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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**38 Chiltern Crescent , Earley,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Kyle Beaverstock and Tim Dawson

Site Code: CCE12/161

(SU 7439 7344)

**38 Chiltern Crescent,
Earley, Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for TA Fisher and Sons Ltd

by Kyle Beaverstock and Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CCE12/161

November 2014

Summary

Site name: 38 Chiltern Crescent , Earley, Reading , Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7439 7344

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th May – 21st October 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: CCE12/161

Area of site: 0.24ha

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 06.11.14 Steve Preston✓ 05.11.14

38 Chiltern Crescent, Earley, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 12/161

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 38 Chiltern Crescent, Earley, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7439 7344) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Haskett formerly of TA Fisher and Sons Ltd, Windmill House, Victoria Road, Mortimer, Berkshire, RG7 3DF.

Planning permission (app F/2010/2764) was gained from Wokingham Borough Council to redevelop the site for new housing following demolition of the existing houses on Chiltern Crescent. The consent was subject to a condition (20) relating to archaeology requiring an evaluation to take place prior to groundworks. However, groundworks were carried out before the archaeological work was undertaken. To compensate, trenches were excavated retrospectively. This was carried out with the agreement of the Borough Council as advised by Berkshire Archaeology.

The fieldwork was required 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 retrospective field investigation was carried out to a specification originally approved by Mrs Mary Neale, Archaeology Officer, Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, David Platt and Genni Elliot and the site code is CCE12/161. 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 in a residential area of Earley, east of the centre of Reading, Berkshire (SU 7439 7344) (Fig. 1) with houses to the west, east and south and a road (Chiltern Crescent) bordering the north (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is a Lambeth Group silty sand (Brickearth) (BGS 1971)

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area in general (Ford 1987; Gates

1975). Excavations on the site of the former Earley Power Station to the north-east examined a Late Iron Age/Roman enclosure complex, and Early Bronze Age (Beaker) burial and Mesolithic flintwork were also recovered (Barnes *et al.* 1997). Construction of the Great Western Railway in the mid 19th century and the digging of a nearby hole for ballast led to the discovery of an Early Saxon inhumation cemetery to the north-west. Other finds nearby include a Roman coin, and Mesolithic flint tools dredged from the Thames. However, evaluation of a large site just to the north-west revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Lewis 2011).

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 will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. 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; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was initially proposed to dig 5 trenches, each 15m long and 1.6m wide (*c.* 5% of the site area). The trenches were intended to be at targeted the footprints of the proposed new structures. The topsoil and other overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, excavated to an agreed sample fraction and recorded. Due to the changed circumstances of the project, it was subsequently agreed that four trenches would be excavated retrospectively, in different locations.

Results

In total 4 trenches were excavated in order to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits would have been present during the original works (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged in length between 4.20m and 17.50m, and in depth from 0.50m to 0.60m, and were 0.7m to 1.6m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SSE – NNW and was 17.50m long, 1.00m wide and ranged in depth from 0.50m towards the southern end and 1.00m in the northern end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of loose rubble and 0.25m dark grey sandy clay rubble which included china and concrete, overlying a dark yellow brown sandy clay with some gravel natural geology (Fig. 4). A modern truncation was seen at the southern end containing coal and ceramic building material. Another modern truncation was revealed at the northern end which contained tile and coal. No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 11.50m long, 1.6m wide and 0.52m deep at the eastern end and 0.92m in the western end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of loose rubble and 0.28m mid/dark grey brown sandy clay subsoil overlying a mid red yellow sandy clay natural geology. A modern truncation was seen at the north east end of the trench which a test pit confirmed was 0.72m deep and contained brick and other modern finds. No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned roughly N - S and was 4.20m long and 0.51m deep and 0.70m wide. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of hardcore and 0.20m of made ground overlying a red yellow clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 4.70m long and 0.50m deep and 1.20m wide. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of pale brown grey silty sand rubble, 0.10m of mid brown red sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions, 0.05m dark grey clay sand with frequent gravel inclusions and 0.05m pale brown grey clay sand with gravel overlying a red yellow clay with some gravel natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered.

