

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

**Kings Field, Blakes Road,
Wargrave, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Taylor

Site Code: BRW09/99

(SU 7975 7884)

Kings Field, Blakes Road, Wargrave, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Leadbitter Construction**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeBRW 09/99

June 2010

Summary

Site name: Kings Field, Blakes Road, Wargrave, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7975 7884

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 8th–9th June 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: BRW 09/99

Area of site: c.500 sq m

Summary of results: One gully, probably a field boundary of early post-medieval date was recorded.

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 ✓ 15.06.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 16.06.10

Kings Field, Blakes Road, Wargrave, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 09/99

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Kings Field, Blakes Road, Wargrave, Berkshire (SU 7975 7884) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Ann Easom of Leadbitter Construction, Grange Court, Abingdon Science Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 3NB on behalf of their client.

Planning permission (app no F/2008/2293) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council to construct eight new residential properties on the site. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to groundworks commencement. This was to take the form, initially, of field evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which, a mitigation strategy could be devised as appropriate.

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 field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Natasha Bennett between 8th and 9th June 2010 and the site code is BRW 09/99. 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 on the south side of Blakes Road, on the eastern margins of Wargrave, north-east of Reading (Fig. 2). It is a relatively flat parcel of land and is currently a grassed field with a football pitch to the west and other fields to the south and east. According to the geology map the underlying geology consisted of Upper Chalk (BGS 1971). However, the actual geology observed consisted of clay with flints and gravel as well as patches of brickearth. The site lies at a height of c.64.50m above Ordnance Datum. The river Thames flows past Wargrave roughly 1km to the west.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in an advance notice from Ms Mary O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology and stems from its location in an area of the Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area (Ford 1987). Much of the recorded archaeology is to be found on the Thames gravel terraces to the west with, for example, prehistoric, Roman and Saxon artefact scatters present along with a cropmark complex visible from the air to the west of the railway station (Gates 1975; Ford 1997). Fewer finds are recorded close to the site the county Historic Environment Record notes the presence of Saxon metalwork. The manor (*Weregrave*) was a royal holding at the time of Domesday Book (AD1086) and was a very substantial estate housing 55 households, along with 6 slaves and containing arable land for 29 ploughs, 16 acres of meadow, woodland for 100 pigs, a mill and three fisheries producing 3000 eels a year (Williams and Martin 2002, 138). The settlement of Wargrave was considered to have urban status in medieval times (Astill 1978).

A recent evaluation to the west of the site at Dark Lane, Wargrave (Taylor 2010) did not find any archaeological deposits, although pottery finds of Bronze Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil.

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 aims of the project were:

- 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 deposits associated with prehistoric activity are present; and
- to determine if any deposits associated with Roman activity are present.

Six trenches were to be dug targeting those parts of the site that will be most affected by the new development, namely the building and access road footprints. These were dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

Six trenches were dug measuring 1.6m wide and between 22.10m and 24.90m in length (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

This trench measured 24.50m in length and was 0.51m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/brown clayey subsoil overlying orange grey clay natural geology with patches of gravel. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4 and Plate 1)

This trench measured 22.10m in length and was 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/brown clayey subsoil overlying orange/grey clay natural geology. A gully was observed in this trench at 10m from the NW end. A slot (1) was dug across it and revealed it to be 0.58m wide and 0.19m deep. Its orange/brown silty clay fill (52) was found to contain one piece of 16th/17th century pottery, seven pieces of brick, one piece of animal bone and an iron nail stem.

Trench 3 (Plate 2)

This trench measured 24.30m in length and was 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/brown clayey subsoil overlying a yellow/grey sandy clay with gravel patches natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 4

This trench measured 23.20m in length and was 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/brown clayey subsoil overlying orange/brown silty clay (brickearth) and clay natural geology . A possible linear feature observed in this trench, upon investigation was shown to be a variation in the natural geology.

Trench 5

This trench measured 24.90m in length and was 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/brown clayey subsoil overlying orange/brown silty clay (brickearth) and clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 6

This trench measured 24.30m in length and was 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying grey/ brown clayey subsoil overlying yellow/grey clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd weighing 46g was the only pottery find. It occurred in gully, 1 [52]. It is a product of the post-medieval Border Ware industry of Surrey and Hampshire (Pearce 1988), and is from the base of a small dish or bowl with an internal yellow glaze. It is a typical product of the tradition, dating from the mid 16th – late 17th century.

