

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

**Land off Wensley Road, Coley,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: WRC10/128

(SU 7017 7190)

**Land at Wensley Road, Coley,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for PMC Construction**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRC10/128

January 2011

Summary

Site name: Land at Wensley Road, Coley, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7017 7190

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 17th January 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: WRC 10/128

Area of site: 1300 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified nor artefacts of archaeological interest recorded. It is considered that the site has no archaeological potential.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 26.01.11
	Steve Preston ✓ 27.01.11

Land at Wensley Road, Coley, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 10/128

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Wensley Road, Coley, Reading (SU 7017 7190) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stephen Cripps, of PMC Construction; 106 Queens Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 7NE.

A planning consent (09/01109/FUL) has been granted by Reading Borough Council to construct four new houses on the site. The consent gained is subject to a condition (11) relating to archaeology which requires a field evaluation to be carried out prior to groundworks. Further fieldwork may be required if archaeological deposits are encountered which cannot be preserved *in situ*.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock on 17th January 2011 and the site code is WRC10/128. 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 off Wensley Road in Coley, Reading just north of the Holy Brook (Fig. 2). The site had been previously occupied by a parking area and a demolished building, the footings of which were still visible in the ground. The site slopes downwards from north to south. The underlying geology is described as upper chalk close to its boundaries with alluvium and the Reading Beds (BGS 1946): a grey/brown sand was revealed in the trenches. The site lies at around 41m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley with a wide variety of sites and finds recorded, particularly dating from the Roman period (Lobb and Rose 1996). A number of Roman coins are recorded nearby. To the west a Saxon burial is recorded and to the east, Saxon pottery and preserved wood have been recorded in the former course of the Holy Brook (Terry 1997). Recent evaluation to the north-east revealed a single prehistoric flint flake but no archaeological deposits (Colls 2006) and a watching brief to the north revealed nothing of interest (Dawson and McNicoll-Norbury 2010).

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 had survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present; and
- to determine if there were prehistoric or Roman deposits present on the site.

Five trenches were proposed to be dug, each 1.6m wide with one being 15m long and the remainder being 10m long, using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

The five trenches were dug as intended. They ranged in length from 10.05m to 15.25m and in depth from 0.36m to 0.82m, the locations of Trenches 2 and 3 had to be moved slightly due to the presence of drains and possible other services in their locations (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 (Fig. 3)

Trench was aligned S–N and was 15.25m long and 0.59m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.45m hardcore and Tarmac deposits overlaying grey sand natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was aligned close to W–E and was 10.9m long and 0.82m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.14m topsoil, above 0.11m of orange/brown sand and gravel, over 0.25m of bright orange sand, above 0.27m of grey sand considered to be the natural geology. A concrete slab was identified at the E end of the trench. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 3(Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 3 was aligned NW-SE and was 10.1m long and 0.79m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.39m hardcore, above 0.33m of made ground consisting of green sand with brick inclusions overlying grey sand natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned SW–NE and was 10.05m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.30m topsoil, above 0.15m of made ground consisting of mottled orange/brown sand with modern inclusions overlying grey sand natural geology. A modern service pipe was observed 4.0m from the western end of the trench. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 4)

Trench 5 was aligned SE–NW and was 11.3m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.24m topsoil overlaying grey sand natural geology. Services were observed running along the length of the trench. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed that although the archaeologically relevant levels appear to have survived on the site despite the absence of subsoil and the presence of made ground, no archaeological deposits nor finds of archaeological interest were recorded. On the basis of these results it is considered that the site has no archaeological potential.

