

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot,
Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: HHA16/141

(SU 9143 6851)

Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust**

by Luís Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HHA16/141

January 2017

Summary

Site name: Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9143 6851

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th – 5th January 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luís Esteves

Site code: HHA 16/141

Area of site: c. 3ha

Summary of results: No archaeological features were observed during the evaluation trenches. It is considered that the site has low 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.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 12.01.17 Steve Preston✓ 12.01.17

Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luís Esteves

Report 16/141b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot, Berkshire (SU 9143 6851) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sarah Isherwood of Vail Williams LLP, 550 Thames Valley Park, Reading on behalf of Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Planning permission is to be sought from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to redevelop the hospital complex. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site, a field evaluation has been requested by Berkshire Archaeology as detailed in the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, the advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luís Esteves and Cosmo Bacon on 4th and 5th January 2017 and the site code is HHA16/141. 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

Heatherwood Hospital is located approximately 1.5km west of Ascot (Fig. 1). The site is located at the south of the hospital grounds and slopes steeply down southwards from a height of c.90m above Ordnance Datum at the hospital before levelling off adjacent to the Reading-Waterloo railway line at c. 75m aOD (Fig. 2). This area is occupied by regenerated woodland with some trees. The underlying geology is mapped as Bagshot Beds (sand) (BGS 1981) and this was observed on site as generally sandy clay or silty clay. The entire proposal site covers around 7ha but most of this is to be retained as open space (SANG) so the area to be proposed for development (and therefore evaluation) covers approximately 3ha (Fig. 2). A site walkover survey suggested that at least some

of the contours of the site might be artificial, presumably relating to the construction of the hospital and/or railway line.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been summarized in a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2016). The site lies within the heathland area of south-east Berkshire which is a topographic zone not noted for its wealth and density of archaeological deposits. It is assumed that the current poor agricultural quality of the heathland soils was also so for much of prehistoric and historic times and accounts for the relatively few findspots in general. Yet this landscape is not wholly devoid of archaeology and there is a range of monuments such as Bronze Age round barrows, an Iron Age hillfort (Caesar's Camp) and Roman settlement, perhaps associated with the presence of the major Roman road from London to Silchester and exploitation of iron ore deposits (Ford 1987). For the earlier part of the Bronze Age there is evidence (in fact from a monument on the hospital site itself) that the land was cleared of woodland and cultivated for cereals (Bradley and Keith-Lucas 1975). Yet this activity may well have precipitated the formation of the heathland soils which are prevalent today. It is perhaps the agriculturally marginal nature of the area, unfavourable for later farming, which has led to the survival of more upstanding earthworks than other areas of eastern Berkshire where later cultivation has levelled such sites. Until relatively recently four such monuments (round barrows) had survived on the hospital site, of which one has survived until the present day and is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Fig. 2). This is located some 160m north of the area to be developed. Although the locations of the other three reported barrows are not all known precisely, they were considered likely to have been within close proximity of the surviving example and not within the proposed development area.

Ascot is not recorded before AD1177 (Mills 2011) although the place-name is Anglo-Saxon (Old English). Neither it nor surrounding manors are mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086, which may suggest they all fell within the bounds of the royal dominion of Windsor Forest, as the area certainly was by 1221 (Ford 1987, 102).

An archaeological evaluation (Hammond 2004) and a watching brief (Cass and Platt 2008) on previous development within the northern part of the hospital complex (beyond the current proposal area) had revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

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 archaeological features or deposits which warranted preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine if any Bronze Age deposits are present contemporary with the round barrow.

It was proposed to dig 25 trenches, each 25m in length and 2m wide to examine all of the proposal area on a stratified random layout. Unfortunately it was only possible to dig ten trenches (Fig. 3). The overburden was to be removed with a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features were encountered the trenches were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded including a photographic record. The excavation of the trenches was to be supervised by an archaeologist at all times and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

Only ten of the planned trenches could be dug due to the presence of a considerable number of trees, an area of badger setts and tree/roots protection zones) The trenches ranged in length from 6m to 19m and in depth from 0.25m to 1.1m (Fig. 3). All were 1.8m wide. A test pit was excavated in the north area of the site to confirm the deep made ground observed in Trenches 1 and 2, perhaps related with the construction of the hospital in the 1920's.

