

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Coley Park, Coley Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: CPR15/67

(SU 7040 7230)

**Coley Park, Coley Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Taylor Wimpey**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CPR 15/67

June 2016

Summary

Site name: Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7040 7230

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 21st - 24th June 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: CPR 15/67

Area of site: 1.91ha

Summary of results: Two undated linear features (probably the same feature) were found in the northern part of the site. Elsewhere on the site the evaluation revealed large amounts of truncation and built up deposits across the site. No other finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded.

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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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 30.06.16
	Steve Preston ✓ 27.06.16

Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 15/67b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7040 7230) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jason Allan of Taylor Wimpey West London, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9PQ and comprises the second stage of a process to determine the presence/absence, extent, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains which may be liable to be affected by redevelopment of the area.

Planning consent (15/1173/FULL) has been gained from Reading Borough Council to construct new housing on land at Coley Park, subject to an archaeological condition. A previous desk-based assessment was carried out for the development area (Ford 2015) and it is possible that the development area may contain archaeological deposits. In order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to draw up a scheme to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation by means of machine trenching has been requested to establish the extent of possible archaeological remains on the site.

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, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Jesse Coxe between 21st and 24th June 2016 and the site code is CPR 15/67. 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 in a suburb of Reading beyond the south-western edge of the town centre (Fig. 1). The site is comprised of an irregular plot of land consisting of a range of government offices, Tarmacadamed access and grassy areas. The areas to the north and east are occupied by housing, whereas to the south and west there are larger buildings with more open space reflecting the presence of the former parkland. The site lies on the side of the valley of the River Kennet, with the Holy Brook lying just to the south and the Kennet itself (canalized) further south again. The area is located on Reading Beds to the south and what is mapped as 'plateau' gravel to

the north (BGS 2000) though Wymer (1968, fig. 47) suggests that the plateau gravel is Henley Road Gravel and that soliflucted gravel lies on top of the Reading Beds. The site lies at a height of approximately 52m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2015). In summary there are relatively few sites or finds of archaeological interest in the immediately adjacent areas, with just a few finds of prehistoric stone axes and Roman coins recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. However, in general the site lies within the archaeologically rich Thames/Lower Kennet Valley with a wealth of sites and finds from both prehistoric and later periods (Lobb and Rose 1996).

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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

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 collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.

A total of 20 trenches were to be dug at a length of 20m each and between 1.6-2.0m in width targeting areas of the new buildings but avoiding areas of old buildings. The trenches were to be dug using a JCB type machine fitted with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive areas. Any archaeological features identified would be then hand excavated accordingly.

Results

Most of the trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3) and ranged in length from 16.00m to 23.10m and in depth from 0.34m to 1.50m. Trenches 10 and 16 were not dug due to the presence of services and access restrictions. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned SE - NW and was 20.0m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology consisting of sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 19.70m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlying natural geology consisting of sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 5)

Trench 3 was aligned S - N and was 20.0m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.06m of Tarmac, 0.54m hard core and made ground, 0.15m dark grey brown silt sand (possible buried topsoil) and 0.20m mid grey brown silty sand overlying natural geology consisting of sands and gravels. A ditch [1] was identified at the southern end of the trench which was 1.10m wide and 0.36m deep and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (52), from which no finds were recovered. The ditch is likely to be the same feature as that seen in Trench 4 but it is not seen in Trench 2 possibly due to the height difference in the trenches or to truncation.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 6)

Trench 4 was aligned W - E and was 19.60m long and 1.15m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.08m of Tarmac, 0.72m hard core and made ground and 0.25m mid grey brown silty sand overlying natural geology consisting of sands and gravels. A ditch [2] was recorded at the western end of the trench which was aligned W-E before it turned to the south. The ditch measured 0.70m wide and was 0.25m deep and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (53) from which no finds were recovered. The ditch is likely to be the same as ditch 1 in Trench 3.

