

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn,
Hertfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Site Code: RLW12/147

(TL 2285 1774)

**21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn,
Hertfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Don Scanlon

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code RLW 12/147

November 2012

Summary

Site name: 21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire

Grid reference: TL 2285 1774

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 7th November 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: RLW 12/147

Summary of results: Foundation trenches for a new extension were excavated to the north-east of the existing house. No deposits nor artefacts 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 at Mill Green Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 12.11.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 12.11.12

21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Report 12/147

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (TL 2285 1774) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Don Scanlon of 21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire.

Planning permission (N6/2011/2019/FP) has been gained from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on appeal (APP/C1950/A/12/2170454) for the erection of a new extension to the house. The consent is subject to two conditions relating to archaeology. The site lies within an archaeological notification area.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Andy Instone, County Planning Archaeologist for Hertfordshire County Council, adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter on 7th November 2012 and the site code is RLW 12/147.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Mill Green Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located c. 1km to the north of Welwyn at the north-east end of Rollswood Road (Fig. 2). Prior to construction of the extension, a small conservatory had stood in this location, with the surrounding area used as a patio and gravelled driveway to the rear of the existing house. The site lies at a height of c.106m above Ordnance Datum and slopes down toward the south and the existing house. The site is located on an area of transition in the natural geology with Upper Chalk to the south and Clay-with-flints to the north (BGS 1978). Both chalk and clay were observed during groundworks with the clay overlying the chalk to the south.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the general environs of Welwyn. Roman settlement is well recorded for this area with several villas, and a settlement and substantial cemetery for

Welwyn itself. However, it is not considered that the Roman settlement was a town but rather the centre of a villa estate. Welwyn was traversed by the Roman road from St Albans to Braughing and Colchester (Thompson and Bryant 2002). Welwyn is also notable for the presence of rich Late Iron Age princely burials, though as yet, whilst several settlements of this period are recorded, no high status ones are known. Saxon occupation is recorded on a small scale for Welwyn, however by the medieval period Welwyn had a substantial village population. A small number of earlier prehistoric flint finds are recorded relatively close to the site, indicating some activity in this period, but it is the presence of Roman building material and an Iron Age pit at Rollwood to the south-west that is of most relevance to the development site.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was expected to comprise ground reduction to compensate for the slope of the site and the digging of foundation trenches for foundations and services.

Foundation trenches were excavated using a JCB-type machine equipped with a 0.60m ditching bucket. The foundation trenches were made deeper at the northern extent of the site rather than reducing the ground to compensate for the slope of the site. The spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Foundations for a new extension were excavated to the north and north-east of the existing house (Pl. 1, Fig. 3). The foundation trenches were 0.60m in width and varied in depth from 1m to the south-west (close to the existing house) to 1.50m at the northern extent. The extension was 14m in length on the north western side and 7m to the north-east, with a width (east-west) of 8m.

The extension was excavated in an area of geological transition and as such the geology varied across the site. At the south-western end the stratigraphy (Pl.2; Fig. 4) comprised 0.20m of dark brown/grey sandy clay made ground for a driveway/ patio, above 0.40m mid red/brown silty clay (subsoil), which overlay light yellow/grey clayey chalk natural geology, excavated to a depth of 1.10m. At the mid point of the extension the stratigraphy was broadly similar with 0.20m of made ground, over 0.20m mid red/brown silty clay (subsoil), overlying clayey chalk natural geology. At the northern extent of the site the stratigraphy comprised 0.20m of made ground as described above, overlying very dark brown silty clay with flint inclusions natural geology with some chalk occasionally visible at a depth of 1.50m as the geology changes.

A soakaway was also excavated to the west of the existing house, where it meets the new extension. This formed a sub rectangular pit 1.20m across and 1.5m deep.

No deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the works and no finds recovered.

