

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals,  
Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Daniel Bray**

**Site Code: WLS12/150**

**(SU 9333 8088)**

**Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals,  
Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for CgMs Consulting**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WLS 12/150

**October 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 9333 8088

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd–5th October 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Daniel Bray

**Site code:** WLS 12/150

**Summary of results:** The evaluation has confirmed the presence of a modest volume of deposits of probable archaeological interest on the site, several of which had been identified in a previous evaluation. It is considered that these features represent field boundaries, with one location probably including a ring gully enclosure. None of the features produced dating evidence. A series of geotechnical test pits were also observed but revealed no deposits of archaeological interest.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 09.10.12 Steve Preston ✓ 09.10.12
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# Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow An Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray

Report 12/150

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow, Berkshire (SU 9333 8088) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Suzanne Gailey, CgMs Consulting, 140 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5DN on behalf of Taylor Wimpey West London, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9PQ.

Planning permission (P/02441/010) has been granted by Slough Borough Council for residential development of land at the former Wyeth Pharmaceuticals Laboratories, Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow. The consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology, requiring a phased programme of archaeological investigation. A desk-top study had summarized the archaeological potential of the area (CgMs 2011) which had also previously been evaluated (OA 1993).

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) has superseded PPS5. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology and advisor to Slough Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Aidan Colyer and the site code is WLS 12/150. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

Taplow is located to the north west of the site and Cippenham is directly to the east (Fig. 1). The site is located on an irregular parcel of land occupied by a car park that was used by the former Wyeth Labs located directly to the south (Fig. 2). The construction of this car park in the late 20th century levelled the slightly undulating natural topography. The site is bounded by residential houses to the north and Huntercombe Lane South to the west. The River Thames is approximately 1.25km to the south. The site lies at a height of 23.5m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Shepperton gravel deposit (BGS 2005). The geology observed was a light grey sandy silt alluvium deposit.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Chadwick 2011). In summary, large quantities of Palaeolithic artefacts have been found during gravel extractions at various sites in Taplow and Slough and causewayed camps of early Neolithic date have been found at nearby Staines, Eton Wick and Boveney. Woodland clearance in the area is hinted at by a Neolithic flint axe found at Cippenham. Recent excavations in Cippenham also revealed a ring gully with associated features which produced only a single flint flake and a single sherd of late Iron Age pottery (Preston 2012). A previous evaluation on the site produced four flint flakes of possible Neolithic/Bronze Age and undated linear features, possibly prehistoric (OA 1993).

## **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 specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine the date of any archaeological deposits on site; and
- to provide sufficient information to enable an appropriate mitigation strategy to be produced if necessary.

It was proposed to excavate ten trenches – three measuring 30m, four measuring 20m and three measuring 10m long, and all 1.8m wide. A contingency of up to a further 124 sq m of trenching was included if advised by Berkshire Archaeology.

Top- and sub-soil was firstly removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. In places a breaker was used to remove Tarmac. This work was supervised at all times by an archaeologist and spoil heaps were monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were exposed they were to be cleaned and excavated by hand. Upon completion of the archaeological evaluation the trenches were backfilled.

## Results

### *Geotechnical test pits*

Prior to the excavation of trenches, 14 geological test pits were dug (Fig. 3). These were monitored but produced nothing of archaeological interest. The test pits were all 0.40m wide and ranged from 2.14m to 2.66m long and from 0.74m to 3.00m in depth.

### *Evaluation trenches*

All 10 trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 10.10m to 30.40m and in depth from 0.45m to 0.75m. 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; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned N - S and was 30.0m long and 0.50m deep except for the test pit at the southern end which measured 1.10m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of Tarmac above 0.05m of scalpins above 0.20m of compacted rubble on top of the natural geology. The natural geology observed in this trench consisted of a mid yellowish brown silt deposit with very frequent gravel and stone inclusions. A gully terminus (3) filled with mottled grey/brown/red sandy silt (54) and measuring 0.9m wide by 0.33m deep (Fig. 6) was recorded at 8m from the southern end. This appears to be a continuation of a gully present in the previous evaluation. A second gully (5) was excavated at 17m and measured 0.70m wide by 0.01m deep (Pl. 3) filled with pale grey clayey silt (57). At 12m a pit/posthole (4) was excavated (Pl. 4). It contained two fills (dark grey sandy silt 55 and light grey sandy silt 56). No finds were recovered from any of these features.

