

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School,
Moulsford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Site Code: CSM12/05

(SU 5896 8416)

New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Cranford House School**

by David Platt
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code CSM12/05

January 2012

Summary

Site name: New Astro turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5896 8416

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th – 25th January 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: CSM12/05

Area of site: c. 0.4ha

Summary of results: A ditch, gully and grave, all of unknown date were identified. It is possible that these relate to Iron Age or Roman activity in the area. The site can be considered to have moderate archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford ✓ 26.01.12 |
| | Steve Preston ✓ 26.01.12 |

New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Report 12/05

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire (SU 5892 8415) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Jane Cuffe on behalf of Cranford House School, The Street, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission is to be sought from South Oxfordshire District Council for the redevelopment of the school site, including the installation of a water treatment plant with soakaway, an Astroturf surface and alteration to the car parking arrangements. The results of a field evaluation have been requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and if so, produce information to mitigate the impact of the proposed development. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2011). The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt and Aidan Colyer and the site code is CSM12/05. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north western extent of the village of Moulsoford approximately 2km south of Cholsey and 3km north-west of Goring in south Oxfordshire. The eastern edge of the site is bounded by the A329 and the northern extent is bounded by Willow Court Lane. The River Thames flows south, less than 250m to the east. (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consists of lower chalk (BGS 1980) and this was seen in trench as a pale brownish white degraded chalk. The site is 55m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the west, sloping down towards the river to 50m aOD in the east, and is currently used as playing fields. The school buildings stand to the west, with housing to the south. The east of the site is bounded by the A329 and the north by Willow Court Lane.

Archaeological background

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential (Oram 2011). To the west, cropmarks visible from the air indicate the presence of a trackway and field system, perhaps of Iron Age or Roman date. These cropmarks continue up to the proposal site boundary. A Roman cemetery was also located in the same area and partially explored following a chance discovery of a Bronze Age gold torc during ploughing in the 1960s. A second gold torc was recovered with a metal detector some 550m west of the site. Elsewhere, Roman coins have been recovered 150m to the west of the site and within the grounds of the Old Vicarage, while Roman pottery was recovered from the playing fields immediately to the south. Two Neolithic axes have also been recovered to the south-west. Fieldwork in advance of a pipeline located an Iron Age and Roman settlement on Halfpenny Lane to the west with another Late Iron Age settlement to the south (Ford 1990). Finally, the projected course of the Roman road from Dorchester to Silchester lies somewhere in the vicinity of the site and may follow the main road forming the eastern boundary of the school (Margary 1955, 151).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features are present on the site; and
- to determine if any Iron Age or Roman occupation is present on the site.

Four trenches 10m long trenches and two trenches 20m long were to be dug, all 1.6m wide. These were to be dug by using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision, either down to the natural geology or until archaeological features were encountered. All archaeological deposits were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded, except where such remains might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions appertaining to full excavation. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for artefacts and metal detected.

Discovery of human remains was to be reported to the coroner but no further action would be taken as part of the evaluation exercise, unless requested as additional work by the client in consultation with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service.

Results

Trenches 1-5 were dug as intended but Trench 6 was rotated 90 degrees in order to avoid thick plastic matting that had been laid down underneath the turf to provide a temporary road surface for exit from the car park, this alteration was carried out in consultation with Mr Oram. The trenches ranged in length from 9.80m to 20m and in depth from 0.50m to 0.85m (Fig. 3). A metal detector was used to scan the spoil heaps for metal finds. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 10m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of dark greyish brown clayey silt topsoil overlying a mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil that was 0.21m thick. This in turn overlay the natural geology which was a pale brownish white degraded chalk. No finds or features of archaeological significance were present.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned N-S and was 9.80m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.26m of subsoil, which in turn overlay the natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological significance were present.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned NE-SW and was 10.0m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.25m of subsoil, which in turn overlay the natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological significance were present.

