

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bloom Buildings, West End,
Cholsey, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: BWC16/207

(SU 5808 8592)

Bloom Buildings, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Claude Fenton (Holdings) Ltd**

by Luís Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BWC16/207

February 2017

Summary

Site name: Bloom Buildings, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5808 8592

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 8th February 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luís Esteves

Site code: BWC 16/207

Area of site: c.0.17ha

Summary of results: Two trenches were dug as intended and only a single undated ditch was identified during the archaeological evaluation. Parts of the site were occupied by deep made ground directly overlying natural geology suggesting some truncation of the archaeologically relevant levels had taken place. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 13.02.17 Steve Preston✓ 13.02.17

Bloom Buildings, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luís Esteves

Report 16/207b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Bloom Buildings, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire (SU 5808 8592) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Matt Fenton for Claude Fenton (Holdings) Ltd, Unit 1, Kennet Weir Business Park, Theale, Reading, RG7 4AE.

Planning permission (P16/S4177/FUL) has been sought from South Oxfordshire District Council to demolish the existing buildings and erect five new houses and associated infrastructure. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the groundworks, a field evaluation has been requested as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's Local Plan policies. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, which was prepared according to a brief (Oram 2017). The fieldwork was undertaken by Luís Esteves and Cosmo Bacon on 8th February 2017 and the site code is BWC 16/207. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Cholsey is located c.3km south-west of Wallingford (Fig. 1). The site is located in the southern extent of Cholsey, next to the railway station. It lies surrounded by fields and there are some buildings/sheds in the centre of the site (Pl. 1). The underlying geology is mapped as Lower Chalk (BGS 1980) and this was observed in the trenches. The site is at an elevation of c.49m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2016) drawing on a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2016). In summary the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in close proximity to the suggested

site of a 10th-century Benedictine Abbey and a medieval grange and moat. It appears to be located within a moated enclosure, although there is no evidence to establish any clear connection with Abbey or grange. Two watching briefs on the property immediately to the north (The Elms) (Dawson 2009; Castle and Dawson 2013) revealed a single undated ditch cut into the chalk within the northern end of the enclosure earthworks.

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

The specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits relating to the Saxon period are present; and
- to determine if any deposits relating to the medieval period are present.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, each 20m in length and 1.6m-2m wide. The overburden was to be removed with a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features were encountered the trenches were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded including a photographic record. The excavation of the trenches was to be supervised by an archaeologist at all times and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

Results

The two trenches were excavated as intended (Fig. 2), measuring 1.6m wide and between 17.5m and 20m long and between 0.6m and 0.8m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 1 was aligned south-south-west – north-north-east and was 17.5m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of hoggin, 0.15m of crush levelling and 0.60m of dark grey clay made ground with inclusions

of modern ceramic building material directly overlying the grey silty clay with chalk inclusions natural geology. No features were present nor finds recovered.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 3; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was aligned south-west – north-east and was 20.0m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.40m of mid grey silty clay subsoil overlying chalk natural geology. Five areas of discolouration of the natural geology were investigated in this trench, four of which were written off as being either of natural origin or of modern date, containing items such as modern brick or mass produced transfer patterned 'china'. However, a single ditch (1) was recorded which was aligned NW–SE, was 0.95m wide and 0.30m deep and filled with a single light yellow-grey silty clay fill (54). Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

Finds

No finds were recovered during the archaeological evaluation.

Conclusion

Both trenches were excavated as intended and a single feature was identified at the eastern end of the site. This consisted of a ditch aligned north-west – south-east which contained no dating evidence. The western trench (1), however, showed signs of significant amounts of modern disturbance with made ground being observed directly overlying the natural geology. This might suggest that in the western part of the site, the top of the archaeologically relevant level has been truncated in the modern period while the eastern end of the site remains relatively undisturbed. The ditch observed was markedly out of alignment with the earthworks around the site, suggesting it was probably not directly related to these.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Baljkas, G, 2016, 'Bloom Buildings, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment', TVAS unpubl rep **16/207**, Reading
- Castle, A and Dawson, T, 2013, 'The Elms, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire: An archaeological watching brief', TVAS unpubl rep **13/150**, Reading
- Dawson, T, 2009, 'The Elms, West End, Cholsey, Oxfordshire: An archaeological watching brief', TVAS unpubl rep **08/134**, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2017, 'Bloom Buildings, Westend, Cholsey: Design brief for archaeological field evaluation', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, Oxford

