

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road,
Shinfield, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Aiji Castle

Site Code: ORR14/115

(SU 7362 6847)

**Rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road,
Shinfield, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Hurst Development Solutions**

by Aiji Castle

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ORR14/115

July 2014

Summary

Site name: Rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road, Shinfield, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7362 6847

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26th June 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aiji Castle

Site code: ORR 14/115

Area of site: c.0.40ha

Summary of results: A single pit of uncertain date was recorded within the proposal site during this evaluation. The majority of the site is not considered to have any archaeological potential but results from previous fieldwork to the north-west suggest that this area may have some potential for the presence of Iron Age deposits.

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

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓	08.07.14
	Steve Preston✓	08.07.14

Rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road, Shinfield, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Aiji Castle

Report 14/115

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at the rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road, Shinfield, Berkshire (SU 7362 6847) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Malcolm Hurst of Hurst Development Solutions, Davidson House, Forbury Square, Reading, RG1 3EU.

Planning consent (F2013/1581) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the demolition of an existing extension and the construction of seven new houses with associated access road. The consent includes a condition (2.1) relating to archaeology that requires a field evaluation to be undertaken prior to development.

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 Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to Wokingham Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aiji Castle and Nick Harper on 26th June 2014 and the site code is ORR 14/115. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located towards the north-east of the village of Shinfield which lies just south of the M4 motorway, near Reading (Fig. 1). The development area encloses c.0.4ha and is bounded by a suburban residential area to the south and west and pastoral fields to the east (Fig. 2). Prior to demolition the site contained various residential extensions and associated septic tanks and services. The underlying geology is mapped as on the boundary between plateau gravel and London Clay (BGS 1946). The evaluation observed the natural geology as a sandy clay with only a little gravel present. The site lies approximately 50m 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 with several Roman and prehistoric sites recorded. Fieldwork to the west has revealed Iron Age and Roman landscape activity and a cremation burial (Taylor 2012a). Immediately to the north of the site (and encroaching within it) Iron Age occupation deposits have been revealed (Taylor 2012b; Taylor 2001; Saunders 2000). An investigation to the south, however, revealed little of interest (McNicoll-Norbury 2009).

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;
- to determine if further Iron Age deposits are present as previously recorded to the north; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig five trenches, each 20m long and 1.6m wide targeted at the footprints of the proposed new structures using a JCB-type or small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were 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 archaeological features and deposits excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be excavated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Six trenches were eventually dug (Fig. 3). The five proposed trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended locations though Trench 1 had to be moved partly to the south-east. The trenches measured between 8.1m and 20.2m in length and between 0.36m and 0.6m deep. All were 1.6m wide. A complete list of trenches

giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 summarizes the single feature excavated.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned SE–NW and was 20.1m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil and 0.2m of brown clay sand with gravel subsoil which overlay the natural geology which was a yellow brown sandy clay with some gravel. Two land drains were noted along with a single pit possibly of archaeological interest. Pit 1 was 0.75m across and 0.17m deep with a bowl-shaped profile (Pl. 4). It was cut by a land drain or possibly a plough scar. It contained a single fill of yellow/grey silty sand with some gravel. No finds were recovered but a little charcoal was observed.

Trench 2 (Fig 3)

Trench 2 was aligned north–south and was 20.2m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of turf/topsoil and 0.2m of subsoil which overlay the natural geology. A possible pit was investigated but written off and a modern pit noted.

Trench 3 (Fig 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW–NE and was 20m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of turf/topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology.

Trench 4 (Fig 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned west–east and was 19.75m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of turf/topsoil and 0.17m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology.

Trench 5 (Fig 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned west–east and was 20m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of turf/topsoil over 0.25m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology. A number of land drains were observed.

