

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Roman Occupation at 177 Upper Woodcote Road,
Caversham, Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: UWR19/82

(SU 6967 7622)

**Roman occupation at 177 Upper Woodcote Road,
Caversham, Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Excavation

for Mr Amarjot Singh

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code UWR 19/82

April 2020

Summary

Site name: 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 69675 76225

Site activity: Excavation

Date and duration of project: 2nd to 4th of March 2020

Project coordinator: Danielle Millbank

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: UWR 19/82

Area of site: c. 750 sq. m. for the whole site, c. 395 sq. m excavated

Summary of results: The archaeological excavation was conducted as intended and confirmed the result of the previous evaluation, namely that the site saw Roman occupation which included both early (1st-2nd century) and Late Roman (4th century) elements. It consisted of a NNW-SSE ditch surrounded by several refuse pits, an isolated post hole and a couple of short gullies, possibly extending towards the property to the south. The quantity of finds suggests significant settlement of the period in the vicinity. The ditch was truncated by an undated pit, itself cut by a large? quarry pit filled with large flints, probably medieval or later. Aside from pottery, two Roman coins were found as well as some animal bones and ceramic building material. Two features also produced a small amount of medieval pottery.

Monuments identified: Roman ditch and pits.

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

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Roman occupation at 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Excavation

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 19/82b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out at 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7JR (SU 69675 76225) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the landowner, Mr Amarjot Singh.

Planning permission (190316) had been gained from Reading Borough Council for the erection of a single dwelling and associated infrastructure at the site. The consent was subject to a condition that required the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. This was in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, archaeological officer for Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to Reading Borough Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, assisted by Camilla Carvalho, Tom Stewart, Michael Paine and Jon Tierney, between the 2nd and 4th of March 2020. The site code is UWR 19/82.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Caversham, part of the borough of Reading, 3km NW from the town centre (Fig. 1). It is a plot of land on the west side of Upper Woodcote Road, which was used as a garden. It is bordered on both sides and at the back by residential properties (Fig. 2). The site is a sub-rectangular plot of land, about level at 84m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology as recorded on maps (BGS 2000) is Quaternary river terrace deposits, namely Black Park Gravel, overlying chalk.

Archaeological background

The site's archaeological potential was highlighted in a brief prepared by Ms Ellie Leary, formerly of Berkshire Archaeology. The terrace gravels of the Middle Thames Valley are well known for their density of archaeological deposits of all periods (Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009) and a number of sites and finds are recorded in

the Berkshire and Oxfordshire's Historic Environment Records. Notably, in the vicinity of the site, a Roman building was recorded across Upper Woodcote Road from the site, in the garden of 'Hilingdon' on Upper Woodcote Road (Seaby 1934) and a pit with coins reported from Blagrove Farm. Further Roman occupation including evidence of timber buildings was also recorded c.100m, to the south of Blagrove Farmhouse corresponding with an area of cropmarks (Hull, 1998). Findspots from the Palaeolithic (Wymer 1968) to Medieval times are also known in general for the vicinity. For example, a Bronze Age occupation site was discovered on St Peter's Hill to the south-east (Ford and Raymond 2013) while extensive prehistoric occupation was documented on the Marple Durham Golf Course to both the north and west (Ford 1991; Torrance and Ford 1991a and b; Hull 1998). A medieval site including a building was also located on the golf course c.500m south of Blagrove Farm, (Hull 1998).

This generalized potential was confirmed for the site specifically by an evaluation (Attard 2019). Two trenches produced a number of archaeological features, among which were some of Roman date.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the excavation was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the development. This was to be able to produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for the deposits and features encountered, establish their character to ascertain functional areas (industrial, domestic, etc). More generally, the information produced could be compared to local or regional sites such as presented in the Solent-Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014). A particular emphasis was to be put on determining the earliest use of the site, its date of abandon and its status. Any palaeo-environmental data available would help reconstructing the setting of the site.

It was proposed to strip an area about c.240 sq m that followed the footprint of the new house. Topsoil and subsoil were to be stripped down to the relevant archaeological level, using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Any features exposed were to be hand cleaned if necessary and sufficiently sampled where preservation *in situ* could not be achieved.

Results (Fig. 3)

The excavation was carried out almost as intended. On arrival, a preliminary strip (1.80m wide) was excavated down to the top of the natural geology. A slightly deeper test slot in the north-west corner, established that the formation level of the building works would require going as deep as the yellow sandy gravel, the top of the

archaeological horizon, throughout the site, leaving no possibility for preservation *in situ* and everything had to be investigated. The excavation stripping level was about ten centimetres higher than the evaluation's and it was not possible to find the 'postholes' noted but left unexcavated in trench 2 despite the manual removal of part of the remaining trench backfill: they may have been insignificant dips in the surface of the natural geology.

A metal detector (Fischer F5) was used on site to enhance metal finds recovery. Spoil was almost immediately taken off site and could not be systematically checked.

A catalogue of features can be found in Appendix 1.

Phase 1: Roman

Most of the features encountered dated to the Roman period. They consisted of a ditch, a couple of possible short gully segments, several pits and one post hole. Unless otherwise described, the fill of all features was a soft dark brown clayey silt with occasional gravels or small pebbles and rare charcoal flecks.

Linear features

A NW-SW ditch, 30, crossed the site. It had already been investigated during the evaluation (slot 1 in trench 1 and noted as cut 6 in trench 2). An extra slot, 10, was made to confirm its concave profile and moderate slopes. Another slot showed that it was truncated by pits 32 and 25. At south, pit 13 seemed to encroach upon it (cut 12) but the relationship was unclear. The ditch was also truncated by pits 24 and 32. Pit 2 supposedly cut by the ditch in evaluation trench 1 more likely corresponds to some overspilling ditch fill. As a matter of fact a majority of the infills of the Roman features extended beyond their cut edges, blurring their real shape. The ditch had an average width of 1.30m, with a maximum depth of 0.37m. The various excavated slots produced some 48 sherds of pottery, as well as an iron buckle.

Gully 31 was a very narrow (0.38m) and short (0.63m) linear feature seen next to pit 17. It did not exceed 0.10m deep. It had a rounded end, steep sides and a flat base. A smashed but near complete pottery vessel was recovered from its fill. Its relationship with the pit was uncertain as they had a similar infill.

Pits

Pit 11, less than 1m NE of ditch 30, was assessed on site as a single entity. However, post-excavation re-appraisal corroborated what checking the unexcavated halves had revealed, that it was in fact two pits side by side. Material found within (coin, pottery, bones) could not be reassigned to a specific one so a single feature

number was kept. The western pit was at least 1m wide and 1.85m long for a depth of 0.30m while the eastern one was about 1.30 x 2.00m and 0.25m deep. A thin layer of their fills over spilled towards pits 21-22.

Pit 13 was initially assessed as the cut of a ditch. It turned out to be a pit (or the terminus of a ditch continuing south, beyond the limit of excavation). It was 0.83m wide and at least 1m long. It had a bowl shaped profile. Its fill contained two sherds of pottery. Its relation with ditch 30 remained unclear.

Pit 17 was only partially visible in the excavated area. Some deposit overflow caused us to believe it ran into ditch 30, but further excavation proved it was not the case. It had an unclear relation with feature 31 (Pl. 3). This sub-circular pit, at least 1.15m in diameter and 0.55m deep, had steep sides and a flattish base and contained the largest of the site's pottery assemblages, animal bones and two iron nails in its fill.

Features 18 and 19 were two intercutting pits (Pl. 4). Pit 18 was *c.* 0.90m in diameter and 0.37m deep with steep sides and a flat bottom: it contained a single sherd of pottery. Pit 19 was about 1.32m in diameter and 0.48m deep. It is best described as a bowl-shaped pit. Pit 19 yielded four potsherds and some CBM fragment.

