

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Lizzi Lewins

Site Code: SRR14/220

(SU 7360 6770 to 7325 6880)

Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Shinfield Reading, Berkshire

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Hochtief (UK) Construction Ltd

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SRR 14/220

February 2016

Summary

Site name: Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7360 6770 to 7325 6880

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 25th February- 19th May 2015

Project manager: Andy Taylor

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson, Genni Elliott, Lizzi Lewins and Andy Taylor

Site code: SRR 14/220

Summary of results: A single ditch of likely post-Medieval date was identified within the lagoon area of the site. No further archaeological features or finds were observed.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 18.02.16 Steve Preston ✓ 02.02.16

Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Lizzi Lewins

Report 14/220b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, Reading, Berkshire (centred on NGR SU 738 685) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Phil Wharton of Hochtief (UK) Construction Ltd, Epsilon, Windmill Hill Business Park, Whitehill Way, Swindon, SN5 6NX.

Planning consent (app. F/2010/1428) has been granted following an appeal (APP/X0360/A/11/2151413), by Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of a new road to the east of the village of Shinfield. As part of the project, a former stable at Lane End Farm was also to be demolished. The consent is subject to a condition (9) which required building recording and an archaeological recording action. This report documents the archaeological recording action. The building survey has been reported on separately (Elliott 2015).

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 Ms Ellie Leary, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, Genni Elliott, Lizzi Lewins and Andy Taylor between the 25th February and 19th May 2015 and the site code is SRR 14/220.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a museum willing to accept archive material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the east of Shinfield, which itself lies on the southern edge of Reading (Fig. 1), and the river Loddon flows to the east of the road route (Fig. 2). Topographically the site lies on the gently sloping side and floor of the Loddon Valley. The underlying geology is mapped as valley gravel on the southern part of the road with London clay and gravel on the remainder (BGS 1946): the natural geology was mainly observed in the southern part of the area, where it varied from gravelly clay to clayey gravel to clay. The site lies at a height of between 45m and 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Chadwick *et al.* 2008). This potential stems from its location within the valley of the River Loddon, a topographic zone relatively rich in archaeological deposits. Field survey in the valley to the south and north has revealed prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval finds (Ford 1994-7) with other sites recorded from the air (Gates 1975). Excavations in advance of mineral extraction to the north have examined Mesolithic and Iron Age occupation sites (Harding and Richards 1993; Barnes and Hawkes 1991; Manning and Moore 2011) with research excavation to the south revealing more (Lobb and Martin 1993). Development sites within Shinfield to the west have revealed further Iron Age occupation and field systems (Taylor 2010a and b). The desk-based assessment noted the presence of a number of linear cropmarks on the route of the road. This led to a geophysical survey (Walford and Fischer 2008), that identified a small number of linear anomalies, and trial trenching (Holt 2009) that showed these to be mostly undated, with one modern.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to:

- Excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development;
- Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- Establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic etc.;
- Produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region; and
- Determine the date and nature of the linear features already recorded for the site.

The fieldwork was to comprise a single component of work which was to supervise the removal of topsoil and subsoil to expose the archaeologically relevant levels along the route of the road and any other ancillary areas. However, ground conditions varied widely and both monitored overburden removal, test pitting and trial trenching were employed. This was carried out by a 360°-type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. under archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Southern flood lagoon (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

A 'J-shaped' area of c. 120m by 10m, for a flood lagoon was stripped of overburden. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil overlying 0.29m of subsoil overlying gravelly clay natural geology. Much of this area was not stripped below subsoil as this was the required formation level. However at the southern end a ditch was observed crossing the area cutting the natural geology, into which a slot (1) was dug (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The ditch was 2.20m wide and 0.35m deep and contained three fills (52-54) (Fig. 8) with only middle fill 53 producing finds, a single piece of modern tile. This ran parallel to an open field boundary and most likely represents relatively recent field boundary, possibly diverted when the nearby houses were built.

Gas main pipe area (Fig. 7; Pl. 2)

At the north-western end of the road line, a gas main had to be diverted, which required a stripped area parallel to the M4 motorway (Pl. 2). This was dug to a depth of c.0.40m and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil overlying 0.18m of subsoil overlying gravelly sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

Bund(?) area strip (Fig. 6; Pl. 9)

At the north-eastern end of the road line, an area c. 130m long and 20m wide with an L-shaped plan was stripped of overburden to a depth of c.0.40m and consisted of 0.22m of topsoil overlying 0.18m of subsoil overlying gravelly sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

Cable trenches (Figs 6 and 7; Pls 3-4)

A trench c. 400m long was dug in order to divert overhead power cables in three separate sections along the northern part of the road line (Pls 3-4). These trenches measured 0.70m wide and between 0.60m and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy in them all consisted of c. 0.19m of topsoil overlying 0.34m of subsoil overlying sandy clay and gravel natural geology. No archaeology was observed.

Road side drainage trenches (Figs 5- 7; Pls 5-6)

Two intermittent trenches were dug along the road strip in areas B and C: an initial trench 3m in from the western limit of excavation and a second, longer trench along the eastern limit (Pls 5-6). Both trenches were 1.70m wide. The western trench (Fig. 5) was dug in two sections (75m and 70m long) to a maximum depth of 1.13m (from the original ground level) at its northernmost extent with a minimum depth of 0.66m at 40m from

the south end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15–0.18m of topsoil above a similar depth of subsoil, over 0.35m of made ground consisting of silty clay (alluvium) with infrequent post-medieval brick/tile inclusions overlying 0.30m of (clean) silty clay alluvium overlying sandy clay and gravel natural geology. The depth of the clean alluvium was noted to increase to 0.54m at the northern extent of the trench (from 100m onwards). The natural geology changed to a clayey sand approximately around 40 along the length of the trench from the southern end.

