

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: CHA13/229

(SP 9932 0835)

**8 Castle Hill Avenue,
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mrs V Wallis

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CHA 13/229

February 2014

Summary

Site name: 8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

Grid reference: SP 9932 0835

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 13th January 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: CHA 13/229

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of 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 Dacorum Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 19.02.14
	Steve Preston ✓ 19.02.14

8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 13/229

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (SP 9932 0835) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Edward Hunt, of Edward Hunt & Co, Architectural Consultants and Chartered Building Surveyors, Berkhamsted House, 121 high Street, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 2DJ on behalf of Mrs Vickie Wallis of 8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HJ.

Planning permission (4/01773/12/FHA) has been gained from Dacorum Borough Council for the construction of a new extension to the house. The consent is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kate Batt, Historic Environment Advisor with Hertfordshire County Council, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on 13th January 2014.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Castle Hill Avenue, the north-eastern side of Berkhamsted and west of the castle ruins (Fig. 2). The watching brief took place at the rear of the property. The underlying geology consisted of Upper Chalk (BGS 1990), which was observed in all trenches but with an undulating reddish brown clay capping in places. The site lies at a height of c. 110m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the historic (late Saxon and medieval) core of the town, more specifically just to the west of the castle. The town was recorded as a Borough in Domesday Book with a castle constructed soon after the Norman Conquest (Thompson and Bryant 2005). An

official Royal charter granting Borough Status was made by Henry II in 1156. Various archaeological investigations in the town have revealed evidence of medieval activity (but little of later Saxon date). A Roman road (Akeman Street) passes through the town and is thought to be on the line of the High Street and there is a possibility of encountering Roman roadside settlement on the site. Just to the north of the site, Roman occupation deposits were recorded when the housing estate on Castle Hill Avenue was built in the 20th century and to the south a Roman kiln is recorded.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. Foundation trenches for the proposed extension were observed along with an associated soakaway (Fig. 3). All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The extension

The foundation trenches measured 0.60m wide and were dug to a depth of *c.* 1m deep (Fig. 3). A concrete pad, *c.* 0.1m thick that covered the extension site had already been removed. The stratigraphy observed in the trenches consisted of 0.25m of reddish brown silty clay subsoil directly overlying an undulating chalk natural geology (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1).

The soakaway

A soakaway was dug further to the east (Fig. 3; Pl. 2). It measured 2.50m square and was dug to a depth of *c.* 1m. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.25m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.27m of reddish brown silty clay subsoil overlying chalk and clay natural geology.

Conservatory

An area for a small conservatory adjacent to the extension was to comprise only shallow foundations and was not examined.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were recovered.

