

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H W E S T

**Binnegar Quarry, Southern Extension,
Wareham, Dorset**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Richard Tabor and Andrew Weale

Site Code: BQW15/273

(SY 8845 8772)

Binnegar Quarry, Southern Extension, Wareham, Dorset

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Raymond Brown Minerals and Recycling Ltd

by Richard Tabor and Andrew Weale
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
(South West) Ltd

Site Code BQW
15/273

January 2016

Summary

Site name: Binnegar Quarry, Southern Extension, Wareham, Dorset

Grid reference: SY 8845 8772

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 1st – 4th December 2015

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: BQW 15/273

Area of site: c. 52 sq m

Summary of results: The evaluation has shown that previous use of make-up layers and geotextile sheet has been effective in protecting the Battery Bank scheduled monument. The work also identified historic rutting on top of the possible residual bank material and a massive ditch, presumably the original quarry ditch for the bank's construction, which had been re-cut on a smaller scale parallel to its northern edge. No dating was found for the ditch and re-cuts, nor for the construction of the bank or its subsequent breaching.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, South West in Taunton and will be deposited with Dorset County Museum Service in due course.

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Binnegar Quarry, Southern Extension, Wareham, Dorset An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 15/273

Introduction

Planning permission is to be sought from Dorset County Council for the extension of Binnegar Quarry on land north of Binnegar and south of Puddletown Road, near Wareham, Dorset (SY8845 8772) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Andrew Josephs of Andrew Josephs Associates (AJA), 16 South Terrace, Sowerby, Thirsk, YO7 1RH on behalf of Raymond Brown Minerals and Recycling Ltd, 160 Christchurch Road, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 3AR. The route of the proposed access to the extension would cross Battery Bank, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 101623) (AJA 2015) and as such it is required that the proposal be designed to avoid damage to the monument. A written scheme of investigation was prepared for an evaluation which would provide information to design such mitigation. Scheduled monument consent for the work was obtained by AJA and the work was supervised on site by Ian Meadows of AJA, as required under the consent.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Ian Meadows between 1st and 4th December 2015 under the TVAS site code BQW 15/273. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton, and will be deposited with the Dorset County Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Binnegar Quarry is 3km west of Wareham, Dorset, the greater part of which lies on the north side of Puddletown Road (Fig. 1). The proposed extension is to the south of the road and east of Binnegar Lane. The site of the present evaluation is restricted to where the proposed access to the extension crosses Battery Bank using an old break known as 'crossing point 2' (C2) (Fig. 2). It passes over level ground at a height of around 36m above Ordnance Datum from north to south from quarry workings through a narrow strip of woodland into the north-west corner of an open field. The underlying geology comprises Broadstone Sand Member sedimentary sand (BGS 2001).

Archaeological background

A cultural heritage assessment found that the area around the site contains many round barrows including two groups 600m to the south-east (SM 1016276) and east, as well as some Roman occupation sites (AJA 2015, 13). The proposed access itself utilises a track of made ground that crosses Battery Bank (SM 101623) using an historic breach first shown on the 1902 OS. The bank is of unknown date but it has been suggested that it might be of later prehistoric, Roman or early Saxon origin (AJA 2015, 13; 24). In the recent Cultural Heritage Assessment of the site it was suggested that the name might derive from its military use during the Napoleonic Wars (AJA 2015, 23).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the evaluation were to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the proposed area of development in a manner which did not compromise their integrity. The over-riding aim was to ensure that the evaluation and the final design of the crossing ensured the preservation *in situ* of any archaeological remains associated with the Monument.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to record a section across the scheduled monument and if possible obtain dating evidence;
- to assess the potential significance of any such deposits according to various priorities (eg. English Heritage 2005) or the overview of the archaeology of South West England (Webster 2008); and
- to provide sufficient information to allow the design of a crossing of Battery Bank to be finalised in a manner ensuring that there would be no adverse effects upon the monument.

A single, curved, trench of 39m by 2m was excavated by a 360° tracked machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The work took place under archaeological supervision.

