

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Frimley Stables, Thorpe Street,
Aston Upthorpe, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt

Site Code: AUD13/97

(SU 5530 8640)

Frimley Stables, Thorpe Street, Aston Upthorpe, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Michael Moore

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code AUD 13/97

March 2014

Summary

Site name: Frimley Stables, Thorpe Street, Aston Upthorpe, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5530 8640

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th November 2013 - 12th March 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt, Susan Porter and Andy Taylor

Site code: AUD 13/97

Area of site: c.0.48 ha

Summary of results: A single pit of medieval or later date was identified in the footings of plot 2 along with a residual sherd of Roman pottery. These features add to the Bronze Age Roman and medieval features found during the evaluation.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 31.03.14 Steve Preston ✓ 25.03.14

Frimley Stables, Thorpe Street, Aston Upthorpe, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by david Platt

Report 13/97b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Frimley Stables, Thorpe Street, Aston Upthorpe, Oxfordshire SU5530 8640 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael Moore, of Langdons, The Croft, Aston Tirrold, OX11 9DL.

Planning permission (P12/S1381/FUL) has been gained on appeal (APP/Q3115/A/12/2187399) from South Oxfordshire District Council for residential development comprising the construction of four new houses and conversion of existing structures at Frimley Stables. The consent is subject to a condition relation to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during ground works.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District'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 supplied by him. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Andy Taylor between the 8th November and 19th December 2014 and the site code is AUD 13/97.

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 within the village of Aston Upthorpe, c.3km west of Cholsey and 2km east of Blewbury, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The site was previously used as stables (Fig. 2). The site lies at a height of between 60m and 65m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Lower Chalk (BGS 1980), which was observed across the site. But which was in places overlain by a sandy clay.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was initially highlighted in a brief prepared by Mr. Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2013). In summary the site lies within the historic core of Aston Upthorpe with the Iron Age hillfort of Blewburton Hill lying just to the west. It is possible that a Neolithic

monumental site underlies the hillfort (Harding 1976; Oswald *et al.* 2001). Aston Upthorpe has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). A late Roman *solidus* (gold coin) of Honorius (AD395–423) was found in 1969 whilst re-laying paving 130m to the east of the site. Various 17th-century listed buildings are present in the vicinity of the site, with, until a recent fire, a barn of similar date on the site itself. An archaeological evaluation of the site revealed a number of archaeological features tentatively dating from Bronze Age, Roman and medieval periods and included a chalk-lined well of uncertain date (Platt 2013).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, geo-technical investigations, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work. Archaeological deposits which were exposed by the groundworks were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by groundworks.

Results (Figs 3-4)

Plot 1 (Pl. 1)

The whole footprint of this plot was initially reduced by c. 0.5m of modern made ground to partially expose a yellow grey sandy clay natural geology. The footing trenches footings observed for this plot measured 0.80m wide and were dug to a further depth of 0.70m. No archaeological finds or features were exposed.

Plot 2 (Pl. 2; Fig. 4)

The footings for his plot measured between 0.60m and 0.90m wide and 1.00m deep. The stratigraphy observed comprised 0.10m of cement overlying 0.60m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of gravelly clay and chalk natural geology. A pit (8) was observed in the base of one of the footings (Pl. 2). This measured 1.86m wide and was dug to a depth of 0.60m and contained a single fragment from the rim of a jar dated to the late 11th to 12th century. A sherd of residual Roman greyware pottery was also recovered from this feature. No continuation of the linear feature (5) found during the evaluation was observed on this occasion.

Plot 3 (Pl. 3)

The area for this plot was reduced by 0.70m consisting of demolition rubble overlying sand and partially exposed the natural geology to the north west. The foundations measured 0.80m wide and 0.90m deep. The

stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of rubble made ground overlying 0.30m of a mid grey silty clay overlying chalk natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were exposed.

Plot 4 (Pl. 4)

The foundation trenches for this plot measured 0.60m wide and 1.15m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.60m of topsoil overlying chalk natural geology, with no archaeological finds or features present.

Plot 5

Half of this plot was reduced by 0.50m at the western end and raised 0.50m at the eastern end in order to level the area. The foundation trenches were 0.70m wide and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.20m of mid reddish brown clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions overlying chalk natural geology. No deposits of finds of archaeological interest were exposed.

