

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Thame Road, Warborough,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: TRW16/134

(SU 5985 9338)

Land at Thame Road, Warborough, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation for Rectory Homes

by Luís Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TRW16/134

May 2017

Summary

Site name: Land at Thame Road, Warborough, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5985 9338

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th to 9th of May 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luís Esteves

Site code: TRW 16/134

Area of site: c. 2.3ha

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed a number of linear features which were investigated but produced no dating evidence. No other types of feature were revealed and no artefacts, datable or otherwise were recovered. The features are therefore of uncertain date but are considered to represent boundaries and field systems located away from the centre of intensively occupied areas.

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

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 25.05.17
	Danielle Milbank ✓ 25.05.17

Land at Thame Road, Warborough, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luís Esteves

Report 16/134c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Thame Road, Warborough, Oxfordshire (SU 5985 9338) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steven Kerry of Rectory Homes, Rectory House, Thame Road, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8DA.

Planning permission (P16/S4080/FUL) has been sought from South Oxfordshire District Council to erect 36 new houses on the site. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, field evaluation has been requested by means of machine trenching prior to 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 approved by Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luís Esteves and Maisie Foster between 4th and 9th May 2017 and the site code is TRW16/134. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The proposal site is located centrally within the village of Warborough. The proposal site comprises an irregular relatively flat parcel of land covering an area of 2.33ha (Figure 1) and is approximately 48m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The site is bounded by Thame Road and a playing field to the west, the rear of properties fronting Quaker Lane and The Green South to the north, open fields to the east and the grounds of St Laurence Church of England Primary School to the south. The underlying geology is mapped as river gravel (BGS 1980).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service drawing on a desk-based assessment (Baljkas

2016) and geophysical survey (Beaverstock 2017). In summary the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley. The environs of Dorchester on Thames are exceptionally rich with sites of many periods recorded by aerial photography and mineral extraction. Several of these sites are scheduled monuments, with a cursus monument, ring ditch (levelled burial mound) and other enclosures lying to the east, a probable Roman villa to the south west and other Roman settlement to the south east. The site has been subject to geophysical survey though this revealed few, if any, anomalies of archaeological interest.

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 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.

It was proposed to dig thirty trenches, each 20m long and 1.6m-2m wide (Fig. 2) Topsoil and other overburden were to be removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. 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

Trenches were excavated as intended and measured 20m in length, between 0.37m and 0.79m in depth and 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. All features of possible archaeological interest were cleaned and investigated using hand tools and are described in detail below. Test pits were excavated in a number of trenches to verify the subsoil and natural geology levels, in consultation with the county archaeologist. A list of features investigated is given in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

Trench 1 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.1m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. A test pit was dug in the NW end, 0.77m deep showing a yellow sand.

Trench 2 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Plate 1)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.09m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a mid grey orange silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 3 (Fig 2)

Trench 3 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.36m of topsoil and 0.14m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 4 (Fig 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.11m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with occasional gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 5 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.61m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. A ditch was investigated where a slot (6) was dug with 1.1m wide and 0.38m deep with a single fill (57) of light orange grey sandy clay. No dating evidence was encountered.

Trench 6 (Fig 2)

Trench 6 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.36m of topsoil and 0.11m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 7 (Fig 2)

Trench 7 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.11m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark orange grey silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 8 (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

Trench 8 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil and 0.14m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. A ditch was investigated where a slot (7) was dug with 0.55m wide and 0.35m deep and a single fill (58) of light grey brown silty clay. No dating evidence was encountered.

Trench 9 (Fig 2)

Trench 9 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.09m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark brown orange silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 10 (Fig 2)

Trench 10 was aligned S - N and was 20m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a mid brown gravel and silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 11 (Fig 2)

Trench 11 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.1m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 12 (Fig 2; Pl. 3)

Trench 12 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m of topsoil and 0.2m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a patchy orange brown silty clay with gravel and sand natural geology. A test pit was dug in the SW end, 0.99m deep showing a yellow orange sand. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 13 (Fig 2)

Trench 13 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.67m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.17m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with frequent gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 14 (Fig 2)

Trench 14 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.79m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil and 0.18m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a patchy orange brown silty clay natural geology with gravel and sandy patches. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 15 (Fig 2)

Trench 15 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil and 0.06m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark orange brown silty clay with moderate gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 16 (Fig 2)

Trench 16 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.1m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark brown orange silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 17 (Fig 2)

Trench 17 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.22m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 18 (Fig 2)

Trench 18 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark orange brown sandy silt with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 19 (Fig 2)

Trench 19 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.44m of topsoil and 0.12m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown sandy silt with gravel natural geology. A ditch terminus was investigated where a slot (1) measuring 1m long was dug which was 0.6m wide and 0.23m deep with a single fill (52) of mid grey brown silty clay. No dating evidence was encountered.

