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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire,  
Proposed Access Road Corridor**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Jamie Lewis and Jo Pine**

**Site Code: WWO09/57-2**

**(SU 6020 8010)**

# **Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire Proposed Access Road Corridor**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd**

by James Lewis and Jo Pine  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeWWO09-57

**March 2010**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, Proposed Access Road Corridor

**Grid reference:** SU 6020 8010

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 25th–26th March 2010

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James Lewis

**Site code:** WWO 09/57

**Summary of results:** This evaluation, targeted at an access road corridor for a proposed housing development site, has located a modest range of cut deposits of archaeological interest. Two ditches, pre-recorded as cropmarks, are clearly of medieval date whereas the remainder of the features investigated are undated but are thought to be of medieval or earlier origin. It is considered that these deposits relate to occupation and landscape activity already evidenced elsewhere on the site. None of these features are obviously contemporary with, or related to, nearby circular cropmark sites, assumed to be ceremonial or burial monuments of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date.

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

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# Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, Proposed Access Road Corridor An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis and Jo Pine

Report 09/57c

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Winterbrook, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, SU6020 8810 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Eyre, of Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd, Berkeley House, Abingdon Science Park, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3NB.

Planning permission is to be sought from South Oxfordshire District Council to develop the site for housing which will also involve ancillary works including access roads, paths, and public open spaces, etc. The whole proposed site covers an area of *c.*24 ha but this investigation is intended specifically to examine the corridor of the access road to the development.

Previous evaluation of the larger *c.*24 ha area revealed the archaeological potential of the area (Lewis 2009). It revealed sporadic, scattered finds and deposits of earlier prehistoric, Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, Roman and medieval date but with the dominant period present being that of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, whose remains were more concentrated and located to the north west of the whole proposal site.

The corridor for the access road to the proposed development traverses a zone on the site which contains two circular cropmarks. These cropmark sites are intended to be preserved in-situ and are to be excluded from the development area. The archaeological evaluation described below was intended to establish the quality and quantity of any archaeological deposits on the road corridor section of the site with particular reference to the nearby circular cropmark sites. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and South Oxfordshire District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis, James Early, Aigi Castle and Jackie Pitt between the 25th and 26th March 2010 and the site code is WWO09/57. 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 of the proposed access route lies to the west of Winterbrook and to the north of the Wallingford bypass. It runs from the roundabout on the A4130 in a sinuous but northerly direction. The site is currently under an arable crop (Fig. 2). The site is mostly located on first (floodplain) terrace gravels (BGS 1980). It is at a height of approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The previous evaluation of the site (Lewis 2009) revealed prehistoric (Iron Age) occupation to the north-west and south-west, along with three human burial deposits (two of Early Bronze Age date and one undated). Cropmarks of circular monuments visible from the air lie either side of the road corridor and are possibly the remains of Bronze Age burial mounds. Geophysical survey of part of the site in 1997 (GSB 1997) located these two concentric ring ditches, another separate ring ditch, and linear features (all of these already recorded from aerial photography). Fieldwalking in the environs of the access road revealed a concentration of struck flints (Dingwall and Hancocks 1998). Fieldwalking over the southern portion of the site recovered a scatter of struck flints, possibly all of Bronze Age manufacture, and a few sherds of Roman and Iron Age pottery.

The wider archaeological background to the site has been presented in a desktop study (Preston 2009). In summary, work in advance of the construction of the Wallingford By-pass to the west of the proposal site also revealed prehistoric occupation, and Roman features at Bradford's Brook. Evidence here included Neolithic flints (though no features of this date), late Bronze Age land divisions, a possible roundhouse and waterhole, Iron Age pottery, ditches of Roman date and Saxon pottery (Boyle and Cromarty 2006). Recent evaluation to the east of the site also located a range of deposits (WA 2009). This comprised Middle Iron Age occupation and Late Saxon/medieval pits along with finds of early Saxon pottery and a possible Bronze Age ditch. The Saxon and medieval town of Wallingford is located just to the north of the site. Numerous, though mostly very small, investigations have taken place within the Saxon *burh* and medieval town. Recent fieldwork within the town has almost invariably produced evidence of the medieval town, but Saxon remains are still relatively rare (Ford 1991a; Hammond 2003; Pine 2003).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the evaluation are to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeo-environmental deposits within the area of development. This work will be

carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Neolithic or Bronze Age deposits are present;
- to determine if any Iron Age or Roman deposits are present;
- to determine if any medieval deposits are present; and
- to determine the date and nature of linear cropmarks already recorded for the site which are traversed by the road corridor.

