THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Eton Court, Eton, Windsor, Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Phase 1

by Daniel Bray and James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: ECE13/32

(SU 9660 7741)

Eton Court, Eton, Windsor, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation (Phase 1)

for Patrick Ruddy Homes

by Daniel Bray and James McNicoll-Norbury

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ECE 13/32

December 2013

Summary

Site name: Eton Court, Eton, Windsor, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9660 7741

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26th–28th November 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: ECE 13/32

Area of site: 0.19ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed the presence of some archaeological features of late medieval and post-medieval date buried beneath a thick deposit of relatively modern made ground.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 19.12.13 Steve Preston✓ 20.12.13

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Eton Court, Eton, Windsor, Berkshire
An Archaeological Evaluation, Phase 1

by Daniel Bray and James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 13/32

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Eton Court, Eton, Berkshire (SU 9660 7741) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Ison of Patrick Ruddy Homes Ltd, Enterprise Way, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 5BS.

Planning permission (app no 12/0186/FUL) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of new houses, apartments, public conveniences and parking space on the site following demolition of the existing structures. The consent includes a condition relating to archaeology. Field evaluation was required in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site; this report documents the first phase of this work, with further trenching to follow. Based on the results of this evaluation, a mitigation can be designed as appropriate.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray, Kyle Beaverstock and Genni Elliott between 26th and 28th November 2013 and the site code is ECE 13/32. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west side of High Street and to the south of Eton Court in Eton, Berkshire (Fig. 2) and covers approximately 0.2ha. The site is generally flat at 18.1m above Ordnance Datum. A building on the site had been demolished prior to excavation of the archaeological trenches. The underlying geology is described as brickearth (BGS 1981), the geology observed in the trenches comprised of clay with gravels.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Eton which is of medieval and possibly late Saxon origins (Astill 1978; Preston 2005). The site also lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with the possibility of prehistoric and Roman deposits being encountered (Ford 1987). Fieldwork on the High Street in the town, has recorded relatively little (Hammond 2003; Howell 1995). Field evaluation of the Gowers Yard site to the north did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest but indicated that land reclamation in relatively modern times had taken place (Taylor 2006). However, fieldwork on the waterfront to the south has recorded medieval and post-medieval occupation and industrial deposits (Blinkhorn and Pugh 2000; Weale and Porter 2013).

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 aims of the project were to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site, if any archaeological deposits of any period were present and to determine the depth at which any archaeologically significant deposits lie in order to inform the development of a foundation design that will enable preservation in-situ to be achieved if possible.

Five trenches were proposed to be dug at 12m in length and between 1.6-2.0m wide covering 4% of the site area using a JCB type machine with a ditching bucket under constant supervision. The trenches were located within the footprint of the new structures and other areas affected by the development. Only three of the trenches were dug during this phase of the development due to continued use of the car park on site.

Results

The three trenches dug ranged in length from 11.0 to 13.6m and in depth from 1.75 to 3.00m. Trenches 2 and 3 were stepped out at the west end in order to gain access to the features identified in these trenches. A list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. In general the trenches all consisted of large amounts of made ground overlying the natural geology.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3, Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 13.60m long and 1.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of demolition rubble, 0.40m of brick rubble, 0.45m of dark soil and rubble, 0.33 of dark grey blue with brick and tile inclusions, 0.42m of mid grey yellow sandy clay with brick and tile above the clay and gravel natural

geology. A concrete slab was present at the western end and I culvert was also present. No archaeological feature or finds were observed.

Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5, Pls 2 and 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SW-NE and was 13.63m long and 1..83m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.58m dark soils with loose rubble, 0.35m pale brown soil containing mortar and brick rubble overlying natural geology. A SW-NE aligned ditch (1) was recorded which was 1.6m wide and 1.20m deep (proved by auger) and filled with a dark grey brown silty clay (54) containing pottery, bone and brick/tile, a greyish blue silty clay with charcoal (55) which contained bone and brick/tile and a greyish blue silty clay with charcoal (56) which also contained pottery, bone and brick/tile. This ditch was truncated at the western end by pit (2) which measured 2.4m in width and was depth of 1.10m. It was filled with grey blue silty clay (50) containing brick/tile and charcoal and a yellow brown sandy clay with gravel deposit (51) but from which no finds were recovered.

