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Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: HRB21/169

(SP 4469 4253)

Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Manor Oak Homes Ltd

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HRB 32/169

January 2022

Summary

Site name: Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 4469 4253

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 10th-14th January 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: HRB 21/169

Area of site: *c.* 3.32ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was successfully carried out with thirty trenches opened as intended. Fifteen of the trenches revealed features which appear to relate to post-medieval ridge and furrow, or other agricultural features perpendicular to the same, which had been located during the geophysical survey. No other finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded. The site is therefore considered to have low archaeological potential.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 17.01.22
	Steve Preston✓ 17.01.22

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Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Report 21/169c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4469 4253) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr William Main of Manor Oak Homes Ltd, 21 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7NU.

Planning permission (application 21/03426/OUT) has been sought from Cherwell District Council for a residential development on the site. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, two components of archaeological work were proposed in order to inform the planning process: a geophysical survey and field evaluation. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the District Council's Local Plan policies.

The geophysical survey (Beaverstock 2021) revealed a small number of magnetic anomalies of potential archaeological interest, including a positive penannular anomaly and two positive linear anomalies (Beaverstock 2021). This report documents the results of the trenching component of the investigation. The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Ms Victoria Green, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, the archaeological adviser to the District Council, and based on a brief supplied by her (Green 2021). The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster and Mike Murray between 10th and 14th January 2022 and the site code is HRB 21/69.

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 on the northern edge of Banbury, bounded on its north and west sides by open fields and Duke's Meadow Drive on its south and east sides (Fig. 1). The site is a sub-triangular parcel of land that slopes from *c.* 130m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north-west to 108m aOD in the south-east. The site is currently under grass and shrubs and is not being utilised (Pl. 6). The underlying geology is mapped as Middle

Lias silts and clays in the west and Lower Lias mainly clay in the east (BGS 1982). A light reddish-grey silty clay was observed across the whole site during the evaluation.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a detailed briefing document for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Green 2021) drawing on the results of a desk-based assessment and geophysical survey (Tabor 2021; Beaverstock 2021). In summary, the site lies in an area in which relatively few sites and finds are recorded. However to the west a probable Bronze Age round barrow that had later been re-used as a post-medieval windmill was excavated (McNicoll-Norbury 2015a and b; Bray and McNicoll-Norbury 2016) and further to the west (at SP 4356 4279) an Iron Age to Roman settlement has been excavated (Green 2021; Egan 2017). Other fieldwork beyond the desktop study area boundary has revealed Roman occupation and possible prehistoric landscape features.

The geophysical survey on the site itself (Beaverstock 2021) mainly revealed anomalies relating to ridge and furrow cultivation, but also three anomalies that might represent features of archaeological interest, two linear and one penannular.

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 of the project were;

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present,

to determine if the geophysical anomalies are of archaeological origin; and

to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Thirty trenches, 25m long and 1.8m wide were to be dug using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed to expose the 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 feature 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 and scanned with a metal detector.

Results

Thirty trenches were opened mostly as intended, with trenches 2 and 3 on slightly different orientations (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged from 21.7m to 27.5m in length and 0.3m to 0.56m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving length, breadth, depth and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 25.8m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the NE end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned NNW - SSE and was 24m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows was recorded at 2m and 13m from the NNW end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SSW - NNE and was 21.7m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the NE end but no finds were recovered.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 24m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the NE end, but no finds were recovered.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned close to N - S and was 27.5m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 5)

Trench 6 was aligned SW - NE and was 26.2m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 7 was aligned close to W - E and was 26m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.29m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned NW - SE and was 24.5m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil and 0.26m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3)

Trench 9 was aligned NW - SE and was 25.7m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 10 (Fig. 3)

Trench 10 was aligned N - S and was 24.1m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the N end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 11 (Fig. 3)

Trench 11 was aligned WNW - ESE and was 24m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.19m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 12 (Fig. 3)

