

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Mackney Court Farm, Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Steve Crabb

Site Code: MCF14/84

(SU5789 9019)

Mackney Court Farm, Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Recording Action

For MES Dart and Partners

by Steven Crabb

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code: MCF 14/84

May 2014

Summary

Site name: Mackney Court Farm, Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU5789 9019

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 20th- 28th May 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steven Crabb

Site code: MCF 14/84

Area of site: 950m²

Summary of results: No archaeological features were observed nor artefacts recovered. Little of the development proposal exposed the natural geology

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 ✓ 02.06.14 Steve Preston ✓ 02.06.14 |
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Mackney Court Farm, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire **An Archaeological Recording Action**

by Steven Crabb

Report 14/84

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on the site of Mackney Court Farm, Mackney Lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Oxfordshire (SU 5789 9019 (Fig. 1)). The work was commissioned by Mr Alex Lawrence of Reading Agricultural Consultants, Beechwood Court, Long Toll, Woodcote, Reading, on behalf of MES Dart and Partners, of Mackney Court Farm, Mackney lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell.

Planning permission (P13/S1361/F) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the erection of a new straw storage building, hard standing and access. Due to the potential of disturbance of any archaeological features present the consent includes a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation on the site. It was determined that this should take the form of a recording action being carried out 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 the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2013). The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll and Steven Crabb between 20th-28th May 2014, and the site code is MCF 14/84.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, to the west of Wallingford and east of Didcot in South Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). It lies amidst open farmland bisected by wet ditches which feed into the Mill Brook and Bradford's Brook to the south and east. The area of the development is currently open ground to the north of the existing farm buildings and hardstanding (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is on the boundary between upper

greensand and 2nd terrace gravel (BGS 1908) and the site is at 50m above Ordnance Datum with a very gentle slope down to the north.

Archaeological background

The site is located within the grounds of a medieval manorial house complex with parts of the house dating to 1509. To the north of the site is a medieval moat or garden feature. The site is also within a landscape of cropmark enclosures which may be of Iron Age or Roman date (Benson and Miles 1974). The closest of these are located approximately 120m to the south-west of the site (Fig. 2). Roman coins and pottery have also been recovered as surface finds from the surrounding area. An Iron Age occupation site and Roman features have been excavated to the south of the site at Sherwood Farm (Crabb 2012) and not far north of that site, a Medieval cemetery had previously been recorded (Pike 1964).

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the watching brief were to:

Excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the development.

Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site.

Establish the character of these deposits in an attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic etc.

Produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the area.

Results

Overburden removal and hardstanding area

The whole extent of the site comprising the area of hardstanding and the footprint of the barn was stripped of topsoil to a depth of between 0.1m and 0.2m. (Fig. 3). The area of the hardstanding did not require further excavation below this level as it is to be built up. The archaeologically relevant level at the top of the natural geology was not exposed.

Barn footing pads

The barn floor was to be earthen and it too required no further excavation to expose the archaeologically relevant level.

Sixteen footing pads (Fig. 3) were excavated using a 360⁰ type machine equipped with a toothless bucket. Each pad measured 1.2m by 1.5m and between 0.5m and 1.2m in depth. Footing pads 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 revealed modern truncations filled with 20th-century refuse. Pads 3, 8, 9 and 10 were not fully excavated due to the presence of modern water pipes, nor 12 due to the presence of a modern drain. The stratigraphy in all of the footing pads consisted of 0.4m of topsoil (including the 0.2m removed during the previous stripping) overlying dark grey brown clayey silt made ground up to 1.0m deep, which in turn lay on top of the greensand natural geology. No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed during this work.

