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**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at North Bersted Phase 6,  
Bognor Regis, West Sussex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: NBWS07/135**

**(SU 9220 0105)**

# **Land at North Bersted Phase 6, Bognor Regis, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Berkeley Homes (Southern) Limited**

by Andy Taylor  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code  
NBWS 07/135

**February 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at North Bersted Phase 6, Bognor Regis, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** SU 9220 0105

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 15th-21st February 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andy Taylor

**Site code:** NBWS 07/135

**Area of site:** c.0.68 hectares

**Summary of results:** A number of archaeological features, mostly linear in nature, were observed and appear to range from Bronze Age to Medieval date. Other finds recovered represented a longer chronology with a sherd of Early Neolithic pottery being present along with a miniature flaked flint axe. These deposits appear to show a further expansion of the area containing archaeological deposits from what had been previously observed to the north.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Chichester Museum in due course with accession code CHCDM: 2008.1.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 28.02.12 Jo Pine✓ 28.2.12
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# Land at North Bersted Phase 6, Bognor Regis, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

**Report 07/135c**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Land at North Bersted, Bognor Regis, West Sussex (SU 9220 0105) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Jon Neville, Head of Planning and Design with Berkeley Homes (Southern) Limited, Berkeley House, Summers Place, Stane Street, Billingshurst, RH14 9GN.

Planning permission is to be sought from Arun District Council for residential development on the site as an extension to the major development already taking place at North Bersted immediately to the north. The proposal area would form phase 6 of the development programme.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr John Mills, Senior Archaeologist with West Sussex County Council, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Kyle Beaverstock and Steve Crabb and the site code is NBWS 07/135. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Chichester Museum in due course with accession code CHCDM: 2008.1.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located to the east of the A259 Chichester Road and north of Rowan Way and is on the northern margins of Bognor Regis. (Fig. 1). The natural geology comprises Aeolian Deposits (Brickearth) contaminated with gravels, along with alluvium (BGS 1994), which were observed in all trenches. The site lies at a height of c.4 m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential for the environs of the site has been highlighted by desk-based assessment, field evaluation and excavation (Jones and Dunkin 2000; Worrell 2005; Taylor and Weale 2009). In summary the site lies on the Sussex coastal plain, which is considered rich in archaeological deposits of many periods (Rudling

2003). This archaeological potential has been demonstrated in adjacent areas with the excavation and recording of an extensive prehistoric and Roman landscape with occupation areas and small enclosures set amongst field systems. The most notable finding was that of a Late Iron Age princely burial equipped with a rich array of grave furniture including pottery vessels, a sword, shield boss and helmet (Taylor and Weale 2009).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Bronze Age are present.

To determine whether any evidence of late Iron Age and Roman occupation and landuse is present.

Ten trenches were to be dug using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. These were to be dug under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## **Results**

Ten trenches were dug measuring *c.* 1.90m wide and between 19.50m and 21.80m in length (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1

This trench measured 21.30m in length and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.25m deep overlying a brown silty clay subsoil 0.15m deep which in turn overlay a mid yellow/brown silty clay (brickearth) which was the natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed within the trench.

### Trench 2

This trench measured 21.00m in length and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.20m deep overlying subsoil 0.34m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed within the trench.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 5)

This trench measured 21.50m in length and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.30m deep overlying subsoil 0.20m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. Two cut features were observed. A gully (7306) was located in the central part of the trench. A slot was dug across it measuring 1m in length, showed the gully to be 0.40m wide and 0.05m deep. It contained a single fill (7557) of mid yellow/brown clayey silt with a single sherd of medieval pottery and a prehistoric flint flake. A posthole (7307) was located at the northern end of the trench, this was half sectioned and showed the feature was 0.54m in diameter and 0.10m deep. It contained a single fill (7558) of grey/brown clayey silt with 53 pieces of burnt flint recovered from a 10L soil sample, but no other closely datable artefacts.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 4 and 5)

This trench measured 21.10m in length and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.30m deep overlying subsoil 0.25m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. An intercutting ditch and a gully were recorded at the north eastern end of the trench. A slot dug to determine the relationship between the two showed ditch 7309 truncated gully 7308. Ditch 7309 was 1.7m wide but only partially excavated to 0.2m deep in a relationship slot. The single fill encountered (7560) was a light brown/grey clayey silt and contained a single sherd of Middle or Late Iron Age pottery. It is possible that ditch 7309 continues to become ditch 7305 in trench 6 to the north west (Fig. 3). If so, this sherd of pottery is residual in a Bronze Age feature. Gully 7308 was 0.25m wide and 0.07m deep with a single fill (7559) of mid grey/brown clayey silt but no finds.

