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

**Moathouse Cottage, White's Hill, Sulhamstead,  
West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Lizzi Lewins**

**Site Code: MCS18/15**

**(SU 6416 6784)**

# **Moathouse Cottage, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Dan Harman**

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MCS 18/15

**April 2018**

## Summary

**Site name:** Moathouse Cottage, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6416 6784

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** January 2018

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Will Attard, Kyle Beaverstock, Lizzi Lewins

**Site code:** MCS 18/15

**Area of site:** 60sqm

**Summary of results:** The original cut of the moat was seen however it was observed that the moat contained late post-medieval/modern backfill. No further archaeological features were observed.

**Monuments identified:** Moat.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.04.18 Steve Preston ✓ 04.04.18
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# Moathouse Cottage, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins

Report 18/15

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Moathouse Cottage, White's Hill, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire, RG7 4EN (SU 6416 6784) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Dan Harman of Moathouse Cottage, White's Hill, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire, RG7 4EN.

Planning permission (17/02071/HOUSE) has been gained from West Berkshire Council and Scheduled Monument consent from the Secretary of State (S00172369) as advised by Historic England, to demolish an existing outbuilding and construct a new garage. A watching brief was requested as a condition of granting the consent due to the possibility of damage or destruction to archaeological deposits during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)* within the Scheduled Area and for the rest of the site, the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012)* and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Alex Bellisario, the Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments with Historic England. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard, Kyle Beaverstock and Lizzi Lewins during January 2018 and the site code is MCS 18/15.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north-west of Burghfield Village, on the east side of White's Hill road and west of St Mary's church (Fig. 1). The site is situated on a sloping parcel of land currently occupied by a house, garden and outbuilding (Fig. 20). Earthworks can be seen within the bounds of the garden that mark the moat (SAM 1013170) (Pl. 4). The site lies at a height of 92m above Ordnance Datum at the south-eastern end sloping to 88m aOD in the north-western extent. The underlying geology is described as Silchester Gravel (BGS 2000) and this was observed on site as a sandy clay with frequent gravel.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location with a medieval moat and associated fishponds. The site is a scheduled monument (SAM 1013170) although the house, adjacent concreted areas and the ground beneath have been excluded from the Scheduled Area, the proposed new garage lies within it (Fig. 3). The current building is thought to have been built *c.*AD1620 and is Grade II Listed. Pre-determination evaluation was carried out within the footprint of the proposed new building (Cass 2007). The evaluation only revealed dump deposits of 19th-century date reflecting the more recent history of the site. Several surveys of the site have been undertaken over the years and it was during one of these that it was noted that the moat had been "greatly altered" and "part of the north-west side had been filled with topsoil" (West Berkshire HER undated).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work and was to involve the examination of the foundation trenches and any associated service trenches. The objective of the project was to provide further detail of the nature, date and extent of the archaeological deposits of medieval date as covered by the Solent Thames research agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

Archaeological deposits that were affected by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded, with sufficient time allowed within the groundworkers schedule to achieve this. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## **Results**

The trenches were dug with a Kubota-type mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and measured between 1.20m-1.30m wide, ranging in depth from 0.69m - 1.53m. The stratigraphy differed throughout the trench with subsoil not seen across the entire site.

In the south-west section of trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.53m of brown grey silty clay subsoil which overlay the sandy clay and gravel natural geology (Pl. 2). An area of modern gravel was also noted within this area of the trench directly overlying the natural geology on the internal pad. An area of disturbed ground, possibly associated with the construction of the driveway, 0.52m deep, overlay the original cut of the moat in the south-eastern limit of the trench, which was filled with a grey brown clayey silt which contained frequent modern brick and tile (Fig. 4; Pl. 1).

The original moat cut was also visible in the north-east section of the trench. It measured 0.69m deep and 1.36m wide and was observed to contain modern backfill including china, a large metal strap and a sherd of salt-glazed stoneware. No subsoil was seen in this area. The area immediately north of the cut appeared to have been raised using a dump of topsoil containing modern brick and tile (Fig. 4; Pl. 3).

