

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: ASW12/21

(SU 7140 6604)

**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Westbuild Homes**

by Susan Porter
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code ASW 12/21

March 2012

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7140 6604

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 28th March 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: ASW 21/21

Area of site: 0.15ha

Summary of results: No features or artefacts of archaeological interest were observed in the trenches. It is considered that the site has no archaeological potential

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local Museum in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 29.03.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 29.03.12

Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 12/21

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire SU 7140 6604 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Guy West of Westbuild Homes, Hunters Lodge, Rectory Road, Padworth Common, Reading, RG7 4JB.

Planning permission is to be sought from Wokingham Borough Council to develop the site for four new houses. This archaeological evaluation has been proposed in order to determine the archaeological potential of the site so as to inform the planning process, and if necessary, allow for appropriate mitigation of the effects of development.

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 Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification submitted to Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The site work was monitored by Ms Fiona Macdonald of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Chris Crabb on 28th March 2012 and the site code is ASW12/21. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of Reading, at the southern end of the village of Spencers Wood, in the parish of Shinfield (Fig. 1). The land was once part of an extensive rear garden to the existing house, but is currently overgrown. The site is located to the west of Basingstoke Road (B3349) and is surrounded by other residential properties (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as valley gravel (BGS 1946), although a more clayey natural geology was observed on site. The site lies at the top of a slight rise in the land at an elevation of *c.*57m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to an area where archaeological deposits have been discovered prior to development of a nearby site to the south. Occupation deposits of Middle Iron Age through to post-medieval dates were revealed by trial trenching and were subsequently excavated (ASE 2004a; 2004b). The wider environs of the site contain a modest range of finds from other periods. A possible settlement complex is visible from the air as cropmarks in an area to the south-east of the site (Gates 1975) and from field survey (Ford 1997). These include enclosures, ring ditches, trackways, and linear features, though none have been excavated. It is thought that the route of the Henley to Silchester Roman road passes to the south-west of the site (Margary 1973). However, a watching brief carried out at Ashdown during construction of a house extension only revealed the presence of a modern ditch (Colley 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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warranted preservation *in situ*, or would be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if any Iron Age deposits were present, the presence of which would extend the area of the already known site to the south; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig three trenches, c.15m long and 1.6m wide area targeted to provide a spatial coverage of the site area. A contingency of c.5-10m of trench was included should it be required to clarify findings made in the initial evaluation.

Topsoil and overburden was removed with a JCB-type machine fitted with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. The spoilheaps were monitored during excavation and, had any archaeological features been observed during excavation they would have been cleaned and excavated using hand tools. Following the completion of all excavation and recording the trenches were efficiently backfilled.

Results

All three trenches (Figs 3 and 4, Pls 1-3) were dug as intended. All were 1.6m wide. They ranged in length from 15m to 17m and in depth from 0.40m to 0.55m. A metal detector was used to monitor the spoil heaps.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 17.0m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of dark brown sandy silt topsoil above 0.35m mid orangey grey silty clay subsoil overlying mottled grey-blue clay natural geology. A modern pond, with a plastic lining was observed at 10.50m along the southern edge of the trench. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned SW-NE and was 17.0m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil above 0.30m of grey silty clay subsoil overlying clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned SW-NE and was 15.0m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil above 0.20m of subsoil overlying clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Conclusion

Although the area to the south of the site had previously revealed archaeological deposits of Middle Iron Age to post-medieval date, no deposits of archaeological interest were observed within the area of the trenches and no pre-modern artefacts were recovered from anywhere on the site. Based on the results of this evaluation the site has low archaeological potential.

