

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Proposed Primary School, Hodsoll Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Site Code: ORS14/157

(SU7080 7375)

Proposed Primary School, Hodsoll Rd, Reading, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Reading Borough Council**

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ORS14/157

May 2015

Summary

Site name: Proposed Primary School, Hodsoll Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU7080 7375

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 12th - 14th May 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: ORS14/157

Area of site: c. 0.33ha

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological significance were observed. All four trenches revealed the presence of deep made ground overlying the natural geology. There was evidence to suggest that previously the site had been stripped of overburden down to the top of the natural geology and perhaps even truncated the latter suggesting that any archaeology present in those areas would have been destroyed.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 21.05.15 Steve Preston✓ 20.05.15

Proposed Primary School, Hodsoll Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Report 14/157

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Hodsoll Road, Reading, Berkshire (SU7080 7375) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jon Skipper, of Hampshire County Council on behalf Reading Borough Council. Planning consent (app 141490) has been gained from Reading Borough Council to construct a new primary school at the site. The consent included a condition relating to archaeology.

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 to develop a strategy to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation has been requested as detailed in the *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 Ms Kathelen Leary, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt between 12th and 14th May 2015 and the site code is ORS14/157. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the west of Reading town centre, 1km south of the river Thames (Fig. 1). The site was a former warehouse complex with associated car parking, bounded by Hodsoll Road to the west and Great Knollys Street to the south, with further warehousing to the east and a railway sidings yard to the north. The site is at an elevation of approximately 38m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is mapped as alluvium (BGS 1946): this was observed in Trenches 1 and 2 as a pale grey blue alluvium but the natural geology in Trenches 3 and 4 was a pale grey sandy gravel.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Booth et al 2007; Lambrick and Robinson 2009) yet there is relatively little recorded in the immediate environs of the site, probably as a result of a comparative lack of systematic investigation in the near vicinity. A flint axe (presumably Neolithic) was found to the west and Bronze Age pottery found during an evaluation to the north-west. Two brooches, one Iron Age and one Roman, were found to the south-west but with an uncertain precise provenance, with an inhumation burial supposed of Late Iron Age date nearby. A single Roman pottery sherd is recorded well to the south-west during an evaluation (Hull 1995) and a Saxon inhumation burial accompanied by shield and spear was found, also well to the south-west.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the evaluation will be to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present.

It was proposed to dig four trenches, two 10m long, and two 20m long, each 1.6m wide, located to examine the footprints of the new buildings. Overburden was to be removed by a JCB-type machine under constant archaeological supervision. A ditching bucket was used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficiently excavated to satisfy the aims outlined above.

Results

Trenches 3 and 4 were dug as intended, but Trenches 1 and 2 were shorter as it became clear that the natural ground surface had been truncated (Fig. 2). The trenches ranged in length from 9.50m to 10.20m and in depth from 1.13m to 2.00m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned west–east and was 10.20m long and 1.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of Tarmac overlying 0.18m of mid grey brown silty clay with frequent modern brick and tile (CBM) inclusions, which in turn overlay 0.30m of mid grey brown silty clay with CBM inclusions. This overlay 0.45m of pale grey clay with CBM inclusions which overlay 0.29m of dark brown grey silty clay, above the natural grey blue alluvium. No features were observed or finds recovered.

Trench 2 (Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned roughly south–north and was 9.80m long and 2.0m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of Tarmac overlying 0.32m of concrete crush, this overlay another 0.08m deep Tarmac layer, above 0.30m of dark brown grey clayey sand with frequent CBM inclusions. This overlay 0.15m of dark red brown silty clay which overlay 0.15m of dark grey black silty clay. This in turn overlay 0.28m of mid blue grey clay with CBM inclusions, over 0.12m of black sandy clay which overlay 0.20m of pale blue grey clay which overlay 0.10m of black silty clay containing transfer printed mass produced white earthenware (19th- or 20th-century ‘china’) above the blue grey alluvium natural. geology No features were observed or finds recovered.

