

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Proposed Primary School, St Michael's, Dee Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Site Code: SMS14/155

(SU 6805 7300)

Proposed Primary School, St Michael's, Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Reading Borough Council**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SMS 14/155

August 2014

Summary

Site name: Proposed Primary School, St Michael's, Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6805 7300

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 12th – 13th August 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: SMS 14/155

Summary of results: A single undated gully was found during the evaluation which possibly represents an old boundary.

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✓ 22.08.14
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Proposed Primary School, St Michael's, Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Report 14/155

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at St Michael's Primary School, Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire (SU 6805 7300) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Gareth Talbot of Hampshire County Council on behalf of Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7AE.

Planning consent is to be sought from Reading Borough Council to construct new facilities at St Michael's, Primary School, Dee Road, Reading, Berkshire. It is possible that the development area may contain archaeological deposits and in order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation has been requested.

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 12th and 13th August 2014 with the site code SMS14/155. 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 within the grounds of the school (Fig. 2). The site is located to the south-east of Dee Road in Reading which forms its northern boundary and surrounding the site are residential dwellings. The site is c.90m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as plateau gravel (BGS 1946) and this was observed in the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the higher gravel terraces of the archaeologically rich Thames Valley where prolific numbers of Palaeolithic worked flints have been recorded,

especially to the east at the former Grovelands Pit (Wymer 1968). Less is known for the Palaeolithic for the higher terrace on which the site lies. There are a modest range of sites and finds of other periods from this area of Tilehurst with none especially close to the site. A neolithic flint axe is recorded to the north east. Again at Grovelands Pit, both Bronze Age and Roman deposits were encountered. Similarly to the south east, Roman occupation is recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record, though various episodes of fieldwork nearby have failed to find additional deposits.

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 3 trenches at 12m 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

The three trenches were dug as intended and ranged between 11.70-12.50m in length and between 0.72-1.07m in depth and all were 1.6m wide (Fig. 3). 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 4, and Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 12.30m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil, above 0.25m yellow brown sandy gravel above and 0.32m grey brown silty gravel overlaying natural geology which comprised a light grey brown silty gravel. A gully (1) was recorded, aligned N-S, which measured 0.35m wide and 0.24m deep. It was infilled with dark brown grey silty sand (53) from which no finds or dating evidence were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3, Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE–NW and was 11.70m long and was 1.07m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil, above 0.44m grey brown silty gravel above 0.35m of dark brown clay silt and gravel overlying natural geology consisting of orange brown clay silt and gravel. An ephemeral patch of slightly darker silt was investigated but it was determined that this was of geological origin. No archaeological features were observed nor finds recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3, Pl. 4)

Trench 3 was aligned SE–NW and was 12.50m long and 0.72m deep. The trench had to be subdivided due to the presence of a water pipe, which was left on a plinth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil above 0.24m light grey brown silty gravel above a subsoil layer 0.25m thick, which consisted of dark brown clay silt and gravel. This overlay the natural geology consisting of orange brown clay silt and gravel. No archaeological features were present nor finds recovered.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were found during the evaluation

