

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Dedworth Middle School, Smiths Lane,
Dedworth, Windsor, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Cecilia Galleano

Site Code: DSW17/210

(SU 9411 7651)

**Dedworth Middle School, Smiths Lane,
Dedworth, Windsor, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Faithful and Gould Limited**

by Cecilia Galleano

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DWS17/210

December 2017

Summary

Site name: Dedworth Middle School, Smiths Lane, Dedworth, Windsor, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9411 7651

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: SU 9411 7651

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Cecilia Galleano

Site code: DSW17/210

Area of site: 0.17ha

Summary of results: Four trenches were dug as intended during the course of the archaeological evaluation but only a single possible feature (a pit) was uncovered. This contained no archaeological finds. A Roman tile fragment (*tegula*) was recovered from the subsoil. The site is therefore considered to have 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 approved local Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 14.12.17 Steve Preston✓ 13.12.17

Dedworth Middle School, Smiths Lane, Dedworth, Windsor, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Cecilia Galleano

Report 17/210

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Dedworth Middle School, Smiths Lane, Dedworth, Windsor, Berkshire (SU 9411 7651) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Josh Welka, of Faithful and Gould, Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London, NW1 3AT.

Planning permission (app no 17/01437/FULL) has been gained on appeal from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new school building. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the groundworks, a field investigation has been required. This was to take the form, initially, of evaluation by means of trial trenching, based on the results of which further fieldwork might be required to mitigate the impact of the development on archaeological remains.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Cecilia Galleano and Maisie Foster on 6th and 7th December 2017 and the site code is DWS 17/210. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local approved museum willing to accept the archive, in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north-west of the town of Windsor (Fig. 1). The site is located in the interior of the grounds of Dedworth Middle School, on the west side of Smiths Lane and on the north side of Dedworth Road (Fig. 2). It lies at a height of *c.* 25m above Ordnance Datum and consists of a flat plot of land occupied by school buildings and football and tennis fields. The underlying geology is mapped as London clay (BGS 1981): the geology uncovered in the trenches was light yellowish brown clay.

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 (Ford 1987; Gates 1975) and there are exceptional Early Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation deposits recorded across the river from the site of the Eton-Dorney rowing lake (Allen *et al.* 2004). The site lies within or close to the historic core of Dedworth which is documented in Domesday Book but was subsequently subdivided into two manors in medieval times. One of the manor sites is likely to be at the moated site located to the south of the site (now built over) with a second to the north-west. In early post-medieval times the site lay on the fringe of the hamlet and perhaps parts of several of those properties could lie within its boundaries. Evaluation to the south (Lewis 2008) revealed some medieval and post-medieval boundary features, and to the west a medieval hearth has been recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. Further to the west, evaluation revealed a burnt mound, probably of Bronze Age date along with other prehistoric occupation (Pine 1996), and a small evaluation to the south-west revealed a probable medieval gully (Cass 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- 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 or Medieval deposits are present; and
- to determine if any archaeologically significant deposits are present so as to inform the development of a mitigation strategy.

Four trenches were to be dug, each 10m in length and 1.6m wide, targeting the proposed new building. There were to be dug using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket, under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the features excavated to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Four trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). They were all 1.6m wide and ranged in length from 10m to 12.40m with depths between 0.39m and 0.52m. All trenches were crossed by modern land drains cut from topsoil level. Trenches 1 and 4 were extended for a total of 2m each (presence of pipes and land drains did not permit exposure of the natural horizon for the total of 10m). Four slots were dug into modern linear features in order to prove their nature and chronology. Finds were recovered only from the subsoil (ceramic building material and burnt flints).

