

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Forest Bridge School, Stafferton Lodge, Braywick Road,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Joshua Hargreaves

**Site Code: FSB18/189
(SU 8931 7999)**

**Forest Bridge School, Stafferton Lodge,
Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Kier Construction**

by Joshua Hargreaves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FSB 18/189

May 2019

Summary

Site name: Forest Bridge School, Stafferton Lodge, Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8931 7999

Site activity: Field Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 29th April to 3rd May 2019

Project coordinator: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Joshua Hargreaves

Site code: FSB 18/189

Area of site: c. 1.6 ha

Summary of results: None of the trenches that exposed the natural geology recorded any archaeological deposits. Three trenches on the east side of the site revealed the extent of gravel extraction and modern landfill. The possibility of any significant archaeological deposits is low with any possible archaeological horizons truncated away by successive phases of modern dumping. The archaeological potential of the site is low.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 07.05.19 Steve Preston ✓ 07.05.19

Forest Bridge School, Stafferton Lodge, Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Joshua Hargreaves

Report 18/189

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Stafferton Lodge, Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8931 7999) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Marcus Howe of Kier Construction, Building 1410 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Reading, RG7 4SA.

Planning permission (18/02601/FULL) has been sought from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new school with associated car parking and sports pitch on a c.1.6 hectare plot of land. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits, a programme of archaeological work has been requested in order to inform the planning process with regards to potential archaeological implications. A single component of work is proposed initially, a field evaluation by means of machine dug trenches, with further work possibly required if significant archaeological deposits are encountered.

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 Matt Saywood of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joshua Hargreaves and Cosmo Bacon from 29th April to 3rd May 2019, and the site code FSB 18/189. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading, and will be deposited at an approved local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an irregular piece of land to the north of Braywick Park, south of Maidenhead town centre (SU 8931 7999) (Fig. 1). The site is currently used as a rifle range and area of waste ground to the north-east of Stafferton Lodge Pub and Braywick Heath Nursery. The site has been heavily landscaped with the ground level having been both reduced, and built up over the past decades. The site is currently between 25m and 27m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Lambeth Group, clay, silt and sand with landfill (BGS 2005). This matches the geology observed in the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (OA 2018). In summary; the site lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wide range of sites recorded by aerial photography (Gates 1975), major infrastructure projects (Foreman et al 2002), field survey (Ford 1987) and developer-led fieldwork (Platt 2017). In particular, recent fieldwork immediately adjacent to the southern boundary has recorded Late Neolithic pits, an Early Bronze Age ring ditch (levelled round barrow) and Early Saxon occupation in the form of six sunken-floored buildings (Colyer 2019). Bronze Age occupation has also recently been recorded recently at Bray, to the east (Galleano 2018). There is also a possibility of a medieval precursor to Stafferton Lodge.

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.

The specific research aims of the project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site given the presence of historic quarrying and landfill to the east;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits representing Neolithic or Saxon occupation are present on the site;
- to determine if further Bronze Age deposits are present at the south of the site as a continuation of the known deposits to the south; and
- to determine if there are any medieval deposits present on the site representing a precursor to Stafferton Lodge.

It was proposed to excavated twelve 20m long trenches and one 10m long trench, using a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an archaeologist. A contingency of 40m of trenching was included within the proposal should it be necessary for clarification of any deposits recorded in the initial trenching.

Any archaeological features identified were to be cleaned and investigated using appropriate hand tools. Metal detectors were to be used on spoil heaps to aid in recovery of metal artefacts.

Results

Eleven trenches were opened mostly as intended (Fig. 2). The intended Trenches 1 and 2 were left unopened due to the presence of a large spoil heap in use by the neighbouring development: access to these trenches will be available at a later date. The length of Trenches 10 and 11 had to be shortened to 7.5m and 11m long respectively, due to the presence of protected habitats. Other trenches had their positions altered by a few metres, in order to fit them around existing structures and protected habitats. All other trenches' lengths ranged between 16.5m and 21m, and between 1.7m and 0.2m in depth. All alterations to the original trench layout were made in consultation with Mr Matt Saywood of Berkshire Archaeology. Spoil heaps were metal detected and all trenches were checked using a CAT machine for live services before excavation.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trenches 1 and 2

