

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Planning Application Site A, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Luis Esteves

Site Code: SPA16/236

(SU 7417 7378)

**Planning Application Site A, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Standard Life Assurance Limited**

by Andy Taylor and Luis Esteves
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SPA 16/236

February 2017

Summary

Site name: Planning Application Site A, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7417 7378

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 12th December 2016-14th February 2017

Project manager: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves and Andy Taylor

Site code: SPA 16/236

Area of site: c. 3.25ha

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed that the previous development on the site had variously disturbed or truncated the archaeologically relevant horizon across much of the site but that in places an intact subsoil was recorded indicating zones of less disturbance. However, despite this no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed and 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 a local museum willing to accept archive material in due course.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 20.02.17
	Steve Preston✓ 20.02.17

Planning Application Site A, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Luis Esteves

Report 16/236

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Suttons Business Park, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (SU7417 7378) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Lee Sherrington of Christopher Smith Associates LLP, Eiverside, 8 Lower Teddington Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 4EZ on behalf of Standard Life Assurance Limited, 1 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2LL.

Planning consent has been obtained from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of new warehousing following the demolition of existing structures. This assessment has been prepared and submitted to address the requirements of Condition 4 on planning permissions 162736 and 161066. This assessment will accompany the application in order to inform the planning process with regard to potential archaeological and heritage implications.

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 Kathelen Leary, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves and Andy Taylor with Cosmo Bacon and Cecilia Galleano between the 12th December 2016 and 14th February 2017 and the site code is SPA 16/236. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a local museum willing to accept archive material.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on two irregular plots of land on either side of Suttons Park Avenue, on the eastern margins of Reading but within the Borough of Wokingham (Fig. 1). It is bounded by further industrial units to the west and north with the A4 to the south, a residential area to the east and the main Reading to London Paddington railway line to the north (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Thatcham Gravel (BGS 2000) and the site lies at a height of c.43m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area in general (Ford 1987; Gates 1975). Excavations on the site of the former Earley Power Station to the north-east examined a Late Iron Age/Roman enclosure complex and both Early Bronze Age (Beaker) burial and Mesolithic flintwork were also recovered (Barnes *et al.* 1997). Construction of the Great Western Railway in the 19th century and the digging of a nearby hole for ballast led to the discovery of an Early Saxon inhumation cemetery. Other finds nearby include a Roman coin and Mesolithic flint tools dredged from the Thames. Evaluation to the south-east, however, found only modern disturbance (Lewis 2011; Dawson and Ford 2011; Taylor 2015).

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.

Specific aims of the project were:

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

Sixteen trenches were to be dug targeting the proposed new structures. These were to measure 20m long and between 1.60m and 2.0m wide. They were dug using a 360° or JCB type machines fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Sufficient of any archaeological deposits revealed would be investigated to satisfy the aims outlined above, and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Fourteen trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended positions (Fig. 2), although the presence of a high voltage electricity cable resulted in two trenches in the northern portion of the site being written off. The presence of large piles of crushed demolition rubble resulted in some repositioning of trenches (Pl. 1). The trenches measured between 7m and 21m long and between 0.75m and 1.30m deep and all were 1.6m wide.

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; Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned SE-NW and measured 16.70m long and 0.90m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.80m of made ground comprising gravels and soil bands containing brick fragments. This overlay gravel natural geology. Several modern services were noted in this trench.

Trench 2 (Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned approximately SE-NW and measured 12m long and 1.20m deep. It consisted of 1.10m of gravel and soil made ground overlying gravel natural geology. A concrete foundation and service were observed in this trench.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned approximately SSE-NNW and measured 7m long and 1.10m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of brick and concrete rubble overlying 0.30m of gravel made ground. This overlay 0.30m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 4 (Pl. 4)

This trench was aligned W-E and measured 15m long and 1.10m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.30m of gravel made ground. This overlay 0.50m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 5

This trench was aligned roughly N-S and measured 19m long and 0.75m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.40m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

This trench was aligned SSE-NNW and measured 21m long and 0.85m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.59m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 7

This trench was aligned SE-NW and measured 20m long and 0.85m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.60m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology. A concrete foundation was noted at the southern end of the trench.

