

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land at the rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: ARM15/38**

**(SU 8690 8040)**

**Land at the rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Herbert Developments and Mr S Thorn**

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ARM 15/38

**March 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at the rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8690 8040

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 6th March 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** ARM 15/38

**Area of site:** *c.* 1000 sq m to the rear of no 57 and *c.* 1100 sq m to the west of no 59

**Summary of results:** Several features were observed in the trenches to the west of No 59, however these were all late post-medieval and modern in date. No further deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning committee) in due course.

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 11.03.15<br>Steve Preston ✓ 11.03.15 |
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# Land at the rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 15/38

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on two parcels of land, one at the rear of 57, and one west of 59 Altwood Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SU 8690 8040 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nick Herbert, of Herbert Developments Ltd, 3 Kingsfold Close, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9HG.

Planning permission (app no 14/03786) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a detached dwelling and detached double garage with access at land to the rear of 57 Altwood Road Maidenhead. The consent includes a condition (17) relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation prior to the development. Planning permission is also to be sought from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the development of land to the west of no. 59 and it is assumed that this would have a similar condition relating to archaeology attached to the permission, if granted.

It was determined that the investigation should take the form, initially, of an evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which, a further phase of work might be required. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Royal Borough'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 Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Benedikt Tebbit on 6th March 2015 and the site code is ARM 15/38. 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.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of Altwood Road to the south-west of Maidenhead town centre (Fig. 1). The site currently comprises two separate plots of land to the rear of No 57 and west of No 59 (Fig. 2). The land to the rear of No 57 was previously a garden attached to the house but has been subdivided in preparation for the new development. The land to the west of No 59 remains as a tended garden with sunken central area and

contains several trees under tree protection. The site lies at a height of *c.* 41m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Upper Chalk (BGS 1981), although a red brown sandy silt natural geology was observed overlying the chalk within all of the trenches.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within an area of eastern Berkshire which is relatively rich in finds of prehistoric and Roman date (Ford 1987) as is reflected in the number of archaeological entries noted for this area in the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record. Various Roman finds including pottery and an oven were found during construction work carried out during the 1930s at Altwood Close, which lies just to the south of the site. However, more recent watching briefs carried out at Altwood Close did not reveal any archaeological deposits (Dawson and Taylor 2012; McNicoll-Norbury 2013).

Three undated human burials were found during construction of a tennis court to the west of the site in 1936 (Underhill 1937, 37). The existence of a Roman villa has been suggested in the vicinity of the County Boys School at Shoppenhanger Road to the east. Roman pottery and a Neolithic axe were found in the school grounds, but the circumstances of these finds are unclear. A rectangular enclosure (and possible earthwork) was identified a short way to the west through aerial photography. At the northern end of Shoppenhanger Road (some 1km to the north-west), pits containing Iron Age pottery and worked flint have been excavated. At Altwood Bailey which lies *c.*200m to the south of the site, fieldwork recorded a posthole and a ditch tentatively dated to the Saxon period (Coles 2005).

## **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 which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ* or would be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if any Roman features were present on the site; given the find spots in the near vicinity; 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 four trenches, each 15m in length and 1.6m wide: two in the plot of land to the rear of No 57, and two to the west of No 59. The trenches were to be located within the footprints of the new house and garage to the rear of No 57 and to give random stratified coverage of the land to the west of No 59 where no detail of the new development proposal is yet available. A contingency of 10m of trench was included should it be required to clarify initial findings.

Topsoil and overburden were removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the archaeologically sensitive levels under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were present these areas were hand cleaned and excavated and spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

All four trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 14.90m to 16m and in depth from 0.38m to 0.42m, and 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. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

### Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5, Pls 1 and 3)

Trench 1 was aligned east–west and was 16.0m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of topsoil and 0.17m mid red brown silty clay subsoil overlying light red brown sandy silt natural geology. A ditch (1) was recorded aligned north–south, which was 0.30m wide and 0.70m deep and filled with soft mid brown grey silty sand (52), from which a single sherd of stoneware pottery of 18th-century date was recovered alongside three modern nails and a tile fragment. To the east of ditch 1 lay gully 2 with pit 3, although the relationship between the two features could not be discerned. Gully 2 was aligned west–east, was 0.25m wide and 0.22m deep and filled with soft mid brown grey silty sand (53). It is possible it was respecting the line of ditch 1 and perpendicular to it, thus potentially contemporary. Pit 3 was 0.45m in diameter and 0.22m deep filled with soft mid brown grey silty sand (54) No finds were recovered from features 2 or 3.

