

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road,  
Pewsey, Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Jamie Lewis**

**Site Code: BFP11/41**

**(SU 1710 6025)**

# **Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action  
for Acorn Construction (Newbury) Ltd**

by James Lewis  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

SiteCode: BFP11/51

**June 2011**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire

**Grid reference:** SU 1710 6025

**Site activity:** Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 14th–15th June 2011

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James Lewis

**Site code:** BFP 11/51

**Area of site:** 1825 sq m (280 sq m excavated)

**Summary of results:** Eight postholes, 3 pits, a single ditch and a gully were excavated and recorded. All appear to be late post-medieval in date; the gully is possibly of medieval date.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 27.06.11
	Steve Preston ✓ 27.06.11

# Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by James Lewis

Report 11/51

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out on land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire (SU 1710 6025) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Baker of Acorn Construction (Newbury) Ltd, Unit 18, Salisbury Road, Pewsey, SN9 5PZ

Planning consent (K/5961/12/F) has been obtained from Wiltshire Council to construct two new dwellings with ancillary garage, driveway and a replacement garage on land at Ball House Farm. Recent work has indicated that this area was the location of early industry and potentially the site of an early Manorial seat of the early medieval settlement. As a result of potential archaeological deposits being damaged or destroyed by the proposed development a condition was attached to the consent, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This was to take the form of a recording action within the footprint of the proposed houses and garage.

This was in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), which has since been superseded by the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and Wiltshire County Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Vaughan, Assistant County Archaeologist, of Wiltshire Archaeology Service, and based on a brief supplied by Wiltshire Archaeology Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and Kyle Beaverstock on 13th–14th June 2011 and the site code is BFP 11/51. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museums in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern edge of the small town of Pewsey within the Vale of Pewsey (Fig.1). The site was used as an orchard and extension to the garden of the present Ball House Farm: previous to this a milking shed occupied the site. The northern boundary is defined by the B3087 Pewsey to Burbage road and beyond this and to the west are residential houses (Fig. 2). The east and south of the site is open field given over to livestock

farming. The underlying geology is mapped as Brickearth (BGS 1985) however Greensand was the natural geology encountered during the excavation. The site lies at an elevation of 116m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Wiltshire Archaeology Service. It is located within the Vale of Pewsey which is considered to be an archaeologically rich area, for example an important Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Knap Hill lies 6km to the north-west. The site lies to the east of the historic centre of Pewsey, which has late Saxon origins and is recorded in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). The parish church retains 9th-century features and other Saxon finds, including a gold pendant have been recorded in the area, along with a variety of prehistoric struck flint. On the High Street itself previous work has recorded medieval remains (WA 1996), however recent work also on the High Street found no archaeological deposits (Porter 2011). Recent research summarized within the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record suggests that the site lies within an area of early medieval settlement. The area around St John's Close (just west of the site) is thought to be the position where a Tithe Barn once stood. A late Saxon manor is possibly located close to the site.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the project 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 are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any late Saxon or medieval deposits are present; and
- to determine if any evidence for early industrial activity was present.

Three areas were to be examined, each corresponding with the footprint of the proposed buildings (Fig. 3). A JCB-type digger fitted with a toothless bucket was used to excavate down to the natural geology or until archaeological deposits were encountered. Depending upon the results of this initial excavation and the depth of the groundworks to firm the driveway, turning areas and hard standing around the structures a contingency was allowed in order to extend the excavation into these areas if need be. All archaeological deposits and features were to be hand cleaned, sectioned and recorded as a minimum requirement.

