

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Lakeside, The Green, Theale,  
Reading, West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Maisie Foster**

**Site Code: LGT15/181**

**(SU 6353 7092)**

# **Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading, West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Ridgepoint Homes Ltd**

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LGT 15/181

**October 2021**

## Summary

**Site name:** Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading, West Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6353 7092

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 25th-26th October 2021

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Maisie Foster

**Site code:** LGT 15/181

**Area of site:** 10 ha

**Summary of results:** The evaluation was carried out with some minor changes to the positions of the 10 trenches excavated due to the presence of deep unstable made ground. The remaining trenches were opened successfully and revealed the top of the in-situ archaeologically relevant horizon, but no deposits of archaeological interest were encountered. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum, with accession code NEBYM:2021.13.

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:  
[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 3.11.21 Steve Preston✓ 29.10.21
--

# Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading, West Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

**Report 15/181**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading, West Berkshire (SU 6353 7092) (Fig. 1.) The work was commissioned by Mr Malcolm Law of Ridgepoint Homes Ltd, Terriers House, 201 Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 5AJ.

Planning consent (15/02842/OUTMAJ) has been gained on appeal (APP//W0340/W/16/31553722) from West Berkshire Council for the development of a 10ha parcel of land for housing at Lakeside. The consent is subject to a condition (26) requiring a programme of archaeological work to have been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing before any phase of work can commence. In order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation has been requested. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 141), and the Council's Local Plan policies.

The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster and Richard Dewhurst, on 25th and 26th October 2021 and the site code is LGT15/181. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum with accession number 2021.13.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is an irregular parcel of land approximately 1.5km to the south-west of central Theale, which itself is located south-west of Reading in West Berkshire (Fig. 1.) The area is bounded by the A4 (Bath Road) to the south, The Green to the north and west, and housing along its eastern edge (Fig. 2). The area is approximately 10ha, but with an artificial lake occupying much of the central and eastern parts. The lake was formerly the site of a gravel extraction pit. The site lies at a height of approximately 47m to 49m above Ordnance Datum, sloping down slightly from west to east. The site is currently out of use and appears to have been used as a dumping

ground for some time (Pls 5 and 6). The underlying geology is Valley Gravel, with a band of Lambeth Group (clay and silts) in the north-east corner (BGS 2000).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Bermingham 2015). In summary this potential stems from the site's location in the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley (Lobb and Rose 1996; Dils and Yates 2013). Roman archaeological deposits have been recorded on the proposal site itself previously with the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record also recording a range of sites and extensive Roman cropmarks in adjacent fields and in the general vicinity of the site.

Although much of the site had been quarried, documentary information indicated that extraction of minerals had not taken place within a *c.* 2.2ha area of the western portion of the site nor along the northern portion. However, detailed geotechnical information indicated that quarrying in the western areas of the site were more extensive than once thought, whereas the northern areas were confirmed to be unquarried.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if any marginal areas of the site to the west have not been quarried and if so have archaeological potential;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there are any earlier prehistoric deposits present; and
- to determine if there are any Roman settlement deposits are present.

Ten trenches, 3m, 10m and 25m long and 1.8m wide were proposed to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or be

better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds and scanned with a metal detector.

## **Results**

Seven of the proposed 10 trenches were excavated as intended (Figs 3 and 4.) These trenches ranged from 3m to 25.5m in length and 0.57m to 1.78m in depth. Three trenches (4, 5 and 8) had to be altered and then abandoned due to the depths of made ground. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned N - S and was 25.0m long and 1.12m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.39m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 24.0m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 0.31m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

### Trench 3 (Fig. 4)

Trench 3 was aligned SE - NW and was 25.50m long and at SE end 0.57m and NW end 1.0m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

### Trench 4A (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

Trench 4A was aligned SE - NW and was 5.0m long and 1.95m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 1.80m+ of modern layered made ground. The natural geology was not reached. No finds were recovered or features observed.

