

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Units 31-33, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Anne-Michelle Huvig

Site Code: SPA 19/58

(SU 7387 7376)

**Units 31-33 Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Phoenix Life Limited**

by Andy Taylor and Anne-Michelle Huvig
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SPA 19/58

June 2024

Summary

Site name: Units 31-33, Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7387 7376

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th – 28th May 2024

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: SPA 18/59

Area of site: c.1.4 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was carried out as intended and twelve trenches were successfully excavated. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were encountered. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 03.06.24
	Steve Preston ✓ 03.06.24

Units 31-33 Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Anne-Michelle Huvig

Report 18/59

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Units 31-33 Suttons Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7387 7376) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Lee Sherrington of Christopher Smith Associates LLP, Riverside, 8 Lower Teddington Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 4EZ on behalf of Phoenix Life Limited, 1 Wythall Green Way, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6WG.

Planning permission (230219) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the erection of an industrial unit with ancillary office space and associated storage areas, along with a new car parking area, access and associated landscaping following the demolition of the existing units. The permission is subject to a condition (17) related to archaeology that requires a programme of archaeological work to be carried out prior to development.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Linden Ellicott, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Anne-Michelle Huvig, Mike Murray and Nathan Ohlendorf between 7th and 28th May 2024 and the site code is SPA 18/59. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with The Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern edge of Reading on part of the Suttons Park Industrial estate (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by Suttons Park Avenue to the south, industrial unit type buildings to the east and west and the railway to the north (Fig. 2). This former office/warehouse is a flat square parcel of land on concrete hard standing, prior to demolition and removal of the slab. The underlying geology is mapped as Kempton Park Gravel and Upper Chalk deposits (BGS 2000), which was observed in the trenches and the site lies at a height of approximately 40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

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 in general (Ford 1987, Gates 1975). Excavations on the site of the former Earley Power Station to the north-east examined a Late Iron Age/Roman enclosure complex and both Early Bronze Age (Beaker) burial and Mesolithic flintwork were also recovered (Barnes *et al.* 1997). Construction of the Great Western Railway in the 19th century and the digging of a nearby hole for ballast led to the discovery of an Early Saxon inhumation cemetery (Josephs 1894). Other finds nearby include a Roman coin, and Mesolithic flint tools dredged from the Thames. Evaluation of land elsewhere on the industrial estate revealed many areas of modern disturbance and truncation but with no archaeology recorded in less disturbed or untruncated areas as yet (Lewis 2011; Dawson and Ford 2011; Taylor 2015; Esteves and Taylor 2016; Taylor and Esteves 2016; Beaverstock 2017).

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 research aims of this project are{

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Saxon occupation or burial are present on the site; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig 12 trenches, each 20m long and between 1.6-2m wide. These were dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Sufficient of any identified archaeological deposits would be investigated to meet the objectives outlined above, and the evaluation was carried out according to CIfA standards (CIfA 2020).

Results

All 12 trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended locations, although some repositioning did occur due to the programme of demolition and slab removal (Fig. 2). The trenches measured 2.50m wide, between 16.60m and 22.10m long and between 0.38m and 1.10m deep.

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

Trench 1 (Fig 3; Pl. 1)

This trench was aligned North-South and measured 19.70m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.43m of brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology.

Trench 2 (Fig 3; Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned approximately East-West and measured 22.10m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.38m of brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3-4)

This trench was aligned East-West and measured 20m long and 0.55 to 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.45m brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology. At the West end the trench depth increased due to another modern deposit under the brick rubble. It was made of chalk and concrete with bricks fragments.

Trench 4 (Fig 3 ; Pl. 5)

This trench was aligned East-West and measured 20.50m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology.

Trench 5 (Fig 3)

This trench was aligned North-South and measured 20.30m long and 0.52m deep at the southern end and 0.98m deep at the northern end. The stratigraphy at the southern end consisted of 0.52m of brick rubble and gravel made ground overlying gravel natural geology. At 12m a brick and concrete wall foundation was present and north of this the trench depth dropped to 0.98m with the same stratigraphy.

Trench 6 (Fig 3)

This trench was aligned North-South and measured 19.20m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.42m of brick rubble and gravel made ground overlying gravel and sandy silt natural geology.

Trench 7 (Figs 3)

This trench was aligned approximately North-West to South-East and measured 19.60m long and 0.57m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.57m of brick rubble and gravels made ground overlying gravel and silty sand natural geology.

