

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Rear of 84 London Street,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: 84LSR23/136

(SU7181 7301)

Rear of 84 London Street, Reading, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Hasuna Media Limited**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 84LSR 23/136

March 2024

Summary

Site name: Rear of 84 London Street, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7181 7301

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 21st-26th February 2024

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Will Attard, Emily Gibson and Sophie Peng

Site code: 84LSR 23/136

Area of site: c.600 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief was successfully carried out but only identified late post medieval layers of made ground with residual pottery of early post-medieval date.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.03.24 Steve Preston✓ 14.03.24
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84 London Street, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 23/136

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at to the rear of 84 London Street Reading, Berkshire (SU 7181 7301) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Chris Keen of The Keen Partnership, The Courtyard, Edinburgh Road, Reading, RG30 2UA on behalf of Hasuna Media Ltd, 160 Kemp House, 128 City Road, London EC1V 2NX.

Planning permission (190478) has been granted by Reading Borough Council for demolition of a commercial unit and construction of three one-bedroom flats. The consent is subject to a condition which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Edwin Wood, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard, Emily Gibson and Sophie Peng between 21st and 26th February 2024 and the site code is 84LSR23/136.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum and/or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern edge of central Reading (Fig. 1), to the rear of 84 London Street (on its western side) and is bounded by residential properties with Church Street on its southern side. The River Kennet flows to the north. The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 2000), although sandy gravels were observed during the fieldwork, and the site lies at a height of c.45m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The area of development was at the rear (west) of the plot associated with number 84 (Fig. 2; Pl. 4).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been documented in a briefing note prepared by Berkshire Archaeology. In summary, this potential stems from its location within the historic core of Reading and on what

is one of the original medieval streets (Astill 1978; Preston 2005; Slade 2001). The town has late Saxon origins but with the original Saxon town located somewhere close to St Mary's Church, to the north-west of the site. Several archaeological investigations have taken place on London Street and these have variously recorded medieval and post-medieval remains, but have also indicated the presence of gravel extraction presumably for metalling of the street surface (Platt 2012; Bray 2012). Many of the properties fronting London Street have deep basements which have removed the archaeological deposits. Several of the properties on the street frontage are listed buildings. To the west of the site is the Friends (Quaker) Meeting House and burial ground, which is indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was expected to entail the monitoring of any overburden removal, ground reduction and the excavation of foundation and service trenches. Any archaeological deposits identified would be hand cleaned and excavated as necessary.

Results

Footing Trenches (Fig. 3; Pls. 1-3)

The trenches all measured 0.60m wide and were dug to a depth of between 0.75m and 1.16m. At the northern end of the site the stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.05m of concrete (50) overlying 0.12m of brick rubble and gravel made ground (51). This overlay 0.32m of a dark brown grey sandy silt (52) overlying silty sand and gravels (53) which appeared to be redeposited natural geology (Pl. 1).

On the eastern side of the site the stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of bricks from the foundation of the existing property overlying deposits 52 and 53 as observed previously (Pl. 3). Two pits for underpinning the wall of the existing property were dug which showed 0.40m of the dark brown grey sandy silt (52) overlying 0.45m of mid yellow brown silty sand and gravel containing brick fragments (redeposited natural geology) overlying natural gravels (Pl. 2).

Two central foundation trenches were also dug with the North-South trench consisting of 0.80m of mid grey brown sandy silt overlying sandy gravel natural geology. The East-West trench consisted of 0.12m of brick overlying 0.20m of dark grey brown sandy silt. This overlay 0.45m of mid grey brown gravelly silt made ground.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Seventeen sherds of pottery weighing 1472g were collected from made ground deposit, 52. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric and a summary catalogue is included as Appendix 1.

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric in approximate date order.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Date range</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>Eve</i>	<i>MNV</i>
Border ware	BORD	16th-17th c.	6	883	0.40	6
Border redware	BORDR	16th-17th c.	1	34	0.17	1
Glazed red earthenware	GRE	M16th-18th c.	3	445	0.17	2
Tin-glazed earthenware	TGE	16th-18th c.	3	37	0.08	3
Westerwald stoneware	WEST	L.17th-19th c.+	2	65	0.24	1
Staffs-type white salt-glazed stoneware	SWSW	18th c.	1	1		1
Porcelain	PORC	18th-20th c.	1	7		1
<i>Totals</i>			<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight, estimated vessel equivalent (eve) and minimum number of vessels (MNV). Fabric codes were assigned from the author's post-medieval fabric series. Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998). An Access database forms the archive catalogue.

