

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: KRN21/222

(SU 4866 6733)

**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Muller Property Limited

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code KRN 21/222

February 2023

Summary

Site name: Land at Kennet Reach, London Road, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 4866 6733

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th - 23rd February 2023

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Steve Ford and Maisie Foster

Site code: KRN 21/222

Area of site: 0.5ha

Summary of results: Only 6 of the intended 7 trenches were excavated, with the location of trench 6 inaccessible. Trenches 4 and 5 had to be slightly re-positioned to avoid unforeseen obstacles on site. The development area was covered in a very thick deposit of modern made ground (more than 3m in some areas), therefore trenches 1, 4, 5 and 7 did not reach natural geology. In trench 3 a small segment of brick flooring from the demolished Ham Manor was recorded and in trenches 2 and 3 the natural geology was recorded as a peaty sandy gravel. No other finds or features of archaeological interest were observed or recorded. Due to the depth of modern made ground, it was not possible to fully determine the site's archaeological potential, but any archaeological deposits that might exist will be so deeply buried that its chance of being affected by the development is very low.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston ✓ 27.02.23

Land at Kennet Reach, London Road, Newbury, West Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Report 21/222b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Kennet Reach, London Road, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU 4866 6733) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Matthew Buckle, of Muller Property Ltd, The Point, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2GP.

Planning consent has been sought from West Berkshire Council for the construction of a care home. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on site, a single component of work is proposed, a field evaluation by means of machine trenching with the potential for a further phase of fieldwork if significant deposits are revealed to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to mitigate the effects of the development. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the Council's *Local Plan* policies.

The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist (Planning and Management Advice) for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford, Maisie Foster and John Conley between 20th - 23rd February 2023. The site code is KRN 21/222.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum or Archaeology Data Service according to their guidelines in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the east of Newbury, West Berkshire, just off London Road (A4) (Fig. 1). The site is an irregular parcel of land, covering 0.5ha, that is relatively flat at a height of *c.* 74m above Ordnance Datum, which sits approximately 1m above the land surrounding it. The site is bounded by the River Kennet to the south and the marina to the west, a small lane and residential properties and their gardens to the north and east, which are then both bounded by the River Lambourn. The underlying geology is mapped as Terrace 3 Gravel (BGS 2006). Natural geology was only reached in two trenches and was recorded as a peaty sandy gravel.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Procter and Elliot 2021). In summary this potential stems from the site's location in the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley (Lobb and Rose 1996; Dils and Yates 2013; Froom 2012). The Kennet Valley is particularly notable for its rich Mesolithic presence with numerous sites spanning the Late Palaeolithic through to Late Mesolithic on the stretch of valley floor and adjacent terraces between Hungerford and Thatcham. A predictive mapping study for the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic within the Kennet Valley suggests that the site, close to the confluence of the Rivers Kennet and Lambourn is a likely position for Mesolithic (and later) occupation (Barnett *et al.* 2020). The site lies some distance from the historic core of Newbury but was partly occupied by the buildings and garden of the 19th-century Ham Manor, first recorded on the Tithe Map of 1840. A late Bronze Age burnt mound and Roman occupation were also recorded during an excavation to the north (Pine 2010).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there are any earlier prehistoric (Mesolithic) deposits or artefact scatters are present;
- and
- to determine if there are any earlier origins to Ham Manor than has been documented cartographically or historically.

Seven trenches were to be dug using a 360°-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any feature that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. If any ancient buried soil layers were to be exposed, provision was made to dig up to seven test pits in total to systematically search for Mesolithic flintwork. The spoil from each of the

was to be sieved using a 10mm mesh. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds and scanned with a metal detector.

Results

Only six of the tended trenches were dug, with slight alterations made to all to work around constraints such as preserved trees (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged from 21.7m to 12m in length and 1.6m to 3m in depth. Trench 1 was 1.2m wide, all the others 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadth, depths and description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned NW - SE and was 21.7m long and 2.1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 1.9m+ of banded modern made ground. A dense deposit of brick rubble was recorded for 4m from WNW end between an approximate depth of 1.2–1.4m. Natural geology was not reached. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2 (Figs 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned S - N and was 14m long and 1.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil, 1.6m of compact banded modern made ground overlying peaty gravel (possible natural geology). The basal spoil was put to one side and spread, but no finds of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned close to S–N, and was 12m long and 1.6m deep at the N end and 1.8m deep at the S end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil, above 1.4m of compact banded modern made ground, above 0.15m of brick rubble overlying peaty gravel (possible natural geology). The basal spoil was put to one side and spread, but no finds were recovered. Between 10.5m and 11.8m the remains of a brick floor probably associated with Ham Manor was recorded.

