

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**110-114 High Street,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt, Susan Porter and Andy Taylor

Site Code: 110HSM06/70

(SU 8868 8122)

**110–114 High Street,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Rowan Asset Management**

by David Platt, Susan Porter and
Andy Taylor
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code
110HSM06/70

June 2012

Summary

Site name: 110–114 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8868 8122

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25th May–9th June 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt and Susan Porter

Site code: 110HSM 06/70

Area of site: c.0.1 hectares

Summary of results: A single gully of late post-medieval date was observed along with a fragment of early post-medieval pottery from a made ground context. The archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 18.06.12 Steve Preston✓ 18.06.12
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110–114 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt, Susan Porter and Andy Taylor

Report 06/70b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 110–114 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8868 8120) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stuart Rackham of Pegasus Planning Group, 2–10 King's Parade Mews, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2E on behalf of Rowan Asset Management, 25 Bruton Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 6QH.

Planning permission (app 09/00727) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the demolition of an extension to the current building, refurbishment of the remainder of the building for commercial and residential use and construction of new residential accommodation to the rear. The consent was subject to a condition (8) relating to archaeology.

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 Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Earley, David Platt and Susan Porter on 25th May and 9th June 2012 and the site code is 110HSM 06/70. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate repository in due course.

A desk-top study (Preston 2006) noted limited activity of prehistoric and Roman date and observed the site's location within the medieval town and that Maidenhead has Saxon origins.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a rectangular parcel of land on the northern side of High Street, Maidenhead (Fig. 2), backing onto West Street. The site slopes from West Street up to High Street, appearing to follow the natural topography of the area. It is currently used as parking for a Post-Office and number 110. The underlying geology is mapped as Taplow Gravel (BGS 2005), although a sandy clay was actually observed in the trenches. The site lies at a height of c.29m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The desk-based assessment (Preston 2006) documented in detail the archaeological potential of the site. In summary this noted a very limited amount of prehistoric activity in the area in the form of a flint tool, Neolithic and Iron Age pottery and an Iron Age coin. Roman activity is also very limited with some Roman pottery found directly opposite the site as well as a single coin further afield. A Saxon spearhead was found at Maidenhead railway station to the south-west and medieval activity takes the form of pottery, coins, a 13th-century church and cartographic evidence. The core of the medieval town was probably in the area occupied by the site. Several listed buildings of post-medieval date are located within the environs of the site. An undated human skeleton was also found during construction works at Maidenhead Station, possibly related to the Saxon spearhead.

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.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological of any period are present.

To determine if deposits of medieval date are present.

To allow an informed decision to be made on future treatment, investigation and recording of any archaeological deposits found to survive on the site.

Three trenches were to be dug in order to examine the footprint of the proposed building. They were to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Al three trenches were dug as intended though their positions had to be adjusted slightly due to various site constraints (Fig. 3). The trenches measured between 5.1m and 7m in length and between 1.10m and 1.80m deep.

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

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4 and Pls 1 and 2)

This trench was aligned NNW–SSE and measured 7.00m in length and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of concrete 0.2m thick overlying brick rubble made ground 0.7m thick directly overlying a mid brown grey silty clay natural geology. No buried topsoil or subsoil deposits were recorded. A modern service was present at the northern end. A post-medieval gully was located at 3.80m from the southern end which terminated in the trench at its western end. A slot (1) was dug across which revealed it was 0.36m wide and 0.20m deep. Its mid brown grey silty clay fill (52) contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and two pieces of tile. A 10L sample of the fill was sieved which led to the recovery of further clay pipe stems, oyster shell, animal bone, glass, tile and coal.

A single rim sherd of post-medieval pottery of 16th or 17th century date was recovered from the overlying made ground layer and must be redeposited.

