

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**

An Archaeological Recording Action

By David Platt

**CSM12/05
(SU 5877 8418)**

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

**An Archaeological Recording Action
for Cranford House School**

by David Platt
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code CSM12/05

November 2012

Summary

Site name: New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5877 8418

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 9th July – 10th September 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: CSM12/05

Area of site: c. 0.17ha

Summary of results: A cluster of 8 intercutting pits were uncovered in the area stripped for the new pitch. These pits produced a modest volume of Roman pottery, tile and animal bone and are considered to be Roman in date. A single sherd of Late Saxon pottery was recovered from the upper layer of one pit that lay immediately beneath the subsoil and is considered to be intrusive. This sherd is possibly 'Thetford Ware', a type rarely encountered in Oxfordshire.

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 ✓ 19.11.12
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New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Recording Action

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Report 12/05b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire (SU 5877 8418) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Jane Cuffe on behalf of Cranford House School, The Street, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire. Three separate planning applications have been submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council for the installation of an artificial turf pitch with associated fencing, new car parking layout and landscaping (P11/W2129), the decommissioning and replacement of the existing foul water treatment system (P11/W0286) and the demolition of redundant buildings and the construction of a new sports centre and new drama centre (P11/W2202). This phase of archaeological works deals with the first two of these applications. Due to the presence of archaeological deposits on the site, identified through evaluation, a recommendation for a condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation had been made to the District Council. Consent has been gained for each with a condition which requires a programme of archaeological works to excavate and record archaeological deposits prior to development as guided by *Planning for the Historic Environment* PPS5 (2010). It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) has superseded PPS5.

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, Tim Dawson, Steven Crabb and Dan Bray between 9th July and 10th September 2012 and the site code is CSM12/05ex. 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 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

A brief for the project has been prepared by Mr. Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service drawing on the results of an earlier evaluation which has highlighted the archaeological potential of the site. In summary, 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 area where the cropmarks lie. A chance discovery during ploughing led to the discovery of a Bronze Age gold torc (bracelet) whilst ploughing with a second gold torc 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 with Roman pottery 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). 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). Archaeological evaluation of the site of the proposed artificial turf pitch recorded a human grave and a small number of linear features. These features were undated but the grave may represent a continuation of the Roman cemetery identified to the west of the application area (Platt 2012).

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project were to:

- Excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development;
- Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- To establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc; and produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

The specific research objectives were to answer the following questions:

To determine whether other burials are present and if so they how they relate to the Roman cemetery recorded to the west.

To determine whether the linear features recorded part of possible prehistoric or Roman field systems that are present in the area and whether other elements of these are present on the site.

Results

Topsoil and other overburden was removed using a 360⁰ excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision to expose archaeological deposits.

Water Treatment plant

No archaeology was observed during the stripping for the water treatment plant (Fig. xxx). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of topsoil overlying 0.50m of mid to light reddish brown clayey silt subsoil, this in turn overlay the natural chalk geology.

Artificial turf pitch and car park

The car park was only stripped of topsoil and the construction of the new surface was built up so no archaeologically relevant layers were exposed nor impacted.

In the area of the artificial turf pitch a total of c. 150m² was stripped using a 360⁰ excavator down to the top of the natural geology. The area was less than originally intended as the decision was made to build up the southern half of the pitch in order to create a level playing field instead of excavating the whole area down to a greater depth. As a result of this the area to the south east, which contained the grave and possible terminus identified in the evaluation (Platt 2012), was not excavated and was preserved in situ.

A cluster of 8 intercutting pits (500) were identified on the eastern side of the site. These were numbered 101 – 108;

Pit 101

Pit 101 was 0.23m deep and 0.50m in diameter with moderately steep curved sides and a rounded base, the single fill (150) consisted of pale brownish grey silty clay with occasional small flint and chalk inclusions.

Stratigraphically this pit was later than [102] and was one of the last in the sequence of pits to be dug, however it cannot be more closely dated as no finds were recovered.

Pit 102

Pit 102 was 0.35m deep and had steep concave sides and a slightly curved base. The single fill (151) consisted of a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional flint and chalk inclusions. 3 fragments of cattle bone were recovered from this deposit. This pit was cut by pit [101] but cuts pit [103] providing a relative stratigraphic sequence.

