

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Proposed Primary School, Land adjacent to The Acorn
Centre, Fernlea Drive, Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: WHS13/38

(SU 7970 6870)

**Proposed Primary School, Land adjacent to The Acorn
Centre, Fernlea Drive, Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Wokingham Borough Council**

by Susan Porter
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WHS 13/38

March 2013

Summary

Site name: Proposed Primary School, Land adjacent to The Acorn Centre, Fernlea Drive, Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7975 6880

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th March 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: WHS 13/38

Area of site: c.0.6ha

Summary of results: A shallow modern ditch was recorded but no deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were observed. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 12.03.13 Steve Preston✓ 15.03.13

**Proposed Primary School, Land adjacent to The Acorn Centre, Fernlea Drive,
Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire
An Archaeological Evaluation**

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Report 13/38

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Land adjacent to The Acorn Centre, Fernlea Drive, Woosehill, Wokingham, Berkshire SU 7975 6880 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Arnab Mukherjee on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1BN.

An application for planning permission (app F/2013/0019) has been submitted to Wokingham Borough council for the construction of a primary school with associated car parking and access works. An archaeological evaluation has been requested in order to provide information on the archaeological potential of the site and allow a scheme to be devised to mitigate the effects of the proposed construction on any potential archaeological deposits that may be present.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Ben Jervis, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough Council on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Lizzie Lewins on 5th March 2013 and the site code is WHS 13/38. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a roughly rectangular parcel of land off Fernlea Drive, Woosehill, Wokingham (Figs 1 and 2). The site is currently occupied by scrubland and slopes down towards the east with a steep drop off just beyond the eastern extent of the site. It is at an elevation of around 54m above Ordnance Datum in the west, 50m AOD in the east. The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 1946) and this was observed on site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the environs of the site is unclear as it is located in an area that has not been subject to archaeological work, and there are few entries in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record for the area. However, various sites and finds are recorded in similar geological and topographic settings in zones to the north-west and north-east, as various field surveys have begun to document (Ford 1987; Ford 1994-7). To the east documentary research and follow-up fieldwork revealed medieval occupation and an early post-medieval manor at The Beeches on Wokingham Road (Lewis and Preston 2011). To the north-west at Sindlesham, recent fieldwork has revealed Bronze Age pottery, an Iron Age iron production site and Saxon charcoal production site (Lewis *et al.* forthcoming).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were;

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig three trenches, each 30m long and 1.6m wide, targeted at the footprints of the proposed new structures. A contingency of 10m of trenching was included should it be required to clarify findings made in the initial evaluation.

Topsoil and overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were present or suspected they were to be cleaned and excavated using hand tools. Spoil heaps were to be surveyed with a metal detector to enhance finds recovery.

Results

All three trenches were dug as intended. They ranged in length from 29.10m to 30.50m and in depth from 0.30m to 0.48m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig 3, Pl 1)

Trench 1 was aligned South West – North East and was 30.50m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying dark yellow brown silty clay natural geology (London Clay) with infrequent gravel inclusions. There was heavy root disturbance at the southern end. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned North - South and was 29.10m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil above 0.30m of light grey brown silty clay subsoil overlying dark yellow brown silty clay natural geology, lighter yellow in colour towards the north. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl.2)

Trench 3 was aligned South West – North East and was 30.40m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil above 0.15m of light grey brown silty clay subsoil overlying dark yellow brown silty clay natural geology, with brown gravelly clay to the south west. A shallow ditch [1] was recorded between 5m and 8m from the southern end of the trench. It was 3m wide but only 0.10m deep, and filled with soft mid yellow brown clayey sand (52). It contained 19th/20th-century pottery, window glass, coal and brick/tile (not retained) indicating that it was of fairly modern date.

Conclusion

Prior to the evaluation the archaeological potential of the site was unclear, although sites of prehistoric, Saxon and medieval/ early post-medieval date have been located in the wider area. The single feature observed within Trench 3 was modern in date and no other deposits of archaeological interest were observed within the trenches. As such the result of the evaluation strongly suggests a low archaeological potential for this site.

