

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**New Children's and Community Centre,  
Wood Farm Primary School, Titup Hall Drive,  
Headington, Oxford**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by James McNicoll-Norbury**

**Site Code: TLH 10/44**

**(SP 5515 0625)**

**New Children's and Community Centre,  
Wood Farm Primary School, Titup Hall Drive,  
Headington, Oxford**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Oxfordshire County Council**

by James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code TLH 10/44

**July 2010**

## Summary

**Site name:** New Children's and Community Centre, Wood Farm Primary School, Titup Hall Drive, Headington, Oxford

**Grid reference:** SP 5515 0625

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 14th–15th June 2010

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** TLH 10/44

**Area of site:** 721 sq m

**Summary of results:** A single sherd of Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the stripped surface of the natural geology across the site but no deposits of archaeological interest were present.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.07.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 27.07.10

**New Childrens and Community Centre, Wood Farm Primary School,  
Headington, Oxford  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Report 10/44**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Wood farm Primary School, Titup Hall Drive, Headington, Oxford (SP 5515 0625) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Charlotte Morris of Jacobs Engineering U.K. Limited, Jacobs house, London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1BL on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. The County Council has approved an application (R3.0007.10) that involves the demolition of existing school buildings and the construction of replacement school buildings in three phases. The first phase works subject to the watching brief described below comprised construction of the new Childrens and Community Centre. The planning consent is subject to a condition requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. Archaeological monitoring of subsequent phases of the school re-development were conditional on the findings of this first phase of observation.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the County's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Paul Smith, County Archaeological Officer of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, and based on a brief provided by him (Smith 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury on 14th and 15th June 2010 and the site code is TLH 10/44.

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

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located off Titup Hall Drive in the Headington suburb of Oxford in the grounds of Wood Farm Primary School (Fig. 2). Areas of the site are occupied by former school buildings awaiting demolition and car parks. The underlying geology is described as Kimmeridge clay with Wheatley Limestone Member just to the

west (BGS 1994) and Kimmeridge clay was observed on site and the site lies at 98-100m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the area has been highlighted by a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Smith 2010). In summary, the site lies in an area of archaeological potential. The areas to the south and east of Oxford City are notable for the large numbers of Roman pottery kiln sites whose products were traded widely across southern England in Roman times (Briggs 1986; Young 1977). In the locality of the site, antiquarian observations during quarrying operations noted the presence of a Roman kiln complex *c.* 140m to the south west. A possible (Bronze Age) round barrow has also been recorded 150m to the east of the site. Recent work in the Headington area such as at Bayards Hill Primary School revealed the presence of the Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester (Lewis 2009) with Roman occupation found at Headington School (Cass 2009) but elsewhere in the area as at Horspath Driftway (Dawson 2009) and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (Hammond 2003) no archaeological deposits were revealed.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This will involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks involved with the construction of the phase 1 school development such as excavations for foundations, hard play areas and services trenches. Further phases may need to be monitored depending on the results of the phase 1 observations.

Archaeological deposits which are threatened by development were to be excavated and recorded. Sufficient time will be allowed to carry this out within the groundworkers schedules but without causing undue delay.

## **Results**

The phase 1 area of the site was that predicted to be the least disturbed of the school site, by not being occupied by former buildings. Ground reduction took place using a 360° machine fitted a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision in an area 37m long by 19.5m wide (Fig. 3). At the western end of the strip the stratigraphy comprised 0.20m made ground overlying natural geology consisting of Kimmeridge Clay. Moving eastwards across the strip the made ground, consisting of loose gravels, broken brick and clay, became

increasingly thicker up to 0.50m in depth, which lay beneath a previously removed area of Tarmac and small grassed areas (Fig. 4). No archaeological features were identified. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the surface of the stripped area and two modern truncations were also observed in the northern corner of the strip, one of these was a drain, the other a linear feature was revealed to be a live service trench for the previous school building.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by James McNicoll-Norbury

