

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Boxford,  
Newbury, West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Maisie Foster**

**Site Code: WRB 16/126**

**(SU 4420 7205)**

**Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Boxford,  
Newbury, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr P. Wakelyn**

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRB 16/126

**May 2018**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Boxford, Newbury, West Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 4420 7205

**Site activity:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 26th - 30th April 2018

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Kyle Beaverstock

**Site code:** WRB 16/126

**Area of site:** c. 825 sq m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief was carried out as intended and monitored the stripping of land for an agricultural trackway to the rear (north) of Mudhall Cottage. No finds nor features of archaeological interest were identified during the course of this fieldwork.

**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 ✓ 05.05.18 Steve Preston ✓ 03.05.18
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# Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Boxford, Newbury, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Maisie Foster

**Report 16/126**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Mudhall Cottage, Boxford, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU 4420 7205) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Somerset, BA11 5DP on behalf of Mr P. Wakelyn.

Planning consent (13/02032/FUL and 17/02994/COND1) has been granted by West Berkshire Council on appeal (appeal reference APP/W0340/A/14/2218382) for the formation of an agricultural T-shaped trackway. The consent is subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological work to be implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. It was agreed that in this instance an archaeological watching brief during development would be sufficient to record anything of archaeological interest. The field investigation was carried out to a specification (Farr 2017) approved by West Berkshire Council's Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Kyle Beaverstock, Will Attard, Tim Dawson and Anne Huvig between 26th and 30th April 2018. The site code is WRB 16/126. The archive is presently held at TVAS in Reading and will be deposited with at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located approximately 5km north-west of Newbury to the east of the village of Boxford on an area of gently rising ground (Fig. 1). The area of land needed for the formation of the trackway is positioned on the northern side of Winterbourne Road (Fig. 2), The investigated area is bounded on the west by a band of mature trees, and to the east by a stable block and paddocks. The natural geology is Lambeth Group clay, silt and sand (BGS 2006), which was observed on site. The site lies at a height of 140m above Ordnance Datum at the north end, dropping to 120m aOD by the roadside in the south.

## **Archaeological background**

Boxford and environs are rich with archaeological remains from Iron Age and Roman settlements to numerous Listed Buildings. The West Berkshire Historic Environment Record notes at least 30 records within a 1km radius of the site, with ring ditches and linear ditches seen as crop marks on aerial photographs to the west, and Borough Hill Camp, a possible Iron Age hillfort recorded at Borough Copse to the immediate north of the location of the trackway. A series of Iron Age ‘hearths’ were also found during quarrying in the 1930s to the south of Winterbourne Road. Some 2km to the east, is Bussock Camp (another probable hillfort which is a scheduled monument).

More notable is recent fieldwork leading to the discovery of Boxford Villa in the immediate vicinity of the site. The project undertaken by the Boxford History Project and the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group investigated three closely linked Roman sites and confirmed a large villa, bath house, farmstead and an additional villa with a figurative mosaic illustrating mystical characters from Greek legends.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains that could be affected by the formation of the trackway. This involved the archaeological monitoring of all stripping of the route of the trackway. Topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket and any potential archaeological features were to be hand cleaned and excavated.

## **Results**

An elongated T-shaped area for the trackway was stripped (Fig. 3), with the main body measuring 245m in length (north-south) and approximately 3m in width with an excavated depth of approximately 0.30m (Fig. 4 and Pl. 1). The top of the trackway making the cross of the T-shape measured 22m in length (east-west) and 4.2m in width, again dug to a depth of approximately 0.30m (Pl. 2). The full length of the trackway including the turning T at the northern end was 267m. The site was stripped of approximately 0.10m of topsoil (mid brown-grey loam) and 0.20m of subsoil (mid brown grey sandy silt with orange patched) before reaching the natural geology in some areas, which varied from yellow clay in the south to clay with gravel at the northern end (Fig. 4). In some places the subsoil extended deeper than formation level so the natural geology was not exposed consistently along the length of the trench. There were a series of ceramic land drains across the width of the stripped area and some ephemeral plough scars were noted, but no archaeological deposits or finds were excavated.

## **Finds**

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the excavations.

