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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Phase 2B and Area C, Spencers Wood,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Luis Esteves**

**Site Code: SWB17/208**

**(Phase 2B: SU 7170 6780)**

**(Area C: SU 7240 6740)**

# **Phase 2B and Area C, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for CgMs Consulting**

by Luís Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SWB 17/208

**December 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** Phase 2B and Area C, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** Phase 2B: SU 7170 6780  
Area C: SU 7240 6740

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd October to 15th December 2017

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Luís Esteves

**Site code:** SWB 17/208

**Summary of results:** 16 trenches were excavated in two areas as intended. No archaeological deposits nor artefacts were identified and these areas are 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 appropriate Museum or repository in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 18.12.17 Steve Preston ✓ 18.12.17
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# Phase 2B and Area C, Spencers Wood , Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luís Esteves

Report 17/208

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out in two areas of land at Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7170 6780- Phase 2B; SU 7240 6740 Area- C) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steven Weaver, of CgMs Consulting, Burlington House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham.

Planning permission (162829) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for development of land for housing. In light of the possibility that the site might contain archaeological remains which might be impacted by the proposed development the consent is subject to a condition (condition 33), requiring a field evaluation to inform a mitigation strategy if required. This report relates to two areas known for planning purposes as Phase 2b and Area C.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *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 Ellie Leary, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luís Esteves along with Cosmo Bacon and Ashley Kruger on 2nd and 3rd October 2017 (Area C) and 12th-15th December 2017 (Phase 2B) and the site code is SWB 17/208. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The sites are located on the eastern margins of Spencers Wood, south of Reading (Fig. 1) with the main focus of trenching to the south of Church Lane (Fig. 2). The majority of the sites are unused former farmland. The underlying geology consists of London Clay (BGS 2000) which was observed in the trenches as a silty clay sometimes with sand patches. As a whole the sites lie on relatively flat plots of land at a height of 42m above Ordnance Datum for Phase 2B, and 48m for Area C.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the sites stem from their locations within an archaeologically rich zone on the valley margins of the Foudry Brook/River Kennet. Field survey (Ford 1997) and aerial photography (Gates 1975) had previously indicated the archaeological potential in the area with recently excavated sites having shown an emphasis on deposits of Iron Age and Roman date such as at Grazeley Road and Mereok Lane to the west (Ford *et al.* 2011; Milbank 2010) and Iron Age to the south (ASE 2004a and b). Both Roman (Booth 2007, fig 3.5) and Bronze Age occupation is also recorded to the north-west (Brossler *et al.* 2004; 2013; Moore and Jennings 1992). Preliminary evaluation in Phase 2 located undated and post-medieval gullies (Taylor 2012) (Fig. 4).

## **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 the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Sixteen trenches were to be dug in total, four in Area C and twelve in Phase 2B. These were to be dug using a 360-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, these were dug 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**

The trenches were located as close as possible to their intended positions although occasional movement due to boundaries or known services was required (specifically Trenches 10 and 16). The trenches measured between 30m and 50m in length, all were 1.8m wide (Figs 2, 3 and 4). All spoilheaps were monitored for finds. A

complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### *Area C*

#### Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 1)

This trench was aligned SE–NW, measured 30m in length and 0.30m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a light yellowish silty clay natural geology. A modern field drain was observed at 1.2m from the SE end of the trench. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 2)

This trench was aligned W–E, measured 31m in length and 0.30m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a light yellowish silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 3)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 31m in length and 0.40m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a light yellowish silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 4)

This trench was aligned SE–NW, measured 30m in length and 0.35m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a light yellowish silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

### *Phase 2b*

#### Trench 5 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 50m in length and 0.30m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a light yellowish brown silty clay natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 6 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 50m in length and 0.55m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. A modern field drain was observed at 28m from the SW end of the trench. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 7 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl 5)

This trench was aligned SE–NW, measured 49m in length and 0.54m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 8 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 50m in length and 0.47m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 9 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 50m in length and 0.38m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 10 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl 6)

This trench was aligned roughly W–E, measured 45m in length and 0.42m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 11 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl 7)

This trench was aligned S–N, measured 48m in length and 0.46m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 12 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl 8)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 46m in length and 0.41m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 13 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SE–NW, measured 49m in length and 0.40m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 14 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 47m in length and 0.27m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 15 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SW–NE, measured 50m in length and 0.43m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 16 (Figs 2 and 4)

This trench was aligned SE–NW, measured 45m in length and 0.42m deep, and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil which in turn overlay a mottled mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional sand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

### **Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the trenching.

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation has been carried out as intended. All trenches were devoid of archaeological features and finds and revealed only modern land drains. A spoil heap search yielded only fragments of tile/ drain pipe which were not retained. The sites are considered to have low archaeological potential.

