

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Greendown, Pearson Lane,
Sonning, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Site Code: GAP12/197

(SU 7595 7538)

Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr David Wrigley

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code GAP12/197

February 2013

Summary

Site name: Greendown, Pearson Lane, Sonning, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7595 7538

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 1st February 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: GAP 12/197

Summary of results: Two pits were discovered, the first cutting the second; the former contained tile and medieval pottery and is likely to be of medieval date. Two sherds of Roman pottery were also recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the finds and archive in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.02.13 Steve Preston✓ 15.02.13
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Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

By David Platt

Report 12/197

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the rear of Greendown, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berkshire (SU 7595 7538) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Wrigley, Foxhills House, Robin Hill, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 2GZ.

A planning permission time extension (10/0407/EXC), to an earlier consent (07/0690/OUT) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council. This permits the construction of a single detached house and garage. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. As a condition on the granting of the planning consent fieldwork is required, as set out in *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010) and the Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) has superseded PPS5.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald the principal archaeologist of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt and Christopher Crabb on the 1st February 2013 and the site code is GAP12/197. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the finds and archive in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is within the village of Sonning which is located approximately 5km north-east of Reading and 3km west of Twyford. The site is situated at approximately 65m above Ordnance Datum and is bordered to the west by Pound Lane and is to the rear of Greendown, which is located on Pearson Road (Fig. 1). The underlying geology is valley gravel (BGS, 1946) and this was observed in the trenches as a mid reddish brown silty gravel.

Archaeological background

The site lies on the margins of Sonning which was an important administrative and ecclesiastical centre in Saxon and medieval times. Various fieldwork projects have revealed archaeological deposits within the settlement. To the west is the site of the Bishop's Palace, which dates from as early as the 13th century. These remains were partly excavated during the First World War and revealed a complex of medieval buildings (Brakspear 1916). Other excavations in the grounds of the vicarage to the north-west uncovered deposits of late Saxon and early medieval date (Hull and Hall 2003). Charnel deposits of uncertain date have been recovered at the Bull Inn, again to the north-west of the site (Milbank 2007) with Saxon inhumations nearby. At Old Walls, to the west, medieval boundary features and a pit have been found (Milbank 2006; Taylor 2006). However, a watching brief at the Dower House on the north side of Pearson Road, revealed no archaeological deposits (Lowe 2008). In more general terms, the site lies in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with important prehistoric and Roman remains visible from the air situated to the east of the village (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Slade 1964).

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 this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits representing late Saxon or medieval deposits are present, and if so their date and nature; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig two trenches both 10m long and 1.6m wide (Fig. 3), targeted at the footprints of the new building. A contingency of 5m of extra trenching was included should it be required to clarify findings made in the initial evaluation. Overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels under archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Both trenches were dug in the positions intended. They were respectively 9.80m and 10.20m in length and 0.55m to 0.65m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Fig 3)

Trench 1 was aligned east–west and was 10.20m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.25m of subsoil overlying silty gravel natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological significance were uncovered.

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

Trench 2 was aligned north–south and was 9.80m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural silty gravel geology. Two pits (1 and 2) were uncovered (Fig. 4). Pit 1 was at least 3m in diameter, 0.60m in depth and was filled with a single deposit consisting of a mid greyish brown sandy silt (52) with occasional poorly sorted gravel inclusions. Two pieces of medieval pottery were recovered along with 18 fragments of tile. Sieving of a soil sample recovered only a small amount of wood charcoal.

Pit 2 was approximately 0.40m in diameter and 0.30m deep and was cut by pit 1. Its fill consisted of two deposits, the primary fill was a dark brownish grey sandy silt (54) with frequent gravel inclusions and the secondary fill (53) was a mid reddish brown sandy silt with poorly sorted gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 20g. It all occurred in a single context, (52).

The following medieval fabrics were noted:

Medieval Sandy ware, Late 11th - 14th century? Dense sub-rounded white, grey and clear quartz up to 0.5 mm. Early medieval pottery types similar to this are found along a considerable length of the middle Thames Valley and its hinterland, and the problem of differentiating between the numerous different wares has been noted in the past (Mellor 1994, 84). 1 sherd, 6g

'M40' type ware. ?Late 11th – 14th century (Hinton 1973). Hard, flint and limestone unglazed ware, with a possible kiln sources at Camley Gardens near Maidenhead (Pike, 1965) and Denham in Buckinghamshire (op. cit. Mellor 1994, 86). Known from numerous sites in south Oxfordshire and Berkshire. 1 sherd, 9g.

