

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins

Site Code: 29HSL16/161

(SU 3250 7877)

**Land at 29 High Street,
Lambourn, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Armour Heritage Ltd

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 29HSL 16/161

May 2017

Summary

Site name: Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3250 7877

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 23rd January - 28th March 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Ellen McManus-Fry and Lizzi Lewins

Site code: 29HSL16/161

Area of site: 0.05ha

Summary of results: The excavation of foundation trenches, ground reduction within the plot and a service trench revealed no features or deposits of archaeological interest. One possible pit was investigated and shown to be of modern date, as were other modern truncations uncovered during the groundworks.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 15.05.17 Steve Preston✓ 15.05.17

Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins

Report 16/161

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 29 High Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire (SU 3250 7877) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage Ltd, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset, BA11 5DP.

Outline planning consent (14/00620/OUTD) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the construction of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, demolition of an existing single-storey side extension, and re-opening of vehicular and pedestrian access. The consent is subject to a condition (19) which requires that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the groundworks, due to the possibility of damage or destruction to archaeological deposits.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification prepared by Armour Heritage approved by Mr Alex Godden, (former) Archaeological Officer with West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ellen McManus-Fry, Michael Johnson and Lizzi Lewins, between 23rd January and 28th March 2017 and the site code is 29HSL 16/161.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north-west side of the High Street at the southern end of Lambourn (Figs 1 and 2). The site is a sub-rectangular parcel of flat land and lies at a height of c.132m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology is mapped as New Pit Chalk Formation which is overlain by Head deposit (BGS 2006) which was observed on site as a mid red brown clayey silt with frequent gravel and flint natural geology.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Lambourn, which has its origins in the Saxon period and is thought to have been the centre of a Royal estate from a consideration of

the unusually large size of the parish (Astill 1978). A number of previous investigations within the immediate vicinity of the site have been conducted with all but one producing positive results (Ford 2010). One site to the north-west produced evidence for late Saxon and Medieval pits (Ford 2001). A site to the south-east revealed pits ranging from the Medieval period through to the 19th century (Hindmarch and Ford 2003), whilst four sites to the north-east provided further evidence for Medieval activity within the village (FA 1999; Ford 2004; Platt and Porter 2014; Wallis 2003). Middle Saxon deposits have also been record to the north (HER).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was:

- to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should any remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
- to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;

Any deposits of possible archaeological interest were to be cleaned and investigated using appropriate hand tools, and any archaeological deposits uncovered were to be excavated and recorded.

The excavation of the foundation trenches, ground reduction within the plot and one service trench was observed (Fig. 3). The groundworks were undertaken by a 360^o-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Foundation trenches

The footprint of the new house plot was 12.25m long and 8.00m wide (Fig. 3). The trench varied in width from 0.70–1.70m and depth ranged between 1.10–1.20m. Although subsoil was present across the site it had been heavily truncated in the western extent of the plot. The stratigraphy varied between the western and eastern extent (Fig. 4). The stratigraphy in the western extent of the plot consisted of 0.28m of disturbed topsoil which contained numerous brick fragments overlying 0.40m of a light yellowish brown silty clay with chalk inclusions and fragments of modern brick (levelling layer) overlying 0.27m of dark brown grey clayey silt (remaining

subsoil in western area) overlying mid red brown clayey silt with frequent flint and gravel inclusions natural geology (superficial Head deposit).

The stratigraphy in the eastern extent consisted of 0.12m of topsoil overlying 0.66m of mid brown grey clayey silt subsoil which had been disturbed and was seen to contain modern debris (wire, glass, metal, Wellington boot) overlying the mid red brown clayey silt superficial natural geology.

In the southern trench the chalk bedrock natural geology was observed, and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of subsoil overlying 0.60m of Head deposit overlying the chalk natural geology.

The area within the foundation trench was reduced by c.0.46m exposing the levelling layer in the west and the disturbed subsoil in the east. An irregular pit/treebole was encountered in the western plot, it was 0.90m in diameter and 0.24m deep and contained two iron nails, two fragments of patterned china, a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem, a piece of green bottle glass, a fragment of modern brick and a modern 60-watt light fitting. A large piece of metal with inlaid grooved rubber was present in the top of the pit but could not be removed. A modern truncation was noted in the eastern plot following widening of the trench and was 2m wide and 0.80m deep and contained modern brick and tile and fragments of horse bone.