At the eastern end of the trench, pit 4 was 1.16m wide and 0.41m deep (Pl. 3) and filled with soft mid brown grey sandy silt (55) from which a fragment of ‘china’ pottery, animal bone, glass and nail fragments were recovered.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5, Pls 2 and 4)

Trench 2 was aligned roughly east–west and was 15.20m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.26m mid red brown silty clay subsoil overlying light red brown sandy silt natural geology. A modern pit (5) was recorded which was 1m in diameter and 0.32m deep (Pl. 4) and filled with a sticky mid brown grey silty clay (56) with infrequent stone inclusions, containing ceramic building material (tile), pottery of late post-medieval or modern date and animal bone. To the west a second feature, a possible elongated pit or terminus (6) was recorded measuring 1.15m in length 0.40m wide and 0.20m deep with a single fill (57) comprising soft mid brown grey sandy silt containing animal bone, a piece of lead edging strip and window glass, again probably modern.

#### Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned east–west and was 15.20m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.17m mid red brown silty clay subsoil overlying light red brown sandy silt natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered and no finds were recovered.

#### Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SW–NE and was 14.90m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.21m mid red brown silty clay subsoil overlying light red brown sandy silt natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.

### **Finds**

#### *Pottery by Susan Porter*

Three fragments of pottery were recovered from the site, all of post-medieval or modern date. These were: a fragment of cream stoneware from ditch 1; a fragment of blue transfer-printed ‘china’ from pit 4; and a large fragment of 18th century or later coarseware rim sherd from pit 5.

#### *Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank*

A small quantity of ceramic building material was recovered during the evaluation, with a total of four pieces, from four contexts, weighing 143g. These were all tile fragments, and were examined under x10 magnification. Ditch 1 contained a tile fragment which is hard, evenly-fired, with fine sandy inclusions and occasional groggy inclusions. The side and base are rough indicating a sandy mould, and the form is fairly even, and the piece is a mid orange red colour. Deposit 55 (in pit 4) contained a small piece of a hard, well-fired fabric with occasional small rounded inclusions and a dark red colour. A fragment from pit 5 (56) comprises a medium-hard fabric with

fine sandy inclusions and an orange red colour. A single fragment from pit 6 (57) comprises a coarse fabric with frequent rounded sandy inclusions (small and medium), a mid orange red colour and slightly friable texture.

The tile fragments could only be very broadly dated to the post-medieval periods.

### *Animal bone* by Danielle Milbank

Animal bone (6 pieces), weighing a total of 110g was recovered from three contexts. These were classified according to size (large, medium or small animal) and where possible, by species. The condition of the bone was good, with low fragmentation and little surface erosion or abrasion.

Pit 4 (55) contained two fragments, one a sheep/goat tooth, the other a small piece of bird long bone. Context 56 (fill of pit 5) contained a piece of a right radius-ulna from a medium-sized mammal (sheep/goat or deer). Two pieces of a cattle or horse vertebra were recovered from deposit 57 (pit 6), along with a small piece of unidentified bone.

Overall, the assemblage is modest and is likely to represent domestic consumption, though no butchery marks were identified. No other information could be retrieved from the fragmented remains,

### *Metal* by Susan Porter

A total of eleven metal artefacts were recovered from the site comprising a single copper alloy piece, fragment of lead and nine ferrous nails or nail fragments.

Ditch 1 contained a misshapen lump of copper alloy, likely brass, possibly from a garden ornament, alongside three slightly corroded round headed modern nails *c.* 32mm in length.

Pit 4 contained six nail fragments including two near complete narrow nails *c.* 45mm in length, also of modern date.

Pit 6 contained a single piece of lead 100mm in length, flattened and folded at 65mm, 6mm wide, likely to be an edging strip, of unknown date.

### *Glass* by Susan Porter

A total of four fragments of glass were recovered from two features. Pit 4 contained three shards of modern glass, two clear and one green. Of these one of the clear fragments may be window glass, the other two pieces are likely to be bottle fragments. A single shard was recovered from pit 6, 4mm wide and slightly curved, possibly window glass.



## Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological features to be present on the site, due to the proximity of numerous nearby find spots, the results of the evaluation suggest a low potential for archaeological remains. To the rear of no 57, the trenches were devoid of archaeology and as such there is very low potential for archaeology in the area of the permitted development. To the west of No 59, several features were investigated, however all were found to be post-medieval and modern in origin, as such the potential for archaeological remains of significance to be present on the proposed site also appears low.

## References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coles, S, 2005, 'Glengariff, Altwood Bailey, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **05/32**, Reading
- Dawson, T and Taylor, A, 2012, 'Land at Beech Cottage, Altwood Close, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **12/122**, Reading
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- Hillson, S, 1992, *Mammal Bones and Teeth*, London
- McNicoll-Norbury, J, 2013, 'Land at High Trees, Altwood Close, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **13/169**, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

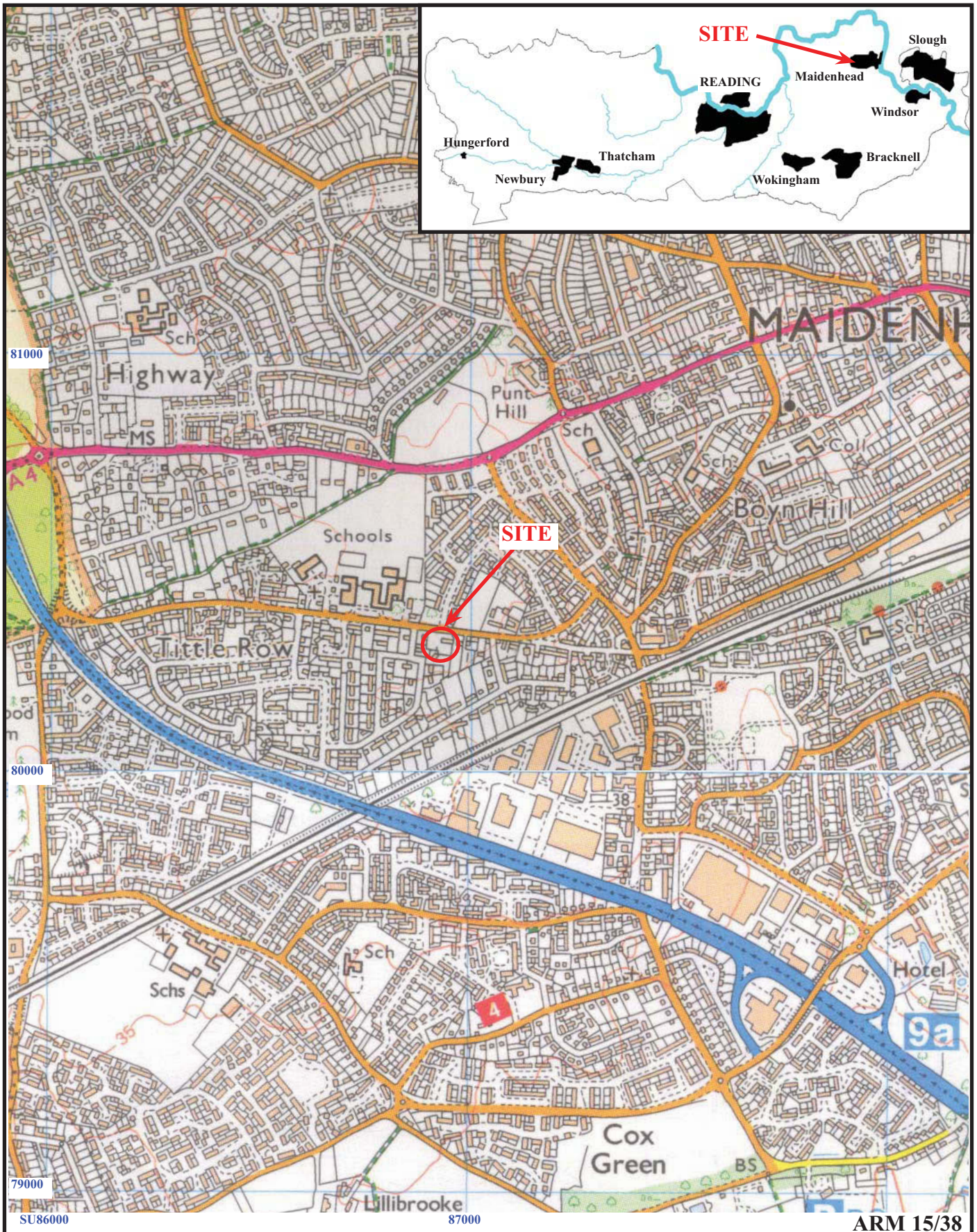
0m at western end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i>  |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| 1             | 16.00             | 1.60               | 0.38             | 0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.28m mid red brown silty clay; 0.28m+ light red brown sandy silt natural geology. Ditch 1, gully 2, pits 3 and 4. <b>[Pls 1 and 3]</b> |
| 2             | 15.20             | 1.60               | 0.42             | 0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.39m mid red brown silty clay; 0.39m+ light red brown sandy silt natural geology. Pits 5 and 6. <b>[Pls 2 and 4]</b>                   |
| 3             | 15.20             | 1.60               | 0.40             | 0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.34m mid red brown silty clay; 0.34m+ light red brown sandy silt natural geology.  |
| 4             | 14.90             | 1.60               | 0.42             | 0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.37m mid red brown silty clay; 0.37m+ light red brown sandy silt 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              | Ditch       | Modern      | Pottery                |
| 1             | 2          | 53              | Gully       | Unknown     | None                   |
| 1             | 3          | 54              | Pit         | Unknown     | None                   |
| 1             | 4          | 55              | Pit         | Modern      | Pottery                |
| 2             | 5          | 56              | Pit         | Modern      | Pottery                |
| 2             | 6          | 57              | Pit         | Modern      | Glass                  |