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

Trench 3 was aligned SW-NE and was 11.0m long and 1.50m deep, although 1.00m of made ground had already been removed prior to excavation of the trenches. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m dark soils with small stones and brick/tile, overlying 0.70m of dark soil containing abundant brick rubble, overlying 0.4m of grey/blue soil with bone and tile overlying natural geology. A NW-SE aligned ditch (3) was recorded which was 2.0m wide and at least 0.82m deep (the base was not reached) and filled with a firm grey brown silty clay (57) containing no finds and a blue grey silty clay with charcoal (58) which contained pottery, bone and brick/tile.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 19 sherds with a total weight of 259g. The following fabric types were noted:

EMW: 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). 3 sherds, 7g.

M40: '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 and Denham in Buckinghamshire (Pike 1965; Mellor 1994, 86). Known at numerous sites in south Oxfordshire and Berkshire. 1 sherd, 21g.

SWW: Surrey Whiteware, mid 13th – mid 15th century (Pearce and Vince 1988). A range of whitewares from several sources in Surrey, including Kingston and Cheam. Range of vessel forms which changes over time, but the earlier assemblages are dominated by glazed jugs, some with slipped, incised and plastic decoration. 5 sherds, 106g.

TG: Tudor Green Wares. Green-glazed whitewares produced at several centres in the south of England in Surrey and Hampshire. Wide range of late medieval vessel forms (Pearce and Vince 1988), often delicate and

thin-walled, including jugs, costrels (portable flasks) and lobed cups. Common throughout central southern England, c AD1380-1550. 4 sherds, 28g.

LMT: Late Medieval Transitional Earthenwares, 15th – mid 16th century. Wide range of utilitarian wares. Slightly sandy, red fabric with a thin, patchy glaze on one or both surfaces. Occurs commonly in Reading and most other towns in the middle and lower Thames Valley (eg. Blinkhorn 2007, 13). 4 sherds, 50g.

GS: German Stonewares. AD1450+. A range of hard, grey, salt-glazed fabrics produced at numerous sites in the Rhineland and beyond (cf Gaimster 1997). 1 sherd, 15g.

MET: Metropolitan-type Slipware, 17th – 18th C. Similar fabric to Red Earthenware, with geometric designs in white slip under the glaze. Produced at a number of centres, but particularly Harlow in Essex (Davey and Walker 2009). 1 sherd, 32g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. The range of fabric types is typical of the region (e.g., Blinkhorn 2000), and shows that there was activity at the site throughout the medieval period. Most of the sherds are fairly large and fresh, and appear to be reliably stratified. The sherd of German Stoneware from context 54 is a fragment of a mug of Siegburg type, and is late medieval in date.

Animal Bone by *Danielle Milbank*

A small assemblage of fragmented disarticulated animal bone was hand collected from four contexts encountered in the evaluation, including material from three sieved soil samples. A total of 62 fragments were recovered, weighing 1474g, which are summarised in Appendix 4. The preservation of the remains was good, with low to medium fragmentation and very little surface erosion or weakening. In some contexts the fragment size limited the amount of identifiable bone. Where species could not be identified, the remains were categorised as large (horse, bovine), medium (sheep/goat, pig) or small (cat, dog, rodent). The majority of the bone was derived from the fills of pit 1.

Ditch 1 (54) contained several cattle bones (including two left radius-ulna bones, tibia-fibula) which are derived from juvenile animal, as there are unfused ephyses. A sheep mandible and several rib and long bone fragments from small and medium animals were also present. Ditch 1 (55) contained a small calcaneus with an unfused end which suggests it is also from a juvenile cattle individual. Ditch 1 (56) contained a cattle scapula and several sheep elements and a small animal (perhaps rabbit or hare) femur.

