THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Proposed Beech House, High Street, Souldern, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Site Code: BHS15/143

(SP 5210 3158)

Proposed Beech House, High Street, Souldern, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr and Mrs Harper

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BHS 15/143

August 2015

Summary

Site name: Proposed Beech House, High Street, Souldern, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 5210 3158

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th August 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: BHS 15/143

Summary of results: Two ditches of unknown date were recorded with only a small animal bone assemblage recovered. A modern ditch was also revealed.

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.

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 11.08.15

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Proposed Beech House, High Street, Souldern, Oxfordshire
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Report 15/143

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at on a parcel of land to the north of High Street, Souldern, Oxfordshire (SP 5210 3158) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Dr Isabel Lisboa, of Archaeologica Ltd, 7 Fosters Lane, Bradwell, Milton Keynes, MK13 9HD on behalf of Mr and Mrs Harper, Orchard View, Tithe Lane, Clifton, Banbury, OX15 0PU.

Planning permission (app no P1500376/F) has been gained from Cherwell District Council to erect a new house and garage. The consent is subject to a condition (13) relating to archaeology, which requires a program of archaeological works to be carried out prior to the commencement of any groundworks.

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 Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Benedikt Tebbit on 4th August 2015 with the site code BHS 15/143. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the village of Souldern, Oxfordshire 7km northwest of Bicester (Fig. 1). The open parcel of land is situated on the north side of High Street and is bounded by residential houses to the south and west, Manor Farm to the north and a trackway to the east (Fig. 2). The natural geology is mapped as Northampton Sand (BGS 1968) and the site lies at a height of 113.00m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the historic (medieval) centre of Souldern. Souldern itself is not mentioned in Domesday Book but a Saxon cremation cemetery is located on the west side of the settlement. Also to the west of the site is the medieval manor and to the south several post-

medieval buildings are listed. Possibly of most significance is the presence of a Late Iron Age cremation burial in an urn found at Manor Farm just to the north of the proposal site and there is a possibility of contemporary settlement nearby.

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; and
to determine if any occupation or burial deposits of late prehistoric/Roman date are present.

It was proposed to dig 1 trench 20m in length and 1.60m wide to target the footprint of the new building. The trench was to be excavated using a small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

The trench was dug within the footprint of the building but the southern 10m had to be stepped out to avoid a sewage pipe (Fig 3). The trench giving length, breadth, depth and a description of section and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 -5; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned NW - SE and was 20.10 long, 0.62m deep and 1.80m wide. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.27m of subsoil overlying natural geology. The natural geology at the northwest end was light blue grey silty sand while at the southeast end it consisted of light yellow brown sandy silty with patches of silty clay. At the northern end a large ditch 1 was recorded which was aligned east-west and had depth of 0.70m wide and a possible width of 2m. This ditch was truncated by modern ditch 2 which contained brick, coal and modern iron nails and an iron set of tongs. At the southern end of the trench ditch 3 was excavated which was

aligned north-south and was 0.36m deep and of unknown width as this lay outside the trench. A small animal bone assemblage was recovered from this ditch. No datable finds were recovered from either ditch 1 or 3.

Finds

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from ditch 3 (55). A total of seven fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 80g. The overall preservation of the remains was good, although a moderate degree of fragmentation and localized areas of cortical exfoliation were present.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements based on size, not by species, into one of three general categories: "large", "medium", and "small". Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) were designated to the "small" category. Wherever possible, a more specific identification to species was made. The determination of the minimum number of individuals both within and between the species was investigated based on the duplication of elements, and differences in age categories.

A minimum number of two individuals were represented within the assemblage: one large and one medium sized animal. Four of the seven fragments were able to be refit into the glenoid cavity and neck region of a medium sized right scapula, possibly pig. A further two pieces joined together for form a portion of mandible of a medium sized animal. The remaining fragment was from an unidentified large animal. Although the fragment could not be identified to element of origin either, a single cut mark bisects the joint surface. No further information could be retrieved from this small assemblage of animal bone.

Charred Plant Remains by Joanna Pine

Two 10L sub-samples were were floated then sieved through a 0.25mm mesh, air dried and examined under a low-power binocular microscope at a magnification of x10m. From ditch [3] (55) <2>, charcoal; over 2mm thus having the potential for identification; was present in a moderate amount and one or two small unidentified cereal grains were also present.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed two ditches aligned at right-angles to each other, one of which produced a small animal bone assemblage but no datable finds were recovered from either. A modern ditch which produced brick, coal and possible metal tongs was also recorded. No finds of any date were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil.

