

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire**

Phase 4b

An archaeological Recording Action

By Andrew Muddin

CFF07/01

(SU 3157 9491)

Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

(Phase 4b extraction area)

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Hills Quarry Products

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CFF 07/01e

October 2017

Summary

Site name: Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 3157 9491

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 11th to 24th October 2017

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Andrew Muddin

Site code: CFF 07/01

Area of site: c. 0.65ha

Summary of results: The work in this extraction area revealed a sparse collection of pits, one containing Iron Age pottery, and the continuation of a ditch identified in previous phases of work. The recovery of a small but consistent assemblage of Iron Age pottery confirms the dating previously assigned to this ditch, which has now been traced for over 300m.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2008.62.

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**Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire, Phase 4b Extraction
An Archaeological Recording Action**

by Andrew Munding

Report 07/01e

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action a parcel of land covering *c.*0.65ha at the Chinham Farm Extension of Bowling Green Farm Quarry, Faringdon, Oxfordshire (SU 3157 9491) (Fig. 1). A monitored strip has already occurred and been reported on this year, and labelled as monitoring Phase 4 (Munding 2017) (Fig. 2). The total area therefore stripped under archaeological supervision for the quarry this year totals *c.*1.5ha.

Planning permission (MW.0124/16) has been granted by Oxfordshire County Council to extract sand and limestone from the site. The consent is subject to a condition requiring that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording be undertaken prior to extraction. The investigation followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2016). The Phase 4 works follow on from three earlier phases (Phases 1, 2 and 3; Fig. 2); the excavation of a parcel of land (Phase 1) of totalling *c.*4ha immediately to the west that contained a small causewayed ring ditch and two ditches of Iron Age and Roman date (Pine 2008); a parcel of land *c.* 1.5ha to the north west (Phase 3) that contained two Bronze Age pits, and a sequence of squared Iron Age and Roman enclosure ditches (Weale 2011); and 1.6ha to the south-west (Phase 2) which revealed two ditches, including the continuation of one from Phase 1, and a pit containing a probable Iron Age cremation burial (Elliott 2017).

This phase was undertaken between 11th to 24th October 2017. The project was managed by Joanna Pine, with machine stripping monitored by Jon Tierney and the fieldwork supervised by Andrew Munding with assistance from Pierre Manisse and Anne-Michelle Huvig. The site code is CFF 07/01. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course with accession code OXCMS:2008.62.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies between the towns of Faringdon and Stanford-in-the-Vale in south-west Oxfordshire, on the northern side of the A417 (Fig. 1). It is located on the Corallian Ridge which runs east-west and divides the

Oxford Clay basin, and the topography from the ridge at *c.* 103m above Ordnance Datum slopes gently down from south to north over 200m to the Frogmore Brook at 98m AOD. The geology is Jurassic Corallian Beds (clays, sands and limestones) (BGS 1971). The site sloped gradually from its high point in the south, downhill to the north. The limestone gave way to calcareous silts and clays in the valley bottom. The current excavation area (4b) is to the east of the works undertaken in the summer of 2017 (Fig. 2).

Archaeological background

An archaeological survey of the Corallian Ridge was undertaken by Hingley in 1980 with fieldwalking and air photographic survey of the Upper Thames Valley (OA 2003). It was concluded that the Corallian ridge was just as densely occupied as the gravels of the Thames Valley in the Bronze Age and identified over 21 ring ditches and several flint scatters at the eastern end of the ridge. This and other work was summarized at the time by Bradley (1986). The Frogmore Brook area has a number of quarry sites active in the present day (near Hatford and Shellingford), so opportunities for archaeological monitoring should further understanding of probable deposits located here.