Trench 8 (Pl. 5)

This trench was aligned approximately W-E and measured 17m long and 0.85m deep. It consisted of 0.30m of hoggin overlying 0.50m of gravel made ground, overlying gravel natural geology. A concrete foundation was noted at the NW end and a soakaway at the SE end.

Trench 9

This trench was aligned SE-NW and measured 19m long and 1.30m deep. It consisted of 1.30m of rubble and gravel made ground, and natural geology was not reached in this trench.

Trench 10

This trench was aligned roughly N-S and measured 11m long and 1.30m deep. It consisted of 1.30m of rubble and gravel made ground and natural geology was not reached in this trench.

Trench 11 (Pl. 6)

This trench was aligned W-E and measured 16m long and 1.10m deep. It consisted of 1m of rubble and gravel made ground overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 12

This trench was aligned SW-NE and measured 15m long and 1.30m deep. It consisted of 1.20m of rubble and gravel made ground with patches of natural geology gravel reached below this level but with large areas of truncation.

Trench 13

This trench was aligned SW-NE and measured 20m long and 0.75m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.50m of rubble and gravel made ground. This overlay patches of natural geology gravel but with large areas of truncation from services and foundations.

Trench 14 (Pl. 7)

This trench was aligned SE-NW and measured 21m long and 0.75m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of hoggin overlying 0.50m of rubble and gravel made ground. This overlay patches of natural geology but with large areas of truncation from services and foundations.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

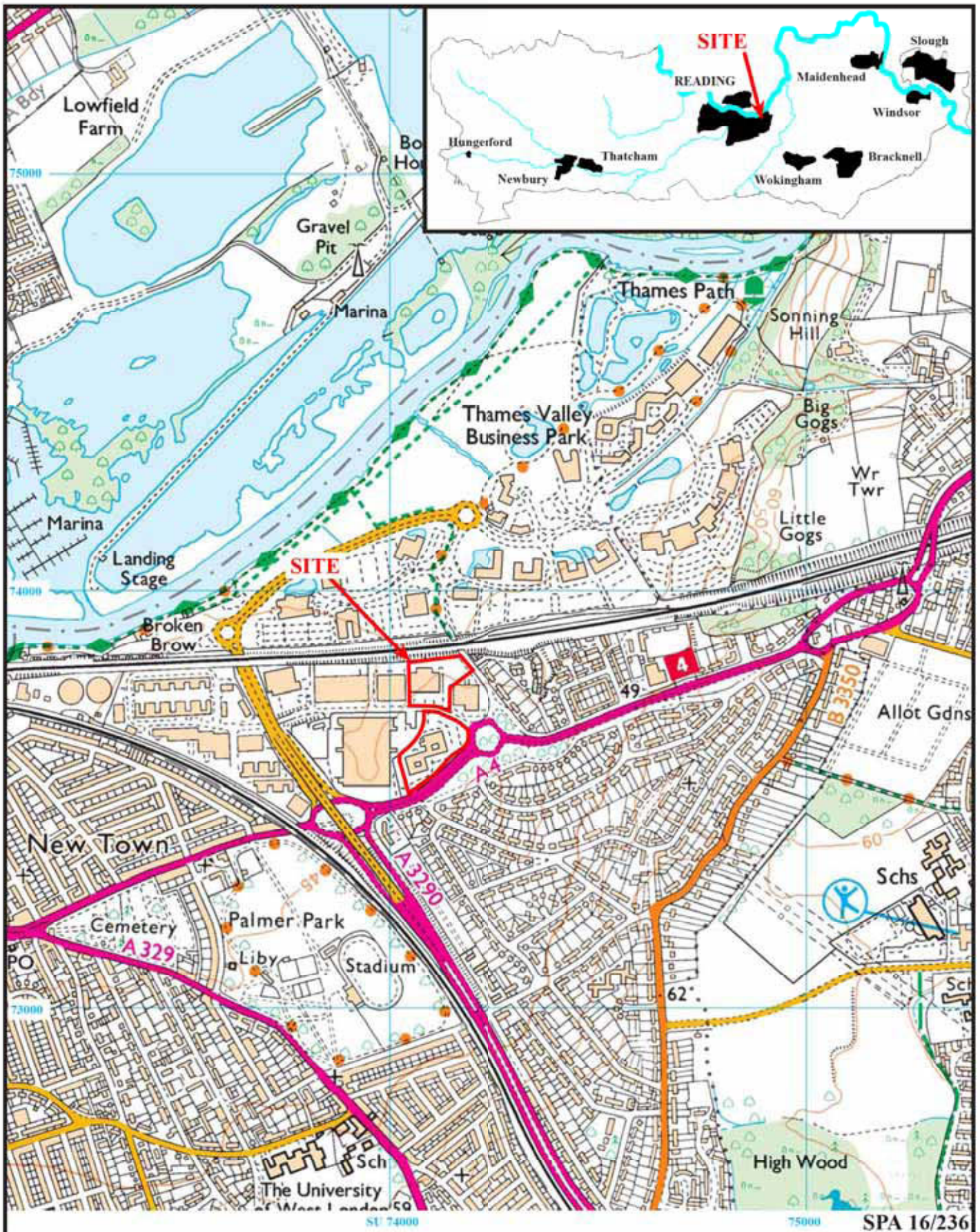
Despite the site's potential for the presence of archaeology, no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed. Although large areas of truncation from foundations and services were observed, undisturbed natural geology was encountered below subsoil suggesting that if archaeology were present it would have survived in places. On the basis of these results, the site can be considered to have little or no archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

