

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land adjacent to Kerrera, High Street,  
Culham, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: HSC 15/30**

**(SU 5082 9507)**

# **Land adjacent to Kerrera, High Street, Culham, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for D Pink Investments**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSC 15/30

**March 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land adjacent to Kerrera, High Street, Culham, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5082 9507

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 13th March 2015

**Project manager:** Joanna Pine

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Munding

**Site code:** HSC 15/30

**Area of site:** 1065sq m

**Summary of results:** No find or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 18.03.15 Steve Preston ✓ 17.03.15
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# Land at Kerrera, High Street, Culham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Muddin

**Report 15/30**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land adjacent to Kerrera, High Street, Culham, Oxfordshire, OX14 4NB (SU 8052 9507) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Allister Godfrey, of AG Architects Ltd, Appledown, 31 Garston Lane, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 7AR, on behalf of the landowner D Pink Investments, Stoney Hedge House, Skeats Bush, East Hendred, OX12 8LH.

Planning permission (P14/S2646/FUL) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new house on this previously undeveloped plot of land, which was formerly an orchard. This consent includes two conditions, 7 and 8, which require that a written scheme of investigation is in place prior to the undertaking of staged archaeological investigation, in this instance, field evaluation with trial trenching. This was to target the area under immediate threat of disturbance from the development.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's heritage policies. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Joanne Robinson, Assistant Archaeological Officer of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, archaeological advisers to the District, and based on a brief also prepared by her. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on 13th March 2015 and the site code is HSC 15/30. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the northern side of the High Street, on a roughly rectangular plot of land to the immediate east of the house known as Kerrera, on an enclosed piece of land and separate from it (Fig. 2). The junction with Tollgate Road is to the just 30m to the south-east and Culham Lock and the River Thames to the south. The underlying geology is on the edge of the Lower Greensand and the First Terrace gravel deposit (BGS 1971) and the site is at a height of 52–53m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Ms Joanne Robinson of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. In summary the site lies within Culham, but outside the Conservation Area which is to the west. This end of the High Street is characterized by 20th-century development, and the site is between two such developments. Historically, Culham itself, is not referred to at the time of Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002), but is mentioned in a document of AD821 and again in a boundary charter of AD940 and seems to have developed mainly in the medieval period.

Extensive cropmarks of known and protected sites exist around Culham with extensive multiphased cropmarks to the west by the Thames and a ring ditch complex to the east closer to Clifton Hampden (Benson and Miles 1974, maps 34 and 35). Mineral extraction nearby has also uncovered extensive areas of multiphased sites (Lambrick and Robinson 2009). Several findspots are also recorded in the county Historic Environment Record for the general environs of the site with Bronze Age metalwork (a flanged axe and a spearhead) being of particular note.

## **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 trenches were positioned to best sample the land under immediate threat from development, and where accessible to be placed within the footprint of the new house (Fig. 3)

The specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels survive on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine if any Saxon or Medieval deposits are present.

It was proposed that two 10m long trenches were to be dug within the footprint of the new building. These were to be excavated with a back-acting mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. All potential archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and investigated by hand to satisfy the aims of the project. All trench spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

## Results

Both trenches were dug to the intended coverage. 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; Pls 1)

Trench 1 was aligned N - S and was 10.6m long, 1.6m wide and 0.74m deep. The topsoil was 0.37m deep overlying subsoil which was 0.32m thick, to a overall depth of 0.67m. The base of this deposit was reached at this depth with the final depth of the trench reaching 0.74m deep. No archaeological deposits were encountered. The natural gravel geology became gradually denser towards the north of the trench with greensand and clays to the south.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 3 and 4, Pl.2)

This trench was aligned NNW - SSE and was 10m long and 1.6m wide and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy of this trench consisted of topsoil overlaying subsoil. The topsoil was 0.32m thick and contained many roots from the previous brambles. The underlying subsoil was disturbed by a disused brick chamber, visible in the eastern side of the southern part of the trench. This contained two fragments of 20th century 'china'. The natural geology was reached at 0.52m, with more gravel to the north of the trench than the south. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered in this trench.