Trench 6 (Fig 3)

Trench 6 was an additional trench to sample the environs of pit 1 in Trench 1 further. It was aligned west–east and was 8.1m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of turf/topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the single feature or any of the trenches.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed just a single pit of possible archaeological interest but which is of uncertain date. The remaining trenches revealed only modern intrusions. Despite the presence of Iron Age archaeological features on the site's north-western boundary and beyond (Fig. 3), pit 1 was the only feature that may be related to this. The largely negative results here coupled with similar results at 84 Oatlands Road (Saunders 2000), may suggest that the Iron Age activity here is of limited extent or that it is focused further to the north-west and the site here is on or beyond its limits. Thus it is considered that the majority of the site has no archaeological potential but it is possible that there is a small zone to the north-west where this statement may not apply.

References

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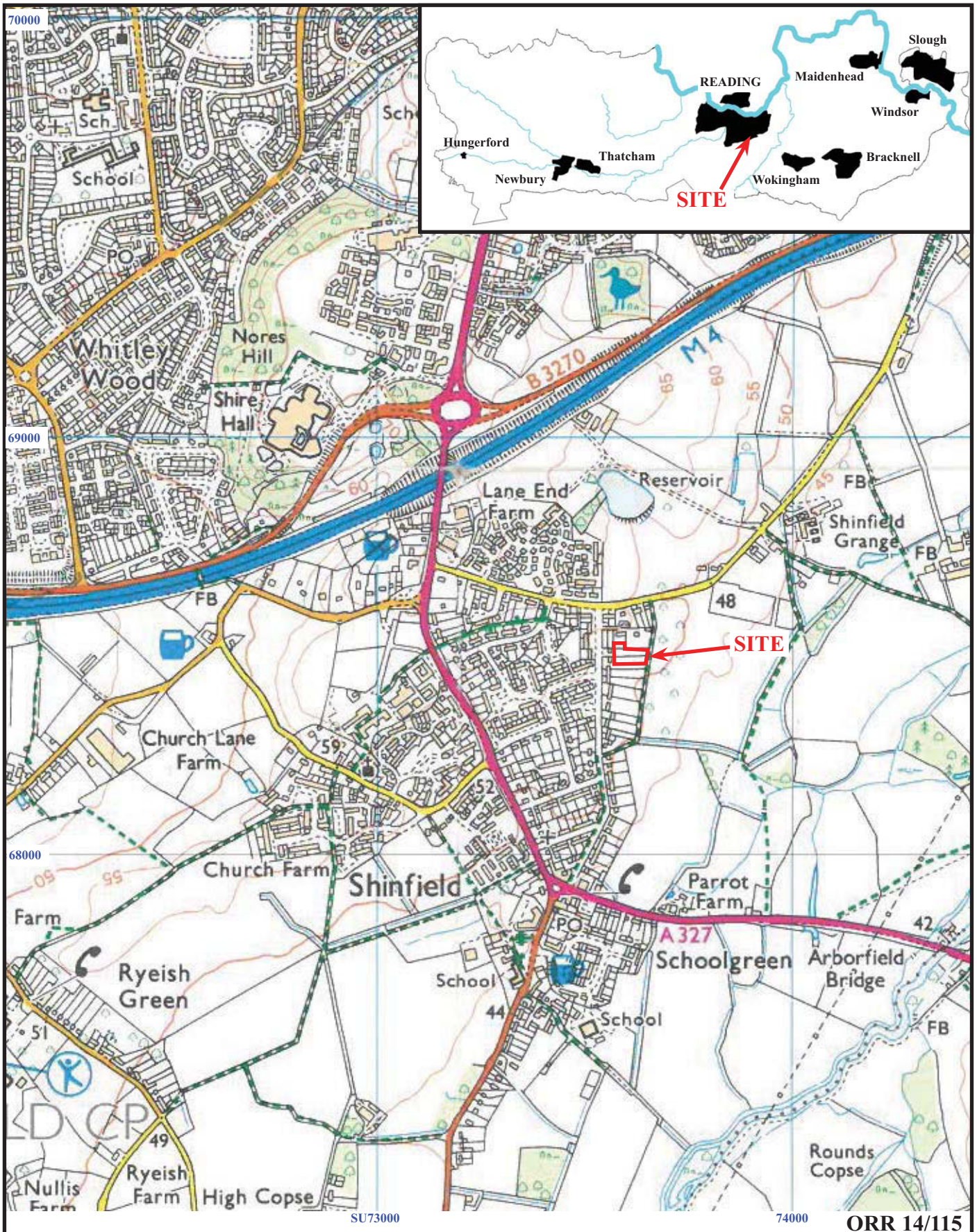
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.1	1.6	0.5	0–0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.4m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology. Land drains, pit 1. [Pls 1 and 4]
2	20.2	1.6	0.36	0–0.07m topsoil; 0.07-0.27m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.27m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology. Possible pit. modern pit
3	20	1.6	0.5	0–0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.33m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.33m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology.
4	19.75	1.6	0.5	0–0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.45m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.45m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology. Land drains. [Pl. 2]
5	20	1.6	0.6	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.55m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.55m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology. Land drains. [Pl. 3]
6	8.1	1.6	0.53	0–0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.44m brown clay sand with gravel subsoil; 0.44m+ yellow/brown sandy clay with gravel natural geology.