Trench 12 was aligned NW - SE and was 24.6m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the SE end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 13 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 13 was aligned NW - SE and was 26.3m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying natural geology. Three furrows were recorded at 1m, 12m and 18m from the NW end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3)

Trench 14 was aligned W - E and was 24.5m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the SE end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 15 (Fig. 3)

Trench 15 was aligned NNW - SSE and was 25.9m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 16 (Fig. 3)

Trench 16 was aligned approximately N - S and was 24.6m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 17 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 17 was aligned SW - NE and was 23.5m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.27m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows were recorded 5m and 20m from the SW end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 18 (Fig. 3)

Trench 18 was aligned NW - SE and was 23.1m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at NW the end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 19 (Fig. 3)

Trench 19 was aligned SW - NE and was 24m long and 0.32m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.04m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows were recorded at 10m and 20m from the SW end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 20 (Fig. 3)

Trench 20 was aligned W - E and was 25.3m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.18m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 21 (Fig. 3)

Trench 21 was aligned SW - NE and was 26.5m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows were recorded at 12m and 17m from the SW end, but no finds were recovered.

Trench 22 (Fig. 3)

Trench 22 was aligned close to W - E and was 25.2m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.24m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 23 (Fig. 3)

Trench 23 was aligned close to S - N and was 24m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.24m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 24 (Fig. 3)

Trench 24 was aligned SW - NE and was 25m long and 0.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 25 (Fig. 3)

Trench 25 was aligned SSE - NNW and was 25.4m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 26 (Fig. 3)

Trench 26 was aligned close to W - E and was 24m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Trench 27 (Fig. 3)

Trench 27 was aligned SE - NW and was 24.3m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.16m subsoil overlying natural geology. A furrow was recorded at the NW end; no finds were recovered.

Trench 28 (Fig. 3)

Trench 28 was aligned close to S - N and was 26.2m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.16m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows were recorded at 7m and 22m from the S end, no finds were recovered.

Trench 29 (Fig. 3)

Trench 29 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.5m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. Three furrows were recorded at 4.5m, 16.5 and 17.5m from the SW end, no finds were recovered.

Trench 30 (Fig. 3)