The eastern trench (Figs 5 and 6) was dug in three sections 195m, 185m and 165m long, the first (most southerly) of which lay parallel to the western trench, to a depth of 0.4m (from a level after topsoil had been removed). The stratigraphy in all three consisted of 0.24–0.28m of subsoil overlying 0.15–0.22m of mixed clay and subsoil overlying sandy clay and gravel natural geology. Frequent grey and red discolouration of the natural was noted in the northernmost extent of the second section of trench.

Road strip (Pl. 10)

The main area of work was the road strip itself between Arborfield Road and Cutbush Lane (Figs 3 to 7; Pl. 10), roughly 1.55km long and varying considerably in width, from 15m to 40m, though in the main 18–20m wide. The north western part of the road strip (A) lay on areas of made ground which was not to be removed. This latter area was partially examined during supervision of overburden removal to a depth of c. 0.2m of a contractor's haul road at the north end, which only exposed clayey made ground.

The stratigraphy of the road strip typically consisted of 0.17m of topsoil overlying 0.21m of subsoil overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology. At the southern end of Area C 0.10m of alluvium was encountered overlying clay natural geology, which contained frequent chunks of Victorian to modern brick/tile.

Nothing of archaeological significance was observed in the road strip.

Southern roundabout (Fig. 3)

Overburden removal during the roundabout construction at the southern end of the road was observed but no undisturbed natural geology was visible. Nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

Pond area (Fig. 5)

A large area (c. 0.4ha) was stripped for a new balancing pond, to the west of the road corridor, roughly corresponding with the northern limit of the drainage trench. The stratigraphy was the same as in the northernmost extent of the drainage trench, with topsoil and subsoil above 'dirty' alluvium which contained post-medieval material, giving on to clean alluvium, though here the distinction was blurred by the stripping

methodology, and wet conditions with a high water table. It appeared for the most part, the natural geology (in this area London Clay) had not been reached. There was no sign of any anomalies which could have produced the three cropmarks plotted in this area.

Finds

Tile

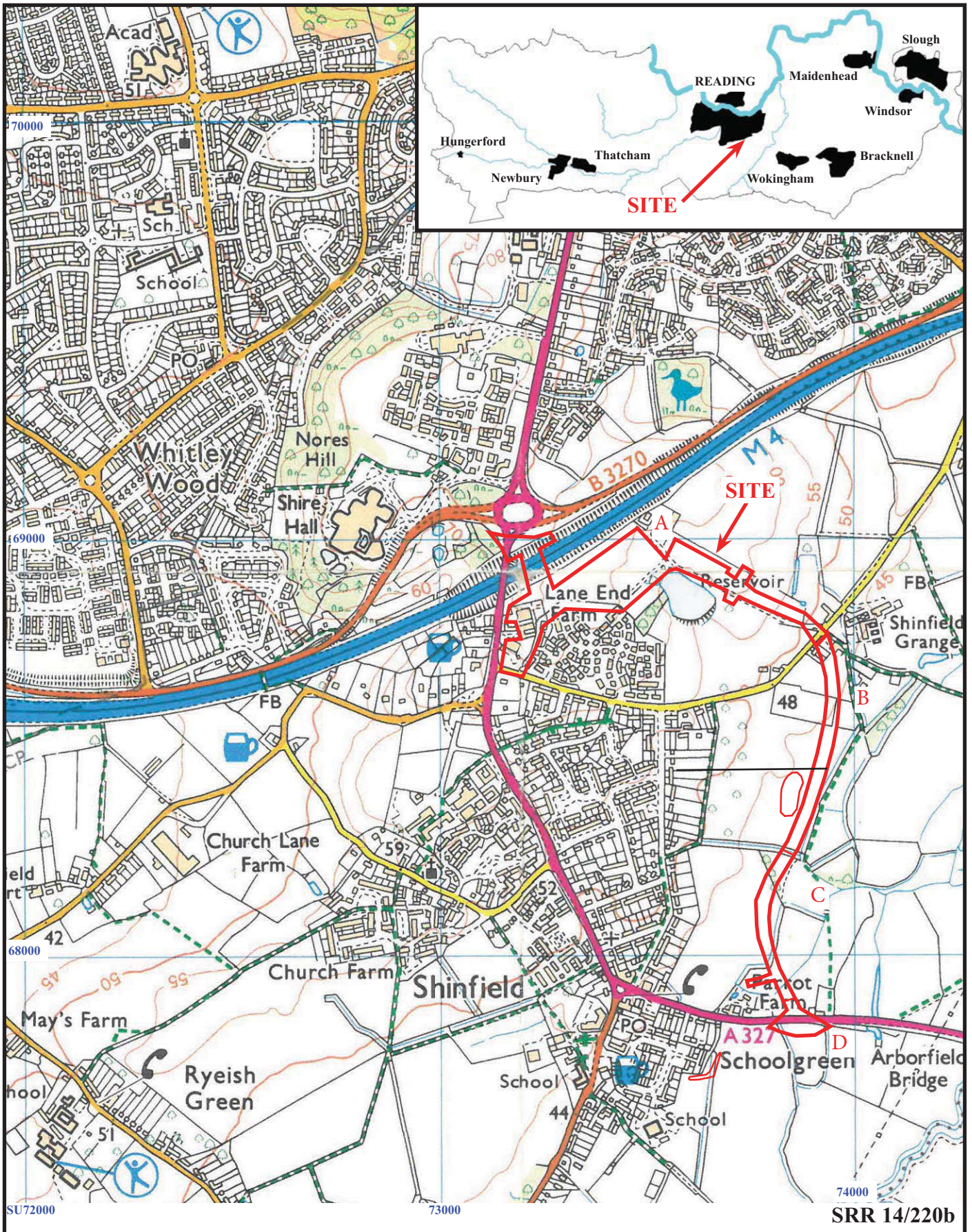
A single piece of tile with a consistent red-brown fabric was recovered from ditch 1 (53). It is late post-medieval to modern in date.

