

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Joshua Hargreaves

Site Code: TAT12/155

(SU6787 7445)

**87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst,
Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Mrs Singh

by Joshua Hargreaves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TAT 12/155

February 2019

Summary

Site name: 87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading

Grid reference: SU6787 7445

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 8th January 2019

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Joshua Hargreaves

Site code: TAT 12/155

Area of site: 72 sq m

Summary of results: The footprint of the proposed new building was stripped of overburden adjacent to a linear earthwork. The natural geology was exposed but revealed that a large portion of it had been truncated presumably during construction of the nearby house. No evidence for archaeological deposits nor artefacts was recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum or the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 12.02.19 Steve Preston ✓ 12.02.19

87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Josh Hargreaves

Report 12/155

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading (SU 6787 7445) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Vivek Narad on behalf of Mrs Singh.

Planning permission (160456) has been gained from Reading Borough Council to demolish existing structures and build a new end of terrace property on the location. The consent is subject to a condition (8) which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological works

This is as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Boroughs policies on archaeology. This is to take place according to a written scheme of investigation approved by Berkshire Archaeology, who advise the Local Planning Authority in archaeological matters. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joshua Hargreaves on the 8th January 2019 and the site code is TAT 12/155.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum or the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north east side of Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst, which forms the western suburbs of Reading (Fig. 2). A rectangular plot of land with the excavated area covering 72 sq m. The site is the side garden of an end terrace property in west Reading the space had previously been used for a few temporary structures and a tarmac yard surface. The site lies at a height of c. 66m above Ordnance Datum on the edge of a level area sloping down to the south west. The underlying geology is head gravel and clay overlying chalk (BGS 2000).

Archaeological background

The site lies immediately adjacent to a large linear earthwork. The earthwork is considered by some to be of Saxon date though there is no direct evidence for this. The monument was part investigated on a site to the north (Taylor 2005) which recovered prehistoric finds from the make up of the bank, though these could easily be residual. The earthwork is more likely to be of late Iron Age date or even Roman date comparable to similar large dykes as at Mongewell (Cromarty et al 2006) or Aldworth (Ford 1982). A second linear earthwork on the Thames floodplain to the north east, known as Coombe Bank may be of similar date though is documented in medieval times.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development and to produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for any deposits and features recorded on the site.

Results

The footprint of the new building, was stripped of overburden using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2). The strip had to be subdivided into south western and north eastern portions by a 1.5m baulk to retain live services to number 87 (Pl. 2).

The south western (front) segment appeared to have been heavily disturbed with more than 1m of made ground recorded (Pl. 2). On the western side a brown clayey sand was exposed directly beneath the made ground and is considered to be the natural geology. The remainder of this area (c. 2/3) to the south east comprised a deep truncation backfilled with a blackish blue clay with metal (rebar) inclusions. This was not removed. No archaeological deposits were observed for the untruncated area.