Ditch 3 (58) contained a cattle distal phalange (hoof) from a fairly small individual.

Due to the lack of duplicated skeletal elements, the minimum number of individuals present in the assemblage was found to be 6: 3 cattle, 1 sheep/goat and 1 dog and one rodent species. Evidence of butchery was found on several pieces which suggests that overall, the modest animal bone assemblage is likely to represent domestic consumption.

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

A total of 6.144kg of ceramic building material (71 fragments) were recovered during the evaluation. Of this, the majority of identifiable fragments were tile, with only one brick piece present, and a moderate quantity of small fragments which could not be identified. The ceramic building material is summarised in Appendix 5.

Ceramic building material was recorded in modest quantities in a total of 5 contexts, including material from sieved soil samples. It was examined under x10 magnification.

Tiles

The tile fabric ranged from medium (slightly weak or friable) to very hard and well-fired, and overall there was little variety in fabric, which was typically a fine clay with small quartz sand inclusions and spare small groggy inclusions. The majority of the hard, evenly-fired types have frequent small well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. Occasional examples contained small and medium-sized flint inclusions. The colour varies from pale grey orange to a dark red, with several examples of a black or grey (reduced) core. All the fragments examined have a rough underside, indicating that they were made using a sanded mould.

An example from Ditch 1 (54) was an incomplete tile with a single peg hole. The form is uneven, and very slightly curved, and the thickness varies from 13mm to 16mm. It is likely to be medieval in date. This context also included an example of a black (reduced) core and a fragment with edge-thickening, both suggestive of a medieval rather than later date.

A piece from Ditch 1 (55) has a small amount of greenish glaze on one side, and a reduced core, and is of uncertain date. Deposit 56 contained a piece of a thin (11mm), well-fired tile with a dark brown colour and a reduced core, though it is of uncertain date.

The single brick fragment was recovered from Ditch 3 (58) and comprised a slightly soft clay fabric with small, well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. Drag marks on one side suggest it is part of a handmade brick, possibly of later medieval or early post-medieval date, and can be broadly categorised as Harley type 4 (Harley 1974).

The tile recovered on the site is modest and reflects the durable nature of building materials. The majority are likely to represent pieces of plain peg tile, with no ridge or decorated tiles present. Tiles of this type were produced from the 12th century onwards, however they were generally limited to high-status buildings before becoming widespread by the 15th century and ubiquitous in the post-medieval period.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed the presence of archaeological features on the site in the form of ditches and a pit dating from late Medieval and post-medieval times. These features were buried by a considerable thickness of relatively modern made ground.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SW end

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	13.6	1.6	1.75	0–0.10m made ground; 0.1-0.5m brick rubble; 0.5-0.95m dark rubble made ground; 0.95-1.28m dark grey blue clay with brick and tile inclusions; 1.28-1.7m mid yellow sandy clay with brick and tile inclusions; 1.70m+ l yellow gravel and clay natural geology **[Pl. 1]**
2	13.63	1.6	0.93	0-0.58m dark soil with brick rubble; 0.58-0.93 pale brown soil with mortar and brick rubble; 0.93m+ natural geology Ditch 1, Pit 2. **[Pls 2-3]**
3	11.0	1.6	1.5	0-0.40m dark soil with small stones and CBM; 0.4-1.10m dark soil with abundant brick rubble; 1.10-1.50m grey blue soil with bone and tile; 1.50m+ natural geology. Ditch 3. **[PL. 4]**

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence*
2	1	54, 55, 56, (52, 53)	Ditch	Late Medieval	Pottery
2	2	50, 51	Pit	Medieval or later	Stratigraphy
3	3	57, 58	Ditch	Post-Medieval	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

		EMW		*M40*		*SWW*		*TG*		*LMT*		*GS*		*MET*	
Cut	*Deposit*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*	*No*	*Wt*
1	54					2	98	4	28	3	45	1	15		
1	56	2	5	1	21	3	8								
3	58	1	2							1	5			1	32
	Total	3	7	1	21	5	106	4	28	4	50	1	15	1	32

APPENDIX 4 - Inventory of animal bone

Cut	*Deposit*	*Sample*	*No. Frags*	*Wt (g)*	*Cattle*	*Sheep/goat*	*Large*	*Medium*	*Dog*	*Rodent*
1	54		19	19	4	1	4	6		
1	55		4	4	1		1			
1	**56**	**1**	**7**	**7**				3		1
1	56		19	19	1	4		4	1	
3	58		13	13						
Total			62	1474						
MNI					3	1			1	1

Appendix 5. Catalogue of brick and tile.

