

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Littlewick Green,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Dan Bray

Site Code: SHC14/83

(SU 8500 8025)

**Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Littlewick Green,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Hicks Development Ltd**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SHC 14/83

August 2014

Summary

Site name: Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Littlewick Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8500 8025

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th – 8th August 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: SHC 14/83

Summary of results: No archaeological features were observed during the evaluation and no archaeological finds were recovered. A large area of modern truncation was identified on the eastern side of the site.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 12.08.14 Steve Preston ✓ 11.08.14

Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Littlewick Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Report 14/83

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the Shire Horse Centre, south of the A4 Bath Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8500 8025) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Heron of Hicks Development Ltd, 15 Headley Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4JB.

Planning permission (12/02020 OUT) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of 6 detached dwellings with access on to Cherry Garden Lane and erection of two replacement garages following demolition of existing buildings. The consent includes a condition (5) relating to archaeology, requiring a phased programme of archaeological works on the site. A single component of work was proposed initially, to take the form of a field evaluation by means of machine-dug trenching. Further fieldwork may be required if significant archaeological deposits are encountered.

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, Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, advisors to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Becky Constable on the 7th and 8th August 2014 with the site code SHC 14/83. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located 3.5km west of Maidenhead town centre and 6.5km south of Marlow. The site occupies an irregular parcel of land formerly used as stables for the Shire Horse centre. The site is bordered to the north by the A4 Bath Road, to the south by Cherry Garden Lane and Woolley Hall to the west. The Shire Horse Pub is directly to the north-east (Fig. 1). The site is c.45m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as upper chalk (BGS, 1981) and this was observed in trenches 2 and 5. In trenches 1, 3 and 4 the natural geology consisted of a light red brown silty clay with large flint inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a range of sites recorded (Ford 1987; Gates 1975). Locally an Iron Age enclosure (Robin Hood's Arbour) and linear earthwork at Maidenhead Thicket (Bowden *et al.* 1983) present the most visible archaeology in the vicinity, with, in addition, Roman deposits to the west at Littlewick Green. However, a limited impact watching brief on the current site itself did not locate any archaeology (Mundin 2007). Directly to the west at Woolley Hall an archaeological evaluation prior to a residential development also did not reveal any archaeological deposits (Dawson 2014).

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 of archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine of archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine if any archaeologically significant deposits are present so as to inform the development of a mitigation strategy

It was proposed to dig 5 trenches; one 20m long, two at 15m long and two at 10m long, all 1.60m wide to target the footprint of the new structures. The trenches were to be excavated using a JCB type machine equipped with a toothless grading bucket and supervised at all times by an archaeologist, with the spoil removed being monitored for finds. All potential archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

Five trenches were dug as intended although Trench 2 was repositioned due to an electric cable and Trench 3 was also repositioned as an existing building had yet to be demolished (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged in length from 10.40m to 18.50m and were between 0.45m and 1.38m deep. All trenches were 1.60m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned E - W and was 15.10m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil (0.18m of Tarmac at the W end) overlying 0.12m of gravel made ground above 0.15m of mid brown grey silty clay. This was above the natural orange brown silty clay with gravel and flint inclusions. No archaeological finds or features were present.

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

Trench 2 was repositioned due to a live electric cable in the intended position. The trench was aligned SE–NW and was 10.40m long and had a maximum depth at the northern end of 1.38m. At the south-east end the depth was 1.18m and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.16m of brown grey silt with chalk inclusions. This was above 0.84m of orange brown clay silt with large flint and brick inclusions. This deposit also contained plastic and metal and is most likely the fill of a large modern truncation possibly the same as that seen in Trench 5. Below this was the natural chalk and silty clay geology. No archaeological features were observed nor finds recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was repositioned as the current buildings had not yet been demolished. The trench was aligned SW–NE and was 14.60m long and between 0.68m deep at the south-west end and 0.85m deep at the north-east end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of Tarmac above 0.16m of orange gravel and 0.06m of large loosely compacted stones. These were above 0.20m of light grey brown silty clay which was on top of a dark grey silty clay with possible diesel contamination. This was on top of the natural orange brown silty clay geology with large flint inclusions. At the north-west end the light grey brown silty clay layer was thicker. No archaeological features were present.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned N–S and was 10.70m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.08m of Tarmac above 0.10m of concrete on top of 0.17m of light brown silty clay with gravel inclusions. This deposit contained small flecks of brick and tile. This was above of 0.19m of a mid orange brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions. This may have been the natural geology but was 'dirtier' than the level machined to below. No archaeological features were present and no finds recovered.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned SE–NW and was 18.50m long and 1.07m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of Tarmac and 0.07m of gravel above 0.54m of light green brown clay with occasional stone inclusions. This was on top of 0.11m of dark brown stained clay which was above the natural chalk and silty clay geology. The trench was considerably deeper between 2.70m and 9.00m. The stratigraphy in this area consisted of Tarmac and gravel above a mixed loosely compacted backfill. Modern bricks and barbed wire were recovered from backfill and this is possibly the same truncation seen in Trench 2. No archaeological features were present.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were found during the evaluation