Plot B

The footprint of this plot was stripped by c.0.3m of made ground overburden following which the foundation trenches for this plot were dug. They measured 0.8m wide and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of made ground overlying yellow-grey sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological finds or features present.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 38g. They both occurred in the same context, (64). One of the sherds, weighing 28g, was a fragment from the rim of a jar in Newbury A/B ware, Oxfordshire County type-series fabric OXBF (Mellor 1994). It has a thumb-frilled 'piecrust' profile which is typical of the late 11th – 12th century. The other sherd is a bodysherd of residual Roman greyware. Both are typical finds in the region. The medieval sherd is in very good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

Conclusion

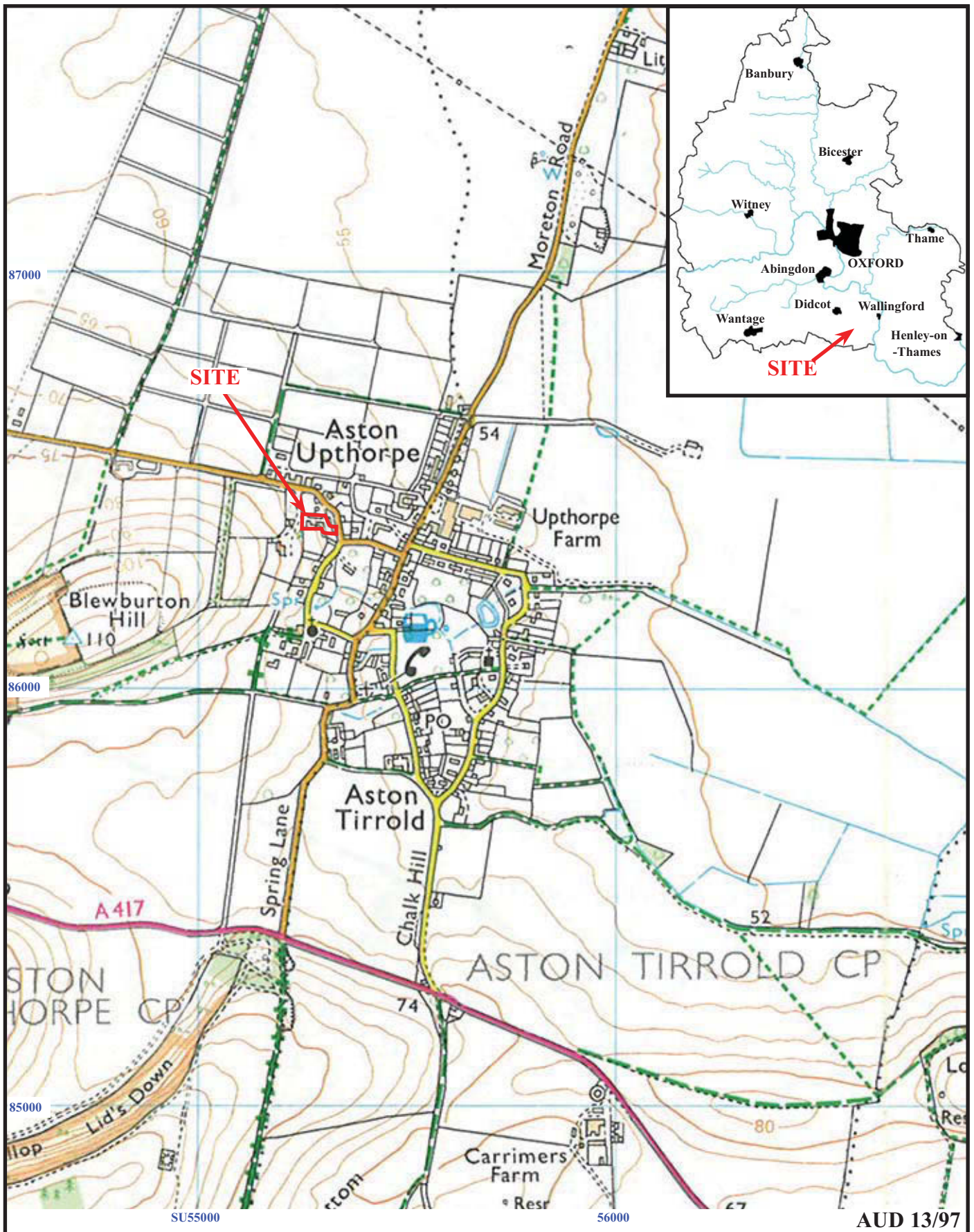
The watching brief the parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of the new buildings. A single pit (8) of medieval or later date was observed in plot 2 in close proximity to the prehistoric and Roman features identified in the previous evaluation (Platt 2013).

