

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane,
Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Site Code: CLF17/274

(SU7307 6971)

Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Mrs Helen Kendall-Smith**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CLF17/274

July 2018

Summary

Site name: Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU7307 6971

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th July 2018

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: CLF17/274

Area of site: 1.3ha

Summary of results: The evaluation comprised the digging of 7 trenches across the proposed development. One trench revealed a single pit of medieval date with the remainder revealing nothing of archaeological interest. Most of the site therefore has low archaeological potential but it is considered that the northern part of the site has some potential for archaeological remains of modest (local) significance.

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.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston ✓ 09.08.18
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Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Report 17/274

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on a parcel of land at the north side of Coningsby Lane, north of Fifield, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 9045 7710). The work was commissioned by Ms. Helen Kendall-Smith of Clay Meadow, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6HU

Planning permission (Applns 17/03579/FULL, 17/03580/FULL, 17/03581/FULL, 17/03596/FULL) have been sought from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council to create a new farm. One consent gained is subject to a condition (5) relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological works in advance of development. In this case, field evaluation was to be undertaken in order to determine the site's archaeological potential and to inform a further programme of mitigation if required. The fieldwork followed a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed by Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken on 19th July 2018 supervised by Steve Ford with assistance from Cosmo Bacon. The site code is CLF17/274.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north of Fifield which lies south-east of Maidenhead (Fig. 1). It lies on level ground at a height of *c.* 29m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is London Clay (BGS 1881). The area to be evaluated, targeted on the footprints of proposed new buildings, was the central part of a larger field, set amidst more fields. A number of undulations across the site may reflect the former presence of ridge and furrow or old field boundaries.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary this potential 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; Dils 2012), though mainly for the gravel areas to the north. More specifically, medieval occupation was recorded to the west during pipe-laying along with a scatter of Roman pottery suggesting a Roman presence in the area. To the north-west a possible enclosure has been revealed as a cropmark visible from the air whose morphology typically may be of Iron Age or Roman date. Small scale trial trenching to the north-east recorded a little prehistoric activity with pits containing struck and burnt flint. Fifield is not mentioned in Domesday Book but has Medieval origins.

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:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

It was proposed to dig seven trenches, each *c.* 16m long and 1.6m wide, targeting the proposed new buildings. Topsoil and other overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type or 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision, to the first archaeologically relevant horizon, or to the level of the natural geology. This work was to be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

All 7 trenches were dug more or less as intended (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged from 15.6–17.0m in length and were 0.29–0.45m deep. All trenches were 1.6m 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.s 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned W - E and was 16.7m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.15 of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology). Pit 1 was located at the eastern end of the trench. It was circular, 0.89m in diameter, with sides sloping very shallowly to the south-west and steeper to the north-east, to a maximum depth of 0.16m (Fig. 4). Its single fill (50)

contained 40 sherds of medieval pottery. Sieving of a bulk soil sample added a further 4 sherds, but no environmental remains or other finds.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 15.6m long and 0.29m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.05m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW - NE and was 16.5m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.15m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned W - E and was 16.5m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.1m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Trench 5 (Fig. 3; Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was aligned W - E and was 17.0m in length and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m of turf/topsoil above 0.1m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was orientated WSW - ENE and was 16.1m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m of turf/topsoil above 0.14m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Trench 7 (Fig. 3; Pl. 6)

Trench 7 was aligned roughly W - E and was 16.2m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m of turf/topsoil above 0.15m of brown silty clay (subsoil) above brown clay with some pebbles (natural geology).

