

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Manor Farm, Henton, Chinnor,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Sanchez

Site Code: MFH19/178

(SP 7632 0270)

Manor Farm, Henton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Signia Properties Ltd**

by David Sánchez

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MFH 19/178

February 2020

Summary

Site name: Manor Farm, Henton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 7632 0270

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th February 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: David Sánchez

Site code: MFH 19/178

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation at Manor Farm revealed a single feature of archaeological interest, a gully of Medieval date. It also revealed an area of heavily truncated ground of modern date in the NE corner of the site. On this basis, parts of the site are considered to have some archaeological potential.

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.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.02.20
	Steve Preston ✓ 28.02.20

Manor Farm, Henton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Sánchez

Report 19/178

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Manor Farm, Henton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Neil Boddington of Boddingtons Planning, Westfield House, 31 Shirburn Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5BU, on behalf of Signia Properties Ltd.

Planning permission (P17/S2001/O) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a single new house and garage. The consent is subject to a condition (3) related to archaeology, in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, a field evaluation has been requested to determine the archaeological potential of the site. Based on the results of this, a mitigation strategy may be formulated as appropriate.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sánchez and Mike Murray, on 20th February 2020 and the site code is MFH 19/178. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the eastern margins of the hamlet of Henton in the civil parish of Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 6km to the SE of Thame and 12km to the SW of Aylesbury (Fig. 1). It is located in a small parcel of land with a gentle slope up towards the south from the access road and it lies at a height of approximately 92m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Gault Formation, Mudstone (BGS 2019) which was uncovered in the excavated trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location adjacent to the Medieval moated manor site in Henton. Henton has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002, 438) when it was one of the many estates held by Miles Crispin. The manor was owned by the Malyns family in the 15th century. A number of archaeological observations have taken place in the village. An Iron Age ditch and Roman gully were revealed in an evaluation some distance to the south-west and a watching brief on footing trenches for an extension that was located on the moat itself (JMHS 2015) revealed the upper levels of the moat ditch which had been infilled by early Post-Medieval times. An archaeological evaluation immediately to the south and east of the site revealed a relatively high volume of archaeological features and artefacts with dates ranging from the 11th to 14th centuries (Dodd and Watson 2019). Details of earthworks are shown in historic mapping (OS 1881-1921) in adjacent areas with some relation to the location of Manor Farm to the south.

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 specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if any Late Saxon or medieval deposits were present on the site which may related to the moat/manorial complex; and
- to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

The potential and significance of any archaeological deposits located was to be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in Historic England Research Agenda (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary such as the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

Three trenches were to be dug, one 5m long and two 10m long, and 1.6-2m wide. A contingency for the equivalent of an additional 10m length of trenching was included within the proposal should this be required to clarify any deposits found in the initial trenching, but this was not required. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by mini-digger type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The excavation was to be undertaken in spits, to enable the recovery or artefactual and ecofactual remains from individual layers and spoilheaps were to be searched for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably exposed the stripped areas were to be cleaned using

appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of outlined above

Results

Two trenches, each approximately 10m long, were dug on the proposed location though these were slightly relocated to adjust to the space available as a consequence of the presence of trees and standing structures (wooden sheds) covering a large part of the site (Fig. 3). The excavation of the third trench was attempted and finally recorded as a test pit as described below. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated feature, with dating evidence, is summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned NW - SE and was 3.00m long and 1.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil, 0.28m of dark reddish brown clay silt and gravel made ground and 0.32m of dark greenish grey silty clay made ground overlying a mixed deposit of light grey sandy silt with large concrete blocks and other construction debris. At a depth of 1.55m and with no natural geology or any deposits of archaeological interest uncovered, the trench reached the water table and quickly flooded with the edges starting to collapse. After consultation with Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Council, and considering the depth of the natural geology in trenches 2 and 3 (see below) it was considered that trench 1 was located in truncated ground, most likely a large pit or pond filled with construction debris, and its excavation was abandoned following recording of the stratigraphy as a test pit. No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from this trench.