References

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
8	64	Pit	11th-12th Century AD	Pottery

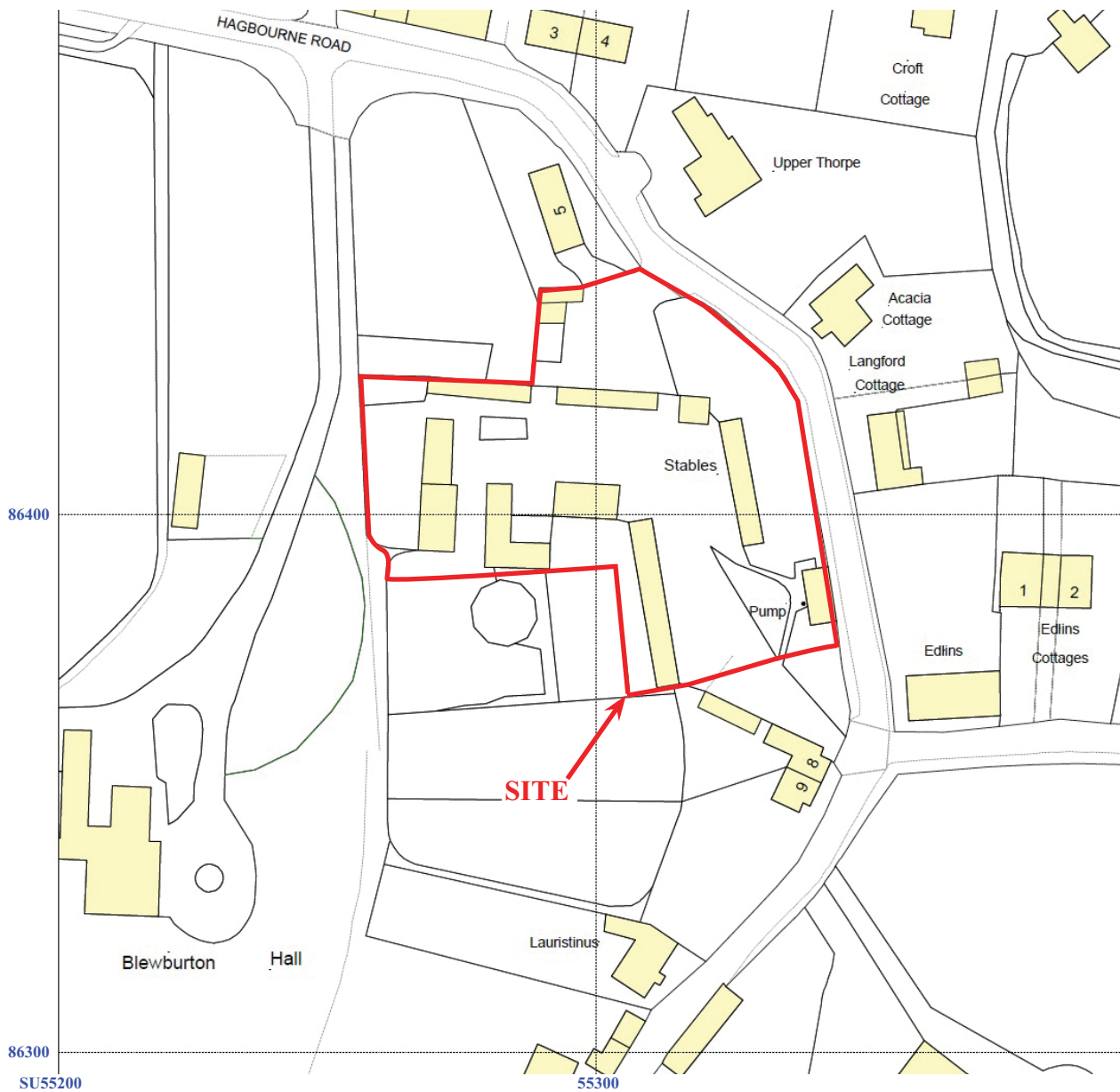


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Figure 1. Location of site within Aston Upthorpe and Oxfordshire.