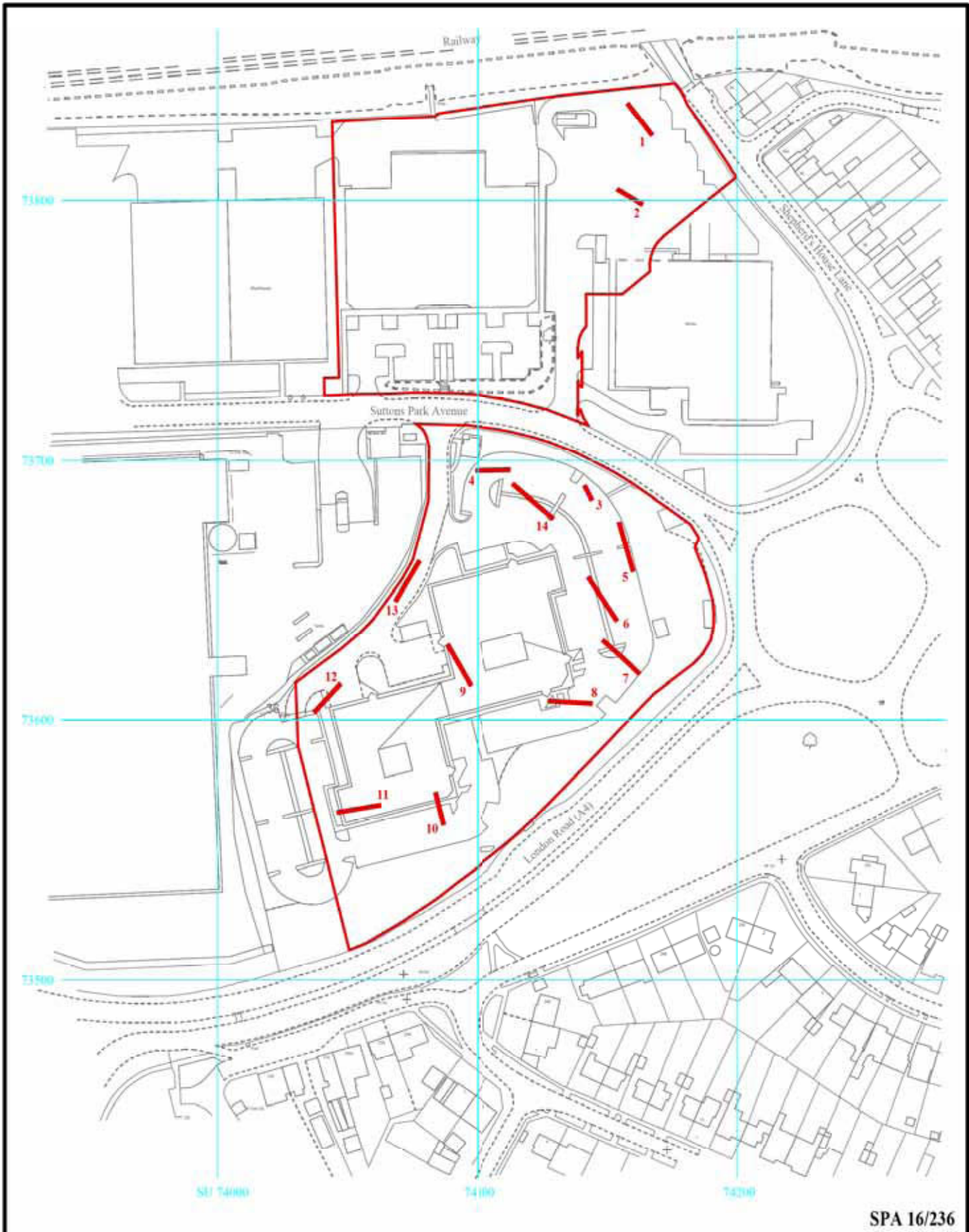
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.70	1.60	0.90	0-0.80m gravel and soil made ground; 0.80m-0.90m+ gravel natural geology. [PI. 2]
2	12.00	1.60	1.20	0-1.10m gravel and soil made ground; 1.10m-1.20m+ gravel natural geology. [PI. 3]
3	7.00	1.60	1.10	0-0.20m brick and concrete made ground; 0.20m-0.50m gravel made ground; 0.50m-0.30m subsoil; 0.80m-1.10m+ gravel natural geology.
4	15.00	1.90	1.10	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.50m gravel made ground; 0.50m-1.00m subsoil; 1.00m-1.10m+ gravel made ground. [PI. 4]
5	19.00	1.60	0.75	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m-0.75m+ gravel natural geology.
6	21.00	1.60	0.85	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.79m subsoil; 0.79m-0.85m+ gravel natural geology.
7	20.00	1.60	0.85	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.80m subsoil; 0.80m-0.85m+ gravel natural geology.
8	17.00	1.60	0.85	0-0.30m hoggin; 0.30m-0.80m gravel made ground; 0.80m-0.85m+ gravel natural geology. [PI. 5]
9	19.00	1.60	1.30	0-1.30m rubble and gravel made ground.
10	11.00	1.60	1.30	0-1.30m rubble and gravel made ground.
11	16.00	1.60	1.10	0-1.00m rubble and gravel made ground; 1.00m-1.10m+ gravel natural geology. [PI. 6]
12	15.00	1.60	1.30	0-0.60m rubble and gravel made ground; 0.60m-1.20m gravel made ground; 1.20m-1.30m+ gravel natural geology.
13	20.00	1.60	0.75	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.70m rubble and gravel made ground; 0.70m-0.75m+ gravel natural geology.
14	21.00	1.60	0.75	0-0.20m hoggin; 0.20m-0.70m rubble and gravel made ground; 1.70m-0.75m+ gravel natural geology. [PI. 7]



