

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**95 Straight Road, Old Windsor,
Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Joshua Hargreaves

Site Code: SROW19/17

(SU 9904 7396)

**95 Straight Road, Old Windsor,
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
For Aquinna Homes**

By Joshua Hargreaves
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SROW 19/17

March 2019

Summary

Site name: 95 Straight Road, Old Windsor, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9904 7396

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th-5th March 2019

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Joshua Hargreaves

Site code: SROW 19/17

Area of site: 0.5ha

Summary of results: The field evaluation resulted in the observation and recording of scattered features of possible archaeological significance, although no dating evidence was recovered. The site was heavily disturbed by modern building activities and services but potentially some of the features observed were older.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the archive in due course.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford ✓ 14.03.19 |
| | Steve Preston ✓ 14.03.19 |

95 Straight Road, Old Windsor, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

By Joshua Hargreaves

Report 19/17

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 95 Straight Road, Old Windsor, Berkshire (SU 9904 7396) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the client Mr John Strange, Land Director for Aquinna Homes, 17 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 2HN.

Planning permission (app no 15/03843) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of 11 new houses on the site following demolition of the existing buildings. The consent is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's policies on archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits a programme of archaeological works has been requested by Berkshire Archaeology. This was to take the form, initially, of a field evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which further work might be required.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Matt Saywood, Archaeological Officer of Berkshire Archaeology who advises the Royal Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joshua Hargreaves and Cosmo Bacon, from 4th to 5th March 2019 and the site code is SROW 19/17. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept the archive in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south east of the centre of Old Windsor (Fig. 1) (SU 9904 7396). The site is currently used as a car valeting garage and before that was the location of a public house. The pub building is currently still standing but will be demolished as part of the development. The site is 0.5ha in extent and lies on flat ground 20m above Ordnance Datum, around 100m west of the River Thames. The underlying geology is mapped as flood-plain gravel (BGS 1981); this matched the geology observed in the trenches.

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). Of more specific interest to this site is the presence of the late Saxon palace complex of Edward the Confessor to the north of the proposal site (Fig. 1) which is a Scheduled Monument, although significant excavations there in the 1950s sadly remain unpublished (Preston 2005). A few Roman finds are recorded just to the north of the 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. This work was carried out following a methodology that would not damage archaeological deposits which might warrant preservation or would be better recorded in a full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeological relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there are any Roman or Saxon deposits present; and
- to determine if any archaeologically significant deposits are present on order to inform the development of a mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig 4 trenches, each 15m in length and 1.6m wide. The trenches were to be located mostly within the footprints of the new buildings. A contingency of 10m of trench was included should this be required to clarify the nature of the initial findings. The trenches were to be excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket while under archaeological supervision. Any archaeological features or deposits were to be cleaned and excavated by hand and recorded.

Results

Only three of the proposed four trenches could be excavated (Fig. 3). Trench 1 could not be opened due to space constraints from recent fencing of an in-use access road. Trench 2 also had to be moved c.10m to the south-east to avoid live electricity cables and water mains. The trenches dug were between 7m and 16.5m long and 0.98m and 1.3m deep. All alterations to the trench layout were carried out in consultation with Berkshire Archaeology. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was left unexcavated due to a lack of practical room to insert the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was aligned NW-SE and was 7m long and 1.3m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 1m of made ground, which included concrete and brick rubble and topped with Tarmac, overlying 0.3m of loose mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil, which overlay the natural gravel geology. A modern truncation cut across the centre of the trench, filled with concrete and drains.

One possible archaeological feature was revealed. Ditch 5 was observed 4.4m from the south end of the trench. The feature was 1.6m wide and filled with a mid greyish brown silty clay (57) but was unexcavated due to the depth of the trench.

Trench 3 (Fig. 4; Pls 2 and 5)

Trench 3 was aligned NE-SW and was 16.5m long and 0.98m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.64m of made ground capped with Tarmac overlying 0.34m of subsoil which overlay the natural geology. There was a modern concrete foundation 8m from the SW end of the trench that was left in-situ. A modern wooden post in its posthole was observed 4.7m from the SW end of trench.