Cut	*Deposit*	*Type*	*Sample*	*No*	*Wt (g)*
2	51	Pit	2	3	70
1	54	Ditch		36	3212
1	55	Ditch		7	482
1	56	Ditch	1	6	12
1	56	Ditch		8	760
3	58	Ditch		5	1294
3	58	Ditch	3	6	314

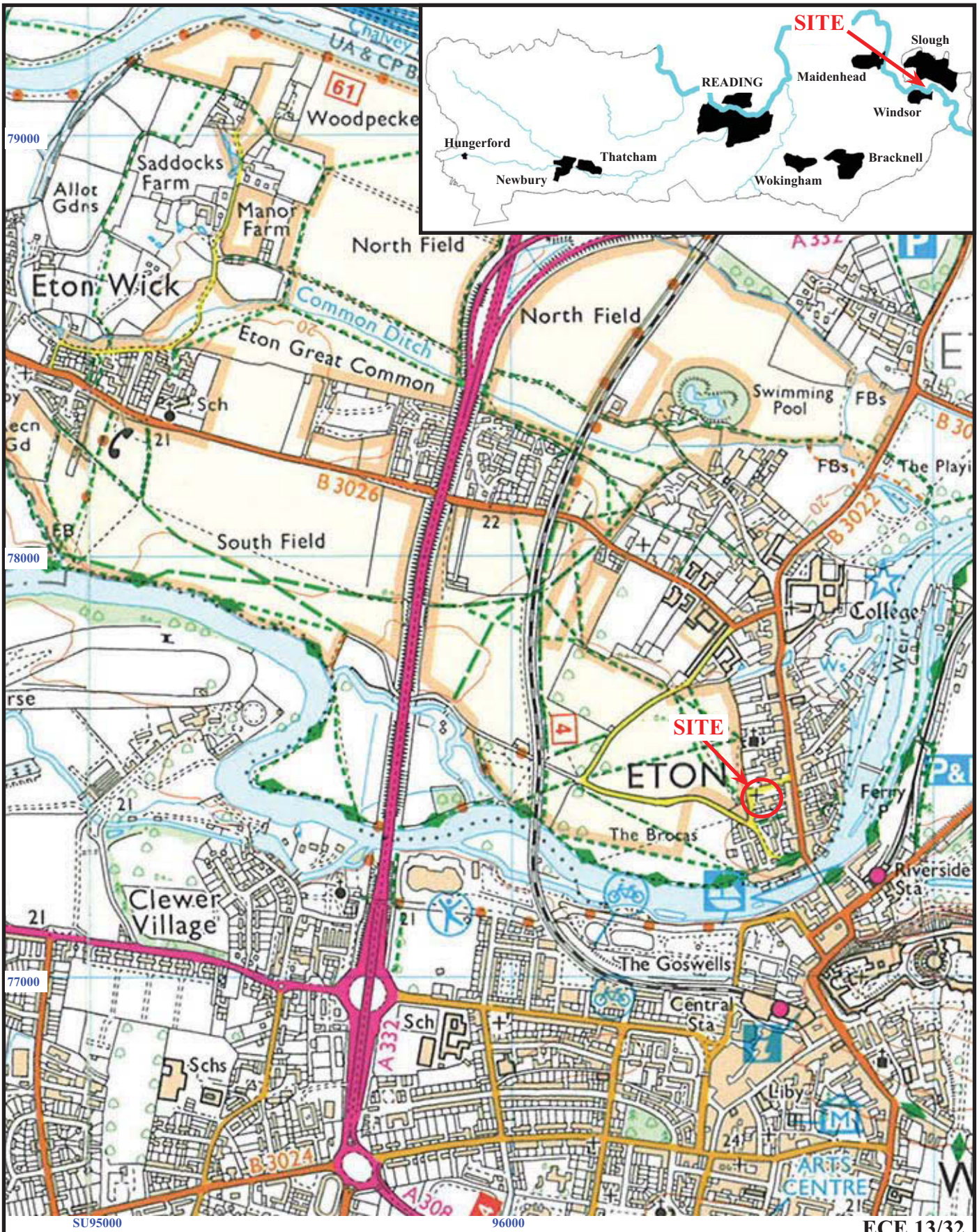

