

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at York Road, Maidenhead,
Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation
Part 1**

by Joshua Hargreaves

Site Code: YRM18/185

(SU 8901 8103)

Land at York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

Part 1

for Countryside Properties

by Joshua Hargreaves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code YRM 18/185

January 2019

Summary

Site name: Land at York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8901 8103

Site activity: Evaluation Part 1

Date and duration of project: 5th-14th December 2018

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Joshua Hargreaves

Site code: YRM 18/185

Area of site: c.1.62ha

Summary of results: Seven trenches formed the first part of the evaluation. Four trenches were found to be located on a gravel terrace. The other three were located on the floodplain of York Stream and revealed deep made ground and alluvium. Two of these latter trenches had to be abandoned due to services and obstructions. A number of modern linear features were observed but no features nor artefacts of archaeological interest. These areas of the proposal site 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 with the Archaeology Data Service or a local museum willing to accept it in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 18.01.19
	Steve Preston✓ 18.01.19

Land at York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Joshua Hargreaves

Report 18/185

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at York Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8901 8103) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Sam Hartley of Countryside Properties (West London), 79 Enfield Road, Acton, London, W3 8RB.

Planning Permission (18/01/1608/FULL) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of new housing on site. This permission is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation (in this instance, a field evaluation) as requested by Berkshire Archaeology. The results of the evaluation would be used to inform an archaeological mitigation strategy if appropriate. This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, 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 for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joshua Hargreaves and George Bacon from 5th to 14th December 2018, and the site code is YRM 18/185. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service or at a local museum willing to accept it, in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located south of Maidenhead High Street next to the Town Hall (Fig. 1). This irregular plot of land covers approximately 1.6ha and is currently used for car parking (Fig. 2). The site lies on generally level land but with some variation in height. To the west the site lies at 27m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) whereas to the east the land drops away to 20m aOD. The underlying geology is recorded as being Taplow gravel to the west of site and alluvium (mainly silt and clay) to the east, next to York Stream (BGS 2005). This sequence was noted in the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Hawkins 2018). The site is located within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with numerous prehistoric and later archaeological finds (eg Dils 2013). Although this site is located outside the recorded areas of medieval settlement within Maidenhead, other nearby fieldwork has suggested the possible presence of water management systems of medieval date. The pre-modern topography comprised a braided river system, now alluviated with several channels leaving gravel 'islands' between them. These islands of higher dry land were often favoured for prehistoric settlement, and where alluvial deposits are present, have a high potential for well-preserved organic remains.

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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in-situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this 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 prehistoric or medieval 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;
- to determine if alluvium or peat deposits are present on the site and if so the relationship of archaeological deposits to them; and
- to determine the palaeoenvironmental potential of the site.

It was proposed to dig 11 trenches, each 15m long and 1.6m or 2.0m wide. Trenches were to be dug by JCB type machine with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were present they were to be cleaned with appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to an agreed sampling fraction in order to satisfy the aims outlined above. Should alluvium be encountered overlying gravel in any of the trenches this was to be removed in spits using a machine, with each spit inspected for deposits and artefacts.

The trenching was to take place in stages according to access requirements and this report deals with the first part of the evaluation comprising six trenches.

Results

The fieldwork undertaken at this stage of the project relates to trenches in the central and eastern parts of the site. Trenches 1-3(at the western end) and 11 (to the south) will be excavated in a later phase when access to the car parks they are located within are available. Trenches 8 and 10 had to be abandoned due to the machine being unable to break through concrete slabs. All other trenches excavated as intended, with lengths ranging from 12m to 20.3m. Trenches 4-7 all included some evidence of demolition from the removal of a row of Victorian terrace housing which had been situated on the site prior to its use as a car park. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. No evidence of archaeological features or finds was observed in any trench.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 4 was aligned WSW–ENE and measured 13.2m in length and 0.6m in depth: it had to be shortened because of existing drainage. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of made ground and Tarmac sitting on top of 0.3m of modern demolition deposits, above 0.13m of grey silty clay made ground, overlying gravel natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were observed in this trench.