Protective made ground and a buried topsoil were removed by the machine under constant archaeological supervision to undisturbed archaeological levels. Exposed archaeological remains were cleaned by hand and recorded. Eight boreholes were made by hand-held auger to determine the depth of deposits towards the northern end of the trench. Written recording was on single context record sheets. The full length of the trench was drawn

in plan on stable film at a scale of 1:20 and in section at a scale of 1:10. The trench was located using a hand-held GPS.

Results

The 39m long, 2m wide trench was oriented from approximately north-east to south-west (Fig. 3). In broad outline the stratigraphy (Fig. 4) consisted of protective modern overburden (contexts 50-53); buried topsoil (54) sealing ruts 3, 4, 5, and probable tree throws (8 and two unnumbered); a further buried topsoil (55) and subsoil (56) and the possible residual bank (59) and upper fills of a large associated ditch 2. The subsoil covered natural (57) at the north end of the trench.

The topsoil (50), including sparse turf, comprised thin silty sand of up to 0.10m thickness. It covered a 0.25m thick gravelly make-up deposit (51) laid over a geotextile sheet (52). This in turn covered a further 0.15m thickness of make-up comprising compacted yellow stony clay (53) which had been laid over old topsoil (54). It was noted that the geotextile fabric weave was of a type in use around 30 years ago which would fit with the recollections of quarry staff when the area to the south was extracted by Drinkwaters for gravel in the 1980s and transported through the crossing (Steve Clasby, *pers comm*).

An area of disturbance (58) at the interface between 52 and 53 filled the cut of a broad, amorphous possible rut 1 which did not extend as far as the section. The former topsoil (54) covered earlier probable wheel ruts 3, 4 and 5, post hole 9 and a tree throw 8. No direct dating evidence was recovered from any of the features but it was noted that the trajectory of the ruts was towards a mature tree which they therefore presumably predate. The tree is likely to be at least a century old based upon measurements of the trunk and applying the Woodland Trust tree diameter dating rule of thumb (<http://wbrc.org.uk/atp/Estimating%20Age%20of%20Oaks%20-%20Woodland%20Trust.pdf>). The wheel ruts were filled with friable grey sandy silt respectively (60, 61 and 62). The fill (68) of tree throw 8 comprised reddish brown, slightly gritty, gravelly, sandy silt. All of these features cut subsoil (55) which was similar in character to tree throw fill (68) as well as extending into the surface of the possible bank material (59). The possible bank material was cleaned by hand and was observed to have a very hard compacted feel which given the associated wheel ruts may perhaps imply that it formed a surface that was regularly trafficked across in the past.

At the northernmost end of the trench buried topsoil (54) tailed off over upper fill (65) of ditch 6 but did not extend as far as ditch 7. Ditch 7 was shown in section to cut ditch 6 (deposits 65 and 66) and ditch 7 appeared to be parallel with ditch 6, which was at least 2m wide, oriented north-west to south-east. The upper fill (65) of

ditch 6 was of friable dark grey, silty sand including moderate to abundant angular gravel. It lay over a partly exposed second fill (66) of fairly loose grey, less gravelly, silty sand. An auger borehole suggested that the full depth of ditch 6 was approximately 0.90m (Fig. 4, BH1). The fill (67) of ditch 7 was firmer and less gravelly.

Ditch 6 cut the upper fill (63) of a much larger ditch 2. The fill (63) was made up friable grey silty sand including sparse grit and gravel. Along its southern edge it was covered by subsoil (55) which also covered a residual spread of probable bank material (59). The bank extended to the south west of tree throw 8, where it appeared to overly the natural (57), giving it a width of approximately 8.4m. The bank material was similar to ditch 2 upper fill (63) and appeared to merge with it and hence was probably the parent material. Fill (63) had formed over a second, broadly similar but lighter, fill (64). As the requirement was to avoid cutting into the bank and its associated features their relationships could not be fully explored. Boreholes BH2-6 and 8 reached natural (57) at the base of ditch 2. The column from BH8 suggested a considerably greater overlap of the bank material and the ditch fill than was apparent in plan, giving the ditch a width in excess of 5.5m. The tail of the bank was up to 0.23m thick where it had spread over the southern edge of the ditch fill (Fig. 4, BH 8). Ditch 2 survived to a minimum depth of 0.95m below the interface of 63 with 64 and appears to have had a broad, flat base. The auger was obstructed in the neighbouring borehole at 0.61m below the exposed machined surface so that the full depth of the ditch could not be determined at that point (Fig. 4, BH 7).

