

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Worton Grange Industrial Estate,
Imperial Way, Reading**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Muddin and Luis Esteves

Site Code: IWR16/175

(SU 7155 6940)

Land at Worton Grange Industrial Estate, Imperial Way, Reading, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Bewley Homes**

by Andrew Mundin and Luis Esteves
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code IWR 16/175

December 2016

Summary

Site name: Land at Worton Grange Industrial Estate, Imperial Way, Reading

Grid reference: SU 7155 6940

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th September–5th December 2016

Project Coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisors: Andrew Munding, David Platt, Luis Esteves

Site code: IWR16/175

Area of site: 2.8ha

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. Much of the central area of the site corresponding with the footprint of the previous structure had been heavily disturbed or truncated. 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 with Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 09.12.16 Steve Preston ✓ 08.12.16

Land at Worton Grange Industrial Estate, Imperial Way, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Munding and Luis Esteves

Report 16/175

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Imperial Way, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 0SL (SU 7163 6943) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stephen Trenwith, of Bewley Homes plc, Inhurst House, Brimpton Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG26 5JJ.

Planning consent (151944) has been gained from Reading Borough Council to redevelop the entire site which will include new housing and retail units, of which the north-eastern portion of the site, covering 2.8ha is for new housing development. The consent has been gained with a condition (29) that requires a phased programme of archaeological investigation on the site. It was determined that this should take the form, initially, of field evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which further investigation might be required. This report deals with the northern (residential) part of the development only.

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 investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kathelen Leary, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Borough Council, and the fieldwork was also monitored by her. The fieldwork was supervised by Andrew Munding and Danielle Milbank, David Platt and Luis Esteves and assisted by Cosmo Bacon in episodes between 19th September and 5th December 2016 and the site code is IWR 16/175. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a digital repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern margins of Reading close to the M4 and A33 junction. It comprises an irregular area to the south east of Imperial Way and west of the old Basingstoke Road (Fig. 2). It was formerly occupied by a substantial industrial facility. Topographically the site lies on the floor of the Kennet Valley close to the confluence of the river and Foudry Brook. The underlying geology is London Clay (BGS 2000). The site is at an elevation of around 40m above Ordnance Datum, rising slightly towards the north.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background of the site has been detailed in a desk-based assessment (Hughes 2015). In summary a number of finds and sites of prehistoric and Roman date are recorded in the area, with extensive later Bronze Age occupation, fields and a burnt mound with Roman land division at Reading Business Park and Green Park to the west (Moore and Jennings 1992; Brossler *et al.* 2004). To the south-west an Iron Age to Roman enclosure complex has also been recorded at Little Lea Park (Booth *et al.* 2007, 50) with further Roman deposits to the south (Milbank 2010).

The assessment noted that structures associated with Lower Whitley Farm, later Worton Grange, were present on the northern part of the site in 1879. This was probably the case until the 1976, with the farm finally levelled in 1984 for construction of the Industrial Estate.

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 work was to be carried out in such a manner that would not compromise the integrity of deposits that might warrant preservation *in situ*, or that would be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific aims of the project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels survive on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.

The proposed trenching was to involve 30 trenches, all 20m long and 2m wide and was to take place in stages. Topsoil and other overburden were to be removed mechanically. A ditching bucket was to be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project. Spoilheaps were to be searched for finds.

Results

In the event only 11 trenches were excavated (Fig. 3). it was revealed that extensive truncation/disturbance had taken place below the footprint of the former building and it was agreed, in consultation with Berkshire Archaeology, that the remaining proposed trenches in this area were not required. Due to various site constraints the widths and lengths varied from those originally intended. The trenches ranged from 8.5 - 21m in length and 0.65-1.4m deep A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 14m long and 1.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.65m of turf over, loose hardcore (rubble, mixed debris), above 0.39m layer of brown/grey clay (with orange silt patches) overlying 0.23m of grey/brown silty clay (possibly natural geology), overlying a grey silty clay natural geology. A test pit at the SW end of the trench confirmed that the grey silty clay (becoming blue and less silty with depth) was the natural geology (London Clay).

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 8.5m long and 1.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of turf /rubble, overlying a 1.1m deep layer of chalky sand silt backfill where the bottom of a modern tank was found.

Trench 3 (Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SE - NW and was 15m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of Tarmac, set on 0.08m of hoggin, overlying 0.27m of made ground, over 0.18m layer of light brown grey clay overlying a mottled grey clay natural geology.

