

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

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**S E R V I C E S**

**Heat extraction scheme, East Lawn and Park,  
Basildon Park, Basildon, Pangbourne, West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Steven Crabb and Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: BPP17/27**

**(SU 6115 7822)**

# **Heat extraction scheme, East Lawn and Park, Basildon Park, Basildon, Pangbourne, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For The National Trust**

by Steven Crabb and Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BPP 17/27

**December 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** Heat extraction scheme, East Lawn and Park, Basildon Park, Basildon, Pangbourne, West Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6115 7822

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 25th September-19th December 2017

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Rebecca Constable, Tim Dawson, Lizzi Lewins, David Sanchez and Andy Taylor

**Site code:** BPP 17/27

**National Trust HBSMR event no.:** ENA8746

**Area of site:** c. 1.1 ha

**Summary of results:** No deposits of archaeological interest were observed. Late 19th- or early 20th-century finds were retrieved from a likely soakaway.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the West Berkshire Museum in due course with accession code NEBYM:2018.1.

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	Steve Preston ✓ 22.12.17

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**Report 17/27**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Basildon Park, Basildon, Pangbourne, West Berkshire (SU 6115 7822) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gary Marshall (Regional Archaeologist) on behalf of the National Trust, The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Buckinghamshire.

Planning consent (apps 17/01486/FUL and 17/01487/LBC2) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new heat extraction system involving the excavation of a series of 20 parallel trenches in the parkland along with connecting trenches linking to the manor house. The planning consents are subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology which requires the implementation of a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and West Berkshire Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Acting Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Lizzi Lewins, Tim Dawson, Rebecca Constable, Andy Taylor, Daniel Haddad and David Sanchez between 25th September and 19th December 2017 and the site code is BPP 17/27. The National Trust HBSMR event number is ENA8746.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the West Berkshire Museum in due course with accession code NEBYM:2018.1.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the east side of Basildon House, itself located within parkland south of the village of Lower Basildon on the west bank of the River Thames 11km north-west of Reading (Fig. 1). The site comprises an area consisting of grass and footpaths, with a trench extending across the East Lawn and up to the house itself. The site is gently sloping from 83m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on the west by Basildon House to 79m

aOD at the eastern extent (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is Upper Chalk overlain by Head deposits of clay and gravel (BGS 2000), which were observed across the site.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (OA 2017). The site lies within the historic park at Basildon adjacent to the present house which was constructed in the late 18th century and is a Grade I listed building. The terraced gardens were constructed in the mid 19th century along with a walled garden and the subsequently levelled kitchen garden. The remaining gardens and surrounding parklands are Grade II listed. Several other buildings in the park are listed and earthwork features are considered to be the remains of demolished buildings. There are further earthworks which are thought to be field or boundary features of likely post-medieval date. Although there was an earlier manor house present on this site, the Saxon and medieval settlement of Basildon is located closer to the river Thames near to modern Lower Basildon. Significant Roman remains, possibly representing a villa or farmstead, were excavated to the north of the historic park during the construction of the Great Western Railway in 1839 (OA 2017). The site lies in the wider area of the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wide range of sites and finds recorded in the area (Gates 1975; Richards 1978; Dils and Yates 2013). A geophysical survey (magnetometry and resistivity) of the site itself showed a number of anomalies of possible archaeological and historical interest: given the context of the park these are possibly garden or quarrying evidence (MS 2017).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. This involved the examination of the trenches excavated for the heat extraction scheme and its link to the North and South Pavilions at the mansion house. Any archaeological deposits which were threatened by the development were to be excavated and recorded. All of the trenches in the parkland area were dug into loose ground making it unsafe to approach the edges or enter the trenches. Consequently, all of the measurements taken for stratigraphy and dimensions of features are approximate and any potential features remained uncleaned. The trenches within the East Lawn and around the mansion house were much shallower with stable sides so it was possible to enter these where necessary. Spoil heaps in both areas were monitored for finds.

