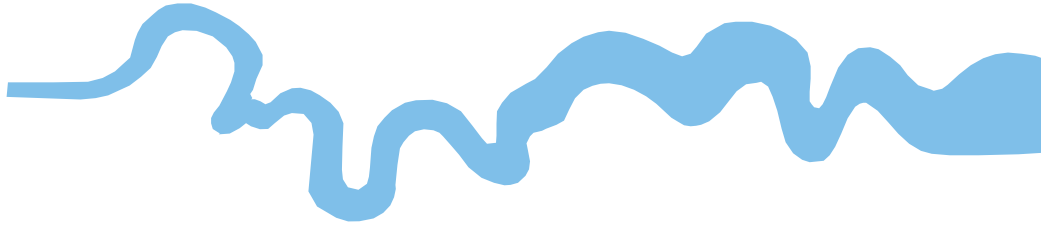


T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

**The Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street,
Congleton, Cheshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Steve Ford

Site Code: CSC 21/166

(SJ 8574 6306)

Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire

**Archaeological Watching Brief
for Homes Cross Property Limited**

by Steve Ford
TVAS North Midlands

Site Code CSC21/166

September 2021

Summary

Site name: Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire

Grid reference: SJ 8574 6306

Site activity: Watching brief

Date and duration of project: 15th–16th July 2021

Project coordinator: Helen Daniel

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: SCS21/166

Summary of results: Six test pits dug for geotechnical purposes were monitored. No artefacts nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed. The site appears to have been partly terraced with the south-eastern parts of the site being truncated, as indicated by modern deposits lying directly on top of the natural geology, which contrasts with the higher unterraced area to the north west.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands and will be deposited with a suitable repository in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston✓ 17.09.21

Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire Archaeological Watching Brief

by Steve Ford

Report 21/166

Introduction

This report documents the results of a watching brief carried out to monitor the digging of a series of geotechnical test pits in advance of redevelopment of a parcel of land at the Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire (SJ 8574 6306) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by RAAN Cross Limited (now Homes Cross Property Limited), Suite 6, Hadfield House, Gordon Street, Stockport, SK4 1RR as advised by Ms Helen Martin-Bacon of Avalon Heritage.

Planning consent (app (20/1934C)) is to be sought from East Cheshire Council to refurbish and extend buildings on Cross Street for residential purposes. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation produced by Avalon Heritage (Martin-Bacon 2021).

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the northern margins of the historic core of Congleton (Fig. 1), on the south side of Cross Street and west of Mill Street (Fig. 2). The site is currently occupied by the Former Electric Cinema, houses, an out building, concrete yard and turfed garden. The site lies at a height of *c.* 48m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as sand and gravel (BGS 1968).

The rear (south) part of the site comprises a terraced area with retaining wall approximately 0.8m high. To the north-west was a raised garden area and to the east a concrete yard surface.

Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site has been detailed in a Heritage Statement produced by Avalon Heritage (Martin-Bacon 2020). In summary, the site is thought to lie within the historic (medieval) core of the town, with Mill Street to the east being one of the main Medieval roads. However, few observations have been made to refine the extent of the town at this time (CCC 2003, Fig. 2). By the mid 19th century the Tithe map indicated that the site was occupied by several structures and by the later 19th century the site lay within the Victorian expansion of the town (Martin-Bacon 2020).

Results

Six test pits were dug and monitored (Fig. 3).

Test Pit 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

This test pit was located in the garden towards the north west end of the site. It was 1.2m long, 0.6m wide and 1.5m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.5m of topsoil containing brick/tile and 'china' pottery, overlying 0.5m of light brown sandy clay subsoil with much sandstone gravel, above compact rounded sandstone gravel (natural geology).

Test Pit 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

This test pit was located in the garden area towards the centre of the site. It was 1.2m long, 0.6m wide and 1.6m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.6m of topsoil overlying 0.3m of light brown sandy clay subsoil with much sandstone gravel, above compact rounded sandstone gravel (natural geology).

Test Pit 3 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 4)

This test pit was located outside of the western end of the building and intended to examine a wall foundation. It was 1m long, 0.6m wide across and 1.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.7m of topsoil containing red brick fragments above 0.5m of a light brown sandy clay above gravel (natural geology). It revealed the brick foundations of the building.

Test Pit 4 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 5)

This test pit was located outside of the eastern end of the building and intended to examine a wall foundation. It was 0.4m square and 1.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.1m of concrete above yellow sand (natural geology).

Test Pit 5 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 6)

This test pit was located adjacent to the outbuilding and intended to examine a wall foundation. It was 0.4m square and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of concrete above yellow sand (natural geology).

