

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land at Crabtree Lane, Duntisbourne Leer,  
Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Aidan Colyer**

**Site Code: DLG20/110**

**(SO 9769 0762)**

# **Land at Crabtree Lane, Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Miss B Barraclough**

by Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DLG 20/110

**August 2020**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Crabtree Lane, Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire.

**Grid reference:** SO 9769 0762

**Site activity:** Evaluation.

**Date and duration of project:** 17th August 2020

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Aidan Colyer

**Site code:** DLG 20/110

**Area of site:** 0.37ha.

**Summary of results:** Two trenches were opened as intended. Both revealed the natural geology which was recorded as a marked slope, but neither revealed any deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest. 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 Corinium Museum or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 20.08.20 Steve Preston✓ 20.08.20
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# Land at Crabtree Lane, Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Aidan Colyer

Report 20/110

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Crabtree Lane, Duntisbourne Leer, Gloucestershire (SO 9769 0762) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Claudia Jones of Ridge and Partners LLP, 3rd Floor, Regent House, 65 Rodney Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1HX; on behalf of Miss B Barraclough.

Planning permission (20/01361/FUL) has been sought from Cotswold District Council for the construction of a storage barn. An archaeological evaluation has been requested to inform the planning decision. 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 Toby Catchpole, Heritage Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Archaeological Service, the archaeological advisers to the district. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer and Michael Paine, on 17th August 2020 and the site code is DLG 20/110. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north-east of the village of Duntisbourne Leer, which itself sits to the north-west of Cirencester (Fig. 1). The site is also to the west of the A417 which follows the path of the Roman road Ermin Way. The local area is near the top of a ridge line with a steep drop down to the south from a high point on the ridge of 225m above Ordnance Datum to a stream valley at 170m aOD. Duntisbourne Abbots is to the east and the hamlet of Duntisbourne Leer occupies the steep valley side opposite the site. The land is used for pastoral farming with the site in particular being used for horses (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is recorded as Mudstone with Limestone beds with a Fuller's Earth formation and Landslip (BGS 1998). On site only small amounts of limestone were observed within the pale brownish yellow clay. Within the site the ground drops from c. 177m aOD in the north to 172m.4m in the south.

## **Archaeological background**

The site lies in an area with Roman and medieval remains within close proximity. Roman archaeological evidence in the area includes a building c.200m to the north-east of the site, which was excavated in 1923, while more recent aerial photography has highlighted potential crop marks in the vicinity. Medieval evidence has been recorded near Nutbeam farm and Duntisbourne Leer. This evidence is of lynchets created by farming; the evidence also extends into the post-medieval period.

## **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 are as follows.

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Roman deposits are present on the site; and
- to determine if earthworks recorded in the county Historic Environment Record for the site are of archaeological origin and reflect the presence of Medieval cultivation terraces.

The potential and significance of any such deposits located were 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 or any more regional or thematic research priorities as necessary (Webster 2007).

The proposed methodology was to excavate two 10m long and 1.6m wide trenches. These trenches were to be excavated with a 360° type machine or a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Any archaeological features uncovered were to be cleaned and excavated by hand before being sampled and recorded. All spoilheaps were also to be monitored for finds.

## **Results**

The trenches were excavated by a 360° type machine with a toothless ditching bucket, as close as possible to their intended locations (Fig. 3) with slight adjustments due to the space needed for the machine and so as not to damage existing terrace banks. The trenches were excavated to the proposed length, however, due to the nature of the site the width of trenches was increased to 1.8m to facilitate safe sections to allow full recording, and to guarantee a sufficient area was excavated if the complete lengths were unable to be achieved. Final cleaning of the trenches was done using hand tools. The trenches were 10.5m and 9.20m in length.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The top- and subsoil were of largely the same composition in both trenches but varied widely in depth. Topsoil was a relatively deep rich loamy dark earth. The minimal subsoil was a mid-dark yellow brown silty clay. The natural geology in both trenches was pale brownish yellow with rare limestone inclusions and minor rooting.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned west - east and was 10.5m long with varying depths. The disparity between the two ends necessitated the recording of both. The west of the trench was left high to preserve a field drain and due to the depth of the bank to the north.