Trench 30 was aligned NE - SW and was 27m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil and 0.09m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two furrows were recorded at 7.4m and 19m from the NE end, no finds were recovered.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits being present on site, only features which appear to relate to post-medieval ridge and furrow, or other agricultural features perpendicular to the same, which were located during the geophysical survey, were recorded. Other anomalies though possibly to be of archaeological origin, however, found no corresponding features in the trenches (Fig. 5) and were probably variations in the natural geology. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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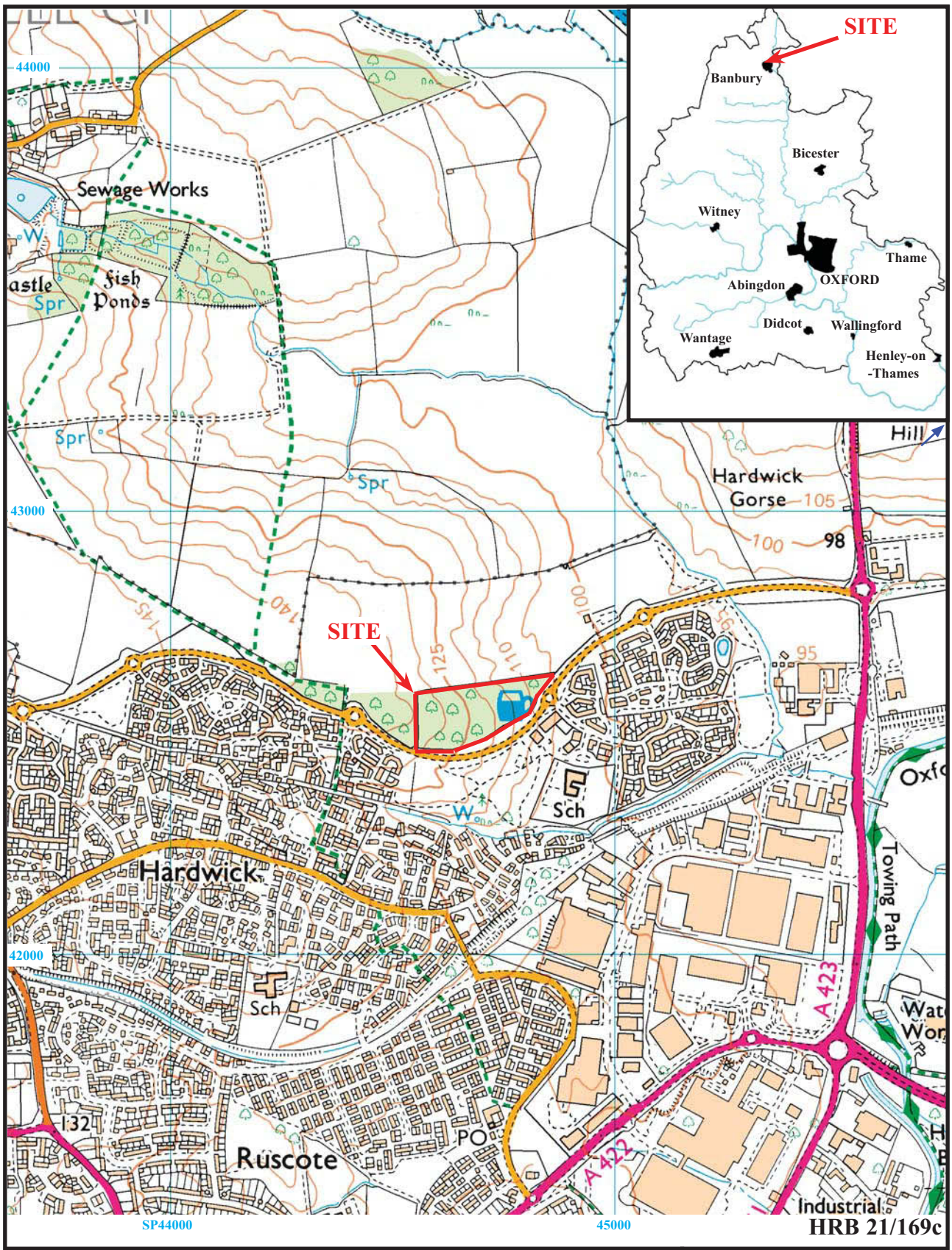
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	25.8	1.8	0.5	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.5m (mid reddish brown silty clay) subsoil; 0.5m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
2	24	1.8	0.42	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows
3	21.7	1.8	0.37	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
4	24	1.8	0.3	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.3m subsoil; 0.3m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
5	27.5	1.8	0.35	0-0.18 topsoil; 0.18-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
6	26.2	1.8	0.5	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology) **[Pls 1 and 5]**
7	26	1.8	0.56	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.56m subsoil; 0.56m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology) **[Pl 2]**
8	24.5	1.8	0.55	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
9	25.7	1.8	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
10	24.1	1.8	0.47	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
11	24	1.8	0.43	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
12	24.6	1.8	0.4	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
13	26.3	1.8	0.56	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.56m subsoil; 0.56m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Three furrows. **[Pl 3]**
14	24.5	1.8	0.5	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
15	25.9	1.8	0.4	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
16	24.6	1.8	0.4	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m subsoil; 0.40m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
17	23.5	1.8	0.42	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows. **[Pl 4]**
18	23.1	1.8	0.4	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
19	24	1.8	0.32	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows.
20	25.3	1..8	0.38	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
21	26.5	1.8	0.39	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.39m subsoil; 0.39m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows.
22	25.2	1.8	0.48	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
23	24	1.8	0.56	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.4m subsoil; 0.4m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
24	25	1.8	0.3	0-0.1m topsoil; 0.1-0.24m subsoil; 0.24m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
25	25.4	1.8	0.48	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
26	24	1.8	0.35	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology)
27	24.3	1.8	0.4	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Furrow.
28	26.2	1.8	0.4	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows.
29	24.5	1.8	0.38	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Three furrows.
30	27	1.8	0.4	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24-0.33m subsoil; 0.33m+ light reddish grey silty clay (natural geology). Two furrows.



