

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land South of Croft Road, Spencers Wood,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Tim Dawson and Aidan Colyer**

**Site Code: CRSW16/190**

**(SU 7231 6684)**

**Land South of Croft Road, Spencers Wood,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**For Country Estates Limited**

by Tim Dawson and Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CRSW 16/190

**November 2016**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land South of Croft Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7231 6684

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 7th November 2016

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Tim Dawson

**Site code:** CRSW 16/190

**Area of site:** 2250sqm

**Summary of results:** A single feature was investigated but was revealed to be of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date and may have been a tree throw hole No artefacts nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed and 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).

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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 ✓ 20.11.16
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# Land South of Croft Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Tim Dawson and Aidan Colyer

Report 16/190

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land south of Croft Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7231 6684) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Matthew Jeal of Country Estates Limited, Kingfisher House, 17 Aldbury Close, Reading, RG30 1BD.

Planning consent (152163) has been granted from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of 4 detached dwellings with associated car parking and amenity space. The consent includes a condition relating to archaeology. 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 Ellie Leary, Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson on 7th November 2016 and the site code is CRSW 16/190. 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).

## Location, topography and geology

The site comprises a roughly square parcel of land on the south side of Croft Road, on the eastern margins of Spencers Wood, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 7231 6684). The parcel of land is c.2250 sq m (Fig. 1) and is c.50m Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology as shown on maps is recorded as being the third River Terrace gravel deposits (BGS 2000). This geology was confirmed during trenching.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from various fieldwork in the area comprising evaluation and follow-up excavation (Taylor, 2012); Platt 2015; Taylor and Dawson 2015). Fieldwork to the north identified Iron Age to post medieval deposits which comprised an Iron Age pit, two ditches containing Roman material, four Saxon linear features and a number of post medieval field boundaries (Taylor 2012), with fieldwork to the

north west revealing Middle Iron Age occupation and field system (Platt 2015; Taylor and Dawson 2015). In general, the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in an area with a range of archaeological deposits. Field survey (Ford 1997) and aerial photography (Gates 1975) had previously recorded several sites with recent excavated site having shown an emphasis on deposits of Iron Age and Roman date such as at Grazeley Road and Mere oak Lane to the west (Ford et al 2011; Milbank 2010) and Iron Age to the south west (ASE 2004a, 2004b).

## **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 were:

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

Four trenches were to be dug, 15m long and 1.6m wide, the trenches were to be located as close as possible to the areas affected by the proposed buildings. A contingency of 25m of trench was included should it be required to clarify findings made in the initial evaluation. These were to be dug using an excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Where potential archaeological features were present, or likely to be present, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. A sufficient number of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project without compromising the integrity of deposits that might be better investigated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

## **Results**

All four trenches were dug as intended. The trenches ranged in length from 15.10 to 16.60m and in depth from 0.09 to 0.52m. They were 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Fig. Pl.1)

Trench 1 was aligned N - S and was 16.10m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of topsoil and 0.45m subsoil overlying natural geology of pale yellow-brown gravel with sandy silt patches.



#### Trench 2 (Fig. PL.2)

Trench 2 was aligned NE - SW and was 16.60m long and 0.26-0.34m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.04m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying natural geology of mid brown-orange gravel. The subsoil was not present between 7.2-16.6m along the trench. A tree throw was observed 8m from the SW end of the trench. this was cleaned back to confirm its identity but was not excavated. A possible ditch was observed 11.8m from the SW end of the trench. A slot [1] was dug in this feature which showed the feature to be 1.60m wide and 0.58m deep. There were four fills numbered (50), (51), (52) and (53) consecutively from the bottom fill to the top fill. No artefacts were recovered from this feature.

Fill (50) consisted of a mid blue-grey silty sand with rare small flint inclusions. This fill was 0.12m in thickness and was 0.73m in width across the section. Fill (51) consisted of a mid grey, with frequent orange patches, sandy silt. This fill was 0.06m in thickness and 0.98m in width across the section. Fill (52) consisted of a mid grey sandy silt with rare small flint inclusions. This fill was 0.39m in thickness and 1.6m in width across the section. Fill (53) consisted of a mid yellow-brown sandy gravel. This fill was 0.14m in thickness and 0.5m in width across the section.