Trench 4 (Figs 4 and 5)

Trench 4 was aligned N-S and was 19.0m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil overlying 0.56m of subsoil, above the natural geology. A ditch (1) was identified 5m from the south end of the trench (Fig. 4). This ditch was 0.65m wide and 0.30m deep and had concave sides and a rounded base (fig. 5). The single fill (52) consisted of a mid to pale brownish white silty sand with frequent medium sized stone

inclusions. This ditch had been disturbed in places by root and animal action. All of the ditch, that was visible in the trench, was excavated in order to obtain dating evidence but none was recovered.

Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 5; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 5 was aligned NE-SW and was 20.0m long and 0.64m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil overlying 0.39m of subsoil, which in turn overlay the natural geology. A gully terminus (2) and grave (3) were identified towards the middle of the trench (Fig. 4). The gully (2) was 0.33m wide and 0.06m deep and had shallow slightly curved sides and a rounded base (Fig. 5). The single fill (53) consisted of a moderate to soft pale greyish brown clayey silt with frequent small chalk inclusions, but contained no finds. The grave (3) was 1.30m long and 0.50m wide and was rectangular/oval in plan. The grave (3) appeared to contain a skull (sk54) and a fill (55) consisting of a mid to pale greyish brown clayey silt with patches of darker brown clayey silt with frequent small chalk inclusions. After consultation with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the grave was left unexcavated, covered with plastic sheeting and reburied. The human remains were reported to the coroner.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned NW-SE and was 10.0m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil overlying 0.20m of subsoil, which in turn overlay the natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological significance were present.

Conclusion

The evaluation has successfully confirmed that archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site. Three features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the evaluation on the eastern edge of the site, these being a ditch in Trench 4, and a gully and a grave in Trench 5. Although these features cannot be dated due to the lack of material culture the presence of a Roman cemetery to the west may possibly account for the burial found in this area and the continuation of possible Iron Age or Roman field systems into the area could account for the ditch and gully found on the site. The site is considered to have moderate archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 254, solid and edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1990, 'The archaeology of the Cleeve-Didcot pipeline, south Oxfordshire, 1989', *Oxoniensia*, **55**, 1–40
- Margary, I D, 1955, *Roman Roads in Britain*, London
- Oram, R, 2011, 'Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford.
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

