

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**31-34 Bartholomew Street,
Newbury, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: BSW18/66

(SU 4697 6691)

**31-34 Bartholomew Street, Newbury,
West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Ressance Limited**

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

BSW 18/66

January 2019

Summary

Site name: 31-34 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 4697 6691

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th December 2018 to 9th January 2019

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Anne-Michelle Huvig

Site code: BSW 18/66

Area of site: 543 sq m

Summary of results: Two trenches were opened. Due to the site constraints they were slightly shorter but wider than originally planned. Remains of walls from the previous building on the site (19th century Primitive Methodist chapel?) were found but no features or finds from any earlier period.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

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

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31-34 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, West Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 18/66

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 31-34 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU 4697 6691) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sarah Melton on behalf of Ressance Ltd, 116 Bartholomew Street, Newbury.

Planning permission (16/01942/OUTMAJ) has been gained from West Berkshire Council to develop the site for mainly residential use, following the demolition of the existing buildings. A condition (11) was attached to this consent, which requires a programme of archaeological investigation on the site. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. This investigation was to take form, initially, of evaluation by means of trial trenching. That was to establish if the site has any archaeological potential and if so to inform of a mitigation strategy. This investigation followed a written scheme of investigation approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist for West Berkshire Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by junior supervisor Anne-Michelle Huvig, from 20th December 2018 to 9th January 2019. The site code is BSW18/66. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the historic core of medieval and post-medieval Newbury. It is a flat irregular piece of land, 543 sq m, previously occupied by some commercial buildings at the rear with a yard at the north side and a front parking. At the time of the site visit their demolition was under way. It lies on near level ground at a height of c. 80m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Beenham Grange Gravel of the Second Terrace, possibly overlaid by some peaty deposits (BGS 2006).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Newbury (WBAS 2006, zone 10). Although one cannot find a trace of Newbury in Domesday Book (1086), the medieval town might originate from a Saxon manor (*Ulvritone*), not well located and of unknown extent (Astill 1978). It is believed that the site could have been within an area of burgage plots of medieval and post-medieval Newbury on the east side of Oddfellows Road, a relatively modern creation. Archaeological work on that street, to the south-west of the current site, only found post-medieval features and residual medieval pottery (Pine 1998). Another evaluation on the other side of Oddfellows Road also yielded medieval and post-medieval finds alongside some struck flints (Ford 1997). More recently the site saw the erection of a Methodist chapel. Built in 1877, and occupying most of the area, it was demolished during the 1950s.

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 for this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present, especially of the Mesolithic period (as the site lies on the Kennet Valley, known for its dense Mesolithic occupation at its base);
- to determine if any Medieval or early post-Medieval activity is present on the site; and
- to provide information with which to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Two 9m long and 1.6m wide trenches were to be excavated. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed to expose archaeologically sensitive levels by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were exposed, the stripped area was to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Attention was to be given to the potential of the discovery of human remains as a cemetery may have been associated with the Methodist chapel, although its exact location remains unknown.

Results

Two trenches were eventually dug but their dimensions and positions differed slightly from the original intended plan (Fig. 3). Adjustments had to be made due to the limited space available to manoeuvre and to store spoil. Part of the debris resulting from the demolition of the former building and car park, as well as contractor's machinery were still in-situ at the time of the evaluation.

The trenches were opened using a machine equipped with a 1.60m toothless bucket but the compaction of ground, with multiple concrete slabs, hard pipes and brick walls, made its use almost impossible in Trench 1 which had to be excavated with a smaller bucket, 0.80m wide, fitted with teeth. The natural geology was not reached despite going as deep as 2m below actual ground surface. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1-2)

This trench was approximately 2.70m wide and 6.60m long on top (5.30m at its base). It was located towards the north-western part of the site, and orientated NW-SE. On its NE edge lies a still standing brick wall. Below a 0.15m concrete layer (51) further brick walls (1) were observed alongside the NW end of the trench and the SW edge. Their full width could not be estimated (more than 0.40m). Ground was reduced by 0.50m, following these walls before arriving on a hard preparatory layer (58) made of compacted stones of small size (0.05-0.15m), up to 0.50m thick. It overlaid a soft dark silt (53) with common brick flecks, stones, concrete fragments that could be a rubble backfill (>1.35m) of a previous part of the church as various other internal walls / room divisions were observed below it. Their footing was not attained. The ground was very disturbed. Some modern glass, clay pipe, brick and pottery (retained on site) were sampled from silt layer 53, all indicating a modern date.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pls 3-4)

