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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Greendown, Pearson Lane,  
Sonning, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Muddin**

**Site Code: GAP12/197**

**(SU 7595 7538)**

# **Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**for Mr David Wrigley**

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GAP12/197

**April 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Greendown, Pearson Lane, Sonning, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7595 7538

**Site activity:** Archaeological watching brief

**Date and duration of project:** 13th March - 16th April 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Muddin

**Site code:** GAP 12/197

**Summary of results:** Two pits, one of medieval date were found in addition to those recorded in a previous evaluation. Residual early Saxon pottery was also recovered.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept it 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✓ 24.04.13 Steve Preston✓ 23.04.13
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# Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

By Andrew Munding

Report 12/197b

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the rear of Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire (SU 7595 7538) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Wrigley of 6 Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire RG4 6XE for Mr David Wrigley, 6 Pound Lane, Sonning, Berkshire, RG4 6XE.

A planning permission time extension (10/0407/EXC), to an earlier consent (07/0690/OUT) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council. This permits the construction of a single detached house and garage. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. As a condition of the permission being granted a programme of archaeological fieldwork is required, as set out in *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010) and the Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) has superseded PPS5.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald the Principal Archaeologist of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Munding between 13th March and 16th April 2013. The site code is GAP12/197. This is the second report regarding this application, as an earlier evaluation took place on the location of the proposed development (Platt 2013). The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the finds and archive in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is within the village of Sonning which is located approximately 5km north-east of Reading and 3km west of Twyford (Fig. 1). The site is at an elevation of approximately 48m above Ordnance Datum and is bordered to the east by Pound Lane and is to the rear of Greendown, which is located on Pearson Road (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is valley gravel (BGS 1946).

## **Archaeological background**

The site lies on the margins of Sonning which was an important administrative and ecclesiastical centre in Saxon and Medieval times. Various fieldwork projects have revealed archaeological deposits within the settlement. To the west is the site of the Bishop's Palace, which dates from as early as the 13th century. These remains were partly excavated during the First World War and revealed a complex of medieval buildings (Brakspear 1916). Other excavations in the grounds of the vicarage to the north-west uncovered deposits of late Saxon and early medieval date (Hull and Hall 2003). Charnel deposits of uncertain date have been recovered at the Bull Inn, again to the north-west of the site (Milbank 2007) with Saxon inhumations nearby. At Old Walls, to the west, medieval boundary features and a pit have been found (Milbank 2006; Taylor 2006). However, a watching brief at the Dower House on the north side of Pearson Road, revealed no archaeological deposits (Lowe 2008). In more general terms, the site lies in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with important prehistoric and Roman remains visible from the air situated to the east of the village (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Slade 1964).

A two-trench evaluation carried out prior to the start of development located two pits; one cutting another, which are probably of Early Medieval date, with residual Roman pottery sherds also found (Platt 2013).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by ground reduction, and to excavate any which would be destroyed by further mechanical excavation. Other intrusive groundworks would be examined if these were outside the main reduction area. This would encompass service trenching and soakaways. It was expected from the previous report that the archaeological horizon would be reached no deeper than 0.6m deep (Platt 2013).

## **Results**

### *Ground reduction*

Ground reduction was carried out in the location of the new house (Fig. 3). This area included the site of a new house and separate garage to the north. The slight slope of the site was taken into account, so the strip was carried out terracing into it at three different levels. The first strip was 0.4m deep from the top of ground level (Pl. 1), and uncovered the top of the natural geology on the western side of the strip. Prior to archaeological observation, 0.2m–0.36m of topsoil had been removed over the entire area. A secondary strip was then carried

out towards the eastern side of the site, where the overburden was slightly deeper. This reached no deeper than 0.56m deep from ground level. This uncovered two features on the northern side of the strip.

Pit 3 was 0.7m in diameter and contained a single fill, a brown clayey sandy silt (56). It was 0.18m deep (Fig. 4). No finds were recovered from its fill. A larger pit was uncovered slightly to the east of Pit 3. Pit 4 was 1.7m in diameter and contained a single fill, which was a brown silty clay (57). It was 0.12m deep (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). Pottery of Early/Middle Saxon and Medieval date was recovered on the northern edge of this deposit.