Pit 103

Pit 103 was 0.45m in depth and had steep curved sides and a flat base. Three fills were identified within this pit; The tertiary fill (152) was a mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional flint inclusions, 1 fragment of cattle bone was recovered along with a single sherd of Roman grey ware jar dated to 200-400AD. The secondary fill (153) was a dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional flint inclusions, 2 pieces of bone were recovered from a large animal (horse or cattle), 27 fragments of sheep/goat and 2 dog bones were recovered. The primary fill (154) was a pale brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions but no artefacts were recovered. Stratigraphically this pit was later than [104] but earlier than [102] and [107].

Pit 104

Pit 104 was 0.44m deep and had steep curved sides and a rounded base. The single fill (155) was a mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional flint inclusions. No finds were recovered but stratigraphically pit 104 is one of the earliest pits being cut by [103] and [105].

Pit 105

Pit 105 was 1.20m in diameter and 0.40m deep with steep concave sides and a rounded base. Two fills were contained within this pit, the primary fill (157) was a mid brownish grey clayey silt with flint inclusions. A single sherd of a Roman beaker was recovered dated to 150-300AD. The secondary fill (156) was a dark grey clayey silt with no inclusions and no finds. Stratigraphically [105] was later than [104] but earlier than [106].

Pit 106

Pit 106 was 0.44m deep with moderately steep curved sides and a slightly curved base. Five fills (158-162) were identified within this pit. The primary fill (161) was a pale brownish grey clayey silt with frequent chalk inclusions, no finds were recovered from this deposit. The secondary fill (160) was a dark grey clayey silt with frequent charcoal inclusions, no finds were recovered from this deposit. A tertiary fill (159) was a mid brownish grey clayey silt with frequent chalk inclusions, no finds were recovered from this deposit. The fourth fill (158) was a dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional chalk inclusions. 2 pieces of fired clay were recovered along with 61 fragments of bone, 47 of which were from a large animal (horse or cattle), 13 from a pig and 1 fragment from a small animal (dog or cat). Two conjoining sherds of late Saxon pottery were recovered from this fill. The uppermost fill was a pale greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions, no find were recovered. Stratigraphically [106] is later than [105] but earlier than [107].

Pit 107

Pit 107 was 1.90m in diameter and 0.44m deep with moderately steep curved sides and a rounded base. The primary fill (165) was a pale grey clayey silt with occasional chalk inclusions, no finds were recovered. The secondary fill (164) was a dark grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal inclusions, 19 fragments of animal bone were recovered from this deposit, all of which were from a large animal(s). Three fragments of Roman tile were also recovered. The tertiary fill (163) was a pale grey clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions and contained 22 fragments of animal bone of which 1 was from a large animal (horse or cattle) and 21 from a medium sized animal (pig, goat or sheep). Two sherds of Roman pottery came from layer 163, these consisted of part of a jar made of sandy greyware and dated to 70-400 AD and part of a bowl made of a silty orange fabric with a black colour coat, this was dated 150-300AD. Stratigraphically [107] was one of the latest pits cutting both [108] and [103].

Pit 108

Pit 108 was 0.55m deep with steep concave sides and a rounded base, the single fill (166) was a pale brownish grey clayey silt with occasional chalk inclusions. Stratigraphically [108] was earlier than [107].

Finds

Pottery by Malcolm Lyne

Five sherds of pottery were recovered from the pit group as detailed in appendix 2. The Saxon sherd, possibly Thetford Ware, would be a rare find for Oxfordshire.

Fabrics

Roman

R1.Sandy greyware with profuse <0.30 mm quartz-sand filler

R2.Silty wheel-turned greyware with sparse <0.30 mm. brown ferrous inclusions and occasional <3.00 mm. rounded white limestone

R3.Silty pale orange fabric with tiny red ferrous inclusions and black colour-coat.

Late Saxon?

S1.Black wheel-turned fabric fired pale grey-to-buff with profuse <0.30 mm. quartz sand filler. Smoothed externally. ?Thetford ware or related fabric.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from six separate contexts within the investigated area. A total of 137 fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 1478g. The surface preservation of the remains was generally good, although a moderate amount of fragmentation was noted and occasional places of cortical exfoliation. Three contexts (153, 158, and 164) each contained a single unidentifiable fragment of charred (i.e. black in colour) bone.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements into categories based on size, not by species, into one of three categories: “large”, “medium”, and “small”. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) were designated to the “small” category. Wherever possible, a more specific identification to species was made. The determination of the minimum number of individuals (MNI) both within and between the species was investigated.

