

1 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation for Auto-Crash

by Andy Taylor and Sean Wallis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 1BTW 05/18

March 2005

Summary

Site name: 1 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5175 6748

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 1st March 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: 1BTW 05/18

Area of site: c.650 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were identified.

Monuments identified: None.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 09.03.05
	Steve Preston ✓ 10.03.05

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by Andy Taylor and Sean Wallis

Report 05/18

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 1 Broadway, Thatcham, West Berkshire (SU 5175 6748) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr N Richardson of Auto-Crash, 1 Broadway, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 3SW.

Planning permission (04/02560/OUT) has been sought from West Berkshire Council for the construction of new apartments and associated car parking following demolition of the existing structure.

The field evaluation was required in order to provide information to permit mitigation of the effects of redevelopment on any archaeological deposits which might exist on the site. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Principal Archaeological Officer to West Berkshire Council Heritage Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Leon Fern on the 1st March and the site code is 1BTW 05/18. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north side of Broadway, close to the modern centre of Thatcham. Chapel Street (now the A4) runs along the southern boundary of the site, which covers around 650 sq m and is roughly rectangular. The site is currently occupied by an upstanding building on the east side of the site with carpark to the west. The underlying geology of the site is river and valley gravels (BGS 1947), which were observed in both trenches. The site lies at a height of approximately 77.5m above Ordnance Datum..

Archaeological background

The site is located towards the north of the historic core of medieval Thatcham, and possibly the eastern margins of a Roman settlement. The Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester via Speen (Ermin Street, Margary's route 41a; Margary 1973, 120-1) probably lies just to the south of the current Bath Road (the A4, of which Chapel

Street is a part), and various observations made during the 1930s revealed Roman deposits spread c. 600m along the Bath Road to the west of the site with some stretching as much as 150m away from the road to the north (Margary 1973, 121; Harris 1934; 1934-7). Various observations to the south of the site within Thatcham town centre have revealed deposits of Saxon and medieval dates, whilst recent work just to the south of St Mary's Church revealed evidence of what seems to be high-status middle Saxon activity in the area (Wallis 2005).

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 research aims of the project were;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine whether archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if deposits forming a part of the Roman settlement lie within this site.
- d) To determine if deposits forming part of Saxon or medieval Thatcham lie within this site.

Two trenches were to be excavated, each 2m long and 1m wide. The trenches were to be located in the only accessible parts of the site which do not severely disrupt use of the existing property. The trenches were to be dug using a Kubota 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision.

Due to the presence of Tarmac, both trenches were extended slightly, and were 1.2m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was 2.5m long and aligned approximately north-south. A Tarmac surface up to 0.1m thick overlay a bedding layer of hoggin up to 0.06m thick which in turn overlay a dark grey made ground deposit including brick fragments. This overlay a further made ground deposit up to 0.46m thick which overlay a layer of light grey sandy silt approximately 0.4m thick. This deposit lay directly above the natural sand and gravels. No archaeological features were present.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

This trench was 3.13m long and aligned approximately north–south. A Tarmac surface up to 0.08m thick overlay a bedding layer of flint and gravels 0.06m thick. This overlay 0.3m of made ground mostly comprised of brick rubble above a layer of brownish yellow sand up to 0.31m thick. Beneath this was a layer of light grey sandy silt up to 0.72m thick directly above the natural sand and gravels. No archaeological features were present.

