

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way,
Woodley, Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Ellen McManus-Fry and Steve Ford

Site Code: SFW16/145

(SU 7819 7475)

**Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley,
Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Antler Homes Plc

by Ellen McManus-Fry and Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 16/145

October 2016

Summary

Site name: Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7819 7375

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 14th October 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: SFW16/145

Area of site: c. 1.1ha

Summary of results: The majority of the site had been significantly disturbed by quarrying and landfill activity. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed in undisturbed areas of the site. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

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

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Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 16/145

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7819 7375) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Whiting, Antler Homes Plc, Portland House, Park Street, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5AQ.

Planning permission has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council (O/2012/1863) for the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of 27 new residential dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and open space. The work is subject to a condition (37) relating to archaeology which requires that a programme of archaeological investigation be carried out ahead of the development due to the possibility of damage to or destruction of archaeological deposits.

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 for Berkshire Archaeology, advising the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Ellen McManus-Fry on 14th October 2016 and the site code is SFW16/145. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the area of Woodley on the eastern edge of Reading, and lies on the western bank of the Old River, a side channel of the River Loddon (Fig. 1). The site comprises a flat parcel of land, on which currently stand two residential buildings (Fig. 2), with other buildings having been demolished. Parts of the site have previously been used for gravel quarrying and subsequently landfilled. The site lies at a height of c.35m aOD and the underlying geology is described as infilled ground in an area of Second Terrace Deposits (sand and gravel) (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Loddon Valley with a range of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area in general (Ford 1997, Gates 1975). Three excavations have taken place relatively close to the site at Whistley Green to the east where a Mesolithic site (Harding and Richards 1993) and a Roman site (Barnes and Hawkes, 1993) have been excavated in advance of gravel extraction. Iron Age deposits have also been observed during gravel extraction at Lea Farm to the south-east of the site (Manning and Moore 2011). Although the site lies adjacent to a former gravel quarry, areas of unquarried land, formerly occupied by the processing plant, have been evaluated, though the results were negative (Lewis 2011) (Fig. 3).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development, and to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy if necessary.

Six trenches, each 20m long and 1.6-2m wide were proposed. The trenches were to be excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, supervised by an archaeologist, and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Any exposed features were to be hand-cleaned and appropriately excavated and recorded. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

All six trenches were dug, but four of the six (trenches 3-6) were shorter and their locations altered slightly due to various constraints and the nature of the site. (Fig. 3). The length of the trenches ranged from 5.5m to 21.6m depths varied from 0.4m to 1.8m: all were 2m wide. 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 aligned E-W and was 19.4m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil and 0.25m mid grey-brown sandy silt subsoil overlying a light yellow brown gravel and sand natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2 (Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned roughly N-S and was 21.6m long and 0.4m deep. A 1.1m deep test pit was dug at the northern end of the trench to confirm the stratigraphic sequence. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil overlying a light yellow brown gravel and sand natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were present.

Trench3 (Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW-NE and was 8.7m long and a maximum of 1.8m deep at the north-eastern end. The south-western end of the trench was 0.5m deep and the stratigraphy consisted entirely of made ground with building rubble and a possible modern brick wall footing. The stratigraphy in the north-eastern end consisted of 0.4m of made ground containing brick, tile, plastic etc., overlying 0.5m of mid grey-brown silty clay, overlying 0.7m of dark black-brown silty clay with brick rubble, above 0.2m of light yellow sand, which lay above the natural gravel geology. Due to the disturbance and truncation visible in this trench it was not excavated to its full intended length.

Trench 4 (Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned roughly N-S and was 9.5m long and 1.1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of gravel/topsoil yard surface , over 0.2m of light yellow sand, which overlay 0.14m of dark red-brown sandy silty clay, overlying 0.24m of mid grey silty clay with gravel, which lay above the natural gravel geology. Due to the presence of several services crossing the trench it could not be dug to its full length or full depth, The northern part of the trench was excavated using a smaller (1m-wide) bucket to expose natural geology.