## Finds

.No finds of archaeological interest were encountered, and 20th-century material was noted but retained on site.

## Conclusion

No find or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered on this site.

## References

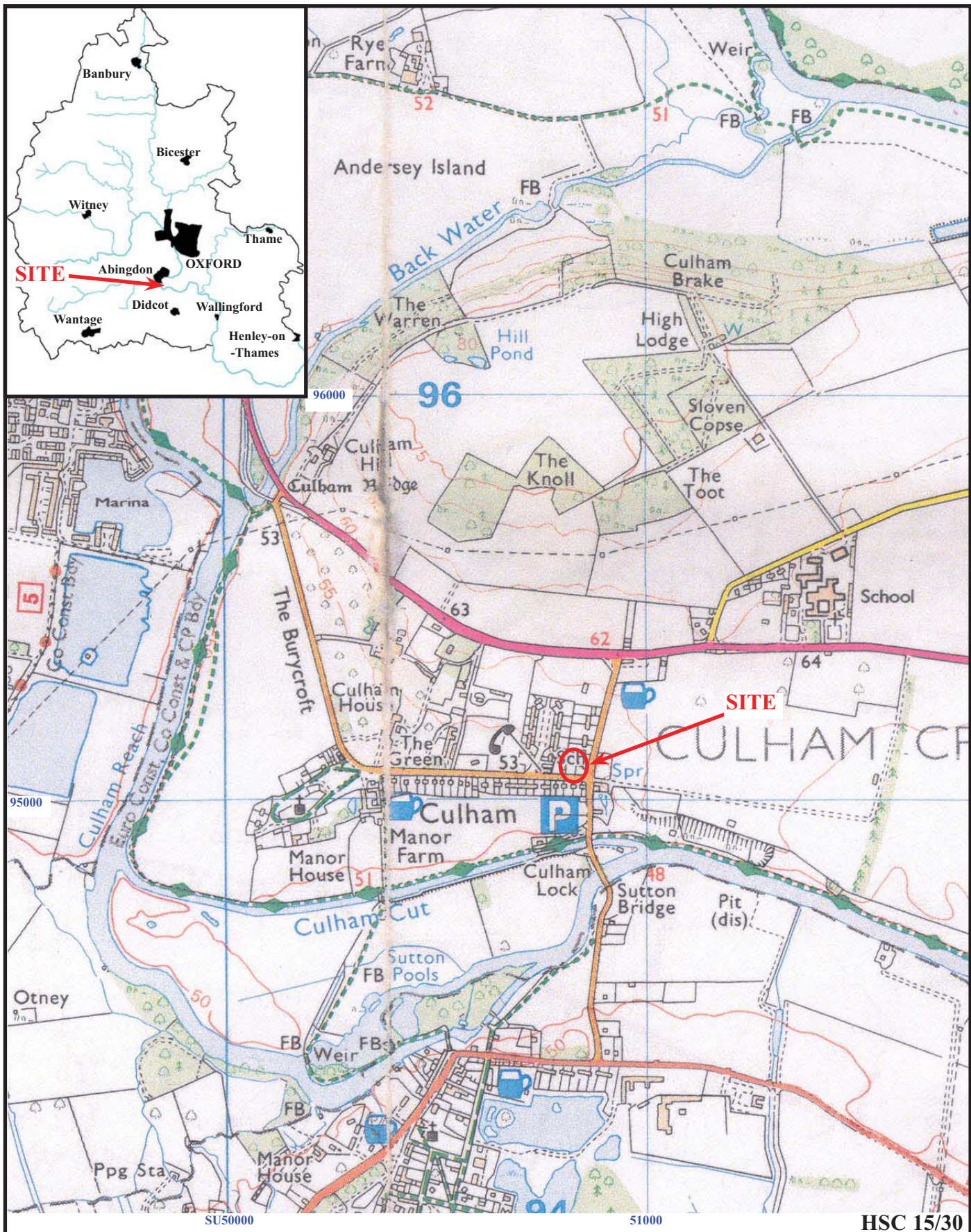
- Benson, D and Miles, D, 1974, *The Upper Thames Valley: an archaeological survey of the river gravels*, Oxfordshire Archaeol Unit Survey 2, Oxford
- BGS, 1971, British Geological Survey, 1:63 360, Sheet 253, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Lambrick, G, Robinson, M and Allen, T, 2009, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: The Thames Valley in Later Prehistory: 1500BC–AD50*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr 29, Oxford
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m = S end of trench

