

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Manor Farm, Binfield Road,
Bracknell, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Site Code: MFB13/204

(SU 8611 7038)

Land at Manor Farm, Binfield Road, Bracknell, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Millgate Homes**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MFB 13/204

October 2013

Summary

Site name: Land at Manor Farm, Binfield Road, Bracknell, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8611 7038

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th – 28th October 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: MFB 13/204

Area of site: overall site *c.* 1.5ha (evaluated area 0.83ha)

Summary of results: A single ditch aligned north-south was excavated producing a single burnt flint fragment but no dateable artefacts. A modern ditch and three modern postholes were also revealed. It is therefore concluded the archaeological potential of the site is low

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 31.10.13
	Steve Preston ✓ 31.10.13

Land at Manor Farm, Binfield Road, Bracknell, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Report 13/204

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Manor Farm, Binfield, Road, Bracknell, Berkshire (SU 8611 7038) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jon Furneaux of Millgate Homes, Millgate House, Ruscombe Lane, Ruscombe, Twyford, Berkshire, RG10 9JT.

Planning consent (12/01008/FUL) has been gained from Bracknell Forest Borough Council to construct 24 new houses with associated parking on a 1.5ha parcel of land at Manor Farm. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological work in advance of the development. This was to take the form, initially, of evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which further work might be required.

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 Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray along with Kyle Beaverstock and Anna Ginger between 24th October and 28th October 2013 with the site code MFB 13/204. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum accepting archives in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a *c.* 1.5ha, irregular parcel of land at Manor Farm, on the fringe of Bracknell, approximately 1.5km north-west of town centre (Fig 1). The evaluated area was in the southern part of the site and covered an area of 0.83ha of land currently used as a paddock with some small buildings present (Pl. 1). The northern boundary of the site is defined by the partially canalized stream known as 'The Cut', the western boundary is defined by Binfield Road and houses and allotments are directly to the south (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 1981). Clay was observed in Trenches 1-6 although gravel was present in the ends of Trenches 4 and 5. Trenches 7 to 9 were predominately gravel with silt patches. The

site slopes gently from south to north towards 'The Cut' but lies at an approximate height of 50m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of North Bracknell that has been well surveyed in recent years (Ford 1987) with several sites subsequently recorded during fieldwork arising from the development process. More specific to the site, the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the valley of the partly canalized stream called 'The Cut'. Evaluation just to the north and north east on the opposite side of 'The Cut' revealed Bronze Age occupation deposits with flintwork of Mesolithic date present (Ford 1989). Roman deposits were found further to the north-east. Roman occupation is also recorded at some distance to the north-east on Cabbage Hill (Mees 1989) and Mesolithic, Middle Iron Age, Late Iron Age and Early Roman occupation is recorded to the west (Roberts 1995). A recent evaluation to the north-east, also bordering the edge of 'The Cut' revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Platt and Pine 2013).

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 specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits representing earlier prehistoric occupation are present, and if so their date and nature; and
- to provide sufficient information for an appropriate mitigation strategy if required.

It was proposed to excavate 9 trenches each 1.60m wide and 25m in length, approximately 5% of developable area. The trenches were positioned to target the footprints of the proposed buildings. The trenches were to be excavated using a JCB-type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and supervised at all times by an archaeologist, with the spoil removed being monitored for finds. All potential archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

All 9 trenches were dug, although trenches 3-6 were repositioned due to existing buildings and trench 9 was split due to a fence partitioning the field (Figs 2 and 3). The trenches ranged from 10m to 25.20m in length and between 0.35m and 0.70m. All trenches were 1.60m wide. 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 SE - NW and was 25.00m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.20m of subsoil overlying the natural clay geology. A modern rectangular truncation with concrete was revealed but no features of archaeological interest were found.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2 and 6)

Trench 2 was aligned E - W and was 25.20m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil overlying the natural clay geology. A single ditch [1] measuring 0.83m wide and 0.34m deep was revealed on a north-south alignment. The single light blue grey sandy clay fill (52) produced a single fragment of burnt flint.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned E - W and was 24.90m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.25m of subsoil overlying the natural clay geology. A modern ditch which contained plastic and three postholes, one with a concrete base and all cutting the subsoil were observed. No archaeological features were revealed.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.60m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil above 0.40m of brick rubble overlying the natural geology which changed from clay in the south west end to gravel at the north eastern end. A 2m stretch was left high at the north eastern end due to the discovery of a power cable. No archaeological features were revealed.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned WSW - ENE and was 24.80m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.28m of subsoil overlying the natural geology of gravel with silt patches. At the south west end

the stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m rubble and burnt bonfire material straight onto the natural geology. No archaeological features were revealed