In addition, two heavily-abraded sherds of Roman grog-tempered wares (5g) were also present.

The wares are typical finds in the region. The sherd of medieval sandy ware is from the rim of a jar, the M40 type ware is a bodysherd. The former is somewhat abraded.

Tile

Some 18 fragments of tile were recovered from Pit 1 (52) weighing 112g. At least two fragments of peg tile were included with several fabrics and finishes represented. Peg tile was in common use from the medieval period onwards.

Sieving

A 40L sample of the soil from pit 1 (52) was floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh to recover charred plant remains. This only produced a few fragments of wood charcoal, too tiny to be identified.

Conclusions

The evaluation has demonstrated that the site has some archaeological potential and has revealed a modest volume of archaeological deposits certainly and probably of medieval date.

References

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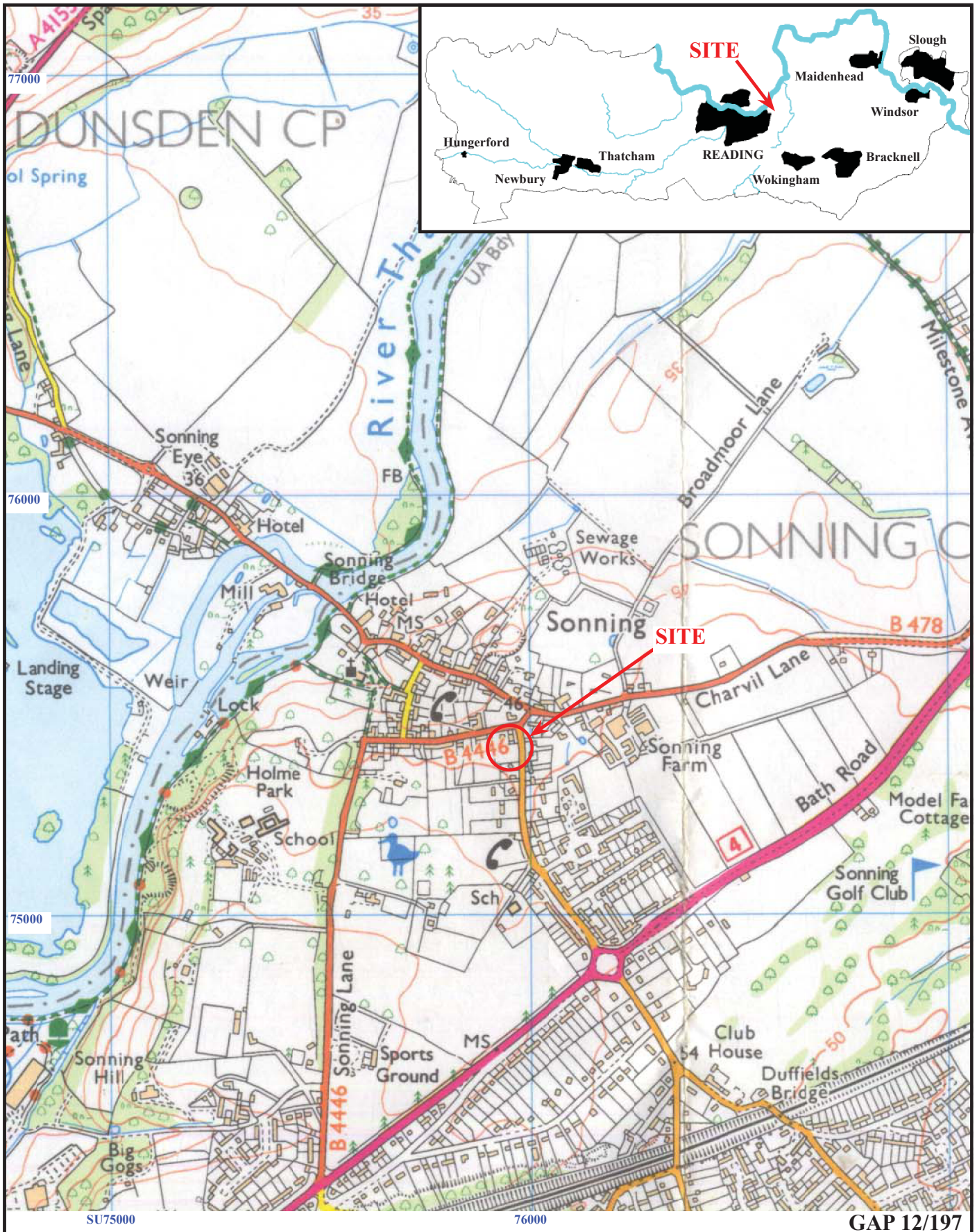
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

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	10.20	1.6	0.65	0-0.15m topsoil, 0.15-0.40m mid grey silty clay subsoil, 0.40m+ Reddish brown silty gravel natural geology.
2	9.80	1.6	0.55	0-0.19m topsoil, 0.19-0.35m subsoil, 0.35m+ Natural geology [Pls 1 and 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	52	Pit	Medieval	Pottery, tile
2	2	53 and 54	Pit	Medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy



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Figure 1. Location of site within Sonning and Berkshire.

