

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Charters School All Weather Pitch, Charters Road,
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Steven Crabb and Tim Dawson

Site Code: CSS10/88

(SU 9415 6687)

Charters School All Weather Pitch, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief (Strip and Record)

For The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

by StevenCrabbandTimDawson
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeCSS10/88

October 2010

Summary

Site name: Charters School All Weather Pitch, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9415 6687

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 14th–20th September 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: CSS10/88

Area of site: 0.256 hectares

Summary of results: Topsoil and overburden removal for the footprint of the new playing surface only revealed modern gravel-filled land drains, a modern Tarmacadamed access road (used during the construction of existing sports pitches), and modern artefacts. No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were recorded.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 27.10.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 26.10.10

Charters School All Weather Pitch, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 10/88

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief (strip and record) carried out on land at Charters School (SU9415 6687) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Kevin Mist of the Leisure Services Unit, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, 1st floor YSH, c/o Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF. Planning consent (10/01194/FUL) had been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new all weather playing surface at the school. The planning consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Royal Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, Natasha Bennett and Jacqui Pitt, between 14th and 20th September 2010. The site code is CSS 10/88.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of Charters Road, on a ground used as playing fields for Charters School (Fig. 2). The ground is landscaped flat, but has a slight fall of slope from north - west to south - east. The area monitored was a rectangular parcel of land bounded by the road to the north and by the school buildings to the west. The underlying geology is mapped as Bracklesham Beds (BGS 1981). A variable clay and sand geology with some gravel was observed on site.

Archaeological background

The site is situated approximately 150m north of the projected line of the 'Devil's Highway', the Roman road between Silchester and London (Margary 1973). Several large Roman sites are known to exist at the side of the

road, as at Wickham Bushes (Ford 1987, 83; Roberts and Leese 1933; Corney and Gaffney 1983). At least one villa-type site was discovered during construction of the railway where it intersected the Roman road to the east of the site (Hughes 1890) and further remains of this period may be anticipated. A Roman brick was recovered from an evaluation on the east end of Charters Road (Wallis 2004), though no positively dated Roman features were uncovered. This area has a scattering of prehistoric activity in the form of presumed Bronze Age round barrows, and isolated Mesolithic and Neolithic findspots without contextual information. It is assumed possible Bronze Age settlement may be nearby associated with the known funerary activity.

Various other fieldwork projects have taken place in the area. Fieldwork within the grounds of a large house (Charters), immediately to the north of the current site, did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest (Oram 2005; Wallis and Cass 2006) Similarly recent evaluations on Fireball Hill (Coles and Ford 2004, Taylor 2006), elsewhere on Charters Road (Cass 2007a) and elsewhere around Sunningdale (Ford 2006; Oram and Taylor 2006; Cass 2007b; Lewis and Munding 2008) have not yielded any discoveries of archaeological interest. A watching brief immediately north of Charters Road during construction of the school car park did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Munding 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits within the areas threatened by the development. This involved examination of all areas where archaeological features would be damaged by groundworks. The specific research aims of this project were:

When was the site first occupied?

When was the site abandoned?

What activities were taking place on the site?

Is there any Roman occupation on the site?

Is there any prehistoric occupation or on the site?

What use was made of floral and faunal resources and can these be identified and assessed from a programme of environmental sampling?

What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the sites during, before and after their use?

Results

A rectangular area, 61m long by 42m wide was stripped of overburden using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket (Fig. 3; Pl. 1) . The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.25m of turf and topsoil lying over dark brown/grey clayey sand containing a moderate amount of gravel and occasional pieces of ceramic building material. Within this were patches of mid grey/orange clay. Other than the modern field drainage system no other features were observed cutting the natural. At the northern end of the pitch a hardcore/Tarmac road was uncovered between 0.1m and 0.15m deep. According to the groundworks contractor, this had been used for the construction of existing all weather pitches to the south west.

No archaeological deposits were revealed.

Finds

The only finds observed were modern ceramic building material, glass, iron nails, etc. These finds were retained on site.