References

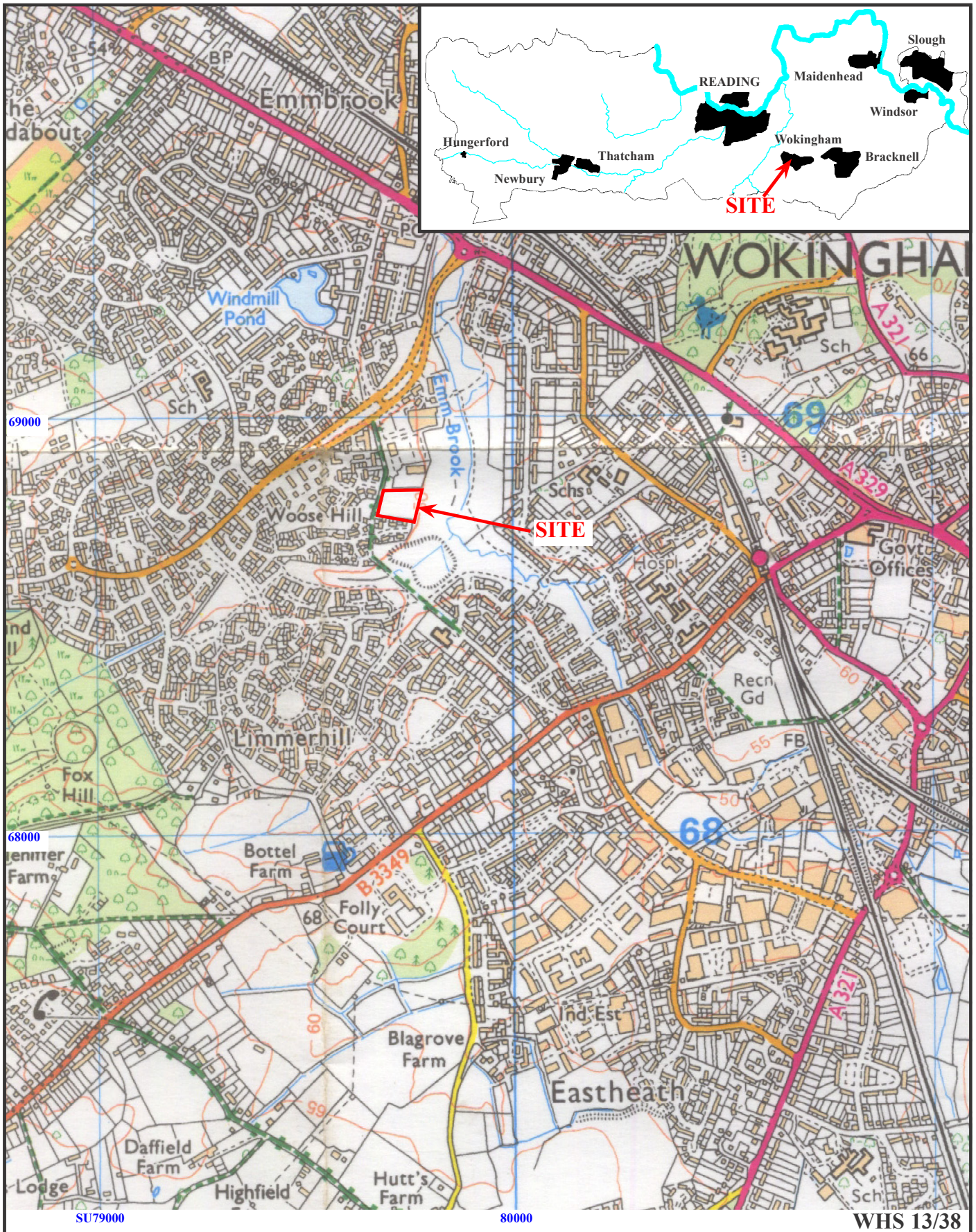
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- Ford, S, 1994-7 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J*, **75**, 11-33
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
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- Lewis, J and Preston, S, 2011, 'Medieval boundaries and an early Post-medieval manor house at Beeches Manor, Reading Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, draft publication report', Thames Valley Archaeological Services project **10/116**, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at south and south western end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	30.50	1.60	0.30	0–0.15m topsoil; 0.15+m dark yellow brown silty clay with infrequent gravel inclusions natural geology. Root disturbed to south.
2	29.10	1.60	0.48	0–0.10m topsoil; 0.15–0.40m light grey brown silty sandy clay subsoil; 0.40+m dark clay with infrequent gravel inclusions natural geology.
3	30.40	1.60	0.42	0–0.15m topsoil; 0.15–0.30m light grey brown silty sandy clay subsoil; 0.30+m clay natural geology with gravel at western end. Post-medieval ditch [1] at 5-8m.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Ditch	19th/20th century	Pottery, glass, coal



