

Land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: BRM17/116

(SU 8929 7977)

Land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BRM 17/116

April 2018

Summary

Site name: Land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8929 7977

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th-6th April 2018

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: BRM 17/116

Area of site: *c*.3.4 hectares

Summary of results: One certain and one probable early Saxon Sunken-featured buildings were identified in two trenches along with an undated posthole.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate local museum willing to accept archive material.

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	Steve Preston ✓ 12.04.18			

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Land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 17/116c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8929 7977) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jason Crozier of Clarkson Alliance, Oxford (Head Office) 287-291 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7JQ on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF.

Planning permission (17/03372/FULL) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new leisure centre. The consent is subject to a condition (8) relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Royal Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Daniel Haddad between the 4th and 6th April 2018 and the site code is BRM 17/116. 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 an irregular parcel of land within Braywick Park to the south of Maidenhead town centre (Fig. 1). It is bounded by a carpark and nursery complex to the north, Braywick Park to the east, Braywick Cemetery to the south and Braywick Road to the west. The River Thames is less than 1km to the east. The site is currently occupied by Maidenhead Golf Centre. An L-shaped timber building is located in the site's north-western corner while another long, rectangular building is located close to the western boundary and is associated with the former driving range (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Taplow gravel (BGS 1981), which along with sandy silty areas was observed across the site at varying depths. The site lies at a height of approximately 30m above Ordnance Datum in the west sloping to approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum in the east.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2017). In summary site lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a range of sites and finds recorded locally. In particular, the route of a suspected Roman road is thought to traverse the site. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits existing on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by development the results of an evaluation has been requested to determine the nature of this potential and allow appropriate mitigation to take place if necessary. The site has been subject to geophysical survey (Beaverstock, 2017). However, this did not reveal any clear cut deposits of archaeological interest, but did reveal that the eastern end of the site had been quarried for gravel.

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; and to determine if there are any deposits representing a Roman road are present on the site.

A total of 21 trenches were to be dug, each measuring 25m long and between 1.60 and 2m wide. These were dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were then to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation

Results

In the event, 22 trenches were dug (an extra trench was opened in order to try to determine any continuation of the feature identified in Trench 9). These measured between 10.60m and 27.70m long and between 0.38m and 1.60m deep.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized as Appendix 2.

Trench 1

This trench was aligned approximately E-W and measured 25.50m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.45m subsoil overlying a silty sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 26m long and 0.50m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil overlying silty sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned approximately E-W and measured 25.50m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.45m of subsoil overlying sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 4

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 25m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil overlying 0.40m of subsoil overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology.

Trench 5

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 24.50m long and 1.15m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying a sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 6

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 24.50m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.50m of subsoil overlying a silty sand natural geology.

Trench 7

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 25.50m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil overlying silty sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 8

This trench was aligned E-W and measured 26.50m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil overlying silty sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 5)

This trench was aligned NE-SW and measured 23m long and 1m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.55m of topsoil overlying 0.45m of subsoil overlying sandy silt natural geology. Posthole 2 was noted at 8.60m from the south-west end of the trench, which measured 0.35m wide and 0.18m deep, although its mid grey brown sandy silt fill (53) did not produce any finds. Between 9.30m and 11.20m was a feature initially thought to be a ditch. A slot (1) was dug into it measuring 2.10m wide and 0.36m deep. Its dark grey brown sandy silt fill (52) produced two sherds of early Saxon pottery and a piece of tile. As no evidence of a ditch was noted in adjacent trenches, the profile of the feature was flat based and the presence of a probable sunken featured building in trench 19, it is most likely that this may in fact be another sunken-featured building.