#### Trench 3 (Fig. PL.3)

Trench 3 was aligned NE - SW and was 16.40m long and 0.09-0.24m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.09-0.10m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology of pale yellow-brown sandy gravel . The subsoil did not extend past 7.5m from the south-western end of the trench. Linear features were observed along the trench but after investigation were discovered to be root action.

#### Trench 4 (Fig. PL.4)

Trench 4 was aligned N - S and was 15.10m long and 0.27m-0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.09m of topsoil and 0.18-0.29m of subsoil overlying natural geology of mid orange sandy gravel. Potential features were identified at 2.40m and 4.50m from the southern end of the trench. After investigation these were identified as root action.

### **Finds**

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

## Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a single feature of possible archaeological interest but on excavation it was revealed to be of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date and may be an elongated tree throw hole rather than a ditch. No other features were uncovered. Parts of the site to the east appeared lower than elsewhere suggesting some previous truncation. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

## References

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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

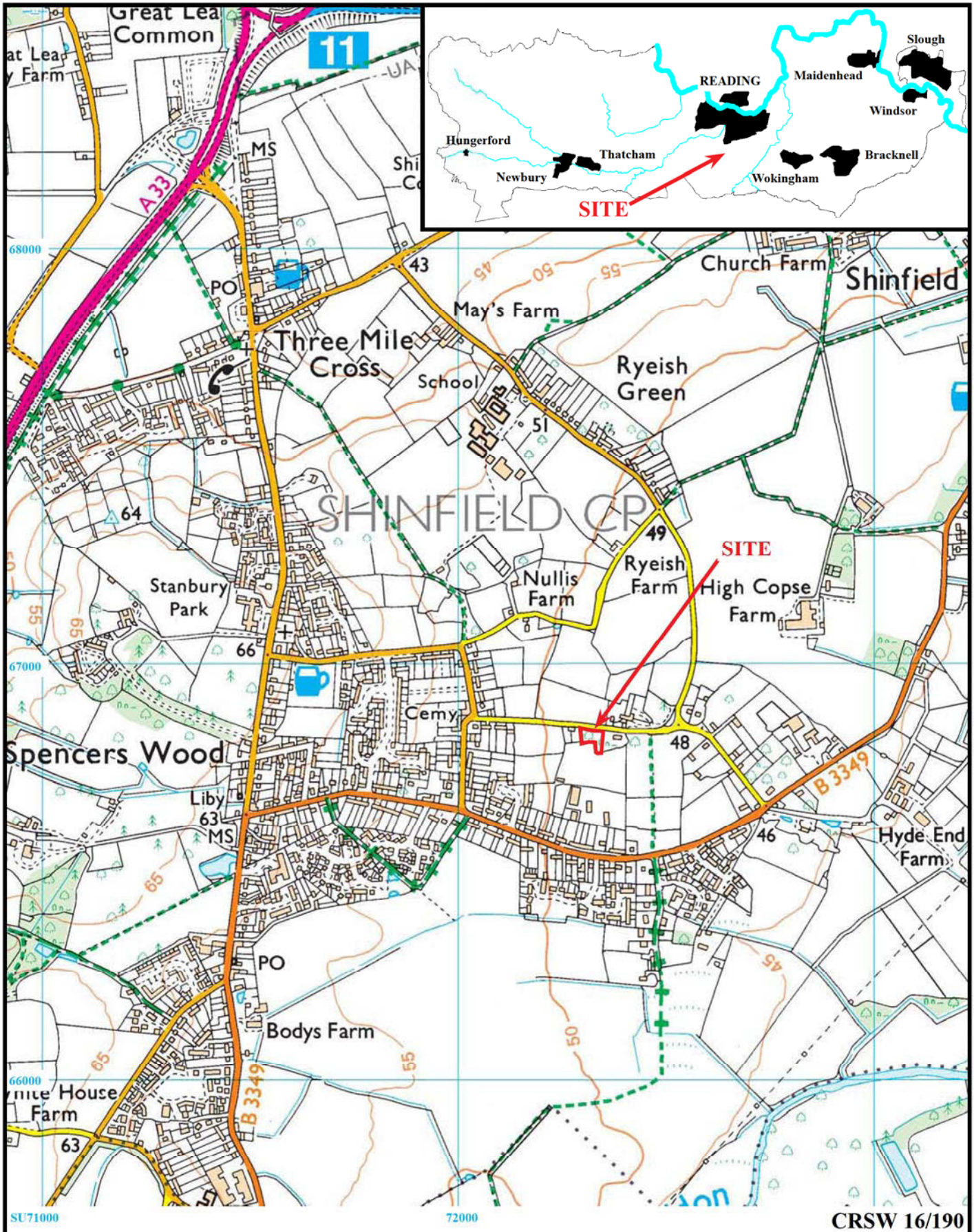
0m at S and SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.10	1.8	0.52	0–0.07m topsoil; 0.07-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural geology. [Pl. 1]
2	16.60	1.8	0.34 SW/ 0.26 NE	0-0.04m topsoil; 0.04-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ natural geology at SW end. 0-0.04m topsoil; 0.04m+natural at NE end. Ditch [1] <b>Pls 2 and 4</b>
3	16.40	1.8	0.24 SW/ 0.09 NE	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10-0.24m subsoil; 0.24m+ natural geology at SW end. 0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09m+ natural geology at NE end.
4	15.10	1.8	0.27 N/ 0.45 S	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ natural geology at N end. 0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology at S end. <b>Pl. 3</b>



## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	50, 51, 52 and 53.	Possible ditch/tree throw	19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> century	Brick/tile fragments

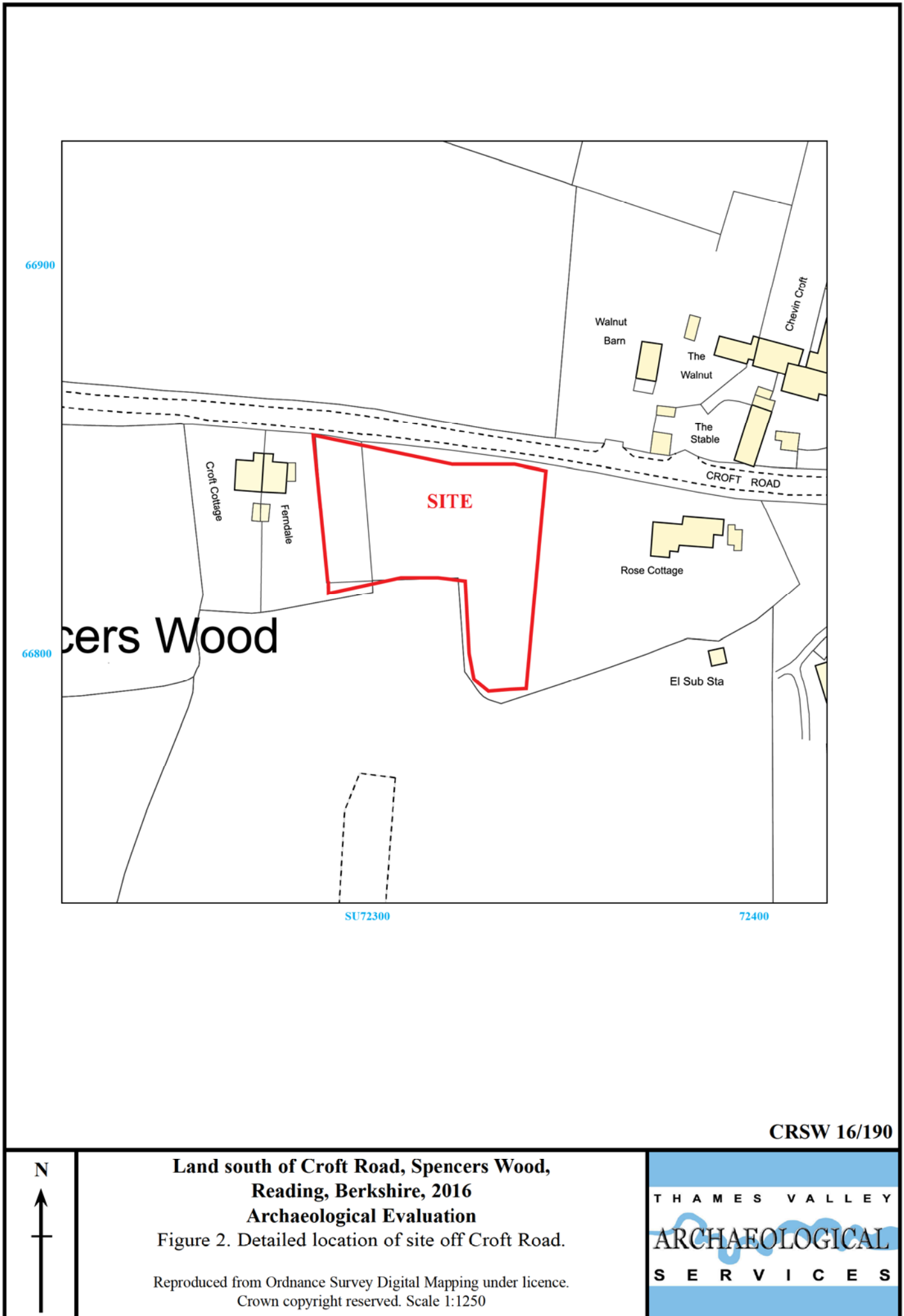


