

Thames View Abingdon



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Prepared by: Granville Laws
Position: Project Officer
Date: 28th February 2005

Checked by: Alan Hardy
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 03rd March 2005

Approved by: Tim Allen
Position: Senior Project Manager
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Signed.....

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Oxford Archaeology
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Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Thames View, Abingdon

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CONTENTS

Summary	2
1 Introduction	2
1.1 Location and scope of work	2
1.2 Geology and topography	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	2
1.4 Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival and Existing Impacts	4
1.5 Acknowledgements	4
2 Evaluation Aims	4
3 Evaluation Methodology	4
3.1 Scope of fieldwork	4
3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording	5
3.3 Finds	5
3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence	5
3.5 Presentation of results	5
4 Results: General	5
4.1 Soils and ground conditions	5
4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits	6
5 Results: Descriptions	6
5.1 Description of deposits	6
5.2 Finds	9
5.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	9
5.4 Scientific dating	10
6 Discussion And Interpretation	10
6.1 Reliability of field investigation	10
6.2 Overall interpretation	10
7 Impact of the Development	12
8 Archaeological Potential in Relation to Outline Research Design	12
8.1 Periods represented	12
9 Recommendations for further post-excavation analysis and publication	13
10 Implications for the Mitigation Strategy	13
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	14
Appendix 2 Brief assessment of pottery and tile	17
Appendix 3 Animal Bone Assessment by Emma Evans	18
Appendix 4 Assessment of Macroscopic Plant and Invertebrate Remains	18
Appendix 5 Bibliography and references	24
Appendix 6 Summary of Site Details	26

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Trench location
Fig. 3 Plan of trench 1 with phasing
Fig. 4 Section 1
Fig. 5 Section 2
Fig. 6 Plan showing possible course of prehistoric ditch across the site

SUMMARY

In January 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) excavated a single evaluation trench on the east side of the former Thames View Industrial Estate, Abingdon (centred NGR SU 5010 9720) on behalf of Barratt-Maidenhead. The evaluation revealed a succession of ditches and pits interleaved with layers of alluvium, the whole dating from perhaps as early as the Iron Age through the Late Saxon/medieval period to the 19th century, overlain by modern disturbance and recent made ground deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 From the 4th - 17th January 2005, Oxford Archaeology (hereafter OA) excavated an evaluation trench on the east side of Thames View site, Abingdon on behalf of Barratt-Maidenhead. The work was carried out in respect of a condition attached to the planning consent for mixed residual and industrial development, and in accordance with a brief set by, and a WSI agreed with, the Oxfordshire Deputy County Archaeologist on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council (specifically section 4.1.1).

1.1.2 The evaluation only examined the north-east area of the 6-hectare development site (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on a gentle south-facing slope upon gravel terrace deposits, shelving onto the alluvial floodplain of the river Thames in the south-east part of the site. The land drops from 54.17 m O.D on the north to 53.53 m O.D on the south. The site is situated on private property belonging to Barratt-Maidenhead and at the time of the evaluation consisted of an open car parking area.

1.2.2 The development site lies on the north-east side of central Abingdon (Fig. 1) and immediately north of the Abbey millstream (a man-made watercourse some 12-15 m wide) and of the Abbey Gardens municipal park. To the west the site is bounded by housing, and on the north by car-parking belonging to Waitrose and to the Vale of White Horse District Council. Audlett Drive and further light industrial units lie to the east.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (Thames View, Industrial Park Abingdon, Oxford Archaeology, April 2003), and was also summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigations for the evaluation (Thames View, Abingdon, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, Oxford Archaeology, 2004). The full archaeological and historic baseline for the area crossed by the proposed scheme can be found in Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement (Kimberley Securities 2003), and this is summarised below.

- 1.3.2 Although no previous archaeological investigations have taken place within the development site, the immediate environs contain evidence of past human activity dating from every period since the last Ice Age. There is therefore the potential for prehistoric evidence of Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age date (Allen 1990). As excavations at Yarnton in Oxfordshire have shown, the floodplain of the Thames was drier before the later Bronze Age than today, so that evidence of occupation predating the late Bronze Age may be found on the floodplain in areas that have since been too wet (Allen, Hey and Miles 1997). Further evidence of Iron Age activity has recently been found to the north of Thames View in the former Abingdon Gasworks site, and on the Penlon site (information from Ken Welsh of OA).
- 1.3.3 In the late Iron Age three parallel defensive ditches were dug around the prehistoric settlement, and have been traced across the Sheltered Housing and the Waitrose sites to the north-west, continuing east-south-east into the development site (Chambers and Moore 1998; Allen 1991; Allen 1993; Allen 1995). These ditches are up to 12 m wide and 2.7 m deep into the gravel, so are likely to have survived more recent development impacts, even if truncated.
- 1.3.4 Roman pits and ditches were found below the Waitrose site, and Roman finds are also recorded from the Abbey Grounds site, so Roman activity is likely to have continued into the development site (Allen 1994; Biddle 1968). Pagan Saxon structures were also found west and east of the development site, so may also occur within it. (Allen 1990; Keevill 1992).
- 1.3.5 Late Saxon and medieval pits, ditches and finds, probably associated with the barton or home farm of Abingdon Abbey, have been found immediately to the north in the Penlon and Waitrose sites, as well as in the Audlett Drive Adult Day Centre (AOC Archaeology 1998; Allen 1994; Keevill 1992). These include ditches running towards the development site.
- 1.3.6 Abingdon Abbey church lay within Abbey Grounds just to the south-west, and ancillary buildings are recorded east and north-east of the church in the documentary record that may well have lain within the development, particularly towards the east end. 16th-century maps show at least one ditched enclosure on the north side of the Abbey Millstream within the site (Kimberley Estates 2003, Thames View Industrial Estate Environmental Statement, Appendix 7.3 Figure 8) Bridges are also mentioned in the documents. Leland claimed that an earlier Saxon church lay north-east of the abbey church, extending into the development site, though his claim is unsubstantiated.
- 1.3.7 A recent plot of the likely position of the Civil War defences of Abingdon has suggested that one of these, called Abbey Guard, lay within the east part of the development site (Brinkley 2002). A pentangular ditched redoubt has recently been discovered within the Penlon site just to the north, and another possible defence on Stert Street, confirming other documented locations on the east side of the town.

1.4 Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival and Existing Impacts

- 1.4.1 Much of the site was used as an orchard in the late medieval and post-medieval periods, and it is therefore likely that tree roots and tree-holes will have had an impact upon any archaeological deposits at shallow depth.
- 1.4.2 The development of the site during the 20th century is likely to have resulted in the truncation and in places the destruction of archaeological deposits across the north-western half of the site, but landscaping of the south-eastern part of the site is more likely to have buried previous ground surfaces below Made Ground.

1.5 Acknowledgements

- 1.5.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Paul Soutar of Barratt-Maidenhead for his help, and Hugh Coddington, the Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, for site visits. The machine excavation and backfilling was carried out by Fentons of Reading.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The aims of the work were to establish, as far as is practicable from a limited evaluation of this scale, the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains, and, if archaeological remains are present, to ascertain their date, character, level of survival and information potential, including that of environmental remains.

The specific objectives of excavating this evaluation trench were:

- ... To establish the profile of the underlying terrace/floodplain interface, and the character and complexity of alluvial deposits, including the presence of any buried land surfaces;
- ... To establish the presence/absence of the large late prehistoric defensive ditches within the proposal area, and if present, to establish their state of preservation, broad sequence of infilling, dating and environmental potential;
- ... If the defensive ditches are present, to establish whether any associated banks or other features survive;
- ... To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date and depth of any other archaeological remains present, and in particular to determine whether the Late Saxon and medieval activity seen to the north continues into the site;
- ... To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any other archaeological deposits and features;
- ... To make an assessment of the impact of the scheme on any significant remains or deposits encountered;
- ... To make an assessment of the need for further archaeological evaluation and mitigation in this area prior to and during the construction of the proposed scheme.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of one linear trench with stepped sides to the east, west and north and south allowing for safe working conditions. The evaluation trench roughly measured 38.5 m (north-west / south-east) long and between 4 to 11 m wide and varied in depth from 1.7 m to 4 m (Figs 3 and 4). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trench was cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. Some features, particularly the large ditches, were excavated using a combination of hand-sampling and controlled machine excavation. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and were generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 During the evaluation suitable deposits were located that were environmentally sampled, column and bulk samples were taken for future analysis for waterlogged plant remains, pollen, snails and artefactual remains.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 Section 5 describes the sequence of deposits and archaeological remains in the trench. A plan of the trench and accompanying sections from the trench are illustrated. Context and finds details are given in the Context Inventory (Appendix 1).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The general soil type was an alluvial silty clay of varying colours, overlain by a considerable depth of made ground, consisting of hard core, rubble and tarmac car-parking surface. The underlying natural geology was a mid-brown alluvial silty clay.

