

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**17 Mill Street, Eynsham,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Tim Dawson and Joanna Pine

Site Code: 17MSE13/125

(SP 4320 0940)

**17 Mill Street, Eynsham,
Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Bellwood Homes**

by Tim Dawson and Jo Pine
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 17MSE13/125

October 2013

Summary

Site name: 17 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 4320 0940

Site activity: Archaeological evaluation

Date and duration of project: 3rd- 7th October 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: 17MSE 13/125

Area of site: c.0.25ha

Summary of results: A number of medieval features (ditches, pits and postholes) were recorded. An early post-medieval stone lined drain, a later post-medieval well and various more recent features were also noted.

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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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 23.10.13 Steve Preston ✓ 21.10.13

17 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Tim Dawson and Jo Pine

Report 13/125

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 17 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire (SP 4322 0941) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Keith Hawtree of Bellwood Homes, PO Box 1384, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 9AZ.

Planning permission (12/0458/P/FP) has been gained from West Oxfordshire District Council for residential development comprising the construction of nine new houses and conversion of an existing barn to residential use. The consent is subject to two conditions (7 and 8) relating to archaeology. The results of a field evaluation have been requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and, if so, to produce information to draw up a scheme 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 District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Acting County Archaeological Officer at Oxfordshire County Council and based on a brief supplied by him (Coddington 2013). The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, Lizzi Lewins and Jo Pine between 3rd and 7th October 2013 and the site code is 17MSE13/125. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museums Service.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the western side of Mill Street, immediately to the north-west of the centre of the village of Eynsham (Fig. 1). Eynsham lies to the north-west of Oxford, close to the confluence of the River Evenlode and the River Thames. The area around the site is currently mostly residential with shops along Mill Street itself and the High Street to the south (Fig. 2). The site lies at a height of approximately 68m above Ordnance Datum, and the underlying geology is recorded as 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits (BGS 1982) which was observed in all four trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in the brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2013). In summary the site lies within the historic medieval core of Eynsham. Eynsham has Saxon origins and is documented as a ‘town’ in AD571 after the battle of Bedcanford (Munby *et al.* 1975). It is also mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2012) and became a prosperous town in medieval times (Munby *et al.* 1975). Map evidence suggests that the site lies within an area of burgrave plots. The site also lies in the archaeologically rich Upper Thames Valley with much Roman and prehistoric activity in the general area (Lambrick *et al.* 2009). Despite this high level of archaeological potential, field evaluation undertaken at 13-15 Mill Street, directly to the south of number 17, found nothing except an isolated undated pit and a water channel or pond in-filled during the post-medieval period (Porter 2013).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features are present on the site; and
- to determine if there are later prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval deposits present on the site.

Four trenches, each intended to be 15m long and 1.6m wide, targeting the footprints of the proposed new houses, were to be dug by a JCB -type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket in the positions as indicated on Figure 3. This was to be supervised at all times by an archaeologist with the spoil removed being monitored for finds. All potential archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

Results

All four trenches were dug in their intended positions although Trench 3 was shortened by 5m at its northern end due to the presence of a live surface water drain which services the houses to the west. The trenches ranged in length from 10.5m (Trench 3) to 16.6m (Trench 4) and in depth from 1.90m (Trench 1 test pit) to 0.51m (Trench 4). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5, Pls 1-3)

Trench 1 was aligned west-east and was 15m long and 0.94m deep with a 1.20m deep test pit at its eastern end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of concrete, over 0.28m of made ground overlying 0.45m of buried soil (53). This in turn sealed the red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. The trench was disturbed by a modern brick-lined tank at its western end but archaeological features survived in the remaining part of the trench.

At the far west below a modern concrete footing was a stone lined drain (57) in construction cut [5] (Pl. 3). This was a substantial structure aligned NE-SW and from the clay material (54) sealing the stone was recovered a residual medieval pottery sherd together with two post-medieval sherds, a brick, an iron nail, and bottle glass. This structure cut an earlier pit [1] which was undated but is post-medieval or earlier. This was 0.75m by 0.32m and 0.35m deep and contained a sandy silt fill (50).

Just to the west of the stone lined drain was a small shallow undated pit [4], 0.48m in diameter and 0.17m deep, which contained a sandy clay fill (58). Pit 2 was not seen fully in plan but was 1.12m by 1.10m and 0.49m deep with undercutting sides and a flat base (Pl. 2). From its clayey silt fill (51) was recovered one residual sherd of Roman pottery, 63 sherds of early medieval pottery, an iron nail, a fragment of mortar, tile fragments and animal bone. This feature truncated a shallow gully [3]. This was aligned approximately north-south; was 0.41m wide and 0.05m deep. Its sandy silt fill (52) contained two sherds of medieval pottery, a fragment of glass (intrusive?) and tiny fragments of ceramic building material (CBM). Protruding from the northern edge of the trench was another pit [6]. This was at least 1.80m east-west and 0.38m was exposed north-south. It was cleaned and photographed and five sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from its dark black brown upper fill (59). Two possible other features were recorded in the trench: posthole [8] and possible pit [7].

Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5; Pl. 4)

Trench 2 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 14.2m long and 0.92m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of concrete, 0.28m of made ground and 0.35m of buried soil (66) overlying the red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. At the south-east end of the trench was a linear feature [9] aligned approximately NW-SE. It had steep sides, was 0.52m wide and 0.56m deep. Its northern end was truncated by cut 13 for a stone lined well. Its mottled sand and clay fill (62) contained a lump of slag and CBM fragments including a post-medieval glazed brick. It truncated a small pit [10], which was 0.28m by 0.96m and 0.61m deep. This contained a mid brownish grey sandy silt fill (63) which contained charcoal but no other finds. A small posthole [12] was recorded close by: this was 0.29m by 0.25m and 0.18m deep. No finds were recovered from its mid brown grey sandy silt fill

(69). Two other possible postholes [18 and 19] were noted at this end of the trench truncating the natural geology.

In the centre of the trench was a large clay filled (68) construction cut [13] for a probable late post-medieval stone-lined well (67). The construction cut [13] was seen truncating the buried soil deposit (66) and the well was backfilled with slates and the occasional brick fragment. At the north-western of the trench was an ephemeral feature 14/15 which on reflection is likely a tree-hole rather than of archaeological origin.

Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 5)

Trench 3 was aligned NE-SW and was 10.5m long and 0.94m deep. A concrete footing was in the southern part of the trench. In the remainder of the trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of concrete overlying 0.12m of made ground. This material sealed 0.54m of buried soil (65), containing two iron nails and a lump of concrete; this in turn overlay the red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. At the south-east end of the trench was a linear feature [11] aligned approximately N-S. It had steep sides and a rounded base and although the slot showed it was only 0.15m deep, examination of the trench sides showed it was at least another 0.10m deep. Its mid grey brown sandy silt fill (64) contained a sherd of medieval pottery. This ditch appeared to truncate another feature (20) which was partially exposed in the trench. At the far northern end of the trench was another possible feature [21].

Trench 4 (Figs 4, 5 and 6)

Trench 4 was aligned NNW-SSE and was 16.6m long and 0.98m deep at south end rising to 0.51m at the north end. The stratigraphy of the trench at the south end consisted of 0.2m of concrete overlying 0.20m of a made ground/levelling layer consisting of sand. This material sealed a layer (73); this was a mid grey brown silt which contained stone blocks and brick fragments. This in turn overlay the red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. Below this material (73) was an undated ditch [16] aligned approximately N-S. It was 0.80m wide and 0.39m deep had steep sides and a rounded base and contained a mid grey brown sandy silt fill (72). This is on the same alignment as ditch [11] in trench 3 and may be the same feature. Partially exposed in the trench, just to the west of the ditch, was a probable pit [17]. This too was sealed by layer 73, was 1.98m N-S, 0.29m was exposed E-W and was 0.61m deep. It was filled with two fills (74 and 75) but no finds were recovered.

From c.5m to the northern end of the trench the stratigraphy was 0.18m of concrete overlying 0.27m of made ground which in turn sealed the red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. The trench was disturbed by two modern services, which truncated a possible modern feature [23] in which brick fragments were noted (not

retained) Another possible pit [22] was revealed in the trench, red brick or tile fragments were noted (not retained) and two other possible features [24 and 25]. These latter two features appeared to be filled with a grey clay and thus may be geological.

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 79 sherds with a total weight of 789g. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975–1350. 32 sherds, 294g.
OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 9 sherds, 75g.
OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075–1350. 18 sherds, 109g.
OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200–1600. 11 sherds, 98g.
OXBB: Minety-type ware, early 13th–16th century. 6 sherds, 36g.
OXCL: Cistercian ware, 1475-1700. 1 sherd, 7g.
OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550 onwards. 1 sherd, 168g.
Roman: Roman greyware. 1 sherd, 2g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

The bulk of the assemblage dates from around the mid-11th to the 13th/14th century, and suggests that the site was largely abandoned at the end of that period. Most of the assemblage is in good condition, and appears reliably stratified. It consists of a typical mixture of unglazed jars and glazed jugs.

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

Brick and tile fragments were recovered from five contexts during the evaluation. In total, 16 fragments, weighing 1518g were present (Appendix 4), the majority of which were small fragments which could not be identified. The fabric was examined under x10 magnification.

Contexts 51 and 52 contained very small fragments, with the fabric from 51 consisting of a friable, slightly soft sandy fabric. From deposit 52, two small pieces were recovered of a hard, evenly-fired fabric with sandy inclusions. Drain 5 (54) contained three further pieces which could not be closely dated but are likely to be medieval or post-medieval. It also contained part of a brick which is vitrified on four sides, and is a hard sandy fabric with a occasional groggy inclusions and a orange colour with reduced grey core. It measures 100mm wide and 55mm thick, and has a fairly even form with sharp arrises, and is of likely 16th to 18th century date based on form and fabric.

