

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**North Stoke Farm, The Street,
North Stoke, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Emily Gibson and Lizzi Lewins

Site Code: NSF22/258

(SU 6098 8617)

**New Garage, North Stoke Farm, The Street,
North Stoke, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr C. Sparkes**

by Emily Gibson and Lizzi Lewins
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code NSF 22/258

February 2023

Summary

Site name: North Stoke Farm, The Street, North Stoke, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6098 8617

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th to 10th February 2023

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Lizzi Lewins, Emily Gibson

Site code: NSF 22/258

Area of site: 350 sq m

Summary of results: Excavations for the footings of a new garage, soakaway and drainage trenches were observed. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

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

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
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| | Steve Preston ✓ 16.02.23 |

New Garage, North Stoke Farm, The Street, North Stoke, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Emily Gibson and Lizzi Lewins

Report 22/258

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at North Stoke Farm, The Street, North Stoke, Oxfordshire (SU 60984 86172) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. C. Sparkes, North Stoke Farm, The Street, North Stoke, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission (P22/S2176/HH) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a detached garage at North Stoke Farm (Fig. 2). The consent is subject to two conditions (4 and 5) relating to archaeology. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, an archaeological watching brief was required during any groundworks taking place on the site.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Weaver of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the District Council on matters relating to archaeology in the planning system. The fieldwork was undertaken by Lizzi Lewins and Emily Gibson from 6th to 10th February 2023, and the site code is NFS 22/258.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service and copied to the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

North Stoke lies 3km south of Wallingford, adjacent to the River Thames (Fig. 1). The site is located at the junction of Cook Lane and The Street (Fig. 2). The site at North Stoke Farm is currently the driveway and front garden of the farmhouse. The site is rectangular and flat, and lies *c.*45m above Ordnance Datum. The natural geology is mapped as Northmoor Sands and Gravel, 1st Terrace deposit of the River Thames (BGS 1980). The natural geology was observed within the soakaway.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document for the application prepared by Mr Steven Weaver of Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service. In summary the potential of the site stems

from its location in general within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley, but also south of the settlement core. Evidence of earlier prehistoric activity is extensive in this area, (i.e, Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009; Benson and Miles 1974) with fieldwalking recording extensive lithic scatters of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date (Ford 1987). Roman and Saxon occupation sites are also recorded on the valley floor (Ford 1987; Ford and Hazell 1989; 1990). The site lies close to an extensive Scheduled Ancient Monument (1006335), south of Cook Lane which include a Neolithic bank barrow and mortuary enclosures and several round barrows (Case 1982; Barclay *et al.* 2003, 231). Excavation also recorded a Beaker burial (Ford 1984).

A village has been documented since before Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002), with the local church dated from the late 11th century (VCH 2019). The site lies approximately 75m south-east of the churchyard boundary, which borders the west of North Stoke Farm.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. A JCB mini excavator with a 600mm bucket (partially toothed and partially bladed) was used to excavate the footings and soakaway. A toothed 300mm bucket was used to excavate areas where a previous tree root was removed in the north-eastern corner of the garage foot print, in order to remove the remaining roots.

Results

The watching brief was undertaken as intended, with all invasive groundworks associated with foundations for the new garage conducted under constant archaeological supervision.

Footings Trenches (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

The garage footings measured an area 13.0m by 7.60m, at a width of 0.60m and depths ranging from 0.60–0.80m. The topsoil had already been removed prior to the commencement of the excavation, approximately 0.06m in depth. Generally, the stratigraphy observed was firm mid grey brown subsoil (up to 0.55m deep), overlying a superficial soft light grey brown silty-sand (0.55m+). This superficial silty-sand varied in colour across the monitored area of footings, fluctuating to a light-yellow brown and dark yellow brown depending on the influence of intense rooting.

