

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**4 Sunning Avenue,  
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: SAS12/59**

**(SU 94050 66600)**

**4 Sunning Avenue,  
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Applegate Homes Ltd**

by Susan Porter  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code SAS12/59

**May 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** 4 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 94050 66600

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 15th and 16th May 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** SAS 12/59

**Area of site:** 2700 sq m

**Summary of results:** No deposits of archaeological interest were revealed on site. The Roman road (The Devil's Highway) was not detected.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum or repository.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 21.05.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 17.05.12

# 4 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 12/59

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 4. Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire, SU 94050 66600 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Lee Simon, of Applegate Homes Ltd, Probyns, Wick Lane, Englefield Green, Surrey, TW20 0HU.

Planning permission (app no 12/00657/FUL) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new house following demolition of the existing house. The consent includes a condition relating to archaeology, requiring a phased programme of archaeological investigation. This was to take the form, initially, of field evaluation, based on the results of which, an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised if required..

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) has superseded PPS5. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald of Berkshire Archaeology, adviser to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter, Aidan Colyer and Chris Crabb on 15th and 16th May 2012 and the site code is SAS 12/59. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located in a residential area to the north of the A30 and west of the A330, on the north side of Sunning Avenue in the village of Sunningdale, south of Windsor (Fig. 1). The land lies at a height of 57m above Ordnance Datum and currently forms a grassed garden around the house (Fig. 2; Pl. 2). The underlying geology is recorded as Bracklesham pebble beds and Plateau Gravel (BGS 1979), however most of the trenches revealed a slightly clayey sand of variable colour.

## **Archaeological background**

The projected line of the Roman road (The Devil's Highway) from *Londinium* (London) to *Calleva* (Silchester) traverses the centre of the site and it is possible that flanking ditches or even the road surface (*agger*) itself may be encountered during the redevelopment. This road is Margary's (1955) route 4a, and large stretches of it were clearly visible in his day, though not in this particular location. Several large Roman sites are also known to be located adjacent to the road, as at Wickham Bushes (Ford 1987, 83) and other roadside sites can be anticipated. One such site is reported in antiquarian sources for the environs but to the north, although the specific location is not known (Hughes 1890). A medieval priory is recorded in the general area at Broomhall and several Bronze Age round barrows are present to the south. However, a watching brief at Sunning Avenue to the east revealed no deposits of archaeological interest (Cass 2007). An evaluation in the adjacent property no.3 Sunning Avenue near the projected line of the Roman road revealed no deposits of archaeological interest (Porter 2012).

## **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.

The specific research aims of this project were to:

- determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- determine if any archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- determine if the Roman road does traverse the site as projected and if so determine its nature; and
- determine if there was any roadside settlement and burial present.

It was proposed to dig three trenches, each 11m long and 1.6m wide. The trenches were to be located to target the footprint of the new house in the zone beyond the footprint of the existing structure. The trenches were also to be located, as far as practicable, at right angles to the projected course of the Roman road. Topsoil and overburden were to be removed with a JCB-type machine equipped with a ditching bucket, with all possible archaeological deposits to be hand cleaned and excavated.

## **Results**

In the event five trenches were dug due to constraints present affecting the location of the proposed three trenches (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 7m to 11m and were all 1.6m wide. Trench 3 in particular had to be moved further to the north due to the presence of a large tree and modern drain. Fortunately the combination

of trenches ensured a full traverse across the projected line of the Roman road. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

#### Trench 1 (Fig 3 Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned NW- SE and was 11m long and 0.40 – 0.90m deep. At the northern end the stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of turf/topsoil above 0.1m of brown/yellow sand above mid yellow red clayey sand natural geology. The latter became off-white in colour towards the south. At the southern end the stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m topsoil above 0.20m of mid yellow brown gravely made ground with brick and tile, overlying 0.40m very dark brown black, silty alluvial clay, above yellow red clayey sand natural geology. A backfilled pond was present for 6m with a concrete-covered drain cut into it at 4m. No finds of archaeological interest were recovered in this trench.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned NW - SE and was 11m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy at the north end consisted of 0.30m of topsoil above 0.30m of mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil overlying mid yellow red silty clay with lighter patches natural geology. At the southern end of the trench an area of modern disturbance was observed, possibly a former hedgeline and a small drain was noted at 4.5m. No deposits nor finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

#### Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 3 was aligned NW -SE and was 11m long and 0.60m deep. It had been moved further north west than intended due to the presence of a tree canopy space. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of turf/topsoil above 0.10m of mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil overlying light yellow red clayey sand natural geology. The only disturbance of the natural geology observed were the presence of rootholes at the southern end and those of probable hedgeline at 3m. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were recovered.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 5)

Trench 4 was aligned N- S and was 7m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of turf/topsoil above 0.15m of mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil overlying yellow red clayey sand natural geology. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were recovered.

