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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**82-84 Rose Street,  
Wokingham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andrew Weale**

**Site Code: RSW09/108**

**(SU 8143 6881)**

**82–84 Rose Street, Wokingham  
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Bancroft Developments Ltd**

by Andrew Weale  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RSW09/108

**December 2009**

## Summary

**Site name:** 82–84 Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8143 6881

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 15th–16th December 2009

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Weale

**Site code:** RSW09/108

**Area of site:** c. 810 sq m

**Summary of results:** Several deposits of possible and probable archaeological interest were recorded, comprising a large ditch, a gully and pits. These were all poorly dated and no pottery of medieval or earlier date was recovered. Two late post-medieval or modern pits, a well, and two brick walls were also observed. It is considered that despite the lack of positive dating evidence, the large ditch may be the rear boundary of a burgage plot of medieval or even late Saxon date.

**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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# **82–84 Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire**

## **An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Andrew Weale

**Report 09/108**

### **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 82–84 Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU 8143 6881) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Alex Horder of Bancroft Developments, Stratfield House, 265 High Street, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7AH.

Planning permission is to be sought from Wokingham Borough Council to redevelop the site for residential use. The application is to include the results of a field evaluation to assess the archaeological potential of the site in order to inform the planning process and if necessary, allow for appropriate mitigation of the effects of development should consent be obtained.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeological Officer of Berkshire Archaeology, the Borough Council's archaeological advisers. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale and Dan Bray on the 15th and 16th of December 2009 and the site code is RSW 09/108. 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 in the centre of Wokingham, which lies on the top of a low hill (Fig. 1). The site lies at approximately 70m above Ordnance Datum and is generally flat with a slight slope down to the north. The site lies on plateau gravel close to near the boundary with Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1971). A mixture of gravel and clay was observed with the trenches. The site is currently a semi derelict light industrial yard with a brick building, wooden sheds, a swimming pool, spoil heaps and vegetation. The site is bounded to the south east by buildings fronting Rose Street the north-east, north-west and south-east by housing with gardens (Fig. 2).



## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site is due to its position in the historic core of Wokingham. The place name of Wokingham is of Saxon origin however no finds or deposits of a Saxon date have so far been recorded from the town. Wokingham itself is not mentioned in Domesday Book but this may be due to a quirk of the administrative arrangements, with Wokingham's entry subsumed within that of Sonning and as a detached portion of Wiltshire (Astill 1978). The western boundary of the site has been conjectured to be on the line of this boundary of the detached portion of Wiltshire (Astill 1978 fig. 29). In the late 12th or early 13th century Wokingham was chosen by the Bishop of Salisbury as the site of a planned new town. Rose Street is thought to be one of the two main streets of this new town, the other being Peach Street, while Cross Street appears to be part of a crossing grid between the two. The site appears to lie at the junction of what is thought to be the edge of the part of Wokingham that pre-dates this new layout, with the planned town beginning immediately to the west and the earlier (?Saxon) settlement to the east around the church (Astill 1978). The street frontage of Rose Street includes several upstanding medieval and early post-medieval buildings whilst behind them distinctive (medieval) burgage plots survive. Fieldwork to the south of the site on Rose Street adjacent to Cross Street revealed the presence of succession of late medieval and post-medieval buildings (Morris and Jones 1990). However watching briefs on Rose Street Methodist chapel and at Rose Court to the south-west did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Oram 2006; McNicoll-Norbury 2009). Similarly, evaluations to the east close to the church have not revealed any deposits of interest (e.g. Hull 1997)

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeological relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits of late Saxon or medieval date are present representing components of the planned town are present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy;

It was proposed to excavate four trenches, one of 10m, three of 5m length and all 1.6m wide using a 360° tracked machine with a toothless ditching bucket to remove topsoil and overburden down to the top of archaeological deposits or natural geology. The trenches were targeted at the accessible parts of the footprints of the proposed new buildings whilst avoiding the existing canopy space of trees and existing structures on the site. The trenches were located to target those areas of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development. The machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features existed or were thought to exist the trenches were hand cleaned. Sufficient archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above. Spoil heaps were monitored for artefacts.