Ground reduction took place within the footprint of the trenches, the depth of the reduction varied due to the sloping aspect of the site but varied between 0.20m - 0.95m. The backfilled moat cut was observed across the areas of reduction but no further archaeology was noted.

## **Finds**

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

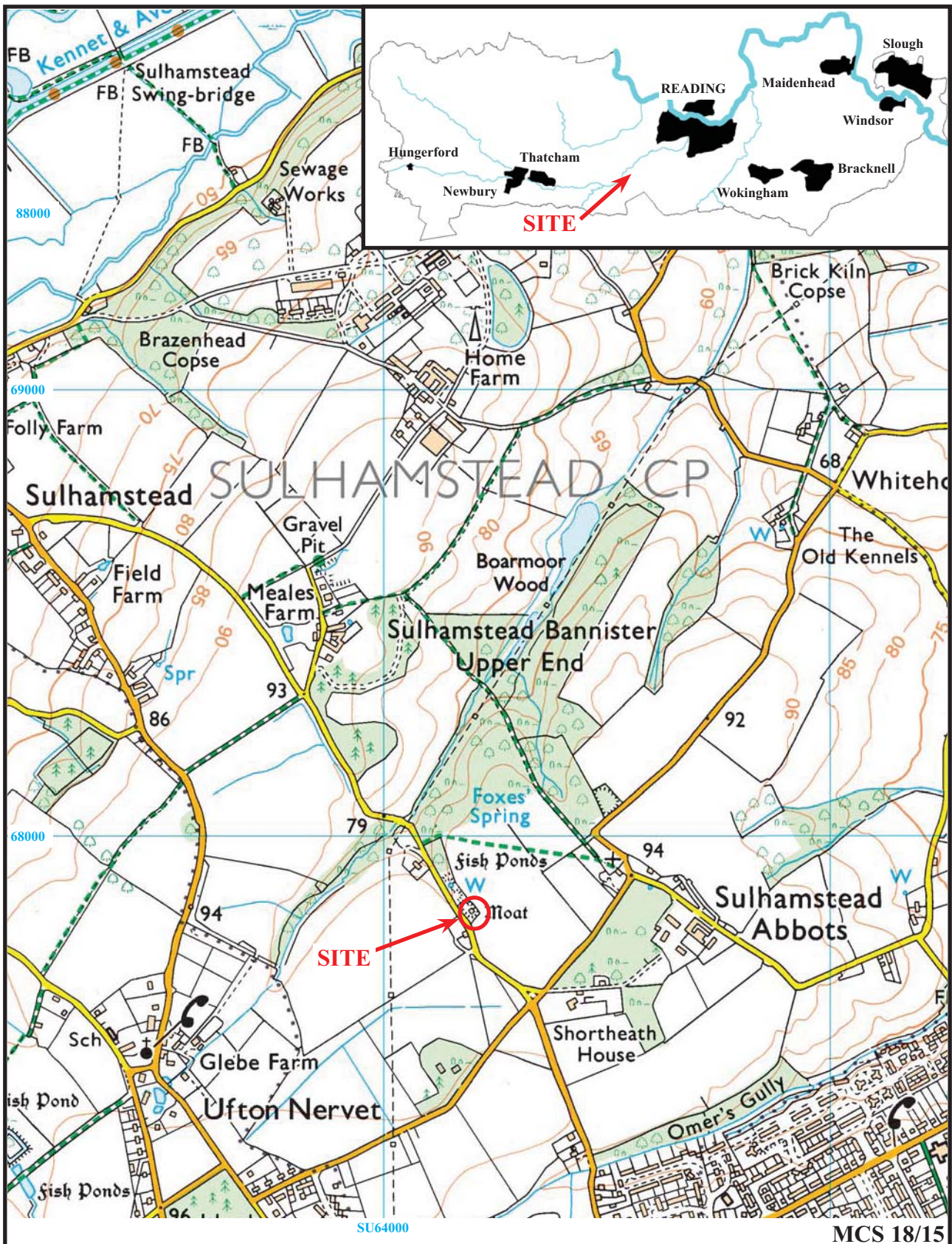
## **Conclusion**

The excavation of the foundation trenches revealed the original cut of the medieval moat, however, it was observed that the moat contained late post-medieval/modern backfill. No other archaeological features were observed.

