

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Lawrence House, Rye Farm,  
Culham, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Aiji Castle and Susan Porter**

**Site Code: LHC12/159**

**(SU 5053 9675)**

# **Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Ian Watson**

by AijiCastleandSusanPorter  
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices  
Ltd

SiteCodeLHC12/159

**October 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5053 9675

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 8th October 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Aiji Castle

**Site code:** LHC 12/159

**Area of site:** c.24 sq m

**Summary of results:** Three foundation trenches for the new extension were excavated, however, no deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 19.10.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 19.10.12

# Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aiji Castle and Susan Porter

Report 12/159

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire (SU 5053 9675) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Watson, of Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (P11/W2447) has been granted from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new extension at Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features a condition has been attached to the planning permission requiring that an archaeological watching brief is maintained during the period of groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services and based on a brief provided by him (Oram 2012). The fieldwork was undertaken by Aiji Castle 8th October 2012 and the site code is LHC 12/159.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located at Rye Farm on the Northern side of Andersey Island to the south-east of Abingdon and north of the village of Culham. The River Thames is to the north with a narrow branch known as Backwater to the south (Fig. 2). The area of excavation forms part of the current rear garden to Lawrence House. The underlying geology is recorded as First Terrace gravel (BGS 1971), which was observed on site. The site is level, at an elevation of 52m above Ordnance Datum.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Oram 2012). In summary the site lies within an area of

considerable archaeological interest. On the north of the Thames, Abingdon Abbey (St Mary's) which was founded AD675 and re-founded in the 10th century (Munby *et al.* 1975). The Abbey is a scheduled monument (SAM218). Several certain or probable archaeological sites have been discovered as cropmarks visible from the air. A rectangular enclosure of prehistoric of possibly Roman date lies c.30m to the south-west of the proposal site and further to the west are a series of ring ditches (levelled Bronze Age barrows) and further rectangular enclosures. A probable trackway, lies both to the north and south of the site and seems likely to have originally continued across it. A further trackway has been recorded east of the site. Fieldwalking survey in the area recovered Roman and medieval pottery and a trench excavated to the west of the site recorded a Roman ditch, a Bronze Age round barrow ditch and a medieval pit.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, geo-technical investigations, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work.

Archaeological deposits exposed by the groundworks were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by the groundworks. The foundation trenches for the extension were excavated using a mini-digger, spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