Trench 5 (Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was was 7.3m long and 1.0m deep but with an angled plan. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.48m of made ground containing brick, tile, wood, metal and plastic, overlying 0.44m of dark orange brown silty clay, which overlay the light yellow brown gravel natural geology. Due to the presence of concrete obstructions the trench could not be dug to its full extent.

Trench 6 (Pl. 6)

Trench 6 was aligned N-S and was 5.5m long and 1.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 1.5m of made ground, comprising 0.2m of brick and building rubble, above 0.25m of dark black-brown gravel and building

rubble, overlying 0.25m of light grey brown gravel and silty clay, over 0.2m of mid-orange gravel and silty sandy clay, above 0.6m dark black-brown clay which overlay grey-orange gravel natural geology. In the north-eastern corner of the trench the natural geology appeared to be visible 0.4m above the base of the trench, suggesting that it was heavily truncated along the rest of the trench and that the edge of the landfill/extraction area had been found.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed that more of the site had been disturbed, gravel extracted and landfilled than previously thought likely. Trenches 1 and 2 in the north of the site had undergone limited disturbance and only shallow layers of topsoil and subsoil lay above the natural geology but no finds or deposits of archaeological interest were found. Similarly Trench 5 revealed what was thought to be in-situ gravel but beneath a layer of made ground. Trenches 3 and 6, however revealed deep made ground and would appear to have been filled after gravel extraction. Trench 4 was partly disturbed by a number of services along with shallow made ground overlying in-situ gravel. It is considered therefore that much of the site has no archaeological potential due to previous mineral extraction with other areas having low potential due to an absence of finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