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. All trenches were taken below the top level of the natural to confirm it was not redeposited. The excavated feature is summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned E-W and was 12.40m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.19m of subsoil (quite mixed) overlying natural clay geology. No features were present nor finds recovered.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2 and 3)

Trench 2 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 10.30m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil and 0.08m of subsoil overlying natural geology. At 2.6m from the north-west end of the trench, a single possible small pit was revealed cut into the natural from below subsoil level. Pit 1 was partially under the trench edge but was approximately 0.46m in diameter and just 0.10m deep (Fig. 4; Pl. 3). Its single fill of light grey-orange silty clay contained no finds.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned N-S and was 10m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.16m of subsoil overlying natural geology. No features were present. A fragment of Roman *Tegula* was recovered from the subsoil.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned NE-SW and was 12.0m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.15m of subsoil overlying natural geology. No features were observed nor finds recovered.

Finds

Pottery

A sherd of Victorian or modern glazed grey earthenware was noted in the topsoil in Trench 1: this was not retained.

Ceramic Building Material

Subsoil in all trenches contained fragments of ceramic building material. Apart from one fragment of Roman *tegula* (roof tile, weighing 218g) with the characteristic cut-away flange, from subsoil in Trench 3, one fragment of peg tile (medieval or more likely post-medieval) and one in a very coarse-grained fabric (possibly medieval), none of it can be dated (Appendix 3). Some of it is probably modern ceramic drain pipe.

Burnt flint

Four small pieces of unworked, burnt flint were recovered from subsoil and topsoil (Appendix 4).

Conclusion

The evaluation trenches revealed just a single undated cut feature, a small pit or posthole which contained no finds. Ceramic building material from the topsoil and subsoil includes one piece of Roman date and one probably medieval but this durable material is often reused and most probably has been redeposited from elsewhere. Based on these results, the archaeological potential of the development area is low.

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	12.40	1.60	0.52	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18m-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m+clay natural geology. [Pl. 1]
2	10.30	1.60	0.39	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22m-0.3m subsoil; 0.30m+clay natural geology. [Pls 2 and 3]
3	10.00	1.60	0.44	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m-0.33m subsoil; 0.33m+clay natural geology.
4	12.00	1.60	0.42	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16m-0.31m subsoil; 0.31+clay natural geology. [Pl. 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

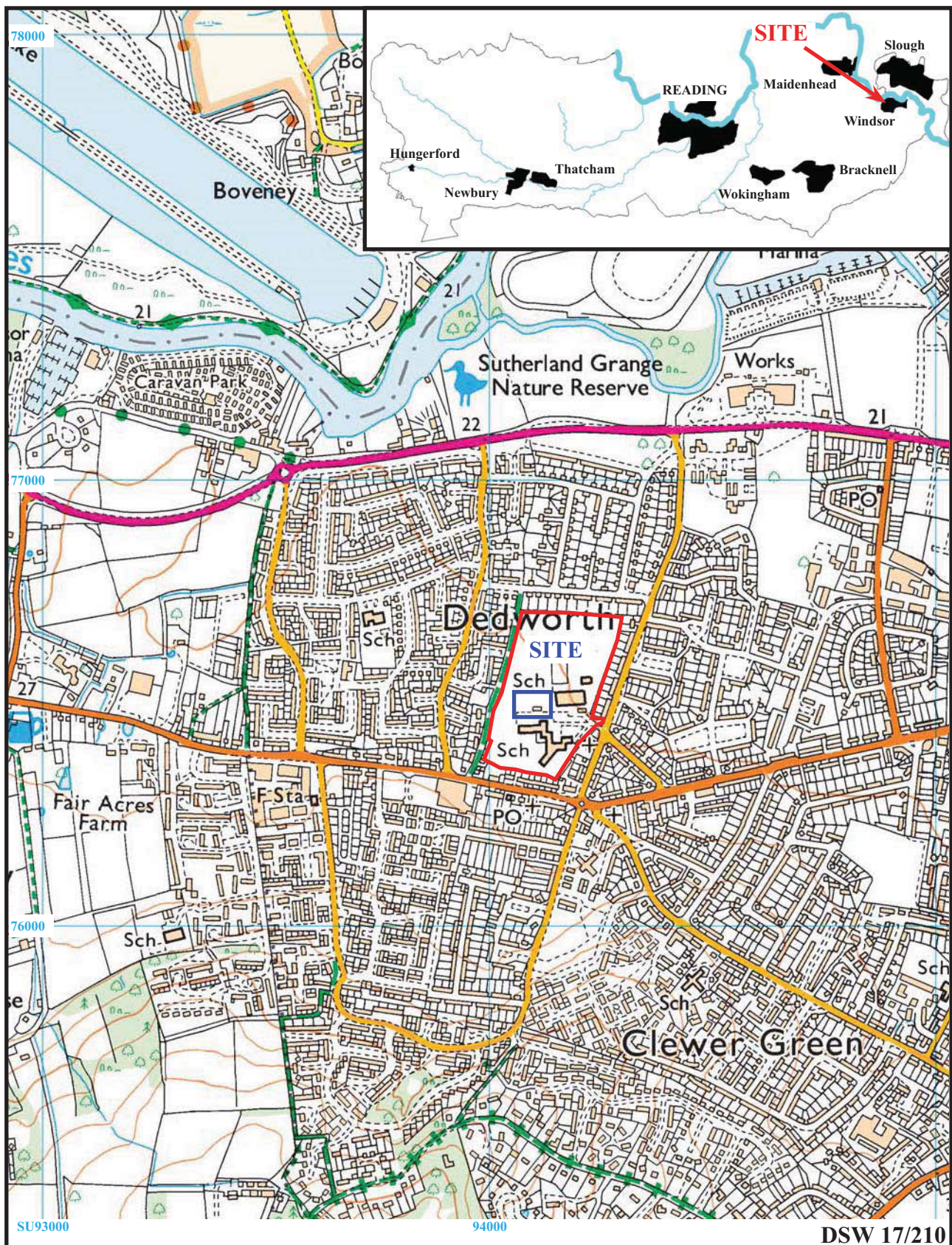
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	50	Possible/pit-posthole	-	No finds