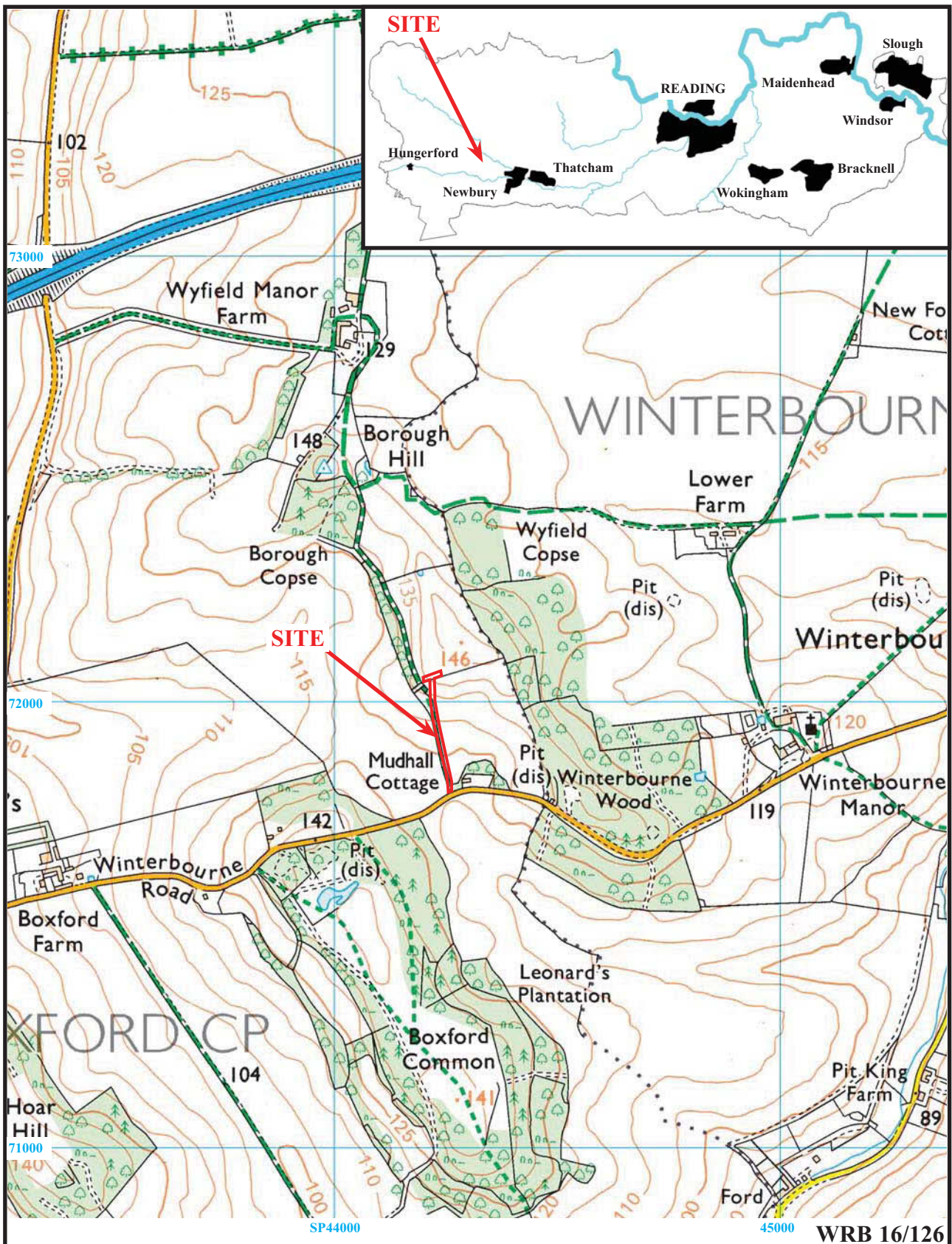
## **Conclusion**

The watching brief was carried out as intended and monitored the stripping of land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage for a proposed agricultural trackway. The natural geology was exposed in several places along the length of the trackway but no finds or features of archaeological interest were identified during the course of this fieldwork.

## **References**

- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 267 (Newbury), Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth
- Farr, S, 2017, 'Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Boxford, Newbury, West Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation: archaeological watching brief', Armour Heritage project ref **AH314**, Frome
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London





