

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at Farley Hall, London Road, Binfield,  
Bracknell, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: FHB15/08**

**(SU 8500 6980)**

# **Land at Farley Hall, London Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for CgMs Consulting Ltd**

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FHB 15/08

**February 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Farley Hall, London Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8500 6980

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 10th-11th February 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** FHB 15/08

**Area of site:** 2.36ha

**Summary of results:** No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered and no finds were recovered. Several features were investigated but were all confirmed as being of modern date. Parts of the archaeologically relevant level on the site may have been truncated probably during construction works associated with the former hall. On the basis of these results, the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be very low.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 16.02.15<br>Steve Preston✓ 12.02.15 |
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# Land at Farley Hall, London Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 15/08

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land at Farley Hall, London Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire (NGR: SU 8500 6980) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Caroline Butler, of CgMs Consulting, 140 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5DN.

Planning consent (app 13/01072/OUT) has been sought from Bracknell Forest Borough Council for the erection of new apartments following the demolition of the existing building at Farley Hall. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, 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, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Sophie Frampton on 10th–11th February 2015 and the site code is FHB 15/08. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site lies on the south side of London Road to the north east of Popeswood, south of Binfield (Fig. 1). The site comprises an area c. 2.36ha in extent and was until recently occupied by Farley Hall (the demolition of which was in progress at the time of fieldwork), a 'C' shaped building in the centre of the site with an outbuilding to the west and areas of hardstanding for access and car parking to the north and east (Fig. 2). The site lies at a height of approximately 75m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as London clay over most of the site with Bagshot beds possibly outcropping in the north-west corner (BGS 1981). The geology observed in the trenches varied (Appendix 1), perhaps more in keeping with the Bagshot beds.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk based assessment (Butler 2014). In summary this potential stems from the site's location within a region of East Berkshire where the range of archaeological sites and finds is relatively well known, following earlier field survey and subsequent development-led investigations. To the north and east a Mesolithic site has been excavated along with an Iron Age to Roman site (Roberts 1995), whilst to the north-west components of medieval Binfield have been revealed by fieldwalking (Ford 1987). Further afield, to the south, additional Mesolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age deposits have been excavated at Jennetts Park (Simmonds *et al.* 2009) and Middle Iron Age occupation at Fairclough Farm, Warfield to the east (Torrance and Dean 2003).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if any deposits representing prehistoric, Roman or medieval deposits were present, and if so their date and nature; and
- to provide sufficient evidence to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig 5 trenches, each 1.60m wide, three at 30m long and two at 20m long, targeted at the proposed new building footprint and car park.

Topsoil and overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with toothless ditching bucket and breaker. The breaker was used when heavy areas of concrete or made ground were encountered, and the toothless ditching bucket was used to expose the archaeological levels. Where suspected archaeological features were present they were to be hand cleaned and excavated to an agreed sample fraction.

## Results

All five trenches were excavated as intended (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 20.30m to 31.30m and in depth from 0.45m-1.30m. Spoil heaps were monitored for finds. 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; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned NW-SE and was 31.10m long and 0.55-1.17m deep, deeper to the eastern end. The stratigraphy at the eastern end consisted of 0.33m of topsoil and 0.55m mid brown grey clay (made ground) overlying 0.17m dark grey silty clay (buried topsoil), which in turn overlay 0.12m grey clay, overlying light grey sandy gravel with orange patches natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned roughly N-S and was 20.30m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil and 0.20m dark grey clayey silt subsoil overlying, 0.20m light yellow silty clay which in turn overlay light grey orange clayey sand natural geology. Three possible features were investigated: a linear feature at 2-4m which yielded 'bone-china' pottery; a possible pit at 7m from which modern concrete was recovered; and a natural treebole at 13m. Finds were retained on site for dating purposes only.

### Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned roughly E-W and was 21.40m long and 0.80-1.30m deep, deeper at the western end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m rubble overlying a demolition layer/ heavy brick and tile made ground 0.50-1.00m in depth, which in turn overlay light blue grey clay with orange patches natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered and no finds were recovered.

### Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned roughly E-W and was 31.30m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m concrete 0.30m dark grey silty clay rubble overlying 0.20m light brown clay, overlying light grey orange silty clay natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

### Trench 5 (Figs. 3 and 4, Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned NE-SW and was 30.60m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m mid grey silty sand under Tarmac and 0.15m light brown grey blue clay, overlying light yellow grey natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

## Conclusion

No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were encountered. The undulating level at which natural geology was encountered parts of which lay directly beneath made ground suggests that some landscaping and possibly truncation had taken place previously on the site, probably in conjunction with the construction of the existing hall. Based on the results of this evaluation, the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be very low.

## References

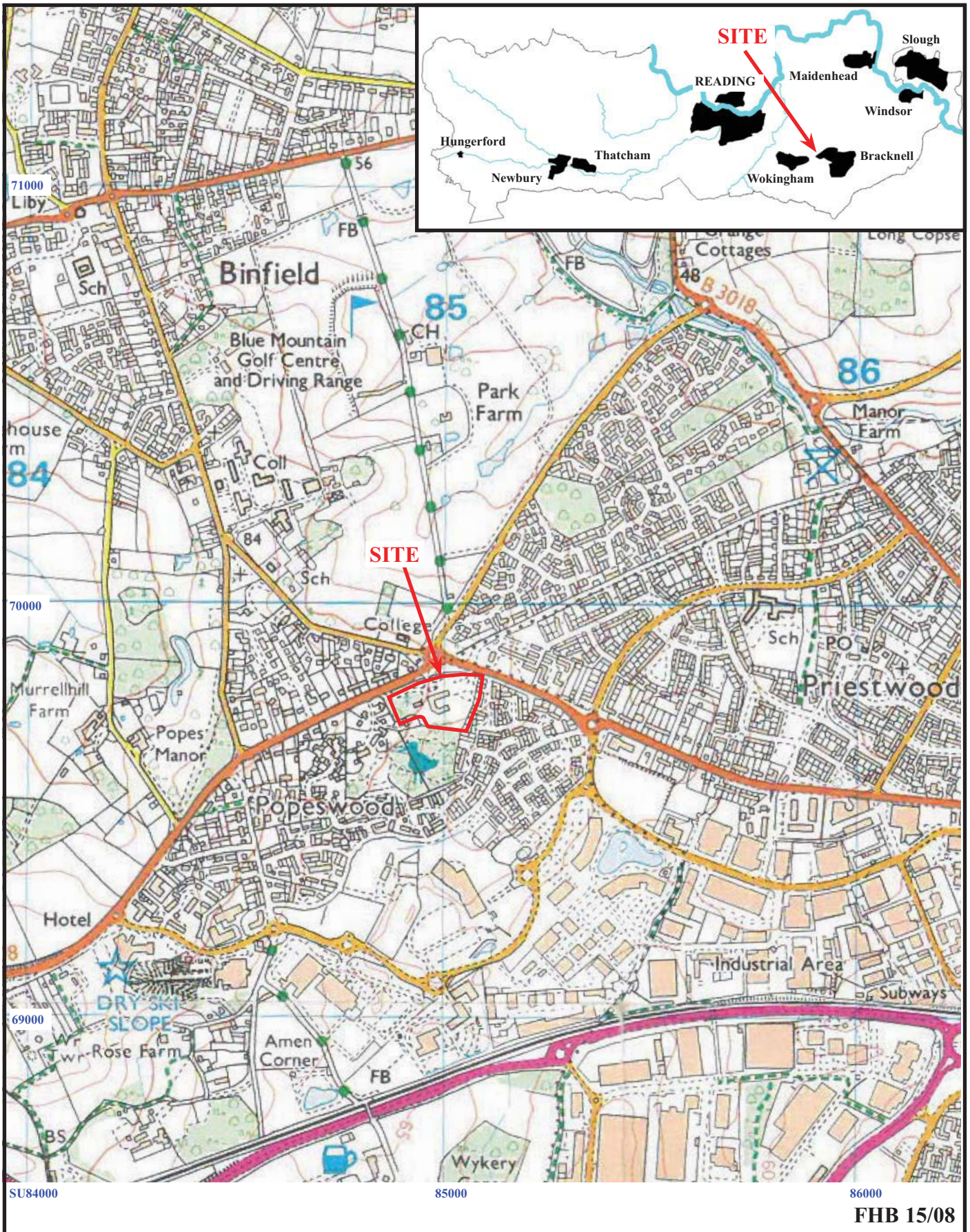
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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at west end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i>  |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| 1             | 31.10             | 1.60               | 0.55-1.17        | 0-0.33m topsoil;; 0.33-0.88m mid brown grey clay made ground; 0.88-1.05m; Dark grey sity clay buried topsoil; 1.05-1.17m grey clay;;1.17m+ light grey sandy gravel with orange patches natural geology.<br>Western end: 0-0.45m topsoil; 0.45-0.55m light grey sandy gravel; 0.55m+ light grey sandy gravel with orange patches natural geology. <b>[Pl. 1]</b> |
| 2             | 20.30             | 1.60               | 0.85             | 0-0.45m topsoil; 0.45-0.65m dark grey clayey silt subsoil; 0.65-0.85m light yellow clay;; 0.85m+ light grey orange clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>  |
| 3             | 21.40             | 1.60               | 0.80-1.30        | 0-0.30m rubble; 0.30-0.80/1.30m demolition layer/ brick and tile made ground; 0.80/1.30m+ light blue grey clay with orange patches natural geology.   |
| 4             | 31.30             | 1.60               | 0.60             | 0-0.10m concrete; 0.10-0.40m dark grey rubble; 0.40-0.60m light brown clay; 0.60m+ light grey orange silty clay natural geology.  |
| 5             | 30.60             | 1.60               | 0.45             | 0-0.30m mid grey silty sand under Tarmac; 0.30-0.45m light brown grey clay; 0.45m+ light grey orange clayey sand natural geology. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>  |