Trench 5 (Fig 3, Pl. 1)

Trench 5 was aligned SW - NE and was 16.0m long and up to 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of Tarmac, 0.61m made ground and hardcore overlaying up to 0.90m of grey brown silty sands and gravels. Natural geology was not observed and no archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 6 (Fig 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 6 was aligned SE - NW and was 20.0m long and 1.03m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.03m Tarmac, 0.53m hardcore and made ground, 0.22m redeposited natural gravels and 0.25m mid grey brown silty sand and gravels which overlay a deposits of truncated natural. No archaeological deposits were identified although a modern footing was identified at the western end.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned W - E and was 16.62m long and 1.13m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.04m of Tarmac, 0.63m hardcore and made ground, 0.13m dark brown silty sand and 0.15m grey brown silty sand overlaying disturbed natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned W - E and was 18.0m long and up to 1.19m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of topsoil, 0.22m grey brown gravels, 0.34m made ground and 0.25m mid grey brown silty sand overlaying natural geology. At the eastern end of the trench, natural geology was 0.60m below ground level. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3)

Trench 9 was aligned SW - NE and was 18.0m long and 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.02m grass, over 0.09m of concrete slabs, 0.21m made ground and 0.13m grey brown silty sand overlaying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 10 (Fig. 3)

Trench 10 was not dug due to live services in the area.

Trench 11 (Fig 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 11 was aligned SW - NE and was 18.0m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m topsoil and up to 0.49m subsoil overlaying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 12 (Fig. 3)

Trench 12 was aligned SW - NE and was 19.60m long and 1.03m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m Tarmac, 0.72m hardcore and made ground, 0.16m dark grey sandy clay overlaying truncated natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 13 (Fig. 3)

Trench 13 was aligned SE - NW and was 19.30m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m topsoil and 0.25m subsoil overlaying natural geology. Modern concrete foundations were identified at the northern end of the trench and no archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3)

Trench 14 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.50m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m topsoil and 0.31m subsoil overlaying natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified but a modern wall was revealed at the southern end.

Trench 15 (Fig. 3)

Trench 15 was aligned SW - NE and was 22.70m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.09m topsoil and 0.22m subsoil overlaying natural sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 16 (Fig. 3)

Trench 16 could not be dug due to lack of safe working space in its intended location

Trench 17 (Fig. 3)

Trench 17 was aligned SW - NE and was 17.80m long and 0.74m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.36m of subsoil overlaying natural geology. At the northern end of the trench a number of modern footings and buried walls (possibly demolished outbuildings) were identified which disturbed the natural geology in this location. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 18 (Fig. 3)

Trench 18 was aligned S - N and was 23.10m long and 0.88m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.04m Tarmac, 0.24m hardcore and 0.38m of grey brown silty sand and gravels overlaying natural sands. The centre of the trench was heavily truncated by the presence of concrete footings and old services. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 19 (Fig. 3, Pl. 4)

Trench 19 was aligned SW - NE and was 19.40m long and 0.34m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.06m topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlaying natural sands and gravels. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 20 (Fig. 3)

Trench 20 was aligned SW - NE and was 18.80m long and up to 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m Tarmac and 0.28m hardcore and made ground at the western end overlying natural geology. At 5.5m from the western end a truncation was seen that disturbed the natural geology to the end of the trench which was revealed to be 1.10m deep. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Finds

No finds were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed the presence of a linear feature in the northern part of the site, however no datable material was recovered from the excavated slots. It is likely that the presence of this feature is restricted to the immediate area where found as adjacent areas appear to have been truncated. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were recorded for elsewhere on the site where further areas of truncation with made ground directly overlying natural geology was observed. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

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- Ford, S, 2015, 'Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **15/67**, Reading
- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Salisbury
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Wymer, J, 1968, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain*, London