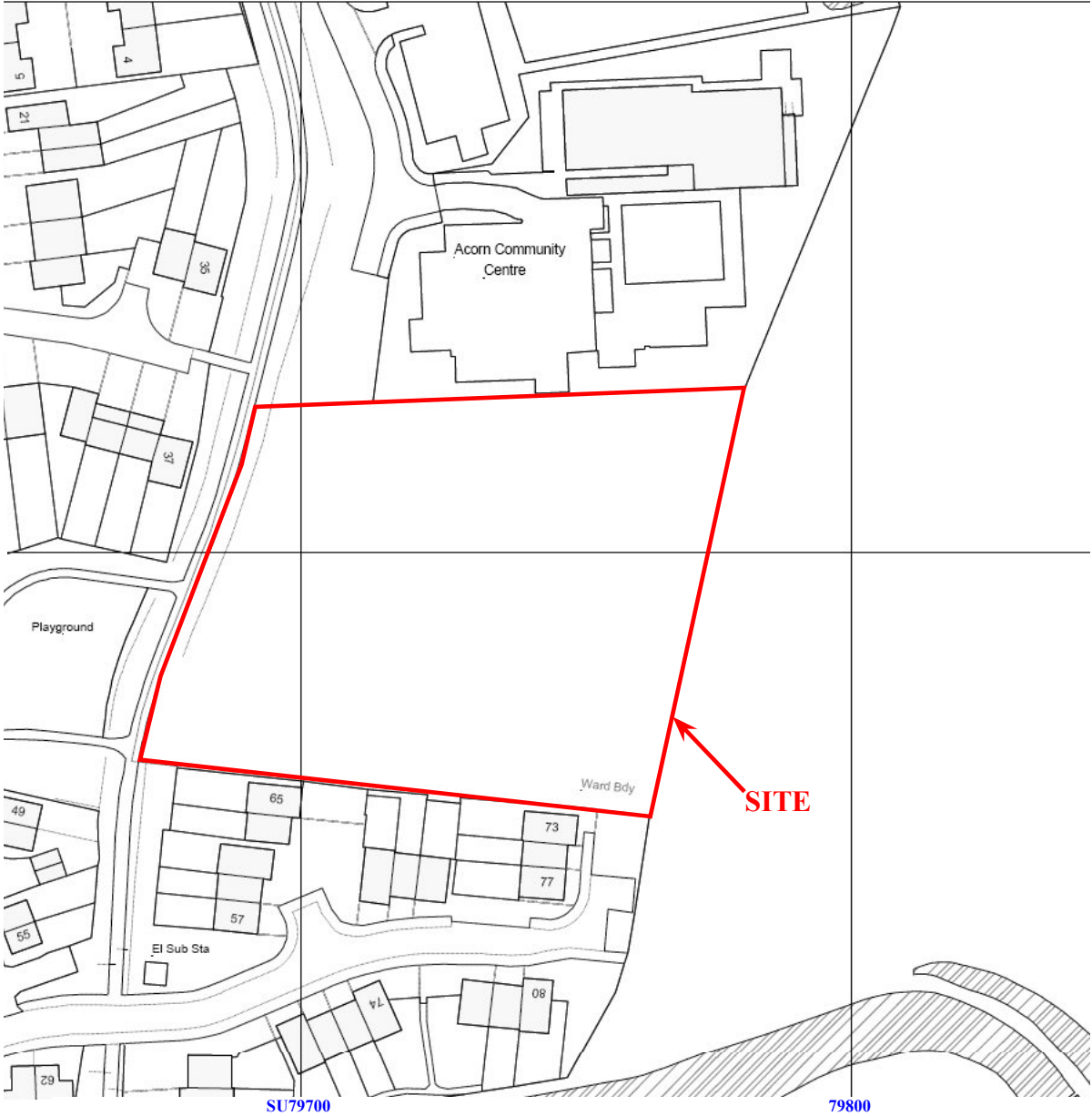
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