

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Brookside, Brook Street,  
Benson, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Lizzi Lewins and Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: BBB15/177**

**(SU 6262 9214)**

# **Brookside, Brook Street, Benson Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action**

**For Mr and Mrs Folley**

by Lizzi Lewins and

Andrew Mordin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BBB 15/177

**October 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Brookside, Brook Street, Benson, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6262 9214

**Site activity:** Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 19th – 20th October 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Muddin

**Site code:** BBB 15/177

### Area of site:

**Summary of results:** A single ditch of late Roman date was discovered within the footprint of the house, which yielded pottery and animal bone. No other archaeological features or finds were recorded in the strip for the garage footprint.

**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.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 30.10.15 Steve Preston ✓ 30.10.15
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# Brookside, Brook Street, Benson, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Lizzi Lewins and Andrew Munding

Report 15/177

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Brookside, Brook Street, Benson, Oxfordshire (SU 6262 9214) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Kirsty Vijn of Bowen Evans Consultancy, 48A High Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1AW on behalf of Mr and Mrs Folley of Brookside, Brook Street, Benson, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (app P15/S0501/FUL) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new house and garage. The consent is subject to conditions (10 and 11) which require that an archaeological recording action be carried out in advance of the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification drawn up according to a brief provided by Mr Richard Oram, (Oram 2015) Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Munding on 19th and 20th October 2015 and the site code is BBB 15/177.

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 is located to the east of the River Thames at the north-eastern edge of the village of Benson and north of RAF Benson within south Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). It is a flat parcel of land occupied by a house and garden (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consists of Summertown – Radley Sand and Gravel Terrace Deposits (BGS 1980), which was observed as clayey silt and gravel across the site. The site lies at a height of *c.*60m above Ordnance Datum.

## Archaeological background

The site lies within an archaeologically rich area. To the north-east are three Scheduled Monuments comprising, a Roman settlement and two Neolithic long barrows. A Neolithic ceremonial complex and Bronze Age ring

ditches are known to the south of the village with Benson itself known to have been of historical importance during Saxon times (Blair 1998); whilst the house itself is a 17th century listed building. Several previous archaeological investigations have been carried out in the immediate area of Benson. Five of the previous sites revealed no archaeological features or finds (Hull 1999; Saunders 1999; Jenkins and Taylor 2002; Oram 2005; Milbank 2007). A further site, although no archaeological features were found yielded three pieces of unstratified pottery (one each of Roman, Saxon and Medieval) (Lowe 2003). Three sites to the west of Brookside revealed extensive archaeological deposits representing multi-period sites ranging from the Mesolithic to Roman periods and into the Saxon and Post-Medieval periods (Ford and Pine 2004; Pine 2006; Weale 2010); with two of the sites demonstrating elements of continuity (Ford and Pine 2004; Weale 2010).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits that would be affected by the construction of the new house and garage. This involved the removal of the overburden within the footprint of the new structures followed by full excavation and recording of any exposed features.

The stripping of the footprints of both the garage and house was observed (Fig. 3). The stripping was carried out by a JCB, using a toothless ditching bucket and was stripped to a depth of 0.74m (garage footprint) and a maximum depth of 0.92m (house footprint). Spoil heaps were monitored for finds. The single feature observed on site was excavated by hand.

## **Results**

### House

The footprint of the house was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.92m (Pl. 1). The topsoil was observed to a depth of 0.43m and was noted to contain fragments of china, brick and tile. The subsoil was observed to a depth of 0.37m on the eastern limit of excavation and 0.49m on the western limit.

A single ditch was orientated SE – NW extending across the width of the stripped area (Pl. 3) with a slight curve toward west–east at the eastern edge. It was recorded as 1.35m wide and 0.26m deep and filled with a brown-grey clayey silt with flint inclusions (Fig. 4; Pl. 4). Ten sherds of pottery and two pieces of animal bone were recovered during the excavation. A bulk sample of 15L was taken for wet sieving.