The trenches were not dug in numerical sequence and trenches 3-5 were dug before trenches 1 and 2. However, trenches 3-5 located the areas of land fill expected for somewhere on the site. Thus the digging of trenches 1 and 2 located in the same area was deemed unnecessary.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 3 was 20.7m long, aligned NW-SE and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m in a test pit. The stratigraphy was 0.15m of topsoil overlying landfill. The landfill was test-pitted to a depth of 0.6m, but not excavated due to the presence of asbestos. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Trench 4 was 11m long, aligned NE-SW, and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.25m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying landfill. The landfill was not excavated due to the presence of hazardous material. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2; Pl. 1)

Trench 5 was 20.2m long, aligned N-S and excavated to a depth of 0.2m. Stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil overlying landfill. The landfill was left unexcavated due to hazard inclusions, a large amount of asbestos was recorded c. 5m from the north end. No archaeological finds nor deposits were recorded.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 6 was aligned NW-SE and was 21m long and 1.05m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil and 0.4m of subsoil overlying natural geology, excavated to a depth of 1.05m in a test pit. A modern ballast-filled pipe-trench truncated Trench 6, extending 14m along its length. Two possible features were investigated, one 13m and one 16m from the north-west end of trench. Both features produced modern brick and china and were not further recorded. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 7 (Fig. 2; Pl. 3)

Trench 7 was aligned SE-NW and was 19.6m long and 1.25m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 1m of made ground (alternating layers of type 2, crush and rubble backfill, with a geotextile layer at 0.15m depth) overlying 0.25m of buried subsoil, a yellowish-brown silty clay. This overlay the natural geology, a bright yellowish sandy gravel. A cable trench was observed cutting through the buried subsoil and into the natural 4m from the SE end of the trench. A concrete wall foundation was left *in situ* 11.5m from the SE end of the trench. Two possible features were investigated, both revealing modern finds of glass bottles and machine-cut roofing slate. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 8 (Fig. 2)

Trench 8 was aligned close to NW-SE and was 18m long and 1.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 1.1m of made ground and crush, as in Trench 7, including a layer of geotextile at 0.15–0.20m depth, overlying 0.2m of buried subsoil which overlay the natural geology. Two slabs of concrete crossed the trench 8m from the north-west end, which protected cables. These were left *in situ*. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 9 (Fig. 2)

Trench 9 was aligned N-S, and was 21m long and 1.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 1.2m of made ground and crush as seen in Trench 7, overlying 0.2m of buried subsoil, which overlaid the natural geology. An electricity cable was observed cutting the subsoil 17m from the southern end of trench. The south end was stepped in order to investigate a possible feature which was shown to be of natural geological origin. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 10 (Fig. 2)

Trench 10 was aligned close to SW-NE and was 7.5m long and 1.4m deep. The stratigraphy of the trench consisted of 1.1m of mixed made ground (as recorded in Trench 7) overlying 0.3m of buried subsoil, which

overlaid the natural geology. Trench 10 was moved slightly and shortened to 10m, in consultation with Matt Saywood from Berkshire Archaeology, due to a lack of space around existing bunds, and protected habitats. The first 2.7m of the trench was successfully excavated to expose the natural geology, however the rest of the trench contained a large number of steel barriers in the rubble backfill which made it impossible for the remainder of the trench to be opened. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 11 (Fig. 2; Pl. 4)

Trench 11 was aligned NE-SW and was 11m long and 1.7m deep, stepped at 1m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.7m of made ground (mixed redeposited alluvium topped with type 1) overlying 0.95m of alluvium (dark blackish blue silty clay), which overlaid the natural geology. Trench 11's location was moved and it was shortened in order to avoid two polytunnels and protected reptile habitats. The NE end of the trench was excavated down onto thick concrete foundations and piping which could not be removed. The trench was stepped along the rest of its length, reaching the natural geology below the alluvium. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 12 (Fig. 2)

Trench 12 was aligned close to NE-SW, and was 19m long and 0.9m deep. The stratigraphy was 0.6m of made-ground overlying 0.2m of alluvium (dark green brown clay), which overlaid the natural geology. Observed 5.5m from the WSW end was a modern truncation cut into the natural geology. This truncation was filled with discarded timber, corrugated iron, and concrete rubble and extended to a minimum depth of 1.2m. It was not bottomed due to dangerous excavation depth and is likely to represent the edge of the landfill recorded in Trenches 3 to 5. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 13 (Fig. 2)

