

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Parkham, St Marks Road, Binfield,
Bracknell, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Tim Dawson

Site Code: PSM15/36

(SU 8454 6999)

**Parkham, St Marks Road, Binfield,
Bracknell, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Millgate Developments Ltd**

by Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PSM 15/36

June 2015

Summary

Site name: Parkham, St Marks Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8454 6999

Site activity: Archaeological evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11-12th June 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: PSM 15/36

Area of site: 0.91ha

Summary of results: All nine trenches were opened although with modifications to their proposed sizes and positions. No features of archaeological interest were identified nor finds recovered from the excavations.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum prepared to accept the material.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 29.06.15 Steve Preston ✓ 29.06.15

Parkham, St Marks Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Tim Dawson

Report 15/36

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Parkham, St Marks Road, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire SU 8454 6999 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jon Furneaux of Millgate Developments Ltd, Millgate House, Ruscombe Lane, Twyford, Berkshire RG10 9JT.

Planning consent is to be sought from Bracknell Forest Borough Council for the erection of new housing and access road. The consent is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work before development takes place. 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. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and Anna Ginger on 11-12th June 2015 and the site code is PSM 15/36. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum prepared to accept the material.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the northern edge of the Popeswood area of Bracknell, immediately to the south of the large village of Binfield and some 3km north-west of the centre of Bracknell (Fig. 1). It lies directly to the south of All Saints and St Mark's Church, with St Marks Road to the west and Popeswood Road to the east and Sampson Park and further housing to the south (Fig. 2). The site itself consists of the large late Victorian house (Parkham) in the western half, with a stables/garage and other outbuildings around a courtyard to the west of the house (Pl. 6). In the north-eastern corner is Squirrels Leap, a modern bungalow. These structures lie in heavily landscaped grounds with Parkham built upon raised ground which drops steeply to the north and east with a more gradual slope to the north-east and south. A small levelled lawn area is present immediately to the south of the main house while in the south-eastern corner of the site a much larger area has been terraced into the slope to create a flat area, possibly once a croquet lawn (Fig. 3). The site perimeter is marked by extensive mature trees

and bushes with a large laurel separating the two lawns in the southern part of the site (Fig. 3). Several large trees are located in the site's north-eastern quarter while the remaining ground was, at the time of the fieldwork, overgrown grass and a gravel drive. At its highest the site lies at *c.*85.6m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in its south-western corner and generally slopes downhill towards the eastern boundary, which lies at a height of *c.*82.4m aOD. The underlying geology is recorded as Plateau Gravel river terrace deposits (BGS 1981), which was observed on site as a mixed sand and gravel with clay patches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its 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. Excavations *c.*800m to the north-east of the proposal site at Park Farm uncovered Mesolithic flint scatters along with a late Iron Age/early Roman site (Roberts 1995). Further afield, *c.*1km to the south west, additional Mesolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and medieval remains were excavated at Jennetts Park (Simmonds et al 2009). Bronze Age finds and deposits have been recorded adjacent to The Cut, north of Manor Farm which lies *c.*1km to the north-east. This latter site included the possible site of a 'burnt mound' of likely Bronze Age date. Middle Iron Age occupation has been recorded at Fairclough Farm, Warfield to the east (Torrance and Durden 2003). In addition fieldwalking survey has recovered a dense scatter of Roman pottery on Cabbage Hill, almost certainly indicating the site of buried remains. Closer to the site to the north-west components of medieval Binfield may also have been revealed by fieldwalking (Ford 1987).