Test Pit 6 (Fig. 3)

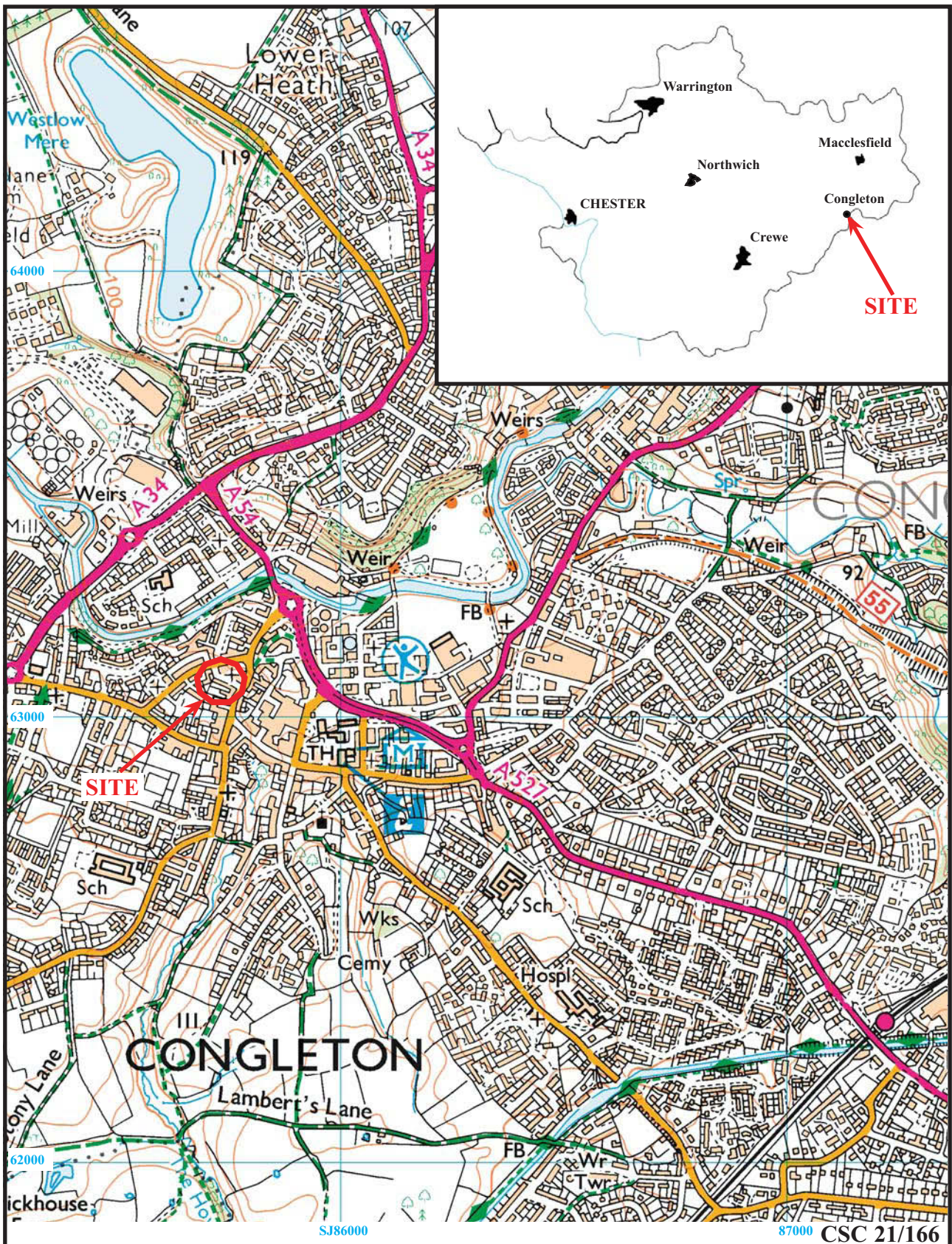
This test pit was located within the eastern end of the building and intended to examine a wall foundation. It was 0.3m x 0.4m across and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of concrete above yellow sand (natural geology).

Conclusion

The watching brief revealed no deposits of archaeological interest nor any artefacts pre-dating the late 19th century. However, the results are informative in that whilst the western garden area retained a natural profile albeit with evidence of enhanced topsoil dumping, the terraced eastern yard area, and area beneath the buildings revealed the slab foundations directly on top of natural geology implying that this area had been truncated and the archaeologically relevant level removed.

