

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows,
Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor and Tim Dawson

Site Code: LAF09/15

(SU 3275 8225)

Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs M. Preston

by Andy Taylor and Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LAF 09/15

December 2009

Summary

Site name: Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3275 8225

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 24th February–9th December 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: LAF 09/15

Summary of results: No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were observed. Parts of the site had been previously developed with some truncation evident.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 24.12.09
	Steve Preston ✓ 24.12.09

Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor and Tim Dawson

Report 09/15

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn, West Berkshire (SU 32750 82250) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin Bugey of Carter Jonas LLP, Anchor House, 269 Banbury Road, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7LL on behalf of Mr and Mrs M. Preston, Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn, RG17 8UH.

Planning consent (application number 08/01558/FULD) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the redevelopment of the site at Long Acre Farm, Seven Barrows, Upper Lambourn. The consent is subject to a condition (3) relating to archaeology, which requires that a programme of archaeological work be approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer with West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Phil Parker and Rob Skinner between the 24th February and 9th December 2009 and the site code is LAF 09/15.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located *c.*3km north of Lambourn and approximately 300m south of Lambourn Seven Barrows, a Bronze Age round barrow cemetery and scheduled monument (Fig. 1). It is situated on a rectangular plot of land (Fig. 2), formerly part of the garden of Long Acre Farm and the modern agricultural buildings and yards of Post Down Farm. The site lies on the floor of the dry valley in which Seven Barrows is also located, on land which slopes down gently eastwards from the edge of the road. The underlying geology comprised Middle Chalk (BGS 1971) and the site lies at a height of approximately 144m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location approximately 300m south of the large Bronze Age round barrow cemetery known as Lambourn Seven Barrows. This name is misleading as over forty such barrows have been identified, with the West Berkshire HER containing a record of at least one barrow having existed on the development site itself. An early Neolithic long barrow and middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery lie to the north-west of Seven Barrows. Surveys of the surrounding area have shown evidence of settlement in later Neolithic and Bronze Age times (flint scatters), as well as extensive settlement and organized land division during the Roman period (Gaffney and Tingle 1989; Bowden *et al.* 1993; Richards 1978, figs 19, 20). A watching brief (Jenkins 2004) was carried out during works on the construction of an all-weather gallop to the east with a number of possible features investigated, although none were unambiguously of archaeological origin. Another watching brief (Saunders 1997) was carried out on the northern side of Long Acre Farm house although no archaeology was encountered.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the construction of an extension to the farmhouse, a garden wall, potting shed, staff accommodation and stable block with associated services and construction of a driveway. Parts of the work were to take place following demolition of existing modern agricultural buildings on the site. In general the watching brief was to involve the monitoring of foundation trenches and service runs, as well as areas stripped of topsoil, landscaping and ground reduction.

There was a possibility of finding of Bronze Age burial deposits, either the monument (e.g. a ring ditch) or burials themselves, either inhumations or cremations. If such deposits were recovered, research topics to be pursued would be concerned with the chronology of the burials, the rites of burial, the cultural affinities of the artefacts, and the anthropological study of the human remains themselves in terms of age, sex and origins, etc.

Results

The watching brief comprised two components; observation of areas stripped of overburden and observation of the digging of deep narrow trenches

Garden Wall

The footings observed for the new garden wall were dug using a toothless foundation bucket (Fig. 3). These measured 0.80m wide and *c.* 1m in depth (this varied slightly depending on the depth of solid chalk with flints deemed good enough for a foundation base). The stratigraphy observed consisted of topsoil (0–0.10m), overlying subsoil (0.10–0.31m). This overlay a decayed chalk natural layer (0.31–0.89m) overlying solid chalk with flints (0.89m+). No archaeological deposits was recorded

House Extension

The area of the new extension north of the farmhouse was stripped of overburden to a depth of *c.* 0.65m. It cut through 0.20m of topsoil, 0.30m of subsoil and 0.15m of red-brown silty clay containing *c.* 80% chalk inclusions and exposed natural chalk geology across the whole area. An area of made-ground or disturbance, probably caused by the construction of the farmhouse, was observed extending 3.70m north of the existing building (Fig. 4). Once the area had been seen to be empty of archaeological features, the foundation trenches for the extension were then dug into the exposed chalk.