Finds

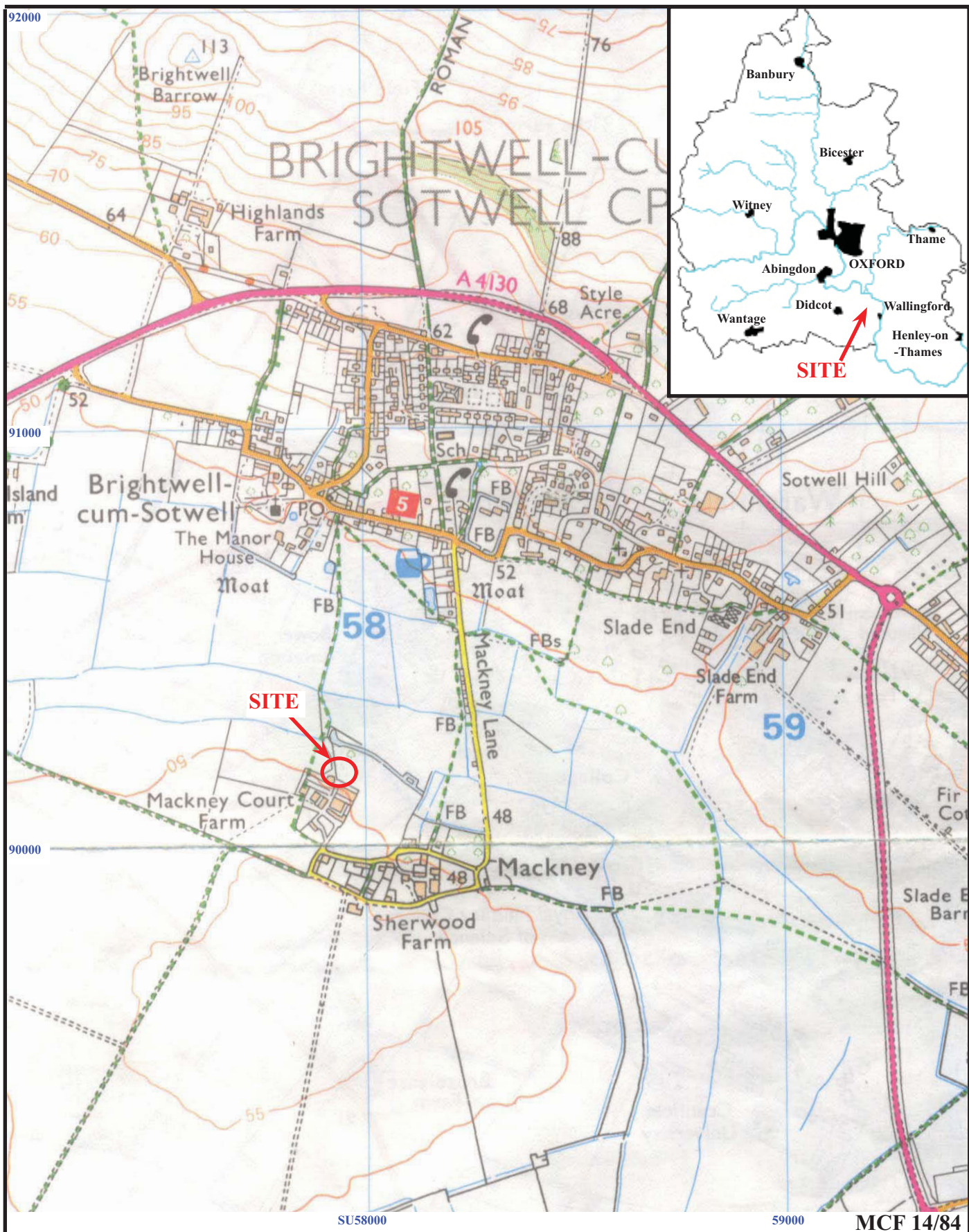
No finds were recovered from this site.

