

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**North Lodge, Hamstead Marshall,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Henrietta Longden

Site Code: HMN09/117

(SU 4223 6693)

**New drainage trenches, North Lodge, Hamstead Marshall,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Brown

by Henrietta Longden
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code HMN 09/117

February 2010

Summary

Site name: North Lodge, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 4223 6693

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 17th December 2009 to 9th February 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Henrietta Longden

Site code: HMN 09/117

Summary of results: A watching brief was carried out during the re-excavation of existing drainage trenches within Scheduled Monument 19010. The trenches revealed large amounts of modern made ground. A small section of late post-medieval brick wall was revealed along with a modern dump of animal bone within the 1985 pipe trench cut. No finds or features 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 West Berkshire Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 24.02.10 Steve Preston ✓ 24.02.10

North Lodge, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Henrietta Longden

Report 09/117

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at North Lodge, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 0JD (SU4223 6693) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Robert Brown and Mrs Sue Brown of the same address.

The site lies within a complex of earthworks which includes two medieval motte and bailey castles and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 19010). Planning consent was gained from West Berkshire Council (app 08/00330) for the proposed change of use of an outbuilding known as 'The Studio'. Scheduled Monument consent for the installation of trench services, comprising a septic tank and the replacement of services within existing trenches, was granted under section 2 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (ref S00005290). The consent is subject to the implementation of an archaeological watching brief for the duration of the deep ground works and the cleaning and recording of the stratigraphy exposed in the re-opened trench sides.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the West Berkshire County policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Chris Welch, Inspector of Ancient Monuments of English Heritage, advisers to the Secretary of State. The fieldwork was undertaken by Henrietta Longden and Aiji Castle between 17th December 2009 and 9th February 2010, and the site code is HMN 09/117.

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

Location, topography and geology

Hamstead Marshall is c.5km to the west of Newbury. The site is located in Hamstead Marshall, approximately 100m to the south of the bank of the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Kennet and directly to the north-west of Hamstead Park. The site consists of two residential properties and associated landscaped garden and terraces within the Scheduled Monument complex (Fig. 2). St Mary's Church stands at the top of the hill 250m to the south-west of the proposed works.

The property of North Lodge lies at approximately at 95m above Ordnance Datum. The topography is steep in the area surrounding North Lodge. The site slopes upwards away from the river towards the south-east reaching c100m AOD at the southern end of the site behind The Studio, and the valley slope levels off at 120m AOD not far beyond the church. The underlying geology is listed as Reading Beds (mottled clay and sand) (BGS 1947). The geology observed on the site during the watching brief was mottled clay and sand, however some (plateau) gravel patches were also noted.

Archaeological background

The site lies in the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley (Lobb and Rose 1996). The river valley between Newbury and Hungerford is noted for its high instance of Mesolithic sites. The Scheduled Monument comprises two motte and bailey castles, fishponds, a deserted medieval village and a manor site to the north-east of St Mary's Church in Hampstead Marshall. The two motte and bailey castles lie directly to the west and the south of North Lodge with associated earthworks which are likely to be contemporary (Fig 2). The earthwork complex has been planned in detail (Bonney and Dunn 1989). Hamstead Park to the east encloses a large area on either side of the steep valley of a small tributary of the Kennet, and beyond this, unusually, is yet another motte (Fig. 1). A watching brief carried out in 1993 at St. Mary's church (Ford 1993) examined the foundation trench for a new wall around the churchyard. A number of late post-medieval and modern cut features were observed at this time, containing large amounts of brick and tile. The wall trench did traverse an earthwork feature interpreted as a hollow way which may have been medieval, although in-filled in late post-medieval times. No medieval finds are recorded from this watching brief. An earlier watching brief was carried out in 1985 to install services at North Lodge on the site itself.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor the digging of new trenches and the opening of existing trenches in order to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and record the stratigraphic details. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds and threatened archaeological features would be hand-excavated as necessary.