Conclusion

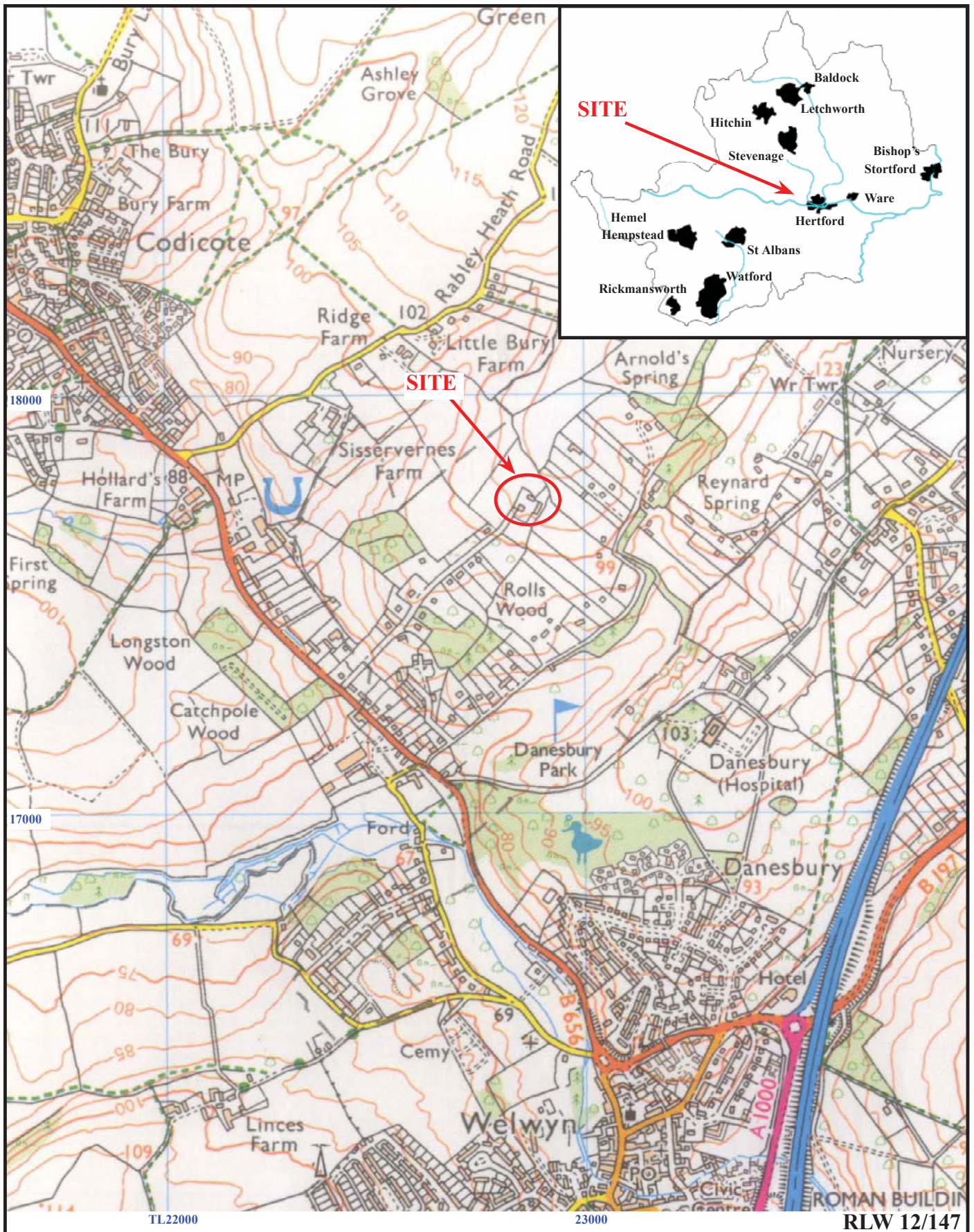
Despite the relatively high archaeological potential for Roman archaeology, and the possibility of recovering prehistoric flint finds, excavation of the foundation trenches did not encounter any deposits of archaeological interest, nor were any artefacts of any date recovered from the spoil heaps.

References

BGS, 1978, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 239, Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Thompson, I and Bryant, S, 2002, Welwyn, Extensive Urban Survey Project, Assessment Report, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertford

APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: 21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Welwyn Hatfield	
Village/Town: Welwyn	Parish: Welwyn	
Planning application reference: N6/2011/2019/FP. APP/C1950/A/12/2170454		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Mr Don Scanlon, 21 Rollswood Road, Welwyn, Hertfordshire		
Nature of application: Small scale (extension)		
Present land use: Yard		
Size of application area: 112 sq m	Size of area investigated: 24 sq m	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2285 1774		
Site code (if applicable): RLW12/147		
Site director/Organization: Steve Ford, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd		
Type of work: Watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: 7/11/2012	Finish: 7/11/2012
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: The archive will be deposited at Mill Green Museum.		
Related HER Nos: None	Periods represented: None	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: None		
Summary of fieldwork results: Foundation trenches for a new extension were excavated to the north-east of the existing house. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.		
Author of summary: Susan Porter		Date of summary: 9/11/2012

