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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Viscount Way, Woodley,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Jamers McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock

Site Code: VWW13/202

(SU 7681 7306)

Viscount Way, Woodley, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation for Bloor Homes

by James McNicol-Norbury and
Kyle Beaverstock
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code VWW13/202

February 2016

Summary

Site name: Viscount Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7681 7306

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th November 2015 to 13th January 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: VWW13/202

Area of site: c. 2.1ha

Summary of results: No features or finds of archaeological significance were observed over the course of the evaluation.

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 authority) in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.02.16
	Steve Preston✓ 15.02.16

Viscount Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock

Report 13/202b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Viscount Way, Woodley, Berkshire (SU 76805 73062) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Dominic Jarman on behalf of Bloor Homes Southern, River View House, First Avenue, Newbury Business Park, London Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2PS. Planning permission (F2014/2105) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of new housing on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (20) relating to archaeology requiring an evaluation to take place prior to groundworks. However, groundworks were carried out before the archaeological work was undertaken. To compensate, a number of test pits were excavated retrospectively in locations close to the locations of the original planned trenches.

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 Miss Ellie Leary, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Danielle Milbank on 24th November 2015 and 13th January 2016 and the site code is VWW13/202. 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 authority) in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of central Woodley, west of the River Loddon, south-east of Reading. This former industrial unit is at the western end of Viscount Way, surrounded by residential properties to the south, the Woodley Industrial Estate to the north and east and Loddon Bridge Road to the west (SU 76805 73062) (Fig. 1). The underlying geology is mapped as Third Terrace Gravel (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2013). In summary this potential stems from being a site of relatively large area within a location where there is a moderate range of archaeological finds and sites recorded. Most of the findspots nearby are for prehistoric flintwork, with Palaeolithic handaxes, Mesolithic and Neolithic hafted axes and flints. Other finds include a Bronze Age bronze palstave (axe) and Roman coins.

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:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was initially proposed to dig 20 trenches, each 20m long and 2m wide. The trenches were intended to be at targeted the footprints of the proposed new structures. The topsoil and other overburden were to be removed by a 360-type mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, excavated to an agreed sample fraction and recorded. Due to the changed circumstances of the project, five test pits were excavated retrospectively, as close as possible to the original trenches (Fig. 2). Also, all foundation trenches that were open were investigated.

Results

Five test pits were dug in order to ascertain whether any archaeological deposits would have been present during the original works. These measured approximately 2m long and 1.8m wide and between 2m and 2.2m deep. A complete list of test pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Test Pit 1 (Figs 2, 3 and Pl. 1)

Test Pit 1 was aligned N-S and was 2m long and 2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.5m of a mid grey brown made ground above 0.3m of hardcore overlying 1.2m of a dark yellowish red gravel. No features or finds were observed.

Test Pit 2 (Fig. 2)

Test Pit 2 was aligned W-E and was 2m long and 2.1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.5m of a mid grey brown made ground overlying 0.3m of hardcore over 1.3m of a mid grey brown made ground. No features or finds were observed.

Test Pit 3 (Figs 2 and 3)

Test Pit 3 was aligned SW-NE and was 2m long and 2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.6m of a mid grey brown made ground above 0.3m of hardcore overlying 1.1m of a mid grey brown made ground. No features or finds were observed.

Test Pit 4 (Fig. 2 and Pl. 2)

Test Pit 4 was aligned NW-SE and was 2m long and 2.05m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of a dark brown grey made ground above 0.26m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.3m of hardcore; 0.32m of a mid red brown clayey silt overlying 0.9m of a dark yellowish red gravel. No features or finds were observed.

Test Pit 5 (Fig. 2)

Test Pit 5 was aligned N-S and was 2m long and 2.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.8m of a mid grey brown made ground above 0.3m of hardcore; 0.6m of a pale yellowish grey made ground overlying 0.5m of a pale greyish yellow gravel. No features or finds were observed.

Foundations (Pls 3 and 4)

All the foundations that had already been excavated and were still open were observed. The stratigraphy conformed to that observed in the test pits, and all were dug exclusively through modern made ground, generally 1.0–1.2m deep, occasionally bottoming onto mixed dirty yellowish-red gravel, which appeared to be redeposited. Natural geology was not observed. No features of archaeological interest were noted in the foundation trenches and no finds recovered.