Trench 4 (Figs 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 14.3m long and 2.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil, overlying 2.15m of compact banded modern made ground. Natural geology was not reached and no finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 5 (Figs 3; Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was aligned SW - NE and was 14m long and 2.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.6m of made ground (formerly a tennis court), overlying 1.8m of compact banded modern made ground. Natural geology was not reached and no finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 6

Not dug

Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 6)

Trench 7 was aligned S - N and was 19m long and 2.6m deep at the north end and 3m deep at the south end. The variation in depth is due to the trench being dug through a small bank, perhaps placed as a flood defence. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil, overlying 2.3m+ of compact banded modern made ground. A Victorian culvert pipe was recorded between 4-4.5m from the southern end. Natural geology was not reached and no finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Finds

All finds encountered were modern and of no archaeological interest.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits being present on site, only a brick floor possibly remaining from the demolished 19th-century Ham Manor was recorded. Of the 7 intended trenches only 6 could be excavated, with all of them needing slight changes in orientation and re-positioning to avoid unforeseen obstacles on site. During the excavation of the trenches a very thick (more than 3m in some areas) deposit of modern made ground was observed. This meant that natural geology was not reached in trenches 1, 4, 5 and 7. No other finds or features of archaeological interest were observed or recorded.

Due to the depth of modern made ground, it was not possible to determine the site's full archaeological potential, however if any archaeological features or deposits survive, there is little chance of them being affected by the development due to their depth in the ground.