Conclusion

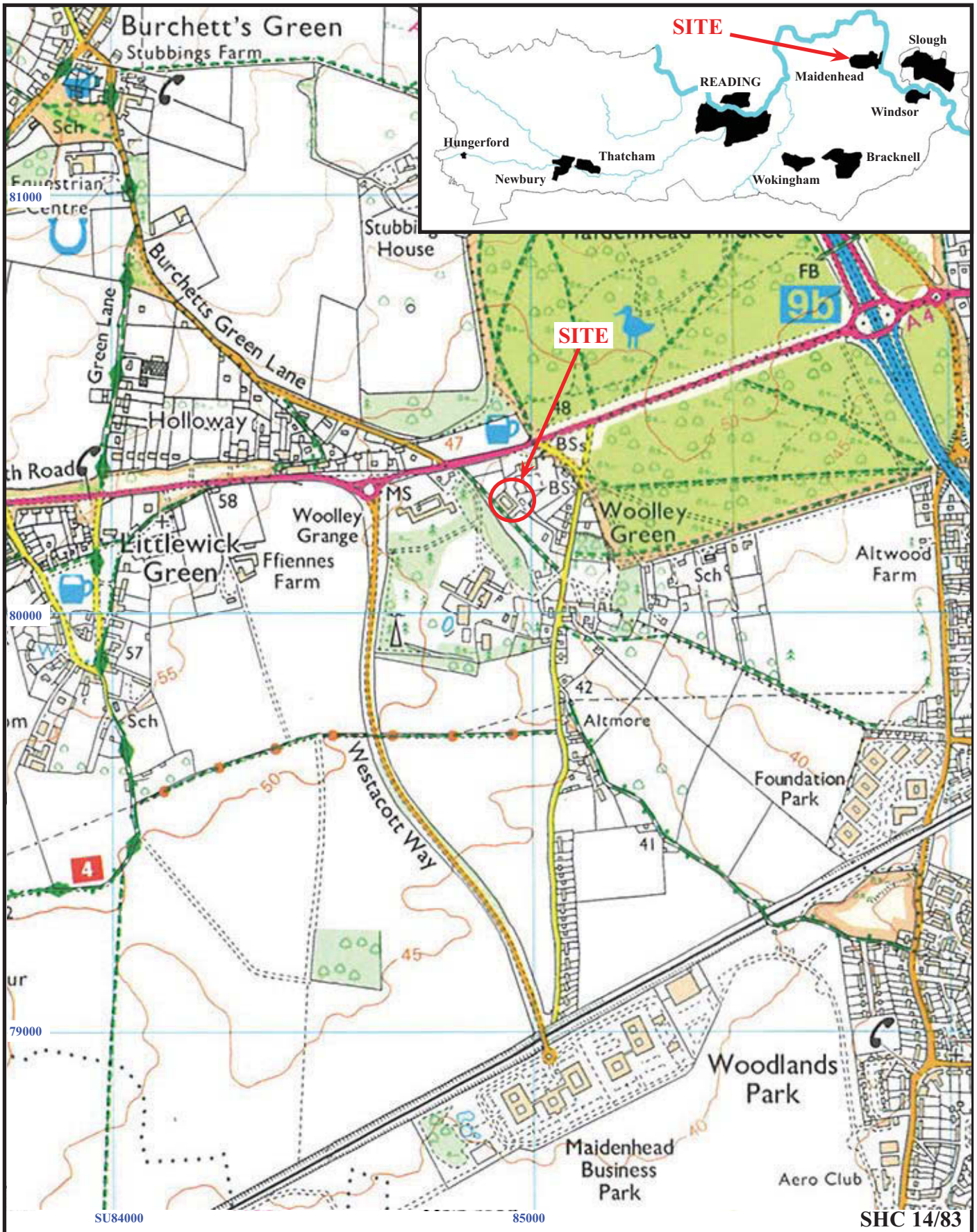
Despite the archaeological potential of the site no archaeological deposits were present. The only anomaly present was a large area of modern truncation observed stretching between Trenches 2 and 5. The lack of archaeological features reflects the findings from a watching brief undertaken on the site previously and an evaluation carried out on land directly to the west which also failed to reveal any archaeological deposits.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Bowden, M, Ford, S and Gaffney, V, 1983, 'The excavation of an earthwork on Maidenhead Thicket, 1982', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 71, (for 1981–2), 21–32
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- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 1, Reading
- Mundin, A, 2007, 'The Old Shire Horse Centre, Bath Road, Woolley Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an Archaeological Watching Brief', report 07/39, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

