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**THAMES SIDE, WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: SU 9683 7727	Report No: 5174
District: Windsor & Maidenhead	Site Code: AS 1833
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 5831
Signed:	Date: 27 July 2016

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire</i>		
<p><i>In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (NGR SU 9683 7727). The evaluation was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new residential development of apartments and townhouses with a basement car park, following the demolition of the existing buildings on the site.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located within the historic town of Windsor, variously New Windsor, at the northern extent of Windsor Town Centre's Conservation Area. The latter is centred on Thames Street and the High Street, and within its Riverside character zone. The site had potential for post-medieval and early modern remains, and a potential for prehistoric archaeology.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site proved to have been significantly truncated by modern developments.</i></p>			
<b>Project dates (fieldwork)</b>	<i>18/05 and 05/05/2016 (site visits), 13/07 and 15/07/2016 (evaluation)</i>		
<b>Previous work (Y/N/?)</b>	<i>N</i>	<b>Future work (Y/N/?)</b>	<i>N</i>
<b>P. number</b>	<i>5831</i>	<b>Site code</b>	<i>AS 1833</i>
<b>Type of project</b>	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<b>Site status</b>	<i>Within Windsor Town Centre's Conservation Area</i>		
<b>Current land use</b>	<i>Office blocks (demolished)</i>		
<b>Planned development</b>	<i>Residential development of apartments and townhouses</i>		
<b>Main features (+dates)</b>	<i>-</i>		
<b>Significant finds (+dates)</b>	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
<b>County/ District/ Parish</b>	<i>Berkshire</i>	<i>Windsor &amp; Maidenhead</i>	<i>Windsor</i>
<b>HER/ SMR for area</b>	<i>Berkshire HER</i>		
<b>Post code (if known)</b>	<i>SL4 1QN</i>		
<b>Area of site</b>	<i>c.2250 m<sup>2</sup></i>		
<b>NGR</b>	<i>SU 9683 7727</i>		
<b>Height AOD (min/max)</b>	<i>20.00/20.50m</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
<b>Brief issued by</b>	<i>Berkshire Archaeology</i>		
<b>Project supervisor/s (PO)</b>	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
<b>Funded by</b>	<i>Shanly Homes Ltd</i>		
<b>Full title</b>	<i>Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<b>Authors</b>	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
<b>Report no.</b>	<i>5174</i>		
<b>Date (of report)</b>	<i>July 2016</i>		

# THAMES SIDE, WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

## **SUMMARY**

*In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (NGR SU 9683 7727). The evaluation was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new residential development of apartments and townhouses with a basement car park, following the demolition of the existing buildings on the site.*

*The site is located within the historic town of Windsor, variously New Windsor, at the northern extent of Windsor Town Centre's Conservation Area. The latter is centred on Thames Street and the High Street, and within its Riverside character zone. The site had potential for post-medieval and early modern remains, and a potential for prehistoric archaeology.*

*In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site proved to have been significantly truncated by modern developments.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (NGR SU 9683 7727; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new residential development of apartments and townhouses with a basement car park, following the demolition of the existing buildings on the site (Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) Council Planning Ref. 15/00355/FULL).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a planning requirement of RBWM Council (based on the advice of their archaeological advisors, Berkshire Archaeology (BA)) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 22/09/2015) and approved by BA. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It also followed the requirements of the Berkshire Archaeology document *General Standards for Historic Environment Projects* (2014).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. It also aimed to provide information on the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

### *Planning policy context*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The site at Thames Side is located within the historic town of Windsor, variously New Windsor, which lies within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and the county of Berkshire (Fig. 1). The site also lies at the northern extent of Windsor Town Centre's Conservation Area, which is centred on Thames Street and the High Street, and within its Riverside character zone (RBWM 2009).