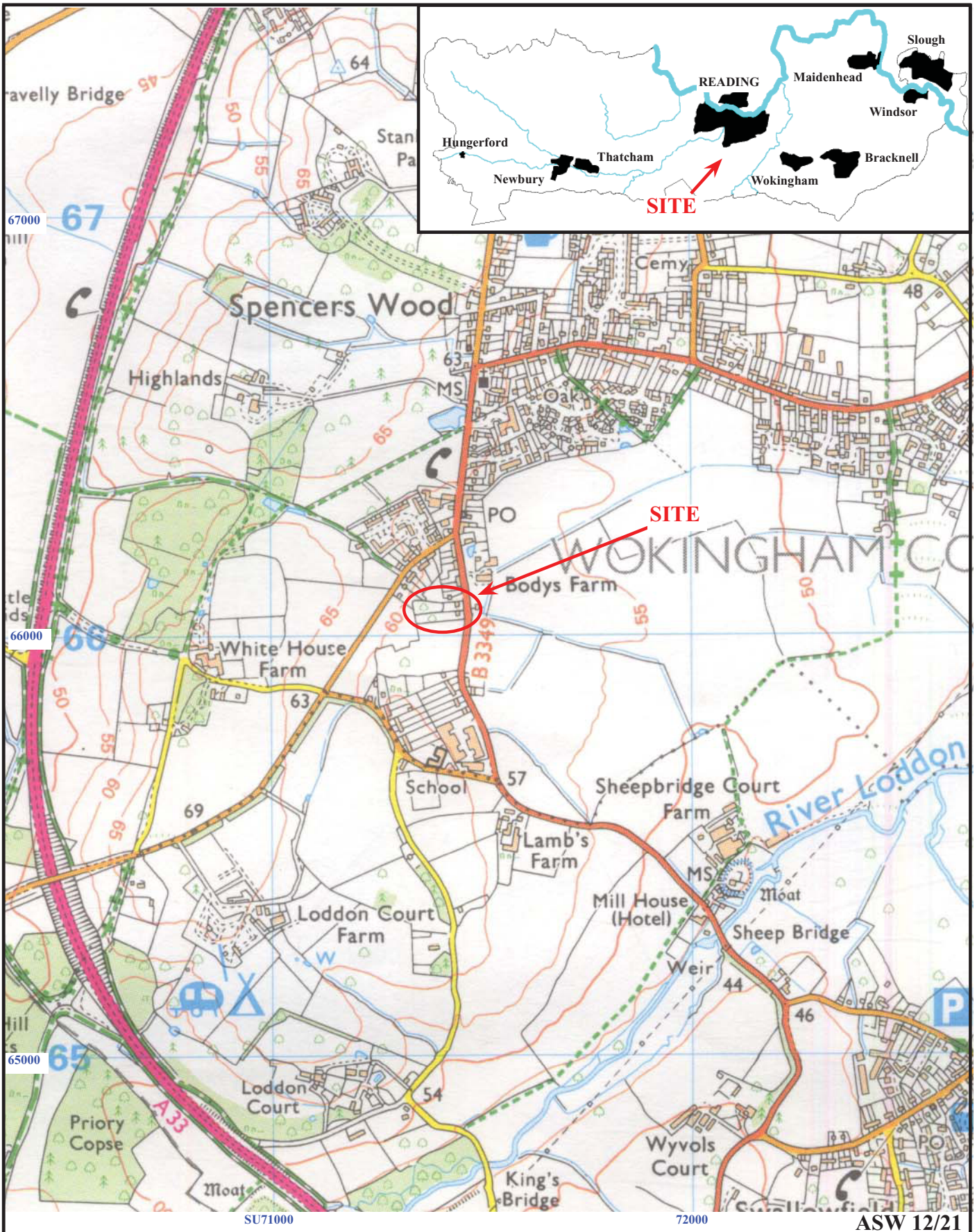
References

- ASE 2004a, 'An Archaeological Evaluation on land at Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire' Archaeology South-East, Ditchling.
- ASE 2004b, 'An Archaeological Evaluation (Stage 2) on land at Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire' Archaeology South-East, Ditchling.
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Colley, S, 2009, 'Ashdown, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/75, Reading

Ford, S, 1997, 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey' *Berkshire Archaeol J* **75**, (for 1994-7), 11-33
Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological survey of the river gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm
Pubn 1, Reading
Margary, I, D, 1973, *Roman Roads in Britain*, Phoenix House, London
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