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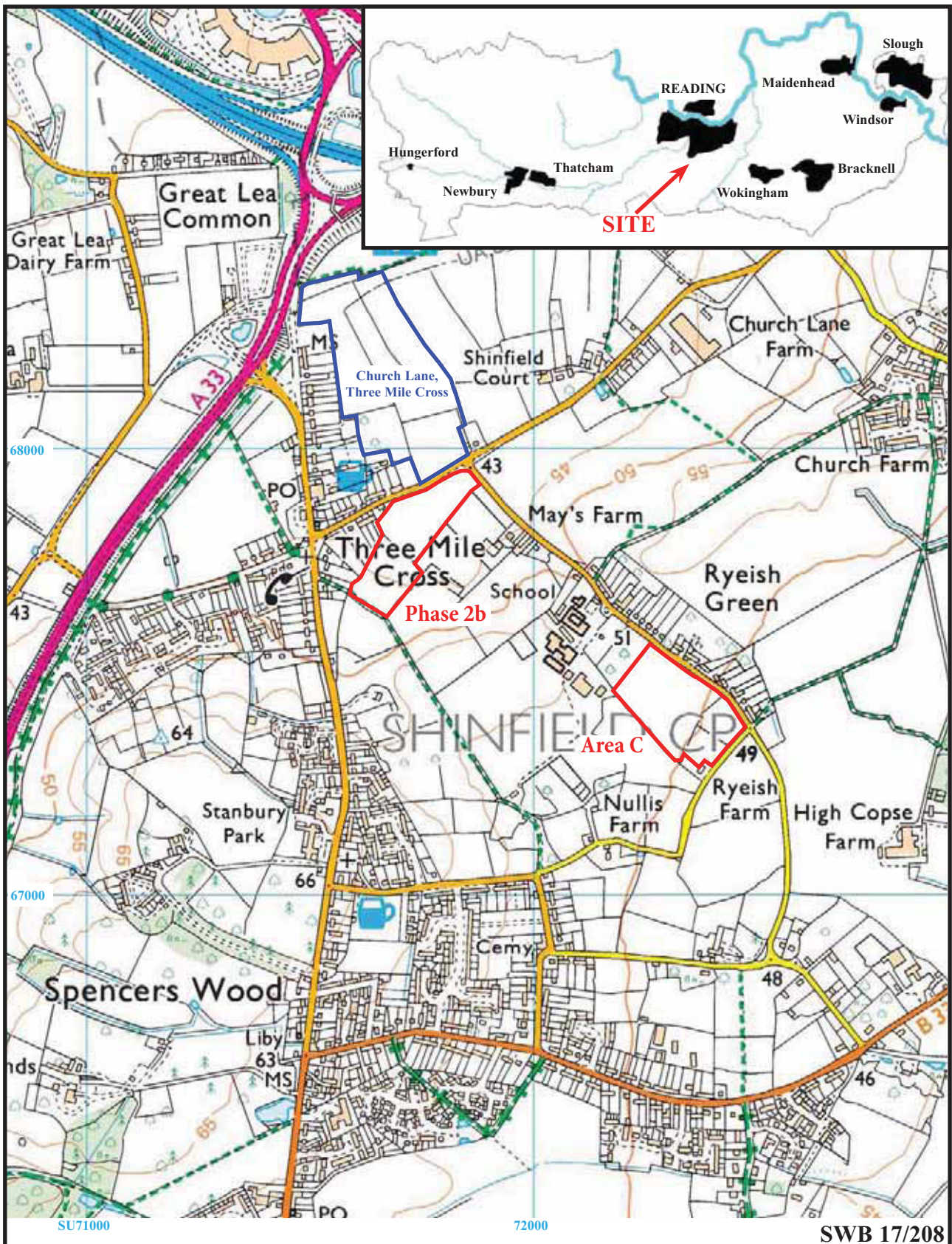


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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at S, W, SW and SE end

