

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land south of Burford Road,
Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: MLO16/162

(SP 3085 1070)

Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Bovis Homes Western region**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MLO 16/162

March 2019

Summary

Site name: Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 3085 1070

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th - 6th March 2019

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: MLO 16/162

Area of site: c. 7.3 Ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation was carried out successfully and 35 trenches were opened. A single undated linear feature - a possible field boundary ditch - was observed in two of them. The other anomalies detected in geophysics proved to be of natural origin. No artefacts nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed and the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

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

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	Steve Preston ✓ 08.03.19

Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 16/162b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire (SU 3085 1070) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Federico Hale-Perez, on behalf of Bovis Homes Western, Cleeve Hall, Bishop's Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 8GD.

Planning permission has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council (P17/01859/OUT) for the residential development of the site. A condition (6) was attached that required the implementation of an archaeological investigation.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council, who had highlighted the potential of the site in a design brief (Coddington 2016). The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, assisted by Jon Tierney and Anne Huvig between the 4th and 8th of March 2019. The site code is MLO16/162. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site, a trapezoid piece of land, is located just west of private properties on Minster Lovell's western edge, south of Burford Road (Fig. 1). On the other sides it is bordered by farmland. The Windrush River is situated approximately 400m to the south of it. The current use of the site was arable farmland. It lies between 121-122m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the north and 119-120m aOD at the south, forming a relatively flat plot. The underlying geology as recorded (BGS 1982) is Forest Marble clays with limestone for most part of it and White Limestone in the south-west corner.

Archaeological background

A desk-based assessment (OA 2016) has previously highlighted the archaeological potential of the site. Some crop marks have been recorded south of the site. The site interest mainly lies in its location in the Windrush valley, at the edge of the Cotswold Hills, an area known for its rich archaeological background. A follow-up geophysical survey (Beaverstock 2016) had highlighted a number of linear anomalies that could be of archaeological origin (Fig. 4).

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. More specifically it aimed to:

determine if the geophysics anomalies are of archaeological origin; and to

provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary

It was proposed to dig 35 trenches, each 25m long and between 1.6-2m wide (Fig. 2), using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. They were partly positioned to target the anomalies and partly to provide a random sample of the site area. Any archaeological features uncovered were to be cleaned, excavated and recorded using appropriate hand tools. The work was to be carried out in a manner that did not compromise the integrity of archaeological remains that might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Most of the 35 trenches were dug as intended but fencing defining a tree protection zone obliged a shift of the southern trenches (33-35) a few metres to the north [Fig. 2]. The trenches ranged in length between 23m and 28.70m and in depth between 0.26 to 0.45m. All trenches were 2m wide. Spoil heap were visually checked. The field had been ploughed before our arrival, allowing examination for artefacts but none were spotted.

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

Topsoil consisted of a 0.25-0.30m thick mid grey brown loamy silt/clayey silt with occasional limestone. The geology observed was a mid orange brown silty clay with common to very frequent flattish sub-angular fragmented limestone, poorly sorted, except in the eastern part of the field where it was a mid orange brown clay.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned SW-NE and was 23m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned W-E and was 23.50m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22-0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned SSE-NNW and was 25m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.28m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. The anomalies recorded by the geophysical survey were caused by bands of natural mid orange brown clay/silty clay.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 27.30m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural silty clay geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. At the northern end of this trench there was some disturbance likely caused by the main water service trench running along the northern field boundary.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 25.20m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.30m topsoil overlying the natural silty clay geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 6 [Pl. 2]

Trench 6 was aligned W-E and was 27.90m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology over the first 15.40m and silty clay geology over the rest of the trench. A test slot was made at the east end, to a depth of 0.80m to confirm interpretation of the geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 26.10m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology over the first 16.50m and silty clay geology over the rest of the trench. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned almost S-N and was 24.70m long and 0.26m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 28.70m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 26.60m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. A test slot was made at the south end, to a depth of 0.42m to confirm interpretation of the geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned W-E and was 27.60m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned SW-NE and was 28.80m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned NW-SE and was 24.40m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 14 [Pl. 14]

Trench 14 was aligned NW-SE and was 25.70m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology over the first 7 to 10m and silty clay geology over the rest of the trench. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 15

Trench 15 was aligned SW-NE and was 25.30m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 16

Trench 16 was aligned W-E and was 25.10m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned SE-NW and was 28.80m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned SSE-NNW and was 27.80m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. The geophysics anomalies were not spotted.