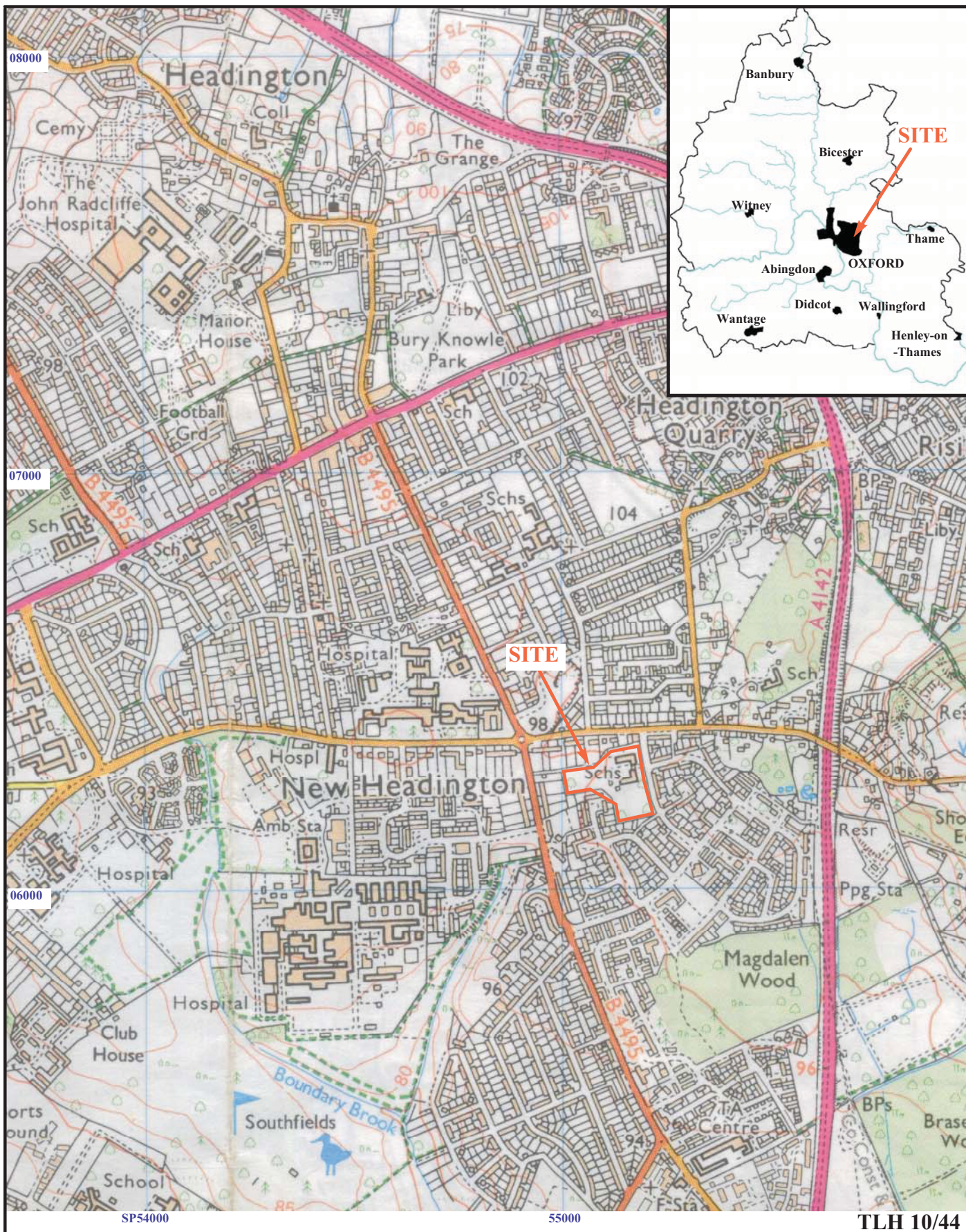
A single sherd of Roman greyware pottery was recovered from the stripped area weighing 14g. The sherd forms part of a base of a small vessel.

## **Conclusion**

The watching brief has not revealed any archaeological features on the site with recovery of just a single sherd of Roman pottery from the top of the natural geology. Stray finds of Roman pottery are found widely, presumably as a by-product of manuring of farmland. On the basis of these results for the phase 1 re-development area, the archaeological potential for the phase 2 and 3 areas appears to be low.