2.2 The site lies along the southern frontage of Thames Side which runs along the southern bank of the River Thames (Fig. 2). The site thus forms part of Windsor's riverside frontage, overlooking the smaller settlement of Eton. Windsor and Eton's Riverside Station is 40m to the south of the site, whilst Windsor Bridge lies 80m to the west-north-west. The northern boundary of the site is formed by Thames Side. To the immediate west of the site is Farm Yard, with the River House Public House at No. 10 Thames Side forming the site's eastern boundary. To the immediate south of the site lies Riverside Walk.

2.3 The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land covering an area of approximately 2,250m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2). Until recently the site was occupied by buildings along its northern and western frontages, mainly Mercer House, a modern, three-storey structure.

### 3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies within the historic core of Windsor and is thus dominated by its urban character. Windsor lies within the valley of the River Thames, with the river only 18m to the north of the site (Fig. 1). The town of Windsor has a typical riverine location, being flat and low-lying on the floodplain. The site itself is located at approximately 20m AOD. The surrounding relief slopes down slightly towards the River Thames to the north and upwards to the south towards the prominent location of Windsor Castle. Geologically, the site lies on river terrace/floodplain gravel, which overlies chalk, Reading Bed sands and London clay formations (British Geological Survey 1978). To the south, Windsor Castle takes advantage of a folded outcrop of Cretaceous Upper Chalk, rising to some 50m AOD above the meandering River Thames.

3.2 Soils of the area comprise those of the Sutton 2 Association, which are characterised by well drained fine and coarse loamy soils usually over gravel with a calcareous matrix (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). It is also possible that the site lies upon the northern extent of the outcrop of Cretaceous Upper Chalk upon which Windsor Castle stands, as well as the river terrace/floodplain gravel and lower lying Reading Beds (with alluvial deposits expected closer to the river).

### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The site has been subject to an archaeological desk-based assessment by AS (Higgs 2014). In summary:

*The site lies within the manor of Underore, which did not form part of the town of Windsor until 1539. The Thames Side area was therefore not subject to development until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but now lies in a prominent location along the southern bank of the River Thames. Both pictorial and cartographic evidence indicate the site was built upon by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, rather than by Norden's map of 1607. Throughout the early modern period the site was occupied by a large number of structures fronting both Thames Side and Farm Yard with yards and outhouses to the rear, and likely of mixed industrial and residential use.*

*The occupation of the site in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is more complicated, as it was subject to three stages of redevelopment. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, prior to 1912, the former frontage properties were replaced by larger, neo-Gothic, Victorian brick structures, although two, original, two-storey structures remained in the north-eastern corner of the site until at least 1971. Between 1947 and 1949, the majority of the site was redeveloped with large, modern*



*industrial units which were used as a bakery and later warehouse. The extant Mercer House, Berkshire House and No. 2 Farm Yard were developed between 1970 and 1990, although the latter has retained evidence of its early 20<sup>th</sup> century origins.*

*The site has a moderate to high potential for remains dating to the post-medieval and early modern periods, a low to moderate potential for prehistoric remains and only a low potential for all other periods.*

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The site was monitored during below ground demolition works/removal of concrete floor slabs. Following this, once the site was finally cleared of stockpiled materials and access was clear, three evaluation trenches were excavated using a mechanical 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were agreed with Berkshire Archaeology and encompassed the proposed footprint of the extensive basement car park. Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision.

5.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

### Trench 1 (Fig. 2, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1A (DP 4): south-east end, south-south-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.38m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1000	Made ground. Mid brownish grey, loose, silty sand with frequent CBM fragments and debris.
0.40 – 0.70m	L1001	Made ground. Light yellow and light grey, loose, sand and gravel.
0.70 – 1.72m	L1002	Made ground. Mid to dark grey, compact, sandy silt with moderate CBM fragments.
1.72m +	L1003	Natural. Light to mid yellow, orangey red and brown, loose, gravel.

<i>Sample section 1B (DP 5): north-west end, north-north-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.21m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.59m	L1000	Made ground. As above.
0.59 – 1.75m	L1002	Made ground. As above.
1.75m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above.