The stratigraphy at the western end consisted of 0.87m of topsoil and 0.05m of subsoil overlying natural geology. A 2m wide test pit was excavated by machine to confirm the interpretation of the natural geology and to show the slopes. The slope ran down in a south-westerly direction which shows a disparity between the southern and northern sections. The southern section was comprised of 0.45m of topsoil with 0.50m of subsoil which overlay natural. The northern side of this section had only 0.29m of topsoil over 0.51m of subsoil onto natural soil which was excavated to a depth of 0.20m.

The eastern end of the trench was significantly shallower. The topsoil was just 0.02m deep followed by 0.18m of subsoil before reaching natural.

Apart from a field drain uncovered at 0.5m-0.6m in the subsoil of the trench no further features natural or otherwise were uncovered. It is interesting to note the depth of the field drain as at least 0.5m above natural. This suggests that the slope had been banked with a mix of subsoil and topsoil previous to the laying of the drain.

No finds were recovered.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned north – south and was 9.20m. As with Trench 1, the two ends of the trench had different depths due to the slope. Unlike Trench 1 there was a single angle to the slope at the southern end.

The southern end of the trench had a stratigraphy that consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.60m subsoil overlying natural geology. The break of slope was at 5.1m from the southern end of the trench. Above this the flatter northern area was almost directly down onto disturbed natural with just small patches of topsoil (0.04m deep at most). The depths of the topsoil in this trench are likely artificial as the bottom of the slope gives onto a recent paddock/manege. No finds were recovered nor were any features observed.

## **Finds**

No artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

The site showed large amounts of modern landscaping to protect slopes and secure terraces where previous construction had taken place, and/or possibly as a result of landslip, as mapped by the British Geological Survey. This meant that the north-eastern section of the area had been previously stripped down to natural geology although the angles of the slopes show that this truncation was not extensive except in the very corner where the depth of the truncation reached around 0.5m. The subsoil was sterile and virtually identical to the natural geology, so may well have been redeposited subsoil, redeposited natural or a mix of the two. This supposition is based on the depth of the field drain which is very high within the sequence. The nature of the slopes on the site shows a managed land throughout the post-medieval period. However, the site itself shows no evidence of medieval or early post-medieval lynchets, nor any deposits of archaeological interest.