It was proposed to dig six trenches, each 25m in length and 1.6m wide using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

## **Results**

All six trenches were excavated. Five ranged in length from 21.1m to 28.20m and one Trench (92) was 15m in length these revealed a wide variety of stratigraphy and geology. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A list of all certain and possible archaeological features revealed is found in Appendix 2. Trench and feature numbering followed on from the previous phase of work.

### Trench 92

This was aligned north-south and measured 15m long and 1.25m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.29m thick which overlay 0.29m of silty clay subsoil. Under this was brownish grey clay which was 0.67m thick overlaying brownish grey sandy silt geology which was recorded at 1.25m deep in two test pits dug at either end of the trench. The trench was not fully excavated to expose all of the natural geology within as the great depth of overburden present would locally protect the archaeologically relevant level from damage during construction of the Access Road. This modification to the scheme was carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service.

### Trench 93

This was aligned north west - south east and was 24.50m long and 0.73m deep. Topsoil 0.36m thick overlay yellowish brown sandy silt subsoil which measured 0.29m thick. This overlay brownish grey sandy silt geology. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

### Trench 94 (Figs 4 and 5, Plates 2 and 3)

This was aligned north west - south east and measured 25.60m long and 0.73m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.36m thick which overlay grey sandy silt subsoil which was 0.28m thick. Below this was yellowish grey gravelly sand geology. A single ditch 504 was recorded in this trench. It was aligned north east – south west and corresponds to the linear crop mark, which is plotted between the two ring ditches (Fig. 3). It was 2.53m wide and 0.60m deep, with concave sides and a flat base (Figs 4 and 5). It contained orange brown sand (496), which contained two tiny abraded sherds of medieval pottery dated to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. In addition one piece of cooking pot dated to the same period was recovered from the topsoil.

### Trench 95 (Figs 4 and 5)

This was aligned north west - south east and measured 28.20m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of; topsoil 0.23m thick which overlay grey/brown sandy silt subsoil which was 0.47m thick. Below this was greyish yellow sandy silt geology. Four features were recorded in this trench; ditch 505 was aligned north east - south west and measured 4.57m wide and 0.65m deep. It displayed slightly irregular concave sides and rounded base and contained two fills (497 and 498) both clayey sands, with charcoal flecks and moderate sub-angular and rounded pebbles. Ditch 509 (Plate was aligned north east - south west and was 1.17m wide and 0.33m deep. It contained dark grey/brown sandy silt (553) with charcoal flecks and moderate subangular pebbles. Ditch 510 was aligned approximately north east - south west and measured 1.26m wide and 0.47m deep. It had concave sides and base and contained a grey/brown sandy silt (554). Posthole 508 was sub-circular 0.29m by 0.24m and 0.25m deep. It contained dark brownish grey sandy silt (499). No finds were recovered from these features however two pieces of early post-medieval ceramic (1500-1700 AD) were recovered from the topsoil of this trench.

### Trench 96

This was aligned north - south and measured 21.10m long and 0.84m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.28m thick overlying grey silty subsoil which was 0.47m thick. Below this was light grey sand with patches of yellow silt geology. No archaeological deposits were identified in this trench.

### Trench 97 (Figs 4 and 5, Plates 1 and 4)

This was aligned north-south and measured 25.30m long and 0.96m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.26m thick overlying dark grey silty clay subsoil which was 0.66m deep. Underneath this was brownish grey sandy silt geology. Ditch 506 was recorded aligned east north east - west south west and measured 3m wide and 1m deep. It contained compact grey sandy silt (550) and from the top of the feature came several pieces of post-medieval brick and tile. However, from within the fill was found animal bone and five sherds of 13th-century pottery. The ditch corresponds to one of two parallel cropmarks previously plotted (Fig. 3). No feature corresponding to the second parallel cropmark was visible. A gully terminus or pit 507 was recorded butting from the western edge of the trench. It was 0.72m wide and 0.16m deep and contained dark brownish grey sandy silt with occasional silt. No finds were found in this feature.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Malcolm Lyne

The site yielded 23 sherds (168g) of medieval and post-medieval pottery. Sixteen of the sherds came from the topsoil and are probably from field-marling: they include all of the post-medieval sherds. The only stratified sherds are five fresh 12th-century cooking-pot fragments in Fabric M1 from the fill of Ditch 506 in Trench 97 and two abraded sherds in Fabric M2 dated c.1150–1350 from the fill of Ditch 504 in Trench 94. They suggest that Ditch 506 might be earlier than Ditch 504.

