

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Annex to 97 High Street,
Eton, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aidan Colyer

Site Code: 97HSE21/74

(SU 9664 7740)

**Annex to 97 High Street, Eton,
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Ms Ros Rivaz**

by Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 97HSE 21/74

July 2021

Summary

Site name: Annex to 97 High Street, Eton, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9664 7740

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 21st-22nd July 2021

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer

Site code: 97HSE 21/74

Area of site: c. 120 sq m

Summary of results: Existing late Victorian to modern walls and foundations were identified and removed revealing only construction layers of the similar date. No features or finds 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 with an appropriate Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 10.08.21 Steve Preston ✓ 10.08.21

Annex to 97 High Street, Eton, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aidan Colyer

Report 21/74

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 97 High Street, Eton, Berkshire (SU 9664 7740) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Philip Tillbury of Herbert J. Stribling & Partners on behalf of Ms Ros Rivaz of 97 High Street, Eton, Berkshire, SL4 6AF.

Planning permission (19/02406) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new two-storey extension to replace a single storey at the rear of the property. The consent is subject to two conditions (2 and 3) relating to archaeology which require that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer between 21st and 22nd July 2021 and the site code is 97HSE 21/74.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north side of the Thames within the historic heart of Eton (Figs 1 and 2). It is bounded by buildings on High Street to north and south, High Street to the east, and by a wall and carpark to the west with gardens also to the north. The underlying geology is mapped as Flood Plain Gravel (BGS 269), however, this was not observed across the investigated area as the works did not penetrate to this depth. The site lies at a height of c.20m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Mr. Matt Saywood of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary the archaeological potential of the area in general stems from

its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded during archaeological fieldwork, aerial photography, mineral extraction and dredging of the nearby river Thames (eg Ford 1987, Foreman *et al.* 2002; Gates 1975). More specifically, the site lies within the historic core of Eton which is of medieval and possibly late Saxon origin (Astill 1978; Preston 2005).

Evaluation at Eton Court to the north revealed a probable Medieval/ Post-medieval boundary ditch (Bray 2013). However, evaluation at Gowers Yard (Taylor 2006) and watching briefs at 39 and 89 High Street (Hammond 2003; Howell 1995) did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved permanent monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and observation of surface stripping, ground reduction to the top of the relevant horizon and all other invasive work. The removal of overburden was to be done by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket and any deposits revealed were to be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in English Heritage Research Agenda (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as identified in the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

Results

The area of the annex was reduced by between 0.5m-0.6m from the existing ground level.

At the eastern end of the excavation, underneath the modern concrete floor, reused Victorian drains and wall stubs were observed. The modern construction, and the proposed new annex mirror the main foundations. Multiple sections of the Victorian walls were removed with only sections at the edge of the site retained. The drainage and services for the previous building were modern yet followed the exact lines of the Victorian drains. These walls and drains were exposed, checked for dating evidence and then only removed after their modern or, at the earliest, late Victorian date was established.

The western end of the excavation revealed imported topsoil for the entire depth, including areas where modern flowerbeds had been prior to demolition. The soil contained early 20th-century pottery and rubble.

A test hole was dug by hand through the lowest deposit to attempt to establish its depth. This was a further 0.3m deep and did not reveal any lower deposits or natural geology. Artefacts recovered from this trial hole were mid-19th century and later.