Trench 2 (Fig 3; Plate 3)

This trench was aligned ENE–WSW and measured 5.10m in length and 1.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of concrete overlying 0.4m of brick rubble with concrete made ground. This overlay a second layer of made ground 0.6m thick comprising a mix of brick rubble within a grey silty clay matrix. This overlay a mid brown grey silty clay natural geology. No buried topsoil or subsoil deposits were recorded. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 3 (Fig 3; Plate 4)

This trench was aligned NNW–SSE and measured 6.50m in length and 1.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of concrete overlying 0.35m of brick rubble made ground. This overlay a further layer of made ground 0.95m thick consisting of brick rubble with a dark grey silty clay matrix. This in turn overlay a mid brown grey silty clay natural geology. No buried topsoil or subsoil deposits were recorded. It is unclear if the relatively greater depth of this trench compared to those of Trenches 1 and 2 is a product of truncation, or simply reflects a variation in the surface of the natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery occurred in the made ground in Trench 1. It is a sherd of Glazed Red Earthenware (Brears 1969), weighing 74g, and is most likely to be mid 16th – 17th century in date. It is from the rim of a large bowl, a common vessel type in this fabric.

Clay tobacco pipe by Andy Taylor

Three clay pipe stem fragments (8g) were recovered from gully 1 (52) including from the sieved sample of fill. They are not closely datable but two are thin walled and have a very narrow bore, which generally indicates a relatively late date (late 18th or 19th century). The largest piece is thicker-walled and has a slightly larger diameter bore and so may be earlier.

Animal Bone and shell by Danielle Milbank

A single fragment (22g) of animal bone was recovered from the sieved sample of fill of gully 1 (52). It was a rib fragment from a large mammal. A single fragment (6g) of oyster shell was also recovered from the sieved sample.

Brick and Tile by Andy Taylor

Eight pieces of tile (103g) were recovered from the fill of gully 1 (52), of which six were recovered from the sieved sample. These are all well fired and a dark orange/red colour and are most likely of post-medieval date.

Glass by Andy Taylor

A single tiny fragment of glass (<1g) was recovered from the sieved sample from gully 1 (52). The piece is thin (<1mm) with a slight curved surface and is possibly from a wine glass or small phial. It is not closely datable.

Environmental Assessment by Jo Pine

A single sample of 10L was taken from gully 1 (52) and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. A small volume of wood charcoal was recovered but most of the material was coal fragments.

Conclusion

Despite the potential of archaeological deposits on the site due to its proximity to the historic core of the town, only a small length of gully was observed of possible archaeological interest. This feature produced dating evidence to indicate that it was no earlier than the 17th century and it is most likely to be of later 19th century date or later. It is on, or very close to, the line of a boundary shown on the 1897 Ordnance Survey map, as well

as one on a reconstructed map showing the town c.1830 (Preston 2006, figs 6 and 9). All three trenches revealed late post-medieval or modern made ground directly overlying the natural geology with no evidence of any buried topsoil nor subsoil deposits present. This leads to the suspicion that the archaeologically relevant horizon and any shallow archaeology present may have been truncated away previously, especially to the east, though the presence of the gully suggests that this need not necessarily have been absolute. However, only a single post-medieval archaeological feature was recorded and only a single sherd of medieval pottery recovered from a made ground layer. This suggests that the archaeological potential of the site is quite low.

References

- BGS, 2005, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Brears, P C D, 1969, *The English Country Pottery. Its History and Techniques*
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Preston, S, 2006, '110–114 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 06/70, Reading