## **Results**

All four trenches were excavated as planned, however the positions of Trenches 1 and 2 had to be moved to the north and north-east respectively due to the presence of a disused swimming pool in this area (Fig. 3). This change in positioning of trenches took place in consultation with Ms O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology. The trenches were between 5.6m and 10.9m long, all were 1.6m wide and up to a maximum of 1m deep. A metal detector was employed to enhance the recovery of metal artefacts, with poor results perhaps due to the presence of ironstone within the gravel. Ground water was encountered within all trenches, in Trenches 1 and 2 at a depth of around 0.70m below topsoil and the resulting flooding made excavation difficult within these trenches.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned SW–NE, 6.10m long and a maximum depth of 0.9m below topsoil. The stratigraphy within Trench 1 comprised 0.41m of humic topsoil over 0.43m of a mid brown silty clay subsoil above 0.07m of a red/brown gravelly clay natural geology. A sondage was excavated at the north-eastern end of the trench to a depth of 1.01m below topsoil to confirm that the interpretation of the stratigraphic sequence was correct. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within Trench 1 and only modern artefacts were noted from the spoil heap (not retained).

### Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5; Plate 1)

Trench 2 was aligned SE–NW, 6.40m long and a maximum depth of 0.9m below topsoil. The stratigraphy within Trench 2 comprised 0.55m of topsoil, below which was ditch 7. Ditch 7 was 2.8m wide crossing the trench

approximately parallel with the site boundary (SW–NE). The upper fill of ditch 7 was a mixture of topsoil and modern debris; below this was whitish/brown silty clay (60) that contained a moderate brick/tile. Beneath fill 60 was a dark brown loam (59) which contained one piece of tile. Due to ground water Ditch 7 was not fully excavated and its full depth remains unknown. Ditch 7 cut through the mid brown silty clay subsoil which had a maximum depth of 0.25m. Beneath the subsoil was red/brown gravelly clay natural geology .

#### Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 5; Plates 2 and 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SE–NW, 10.9m long and a maximum depth of 0.9m below concrete hard standing. The stratigraphy within Trench 2 comprised 0.16m of concrete above 0.30m of made ground. Beneath this was a brick-built well (61) with a 0.70m wide opening. The well had a curved top opening up to an internal diameter of 1.2m; there was no well cap in place. The well was within a large well defined cut (8) that was back filled around the brick work with yellow sandy clay that contained post-medieval or modern brick. The construction cut for the well cut through a layer up to 0.48m thick of dark brown to black silty clay made ground that contained modern pottery along with iron fragments and moderate amounts of brick/tile. Beneath this layer were several pits, a shallow linear feature and a large shallow feature.

Pit 1 was sub-circular in plan approximately 0.66m in diameter with steep sides and a flat base (Pl. 3). Pit 1 was filled with dark brown/grey sandy clay (50) that contained coal, ceramic building material and clay tobacco pipe. Pit 2 was oval in plan, 0.70m along its long axis and 0.56 along its short axis with moderate sloping sides and a flat base. Pit 2 was filled with a loose greenish/grey sandy clay (51) that contained no artefacts. Pit 5 was circular in plan, 0.60m in diameter with steep sides and a flat base. Pit 5 was filled with light greenish/grey sandy clay (54) that contained one piece of tile.

Gully 3 was linear in plan 0.20m wide and a maximum of 0.09m deep although for the majority of its length it was just a stain 0.01m deep. Gully 3 was filled with (52) light brown/grey sandy clay that contained one sherd of post-medieval pottery. Gully 3 cut pit 4 that was sub-rectangular in plan with moderately sloping sides and an uneven base which continued under the edge of the trench. Pit 4 was filled with light brownish/grey sandy clay (53) that contained no artefacts. Gully 3 also cut feature 6 which was a large feature of which only one edge was visible within the trench. Hollow 6 was 3.8m long, a maximum of 1.86m wide and 0.16m deep, the side of hollow 6 was moderately sloped and the base flat. A sondage 0.78m wide and 1.24m long was hand excavated through hollow 6 which showed it was filled with light green/grey sandy clay (57) with moderate gravel that contained no artefacts but had a strong organic odour. Hollow 6 cut into layer 58, a mid to dark green/brown clay sand with 10% silt that extended across the base of the trench up to 0.25m thick. This layer

may have been the remains of subsoil and it contained no artefacts. A machine cut sondage was excavated at the south-eastern end of the trench, removing part of hollow 6 and layer 58 to confirm that no other feature survived beneath 58. The depth of hollow 6 was seen to increase at the south-eastern end of the trench to a maximum of 0.32m deep. Beneath hollow 6 and layer 58 was yellow clayey gravel natural geology.