### Trench 5 (Fig. 3; Pl. 6)

Trench 5 was aligned N-S and was 8.40m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of turf/topsoil above 0.30m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil overlying off white silty sand natural geology. A modern drain traversed the trench and the ground to the south was disturbed beneath the zone of the patio to the rear of the existing house. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

The trenches were located within the footprint of the proposed new development and as far was practicable at right angles to the projected line of the Roman road. Although separate trenches were dug, a complete traverse across the line was established for a distance of 35m, though for the southern end of Trench 1, an area of modern truncation was observed which could have removed any shallow archaeological deposits. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were encountered. Several features cutting the natural geology were observed but all were either of biological (ie roots) or man-made origin (drains).

It is considered that construction of a major Roman Road would have comprised the digging of flanking ditches and have been provided with a metalled surface (*agger*) of gravel or stone. However, flanking ditches were not always dug, or were dug intermittently, and it is possible that metalled surfaces could have been ploughed away or eroded away by subsequent traffic. However, for this site, whilst it is possible that flanking ditches were not dug, given the underlying soft geology, it seems unlikely that a metalled surface would not have been employed. It also seems unlikely that all traces of this would have been removed by later activity, unless construction of the existing houses involved much more extensive landscaping than thought likely. The conclusion therefore is that the line of this major road is not as projected on the Ordnance Survey maps but lies somewhere else but presumably nearby.