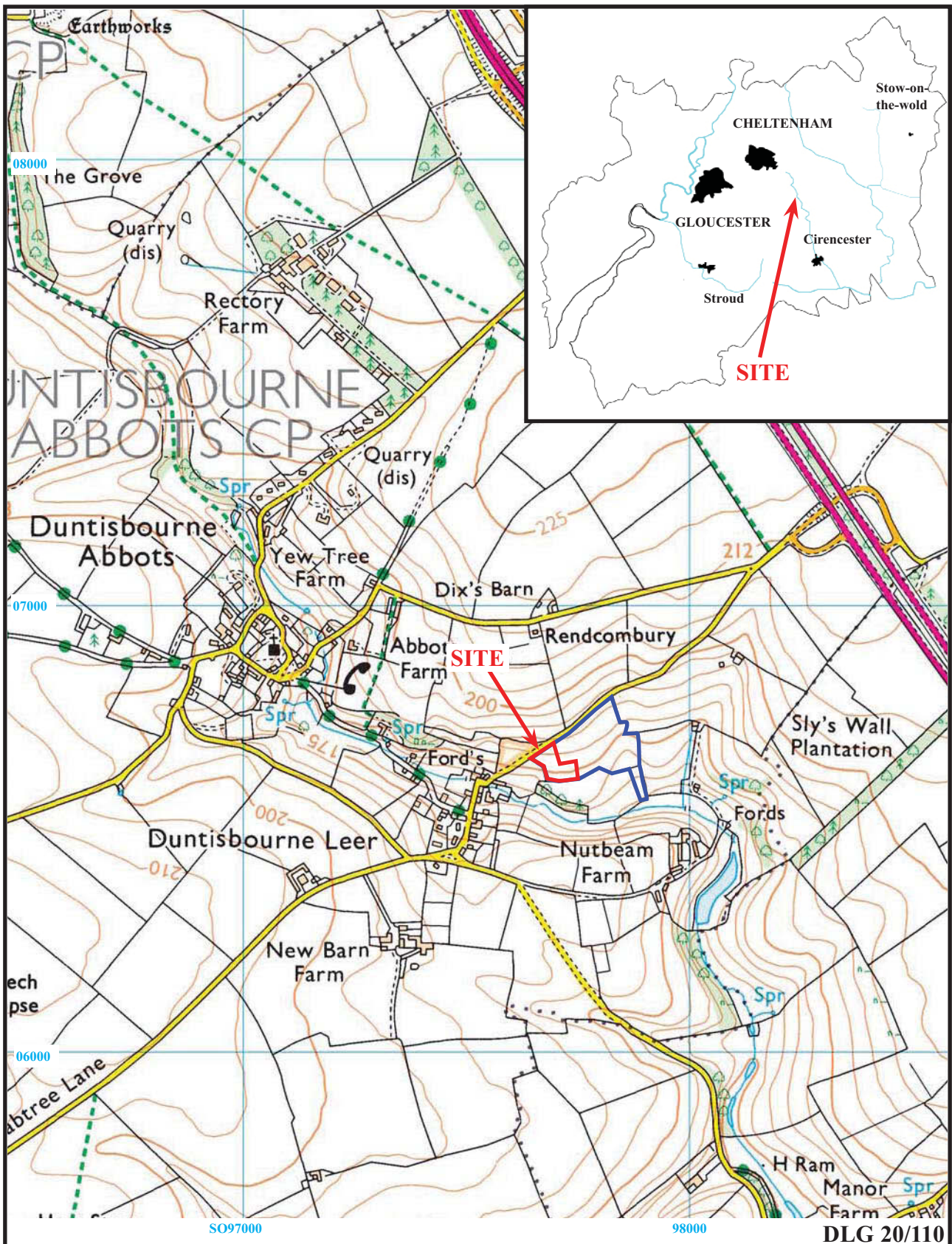
## **References**

BGS, 1998, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **235**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth  
NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.50	1.8	0.2-0.93	Western end: 0-0.87m topsoil, 0.87-0.93m subsoil, 0.93m+ natural geology. <b>[PI. 1]</b> Eastern end: 0-0.02m topsoil, 0.02-0.20m subsoil, 0.20m+ natural geology
2	9.20	1.8	0.04-0.82	Southern end: 0-0.22m topsoil, 0.22m-0.82m subsoil, 0.82m+ natural geology. <b>[PI. 2]</b> . Northern end: 0-0.04m patchy topsoil directly onto natural geology.