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	Pit	undated	Cut by land drain

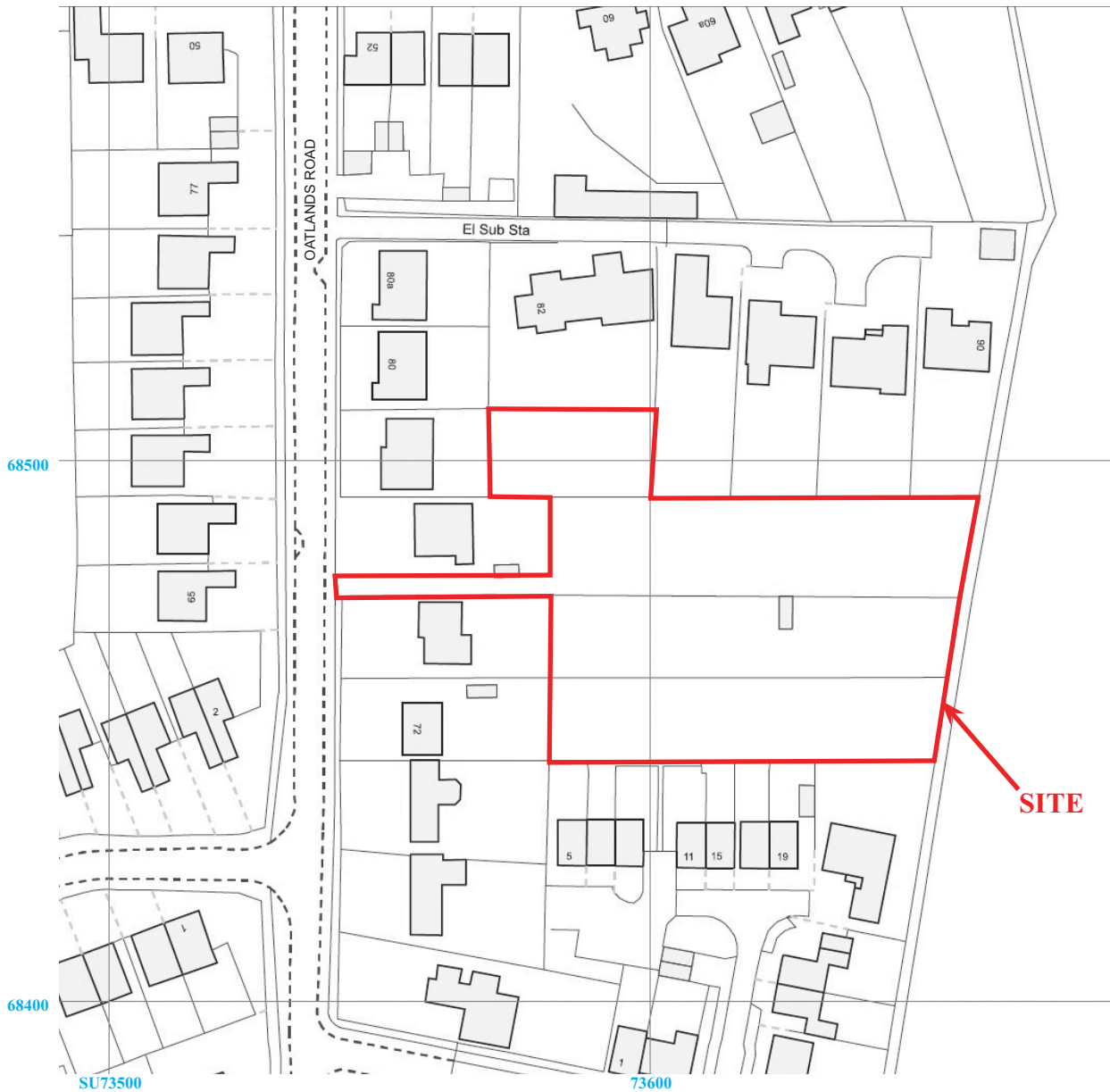


Land to the rear of 74-76 Outlands Road, Shinfield,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