

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**58 Kings Road, Reading,
Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: KRR21/193

(SU 7195 7334)

**58 Kings Road,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for 58KR Limited**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code KRR 21/193

March 2024

Summary

Site name: 58 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7195 7334

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th February and 1st March 2024

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: KRR 21/193

Area of site: c.300sq m

Summary of results: The evaluation was successfully carried out with trenches dug to a depth of 2m. No deposits of any archaeological interest were recorded with only 19th-century made ground layers observed overlying alluvial silts.

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

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.03.24
	Steve Preston✓ 14.03.24

58 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 21/193b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 58 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire, (SU 7195 7334) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Hornby, on behalf of 58KR Ltd, 58 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AA.

Planning permission (231445) has been sought from Reading Borough Council for the proposed construction of a block of flats on the site. An archaeological investigation has been requested in order to inform the planning process with regard to the proposal's potential archaeological implications

This is in accordance with the in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2023) and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Edwin Wood, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Thomas Stewart between the 27th February and 1st March 2024 and the site code is KRR 21/193. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum and/or the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of King's Road in the heart of Reading (Fig. 1). It is bounded to the north by King's Road, the west by Crane Wharf, and to the east by commercial premises (Fig. 2). The south side overlooks the Kennet and Avon Canal, which at this point is the canalized course of the River Kennet. The site has a slight slope from north down to south, but is basically flat at 37m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as alluvium, surrounded by Valley Gravel (BGS 2000); a light blue grey silt (alluvium) was observed on site, although natural gravels were not reached.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Elliott 2021). In summary the site's potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames and Kennet Valleys (Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009) on the margins of the historic (Saxon/Medieval) town (Astill 1978) but within the early post-medieval town and within the town's defensive circuit created in the civil war in 1642 (Slade 2001, 32). More specifically the site lies adjacent to the site of wharves that served Reading Abbey (Hawkes and Fasham 1997). Fieldwork to the west (and west of the river) at Cranes Wharf revealed an extensive sequence of alluvial deposits with Neolithic wood and a Roman or Saxon skeleton, but mostly mid channel deposits. A more complex series of wharves including structures and revetments lay to the north of Kings Road, either side of the river (Hawkes and Fasham 1997). Immediately adjacent to the site, a limited watching brief recorded deep made ground (c. 0.9m thick) overlying alluvium c.1.1m thick where a small gully of Medieval or early post-medieval date aligned north-south was recorded. This gully cut further alluvium (Preston 2006).

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 research objectives for the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Two trenches were to be dug, each measuring 10m long and between 1.6m and 1.8m wide. Tarmac and other overburden were to be removed by machine. A breaker was to be used to penetrate any concrete surfaces and a ditching bucket used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. The trenches were to be dug initially to a maximum depth of c.2m below the existing ground level. Deeper excavation beyond this depth, if required, was to consist of test pits excavated within the trenches to define the depth of the natural geology or first archaeological horizon.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would then be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to

full excavation. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds. The guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020) were followed during the course of the works.

Results

Two trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended locations (Fig. 3) and measured 9.50m and 9.70m long; both were 1.6m wide and 2m deep. Both rapidly filled with water at that depth.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

This trench was aligned North-South and measured 9.50m long and 2m deep. On the eastern side of the trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of Tarmac overlying 0.15m of concrete, which overlay 0.14m of a white yellow sandy silt made ground (50) that contained modern brick and tile. This overlay 0.16m of a dark grey black sandy silt (51) that contained brick and tile overlying 0.76m of dark grey brown silty clay (53) containing further brick fragments. This overlay 0.10m of dark brown grey silty clay (54) overlying 0.64m of a light blue grey silty clay (56) overlying a silty gravel (57) that contained seven sherds of pottery of very mixed dates (medieval and post-medieval), tile, also of mixed medieval and post-medieval date, and animal bone, among which cow and pig could be identified.

On the western side of the trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of Tarmac overlying 0.15m of concrete, over 0.14m of a white yellow sandy silt made ground (50) that contained modern brick and tile. This overlay 0.56m of crushed chalk made ground (52) overlying 0.50m of a clayey peat deposit (55), which overlay 0.60m+ of a light blue grey silty clay (56).

