

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Lea Meadow, Peppard Road,  
Sonning Common, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by James McNicoll-Norbury**

**Site Code: LMS15/99**

**(SU 7118 7959)**

**Lea Meadow, Peppard Road,  
Sonning Common, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Bewley Homes plc**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LMS 15/99

**July 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Lea Meadow, Peppard Road, Sonning Common, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7118 7959

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 14th–16th July 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** LMS 15/99

**Area of site:** 3.4ha

**Summary of results:** The trenching investigated a number of anomalies previously recorded for the site identified by geophysical survey and aerial photography. However, no archaeological deposits or finds were identified and the site is considered to have no potential for post-glacial archaeology.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

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# **Lea Meadow, Peppard Road, Sonning Common, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 15/99b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Lea Meadow, Peppard Road, Sonning Common, Oxfordshire (SU 7118 7959) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stevan Wright of Bewley Homes PLC, Inhurst House, Brimpton Road, Baughurst, Hampshire, RG26 5JJ.

An application for a housing development at Lea Meadow, Peppard Road, on the southern edge of Sonning Common is to be made to South Oxfordshire District Council. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks evaluation of the site was requested to inform the planning application. The evaluation comprised two components; initial geophysical survey followed by trenching. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 128) and the District Council's Local Plan policies.

The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Sophie Frampton between 14th and 16th July 2015 and the site code is LMS 15/99. The work was carried out according to a written scheme of investigation specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, the adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the south-western side of Peppard Road, south of Sonning Common, approximately 6km to the north of Reading (Fig. 1). The site itself is rectangular and consists of relatively flat grassed paddocks at a height of c.85m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). It is currently being used as grazing land for horses and is divided by post-and-wire fences with a stable block in the southern corner of the site. To the north is a garden centre, to the east is Peppard Road and to the south and west small areas of woodland and housing. The underlying geology is recorded as Winter Hill Gravel with Black Park Gravel extending south-eastwards from the site's south-eastern boundary (BGS 1971).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment for the project (Adam 2015). In summary there is no known archaeology on the site except for a possible circular cropmark. A few findspots of Roman pottery and metalwork and a Neolithic axe point to a small amount of activity in the area at those times. The general location of this site is however, better regarded for the presence of Palaeolithic finds within or beneath the gravel deposits of the ancient channel which represents a former course of the river Thames. Geophysical survey revealed few anomalies of possible archaeological interest (Beverstock 2015) (Fig. 4).

## **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 any geophysical anomalies are of archaeological origin; and
- to determine if a circular cropmark is of archaeological origin.

It was proposed that 17 trenches each 25m in length and 1.6m wide were to be dug in a stratified random array except where intended to target geophysical and cropmark anomalies thought to be of archaeological origin. The trenches were to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist at all times.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation in situ or might better be explored under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

## **Results**

The trenches were dug as intended and ranged from 24.7m to 25.5m in length and between 0.20–0.56m in depth, all through small amounts of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology comprised of patches of clay in a mostly gravel matrix.

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

Trench 1 (Fig 2)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.8m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 2 (Fig 2)

Trench 2 was aligned W - E and was 25.0m long and 0.20m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 3 (Fig 2)

Trench 3 was aligned NW - SE and was 25.7m long and 0.26m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.09m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 4 (Fig 2; Pl. 1)

Trench 4 was aligned NW - SE and was 25.2m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 5 (Fig 2)

Trench 5 was aligned SW - NE and was 25.5m long and 0.29m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 6 (Fig 2)

Trench 6 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.7m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified that represent the possible geophysical anomaly in this trench.

Trench 7 (Fig 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 7 was aligned S - N and was 25.2m long and 0.22m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified that represent the possible geophysical anomaly in this trench.