## Results

A series of trenches running along the back of the house (Fig. 2: 22) were observed during the project as was the trench (21) connecting these to the horizontal array in the parkland to the east. The horizontal array consisted of 20 trenches (1–20) each 100m long and 1.10m wide. These were located to the north-east of the house and were aligned essentially north–south. It was agreed with the National Trust regional archaeologist to observe trenches 1–3 of the horizontal array and if these produced negative results then only each third trench (6, 9, 12, 15 and 18) would need to be observed, along with the final trench (20).

The house trench (22) was excavated along the north-eastern wall of the manor house from the North Pavilion and the southern side of the main house (Pl. 1). These trenches were between 0.50m and 0.60m wide, adjacent to the North Pavilion the trench was dug to a depth of 0.60m and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil overlying 0.22m of subsoil above the natural head gravel geology. On the southern side of the main house the trench was dug to a depth of 1.0m and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of garden soil overlying 0.45m of made ground which lay on top of the natural head deposits.

A trench (21) led from here across the East Lawn (Pl. 2) to the south-western corner of the array in the parkland. The stratigraphy of this trench consisted of 0.25m of garden soil overlying 0.25m of light brown clay silt with moderate gravel inclusions which lay above 0.35m of dark brown clay silt made ground containing highly fragmented ceramic building material of uncertain date; below this lay the natural head gravel deposits. Multiple services were observed leading from the house perpendicular to the trench. A square pit was dug at the north-eastern end of the trench to facilitate boring under the terrace wall. This measured 2.00m by 2.00m and 1.70m deep and exposed 0.25m of garden soil, 0.25m of light brown clay silt with moderate gravel inclusions, 0.18m of crushed chalk with no inclusions and 0.35m of dark brown clay silt made ground containing highly fragmented ceramic building material of uncertain date, all of which overlaid the natural head gravel which was recorded at a depth of 1.03m below the lawn surface.

Each of the trenches for the main array measured 100m long, 1.10m wide and between 1.50m and 1.70m deep (Pls. 3 to 7). Metal service pipes and ceramic drainage pipes were observed crossing each of the trenches WSW-ENE and roughly perpendicular to the trenches (Fig. 2). One of these aligns with a magnetic anomaly identified in the geophysical survey (MS 2017) (Fig. 4). The stratigraphy of these trenches was consistent with between 0.20m and 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.30m–0.40m of subsoil. In trenches 1–3 this overlay head deposit natural gravels and in trenches 6–20 this overlay chalk natural with clay-filled hollows in its surface. A chalk-rubble filled ?soakaway (1) was recorded in trenches 1 and 2, 19m from the southern end of the trench. It

measured 4.00m long and 0.55m deep and was observed on both sections of trenches 1 and 2, but not in trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 8). It was found to contain brick and tile, glass and lead objects which are likely to be 19th- to early 20th century in date as well as what appear to be limestone floor tiles.

No other features were observed during the excavation of these trenches.

## **Finds**

### *The Worked Stone* by Genni Elliott

Two fragments of worked stone were recovered from feature 1. Both appear to be floor tiles, one of full size, albeit now broken and the second a half-size tile and relatively complete.

Tile 1: Bath stone, 126mm × 126mm × 28-40mm (5" × 5" × 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>"). Evidence of working with a saw mark on the edge of the upper surface and a second along one of the broken sides. Multi-directional chisel marks are present on the bottom surface and the edges.

Tile 2: Bath stone, 126mm × 60mm-55mm × 36mm (5" × 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"-2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" × 1<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"). Evidence for a chamfer along the long tapered edge and faint chisel marks also present along the long edges.

### *Metalwork* by Steven Crabb

A single piece of metalwork was recovered from feature 1. It is a roughly rectangular section of the corner of a lead sheet which measures 247mm long and 112mm wide. The intact long edge of this piece is rolled over for 194mm of its length and the corner has been rounded. This would suggest that it is the end of an open channel or chute, likely to have been related to garden features.

### *Glass* by Tim Dawson

Two fragments of glass bottle were recovered from the fill of feature 1. The first of these is a thick green glass bottle neck, broken off just above the shoulder and with a slightly unevenly shaped lip and mouth. The form of the neck is suggestive of those manufactured in the 19th century (Shopland 2005). The second is a much paler green glass fragment of bottle body, with just over half the bottle's circumference preserved. It measures 88mm (3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>") in diameter.