Brick and Tile by Andy Taylor

Seven pieces of brick or tile were recovered from gully 1 weighing a total of 554g. Six of these were small undiagnostic fragments but one was a large piece of brick measuring 110mm wide and 50mm deep. It was a dark orange red colour and is of hand made type most likely dating to the 18th-early 19th centuries.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A single animal bone was recovered from gully 1, weighing 25g. The preservation of this element was excellent, and it can be identified as a cattle right proximal phalanx. No other information could be derived for this single piece of animal bone.

Metalwork by Andy Taylor

One piece of iron was recovered from gully 1 weighing 22g. It is most likely a fragment of nail stem.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a single gully of early post-medieval or later date. This is most likely from a redundant field boundary, although was not evident in the adjacent trenches to the south or west and so may turn east or continue northwards towards the road. Despite the potential for archaeological features of much earlier date being present on the site, no such deposits were revealed during the course of the trenching. Based on the results of this trenching exercise, the site is considered to have little or no archaeological potential.

References

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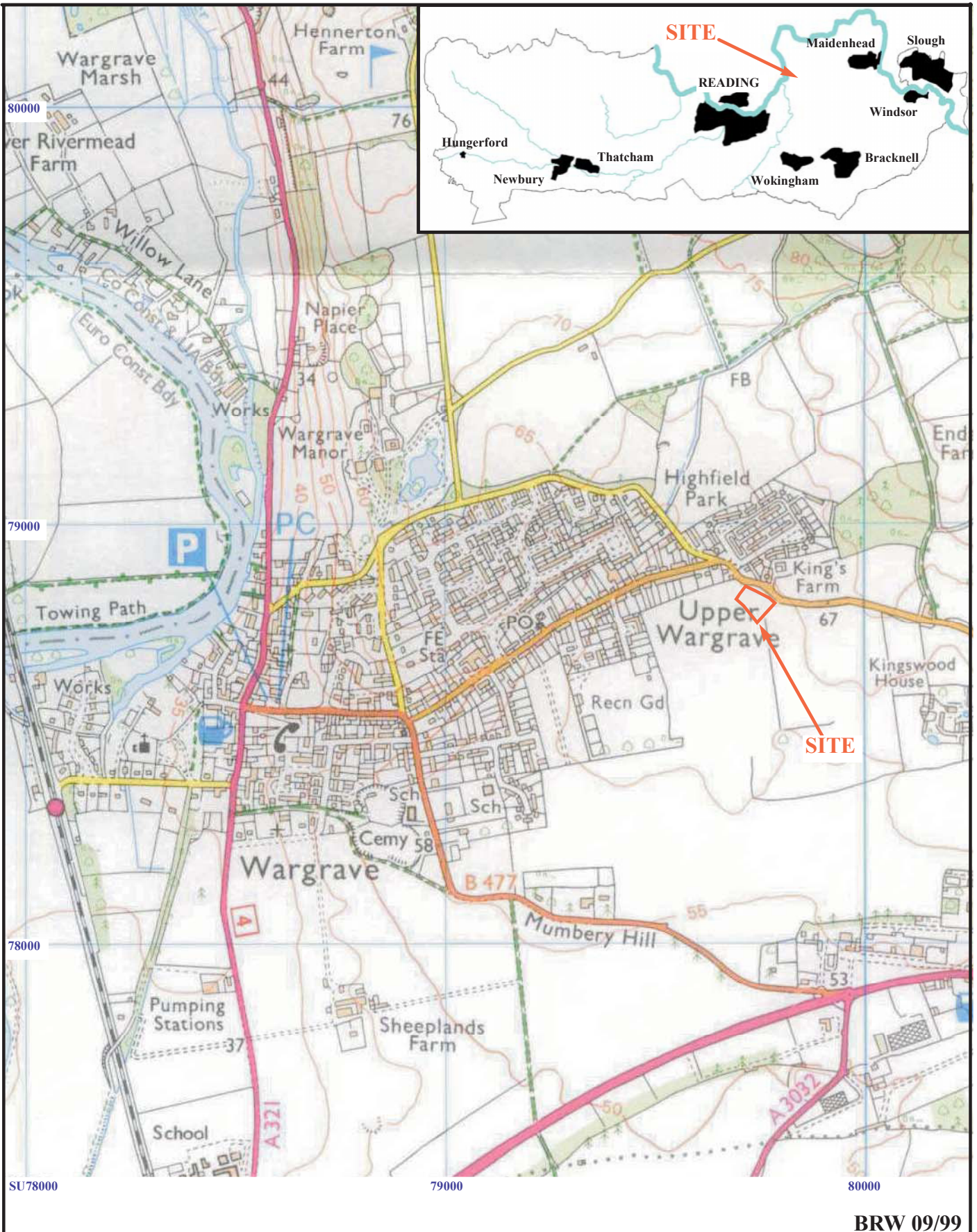
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	24.50	1.60	0.51	0-0.40m topsoil; 0.40m-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ orange/grey clay natural geology.
2	22.10	1.60	0.40	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ orange/ grey clay natural geology. Gully 1. [Pl. 1]
3	24.30	1.60	0.40	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m+ yellow/ grey sandy clay natural geology. [Pl. 2]
4	23.20	1.60	0.50	0-0.36m topsoil; 0.36m-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ brickearth and clay natural geology.
5	24.90	1.60	0.54	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ brickearth and clay natural geology.
6	24.30	1.60	0.54	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17m-0.49m subsoil; 0.49m+ yellow/ grey clay natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
2	1	52	Gully	Post medieval	Pottery, CBM