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 3 and 4)

This trench was aligned approximately NNW–SSE and measured 9.70m long and 2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of Tarmac overlying 0.15m of concrete, above 0.34m of dark grey black silty sand (58) made ground containing brick and tile, overlying 0.10m of redeposited chalk (59). This overlay 0.44m of dark brown grey silty clay (60) overlying 0.10m of yellow brown silty sand (61). This overlay 0.65m of light blue grey silty clay (62) overlying 0.15m+ of dark blue grey silty clay (63) that contained tile (medieval or early post-medieval) and a single large mammal bone.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Seven sherds of pottery weighing 168g were collected from layer 57 (Appendix 1). This small assemblage includes a single small sherd of medieval coarseware in a fine sandy reduced fabric with clear throwing lines internally. However, the other sherds from the context suggest that it was deposited in the 16th century or later. These were a mug rim of Raeren stoneware and five sherds of a glazed red earthenware base.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A total of 16 pieces of animal bone (weighing 733g) were present for analysis (Appendix 4). Overall, the remains were well preserved. The elements were dark brown in colour, suggestive of prolonged deposition with a waterlogged environment. The cortical bone surfaces displayed minimal evidence of damage or erosion, although a moderate degree of fragmentation was present for some elements.

It was not possible to identify five small, non-diagnostic fragments within deposit 57 in trench 1. Despite this, a minimum of three animal individuals were identified, including one “large” (a cow) and two “medium” animal individuals (one pig, and one unidentified species – possibly a juvenile sheep/goat or small deer).

Of the fragments able to be identified to a general size category, the majority were allocated to the “medium” size category, which included the left side of a mandible, a right scapula and a non-descript long bone shaft fragment. Based on the dentition present within the mandibular fragment, the jaw was likely from a juvenile sheep/goat or small deer species. Within the same deposit, at least one pig was represented by fragments of the left side of a mandible and two disarticulated mandibular central incisors. The only tooth *in situ* within the jaw bone was the left third mandibular molar, which displayed extensive wear to the occlusal surface of the crown – suggestive of an older animal. Deposit 57 also provided evidence for at least one cow, specifically the presence of two complete metapodia (a right metacarpal and a right metatarsal).

No further information could be retrieved from the remains.

Ceramic Building Material by Danielle Milbank

Ceramic building material weighing a total of 408g (six pieces) was recovered from two contexts. The pieces were examined under x10 magnification, and categorised where possible according to form and date range. All were retained, but are suitable for discard after recording, in line with the recipient museum’s policy.

Deposit 57 contained four pieces (251g), three of which are in a medium to slightly soft, fine clay with sandy and sparse grog and very occasional small pebble inclusions, and a pale light grey brown to buff colour. The thickness is 12mm to 13mm, and the pieces are fairly uneven, with a peg hole present on one fragment. A further piece from this context is in a medium-hard dense fabric with occasional fine sand, and a mid orange red colour. They are likely to be of medieval date.

Two fragments (157g) were recovered from deposit 63, and comprise a further piece in a hard dense fabric with an orange red colour, and a piece in a similar fabric with a reduced (grey) core. These pieces are 14mm thick, and one has a thickened edge, suggestive of a medieval or very early post-medieval date.

Overall, the evaluation produced a very minimal quantity of ceramic building material, representing the medieval to early post-medieval period. One piece with a hole was identified as peg tile, while the remaining pieces are likely to represent this tile form without the peg hole present. Although this type of roof tile was limited to high status buildings in the early part of the medieval period, their use became more widespread in this region in the 14th century onwards, becoming widespread in the post-medieval period.

Shell by Cristina Mateos-Leal

A small assemblage of shell was recovered from the site weighing a total of 6g. Deposit 57 produced three incomplete mussel shells (*Mutilus edulis* L.) and one complete, common cockle shell (*Cerastoderma edule*). None were complete enough to be measured or assigned to a side.