Trench 13 was aligned E-W and was 16.5m long and 0.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.5m of made ground topped with type 1, over 0.3m of alluvium overlying natural geology. The geology sloped up towards the SW. A furrow with early modern brick was recorded 6m from the SW end. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken with moderate success and with 11 of the 13 intended trenches excavated. Three trenches on the eastern side of the site confirmed the position of the landfill on the site- a zone where no archaeological deposits can have survived the prior quarrying.

Potential features were investigated in three of the evaluation trenches, all producing 19th- or 20th-century brick and china. One possible furrow was observed and investigated in trench 13 and contained 19th-century brick. Despite the potential for archaeological remains extending from the features seen neighbouring development as recorded in excavation (Colyer 2019), nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

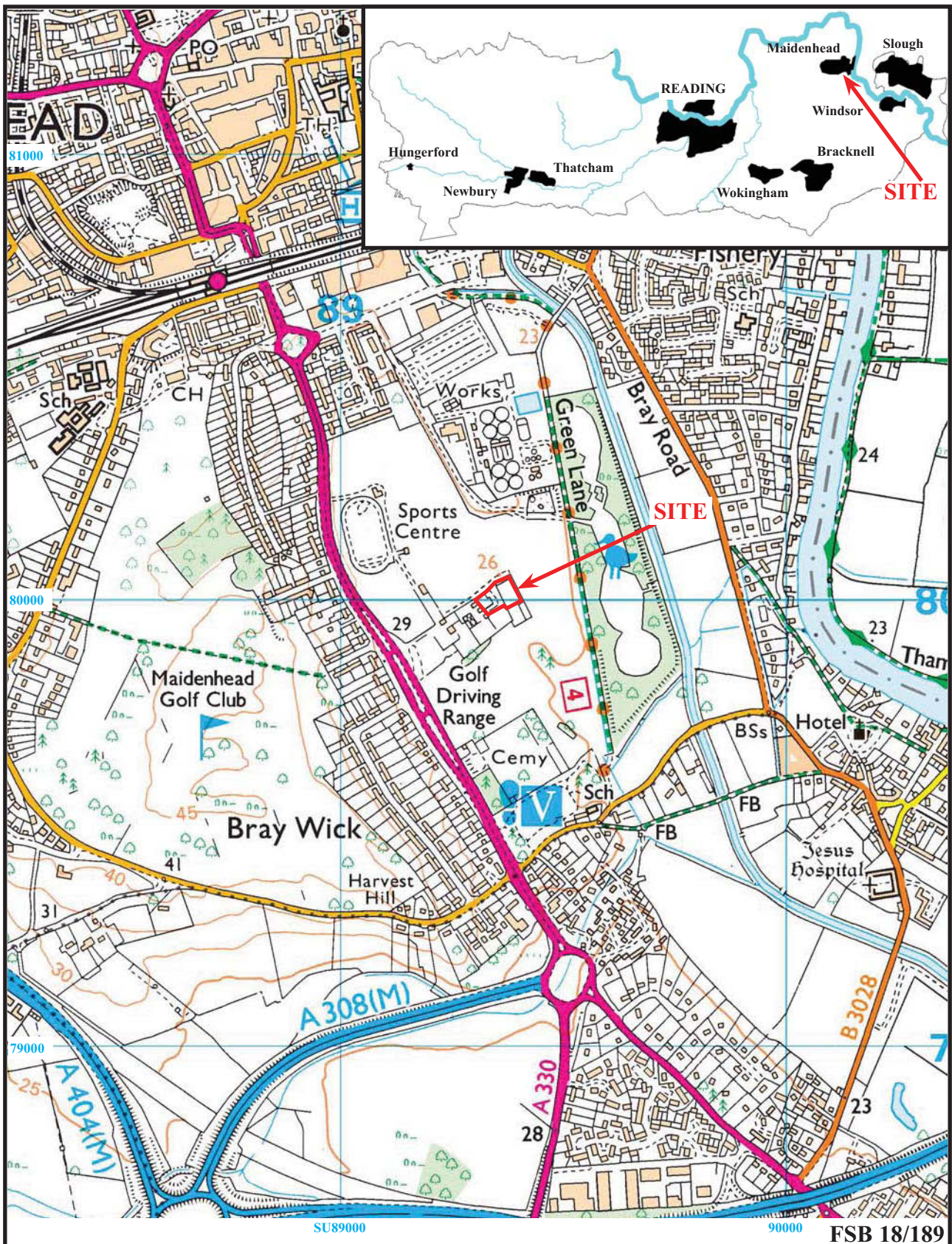
On this basis the site is considered to be of low archaeological potential.