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Figure 1. Location of site within Spencers Wood and Berkshire.

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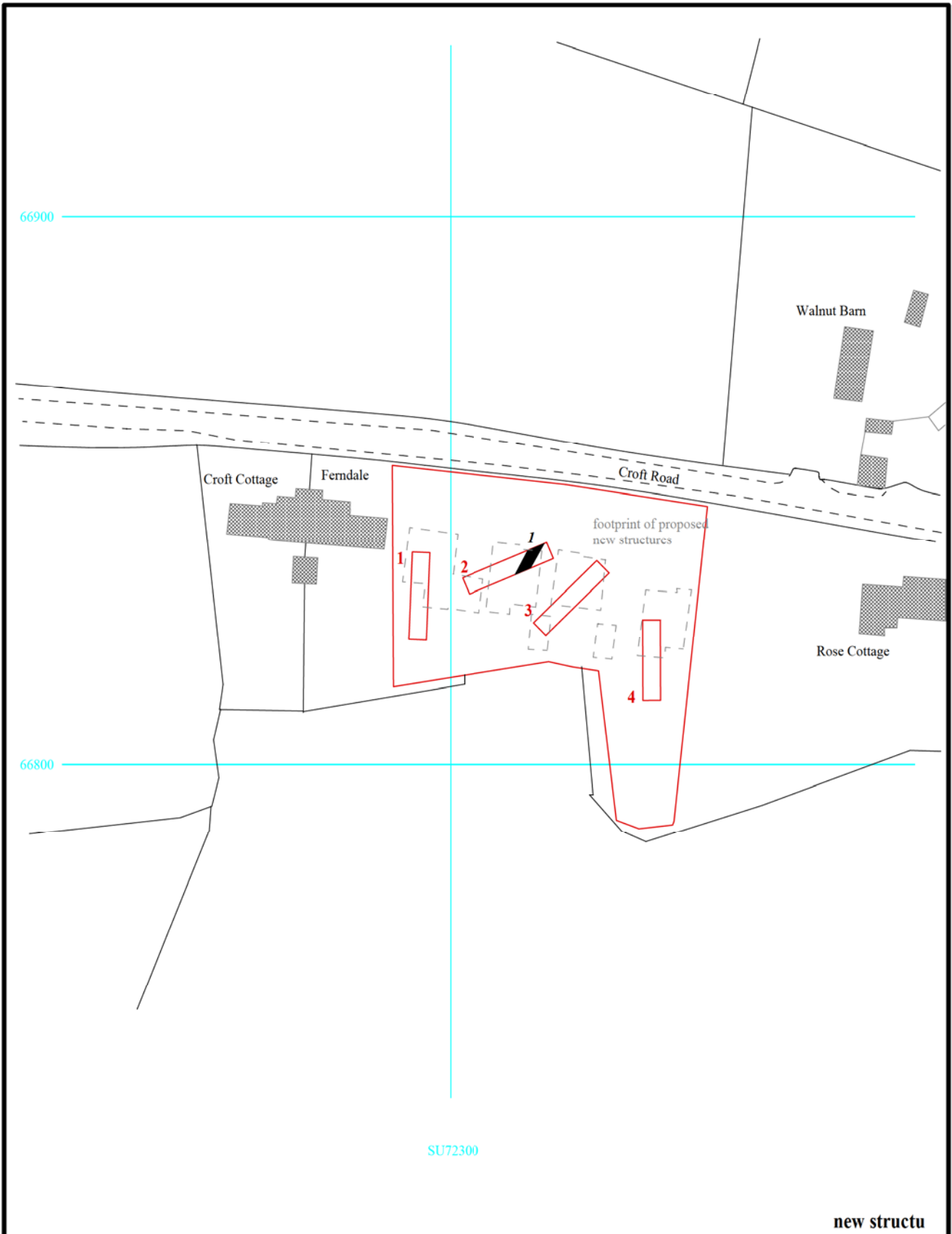


