

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way,  
Cutteslowe, Oxford**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by David Platt and Jo Pine**

Site Code: EWO12/111

(SP5060 1026)

**Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way,  
Cutteslowe, Oxford**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Oxford City Council**

by David Platt and Jo Pine  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code EWO12/111

**February 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Cutteslowe, Oxford

**Grid reference:** SP5058 1026

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 14th - 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** David Platt

**Site code:** EWO 12/111

**Area of site:** c. 0.80ha

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features were recorded and the area appears to have been truncated in the recent past. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 26.02.13
	Steve Preston ✓ 26.02.13

# **Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Cutteslowe, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation**

by David Platt and Jo Pine

**Report 12/111b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Oxford (SP5058 1026) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tom Smailes of Kemp and Kemp LLP, Elms Court, Botley, Oxford on behalf of Oxford City Council.

Planning permission is to be sought from Oxford City Council for the construction of new housing on the current carparking part of the site to the west with replacement car parking to be provided to the east. 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 *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt, Aiji Castle and Kyle Beaverstock between the 14th and 15th February 2013 and the site code is EWO12/111. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site currently consists of a large modern building with an annex, large car park and electricity substation. It is accessed off Harefields and backs onto Elsfield Way (Oxford's northern bypass) to the south (Fig. 2). The residential development area covers approximately 0.8ha. The southern part of the site is located on 3rd (Wolvercote) terrace gravels and the north is on Oxford clay (BGS 1982). It is at a height of *c.* 68m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project produced by David Radford, the Oxford Archaeological Officer, drawing on a desk-based assessment (Preston 2012). In summary,

there are no known archaeological sites or finds recorded for the site itself or in immediately adjacent areas but the site lies within an area of generally high archaeological potential with a range of prehistoric, Roman and medieval sites and finds recorded from the wider area (Dodd 2003).

## **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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

It was proposed to dig 5 trenches 20m long and 1.6m wide . The trenches were positioned to target those areas which will be most affected by the proposed residential development. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type backhoe machine. A toothless ditching bucket was to be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. A metal detector was to be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. Stripped areas and a sample of spoilheaps were to be scanned for the retrieval of artefacts. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, these were to be excavated or sampled by hand sufficiently to satisfy the aims of the project.

## **Results**

The five trenches were dug as intended but repositioned slightly due to the presence of buried services (Fig. 3) The trenches ranged from 18.0m to 25m in length and in depth from 0.55m to 0.80m. All trenches were 1.6m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned W–E and was 20.20m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised 0.16m of topsoil, above 0.12m of made ground onto a thin band of Tarmac; 0.04m thick. This in turn sealed 0.20m of hardcore, directly onto the natural geology; a mid yellow grey silty clay which was dug into for 0.28m

to clarify that it was the natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was observed in the trench; however a live service and a modern soakaway were recorded.

#### Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned NW–SE and was 18.20m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised 0.05m of gravel overlying 0.20m of made ground comprising gravel and asphalt. This deposit sealed 0.20m of hardcore onto a dark green grey silty clay, which is likely the natural geology but had been stained by the made ground above. No archaeology was observed in the trench and no artefacts recovered.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

This was aligned ENE–WSW and was 20.0m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised 0.05m of gravel overlying 0.05m of Tarmac. This in turn sealed 0.20m of hardcore /rubble which overlay 0.10m of pea gravel. This sealed the natural geology; a dark grey green silty clay. No archaeology was observed in the trench and no artefacts recovered.

#### Trench 4 ( Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

This was aligned N–S and was 18.00m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised 0.10m of topsoil overlying 0.10m of a mid yellow brown silty sand.. This in turn sealed 0.20m of hardcore comprising Tarmac and brick rubble. This sealed the natural geology- a mid grey yellow silty clay, the first 0.10m of which had been stained by the main ground above. Another 0.10m depth of this was removed to clarify that the correct level had been reached and expose clean natural geology. No archaeology was observed in the trench and no artefacts recovered.

