

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road,
Banbury, Northamptonshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: ORB14/172

(SP 4588 9654)

M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Barwood Developments Ltd**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ORB 14/172

September 2014

Summary

Site name: M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire

Grid reference: SP 4588 9654

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 3rd-5th September 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: ORB 14/172

Area of site: 0.88ha

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified, modern truncations located across the site possibly relate to the former munitions factory to the east. A boundary ditch located at the western edge of the site was also investigated and found to be modern.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Northamptonshire archives when it is opened.

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

Report edited/checked by: Genni Elliott✓ 11.09.09 Danielle Milbank✓ 12.09.14

M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 14/172

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land off Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire (SP 4588 9654) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Webster of Barwood Developments Ltd, Green Park Court, Roman Way, Northampton.

Planning permission has been gained from Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire District Councils (apps 14/00180/OUT and S/2014/0302/MAO) for the construction of a new industrial/warehouse unit on land south of Overthorpe Road and west of the M40 at Banbury, Oxfordshire. The latter consent is subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology. The results of a field evaluation have been requested to determine if the portion of the site (0.88ha) which lies within Northamptonshire has archaeological potential and if so, produce information 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 Ms Liz Mordue of Northamptonshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Tom Stewart between 3rd and 5th September 2014 and the site code is ORB 14/172. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Northamptonshire Archives in due course once opened.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in a parcel of land c.0.88ha in size to the south of Overthorpe Road and to the west of the M40 near Junction 11 on the eastern side of Banbury (Fig. 1). The general topography of the site is uneven and covered with short crops and grass. The underlying geology is described as Lower Lias Clay (BGS 1982) which was observed on site. The site lies at 90.66m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2004) followed by a large (112 trench) evaluation (Ford 2008). In summary, the sites lies beyond the historic core of Banbury but within the general area where a medieval hospital once stood. However extensive trenching of the site revealed very little of archaeological interest. A few undated or post-medieval field boundaries were revealed along with a few sherds of medieval pottery and a single sherd of Roman pottery.

There is also a possibility that the remains of a First World War munitions factory are present on the site, with the bulk of the factory lying to the east of the M40.

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 specific research aims of this project are;

- a) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- b) To determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features are present on the site.
- c) To determine if there are later prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval deposits present on the site.
- d) To determine if there are any First World War industrial facilities on the site.

Eleven trenches were to be excavated using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, each measuring 22m long and 1.6m wide in a stratified random pattern. Archaeological deposits, if present, were to be cleaned and further excavated by hand.

Results

The trenches were dug as intended and measured between 21.5m and 22.0m in length, and 0.45m to 1.40m in depth, and were all 1.8m wide. Three additional trenches were dug across a boundary ditch on the western edge of the site. These trenches measured between 9.0m and 13.40m in length, and were up to 1.10m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

In general the trenches were covered by both topsoil and varying depths of subsoil overlying natural geology, with several trenches containing modern truncations, and a boundary ditch identified at the western edge of the site.

Trench 1 (Fig 3)

Trench 1 was aligned S - N and was 22.0m long and 0.79m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil, 0.46m hardcore/made ground and 0.23m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern drain was observed at the northern end of the trench. No finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.60m long and 0.59m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 3 (Fig 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW - NE and was 21.90m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.41m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 4 (Fig 3)

Trench 4 was aligned S - N and was 21.70m long and 0.74m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil, 0.50m hardcore/made ground and 0.10m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern disturbance was observed at the northern end of the trench which was in-filled with glass bottles, ceramic bottles, saucepans and other domestic debris.

Trench 5 (Fig 3)

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.60m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.50m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 6 (Fig 3)

Trench 6 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.60m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.43m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 7 (Fig 3)

Trench 7 was aligned SW - NE and was 21.50m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.42m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 8 (Fig 3)

Trench 8 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.80m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.45m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 9 (Fig 3)

Trench 9 was aligned SW - NE and was 22.10m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.35m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 10 (Fig 3, Pl. 4)

Trench 10 was aligned SE - NW and was 22.0m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.34m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern drain was observed at the north western end of the trench.