Finds

Medieval Pottery by Cathy Keevill

The pottery assemblage is relatively small at 56 sherds (total weight 641g) (Appendix 3). The pottery has been assigned to fabric types based on the inclusions or additions in the sherds by analysis with a x20 microscope. This was done for most of the assemblage but the larger examples in context 1 (50) had the definitive range of

fabrics and vessel forms. All fabric types and vessel forms were recorded for each context and the diagnostic sherds such as rims were drawn and recorded on vessel form records. All the pottery has been compared with regional types from London (MOLAS fabric reference 2012 online series), Reading (Underwood 1997; Blinkhorn 2013), Eton (Blinkhorn 2000), Newbury (Mephram 1997), Oxford (Mellor 1994) and Maidenhead (Pike 1965). Three fabric types were present, mainly from context 1 (50).

The fabrics

CAMG Local fine sandy ware/ Oxford fabric **OXAG**: sand and white calcareous grains, and white, clear and red-stained quartz. Thin walled fabric. Narrow necked everted cooking pot rim, local fine sandy ware, probably from the Camley Gardens kiln site (Pike 1965).

KVB Kennet Valley B type ware/Newbury Coarse Wares /Oxford fabric **OXAQ**: hard gritty fabric with moderate to coarse clear quartz sand, flint and shelly limestone ware with grey and oxidized orange patches. Fabric F202 Reading (Blinkhorn 2013, 165), Fabric B Newbury (Mephram 1997, 51-2), Oxford OXAQ (Mellor 1994, 100-106). Small cooking bowl and everted bevelled cooking pot rim.

MINE/OXBB Minety type ware: decayed limestone, vesicular surface sub-angular fine clear quartz with occasional flint. One everted rim cooking pot/jar. This may be a variation of Kennet Valley ware.

The main fabric type is Kennet Valley B/Newbury Coarse Wares (27 sherds 354g). The fabric is dated from the late 11th century to early 15th century in Reading. The vessel forms of a small cooking bowl are dated to the late 12th-13th century (Mellor 1994 102, fig 42) and an everted rim cooking pot is late 13th century (Mellor 1994, 101 fig 41). The limestone tempered ware with some quartz (Minety type ware) is dated from the 12th to 16th centuries but the only everted rim jar/cooking pot sherd is dated to the late 13th.

Camley Gardens type ware is a small portion of the assemblage (11 sherds 155g). The fabric type, also described as Berkshire sandy ware, is known in London, Oxford, Hampshire and most of Berkshire with a wide range at Reading's Oracle (Blinkhorn 2013) and Waterfront sites (Underwood 1997). A similar sandy ware Newbury type C may be from the Ashampstead kilns (Mephram and Heaton 1995), though there may be other kiln sites. This fabric dates from the late 11th to 14th centuries. The cooking pot with a fine everted rim is dated to the late 13th century by comparison with Newbury rim types.

The vesicular limestone tempered fabric (Minety type ware) comprises 18 sherds 132g and is known as a small proportion of the assemblage at Friar Street Reading. The Limestone tempered ware is thought to be related to Kennet Valley ware in Hampshire. The fabric is contemporary with Kennet Valley OXAQ in Oxford and overlaps in geographical distribution.

This assemblage from Maidenhead is a small and closely dated assemblage dating primarily from the late 12th to the late 13th century. The majority of archaeological work on medieval ceramics from Berkshire has been done in Reading and the Newbury area. Maidenhead has had few sites analysed, while there is one site analysed in Eton and an overall summary including Windsor (Blinkhorn 2000; 2005). Both sites produce local early wares but by the 13th century, London imports are evident.

Discussion

It is possible that Maidenhead's river access would make it ideally placed for goods from Reading and the Kennet Valley; this is corroborated by the Kennet Valley ware. This ware is found in Oxford (as fabric OXAQ) and in early contexts in Witney. Imports from elsewhere are limited to the limestone-tempered Minety-type ware, which is found in Oxford, Reading and possibly Newbury. It may derive from Wiltshire but may be from kilns or sites in Berkshire.