In the same way the fill of pits 21 and 22 probably overlapped. 21 was about 3.20 x 1.44m and 22 about 4.36 x 2.00m. Edges of both were a bit diffuse, likely due to some trampling at the time around them and once again their fill extended over a much wider range than the actual cuts. Pit 21 was a rather shallow depression with a maximum depth of 0.20m. A substantial assemblage of pottery, bones, iron nail and brick/tile were found in it. Pit 22 had more uneven sides and base. A depth of 0.40m was recorded. It also contained 30 sherds of pottery (one medieval sherd clearly intrusive in an otherwise compact late Roman collection), animal bones and a Late Roman coin.

Post-hole

Post hole 9 (Pl. 1) was 1.30m SW of ditch 30. It measured 0.48 x 0.40m and was 0.18m deep. It had a concave profile with steep sides. Just two sherds of pottery were found in it. It appeared to be isolated.

Phase 2: Medieval?

Cut 32 appeared as a large sub-rectangular pit. It had been noted during the evaluation phase as cut 4 but excavation revealed it was on a larger scale than had presumed. It was about 5.15 x 4.60m. It had steep sides. It was not bottomed due to rapid ingress of water. The excavation stopped at a depth of 0.63m but some extra shovel scoops proved it continued much further. It is uncertain if it was some kind of quarry pit or a massive waterhole. It had a very specific infill. On the northern side, was a loose mid brown clayey silt with occasional large flint inclusions (0.07-0.20m). This deposit was about 0.70m wide and 0.25m deep. The main fill occupying

the rest of the feature was loose dark brown clayey silt with common to frequent large flinty chunks (0.10-0.30m). Rare pottery (Roman but probably redeposited), bone and brick fragments were collected from it. This pit truncated ditch 30 but was itself cut by undated pit 25.

Gully 15 was adjoining ditch 30, and the ditch was taken to cut the gully, but in fact their relative sequence was not stratigraphically obvious. Feature 15's interpretation even as a gully also is dubious as it was a very shallow patch, a few centimetres thick. It was 0.25m wide. Nonetheless, it yielded two sherds of medieval pottery and some flowerpot, strongly supporting the notion that the stratigraphic relationship was misinterpreted.

Gully 16 possibly cut pit 17 though again this was not clear as the gully was so shallow; nonetheless it contained what appears to be medieval tile.

Undated

Pit 25 was situated on the eastern side of pit 32. Contrary to the initial thought that it was part of the latter, it was in fact an independent feature. It also truncated ditch 30. It was bowl-shaped, 0.30m deep and about 1.30m in diameter. The fill, a soft dark grey brown sandy clayey silt, contained lots of amorphous burnt clay fragments and occasional gravel.

Post hole 7 was located in the SW corner of the excavation. It was sub-circular, measuring 0.46 x 0.40m. Its 0.22m thick fill, a mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional gravels, was sterile. This post hole might be associated with another post hole 1.5m to its east and whose fill contained a modern brick. This might correspond to traces of a possible fence but no other post holes were seen further east.

Post hole 8 was less than 1.4m south of large pit 32. It had moderate to steep sides and a slightly rounded base. Its dimensions were 0.50 x 0.40m and 0.15m deep. It had the same kind of fill as post hole 7.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of *c* 393 sherds, weighing *c* 7.65kg and with 6.14 estimated vessel equivalents (EVE), dating to the Roman period. In addition two medieval and two post-medieval sherds were also present. Pottery was recovered from 14 individual cuts, mainly pits with a single ditch, two gullies and a posthole. The quantity of sherds ranged from a single sherd through to a maximum of 100 sherds from pit 11. The condition of the material, with an overall average sherd weight of 19g, was moderately good for rubbish material recovered from negative features although there was some loss of surface finishes.

The assemblage was sorted macroscopically into fabric groups based on the principal inclusions present in the clay, the frequency and grade of the inclusions and the firing colour. Known or traded Roman wares are coded with reference to the National Roman fabric reference series (Tomber and Dore 1998). The assemblage was quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context (Appendix 2). Freshly broken sherds were counted as single pieces where joins could be made. In addition rims were measured for diameter and percentage present for the estimation of vessel equivalents (EVE) (Orton *et al.* 1993) and identified to broad form. Evidence of use in the form of residues, sooting or leaching was noted.

Description of Roman fabrics and forms (Table 1)

The assemblage is very much dominated by reduced sandy wares which account for nearly 70% by count, over 50% by weight. There are a modest number of continental and regional imports present but the bulk of the group comprises grog-tempered and sandy wares presumed to be of more local origin.

Imported finewares are limited to three sherds of East Gaulish samian, two from the same vessel and all from pit 17. One sherd is from a *mortarium* whilst the other two sherds are from a closed jar or beaker originally with barbotine decoration. There are no further continental imports in the form of fine ware, *mortaria* or *amphorae* present.

The earliest regional import is one small sherd of Abingdon-type oxidised beaker (Timby *et al* 1997) of 1st -century date from ditch 10. The remaining regional wares are all products of the later Roman period and include Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1), fine wares from the Oxfordshire and New Forest industries (NRO RS2) and one rim from a late Roman shelly ware jar (ROB SH). Most of the DOR BB1 rims are from plain-walled dishes with one jar. The Oxfordshire wares include one white ware mortarium (OXF WH) (Young 1977) type M22 and five red-slipped wares (OXF RS) including one sherd with impressed demi-rosette stamps, a piece from a flanged bowl (Young 1977) type C51 and a beaker.

The local wares can be divided into three main groups: flint-tempered; grog-tempered and sandy wares. The flint-tempered ware is the smallest group with five sherds of Silchester-type jar (Timby 2000, 239); one of which has a thick carbonised deposit on the interior. There is a single sherd of sandy ware with sparse flint (SAFL).

The grog-tempered wares form a larger group with examples of later Iron Age-early Roman types (fabrics GR1 and GR3) (Timby 2000, 225 ff); mid-late Roman storage jars in grog or sandy wares with sparse grog and later Roman grog-tempered ware (HAM GT). Most of the featured sherds come from jars, particularly large storage jars but there is a single plain-walled dish and a lid.

The reduced sandy wares make up the bulk of the assemblage with quite a range of generally hard fired fabrics showing variable textures reflecting the density and size of the inclusions. These are loosely grouped under Alice Holt reduced ware (ALH RE) but may include similar wares from other sources. Also attributed to the Alice Holt industry are black sandy ware wheel-made copies of BB1 forms. The latter mainly comprises jars with one plain-walled dish. Several sherds from a single vessel decorated with a right-angle burnished lattice from gully 16 had a calcareous lining on the interior surface. The grey wares are dominated by simple everted or expanded rim jars with just three bowls, two of flanged rim conical form typical of the late Roman period.

Other sandy wares are present in very minor amounts and are classified by firing colour and texture. These include one sherd from a black, fine sandy ware, beaker with barbotine dot decoration typical of the later 1st-early 2nd centuries.

In terms of forms jars dominate overall accounting for 77.7% EVE of which 11.3% is large storage type jar. This is followed by dishes at 8.6% and bowls at 7%. The remaining 6.7% are accounted for by single examples of a lid, beaker and mortarium. Overall the assemblage suggests a rural-type settlement of low economic status perhaps engaged in the processing, or storage, of agricultural products. There are very few imports to the site and most of these relate to the later Roman phase.

Post-Roman pottery

The site produced just two sherds of medieval pottery the most notable of which is a strap attached spout from a pitcher from pit 22. The piece is glazed and is in a sandy ware, possible Oxfordshire fabric (OXY) (Mellor 1994, 63). A second small sandy sherd of medieval date came from gully 15. Two red-earthenware flowerpot sherds also came from gully 15.