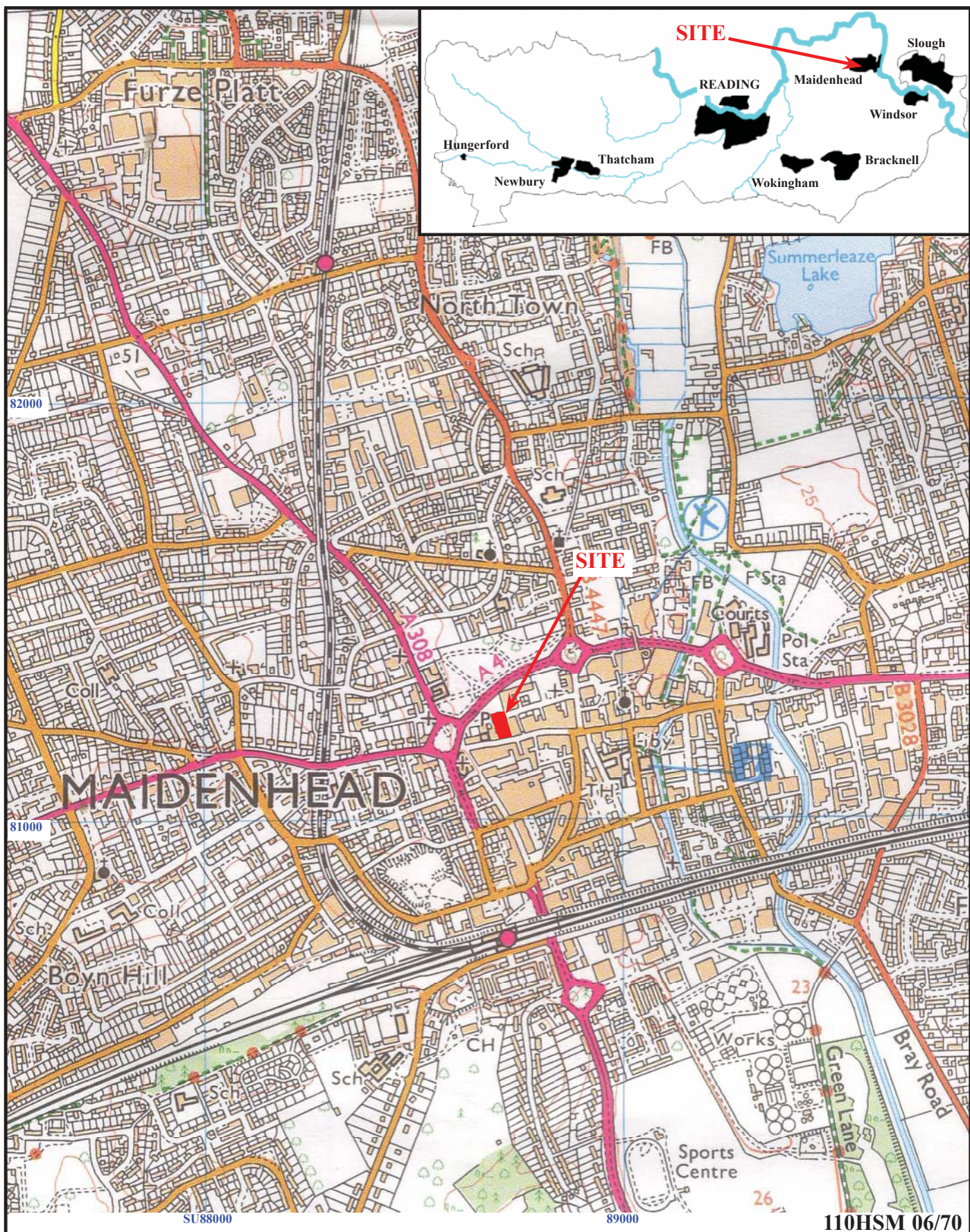
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	7.00	1.60	1.10	0-0.20m concrete; 0.20m-0.90m brick rubble made ground; 0.90m-1.10m+ mid brown grey silty sandy clay natural geology. Gully 1 [Pls 1 and 2]
2	5.10	1.60	1.30	0-0.20m concrete; 0.20m-0.60m brick rubble made ground; 0.60m-1.20m mixed rubble and dark grey silty clay; 1.20m-1.30m+ mid brown grey silty clay natural geology. [Pl. 3]
3	6.50	1.60	1.80	0-0.20m concrete; 0.20m-0.55m brick rubble made ground; 0.55m-1.50m mixed rubble and dark grey silty clay; 1.50m+ mid brown grey silty clay natural geology. [Pl. 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Gully	Post-Medieval	Tile, clay pipe