#### Trench 4 (Fig. 4 and Plate 4)

Trench 4 was aligned WSW to ENE, 5.60m long and a maximum depth of 0.9m below concrete hard standing. The stratigraphy within Trench 4 comprised 0.18m of concrete, 0.17m of made ground consisting of crushed concrete and brick. Beneath this was a large pit, 2.10m in diameter that was filled with modern material including large pieces of iron-stained concrete. The pit was cut through a layer up to 0.47m thick of dark brown to black silty clay made ground that contained modern pottery along with iron fragments and moderate amounts of modern brick/tile which was very similar if not the same as the made ground layer in Trench 3. Beneath this was a yellow gravelly clay natural geology.

The edge of Trench 4 collapsed in two places. The first of these was between 1.4–4m from the WSW end on the south facing section, revealing a wall (55) of three courses of brick in a stretcher bond with a mid yellow sandy mortar, a maximum of 210mm high. This wall was beneath the made ground and on top of a concrete foundation (63) 0.12m thick which was laid on top of the cut of the modern pit. The second collapse occurred in the ENE corner of the north facing section to reveal the corner of a wall (56) of which there appeared to be up to 5 courses, 340mm high with a very crumbly white sandy mortar. The bond pattern could not be discerned. This wall was very decayed and in a state of collapse but appeared to carry on to the east and south.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Andrew Weale*

One sherd of pottery (14g) was recovered from Gully 3 (52). It was a bodysherd in a fine sandy red earthenware with a brown glaze ('post medieval redware'). Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century.

### *Clay pipe by Andrew Weale*

Three fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem weighing 14g were recovered from pit 1 (50).

## *Stone* by Andrew Weale

One piece of coal weighing 1g and one piece of slate (weight 2g) were recovered from Pit 1 (50).

## *Ceramic building material* by Andrew Weale

A total of six fragments of brick and two pieces of tile were recovered from three contexts. The pieces of brick weighing 1.218kg were recovered from Ditch 7 (60). One fragment of tile weighing 66g was recovered from Ditch 7 (59). One fragment of tile weighing 88g was recovered from pit 5 (54). None shows any diagnostic traits and they can only be broadly dated post-medieval or later.

## **Conclusion**

Cut features of possible and probable archaeological interest were observed within three of the four trenches excavated, along with clearly modern deposits. A large ditch (7) at the rear of the plot in Trench 2 appeared to have been backfilled in modern times but it was not possible to establish its origin. However this ditch seems to follow the line of the back of the plot and may indicate the presence of a late Saxon or medieval boundary. Unlike burgage plots to the west, shown on modern plans, the plot forming the site is notably wider and may be the remains of a plot laid out before the medieval new town, as suggested by Astill (1978). It is possible therefore that this ditch may define the rear of the pre-new town settlement.

A series of pre-modern features were recorded in trench 3 but produced few datable finds. A small gully that cut some of these features contained a single piece of dateable pottery, of a broad 16th - 19th century date range and therefore the features it cuts pre-date this. However, pre-modern (medieval or saxon) pottery is conspicuous by its absence from the evaluation as a whole and there is therefore some doubt as to the date of these features.

## **References**

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- Morris, E and Jones, N, 1990, 'Excavations at Cross St., Wokingham, 1974-75', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 73, (for 1986-90), 105-15
- Oram, R, 2006, Methodist Church, Rose Street, Wokingham, An archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/98b, Reading
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