All pottery was of post-medieval to modern date. The largest group comprised the Surrey/Hampshire Border wares, including a manganese glazed globular ?jug with a pedestal base, and rim fragments of a bowl, a ? pipkin and two chamber pots. The whiteware vessels had olive greenish, yellow or bright copper green glaze internally, and the redware had a clear (orange) glaze internally.

Two vessels were post-medieval glazed redwares, comprising a piece of the rim/wall of a large bowl with a beaded rim, and the body/handle of a pipkin.

Tin-glazed earthenwares comprised a small fragment with simple hand-painted blue lines externally, a base fragment with a more complex floral pattern in dark blue internally, and a ram/handle fragment from a probable chamber pot which was undecorated.

The rim and handle of a Westerwald stoneware jug were decorated with hand-painted blue lines around the rilled neck. One small fragment of a white stoneware vessel with a short, slightly flaring rim was possibly a drinking vessel. The latest sherd was a fragment of an undecorated footring base in porcelain, which may date to the 19th century.

Four of the sherds described above were recorded as coming from 'under foundation 84'. These were the SWSW rim, the small fragment of decorated TGE and the Westerwald stoneware jug. The latest sherd in this group is the SWSW, which is no earlier than the third decade of the 18th century.

Overall the group is typical of the area and can be compared with larger assemblages of post-medieval pottery from the town (e.g. Brown and Thompson 2013).

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from deposit 52. Weighing 138g, a total of seven pieces of disarticulated bone were present for analysis (Appendix 3). Overall, the animal bone was well preserved, with a relatively large fragment size and excellent cortical bone surface preservation.

A single “large” sized animal (horse/cow) was represented by a rib fragment, but it was not possible to identify the animal of origin. The majority of fragments were “medium” sized (sheep/goat or pig), including a metatarsal shaft and a right scapula as well as the vertebral end of a rib and a shaft of a left tibia. Of the “medium” sized fragments, just one was able to be identified to species of origin - the distal third of a right sheep/goat radius-ulna. Evidence of butchery cut marks were observed on this sheep/goat radius-ulna. Two transverse, linear blade wounds were located just above the distal joint surface and near the mid-shaft breakage.

No further information could be retrieved from the assemblage of animal bone.

Clay Pipe by Genni Elliott

A total of 11 fragments of clay pipe were recovered from deposit 52 weighing a total of 70g. These consisted of two bowls, 8 stems and 1 mouthpiece. There were no maker marks present on either the bowls or stems and decoration was limited to a single bowl. Stem boreholes sizes were broadly similar across the fragments and comparable with the bowls, suggestive of a similar date for all. No fragments joined, though one stem had broken at the junction of the bowl indicating a minimum of three clay pipes present.

Bowl 1: Pedestal base, long bowl with slightly curved sides. Partial rouletted decoration around the opening of the bowl. Oswald (1975) type Fig. 3,G: 9 (c. 1680-1710)

Bowl 2: Pedestal base, long bowl noticeably more upright than bowl 1. Oswald type Fig. 3,G: 10 (c. 1700-1740)

Based on the bowl dates the assemblage likely dates to the first half of the 18th century.

Conclusion

The watching brief was successfully carried out with foundation trenches of the new building observed. This only identified made ground deposits on the site with no features of an archaeological of an nature observed. The

16th-20th century pottery is unlikely to have travelled far due to its unabraded nature and was most likely desposited where it was used, at or very close to the site. The archaeological evidence from 84 London Street is consistent with post-medieval domestic activity and discard of material.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
50	Concrete	Modern	Concrete
51	Made Ground	19th/20th Century	Brick
52	Dark brown grey silty clay made ground	?18th century	Pottery
53	Mid yellow brown silty sand made ground	Unknown	-