### Trench 4B (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 4B was aligned SE - NW and was 3.0m long and 1.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 1.29m+ of modern layered made ground. The natural geology was not reached. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 5A (Fig. 3)

Trench 5A was aligned SE - NW and was 3.0m long and 1.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 1.28m of modern layered made ground. The natural geology was not reached as the ground was possibly contaminated. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 5B (Fig. 3)

Trench 5B was aligned NE - SW and was 3.0m long and 1.02m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.86m+ of modern layered made ground. The natural geology was not reached as the ground was possibly contaminated. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned E - W and was 22.5m long and at E end was 0.8m and W end 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.29m of subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned SE - NW and was 5.20m long and 1.78m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 1.65m of modern layered made ground overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned E - W and was 5.0m long and 2.0m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 1.87m of modern layered made ground. The natural geology was not reached as the ground was possibly contaminated. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 9 (Fig. 4)

Trench 9 was aligned N - S and was 9.0m long and 1.02m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.87m of modern layered made ground overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

Trench 10 (Fig. 4; Pl. 4)

Trench 10 was aligned SW - NE and was 12.0m long and at SW end 1.23m and NE end 0.98m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 1.08m of modern layered made ground overlying sandy gravel natural geology. No finds were recovered or features observed.

## **Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the evaluation.

## **Conclusion**

Aside from Trenches 4, 5 and 8 the evaluation trenching was carried out as intended. Trenches 1-3 and 6 revealed what is considered to be in-situ natural geology untouched by mineral extraction. Comparison of the levels of the natural geology of these trenches with that in the other trenches indicates that the latter areas have been heavily truncated (extracted) prior to backfilling with modern made ground (as opposed to simple dumping on a topsoil-stripped surface) and therefore any potential for the survival of archaeological deposits has gone. No archaeological finds nor deposits were encountered in any trenches and on the basis of these results, the evaluated area can be viewed to have low and no archaeological potential.