Trench 10 (Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 24m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of topsoil overlying 0.40m of subsoil overlying sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 11

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 26m long and 1.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 1.30m of subsoil overlying sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 12

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 25.80m long and 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.37m of topsoil overlying 0.33m of subsoil overlying silty sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 13

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 26.40m and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil overlying 0.46m of subsoil overlying silty sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 14

This trench was aligned approximately E-W and measured 25m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.55m of subsoil overlying a sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 15

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 26m long and 0.72m deep. It consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying 0.46m of subsoil overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology.

Trench 16

This trench was aligned E-W and measured 26.70m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.45m of subsoil overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology.

Trench 17

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 26.20m long and 0.85m deep.The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.55m of subsoil overlying sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 18 (Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned NE-SW and measured 26.10m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.55m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 19 (Fig. 3: Pls. 4 and 6)

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 25m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology. A feature was noted at 8.50m and so the trench was widened in order to ascertain its nature and extent. It was dug as potentially two pits (3 and 4), although it seems most likely that this represents a second Sunken featured building. Initial cleaning of the surface of the feature produced 24 pieces of pottery, eight pieces of animal bone and four pieces of tile. Cut 3 measured 2m wide and 0.20m deep and appeared to be cutting 4. Its dark grey brown sandy silt fill (54) contained nine pieces of pottery. Cut 4 measured 0.25m deep and its mid grey brown sandy silt fill (55) contained nine sherds of pottery. All of the pottery was of Early Saxon date.

Trench 20

This trench was aligned NE-SW and measured 27.70m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil overlying 0.10m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 21

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 25.80m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 22

This extra trench was dug in order to determine the nature of a possible ditch in trench nine. It was aligned NE-SW and measured 10.60m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.18m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological evaluation resulted in the recovery of some 48 sherds of pottery weighing 852g (Appendix 3). The entire assemblage dates to the early Saxon period.

The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on the colour, texture and nature of the inclusions present in the clay. The sorted assemblage was quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. Freshly broken sherds, where these could be identified, were counted as single pieces. Rims were additionally coded to general form and measured for diameter and percentage present for the estimation of vessel equivalence (cf. Orton *et al.* 1993).

In general terms the assemblage was in quite good condition with a few instances of multiple sherds from single vessels. The overall average sherd weight was 17.8g and the sherds were largely in fresh condition with sharp edges and surface treatment such as burnishing had been preserved. All the pottery came from three features located in Trenches 9 and 19.

Five fabrics have been defined: a predominantly sandy ware (SA); a finer organic-tempered ware (OR); a sandy ware with sparse organic matter (SAOR); a grog-tempered ware (GR) and a sandy ware with sparse flint and iron compounds (SAFLFE). Five rims are present all from handmade jar forms. Two large base sherds have a well burnished interior and some sherds are burnished on the exterior. There are no decorated sherds. One vessel is sooted from use whilst two shows traces of burnt residue on the interior surfaces. Most of the pottery came from two pits (3 and 4) which are probably an SFB with just two sherds from the other SFB or possibly ditch (1).

Summary

The work produced a moderately small assemblage of pottery focussed on Trench 19 and all of which dates to the early Saxon period. Pottery of this period is already well documented in this area of the Middle Thames Valley (Blinkhorn 2002). Of note is the presence of another grog-tempered vessel, a tempering agent not commonly used in the Saxon period.

Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins

A small assemblage of animal bone (8 fragments), weighing a total of 181g was recovered during the course of the evaluation. The bone was heavily eroded, hindering identification. 99% of the assemblage was recovered as surface finds on SFB/pits 3 and 4 and consisted of three fragments of long bone shaft and a partial distal

epiphysis all classified as large mammal (cattle, horse). A single unidentifiable fragment of burnt bone was recovered from pit 3 (54) bulk sample no. 2.

No taphonomy associated with butchery was noted and no further analysis was possible.

Ceramic Building Material by Danielle Milbank

Ceramic building material weighing 803g (5 fragments) was recorded in two contexts encountered during the evaluation. The material was encountered in fairly small quantities and was examined at x10 magnification.

