

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Courtyard Offices, Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way,
Woodley, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Sánchez

Site Code: SCW18/179

(SU 7800 7370)

Courtyard Offices, Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Antler Homes

by David Sánchez

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SCW 18/179

December 2018

Summary

Site name: Courtyard Offices, Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Berkshire.

Grid reference: SU 7800 7370

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th - 20th December 2018

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: David Sánchez

Site code: SCF 18/179

Area of site: c. 0.75ha

Summary of results: Six trenches were excavated during the course of the field evaluation showing that the ground level was flattened and made up on modern date. Frequent modern truncations were uncovered and large areas of the site seem to have been heavily truncated and later backfilled destroying any potential archaeological remains. No features of archaeological significance were uncovered and no evidences of the farm depicted on the Rocque's map of 1760 seem to have survive. The site is therefore 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 at an appropriate designated museum in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

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Courtyard Offices, Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Sánchez

Report 18/179

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at a parcel of land on the east side of Mohawk Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7800 7370) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Mason Winfield of Protech Project & technical Management, 8 Beales Lane, Walton Park, Milton Keynes MK7 7HB on behalf of Antler Homes. Planning consent (150595) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and construction of 21 dwellings. The consent includes a condition (10) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, a field evaluation was required. 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 Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sánchez, between 19th and 20th December 2018 and the site code is SCW 18/179. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the eastern margins of Reading east of the suburb of Woodley, Berkshire (Fig. 1). The site itself is located on a mostly flat parcel of land of 0.75ha with a gentle slope downhill to the north-east at a height of c. 41m above Ordnance Datum. It lies on the west side of Jasmine Square with new built residential areas to the north and south and bounded by Perimeter Road to the west. The underlying geology is mapped as Sand and Gravel (BGS, 2000). The Old River, western arm of the River Loddon, is located approximately 165m to the east.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desktop study (CgMs 2015). In summary, this potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich lower Loddon Valley. Various survey works, such as fieldwalking (Ford 1987; Ford 1994-7) and aerial photography (Gates 1975) have revealed a wide range of sites and finds in surrounding areas. Field survey and excavations to the north revealed Mesolithic, Iron Age and Roman settlements (Barnes and Hawkes, 1991; Ford 1991-3; Manning and Moore 2011; Harding and Richards 1993). The site is depicted as a farm on Rocque's map of 1760.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project were;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present.
- c) To determine if there are any late-medieval or early post-medieval origins to the farm.
- d) To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.
- e) The potential and significance of any such deposits located was to be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *English Heritage Research Agenda* (EH 2005) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as the Solent-Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

Six trenches were to be dug, each 20m long and 1.6m wide. A contingency for the equivalent of an additional 10m length of trenching was included within the proposal should this be required to clarify any deposits found in the initial trenching, but this was not required. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The excavation had to be undertaken in spits, to enable the recovery of artefactual and ecofactual remains from individual layers and spoilheaps were to be searched for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably exposed the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.

Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. A single context recording system was to be used in accordance with the TVAS

Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Descriptions of individual deposits and features were to be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.

Results

Six trenches were dug during the course of the evaluation. Trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 were dug as intended ranging in length between 20.10 and 20.30m. Trench 3 was shorted as a consequence of the presence of a live service and trench 4 was relocated and shortened because of the same reason. The relocation of the trenches to be dug on their full extension was not possible as a consequence of the presence of standing bungalows and further live services in the remaining areas of the site. 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)

