

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough,
Swindon, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale

Site Code: PUW10/21

(SU 2103 8283)

Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough Swindon, Wiltshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Sun Design and Consultancy Limited**

by Andrew Weale and James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PUW10/21

March 2010

Summary

Site name: Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 2103 8283

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 10th–12th March 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: PUW10/21

Area of site: c. 2.5ha

Summary of results: The trenching has demonstrated that the site has good archaeological potential, with features present dating for the early and late Roman periods, the Saxon and the Medieval periods. The features are likely to represent both occupation and agricultural landscape features.

Monuments identified: Roman and Saxon ditches, Medieval gullies, possibly Roman walls, undated post holes.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 24.03.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 24.03.10

Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Weale and James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 10/21

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire (SU 2103 8283) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Rob Spurr of Sun Design and Consultancy Limited, Southview, 22 Ham Road, Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN4 0DF.

Planning permission is to be sought from Swindon Borough Council to construct three new houses, two stables, an attenuation pond, access roads and the planting of an area of woodland. The results of the evaluation are required to accompany the planning application.

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 Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Archaeological Officer of Wiltshire County Council, the Borough Council's archaeological advisers. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale, James McNicoll-Norbury and Aidan Colyer between the 10th–12th March 2010 and the site code is PUW10/21. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the north-eastern edge of historic Upper Wanborough, a village 5.5km to the south-east of Swindon (Fig. 1). The site is situated on a north-westerly facing slope of the Lambourn Downs which slope down towards the River Ray and lies 2km to the north of the course of the Ridgeway path. The site slopes from approximately 150m above Ordnance Datum in the south to 145m AOD in the north, and is located on Pleistocene Head deposits with a junction with Lower Cretaceous Upper Greensand at the south-western edge of the site (BGS 1974): green sand with clay, and chalk (head?) deposits was observed within the trenches. The site is currently occupied by a farm house, barn, outbuildings, gardens, derelict orchard and open grazing land and is bounded to the north-west by a footpath, the north-east by a house and Stacey's Lane, the south-east by church Road and the south-west by residential properties and gardens (Fig. 2).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its position between the two historic foci of Wanborough (Upper and Lower), however it may not be close enough to either centre to anticipate the presence of Late Saxon or medieval occupation deposits. Wanborough lies mostly to the south of Ermine Street, the main Roman road from Cirencester to Silchester and approximately 2km to the south-east of its junction with the Roman road to Marlborough. At this junction lies the small Roman town of *Durocornovium*. Wanborough itself was first mentioned in documents of late Saxon date (a charter of King Ethelwulf of AD 854) however this charter is now suspect. The name is thought to derive from *Waenbeorgon* “(place at) the tumour-shaped mounds” (Mills 1998) and by the time of Domesday Book in 1086 Wanborough was held by the Bishop of Winchester (Williams and Martin 2002). It became a thriving medieval manor.

An evaluation by trial trench at Beanlands to the immediate north of the site (JSAC 1997) revealed Roman and medieval deposits underlying ridge and furrow. Similarly, evaluation at Marsh Farm to the north of Wanborough revealed medieval ditches (Taylor 2007). Possibly of most significance for the current site is the presence of an inhumation cemetery north-west of Covington Farm (SU 2113 8283) which may extend onto to the site. The cemetery is currently of unknown date but may be of Roman or Saxon origin.

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

The specific research aims of the project are:

- to determine if archaeological relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any late Saxon or Medieval deposits are present on the site;
- to determine if any burial deposits are present and if so what are their date; and
- to provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required.

Nine trenches were to be excavated, all 1.6m wide. Four trenches were to be 20m long to target the footprints of the proposed houses, woodland and pond area, three trenches were to be 10m long to target the proposed access road and two trenches were to be 5m long to target the stables. Topsoil and subsoil were removed by a 180°

back-hoe (JCB-type) machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features existed or were thought likely to exist the trenches were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. All spoil heaps were to be searched for artefacts.

Results

The trenches were dug as intended using a toothless ditching bucket and were between 5.0m and 22.1m in length and between 0.51m and 1.20m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 4 and Plate 1)

Trench 1 was aligned west-east and was 19.60m long and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.76m of topsoil and 0.34m of subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology at the east end of the trench, at the west end of the trench there existed 0.56m topsoil overlaying 0.15m of re-deposited natural geology (consisting of green sand and clay) above the undisturbed natural geology. The redeposited natural was initially not removed from the west end of the trench but subsequently a long sondage 0.6m wide was dug through the layer of redeposited natural geology which allowed confirmation of the location and orientation of ditch 1. Ditch 1 occupied most of the trench and possessed a sinuous plan which may belie the presence of more than one feature though no indications of such were observed in this trench. At the west end of the trench a modern truncation was seen to cut into the ditch. The ditch was steep-sided, 0.5m deep and at least 2m wide. The single fill (53) produced 24 sherds of 2nd-century Roman pottery, stone and fragments of fired clay one of the larger pieces possibly being a fragment of tile.

Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

Trench 2 was aligned SW–NE and was 20.5m long and 1.20m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.95m topsoil and 0.20m subsoil overlying natural geology consisting of chalk (head?) and green sandy clay. Two ditches (2 and 3) and structural evidence with three walls (61, 62 and 70) were identified in the trench. Ditch 2 was aligned SW–NE and was 1.95m wide and 0.5m deep with a single fill (54). It contained 5 sherds of residual Roman pottery and six sherds of Saxon pottery. Ditch 3 was also aligned SW–NE and was 1.57m wide and 0.45m deep with a single fill (60) which did not contain any datable finds.

Wall 61 lay within a cut (4) 0.82m wide and 0.15m deep and was aligned SW–NE and made of tightly compacted sandstone lumps . A second probable wall (70) on the same alignment was located 1m away from wall 61 which was 0.40m wide and made of stones of various sizes. Adjacent to these two walls were areas of degraded sandstone that could be interpreted as metalled surfaces, or possibly demolition/weathering debris. No finds were recovered from the latter.

