

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Park Farm House, Castle Street,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Pierre-Damien Manisse**

**Site Code: CSW19/105**

**(SU 6077 8987)**

**New Pond, Park Farm House, Castle Street,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mr Gareth McAleer**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSW 19/105

**October 2019**

## Summary

**Site name:** Park Farm House, Castle Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6077 8987

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 1st October 2019

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Pierre-Damien Manisse

**Site code:** CSW 19/105

**Area of site:** N/A

**Summary of results:** One evaluation trench was dug as intended. Only two post-medieval pits were found, containing pottery, ceramic building material and clay pipe fragments. On the basis of these results the proposed pond will not affect any remains of archaeological significance.

**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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# **Park Farm House, Castle Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

**Report 19/105**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Park Farm House, Castle Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 6077 8987) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Stevens, of David Stevens International, 64 Old Road, Armitage, Rugeley WS15 4BU, Staffordshire, on behalf of Mr Gareth McAleer, Park Farm House, Wallingford, OX10 8DW, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (P19/S1775/HH) is being sought from South Oxfordshire District Council for the creation of an ornamental garden pond on the site. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, an archaeological field evaluation has been requested in order to inform the planning process. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council, the adviser to the district on matters relating to archaeology, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2019). The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, assisted by Anne-Michelle Huvig on 1st October 2019. The site code is CSW 19/105. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Services in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the west side of Castle Street, north of Wallingford's historic core (Fig. 1), directly opposite the north edge of the castle grounds and Saxon/Norman defensive earthworks. The gardens as a whole lie at about 50m above Ordnance Datum but the pond's intended location is in a marked depression, currently occupied by a landscaped garden with fruit trees. The underlying geology as recorded on maps (BGS 1980) is sand and gravel from 1st or 2nd Terrace deposits (the River Thames flows some 400m to the east of the site).

## **Archaeological background**

The site's archaeological potential was highlighted in the project brief (Oram 2019). The site lies in close proximity to two scheduled monuments: the town walls (SAM OX 176); and the 10th century Saxon defences (SAM OX 182). The site is also located just outside the likely site of the north gate of the *burh* (Christie 2003, 74; fig. 4.2), a location where medieval extra-mural occupation may be expected. Previous archaeological fieldworks have recorded a medieval pit, 100m NE of the site (Torrance 1994 (Fig. 2). Some prehistoric activity is also recorded in the vicinity. An Neolithic pit was recorded 170m west of the site, at Wallingford Lower School, containing Peterborough ware pottery, flint tools, quartzite pebbles, and axe sharpening stone. It was radiocarbon dated between 3040-2910 cal BC (Richmond 2005).

## **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, and to provide information on which to base a mitigation strategy if necessary.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any late Saxon, medieval or post-medieval deposits are present on the site; and
- to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

A single trench, 15m long and 1.6m wide, was proposed to be dug, targeting the position of the intended pond. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped area was to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

## **Results**

The single trench was excavated as intended (Fig. 2), by a 360° tracked excavator (8 tons), equipped with a bladed bucket, 1.45m wide.

Appendix 1 details the trench length, breadth, depth and a description of section and geology. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

### Trench 1 (Figs 2-3; Pl. 1-2)

Trench 1 was aligned WSW - ENE and was 16.20m long and at most 1.10m deep. The lowest deposit observed (54) is an heterogeneous light orange brown sand and gravel with some patches of light bluish grey clay, the natural geology. Its depth below actual ground level slowly rose towards east. It was overlaid by a subsoil (53) of an heterogeneous compact silty sand mostly grey and brown, at least 0.25m thick. Above was another firm subsoil (52), a light greyish brown silt with frequent white limestone flecks and common gravels. Its thickness did not exceed 0.25m. Above this was a friable made-ground deposit (51), composed of light brown silt and with frequent ceramic building material inclusions and scarce limestones (0.1m deep). Topsoil (50) was a soft dark brown loam, with lots of tree roots, 0.35m thick at maximum. It was capped by turf. Two potential features were investigated.