Finds

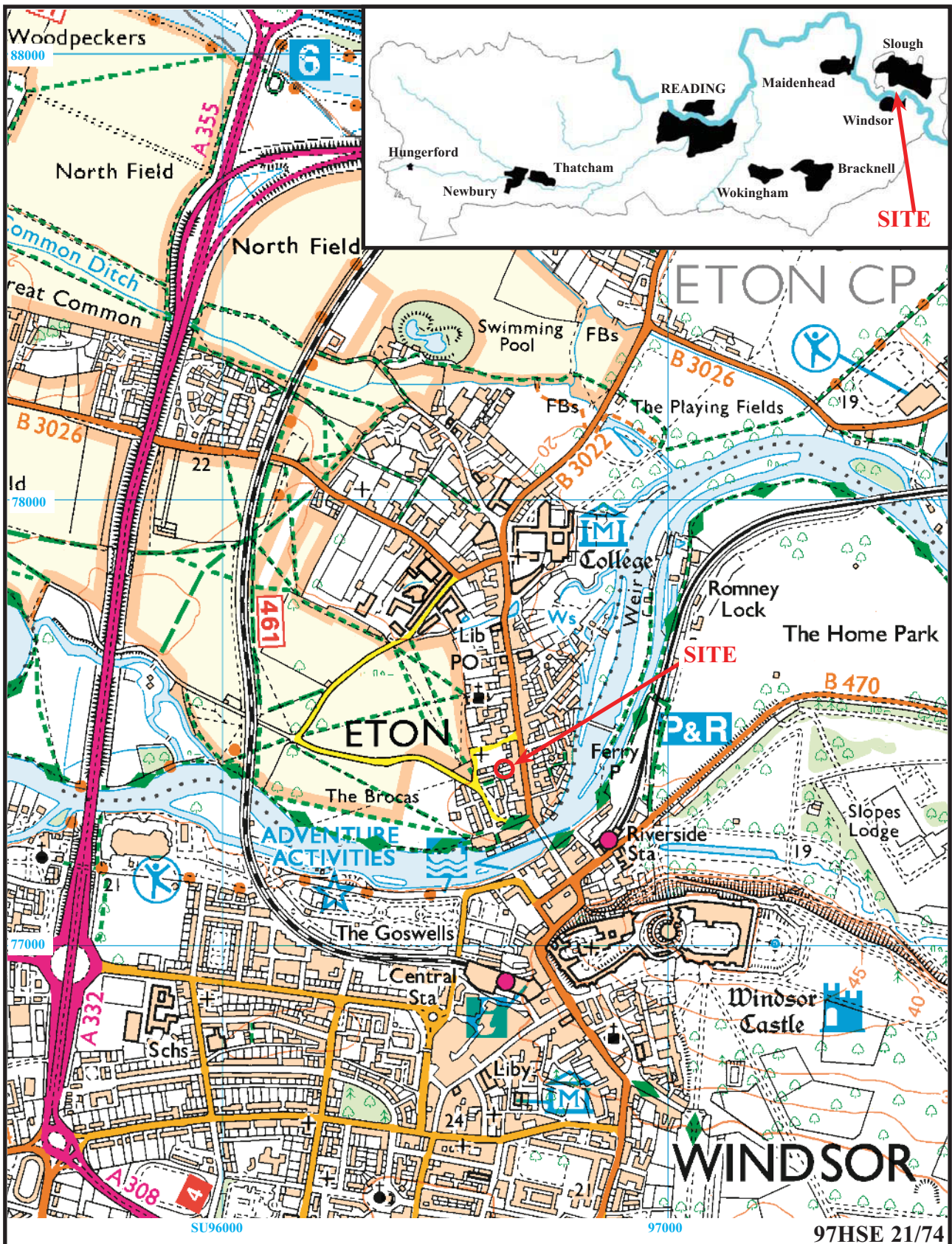
Various late post-medieval artefacts were recovered from the backfill around the Victorian, and modern, foundations and drains. The artefacts included pottery, in particular a marmalade jar with a date of 1862 as part of the labelling, clay pipe, glass, brick and tile, oyster shell, degraded ferrous bars from a drain, and a small amount of animal bone. These artefacts were retained on site.

Conclusion

The watching brief revealed the known foundations and drainage from the modern and Victorian levels. The depth of the excavation reached the bedding layers for this construction but no deeper. A hand dug trial hole confirmed that these layers continued to approximately 1m below the existing ground surface at which depth the late 19th-century and modern layers were still present. Any earlier deposits not destroyed by the previous construction will survive at a depth which will not be impacted by any of the modern groundworks.