Trench 4 (Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned W - E and was 15m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of Tarmac, overlying 0.29m of hoggin, overlying a grey stained clay natural geology.

Trench 5 (Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 16m long and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of Tarmac, overlying 0.34m of hoggin, overlying a grey stained London clay natural geology.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned SW - NE and was 21m long and 1.2m deep. The Tarmac and hoggin had been removed previously to reveal a rubble mix made ground. A test pit 2m deep showed that the stratigraphy consisted of 1.2m rubble mix overlying a dark grey clay natural geology.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned SE - NW and was 15.5m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of made ground, overlying 0.7m of blue grey silty clay with modern bricks, overlying a mottled grey silty clay natural geology.

Trench 8 (Pl. 6)

Trench 8 was aligned S - N and was 15.5m long and 1.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of made ground, overlying 0.6m of blue grey silty clay with modern inclusions, overlying a yellow grey silty clay natural geology.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned SW - NE and was 15m long and 1.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of made ground, overlying a 0.15m of hoggin, overlying 0.55m of yellow grey clay with modern inclusions, overlying a yellow brown silty clay natural geology.

Trench 10 (Pl. 7)

Trench 10 was aligned SW - NE and was 15m long and 1.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of made ground, overlying 0.7m of blue grey silty clay with modern inclusions, overlying a yellow brown silty clay natural geology.

Trench 11 (Figs. 3 and 4; Pl. 8)

Trench 11 was aligned S - N and was 15m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of made ground, overlying a yellow brown silty clay natural geology.

Conclusion

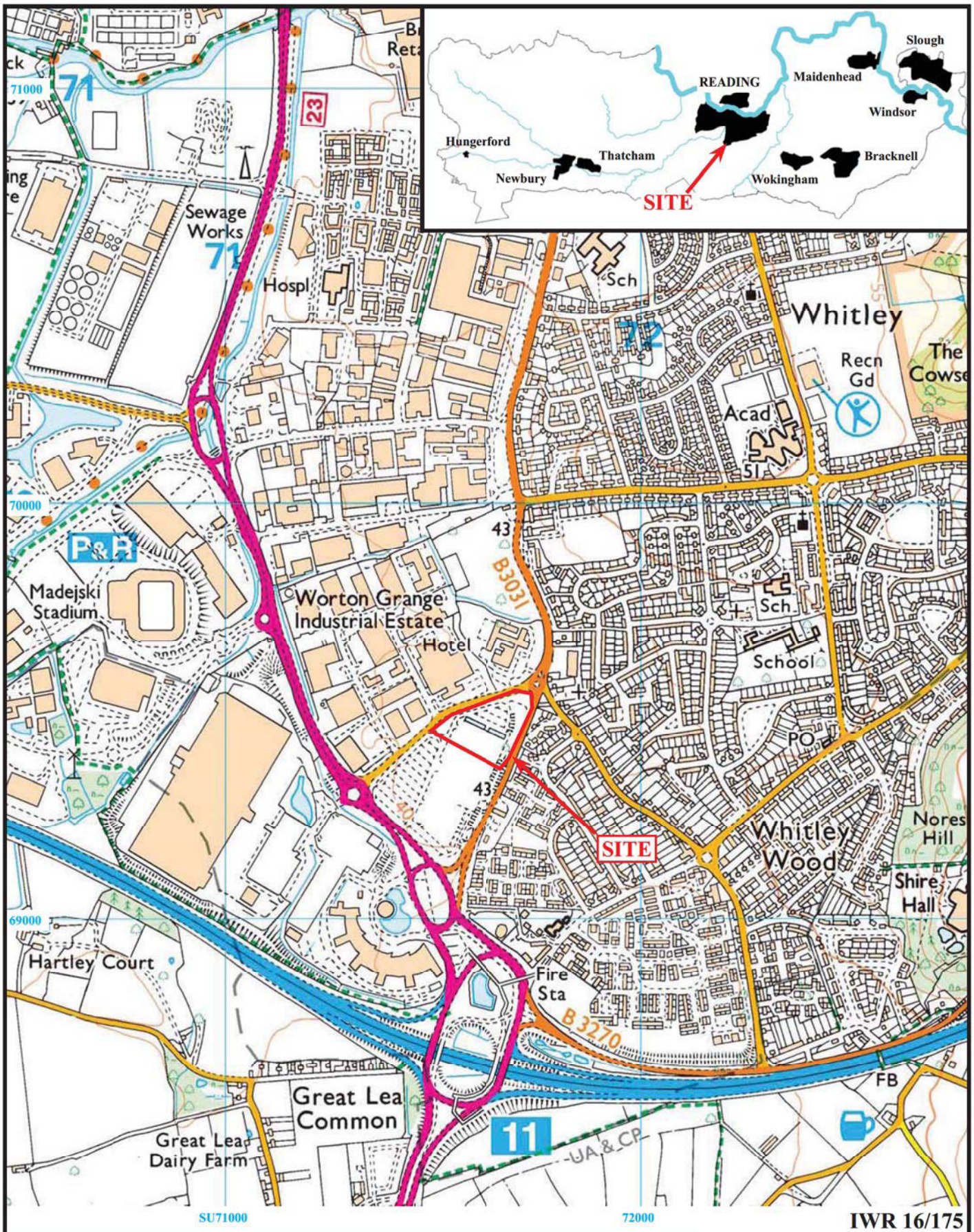
None of the trenches excavated revealed archaeological deposits and no artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered. The archaeologically relevant horizon for a significant proportion of the site had been truncated or heavily disturbed during the previous development on the site. Based on these results the site has no archaeological potential.

