

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H W E S T

**Canterbury Farm, High Street,
Aller, Somerset**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Weale

Site Code: CFA12/203

(ST 4005 2919)

**Canterbury Farm, High Street,
Aller, Somerset**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr S Pledger

by Andrew Weale

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CFA 12/203

October 2013

Summary

Site name: Canterbury Farm, High Street, Aller, Somerset

Grid reference: ST 4005 2919

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 12th December to 13th December 2012

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: CFA 12/203

Summary of results: The remains of a undated yard surface together with a 17th to 18th century outbuilding with a sequence of internal floor layers was observed

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Somerset County Museum Service with PRN number 32303 and accession code TTNCM 103/2013 in due course

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 11.10.13
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Canterbury Far, High Street, Aller, Somerset An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Weale

Report 12/203

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Canterbury Farm, High Street, Aller Somerset, (NGR ST 4005 2919)(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Shaun Curtis of Boon Brown Architects of Motivo, Alvington, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2FG on behalf of Mr S Pledger of S A Pledger Ltd, The Byre, Manor Barns, Long Sutton, Somerset, TA10 9HT. Conditional planning permission (12/03513/FUL) has been granted from South Somerset District Council for alterations, repair and extensions to existing dwelling and the erection of a new dwelling at Canterbury Farm, High Street, Aller, Somerset, TA10 0QN (NGR ST 4005 2919). There is a condition (9) that relates to archaeology:

“9. No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority”.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Planning Policy Statement, *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Councils policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer of Somerset County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale on the 12th to 13th of December 2012 and the site code is CFA 12/203

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the Somerset County Museum Service with PRN number 32303 and accession code TTNCM 103/2013 in due course

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the village of Aller with the village of Othery 2 km to the north west and the town of Langport 2.5km to the south east with the River Parrett to the south of the village (Fig. 1) The Village lies at the base of a limestone escapement at approximately 15m AOD and the escapement rises to over 95m AOD to the north east of the village. The site lies to the south of the A 372 within the village (Fig. 2). The site is fairly flat with a slight slope down to the south west and is bounded by houses and gardens to the west and east, the A372

to the north and farmland to the south. The site is currently occupied by Canterbury Farm House, outbuildings, gardens and an orchard. The underlying geology is Triassic Mercia Mudstone in the north of the site close to the boundary with Quaternary Alluvium in the river flood plan (BGS 1973) weathered red clay with some weathered rock was observed within the footing trenches.

Archaeological background

Aller is mentioned as the location of the baptism of Guthrum, king of the Danes, after his defeat by King Alfred at the Battle of Edington in 878. This would suggest the existence of a church in the parish at that date. Aller is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) as being held by Ralph De Limesy and by Wulfweard in the time of King Edward. It had land for four ploughs, in demene were two ploughs and two slaves, whilst the rest of the manor was farmed by five villans and twelve bordars with two ploughs. There was 15 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture and 10 acres of woodland. The original settlement was probably made in the area of Aller Court Farm on Aller 'island' (VCH 1974). A watching brief at Aller Court Farm (McCrone 1993) found no obvious traces of cut features and there were no finds. To the east and south east of the existing farm and church site there are vague earthworks or soil marks which may be evidence of a deserted medieval settlement. North east of Canterbury Farm is the former rectory, now divided into 2 houses of built around 1500 AD although in 1554 it was in decay (VCH 1974). To the north and across the High Street from Canterbury Farm is Chantry Farmhouse a grade II listed building of 18th and early 19th century date, where watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a domestic house which revealed features that contained several sherds of 10th century Saxon pottery, fragments of animal bone, and two iron objects (a possible spur and a nail) (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2002). Canterbury Farm itself is a grade II listed farm house with out building of an 18th century date or earlier.