## **References**

- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Cass, S, 2007, 'Moathouse Cottage, White's Hill, Sulhamstead, West Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation', TVAS rep **07/16**, Reading
- Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr **6**, Oxford
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London



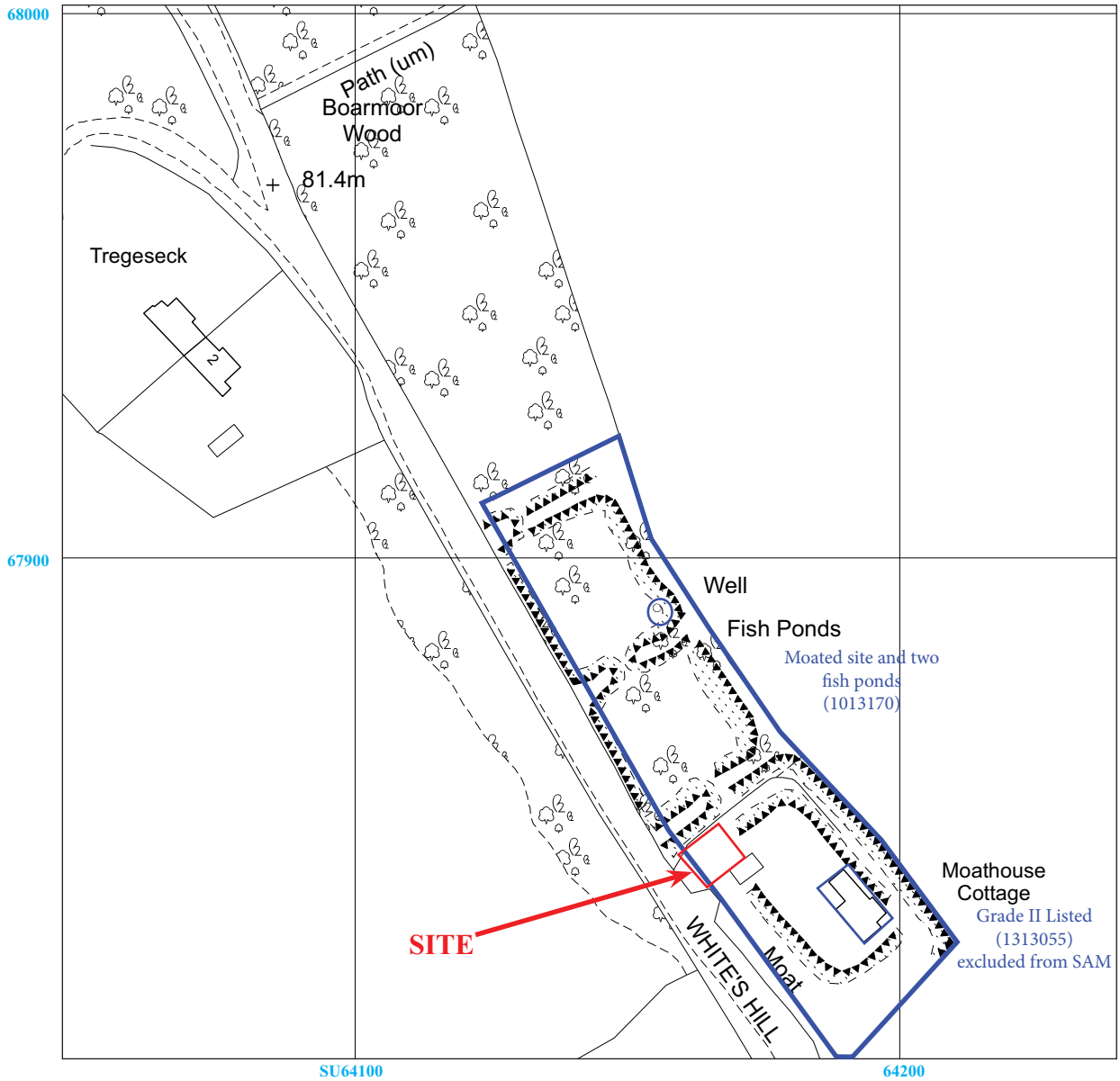


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Figure 1. Location of site within Sulhamstead and Berkshire.