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Figure 1. Location of site within Eton and Berkshire.

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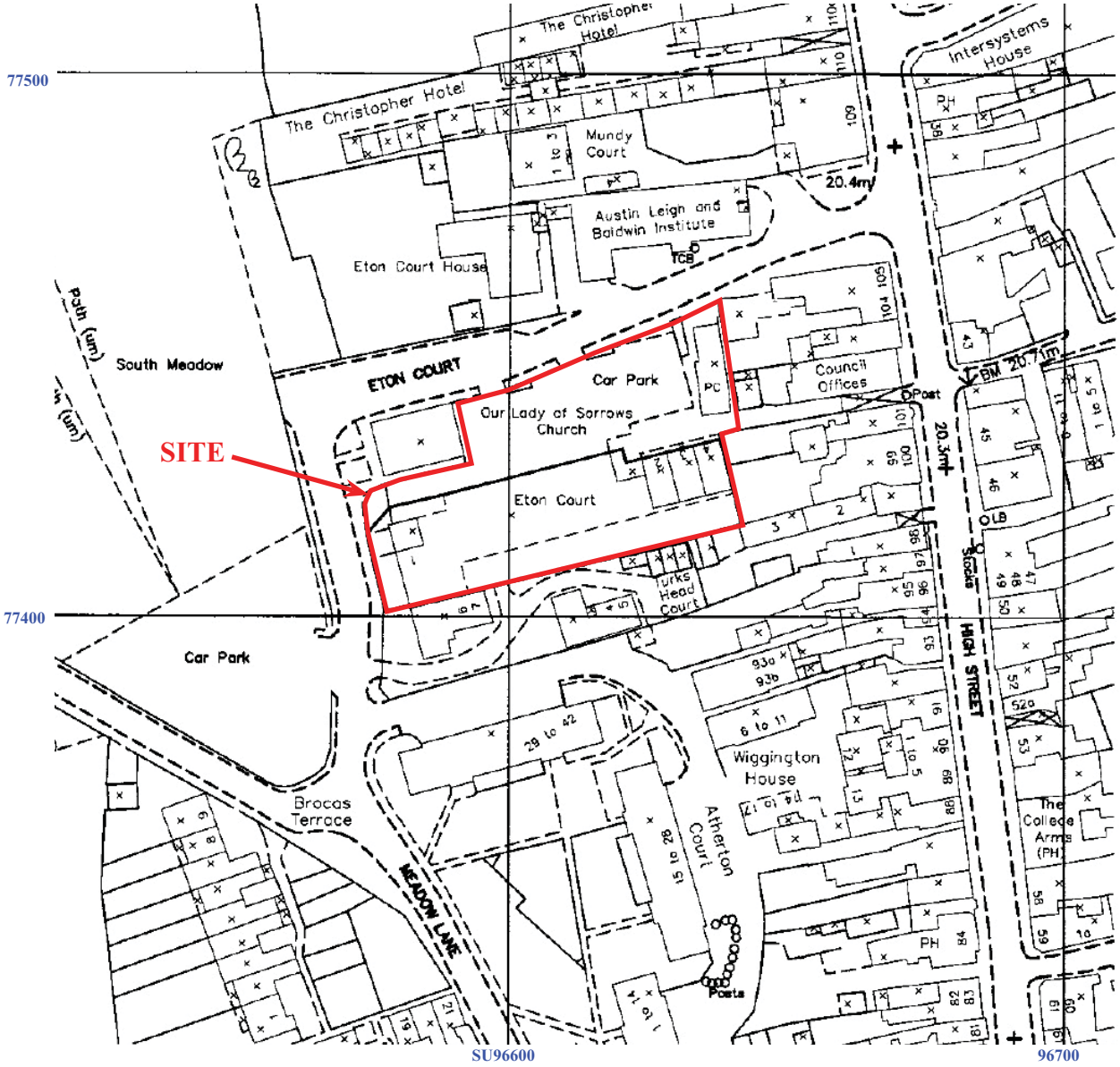