A piece was recovered from ditch slot 1 (52) which is a fairly abraded tile fragment (21mm thick) of fine, slightly soft fabric in a pale red colour.

Pieces from the surface of features 3 and 4 represent a range of tile forms of two fabric types, all but one in a fine, slightly soft fabric in a pale red colour. These include a piece with a slight curve which is likely to represent imbrex (roof tile), and a thick flat piece which may represent a floor tile form such as bessalis. A piece was recovered in a hard, unevenly-fired slightly friable fabric with moderate sandy inclusions and voids, and a medium dark red surface colour with a dark grey (reduced) interior. The piece has one flat side but the full thickness is not present, and it appears to represent a brick rather than tile.

These fragments are of broadly Roman date and the surface abrasion suggests they are residual finds.

Fired Clay by Danielle Milbank

One fired clay object was recovered in the course of the evaluation, comprising a piece of loomweight recovered from ditch slot 1 (52). The fragment weighs 33g and represents a small piece of an annular loomweight, though the piece is of insufficient size to determine the approximate diameter of the complete loomweight. The fabric is a slightly soft and frequently friable fine clay with occasional sandy inclusions, and an orange red colour. This form of weight is typically attributed an early or middle Saxon date.

Burnt Flint by Lizzi Lewins

A small quantity of burnt flint, weighing a total of 32g, was recovered from the bulk samples.

Macrobotanical Remains by Jo Pine

Three bulk soil samples were processed by standard wet sieving techniques (sieved to 0.25mm and air dried). The flots were examined under a low-power binocular microscope at magnifications between x10 and x40. No plant macrofossils were recovered. Charcoal was recovered from each of the samples ranging in size from 2mm – 17mm, however the small fragment size is unlikely to allow for species identification.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a small amount of archaeological deposits in two trenches. The geophysical survey had not identified any deposits, although this may be due the depth of overburden encountered. The deposits observed were dated to the early Saxon period and may represent two Saxon Grubenhauser (Sunken-featured buildings). These particular features are typical of the early Saxon period and can be distributed very widely dispersed over large areas, in this case c.55m apart, and as such the possibility of others being present on the site cannot be discounted simply because other features were not identified by the trenching.

References

Baljkas, G, 2017, 'Braywick Leisure Centre, Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire: an archaeological deskbased assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 17/116, Reading

Beaverstock, K 2017, 'Braywick Leisure Centre, Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire, geophysical survey (magnetic)', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 17/116b, Reading

BGS, 1981, British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

Blinkhorn, P, 2001, 'The Anglo-Saxon pottery', in S Foreman, J Hiller and D Petts, *Gathering the people, settling the land. The archaeology of a Middle Thames landscape. Anglo-Saxon to post-medieval*, Oxford Archaeological Unit, 35 and CD-Rom

