

**Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue,  
Slough, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Baylis Court School**

by James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code BSS 09/95

**October 2009**

## Summary

**Site name:** Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 9660 8160

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 26th and 27th October 2009

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** BSS 09/95

**Area of site:** 0.625ha

**Summary of results:** Two undated gullies were identified

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 02.11.09 Steve Preston ✓ 02.11.09
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# Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

By James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 09/95

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3AH (SU 9660 8160) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steve Owen, of Integrated Design Consultants, The Corner House, 18-20 West End Road, Mortimer Common, Berkshire, RG7 3TF on behalf of Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3AH.

Planning consent has been gained (app no P/06960/015) from Slough Borough Council to construct a new Arts Building along with associated car parking areas on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological fieldwork, initially consisting of field evaluation by means of trial trenching.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The results of the evaluation would permit the formulation of a mitigation strategy for any archaeological remains that may be present. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock on 26th and 27th October 2009 and the site code is BSS 09/95. 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 comprised two rectangular parcels of land at Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough and is currently occupied by school buildings (Fig 2.). The underlying geology is mapped as Langley Silt, a mixture of sandy clay and silt (brickearth) over Upnor and Reading formations of the Lambeth group clay (silty clay with sandy beds, gravel at base) (BGS 2004). What was observed in the six trenches was a brown sandy clayey gravel. The site lies at a height of 31.3m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on a terrace of the Thames Valley which is usually regarded as archaeologically rich with a range of sites and finds of many periods recorded from field survey, aerial photography and trial trenching (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Foreman *et al.* 2002; Ford 2008). The deeply buried underlying gravel deposits are also noteworthy in the vicinity for the presence of Palaeolithic finds. However, for later, post-glacial periods, relatively few finds or sites are recorded with a Roman coin and Bronze Age round barrow recorded to the north. Recent evaluation just to the north located an undated gully though no additional deposits were revealed in the subsequent watching brief (McNicoll-Norbury 2009 a and b).

## **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 aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present

Six trenches were proposed to be dug, 1.6m wide and 20m long in positions related to the proposed footprint of the new structure and the proposed location of a car park extension and contractor's compound. The trenches were to be dug with a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant supervision by an archaeologist, to expose archaeologically sensitive levels.

## **Results**

The trenches were dug as intended and ranged in length from 19.8m to 20.9m with depths of 0.46m to 0.60m (Fig. 3). A list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was 20.2m long, 0.60m deep and aligned west-east. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.33m light brown clay subsoil or made ground comprised of loose dark grey silty clay with brick and rubble which in turn overlay natural geology consisting of brown silty gravel. No archaeological features were identified.



#### Trench 2 (Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 2 was 20.4m long, 0.59m deep and aligned SW–NE. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.32m light brown clay subsoil which in turn overlay natural silty gravel geology. A gully (1) was excavated which revealed a shallow cut 0.75m wide and 0.17m deep filled with a brown silty clay fill but no finds were recovered (Figs 4 and 5). The initial 1.00m long slot was extended to 1.60m to enable recovery of dating evidence but unfortunately none was recovered. Similarly, wet sieving of a 30L soil sample from the same context did not reveal datable finds.

#### Trench 3

Trench 3 was 20.9m long, 0.47-0.51m deep and aligned south-north. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.26-0.30m light brown clay subsoil which in turn overlay natural silty gravel geology. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 4 (Plates 3 and 4)

Trench 4 was 20.0m long, 0.48m deep and aligned NW–SE. The stratigraphy comprised 0.13m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.28m light brown clay subsoil which in turn overlay natural silty gravel geology. A gully (2) was excavated which revealed a shallow cut 0.77m wide and 0.27m deep filled with a brown silty clay fill but no finds were recovered (Figs 4 and 5). The initial 1.20m long slot was later extended to 2.00m to try to recover dating evidence but unfortunately none were recovered. Wet sieving of a 30L soil sample from this context did not reveal datable finds.

#### Trench 5

Trench 5 was 19.8m long, 0.48m deep and aligned roughly south-north. The stratigraphy comprised 0.11m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.27m light brown clay subsoil which in turn overlay natural silty gravel geology. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 was 20.1m long, 0.47m deep and aligned south-north. The stratigraphy comprised 0.16m turf and topsoil overlaying 0.22m light brown clay subsoil which in turn overlay natural silty gravel geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered from the site.

## Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed that deposits of possible archaeological interest are present on the site. The deposits revealed comprise two linear features, which, given their common alignment, may be a part of a single feature. Excavation of these features did not produce any dating evidence, but their stratigraphic position beneath subsoil suggests that they do not reflect modern activity. On the limited evidence available at present, the linear features are likely to be landscape features (eg field boundaries) but it is not known if these lay close to contemporary occupation sites or were at more distance.