Archaeological investigations to the north-west of the current site in the 1980s and early 1990s (by Oxford Archaeological Unit and Oxford University Archaeological Society) revealed a substantial middle to late Iron Age and Roman settlement (HER ref 9237). Stone buildings, ovens, kilns and wells were found and the site was originally considered as a small market town (Chambers 1988; 1989; 1990), though it seems more likely to have been a villa with a temple: over 1500 coins recovered were mainly of very late Roman date but there was also 2nd-century pottery. Evaluation on Bowling Green Farm Quarry to the west of the new extraction area (HER 15822) revealed further Roman ditches, presumably part of outlying field systems associated with the settlement to the north (OAU 1994). Cropmarks representing a double-ditched driveway with adjoining rectangular enclosure were visible on an aerial photograph (HER 12002) to the west of the site.

Observation and later excavation before mineral extraction in 2007 (Phase 1), *c.* 200m to the west of the present site, revealed a small causewayed ring ditch and two ditches of Iron Age and Roman date (Pine 2008). The ring ditch was probably dug at the end of the Early Bronze Age. Middle Bronze Age re-use of the monument took place with a crouched inhumation. Finds included Early and Middle Bronze Age pottery and a deliberately broken bronze rapier blade. A residual later Mesolithic microlith was also recovered pointing to some earlier use of the landscape.

Excavation before mineral extraction in 2011 (Phase 3), also to the west of the present site, revealed a range of archaeological finds and deposits of prehistoric and Roman date. The earlier periods were represented by Mesolithic flintwork, probably residual, and two pits of Bronze Age date. In the early Iron Age a probable rectangular ditched enclosure was constructed. A series of pits of this date was also present. Final use of the site took place in mid-Roman times and was represented by a rectangular ditched enclosure with both double and triple elements (Weale 2011).

Excavation before mineral extraction in 2014 (Phase 2), to the south-west of the current area uncovered a continuation and a more defined trace of the Iron Age ditch found in the eastern side of Phase 1 works (Elliott 2017). A single cremation was also found. This major boundary ditch (102) traversed the width of the phase 2 extraction, with a second ditch (124) parallel to, and to the north of it, containing Roman pottery. This terminated before it reached the limits of the extraction.

Earlier this summer further observations were made, immediately to the east of the Phase 2 works (Mundin 2017). The continuation of the *c.*2m wide boundary ditch was observed, as was a discrete cluster of four non-structural pits. One of these pits contained Iron Age pottery. The systematic sampling of the eastwards continuation of ditch 102, added further Iron Age pottery, but was lacking in any other finds or environmental data. The continuation eastwards of ditch 102 was therefore expected to be found in this phase of works.

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project are to:

- excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development;
- produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc.; and
- produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

Specific research objectives were to attempt to answer the following questions:

- When was the site first occupied and when was the site abandoned?
- What is the layout and organisation of the site?
- What activities were taking place on the site?
- What is the nature and date of any landscape features encountered (e.g. fields, boundary features, large enclosures) and what is their spatial organisation?
- What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the area?

Topsoil was to be removed under continuous archaeological supervision by 360° digger(s) fitted with a toothless bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits. The stripped areas would include areas for

soil bunds, haul roads and conveyor belt corridors as well as the main area of extraction. Where appropriate and necessary, hand cleaning of the stripped surface was to take place. All archaeological features were to be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective, with excavation or sampling to an agreed fraction depending on the nature and significance of the feature. Bulk soil samples were taken from all excavated features for environmental remains and to enhance finds recovery.

This phase of the excavation comprised an area of *c.*0.6ha (Fig. 3; Pl.2). Topsoil and subsoil, typically 0.25–0.3m deep, were stripped from the full area using a 360° machine fitted with a ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, to expose the archaeologically relevant horizon, limestone to the south and sand or sandy clay geology towards the north (Pl. 1). A considerable thickness (up to 0.5m) of colluvium had accumulated under the subsoil, in the northern section of the excavation. As on the previous strip, no archaeological features were present in the northern part. No finds were noted in the colluvium.

As in the Phase 4a area, only one phase of datable features was identified, with a small number of undated pits. No linear features other than the large ditch (102) were encountered. No continuation of the short linear (504–5) to the north was observed. It is now thought this was most probably a recent feature; maybe a gantry base, likely associated with the area when there was a landing strip here.