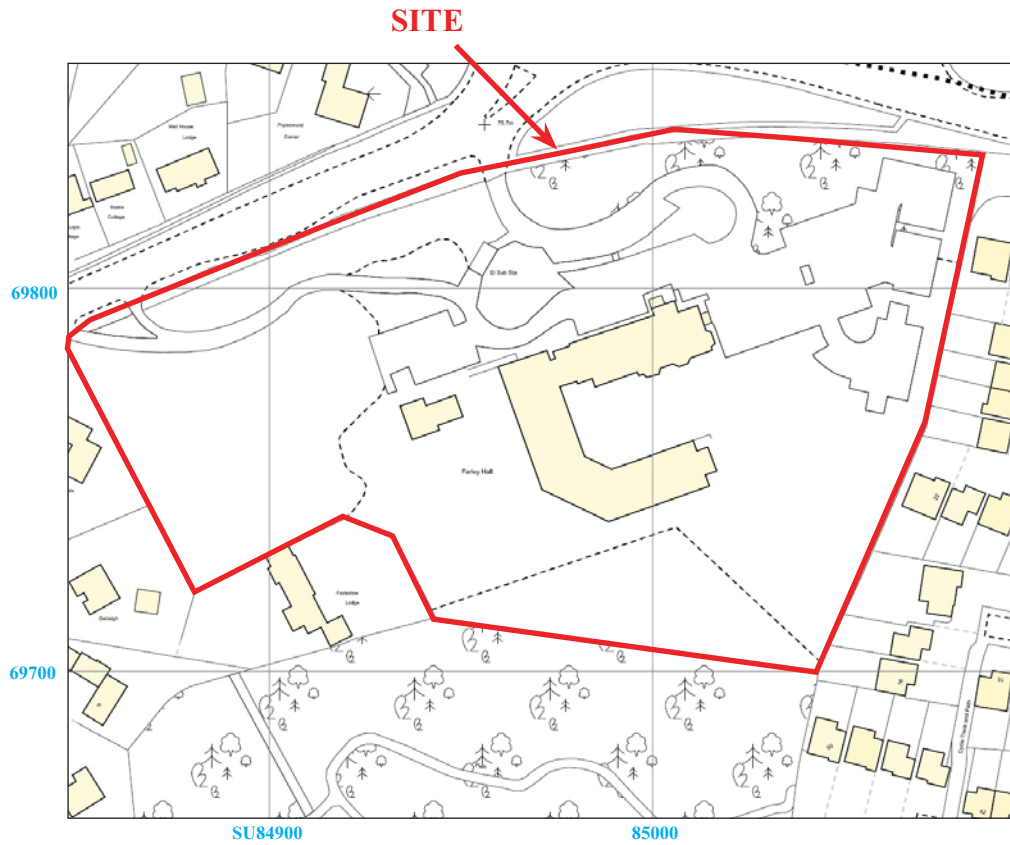




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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Binfield, Bracknell and Berkshire.