Conclusion

Despite the extent of the observations made, only a single ditch was observed during the course of the recording action, and this was of relatively modern date. The prior evaluation and geophysical survey recorded few anomalies of possible interest and the various cropmarks intercepted by the works, did not appear to be of archaeological origin.

References

- Barnes, I and Hawkes, J W, 1991, 'Archaeological excavations at Broadwater, Hurst', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **74**, 95–108
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Chadwick, P, Pugh, G and Heard, H, 2008, 'Shinfield/Spencers Wood, archaeological desk-based assessment', CgMs Consulting, London
- Elliott, G, 2015, 'Former Stable Building, Lane End Farm, Shinfield, Berkshire: building recording', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd unpubl rep 14/220, Reading
- Ford, S, 1997a, 'Loddon Valley Survey, Berkshire', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **75**, 11–34
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Pubn 1, Reading
- Harding, P, Richards, J C, 1993, 'Sample excavation of a Mesolithic flint scatter at Whistley Court Farm', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **74** (for 1991-3), 145
- Holt, R, 2009, 'Eastern Relief Road, Shinfield, Wokingham Borough, archaeological evaluation', Cotswold Archaeology report **09047**, Kemble
- Lobb, S J and Morris, E L, 1993, 'Investigation of Bronze Age and Iron Age features at Riseley Farm, Swallowfield', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **74**, (for 1991-3), 37–68 (and fiche)
- Manning, A and Moore, C, 2011, 'Excavations at Lea Farm, Hurst, 1998', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **80**, 31–71
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Taylor, A, 2010a, 'Iron Age and Roman landscape features at Hollow Lane, Shinfield', in S Preston (ed), *Archaeological Investigations to the South of Reading, 2002-2008: Exploring Late Iron Age and Roman settlement south of Reading, Berkshire*, TVAS Monogr **13**, Reading, 47–52
- Taylor, A, 2010b, 'Late Iron Age features at 82 Oatlands Road, Shinfield' in S Preston (ed), *Archaeological Investigations to the South of Reading, 2002-2008: Exploring Late Iron Age and Roman settlement south of Reading, Berkshire*, TVAS Monogr **13**, Reading, 55–6
- Walford, J and Fisher, I, 2008, 'Archaeological geophysical survey of the proposed Shinfield bypass route and land at Ryeish Green, Berkshire', Northamptonshire Archaeology report **08/185**, Northampton