Trench 20 (Figs 2, 3 and 4 ; Pl. 7)

Trench 20 was aligned S - N and was 20m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.39m of topsoil and 0.11m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown sandy silt with gravel natural geology.

A slot (2) was excavated through a ditch with sloping sides and a v-shaped profile. The slot measured 1m long, 0.9m wide and 0.36m deep with a single fill (53) of light orange brown sandy clay. No dating evidence was encountered.

Trench 21 (Fig 2)

Trench 21 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.1m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 22 (Fig 2)

Trench 22 was aligned SE - NW and was 20m long and 0.64m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil and 0.17m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying an orange brown silty clay with moderate gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 23 (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

Trench 23 was aligned S - N and was 20m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.18m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a dark orange brown silty clay with frequent gravel natural geology.

A ditch was investigated where a slot (5) was dug. This was 1m long, 0.8m wide and 0.14m deep with a single fill (56) of mid grey brown sandy silt. No dating evidence was encountered.

Trench 24 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Pls. 6 and 8)

Trench 24 was aligned SW - NE and was 20m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.37m of topsoil and 0.05m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a orange brown silty clay with gravel natural geology. Two ditches were investigated. The first (3) was 1.3m wide and 0.23m deep with a single fill (54) of mid grey brown sandy silt. The second (4) was 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep with a single fill (55) of light grey brown sandy silt. No dating evidence was encountered in either of the features.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were encountered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The evaluation trenches were dug as intended and showed largely undisturbed natural geology across the site. Variation in the levels present were noted, with the presence of a dark brown clay silt layer with frequent large gravel present in some trenches, underlying the subsoil. Although part of the site was historically occupied by allotments, this deposit has no characteristics of more recent allotment soil and is not the result of post-medieval or modern cultivation. Its extent across the site suggests it is also not likely to relate to the use of the land as an access road during the construction of the adjacent school. This is interpreted as a variation in the natural geology and test pits showed it to be 0.20m to 1.0m thick, and represents the archaeologically-relevant level.

The excavated features are regarded as being boundary and field system features. The lack of any artefacts, datable or otherwise, nor any other types of cut feature present suggesting that the site is located away from the core of a settled area.

