

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close,
Yarnton, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Lizzie Lewins

Site Code: PCY16/03

(SP 4768 1189)

**Land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close, Yarnton,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Keith Miller

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PCY 16/03

February 2016

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close, Yarnton, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 4768 1189

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 15th January 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Danielle Milbank

Site code: PCY 16/03

Area of site: c. 1900 sq m

Summary of results: A likely post-medieval structure of indeterminate nature was exposed during the course of the evaluation.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.02.16 Steve Preston ✓ 04.02.16

Land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close, Yarnton, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Lizzi Lewins

Report 16/03

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close, Yarnton, Oxfordshire (SP 4768 1189) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Keith Miller of 23 Park Close, Yarnton, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (15/01359/OUT) has been sought from Cherwell District Council for the erection of a two bedroom dwelling with garage on the site. A pre-determination archaeological field investigation in the form of an evaluation was requested to determine if archaeological features survive on the site.

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 based on a brief prepared by Mr Richard Oram (Oram 2015), Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank on 15th January 2016 and the site code is PCY 16/03. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located towards the southern edge of the village of Yarnton, west of the A44 (Fig. 1). It lies to the south of properties on Park Close and is bordered immediately to the east by Church Lane. (Fig. 2). Yarnton itself is situated north of Oxford, between the rivers Cherwell to the east and Evenlode to the west, and north of the Thames. The site comprises a flat parcel of former pastureland and lies at a height of 60m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is recorded as Alluvium overlying Oxford Clay (BGS 1982), and this was observed on site as a grey - brown silty clay.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in the brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Oram 2015). In summary the site is located in an area of archaeological interest related to the medieval and early post-medieval settlement. Parts of the site have been excavated by the landowner, who recorded a number of medieval and post-medieval stone-built structures including a possible corn-drier. However, no formal archaeological investigation had taken place on site prior to the evaluation. A deserted medieval village is also known to lie 200m south-east of the site.

A small number of evaluations and watching briefs have taken place within Yarnton to the north-east and east of the site (Bray 2014; Elliott 2013; Wallis 2003), only one of which encountered archaeological features. All of the features encountered during this investigation were undated, although several sherds of medieval and post medieval pottery were recovered from the top- and sub- soil (Mundin 2009). Further south, towards the Thames, extensive fieldwork has detailed the evolution of the landscape over several millennia from the Neolithic onwards, and included excavation of important Iron Age, Roman, early and middle Saxon settlement (Hey *et al.* 2011; Hey 2004).

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 work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of any archaeological features or deposits which warranted preservation *in situ* or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the evaluation were:

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;

To determine if any deposits of prehistoric, Roman or Saxon date were present.

A single trench measuring 20m long and 1.6m wide was proposed, however due to the presence of an overhead cable on site the decision was taken to excavate two shorter trenches in order to avoid this. A contingency of 10m of trench was available should further investigation be required. The trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed house, garage and driveway to assess the impact on any surviving archaeology. The trenches were to be excavated with a mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, supervised by an archaeologist and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Any exposed features or deposits were to be hand cleaned and appropriately excavated and recorded.

Results

The trench was sub-divided and its location altered due to the presence of an overhead cable and a nearby post-mounted substation (Fig. 3; Pl 1). The two trenches ranged in length from 4.8m to 14.10m and in depth from 0.30m to 1.2m and were 1.2m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1a (Fig. 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1a was aligned ESE–WNE and was 14.10m long and 0.50m deep in the main but reaching a maximum depth of 1.20m at the ESE end due to previous disturbance. The WNW end was left higher to avoid a live service. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.34m subsoil overlying a mid grey brown silty clay natural geology.