References

BGS, 1968, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 218, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	20.10	1.80	0.62	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ natural geology. Natural at N end; light blue grey silty sand. Natural at S end; light yellow brown sandy silt with silty clay patches. Ditches 1, 2, 3 **[Pls 1 and 2]**

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
1	1	52, 53	Ditch		
1	2	54	Ditch	Modern	Brick, coal, metal
1	3	55	Ditch		

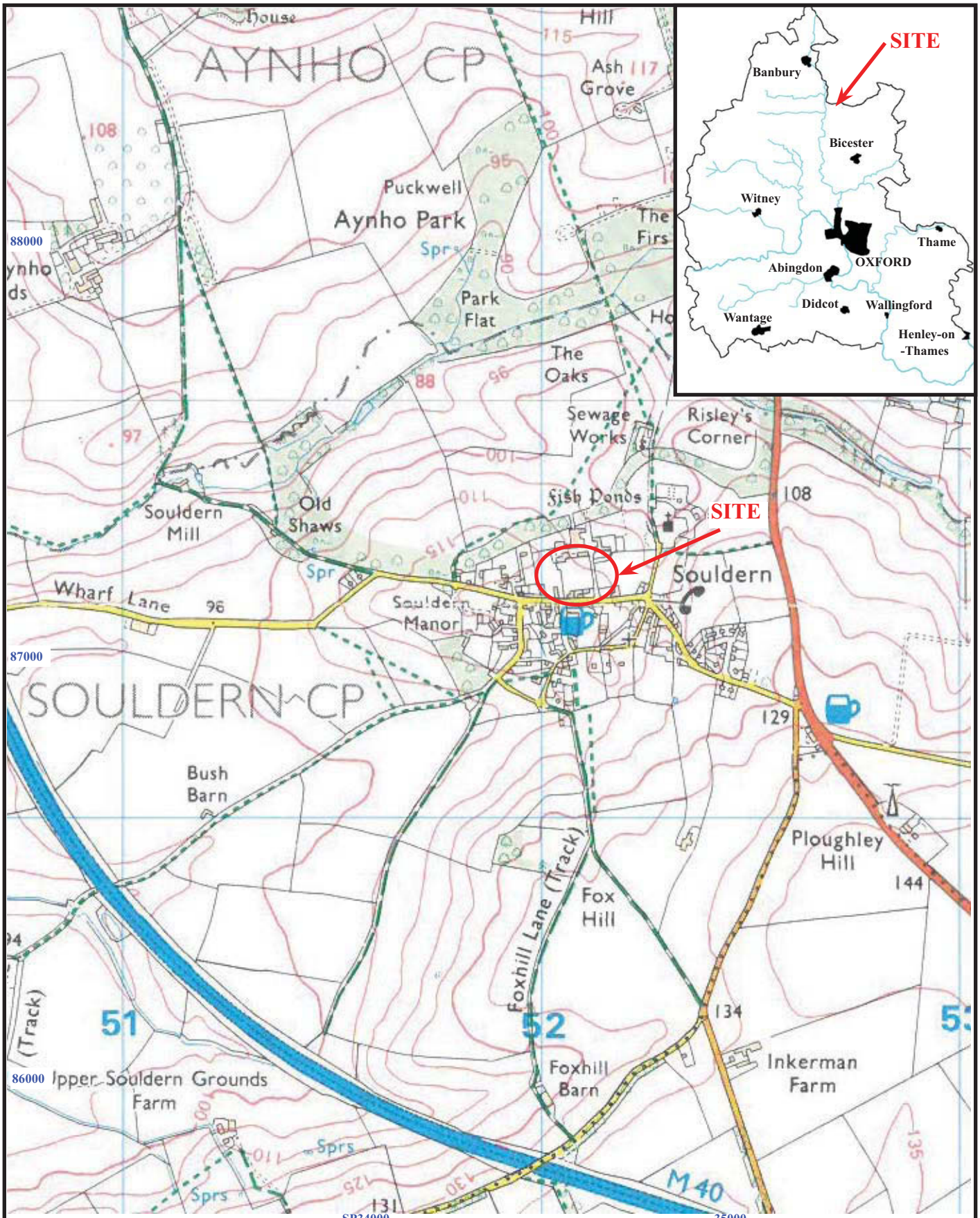

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Figure 1. Location of site within Souldern and Oxfordshire