## Garage

The footprint of the garage was stripped to a depth of 0.74m (Pl. 2). The topsoil was observed to a depth of 0.38m and the subsoil to 0.36m. No archaeological features or finds were uncovered within this area.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Malcolm Lyne*

The 10 sherds (45g) of pottery all come from ditch 1 and are Late Roman in date. Diagnostic sherds are largely absent, meaning that dating cannot be any more precise than *c.* AD270–420. Of particular interest is the presence of three fragments of Thames Valley Pimply ware. The distribution of these handmade and tournetted wares is confined to the middle Thames valley, with the highest percentages coming from the Yewden and Cox Green villas (Lyne 1994: appendix 2 and 3, Industry 4B).

### *Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins*

A small assemblage of animal bone (2 pieces), weighing a total of 177g was recovered from one feature. The condition of the bone was good with little surface erosion or abrasion seen. Hillson's text (1992) was used to confirm identification.

Ditch 1 (52) contained two pieces of bone, one of which was recovered from bulk sample 1. The hand collected bone (17g) was identified as a cattle right metacarpal from . The small fragment (2g) from the bulk sample was classified as unidentified. No butchery marks or other taphonomic processes were observed.

### *Glass by Lizzi Lewins*

Two complete glass bottles were recovered from the topsoil (50). The first bottle is cylindrical, very pale green glass, weighing 270g. It is stamped with Lea & Perrins vertically up the body and Worcestershire Sauce around the shoulder. The second bottle is tapering, clear smoked glass, weighing 242g. The base is stamped with REGISTERED NO. 150286. These late 19th/early 20th century bottles were not retained.

### *Charcoal by Jo Pine*

A single sample [1] from ditch 1 (52) was processed from the site. It was wet sieved to 0.25mm and air dried and examined under a low-power binocular microscope at magnifications between x10 and x40. A small amount of charcoal was present, which was of size and structure too small for species identification.

## Conclusion

The recording action revealed the presence of a late Roman ditch running through the site. Roman occupation is known within the area of Benson and so the presence of the ditch may represent an outlying field boundary, although the full extent of the ditch has not been revealed. Whilst this is only a small sample of the archaeology within this area it does contribute to our knowledge of the larger area of Benson during the Roman period. No other archaeological features or finds were recorded.

## References

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## APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cu</i> <i>t</i>	<i>Fil</i> <i>l</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
1	52	Ditch	Late Roman	Pottery



## APPENDIX 2: Pottery Catalogue

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Date-range</i>	<i>No of sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	52		R1	Closed forms	c.270-420	2	6	Fresh
			R2	Closed forms	c.270-420	2	10	Fresh
			R3			1	3	Fresh
			R4	?C55 bowl	c.240-400			
				Beaker or flagon	c.240-400			
	Misc			4	25			
1	52	1	R2		c.270-420	1	1g	Fresh