A possible construction cut (1) was recorded 4.7m from the WNW end of the trench, which was 0.80m wide and 0.36m deep and filled with a mottled, dark grey brown clayey silt fill (52) and structure 53, a possible wall or surface constructed of a yellow grey, fairly fine, limestone. As exposed within the trench it was 2.45m long (NW–SE) and 1.2m wide, and survived to 0.28m high (roughly equivalent to 5 courses, though no courses as such were evident). The masonry was composed of roughly faced blocks ranging in size from 100x100x50mm to 200x200x80mm, with no mortar, and laid haphazardly. The vertical north-west edge suggested a wall, but its extent to the south-east appeared more like a surface.

Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from deposit 52 (likely to be 13th or 14th century), along with one of medieval and three of early post-medieval date from within structure 53. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was also recovered from the spoil at the west end of the trench

As the structure did not sit on the base of cut 1, it is possible that the cut was unrelated to the masonry: in which case feature 1 may be medieval. The structure however must be mid-16th century or later.

A mottled yellow-brown grey sandy clay layer (55) was recorded at 7.5m, immediately east of the structure and extending 1.4m along the trench until truncated at the ESE end. It appeared to overlie the stone structure but this was not clearly established. A test pit was dug into the layer but the underlying natural geology was not encountered nor were any finds recovered.

Trench 1b

Trench 1b was aligned WSW–ENE and was 4.8m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy at the WSW end consisted of 0.10m of topsoil overlying a modern rubble layer containing pieces of brick and plastic. The stratigraphy at the ENE end consisted of 0.10m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of backfilled rubble overlying truncation 2. The underlying natural geology was not observed in the trench. Truncation 2, a possible pond, was filled with a dark brown/black, sandy organic silt (54) and was not fully excavated. A single sherd of modern china was recovered from deposit 54 and a single sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the spoil.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 10 sherds with a total weight of 136g. It was all medieval or later, and recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall Ware, AD1200–1600. 2 sherds, 17g.

OXAW: Early Brill Coarseware, AD1180–1250. 1 sherd, 8g

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, AD1550 onwards. 4 sherds, 88g.

OXFH: Border Ware, AD1550–1700. 1 sherd, 9g.

OXY: Medieval Oxford Ware, AD1075–1350. 1 sherd, 5g.

WHEW: Mass-produced White Earthenwares, 19th-20th century. 1 sherd, 9g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. All the stratified sherds are in reasonably good condition.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed the presence of a possible construction cut and an indeterminate structure of post-medieval date. The structure was not fully excavated as it was felt that any investigation would be better undertaken under the condition of full excavation, and it is not certain the construction cut in fact relates to the structure. Medieval pottery was recovered from the fill of the cut: if it does relate to the structure, these sherds must represent residual material from an earlier phase of activity within the bounds of the site. However it is possible that cut 1 is a medieval feature underlying the post-medieval stone structure. The evaluation has highlighted the survival of possible archaeological deposits to the west of the proposed footprint of the new building which may be impacted by the groundworks. It is possible that further monitoring of the area will be

required during the development. The truncation seen in Trench 1b was modern and likely to relate to an in-filled pond on the site.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at WNW and SW respectively

