

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane,
Marcham, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: PMO15/245

(SU 4554 9670)

**Land north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane,
Marcham, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Sweetcroft Homes Ltd**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PMO 15/245

November 2015

Summary

Site name: Land north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 4554 9670

Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 23rd - 30th October 2015

Site supervisor: Andrew Mordin

Site code: PMO 15/245

Area of site: c. 600 sq m

Summary of results: Observation of footing trenches at land to the north of 7 Packhorse Lane was undertaken. The natural geology was uncovered in all footing trenches. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

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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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 06.11.15 Steve Preston ✓ 06.11.15

Land to the north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew MUNDIN

Report 15/245

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land to the north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane, Marcham Oxfordshire, OX13 6NT (SU 4535 9670) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Lee Chapman of Sweetcroft Homes Ltd, 78 Cumnor Road, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5JP.

Planning permission (P15/V1444/FUL) has been gained from the Vale of White Horse District Council for the construction of one detached dwelling on a plot of land created as part of recent development to the rear of The Red House, Packhorse Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire. The permission is subject to two conditions (9 and 10) relating to archaeology. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, an archaeological watching brief has been required 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 District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Archaeology Team Leader at Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew MUNDIN between 23rd and 30th October 2015 with the site code is PMO 15/245. 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

Marcham is located west of Abingdon and south-west of Oxford (Fig. 1). The site is located to the north of Packhorse Lane, roughly central to the village. The new plot is situated to the rear and north of Peartree Cottage, adjacent to the recent development at The Red House and is surrounded by other residential development to the west and south (Fig. 2) The site lies between 58-60m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is mapped as Limestone silts and clays (BGS 1971).

Archaeological background

In summary, the site lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential with extensive archaeological remains immediately east of the site. Excavation there has dated a ring ditch (levelled round barrow) of Bronze Age and has also uncovered Iron Age and Roman settlement features and finds. Recent fieldwork at 23 Packhorse Lane to the east of the site found a large number of pits and some linear features. The majority of the features were of Early Iron Age date with others possibly of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date (Mundin *et al.* 2015) (Fig. 5). Further deposits of Early Iron Age date have been identified on two house footings at the rear of the existing properties at Packhorse Lane that were subject to archaeological watching brief this year (Bray and Mundin 2015) More generally, the Marcham/Frilford area on the edge of the Corallian Ridge is rich in archaeological remains of most periods (Kasmash *et al* 2010; Gosden *et al* 2005; Henig and Booth 2000).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works, which in this case involved the monitoring of a single house plot's footings (Fig. 3). No ground reduction was required and a slightly fall of the ground was noted on the initial site visit.

Results

All groundworks were undertaken by a 360° type excavator equipped with a toothed ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. The spoil removed was inspected for finds.

The first footing observed was to the north, which was up to 1.2m deep. This showed a considerable build up of topsoil and subsoil from its north-western side. This reached a depth of 0.77m (Pl. 1). The subsoil deposit was not truncated and no archaeological deposits were sealed by this. The natural geology here (and throughout) was limestone brash. As the excavation was carried out further south, the topsoil thinned and the subsoil was not present. This seems to suggest the site had previously been landscaped. At the southern extent of the footing, comparatively little topsoil (0.4m thick) was present above the natural geology. The eastern footing was only observed after the site had been reduced of 0.3m of topsoil in the north. A remainder of 0.3m of topsoil remained which overlay natural limestone geology.