Conclusion

No archaeological features were observed during the intrusive groundworks at this site. The area of hardstanding was not reduced to a level which would have uncovered any archaeological features and only a few of footing pads revealed undisturbed natural geology.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Crabb, S, 2012, 'New barn Sherwood Farm, Mackney, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, an archaeological recording action', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 12/67, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2013, Design brief for Mackney Court Farm, Mackney Lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service
- Pike, G, 1964, 'A Medieval cemetery at Mackney Court Farm, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell', *Berkshire Archaeol J*, **61**, (for 1963–4), 40–7

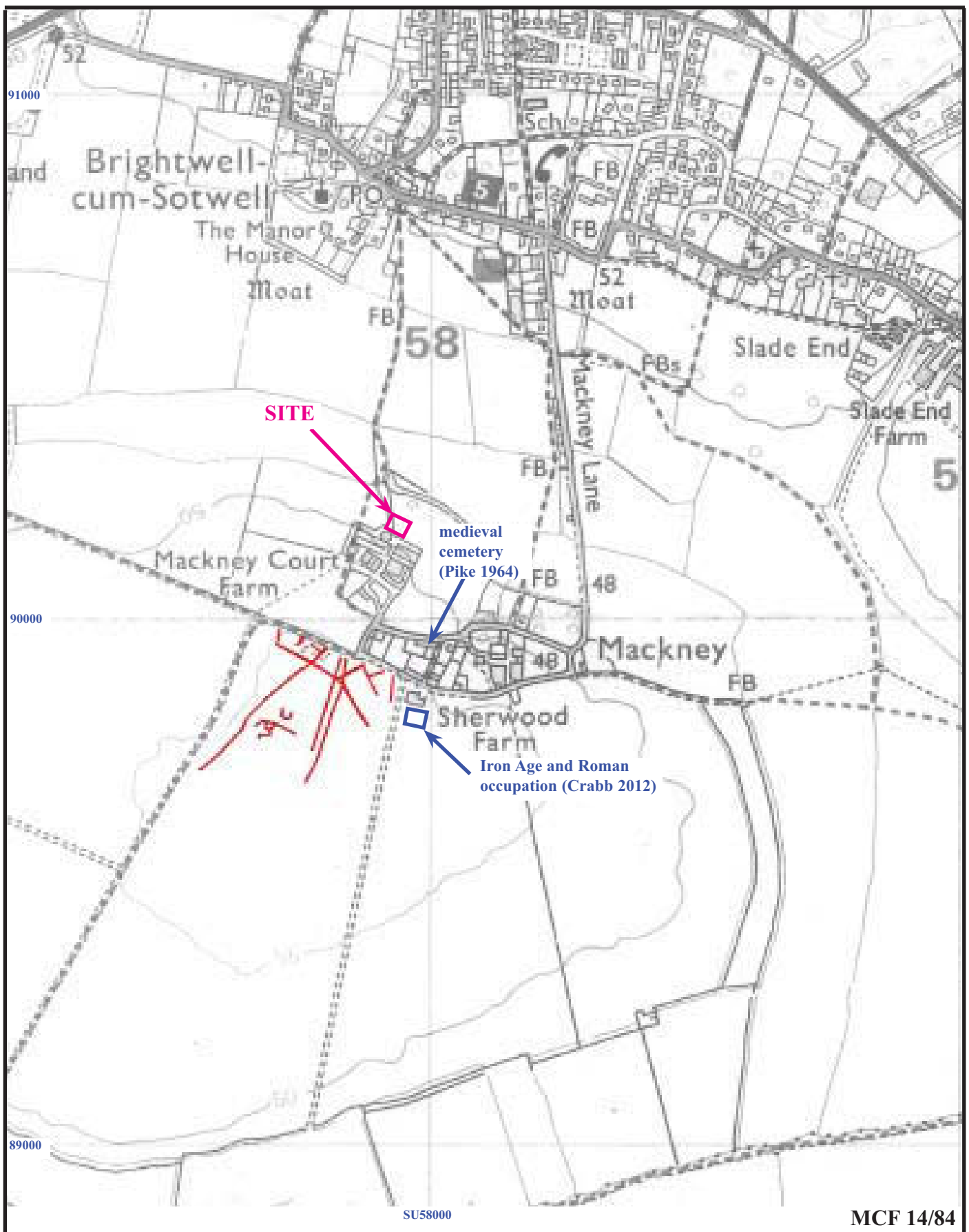


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Figure 1. Location of site within Mackney and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 170 at 1:12500
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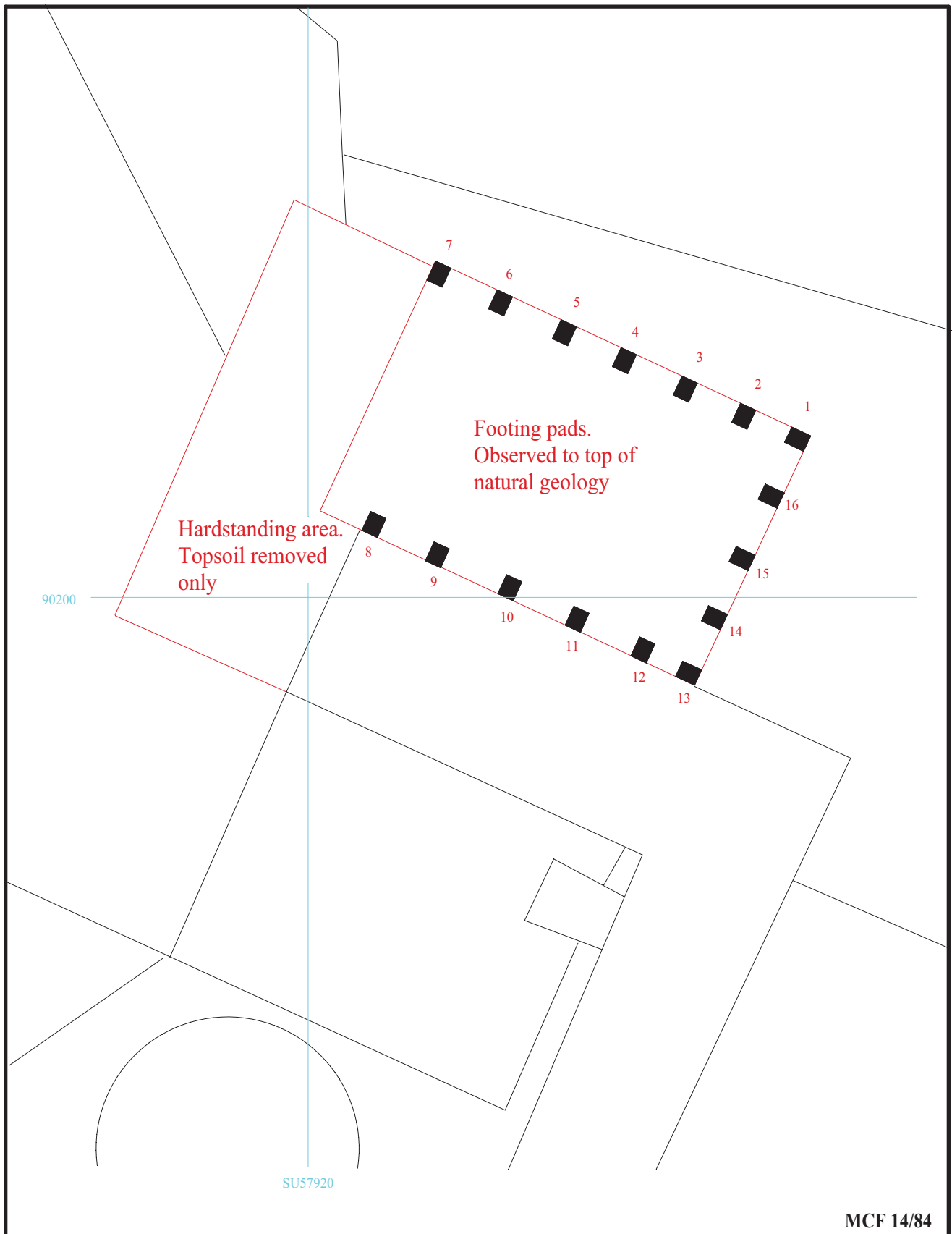
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Figure 2. Location of site in relation to cropmarks
(after Benson and Miles 1974) and previous archaeological work nearby.

Modified from Ordnance Survey Explorer map 170 at 1:10 000
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.