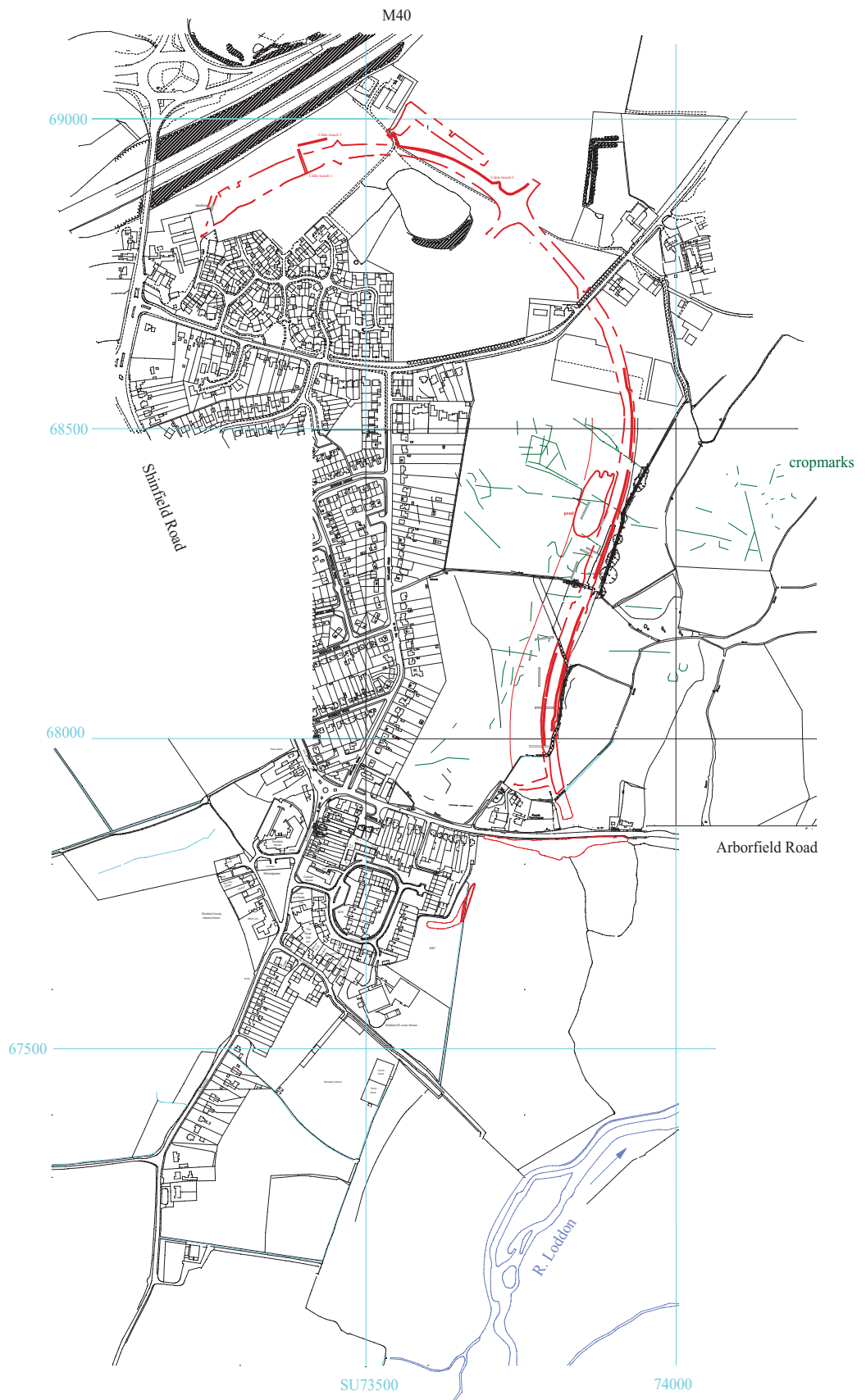


**Shinfield Relief Road,
Shinfield, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 1. Location of site within Shinfield and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 159 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



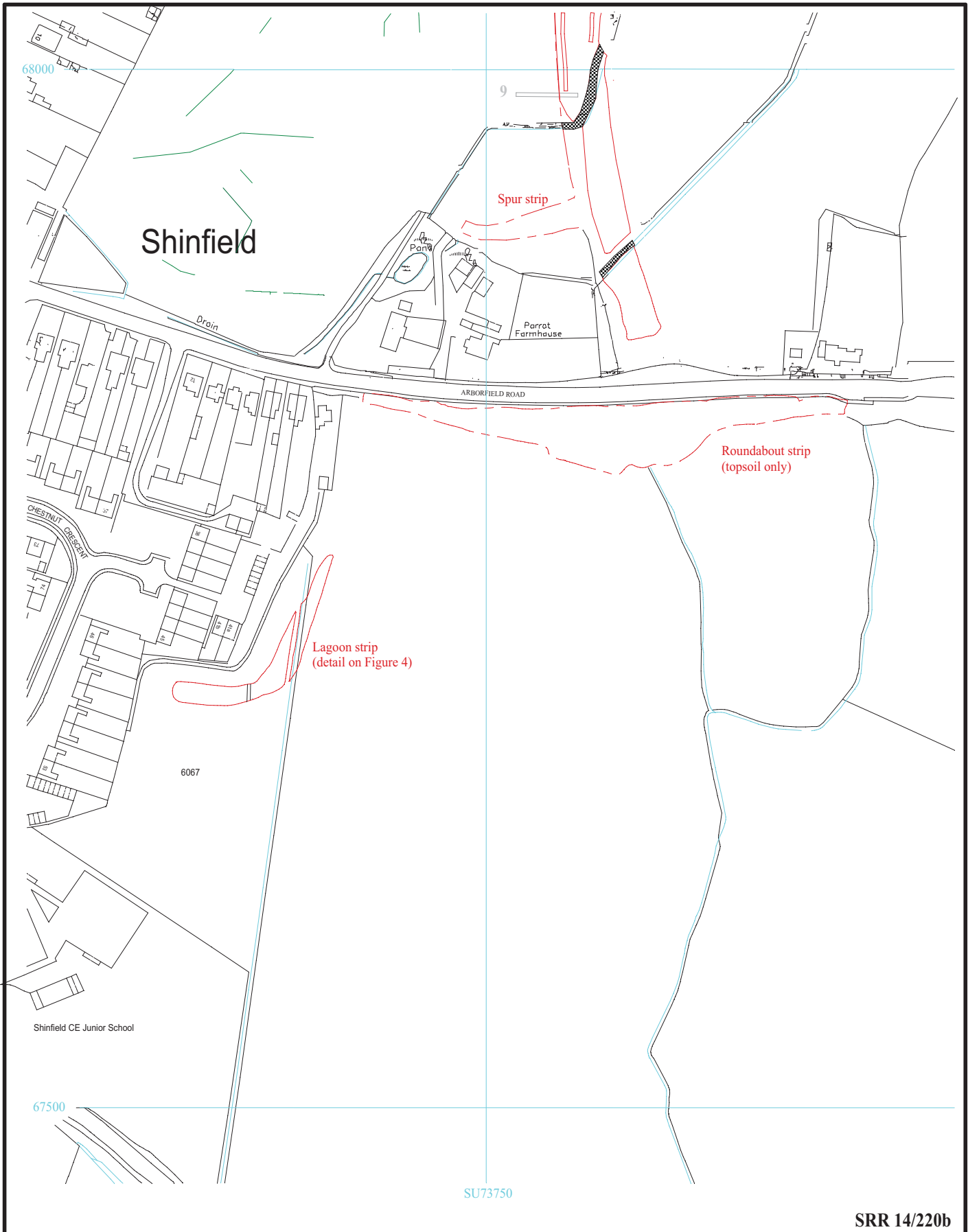
SRR 14/220b

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 2. Detailed location of road.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