A third probable wall (62) on a NW-SE alignment, lay within cut 17 which was 1.4m wide and made of large stones up to 0.5m across that were tightly packed together with a dark grey/brown silty clay bonding material. The fill of cut 17 contained a single sherd of late Roman pottery.

Trench 3 (Fig. 7 and Plates 2 and 3)

Trench 3 was aligned WSW–ENE and was 10.5m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.11m of topsoil, above 0.13m of chalk rubble, above 0.41m of subsoil which overlay natural geology of green sandy clay. A ditch (5) and a gully (6) were identified in the trench. Ditch 5 was aligned north–south and was 0.98m wide and 0.26m deep with a single fill (55). It contained two sherds of Early Roman pottery and a small fragment of ceramic building material. A small portion of gully 6 was revealed, aligned west–east and was 0.18m wide and 0.1m deep with a single fill (64). It was truncated by ditch 5 and also terminated somewhere in the vicinity of ditch 5. It did not contain any datable finds.

Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

Trench 4 was aligned south–north and was 21.40m long and 0.66m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.66m of topsoil directly overlying natural geology. A ditch (7) and an animal burial (8) were investigated and another ditch and three gullies were identified in the trench but were not examined. Ditch 7 was aligned NW–SE and was 1.50m wide and 0.31m deep with a single fill (56). It contained three sherds of Early Roman pottery. Animal burial (8) was that of a goat in a pit which was 0.70m across and 0.25m deep. The fill (63) contained four sherds of Roman pottery.

Trench 5 (Fig. 7)

Trench 5 was aligned SW–NE and was 22.10m long and 0.61m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.6m topsoil directly over natural green sand and clay. A ditch (9), a pit (10) and a posthole (11) were identified in the trench. Ditch 9 was aligned NW–SE and was 1.4m wide and 0.42m deep with a single fill (65). Pit 10 was 0.48m in diameter and 0.12m deep with a single fill (66). Posthole 11 was 0.33m in diameter and 0.14m deep with a single fill (67). None of these features contained any finds.

Trench 6 (Fig. 7)

Trench 6 was aligned SW–NE and was 11.30m long and 0.51m deep; the stratigraphy comprised 0.50m topsoil overlying natural geology. Two postholes or small pits (12 and 13) and a modern pit were identified in the trench. The postholes were 0.46m and 0.36m diameter and 0.14m and 0.17m deep respectively. Neither produced any finds.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned ESE–WNW and was 10.6m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.60m of topsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned west-east and was 5.40m long and 0.69m deep, the stratigraphy comprised 0.69m of topsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 9 (Fig. 7 and Plate 4)

Trench 9 was aligned west–east and was 5.0m long and 0.80m deep, the stratigraphy comprising of 0.80m topsoil over natural geology. Two gullies (14 and 15/16) were identified in the trench. Gully 15/16 was aligned SW–NE and was 0.5m wide and 0.16m deep with a single fill (58–59). Gully 15/16 cut gully 14. Slot 16 produced three sherds of medieval pottery. Gully 14 was aligned NW–SE and was 0.54m wide and 0.16m deep with a single fill (57). No datable finds were recovered.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological evaluation resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of 48 sherds of pottery, weighing 907g, a single piece of roofing tile and c. 15 fragments of fired clay. Pottery was recovered from seven features and includes material of Roman, Saxon and Medieval dates (Appendix 3). The pottery was moderately well preserved with an overall average sherd size of 18.9g and quite fresh breaks to the sherds. Surface finishes had been retained.

Roman

At least 39 sherd of Roman date were recovered which appear to span the 2nd through the later 3rd/4th century. Ditch 1 produced the largest assemblage, 24 sherds, half the total recovered. The group appears to date to the

2nd century and includes a sherd of mica-slipped oxidized ware, a Drag. 33 cup in Central Gaulish (Lezoux) samian, white-slipped ware, grog-tempered ware and various reduced sandy wares in handmade and wheel-made wares. Gully 5 produced two sherds and a small piece of undated ceramic building material. The sherds comprised a grey handmade sandy ware and a burnished grog-tempered sherd which are probably of early Roman date. Similarly of likely early Roman date are two sherds in the Savernake tradition from ditch 7. A further four sherds came from animal burial 8. The sherds, grey and black sandy wares, are not closely datable other than Roman. Construction cut 17 produced a single sherd of a white-slipped Oxfordshire *mortarium* made in the later 3rd or 4th centuries.

Saxon

Six sherds of Saxon pottery were present, all dense organic-tempered wares from ditch 2. Organic-tempered ware has a moderately long chronology and thus without other diagnostic material this group could date anywhere from the 6th to later 8th/9th centuries. The same feature yielded a sherd of Roman Wiltshire colour-coated beaker with combed wavy line decoration, a very worn *mortarium* base and three other Roman sherds.

Medieval

Three sherds of oxidized sandy ware with a patch green glaze were recovered from gully 16. These are from a jug of Brill-Boarstall-type and likely to date to the later 13th-15th century.

Fired clay and ceramic building material by Jane Timby and Danielle Milbank

Fifteen fragments of fired clay with a dense organic temper were recovered from ditch 1. One larger fragment had a right-angle and a flat surface suggesting brick or tile. The association of this material with the pottery suggest it derives from the early Roman occupation. A single very small fragment of possible ceramic building material from ditch 5 is too small to date with certainty.

Also from ditch 1 (deposit 53) came three fragments of tile weighing 1893g. These were examined under x10 magnification and all are of a hard, evenly-fired fabric with frequent small (1mm) and occasional large (up to 10mm) crushed brick/tile grog inclusions. The underside of each piece was rough, indicating they were made using a sandy mould. They were dark, slightly orange red in colour, and 32mm thick. One fragment had traces of mortar on its upper surface. No flanged parts were present, and they appear to be fragments of flat tiles ('bessales', used for hypocausts, or 'lydions', used for coursing in a wall) rather than *tegulae*. They date to the Roman period, but cannot be dated more closely by form or fabric.