#### Trench 5

This trench measured 21.20m in length and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.30m deep overlying subsoil 0.30m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed within the trench.

#### Trench 6 (Figs 4 and 5; Pls 1 and 3)

This trench measured 21.80m in length and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.30m deep overlying subsoil 0.25m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. A ditch (7305) was located

close to the southern end of the trench. This was investigated by a slot 1m long and revealed it was 1.36m wide and 0.60m deep. It contained two fills (7555 and 7556) with the upper fill (7555) of light grey silty clay, containing a small sherd of Middle/Late Bronze Age pottery, a flint flake and two pieces of burnt flint. The primary fill (7556) of light grey/brown silty clay, contained a flint flake and three pieces of burnt flint. It is possible that ditch 7305 continues to become ditch 7309 in trench 4 to the south east (Fig. 3).

#### Trench 7

This trench measured 19.50m in length and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.30m deep overlying subsoil 0.20m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed within the trench.

#### Trench 8

This trench measured 21.00m in length and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy comprised made ground 0.10m deep overlying buried topsoil 0.03m deep, overlying subsoil 0.35m deep which in turn overlay brickearth natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed within the trench.

#### Trench 9 (Figs 4 and 5)

This trench measured 21.0m in length and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.25m deep overlying subsoil 0.25m deep which in turn overlay mid yellow/red brickearth natural geology. Two parallel linear features, ditch (7303) and gully (7304) were recorded towards the northern end of the trench. The relationship between them was unclear. The ditch (7303) measured 1.70m wide and 0.40m deep with a single fill (7553) of light grey/brown clayey silt and contained two sherds of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery and two pieces of burnt flint. The gully (7304) measured 0.40m wide and 0.20m deep with a single fill (7554) of light grey/brown clayey silt. It did not contain any finds.

#### Trench 10 (Figs 4 and 5; Pls 2 and 4)

This trench measured 21.00m in length and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy comprised topsoil 0.35m deep overlying subsoil 0.25m deep which in turn overlay mid reddish brown brickearth natural geology. Two intercutting gullies (7300/1 and 7302) were identified within the trench. Gully (7300/1) on a N-S alignment was 0.65m wide and 0.09m deep and a single fill (7550) of mid yellow/brown silty sandy clay and contained two



pieces of burnt flint and a miniature flaked flint axe head. It truncated an earlier gully (7302), which was on a NNW-SSE axis, and was 0.38m wide and 0.11m deep. This gully contained a single fill (7552) of mid yellow/brown silty clay and a single sherd of early neolithic pottery.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Frances Raymond*

#### *Introduction*

The evaluation produced six wall sherds (weighing 62g.) from five features, which date between the early Neolithic and the medieval period. Work on the pottery has been limited to a rapid appraisal to provide information on its date and character.

#### *Early Neolithic*

A single lightly abraded sherd from Cut 7302 is most likely to be of early Neolithic date (weighing 10g.). It is made from a laminar fabric with sparse to moderate amounts of coarse burnt flint (up to 7mm.), which belongs to one of the more common Sussex early Neolithic ware groups (Drewett 1980, Fabric 1). A few mostly residual sherds from earlier stages of excavation at North Bersted are very similar in character and point to a low level of activity on the site. This is significant on the coastal plain, where evidence of the early Neolithic is relatively scarce. It is unclear whether the sherd is from a Plain Bowl or Decorated assemblage and it is only possible, therefore, to provide a broad time bracket between 3970 and 3095 cal BC (Bayliss, Healy, Whittle and Cooney 2011, 762 and 766).

#### *Middle to Late Bronze Age*

Cut 7305 produced a moderately abraded wall fragment made from a medium grade flint tempered ware (weighing 2g.). Fabrics of this type had a long history of use in Sussex spanning the middle and late Bronze Age and were used for vessels of both periods from the earlier stages of excavation on the site.