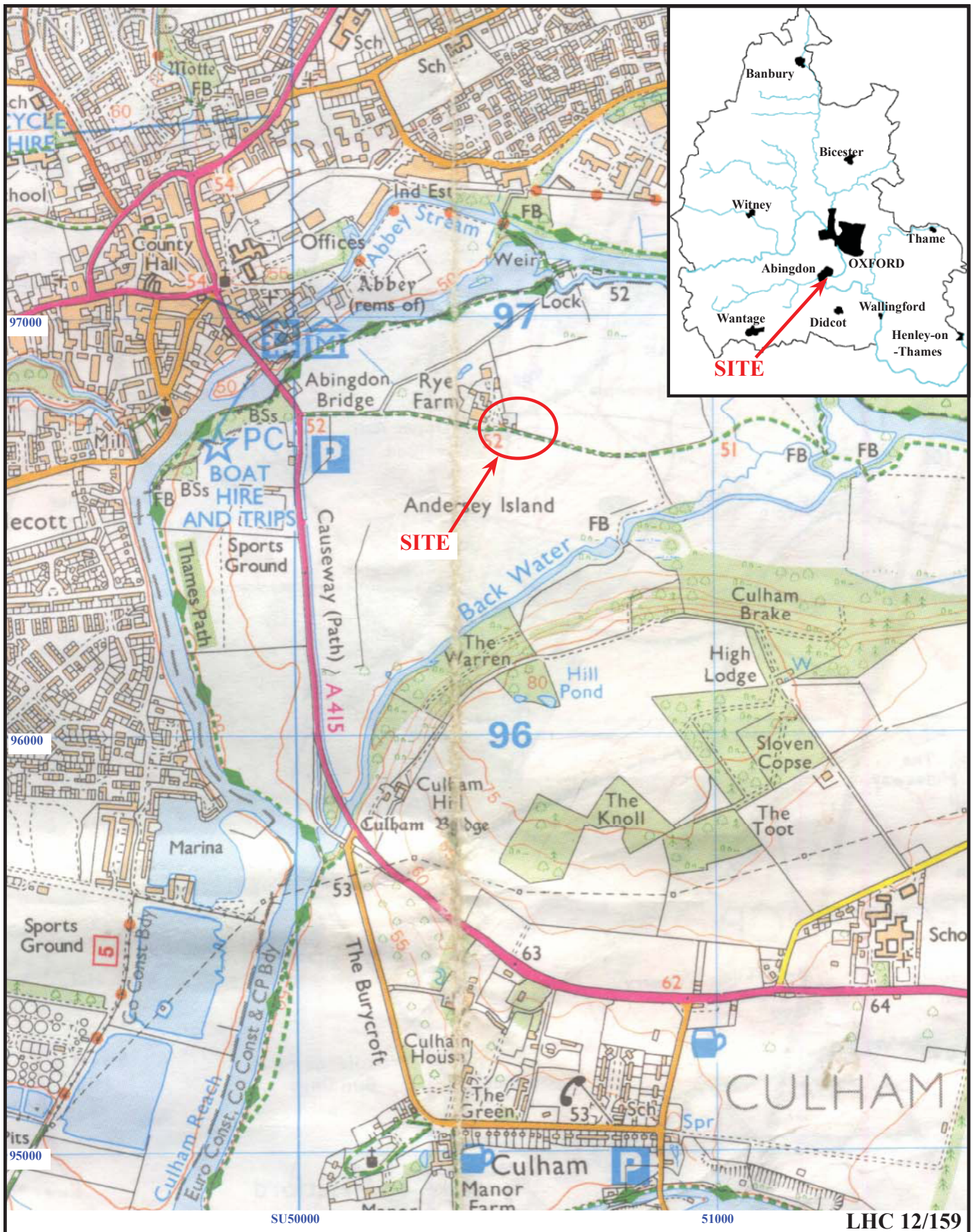
Three foundation trenches were excavated to provide footings for the new extension (Fig. 3). Two of these were oriented north-south and were 3.20m in length and 0.70m wide. The third was oriented east-west (Pl. 1) and measured 7.40m in length and 0.70m in width. The footings were 1m in depth and the stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil and 0.70m mid yellow brown silty sand subsoil above mid yellow gravel natural geology (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). A modern drain was observed in the east-west foundation trench, however, no deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

## **Conclusion**

Three foundation trenches for the new extension were excavated, however, no deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

## **References**

- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 253, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Munby J, Rodwell, K and Turner, H, 1975, 'Abingdon,' in K Rodwell (ed), *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire: a survey of the new County*, Oxford Archaeol Unit Survey No 3, Oxford.
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2012, 'Lawrence House, Rye Farm, Culham, Oxfordshire: Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, Oxford

