

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

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

**All Saints Church, North Moreton,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: NMC15/123**

**(SU 5621 8957)**

# **All Saints Church, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief**

### **For All Saints Church**

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code NMC 15/123

**September 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** All Saints Church, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5621 8957

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 29th July 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** NMC 15/123

**Summary of results:** During the excavation of the new drainage trench, human remains were encountered. The remains of at least six individuals were exhumed and returned to the church for re-burial. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course. The human remains were returned to the church for reburial.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.09.15 Steve Preston ✓ 04.09.15
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# All Saints Church, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter

Report 15/123

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at All Saints Church, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire SU 5621 8957 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Loyd, on behalf of All Saints Parochial Church Council, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire.

A faculty (9759) has been gained from the Archdeaconry of Oxfordshire to install a ringing gallery in the west tower with a screened vestry below, install a WC and servery in the south west corner, re-surface the footpath and install services at All Saints Church, North Moreton, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Due to the possible presence of archaeological features and skeletal remains, a condition was attached to the faculty requiring that an archaeological watching brief be maintained 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 Archdeaconry's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out according to a written scheme of investigation prepared by Thames Valley Archaeological Services. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter on 29th July 2015 and the site code is NMC 15/123.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course; the human remains were returned to the church for reburial.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of Long Wittenham Road in the centre of the village of North Moreton, around 3km west of Wallingford (Fig. 2). The site currently forms a path and grassed area around the western side of the church, to the north and west of the graveyard. The site lies at a height of 50m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Upper Greensand (BGS 1980), although chalk was observed on site during the works.

## Archaeological background

The church is a Grade I listed building. It has an early 13th-century nave and chancel, with an early 14th-century Chancery Chapel, south aisle and tower and some 15th-century alterations. The south porch was added in 1858

and the church restored by G. E. Street. The settlement of North Moreton has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and martin 2002)/

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. this was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks involved with the alterations to the church and the excavation of the drainage trench and footpath.

Archaeological deposits threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded, with sufficient time allowed within the groundworkers schedule to carry this out, without causing undue delay.

Any human remains which were of post-medieval or modern date were to be summarily recorded but not otherwise archaeologically excavated. The bone remains were not to be retained but were to be returned to the church for reinterment. Any human remains of earlier date were to be archaeologically recorded and excavated in consultation with the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser and the project osteologist. Approval was to be obtained from the Consistory Court if removal from site for further study was required.

## **Results**

The results detailed within this report cover the excavation of the new service trench from the newly installed WC in the south aisle. The drainage trench was excavated in two parts: a north–south aspect and an east–west aspect. It was noted that the surrounding houses lie at a lower level, suggesting either that the church has been constructed on a natural high point, or that the land has been built up, the stratigraphic sequence observed would suggest the former of these suppositions to be correct.

The north–south oriented portion of the drainage trench was 0.40m wide and 14.20m in length and for the most part lay below the existing path with a steep slope downwards to the north. Natural chalk geology was observed from 9.00m from the south end to 14.20m. The depth of the trench along this length varied from 0.70m deep at the southern extent to 0.50m deep at the northern extent. The stratigraphy observed at the 9m point of the trench comprised 0.30m topsoil overlying 0.15m of mid brown grey silty sand subsoil above natural chalk geology. Natural geology was not observed to the south of this point suggesting truncation of the site to the north. Immediately west of the church tower a patch of made ground 0.10m in depth was observed below the Tarmacadamed pathway. The path has been cut down the slope as evidenced by the truncated geology.

The east–west part of the drainage trench was 0.40m wide and 7m long. The stratigraphy was observed to be 0.30m topsoil, overlying a homogenous light grey brown silty clay deposit, within which skeletal remains were encountered. All except one of these were suspected to have been disturbed at some time in the past, however an east-west orientation could be determined for all partially articulated remains encountered. Those remains that were in danger of destruction from the groundworks were removed and returned to the church for reburial, whilst others were left *in situ* as they lay below the level of works.

