

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Site Code: CSR18/83

(SU7307 6971)

**Land at Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Crosfields School**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSR18/83

July 2018

Summary

Site name: Land at Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU7307 6971

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th June and 16th-17th July 2018

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: CSR 18/83

Area of site: 1.3ha

Summary of results: The evaluation comprised the digging of 15 trenches across the two areas of the proposed development. The western area (8 trenches) revealed no deposits of archaeological interest. However, the southern part of the eastern area (7 trenches) revealed occupation deposits of Iron Age date, including iron slag evidence for smelting or smithing. It is considered that this zone has high archaeological potential. A single mesolithic narrow flake was also recovered from the site.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable repository in due course

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

| |
|--|
| Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston ✓ 25.07.18 |
|--|

Land at Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Report 18/83

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on a parcel of land at Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading, Berkshire (SU7307 6971) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Neil Boddington of Boddingtons Planning, Westfield House, 31 Shirburn Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5BU on behalf of the school.

Planning permission (161911) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council to relocate a cricket pitch and construct a new astroturf pitch. The consent is subject to a condition (5) relating to archaeology. The investigation followed a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed by Ms Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology archaeological advisor to Wokingham Borough Council Wokingham Borough Council. The fieldwork was supervised by Steve Ford with assistance from Cosmo Bacon and Brandon Wrey. The site code is CSR18/83.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The School site is located on the western edge of a plateau or ridge lying between the River Kennet and Foudry Brook to the west and River Loddon to the east. The western component of the project lies on steeply sloping land on the valley side which is bisected by dry valleys and lies below a spring line. The ground lies at c. 75m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is London Clay (BGS 2000). The eastern side of the site lies on level ground on Black Park gravel (terrace 6) at a height of 79m aOD.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the plateau margin overlooking the valley of the Kennet Valley/Foudry Brook. This is a location from which several site and finds have now been recorded. In particular field evaluation to the north located residual finds of Roman pottery, a medieval ditch and undated postholes (Ford and Pine 1998). Excavation on an adjacent plot at 68-72 Northcourt Avenue (Milbank 2010)

revealed an Early Roman occupation site with some Bronze Age occupation also recently recorded at 74 Northcourt Avenue (Ford 2018). Iron Age pottery and Roman ditches were also recorded to the north (Carlsson 2010) and a Roman cremation burial to the north west but evaluation at Windermere Road to the north revealed nothing of interest (Ford 2010). Recent excavation at Ridgeway School has also revealed Middle/Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Early Roman occupation (Ford 2017). Finds included a hoard of Roman coins placed within a pot. The plateau edge seems to be an area of preferred settlement in prehistoric and Roman times.

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project are to:

- To determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental within the area of development,
- To undertake the work in such a manner that will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation,
- To provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Specific research objectives to understand more local and thematic priorities, according to the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) are:

- When was the site first occupied and when as the site abandoned?
- What is the layout and organisation of the site?
- What activities are taking place on the site?
- What is the nature and date of any features encountered? (e.g fields, boundary features or settlement enclosures, or structural remains)

In total, it was proposed that 15 trenches, c.25m long and 1.6-2m wide were to be excavated across the two main area of the site to be affected by proposed development.

Results

All 15 trenches were dug more or less as intended. The trenches ranged from 24.1 26.8m in length and 0.2-1.1m deep. The trenches were 2.1m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SE-NW and was 24.6m long and 0.3m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some gravel (natural geology).

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned W - E and was 24.7m long and 0.2m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some gravel (natural geology).

Trench 3 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned W-E and was 25.0m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.3m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some gravel (to the west and clay to the east (natural geology).

Trench 4 (Fig 3)

Trench 4 was aligned N - S and was 24.1m long and up to 1.1m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.05m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some gravel (natural geology).

Two deep undulations are thought to be former channels which relate to a spring just to the east.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned SW-NE down the base of a dry valley and was 25.9m in length and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.75 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above gravel (natural geology).

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

Trench 6 was orientated N - S and was 24.9 long and 0.3m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some gravel (natural geology).

Trench 7 (Fig. 2)

Trench 7 was aligned SW-NE and was 25.2m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay (natural geology).