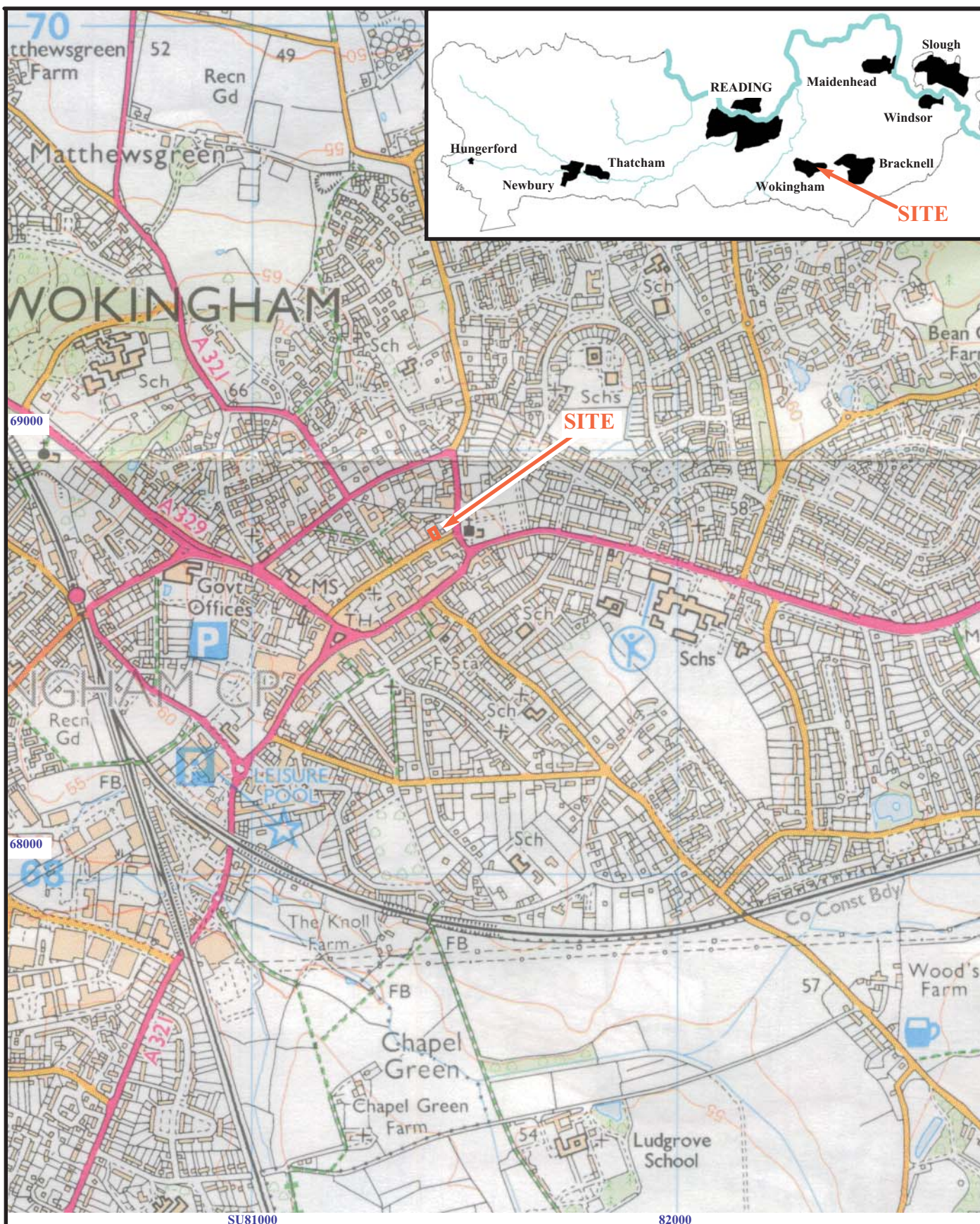
0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	6.10	1.6	0.9	0–0.41m topsoil; 0.41–0.83m subsoil; 0.83m+natural geology (gravely clay).
2	6.40	1.6	0.9	0–0.55m topsoil; 0.55–0.80m subsoil; 0.80m+ natural geology (gravelly clay). Ditch 7 <b>[Plate 1]</b>
3	10.9	1.6	1.26	0–0.16m concrete; 0.16–0.46m made ground; 0.46–0.94m black made ground 0.94–1.20m possible subsoil (58); 1.2m+ natural geology (clayey gravel). Pits 1, 2, 4 and 5, Gully 3, feature 6, well cut 8, well 61. <b>[Plates 2 and 3]</b>
4	5.60	1.6	0.90	0–0.18m concrete; 0.18–0.35m made ground; 0.35–0.82m black made ground; 0.82m+ natural geology (gravelly clay). Wall 55 in section wall 56 in section. <b>[Plate 4]</b>