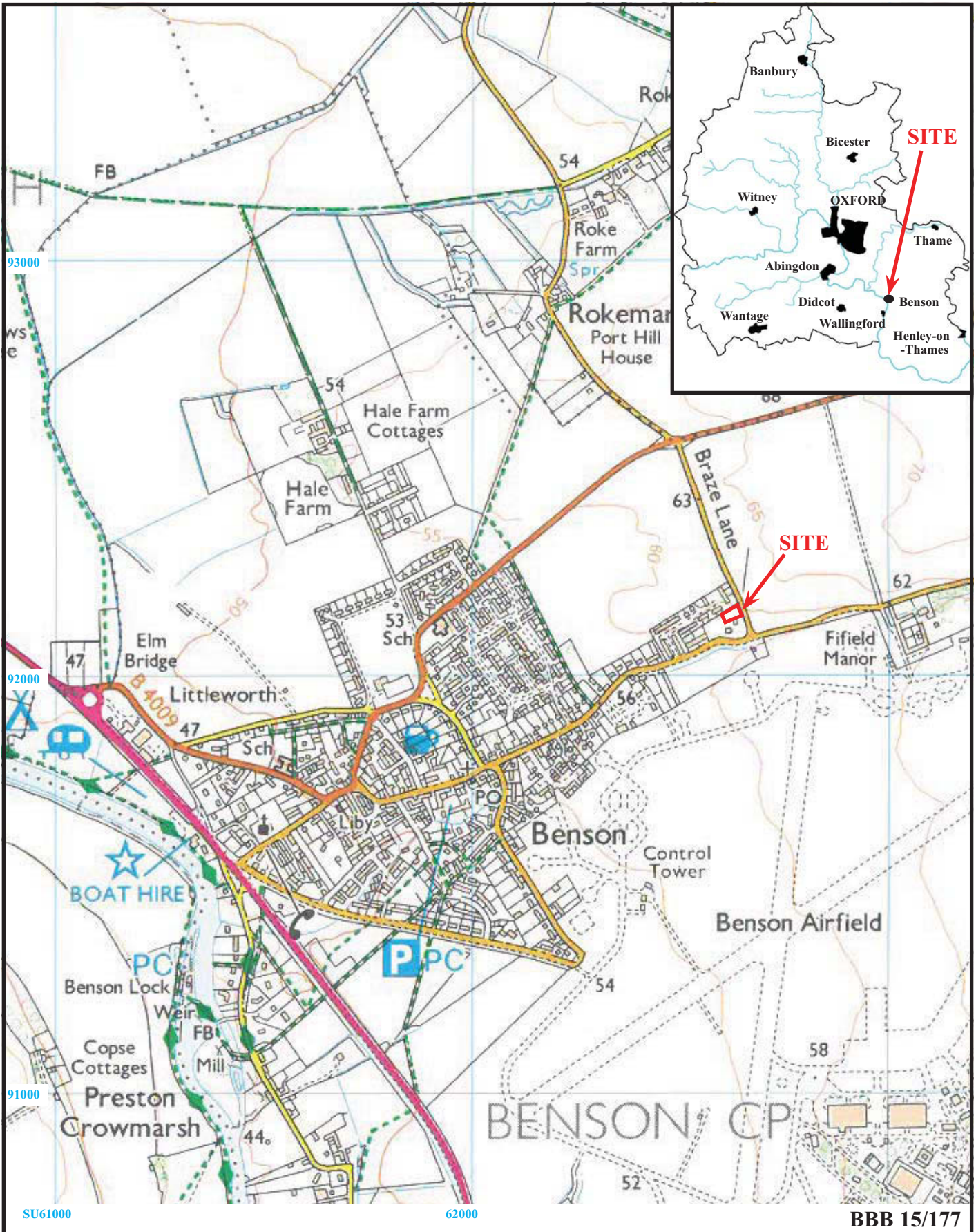
### Fabrics

R1. Alice Holt/Farnham greyware (Lyne and Jefferies 1979)

R2. Thames Valley Pimply ware with coarse multi-coloured quartz-sand and alluvial flint filler (Lyne 1994, Industry 4B).

R3. Miscellaneous greywares

R4. Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat (Young 1977)