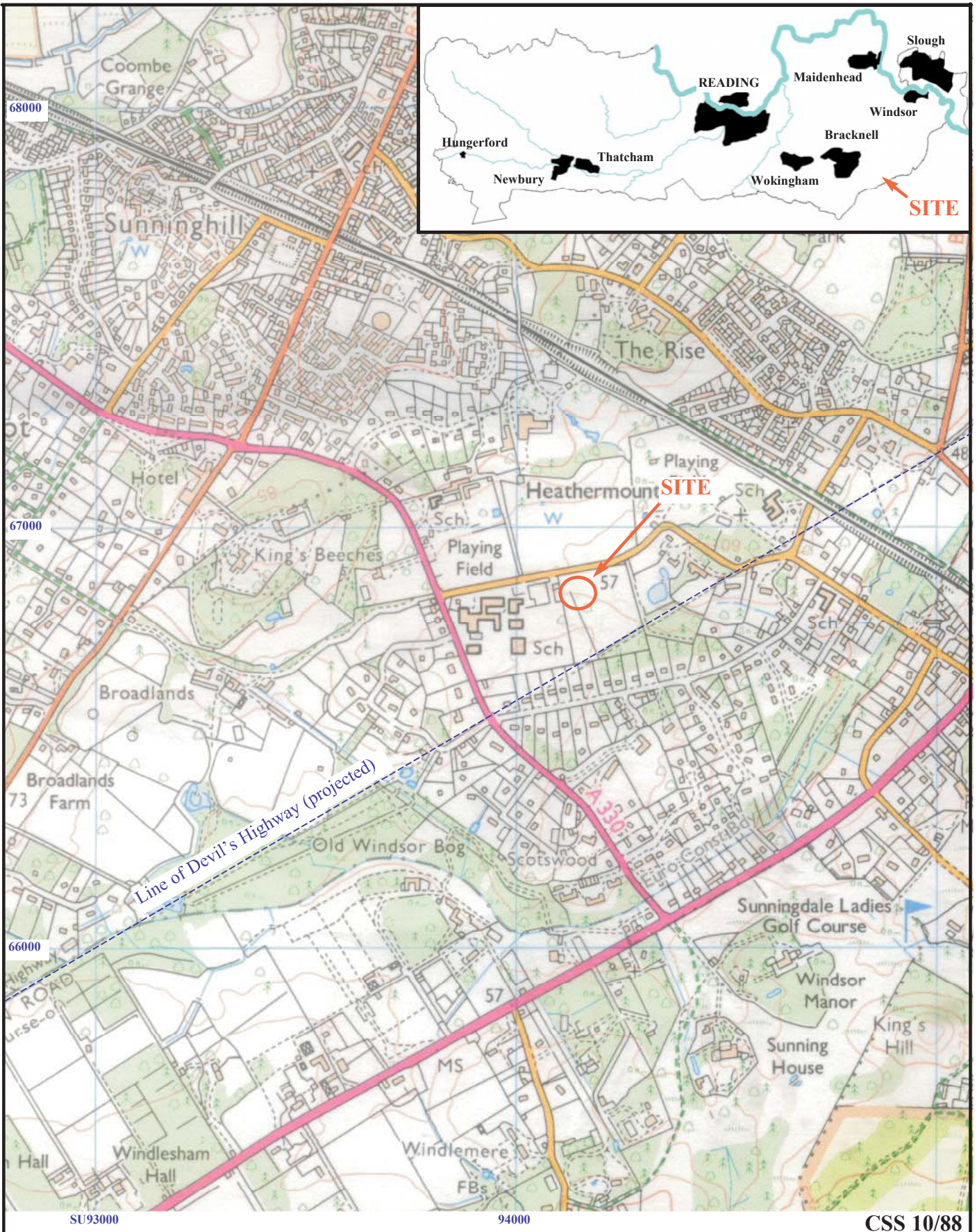
Conclusion

Overburden removal for construction of the all weather pitch has allowed close examination of a wide expanse of the surface of the natural geology (the archaeologically relevant