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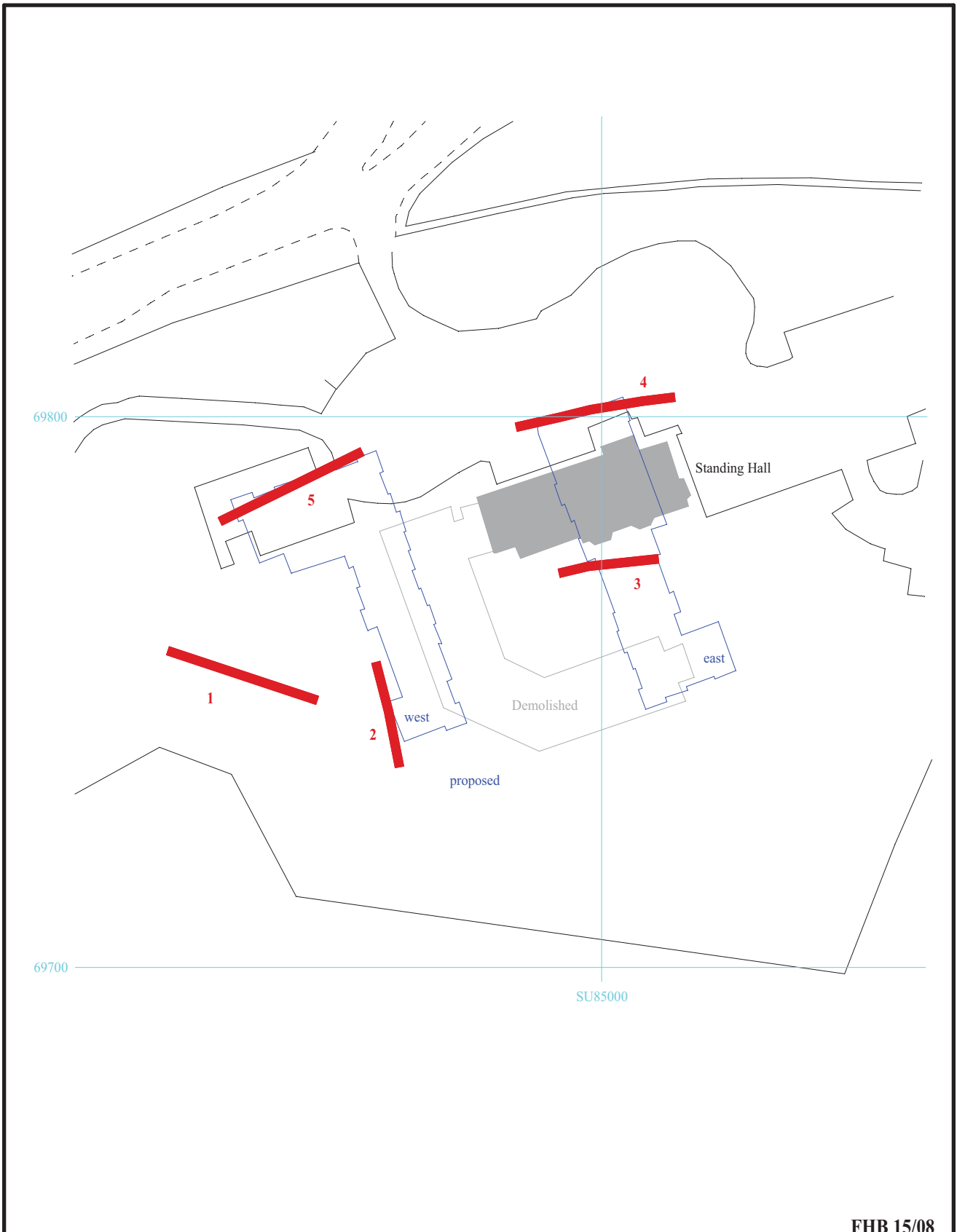