## **References**

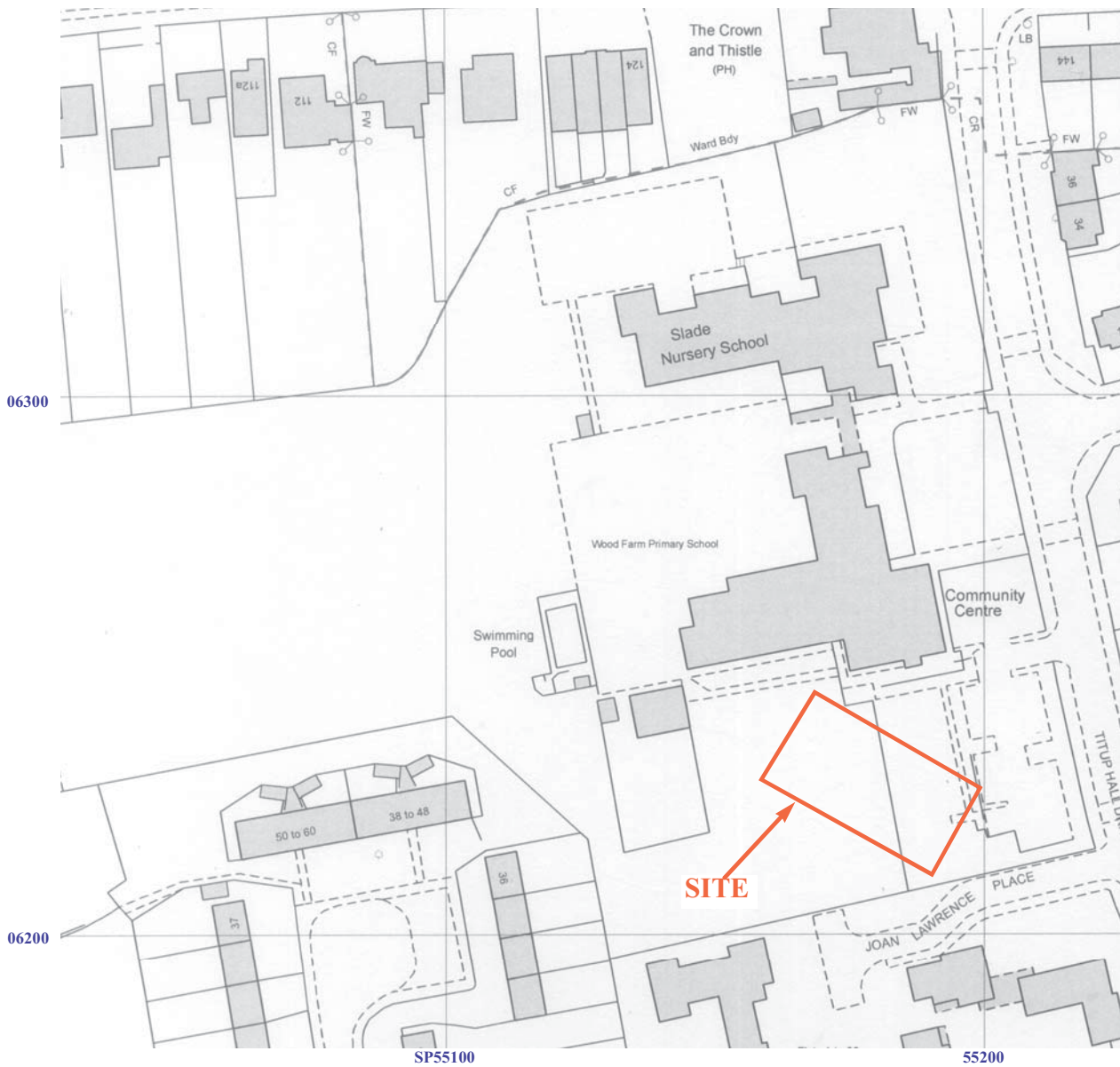
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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Headington and Oxfordshire.