Objectives and methodology

The purposes of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This will involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular the footing trenches for the new building together with any services. The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in English Heritage Research Agenda (English Heritage 2005) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as identified in the South West Archaeology Research Framework (Webster 2007)

Results

Topsoil (0.30m) and subsoil (0.15m) were removed by 360° tracked machine across the area of the new building (Fig. 3). The existing outbuilding which was stone-built with an open front was demolished and the remains removed by machine. The internal floors of the outbuilding were also removed by machine except in an area between the rear of the new building and the boundary wall/rear wall of the outbuilding. One stub wall of the outbuilding on the north western corner remained (Fig. 4). To the north and east of the stub wall were the remains of a stone yard surface (57) which consisted of large stone blocks laid without mortar and roughly faced on the upper surface and ends with rough squaring on the base the sides appeared to be natural bedding planes (Pl. 3). This yard surface butted up to the remaining stub of the outbuilding (56) (Pl. 1) was constructed of mortared limestone blocks which were roughly faced on the upper surface and ends with rough squaring on the base the sides appeared to be natural bedding planes and was bonded into the boundary wall which may be evidence that the outbuilding was contemporary with that section of the boundary wall. No construction cut could be observed for wall 56. In the area between the rear wall of the new building and the existing boundary wall the internal floor layers of the outbuilding remain (Fig. 5 Pl. 2). The uppermost layer (52) consisted of a dark grey to humic black loam which contained modern plastic, metal tins etc and was a maximum of 0.10m thick. Beneath 52 was a hard red brown clay layer (53) which contain a moderate amount of limestone fragments and a single sherd of 17th to 18th century pottery as well as a single fragment of roof tile and was a maximum of 0.15m thick. Layer (53) could be the remains of a rammed clay floor within the outbuilding. Beneath (53) was a layer (54) of limestone blocks set vertically with a grey brown silt between them. Layer (54) was a maximum of 0.18m thick and contained no artefacts. Layer (54) could be the remains of a limestone floor within the outbuilding. Beneath (54) was (55) a layer of limestone fragments and grey brown silt up to 0.22m thick that contained two sherds of 17th to 18th century pottery that joined and came from pancheon. Layer 55 may be the remains of a make up or bedding layer for floor 54. Beneath layer (55) was natural red brown red clay geology.

The footing trenches of the new building were all observed and showed a natural sequence of topsoil, subsoil and geology in the area outside the outbuilding or the same sequence as above within the outbuilding, no further archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised three sherds with a total weight of 41g. The sherds were all Donyatt-type Earthenwares (Coleman-Smith and Pearson, 1988). Two joining sherds occurred in context (55). They are probably from a large, internally glazed pancheon (weight = 35g). The other sherd, from context (53) is from a jar or similar vessel, and has a speckled, yellow-brown glaze on both surfaces (weight = 6g). The sherds from (55) are heavily abraded, with nearly all the yellow glaze worn away, and seem very likely to be redeposited. All the pottery seems most likely to be of 17th – 18th century date.