Conclusion

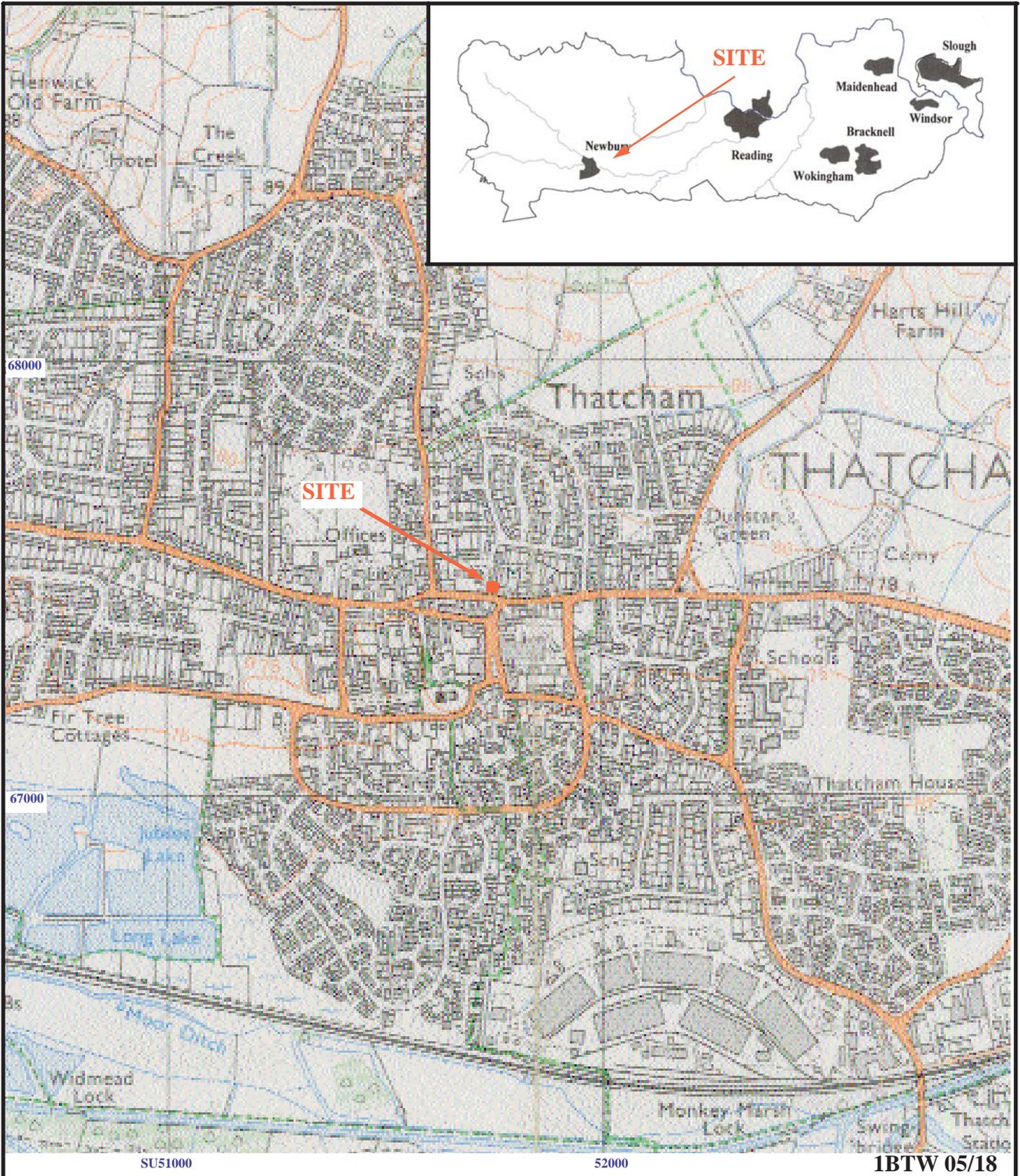
Although the scope of the evaluation was restricted by the continued commercial use of the site, the two trenches dug produced no archaeological features or finds.

References

- BGS, 1947, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 267, Solid and drift Edition, Keyworth
- Harris, W E, 1937, 'A Romano-British settlement at Thatcham Newtown, Berkshire', *Trans Newbury and District Fld Club* **7**, 6–17
- Harris, W E, 1934-7, 'Romano-British settlement at Thatcham Newtown, Berkshire', *Trans Newbury and District Fld Club* **8**, 219–55
- Margary, I D, 1955, *Roman Roads in Britain*, London
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Wallis, S, 2005, '12–14, Church Gate, Thatcham, West Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/49, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	2.5	1.2	1.14 (N) 1.05 (S)	0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.16m hoggin; 0.16-0.27m dark grey stony made ground; 0.27-0.73m made ground with ceramic building material fragments; 0.73-1.13m light grey sandy silt; 1.13m+ sand and gravels. [Plate 1]
2	3.13	1.2	1.48 (N) 0.40 (S)	0-0.08m Tarmac; 0.08-0.14m flint and gravels; 0.14-0.44m made ground with ceramic building material fragments; 0.44-0.75m brownish yellow sand; 0.75-1.47m light grey sandy silt; 1.47m+ sand and gravels. [Plate 2]

