Some initial investigation of the open car parks was carried out by drilling boreholes down to depths of over 6 metres, and extracting sediment cores. The information has been used to generate a 3D model of the prehistoric topography: showing the line of the prehistoric channel later to be called the Trill Mill Stream (the pink and purple area), with a possible island to the south (the green area).

Geoarchaeologists from Oxford Archaeology will gather data from the site which will allow them to piece together the changing nature of the Thames floodplain environment over this epic timespan. We will be able to identify and plot the old silted up channels and islands, and discover the effects of the rising and falling watertable, and the cycles of flood and dry periods. This work will help to identify locations where people may have settled, and carried out activities such as hunting, fishing and possibly ritual sacrifices to the gods!

Each change in the nature of the river would have created its own unique habitat of plants (flora) and animals (fauna). Some of those animals and plants will have been preserved in the buried soils and sediments. Geoarchaeologists will take samples of these deposits and extract the preserved fragments of the plants, such as seeds or pollen grains, which along with preserved insects will provide information on the changing environment. Changes in water levels and the strength of the waterflow in the river (whether a stagnant pool or slow flowing stream for example) can also be deduced from the shells of aquatic snails and microscopic algae such as diatoms.

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