Trench 2 (Figs 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned WSW - ENE and was 10.00m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil, between 0.20–0.25m of chalk made ground and 0.05–0.10m of very disturbed mudstone with frequent roots and chalk inclusions, overlying light greenish grey mudstone natural geology. At the ENE end of the trench a test pit was dug to a maximum depth of 1.20m to confirm the nature of the mudstone and discount the possibility of this being a made ground layer of redeposited natural. At 4m from the ENE end of the trench a service trench (electrics and water) was uncovered and at 2m and 4m from the same end of the trench two postholes of a modern wooden fence (removed during the excavation) were also observed cutting the natural geology. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered from this trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3 and 4)

Trench 3 was aligned NNW - SSE and was 9.80m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil, 0.15m of chalk made ground and between 0.10–0.15m of very disturbed mudstone with frequent rooted areas and chalk inclusions overlying light greenish grey mudstone natural geology. The continuation of the service trench uncovered in trench 2 was observed at 2m from the SSE end of the trench. A gully (1) was uncovered at the opposite end of the trench on a NW-SE alignment and a slot was dug on this feature showing it to be 0.68m wide and 0.22m deep with concave base and steep sides filled with one very rooted deposit (52) of mid brownish grey silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. Four sherds of pottery dated between 13th and 14th century were recovered from its excavation along with one fragment of a copper alloy bag catch and small assemblage of animal bone.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Four sherds of pottery weighing 19g were collected from gully 1. Quantification was carried out by sherd count and weight (Appendix 3). Fabric codes were assigned from the author's post-Roman fabric series. Form terminology follows MPRG (1998). Recording uses a system of letters for fabric codes.

All of the pottery was of medieval date, and included sherds which would fit with the range of pottery made at nearby Great Missenden (Ashworth 1983). Two body sherds were glazed, one in Great Missenden fabric and the other in Surrey whiteware. These suggest a 13th/14th-century date for the fill of the gully.

Metalwork by Aidan Colyer

A single copper alloy object was recovered from deposit 52 in gully 1. The object has a circular section with a diameter of 26mm. On the edge there is a protrusion of length 20mm and width 5mm. This protrusion is curved and broken on the end. There is a small hole in the centre of the circular part and possible evidence of a rivet near the edge. Taken as a whole this is likely to be a broken bag catch. The design is simple and has no decoration that would indicate its age. Such catches for bags are commonly found to be medieval or later although no secure date can be given.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from gully 1 (52) in Trench 3. Weighing 166g, a total of 17 fragments were present for analysis (Appendix 4). The overall preservation of the remains was good, however isolated patches of cortical bone erosion were noted, as was a moderate degree of fragmentation.

No bones could be identified to species level but most could be sorted by size. Horse and/or cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat, deer and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) are designated to the “small” category. The presence of a minimum of three individuals was indicated, one in each size category. A minimum of one large animal was represented by 11 fragments, 10 of which were pieces of ribs (at least three left and three right ribs). The presence of a medium-sized animal was also indicated by two rib shaft fragments. Finally, a small mammal was represented by a single right femur. No further information could be retrieved from the remains.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Manor Farm, Herton, revealed a single feature of archaeological interest consisting of a gully of Medieval date suggesting the continuation to the west of some of the medieval features uncovered in the evaluation immediately to the east. The location of trench 1, though the trench was only partially dug, revealed an area of heavily truncated ground of a modern date and therefore any potential archaeological deposits originally present in this area would not be preserved. The main area of the site where trenches 2 and 3 were located was shown to be relatively untouched with the potential archaeological horizon preserved and no other truncation than one service trench and occasional postholes of modern fences. It is considered that parts of the site have some archaeological potential.