At 13.15m from the west end of the trench was pit 1 (Pl. 1). It was an oval, slightly concave feature with moderate slopes, but steep at the west. It measured at least 0.72m x more than 0.55m, as part of it continued under the trench baulk, and no more than 0,08m deep. The visible part was fully excavated. Some ceramic building material (CBM) and one glazed pottery sherd were retrieved from its fill, (55), a mid brown sandy silt with rare gravels or natural flints.

At 5m from the west end of the trench a more amorphous possible pit, 2 (Pl. 2), was recorded, mostly continuing under the baulk. As it only slightly appeared in the trench, and as a 10m contingency was reserved, it was decided to enlarge the trench to gain a better understanding of the feature. This confirmed its irregular shape, about 1.95m by 0.65m and it was half-sectioned. It had steep sides but it was only a shallow scoop, not exceeding 0.15m with a flattish base. It was filled by a firm mid to dark greyish brown sandy silt (56) with occasional CBM fragments, rare natural flint and pebbles, and contained a glazed pottery sherd and a clay pipe stem were.

A sample for environmental remains was taken from both pits but sieving these produced no charred plant remains (though a few small pieces of CBM).

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Cristina Mateos*

The pottery assemblage comprised a total of 3 sherds weighing 60g, all dating to the Post-medieval period, from both pits 1 and 2. The sherds belong to three different vessels.

Two sherds of orange earthenware were recovered from pit 1. One is an unglazed body sherd. The other one is a rim from a dish with internal green glaze. This pottery can be dated between 1650 and 1800 (Draper 1984, 7).

The sherd recovered from pit 2 is a body sherd of red earthenware with remains of green glaze, almost identical to a sherd recently recovered from a site at Quaker Meeting House, Oxford (Anderson 2019) in fabric GRE (Mellor 1994), dated to the 16th to 18th centuries (2019, 6).

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Danielle Milbank

Brick and tile fragments were recovered from both pits, both hand-collected and retrieved from sieved soil samples. These comprised 12 pieces, weighing a total of 221g.

Pit 1 contained one tile piece in a medium hard slightly rough sandy fabric with a mid to dark red colour. A second piece from this context is a medium hard fabric with fine to medium sand inclusions and a pale red colour with a darker red (reduced) core. The form is slightly uneven, with a thickened edge, and is of possible medieval or more likely early post-medieval date.

Fragments from pit 2 comprised a medium hard slightly rough sandy fabric with a mid to dark red colour, with a fairly even form and a likely early post-medieval date. Two brick fragments were also recovered, which are of a medium hard fabric with very occasional fine limestone inclusions, and are not closely datable.

Overall, the material represents brick and roof tile of broadly late medieval or more likely 16th or 18th century date, matching the pottery.

### *Clay tobacco pipe* by Danielle Milbank

A single piece of clay pipe stem was recovered from pit 2 (56) which is broken along the length and weighs 4g. The bore diameter is suggestive of a mid to late 17th century date, however this is only tentative as dating by bore is more suitable for larger samples.

## **Conclusion**

The field evaluation was carried out as intended, and the trench revealed that topsoil and made ground/subsoil overlay the natural geology, which was largely intact, with good potential for the survival of archaeological deposits or features.

Two features were excavated. Both pits were of later post-medieval date containing brick/tile and pottery as dating evidence. No artefacts nor deposits of earlier date were observed. It was also noted that the proposed depth for the pond (0.75m) would not penetrate below the deep subsoil in this location and would not reach the level from which the pits were dug. As such even if other features were present beyond the trench, it is most likely that they would not be affected by the proposed pond

## References

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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

### 0m at WSW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.20m	1.50m Extended to 2.25m	0.95m at WSW 1.10m at ENE	0-0.35m topsoil, 0.35-0.50m made ground, 0.50-0.75m upper subsoil, 0.75-1.05m lower subsoil, >1.05m natural geology. Pits 1 and 2 <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