Potting Shed

The area of the new potting shed on the west side of the site was mostly (ie to the south) stripped of overburden to a depth of *c.* 1m. It cut through 0.1m of topsoil over 0.21m of subsoil above decayed chalk natural. At the northern end the construction method changed and only foundation trenches were dug. These were 0.8m wide and revealed the same stratigraphy as the area strip. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Service runs

The service runs measured 0.30m wide and dug to an initial depth of *c.* 0.30m to allow for archaeological inspection. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying decayed chalk natural geology. No archaeological deposits were seen.

Stables/accommodation blocks and new driveway

The areas of the latter buildings largely lay within areas that had been previously occupied by large, modern agricultural buildings and yard with concrete slabs. Construction of these had led to removal of topsoil and any subsoil as well as truncation of the natural geology (as compared to surrounding, undisturbed ground close to the road). Removal of the concrete slabs only revealed disturbed ground.

An area of ground c. 22m long and 6m wide was graded in the north-west corner of the site from the road into the site. At the western end the stratigraphy exposed consisted of c.0.10m of topsoil (turf) covering a 0.10m thick concrete surface which, in turn, covered the chalk natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found. To the east, the grading only revealed disturbed ground associated with the former farmyard.

Finds

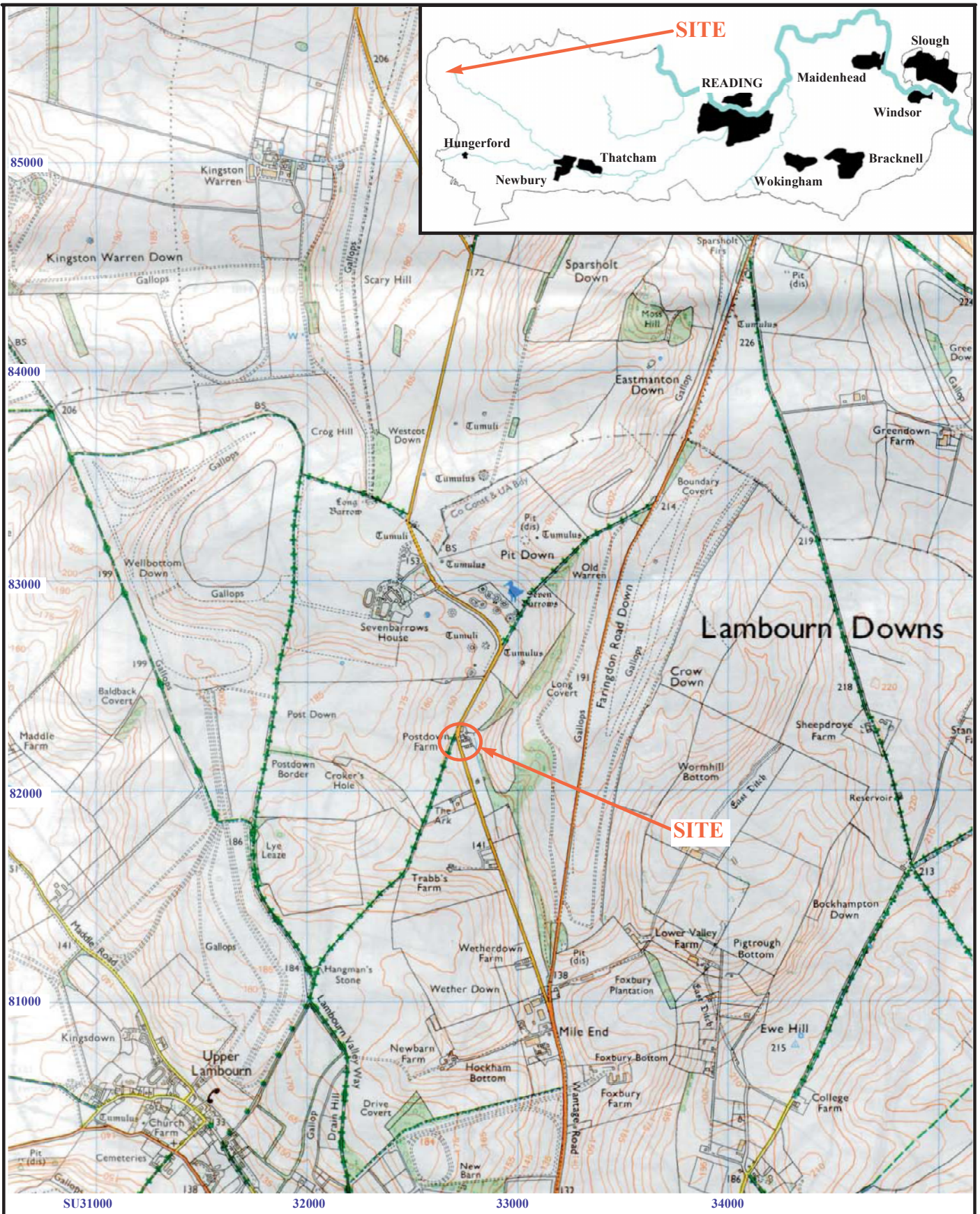
No finds of any archaeological interest were retrieved.

