

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead,
Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

**Site Code: VWM18/110
(SU 8912 8062)**

Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

By Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code VWM 18/110

November 2018

Summary

Site name: Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8912 8062

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th-20th November 2018

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: VWM 18/110

Area of site: c.0.4 hectares

Summary of results: The majority of the area had been deeply disturbed by previous developments including marginal zones beyond the footprint of a former large building on the site. However, one trench was relatively undisturbed, and revealed the presence of an alluvium-filled channel and an adjacent terrace of gravel/brickearth. Two Mesolithic flints were recovered from the latter zone. Despite the digging of an additional trench to search for further flintwork on this terrace, no more finds were revealed. The site is considered to have low or no archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a local museum willing to accept archive material 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: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✓ 29.11.18

Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Report 18/110

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8912 8062) (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr Andrew Butcher of Faithful+Gould, Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London, NW1 3AT on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Planning permission has been sought from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new multi-storey car park on the site. The application is to include the results of a field evaluation to determine what if any mitigation of the effects of development on any archaeological assets will be needed.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018), and the Royal Borough'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 Steve Ford and Josh Hargreaves between 19th and 20th November 2018 and the site code is VWM 18/110. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept archive material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The proposal site is located within Stafferton Industrial Estate to the south of Maidenhead town centre (Fig. 1). The River Thames is less than 1km to the east. The site comprises an irregular parcel of land covering an area of approximately 0.4ha and is centred on NGR SU 8912 8062. The concrete slabs and surfaces of a former building and subsequently a car park had been removed prior to the evaluation (Pl. 1). The site is bounded by Stafferton Way to the north, commercial units to the east, apartment buildings to the south and Vicus Way to the west. The underlying geology is alluvium (BGS 2004) but gravel and brickearth were recorded at the western end. The site lies at a height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum.

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; Dils 2013). The town of Maidenhead is considered to have Saxon origins and is recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 as *Ellintone* (*Elentone* or *Aylington*) but was probably no more than a hamlet or village at that time. The settlement increased in importance following the erection of a bridge crossing the River Thames in c. 1280 (Astill 1977). However the site lies at some distance from the historic core.

Recent discoveries of early Saxon structures at Braywick Leisure Centre to the south (Taylor 2018) with an additional Bronze Age ring ditch and Neolithic pits discovered during follow up fieldwork (Colyer in prep.) demonstrate the potential of the environs of the proposal site.

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 research 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;
- to determine if there are any deposits of Saxon date on the site;
- to determine if possible the palaeotopography of the site with regards to areas of higher, drier land (gravel islands) more suitable for occupation; and
- to determine the palaeoenvironmental potential of the site.

Five trenches were to be excavated across the site, each measuring 25m long and between 1.60m and 2m wide. This was to be done using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Trenches were to be excavated to the first archaeologically relevant horizon, or to the level of the natural geology. Should alluvium (or peat) be encountered overlying gravel, this was to be removed in spits of 0.1-0.15m thickness with each phase of surface exposed inspected for deposits and artefacts. Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any deposits or features that might warrant preservation in situ or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Six trenches were eventually excavated, as close as possible to their intended locations although the presence of live services resulted in some repositioning of trenches in the northern portion of the site (Fig. 3). The trenches measured between 6.5m and 30.7m long and between 0.35m and 1.55m deep. All were 1.8m 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. 4; Pls 5-7)

This trench was aligned SW- NE and measured 25.0m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of made ground above 0.2m of blue/grey alluvium above yellow/brown alluvium above off-white calcareous sandy clay with some gravel, the natural geology. The alluvium shelved up at the south-west end onto a light brown silty clay with some gravel. It is considered that the latter is possibly a brickearth capping to gravel on the edge of a terrace. Three struck flints were recovered from the latter deposit.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned NE-SW and measured 27.0m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy at the south west end comprised 0.1m of made ground above brickearth. For the remainder of the trench made ground overlay clayey gravel natural geology, with no traces of alluvium.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned ESE-WNW and measured 17.0m long and 1.4m deep. The stratigraphy comprised made ground above alluvium. The made ground also contained large blocks of redeposited alluvium. Two test pits were dug to depths of 1.55m which revealed alluvium above clayey gravel. The trench base was frequently disturbed by modern cut features.

