

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Cholsey Village Hall, Station Road,
Cholsey, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Site Code: CSP12/157

(SU 5859 8643)

**Cholsey Village Hall, Station Road,
Cholsey, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Cholsey Parish Council

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSP 12/157

October 2012

Summary

Site name: Cholsey Village Hall, Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5859 8643

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 27th September – 10th October 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Mundin

Site code: CSP 12/157

Summary of results: A modern wall and pit, and undated ditch were observed within the new foundation trenches.

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

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 24.10.12 Steve Preston ✓ 23.10.12 |
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Cholsey Village Hall, Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Report 12/157

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the site of the new Cholsey Village Hall, Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire (SU 5859 8643) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Gray, Chairman of Cholsey Parish Council.

Planning permission (P12/S1468/FUL) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for construction of a new Village Hall, on Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features the planning permission was subject to a condition requiring that a watching brief be maintained during the period of ground works.

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 prepared by him (Oram 2012). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Mundin, Christopher Crabb and Susan Porter between 27th September and 10th October 2012 and the site code is CSP 12/157.

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

Cholsey lies c.3km south-west of Wallingford (Fig. 1). The site is located on the western side of Cholsey, on the western side of Station Road (Fig. 2) and was formerly used as a pavilion but at the time of this watching brief the structure had been demolished. The site lies at a height of c.47m above Ordnance Datum, with the underlying geology recorded as Lower Chalk (BGS 1980). This was observed on site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a detailed brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Oram 2012). In summary, the site lies 200m west of the projected line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Silchester. A variety of Roman coins have been recorded from several locations

close to the site including on the grounds of the site itself, with others from locations to the east. Undated cropmarks visible from the air and a metalled trackway to the north-west may be of Iron Age or Roman date. A Saxon glass bead was also recovered to the west. Recent fieldwork to the east revealed some field boundaries tentatively dated to the later Roman period (Taylor 2011; Muddin 2011) with nearby watching briefs locating further linear features and cut features tentatively dated to the medieval (Bray 2012) and post-medieval periods (Bennett 2007).

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 that were exposed by the groundworks were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by the groundworks.

Results

Before work commenced on the foundation trenches the ground was reduced by at least 0.12m through the rubble of the previous buildings and the base for the swimming pool was backfilled (Fig. 3). The natural geology was not observed at this point. At the western side of the site on the edge of the Tarmac a block drain was investigated, this revealed the natural chalk below a heavily truncated 0.30m dark brown humic subsoil and Tarmac ballast.

The foundation trenches for the new building at the westernmost end of the site were 0.90m wide and 0.70m in depth. The stratigraphy in these footings comprised 0.15m topsoil above 0.15m light yellow grey sandy silt subsoil over light yellow white chalky sand natural geology.

The foundations trenches for the remainder of the new building were 0.90m wide and 0.80m in depth, the stratigraphy comprised 0.35m of made ground and 0.15m light brown grey silty clay with frequent chalk flecks above the natural geology.

At the eastern extent of the southern foundation for the new hall a modern wall 0.70m wide was observed, this may have been a remnant from the previous building or a boundary feature. At the mid point of the southern foundation a modern pit 0.50m in diameter was observed.

An undated ditch (1) was observed within the northern foundation slot of the new hall, this was orientated roughly on the same south-east to north-west line as the new building (Fig. 3). It measured 1.50m in width, and

was excavated to a depth of 0.50m, however the base was not reached. A single fill (51) was visible in the section as a hard light grey silt with moderate chalk flecks (Fig. 4). No finds were recovered.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A single fragment of animal bone was recovered from ditch 1 (51), weighing 14g. The preservation of the piece of bone was generally poor, with much cortical exfoliation of the surface, and a small fragment size. Although the specific animal of origin was not able to be determined, it was a large species (e.g. including horse and cattle). No further information could be derived from this single, poorly preserved fragment of animal bone.