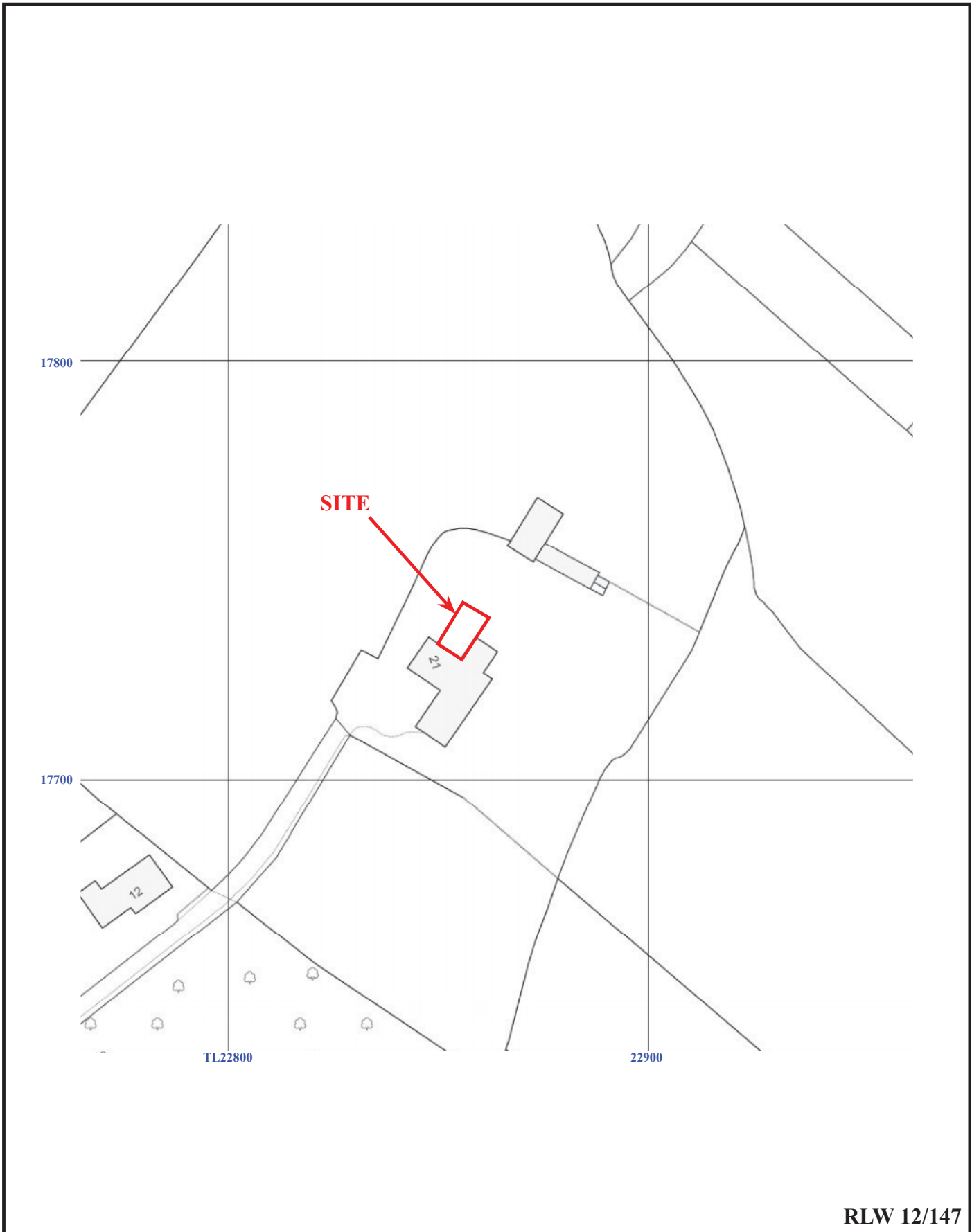


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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Welwyn and Hertfordshire.