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Tim Dawson

A single fragment of ceramic floor tile was recovered from feature 1. It comprises of the broken corner of a blue-black quarry tile which were in common use from the later 19th century onwards.

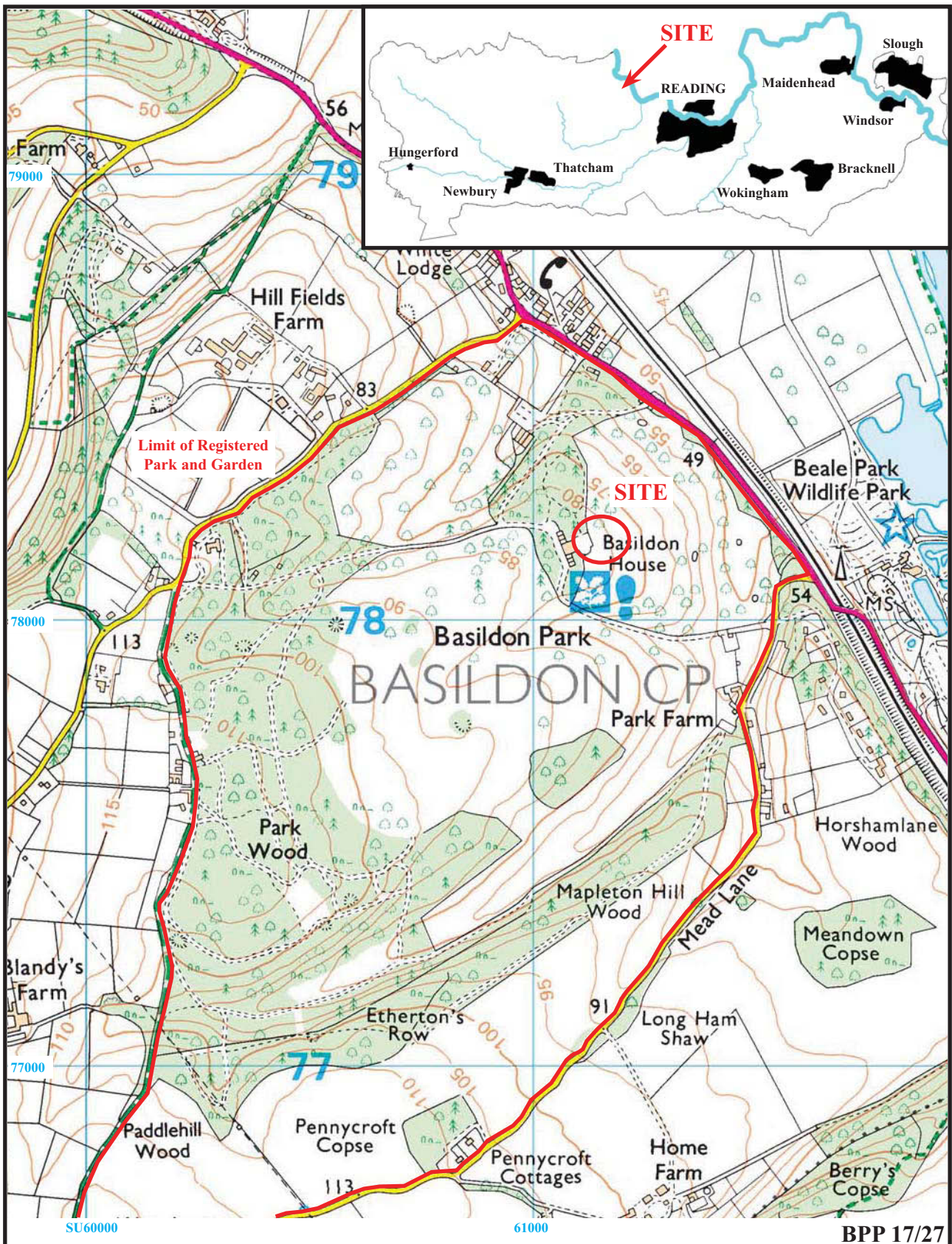
## Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeology to be present on the site no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during the course of the watching brief. The single feature that was identified is possibly a soakaway or an in-filled tree throw. The finds recovered from the fill represent building and garden materials and general waste, most likely dating from the late 19th-/early 20th century. The potential features identified by the geophysical survey (MS 2017) and desk-based assessment (OA 2017) were located in the ground either as modern services or possible reflections of natural clay-filled hollows in the surface of the chalk geology (Fig. 4). The late 19th-/early 20th century ?soakaway which was identified at the western edge of the parkland had most likely been obscured in the geophysical survey results by a strong ferrous anomaly. The stratigraphy exposed within the East Lawn suggests that the whole area was built up upon the natural gravel geology with layers of clayey silt and chalk being used for the landscaping. A lack of datable finds from this area, however, prevents any comment being made on when this work was undertaken.