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned N-S and measured 20.3m in length with a depth of 1.1m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of modern made ground and Tarmac overlying 0.2m of modern demolition debris, above 0.5m of redeposited alluvium and made ground mix, over the natural gravel geology. The increased depth of this trench was due to the levelling of the naturally sloped ground for the construction of the existing car park. Modern linear features were observed aligned E-W at both ends of the trench. A central section of the trench was left unexcavated due to the presence of a electrical cable. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned roughly E-W and was 12m long with a depth of 0.4m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of modern made ground, demolition rubble and Tarmac directly overlying the natural gravel geology. One possible archaeological feature was observed but upon investigation proved to be modern. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned NNW-SSE and measured 17m in length with a depth of 0.65m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of modern made ground and Tarmac above 0.35m of demolition rubble which overlay the natural gravel geology. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned roughly N-S and measured 15.45m in length with a depth of 0.2m. Below 0.2m of Tarmac was a large concrete slab which covered the whole trench. The breaker was unable to penetrate this concrete slab so the trench was abandoned with agreement from Berkshire Archaeology.

Trench 9 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 4)

Trench 9 was aligned NE-SW and was 14.5m long. The depth of the trench was stopped at 1.3m along its length for health and safety reasons, but a test pit (stepped out to 3.6m wide) was excavated at the NE end down to 2.5m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of Tarmac onto 0.3m of compact yellow gravel and concrete made ground. This overlay a further 1m of made ground consisting of loose stone and chunks of concrete crush. Below this was 1m of mid greenish brown silty clay (redeposited alluvium) with brick inclusions. Underlying this at 2.4m+ was further alluvium which was not further excavated. The thick layers of made ground recorded in this trench relate to the multi-storey office building which had occupied this site before its temporary use as a car park. No archaeological finds or features were recorded or observed.

Trench 10 (Fig. 3)

Trench 10 was 15m long aligned E- W but was abandoned due to the breaker not be able to penetrate the reinforced concrete 0.2m down as per trench 8.

Conclusion

The first stage of evaluation has revealed no finds or features of archaeological interest on the site. The four trenches on the river terrace revealed in-situ gravel with relatively few areas of modern truncation, but nevertheless no archaeology was recorded. Two of the three trenches on the lower part of the site could not be completed but Trench 9 was probably typical of the strata expected with deep made ground overlying alluvium to a depth of 2.4m which did not reveal any archaeological deposits at that level.