NPPF, 2012, National Planning Policy Framework, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	25.50	1.80	0.80	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-0.80m subsoil; 0.80m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology.
2	26.00	1.80	0.50	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology
3	25.50	1.80	0.65	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ sandy silt natural geology.
4	25.00	1.80	0.85	0-0.45m topsoil; 0.45m-0.85m subsoil; 0.85m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology.
5	24.50	1.80	1.15	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-1.15m subsoil; 1.15m+ sandy silt natural geology.
6	24.50	1.80	0.75	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ silty sand natural geology.
7	25.50	1.80	0.70	0-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m+ silty sand natural geology.
8	26.50	1.80	0.75	0-0.45m topsoil; 0.45m-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ silty sand and gravel natural geology.
9	23.00	1.80	1.00	0-0.55m topsoil; 0.55m-1.00m subsoil; 1.00m+ sandy silt natural geology. SFB1 posthole 2 Pls. 1 and 5
10	24.0	1.80	0.80	0-0.40m topsoil; 0.40m-0.80m subsoil; 0.80m+ sandy silt natural geology. Pl. 2
11	26.00	1.80	1.60	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-1.60m subsoil; 1.60m+ sandy gravel natural geology.
12	25.80	1.80	0.70	0-0.37m topsoil; 0.37m-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m+ silty sand and gravel natural geology.
13	26.40	1.80	0.80	0-0.32m topsoil; 0.32m-0.78m subsoil; 0.78m-0.80m+ silty sandy gravel natural geology.
14	25.00	1.80	0.85	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.85m subsoil; 0.85m+ sandy silt natural geology.
15	26.00	1.80	0.72	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26m-0.72m subsoil; 0.72m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology.
16	26.70	1.80	0.75	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.75m subsoil; 0.75m+ sandy silt natural geology.
17	26.20	1.80	0.85	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.85m subsoil; 0.85m+ sandy silt natural geology.
18	26.10	1.80	0.80	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.80m subsoil; 0.80m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology. Pl. 3
19	25.00	1.80	0.65	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ sandy silt and gravel natural geology. SFB2 Pls. 4 and 6
20	27.70	1.80	0.38	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28m-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ gravel natural geology.
21	25.80	1.80	0.40	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22m-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m-0.40m+ gravel natural geology.
22	10.60	1.80	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m-0.45m+ gravel natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Туре	Date	Dating evidence
9	1	52	SFB?	Early Saxon	Pottery
9	2	53	Posthole	-	-
19	3	54	SFB/Pit?	Early Saxon	Pottery
19	4	55	SFB/Pit?	Early Saxon	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

Tr	Cut	Deposit	Type	Fabric	Form	Wt (g)	No	Rim	Diam	Eve	Comment	Date
9	1	52	?SFB	SA		74	2	0	0	0	x1 internal burnish	Saxon
19	3	54	SFB	SA		115	4	0	0	0		Saxon
19	3	54	SFB	SAFLFE		16	1	0	0	0		Saxon
19	3	54	SFB	OR	jar	18	2	1	18	7		Saxon
19	3	54	SFB	OR	jar	10	0	1	9	7	int residue	Saxon
19	4	55	SFB	OR		21	3	0	0	0	<3> burnished	Saxon
19	4	55	SFB	SAOR		38	1	0	0	0		Saxon
19	4	55	SFB	OR		8	1	0	0	0		Saxon
19	4	55	SFB	SA		40	3	0	0	0		Saxon
19	4	55	SFB	SAFLFE		21	1	0	0	0	6=1 fragmented	Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	GR		49	1	0	0	0		Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	OR		37	6	0	0	0		Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	SAOR	jar	88	4	1	14	12		Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	SAOR	jar	24	0	1	18	5		Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	SA		211	10	0	0	0	x1 internal burnish	Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	OR		30	1	0	0	0	int residue	Saxon
19	3/4	0	SFB	SA	jar	52	2	2	13	13	sooted exterior	Saxon
TOTAL						852	42	6		44		

