

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Cromwell Lodge, Thames Street,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: TSW10/24

(SU 6088 8922)

**Cromwell Lodge, Thames Street,
Wallingford, Oxford**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Herring

by JamesMcNicol-Norbury
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeTSW 10/24

March 2010

Summary

Site name: Cromwell Lodge, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6088 8922

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 22nd – 23rd March 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: TSW 10/24

Summary of results: Two Late Saxon features were identified on the site, one truncating the other, with sherds of Saxon pottery recovered from layers elsewhere on the site.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 31.03.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 30.03.10

Cromwell Lodge, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 10/24

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Cromwell Lodge, 8 Thames Street, Wallingford (SU 6088 8922) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Graham Russell of The Ridgeway Oak Company Ltd, Unit 3 Paddicks Yard, Pearson Road, Sonning on Thames, Reading, RG4 6UJ on behalf of Mr and Mrs Herring of Cromwell Lodge, 8 Thames Street, Wallingford

Planning consents (P06/W0674 and P09/W0245) have been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new garage with studio and store. The planning consent includes a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by, and designed in accordance with a brief supplied by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury on 22nd March 2010 and the site code is TSW 10/24.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Wallingford on the west bank of the Thames and on the eastern side of Thames Street (Fig. 2). The site is currently occupied by residential buildings and the actual area covered by the works was previously occupied by a gravel driveway and a garage. The underlying geology is First Terrace (flood plain) River Gravels (BGS 1980). The site lies at approximately 46m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of this site was highlighted in the project brief supplied by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Oram 2010). In summary the site lies in an area of archaeological potential within the

historic Saxon and medieval core of Wallingford, immediately adjacent to the predicted line of the eastern defences of the Saxon burh (Airs *et al.* 1975). Saxon floor deposits have been recorded to the west of the site and medieval burials to the south-east presumably associated with the former medieval St Michael's Church. Cromwell Lodge itself is a grade II listed building dating to the mid 17th century with an 18th century front.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed development. This involved the monitoring and examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, the digging of foundation trenches and the digging of service runs and soakaways. For this site the groundworks of possible archaeological interest were to consist of two components: ground reduction and the digging of eleven rectangular pad footings.

Results

Ground reduction

Topsoil / made ground to a depth up to 0.20m was removed from the area covered by the works using a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket (Fig. 3, Pl.1). No deposits nor finds of archaeological interest were observed for this area.

Footing pads

Eleven pad footings of *c.* 1.00 x 0.75m x 0.80m were dug using a toothless bucket (Fig. 3 and Pl. 2). The stratigraphy of the footings in the southern portion of the site (from the pre-ground reduction level) comprised 0.10m of topsoil over 0.15m of made ground consisting of a mid grey/brown silty clay with modern inclusions. This in turn overlay 0.31m of mid brown silty clay which in turn overlay river terrace gravel which formed the natural geology.

In footings 7, 8 and 10 the same general stratigraphy was observed but the natural geology was not exposed. However a layer of dark grey silty clay (56) was observed beneath the made ground. A similar layer observed in footing 6 produced fragments of late Saxon pottery and a horn core suggesting that this deposit might be of cultural significance.

Two archaeological features were identified in footing 1 (Fig. 4; Pl. 1). Cut 1 was 0.75m wide and over 0.65m deep with vertical sides and three fills (50–52), the upper most fill (50) was a dark grey silty clay

overlying (51) a mottled grey brown silty clay with gravel inclusions which in turn overlay (52) a dark grey silty clay, no finds were recovered from any of these layers. A second cut (2) was recorded truncating cut 1 with a gradual sloping side and a more vertical side again with three fills, the top most fill (53) was a mid grey silty clay overlying a brown/ grey silty clay (54) which in turn overlay a very dark grey silty clay fill (55). Six fragments of late Saxon pottery and animal bone were recovered from fill 54 and animal bone from fill 55 (Fig. 4). Due to the limited exposure of the features in the trench, neither the full depth nor extent of these two features could be determined. Layer 56 was not identified in this footing trench.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprises 15 sherds with a total weight of 244g. It consists of a mixture of largely late Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery which indicates that there was activity at the site from the 10th – late 11th centuries. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

OXB: Late Saxon Oxford Ware. Late 8th– early 11th century. 2 sherds, 22g.