### Medieval

M1. Rough black fabric with profuse <2.00mm alluvial-grit filler, including flint, ironstone and quartz-sand.  
12th century.

M2. Sandy black filler with profuse ill-sorted 0.30 to 1.00 mm multi-coloured quartz filler

### Post-Medieval

PM 1. Orange-yellow to reddish-brown earthenware with internal yellow to dark-green glaze

PM 2. Siegburg stoneware

### *Ceramic Building Materials* by Danielle Milbank

Ditch 506 produced 651g of ceramic building material:

### Tile

Eleven pieces of tile were recovered from cut 506. The tile fabric was uniformly sandy, with frequent small well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. The fragments were hard and well-fired, and had a rough underside, indicating that they were made using a sanded mould. The colour varied from slightly orange red to darker red,



with occasional examples of a grey core. One example from deposit 550 (ditch 506) was pale with a grey core, and was 12mm thick, with an incised line on the upper side.

### Brick

Two pieces of brick were recovered from ditch 506. The fabric was consistent and homogenous, with very fine, well-sorted sandy inclusions. Larger inclusions (1mm-2mm) were occasionally present. The fabric was hard and well-fired, and the colour ranged from bright orange red to dark red. No complete bricks were found, and no fragments were frogged. One example from the ditch was typical of bricks from the late 18th and early 19th centuries which were produced by mechanized methods, and are categorized as Harley (1974) type 5.1.

Although some examples of brick and tile recovered from the ditch are likely to be post-medieval, no examples could be closely dated. The assemblage as a whole does not have any notable characteristics, and does not indicate particular buildings or industries on the site or nearby.

### *Animal Bone* by Danielle Milbank

Six fragments of animal bone weighing 238g were recovered from one context, ditch 506 (deposit 550). These were slightly weathered and all were parts of a large animal, probably cattle. These comprised a mandible fragment and three long bone pieces (including a piece of humerus). The long bone pieces showed butchery marks and had been cut, probably to remove the marrow.

### *Shell* by Danielle Milbank

A single fragment of oyster shell was recovered from ditch 506, which weighed 6g.

### *Metalwork* by Danielle Milbank

Three metalwork objects were recovered in the evaluation from ditch 506. These comprised a long, tapering iron item, probably a large nail (Appendix 5: 1) which weighed 35g and was 142mm long and 7mm wide at its thickest point. A further iron item (Appendix 5: 2) weighed 49g and was 87mm long. It was 12mm by 12mm at the wide end, square in section and tapering to a bent point. It is possibly a bradawl or awl. Both these iron objects were fairly badly corroded. A third item (Appendix 5: 3) was a small flat ring of a blackish (possibly silver) alloy. It was 24mm in diameter, 2.5mm wide, and 1mm thick, and it weighed 4g. It is unlikely to be an item of jewellery, but its use is unclear and it could not be closely dated.

## Conclusion

This targeted evaluation has identified and characterised features certainly or probably of archaeological interest at various locations but with a large stretch of the road corridor devoid of evidence for any archaeological deposits. The trenching has indicated that two of the linear cropmarks traversed by the road corridor were of medieval date. A third feature was not located and is now considered, perhaps, to be an agricultural feature of relatively modern date, which had formed only within the topsoil or subsoil on the site. The other deposits located are not dated, other than that their nature and stratigraphic position beneath subsoil suggests that they are of medieval or earlier date. The absence of artefacts clearly indicates that these deposits are not exceptionally rich and their character suggests that they relate to medieval or earlier occupation and landscape activity, which has already been demonstrated in this general area. None of these road corridor features are obviously contemporary with, or related to, what are assumed to be ceremonial or burial monuments of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date as evidenced by the nearby circular cropmarks.