Stone by Danielle Milbank

Seven fragments of stone weighing 618g were recovered, all from wall construction cut 4 (61). These included four pieces of grey, slightly friable limestone with two possible examples of rough facing. These may have been used as building material. Also recovered were two fragments of a hard pinkish-grey quartz rich medium-grained sandstone, perhaps used as a roof tile, as what might be a peghole was visible on one broken edge. One piece of a similar very hard quartz-rich stone was recovered, with slightly more rounded grains, very well cemented with iron oxide. It is possibly feldspathic gritstone, and is a fairly regular shape and smoothed, and may have been used as a whetstone.

Animal Bone by Danielle Milbank

A small assemblage of fragmented disarticulated animal bone and one articulated skeleton were recovered from 6 contexts encountered in the evaluation. A total of 211 fragments were recovered, weighing 1842g (Appendix 4). The preservation of the remains was moderate, with fairly high fragmentation and some surface erosion. The generally small fragment size limited the amount of identifiable bone, with the exception of the animal burial in context 63 (pit 8). Overall, the assemblage was dominated by sheep/goat skeletal elements, which were identified in contexts 53, 54, 55, 61 and 63. Of these, the majority comprised an incomplete sheep/goat skeleton, of which ten vertebrae, the sacrum and several ribs, and pieces representing long bones of the fore- and hindlimbs and phalanges (representing one individual) were recovered. Based on the morphology of the metatarsals, the skeleton is more likely to be that of a goat than a sheep, and was a fairly small, though skeletally mature, animal. The skull was not recovered and it appears that the upper part of the skeleton including the skull was not within the excavated slot (the pit was not fully excavated in the evaluation). There were no butchery marks present, and the articulated state in which the animal was found suggests it was not killed for food.

Fragments of cattle bone and tooth were recovered from deposits 52 (a single tooth) and 53 (a mandible fragment with several teeth), and deposit 54 contained a single piece identified as the right calcaneus of a pig. A single horse talus bone (left) was recovered from deposit 53.

Due to the lack of duplicated skeletal elements, the minimum number of individuals present in the assemblage was found to be 5: 2 sheep/goat, 1 pig, 1 horse and 1 cow species. Evidence of butchery was limited to one fragment of unidentified large animal bone. No other information could be retrieved from the fragmented remains, and other than the goat skeleton, the animal bone is likely to represent domestic consumption.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the site has demonstrated the survival of archaeological remains of at least three periods, with seven of the nine trenches producing features, and pottery from the Roman (early and late), Saxon and Medieval periods. The features are in general well-preserved, presumably thanks to the very deep topsoil. The ditches may represent an agricultural landscape, while the walls and possible surface suggest occupation, set back some distance from Ermin Street. No evidence was found of the extension of the nearby human burials onto the site, but trenching in the eastern portion, where these might be expected, was limited.

It is concluded that the site has good archaeological potential for these three periods and that the proposed development is likely to require archaeological mitigation.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1 (East)	19.60	1.6	1.10(E) 0.71 (W)	East: 0-0.76m topsoil; 0.76-1.10m subsoil; 1.10m+ green sand and clay (natural geology). Ditch 1. West: 0-0.56m topsoil; 0.56-0.71m redeposited natural; 0.71m+ natural geology. Modern truncation and Ditch 1. [Plate 1]
2	20.50	1.6	1.20	0-0.95m topsoil; 0.95-1.15m subsoil; 1.15m+ natural geology. Ditches 2 and 3, walls 61, 62 and 70.
3	10.50	1.6	0.65	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.24m chalk rubble; 0.24-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ natural geology. Gullies 5 and 6. [Plates 2 and 3]
4	21.40	1.6	0.66	0-0.66m topsoil; 0.66m+ natural geology. Ditch 7 and animal burial 8.
5	22.10	1.6	0.61	0-0.60m topsoil; 0.60m+ natural geology. Ditch 9, pit 10, posthole 11.
6	11.30	1.6	0.51	0-0.50m topsoil; 0.50m+ natural geology. Postholes 12 and 13.
7	10.6	1.6	0.60	0-0.60m topsoil; 0.60m+ natural geology.
8	5.40	1.6	0.69	0-0.69m topsoil; 0.69m+ natural geology.
9	5.00	1.6	0.80	0-0.80m topsoil; 0.80m+ natural geology. Gullies 14 and 15=16. [Plate 4]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

