

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Hill View Farm,
Marston, Oxford**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: MMO20/189

(SP 5220 0939)

Land at Hill View Farm, Marston, Oxford

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for M K Dogar Limited**

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MMO 20/189

December 2020

Summary

Site name: Land at Hill View Farm, Marston, Oxford

Grid reference: SP 5220 0939

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 30th November – 1st December 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: MMO 20/189

Area of site: 4.05ha

Summary of results: Sixteen of the twenty-two proposed trenches were excavated as intended with alterations to the position of the other six trenches in the south-eastern field due to the presence of unexpected services and land drains. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered in any of the trenches. The site is considered to have very low archaeological potential.

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

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Land at Hill View Farm, Marston, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Report 20/189

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at and adjacent to Hill View Farm, Marston, Oxford, OX3 0QG (SP 5220 0939) (Fig. 1). The works were commissioned by Mr Ben Stephenson of ACD Environmental Ltd, Rodbourne Rail Business Centre, Grange Lane, Malmesbury, SN16 0ES on behalf of M K Dogar Limited, 1 Hillsborough Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 3SL.

Planning permission is to be sought from Oxford City Council to develop the *c.* 4ha land parcel. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site, which may be damaged or destroyed by subsequent groundworks, an archaeological evaluation has been requested to inform the planning process with regard to potential archaeological implications and to provide sufficient information to inform mitigation if required.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster and Camilla Carvalho between 30th November and 1st December 2020 and the site code is MMO20/189. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Marston is 3km north-east of Oxford city centre. The site lies at Hill View Farm, immediately south of the A40, which forms the northern bypass of Oxford. The site lies west of the farm buildings. The site is east of the River Cherwell on its floodplain and 1km north-west of the historic core of Marston, at the northern extent of Mill Lane, within open farmland. The east side of the site lies at a height of *c.* 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) with a slight drop towards the river to about 63m aOD in the west. The underlying geology is mapped as

Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel (2nd Terrace deposit) (BGS Geindex; BGS 1982) but a natural geology more representative of Oxford Clay Formation was recorded in all trenches.

Archaeological background

The potential of the site has been highlighted by a desk-based assessment (Stephenson 2020). In summary, the site itself contains no known sites nor finds of archaeological origin. Geophysical survey on the site itself, located no anomalies that could confidently be identified as of archaeological origin (Sumo 2020).

In the wider area to the north, Roman field-systems and occupation evidence have been found, along with deposits of Middle Bronze Age date and an early Roman cremation burial (Martin and Champness 2019). The gravel terrace between the Thames and Cherwell to the west of the site is notably rich with a wide range of Prehistoric and Roman sites recorded as well as the Saxon and Medieval town (Lambrick et al. 2009; Dodds 2003) including a Late Neolithic henge monument (Wallis 2010) Marston meaning ‘farm in the marsh’ (Mills 1998, 235), was not mentioned individually in Domesday Book (AD1086). It has links, in the 12th century, to the manor of Headington which was already a royal *vill* by AD1004 (VCH 1957). Archaeological excavation, in the village itself 1km to the south east, has found Medieval occupation evidence, particularly from the 11th-12th century onwards (Lewis *et al.* 2014).

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 proposed development. Investigation was to be undertaken in such a way as to not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits better excavated under the conditions of full excavation.

Specific research aims of this project were;

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels survived on the site;
- to determine if there is any evidence of any period on site; and
- to provide information to support a mitigation strategy if required.

Twenty-two trenches, 25m long and 1.6-2m wide were proposed to be dug, using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other over burden was to be removed to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or

probably present, the stripped areas were 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 outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

Twenty-two trenches were excavated. Sixteen of the trenches were excavated as intended (Fig. 3; Pls 8 and 12) with alterations being made to the positioning of six trenches after consultation with Mr Ben Stephenson, project consultant and with the agreement of Mr. David Radford, Oxford Archaeological officer in the south-eastern most field to allow for unexpected services and land drains. The trenches ranged from 16m to 28m in length and 0.4m to 0.75m in depth. All were 2m wide. A complete list of trenches giving length, breadth, depth and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