Results

Elements of the trenching have been given individual numbers for ease of reference. All trenches were excavated using a small 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was a re-dug drainage gully lying across the front (north) of North Lodge on a NW–SE orientation. It was c.30m in length and 1m wide. This trench had been dug prior to commencement of the watching brief. As a part of the watching brief, the trench was cleared of collapse and the sides cleaned. The south-east end of the trench showed a large feature filled with modern demolition rubble including brick and concrete. This has been interpreted as a tree bowl, likely to have been dug out and filled just prior to the building of the garage. The footings to the garden wall can clearly be seen in the section. The south-eastern end of the trench is entirely made ground consisting of bricks and demolition debris and the natural geology had not been reached at a depth of 1.1m. The north-west end of the trench was considerably less disturbed. Dark brown sandy clay topsoil was observed to 0.5m with made ground beneath this to 0.7m. Natural geology comprising a yellow sandy clay was reached at 0.7-0.8m down. No archaeologically relevant features were observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 8m in length and 0.6m wide. This trench was orientated NE–SW along the eastern side of North Lodge, at right angles to Trench 1 which it joined at the latter's junction with Trench 3. The south-west end of the trench was characterized by a thick layer of hardcore and demolition rubble down to 0.6m where the natural geology was revealed as an orange sandy clay. The north-east end of the trench located in the driveway showed slightly less disturbance with a layer of hardcore (0.1m) above 0.3m of subsoil containing modern brick and demolition material. At 0.7–0.85m depth, orange sandy gravel and clay natural geology was observed (Fig. 4). No archaeological features were present.

Trench 3

Trench 3 ran from the junction of Trenches 1 and 2, on the same NW–SE alignment as Trench 1. The trench was 14.5m in length and terminated at a septic tank. The trench was disturbed by tree roots. Topsoil was observed down to 0.35m and below this was disturbed brown sandy clay subsoil with brick and rubble inclusions recorded. Finally at 0.8m-0.95m a mid yellow/brown sandy clay and gravel natural geology was noted (Fig. 4). No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 3.7m long, 0.6m wide and 0.69m deep, and was dug from an electricity pylon to Trench 3 in order to run electricity through the new service trenches. The stratigraphy comprised 0.29m of dark brown/grey sandy silt with root disturbance (Pl. 1). Below this a layer 0.14m thick of orange/brown gravel hardcore was observed. Below this was a subsoil which was heavily disturbed and contained modern building material. Modern (blue and white 20th-century transfer printed wares) pottery found at the base of the trench was not retained. Natural geology was not observed and no archaeological features were recorded.

Trench 5

This trench was dug to ascertain the location of existing services. The trench was 1.7m long, 0.6m wide and 0.6m deep. Topsoil 0.2m deep overlay made ground. The footings to the adjacent garden wall were revealed. At the base of the trench the service pipe was visible in a layer of builders' sand. Natural geology was not observed and no archaeological features recorded. The trench was backfilled. The north end of Trench 7 overlay Trench 5.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was 6m in length, 0.6m wide and 0.48m deep. It joined the north-west end of Trench 1. Trench 6 revealed a very similar stratigraphy to Trench 5, namely 0.2m of topsoil above made ground. Natural geology was not observed and no archaeological features were recorded.

Trench 7

This trench followed the route of the 1985 pipe trench which was dug from the west side of North Lodge across the garden and driveway to The Studio. This trench measured 68m in length and was 0.6m wide and up to 1m deep. The majority of the observed stratigraphy reflects disturbed ground associated with the backfilling of the earlier trench. The stratigraphy in the southern half of the trench comprised made ground and subsoil with modern brick and tile inclusions. The northern end of the trench was less disturbed and where the natural geology was seen, it was a mottled yellow/brown clay. No archaeological features were observed in the northern half of the trench. A series of representative sections along the trench were drawn (Fig. 5).

