

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Brook House, Barkham Street,
Barkham, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Mundin

Site Code: BHB19/116

(SU 7817 6660)

**Brook House, Barkham Street, Barkham,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Kevin Brant

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BHB 19/116

October 2019

Summary

Site name: Brook House, Barkham Street, Barkham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7817 6660

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 1st and 2nd August 2019

Project coordinator: Danielle Millbank

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer

Site code: BHB 19/116

Area of site: c.780 sq m

Summary of results: Excavation of footings for a new property were observed during groundworks. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable depository when one becomes available. Digital copies of reports will be provided to OASiS and ADS databases.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 18.11.19

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Report 19/116

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land adjacent to Brook House, Barkham Street, Barkham, Berkshire, RG40 4PH (SU 7819 6660) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Edwards of The Edwards Irish Partnership, Unit 11, Indigo House, Mulberry Business Park, Fishponds Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2GY on behalf of Mr Kevin Brant.

Planning permission (181387) has been gained on appeal (app/X0360/W/18/3212567) from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of a new property to the east of Brook House. Brook House is a 19th century building, once a farmhouse, but now a residence, and previously included the former stables at Church View to the north. The consent contained a condition (20 relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and Berkshire Archaeology's general standards for archaeological fieldwork projects (April 2019). The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer on 1st and 2nd August 2019 and the site code is BHB 19/116.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at with a suitable depository when one becomes available. Digital copies of reports will be provided to OASiS .

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of Barkham Street, just north of Barkham Brook on one of the main roads through the parish. The land is relatively flat to the south and south east, but raises uphill to the north. The underlying geology is alluvium over London Clay(BGS 2000) and lies at a high of c.56m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Archaeological background

Barkham is a dispersed village with late Saxon origins (VCH1923). The centre of the village is usually considered to lie close to the parish church and manor (moated here) but the proposal site and many other buildings are 300m or so to the north. A second moat lies to the west. Much of the understanding of the

archaeology of the parish recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record stems from fieldwork and research carried out by Barkham History Association (eg French and Firth 2000), Barkham was first recorded in AD 952 and again in Domesday Book of 1086. Nearby Brook Farm may be on the site of one of the older (late medieval?) farms in the area. Fieldwork has recorded a variety of Roman and medieval pottery, prehistoric flintwork and iron slag from iron production of uncertain date, with some negative results (eg Flaherty 2015). Fieldwork during pipeline construction to the south west revealed a Late Bronze Age 'burnt mound' (communal cooking place) (Torrance and Ford 2003) and an excavation to the north east revealed Middle Iron Age iron smelting furnaces (Amelay 2018).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks associated with the demolition and removal of existing structures as well as those for the new development. This is expected to involve monitoring of grubbing out existing foundations and hardstanding, foundation trench digging and other intrusive groundworks such as the excavation of services trenches and overburden removal.

All areas under excavation was undertaken with a mechanical excavator, fitted with a bladed digging bucket. All spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The watching brief comprised two components: overburden removal and the digging of foundation trenches. (Fig.3).

Overburden removal

The footprint of the new development, to the east of Brook House was stripped of overburden (made ground and a grey brown clayey subsoil), with a 1.6m wide bladed bucket to a depth of 0.75m in the north and 0.3m in the west. Natural geology was exposed at the northern end only. Two large pit truncations, both modern, were cutting central areas of the strip, and drain trenches were visible in the north portion. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered,

Foundation trenches

Observation of the footing excavation started in the southern half of site. A wider trench here was 1.4m wide, The remainder of the trenches were 0.7m wide. The full dimensions of the observed footings were 18.4m (N-S) and 11m (W-E). All areas exposed natural geology at their base, and were excavated to 1m deep. In section, the footings to the south dug through the remains of made ground and 0.3m of subsoil to reveal natural geology from 0.4m deep to the base of excavation. No archaeological deposits nor finds of interest were encountered.

