

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow,
Pewsey, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Site Code: SOP13/185

(SU 1690 5960)

Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey, Wiltshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Acorn Construction (Newbury) Ltd**

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code SOP13/185

October 2013

Summary

Site name: Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 1690 5960

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25-26th September 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: SOP13/185

Area of site: c. 0.59ha

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed four or five linear features, two of which were of medieval or later date. A number of other possible features were investigated but are thought to be of natural or agricultural origin. A small collection of medieval pottery and single sherds of Roman and early/middle Saxon date were also recovered from the spoilheaps. The archaeologically relevant horizon was relatively deeply buried by subsoil suggesting either that these levels have been buried by colluvium (hill wash) or by dumping of unwanted soil. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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

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Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Steve Ford

Report 13/185

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey, Wiltshire (SU1690 5960). The work was commissioned by Ms Claire Welburn of Fowler Architecture and Planning, 19 High Street, Pewsey Wiltshire, SN9 5AF on behalf of Acorn Construction (Newbury) Ltd, Unit 18 Salisbury Road Business Park, Pewsey, Wiltshire, AN9 5PZ.

A resolution to grant planning permission (app no (E/2012/1536/FUL) has been made by Wiltshire Council to build new houses on the site. The resolution is subject to a condition (13) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, fieldwork has been requested in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. This to determine the archaeological potential of the site and if necessary, inform a mitigation strategy for the project. A single component of work was proposed; field evaluation by means of machine trenching. Further fieldwork could have been required if archaeological deposits are encountered.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Rachel Foster, Assistant County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Kyle Beaverstock on 25th-26th September 2013 and the site code is SOP13/185. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Wiltshire Heritage Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The town of Pewsey is located c. 9km south-west of Marlborough and is bordered by the river Avon to the north and south and Ford Brook to the west (Fig. 1). The site is located on the western side of Southcott Road, but is accessed from Swan Meadow to the north. The southern boundary is undefined. It occupies an area of 0.59 ha and is wooded along the northern and eastern boundaries with a grassed area in the centre and an orchard to the south (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consists of Upper Greensand (BGS 1959). This was observed in the trenches as a pale greenish grey sand with some sandstone inclusions. The site lies at a height of 110m above Ordnance Datum on land that generally rises to the north.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in an advice note prepared by Ms Rachel Foster of Wilshire Council Archaeology Service. In summary the site lies within the Vale of Pewsey which is regarded as being archaeologically rich, with for example, the important Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Knap Hill to the north west. The site lies at or beyond the historic (Saxon/medieval) core of Pewsey but is relatively close to a medieval hamlet of Southcott first recorded in AD1249. A variety of prehistoric struck flints are also recorded from various locations within Pewsey

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 are:

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the 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 provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required; and
- To report on the findings of the evaluation.

It was proposed to dig seven trenches 20m long. All trenches were to be 1.6m wide. It was proposed to target the footprint of the proposed buildings and driveways. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Excavation of exposed archaeological features was to be carried out by hand and spoil heaps were to be searched for artefacts. Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions of full excavation.

Results

Eight trenches were eventually dug due to a need to avoid various constraints such as mature trees and a sewer pipeline. The trenches ranged in length from 7.6 to 21.3m and in depth from 0.65m to 1.30m. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 18.6m long and up to 1.0m deep at the NE end and 0.7m at the SW end. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.4m dark brown clayey sand subsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand. The northern margins of the base of the trench dipped to the north and was infilled with subsoil. No finds or features were recovered.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned WSW - ENE and was 17.3m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.35m of subsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with some chert. No finds or features were recovered.

Trench 3 (Figs 3-5; Pls 5-6)

Trench 3 was aligned WSW - ENE and was 21.3m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.25m of subsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with some chert. Four possible features were investigated. Three of these (2-4) were possibly postholes with posthole 3 being plausible whereas numbers 2 and 4 were doubtful. No finds nor charcoal were recovered from these features. Feature 5 was investigated as a possible pit but was revealed to be shallow and did not contain any artefacts or charcoal. It is considered this is a subsoil feature similar to the subsoil patches recorded in the base of trench 1. Three sherds, two Medieval and one Early/Middle Saxon were recovered from the spoilheaps.

Trench 4 (Figs. 3-6; Pls 1-2)

Trench 4 was aligned N - S and was 20.7m long and was 0.55m deep at the south end but 0.85m deep to the north. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.3m of subsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with some chert.