Trench 1 was aligned W - E and was 20.10m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel and 0.47m of modern made ground consisting of two different deposits: 0.25m of rubble and 0.20m of mid brown gravel with very frequent construction debris. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of between 0.55 and 0.70m and consisted of light grey/orange brown silty clay. At the east end of the trench a test pit was dug to confirm the nature of the natural geology with a depth of 1.30m. One modern truncation was uncovered between 12 and 18m from the W end of the trench, filled with dark blue grey clay and gravel with frequent modern construction debris to a depth of 1.80m. A modern service trench (electric) was uncovered at 1m from the same end. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was aligned NNE - SSW and was 20.30m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel and 0.75m of mixed modern made ground consisting of three different deposits; 0.27m of rubble in grey sand matrix, 0.28m of mid yellowish brown gravel (possible redeposit natural gravel) with no inclusions, 0.20m of dark blue grey clay with occasional modern construction debris. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 0.80m and consisted of light grey/orange brown silty clay. At 10m from the NNE end of the trench a modern services trench (water) was uncovered. An area of 2m long was left on a plinth at a depth of 0.50m where the water pipe was uncovered and the remaining length of the trench was dug as intended. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered from this trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 3, Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned NNE - SSW and was 10.20m long and 1.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel and 1.25m of modern made ground consisting of three different deposits: 0.20m of construction gravel, 0.12m of rubble and construction gravel and 0.93m of dark blue grey clay with frequent modern construction debris. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 1.30m and consisted of mid grey gravel in clay matrix. A test pit with a depth of 2.00m was dug at the NNE end of the trench to clarify geological nature of this deposit showing a gradual transition to a cleaner silty clay with occasional gravels but still consisted as a single deposit. Therefore this is considered to be the natural geology level. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 13.50m long and 1.25m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel, between 0.10 and 0.15m of concrete and 0.95m of modern made ground consisting of three different deposits: 0.55m of rubble in mid brown clay and sand matrix, 0.30m of chalk with occasional modern brick fragments, and 0.10m of dark grey/black silt clay with frequent modern brick fragments. The natural geology was uncovered at 1.10m consisting at the SW end of the trench of mid grey gravel in silty clay matrix gradually turning to silty clay with occasional small gravel patches to the NE. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered.

Trench 5 (Figs 3, Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned NNW - SSE and was 20.30m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel, 0.10m of construction gravel and 0.95m of modern made ground consisting of two different deposits; 0.15m of rubble in grey sand matrix and 0.75m of dark blue grey clay with frequent modern construction debris. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 1.05m and consisted of light brown and grey gravel in silty clay matrix. This natural geology level was heavily truncated in most of the extension of the trench with modern truncations between 0 and 2m and from 8m to the SSE end of the trench. Smaller modern truncations were also uncovered at 3.5 and 6m from the same end. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered from this trench.

Trench 6 (Figs 3, Pl. 4)

Trench 6 was aligned SW - NE and was 20.10m long and 0.98m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of driveway gravel and between 0.75 and 0.93m of modern made ground consisting of two different deposits; 0.35m of rubble in mid brown silty clay matrix and between 0.40 and 0.58m of dark blue grey clay with occasional modern construction debris. The natural geology was uncovered at a depth of between 0.80 and 0.98m gently sloping down to the NE and consisted of light grey silty clay. Between 16.90m and the end of the

trench a modern services trench (water) was uncovered and the area was left on a plinth at a depth of 0.80m. Between 10.50 and 16.00m from the SW end of the trench a modern truncation was uncovered, filled with the same dark blue clay deposit overlying the natural across the full extension of the trench and with a depth of 1.40m. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered from this trench.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from any of the trenches excavated.

Conclusion

Six trenches were excavated during the course of the field evaluation showing that the ground level was flattened and made up on modern date, probably as part of the development for the construction of the bungalows which are still standing on the site. Frequent modern truncations were uncovered typically filled with rubble and modern dumps of mixed sediment with frequent construction debris. The depth of the natural geology uncovered at up to 1.30m deep in some trenches though in trench 1 was only 0.50m deep suggest that large areas of the site were heavily truncated and later backfilled destroying any potential archaeological remains. No features of archaeological significance were uncovered and no evidences of the farm depicted on the Rocque's map of 1760 seem to have survive. The site is therefore considered to have no archaeological potential.