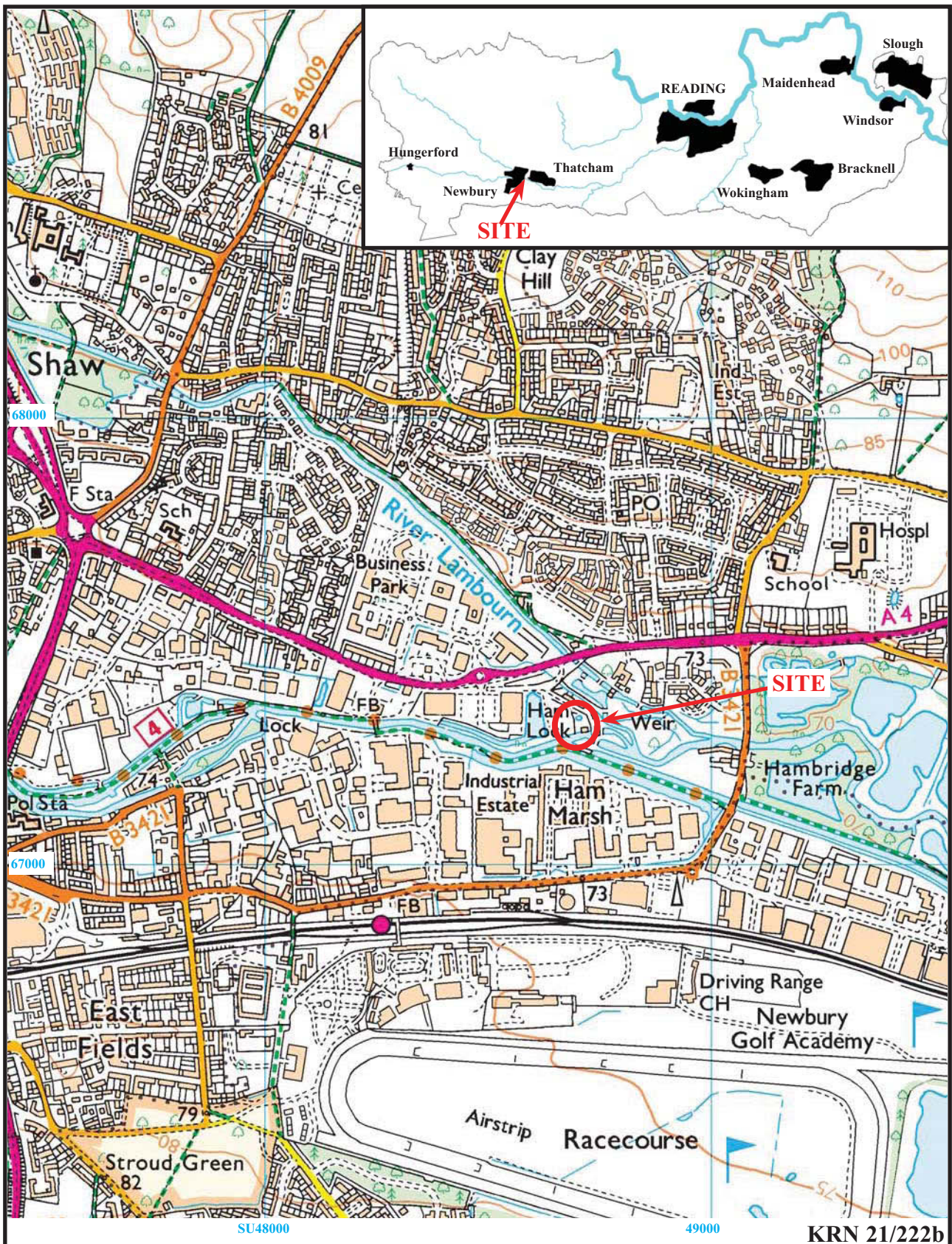
References

- Barnett, C, Bell, M and Grant, M, 2020, *Tracing their steps; predictive mapping of Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Archaeology, Middle Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Historic England research report **87-2019**, London
- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 267, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits, Keyworth
- Dils, J and Yates, M, 2013, *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire*, Berkshire Record Society, Eynsham
- Froom, R, 2012, *The Mesolithic of the Kennet Valley*, privately printed
- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Salisbury
- NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Pine, J, 2010, 'A Late Bronze Age burnt mound and other prehistoric features, and Roman occupation at Turnpike School, Gaywood Drive, Newbury', in J Pine, *Archaeological investigations along the Line of Ermin Street in West Berkshire, 1992-2008, Exploring Prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement*, TVAS Monogr **12**, Reading, 1-17
- Procter, C and Elliott, G, 2021, 'Land at Kennet Reach, London Road, Newbury, West Berkshire and Archaeological Desk-based Assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **21/222**, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at WNW, S, SW, WSW, SSW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	21.7	1.2	2.1	0-0.2m Topsoil; 0.2-2.1m+ banded modern madeground (Natural geology was not reached) [PI. 1]
2	14	1.8	1.8	0-0.1m topsoil; 0.1-1.7m banded modern madeground; 1.7m+ peaty gravel (possible natural geology) [PI. 2]
3	12	1.8	NE end 1.6 SW end 1.8	0-0.1m topsoil; 0.11-1.5m modern madeground; 1.5-1.55m brick rubble; 1.55m+ peaty gravel (possible natural geology). Brick floor [PI. 3]
4	14.3	1.8	2.4	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-2.4m+ modern madeground (Natural geology not reached) [PI. 4]
5	14	1.8	2.4	0-0.6m modern madeground for tennis court; 0.6-2.4m+ modern madeground (Natural geology not reached) [PI. 5]
7	19	1.8	S end 3m N end 2.6	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-2.6m+ modern madeground (Natural geology not reached) [PI. 6]