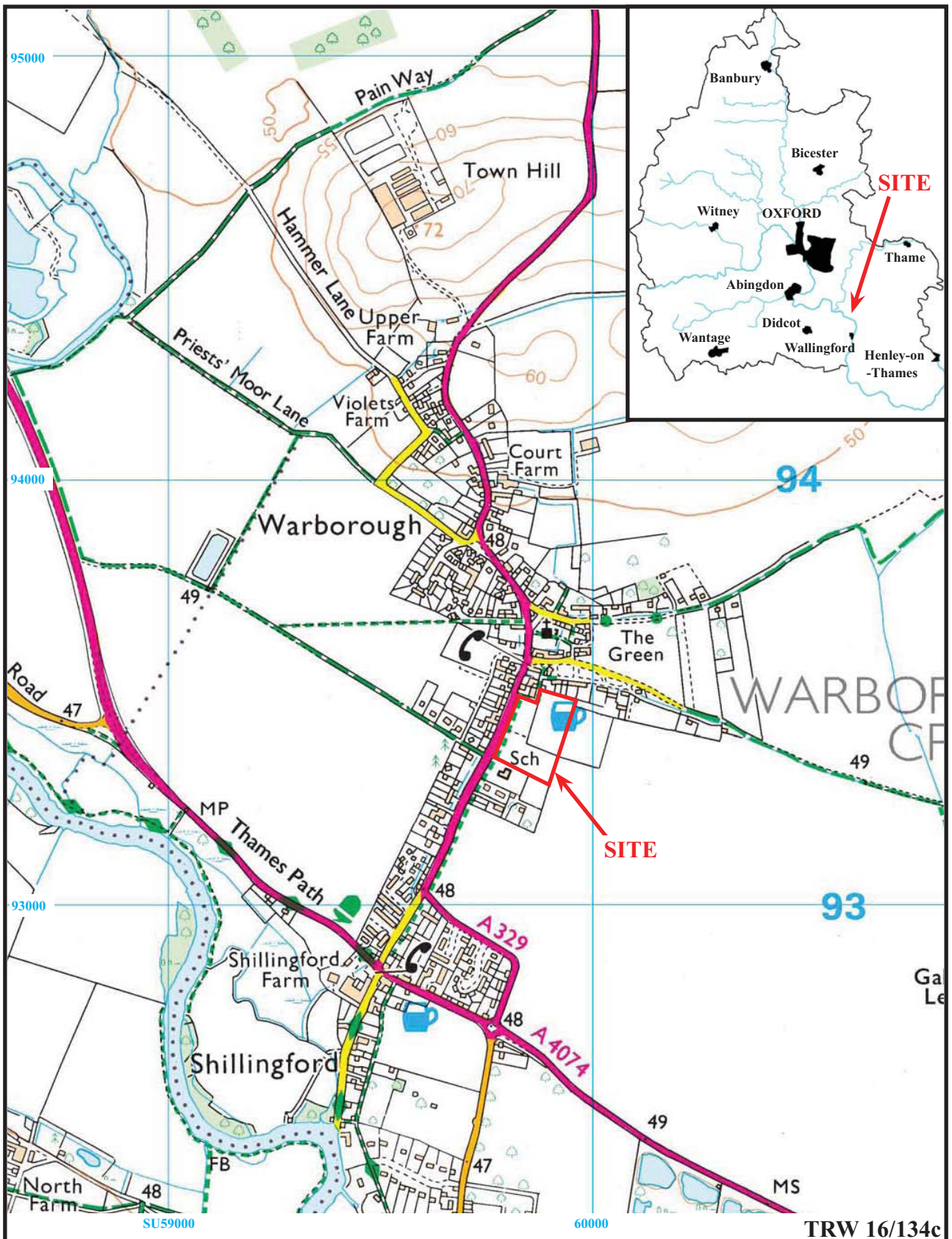
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20	1.8	0.37	0–0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.29m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
2	20	1.8	0.54	0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.41m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.41m+ dark orange grey mottled clay silt natural geology. [Pl. 1]
3	20	1.8	0.65	0–0.36m topsoil; 0.36-0.50m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.50m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
4	20	1.8	0.60	0–0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.45m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.45m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology. [Pl. 2]
5	20	1.8	0.61	0–0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.52m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.52m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology. Ditch 6 [Pl. 5]
6	20	1.8	0.60	0–0.36m topsoil; 0.36-0.47m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.47m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
7	20	1.8	0.43	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.39m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.39m+ dark orange grey mottled clay silt natural geology
8	20	1.8	0.57	0–0.32m topsoil; 0.32-0.46m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.46m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology. Ditch 7
9	20	1.8	0.50	0–0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.36m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.36m+ dark brown orange silty clay natural geology.
10	20	1.8	0.50	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.40m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
11	20	1.8	0.45	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.30m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.30m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
12	20	1.8	0.66 Test pit 0.96	0–0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.51m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.51m+ brown orange silty clay natural geology with frequent gravel and sandy patches. [Pl. 3]
13	20	1.8	0.67	0–0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.52m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.52m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
14	20	1.8	0.79	0–0.45m topsoil; 0.45-0.63m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
15	20	1.8	0.50	0–0.34m topsoil; 0.34-0.40m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
16	20	1.8	0.49	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.38m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.38m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
17	20	1.8	0.65	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.50m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.50m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
18	20	1.8	0.52	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.42m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.42m+ orange brown sandy silt natural geology with frequent gravel.
19	20	1.8	0.70	0–0.44m topsoil; 0.44-0.56m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.56m+ orange brown sandy silt natural geology with frequent gravel. Ditch 1
20	20	1.8	0.57	0–0.39m topsoil; 0.39-0.50m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.50m+ orange brown sandy silt natural geology with frequent gravel. Ditch 2 [Pl. 7]
21	20	1.8	0.48	0–0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.45m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ orange brown sandy silt natural geology with frequent gravel.
22	20	1.8	0.64	0–0.34m topsoil; 0.34-0.53m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ orange brown silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
23	20	1.8	0.65	0–0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.53m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.53m+ orange brown silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
24	20	1.8	0.54	0–0.37m topsoil; 0.37-0.42m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.42m+ orange brown silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology. Ditches 3 and 4 [Pls. 4; 6 and 8]
25	20	1.8	0.50	0–0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.40m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ orange brown silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
26	20	1.8	0.46 Test pit to 0.96	0–0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.29m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ natural brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
27	20	1.8	0.76	0–0.39m topsoil; 0.39-0.61m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.61m+ orange brown silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
28	20	1.8	0.46 SW end 0.61	0–0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.29m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.29m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
29	20	1.8	0.47 (0.77 at S end)	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.40m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.
30	20	1.8	0.48	0–0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.40m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ brown orange silty clay and frequent gravel natural geology.