#### *Middle to Late Iron Age*

A lightly abraded sherd in a hard fabric tempered with abundant burnt flint (<2.0mm.) came from Cut 7309 (weighing 29g.). This compares most closely with the wares represented in the North Bersted transitional middle to late Iron Age assemblages that continued to be produced into the late Iron Age.

#### *Late Iron Age to Roman*

Cut 7303 produced two wall fragments from different vessels (weighing 16g.). The smaller of the two sherds (weighing 3g.) is in fresh condition and is made from a black unoxidised fabric tempered with moderate

quantities of very fine burnt flint (<1.0mm.). The associated greyware sherd is lightly abraded and has small black ferrous inclusions typical of the Arun Valley industry. A date on either side of the Conquest up until c.AD 60 is possible for the deposit, although with only two sherds this is uncertain.

#### *Medieval*

A heavily abraded medieval sherd from Cut 7306 has surviving traces of an internal pale green glaze (weighing 5g.). It is made from a coarse, fully oxidised pink fabric with moderate amounts of flint and sparse shell, quartz and ferrous inclusions.

#### *Struck Flint* by Steve Ford

A small collection comprising 3 struck flints was recovered from the site. Two pieces both from ditch 7305 were flakes made from flint locally available. These flints are not chronologically distinctive but are probably of neolithic or Bronze Age date. The third piece was what is considered to be a miniature flaked flint axe from gully 7300. It was 60mm long, 29mm wide at the blade end and tapering to 15mm at the butt. It was 10mm thick. It was extensively flaked on both surfaces with a small area of cortex remaining at the butt end. The blade is symmetrical about its long axis. The blade end does not appear to be well formed either due to breakage during use or failure during manufacture. The piece is too heavy and chunky to be considered as an arrowhead or even an unfinished one. With the presence of cortex at the butt end (where a projectile tip would lie), and its tapered form, it also seems unlikely to be or have intended to be a laurel leaf. A miniature axe seems the most likely identification.

#### *Burnt Flint* by Andy Taylor

10 pieces of burnt flint weighing a total of 304g were recovered during the evaluation as detailed in Appendix 5.

### **Conclusion**

A moderate volume of archaeological features were observed during the evaluation, which was expected considering its proximity to deposits identified immediately to the west of the proposed phase 6 area. Finds recovered represented a wide range of dates, with a noteworthy sherd of Early Neolithic pottery being present as a result of the rarity of such material on the Sussex coastal plain. However, few of the features contained more than a few datable finds and the features are only contemporary with, or later than, the finds they

contained. Gully 7306 in trench 3 appears reasonably certain to be of medieval or later date and ditch 7305 (and its probable continuation 7309) seems likely to be of Bronze Age date. Ditch 7303 in trench 9 is unlikely to be earlier than Late Iron Age/Roman times. It seems reasonable to conclude that both Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/Roman and Medieval boundary features are present with the possibility that earlier features, such as those of Neolithic date, are also present in the area. The encountered deposits show a further expansion of the area containing archaeological deposits from what had been previously observed to the north.

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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	21.30	1.90	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ mid yellow/brown brickearth natural geology.
2	21.00	1.90	0.60	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.54m subsoil; 0.54m+ brickearth.
3	21.50	1.90	0.55	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ brickearth. Gully 7306; Posthole 7307
4	21.10	1.90	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ brickearth. Gully 7308; Ditch 7309
5	21.20	1.90	0.65	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.60m subsoil; 0.60m+ brickearth.
6	21.80	1.90	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ brickearth. Ditch 7305; <b>[Pls 1 and 3]</b>
7	19.50	1.90	0.55	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ red brown brickearth.
8	21.00	1.90	0.75	0-0.10m made ground; 0.10m-0.40m topsoil; 0.40m-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ brickearth.
9	21.00	1.90	0.55	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ mid yellow/red brickearth. Ditch 7303; Gully 7304
10	21.00	1.90	0.65	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-0.60m subsoil; 0.60m+ mid reddish brown brickearth. Gullies 7300, 7301 and 7302; <b>[Pls 2 and 4]</b>

**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
3	7306	7557	Gully	Medieval?	Pottery
3	7307	7558	Posthole	Prehistoric?	Burnt flint
4	7308	7559	Gully	Pre- Bronze Age?	Stratigraphy
4	7309	7560	Ditch	Bronze Age	Iron Age Pottery. Same as 7305?
6	7305	7555, 7556	Ditch	Bronze Age	Pottery . Same as 7309?
9	7303	7553	Ditch	Late Iron Age/Roman?	Pottery
9	7304	7554	Gully	-	-
10	7300	7550	Gully	-	-
10	7301	7551	Gully	-	-
10	7302	7552	Gully	Neolithic?	Pottery

### APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

Trench	Cut	Fill	Number	Weight (g)	Date
3	7306	7557	1	5	Medieval
4	7309	7560	1	29	Middle / Late Iron Age
6	7305	7555	1	2	Middle/ Late Bronze Age
9	7303	7553	2	16	Late Iron Age/ Early Roman
10	7302	7552	1	10	Early Neolithic

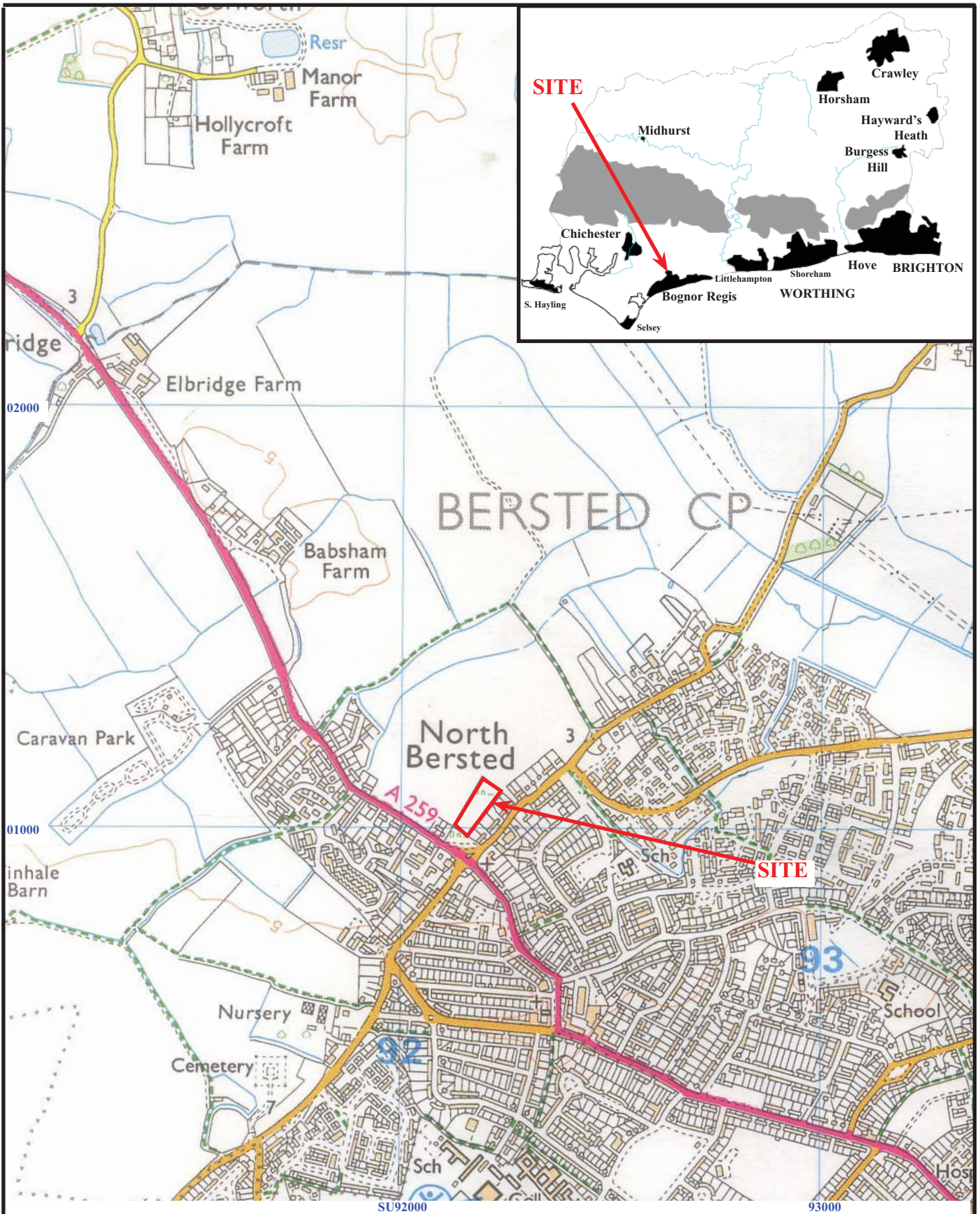
**APPENDIX 4:** Catalogue of Struck Flint