Conclusion

The evaluation was successfully carried out with trenches dug to a depth of 2m before there was a rapid influx of groundwater. No deposits of archaeological interest were recorded with only 19th century made ground layers observed overlying alluvial silts. The finds recovered from within these deposits were mainly of late 16th to early 18th century date, although one sherd of pottery and one tile fragment may be earlier (medieval). All deposits containing material from the earlier half of this date range also contained material from the latter half, suggesting that at least these, if not all, finds might be residual. This shows a consistency with the next door site that suggests that the area of these trenches is within a deep alluvial deposit of the River Kennet (or the Holy Brook) suggesting that it had silted up in this period. It is possible that archaeological deposits survive in deeper, waterlogged, conditions, although these levels will remain largely preserved *in situ*.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9.50	1.60	2.00	E. Side: 0-0.05m tarmac; 0.05m-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.34m white yellow sandy silt made ground; 0.34m-0.50m dark black grey sandy silt made ground; 0.50m-1.26m dark grey brown silty clay; 1.26m-1.36m dark brown grey silty clay; 1.36m-2.00m light blue grey silty clay; 2.00m+ sandy gravel. W. Side: 0-0.05m tarmac; 0.05m-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.34m white yellow sandy silt made ground; 0.34m-0.90m redeposited chalk made ground; 0.90m-1.40m clayey peat; 1.40m-2.00m+ light blue grey silty clay. [Pls 1 and 2]
2	9.70	1.60	2.00	0-0.07m tarmac; 0.07m-0.22m concrete; 0.22m-0.56m dark grey black silty sand; 0.56m-0.66m white grey chalk; 0.66m-1.10m dark brown grey silty clay; 1.10m-1.20m yellow brown silty sand; 1.20m-1.85m light blue grey silty clay; 1.85m-2.00m+ dark blue grey silty clay. [Pls 3 and 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	50	Light yellow sandy silt made ground	19th/20th Century	CBM
1	51	Dark black grey sandy silt made ground	19th/20th Century	CBM
1	52	Chalk (made ground)	19th/20th Century	-
1	53	Dark grey brown sandy silt	19th Century	CBM
1	54	Dark brown grey silty clay	-	-
1	55	Dark brown black clayey peat	-	-
1	56	Light blue grey silty clay	-	-
1	57	Light blue grey sandy gravel	16th century or later	Pottery (very mixed)
2	58	Mid black grey silty sand	19th/20th Century	CBM
2	59	Chalk (made ground)	19th/20th Century	-
2	60	Dark brown grey silty clay (made ground)	19th/20th Century	CBM
2	61	Light yellow brown silty sand (made ground)	19th/20th Century	CBM
2	62	Light blue grey silty clay	-	-
2	63	Dark blue grey silty clay	Late medieval or early post-medieval	CBM

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Date range</i>
57	Medieval fine sandy greyware	MCW	U	1	1	1			12th-14th c.
57	Raeren stoneware	RAER	R	1	20	1	mug	upright plain	L.15th-16th c.
57	Glazed red earthenware	GRE	B	5	147	1			M16th-18th c.

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of Animal Bone

Inventory of animal bone. Key: lbsf = long bone shaft fragment(s)