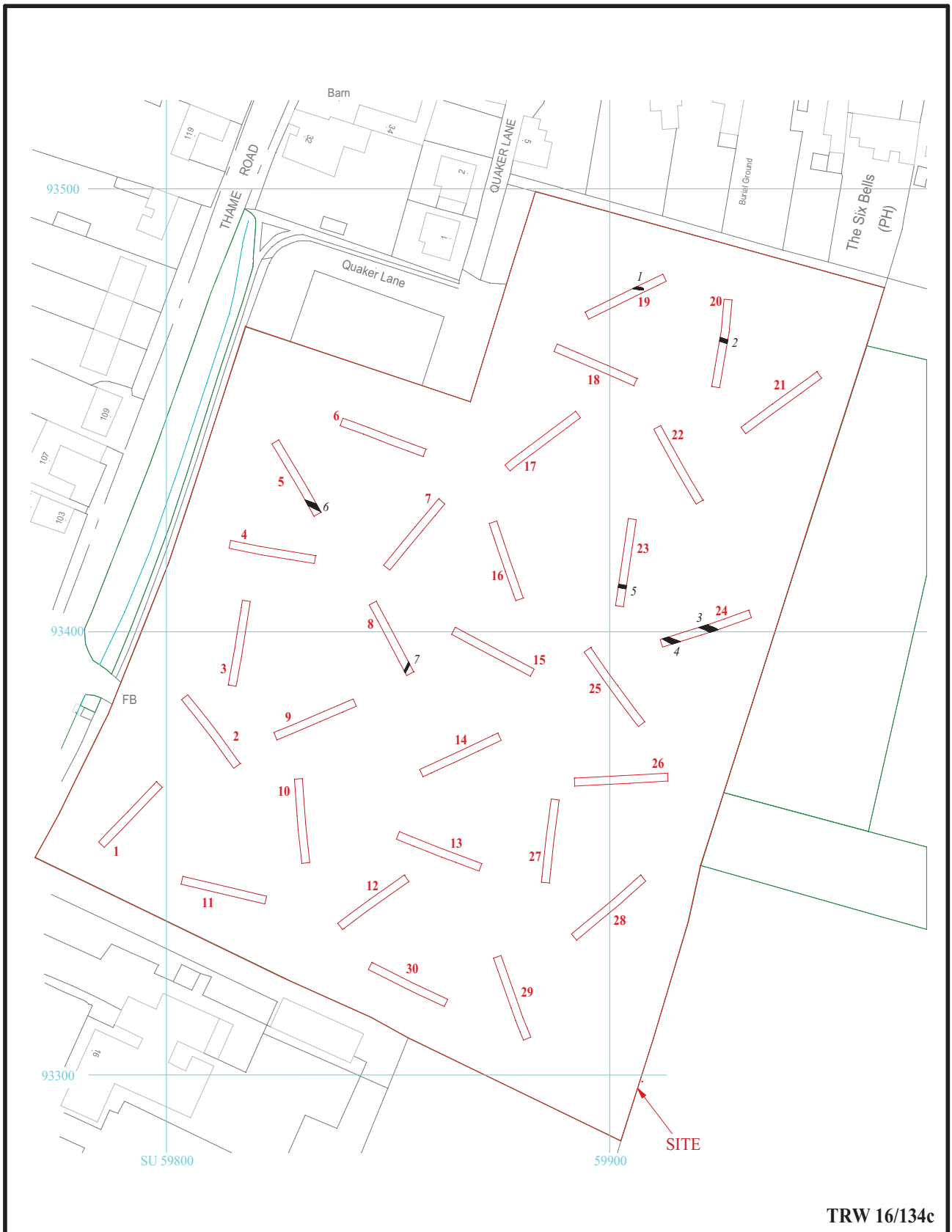
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Figure 1. Location of site within Warborough and Oxfordshire.

