

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

**Brick Kiln Copse Moat,
Semley, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

**by
Susan Colley and David Platt**

Site Code: BSW10/20

(ST 8935 2761)

New Drainage Trench, Brick Kiln Copse Moat, Semley, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For BAM Nuttall

by Susan Colley and David Platt
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code BSW 10/20

June 2010

Summary

Site name: Brick Kiln Copse Moat, Semley, Wiltshire

Grid reference: ST 8935 2761

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 10th May to 3rd June 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Colley and David Platt

Site code: BSW 10/20

Area of site: c.140 sq m

Summary of results: Groundworks comprising topsoil stripping and trench digging were carried out adjacent to the scheduled monument of Brick Kiln Copse Moat. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were observed.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Salisbury Museum in due course. The archive comprises seven record sheets, a site plan, 20 each of colour prints, colour slide and a black and white contact sheet. There were no finds and no detailed drawn plans or sections.

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Report 10/20

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Brick Kiln Copse Moat, Semley, Wiltshire (ST 8935 2765) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mike Nowell for BAM Nuttall, Downside Offices, Downside Yard, Station Hill, Three Bridges, West Sussex, RH10 1LY on behalf of their client, Network Rail.

The works required consent under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* (1979), due to their location directly to the north and north-east of the moated site of Brick Kiln Copse (which is Scheduled Monument 12042). The scope of works was to include arranging access to a contractors compound and materials storage area, for the excavation of a drainage trench across the top of the railway cutting, and the establishing of an access track. Though it was identified that the works would not enter the area of the Scheduled Monument, it was thought that associated deposits outside the moat could be encountered, along with the partially backfilled north and western enclosure ditches of the monument.

In the light of these possible impacts, an archaeological watching brief was required, in order to comply with the Scheduled Monument Consent. The works were carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Ms Clare King of Wiltshire County Archaeology Service, and Mr Shane Gould, Inspector of Ancient Monuments of English Heritage.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Colley and David Platt between 10th May and 3rd June 2010, and the site code is BSW 10/20. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Salisbury Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located just north of the village of Semley, which is *c.* 4km north-east of Shaftesbury. The works themselves are located in land between the fenced enclosure for the moated scheduled monument and the fence of the railway cutting. This land is roughly triangular in shape. The underlying geology is mapped as Kimmeridge Clay (BGS 1996). During the investigation, the natural geology exposed varied between pale grey pebbly clay and orange brown to blue/brown clay.

Archaeological background

The Wiltshire Historic Environment Record was consulted on 18th March 2010 for a radius of 250m around the site. Just two entries are recorded for the study area. However, the site is located immediately adjacent to the moated site of Brick Kiln Copse (SM 12042), which is visible as an earthwork. This is roughly square, partially filled in on the western and northern sides (Fig. 2). The site has not been archaeologically excavated. It lies 0.5km north of the village of Semley, which is not mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002), but is thought to have Medieval origins.

Moated sites are mostly located within Lowland Britain on badly drained soil, and can be from as early as a 13th or 14th century in date (Adkins and Adkins 1982). It is thought that most contained some sort of building, sometimes associated with a manor house, often with the addition of dependent settlement outside the moat. Some did remain empty, however, as a protected site to keep livestock or animals for the use of hunting (Wilson 1985). Water to fill the moat could have been drawn to it from the nearby River Sem, which is situated a little to the north.

Of other archaeological note, the site is located on the northern side of the archaeologically rich Cranbourne Chase. Many earthworks from prehistoric up to Medieval date, exist close to Semley, such as Castle Rings near Wincombe, a possible Iron Age fort site, and Old Wardour Castle. It is thought that a Roman road (Margery 1955, route 46) passed through here linking Bath to Badbury and continuing further to a legionary fortress at Wimborne, itself sited to protect a possible port, and certainly a settlement on the south coast at Hamworthy, Poole (Coles and Pine, 2009). The exact location of the road is not known within the vicinity of the site but is thought to follow the north-south Donhead Hollow south of Semley, through Charlton Down.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits threatened by the groundworks. This was expected to involve examination of a drainage trench and the compound entrance of Britmore Lane (Fig. 2). Which would include overburden stripping. Some areas to be excavated lay in previously disturbed areas (the cutting slope) or were shallow (topsoil disturbance only) with mitigation measures in place to minimize deep disturbance. All areas were excavated under supervision by an archaeologist at all times, using a bladed grading bucket on a 360° mechanical excavator.