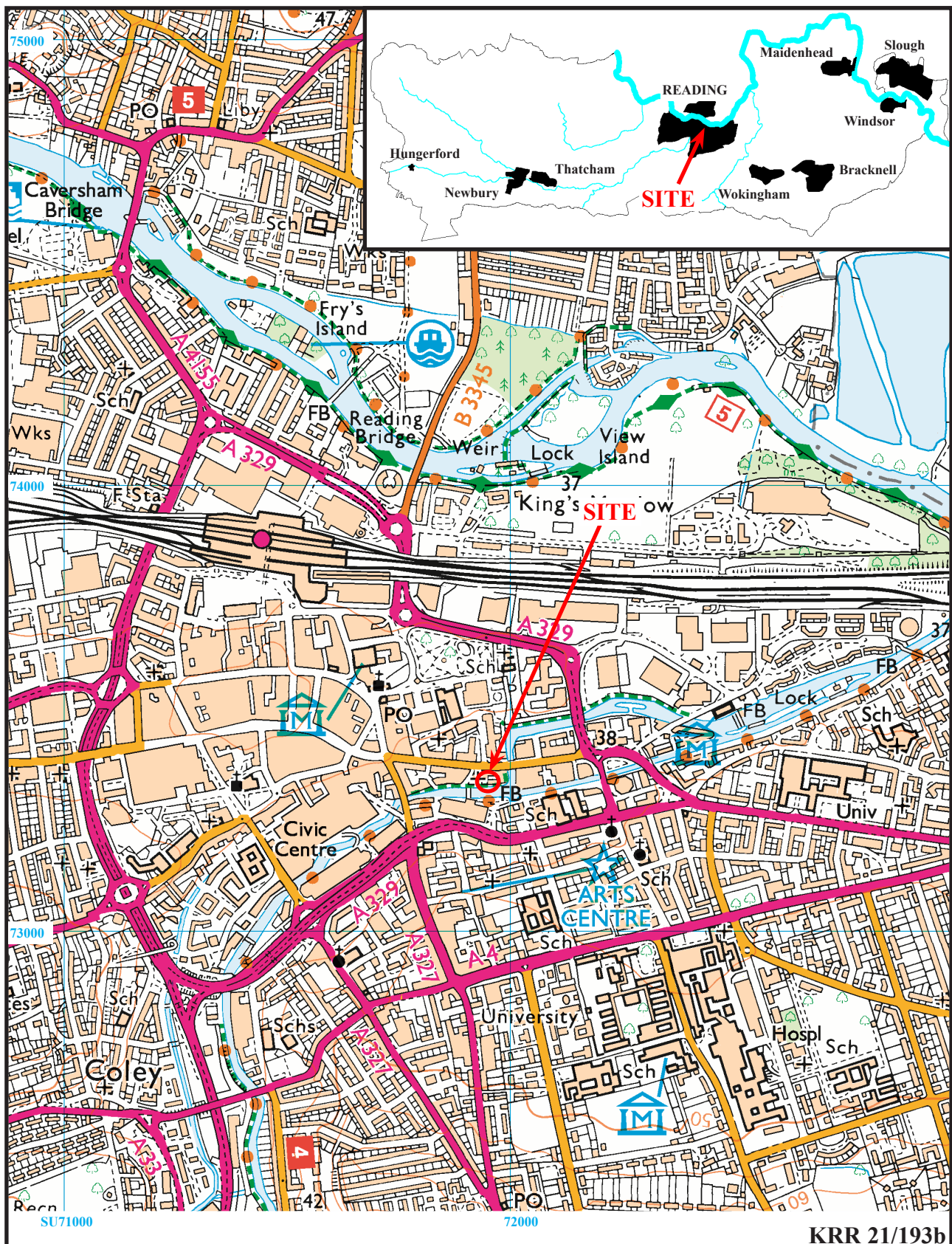
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Unident</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	-	57	15	533	3	7	5	<u>Cow</u> : right metacarpal and metatarsal; <u>Pig</u> : left mandibular fragment (severe wear to M3); " <u>Medium</u> ": left mandible fragment, right scapula, lbsf
2	-	63	1	200	1	-	-	" <u>Large</u> ": right proximal femur

APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Ceramic Building Material

<i>Trench.</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt(g)</i>
1	57	4	251
2	63	2	157

APPENDIX 6: Catalogue of Shell

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Shell Type</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt(g)</i>
1	57	Mussel	3	5
1	57	Cockle	1	1