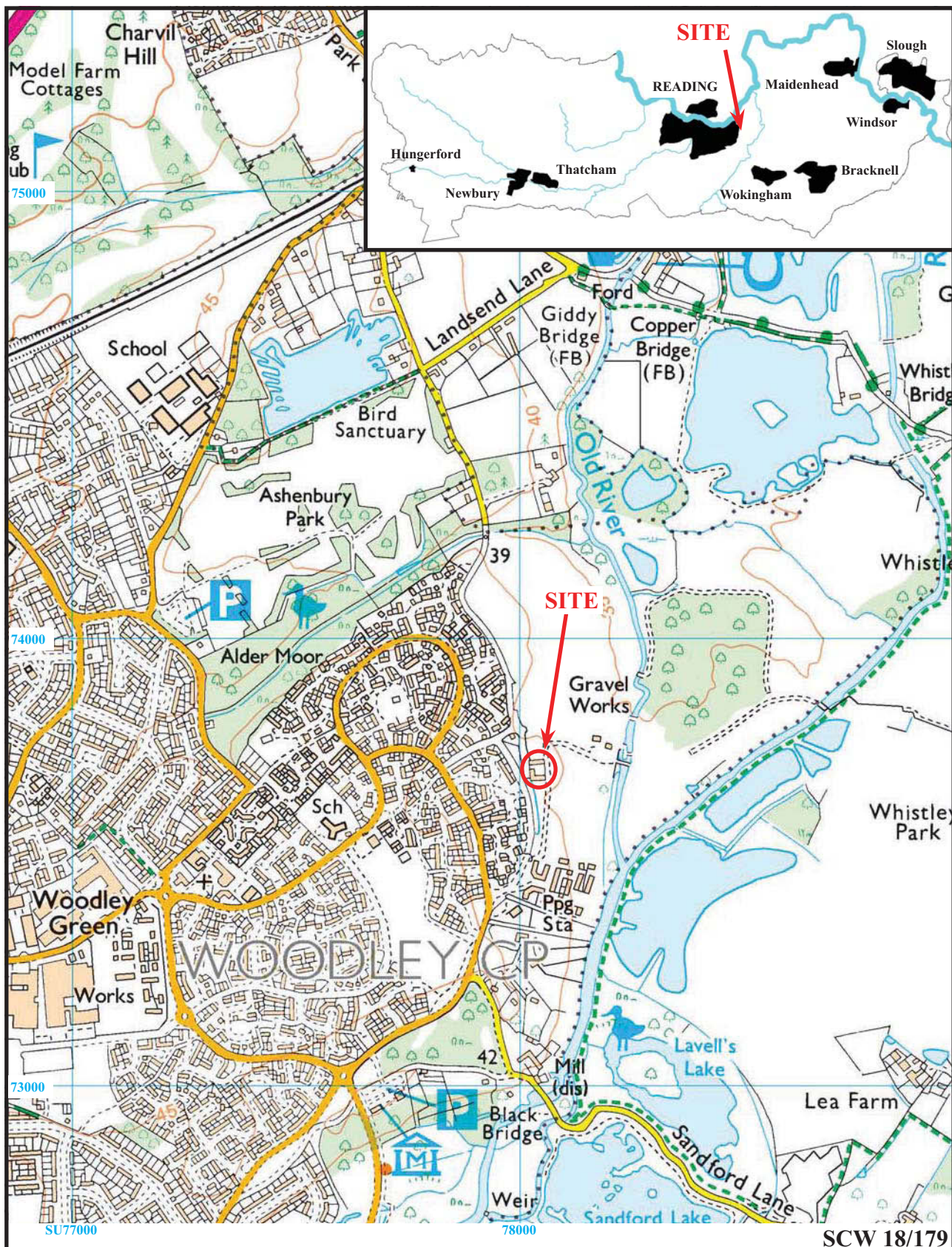
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at W, SW, SSW and SSE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.10	1.70	0.72	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.30m rubble; 0.30-0.52m mid brown gravel; 0.52m+ light grey/orange brown silty clay natural geology.
2	20.30	1.70	0.80	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.32m rubble in grey sand matrix; 0.32-0.60m mid yellowish brown gravel (redeposit natural?), 0.60-0.80m dark blue grey clay, 0.80m+ light grey/orange brown silty clay natural geology [Pl. 1].
3	10.20	1.70	1.30	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.25m construction gravel; 0.25-0.37m rubble; 0.37-1.30m dark blue grey clay; 1.30m+ mid grey gravel in clay matrix natural geology [Pl. 2].
4	13.50	1.70	1.25	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.15/0.20m concrete; 0.15/0.20-0.70m rubble in mid brown clay and sand matrix; 0.70-1.00m chalk; 1.00-1.10m dark grey/black silty clay; 1.10m+ mid grey gravel in silty clay matrix natural geology .
5	20.30	1.70	1.10	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.40m construction gravel; 0.15-0.30m rubble in grey sand matrix; 0.30-1.10m dark blue grey clay; 1.10m+ light brown and grey gravel in clay matrix natural geology [Pl. 3].
6	20.10	1.70	0.98	0-0.05m Driveway gravel; 0.05-0.40m -0.80/0.98m dark blue grey clay; 0.80/0.98m+ light grey silty clay natural geology [Pl. 4].