Conclusion

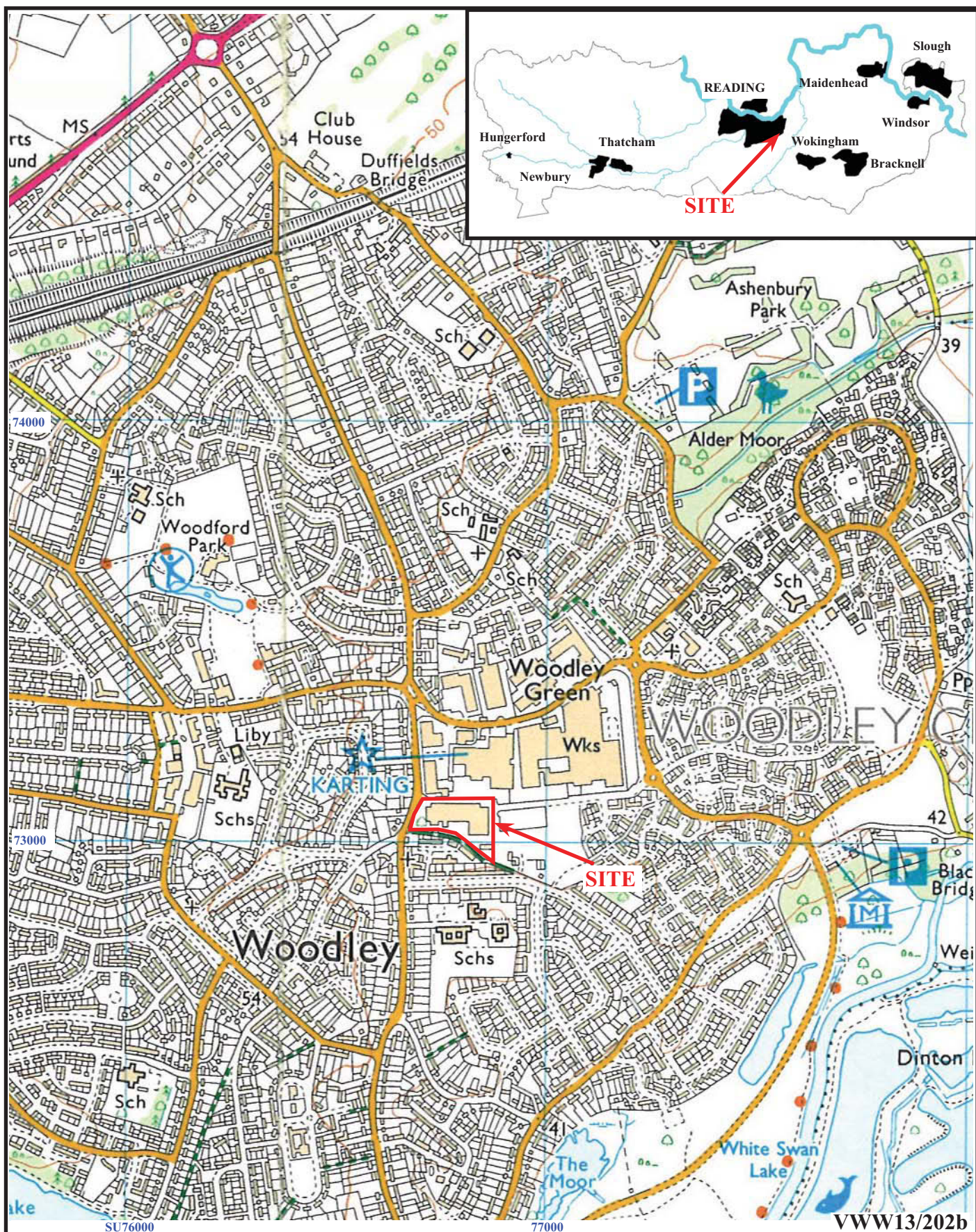
In conclusion, no features or finds of archaeological significance were observed over the course of the evaluation. However, none of the test pits revealed the level of the natural geology, consisting of mainly made ground and re-deposited gravels most likely relating to the earlier industrial buildings. Observations of the new foundation trenches were consistent with the test pits. It is possible therefore that any archaeological deposits present would lie below the level of impact of the current groundworks.