Trench 8 (Fig 2; Pl. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.8m long and 0.27m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 9 (Fig 2)

Trench 9 was aligned S - N and was 25.2m long and 0.20m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 10 (Fig 2)

Trench 10 was aligned SE - NW and was 25.1m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 11 (Fig 2; Pl. 4)

Trench 11 was aligned SW - NE and was 25.1m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.19m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 12 (Fig 2)

Trench 12 was aligned SE - NW and was 24.8m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 0.16m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 13 (Figs 2 and 3, Pl. 5)

Trench 13 was aligned SW - NE and was 25.0m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.18m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified that represent the possible circular cropmark previously identified by the desktop study in this trench.

#### Trench 14 (Fig 2)

Trench 14 was aligned W - E and was 25.1m long and 0.24m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 15 (Fig 2)

Trench 15 was aligned SE - NW and was 24.9m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.24m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 16 (Fig 2)

Trench 16 was aligned W - E and was 25.4m long and 0.29m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 17 (Figs 2 and 3 and Pl. 6)

Trench 17 was aligned S - N and was 24.8m long and 0.20m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits as previously identified from the earlier geophysical survey, no archaeological deposits were identified in the trenches that corresponded with these earlier results, nor were any

deposits identified in the vicinity of the large circular cropmark identified from aerial photographs. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have no post-glacial archaeological potential.

## References

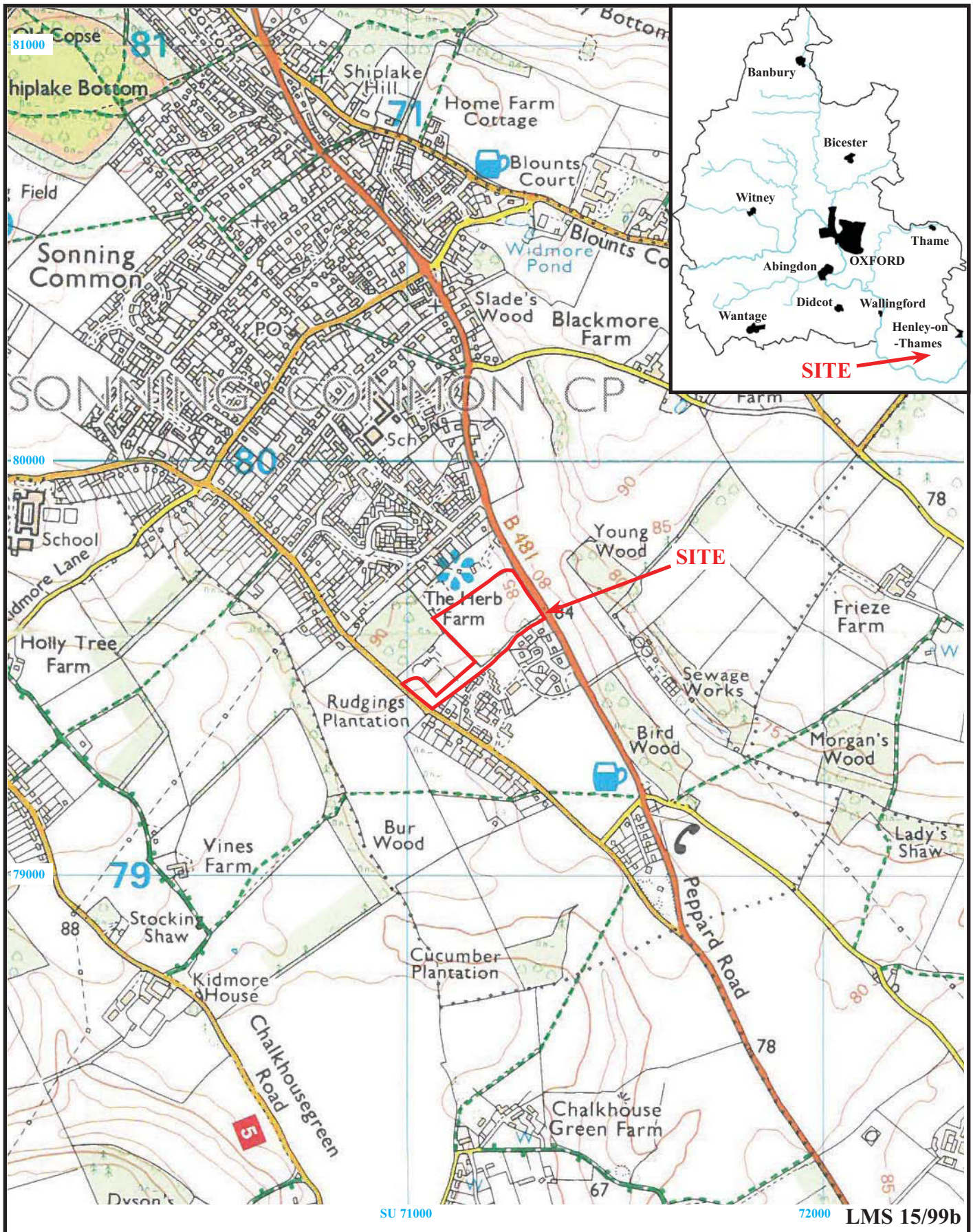
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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S, SW, NW or SE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	24.8	1.6	0.28	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.28m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
2	25.0	1.6	0.20	0–0.10m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.10-0.20m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.20m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
3	25.7	1.6	0.25	0–0.16m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.16-0.25m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.25m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