*Description:* No archaeological features or finds were present.



**Trench 2** (Fig. 2, DP 6-7)

<i>Sample section 2A (DP 8): south-west end, south-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.15m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.85m	L1000	Made ground. As above, Trench 1.
0.85 – 1.94m	L1004	Made ground. Mixed light brown, loose, gravel with mid grey, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments and debris.
1.94m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 2B (DP 9): north-east end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.24m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.93m	L1000	Made ground. As above, Trench 1.
0.93 – 1.69m	L1004	Made ground. As above.
1.69m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above, Trench 1.

*Description:* No archaeological features or finds were present.

**Trench 3** (Fig. 2, DP 10-11)

<i>Sample section 3A (DP 12): north-west end, south-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.26m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.53m	L1000	Made ground. As above, Trench 1.
0.53 – 0.69m	L1005	Made ground. Mid brownish yellow, loose, silty sand with frequent CBM fragments.
0.69 – 1.16m	L1006	Made ground. Dark grey, friable, sandy silt with frequent CBM fragments.
1.16 – 1.70m	L1004	Made ground. As above, Trench 2.
1.70m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 3B (DP 13): south-east end, north-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 20.37m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.44m	L1000	Modern made ground. As above, Trench 1.
0.44 – 0.73m	L1005	Made ground. As above.
0.73 – 1.49m	L1006	Made ground. As above.
1.49 – 1.78m	L1007	Made ground. Light to mid greyish brown, loose, sand with frequent concrete, CBM fragments and modern debris .
1.78m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above, Trench 1.

*Description:* No archaeological features or finds were present.

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds although the evaluation was conducted after the perimeter piling on the site had been completed. Earlier demolition works were monitored.

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 The site contained thick deposits of (modern) made ground. These were 1.20 – 2.00+ thick and were present directly overlying the natural geology (L1003). The latter comprised a light to mid yellow, orange/red and brown, loose, gravel.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the post-medieval and early modern archaeology, and also prehistoric remains. The site is located within the historic town of Windsor, at the northern extent of Windsor Town Centre's Conservation Area. The latter is centred on Thames Street and the High Street, and within its Riverside character zone.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed, and no residual finds were recovered. The site was shown to have been significantly truncated by modern developments, in particular by the construction of Mercer House office block. No deposits other than those of modern 20<sup>th</sup> century origin were present. It is unlikely any archaeological remains survive, if present, as the modern activity affected practically the entire site.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at a suitable local repository. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Shanly Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding the project (in particular Mr Peter Humm and Mr Phil Mason for assistance). AS would also like to acknowledge Reynolds Groundworks Services for assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology.

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## APPENDIX 1      CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

<b>Records</b>	<b>Number</b>
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	4 (Context, Photo, Digital Photo, Drawing)
Context Sheets	7
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	2
Site drawings A4	0
Site photographs b/w	9
Site photographs colour slides	9
Digital Photographs	22



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The site. Looking east.



DP 2. Trench 1. Looking south-east.



DP 3. Trench 1. Looking west-north-west.



DP 4. Trench 1, south-east end. Sample section 1A. Looking north-north-east.



DP 5. Trench 1, north-west end. Sample section 1B. Looking south-south-west.



DP 6. Trench 2. Looking east-north-east.





DP 7. Trench 2. Looking south-west.



DP 8. Trench 2, south-west end. Sample section 2A. Looking north-west.



DP 9. Trench 2, north-east end. Sample section 2B. Looking south-east.



DP 10. Trench 3. Looking east-south-east.



DP 11. Trench 3. Looking north-west.



DP 12. Trench 3, north-west end. Sample section 3A. Looking north-east.



DP 13. Trench 3, south-east end. Sample section 3B. Looking south-west.