Trench 19

Trench 19 was aligned SW-NE and was 25.90m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 27.30m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. The geophysics anomaly was not spotted.

Trench 21 [Fig.3]

Trench 21 was aligned SSE-NNW and was 25.40m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered. A linear feature, ditch 2, was observed and match what was recorded by the geophysical survey. It was not excavated in this trench as it had already been examined in trench 27. It was 0.90m wide, aligned WSW-ENE.

Trench 22

Trench 22 was aligned SW-NE and was 27.80m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 23

Trench 23 was aligned W-E and was 27.80m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 24

Trench 24 was aligned SW-NE and was 27.00m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying both the natural limestone and silty clay geology. This trench was positioned at the transition between the two geological horizons. No finds were recovered. Possibly a small depression observed could be the continuation of ditch 1/2 but it was shallow and filled with what appeared to be topsoil. The corresponding anomaly on the geophysics plan stopped a few metres west of this trench. It is indeed possible that it continued further east but too faint to leave a noticeable trace on the magnetometer survey. It was anyway not visible in trench 15 further to the east.

Trench 25

Trench 25 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 25.10m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m topsoil overlying the natural silty clay geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 26

Trench 26 was aligned SSE-NNW and was 25.90m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 27 [Fig. 3]

Trench 27 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 24.80m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered. A linear feature, ditch 1 was observed and matched the course of the geophysics linear anomaly, also observed as ditch 2 in trench 24 [Pl. 1]. It was 0.90m wide, 0.18-0.22m deep with steep sides and a flattish base. A 0.50m long slot was dug by hand tools. Fill (52) was a medium compacted mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional to common flattish sub-angular limestone (5-15cm). A soil sample (s1) revealed no palaeoenvironmental or dating evidence.

Trench 28

Trench 28 was aligned W-E and was 25.50m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. A WSW-ENE secondary water service trench was observed. N-S linear anomalies were not seen at all.

Trench 29

Trench 29 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 26.70m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. No trace of any WSW-ENE anomaly could be observed.

Trench 30

Trench 30 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 25.60m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the silty clay geology over the first 7m and natural limestone geology over the rest of the trench. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 31 [Pl. 3]

Trench 31 was aligned W-E and was 27.10m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 32

Trench 32 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 25.00m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 33

Trench 33 was aligned W-E and was 29.00m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered. Due to its displacement some metres north of its intended position because of the tree protection zone fence, it was not possible to target a vaguely circular geophysical anomaly.

Trench 34

Trench 34 was aligned W-E and was 27.90m long and 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m topsoil overlying the natural limestone geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 35

Trench 32 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 28.40m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25-0.30m topsoil overlying the natural silty clay geology. No finds were recovered and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation was carried out as intended with 35 trenches dug. However only a single linear feature of archaeological interest was seen. A WSW-ENE ditch was observed at least within two trenches. It was not indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 and probably pre-dates this map. It could have been an earlier field boundary ditch, probably of no great antiquity, as it follows the same alignment as the Burford Road. Based on the results of this evaluation, it is considered that the site has no archaeological potential.