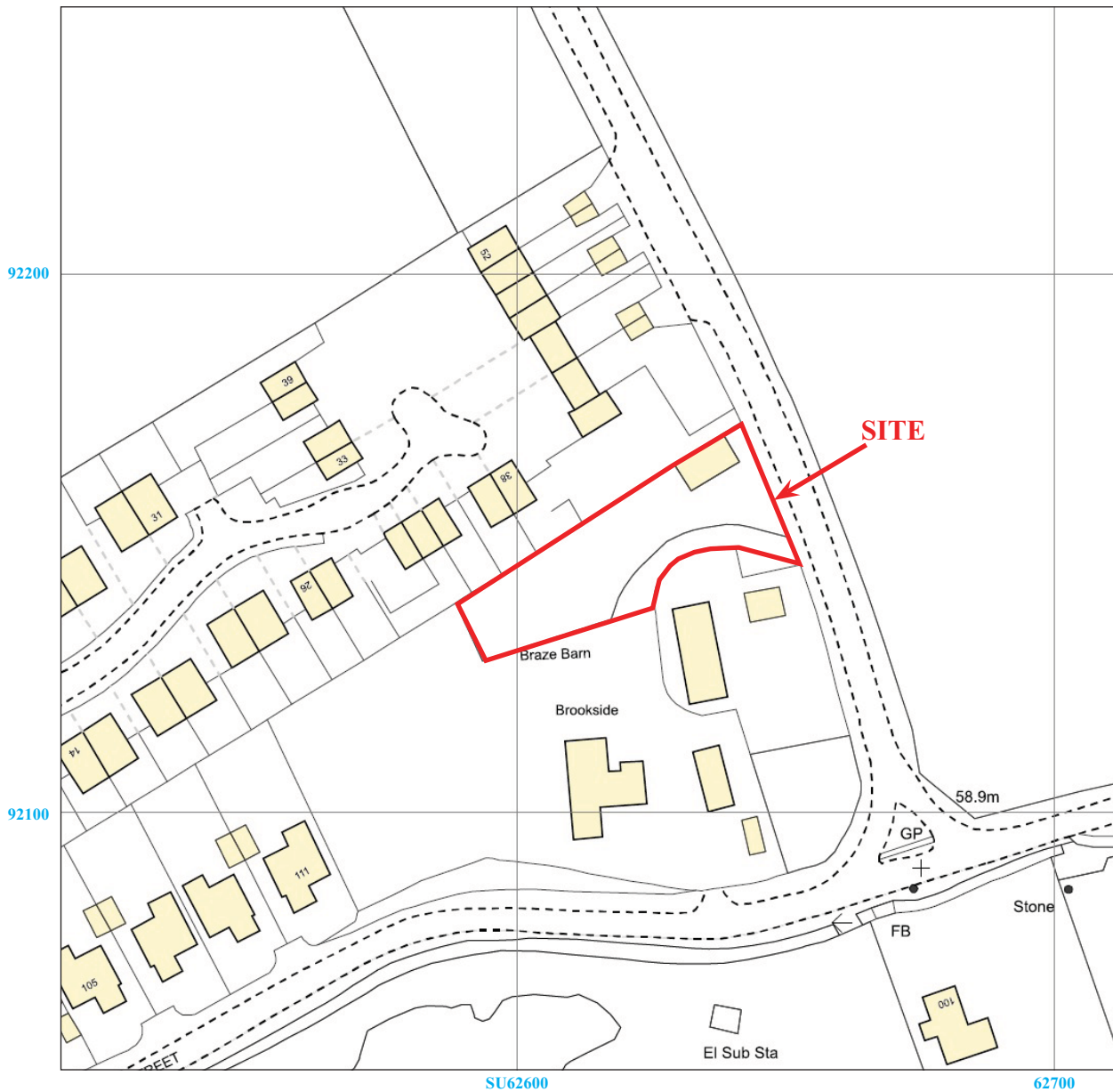


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Figure 1. Location of site within Benson and Oxfordshire