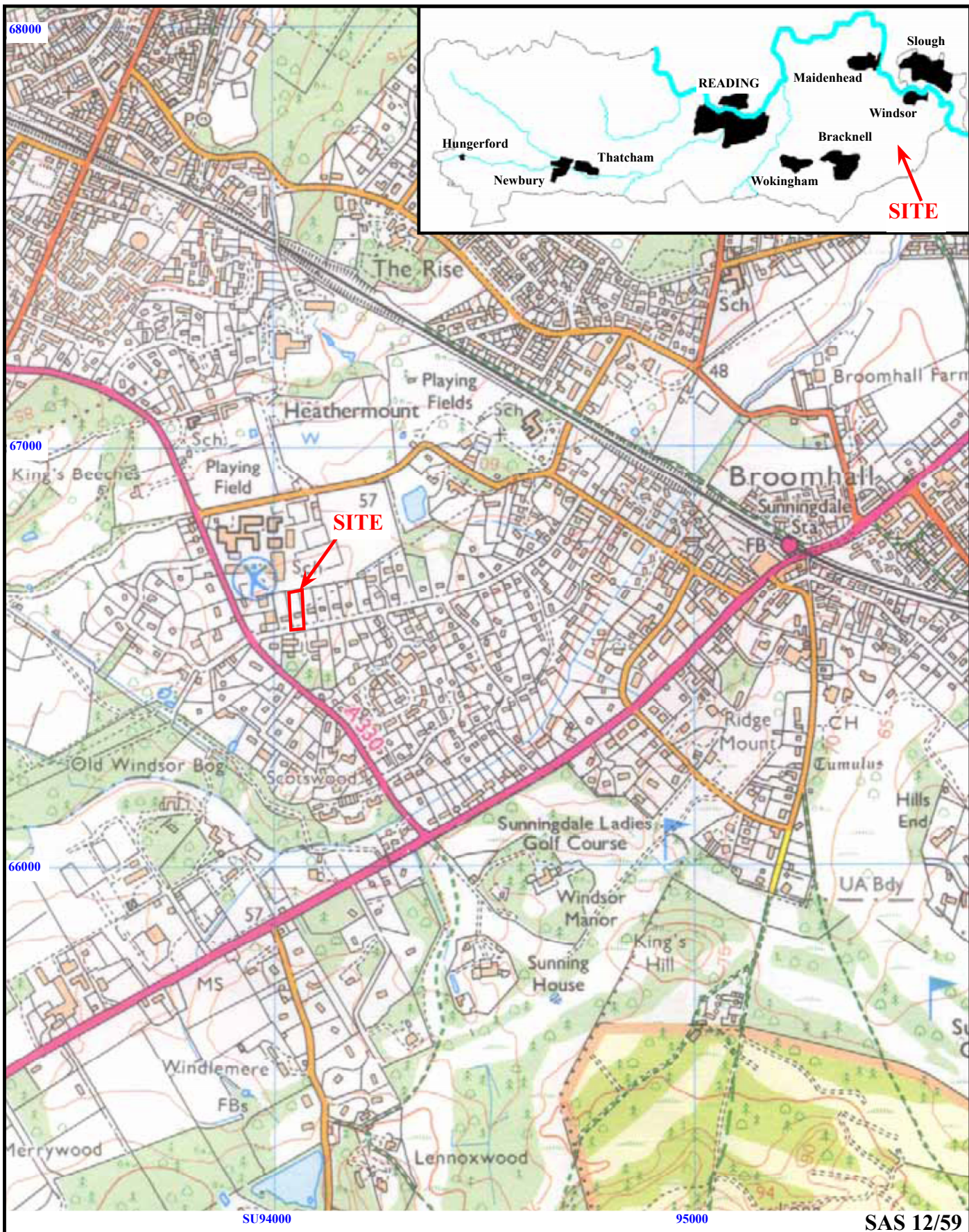
## References

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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11	1.60	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.40m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil; 0.40m+ yellow red clayey sand natural geology. At the se end of trench 0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.55m yellow brown silty sand with brick and tile made ground; 0.55-0.90m very dark brown/black silty alluvial clay (backfilled pond); 0.90m+ yellow red clayey sand natural; geology. <b>[Plates 1 and 2]</b>
2	11	1.60	0.60	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.60m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil; 0.60m+ yellow red clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Plate 3]</b>
3	11	1.60	0.40	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.40m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil; 0.40m+ yellow red clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Plate 4]</b>
4	7	1.60	0.40	0–0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.40m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil; 0.40m+ yellow red clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Plate 5]</b>
5	8.40	1.60	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.50m mid brown yellow silty sand subsoil; 0.50m+ yellow red clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Plate 6]</b>