Trench 8 (Fig. 2)

Trench 8 was aligned SW-NE and was 24.5m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay (natural geology).

Trench 9 (Figs. 2,3 and 4; Pls 3,5-7)

Trench 9 was aligned W-E and was 26m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.2m of subsoil above gravel with some sand and clay patches natural geology. The initial trench contained a number of features which were further exposed by two sideways extensions (Fig. 3).

Gully 1 was curvilinear in plan and was 0.7m wide and 0.15m deep. It contained a grey sand with gravel. 11 sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered along with surface finds of another 2 sherds and a fragment of fired clay, possibly a loomweight fragment. Gully 1 is possibly the same as gully 4.

Gully 2 was linear in plan and was 0.5m wide and 0.1m deep. It contained a grey sand with gravel. But no finds from the excavated slot. However, surface finds of iron slag and burnt flint were recovered.

Gully 4 was 0.44m wide and 0.14m deep with a grey sand with fine gravel fill. It contained no finds. Posthole 5 was 0.23m across and 0.07m deep. With a grey sand fill. It contained no finds.

Trench 10 (Fig 2)

Trench 10 was aligned N – S and was 24.6m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.2m of subsoil above gravel with some sand and clay patches natural geology.

Trench 11 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Pls 4 and 8)

Trench 11 was aligned SW- NE and was 24.3m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.24m of subsoil above gravel with sand and clay patches natural geology. A gully (3) was aligned N – S, It was 0.36m wide and 0.18m deep with a fill of grey sandy gravel. It contained no dating material.

Trench 12 (Fig. 2)

Trench 12 was aligned SE-NW and was 24.8m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.2m of subsoil above gravel natural geology. A large modern pit was present at 6m.

Trench 13 (Fig. 2)

Trench 13 was aligned N-S and was 24.4m long and up to 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.45m of subsoil above gravel and clay patches natural geology. A modern service run was located at the northern end.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3)

Trench 14 was aligned SW-NE and was 26.8m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.2m of subsoil above gravel with some sand patches natural geology.

Trench 15 (Fig.3)

Trench 15 was aligned W- E and was 26.7m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil 0.23m thick overlying 0.2m of subsoil above gravel and sand patches natural geology. A service run containing modern clinker and what was possibly a hedge line, both aligned east - west were observed.

Finds

Pottery by Richard Tabor

The assemblage comprised 15 sherds weighing 60g. One glazed sherd (25g) was of Post-medieval or Modern date but the remaining sherds are later prehistoric. The prehistoric pottery included a flint ware, a quartz and flint ware and a sandy ware (Appendix 3).

Later prehistoric: Quartz/sand and flint

F1 (medium) Moderately hard, grey, slightly micaceous fabric with buff red exterior and buff red to grey interior surfaces including moderate fine (<1mm) and sparse medium (<2mm), sparse coarse (<4mm) burnt angular flint and sparse fine to coarse (<3mm) sub-rounded red iron oxides. Hackly fracture.

QF1 (fine/medium) Moderately hard, grey, sandy micaceous fabric with reddish brown to grey brown surfaces including abundant fine (<0.25mm), to fine/medium (0.5mm) sub-rounded and sub-angular quartz, moderate very fine (<0.5mm), sparse fine (<1mm) and (<2mm) burnt angular flint.

S1 (medium) Moderately hard, dark grey/black, fine sandy fabric with buff orange exterior surface. Probably non-pottery ceramic.

The 14 sherds (35g) of later prehistoric pottery were divided between three fabrics. The flint fabric lacking visible quartz of a shoulder sherd from the fill (50) of [1] might potentially be of Middle to Late Bronze Age date although similar fabrics persist well into the Iron Age and, although fragmented, the sherd is in fresh condition. In similar condition, an upright, rounded rim with a concave neck giving a proto-beaded effect in QF1 is from a round shoulder jar probably dating to later Iron Age. A fragmentary medium length neck sherd from fill (50) may be contemporary or later, possibly, Roman date.

Post-medieval / modern

gIS1 (medium) Hard, pink, fine sandy fabric with pink surfaces including rare to sparse fine (<1mm) to medium (<2) iron oxides. Interior glazed.