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 research aims of this project are:

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if any deposits representing prehistoric, Roman or medieval deposits are present, and if so their date and nature.
- d) To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

f) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *English Heritage Research Agenda* (English Heritage 2005) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as the Solent Thames research agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

It was proposed to dig 9 trenches, 25m in length and 1.6m wide using a JCB-type backhoe with toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. The trenches were targeted at the area to be occupied by the footprints of the new buildings, access road and new car park. Obstructions on site such as buildings and vegetation necessitated the altering of the positioning and dimensions of several of the trenches. All excavation was supervised by an archaeologist, who also monitored spoil heaps for finds and hand-cleaned potential archaeological deposits. Should these have proved to be of archaeological interest, sufficient of the features and deposits were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

Results

All 9 trenches were dug in the general proposed positions and at the proposed lengths (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 15.2m to 26.5m and in depth from 0.30m to 0.50m. The deviations from the planned positions and lengths were a result of standing buildings and vegetation that stood in the proposed locations. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded in any of the trenches. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was originally intended to be dug slightly to the east of its actual position but mature laurel bushes, overhanging tree canopy and an area of sunken lawn resulted in its being moved to the west, rotated and shortened. The excavated trench was aligned west - east and was 15.2m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy exposed consisted of 0.05m of topsoil and 0.35m of subsoil overlying natural geology, here recorded as a mid grey silty sand with frequent gravel inclusions.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

Trench 2, aligned WNW - ESE, was dug to a length of 21.0m and a depth of 0.50m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.35m of subsoil overlying natural geology, a silty sand with gravel which varied in colour between mid brown-grey, light brown-grey and mid grey-orange. A brick-filled soakaway was noted cut into the natural geology between 3m and 6m from the WNW end of the trench. This connected to the stables/garage to the north-east and is most likely contemporary in date.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned WNW - ESE and was 20.0m long and 0.40m deep. The reduction in length from the proposed 25m was due to the overhanging tree canopy at the south-eastern end of the trench. The stratigraphy noted in the trench consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.20m of subsoil overlying the mid grey-orange silty sand and gravel natural geology. Several land drains crossed the trench running in an approximately north - south direction.

Trench 4

Like Trench 3, Trench 4 was moved in order to avoid tree canopies and therefore root systems. It was aligned north - south and was 26.5m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil overlying the same silty sand with gravel natural geology as noted previously.

Trench 5 (Pl. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned south-west - north-east and was 23m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy exposed in the trench consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.25m of subsoil overlying the natural geology.

Trench 6

Of all the trenches Trench 6 was positioned closest to its proposed position. It was aligned west - east and measured 24m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying the sandy gravel natural geology. Two patches of burning were noted at the western end of the trench but both of these contained modern china and glass and were therefore not recorded as archaeological features. A buried tree stump caused an obstruction to the digging of the trench between 19.5m and 20m from the western end.

Trench 7 (Pl. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned south-east - north-west and cut to a length of 24.2m and depth of 0.35m through a narrow gap between a large tree and the sleeper-built retaining wall to the east of the house (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy exposed consisted of 0.05m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying natural geology, which in this location consisted of very hard mid orange-grey, mid brown-grey and mid brown-orange silty sand and gravel. Several areas of modern disturbance were noted at the north-western end of the trench. These corresponded to the location of the northern end of the retaining wall and the gravel drive, which the trench cuts across.

Trench 8 (Fig. 4; Pl. 4)

The position of Trench 8 was altered to avoid the bungalow which stands in the north-western corner of the site and its associated services. It was realigned to run south-west - north-east and was 22.3m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.40m of a dark brown-grey silty sand subsoil, the top 0.20m of which contained several large fragments of modern brick along with modern china and glass. This all overlaid the silty sand and gravel natural geology. Three linear features were identified at the trench's south-western end although, like the subsoil, all three contained finds of modern brick and china.

Trench 9 (Pl. 5)

Trench 9 was aligned WSW - ENE along the foot of an embankment along the top of which ran the driveway. The trench was 24m long and, for the first 9m from the WSW end, 0.60m deep with the stratigraphy consisting of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.50m of subsoil with bricks as seen in Trench 8. After 9m the level of the natural geology rose to a depth of 0.40m at which point the subsoil continued as the mid grey-brown silty sand seen previously but without any fragments of brick. Three land drains forming an “A” shape and two patches of modern disturbance were noted in the ENE half of the trench.