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Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Banbury and Oxfordshire.

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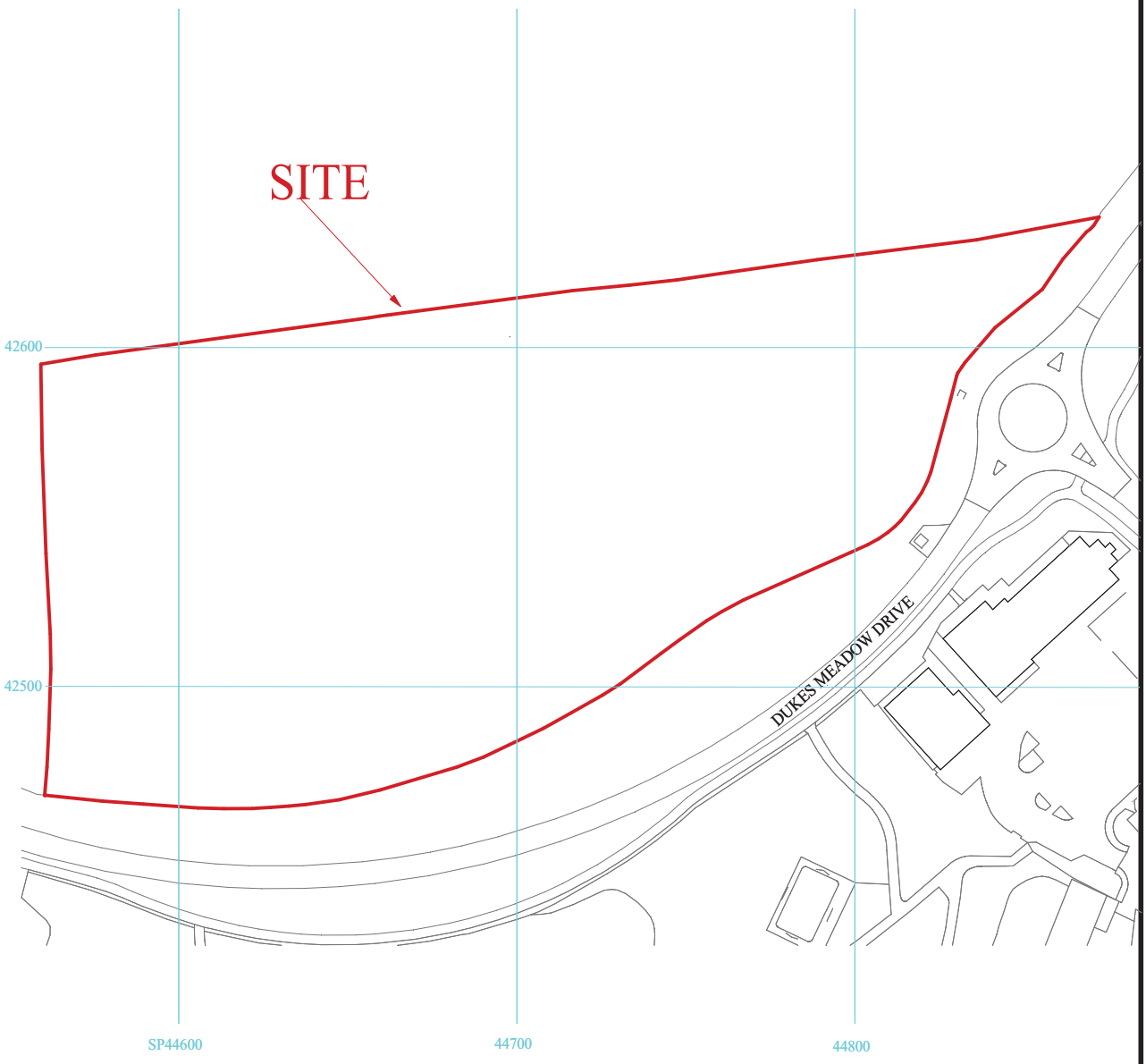