References

- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 'Land at Viscount Way, Woodley, Berkshire: an archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd unpubl rep **13/202**, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Test pit details

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	2.8	1.8	2.0	0-0.5m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.5-0.8m of hardcore overlying 0.8-2m of a dark yellowish red gravel. [Pl. 1]
2	2.0	1.8	2.1	0-0.5m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.5-0.8m of hardcore overlying 0.8-2.1m of a mid grey brown made ground
3	2.0	1.8	2.0	0-0.6m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.6-0.9m of hardcore overlying 0.9-2m of a mid grey brown made ground
4	2.0	1.8	2.05	0-0.27m of a dark brown grey made ground; 0.27- 0.53m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.53-0.83m of hardcore; 0.83-1.15m of mid red brown clayey silt overlying 1.15-2.05m of a yellowish red gravel. [Pl. 2]
5	2.0	1.8	2.2	0-0.8m of a mid grey brown made ground; 0.8-1.1m of hardcore; 1.1-1.7m of a pale yellowish grey made ground overlying 1.7-2.2m of greyish yellow gravel

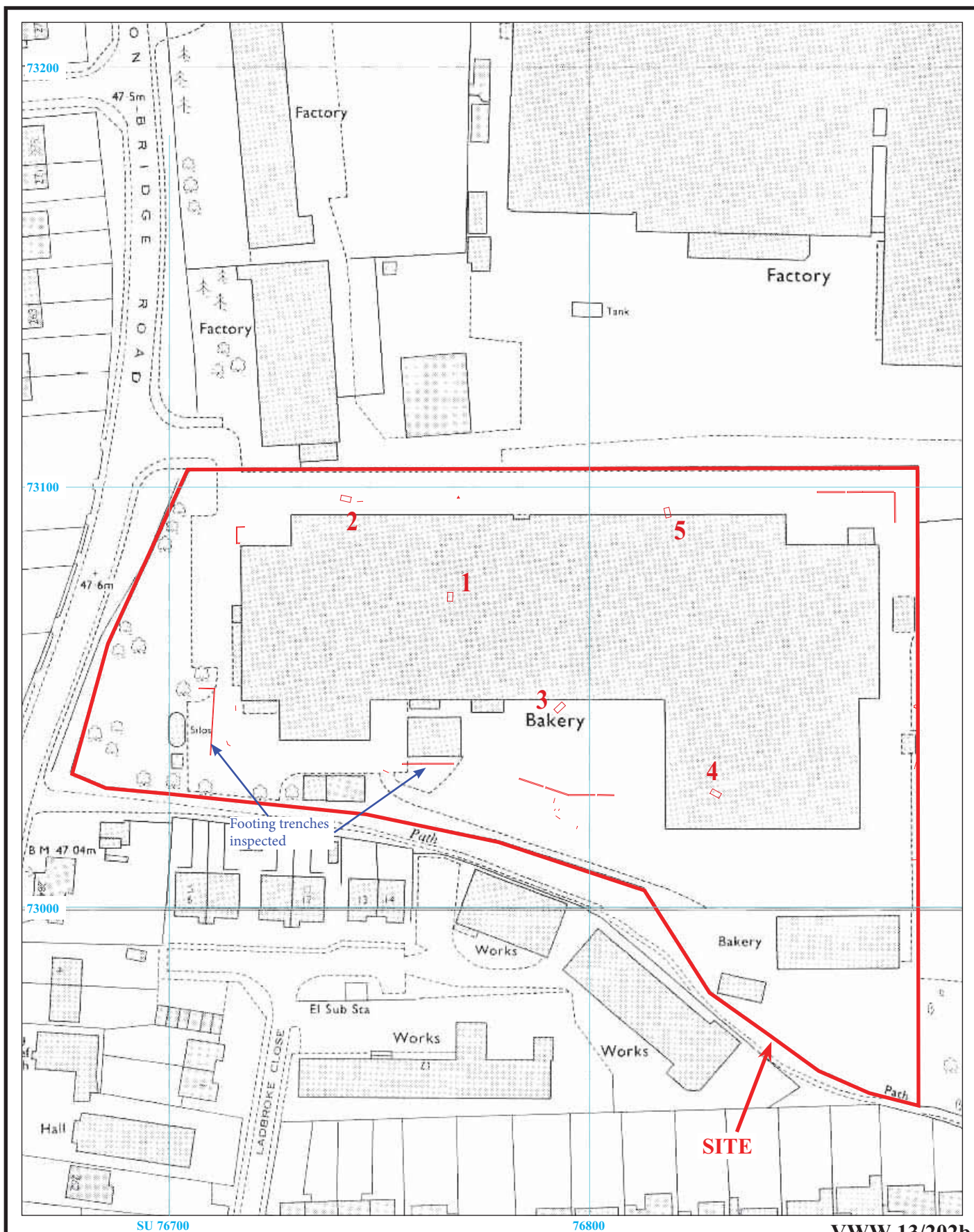


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Figure 1. Location of site within Woodley and Berkshire.