Conclusion

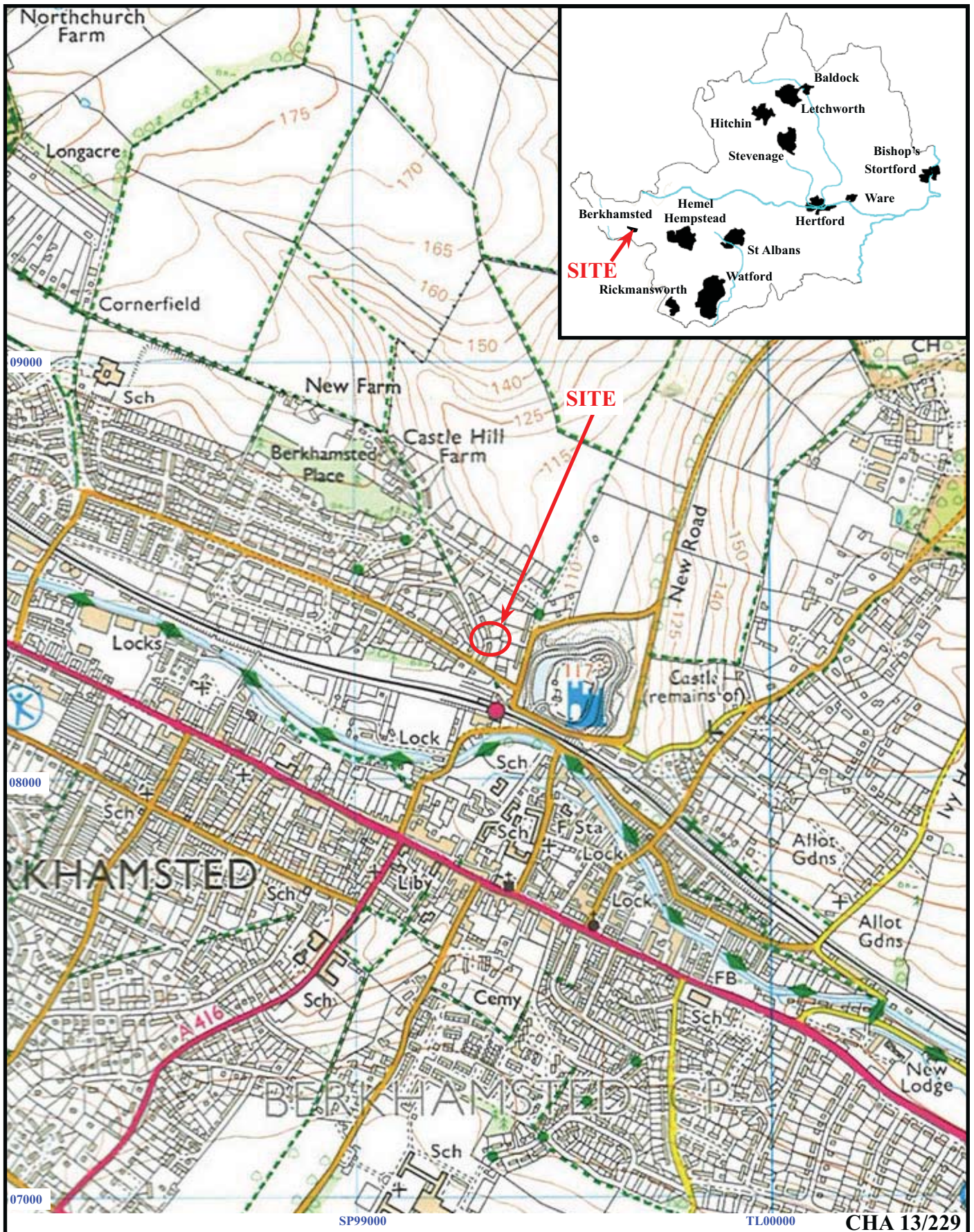
No deposits nor finds of an archaeological nature were observed during the watching brief.

References

BGS, 1990, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 238, Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Thompson, I, and Bryant, S, 2005, 'Berkhamstead, Extensive Urban Survey Project, Revised Assessment Report', Hertfordshire County Council, Hertford

APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: 8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Dacorum	
Village/Town: Berkhamsted	Parish: Berkhamsted	
Planning application reference: 4/01773/12/FHA		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Mrs Vickie Wallis of 8 Castle Hill Avenue, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HJ.		
Nature of application: Construction of new extension to a house.		
Present land use: House		
Size of application area: -	Size of area investigated: -	
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 9932 0835		
Site code (if applicable): RCT 13/98		
Site director/Organization: Andy Taylor, Thames Valley Archaeological Services		
Type of work : Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 13/01/2014	Finish: 13/01/2014
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Dacorum Museum		
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: None	
Relevant previous summaries/reports		
Summary of fieldwork results: No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were recorded.		
Author of summary: A Taylor		Date of summary: 17/02/14



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Hertfordshire, 2014**

Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Berkhamsted and Hertfordshire.

