

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane,  
Yarnton, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Genni Elliott**

**Site Code: GLY 13/116**

**(SP 4845 1233)**

# **Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Yarnton Parish Council**

by Genni Elliott

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GLY 13/116

**August 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 4845 1233

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 23rd–24th July 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Genni Elliott

**Site code:** GLY 13/116

**Area of site:** c. 270 sq m

**Summary of results:** Nothing of archaeological significance was found. Natural geology was encountered in all the trenches.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire 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 ✓ 27.08.13 Steve Preston ✓ 14.08.13
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# Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Report 13/116

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4845 1233) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Maya Ellis of Maya Ellis Design Limited, 13 Gravel Pits Lane, Yarnton, Oxon, OX5 1PX on behalf of Yarnton Parish Council.

Planning permission (10/01568/F) has been granted from Cherwell District Council for the construction of a new sports pavilion subject to two conditions (4 and 5) which require a staged programme of archaeological mitigation; in this instance this was determined to require an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during the period of groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and Cherwell District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service and based on a brief provided by him (Oram 2013).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank and Genni Elliott between 23rd and 24th July 2013. The site code is GLY 13/116.

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

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the northwest of Oxford and to the east of Yarnton Village, on the north-west side of Yarnton Lane, immediately adjacent to the railway line (Fig. 2). The site is currently used as a playing field with a pavilion in the south-west corner which has been demolished to allow the construction of a new pavilion. The land is fairly level at approximately 61m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology of the site is recorded as alluvium (BGS 1982). The natural geology encountered consisted of mid orangey brown, sandy clay containing increasing amounts of gravel with depth.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2013). In summary the site lies within an area of considerable archaeological interest. To the south, extensive excavations in advance of mineral extraction have revealed complex multi-period archaeological deposits (Hey 2004). For the environs of the site to both the south and north cropmarks visible from the air have revealed elements of field systems and enclosures possibly of prehistoric or Roman date. Roman occupation was also recorded to the north during quarrying in the early part of the 20th century. Evaluation of the site itself possibly revealed the presence of a pit of Bronze Age or Iron Age date (Gilbert 2006).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks and included observation of geo-technical investigations and the excavation of foundations (Fig. 3). A geotechnical test pit was located in the centre of the former pavilion and measured 1.60m by 1.10m by 1.06m deep. The foundation trenches were located around the edge of and within the area of the former pavilion (Pl. 1). They were 0.60m wide by up to 1.20m deep.

## **Results**

Work external to the former pavilion revealed 0.50m of topsoil consisting of loose, pale brown sandy clay, including grass and abundant roots. Below the topsoil was 0.50m of subsoil consisting of dark yellowish brown, sandy clay which in turn was above the natural geology which was orangey brown, sandy clay (Pl. 2). At a depth of 1.20m the soil contained substantial amounts of gravel.