Two potential features were investigated. Possible pit 3 was recorded 10.9m from the SW end. The feature was 0.65m wide and 0.2m deep and filled with a dark brown silty clay with charcoal inclusions (55). Possible posthole 4 was recorded 14.45m from the SW end of trench and was 0.49m by 0.5m with a depth of 0.15m. The feature was filled with a dark brown-grey silt with gravel inclusions (56). Both features were fully excavated within the trench following recording but no dating evidence was recovered from either of these features.

Trench 4 (Fig. 4; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 4 was aligned close to N-S and was 15.3m long and 1.04m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.68m of made ground capped with Tarmac overlying 0.36m of subsoil which overlay the natural geology. Linear feature 1 was observed 7m from the S end aligned SW-NE. It was 0.85m wide and 0.33m deep filled with a dark brown silty clay with small amounts of charcoal inclusions (53). Possible pit 2 was recorded 10m from the S end of trench and was 0.8m wide and 0.23m deep. The feature was filled with a dark brownish-grey clayey silt with small gravel inclusions (54). Both features were fully excavated following recording but no dating evidence was recovered from either of these features.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from any of the features or spoilheaps.

Conclusion

The evaluation was carried out only with partial success. One trench could not be dug to recently imposed access constraints and a possible archaeological feature in Trench 2 could not be fully investigated due to depth constraints. The other trenches revealed features of potential archaeological interest and these were fully dug but failed to produced any dating evidence. It is considered that the site has some archaeological potential but the nature of this potential is unclear.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
- Preston, S, 2005, 'Introduction', in S Preston (ed), *Reading and Windsor: Old and New. Excavations 1995–2002*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Monogr 7, Reading, 2–8
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeology Comm Pubn 1, Reading
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading

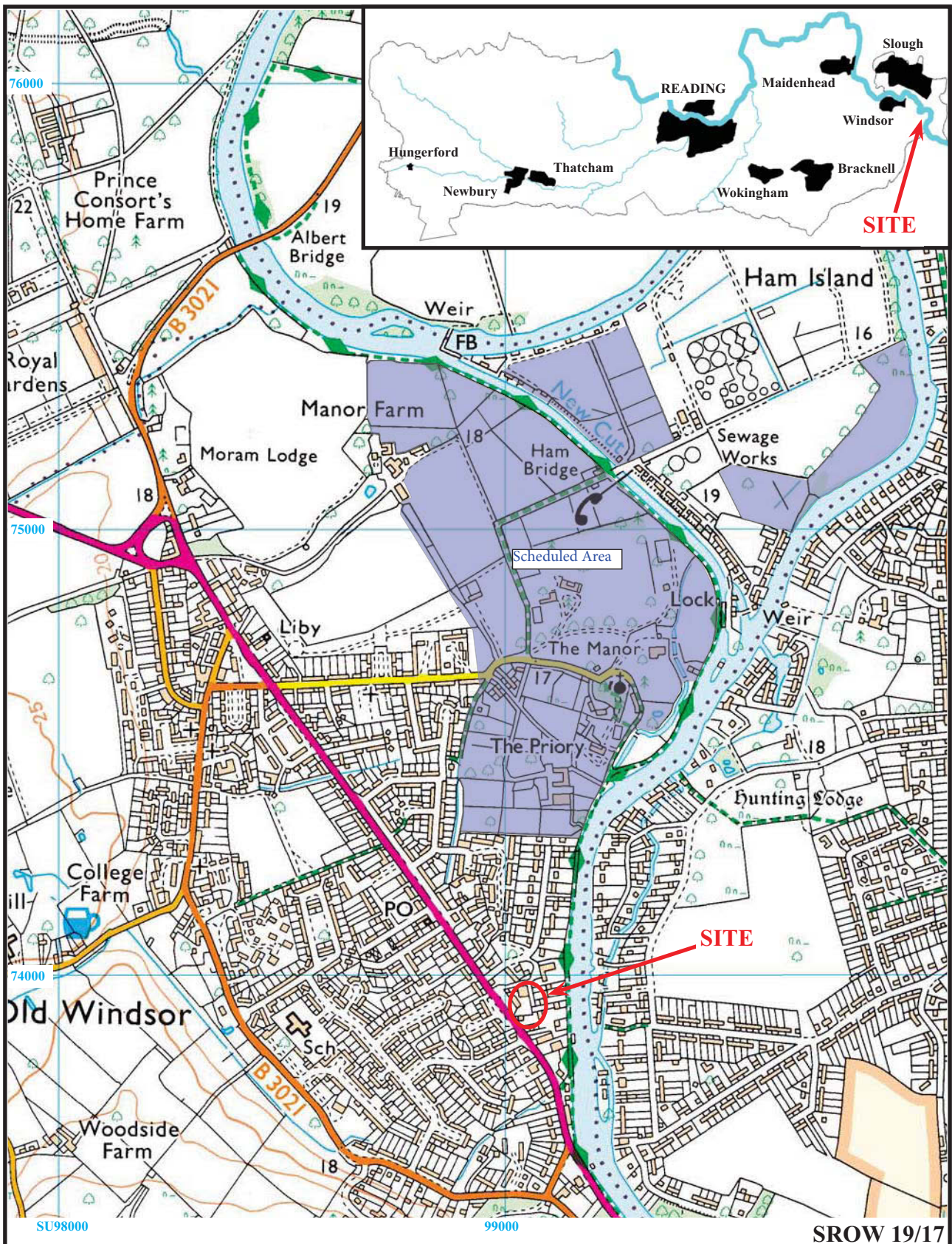
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

