

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land at Upper Farm Road,  
Chilton, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock**

**Site Code: UCO15/09**

**(SU 4840 8575)**

# **Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire**

## **An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mrs H. King-Thompson and Mrs H. Shorthouse**

by James McNicoll-Norbury and

Kyle Beaverstock

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code UCO15/09

**April 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 4840 8575

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 15th - 17th April 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** UCO15/09

**Area of site:** c.3.2ha

**Summary of results:** The evaluation revealed various linear features (gulleys,ditches) and a single pit showing a strong correlation with the results of a previous geophysical survey. Most of these features were undated but a pair of parallel gullies recorded in several trenches were thought to be a trackway dated by pottery to the Late Bronze Age. The southern and north-eastern portions of the site appear to contain no features, despite geophysical anomalies in the south, and the absence of subsoil suggests these areas have been disturbed.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:  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✓ 30.04.15 Steve Preston✓ 30.04.15
---

# Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock

Report 15/09

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out Upper Farm Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire (SU 4840 8575) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Handy of Strutt and Parker LLP, 269 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7LL on behalf of Mrs H. King -Thompson and Mrs H. Shorthouse.

Planning permission (app no: P14/V2462/O) is being sought from the Vale of White Horse District Council for the construction of a new housing on a plot of land of *c.* 3.2ha. As part of the planning application, an archaeological evaluation was requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and so inform the planning process with regards to the archaeological implications of the proposed development and, if appropriate, produce information to help devise a scheme to mitigate any such impact.

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 Mr Hugh Coddington, Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The specification was based on a brief provided by Mr Coddington (Coddington 2015). The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Lizzie Lewins and the site code is UCO15/09. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site consists of a trapezoidal parcel of land directly west of the A34 and the village of Chilton, 5km south-west of Didcot and south of Harwell Laboratories and Chilton Primary School. The site lies on the south-east side of Upper Farm Road covering an area of 3.2ha and is relatively flat lying at a height between 116m-117m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). An area of 0.78ha in the north-eastern corner is occupied by an industrial building and yard separated from the field by a hedge and trees. The site is bounded by a wooden post-and-rail fencing to the east, trees and a machine dug trench to the south and west and metal fence and trees separate the

field from the footpath to the north. The underlying geology is recorded as Head and Younger Coombe Deposits (BGS 1971).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site area stems from the presence of a number of sites and finds recorded within the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record. Most significant of these is the presence of a small Roman villa *c.*400m to the west with surrounding field system (Pine and Preston 2014; and forthcoming). The excavation also revealed an underlying Middle Iron Age house, and more tentatively, sub-Roman or early Saxon settlement. Elsewhere to the north further Iron Age deposits have been recorded.

## **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:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there are prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and or medieval deposits present on the site; and
- to determine if geophysical anomalies are of archaeological origin.

Twenty-two trenches were to be dug, each 17m long and 1.6m wide, using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Any archaeological features were to be hand excavated and spoilheaps monitored for finds.

## **Results**

The trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2) and ranged in length from 14–20.9m and varied considerably in depth from 0.24–0.77m. In general, the stratigraphy comprised topsoil up to 0.28m in depth and subsoil up to 0.49m in depth overlying the natural sand geology. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 summarizes the features excavated.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned south to north and was 17.5m long and 0.77m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.49m subsoil overlying natural geology. In correlation with the geophysical survey a ditch (1) was recorded which was 0.94m wide and 0.28m deep and filled with (52) (Pl. 5). No finds were recovered.

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

Trench 2 was aligned east to west and was 19m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. A gully (2) was recorded which was 0.6m wide and 0.15m deep and filled with (53). No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned south-west to north-east and was 18.5m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4, Pls 2 and 5)

Trench 4 was aligned south to north and was 18m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.19m subsoil overlying natural geology. In correlation with the geophysical survey a ditch (3) was recorded which was 1.11m wide and 0.34m deep and filled with (54). No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned south-west to north-east and was 20m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned west to east and was 18.8m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned south-west to north-east and was 17.9m long and 0.63m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.4m subsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 8 was aligned south-east to north-west and was 20.9m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.2m subsoil overlying natural geology. In correlation with the geophysical survey a

possible ditch (4) was recorded which was 1.29m wide and 0.3m deep and filled with (55). No finds were recovered. Further anomalies detected by the geophysical survey were not observed.