## References

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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
92	12m	1.6	0.96	0-0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.92m dark grey silty clay subsoil, 0.92m+ natural geology sandy silt. No features.
93	24.50	1.6	0.73	0-0.36m topsoil; 0.36-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ natural geology. No features.
94	25.60	1.6	0.73	0-0.34m topsoil; 0.34-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ natural geology. Feature 504. <b>[Plates 2 and 3]</b>
95	28.2	1.6	0.72	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.61m subsoil; 0.61m+ natural geology. Features 505, 508-10
96	21.1	1.6	0.84	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ natural geology. No features.
97	28.9	1.6	1.25	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.58m subsoil; 0.58-1.25m clay layer; 1.25m+ natural gravel. Features 506 and 507. <b>[Plates 1 and 4]</b>

**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
94	504	496	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery
95	505	497	Ditch	-	
95	505	497	Ditch	-	
97	506	550	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery
97	507	499	Gully	-	
95	508	552	Posthole	-	
95	509	553	Ditch	-	
95	510	554	Ditch	-	

### APPENDIX 3: Pottery Catalogue

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Date-range</i>	<i>No sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
92		50	PM1	Open form Jug	c.1500-1600 c.1500-1600	9	45	Abraded Abraded
94		50	M2 Tile	Cooking-pot	c.1150-1350 late medieval	1 1	3 3	Abraded Abraded
94	504	496	M2		c.1150-1350	2	2	Abraded
95		50	PM1 PM2	Cistern Jug base	c.1500-1700 16 <sup>th</sup> c.	1 1	41 6	Abraded Fresh
97		50	PM1	Open form	c.1500-1600	3	19	
97	506	550	M1	Cooking-pot	c.1100-1200	5	49	Fresh

**APPENDIX 4:** Catalogue of brick and tile

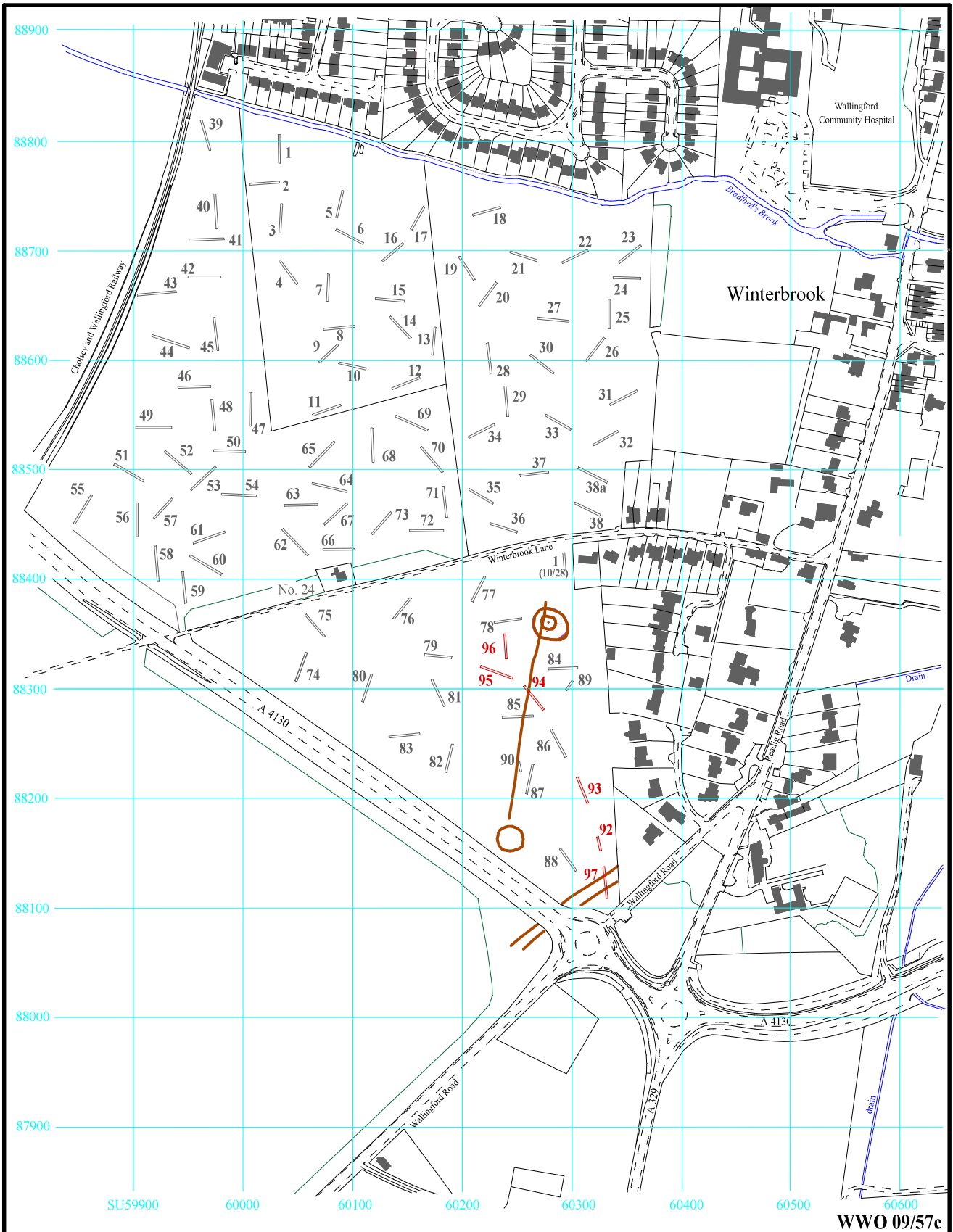
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Trench</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
506	550	Ditch	97	14	651

