

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**University Spine Road, Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Crabb and Luis Esteves

Site Code: USR17/206

(SU 7265 6725)

**University Spine Road, Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for CgMs Consulting**

by Steven Crabb and Luis Esteves
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code USR 17/206

November 2017

Summary

Site name: University Spine Road, Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7265 6725

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26th October 2017

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves

Site code: USR17/206

Summary of results: A single undated gully was uncovered

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local Museum willing to accept archives in due course.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 27.11.17
	Steve Preston ✓ 23.11.17

University Spine Road, Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 17/206

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Hyde End Lane, Ryeish Green, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7265 6725) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steven Weaver, of CgMs Consulting Burlington House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham, GL50 2SY on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd and David Wilson Homes Southern.

Planning permission (170239) has been granted by Wokingham Council for an extensive development at Spencer's Wood, Reading, Berkshire. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features planning condition 33 was attached requiring a programme of archaeological investigation be carried out. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The current archaeological investigation was required as part of this condition related to the construction of a link road on the south-eastern extent of this site. Other investigations as part of other phases of the development programme have been (Dawson 2017; Taylor 2017) or will be reported on separately.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kathelen Leary, Archaeological Office for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves along with Anne Huvig and Pierre Manisse on 26th October 2017 and the site code is USR 17/206. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a parcel of land at the south eastern margin of Ryeish Green, itself located south of Reading and the M4 (Fig. 1). The land is currently in use as arable land with the crop cover recently having been harvested. The site is gently sloping down from north-west to south-east. The underlying geology consists of Third Terrace valley gravels deposits overlying London Clay (BGS 2000). The site lies at a height of 49m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been detailed in desk-based assessments (CgMs 2010; 2012). The site is within the archaeologically rich zone on the margins of the Foudry Brook/River Kennet valley. The archaeological potential of this area was previously indicated through both aerial photography (Gates 1975) and field survey (Ford 1997). More recently excavated sites to the north-west revealed deposits of Iron Age and Roman dates at Grazeley Road (Ford *et al.* 2011) and MereOak Lane (Milbank 2010) and to the south deposits of Iron Age date (ASE 2004a, 2004b; Taylor and Dawson 2017). Roman (Booth *et al.* 2007, fig 3.5) and Bronze Age (Brossler *et al.* 2004; 2013; Moore and Jennings 1992) occupation have also been recorded to the north west. An evaluation in advance of planning permission being granted revealed potential for Roman, Saxon and post medieval features to the north-west, west and south of the site (Taylor 2012).

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 specific research aims of this project are as follows:

- to determine if any archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any periods are present;
- to establish a relative and absolute chronological framework for the site; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Three trenches were to be excavated along the proposed route of the access road. These were to be dug with a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project without compromising the integrity of deposits that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Trenches 1 and 2 were located in accordance with the written scheme of investigation. Trench 3 was relocated to the south-west, along the direction of the road, as the intended location had been enclosed as part of a

neighbouring development. The trenches measured between 29.5m and 30.6m in length and all were 1.85m wide (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The sole excavated feature, is summarized in Appendix 2.

All trenches comprised topsoil overlying subsoil with Trenches 1 and 2 overlying sand and gravel natural geology and Trench 3 overlying sandy clay with gravel patches.

Trench 1 (Fig 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 30.6m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.18m of subsoil overlying sand and gravel natural geology. At 24.1m from the south-west end of the trench was a gully terminus through which a slot (1) (Fig. 4; Pl. 4) was dug to reveal it was 0.9m wide and 0.18m deep. Its mid grey silty sand fill (52) did not contain any dating evidence.

Trench 2 (Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned SW - NE and was 29.5m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil overlying 0.4m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology. Two field drains were present in this trench one extending from the SW end in an easterly direction for approximately 20m and the second field drain crossing the trench at 25m from the SW end.

Trench 3 (Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW- NE and was 30.2 m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.2m of subsoil which overlay the natural geology. Two field drains at the SW end and 25m from the SW end were observed as was a furrow 2.7m wide at 15.6m from the SW end. This trench had to be slightly relocated due to the presence of fencing enclosing a neighbouring site (Pl.3).

Finds

No finds were recovered from this evaluation.

Conclusion

Three trenches were dug within the area to be impacted by road construction. A single gully was excavated in trench 1 however there was no dating evidence present in this feature. Based on these results, the potential for archaeology in this part of the development area is considered low.