OXR: St. Neots Ware type T1(1), AD850–1100. 5 sherds, 94g.

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975–1350. 2 sherds, 22 g.

WA38: Wallingford ware, AD1050–1250. 3 sherds, 18g.

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 2 sherds, 24g.

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550 onwards. 1 sherd, 64g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The sherds were generally fairly large and in good condition, indicating that they were reliably stratified. The single sherd of OXDR aside, all the pottery from the footings is late Saxon or Saxo-Norman, with the latest sherds probably dating to around the end of the 11th century, with OXR and OXB being very reliable indicators of late Saxon activity, probably of late 9th/early 10th to early/mid 11th century date.

Animal Bone by Danielle Milbank

A total of 10 fragments of disarticulated animal bone, weighing 323g, was recovered from three contexts (Appendix 3). The preservation of the remains was moderate, with fairly high fragmentation and some surface erosion. The generally small fragment size limited the amount of identifiable bone. The elements which could not be identified by species were all categorized as belonging to one medium-sized animal (sheep/goat or pig), and included several ribs and long bone fragments.

Of the fragments which could be identified, a cattle horn core was recovered from foundation trench 6. Deposit 54 contained a cattle right tibia/fibula, with clear butchery marks. No other information could be retrieved from the fragmented remains, and the animal bone overall is likely to represent domestic consumption although the horn core could derive from more specialist activity.

Conclusion

Natural geology was only encountered in one small area of the site during the watching brief where the presence of two probable pits, one of which truncated the other and dated to the mid 11th century, were identified. Pottery of a similar period was also recovered from other areas of the site suggesting a period of activity on the site during this time. No trace of any features which might be related to the defensive *burh* ditch were identified.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Hillson, S, 1992, *Mammal Bones and Teeth*, London
- Mellor, M and Oakley, G, 1984, 'A summary of the key assemblages, a study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century', in T G Hassall, C E Halpin and M Mellor, 'Excavations in St Ebbe's, Oxford, 1967–1976: Part II: Post-medieval domestic tenements and the Post-Dissolution site of the Greyfriars', *Oxoniensia*, **49**, 181–211
- Mellor, M, 1994, 'Oxfordshire Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, **59**, 17–217
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Oram, R, 2010, 'Cromwell Lodge Thames Street, Wallingford, Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford

APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of excavated features

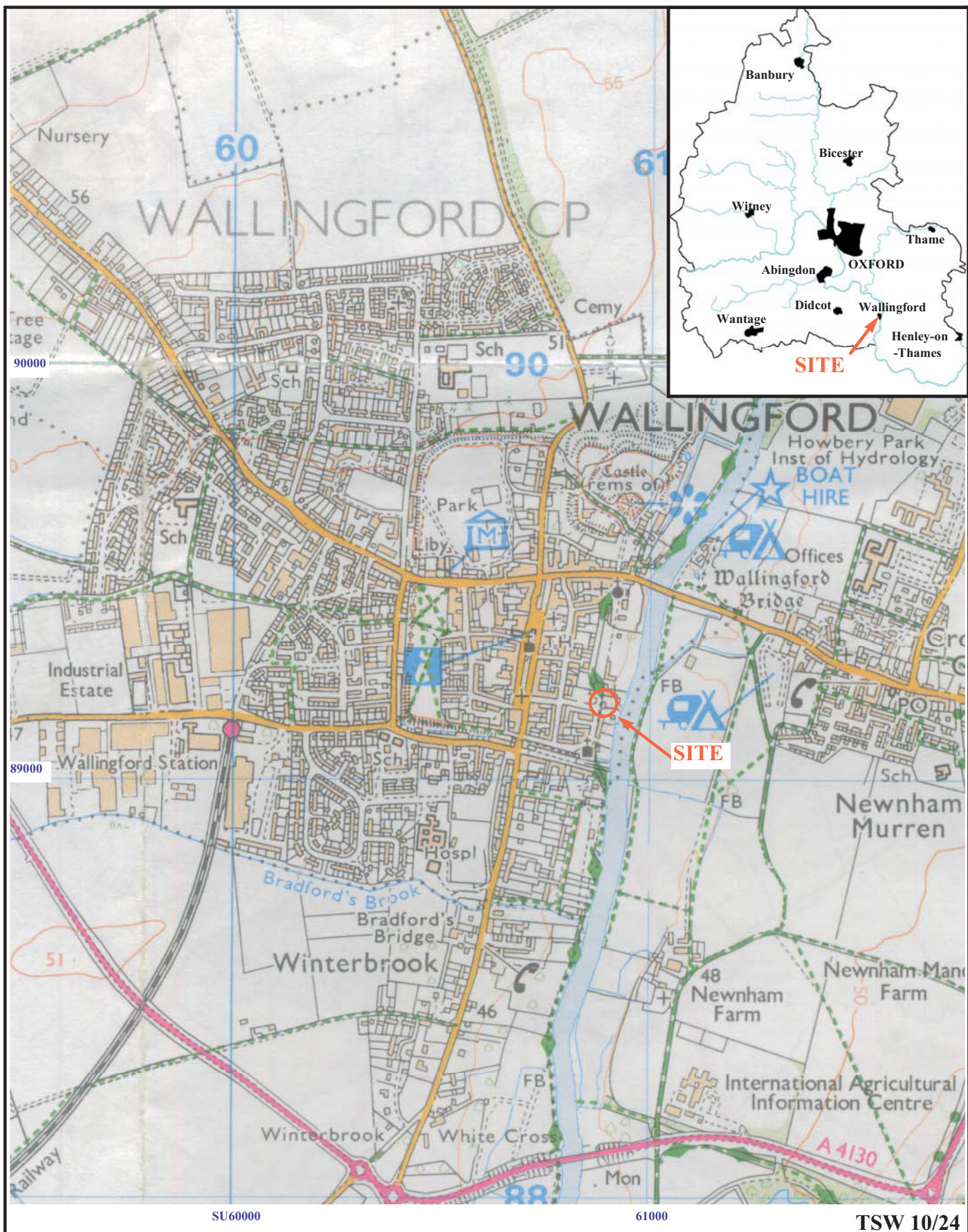
<i>Footing Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	50-52	Pit	Late Saxon or earlier	Stratigraphy
1	2	53-55	Pit	Late Saxon	Pottery

APPENDIX 2: Pottery

<i>TP</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>OXR</i>		<i>OXB</i>		<i>OXAC</i>		<i>OXBF</i>		<i>WA38</i>		<i>OXDR</i>	
			<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1	2	54	3	16					2	24	1	5		
7		56									1	6		
8		56					1	9						
10		56	2	78	2	22	1	13			1	7		
10		u/s											1	64
		Total	5	94	2	22	2	22	2	24	3	18	1	64

APPENDIX 3: Inventory of animal bone

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No. Frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Cow</i>	<i>Medium -sized</i>
	56	1	171	1	-
2	54	7	131	-	7
2	55	2	21	-	2
	Total		1842		
	MNI			1	1