Chronology and site distribution

Although a small assemblage, the pottery exhibits quite a wide chronology. The earliest material is that from ditch 30 which produced some 48 sherds weighing 1124g from the various interventions. With the exception of an intrusive sherd of late Roman New Forest ware from cut 12, the assemblage comprises one sherd of grey Alice Holt ware, the one Abingdon-type piece and a range of flint-tempered or grog-tempered types. On balance the group suggests a post-conquest but pre-Flavian date.

Possibly contemporary with this are the two sandy ware sherds from pit 23 at least one of which is handmade; two sherds of sandy ware with grog from pit 18 and two grog-tempered sherds from pit 13.

Probably next in the sequence are pits 16 and 11. Pit 16 contained 52 sherds of which 48 came from one vessel, a black sandy ware copy of a BB1 jar. The use of the right-angle lattice could imply a 2nd-3rd century date but it could equally be a later product. Similarly pit 11, although it yielded 100 sherds, is quite difficult to date. These are all coarsewares and dominated by grey reduced sandy ware jars and grog-tempered storage jar. Two DOR BB1 plain-walled dishes suggest the group dates after the mid-later 2nd century but the absence of any colour-coated wares could imply a date before the mid-late 3rd century.

The remaining Roman assemblage more clearly dates to the 4th century exemplified by the groups from pits 17, 21 and 22. The single rim from a late Roman shelly ware jar from 21 indicates a date from the last quarter of the 4th century or later. Pits 17 and 22 contain sherds of late Roman colour-coated wares from Oxfordshire and the New Forest. The sherd of medieval spouted pitcher came from pit 22 and is presumably intrusive. Gully 15 is of post-Roman/ modern date.

With such a small group it is difficult to determine whether the pottery represents a continuous sequence of use but there certainly appears to be a hiatus during the later 1st century through to the later 2nd century.

Table 1 Summary of Pottery by Fabric

	Fabric	Description	No	%	Wt	%	Eve	%
FW imports	EG SA	East Gaulish samian	3	0.8	45	0.6	0	0.0
Regional	ABN OX	Abingdon-type oxidized ware	1	0.3	5	0.1	0	0.0
	DOR BB1	Dorset black burnished ware	8	2.0	89	1.2	0.31	5.0
	NFO RS2	New Forest red-slipped ware	3	0.8	75	1.0	0	0.0
	OXF RS	Oxon red-slipped ware	5	1.3	28	0.4	0.2	3.3
	OXF WH(M)	Oxon whiteware mortaria	1	0.3	68	0.9	0.17	2.8
	ROB SH	late Roman shelly ware	1	0.3	36	0.5	0.17	2.8
Local: sandy	ALH RE	Alice Holt-type/ reduced wares	193	49.1	2939	39.0	2.77	45.1
	ALH BB1	Alice Holt BB1 copies	61	15.5	787	10.5	1.15	18.7
	BWFSY	fine sandy black ware	1	0.3	3	0.0	0	0.0
	BWSY	misc black sandy wares	1	0.3	15	0.2	0	0.0
	GYSY	misc grey sandy wares	16	4.1	617	8.2	0	0.0
	GYF	fine grey ware	3	0.8	28	0.4	0	0.0
	OXFSY	fine sandy oxidized ware	2	0.5	7	0.1	0	0.0
Flint	FL1	Silchester flint-tempered ware	5	1.3	235.5	3.1	0	0.0
	SAFL	sandy with flint	1	0.3	55	0.7	0.05	0.8
Grog	GR	grog-tempered	18	4.6	291.5	3.9	0.11	1.8
	GYGR	grey grog-tempered	2	0.5	28	0.4	0.08	1.3
	GR1	LIA-ERO grog-tempered	18	4.6	303	4.0	0.15	2.4
	GR3	lumpy grog-tempered	8	2.0	124	1.6	0.1	1.6
	GRFL	grog and flint-tempered	1	0.3	8	0.1	0	0.0
	GRSA	sandy with grog	25	6.4	940	12.5	0.8	13.0
	GRSJ	grog-tempered storage jar	10	2.5	676	9.0	0.08	1.3
	HAM GT	Hampshire late grog-tempered	2	0.5	30	0.4	0	0.0
TOTAL	OXGR	oxidized with grog	4	1.0	97	1.3	0	0.0
			393	100.0	7530	100.0	6.14	100.0

Roman Coins by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Two coins were recovered by using metal detectors during the course of this project. Both came from Roman pits.

1) Aes Copper Alloy Mint: - Date: 1st-2nd C. AD?

O/ Illegible - Bust right

R/ Illegible - Personification standing left

Ref.: -

[11](62) Weight: 7.62g Diameter: 25.5mm Axis: 12h

2) Aes 3/4? Copper Alloy *Constantinopolis* type Mint: Trier Date: 330-340 AD

O/ CONSTAN[TINOPOLIS - Helmeted and cuirassed bust left of Constantinopolis, holding a sceptre

R/ Anepigraph //TR·P - Victory standing left, foot on a prow, holding a long sceptre and a shield behind her.

Ref.: -

[22](75) Weight: 1.84g Diameter: 17.0mm Axis: 6h

Metalwork by Aidan Colyer

Four ferrous objects were recovered during the excavations. Of these objects three are nails and one is a ferrous ring (Appendix 3).

The ring, catalogue number 4, was recovered from deposit (79) in Roman ditch 30 [slot 26]. The ring is corroded, obscuring any detail but is otherwise well preserved. The external diameter is 50mm with the thickness being 8mm. Two portions of the ring look to have been flattened which suggests that they were the areas where straps were attached. This piece is therefore likely to be part of a horse bridle or similar. The piece cannot be dated and is likely the same date of the context from which it is recovered.

Three nails, catalogue numbers 1, 2, and 3, were recovered. Two of these are general use nails which are remarkably similar in their dimensions. This and the similar states of preservation suggest that they are part of the same batch of nails and are thus contemporary. The third nail, catalogue number 3, is a complete hobnail. The nail was recovered from sieving bulk sample <18>. This hobnail has a pyramid head and is curved on the end showing that it has been used. This style of hobnail was common during the Roman period although hobnails were used later.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint, a spall (piece less than 20xx20mm) was recovered from pit 23 (fill (72), sample 6). It is not closely datable and could even have been accidentally struck in Roman times.

Ceramic building material by Danielle Milbank

A modest quantity of brick and tile fragments (15 pieces weighing 2051g) was recovered from five contexts (Appendix 4). The majority of identifiable pieces are tile though smaller fragments of 10g or less were not

diagnostic and could equally represent brick or tile. The material is largely in moderate to poor condition, highly fragmented and with some abrasion.

Roman tile

Several pieces were recovered which are of a Roman fabric, which is typically a soft to medium soft, fine clay with fine pale grog inclusions and sparse fine and occasional coarse sand inclusions, and a mid to dark orange red colour.

Two pieces from pit 17 (68), comprise a small piece 22mm thick (possibly representing *tegula*) and a piece representing the lower end of a *tegula*, with part of a fingertip 'signature' mark. The part includes the top of the flange, a double finger groove at the base of the flange, and the lower cutaway, according to Warry's classification (Warry 2006) a type C (probably his category C5). This form can be tentatively dated to a range between the mid-2nd up to the later 3rd century.

Pit 19 (70) contained two pieces which are thicker tile and are likely to be of Roman date, though it is not possible to determine the form as the full thickness is not present. Likewise, pit 23 (73) contained four pieces, one small and non-diagnostic, one piece which has an angle suggestive of a *tegula* cutaway of some form, and two which are tile of likely Roman date.

Pit 21 (74) contained pieces 38mm thick which may represent a flat tile type, for example *bessalis*, *pedalis* or *lydion*, and a further piece with a shallow finger groove representing a *tegula* fragment.

