

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**River Home, Willow Lane,
Wargrave, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Will Attard

Site Code: RHW22/44

(SU 7830 7952)

River Home, Willow Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr & Mrs M Allen

by Will Attard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RHW 22/44

May 2022

Summary

Site name: River Home, Willow Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7830 7952

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11th May 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Will Attard

Site code: RHW 22/44

Area of site: c. 1200 sq m

Summary of results: Only one of the two intended trenches could be opened. This revealed that the ground level of the site had been raised by the deposition of modern made ground which had also truncated the top of the natural geology, probably removing the archaeologically relevant horizon. No features, deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 25.05.22
	Steve Preston ✓ 25.05.22

River Home, Willow Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Will Attard

Report 22/44

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at River Home, Willow Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8LH (SU 7830 7952). (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Tapp of Tapp Associates, 14 Bix Common, Bix, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 6BS on behalf of Mr & Mrs M Allen, Quenby Hall, Hungarton, Leicestershire, LE7 9BQ

Planning permission (app 211846) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council for the erection of a new boathouse with slipway, demolition of existing outbuilding and extension to the existing house at the site. The consent is subject to a condition (6) requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, which in this instance was to take the form of an archaeological evaluation by means of trenching.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out according to a specification approved by Dr Edward Peveler of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard and Emma Bonnie on 11th May 2022, and the site code is RHW22/44. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located 650m northwest of the village of Wargrave, Berkshire, on the north-eastern bank of the River Thames (Fig. 1), with the current dwelling situated at the river's edge. The river forms the county boundary at this point, with the west bank being in Oxfordshire. The site is on an eyot between the Thames to the west and the Hennerton backwater to the east, and there is another minor (unnamed) water channel or race immediately east of the house (Fig. 2). The area covered by this evaluation occupies a level area of garden, extending up to the edge of the river, and lying at a height of 35m above Ordnance Datum. The geology for the site is mapped as alluvium (BGS 2000). The bank of the river has been modified in order to strengthen it and to raise the level.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Dr Edward Peveler of Berkshire Archaeology. To summarize, the site's potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley, close to the confluence with the Loddon (Dils and Yates 2013; Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2007). A range of prehistoric and later archaeological finds are recorded for the wider area, with extensive prehistoric artefact scatters to the south-west, where Iron Age/Roman cropmarks and Saxon pottery have also been recorded (Gates 1975). The historic (Saxon/Medieval) core of Wargrave lies to the south, although the exact nature of this settlement is not clear (Astill 1978).

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. The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Iron Age or Roman deposits are present; and
- to provide information to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary

Any archaeological findings were to be assessed with reference to national (HE 2016) and regional (Hey & Hind 2014) research agendas. Fieldwork was to follow the relevant CIFA guidance regarding archaeological evaluations (CIFA 2020)

It was proposed to dig two trenches, 7m and 8m long respectively (Fig. 2), targeting the footprint of the proposed groundworks for the new boat house and cutting. Excavation of the trenches was to be undertaken under constant archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features or deposits were possibly or certainly present, the area was to be hand cleaned, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits sampled and recorded to satisfy the aims outlined above. This investigation was to take place in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological deposits and features which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or be more appropriately investigated under conditions pertaining to a full excavation. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

All excavation was undertaken by a JCB backhoe fitted with a 1.7m wide toothless ditching bucket. Of the two proposed trenches, Trench 1 could not be opened due to significant space constraints on the site. Trench 2 was opened as close as possible to its intended location (Fig. 3), but could not be dug to the level of the natural geology along its whole length due to considerable quantities of rubble and large pieces of concrete within the made ground under the topsoil. Full trench details and a description of the observed stratigraphy and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned close to W-E and was 8.0m long and 1.2m deep. Made ground filled with very large concrete chunks prevented excavation to the surface of the natural geology in several places (approximately 1/3 of the length of the trench), though sufficient sections were excavated to the intended depth. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.14m of topsoil, over 0.16m of subsoil with frequent ceramic building material and concrete inclusions and 0.70m of made ground with very frequent brick, tile, Tarmac, concrete, stone and re-bar inclusions. The underlying natural alluvium was observed at a depth of 1m onwards, and consisted of sandy clay stained a dark blue-grey.