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

## **Results**

### House Plot 1

The footprint for House 1 was L-shaped and the main part of the building was aligned NE-SW and covered an area of approximately 130 sq m (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy and depth of overburden varied; in the northern part of the footprint, the stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m thick of topsoil over subsoil, 0.43m thick, which overlay the natural Greensand geology.. In the southern area the stratigraphy comprised topsoil, 0.2m thick, overlying made ground (68), 0.8m thick, beneath which lay the natural geology. The concrete floor of the dairy shed was observed in the western side of the footing at a depth of 0.2m and measured 0.1m thick. Made ground layer 68 contained four sherds of 19th- or 20th-century pottery

Two features were investigated in the southern portion of the footprint (Fig. 4, Pl. 2). Feature 4 was a broad but shallow ditch aligned SW- NE ditch, extending beyond the excavation boundary but not as far as house plot 2; it was at least 3m long and was 2.3m wide but only and 0.24m deep. It contained two fills; the top fill (57) was green-brown silty sand and contained late post-medieval pottery and brick. This overlay darker green brown silty sand (58) which also contained post-medieval pottery and brick. Approximately 0.3m to the north was an irregular shaped feature (5), possibly a pit. This measured 1.42m long, 1.2m wide and 0.16m deep with a very irregular base, and it contained a single fill (59), green-brown silty sand with post-medieval pottery, bone and brick inclusions.

### House Plot 2

House 2 was located to the west of house 1. The footprint covered an area of 120 sq m (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil, above made ground (68), 0.9m thick which overlay the natural geology. Eight features (6-13) were identified during the excavation; features 6–8 and 11–13 were very shallow postholes, which measured between 0.18–0.3m in diameter and the depths varied between 0.03–0.09m. All the postholes contained similar fills of compact, brown grey sandy clay (60, 61 and 64–67), with no inclusions (Fig. 4). It is possible these formed a small rectangular building some 5m x 3.5m but the plan is not especially convincing and the spacing between the posts is probably too great for them to be related in this way.

Feature 9 was a shallow rectangular pit, 0.7m long, 0.33m wide and 0.05m deep. It contained a single fill (62), dark grey sandy clay with the bones of a piglet. This pit was most likely dug specifically to dispose of the piglet. Feature 10 was another shallow rectangular pit which measured 1m long, 0.5m wide and 0.03m deep. It contained a single fill (63) brown grey sandy clay, with no inclusions.

## Garage

The footprint of the garage was rectangular in shape, covered an area of 29 sq m (Fig. 3, Pl. 3). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m thick of topsoil (50) below this was subsoil (51), 0.65m thick which overlay natural geology. Three features (1-3) were identified. Feature 1 was a shallow gully which was aligned SW-NE (broadly on the same alignment as ditch 4). The eastern end was truncated during the excavation of the footprint but could be identified in the eastern section. It was also truncated by pit 3 (see below). The gully measured at least 6m long, 0.65m wide, 0.3m deep and extended beyond the western and eastern edges of the excavation area (Fig. 4; Pl. 1). It contained one fill (52) of brown grey sandy clay and within this was found a single piece of medieval pottery and animal bone and a large piece of brick. Located 0.7m south of the gully was a shallow posthole (2) which measured 0.55m in diameter and 0.04m deep. It contained a single fill (53) of compact brown grey sandy clay, with no inclusions.

Truncating gully 1 was deep oval pit (3) which measured 1.1m long, 0.75m wide and 0.7m deep. It contained 3 fills. The top fill (54) was dark blue grey sandy clay with post-medieval pottery, animal bone, a single oyster shell and a clay tobacco pipe stem. The thickness of the fill varied between 0.25–0.4m. Below this was re-deposited greensand (55), with no inclusions of up to 0.25m thickness. At the base of the pit was 0.1m of dark blue grey sandy clay (56), with post-medieval pottery.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 176g. It was largely post-medieval, although a single medieval sherd was also present (Appendix 3). The following fabric types were noted:

**Newbury-type A/B wares.** Late 11th to early 15th century (Mephram 1997, 51–2). Flint, sand and shell tempered wares, probably manufactured in the Savernake Forest (Mephram 1997, 65). It has a wide distribution throughout Berkshire, northern Hampshire and Oxfordshire (Mephram 1997, fig. 29). 1 sherd, 3g.

**Red Earthenware.** 16th – 19th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. There is a known Wiltshire source at Crockerton (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 459). 6 sherds, 154g.

**19th C.** Mass-produced 19th – 20th century earthenwares. 6 sherds, 19g

The fabrics are typical finds at sites in the region.

### *Clay pipe* by James Lewis

A single clay tobacco pipe stem was recovered from cut 3 fill 54. It measured 62mm long and 8mm in diameter and the hole was 3mm in diameter. The wide bore indicates that it is probably late, dating to the 19th century.