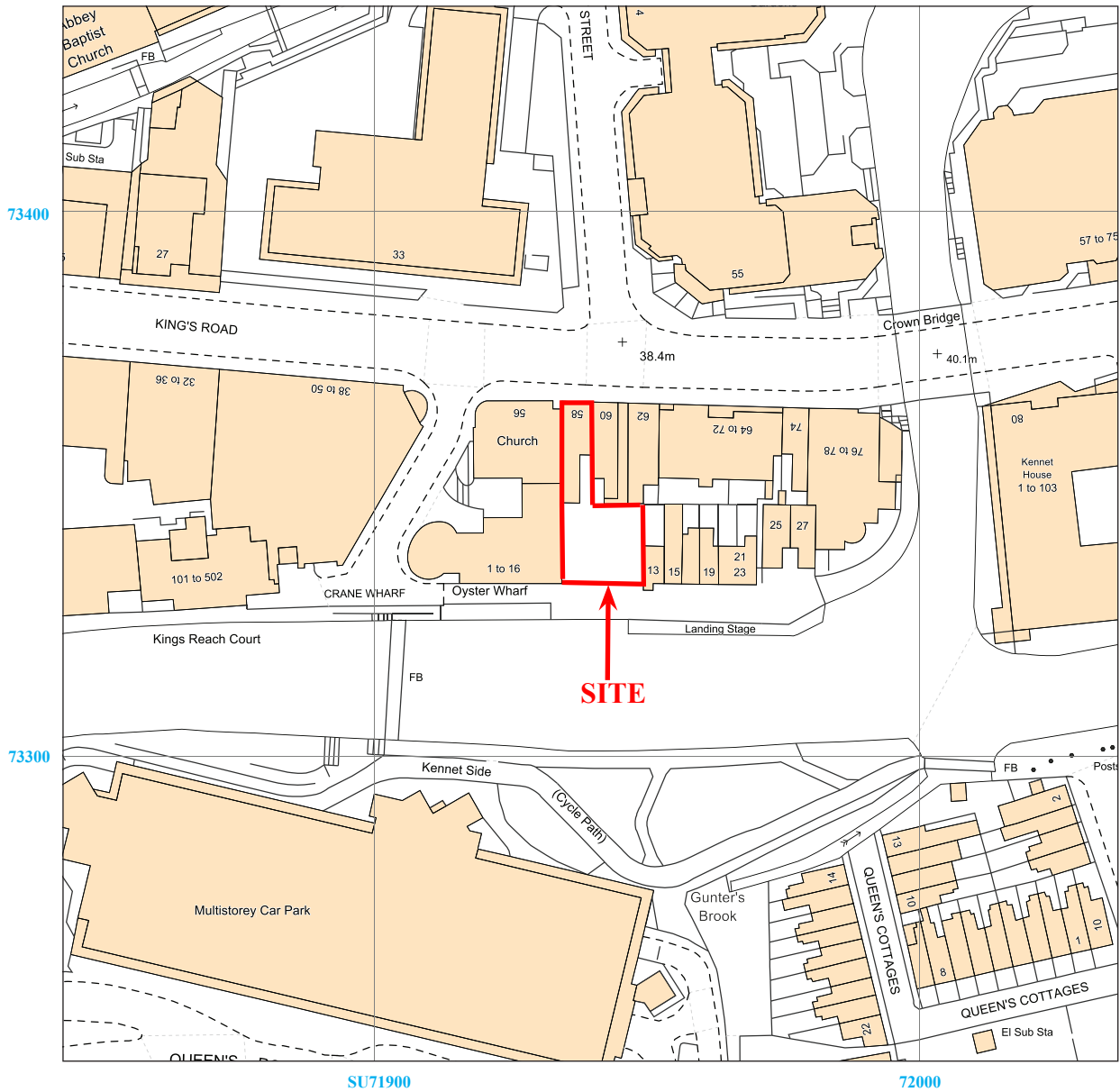


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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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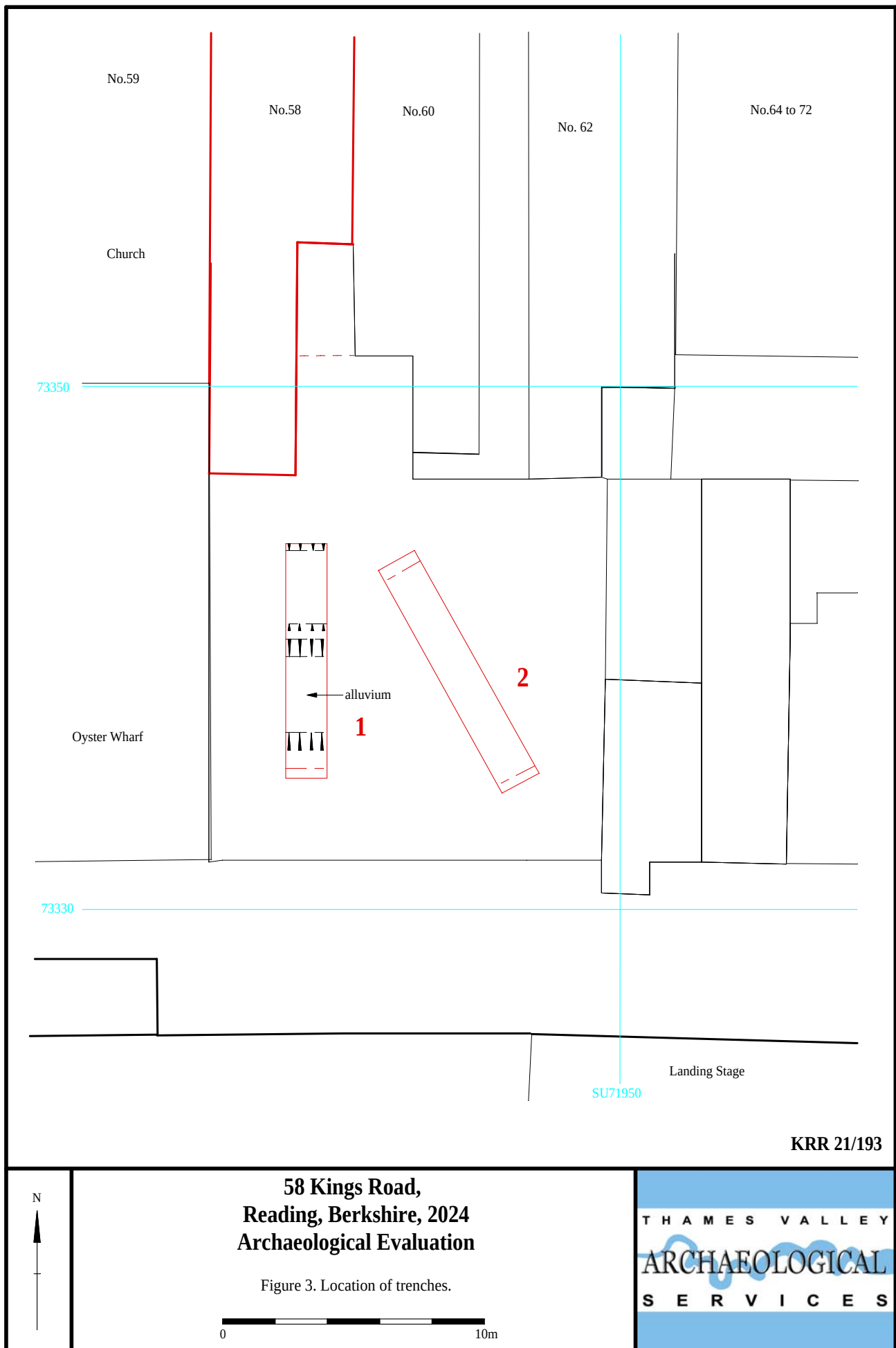
