

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Palm Hills, London Road, Chavey Down,  
Bracknell, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation    phase 1**

**by Maisie Foster**

**Site Code: PHB21/253**

**(SU 8940 6901)**

**Palm Hills, London Road, Chavey Down,  
Bracknell, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation- Phase 1  
for Shanly Homes (Thames Valley)**

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PHB 21/253

**November 2021**

## Summary

**Site name:** Palm Hills, London Road, Chavey Down, Bracknell, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8940 6901

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** Phase 1: 15th-17th November 2021

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Maisie Foster

**Site code:** PHB 21/253

**Area of site:** c. 2.7ha (c. 2ha developable)

**Summary of results:** Due to unanticipated live service runs, occupied properties and access roads only 6 trenches were opened in this phase, whilst a further two were started but had to be abandoned after locating live services. A second phase of trenching is expected to be required after services have been located and properties vacated in order to fulfil the archaeological condition. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were encountered in the trenches excavated in this initial phase.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 2.12.21 Steve Preston ✓ 30.11.21
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# **Palm Hills, London Road, Chavey Down, Bracknell, Berkshire**

## **An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Maisie Foster

**Report 21/253**

### **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Palm Hills, London Road, Chavey Down, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 9FR (SU 8940 6901) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jeff Hughes of Shanly Homes (Thames Valley) 24-26 Aylesbury End, Beaconsfield, HP61LW.

Planning permission (19/00847/OUT) has been gained on appeal (APP/R0335/W/21/3267437) from Bracknell Forest Council for the construction of new housing on the site. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on site the consent is subject to condition (16) relating to archaeology, which requires the results of an archaeological evaluation to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy..

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The archaeological evaluation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Edward Peveler, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster and Camila Carvalho on 15th to 17th November 2021 and the site code is PHB 21/253.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an appropriate Museum in due course.

### **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located east of Bracknell on the north side of London road (Fig. 1). The development site is split into an east and west side with a band of buildings and woodland splitting the area (Fig. 2). The east of the site is accessed by a concrete lane which opens into a small car park surrounded by residential properties and office buildings. To the rear of these properties is a larger car park and a residential property but the majority of the land is open space that appears to have been used for the dumping of hardcore and other materials. The west side of site is accessed further down London Road by another lane and encompasses one building and surrounding land, backing onto the rear of properties fronting Long Hill Road further west. The site as a whole is fenced off, with residential properties to the south and south-east and woodland surrounding the remaining areas. The site is

on a slight incline from c. 100m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north to 85m aOD in the south. The underlying geology is mapped as Bagshot Formation - Sand (BGS 1981) which was recorded as the natural geology during the evaluation.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document produced by Mr Roland Smith formerly of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary, there are no recorded archaeological sites or finds on the site itself but a number of sites and finds are recorded in the vicinity and wider area (Ford 1987). To the north, Iron Age occupation has been recorded (Torrance and Durden 2003) with further sites of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval date to the north and north-west. To the south-west Middle Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age occupation has been recorded at the former RAF Staff College (Lowe 2013) and to the south-east a number of round barrows are recorded at Heatherwood Hospital (Bradley and Keith Lucas 1975; Esteves 2017).

## **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:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide information about the archaeological potential in order to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Twenty trenches were intended to be dug using a 360°-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 and 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 feature 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**

In this phase due to unanticipated service lines, occupied residential/work buildings, in-use car parks, access roads and blocked access, only six of the proposed trenches could be opened, with some degree of modification to half of them (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged from 9.50m to 25.0m in length and 0.50m to 0.94m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadth, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned North–South and was 25m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed. The trench was taken 0.25m deep into the sand to confirm that this was the natural geology.

### Trench 12 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 12 was aligned East–West and was 25m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of topsoil and 0.22m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

### Trench 16 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 16 was aligned SE - NW and was 24m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.33m of topsoil and 0.18m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

### Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned East- West and was 24m long and 0.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.8m of topsoil and 0.3m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

### Trench 18 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 18 was aligned East - West and was 9.5m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

### Trench 20 (Fig. 3; Pl. 5)

Trench 20 was aligned close to East - West and was 24.8m long and 0.94m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.6m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds were recovered nor features observed.

## **Finds**

All finds noted were modern and of no archaeological interest, and were not retained.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits being present on site none were encountered during this phase of evaluation . It remains to be seen if the remaining areas to be trenched on the proposal site during phase 2 produce similar results.