horizon). However, apart from some modern material and modern land drains, this did not revealed any finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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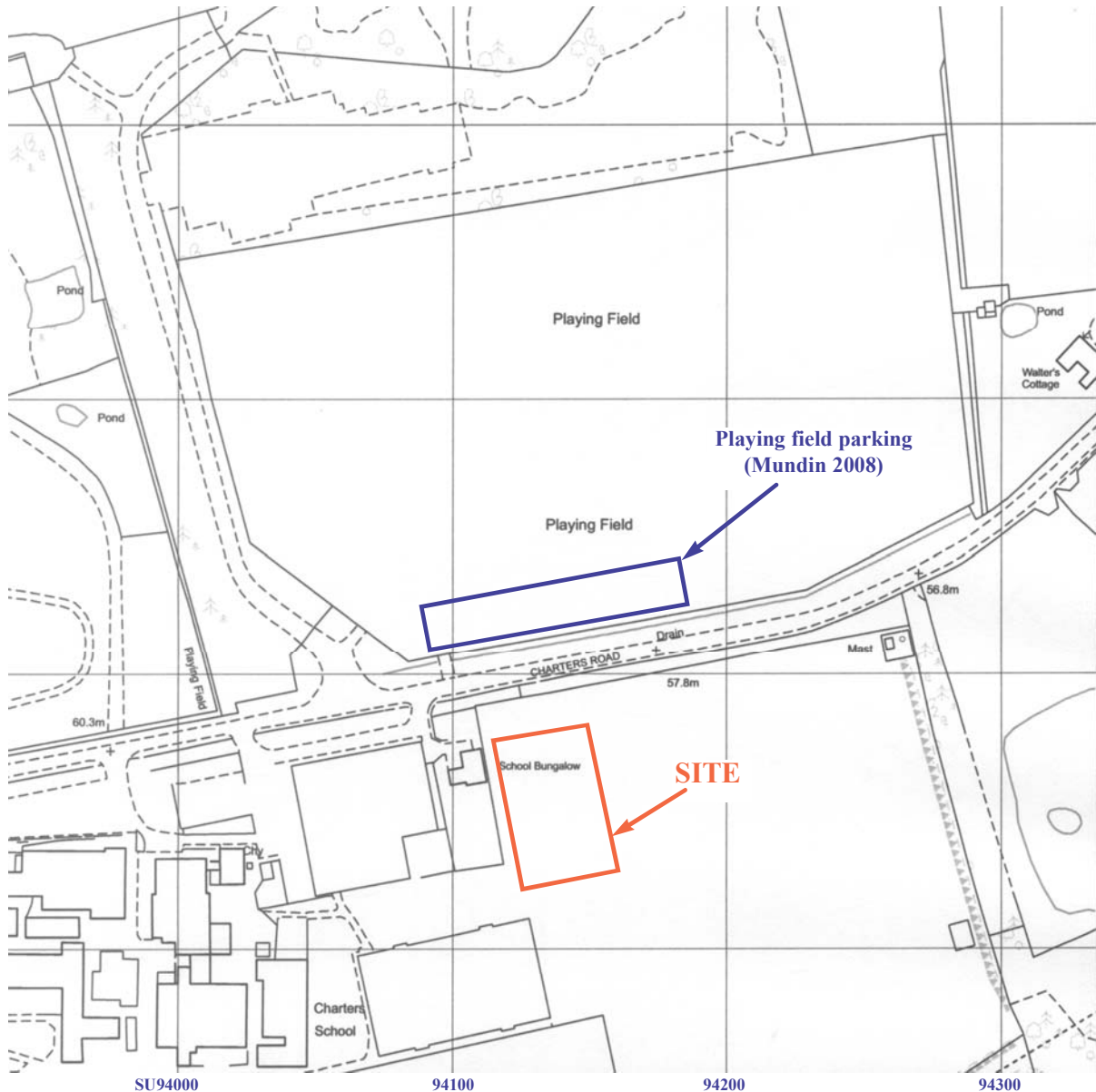