Due to limited space available to dig the proposed trench, it was also reduced in length (4.80m long at top, 3.45m at base). It was 2.60m wide. The trench was dug into a 0.24m thick soft dark silt with large gravels on top (52) (former car park). It is above a levelling layer of light greyish/brownish pink and/or yellow silt (60), which was 0.12-0.20m thick. Then occurred a disturbed deposit, made ground (57), up to 0.52m thick, mostly a light to mid grey clayey silt with fragments of mortar, brick and stones. The lowest layer observed was a mid to dark grey silty clay (54), at least 0.60m thick. Dug within it was a modern electric cable line isolated with small white gravels. On the NE half end of the trench the angle of a brick wall (3) was observed, aligned SW-NE and NW-

SE and preserved to a height of 0.38m. It was 0.45 wide. It overlaid a brick footing of 0.18m thickness and somewhat wider (0.65m). Below was some soft preparatory/levelling layer, 0.20m thick, of light to mid greyish mortar (59). Layers, possibly related to a fireplace, were also observed on the SE edge, below made ground 57: a soft dark grey silt (0.37m thick) with brick flecks inclusions at its base (56) on top and then a 0.60m thick soft mid grey/brownish grey clayey silt (55) here overlaid (54). It was no more than 1.40m wide from the corner of brick wall 3 to the NE where it seems limited by another brick wall.

Finds

Only modern finds were observed and were retained on site.

Conclusion

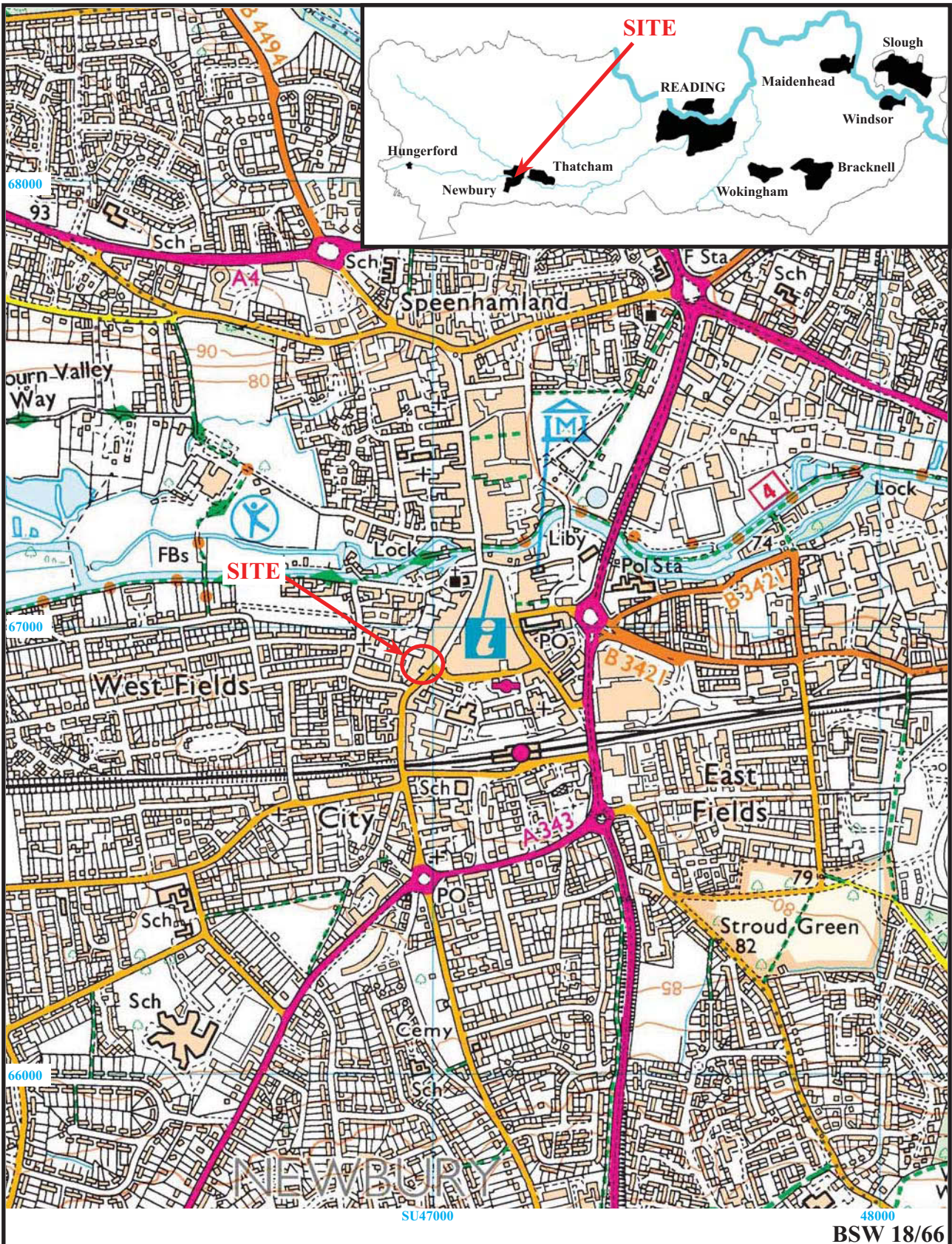
The evaluation was carried out with some modification from the original scheme but to investigate the same total area. No horizon of archaeological interest was recorded, despite the depth reached (2m below ground level). This shows that the site was heavily disturbed when the Methodist church was built in the 19th century. Several of its walls were observed underneath various modern backfill and levelling layers. There was no trace of any associated cemetery. Therefore the potential of the site for archaeological remains is considered to be low.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	6.60	2.70	2.0	0-0.15 concrete (51), 0.15-0.65m brick wall [01], 0.65-1.15m preparatory layer (58), 1.15 - >2m man-made backfill (53), brick wall [02] (Pl. 1-2)
2	4.80	2.60	2.0	0-0.24m topsoil (52), 0.24-0.44 preparatory layers (60), 0.44-0.96m man-made backfill (57), 0.96- >2m man-made deposit (54). + brick wall and its footing [3], levelling layer (59); +deposits (56) and (55). (Pl. 3-4)