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.6	1.6	0.74	0-0.37m dark brown grey silty loam topsoil, 0.37-0.69m brown dark grey silty clay subsoil, 0.69m+ light reddish yellow grey clay gradating onto gravel at the northern end of the trench. <b>[PI. 1]</b>
2	10	1.6	0.56	0-0.32m topsoil, 0.32-0.52m subsoil, 0.52m+ yellowish grey clay with reddish clay patches and gradating onto gravel to the north. <b>[PI. 2]</b>





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Oxfordshire, 2015  
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Figure 1. Location of site within Culham  
and Oxfordshire.

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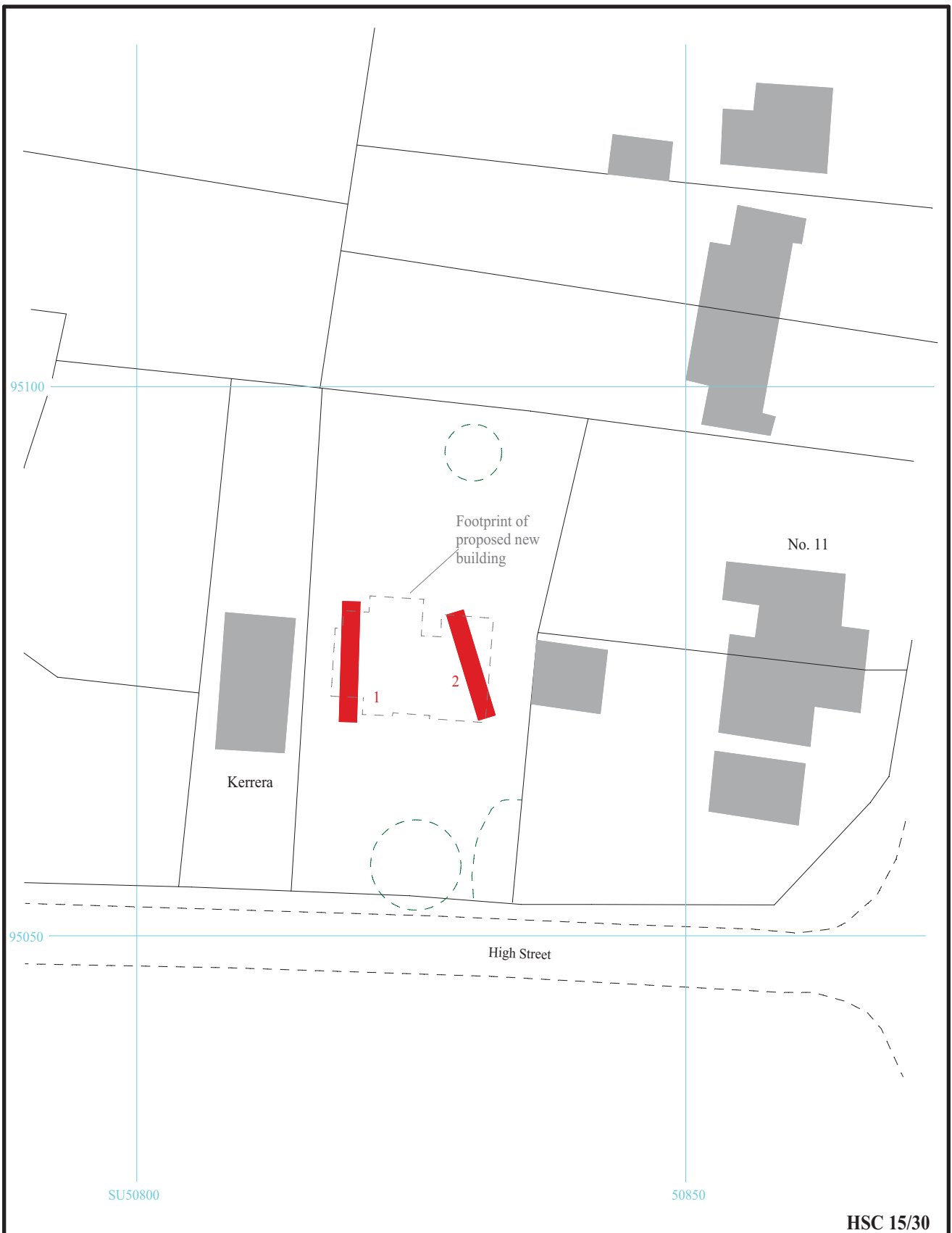
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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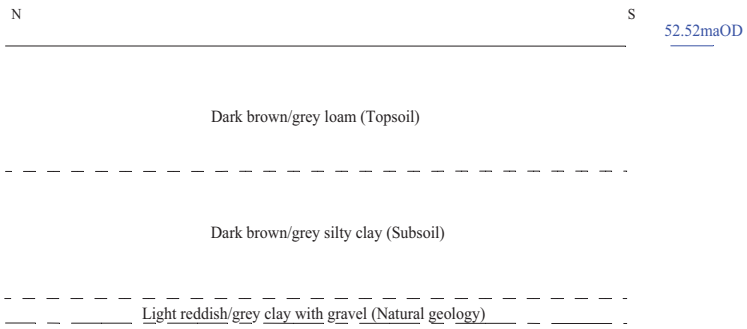
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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.