Medieval and post-medieval

Gully 16 (67) contained a small piece of tile which is in a fine, hard evenly fired fabric with a red colour, and a broadly medieval or post-medieval date.

Summary

The material encountered in the excavation comprised a modest quantity, largely recovered from features of Roman date, and represents a narrow range of forms. A large proportion of the material lacked diagnostic characteristics, with *tegula* the only Roman form identified with certainty, and one medieval or post-medieval example.

Fired Clay by Danielle Milbank

Three contexts contained fired clay, all single pieces, with a total weight of 447g. These comprised a piece from pit 10 (61) weighing 29g, of a fairly rough fired clay with moderate fine voids and very occasional fine (possibly limestone) inclusions. The form is a thin bar 15mm high and 13mm wide, sub rectangular in section, with a

further bar extending from one side at an oblique angle, forming a Y shape in plan. It represents a fairly small, fine firebar from an oven or kiln structure.

A small piece was recovered from pit 11 (62) weighing 6g which is a fine red clay with no inclusions, and a piece was recovered from pit 23 (73), weighing 412g, which is a fine, rough textured, slightly soft and friable clay material with frequent small to medium subangular limestone inclusions and a pale orange red colour. The piece has one flat side and the impression of a wooden wattle on its rough side, suggesting it represents a piece from a structure such as an oven.

Glass by Danielle Milbank

Glass was recovered from a sieved soil sample from pit 17 (68). This is a small fragment (1g) of pale blue green glass 3mm thick, and can only be broadly dated as Roman.

Slag by Aidan Colyer

A single piece of ferrous slag was recovered from the sample taken from deposit (61) in ditch 30 [slot 10]. The slag is a droplet that has spilt onto a flat surface and cooled. This is likely a piece that has been deposited as a stray object as there is no further evidence of slag on site to suggest metalworking was taking place in the nearby area.

Animal Bones by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from nine features within the investigated area. Weighing 856g, a total of 73 fragments were present for analysis (Appendix 5). The overall preservation of the remains was poor, as the majority of bone was brittle in texture and easily damaged. Isolated patches of cortical bone surface erosion were noted. Post-excavation breakage of the fragile bone contributed to the fragmented nature of the assemblage.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements based on size, not by species, into one of three general size categories: “large”, “medium”, and “small”. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat, deer and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) are designated to the “small” category. Wherever possible, specific identification to species and side of origin was attempted using reference to Hillson (1992).

Unfortunately, the less than ideal preservation, small fragment size, or non-descript appearance of many of the post-cranial pieces of bone (i.e. long bone shaft fragments) limited species identification. Teeth were the best preserved and diagnostic pieces recovered, which permitted much of the identification of the species present.

A minimum of four animals can be identified within the small assemblage: one horse, two cows, and at least one sheep/goat. A single horse tooth was recovered from pit 17 (68). The presence of a minimum of two cows was indicated by the proximal portions of two right tibiae in pit 22 (75). Evidence sheep/goat was suggested by loose sheep/goat sized teeth recovered from pits 17 (68) and 23 (73). Evidence of butchery practices was not observed, however, any cut marks present may have been masked by the post-excavation fragmentation. No further information could be retrieved from the small assemblage of animal bone.

Burnt Bone by Ceri Falys

A small amount of burnt and unburnt bone was recovered from ditch 10 (61). A total of six pieces of white coloured bone, weighing just 2g was present for analysis. The overall preservation of the bone was fair, as the cortical bone was eroded in places and a generally small fragment size was recorded. The largest piece of bone had a maximum length of 19.4mm. The white colouring of the bone suggests that it was subjected to temperatures above 600°C during the burning process, which resulted in the organic components being completely oxidized (Holden 1995a, 1995b). Osteological analysis was unable to identify the species or elements of origin, beyond they were likely of long bone shaft origin. No further information could be retrieved from the small assemblage of burnt bone.

Environmental Samples by Rosalind McKenna

A programme of soil sampling was implemented during the evaluation and excavation, which comprised the collection of 19 soil samples mostly of 16L, but some of 8L, from sealed contexts. The samples were floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh and air dried. Details of methodology and identification guides used are in the archive. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Stace (1997). Identification of charcoal was made using guides of Schweingruber (1978) and Hather (2000).

Results

Fourteen samples and one hand picked charcoal sample are the basis of this investigation. Charred plant macrofossils were present in six of the samples. The preservation was poor and the samples produced small suites of plant macrofossils, both in terms of quantity and diversity. The results of this can be seen in Appendix 6:1. Indeterminate cereal grains were recorded in all six of the samples. These were identified based on their overall size and morphological characteristics, which may suggest a high degree of surface abrasion on the grains, indicative of mechanical disturbances that are common in features such as pits, post holes, gullies and

ditches, where rubbish and waste are frequently discarded. Grass seeds were present in two samples, and weed seeds in two samples.

The fact that the samples have produced broadly similar results suggests that these secondary deposits do not result from deposition of debris from accidental charring events, but instead represent a consistent pattern of charring cereal grain and crop weeds over the period of occupation and using the waste for fuel, which was subsequently deposited around the site.

Charcoal fragments were present in the majority of the samples and identifiable remains were present in eight of the samples. The results of this analysis can be seen in Appendix 6:2. The total range of taxa comprises oak (*Quercus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and willow/poplar (*Salix / Populus*). These taxa belong to the groups of species represented in the native British flora. A local environment with an oak dominant woodland is indicated from the charcoal of the site. As seen in Appendix 6:2, five samples were dominated by oak amongst the identifiable fragments, with the one sample being dominated by hazel and one sample being dominated by willow / poplar. One sample contained equal amounts of oak and hazel charcoal. The compositions of the samples are all similar – originating in post hole and pit features, it is probable therefore that these small assemblages of charcoal remains reflect the intentional deposition or accumulation of domestic waste.

Summary

The samples produced some environmental material of interpretable value, with the plant macrofossils from six of the samples and the identifiable charcoal remains from eight of the samples. The remains of plant macrofossils recovered from the samples showed the presence of indeterminate cereal grains, grass and weed seeds. The deposits from which the samples derive, probably represent the intentional deposition or accumulation of domestic waste associated with fires.

Conclusion

This site was occupied during the Roman period with an emphasis on the east half of the excavated area. This appeared as the earliest trace of activity here, mostly in the form of refuse pits, shallow gullies, and a single ditch and post-hole. A very large pit was noted but its interpretation as a quarry pit remains hypothetical. The site probably stood in the backyard of a substantial dwelling as the quantity of artefacts recovered (pottery, coins, bones) was significant. The portion on the front side of the property was too affected by modern disturbance to

preserve any archaeological feature. Rare traces of modern activity, namely post holes and a probably soakaway filled with bricks on the south edge complete the list of features observed.

