

**Coronation Square, Southcote Lane,
Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Bluestone plc

by Sarah Coles

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSS05/28

April 2005

Summary

Site name: Coronation Square, Southcote Lane, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6892 7191

Site activity: Archaeological evaluation

Date and duration of project: 13th April 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sarah Coles

Site code: CSS 05/28

Area of site: c. 1000 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were found and the only item of interest was a prehistoric struck flint from the subsoil.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 29.04.05
	Steve Preston ✓ 03.05.05

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Report 05/28

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Coronation Square, Southcote Lane, Reading, Berkshire (SU 6892 7191) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin Napier of Bluestone plc, Harrier House, St Albans Road East, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 0HE.

Planning permission (03/01169/FUL) has been granted by Reading Borough Council for the development of four two-bedroom flats. The permission was subject to a condition (6) relating to archaeology. The client chose to satisfy this planning condition by the means of a field evaluation carried out prior to the commencement of any ground works. 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 Fiona MacDonald of Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles and Katie Keefe on 13th April 2005, and the site code is CSS05/28. 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 in Southcote, south-west of Reading town centre. To the north is the A4 and to the south, Southcote Lane. The Holy Brook and the River Kennet flow eastwards just to the south. The site forms an irregular shaped parcel of waste land on the eastern side of Coronation Square and covers an area of c.1000 sq m. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1946), the site lies on Reading Beds, at a height of c. 45m above Ordnance Datum. A pale orangey yellow sand with occasional yellow grey lenses of clay was noted in all of the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from information within the Borough Sites and Monuments Record. In summary, the site lies close to an area where an Iron Age settlement was discovered in the 1930s (Piggott and Seaby 1937).

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. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which would warrant preservation *in situ*, or which might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if any deposits relating to the presence of an Iron Age settlement are present.

The agreed specification was for the excavation of three trenches each 1.6 wide and 7m long located to give a spatial covering of the site area. The trenches were dug under continuous archaeological supervision by a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket. Spoilheaps were searched for finds.

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

Results

Three trenches were excavated in the intended locations; all were slightly longer than specified. All three trenches showed a similar stratigraphy consisting of 0.25–0.60m of topsoil onto 0.30–0.50m of a mid brown sandy silt, onto a mid-pale orangey yellow sand with occasional yellow grey clay lenses (Reading Beds) (Pls 1, 2). No archaeological features were observed in any of these trenches.

A single struck flake was retrieved from the subsoil of Trench 3.

Finds

Flint by Steve Ford

Just one struck flint, a flake, was recovered from Trench 3 during the evaluation. It is not closely datable and is of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Conclusion