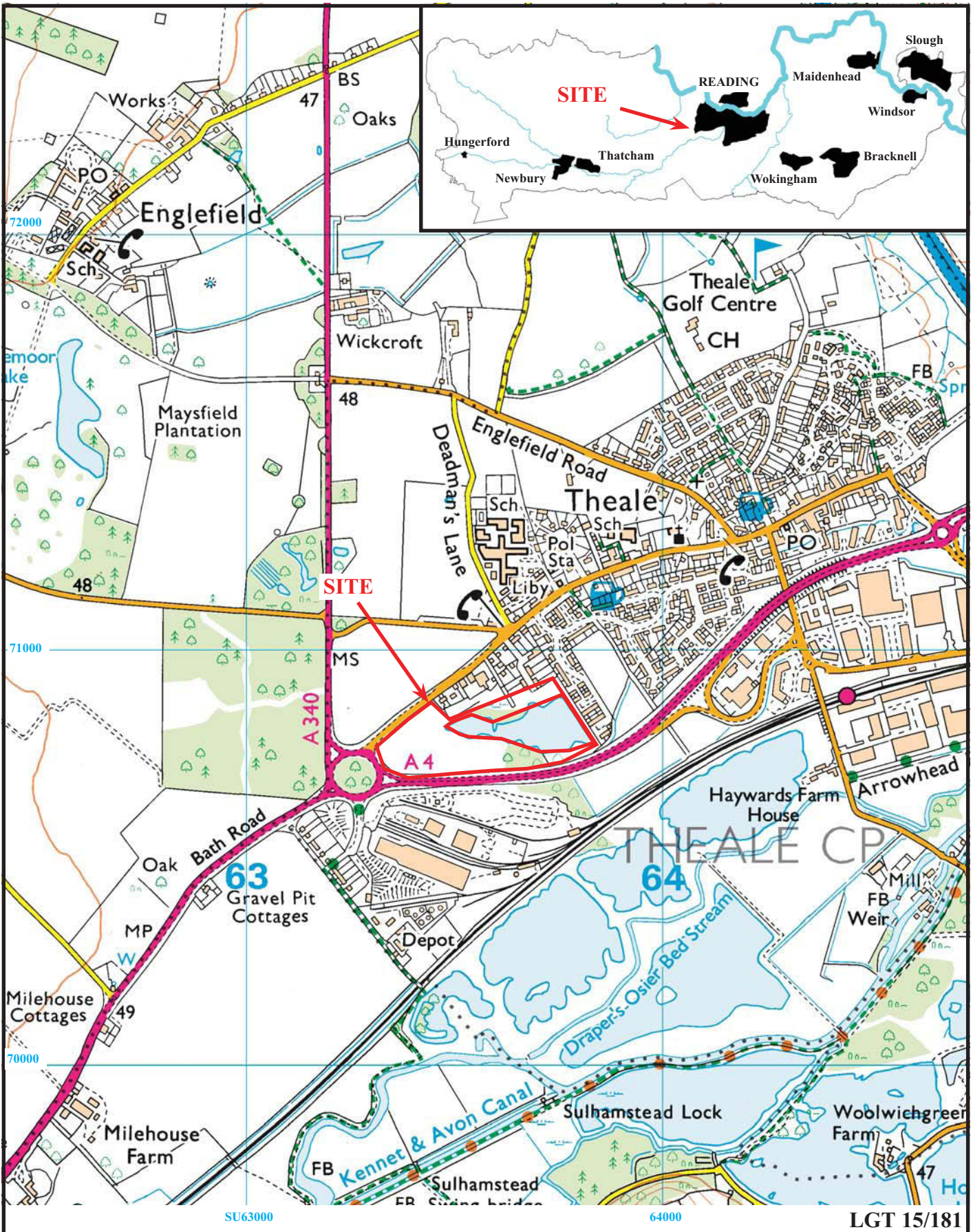
## **References**

- Bermingham, N, 2015, 'Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading, West Berkshire: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment'. TVAS unpubl rep **15/181**, Reading
- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **268**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Dils, J and Yates, M, 2013, *An historical Atlas of Berkshire*, Berkshire Record Society, Eynsham
- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Sailsbury
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London



**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25.0	2.20	1.12	0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-1.05m subsoil; 1.05m+ sandy gravel natural geology <b>Pl. 1</b>
2	24.0	2.20	0.57	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m+ sandy gravel natural geology
3	25.50	2.20	NE 1.0 SE 0.54	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.52m (SE) 0.22-0.74m (NW) subsoil; 0.52-0.74m+ sandy gravel natural geology
4a	5.0	2.20	1.95	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-1.95m+ modern layered made ground (Natural geology not reached) <b>Pl. 2</b>
4b	3.0	2.20	1.46	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-1.46m+ modern layered made ground (Natural geology not reached)
5a	3.0	2.20	1.40	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12-1.40m+ modern layered made ground (Natural geology not reached - Contamination)
5b	3.0	2.20	1.02	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-1.02m+ modern layered made ground (Natural geology not reached - Contamination)
6	22.50	2.20	E 0.8 W 0.53	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ sandy gravel natural
7	5.20	2.20	1.78	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-1.71m modern layered made ground; 1.71m+ sandy gravel natural geology
8	5.0	2.20	2.0	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-2.0m+ modern layered made ground (Natural geology not reached - Contamination) <b>Pl. 3</b>
9	9.0	2.20	1.02	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-1.01m modern layered made ground; 1.01m+ sandy gravel natural geology
10	12.0	2.20	SW 1.23	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12-1.20m modern layered made ground; 1.20m+ sandy gravel natural geology <b>Pl. 4</b>



