

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Marston House, Oxford Street,
Lambourn, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: MHL17/261

(SU 3287 7909)

**Marston House, Oxford Street,
Lambourn, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Simon Mooney

by Luis Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MHL 17/261

February 2018

Summary

Site name: Marston House, Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3287 7909

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 31st January 2018

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves

Site code: MHL 17/261

Area of site: 150 sq m

Summary of results: Trench foundations for extensions to the existing dwelling were observed. No archaeological deposits were identified nor finds recovered.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 06.02.18 Steve Preston ✓ 06.02.18

Marston House, Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire

by Luis Esteves

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Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Marston House, Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire (SU 3287 7909) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Mooney of the same address.

Planning consent (app 17/02075/HOUSE) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for alterations and a two-storey extension to the existing dwelling. The consent includes a condition (5) relating to archaeology which requires that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's Council policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Acting Archaeological Officer and Historic Environment Record Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves on 31st January 2018 and the site code is MHL17/261.

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 near the centre of Lambourn, approximately 250m north-east of the parish church (Fig. 1), on the north side of Oxford Street and 120m east of the River Lambourn. The site is flat, with a central existing house and associated garages (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped at the junction of alluvium of the river valley with Valley Bottom Head (a silty, stony and sandy clay) (BGS 2006). A yellow pale sandy gravel with flint was observed in the foundation trenches. The site lies at a height of 125m above Ordnance Datum and is relatively flat in comparison to the steep hills which rise all around Lambourn.

Archaeological background

The site lies on the edge of the historic core of Lambourn, which is thought to have originated as a Saxon royal estate before developing into a town during the medieval period. The site lies on the eastern edge of what is

thought to be the Saxon core of the town centred on the parish church and distinctive oval street pattern. The parish church of St Michael and All Angels has a late 12th-century tower and nave and is thought to be located on the site of the original late Saxon church (Astill 1978).

The Lambourn area generally is notable for the large Bronze Age round barrow cemetery of Lambourn Seven Barrows which comprises a tight cluster of mounds at its centre with several outlying mounds and levelled mounds (ring ditches). Over forty certain and possible barrows are known. Areas surrounding the cemetery are also notable for evidence of Roman, with some prehistoric field systems.

More specifically, within Lambourn itself, numerous small-scale archaeological investigations have produced evidence from a variety of periods. An evaluation and subsequent watching brief on the site of the former Red Lion Hotel, on the corner of Newbury Street and Oxford Street, revealed evidence of early–middle Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity in the form of surfaces, pits, postholes and ditches (King 1999a and b). An evaluation at Bourne House Stables, also on Oxford Street, uncovered a well shaft of possible Roman date together with linear features of Saxon date (King 2000). Subsequent fieldwork there recorded Early/Middle Saxon sunken floored buildings, further Roman features and medieval and post-medieval deposits (King in prep). A watching brief to the south at 2 Newbury Street revealed two medieval pits of 11th- to 12th-century date and one later pit of 15th-century date (Wallis 2003). Further to the south at 18–20 High Street another watching brief recorded a number of pits ranging in date from medieval through the 16th century to the 19th century (Hindmarch and Ford 2003). Two recording actions carried out close to the current site (Ford 2004) identified two pits of medieval and post-medieval date, and one medieval gully at 18-20 Oxford Street (Platt 2014).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction works. This was to involve examination of all areas of ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services as necessary. The groundworks took place under constant archaeological supervision.

Results

The foundation trenches for the new extensions were observed (Fig. 3; Pls 1–4). The trenches measured 0.8m wide and 0.8–0.9m deep. In the north-east part of the site the trenches encountered only modern disturbed ground relating to the previously demolished room of the existing house. The south-east of the area showed signs

of heavy rooting. The stratigraphy varied only in the topsoil (0.1m) not being present in some areas, overlying 0.3m–0.4m of dark brown subsoil overlying a yellow pale sandy gravel with flint natural geology (Fig. 4).

No archaeological features were observed.