References

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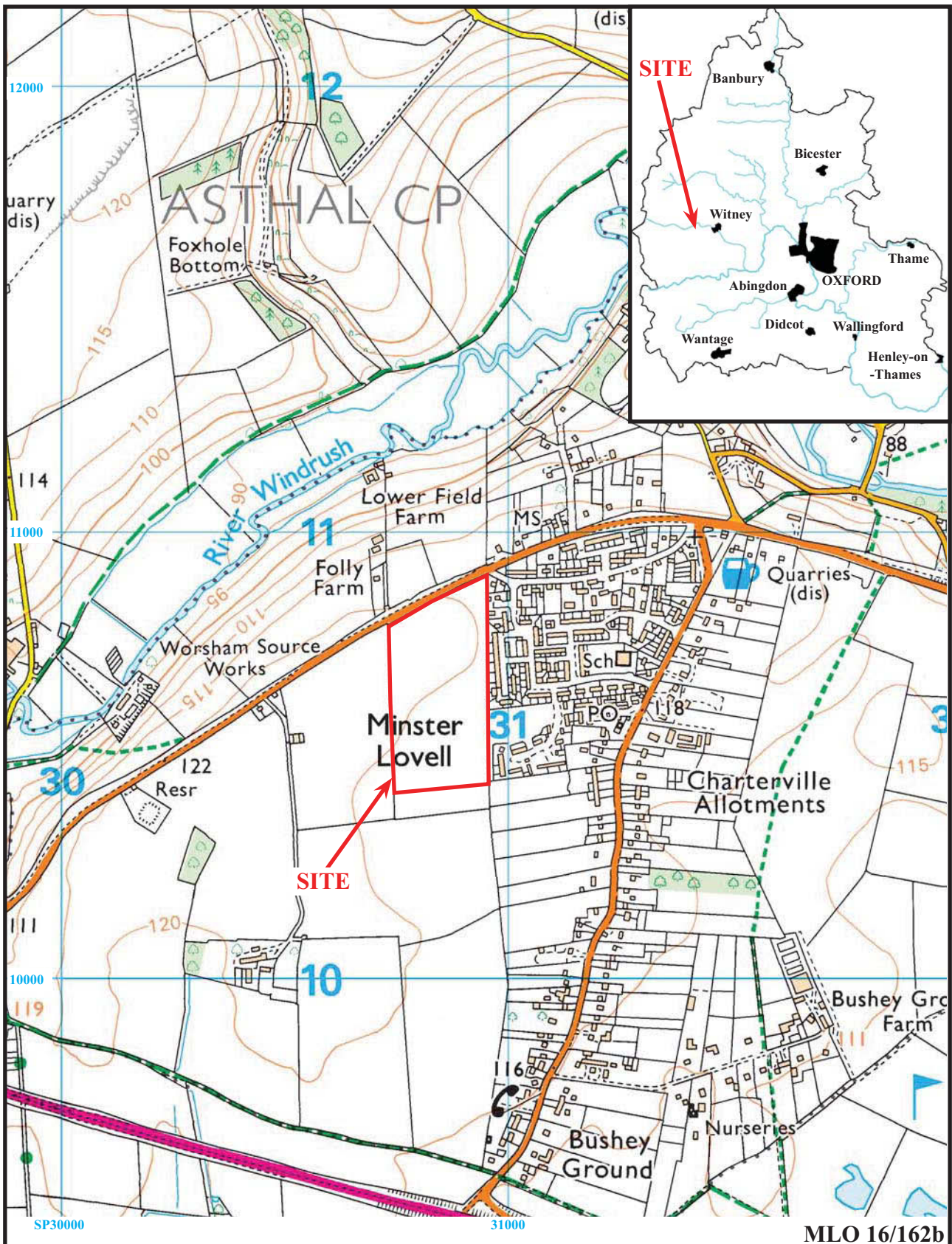
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W ends