Results

Iron Age

Ditch 102 continues from the phase 2 excavation across the full width of the phase 4 area including phase 4b (Fig. 3), adding an additional 47.5m in length, giving a total of *c.*300m observed. The ditch was aligned approximately east-west with a slight meander in its length tracing its way slightly more towards east-north-east. The ditch continued to the site boundary in the east. Five slots (519–23) were excavated in this phase of work, adding to the thirteen excavated in phase 2 and six excavated in the first part of Phase 4 (Mundin 2017). The ditch was between 1.09m and 2.98m wide and 0.48–0.79m deep (Fig. 3; Pl. 2-4) and was continuous, unlike sections of the ditch to the west where it was segmented (in Phase 1). It is unclear if this represents differential survival but it is not uncommon for Iron Age ditches to be discontinuous. It generally contained multiple fills (Fig. 4; Pls 3 and 4), here amounting to two in slots 519, 520, 521, and three in 522 and 523.

The phase 1 excavation dated the ditch to the Iron Age based on the pottery assemblage (29 sherds of undiagnostic sandy wares). Phase 2 found an additional three sherds with a suggested the date can be narrowed

slightly to the middle-late Iron Age. Phase 4 found 22 further sherds, which while confirming the Iron Age date, did nothing to refine it. No further pottery was collected from the slots excavated in phase 4b (Fig. 4; Pl.3).

A single oval pit (526) 1.1m by 0.7m, 0.28m deep contained a single fill of reddish brown silty clay. Four sherds of broadly Bronze Age or Iron Age pottery were recovered from this fill. The pit was located some way north of the main ditch c.30m, and is not associated with any other features.

Undated

Two widely spaced post-holes were present to the south of the ditch (523 and 524). These both contained single fills of medium compacted, brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks (891 and 892) and no finds. They might be very tentatively suggested to be associated with the ditch but there is no real evidence for this.

Two other possible pits were investigated, but were deemed to be tree holes located close to the ditch and to the south. Both were shallow, of no defined shape, and contained no finds.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 14g, all from pit 526, context 953. It is all prehistoric. The following fabric types were noted:

SPF: Flint. Moderate to dense angular flint up to 2mm, most 1mm or less. 1 sherd, 3g.

FSN: Fine Sandy Ware. Moderate to dense sub-rounded quartz less than 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 3g.

SFL: Sand and Flint. Moderate sub-rounded quartz up to 1mm, sparse to moderate white flint up to 1mm. 2 sherds, 8g.

The sherds are all rather small, and likely to be the product of secondary deposition. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of the late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age in the area (eg. Timby 2004).

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

Three struck flints were recovered, all from the soil samples from ditch slot 523 (fills 895 and 897). They comprised two flakes and a spall (piece less than 20x20mm). They were all patinated a bluish white. They are not chronologically distinctive and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be suggested.

Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins

Fifty-four fragments of animal bone weighing 64g, were recovered, all from ditch 102 slot 520 (891). The bones were highly fragmented and eroded. The only identifiable fragments were two horse teeth. No further analysis was possible.

Macrobotanical remains and charcoal by Jo Pine

Ten samples were processed from features sampled during the excavation. The flots were sieved to 0.25mm and air dried and the resultant flots examined under a low-power binocular microscope at a magnification of x10. No cereal or charred seeds were present. Only one sample (1012; from fill 895 in ditch 102, slot 523) contained two fragments of charcoal, most likely oak.