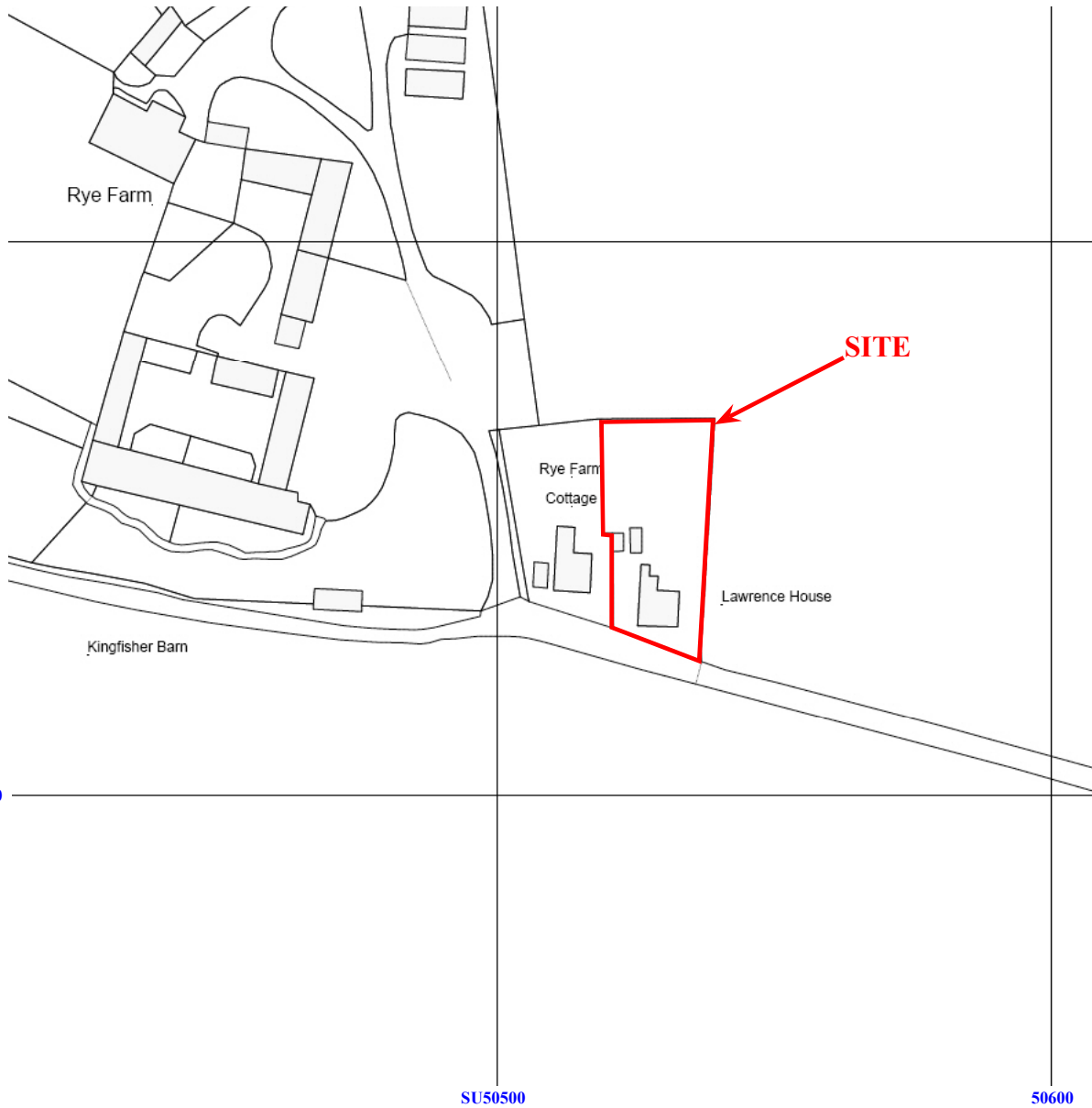


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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Abingdon, Culham and within Oxfordshire.

