

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street,
West Horsley, Surrey**

Archaeological Excavation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: BFS 20/167

(TQ 0786 5255)

**Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street,
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for Armour Heritage Ltd

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BFS 20/167

December 2020

Summary

Site name: Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street, West Horsley, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 0786 5255

Site activity: Archaeological Excavation

Date and duration of project: 15th to 17th December 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: BFS 20/167

Area of site: c. 280 sq m

Summary of results: An archaeological evaluation recorded a low volume of archaeological features including at least one pit of Late Bronze Age date in the western corner of site. The subsequent excavation targeting this area revealed no further deposits of archaeological interest but did recover nine broadly prehistoric flints from the subsoil.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 06.01.21
	Steve Preston ✓ 05.01.21

Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street, West Horsley, Surrey An Archaeological Excavation

by Maisie Foster

Report 20/167b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out at Britains Farm, 42 The Street, West Horsley, Surrey KT24 6AX (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage Ltd, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset, BA11 5DP.

Planning consent (20/P/01430) has been granted by Guildford Borough Council for the construction of five dwellings and associated access and landscaping. This consent is subject to a condition (17) related to archaeology. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. As a possibility of the presence of archaeological deposits on the site which could be damaged or destroyed during the groundworks associated to the development, a field evaluation (Sanchez 2020) was required following the submission of an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AH 2020) and Heritage Assessment (PP 2020). The archaeological evaluation comprised of four evaluation trenches, which revealed three pits, one of which contained struck flints and Late Bronze Age pottery sherds.

After consultation with Mr Nick Truckle, the archaeological adviser to Guildford Borough Council, a further phase of archaeological mitigation was required to be undertaken to record any archaeology within the vicinity of the pits recorded on site. This excavation forms the latest phase of these archaeological works. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster between 15th and 17th December 2020 and the site code is BFS 20/167. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Guildford Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the southern margins of the village of West Horsley, which is *c.* 5km to the east of Guildford (Fig. 1). The site itself comprises an irregular parcel of land *c.* 0.46ha currently under rough pasture, once used for the grazing of horse and sheep, enclosed by a boundary of mature trees. It lies to the south-west of Cranmore Lane, with the Royal British Legion building to the east, and small parcels of pastoral land to the west, north-west and south, currently under development (Fig. 2). The topography of the land is slightly uneven with a

slope towards the west and south-west and elevations between *c.* 80m above Ordnance Datum in the north-west and *c.* 82m AOD in the south-east. The underlying geology is mapped (BGS 1981) as Lambeth Group (clay, silt and sand), with a clay matrix with flint gravel inclusions observed during excavation.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been assessed in an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AH 2020) and Heritage Statement (PP 2020). In summary the site lies in the proximity of three Areas of High Archaeological Potential, with one which encroaches into the western extent of the site. Evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity is limited, with find spots of one Neolithic flint axe south of the site and an undated flint implement further to the south-east. A group of inhumations associated with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon coins was recorded at Horsley Down in 1800 (Malden 1912).

An Early Medieval manor is first recorded at West Horsley in the 9th century and later in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). The manor was held by the Windsor family through much of the 12th century and subsequently granted to the Berners family until the end of the medieval period. Fieldwalking to the west of the site recorded a scatter of early medieval pottery (Bird *et al* 1990, 205) with two medieval buildings situated 50m south-west and 775m north of the site (Moir 2004; Gray 2001). A group of probably medieval earthworks has also been identified in the Sheepleas area, south-east of the site.

The previous stage of investigation at Britains Farm comprised a four-trench evaluation which recorded a low volume of features of archaeological interest located on the western area of the site. One pit (pit 1 in Trench 3) produced a group of 33 pottery sherds of Late Bronze Age date and 16 struck flints, along with a small quantity of burnt flint, and two possible pits of uncertain date were recorded to the south of it (in Trench 2) (Sanchez 2020).

Objectives

The aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to:

- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the excavation area and to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
- identify, within the constraints of the excavation area the date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;

determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;

determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;

produce a report on the results of the fieldwork;

relate (where appropriate) the results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context; and to

prepare and deposit a site archive with the local museum

Excavation Methodology

The area selected for excavation based on the results of the prior investigations (Fig. 2) covered *c.* 450sq m in the north-western corner of the overall site. A contingency was included to allow the area to be adapted in light of the nature of any archaeology being exposed, allowing for the presence of a tree protection zone.