Approximately half way along the north-south footing trench closest to the boundary wall, a modern dump of ceramic building material (CBM) and chalk was uncovered measuring approximately 4.0m wide, 4.0m long and 0.45m deep. An additional dump of CBM, gravel and cement was uncovered in the south-western corner of

the footings, approximately 0.40m deep. In this area a live sewage pipe was also observed running north-south towards a drain in the north-western corner of the site. The footings also butted up against a previous septic tank, which measured 3.10m by 1.50m and consisted of brick and cement. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Soakaway (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

The soakaway monitored measured 2.0 x 2.0m, to a depth of 1.44m. The stratigraphy observed was topsoil (0.10m deep), above a firm mid grey brown sub soil (0.35m deep), overlying a modern deposit of dumped brick and chalk nodules (up to 0.8m thick) onto the light grey yellow natural sand and gravel deposit. The remains of previous brick footings were observed in the south-eastern corner of the soakaway trench. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Drainage Trenches (Fig. 3; Pl.4)

The drainage trench measured 0.45m wide, 12.50m long to a depth of 0.40m increasing to 0.60m deep from 6.50m along the trench. The stratigraphy observed was top soil (0.06m thick) above subsoil. This trench butted up against the previous septic tank, as noted above. A water pipe was contained within this trench. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recorded during the watching brief.