A minimum of five animal individuals were present within the assemblage: two large (one horse, one cow), two medium (one sheep/goat and one pig), and one small sized (dog) animals. The horse was identified by a single proximal half of a right metapodial in pit (153). Elements of a single cow were present in contexts (151, a right talus), (153, right distal tibia), and (164, left distal humerus). A single loose tooth from pit (153) was of

sheep/goat size. A portion of right pig mandible was present in (158). Finally, two halves of a dog mandible with in-situ teeth was located in (153).

Thin superficial cutmarks (evidence of butchery practices) were observed on the cattle talus and the distal humerus in contexts 151 and 164, respectively. No further information could be derived from this assemblage of animal bone.

Brick/tile

Three fragments of Roman tile came from pit 107 (164). One fragment contained a distinctive ridged surface.

Conclusion

The fieldwork has revealed just a single archaeological entity, albeit a complex one. The feature comprises a cluster of intercutting pits of Roman date, with a focus of repeat activity taking place over some years as evidenced by the fact that earlier pits have been infilled in order that the later pits can be observed to be cutting them. Nevertheless, the pits appear to be relatively isolated and may be located at some distance from an occupied area, though the earlier evaluation located a gully and human burial relatively close by. The pits appear to have been used for rubbish disposal, including bone waste. The presence of this intercutting pit group adds further to the evidence of Roman occupation and other activity in the general vicinity of the site. The presence of a sherd of late Saxon pottery is also worthy of note for the indication of late Saxon activity somewhere in the vicinity and also that it may be a pottery type rarely encountered in this region.

References

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- Platt, D, 2012, New Artificial Turf Pitch, Cranford House School, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 12/05, Reading
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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

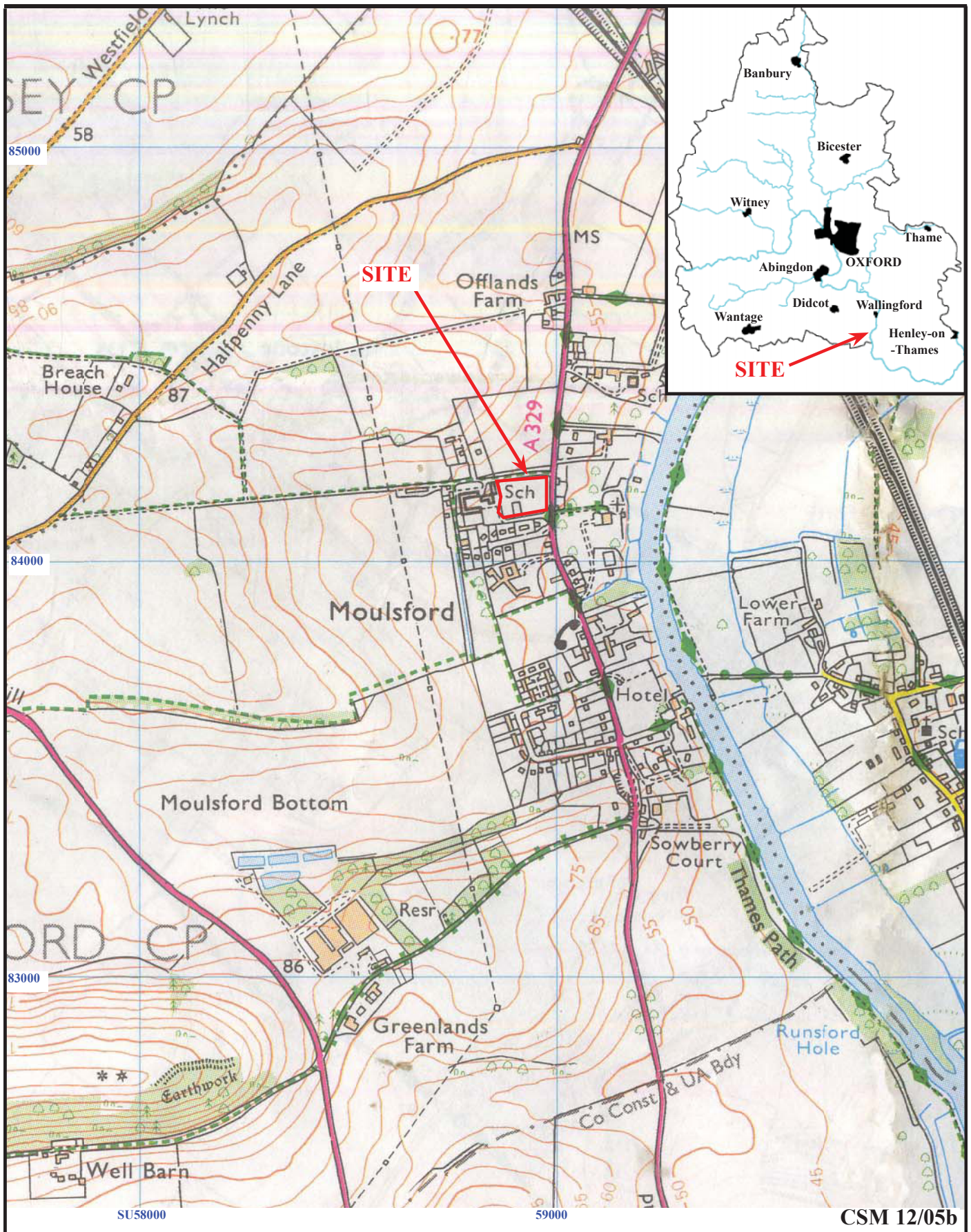
Group	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
500	101	150	Pit		
500	102	151	Pit		
500	103	152-154	Pit		
500	104	155	Pit		
500	105	156, 157	Pit		
500	106	158-162	Pit		
500	107	163-165	Pit		
500	108	166	Pit		

