

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane,  
Frieth, Buckinghamshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: BPP14/69**

**(SU 7943 8943)**

**St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Skillbond Limited**

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BPP 14/69

**May 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth, Buckinghamshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7943 8943

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 13th May 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** BPP 14/69

**Summary of results:** A single trench was excavated, revealing disturbed ground and layers of heavily compacted made ground. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:  
[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 22.05.14
---

# St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 14/69

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth, Buckinghamshire (SU 7943 8943) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Malcolm Cook of Danks Badnell Chartered Architects, Kings Stables, 3-4 Osborne Mews, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 3DE on behalf of Skillbond Limited

Planning permission (app 13/07445/FUL) has been gained from Wycombe District Council to erect a new house following demolition of an existing structure at St. Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth, Buckinghamshire. This permission is subject to a condition relating to archaeology as the site lies alongside the boundary of the historic park of Parmoor. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, a field investigation in the form of an archaeological evaluation has been requested.

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 Ms Eliza Alqassar, Archaeological Planning Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council advisors to the district on matters relating to archaeology. Following a brief provided by her (BCAS 2014) The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter with the assistance of Nick Harper on 13th May 2014 and the site code is BPP 14/69. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located off the western side of Parmoor Road to the north of St. Katherine's Convent roughly 1km south of the hamlet of Frieth (Fig. 1). The site currently forms the front yard/ garden to the existing cottage of St. Benedicts (Fig. 2) which comprises mostly pea gravel although there was a small patch of grass in the central area. The site lies at a height of c.170m Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology lies on the boundary between the upper chalk and clay with flints (BGS 1980) and both were observed in the trench.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the environs of the site is poorly understood. Frieth or Parmoor are not mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) but are likely to be of medieval origin. The history of the convent of St. Katherine (SRPF, 2013) records that Parmoor was referred to as Pyremere in the 14th century, Parimer in the 15th and Parmor from the 18th century. There are very few sites or finds noted anywhere close to the site, and those that are close comprise mostly farms of post-medieval date. In the wider area a few Neolithic stone tools, Roman coins and a cremation burial have been recorded indicating some activity in these periods. To the south at Hambledon a Roman villa is recorded.

Immediately to the south of the proposal site lies a grade II listed building of 18th century date (St. Katherine's Convent) with extensive (12 acres) walled gardens to the south and west, and a walled kitchen garden to the north. The outline of the formal garden has been uncovered, the walls to the kitchen garden may be still visible within the vicinity of the site and the sunken garden awaits restoration (SRPF, 2013). The estate had two messuages, including a dwelling house, outbuilding, courtyard, orchard and garden, covering 140 acres of land and 2 acres of meadow. This land was originally owned by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem during the reign of Henry VI and remained in Lancastrian hands throughout the Wars of the Roses, the building was extensively altered during the 19th century and during the 1940's was briefly home to King Zog of Albania (SRPF, 2013).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which may warrant preservation in-situ, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present.

The potential and significance of any such deposits located were to 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 as necessary, such as the emerging Solent-Thames Research Agenda (Munby 2008).

It was proposed to dig a single trench between 15 and 17m long and 1.4-1.6m wide, targeting the footprint of the proposed building. Topsoil and other overburden was removed using a Kubota-type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were encountered they were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

## **Results**

The trench was dug as intended within the footprint of the proposed building. Topsoil and overburden were excavated in shallow spits under constant archaeological supervision, spoil heaps were monitored at all times.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned North - South and was 17m long, 1.40m wide and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy was surprisingly complicated and consisted of 0.10m peagrit and 0.07m hardcore, overlying 0.05m heavily compacted made ground chalk and flint (50), which in turn overlay 0.05m compacted dark brown grey silty clay and flint made ground (51)with brick and tile inclusions,. This in turn lay above 0.21m of very firm made ground, comprising 'dirty' chalk and flint (52)with frequent brick/tile inclusions. This overlying a further 0.34m of made ground which comprised a hard mid brown/grey clay and flint again with brick/tile and chalky inclusions (53). This overlay chalk with patches of mid orange/brown clay with flint natural geology The brick/tile appeared modern/ very late post-medieval in date and was prevalent throughout the trench until the natural geology was reached. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the archaeological potential due to proximity to the 18th century building and gardens and the possibility of earlier origins, the archaeological evaluation revealed no deposits of archaeological interest. The layers of made ground revealed by the trial trenching appeared to be modern in date and unrelated to activity associated with the house and gardens or anything earlier. As such the immediate area of the proposed site has a very low archaeological potential.