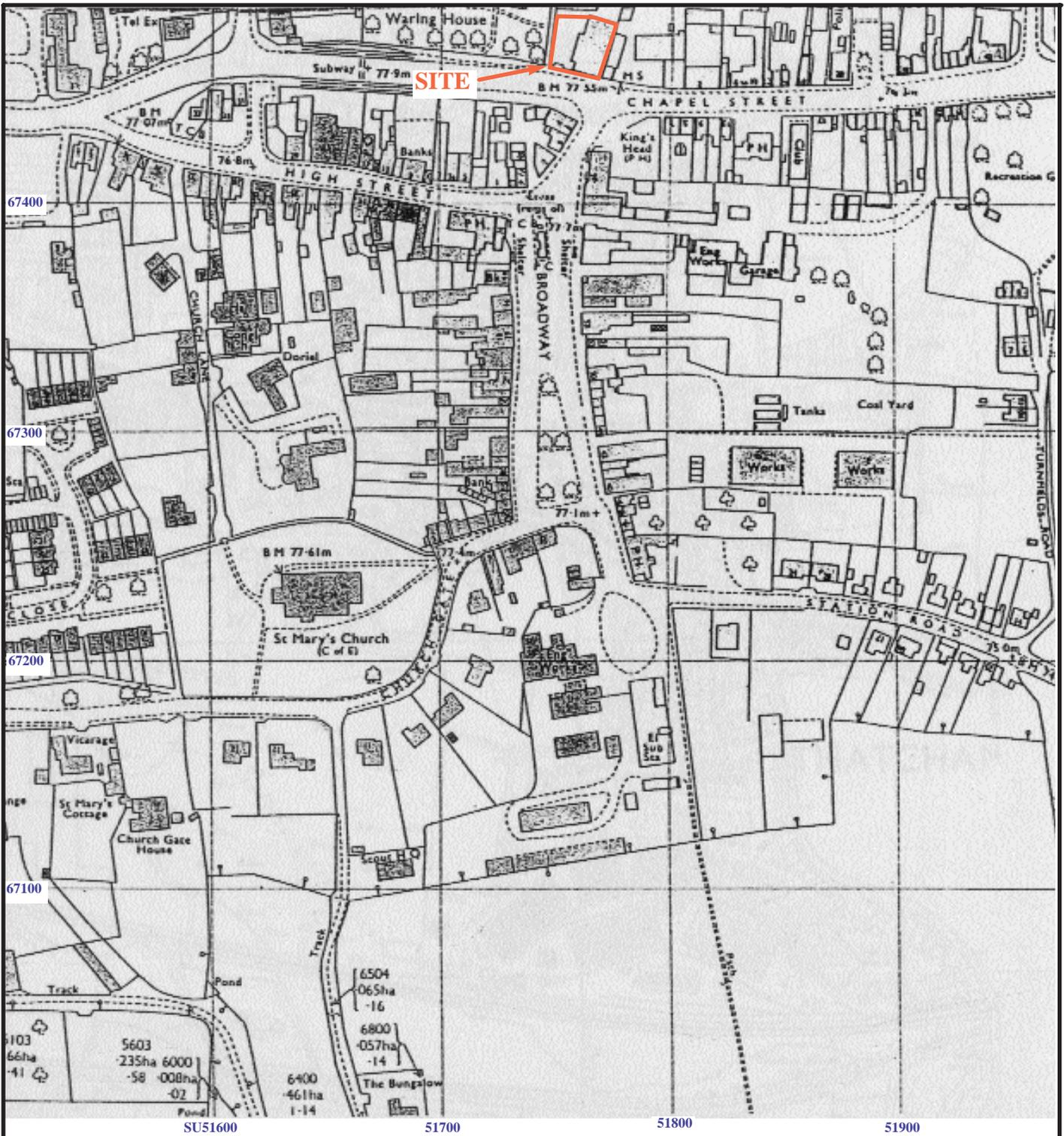


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Figure 1. Location of site within Thatcham and Berkshire.

