

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Dark Lane Allotments, Dark Lane, Sherborne St John,
Basingstoke, Hampshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster and Andy Taylor

Site Code: DLS18/114

(SU 6252 5532)

**Dark Lane Allotments, Dark Lane, Sherborne St John,
Basingstoke, Hampshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for RJS Builders Ltd

by Maisie Foster and Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DLS 18/114

February 2019

Summary

Site name: Dark Lane Allotments, Dark Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6252 5532

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th February 2019

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: DLS 18/114

Area of site: c.0.4 hectares

Summary of results: A single ditch of Early Roman date was recorded in one trench and a sherd of Medieval pottery was also found, presumably intrusive. However, the five other trenches dug revealed neither cut features nor artefacts. The ditch is considered to be an isolated field or boundary feature and despite its presence, the site is considered to have fairly low archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Hampshire Cultural Trust Museum in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.02.19
	Steve Preston ✓ 01.03.19

Dark Lane Allotments, Dark Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster and Andy Taylor

Report 18/114

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Dark Lane Allotments, Dark Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire (SU 6252 5532) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr R Sears of RJS Builders Ltd, 30 Park Lane, Old Basing, Hampshire, RG24 7HQ.

Planning permission (18/00475/FUL) has been gained from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to develop the site for new housing. The consent is subject to conditions (20-22) relating to archaeology, requiring the implementation of a programme of assessment by trial trenching, based on the results of which a programme of mitigation could be devised if required, and reporting of the results.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Neal Adam, Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster and Camila Carvalho on the 7th February 2019 and the site code is DLS 18/114. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an irregular parcel of land on the eastern side of Dark Lane, Sherborne St John, which is on the northern margins of Basingstoke (Fig. 1). It is bounded by residential properties to the east, south and north with Dark Lane and another open area to the west and it consisted of open scrubland (Fig. 2) with remnant cress beds fed by active springs within the site (Pl. 1). The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 1981), which was observed across the trenches and the site lies at a height of *c.* 7.6m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the historic core of the settlement, with the parish church to the north west. Sherborne St John has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002, 107). The parish church has retained medieval fabric and there are a number of late medieval/early post-medieval listed buildings in the settlement. A possible Roman settlement lies to the west. It is possible that the springs in the site area would have attracted early (Mesolithic) occupation.

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.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there is any Roman settlement on the site;
- to determine if there is any Saxon or Medieval settlement on the site; and
- to inform a strategy for mitigation if required

Six trenches were to be dug, each measuring 15m long and 1.60m wide. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilhepas were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to an agreed sampling fraction, to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any archaeological features that may warrant preservation *in situ*.

Results

The trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended locations although some shortening of trenches 3, 5 and 6 was required due to the presence of trees and a spring (Fig. 3). They measured between 11m and 15m long and between 0.31m and 0.52m deep.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 14.30m in long and 0.34m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil overlying 0.10m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 14.40m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying 0.05m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned E-W and measured 15m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.16m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology. A linear feature was observed between 11.40m and 14.30m into which a slot (1) was dug measuring 2.66m wide and 0.22m deep. Its light grey silty clay fill (52) produced 16 sherds of Roman pottery, 1 sherd of medieval pottery, 10 pieces of animal bone, 3 pieces of Roman roof tile and an amorphous piece of fired clay.

Trench 4

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 15m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil overlying 0.11m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Trench 5 (Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 11.50m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil overlying 0.29m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Trench 6

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 11m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.05m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work produced 17 sherds of pottery weighing 143g from a single ditch. All the sherds with one exception date to the early Roman period. The exception is a single probable medieval piece. The sherds are quite fragmented with a low average sherd weight of 5.3g (Appendix 3).

The Roman fabrics comprise Atrebatian-type black sandy ware, coarse calcined flint-tempered ware and Alice Holt grey ware. The only featured sherd is from a bead-rim jar. The group comprises a mixture of wares

typical of the local pre-Roman native traditions accompanied by more Romanised Alice Holt ware. Whilst the Alice Holt industry has pre-Roman origins the sherds here suggest they are more likely to date to the second half of the 1st century AD. The medieval sherd is presumably intrusive. The assemblage is too small to make any further inferences.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint, a spall (piece less than 20x20mm) was recovered from a sieved sample taken from ditch 1 (52). It is not closely datable but is likely to be of prehistoric date and clearly redeposited in this ditch.