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Type</i>
1	7300	7550	Flaked axe
6	7305	7555	Flake
6	7305	7556	Flake

**APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Burnt Flint**

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
7300	7550	2	10
7303	7553	2	61
7305	7555	2	73
7305	7556	3	141
7306	7557	1	19
7307	7558	53	163





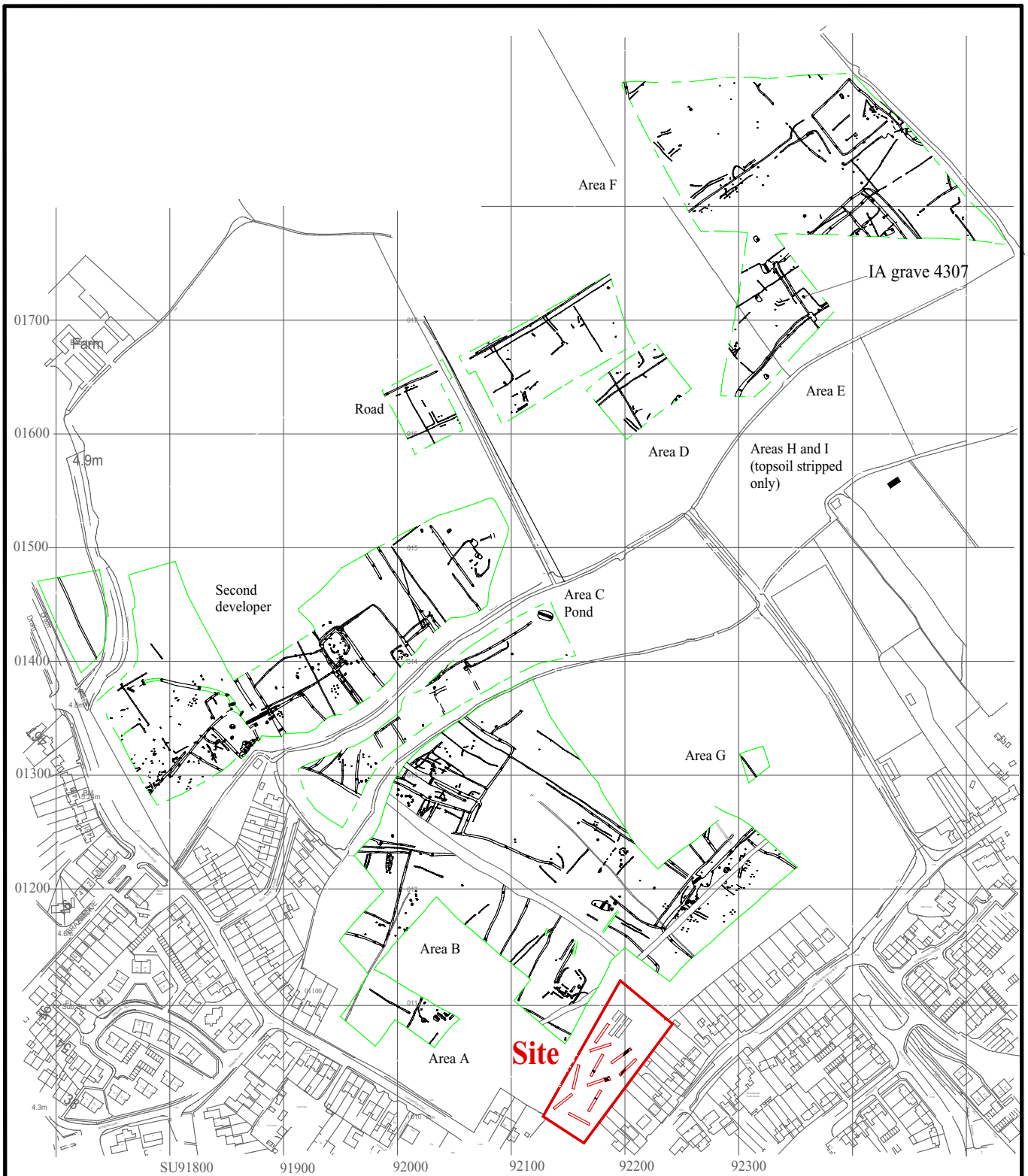
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Figure 1. Location of site within North Bersted and West Sussex.