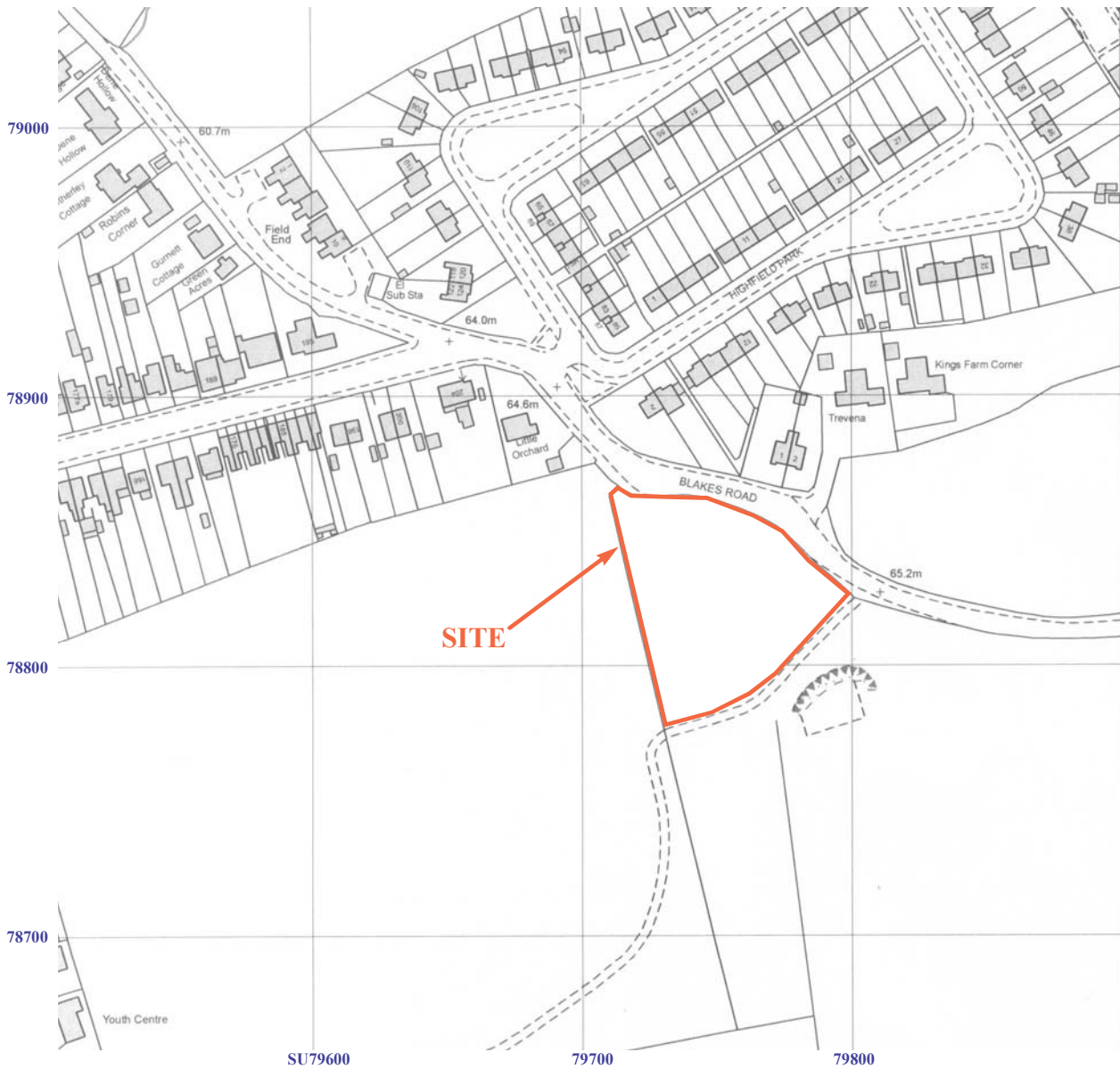
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wargrave and Berkshire.