Finds

No finds were recovered from the trenches or their associated spoil heaps.

Conclusion

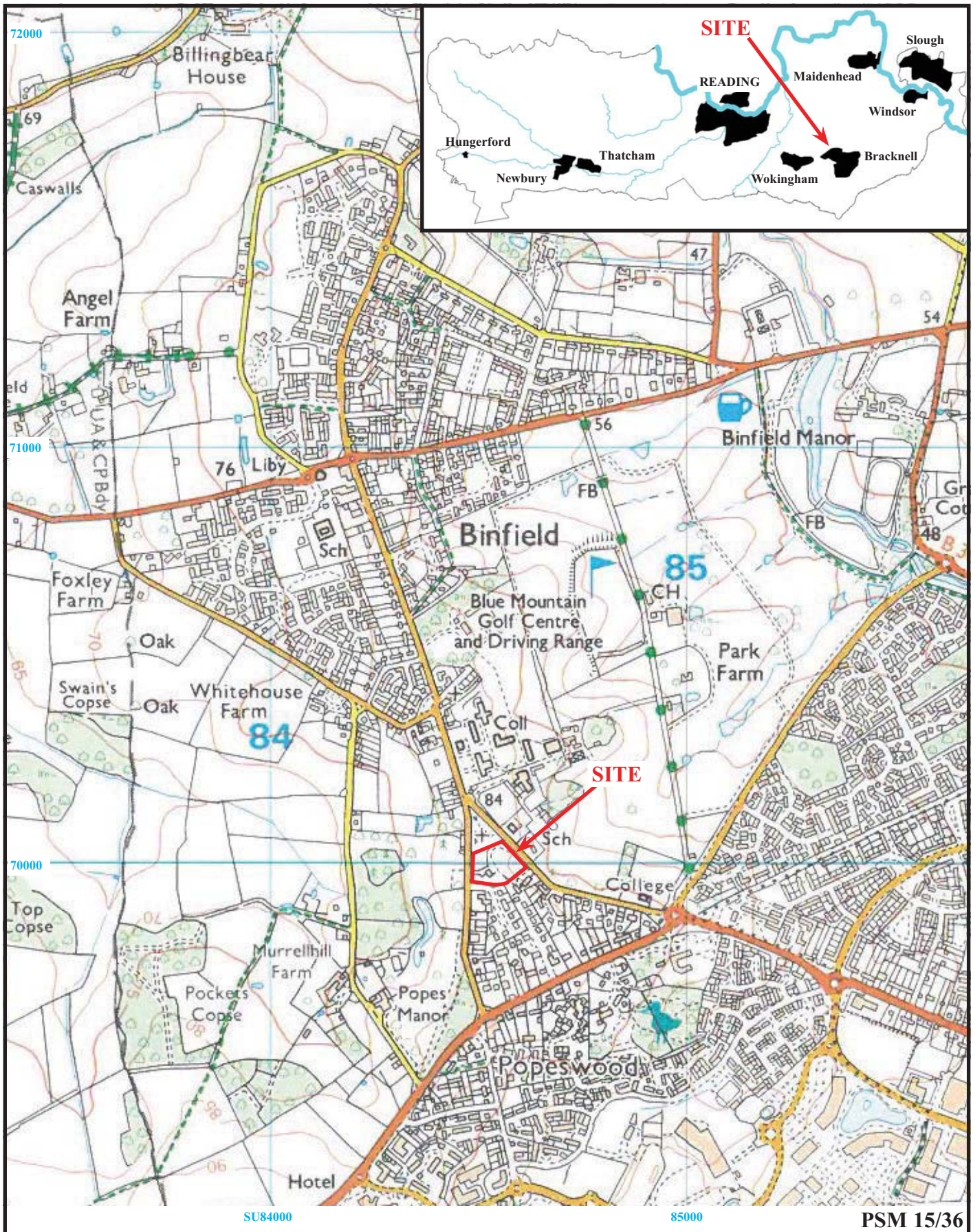
The nine trenches were excavated within their proposed locations, albeit with slightly modified lengths and orientations due to the unexpected close proximity of vegetation, trees and standing buildings. The natural geology was located in all of the trenches although this appeared to have been landscaped away in the areas to the south and south-east of the main house where lawns had been terraced into the slope. An abundance of brick within the subsoil between the main house and the bungalow to the north suggest that the ground may have been built up or levelled in this area, although the house and driveway stand on still higher ground immediately to the south. Several potential features were identified in the trenches although they proved to be either land drains or modern deposits