Trench 8 (Fig 3; Pl. 6)

This trench was aligned East-West and measured 16.60m long and 0.93m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.93m of brick rubble and gravels made ground overlying gravels and sandy silts natural geology.

Trench 9 (Fig 3)

This trench was aligned North-East to South-West and measured 20.70m long and 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.53m brick rubble made ground directly overlying sandy clay and gravel natural geology.

Trench 10 (Fig 3)

This trench was aligned NNW–SSE and measured 20.10m long and 1.02m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 1.02m of brick rubble and gravels made ground overlying gravel natural geology.

Trench 11 (Fig 3 ; Pl. 7)

This trench was aligned North-East to South-West and measured 20.50m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of brick rubble made ground directly overlying sandy silt and gravel natural geology.

Trench 12 (Figs 3 and 4 ; Pl. 8)

This trench was aligned approximately WNW-ESE and measured 19.80m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of brick rubble made ground directly overlying sandy clay, chalk and gravel natural geology.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation was carried out as intended with 12 trenches dug. No archaeology was observed in any of the trenches, all of which showed modern made ground directly above natural geology with neither topsoil nor subsoil surviving, indicating that the entire area could have been truncated. As a consequence the archaeological potential is considered negligible.

References

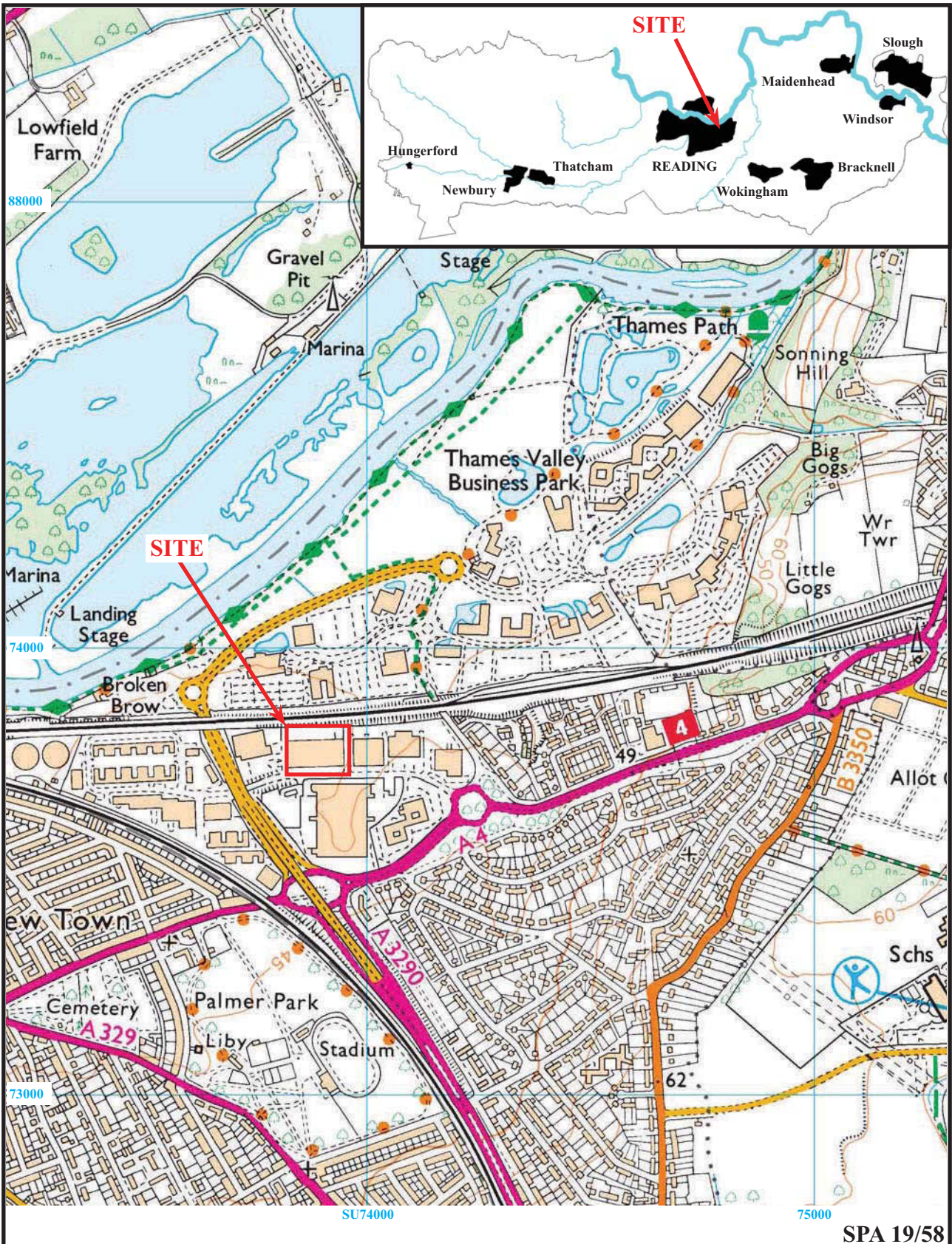
Barnes, I, Butterworth, C A, Hawkes, J W and Smith, L, 1997, *Excavations at Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, 1986–88*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **14**, Salisbury
Beaverstock, 2017, Units 27-8 Sutton Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 17/72, Reading
BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