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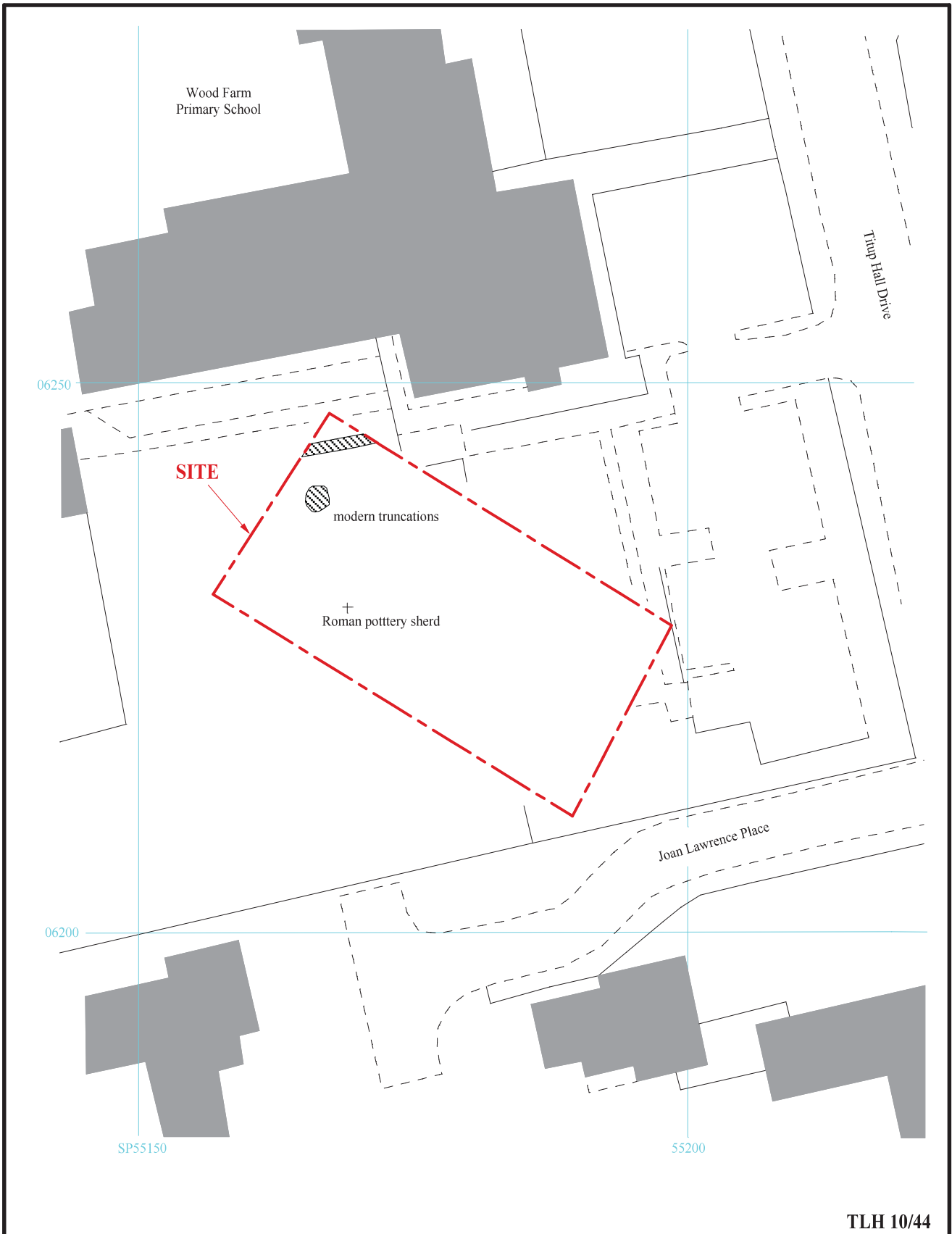
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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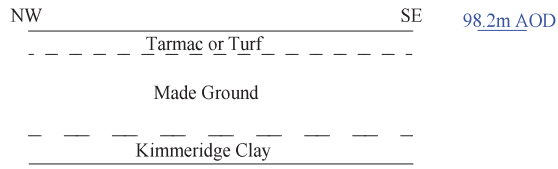


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Figure 3. Location of area for watching brief.



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Figure 4. Representative Section





Plate 1. Drain in stripped area, looking south.