#### Trench 9 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 9 was aligned south to north and was 20.3m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil overlying natural geology. A pit (5) was recorded which was 0.91m wide and 0.29m deep it had three fills (56, 57 and 58) none of which produced any dating evidence although two small fragments of animal bone were recovered from a sieved soil sample (1). Further anomalies detected by the geophysical survey were not observed.

#### Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned south to north and was 17m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned west to east and was 17m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned south-west to north-east and was 16m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.06m of Tarmac, 0.23m of crush, 0.11m of made ground and 0.22m of subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned south to north and was 14m long and 0.24m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of made ground overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 14

Trench 14 was aligned west to east and was 14.5m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of made ground overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 15 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 3)

Trench 15 was aligned south to north and was 19m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.2m subsoil overlying natural geology. In correlation with the geophysical survey, two gullies (8

and 9) were recorded, gully 8 was 0.64m wide and 0.14m deep and filled with (61). Gully 9 was 1.07m wide and 0.2m deep and was filled with (62), neither gullies produced any dating evidence.

#### Trench 16 (Figs 3 and 4, Pls 4 and 6)

Trench 16 was aligned south-east to north-west and was 20m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.2m subsoil overlying natural geology. In correlation with the geophysical survey two gullies (6 and 7) were recorded, gully 6 was 0.62m wide and 0.13m deep and filled with (59) which contained 33 sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery. Gully 7 was 0.61m wide and 0.16m deep and was filled with (60), no finds were recovered.

#### Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned south-east to north-west and was 20.4m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned west to east and was 19m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.43m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 19

Trench 19 was aligned west to east and was 18.3m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.63m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned west to east and was 19.8m long and 0.29m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 21

Trench 21 was aligned west to east and was 19.5m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 22

Trench 22 was aligned south-east to north-west and was 20m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil overlying natural geology. Despite anomalies detected by the geophysical survey no archaeological features were observed.



## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 33 sherds with a total weight of 117g. They were all from a single vessel of prehistoric date, and all occurred in gully 6 (fill 59). The vessel is hand-built, with a moderate temper of fine angular white flint up to 2mm. Most of the base, and part of the upright rim (diameter = 120mm, 15% complete) were reconstructable. Most of the body was missing, so the original shape of the vessel is uncertain, but it seems likely from the remaining sherds to have originally been of ovoid form.

Ovoid vessels with simple upright rims are fairly typical of the Late Bronze Age, specifically the post-Deverel-Rimbury plainware tradition (Knight 2002, 124), and such vessels in flint-tempered fabrics are well-known in the region. For example, a number were noted amongst the Late Bronze Age assemblage from the Spring Road Municipal Cemetery site in Abingdon (Barclay 2008, 40 – 2). This vessel would appear to be of a similar date. It is in very good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

### *Animal Bone* by Danielle Milbank

A small quantity of fragmented disarticulated animal bone was retrieved from a sieved soil sample of deposit 57 in undated pit 5. This comprised 2 pieces (4g) of long bone, of a size suggestive of a medium-sized animal (sheep/goat or pig). The fragments have no butchery marks, and no further information could be derived from the remains.

## **Conclusion**

A number of potential archaeological deposits were observed during this evaluation, most of which correlated with anomalies detected by the geophysical survey (Bray and Dawson 2015) although only a single feature supplied datable evidence (Fig. 5). The feature in question yielded 33 fragments of a single pot dated to the late Bronze Age. This gully (6, in Trench 16) was one of two parallel east–west features also observed in Trench 15 and detected by the geophysical survey. These may be part of a trackway or hedge bank, a Bronze Age boundary type found increasingly within the Thames Valley area (Robinson and Lambrick 2009, 58). Bronze Age pottery was also found at the Chilton Fields villa site to the west, though very fragmentary.