4.1.2 The excavated features continued below the standing water table, making the ground conditions wet, muddy and sticky. A pump was therefore employed to reduce and prevent flooding and to enable the hand-excavation and recording of the features in the southern half of the trench. Because of this a sump had to be excavated by machine at the southern end of the trench (Fig. 4 Section 1), and small trenches had to be excavated by machine through the exposed archaeology to enable the water to flow into the sump. Although these operations were carried out under archaeological supervision,

examination of these excavations was necessarily limited, and these operations also reduced the area available for more detailed archaeological examination. Due to the difficult wet conditions the large ditch in the centre of the trench was part-excavated by machine and part-excavated by hand.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 Only a single feature, a ditch of 19th-century date, was found in the northern half of the trench. Halfway down the trench a large ditch crossed in a roughly east-west direction, and in contrast the southern half of the trench contained a high density of pits, ditches and other possible features.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 5.1.1 The natural geology consisted of a friable mid-brown orange alluvial silty clay (109), and was recorded along the full length of the trench. The natural was identified at a depth of 1.36 m to the north-west below the present surface of 54.17 m O.D and at a depth of 3.72 m to the south-east below the present surface of 52.89 m O.D.
- 5.1.2 The natural was overlain by a layer of tenacious light grey brown silty clay (148) that was also seen in the middle of the trench (here numbered 109) and towards the south-east end (here numbered 143) (Figs. 4 and 5, Sections 1 and 2). Due to the wet conditions layer (148 =143) was apparently omitted in error from section 1, but was recorded in the opposing section 2. A sample of this layer was taken at the north end of the trench, and proved to contain land snails and a small quantity of charred plant remains including rye (see Section below). This soil is tentatively interpreted as the original Holocene soil modified by later occupation activity.
- 5.1.3 At the south-east end of the trench layer (148) was truncated by a sloping cut (160), probably belonging to a ditch or a channel. For reasons of Health and Safety this feature was not bottomed, but the excavated part was at least 1 m deep and 4 m wide. Machining of the sump at the very south end of the trench showed that these deposits continued to the end of the trench and beyond, as is also suggested by the angle of slope of the deposits along its northern side (Fig.3 and 4, section 1). This feature was therefore at least 8 m wide.
- 5.1.4 The north-west edge of the possible ditch, which ran east to west, sloped down at an angle of 35°, and contained a series of alluvially-derived fills and an organic deposit (see Fig 4, Section 1). In summary these fills vary from a friable dark blue-grey clay silt to a mid to light brownish-grey sandy silt (159, 152, 155 and 156) overlain by a lens of light yellow grey silt sand (154). This deposit was overlain by an upper fill of a friable dark grey brown clayey peat (157), whose extent is plotted (Fig. 3, Plan 1).

- 5.1.5 An abraded sherd of possibly Iron Age pottery was retrieved from fill (152) on the north-west edge of the ditch. The uppermost peat layer 157 was sampled for environmental remains, and contained a cherry stone indicating a Roman or later date and charred plant remains including free-threshing wheat and oats, both suggesting a Saxon or later date.
- 5.1.6 Sealing this fill of feature (160) were successive blue-grey gleyed layers of friable sandy silt (153) and clay silt (158). Both layers could either be alluvially-derived flood material or yet further upper fills to ditch 160.
- 5.1.7 Towards the south end of the trench soil 148 was cut by a ditch aligned north-west to south-east (151), which measured 1.5 m wide by 0.7 m deep and contained three fills (Fig. 5, Section 2). The ditch fills consisted of a tenacious dark grey-brown silty clay (144), possibly eroded soil from the ditch sides, sealed by a primary fill of sticky / tenacious dark grey brown clay-silt peat (150) and overlain by an upper fill of mid grey-brown clayey silt (149). An environmental sample from the peat (sample 8) included rye and free-threshing wheat, crops only common from the late Saxon period onwards, and a sherd of medieval pottery of 13th-14th century date. Animal bones, one sherd of Roman or medieval pottery and a number of Roman tile fragments were also recovered.
- 5.1.8 To the north of ditch (151) a couple of oval pits were located (139 and 142). Pit 139 cut pit 142, and pit 142 cut soil layer 148=143 (Figs. 3 and 5, Section 2). Both pits were of similar dimensions (pit 139 measured approximately 2.4 m x 2 m by 0.6 m deep, pit 142 measured 2.5 m x 1.9 m by 0.7 m deep). Pit 139 contained 3 fills: the primary fill was friable dark grey brown clay peat (138) overlain by a tenacious mid grey brown silty clay (137) overlain in turn by a yellow brown silt clay (136), probably redeposited natural. In pit 142 there were two fills. The primary fill consisted of friable dark grey clayey peat with occasional pebbles (141), from which fragments of dog and cattle bone were recovered. This fill was overlain by a tenacious mottled mid brown-grey silty clay (140). These pits are undated, but are probably also medieval.
- 5.1.9 Both pits and ditch 151 were sealed by a thick layer of alluvium (131), a friable mid-grey clayey silt that contained a small quantity of cattle bone. This was cut by a substantial ditch numbered (121) on one side of the trench and (130) on the other (Figs. 4 and 5, Sections 1 and 2). This ditch was 6.2 m wide and 1.4 m deep, had sides sloping at between 30° and 45° and a flat base. It was aligned roughly east-west and contained three deposits. Along the south edge was a slump of tenacious grey silt (128=146). The remainder of the ditch contained a friable light blue grey silty sand (127 =147), overlain by a tenacious dark blueish brown clay silt (122=145) that contained sherds of Roman pottery, tile and brick, animal bone and fired clay.
- 5.1.10 A layer of tenacious mid brownish grey clayey silt (129) overlay alluvium (131) and extended over ditch fill (122), ending just north of the ditch. To the south the layer was truncated some 6 m short of the end of the trench by recent disturbance associated with the development of the site in the 20th century (Figs. 4 and 5,

Sections 1 and 2), but it is likely that it originally extended further south. Layer 129 is interpreted as a post-medieval alluvium.

- 5.1.11 In the northern half of the trench, beyond the limits of layer 129, a thin alluvial deposit of friable mid grey-green silty clay (118) was recorded overlying soil 108 and probably resulted from extensive flooding in the medieval period.
- 5.1.12 A layer consisting of a tenacious mid brownish-grey clay silt (115=107) ran most of the length of the trench, being truncated on the south by recent disturbance (Fig. 4, Section 1). This layer was stained by diesel, and its upper part was disturbed by modern activity above. This layer overlies both layer 118 and alluvial deposit 129. Two sherds of 19th-century pottery were recovered from this layer.
- 5.1.13 Truncating layer (115) was an oval pit (132) that measured 2.8 m wide by 0.85 m deep and contained fills of a tenacious dark to mid grey black silty clay (133 and 134, Fig 4, Section 1).
- 5.1.14 Overlying layer (115) and sealing pit (132) was a layer of loose dark brown silty clay (119) that was recorded along the full length of the trench.. This layer consisted of a mix of industrial and domestic rubbish (119), including three sherds of 19th century pottery and a newspaper dating to the 20th-century. This layer is interpreted as a buried topsoil prior to the 20th century redevelopment of the site.
- 5.1.15 Close to the north-west end of the trench a ditch or stream channel (125) running east-west was exposed, which measured 2.1 m wide by 0.45 m deep and contained a friable dark brown black clay silt with four sherds of 19th-century pottery. Although layer 119 ran up to this feature, but not apparently beyond it to the north, no relationship between them was obtained, because feature 125 was completely truncated by a concrete and stone culvert (106).
- 5.1.16 The culvert cut through layer 119, and the concrete slabs forming its sides and base suggest a 20th-century date. It contained contexts (104, 110, 105 and 103, Fig. 4, Section 1). The culvert was removed by machine, and no finds were recovered.
- 5.1.17 Directly above the infilling of the culvert (106) a layer of soft dark brown black clay silt (102) was located. This is interpreted as modern dump.
- 5.1.18 Also overlying layer (119) was a layer of mid yellow-brown sand and brick hardcore and rubble (114) that covered the southern half of the trench.
- 5.1.19 Towards the northern end of the trench hardcore layer 114 was cut by a shallow pit (113) measuring 4 m long by 0.4 m deep, and filled by a deposit of loose dark brown black clay silt (112). This pit was cut by a drain (116 and 117) to the north and was covered by a concrete, stone and tarmac surface (126, 120, 111 and 123) to the south. This tarmac was not fully recorded in section.
- 5.1.20 Capping (101, 102, 119, 112, 117, 123 and 114, Fig. 4 Section 1) was a substantial layer of yellow mid brown sandy, gravel and hard core with a finishing tarmac car-parking surface (100).