Appendix 2: Catalogue of pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Date-range	No of sherds	Wt in gm	Comments
[103] 152	R2	Jar	200-400	1	14g	Fresh
[105] 157	R3	Beaker	150-300	1	1g	Abraded
[106] 158	S1 Fired clay	Jar	850-1100	2=1 2	17 13	Fresh
	Total		950-1100	4	30g	
[106] 162	R1 R3	Jar Bowl	70-400 150-300	1 1	3 2	Abraded Sl abraded
			Roman	2	5g	

Appendix 3: Inventory of animal bone

Context		Number of Fragments	Weight (g)	Identified fragments – by animal size			Unidentified/ comments
Cut	Deposit			Large	Medium	Small	
102	151	3	60	3 (cattle)	-	-	-
103	152	1	110	1	-	-	-
103	153	31	352	2	27 (sheep/goat)	2 (dog)	1 charred fragment
106	158	61	584	47	13 (pig)	1	1 charred fragment
107	163	22	42	1	21	-	-
107	164	19	330	19	-	-	1 charred fragment
Total / MNI		137	1478	1 cow 1 horse	1 sheep/goat 1 pig	1 dog	-



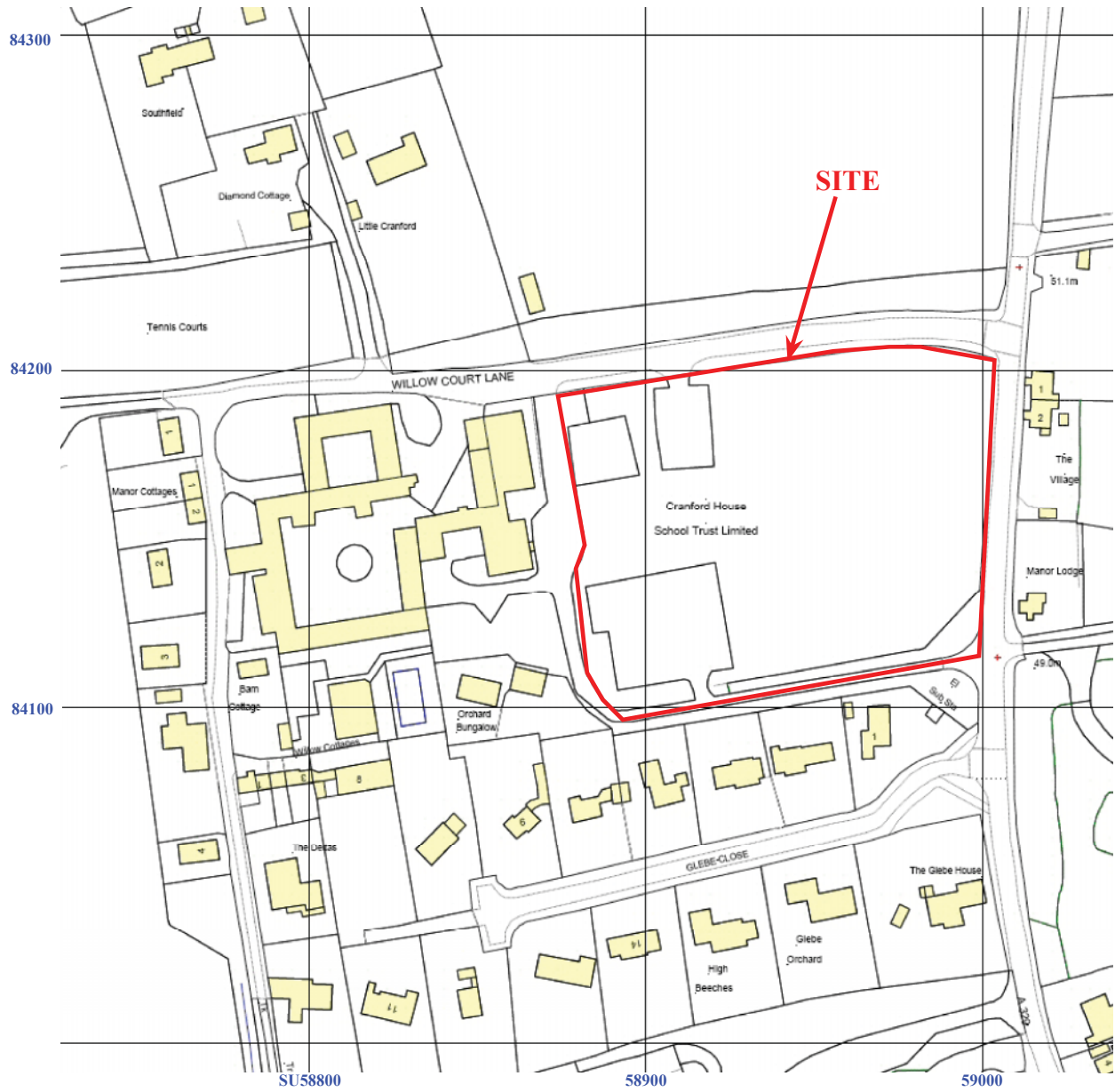
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Figure 1. Location of site within Moulsoford and Oxfordshire.