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	23.00	2	0.31	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
2	23.50	2	0.30	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
3	25.00	2	0.30	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
4	27.30	2	0.36	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
5	25.20	2	0.35	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
6	27.90	2	0.80	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix and orange brown silty clay (natural geology). [PI. 02]
7	26.10	2	0.33	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix and orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
8	24.70	2	0.26	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
9	28.70	2	0.33	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
10	26.60	2	0.42	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
11	27.60	2	0.33	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
12	28.80	2	0.30	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
13	24.40	2	0.37	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
14	25.70	2	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix and orange brown silty clay (natural geology). [PI. 14]
15	25.30	2	0.41	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
16	25.10	2	0.33	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
17	28.80	2	0.35	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
18	27.80	2	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
19	25.90	2	0.31	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
20	27.30	2	0.42	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
21	25.40	2	0.35	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology). Ditch[2.
22	27.80	2	0.38	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
23	27.80	2	0.31	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
24	27.00	2	0.35	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix and orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
25	25.10	2	0.38	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
26	24.50	2	0.26	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
27	24.80	2	0.37	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology). Ditch 1. [PI. 1]
28	25.50	2	0.38	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
29	26.70	2	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
30	25.60	2	0.35	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix and orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
31	27.00	2	0.31	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology). [PI. 3]
32	25.00	2	0.31	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
33	29.00	2	0.38	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
34	27.90	2	0.31	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ fragmented limestone in clayey matrix (natural geology).
35	28.40	2	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ orange brown silty 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>
21	2	53	ditch	undated	none
27	1	52	ditch	undated	none



**Land off Burford Road, Minster Lovell,
Oxfordshire, 2019**

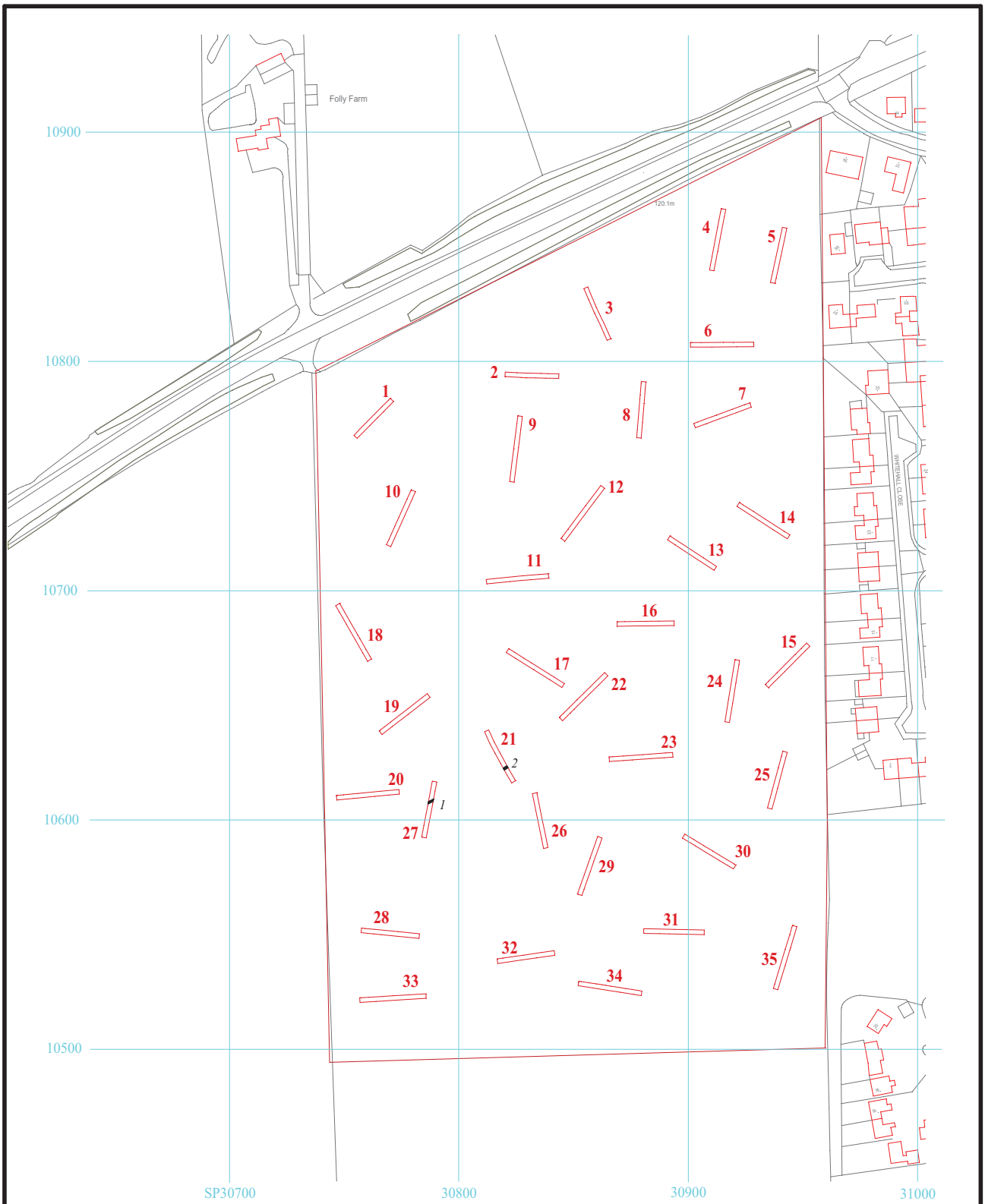
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Figure 1. Location of site within Minster Lovell and Oxfordshire.