Finds

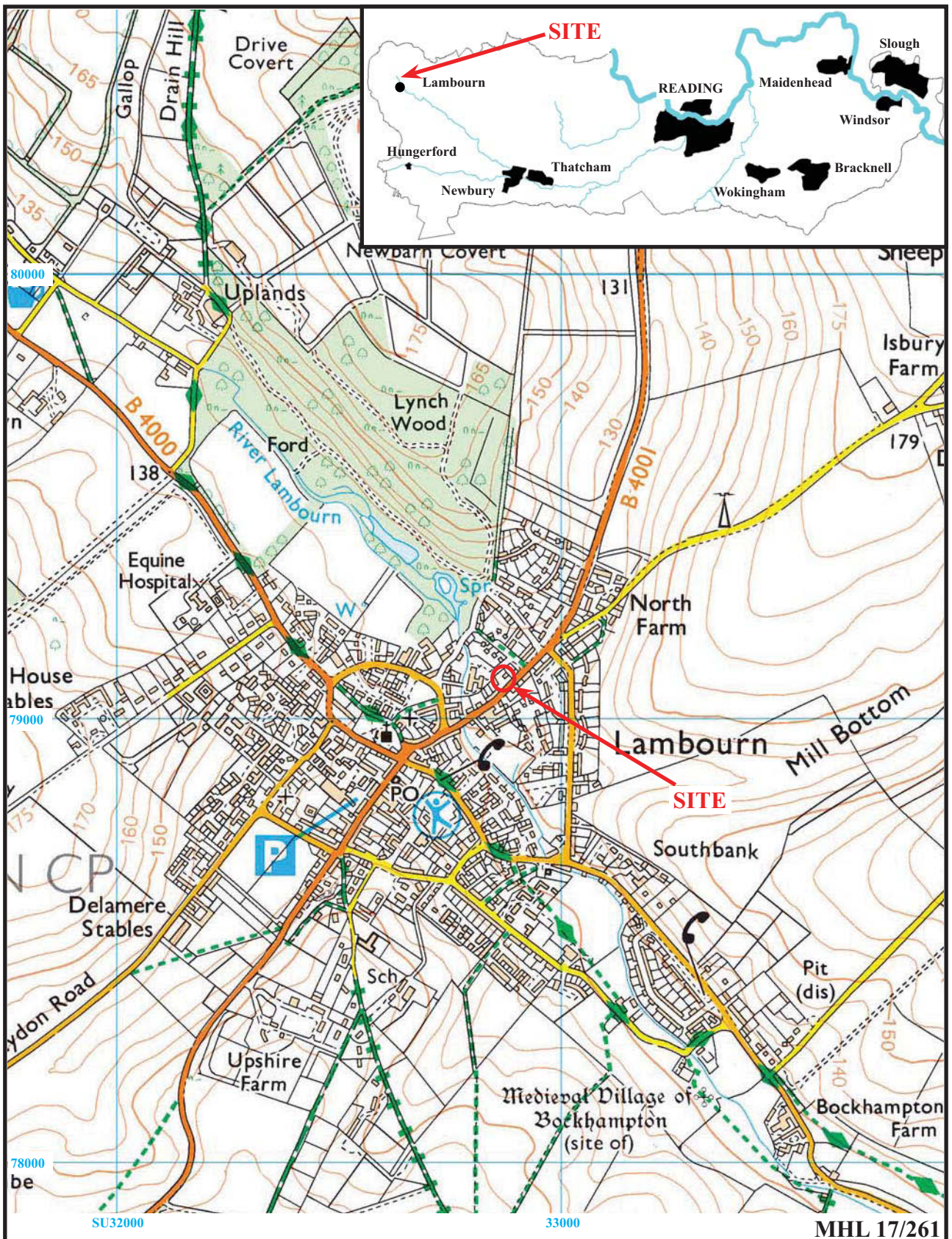
No finds of archaeological interest were observed.

Conclusion

All invasive groundwork was monitored and despite the site's potential for archaeology to be present, no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed.