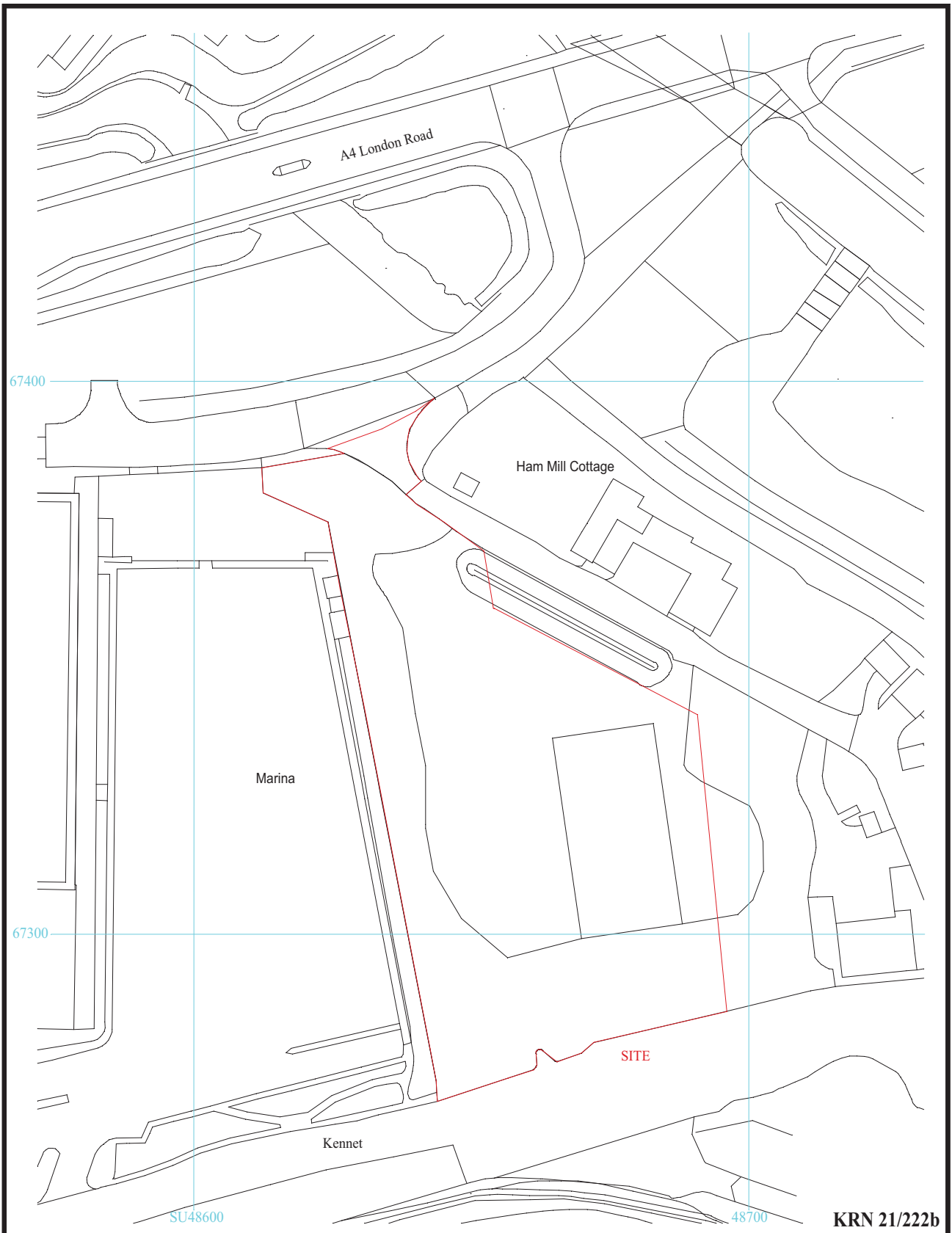


**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road, Newbury,
West Berkshire, 2023
Archaeological Evaluation**
Figure 1. Location of site within Newbury and Berkshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500
Crown Copyright reserved