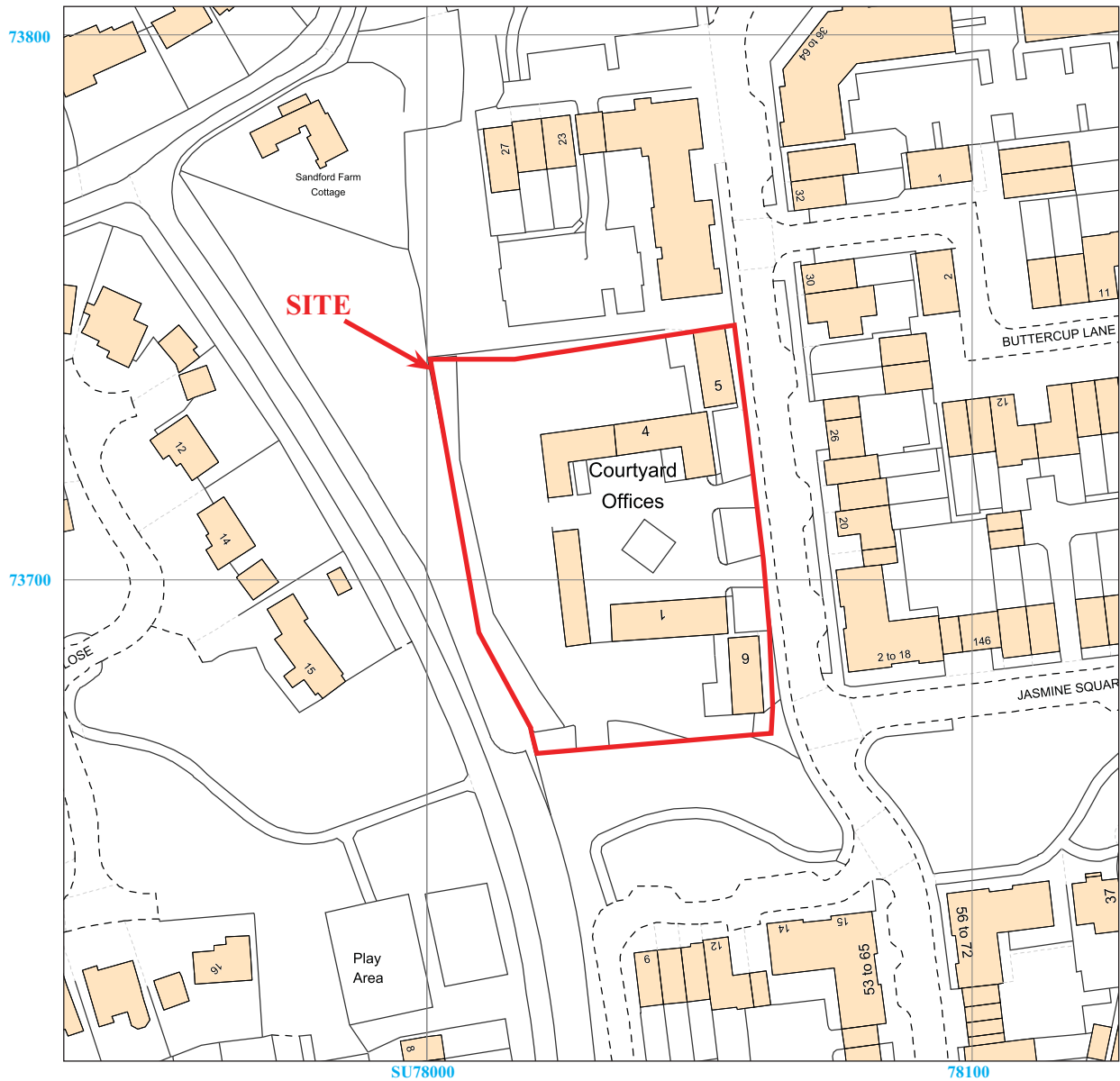


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Figure 1. Location of site within Woodley and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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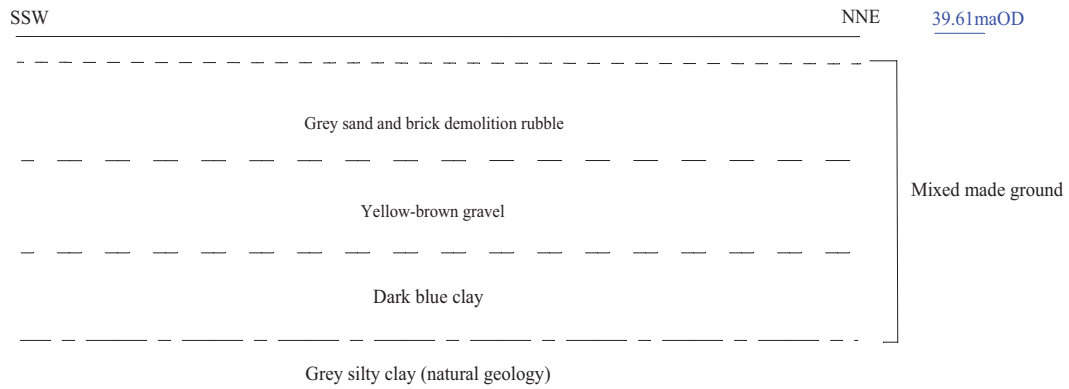
Figure 3. Plan of trenches.

0 50m