Deposit 62 (cut 9) contained 10 fragments including two examples of brick pieces with vitrification on three sides. The fabric of both is a hard, evenly-fired sandy clay with groggy inclusions and very occasional small ferrous inclusions. The pieces are not sufficiently complete for the brick dimensions to be recorded, however the fabric and vitrification suggest that they are of late medieval or early post-medieval date.

A piece of tile was recovered from deposit 65. This is 16mm thick and is a hard sandy fabric with occasional groggy inclusions, and is a red colour with a dark grey core indicating reducing conditions during firing. It is broadly dateable to the medieval (or very early post-medieval) period.

The brick and tile assemblage derived from the site is modest and illustrates the durable nature of ceramic building material, and is broadly medieval or early post-medieval date.

Industrial debris by Steve Crabb

A single piece of slag was recovered from ditch 9 (62) weighing 30g. It is dark grey to purple in colour and is dense with small to moderate sized occasionally frequent porosity. It is undiagnostic post blast furnace iron working slag.

Glass by Steve Crabb

Two pieces of glass were recovered. A small flat fragment of clear glass (<1g) from gully [3] is likely to have been a piece of window glass. A fragment of light green curved glass was recovered from stone-lined drain [5]. The form of this suggests it was most likely the shoulder of a bottle.

Metalwork by Steve Crabb

Five pieces of ferrous metalwork were recovered. Two are nails (cat. nos. 1, 3). These are both square section with square heads. The larger example is intact and measures 69mm long with a head 15mm across. The smaller example having been broken is 40mm long with a head 15mm across. Both were recovered from buried soil (65). A single piece of metalwork was recovered from pit 2. This has been corroded and encrusted but it seems to have been a handle with a long flattened section between two curved end sections one of which has been damaged. It measures 130mm long (cat. no.4). Two pieces of metalwork were recovered from stone-lined drain (5). One is a curved square section piece possibly a wall hook which has been damaged, it measures 46mm long by 25mm (cat. no. 5). Also recovered was a small bar probably a nail measuring 53mm long (cat. no. 2).

Animal Bone by Danielle Milbank

A modest assemblage of fragmented disarticulated animal bone was hand collected from five contexts encountered in the evaluation, a total of 48 fragments weighing 220g (Appendix 5).

The preservation of the remains was moderate to poor, with high fragmentation and frequent surface erosion. This poor condition and small fragment size greatly decreased the amount of identifiable bone. Bone which was not identifiable by species was classified as being from a small animal (cat, dog, rodent) medium-sized animal (sheep/goat, deer or pig), or a large animal (cattle or horse).

Overall, the assemblage was dominated by medium sized animal bones, with a single bird bone present, which is likely to be from a chicken. Two were identified as cattle bones, comprising a pes (hoof) bone and a proximal phalange, both from 2 (51).

Due to the lack of duplicated skeletal elements, the minimum number of individuals present in the assemblage was found to be 3: 1 bird species, one medium-sized animal and one cattle animal. The assemblage is overall modest and though no butchery marks were present, is likely to represent domestic consumption.

Human Bone by Danielle Milbank

A single fragment of likely human bone was recovered from a sieved soil sample from gully 3 (deposit 52). This is a proximal phalanx, possibly from the left foot. Age and sex could not be determined and no pathologies were identified.

Palaeoenvironmental assessment by Joanna Pine

Seven sub-samples of 5-10L were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential. The samples were floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. Sample 1 (Tr 1 cut 2, 51) contained a very occasional charcoal <2mm in size and a small number of carbonized weed seeds. A single piece of charcoal was recovered from pit 2 during excavation, it measures 35mm long.

Sample 5 (Tr 1, cut 6, 59) contained charcoal over 2mm in size and thus has potential for identification and moderate amount of carbonized cereal grains including those identifiable as barley. Sample 7 (Tr 3 cut 11, 64) contained a very occasional charcoal <2mm in size.

Conclusion

The four excavated trenches have confirmed that the site has archaeological potential. The evaluation has revealed the presence of certain and probable archaeological deposits on the site, despite modern disturbance.