It should be noted that this excavation represents only a small part of what could be an extensive and long lived Roman site. Previous investigations have revealed dense Roman deposits including timber and stone building remains to both the south west and north east with other isolated deposits to the north west. The core of the site might, therefore extend for several hectares.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of excavated features

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
EVAL/EX			50	Topsoil		
EVAL/EX			51	Subsoil		
EVAL	30	1	52	Ditch	Roman	By pottery
EVAL		2	53	Pit		
EVAL		3	54	Pit		
EVAL		4	55	Pit		
EVAL		5	56	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EVAL	30	6	57	Ditch	Roman	By association
EX		7	58	Post hole		
EX		8	59	Post hole		
EX		9	60	Post hole	Roman	By pottery
EX	30	10	61	Ditch	Roman	By pottery
EX		11	62	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX	30	12	63	Ditch	Roman	By pottery
EX		13	64	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX	30	14	65	Ditch	Roman	By association
EX		15	66	Gully?	Medieval (or later)	By pottery
EX	31	16	67	Gully?	Medieval?	By tile
EX		17	68	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX		18	69	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX		19	70	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX	31	20	71	Gully?	Roman	By pottery
EX		21	74	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX		22	75	Pit	Roman	By pottery
EX	32	23	72-73	Pit	Medieval?	By pottery
EX	32	24	77	Pit	Medieval?	By association
EX		25	78	Pit	>Medieval?	By stratigraphy
EX	30	26	79	Ditch	Roman	By Pottery

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of pottery

Cut	Deposit	Group	Type	Fabric*	Form	Type	Wt	No	Rim	Diam	EVE	Comment
	82		backfill	ALHRE-T			18	1	0	0	0	
	82		backfill	GR			8	1	0	0	0	
9	60		posthole	ALHRE-T			6	1	0	0	0	
9	60		posthole	GRSA			1	1	0	0	0	
11	62		pit	ALHBB1	J2	jar	197	0	4	16	48	vertical burnished lines
11	62		pit	ALHBB1	J2	jar	8	0	1	14	7	
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	B2	bowl	518	40	1	19	12	tooled wavy line
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	J12	jar	8	0	1	0	5	
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	8	0	1	14	7	
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	13	0	1	0	5	
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	11	0	1	0	3	
11	62		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	4	0	1	12	8	
11	62		pit	BWFSY			3	1	0	0	0	barbotine dots
11	62		pit	DORBB1	D1	dish	25	1	1	18	5	
11	62		pit	GR	L	lid	283	15	1	10	11	lid or plate with raised rib and décor
11	62		pit	GRSA	D1	dish	26	0	2	16	16	
11	62		pit	GRSA	X	base	24	1	0	0	0	
11	62		pit	GRSA			8	1	0	0	0	
11	62		pit	GRSJ	J4	storage jar	676	9	1	32	8	
11	62		pit	GYFSY			6	1	0	0	0	
11	62		pit	OXIDFSY			3	1	0	0	0	
11	62		pit	SASJ	X	base	584	14	0	0	0	
13	64		pit	GR3			23	2	0	0	0	
15	66		gully	MEDSY			6	1	0	0	0	
15	66		gully	PMFL			19	1	1	0	0	
17	68		pit	ALHBB1	J11	jar	17	0	1	0	3	
17	68		pit	ALHBB1	J11	jar	11	0	1	16	10	
17	68		pit	ALHBB1	J11	jar	10	0	1	0	3	
17	68		pit	ALHBB1	J2	jar	11	0	1	16	5	
17	68		pit	ALHBB1	J2	jar	5	0	1	12	7	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	B4	bowl	10	0	1	24	6	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	J11	jar	34	0	1	14	15	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	J11	jar	19	0	1	0	5	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	J11	jar	17	0	1	12	17	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	J12	jar	17	0	1	22	6	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T	J7	jar	22	0	1	18	10	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T			12	4	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T			202	20	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	ALHRE-T			164	19	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	D1	dish	5	0	1	0	3	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	D1	dish	11	0	1	22	5	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	D1	dish	15	0	1	22	6	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	D1	dish	10	0	1	20	5	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	J11	jar	14	0	1	18	7	
17	68		pit	DORBB1	X	base	9	1	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	EGSAM	mort	mortaria	39	1	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	EGSAM			6	2	0	0	0	closed form with barbotine dec
17	68		pit	GRSA	J4	storage jar	183	0	1	30	8	
17	68		pit	GRSA	J4	storage jar	133	1	1	0	5	
17	68		pit	GRSA	J4	storage jar	33	0	1	26	17	
17	68		pit	GRSA			35	2	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	GYF			22	2	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	HAMGT			30	2	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	NFOR2	X	base	26	1	0	0	0	beaker
17	68		pit	NFOR2			4	1	0	0	0	
17	68		pit	OXFRS	BKr	beaker	8	1	1	6	13	x2 body demi-rosettes
17	68		pit	OXFRS	C51	bowl	8	0	1	12	7	Young 1977
17	68		pit	OXIDFSY			4	1	0	0	0	
18	69		pit	GRSA			10	1	0	0	0	
19	70		pit	ALHRE-T			44	1	0	0	0	
19	70		pit	ALHRE-T			4	3	0	0	0	
21	74		pit	OXFRS			6	1	0	0	0	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	B4	bowl	44	0	1	18	11	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	B7	bowl	40	0	1	16	7	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	11	0	1	0	5	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	102	0	1	16	17	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	65	0	1	14	25	sooted rim /exterior
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	79	0	1	12	31	2=1

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Fabric*</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Diam</i>	<i>EVE</i>	<i>Comment</i>
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	23	0	1	17	12	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	32	0	1	16	20	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	28	0	1	14	10	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T	J2	jar	4	0	1	16	7	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T			6	1	0	0	0	
21	74		pit	ALHRE-T			951	55	0	0	0	
21	74		pit	GRSA	J2	jar	45	0	1	22	10	
21	74		pit	OXFWHM	M22	mortaria	68	0	1	22	17	Young 1977
21	74		pit	ROBSH	J7	jar	36	0	1	20	17	
22	75		pit	ALHBB1	D1	dish	17	0	1	18	5	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T	J11	jar	21	0	1	16	10	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T	J11	jar	18	0	1	18	6	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T	J3	jar	9	0	1	20	7	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T	J7	jar	27	0	1	16	10	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T			79	2	0	0	0	
22	75		pit	ALHRE-T			252	17	0	0	0	
22	75		pit	GRSA	J4	storage jar	92	3	1	24	6	
22	75		pit	GRSA	J4	storage jar	139	1	1	15	10	
22	75		pit	MEDGL	SPO PIT	pitcher	95	0	1	0	3	
22	75		pit	OXFRS			6	1	0	0	0	
10	61	30	ditch	ABNOX			5	1	0	0	0	
10	61	30	ditch	FL1			197	1	0	0	0	sl finer, int carbon deposit
10	61	30	ditch	GR1			11	4	0	0	0	<9>
10	61	30	ditch	GR1			53	2	0	0	0	
10	61	30	ditch	GR1			32	2	0	0	0	
10	61	30	ditch	GR3	J1	jar	71	2	2	18	10	
10	61	30	ditch	GRFL			8	1	0	0	0	
10	61	30	ditch	GYGR			2	1	0	0	0	black grog, ro sand
10	61	30	ditch	OXGR			97	4	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	ALHRE-T			5	1	0	0	0	carinated sherd
12	63	30	ditch	FL1			11	1	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	FL1			27	1	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	FL1			0.5	2	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	GR			0.5	1	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	GR1			66	4	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	GR3			30	2	0	0	0	lumpy
12	63	30	ditch	GRSA	J4	storage jar	72	0	1	30	8	
12	63	30	ditch	GRSAFL			137	4	0	0	0	v fine flint
12	63	30	ditch	GY			30	1	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	GYGR	D?	dish	9	0	1	16	8	black grog, ro sand
12	63	30	ditch	GYGRSA			19	1	0	0	0	
12	63	30	ditch	NFOR2			45	1	0	0	0	
26	79	30	ditch	GR1	J12/3	jar	133	4	1	18	5	
26	79	30	ditch	GR1	J2	jar	8	0	1	14	10	
26	79	30	ditch	SAFL	J11	jar	55	0	1	0	5	
16	67	31	gully	ALHBB1	J11	jar	507	45	3	17	27	1 vess int calcif; rt angle lattice
16	67	31	gully	ALHBB1			4	2	0	0	0	
16	67	31	gully	ALHRE-T			12	2	0	0	0	
23	72	32	pit	GYSY			3	1	0	0	0	
23	73	32	pit	BWSY			15	1	0	0	0	

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Metalwork

<i>Cat. No.</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Length (mm)</i>	<i>Head width (mm)</i>	<i>Shaft width (mm)</i>
1	16	67	Nail	40	19	4
2	21	74	Nail	60	19	4
3	21	74	Hobnail	11	8	3
4	26	79	Ring	50	-	8

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of ceramic building material

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
16	67	31	Gully	EX	1	20
17	68		Pit	EX	2	418
19	70		Pit	EX	2	223
23	73	32	Pit	EX	4	500
21	74		Pit	EX	6	890

APPENDIX 5: Inventory of animal bone.