Three probably four linear features were revealed. Ditches 6 and 7 aligned E-W were initially thought to be a single feature. However the profile and slight change of fills indicates two features though the relationship between them could not be determined. Ditch 6 was c. 1.1m wide and 0.35m deep with a single fill of grey/brown clayey sand with some cherty pieces, greensand pieces and charcoal (57). A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, along with 3 fragments of bone. Ditch 7 was c. 0.9m wide and 0.22m deep also with a single fill of brown/grey clayey sand with some cherty pieces and rare charcoal (58). Gully 8 was aligned E-W, and was 0.48m wide and 0.1m deep with a single fill of brown clayey sand with a few small chert pieces and charcoal (59). It contained no dating evidence. Probable gully 9 was aligned SW- NE and was 0.44m wide but was not excavated. Four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 6; Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned NW - SE and was 7.6m long, 0.9m deep to the south east and 0.75m deep to the north west. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.2m of dark brown clayey sand subsoil overlying 0.2m of dark brown clayey sand (buried topsoil?) above the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with chalky patches. The buried topsoil contained a quantity of animal bone along with a sherd of Roman Samian pottery and 8 sherds of medieval pottery. It is not considered that this is a midden deposit. The eastern end of the trench was occupied by the cut for a sewer. No features of archaeological interest were recorded.

Trench 6 (Figs 3-5; Pl. 4)

Trench 6 was aligned NNW- SSE and was 20.0m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of rooty turf/topsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with chalky patches. A single ditch (1) was revealed at the northern end of the trench aligned NW- SE. It was 0.6m wide and 0.26m deep with a single dark brown/clay clayey sand fill (52). No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 6)

Trench 7 was aligned NW - SE and was 19.8m long, 0.6m deep at the SE and 0.7m deep to the NW. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.4m of subsoil overlying the natural geology; which was a green/brown clayey sand with chalky patches. No features were observed but a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned NNE- SSW and was 13.0m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf/topsoil above 0.35m of subsoil overlying the natural geology which was a green/brown clayey sand with chalky patches. No finds nor features were recovered.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

Introduction

The archaeological evaluation resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of 23 sherds of pottery and two fragments of either pot of fired clay / ceramic building material weighing 157 g in total. The assemblage contains material of Roman, Saxon and medieval date. Most of the pottery was recovered from the subsoil with just a single medieval sherd from a feature in Trench 3. The assemblage is of variable condition with mainly quite small sherds although some are slightly better preserved than others. The overall average sherd weight is just 6.3g. For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in Appendix 3.

Roman

Two sherds from a single Central Gaulish samian bowl (Dragendorff 31) dating to around the mid-2nd century were recovered from Trench 5. The vessel has been burnt and there are the linear marks of burnt straw on the vessel surface.

Saxon

Three freshly broken pieces from a small handmade sherd with a dense organic temper were recovered from Trench 3. The sherd is reduced black in colour with a sandy paste. The piece, although small, is typical of the Saxon period (6th-9th century).

Medieval

The remaining assemblage date to the medieval period probably spanning the 11-13th centuries. The group mainly comprises unglazed cooking pots/ jars in flint, limestone and sandy fabrics some of which can be identified as coming from the Kennet Valley. The constituents in the clays suggest all are likely to be from local sources. Featured sherds include two rim sherds from jars, one with finger-tipping on the rim surface from

Trench 5. There is also one unglazed bodysherd from Trench 4, with combed wavy line decoration which is likely to come from a spouted pitcher.

Animal Bone by Danielle Milbank

A total of 11 fragments of bone were recovered during the evaluation, weighing 16g. Of these, 8 were derived from a subsoil layer in trench 5, and three were recovered from ditch 6 (57). The condition of the remains is poor, with some surface erosion, and they are very highly fragmented. The remains are largely unidentifiable with the exception of a rib fragment from a medium-sized animal from the trench 5 subsoil. The species present could not be identified and no butchery marks were observed.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed the presence of several linear features, two of which are of medieval or later date with the others being undated. A number of other possible features were investigated but are thought to be of natural or agricultural origin. Searches of the spoilheaps recovered a small collection of medieval pottery with single sherds of Roman and early/middle Saxon date. The archaeologically relevant horizon was relatively deeply buried by subsoil which may have originated as colluvium (hill wash). However, the buried soil in trench 5 may originate from the dumping of unwanted soil, perhaps when the older houses on Swan Meadow were built. On the basis of this evaluation it is considered that the site has low archaeological potential.