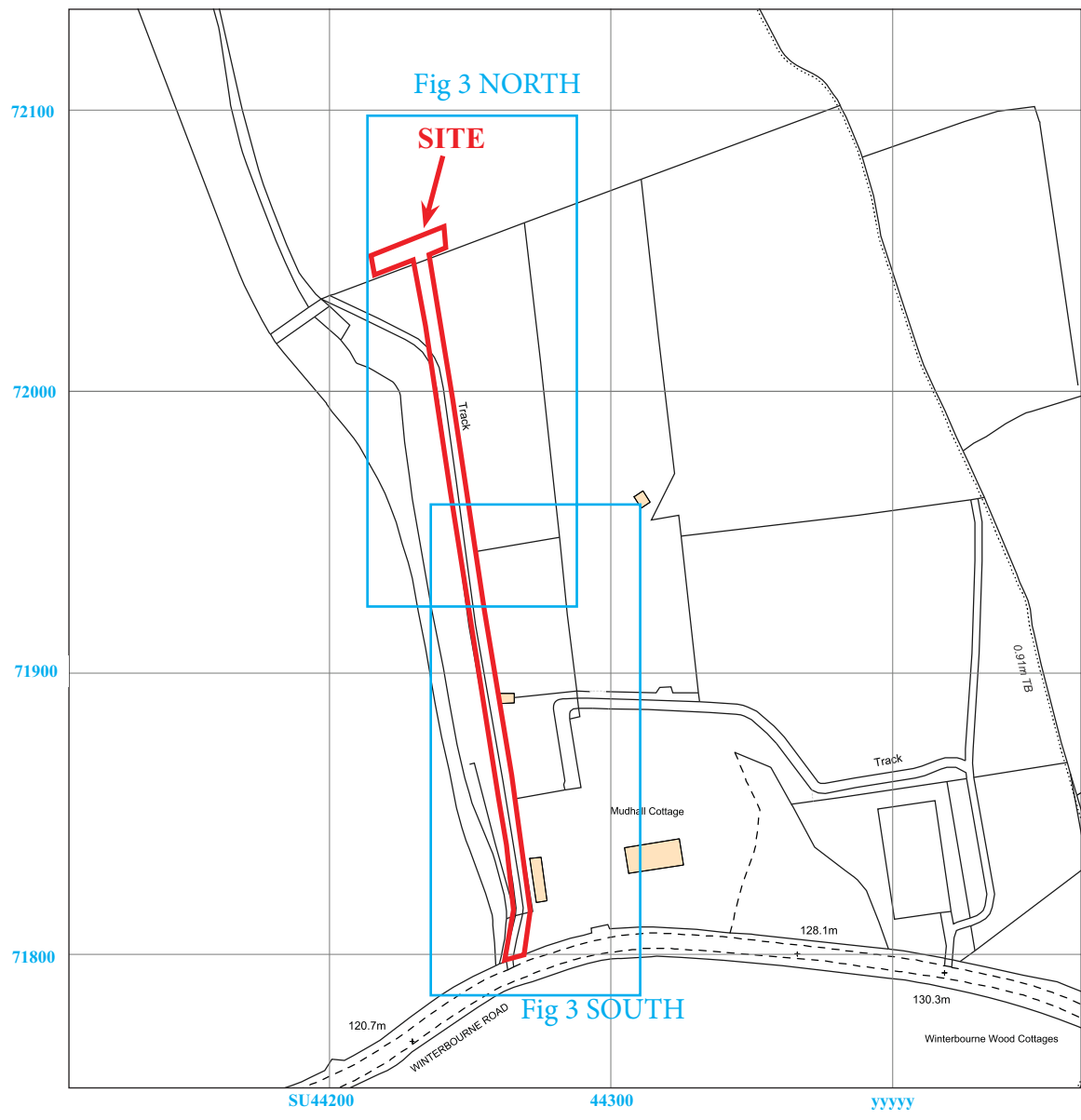
**Land to the rear of Mudhall Cottage, Winterbourne Road,  
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Figure 1. Location of site at Boxford Common and within  
West Berkshire.