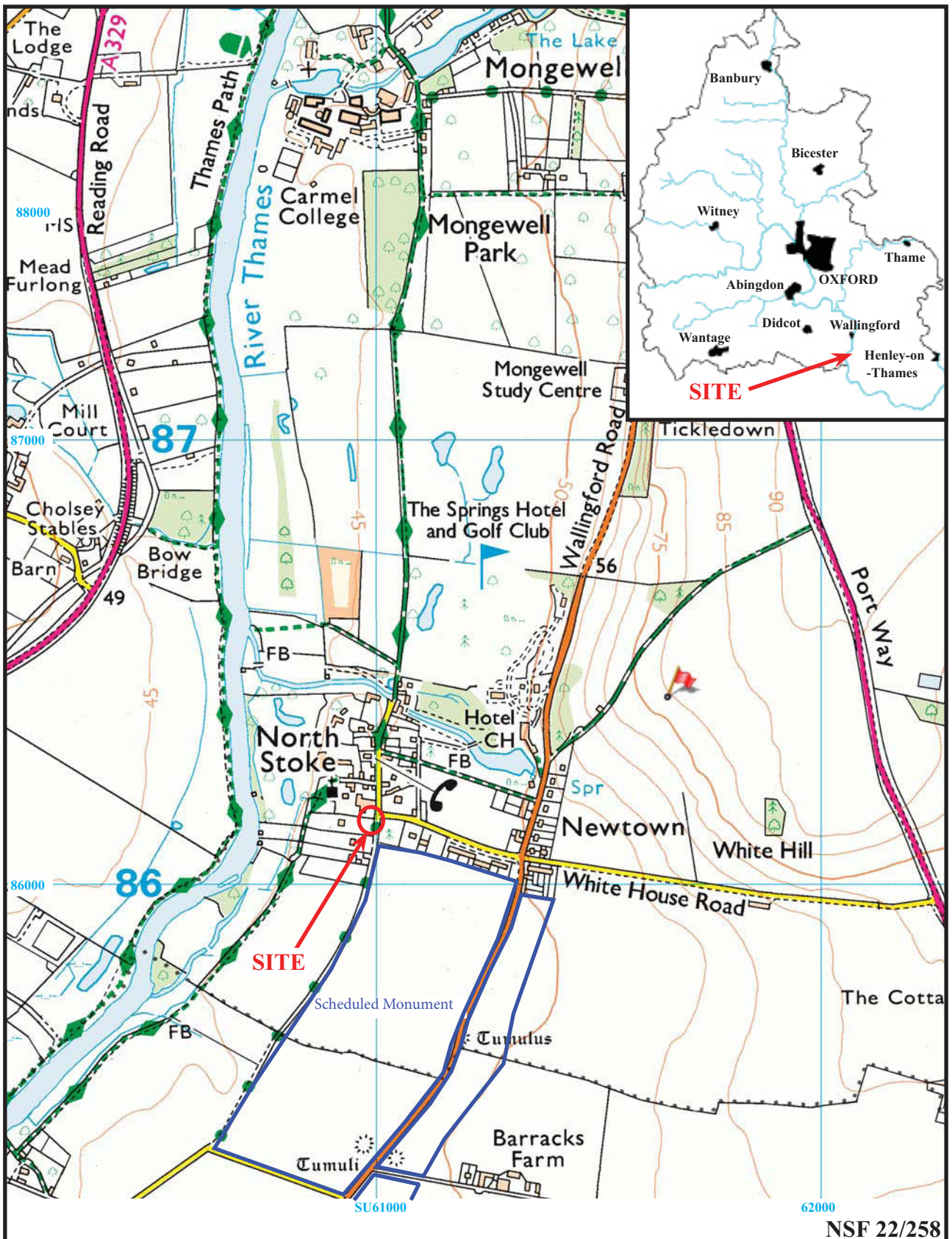
Conclusion

The archaeological watching brief was carried out as planned, monitoring the excavations of footings for a new garage, along with a related soakaway and drainage trench. However, no archaeological features or finds were observed.

References

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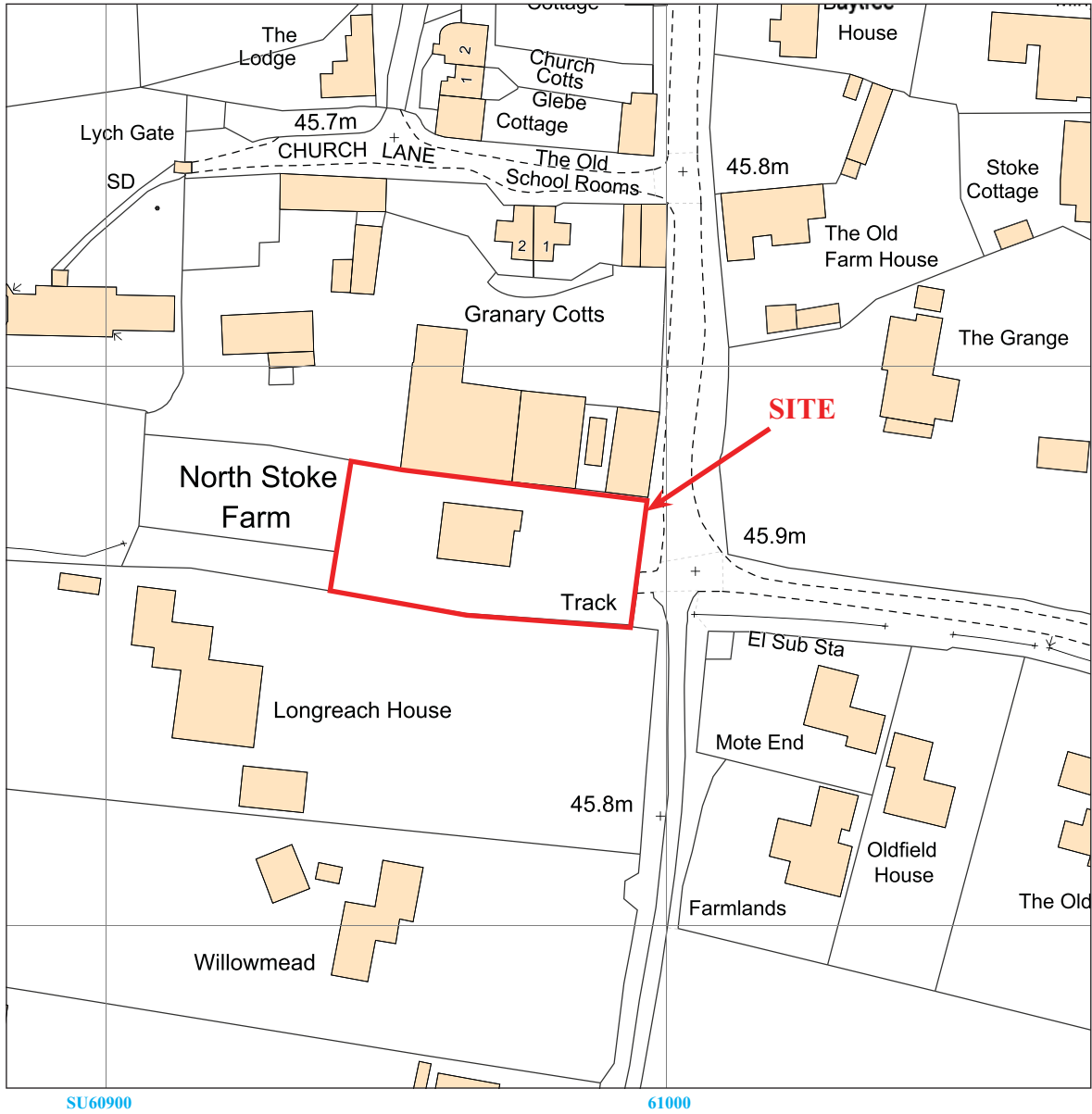
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**Figure 1. Location of site within North Stoke and
Oxfordshire.**