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Pottery, tile, iron objects and animal bones were recovered from the evaluation. The material was scanned to provide spot-dating and broad fabric identifications. Detailed assessments of the finds will be found in Appendices 1-3.
- 5.2.2 The assemblage of pottery was small (14 sherds), 9 of which were of 19th century date. There was one medieval sherd of the 13th/14th centuries from ditch 151, plus one indeterminate rimsherd of medieval or Roman date. Two sherds were Roman, both residual in later features, and one very small abraded sherd was probably Iron Age.
- 5.2.3 A total of 25 fragments of tile were recovered, mostly of Roman date. These were roof tiles and bricks, and were all residual in later features. In addition a late medieval/early post-medieval 'Tudor' brick fragment came from ditch 121, and a 19th-century transfer-printed tile from layer 119.
- 5.2.4 Two fragments of a flat, iron plate measuring at least 60 by 60 mm and only 1 mm thick were retrieved from fill (148) of medieval ditch (151). These will be X-rayed in due course.
- 5.2.5 Seventeen animal bones, including bones of dog, pig and cattle, were recovered from ditches, alluvial deposits and a pit dating to the medieval or post-medieval periods.

5.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 5.3.1 Four samples were assessed for palaeo-environmental potential. These were:
- ... Sample 9 from layer 157 in the top of feature 160
 - ... Sample 8 from 150, the lowest fill of medieval ditch 151
 - ... Sample 6 from 127, the lowest fill of post-medieval ditch 121
 - ... Sample 2 from layer 108 at the north end of the trench

The samples were selected to assess the full chronological span of the archaeological features, to provide an indication of the environmental development of the site, and to answer specific questions, for instance whether buried soils were alluvial in origin.

- 5.3.2 The assessment showed that charred plant remains survived in all of the samples, and that waterlogged plant and insect remains were well-preserved in the earliest (and deepest) sample, sample 9. Otherwise remains, including molluscs, were present but were poorly-preserved. The detailed assessment will be found in Appendix 4.
- 5.3.3 No pollen assessment has been carried out, but the good preservation of waterlogged remains in Sample 9 suggests that pollen preservation in this deposit will also be good.

5.3.4 The environmental remains provided important information that assisted in dating the deposits, showing that all of the sampled deposits were late Saxon or later. In addition, the different environment indicated for Samples 9 (grazed grassland and settlement in the vicinity) and 8 (scrub and woodland) shows that layers 157 and 150 are not contemporary.

5.3.5 The environmental information from Samples 9 and 8 provides important background to the settlement remains identified immediately north of the site in the medieval period, and to the environment of Abingdon Abbey just to the south-west.

5.4 Scientific dating

5.4.1 No scientific dating has been undertaken as part of this assessment, but the potential for this exists in both the animal bones and the waterlogged plant remains recovered. The only deposit that might merit consideration for scientific dating is layer 157 in the top of feature 160.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The trench was positioned to provide a north-south transect across the eastern end of the development site. The location of the trench was constrained by the standing buildings to the west and by the access road to the south. It was also moved slightly further east, and so shortened, to avoid a live electric cable. Within the area examined the results from the single trench have clearly demonstrated the presence of archaeological features and deposits.

6.1.2 The depth of the Made Ground presented considerable technical difficulties in examining the archaeological features. The water table was found at c. 3 m below ground, necessitating the use of a pump and the excavation of a sump within the area of the trench. It was nevertheless possible to obtain a clear plan of the archaeology except at the very south end of the trench, and to record a complete section of the stratigraphy. Hand-excavation was also limited by the ground conditions and the confined area of the trench, so that the artefact assemblage is small. This has made accurate dating of the features and deposits more tentative, though the environmental samples also added important dating evidence.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

6.2.1 The field evaluation has revealed significant archaeological features and deposits. A summary is described below.

6.2.2 A thin soil was found overlying the natural sand and gravel, a sample from which (Sample 2) suggested that at the north end of the trench ground conditions were dry. The absence of aquatic molluscs from this sample could indicate that this soil was not

deposited as alluvium from the river, and that the edge of the floodplain until the post-medieval period lay partway down the trench.

- 6.2.3 This soil produced charred plant remains likely to be Late Saxon or medieval in date, probably derived from the settlement identified from evaluation in the adjacent properties north of Thames View. The presence of these remains does not mean that the soil originated in the Late Saxon or medieval period, but that this thin topsoil was accumulating material from the adjacent settlement at this time.
- 6.2.4 One of the main aims of the evaluation was to discover whether the large prehistoric defensive ditches known to run into the Thames View site from the north-west continued this far east, and to establish their alignment. The large east-west feature at the south end of the trench, the earliest cut feature identified, may be one of these ditches, as an early fill spilling down its north edge contained Iron Age pottery. Sample 9 from layer 157, one of the latest fills of this ditch, proved to be Late Saxon or medieval in date, but this does not date the digging of the feature itself. In the Vineyard the ditches were deliberately backfilled in the Roman period, but further west close to St. Helens Church the ditches remained open and were recut in the medieval period (Allen 1997, 50).
- 6.2.5 The size of feature 160 makes it likely that this was either a defensive ditch or a palaeochannel. On the basis that the ditch at the south end of the evaluation trench was the continuation of the outermost (northernmost) of the ditches revealed further north-west, a tentative alignment for the ditches has been indicated (Figure 6). As the area below and to the south of the access road was not evaluated, it is not known whether only one or more of these ditches might have continued this far.
- 6.2.6 Despite the absence of Roman features, the quantity of Roman finds recovered suggests Roman activity, and indeed a structure or building, in the vicinity. A Roman building is known from excavations in the Vineyard some 200 m to the west, and it is possible that this material was derived from the robbing of this structure during work on the medieval abbey, but the possibility of Roman activity closer than this also needs to be borne in mind.
- 6.2.7 The environmental remains from the top of the feature are of considerable importance in themselves, providing information on the environment both of Abingdon Abbey and (probably) the associated barton or home farm of the abbey to the north of the site. Although no certainly Late Saxon/medieval features were identified in the evaluation trench, the evidence of charred plant remains from both ends of the trench shows that there is activity in the vicinity, and the stratigraphic position of the two undated pits to the north makes it probable that these belong to this period.
- 6.2.8 Ditch 151 was dated to the 13th/14th century. The environmental evidence from its fills suggests a change from grazed grassland to woodland by this time, possible related to the disappearance of the settlement activity to the north, and indicating the change of use of this part of the Abbey precinct. This may be one of the ditches recorded in the Abbey manorial accounts (OA 2003, section 7.2.42).

- 6.2.9 The ditch and pits were sealed by a thick alluvial deposit, showing an increase in alluviation in the late medieval period. This is cut by ditch 121, which may have followed the boundary of the floodplain at this time, as the alluvium does not continue north beyond it. This large ditch is either late medieval or post-medieval in date, and may be one of the ditches mentioned in Amyce's 16th-century survey of Abingdon (see OA 2003, section 7.2.42). Its broad profile and wide flat bottom may indicate that it was used as a fishpond, or possibly as a defence, rather than simply as a boundary ditch. Its line is followed by a boundary surviving, though not as an open ditch, until the 19th century, as it is visible on the Tithe Map of the parish of St. Nicholas in 1841 (OA 2003, Figure 7.10).
- 6.2.10 A series of later alluvial layers were recorded, indicating flooding in the post-medieval period, as historic maps indicate. These alluvial layers have then been truncated by modern activity associated and made ground for the construction of the past building and car-parking surfaces.

Significance

- 6.2.11 The prehistoric defences of Abingdon are of regional importance and significance. The significance of the Late Saxon/early medieval activity and environmental evidence is enhanced by their being part of the barton or home farm of Abingdon Abbey, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that the Made Ground is of considerable depth in this part of the site. Only in the northern part of the site are any buried archaeological features likely to suffer significant impacts from the proposed development. Deeper interventions such as service trenches may however result in limited truncation of archaeological features further south.