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Figure 2. Detailed site location

0 100m

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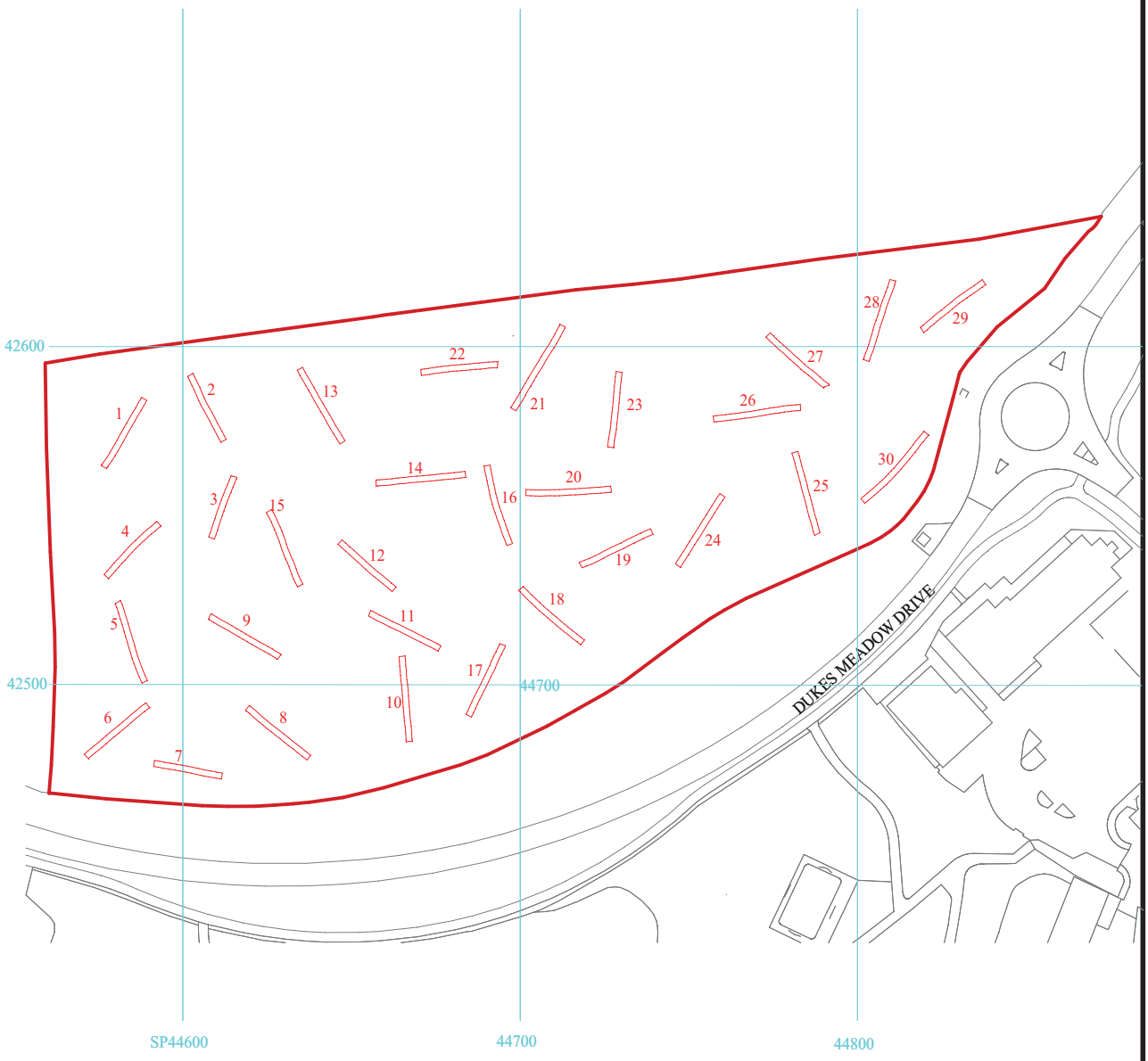