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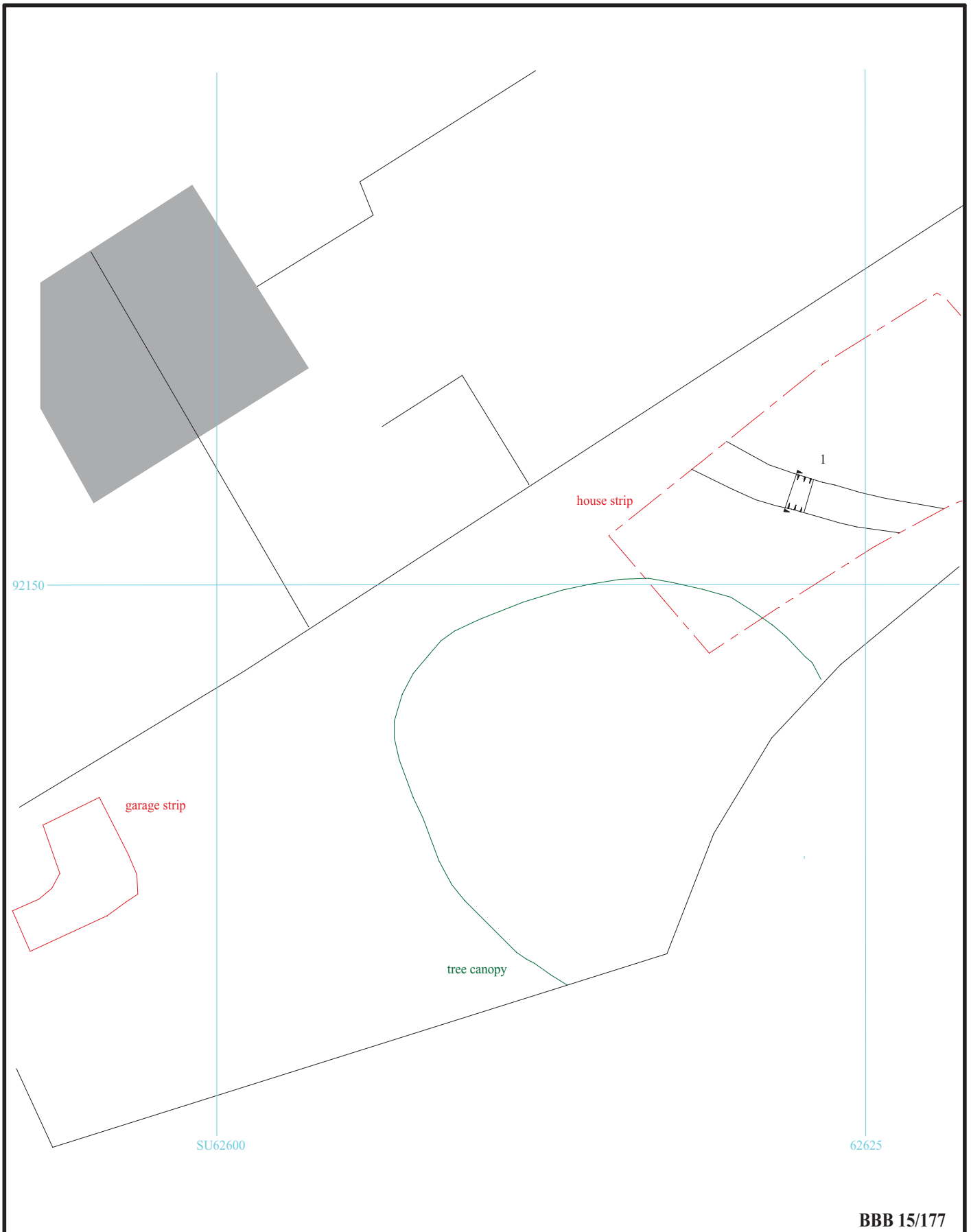
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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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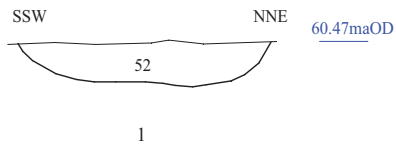
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Figure 3. Location of observed area.





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Figure 4. Section.



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Plate 1. House strip, looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Garage strip, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Ditch 1, looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Ditch 1 section, looking north west, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

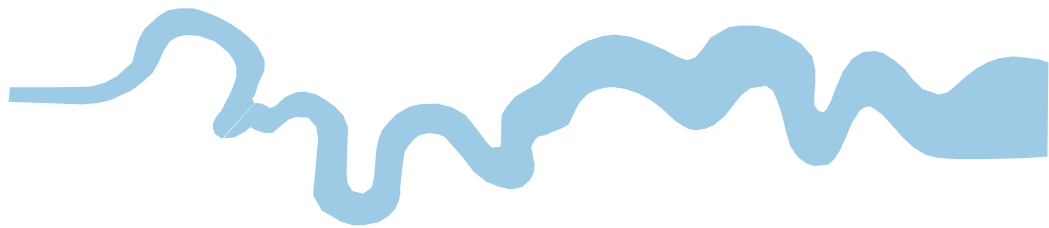
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## TIME CHART

	<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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