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned E - W and was 24.70m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.24m of subsoil overlying the natural clay geology. A modern truncation seen cutting the subsoil was revealed through the whole length of the trench on the northern side. No archaeological features were revealed

Trench 7 (Pl. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned SW - NE and was 25.10m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.24m of subsoil overlying the natural clay geology with frequent gravel inclusions. No archaeological features were revealed

Trench 8 (Pl. 4)

Trench 8 was aligned E - W and was 24.80m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of topsoil and 0.41m of subsoil overlying the natural gravel geology with clay patches. No archaeological features were revealed

Trench 9a

Trench 9a was aligned ENE - WSW and was 15.00m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of topsoil and 0.30m of subsoil overlying the natural gravel geology. No archaeological features were revealed

Trench 9b (Pl. 5)

Trench 9b was aligned ENE - WSW and was 10.00m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.038m of subsoil overlying the natural gravel geology. No archaeological features were revealed

Finds

Sieved Samples

A total of 10 litres of soil were sampled from ditch 1 for environmental analysis. No charred plant remains were present but a single burnt flint fragment was recovered weighing approximately 4g. There were no other finds from the site.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a single ditch aligned north-south which produced a single burnt flint fragment but no dateable finds. A modern ditch which produced plastic and three postholes cutting the subsoil are all on the same alignment as the current trackway in to the farm and the fence that borders it. No finds of any date were recovered from the subsoil or trench spoil, and it is therefore thought that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

References

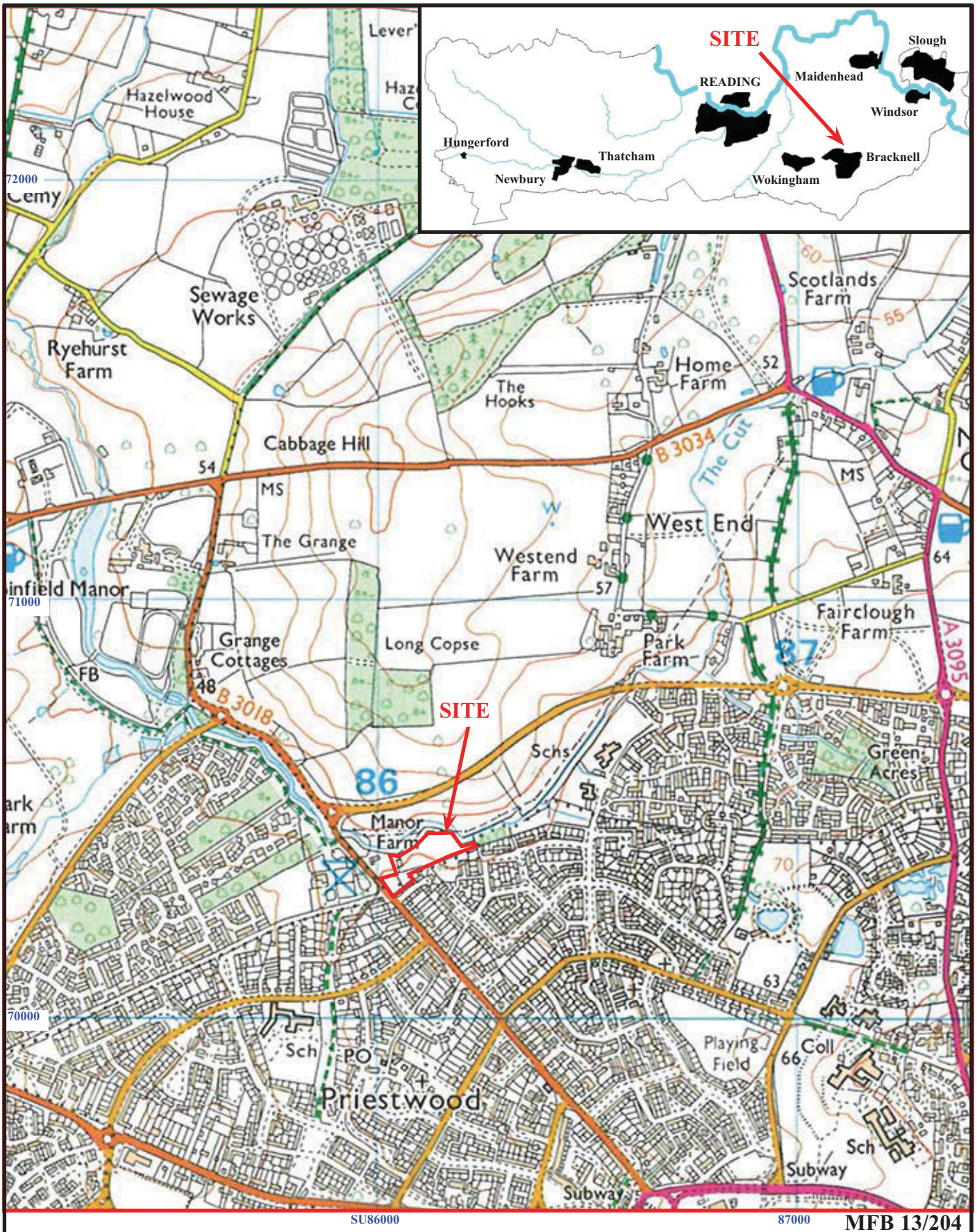
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	25.00	1.60	0.40	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10-0.30m mid brown grey sandy clay subsoil; 0.30m+ mid grey orange sandy clay. Modern truncation
2	25.20	1.60	0.35	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ natural geology. Undated ditch [1] [Pls 2 and 6]
3	24.90	1.60	0.45	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology
4	24.60	1.60	0.70	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.30m subsoil; 0.30-0.70m brick rubble; 0.70m+ natural clay geology at SW end, gravel at NE end.
5	24.80	1.60	0.45	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.48m light mid brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.48m+ natural clay geology at WSW end and gravel and ENE end
6	24.70	1.60	0.50	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ natural clay geology
7	25.10	1.60	0.52	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural clay geology with gravel patches [Pl. 3]
8	24.80	1.60	0.55	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ natural gravel geology with clay patches [Pl. 4]
9a	10.00	1.60	0.52	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.41m subsoil; 0.41m+ natural gravel geology
9b	15.00	1.60	0.48	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural gravel geology [Pl. 5]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
2	1	52	Ditch	-	-