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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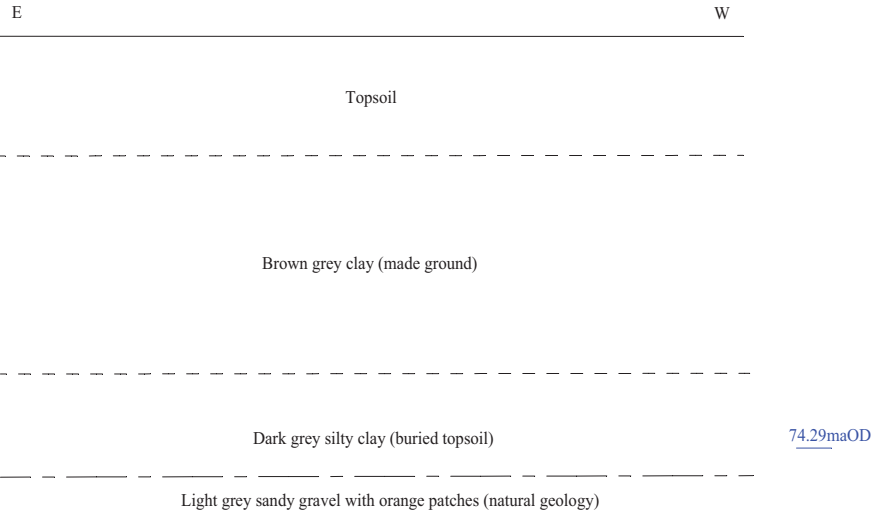
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

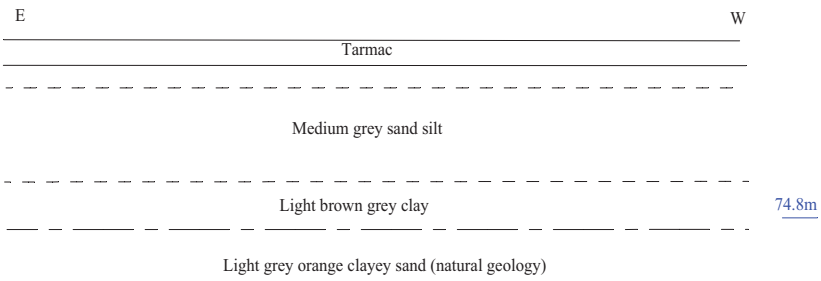


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**Trench 1**



**Trench 5**



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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

