

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bints Yard, Chapel Lane,  
Northmoor, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: BYN18/220**

**(SP 4202 0294)**

**Bints Yard, Chapel Lane,  
Northmoor, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Jack B Developments Ltd**

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BYN 18/220

**January 2019**

## Summary

**Site name:** Bints Yard, Chapel Lane, Northmoor, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 4202 0294

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 3rd – 4th January 2019

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Mundin

**Site code:** BYN 18/220

**Summary of results:** Five trenches were excavated at the site and revealed a ditch and pits of medieval date, the latter probably quarries, and two linear features more tentatively also possibly medieval. Other areas of the site had been deeply truncated

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

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford ✓ 14.02.19    |
|                           | Steve Preston ✓ 14.02.19 |

# **Bints Yard, Chapel Lane, Northmoor, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Andrew Muddin

**Report 18/220**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land known as Bints Yard, Chapel Lane, Northmoor, Oxfordshire, OX29 5SZ (SP 4202 0294) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Lucie Savage of Jack B Developments, Wittas House, Two Rivers, Station Lane, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 4BH.

Planning permission (18/0032/FUL) has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of eight new dwellings on the site following demolition of previous structures. The permission is subject to two conditions (21 and 22) relating to archaeology, requiring a staged archaeological investigation. This was to take the form, in the first instance, of field evaluation that would determine the presence/absence of archaeological deposits, and inform a programme of mitigation as appropriate.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The fieldwork followed a specification based on a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Coddington 2018), and was approved and monitored by Mr Richard Oram, of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, advising the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin between 3rd and 4th January 2019 and the site code is BYN 18/220.

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

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located in the village of Northmoor, on a parcel of land on the west side of Chapel Lane. It is *c.* 100m to the north-west of the local parish church of St Denis (Fig.1). The site had recently been cleared of all 20th-century buildings of wooden and concrete construction (Fig. 2). The site was once used as a storage yard, and a coal yard in the last 50 years. The underlying geology is Northmoor Sand and Gravel, 1st terrace gravels of the River Windrush (BGS Geoindex; BGS 1982). Bints Yard backs on to the north side of Church Lane properties, with the south of the current site previously used as allotments.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in the project brief (Coddington 2018). The gravel terraces of the Thames are rich in archaeological evidence (Emery 1974, 42; Lambrick *et al* 2009). In particular dense and grouped areas of cropmarks are recorded to the areas to the south, south-west, and west of the village and are Scheduled Monuments (SAM 1006343; OX 141). Datable features from the Neolithic to the Medieval period are known, with occupation of the Iron Age and Roman periods, within the Scheduled area (Thorpe 1992). Iron Age and Roman enclosed settlement continued to the north of the village with features found during archaeological strip, map and sample in advance of mineral extraction (Allen 1990; Norton 2006).

Similar densities of archaeological cropmarks are seen at the point the River Thames is joined by the Windrush, with settlement evidence linked by long trackway and enclosure boundaries that predate existing fields (Benson and Miles 1974, 48). The cropmark features are not seen to extend into the village itself.

The village, now nucleated after ‘shrinkage’ in Medieval times, is likely to have originated in Saxon or Norman times, centred at the local parish church of St Denis (Grade I). Its cruciform-shape is likely 12th century, though nothing this early survives in its structure (VCH 1996), the oldest parts of which are early 14th century (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 722). Other than the church, other Listed properties on Church Lane are of 17th and 18th century date, apart from a barn of Late Medieval date (Grade II\*) at Church Farm (Roberts 2008).

## **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 undertaken in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of any archaeological deposits which would warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Specific aims were:

- To determine if archaeological deposits were present on the site;
- To determine if any late prehistoric or Roman deposits were present; and
- To provide information to allow the preparation of mitigation strategy if necessary.

Excavations were undertaken with a 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a bladed bucket, 1.2m wide. It was intended that five trenches, 15m long were to be excavated to provide a 4% sample of the site. Unfortunately, groundworks had started prior to the archaeological sampling of the site being undertaken. The location of the trenching was adjacent to most of the intended locations, due to new foundations being dug. Lengths of three of the five trenches, were severely restricted (Fig. 3).