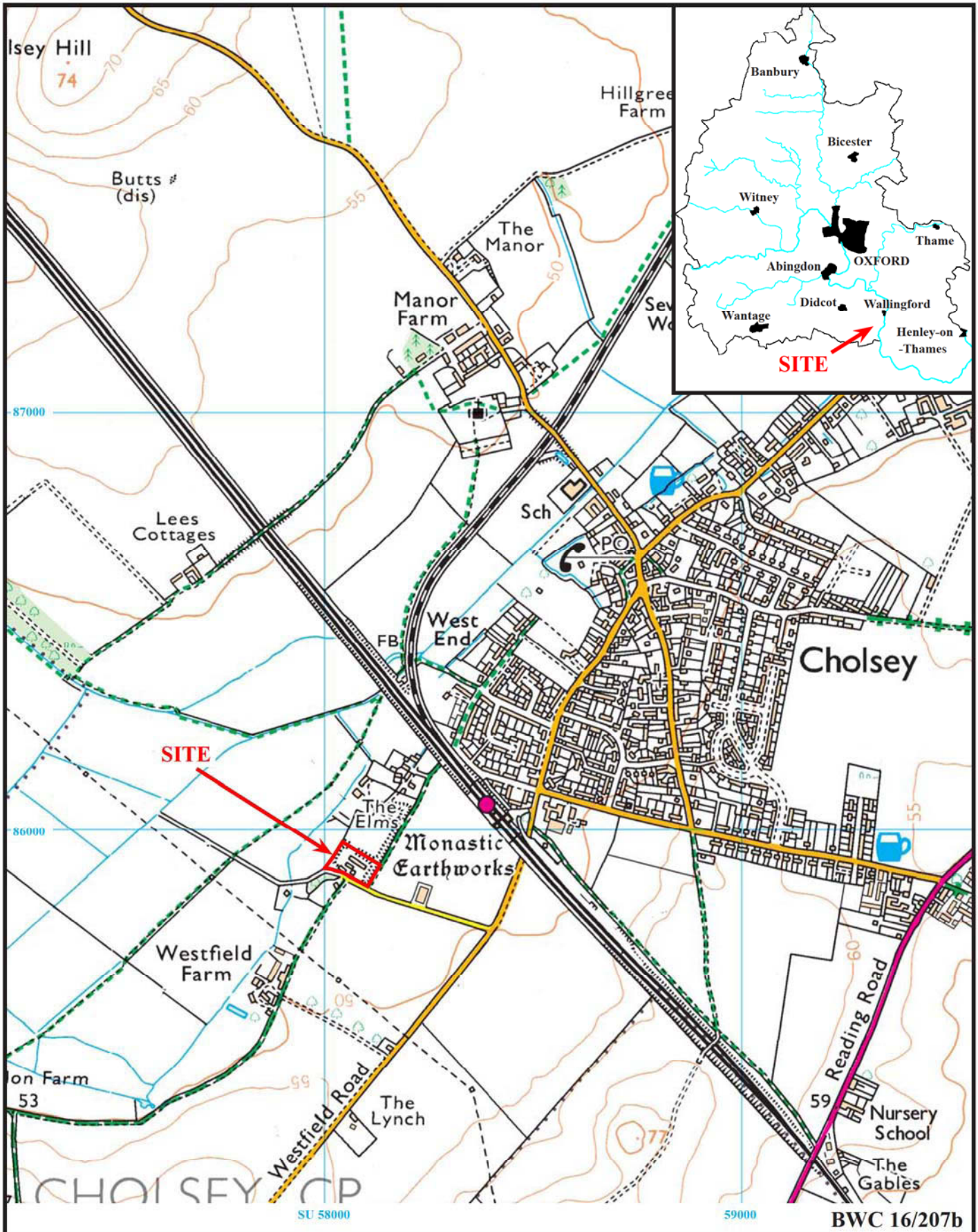
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SSW or SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	17.5	1.6	0.80	0-0.05m hoggin, 0.05-0.20m levelling, 0.20-0.80m made ground, 0.80m+ natural geology. Pls 1 and 2]
2	20.0	1.6	0.60	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.60m subsoil, 0.60m+ natural geology. Modern features Ditch 1 [Pls 3 and 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