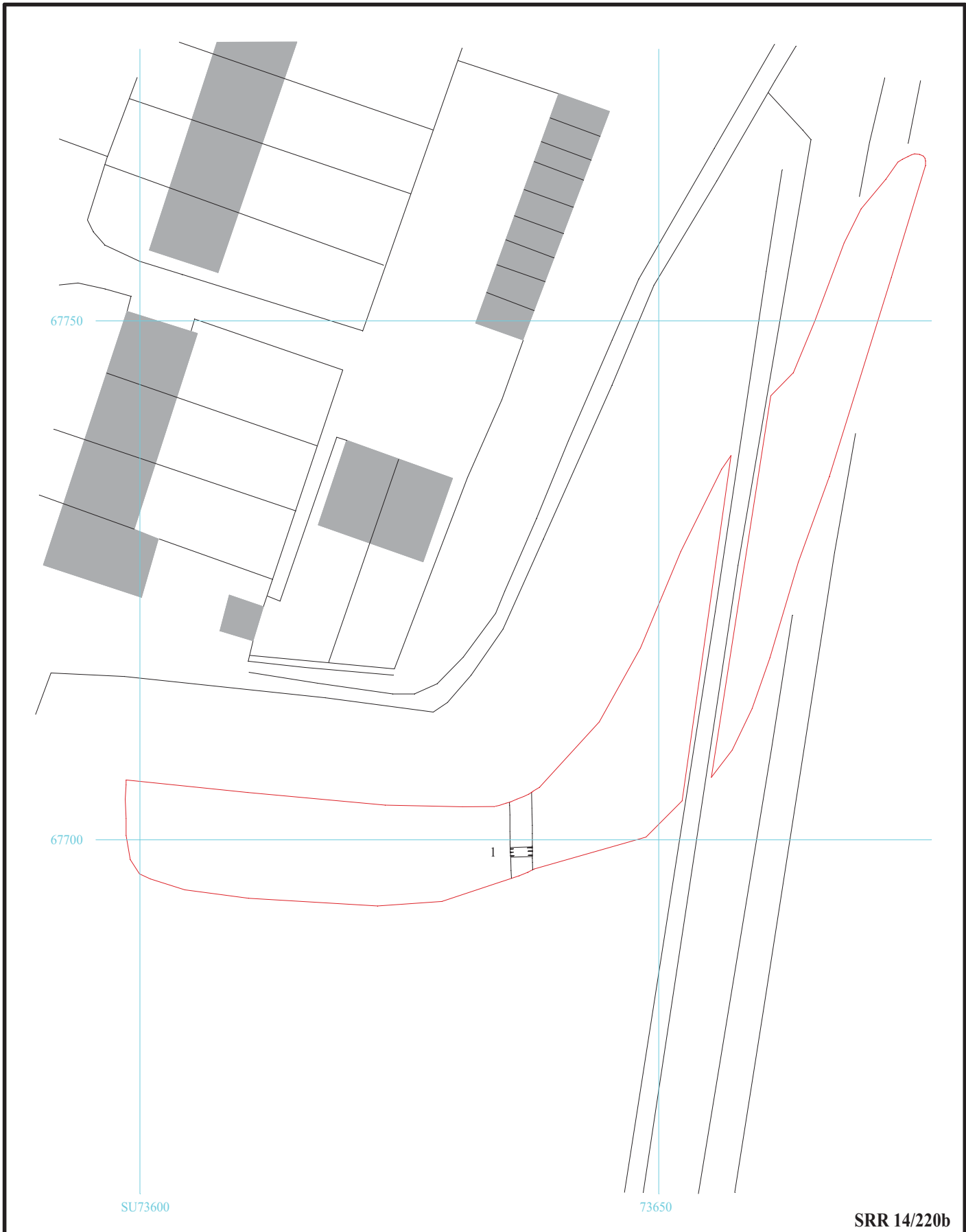
SRR 14/220b

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 3. Location of southern works.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