The single Post-medieval / modern sherd from Trench 10 is a slightly expanded base angle, the interior of which is deeply and acutely moulded. The wall turns moderately sharply outwards above the base.

Fired clay by Richard Tabor

A single fragment of fired clay weighing 40g was recovered from the top of cut 1. It was in a hard, grey, sandy fabric with pink margins and surfaces and included moderate fine (<0.5mm) to medium (<1mm) sub-angular and sub-rounded quartz and rare medium (<2mm) to coarse (<5mm) flint. The flint is probably an incidental rather than a deliberate inclusion. The fragment has three roughly flat surfaces and whilst it may derive from a loomweight or oven furniture it might also be a handmade brick which might date from the Roman, Medieval or Post-medieval periods.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint, a broken narrow flake was recovered from the spoil of Trench 15. It is likely to be of Mesolithic date.

Iron Slag

Six fragments of slag weighing 631g were recovered from the top of cut 2

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed a small area of archaeological deposits that appear to represent a small occupation site of Bronze Age or Iron Age date, and which may also have been involved in iron production or working. These deposits were located at the southern end of the site and this zone has archaeological potential. The remainder of the site revealed nothing of interest.

References

- BGS 2000, *British Geological Survey* sheet 268, 1:50000, Keyworth
- Carlsson, C, 2010, An archaeological excavation at 29 Cressingham Road, Reading, John Moore Heritage Services, report RDCR10, Beckley
- Ford, A and Pine J, 1998, Land to the rear of 74 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 98/15, Reading
- Ford, S 2010, Land to the rear of 130-149 Windermere Road, Reading, Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 10/134, Reading
- Ford, S 2017, 'A Late Bronze Age burnt mound, Bronze Age occupation and Roman enclosure at Ridgeway School, Whitley, Reading', in T Dawson, S Ford and A Taylor, *Archaeological Excavations on Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval Sites in Reading and Wokingham, Berkshire*, TVAS Occas Pap **21**, Reading, 1–33
- Ford, S 2018, 'Bronze Age occupation at 74 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 17/123b, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- Milbank, D, 2010, 'Late Iron Age/early Roman and late Roman occupation at 68–72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading', in S Preston (ed), *Archaeological Investigations to the South of Reading, 2002-2008: Exploring Late Iron Age and Roman settlement south of Reading, Berkshire*, TVAS Monograph **13**, Reading, 21–37

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

| Trench | Length (m) | Breadth (m) | Depth (m) | Comment |
|--------|------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1 | 24.6 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.3m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.3m+ brown clay with some gravel (natural geology). [Pl. 1] |
| 2 | 24.7 | 2.1 | 0.2 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.2m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.2m+ brown clay (natural geology) Test pit at 20m to 0.4m. Charcoal patches and clinker at west end |
| 3 | 25 | 2.1 | 0.5 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-25m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.25m+ brown clay with some gravel (natural geology). [Pl. 2] |
| 4 | 24.1 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.2m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.2-0.4m+ brown clay with some gravel (natural geology). Channel at 15-20m. |
| 5 | 25.9 | 2.1 | 0.85 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.4m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel (natural geology) |
| 6 | 24.9 | 2.1 | 0.3W 0.5E | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.3m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.3m+ brown clay (west), clay/gravel (east) (natural geology) |
| 7 | 25.2 | 2.1 | 0.3 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.3m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.3m+ brown clay (natural geology) |
| 8 | 24.5 | 2.1 | 0.5 | 0–0.15m Turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.3m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.3m+ brown clay (natural geology) |
| 9 | 26 | 2.1 | 0.49 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel with clay patches (natural geology). Two side extensions. Gullies 1,2 and 4, posthole 5. [Pls 3,5-7] |
| 10 | 24.6 | 2.1 | 0.48 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel with some clay and sand patches (natural geology). |
| 11 | 24.3 | 2.1 | 0.49 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.44m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.44m+ gravel with clay and sand patches (natural geology). Gully 3. [Pls 4 and 8] |
| 12 | 24.8 | 2.1 | 0.47 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel (natural geology). |
| 13 | 24.4 | 2.1 | 0.53S 0.68N | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.45m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.45m+ gravel with clay patches (natural geology). |
| 14 | 26.8 | 2.1 | 0.48 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel with some pan and sand patches (natural geology). |
| 15 | 26.7 | 2.1 | 0.57 | 0–0.03m Turf; 0.03- 0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.4m clayey gravel (subsoil); 0.4m+ gravel with sand patches (natural geology). Service run and hedge line |