4	25.2	1.6	0.28	0–0.18m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.18-0.28m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 1]</b>
5	25.5	1.6	0.29	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.29m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.29m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
6	24.7	1.6	0.30	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.28m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
7	25.2	1.6	0.22	0–0.10m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.10-0.22m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.22m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 2]</b>
8	24.8	1.6	0.27	0–0.13m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.13-0.27m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.27m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 3]</b>
9	25.2	1.6	0.20	0–0.10m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.10-0.20m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
10	25.1	1.6	0.28	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.28m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
11	25.1	1.6	0.36	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.34m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.34m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 4]</b>
12	24.8	1.6	0.28	0–0.12m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.12-0.28m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.28m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
13	25.0	1.6	0.40	0–0.15m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.15-0.38m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.38m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 5]</b>
14	25.1	1.6	0.24	0–0.10m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.10-0.24m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.24m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
15	24.9	1.6	0.56	0–0.26m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.26-0.50m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.50m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
16	25.4	1.6	0.29	0–0.14m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.14-0.29m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.29m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology.
17	24.8	1.6	0.20	0–0.10m dark brown soil and grass (topsoil); 0.10-0.20m grey brown sandy clay (subsoil); 0.20m+ orange brown clay with gravels and flints (natural geology). No archaeology. <b>[PI. 6]</b>