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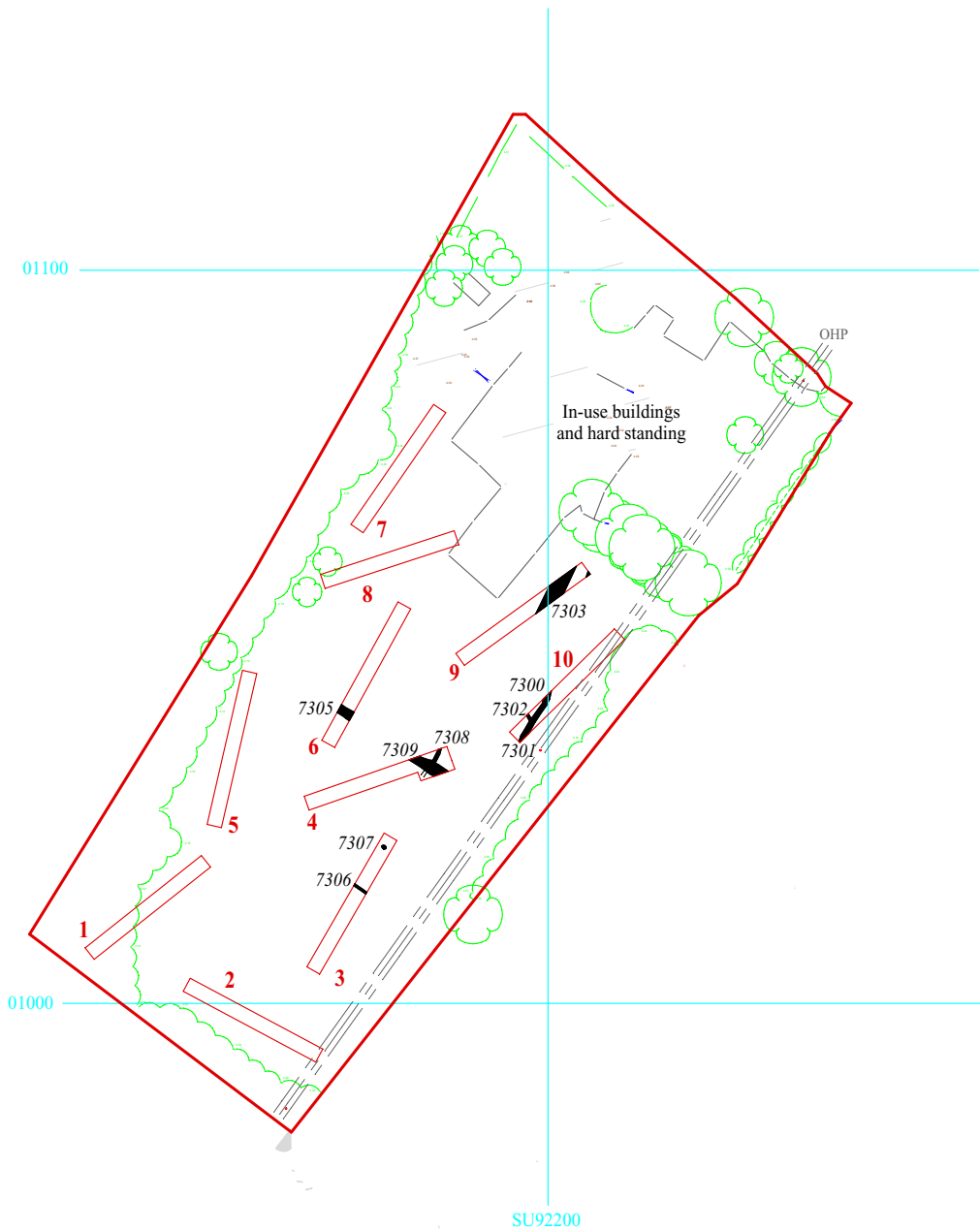
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Figure 2. Location of Phase 6, in relation to 2007 excavations.



