

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**54a–66 Norcot Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Genni Elliott

Site Code: NRT13/78

(SU 6726 7381)

**54a-66 Norcot Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Hayward Nevitt Limited**

by Andy Taylor and Genni Elliott
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

NRT 13/78

April 2013

Summary

Site name: 54a-66 Norcot Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6728 7381

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25th April 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: NRT 13/78

Area of site: c.0.13 hectares

Summary of results: No deposits or finds 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 with Reading Museum in due course with accession number REDMG: 2013.341.

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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.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✓	29.04.13
	Steve Preston✓	30.04.13

54a-66 Norcot Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Genni Elliott

Report 13/78

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 54a-66 Norcot Road, Reading, Berkshire (SU 6726 7381) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Hayward of Haywood-Nevitt Ltd, 17 Boundary Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 4ER. Planning permission (13/00320/FUL) has been applied for from Reading Borough Council to develop land to the rear of 54–66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst with 7 houses of varying size around a central road. A draft consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology which initially requires an archaeological evaluation to assess the extent of archaeological remains on the site, if any.

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 Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on 25th April 2013. The site code is NRT13/78. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of 54–66 Norcot Road and to the west of Blundells Road, in the Tilehurst area of west Reading (Figs 1 and 2). The site is an irregular parcel of land currently with a cover of grass with some trees and outbuildings sandwiched between the rear gardens of houses along Norcot Road, Blundells Road and Recreation Road, with access from Norcot Road. The site is reasonably level, at approximately 91m above Ordnance Datum.

The underlying geology is Plateau Gravel close to a boundary with the Reading Beds (BGS 1946). Gravel in a matrix of yellowish brown sandy clay with leached patches was observed in the base of all trenches (Pls 1 and 2).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of sites and finds from both prehistoric and later periods. This part of Tilehurst, however, has relatively few sites or finds recorded in the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record. There are various stray finds and reports of occupation and burial sites of prehistoric and Roman date, most of which are recorded from the many quarry sites in the area. At Grovelands Pit, which is at some distance east of the site, for example both, Bronze Age and Roman deposits were encountered. The higher gravel terraces of the Thames Valley are particularly noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic flint and stone tools, representing the earliest human occupation in the British Isles (Wymer 1968) though the gravel outcrop on which the site lies pre-dates most human activity in the British Isles. The site also includes a Grade II listed water tower.

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. The work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

A total of three trenches were to be excavated measuring 1.6m wide by 15m long using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were identified they were to be investigated by hand. Spoilheaps were to be searched for finds.

Results

All three trenches were dug according as intended. They ranged in length from 14.60m to 15.40m and in depth from 0.65m to 1.10m (Figs. 3 and 4). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned WNW–ESE and was 14.90m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of rubble and made ground above topsoil, which overlay the brown sandy gravel subsoil. Natural gravel geology was found at 1.04m below the current ground surface at 90.15m above Ordnance Datum. No features of archaeological significance were present.

Trench 2 (Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned NW–SE and was 15.0m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of rubble and made ground above subsoil. Natural gravel geology was found at 0.62m below the current ground surface at 90.52m above Ordnance Datum. A modern footing aligned NE–SW ran across the centre of the trench but no features of archaeological significance were present.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned NNE–SSW and was 15.40m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of brick rubble and made ground above the natural gravel. Natural gravel was found at 0.70m below the current ground surface at 90.65m above Ordnance Datum. No features of archaeological significance were present.

Conclusion

Nothing of archaeological significance was found and no artefacts were recovered. The natural gravel geology was found in the base of all three trenches between a depth of 90.15m and 90.65m above Ordnance Datum. On the basis of this evaluation it is unlikely that archaeological deposits would be threatened by the proposed development.