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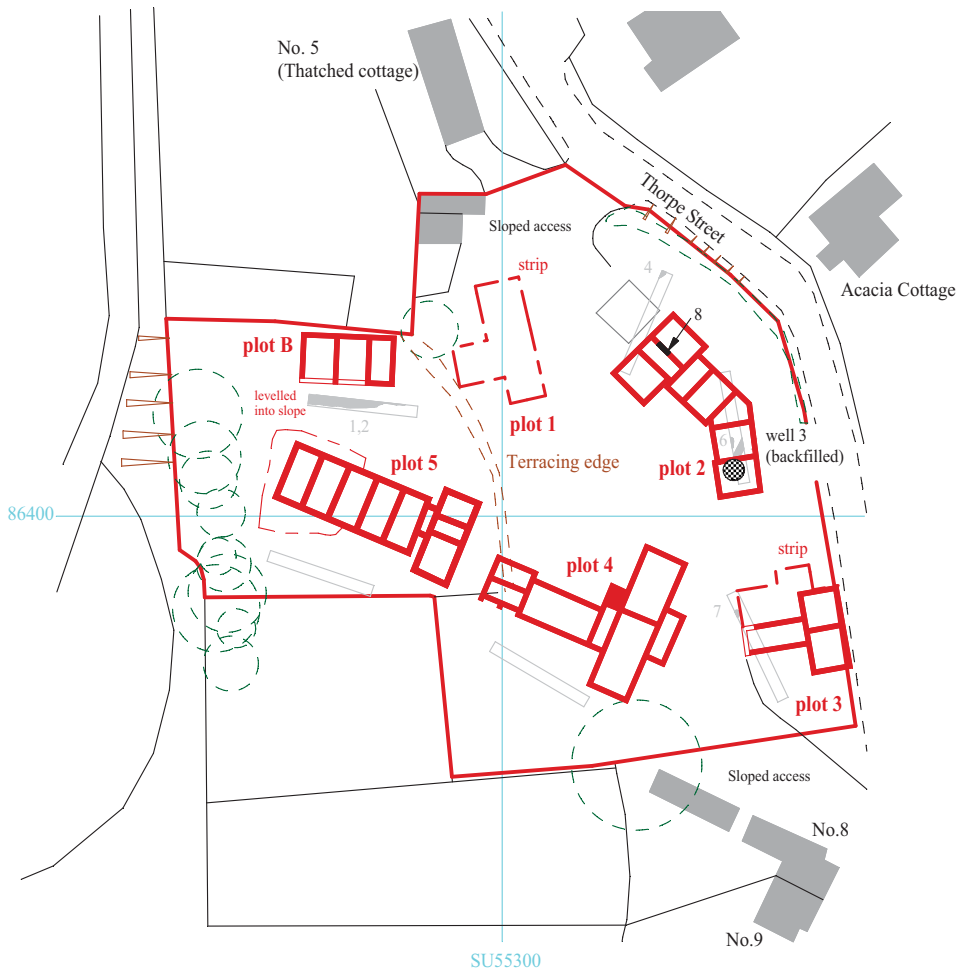
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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site, prior to demolition of
 stables.

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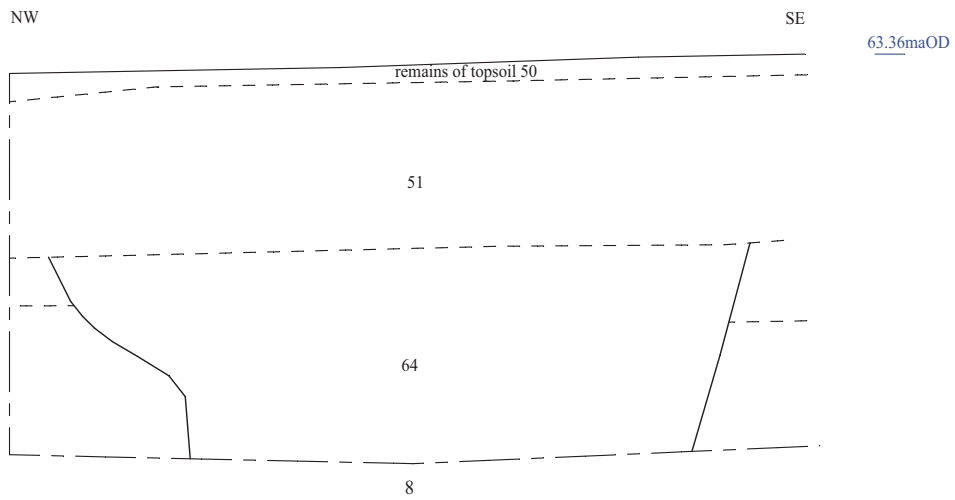
8 to slope

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Figure 3. Observed areas of watching brief.