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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

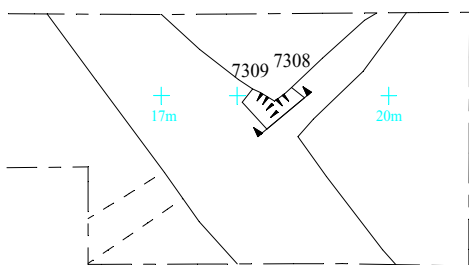


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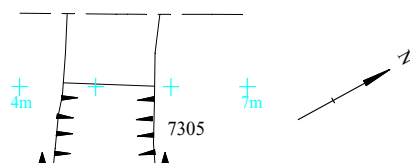
Trench 3



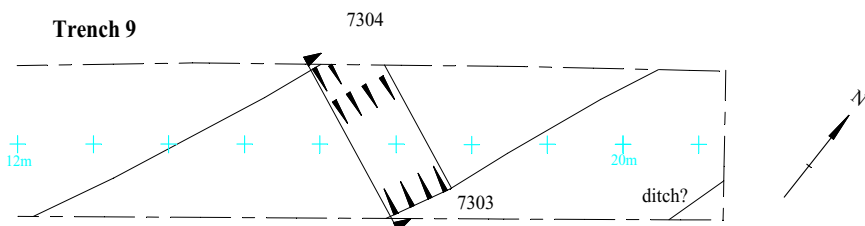
Trench 4



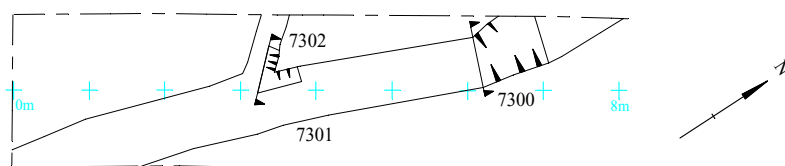
Trench 6



Trench 9



Trench 10



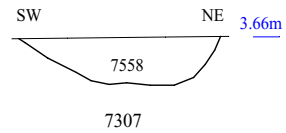
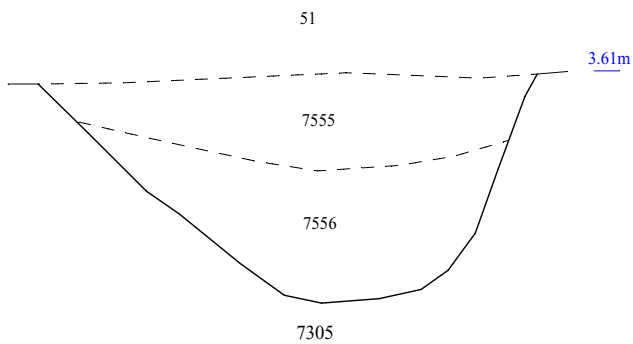
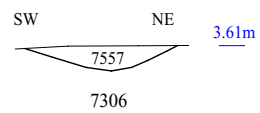
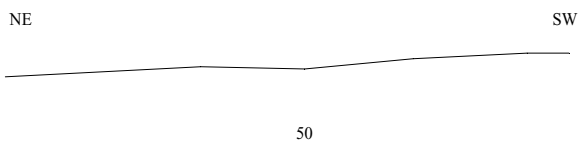
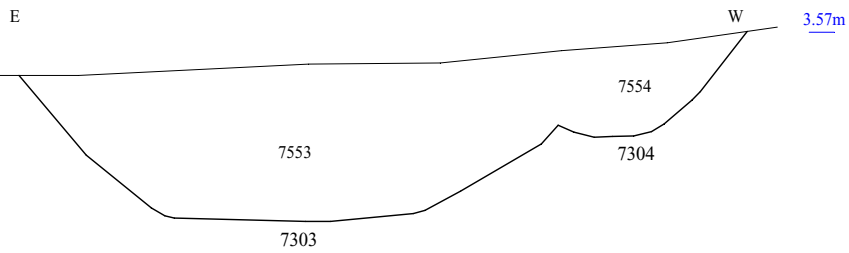
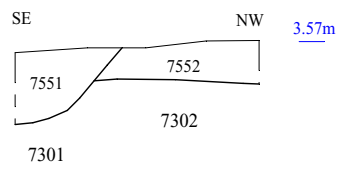
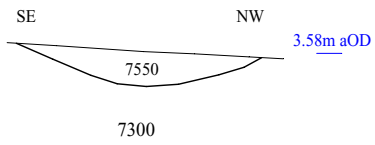