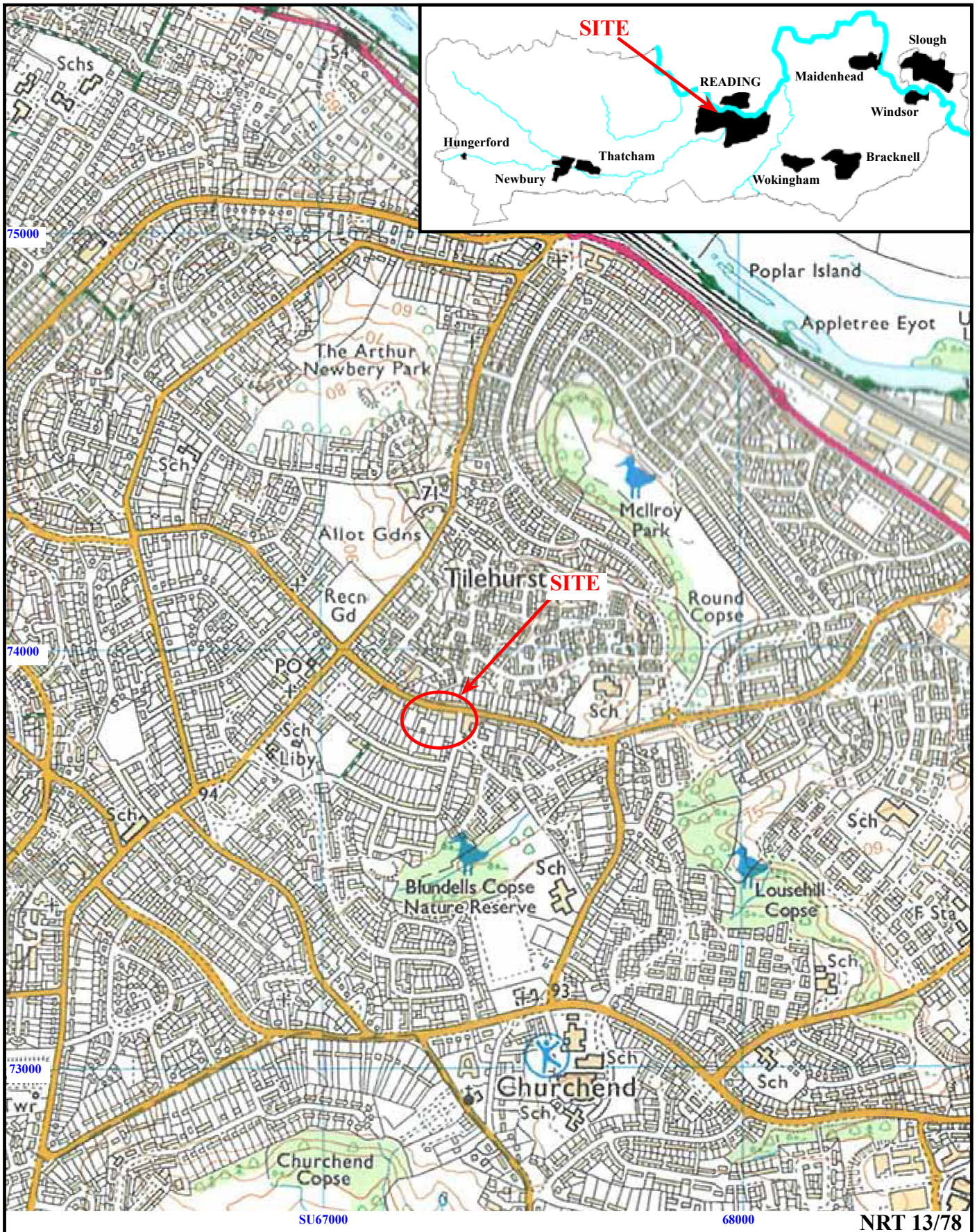
References

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63 360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Wymer, J, 1968, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at the south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14.90	1.60	1.10	0–0.30m brick rubble in a matrix of mid brown soil; 0.30–0.53m buried topsoil; 0.53–1.04m sandy, gravelly subsoil; 1.04m+ gravel in a matrix of yellowish brown, sandy clay with leached patches (natural geology) [Pl. 1]
2	15.0	1.60	0.65	0–0.30m brick rubble in a matrix of mid brown soil; 0.30–0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ gravel natural geology.
3	15.40	1.60	0.72	0–0.70m brick rubble in a matrix of mid brown soil; 0.70m+ gravel natural geology [Pl. 2]