## References

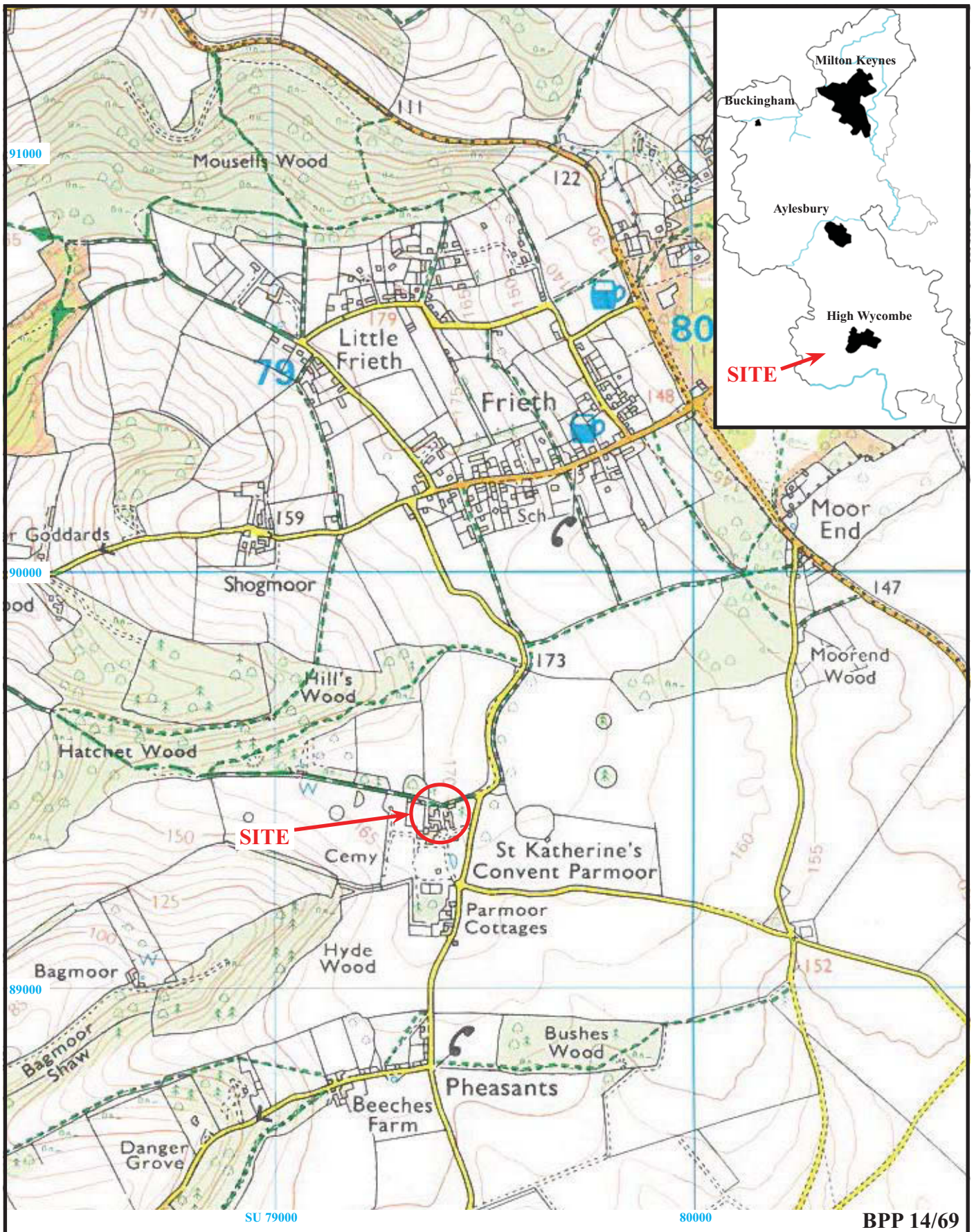
- BCAS, 2014, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS); Generic Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation, BCAS, Aylesbury.
- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 252, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- English Heritage, 2005, *English Heritage Research Agenda*, English Heritage, London
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- SRPF, 2014, 'Sue Ryder Prayer Fellowship, *St Katherine's: History*', [www.srpf.org.uk](http://www.srpf.org.uk)
- Williams, A and Martin, G. H, 2002, *Domesday Book; A complete translation*, London

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at south end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	17.00	1.40	1.10	0–0.10m peagrit; 0.10-0.17m hardcore; 0.17-0.22m compacted chalk and flint made ground with brick/tile inclusions; 0.22-0.27m compacted dark grey/brown clay and flint made ground with brick/tile inclusions; 0.27-0.48m dirty chalk and flint made ground with brick/tile inclusions; 0.48-0.82m firm mid brown grey clay with flint made ground with brick/tile and chalky inclusions; 0.82m+ chalk with patch y mid orange brown clay with flint natural geology. <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>