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Figure 1. Location of site within Basildon Park and Berkshire.

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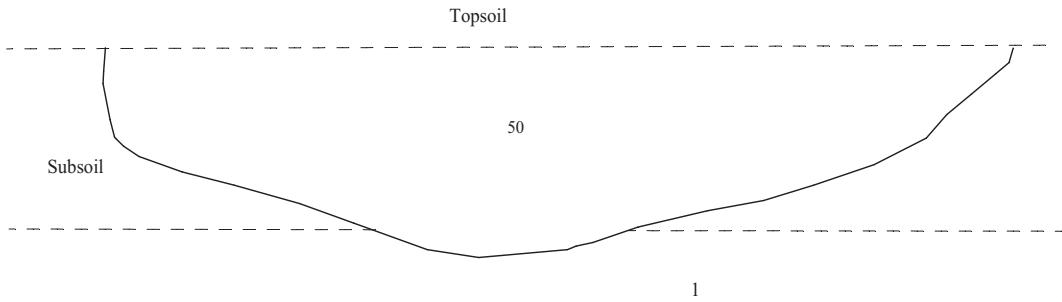


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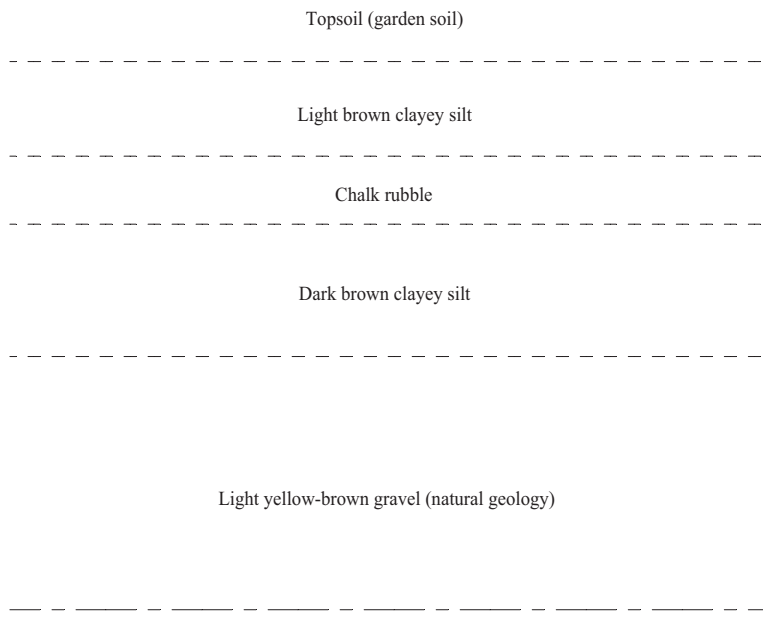
Figure 2. Observed areas (in red).



