

Land at the former Dove Public House, Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for SLK Investments**

by Danielle Colls

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DPH 06/35

March 2006

Summary

Site name: Land at the former Dove public house, Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7280 7340

Site activity: Field Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 23rd March 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Richard Oram

Site code: DPH 06/35

Area of site: 640 sq. m

Summary of results: Two trenches were dug, showing stratigraphy of made ground overlying the geology, with several service trenches observed but no archaeological features or deposits.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 27.03.06
	Steve Preston✓ 24.03.06

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Report 06/35

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land at the former Dove Public House, Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire (SU7280 7340) (Fig. 1). Planning permission (app. no. 05/01310/FUL) has been sought from Reading Borough Council to demolish the existing building and replace it with an apartment block.

As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development, a field evaluation has been requested, in accordance with principles detailed in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology, to further inform the planning process.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeological Officer of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the borough council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Oram and Danielle Colls on the 23rd March 2006 and the site code is DPH 06/35. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on land to the north of Orts Road in Reading, south of the River Kennet, and comprises the area of the pub and adjacent car park. The site lies on a slope, with the south side situated at approximately 42m above Ordnance Datum, and the north at approximately 41m above Ordnance Datum (Fig. 2). The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey is river terrace gravel (BGS 1971) and this was observed in both trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Mr David Thomason. In summary the potential of the site stems from its location on the south side of the Kennet, on the edge of the terrace level which makes it a prime location for multi-period settlement and activity. Individual findspots suggest prehistoric, in particular Bronze Age, activity in the environs of the site. Medieval activities dating to the 11th to 15th centuries, possibly associated with a leper hospital, were recorded 190m to the south-east of the site.

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 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 better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if any prehistoric activity is present on this site.
- d) To determine if any remains of Saxon or Medieval date are present.

It was proposed to excavate two trenches, 13m long and 1.6m wide, within the car park area, as the building was still standing during the evaluation. The building has a cellar which would have truncated any archaeological features or deposits in the footprint. In the event due to logistical difficulties including access and services, the trenches were slightly shorter than proposed. The trenches were dug by a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and cleaned by hand. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1

Results

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

This trench was aligned NE–SW and was 11m long, .6m wide and 0.56m deep. Tarmac 0.06m thick overlay hoggin 0.06m thick, which comprised fine gravel and stones. This in turn sealed a band of grey/brown silty clay with frequent gravel 0.23m thick. This sealed the natural geology which was a reddish yellow silty sand with gravel. Services severely disturbed the natural geology in this trench. No archaeological deposits nor artefacts were revealed.

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

This trench was aligned NW–SE and was 10m long, .6m wide and 0.85m deep. Tarmac 0.06m thick overlay hoggin 0.24m thick which comprised yellow gravel and frequent rounded stones. This in turn overlay shingle 0.17m thick which comprised mixed sub-angular stones, which sealed the natural geology which was a red/yellow silty sand with gravel. Services and a band of modern truncation containing modern brick fragments disturbed this trench. No archaeological deposits nor artefacts were revealed in this trench either.

Finds

Modern brick fragments noted in the truncated areas were not retained.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeology in this area, no features or deposits were observed, and the underlying terrace gravel geology is extensively truncated by modern activity on this site.

References

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000 Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.0	1.6	0.56	0–0.5m Tarmac onto 0.05–0.11m fine gravel and stones hoggin layer onto 0.11–0.34m mid grey brown silty clay with frequent gravel subsoil onto mid orange silty sand with gravels. [Plate 1]
2	10.0	1.6	0.85	0–0.06m Tarmac onto 0.06–0.30m yellow gravel and stones hoggin layer onto 0.30–0.47m mixed sub-angular flints onto mid orange silty sand with gravels. [Plate 2]