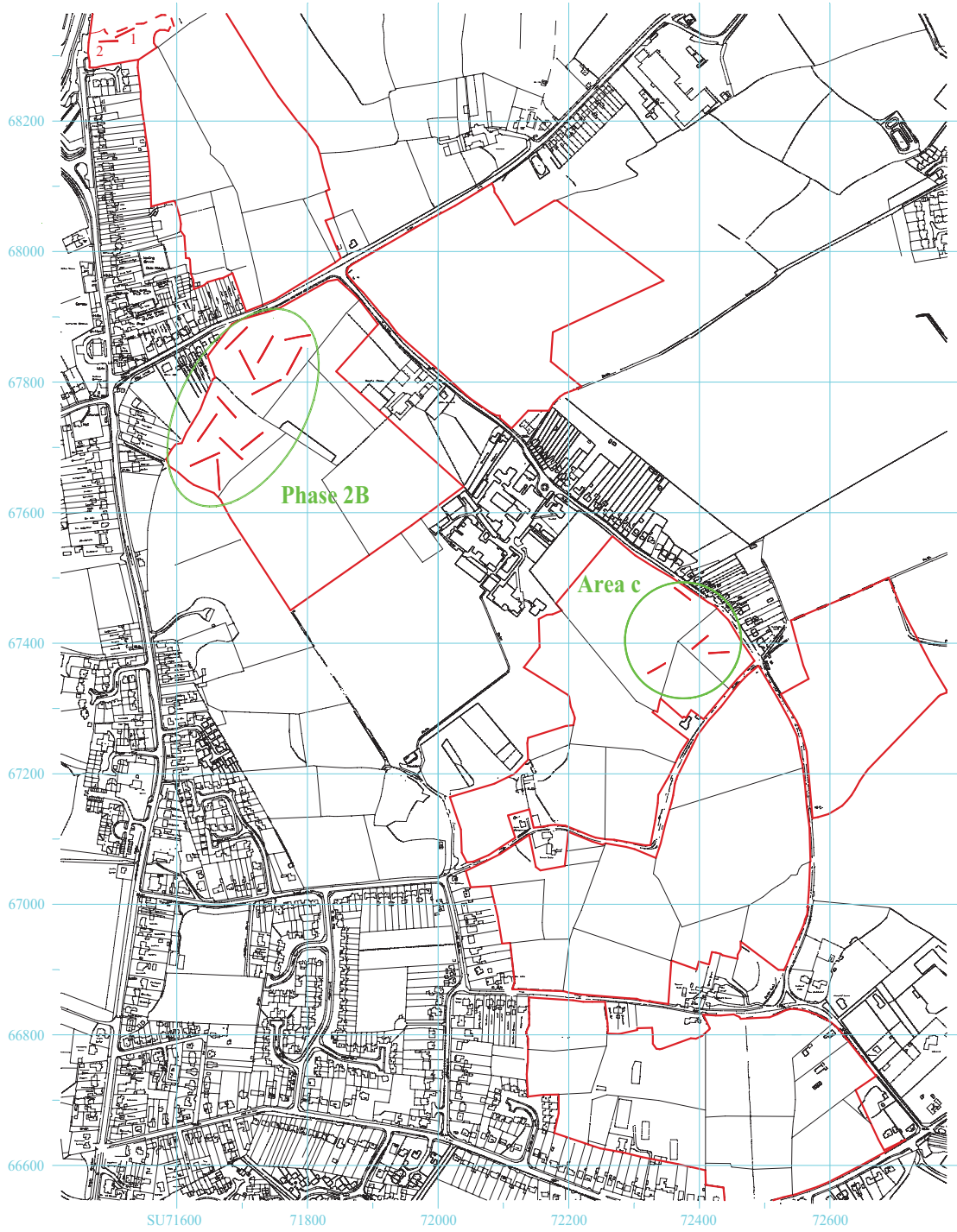
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	30	1.80	0.30	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ light yellowish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
2	31	1.80	0.30	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ light yellowish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
3	31	1.80	0.40	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ light yellowish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
4	30	1.80	0.35	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ light yellowish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 4]</b>
5	50	1.80	0.30	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10m-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ light yellowish silty clay natural geology.
6	50	1.80	0.55	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
7	49	1.80	0.54	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 5]</b>
8	50	1.80	0.47	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
9	50	1.80	0.38	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
10	45	1.80	0.42	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 6]</b>
11	48	1.80	0.46	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22m-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 7]</b>
12	46	1.80	0.41	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology. <b>[Pl. 8]</b>
13	49	1.80	0.40	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
14	47	1.80	0.27	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
15	50	1.80	0.43	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.
16	45	1.80	0.42	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ mottled reddish silty clay natural geology.