Topsoil and other overburden was to be removed by a 360° type mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits, under constant archaeological supervision. Following machine clearance, all investigation of archaeological levels was to be by hand. Appropriate sampling and recording of all archaeological features identified was to be carried out by hand and to be reviewed continuously throughout the course of the fieldwork and, if necessary, amended in order to take account of changing circumstances and understanding.

Results

The excavation area was stripped mainly as intended but the total area covered had to be reduced slightly due to the presence of a tree root protection zone on the western side of the site (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2). The areas of chief interest around trial trenches 2 and 3 were, however, still excavated. The stratigraphy consisted of between 0.25m and 0.30m of topsoil above typically 0.3–0.4m of subsoil above the natural geology (Fig. 4) which was mostly a yellowish brown sandy clay with reddish brown clay and gravel patches. No further deposits of archaeological interest were observed and the only finds recovered were a few flints, some tiny pieces of animal bone, and one sherd of 19th-century pottery, all from the subsoil.

Finds

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection of nine struck flints was recovered during overburden stripping of the site for the excavation phase of the fieldwork, to add to 16 recovered from Pit 1 in the evaluation. The excavation finds consisted of

eight flakes, one of which was in effect a large chunk from a shattered core. The pieces are mostly made from brown and black flint with cortex suggesting a gravel source available locally. One piece was patinated white and almost certainly introduced to the site from a location with a chalk substrate. One other piece was patinated blue/grey. The flake/core fragment also appears to have been introduced to the site direct from a chalk source. The material is undiagnostic and could belong to several periods but is probably of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Conclusion

The targeted archaeological excavation was carried out to determine whether further archaeological features were present in the area trial trenching had recorded a low number of certain and probable Late Bronze Age pits. Although no further finds or deposits of archaeological interest were recovered, aside from a small number of flints from the subsoil, the evaluation phase of the project had already revealed a Late Bronze Age pit, which the excavation has now shown to be an isolated feature. Whilst Late Bronze Age settlement usually manifests itself with a rather greater density of features, a single isolated pit may be all that survives below ground of a settlement of this period and thus this discovery is of some interest for understanding the earliest development of settlement in the local area.

References

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Appendix 1: OASiS Summary Form

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OASIS ID: thamesva1-411661

Project details

Project name	Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street, West Horsley, Surrey
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation recorded a low volume of archaeological features including at least one pit of Late Bronze Age date in the western corner of site. The subsequent excavation targeting this area revealed no further deposits of archaeological interest but did recover nine broadly prehistoric flints from the subsoil.
Project dates	Start: 15-12-2020 End: 17-12-2020
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BFS20/167 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	20/P/01430 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 5 - Character undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	LITHICS Late Prehistoric
Investigation type	"Open-area excavation"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SURREY GUILDFORD WEST HORSLEY Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street
Study area	280 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 0786 5255 51.261374807867 -0.453976367397 51 15 40 N 000 27 14 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 80m Max: 81m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Armour Heritage

Project director/manager Tim Dawson
 Project supervisor Maisie Foster
 Type of sponsor/funding body Consultant
 Name of sponsor/funding body Armour Heritage

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Guildford Museum
 Physical Contents "Worked stone/lithics"
 Digital Archive recipient Guildford Museum
 Digital Contents "other"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"
 Paper Archive recipient Guildford Museum
 Paper Contents "Survey", "Worked stone/lithics", "other", "Stratigraphic"
 Paper Media available "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Microfilm", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