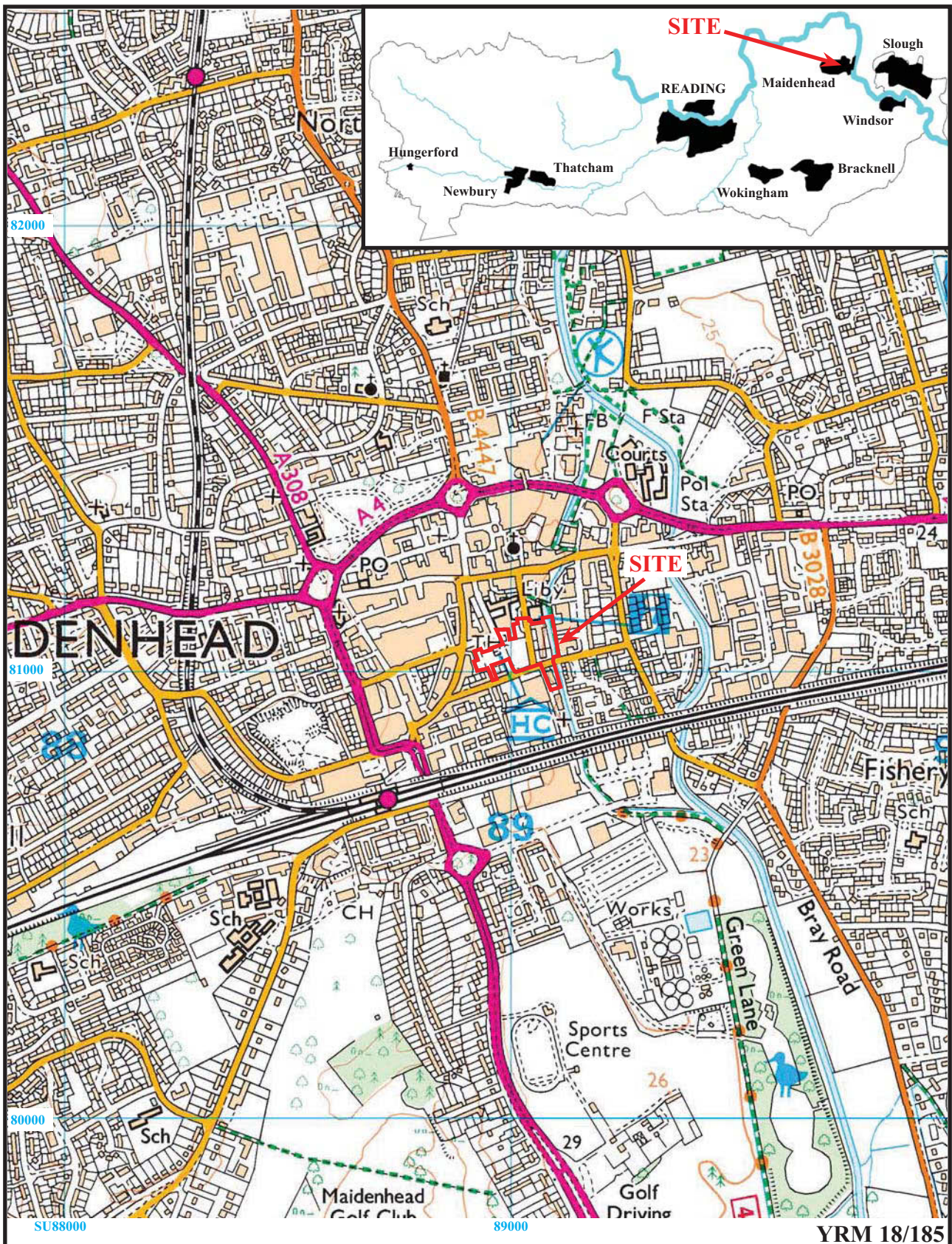
References

- BGS, 2005, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Keyworth
- Dils J and M Yates, 2013, *An Historical Atlas of Berkshire*, Berkshire Record Society, Reading
- Hawkins, N, 2018, 'Land at York Road, Maidenhead, Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment', Pre-Construct Archaeology, report 13251, London
- NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

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				Later Phase
2				Later Phase
3				Later Phase
4	13.2	1.6	0.6	0-0.10 Tarmac; 0.10-0.25m made ground, 0.25-0.42m demolition (brick and tile), 0.42-0.55m grey silty clay made ground; 0.55m+ natural gravel [Pl. 1]
5	20.3	1.6	1.1	0-0.10 Tarmac; 0.1-0.3m light yellowish brown silty sand made ground, 0.3-0.5m brick and tile demolition rubble; 0.5-0.6m light grey clay made ground; 0.6-1m light greyish brown silty clay made ground, 1m+ natural gravel [Pl. 2]
6	12.0	1.6	0.4	0-0.10 Tarmac; 0.10-0.35m demolition layer and made ground, 0.35m+ natural gravel.
7	17.0	1.6	0.65	0-0.10 Tarmac; 0.10-0.25m made ground, 0.25-0.6m demolition layer and made ground, 0.6m+ natural gravel [Pl. 3]
8	15.45	1.6	0.2	0-0.2m Tarmac, 0.2m+ concrete slab
9	14.5	1.6	1.3 (Test pit 2.5m)	0-0.10 Tarmac; 0.10-0.4m compact yellow gravel and concrete; 0.4-1.4m made ground, 1.4-2.4m redeposited alluvium with brick, 2.4m+ alluvium [Pl. 4]
10	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not excavated due to concrete
11				Later Phase