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. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 11m long and 1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying 0.85m of green/brown clay made ground containing modern brick rubble, overlying a light yellow silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SSW - NNE and was 18m long and 1.1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying 0.85m of dark green/grey clay made ground overlying a light yellow sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned SW - NE and was 13m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.5m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 8m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 10m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned SE - NW and was 19m long and 0.25m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 7 was aligned SW - NE and was 8m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange clayey silt natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned SW - NE and was 10m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange silt natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3)

Trench 9 was aligned S - N and was 10m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil overlying a mid yellow/orange silty clay (with gravel) natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Trench 10 (Figs 3 and 4; PL 5)

Trench 10 was aligned S - N and was 6m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil overlying a light yellow/orange clayey silt natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Test pit (Fig. 3; PL 6)

The test pit was 2m x 2m size and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying 0.9m of green/grey clay made ground containing modern concrete and brick rubble, overlying a light yellow/orange silty clay natural geology.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeology (Bronze Age round barrows surrounding the area) no features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during the course of the evaluation. In the north part of the site the natural geology was truncated and replaced with a dark grey/green made ground (with modern ceramic building material) presumably in connection with the construction of the hospital. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

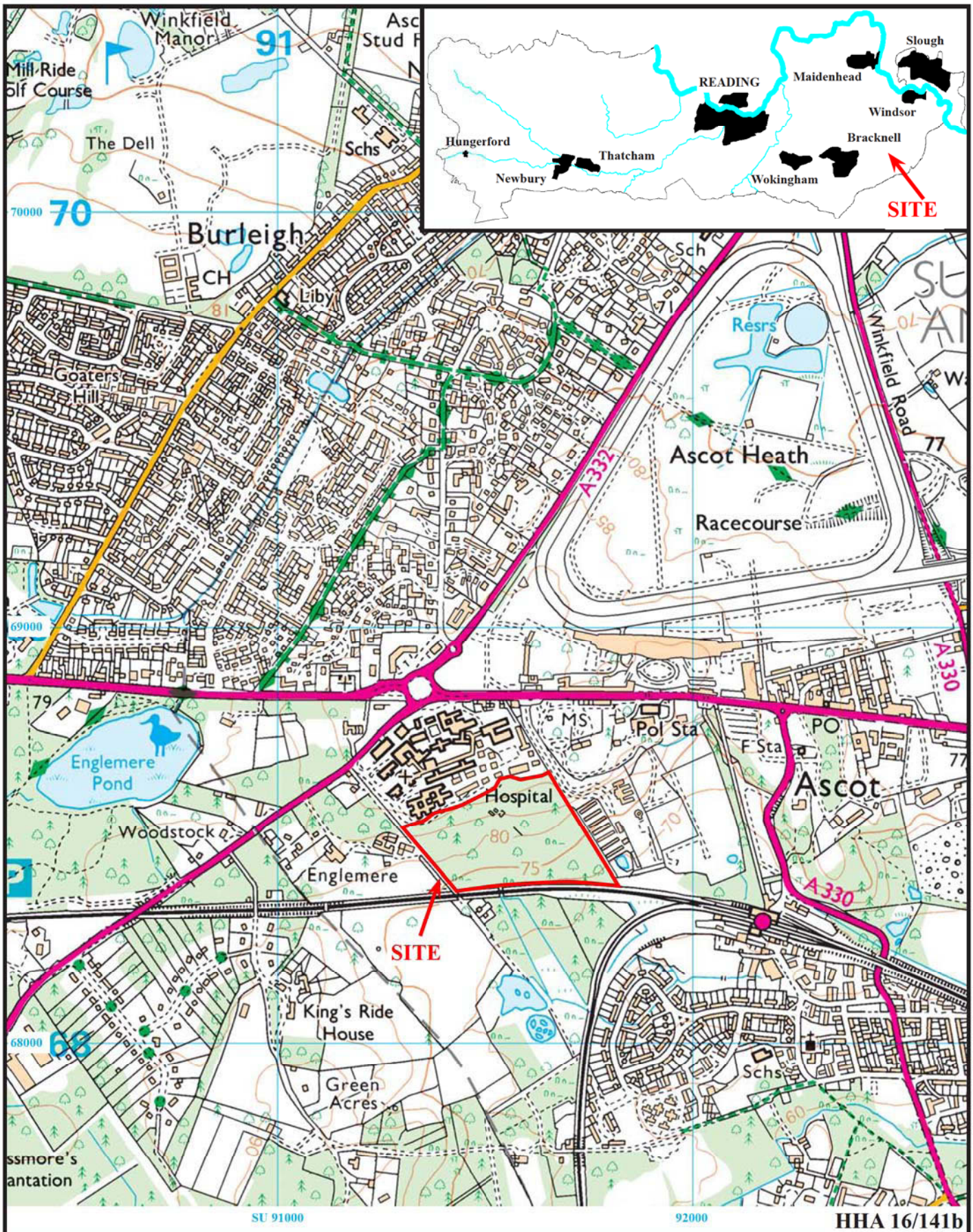
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SW, SSW, SE and S end