References

- Ashworth, H, 1983, ‘Evidence for a medieval pottery industry at Potter Row, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire’, *Recs Bucks* **25**, 153–9
- BGS, 2019, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
- Dodd, L and Watson, D, 2019, ‘Manor Farm, Herton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Evaluation Report’, KDK Archaeology Ltd, Leighton Buzzard
- HE 2017, *Research Agenda*, Historic England, London
- Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr **6**, Oxford
- JMHS, 2015, ‘A watching brief at Lowfields, Manor Farm, Barns, Herton, Chinnor, Oxfordshire’, John Moore Heritage Services, Beckley
- MPRG, 1998, *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occas Pap **1**
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book. A complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at NNW, WNW and WSW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	3.00	1.40	1.55	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.58m dark reddish brown clay silt and gravel made ground, 0.58-0.90m dark greenish grey silty clay made ground, 0.90m+ mixed deposit of light grey sandy silt with large concrete blocks and construction debris. [Pl. 1]
2	10.00	1.40	0.60	0–0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.50/0.55m chalk made ground, 0.50/0.55-0.60m rooted and disturbed mudstone, 0.60m+ light greenish grey mudstone natural geology. [Pl. 2]
3	9.80	1.40	0.48	0–0.18m topsoil, 0.18-0.33m chalk made ground, 0.33-0.48m rooted and disturbed mudstone, 0.48m+ light greenish grey mudstone natural geology. Gully 1 [Pls 3 and 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

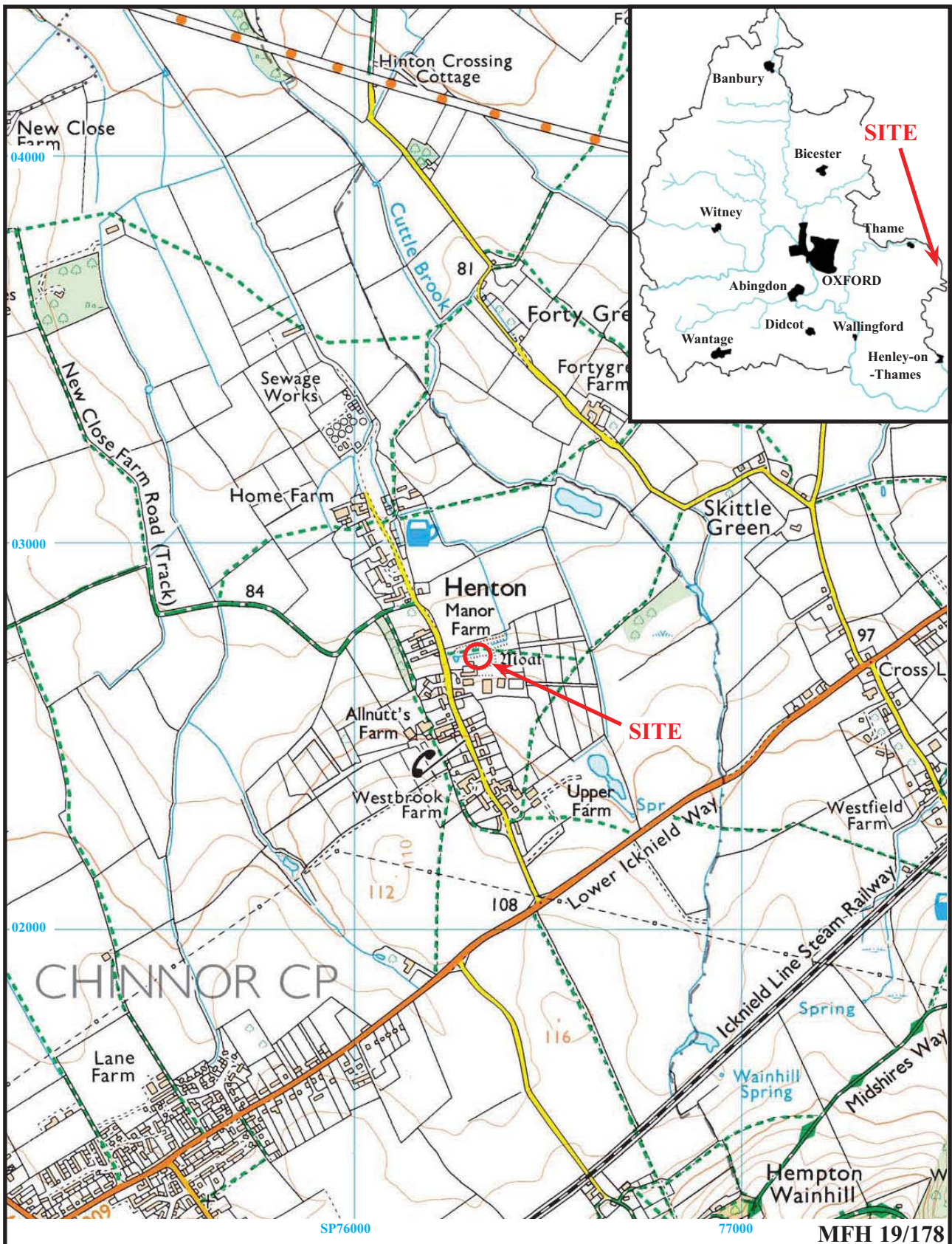
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Gully	Medieval	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogue

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Spotdate</i>
52	KING	1	5	Body sherd, broad brown stripe and pale green glaze externally.	13th-14th c.
52	GMGW	1	3	Fairly coarse fabric, oxidised surfaces, spots of green glaze externally.	13th-14th c.
52	GMCW	1	5	Dark grey/black, sooted body sherd in fine-medium sandy fabric.	13th-14th c.
52	GMCW	1	6	Pale grey body sherd, oxidised buff externally, combed horizontal lines, some sooting.	13th-14th c.

APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Unid</i>	
1	52			11	2	1	3	large and medium rib fragments, small right femur



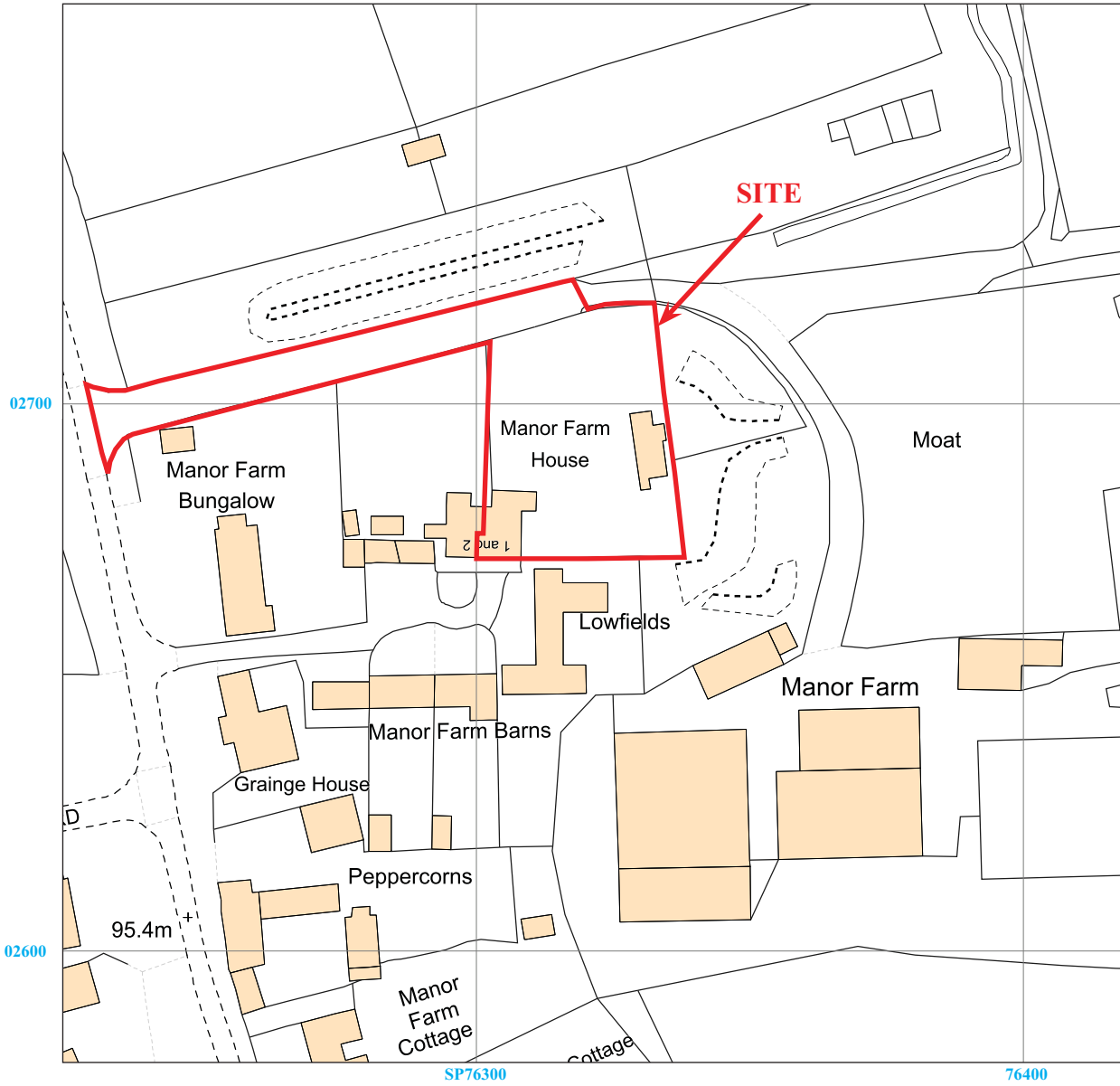
**Manor Farm, Henton
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Henton and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500
Crown Copyright reserved