**Land to rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

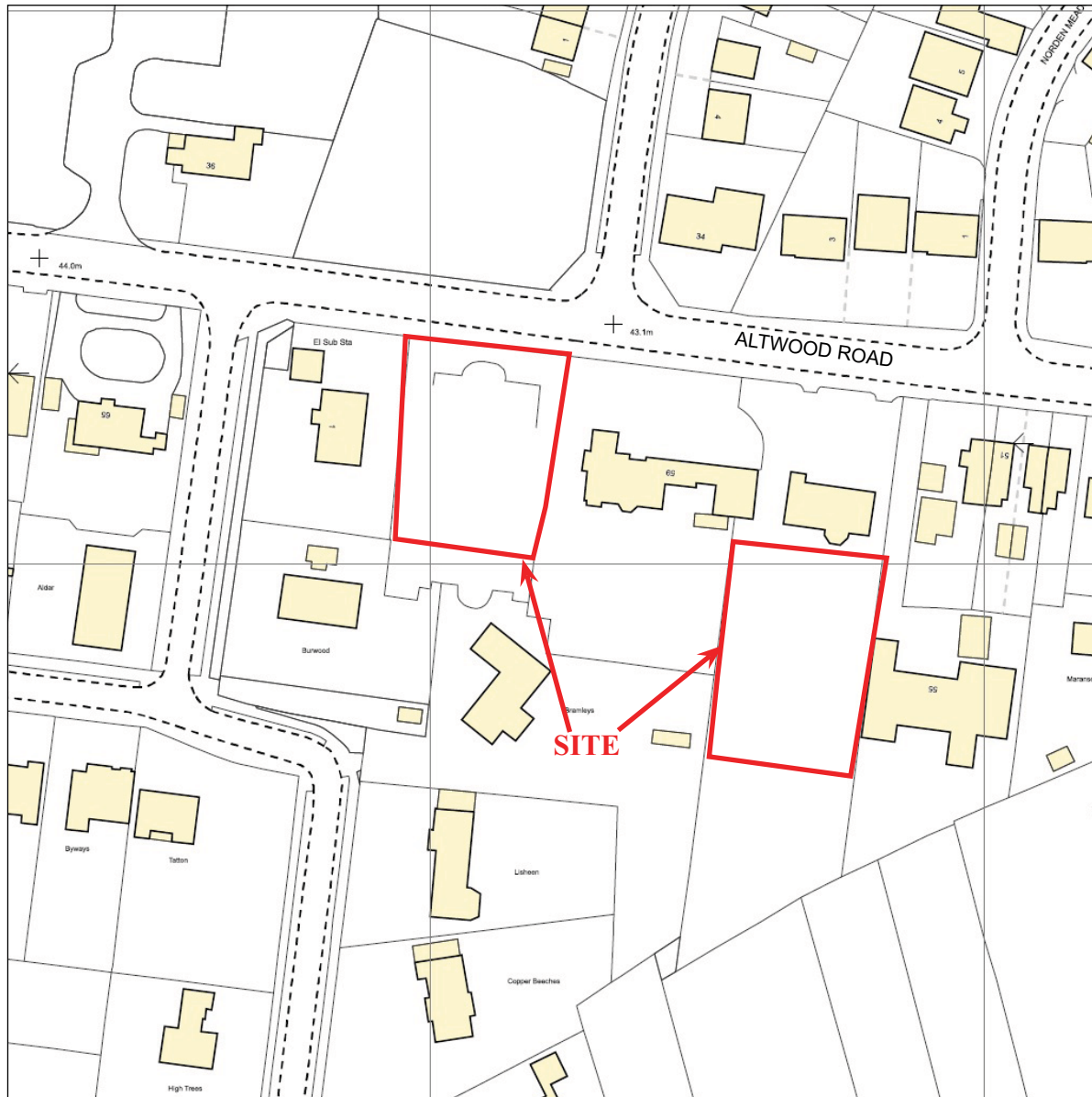
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 