Conclusion

The areas where intrusive groundworks were to take place were monitored during their excavation. Parts of these areas, particularly to the north, had already been subject to extensive disturbance and truncation during construction of previous buildings on the site, whereas areas to the south were much less disturbed. Despite this, and the site's close proximity to the large barrow cemetery of Lambourn Seven Barrows, and the possible location of a Bronze Age barrow somewhere on the site, no archaeological finds or features were identified.

References

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- Gaffney, V and Tingle, M, 1989, *The Maddie Farm Project, an integrated Survey of Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs*, BAR Brit Ser 200, Oxford
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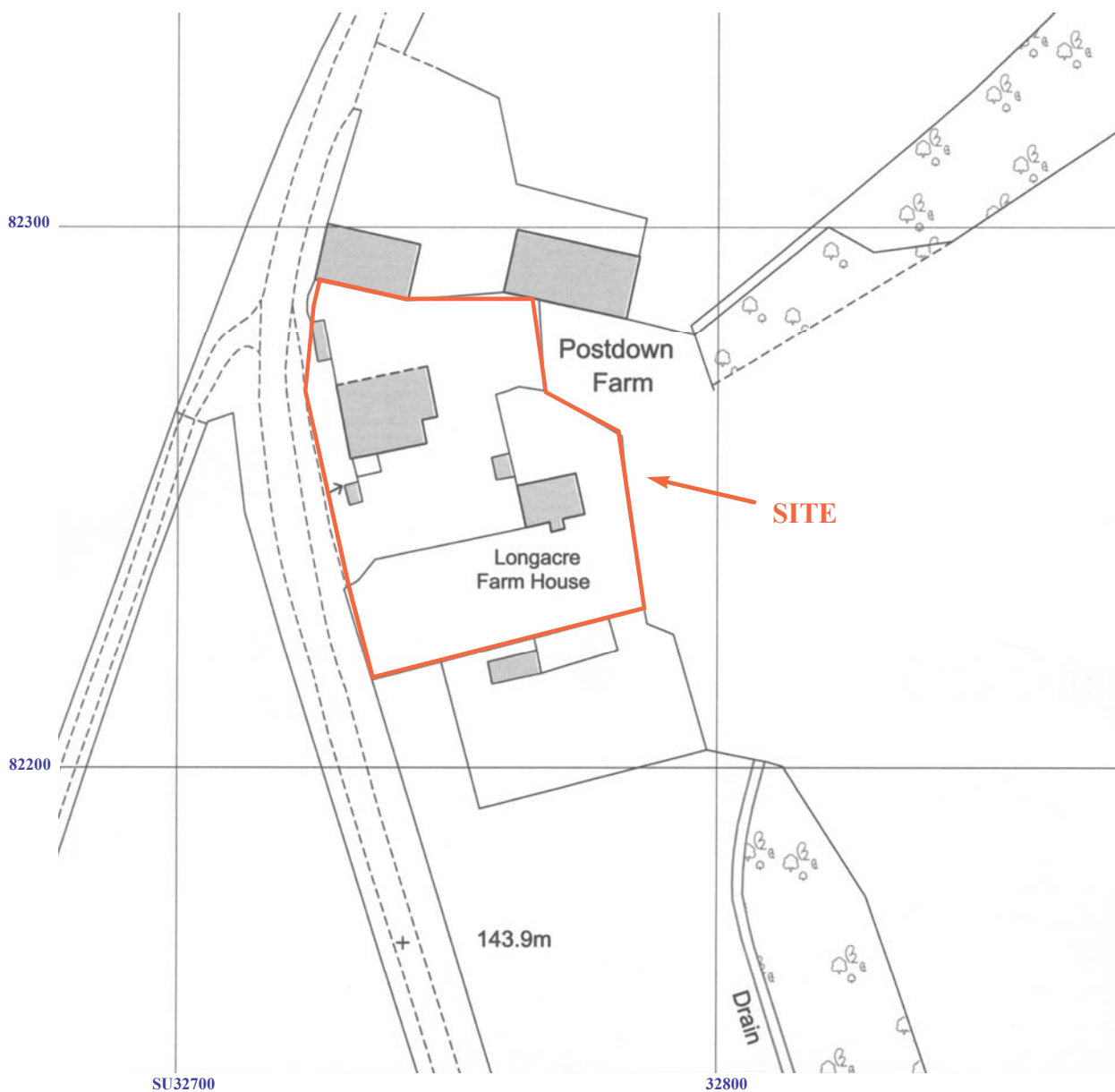