References

BGS, 1959, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 282, Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SE or W end

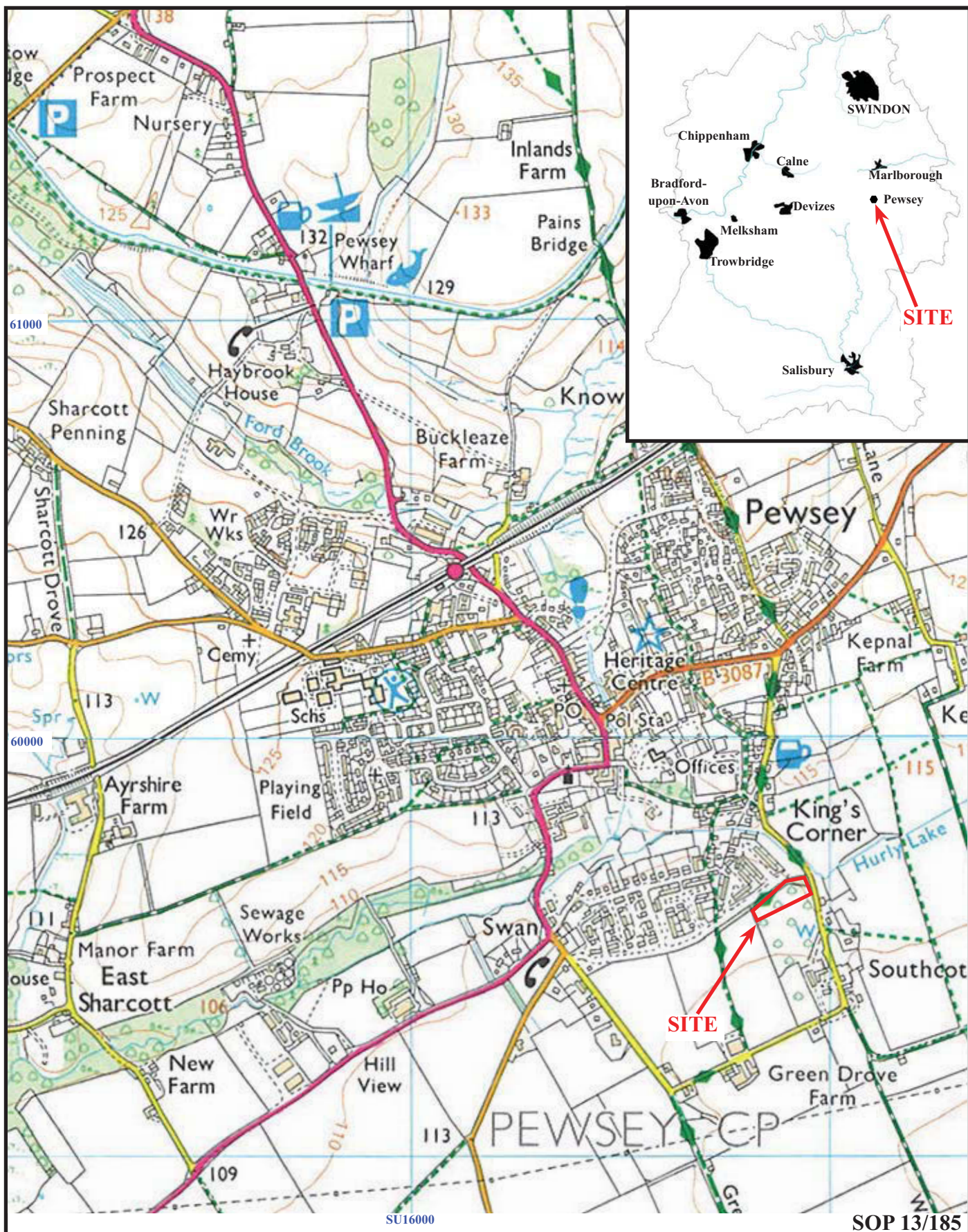
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	18.6	1.6	0.7(SW) 1.0(NE)	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.6m Dark brown clayey sand subsoil; 0.6m+ Brown/green clayey sand natural geology
2	17.3	1.6	0.6	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.55m; 0.55m+ Brown/green/clayey sand with some chert natural geology
3	21.3	1.6	0.5(E) 0.82(W)	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m+ natural geology. Possible features 2-5. [Pls 5 and 6]
4	20.7	1.6	0.55(N) 0.85(S)	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ natural geology. Ditches 6-9. [Pls 1 and 2]
5	7.6	1.6	0.75(NW) 0.9(SE)	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.4m subsoil; 0.4-0.6m very dark brown clayey sand with pottery and bone (buried soil); 0.6m+ natural geology. Sewer at east end. [Pl. 3]
6	20.0	1.6	0.44	0-0.36m Turf/topsoil; 0.36m+ natural geology. Ditch 1. [Pl.4]
7	19.8	1.6	0.7(NW) 0.6(SE)	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.6m subsoil; 0.6m+ natural geology
8	13.0	1.6	0.7	0-0.2m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.55m subsoil; 0.5m+ 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>
6	1	52	Ditch	-	
3	2	53	Posthole?	-	
3	3	54	Posthole?	-	
3	4	55	Posthole?	-	
3	5	56	Scoop?	-	
4	6	57	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery
4	7	58	Ditch	Medieval	Cut/cut by 6
4	8	59	Gully	-	
4	9	-	Gully	Not dug	