### *Oyster Shell* by James Lewis

A single fragmentary piece of oyster shell was recovered from post-medieval pit 3. It measured 40mm long and 25mm wide and was approximately 2mm thick.

### *Brick and Tile* by James Lewis

A total of 912g of brick and tile was recovered from three features (1, 4 and 5). It was all hand made in a similar fabric, with occasional flint inclusions. The majority of the material (818g) being recovered from post-medieval features. Only a single piece (94g) came from a possible medieval context (1).

### *Animal bone* by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from four contexts. A total of 72 pieces of bone were present for analysis, weighing 243g (Appendix 4). The surface preservation of the remains was generally good, with the exception of the fragment from gully 1 (52), which had a very etched cortical bone surface and extensive exfoliation. All pieces displayed some degree of fragmentation, hindering some species identification.

The minimum number of animal individuals present within this assemblage was four: one horse, one sheep/goat, one pig, and one unidentifiable small animal. The horse was represented solely by two pieces of bone in pit 3 (54), which were re-fit into a single proximal phalanx. The sheep/goat was also identified by remains in context 3 (54), notably fragments of a left distal tibia and ulna, as well as portions of the left and right



sides of the cranium at the articulation with the horn cores. The pig individual was represented by all remains excavated from pit 9 (62). The pig was very young at the time of death, as the skeleton was still in the process of development (i.e. all epiphyses were unfused). Finally, a single long bone fragment from an unidentified small animal was also present in 3 (54).

Evidence of cut-marks (i.e. butchery practices) were present on three of the bone fragments recovered from pit 3 (54), including the proximal horse phalanx, the distal sheep/goat tibia, ulna and an unidentifiable medium sized animal long bone shaft fragment. No further information could be retrieved from these remains.

## Conclusion

At Ball House Farm deposits of possible archaeological significance were found to be present on the site but these mostly date from the late post-medieval period. Potentially gully 1 might be earlier. However it was dated only by a single sherd of medieval pottery and by its truncation by a 19th/20th century pit. As it also contained a brick fragment that was identical to that from the post-medieval features, it may be that the medieval pottery is residual.

The geological map records the natural geology as 'Brickearth' however very little 'Brickearth' was found and the 19th-century (or later) made ground directly overlay the greensand in the footprint of house 2 and the southern area of house 1. This truncation may relate to the former use of the site or possibly even that the brickearth was actually removed for brick making.

## References

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- Mepham, L, 1997, 'Pottery' in A G Vince, S J Lobb, J C Richards and L Mepham, *Excavations in Newbury, Berkshire, 1979 – 1990*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **13**, Salisbury, 45–67
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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
House 1	11.84	11.84-17.29	0.83-1.0	0–0.4m topsoil; 0.4-0.85m subsoil; 0.85m Greensand natural geology. Features 4 and 5. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
House 2	22.25m	12	0.9-1.1	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-1.1m made ground; 1.1m +natural geology. Features 6–13.
Garage	6	4.75	0.75	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.3m subsoil; 0.3m+ natural geology. Features 1-3. <b>[Pls 1 and 3]</b>

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
House 1	1	52	gully	medieval	pottery
House 1	2	53	posthole	Unknown	None
House 1	3	54, 55, 56	pit	Post-medieval	Pottery and pipe
House 2	4	57, 58	Ditch	Post-medieval	Pottery
House 2	5	59	pit	Post-medieval	Pottery
Garage	6	60	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	7	61	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	8	68	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	9	62	Pit (animal burial)	unknown	none
Garage	10	63	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	11	64	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	12	65	posthole	unknown	none
Garage	13	66	posthole	unknown	none
House 1 and 2	-	68	deposit	19th-20th century AD	pottery