#### Trench 2 (Fig. 3, Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was aligned E - W and was 10.5m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy at the west end consisted of 0.06m of bricks above 0.06m of sand above 0.22m of scalpins above 0.22m of compacted rubble overlying a mid yellowish brown silty clay natural geology. The stratigraphy at the east end of the trench was the same as Trench 1. No archaeological deposits were observed.

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned N - S and was 10.40m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of Tarmac above 0.05m of scalpings above 0.25m of compact rubble overlaying a mid greyish brown silty clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

### Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned E - W and was 10.10m long and 0.57m deep, except for a test pit at the west end which was dug to 0.92m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil above 0.21m of mid greyish sandy silt subsoil with flecks of brick and tile overlaying a light yellowish grey sandy silt natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed.

### Trench 5 (Fig. 5, Pl. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned E - W and was 29.50m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil above 0.11m of pale grey sandy silt subsoil overlying a light yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. A NW - SE gully (1) measuring 0.45m wide and 0.18m deep (Fig. 6) and containing grey-brown silt fill (52) was recorded and fully excavated within the trench but no finds were recovered. A line of ten modern postholes containing concrete were also noted. Gully 1 appears to be the same feature as revealed in the previous evaluation to the south.

### Trench 6 (Fig.3)

Trench 6 was aligned N - S and was 18.20m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil above 0.20m of mid grey sandy silt subsoil overlying light yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found. Tree roots and other areas of disturbance were observed throughout the trench.

### Trench 7 (Fig. 5)

Trench 7 was aligned E - W and was 23.50m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.26m of mid grey sandy silt subsoil overlying light yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. Field drains and modern truncation were observed as well as an area of disturbance which was possibly part of a previous evaluation trench. No archaeological deposits found.

### Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned N - S and was 19.40m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy at the south end of the trench consisted of 0.25m of topsoil above 0.45m of mid grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying light yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. The sequence in the middle of the trench consisted of Tarmac and rubble directly above the natural geology and at the northern end there was brick and sand above hardcore directly overlying the natural geology. No archaeological deposits were found but tree roots and other areas of disturbance were observed throughout the trench.

### Trench 9 (Fig.3)

Trench 9 was aligned E - W and was 30.40m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of Tarmac above 0.10m of scalpins above 0.20m of compacted rubble overlaying mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. The trench traversed by several drainage pipes. No archaeological deposits were found.

### Trench 10 (Fig. 5)

Trench 10 was aligned N - S and was 10.00m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.14m of mid brownish grey sandy silt subsoil or possible plough soil overlying mid yellowish brown sandy silt alluvial deposit. A single posthole (2) filled with grey-brown silty clay (53) was excavated (Fig. 6) but no datable finds were recovered. A modern truncation was investigated at the southern end of the trench.

## **Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the evaluation.

## **Sieved samples**

A total of 6 sub-samples typically 10-20L each were taken from slots dug across the 5 cut features (two from feature 4) to recover any charred plant remains or small datable artefacts. The samples were floated and wet sieved using 5mm and 0.25mm meshes. No artefacts were recovered and only very rare charcoal flecks.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation has confirmed the presence of a modest volume of deposits of probable archaeological interest on the site, several of which had been identified in a previous evaluation. Unfortunately no dating evidence was



recovered despite full excavation of all of the deposits encountered in the trenches and a programme of sampling and sieving of all features.

At the eastern end of the site, the previous evaluation (OA1) had identified what could well be a ring gully forming a house or enclosure site with a diameter of around 10m, though at the time this feature was considered to be a part of a field system linked to gullies found in other trenches. The current evaluation located additional gullies and a pit (Trench 1) just to the west of the previous evaluation trench (OA1) and seems to indicate that a ring gully or other enclosure structure is more likely. No dating evidence was recovered but if the ring gully interpretation is confirmed, a Middle Iron Age date is most likely though a small round barrow (ring ditch) is also a possible interpretation. An artefact-poor ring gully has been excavated to the east at Cippenham (Taylor 2012) and small ephemeral ring ditch at Harmondsworth (Andrews 1996, 10). The lack of any finds of Roman date suggest that it is unlikely to be a Roman circular house site.