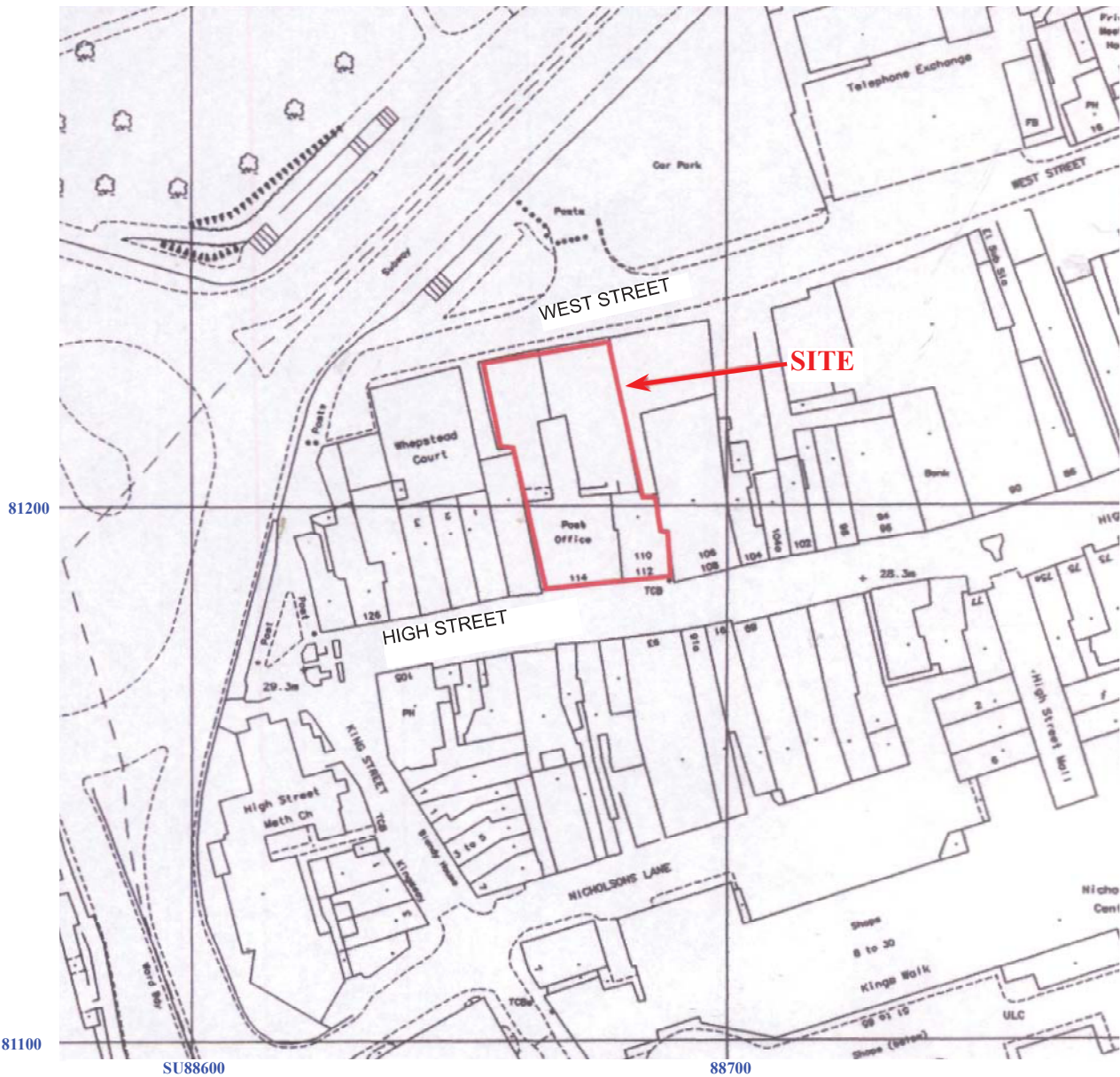


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