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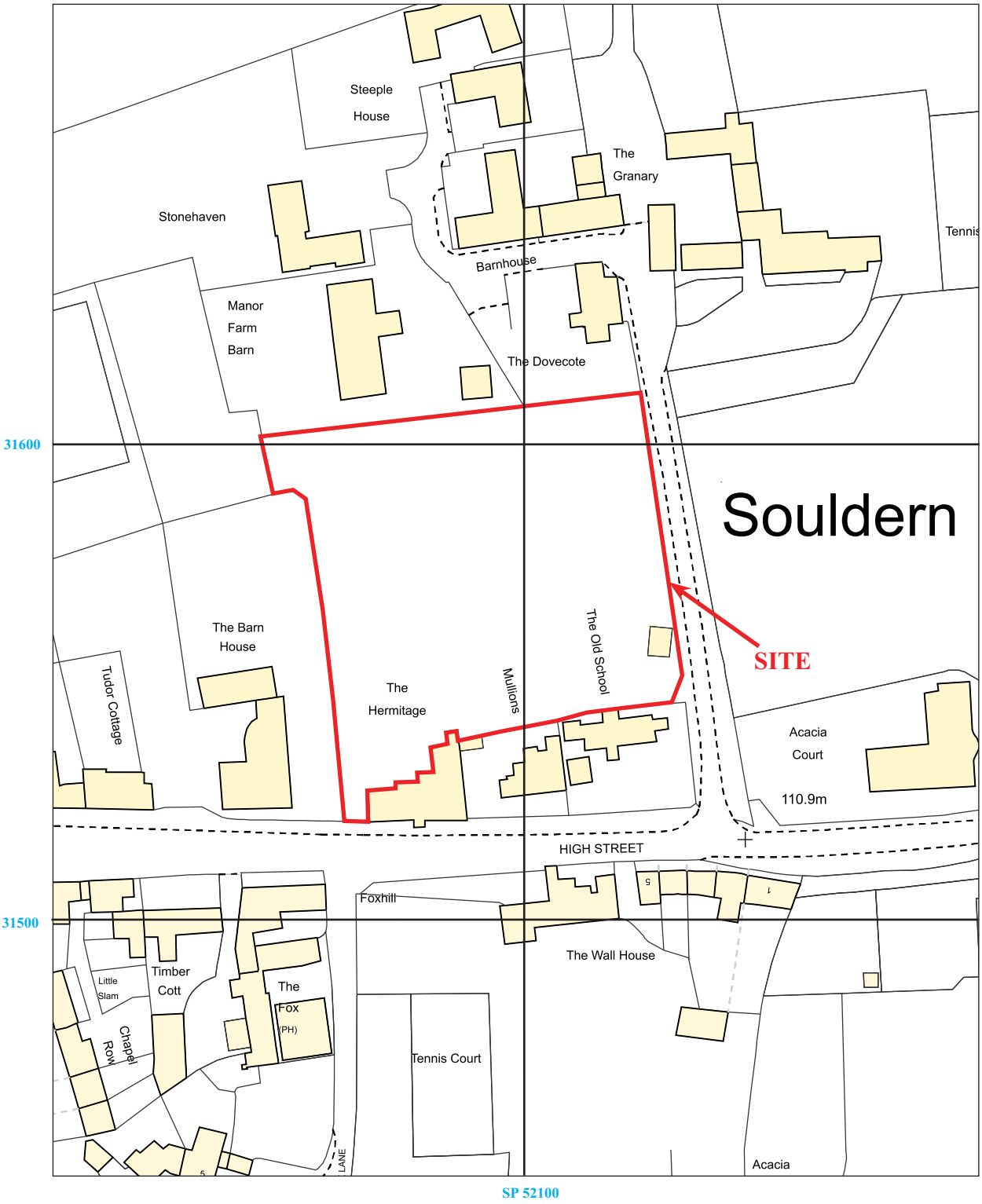

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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Figure 3. Location of trench