At 46m from the northern end of the trench, just prior to the trench's turning in front of The Studio and close to the pond (Fig. 2), a small section of wall was uncovered (Fig. 5; Pl. 2). The surviving section of brick wall was 1.5m in length, and comprised 3 courses of red brick aligned north-south obliquely across the trench. The size of the bricks (62mm thick x 110mm in breadth and up to 220mm in length) indicates a 19th century date (Harley 1974), assuming they were not re-used. The colour of the brick is a mottled orange red with some purple red in places; flecks of white sand and quartz like inclusions are visible throughout. The wall is likely to

be part of an outbuilding associated with The Studio building. In the trench area surrounding the wall large amounts of animal bone were noted. These bones of sheep/goat, cattle and pig were found overlying the 1985 gas and electricity cables indicating possible removal and redeposition at that time. The bones showed butchery marks and a noticeable bias towards phalanges and broken ends of long bones. Ribs and vertebrae were also present in large numbers. One long bone likely to be sheep/goat was found with a wire loop attached at one end perhaps indicating how it was hung; this bone also had extensive incision marks indicating butchery.

No discernible cut feature was observed. Two sherds of 20th-century transfer printed, mass produced pottery blue and white ‘porcelain’ were also recovered from this deposit (not retained). The Studio was previously known as the ‘meat house’ (Robert Brown pers comm.). The close proximity of the dump to this building would suggest that it represents disposal of waste from animal processing that took place in the building. No other archaeological features were observed in trench 7.

Finds

No finds were retained from the site.

Conclusion

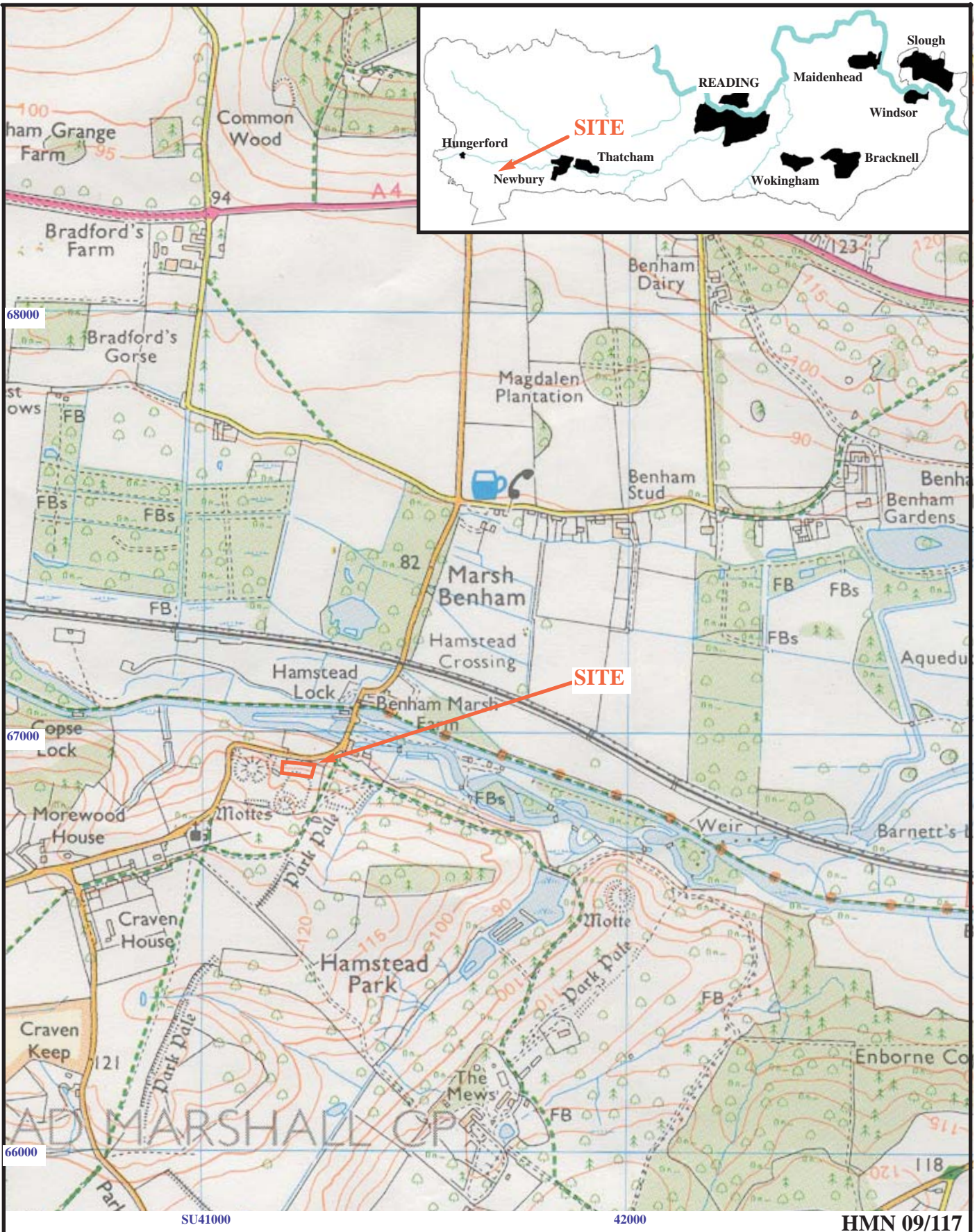
The trenches for the new services concentrated largely on reopening existing trenches originally dug in 1985. This may account for the large amount of made ground that was observed in the trenches, though the modern demolition debris presumably derived from construction of the current buildings on the site. The most notable feature was a small section of 19th or 20th-century brick wall of uncertain function which was preserved *in situ*.