Trench 11 (Fig 3)

Trench 11 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.9m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern drain was observed at the northern end of the trench.

Trench 12 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 5)

Trench 12 was aligned SW - NE and was 13.4m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.40m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern ditch (1) was recorded aligned SE - NW which cut the topsoil. It measured 1.2m wide at the base of the trench and was 0.27m deep, fragments of glass including an inkwell were recovered during excavation. At the western end of the trench a concrete culvert was observed.

Trench 13 (Fig 3)

Trench 13 was aligned SW - NE and was 9.0m long and 0.74m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil and 0.36m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern boundary ditch was observed aligned SW-NE and represents the same feature encountered as ditch (1) in trench 12.

Trench 14 (Fig 3, Pl. 6)

Trench 14 was aligned SE - NW and was 9.2m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.65m subsoil overlying the sandy clay natural geology. A modern boundary ditch was observed aligned SW-NE and is the same ditch as ditch (1) in trench 12.

Finds

No finds were recovered from site.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed that whilst archaeologically relevant levels survive on site, no archaeological features or deposits were identified. A small number of modern truncations in the form of drains were observed across the site. A large modern truncation was observed in trench 4 which may relate to the former munitions factory that occupied the site up to and after the Second World War. A modern boundary ditch was also recorded, aligned north-south between the fields, again this may be related to the munitions factory however no evidence was found to support this.

