

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Kennetside, Station Road,
Woolhampton, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aidan Colyer

Site Code: KSW17/58

(SU 5729 6648)

**Kennet Side, Station Road, Woolhampton,
West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Vaughan-Fowler

by Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code KSW 17/58

May 2017

Summary

Site name: Kennet Side, Station Road, Woolhampton, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5733 6645

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 19th - 20th April 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer

Site code: KSW 17-58

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed the foundations of post-medieval cottages on the site which were demolished in the 1970s. A row of lean-to sheds were found to incorporate some re-used post-medieval bricks in the wall that they rested on. Stripping of an area prior to the laying of a piling matt for the the new house was not deep enough to expose archaeologically relevant finds or deposits. No finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

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by Aidan Colyer

Report 17/58

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Kennet Side, Station Road, Woolhampton, West Berkshire. (SU 5733 6645) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Potter of RPA Architects Ltd., Strathfield House, Chilton Road, Upton, OX11 9JL, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Vaughan-Fowler.

Planning consent (16/02027/FUL) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the redevelopment of land at Kennet Side, Station Road, Woolhampton. The proposal comprises demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuilding, and construction of replacements, renovation of an outbuilding, and extension of a boundary wall. The approval is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This programme of works is for the monitoring of ground reduction for the new buildings.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and West Berkshire council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer on 19th and 20th April 2017. The site code is KSW 17/58. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the south side of Woolhampton on the southern bank of the Kennet and Avon Canal (Fig. 1). Woolhampton is situated midway between Newbury and Theale, a short distance west of Aldermaston. The site lies adjacent to Woolhampton's road bridge across the Canal, and opposite the Rowbridge Inn (Fig. 2). On the north side of the canal, directly opposite the site, is Bridge Cottage, a Listed building (Grade II, 39679). The site itself contains two dilapidated sheds connected by a small lean-to structure. The demolition of the existing buildings and outhouses of modern date, the main dwelling being of 1930's date, had already been carried out prior to the archaeological works. The sheds were being used to store retained bricks from the demolition. The

underlying geology of the site is mapped as alluvium, bounded by Beenham Grange Gravel deposits to the South, West and North East (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is set out in a brief prepared by Mr Alex Godden. In summary, the site is characterized as having a high potential for prehistoric archaeology, in particular for Mesolithic flint artefacts in the areas to be reduced, and potentially palaeoenvironmental remains. In addition, the walls and remaining outbuildings are likely to be linked to the use of the canal in the 19th century and appear on maps dating to the early 19th century. Within Woolhampton, several sites have been subject to similar archaeological investigations. Work on the village hall revealed no archaeologically relevant deposits (Lewis 2008), while a similar absence at Douai Abbey was at least partly due to truncation by the construction of existing structures (Taylor 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. In general the watching brief was to involve examination of any areas of ground reduction and the digging of trenches for services as necessary. This included monitoring ground reduction in preparation for laying the driveway.

The ground reduction comprised the driveway (aligned approximately east-west) and the footprint of the proposed house (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2). Topsoil 0.15m thick was removed by machine, exposing footings and patches of floor surfaces. These relate to the foundations of a row of 19th-century cottages, aligned roughly east-west parallel to the Kennet and Avon Canal. These buildings were identified by Trigg in his works on Woolhampton village (Trigg 2000) and are thought to date to 1856 or earlier based on the cartographic evidence. They are referred to as Canal Cottages and were renovated in the late 19th century, appearing last on the 1973 Ordnance Survey map, and eventually demolished in the later 1970s.

Results

The footings comprised mortared brick structures which were overall 4.2m north-south by 5.25m east-west, with the footings 0.24m wide. At the south, the footings enclosed a brick surface 2.6m north-south and 3.65m wide, which had been truncated and disturbed. Here, the bricks were unfrogged and of likely early 19th century

date, which correlates with the historical record of the structures. These footings and floors lie below the level of construction for the driveway and will be preserved *in situ* by the driveway construction.

To the south-east of these footings, a further small portion of heavily truncated brickwork was observed, which was 1.2m by 0.45m.

The ground reduction areas to the east beyond the footings was carried out to a depth of between 0.10m and 0.25m, and removed only the topsoil layer. The topsoil contained modern debris from the previously demolished building and natural geology was not observed.

Due to the piled foundation design, no further excavation for ground reduction, footing or foundation trenches was to be carried out.