Sieved sample

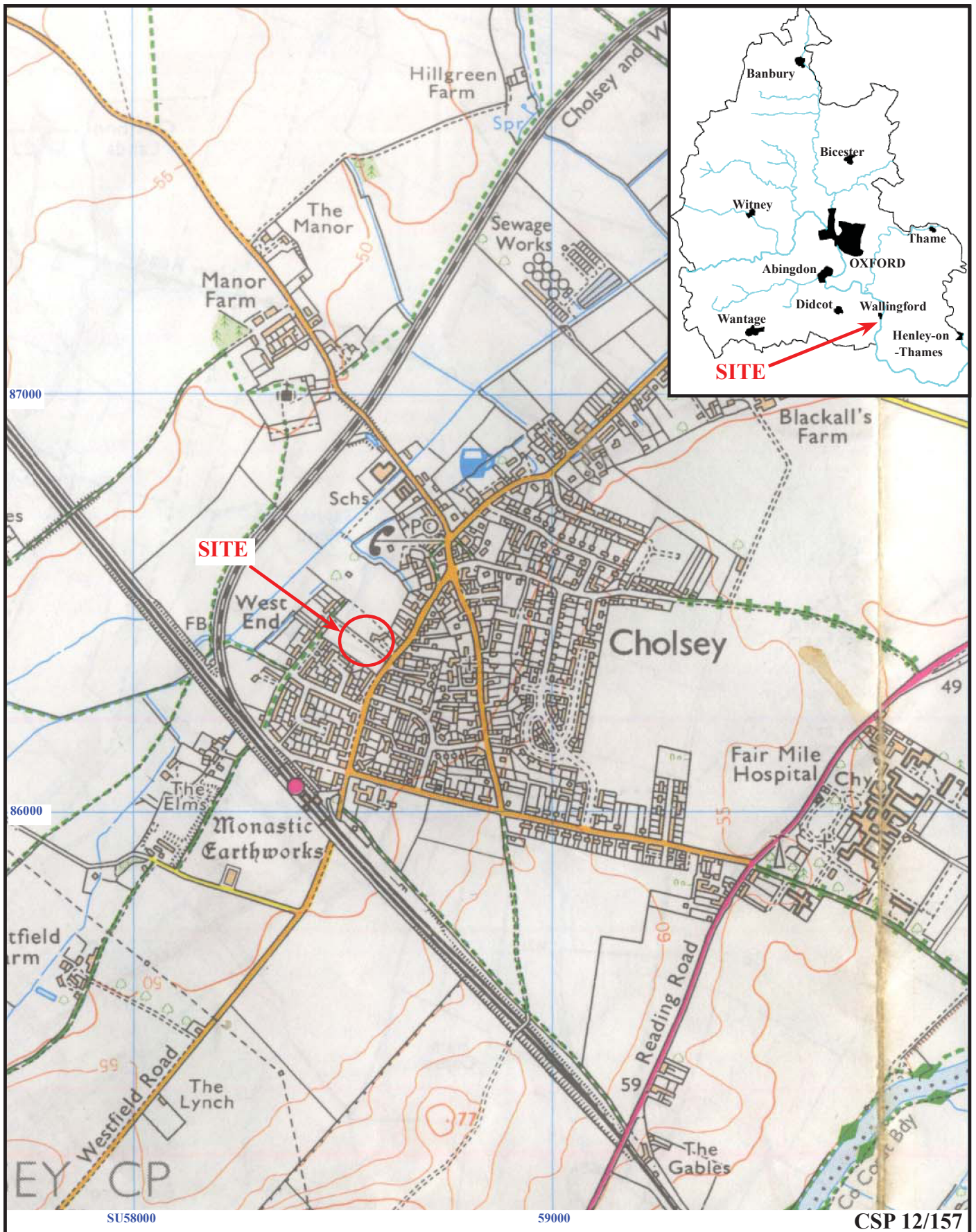
A single sample of 40L was taken from ditch 1(51). to recover any small datable or charred plant remains artefacts. The samples were floated and wet sieved using 5mm and 0.25mm meshes. A few land snails and small flecks of clinker were observed.

Conclusion

A modern wall, modern pit and undated, possibly modern ditch were the only features observed on site during the groundworks. It is likely, due to their location within the heavily truncated ground below the previous building, that they were actually related to the previous structure. No finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