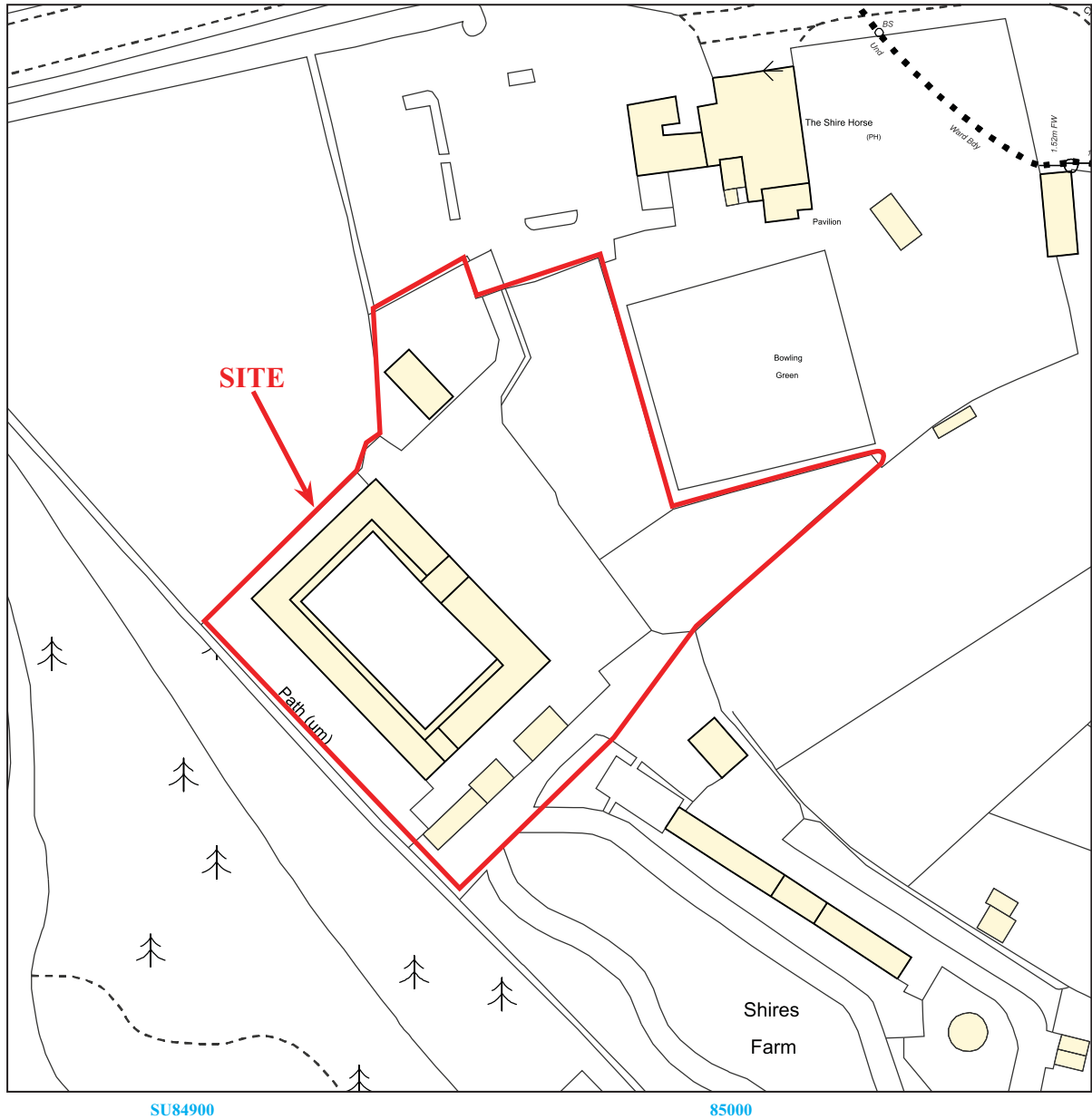
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	15.10	1.60	0.45	0-0.18m Topsoil (0.19m topsoil at E end); 0.18-0.30m gravel made ground; 0.30-0.45m mid brown grey silty clay; 0.45m+ natural orange brown silty clay geology with flint inclusions [Pl. 1]
2	10.40	1.60	1.18-1.38	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.34m brown grey clay silt with frequent chalk; 0.34-1.18m orange brown clay silt with flint inclusions (bricks and wire present in this deposit); 1.18m+ natural chalk and silty clay geology. Modern Truncation? [Pl. 2]
3	14.60	1.60	0.68-0.85	0-0.13m Tarmac; 0.13-0.29m orange gravel; 0.29-0.35m loose stones; 0.35-0.55m light grey brown silty clay; 0.55-0.68m dark grey silty clay (stained?); 0.68m+ natural orange brown silty clay geology with flint inclusions . [Pl. 3]
4	10.70	1.60	0.54	0-0.08m Tarmac; 0.08-0.18m concrete; 0.18m-0.35m light brown silty clay with gravel (subsoil?); 0.35-0.54m orange brown silty clay (dirty natural?); 0.68m+ natural orange brown silty clay geology
5	18.50	1.60	1.07	0-0.12m Tarmac; 0.12m-0.19m gravel; 0.19-0.73m light green brown silty clay; 0.73-0.82m dark brown clay (contaminated?) 0.82m+ natural chalk and silty clay geology. Modern truncation at SE end. [Pl. 4]