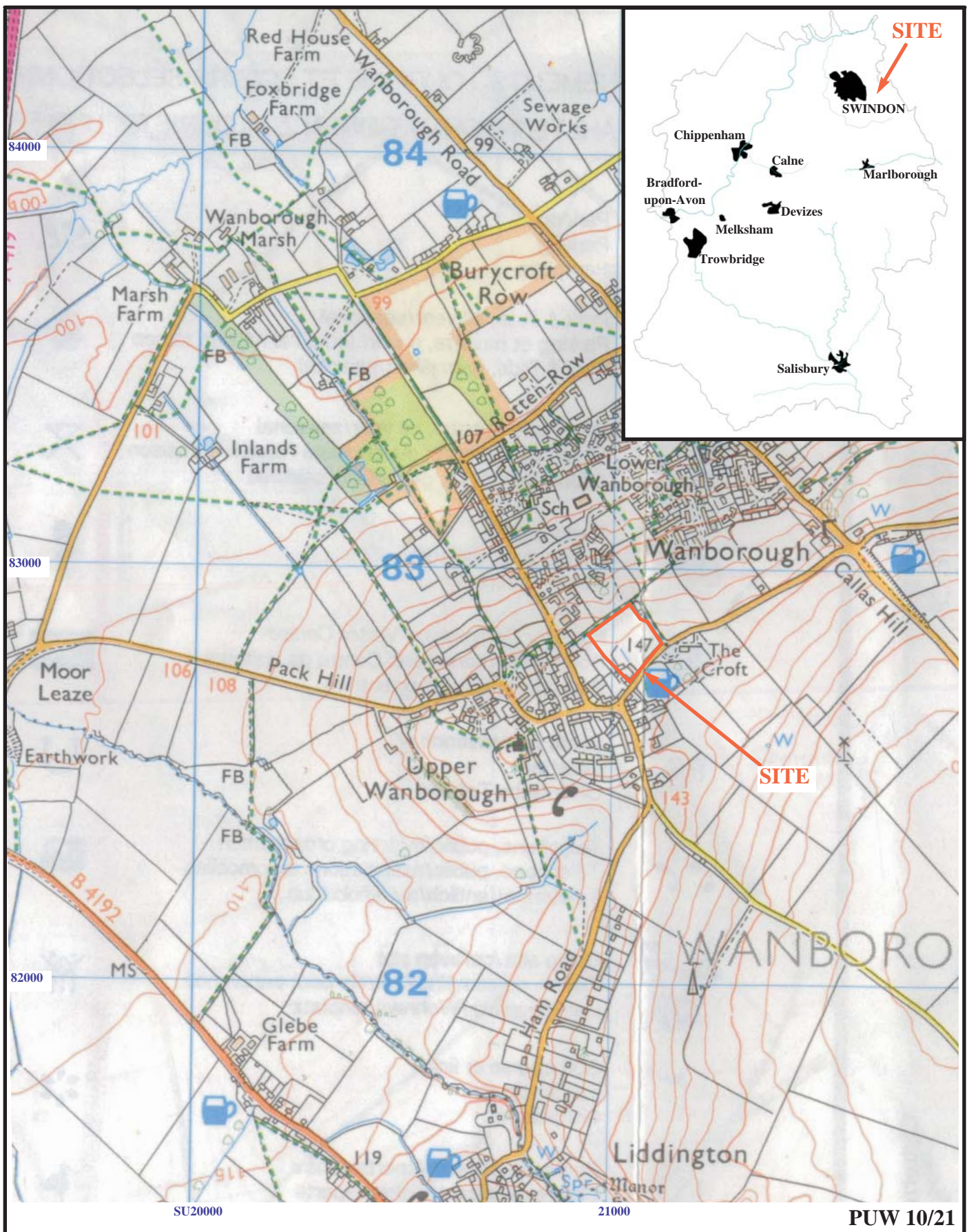
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	53	Ditch	Roman	Pottery
2	2	54	Ditch	Early/Middle Saxon	Pottery
2	3	60	Ditch	-	
2	4	61	Wall	-	
2	17	62	Wall	Late Roman	Pottery
2	18	70	Wall	-	
3	5	55	Gully	Early Roman	Pottery
3	6	64	Gully	Roman or earlier	Stratigraphy
4	7	56	Ditch	Early Roman	Pottery
4	8	63	Animal burial	Roman	Pottery
5	9	65	Ditch	-	
5	10	66	Pit	-	
5	11	67	Posthole	-	
6	12	68	Posthole	-	
6	13	69	Posthole	-	
9	14	57	Gully	Medieval or earlier	Stratigraphy
9	15	59	Gully	Medieval	Same as 16
9	16	58	Gully	Medieval	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery summary

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Early Roman</i>	<i>Roman</i>	<i>Saxon</i>	<i>Medieval</i>	<i>Total No</i>	<i>Total Wt (g)</i>
1	53	-	24	-	-	24	406
2	54	-	5	6	-	11	173
5	55	2	-	-	-	2	40
7	56	3	-	-	-	3	193
8	63	-	4	-	-	4	29
16	58	-	-	-	3	3	11
17	62	-	1	-	-	1	55
TOTAL		5	34	6	3	48	907

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of animal bone

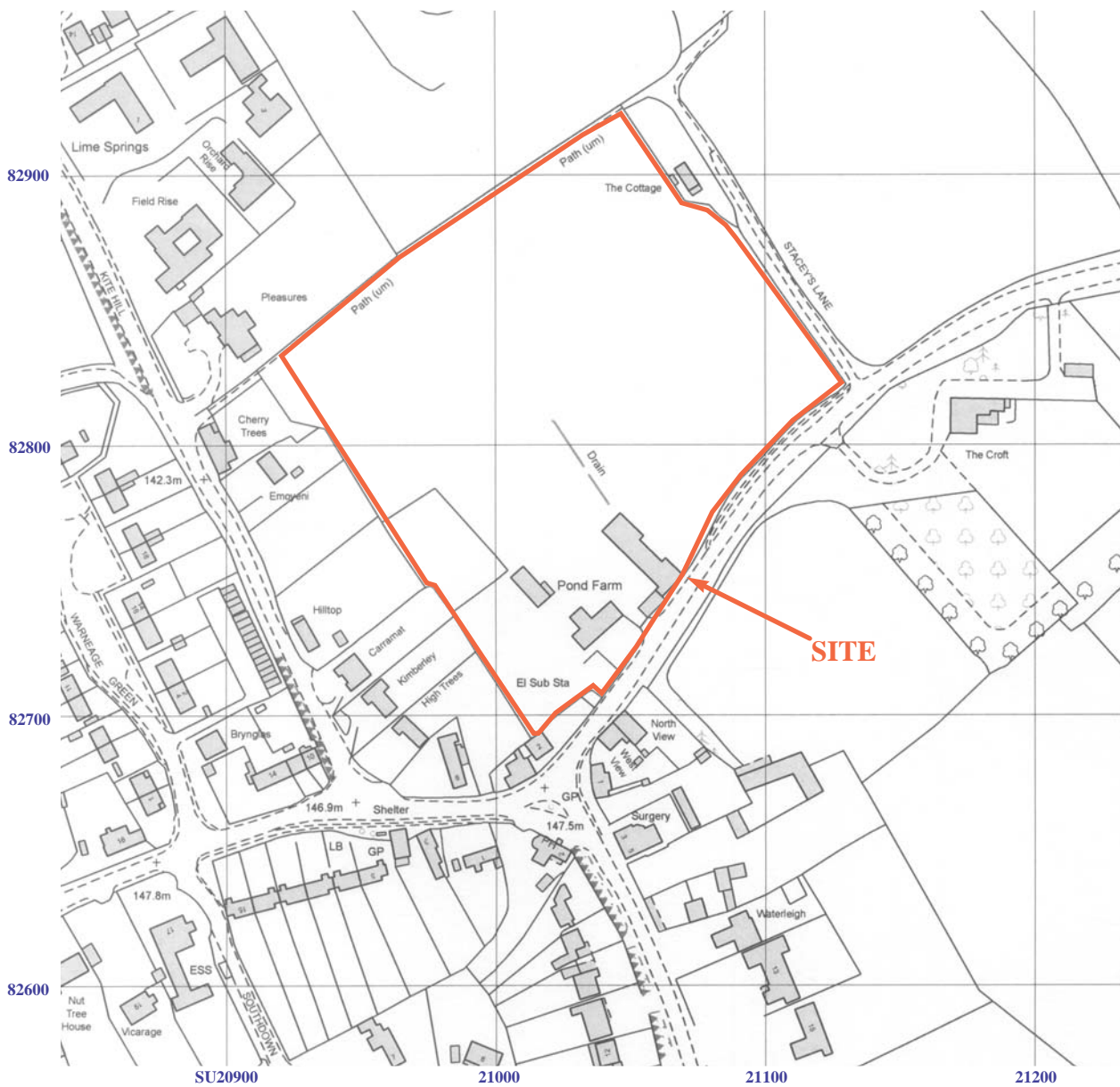
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No. Frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Cow</i>	<i>Sheep/goat</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
	52	10	103	-	-	-	-	10
1	53	65	963	1	5	1	-	58
2	54	30	243	-	-	7	1	22
5	55	5	54	-	1	1	-	3
4	61	1	39	-	-	1	-	-
8	63	100	440	-	-	40	-	60
	Total	211	1842					
	MNI			1	1	2	1	