Shinfield and Berkshire.

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SITE

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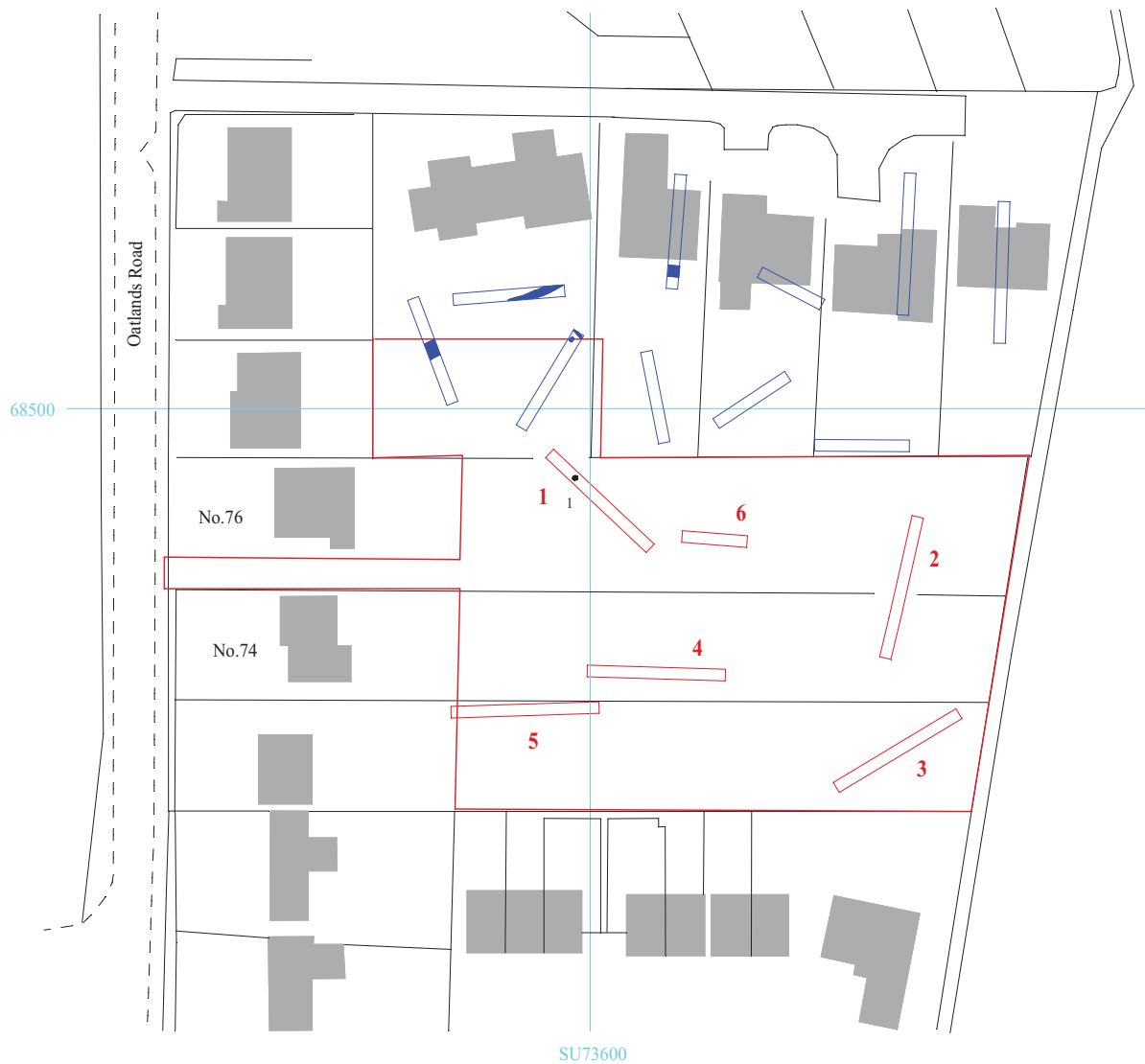