8 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL IN RELATION TO OUTLINE RESEARCH DESIGN

8.1 Periods represented

- 8.1.1 The sequence of soils confirms the extent of the alluvial floodplain and the possible edge to the gravel terrace deposits at various periods. The sequence of alluvial deposits suggests a gradual build up of these flooding layers, extending gradually further northwards, from prehistory to the present day.
- 8.1.2 No buried land surfaces containing *in situ* occupation deposits earlier than the 19th century were identified within the evaluation trench.
- 8.1.3 A possible Iron Age ditch that was partially revealed may be a continuation of the late prehistoric defensive ditches that were identified to the north-west immediately outside the development site.

- 8.1.4 The evidence for Late Saxon/medieval activity consists of layers containing environmental remains, a boundary ditch, a couple of pits and a sequence of alluvial deposits. The infilling of the above features indicates active alluviation within the area and flooding would have probably restricted medieval activity south of the ditches. Outside the development site to the north and west, where flooding seems not to have occurred, Late Saxon/medieval activity has been located in evaluation and excavation trenches. The documented buildings, bridges and ponds in the Pitancery of Abingdon Abbey have not been encountered in this trench, although it is possible that ditch 121 was used as a fishpond.
- 8.1.5 The medieval features were sealed by more alluvial deposits indicating the continuation and increase in flooding during the late medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 8.1.6 A large ditch of late medieval and/or post-medieval date (121) was located in the middle of the trench. This ditch may have been dug, or utilised, in the Civil War period, similar to the large ditches found north of the development site in recent archaeological excavations (OA unpublished information). The position and alignment of this ditch makes it likely that it corresponds to a field boundary marked on the tithe map for the parish of St. Nicholas 1841.
- 8.1.7 Evidence for medieval and post-medieval garden or orchard soils was not recovered.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION

- 9.1.1 No further work is required on the small assemblage of finds.
- 9.1.2 There is potential for a fuller analysis of the environmental remains from Samples 8 and 9, and there is also the likelihood of pollen preservation in these deposits. Whether this is worthwhile depends upon closer dating of layer 157.
- 9.1.3 Suitable material exists for radiocarbon dating layer 157 containing Sample 9.
- 9.1.4 Whether to undertake scientific dating and further environmental analysis will depend upon the overall understanding obtained from archaeological mitigation, and whether other better-dated or preserved samples are recovered.
- 9.1.5 Any further work should be considered following the completion of fieldwork as part of an overall post-excavation assessment. This will also determine the appropriate scale and scope of any publication report.

10 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MITIGATION STRATEGY

- 10.1.1 No monitoring of works is likely to be required south of the access road unless excavation at least 2 m deep is anticipated.
- 10.1.2 A minimum impact depth of c. 1 m has been established in the north-east part of the site, above which no archaeological mitigation will be required.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	100	Layer		0.9	Made ground	-		
	101	Layer	1.5 m	0.2	Made ground	-		
	102	Layer	10 m	0.5	Made ground	-		
	103	Fill		0.5	Fill of 106	-		
	104	Str	2.8 m	0.6	Concrete culvert	-		
	105	Fill		0.5	Fill of 106	-		
	106	Cut	2.8 m	0.7	Cut for culvert	-		
	107	Layer	3.5 m	0.5	Band of stained alluvium	-		
	108	Layer	3.5 m	0.1	Alluvial deposit	-		
	109	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	110	Fill		0.45	Fill of 106	-		
	111	Str		0.22	Block edging	-		
	112	Fill		0.45	Fill of pit 113	-		
	113	Cut	4 m	0.45	Modern pit	-		
	114	Layer	25 m	0.5	Made ground	-		
	115	Layer	20 m	0.62	Stained alluvium	Pottery	2	19 C
	116	Cut	0.6 m	0.85	Drain	-		
	117	Fill		0.85	Fill of 116	-		
	118	Layer	11.5 m	0.4	Alluvial deposit	-		
	119	Layer	32.5 m	0.66	Made ground	Pottery tile	3 1	19 C
	120	Layer	24 m	0.23	Concrete	-		
	121	Cut	6 m	1.4	Ditch	Yes		
	122	Fill		0.9	Upper fill of 121	Pottery tile Bone	1 3 2	Roman 'Tudor'
	123	Surface	23 m	0.1	Tarmac surface	-		
	124	Fill		0.45	Fill of 125	Pottery	4	19 C
	125	Cut	2.1 m	0.45	Ditch / stream channel	Yes		
	126	Cut	20 m	0.33	Concrete tarmac surface	-		
	127	Fill		0.3	Primary fill of ditch 121	-		

	128	Fill		1 m	Fill of ditch 121	-		
	129	Later	23 m	0.4	Stained alluvium	-		
	130	Cut	6 m	1.4	Same as ditch 121	-		
	131	Layer	15 m	0.6	Alluvial deposit	Bone	2	
	132	Cut	2.8 m	0.85	Oval pit	-		
	133	Fill		0.15	Primary fill of pit 132	-		
	134	Fill		0.8	Upper fill of pit 132	-		
	135	Layer	15 m	0.6	Same as 131 alluvial deposit	-		
	136	Fill		0.2	Upper fill of pit 139	-		
	137	Fill		0.18	Fill of pit 139	-		
	138	Fill		0.2	Primary fill of pit 139	-		
	139	Cut	2.4 x 2 m	0.6	Oval pit	-		
	140	Fill		0.5	Upper fill of pit 142	-		
	141	Fill		0.22	Primary fill of pit 142	Bone	2	
	142	Cut	2.5 x 1 m	0.7	Oval pit	Yes		
	143	Layer	6 m	0.25	Alluvial deposit =148	-		
	144	Fill		0.1	Fill of ditch 151	-		
	145	Fill		0.62	Upper fill of ditch 130	-		
	146	Fill		0.6	Fill of ditch 130	-		
	147	Fill		0.5	Primary fill of ditch 130	-		
	148	Layer	6 m	25	Alluvial deposit =143	Bone Fe Obj	5 2	
	149	Fill		0.4	Upper fill of ditch 151	Pottery tile bone	1 17 6	Roman Roman
	150	Fill		0.7	Primary fill of ditch 151	Pottery Tile	1 5	13th- 14th C Med and Roman
	151	Cut	1.5 m	0.7	Ditch	Yes		
	152	Fill		0.3	Fill of ditch 160	Pottery	1	?IA
	153	Layer		0.15	Alluvial deposit	-		
	154	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 160	-		
	155	Fill		0.3	Fill of ditch 160	-		
	156	Fill		0.05	Fill of ditch 160	-		
	157	Fill		0.3	Upper fill of ditch 160	-		
	158	Layer		0.2	Alluvial deposit	-		
	159	Fill		0.2	Fill of ditch 160	-		

	160	Cut	3 m	0.6	Ditch	Yes		
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APPENDIX 2 BRIEF ASSESSMENT OF POTTERY AND TILE

by Paul Booth and Tim Allen

Pottery

A total of 14 sherds of pottery was recovered. This material was scanned macroscopically to provide spot-dating and an indication of the types and fabrics present.

Nine of the sherds were of 19th-century date. These were mainly plain fragments of clear-glazed white plates and bowls, but also included a light blue teapot spout and a red-slipped stoneware jar fragment from context 119.

One sherd from layer 150 in ditch 151 was medieval, a bodysherd in a thin quartz-tempered fabric with a dark grey interior and a buff exterior with a spot of green glaze. This sherd can be dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Another sherd from this ditch, a pale fine sandy bodysherd without surfaces from layer 149, may have been either medieval or Roman.

Two Roman sherds were recovered. One greyware fine sandy bodysherd (OA fabric group R30) of 2nd -4th century date came from layer 150 in medieval ditch 151. A rimsherd from a lid-seated jar in a fine quartz-tempered fabric (OA fabric group R30), pale in colour but a reduced ware, came from layer 122 in ditch 121.

One very small and abraded bodysherd from layer 152, in a soft, quartz- and shell-tempered fabric, was possibly Iron Age .

Tile and other Ceramic Building Material

A total of 25 fragments of tile were recovered. These were briefly scanned to provide spot-dating, identify tile types and indicate the range of fabric types present.