Trench 3 (Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned east–west and was 10.10m long and 1.13m deep. The centre of the trench was stepped to avoid a service. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of concrete overlying 0.25m of black and red brown banded sand and gravel which overlay 0.22m of dark green grey sand with occasional gravel inclusions. This in turn overlay 0.06m of pale green grey gravel which overlay 0.35m of dark brown grey silty sand with CBM inclusions, over the pale grey sandy gravel natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered.

Trench 4 (Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned SSE–NNW and was 9.50m long and 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of concrete overlying 0.25m of black and red brown banded gravel which in turn overlay 0.21m of mid grey gravel with CBM inclusions, this in turn overlay 0.48m of dark brown grey clayey sand with CBM and metal inclusions which overlay the natural pale grey sandy gravel natural geology. No features were observed or finds recovered. The south end of the trench was stepped to avoid a service.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

No finds or features of archaeological significance were recovered. The presence of made ground directly lying above the natural geology suggests that the site had previously been stripped to either the top of the geology or even had truncated it. The differential depth to the natural geology between Trenches 1 and 2 suggests that the natural geology, and therefore any archaeological deposits that might ever have been present, in the area of Trench 2 had been truncated, no earlier than the late 19th century. The truncation and levelling most likely occurred at the time of the demolition of the terraced housing that had occupied the site prior to the construction of the current warehouse unit and car park.