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

Trench 1 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 23m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned WSW-ENE and was 25.1m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.1m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned S-N and was 25m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.16m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned close to S-N and was 20.4m long and 0.69m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.39m subsoil. Due to a large land drain aligned SE-NW along the trench, natural geology was not reached at any point in this trench and it was shortened due to further services found at the southern end of the trench. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 16.1m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.36m subsoil overlying natural geology. Between 9.2m and 16.1m from SSW end the trench natural geology was not reached due to the presence of a service pipe. The trench was shortened due to a large land drain running across the northern end. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned SSW-NNE and was 16m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.1m subsoil overlying natural geology. This trench was shortened due to a large land drain running east to west at the north end of the trench. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned SW-NE and was 25.2m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned NW-SE and was 25m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.1m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 9 was aligned NW-SE and was 27.3m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 10 (Fig. 3)

Trench 10 was aligned ESE-WNW and was 25m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. Between 0m and 9m from ESE end natural geology was not reached due to an unexpected man hole and live service. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 11 (Fig. 3)

Trench 11 was aligned NW-SE and was 21.3m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 12 (Fig. 3; Pl. 5)

Trench 12 was aligned NW-SE and was 23m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.19m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 13 (Fig. 3)

Trench 13 was aligned N-S and was 25m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3; Pl. 6)

Trench 14 was aligned N-S and was 24.5m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 15 (Fig. 3)

Trench 15 was aligned close to N-S and was 25m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 16 (Fig. 3; Pl. 7)

Trench 16 was aligned NNE-SSW and was 25.4m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.2m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 17 (Fig. 3; Pl. 9)

Trench 17 was aligned NNE-SSW and was 23m long and 0.69m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of topsoil and 0.22m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 18 (Fig. 3)

Trench 18 was aligned NNW-SSE and was 24.5m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.33m of topsoil and 0.32m subsoil overlying natural geology. Natural geology was not reached between 10m and 10.5m NNW end due to a large land drain. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 19 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 19 was aligned NW-SE and was 27m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 20 (Fig. 3; Pl. 10)

Trench 20 was aligned NW-SE and was 25.5m long and 0.63m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 21 (Fig. 3)

Trench 21 was aligned NW-SE and was 25m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil and 0.29m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 22 (Fig. 3; Pl. 11)

Trench 22 was aligned ENE-WSW and was 28m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.36m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Finds

A small number of artefacts were encountered on the spoilheaps but they were all of modern date and of no archaeological interest. They were not retained.