Skeleton 150 was encountered 0.40m below the ground surface and appeared to be an infant skull and associated ribs and fingers which lay in close proximity to a disarticulated adult jawbone.

Skeleton 151 was a partial adult skeleton initially thought to be *in situ* although as body survival is partial it was later determined to have been previously disturbed. The remains observed comprised the lower right arm and hand, which lay over a pelvis fragment and the upper part of the right leg alongside spine fragments and the skull. No part of the left side was encountered.

Skeleton 152 was partial and very fragmentary. The skull was observed to be at the west with what remained of the body extending to the east, the upper right leg overlapping that of skeleton 151. Only the skull and fragments from the right side of the body were encountered.

Skeleton 153 comprised the very top of the skull and a partial clavicle from the right side of the body.

Skeleton 154 was that of an infant. The skull, mandible and clavicle were recovered and it was considered that the burial was not *in situ* as it lay in an area dense with adult skeletal remains.

Skeleton 155 was labelled as a separate individual, although it is possible that these remains belong to one of those previously identified, but displaced. The right side of the pelvis, right hand and partial lower right radius and ulna were recovered alongside the ball joint of the right femur.

Skeleton 156 was observed as the skull only and as it lay below the level of the intended pipe, the skull was re-covered and left *in situ* as the intended pipe would not cause damage.

Skeleton 157 was the only individual considered to be still *in situ*. The skull lay to the west with the body extended to the east and was generally in a near complete state although again only the right side was encountered, the left side lying outside of the excavated pipe trench. A second (unrelated) mandible was observed across the pelvis.

With the exception of skeleton 156 all were removed from the trench and returned to the church for reinterment. No grave cuts were observed and it seems possible that the individuals encountered had been

subject to previous reburial, a context for which might be found in the mid-19th century restoration works. A single sherd of pottery was recovered close to skeleton 154 which was 11th-13<sup>th</sup> century in date.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Paul Blinkhorn