References

- Bennett, N, 2007, 'Land adjacent to Goswells, Honey Lane, Cholsey, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 06/146, Reading
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- Bray, D, 2012, 'Land to the rear of 27 Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 11/102, Reading
- Mundin, A, 2011, 'Station Road Cholsey, Oxfordshire, An archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 10/119b, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2012, 'Cholsey New Village Hall, Station Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire: Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, Oxford
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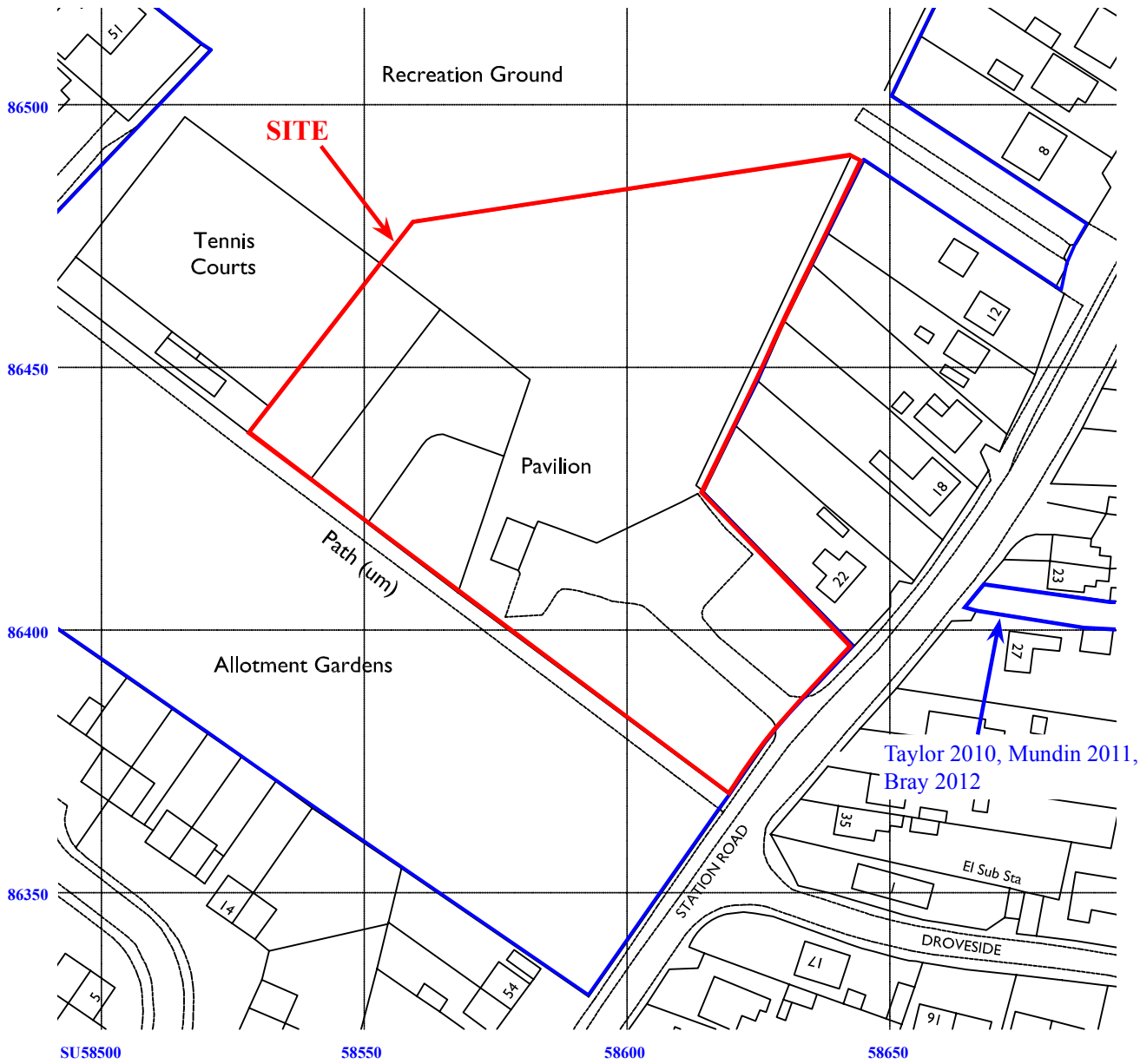
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Figure 1. Location of site within Cholsey and Oxfordshire.