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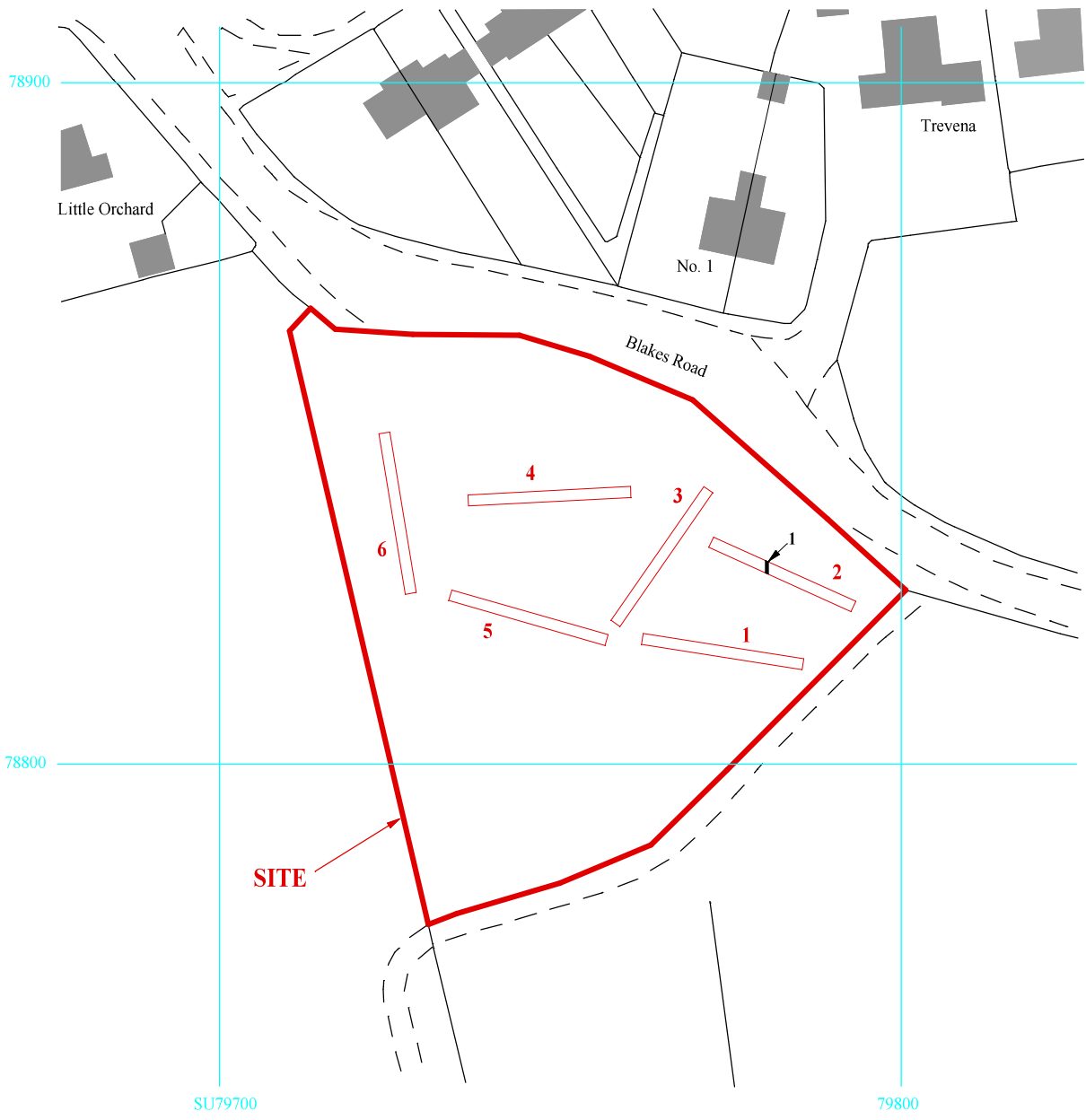
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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