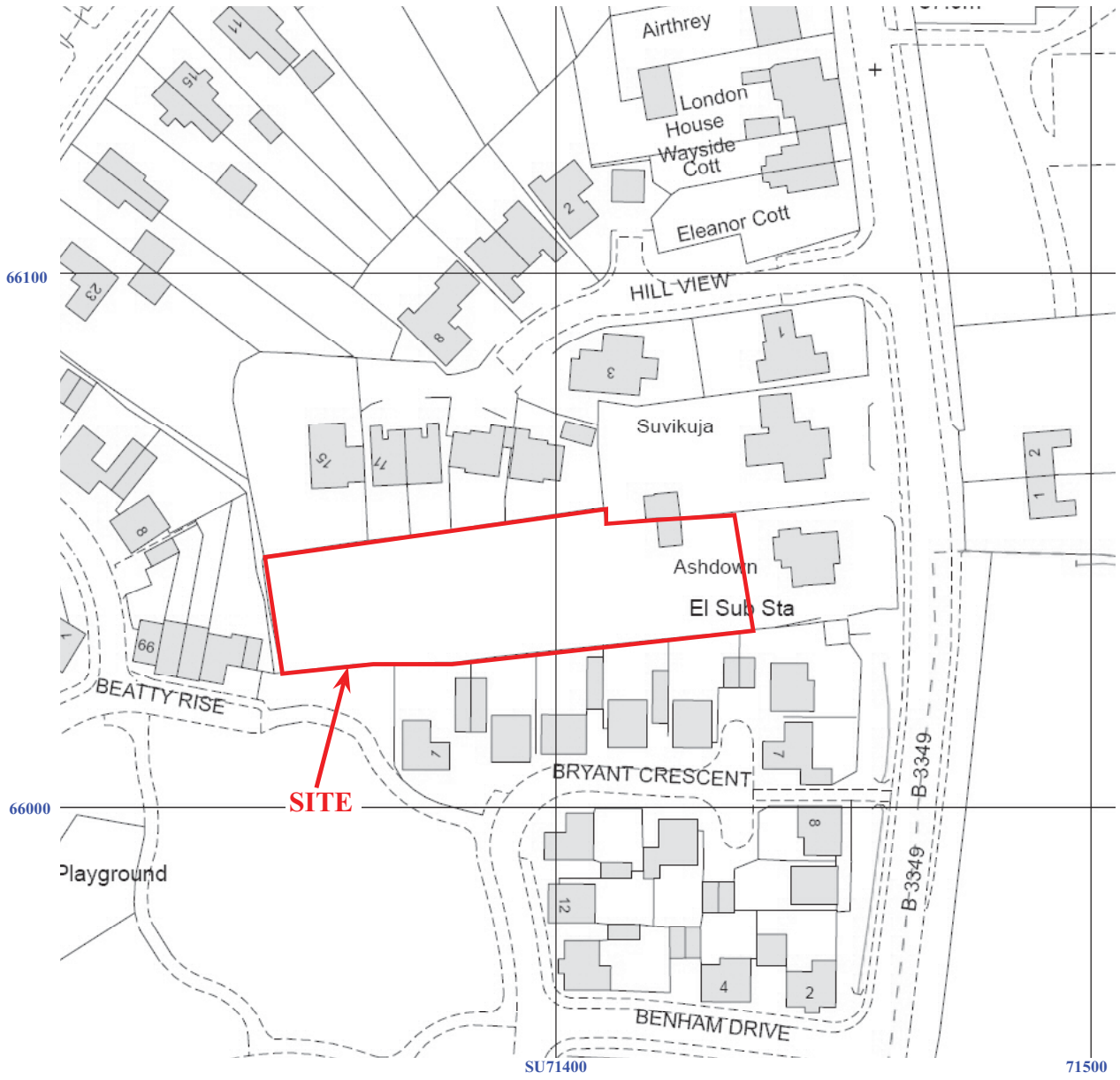
APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	17	1.6	0.55	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20 – 0.55m mid orange grey silty clay subsoil; 0.55m+ mid orangey grey-blue clay natural geology. [PI. 1]
2	17	1.6	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20 – 0.50m mid greenish grey silty clay subsoil; 0.50m+ mid brownish orange clay natural geology. [PI. 2]
3	15	1.6	0.40	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20 – 0.40m mid greenish grey silty clay subsoil; 0.40m+ mid brownish orange clay natural geology. [PI. 3]