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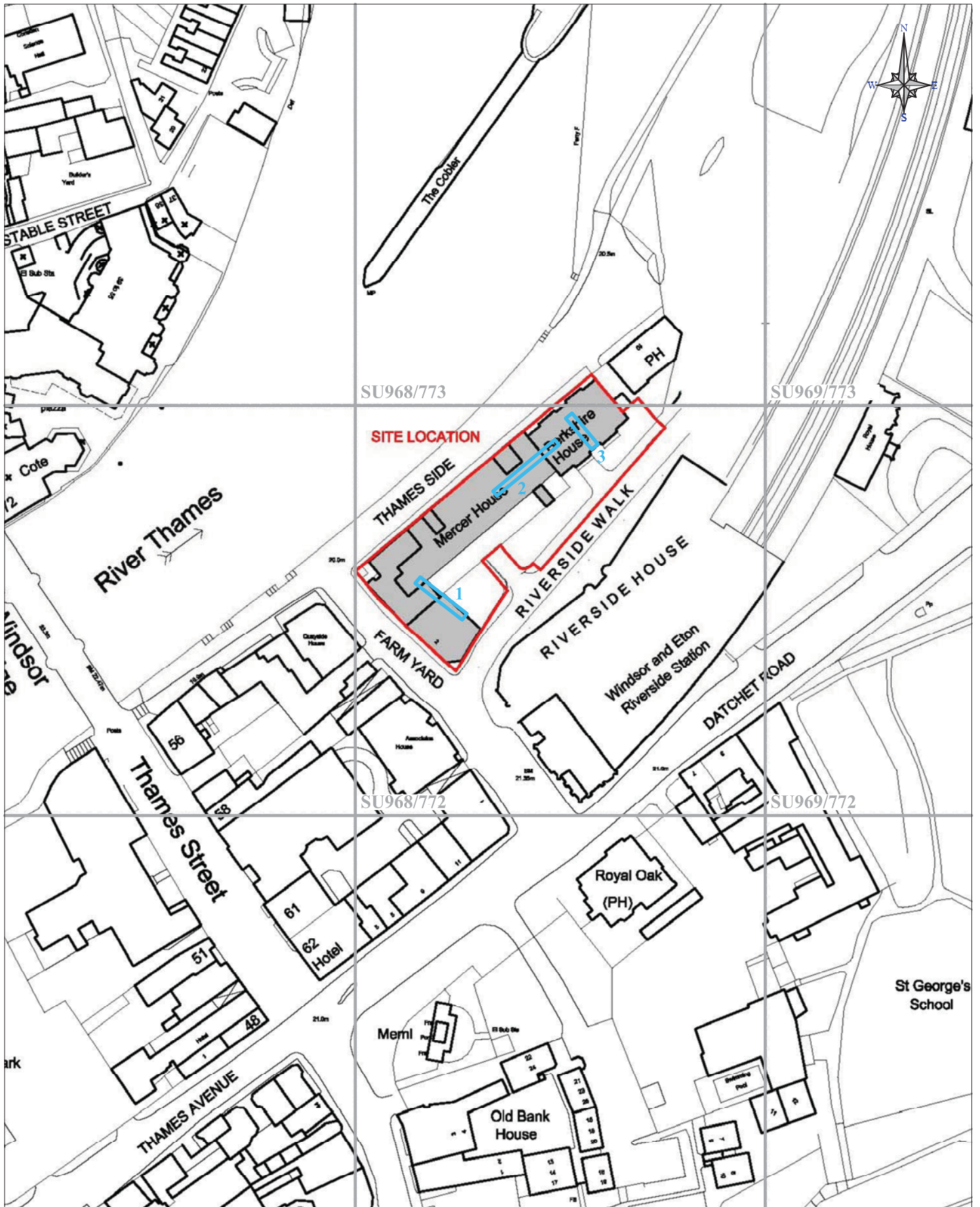
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## Fig. 1 Site location plan

Scale 1:25,000 at A4

Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (P5831)





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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:1250 at A4  
 Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (P5831)



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<b>Fig. 3 Trench location plan</b>
Scale 1:750 at A4
Thames Side, Windsor, Berkshire (P5831)