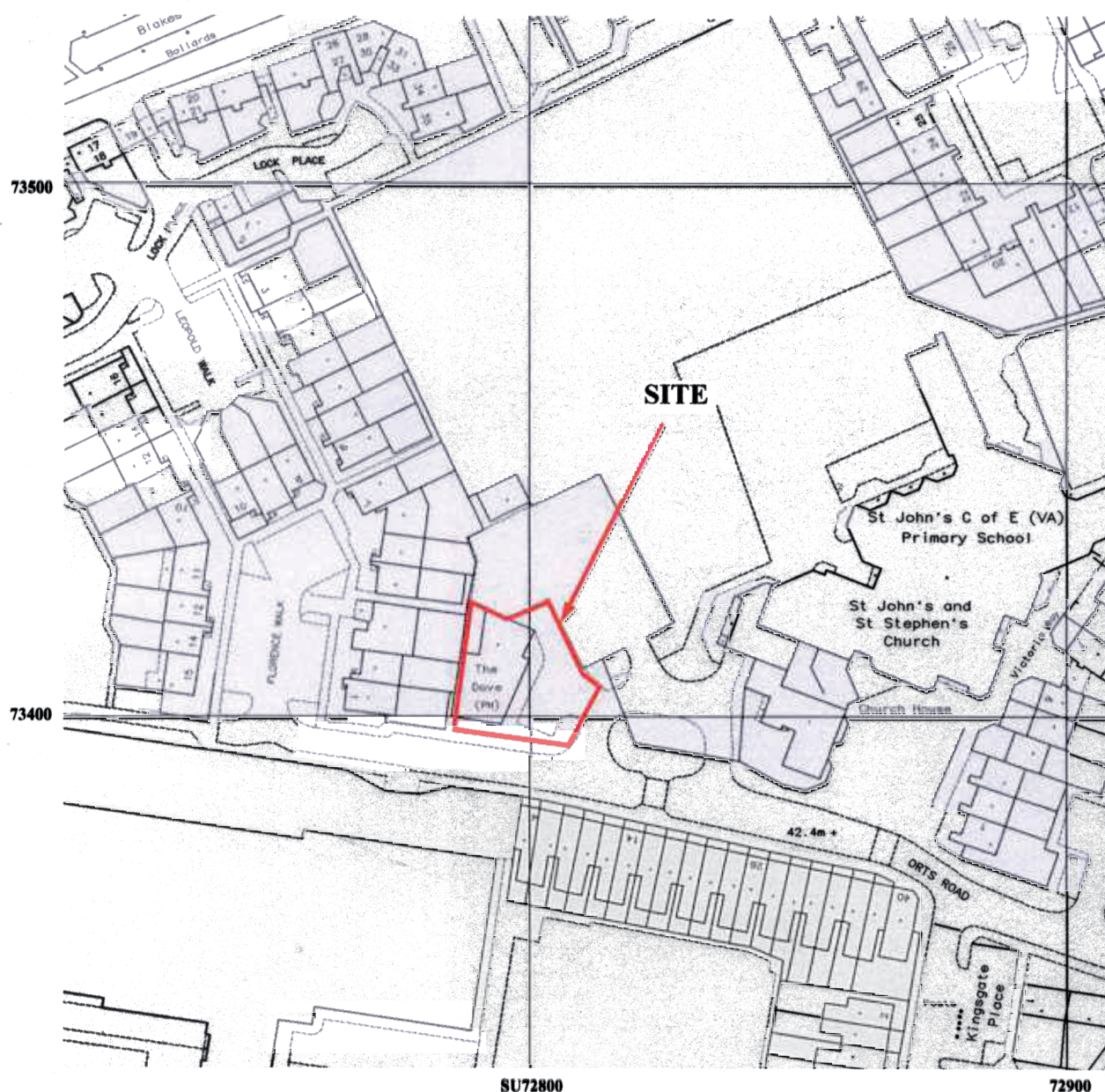


Land at the former Dove Public House, 119 Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire, 2006
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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Orts Road.

Scale: 1:1250.

