

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Shinfield Infants School, School Green,
Shinfield, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: SSS14/30

(SU 7329 6770)

**Shinfield Infants School, School Green,
Shinfield, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Wokingham Borough Council**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SSS 14/30

March 2014

Summary

Site name: Shinfield Infants School, School Green, Shinfield, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7329 6770

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th-25th March 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: SSS 14/30

Area of site: 0.36ha

Summary of results: A single shallow ditch was found at the northern end of the site containing modern finds. The site is considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 28.03.14 Steve Preston ✓ 28.03.14

Shinfield Infants School, School Green, Shinfield, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 14/30

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Shinfield Infants School, School Green, Shinfield, Berkshire (SU 7329 6770) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Neil Jones, of the Buildings Unit, Property Services, Wokingham Borough Council.

A planning application is to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of an extension to the primary school with associated car parking and access works, with land designated for future expansion. An archaeological field evaluation has been requested prior to submission in order to inform the planning process and to provide information on which to base a scheme to mitigate the effects of the development on any archaeological deposits that may be present. Further fieldwork may be required if significant archaeological deposits are encountered which cannot be preserved *in situ*.

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 Mr Paul Falcini, formerly of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Nick Harper on 24th March 2014 and the site code is SSS 14/30. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and it is anticipated that it will be deposited at appropriate designated museum or repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site comprises a rectangular parcel of land adjacent to Shinfield Infants School, Shinfield, Berkshire in a field used as pasture. To the north and east of the site stand the school and a health centre and to the south and west open fields with hedgerows as boundaries. The geology of the site is described as river terrace gravels (BGS 1946) and the site lies at 45m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within an area where there is a moderate range of archaeological finds and sites recorded within Shinfield. A general perspective of settlement in the environs came from the Loddon Valley Survey fieldwalking project (Ford 1994-7) which examined areas to the south and west of the proposal site, and the earlier East Berkshire Archaeological Survey (Ford 1987) with several Roman and prehistoric sites recorded. Fieldwork to the north has revealed Iron Age and Roman landscape and cremation burial (Taylor 2012a). To the north-east Iron Age occupation deposits were revealed (Taylor 2012b) with medieval deposits to the north-west (Milbank 2009a): an undated cremation burial was found to be an isolated feature (Milbank 2009b). However several small investigations close to the site, such as one immediately to the north (Hammond 2007), have revealed little of interest.

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 research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Five trenches were to be dug, each 20m long and 1.6m wide, using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were targeted at the footprints of the proposed and future new structures. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims above.

Results

The trenches were dug as intended and ranged from 19.8m to 20.1m in length and in depth from 0.36m to 0.69m. Trenches 2 and 5 had to be moved slightly due to the presence of overhead cables (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1, with feature details in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned SW–NE and was 19.8m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural gravel geology. A ditch (1) aligned broadly east–west was recorded which was 1.4m wide and 0.15m deep and filled with grey brown silty clay with small gravel inclusions (52). Modern fragments of pottery and brick were found within the deposit and were retained on site.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned SSE–NNW and was 20.0m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.37m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found.

Trench 3 (Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SE–NW and was 20.0m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SE –NW and was 20.0m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found.

Trench 5 (Pl. 4)

Trench 5 was aligned S–N and was 20.1m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.19m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found.

Finds

Sherds of modern pottery and brick fragments were found in ditch 1; these finds were retained on site.

Conclusion

Despite the potential of the site for archaeological remains and the survival of subsoil seen in the trenches only a shallow ditch containing modern finds was identified in the trenches, which was possibly the remains of a former boundary. The site is considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