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 Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital mapping at 1:12500

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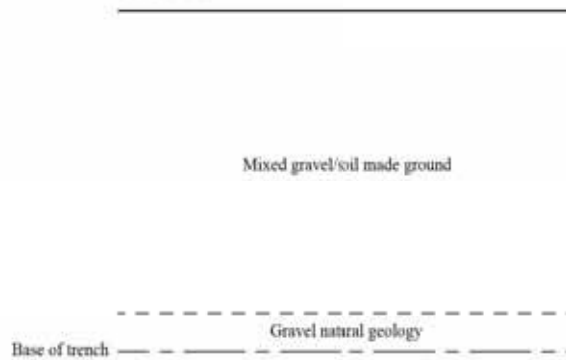
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.

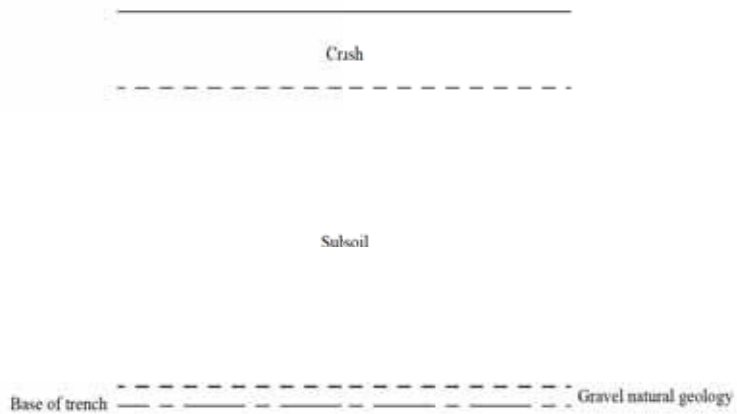


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Trench 1



Trench 6



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Figure 3. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. After demolition, prior to trenching, looking north east.



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



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

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Plates 1 - 3.**

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Plate 4. Trench 4, looking East, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 5. Trench 8, looking NE, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 4 - 5.

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Plate 6. Trench 11, looking West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 7. Trench 14, looking NW, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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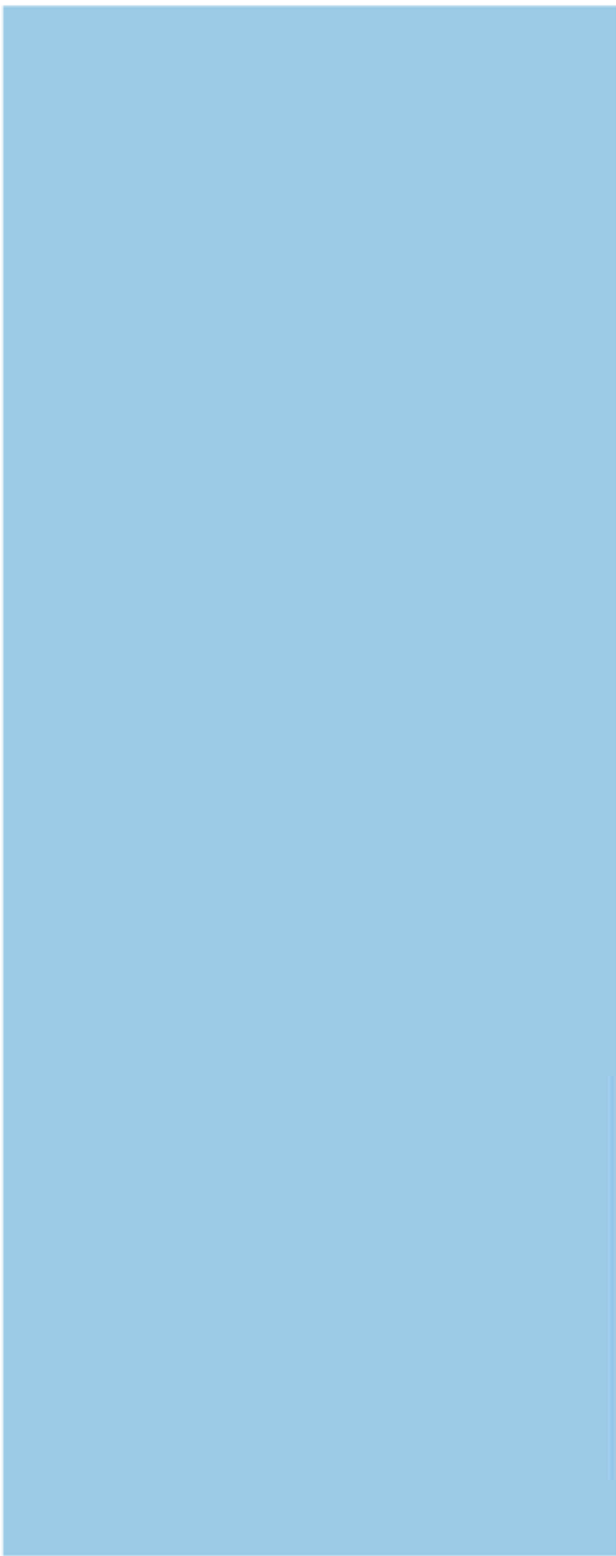
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Plates 6 - 7.**

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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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