Conclusion

The evaluation has confirmed that traces of the scheduled monument, Battery Bank, survive under the protective layers laid over it some 30 years ago. In addition a substantial quarry ditch probably from the original construction of the bank was identified on its north east side and should be treated as part of the monument. At least one much narrower ditch may represent re-cutting of the original ditch but equally it may be a later field boundary. Several ruts suggest that wheeled traffic took advantage of the slightly raised ground and break in the continuous bank but it was unclear when the breach was made or when the wheel ruts dated to, except that it predated the construction of the protective made ground in the 1980s. The information gained from the evaluation has been recorded in writing and graphically and located by GPS and is available to inform future research concerning the monument and its place in the wider landscape. The only research objective which has not been achieved is the discovery of evidence to date the construction of the bank and its associated features.

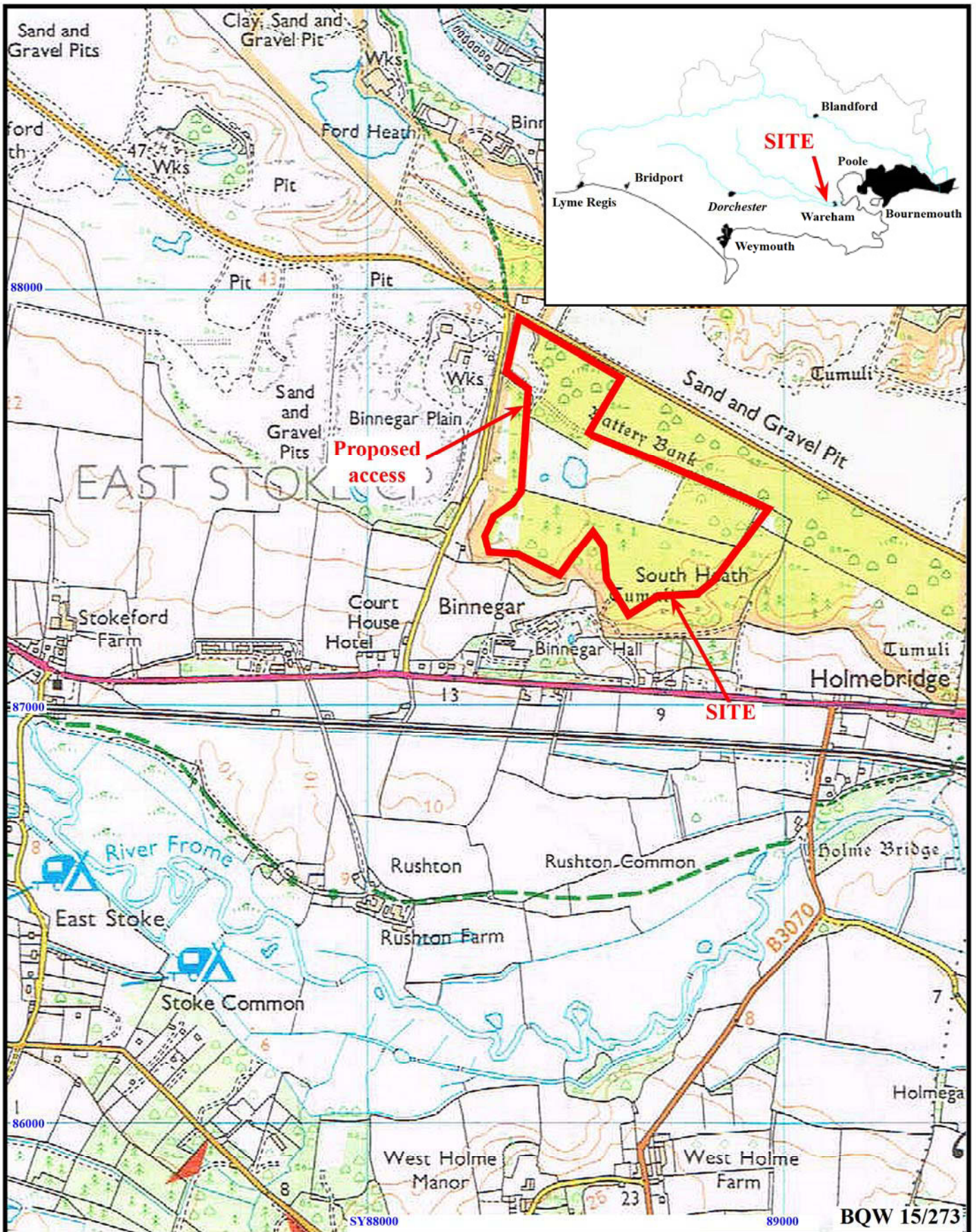
The evaluation has shown that the use of madeground and geotextile sheet has provided effective protection of the monument thus far but it should be borne in mind that quarry traffic could create deep rutting so that further protection may be necessary.