The presence of a disturbed dump of modern animal bone close to ‘The Studio’ may represent the remains of the disposal of butchery waste which is derived from the ‘The Studio’ when it was a ‘meat house’: the bones were clearly of no great age.

No medieval (or earlier) deposits or finds were observed during the work.

References

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- Ford, S, 1993, ‘Archaeological Watching Brief at Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berkshire. SAM no 19010’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, rep 93/09, Reading
- Harley, L S, 1974, ‘A typology of brick’, *J Brit Archaeol Assoc* **37**, London
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

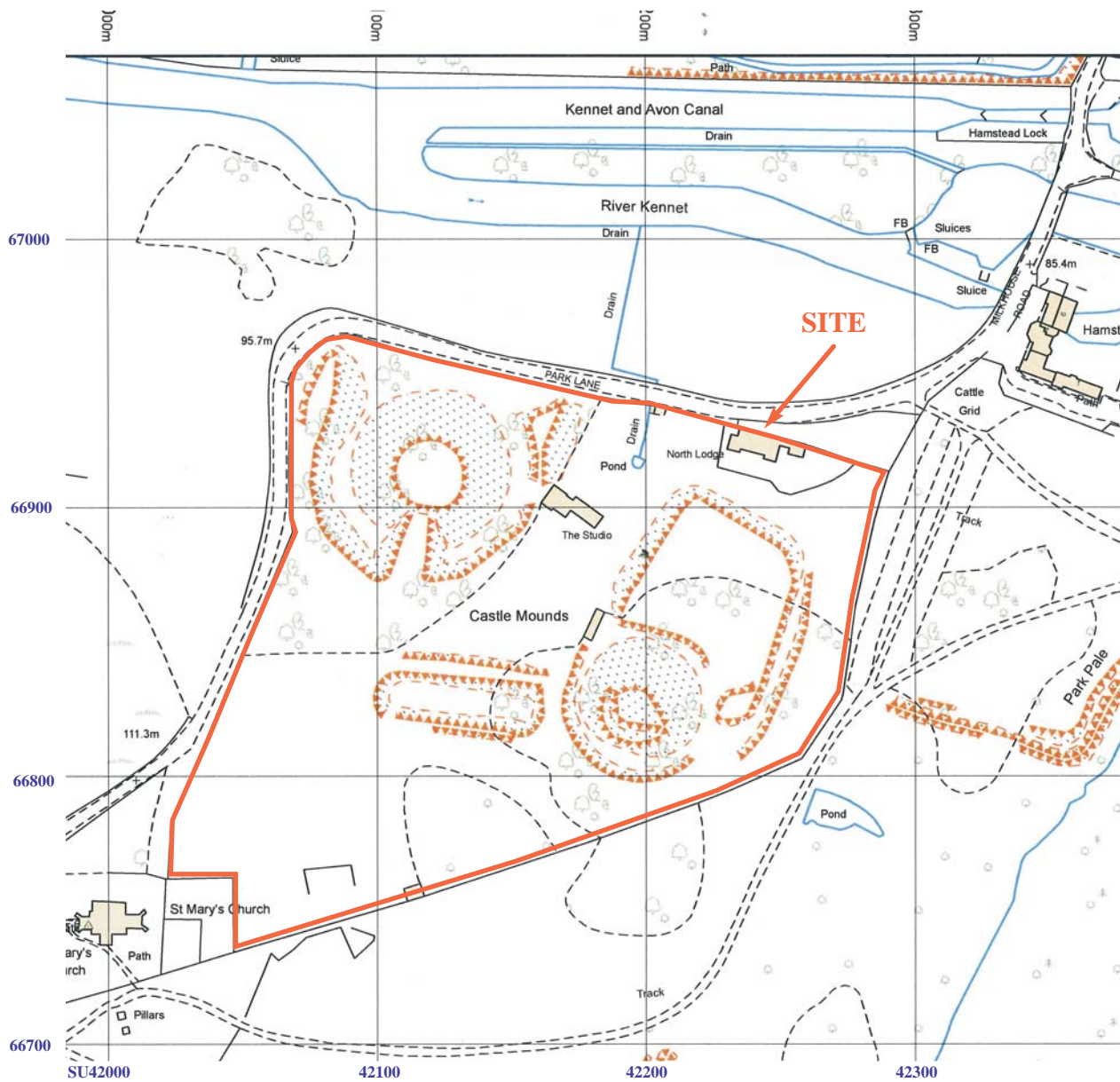


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Figure 1. Location of site within Hamstead and Berkshire.

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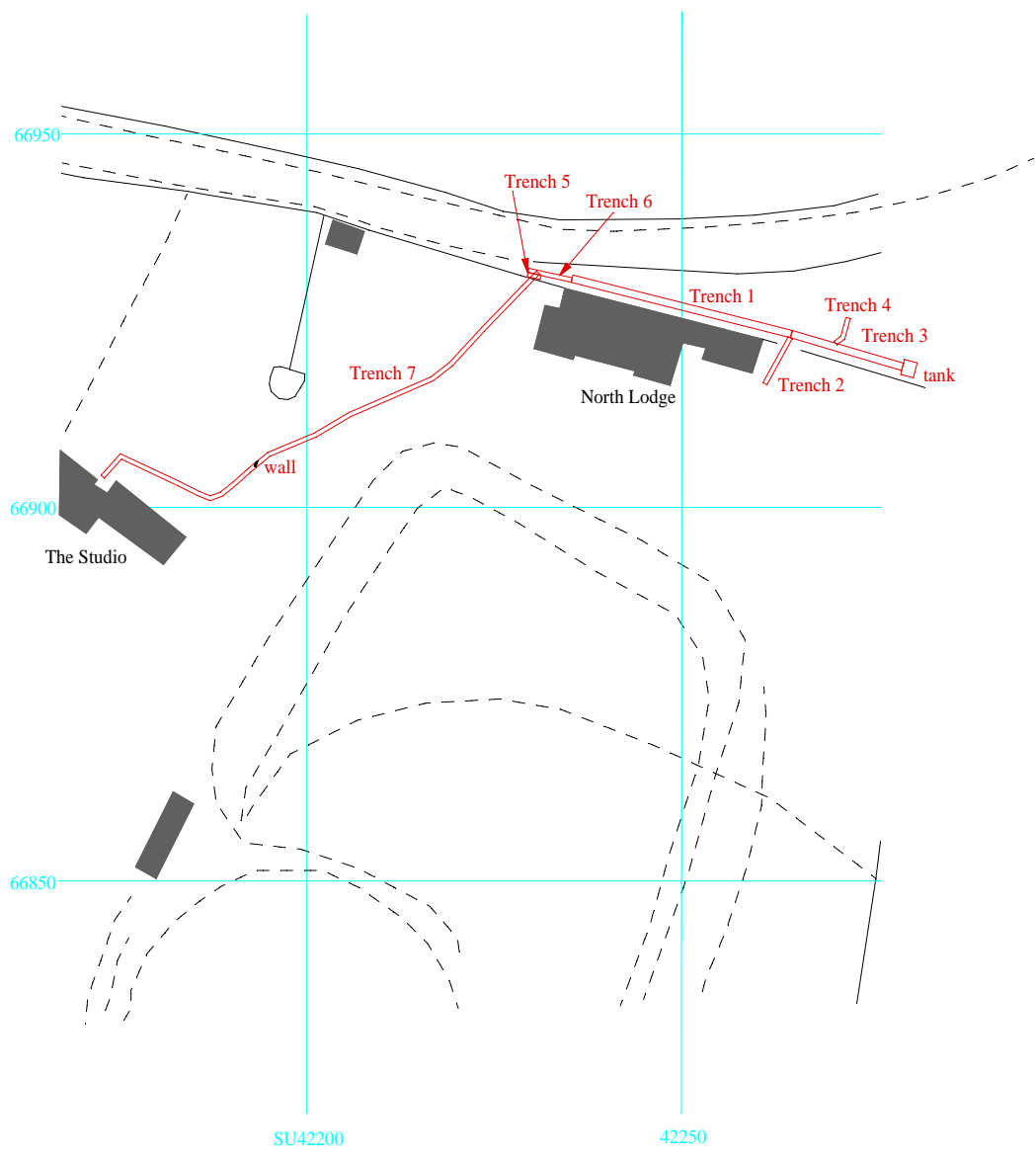
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Figure 2. Location of North Lodge within Scheduled Area.

