

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Virginia House, Fishers Wood,
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Site Code: VHS13/217

(SU 9616 6618)

Virginia House, Fishers Wood, Sunningdale, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Runnymede Homes Ltd

by Genni Elliott

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code VHS 13/217

April 2015

Summary

Site name: Virginia House, Fishers Wood, Sunningdale, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9616 6618

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th November 2014 – 12th February 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: VHS 13/217

Area of site: c. 0.2ha

Summary of results: Nothing of archaeological significance was identified.

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

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 17.04.15 Steve Preston ✓ 17.04.15 |
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Virginia House, Fishers Wood, Sunningdale, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Report 13/217

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Virginia House, Fishers Wood, Sunningdale, Berkshire (SU 9616 6618) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael Weeks, of Runnymede Homes Ltd. 182 Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0RJ.

Planning permission (app no 13/02579/FULL) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new house on a larger footprint following demolition of the existing house on the site. The consent includes a condition (8) relating to archaeology which requires that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks. 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 of Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury, Tim Dawson and Dan Strachan, between 6th November 2014 and 12th February 2015 and the site code is VHS 13/217. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an approved local museum willing to accept the material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of Fishers Wood to the south-east of Sunningdale village, off Chobham Road (Fig. 2). The existing house is set within mature gardens at a height of approximately 60m above Ordnance Datum. It lies on a terrace with the gardens sloping down to the north-east (Pl. 1). The underlying geology is described as the Bracklesham Beds consisting of sandy clays and loams (BGS 1981). The observed natural geology was a yellowish brown sandy clay, consistent with the Bracklesham Beds.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of east Berkshire which has recorded only a modest range of archaeological finds and deposits. Nevertheless there is a persistent presence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval find spots as recorded in

the Berkshire Historic Environment Record, and several upstanding Bronze Age burial mounds (round barrows) are located on the heathland areas of east Berkshire (Ford 1987). Two barrows are recorded to the west at Sunningdale golf course and there is a record for the findspot of a Neolithic axe to the north-west. The site also lies within the southern part of an undated earthen banked enclosure.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any topsoil stripping prior to ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs as necessary. Observations consisted of watching a soakaway, drain trench, terracing for a garage, and house foundations.

Results (Figs 3 and 4)

The Soakaway

The soakaway measured 3m by 2m by 2.26m deep and consisted of 0.67m of topsoil above 0.37m of brown, sandy clay subsoil above more than 1.22m of natural clay. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

The Drain Trench

The drain trench was located around the north-west, north-east and south-east sides of the new house. The trench was 0.80m wide and between 1.20m and 1.53m deep dependent on the existing ground level. In general, the stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of mixed rooty topsoil above 0.62m of brownish yellow, over sandy clay subsoil above more than 0.56m of natural clay. The south-east side varied slightly with 0.21m of rooty topsoil above 0.08m of mid bluish-brown, sandy clay subsoil above more than 1.24m of natural clay. No archaeology was observed.

The Garage Terrace (Pl. 2)

The new garage was to be located on a terrace cut into the natural slope. The excavated area was slightly irregular but measured a maximum of 12m by 14m, and was between 1.0m and 2.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil above 0.60m of subsoil above 0.20m of green waterlogged clay, above more than 1.40m of natural clay. No archaeology was observed.