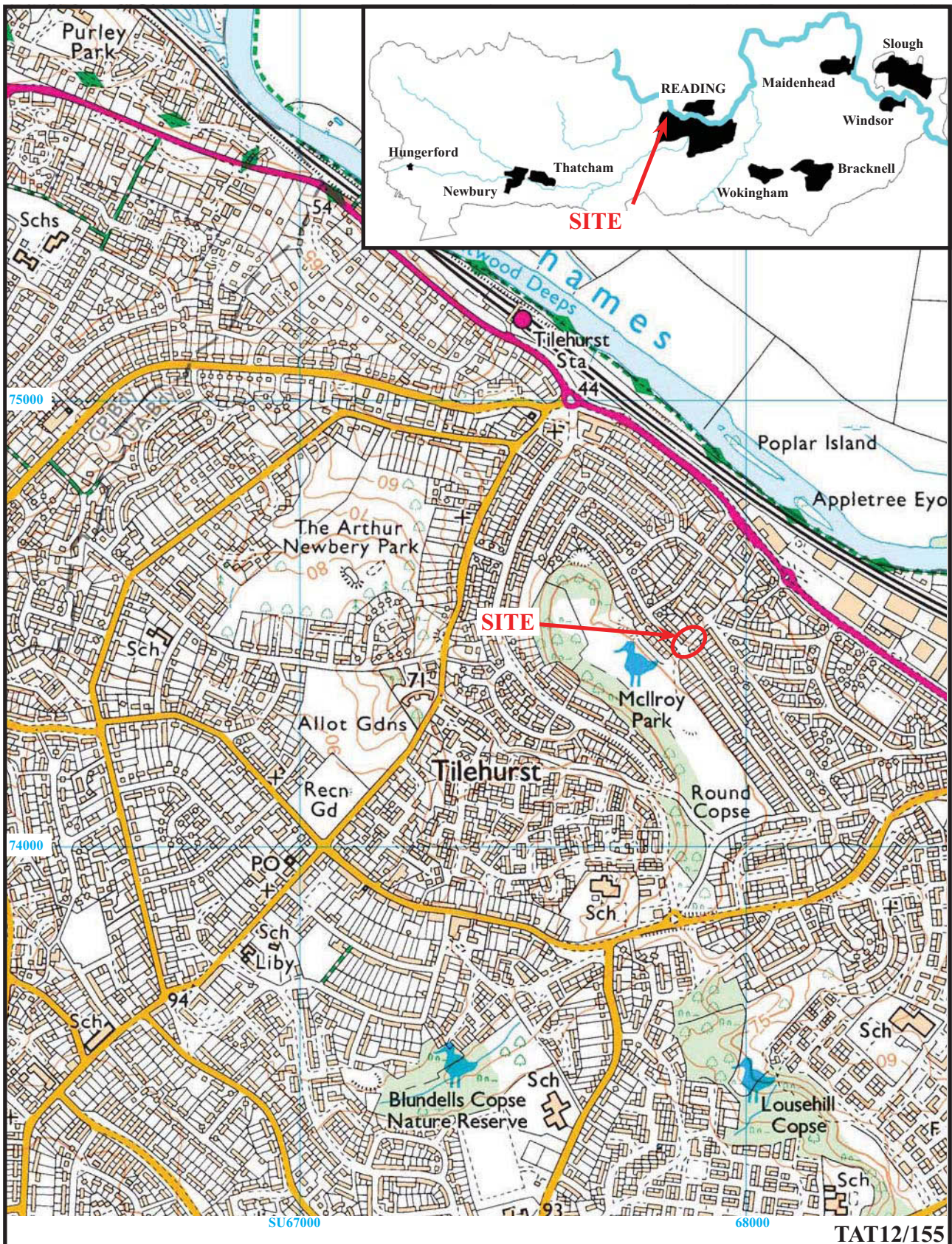
The north eastern (rear) segment was less disturbed. More made ground (a mid reddish brown clayey silt) to a depth of c. 0.6m overlay a yellow sand natural geology on the western side of the area (Pl. 1) A small hand dug test pit to a depth of 0.25m confirmed that this was the natural geology. However, further to the north east a sharp truncation was observed which had been backfilled with reddish brown clayey silt with some gravel. Again no archaeological deposits were observed for the untruncated area.

Conclusion

Despite the presence of the nearby earthwork, the recording action did not reveal any deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest, nor did it provide any new information as to the date and function of the adjacent earthwork. Much of the natural geology for the area of the new building had been previously disturbed and backfilled, perhaps during construction the adjacent house.