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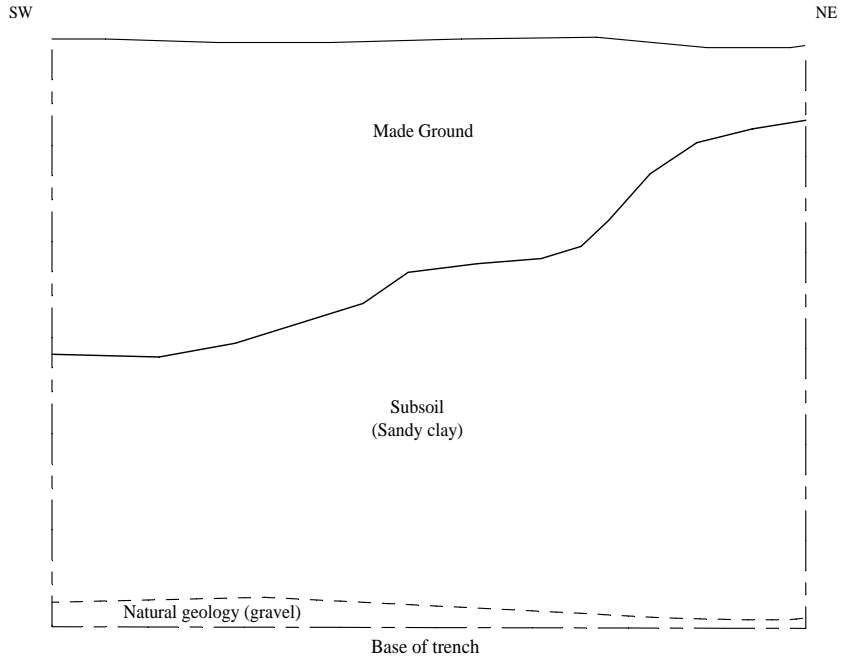
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