## **Results**

Five trenches were excavated as intended (Fig. 3). All were shorter than required, due to space restrictions. They varied in length between 3.8m and 9m long, and in depth between 0.47-0.9m deep. Natural gravels were encountered in all trenches, but the natural horizon had been severely truncated in Trenches 2, 3, 4 and 5. Trench 1 was shortened so it did not restrict the main access in the east.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pl.1)

Trench 1 was aligned SSE – NNW, and was 3.8m long and was 0.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of three thin layers of compacted gravel, sand and clay to a depth of 0.16m, overlying 0.17m of ballast which reached a depth of 0.33m. From this depth to the base of excavation at 0.8m, the natural gravel was covered by dark brown clay silt, made ground (56) which contained two sherds of medieval pottery. At the base of the excavated trench, two features cut the natural geology. Gully 3 was on a W-E axis and was 0.54m wide and 0.14m deep. It was filled with a dark brown silty clay with moderate to frequent rounded gravel inclusions (57). It contained no dating evidence. A second possible feature was possibly just clipped at the southern end of the trench but could not be examined. If the medieval pottery dates the made ground (which is possible but it is perhaps more likely it is redeposited) then both features are also medieval or earlier.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned NW - SE, and was only 4m long, due to deeper than 0.9m modern truncations. The trench was no deeper than 0.9m. The stratigraphy consisted of brown clayey silt and gravel overburden to 0.12m which covered a dump of reinforced concrete and limestone rubble from a previously demolished building to a depth of 0.48m. This was over a layer of made ground, which contained plastic and modern debris to a depth of 0.76m. In

turn, this overlay brown clayey silt with red brick and tile rubble to a depth of 0.9m. A truncated horizon of light-coloured natural gravel was encountered from this depth. At 4m from the NW end of the trench, during excavation, truncation of this horizon was severe, so excavation was halted due to this area having no archaeological potential.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 2 and 3)

Trench 3 was aligned E - W, and was 9m long and 0.54m deep. Most of the eastern portion of the trench comprised modern deposits. A segment of a limestone wall on a W-E axis. was founded on top of the modern truncation in the east end of the trench.

The stratigraphy consisted of brown clayey silt and gravel overburden to 0.12m over a redeposited lens of yellow brown rounded gravel to a depth of 0.19m (50). This, in turn, overlay dark brown grey clay silt and gravel made ground (51). This reached a depth of 0.47m. This overlay another layer of brown silt and gravel to a depth of 0.54m, overlying natural geology.

Two intercutting pits were revealed (1 and 2). Pit 1 was 1.2m in diameter, with at least two fills (52 and 53) but was not bottomed. The feature was excavated to 0.38m The upper fill was grey-brown sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions (52) and contained two sherds of medieval and late medieval pottery. The lower fill was a brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions (53) and contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. Pit 1 cut pit (2) to the west. Pit 2 was at least 0.9m in diameter and 0.27m deep. It also contained two fills (54 and 55). Fill 54 was a brown clayey silt with moderate gravel, and limited flecks of charcoal and contained 8 medieval sherds. The lower deposit (55) was a grey clay silt with frequent rounded gravel and contained 10 early medieval sherds.

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

Trench 4 was aligned E – W and was 7.4m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of layers of made ground overlying redeposited gravel (62) over the natural gravel geology at a depth of 0.35m. One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from layer 62, which extended to around 5.5m from the west end of the trench but was not present at the east end.

Towards the east end of the trench, Ditch 5 cut layer 62 in the west and the natural gravel in the east (Fig. 5). Ditch 5 was aligned north–south, 1.9m wide and 0.32m deep, with very shallowly sloping sides and two fills (58 and 59). A small cluster of 12th-13th century pottery, was found at the base of the lower fill (59). One piece of animal bone (jaw bone) was also recovered from the deposit close to this cluster at the base of the feature. The

upper fill (58) was a dark brown clay silt, with rounded gravel inclusions. The lower fill was a brown-yellow sandy silt with frequent gravel (59). The lower fill reached a depth of 0.52m from the trench surface.