References

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 201, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2004, Land at Spital Farm, Banbury, Oxfordshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/60, Reading
- Ford, S, 2008, Land at Spital Farm, Banbury, Oxfordshire, an archaeological excavation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/60b, Reading
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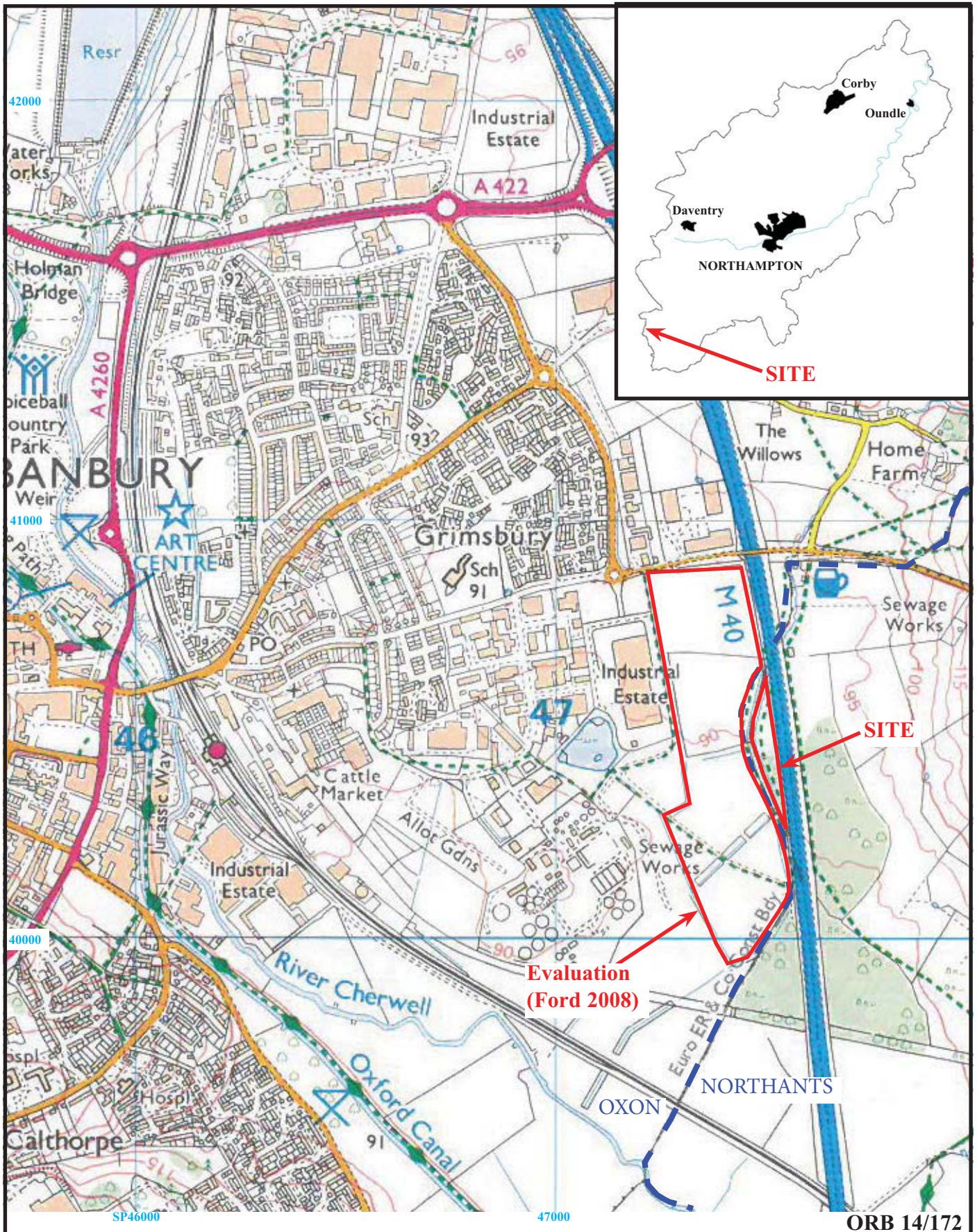
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S, SW or SE end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	22.0	1.8	0.79	0-0.10m dark brown loamy topsoil, 0.10-0.56m made ground/hardcore, 0.56-0.79m mottled orange brown sandy silt subsoil, 0.79m+ natural geology consisting of sandy clays
2	21.60	1.8	0.59	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.50m subsoil, 0.50m+ natural geology
3	21.90	1.8	0.60	0-0.19m topsoil, 0.19-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology
4	21.70	1.8	0.74	0-0.10m topsoil, 0.10-0.60m made ground/hardcore, 0.60-0.70m subsoil, 0.70m+ natural geology. PI. 3
5	21.60	1.8	0.70	0-0.10m topsoil, 0.10-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology
6	21.60	1.8	0.70	0-0.17m topsoil, 0.17-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology
7	21.50	1.8	0.62	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.62m subsoil, 0.62m+ natural geology
8	21.80	1.8	0.70	0-0.15m topsoil, 0.15-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology
9	22.10	1.8	0.70	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.65m subsoil, 0.65m+ natural geology
10	22.0	1.8	0.60	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.54m subsoil, 0.54m+ natural geology PI. 4
11	21.9	1.8	0.45	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.45m subsoil, 0.45m+ natural geology
12	13.4	1.8	0.70	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.70m subsoil, 0.70m+ natural geology Ditch 1 PI. 5
13	9.0	1.8	0.74	0-0.32m topsoil, 0.32-0.68m subsoil, 0.68m+ natural geology
14	9.2	1.8	1.10	0-0.35m topsoil, 0.35-1.00m subsoil, 1.00m+ natural geology PI. 6