APPENDIX 3: Pottery

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1			pot / fired clay?		1	0.5	no date	abraded
3			sand & flint	body	1	1	medieval	and two soil lumps
3		11.5	?CBM	lump	1	23	medieval	no flat surfaces large vessel or cbm
3		15	flint, iron and quartz	jar	1	34	early med	handmade
3		15-20	sand & organic	body	3	5	Saxon	3=1 fresh break; handmade
3		15-20	flint, iron and quartz		1	6	early med	
4		10	sandy	body	1	5	medieval	
4		15-20	Kennet Valley	pitcher	1	5	early med	combed wavy line décor
4			?Kennet Valley		2	2	medieval	
4	[6] 57		Kennet Valley		1	1	medieval	
5			Central Gaulish samian	Dr 31	2	17	2nd c	burnt with straw marks; 2=1 rim
5			limestone/flint	jar	8	52	medieval	2=1 rim
5			sand & flint	body	1	0.5	?med	
7		15-20	Kennet Valley	body	1	5	medieval	
<i>TOTAL</i>					<i>25</i>	<i>157</i>		



**Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey
Wiltshire, 2013**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Pewsey and Wiltshire.

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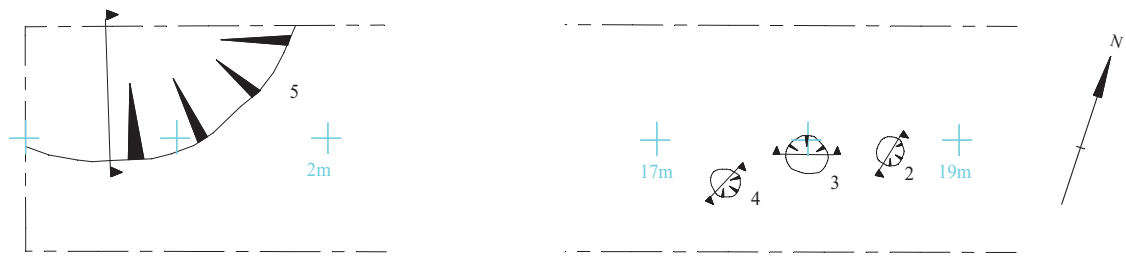
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Southcott Road.

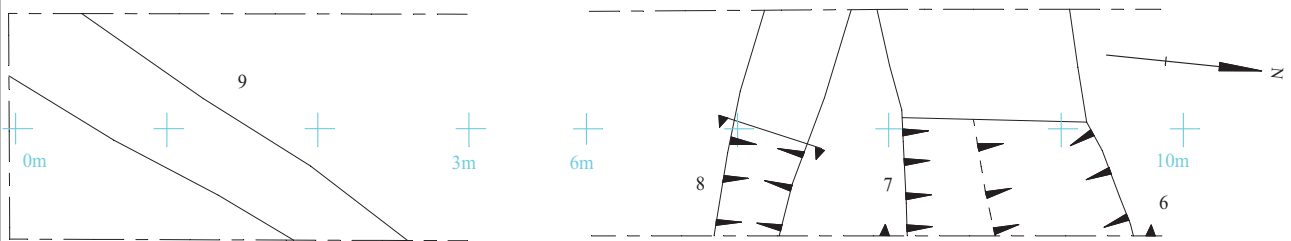
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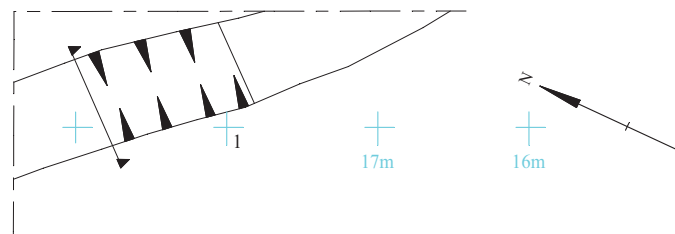
Trench 3