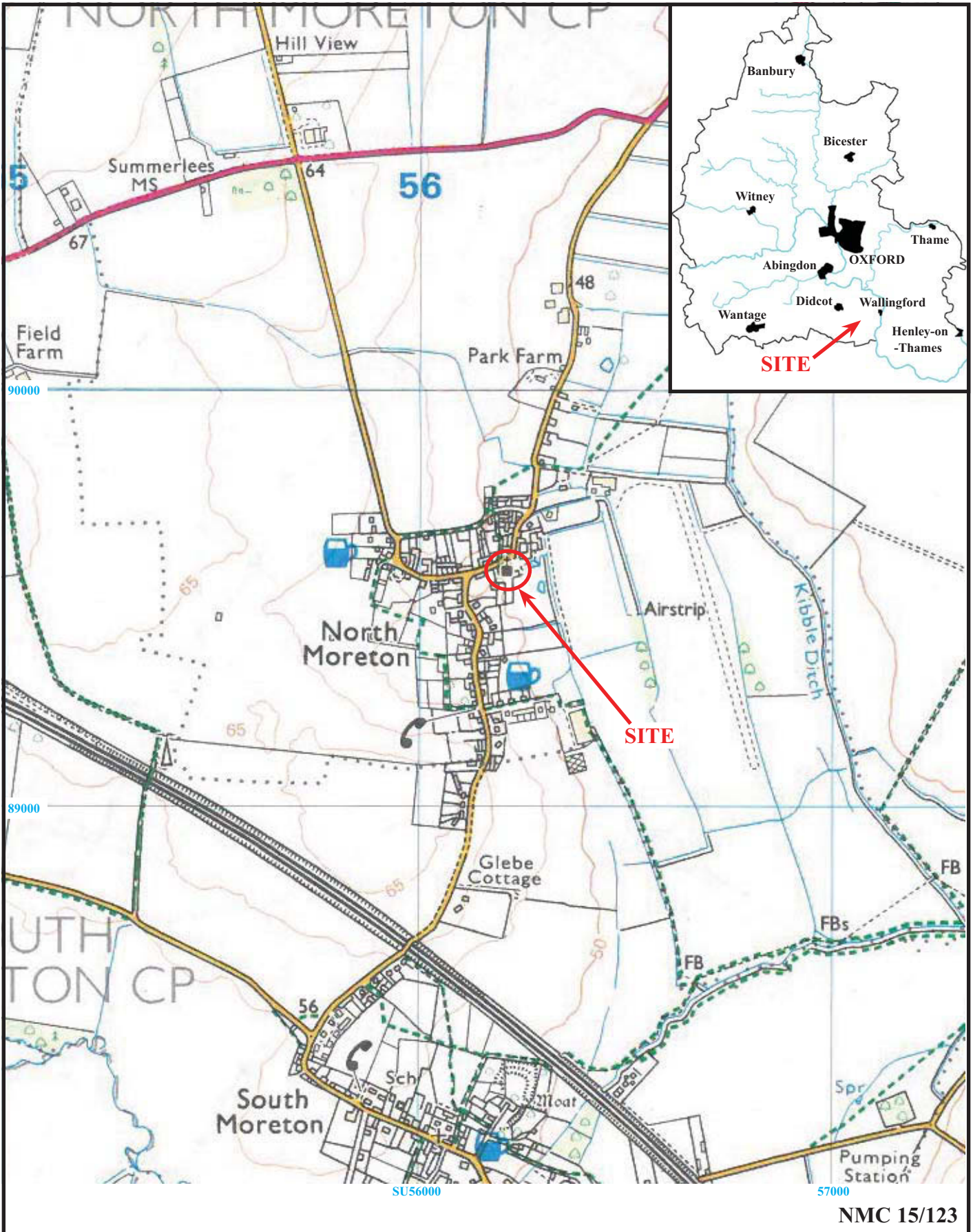
A single sherd of pottery weighing 9g was noted. It is a bodysherd in Wallingford Ware, fabric WA38 in the Oxford type-series, and datable to the mid 11<sup>th</sup> – mid 13<sup>th</sup> century (Mellor 1994, 63). It is a typical find in the region, and is in good condition.

## **Conclusion**

The remains of several individuals of suspected post-medieval date were encountered during the excavation of a drainage trench close to the tower and south aisle of the church. The individuals encountered are not considered to have been *in situ* and it may be suggested that the individuals have been disturbed or even moved in this location. The stratigraphy suggests that the land has been truncated to the north. No further deposits of archaeological interest were encountered but a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered.

## **References**

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth  
Mellor, M, 1994, 'A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, **59**, 17–217  
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London  
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London