- CIfA, 2020, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- Dawson, T and Ford, S, 2011, 'Unit 24 Suttons Business Park, London Road, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological evaluation supplementary report', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **11/58b**, Reading
- Esteves, L, and Taylor A, 2016, 'Planning Application Site B, Sutton Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **16/237**, Reading
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Pubn 1, Reading
- Josephs, J S, 1894, 'The discovery of a Saxon burial-place near Reading', *J British Archaeol Assoc*, **50**, 150-7
- Lewis, J, 2011, 'Unit 24 Suttons Business Park, London Road, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **11/58**, Reading
- NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Taylor A, 2015, 'Unit 62 Sutton Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **15/287**, Reading
- Taylor A, and Esteves, L, 2016, 'Planning Application Site A, Sutton Park Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, Archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **16/236**, 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	19.70	2.50	0.43	0-0.43m brick rubble made ground; 0.43m+ gravels and sand natural geology [PI. 1] .
2	22.10	2.50	0.38	0-0.38m brick rubble made ground; 0.38m+ brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology [PI. 2] .
3	20.00	2.50	0.55 (E) 1.10 (W)	E End: 0-0.45m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.45m+ gravel natural geology. W End: 0-0.30m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.30-0.60m brick chalk clayey made ground, 1.10m+ gravel natural geology [PIs 3 and 4] .
4	20.50	2.50	0.55	0-0.55m brick rubble made ground; 0.55m+ brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology [PI. 5] .
5	20.30	2.50	0.98 (N) 0.52 (S)	N End: 0-0.98m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.98m+ gravel natural geology. S End: 0-0.52m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.52m+ gravel natural geology.
6	19.20	2.50	0.42	0-0.42m brick rubble and gravels made ground; 0.42m+ gravel and sandy silt natural geology.
7	19.60	2.50	0.57	0-0.57m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.57m+ gravel and silty sand natural geology.
8	16.60	2.50	0.93	0-0.93m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 0.93m+ gravel and sandy silt natural geology [PI. 6] .
9	20.70	2.50	0.53	0-0.53m brick rubble made ground; 0.53m+ brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology.
10	20.10	2.50	1.02	0-1.02m brick rubble and gravel made ground; 1.02m+ gravel natural geology.
11	20.50	2.50	0.39	0-0.39m brick rubble made ground; 0.39m+ brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel and sands natural geology [PI. 7] .
12	19.80	2.50	0.55	0-0.55m brick rubble made ground; 0.55m+ brick rubble made ground directly overlying gravel, chalk and sands natural geology [PI. 8] .