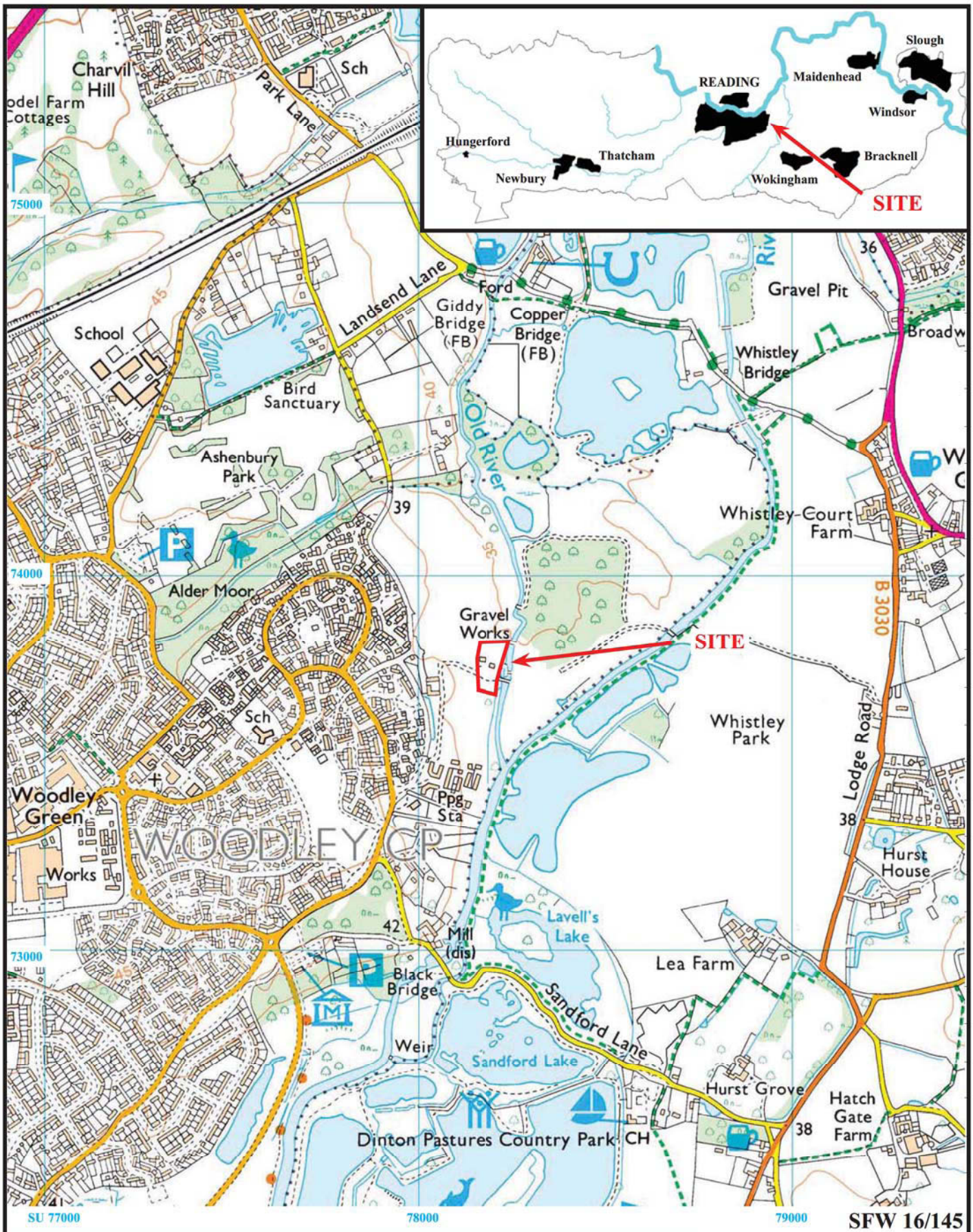
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	19.4	2.0	0.5	0-0.1m topsoil, 0.1-0.25m mid grey-brown sandy silt subsoil, 0.25m+ light yellow brown gravel and sand natural geology. [PI. 1]
2	21.6	2.0	0.4	0-0.2m topsoil, 0.2m+ light yellow brown gravel and sand natural geology. [PI. 2]
3	8.7	2.0	1.8	0-0.4m made ground containing brick, tile, plastic etc., 0.4-0.9m mid grey-brown silty clay, 0.9-1.6 dark black-brown silty clay with brick rubble, 1.6-1.8 light yellow sand, 1.8m+ natural gravel geology. [PI. 3]
4	9.5	1.0-2.0	1.1	0-0.4m gravel/soil yard surface, 0.4-0.6m light yellow sand, 0.6-0.74m of dark red-brown sandy silty clay, 0.74-0.98m mid grey silty clay with gravel in test pit 0.98m+ natural gravel geology. [PI. 4] Trench abandoned due to services
5	7.3	2.0	1.0	0-0.48m made ground containing brick, tile, wood, metal and plastic, 0.48-0.92m dark orange brown silty clay, 0.92m+ light yellow brown gravel natural [PI. 5]
6	5.5	2.0	1.5	0-0.2m brick and building rubble, 0.2-0.45m dark black-brown gravel and building rubble, 0.45-0.7m light grey brown gravel and silty clay, 0.7-0.9m mid-orange gravel and silty sandy clay, 0.9-1.5m dark black-brown clay, 1.5m+ grey-orange gravel natural geology [PI. 6]



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Figure 1. Location of site within Woodley and Berkshire.