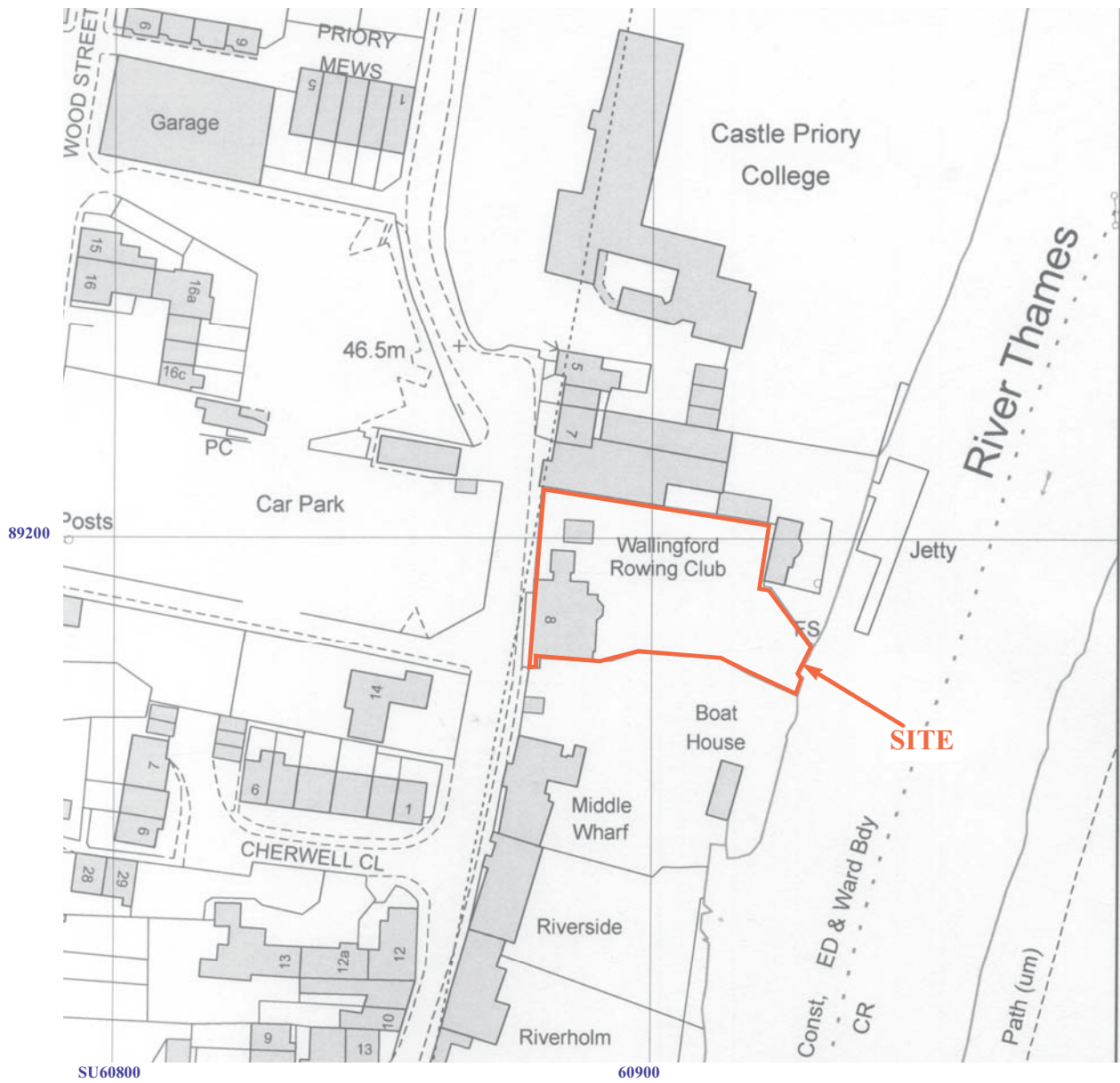


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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Thames Street.

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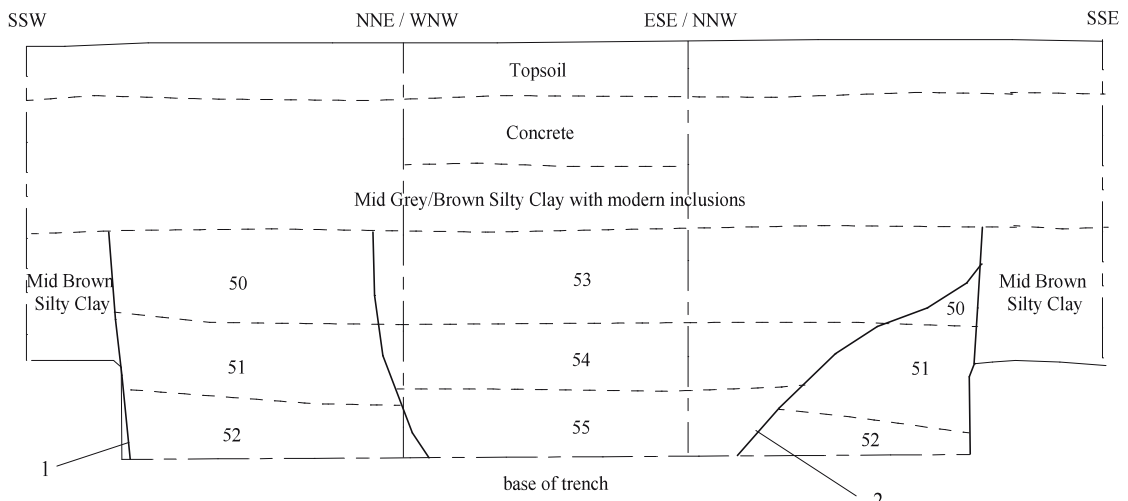


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Figure 3. Location of Groundworks