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Sheep/goat</i>	<i>MED</i>	<i>Unid</i>	
10	61	2	7	-	-	-	-	1	1	sheep/goat sized tooth fragment
11	62	8	3	-	-	-	-	-	8	unidentified lbsf. Found mixed with 6 pieces of burnt bone (2g).
12	63	1	28	-	-	1	-	-	-	non-descript "large" lbsf
17	68	43	538	1	-	23	6	-	13	"large" left scapula, ribs, lbsf, horse tooth, "medium" rib shafts, sheep/goat sized teeth
19	70	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	small fragment
23	73	7	54	-	-	1	6	-	-	sheep/goat sized teeth
21	74	1	21	-	1	-	-	-	-	cow tooth
22	75	9	188	-	2	6	-	-	1	2 right proximal tibiae
26	79	1	15	-	-	-	-	-	1	lbsf

Lbsf= long bone shaft fragment

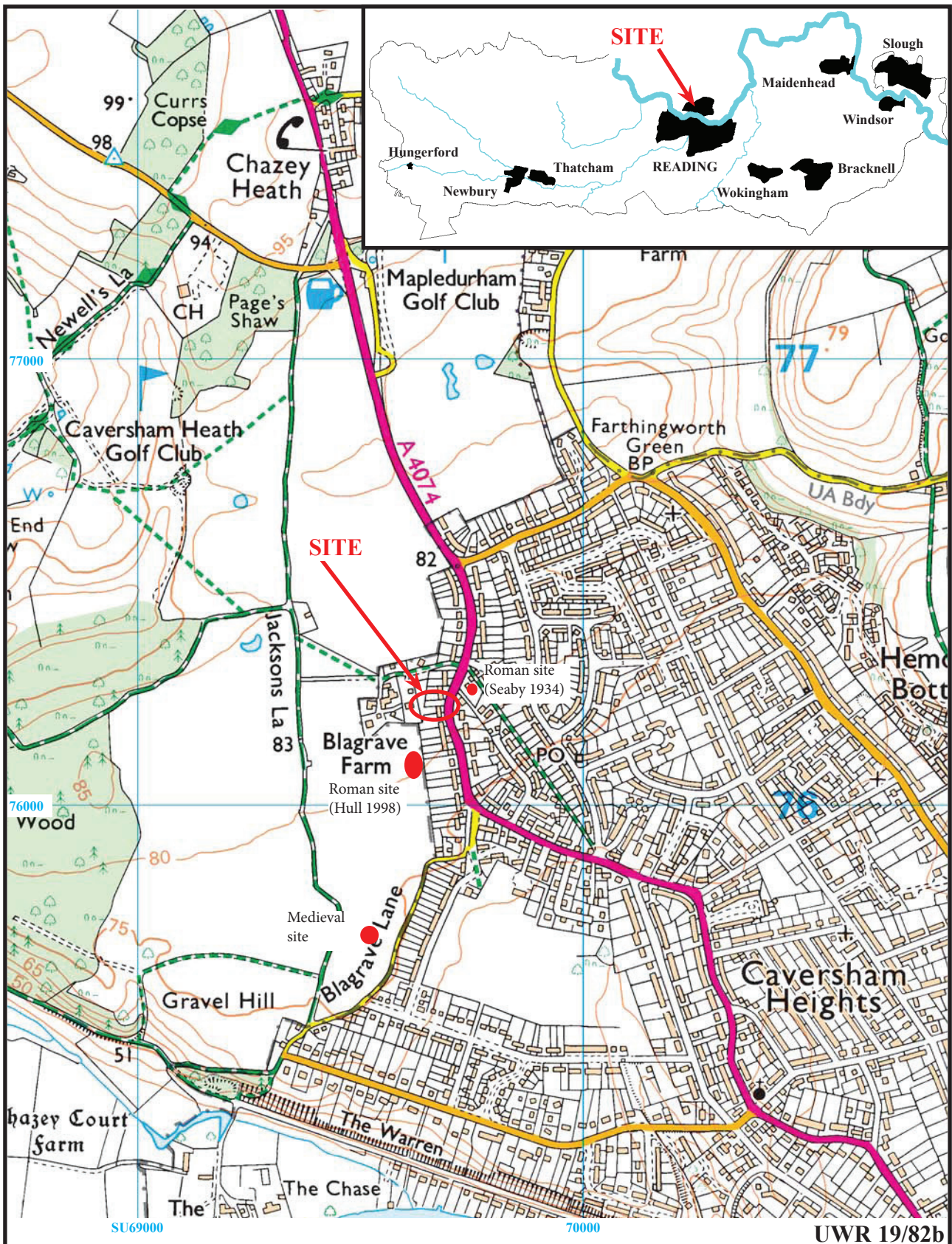
APPENDIX 6: Environmental remains

Table 6:1: **Plant Macrofossils** - Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Stace (1997).

Sample Number	6	13	14	17	18	19	
Feature Number	7	16	17	23	21	22	
Context Number	58	67	68	73	74	75	
Feature Type	Post hole	Gully	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit	
LATIN BINOMAL							COMMON NAME
BRASSICACEAE				1			Cabbage family
<i>Vicia L. / Lathyrus L..</i>				1			Vetch / Pea
POACEAE				9		4	Grass family
Indeterminate Cereal	2	2	3	9	1	4	Indeterminate Cereal

Table A:2: **Charcoal** -Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Schweingruber (1978). Numbers are identified charcoal fragment for each sample.

Sample Number		6	7	12	14	16	17	18	19
Feature Number		7	8	13	17	23	23	21	22
Context Number		58	59	64	68	72	73	74	75
Feature Type		Post hole	Post hole	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit
No. fgts.		28	7	1	13	200+	5	6	6
Max. size (mm)		11	5	6	13	23	10	14	11
Latin	Vernacular								
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel				7			1	2
<i>Salix / Populus</i>	Willow / Poplar						1		
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	4	3		3	100		1	4
Indeterminate	Indeterminate	24	4	1	3		4	4	