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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Upper Lambourn and Berkshire.

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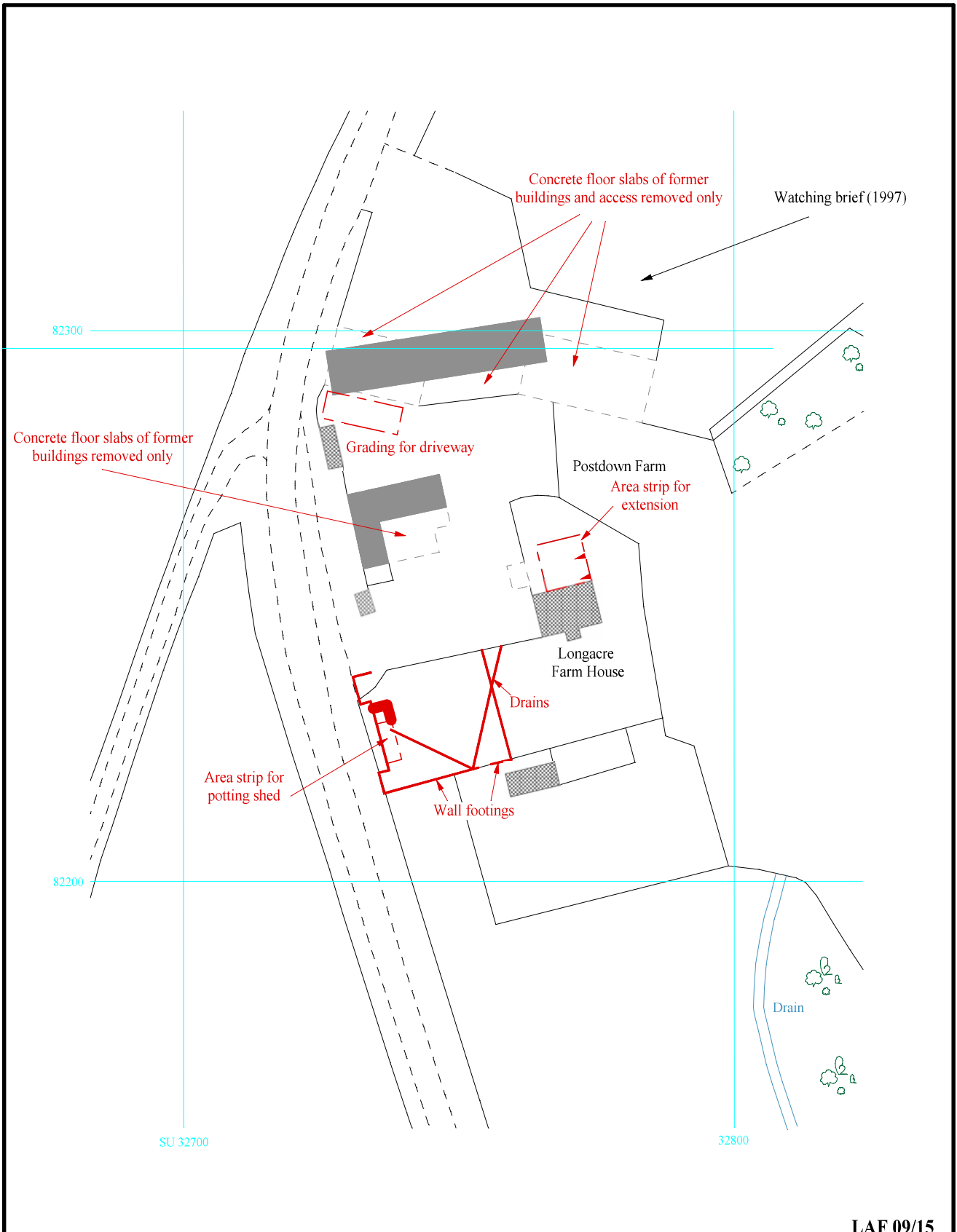
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Figure 2. Location of site at Long Acre Farm.