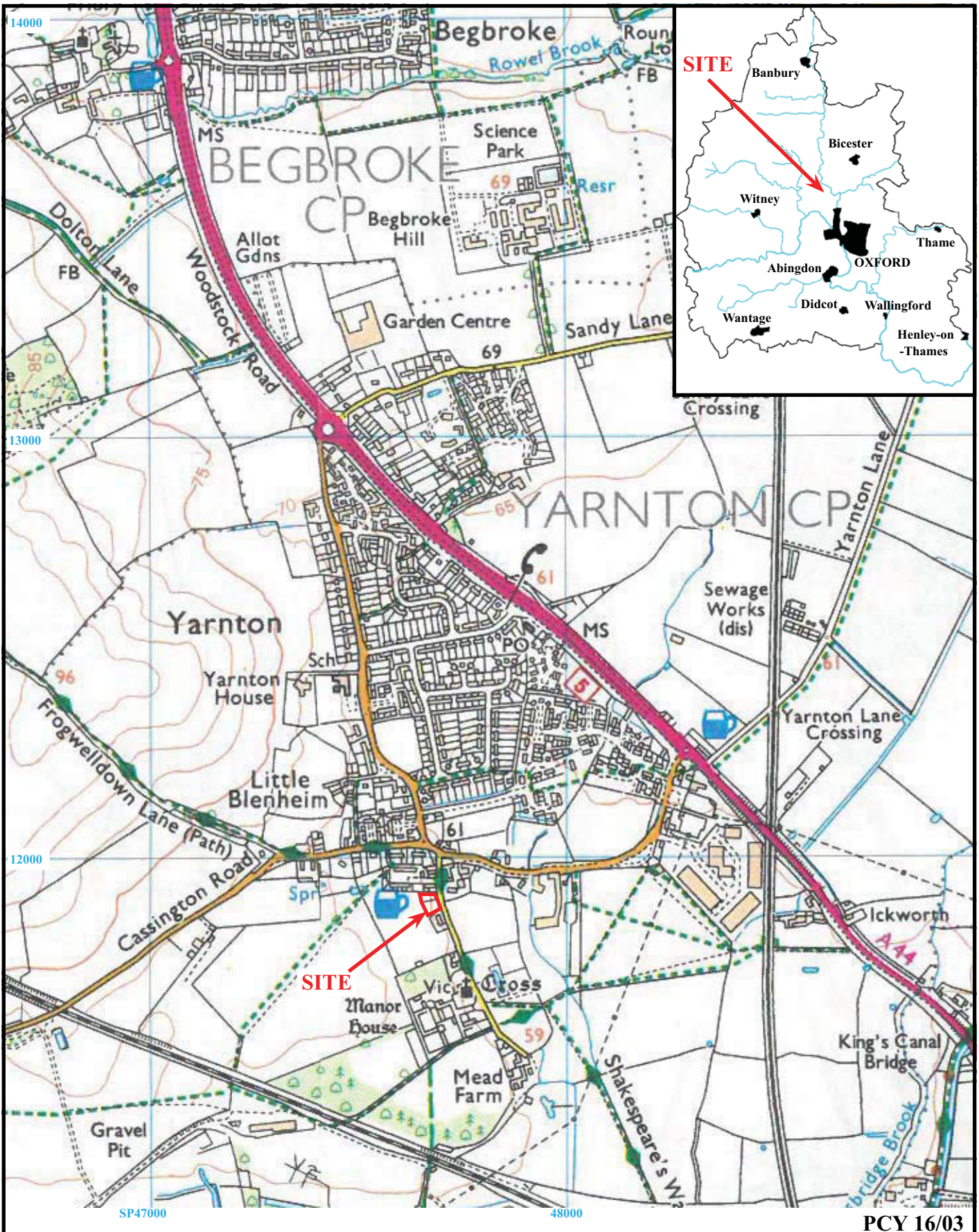
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1a	14.10	1.20	0.50	0-0.16m topsoil, 0.16m-0.50m subsoil, 0.50m+ mid grey brown silty clay natural geology. Cut 1 and layer 55. [Pls 1 and 2]
1b	4.80	1.20	0.85	0-0.10m topsoil, 0.10m-0.40m backfilled rubble, 0.40m+ Truncation 2

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1a	1	52, 53	?Construction cut	Post-Medieval	Pottery
1a		55	Layer	Undated	
1b	2	54	Pond (truncation)	Modern	China

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	OXY		OXAW		OXAM		OXDR		OXFH		WHEW	
			<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1A	1	52	1	5			2	17						
1A	1	53			1	8			3	43				
1A	2	54											1	9
1A	-	Spoil W End									1	9		
1B	-	SW End							1	45				
		Total	1	5	1	8	2	17	4	88	1	9	1	9