160 and 172 at 1:12500  
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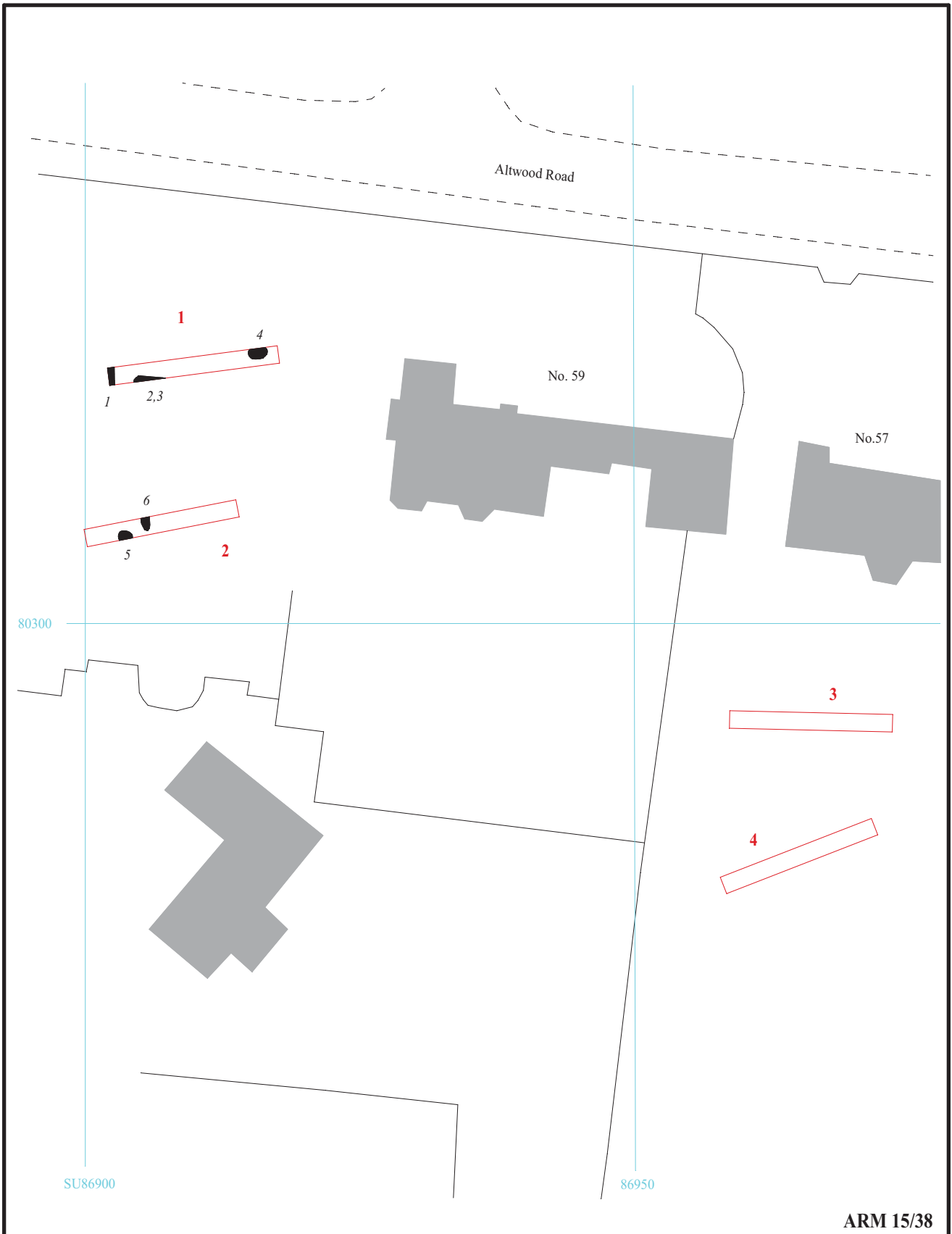