## References

- BGS, 2004, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, East Berkshire Archaeological Survey, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Ford, S, 2008, An Early/Middle Iron Age enclosure, Saxon halls and Roman features at Wexham Road, Wexham, Slough, Berkshire. Draft publication report. Thames Valley Archaeological Services project 07/55, Reading
- Foreman, S, Hiller, J and Petts, D, 2002, *Gathering the people and settling the land, the archaeology of a middle Thames landscape, Anglo-Saxon to post-medieval*, Oxford Archaeol Monogr 14, Oxford
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 1, Reading
- McNicol-Norbury, J, 2009a, 'Land adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, An Archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 08/113b, Reading.
- McNicol-Norbury, J, 2009b, 'Land adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, An Archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 08/113c, Reading.
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

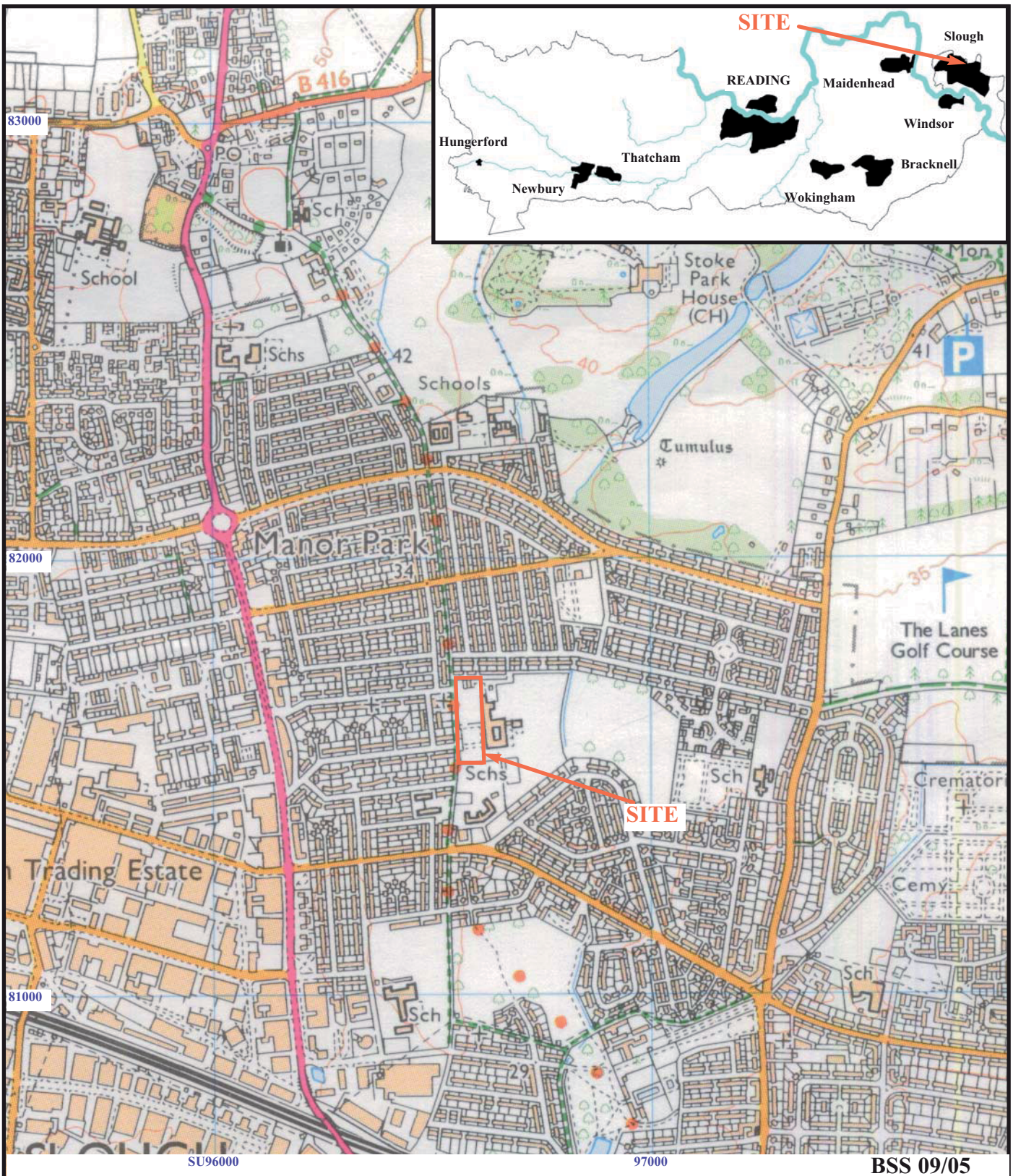
0m at S, W or SW end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	20.2	1.6	0.60	0-0.18m turf and topsoil; 0.18-0.51 brown silty clay subsoil / dark grey silty clay made ground; 0.51m+ brown gravels (natural geology).
2	20.4	1.6	0.59	0-0.18m turf and topsoil; 0.18-0.50m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.50m+ natural geology. Gully 1 <b>[Plates 1 and 2]</b>
3	20.9	1.6	0.51	0-0.18m turf and topsoil; 0.18-0.47m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.47m+ natural geology.
4	20.0	1.6	0.48	0-0.13m turf and topsoil; 0.13-0.41m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.41m+ natural geology. Gully 2 <b>[Plates 3 and 4]</b>
5	19.8	1.6	0.48	0-0.11m turf and topsoil; 0.11-0.38m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology.
6	20.1	1.6	0.47	0-0.16m turf and topsoil; 0.16-0.38m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	52	Gully	Undated	None
4	2	53	Gully	Undated	None