**APPENDIX 3:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

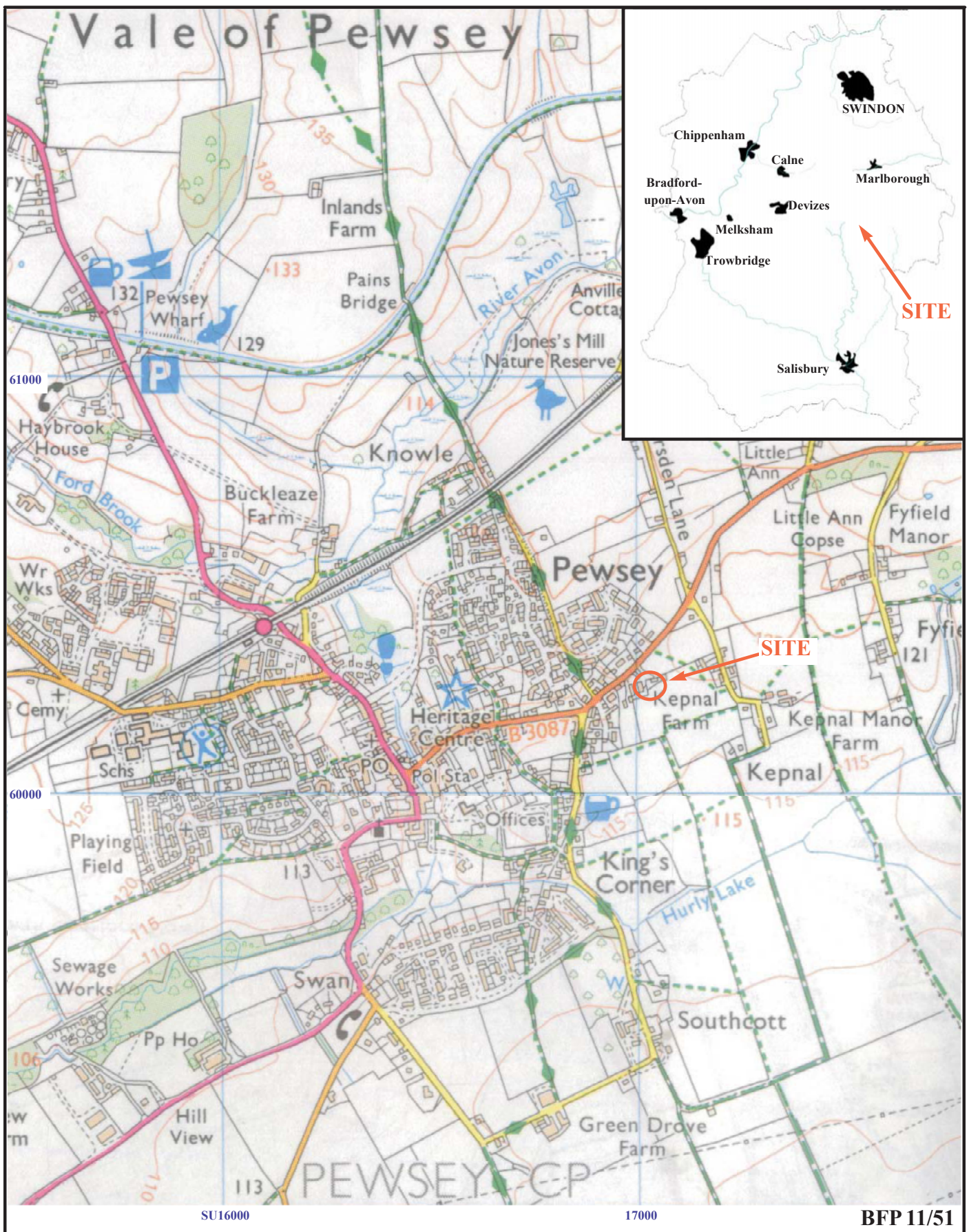
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>NEWAB</i>		<i>GRE</i>		<i>19th C</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
	68					4	11
1	52	1	3				
3	54						
3	56			1	37		
4	57					2	8
4	58			1	43		
5	59			4	74		
	Total	1	3	6	154	6	19

**APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone**

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No. frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Sheep/goat</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
1	52	1	16	1	-	-	-	-	-
3	54	10	133	-	2	7	-	1	-
5	59	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	62	50	92	-	-	-	50	-	-
Total		72	243						