## **References**

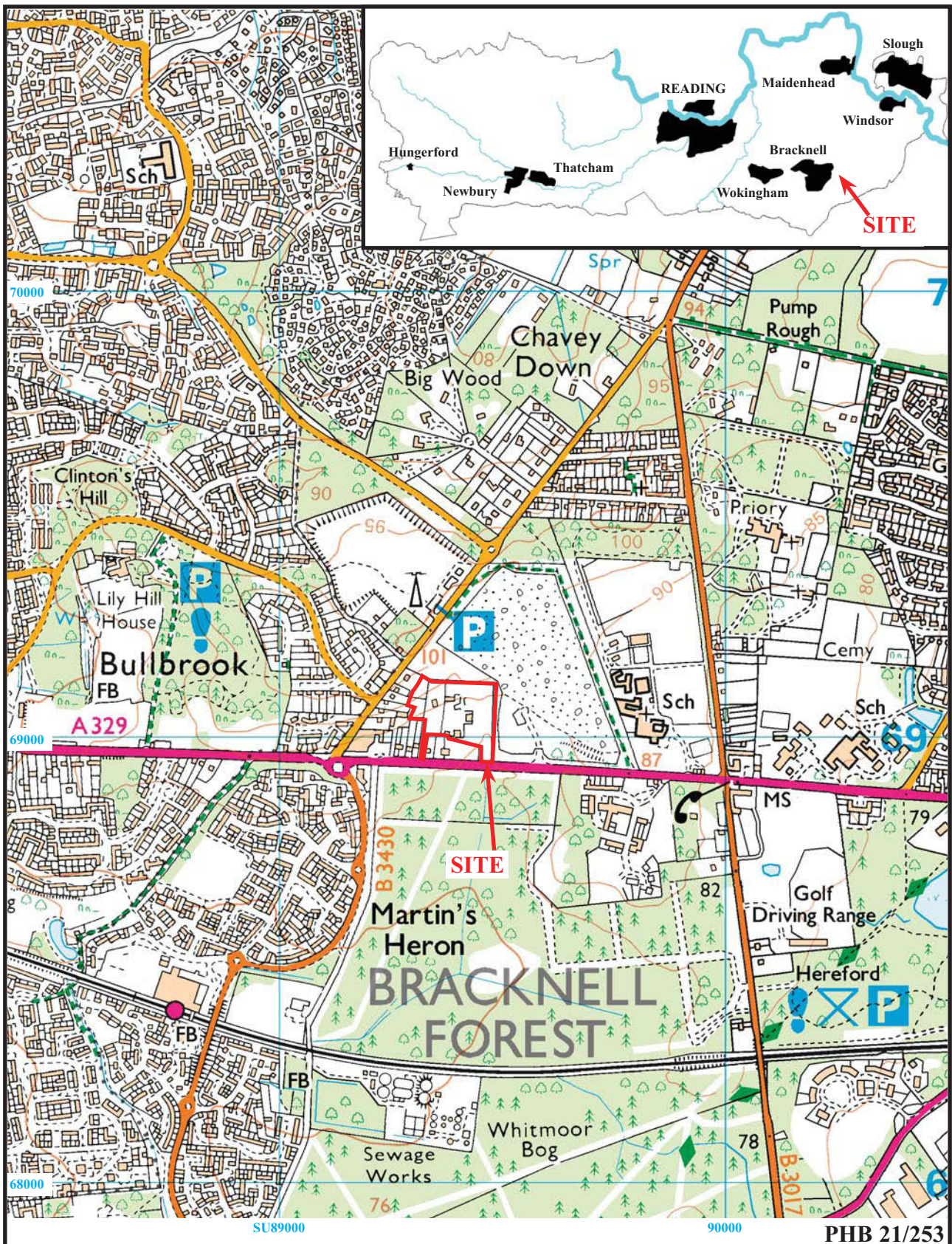
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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at N, W, E and SE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25	1.6	0.75	0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ light yellowish white sand natural geology. <b>[PI. 1]</b>
12	25	1.6	0.66	0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ light brownish white sand natural geology <b>[PI. 2]</b>
16	24	1.6	0.6	0-0.33m topsoil; 0.33-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ light brownish yellow sand natural geology <b>[PI. 3]</b>
17	24	1.6	0.8	0-0.5m topsoil; 0.5-0.8m subsoil; 0.8m+ light brownish yellow sand natural geology
18	9.50	1.6	0.5	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ light brownish yellow sand natural geology <b>[PI. 4]</b>
20	24.80	1.6	0.94	0-0.6m topsoil; 0.6-0.8m subsoil; 0.8m+ light brownish yellow sand natural geology <b>[PI. 5]</b>