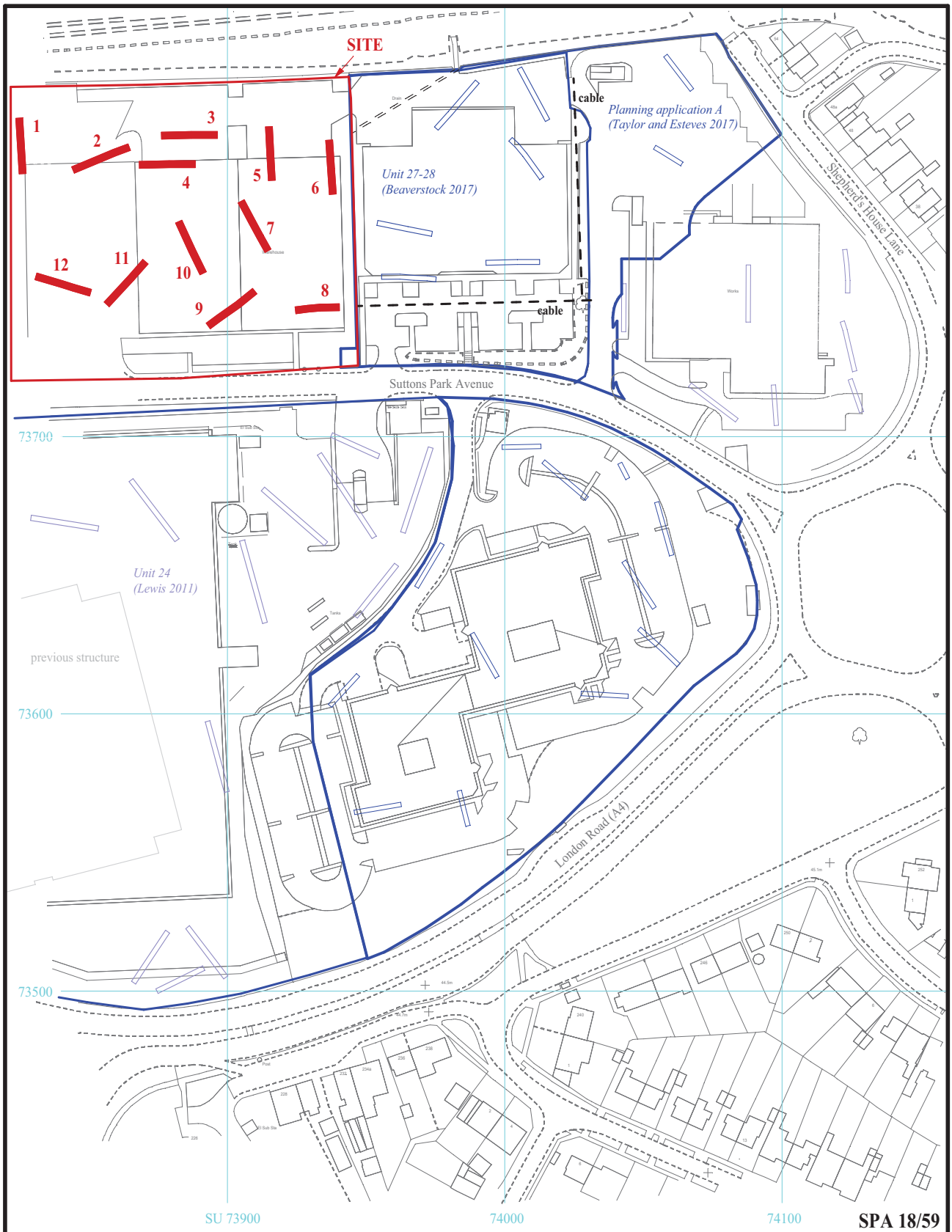


**Units 31-33, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500
Crown Copyright reserved

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



**Unit 31-33, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Location of trenches.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Trench 3