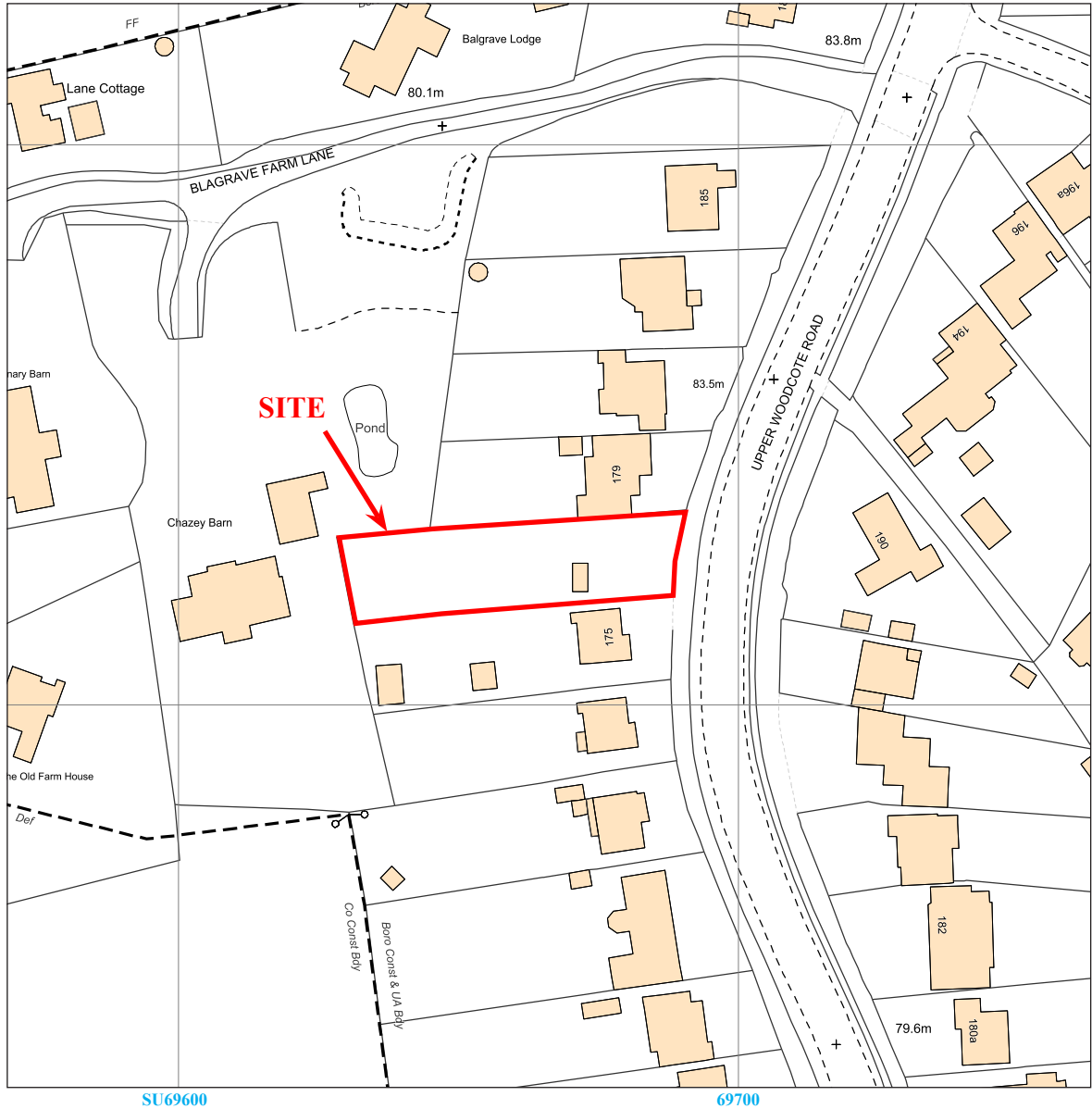


**177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Caversham and Berkshire.

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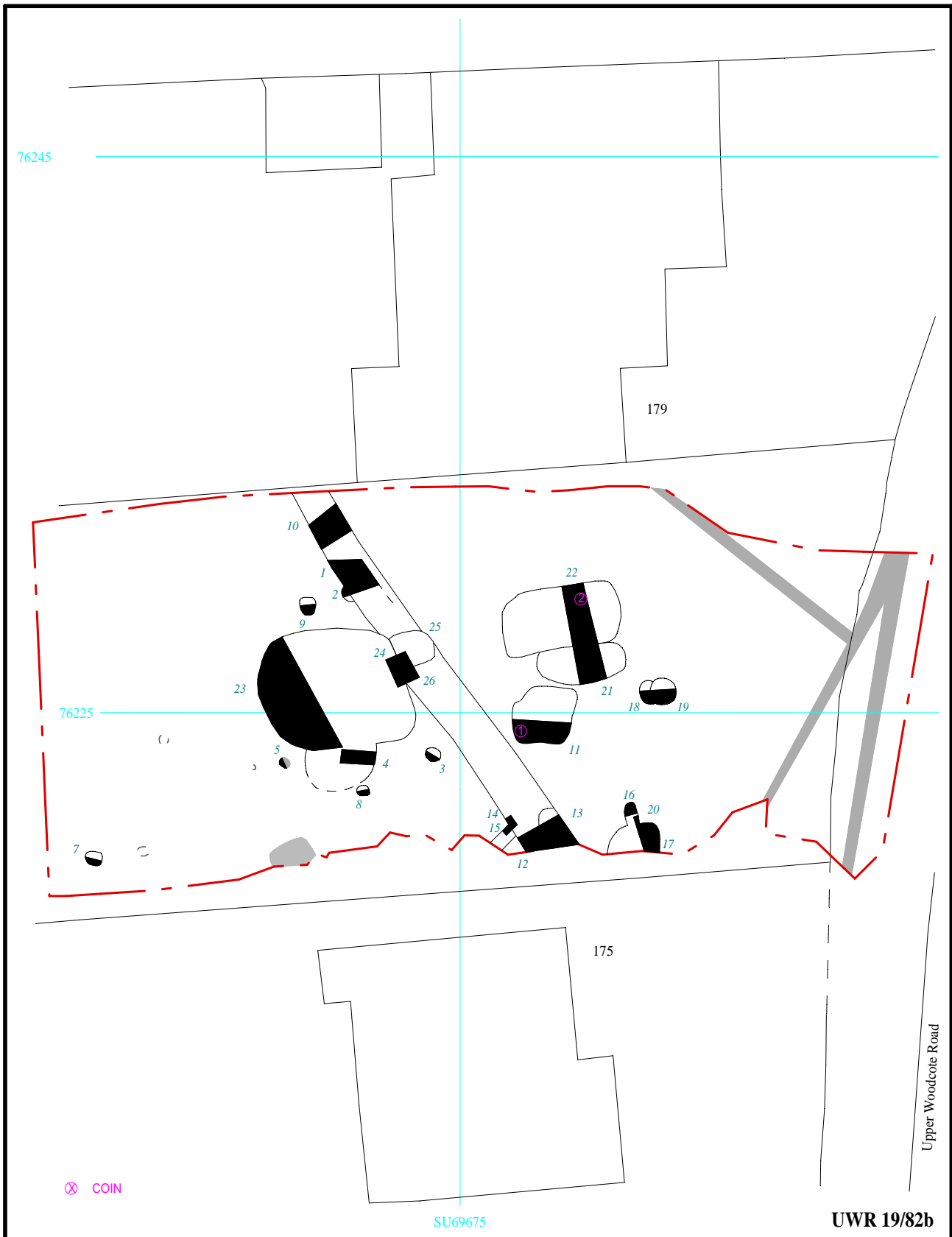
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**177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Excavation**
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Upper Woodcote Road.