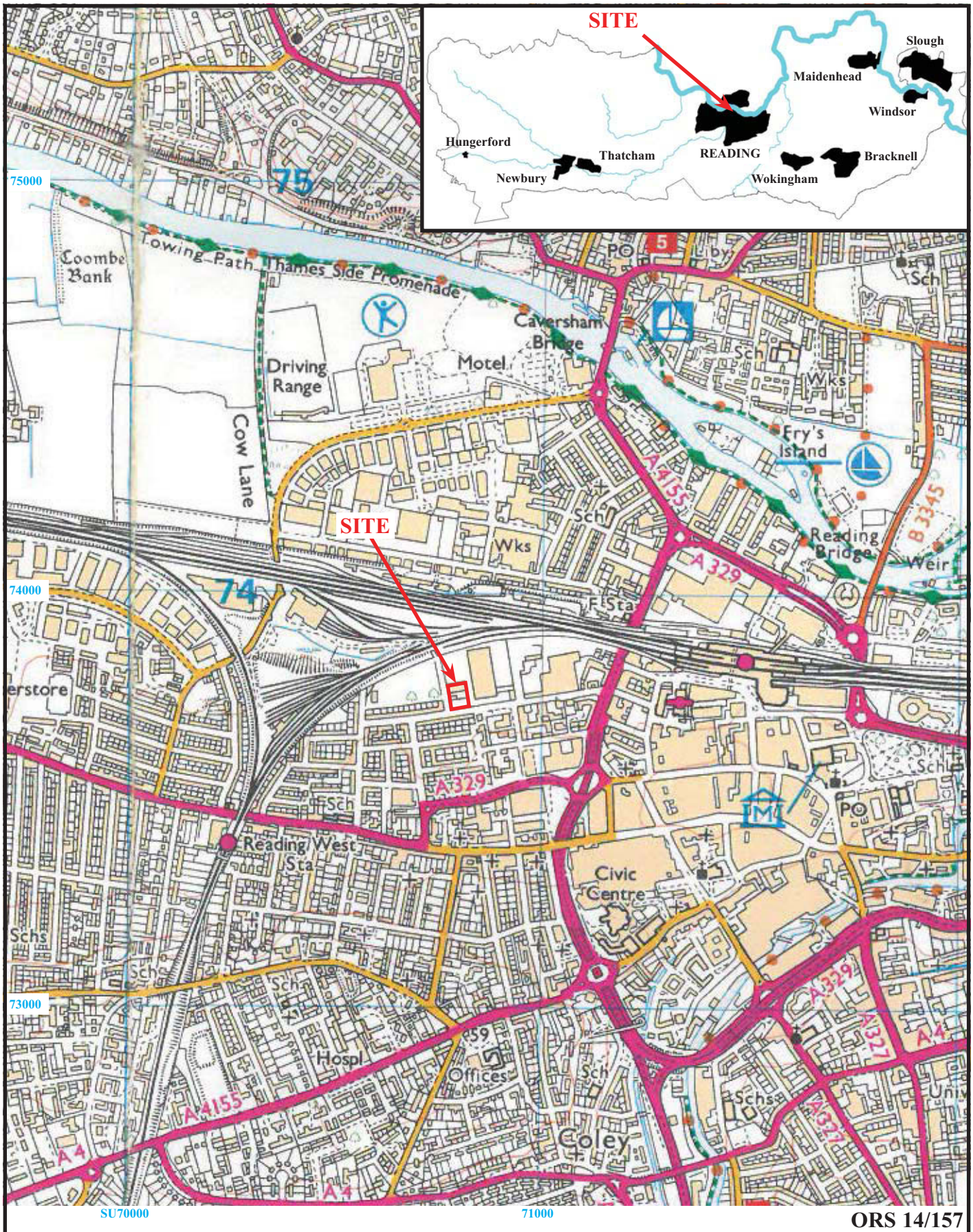
References

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- Hull, G, 1995, Battle Hospital Reading, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 95/71(2), Reading
- Lambrick, G, Robinson, M and Allen, T, 2009, *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: The Thames Valley in Later Prehistory: 1500BC–AD50*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **29**, Oxford
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S, W and SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.20	1.6	1.41	0-0.12m Tarmac, 0.12-0.30m mid grey brown silty clay with frequent ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions, 0.30-0.60m mid grey brown silty clay with CBM, 0.60-1.05m pale grey clay with CBM inclusions, 1.05-1.34m dark brown grey silty clay, 1.34m+ grey blue grey clay natural geology [PL. 1]
2	9.80	1.6	2.00	0-0.10m Tarmac, 0.10-0.42m concrete crush, 0.42-0.50m Tarmac, 0.50-0.80m dark brown grey clayey sand with frequent CBM inclusions, 0.80-0.95 dark red brown silty clay, 0.95-1.10 dark grey black silty clay, 1.10-1.38m mid blue grey clay with CBM inclusions, 1.38-1.50m Black sandy clay, 1.50-1.70m pale blue grey clay, 1.70-1.80 black silty clay, 1.80m+ mid blue grey clay natural geology. [PL. 2]
3	10.10	1.6	1.13	0-0.20m concrete, 0.20-0.45m black and red brown banded sand and gravel, 0.45-0.67m dark green grey sand with occasional gravel inclusions, 0.67-0.73m pale green grey gravel, 0.73-1.08m dark brown grey silty sand with CBM inclusions, 1.08m+ pale grey gravel natural geology. [PL. 3]
4	9.50	1.6	1.50	0-0.20m concrete, 0.20-0.45m black and red brown banded gravel, 0.45-0.66m mid grey gravel with CBM inclusions, 0.66-1.14m dark brown grey clayey sand with CBM and metal inclusions, 1.14m+ natural pale grey sandy gravel natural geology. [PL. 4]