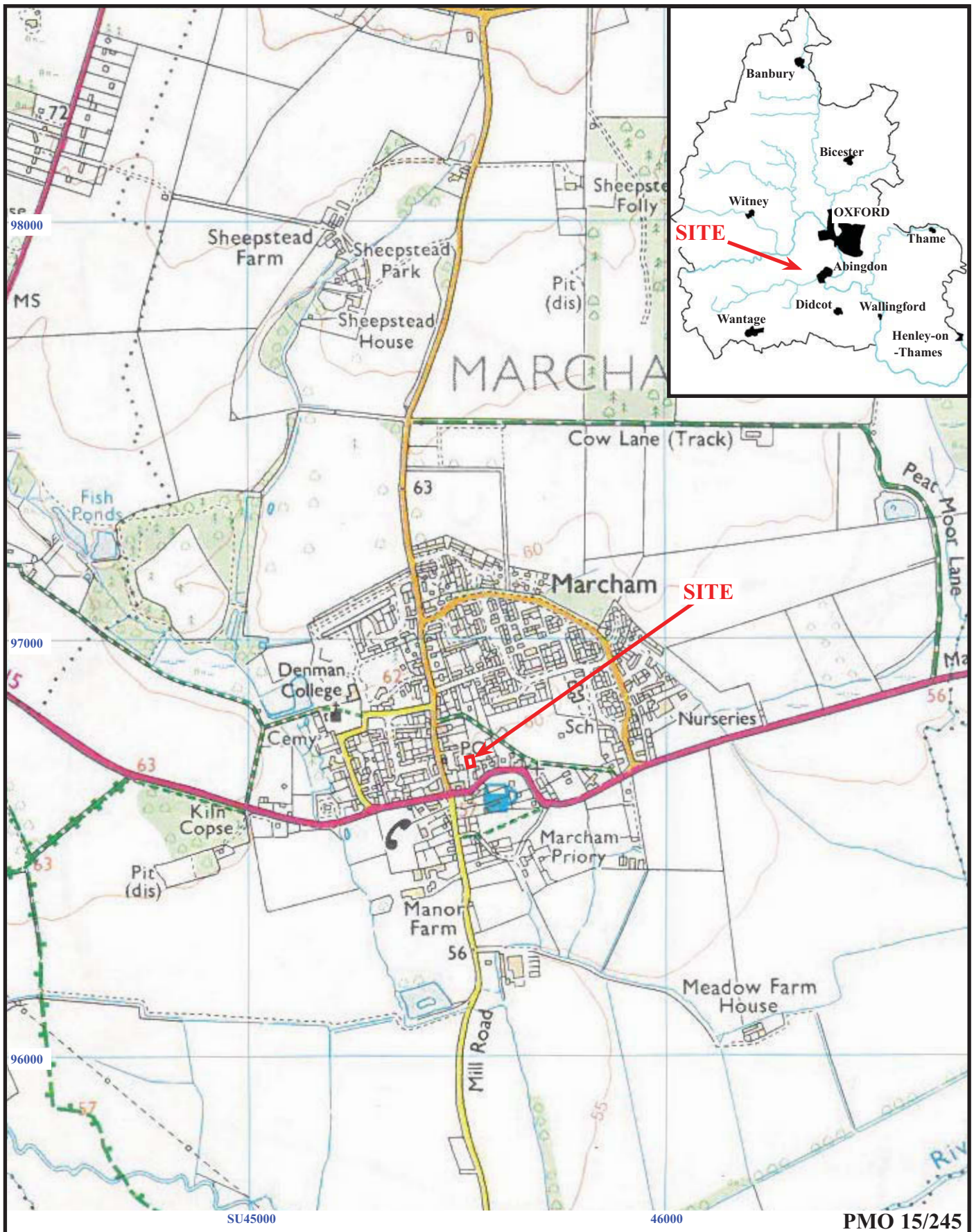
No archaeological deposits were noted in the footing trenches, and no finds were recovered.

Conclusion

The watching brief has not identified remains of archaeological interest, unlike the previous sites nearby. A considerable amount of topsoil was present in the north and north-western footings with less topsoil to the south and more limestone was observed, not the silt and clay capping within which archaeological features had previously been identified. It is possible that the site had previously been levelled.