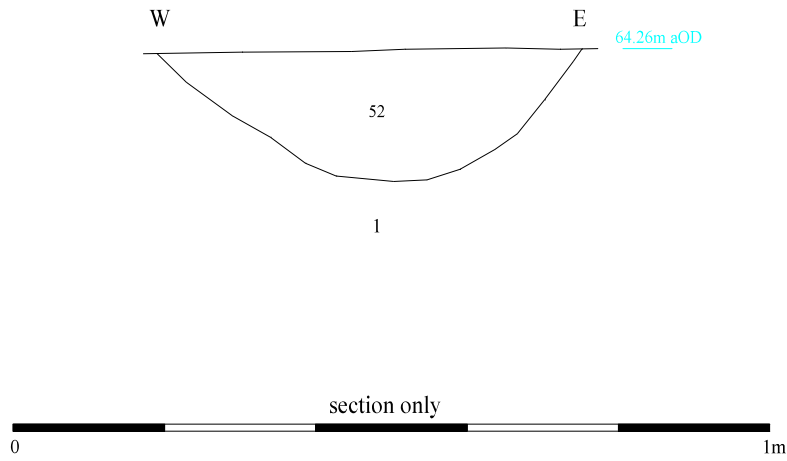
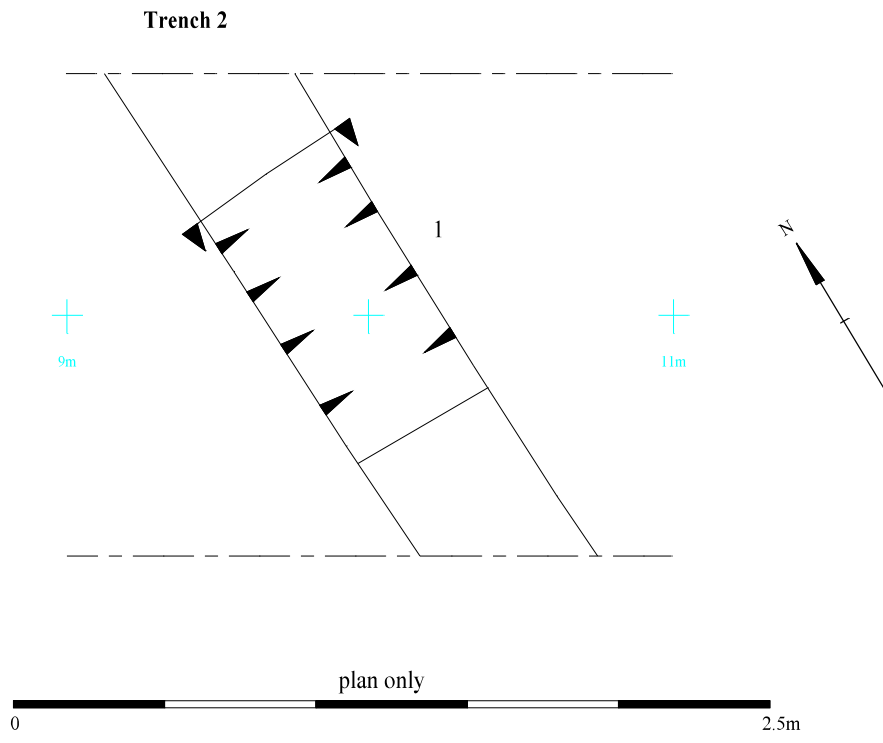
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Figure 4. Trench Plan and Section.