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wanborough and Wiltshire.

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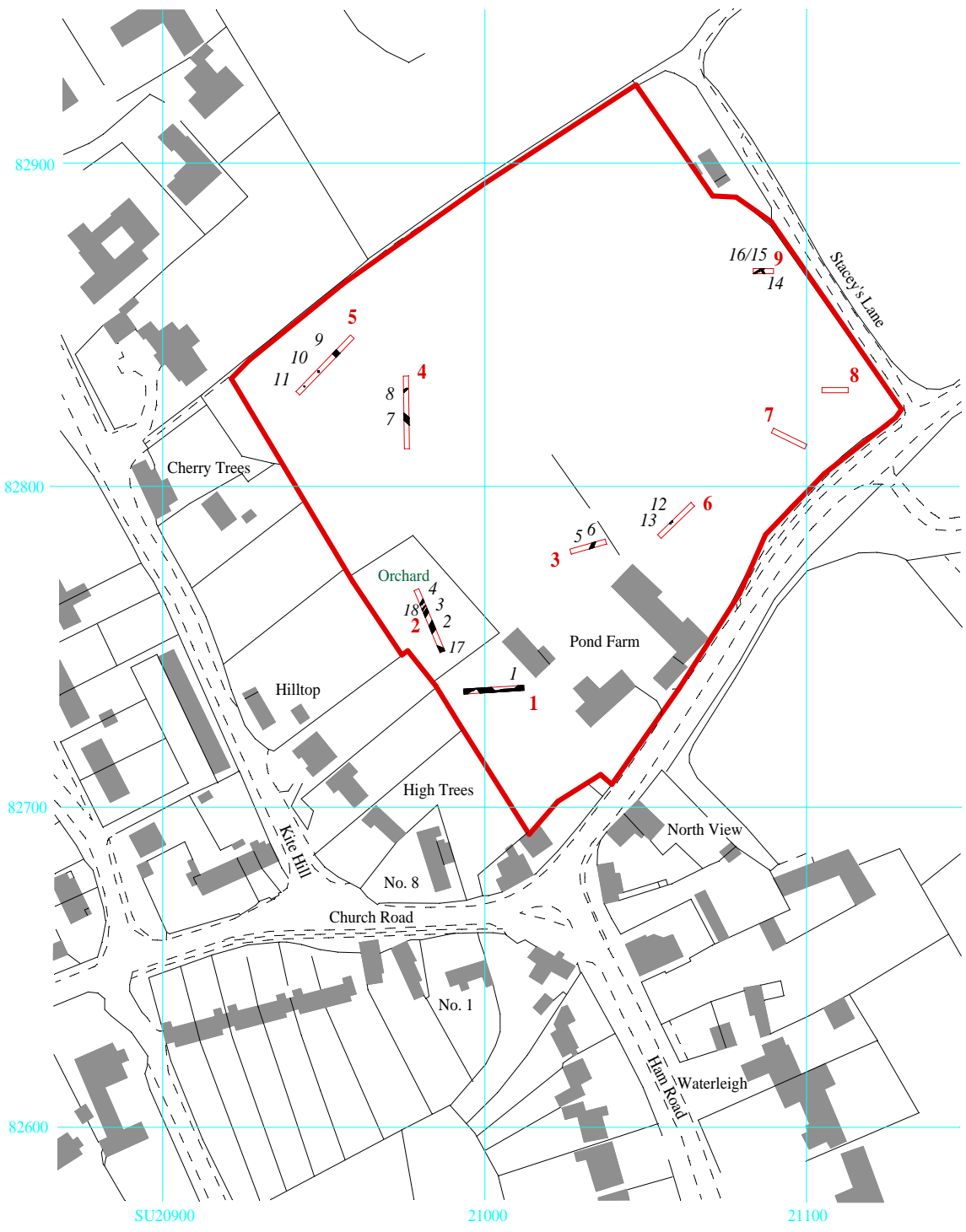


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Figure 2. Location of site off Church Road, showing current site layout.