N S 81.56m aOD



NNW SSE 83.23m aOD



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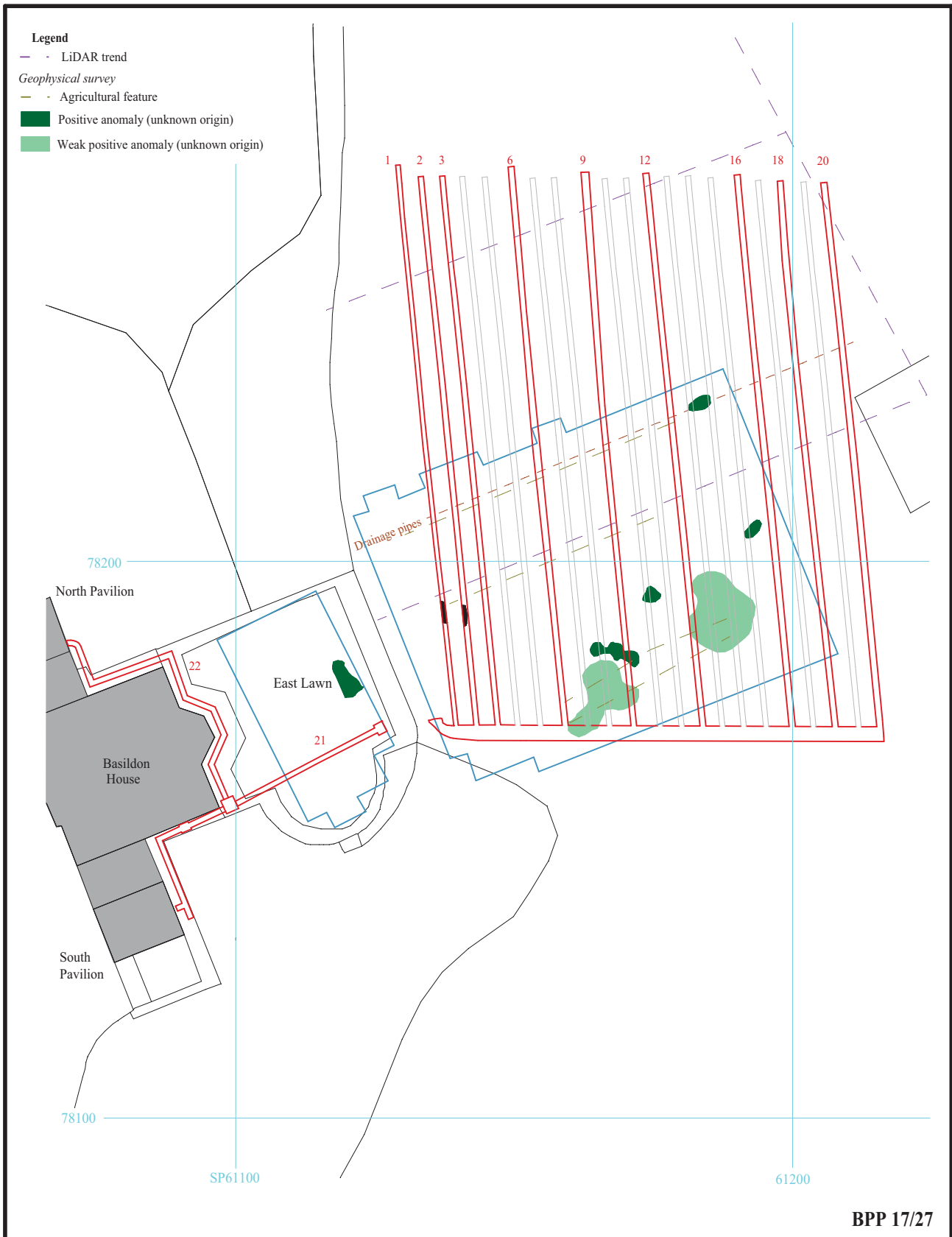
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Figure 3. Section of cut 1 and representative section in East Lawn.



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Figure 4. Observed areas (in red) overlain on LiDAR and geophysical survey interpretation plots (after OA 2017).





Plate 1. House trench 22 (North Pavilion), looking south, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. House trench 22 (main house), looking south-west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 3. Trench 1, looking north, Scale: 2m.



Plate 4. Trench 1 general section, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 1 to 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 6, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 9, looking south, Scale: 2m.



Plate 7. Trench 18, looking south west,  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 8. ?Soakaway 1 in Trench 1, looking south west,  
Scale: 2m.

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Plates 5 to 8.**

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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





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