SW

NE

39.87maOD

brick rubble made ground

yellow brown modern deposit

Natural

Trench 12

SE

NW

40.36m

Brick rubble made ground

Sandy silt and gravel natural geology

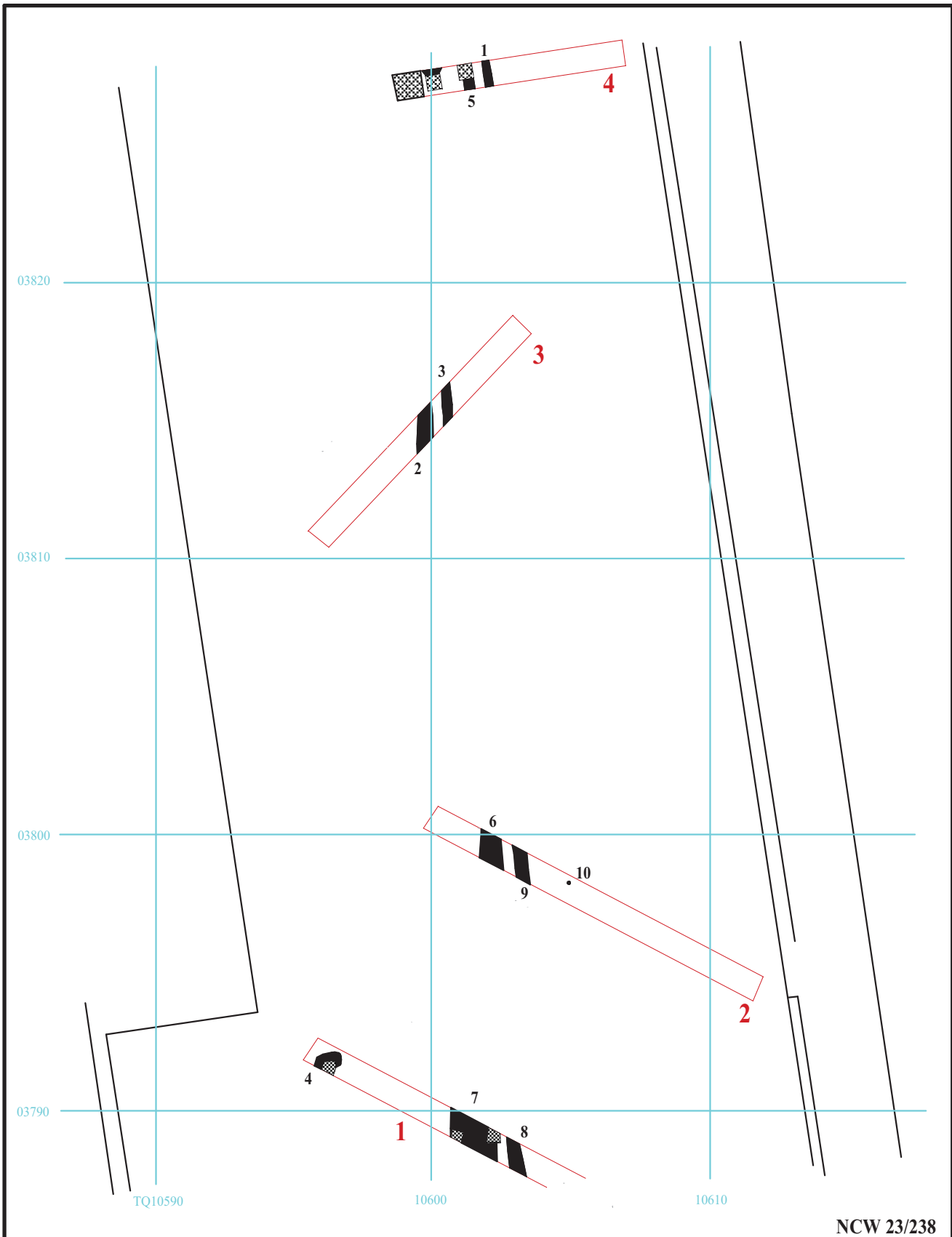
SPA 18/59

**Units 31-33, Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Representative sections.



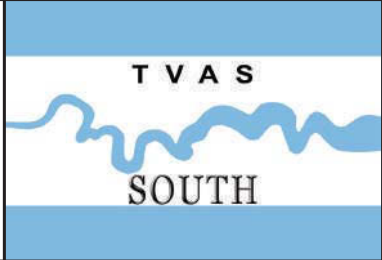
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



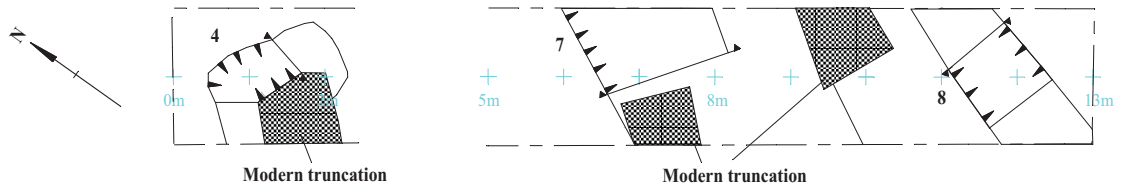
NCW 23/238

**Land at Northbrook College, West Durrington,
Worthing, West Sussex, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

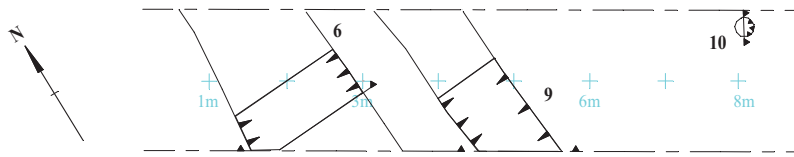
Figure 4. Plan showing the evaluation trenches and features recorded.