Conclusion

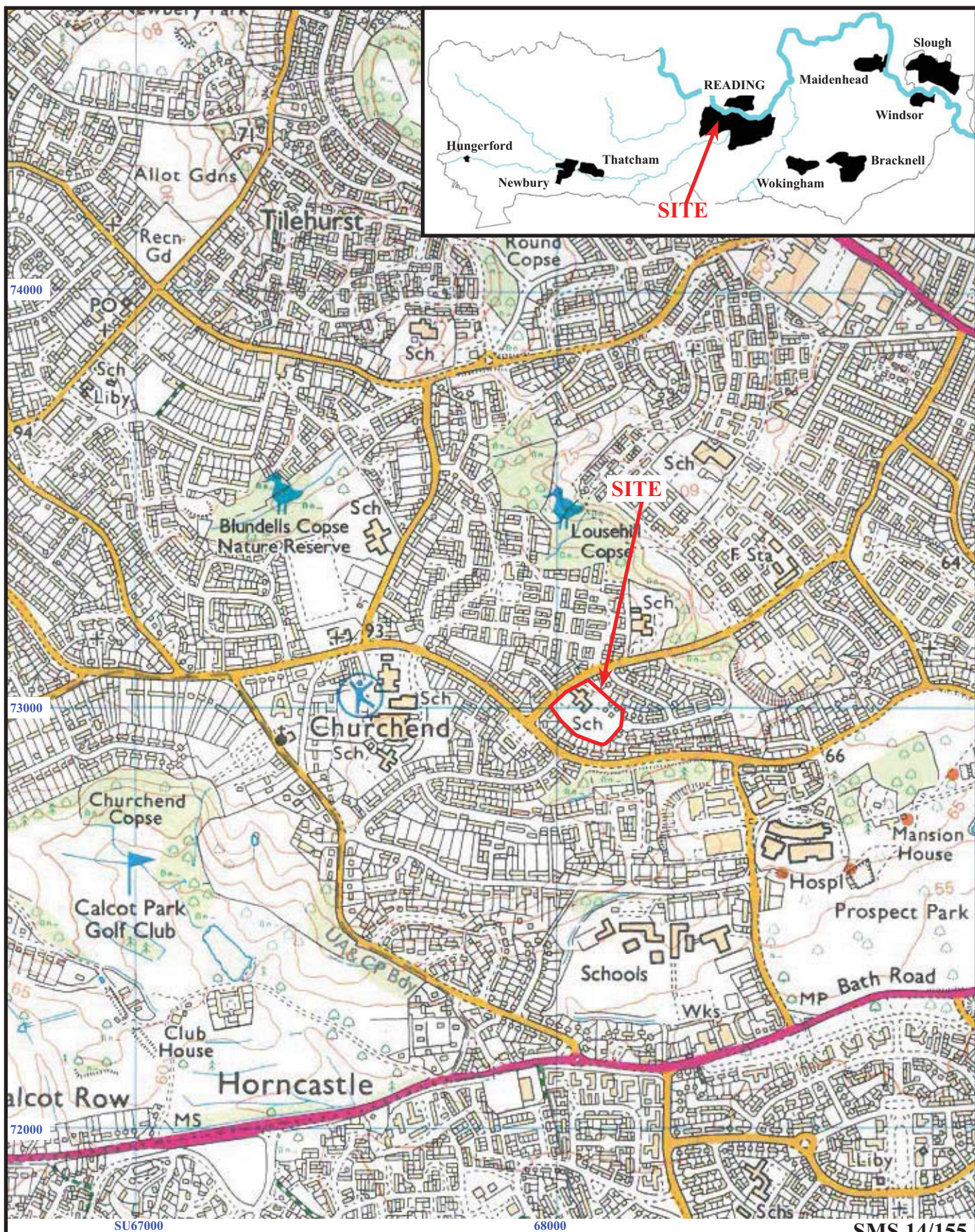
The evaluation showed that archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site. Despite the archaeological potential of the site only a single undated gully was found during the evaluation, which is likely to represent an old boundary feature. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

References

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
Wymer, J, 1968, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