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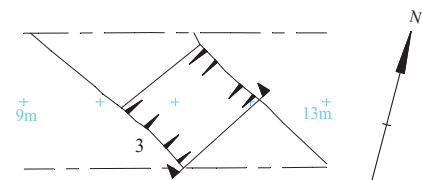
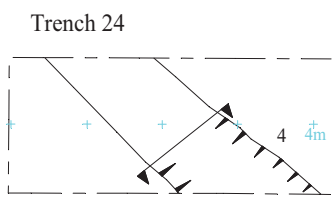
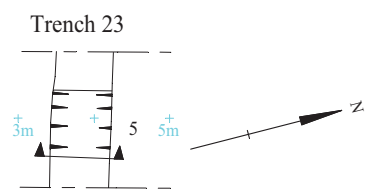
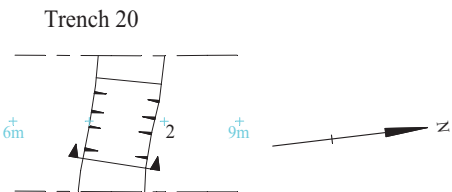
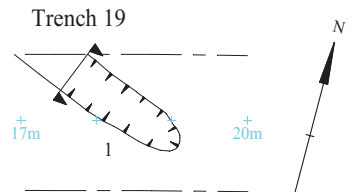
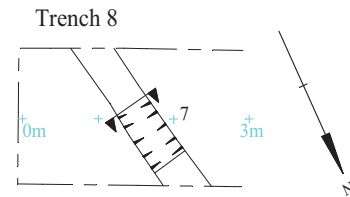
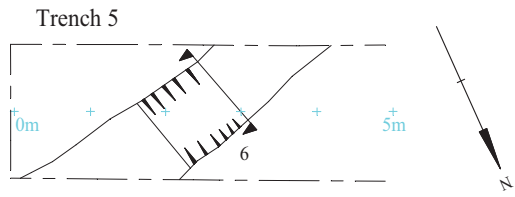
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Figure 2. Location of trenches and excavated features.



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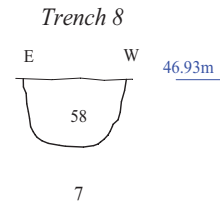
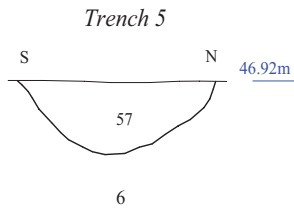
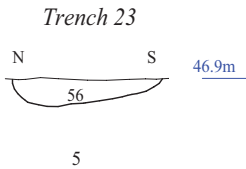
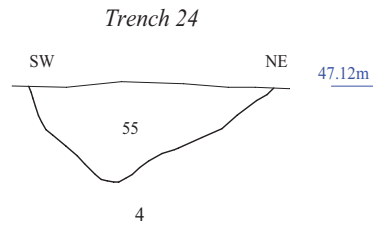
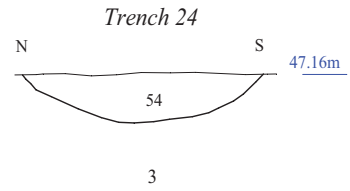
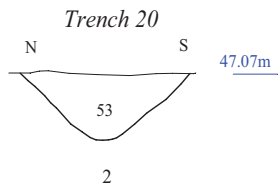
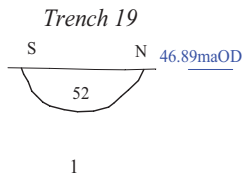


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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.