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 6, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 10, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 6, ditch 7305, looking north west, Scales: 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 10, ditch slot 7300, looking south east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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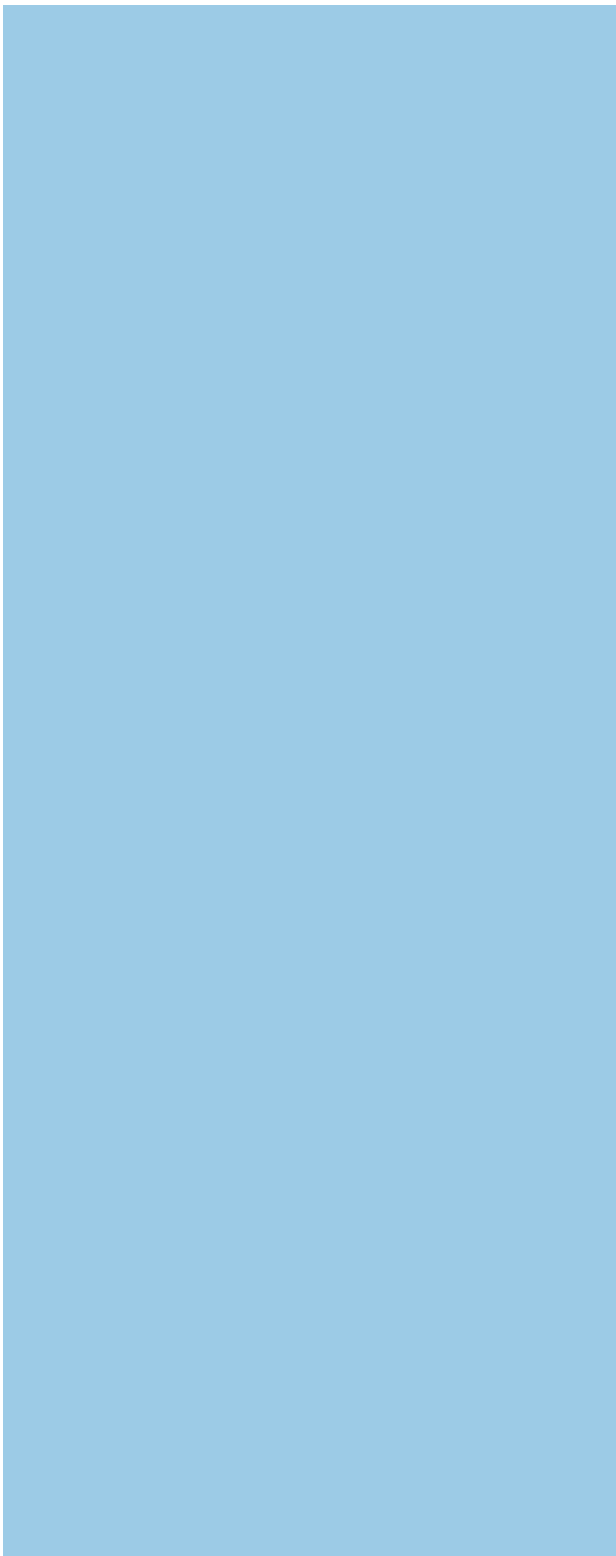
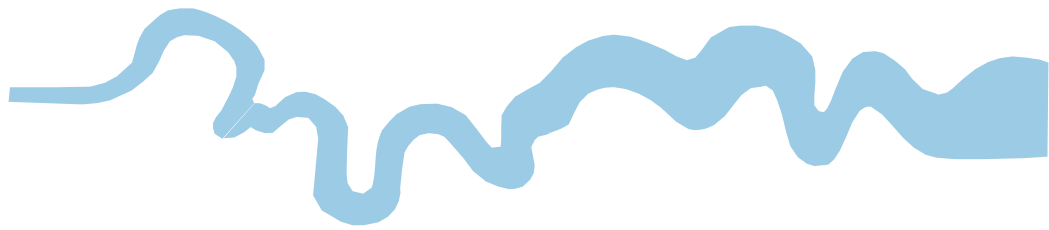
Plates 3 and 4.

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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
↓	↓





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,  
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Fax: 0118 9260553  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**