**Land at rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Altwood Road.

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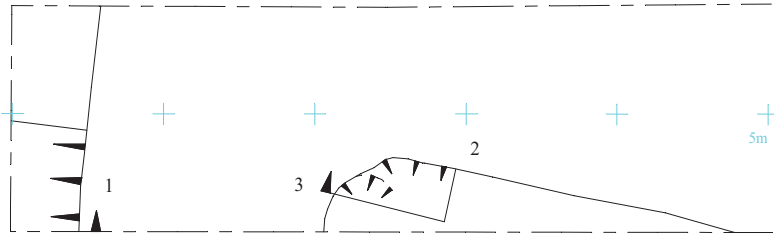
**Land at rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.

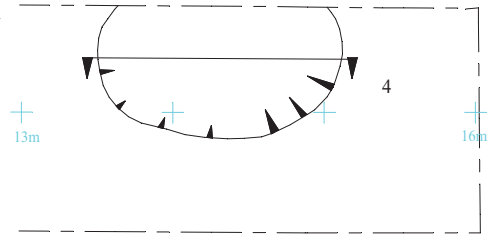


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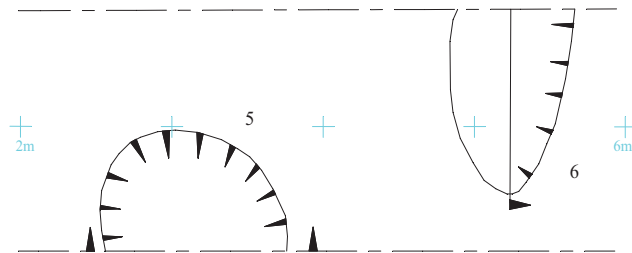
Trench 1



Trench 1 (cont'd)



Trench 2

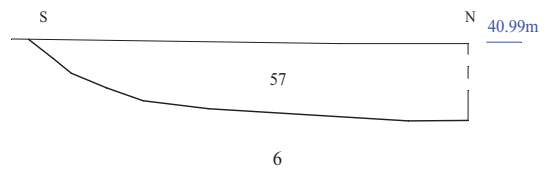
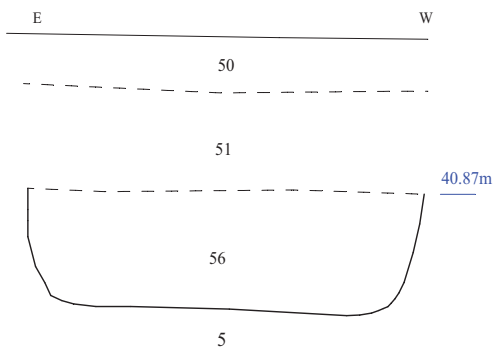
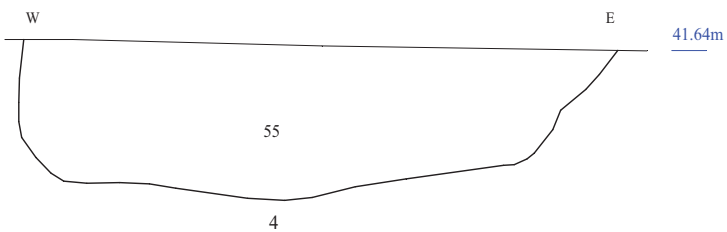
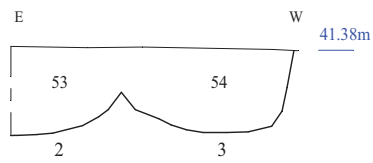
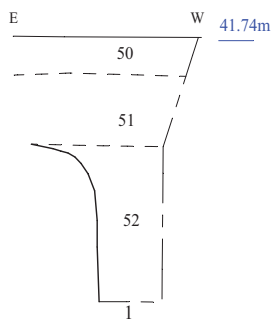


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Figure 4. Plan of trenches.