References

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- Ford, S, 1982, 'Linear earthworks on the Berkshire Downs', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **71**, 1–20
- Taylor A, 2005, Land at 885 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 05/09, Reading
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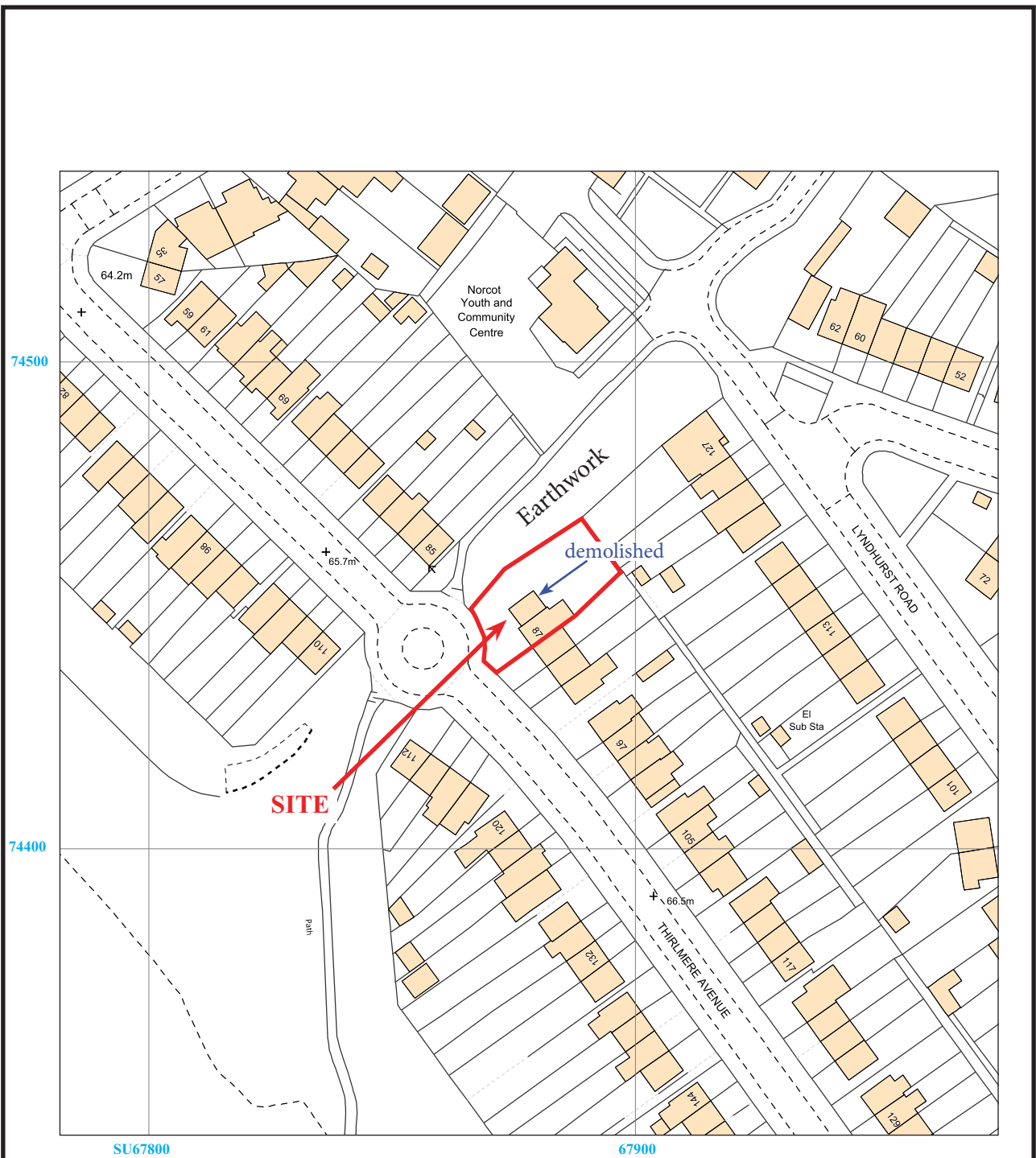
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Figure 1. Location of site within Tilehurst and Berkshire.