References

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- Moore, J and Jennings, D, 1992, *Reading Business Park, Thames Valley Landscapes: the Kennet Valley*, Oxford Archaeological Landscape Monogr **1**, Oxford
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14	1.6	1.35	0-0.65m turf over/loose hardcore, 0.65m-1.04m brown grey silt clay, 1.04m-1.27m grey brown silty clay natural geology?, 1.27m+ grey silty clay natural geology. [PI. 2]
2	8.5	3.7	1.4	0-0.3m turf/rubble, 0.3m-1.4m chalky sand silt backfill with a modern tank.
3	15	2.5	0.68	0-0.12m Tarmac, 0.12m-0.2m hoggin, 0.2m-0.47m made ground, 0.47m-0.65m light brown grey clay, 0.65m+ mottled grey clay natural geology. [PI. 3]
4	15	2.5	0.48	0-0.13m Tarmac, 0.13m-0.42m hoggin, 0.42m+ grey stained clay natural geology. [PI. 4]
5	16	1.6	0.62	0-0.18m Tarmac, 0.18m-0.52m hoggin, 0.52m+ grey stained clay natural geology [PI. 5]
6	21	1.6	1.2 Test pit 2m	0-1.2m rubble mix (truncated area), 1.2m+ dark grey clay natural geology
7	15.5	1.6	1.2	0-0.3m made ground, 0.3m-1m blue grey silty clay, 1m+ mottled grey silty clay natural geology
8	15.5	1.6	1.3	0-0.4m made ground, 0.4m-1m blue grey silty clay, 1m+ yellow grey clay natural geology [PI. 6]
9	15	1.6	1.3	0-0.3m made ground, 0.3m-0.45m hoggin, 0.45m-1m yellow grey clay, 1m+ yellow brown silty clay natural geology
10	15	1.6	1.3	0-0.3m made ground, 0.3m-1m blue grey silty clay, 1m+ yellow brown clay natural geology [PI. 7]
11	15	1.6	0.65	0-0.45m made ground, 0.45m+ yellow brown clay natural geology. [PI. 8]