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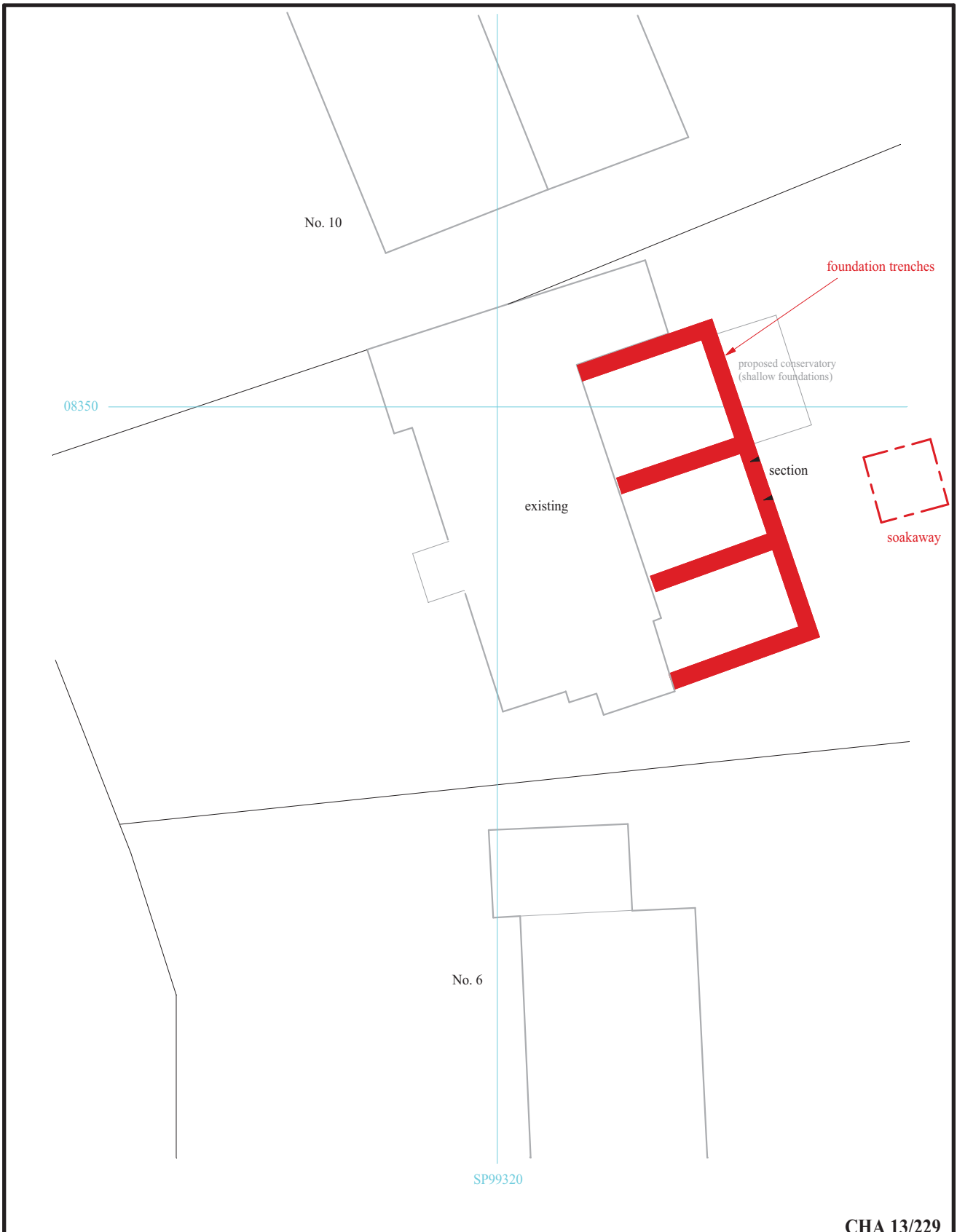
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Castle Avenue.

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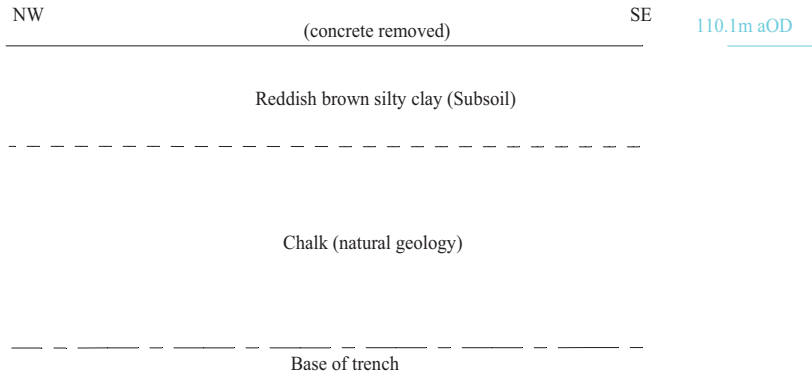
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Figure 3. Location of watching brief areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Footing trench under excavation, looking south, Scale: 0.5m.



Plate 2. Soakaway, looking west, Scales: 0.5m.

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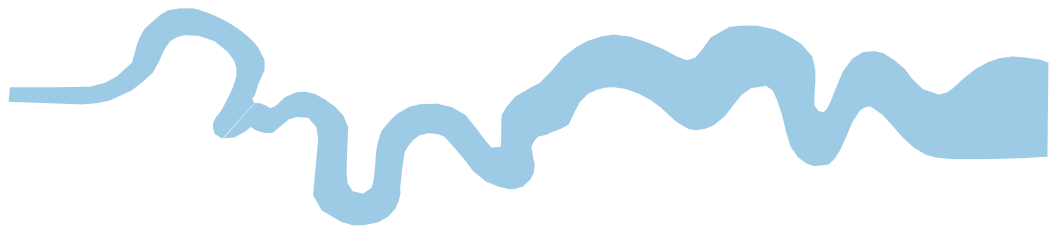
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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
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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