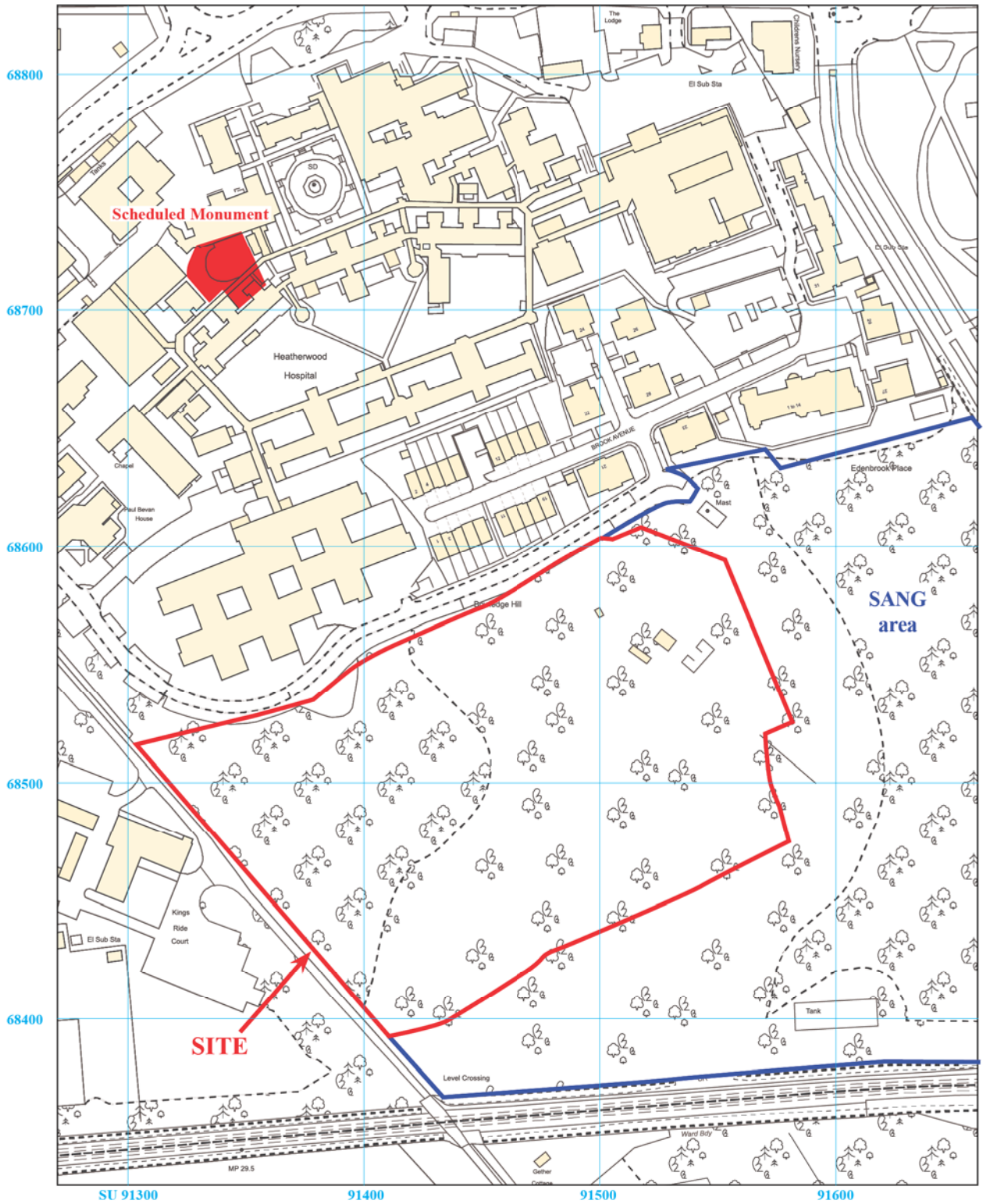
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11	1.8	1	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15m-1m green/brown clay made ground; 1m+ light yellow/orange silty clay natural geology.
2	18	1.8	1.1	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15m-1m dark green/grey clay made ground; 1m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology.
3	13	1.8	0.65	0-0.5m topsoil; 0.5m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology
4	8	1.8	0.5	0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology
5	10	1.8	0.5	0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology
6	19	1.8	0.25	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology
7	8	1.8	0.45	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m+ light yellow/orange clayey silt natural geology
8	10	1.8	0.35	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15m+ light greyish yellow silt natural geology
9	10	1.8	0.65	0-0.45m topsoil; 0.45m+ light yellow/orange sandy clay natural geology
10	6	1.8	0.35	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3m+ light yellow/orange clayey silt natural geology



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Figure 1. Location of site within Ascot and Berkshire.