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

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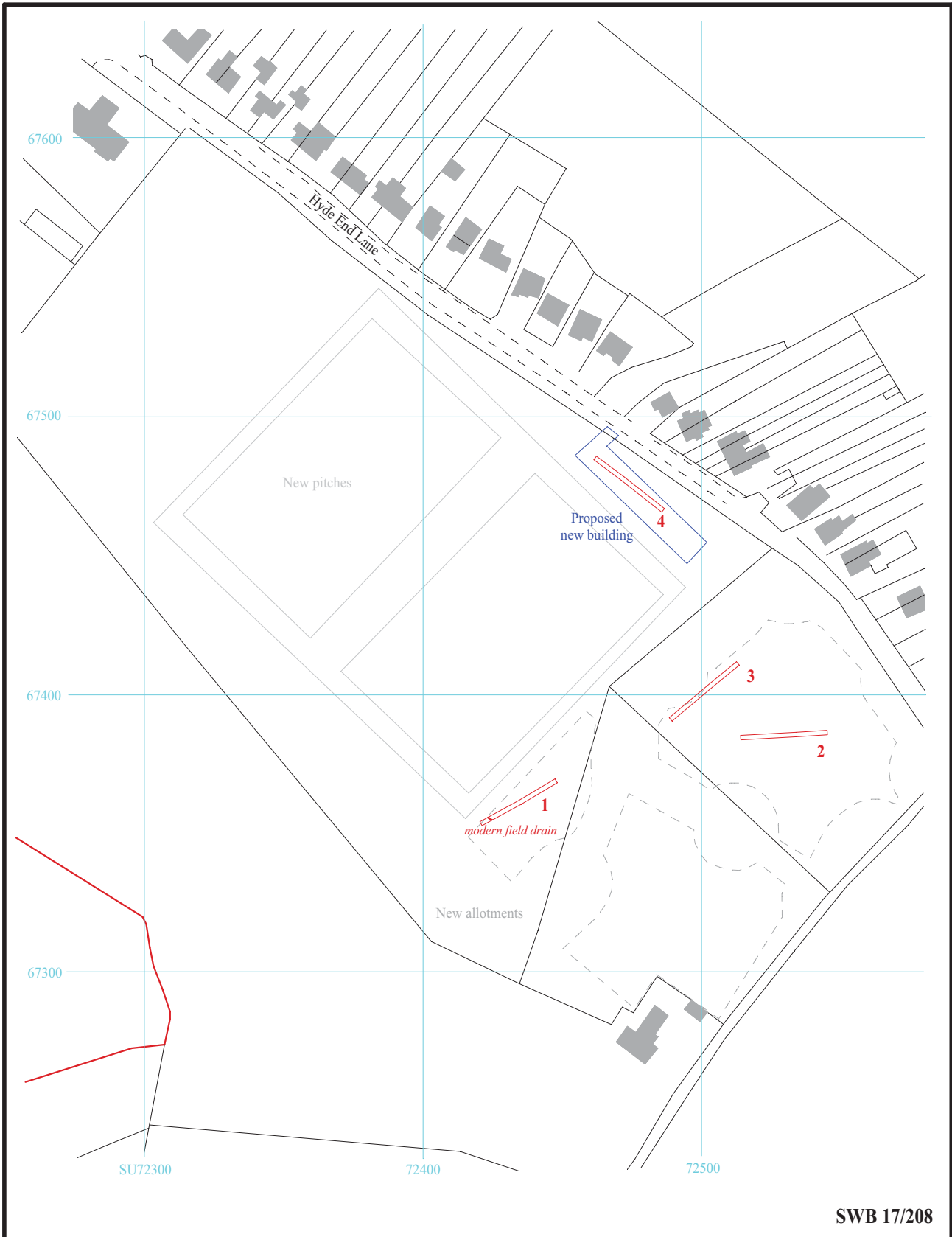


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Figure 2. Overview of trench locations.