The medieval period is represented by ditches, pits, and postholes, which are present in all of the trenches, thus showing the potential for further features to be found across the whole site. There is also evidence of post-medieval features surviving on site; in trench 1 a stone-lined drain and a likely back-filled well in trench 2. The presence of Roman pottery on the site, albeit recovered from a medieval feature, indicates some Roman activity on or near the site.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at west, south or southeast end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	15.0	1.6	0.94	0-0.25m concrete; 0.25-0.53m made ground; 0.53-0.98m dark brown buried soil (53); 0.98m+ mid red-yellow sandy gravel natural geology. Pits 1, 2, 4; gully 3; drain 5; features 6, 7, 8. [Pls 1, 2 and 3]
2	14.2	1.6	0.92	0-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.48m made ground; 0.48-0.80m buried soil 66; 0.80m+ natural geology (as Tr. 1). Ditch 9; pit 10; posthole 12; well 13; treehole 14, 15; features 18, 19. [Pl. 4]
3	10.5	1.6	0.94	0-0.14m concrete; 0.14-0.27m made ground; 0.27-0.84m buried soil (65); 0.84m+ natural geology (as Tr. 1). Ditch 11; features 20, 21.
4	16.6	1.6	0.98 (S) 0.51 (N)	South end: 0-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.40m made ground; 0.40-0.80m layer (73); 0.80m+ natural geology (as Tr. 1). Centre: 0-0.18m concrete; 0.18-0.45m made ground; 0.45-0.50m layer (73); 0.50m+ natural geology. North end: 0-0.18m concrete; 0.18-0.50m made ground; 0.50m+ natural geology. Ditch 16; pit 17; features? 22, 23, 24, 25.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1		53	Modern buried soil	20th century	Pottery
2		66	Buried soil layer	Post-medieval	
3		65	Buried soil layer	Late Post-medieval/modern	Nails, Concrete
4		73	Layer	Post-medieval/medieval	Brick fragments
1	1	50	Pit	Medieval?	Stratigraphy
1	2	51	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
1	3	52	Gully	Medieval	Pottery and stratigraphy
1	4	58	Shallow pit/posthole	-	-
1	5	54, 55, 56, 57	Stone-lined drain	Post-medieval (earlier)	Pottery, glass
1	6	59	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
1	7	60	Pit?	-	-
1	8	61	Pit?	-	-
2	9	62	Ditch	Post-medieval	Glazed brick
2	10	63	Pit	Post-medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
3	11	64	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery
2	12	69	Posthole	-	-
2	13	67, 68	Stone-lined well	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy and slate
2	14	70	Treehole	-	-
2	15	71	Treehole	-	-
4	16	72	Ditch	Medieval?	Alignment?
4	17	74, 75	Pit	-	-
2	18	76	Posthole	-	-
2	19	77	Posthole	-	-
3	20	78	Pit	Medieval	Observed Stratigraphy
3	21	79	Pit?	-	-
4	22	80	Pit	-	-
4	23	81	Pit?	Modern	Brick fragments
4	24	82	Pit?	-	-
4	25	83	Pit?	-	-

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

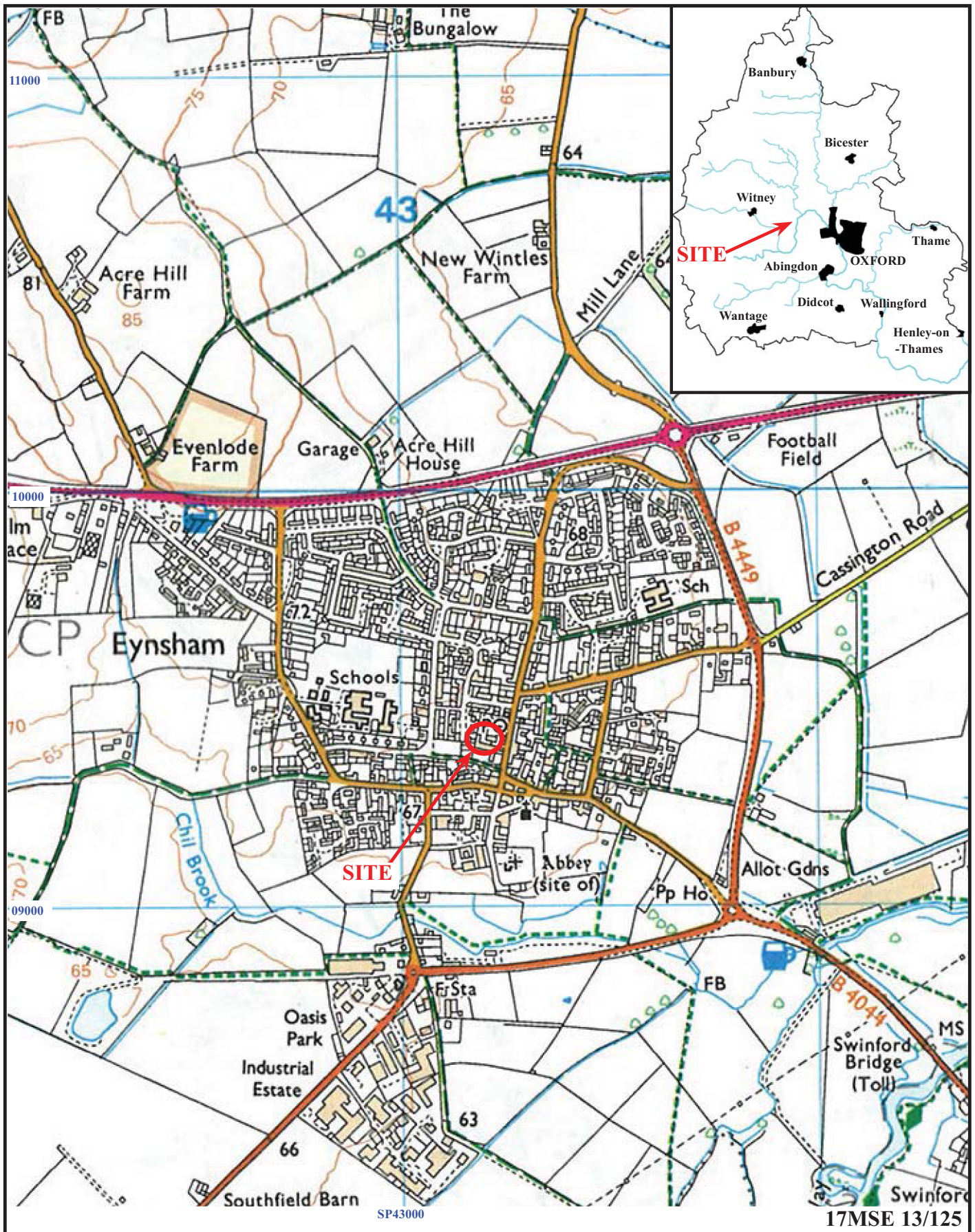
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	Roman		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXBB		OXAM		OXCL		OXDR	
			<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1	2	51	1	2	24	217	8	68	18	109	6	36	7	90	-	-	-	-
1	3	52	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	5	54	-	-	1	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	1	168
1	6	59	-	-	5	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	11	64	-	-	-	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	-	-	-	-
		Total	1	2	32	294	9	75	18	109	6	36	11	98	1	7	1	168