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Croft Road.

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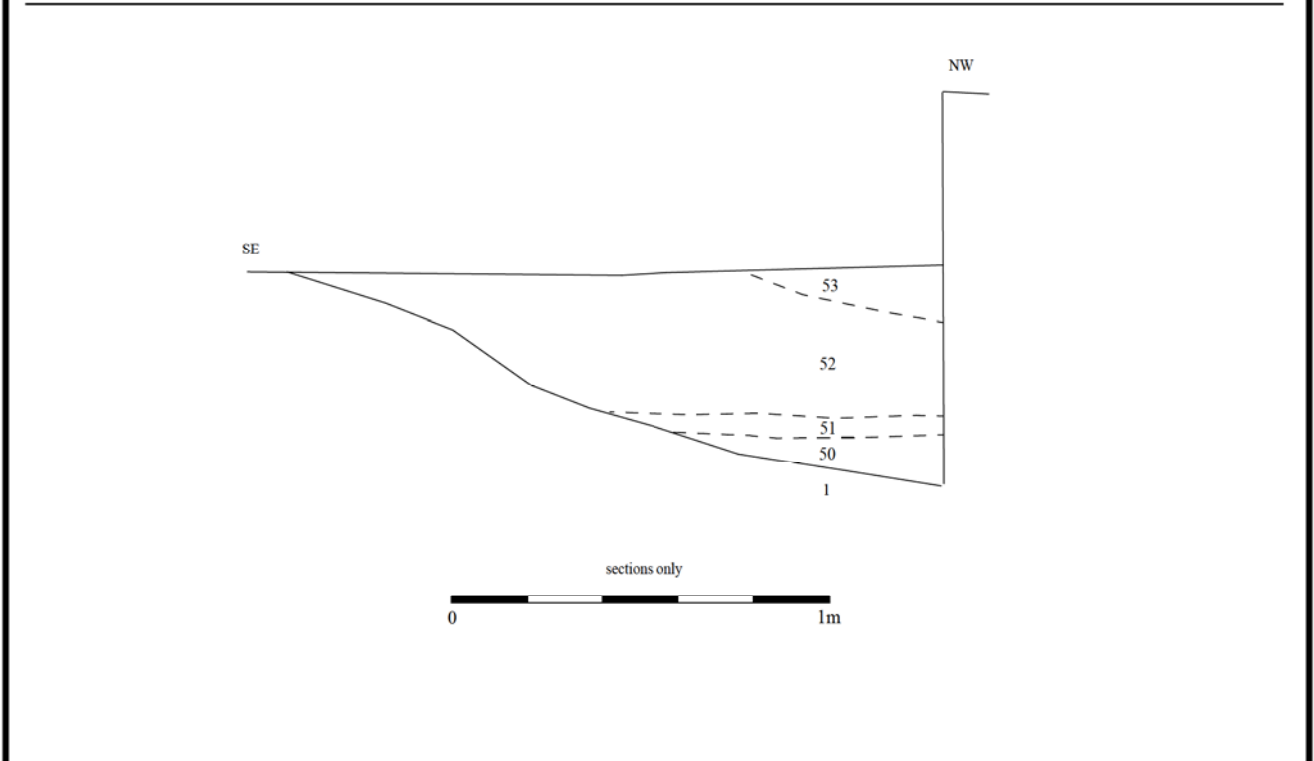