References

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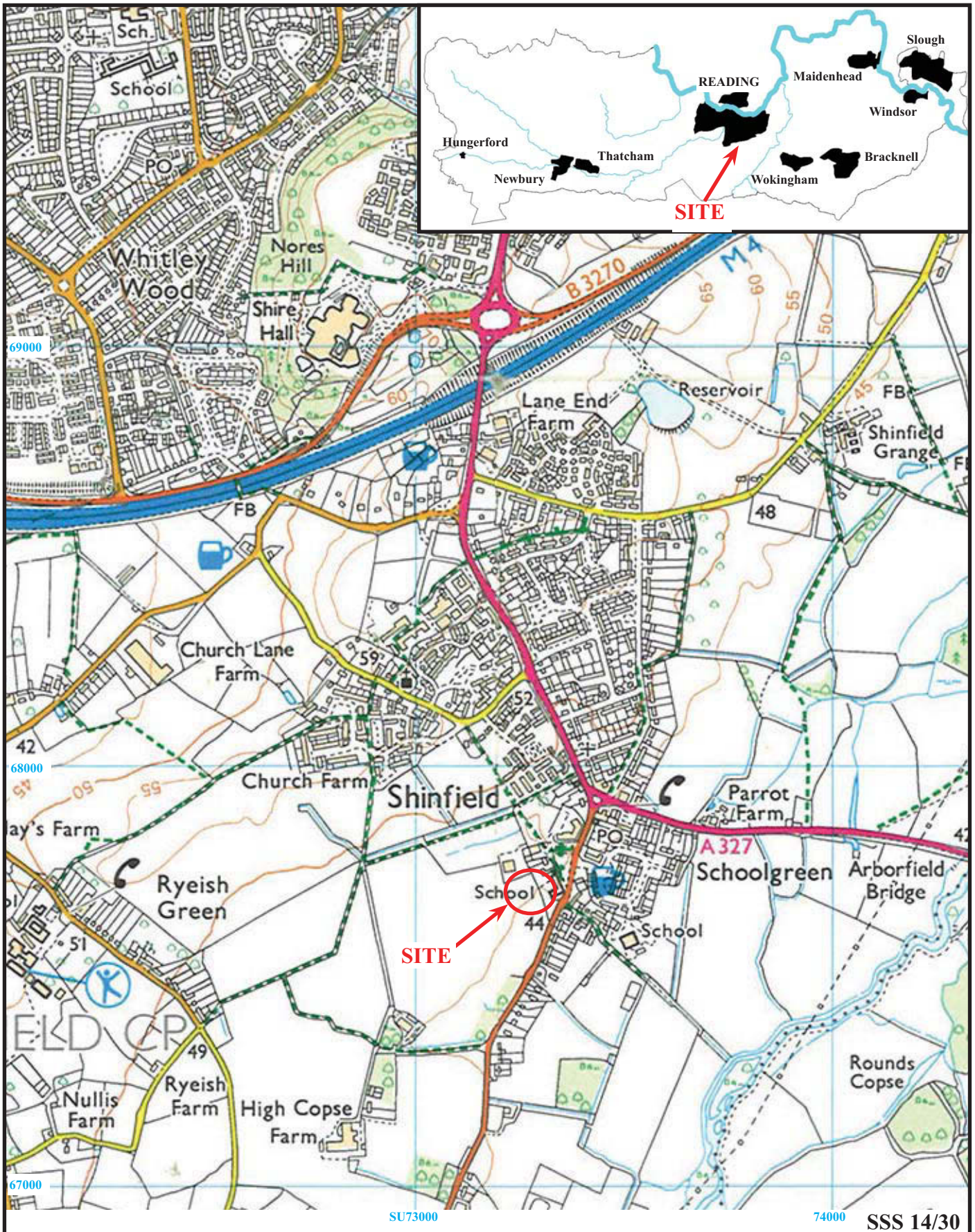
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S, SW or SE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	19.8	1.6	0.39	0–0.22m dark brown silty sand (turf and topsoil); 0.22-0.39m grey brown silt (subsoil) 0.39m+ sandy gravel natural geology. Ditch 1. [Pls 1 and 2]
2	20.0	1.6	0.62	0–0.37m topsoil; 0.37-0.62m subsoil; 0.62m+ natural geology.
3	20.0	1.6	0.36	0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ natural geology. [Pl. 3]
4	20.0	1.6	0.34	0–0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ natural geology.
5	20.1	1.6	0.45	0–0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ 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	Ditch/furrow	Modern	Pottery/brick