Appendix 5: Catalogue of metal finds

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>
97	506	550	nail	35	Post-medieval
97	506	550	Nail/Awl	49	Post-medieval
97		50	Flat-Ring	4	Unknown







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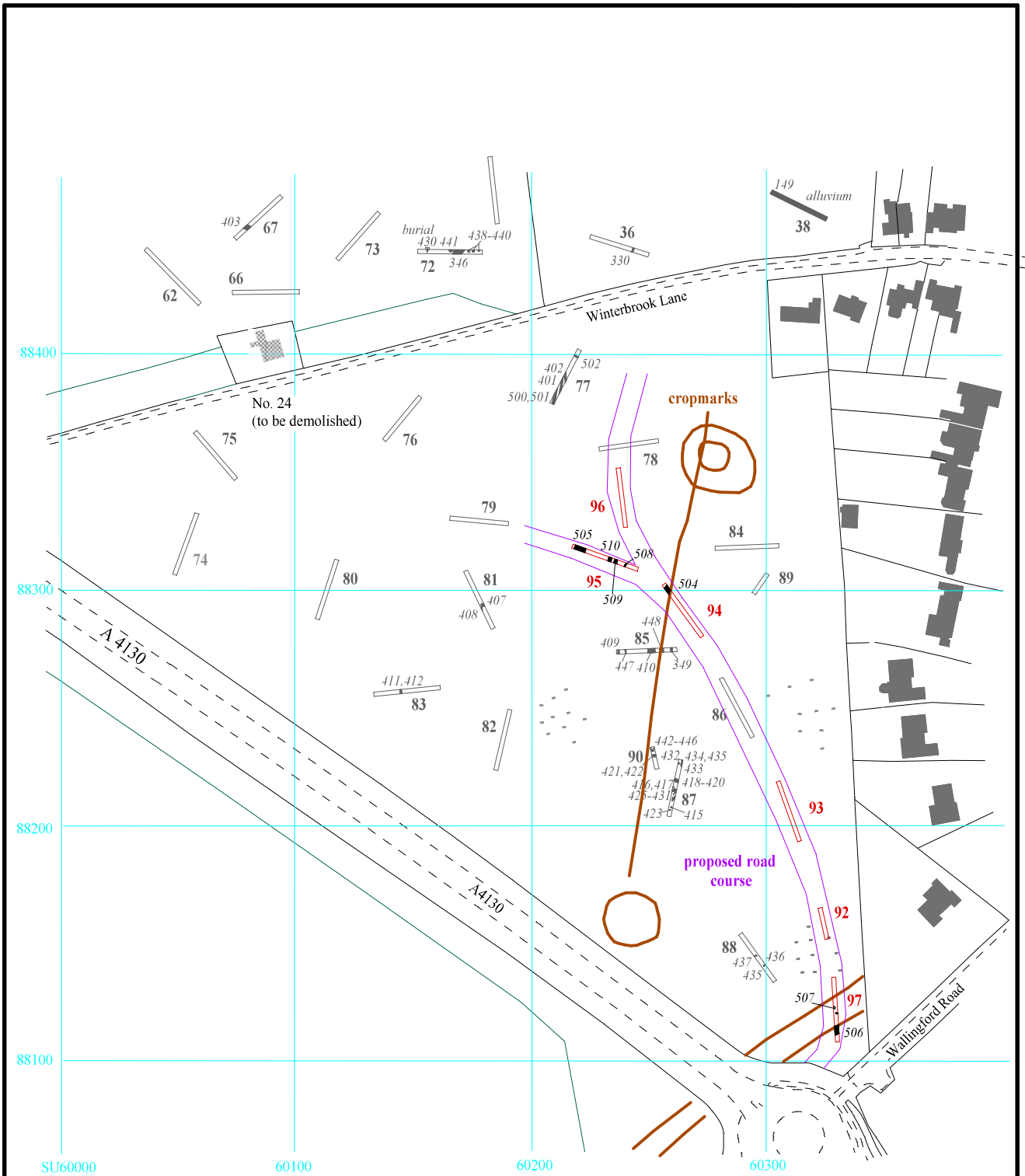