Large = horse/cattle/deer sized

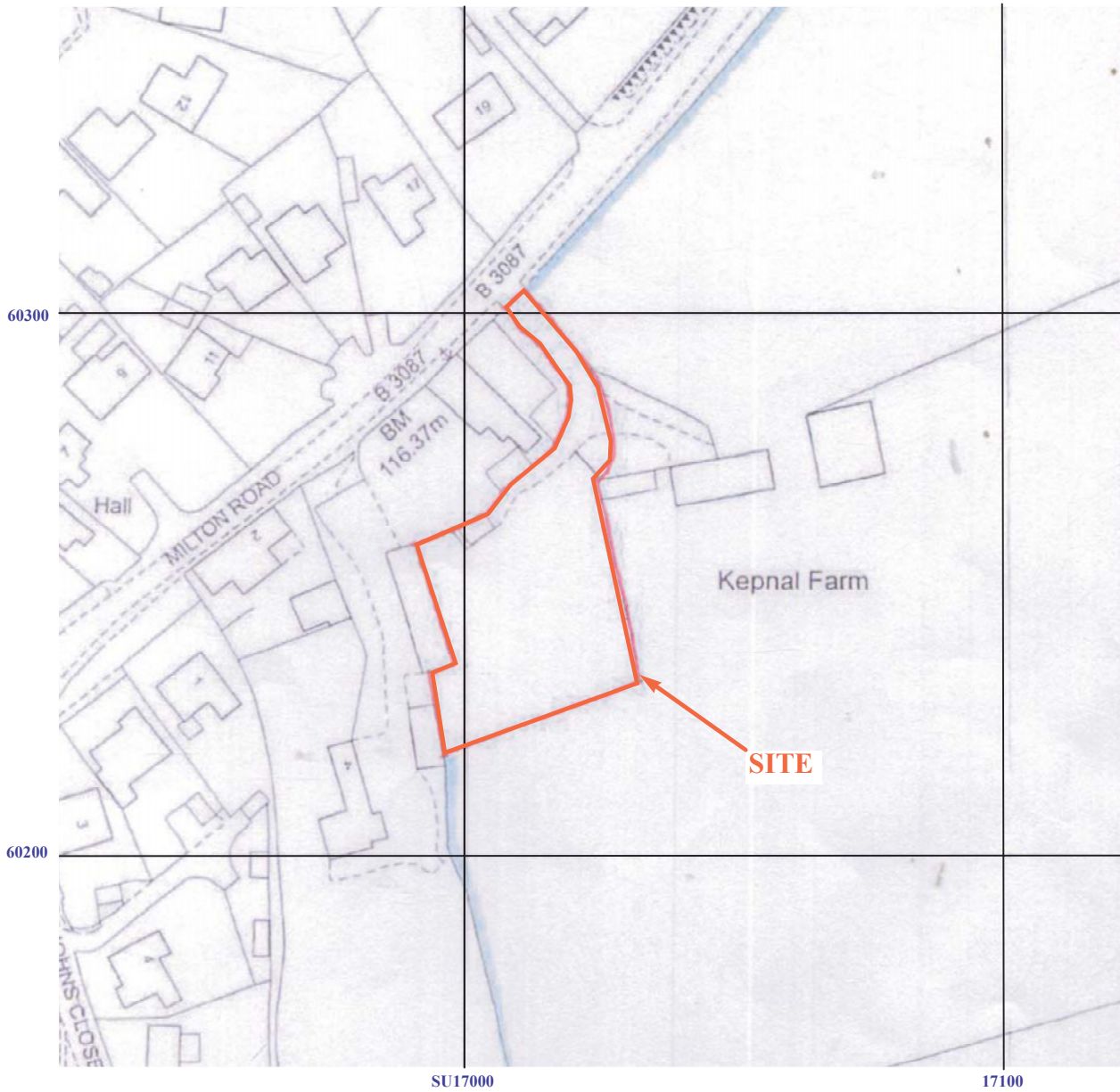
Small = dog/cat sized



**Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey,  
Wiltshire, 2011**  
**Archaeological Recording action**  
 Figure 1. Location of site within Pewsey and Wiltshire.