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of Animal Bone

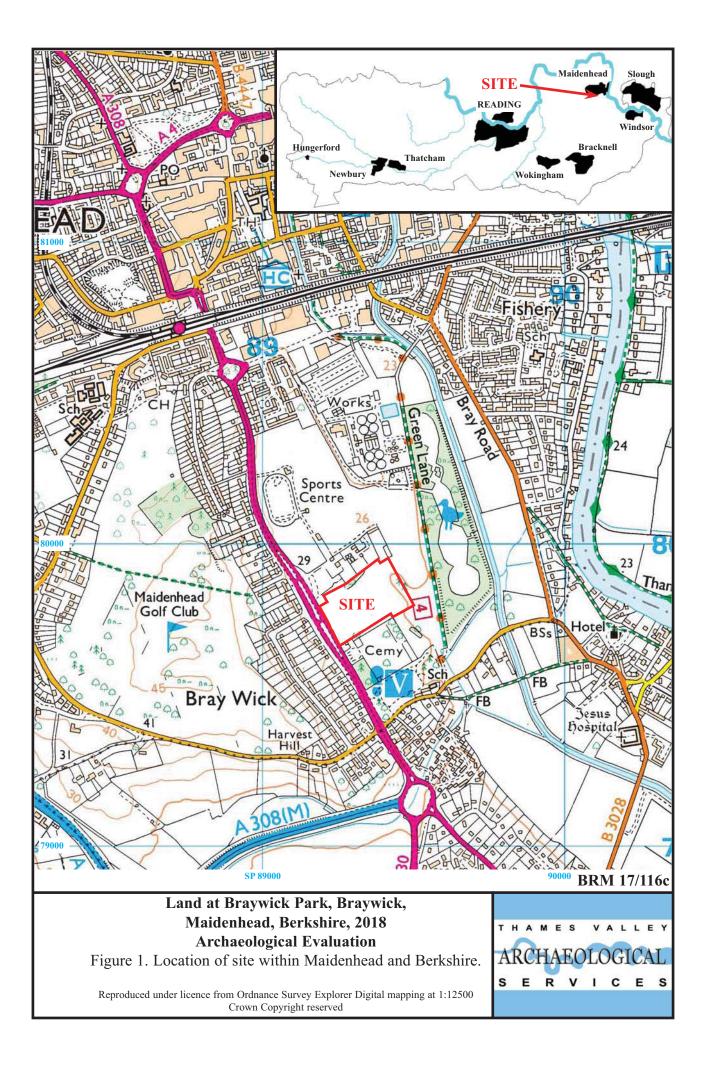
Trench	Cut	Deposit	Туре	Sample	No Frags	Wt (g)
19	3	54	Pit	2	1	1
19			Surface finds above 3, 4		7	180

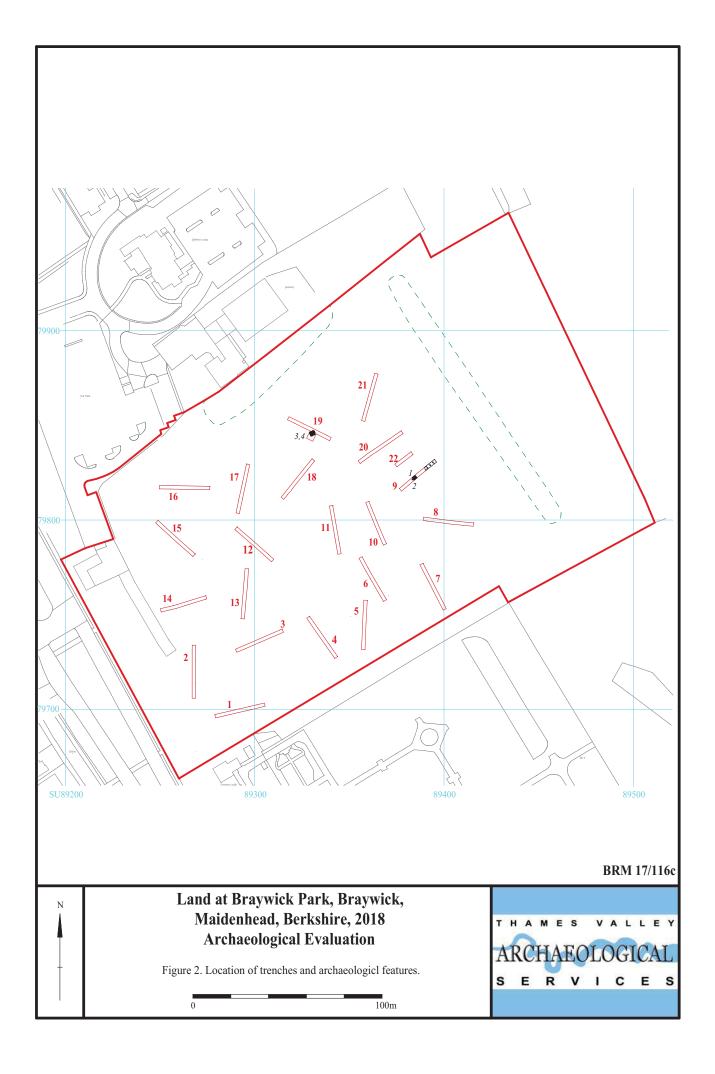
APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Ceramic Building Material