No archaeological features or deposits were present within this trench, nor were any archaeological finds recovered from the trench or the spoil heap.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered during the course of this project.

Conclusion

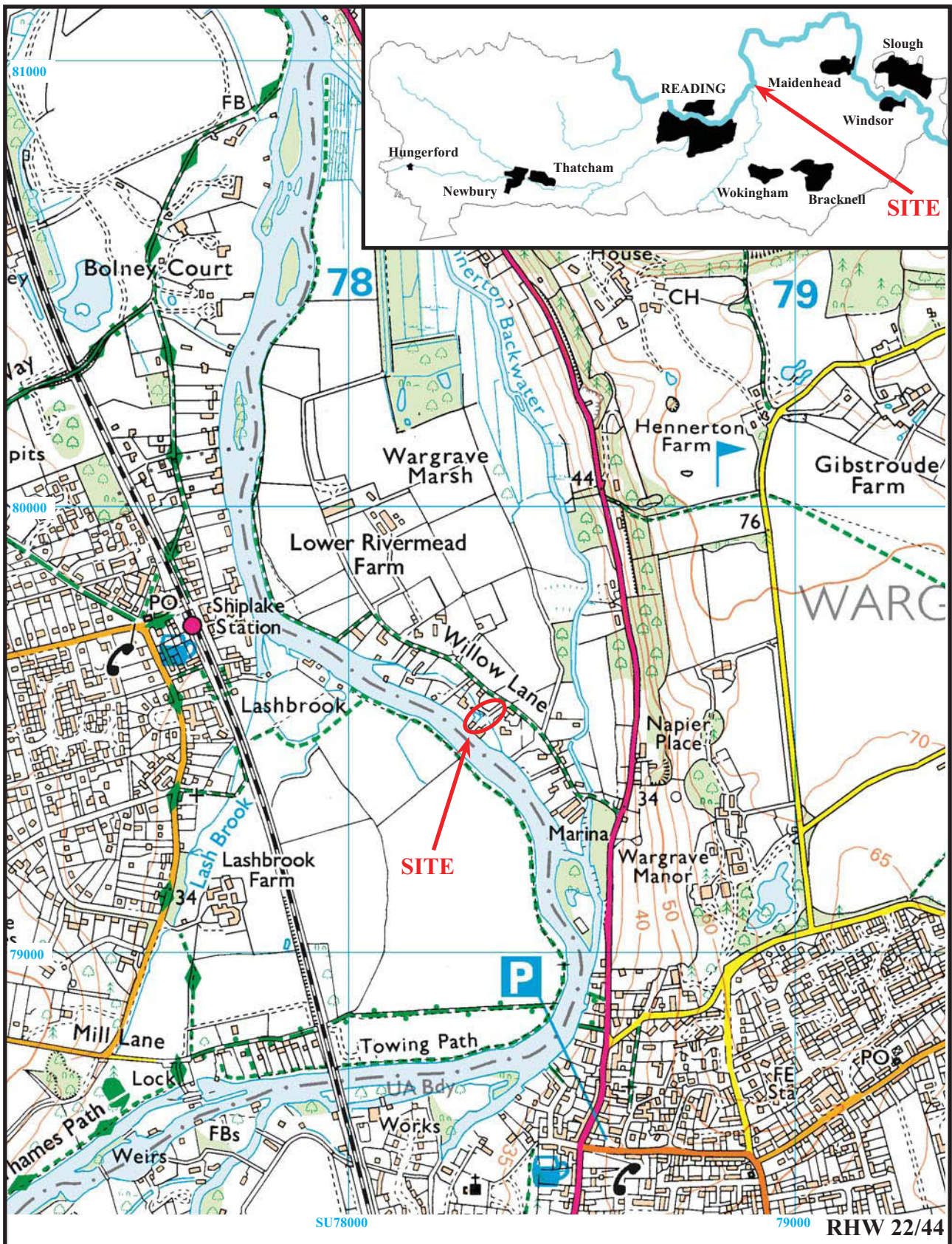
The evaluation trench revealed thick deposits of made ground underlying the current sub- and topsoil of the garden. It is likely that these made ground deposits are make-up layers used to level, stabilize and raise the river bank. The natural geology observed in Trench 2 appeared to have been truncated during the deposition of the made ground, and it is probable that the relevant archaeological level no longer survives. No archaeological features or deposits were observed and examination of spoil heaps produced only modern material. Although only one trench could be opened, it seems logical that the made ground would have extended throughout the site area, down to the river bank through the intended location of the other trench, and the proposed works.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1				Not excavated
2	8.0	1.7	1.2	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.30m subsoil; 0.30-1.00m made ground; 1.00-1.20m dark blue-grey clay. [Pls 1 and 2]