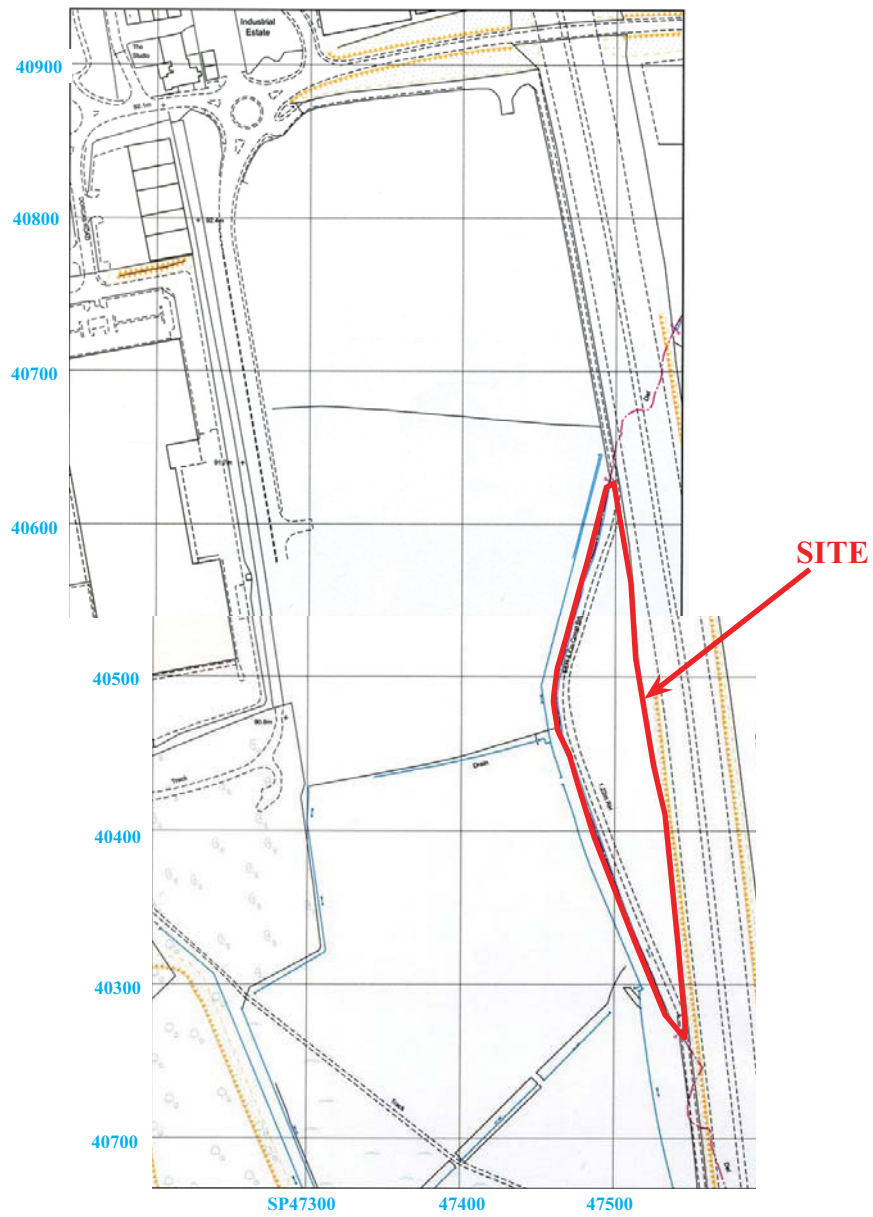
APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
12	1	52	Ditch	Modern	Stratigraphy, Glass