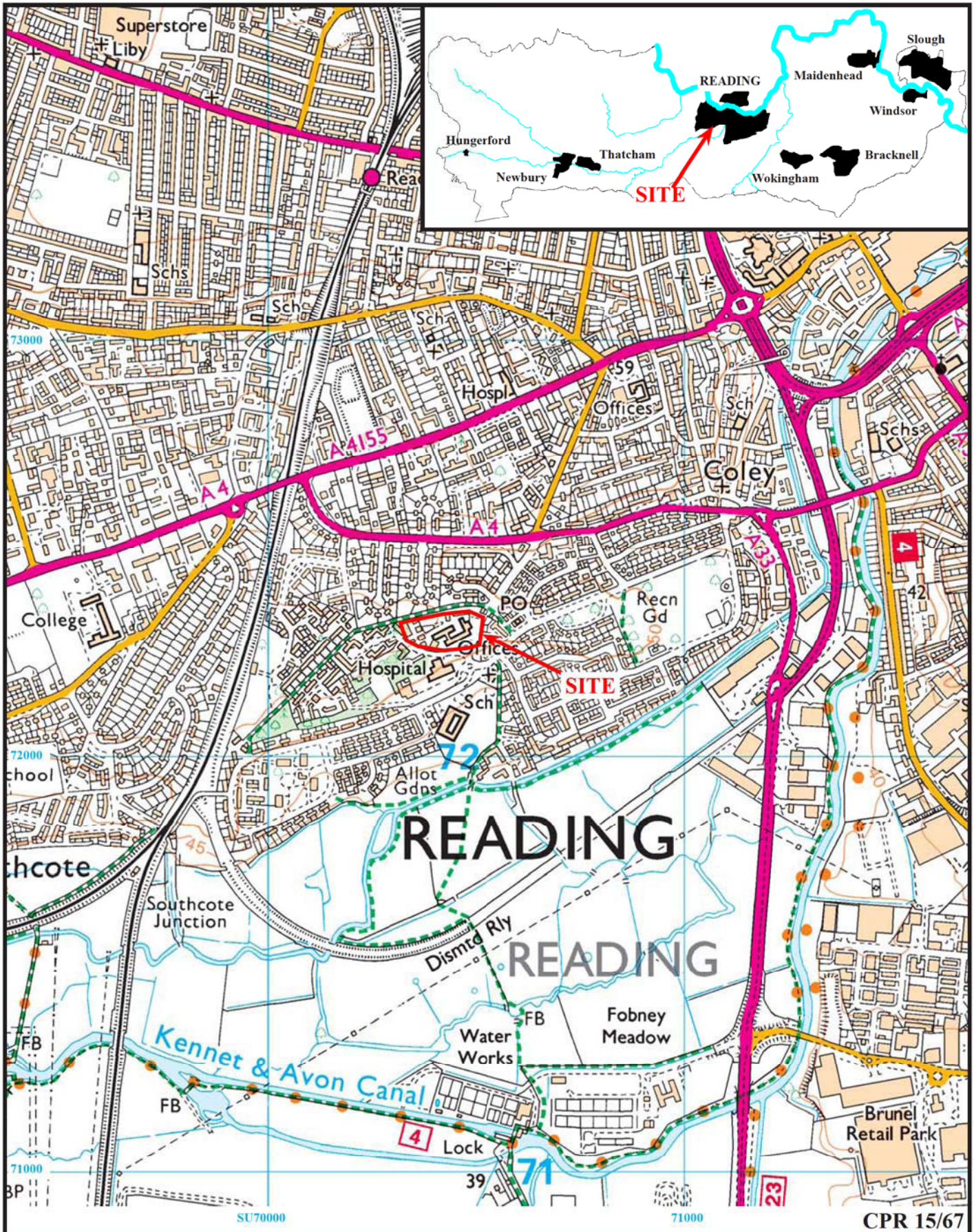
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S, W, SE or SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.0	1.6	0.40	0-0.10m topsoil, 0.10-0.35m subsoil, 0.35m+ natural geology.
2	19.7	1.6	0.49	0-0.15m topsoil, 0.15-0.40m subsoil, 0.40m+ natural geology.
3	19.80	1.6	1.10	0-0.06m Tarmac, 0.06-0.60m hardcore and madeground, 0.60-0.75m dark grey brown silty sand, 0.75-0.95m mid grey brown silty sand, 0.95m+ natural geology. Ditch 1 [Pl. 5]
4	19.60	1.6	1.15	0-0.8m Tarmac, .08-0.80m hardcore and madeground, 0.80-1.05m mid grey brown silty sand, 1.05m+ natural geology. Ditch 2, [Pl. 6]
5	16.00	1.6	1.50	0-0.07m Tarmac, 0.07-0.68m hardcore and madeground, 0.68-1.50m mid grey brown silty sand and gravels. Natural not seen [Pl. 1]
6	20.00	1.6	1.03	0-0.03m Tarmac, 0.03-0.56m hardcore and madeground, 0.56-0.78m redeposited natural geology, 0.78-1.03m grey brown silty sand, 1.03m truncated natural [Pl. 2]
7	16.62	1.6	1.13	0-0.04m Tarmac, 0.04-0.67m hardcore and madeground, 0.67-0.80m dark grey brown silty sand, 0.80-0.95m mid grey brown silty sand, 0.95m+ natural geology