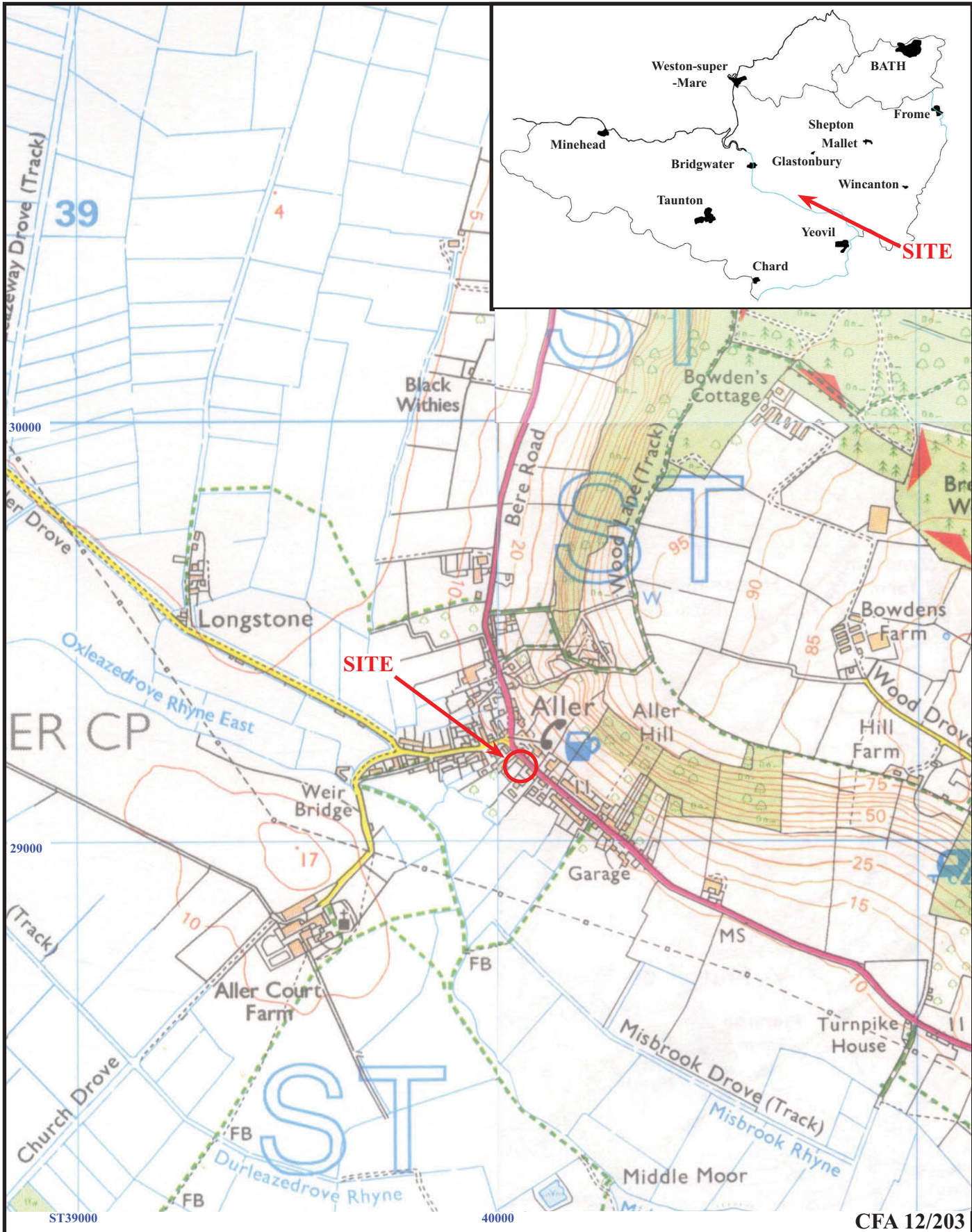
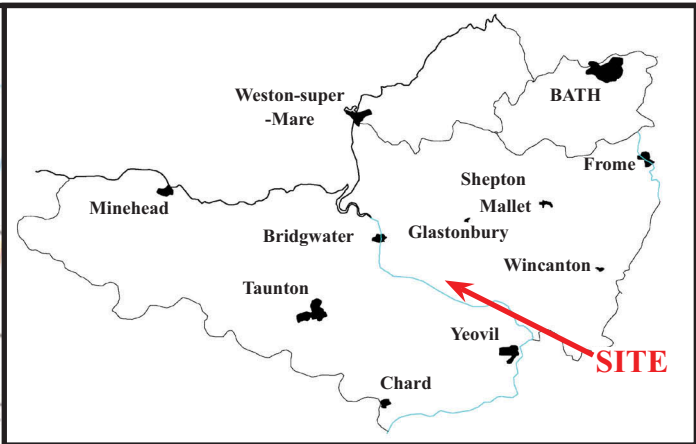
A single fragment (12g) of red, slightly sandy roof-tile also occurred in context (53).

Conclusion

Although archaeological features have been recorded near to Canterbury Farm at Chantry Farmhouse where several sherds of 10th century Saxon pottery, fragments of animal bone, and two iron objects were discovered, no medieval or early features or artefacts were discovered at Canterbury Farm. Canterbury Farm itself is a grade II listed farm house of an 18th century date or earlier. The pottery recovered from the floors of the outbuilding would suggest that it was also of an 18th century or possibly late 17th century origin and may have been contemporary with the part of the farm house.