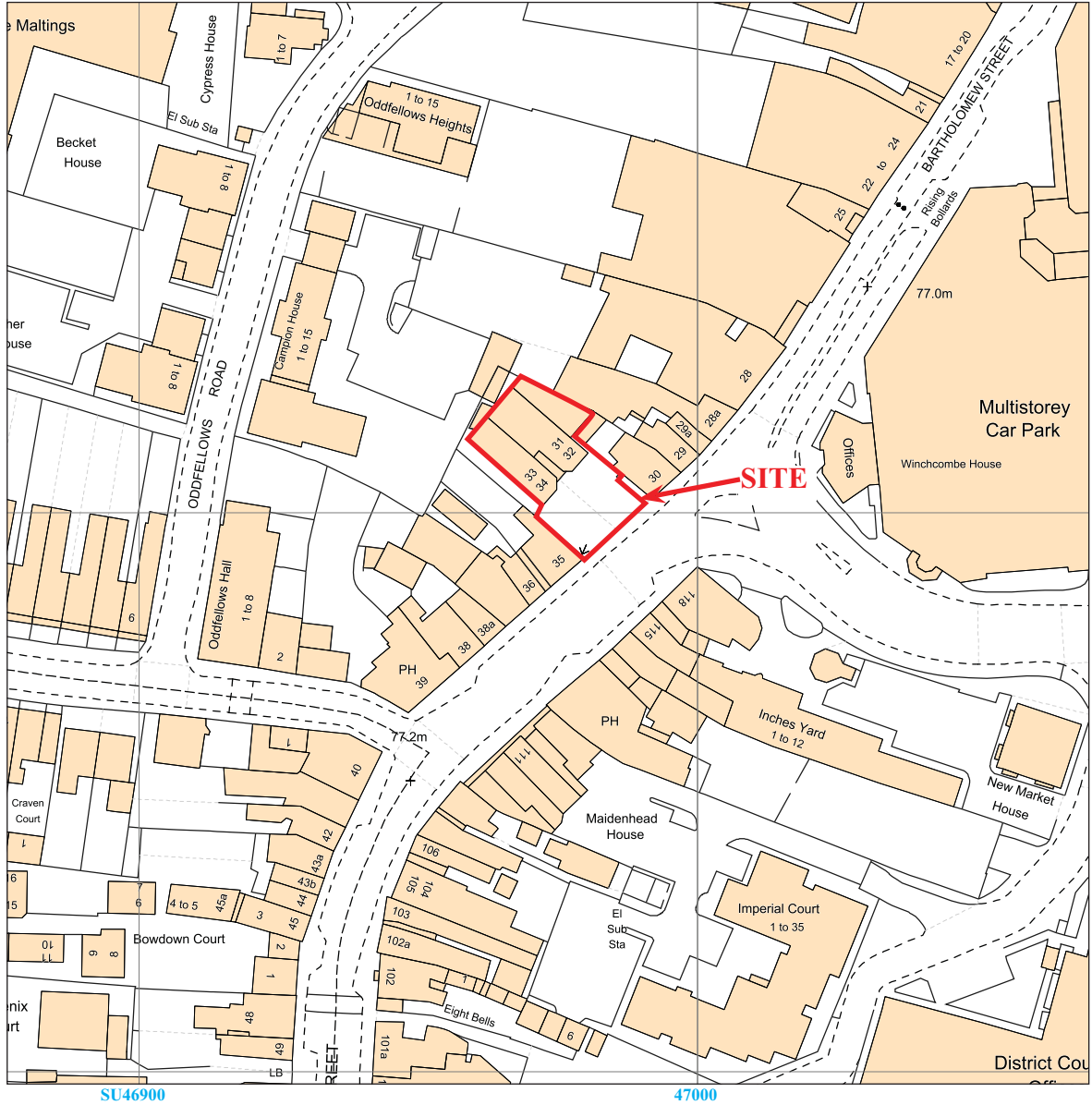


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Figure 1. Location of site within Newbury and Berkshire.