Only a single feature had not been predicted by the geophysical survey. No trace, however, was found of the anomalies in the southern part of the site, where the absence of subsoil (Trenches 5, 20, 21 and 22) suggests

the area may have been truncated. The ground level in the north-east corner of the site (Trenches 12–14) had been made up but also lacked subsoil: there were no features in this area.

## References

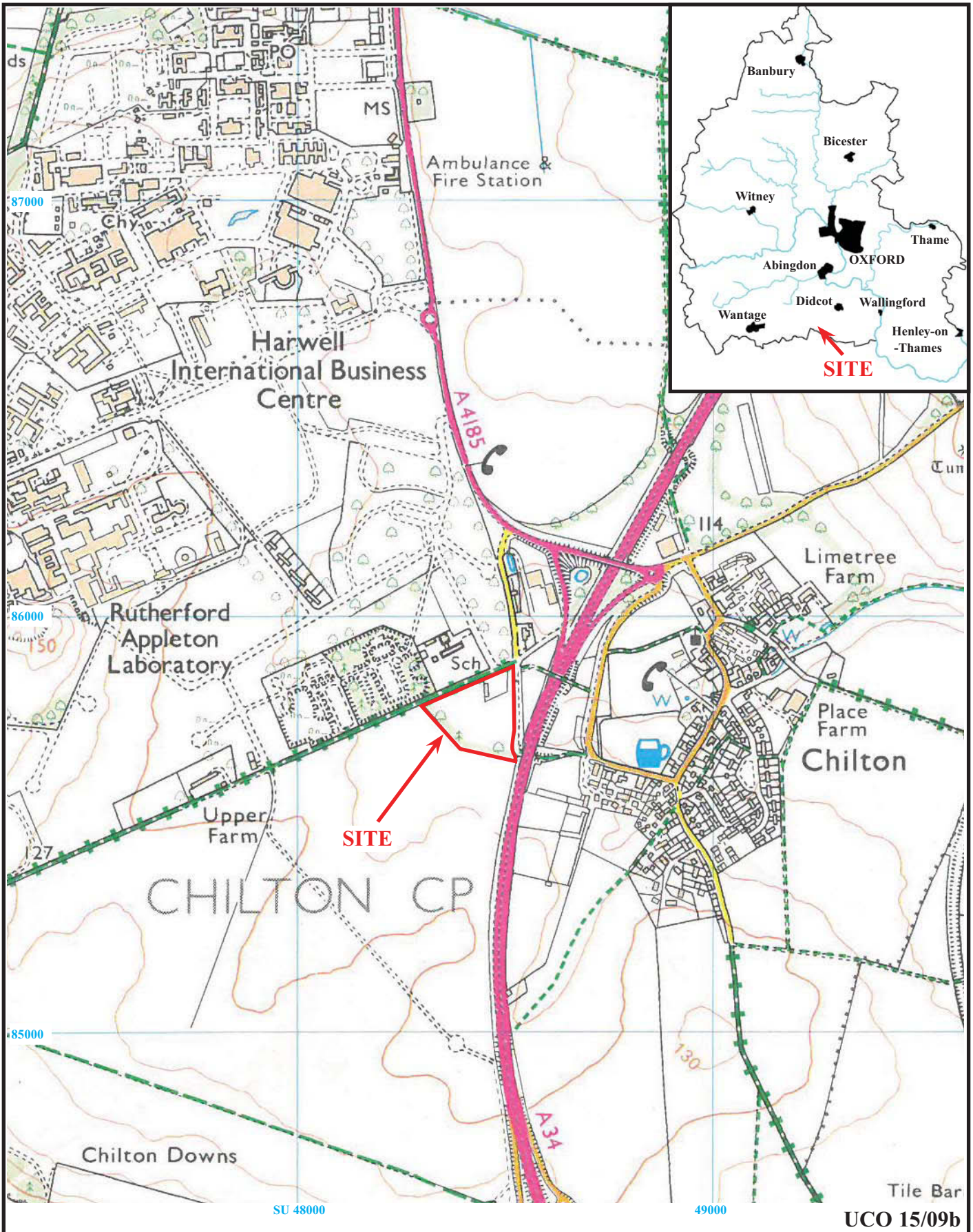
- Barclay, A, 2008, 'Later Bronze Age Pottery', in T Allen and Z Kamash, *Saved From the Grave. Neolithic to Saxon discoveries at Spring Road Municipal Cemetery, Abingdon, Oxfordshire*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr**28**, Oxford, 39–42
- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000 Sheet 253, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Bray, D and Dawson, T, 2015, *A Geophysical Survey at Upper Farm Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **15/09**, Reading
- Coddington, H, 2015, 'Land off Upper Farm Road, Chilton Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation', Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford
- Knight, D, 2002, 'A Regional Ceramic Sequence: Pottery of the First Millennium BC between the Humber and the Nene', in A Woodward and J D Hill (eds), *Prehistoric Britain: The Ceramic Basis*, Prehistoric Ceramics Res Grp Occas Publ n **3**, Oxford, 119–42
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Pine, J and Preston, S, 2014, 'An Iron Age roundhouse and Roman villa at Chilton Fields, Oxfordshire, post-excavation assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **05/111b**, Reading
- Pine, J and Preston, S, 2014, *An Iron Age Roundhouse and Roman Villa at Chilton Fields, Oxfordshire*, TVAS Monogr **21**, Reading
- Robinson, M and Lambrick, G, 2009, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscape Monogr **29**, Oxford