APPENDIX 4. Catalogue of ceramic building material

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1	2	51	pit	3	26
1	3	52	gully	2	<1
1	5	54	drain	4	1004
2	9	62	ditch	6	412
3		65	buried soil	1	76
2		67	stone-lined well	16	1518

APPENDIX 5: Inventory of animal bone

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No Frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Bird</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
1	2	51	39	172	2	2	2	4	1	28
1	3	52	2	8	-	-	2	-	-	-
1	5	54	5	30	-	-	1	-	-	4
1	6	59	1	<1	-	-	-	-	-	1
2	15	71	1	10	-	1	-	-	-	-



17 Mill Street, Eynsham,
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Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Eynsham and Oxfordshire

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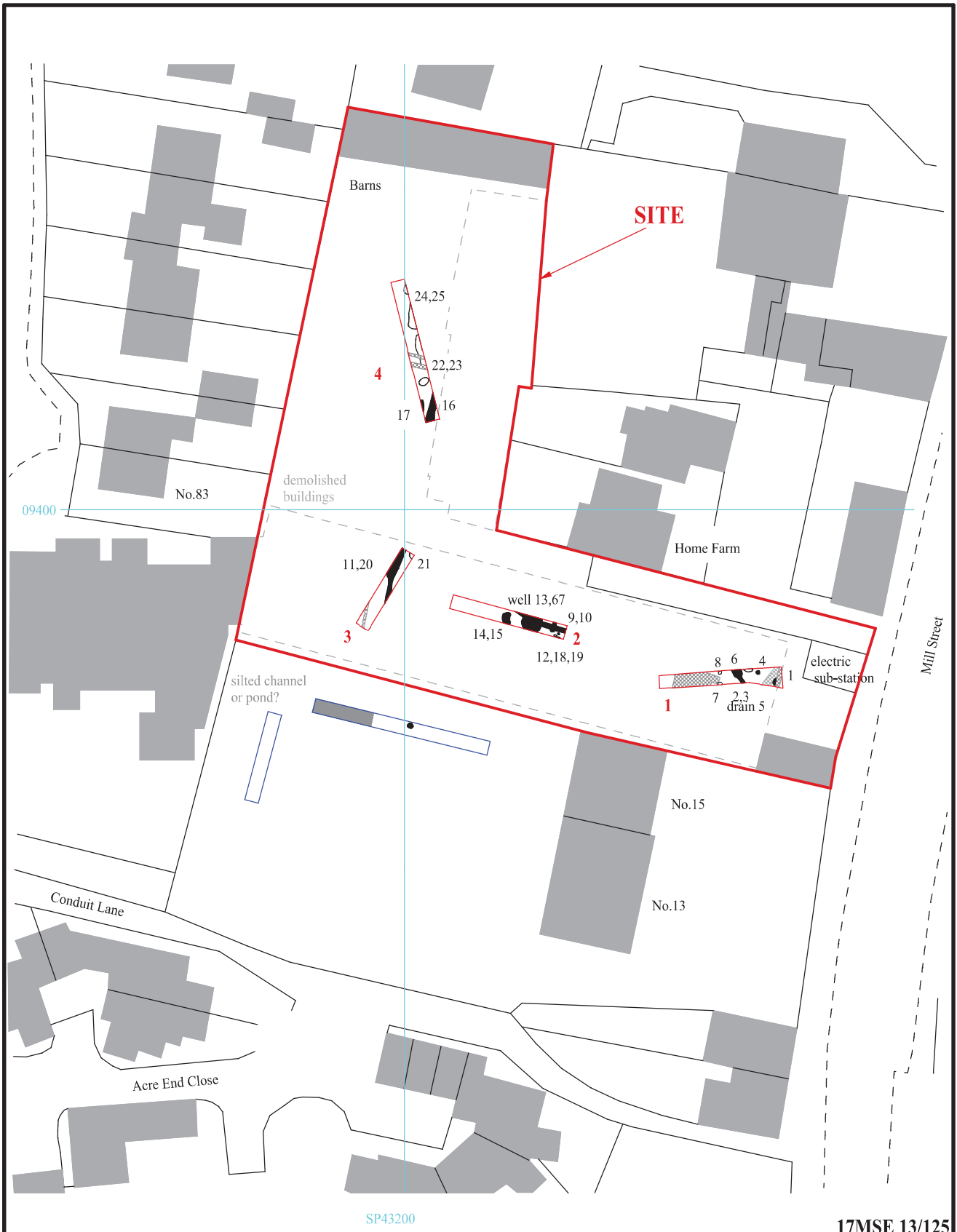
17MSE 13/125