Conclusion

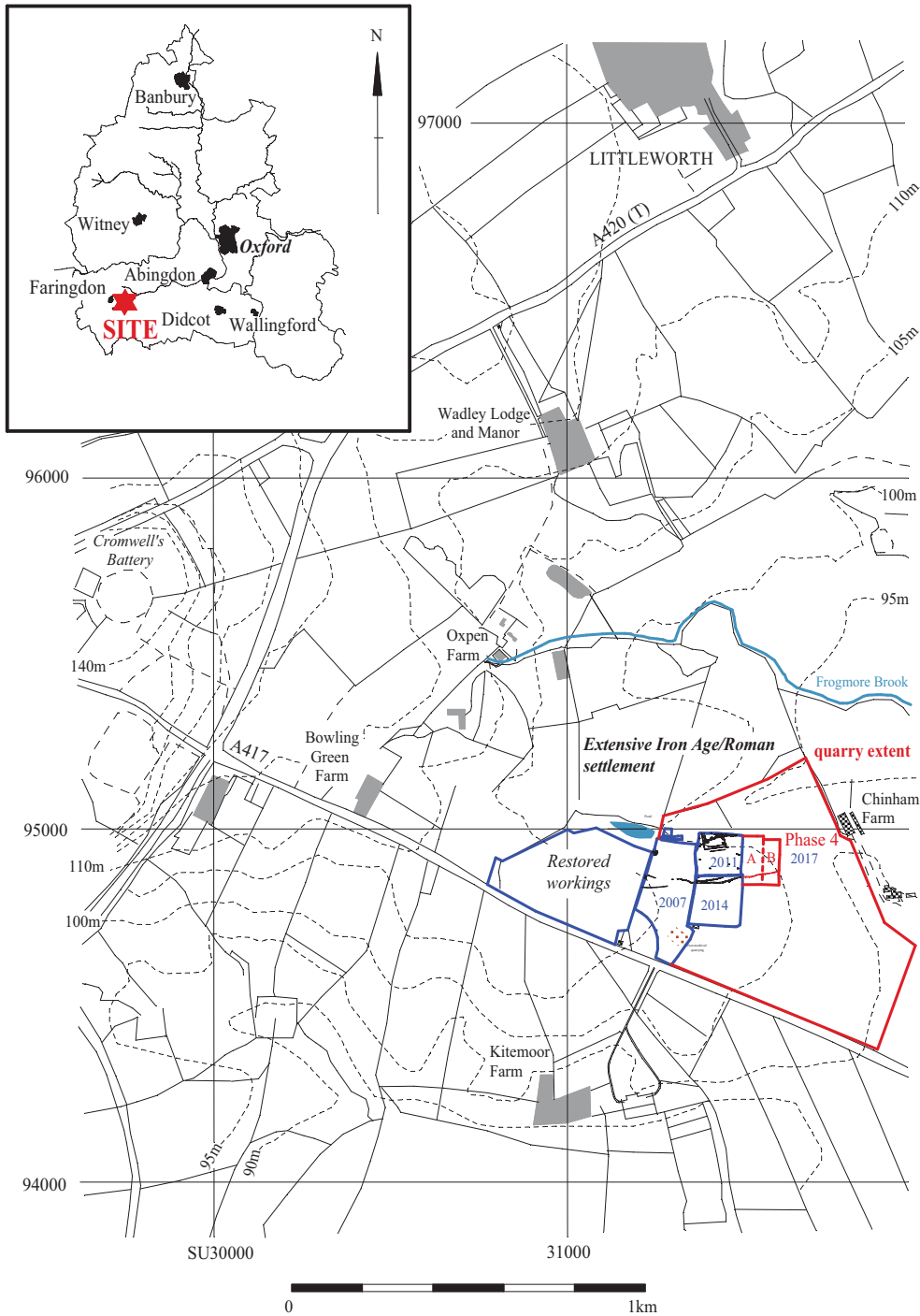
This phase of works recorded just two datable features: an oval pit (526) of Iron Age date and the continuation of the boundary ditch recorded in the previous phases of extraction. Ditch 102 dates to the middle to late Iron Age, though the pottery and environmental deposits sampled here shed no new insight. A pit, in isolation, contained pottery tentatively dated as slightly earlier, of Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age date, but may have resulted from secondary deposition and could easily be residual in the context. The boundary ditch did not terminate and there is no reason a continuation of this ditch should not be uncovered further east.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature list (Phases 4 and 4b)