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site at Eton Court.

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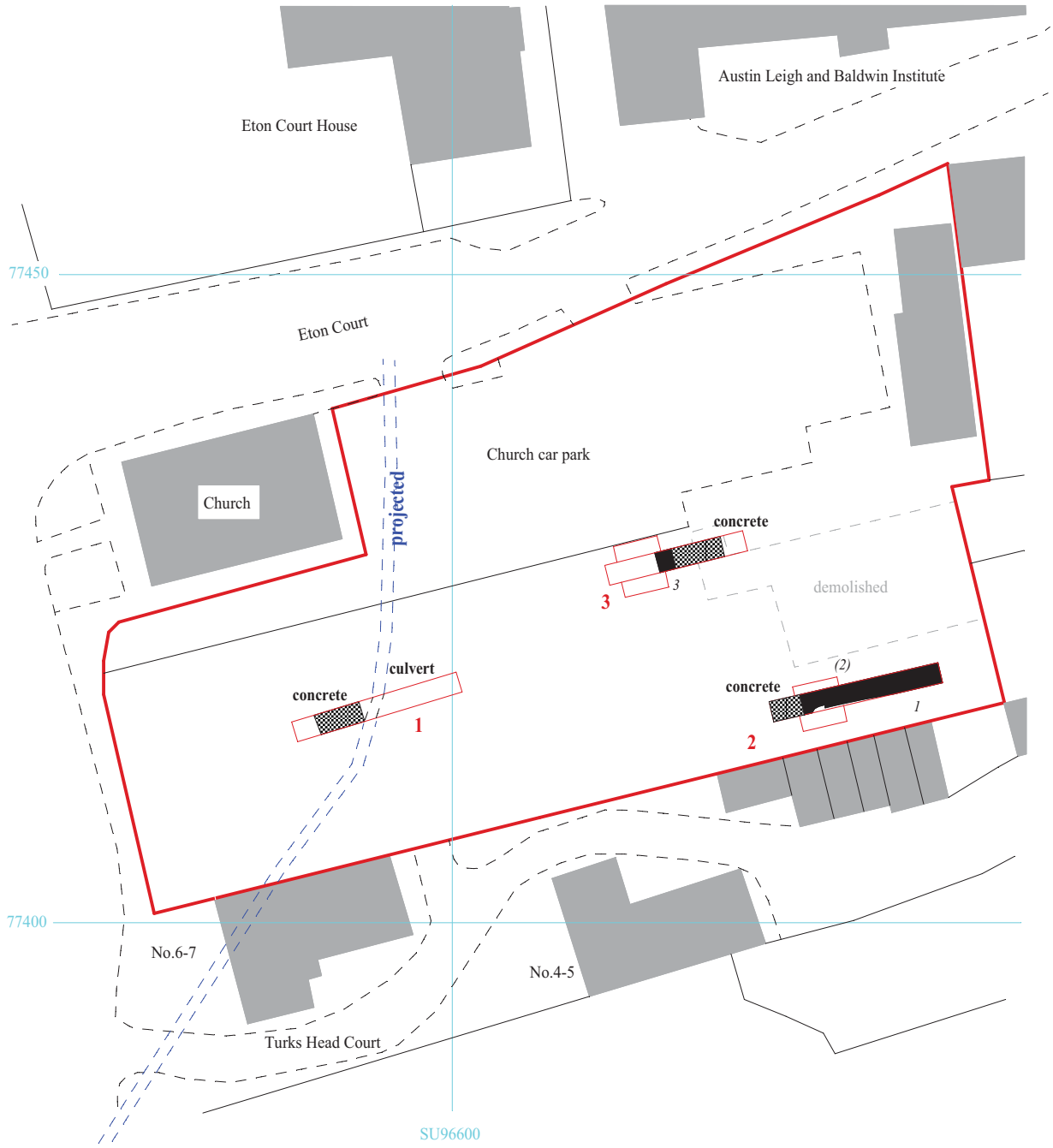