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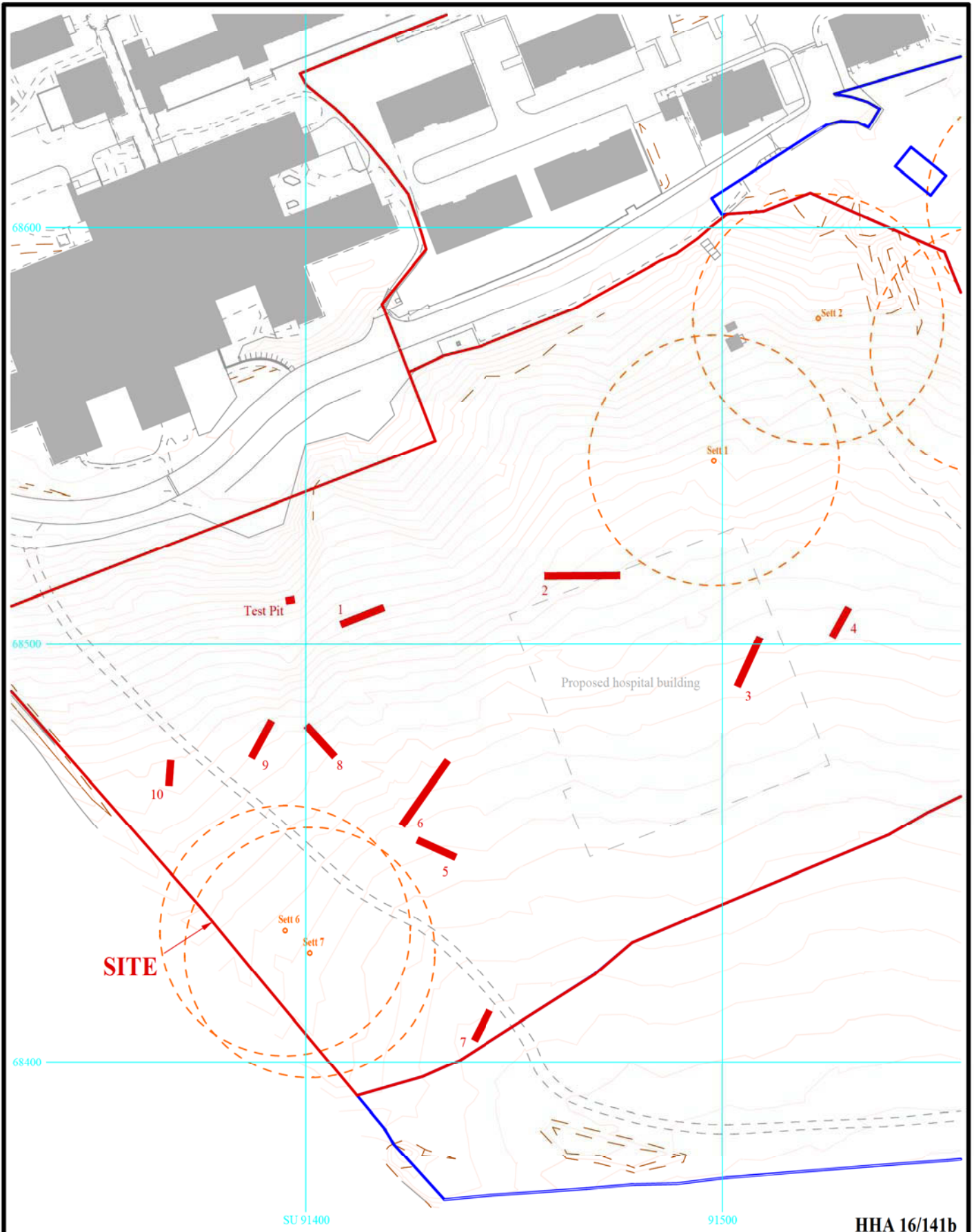
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in Heatherwood Hospital.