Conclusion

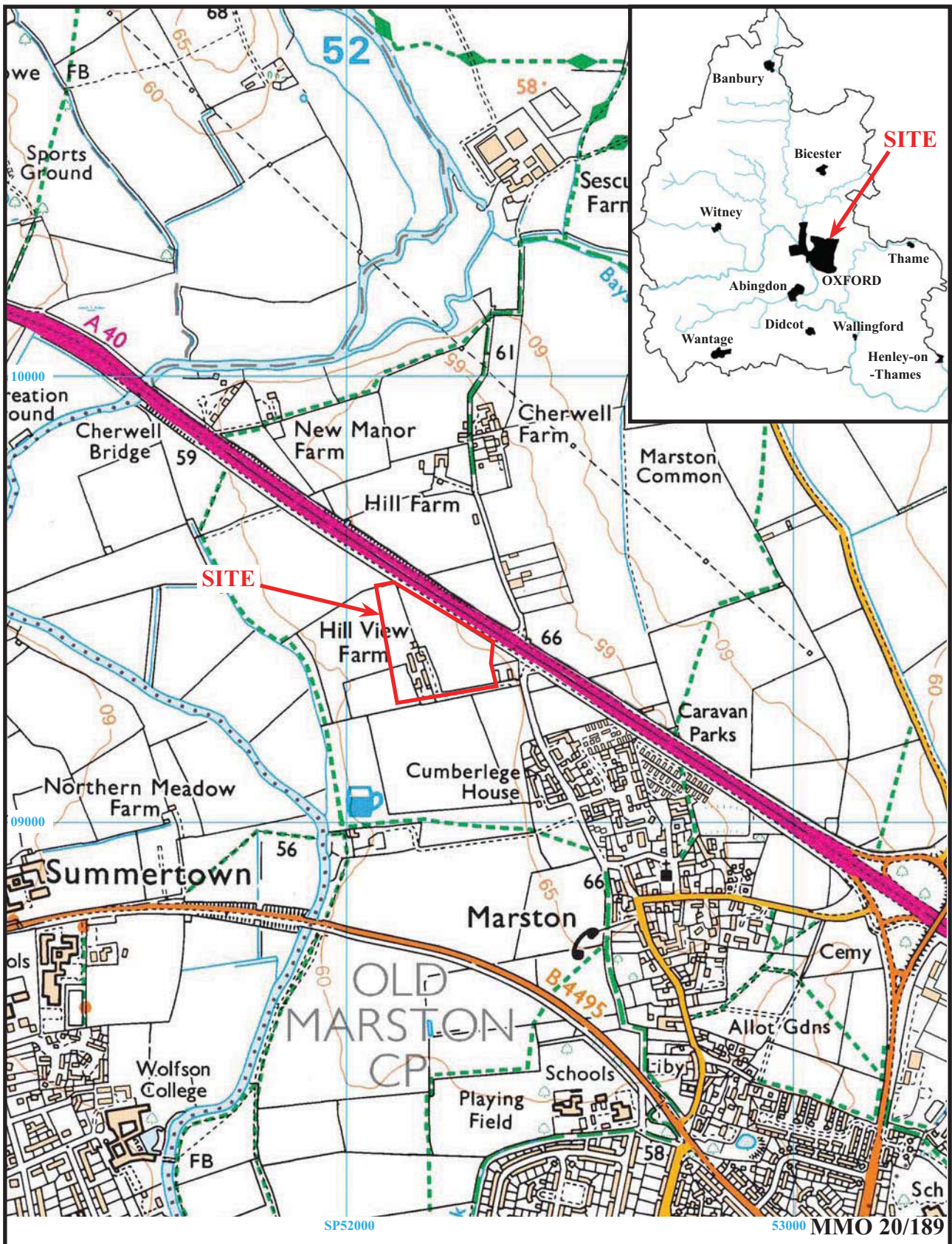
The evaluation was carried out as intended apart from some adjustments to trench locations in the south east corner. Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on this site, no deposits nor finds of any archaeological interest were observed in any of the trenches. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have minimal archaeological potential.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	23	2	0.5	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.4m light grey brown silty clay subsoil; 0.4m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 1]
2	25.1	2	0.45	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.30-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
3	25	2	0.5	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
4	20.4	2	0.69	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.69m subsoil; Natural geology not reached [PI. 2]
5	16.1	2	0.75	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.66m subsoil; 0.66m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
6	16	2	0.4	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 3]
7	25.2	2	0.6	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
8	25	2	0.4	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
9	27.3	2	0.6	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 4]
10	25	2	0.6	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
11	21.3	2	0.5	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
12	23	2	0.6	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 5]
13	25	2	0.5	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
14	24.5	2	0.5	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.25-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 6]
15	25	2	0.55	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
16	25.4	2	0.6	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 7]
17	23	2	0.69	0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 9]
18	24.5	2	0.75	0-0.33m topsoil; 0.33-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
19	27	2	0.66	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
20	25.5	2	0.63	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.54m subsoil; 0.54m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 10]
21	25	2	0.7	0-0.32m topsoil; 0.32-0.61m subsoil; 0.61m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology)
22	28	2	0.72	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ silty clay with small gravel patches (natural geology) [PI. 11]