Results (Figs 2 and 3)

Access ramp

An access ramp was cut through the hedgerow off Britmore Lane 8m wide and roughly 10m in length (Plate 1). At its deepest point the access cutting was 1m. The topsoil comprised a thin layer (0.20m) of dark grey brown sandy silt directly overlying the natural geology. A sondage 1m square was dug adjacent to the carriageway to search for a service pipe, but this was not revealed. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Compound/material storage area

Further topsoil stripping occurred, to a depth of 0.1m to 0.2m, over an area of c.14m by 4m wide to the east of the moated site prior to the laying of geotextile and formation of a compound surface. The overburden stripping was not deep enough to expose the archaeologically relevant level and no archaeological deposits were observed (Plate 2).

Septic tank trench

A septic tank trench 8m by 4m was excavated to the east of the compound area to a depth of 0.5m. This revealed c. 0.15m of topsoil above 0.15m of grey brown sandy clay subsoil above the natural clay. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Drainage trench

A trench was dug in order to install drainage piping, running along the top of the cutting to the north of the moated site. This was done in order to prevent excess water flow adjacent to the moat which had previously caused a collapse of the railway embankment on its southern side. An access track was thought to be needed to create a level and handstanding base to dig the drainage trench, but was not in the event required, and the drain was dug directly through the topsoil.

This drainage trench was c.75m in length, 0.6m wide and was excavated to a depth of between 1.1m to 1.8m deep. This generally uncovered undisturbed stratigraphy, though a brick culvert was noted to cross the trench perpendicularly at a depth of 1.1m deep, 15.5m from the west end of the trench. This was modern in date, seen to be cut through the subsoil, and thought to be associated with drainage from the moat. It is also noted that this may well have been associated with the ground instability on the railway cutting. Due to its location it was thought that this would have been running from the base of the moat ditch outside its course. No clear cut for the

moat (which is not visible as an earthwork at this point) was noted in the drainage sections. No archaeological deposits were identified with the trench.

Finds

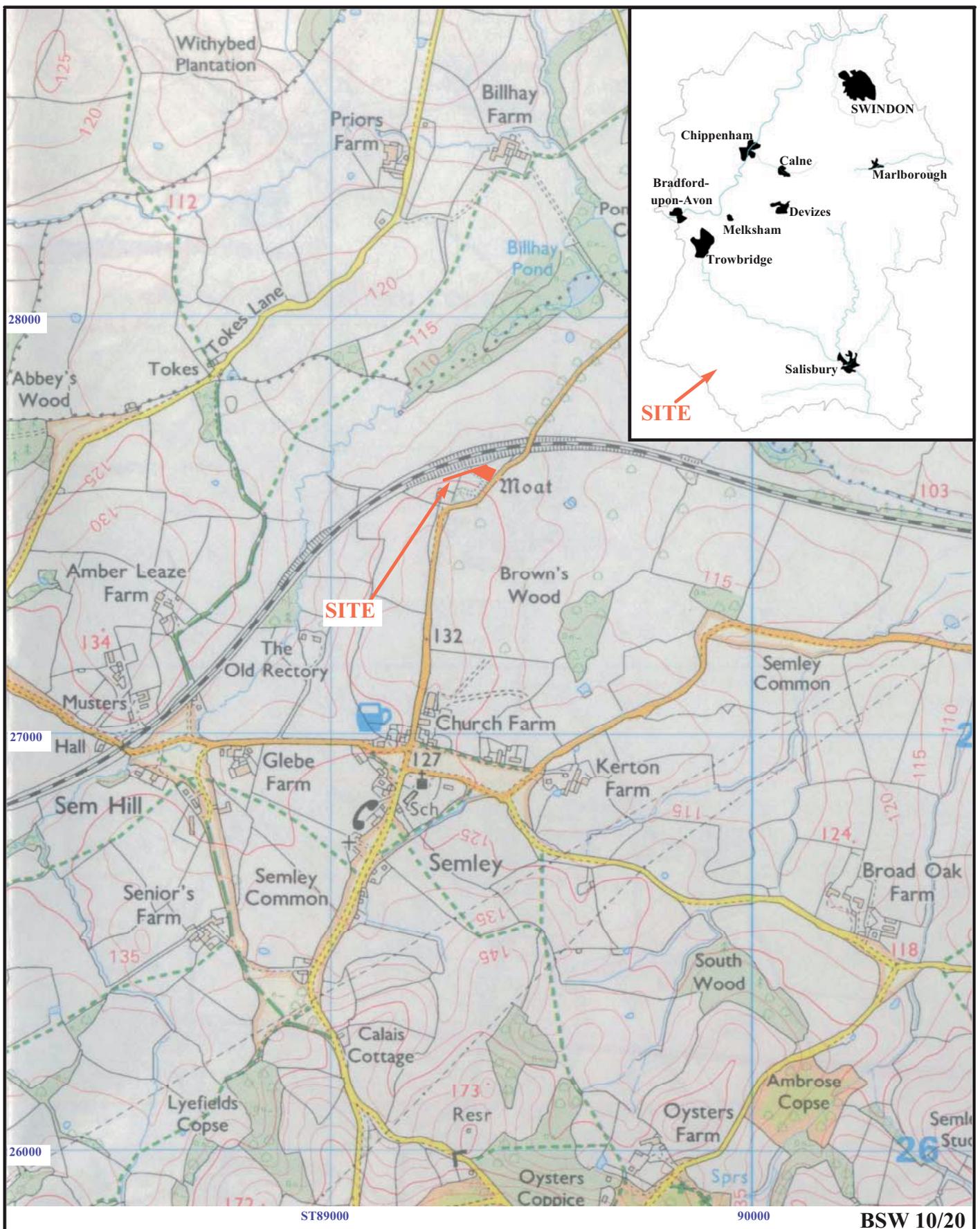
No finds of archaeological interest were uncovered during this watching brief.