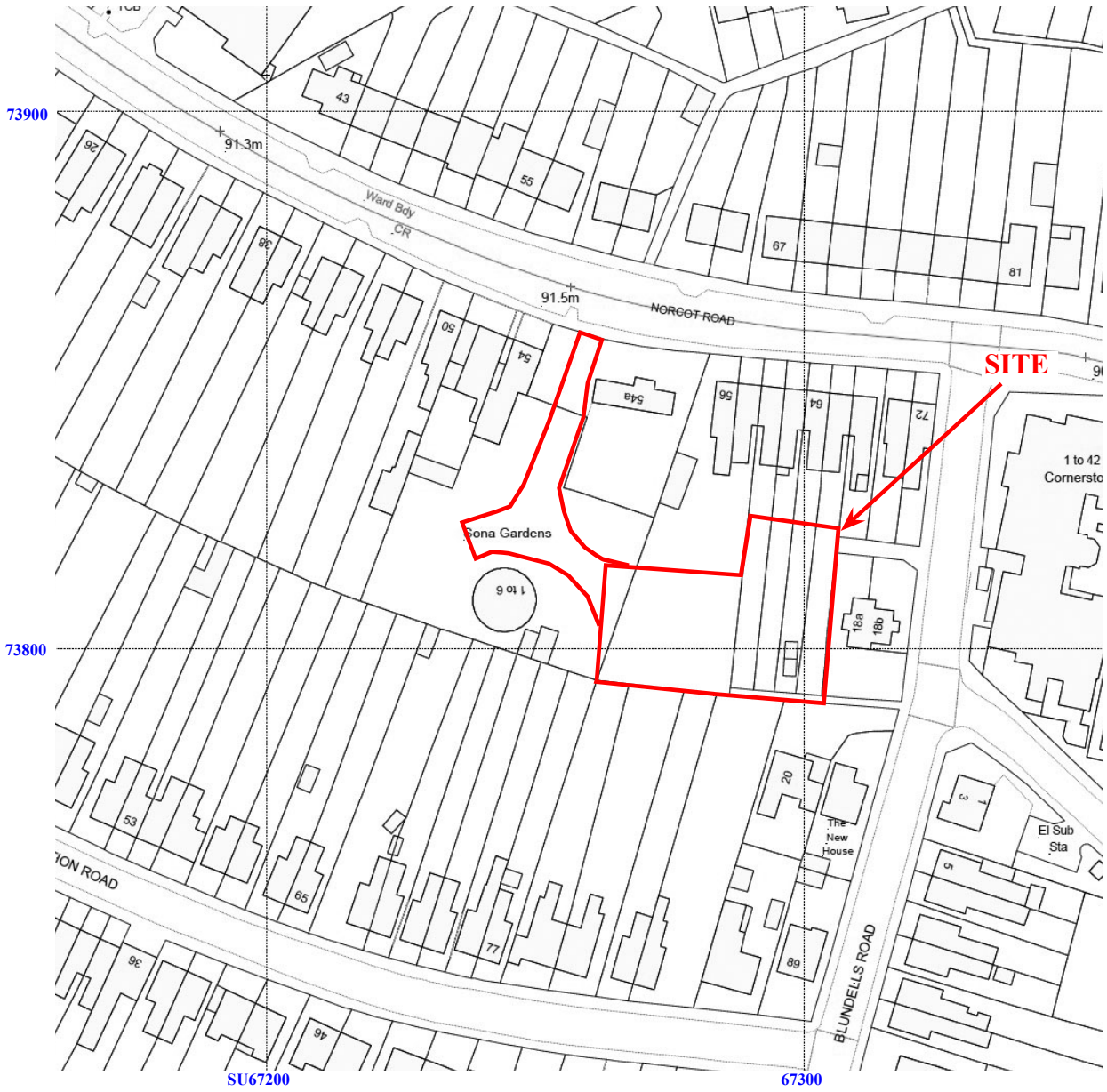
**Land to rear of 54a-66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading,
Berkshire, 2013**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Tilehurst, Reading and
Berkshire.

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

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



NRT 13/78



Land to rear of 54a-66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst. Reading, Berkshire, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Norcot Road.

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





NRT 13/78

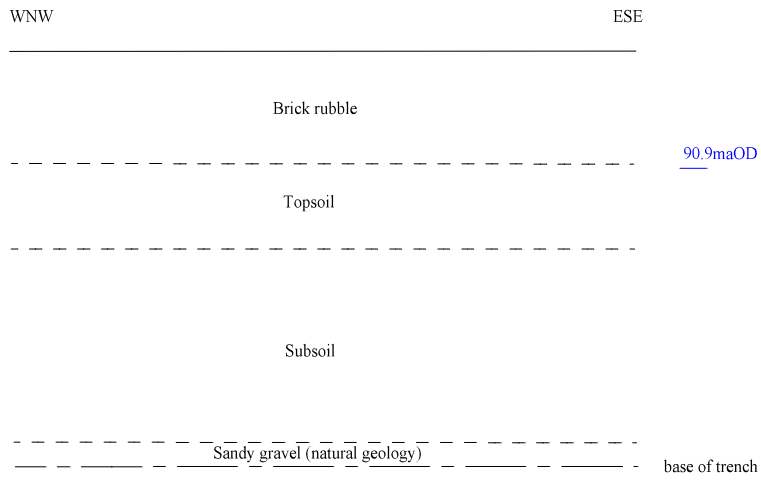
**Land to rear of 54a-66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Trench 1



