

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Perch, Binsey,
Oxford**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Will Attard and Andrew Muddin

Site Code: PBO18/102

(SP 4929 0770)

The Perch, Binsey, Oxford

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Jon Ellse

by Will Attard and Andrew Mordin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PBO18/102ev

February 2019

Summary

Site name: The Perch, Binsey, Oxford

Grid reference: SP 4929 0770

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 14th January 2019

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Will Attard

Site code: PBO18/102ev

Area of site: 68.8 sq m

Summary of results: A single evaluation trench was excavated ahead of the construction of a new extension at the rear of the existing pub. A high density of archaeological deposits was revealed beneath various made-up layers considering the small size of the trench. These comprised pits and linear features dated to the late medieval and early post-medieval periods.

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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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 15.02.19 Steve Preston ✓ 15.02.19 |
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The Perch, Binsey, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation

by Will Attard and Andrew Muddin

Report 18/102b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at The Perch, Binsey Lane, Binsey, Oxford, (SP 4929 0770) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Laura Donald of Laura Donald Architects, The Gables, Pleck Lane, Kingston Mount, Chinnor, OX39 4RU, on behalf on Mr Jon Ellse, c/o LDA, The Gables, Pleck Lane, Kingston Mount, Chinnor, OX39 4RU.

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent (15/03669/FUL and 15/03670/LBC) have been granted by Oxford City Council for the demolition of the modern extension, renovation and remodelling of the interior, with construction of a new extension and the creation of a serving hatch through an existing boundary wall. The consent is subject to a condition (11) which requires assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, with an evaluation trench excavated within the footprint of the new extension.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and Oxford City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the City Archaeologist, Mr David Radford. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard on 14th January 2019 and the site code is PBO18/102. A building recording at the site has been reported on separately (Milbank 2018).

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 within the small hamlet of Binsey, adjacent to Manor Farm (Fig. 1). The development directly impacts the east side of the structure. The area to be developed lies within the pub garden, in a semi-sheltered area used for dining on a paved patio area since 2015. The gardens extend further to the east. The underlying geology is alluvial sand and gravel of the Thames floodplain, overlying Oxford Clay, on patches of gravel within the clay between the Seacourt Stream and River Thames at Port Meadow (BGS Geindex: BGS 1982).

Archaeological background

The potential of the site has been evaluated in two building assessments (Yeates 2014; Milbank 2018) which identify a high probability of surviving Medieval archaeology, as well as the possibility of occupation prior to the erection of the existing 17th century building, which is a Listed Building (Grade II; 1185191) (Preston 2017; Milbank 2018). To the east, on the opposite side of the River Thames, is the large Scheduled Monument of Port Meadow (SAM 1010717), a large open landscape of common land, unchanged since the 17th century with evidence of early prehistoric burial mounds and Iron Age enclosures (Atkinson 1942).

Binsey is situated west of Oxford, on the floodplain of the River Thames. Thought to be a Medieval 'shrunk' hamlet, this was one of a few possible crossing points of the river, allowing movement to/from the west of Oxford, in the direction of Eynsham. The local church (St. Margaret of Antioch) was a pilgrimage site from the 12th century onwards, noted for its Holy Well and the site of St. Frideswide's refuge. A sub-oval enclosure located to the south of the church has been dated by pottery to the Early Saxon period, but is considered to be a re-use of an existing Iron Age defensive feature (Blair 1988, 17). This enclosure lies some 500m to the north-west of the current site. The Perch has greater proximity to the Post-Medieval core of the hamlet of Binsey, and the site of Manor Farm, which lies immediately to the east. A stone shed for the farm is attached to the building in the north and the early 18th century farmhouse is immediately located to the west (Grade II; 1369326).

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 that would not compromise the integrity of any archaeological deposits found later warranting preservation *in situ*, or which might be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Specific aims were:

- To determine if archaeological deposits were present on the site;
- To establish the character and extent of any Saxon, Medieval or Post-Medieval archaeology; and
- To provide information to allow the preparation of mitigation strategy if necessary.

Excavation was undertaken with a small 360° type mechanical excavator, fitted with a bladed bucket, 1.6m wide. It was intended that one trench, 7m long and at least 1.6m wide was to be excavated, within the original extent of the previous shelter and the new extension. Detailed dimensions and descriptions of the overburden are given in Appendix 1.