References

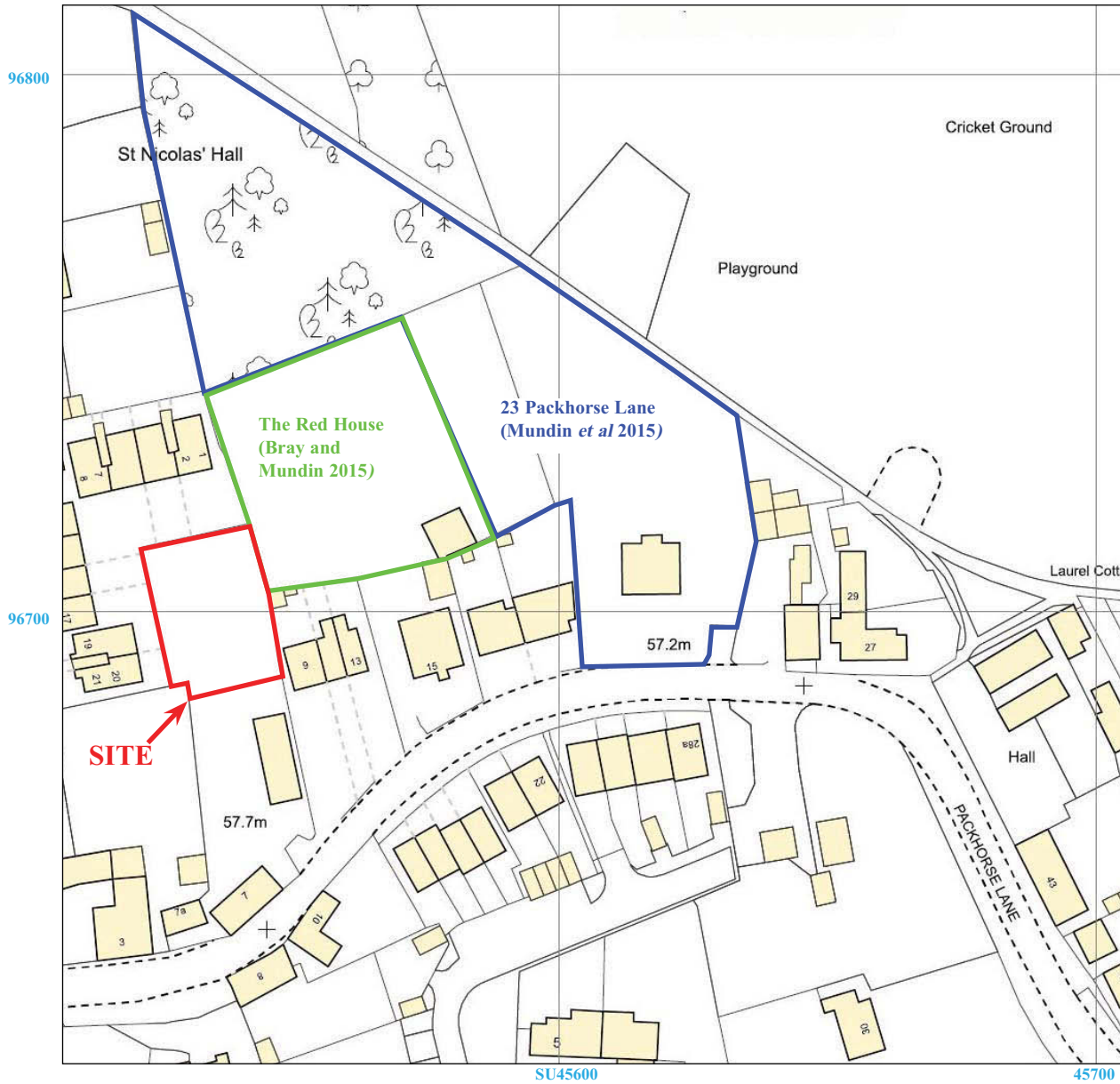
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**Land north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane,
Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Marcham
and in Oxfordshire.