House Foundations

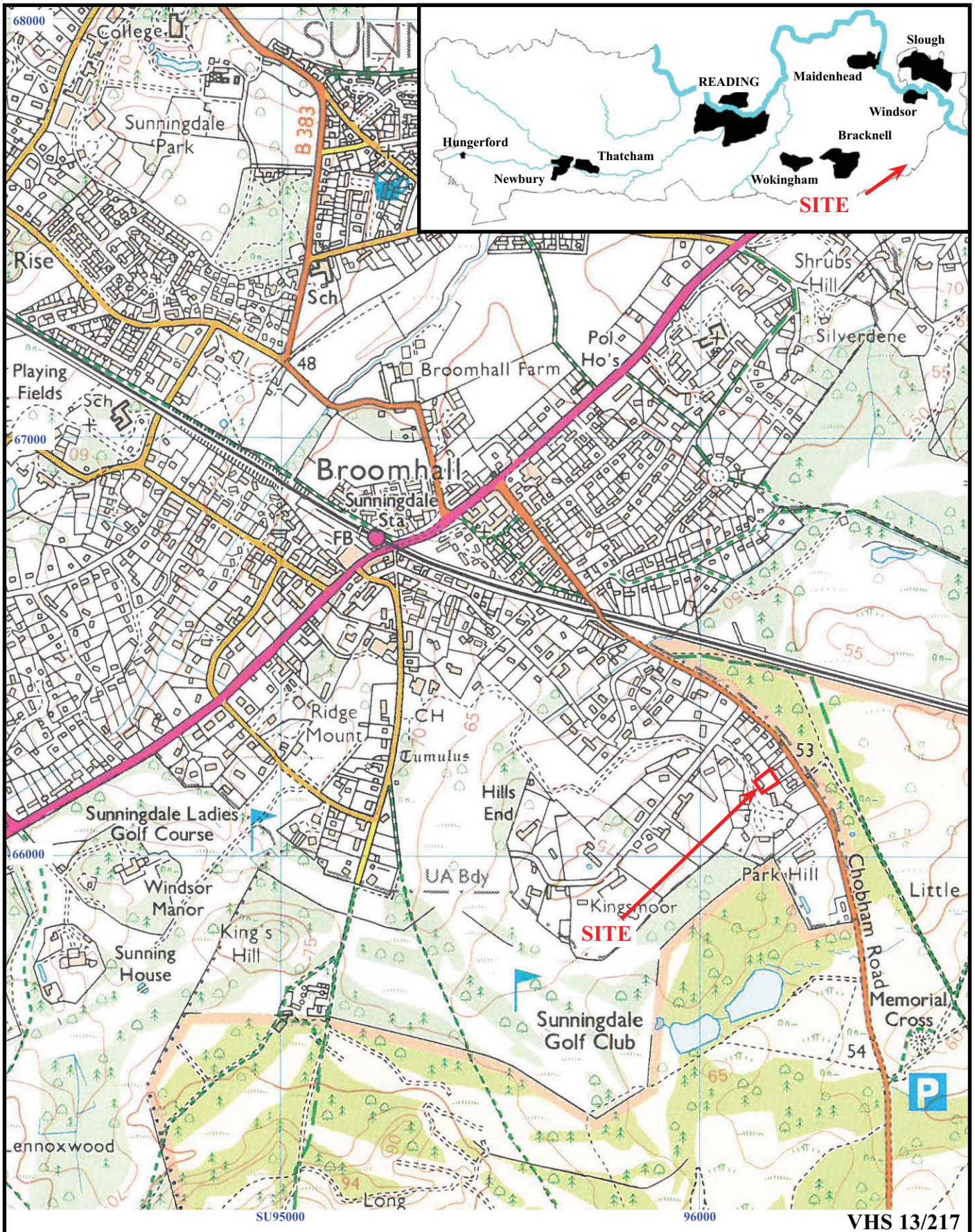
The house foundation trenches were 0.60m wide by between 1.40 and 2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of topsoil above 0.25m of subsoil above natural clay. No archaeological deposits or finds were observed.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for the site to contain archaeological features, nothing of archaeological significance was identified.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning
Occas Pap **1**, Reading
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London