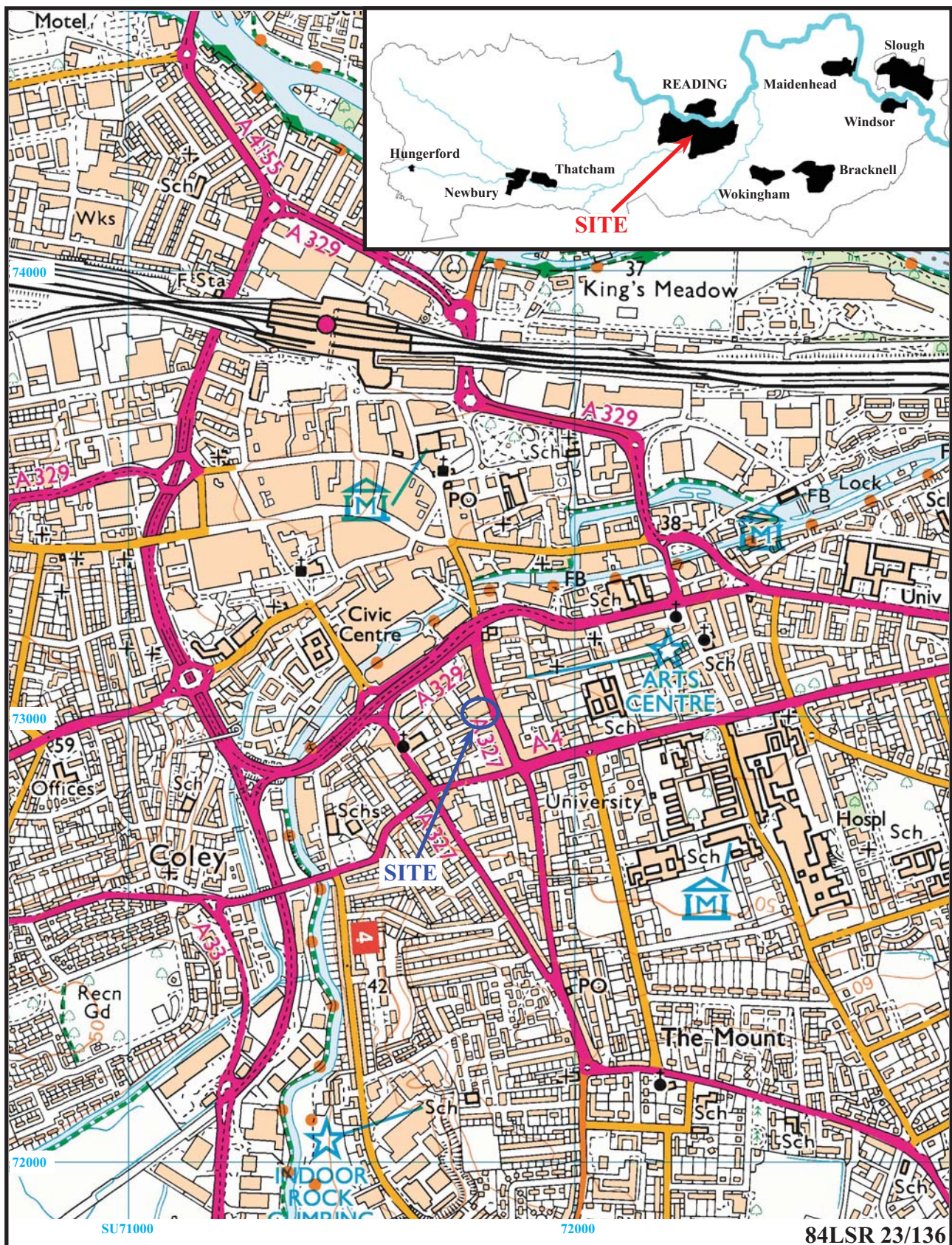
APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Pottery

Full catalogue in archive as MS Access database

<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Spot date</i>	<i>Date range</i>
52	under foundation 84	WEST	RDH	2	65	1	JG	COLL		L.17th-19th c.+
52		TGE	D	1	1	1				16th-18th c.
52		SWSW	R	1	1	1	?	FLAR		18th c.
52		GRE	R	1	360	1	BL	BD		M16th-18th c.
52		GRE	DH	2	85	1	PK			M16th-18th c.
52		TGE	RH	1	23	1	CH	CAV		16th-18th c.
52		TGE	B	1	13	1				16th-18th c.
52		PORC	B	1	7	1			19+	18th-20th c.
52		BORD	R	1	26	1	BL	BD		16th-17th c.
52		BORD	R	1	45	1	CH	FTEV		16th-17th c.
52		BORD	R	1	44	1	PK?	LSEV		16th-17th c.
52		BORDR	R	1	34	1	CH?	BD		16th-17th c.
52		BORD	B	1	142	1				16th-17th c.
52		BORD	B	1	422	1				16th-17th c.
52		BORD	BH	1	204	1	JG?			16th-17th c.