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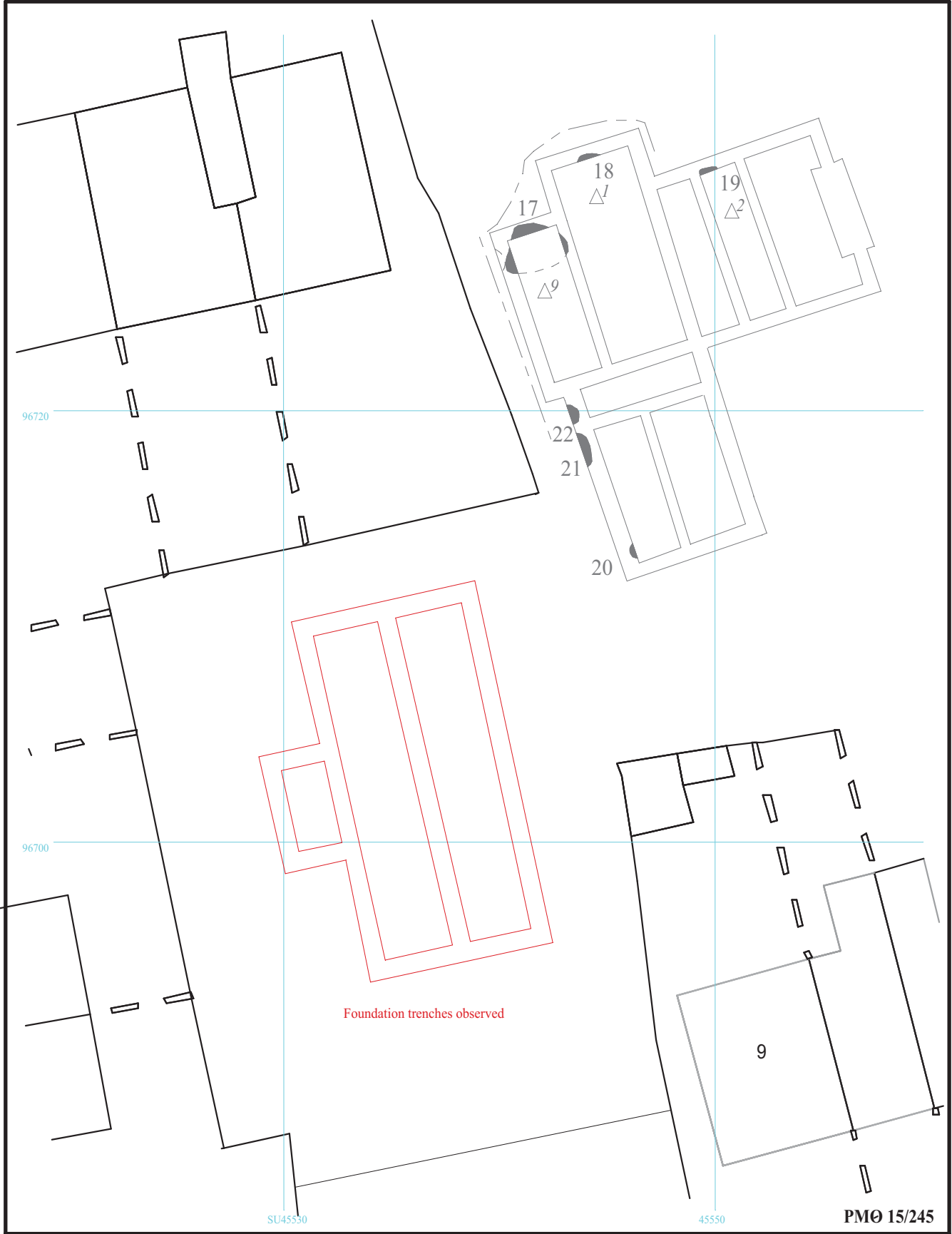


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Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Packhorse Lane, and in relation to recent investigations.

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Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Detail of site.



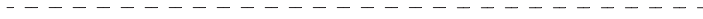
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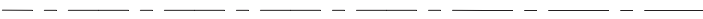
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60maOD

Dark grey brown clayey silt loam (Topsoil)



Limestone (natural geology)



base of trench

PMO 15/245

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Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



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Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 5. Location of site and nearby excavated deposits.





Plate 1. Thickening of topsoil at north western side of site, looking west,
Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. Foundation trench on eastern side, looking south, Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 1m.