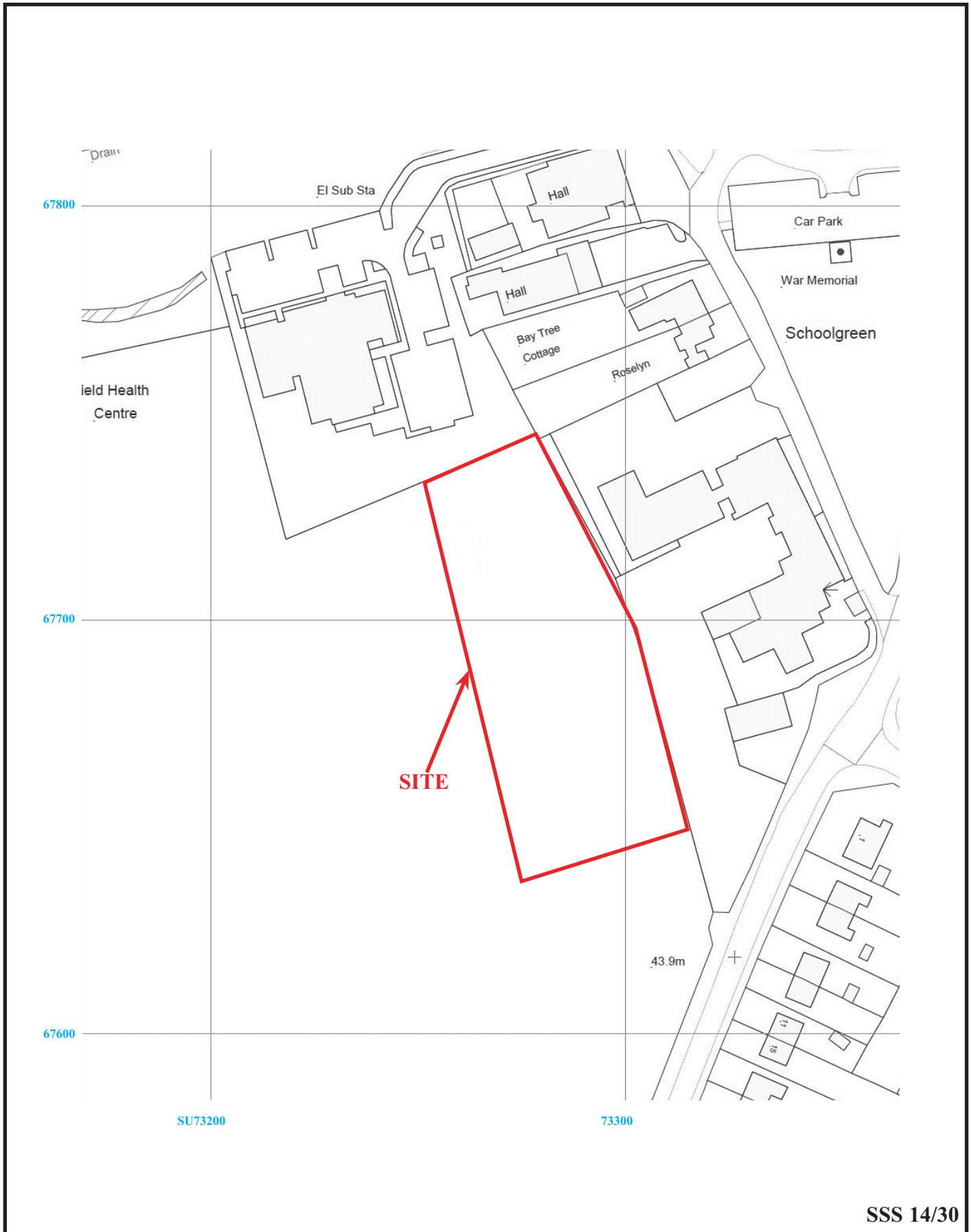


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Figure 1. Location of site within Shinfield and Berkshire.