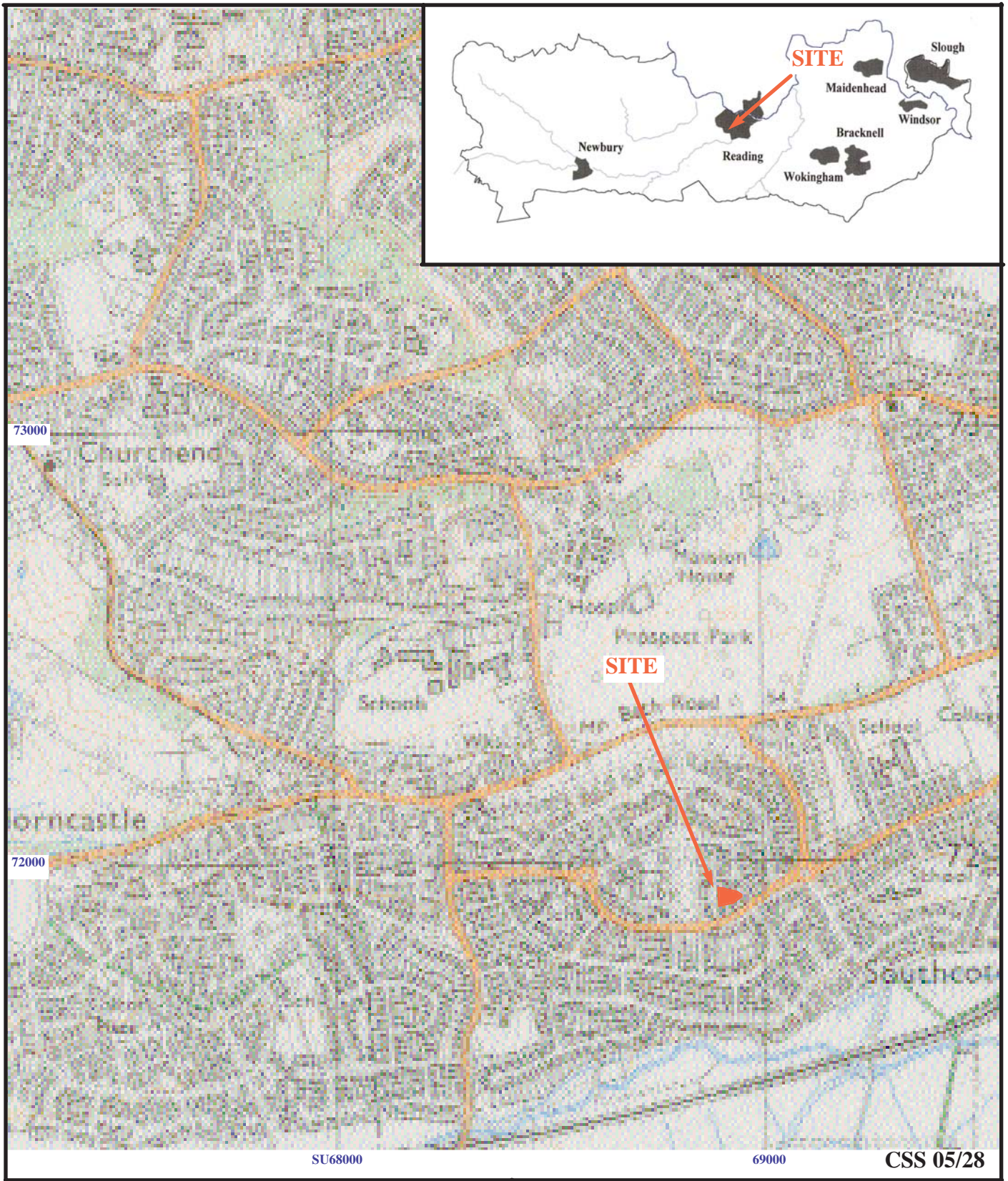
No archaeological deposits were found during the evaluation and the only item of interest was a single prehistoric struck flint flake. On the basis of the results of the field evaluation the site appears to have no archaeological potential. No information relevant to the presence of an Iron Age settlement or of archaeology belonging to any period was revealed.

References

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 268, Drift and Solid Edition, Keyworth
Piggott, C M and Seaby, W A, 1937, 'Early Iron Age site at Southcote, Reading,' *Proc Prehist Soc* **3.1**, 43–57
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	7.05	1.60	SE0.85 NW1.06	0.35m topsoil onto 0.42m of subsoil onto mid orangey yellow sand with clay lenses. Testpit dug at SE end 1.60m deep.
2	7.10	1.60	S1.25N1.15	0.50m topsoil onto 0.30m subsoil onto mid orangey yellow sand with clay lenses. [Plate 1]
3	8.30	1.60	0.75	0.35m topsoil onto 0.30m subsoil onto mid orangey yellow sand with clay lenses. [Plate 2]