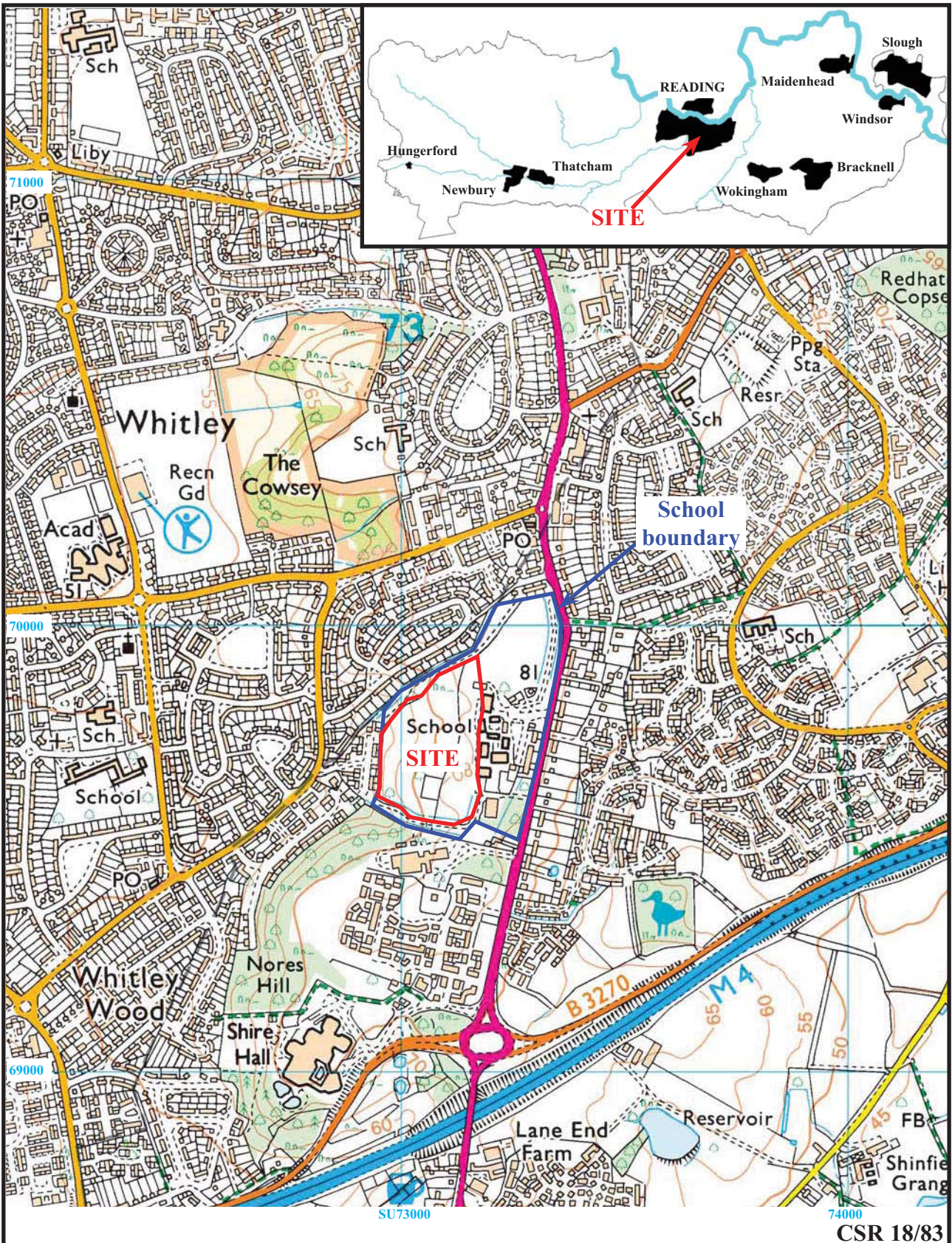
APPENDIX 2: Feature details

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 9 | 1 | 50 | Gully | Iron Age | pottery |
| 9 | 2 | 51 | Gully | - | |
| 11 | 3 | 52 | Gully | - | |
| 9 | 4 | 53 | Gully | - | |
| 95 | 5 | 54 | Posthole | - | |

APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogue

| Trench | cut | deposit | F1 | | QF1 | | S1 | | Total | |
|--------|-----|---------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-------|----|
| | | | no | wt | no | wt | no | wt | no | wt |
| 9 | 1 | 'top' | | | 2 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 16 |
| | 1 | 50 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 15 | | | 11 | 19 |
| | | Total | 6 | 4 | 7 | 29 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 35 |

(weight in g)

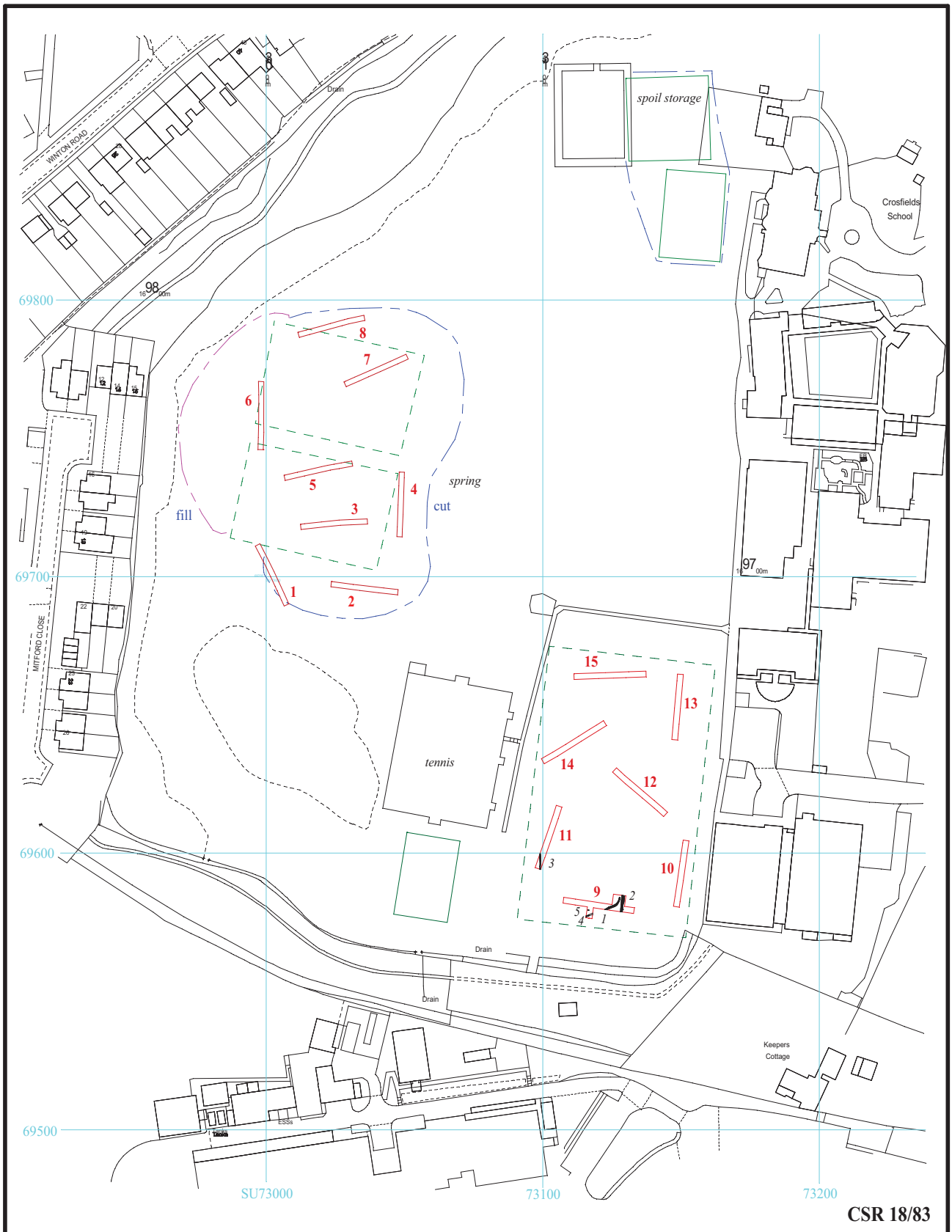


**Crosfields School, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500
Crown Copyright reserved

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



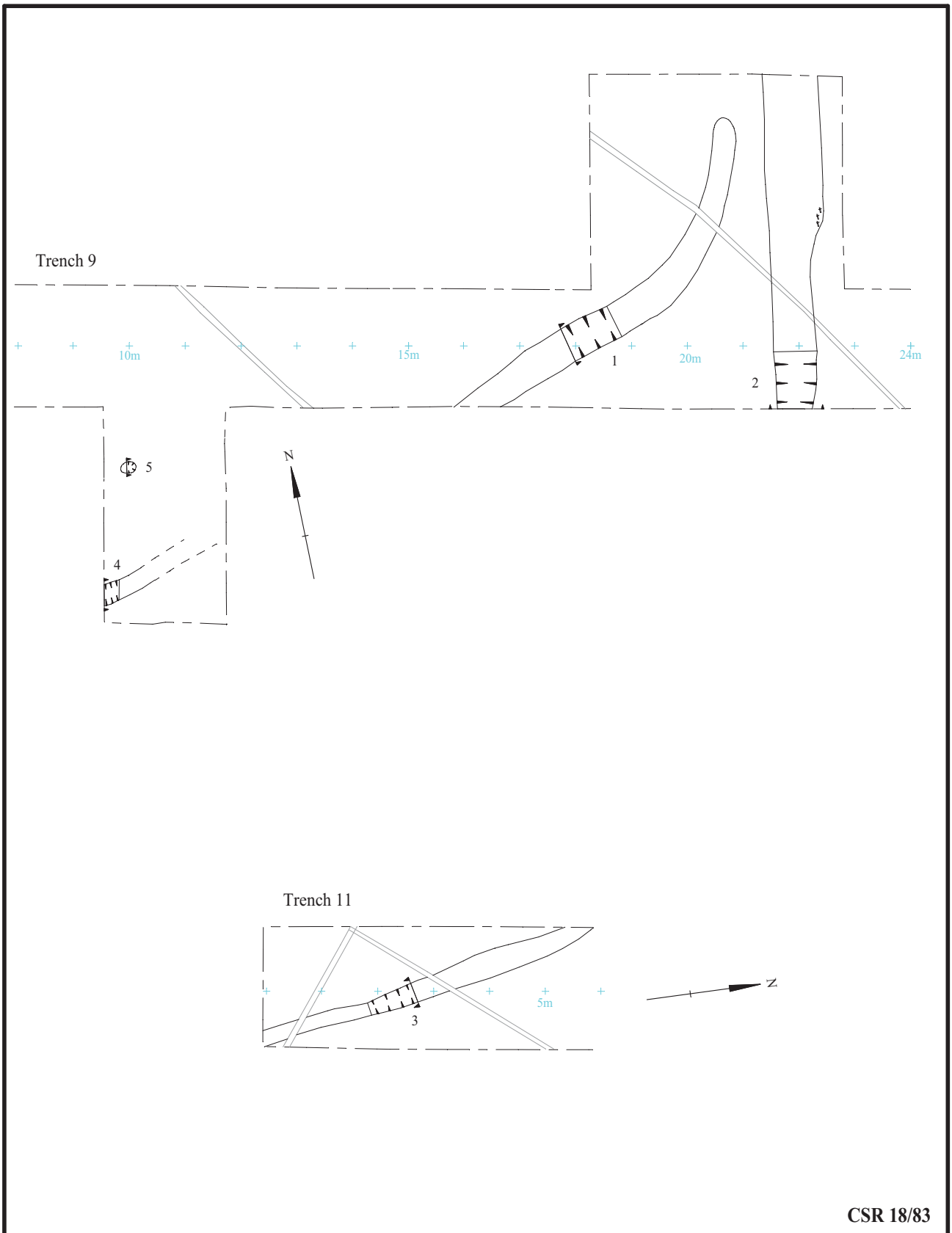
CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Location of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