River access and organization of river trade has been recognized at Wallingford, and in the late 12th and early 13th centuries the sandy Berkshire wares were transhipped up-river via Henley. Windsor, Maidenhead and Reading had extensive wharves (Hawkes and Fasham 1997, Nash Ford 2001). Further work on pottery assemblages and environmental evidence would help in understanding the markets and trading routes via river both upstream to Reading and further or downstream and back to London and region. Medieval Camley Gardens-type ware is recognized in London, so material from the Maidenhead area was traded. This may indicate other goods travelling from Maidenhead area for larger markets.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a single archaeological feature, a shallow pit of probably late 12th to late 13th century date. This was located at the north-western corner end of the site and this zone has some archaeological potential. The remainder of the site revealed nothing of interest.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.7	1.6	0.38	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.35m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.35m+ brown clay (natural geology). Pit 1 [Pls 1 and 2]
2	15.6	1.6	0.29	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.25m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.25m+ brown clay (natural geology)
3	16.5	1.6	0.4	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.35m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.35m+ brown clay (natural geology) [Pl. 3]
4	16.5	1.6	0.33	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.35m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.35m+ brown clay (natural geology) [Pl. 4]
5	17	1.6	0.36	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.35m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.35m+ brown clay (natural geology) [Pl. 5]
6	16.1	1.6	0.45	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.34m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.345m+ brown clay (natural geology)
7	16.2	1.6	0.38	0–0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.35m brown silty clay with pebbles (subsoil); 0.35m+ brown clay (natural geology) [Pl. 6]

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	1	50	Pit	Medieval (12th/13th cnetury)	pottery

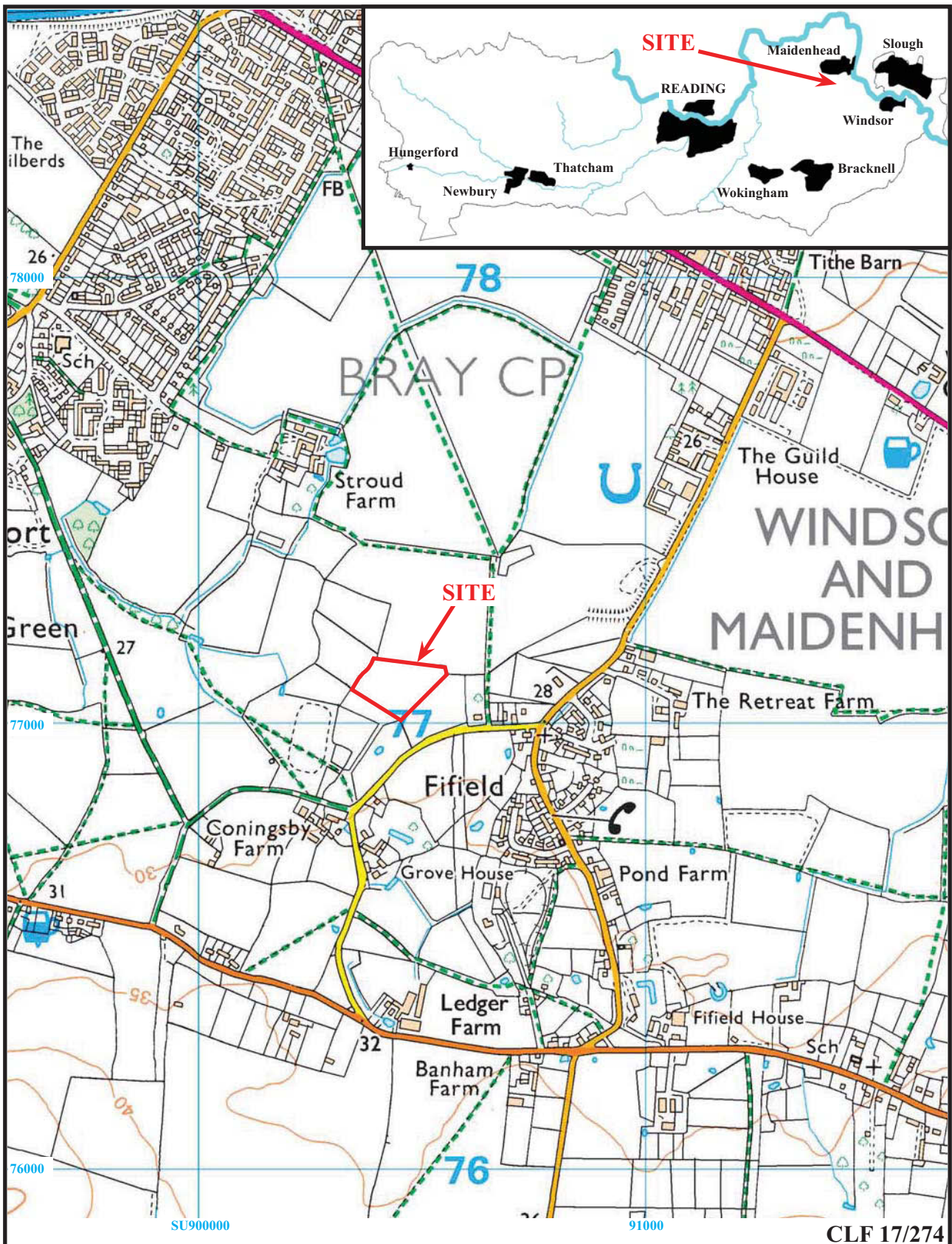
APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogues

A>hand collected

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date (century AD)</i>	<i>Comments/vessel type/form</i>
1	1	50	KVB	11	96	12th-13th	Bodysherds cooking/bowl frags grey and oxidized orange
1	1	50	KVB	3	35	12th-13th	Base angles
1	1	50	KVB	2	27	12th-13th	Bowl rims co-join profile diameter 14cm 12.5%
1	1	50	KVB	1	64	13th	Cooking pot/jar rim everted bevelled rim diameter 21cm 12.5%
1	1	50	KVB	1	46	12th-13th	Cooking pot/jar rim everted bevelled rim 20 cm 5%
1	1	50	CAMG	5	83	12th-14th	Bodysherds cooking pot
1	1	50	CAMG	1	54	Late 13th	Everted cooking pot rim rounded rim top Diameter 17vm 7%
1	1	50	OXBB	15	125	13th-14th	Bodysherds cooking pot vesicular fabric
1	1	50	OXBB	1	3	13th-14th	Cooking pot everted round topped rim diameter 21cm 6%
		Surface finds	KVB	5	38	12th-15th	bodysherds
		Surface finds	KVB	3	46	12th-14th	Base angles
		Surface finds	CAMG	1	2	12th-13th	Round topped cooking pot rim
		Surface finds	CAMG	1	8	13th-14th	Fine version later possible pitcher sherd

A>from sieved samples

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comments/vessel type/form</i>
1	1	50	CAMG	1	4	12th-14th	Base angle
1	1	50	KVB	1	2	12th-15th	bodysherd
1	1	50	OXBB	2	4	12th-15th	bodysherd