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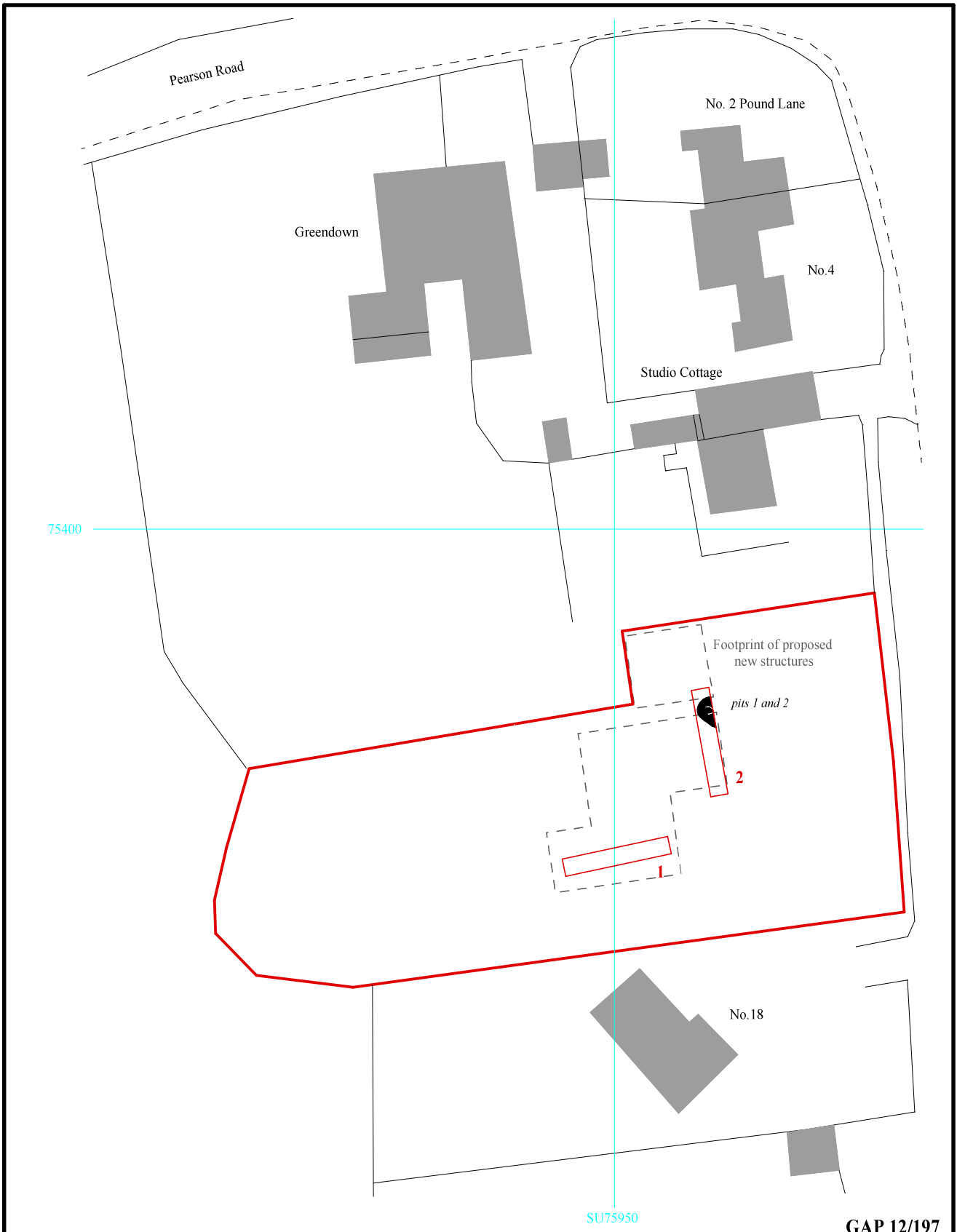
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Pearson Road.