SRR 14/220b

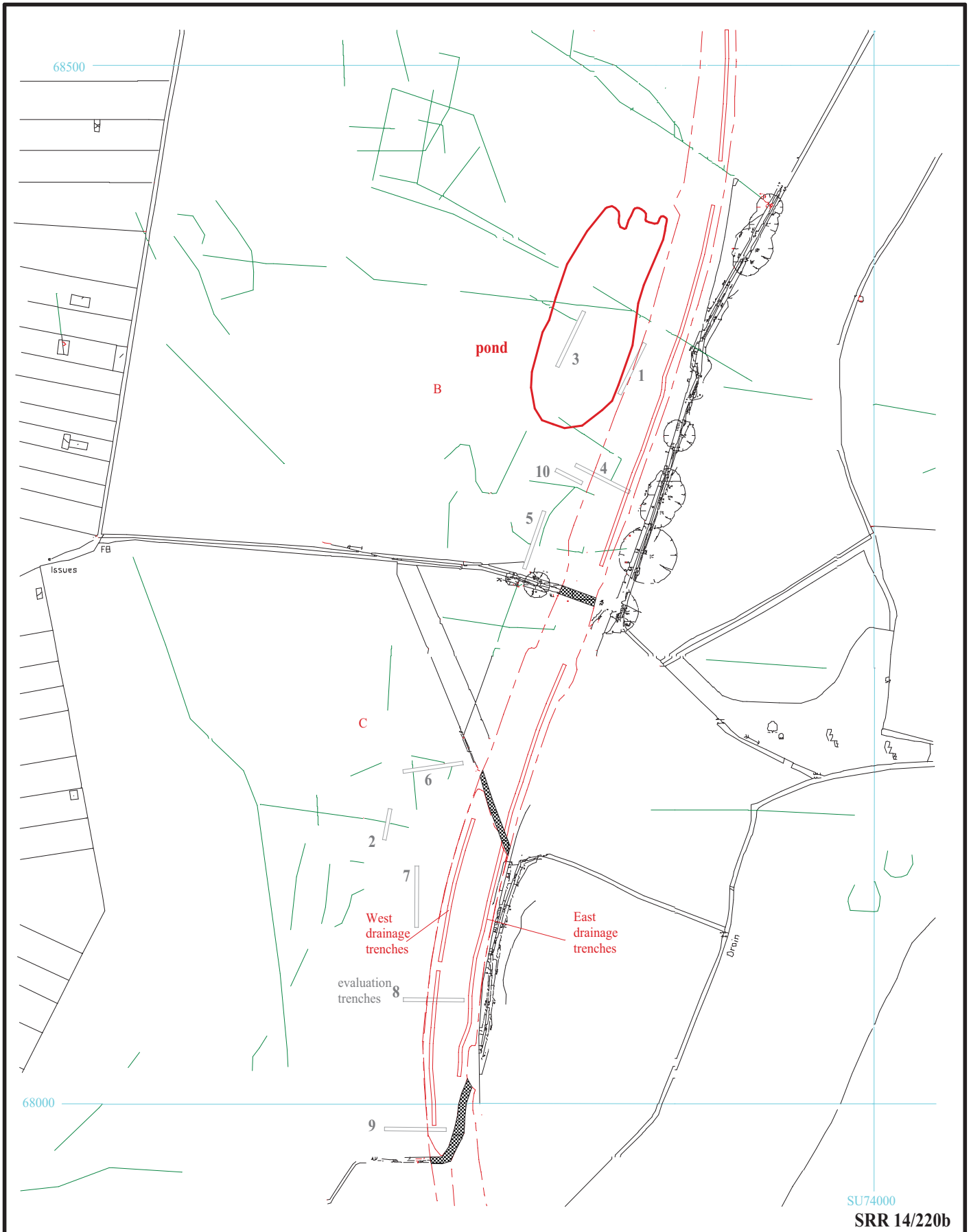


**Shinfield Relief Road,
Shinfield, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 4. Details of lagoon area.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