Once these features were recorded these two areas were further excavated through the natural geological horizon of orangey yellow clayey gravel. This reached to no greater depth of 0.9m in section. No further archaeological material was recovered.

### *Soakaway*

Other than the ground reduction for the house, a soakaway trench was observed being excavated to the top of the natural geology, to the east of the house and garage works. It was 6.5m in length by 3.5m wide. This area has originally been under a topsoil heap and had been reduced from its original ground height of 0.3m. The top of the natural horizon was uncovered at 0.2m deep. No archaeological finds nor features of interest were uncovered at this location.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage from the watching brief comprised 20 sherds with a total weight of 390g, to add to 4 sherds from the evaluation. The following fabric types were noted, and the chronology of the Oxfordshire County type series (Mellor 1994) is used :

**EMS: Early/Middle Saxon Hand-Built Wares**, c. AD450–850. Moderate chaff voids up to 5mm, sparse sub-angular quartz up to 2mm, most 0.5mm or less. 2 sherds, 39g.

**EM1: Fine Medieval Sandy ware**, Late 11th - 14th century? Dense sub-rounded white, grey and clear quartz up to 0.25 mm. Rare sub-angular flint up to 4mm. Early medieval pottery types similar to this are found along a considerable length of the middle Thames Valley and its hinterland, and the problem of differentiating between the numerous different wares has been noted (Mellor 1994, 84). 16 sherds, 309g.

**EM2: Coarse Medieval Sandy ware**, Late 11th - 14th century? As EM1, with larger sand grains up to 1mm. 1 sherd, 27g.

**GRE: Red Earthenware**, 16th – 19th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century (Brears 1969). 1 sherd, 15g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of pottery types is typical of sites in the region. All the sherds of EM1 were from the upper body of a single vessel, a jar with an upright rim form typical of the tradition. The single sherd of EM2 was from a bowl.

## Conclusions

Further to the features found in the evaluation, along with Medieval and Roman pottery, more Medieval pottery was uncovered from Pit 4 along with residual Saxon pottery. These pits as recorded are probably are not representative of their true original depth, as later landscaping of the garden, especially the slope that had been reduced for the site, may have removed the upper parts of these features.

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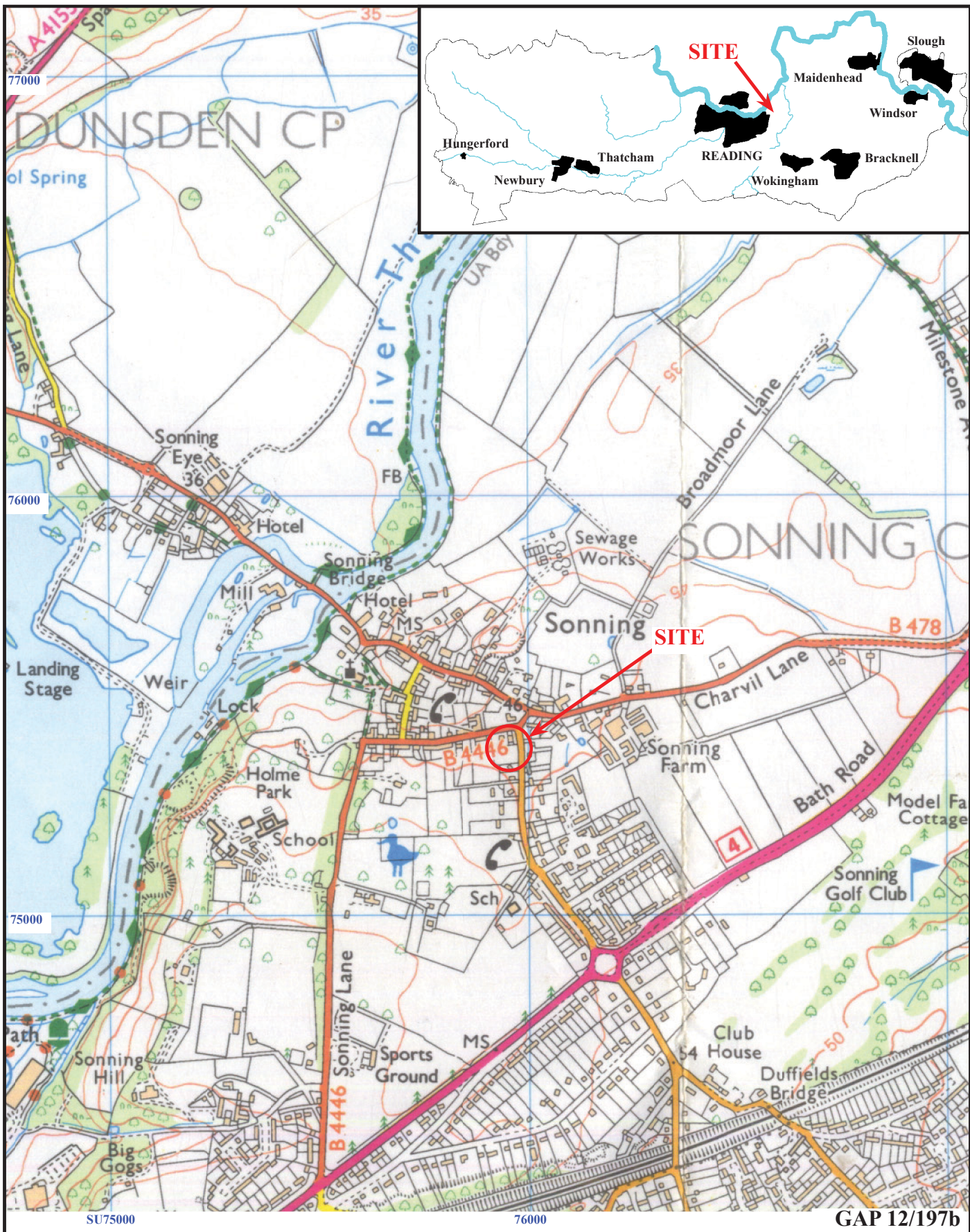
**APPENDIX 1:** Catalogue of features (evaluation and watching brief combined).