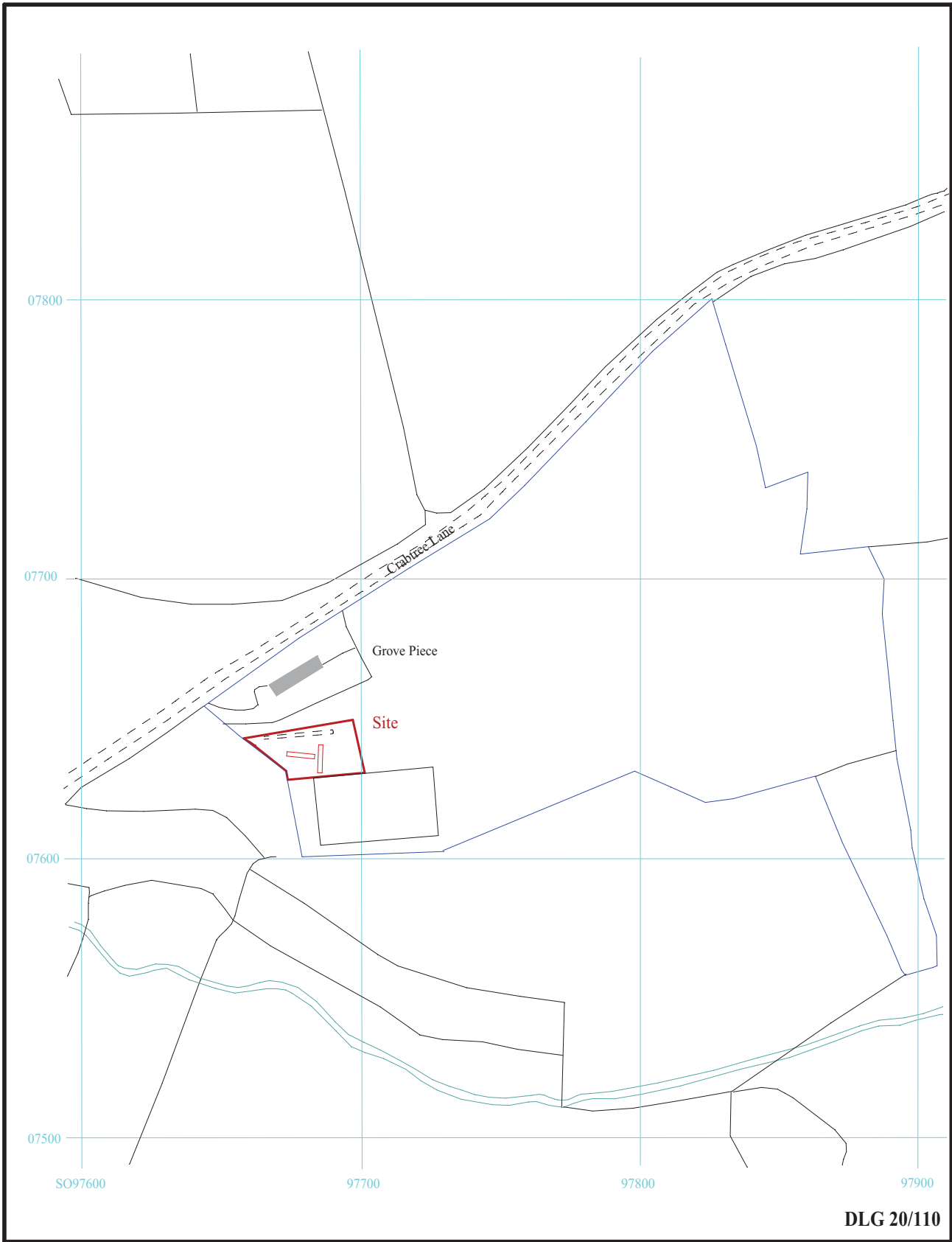


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Figure 1. Location of site within Duntisbourne Leer and Gloucestershire.

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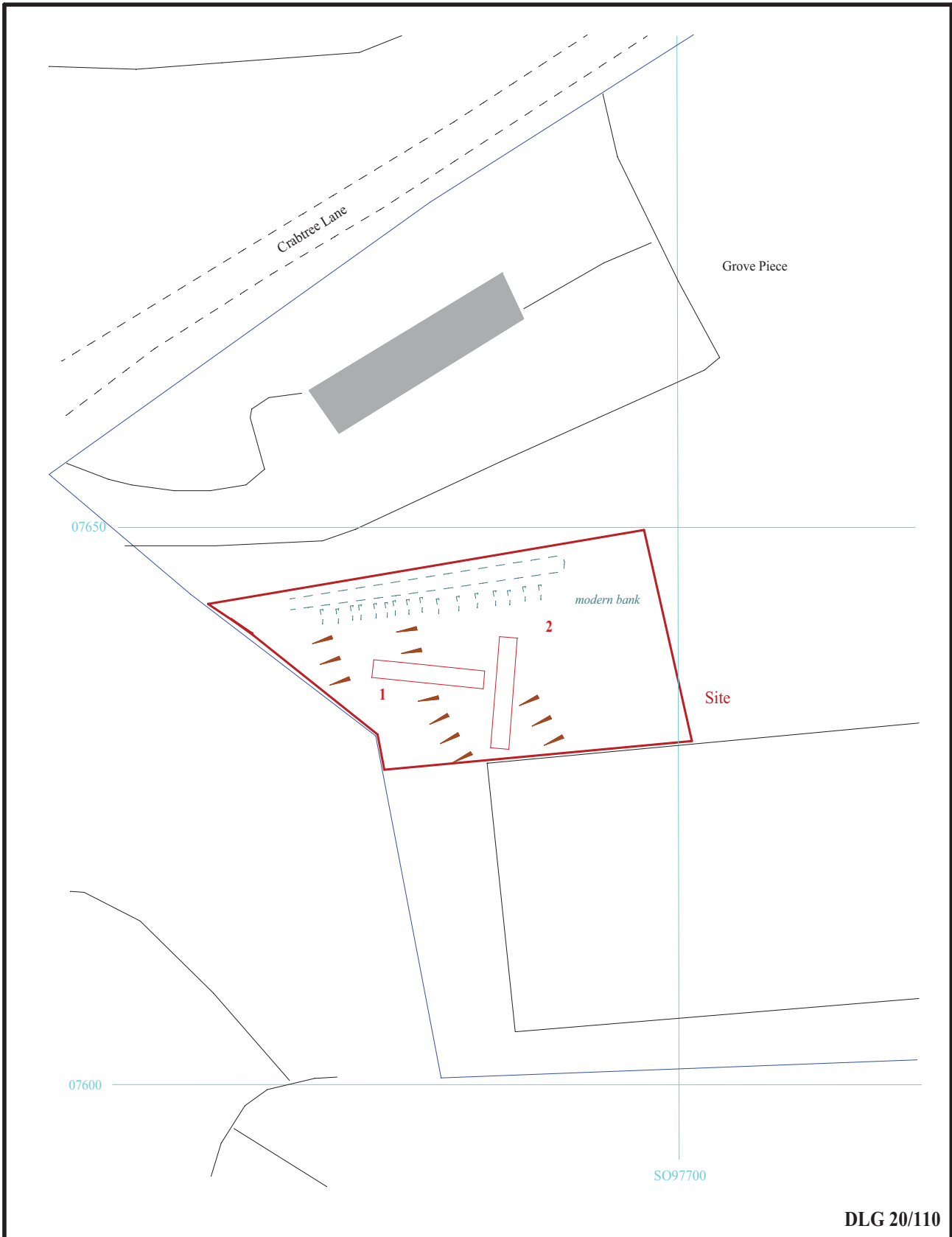