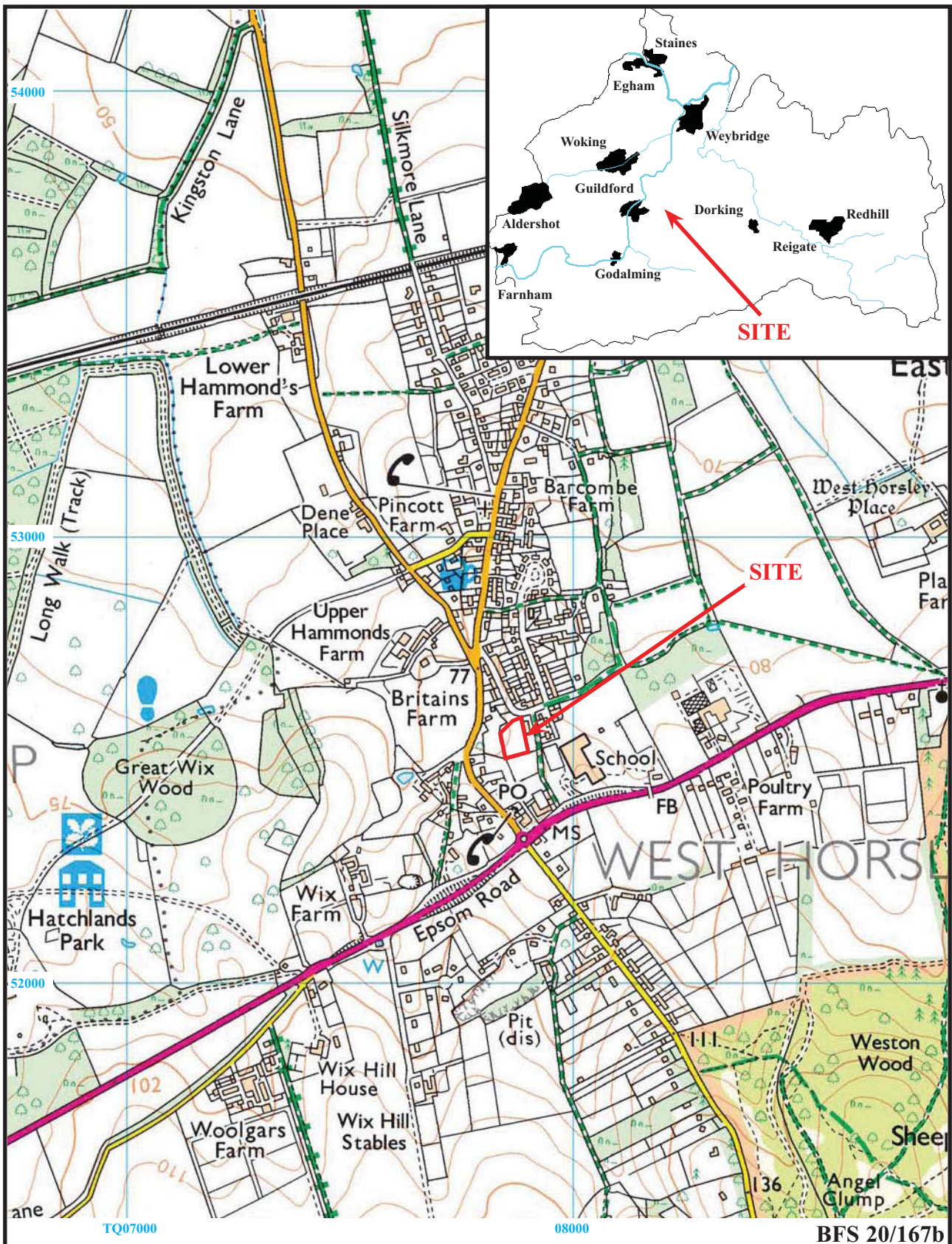
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