**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**
Figure 1. Location of site within Spencers Wood and
Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 159 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880



ASW 12/21



**Land at rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



AWS 12/21

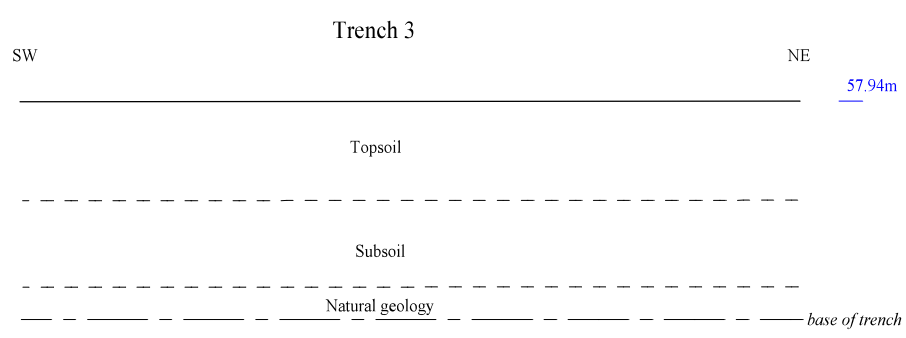
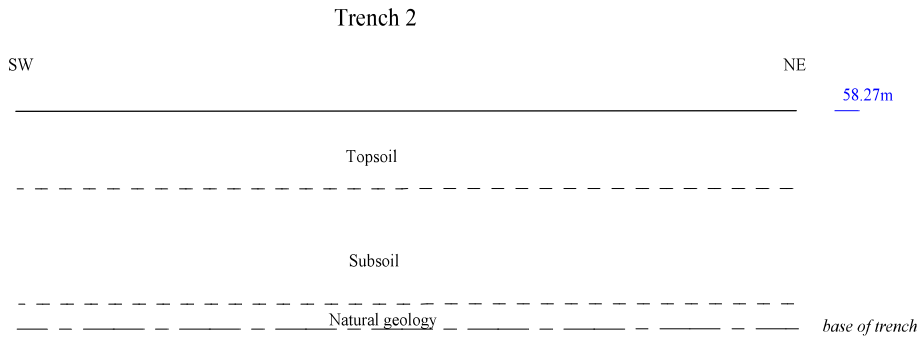
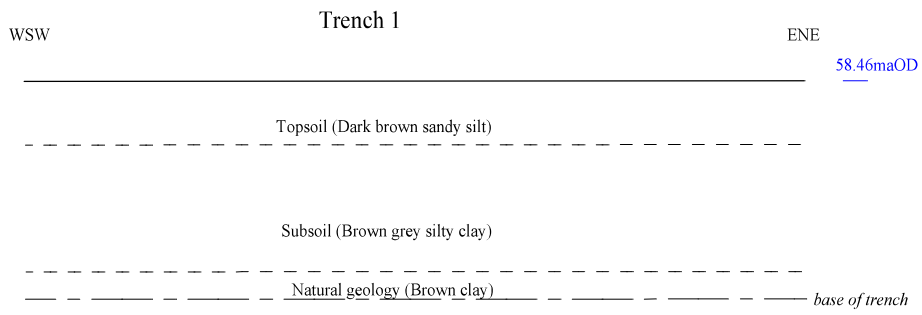


**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES



AWS 12/21



**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1 and setting, looking east.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south west, Scale: 2m.