References

- BGS, 1968, *British Geological Survey* sheet **110**, 1:63360 solid and drift, Keyworth
- Martin-Bacon, H, 2020, 'The Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, heritage statement', Avalon Heritage report AH 575, Stoke-on-Trent
- Martin-Bacon, H, 2021, 'Written Scheme of investigation for a Watching Brief: Land at The Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton', Avalon Heritage report WSI/crossstreet/AH575/30/06/21, Stoke-on-Trent
- CCC, 2003, 'Congleton' *Cheshire Historic Towns Survey*, Cheshire County Council/English Heritage, Chester

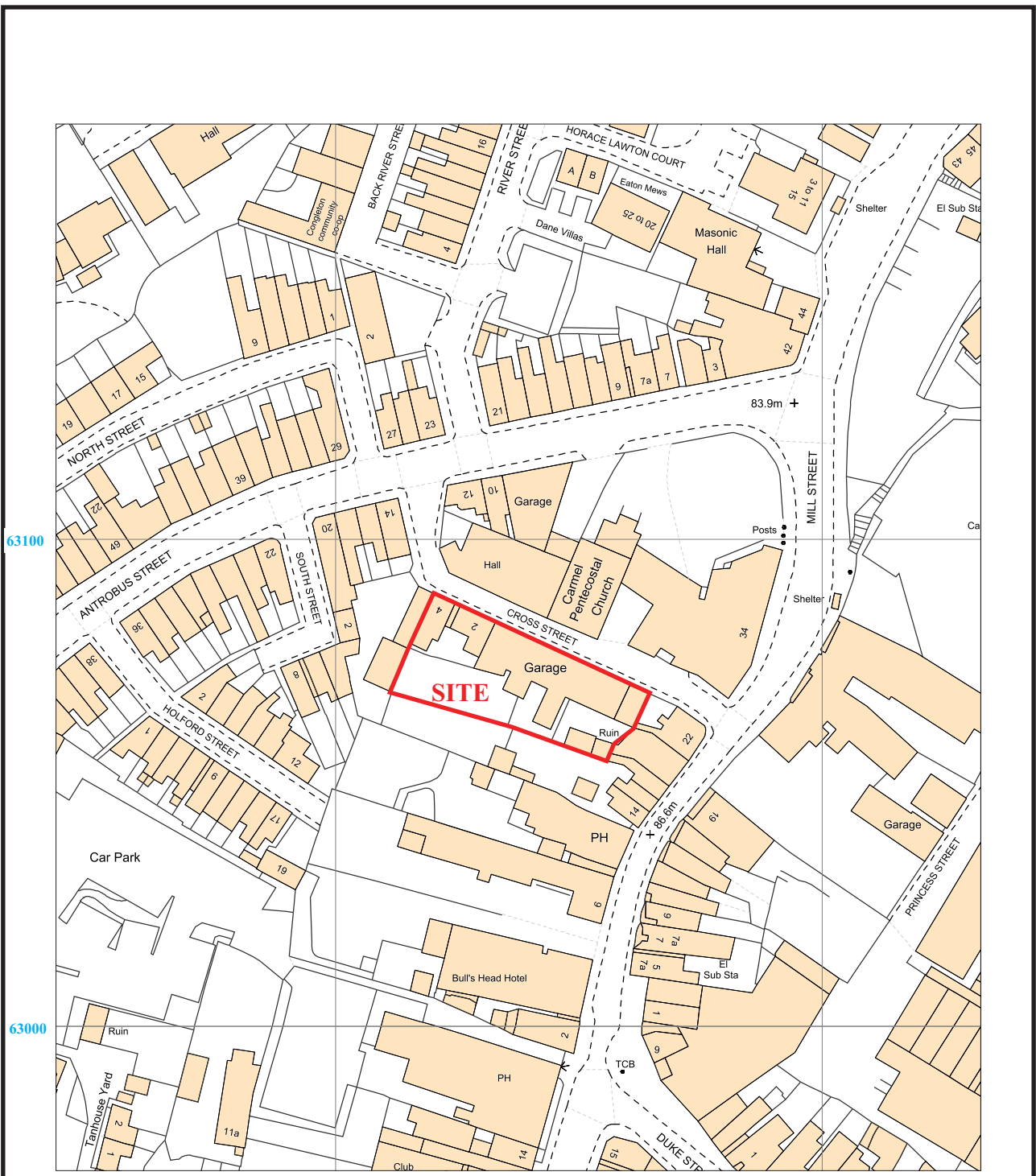


**The Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Congleton and Cheshire.

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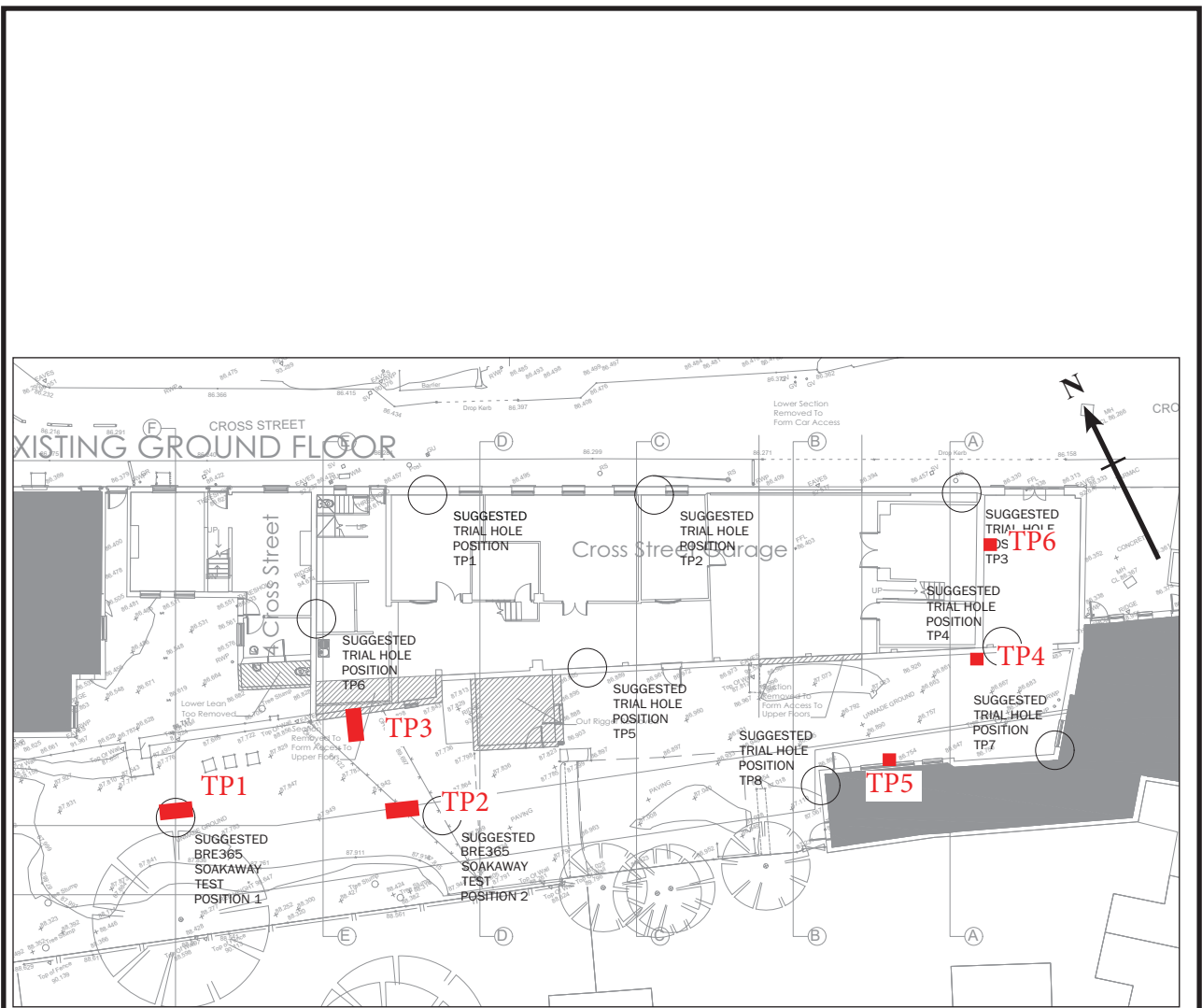
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Cross Street.

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Figure 3. Location of test pits observed (TP1-6)



