

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Wokingham, Cricket and Tennis Clubs, Wellington Road,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

Phase 2

by Susan Porter and David Platt

Site Code: WCC05/87A

(SU 8071 6841)

Wokingham Cricket and Tennis Clubs, Wellington Road, Wokingham, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation (Phase 2)

For Taylor Wimpey

by SusanPorterandDavidPlatt
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCode: WCC05/87A

July 2012

Summary

Site name: Wokingham, Cricket and Tennis Clubs, Wellington Road, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8071 6841

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th - 29th June

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: WCC 05/87A

Summary of results: Two postholes, three gullies and a treehole or hedgeline were uncovered during the evaluation. All except one undated gully were datable to the later 18th or, more likely, later 19th centuries. No artefacts nor features of archaeological interest were recorded and this portion of the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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, with accession code REDMG:2010.99.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 04.07.12 Steve Preston ✓ 04.07.12
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Wokingham Cricket and Tennis Club, Wellington Road, Wokingham, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter and David Platt

Report 05/87A-4

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at Wokingham Cricket and Tennis Clubs, Wellington Road, Wokingham, Berkshire SU 8071 6844 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gary Webster, for Taylor Wimpey West London, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9PQ.

Planning permission (app no O/2007/0273) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council on appeal (APP/X0360/A/07/2046044) to develop the site for housing. This consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) (although it is acknowledged that this has been superseded by the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) and in turn by the *National Planning Policy Framework*), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary Neale, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and David Platt between the 27th and 29th June 2012 and the site code is WCC 05/87B.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course, with accession code REDMG:2010.99.

A desk-top study of the site (Preston 2005) consulted cartographic and documentary sources, which appear to show that the site has never been developed beyond the requirements of the sports club. The study suggested that there is little potential for remains of national importance to be present on the site, however more ephemeral features may be present and due to its lack of previous development, the site may have greater archaeological potential than nearby parts of Wokingham. Subsequent evaluation trenching and a recording action located deposits of possible archaeological interest along with a sherd of medieval pottery (Porter 2012a and b).

Location, topography and geology

The site is located beyond the historic core of Wokingham, on the western side of Wellington Road (Fig 1). The site was previously used as a cricket ground and tennis courts with space for car parking. A railway line borders the site to the west, with trees to the south and west and a hedge to the east. This site covers an area of approximately 1.7ha of land and lies at a height of 60m above Ordnance Datum (Fig 2). There is a slight slope across the site from the north-east (*c.* 61m aOD) to the south-west (*c.* 58m). The site is mapped as being on the junction between the London Clay and the Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1946). The geology observed on site was orange grey silty sand, with occasional gravel. The area of the phase 2 evaluation is centred on NGR SU 8071 6844.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been highlighted in a desk-based assessment for the project (Preston 2005). The town of Wokingham is thought to have late Saxon origins, although this has yet to be archaeologically demonstrated. A modest range of archaeological finds and sites have been recorded for the area, findspots comprising a Palaeolithic handaxe, Roman coins and pottery are recorded for the general environs of Wokingham, in addition to the medieval town. The site lies outside the medieval and post-medieval extent of the town, but within the area likely to be exploited to feed the settlement. To the south (*c.* 300m) was the site of a medieval and post-medieval water mill, and the western boundary of the site is formed by the Reading to London (Waterloo) railway line. Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity have all proved negative, although this may be due (in all cases) to modern truncation. The relatively large size of the plot of land, and the lack of major development, suggested moderate, generalized potential for remains of almost any period.

The archaeological potential of the site has been further determined by the results of the first phase of field evaluation (Porter 2012a) in which just a single undated ditch was recorded. A subsequent recording action increased the sample of the ditch excavated (Porter 2012b). A single abraded sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from its fill though it is far from clear if this provided conclusive dating evidence. A single small pit or posthole was also recorded but was undated.

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 deposits of any period are present.