Finds

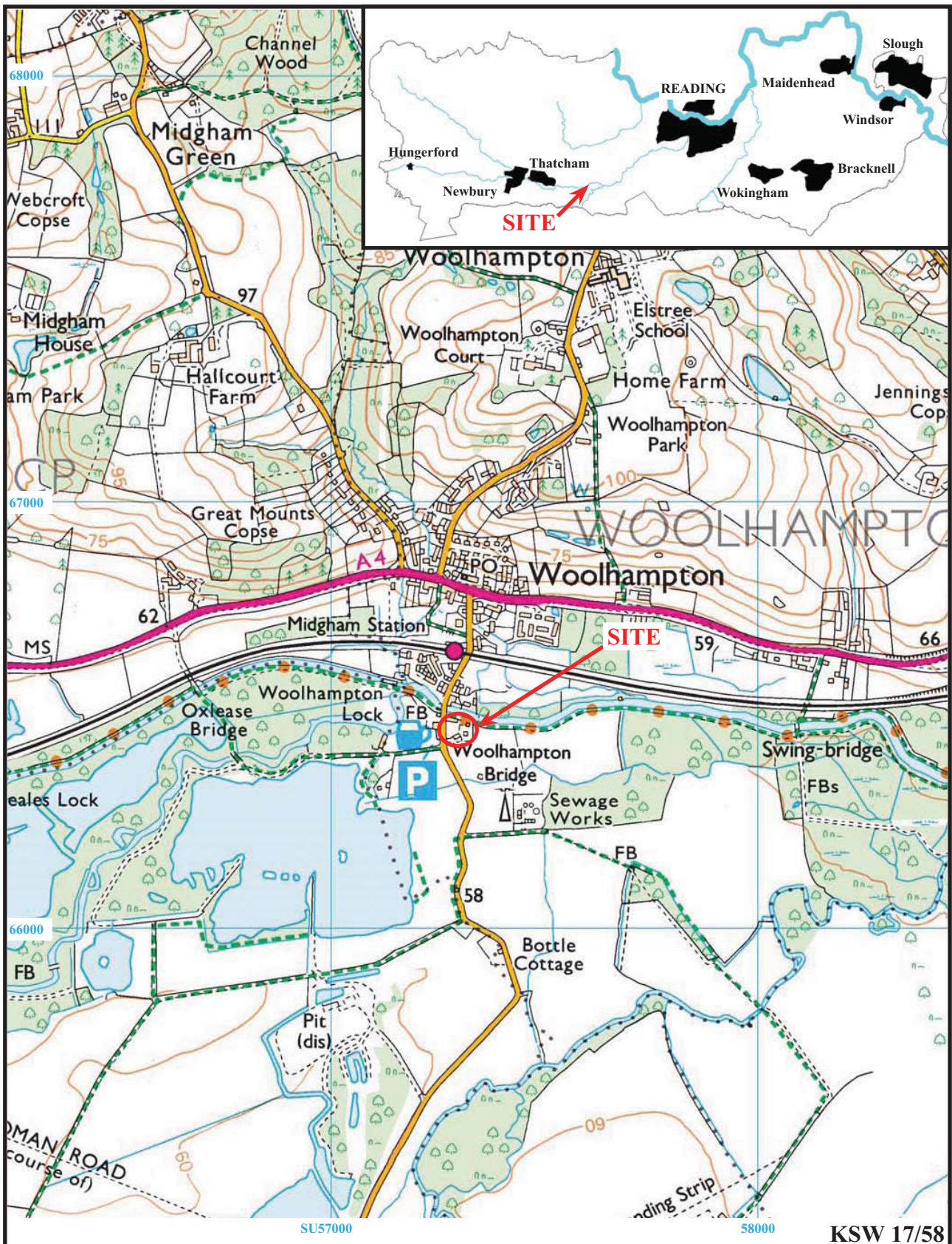
No finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

Conclusion

During the watching brief, the ground reduction exposed the 19th-century footings, truncated in places, representing the cottages that were demolished in the 1970s and known from cartographic evidence and map evidence. The construction design will cover and preserve these levels, and no further archaeologically-relevant levels were exposed or affected by the groundworks.

References

- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268 Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Lewis J, 2008, 'Woolhampton Village Hall, Bath Road, Woolhampton, West Berkshire an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report, **05/125**, Reading
Taylor, A, 2006, 'Douai Abbey, Upper Woolhampton, West Berkshire an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report, **05/10**, Reading.
Trigg, J, 2000, *Village Collection, More old tales of Woolhampton, Midgham, Brimpton and Wasing*, Monograph/SWB14056, privately published.