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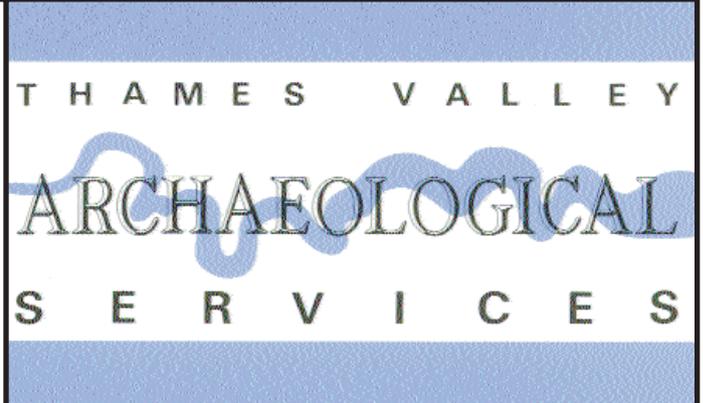


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Thatcham.

Scale: 1:2500



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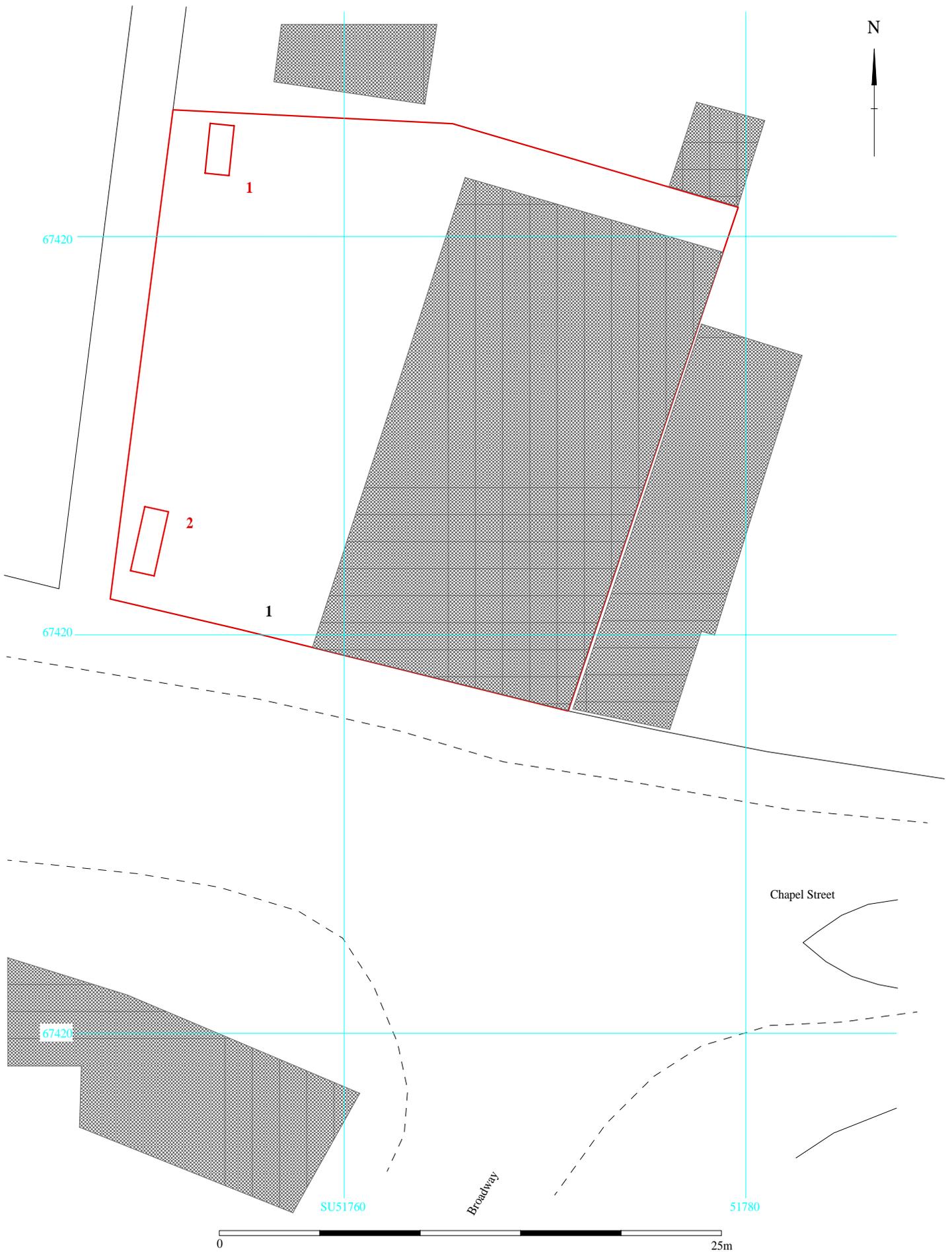