References

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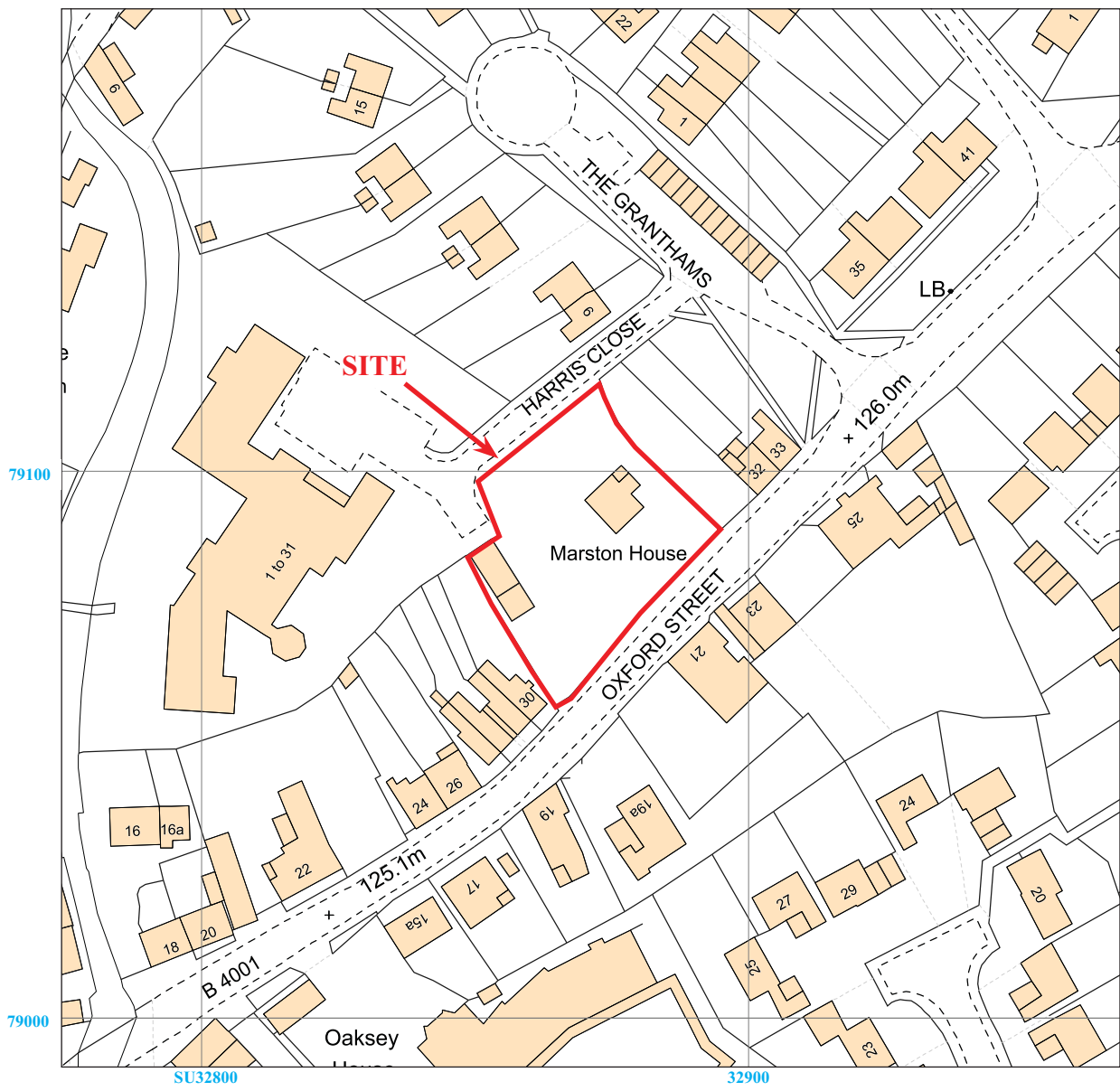


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Figure 1. Location of site within Lambourn and
West Berkshire.