Finds

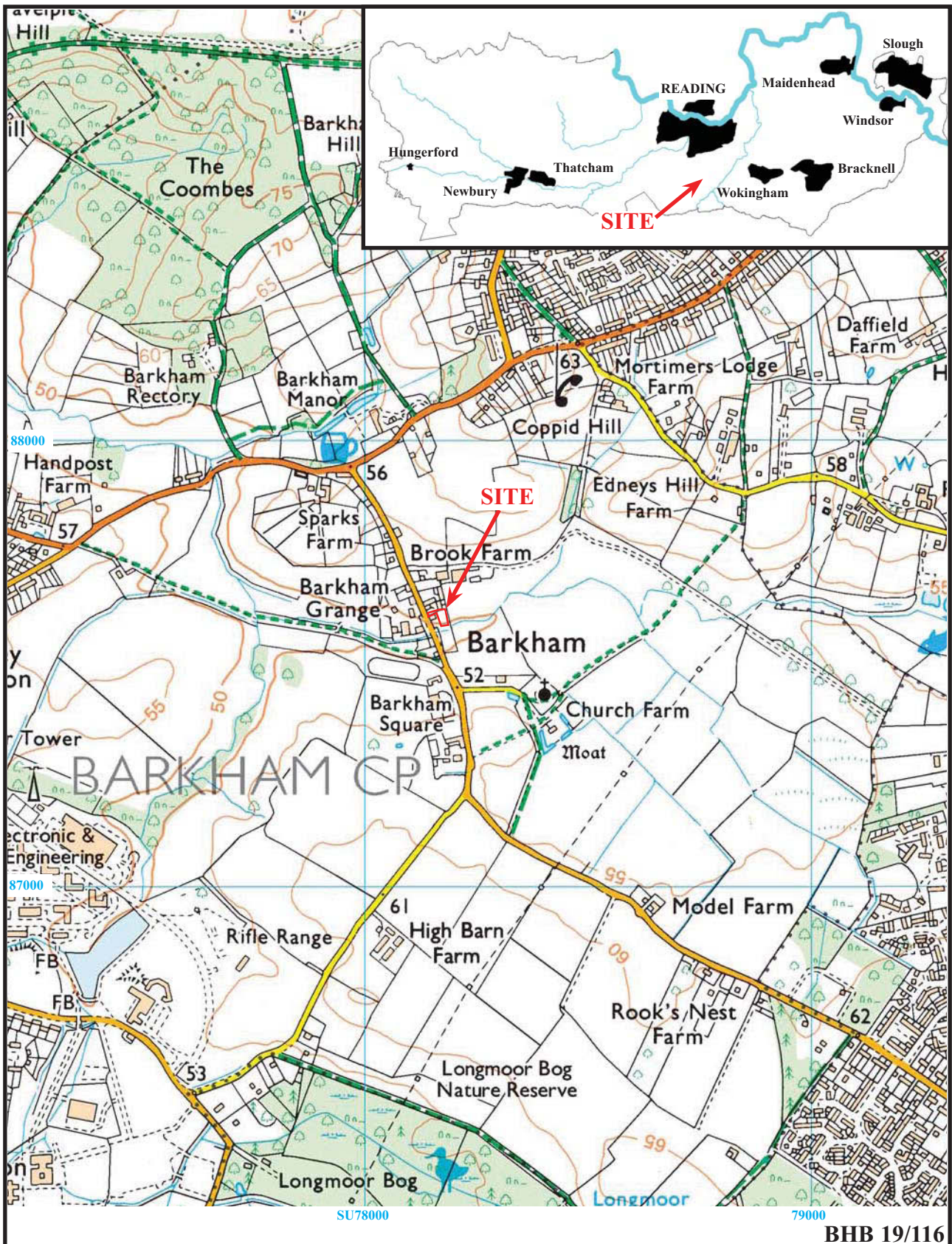
No artefacts of archaeological interest were revealed.

Conclusion

Despite the potential of the site no deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were encountered.

References

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- NPPF 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Torrance, L, and Ford, S, 2003, 'A late Bronze Age burnt mound at Barkham Square, Wokingham, 1992', in S Preston (ed), *Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon sites of Eastern Berkshire*, TVAS Monogr **2**, 87-97
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- VCH, 1923, 'Parishes: Barkham', In P H Ditchfield and W Page (eds) '*A History of the County of Berkshire*, Vol. **3**' *British History Online*, 238-241, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/berks/vol3/pp238-241> [accessed 11th October 2019]