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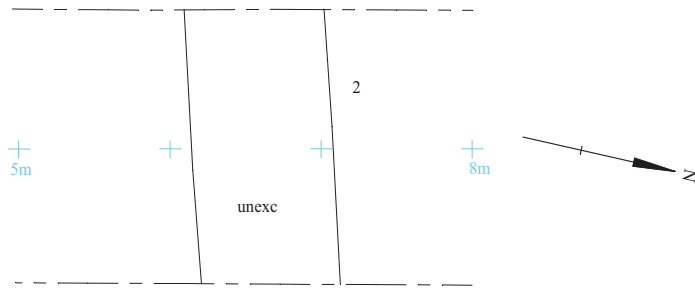
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.

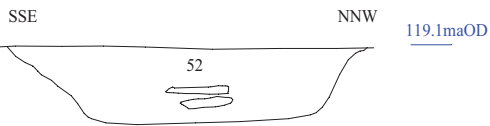
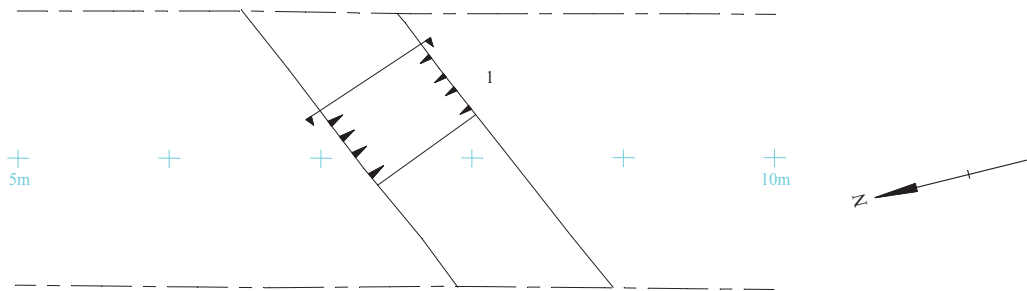