References

- AJA, 2015, *Binnegar Quarry Southern Extension Cultural Heritage assessment*, Andrew Josephs Associates, Thirsk
- BGS, 2001, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet E343 (with parts of E342), Solid and Drift Provisional Edition, Keyworth
- English Heritage, 2005, *Research Agenda*, English Heritage, London
- TVAS, 2015, *Binnegar Quarry, Southern Extension, Wareham, Dorset: Project for an archaeological evaluation of Battery Bank*, Thames Valley Archaeological Service, Reading
- Webster, C J (ed), 2008, *The archaeology of South-West England. South West Archaeological Research Framework. Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, Somerset County Council, Taunton

APPENDIX 1: Context summary

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposits/Fills</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	50	Topsoil	Modern	Stratigraphy
	51	Madeground	Undated	Stratigraphy
	52	Terram	Modern	Fabric
	53	Madeground	Modern	Stratigraphy
	54	Buried topsoil	19th century/ modern	Stratigraphy
	55	Buried topsoil	Undated	Stratigraphy
	56	Subsoil	Undated	Stratigraphy
	57	Natural	Geological	Stratigraphy
1	58	Rut	Modern	Stratigraphy
	59	Bank material	Undated	Stratigraphy
3	60	Rut	Early 19th century	Stratigraphy and orientation?
4	61	Rut	Early 19th century	Stratigraphy and orientation?
5	62	Rut	Early 19th century	Stratigraphy and orientation?
2	63, 64	Bank ditch	Undated	Stratigraphy
6	65, 66	Ditch	Undated	Stratigraphy
7	67	Ditch or recut	Undated	Stratigraphy
8	68	Tree bowl	Undated	Stratigraphy
9	69	Post hole	Modern	Stratigraphy