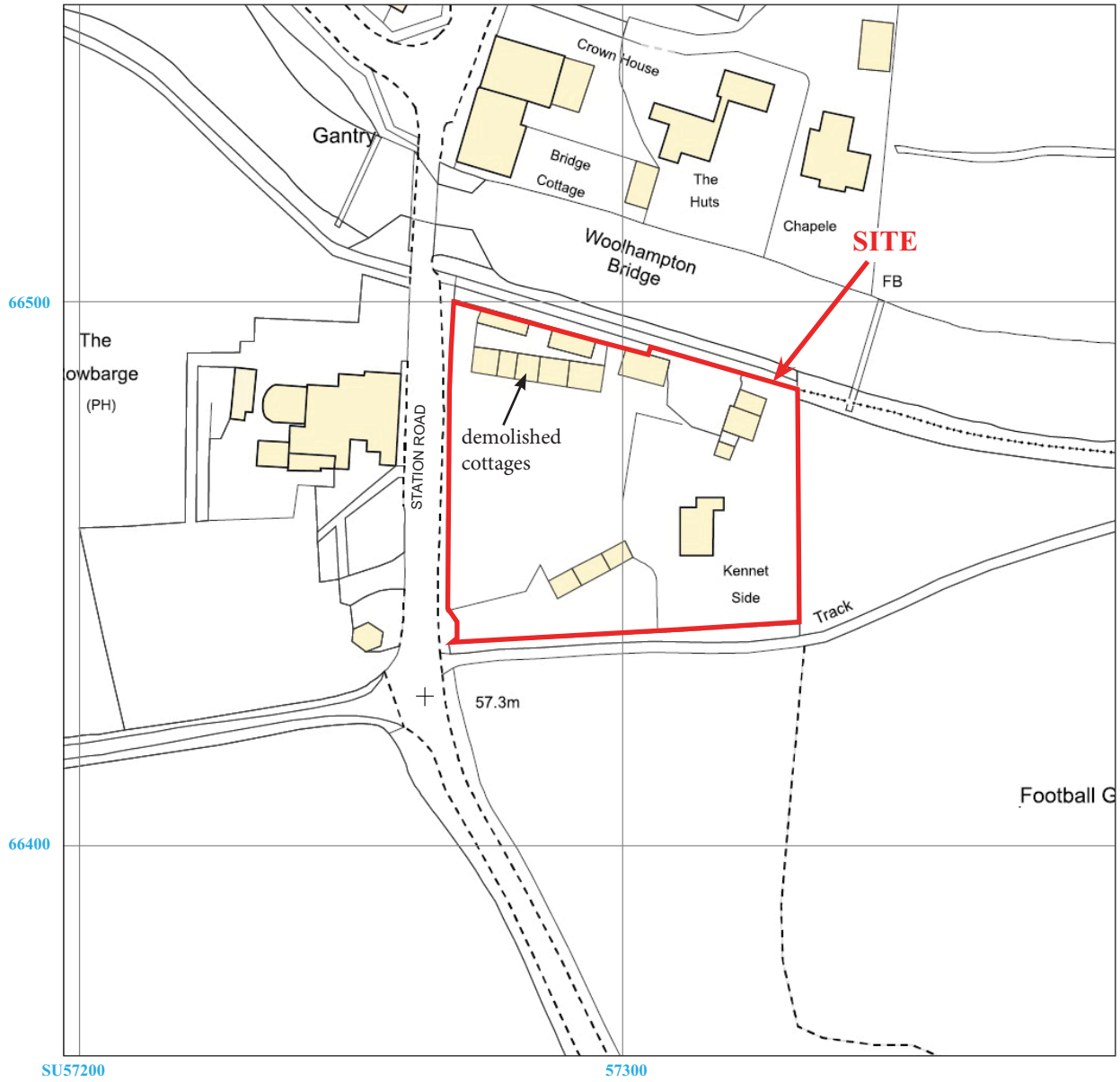


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Figure 1. Location of site within Woolhampton and Berkshire.