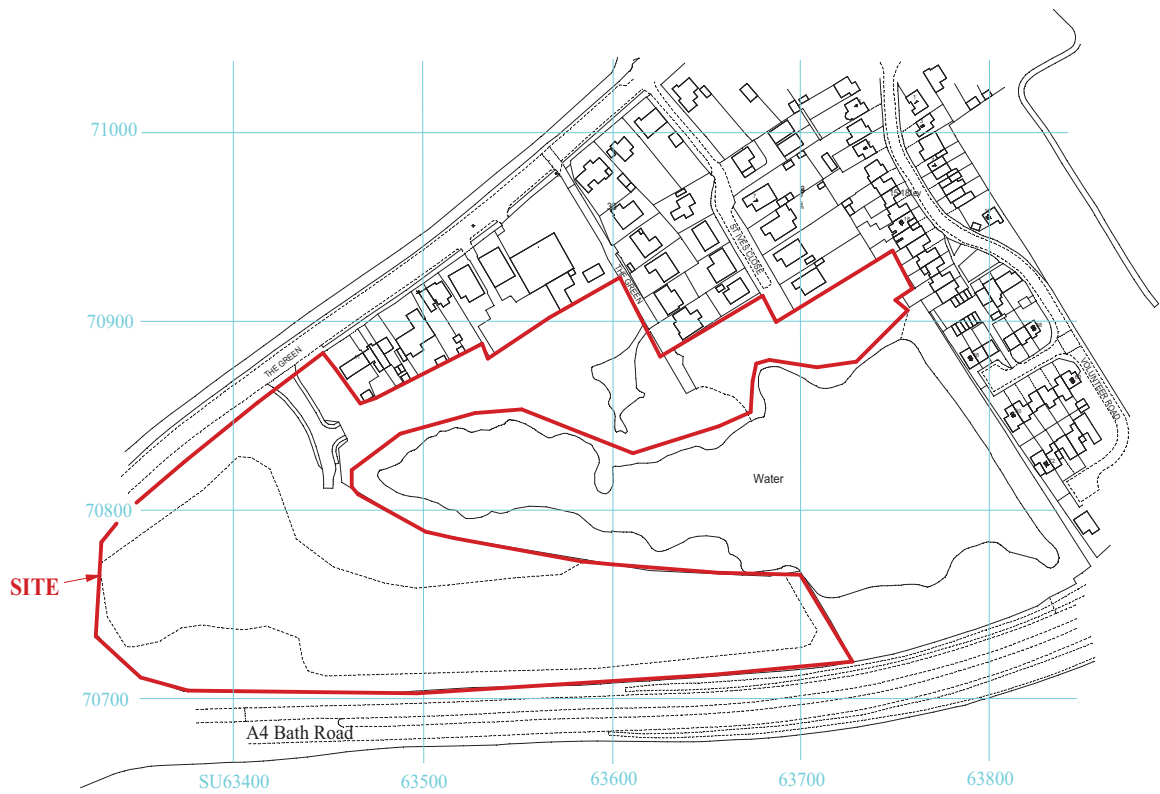
Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading  
 Berkshire, 2021  
 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Theale and Berkshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500  
 Crown Copyright reserved