Layer 62 sealed the top of fill of a large quarry pit (4) which was also cut by ditch 5. The pit may have extended the full length of the trench below deposit 62 (suggesting that 62 was in fact its top fill) but this was not established. A slot 1.2m long was dug into the edge of pit (4). The slot was no more than 0.35m deep, before the the water table was reached and the feature therefore could not be bottomed. It was assumed this feature was likely to be deeper to the west. It included two fills (60 and 61) below layer 62. The upper fill was a dark brown grey clay silt with occasional gravel. The lower fill was bluish grey silty gravel against the east side of the cut, and once removed exposed natural gravel geology. The lower part of the investigated feature reached an overall depth of 0.75m from the trench surface. No finds were recovered from fills 60 and 61.

### Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned N - S, and was 5.2m long and 0.52m deep. Excavation stopped at modern truncations deeper than 0.69m which extended further to the north along the projected line of the trench. The stratigraphy consisted of various layers of made ground directly overlying the gravel natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Sue Anderson

Thirty-seven sherds of pottery weighing 227g were collected from seven contexts (Appendix 3). Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric and Appendix 3 provides a catalogue by context.

| <i>Fabric</i> | <i>Name</i>               | <i>Date range (century AD)</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Wt (g)</i> |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| OXAC          | LSax-EMed West Oxon ware  | Late 9th to mid-13th           | 24        | 110           |
| OXAG          | LSax-Med Abingdon ware    | Mid-11th to -mid-15th          | 1         | 8             |
| OXAW          | Brill/Boarstall-type ware | Late 12th to mid-14th          | 11        | 68            |
| OXBX          | LMed Brill/Boarstall ware | 15th to 17th                   | 1         | 41            |

Medieval fabric codes were assigned from the Oxfordshire fabric series (Mellor 1994). Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998). An Access database forms the archive catalogue.

Twenty-four sherds of six vessels were in sandy grey fabrics typical of Oxford and west Oxfordshire. These included twelve sherds from a single vessel in ditch 5, fill 59. A single sherd of Abingdon ware was probably also of medieval date, but all sherds in these fabrics were body fragments and could not be more closely dated.



Eleven sherds of Brill/Boarstall-type ware included eight sherds from a small rounded jug with speckled copper green glaze. There was also a rim fragment of a later medieval jug in this fabric.

Pottery of medieval date was recovered from trenches 1, 3 and 4 and several features can be dated to the early to late medieval period. The range of wares is typical of this part of Oxfordshire, with most of the coarsewares originating to the west of Oxford and Abingdon, and all glazed wares being of Brill/Boarstall type.

## Conclusion

Five evaluation trenches have been excavated at the site, with their positions dictated by the start of groundworks at the site. These have revealed archaeological deposits of medieval date in Trenches 3 and 4 in the south and east of the site, possibly representing quarrying, and ditch 5 also appears to be medieval. The linear features in Trench 1 could also be of similar date but the dating of these is more tentative.

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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i>   |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| 1             | 3.8               | 1.2                | 0.82             | 0-0.16m hardstanding (gravel, clay and sand); 0.16-0.33m ballast (bedding surface); 0.33-0.8m brown silty clay (made ground; 56); 0.8m+ light grey gravel (natural geology). (Gully 3) <b>[Pl. 1]</b>  |
| 2             | 4                 | 1.2-1.5            | 0.9              | 0-0.12m mixed gravel and dark brown clay silt (overburden); 0.12-0.48m concrete and limestone rubble; 0.48-0.76m dark brown clayey sand and silt (made ground); 0.76-0.9m brown clayey silt and red brick (made ground); 0.9m+ truncated grey/blue gravel (natural geology). Modern truncations.                 |
| 3             | 9                 | 1.5                | 0.54             | 0-0.12m mixed gravel and dark brown clay silt; 0.12-0.19m lenses of gravel (redeposited; 50); 0.19-0.47m dark brown grey clayey silt and gravel (made ground; 51); 0.47-0.54m gravel (redeposited); 0.54m+ sand and rounded gravel (natural geology). Modern truncation and (Pits 1 and 2). <b>[Pls 2 and 3]</b> |
| 4             | 7.4               | 1.4                | 0.47             | 0-0.23m dark brown clay silt and gravel (made ground), 0.23-0.35m redeposited gravel; 62), 0.35m+ rounded gravel (natural geology). (Ditch 5) cut from top of redeposited gravel. Quarry pit 4. <b>[Pl. 4]</b>   |
| 5             | 5.2               | 1.5                | 0.69             | 0-0.24m dark brown sandy silt loam (topsoil), 0.24-0.52m dark brown marl silt (made ground) 0.52m+ rounded gravel (natural geology). Modern truncations.   |