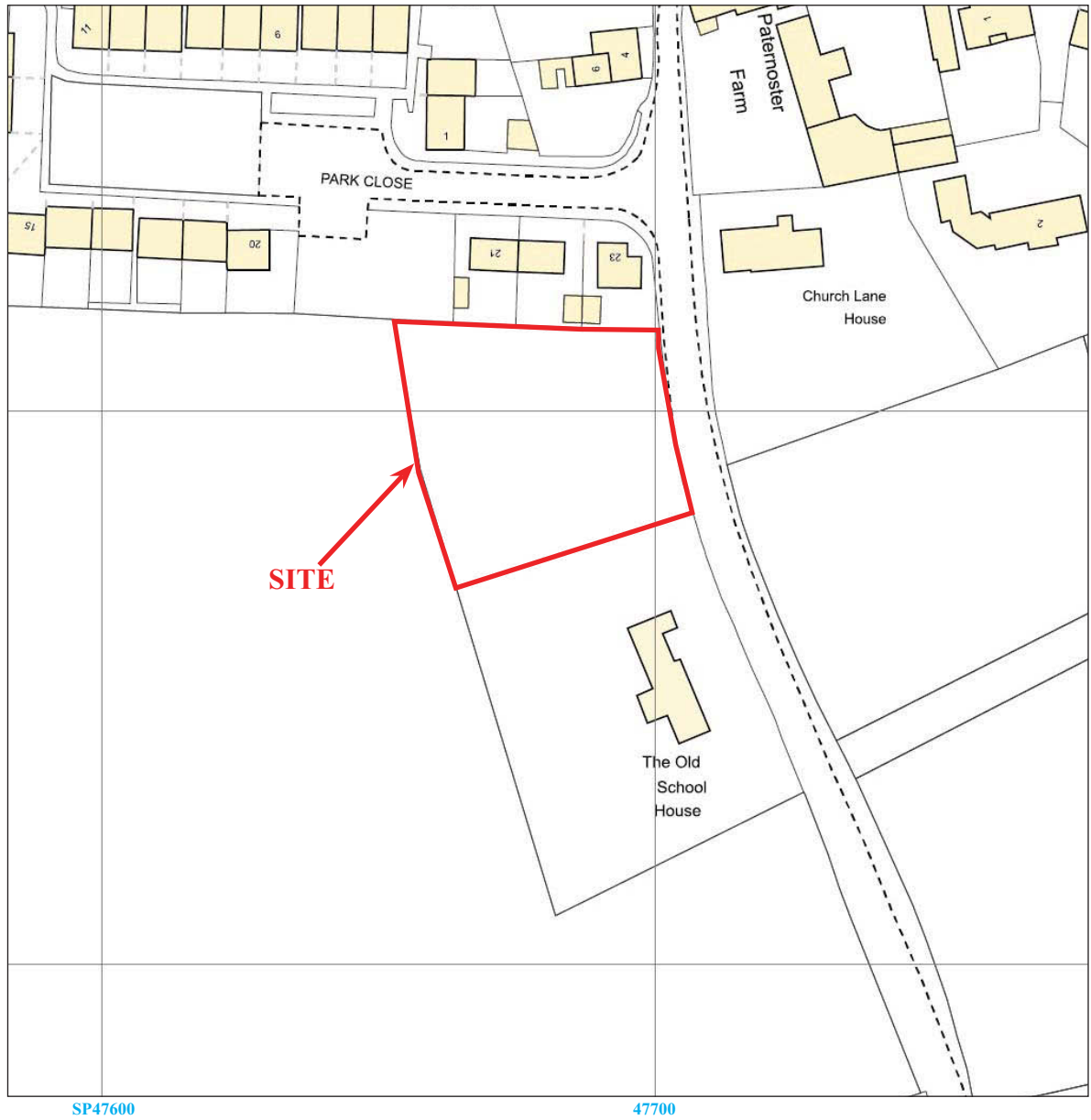


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Figure 1. Location of site within Yarnton and Oxfordshire.