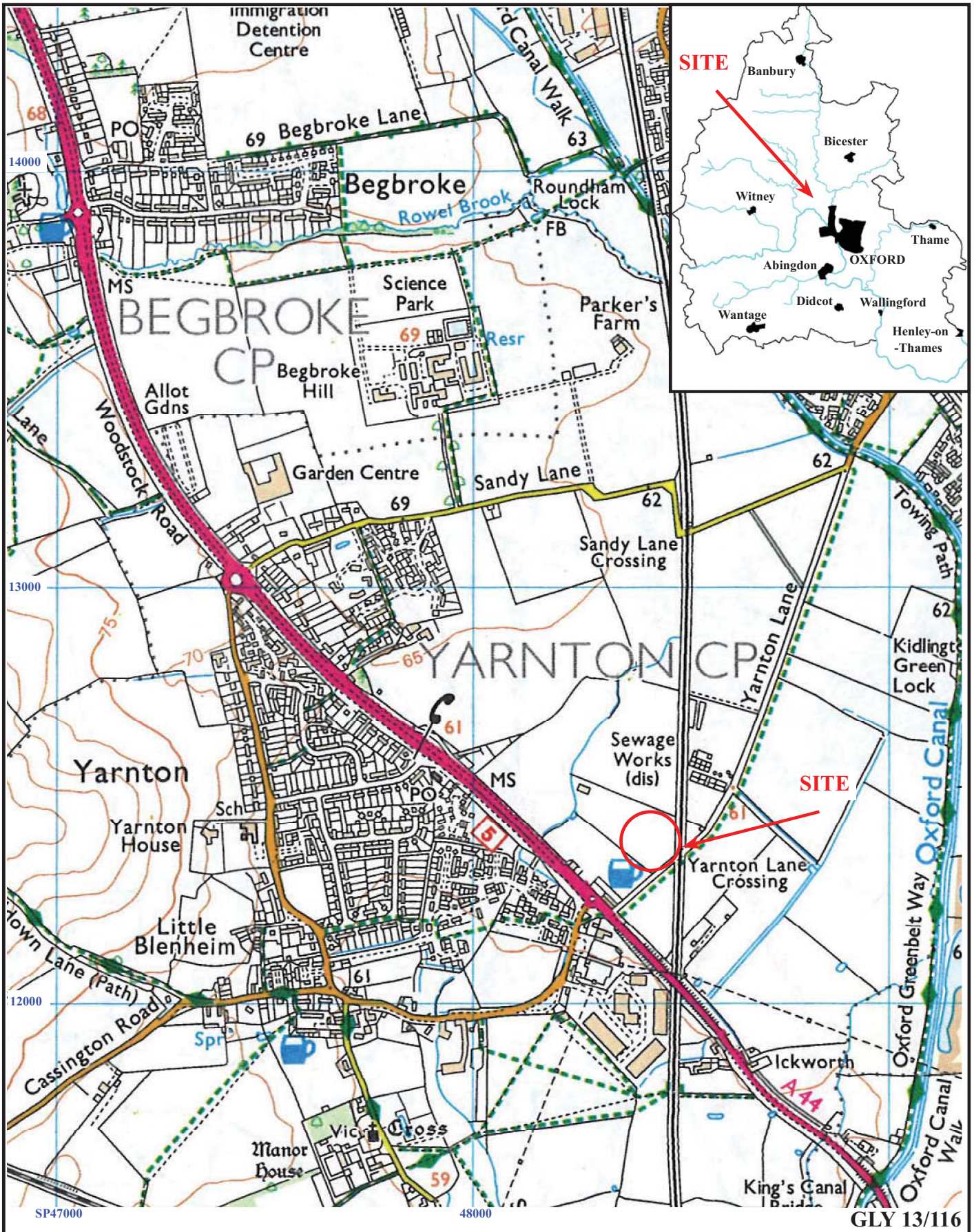
Within the former pavilion area the current ground level was lower; the topsoil having previously been removed and replaced by 0.36m of stone hardcore. Both the test pit and the foundation trenches revealed the same stratigraphy (Fig. 4). Below the hardcore was the same subsoil and natural geology as that found outside the former pavilion. The gravel layer was encountered 1.06m below the ground surface. The foundation along the west side ran along the line of the former pavilion and encountered only stone hardcore and the foundations of the pavilion.

## **Conclusion**

Nothing of archaeological potential was encountered. Natural geology was found approximately 1m below the current ground level external to the former pavilion and 0.52m below the ground level within the former pavilion.

## **References**

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 236, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Gilbert, D, 2006, 'An archaeological evaluation of Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire', John Moore Heritage Services, Beckley
- Hey, G, 2004, *Yarnton: Iron Age and Roman Settlement and Landscape*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **20**, Oxford
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2013, *Little Marsh Playing Field, Yarnton Lane, Yarnton, Oxfordshire, Design brief for archaeological watching brief*, Reading