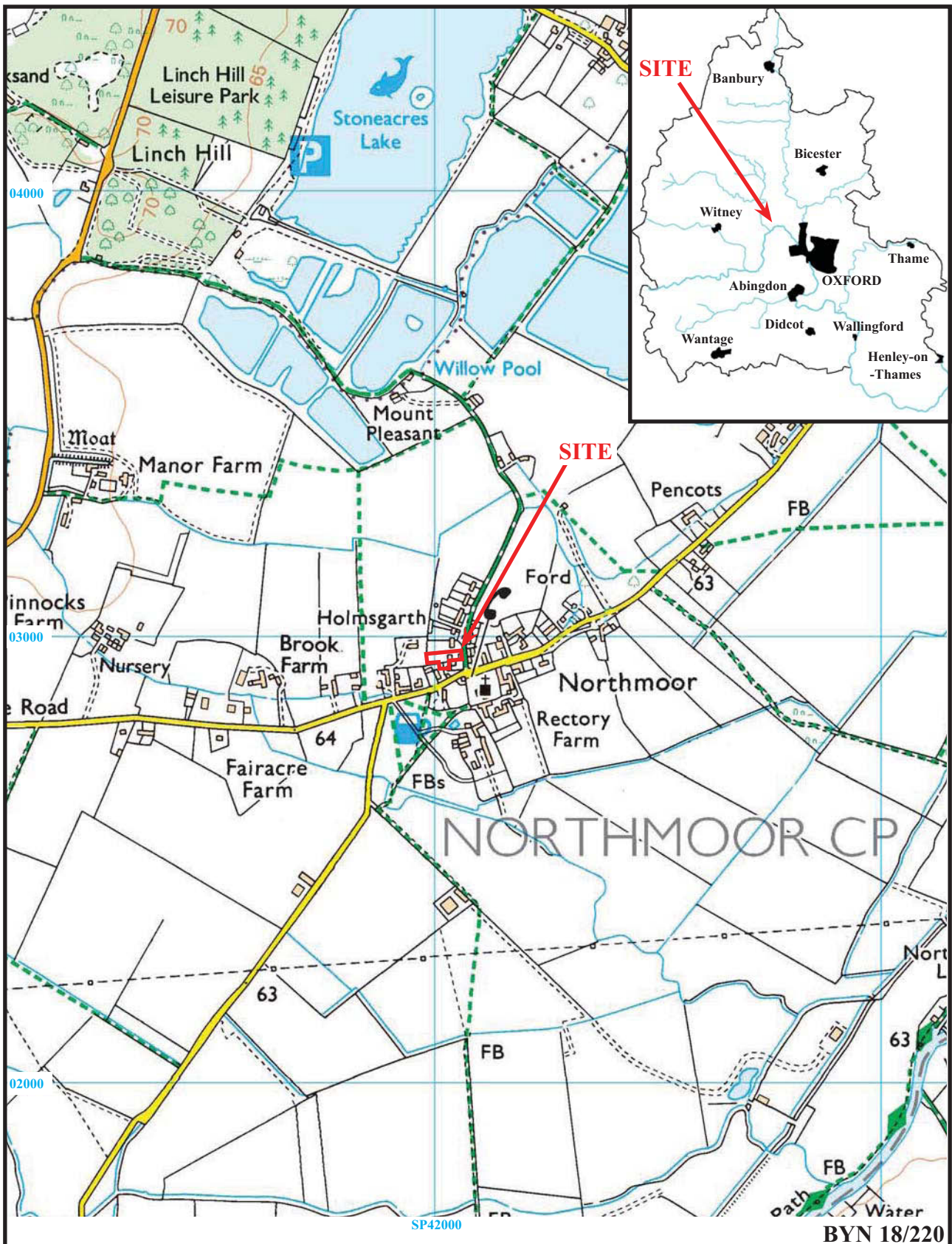
**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i>        | <i>Date</i>               | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
|               |            | 50              | Redeposited gravel | -                         | -                      |
|               |            | 51              | Made ground        | Medieval                  | pottery                |
| 3             | 1          | 52, 53          | Pit                | Late Medieval             | pottery                |
| 3             | 2          | 54,55           | Pit                | Medieval                  | pottery                |
| 1             |            | 56              | Made ground        | Medieval                  | pottery                |
| 4             |            | 62              | Redeposited gravel |                           | pottery                |
| 1             | 3          | 57              | Gully              | Medieval or earlier       | stratigraphy           |
| 4             | 4          | 60, 61          | Quarry pit         | Medieval or earlier       | stratigraphy           |
| 4             | 5          | 58, 59          | Ditch              | Late Saxon/Early Medieval | pottery                |