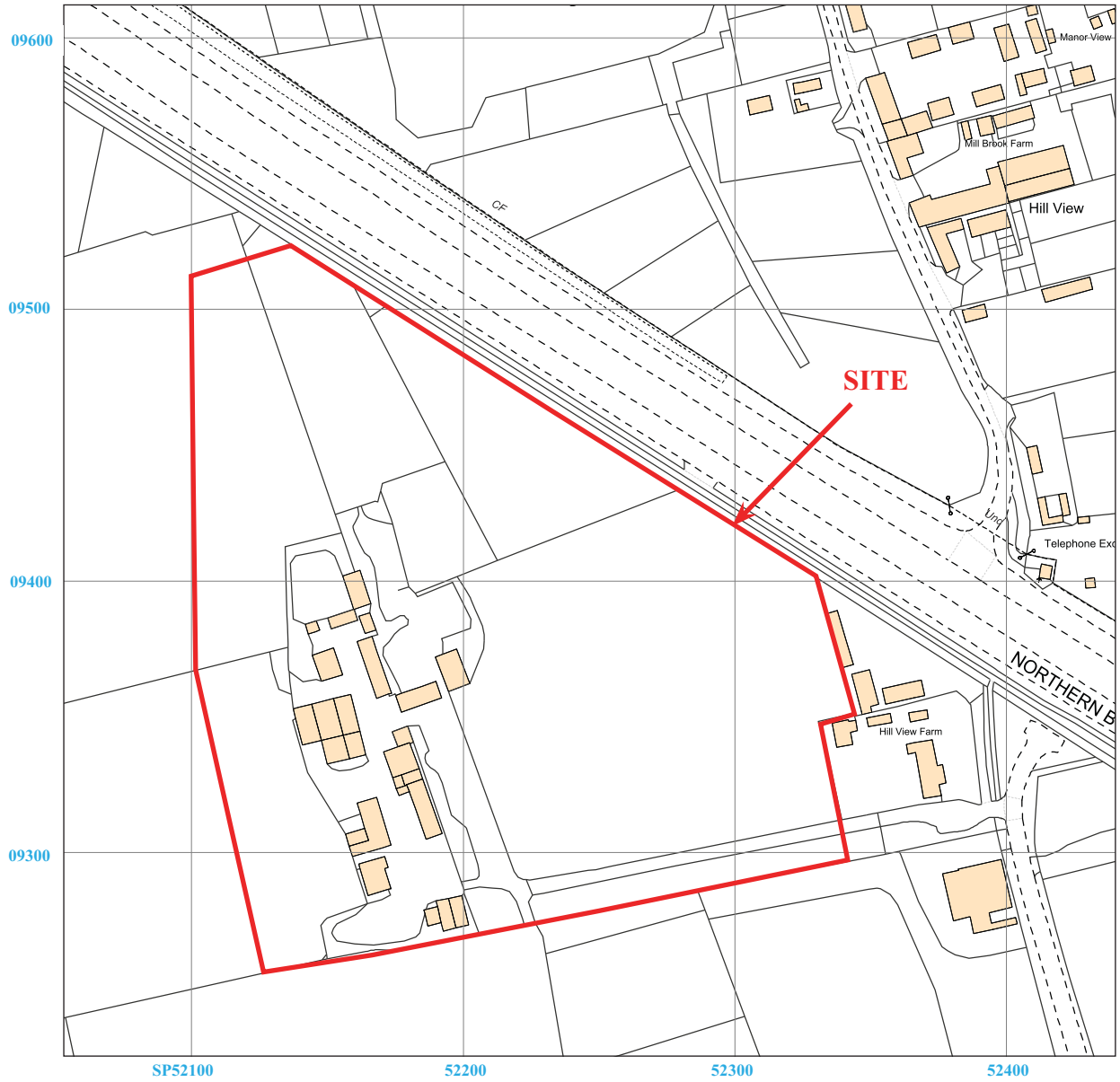


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Figure 1. Location of site within Marston and Oxfordshire.