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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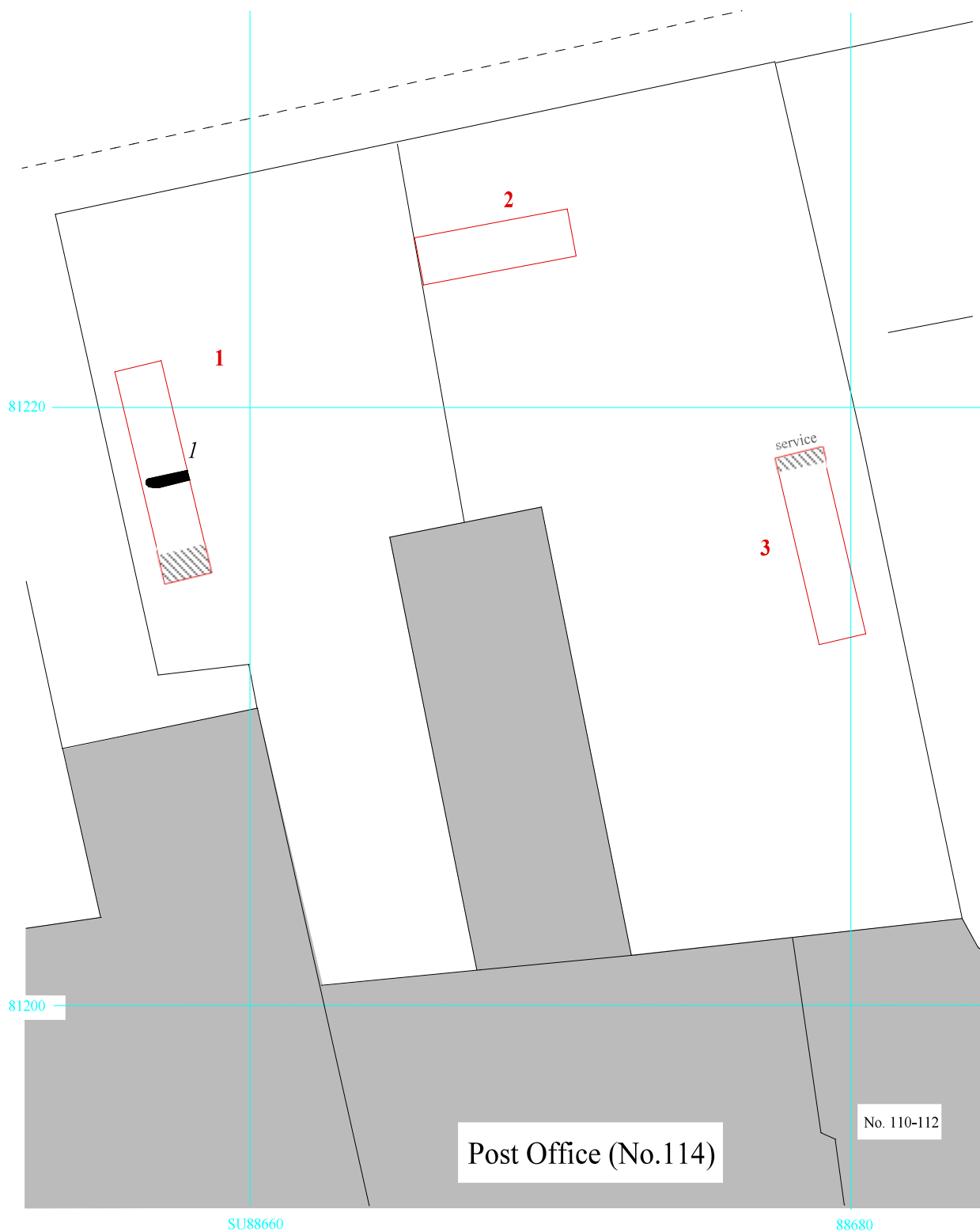