KRN 21/222b

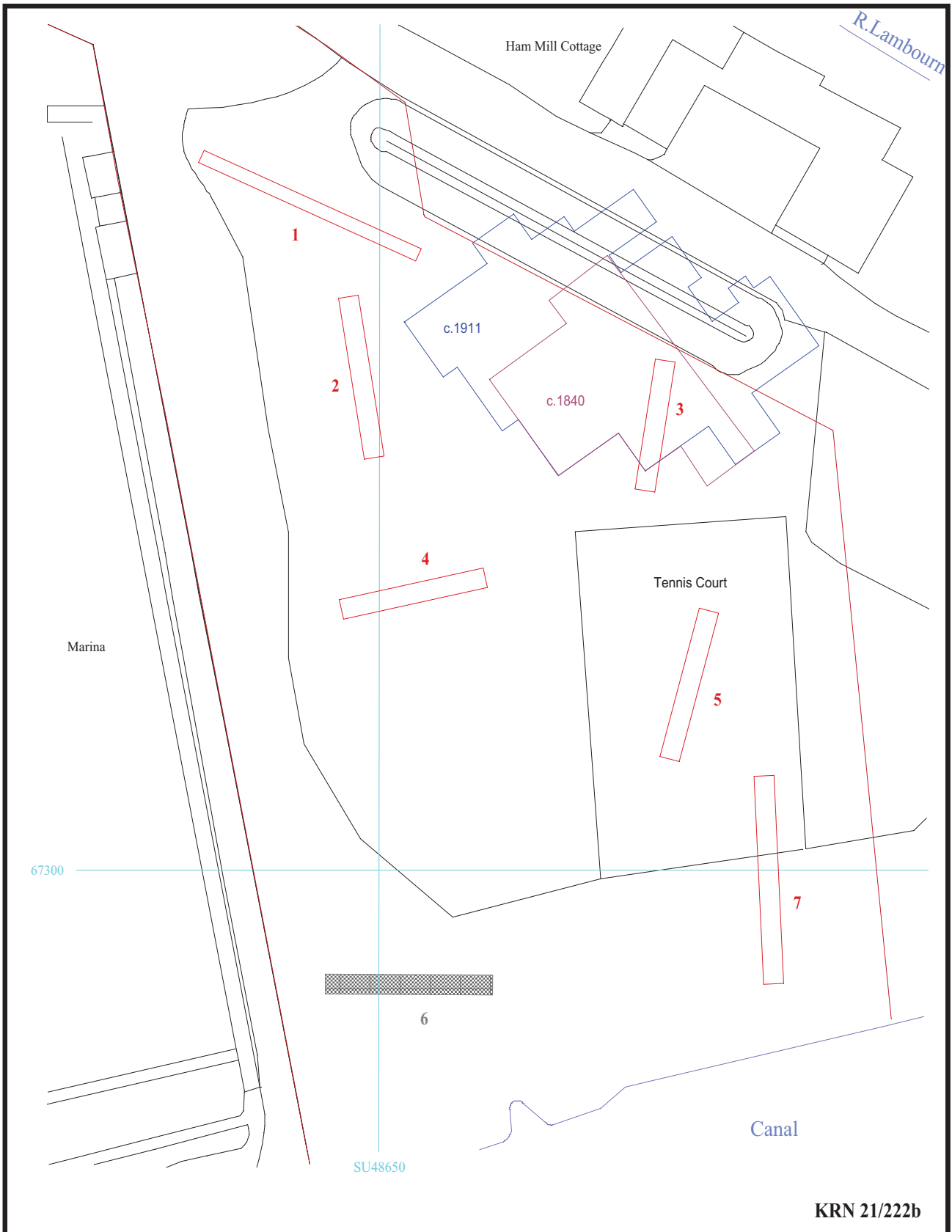


**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire, 2023
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.



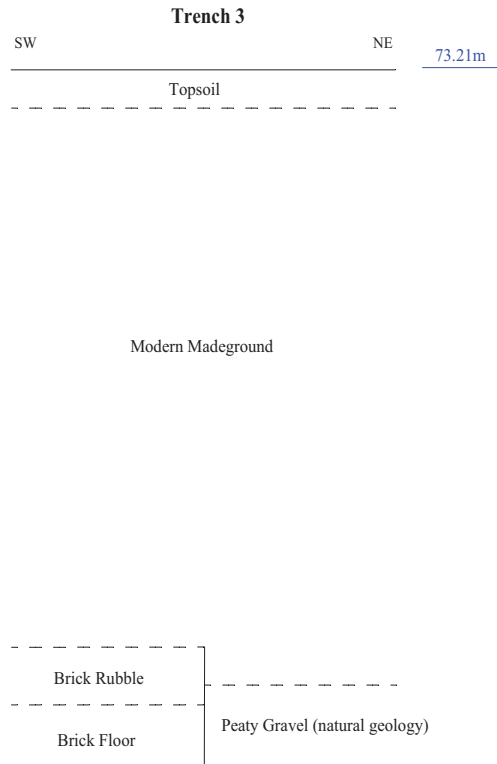
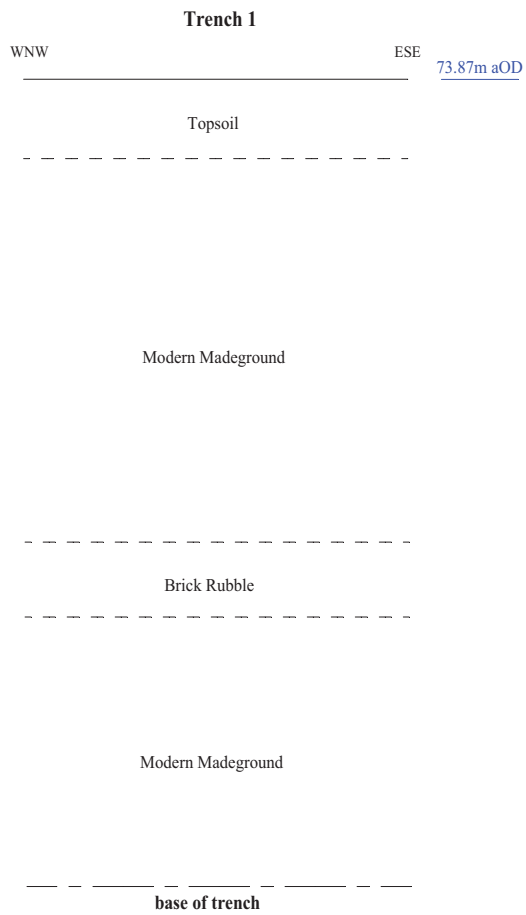
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire, 2023
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches and mapped footprint of Ham Manor.