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- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- OA, 1993, 'Wyeth Laboratories, Taplow, Berkshire, archaeological evaluation report', Oxford Archaeological Unit, Oxford
- Taylor A, 2012, 'Early Neolithic pit, Bronze Age occupation, Iron Age occupation and fields and Roman landscape features at Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire', in S Preston (ed) *Settlement and Landscape Archaeology in the Middle Thames Valley: Slough and Environs*, TVAS monograph **14**, Reading, 1–44

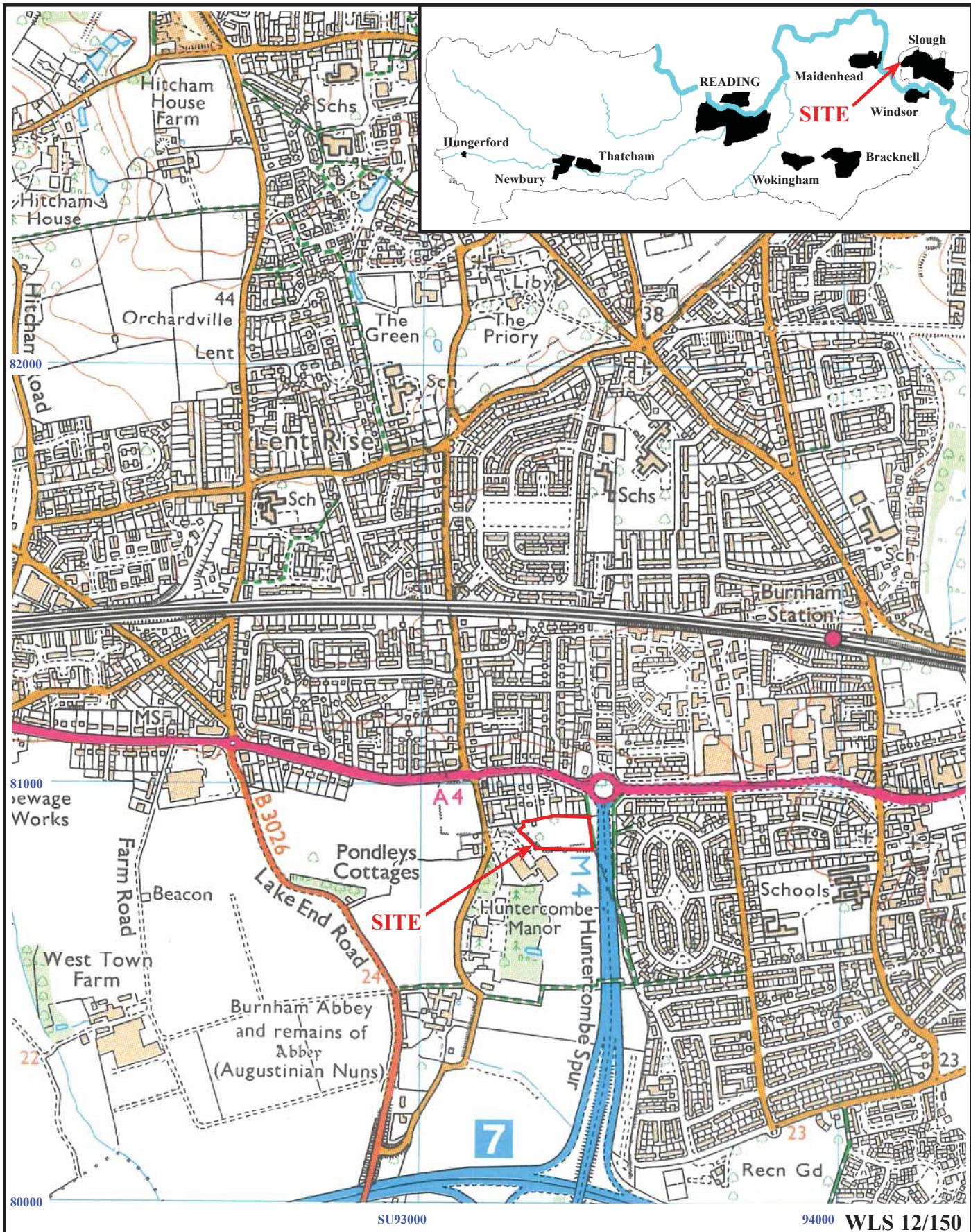
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	30.00	1.80	0.50	0.00m-0.25m Tarmac; 0.25m-0.30m scalpins; 0.30m-0.50m compact rubble; 0.50m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. Gully terminus [3] at 8m, pit/posthole [4] at 12m and gully [5] at 17m. <b>[Pls 3 and 4]</b>
2	10.50	1.80	0.56	West end: 0.00m-0.06m bricks; 0.06m-0.12m sand; 0.12m-0.34m scalping; 0.34m-0.56m compact rubble; 0.50m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. East end: same as trench 1. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
3	10.40	1.80	0.55	0.00m-0.20m Tarmac; 0.20m-0.25m scalpins; 0.25m-0.50m compacted rubble; 0.50m+ mid grey brown silty clay natural geology.
4	10.10	1.80	0.57	0.00m-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.46m mid grey sandy silt subsoil; 0.46m+light yellowish grey sandy silt natural geology.
5	29.50	1.80	0.47	0.00m-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.34m pale grey sandy silt; 0.34m+ pale yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology. Gully [1] at 9.4m. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
6	18.20	1.80	0.50	0.00m-0.27m topsoil; 0.27m-0.43m mid grey sandy silt subsoil; 0.43m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology.
7	23.50	1.80	0.60	0.00m-0.27m topsoil; 0.27m-0.53m mid grey sandy silt subsoil; 0.53m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology.
8	19.40	1.80	0.75	South end: 0.00m-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.70m mid grey brown silt subsoil; 0.70m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology; Middle: Tarmac and rubble directly above the natural geology. North: brick, sand and hardcore directly above the natural geology.
9	30.40	1.80	0.50	0.00m-0.20m Tarmac; 0.20m-0.30m scalpins; 0.30m-0.50m compact rubble; 0.50m+ mid yellowish brown sandy silt natural geology.
10	10.00	1.80	0.45	0.00m-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.39m mid brown silty clay subsoil; 0.39+ mid yellowish brown silty clay natural geology.