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Phasing Evidence</i>
4	500	850		Pit	Iron Age	Pottery
4	501	851		Pit	Iron Age	Association
4	502	852		Pit	Iron Age	Association
4	503	853		Pit	Iron Age	Association
4	504	855		Ditch	Undated	
4	505	855		Ditch	Undated	
4	506	856-7	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	507	858-60	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	508	861-4	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	509	865		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	510	871-3	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	511	866-70	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	512	885-8	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4	513	884		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	514	882-3		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	515	880-1		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	516	877-9		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	517	875-6		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4	518	874		Post-hole	Iron Age	Association
4b	519	889-90	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4b	520	891-2	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4b	521	893-4	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4b	522	898-9, 950	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4b	523	895-7	102	Ditch	Iron Age	Association
4b	524	951		Post-hole	Undated	
4b	525	952		Post-hole	Undated	
4b	526	953		Pit	Iron Age	Pottery



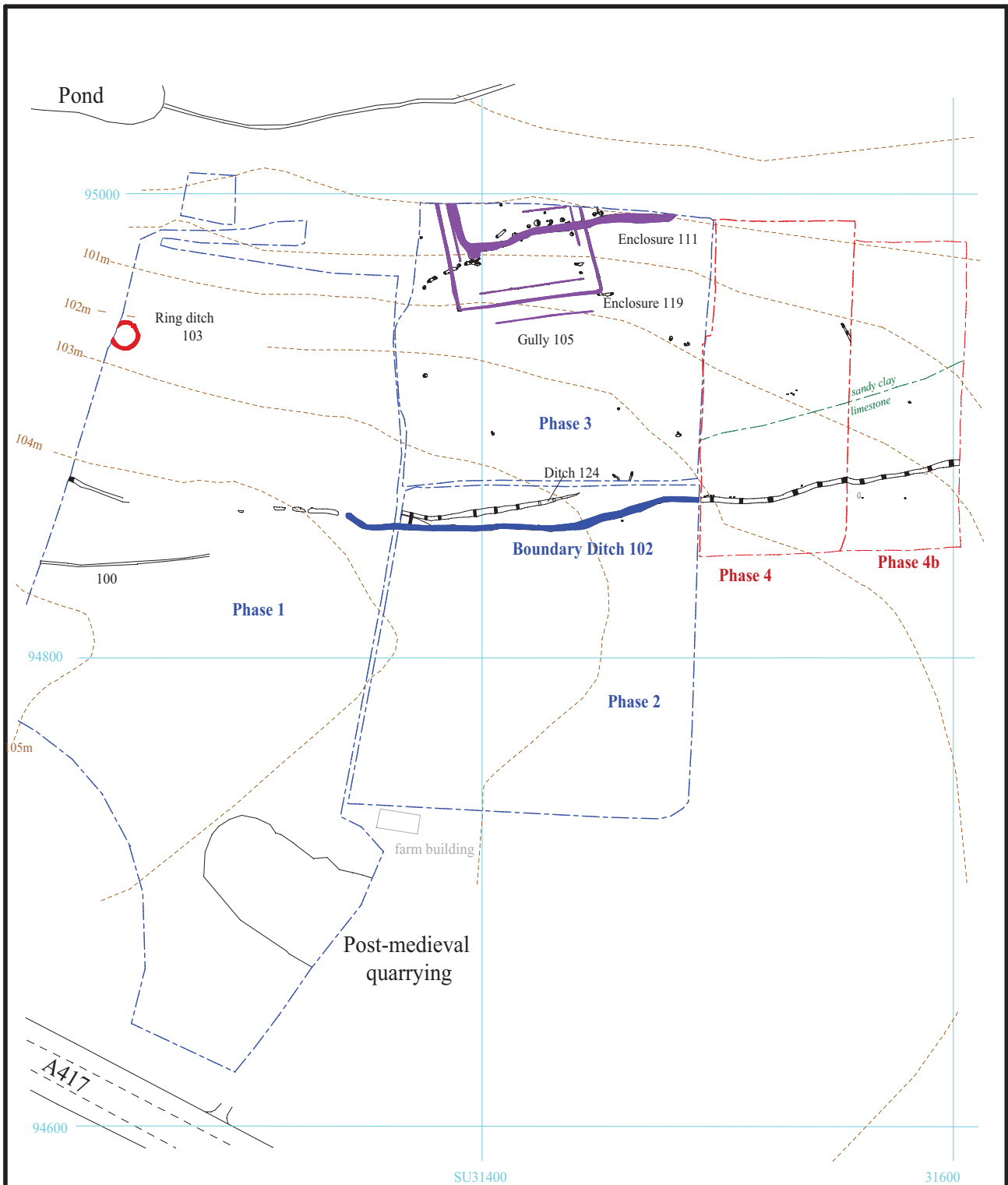
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Faringdon, Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4b**