Results

A single trench was dug as intended (Fig.3). Due to space restrictions, the trench was marginally shorter than originally intended. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 3, and 4; Pls 1– 3)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 6.75m long and 0.75m deep. The top of the trench was at *c.* 58m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of sand and ballast bedding for the paving that had recently been lifted prior to the excavations. Below this, to a depth of 0.43m, was a modern made ground consisting of a dark brown clayey silt. Beyond this to a depth of 0.75m was a dark grey sandy silt which contained Post-medieval finds such as clay tobacco pipe and residual medieval pottery. This overlay natural yellow brown sandy clay geology (Pl.1)

At the SW end of the trench, part of an exposed ditch (2) was visible lying on a WSW-ENE axis. This was sectioned (Pl.2). The excavated slot showed a single fill (55), a brown grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered from this feature but its southern edge was cut by a large pit (3) fully exposed in plan (Fig. 4). Pit 3 was 1m in diameter and 0.5m deep. A single fill was recorded within it, a soft dark grey brown sandy clay (56). Four sherds of late medieval pottery and animal bone were recovered from its fill.

At 3.7m from the SW of the trench, a small pit was encountered (1). This was 0.33m in diameter, 0.13m deep, and fill with a single fill of a loose, dark grey brown sandy silt fill (54). A single piece of clay pipe was recovered from this fill. At the NE end of the trench, on a NNE-SSW axis, was the southern terminus of a gully (4). This had a single fill (57), a soft brown grey sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions. An early post-medieval date was provided by two clay pipe stem fragments with a single sherd of medieval pottery clearly residual.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Thirteen sherds of pottery weighing 208g were collected from four contexts (Appendix 3). Medieval fabric codes were assigned from the Oxfordshire fabric series (Mellor 1994), with post-medieval wares based on the author's fabric series. Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998).

Six sherds were probably of high medieval date. These comprised two body fragments of Oxford Ware, two body sherds of SE Oxfordshire wares (fabrics WA27 and HE3, based on Mellor 1994) and a rimsherd of a green-glazed Brill/Boarstall jug. A body fragment of probable late medieval green-glazed Brill/Boarstall ware vessel was also found, and three sherds were probably late medieval SE Oxfordshire wares. Two of the latter were thinly glazed with a clear lead glaze externally.

A rim fragment of a jar in a very hard red/grey earthenware fabric with a white slip internally and externally was probably of post-medieval date. The vessel was covered in a bright copper green glaze which had a metallic appearance externally. It was found in association with a small fragment of green-glazed Border ware and an abraded sherd of tin-glazed earthenware with internal blue decoration.

This small assemblage includes a variety of medieval, late medieval and post-medieval wares. Apart from one large sherd of Oxford ware from the fill of a gully, most of the medieval wares appear to be redeposited in later contexts. The wares are all types which are found in Oxford and it is likely that they reached the site via the market town.

Clay pipe by Danielle Milbank

Clay pipe fragments were recovered from three contexts during the evaluation, comprising three bowls and 32 stem pieces.

Subsoil context 52 contained two bowls of small size, with a bulbous form and a short spur, which can be categorised as Oswald type 16/17 and date to the first half of the 17th century. A third bowl was recovered of a larger, more upright form (Oswald type 10/11) which has a likely early 18th century date. A further stem was recovered from this context with a small spur bearing a small moulded six-pointed star, though this mark could not be identified to a particular maker. The bore diameter of the remaining stems suggests a range of dates in the 17th and 18th century.

The stem piece recovered from pit 1 (54) has a broad date of mid 17th to early 18th century, and the two pieces from 4 (57) a likely mid to late 18th century date.

Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone (8 pieces, 286g) was recovered from two contexts (Appendix 4). The surface preservation of the remains is generally good, but all pieces of bone show some degree of fragmentation. No complete skeletal elements are present.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements based on size, into general categories: “large”, “medium”, and “small”. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category; no bones were designated to the “small” category. Wherever possible, a more specific identification to species has been made. The determination of the minimum number of individuals both within and between the species was investigated based on the duplication of elements and differences in age categories.