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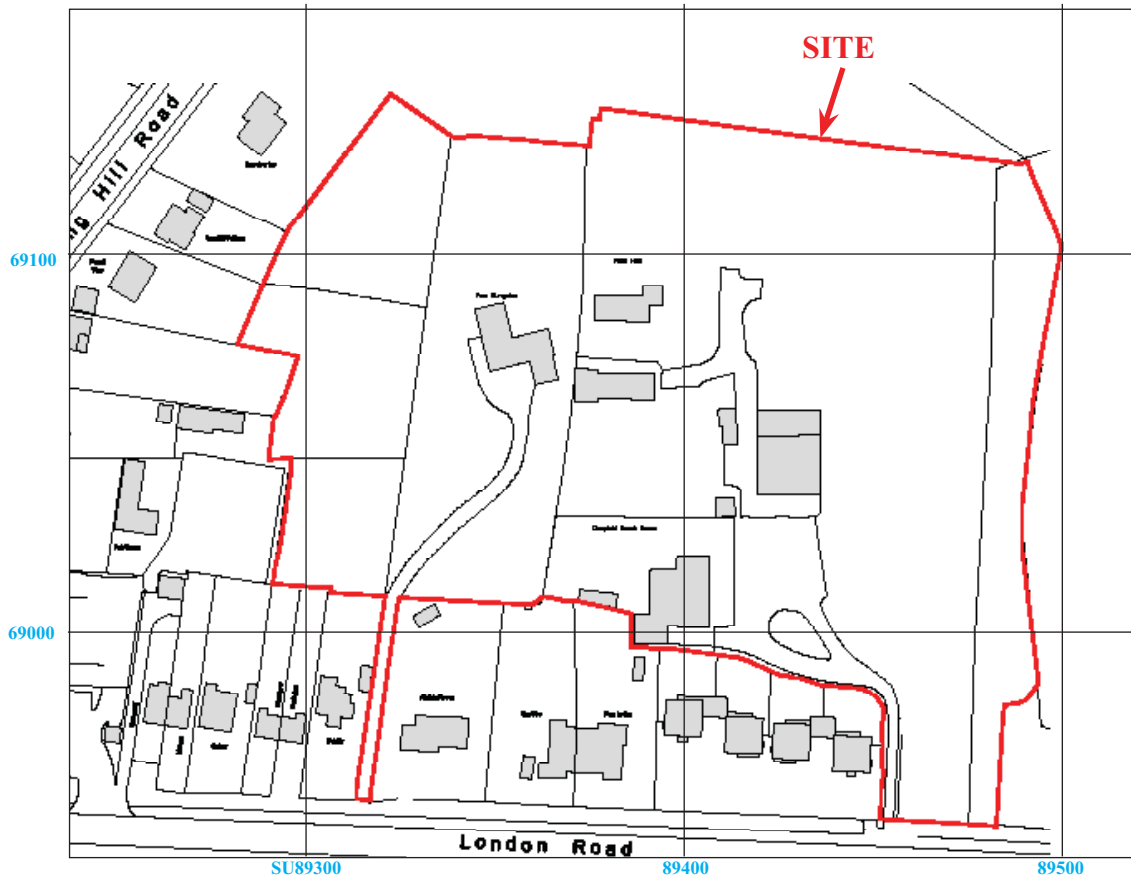
Figure 1. Location of site within in relation to Bracknell and within Berkshire.