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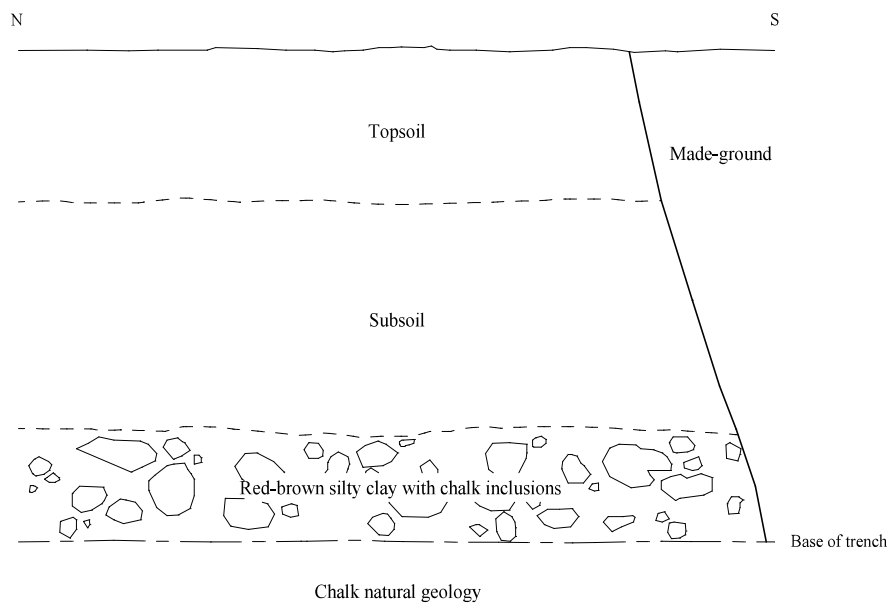


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Figure 3. Location of watching brief areas



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Figure 4. Representative section showing the stratigraphy observed in the house extension area.