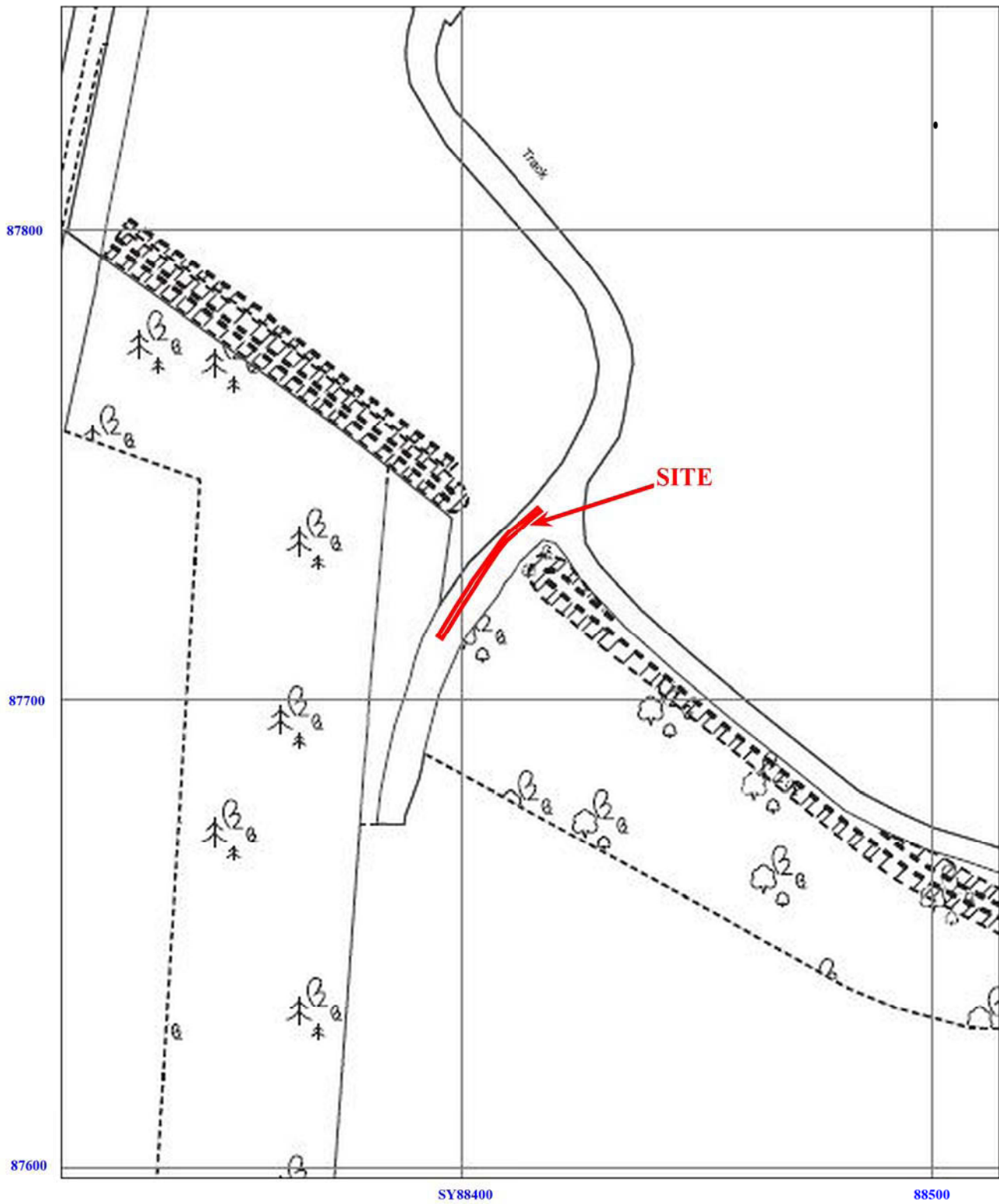
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Figure 1. Location of the site

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Figure 2. Detailed site setting