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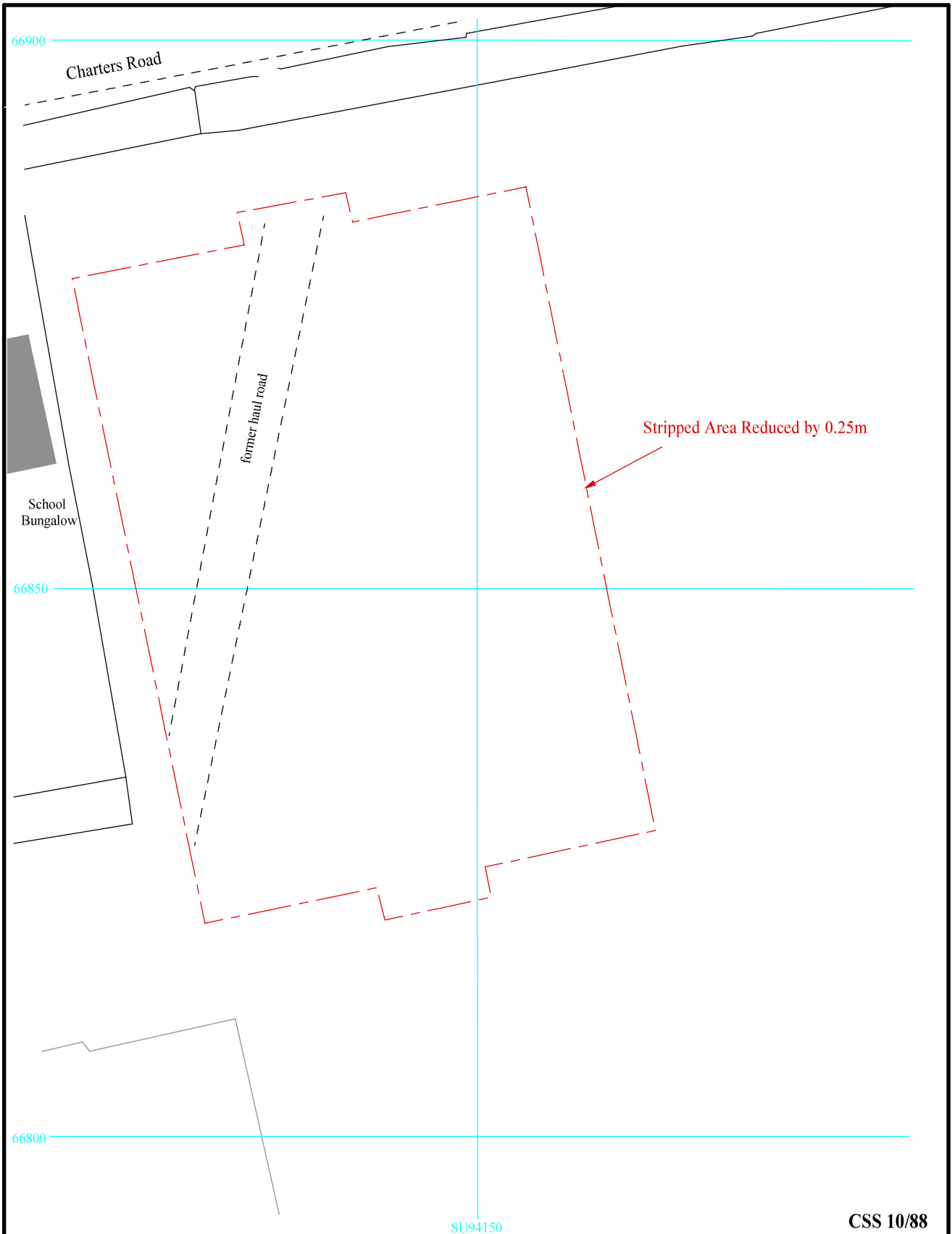
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Charters Road.

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Figure 3. Location of observed area.



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Plate 1. General view of area strip looking north.