Trench 4 (Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned SE-NW and measured 21.2m long and up to 1.08m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.95m of made ground above alluvium/gravel. Much of the trench was disturbed by modern cut features.

Trench 5 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned SW-NE and measured 30.7m long and up to 1.16m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.9m of made ground above 0.26m of brown alluvium above clayey gravel. Much of the trench to the south-west was

disturbed by Victorian and modern cut features. One feature of possible archaeological interest was investigated at the south-western end but was considered to be a root hole.

Trench 6 (Fig. 4; Pl. 4)

This trench was aligned N - S and measured 6.5m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of made ground overlying gravel. Much of the south end of the trench was disturbed by services.

Finds

Struck flint by Steve Ford

Three struck flints were recovered from the western end of Trench 1. Two of these were well-made narrow flakes (blades), slightly patinated but otherwise in good condition (Pl. 8). A third small flake was also recovered but was unpatinated and not obviously of the same period as the two blades.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed that much of the site has been heavily disturbed with truncation and even removal of alluvium in places. Nevertheless in areas with less disturbance, no deposits of archaeological interest were revealed. As the geology maps indicate, the majority of the site was occupied by alluvium but a small area of the site appeared to represent an area of higher ground either a terrace or gravel 'island'. However, no occupation deposits were revealed on these nominally higher and drier parts of the site. The three struck flints of Mesolithic date were recovered from this area but are too few to suggest the presence of nearby occupation remains. They are likely to represent no more than casual loss or discard.

On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

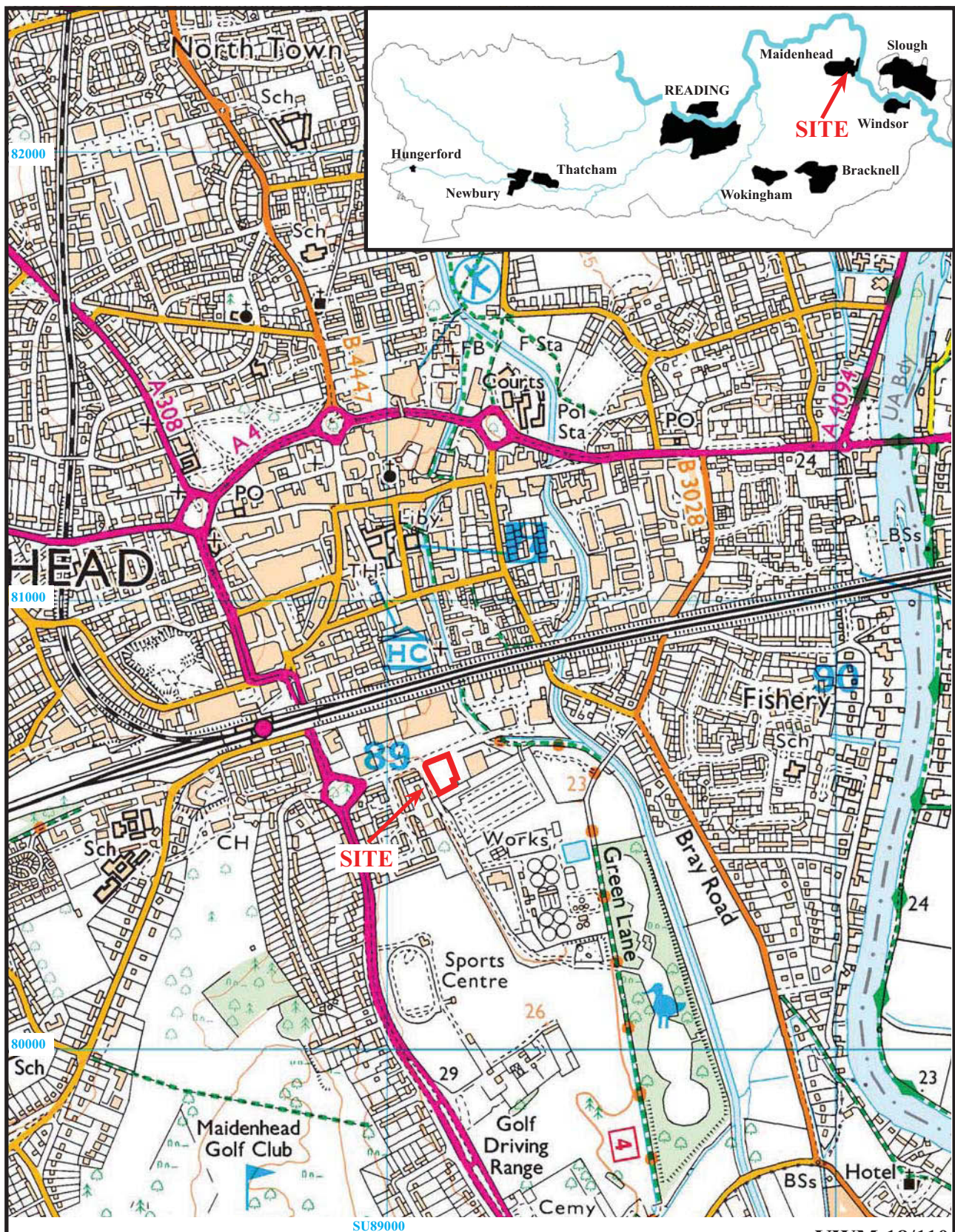
References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2, Reading
- BGS, 2005, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Colyer, A, in prep, 'Late Neolithic pits, a Bronze Age ring ditch and Early Saxon houses at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire: an archaeological excavation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 17/116d, Reading
- Dils J and M Yates, 2013, *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire*, Berkshire Record Society, Reading
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 1, Reading
- NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Taylor, A, 2018, 'Land at Braywick Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 17/116c, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25	1.8	0.73	0-3m- 0-0.1m made ground; 0.1-0.4m brickearth; 0.4m+ clayey gravel. 3-25m 0-0.1m made ground; 0.1-0.2m blue/grey alluvium; 0.2-0.7m yellow/brown alluvium; 0.7m+ off white calcareous sandy clay with gravel . [Pls 5-7]
2	27	1.8	0.7	0m-6m- 0-0.1m made ground 0.1m+ brickearth 6m- 27m- 0-0.6m made ground; 0.6m+ clayey gravel
3	17	1.8	1.4	0-1.4m made ground: 1.4m alluvium/gravel. Test pits to 1.55m
4	21.2	1.8	1.08	0-0.95m made ground 0.95m alluvium/gravel. [Pl. 2]
5	30.7	1.8	1.16	0-0.9m made ground; 0.26m brown alluvium; 1.16m+ clayey gravel Much disturbed at E end. [Pl. 3]
6	6.5	1.8	0.35	0-0.35m of made ground; 0.35m+ gravel. Much disturbed at S end. [Pl. 4]