ASW 12/21

**Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Trench 3 looking west. Scale: 2m

ASW 12/21

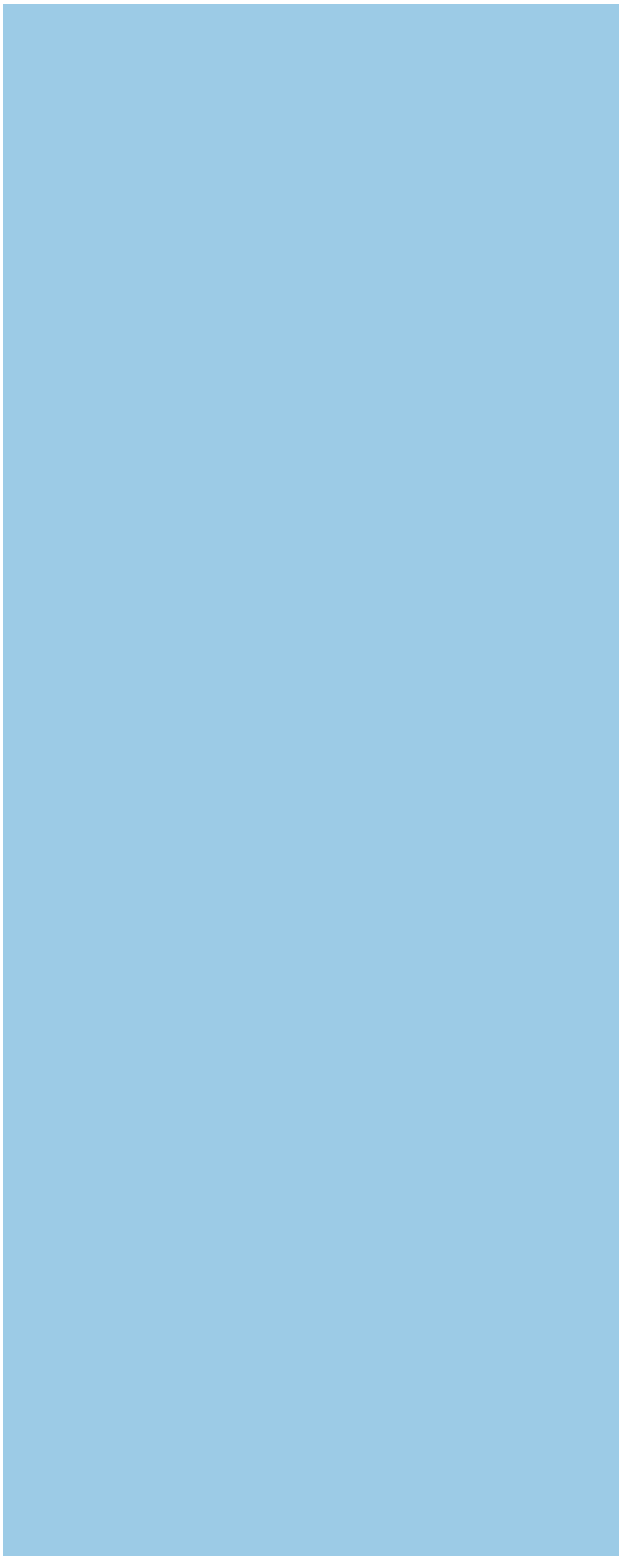
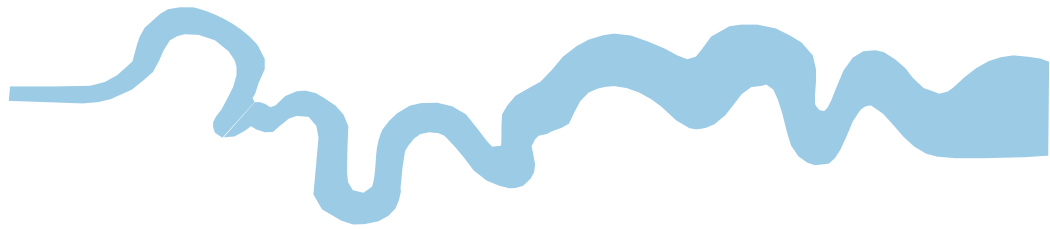
Land to the rear of Ashdown, Basingstoke Road,
Spencers Wood, Berkshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation
Plate 3

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**