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	50	Pit	Post-medieval	Clay pipe
3	2	51	Pit	Undated	None
3	3	52	Gully	Post-medieval	Pottery
3	4	53	Pit	Undated	None
3	5	54	Pit	Medieval-Post-medieval	Peg tile
3	6	57	Hollow	Undated	None
2	7	59, 60	Ditch	Post-medieval	Brick
3	8	61, 62	Well	Post-medieval	Brick
4		55	Wall	Post-medieval/modern	Brick and concrete construction
4		56	Wall	Post-medieval	Brick





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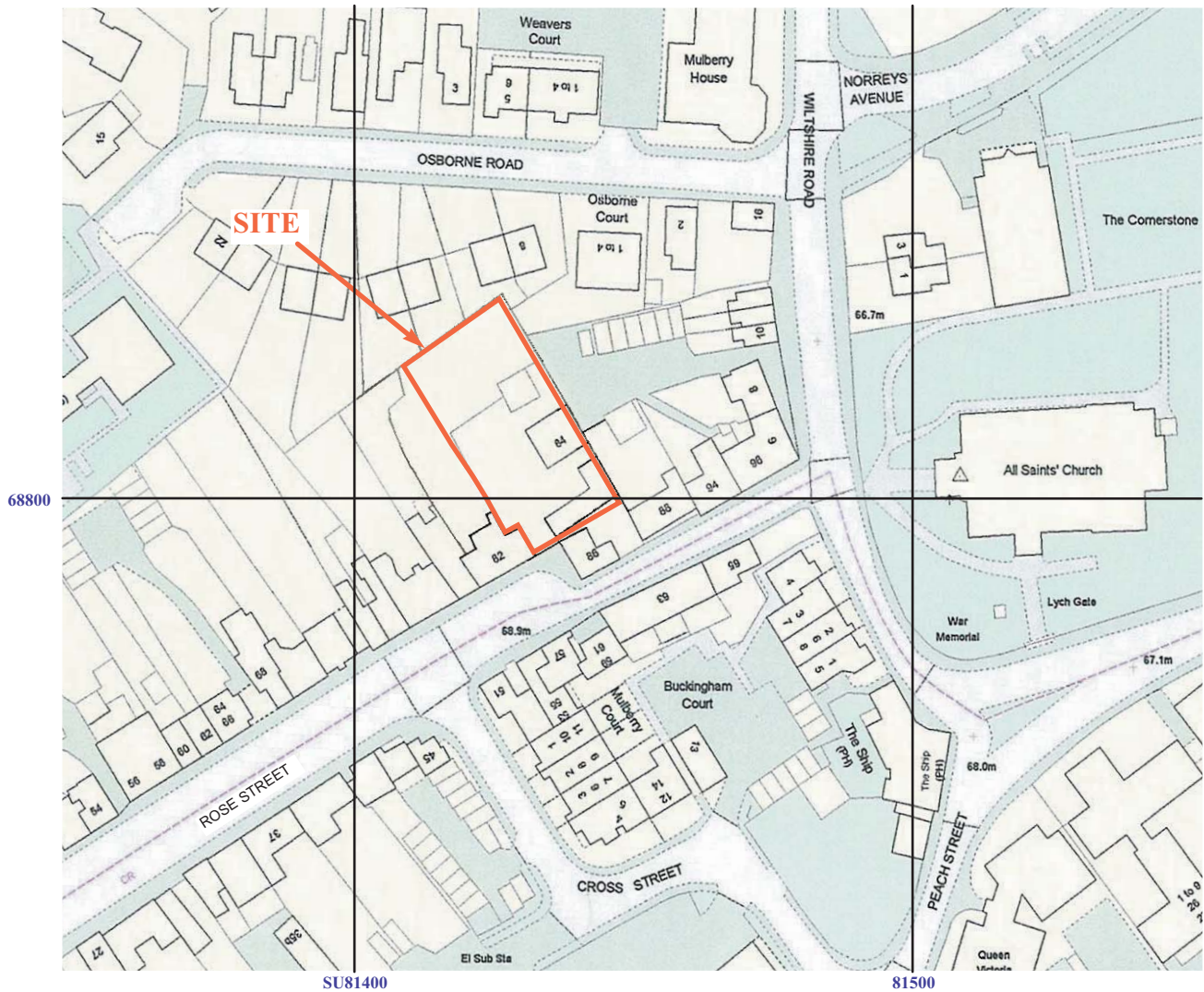
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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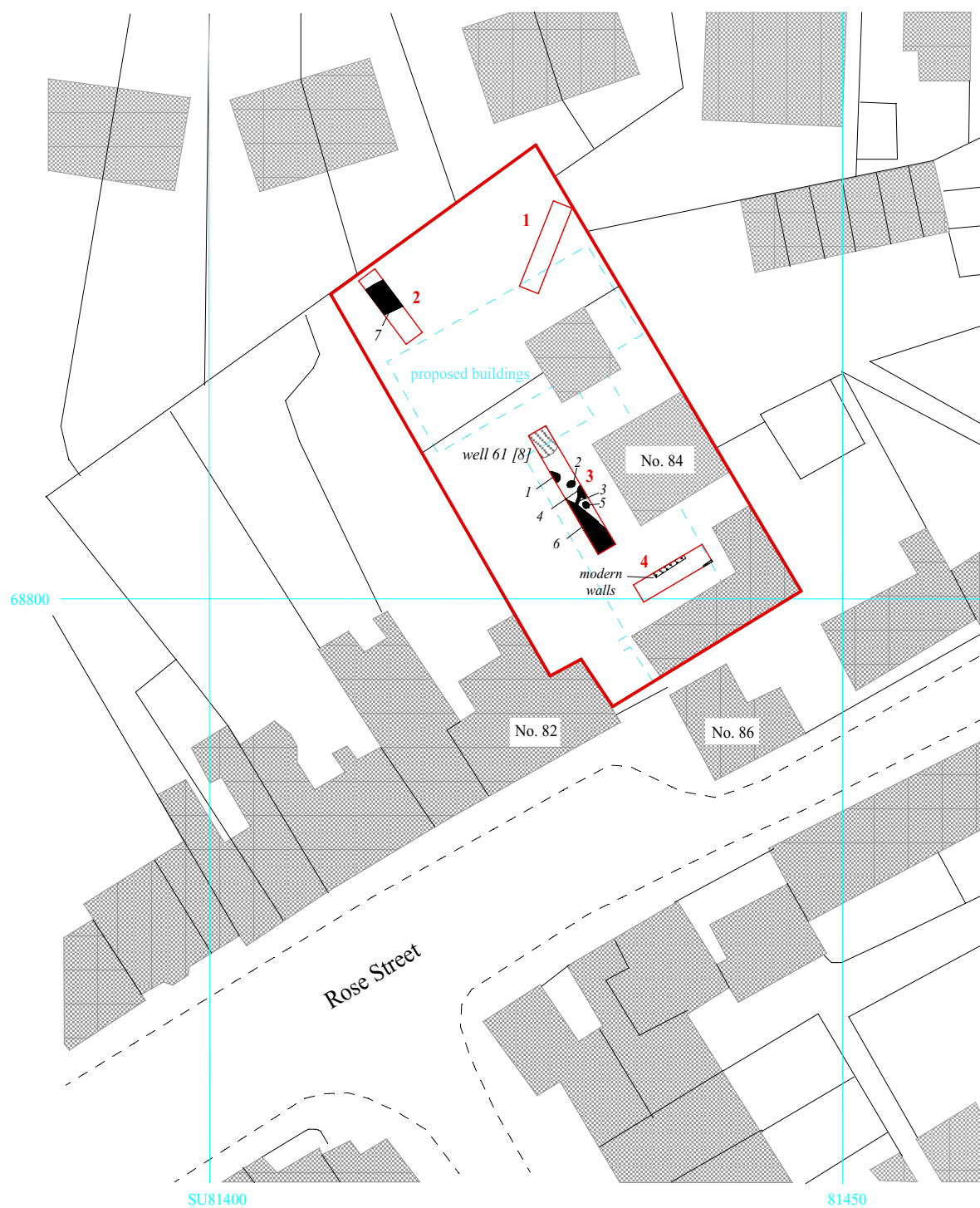
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Figure 2. Location of site off Rose Street.