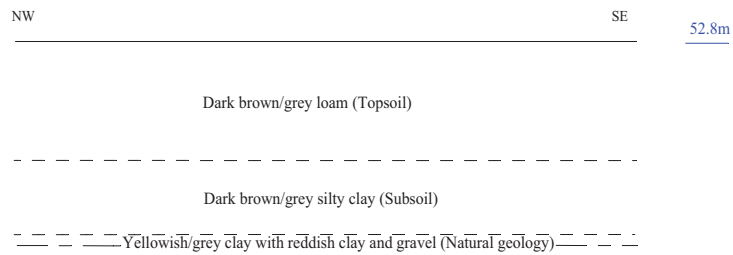


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### Trench 1



### Trench 2



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north west, Scale: 1m.

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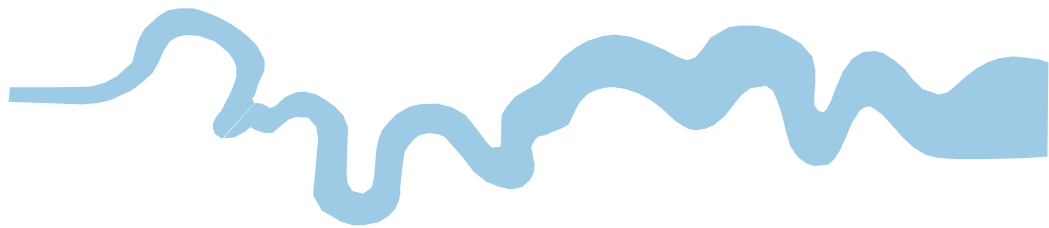
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Archaeological Evaluation**  
Plates 1 - 2.

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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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