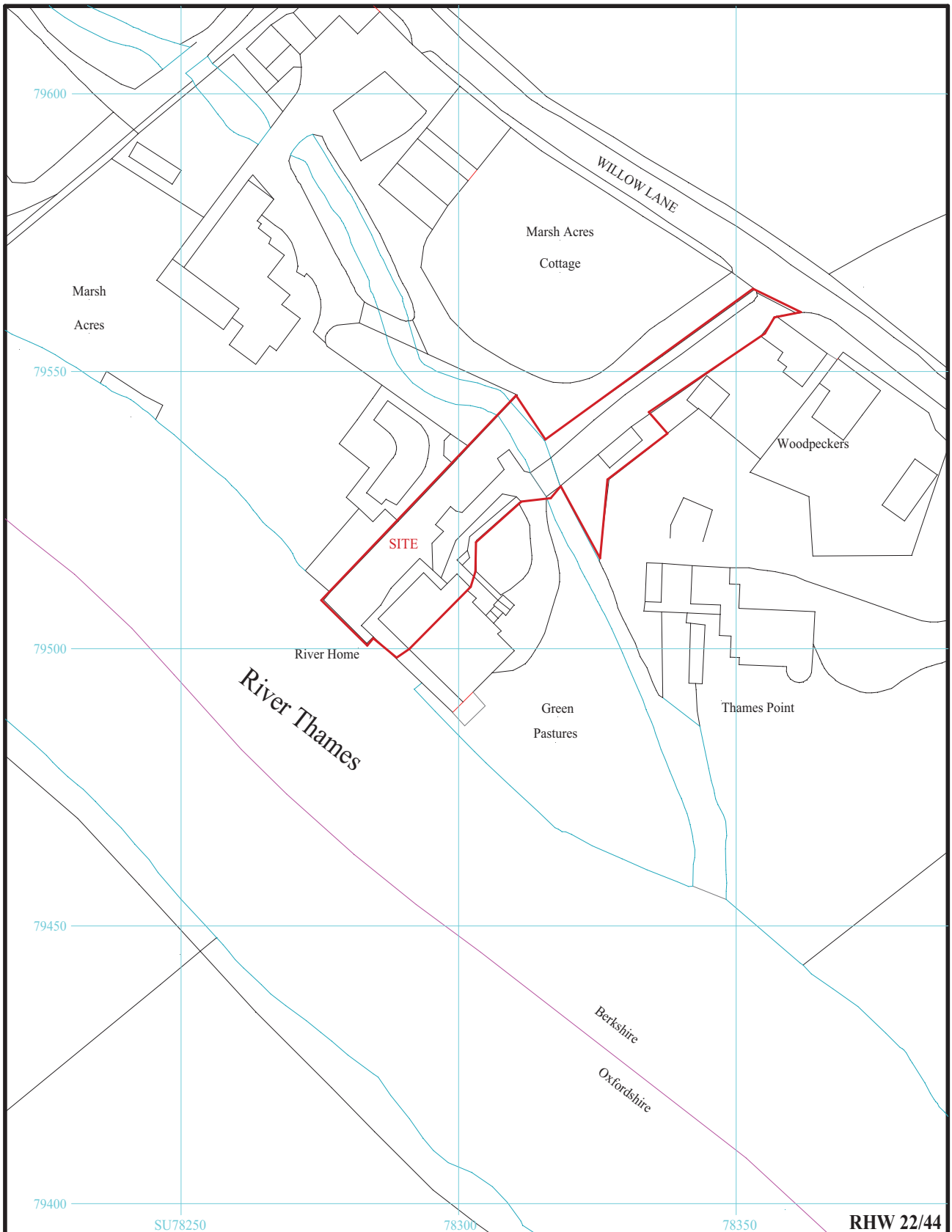


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Figure 1. Location of site