Conclusion

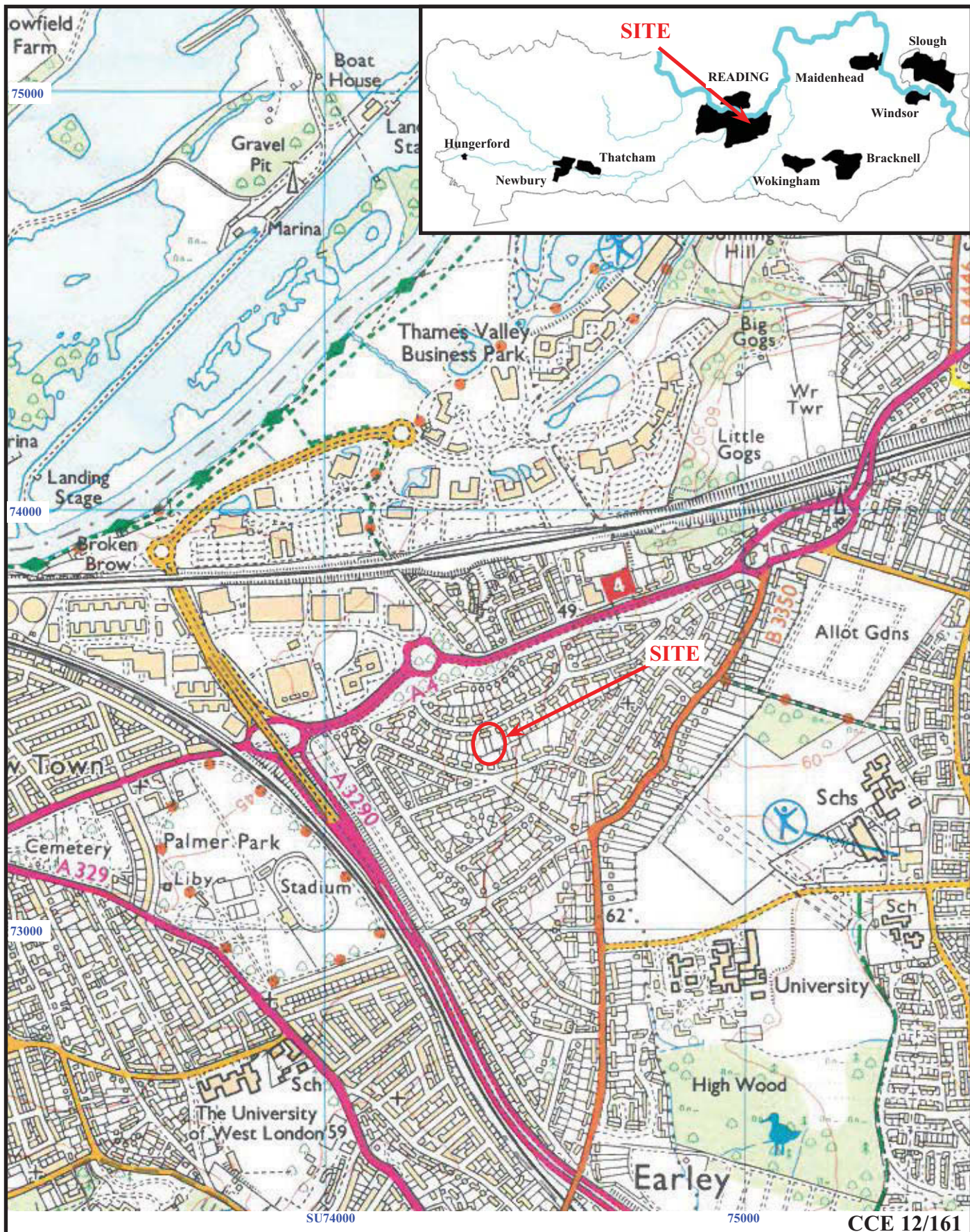
No features or finds of archaeological interest were noted in the four trenches. The site showed considerable evidence for previous modern truncation, with made ground directly overlying natural, suggesting that previous development would have already compromised any archaeological potential the site ever had.