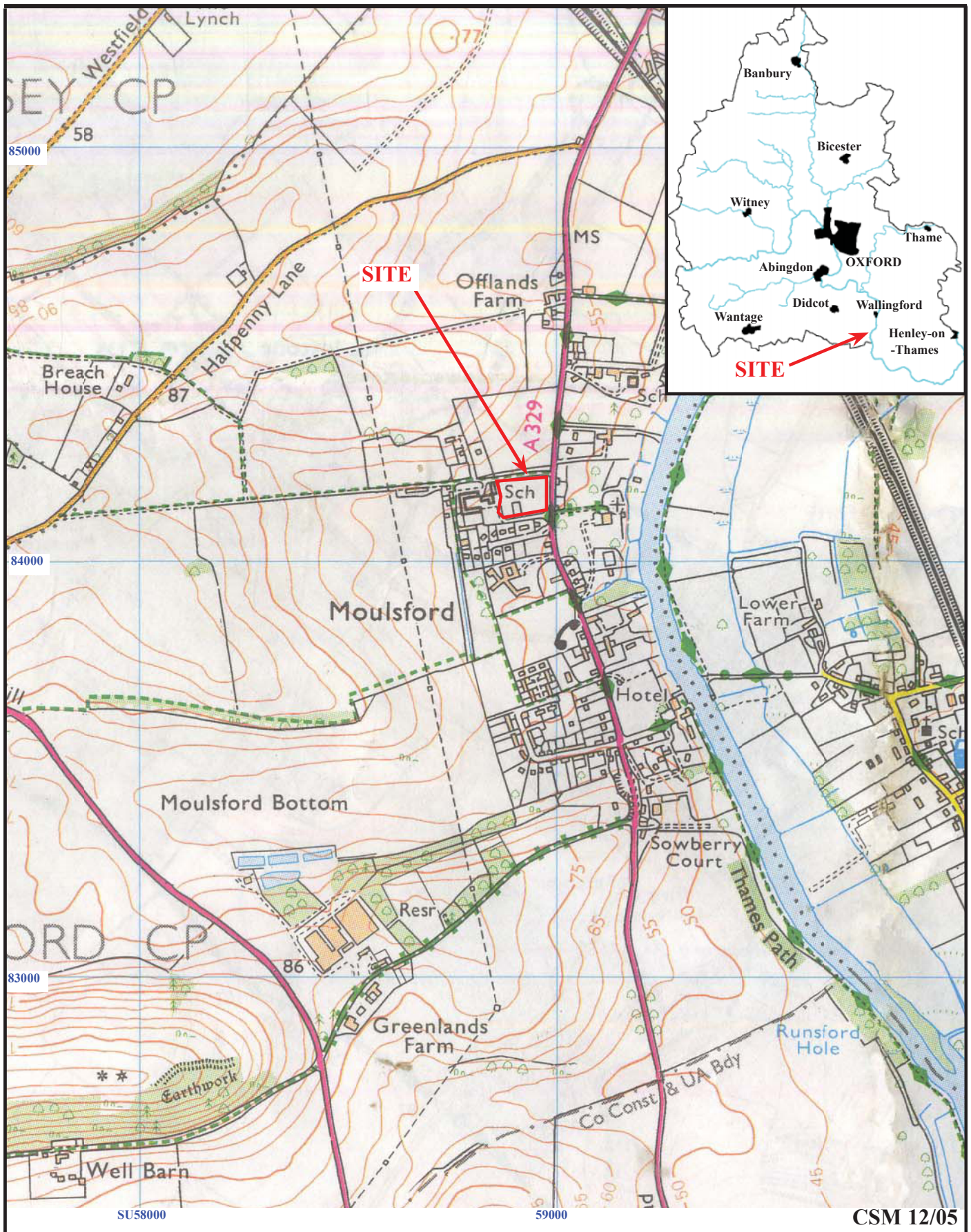
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 | 10 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 0–0.30m dark greyish brown clayey silt topsoil; 0.30-0.51m mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil; 0.51m+ pale brownish white chalk natural geology. |
| 2 | 9.8 | 1.6 | 0.5 | 0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural geology. |
| 3 | 10 | 1.6 | 0.5 | 0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ natural geology |
| 4 | 19.0 | 1.6 | 0.85 | 0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.78m subsoil; 0.78m+ natural geology. Ditch 1 |
| 5 | 20 | 1.6 | 0.64 | 0–0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.63m subsoil; 0.63m+ natural geology Gully terminal 2 and Grave 3 [Pls 1 and 2] |
| 6 | 10 | 1.6 | 0.44 | 0–0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ natural geology |

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 4 | 1 | 52 | Ditch | Undated | None |
| 5 | 2 | 53 | Gully Terminus | Undated | None |
| 5 | 3 | Sk. 54 , 55 | Grave | Undated | None |