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Figure 4. Plot 2, section of Pit 1.



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Plate 1. Plot 1, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Plot 2, pit 8 looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 1. Plot 3, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Plot 4, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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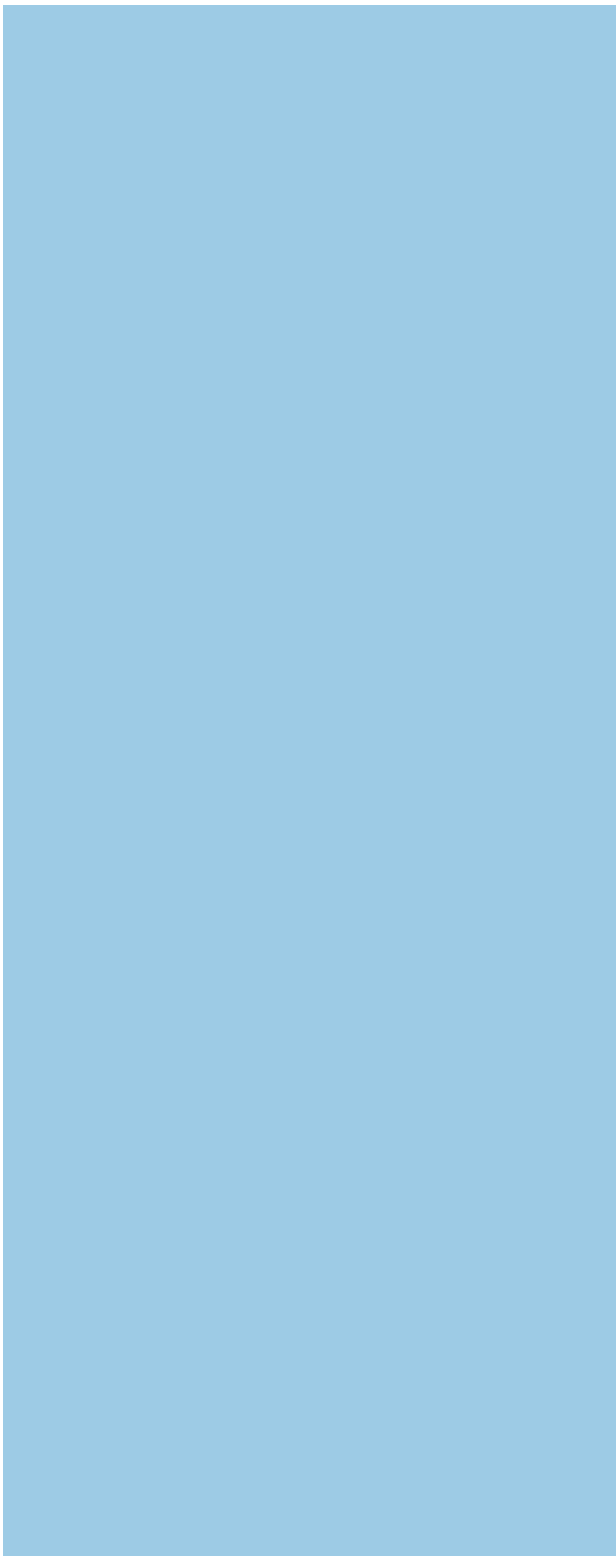
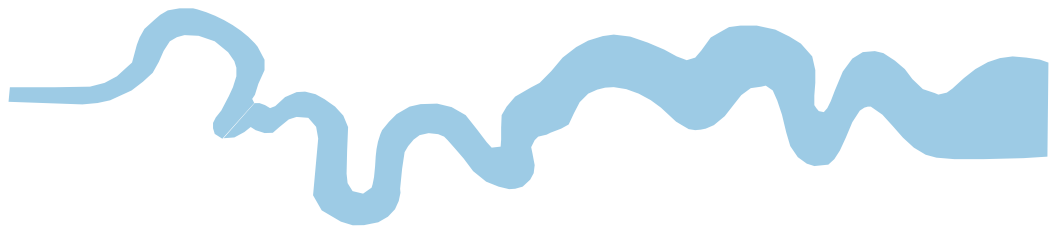
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**