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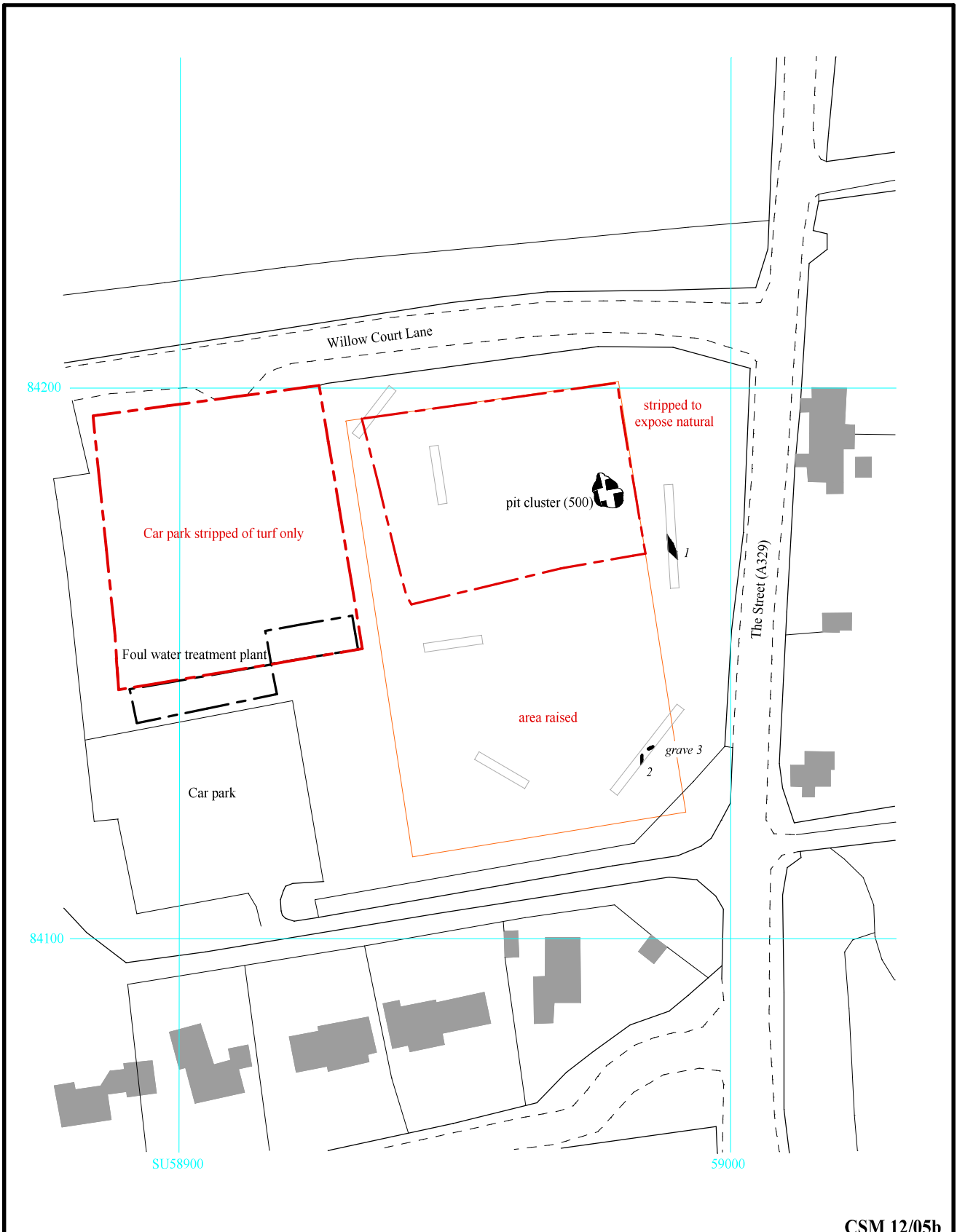
CSM 12/05b



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

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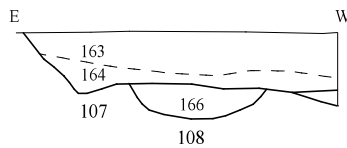
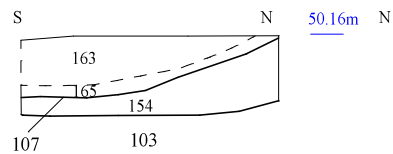
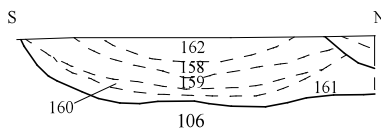