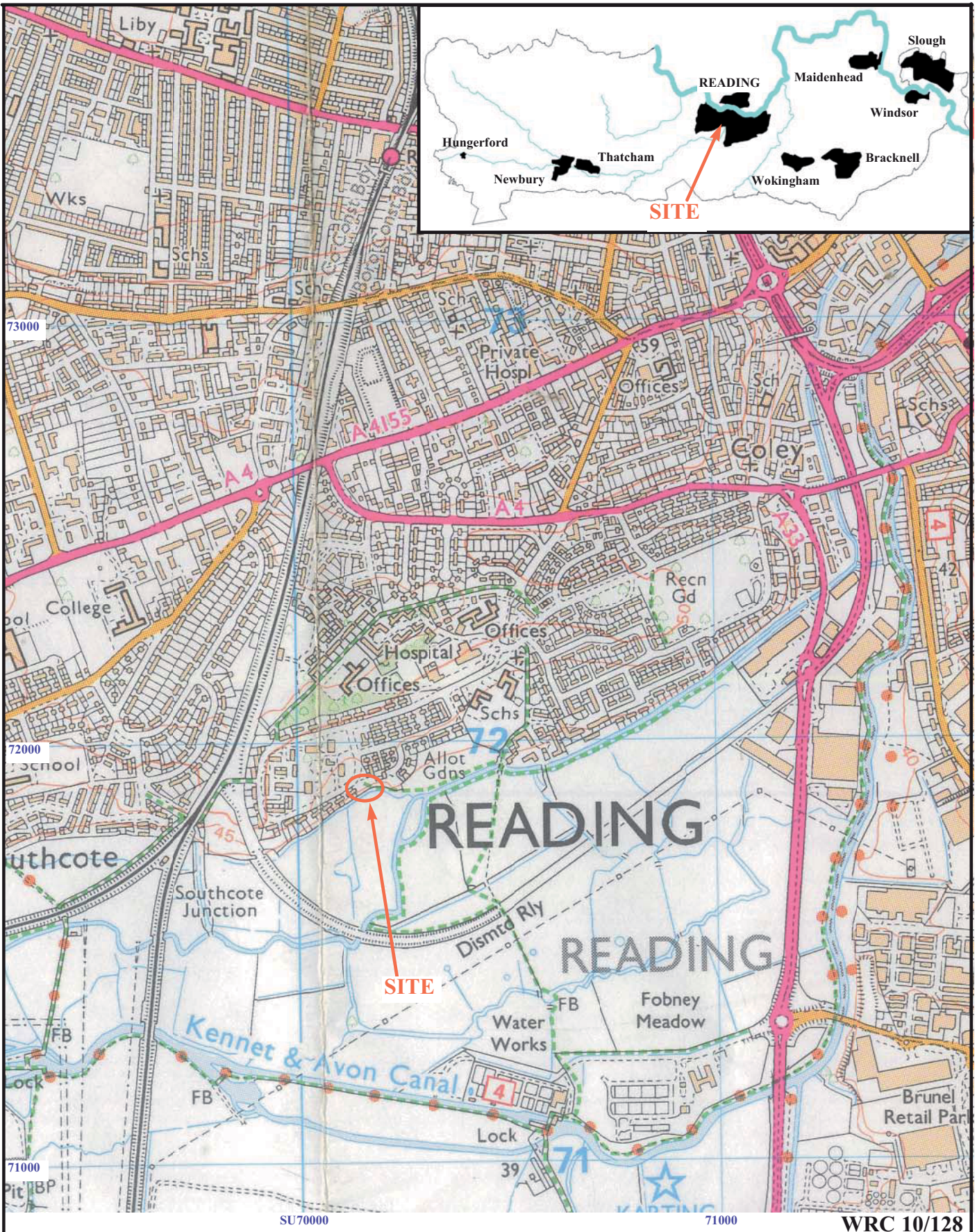
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- Dawson, T and McNicoll-Norbury, J, 2010, 'Land off Ashley Road, Coley, Reading, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/116, Reading
- Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Salisbury
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SW or NW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	15.25	1.6	0.59	0-0.45m made ground (hardcore and tarmac); 0.45m+ grey/brown sand natural geology. No archaeology
2	10.9	1.6	0.82	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.25m orange brown sands and gravels; 0.25-0.50m bright orange sands with modern inclusions; 0.50-0.77m grey brown sand; 0.77m+ grey/brown sand natural geology. No archaeology [Plate 1]
3	10.1	1.6	0.79	0-0.39m made ground (hardcore and tarmac); 0.39-0.72m green sands with modern inclusions; 0.72m+ grey/brown sand natural geology. No archaeology
4	10.05	1.6	0.55	0-0.30m+ topsoil; 0.30-0.45m mottled orange brown sand; 0.45m+ grey/brown sand natural geology. No archaeology. [Plate 2]
5	11.3	1.6	0.36	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m+ grey/brown sand natural geology. No archaeology