VWM 18/110

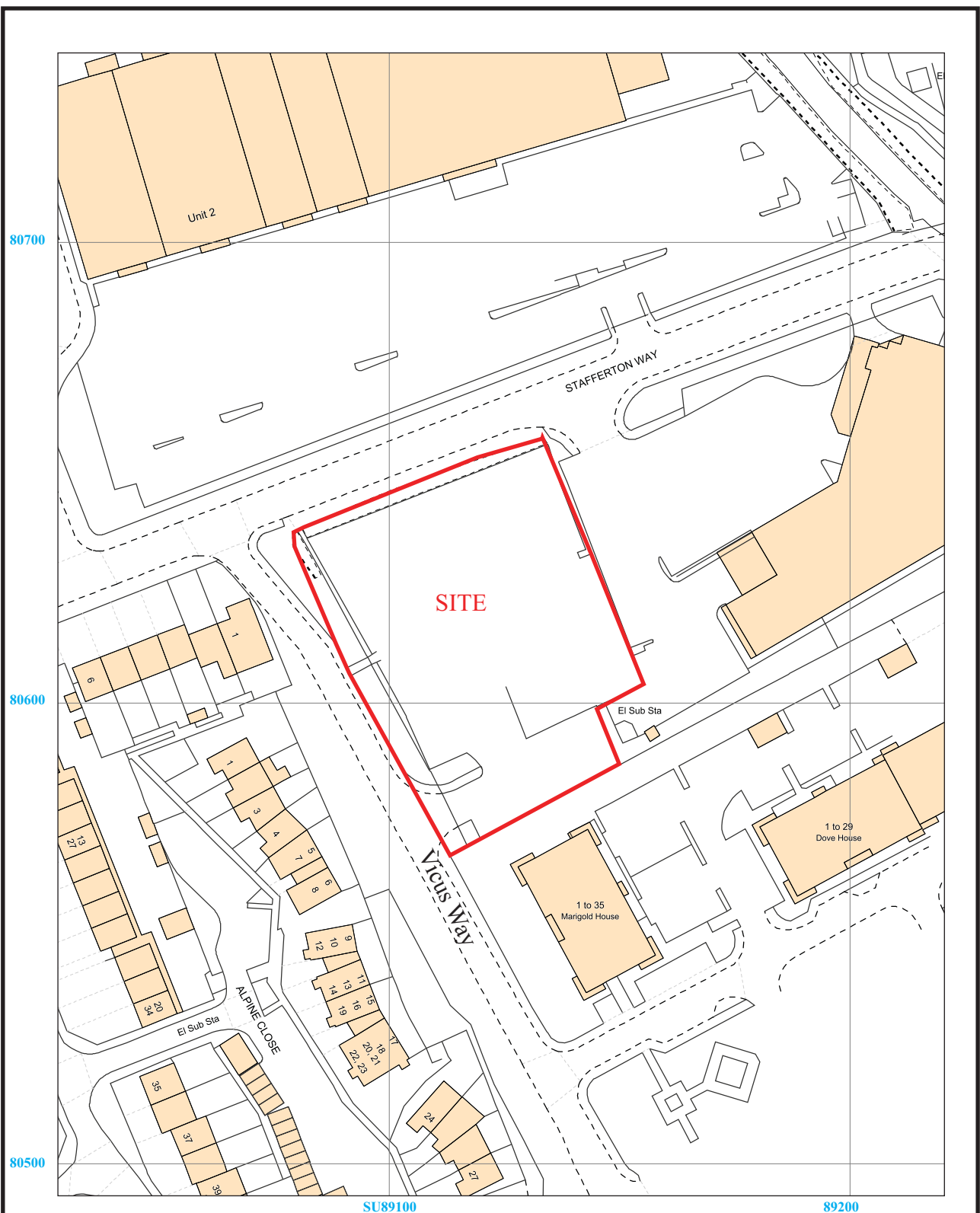
**Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2018**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire

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