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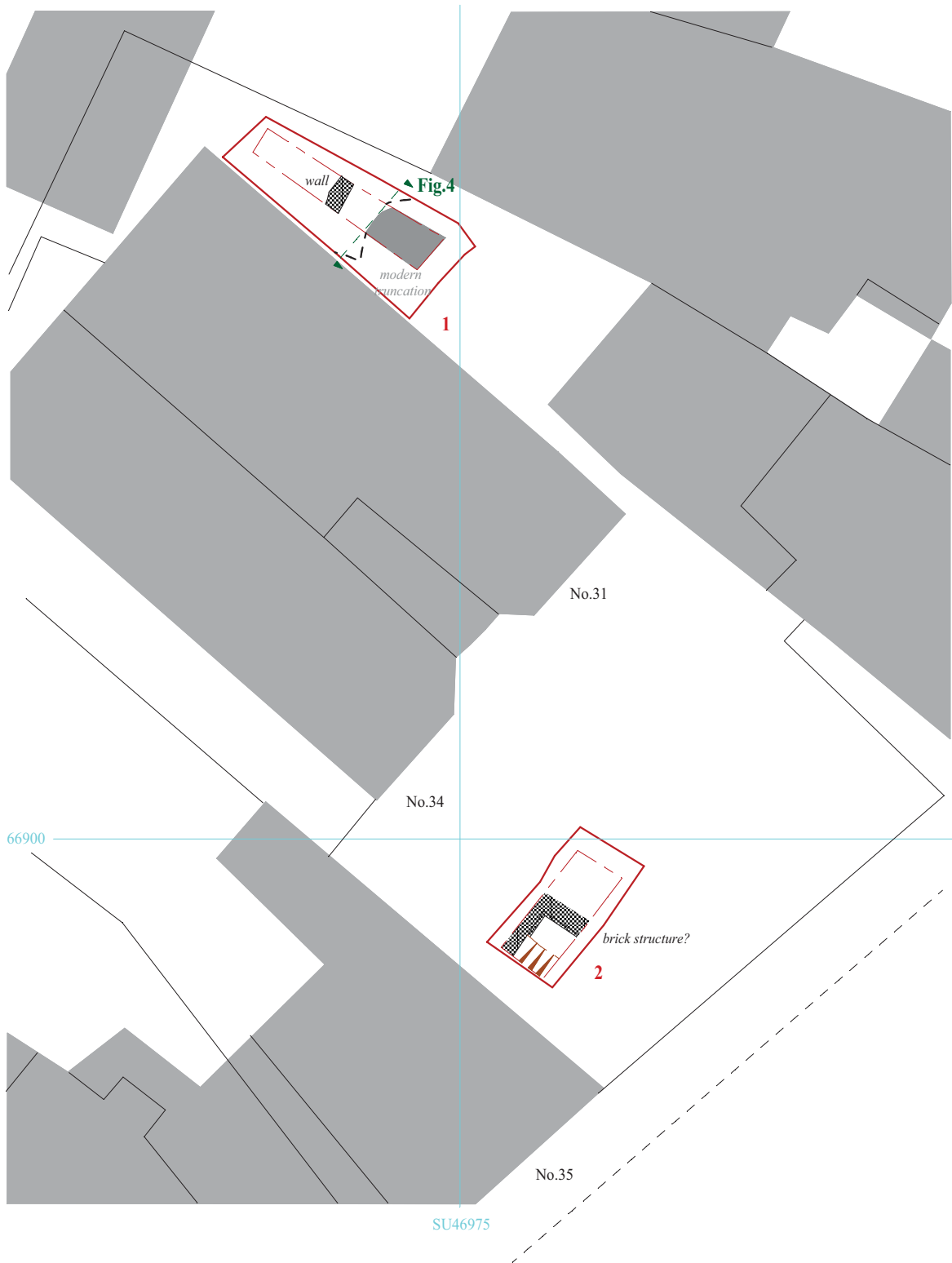
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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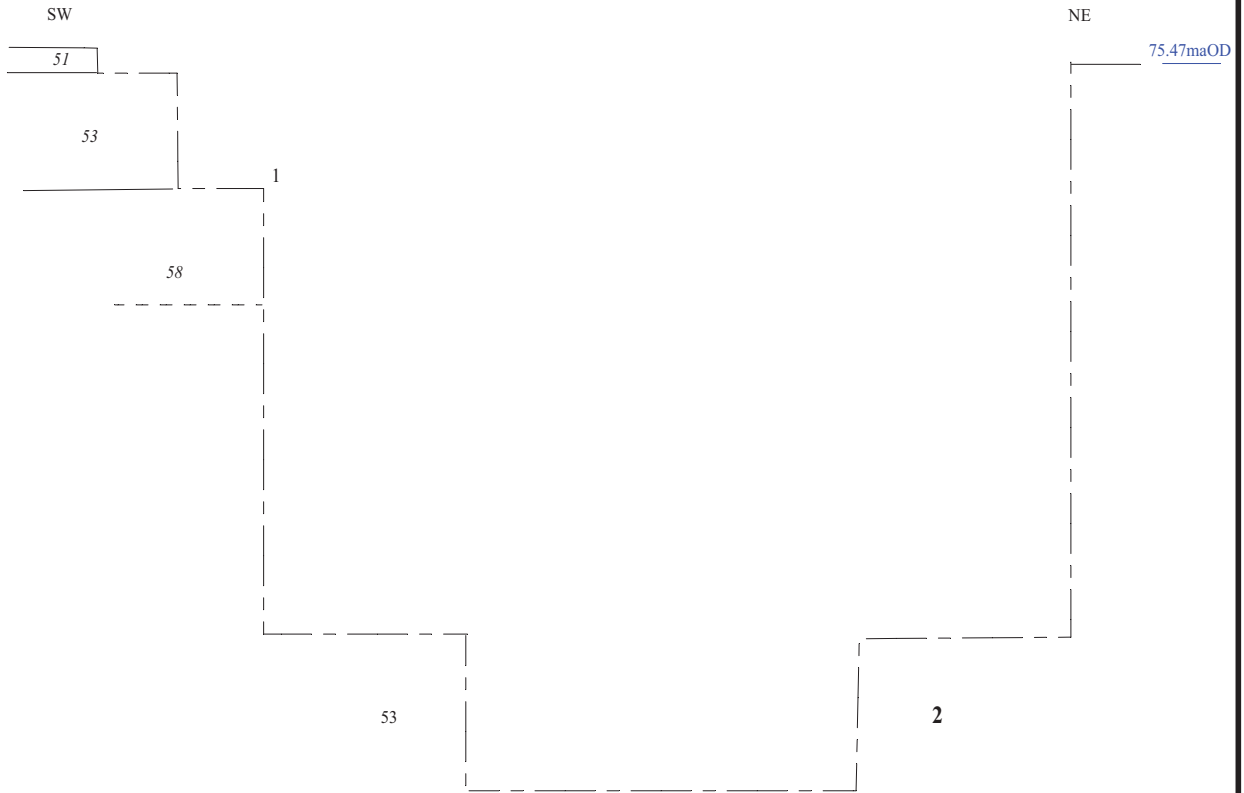
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Trench 1



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Figure 4. Cross section of Trench 1.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north-north-east, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, looking south-east, Scales: 2x1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking north-north-east, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 4. Trench 2, looking south-west, Scales: 2x1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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