Pad foundation 1



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Figure 4. Representative Section



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Plate 1. General site view, looking north



Plate 2. Pits 1 and 2, looking east, scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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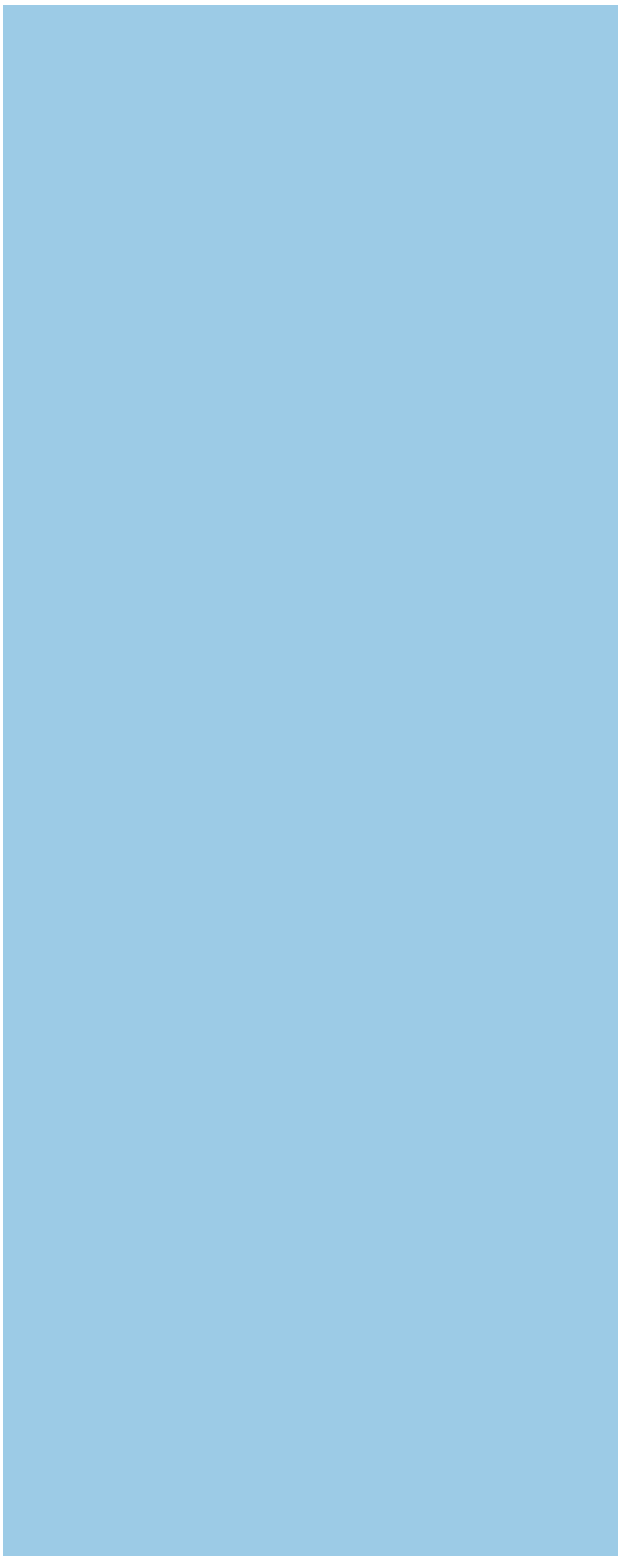
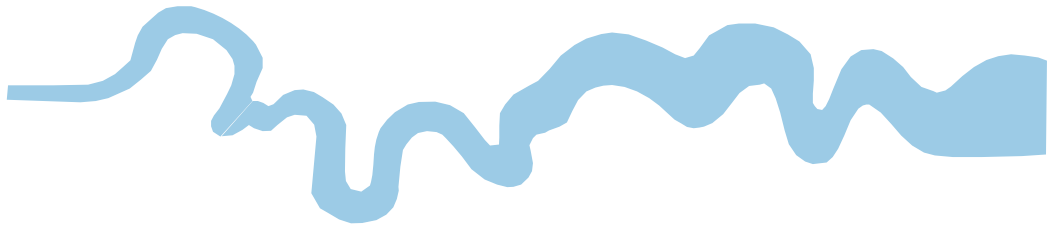
Plates 1 and 2

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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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