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	17.50	1.60	0.77	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.69m mid grey brown silty clay subsoil; 0.69m+ mid brown white chalk natural geology with clay and gravel patches. Ditch 1 <b>[PI. 5]</b>
2	19.00	1.60	0.36	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ natural geology. Gully 2 <b>[PI. 1]</b>
3	18.50	1.60	0.40	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology
4	18.00	1.60	0.40	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ natural geology. Gully 3 <b>[PI. 2]</b>
5	20.00	1.60	0.38	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23m+ natural geology
6	18.80	1.60	0.40	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ natural geology
7	17.90	1.60	0.63	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23m-0.63m subsoil; 0.63m+ natural geology
8	20.90	1.60	0.46	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18m-0.38m light brown grey silty clay subsoil with occasional gravel; 0.38m+ natural geology. Ditch 4.
9	20.30	1.60	0.31	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19m+ natural geology. Pit 5.
10	17.00	1.60	0.43	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m+ natural geology
11	17.00	1.60	0.40	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m natural geology
12	16.00	1.60	0.70	0-0.06n Tarmac; 0.06-0.29 made ground; 0.29m-0.40m made ground; 0.40m-0.62m dark grey brown silty clay subsoil; 0.62m+ natural geology
13	14.00	1.60	0.24	0-0.24m made ground; 0.24m+ contaminated natural
14	14.50	1.60	0.40	0-0.30m made ground; 0.30m+ light brown white chalk and clay geology with occasional gravel inclusions
15	19.00	1.60	0.45	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18m-0.38m light brown grey silty clay subsoil with occasional gravel; 0.38m+ mid brown white chalk geology with clay and gravel patches. Gullies 8 and 9. <b>[PI. 3]</b>
16	20.00	1.60	0.42	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16m-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ natural geology. Gullies 6 and 7 <b>[PIs 4, 6]</b>
17	20.40	1.60	0.35	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12m-0.29 subsoil; 0.29m+ natural geology
18	19.00	1.60	0.70	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27m-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ natural geology
19	18.30	1.60	0.30-0.75	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ natural geology
20	19.80	1.60	0.29	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26m+ natural geology
21	19.50	1.60	0.35	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m+ natural geology
22	20.00	1.60	0.35	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m+ natural geology

**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Ditch		
2	2	53	Gully		
4	3	54	Ditch		
8	4	55	Ditch		
9	5	56-58	Pit		
16	6	59	Gully	Bronze Age?	Pottery
16	7	60	Gully		
15	8	61	Gully		
15	9	62	Gully		