To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Five trenches remained to be dug using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All trenches were dug under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were present they were to be hand cleaned and excavated in sections. Discrete features were to be excavated in half-section and linear features were excavated in slots of approximately 1m. A contingency to extend parts of the site area by 10m was not used.

Results

The trenches measured between 18.30m and 26.0m in length and between 0.55m and 1.0m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench numbering continues the sequence established from the previous phase of evaluation.

Trench 17 (Pl. 2)

Trench 17 was aligned SW–NE and was 18.30m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of dark grey sandy silt with gravel and Tarmac overlying a mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil that was 0.30m thick. This in turn overlay the natural geology which was a light yellowish grey silty sand. A gully terminus (200) was identified 11m from the south-west end of the trench (Fig. 4). This terminus was 0.65m wide and 0.30m deep and had concave sides and a rounded base (Fig. 5). The single fill (250) consisted of a dark brownish grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions. The majority of the gully that was visible in the trench, was excavated in order to obtain artefactual dating evidence but none was recovered. However, a sample of the fill was sieved and produced several fragments of coal/clinker and this feature can therefore be dated to after the later 18th century or more likely the mid 19th century.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned west–east and was 26.0m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of demolition debris (concrete crush) overlying 0.30m of dark grey sandy silt with gravel and Tarmac; this overlay a mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil that was 0.25m thick. This in turn overlay the natural geology which

was a light yellowish grey silty sand with some gravel. A shallow irregular linear feature (201) most likely to be root action from a hedge line, was identified 21m from the west end of the trench (Fig. 4). This was 1.10m wide and 0.05m deep and had irregular sides and base (fig. 5). The single fill (251) consisted of a loose light yellowish grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions and heavy rooting. This feature was deemed to have no archaeological significance.

Trench 19 (Pl. 1)

Trench 19 was aligned SE-NW and was 20m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of concrete crush overlaying 0.15m of dark grey sandy silt with gravel and Tarmac, this overlay a mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil that was 0.25m thick. This in turn overlay the natural geology which was a light yellowish grey silty sand with some gravel. A gully (204) was located at 10m and two postholes (202, 203) were identified 19m from the south-east end of this trench. This gully was 0.30m wide and 0.05m deep and had sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 5). The single fill (254) was a soft yellowish grey silty sand with occasional gravel inclusions. The majority of the gully, that was visible in the trench, was excavated in order to obtain artefactual dating evidence but none was recovered. However, a sample of the fill was sieved and produced several fragments of coal/clinker, some of which exceeded 10mm and this feature can therefore be dated to after the later 18th century or more likely the mid 19th century.

The easternmost posthole (202) was 0.30m in diameter and 0.15m deep and contained a single fill (252). The westernmost posthole (203) was 0.30m in diameter and 0.20m deep and contained a single fill (243). Both of these fills consisted of a mid brownish grey silty sand with occasional gravel inclusions. These postholes were 100% excavated but no artefactual dating evidence was recovered. However, their fills were also sieved and produced several fragments of coal/clinker and they can be dated to after the later 18th century or more likely the mid 19th century.

Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned W-E and was 20m long and 1.0m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of hardcore overlying 0.10m of light yellowish brown sand and cement made ground, this overlay 0.30m dark brown grey sandy clay made ground with heavy rooting. This in turn overlay 0.40m of light grey clay which overlay the light yellowish grey silty sand with gravel natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Trench 21

Trench 21 was aligned S-N and was 20.50m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of hardcore overlying 0.30m of very dark brownish grey silty sand made ground. This in turn overlay 0.40m light blue grey sandy subsoil. This in turn overlay the light yellowish grey silty sand with gravel natural geology. A gully (205) was identified 4m from the south end of the trench (Fig. 4). This was 0.65m wide and 0.30m deep and had concave sides and a rounded base (Fig. 5). The single fill (250) consisted of a dark brownish grey sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions. The majority of the gully that was visible in the trench, was excavated in order to obtain dating evidence but none was recovered. A sieved sample of the fill produced only a very little cominuted charcoal.