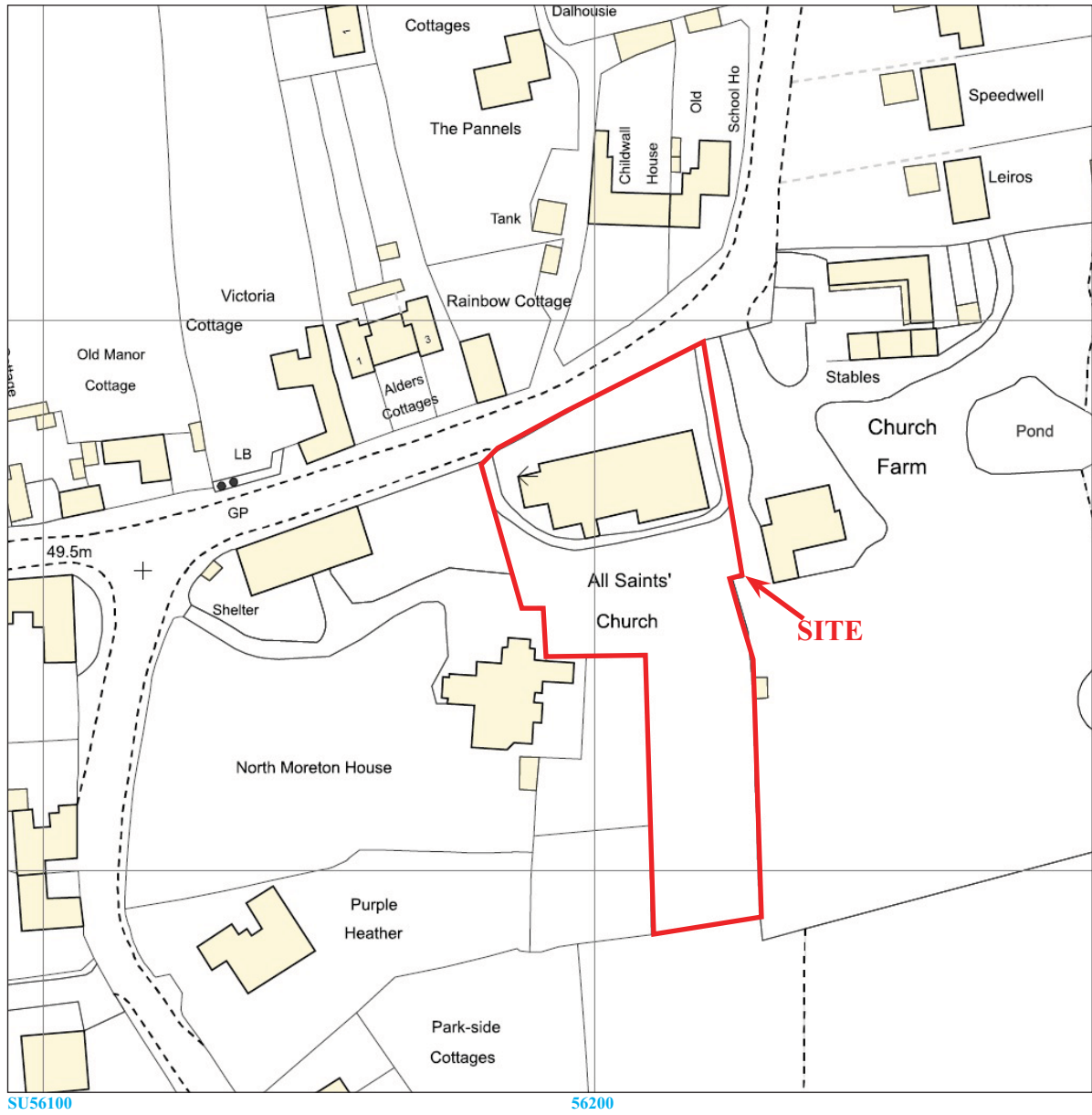
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Figure 1. Location of site within North Moreton and Oxfordshire.