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Figure 5. Sections.







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



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

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**Land to rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 1, pit 4, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



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

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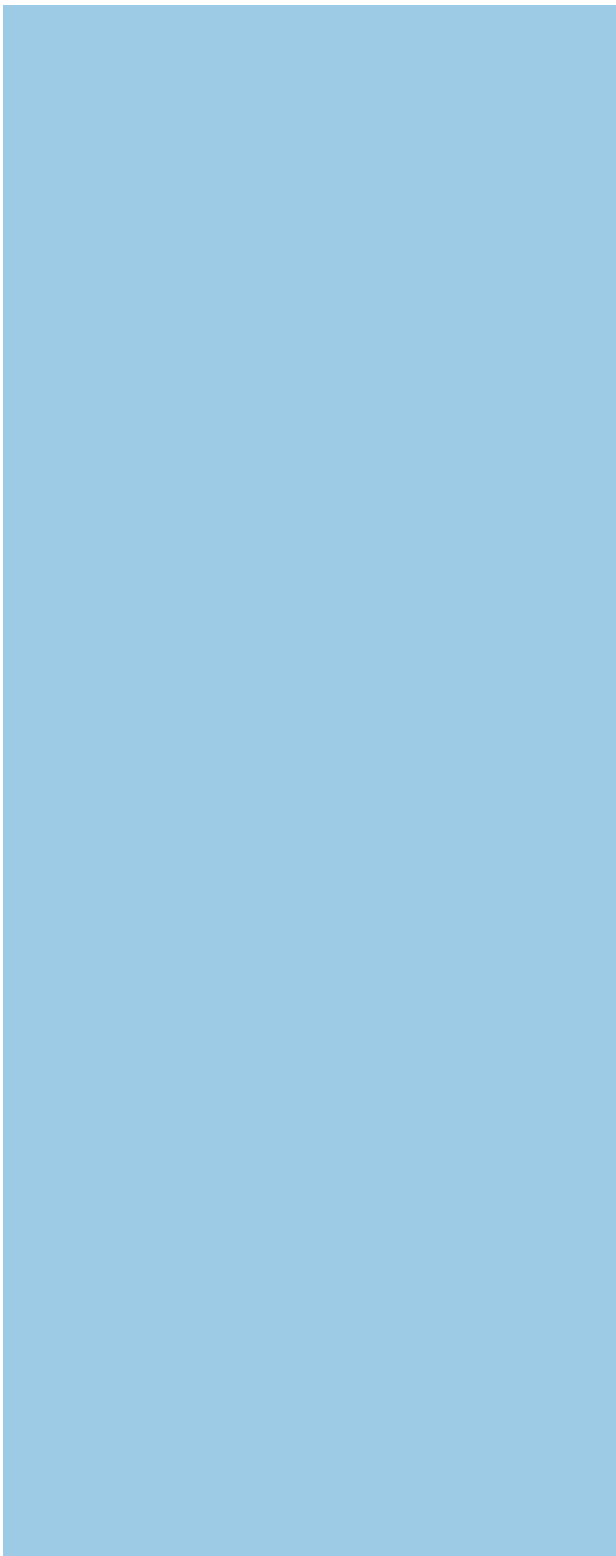
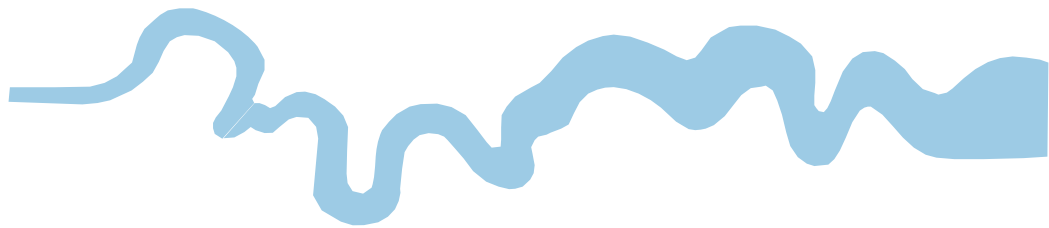
Land to rear of 57 and west of 59 Altwood Road,  
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015  
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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<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    |





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