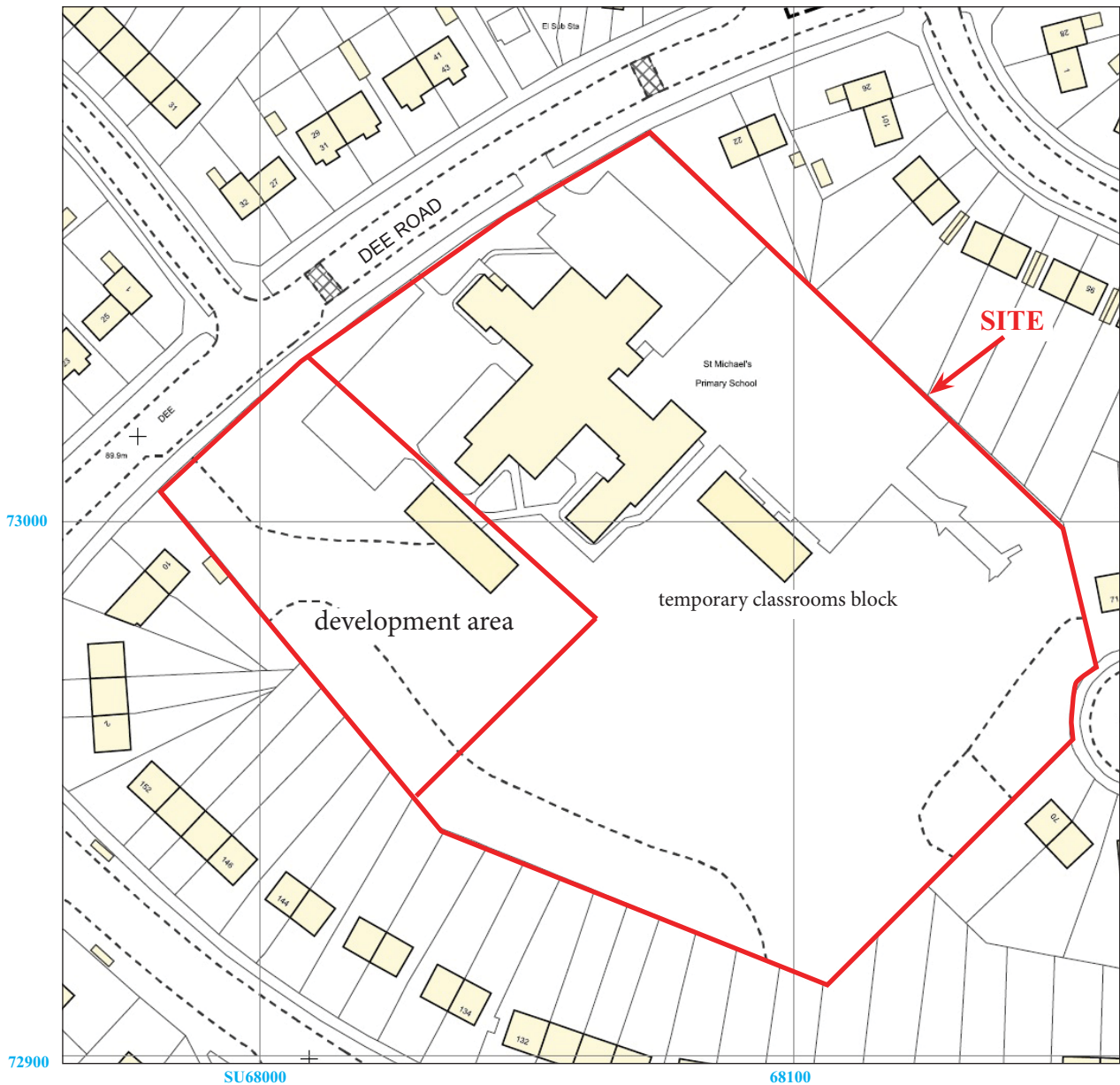
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	12.30	1.60	0.72	0-0.15m Topsoil; 0.15-0.40m yellow brown sand silt and gravels; 0.40-0.72m grey brown silty gravel; 0.72m+ light grey brown silty gravel (natural geology) Gully 1 [Pls 1 and 2]
2	11.70	1.60	1.07	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.72m grey brown silty gravel; 0.72-1.07m dark brown clay silt gravel; 1.07m+ orange clay silt and gravels (natural geology) [Pl. 3]
3	12.50	1.60	0.72	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.47m light grey brown silty gravel; 0.47-0.72m dark brown silt gravel; 0.72m+ orange clay silt and gravels (natural geology) [Pl. 4]



**St. Michael's School, Dee Road,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Tilehurst, Reading and
Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Dee Road.