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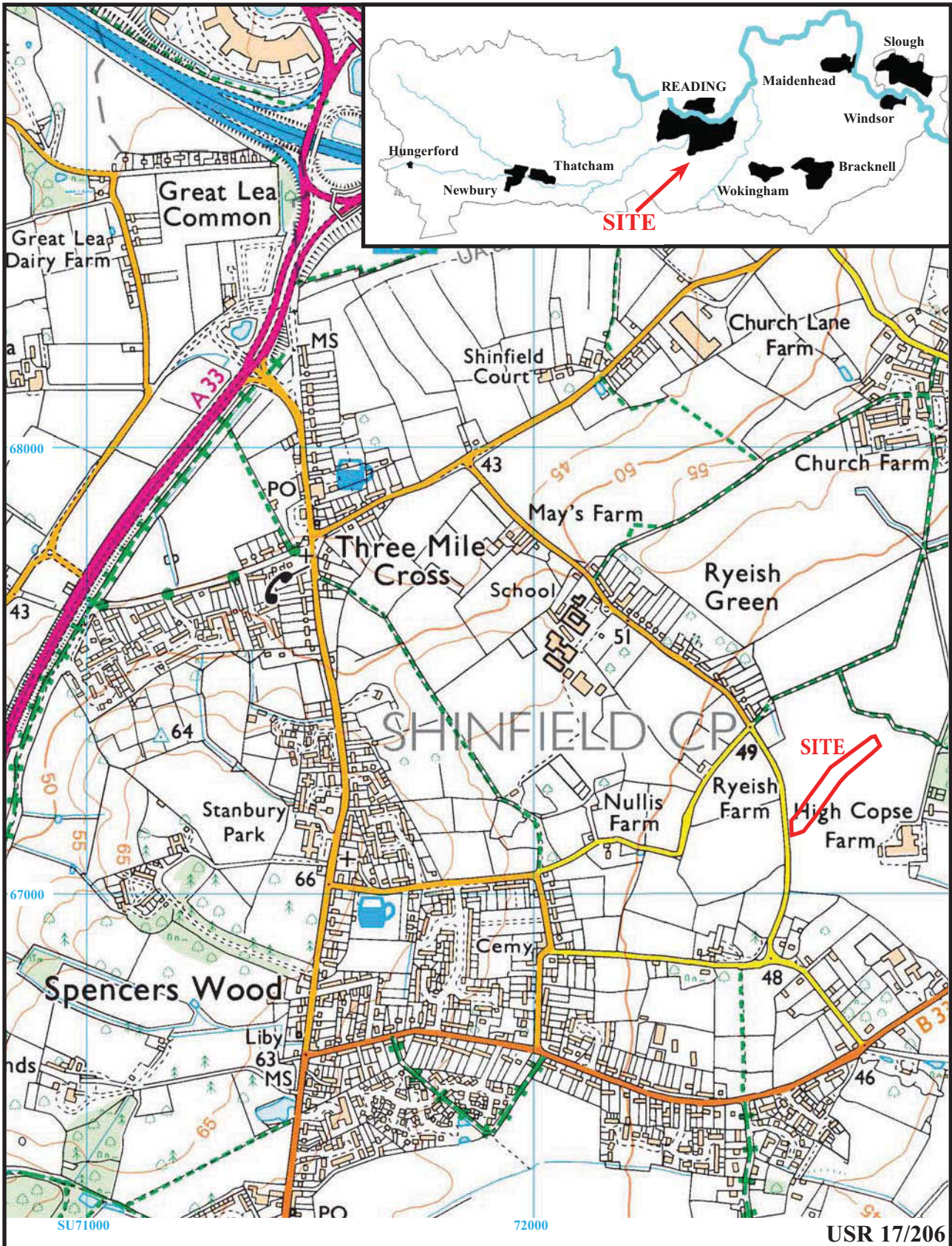
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at Southwestern end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	30.6	1.85	0.5	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.48m subsoil, 0.48m + reddish brown sand and gravel natural geology. Gully 1
2	29.5	1.85	0.7	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.70 subsoil, 0.70m + reddish brown sand and gravel natural geology.
3	30.2	1.85	0.6	0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.45m subsoil, 0.45m + reddish yellow brown sandy clay with gravel patches

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1		51	Subsoil	Undated	None
1	1	52	Gully terminus	Undated	None