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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				Not opened (landfill).
2				Not opened (landfill).
3	20.7	1.6	0.6	0m at S End; 0-0.15m of topsoil; 0.15m+ landfill.
4	11	1.6	0.2	0m at SW end; 0-0.15m of topsoil; 0.15m+ landfill.
5	20.2	1.6	0.2	0m at W end; 0-0.2m of topsoil; 0.2m+ landfill. [Pl. 1]
6	21	1.6	1.05	0m at W end; 0-0.2m of topsoil; 0.2-0.6m subsoil; 0.6m+ gravel natural geology. [Pl. 2]
7	19.6	1.6	1.25	0m at SE end; 0-1m made ground; 1-1.25m subsoil; 1.25m+ natural gravel geology. [Pl. 3]
8	18	1.6	1.3	0m at W end. 0-1.1m made ground; 1.1-1.3m subsoil; 1.3m+ natural gravel geology.
9	21	1.6	1.5	0m at S end. 0-1.2m made ground; 1.2-1.4m subsoil; 1.4m+ natural gravel geology.
10	7.5	1.6	1.4	0m at SW end. 0-1.1m; 1.1-1.4m subsoil; 1.4m+ natural gravel geology.
11	11	1.6	1.7	0m at SW end. 0-0.7m; 0.7-1.65m of alluvium; 1.65m+ natural geology. [Pl. 4]
12	19	1.6	1.2	0m at WSW end. 0-0.6m made ground; 0.6-0.8m alluvium; 0.8m+ natural gravel geology. [Pl. 5]
13	16.5	1.6	0.8	0m at W end. 0-0.5m made ground; 0.5-0.8m alluvium; 0.8m+ natural gravel geology. [Pl. 6]