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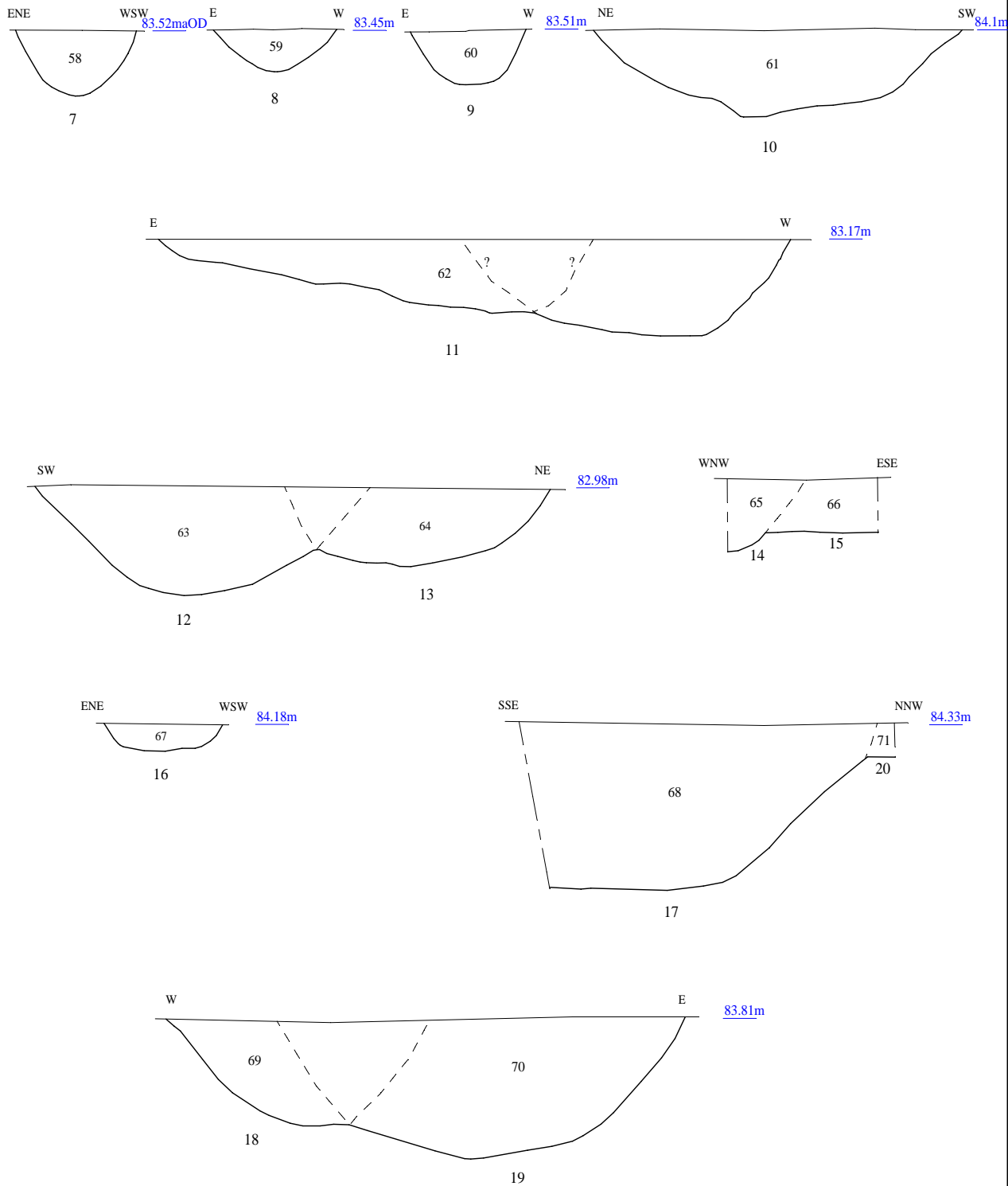


**177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
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Figure 3. Detail of area.



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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Post hole 9; looking south;
Scales: 0.50m and 0.20m



Plate 2. Working shot looking south-east



Plate 3. Pit 17 and gully 31 (foreground); Pit 13 and ditch 30; (background) looking west;
Scales: 1m, 0.5m and 0.10m.

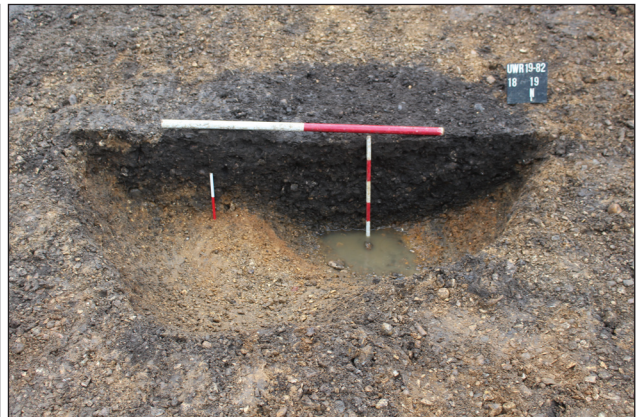


Plate 4. Pits 18 and 19; looking north;
Scales: 1m, 0.50m and 0.20m.

UWR 19/82b

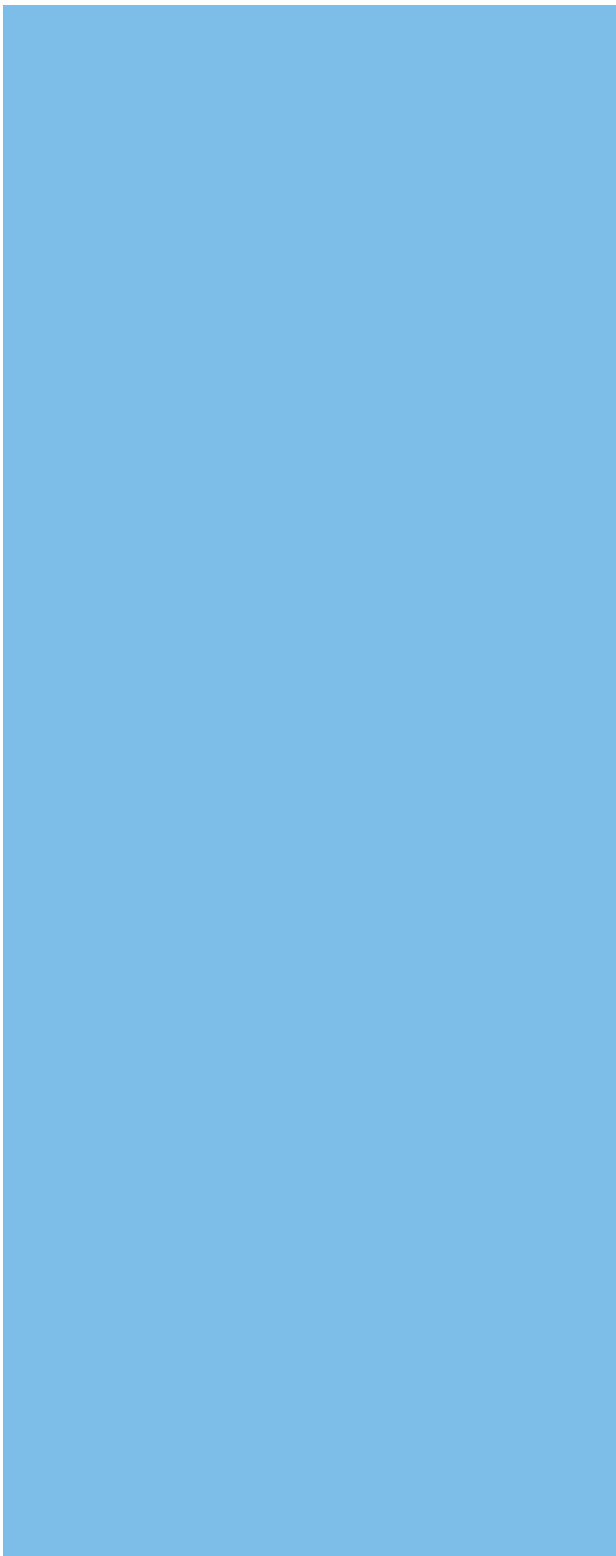
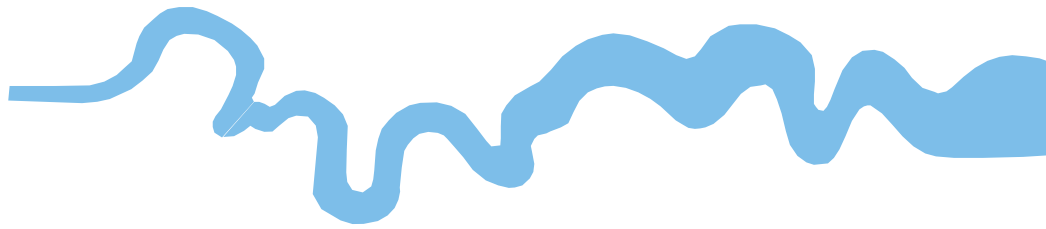
177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Excavation
Plates 1 to 4.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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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