References

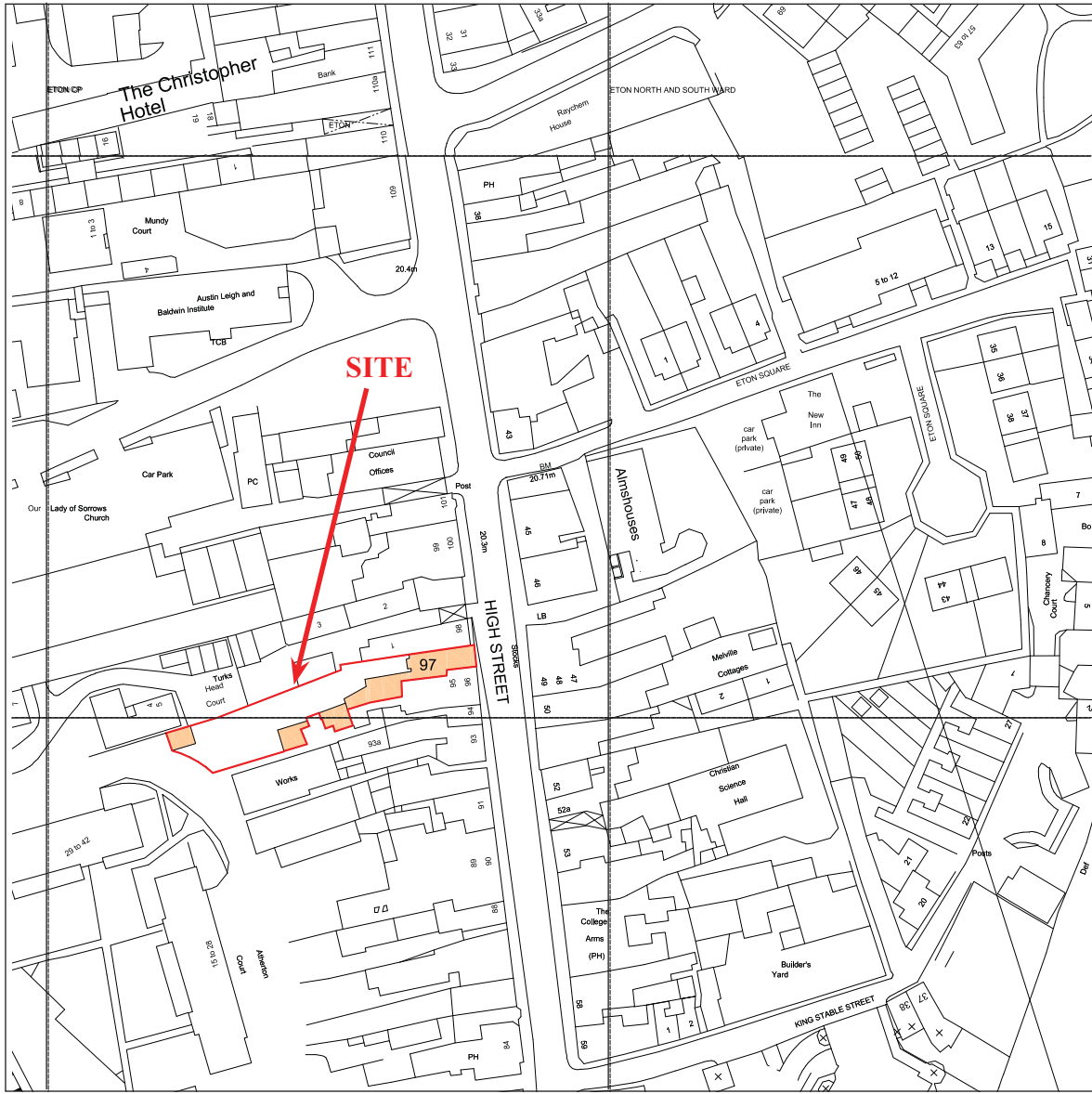
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**Annex to 97 High Street,
Eton, Berkshire, 2021
Archaeological Watching Brief**
Figure 1. Location of site within Eton and Berkshire.