Figure 1. Location of Phase 4 (2017 workings), and previous phases 1-3



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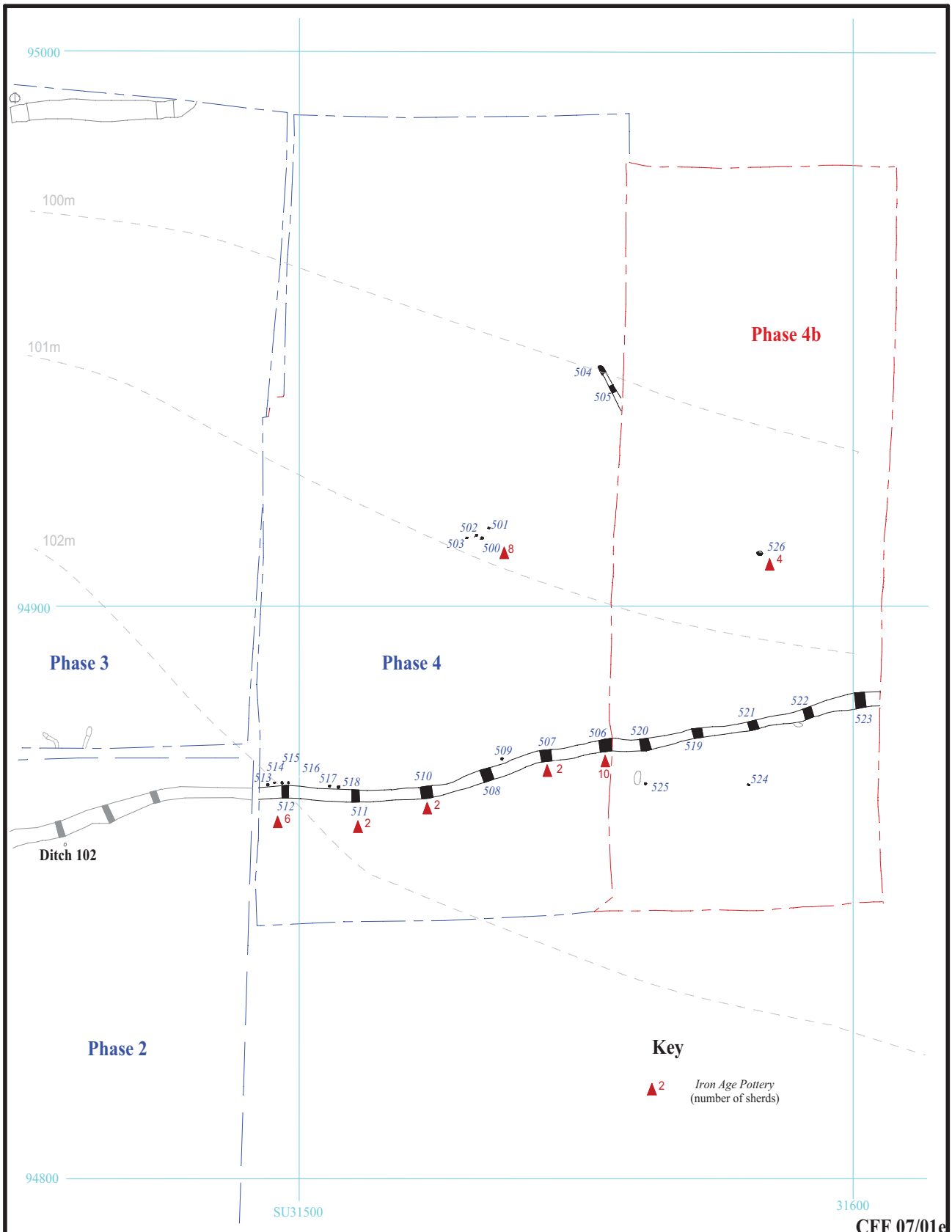
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Figure 2. Phases of excavation since 2007, highlighting main features.