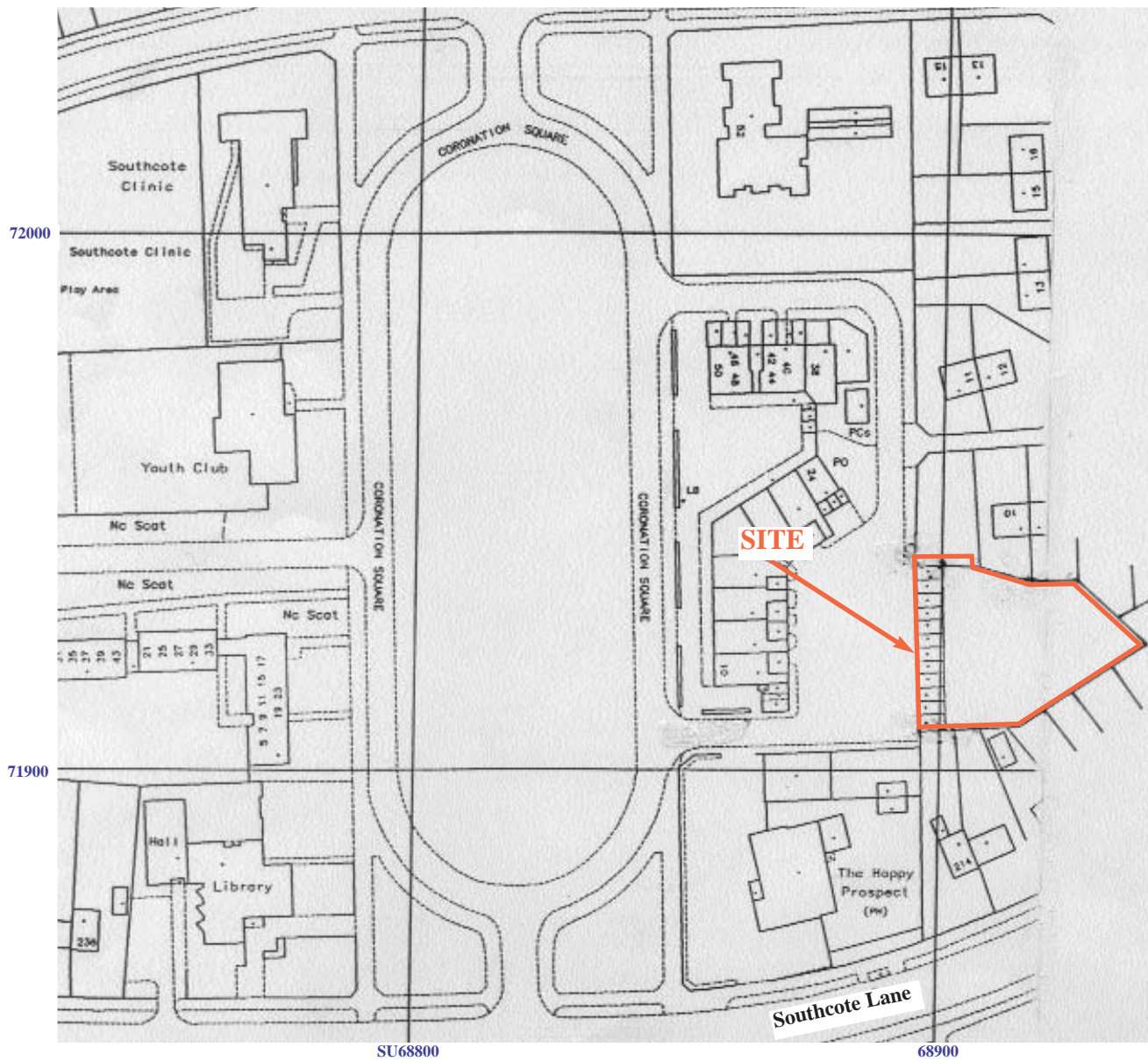
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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading
and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site on Coronation Square.

Scale: 1:1250

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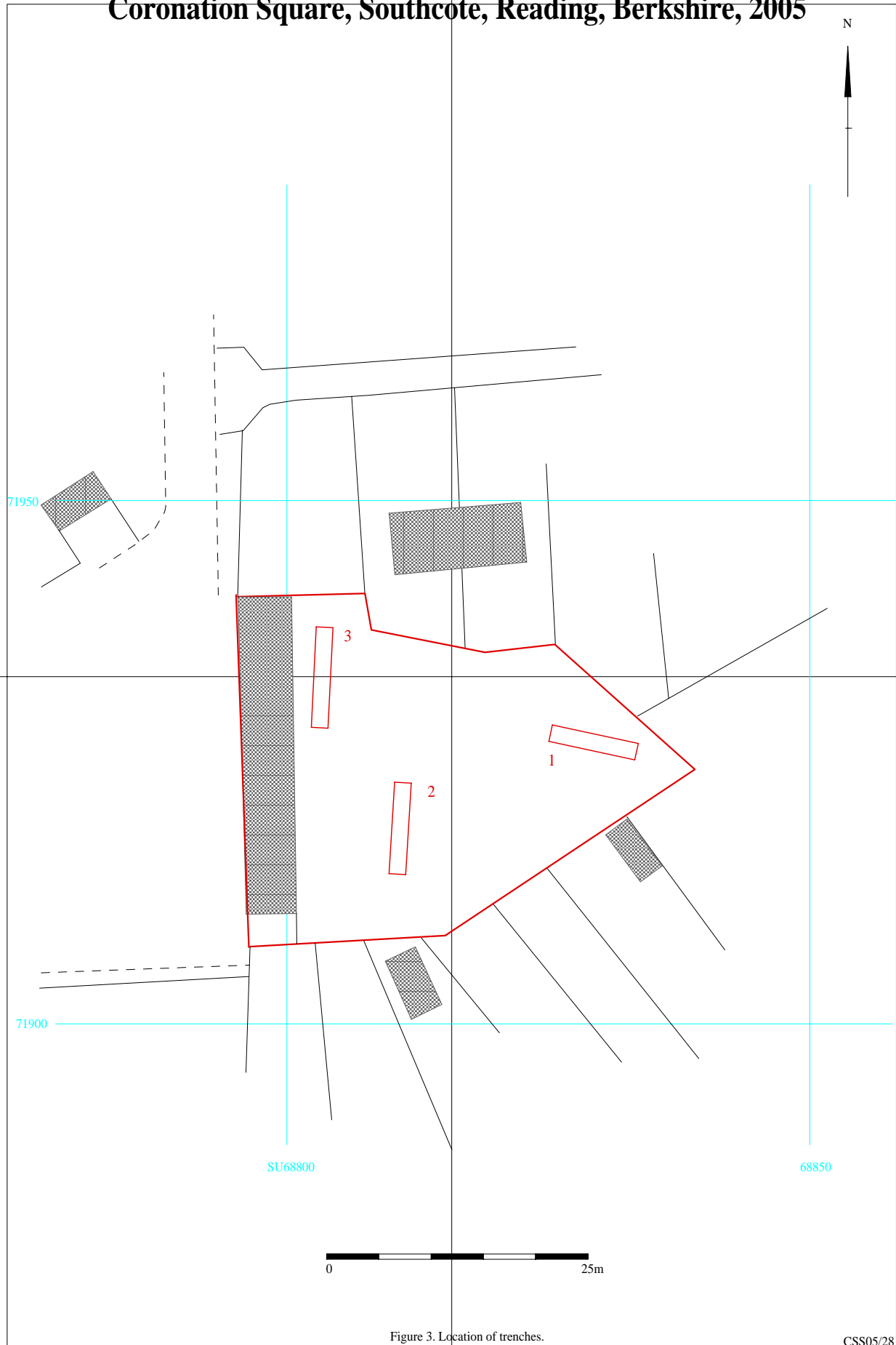