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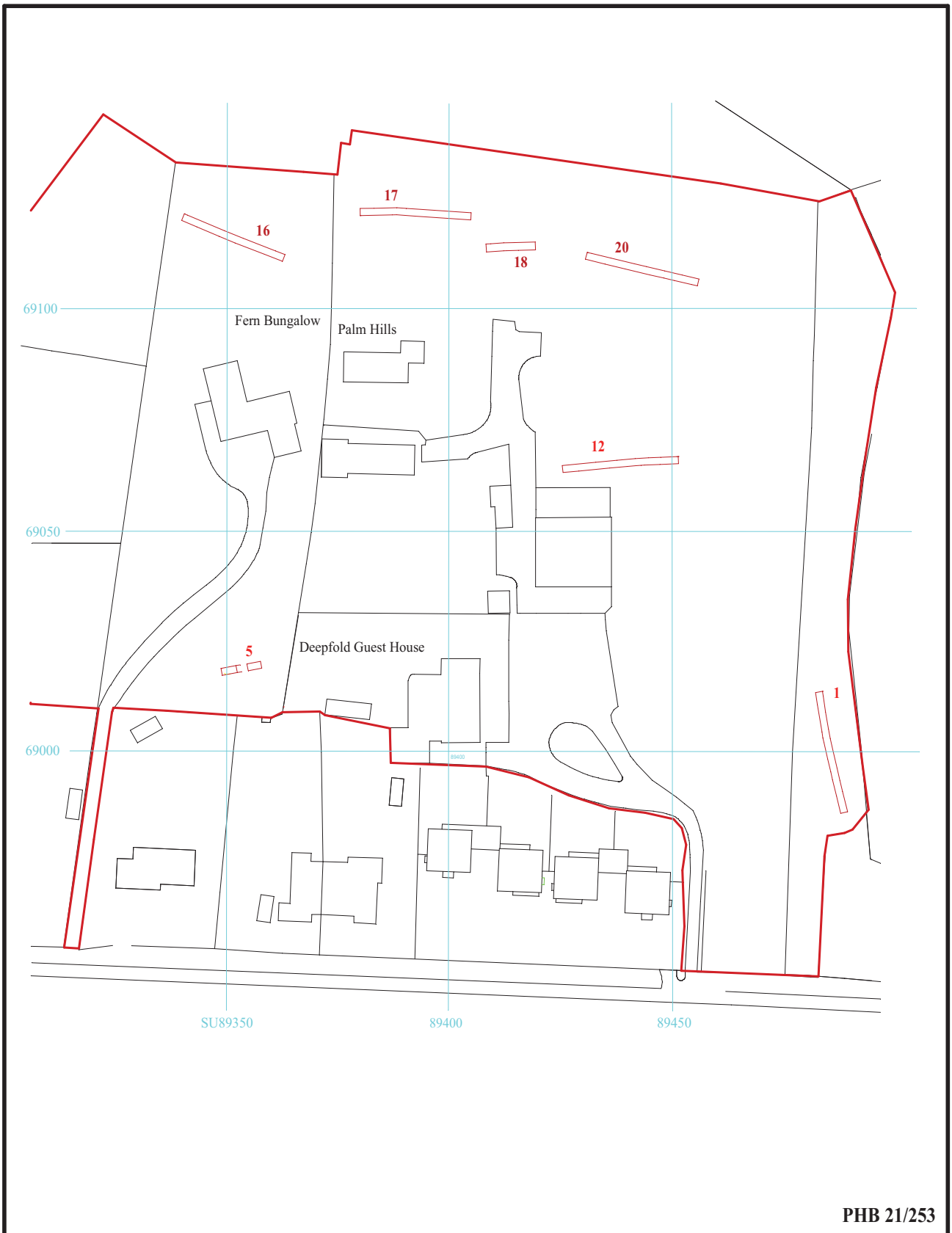


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off London Road.

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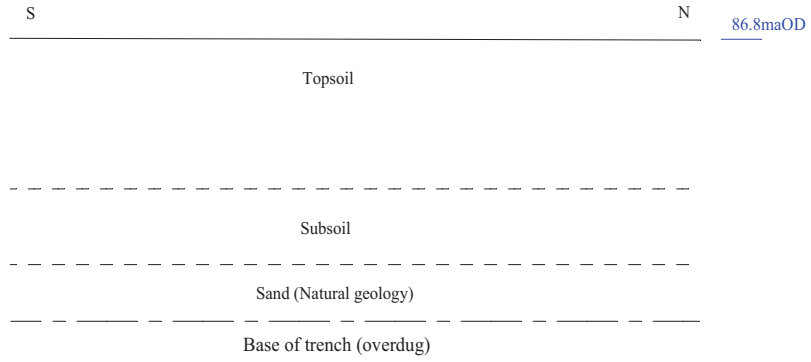
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Figure 3. Location of trenches (partial).



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*Trench 1*



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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



Plate 2. Trench 12, looking West,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 16, looking North West,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 18, looking West,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 5. Trench 20, looking West,  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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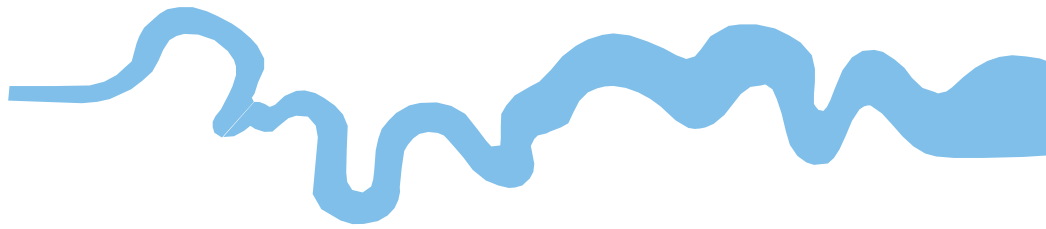
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Plates 1 to 5.

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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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