The bulk of the tile fragments came from medieval ditch 151: five fragments from layer 150 and 17 from layer 149, although 11 of the fragments from 149 were unidentifiable chips. All of the tiles bar one were flat tiles, and were of four thicknesses: 13 mm (1 fragment), 18 mm (3), 26 mm (3) and 38 mm (2 or 3). The second of these included the only curving tile, probably a Roman imbrex roof tile, and the third is characteristic of the flanged Roman tegulae that also form part of the Roman roof. One other fragment from layer 122 may have been the edge of a flange from a tegula. Tiles of 38 mm are probably from Roman bricks, normally used in hypocaust systems or in walls. The thinnest fragment was a flat medieval roof tile.

The predominant fabric was an iron-rich clay containing much grog (fired clay lumps). Variants included one also including fossil shell, another including straw/grass voids, and some fragments were also quartz-rich (sandy). The medieval flat tile was made of an alluvial clay including grog.

One hard-fired fragment from ditch 121 was 45 mm thick, and is part of an early 'Tudor' brick made in a quartz-rich fabric that also included fossil shell. A possible edge of a Roman tegula, and an amorphous fragment of white fired clay, also came from this context.

A thin transfer-printed wall tile, with a design of corner shells, diagonal bands and floral centrepiece on a white background, came from context 119.

APPENDIX 3 ANIMAL BONE ASSESSMENT by Emma Evans

A total of seventeen bones were recovered, with the re-fitting of several fragments reducing this number to twelve. The condition of the bone is good, with the majority scoring 2 on a grading of 1 - 5, with grade 1 being best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable. The good condition of the bone has resulted in 9 fragments being identifiable to species, 75% of the total number of bones recovered, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of bones identifiable to species

Context	Date	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Dog	Unidentifiable	Total
149	13th - 14th cent	1	3	-	-	1	5
131	Late medieval	1	-	-	-	-	1
141	Medieval	1	-	-	1	-	2
122	Post-medieval	1	-	-	-	-	1
148	Saxon/early medieval	-	-	1	-	2	3
Total		4	3	1	1	3	12

A fused distal cattle humerus from the late medieval period suggests that at least one individual died greater than 1 - 1½ years, and a tibia from the post-medieval phase suggests that another died over the age of 2 - 2½ years. The humerus had been chopped through the shaft, probably for marrow extraction.

The sheep/goat remains included a juvenile mandible, but unfortunately there were no teeth present from which to ascertain an age at death. The single pig tibia was fused distally, suggesting this individual died over the age of 2 years, and the dog pelvis was also fused which suggests that it reached at least 6 months of age, but the robustness indicates that it is probably from an adult individual.

APPENDIX 4 ASSESSMENT OF MACROSCOPIC PLANT AND INVERTEBRATE REMAINS

by Mark Robinson

INTRODUCTION

A single evaluation trench on the Thames floodplain at Thames View, Abingdon (ABTHV 05) discovered a series of waterlogged ditches and alluvial layers. Samples were taken from them for evaluation of the potential of their macroscopic biological remains both to provide additional dating evidence and environmental evidence.

METHODS

Four samples, each of 1 litre, were assessed:

Sample 2,	Context 108,	alluvial deposit,	presumed to be prehistoric.
Sample 9,	Context 157,	peat layer in ditch,	presumed to be Iron Age.
Sample 8,	Context 150,	ditch fill,	medieval.
Sample 6,	Context 127,	ditch fill,	post-medieval.

Each sample was washed over onto a 0.25mm mesh and scanned under a binocular microscope in water at x10 magnification. The results for waterlogged seeds, other waterlogged macroscopic plant remains, carbonised plant remains, Coleoptera and molluscs are given in Tables 2-6.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Preservation

Sample 9 contains high concentrations of well-preserved waterlogged macroscopic plant remains and insects. Very poorly-preserved waterlogged plant and insect remains are present in Samples 8 and 6. Charred cereal remains are present in all the samples in low concentrations. All the samples also contain mollusc shells although they are badly preserved and very sparse in Samples 2 and 6.

Dating Implications

Sample 2 contains some charred grain of free-threshing *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread wheat). While this wheat was cultivated in prehistoric Britain, it did not become a major crop until the Saxon period. Its presence in a pre-Saxon alluvial deposit seems implausible. Sample 9 contains a waterlogged stone of *Prunus avium* (cherry), a tree not known from Britain before the Roman period, as well as carbonised grain of free-threshing *Triticum* sp. and *Avena* sp. (oats). The charred remains from Sample 8 include *Secale cereale* (rye), a crop which did not become significant until the late Saxon period, as well as grain of free-threshing *Triticum* sp. Sample 6 contains grain of *S. cereale*.

The macroscopic plant remains suggest that the dating for Context 108 (Sample 2) and Context 157 (Sample 9) ought to be revised and that they are Saxon or medieval rather than Iron Age or earlier. The remains from Context 150 (Sample 8) and Context 127 (Sample 6) are consistent with the other dating evidence which suggests them respectively to be medieval and post-medieval.

Environment

The evidence from Sample 2 is limited to a shell of the snail *Helicella itala*, which is characteristic of dry, open habitats and some carbonised grain, which suggests settlement-related activity.

The peat of Sample 9 accumulated in a ditch which held stagnant water. The seeds suggested that aquatic plants such as *Callitriche* sp. (starwort) and *Potamogeton* sp. (pondweed) grew in the ditch while *Lemna* sp. (duckweed) covered the surface of the water in the summer. Various water snails, such as *Planorbis planorbis* and *Planorbarius corneus*, and water beetles, such as *Hydrobius fuscipes*, lived in the ditch. However, episodes of flowing water in the ditch, perhaps during winter floods, are suggested by the water snails *Bithynia leachii*.

The majority of the waterlogged seeds are from plants of waste-ground type habitats, including *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle), *Stachys* sp. (woundwort), *Dipsacus fullonum* (teasel) and *Picris echioides* (bristly ox-tongue). Some trees and bushes are also suggested by the waterlogged macroscopic plant remains, including *Crataegus* or *Prunus* sp. (hawthorn or sloe), *Prunus avium* (cherry) and *Salix* sp. (sallow or willow). Perhaps they grew alongside the ditch. The insect remains include scarab dung beetles from the genus *Aphodius*, suggesting the grazing of domestic animals in the vicinity, while the charred cereal remains represent settlement-derived material.

The waterlogged seeds from Sample 8 (context 150) are almost all from plants of scrub or woodland. The woody species include *Acer campestre* (field maple) and *Corylus avellana* (hazel). Herbaceous species include the climber *Humulus lupulus* (hop) and the low-growing plant *Ajuga reptans* (bugle). The shaded conditions had perhaps made circumstances in the ditch unsuitable for water snails, the only shells being from* terrestrial woodland snails such as *Discus rotundatus* and *Clausilia bidentata*. Settlement-derived remains continued to be represented by charred cereals. The evidence from Sample 6 is very limited although some charred grain is present.

POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

The only samples with potential for further analysis are Samples 9 and 8, which could give more detail of the local environments. The value of this would however depend upon more precise dating of Sample 9, and the overall significance of these features within the development as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The dating and environmental evidence recorded by the sample assessment is of some value and should be incorporated in any published report.

Table 2: Waterlogged Seeds from Abingdon Thames View (ABTHV05)

	Context	157	150	127
	Sample	9	8	6
<i>Caltha palustris</i> L.	kingcup	+	-	-
<i>Ranunculus</i> cf. <i>repens</i> L.	buttercup	+	+	-
<i>R. sceleratus</i> L.	celery-leaved crowfoot	+	+	-
<i>Thalictrum flavum</i> L.	meadow rue	+	-	-
<i>Stellaria media</i> gp.	chickweed	+	-	-
<i>Chenopodium polyspermum</i> L.	all-seed	+	-	-
<i>Atriplex</i> sp.	orache	+	-	-
<i>Acer campestre</i> L.	field maple	-	+	-
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> (L.) Max.	meadowsweet	+	-	-
<i>Potentilla anserina</i> L.	silverweed	+	-	-
<i>Potentilla</i> sp. (not <i>anserina</i>)	cinquefoil	-	+	-
<i>Prunus domestica</i> L.	plum	-	+	-
<i>P. avium</i> L.	cherry	+	-	-
<i>Epilobium</i> sp.	willow-herb	+	-	-
<i>Callitriche</i> sp.	starwort	+	-	-
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i> Mur.	sharp dock	+	+	-
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.	stinging nettle	++	-	-
<i>Humulus lupulus</i> L.	hop	-	+	-
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	hazel	-	+	-
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> L.	bogbean	+	-	-
<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> L.	henbane	+	-	-
<i>Verbena officinalis</i> L.	vervain	+	-	-
<i>Mentha</i> cf. <i>aquatica</i> L.	water mint	+	-	-
<i>Lycopus europaeus</i> L.	gipsywort	+	-	-
<i>Stachys</i> sp.	woundwort	+	+	+
<i>Galeopsis tetrahit</i> agg.	hemp nettle	+	-	-
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i> L.	ground-ivy	+	-	-
<i>Ajuga reptans</i> L.	bugle	-	+	-
<i>Plantago major</i> L.	great plantain	+	-	-
<i>Galium aparine</i> L.	goosegrass	-	+	-
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	elder	+	+	-
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i> L.	wild teasel	+	-	-
<i>Carduus</i> or <i>Cirsium</i> sp.	thistle	+	-	-
<i>Picris echioides</i> L.	bristly ox-tongue	+	-	-
<i>Sonchus asper</i> (L.) Hill	sow-thistle	+	-	-
<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.	dandelion	+	-	-
<i>Alisma</i> sp.	water plantain	+	-	-
<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.	pondweed	+	-	-
<i>Lemna</i> sp.	duckweed	++	-	-
<i>Carex</i> sp.	sedge	+	-	-
Gramineae indet.	grass	+	-	-