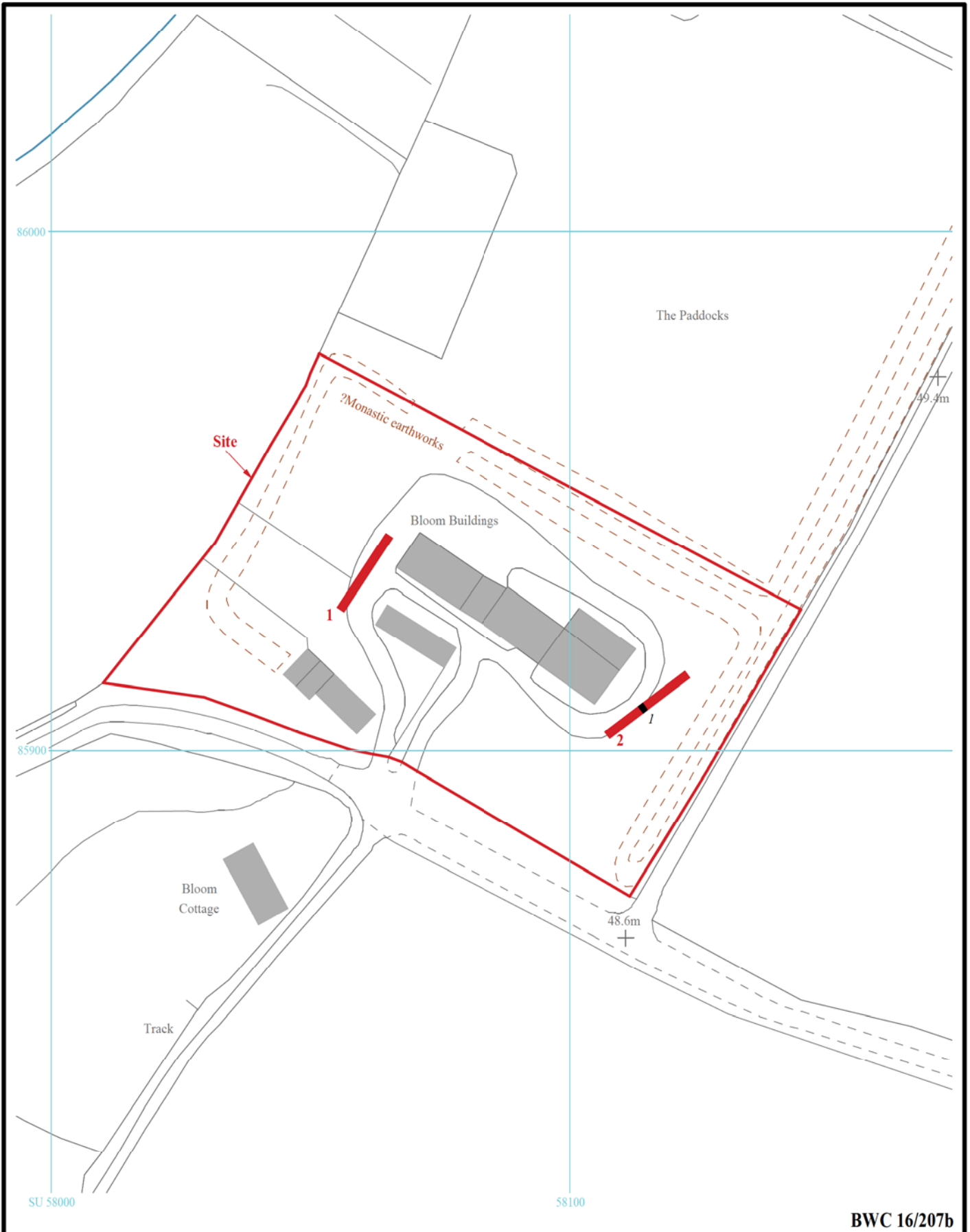
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	54	Ditch	Undated	-