**APPENDIX 3: Pottery summary catalogue**

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Context</i> | <i>Fabric</i> | <i>Form</i> | <i>Rim</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Wt/g</i> | <i>MNV</i> | <i>Context date (century)</i> |
|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| 3             | 1          | 52             | OXAW          |             |            | D           | 1         | 3           | 1          | 15th                          |
| 3             | 1          | 52             | OXBX          | JG?         | UPFT       | RH          | 1         | 41          | 1          | 15th                          |
| 3             | 1          | 53             | OXAW          |             |            | D           | 1         | 11          | 1          | Late 12th-mid 14th            |
| 3             | 2          | 54             | OXAW          | JG          |            | D           | 8         | 47          | 1          | Late 12th-mid 14th            |
| 3             | 2          | 55             | OXAC          |             |            | U           | 2         | 10          | 2          | Late 9th to mid 13th          |
| 3             | 2          | 55             | OXAC          |             |            | UB          | 8         | 27          | 1          | Late 9th to mid 13th          |
| 1             |            | 56             | OXAC          |             |            | U           | 1         | 9           | 1          | Mid 11th to 13th              |
| 1             |            | 56             | OXAG          |             |            | U           | 1         | 8           | 1          | Mid 11th to 13th              |
| 4             | 5          | 59             | OXAC          |             |            | U           | 12        | 60          | 1          | Late 9th to mid 13th          |
| 4             |            | 62?            | OXAC          |             |            | U           | 1         | 4           | 1          | Late 12th-13th                |
| 4             |            | 62?            | OXAW          |             |            | D           | 1         | 7           | 1          |                               |