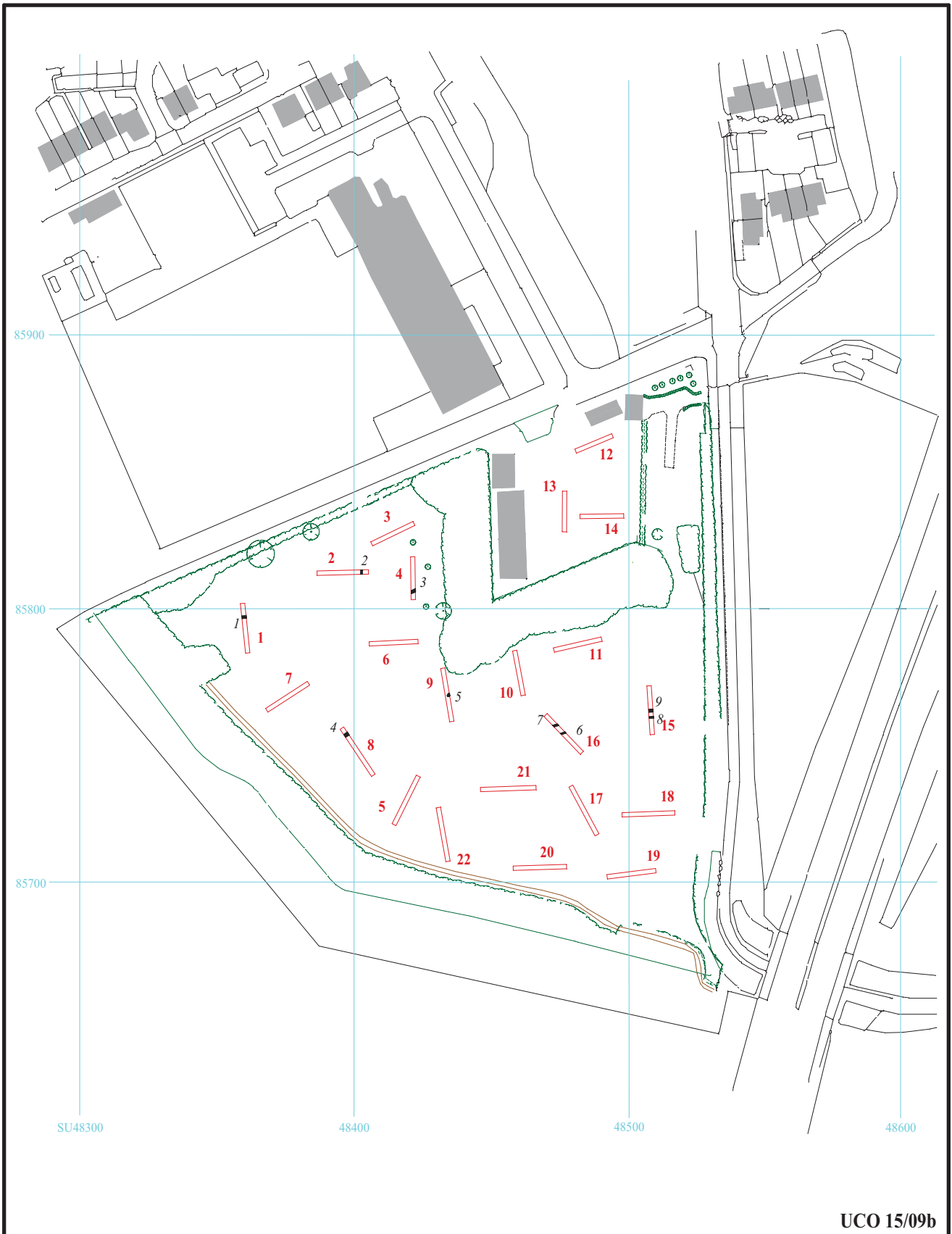


**Land at Upper Road Farm, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Chilton and Oxfordshire

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 145 at 1:12500  
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