or landscaping. From these investigations it can be concluded that the site holds a low archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	15.2	1.6	0.42	0-0.05 topsoil; 0.05-0.40 subsoil; 0.40+ natural geology [Pl.1]
2	21.0	1.6	0.50	0-0.15 topsoil; 0.15-0.50 subsoil; 0.50+ natural geology
3	20.0	1.6	0.40	0-0.20 topsoil; 0.20-0.40 subsoil; 0.40+ natural geology
4	26.5	1.6	0.30	0-0.10 topsoil; 0.10-0.25 subsoil; 0.25+ natural geology
5	23.0	1.6	0.35	0-0.10 topsoil; 0.10-0.35 subsoil; 0.35+ natural geology Pl.2]
6	24.0	1.6	0.30	0-0.05 topsoil; 0.05-0.25 subsoil; 0.25+ natural geology
7	24.2	1.6	0.35	0-0.05 topsoil; 0.05-0.35 subsoil; 0.35+ natural geology Pl.3]
8	22.3	1.6	0.50	0-0.10 topsoil; 0.10-0.50 subsoil with bricks; 0.50+ natural geology Pl.4]
9	24.0	1.6	0.60-0.40	0-0.10 topsoil; 0.10-0.60 subsoil with bricks; 0.60+ natural geology/ 0-0.10 topsoil; 0.10-0.40 subsoil; 0.40+ natural geology Pl.5]