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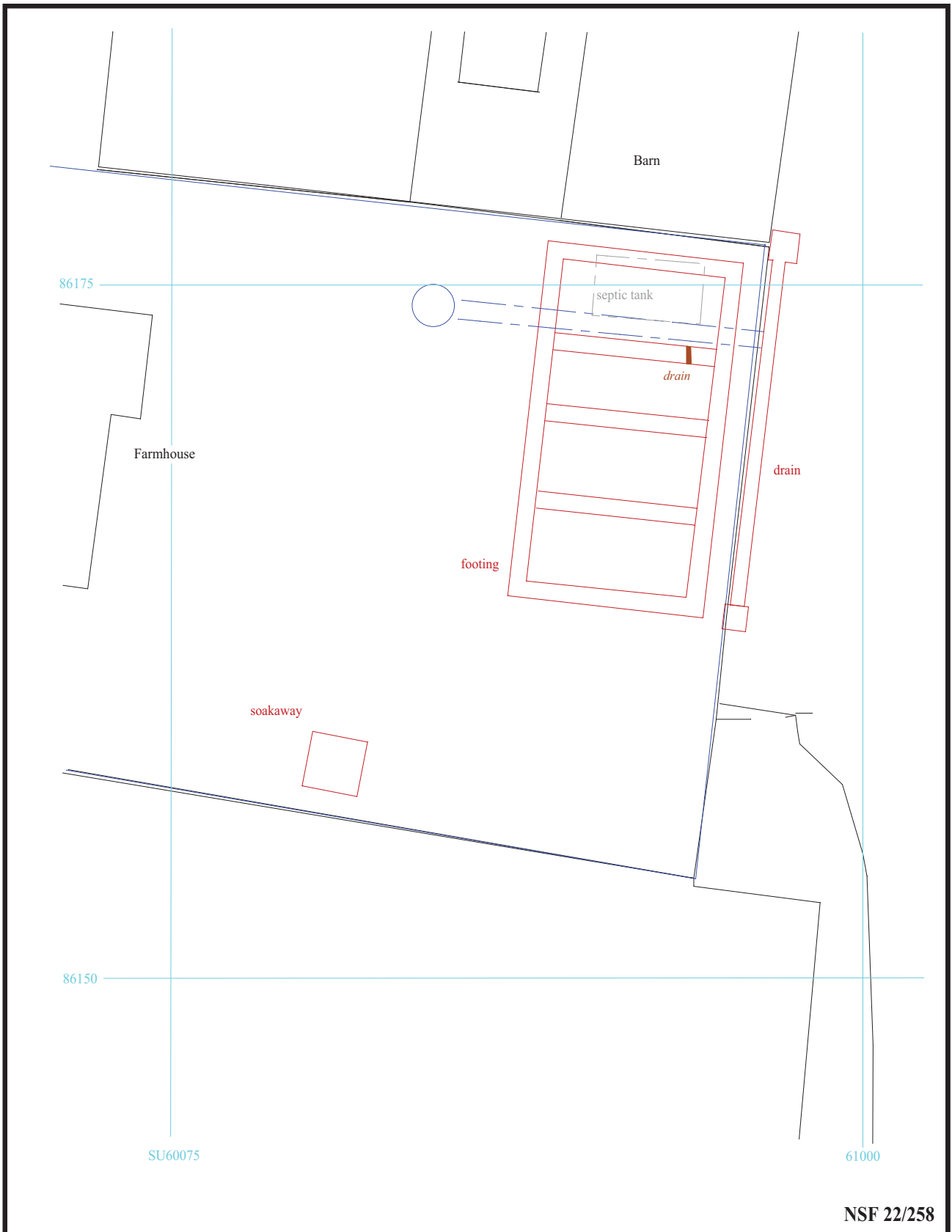
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**New Garage, North Stoke Farm, The Street,
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Archaeological Desk-based Assessment
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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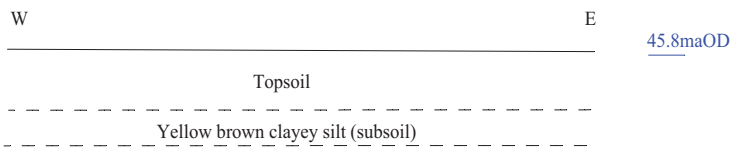