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 25m

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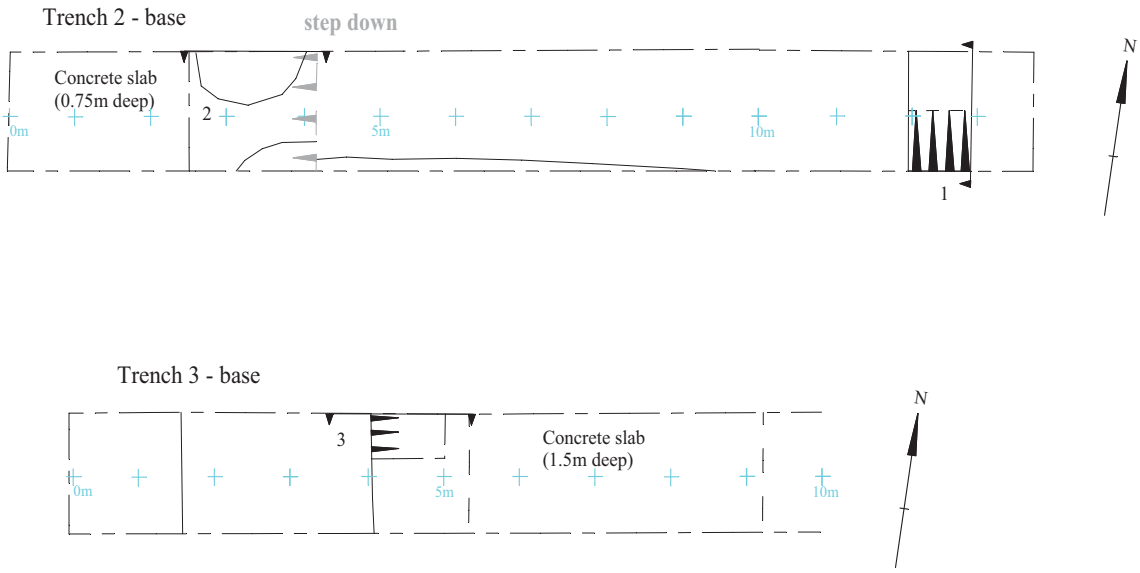

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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