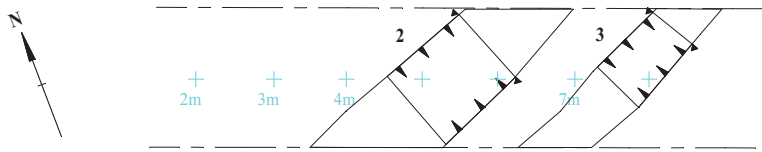
Trench 1



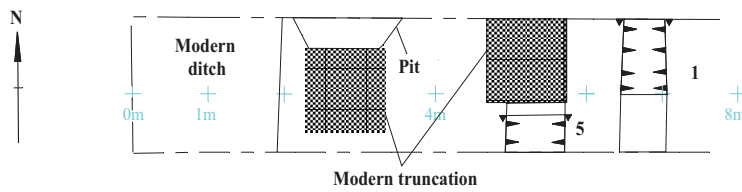
Trench 2



Trench 3



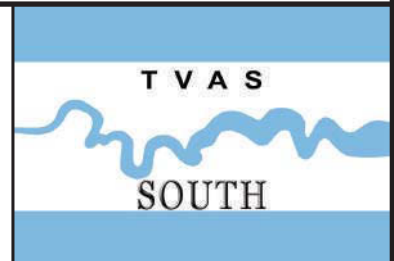
Trench 4

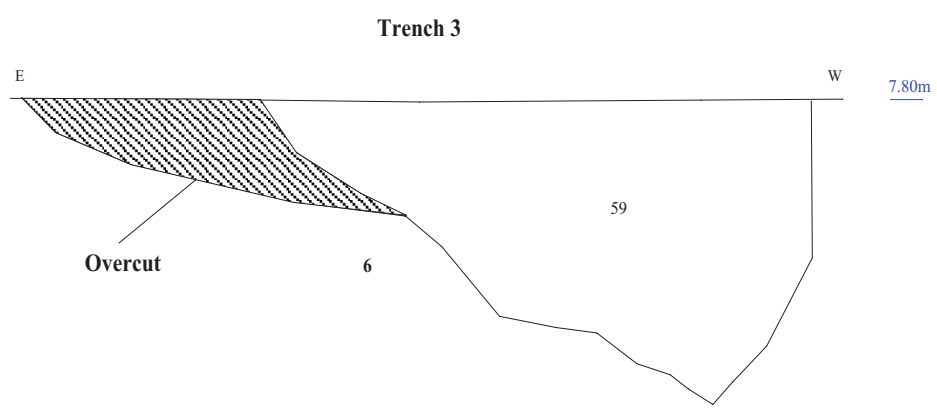
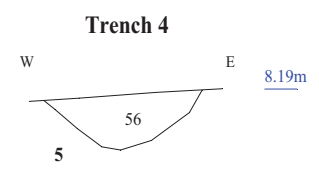
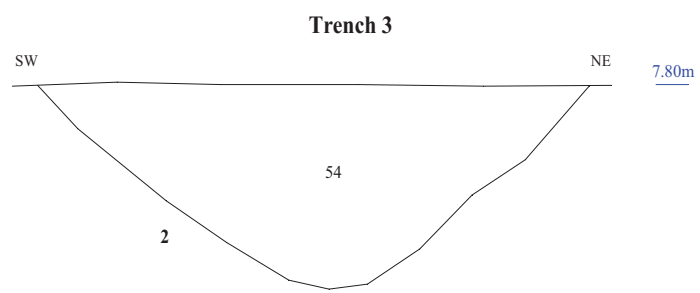
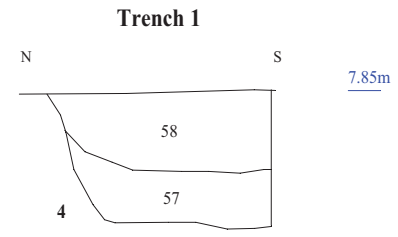
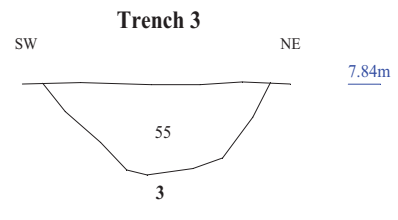
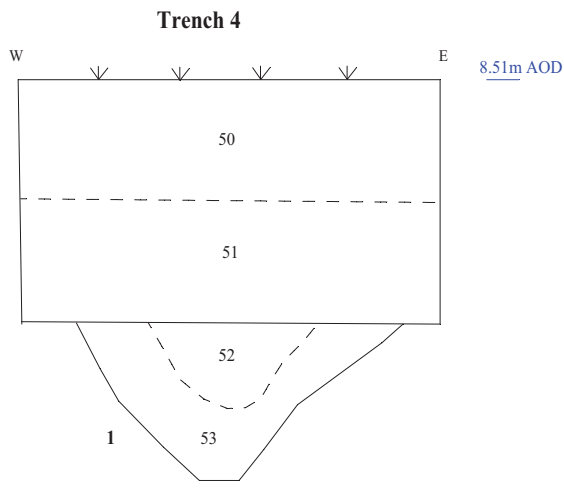