Type: B – base; U/D – undecorated/decorated body sherd; R - rimsherd

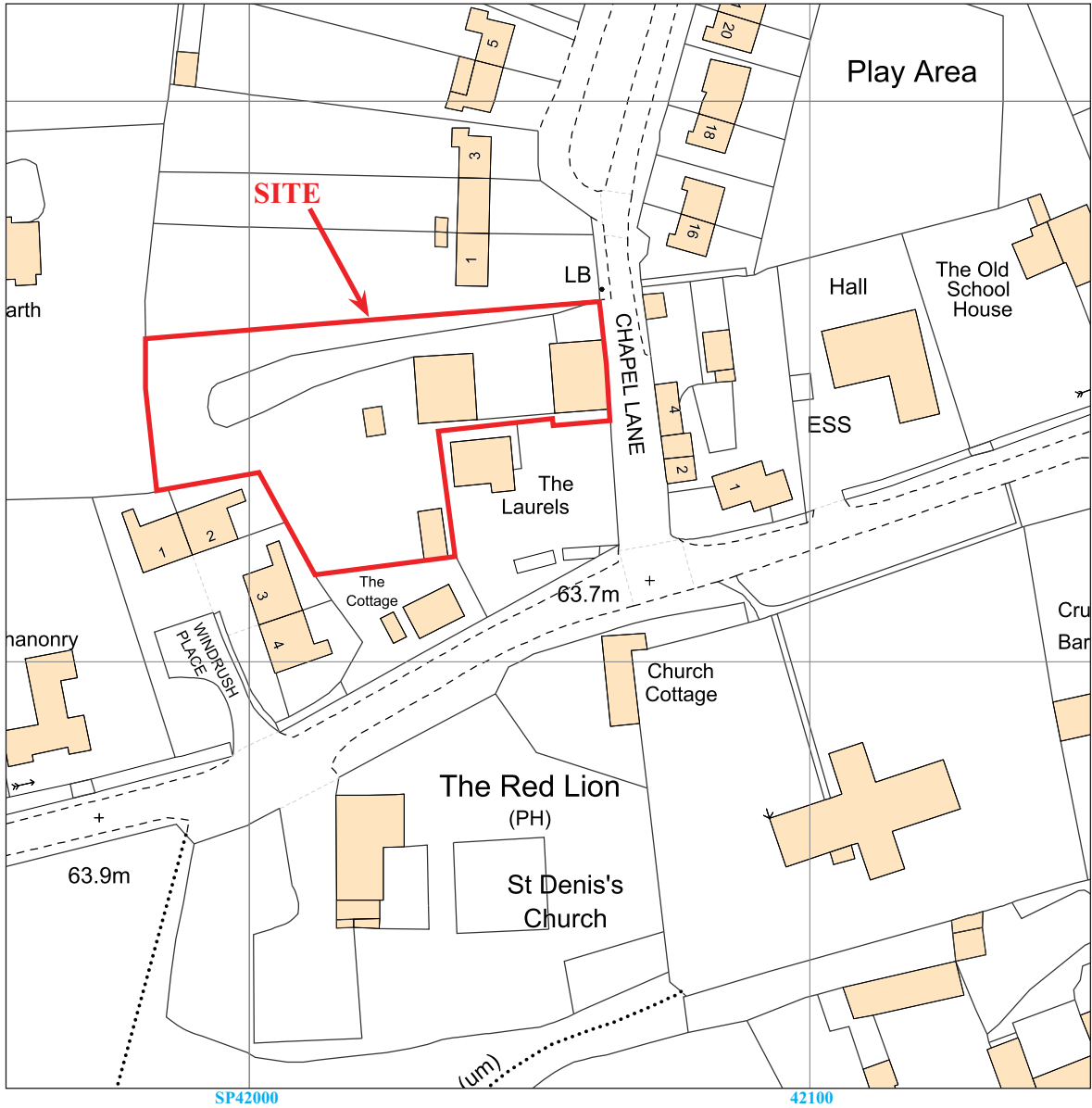


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Figure 1. Location of site within Northmoor and Oxfordshire.