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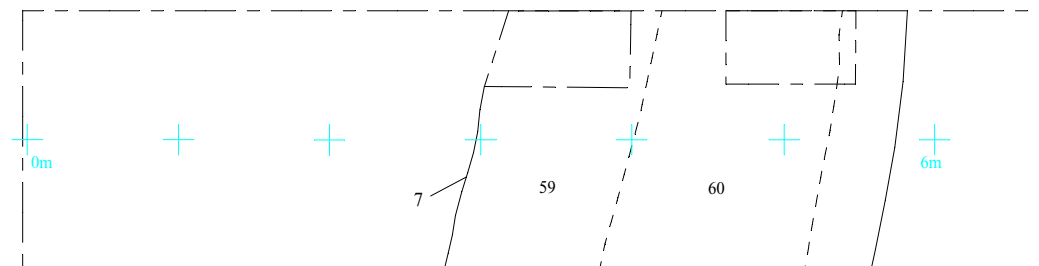
# 84 Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire, 2009 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 3. Location of trenches.

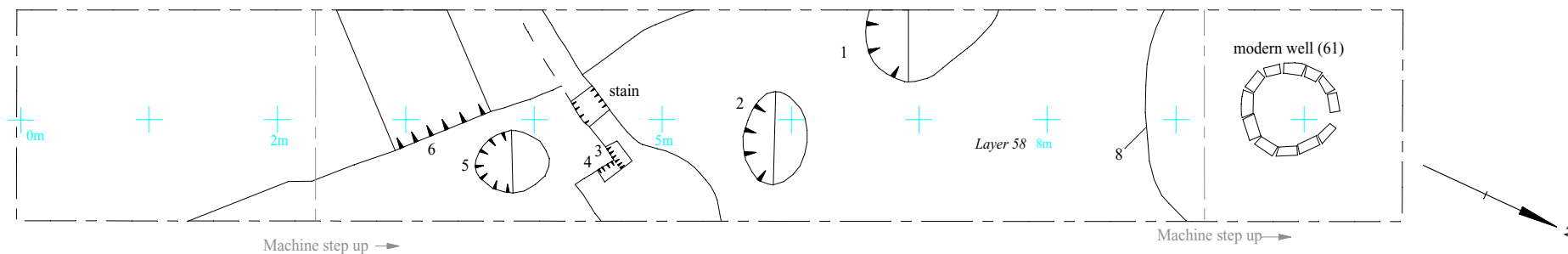


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**Trench 2**



**Trench 3**



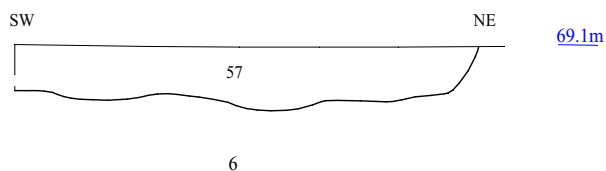
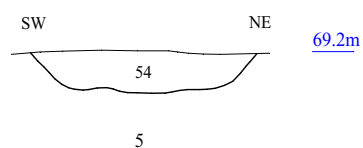
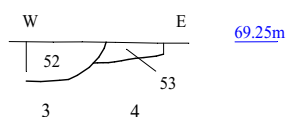
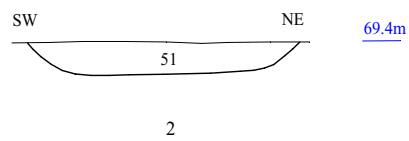
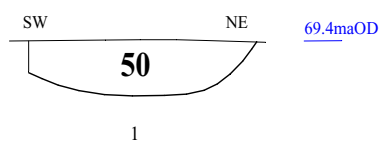
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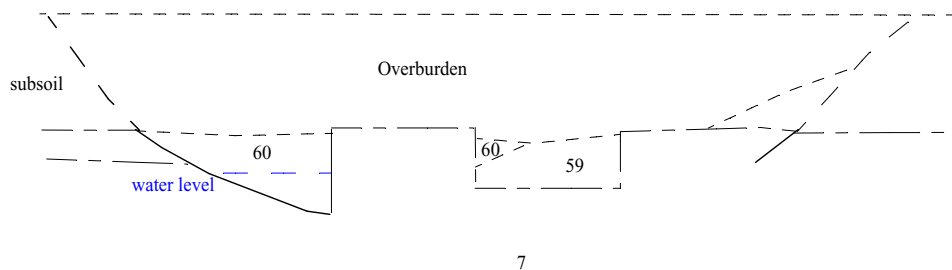
Figure 4. Detail of Trench 2 and Trench 5.



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Topsoil



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Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north west, horizontal scales 2m and 1m, vertical scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north west, horizontal scales 2m and 1m, vertical scale 1m.