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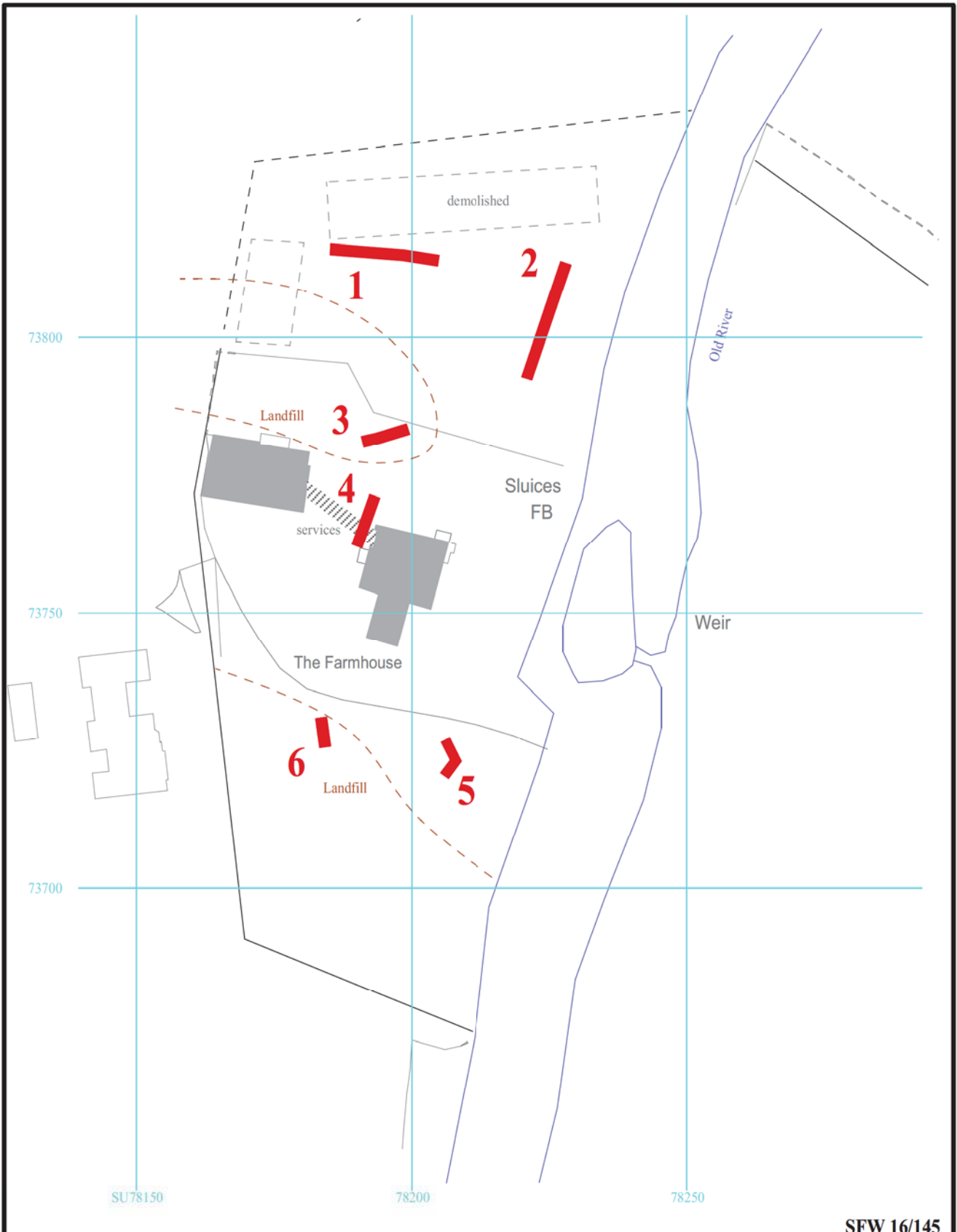


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Mohawk Way.

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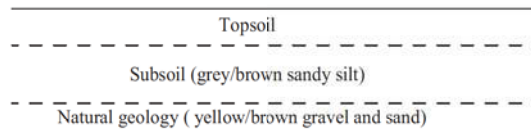
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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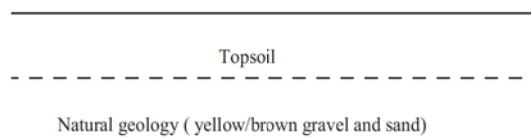
Trench 1