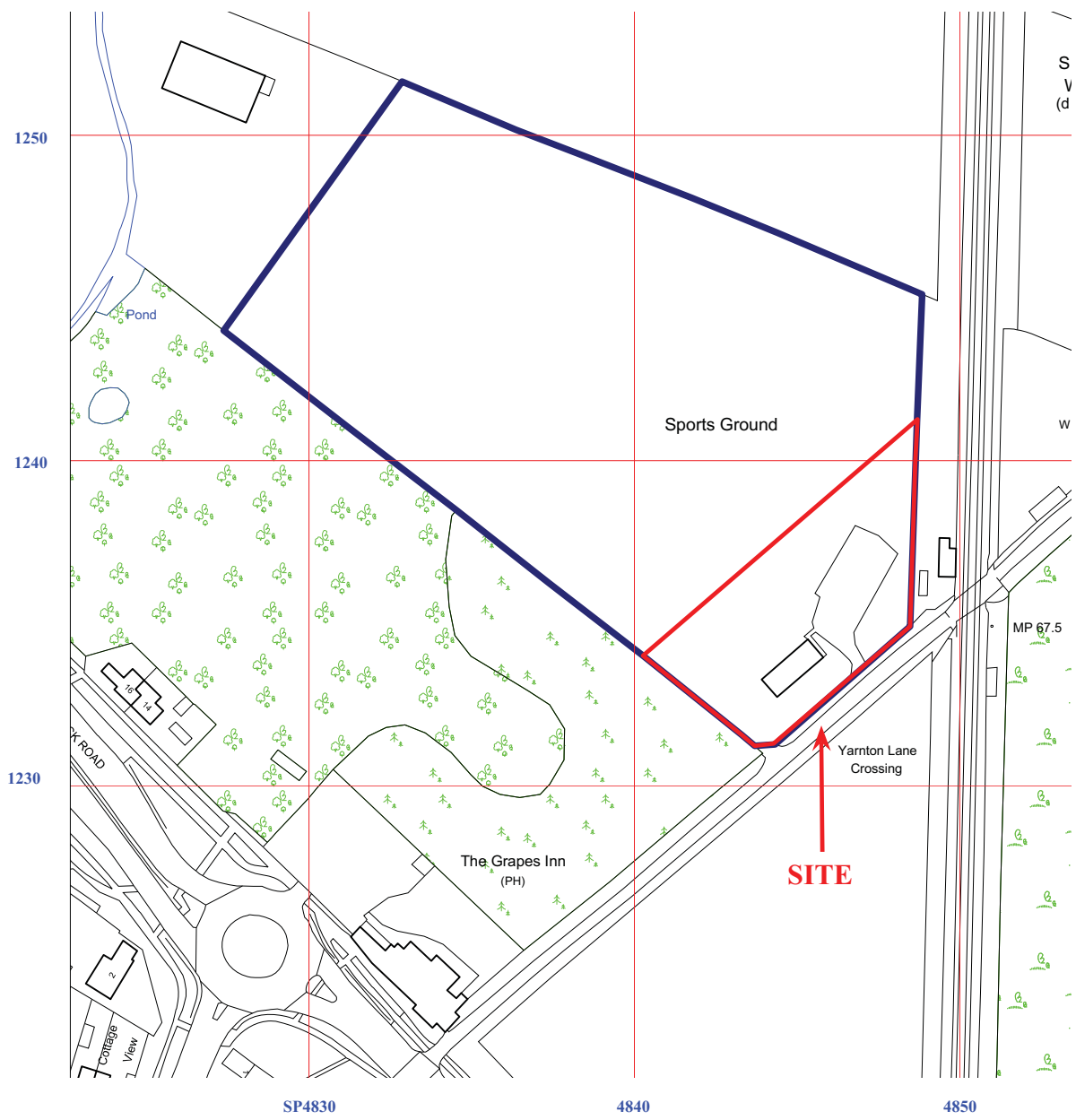


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Figure 1. Location of site within Yarnton and Oxfordshire