**17 Mill Street, Eynsham,
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Figure 2. Location of site off Mill Street.

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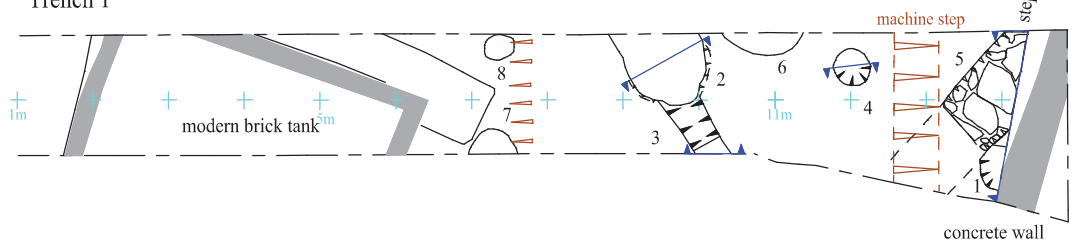
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Oxfordshire, 2013
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

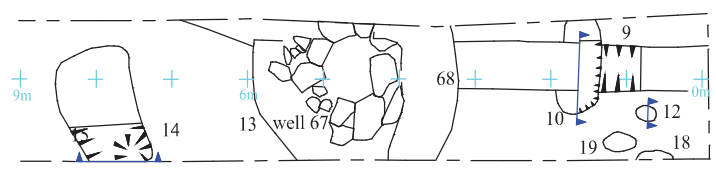


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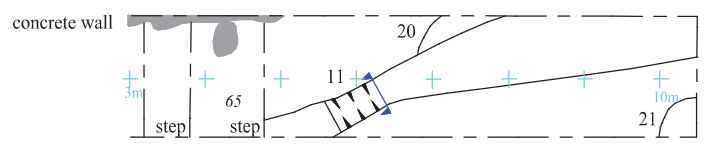
Trench 1



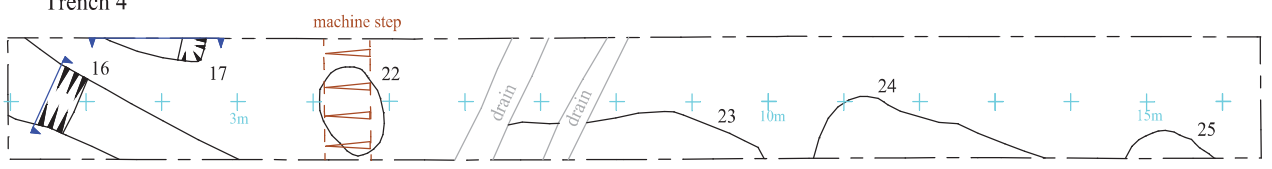
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 4