A minimum number of three animals have been identified: one cow and at least two medium-sized animals of indeterminate species. The cow is represented by two fragments in deposit 52 that refit to form the distal third of a radius/ulna. The anterior surface of the distal radius has a wide chop mark running diagonally towards the articular area for the ulna. Additional evidence for butchery practices is located on broken superior edges of the radial shaft. A minimum of four smooth cut marks show the removal of the distal shaft from the rest of the radius. The presence of at least one "large-sized" animal is supported by single fragments of non-descript "large animal" ribs in both features (i.e. 52 and 56), and a nearly complete right calcaneus in 56.

At least two medium-sized animal are suggested by fragments in deposit 56, including a portion of sacrum, and two long bone shaft fragments. One of the long bone shafts has come from a juvenile animal, as one end of the diaphysis is unfused from the epiphysis. The second long bone shaft fragment appears to be from a fully mature animal.

Conclusion

The evaluation trench was successfully excavated at the site. A high density of archaeological features comprising pits and linear features were recorded and which were of late medieval and early post-medieval date.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at SW end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 | 6.75 | 1.6 | 0.75 | 0–0.1m bedding for paving; 0.1-0.43m made ground; 0.43-0.75m dark grey sandy silt; 0.75m+ yellow brown sandy clay (natural gravel geology). Pit 1, Ditch 2, Pit 3 and pit/gully terminal 4. [Pls1-3] |

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 54 | Pit | Early Post-medieval | Clay pipe |
| 1 | 2 | 55 | Ditch | Medieval? | Cut by 3 |
| 1 | 3 | 56 | Pit | Late-medieval | Pottery |
| 1 | 4 | 57 | Gully terminal | Early Post-Medieval | Clay pipe |

APPENDIX 3: Pottery (All dates in centuries AD)

Table A3.1 Catalogue by context

| <i>Cut</i> | <i>Context</i> | <i>Fabric</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Form</i> | <i>Rim</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Wt/g</i> | <i>MNV</i> | <i>Fabric date range</i> | <i>Spot date</i> |
|------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | 52 | OX162 | U | | | 3 | 19 | 1 | 12th – mid-16th | 16th-18th |
| | 52 | NE1? | D | | | 2 | 71 | 1 | Late 14–15th | |
| | 52 | BORD | D | | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 16th–18th | |
| | 52 | PMR? | R | jar | flat-topped everted | 1 | 45 | 1 | 16th–18th | |
| | 52 | TGE | D | dish? | | 1 | 6 | 1 | 16th–18th | |
| 3 | 56 | OX162 | U | | | 1 | 11 | 1 | 12th–mid-16th | Late 14th-15th |
| 3 | 56 | OXBX | D | | | 1 | 7 | 1 | 15th–17th | |
| 3 | 56 | OXY | U | | | 1 | 12 | 1 | Mid-11th–13th | |
| 3 | 56 | NE1? | U | | | 1 | 23 | 1 | Late 14th–15th | |
| 4 | 57 | OXAW | R | jug | upright flat-topped | 1 | 11 | 1 | Late 12th–Mid-14th | Late 12th - mid 14th |

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

Table A3.2 Pottery quantification by fabric.