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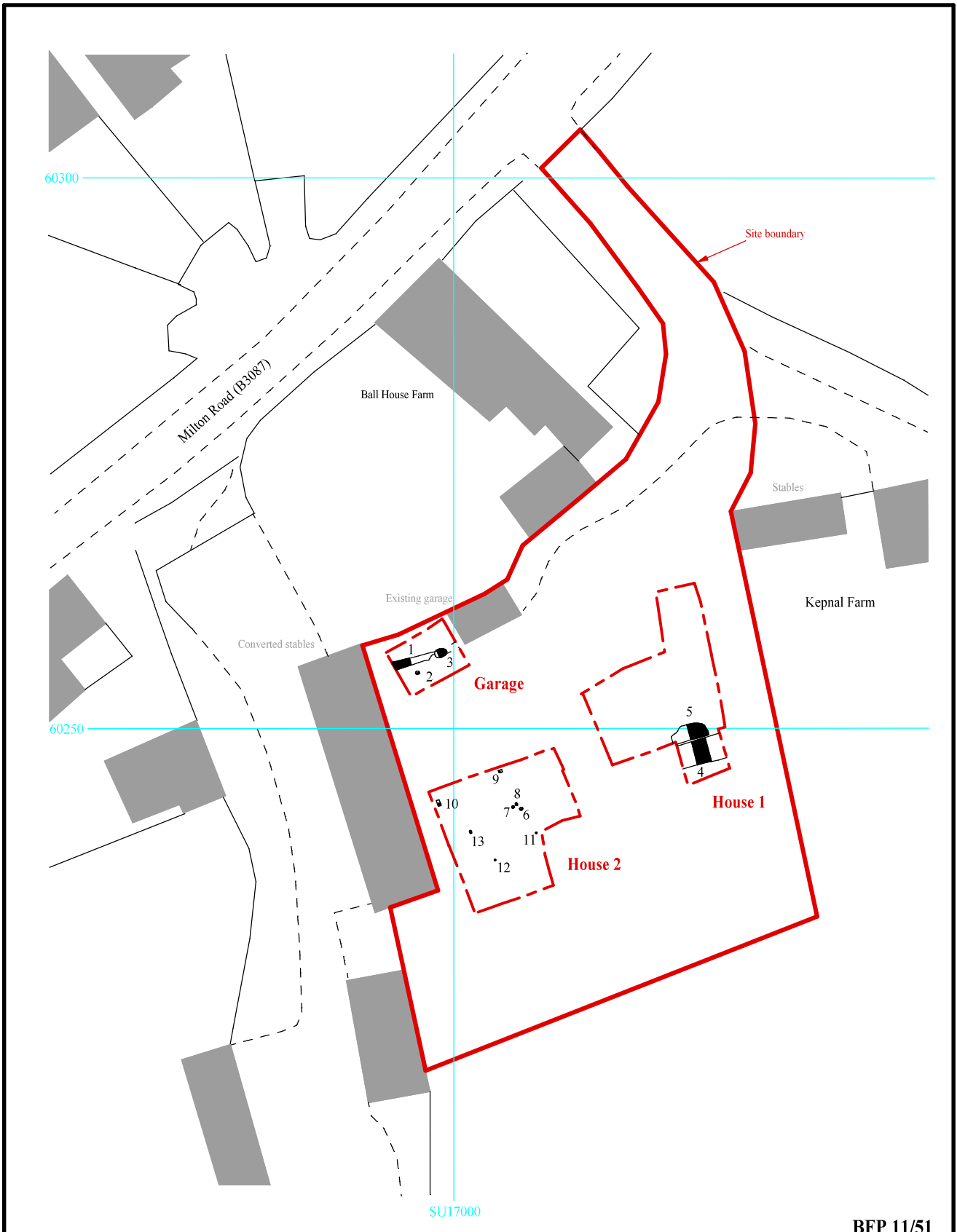
**Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey,  
Wiltshire, 2011**

**Archaeological Recording action**

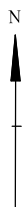
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Milton Road.