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Figure 2. Detailed location of the site.



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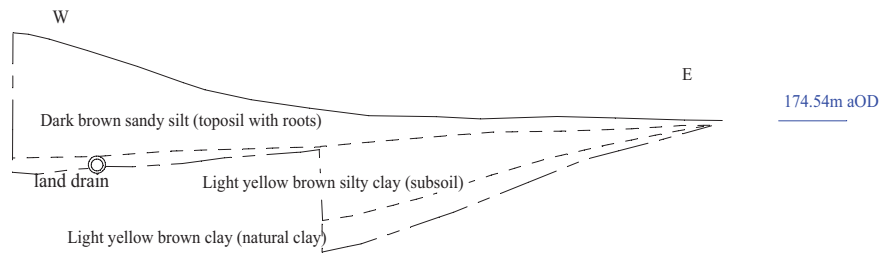
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Figure 3. Location of the trenches.

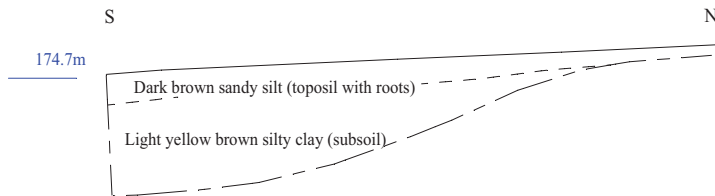


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*Trench 1*



*Trench 2*



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking East,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking North East,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench at the top of the terrace slope,  
looking South East.

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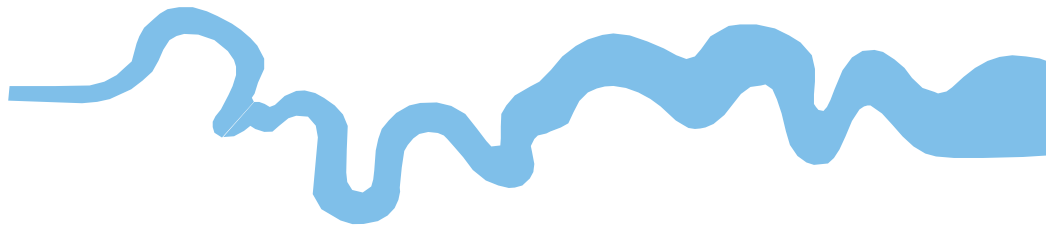
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Plates 1 - 3.**

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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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