PMO 15/245

**Land north of Peartree Cottage, 7 Packhorse Lane,
Marcham, Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

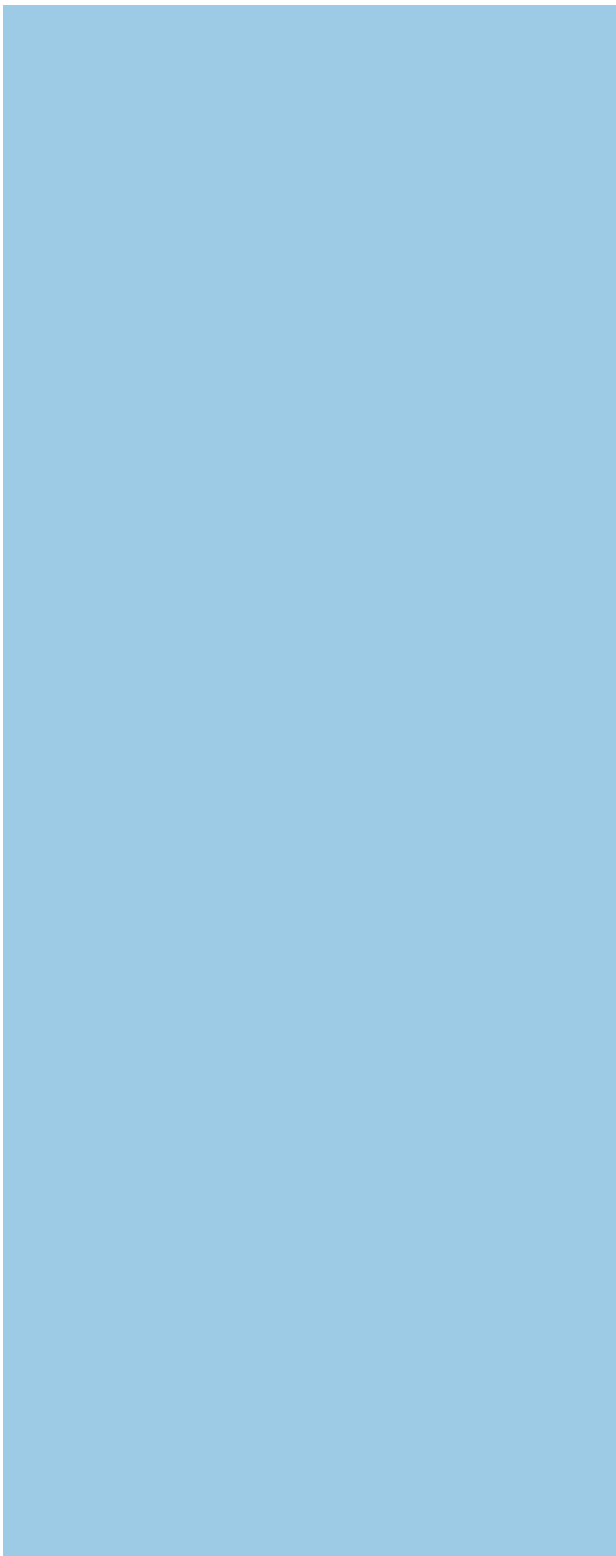
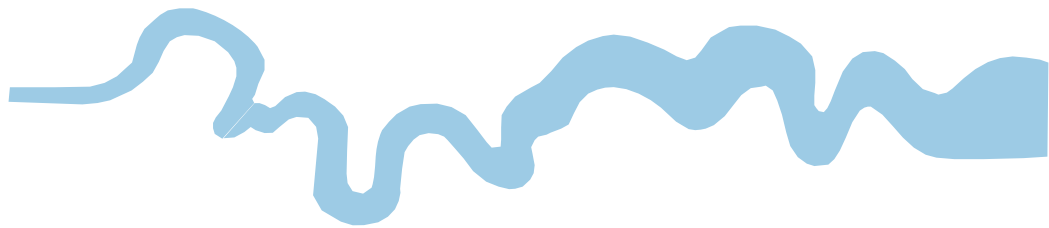
Plates 1 - 2.

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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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