0 25m

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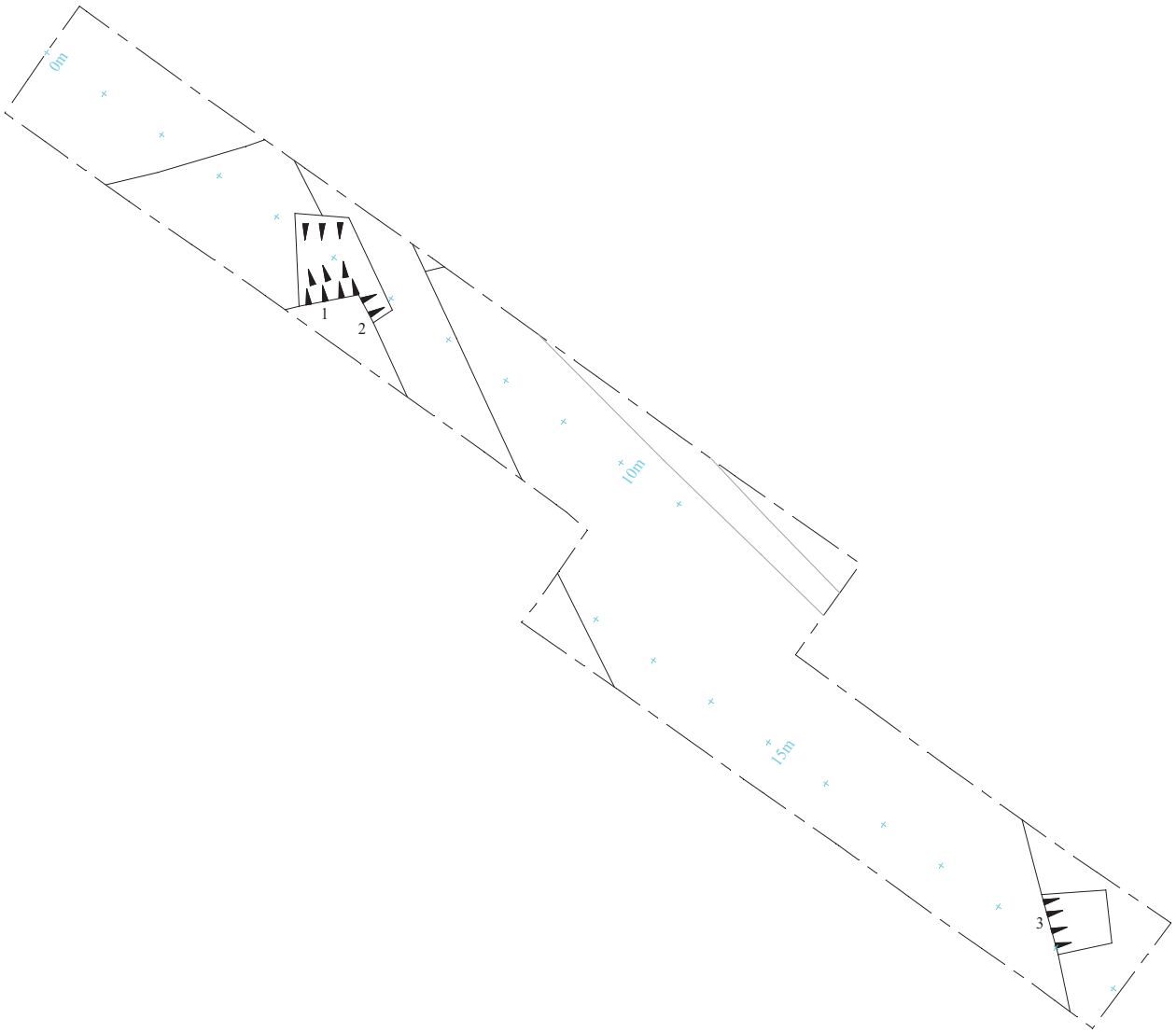

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Figure 4. Trench Plan.

0 1m

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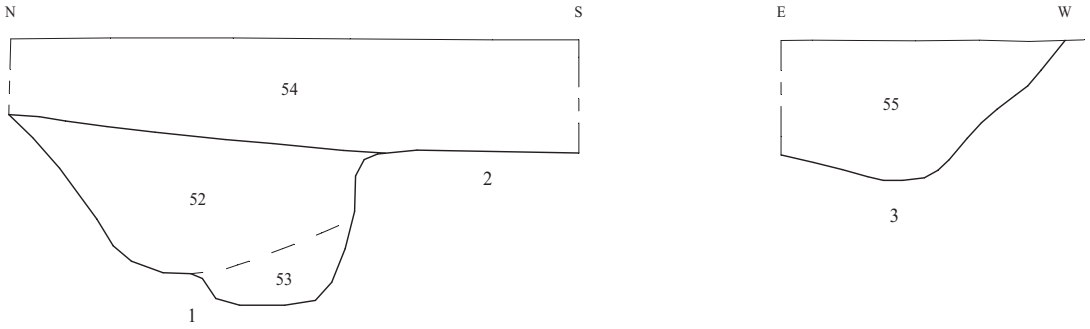

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Figure 5. Sections.

0 1m

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

Plate 2. Ditch 1 and 2, looking east, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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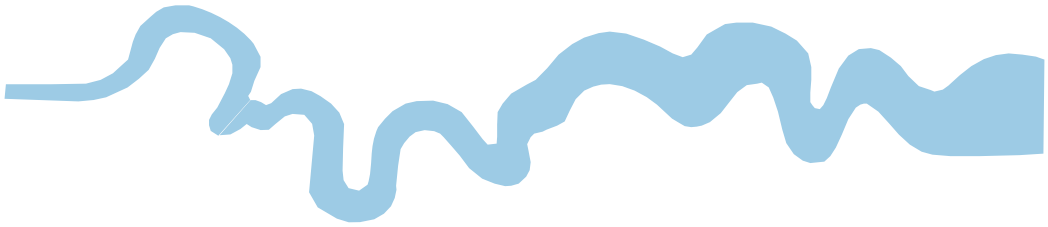
TIME CHART

	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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