Conclusion

Although the works were carried out within the vicinity of this Scheduled Monument, no archaeological relevant finds nor deposits were uncovered during the groundworks.

References

- Adkins, L and Adkins, R A, 1982, *The Handbook of British Archaeology*, London
BGS, 1992, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 297, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Coles, S and Pine, J, 2009, 'Excavation of an Iron Age and Roman settlement and salt production site at Shapwick Road, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset, 2005-6', *Proc Dorset Natur Hist Archaeol Soc* **130**, 63-98
Williams, A and Martin, G, H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London.
Margary, I D 1955, *Roman Roads in Britain*, London.
Wilson, D, 1985, *Moated Sites*, Princes Risborough



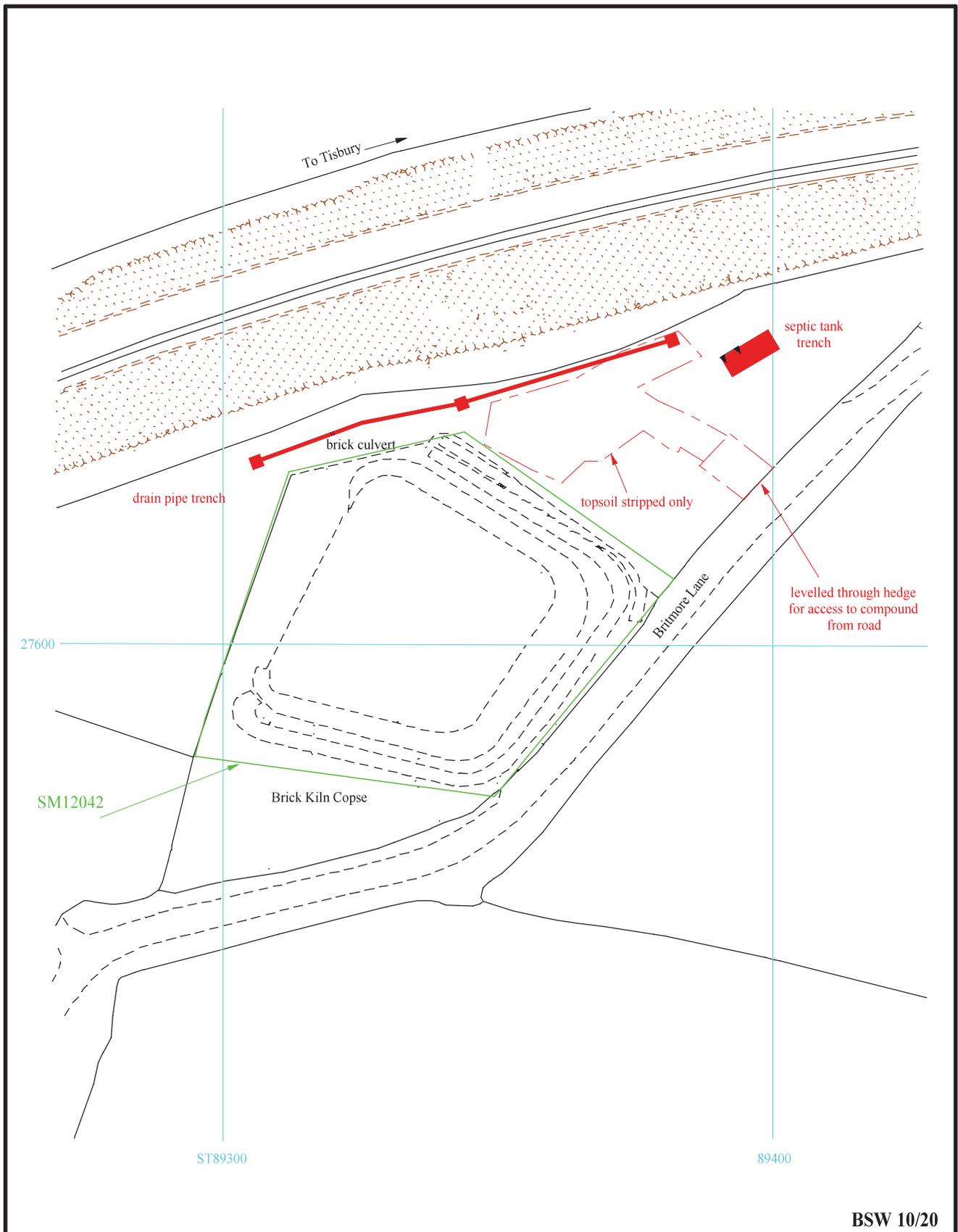
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Semley and Wiltshire.