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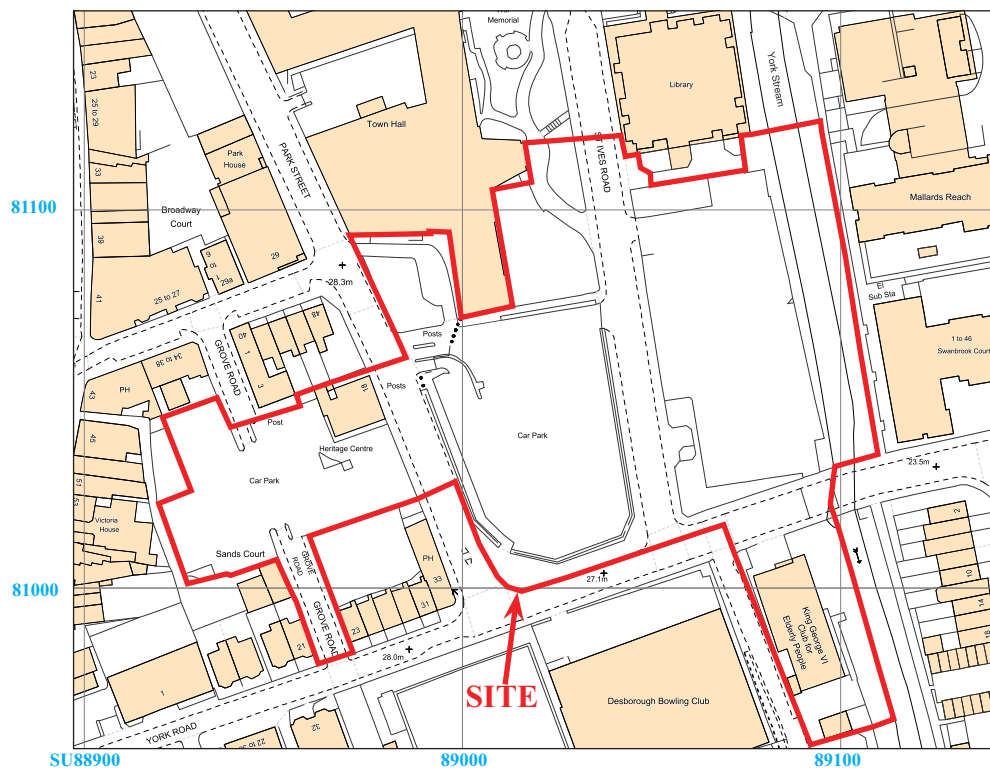
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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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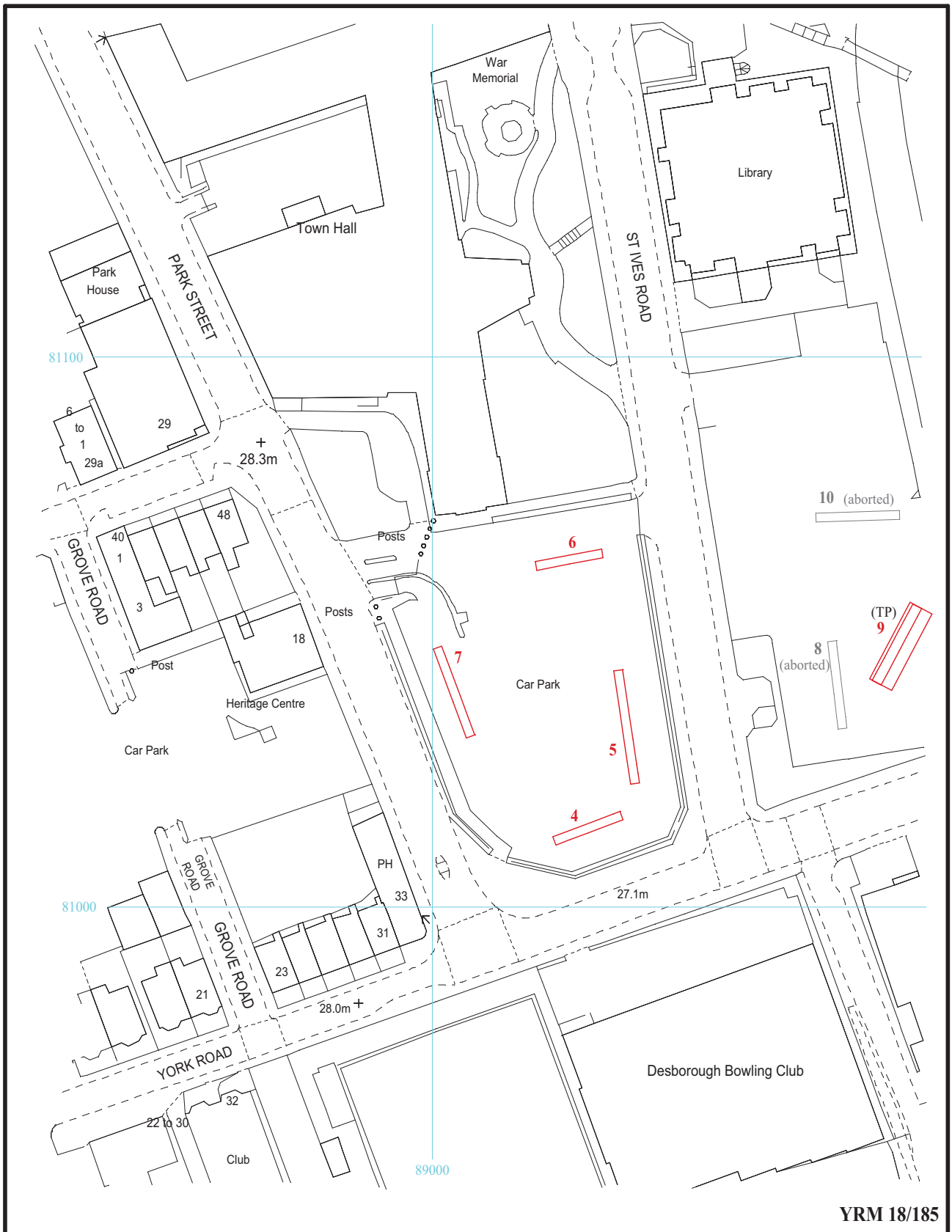
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off York Road.