APPENDIX 3: Ceramic building material

<i>Trench</i> <i>h</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	
1	Subsoil	2	275	
2	Subsoil	2	275	Peg tile
3	Subsoil	1	218	tegula
4	Subsoil	2	60	
4	Modern drain	2	78	

APPENDIX 4: Burnt flint

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1	subsoil	1	19
3	Topsoil	1	17
4	subsoil	2	30



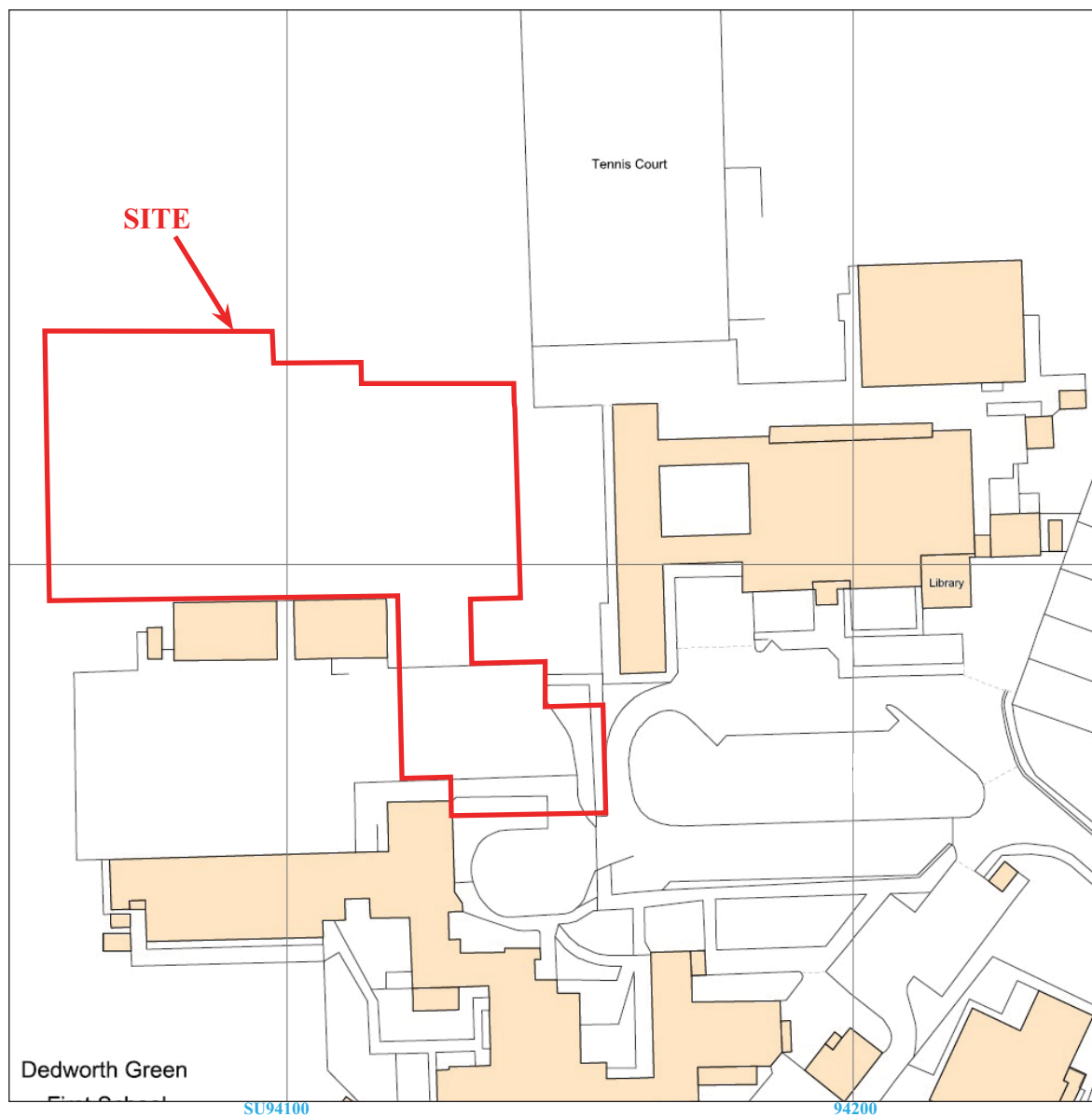
DSW 17/210

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Windsor, Berkshire, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Windsor and Berkshire.