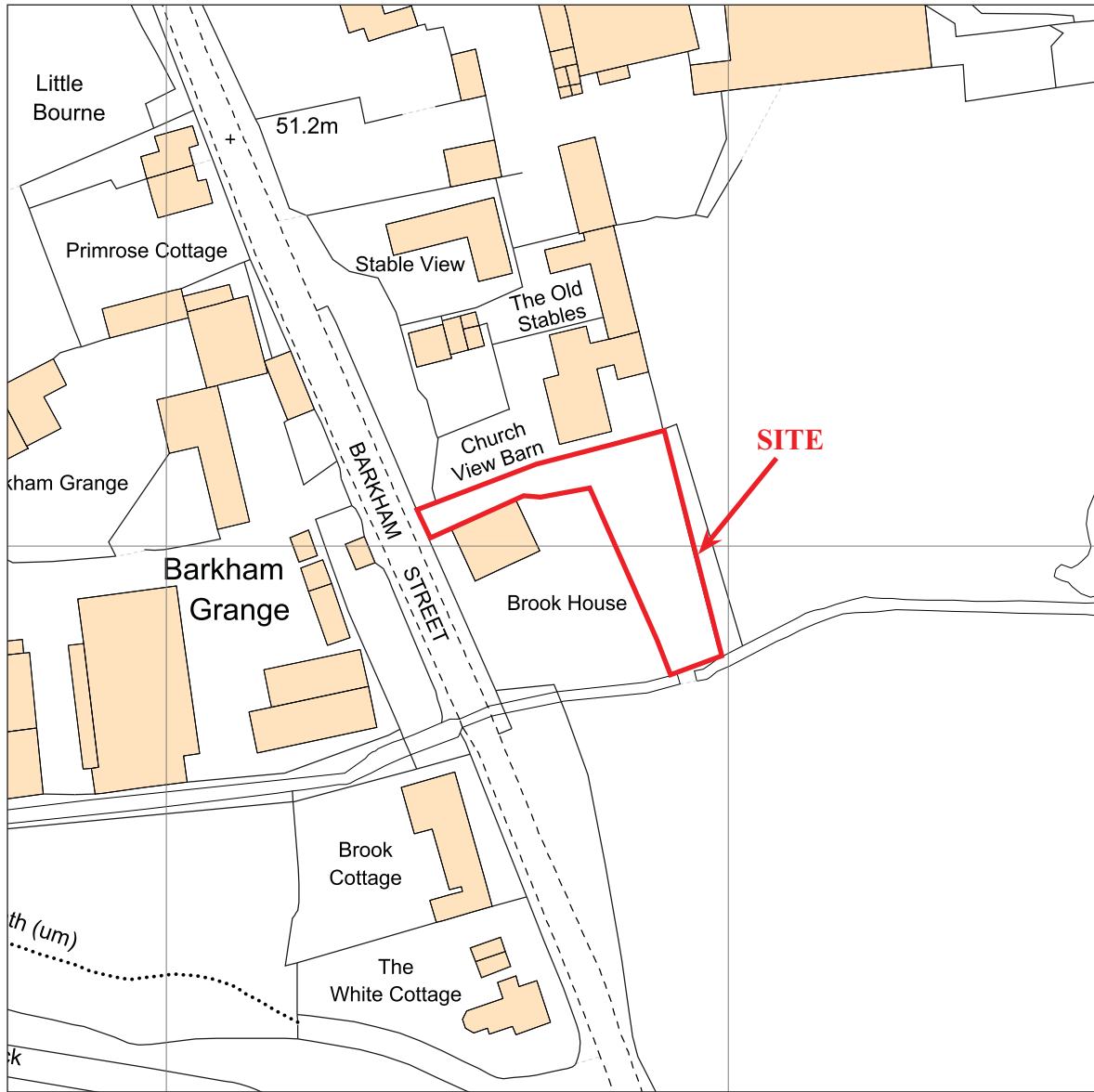


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Figure 1. Location of site within Barkham and Berkshire.