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Plate 1 and 2

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Plate 3. Trench 3, pit 1, looking north west , horizontal scale 0.5m, vertical scale 0.1m



Plate 4. Trench 4, wall 56 in collapsed section, looking south-east, scale 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4

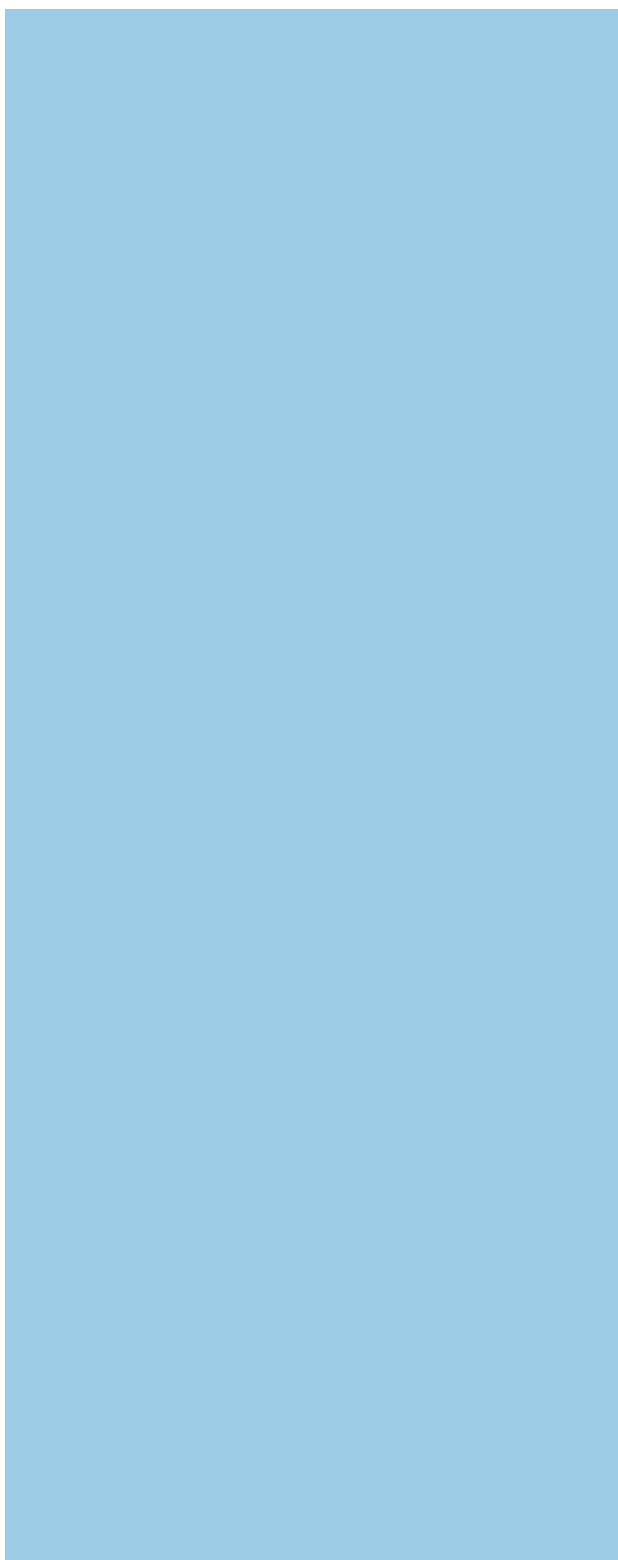
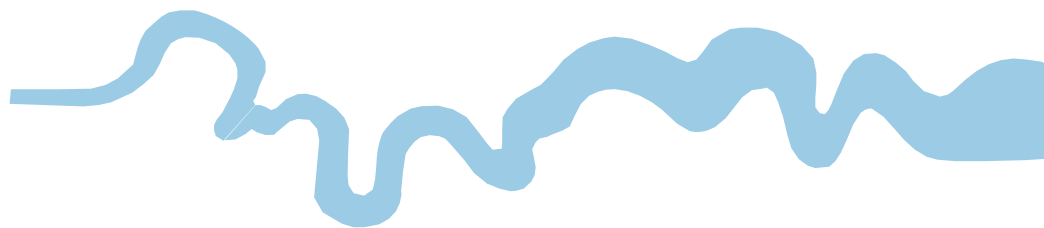
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## TIME CHART

### 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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