+ present, ++ abundant

Table 3: **Other Waterlogged Macorscopic Plant Remains from Abingdon Thames View (ABTHV05)**

	Context Sample	157 9	150 8
<i>Crataegus</i> or <i>Prunus</i> sp. - thorn	sloe	+	-
cf. Pomoideae indet. - wood	hawthorn etc	+	-
<i>Salix</i> sp. - bud	willow	+	-
bud scale indet.		+	+

+ present

Table 4: **Carbonised Cereal Grain from Abingdon Thames View (ABTHV05)**

	Context Sample	108 2	157 9	150 8	127 6
<i>Triticum</i> sp. - free-threshing	rivet or bread wheat	+	+	+	-
<i>Secale cereale</i> L.	rye	-	-	+	+
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	-	+	-	-
cereal indet.		-	+	+	+

+ present

Table 5: Coleoptera from Abingdon Thames View (ABTHV05)

Context Sample	157 9	150 8
<i>Agonum</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Hydroporus</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Colymbetes fuscus</i> (L.)	+	-
<i>Helophorus</i> cf. <i>brevipalpis</i> Bed.	-	+
<i>Hydrobius fuscipes</i> (L.)	+	-
<i>Anacaena globulus</i> (Pk.)	+	-
<i>Limnebius</i> sp.	-	+
<i>Lesteva</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Stenus</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Aphodius</i> cf. <i>sphacelatus</i> (Pz.)	+	-
<i>Aphodius</i> sp.	+	+
<i>Athous hirtus</i> (Hbst.)	-	+
<i>Brachypterus urticae</i> (F.)	+	-
Corticariinae indet.	+	-
<i>Donacia</i> or <i>Plateumaris</i> sp.	-	+
<i>Longitarsus</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Chaetocnema concinna</i> (Marsh.)	+	-
<i>Apion</i> sp.	+	-
<i>Ceutorhynchus erysimi</i> (F.)	-	+
Ceuthorhynchinae indet.	+	+

+ present

Table 6: Mollusca from Abingdon Thames View (ABTHV05)

Context Sample	108 2	157 9	150 8	127 6
<i>Bithynia leachii</i> (Step.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Carychium</i> sp.	-	+	-	-
<i>Lymnaea peregra</i> (Müll.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Planorbis planorbis</i> (L.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Anisus vortex</i> (L.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Planorbis corneus</i> (L.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	-	+	-	-
<i>Discus rotundatus</i> (Müll.)	-	-	+	-
<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> (Müll.)	-	-	+	-
<i>Zonitoides nitidus</i> (Müll.)	-	+	-	-
<i>Clausilia bidentata</i> (Ström)	-	-	+	-
<i>Helicella itala</i> (L.)	+	-	-	-
<i>Trichia striolata</i> (Pfeif.)	-	-	+	-
<i>T. hispida</i> gp.	-	+	+	-
<i>Arianta</i> or <i>Cepaea</i> sp.	-	-	+	+

+ present

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APPENDIX 6 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Site code: ABTHV 05

Grid reference: SU 5010 9720

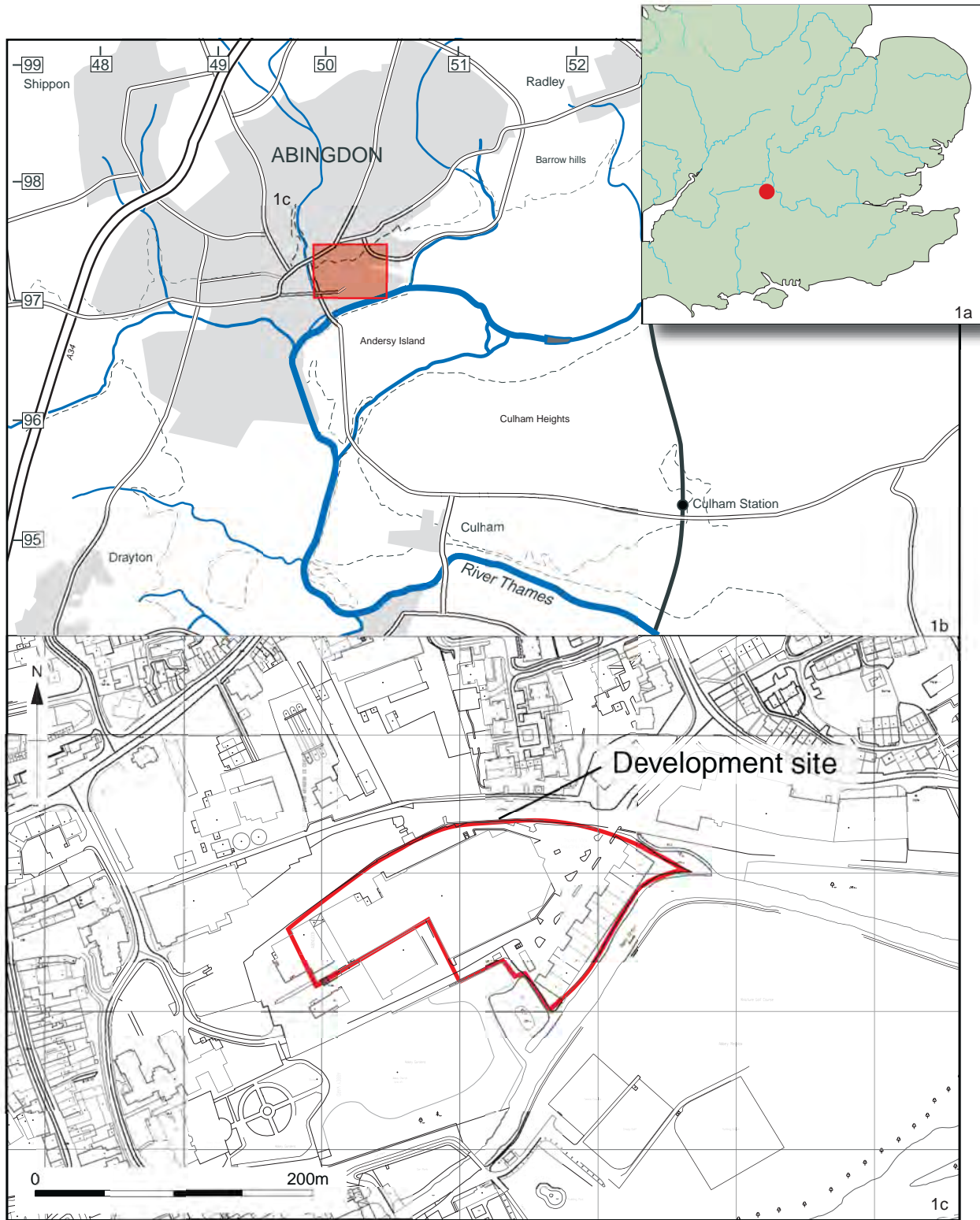
Type of evaluation: A single trench evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th - 17th January 2005

Area of site: Just a small part of a 6 hectare site was evaluated.

Summary of results: An early alluvial deposit, a possible Iron Age ditch, medieval ditch and possible pits, a post-medieval ditch, and a series of alluvial deposits were all identified in the evaluation.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: ABTHV05.01.



Not to scale

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Figure 1: Site location.