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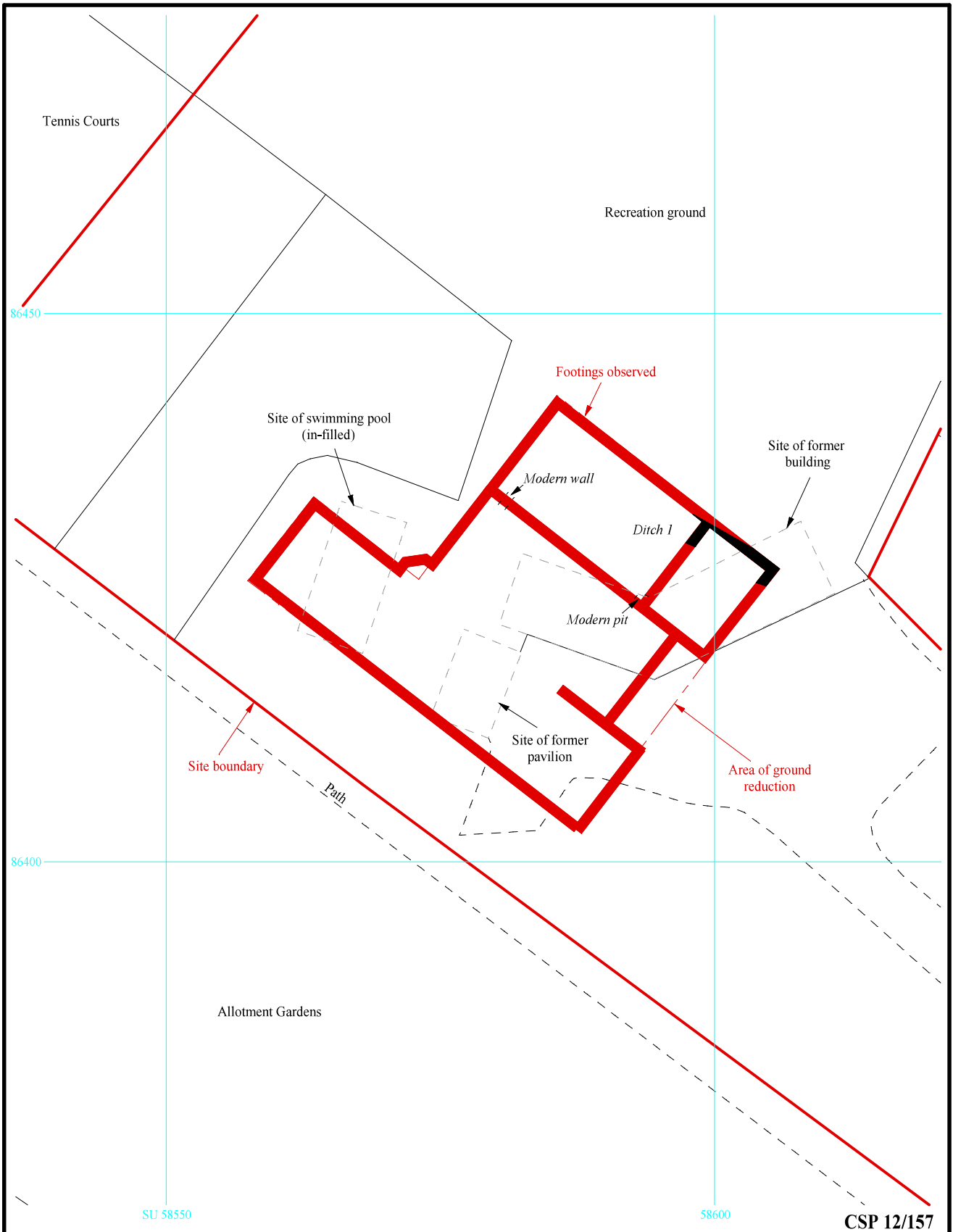


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Station Road.

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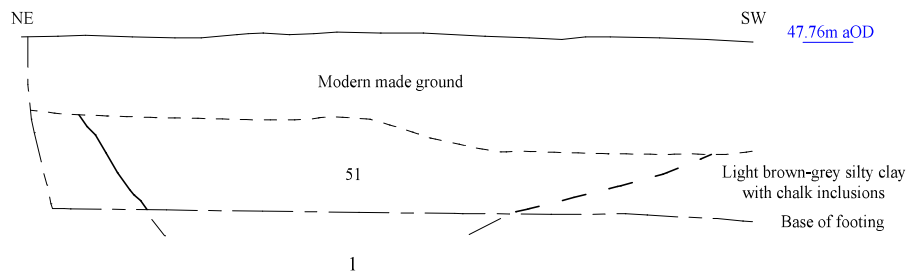


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Figure 3. Plan of site showing areas observed and features recorded.



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Figure 4. Section of ditch 1.



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Plate 1. Turf stripping across the site, looking east.



Plate 2. Undated ditch 1, looking southeast, Scale: 2m.

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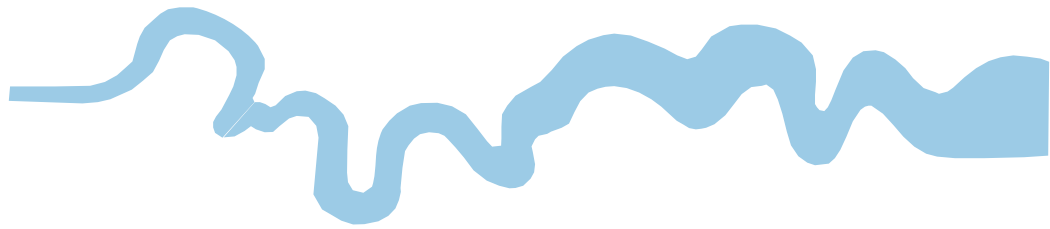
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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