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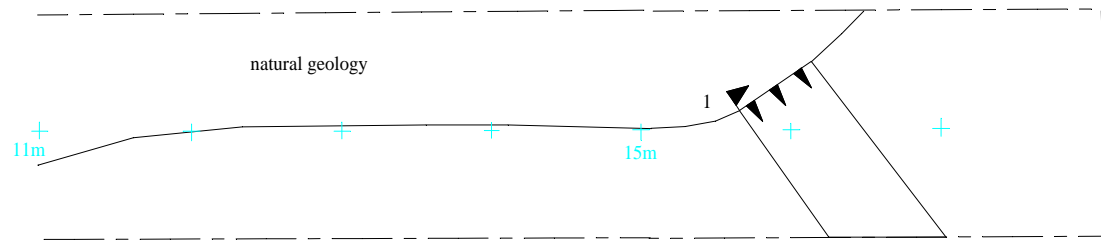
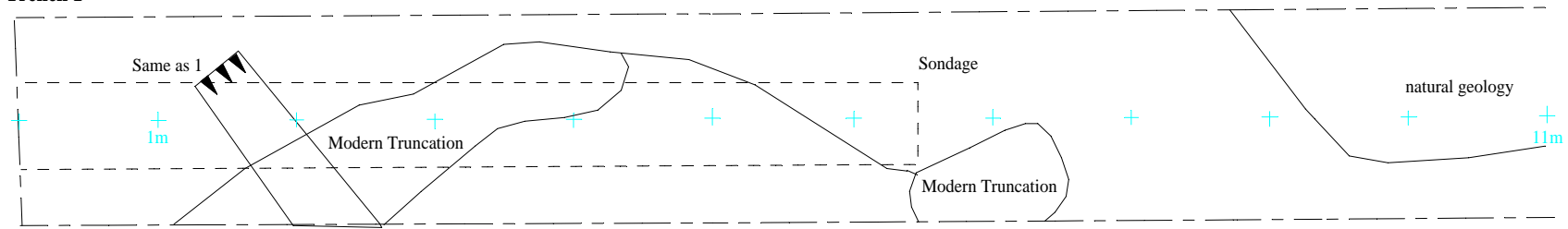
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Figure 3. Location of trenches and features.



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Trench 1



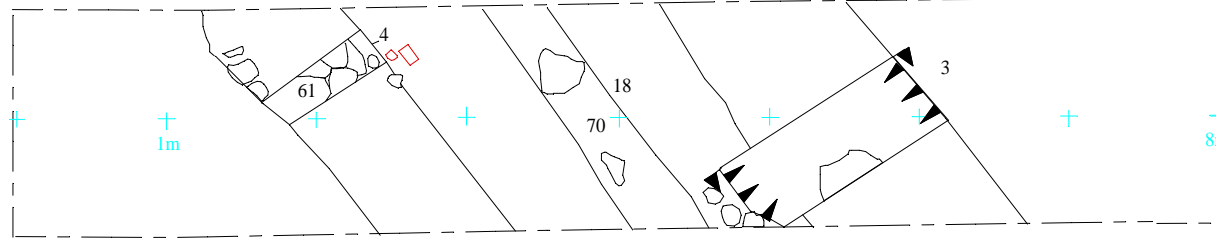
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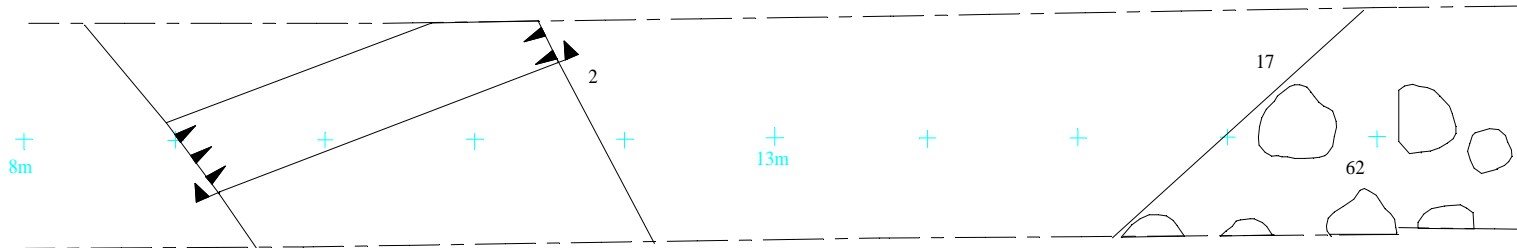
Figure 4. Trench Plan (trench 1).



Trench 2



continued
below



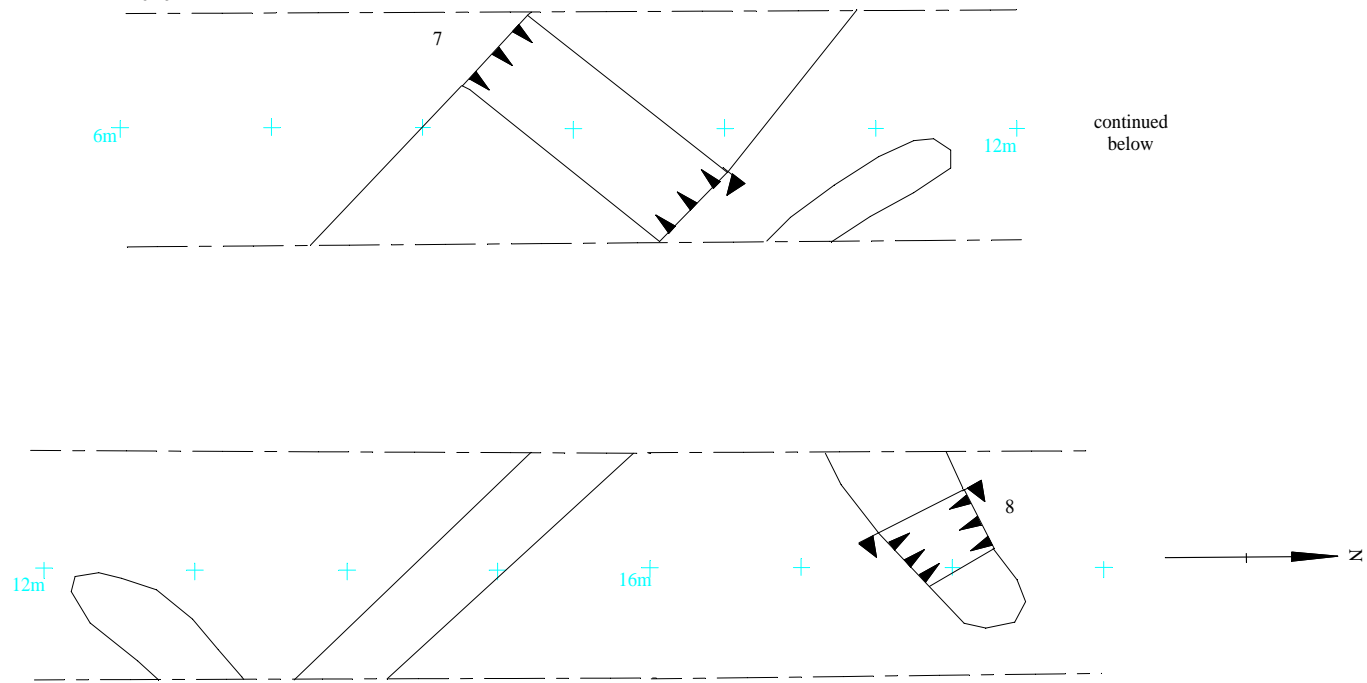
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Figure 5. Trench Plans (trench 2).