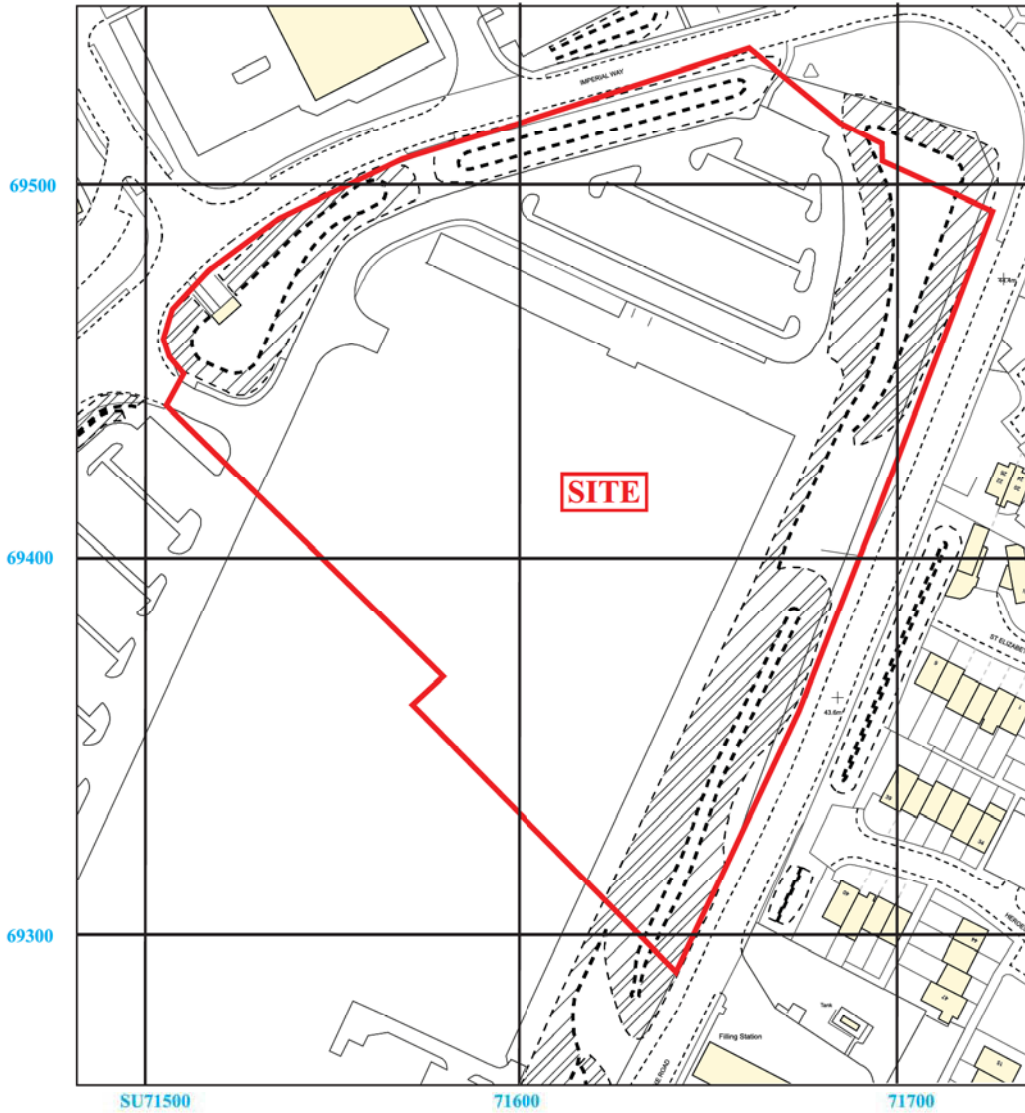


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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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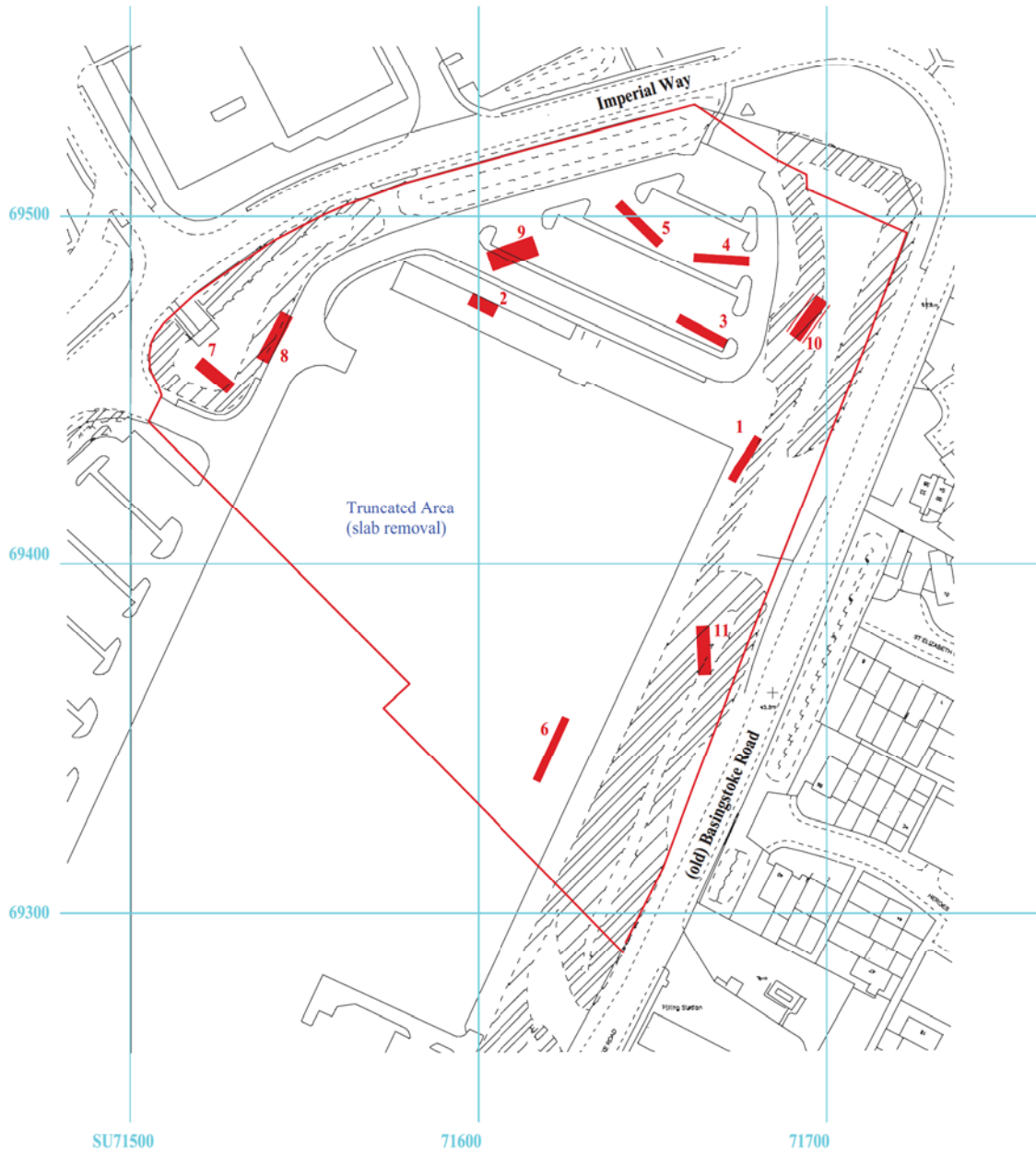
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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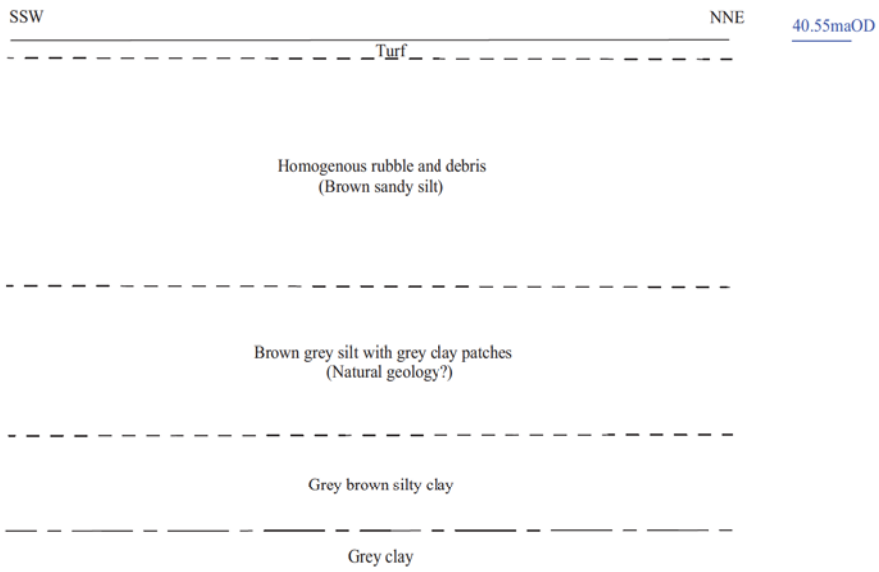
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

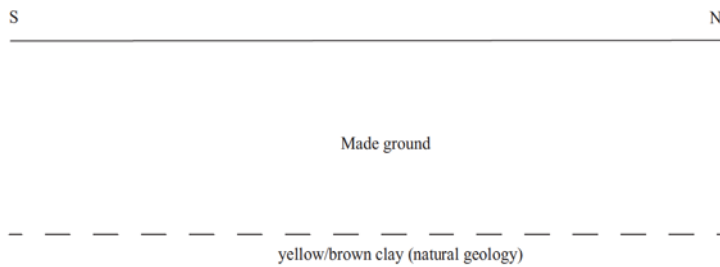


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Trench 1



Trench 11



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. General view of site looking south west.



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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



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

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Plates 3 - 4.

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



Plate 6. Trench 8, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 5 - 6.