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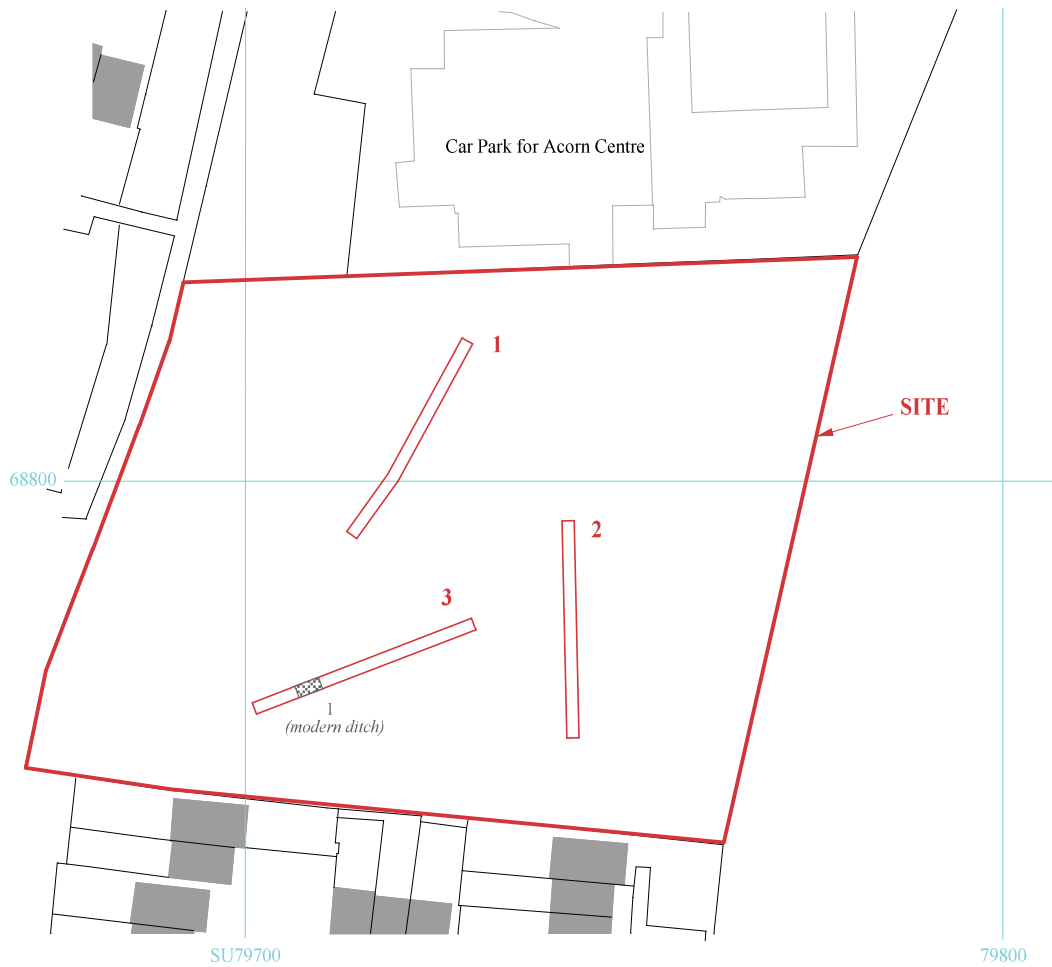