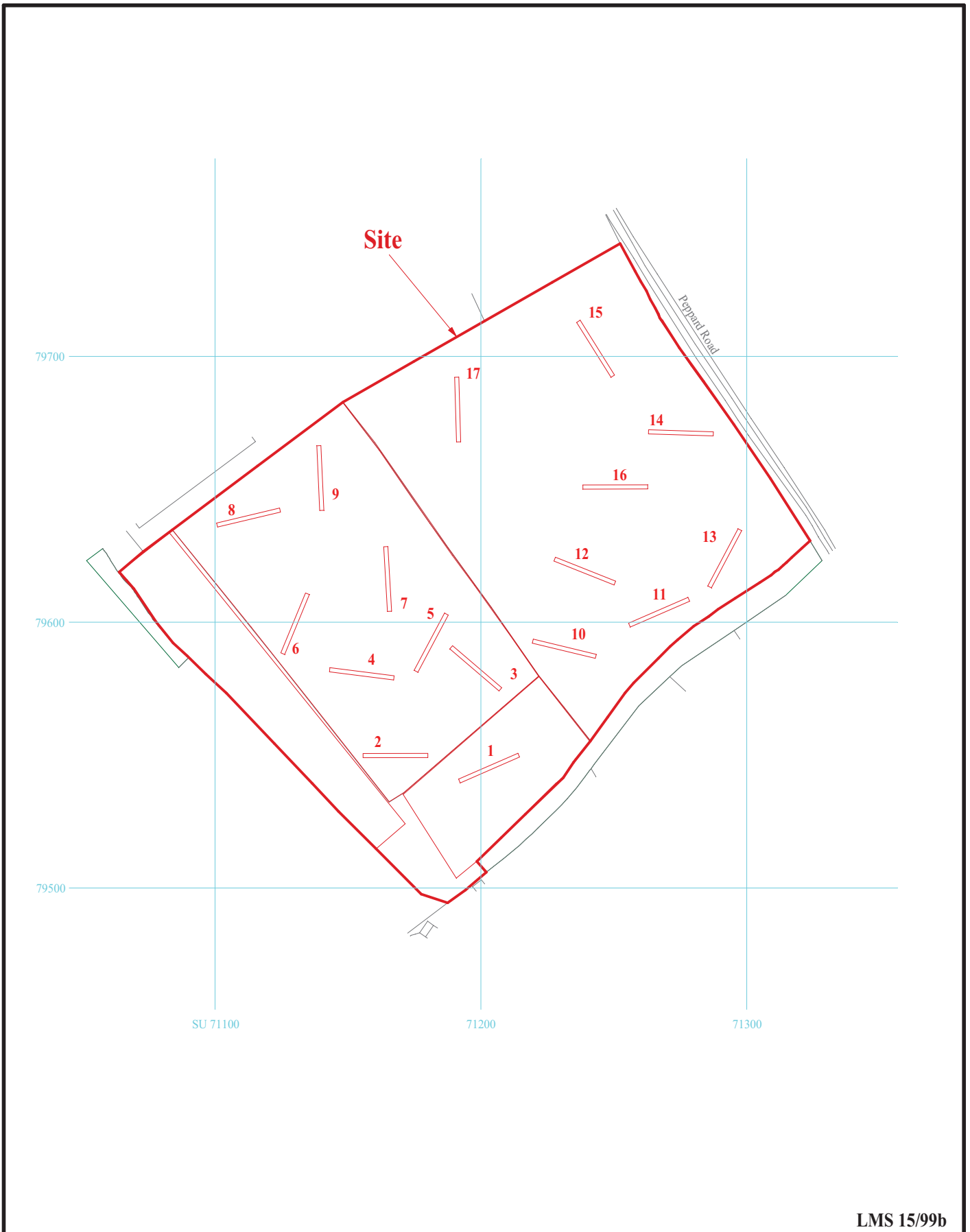
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sonning Common and Oxfordshire