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 | n/a | n/a | n/a | Not opened |
| 2 | 7 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 0-1m mixed Tarmac and made ground (concrete inclusions); 1-1.3m subsoil (mid brown-grey silty clay); 1.3m+ natural geology. Ditch 5 [PI. 1] |
| 3 | 16.5 | 1.6 | 0.98 | 0-0.64m mixed Tarmac and made ground (concrete inclusions); 0.64- 0.98m subsoil (mid brown-grey silty clay); 0.98m+ natural geology. Possible postholes 3 and 4. [PIs and 5] |
| 4 | 15.3 | 1.6 | 1.04 | 0-0.68m mixed Tarmac and made ground (concrete inclusions); 0.68-1.04m subsoil (mid grey-brown silty clay); 1.04m+ natural geology. linear 1 and posthole 2. [PIs 3 and 4] |

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 4 | 1 | 53 | Ditch | | None |
| 4 | 2 | 54 | Posthole? | | None |
| 3 | 3 | 55 | Pit? | | None |
| 3 | 4 | 56 | Pit? | | None |
| 2 | 5 | 57 | Ditch | | None |

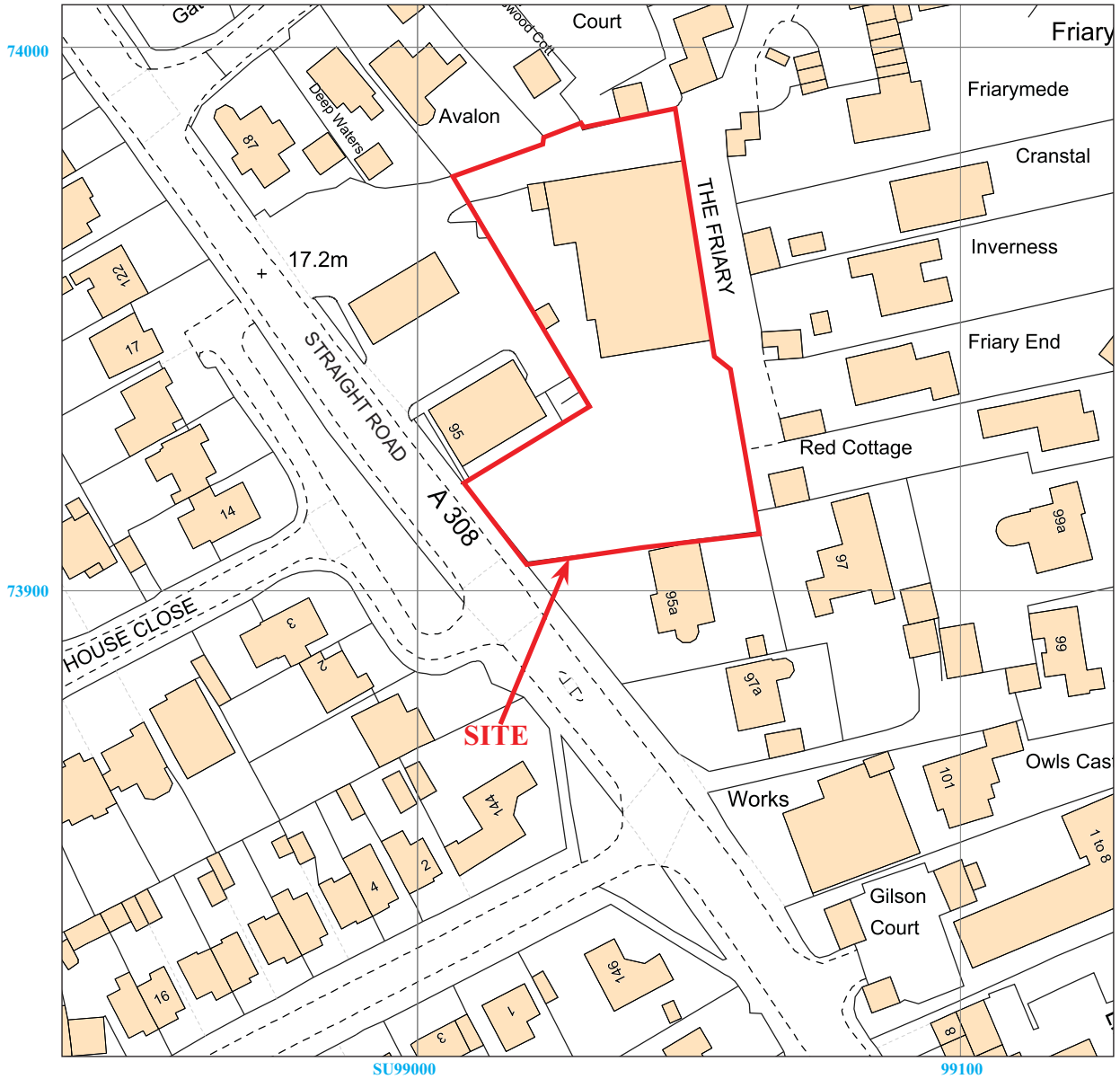


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Figure 1. Location of site within Old Windsor and Berkshire.