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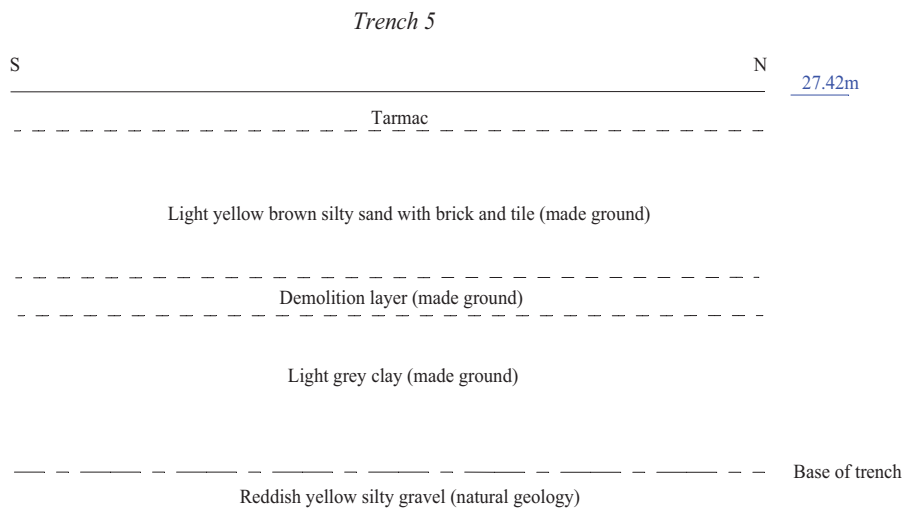
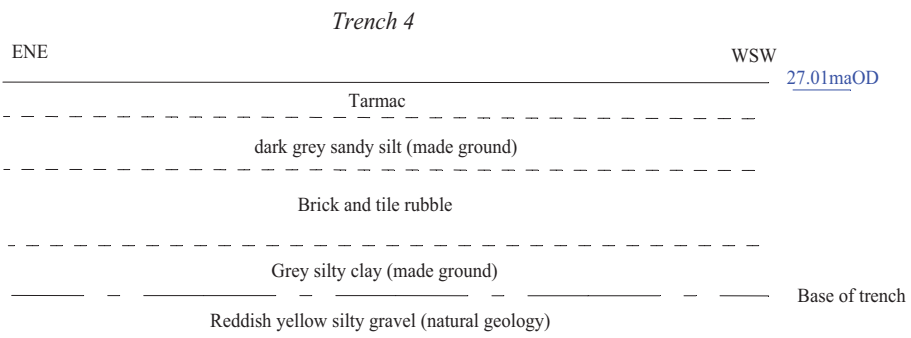


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Figure 3. Location of trenches.