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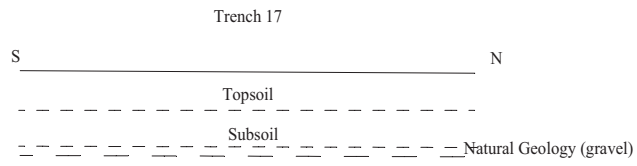
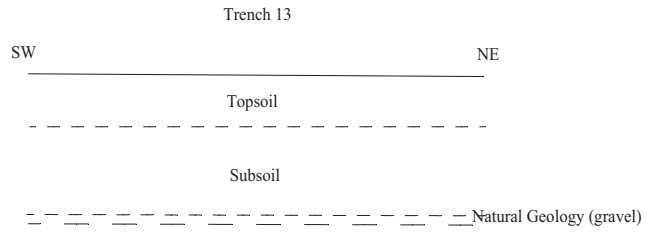
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Figure 2. Trench Locations



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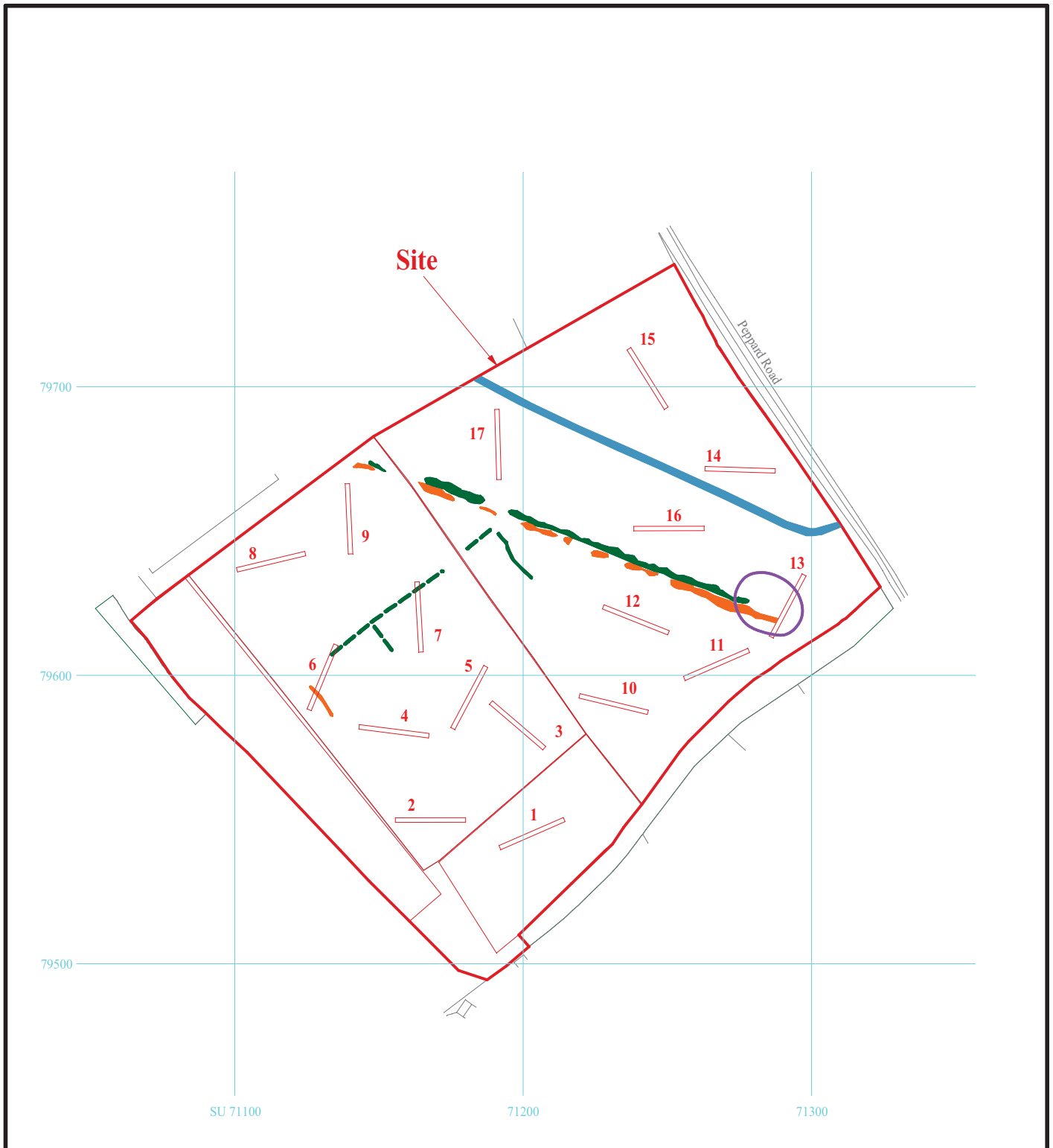


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Figure 4. Representative section.





Positive anomaly - possible cut feature (archaeology)  
 Negative anomaly - possible earthwork (archaeology)  
 Known service  
 Circular cropmark identified from aerial phtograph

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Figure 4. Trench Locations overlaid with geophysical anomalies





Plate 1. Trench 4, looking north west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 2. Trench 7, looking north Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.2m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 8, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.20m.



Plate 4. Trench 11, looking west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 13, looking south west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 6. Trench 17, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.2m.

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Plates 5 - 6.