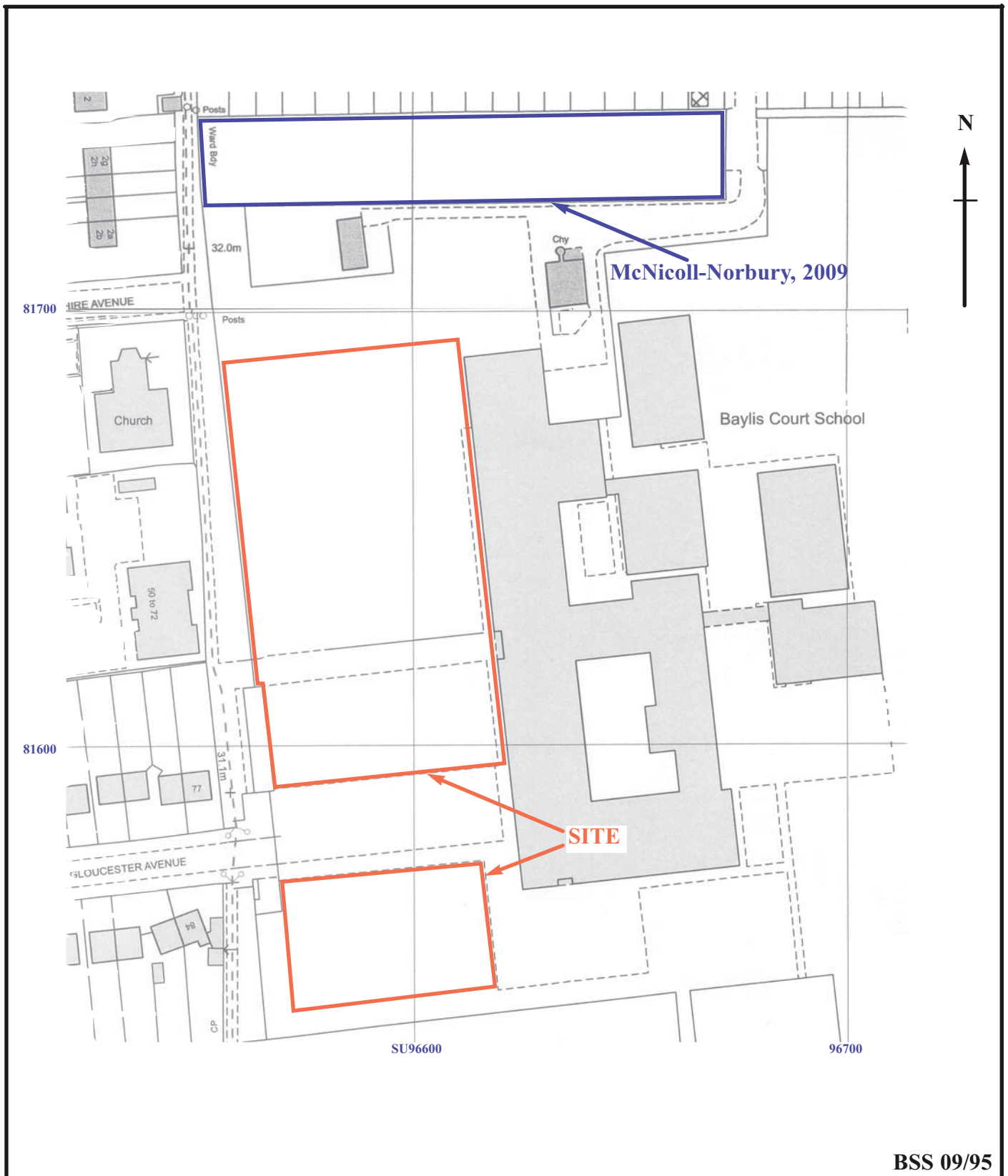
**Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue,  
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Figure 1. Location of site within Slough  
and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Gloucester Avenue.