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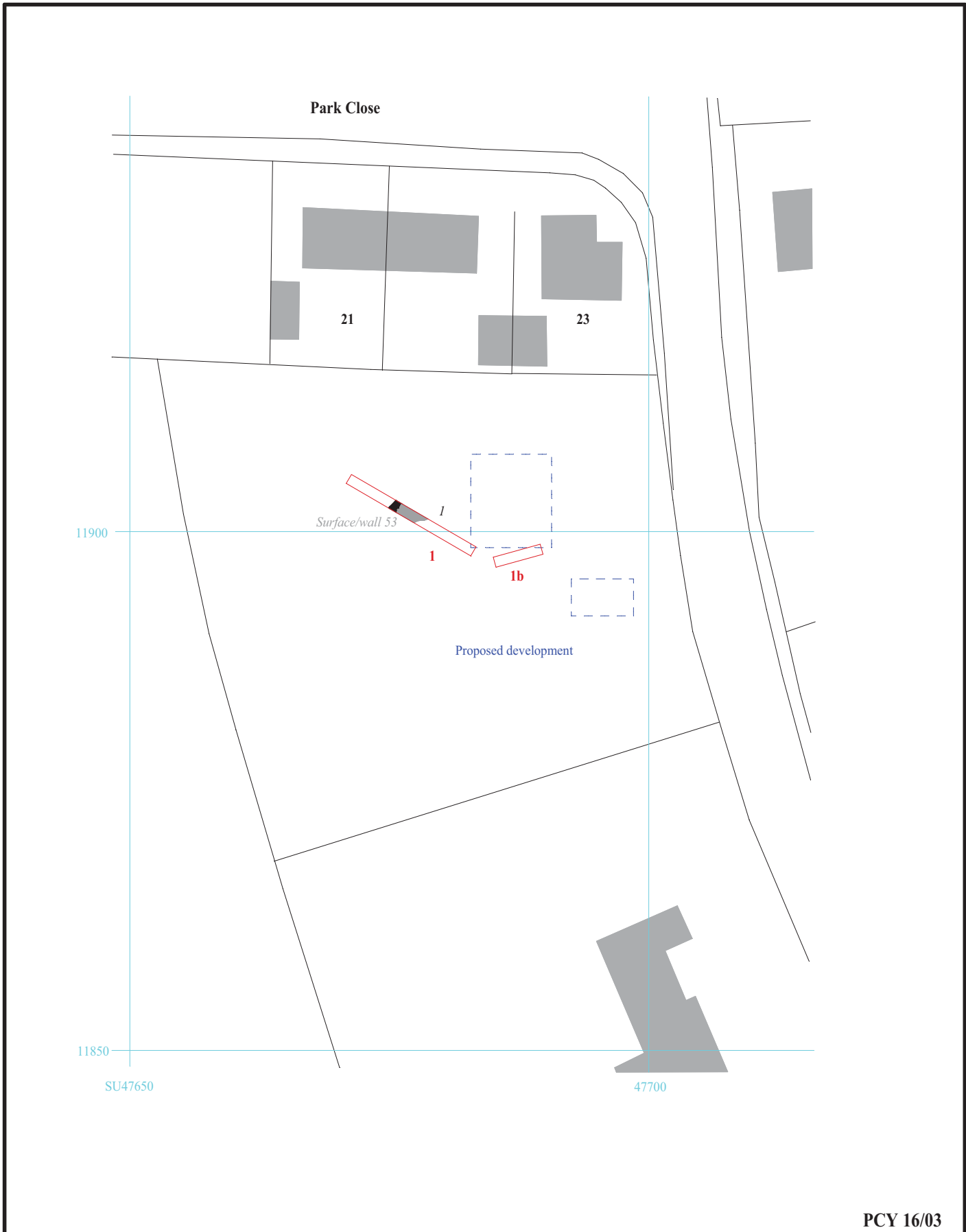