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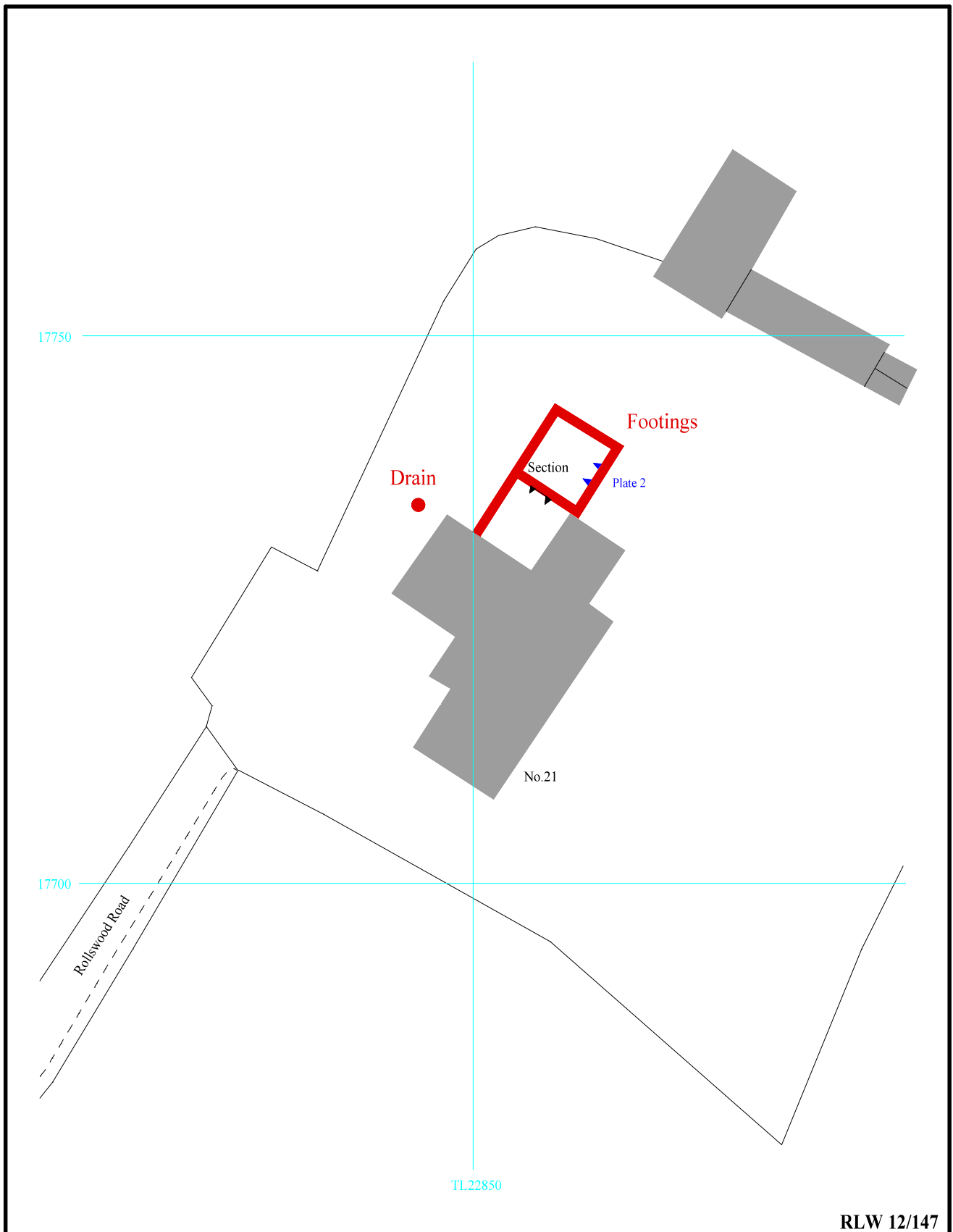


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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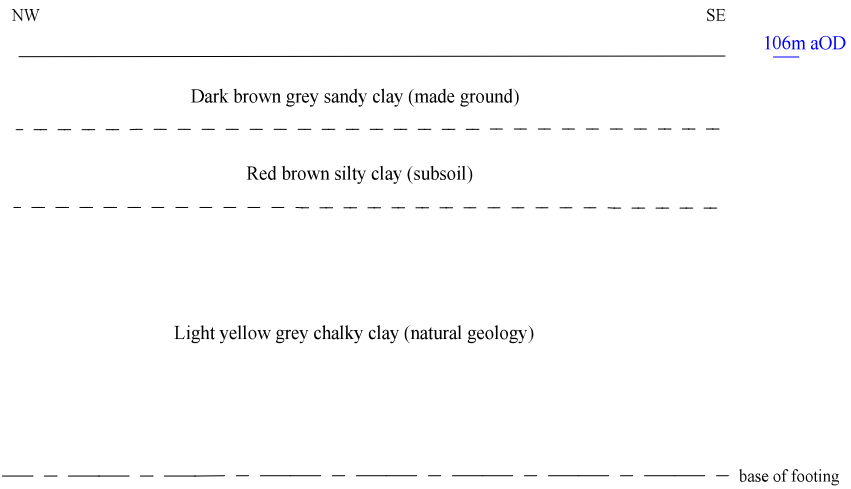


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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of observed area.