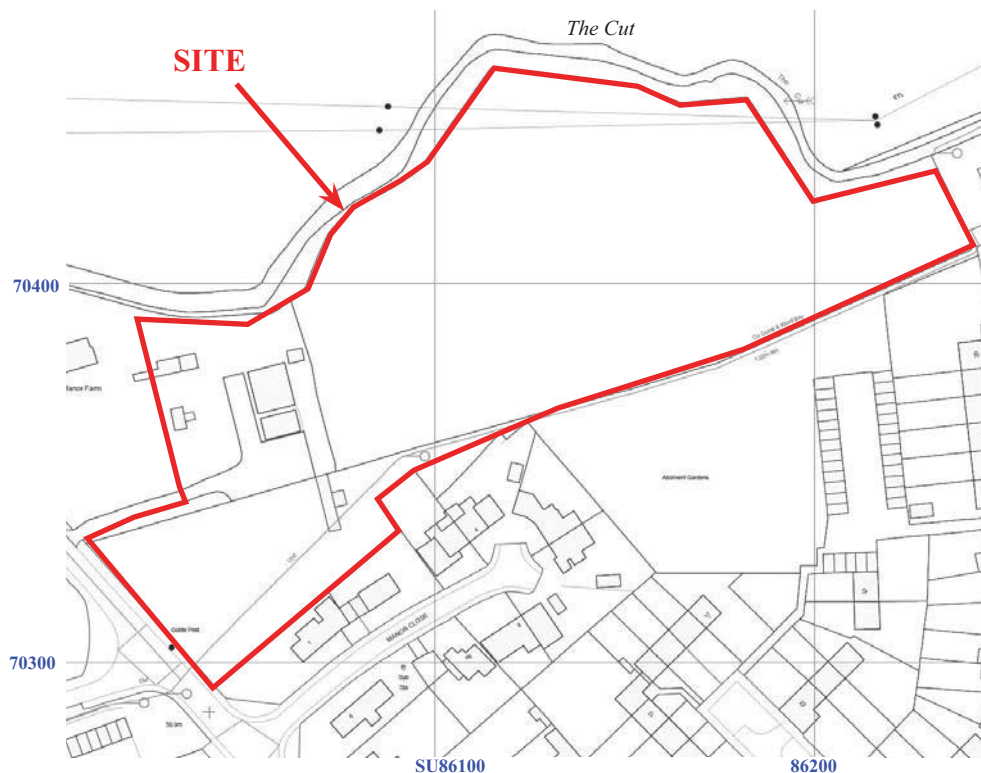


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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Bracknell and within Berkshire.