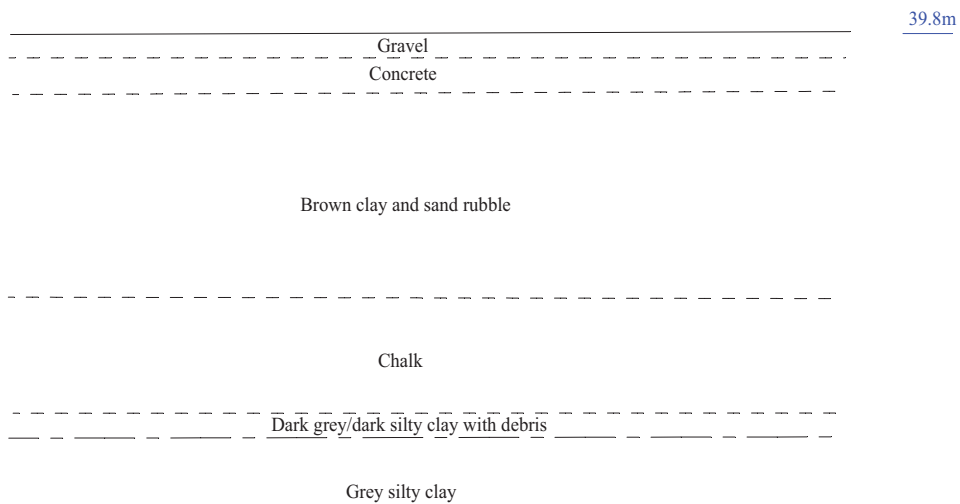


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Trench 2



Trench 4



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking south south east, Scales: 2m and 1m, 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 6 section, looking north west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.