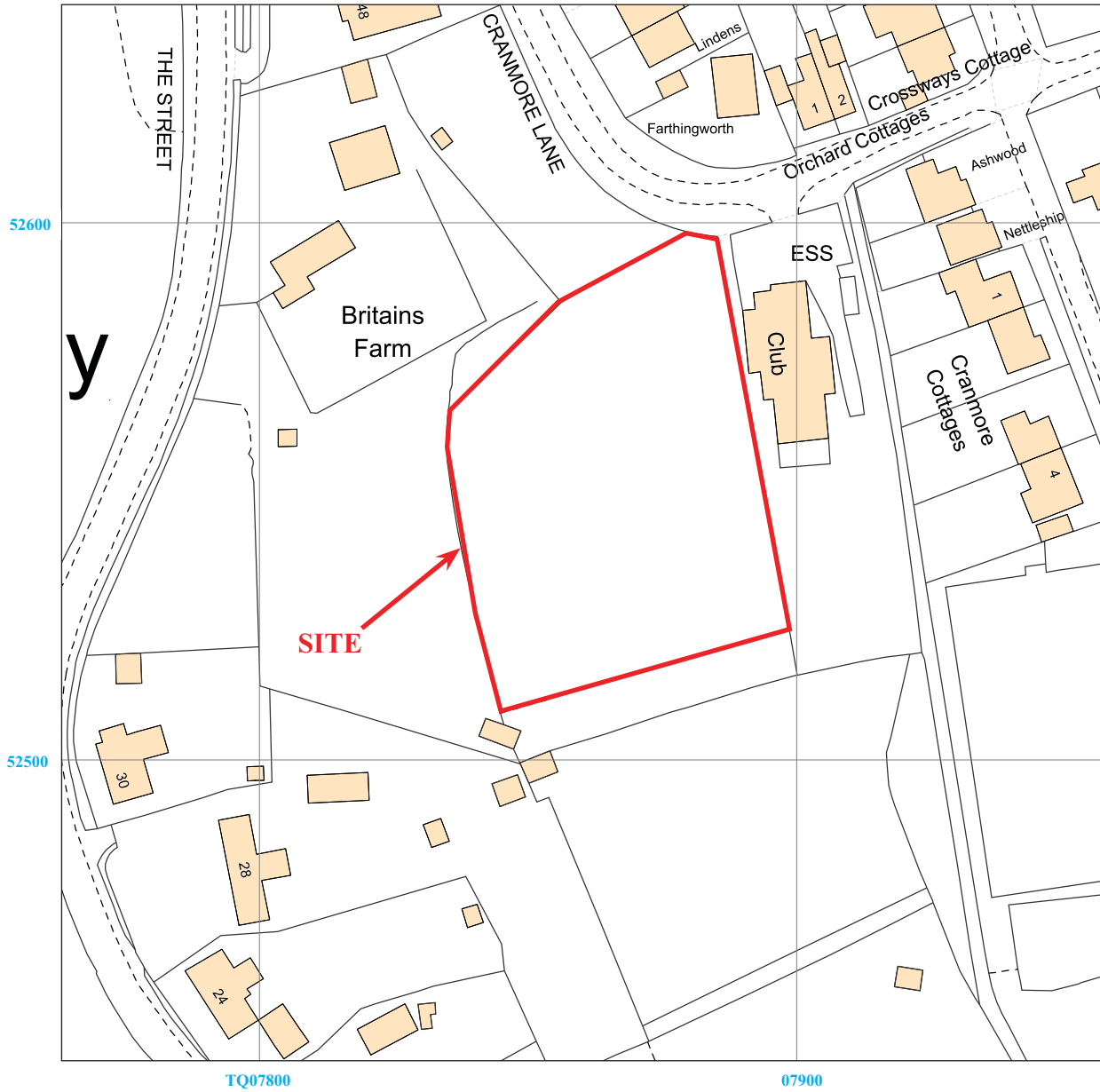


**Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street,
West Horsley, Surrey, 2020
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within West Horsley and Surrey.

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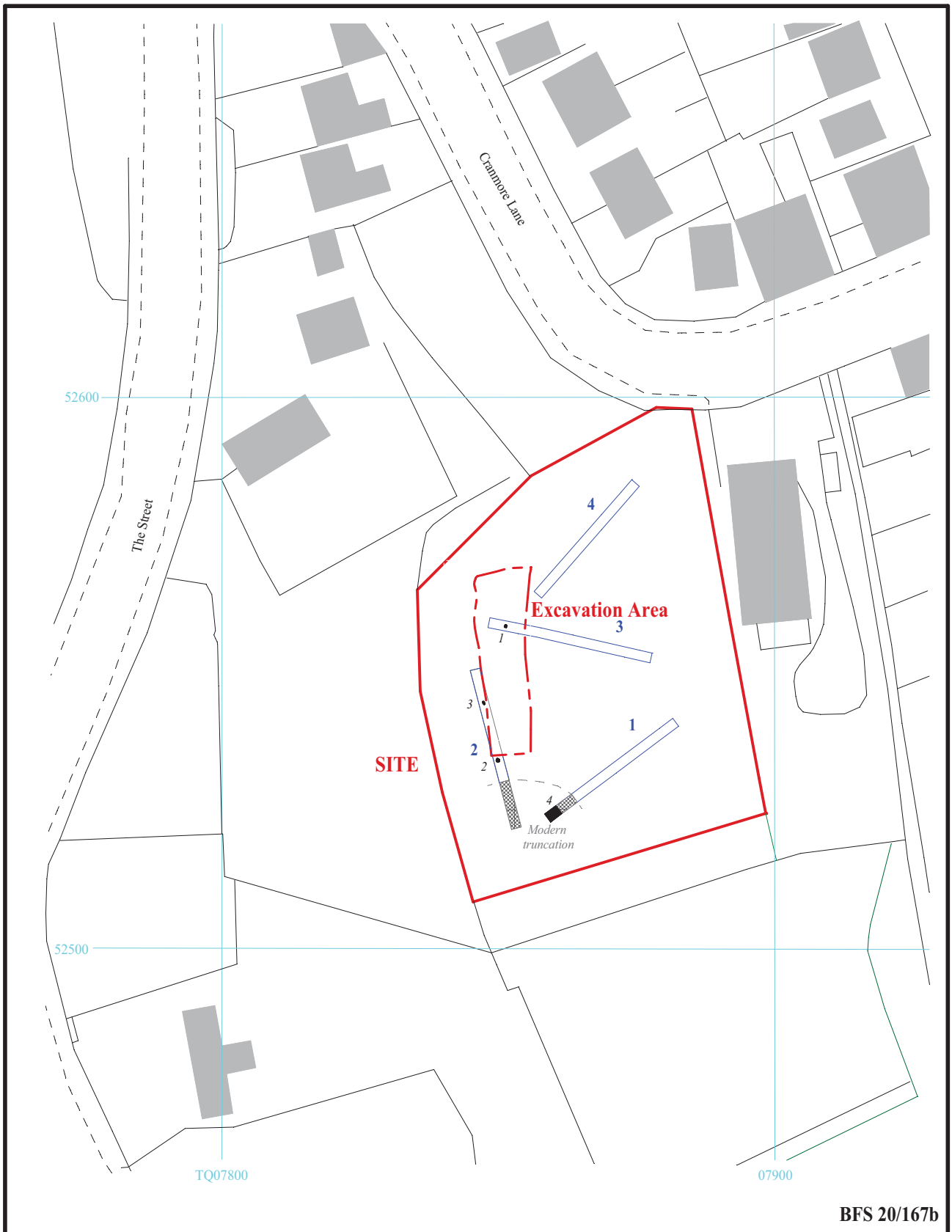
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**Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in relation to Britains Farm.

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Figure 3. Location of excavation area in relation to evaluation trenches.



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W _____ E [81.33m](#)

Topsoil



Subsoil
(sandy clay with a few fine gravel pieces)



Natural geology
(sandy clay with clay and gravel patches)

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Figure 4. Representative section of stripped area.



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Plate 1. Stripped area, looking N,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Stripped area, looking S,
Scales: 2m and 1m.

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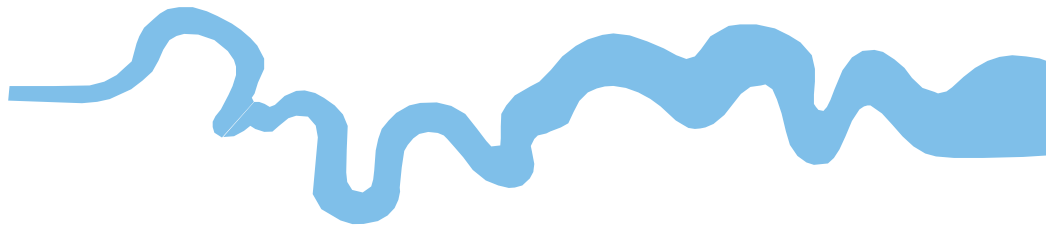
**Land at Britains Farm, 42 The Street,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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





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