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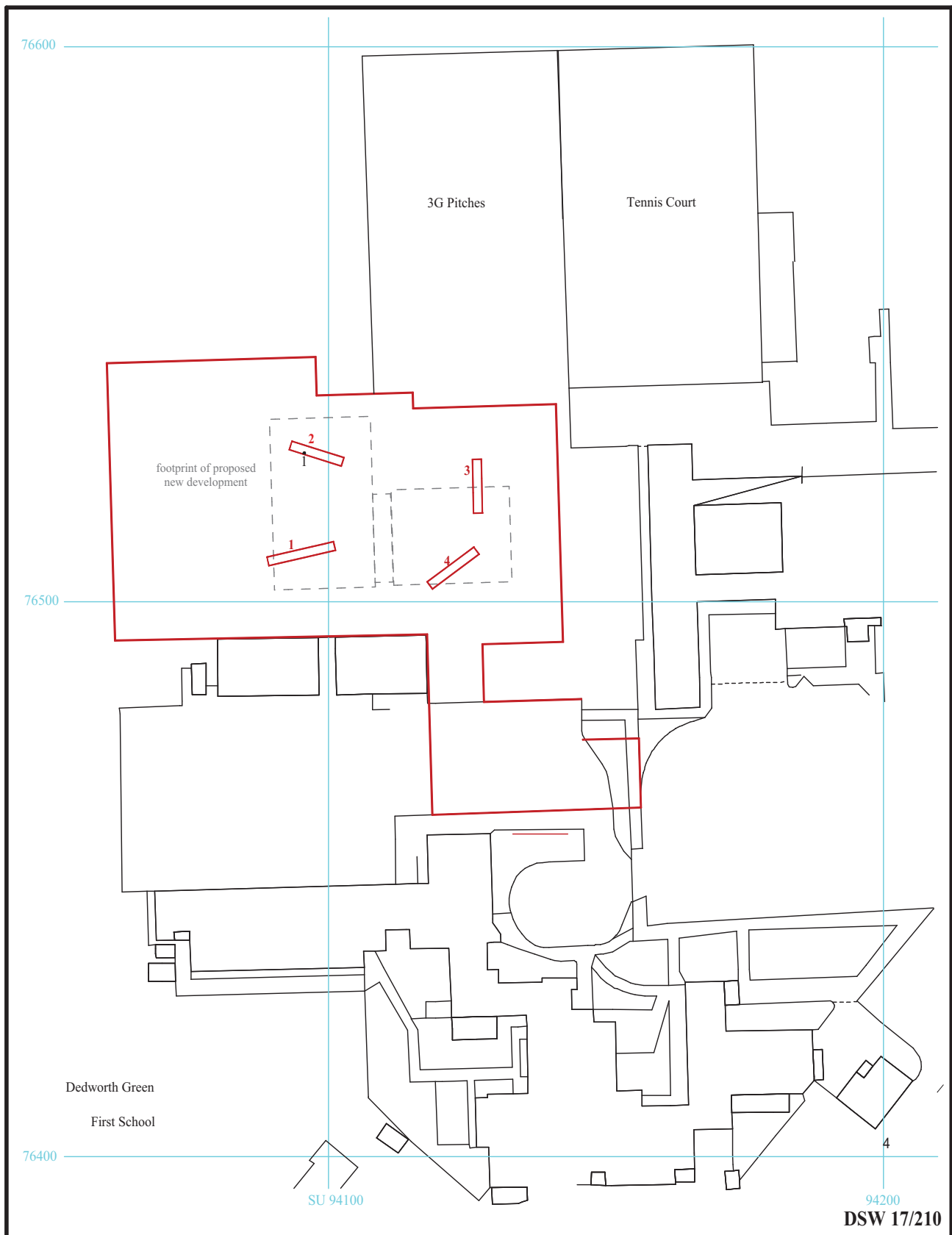
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Archaeological Evaluation**

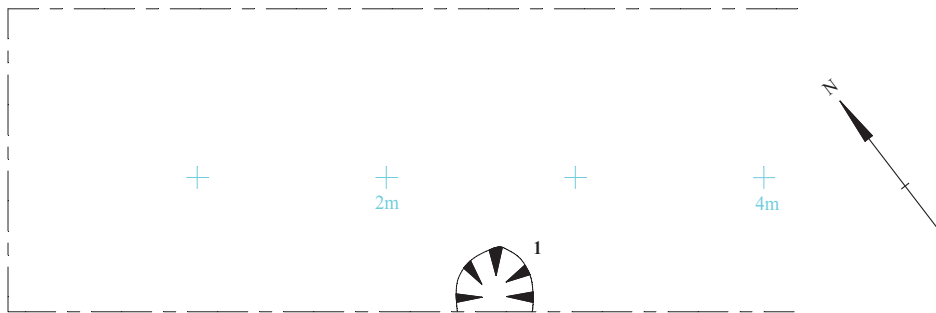
Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 50m

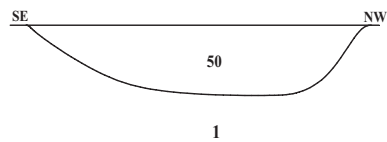


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Trench 2



0 1m



0 0.5m

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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Detail of Trench 2.

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north-east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south-east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 3. Pit 1, looking south, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



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

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Archaeological Evaluation**

Plates 1 to 4.