NRT 13/78

**Land to rear of 54a-66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking south, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

NRT 13/78

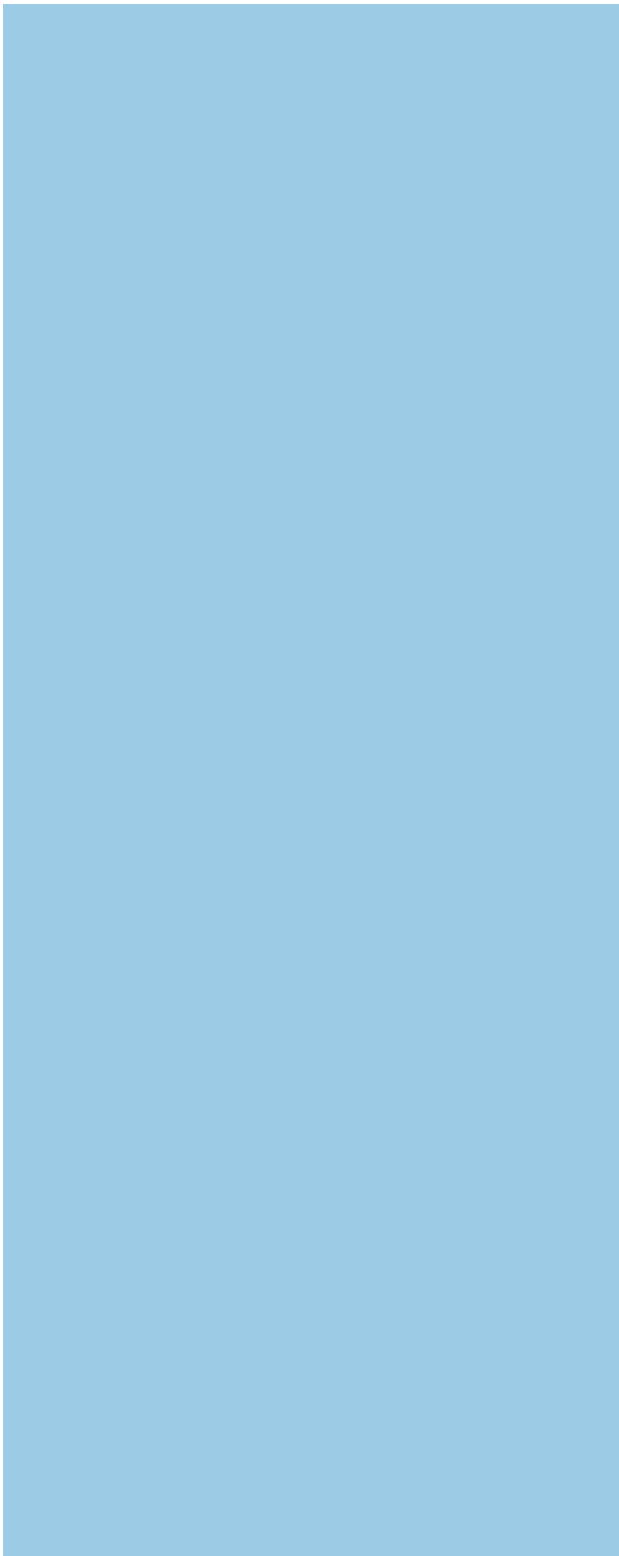
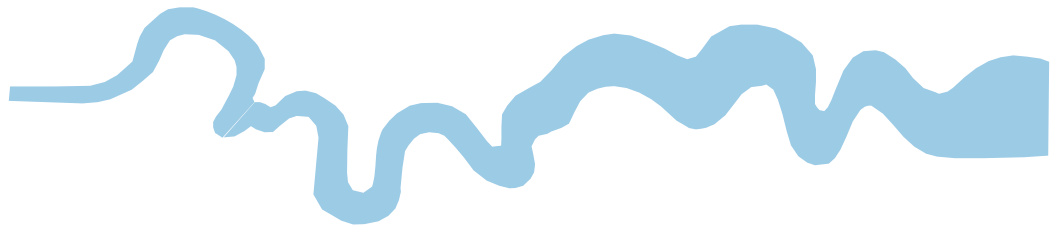
**Land to rear of 54a-66 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading
Berkshire, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.**

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**