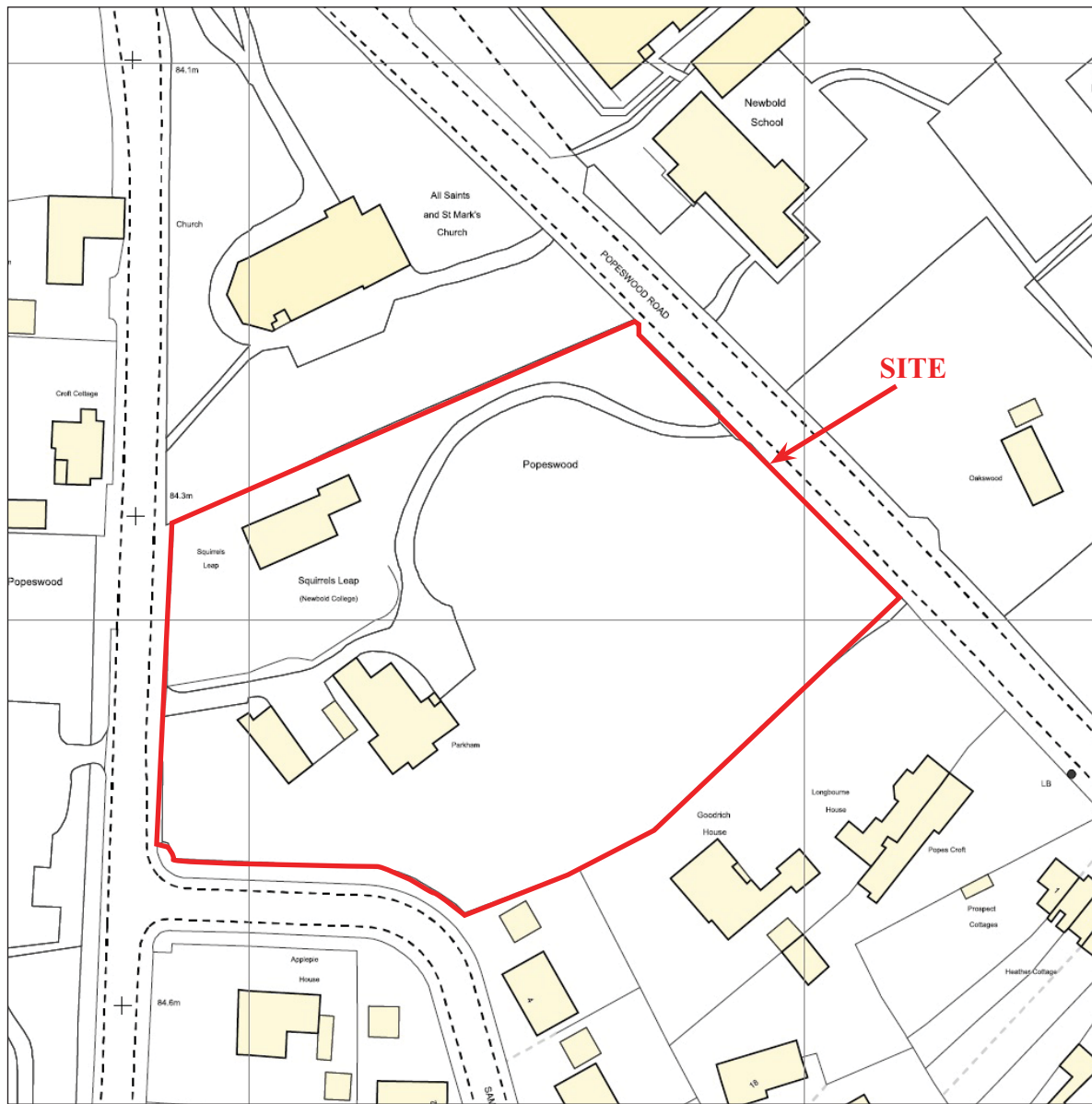
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Figure 1. Location of site within Binfield and Berkshire.