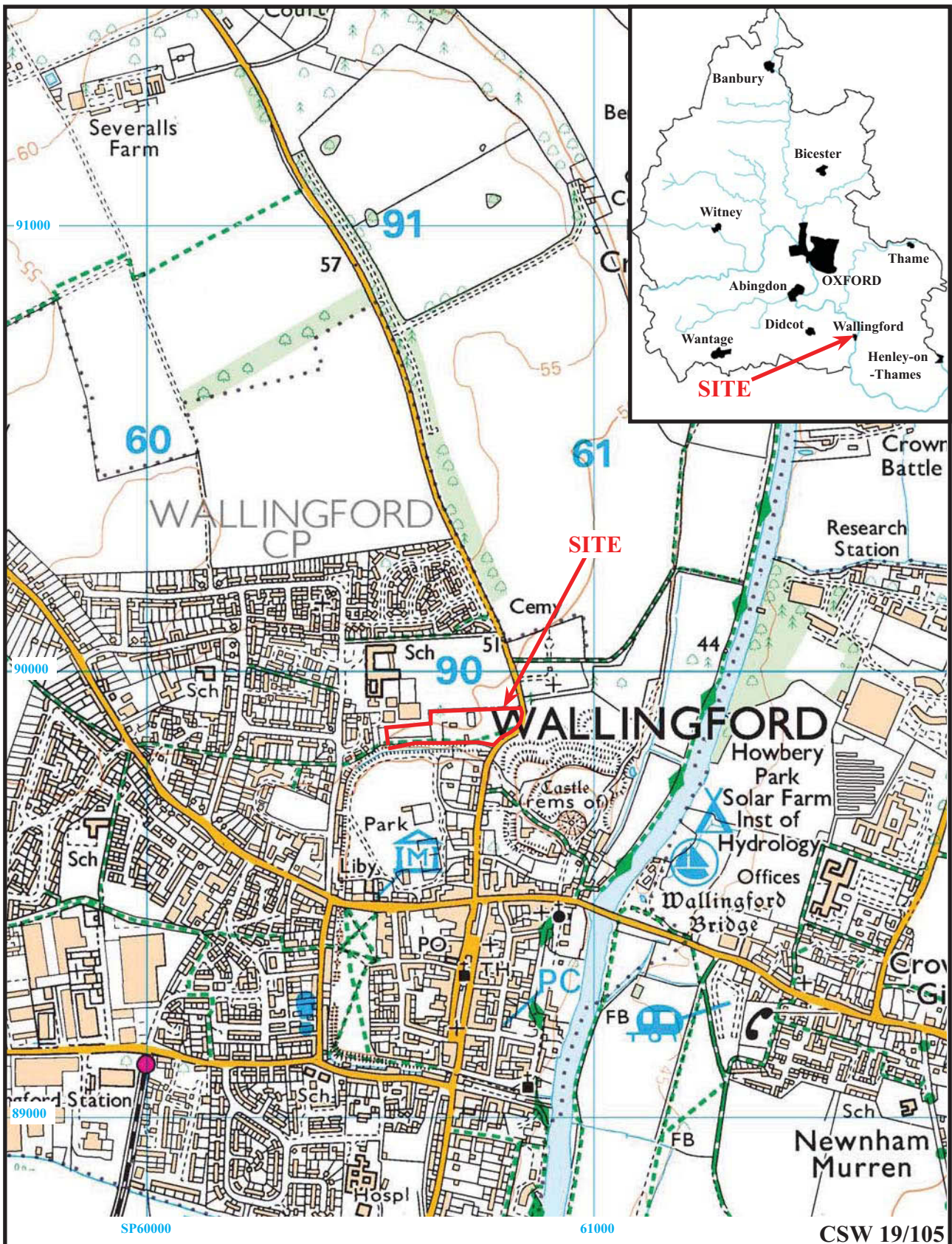
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill(s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	55	Pit	Post-medieval	Pottery
1	2	56	Pit	Post-medieval	Pottery, clay pipe

### APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of pottery

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1	55	Pit	PMRE	Post Medieval	1	12
1	55	Pit	PMGRE	Post Medieval	1	21
2	56	Pit	GRE	Post Medieval	1	17

**APPENDIX 4:** Catalogue of ceramic building material

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1	55	Pit	Post-medieval		1	10
1	55	Pit	Post-medieval	1	1	21
2	56	Pit	Post-medieval		3	96
2	56	Pit	Post-medieval	2	7	94