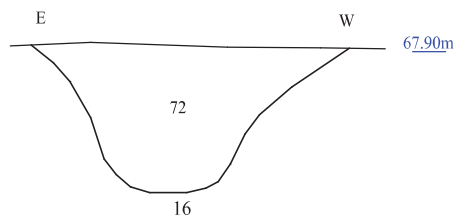
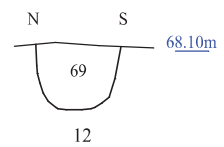
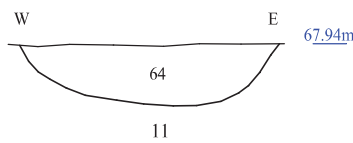
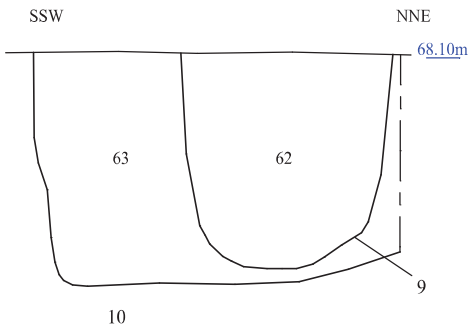
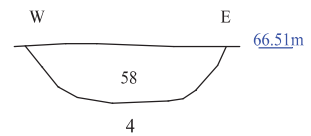
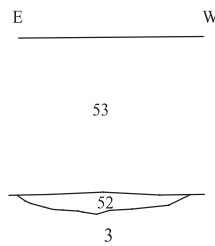
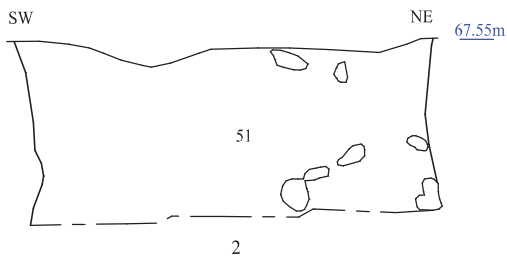
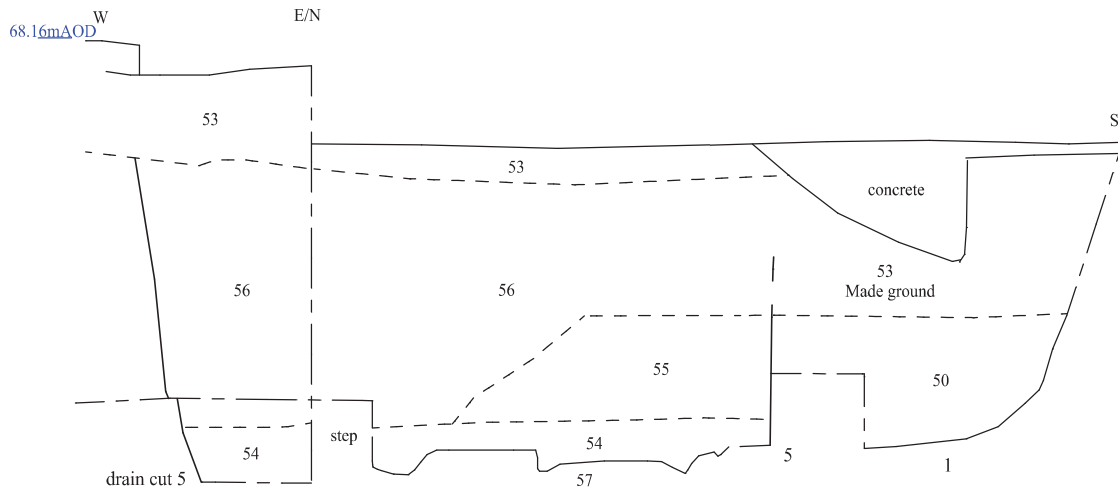
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



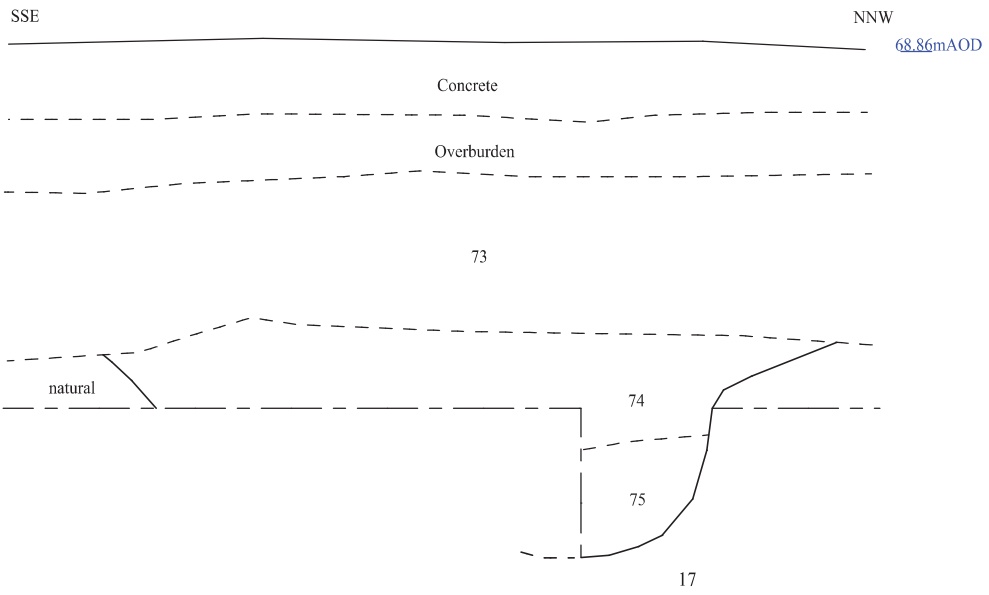


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Figure 5. Sections.