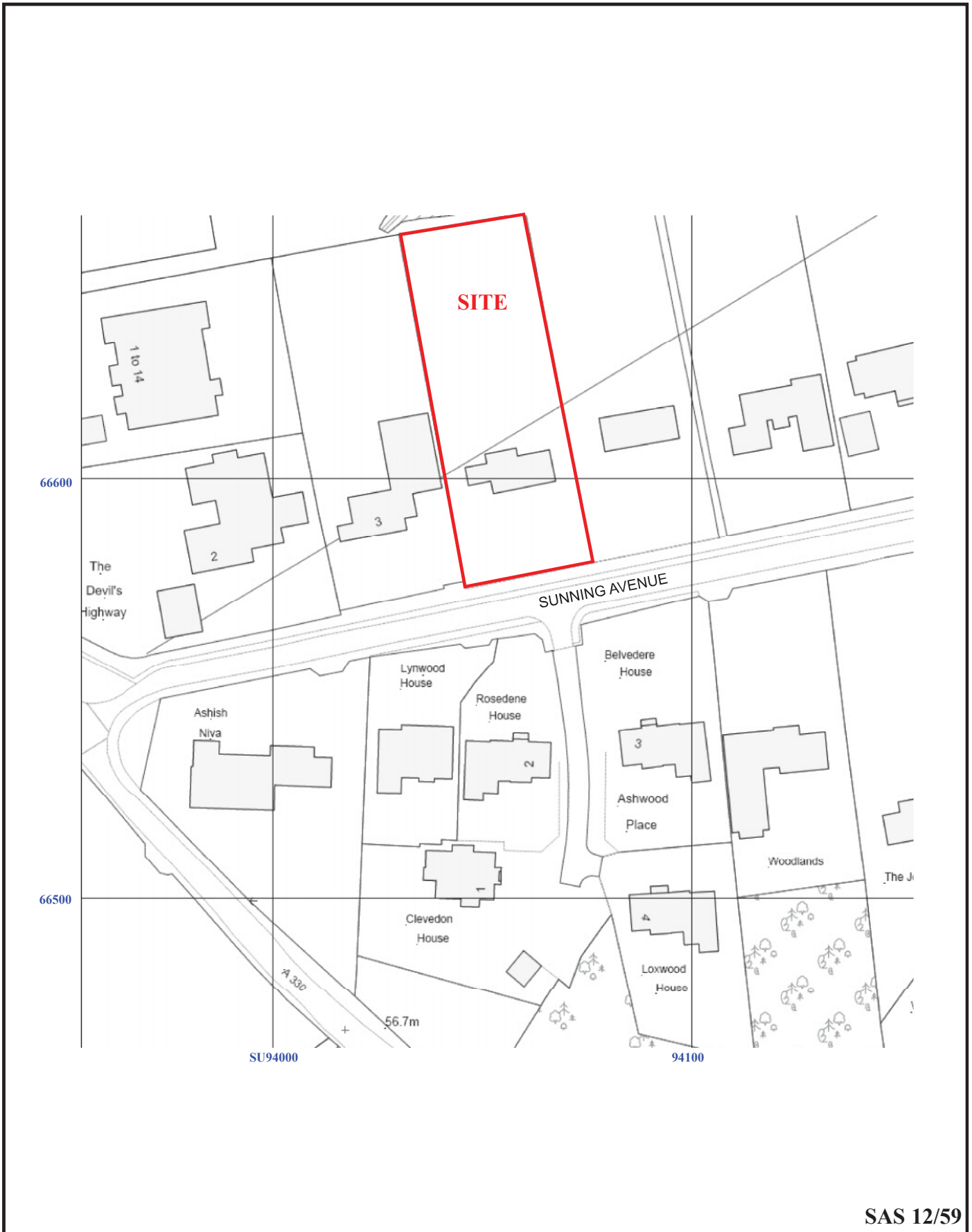
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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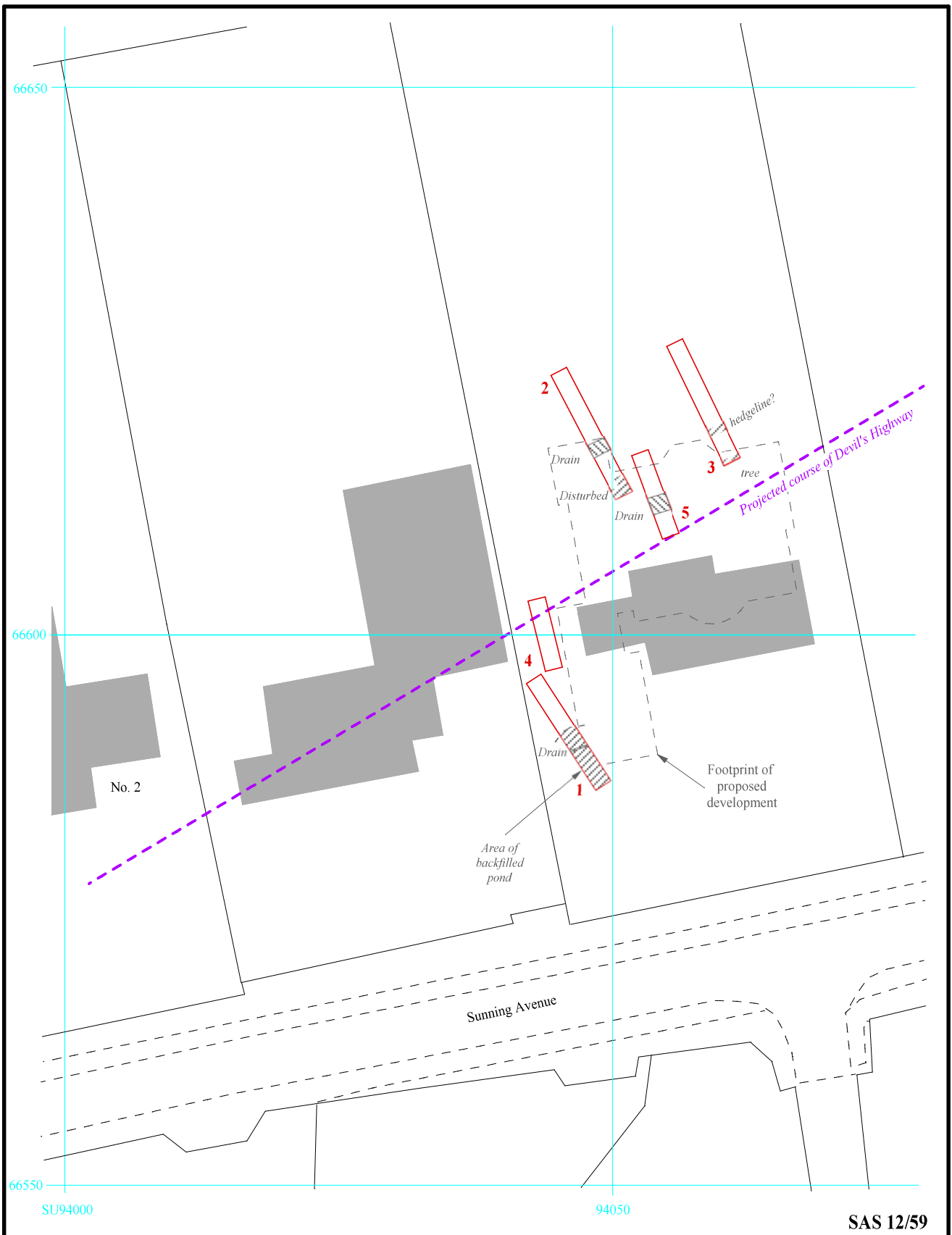
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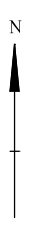
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Sunning Avenue.