References

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- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	17.50	1.00	0.50-1.00	0-0.35m loose rubble; 0.35m-0.60m dark grey sandy clay (made ground); 0.60m+ dark yellowish brown sandy clay with some gravel (natural geology) [Pl. 1]
2	11.50	1.60	0.56-0.92	0-0.24m loose rubble; 0.24m-0.52m mid/dark grey brown sandy clay subsoil; 0.52m+ mid red yellow sandy clay with some gravel (natural geology) [Pl. 2]
3	4.20	0.70	0.51	0-0.27m hardcore; 0.27m-0.51m made ground; 0.51m+ red yellow sandy clay (natural geology) [Pl. 3]
4	4.70	1.20	0.50	0-0.20m pale brown grey silty sand rubble; 0.20m-0.30m mid brown red sandy clay with gravel; 0.30-0.35m dark grey clay sand with gravel; 0.35m-0.45m pale brown grey clay sand with gravel; 0.45m+ red yellow sandy clay with some gravel (natural geology) [Pl. 4]

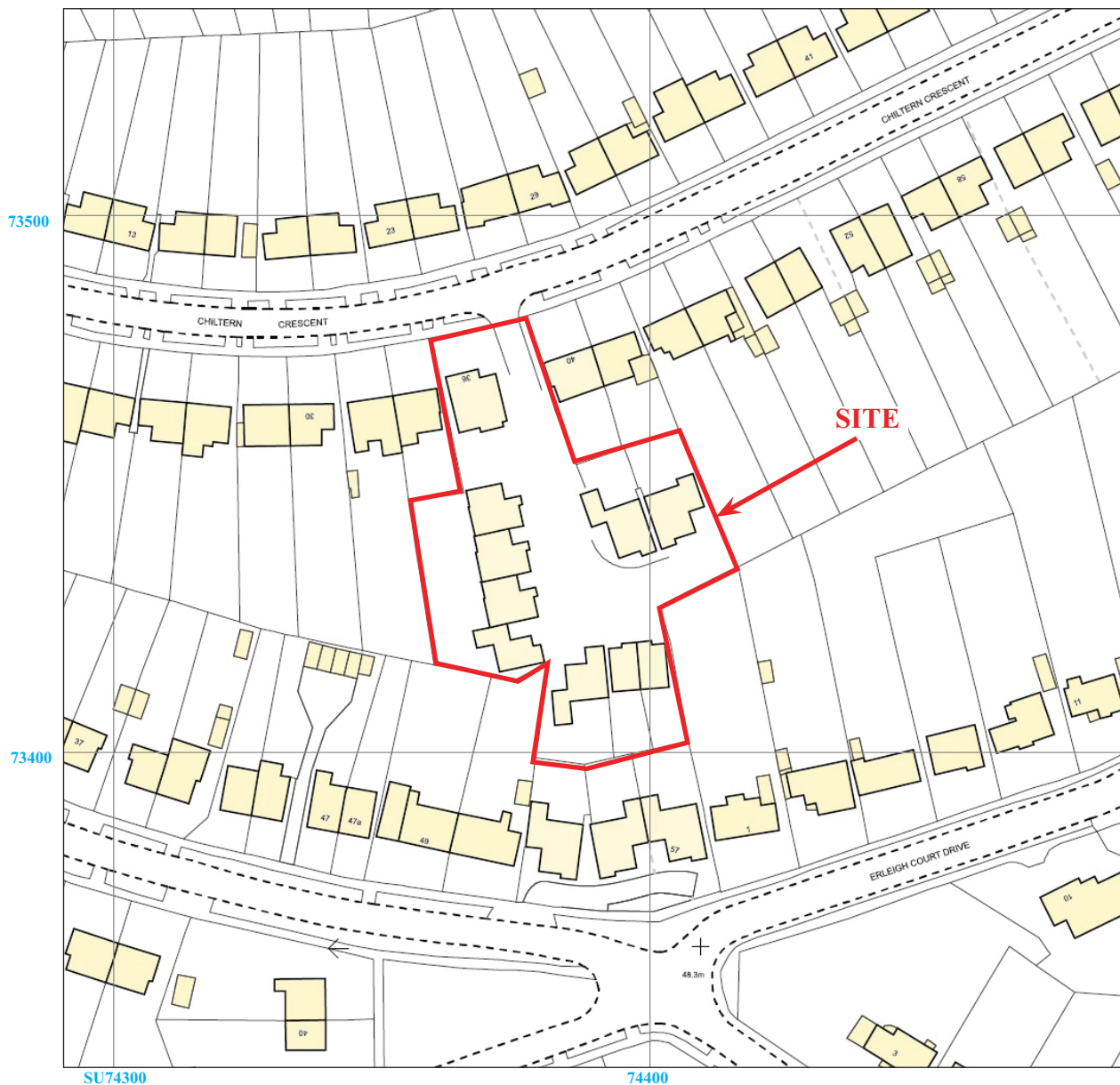


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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Chiltern Crescent.

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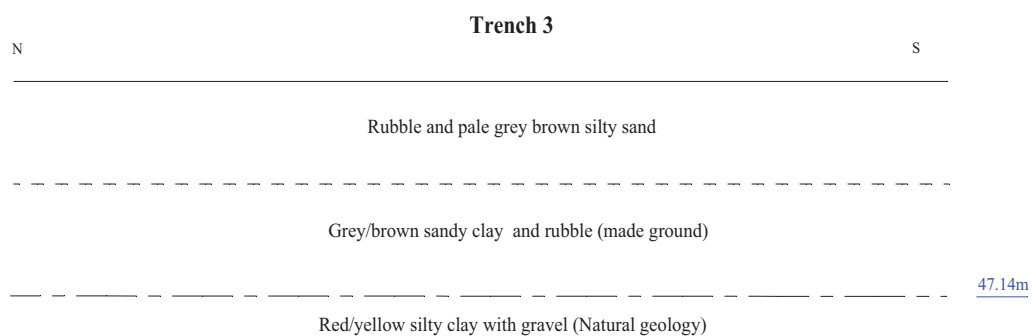
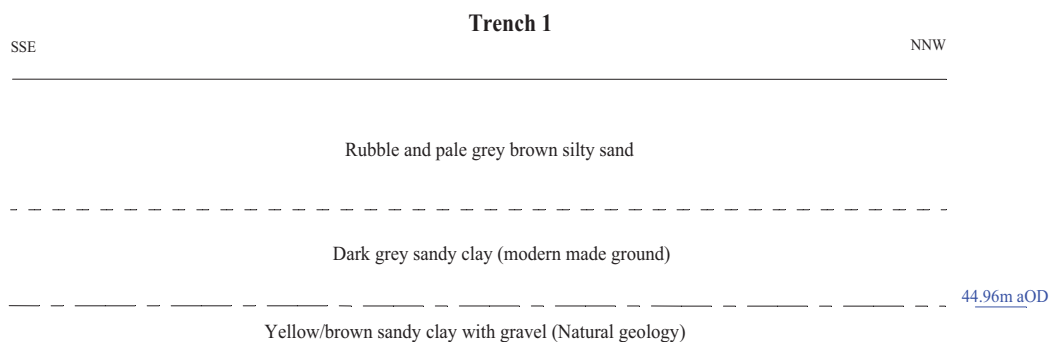
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 50m

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Figure 4. Representative section.