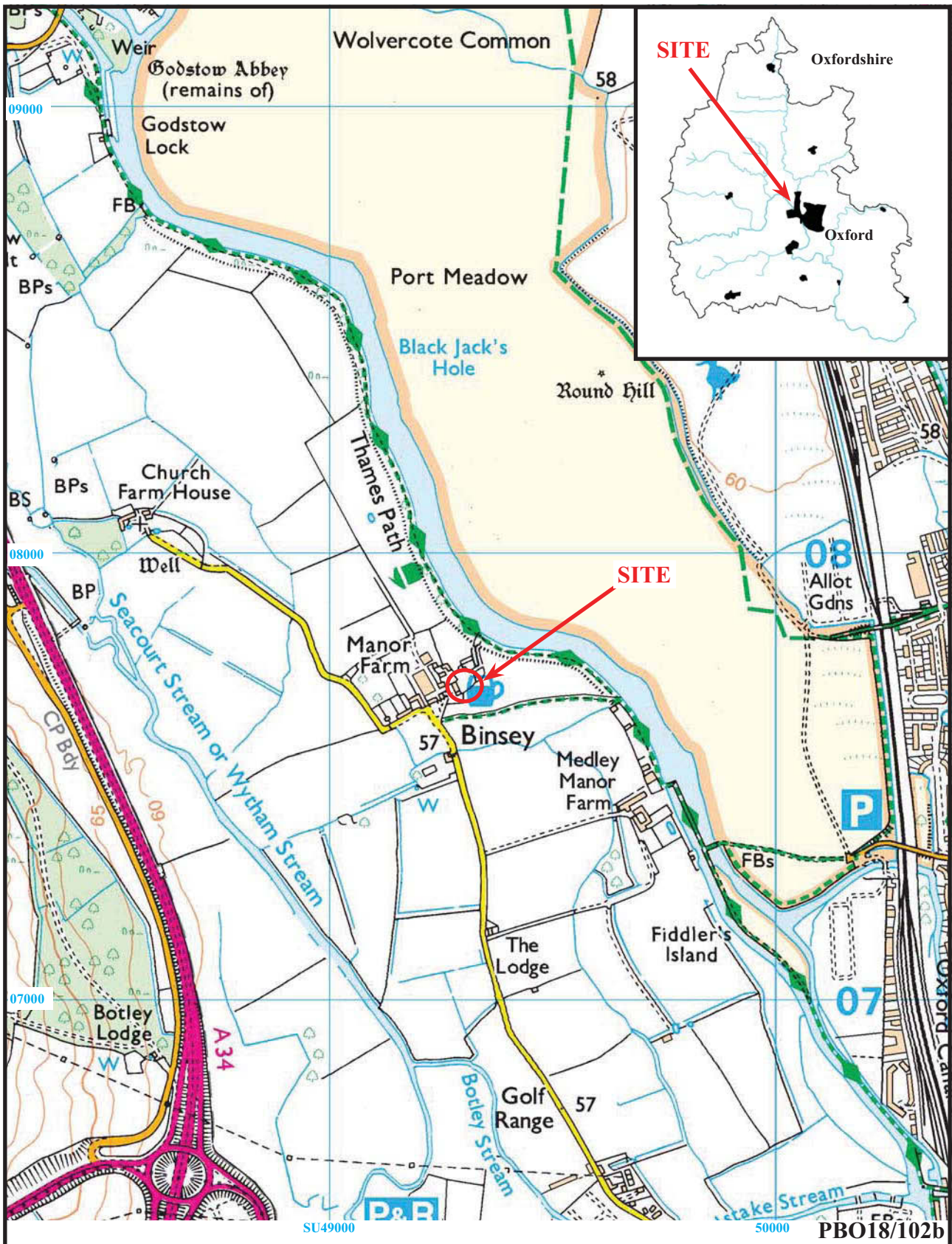
| <i>Fabric</i> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Date range</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Wt/g</i> | <i>eve</i> | <i>MNV</i> |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| OXY | LSax-Med Oxford Ware | Mid-11th–13th | 1 | 12 | | 1 |
| OXAW | Brill/Boarstall-type ware | Late 12th–Mid-14th | 1 | 11 | 0.10 | 1 |
| OX162 | EMed-LMed SE Oxon Ware | Early 12th–Mid-16th | 4 | 30 | | 2 |
| OXBX | LMed Brill/Boarstall ware | 15th–17th | 1 | 7 | | 1 |
| NE1? | LMed SE Oxon Ware | Late 14–15th | 3 | 94 | | 2 |
| PMR? | Post-medieval redwares | 16th-18th | 1 | 45 | 0.10 | 1 |
| BORD | Border ware | 16th-18th | 1 | 3 | | 1 |
| TGE | Tin-glazed earthenware | 16th-18th | 1 | 6 | | 1 |
| <i>Totals</i> | | | <i>0</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0.20</i> | <i>0</i> |

APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone

| <i>Context</i> | | <i>No.Frags</i> | <i>Wt (g)</i> | <i>Number of identified fragments (by animal size)</i> | | | <i>Unidentified / comments</i> |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--|---------------|--------------|---|
| <i>Cut</i> | <i>Deposit</i> | | | <i>Large</i> | <i>Medium</i> | <i>Small</i> | |
| - | 52 | 3 | 153.5 | 3 (cow) | - | - | Distal radius/ulna, rib shaft |
| 3 | 56 | 5 | 132.5 | 2 | 3 | - | Large calcaneus and rib, medium sacrum, and two long bone shafts |
| Total / MNI | | 8 | 286.0 | 1 cow | 1 (?) | - | - |

APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of clay pipe

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Deposit</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Wt (g)</i> |
|---------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 | | 52 | Subsoil | 32 | 118 |
| 1 | 1 | 54 | Pit | 1 | 8 |
| 1 | 4 | 57 | Gully Terminal | 2 | 4 |
| | | | Total | 35 | 130 |



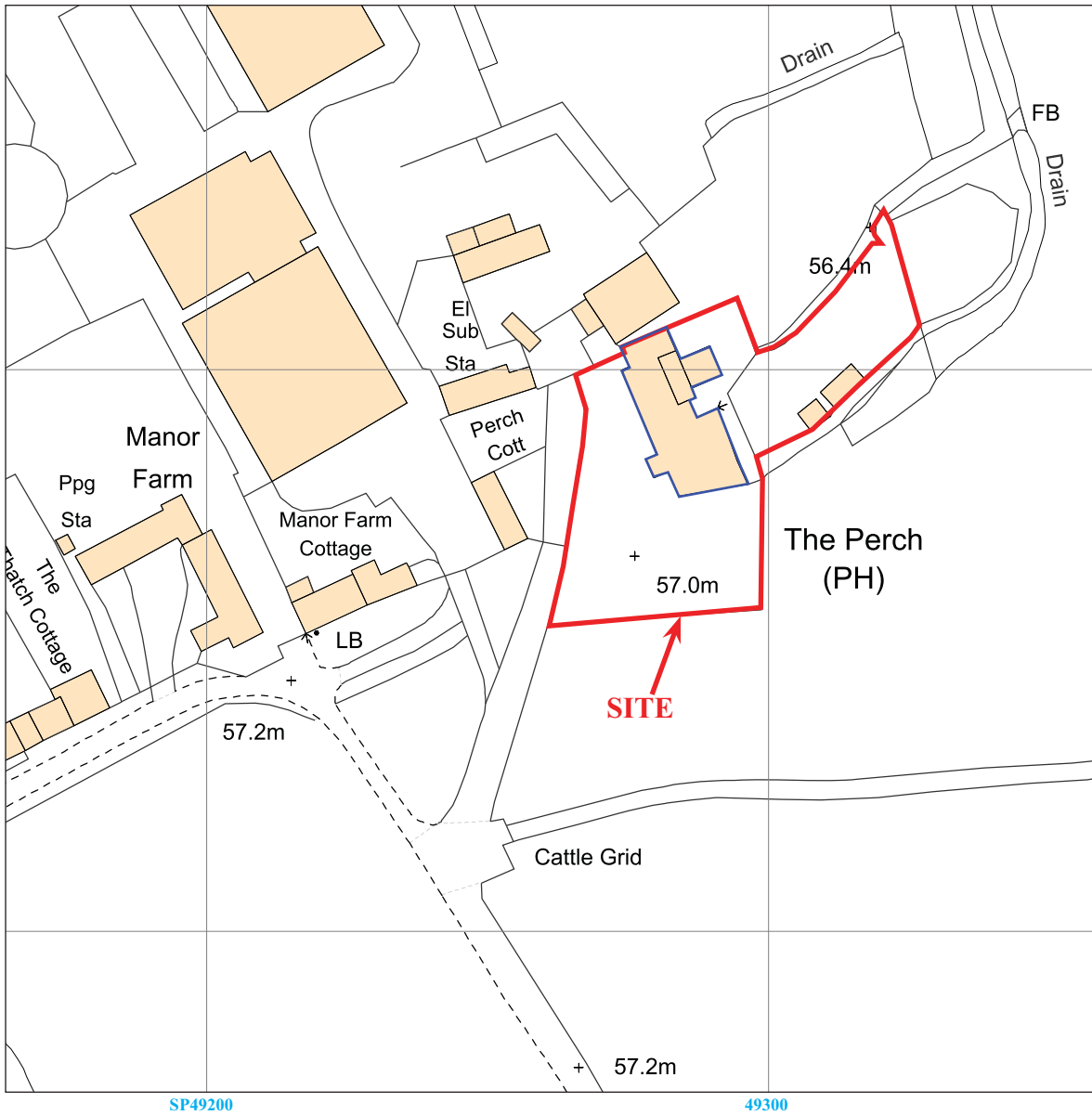
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Figure 1. Location of site within Binsey and Oxfordshire.