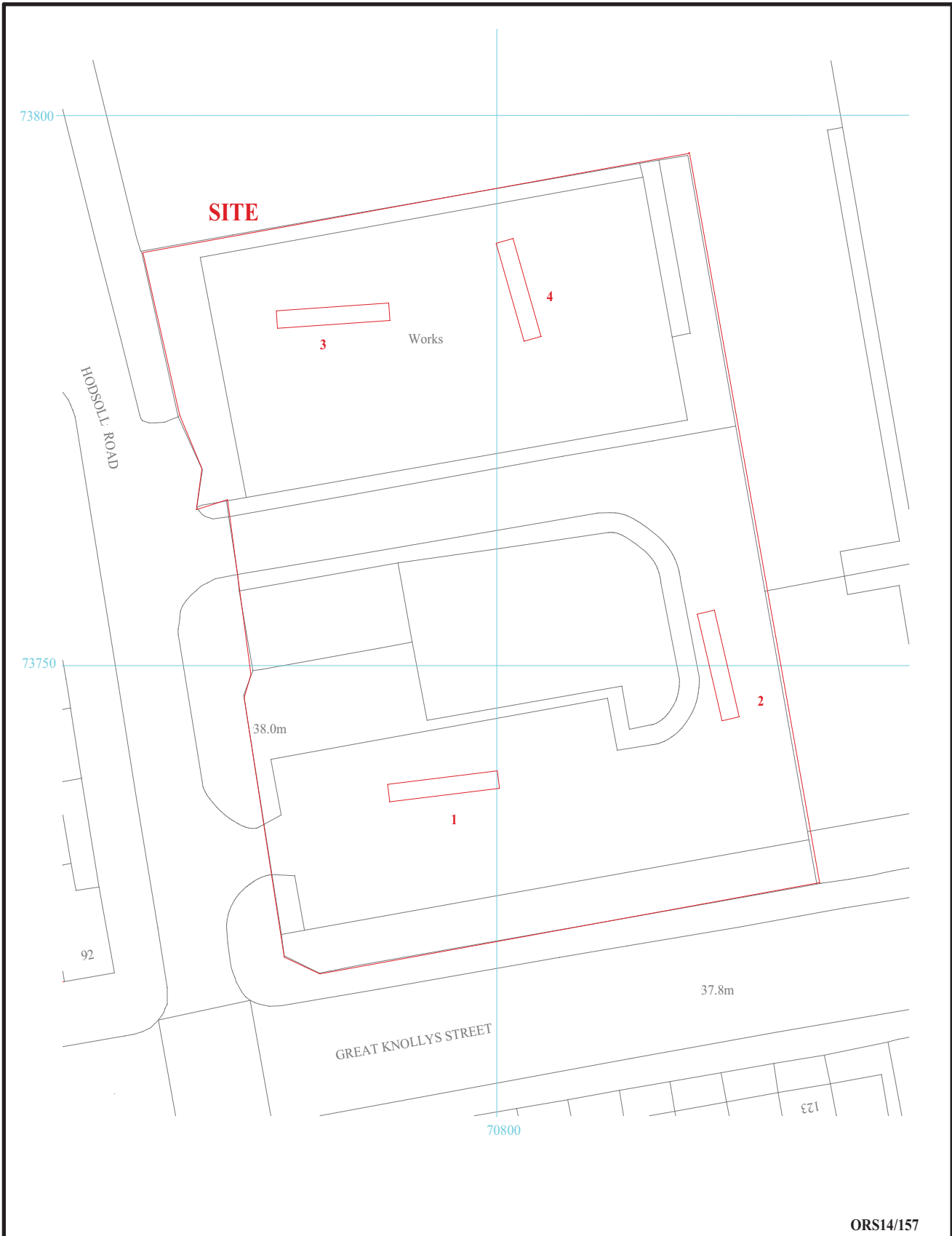


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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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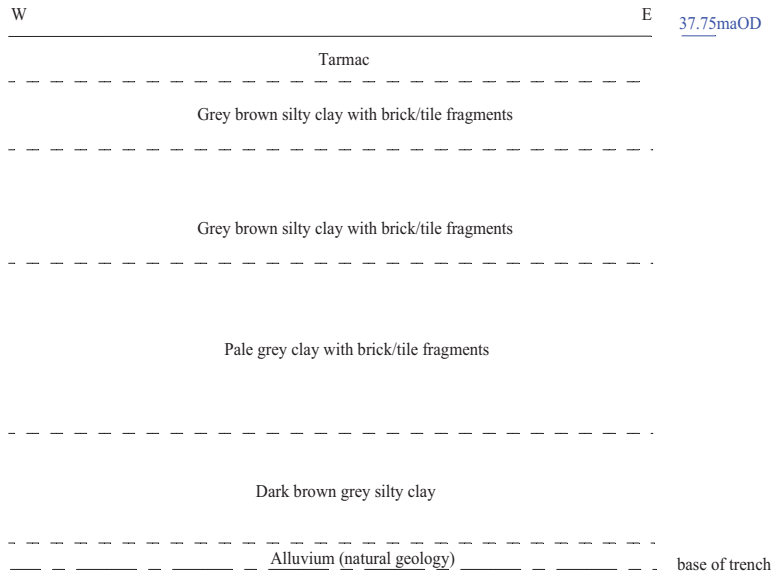
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.