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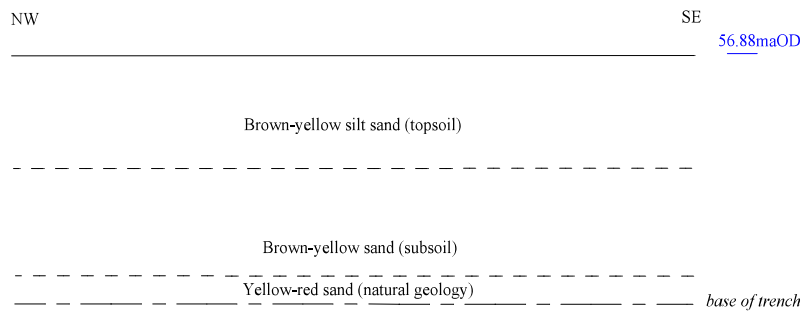
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

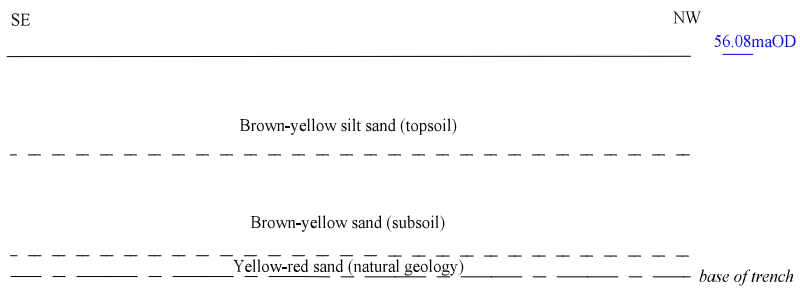


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### Trench 2



### Trench 4



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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



Plate 2. Trench 1, looking south west, Scales 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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



Plate 4. Trench 3, looking north west. Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.

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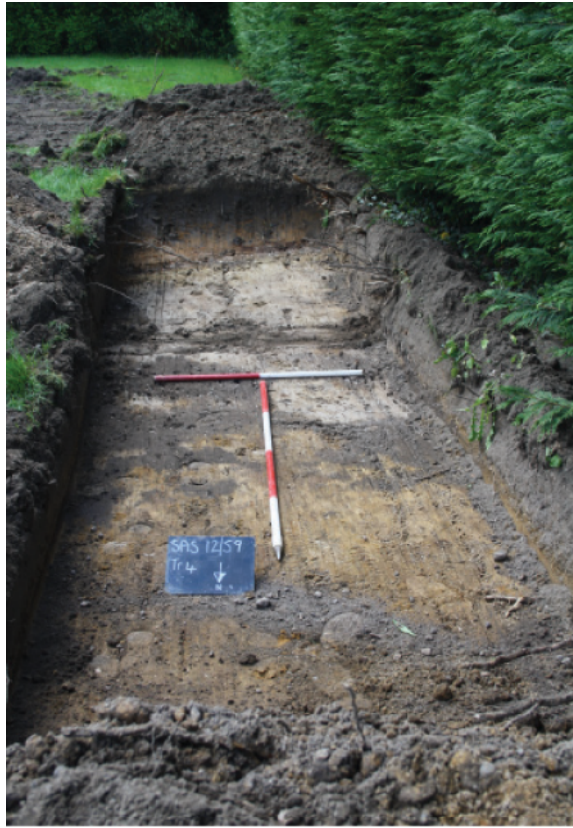


Plate 5. Trench 4, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 5, looking south. Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 5 and 6.