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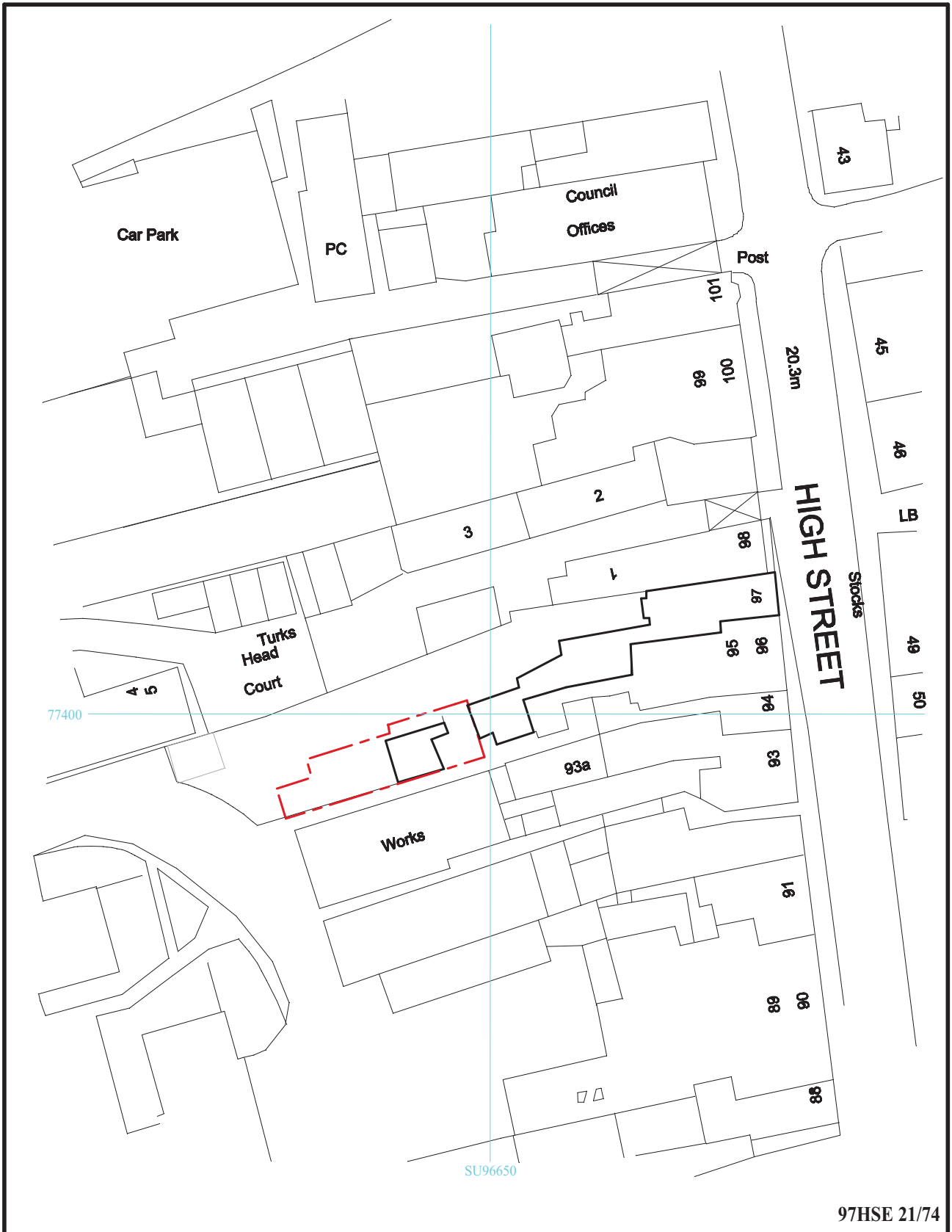
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Archaeological Desk-based Assessment
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off the High Street.

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Figure 3. Detail of site.



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Western section
SW NE 20maOD

Topsoil - imported garden soil

Eastern section
W E

Mixed post-medieval and modern made ground

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Westward facing base of excavation, Scales: 0.3m.



Plate 2. Eastward facing base of excavation, Scales: 0.3m.

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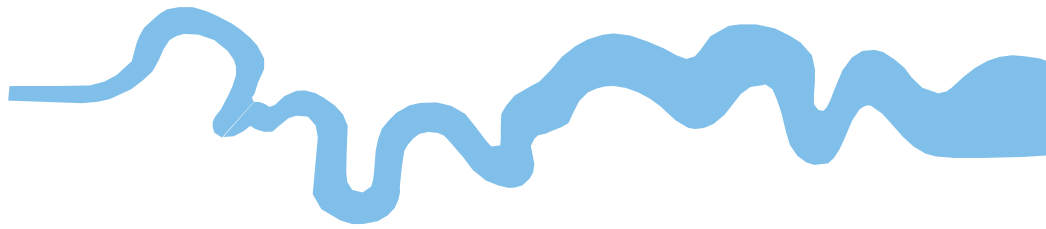
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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