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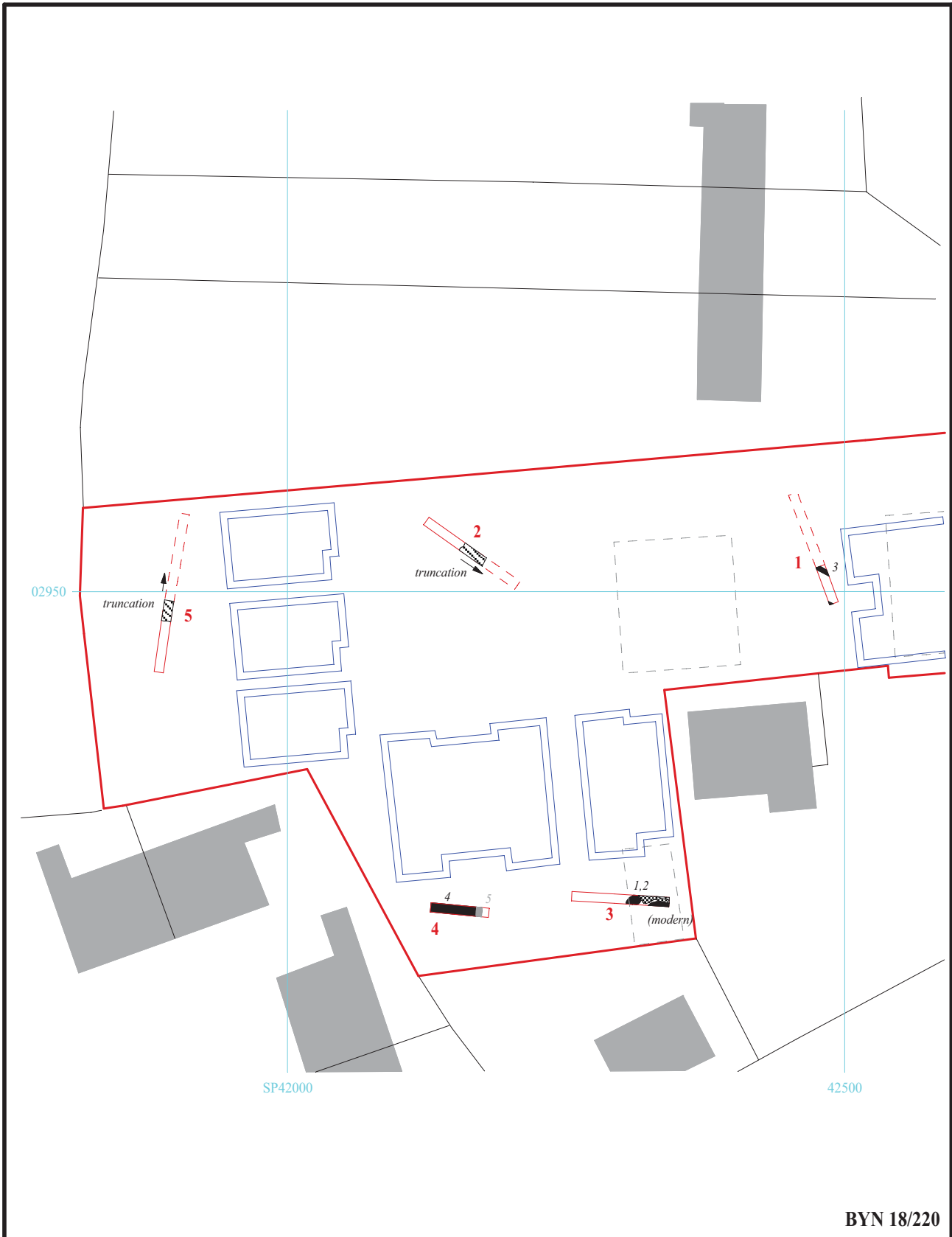
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**Bints Yard, Chapel Lane,  
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Chapel Lane.

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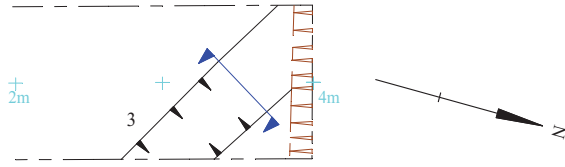
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



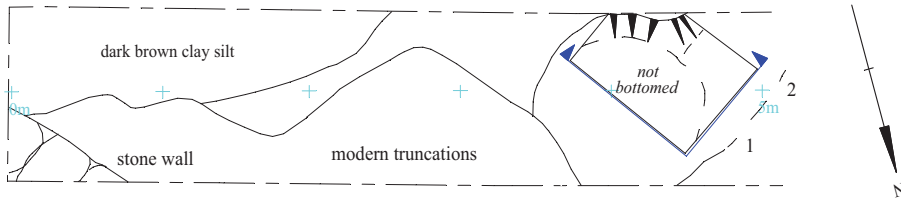
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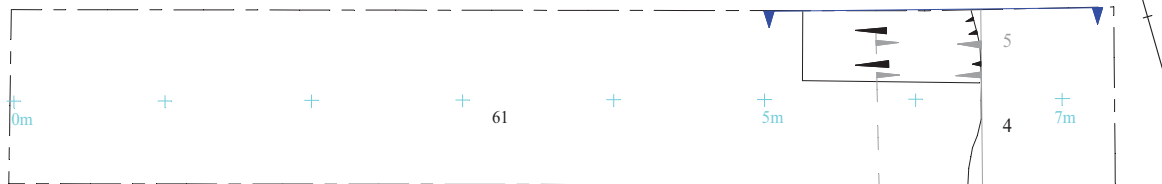
Trench 1