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 100m

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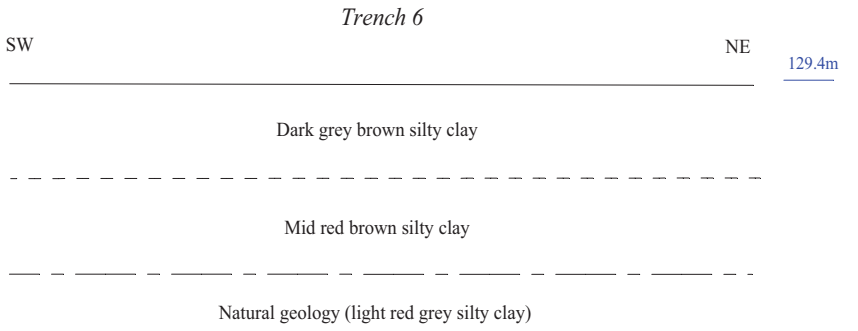

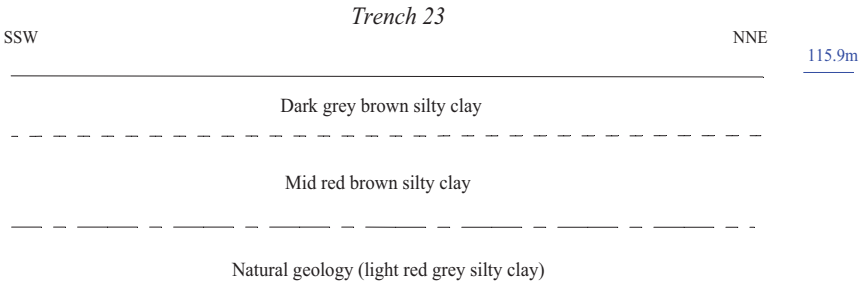

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Figure 4. Representative sections.