0 5m

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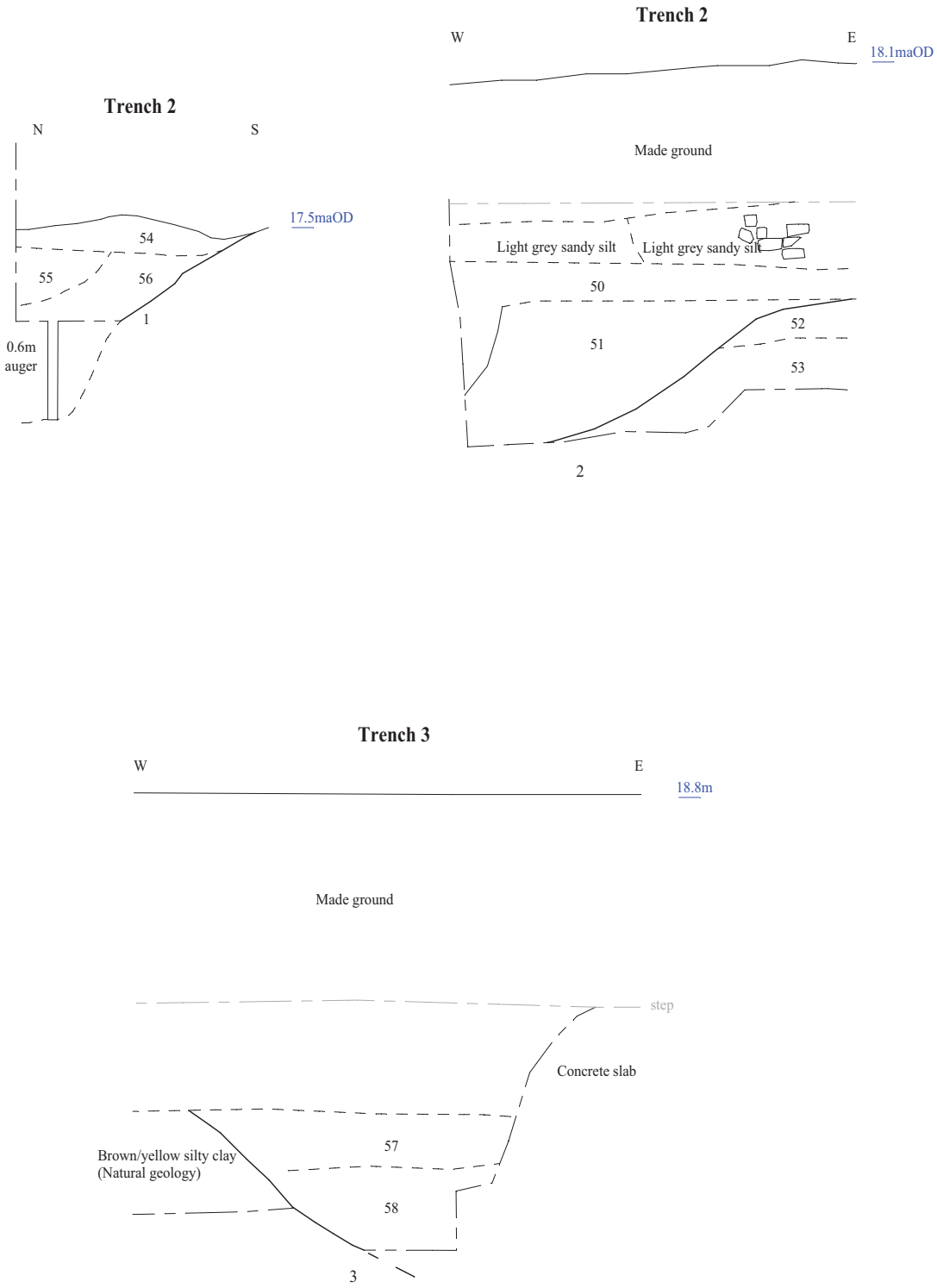

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Figure 5. Sections.

0 1m

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

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

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Plates 1 - 2.

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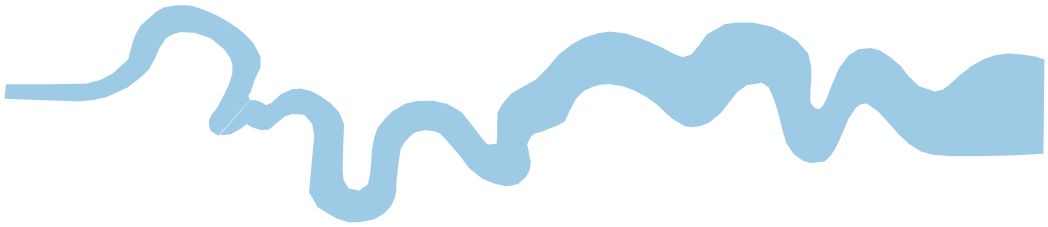
Plate 3. Cut 2 ,Trench 2, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

Plate 4. Cut 3, Trench 3, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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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