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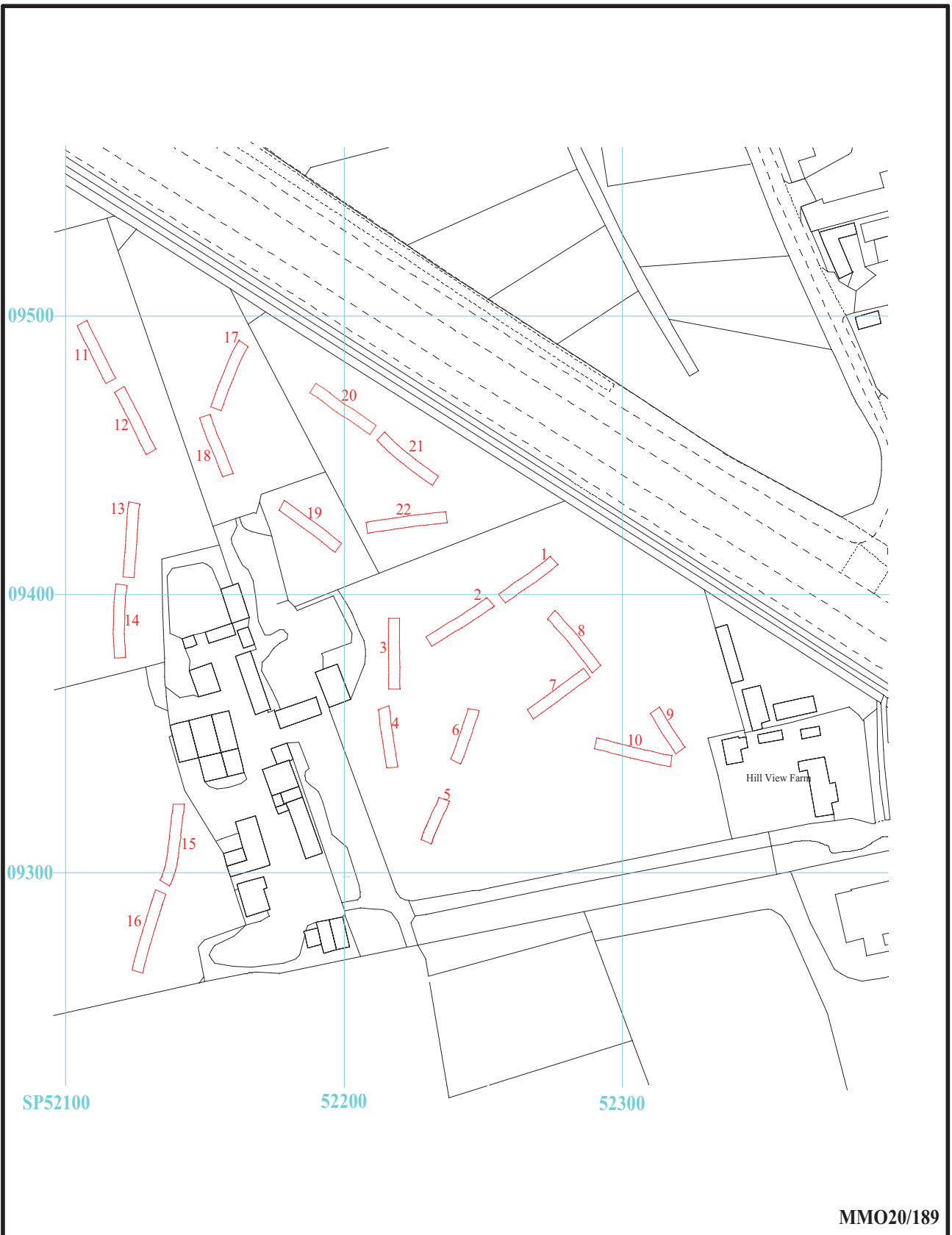
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site adjacent to
the Northern Bypass.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



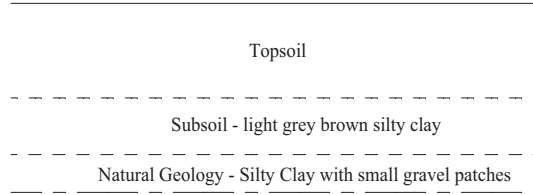
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Trench 1

WSW

ENE

64.88m aOD

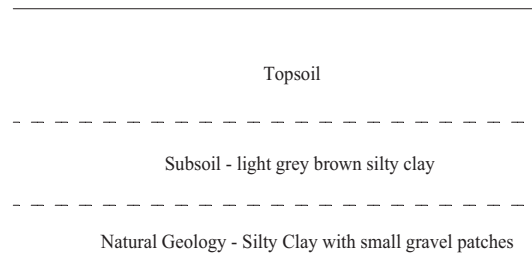


Trench 19

NNW

SSE

63.95m



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Figure 4. Representative Sections



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



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking North.
Scales: 2m, 1m, 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 6, looking North East.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 9, looking South East.
Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 to 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 12, looking South East,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 14, looking South,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 7. Trench 16, looking South,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 8. General view across top of northern field.

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**Land at Hill View Farm,
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Plates 5 to 8.**

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Plate 9. Trench 17, looking South,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 10. Trench 20, looking South East,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 11. Trench 22, looking east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 12. General view across north-eastern field.

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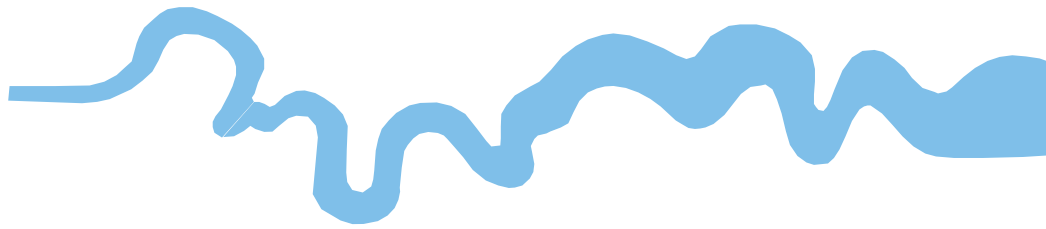
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Plates 9 to 12.**

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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
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

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