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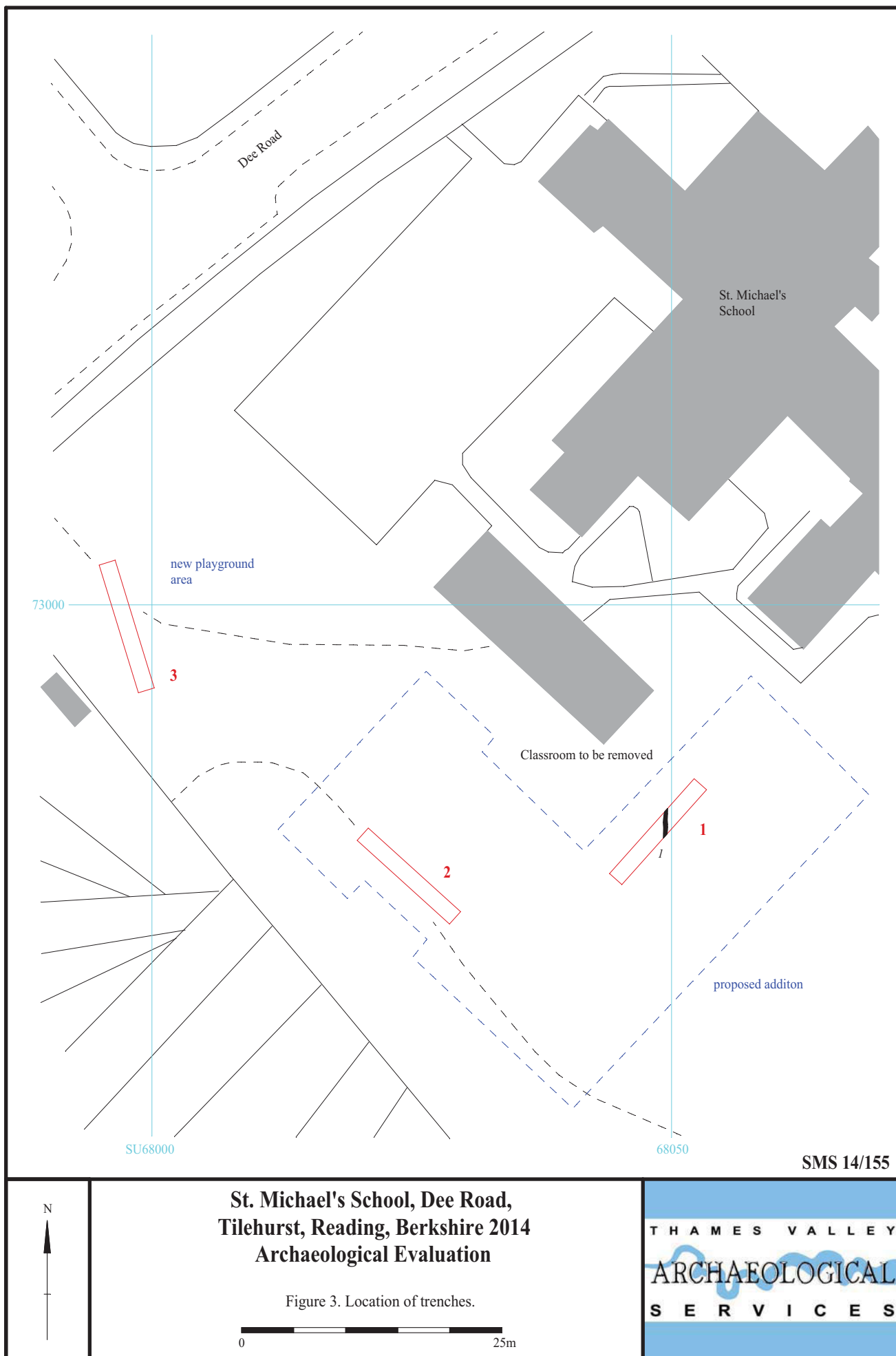




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 1. Trench 1, gully 1, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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**St. Michael's School, Dee Road,
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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