Finds

No artefacts were present in any of the excavated features, samples nor on the spoil heaps.

Sampling

Five soil samples of were taken from each of the five excavated features and sub samples of 10-L were wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh to recover small artefacts or charred plant remains. Four of the five samples taken (those from features 200 202, 203, 204) produced quantities of coal/clinker with as much as 10-20 pieces per flot. The flot from gully 204 (254) in particular produced large fragments some of which exceeded 10mm in size and are most unlikely to be intrusive. Fragments from the other flots were up to 5mm across and are also unlikely to be intrusive. The flot from gully 205 produced a few minute flecks of charcoal only.

Conclusion

Three insubstantial gullies, two small post holes and a root-hollow were recovered. None of these contained any artefactual dating evidence but sieved samples from four of these five features produced quantities of coal/clinker fragments some of which were in large pieces. The use of coal in this region did not take place until the advent of cheap mass transport such as by the digging of 18th century canals (the nearest of which is the Kennet and Avon Canal still 11km distant from Wokingham in Reading), or more likely, the mid 19th century railways. Most of the features discovered therefore can be dated to the later 18th or probably the later 19th century. It is probable, but not proven, that the remaining undated feature found by this evaluation, as well as the

other undated feature recorded in the recording action (Porter 2012b, feature 104) are related and therefore of similar late post-medieval date. On the basis of these results the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