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	52	Pit	Medieval	Pottery, tile
2	53 and 54	Pit	Medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
	55	Subsoil	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy, pottery
3	56	Pit	Undated	
4	57	Pit	11th–14th century AD	Pottery



**APPENDIX 2:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type (evaluation and watching brief combined)

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Rom</i>		<i>E/MS</i>		<i>EM1</i>		<i>EM2</i>		<i>M40</i>		<i>GRE</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1	52	2	5	-	-	-	-	1	6	1	9	-	-
	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	15
4	57	-	-	2	39	16	309	1	27	-	-	-	-
	Total			2	39	16	309	1	27	-	-	1	15



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Figure 1. Location of site within Sonning and Berkshire.

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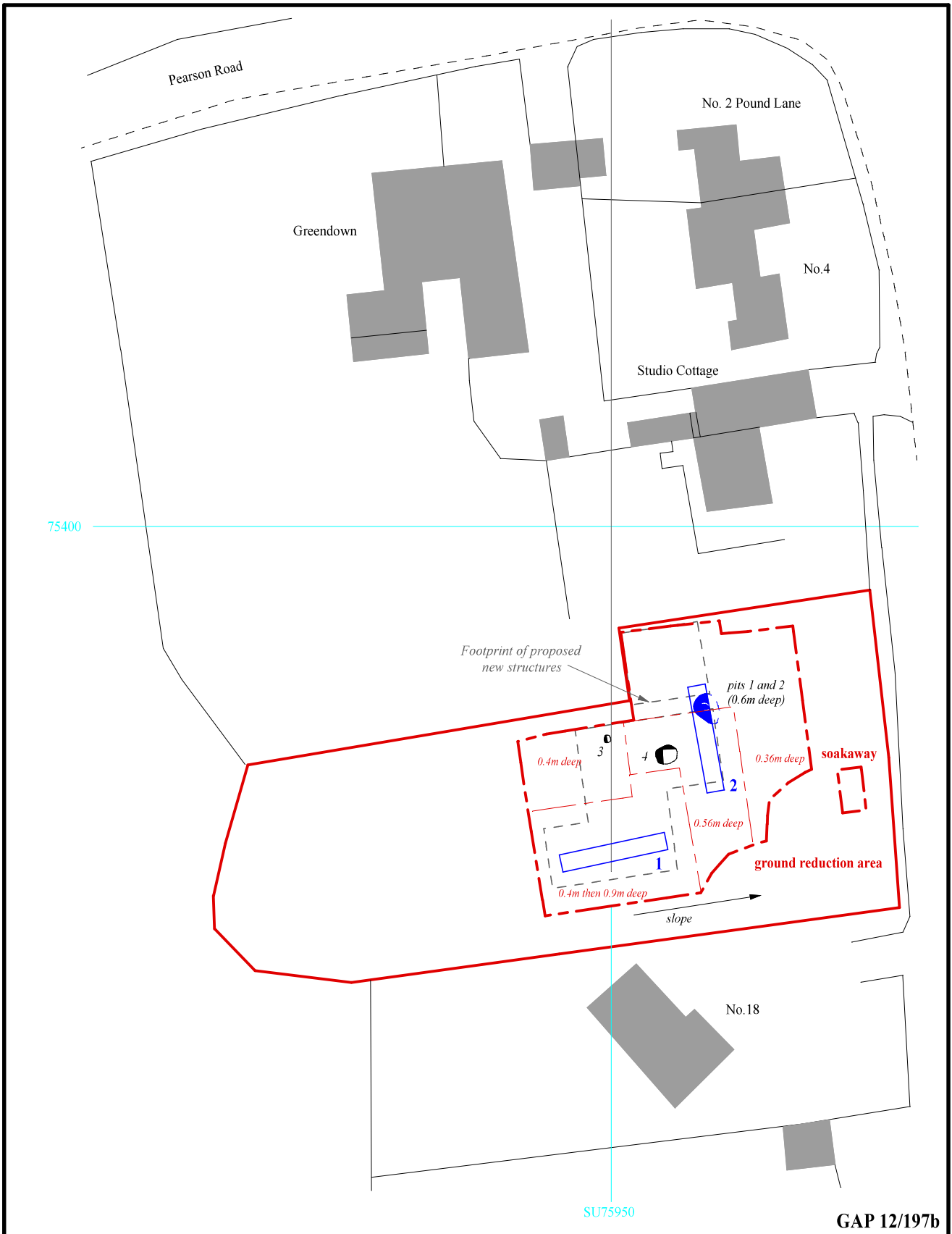


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Pearson Road.

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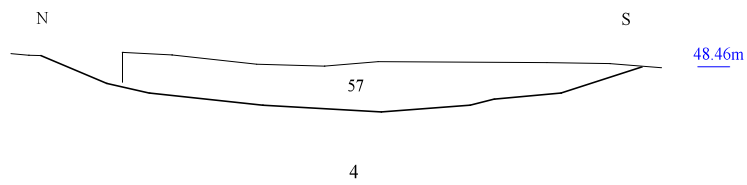
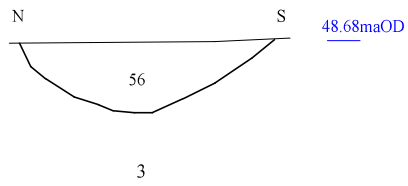


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Figure 3. Location of areas observed.



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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Looking over reduction at depth of 0.4m, looking west, Scales: 1m.



Plate 2. Pit 4, looking east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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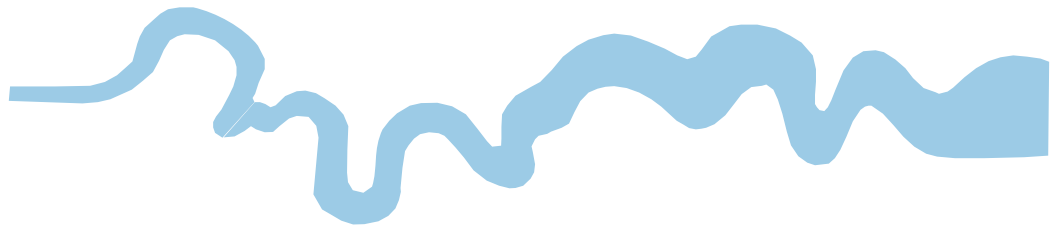
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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