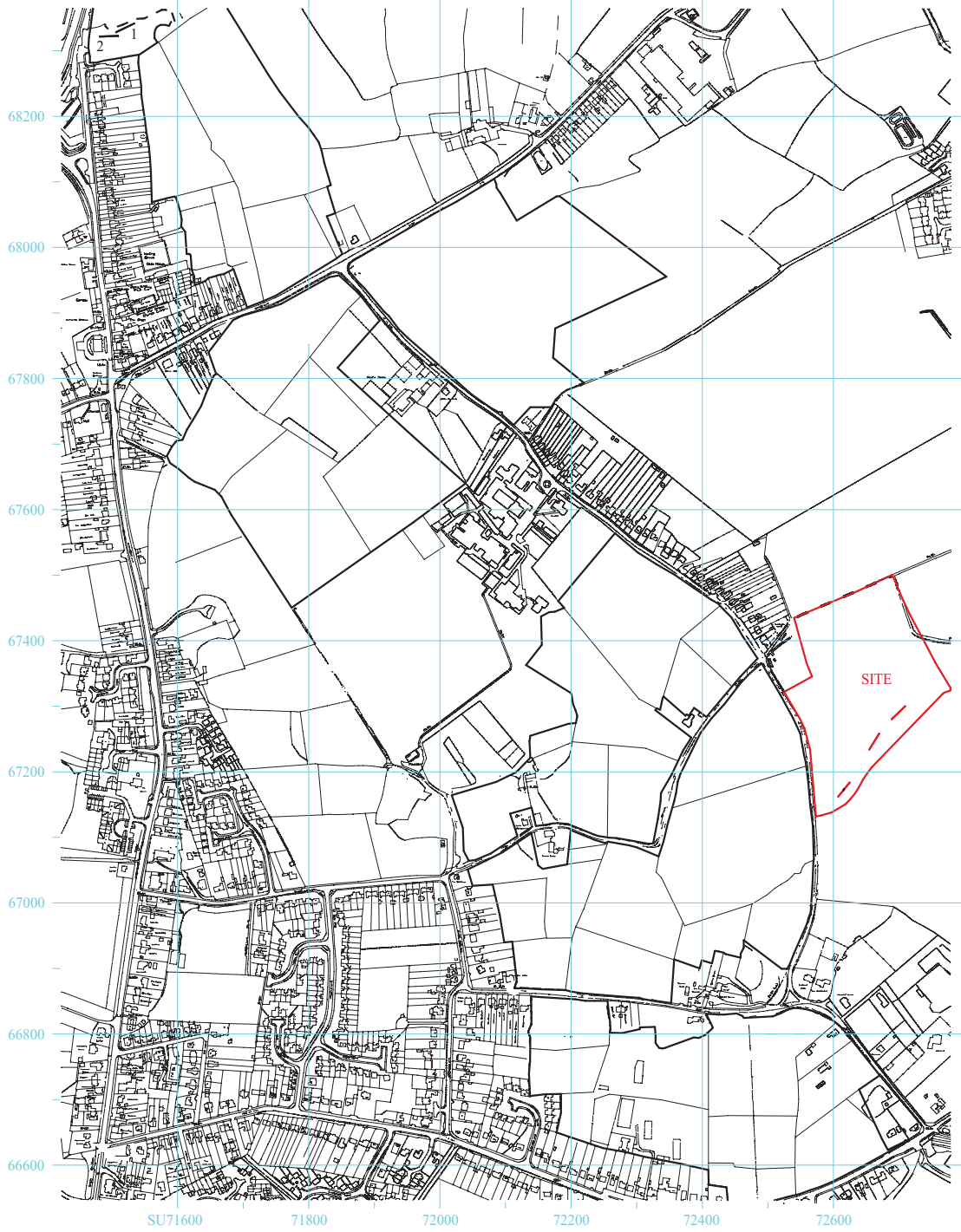
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Spencers Wood and Berkshire.