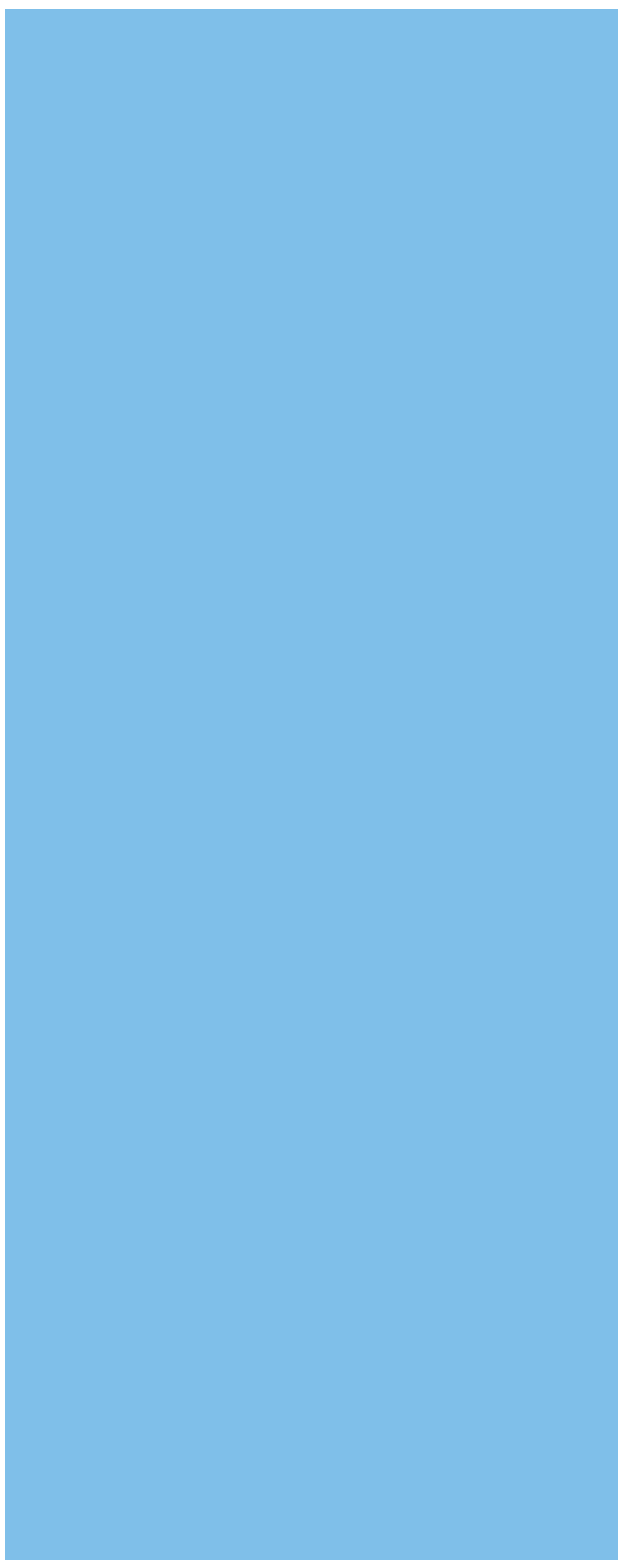
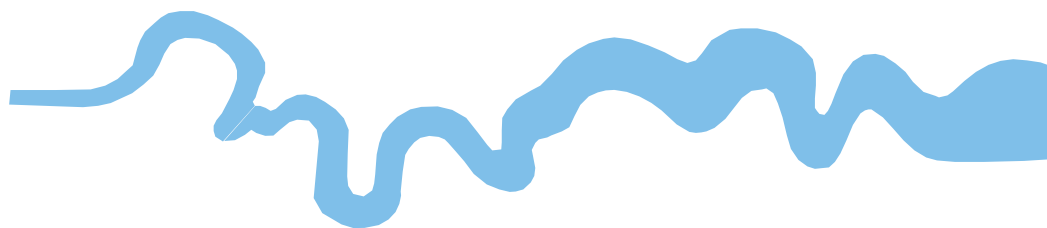
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TIME CHART

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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