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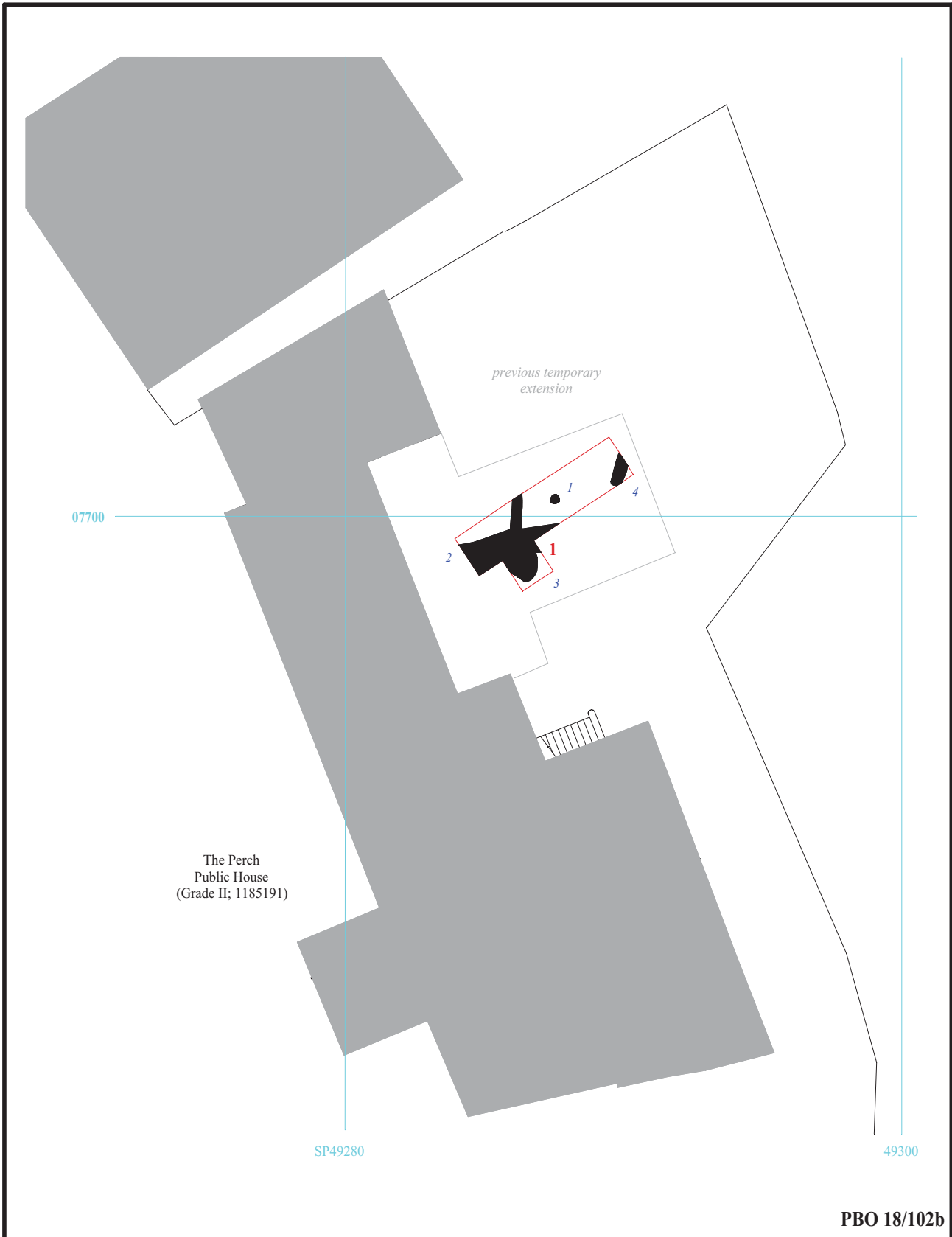