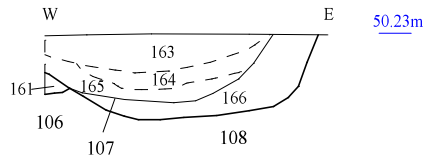
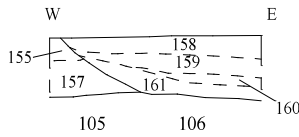
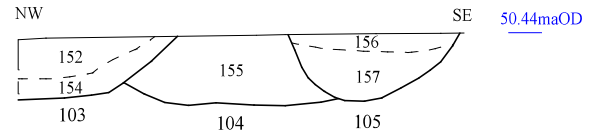
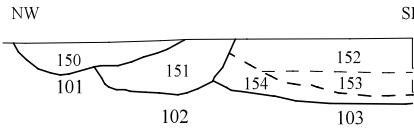
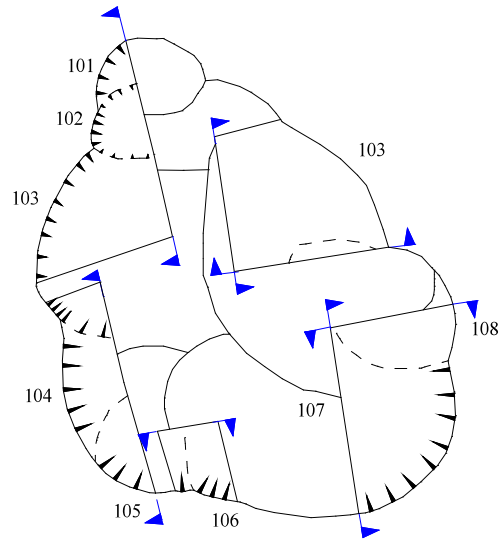


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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Figure 4. Detail of pit cluster 500.