8	18.0	1.6	1.19	0-0.11m topsoil, 0.11-0.33m grey brown gravels, 0.33-0.67m made ground, 0.67-0.92m mid grey brown silty sand, 0.92m+ natural geology
9	18.0	1.6	0.53	0-0.02m grass, 0.02-0.11m paving slabs, 0.11-0.30m made ground, 0.30-0.43m mid grey brown silty sand, 0.43m+ natural geology
10	Not Dug			
11	18.00	1.6	0.62	0-0.15m topsoil, 0.15-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ natural geology [Pl. 3]
12	19.60	1.6	1.03	0-0.15m Tarmac, 0.15-0.87m madeground, 0.87-1.03m dark grey silty clay, 1.03m+ natural geology
13	19.30	1.6	0.55	0-0.10m topsoil, 0.10-0.35m subsoil, 0.35m+ natural geology
14	21.50	1.6	0.50	0-0.11m topsoil, 0.11-0.42m subsoil, 0.42m+ natural geology
15	22.70	1.6	0.46	0-0.09m topsoil, 0.09-0.31m subsoil, 0.31m+ natural geology.
16	Not Dug			
17	18.00	1.6	0.53	0-0.17m topsoil, 0.17-0.53m subsoil, 0.53m+ natural geology
18	23.10	1.6	0.88	0-0.04m Tarmac, 0.04-0.28m hardcore, 0.28-0.66m mid grey brown silty sand, 0.66m+ natural sands
19	19.40	1.6	0.34	0-0.06m topsoil, 0.06-0.20m subsoil, 0.20m+ natural geology [Pl. 4]
20	18.80	1.6	0.40-1.50	0-0.12m Tarmac, 0.12-0.40m hardcore, 0.40m natural geology (0.4-1.50m modern truncation)