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Figure 2. Location of road corridor trenches (red) in relation to previous evaluation trenches and cropmarks



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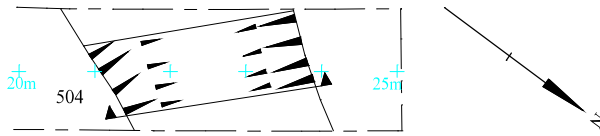
**Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford,  
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Figure 3. Location of additional features in relation to previous identified evaluation features and cropmarks.

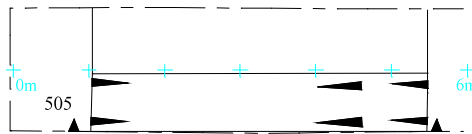


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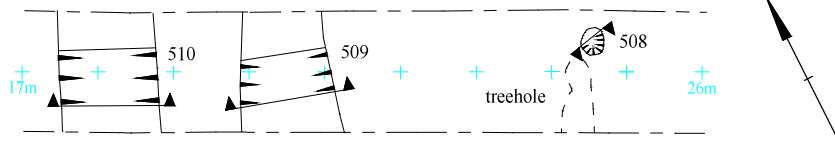
Trench 94



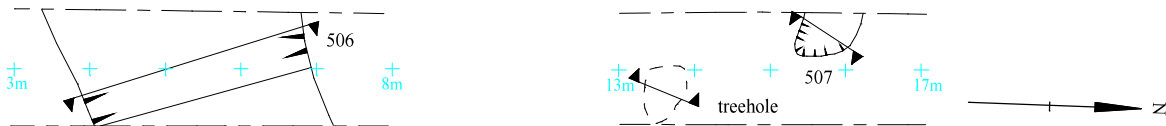
Trench 95



Trench 95 continued



Trench 97

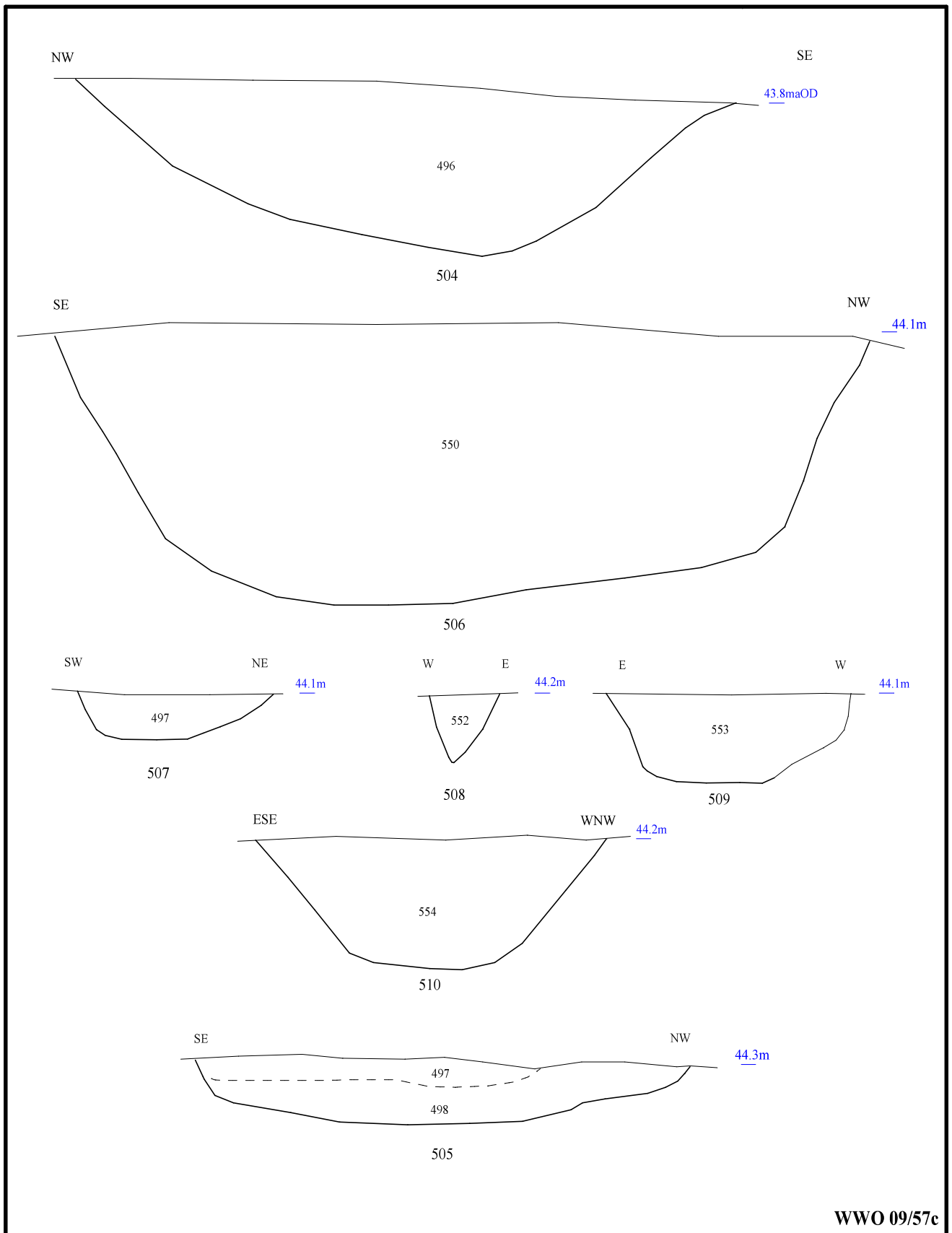


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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.





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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 97, looking north, scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 94, looking south.

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Archaeological Evaluation 2010**