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

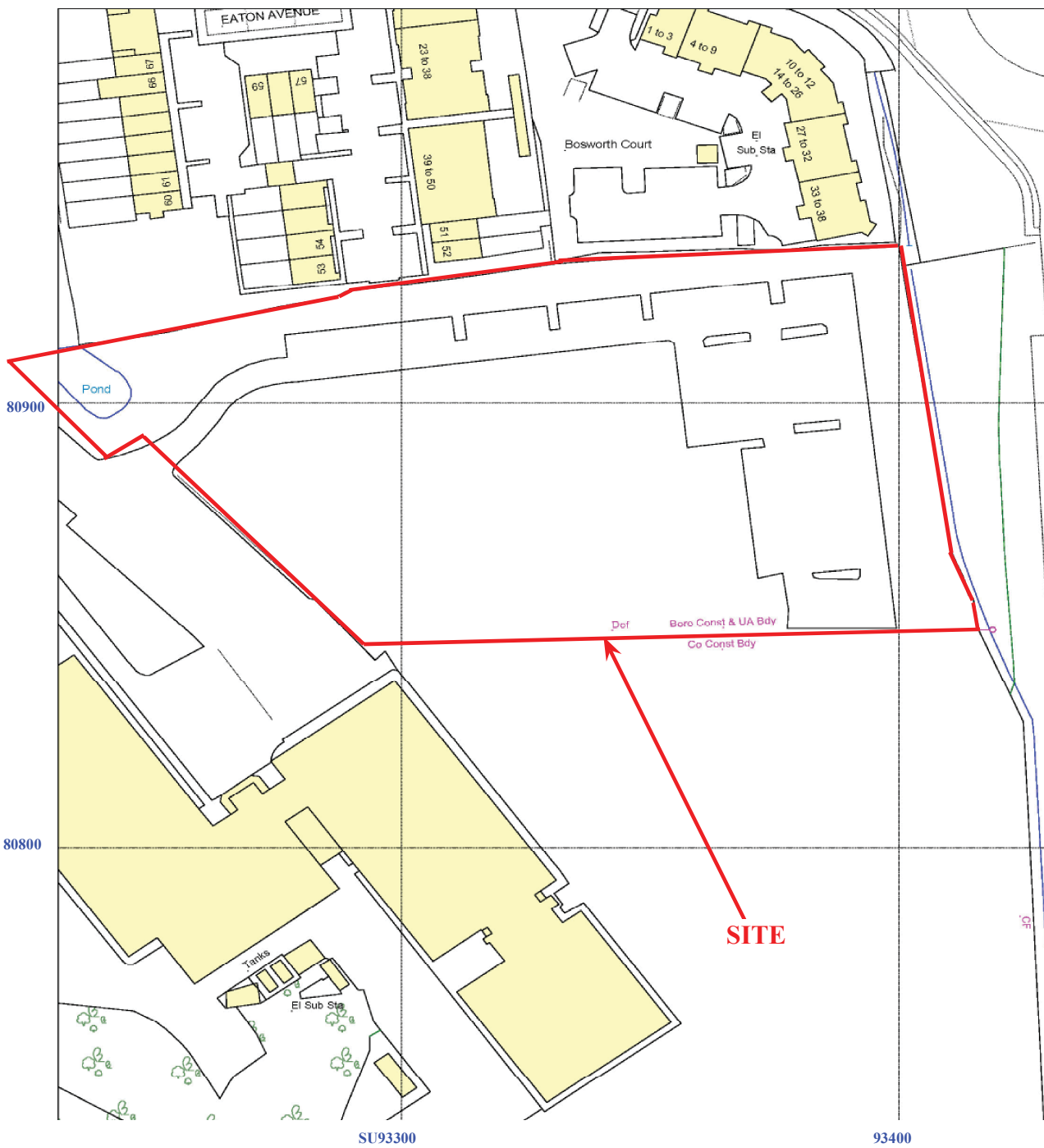
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
5	1	52	Gully	-	-
10	2	53	Posthole	-	-
1	3	54	Gully terminus	-	-
1	4	55, 56	Pit/posthole	-	-
1	5	57	Gully	-	-



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Figure 1. Location of site within Taplow and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Scale: 1:1250  
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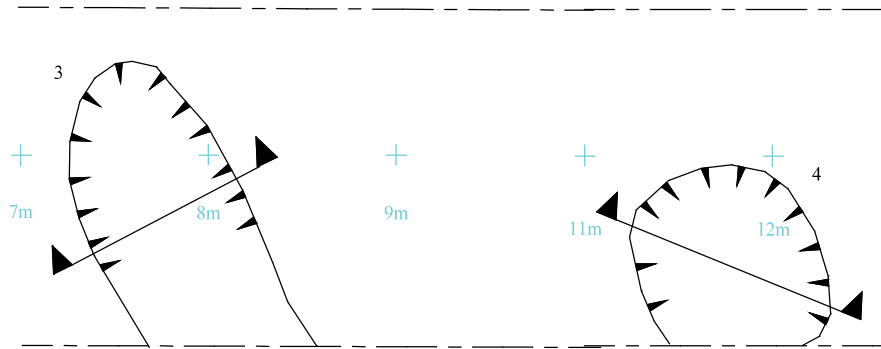
**Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Huntercombe Lane South  
Taplow, Berkshire, 2012  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Trench locations.

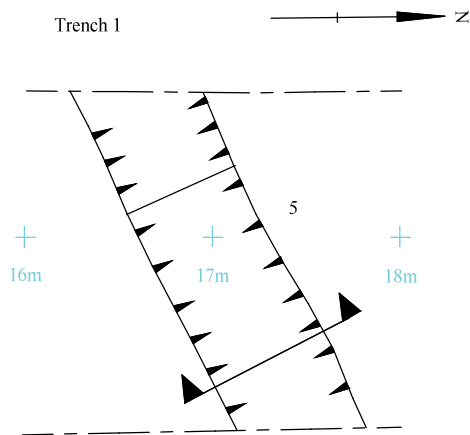


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Trench 1



Trench 1



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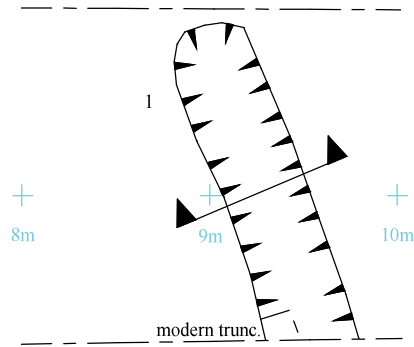
**Land at Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Huntercombe Lane South,  
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Figure 4. Trench Plans