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Ditch	Undated	None
4	2	53	Ditch	Undated	None

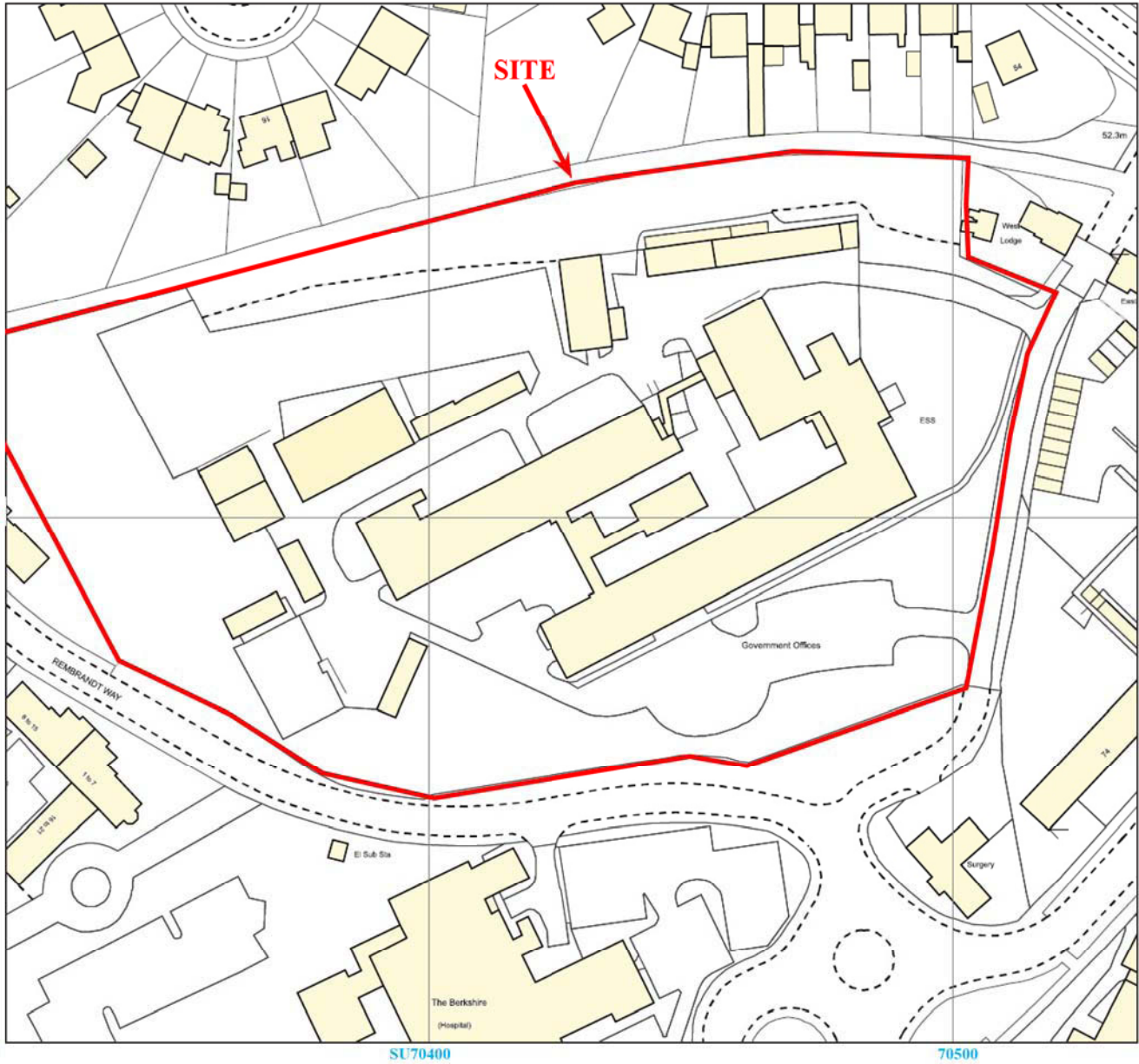


**Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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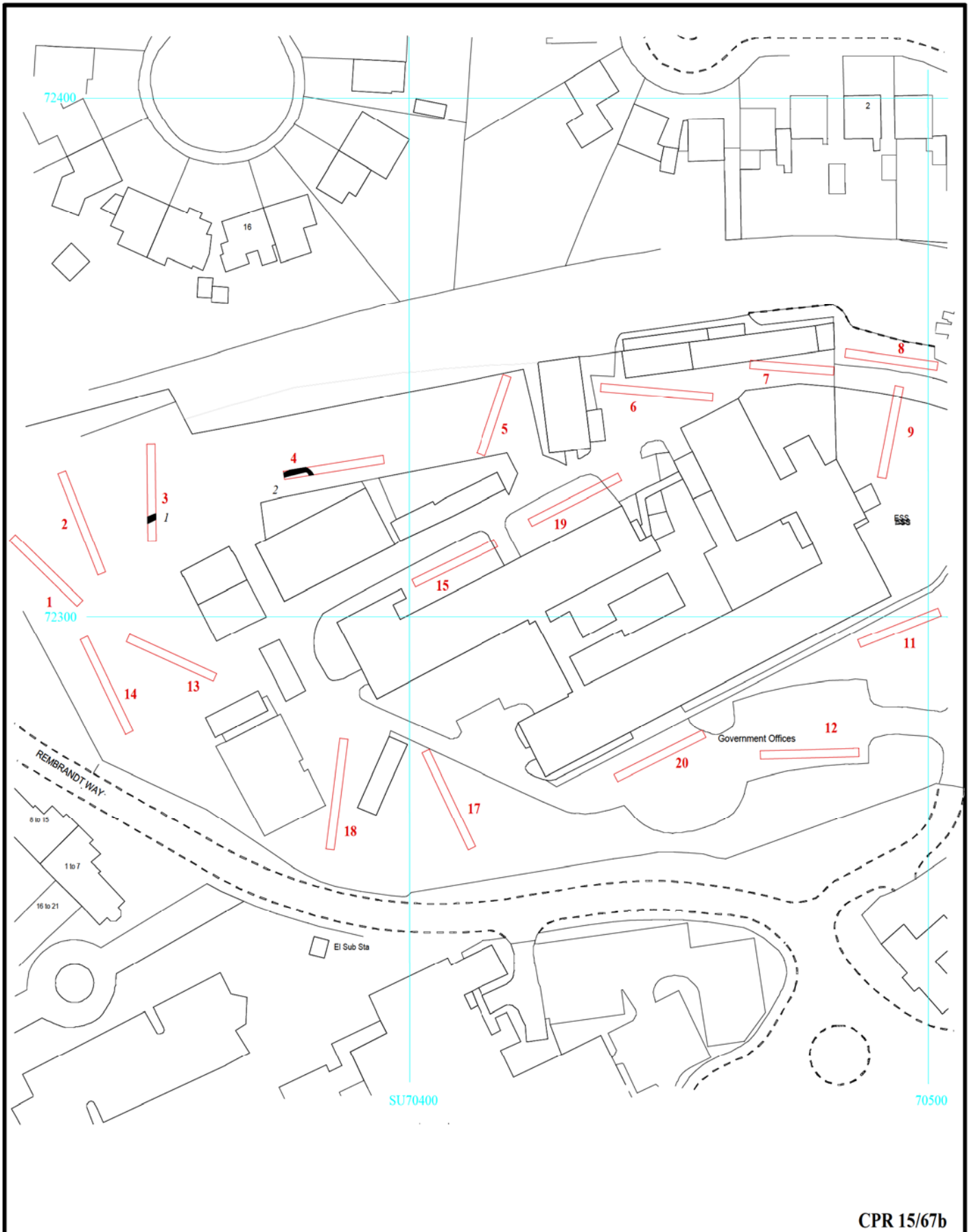
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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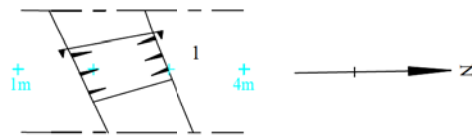
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Figure 3. Location of trenches and features.

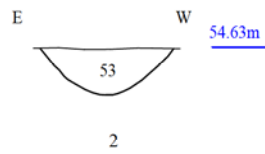
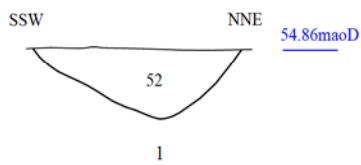
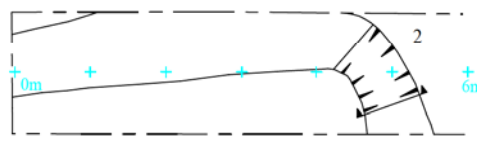


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Trench 3



Trench 4



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Figure 4. Detail of plans and sections.