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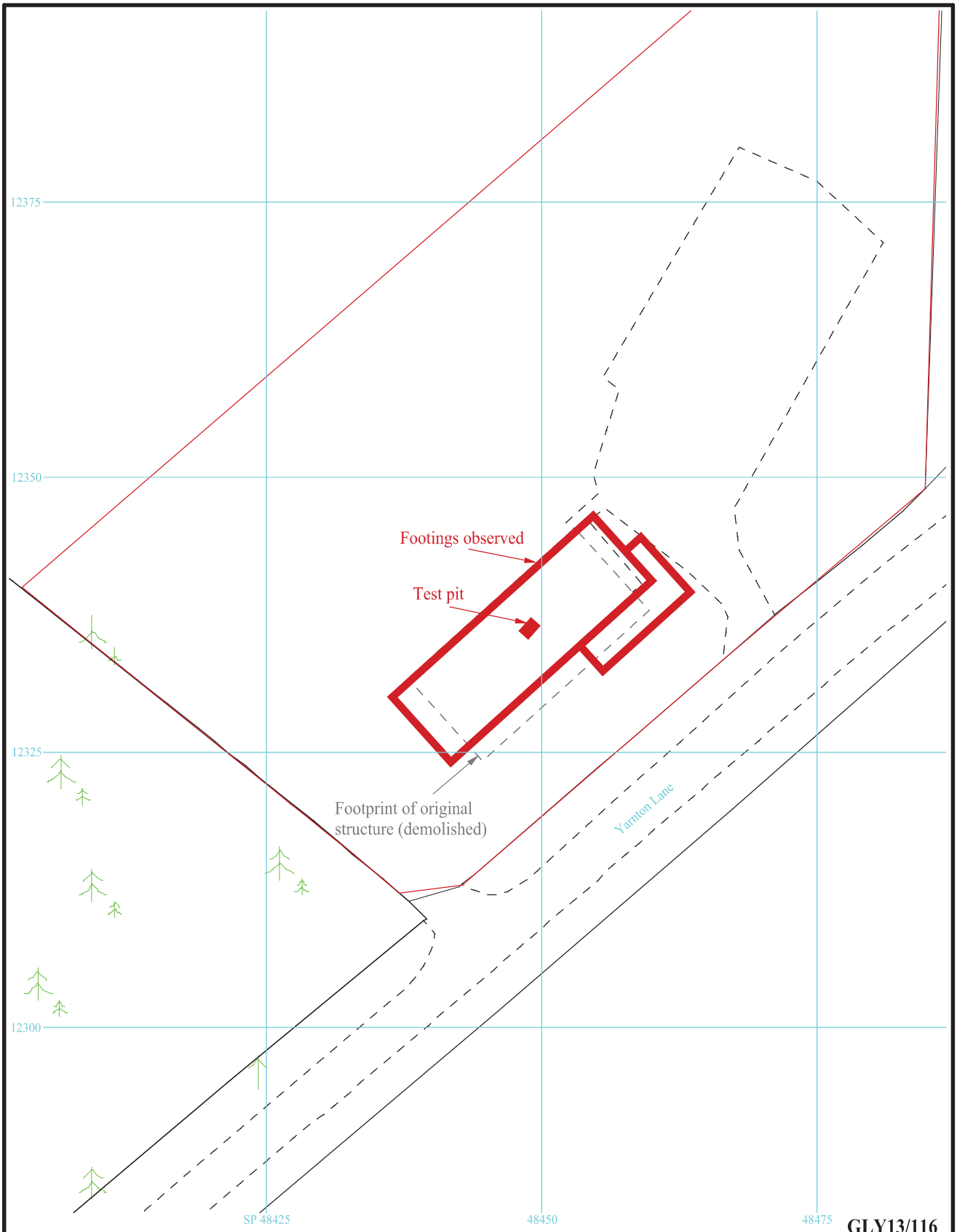


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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Yarnton Lane.

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Figure 3. Site layout.



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SE \_\_\_\_\_ NW 60.1m aOD

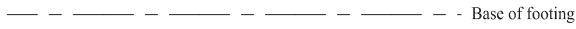
Topsoil



Dark yellow-brown sandy clay subsoil



Brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. The site, looking southwest.