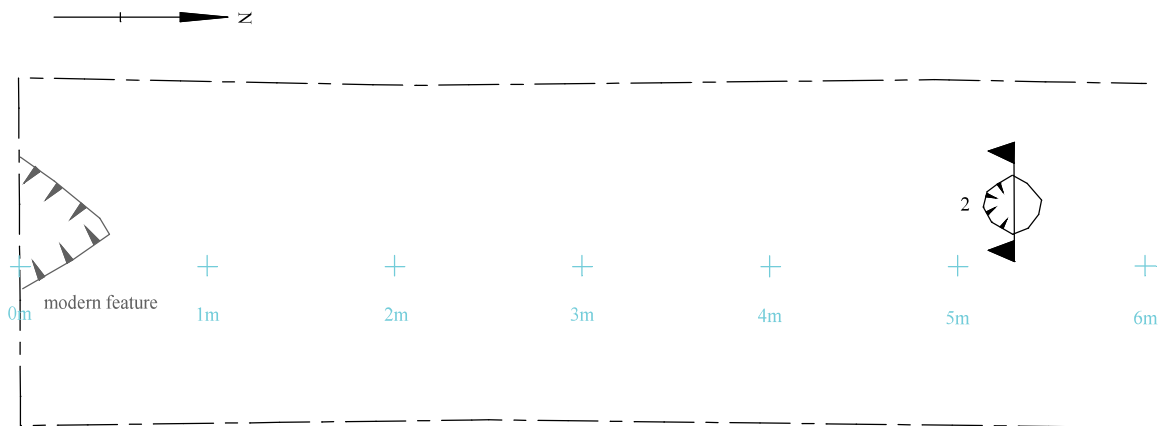


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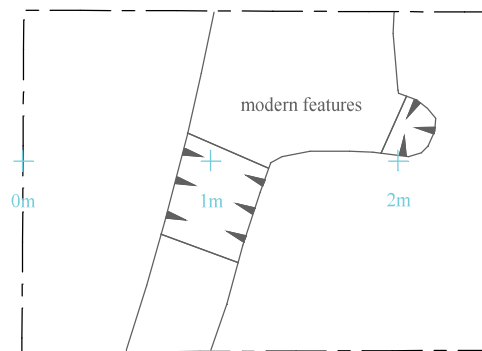
Trench 5



Trench 10



Trench 7



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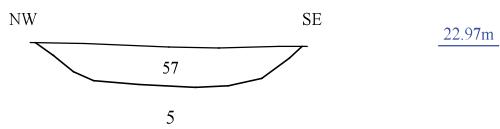
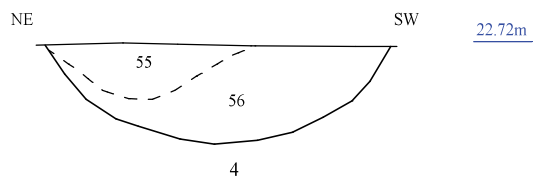
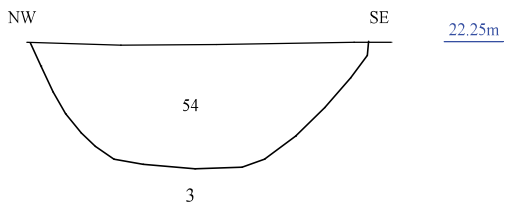
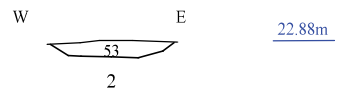
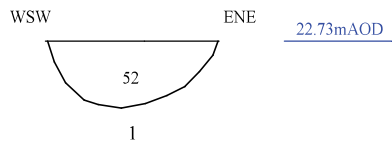
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Figure 5. Trench Plans



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Figure 6. Sections



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 1, gully 5 looking north east, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 1, Pit 4 looking south east, Scales: 0.3m and 1m.