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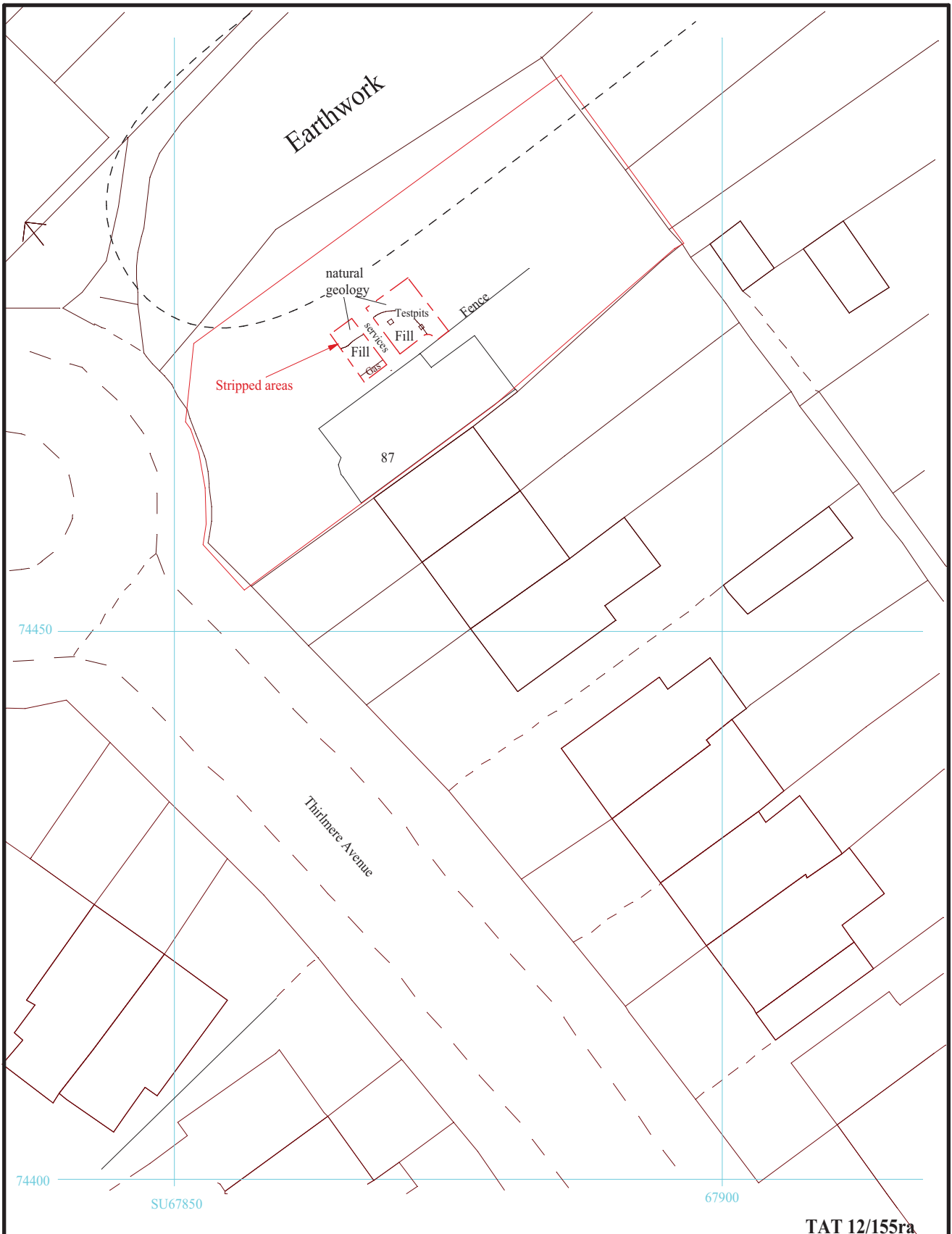
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Thirlmere Avenue.

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Figure 3. Plan showing location of stripped areas.



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Plate 1. Area strip at rear of site looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 2. Area strip to front of site with section showing made ground, looking NE, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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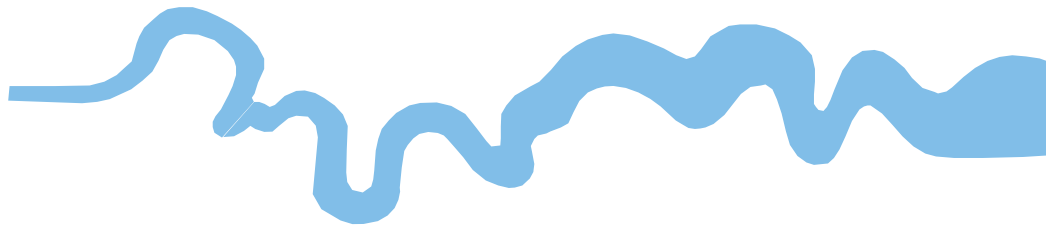
**Land at 87 Thirlmere Avenue, Tilehurst,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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





**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)***