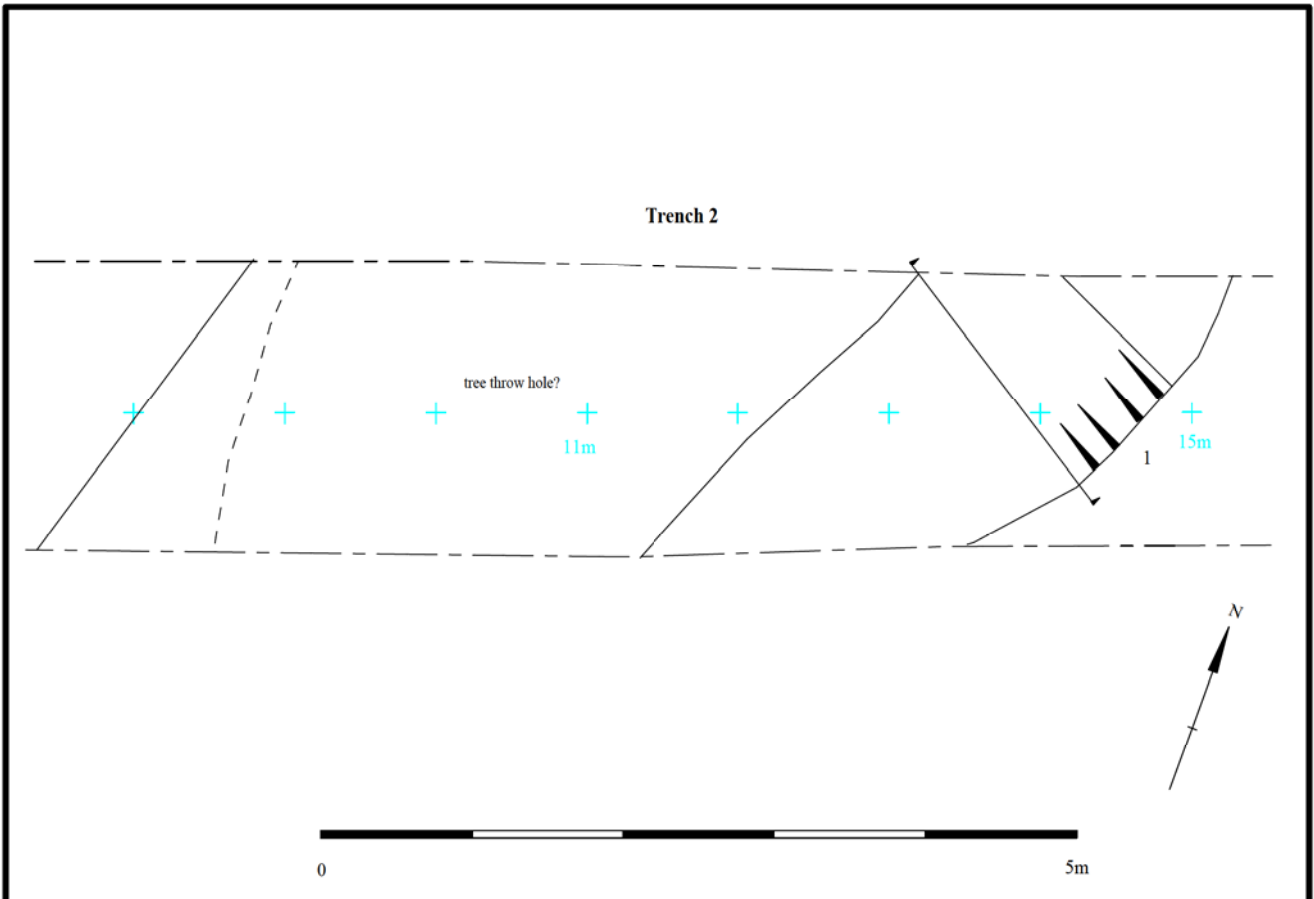




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Figure 3. Location of trenches.