Plate 1. Pit 106 -108 in cluster 500, looking north west, Scales: 2m, 1m, 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Pit 105 and 106 in cluster 500, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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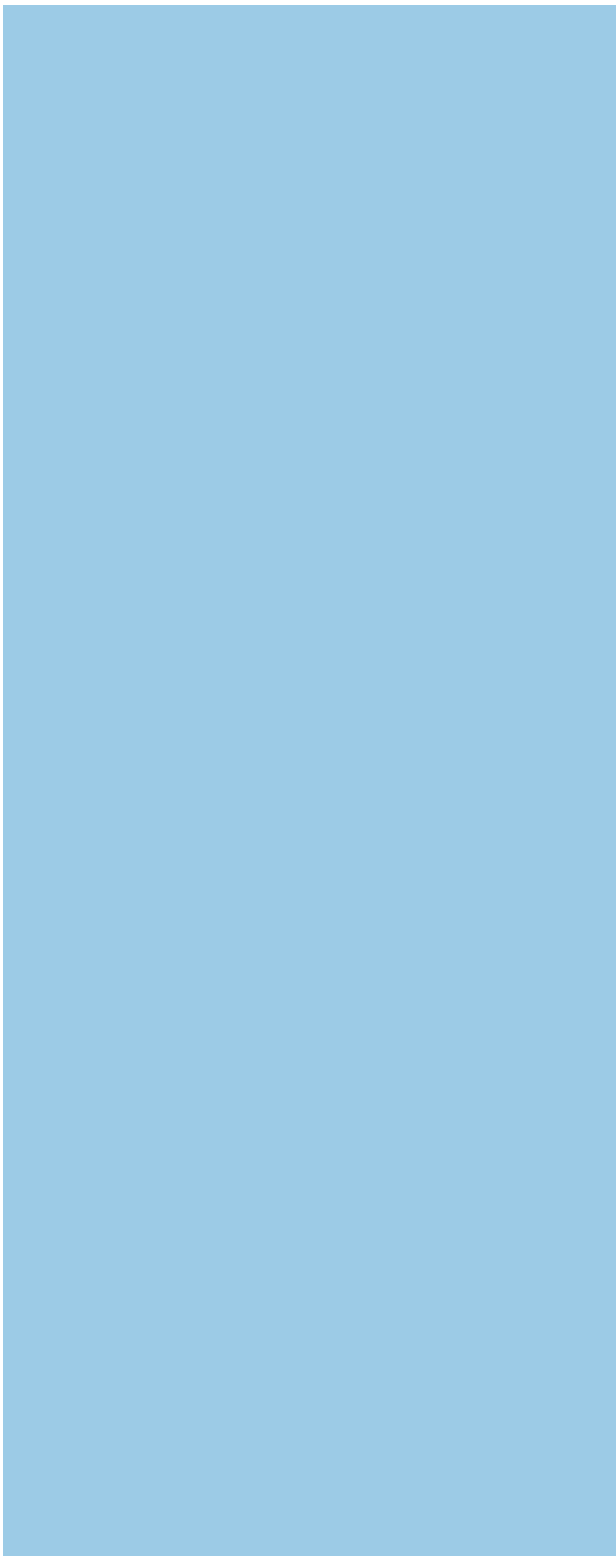
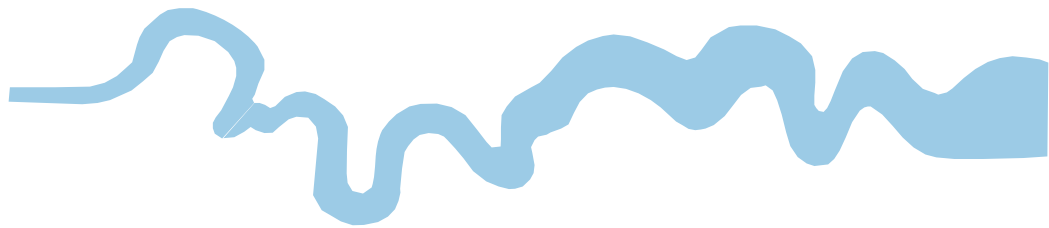
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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