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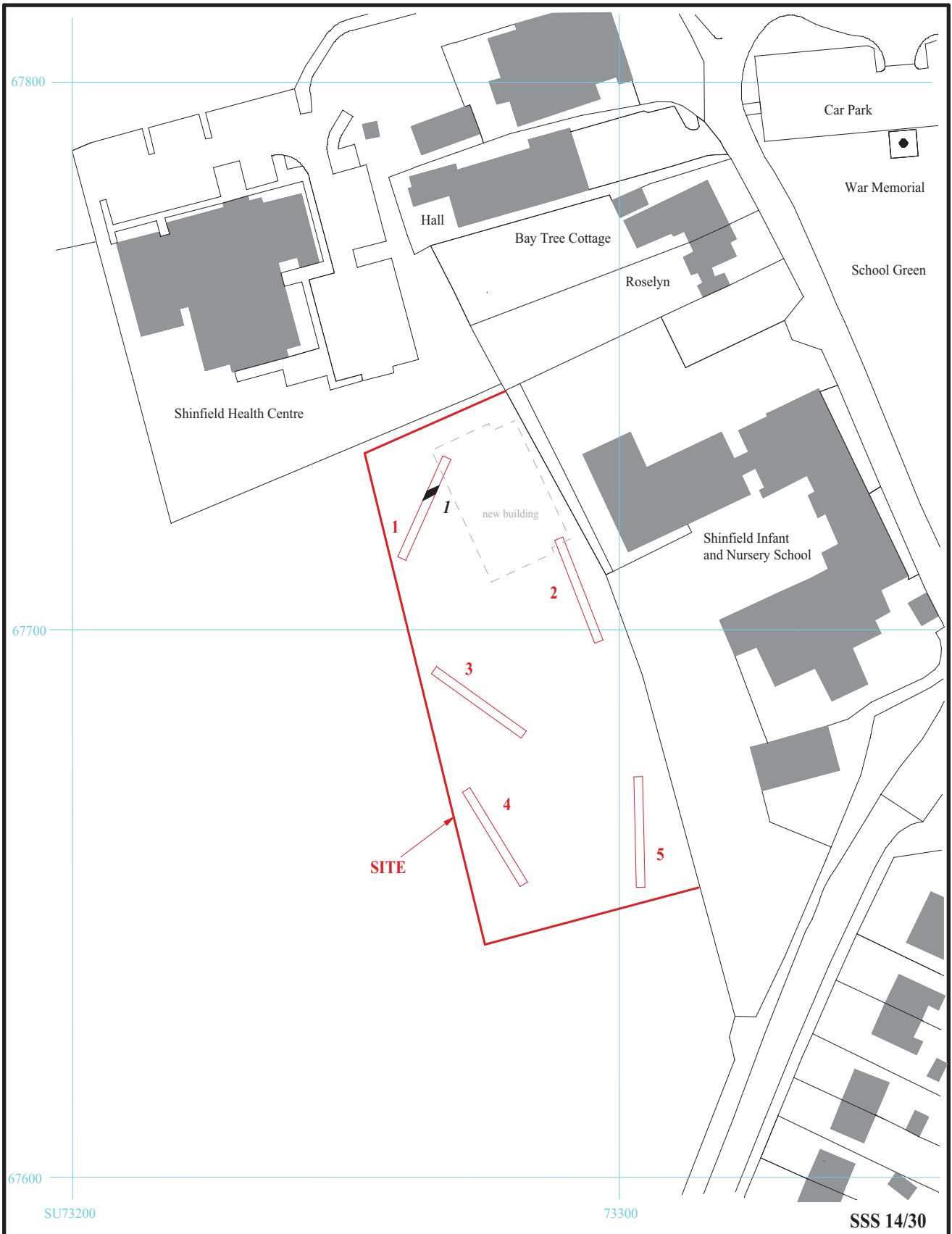


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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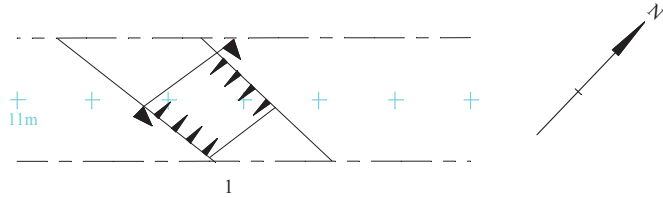
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

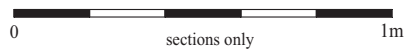
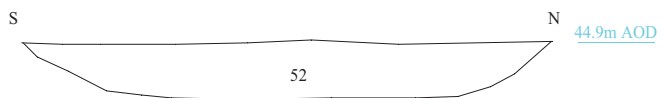
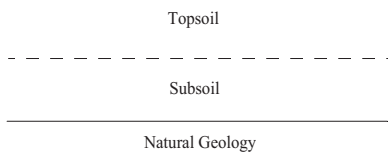


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Trench 1



SW _____ NE [45.3m AOD](#)



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Figure 4. Trench 1 Plan, Representative Section, and Section of ditch 1.

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.1m.



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

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 5, looking south, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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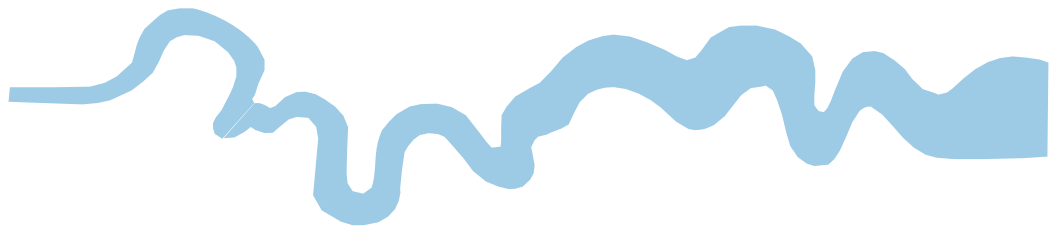
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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