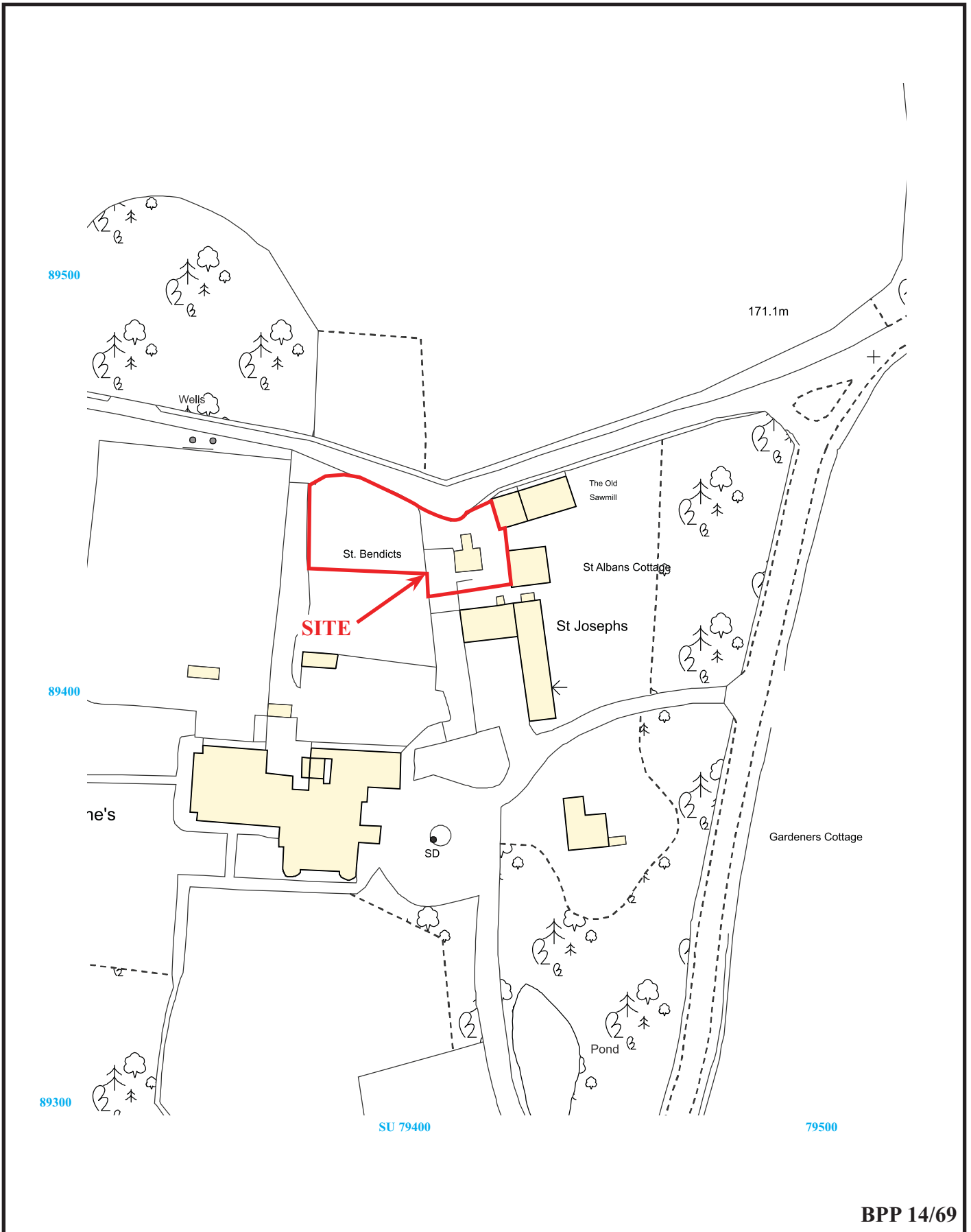


**St Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Frieth and Buckinghamshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 171 at 1:12500  
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