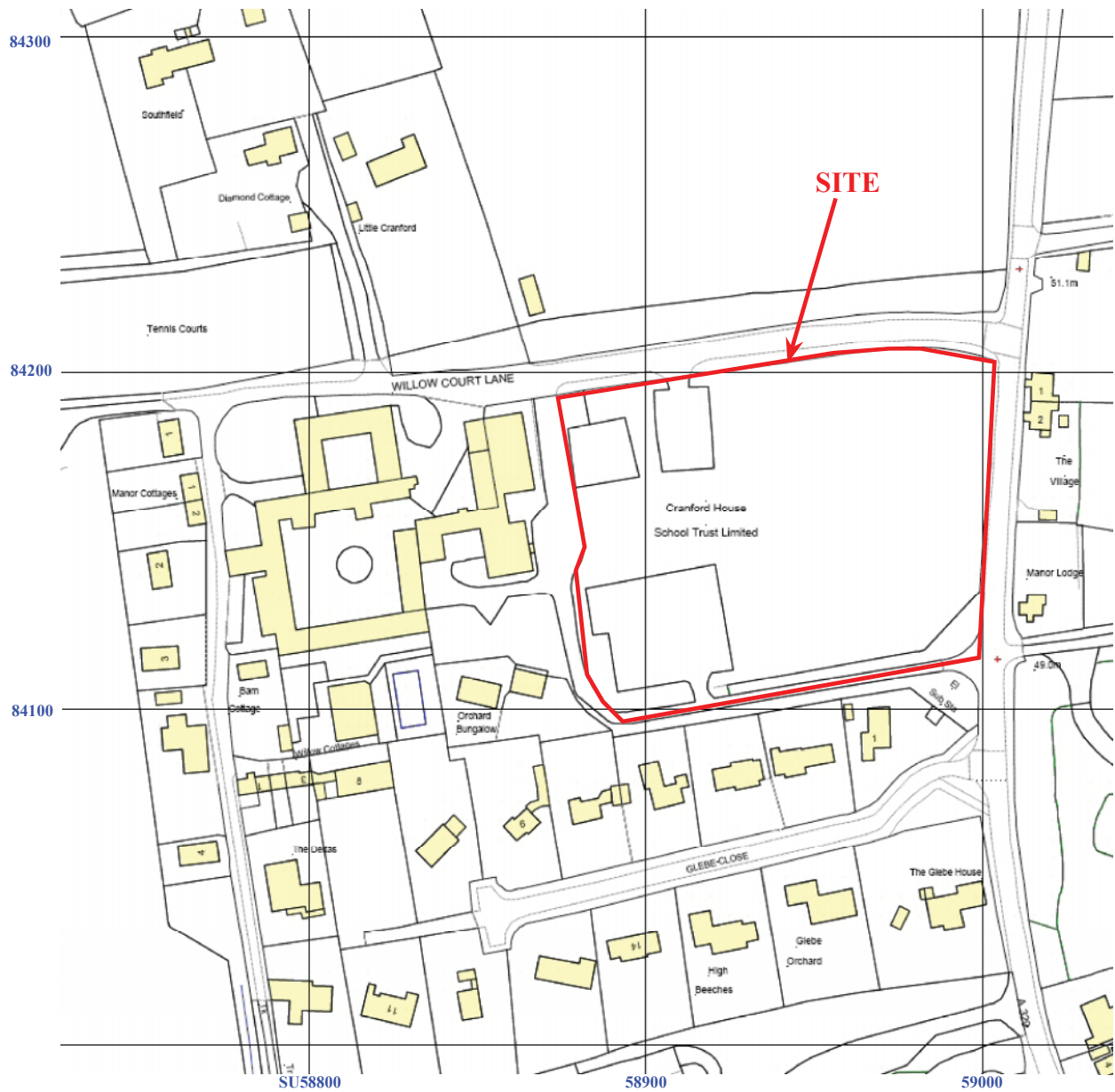


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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Moulsoford and Oxfordshire.