37.2m aOD



Trench 2

36.4m



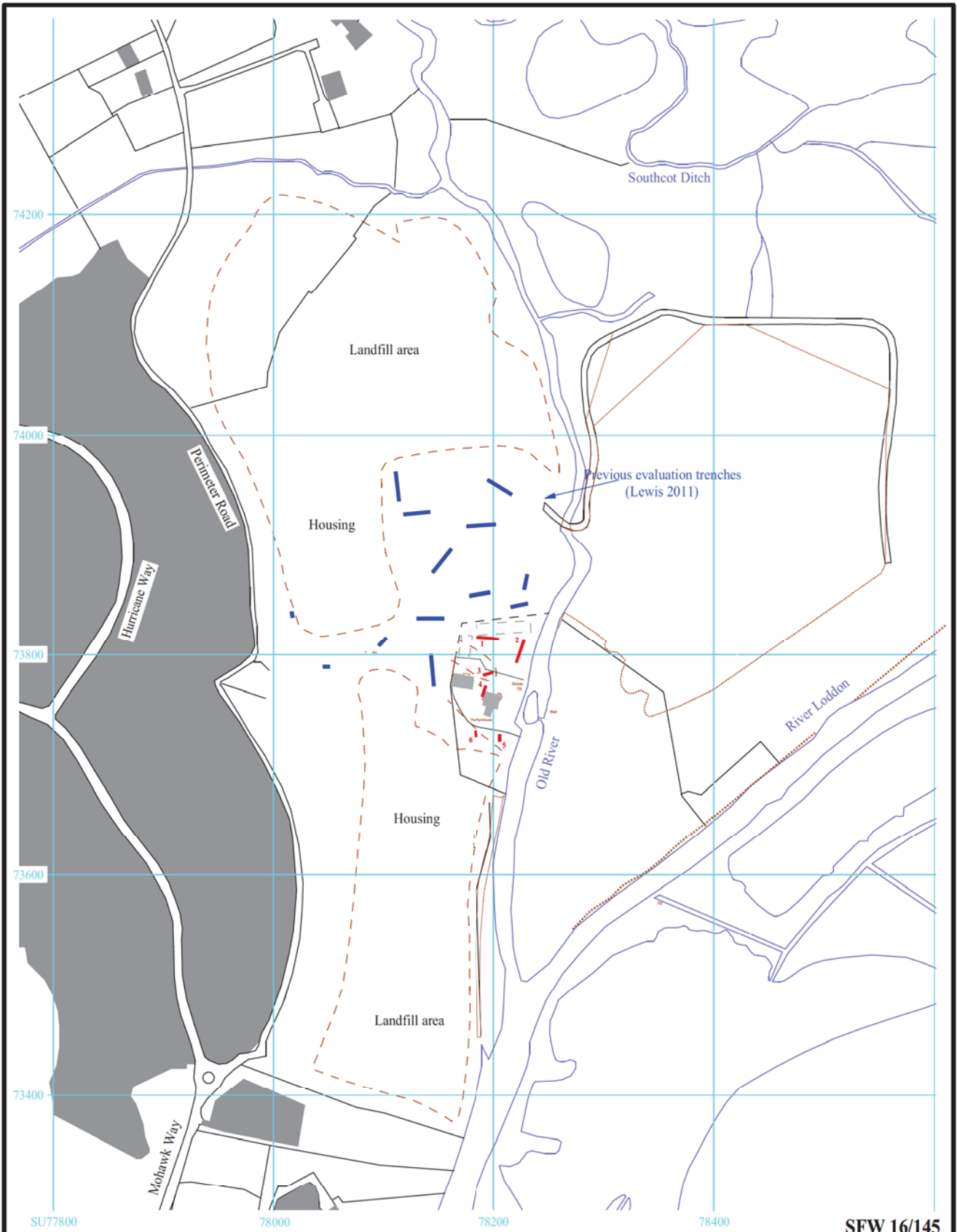
37.2m aOD

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Figure 5. Location of trenches, in relation to previous evaluation (Lewis 2011).



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking northeast, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking southeast, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking northeast, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking northeast, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 5, looking southeast, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.m.