Ground reduction for parking

The area immediately to the south of the trenches, to be used as car parking, was reduced by 0.70m. To the west the stratigraphy consisted of 0.62m of disturbed topsoil overlying the levelling layer, and to the east 0.32m of disturbed topsoil overlying subsoil. The area to the south had previously held a large pond c. 0.70 m deep which had been backfilled.

Service trench

One service trench was excavated to the south of the southern foundation trench sharing the same alignment and turning SE at the north-eastern corner of the new dwellings. This trench was 55m long and 0.60m wide, with a maximum depth of 1m. Where the area was not disturbed by previous ground reduction undertaken as part of the development (see above) the stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.40m of mid brown gravel with modern brick and tile fragments overlying 0.60m of orange brown clay silt.

Finds

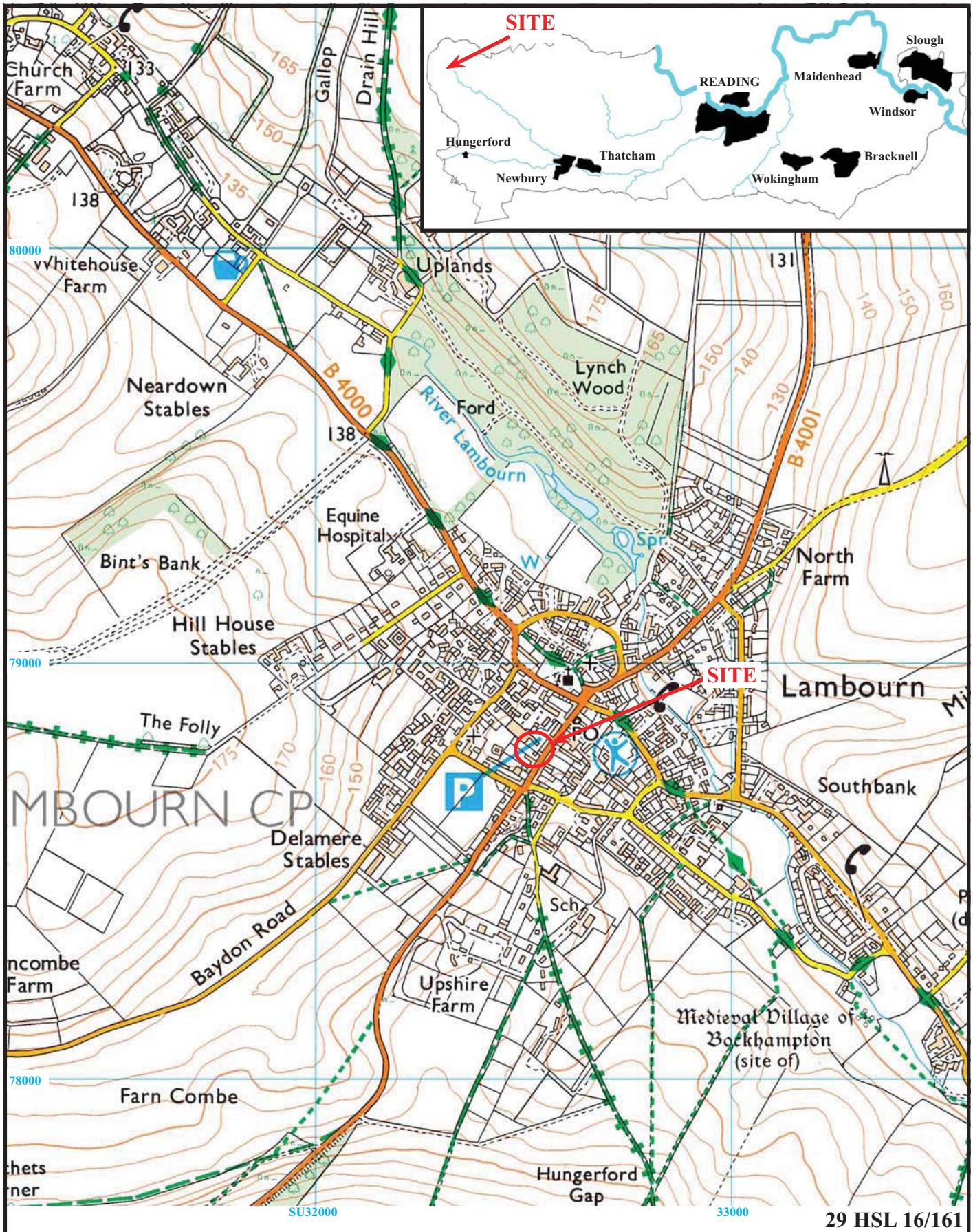
No finds of archaeological interest were revealed Late post-medieval and modern objects were retained on-site.