Ceramic Building Material by Danielle Milbank

Three fragments (83g) of ceramic building material were recovered, all from ditch 1 (52) and examined under x10 magnification. These comprised two small fragments of a fine orange red clay fabric, and one larger piece. This is of the same fine orange red slightly soft fabric with very sparse fine groggy inclusions, with a thickness of 22mm. Although the flange part is broken, it is possible to identify the fragment of Roman *tegula* (roof tile), with a shallow fingertip groove along the base of a flange, a fairly common feature.

A piece of fired clay (23g) in a fine soft fabric was also recovered, which does not have any characteristics suggesting it represents a particular class of clay object, such as loomweight, kiln furniture or daub.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered, all from ditch 1 (52). A total of 10 pieces of bone were present for analysis, weighing 78g. The surface preservation of the remains is generally good, although a moderate degree of fragmentation is present. No complete skeletal elements are present.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements based on size. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and no smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) was present.

A minimum of two animals have been identified: one unidentified large-sized animal and one pig. The large-sized animal is represented by four fragments of non-descript long bone shafts. The presence of a medium-sized animal is identified by six pieces of bone, two of which are a portion of pig mandible with a tooth *in situ*, and a third is a loose tooth, with a very worn occlusal surface, that fits into the jaw fragment.

No clear evidence of butchery practices is observed, and no further information can be retrieved from this small assemblage of animal bone.

Environmental remains

A bulk soil sample was taken from the fill (52) of ditch 1 and processed using standard water flotation techniques. A flint spall was recovered but no charred plant remains nor charcoal.

Conclusion

The evaluation has identified a single linear feature of probable Roman date. It is unclear if this represents a boundary feature or part of an enclosure. However, as no other features were identified in the other trenches nor more artefacts recovered, this feature appears to be an isolated field or boundary feature.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 284, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

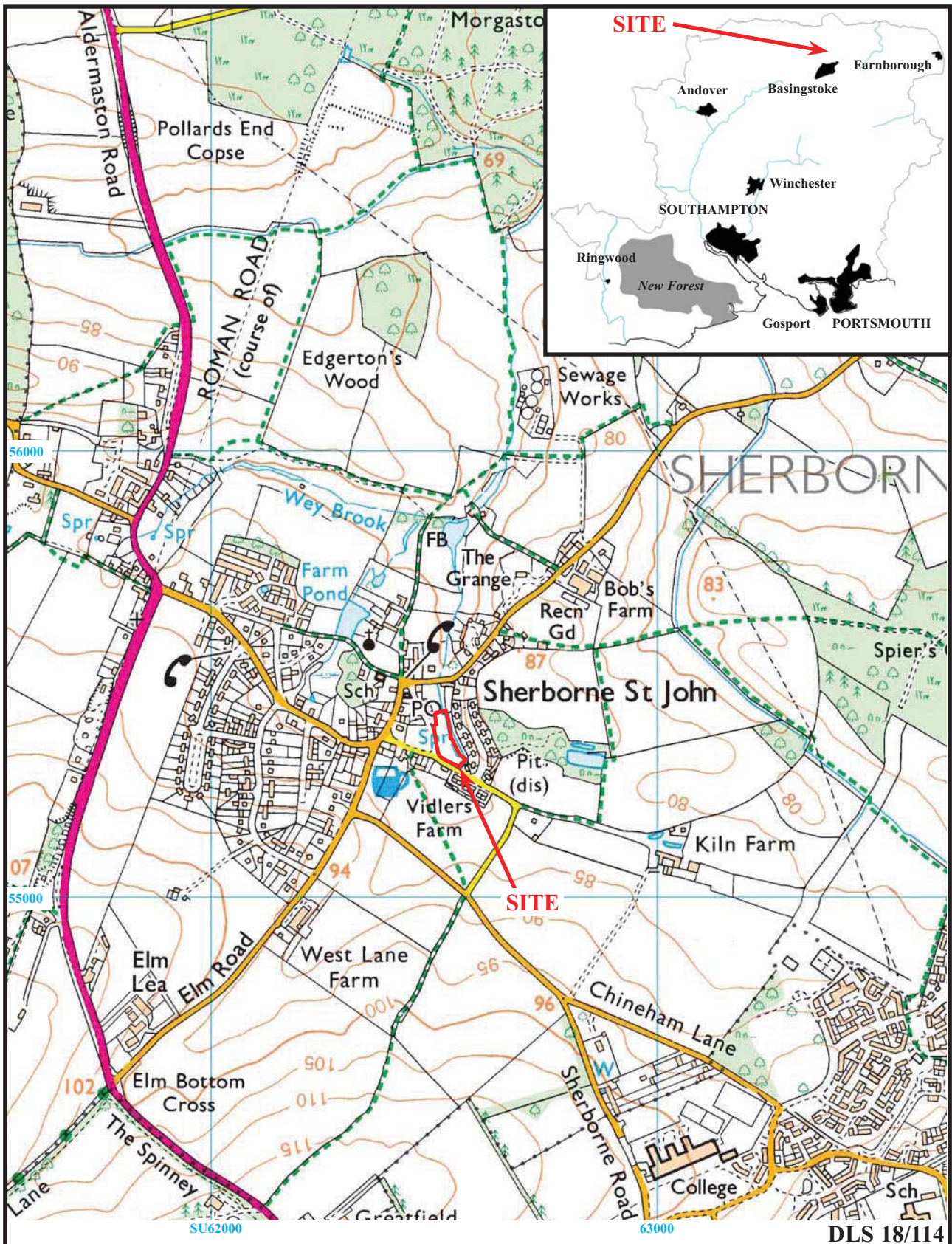
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14.30	1.60	0.34	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ clay natural geology.
2	14.40	1.60	0.31	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26m-0.31m subsoil; 0.31m+ clay natural geology.
3	15.00	1.60	0.36	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ clay natural geology. Ditch 1; [Pls 2 and 4]
4	15.00	1.60	0.39	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m-0.39m subsoil; 0.39m+ clay natural geology.
5	11.50	1.60	0.52	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19m-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m-0.52m+ clay natural geology. [Pl. 3]
6	11.00	1.60	0.47	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m-0.47m+ clay natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Ditch	Early Roman	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Eve</i>
3	1	52		BWSY	black sandy ware	bead rim jar	63	4	10
3	1	52		FL1	calcined flint-tempered		29	4	0
3	1	52		ALHRE	Alice Holt grey ware		30	3	0
3	1	52		BWSY	black sandy ware		4	1	0
3	1	52	1	FL1	calcined flint-tempered		3	2	0
3	1	52	1	ALHRE	Alice Holt grey ware		6	2	0
3	1	52	1	MED	medieval limestone with flint		8	1	0
	TOTAL						143	17	10