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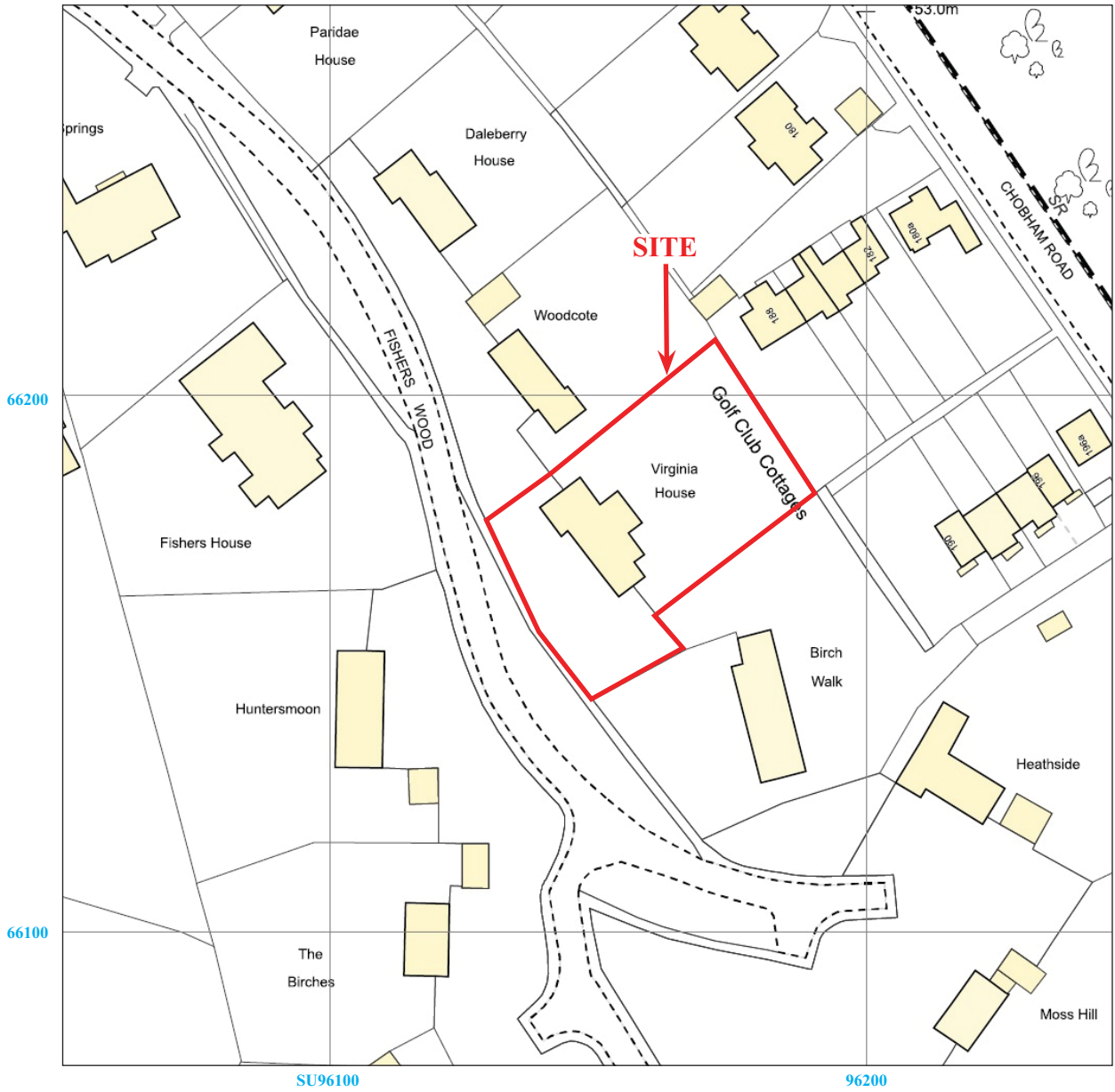
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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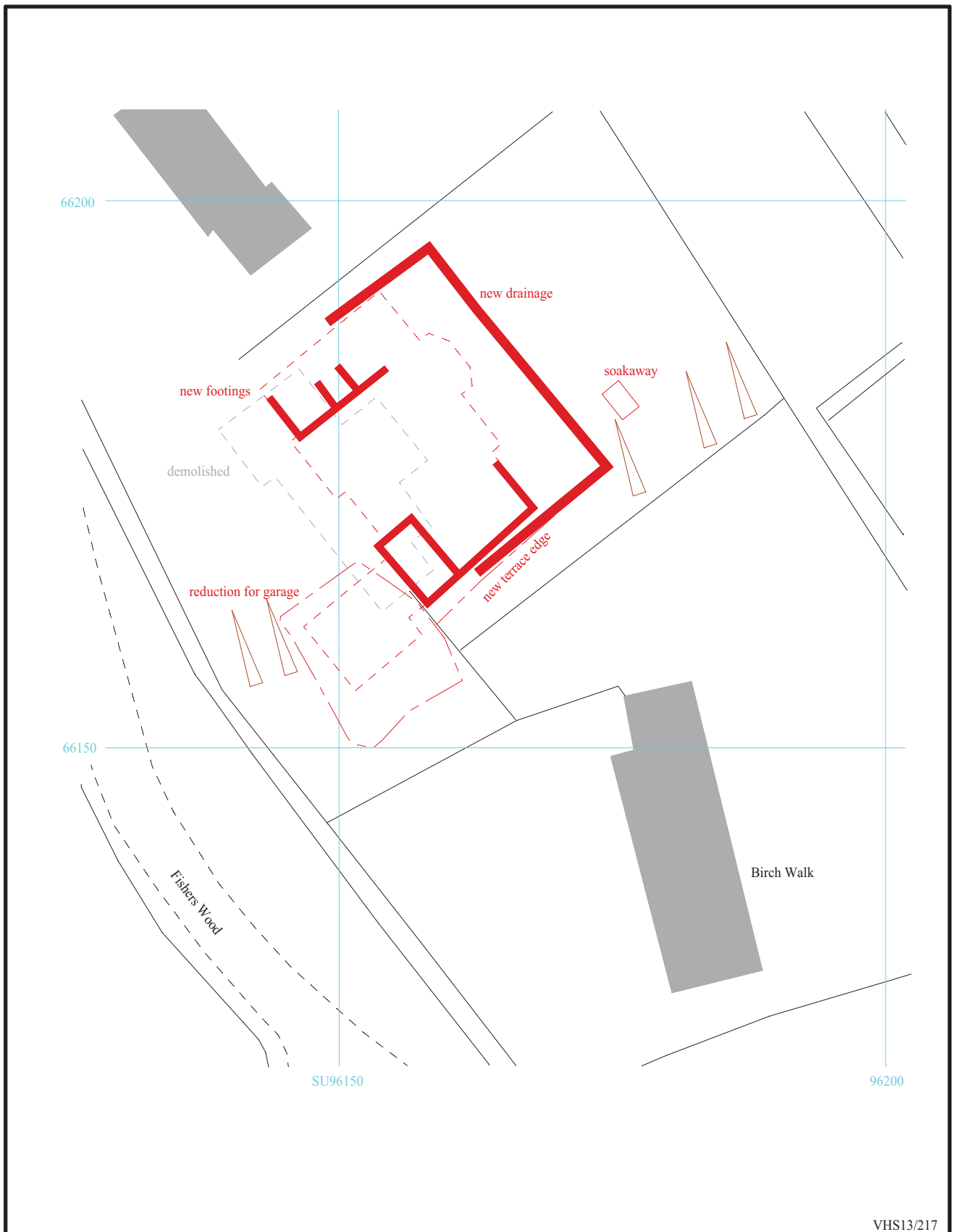