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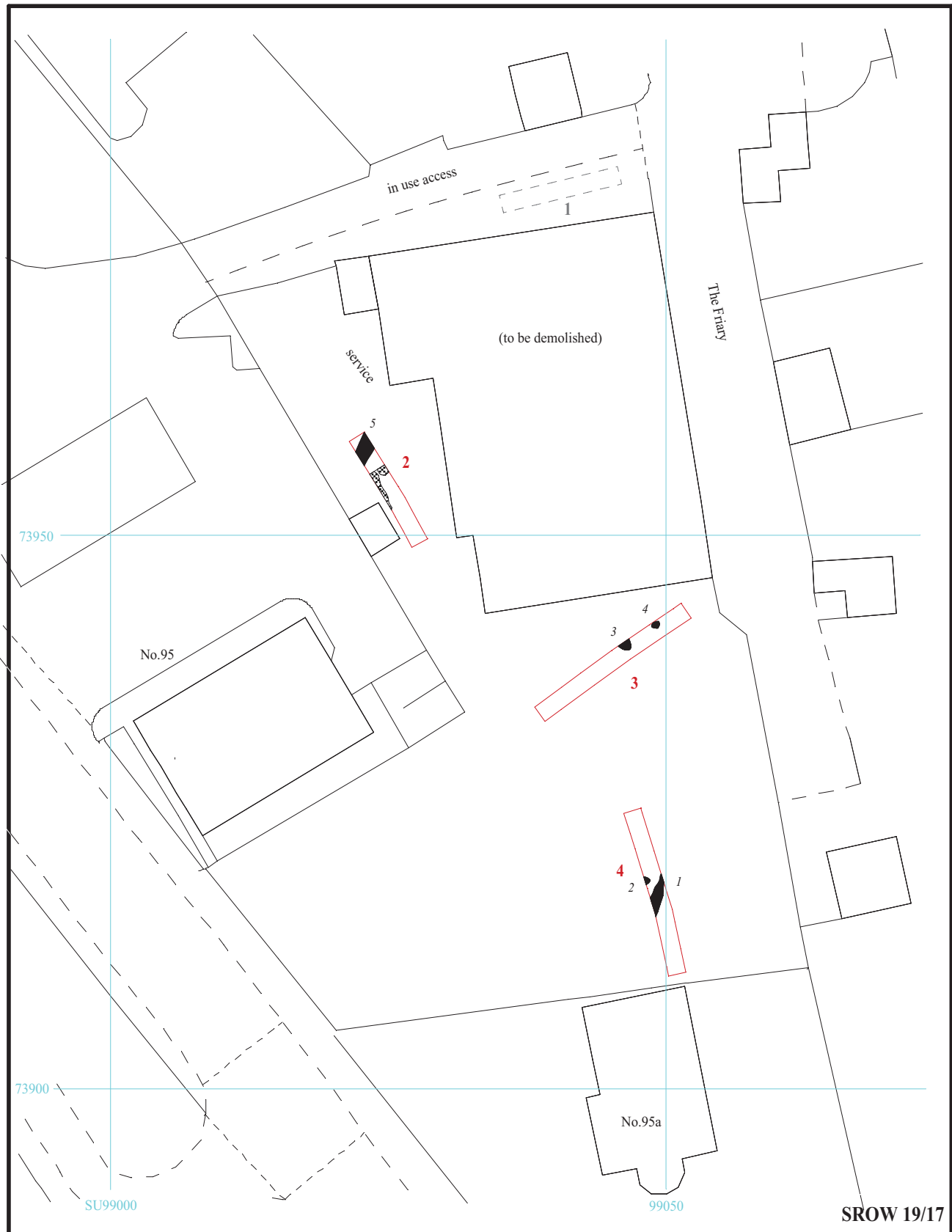
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Archaeological Desk-based Assessment
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Straight Road (A308).