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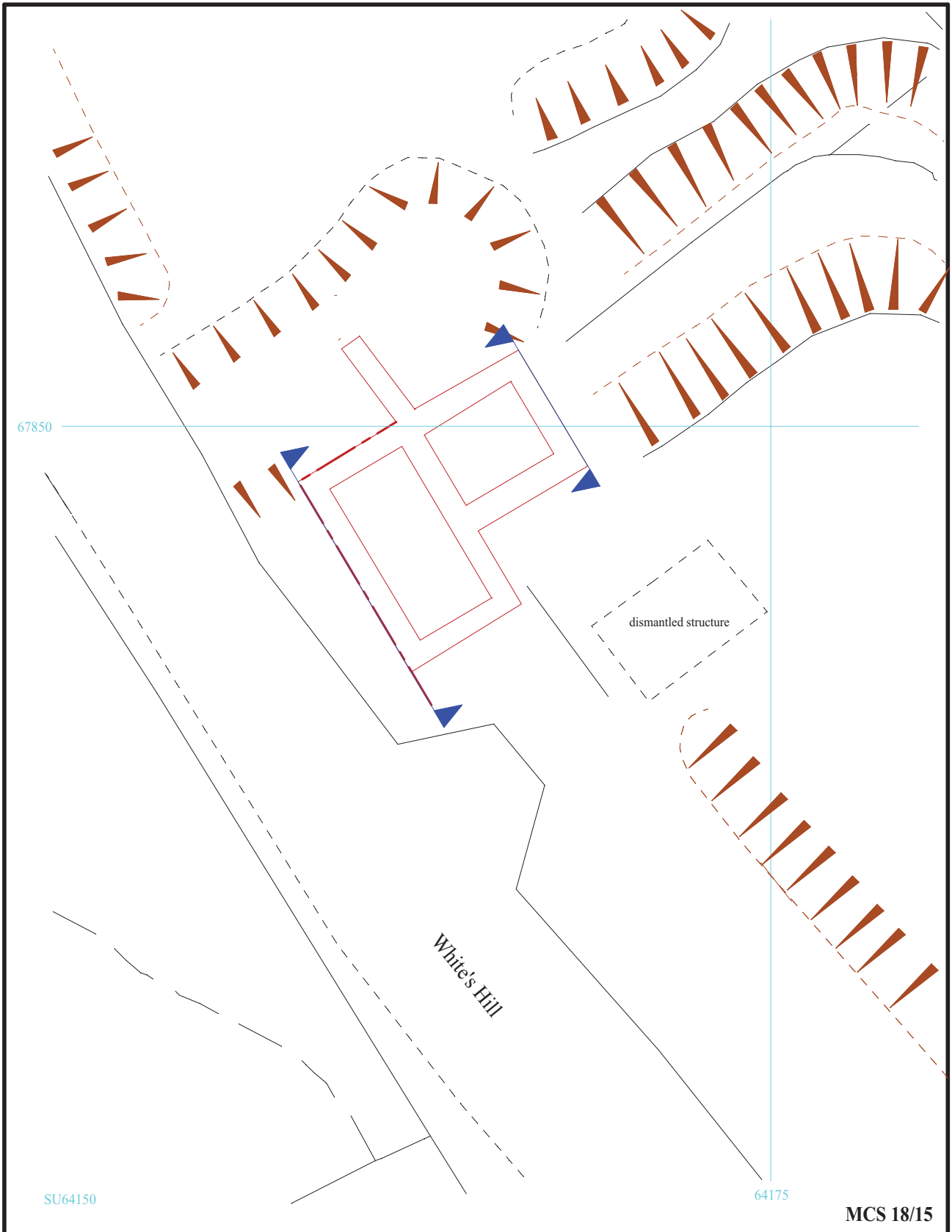
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site, with boundary of Schedule highlighted.