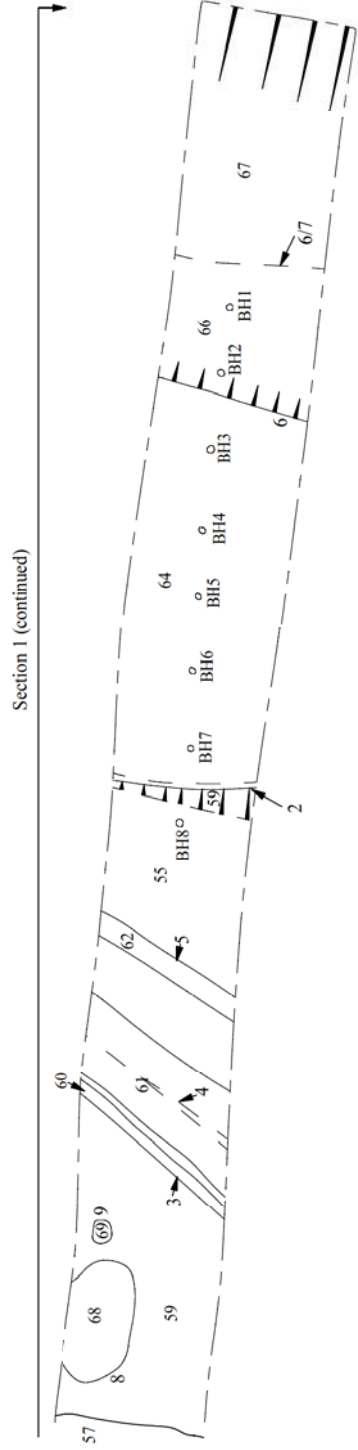
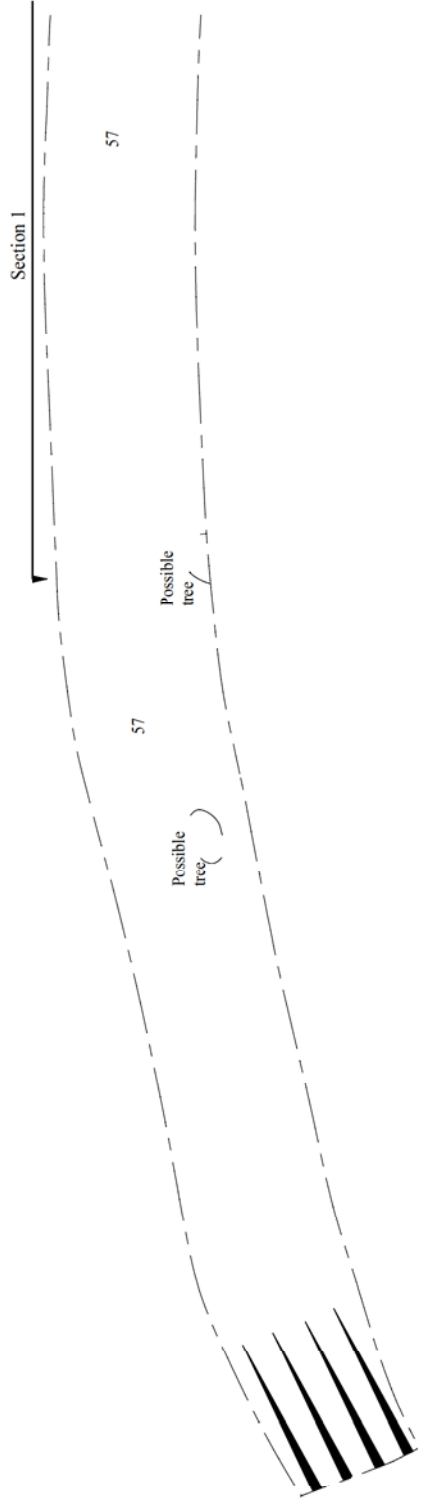
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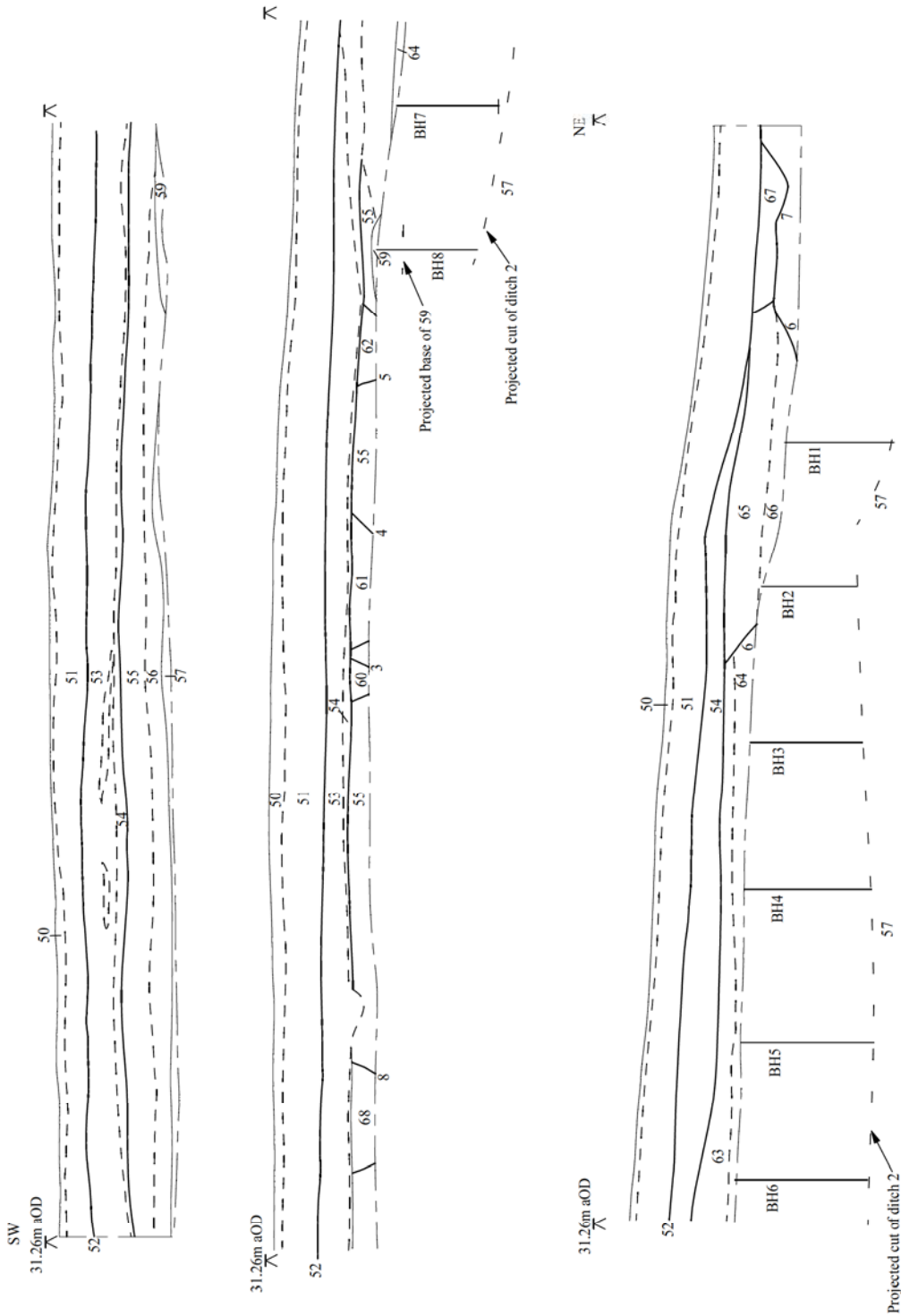
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Figure 3. Plan 1





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Figure 4. Section 1



Plate 1. View of mid-trench section, looking north-west (2m and 1m scales)



Plate 2. Northern end of trench, looking south-west (2m, 1m and 0,5m scales)

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Archaeological Watching Brief

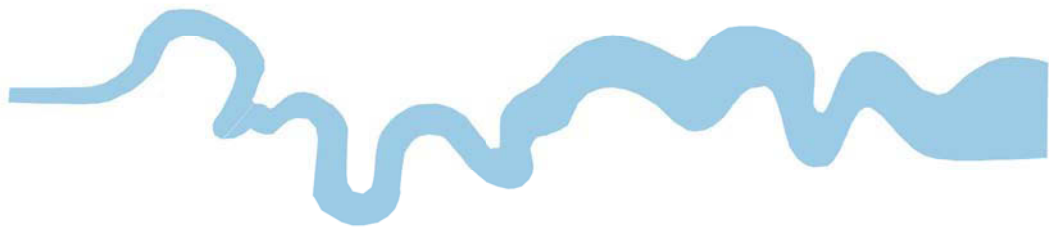
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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