Test Pit 1

88.20m aOD

Topsoil

Light brown sandy clay with gravel (subsoil)

Sandstone gravel (natural geology)

Base of test pit

Test Pit 4

86.65m aOD

Concrete

Yellow sand (natural geology)

Base of test pit

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Figure 4. Sections of test pits 1 and 4





Plate 1: Setting of site looking West



Plate 2: TP 1 looking South East. Scale: 0.5m



Plate 3: TP 2 looking North West. Scale: 0.5m



Plate 4: TP 3 looking North. Scale: 0.5m



Plate 5: TP 4 looking North. Scale: 0.5m



Plate 6: TP 5 looking South. Scale: 0.5m

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**The Former Electric Cinema, Cross Street, Congleton, Cheshire
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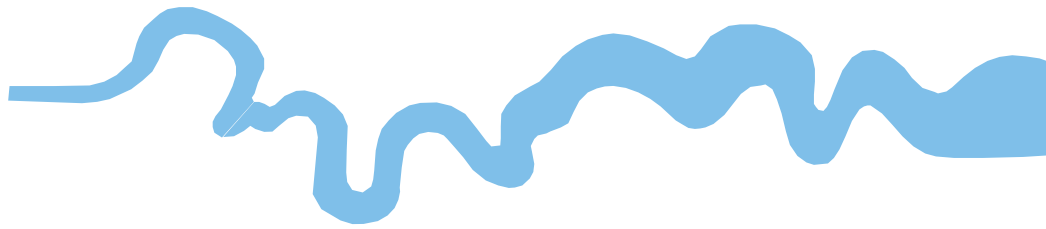
Plates 1-6



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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