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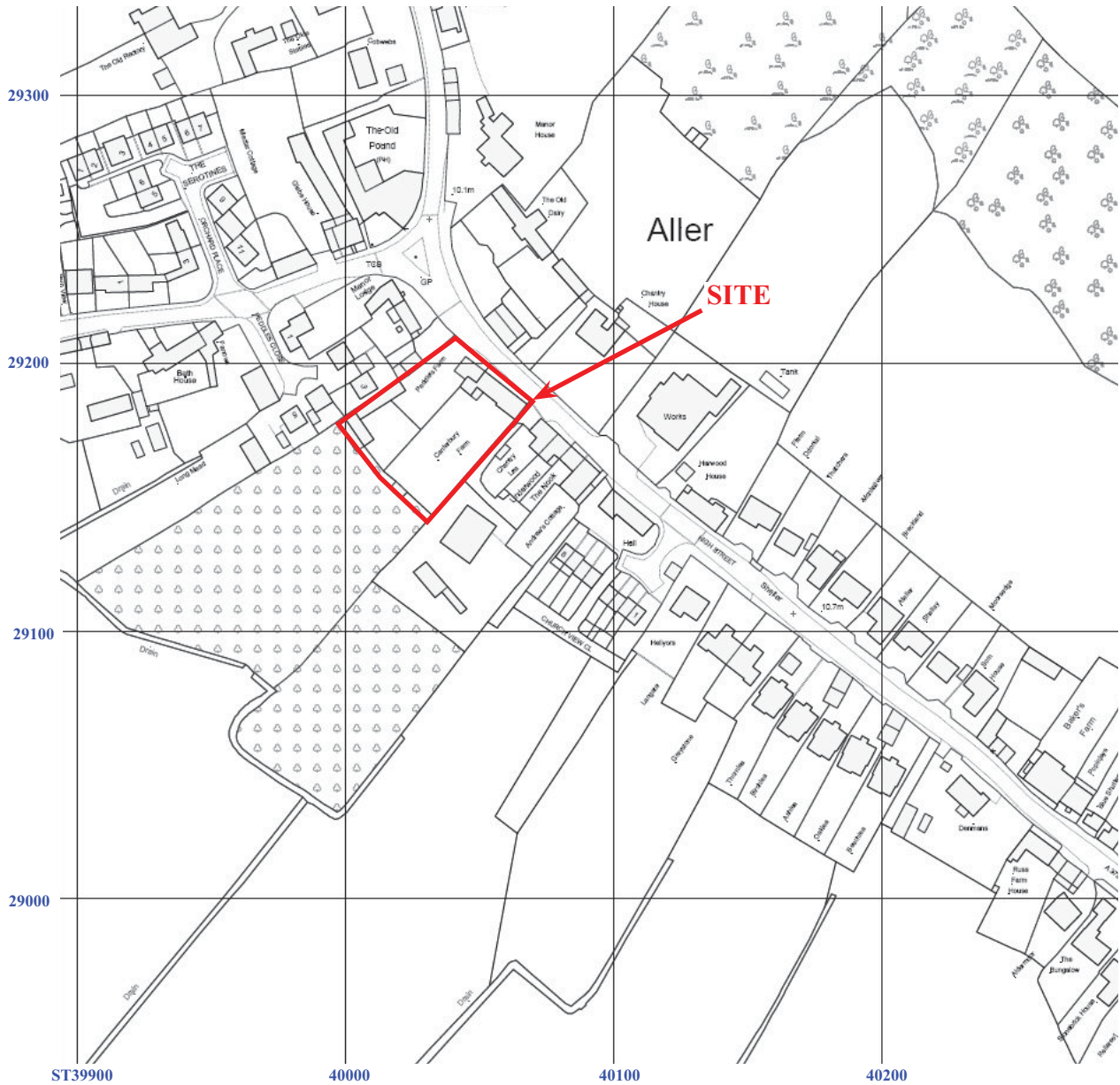
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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Aller and Somerset.

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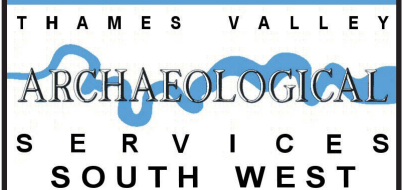