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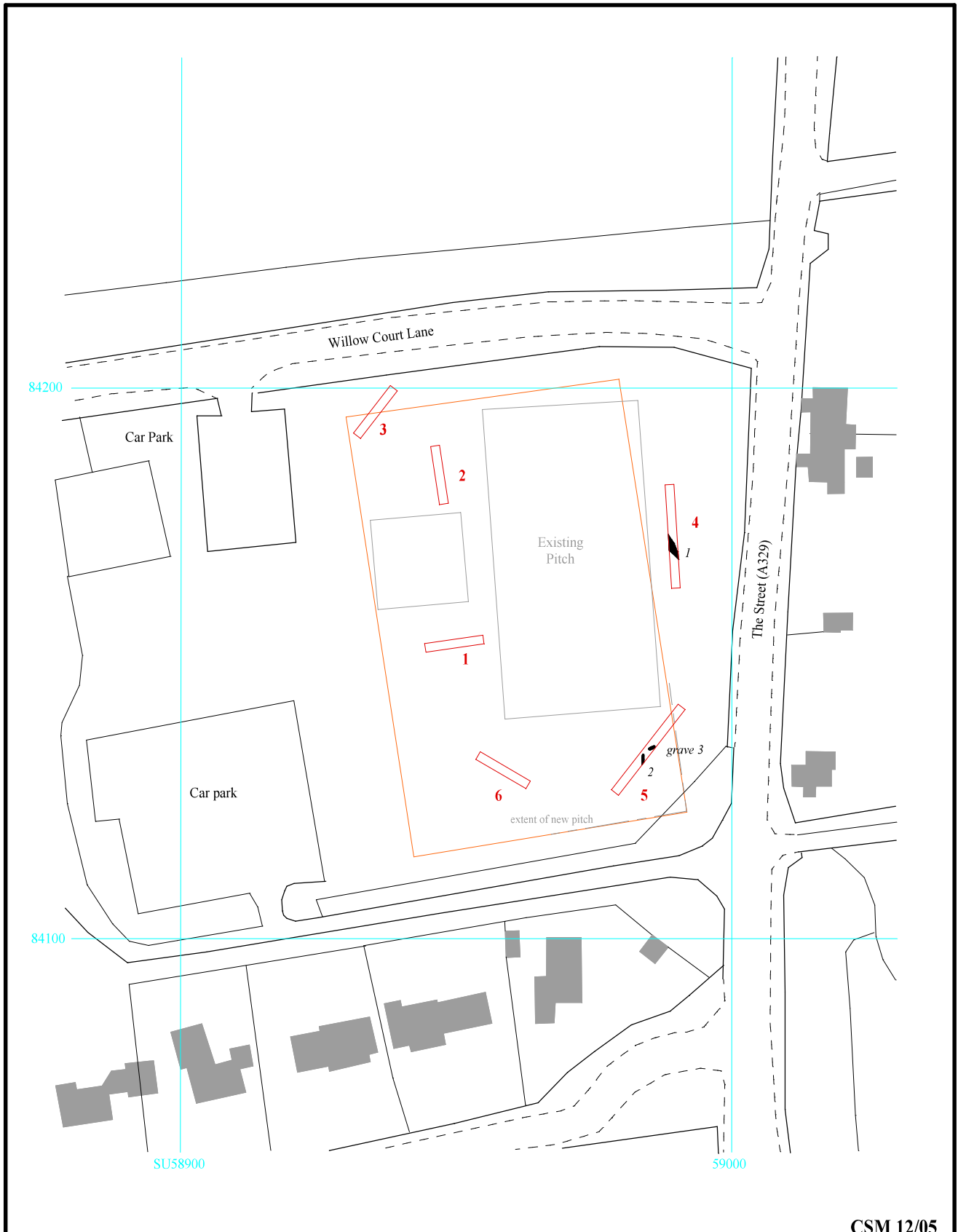
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Archaeological Evaluation**
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off The Street (A329).

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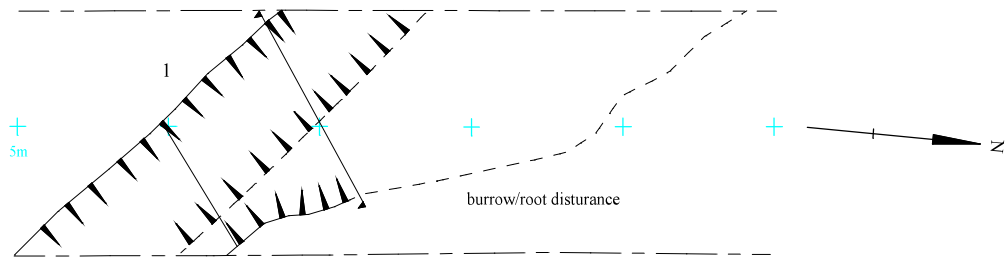
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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.