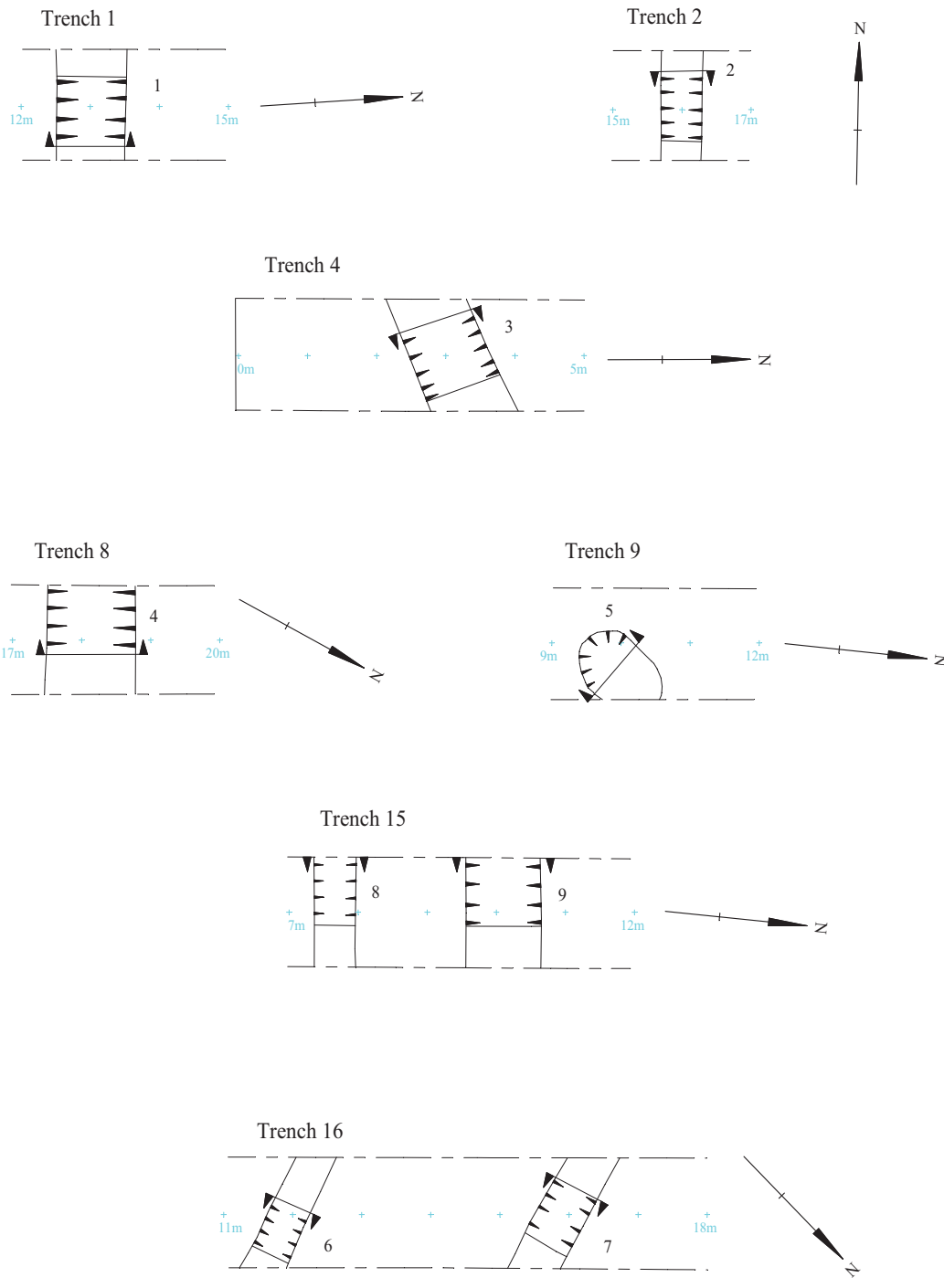
UCO 15/09b

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Location of trenches and excavated features.



THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

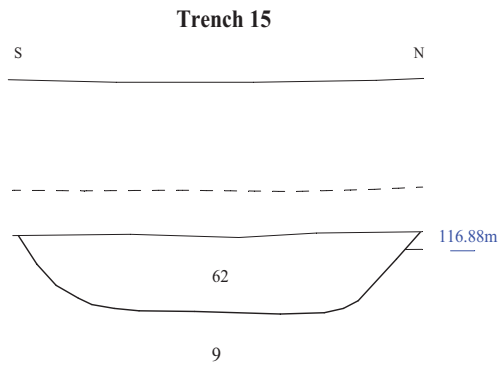
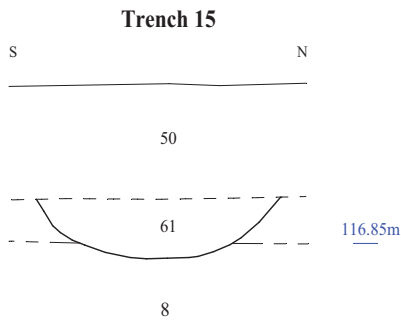
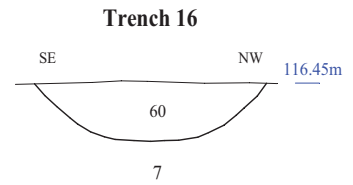
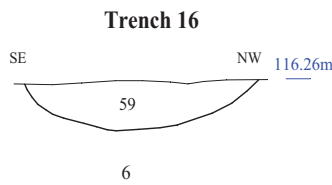
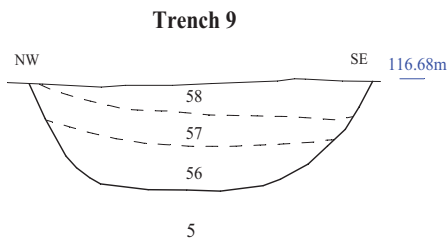
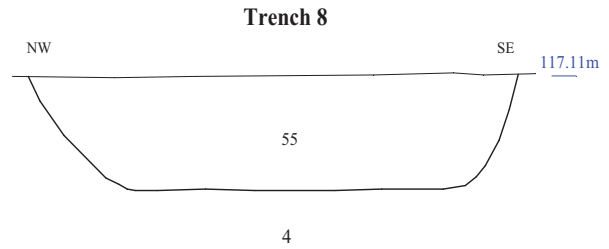
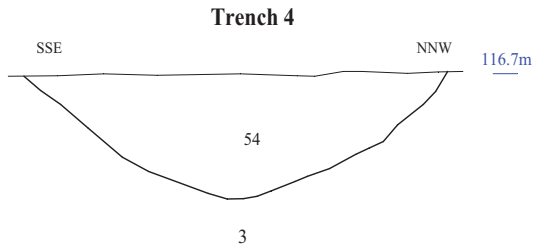
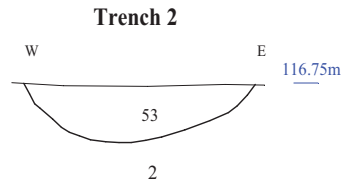
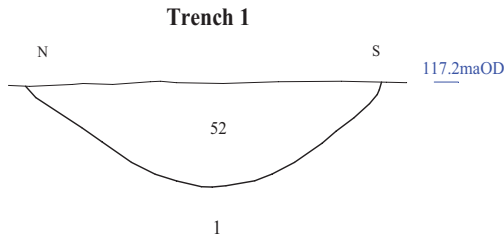


UCO 15/09b

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Detail of trenches.