SU74000
SRR 14/220b

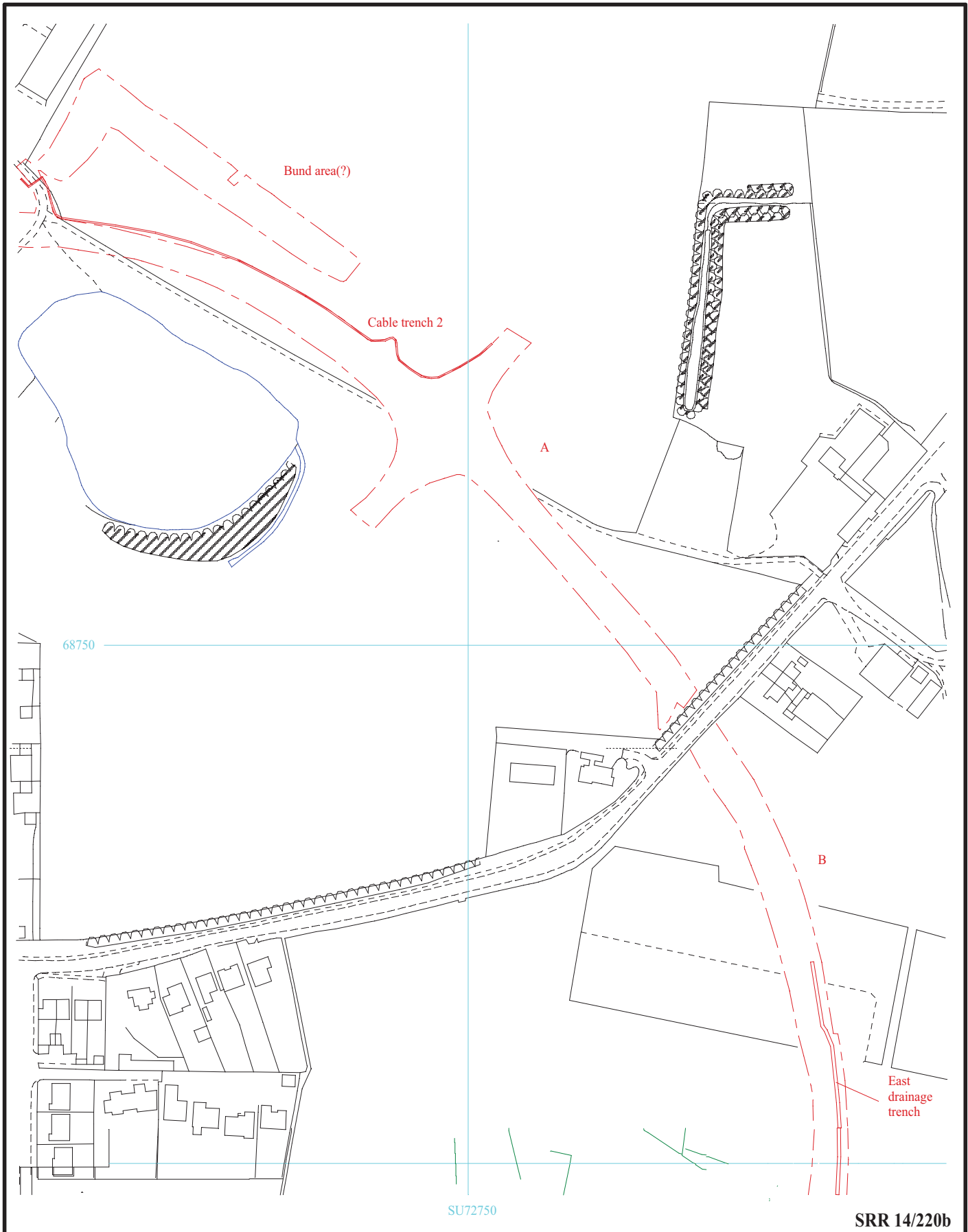


**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 5. Location of road strips and drain channels in Road strip B and C.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



SRR 14/220b

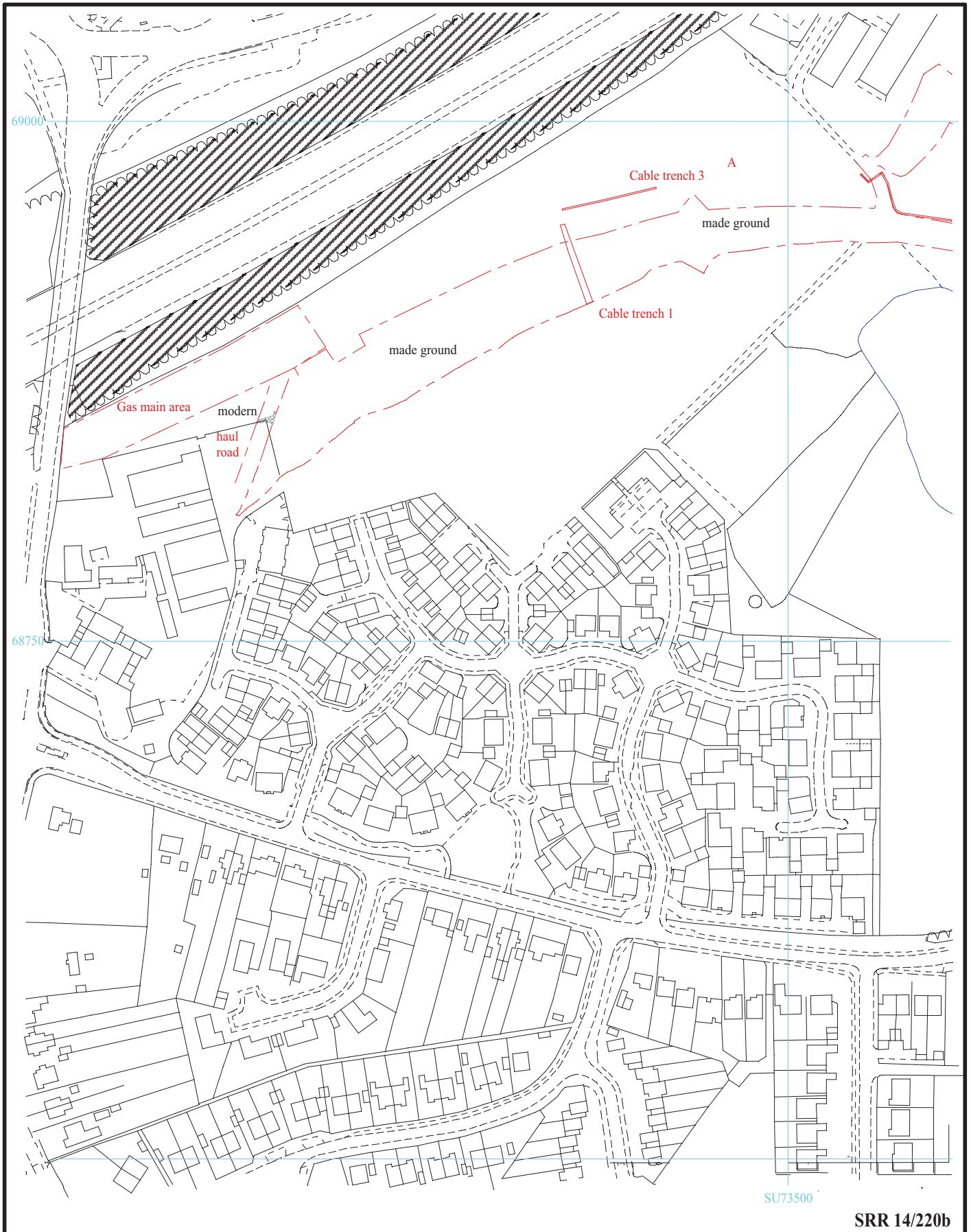


**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 6. Detail of northern stripped area..



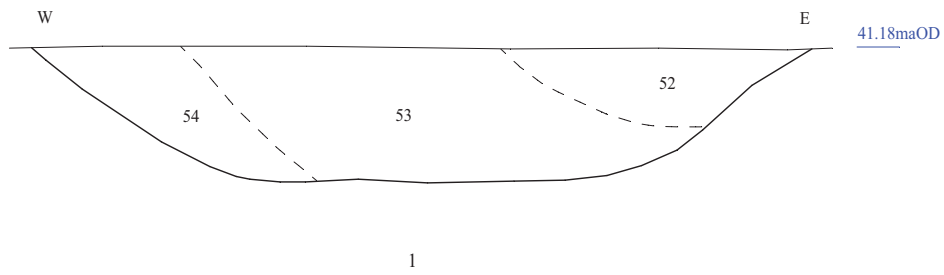
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 7. Detail of the northern section (A).