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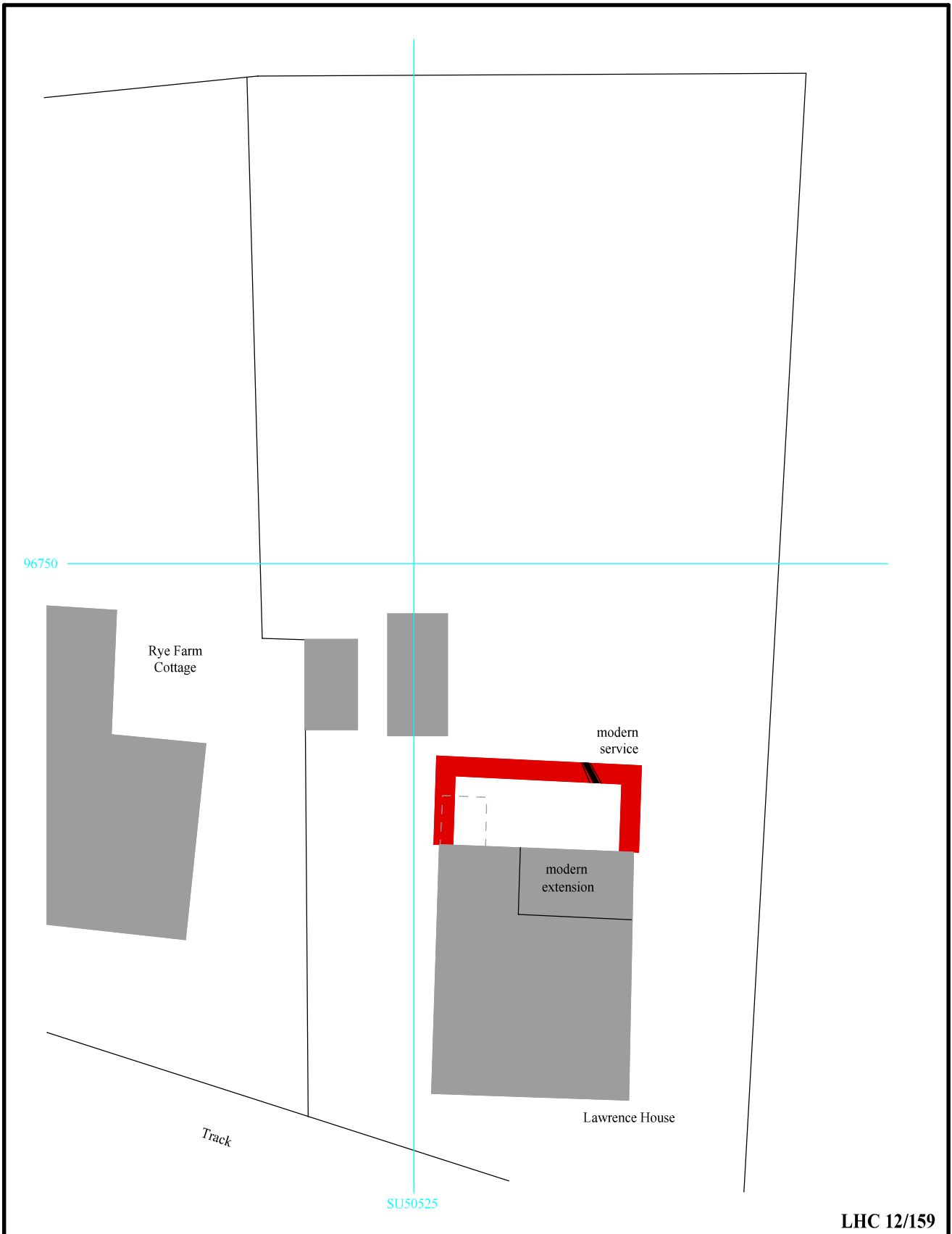
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of observed footing.