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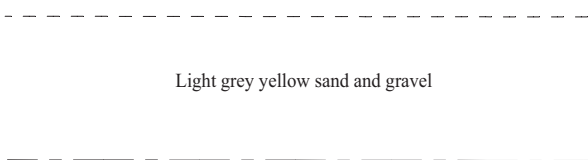
Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



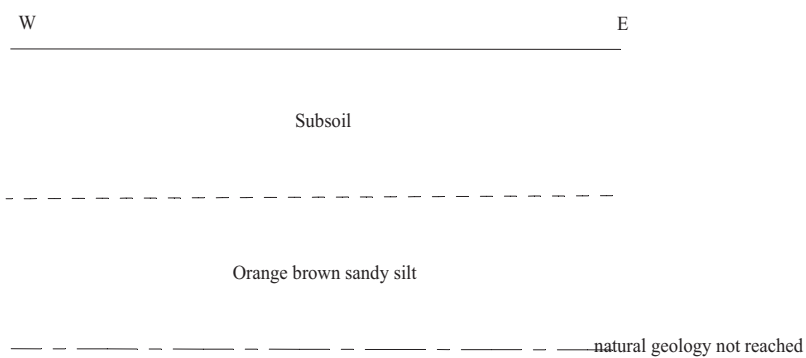
Soakaway



Made ground (brick and chalk nodule)



Footing



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. View of site, looking northwest across the footings of the new garage.



Plate 2. Section, looking north. Scales: horizontal 1.0m, vertical 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Section of soakaway, looking West, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 2m.



Plate 4. Drainage trench, looking North West, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 0.3m.

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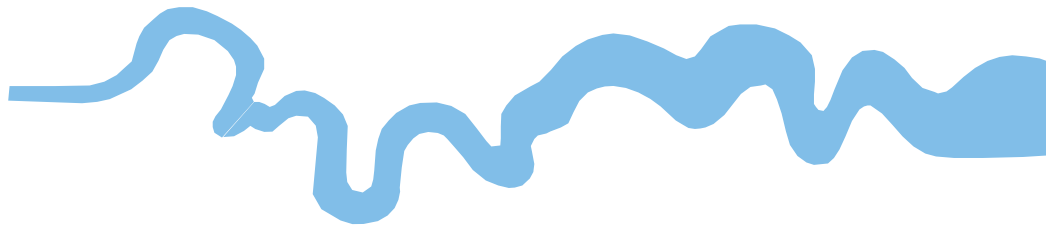
**New Garage, North Stoke Farm, The Street,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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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