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



VWM 18/110



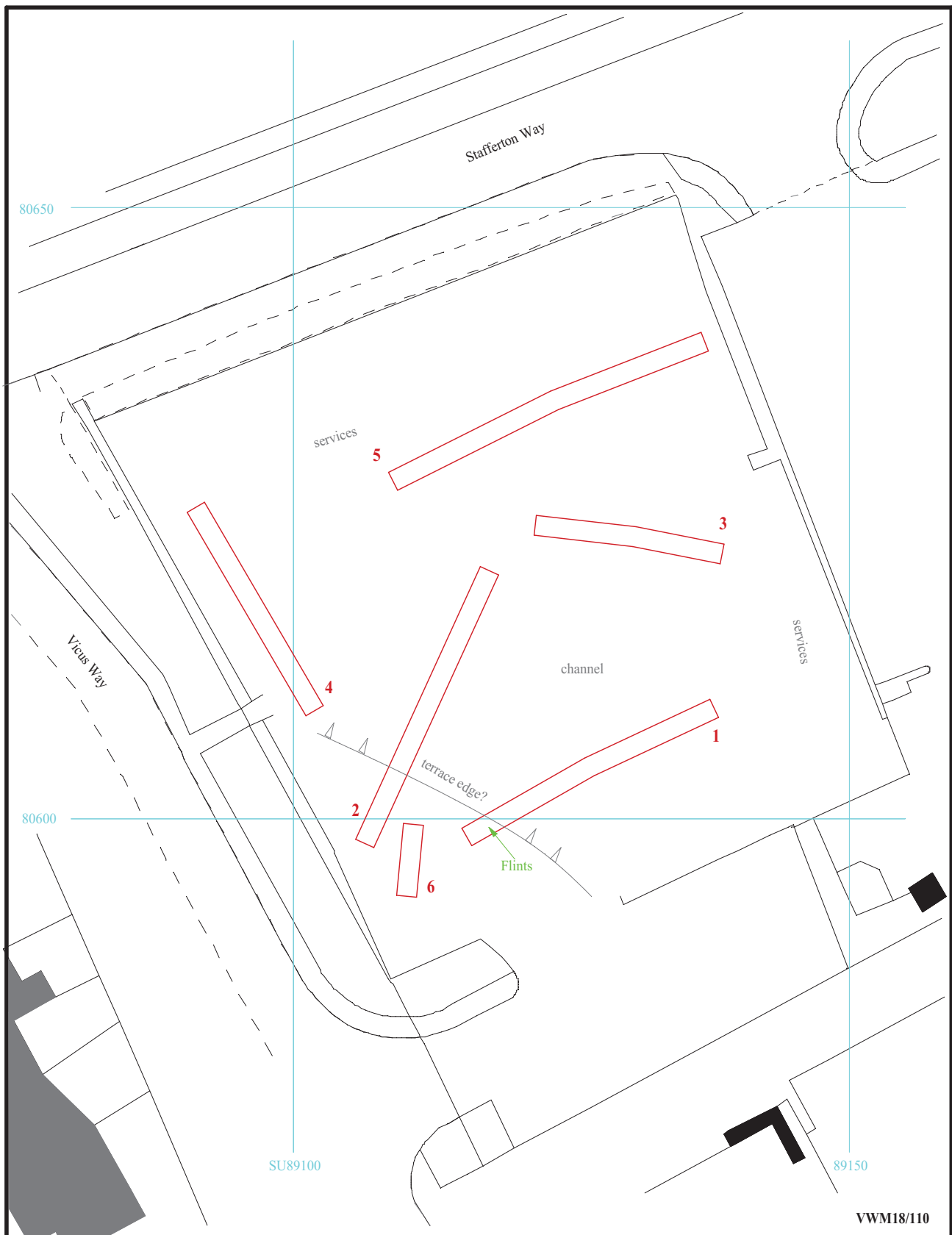
**Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2018**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