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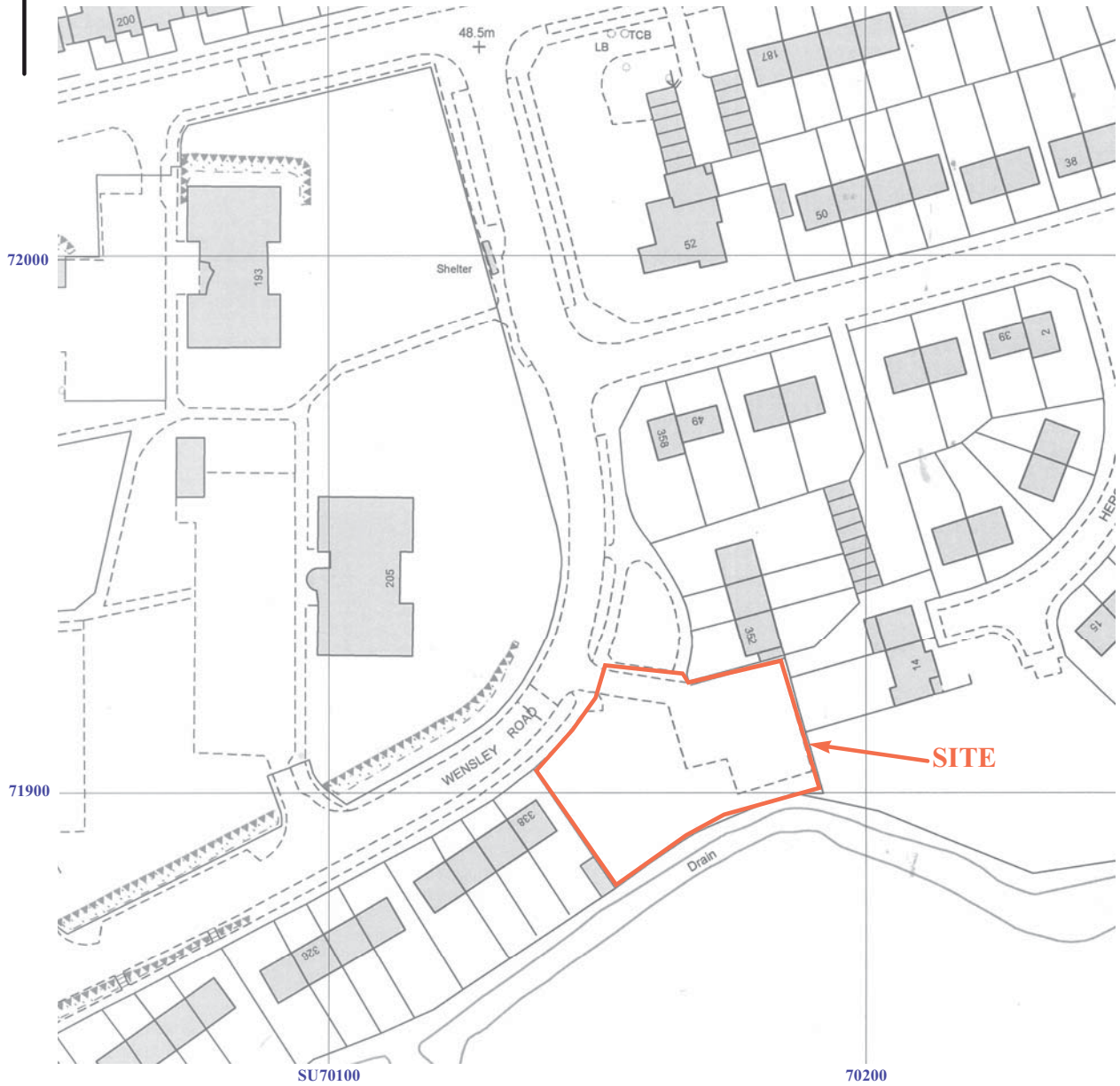
Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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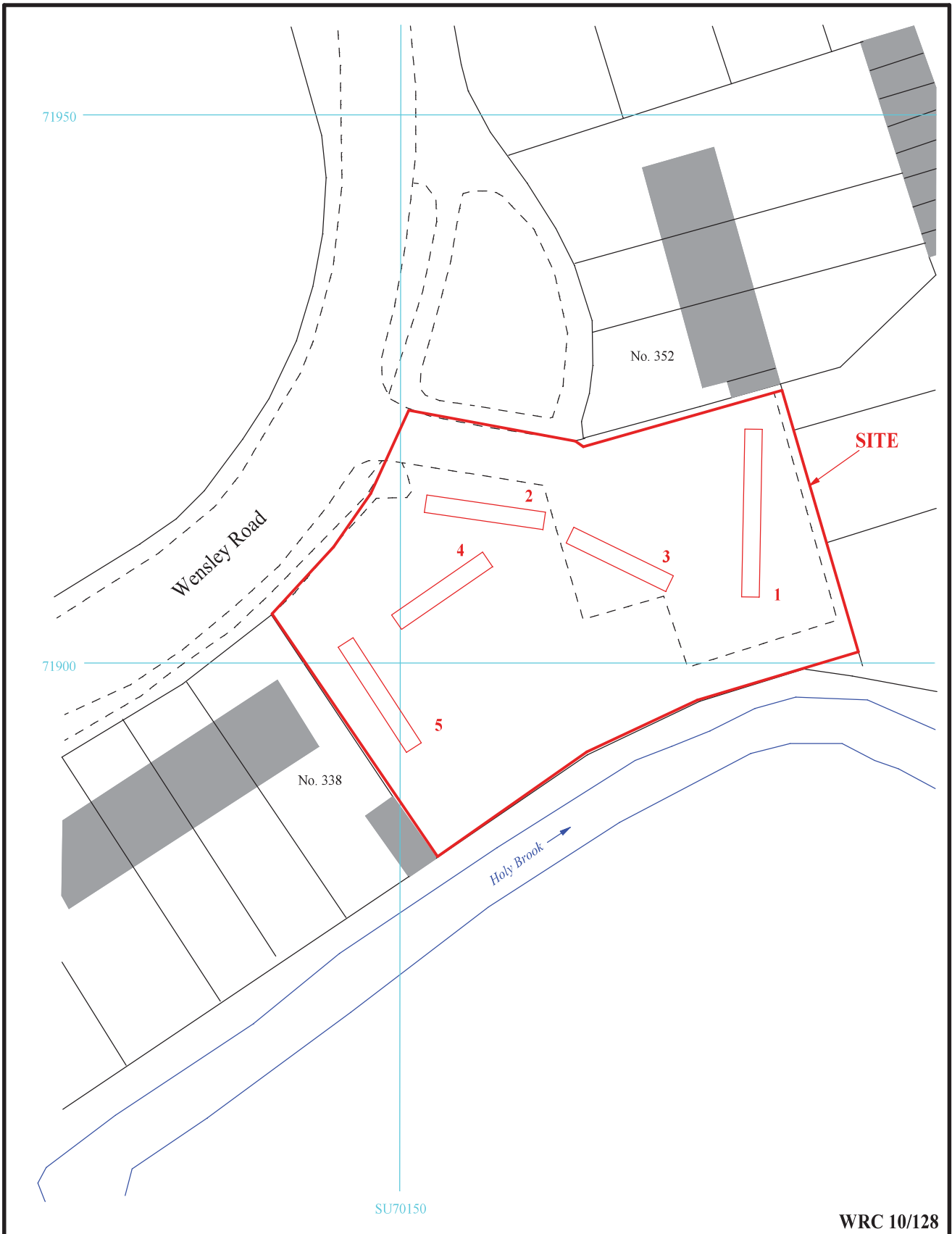
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wensley Road.