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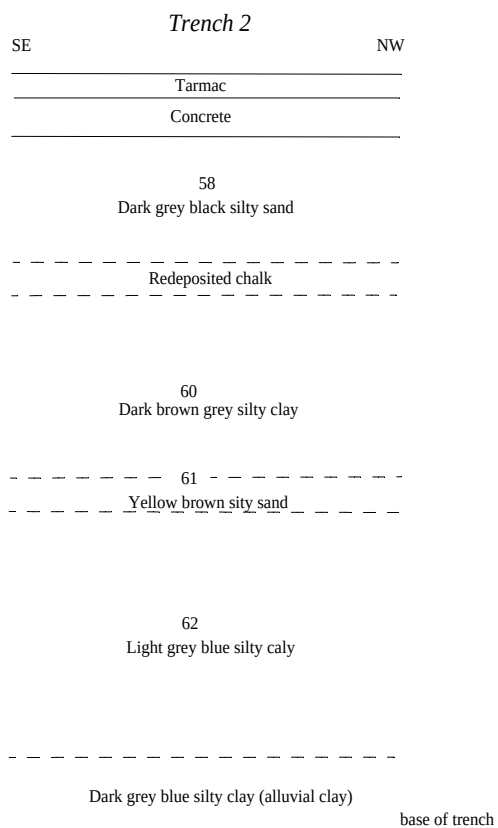
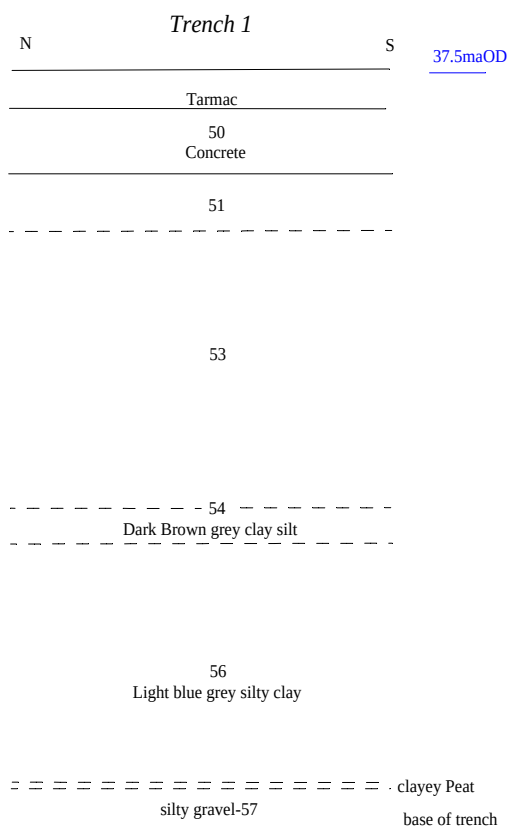


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off King's Road.