Plate 1. Footing pad 1, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Footing pad 14, looking north, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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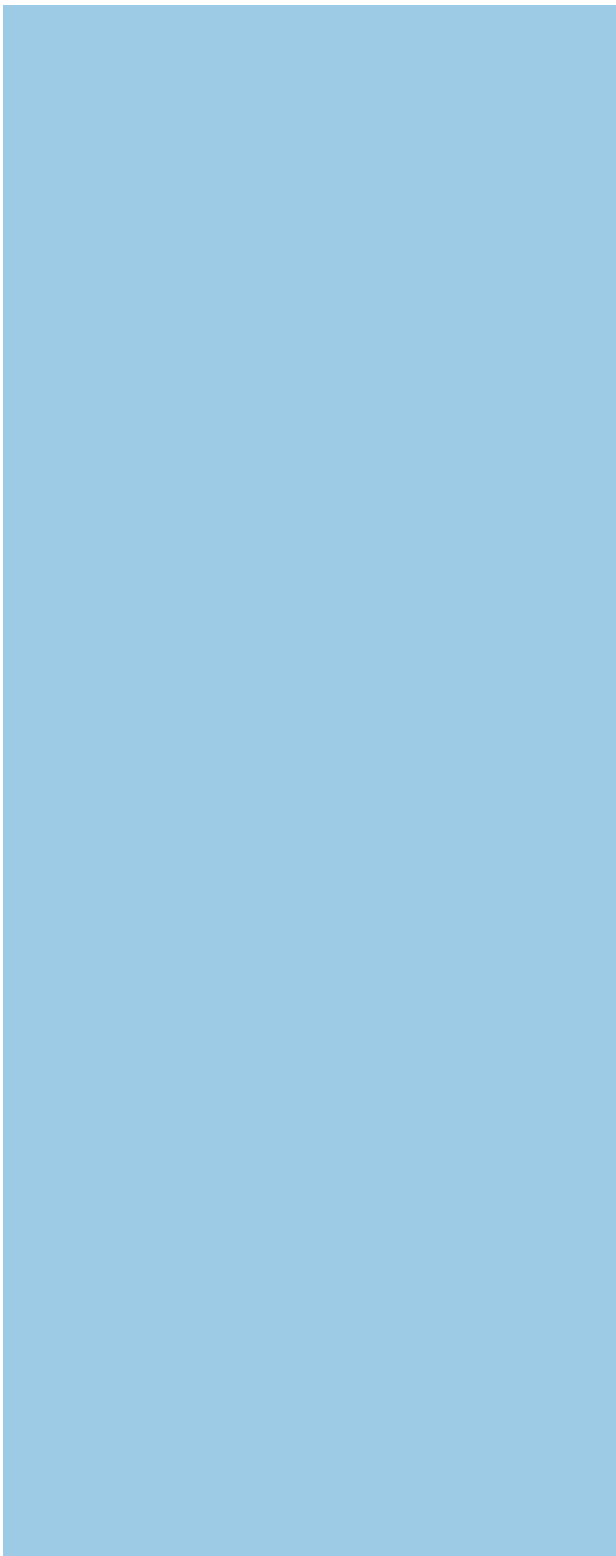
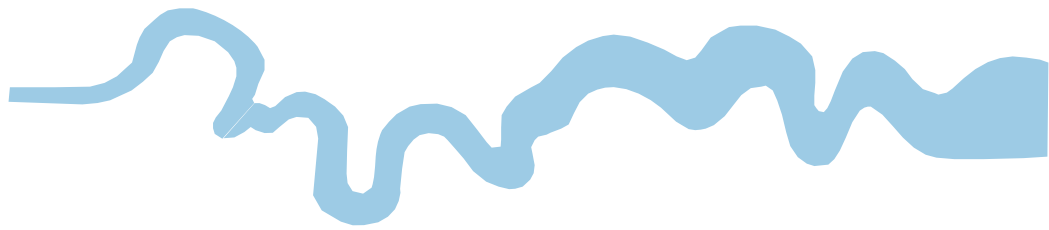
Plates 1 - 2.

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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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