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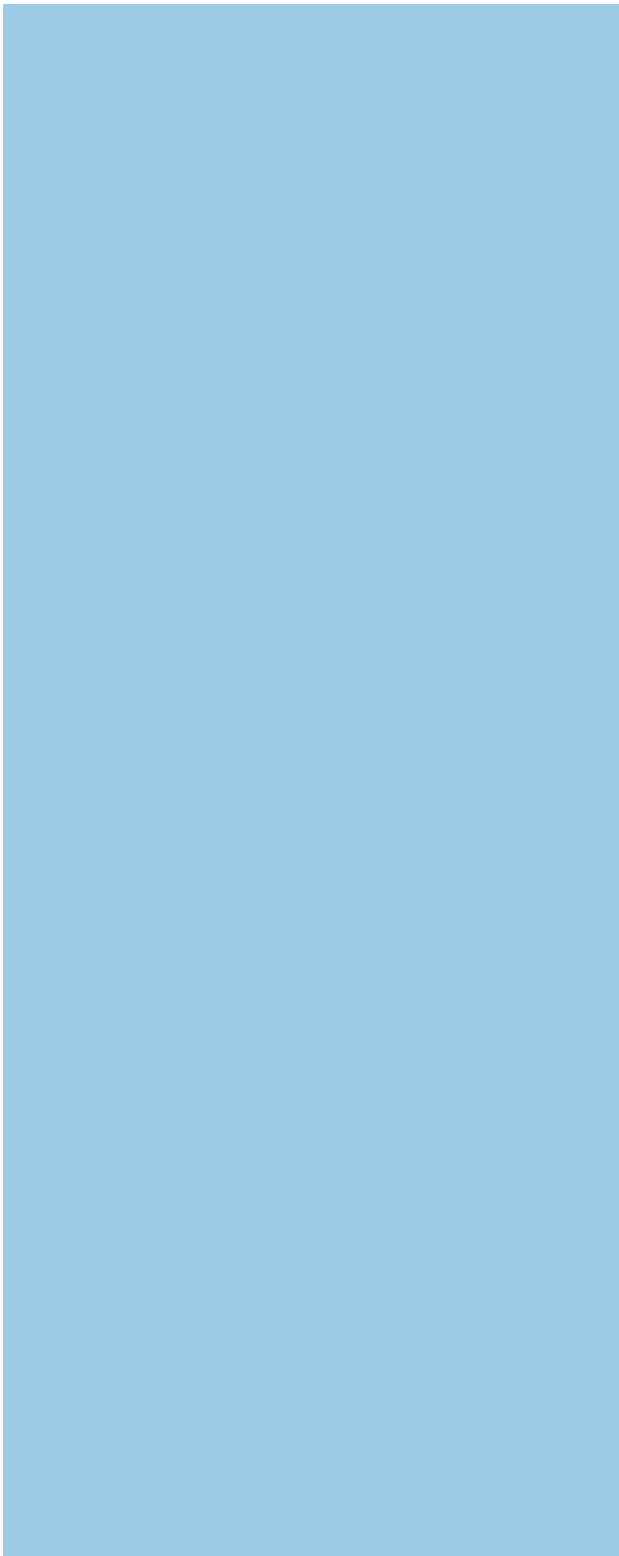
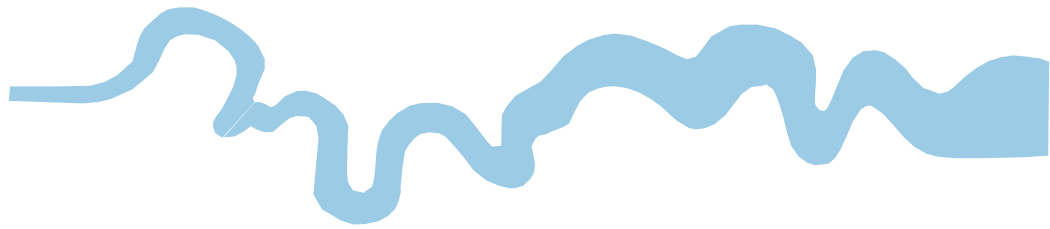
Plates 3 and 4.

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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
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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