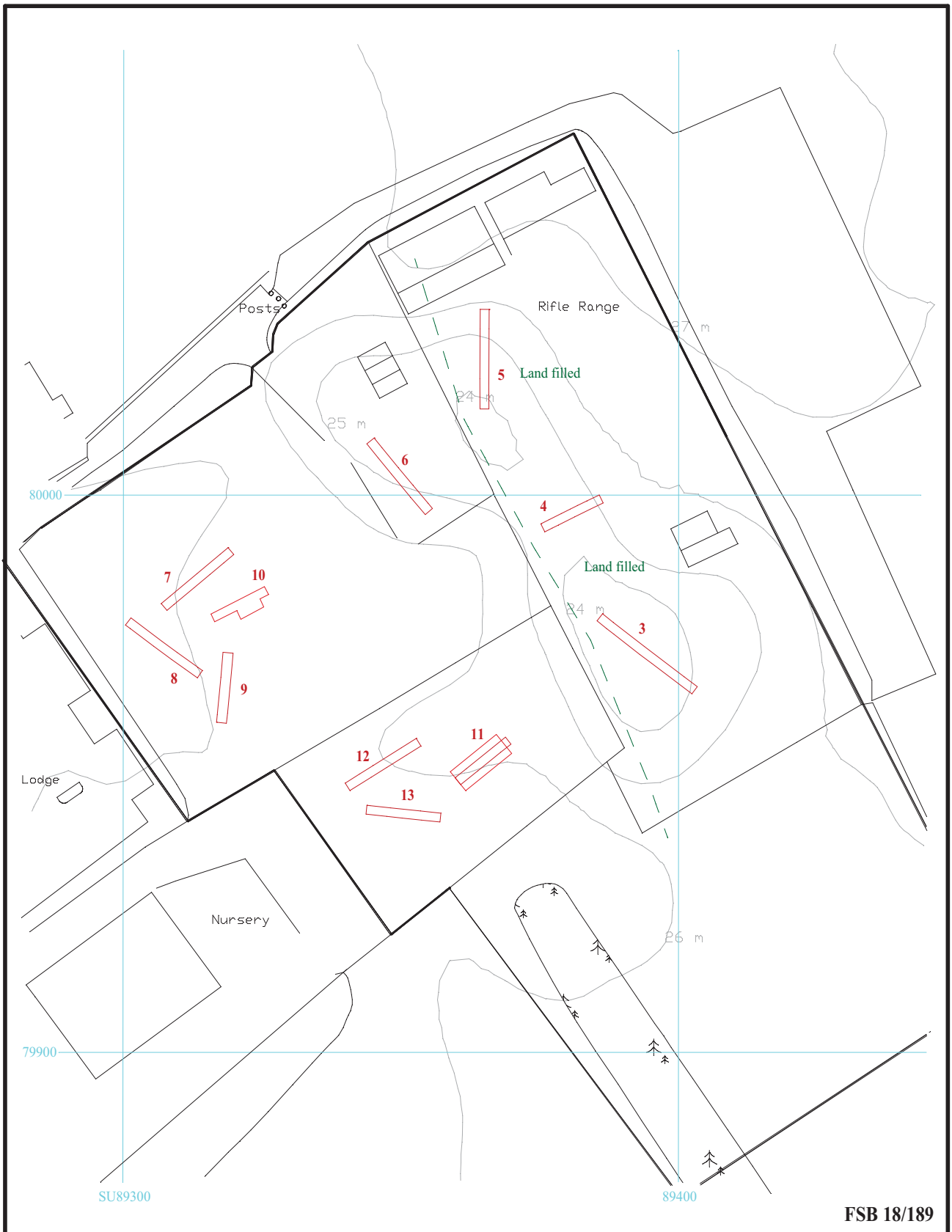


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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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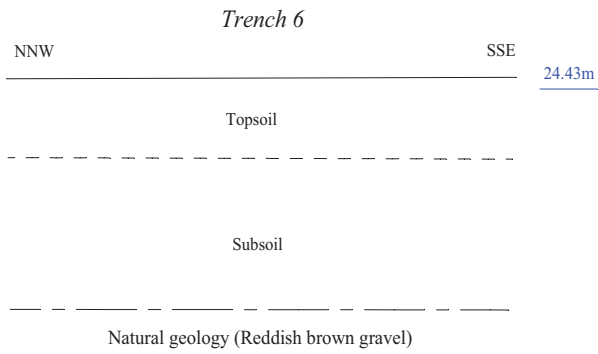
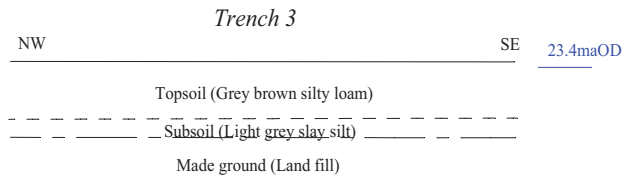
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.



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Figure 3. Representative sections.





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



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

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking north east north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 11, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 12, looking north east north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 13, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 5 and 6.

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Plate 7. General view of site, looking south.



Plate 8. General view of site looking west towards Stafferton Lodge.

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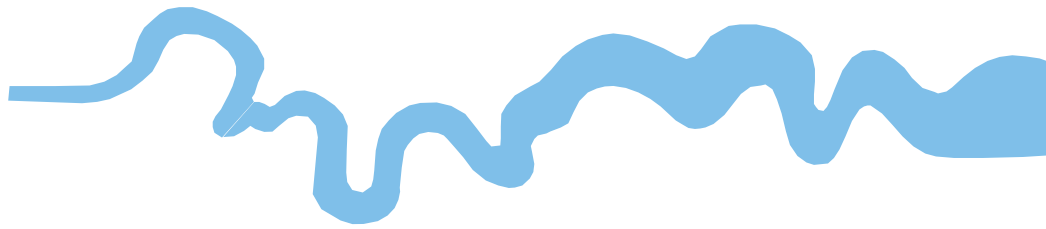
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Plates 7 and 8.**

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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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