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

MFH 19/178



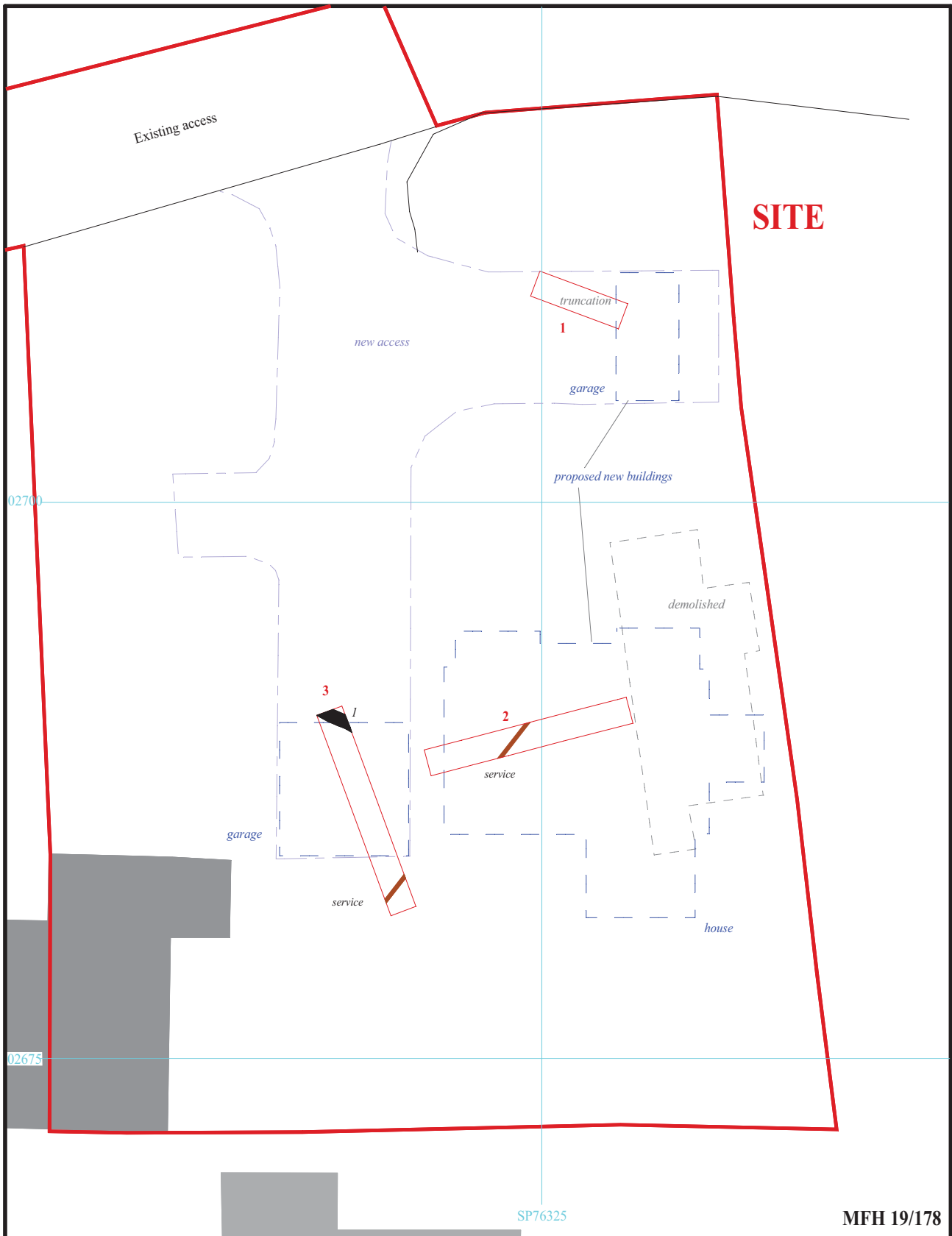
MFH 19/178



Manor Farm, Henton
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
 Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
 Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES



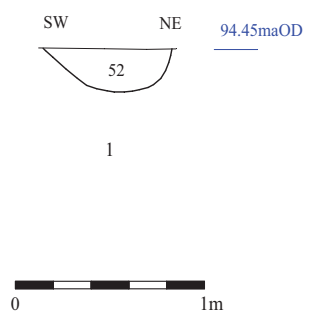
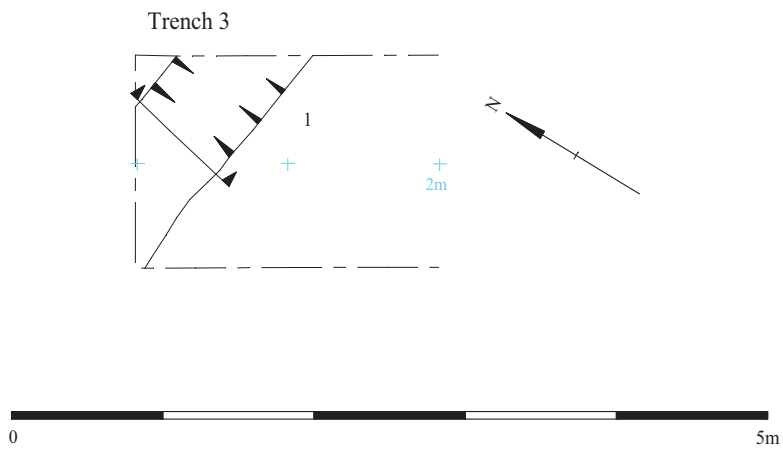
MFH 19/178

**Manor Farm, Henton,
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



MFH 19/178

**Manor Farm, Henton,
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Detail of Trench 3.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking East, Scales: 1m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking North East, Scales: 1m, 1m and 0.3m.

MFH 19/178

**Manor Farm, Henton,
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Trench 3 looking North West, Scales: 1m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Gully 1, looking North West, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

MFH 19/178

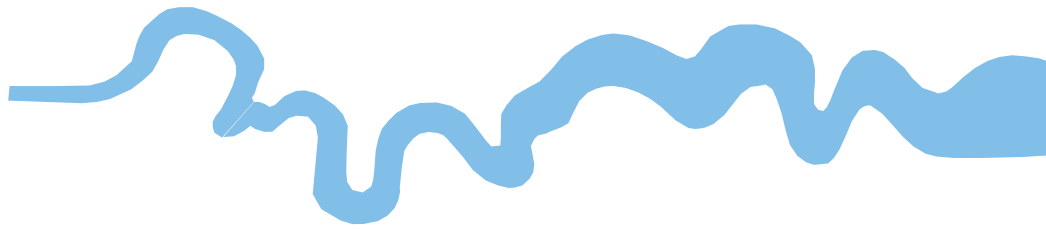
**Manor Farm, Henton,
Chinnor, Oxfordshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 3 and 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

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