SRR 14/220b

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 8. Section of ditch in lagoon area.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Lagoon area Ditch 1, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Lagoon area strip, looking north.

SRR 14/220

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Gas main strip, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Cable trench 2 looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

SRR 14/220

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action
Plates 3 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 5. Cable Trench, looking north west.



Plate 6. Cable Trench, looking north east, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

SRR 14/220

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action
Plates 5 - 6.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 7. Western Road Trench, looking north, Scales: 1m, 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 8. Eastern Road Trench, looking north-northwest, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

SRR 14/220

**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action
Plates 7 - 8.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 9. General view of bund area, Area A looking south east



Plate 10. General view of road strip spur, Area C looking east.

SRR 14/220

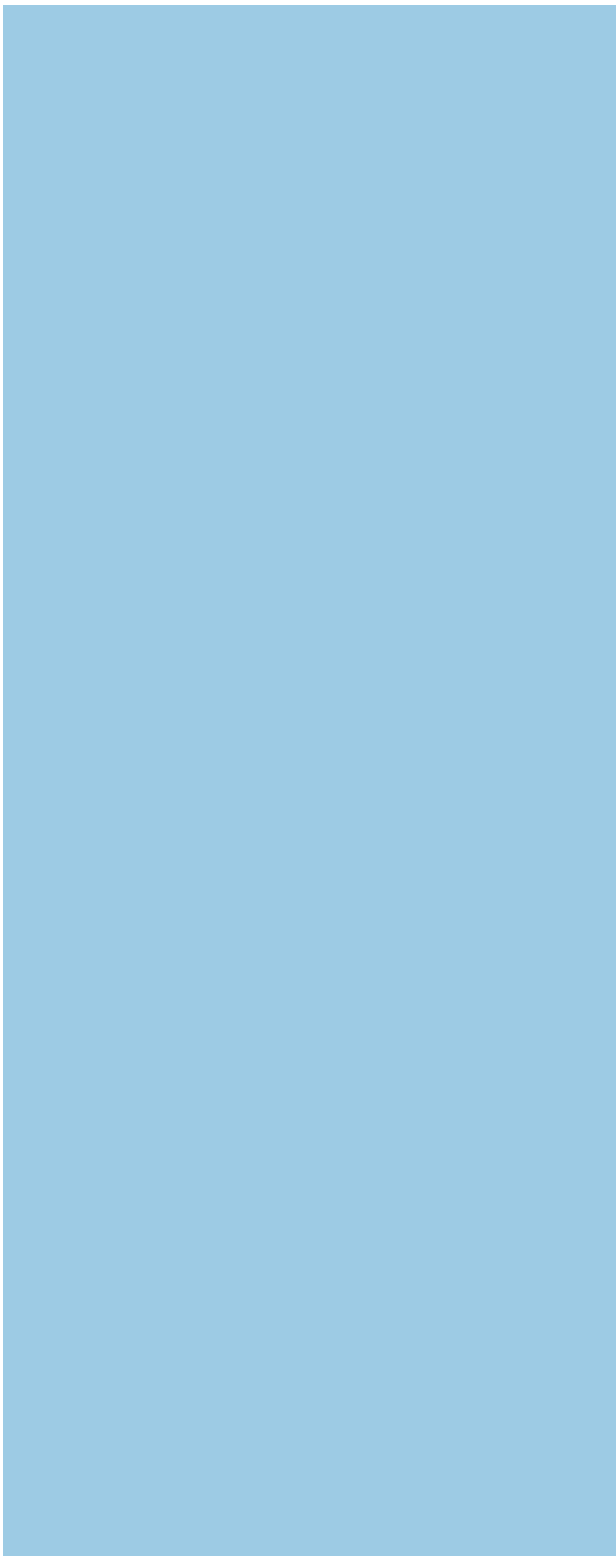
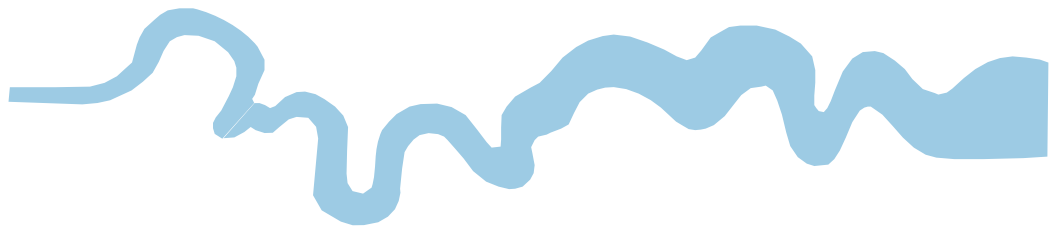
**Shinfield Relief Road, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Recording Action
Plates 9 - 10.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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





**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
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**