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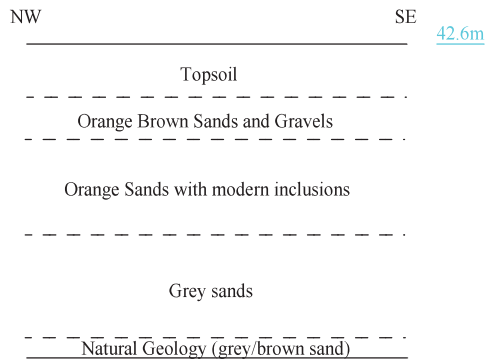
**Land at Wensley Road, Coley, Reading,
Berkshire, 2011
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

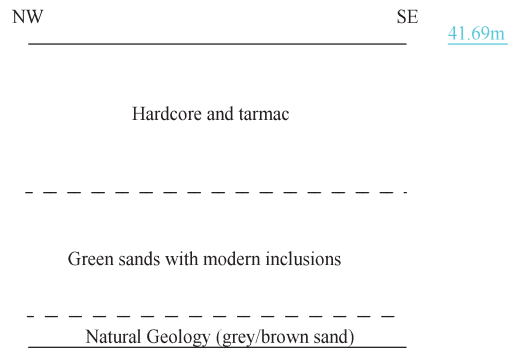


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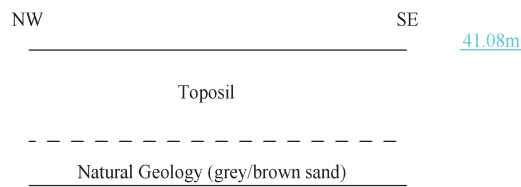
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 5