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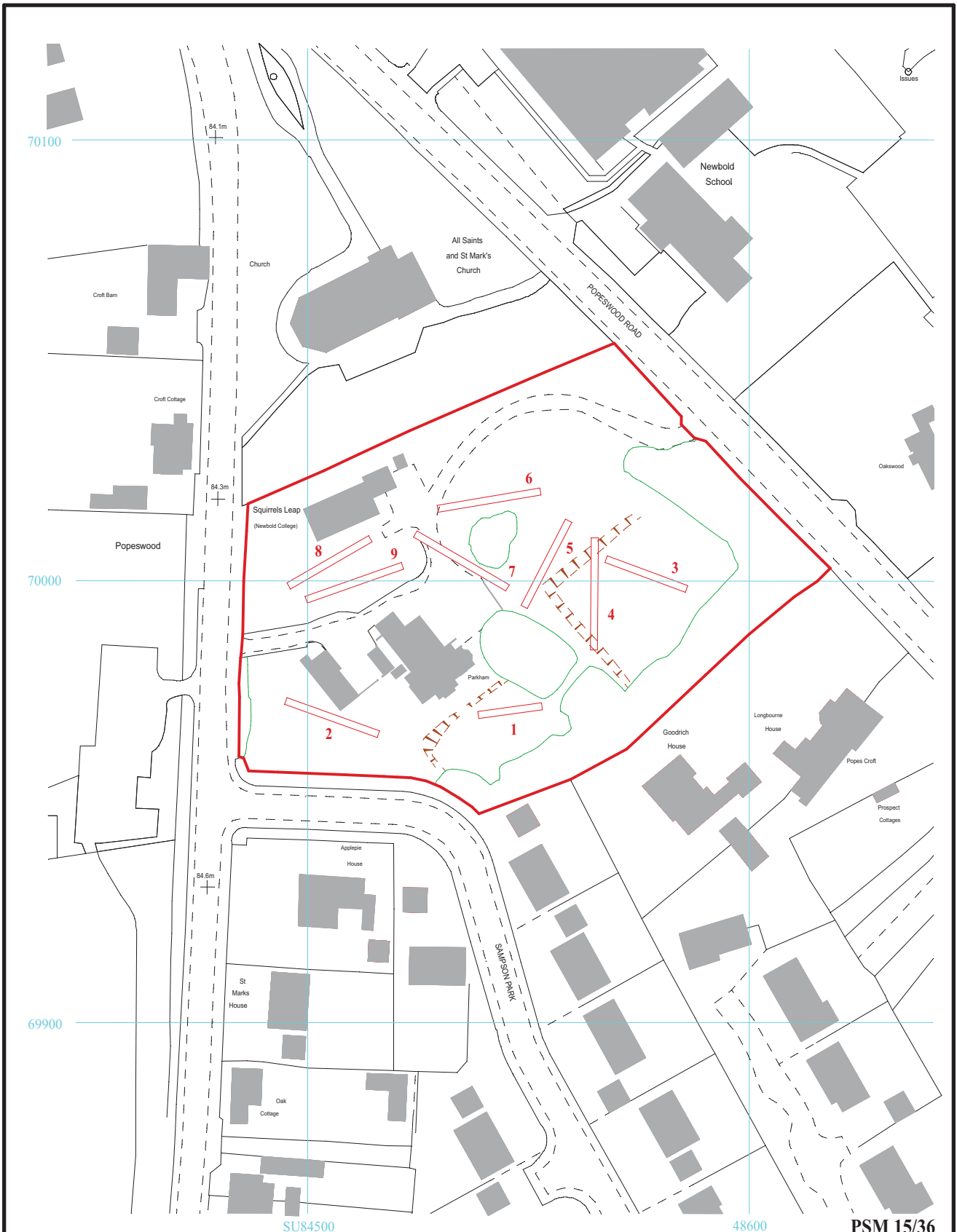
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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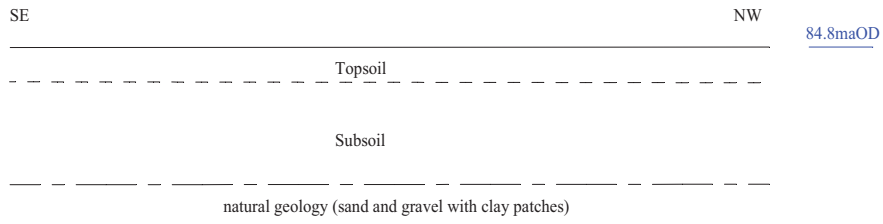
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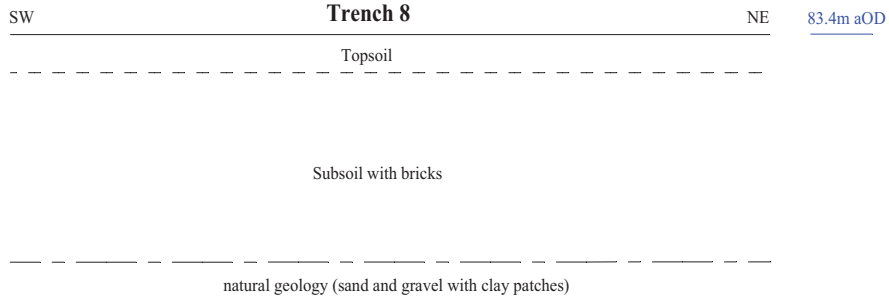
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Figure 3. Trench locations.