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Fernlea Drive.

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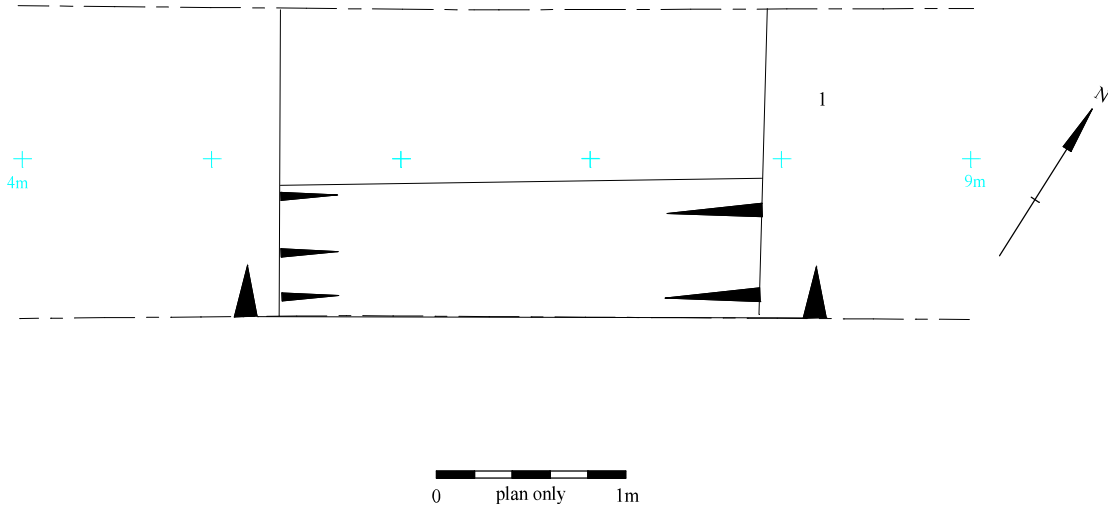
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

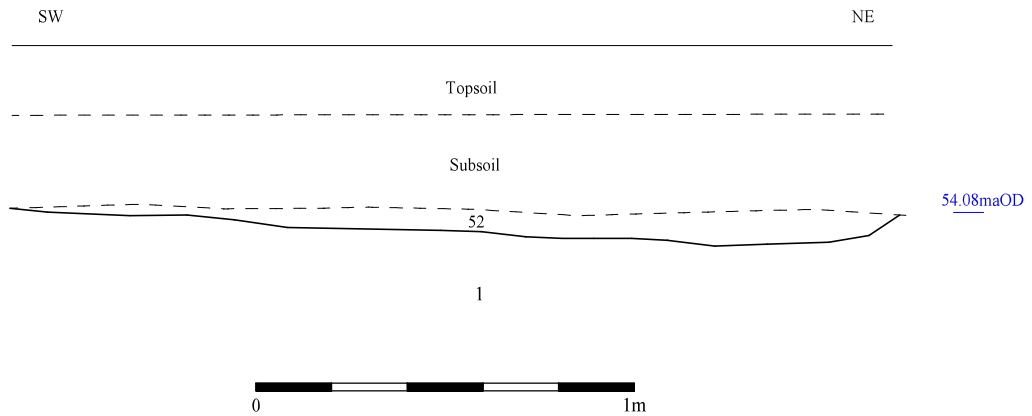


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Trench 3



Trench 3



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Figure 4. Plan of Trench 3 and section.