Plates 1 and 2



Plate 3. Trench 94, ditch 504, looking south west, scales: 1m and 0.5m

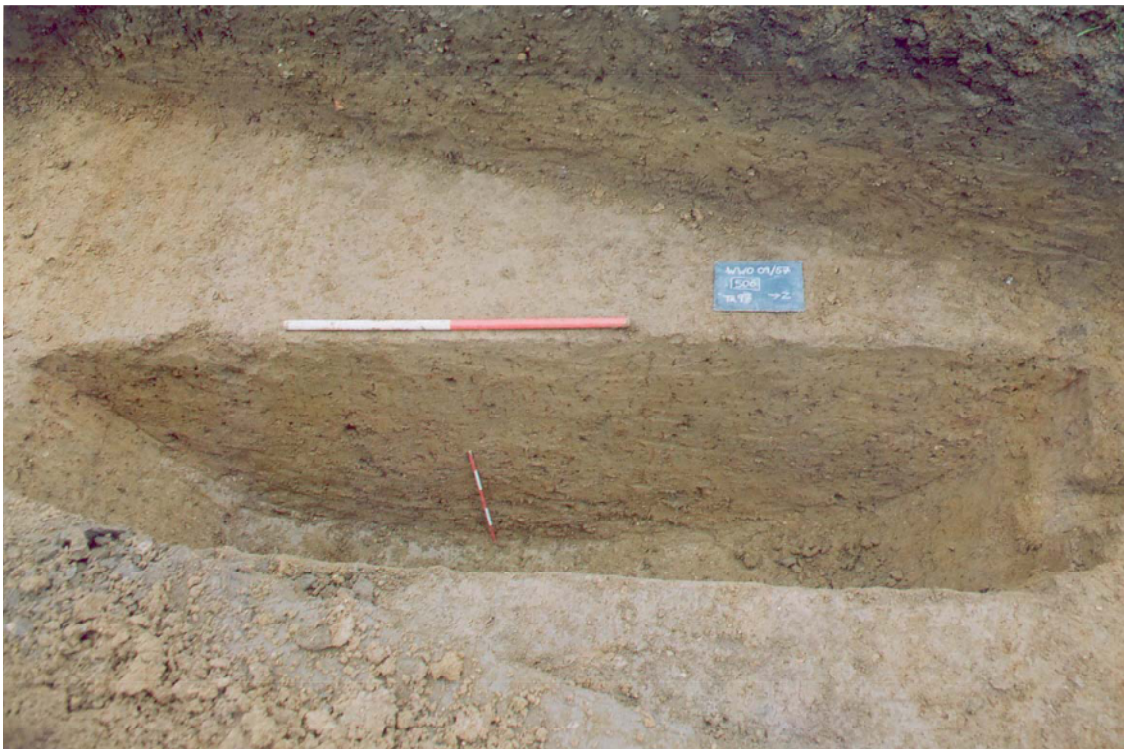


Plate 4. Trench 97, ditch 506, looking south, scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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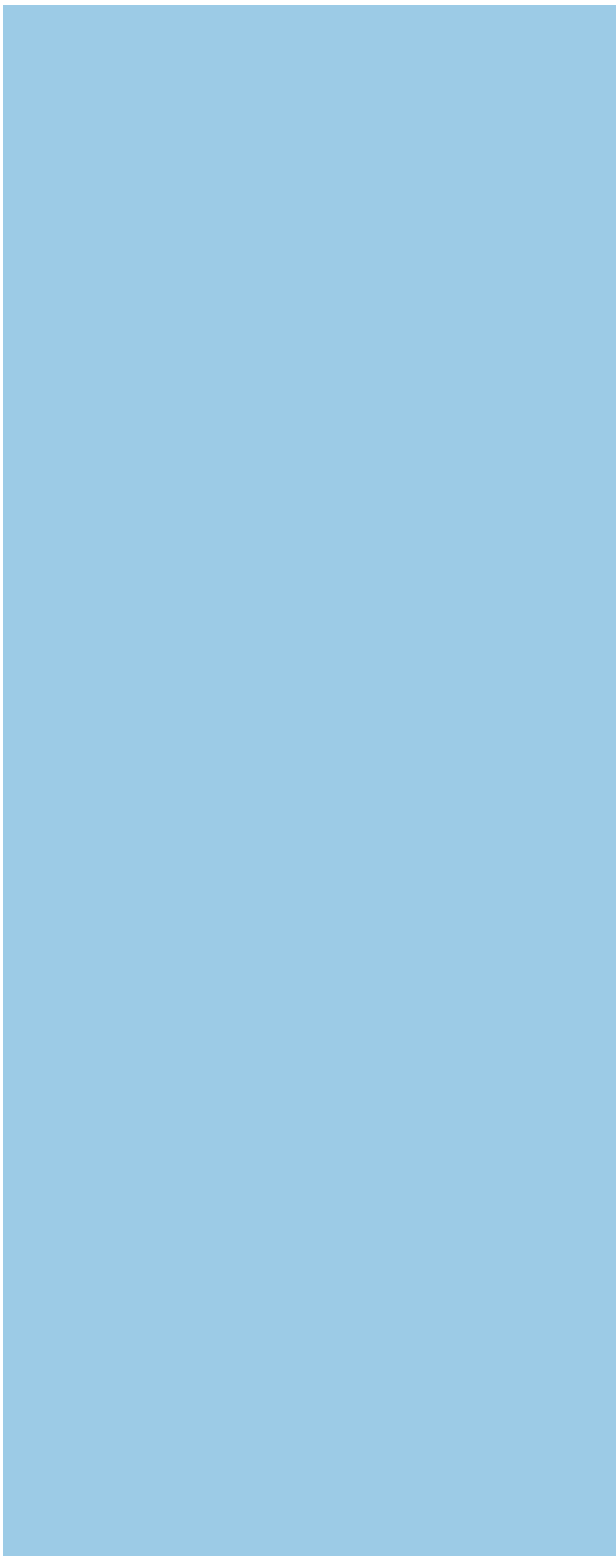
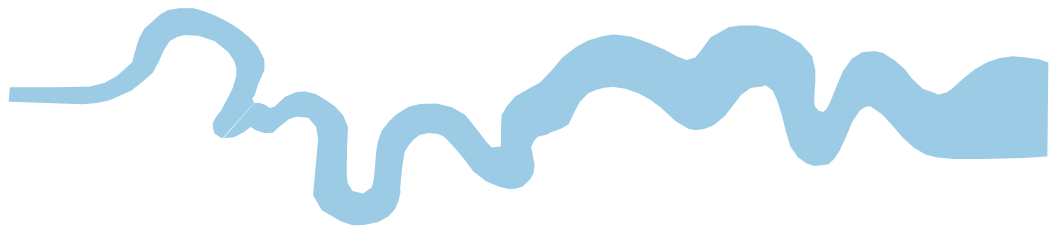
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Plates 3 and 4

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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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