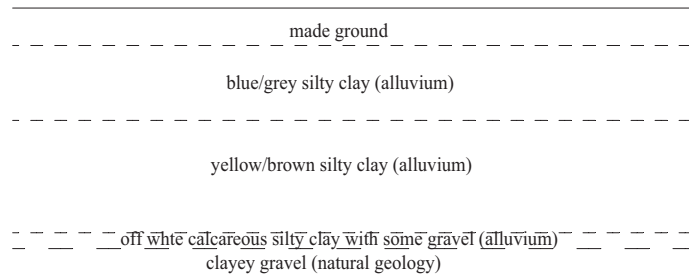
Land at Vicus Way, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 3. Location of evaluation trenches.

0 25m

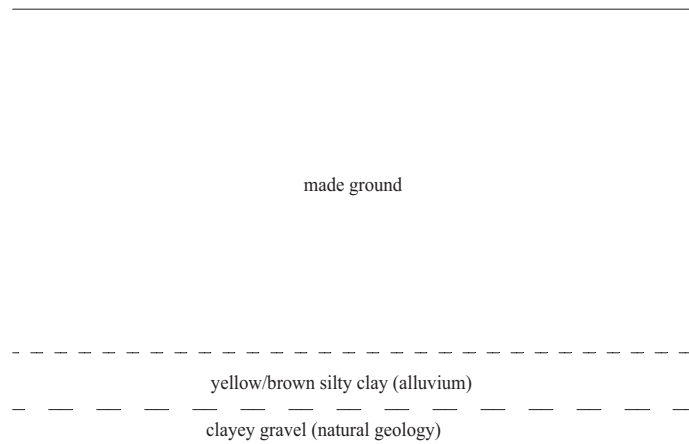
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Trench 1 (centre)



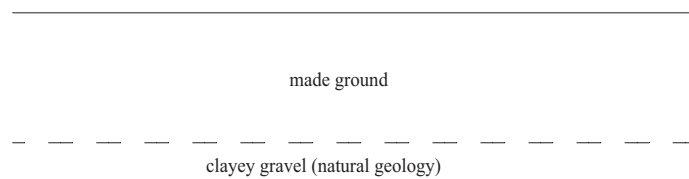
21.95m aOD

Trench 5



21.69m

Trench 6



22.36m

VWM18/110



**Land at Braywick Park, Braywick,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 4. Representative sections



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. General view of site looking north west



Plate 2. Trench 4 looking north,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 3. Trench 5 looking north east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 4. Trench 6 looking north,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m

VWM 18/110

**Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2018**
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1-4

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 5. Trench 1 Palaeochannel looking north east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 6. Trench 1 section south west end looking south west. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 7. Trench 1 section north east end looking north east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m