Plate 2. A typical section, looking northwest, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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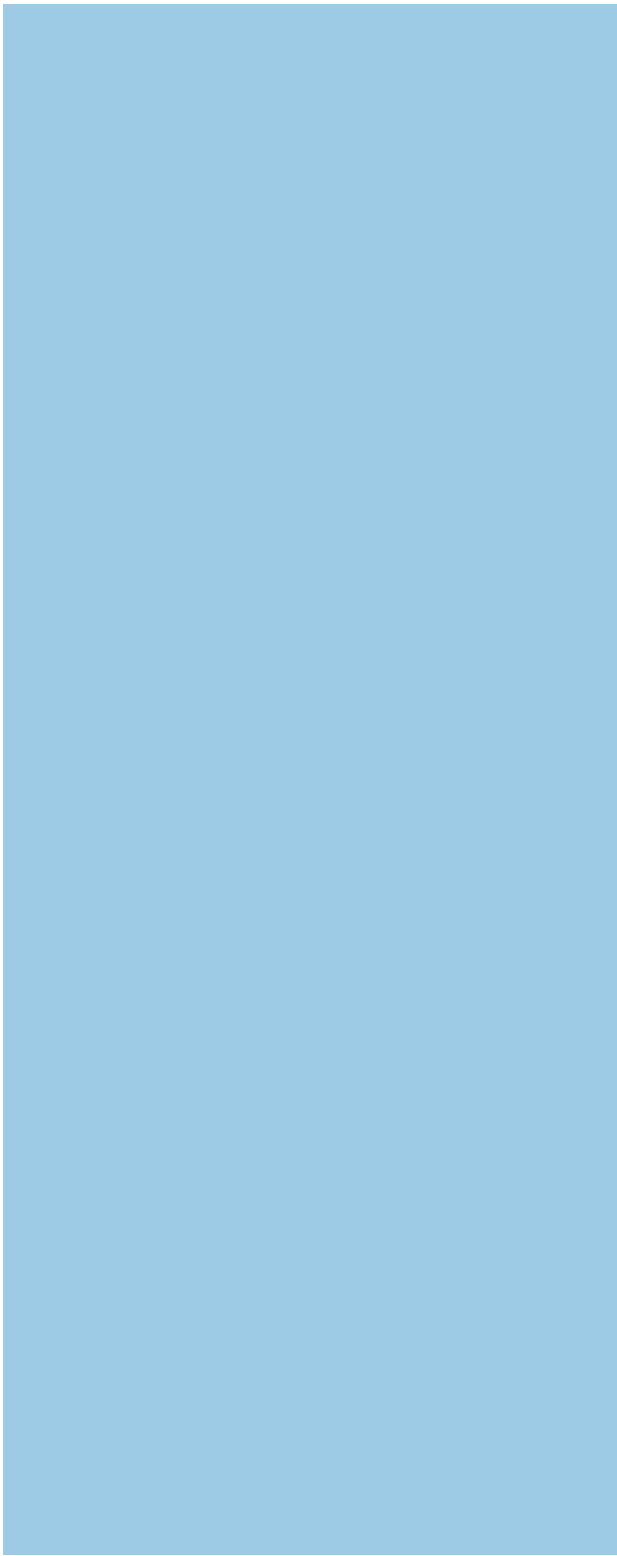
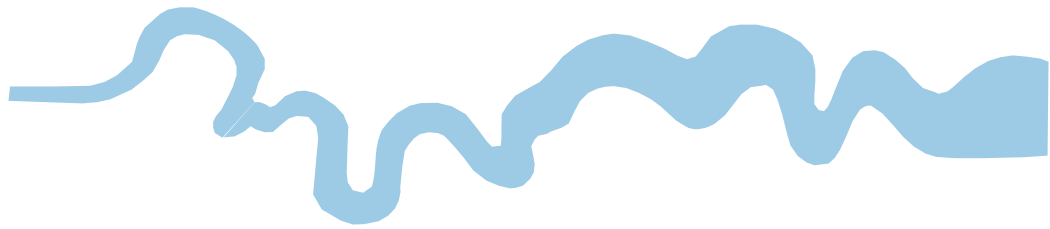
Plates 1 - 2.

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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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