**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Banbury and 2008
evaluation area.

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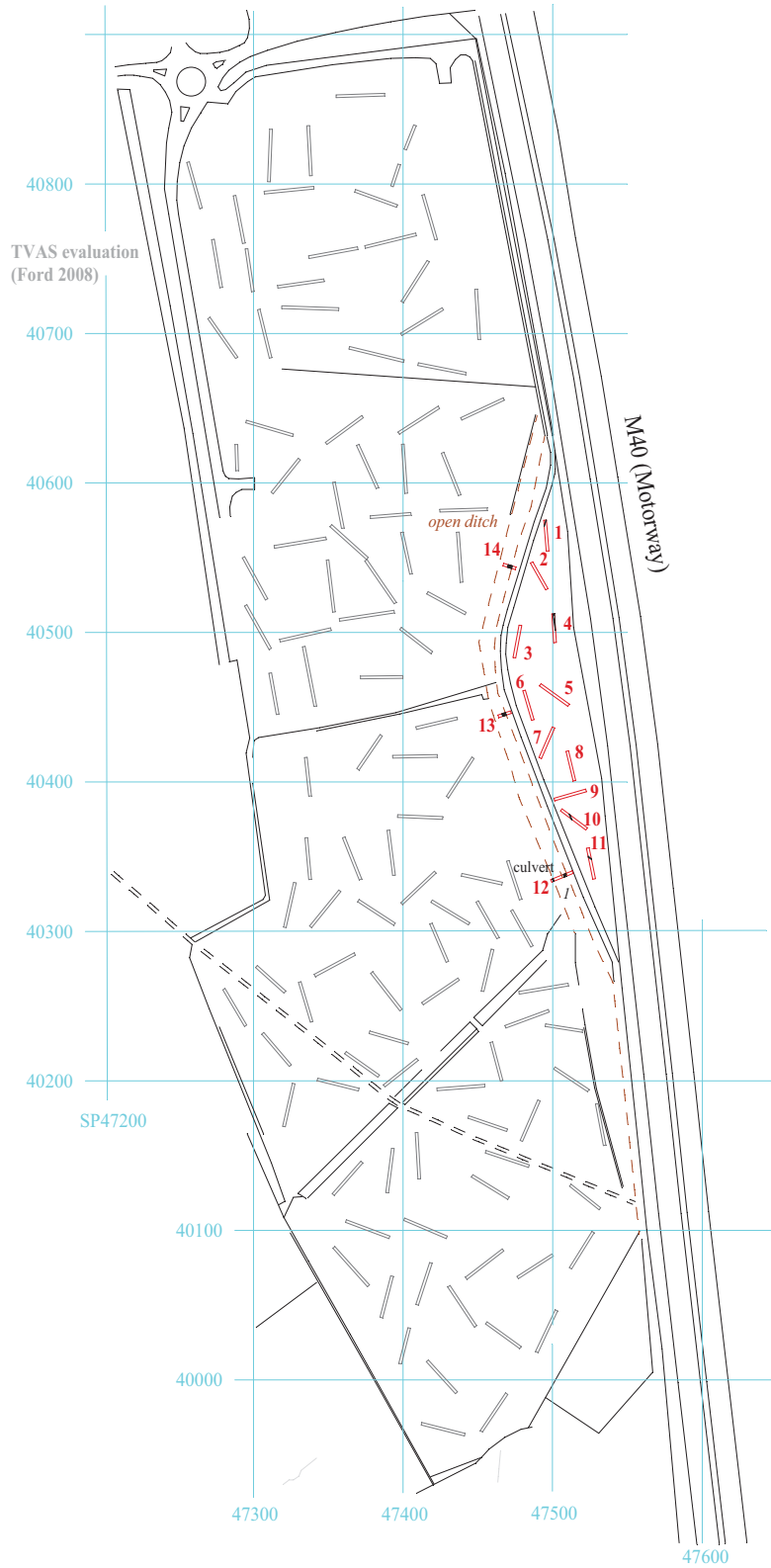


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of 2014 trenches (red) in Northants, compared to location of 2008 trenches (grey) in Oxfordshire.



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Plate 1. Track around west of site with boundary ditch on left, looking north.



Plate 2. Exposed concrete culvert, looking north north east.

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**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,
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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 4, looking south, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m



Plate 4. Trench 10, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 12, base of ditch (slot 1), looking north, Scales: 2m and 0.1m.