Plate 8. Trench 1 Mesolithic flint blades from west end. Scale: 5cm

VWM 18/110

Land off Vicus Way, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5-8

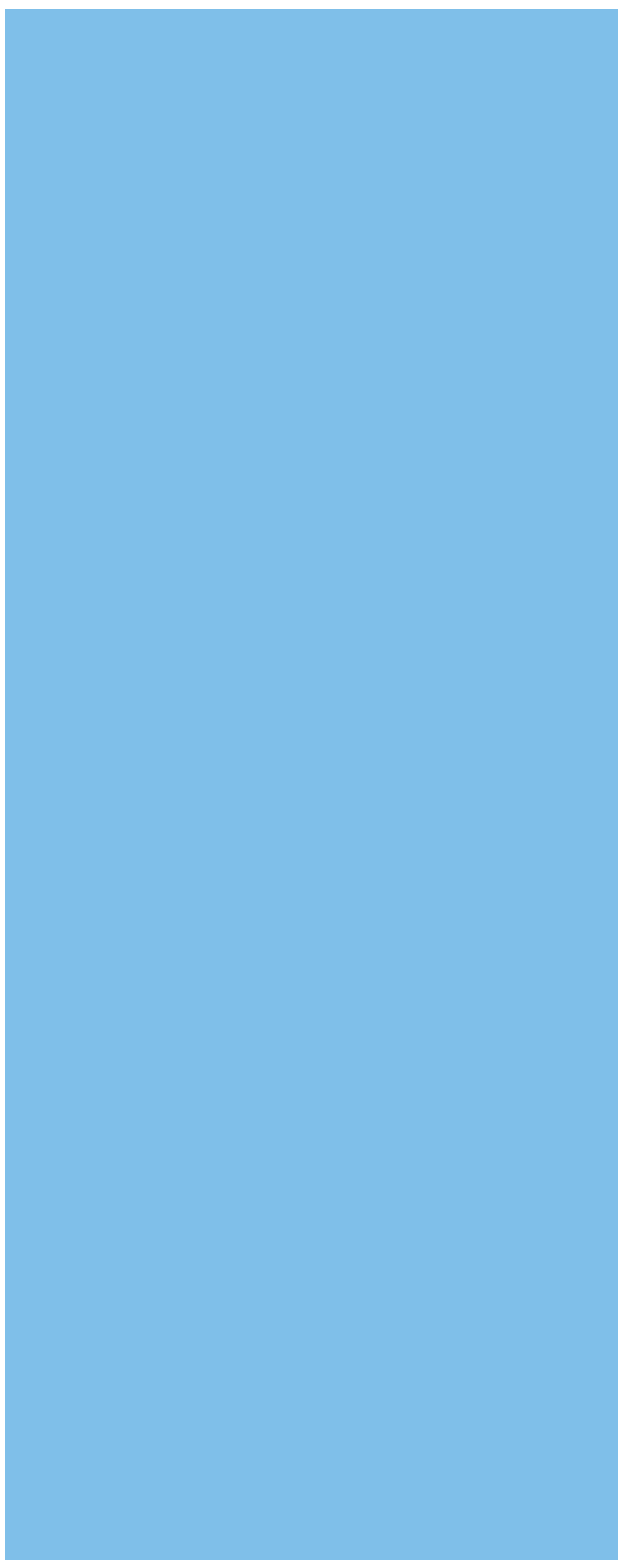
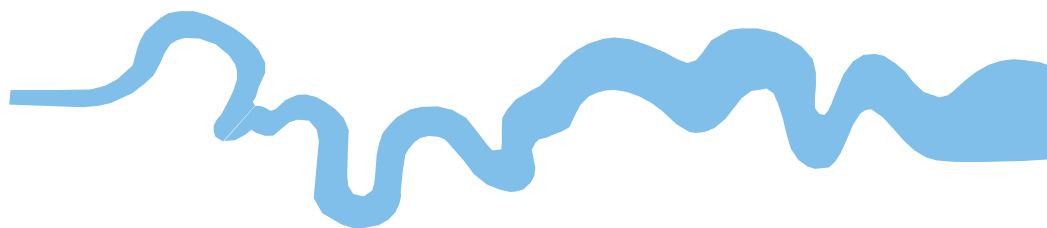
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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)***