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
 A R C H A E O L O G I C A L
 S E R V I C E S

Land at the former Dove Public House,
19 Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire, 2006



Figure 3: Trench Locations

Land at the former Dove Public House, 119 Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire, 2006

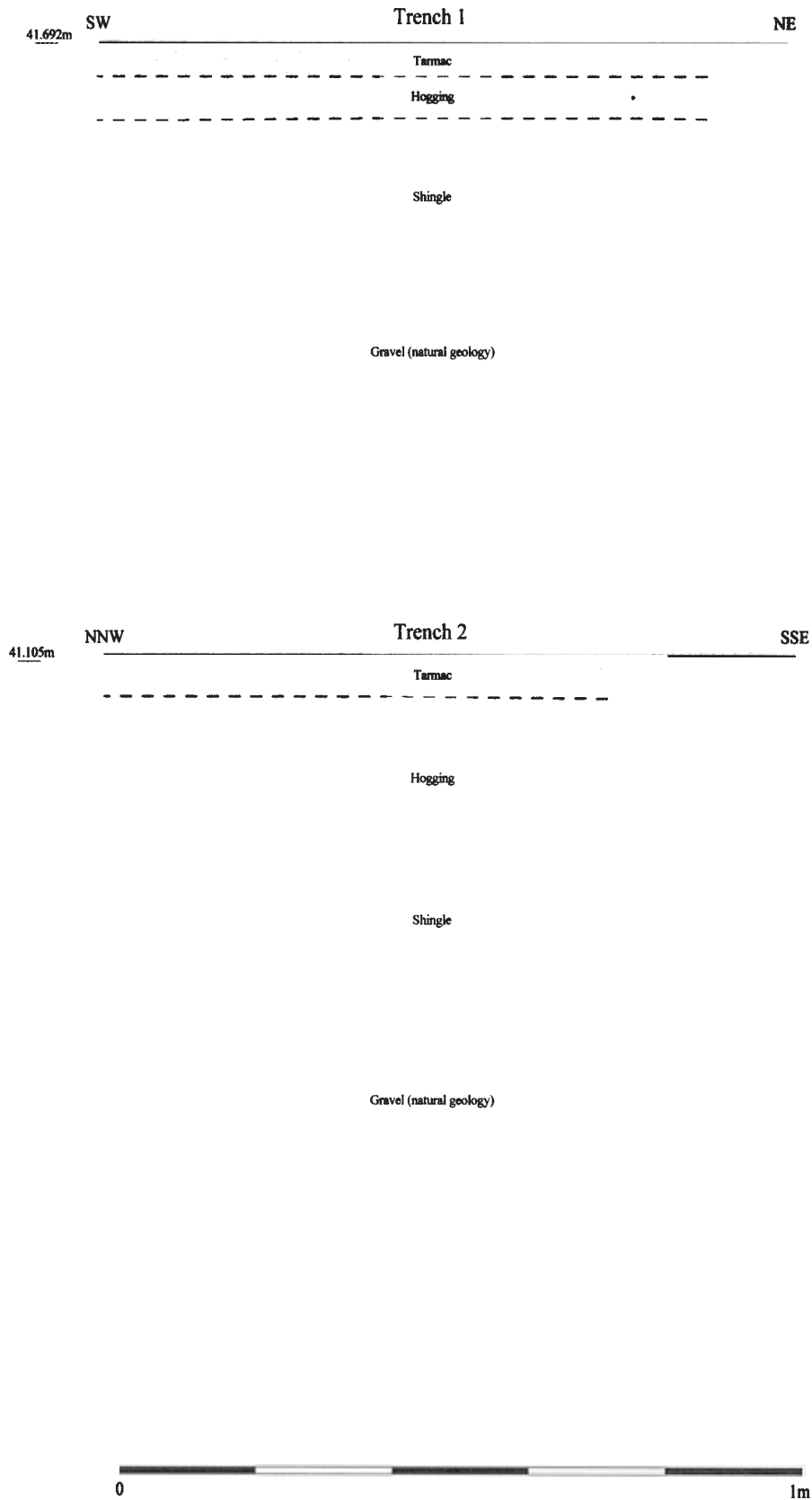


Figure 4: Representative sections



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking south-west, scales 2m, 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2 looking north; scales 2m, 1m