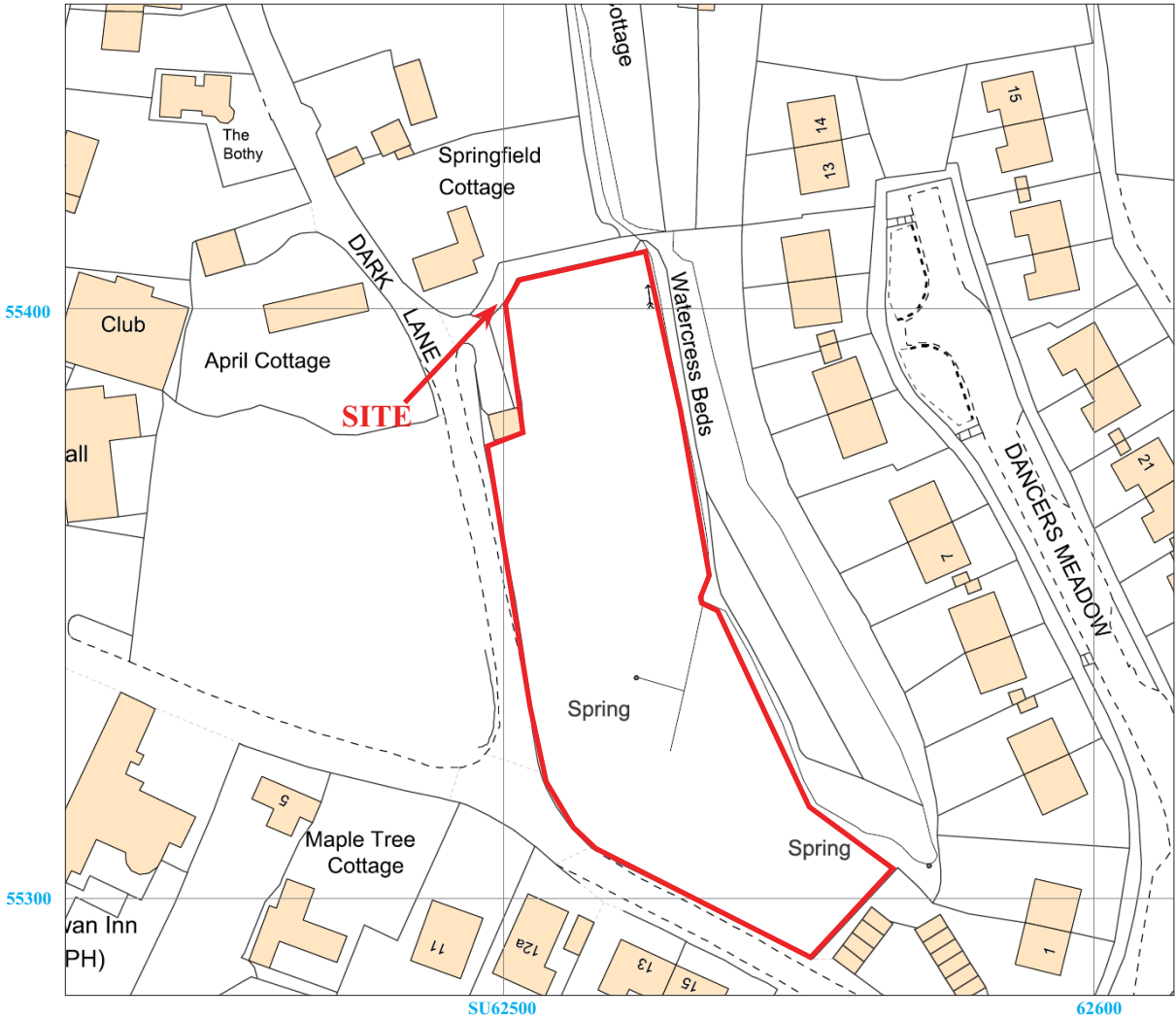
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sherborne St John and Hampshire.