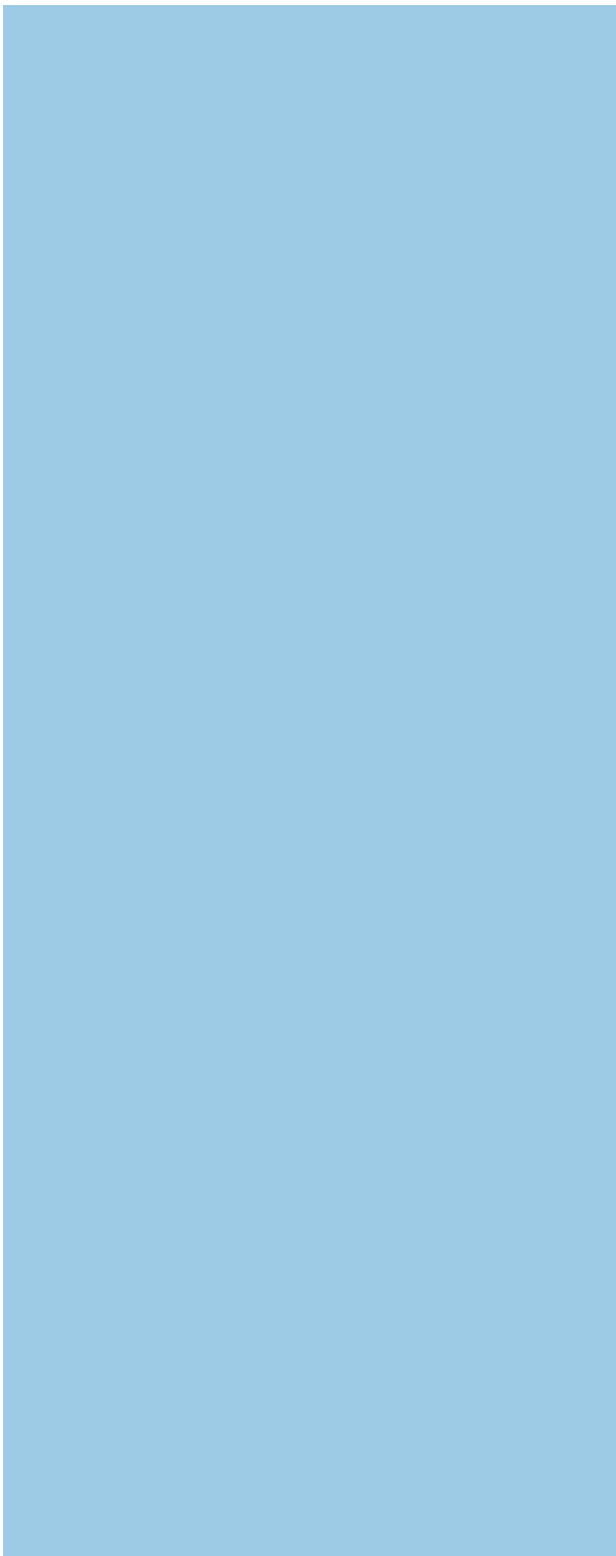
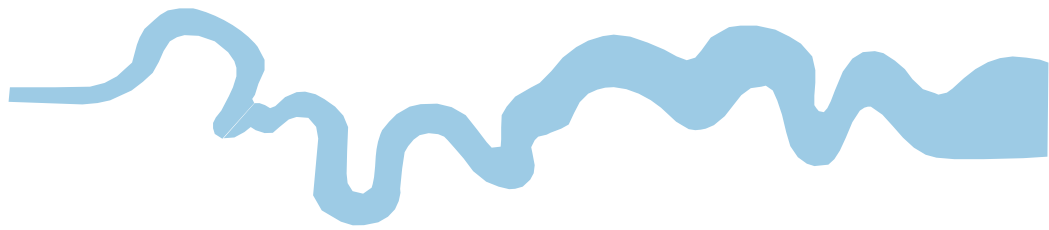
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## TIME CHART

	<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





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