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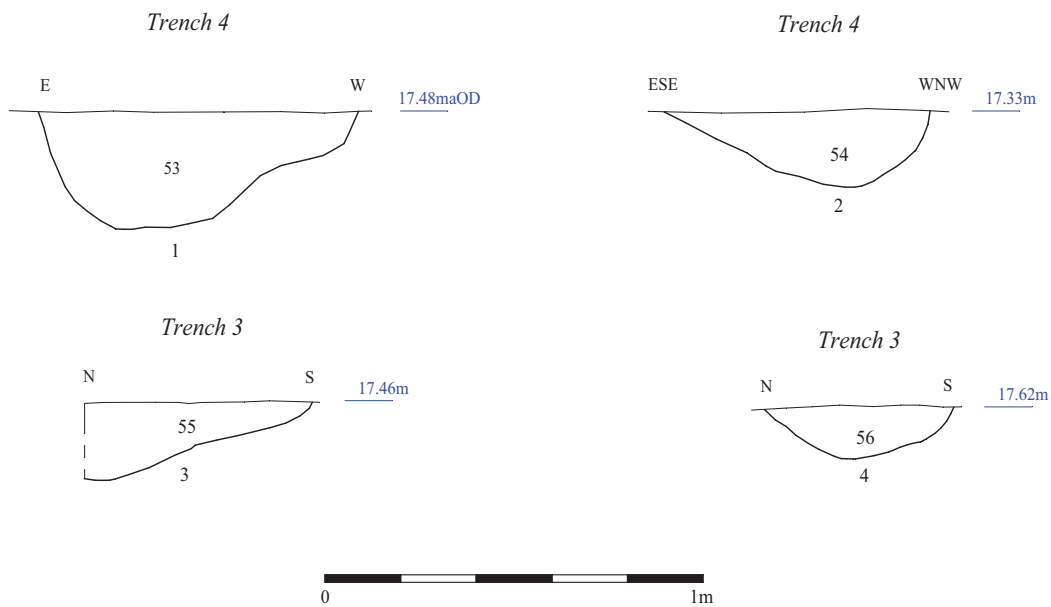
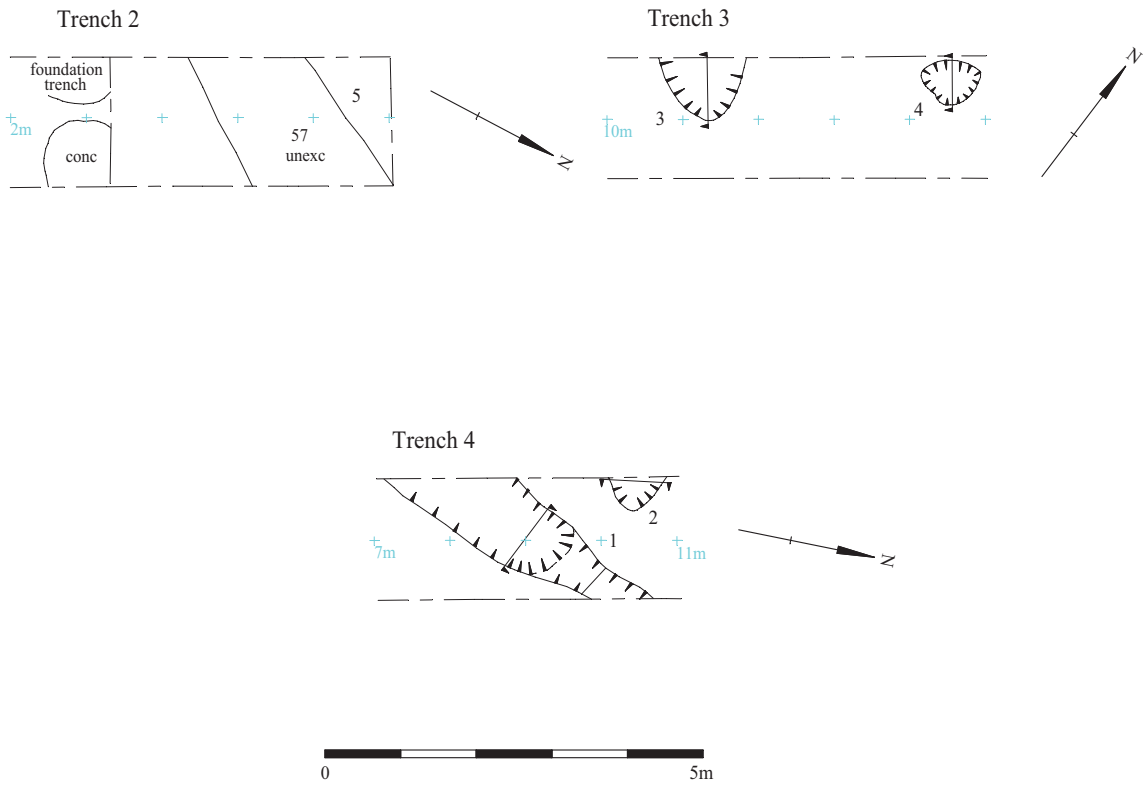
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.





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Figure 4. Detail of Trenches 3 and 4.

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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 4, looking south, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, ditch 1, looking south,
Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 5. Trench 3, pit 3, looking east,
Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.

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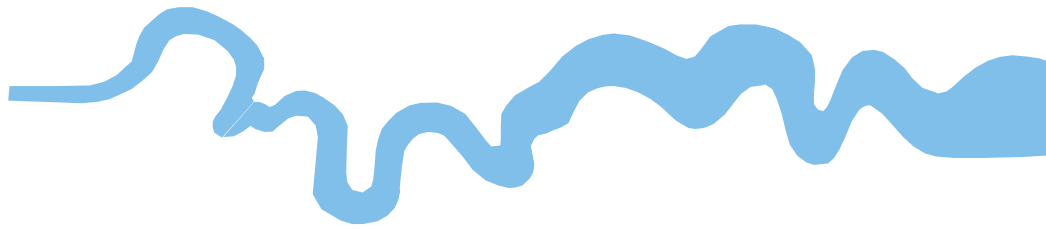
**95 Straight Road, Old Windsor,
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Plates 3 - 5.**

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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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