Trench	Cut	Deposit	Туре	No	Wt (g)
9	1	52	Ditch	1	30
19			Surface finds above 3, 4	4	773

APPENDIX 6: Catalogue of Fired Clay

Trench	Cut	Deposit	Type	No	Wt (g)
9	1	52	Ditch	1	33





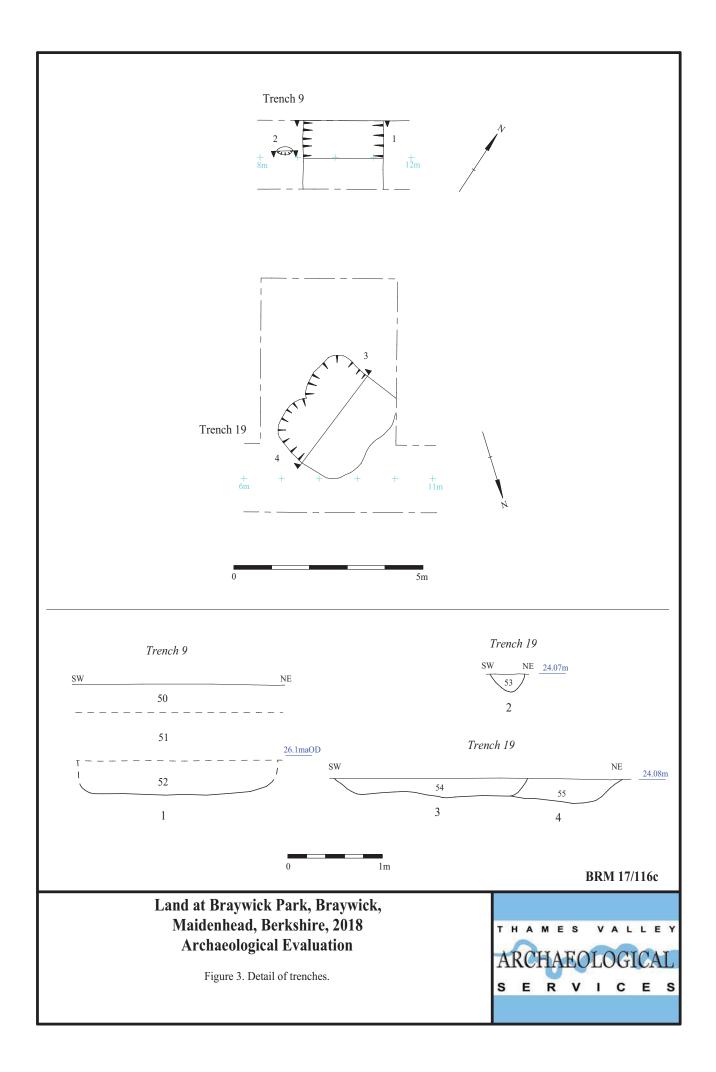




Plate 1. Trench 9, looking southwest, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 10, looking north north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

Land at Braywick Park, Braywick, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018 Archaeological Evaluation Plates 1 and 2.



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Plate 3. Trench 18, looking north north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 19, looking south east (prior to extension), Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

Land at Braywick Park, Braywick, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018 Archaeological Evaluation Plates 3 and 4.



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Plate 5. Trench 9, ditch/possible SFB? (cut 1), looking west north west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 19, pits 3 and 4, looking north north west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 2x0.1m.

Land at Braywick Park, Braywick, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018 Archaeological Evaluation Plates 5 and 6.



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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	AD 0 BC 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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