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Figure 4. Representative Sections





Plate 1. Trench 2, looking south east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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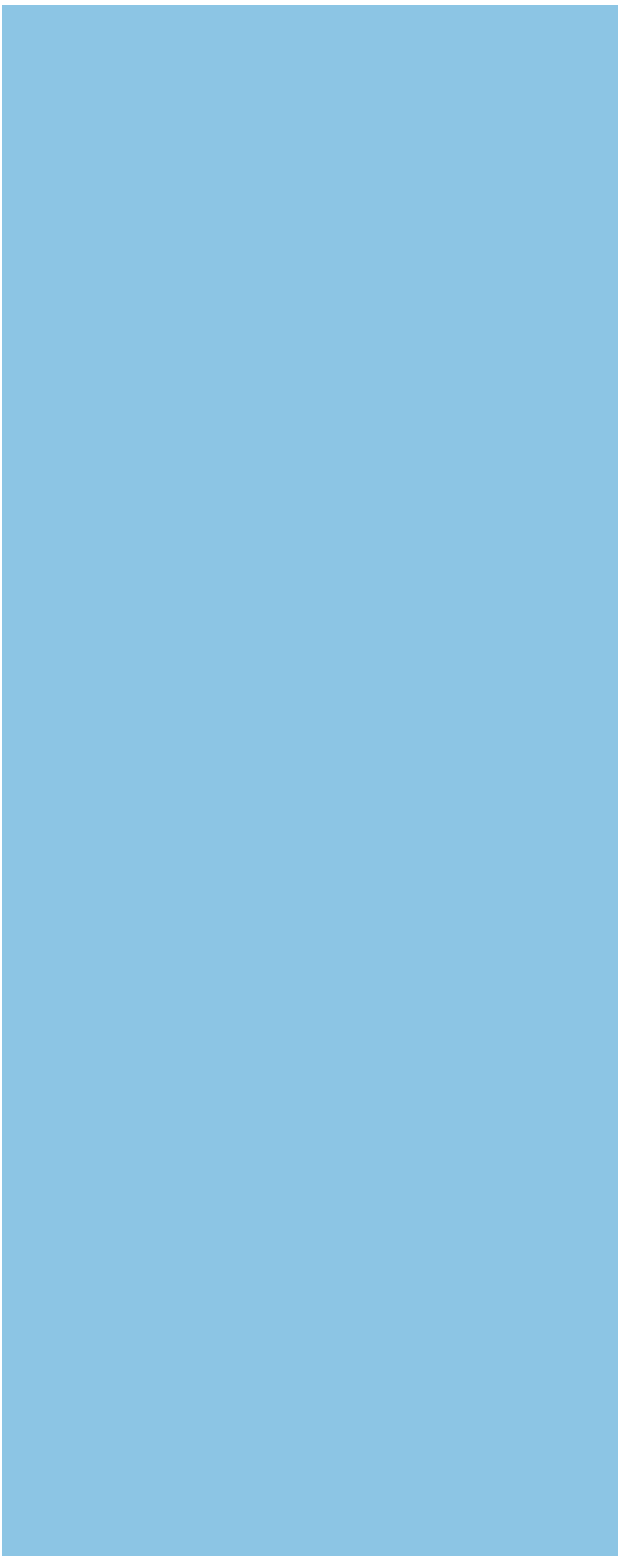
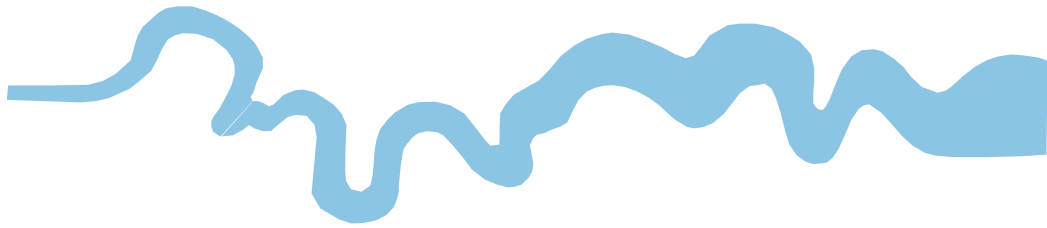
Land at Wensley Road, Coley, Reading, 2010
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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