NCW 23/238

Land at Northbrook College, West Durrington,
West Sussex, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 5. Plan of trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4.

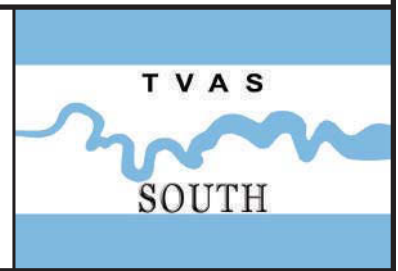




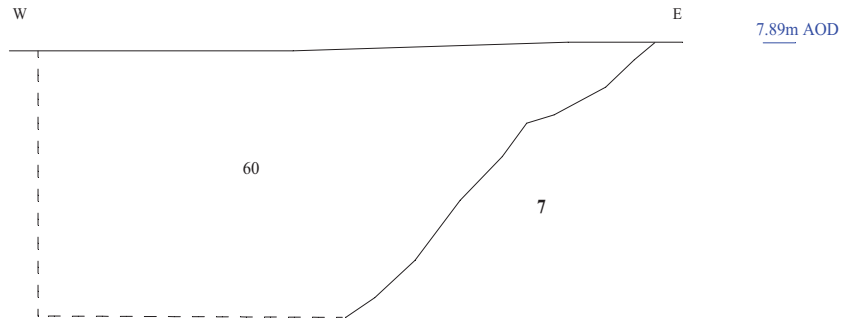
NCW 23/238

**Land at Northbrook College, West Durrington
West Sussex, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

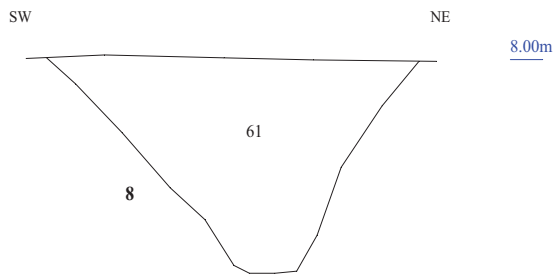
Figure 6. Sections.



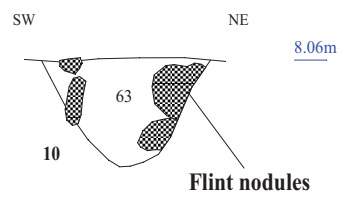
Trench 1



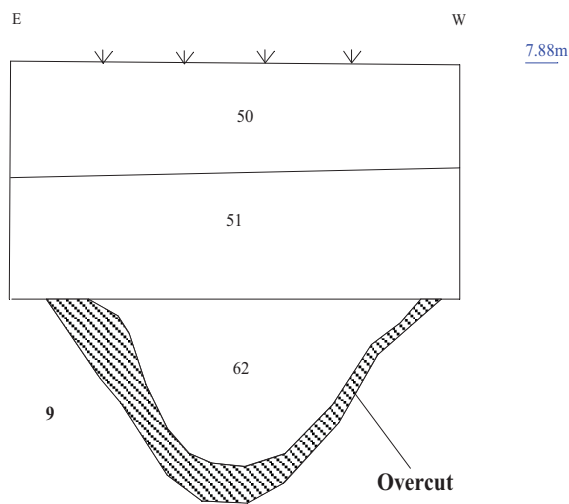
Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench 2



NCW 23/238

**Land at Northbrook College, West Durrington
West Sussex, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 7. Sections.

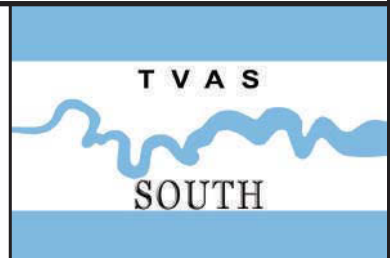




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking South.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking West,
Scales: 2x1m and 0.4m.