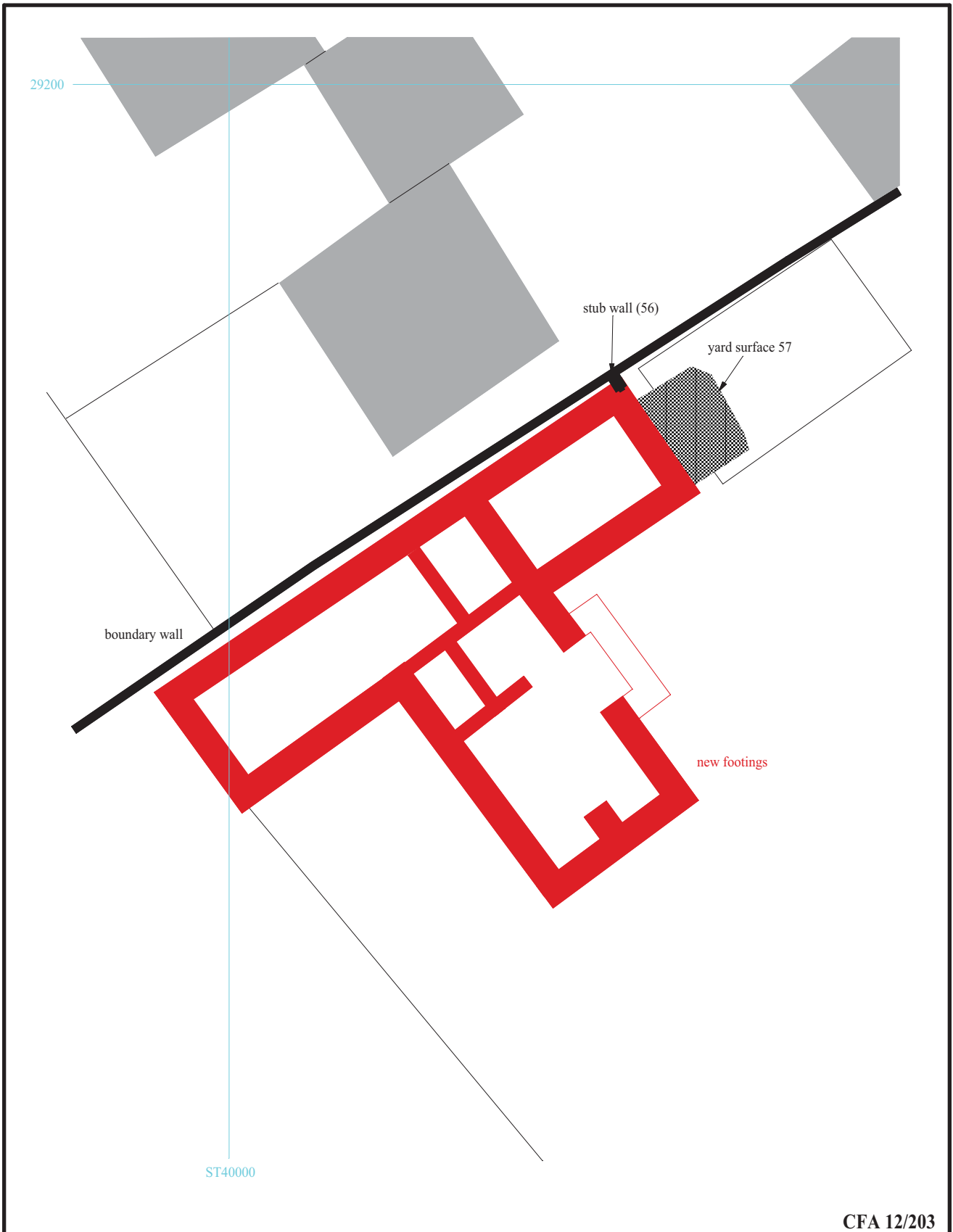
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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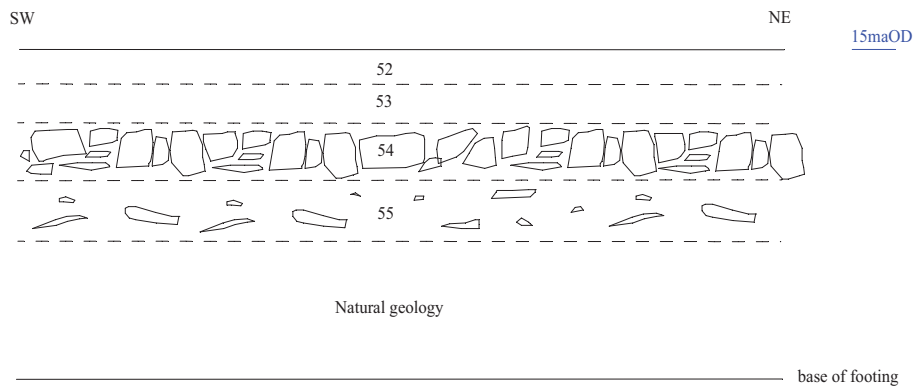


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Figure 3. Location of observed area.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Wall of old outbuilding, looking west, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Section showing floor of old outbuilding, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Section of yard surface to north of outbuilding, looking north, Scales: 1m and 2m.