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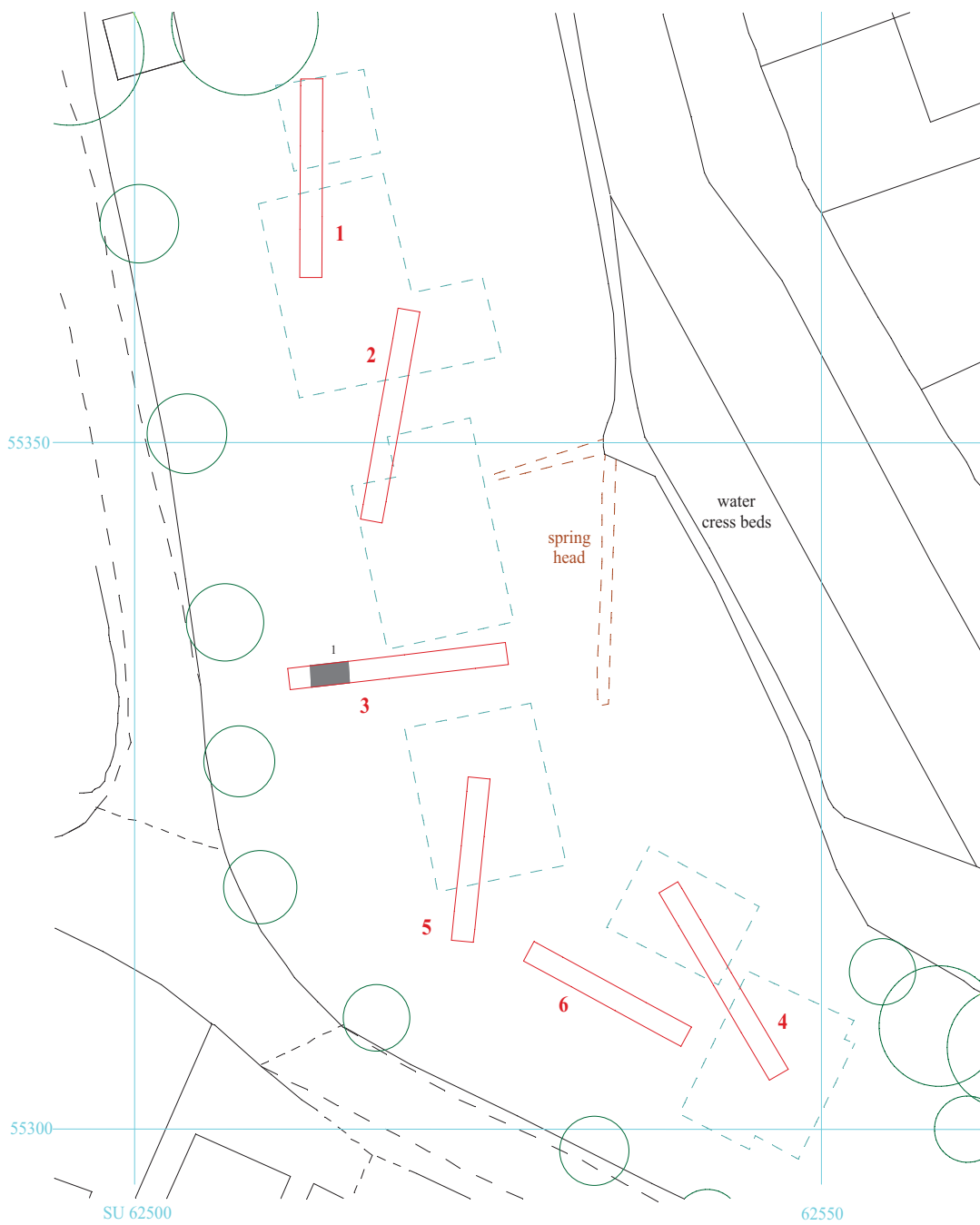
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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Dark Lane.