Plate 4. Trench 3 representative section,
looking North, Scales: 1m and 0.4m.

SPA 18/59

**Units 31-33 Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 5. Trench 4, looking south.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 8, looking west.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 7. Trench 11, Looking south-west.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 8. Trench 12, looking east south east.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

SPA 18/59

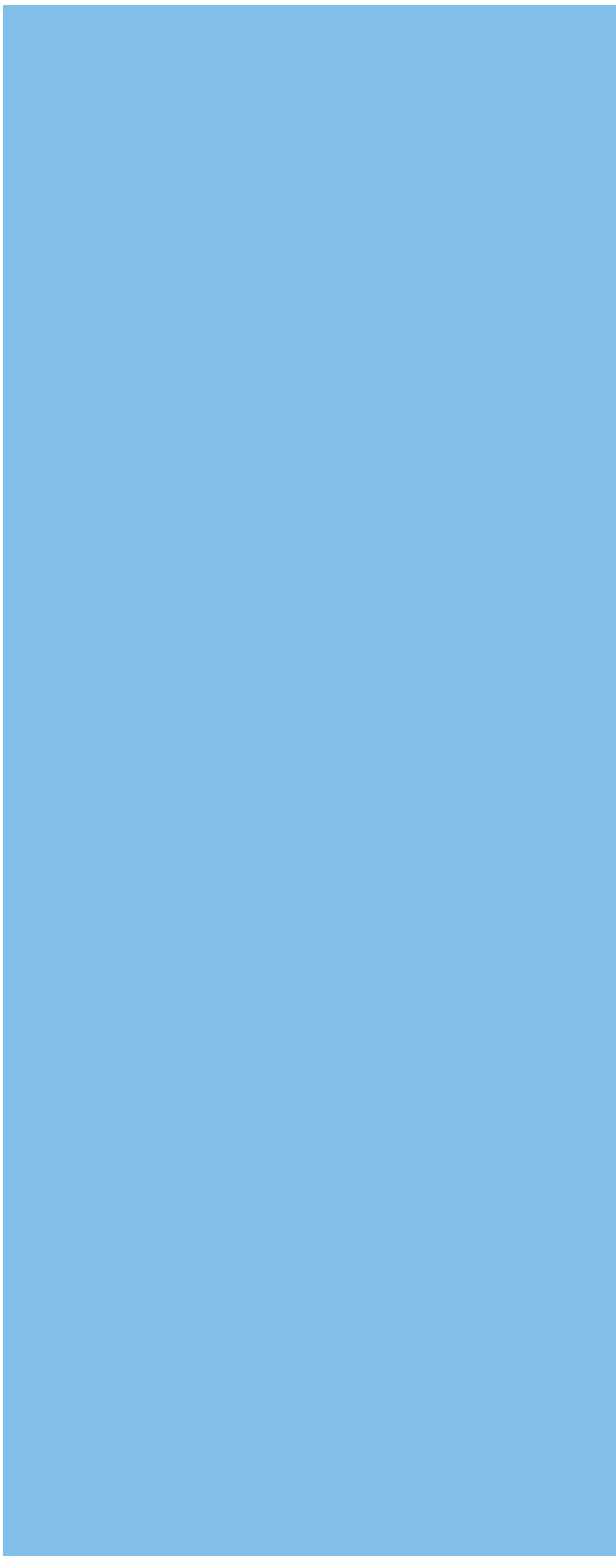
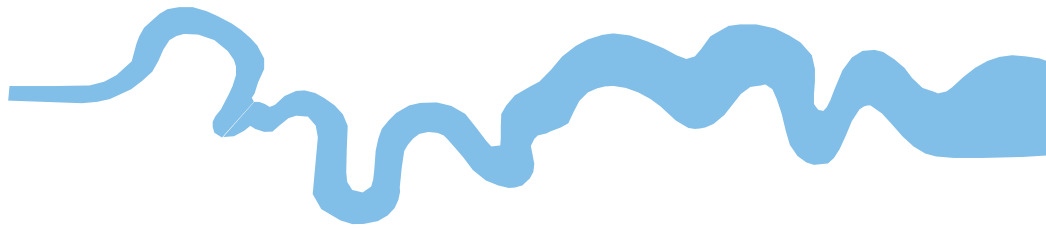
**Units 31-33 Suttons Park Avenue,
Reading, Berkshire, 2024
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5-8.**

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





**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, Wellingborough
and Ennis (Ireland)***