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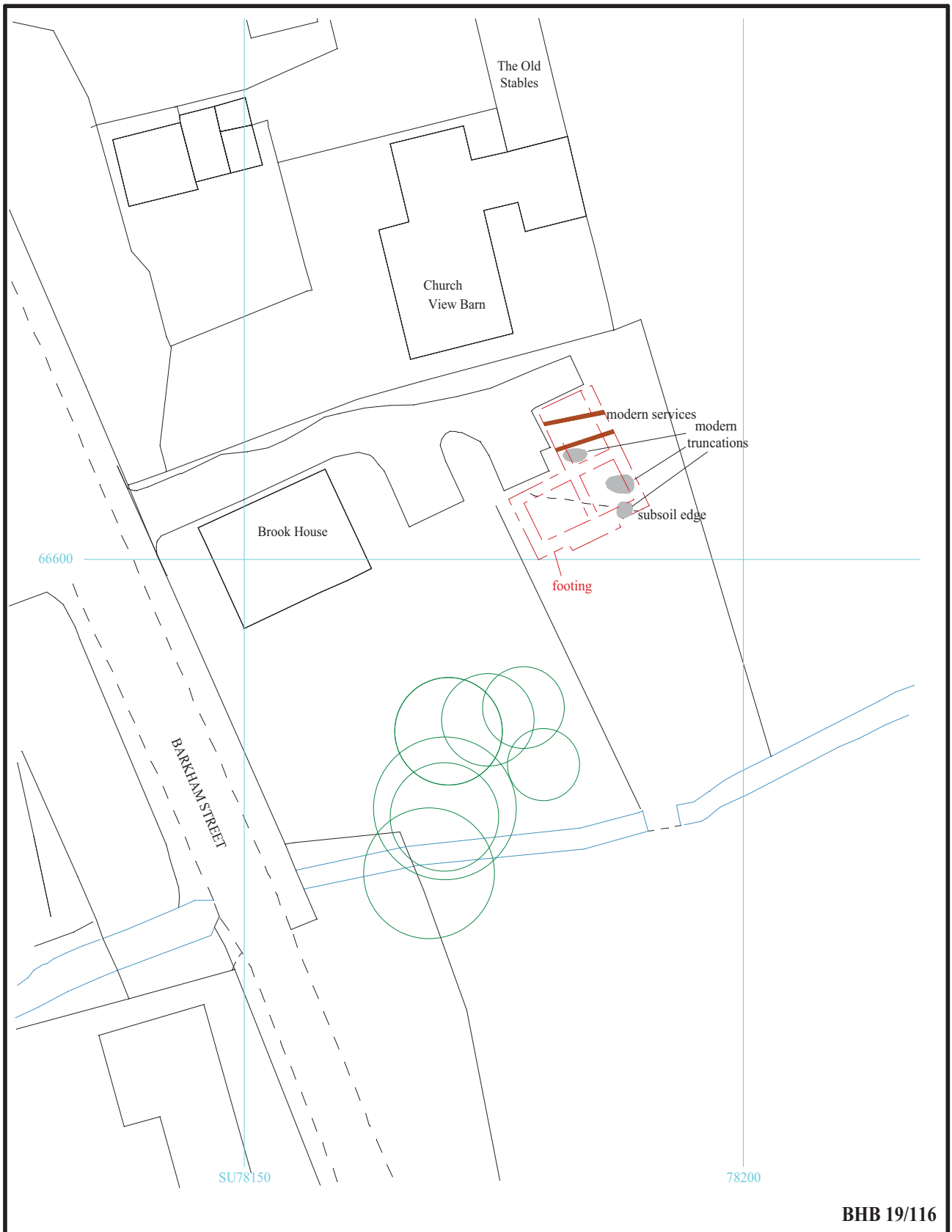
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Barkham Street.

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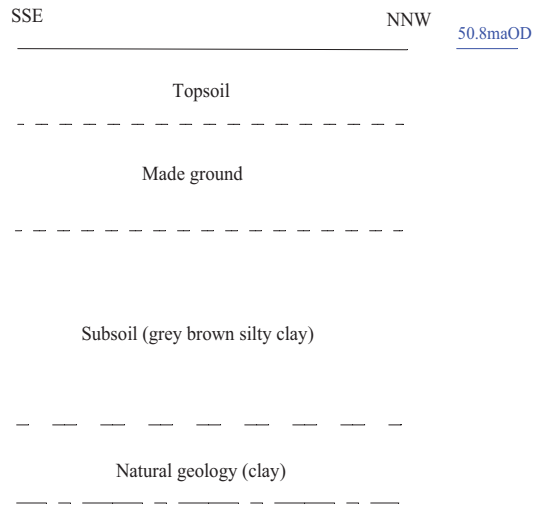
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section (north end).



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Plate 1. South footing trench and modern truncation in section, looking east.



Plate 2. South footing in south west corner, looking west.



Plate 1. Full section, with overburden section, looking at western section.

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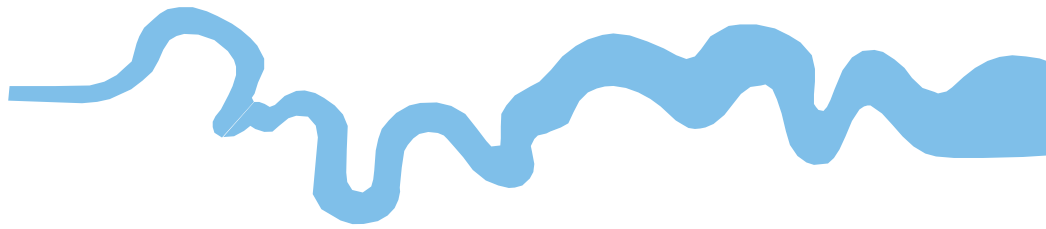
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Plates 1 - 3.**

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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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