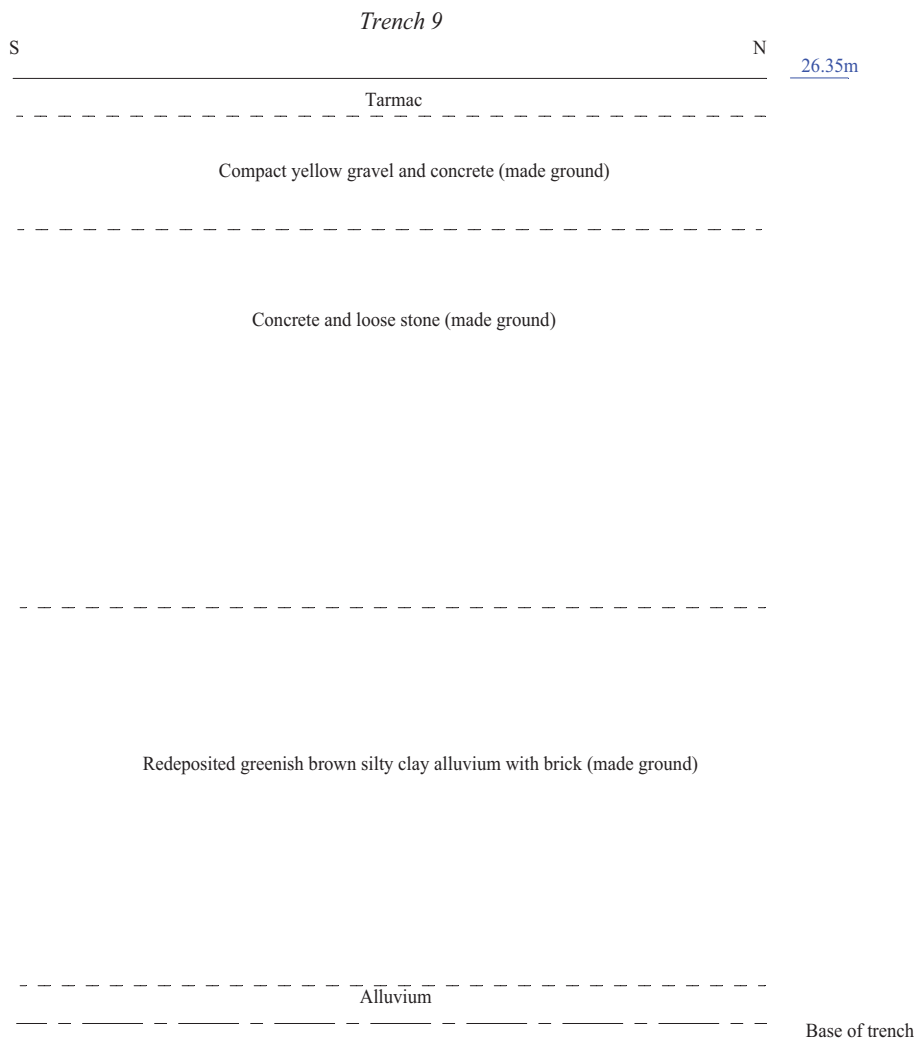
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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Figure 5. Trench 9 section.





Plate 1. Trench 4, looking east north east, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



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

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**Land at York Road, Maidenhead,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking south south east, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 9, looking north,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 1m.

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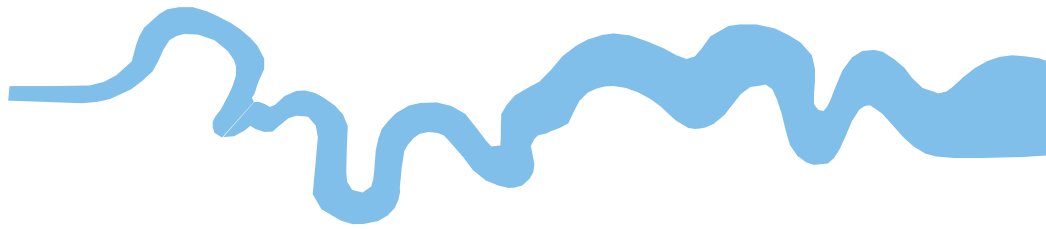
**Land at York Road, Maidenhead,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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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