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Figure 4. Detail of trench 2 and section





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



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

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 4, looking north west, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 2, Ditch 1 looking south west, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.

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Land south of Croft Road, Spencers Wood,  
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Plates 3 - 4.

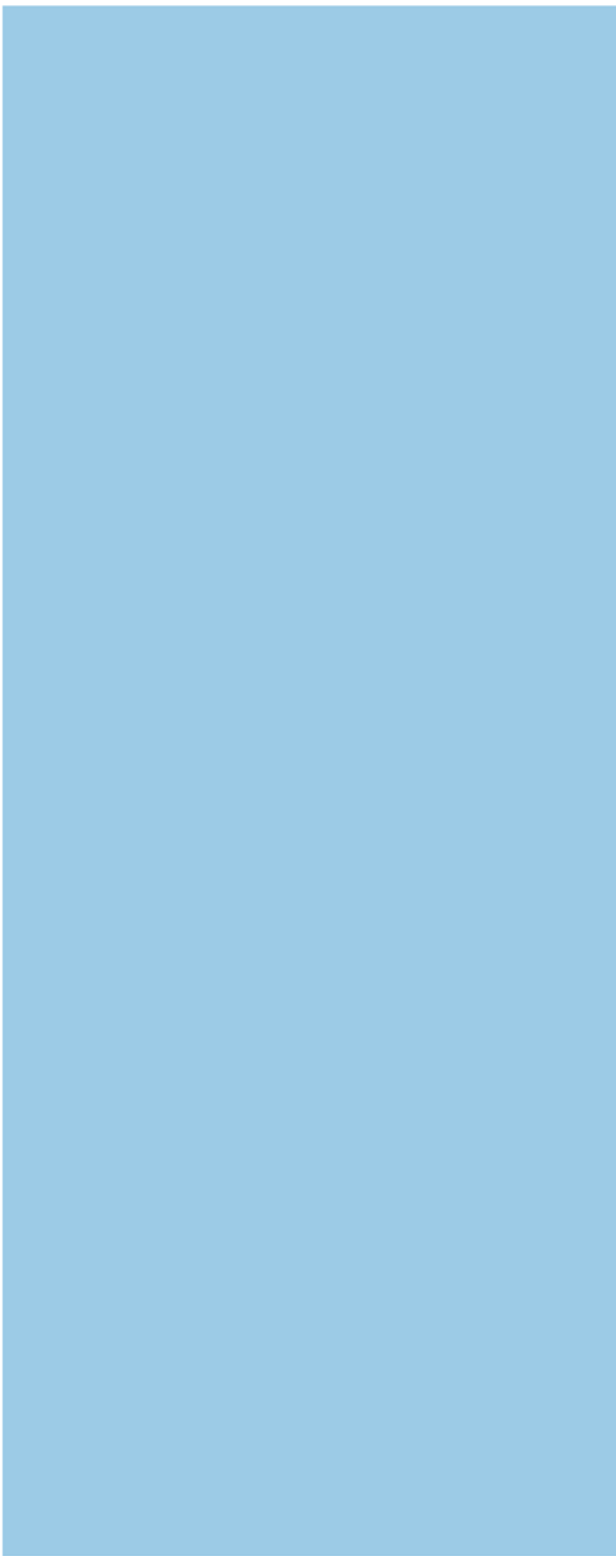
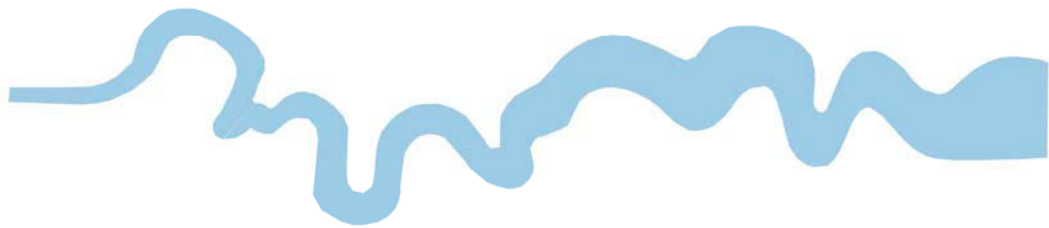
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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**