Trench 2



Trench 8



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking north west, Scales: 2m and 1m,



Plate 4. Trench 8, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 9, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. General view of site, looking south west,

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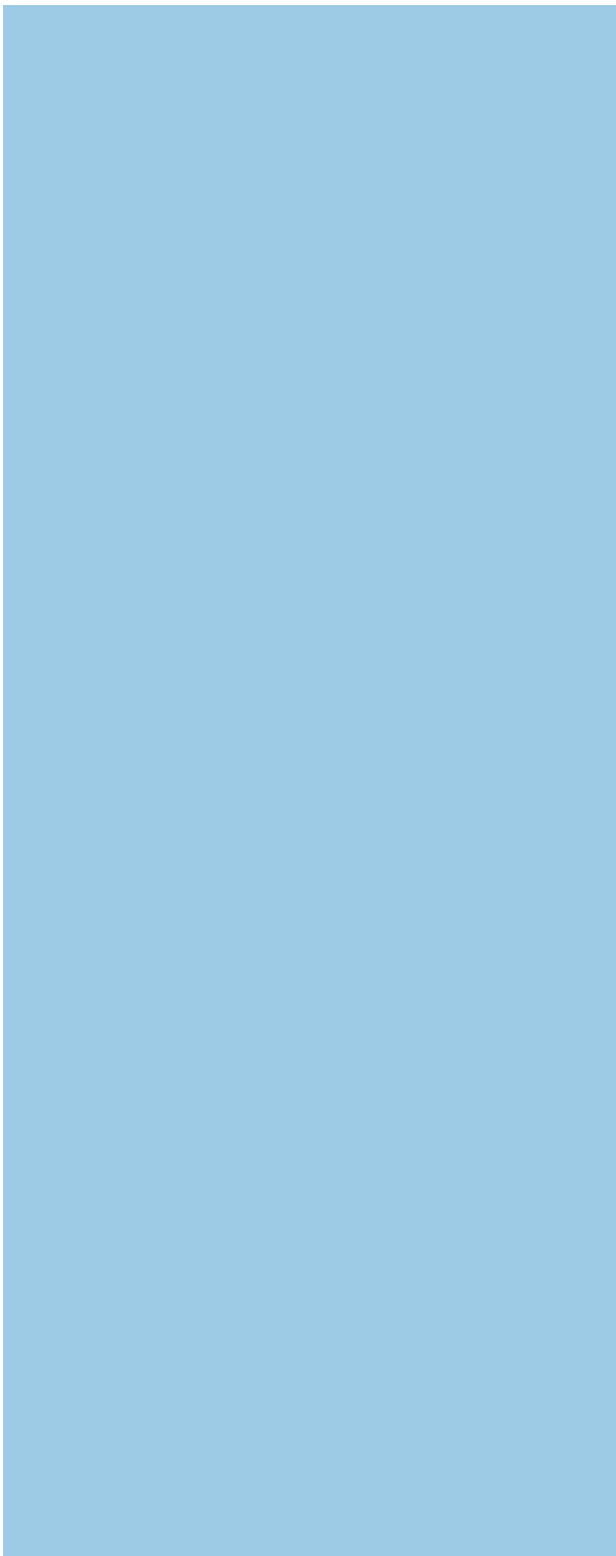
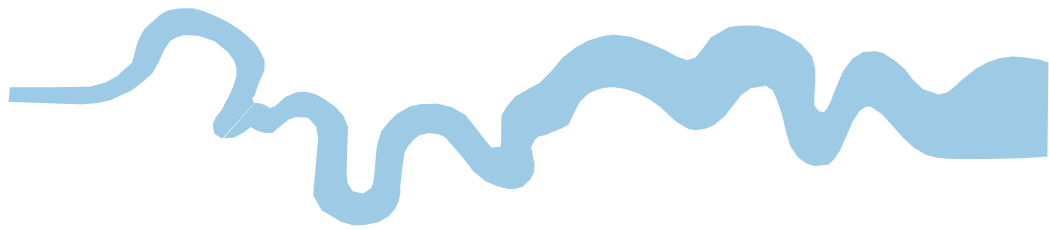
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Plates 5 - 6.**

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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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