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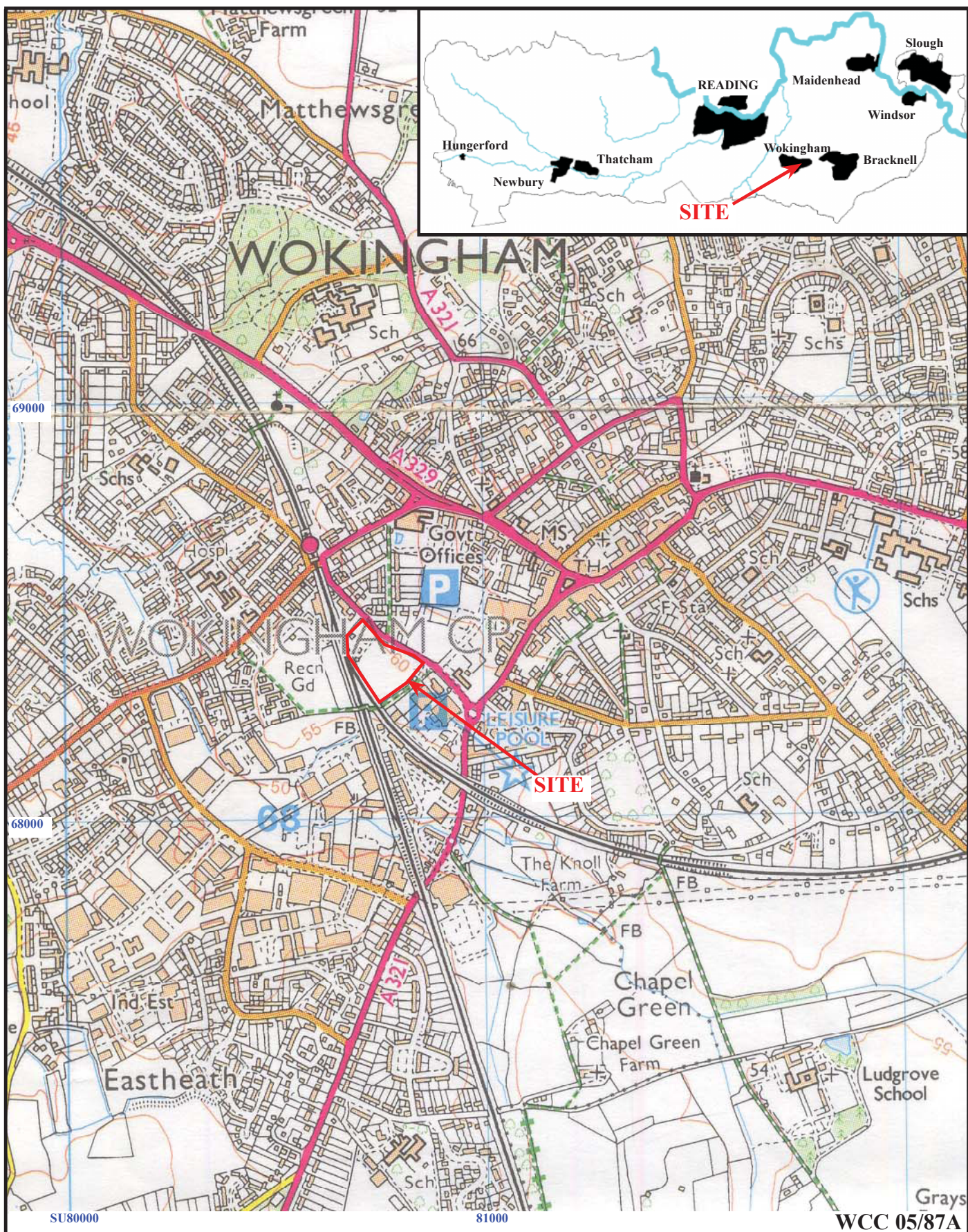
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at South or West end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
17	18.30	1.60	0.66	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30–0.60m mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil; 0.60+ yellow-grey silty sand natural geology. Gully 200. [Pl. 2]
18	26.00	1.60	0.62	0–0.05m crush; 0.05–0.35m dark grey silty sand with gravel and Tarmac; 0.35–0.60m mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil; 0.60+ yellow-grey silty sand natural geology. Root action hollow (201)
19	20.00	1.60	0.55	0–0.10m crush; 0.10–0.25m dark grey silty sand with gravel and Tarmac; 0.25–0.50m mid yellowish grey sandy clay subsoil; 0.50+ yellow-grey silty sand natural geology. Gully 204; post holes 202, 203 [Pl. 1]
20	20.00	1.60	1.00	0–0.10m hardcore; 0.10–0.20m light yellowish brown sand and cement; 0.20–0.50m dark brown grey sandy clay made ground; 0.50–0.90m light grey clay; 0.90m+ yellow-grey silty sand natural geology.
21	20.50	1.60	0.80	0–0.10m hardcore; 0.10–0.40m very dark brownish grey silty sand with contamination; 0.40–0.80m light blue grey sandy subsoil; 0.80m yellow-grey silty sand natural geology. Gully 205

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
17	200	250	Gully	Late 18th or late 19th centuries	clinker
18	201	251	Root hollow	Late 18th or late 19th centuries	-
19	202	252	Post hole	Late 18th or late 19th centuries	clinker
19	203	253	Post hole	Late 18th or late 19th centuries	clinker
19	204	254	Gully	Late 18th or late 19th centuries	clinker
21	205	255	Gully	Late post-medieval?	By association?



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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**SITE
(Phase 2)**