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Figure 6. Section. Trench 4





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



Plate 2. Trench 1, pit 2, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 1, stone drain (cut 5), looking northeast, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



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

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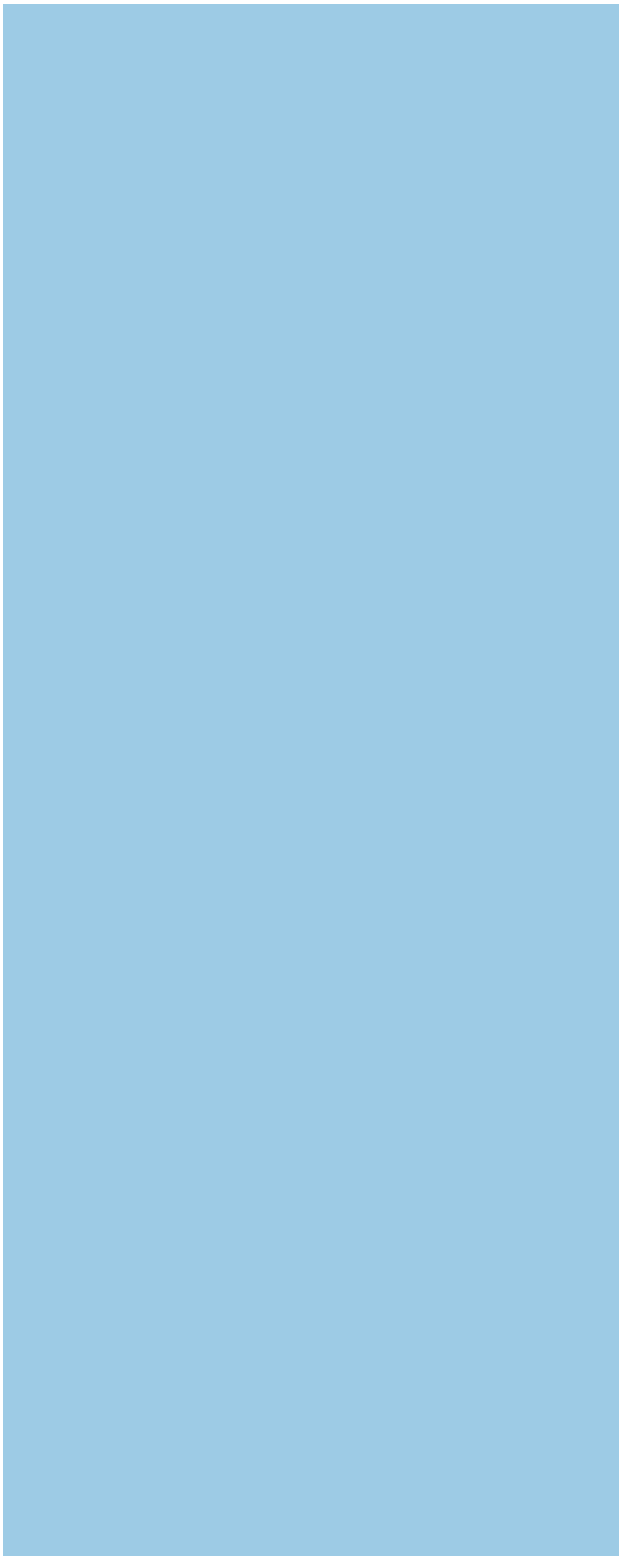
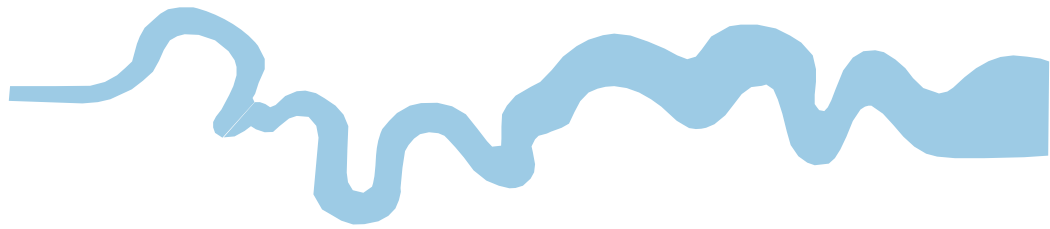
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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