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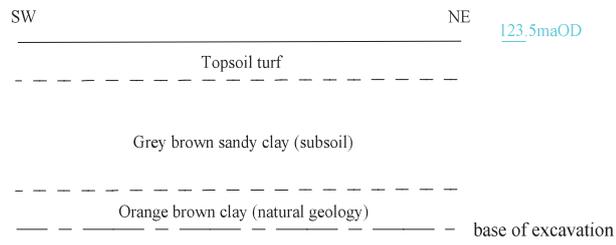
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Figure 2. Location of areas observed during watching brief.

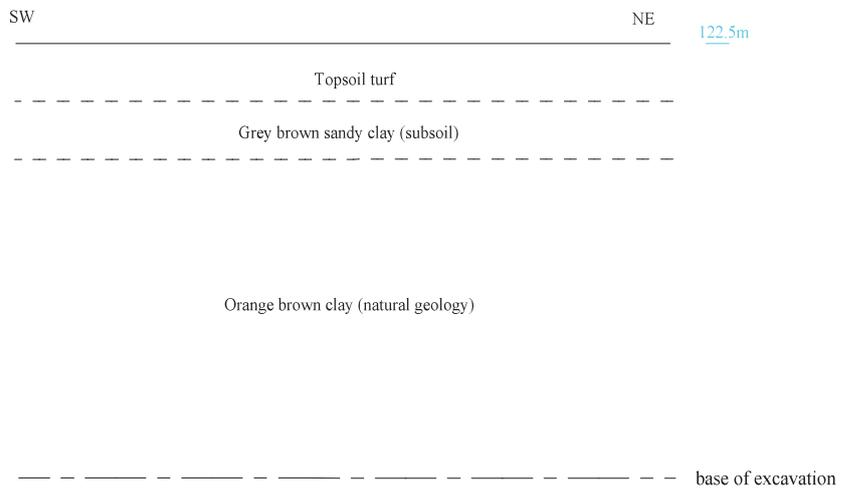


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Septic tank trench



Drainage trench



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Figure 3. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Access trench, looking north west, scales 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Compound topsoil only strip, looking south west, scales 1m and 2m