0 1m

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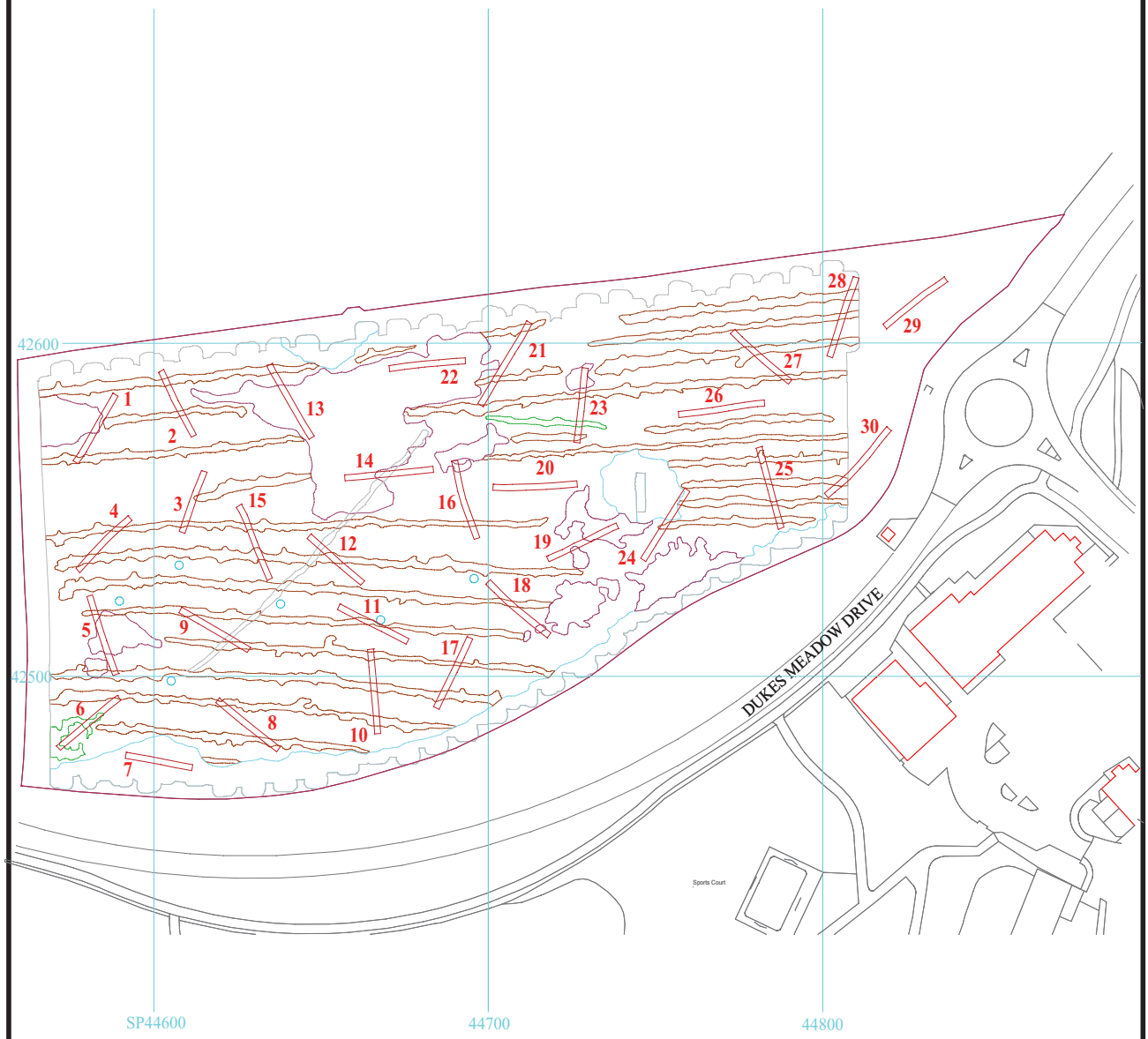

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Figure 5. Location of trenches compared to magentic geophysical interpolation.

0 100m

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Plate 1. Trench 6, looking south-west,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 2. Trench 7, looking south-west,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 4. Trench 13, looking south-east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 5. Trench 17, looking south,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 5. Trench 6 (section), looking south-west,
Scales: 0.50cm and 0.30m.

Plate 6. Site shot, looking north-east.

HRB-21-169

Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury
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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1-6

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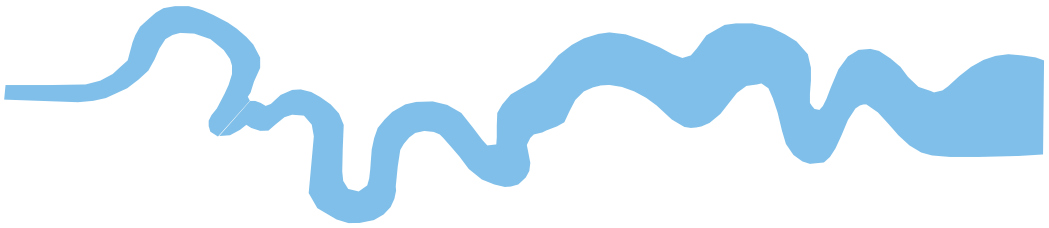
TIME CHART

	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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