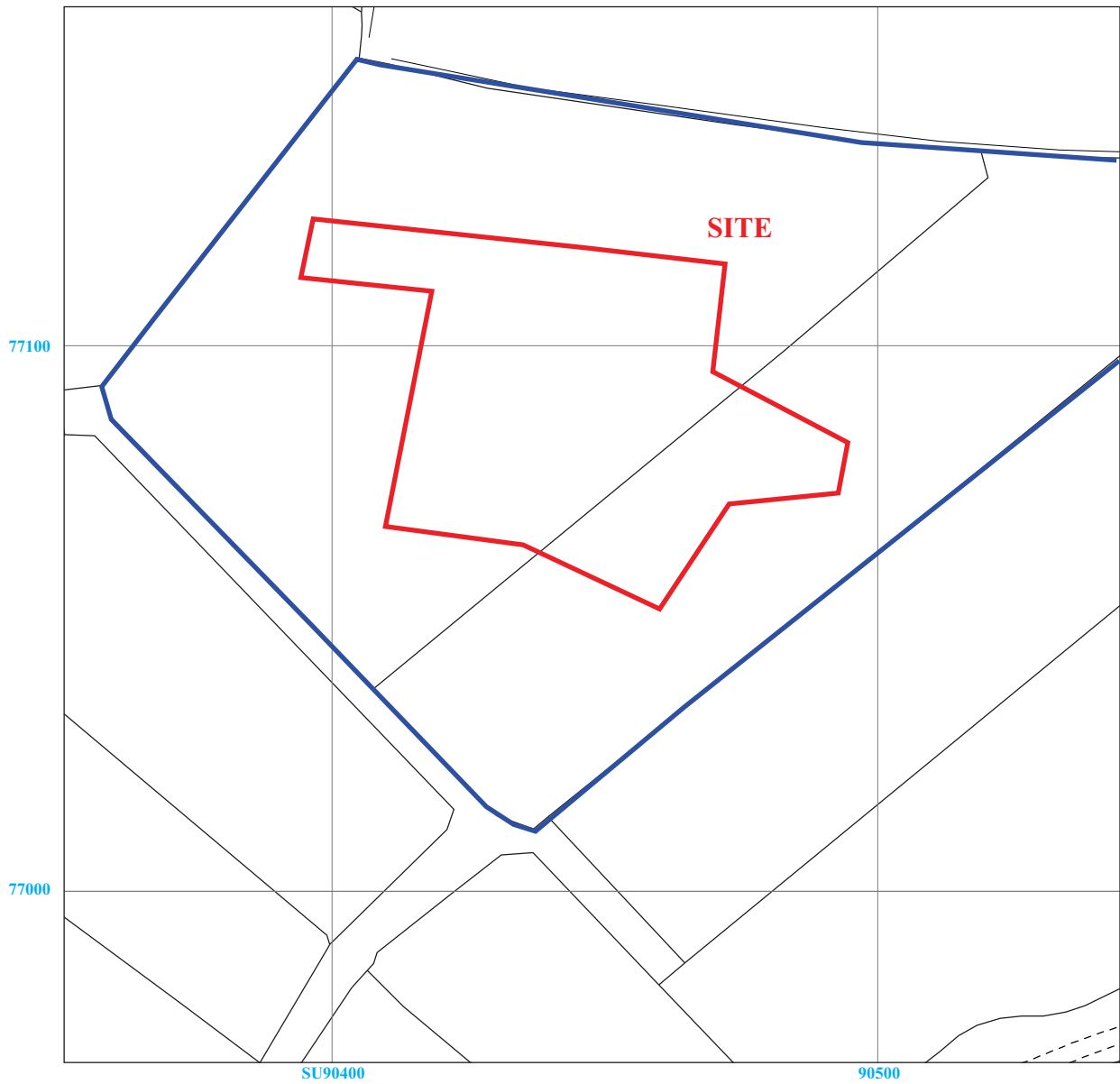


**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifeild,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018
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Figure 1. Location of site within Fifeild, Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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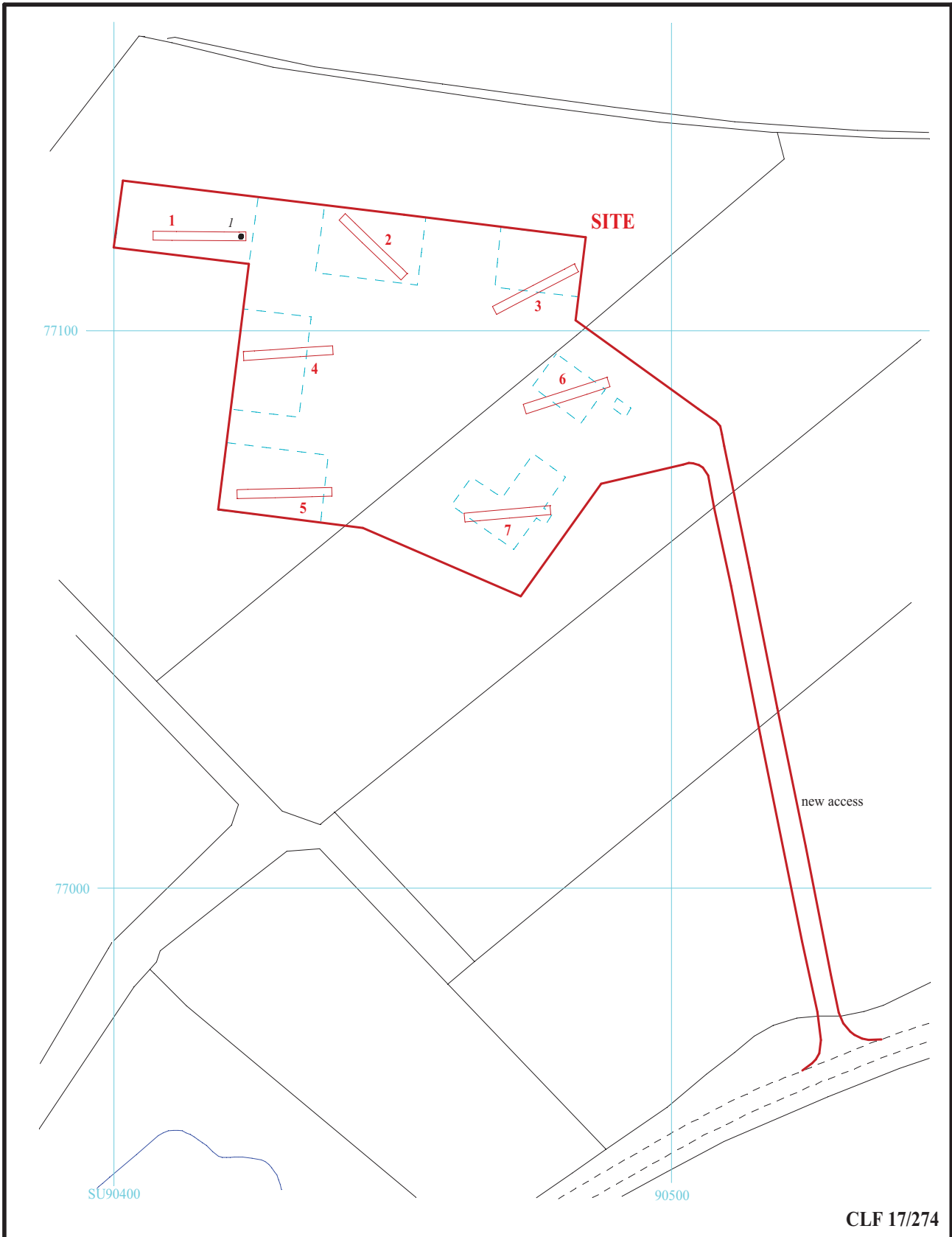
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**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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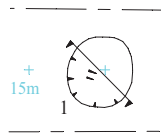
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Figure 3. Location of trenches, showing extent and outline of new buildings.

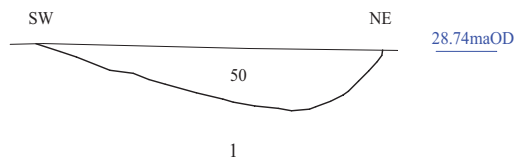


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Trench 1



Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1.

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



Plate 2. Trench 1, Pit 1 looking north,
Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield,
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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking south west,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



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

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**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 5, looking west,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 7, looking west,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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**Land west of Mulberry, Coningsby Lane, Fifield,
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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 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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