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Topsoil

Yellow brown silty sand subsoil

Yellow gravel (natural geology)

base of footing

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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Footing trench, looking east.

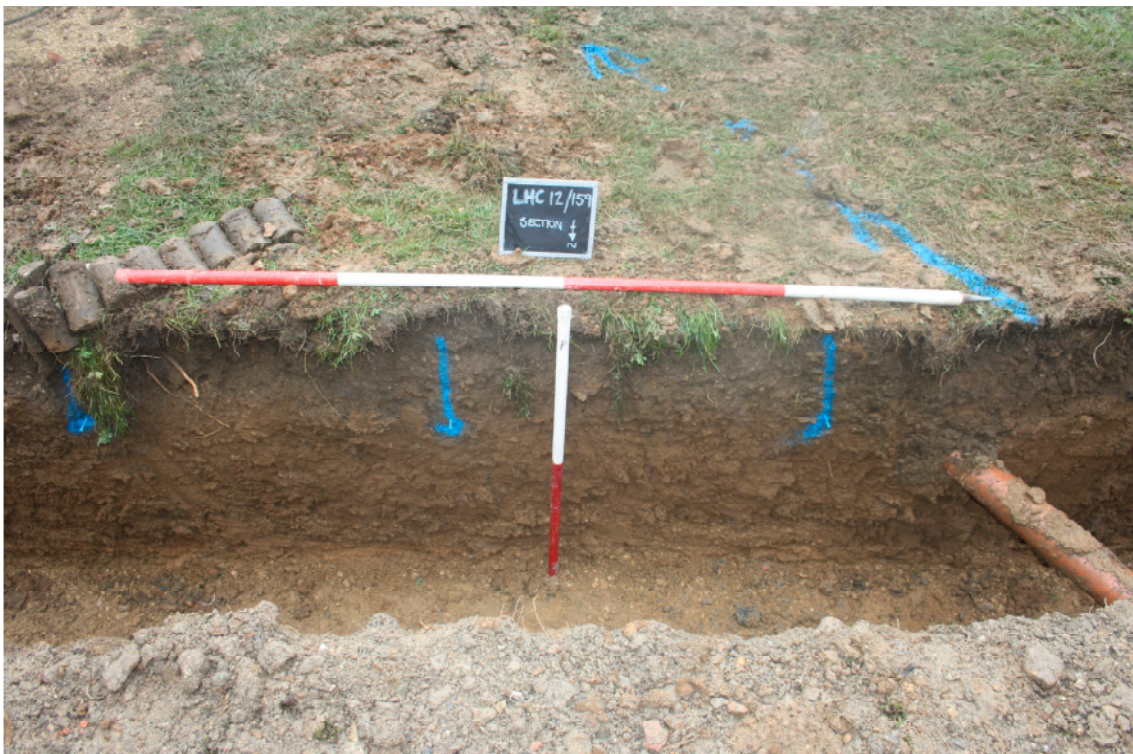


Plate 2. Representative section, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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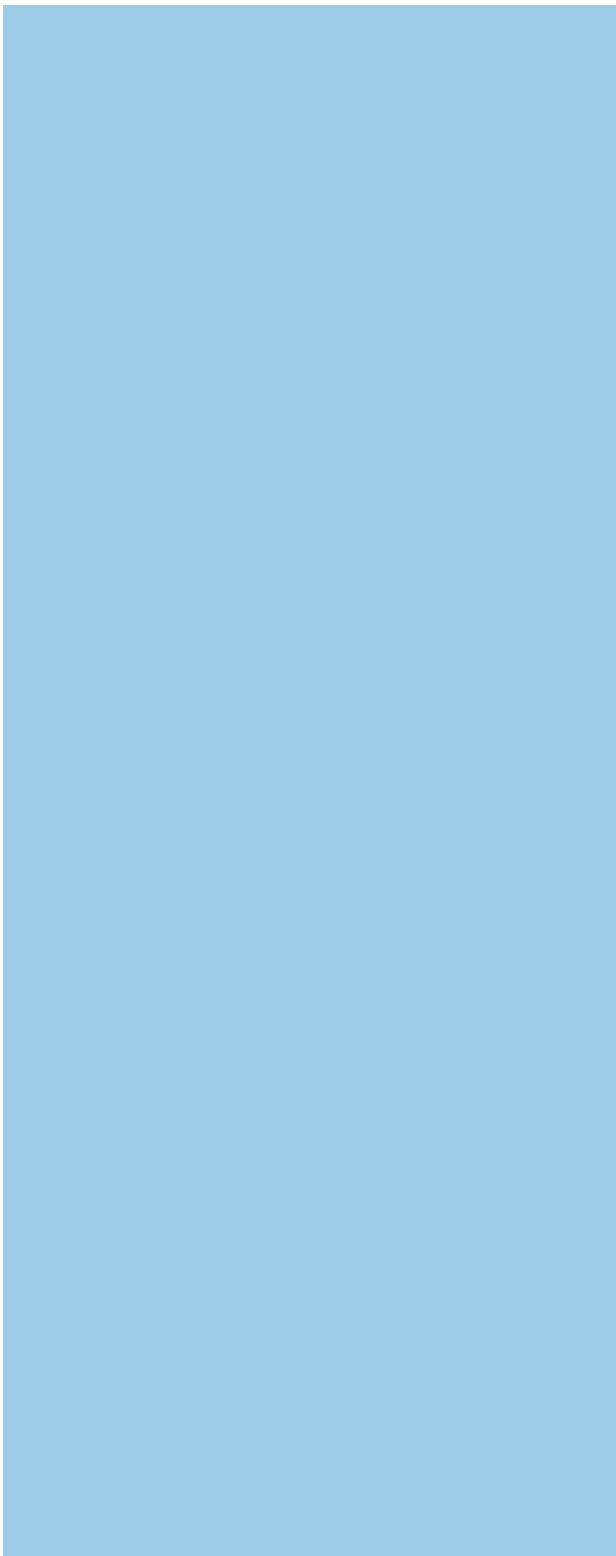
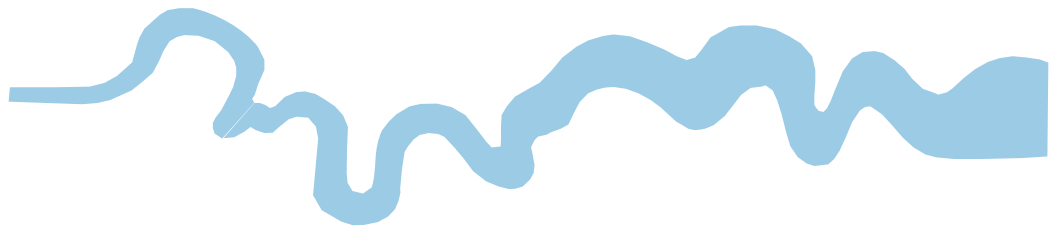
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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