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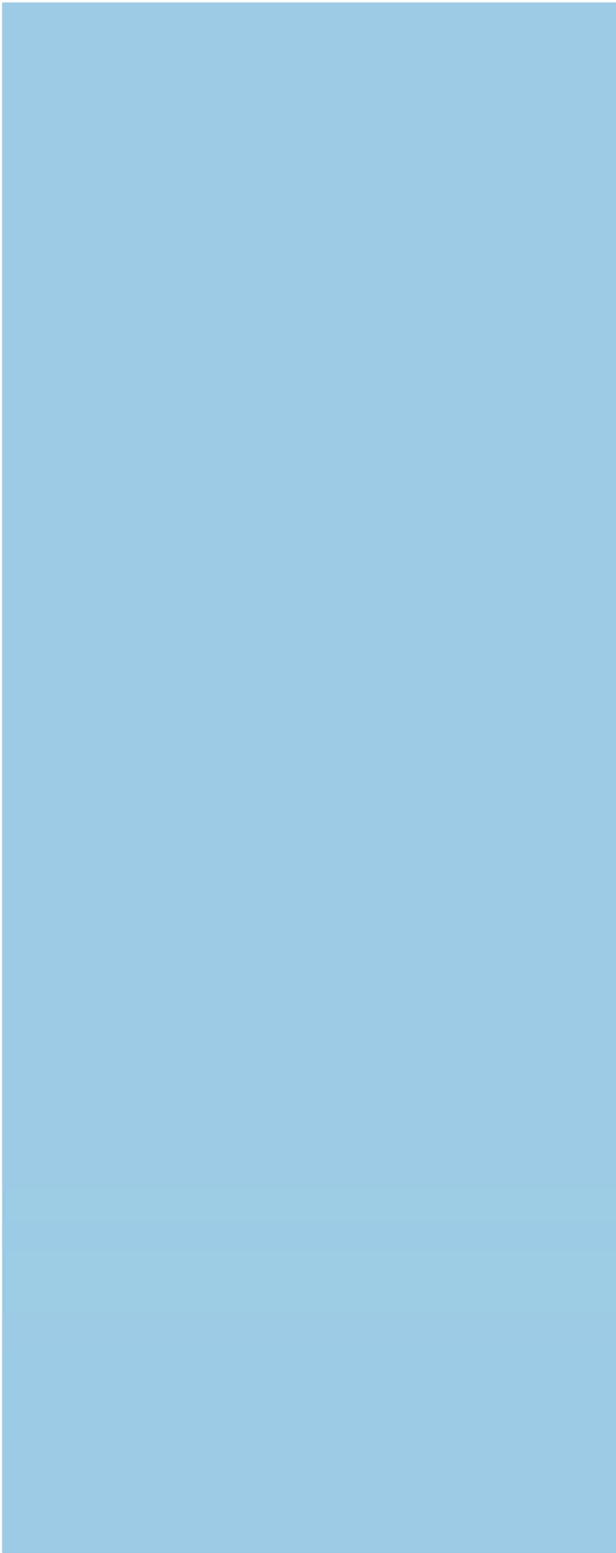
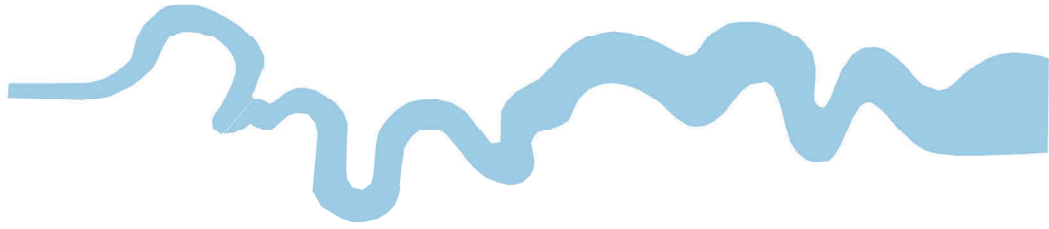
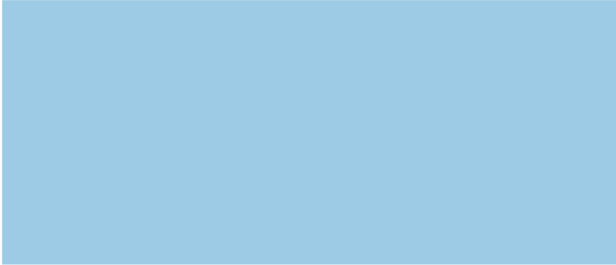
Plates 1 to 3.

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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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