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Figure 3. Location of Trenches

# Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, 2009

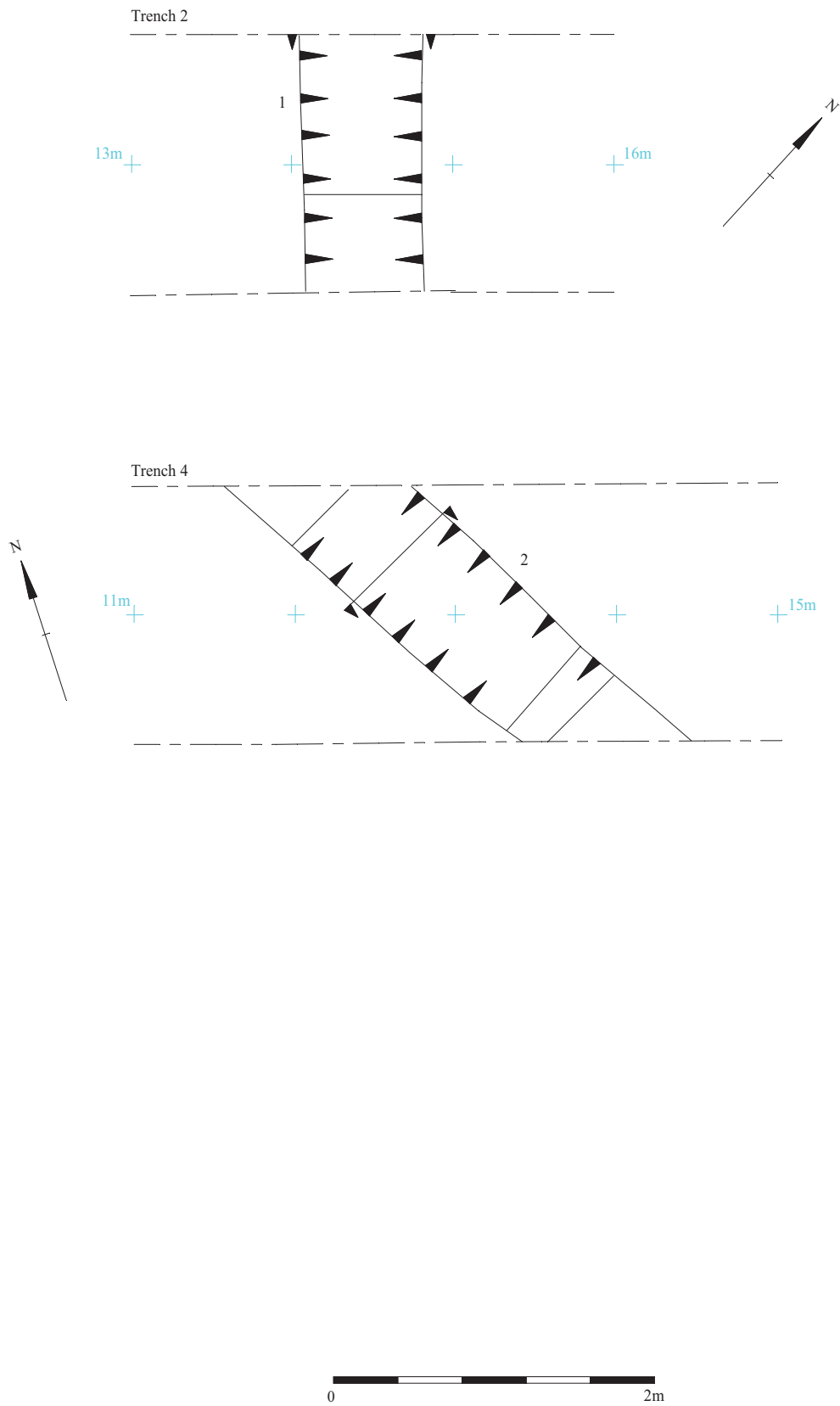


Figure 4. Details of Trenches



# Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, 2009

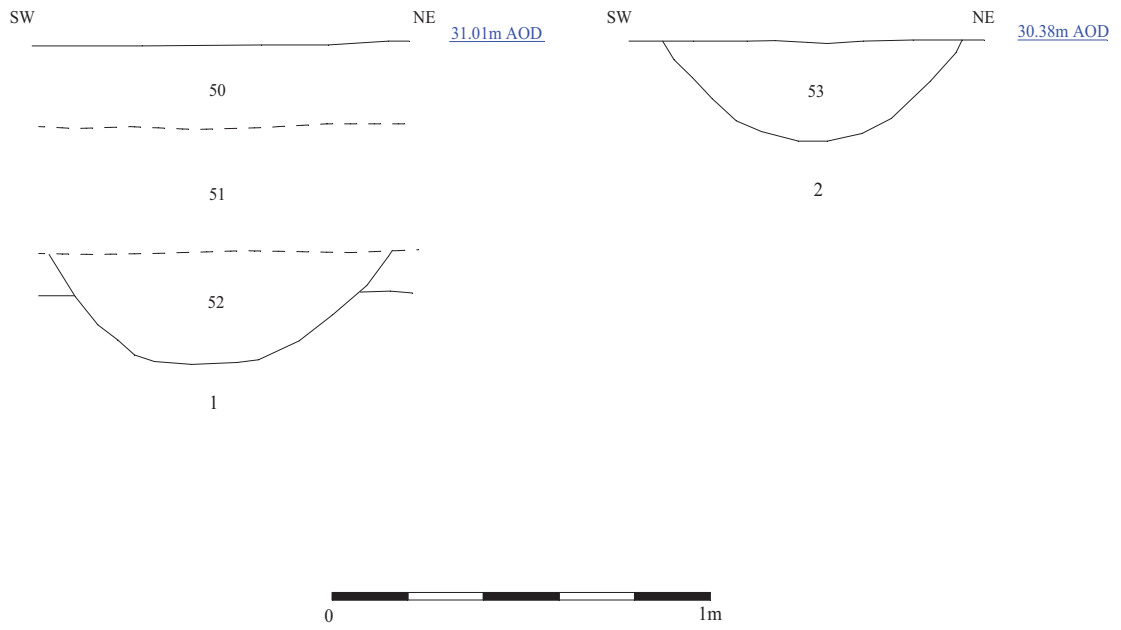


Figure 5. Sections



Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north , scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

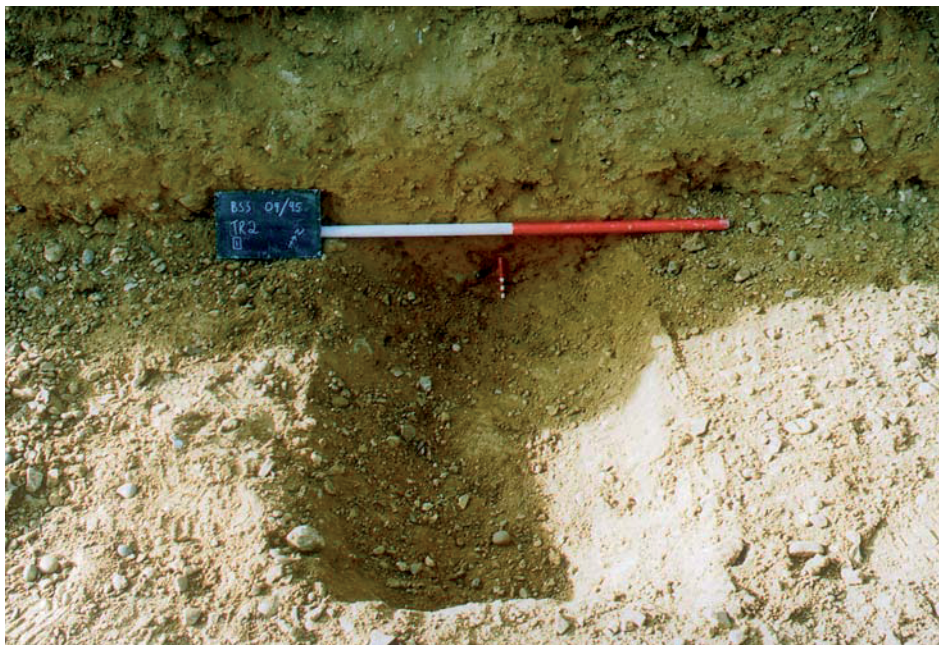


Plate 2. Trench 2, gully 1, looking north west, horizontal scale 1m, vertical 0.1m





Plate 3. Trench 4, looking north west, scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, ditch 2, looking north west, horizontal scale 1m, vertical 0.1m