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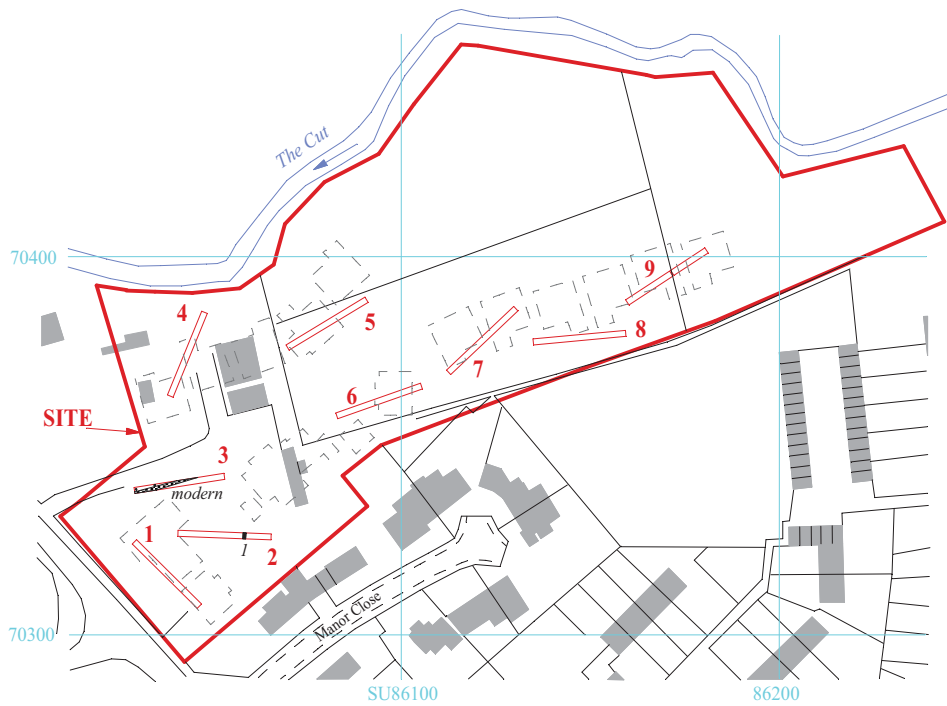


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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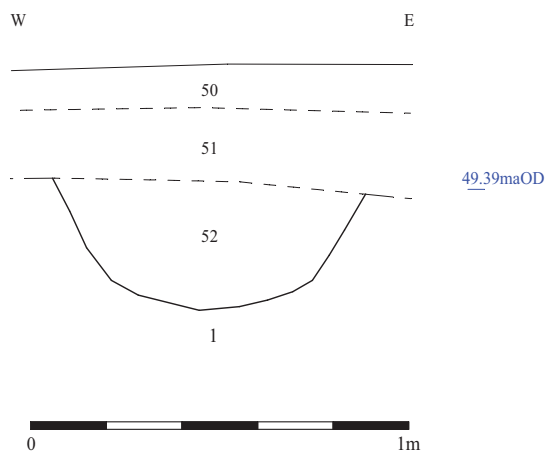
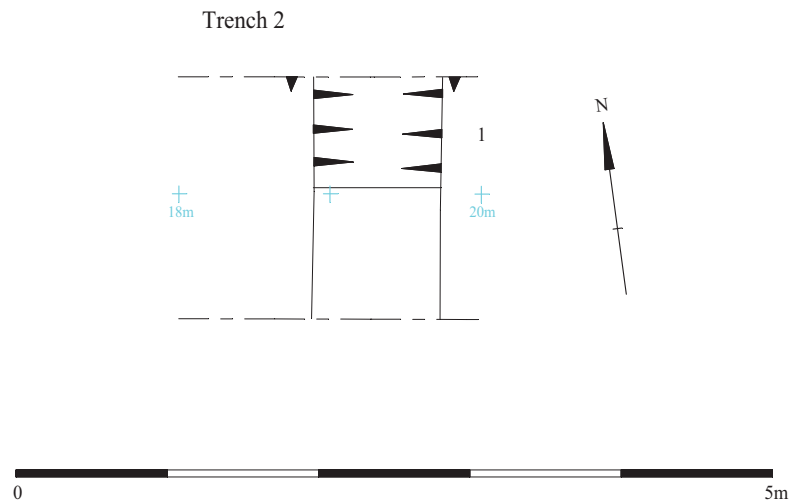
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Figure 4. Details of Trench 2.