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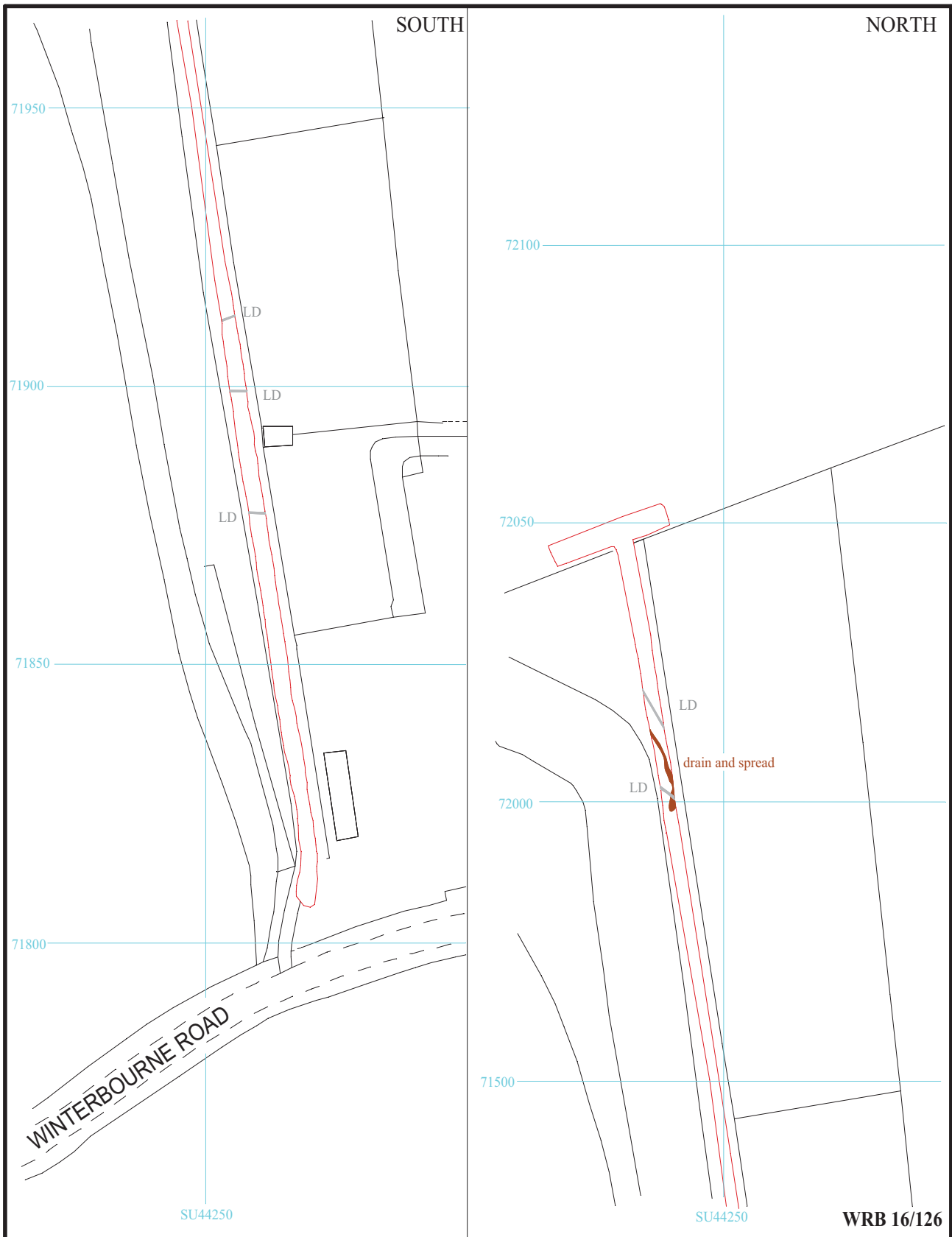


**Land north of Mudhall Cottages, Winterbourne Road,  
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Winterbourne Road.

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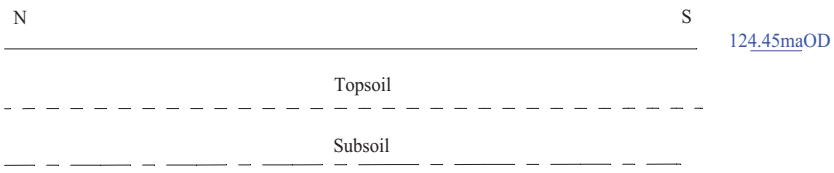


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Figure 3. Detail of observed area.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Reduced dig at southern end, looking south, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Northern end, T-shaped stripped area, looking east, Scales: 2x1m.

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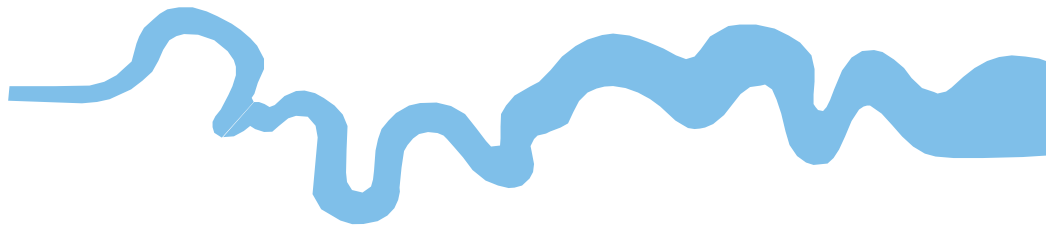
**Land north of Mudhall Cottage, Winterbourne Road,  
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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