#### Trench 5 (Fig 3)

This was aligned E–W and was 25.00m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised 0.05m of gravel overlying 0.10m of Tarmac. This deposit sealed 0.22m of brick rubble which in turn sealed silty clay natural geology which had been stained blue grey. This was removed to expose a clean yellow silty clay at 0.60m below the present land surface. No archaeology was observed in the trench and no artefacts recovered.

## **Finds**

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation did not reveal any archaeological deposits, indeed the lack of subsoil in all the trench profiles and the fact that made ground sat directly over the natural geology in all the trenches strongly suggests the area had been truncated in the recent past, potentially with the removal of any shallow archaeological features that may have once been present. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

## **References**

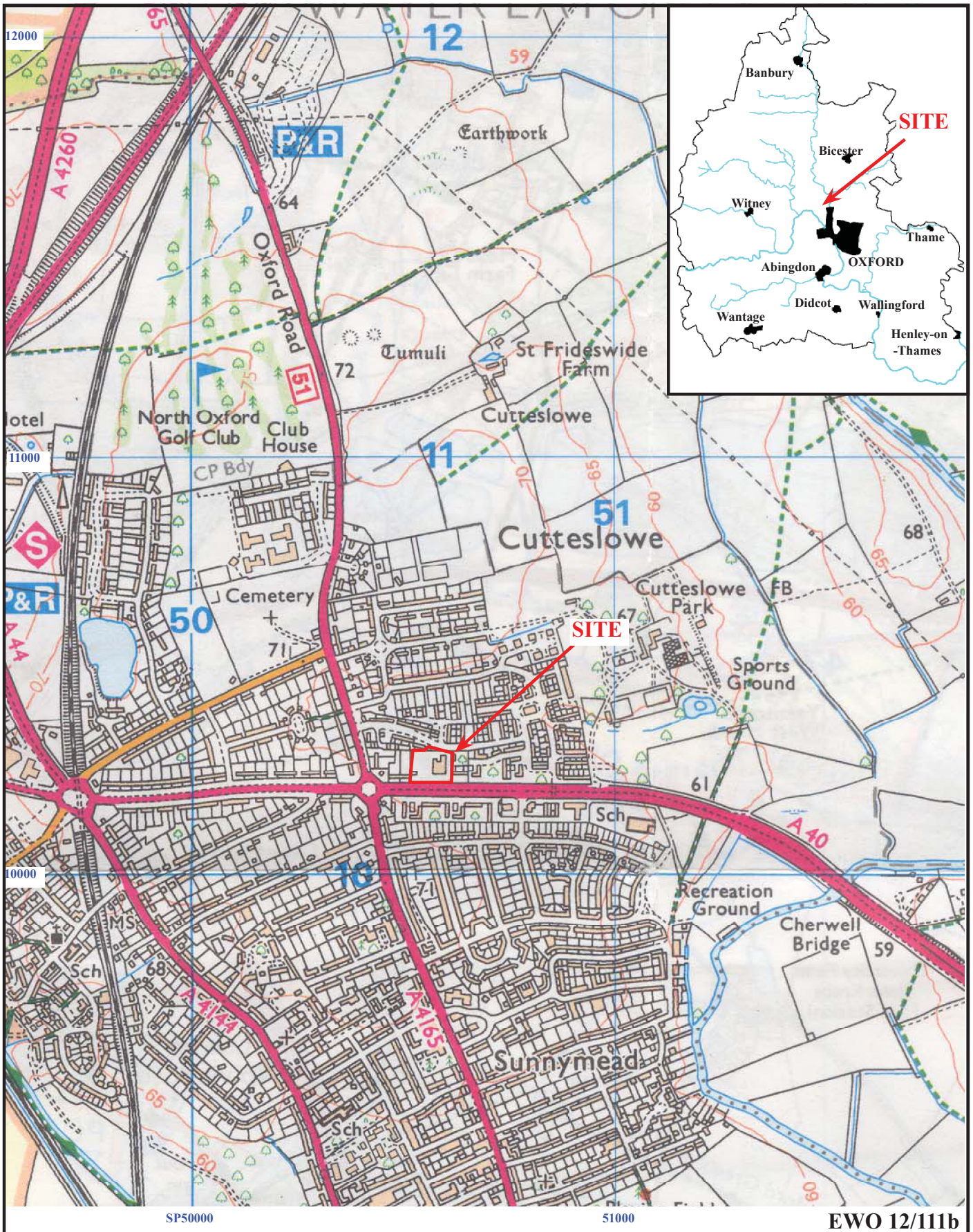
- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 196, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Dodd, A (ed), 2003, *Oxford before the University*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **17**, Oxford
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- OCC 2011, 'Oxford Archaeology Plan, resource assessment', (draft), Oxford City Council, Oxford
- Preston, S 2012, 'Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Cutteslowe, Oxford , an archaeological desk-based heritage assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 12/111, Reading