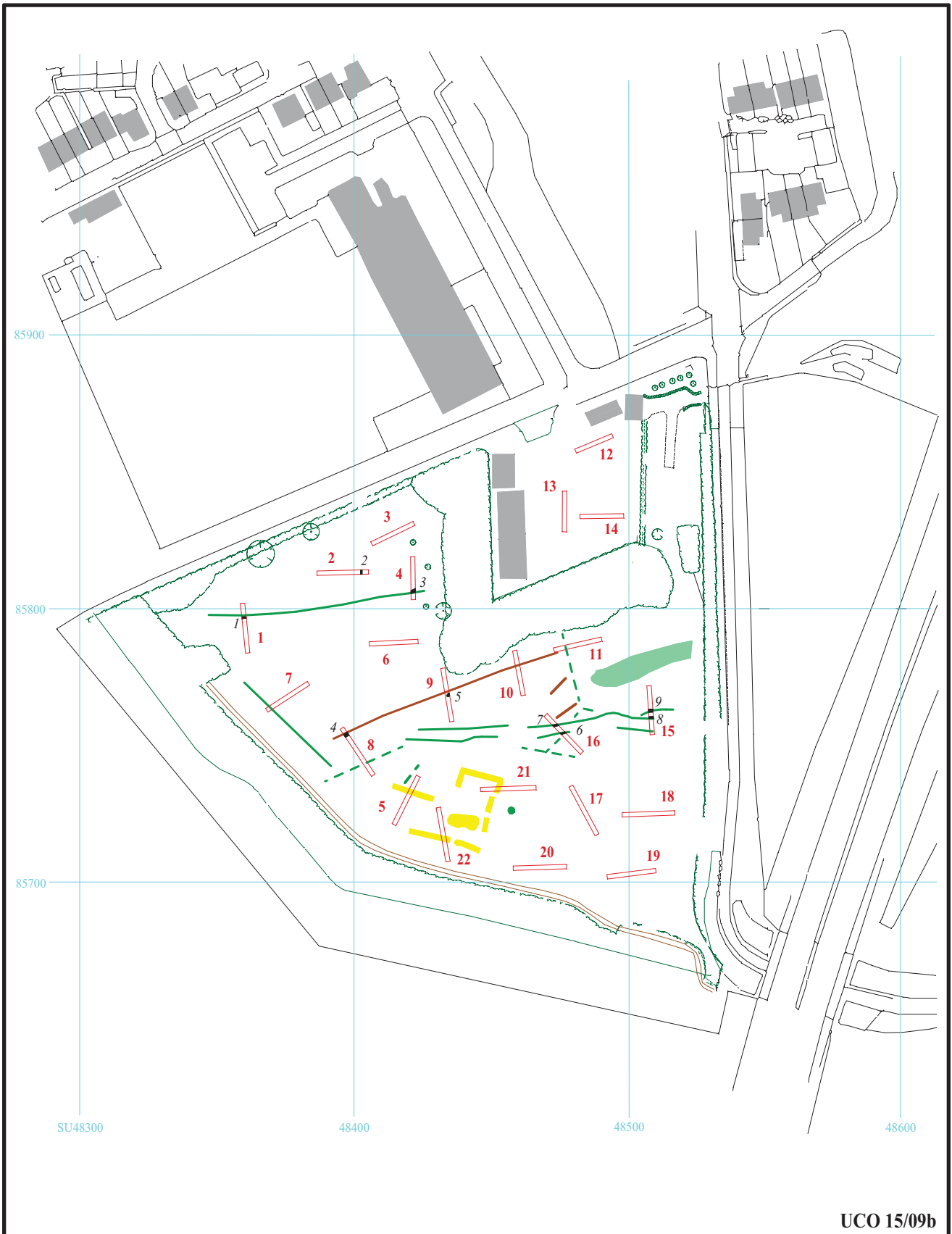
116.88m D

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Sections.







UCO 15/09b

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Location of trenches compared to geophysical anomalies.



THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 1. Trench 2, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

UCO 15/09b

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 3. Trench 15, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 16, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

UCO 15/09b

**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 3 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 5. Trench 1, ditch 3, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 16, gully 6, looking west, Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.1m.

UCO 15/09b

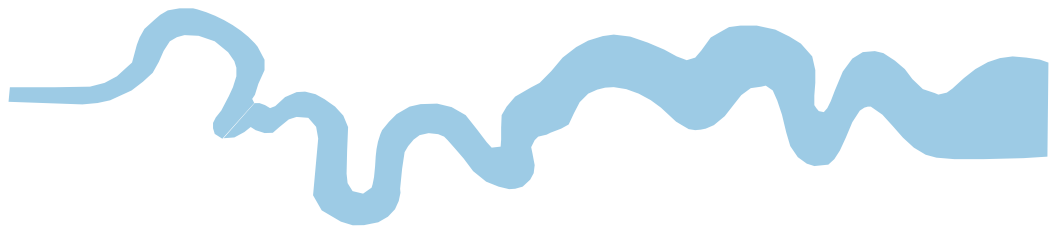
**Land at Upper Farm Road, Chilton,  
Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 5 - 6.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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)**