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Plate 1. Trench 5, looking south west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 6, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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**Coley Park, Coley Avenue, Reading,
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 11, looking south west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 19, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 3, ditch 1, looking north west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 4, ditch 2, looking south, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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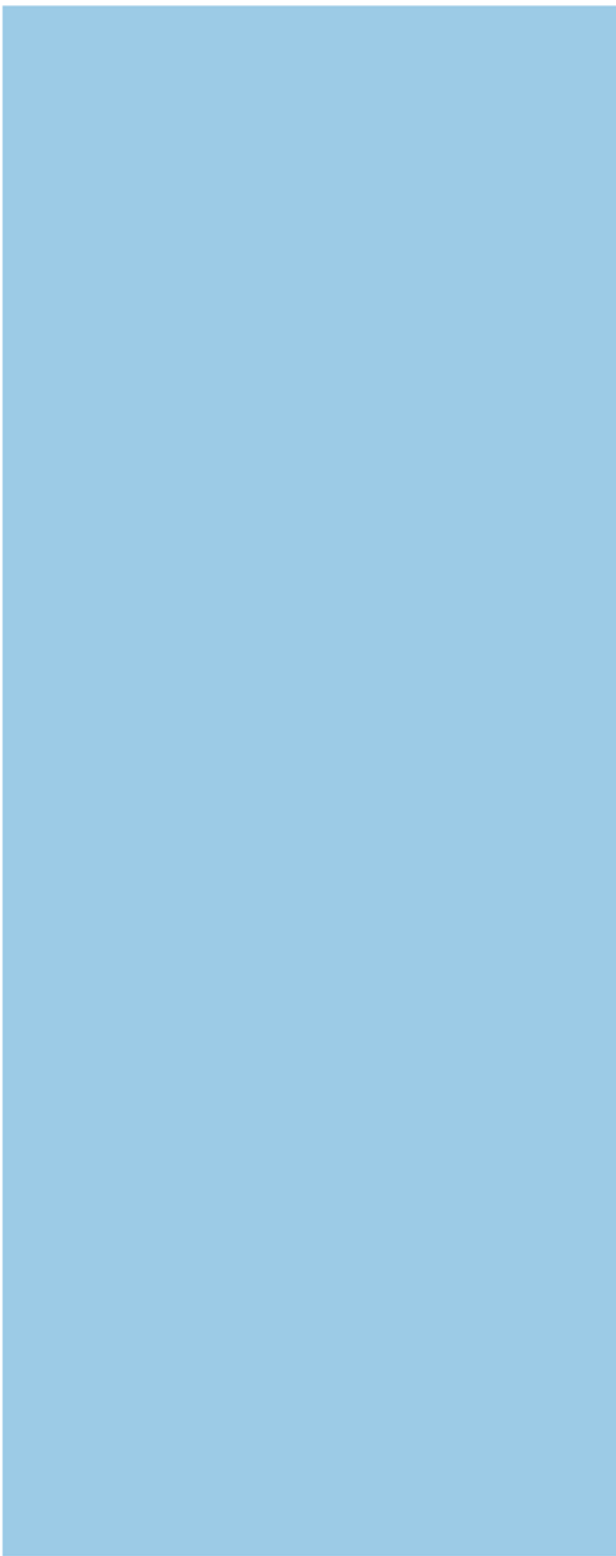
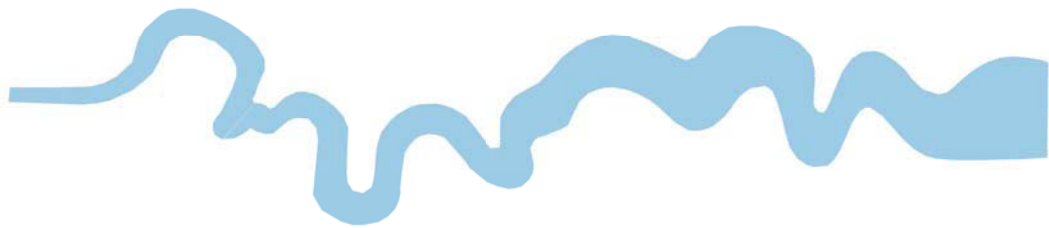
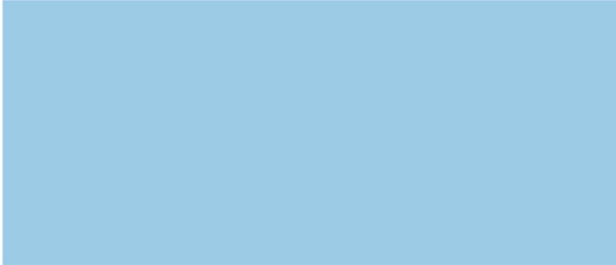
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Plates 5 - 6.

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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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