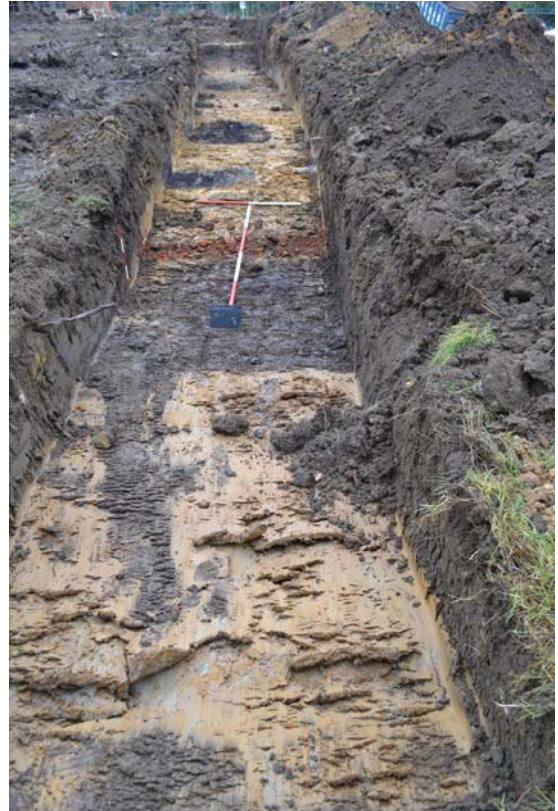


Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 5, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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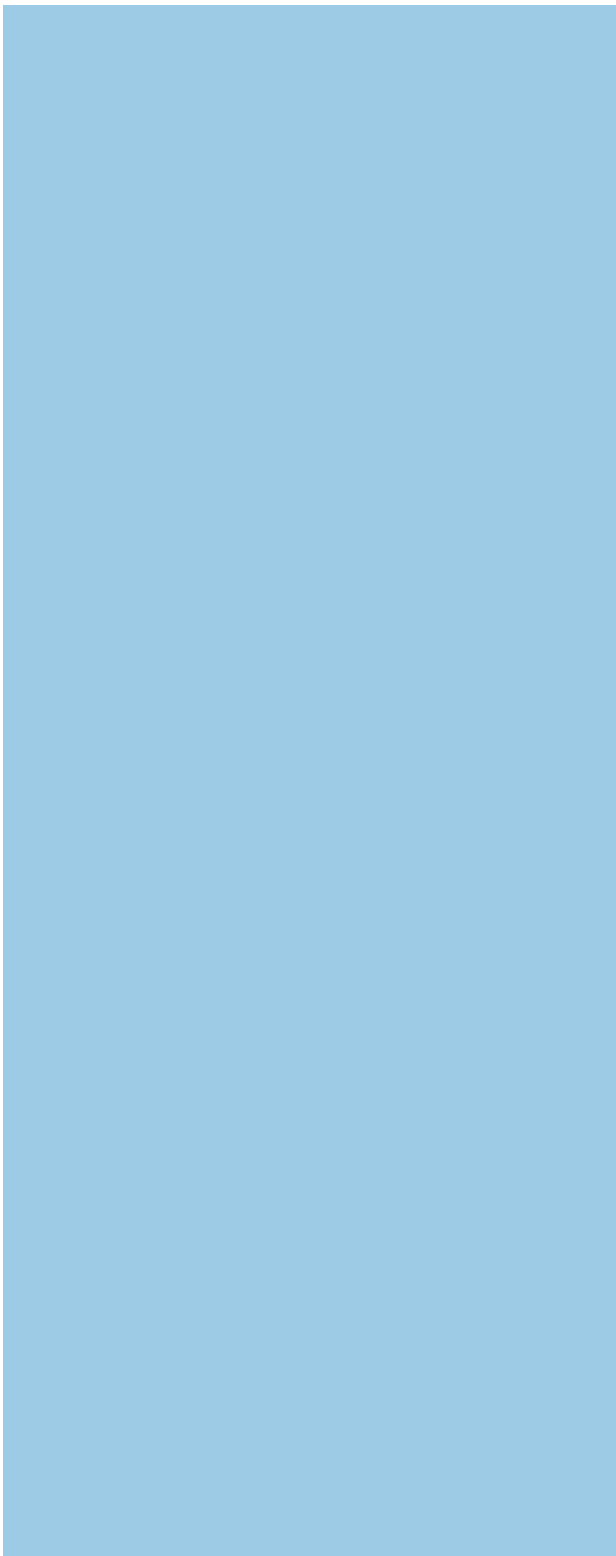
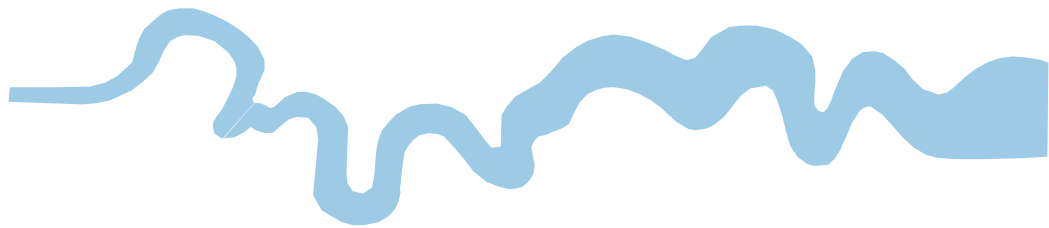
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Plates 1 - 3.**

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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<br>750 BC |
| <br>                       |                 |
| Bronze Age: Late -----     | 1300 BC         |
| Bronze Age: Middle -----   | 1700 BC         |
| Bronze Age: Early -----    | 2100 BC         |
| <br>                       |                 |
| Neolithic: Late .....      | 3300 BC         |
| Neolithic: Early .....     | 4300 BC         |
| <br>                       |                 |
| Mesolithic: Late .....     | 6000 BC         |
| Mesolithic: Early .....    | 10000 BC        |
| <br>                       |                 |
| Palaeolithic: Upper .....  | 30000 BC        |
| Palaeolithic: Middle ..... | 70000 BC        |
| Palaeolithic: Lower .....  | 2,000,000 BC    |





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,  
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Fax: 0118 9260553  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**