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

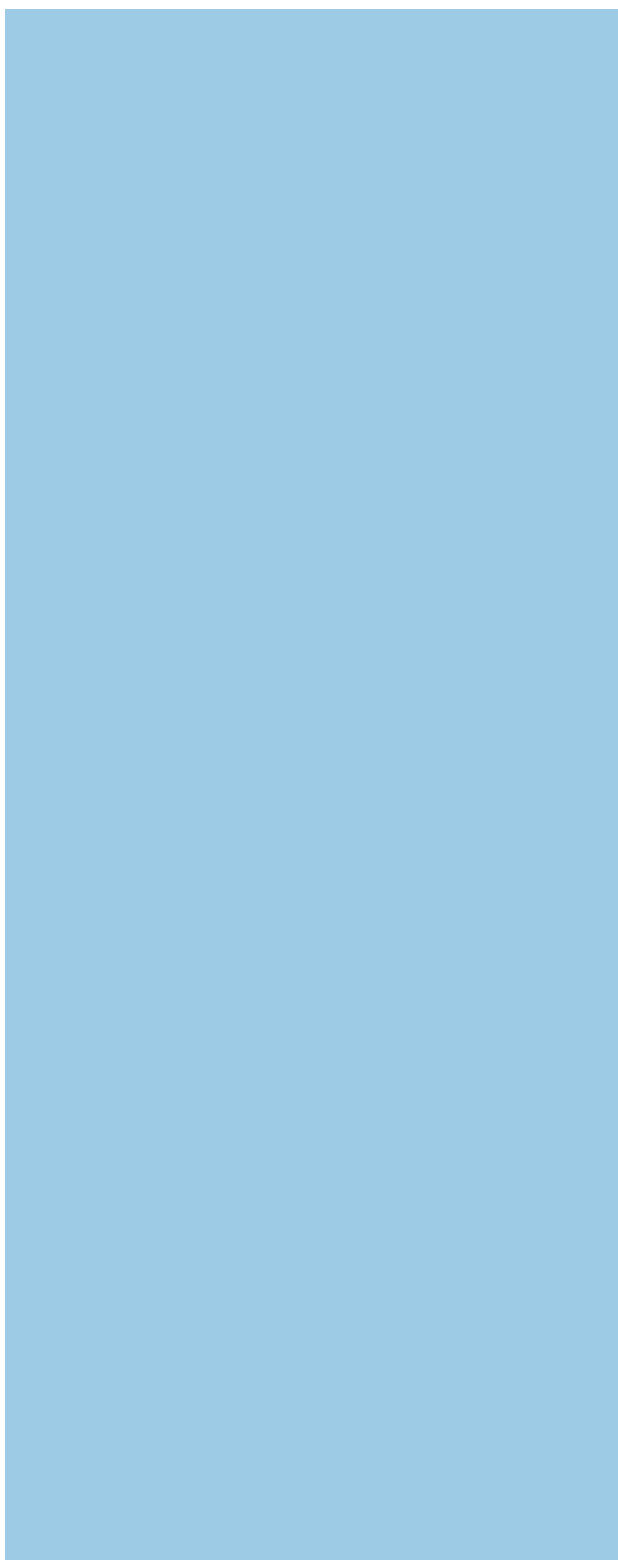
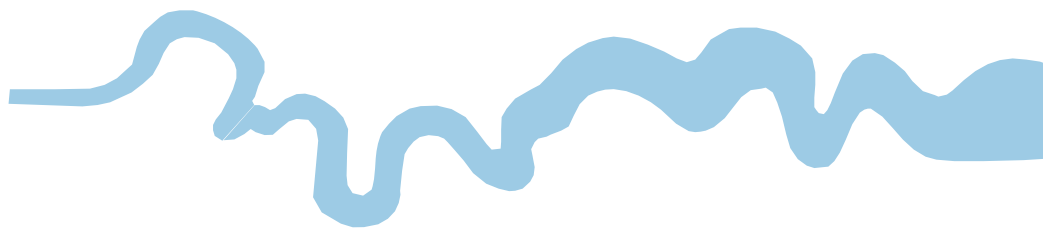
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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