Trench 4



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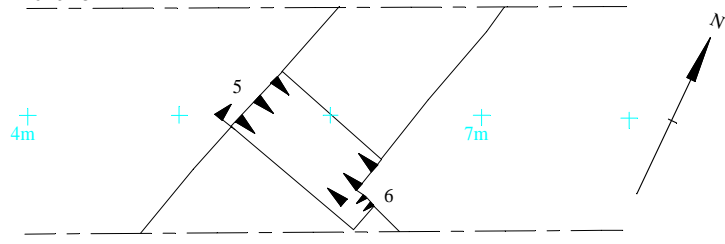
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Figure 6. Trench Plans (trench 4).

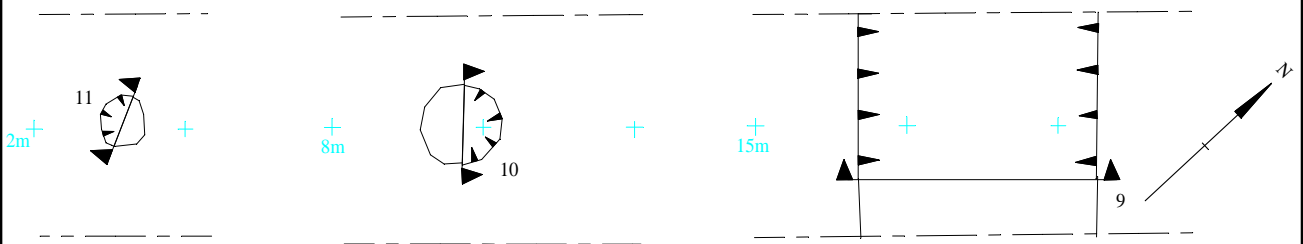


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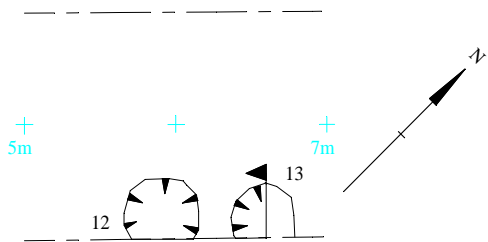
Trench 3



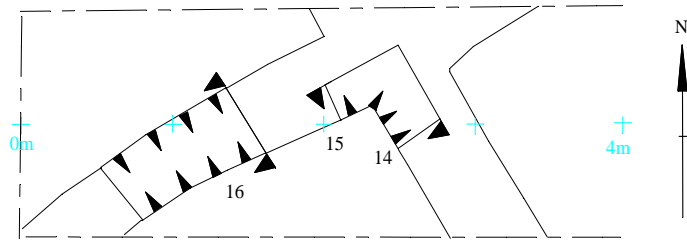
Trench 5



Trench 6



Trench 9



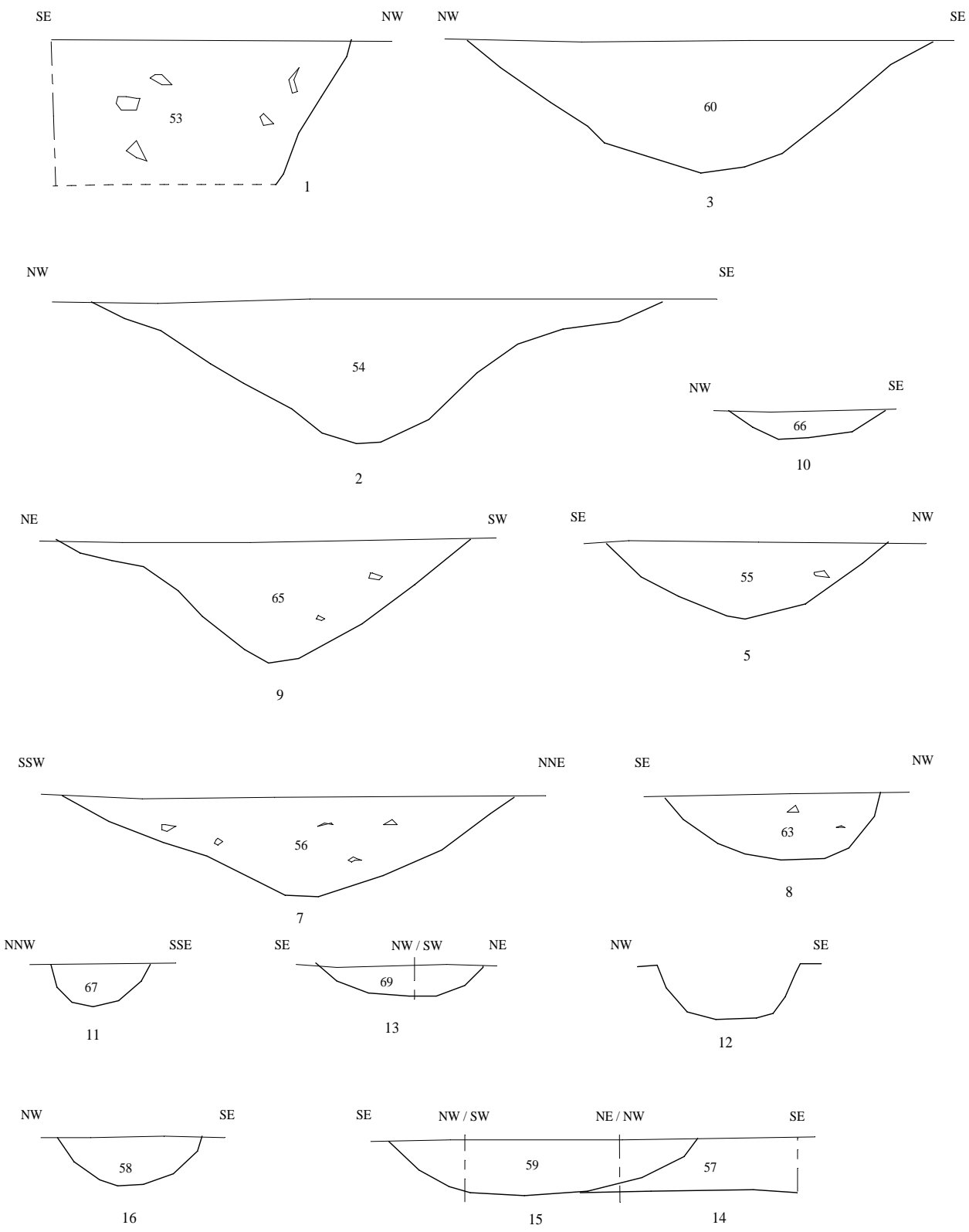
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Figure 7. Trench Plans (3-9).