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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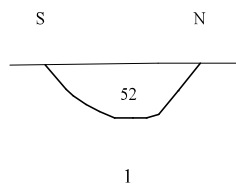
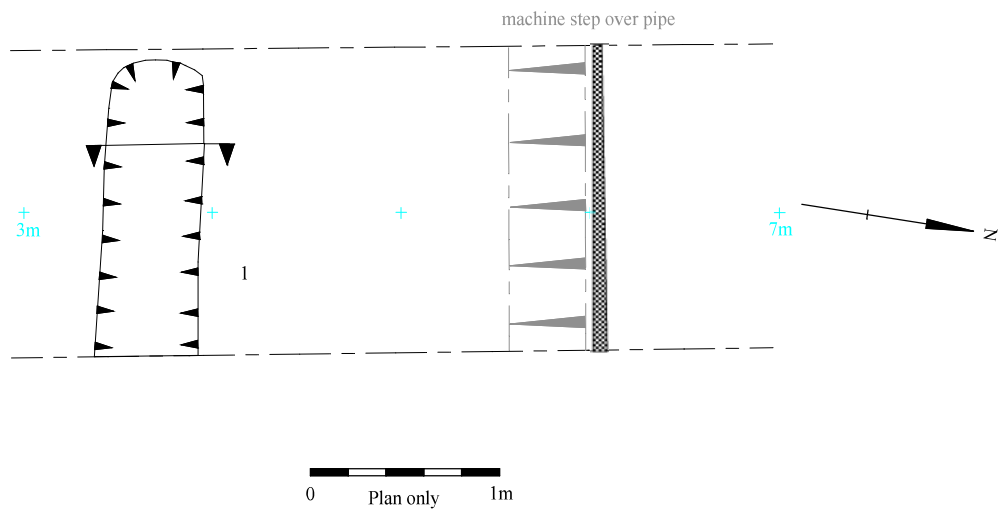
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Figure 3. Location of trenches at rear of property.



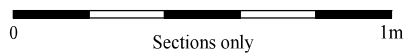
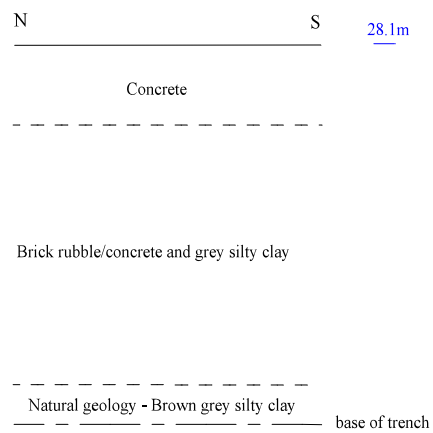
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Trench 1



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Representation of section - Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1.