Conclusion

Despite the archaeological potential of the site the monitoring of the groundworks revealed no features nor deposits of archaeological interest. One possible pit was investigated showing this to be of modern date as were other modern truncations uncovered during the groundworks.

References

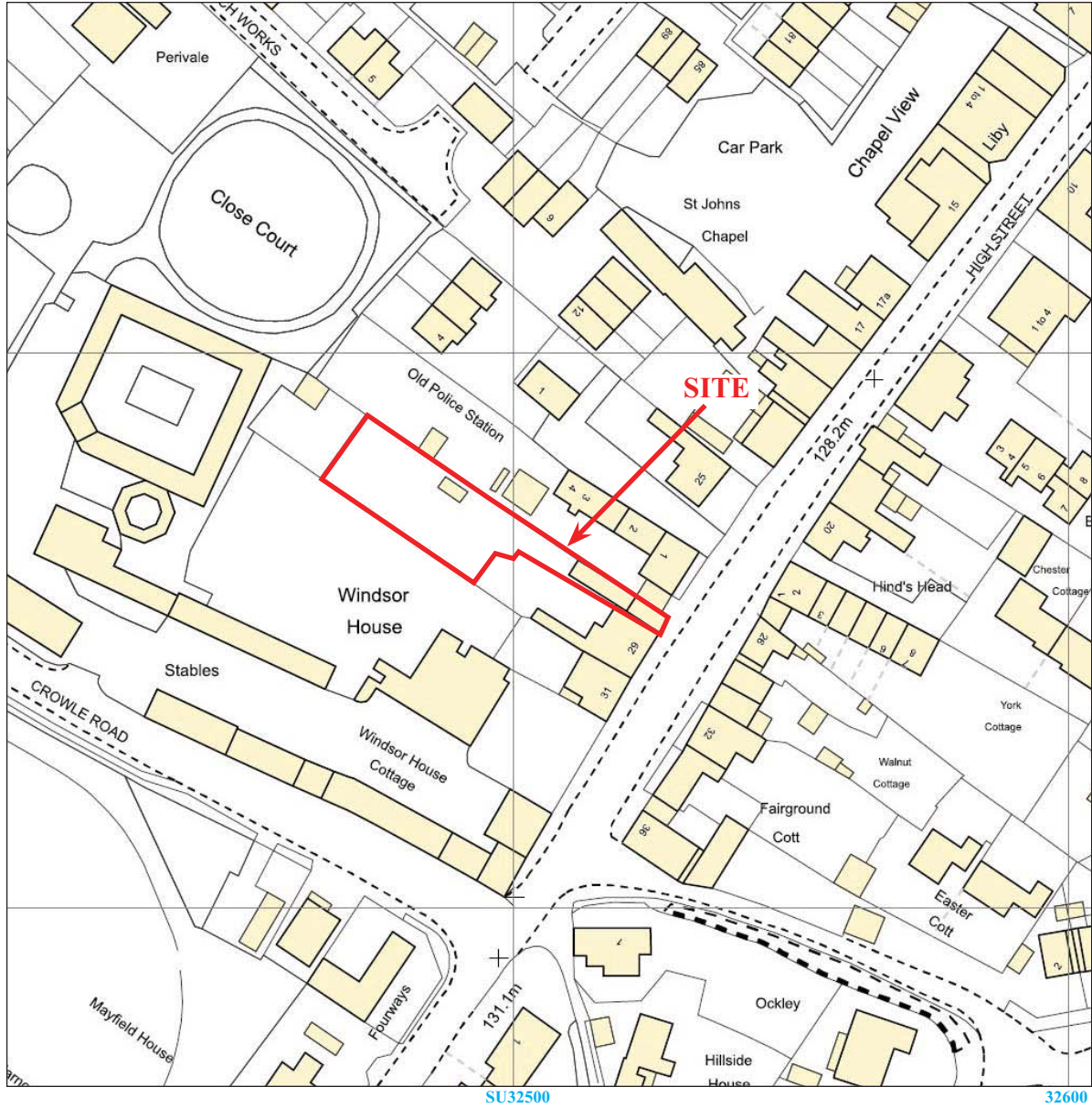
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**Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn,
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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lambourn and West Berkshire.