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Figure 8. Sections



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north west, horizontal scales: 2m and 1m, vertical scale 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking north west, horizontal scales: 2m and 1m, vertical scale 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.



Plate 3. Trench 3, ditch 5, and gully 6, looking south west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m



Plate 4. Trench 9, gully 16, looking east; Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m

PUW 10/21

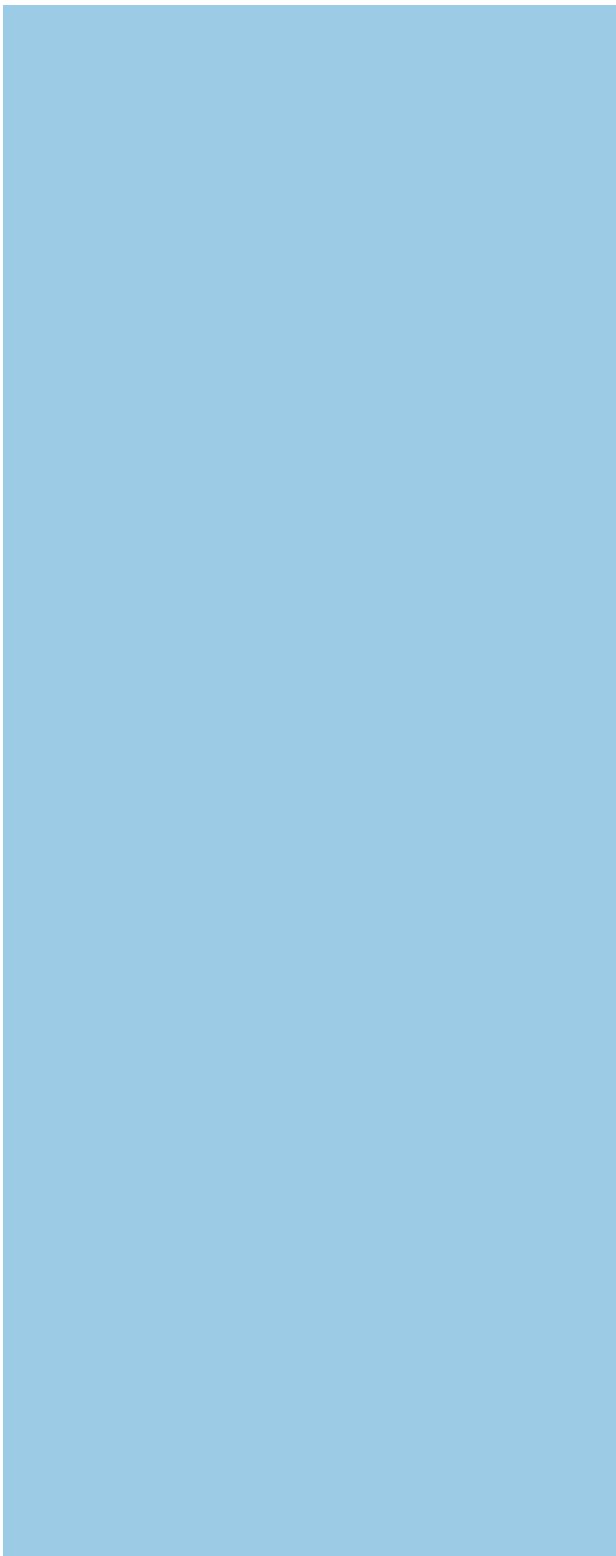
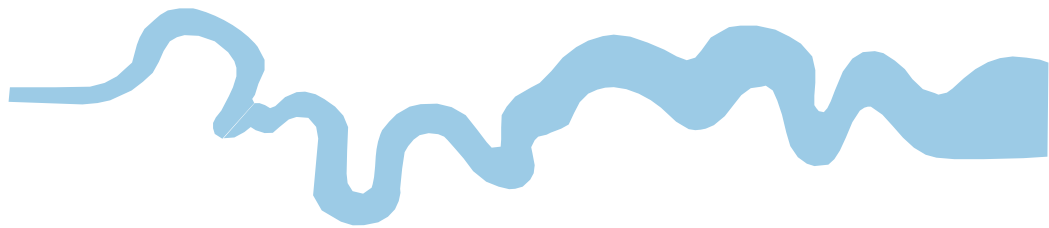
**Pond Farm, Upper Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Plates 3 and 4.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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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