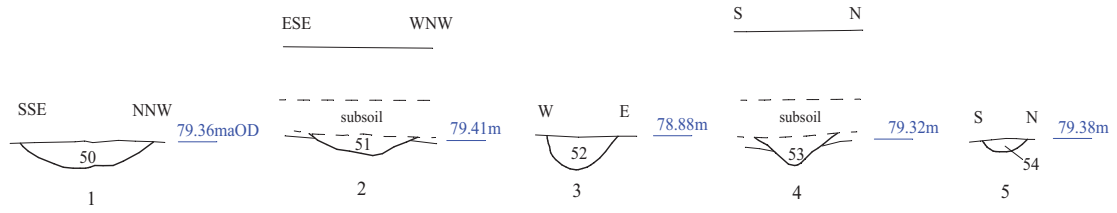
CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
 Reading, Berkshire, 2018
 Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Detail of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES



CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Sections.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



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



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

CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Trench 9, looking west,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 11, looking north,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 3 and 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 5. Trench 9, Ditch 1, looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 9 north extension, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

CSR 18/83

**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 and 6.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 7. Trench 9, Ditch 2, looking south,
Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical and 0.3m.

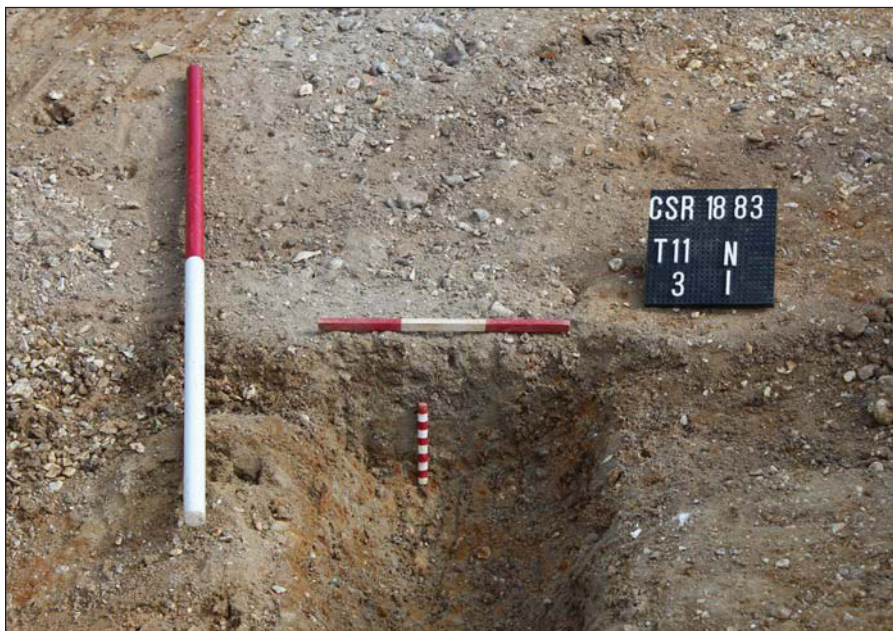


Plate 8. Trench 11, gully 3, looking north,
Scales: 1m, 0.3m and 0.1m.

CSR 18/83

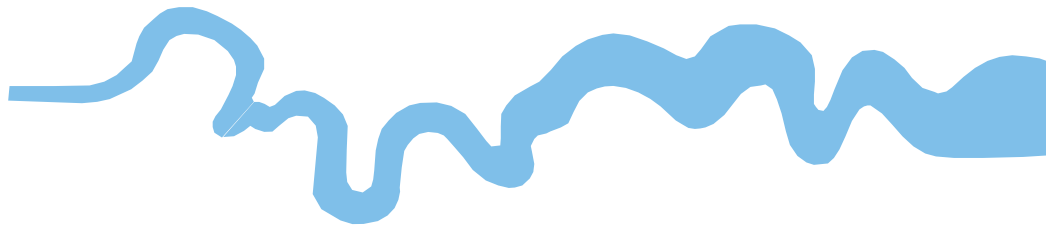
**Crosfields School, Shinfield Road,
Reading, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 7 and 8.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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 |





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

***Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)***