APPENDIX 3: Inventory of animal bone. Key: lbsf = long bone shaft fragment(s)

<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>
-	52	3	67	-	2	1	“ <u>Medium</u> ”: right scapula, metatarsal shaft
-	52 (deeper)	4	71	1	3	-	“ <u>Large</u> ”: rib shaft fragment; <u>Sheep/goat</u> : distal radius-ulna shaft (right) with transverse cut-marks; “ <u>Medium</u> ”: rib shaft (vertebral end), tibia shaft (left, with unfused distal epiphysis),



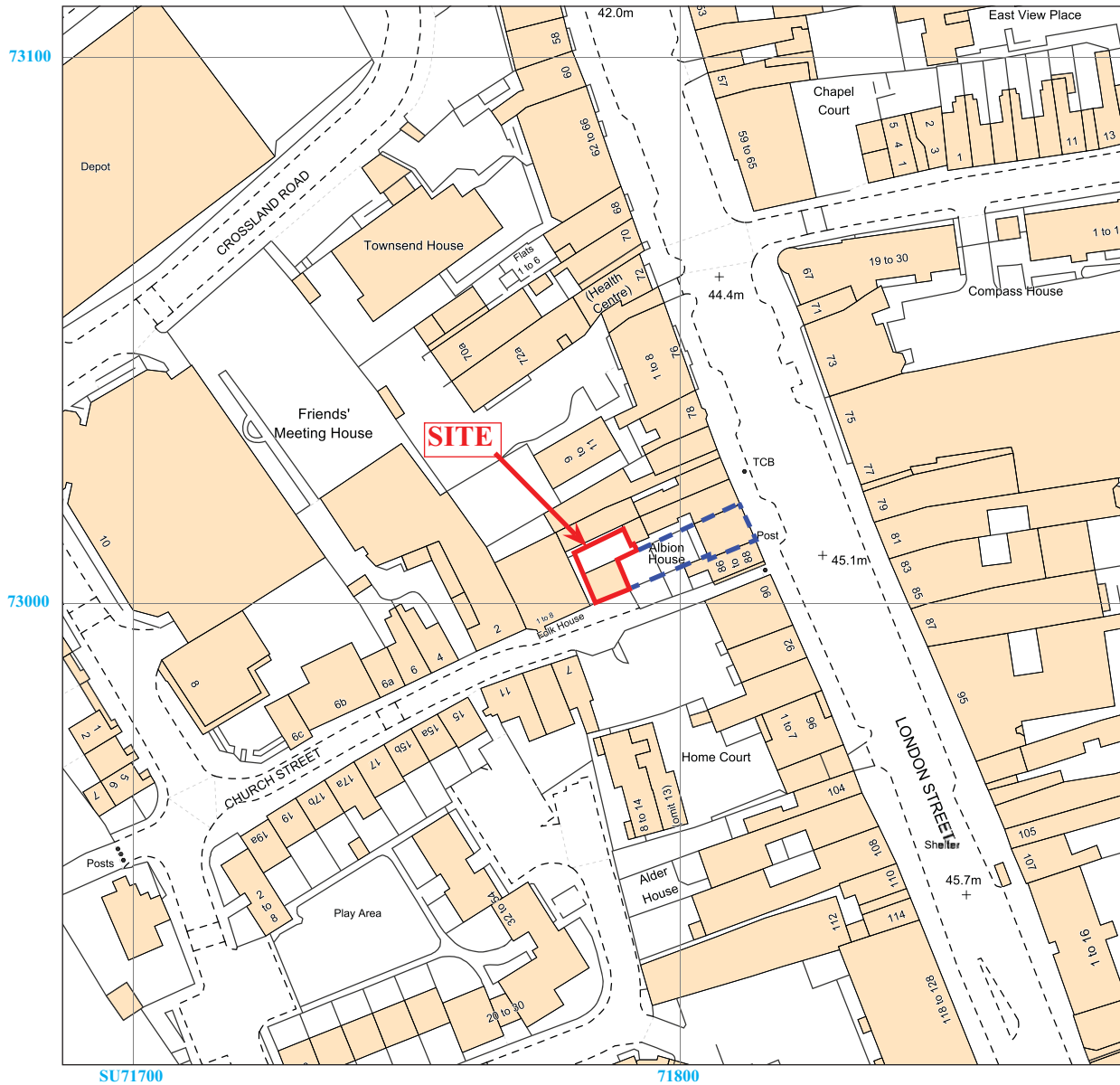
**Land at the rear of 84 London Street, Reading,
Berkshire, 2024**

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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off London Street.

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Figure 3. Observations on site.



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NW

SE

45maOD

Homogenous fill
made ground, with brick and stone rubble

Light brown sandy clay

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Figure 4. Representative section.