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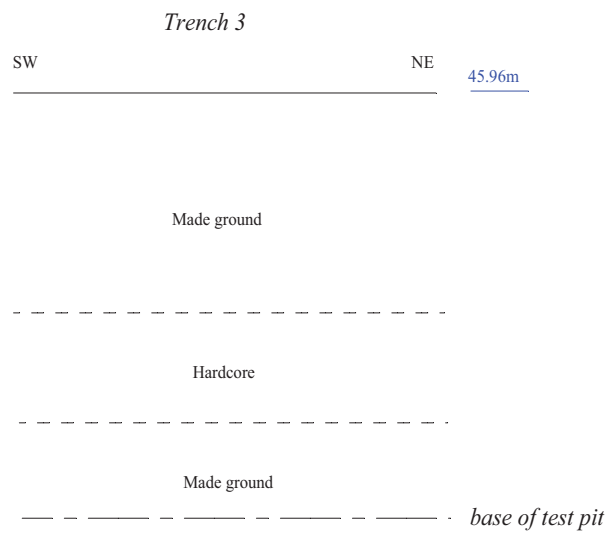
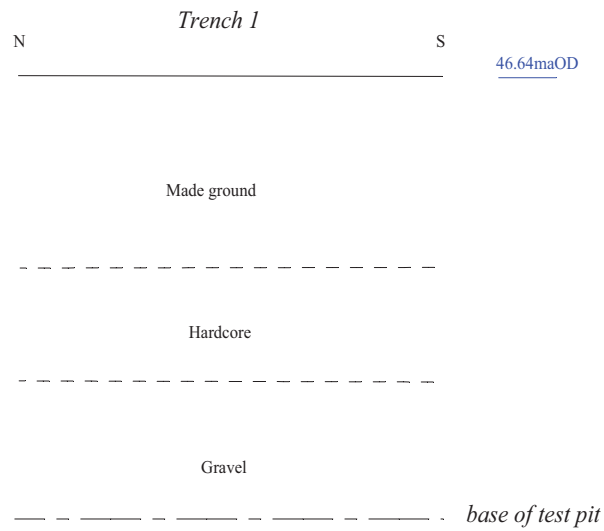


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Viscount Way
showing observed areas.

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Figure 3. Sections.



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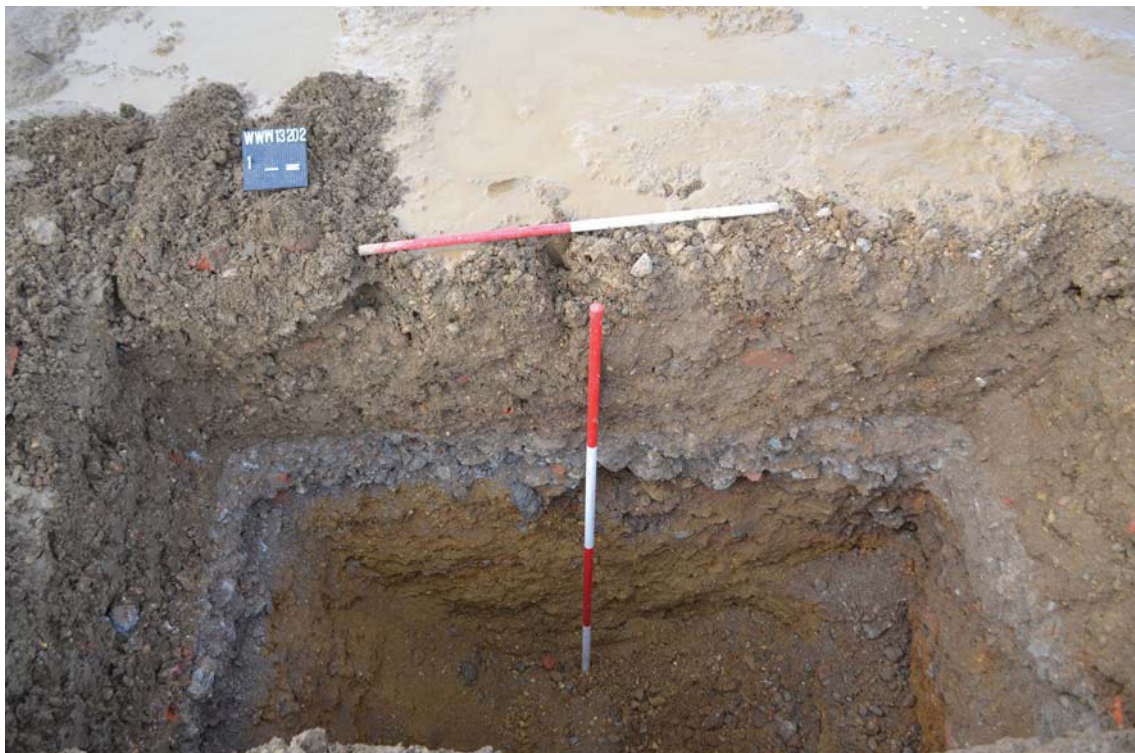


Plate 1. Test pit 1, looking west, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 2m.