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at west or south end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.2	1.6	0.80	0–0.16m topsoil, 0.16-0.28 madeground, 0.28-0.32m asphalt, 0.32-0.52m hardcore, 0.52-0.80m mid yellow grey silty clay, 0.80m+ mid yellow brown silty clay natural geology.
2	18.2	1.6	0.66	0–0.05m gravel, 0.05-0.25m asphalt/madeground, 0.25-0.45 hardcore, 0.45-0.60m contaminated silty clay, 0.66m+ mid grey green silty clay natural geology.
3	20.0	1.6	0.55	0–0.05m gravel, 0.05-0.1m asphalt/madeground, 0.1-0.30 hardcore, 0.3-0.40m peagravel, 0.40m+ dark grey green silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
4	18.0	1.6	0.70	0–0.105m topsoil, 0.05-0.20m mid yellow silty sand, 0.20-0.40m asphalt/madeground, 0.40m+ mid grey green silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
5	25.0	1.6	0.60	0–0.05m gravel, 0.05-0.15m asphalt, 0.15-0.37madeground, 0.37-0.50m contaminated silty clay geology, 0.50m+ mid yellow silty clay natural geology.



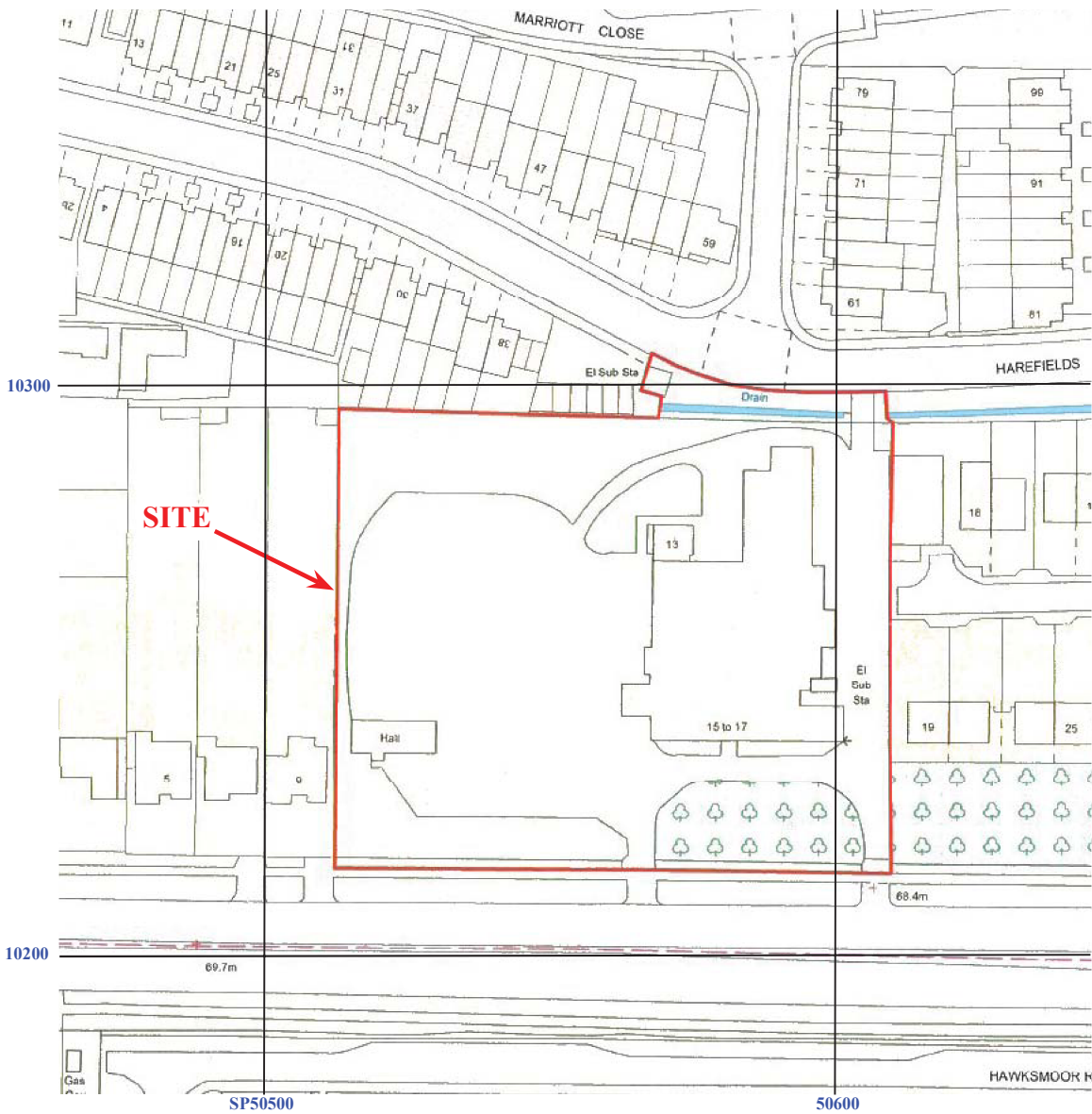


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Figure 1. Location of site within Cutteslowe and Oxfordshire.