THAMES VALLEY  
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
 SERVICES

LGT 15/181



LGT 15/181

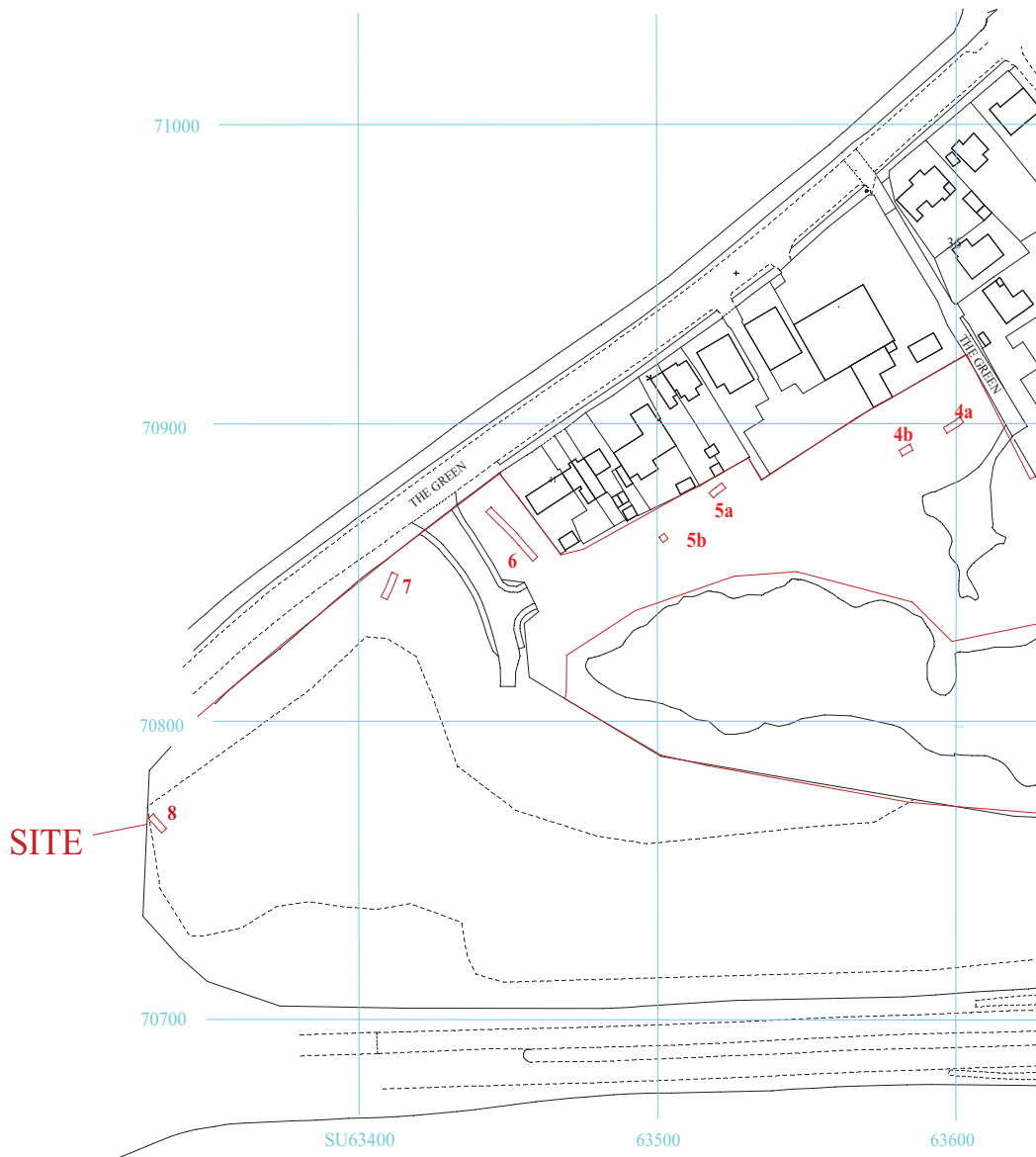


**Lakeside, The Green,  
Theale, Reading, West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Area of development.



THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
SERVICES



LGT 15/181

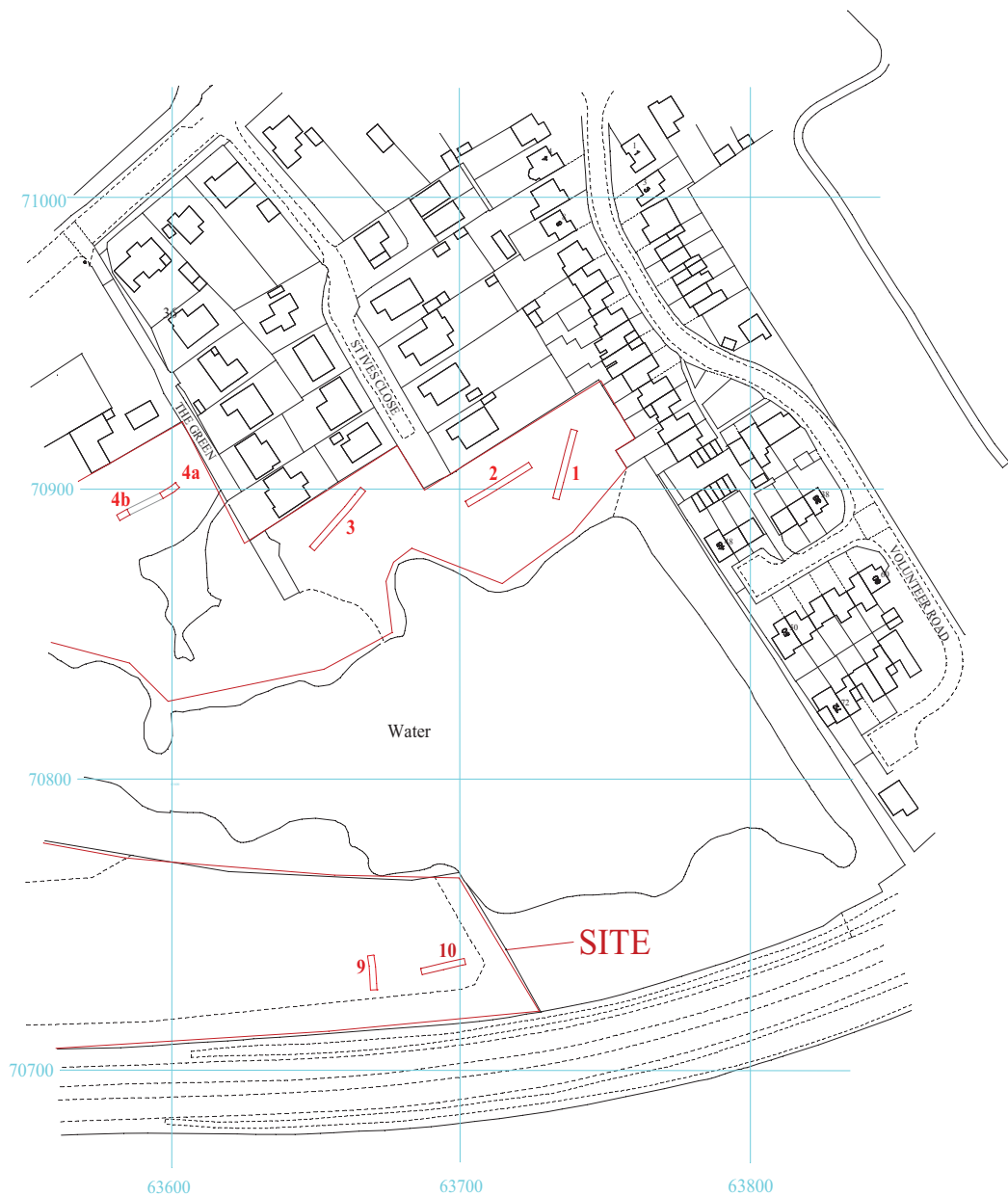


**Lakeside, The Green,  
Theale, Reading, West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches (West).



THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
 SERVICES



LGT 15/181

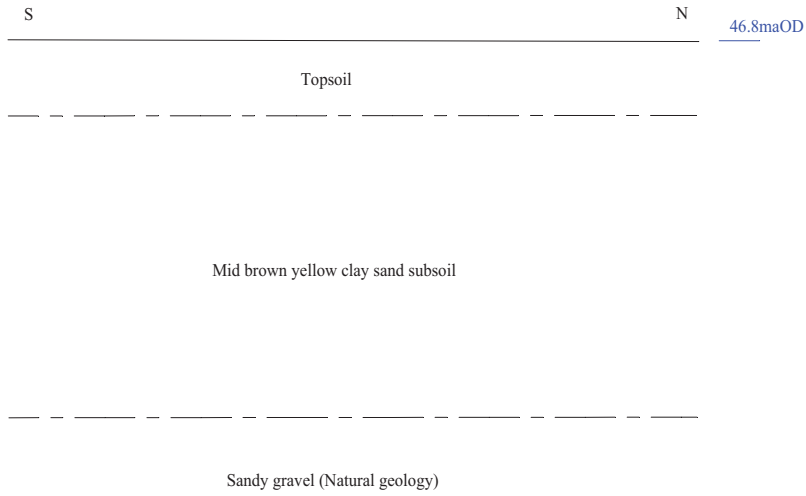
**Lakeside, The Green,  
Theale, Reading, West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Location of trenches (East).



THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
SERVICES

*Trench 1*



*Trench 8*



LGT 15/181

**Lakeside, The Green,  
Theale, Reading, West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Representative sections.