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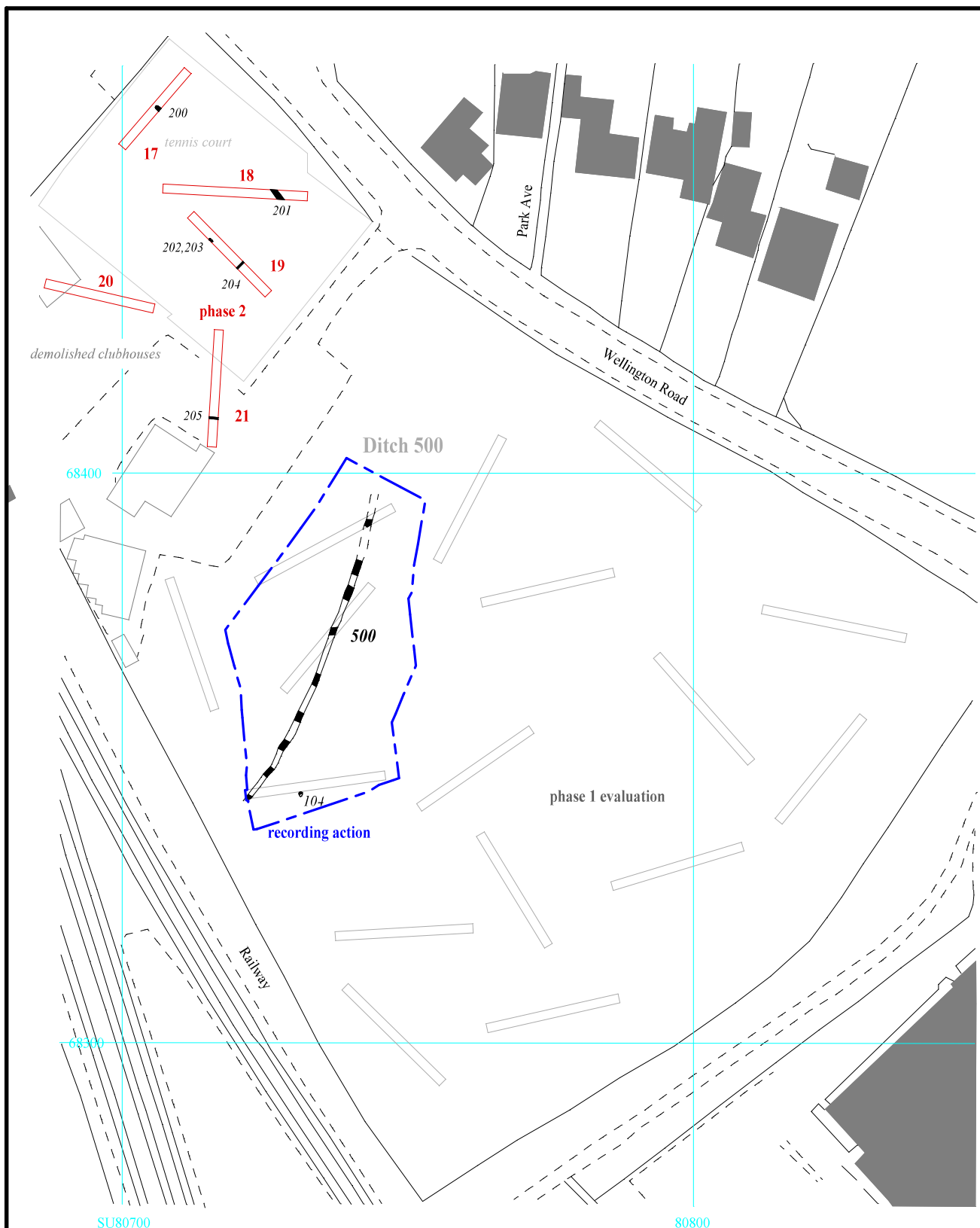
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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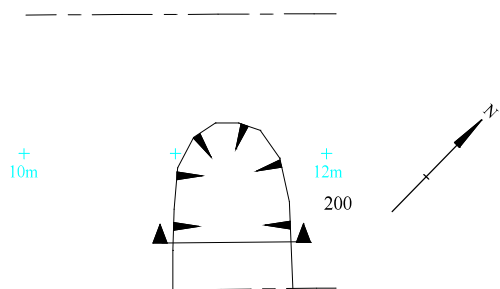
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Figure 3. Location of Phase 2 trenches.