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Figure 1. Location of site within Cholsey and Oxfordshire

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital Mapping at 1:12500



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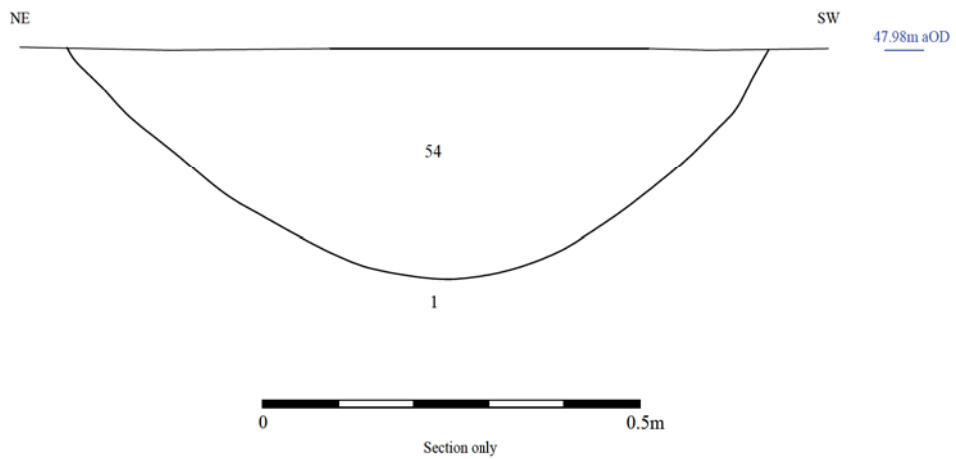
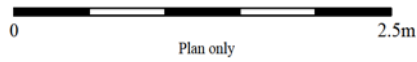
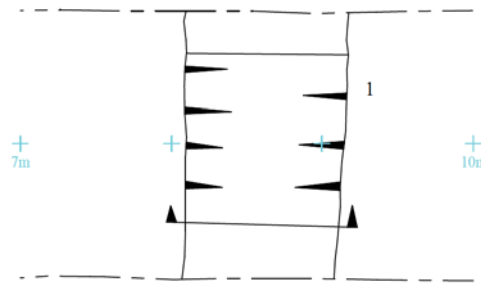
Figure 2. Trench layout.



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Trench 2



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Figure 3. Plan and section.

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Plate 1. General view of the western site area.



Plate 2. Trench 1, looking north-east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking north-east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Ditch cut 1, looking south-east, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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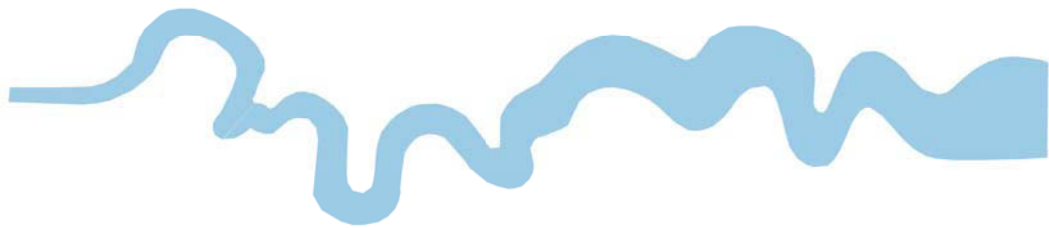
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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