Plate 6. Trench 14, excavated ditch section, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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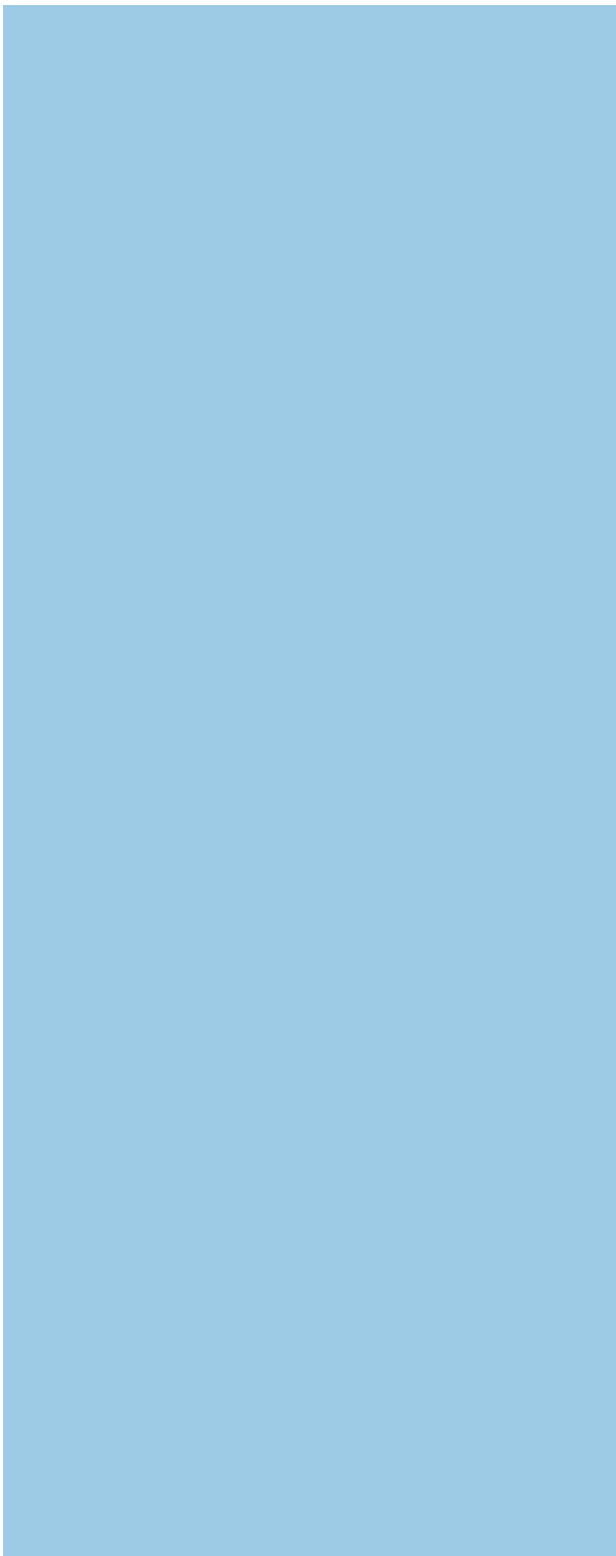
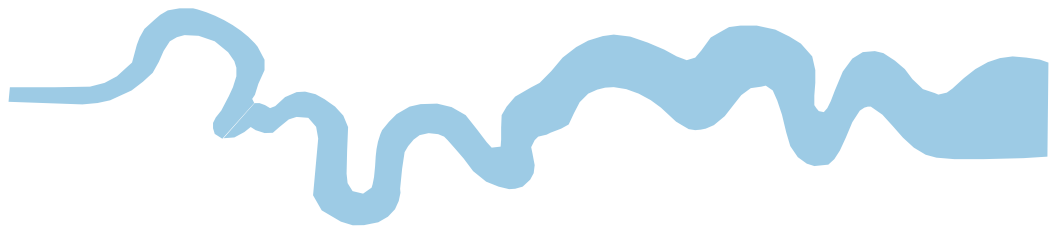
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Plates 5 and 6.

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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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