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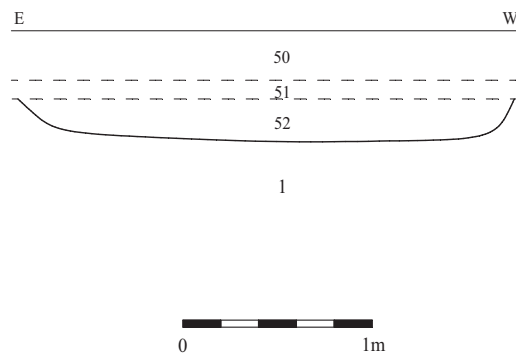
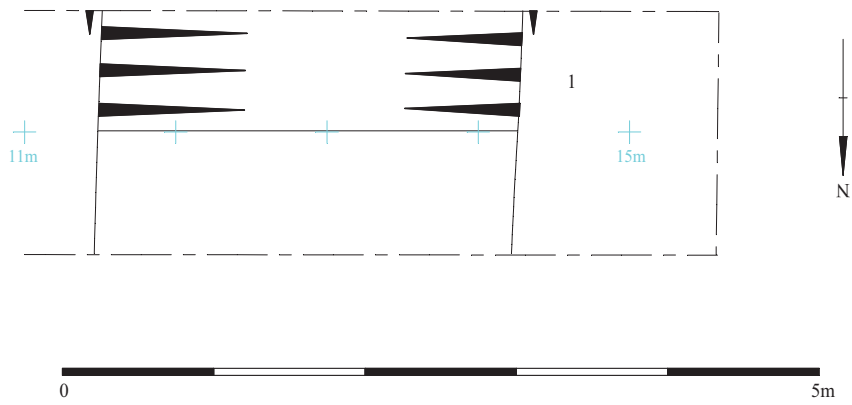
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Trench 3



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Figure 4. Plan and sections of Trench 3.

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Plate 1. Remnant of cress beds on site, looking north.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking west,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking north,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 3, ditch 1, looking north west,
Scales: 2m and 0.5m (oblique).

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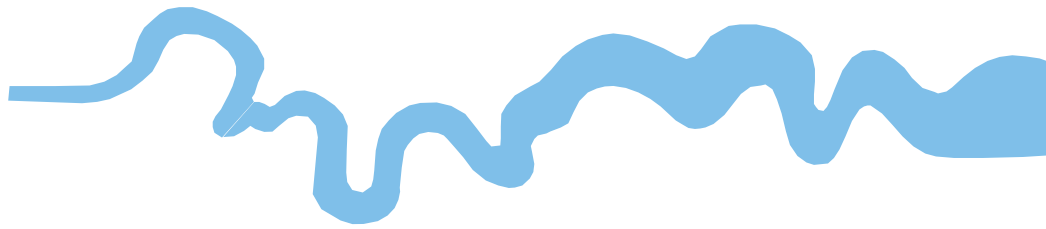
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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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