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

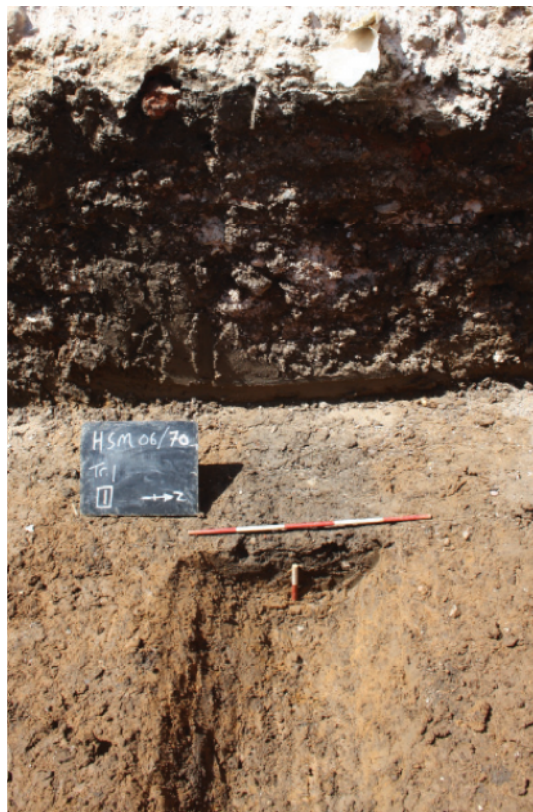


Plate 2. Trench 1, gully 1, looking west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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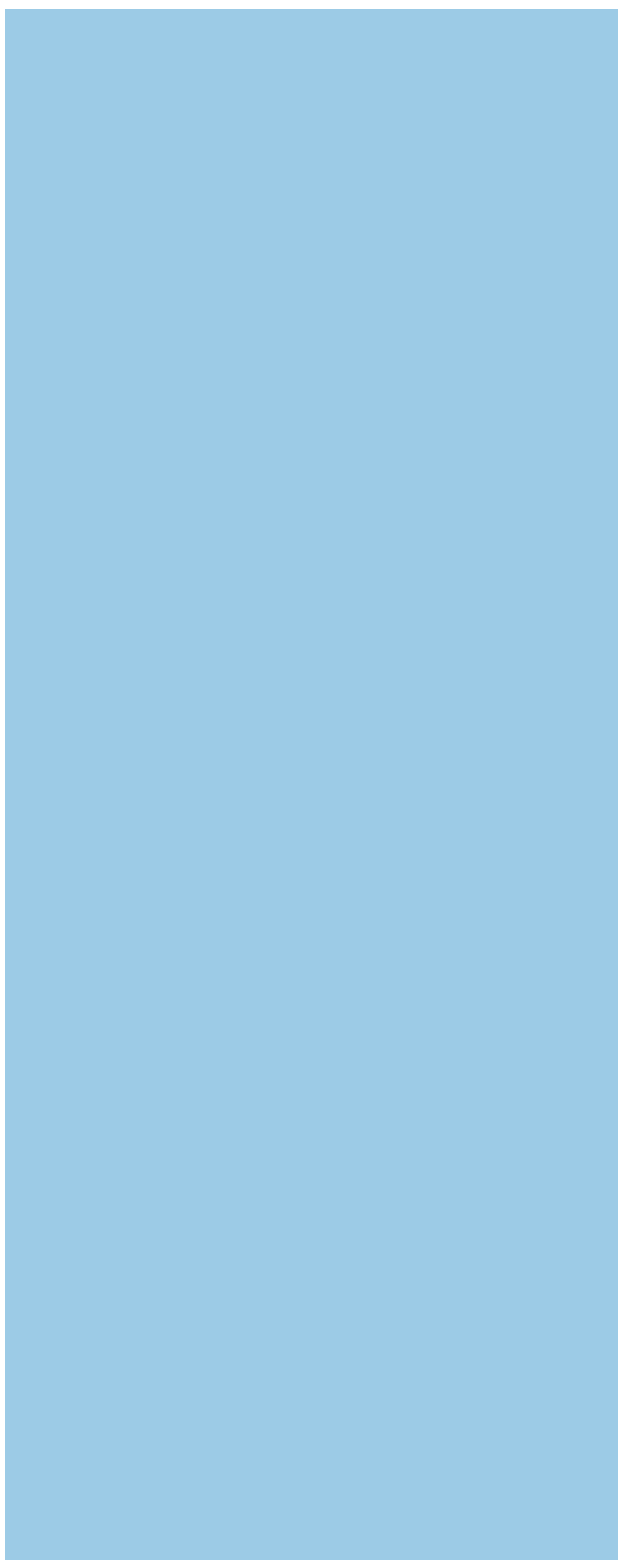
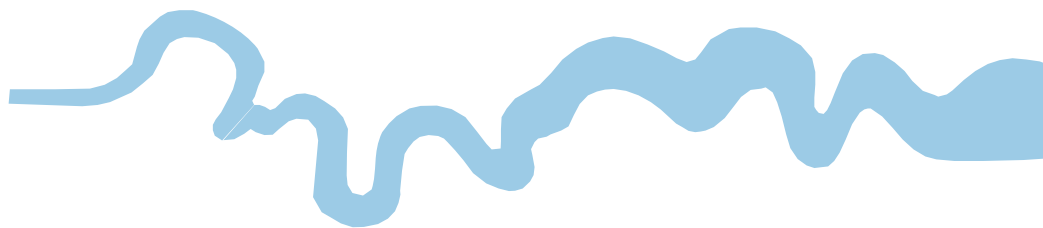
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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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