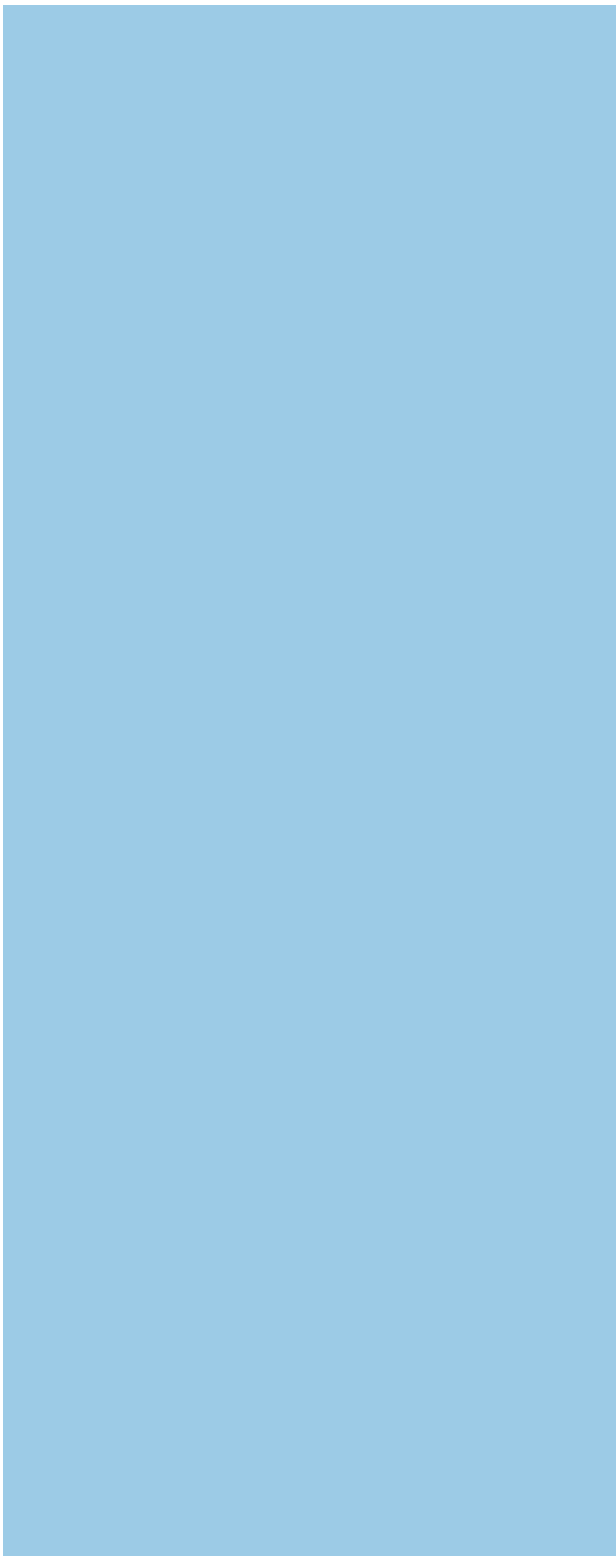
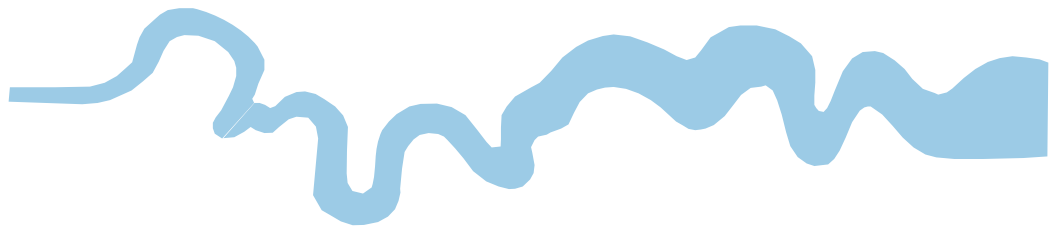
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## TIME CHART

	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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