0 1m

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Plate 1. Foundation Trench, looking North,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Underpinning Pit, looking East,
Scales: 1m and 0.4m.



Plate 3. Foundation Trench, looking North,
Scale: 2m.



Plate 4. General Site Shot

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**Rear of 84 London Street,
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Plates 1 - 4.**

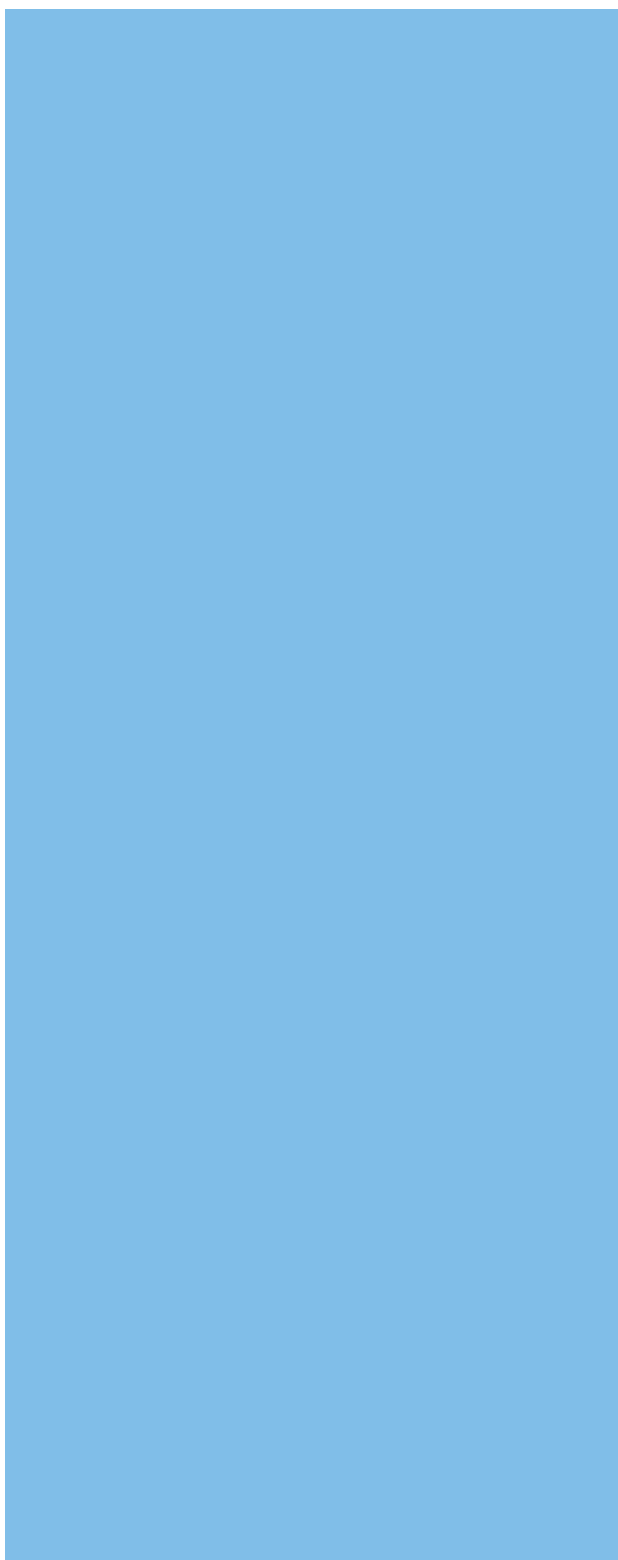
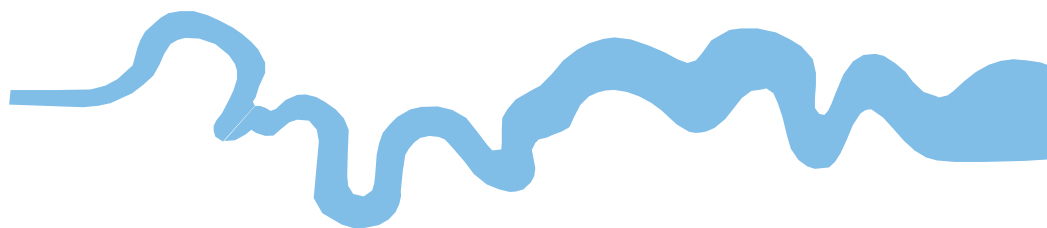
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TIME CHART

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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