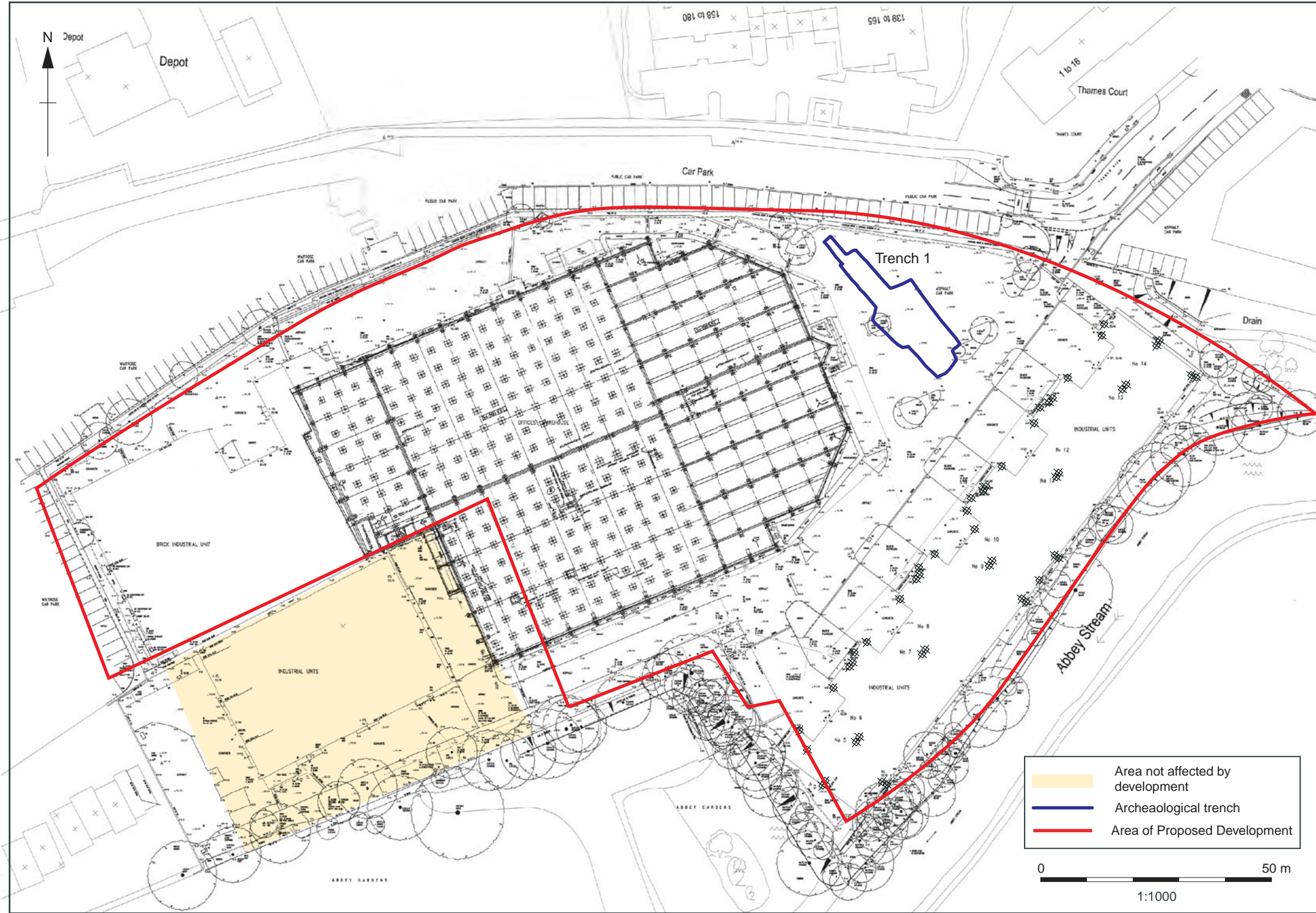


Figure 2: Trench location

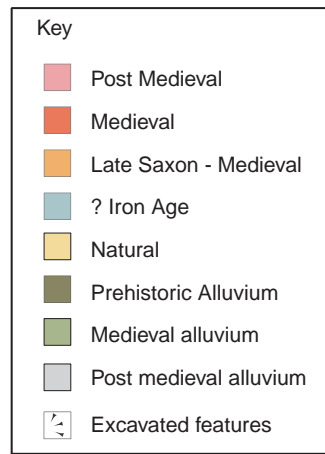
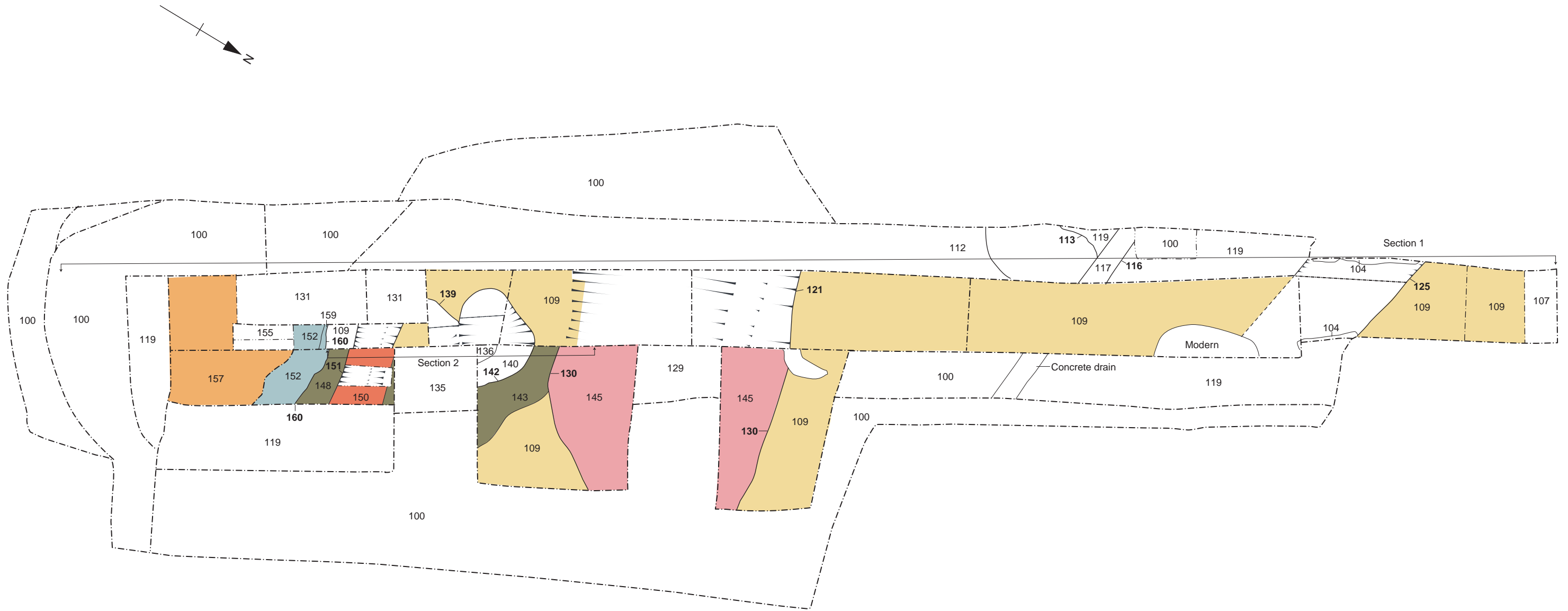