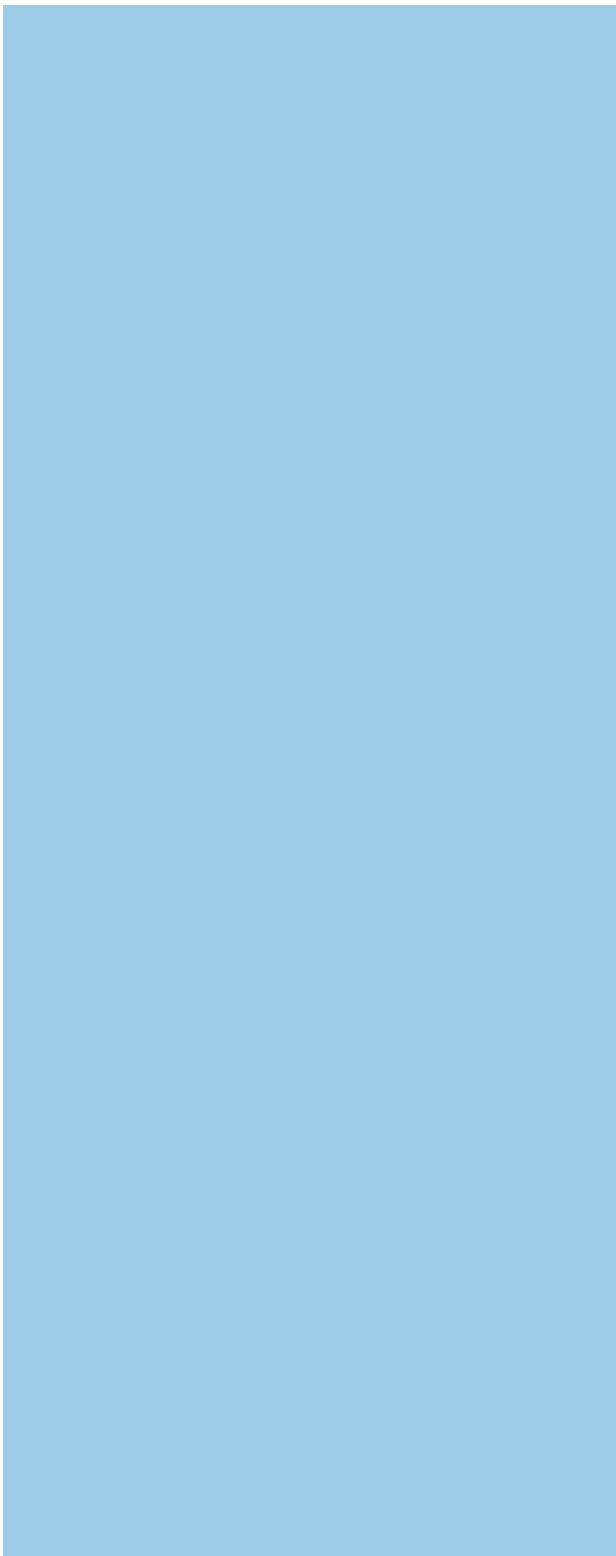
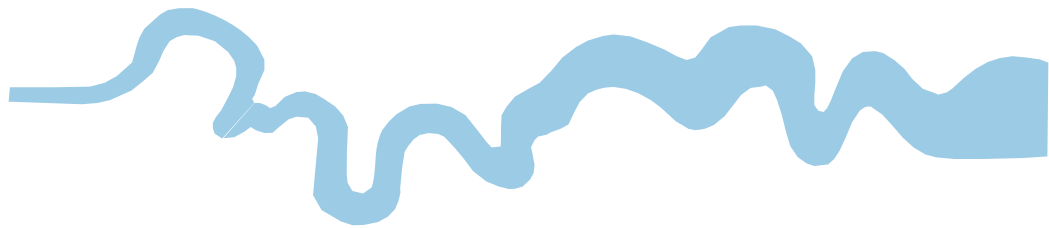


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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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