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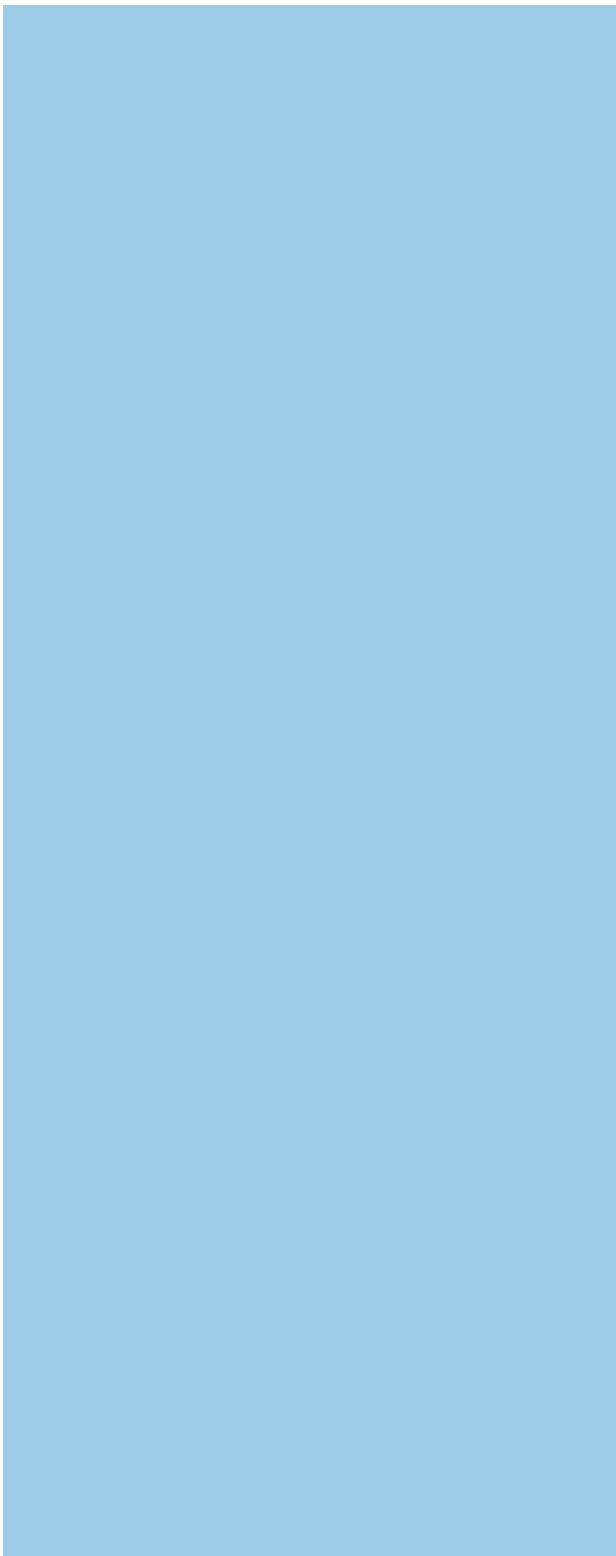
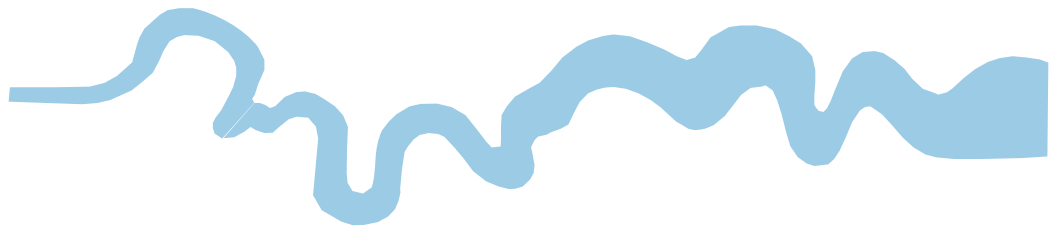
**Charter's School All Weather Pitch, Charters Road,
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Archeological Evaluation
Plate 1**

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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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