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



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

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

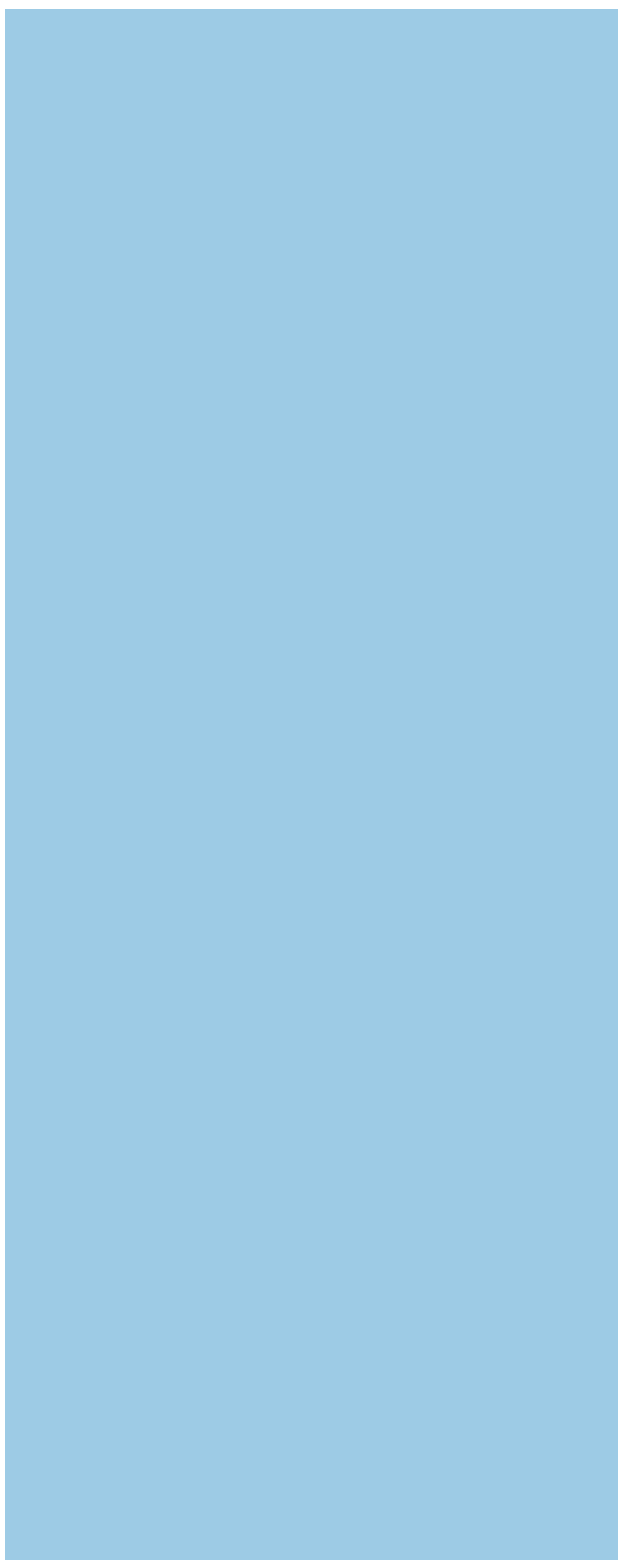
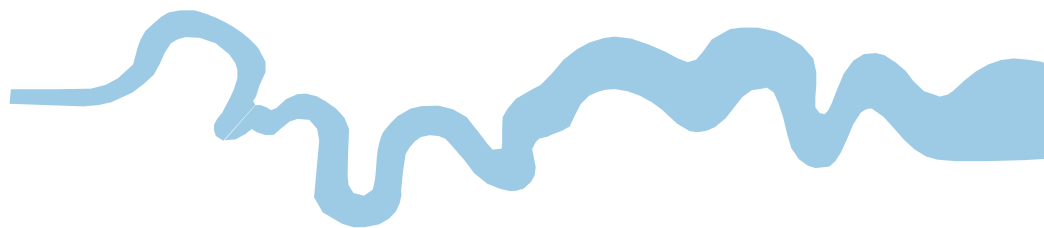
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Plates 3 - 4.**

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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	 3300 BC
Neolithic: Early 4300 BC	4300 BC
 Mesolithic: Late 6000 BC	 6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early 10000 BC	10000 BC
 Palaeolithic: Upper 30000 BC	 30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle 70000 BC	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower 2,000,000 BC	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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