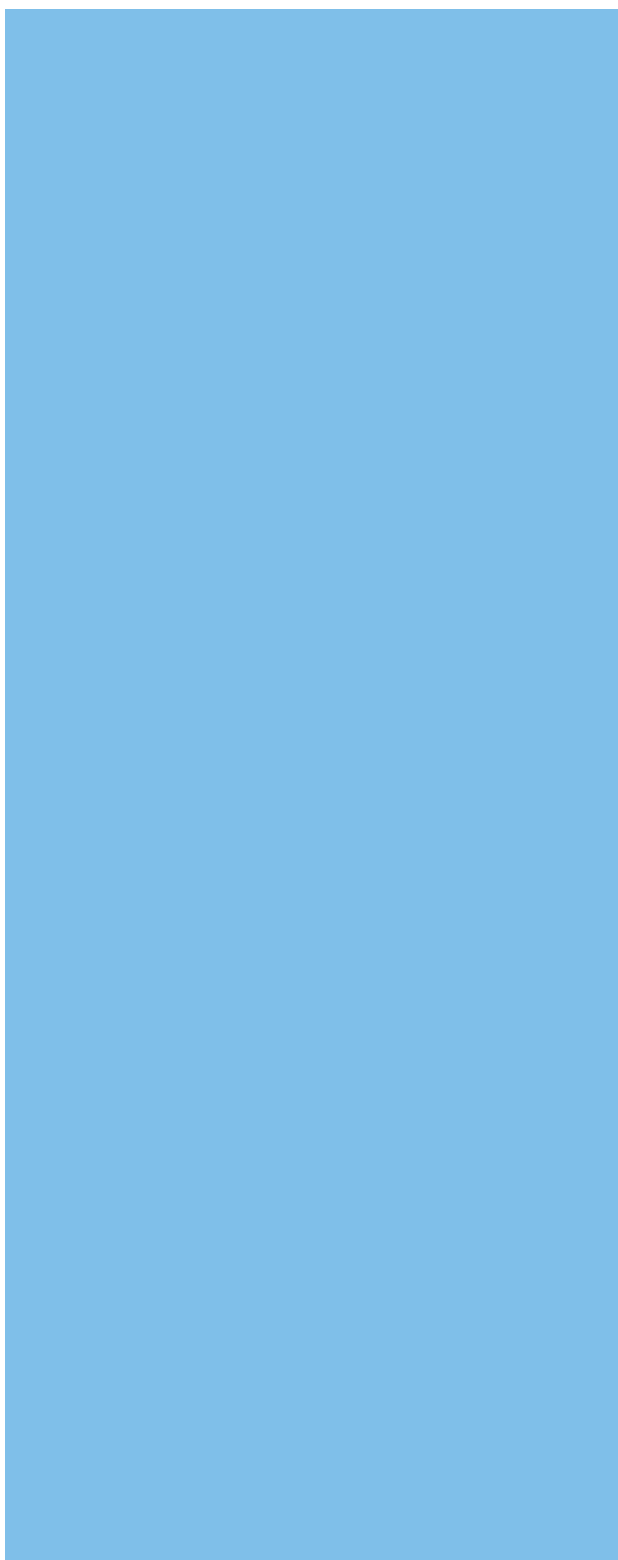
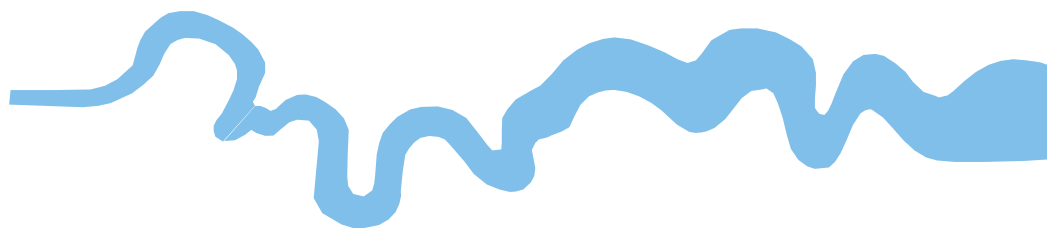
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TIME CHART

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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