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Trench 1



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Figure 3. Representative section.





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



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

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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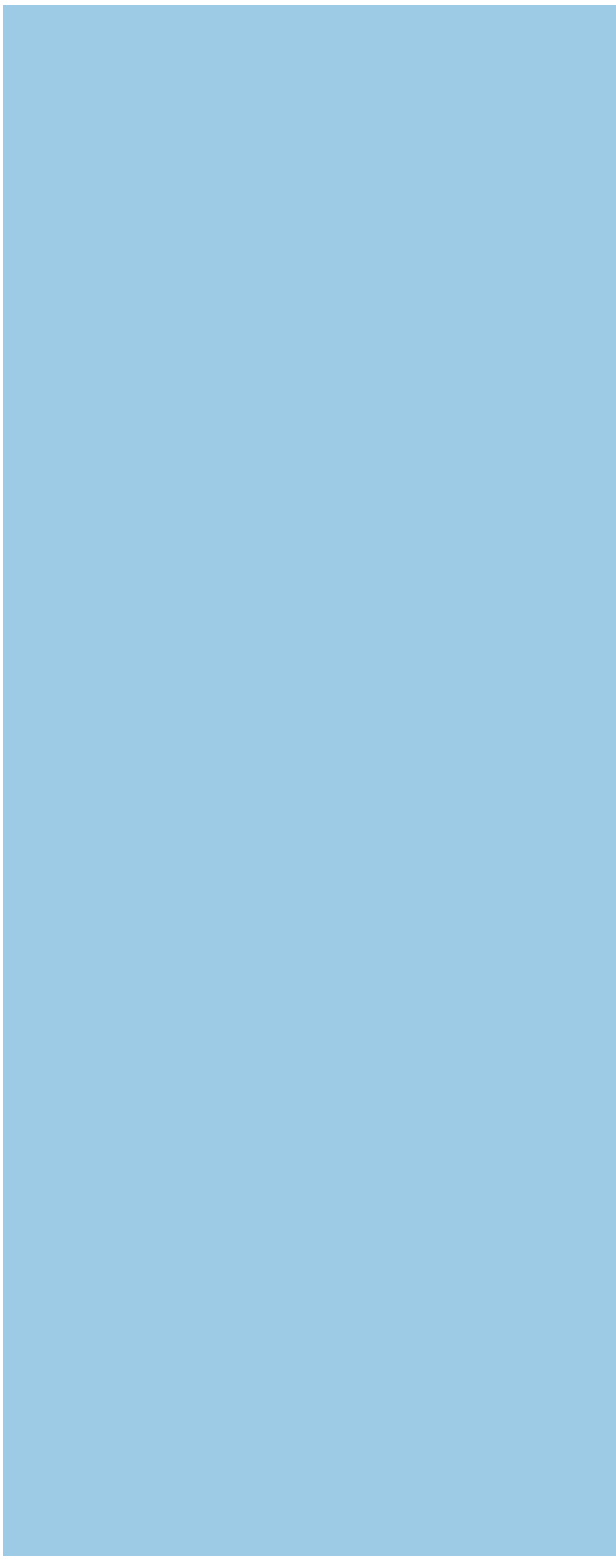
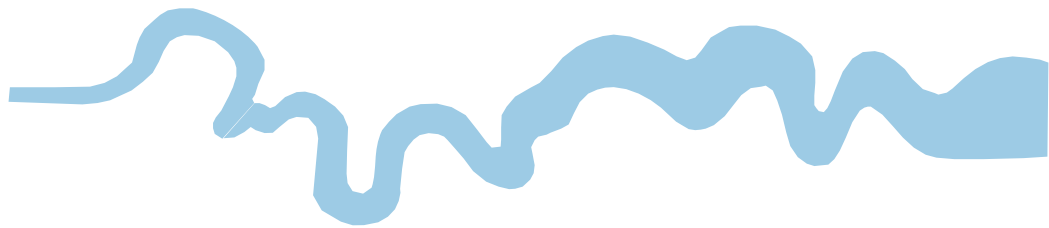
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Plates 3 - 4.**

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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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