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Plate 1. General view of west end of site looking south east.



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

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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 8, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 9, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



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

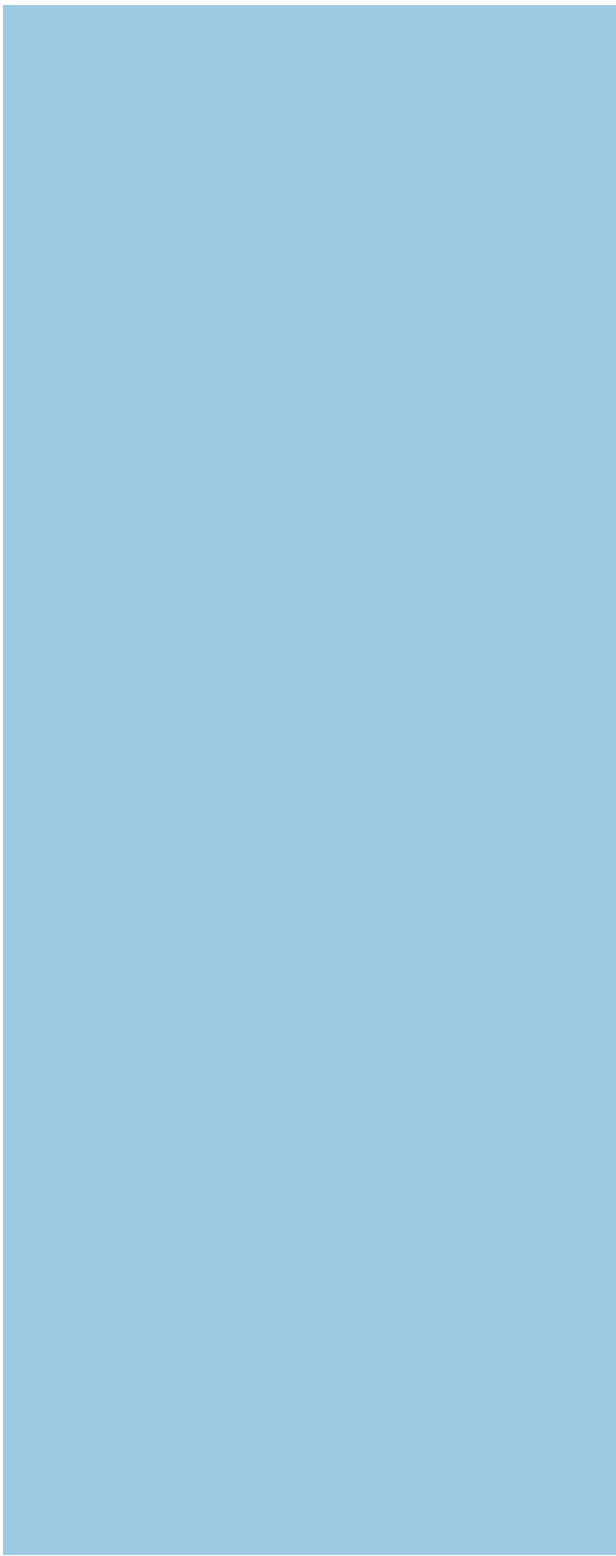
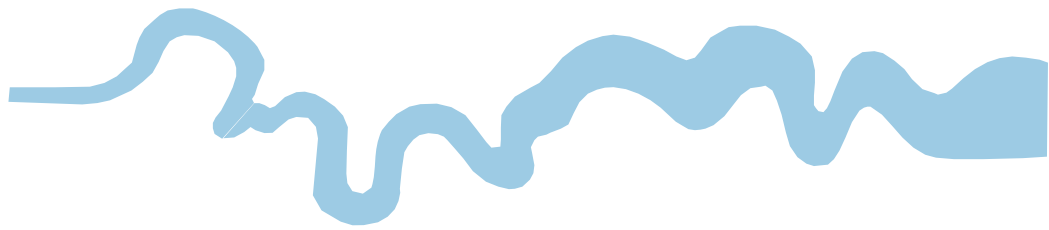
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Plates 5 - 6.**

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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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