within Wargrave and Berkshire.

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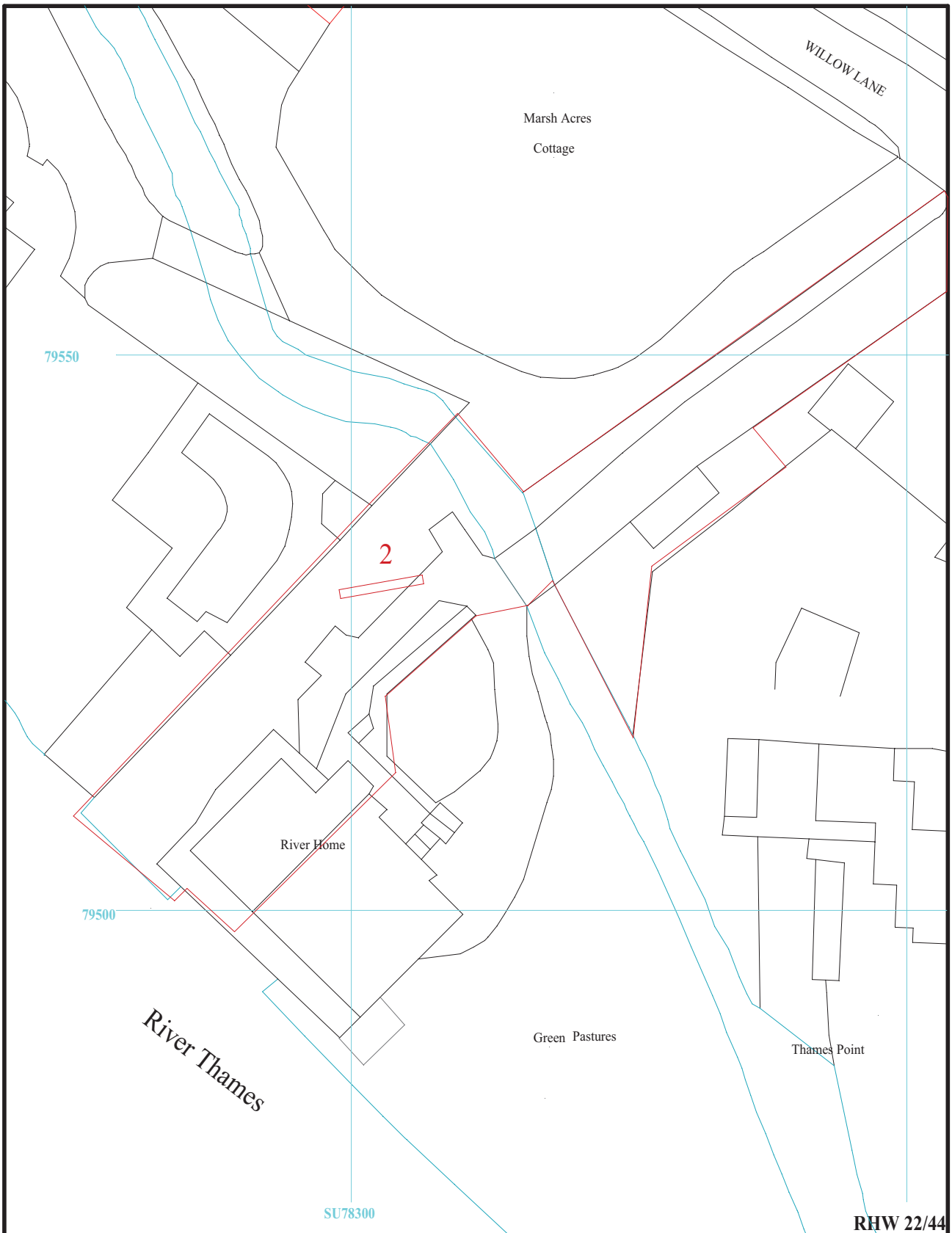