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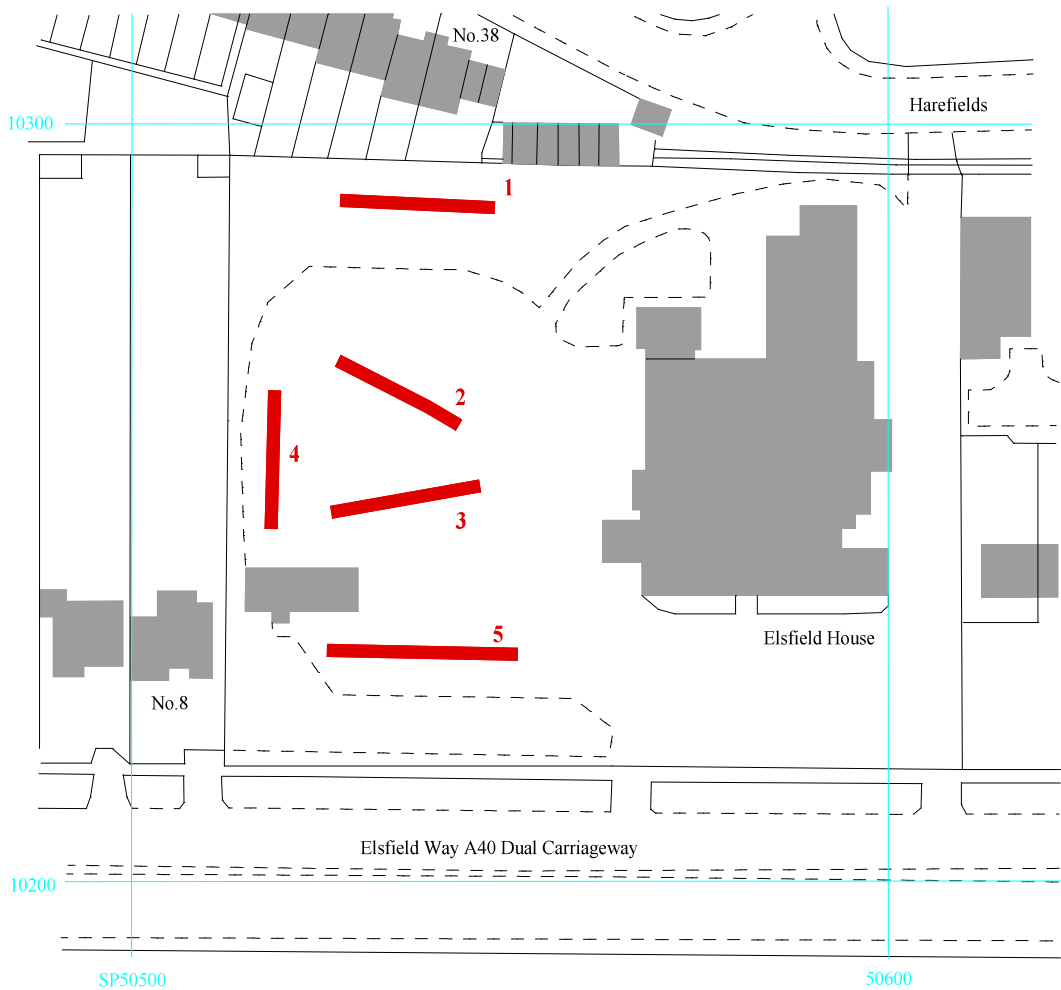
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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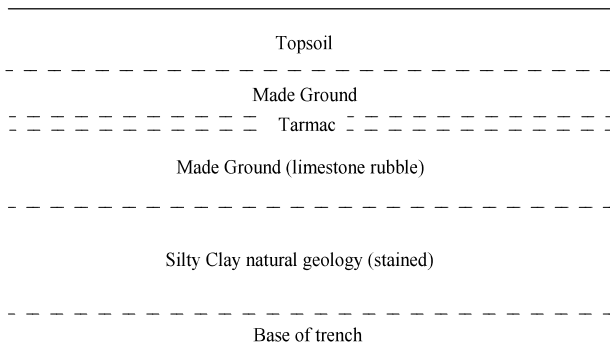
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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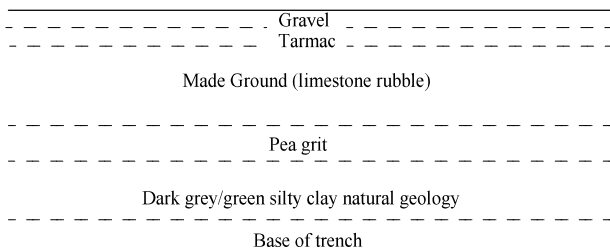
**Trench 1**

67.6m aOD



**Trench 3**

67.8m aOD



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Figure 4. Representative sections





Plate 1. Trench 3, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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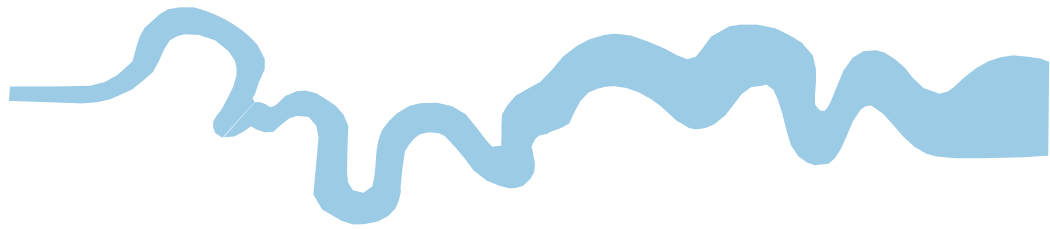
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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