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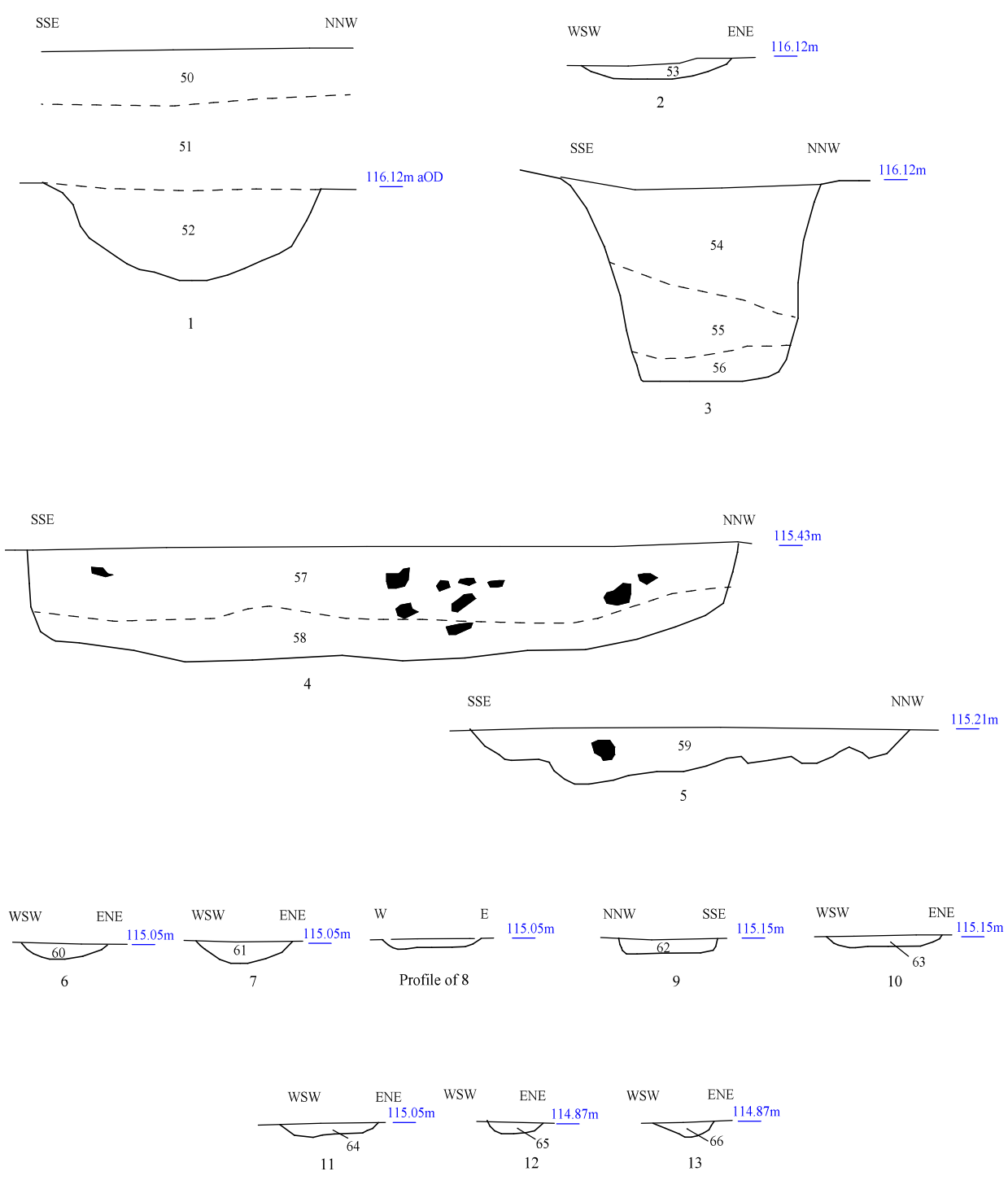
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas



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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Garage, section of gully 1, looking west, scale 0.5m.



Plate 2. House 1, looking south over ditch 4 and pit 5, scales 2m and 1m.

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**Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey,  
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Area of Garage excavation, looking north east, scales 2m and 1m.

