

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

RIVERSIDE MARINA, PARK END WHARF,

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SU 21325 99435

On behalf of

Mr. T. Lloyd

AUGUST 2005

REPORT FOR

Mr. T. Lloyd
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for four new holiday lets. A possible stone wall or revetment was seen. In close association were some timber plank off-cuts. These were dated to the post-medieval period.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The proposal site lies within the north part of Riverside Marina on the north bank of River Thames at approximately SU 21325 99435. Formerly an outbuilding occupied the site. It is reported that extensive deposits of material dredged from the river have been used to level the grounds.

1.2 Planning Background

Cotswold District Council granted planning permission for the construction of four new holiday lets (CT1997/1/P). Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the planning consent that required the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the course of the groundworks in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Extensive prehistoric remains are known in the Lechlade area from aerial photographs, fieldwalking and archaeological investigations. The river gravels were a favoured location for settlement and monuments during this period. In addition Saxon settlement and an extensive cemetery are known in Lechlade. The area is shown as wharves and associated buildings on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1890-1892.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- In particular:
 - to record any evidence relating to prehistoric activity.

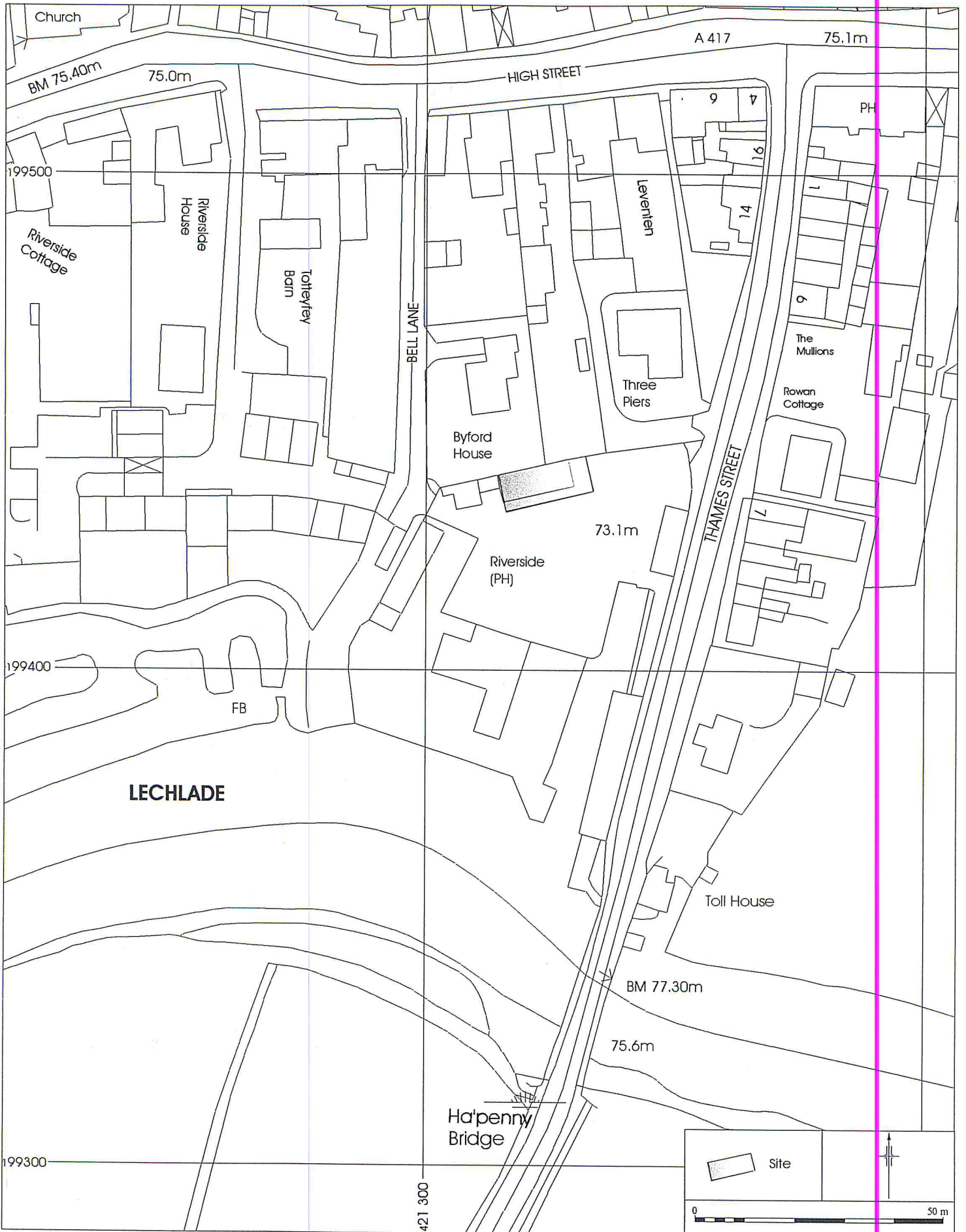


Figure 1. Site Location

- to record any evidence associated with use of the river for trade in later periods.
- To make public the results of the investigations.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service and Cotswold District Council. The work also was undertaken in accordance with Gloucestershire County Council's standard *Brief for an archaeological watching brief*.

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during the excavation for some of the trenches for the new foundations (Fig. 2). The excavations for the first foundations at the west end were monitored and when it was established that there was little potential for significant remains to be present further monitoring was only carried out on the foundation trenches at the east end. All recording was carried out from existing ground level as the trenches were in excess of 3m deep and collapse of trench sides was frequent. Some depth and deposit thickness measurements are therefore approximate. The high water table also prevented the recording of the depth and thickness of some deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services recording techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. walls, pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Deposit sequence (Fig. 3)

The lowest deposit encountered was a natural deposit of pale-mid brown shale-like material (07) 2.4 – 3.2m below modern ground level (mgs). This deposit sloped down slightly from north to south and was deepest in the south extent of the easternmost foundation trench.