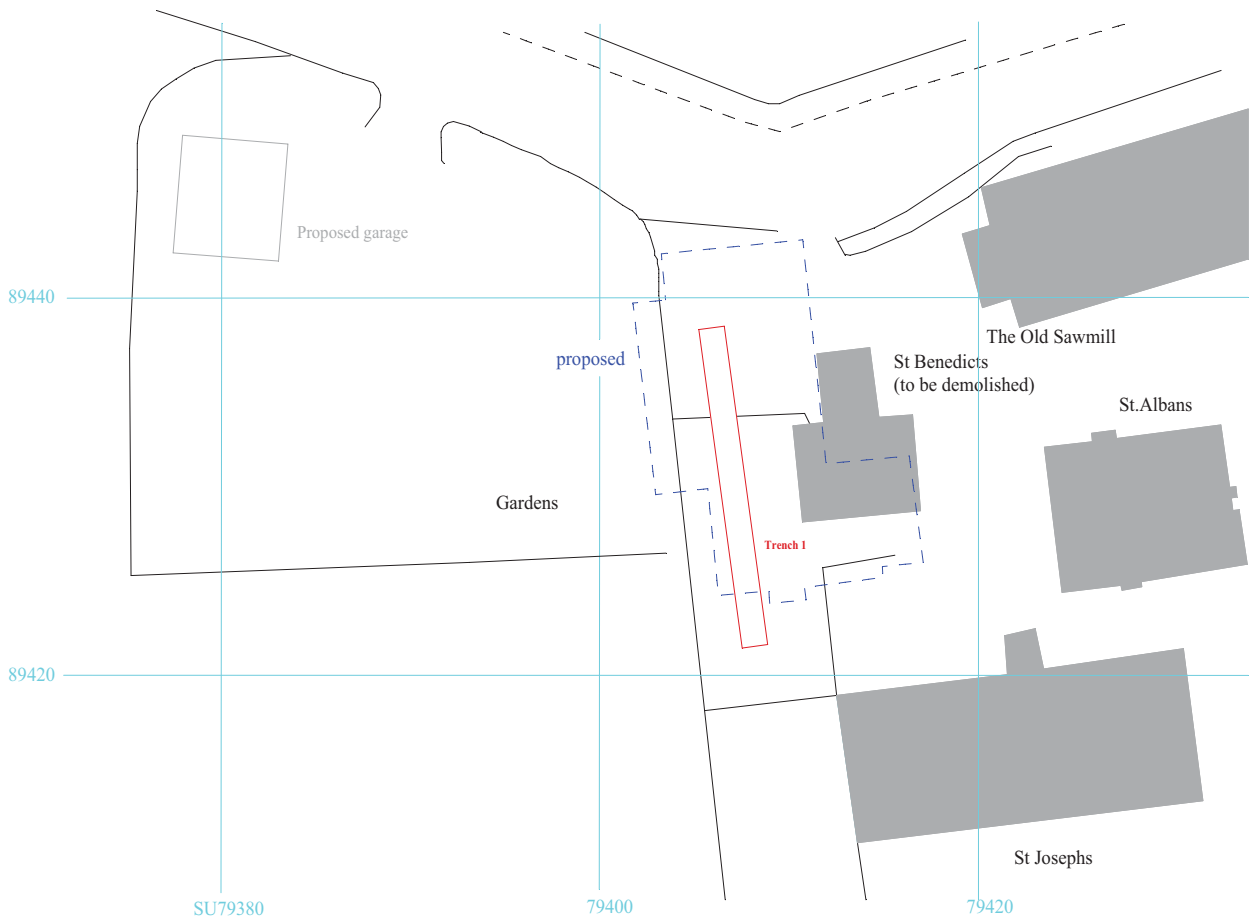
BPP 14/69

**St Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Parmoor Lane.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.  
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250.





BPP 14/69

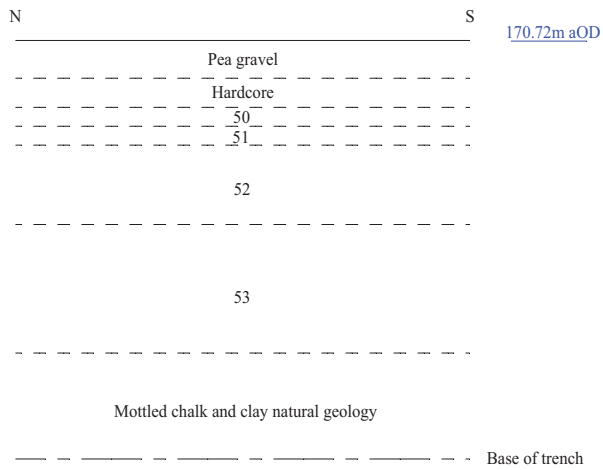


**St Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of evaluation trench.



THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



BPP 14/69

**St Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES





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



Plate 2. Trench 1 stratigraphy, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

BPP 14/69

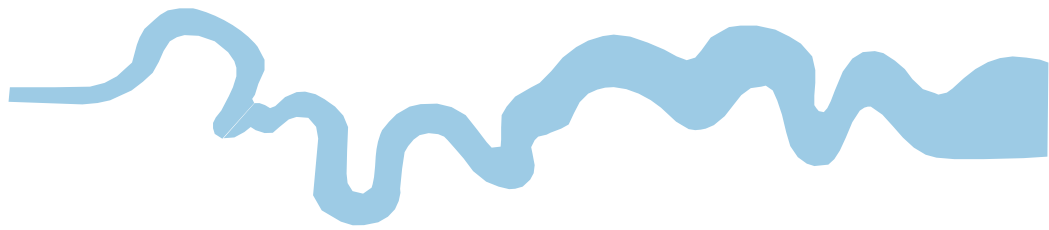
**St Benedicts, Parmoor Lane, Frieth,  
Buckinghamshire, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

## 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](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**