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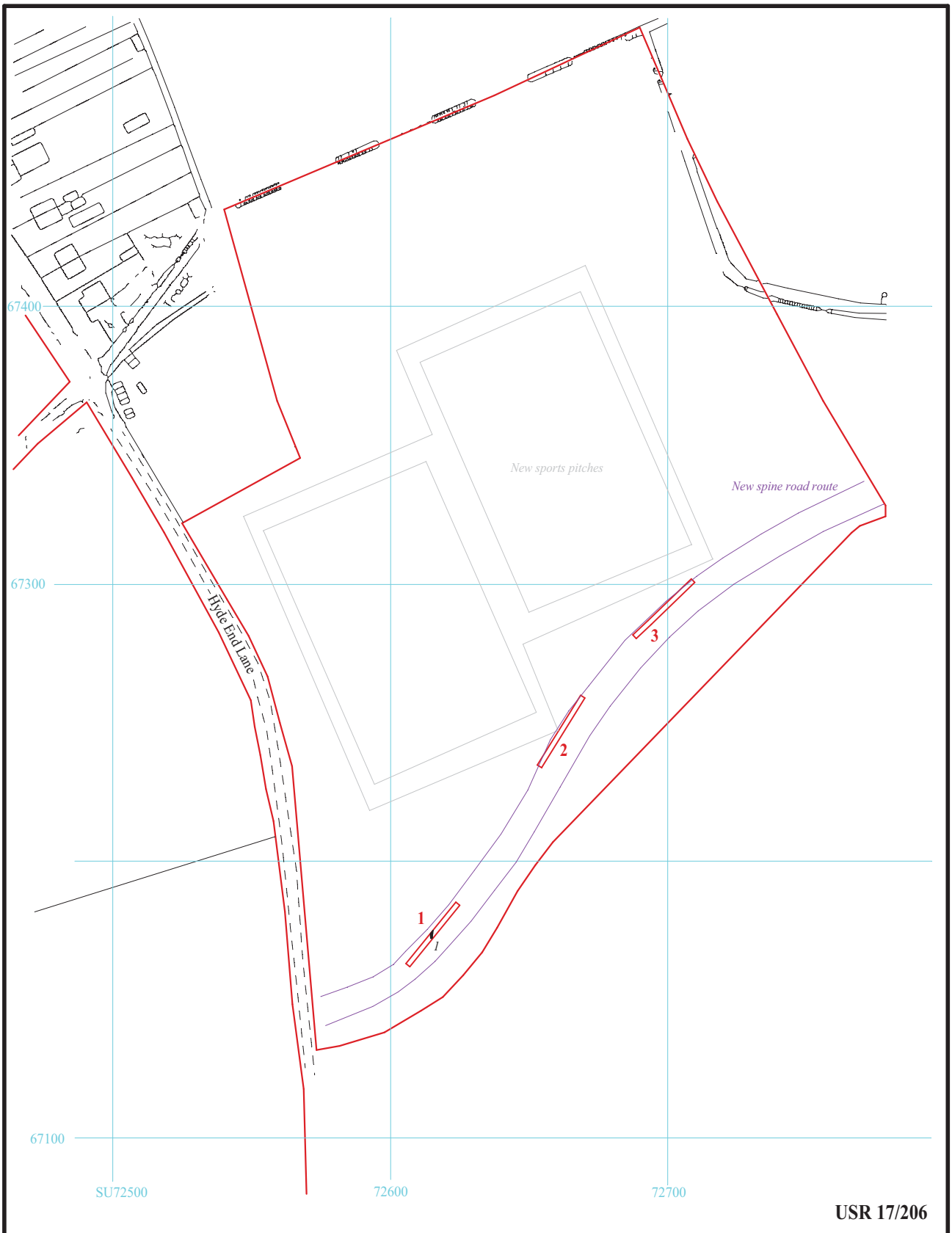
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Figure 2. Overview of evaluation location



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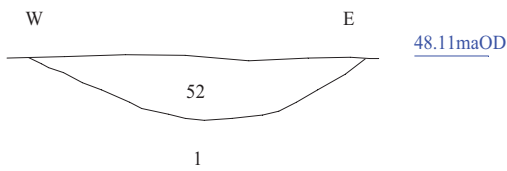
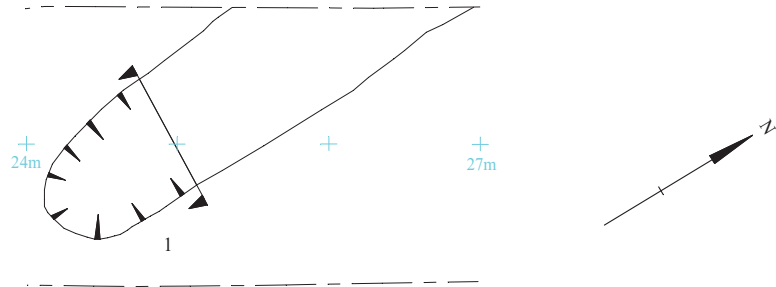
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Figure 3. Location of trenches



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Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail from Trench 1.

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



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

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Plates 1 and 2.

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



Plate 4. Trench 1, ditch terminus 1, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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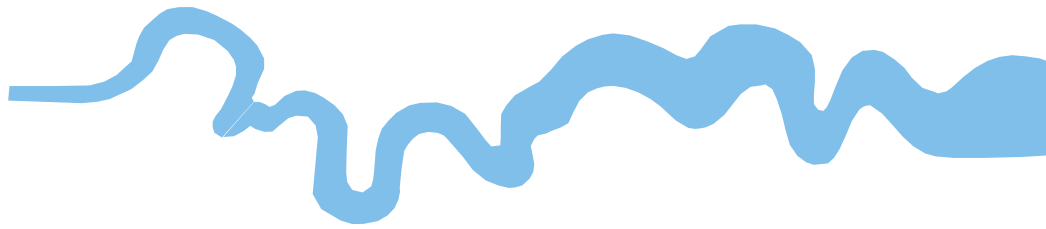
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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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