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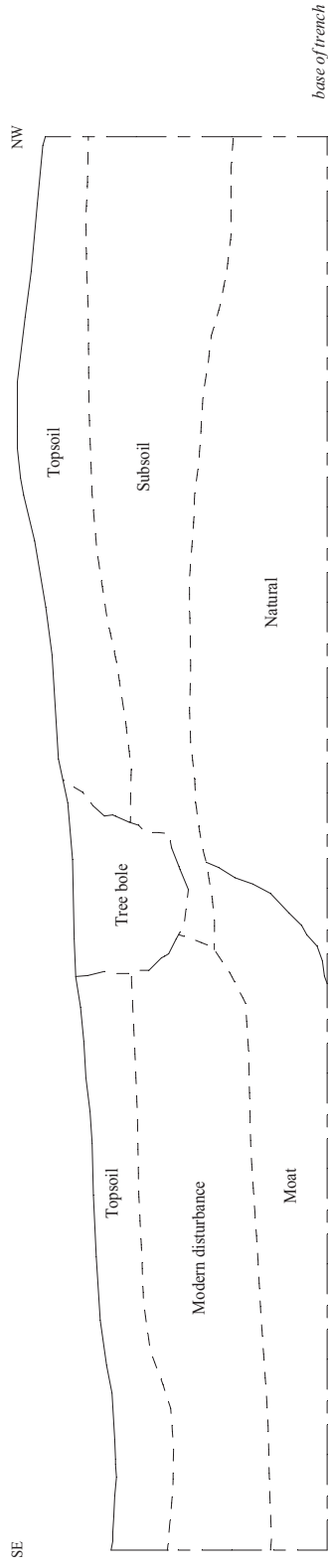
Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



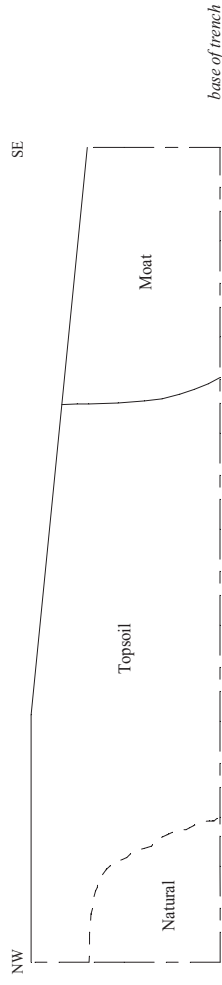
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*South-west trench section*



*North-east trench section*



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Figure 4. Footings trench sections.





Plate 1. Backfilled moat, looking south-west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Footings, looking north-west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Backfilled moat and topsoil dump, looking north-east, Scales: 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 4. Moat earthworks, looking north.

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Plates 3 and 4.

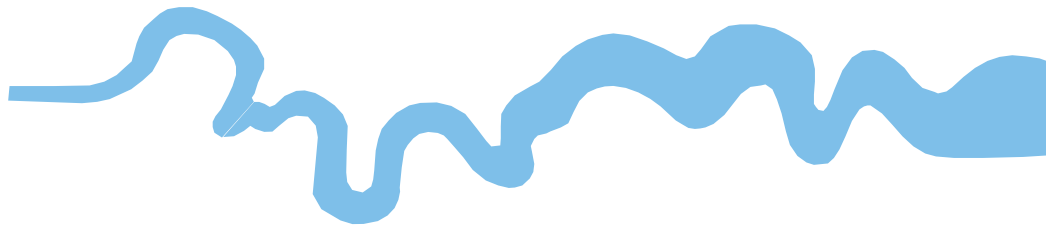
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## TIME CHART

	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







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