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Plate 7. Trench 10, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 8. Trench 11, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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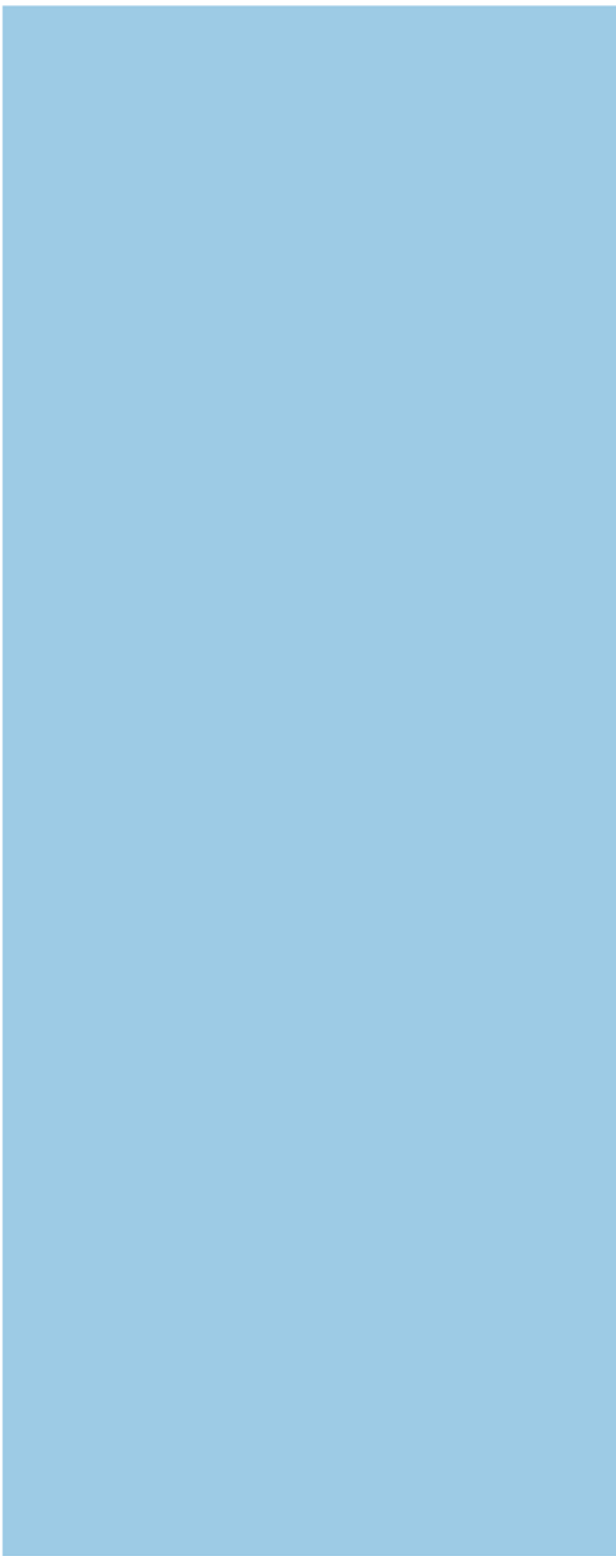
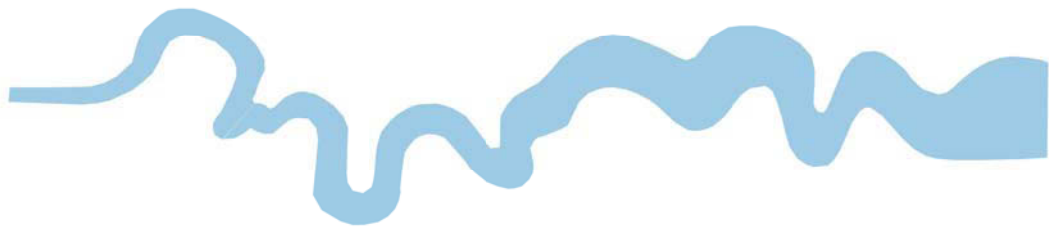
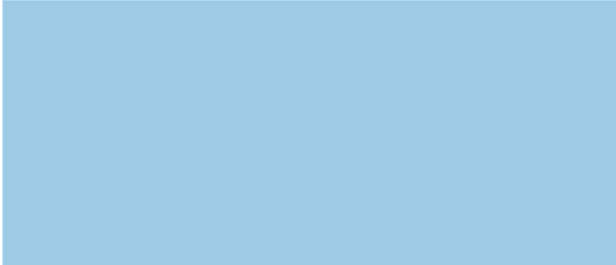
Plates 7 - 8.

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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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