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



Plate 2. Trench 4a, looking South East,  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Trench 8, looking North, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 10, looking North West,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

LGT 15/181

Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading  
West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 1 to 4.

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 5. Site shot from south western corner, looking North East.



Plate 6. Site shot across lake, looking North.

LGT 15/181

**Lakeside, The Green, Theale, Reading  
West Berkshire, 2021  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 5 and 6.**

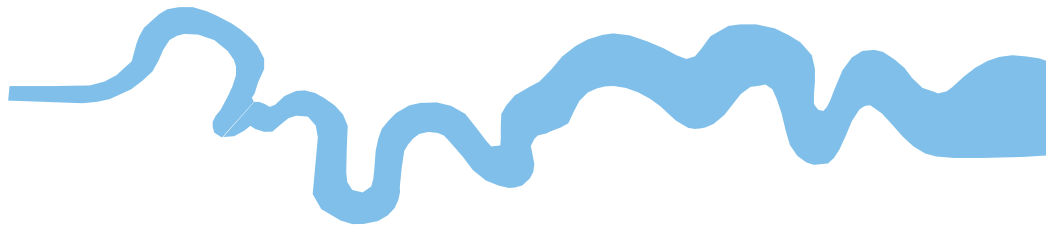
THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



## 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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

*Offices in:  
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)*