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Figure 3. Trench layout.

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Trench 1

SW _____ NE

Topsoil/made ground mix

Green-brown clay with modern rubble

Base of trench -----

Light yellow-orange clay natural geology

Trench 10

S _____ N

Topsoil

Base of trench ----- Light yellow-orange clayey silt natural geology

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north-east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking north west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 7, looking south west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 10, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 6. Test Pit, looking north, Scale: 1m.6

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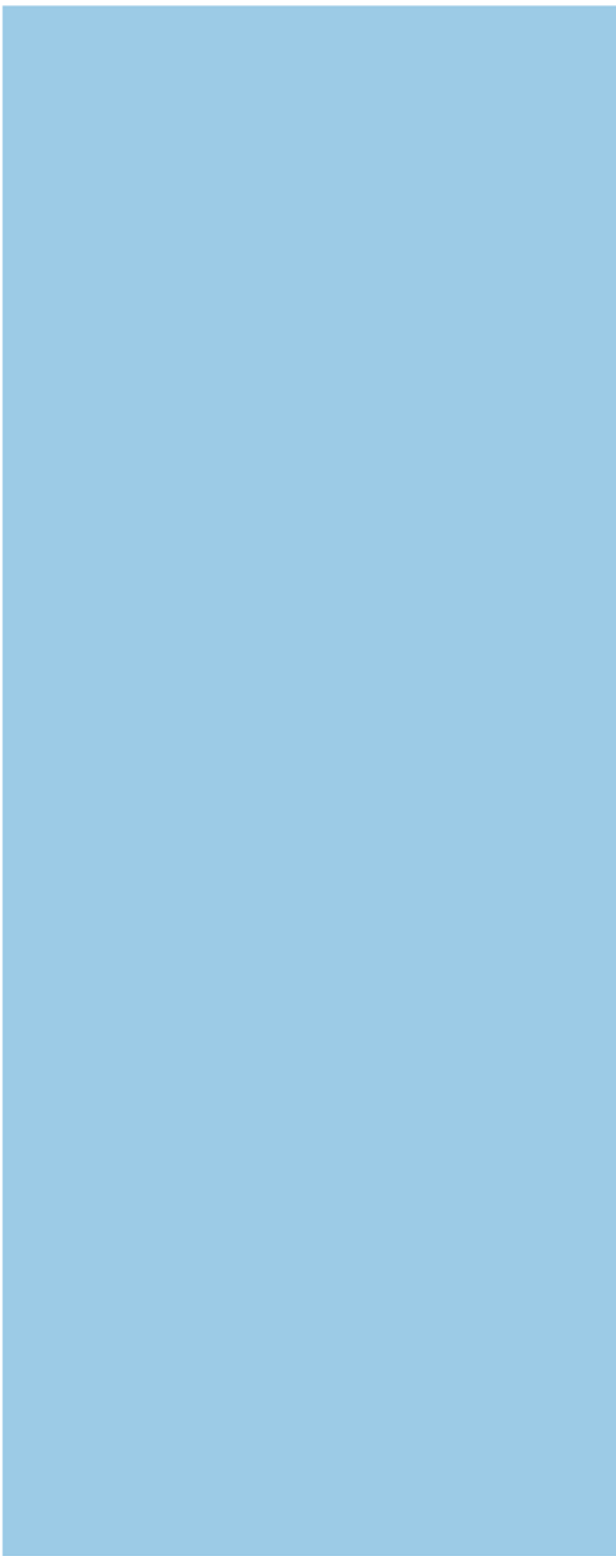
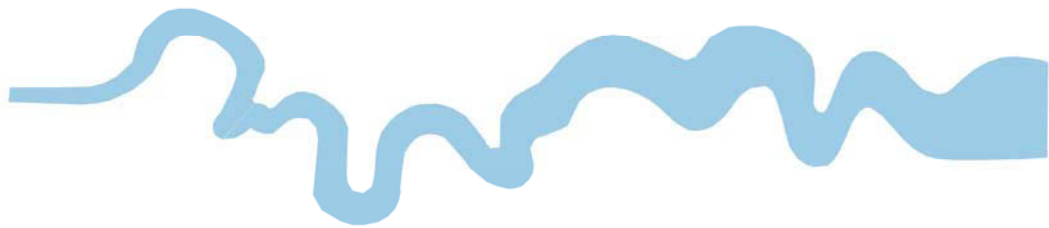
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Plates 5 - 6.**

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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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