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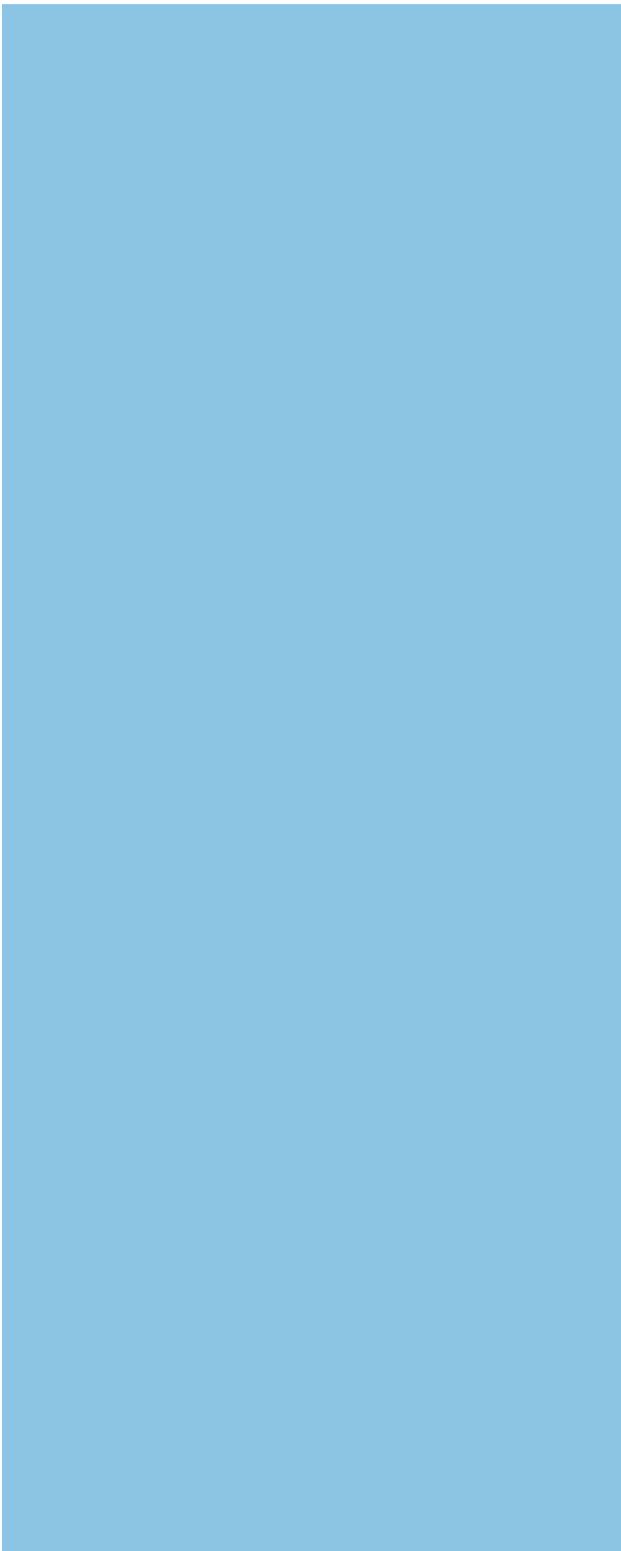
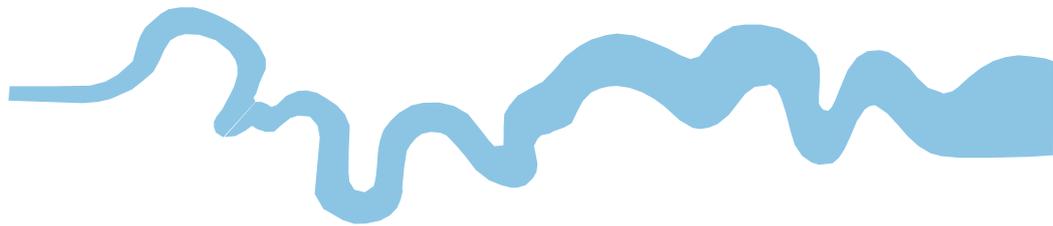
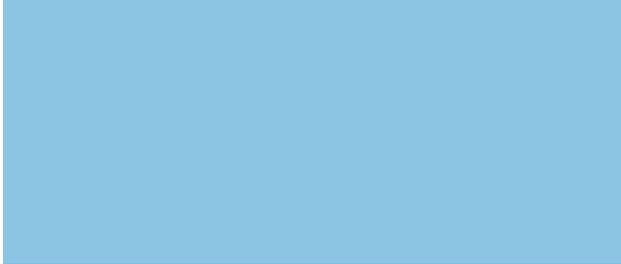
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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