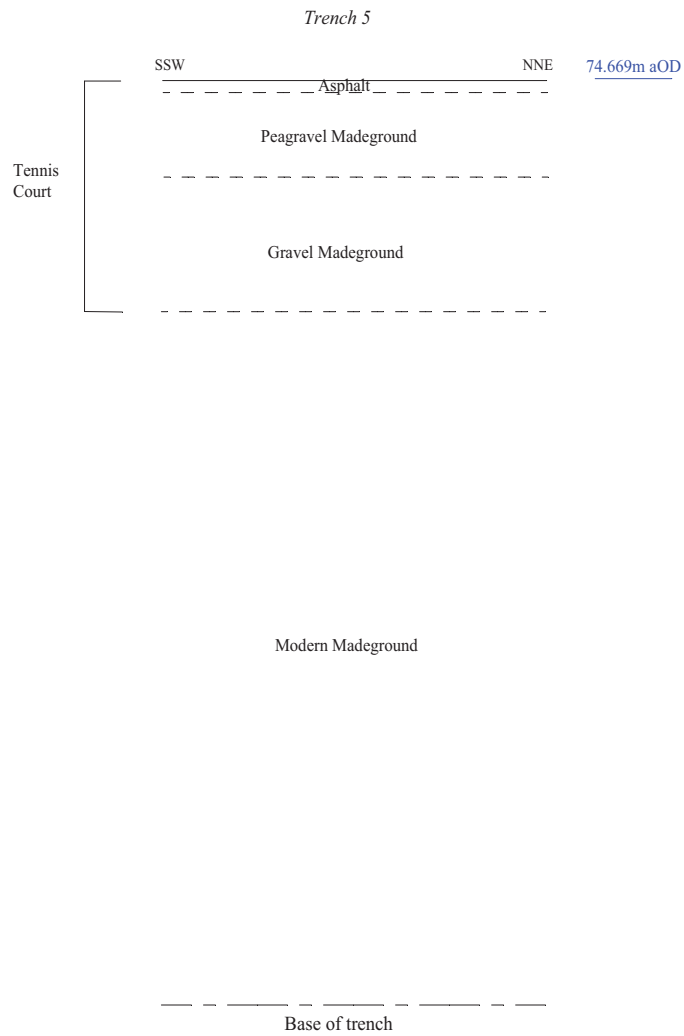
KRN 21/222

**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative sections.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



KRN 21/222

**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road,
Newbury, West Berkshire
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north-west



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north west,
Scales; 2m and 1m



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north east,
Scales; 2m and 1m



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking south west, Scale: 1m.

KRN 21/222

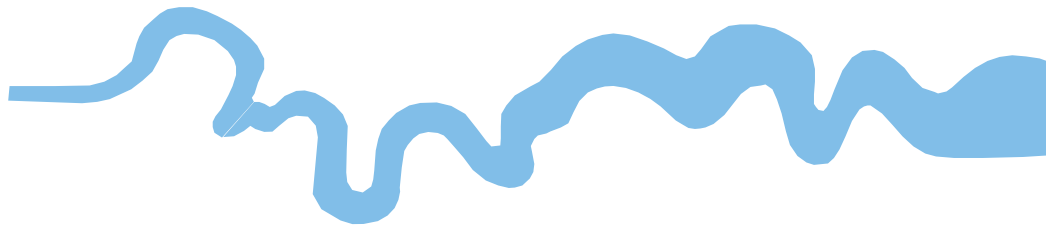
**Land at Kennet Reach, London Road
Newbury, West Berkshire
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 4.**

**THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES**

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

***Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent, Wellingborough
and Ennis (Ireland)***