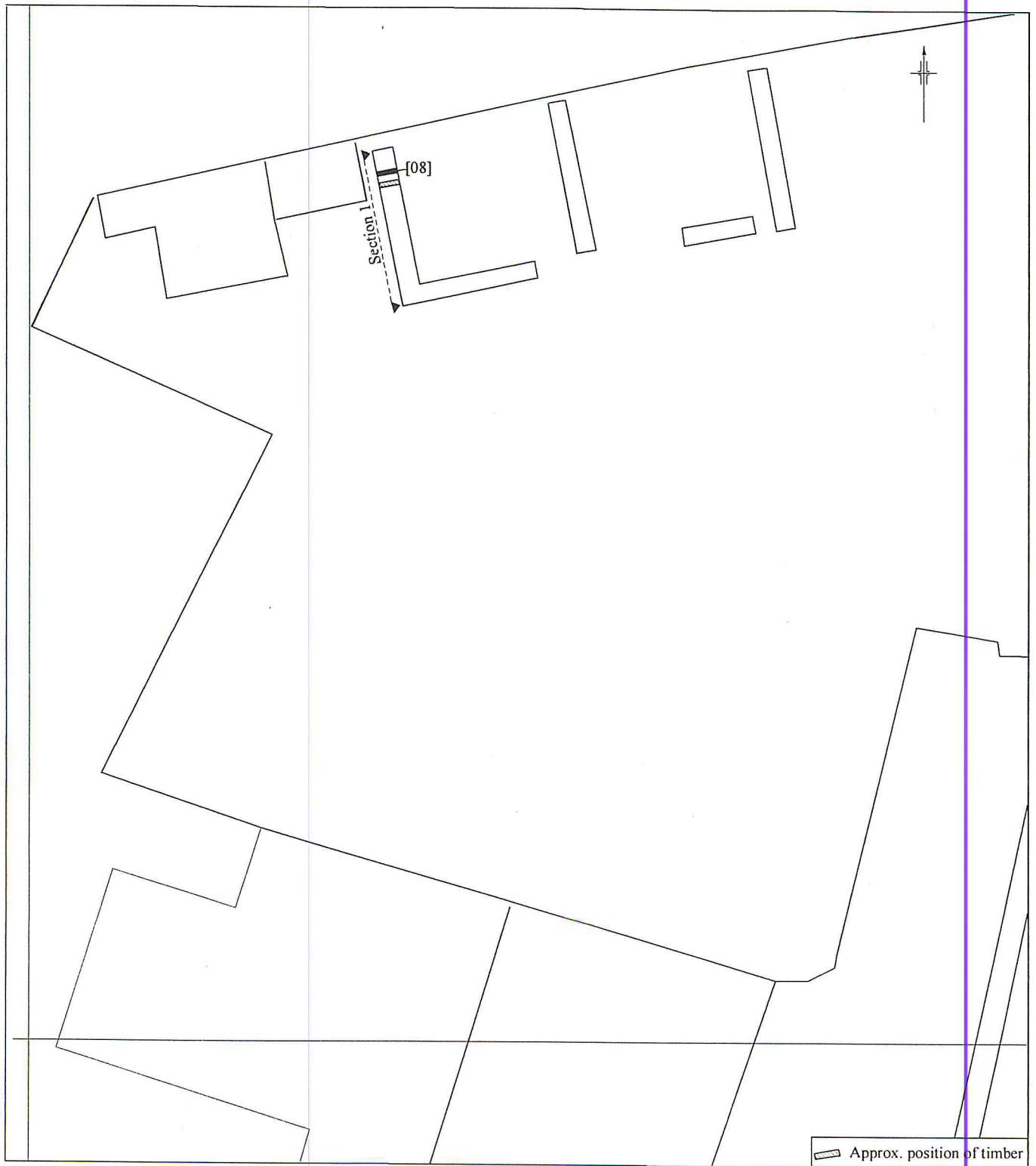


Figure 2. Plan of trenches recorded

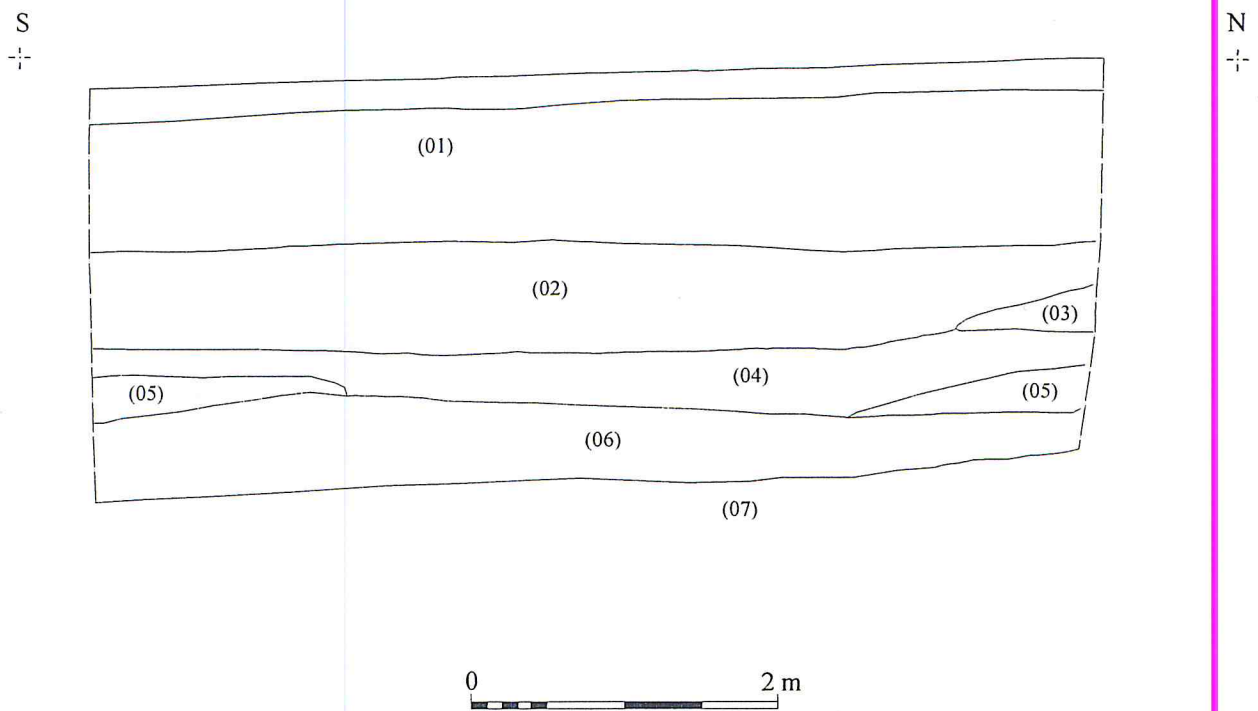


Figure 3. East facing section of west trench

Lying above the shale was a deposit of mid grey clay (06) varying in thickness. In the westernmost foundation trench it increased from 300mm thick at the north end to 500-600mm at the south end. In the middle north-south trench the clay was 700mm thick at the north end with the top 1700mm below mgs. The thickness increased to 1100mm at the north end of the easternmost trench and the top of it was 2100mm below mgs at the south end. Within this last trench the top 100mm of the deposit was gravelly. This deposit is interpreted as alluvium.