Trench 3



Trench 4



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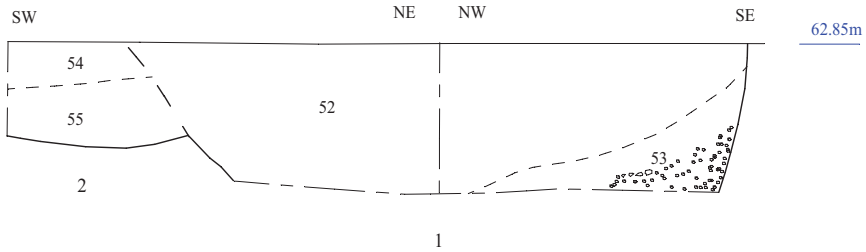
Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



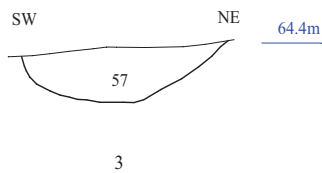
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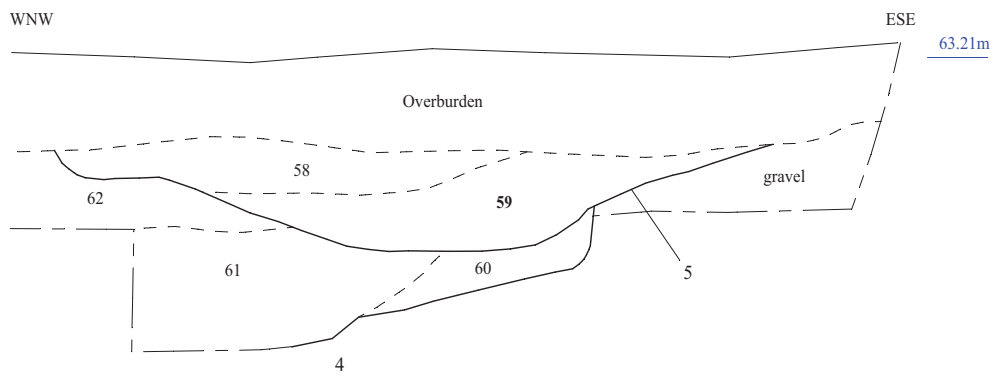
Trench 3



Trench 1



Trench 4



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Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: horizontal 1m and 0.5m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking south east, Scales: horizontal 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.

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**Bints Yard, Chapel Lane,  
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 3, pits 1 and 2, looking north east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.

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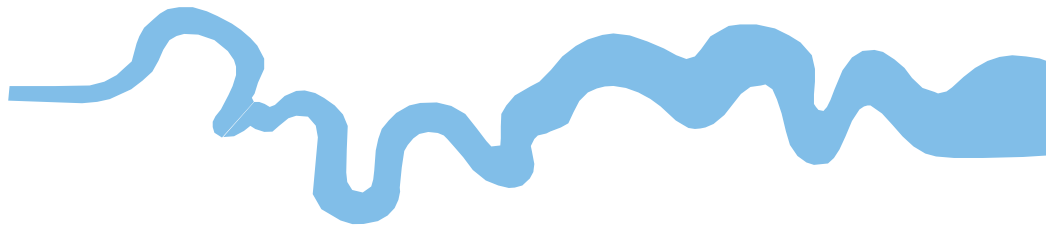
**Bints Yard, Chapel Lane,  
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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<br>AD 0 BC |
| Iron Age _____             | 750 BC           |
| <br>                       |                  |
| Bronze Age: Late _____     | 1300 BC          |
| Bronze Age: Middle _____   | 1700 BC          |
| Bronze Age: Early _____    | 2100 BC          |
| <br>                       |                  |
| Neolithic: Late .....      | 3300 BC          |
| Neolithic: Early .....     | 4300 BC          |
| <br>                       |                  |
| Mesolithic: Late .....     | 6000 BC          |
| Mesolithic: Early .....    | 10000 BC         |
| <br>                       |                  |
| Palaeolithic: Upper .....  | 30000 BC         |
| Palaeolithic: Middle ..... | 70000 BC         |
| Palaeolithic: Lower .....  | 2,000,000 BC     |





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