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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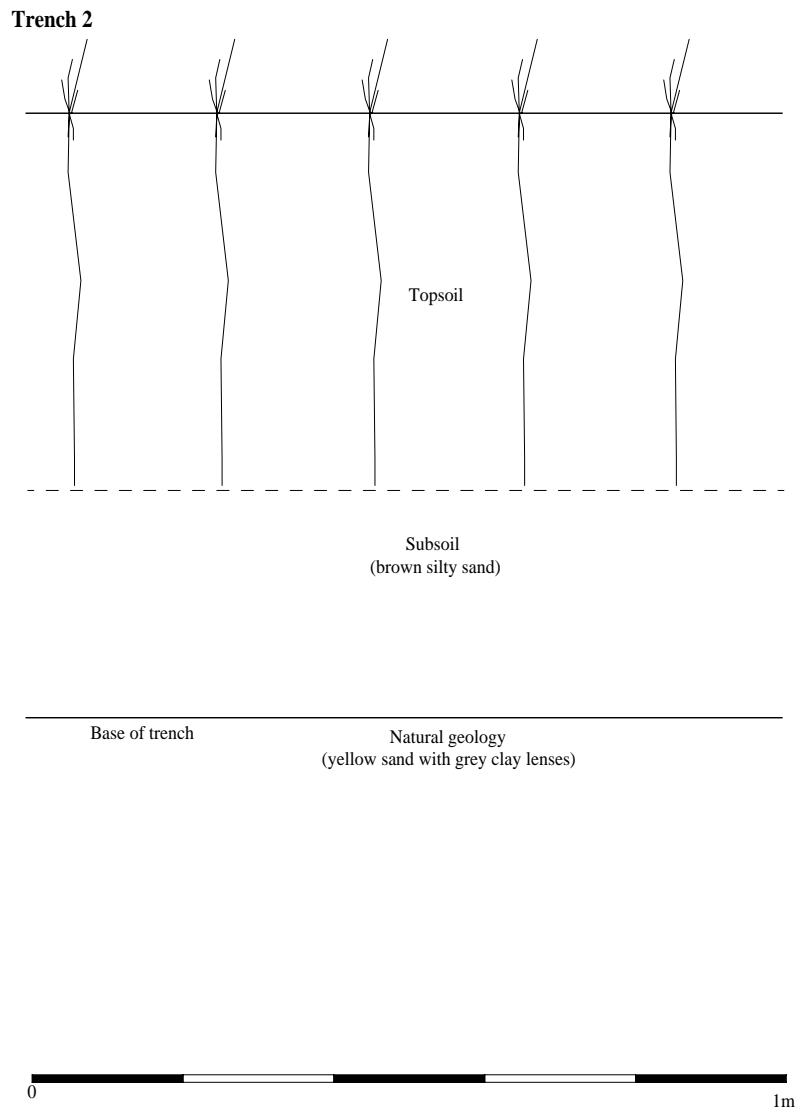


Figure 4: Representative section of trench 2.



Plate 1. Trench 2, looking south, scales 2m and 1m.



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