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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. General view of area of footings, looking south-west towards existing house, Scales: 2m and 1m.



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

RLW 12/147

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Archaeological watching brief

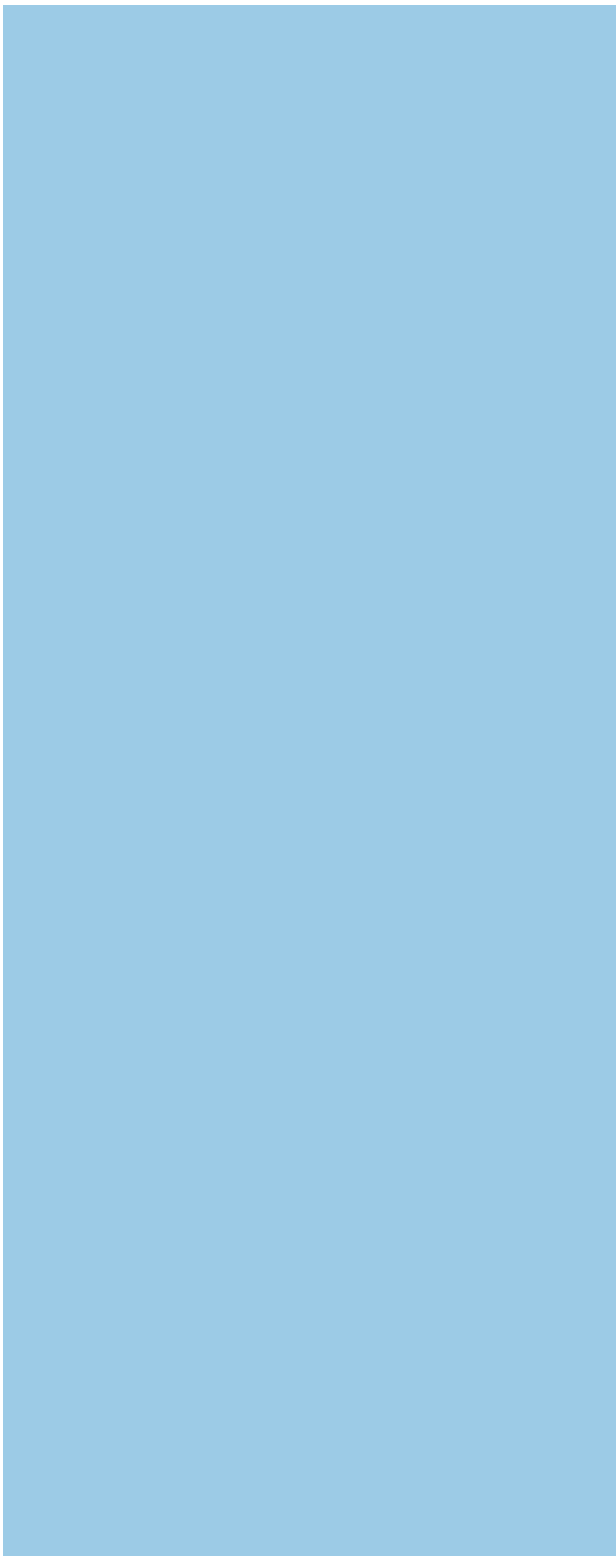
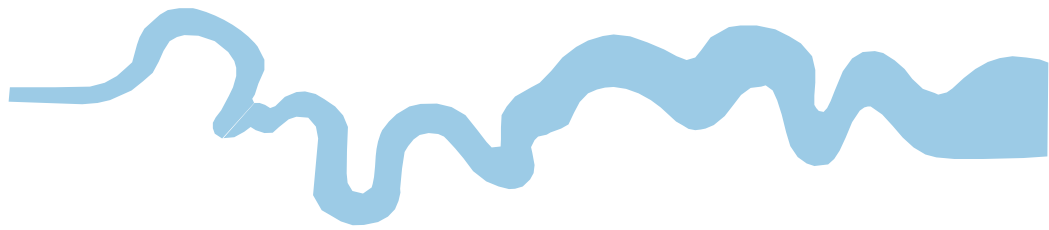
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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