Plate 2. Linear disturbance, looking south south east.

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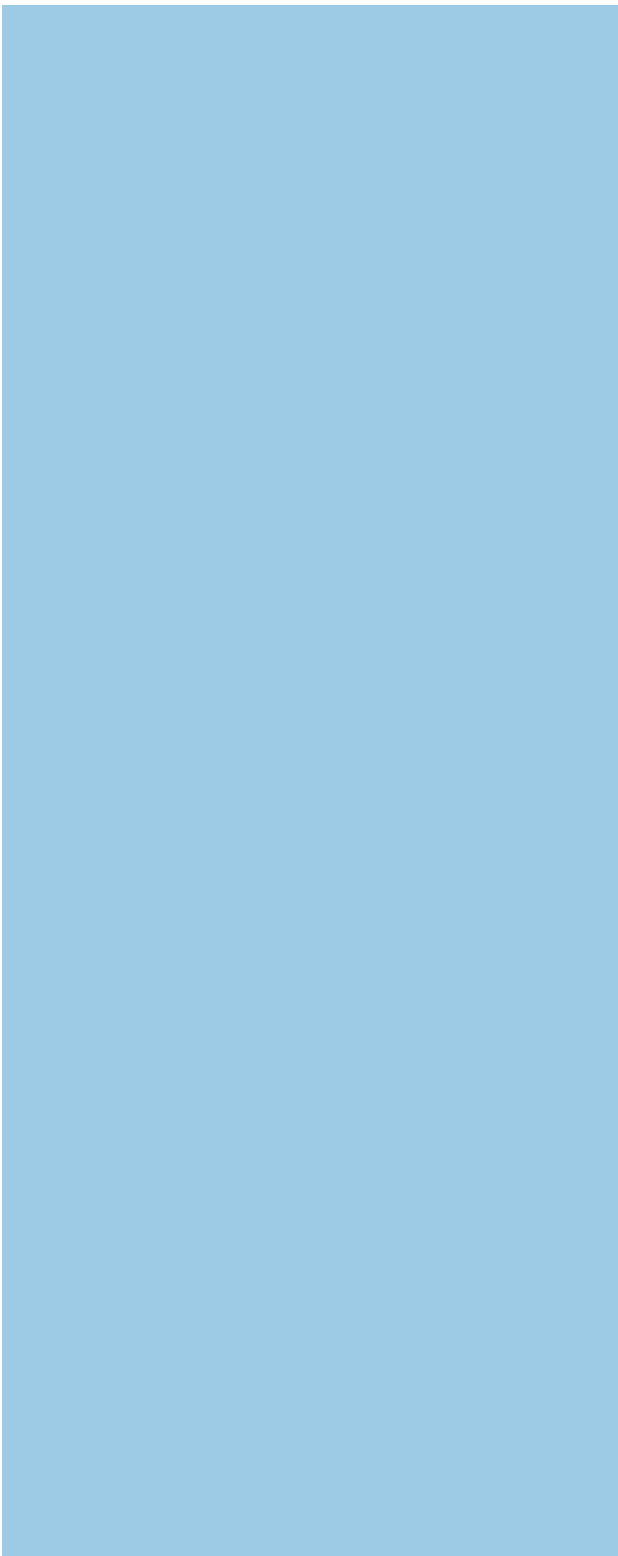
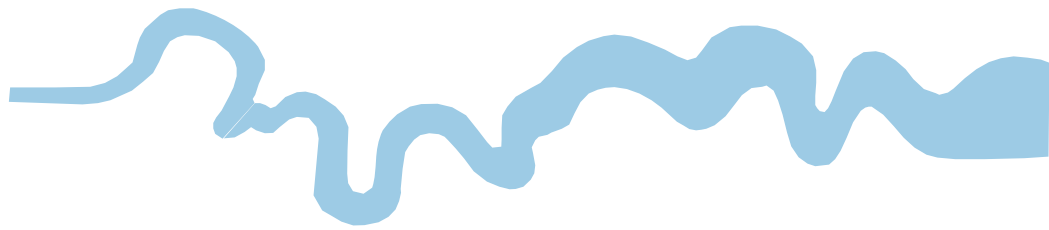
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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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