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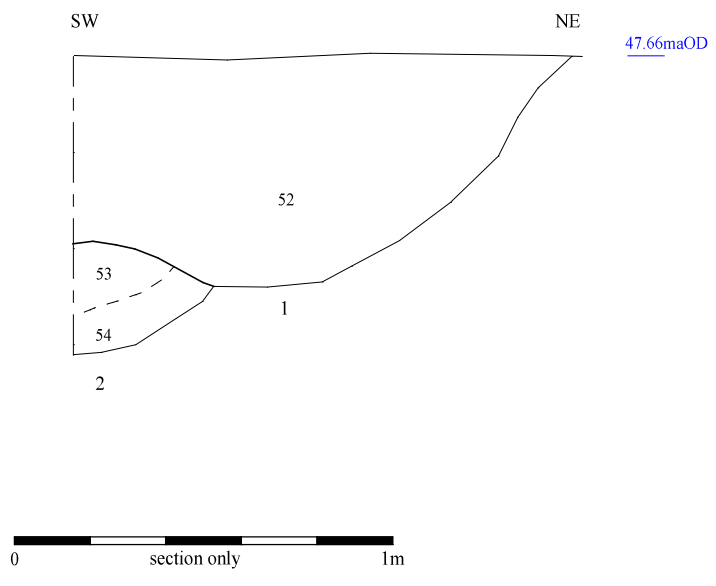
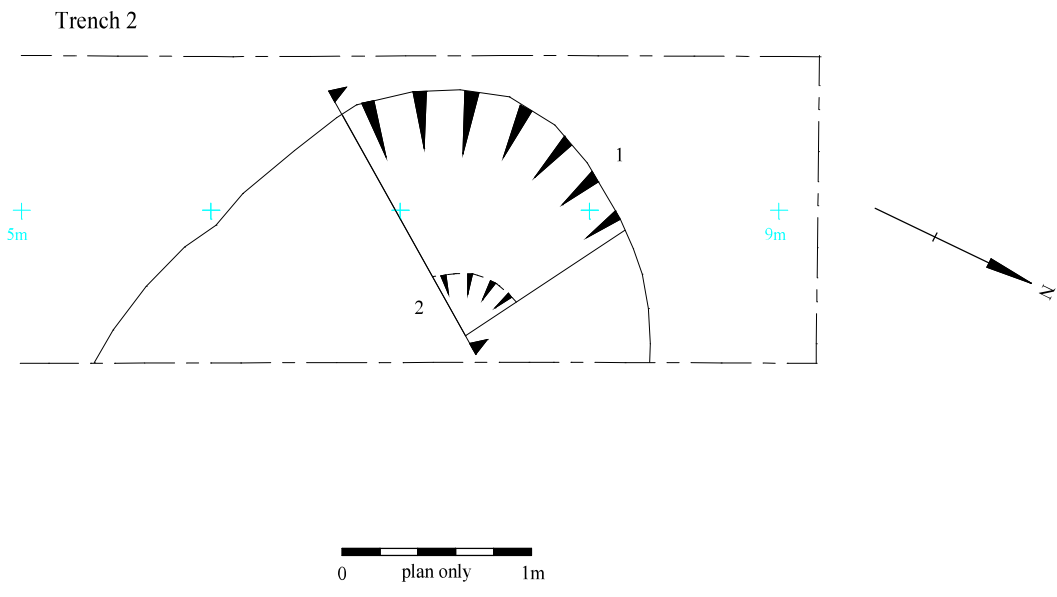
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.





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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 2 and section of Pits 1 and 2.





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



Plate 2. Trench 2, pit 1 and 2, looking east, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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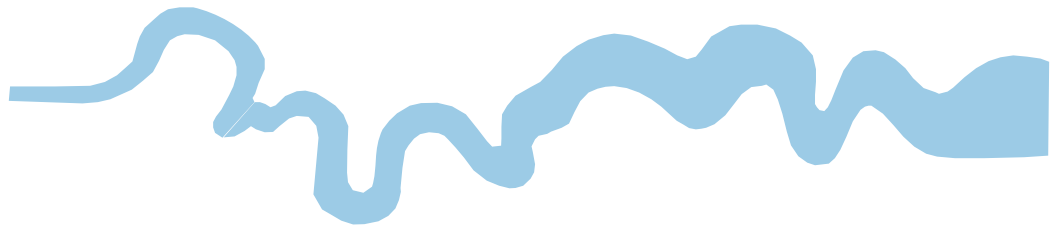
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Plates 1 and 2.

THAMES VALLEY
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SERVICES

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
↓	↓



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

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**