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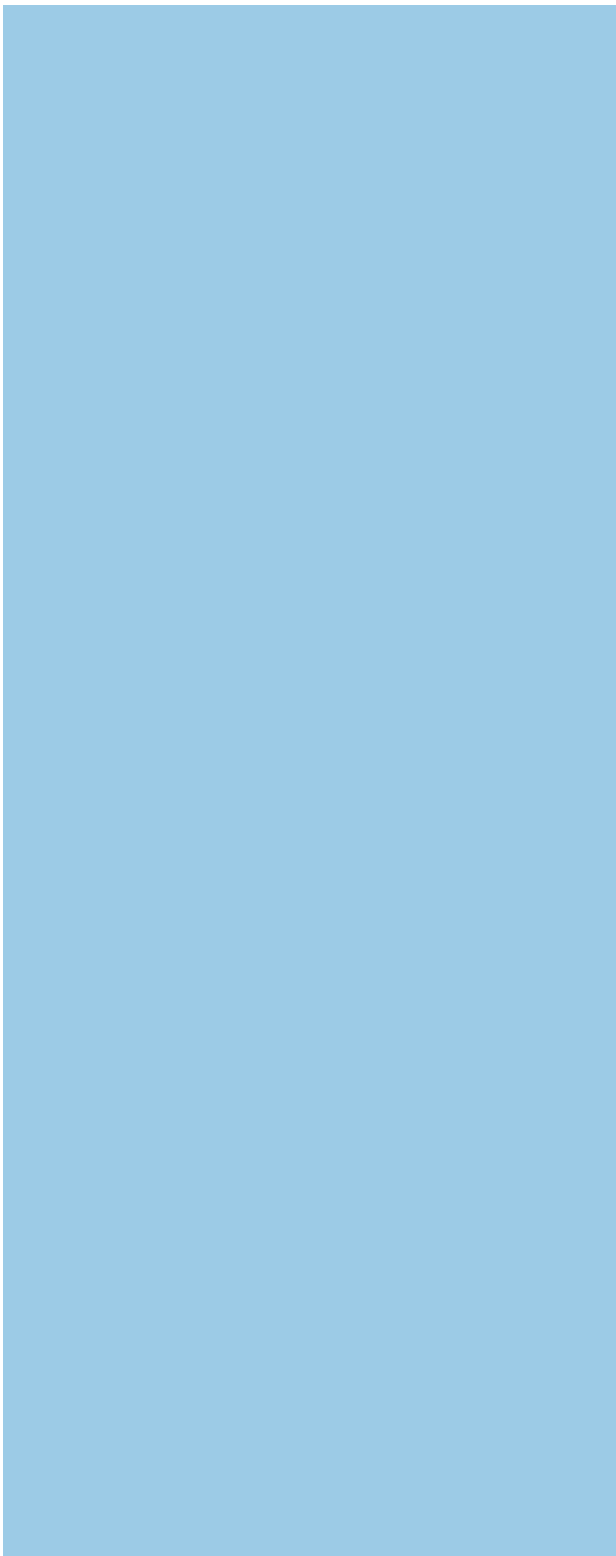
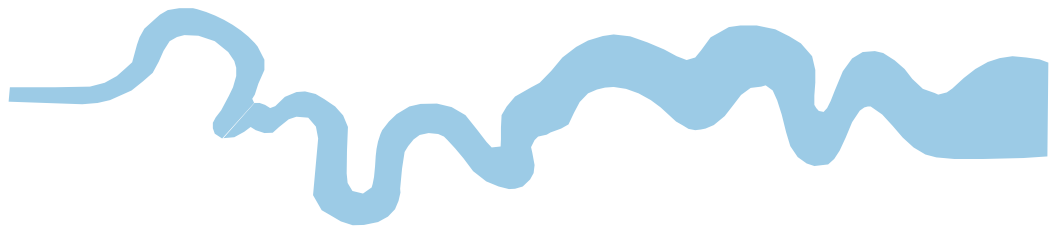
**Land at Ball House Farm, Milton Road, Pewsey,  
Wiltshire, 2011  
Archaeological Recording action  
Plate 3.**

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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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