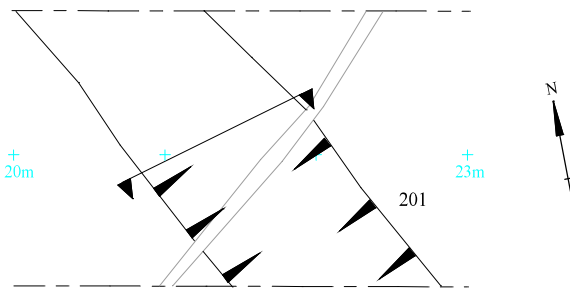


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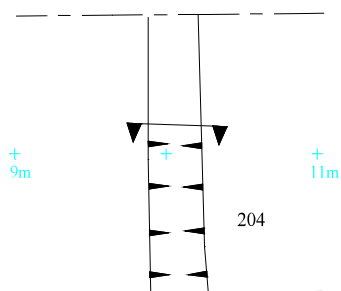
Trench 17



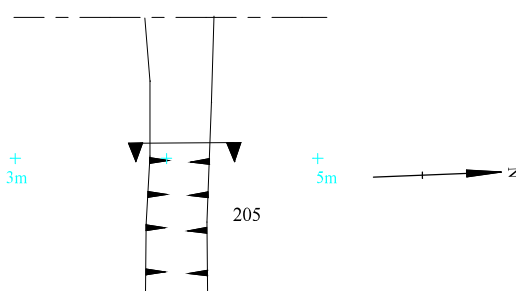
Trench 18



Trench 19



Trench 21



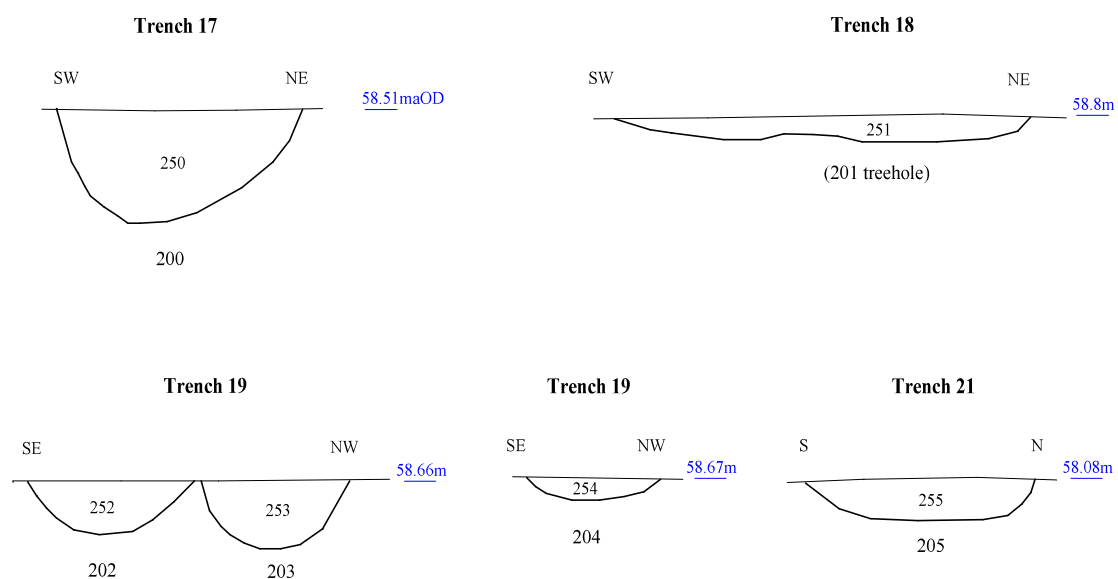
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 19, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 