Plate 6. Trench 6, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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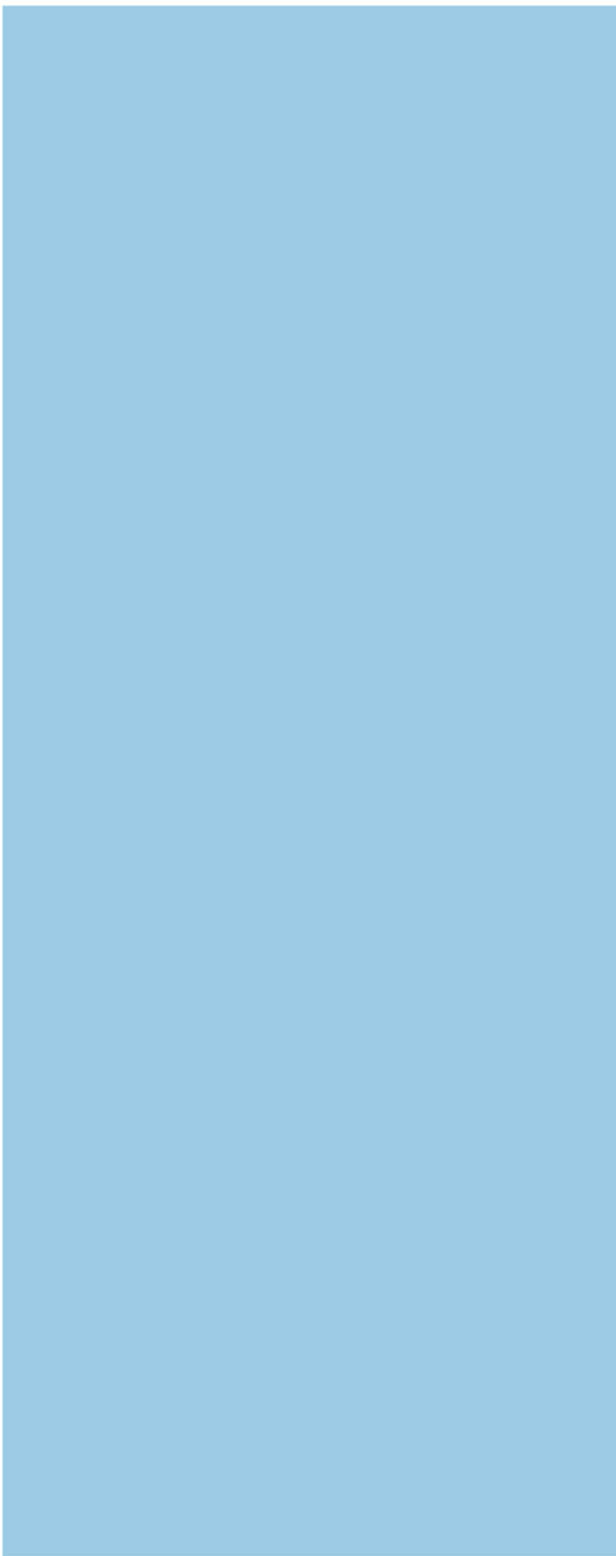
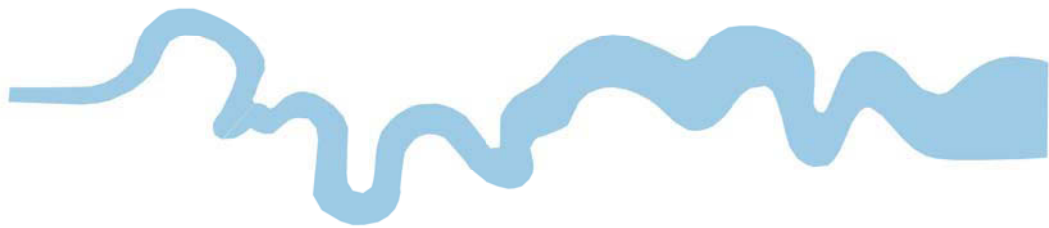
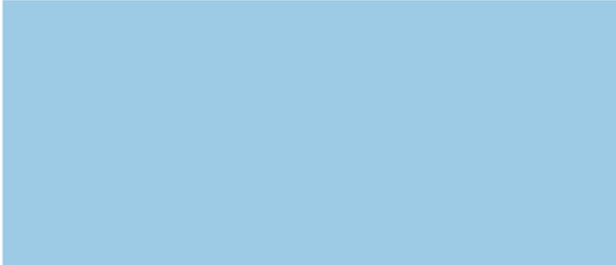
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Plates 5 - 6.

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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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