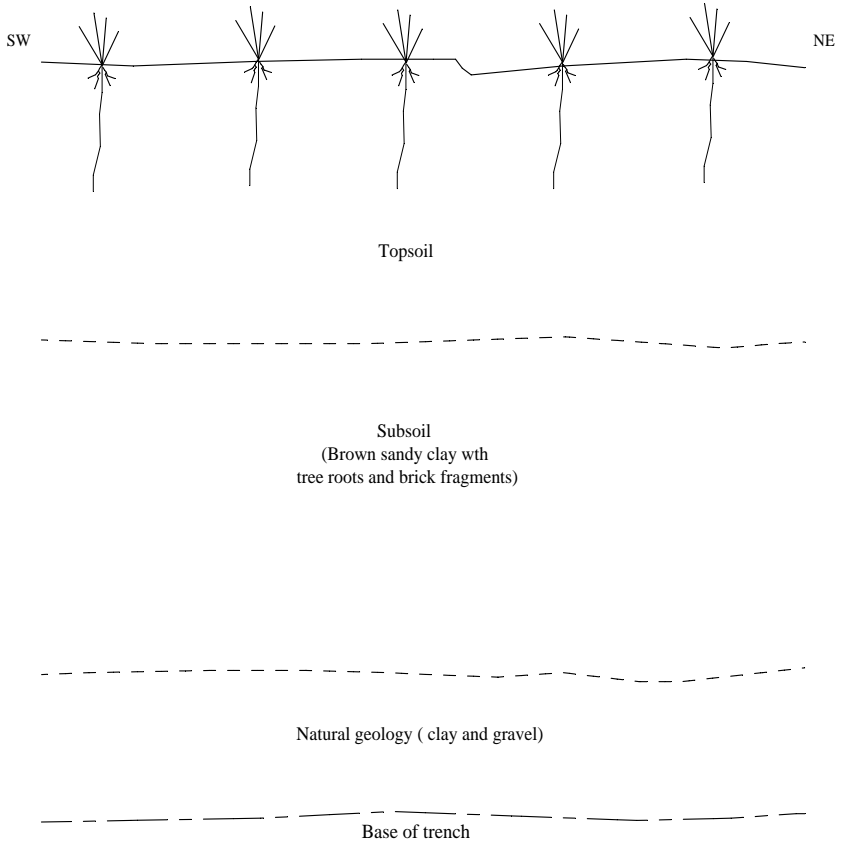


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Trench 2



Trench 3



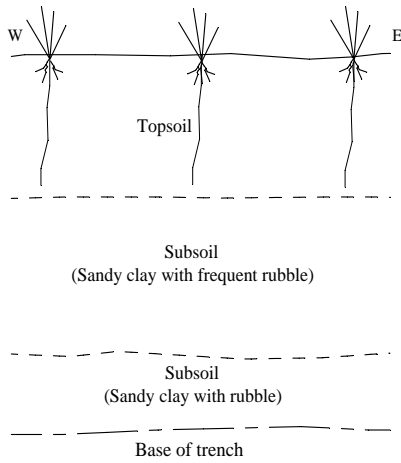
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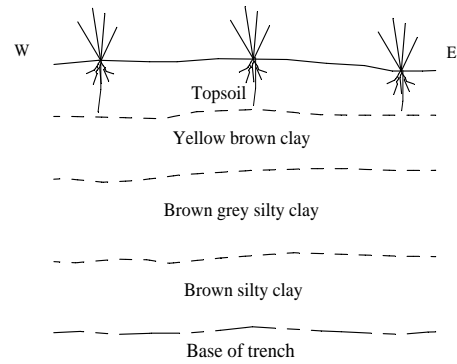
Figure 4. Representative sections of trenches 2 and 3.



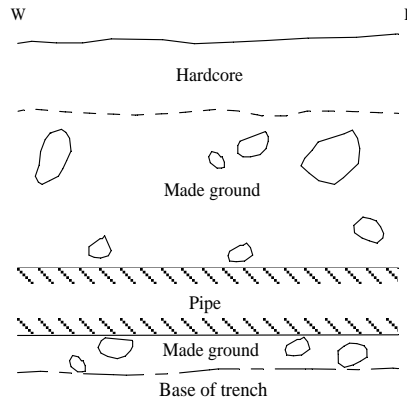
Trench 7 at 1m



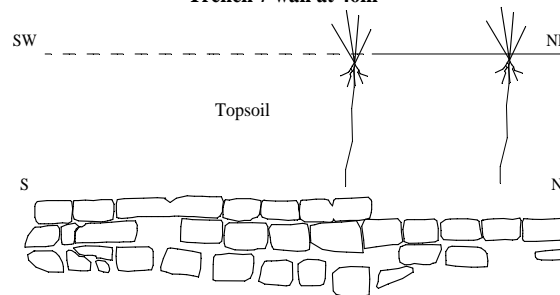
Trench 7 at 23m



Trench 7 at 68m



Trench 7 wall at 46m



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Figure 5. Representative sections of trench 7 at 1m, 40m and 80m and wall at 60m (measured from the north end of the trench).