17, gully terminus (slot 200), looking south-east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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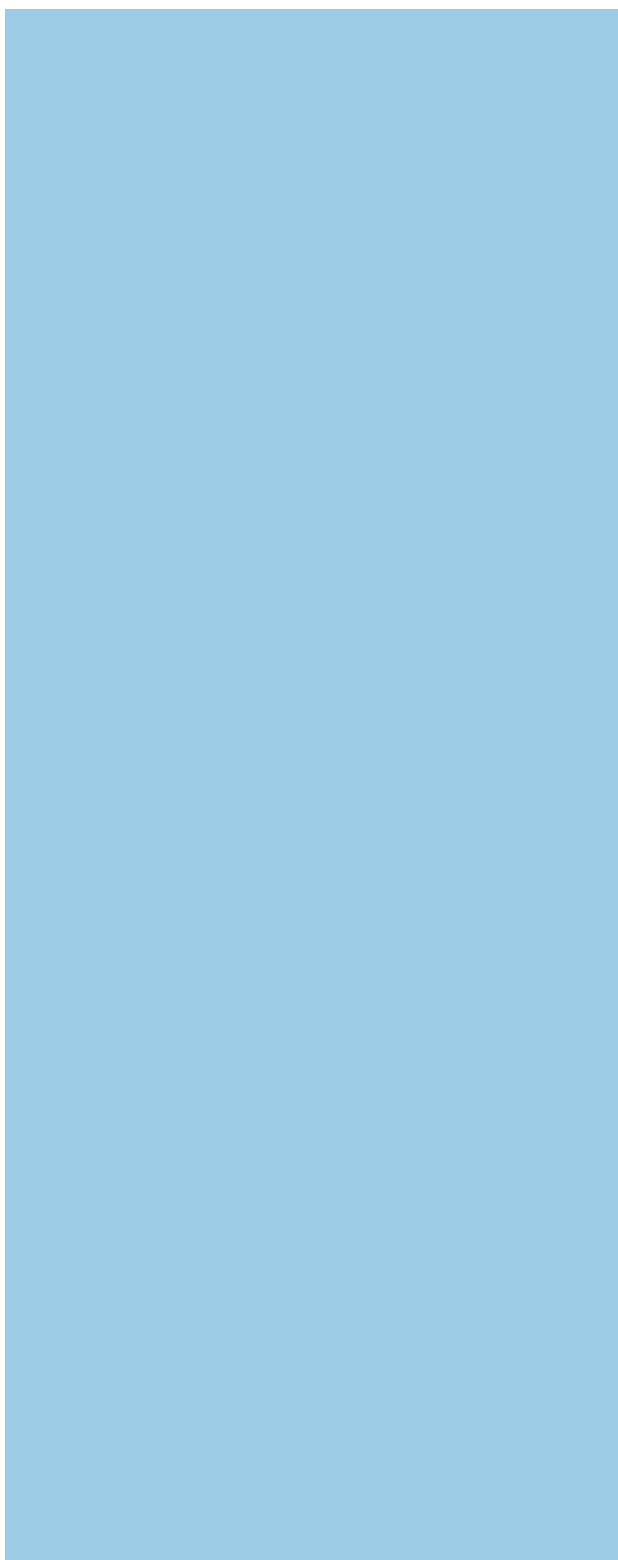
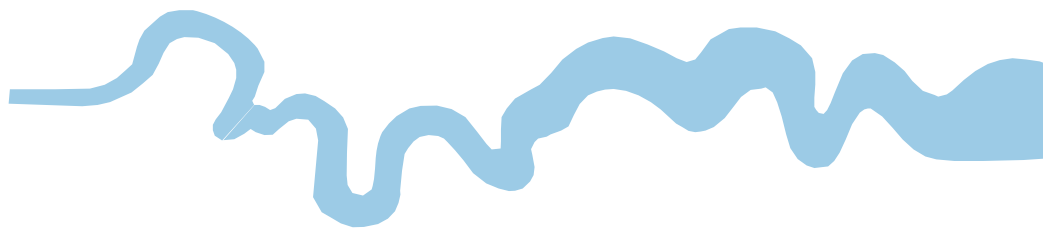
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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