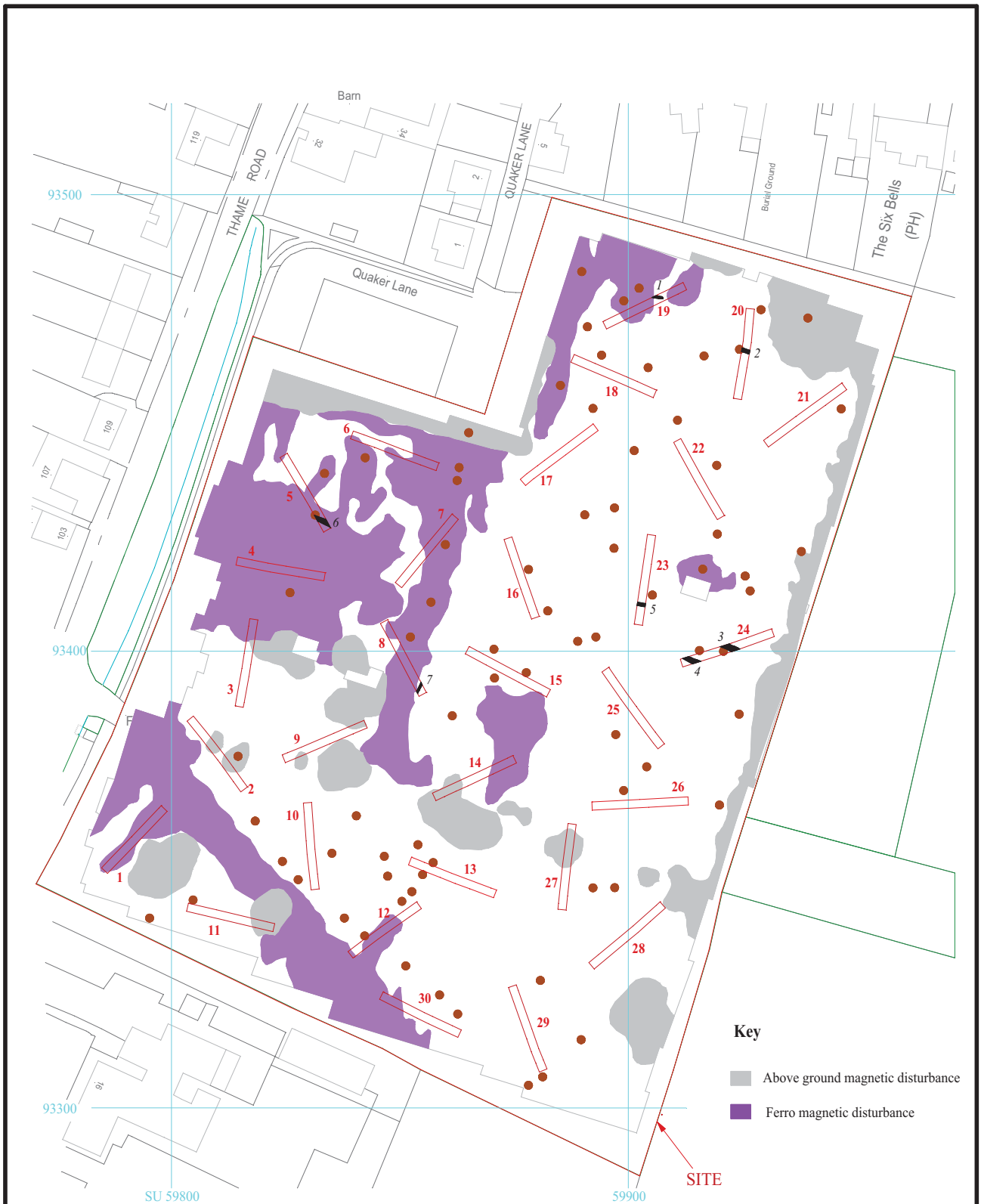
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Figure 4. Sections.



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Figure 5. Location of features, compared to geophysics survey.

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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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**Land at Thame Road, Warborough,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 12, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 24, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land at Thame Road, Warborough,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 5, ditch 6, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 24, ditch 4, looking north west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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**Land at Thame Road, Warborough,
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Plates 5 and 6.**

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Plate 7. Trench 20, ditch 2, looking east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 8. Trench 24, ditch 3, looking east, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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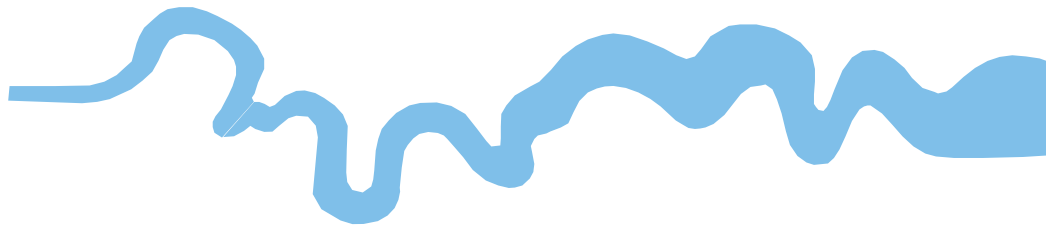
Land at Thame Road, Warborough,
Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 7 and 8.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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