Plate 1. Trench 2, gully 1 looking north, scales 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Trench 3 looking north east, scales 2m, 1m and 0.5m

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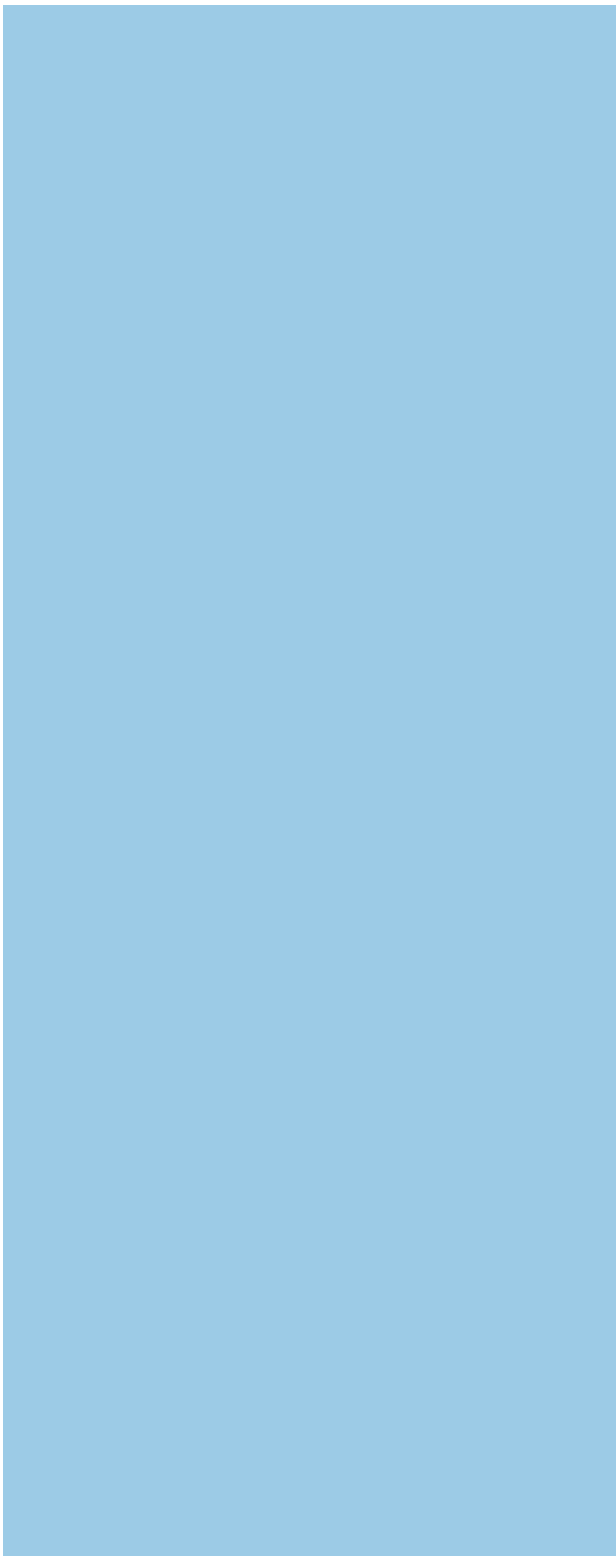
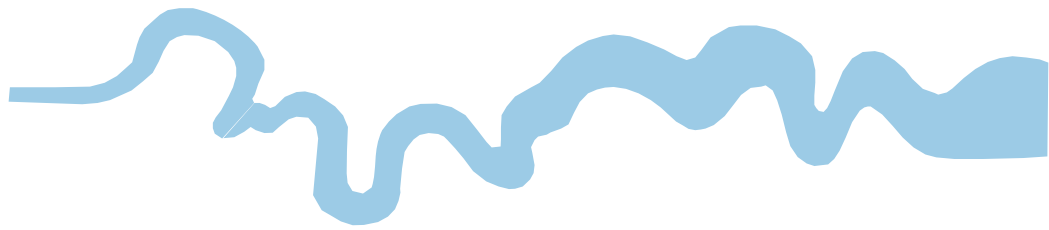
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Plates 1 and 2.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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