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan

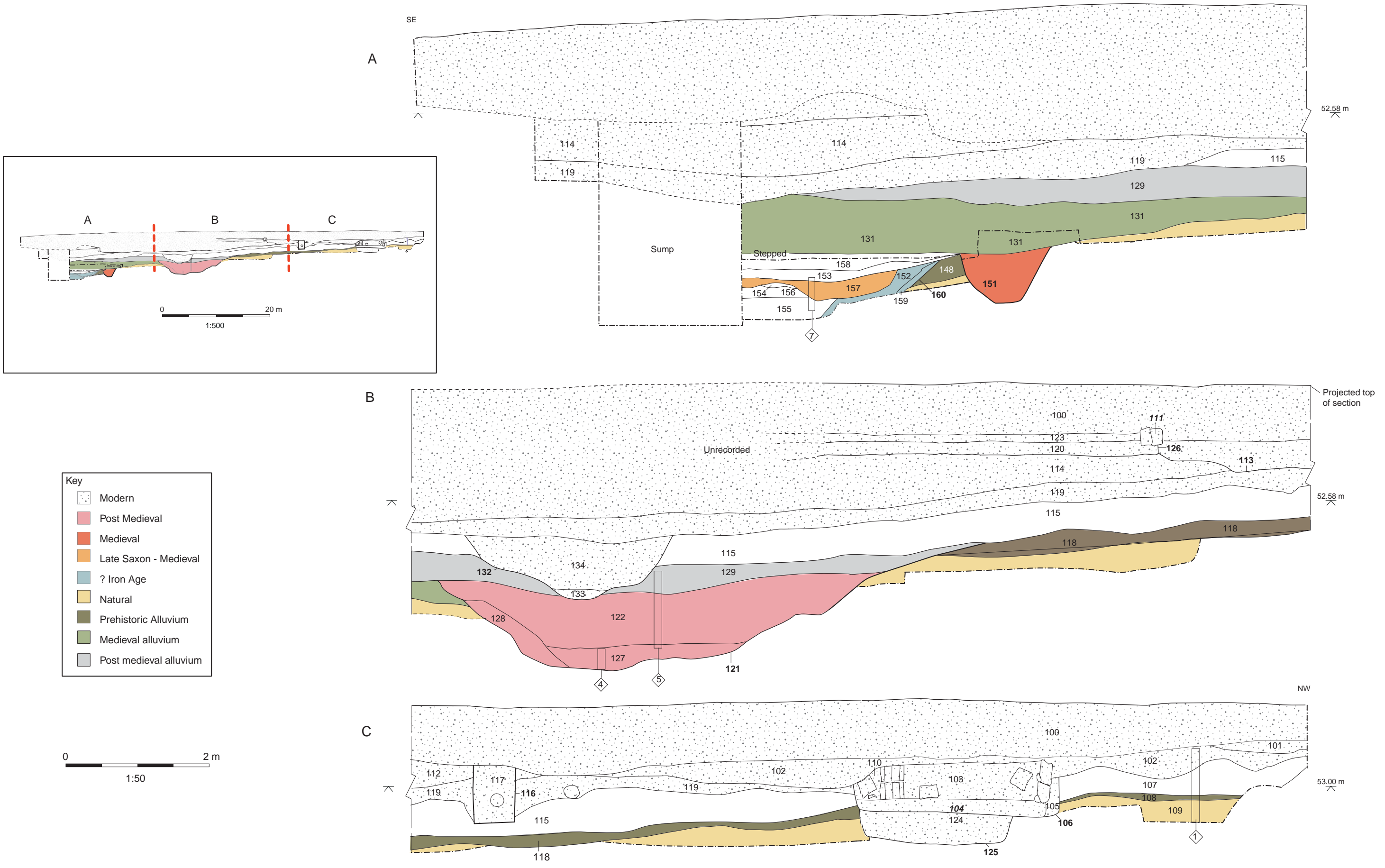
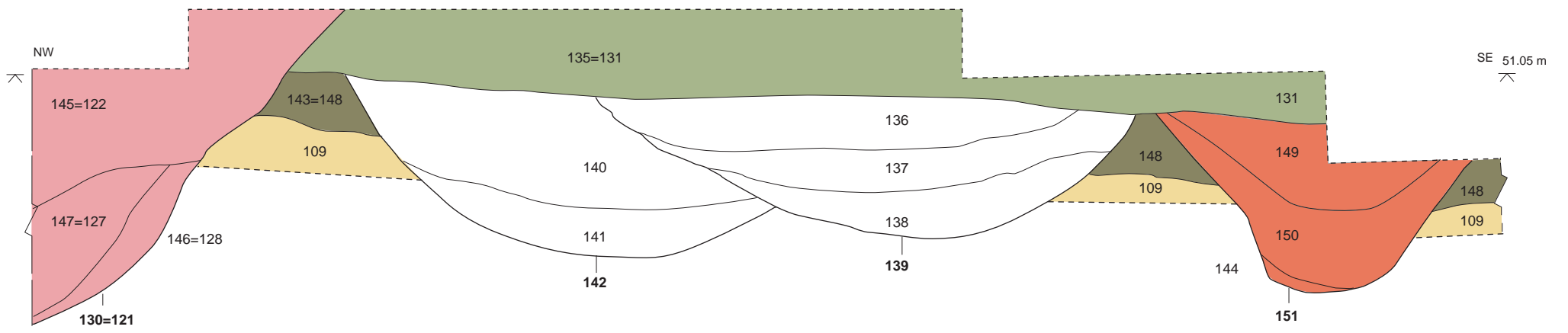


Figure 4: Section 1

Section 2



Key	
	Post Medieval
	Medieval
	Iron Age
	Natural
	Prehistoric Alluvium
	Medieval alluvium
	Post medieval alluvium



Figure 5: Section 2

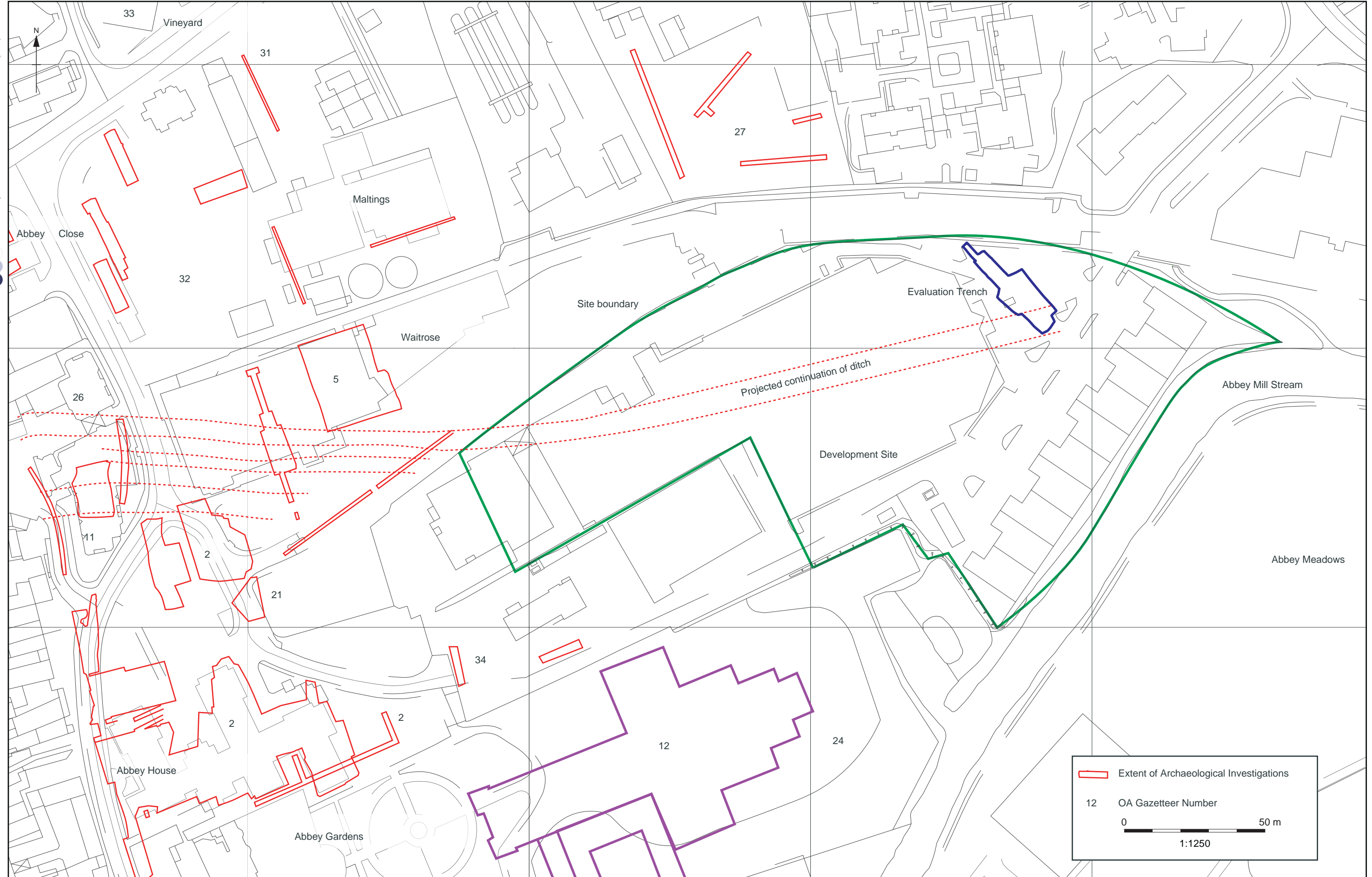


Figure 6: Plan showing adjacent investigations and possibly course of prehistoric ditch across the site