Lying above the alluvial clay was a deposit of pale yellow sand and gravel (05). Within the west foundation trench it was 200mm thick at the north end of the trench and 300mm at the south end. It was not continuous within this trench (Fig. 3). In the other two north-south trenches it was not present at the north ends of the trenches; starting c. 5m from the north end in the middle trench and 3.1m in the east trench. In the middle trench the top of the deposit was c. 2.20m below mgs and in the west trench it was 1.9m below mgs and 200mm thick.

Overlying the sand and gravel were mixed layers of mid grey sandy silt and lenses of sand and fine gravel (04). While this was present in the whole of the west trench it was not present in northern 1.2m of the middle trench and the northern 1.9m of the east trench. In the middle trench it increased from 100mm in thickness at the north end to c. 500mm at the south end. It sloped down more steeply in this trench than in the west trench. This deposit appeared disturbed in the middle of the west trench. Several off-cuts of timber planks (see below) were recovered from this deposit and probably derived from this disturbed part. Also from this deposit and immediately to the north of the planks came several medium to large limestone pieces [08]. They suggest the presence of a possible wall or revetment probably orientated east-west; however nothing was visible in section from the top of the trench.

Along the north edge of the site was a deposit of dull pale orange sandy clay with 10% gravel (03). This was 200mm thick at the north end of the west trench decreasing to 0mm 700mm into the trench from the north, 600mm thick in the middle trench and 300mm thick in the east trench decreasing to 0mm 2.10m into both trenches. Overlying this deposit was a layer of mid brown-grey sandy clay with 5% gravel content (02). This was 350mm thick in the west trench decreasing to 200mm in the other two trenches. This was probably a buried topsoil. The uppermost deposit, mid brown-grey very silty clay, was very clean and virtually sterile (01). This appears to be dumped silts dredged from the river,

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised two post-medieval sherds in a Red Earthenware fabric:

Red Earthenware, 16th – 19th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a wide range of utilitarian forms. 2 sherds, 38g.

A large sherd (36g) from a cauldron or skillet with an internal orange glaze occurred in context 2. It was very abraded, as was the small featureless bodysherd in the same fabric (weight 2g) from context 4.

5.2 Other finds

A piece of animal bone along with a human femur were seen in the alluvium (06) but were not retained. A piece of animal rib was recovered from deposit (04).

A quantity of fired clay (240g) also came from context (04). The maximum thickness of the pieces was 85mm and no piece had a smooth finished side.

The off-cuts of planks from deposit (04) had the following dimensions:

| Width (mm) | Length (mm) | Thickness (mm) | Sawn ends |
|------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 260 | 250 | 53-71 | One end only |
| 210 | 260 | 82-88 | Both |
| 170 | 138 | 32-35 | Both |
| 140 | 130 | 27-34 | Both |
| 128 | 260 | 29-36 | Both |
| 200 | 136 | 29-47 | Both |

The planks that these originated from were fairly rough cut with one piece having bark on it. They had the appearance of being props and/or wedges with differing thicknesses for achieving the required level when more than one was stacked on top of each other. These have now been discarded.

6 DISCUSSION

The deposit sequence exhibits a flood plain sequence with alluvial deposits (03-06). The discontinuity in layer (05) suggests a braided stream eroding part of an earlier river deposit.

Nothing can really be said about the possible wall or revetment (08) as it was machined out and nothing appeared in section. A piece of red earthenware came from the same deposit and location as the pieces of timber and thus dates the timber and probably the stonework to the post-medieval period.

The timber off-cuts may be for supporting boats either during construction or during cleaning/repair work.

The human femur may well be prehistoric in date as it is well known that river locations were places where ritual deposits of metalwork were made, which may have been accompanied by bodies (Bradley 1984, 113). Many skulls have been recovered from the Thames.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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