Plate 1. Trench 4, looking north east, scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Wall in Trench 7, looking north west. scales: 1m and 0.3m.

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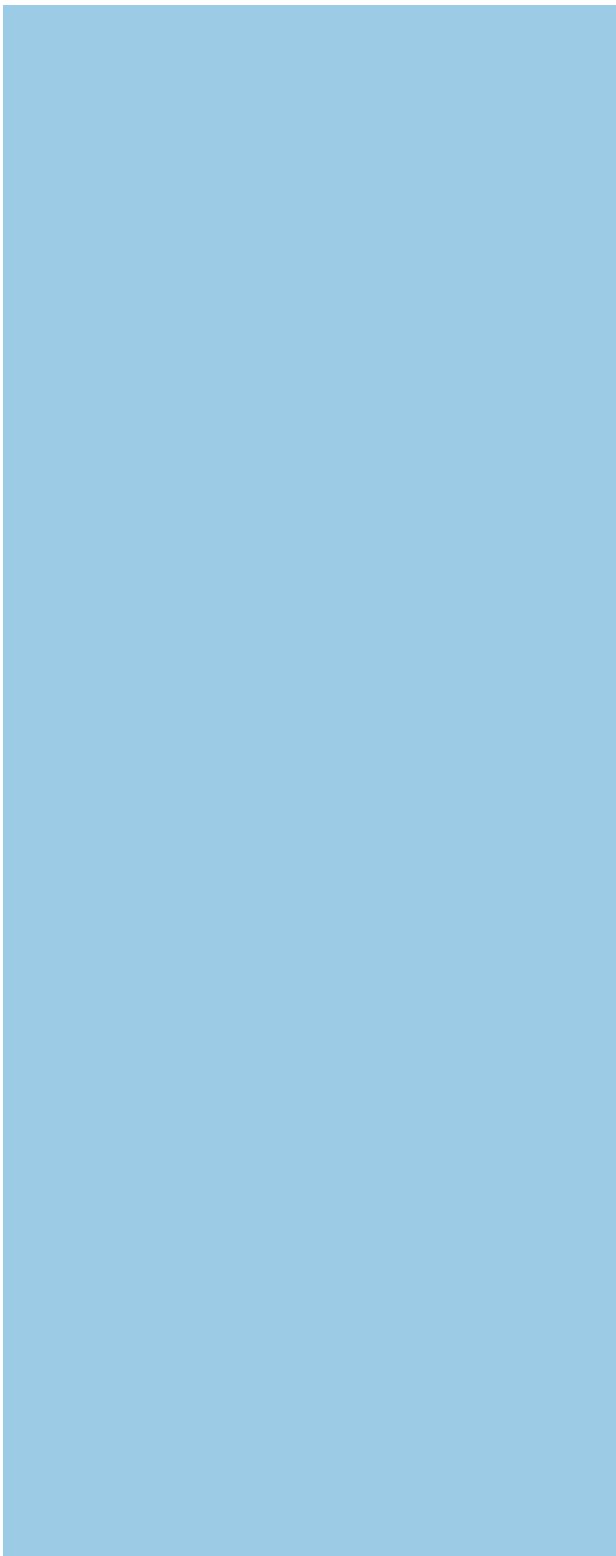
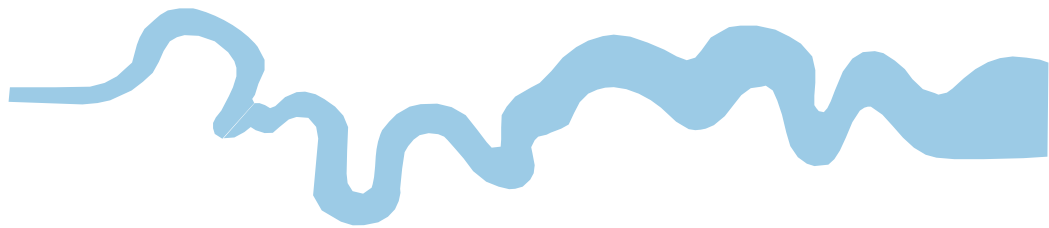
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Plates 1 and 2

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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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