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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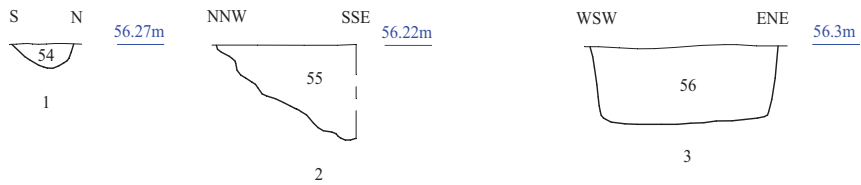
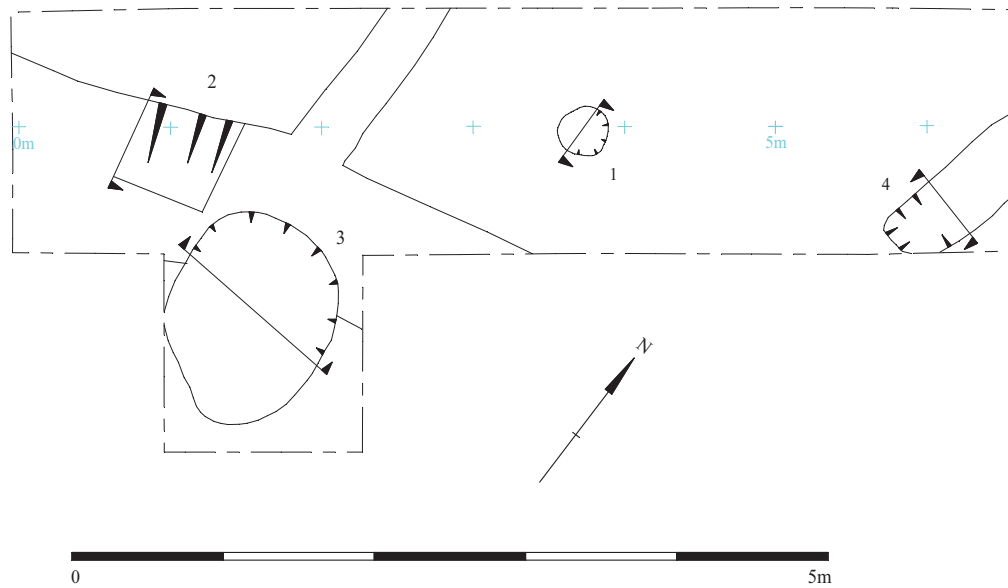


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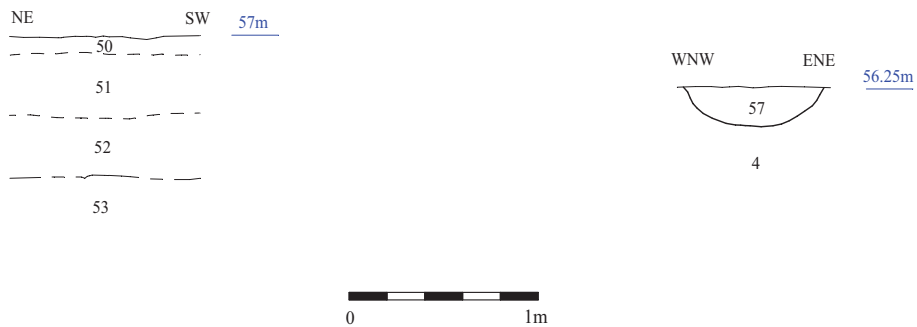
Figure 3. Location of Trench 1.



Trench 1



Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of plan and sections from Trench 1.

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



Plate 2. Trench 1, ditch 2,
looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 3. Trench 1, ditch terminal 4,
looking north east, Scale: 0.3m.

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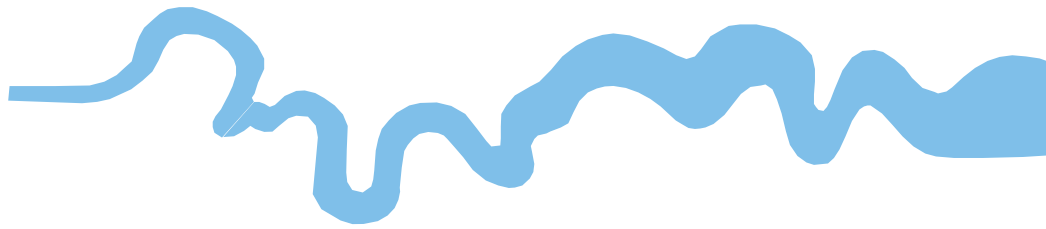
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Plates 1 - 3.

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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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