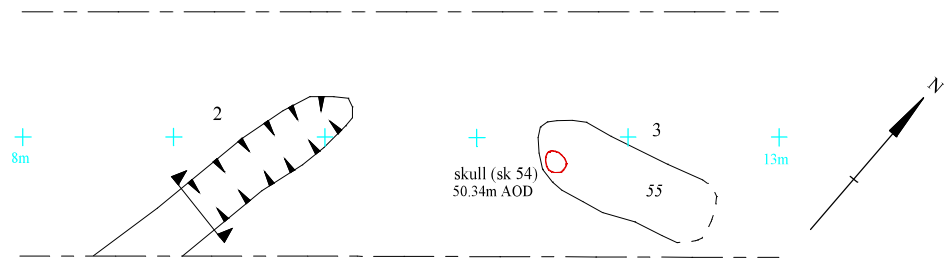


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Trench 4



Trench 5



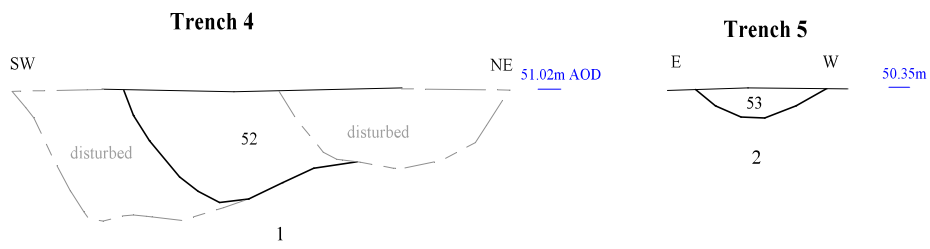
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Oxfordshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 5, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 2. Grave 3, skull to north, looking south, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

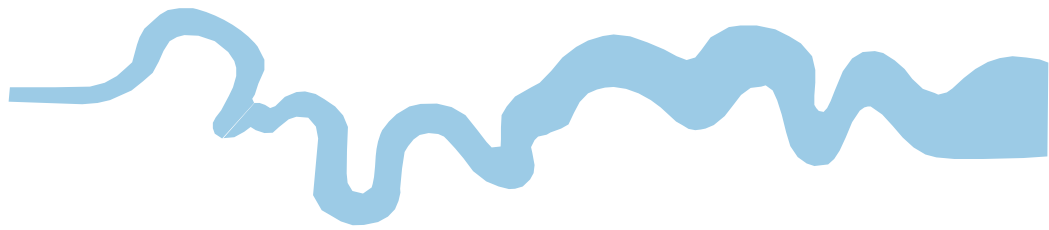
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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TIME CHART

| | Calendar Years |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Modern _____ | AD 1901 |
| Victorian _____ | AD 1837 |
| Post Medieval _____ | AD 1500 |
| Medieval _____ | AD 1066 |
| Saxon _____ | AD 410 |
| Roman _____ | AD 43 |
| Iron Age _____ | BC/AD 750 BC |
| | |
| Bronze Age: Late _____ | 1300 BC |
| Bronze Age: Middle _____ | 1700 BC |
| Bronze Age: Early _____ | 2100 BC |
| | |
| Neolithic: Late | 3300 BC |
| Neolithic: Early | 4300 BC |
| | |
| Mesolithic: Late | 6000 BC |
| Mesolithic: Early | 10000 BC |
| | |
| Palaeolithic: Upper | 30000 BC |
| Palaeolithic: Middle | 70000 BC |
| Palaeolithic: Lower | 2,000,000 BC |
| ↓ | ↓ |



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