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Oatlands Road.

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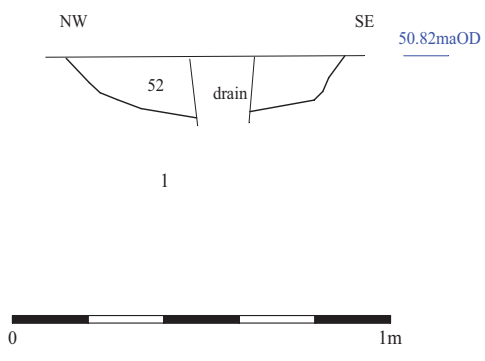
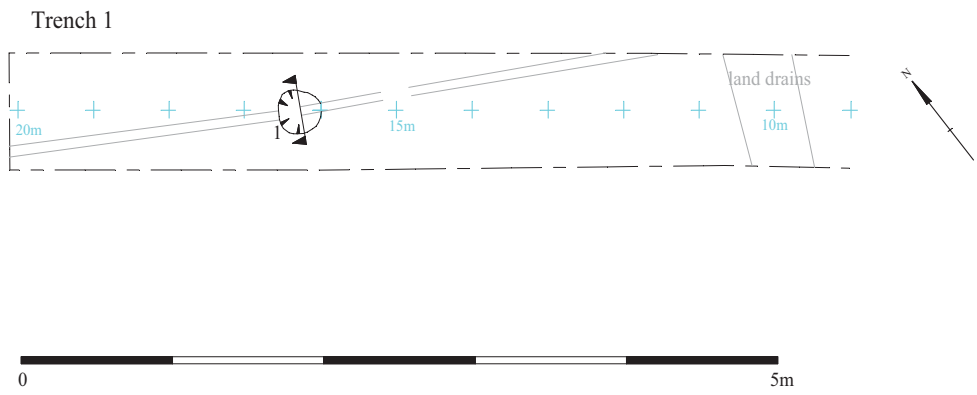
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Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches and previous evaluation trenches (blue).



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ORR 14/115

Land to the rear of 74-76 Otlands Road, Shinfield,
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Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Plan and section of pit 1 in trench 1.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

ORR 14/115

**Land to the rear of 74-76 Oatlands Road, Shinfield,
Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, pit 1, looking south east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

ORR 14/115

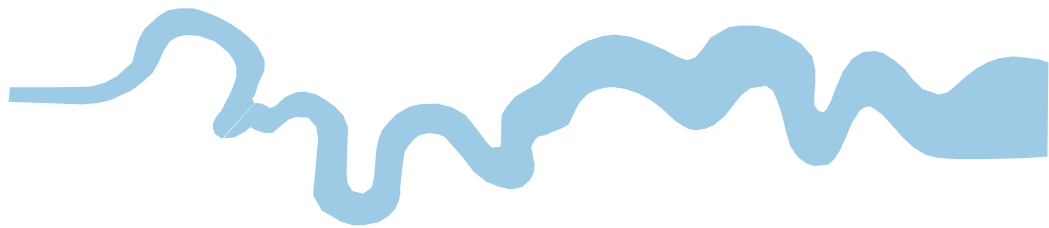
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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