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking South, Scales: 2m and 2x1m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, East Section, looking West, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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**58 Kings Road,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking North West, Scales: 2m and 2x1m.



Plate 4. Trench 2, looking South West, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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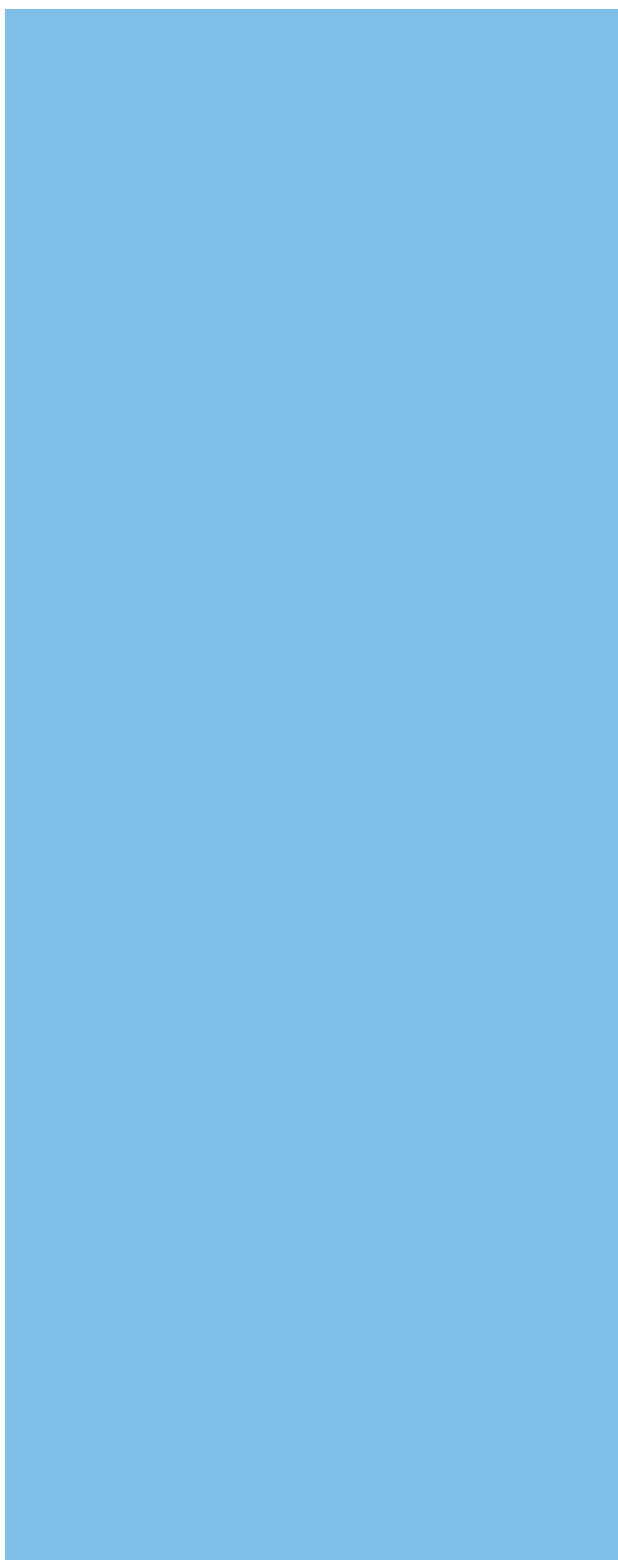
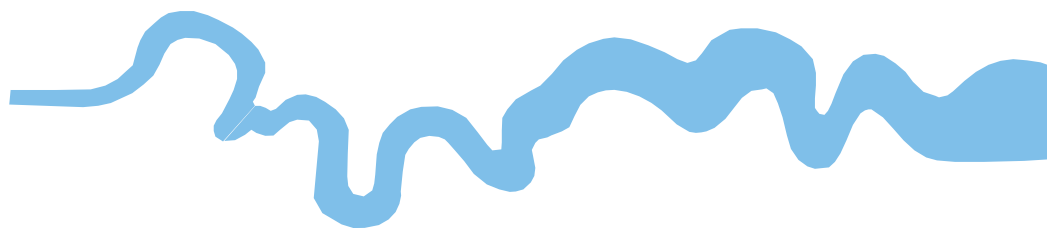
**58 Kings Road,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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