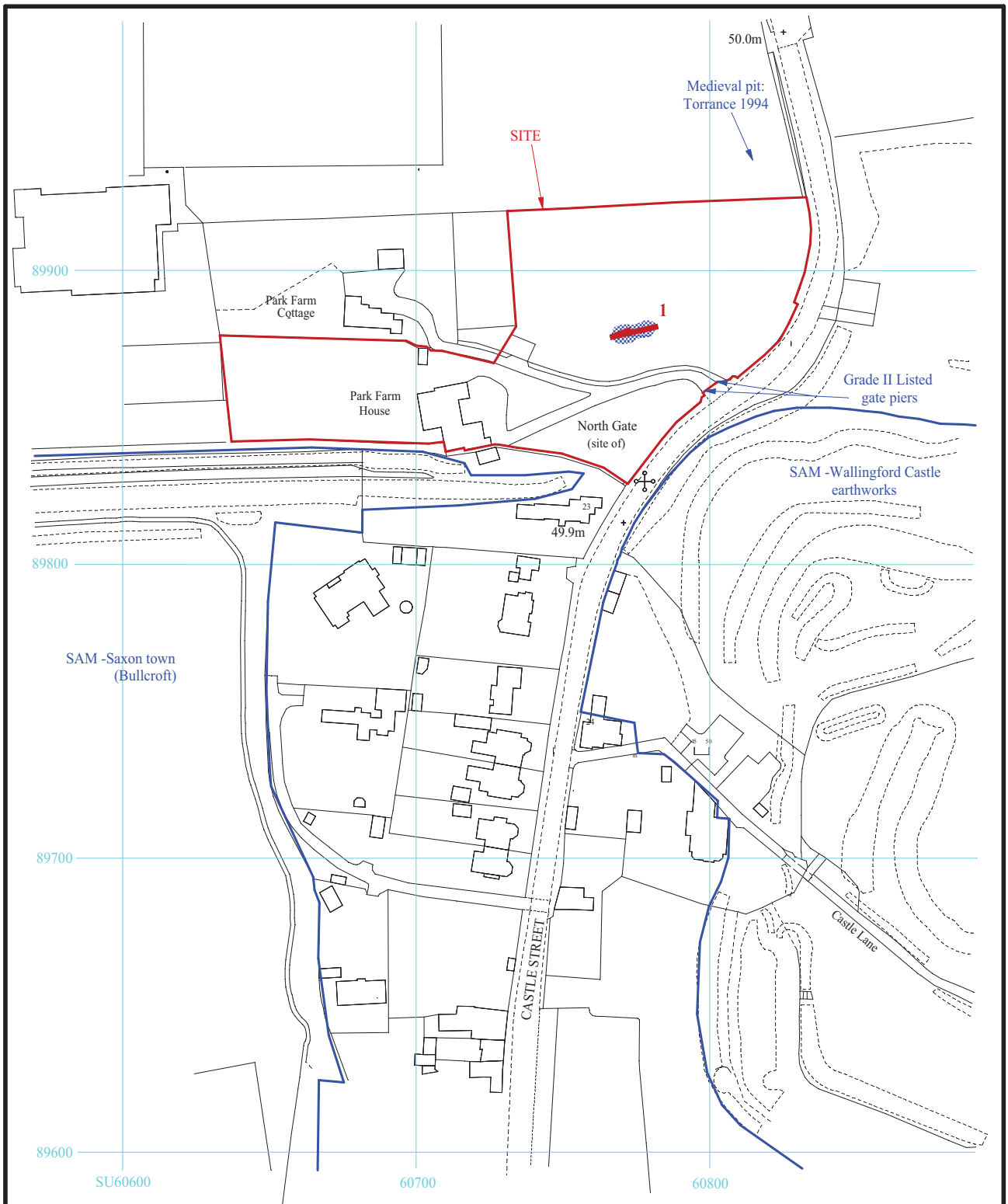
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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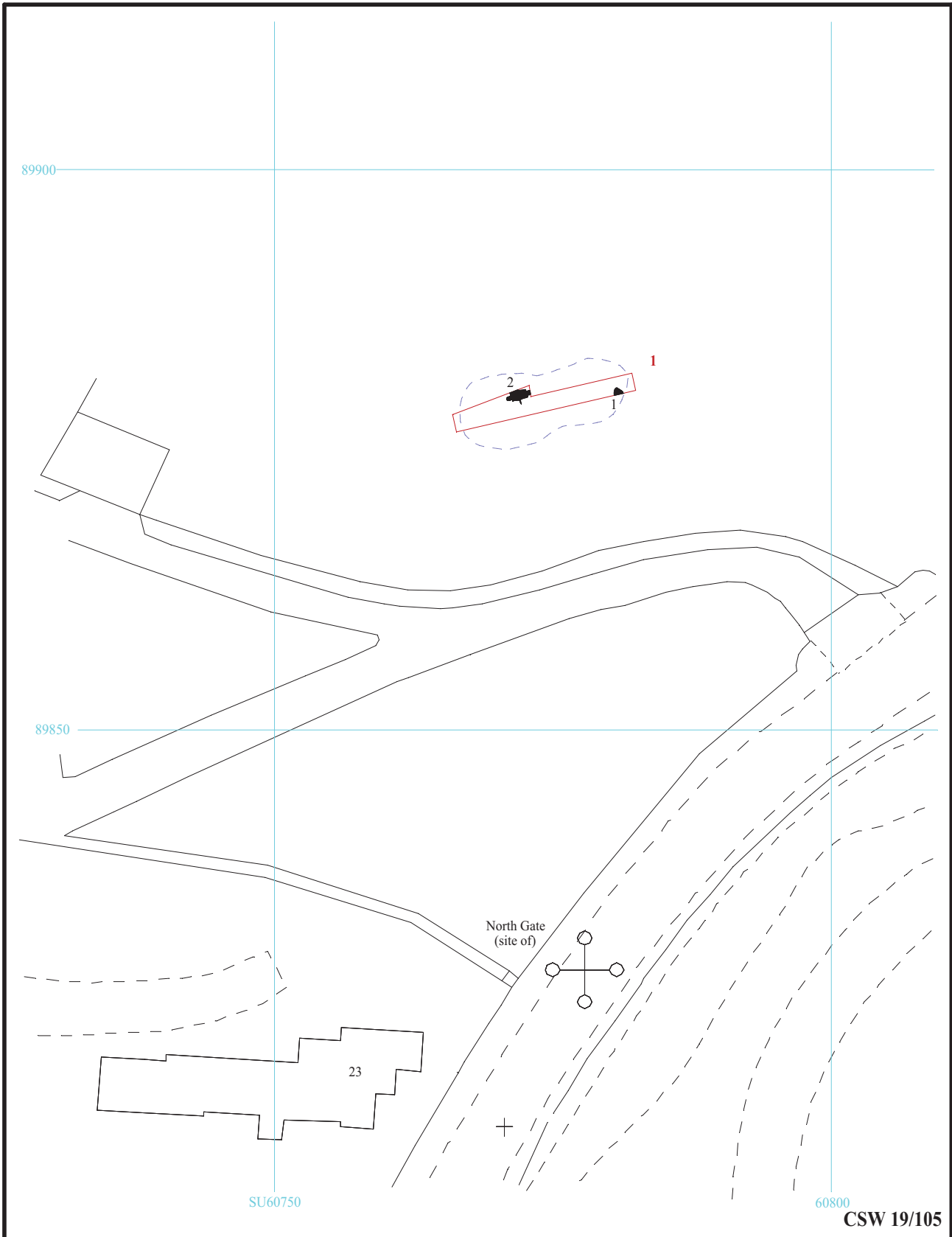
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Figure 2. Detail of site on Castle Street showing to heritage assets, including limits of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).