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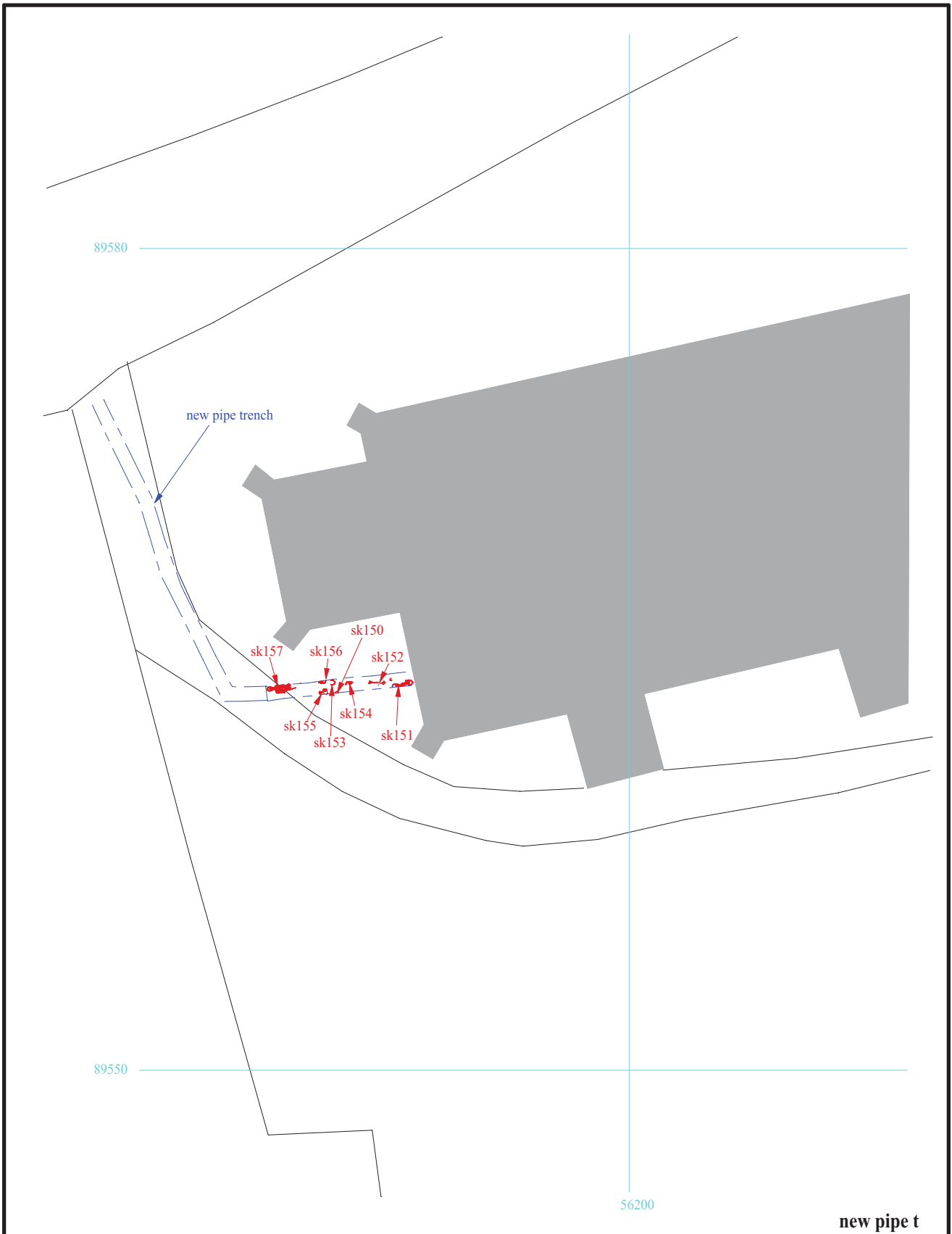


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of observed area.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Skeleton 151, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.



Plate 3. Skeleton 157, looking west, Scale: 0.5m.

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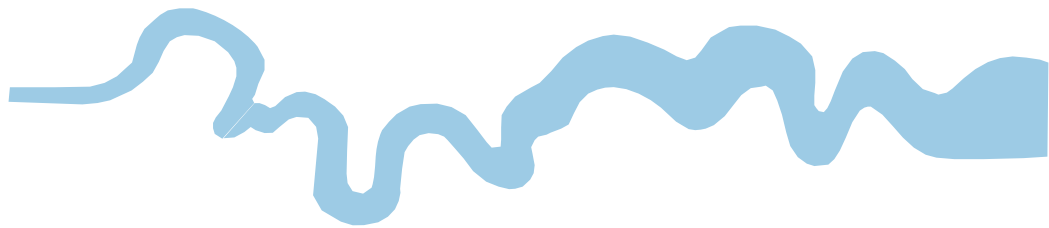
Plates 1 - 3.

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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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