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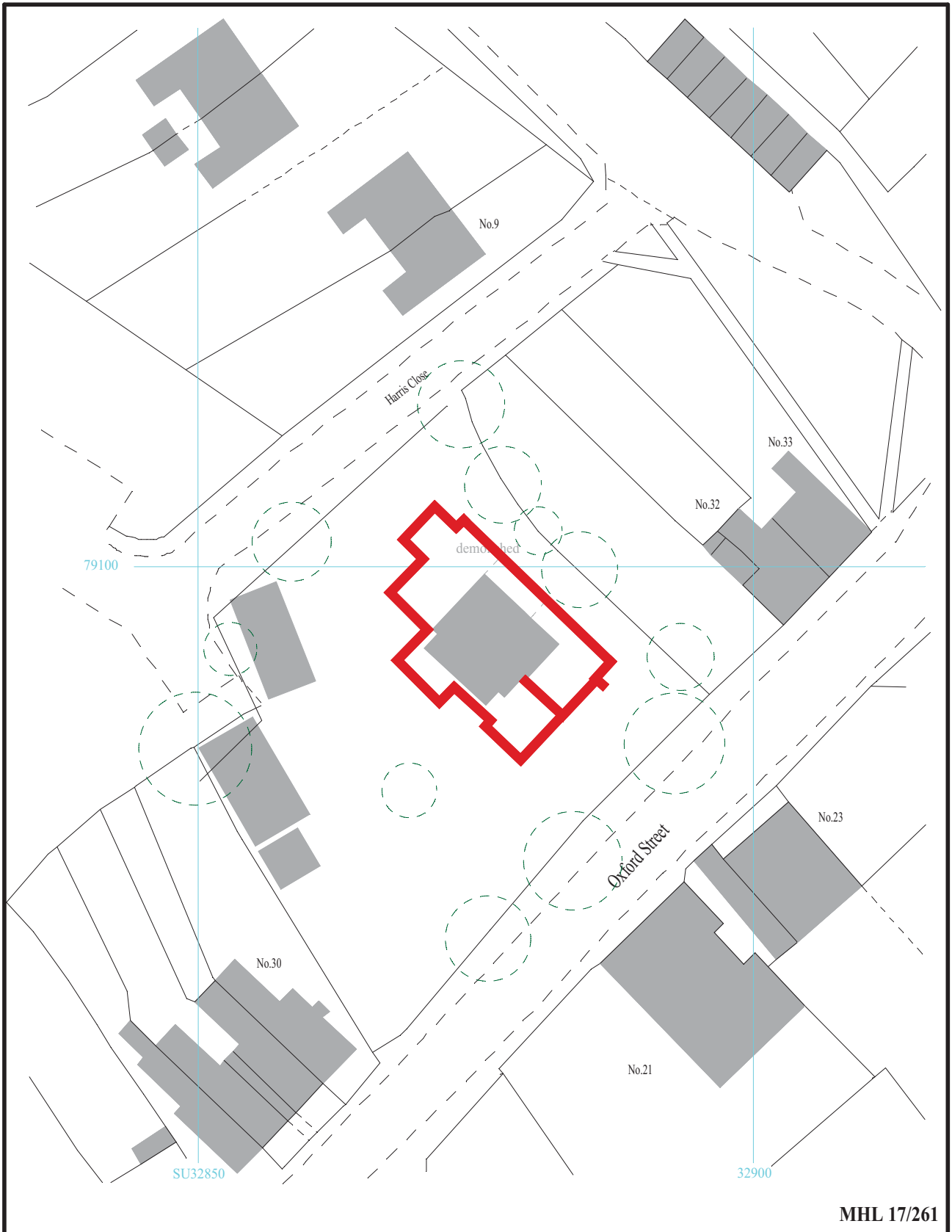


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Oxford Street.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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NW

SE

125.4maOD

Turf/topsoil

Dark grey silt with rooting (subsoil)

Yellow sandy silt with flint gravel (natural geology)

base of trench

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Figure 4. Representative sections.

0  1m

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Plate 1. View of new footings to north of existing house, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. View of new footings to east of existing house, looking south east,
Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 4. View of new footings to south of existing house, looking north north west,
Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

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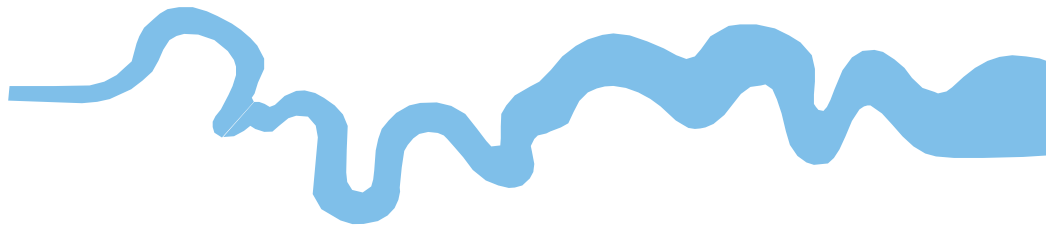
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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 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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