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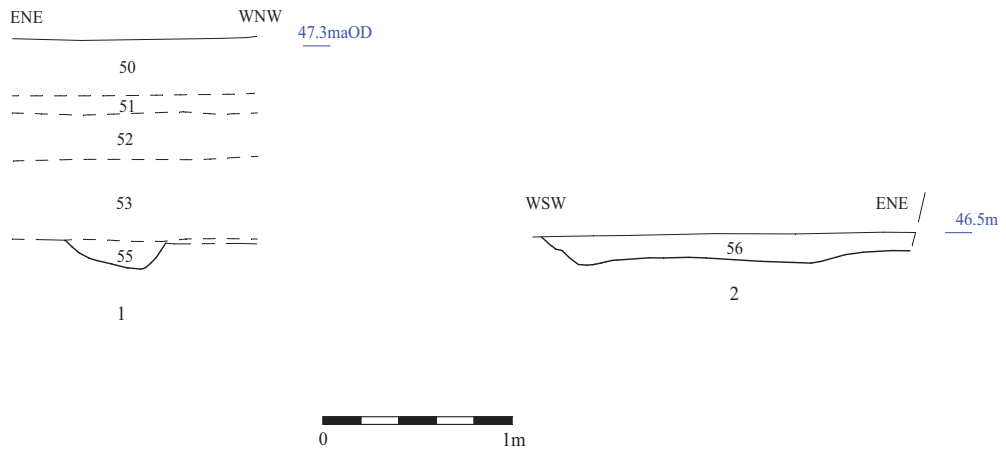
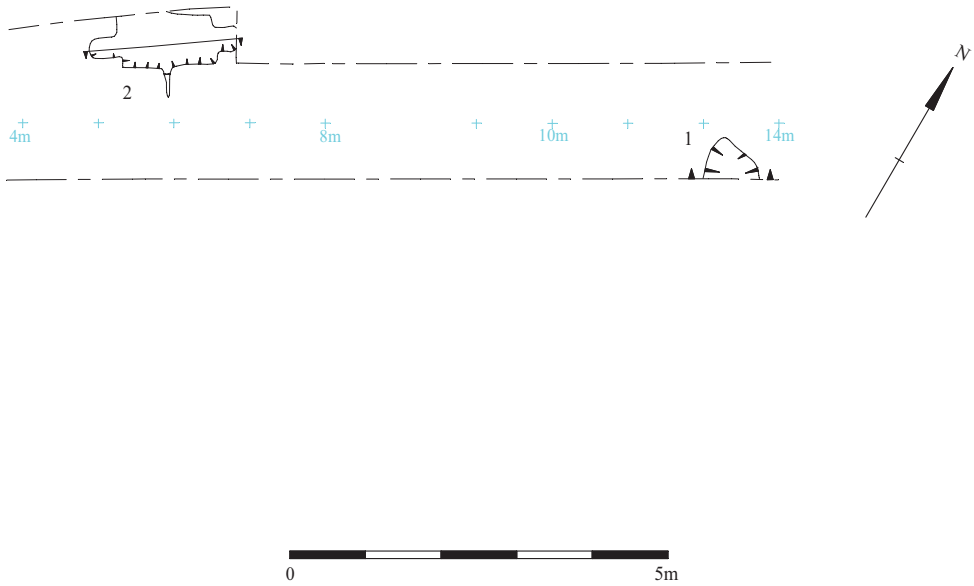
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Figure 3. Location of features in Trench 1.



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Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1..

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Plate 1. Pit [01], looking SSE, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 2. Pit [02], looking NNW, Scales: 1m and 0.10m.

CSW 19/105

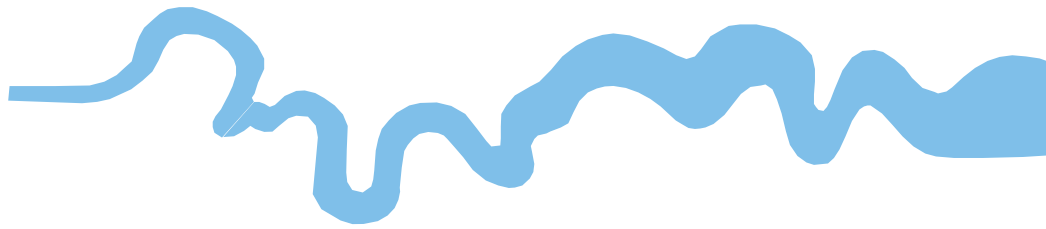
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

*Offices in:  
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)*