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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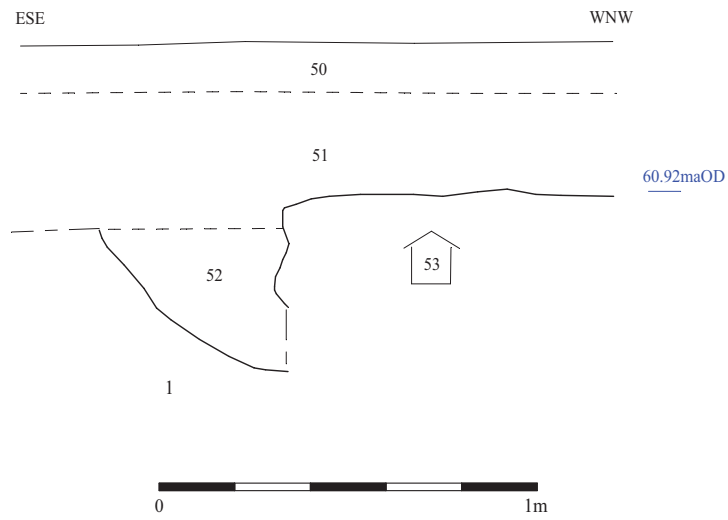
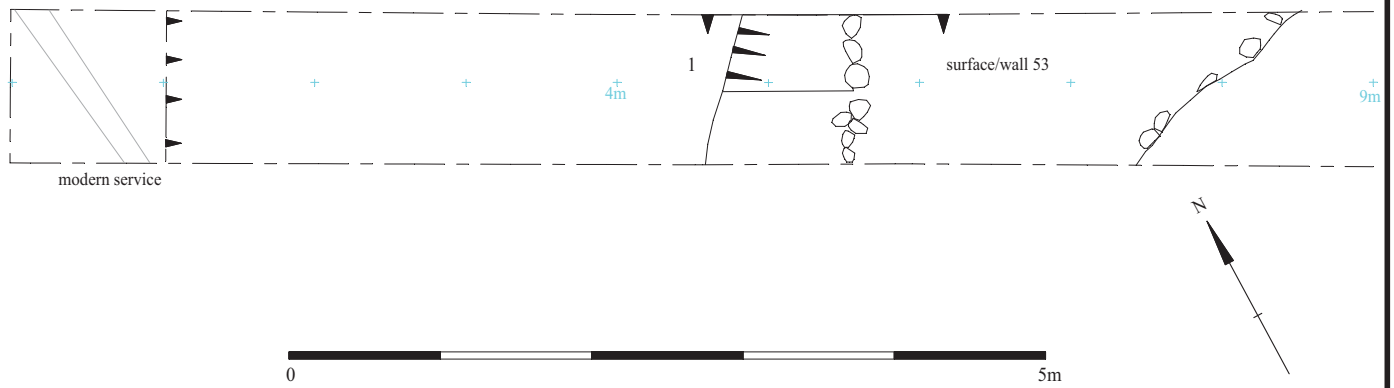
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1.



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 1 cut 1 and surface/wall 53, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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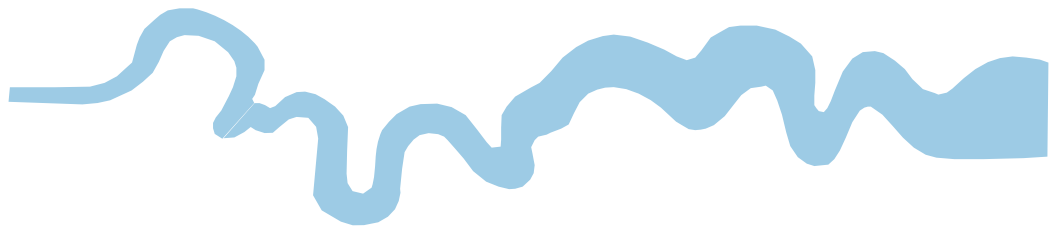
**Land to the rear of 21-23 Park Close, Yarnton,
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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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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