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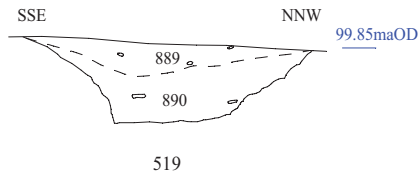
**Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4b**

Figure 3. Phases 4 and 4b: plan of all excavated features.

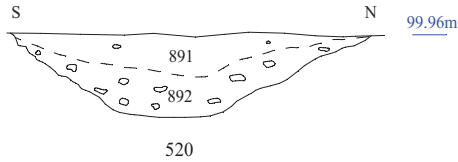


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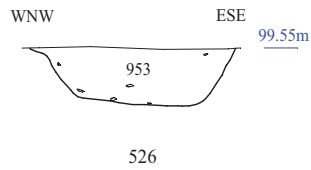
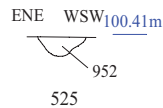
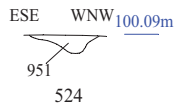
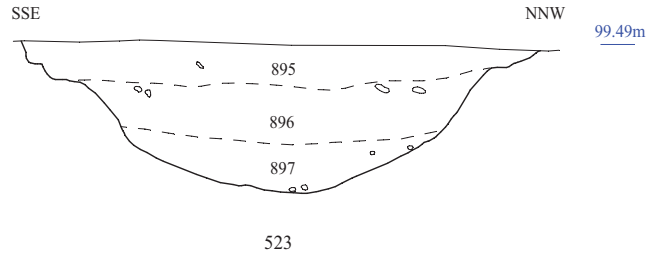
Ditch 102



Ditch 102



Ditch 102



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Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4b**

Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Pit 526, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Ditch 102, looking west after excavation of slot 523 (in foreground).

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Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4b
Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Ditch 102, slot 520, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Ditch 102, ditch 523, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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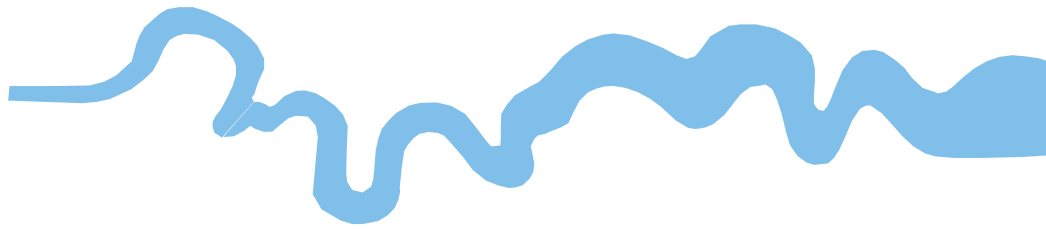
**Chinham Farm Extension, Bowling Green Farm Quarry,
Farington, Oxfordshire, 2017**
Archaeological Recording Action - Phase 4b
Plates 3 and 4.

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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 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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

***Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)***