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



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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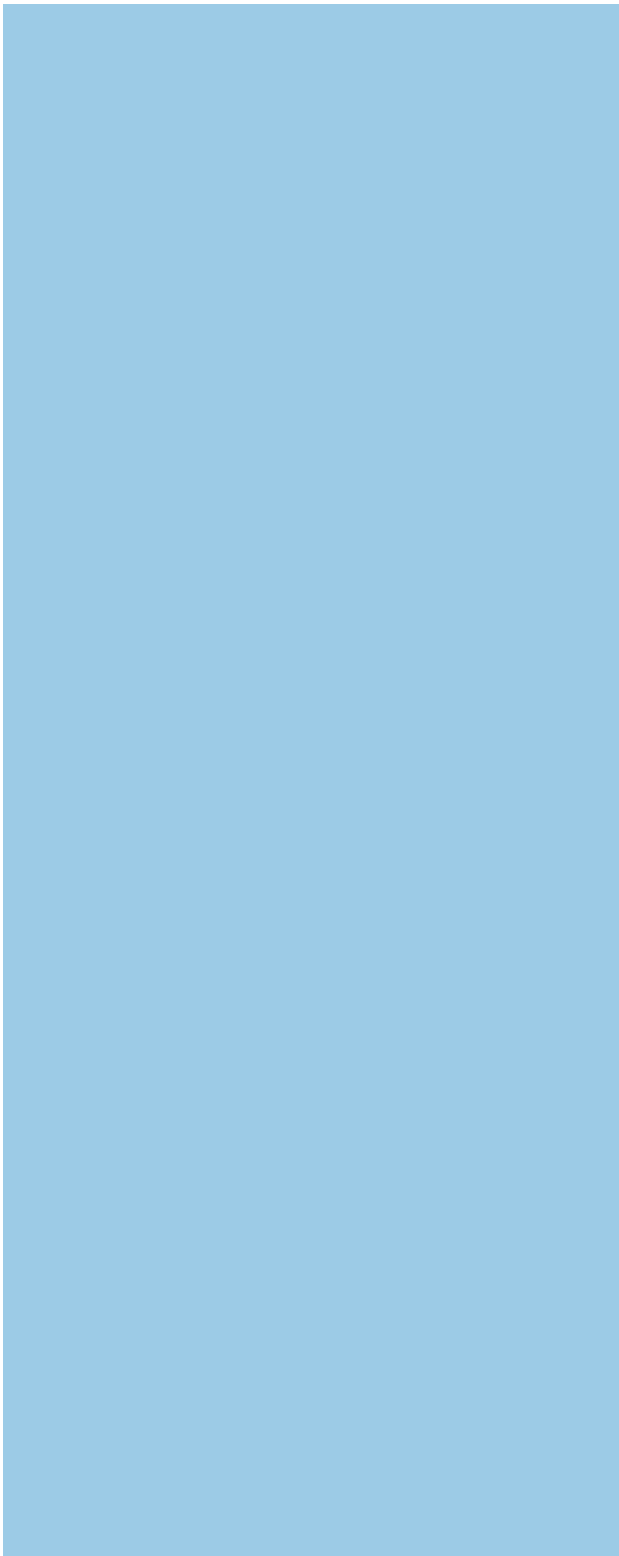
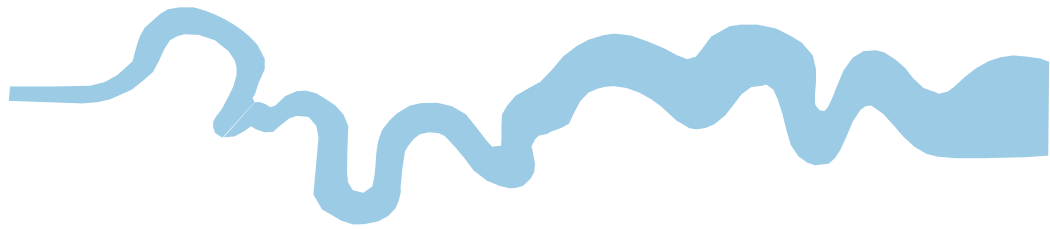
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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
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
↓	↓



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