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Figure 2. Detailed site location.



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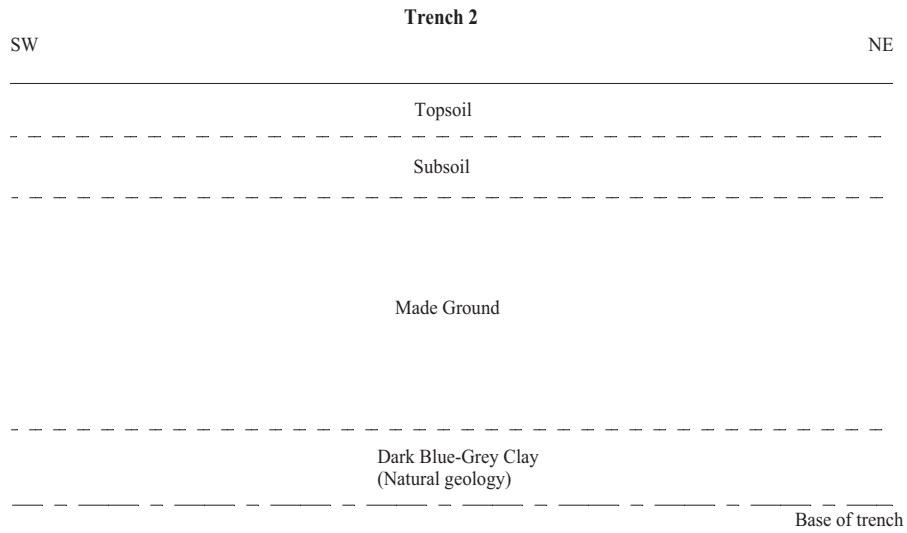


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Figure 3. Location of trench.



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Figure 4. Trench section.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north east. Scales: 1m & 2m (horizontal); 0.5m (vertical)



Plate 2. View of stratigraphy in Trench 2, looking north west. Scales: 1m and 2m

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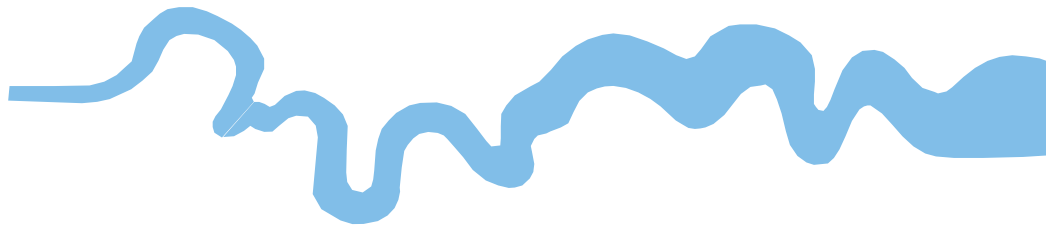
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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