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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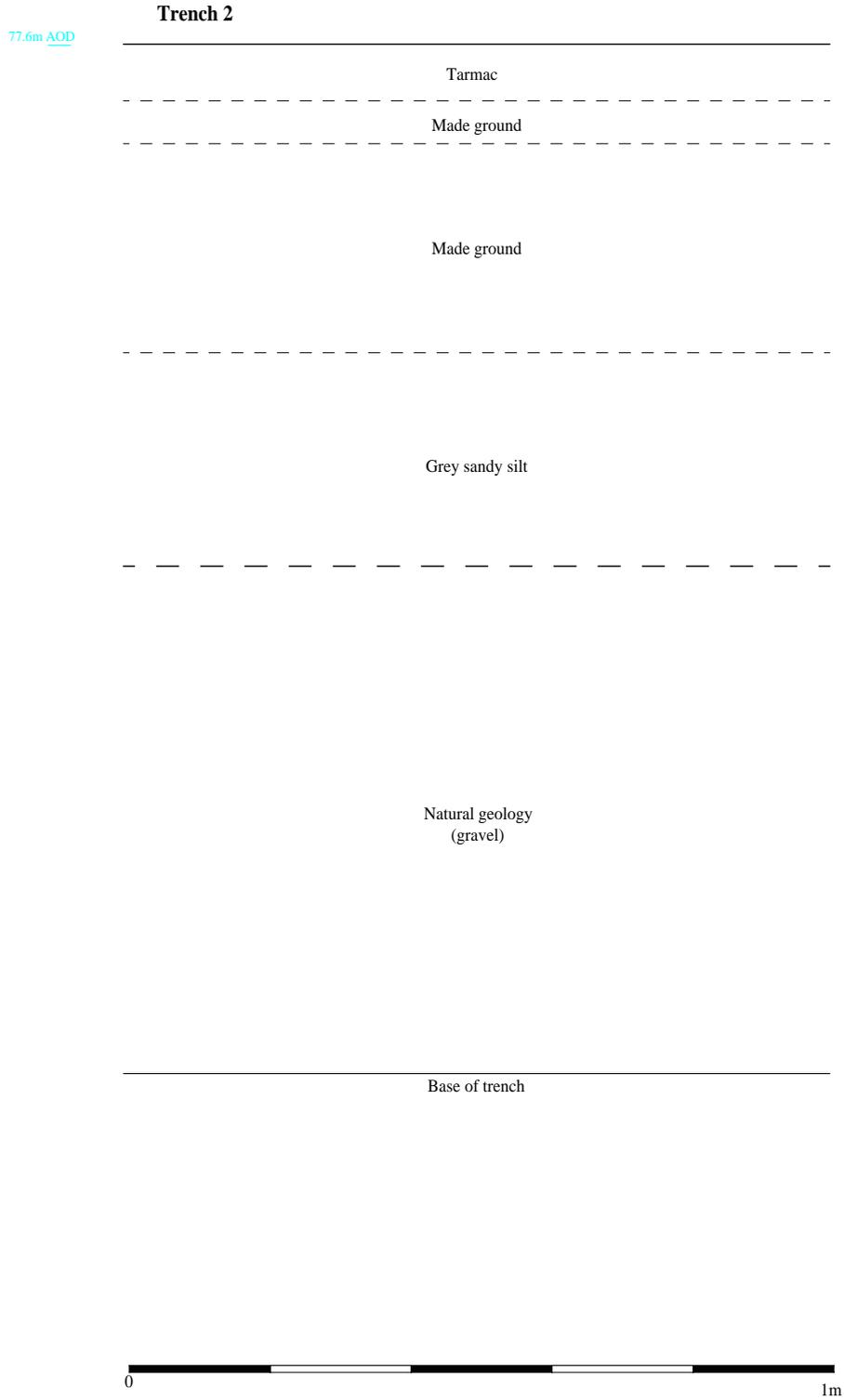


Figure 4: Representative section.



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



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