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Trench 21



Trench 27

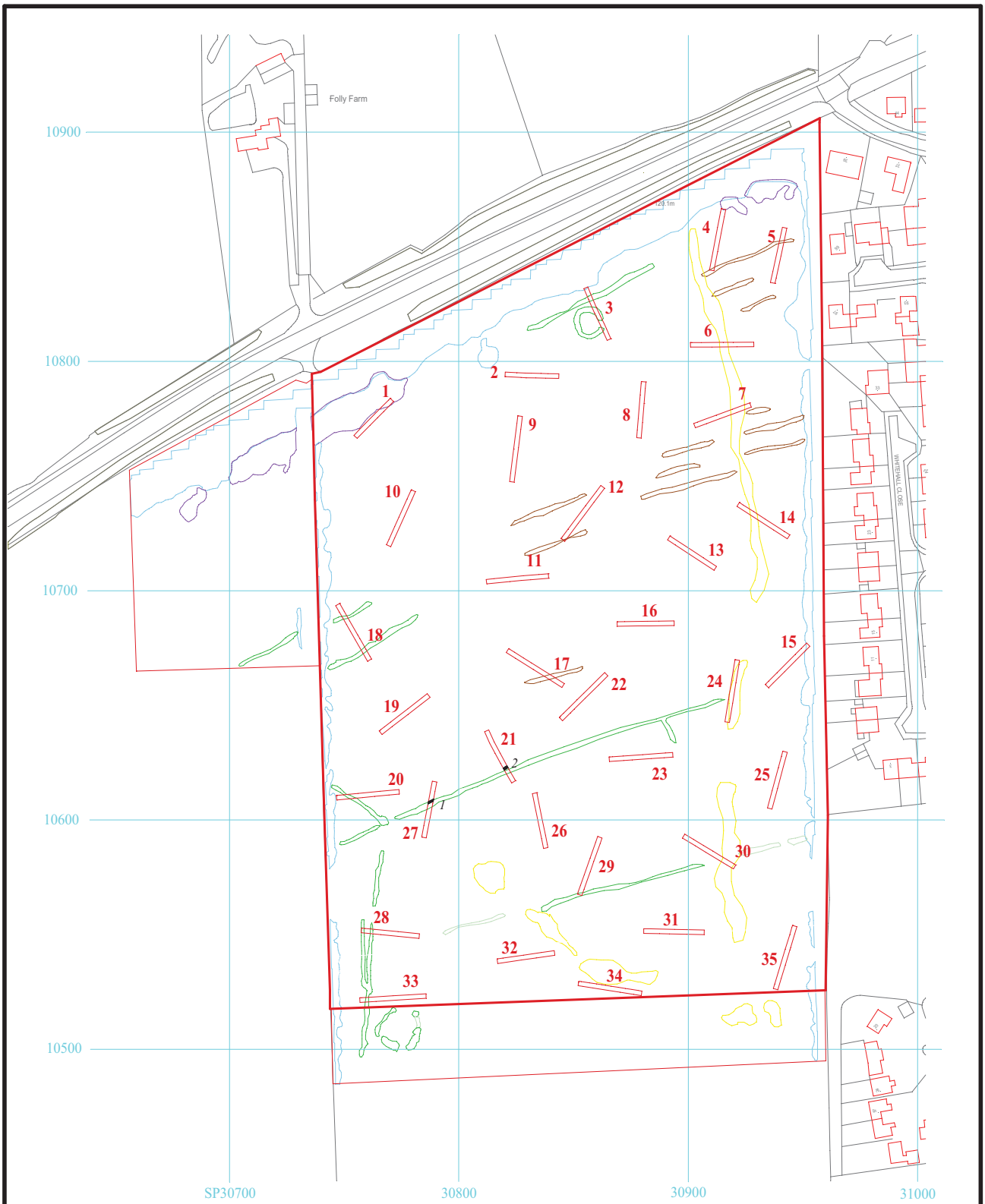


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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.

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Figure 4. Geophysical anomalies in relation to features in evaluation.



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Plate 1. Trench 27, ditch [1], looking south-west, Scales: 1m and 0.10m.



Plate 2. Trench 6, looking east, Scales: 2x1m.

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**Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell,
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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 31, looking east, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 4. Trench 14, looking south-east, Scales: 2x1m.

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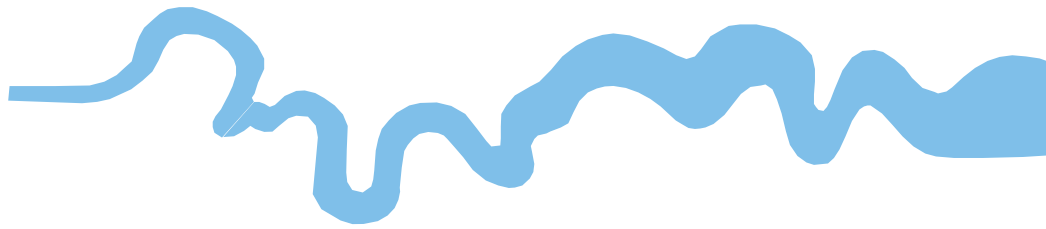
**Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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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