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



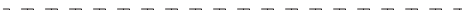
Soakaway



topsoil



brown sandy clay (subsoil)



yellow brown sandy clay (natural geology)

Garage



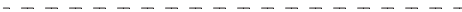
topsoil



brown sandy clay (subsoil)



green/brown (waterlogged) sandy clay (natural geology)



orange/grey sandy clay (natural geology)

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yellow brown sandy clay (natural



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Plate 1. General view of the site, looking north



Plate 2. Garage terrace reduction, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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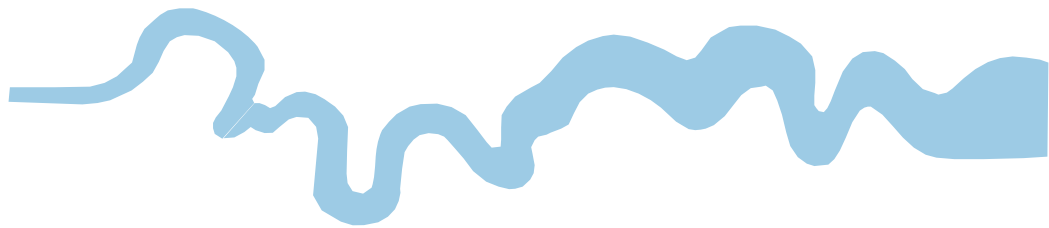
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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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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