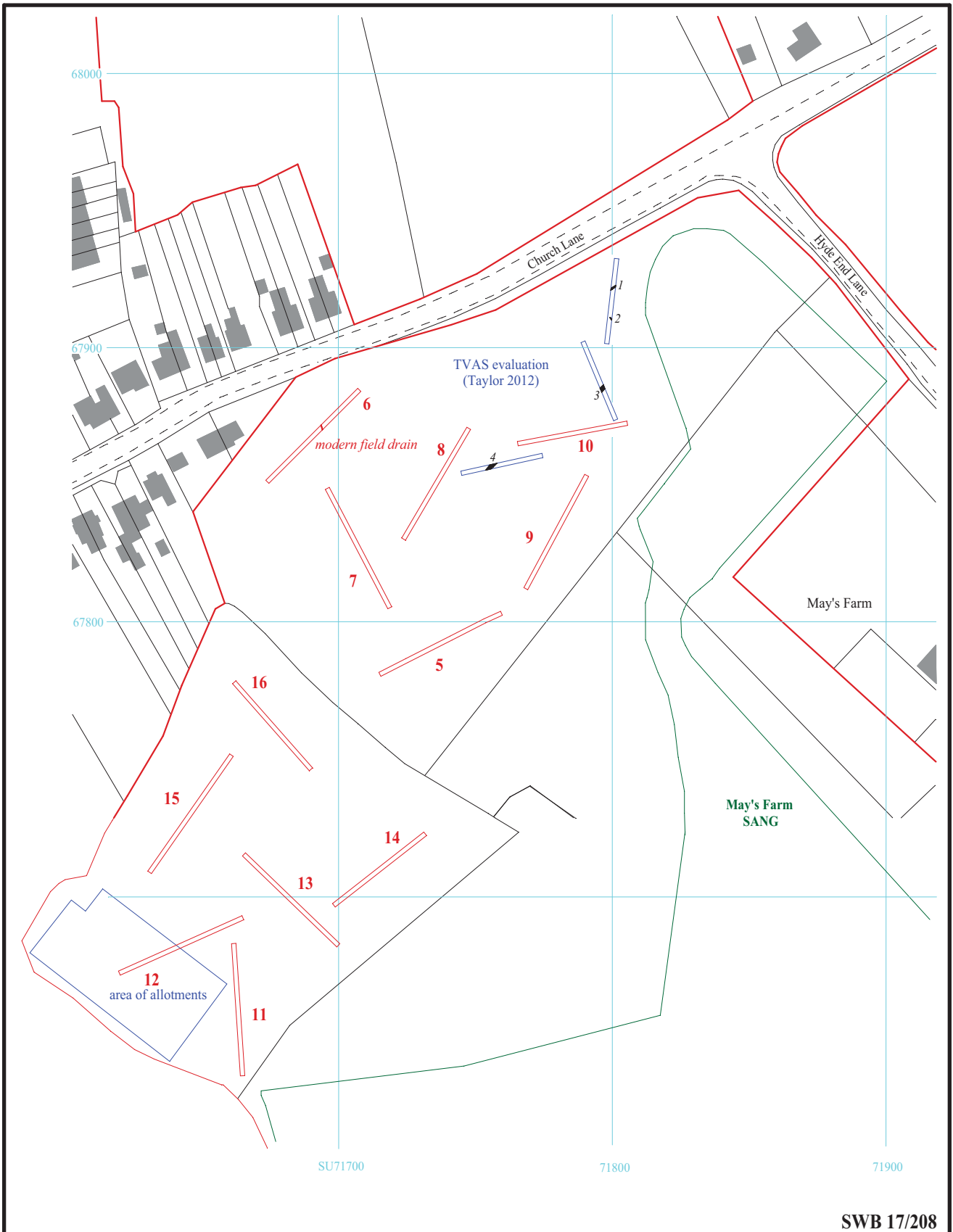


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Figure 3. Detail of Area C.





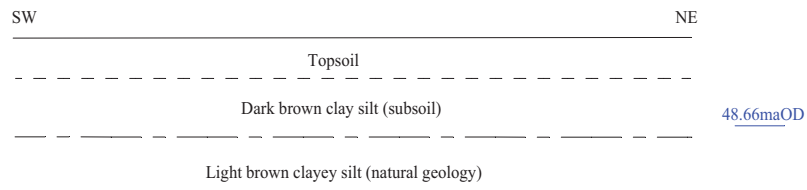
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Figure 4. Detail of Phase 2b, with trenches from 2012 and 2017.



*Trench 3*



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Figure 5. Representative section..



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking east,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north east,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking north west,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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**Phase 2b and Area C,  
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Plates 1 to 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 7, looking north west,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 10, looking east,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 7. Trench 11, looking south,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 8. Trench 12, looking north east,  
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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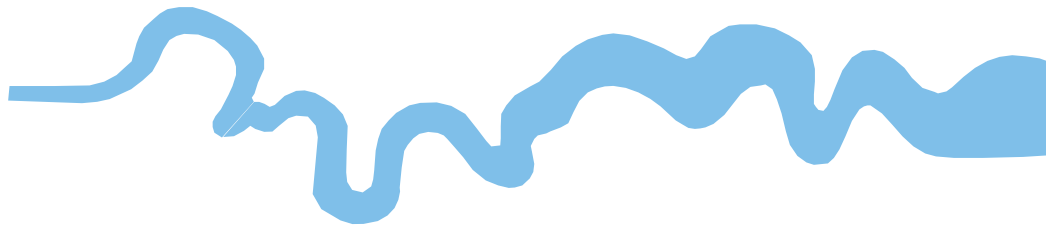
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Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 5 to 8.**

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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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