Plate 2. Test pit 4, looking south south west, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 2m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Representative section of foundation trench within made ground.



Plate 4. Typical foundation trench.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

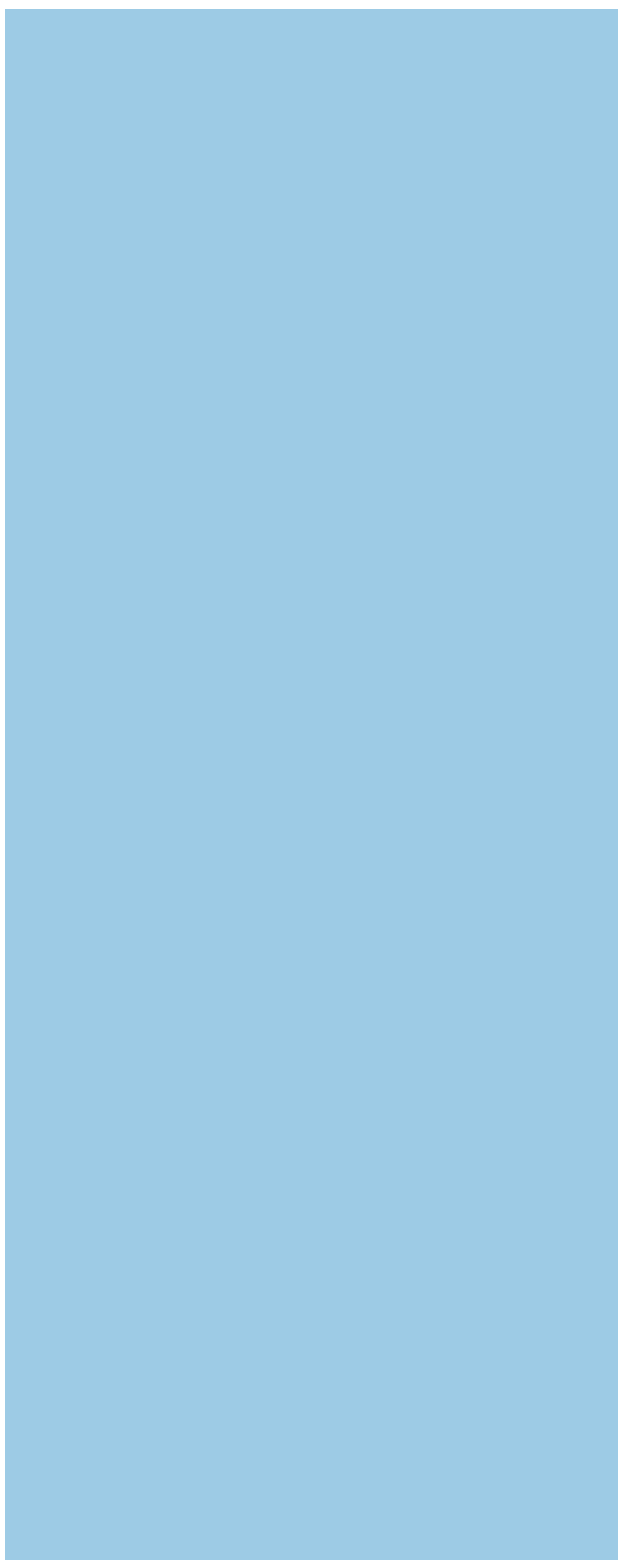
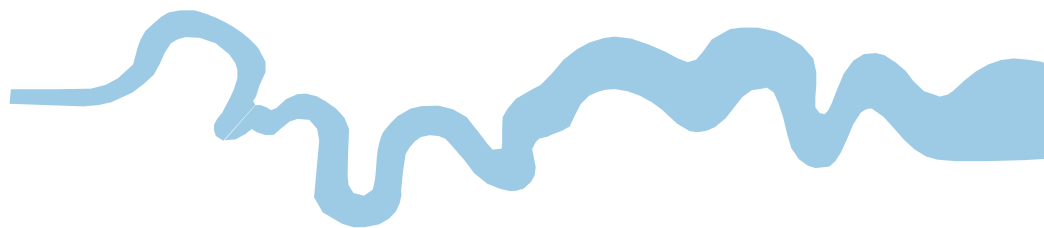
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TIME CHART

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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