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Figure 1. Location of site in relation Littlewick Green and Maidenhead, Berkshire.

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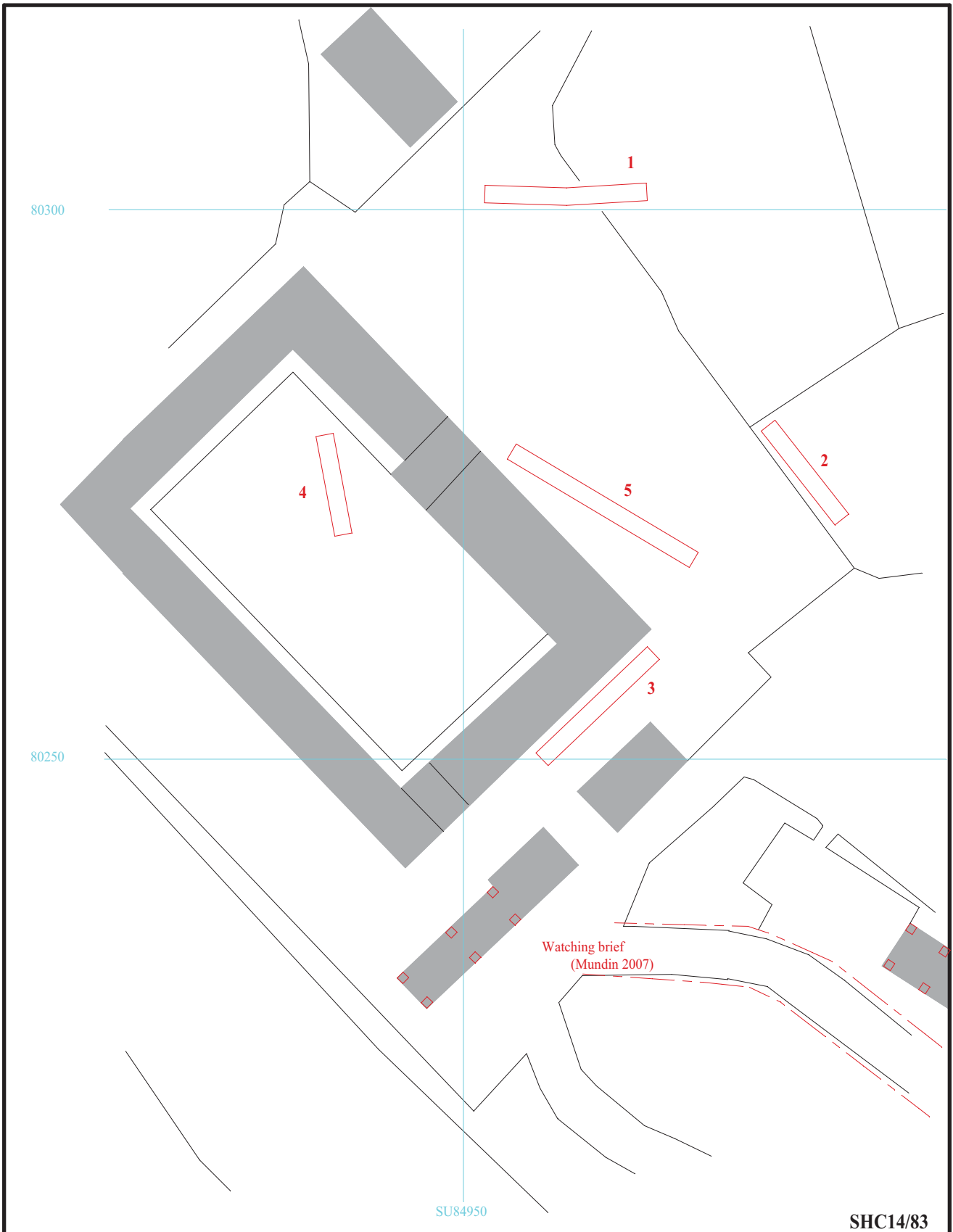
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



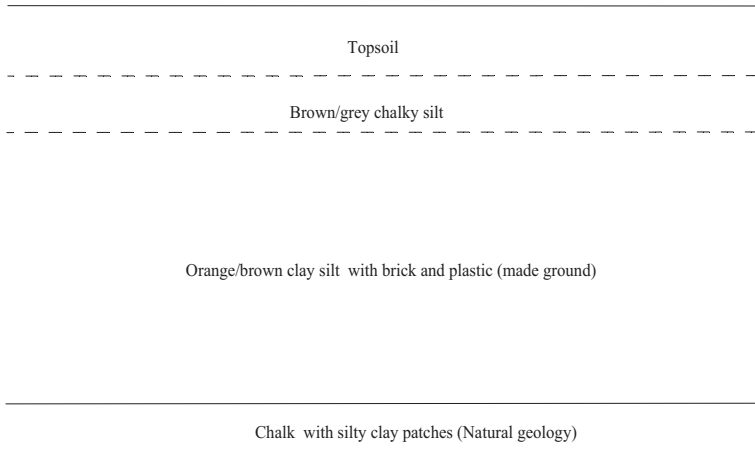
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Trench 2

NW

SE

44.54maOD



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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



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

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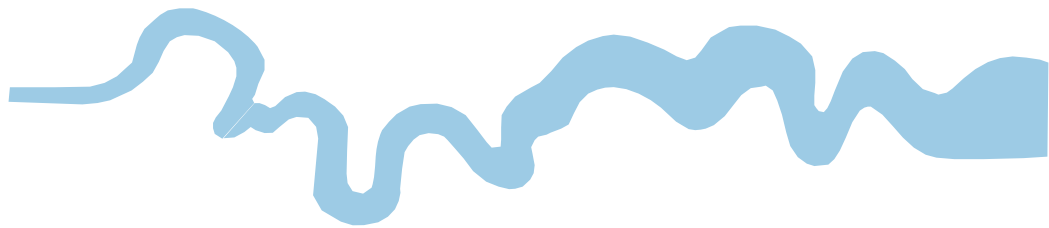
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Plates 3 - 4.**

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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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