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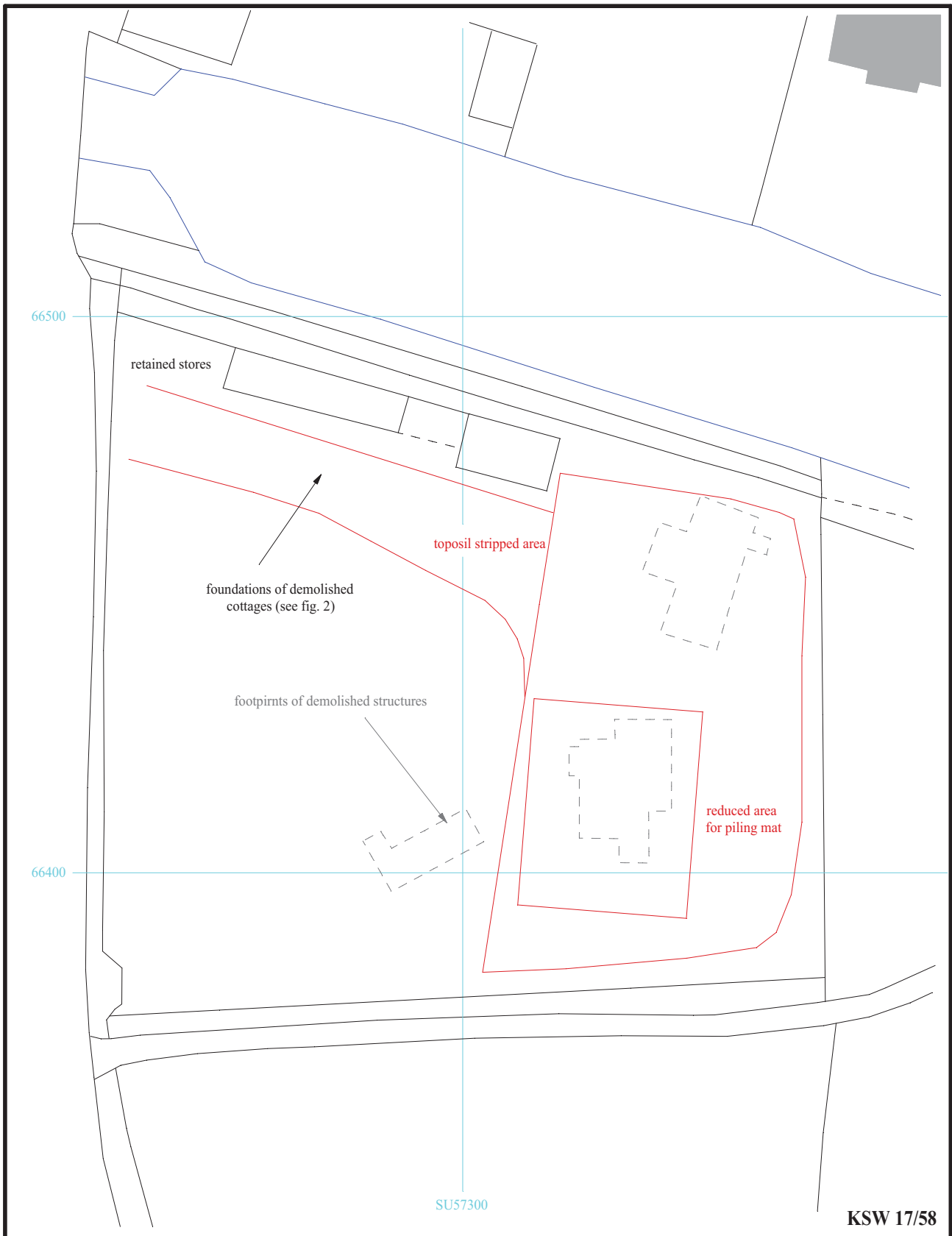
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Station Road.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.





Plate 1. View over stripped area on east of site, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. View over stripped area on south east of site, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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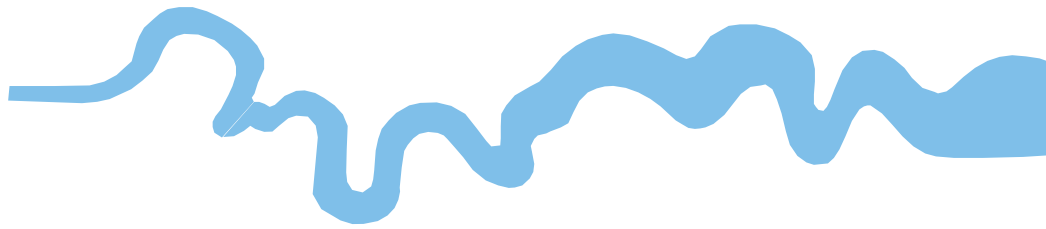
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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