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29 HSL 16/161



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West Berkshire, 2017
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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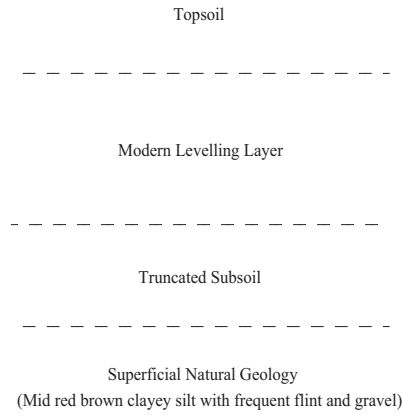


**Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2017
Archaeological Watching Brief**

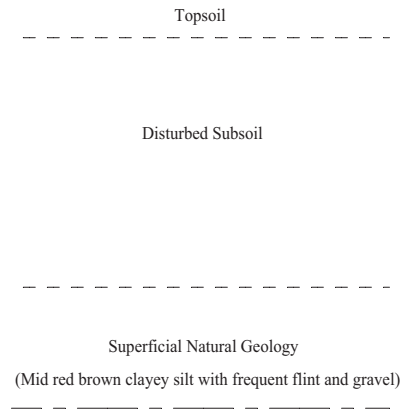
Figure 3. Location of observed area.



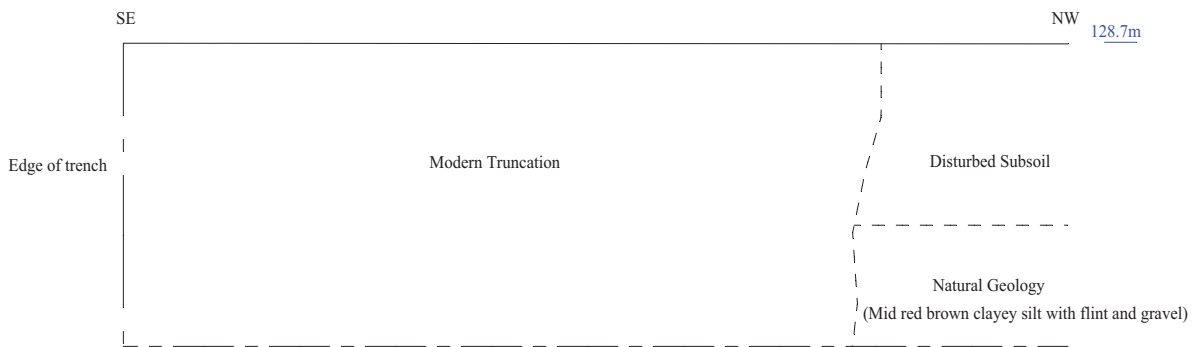
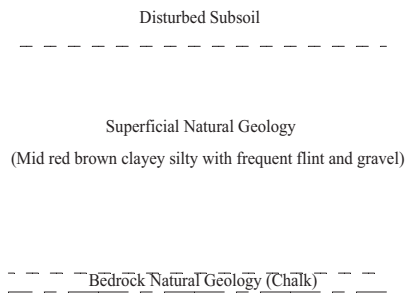
SE Western Extent NW 128.66maOD



SE Eastern Extent NW 128.64m



SW Southern extent NE 128.9m



29HSL 16/161

**Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2017
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. Footing trenches, looking North, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Detail of north-western trench, looking West, Scales: 2m and 1m.

29HSL 16/161

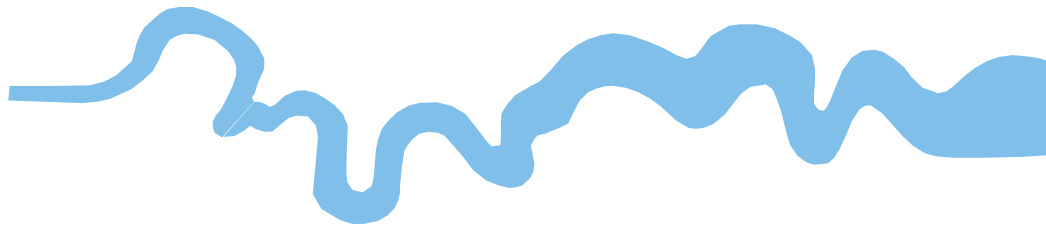
**Land at 29 High Street, Lambourn
West Berkshire, 2017
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 and 2.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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