Trench 4



Trench 6



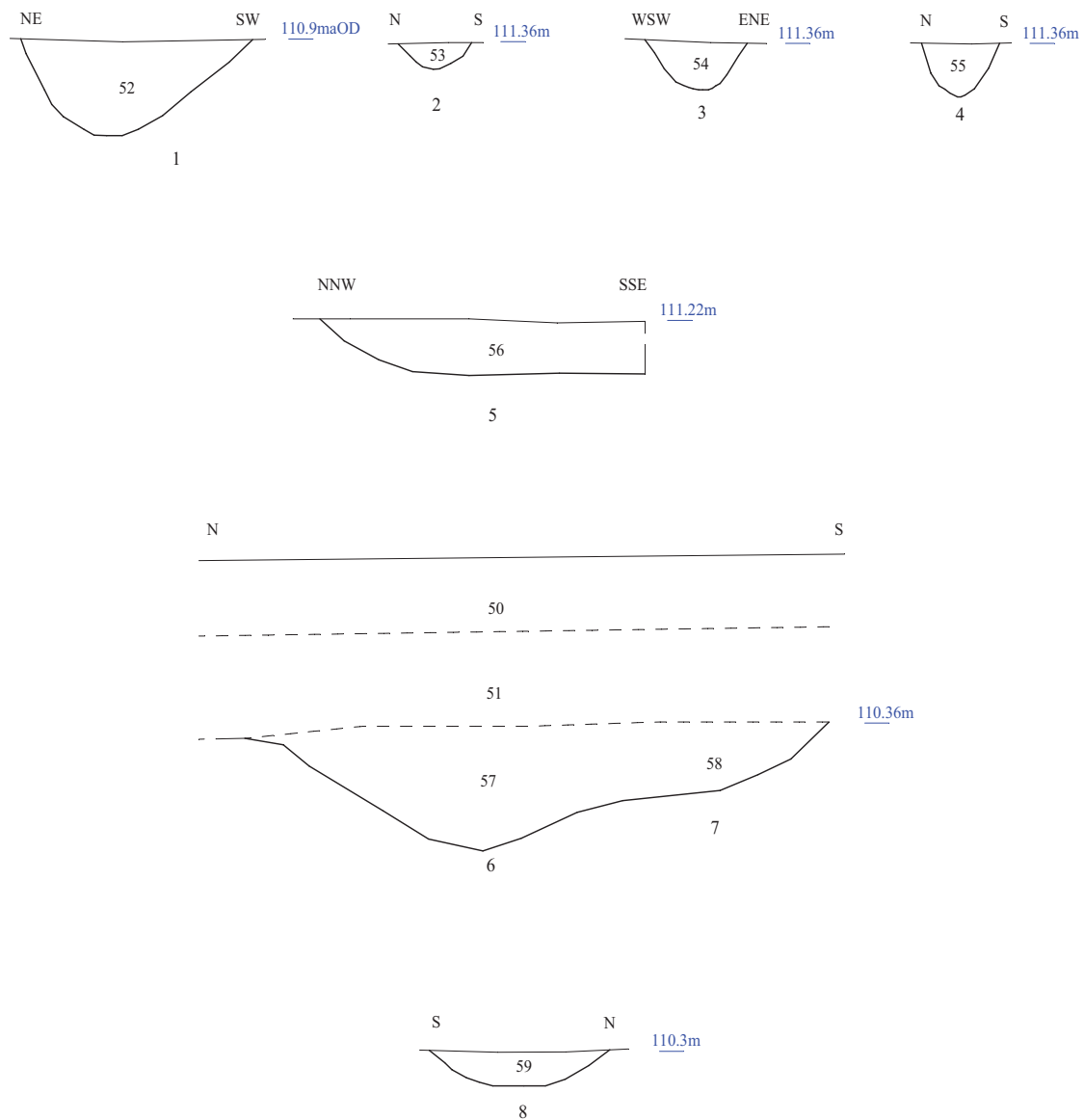
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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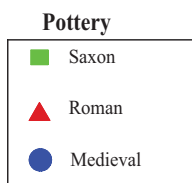
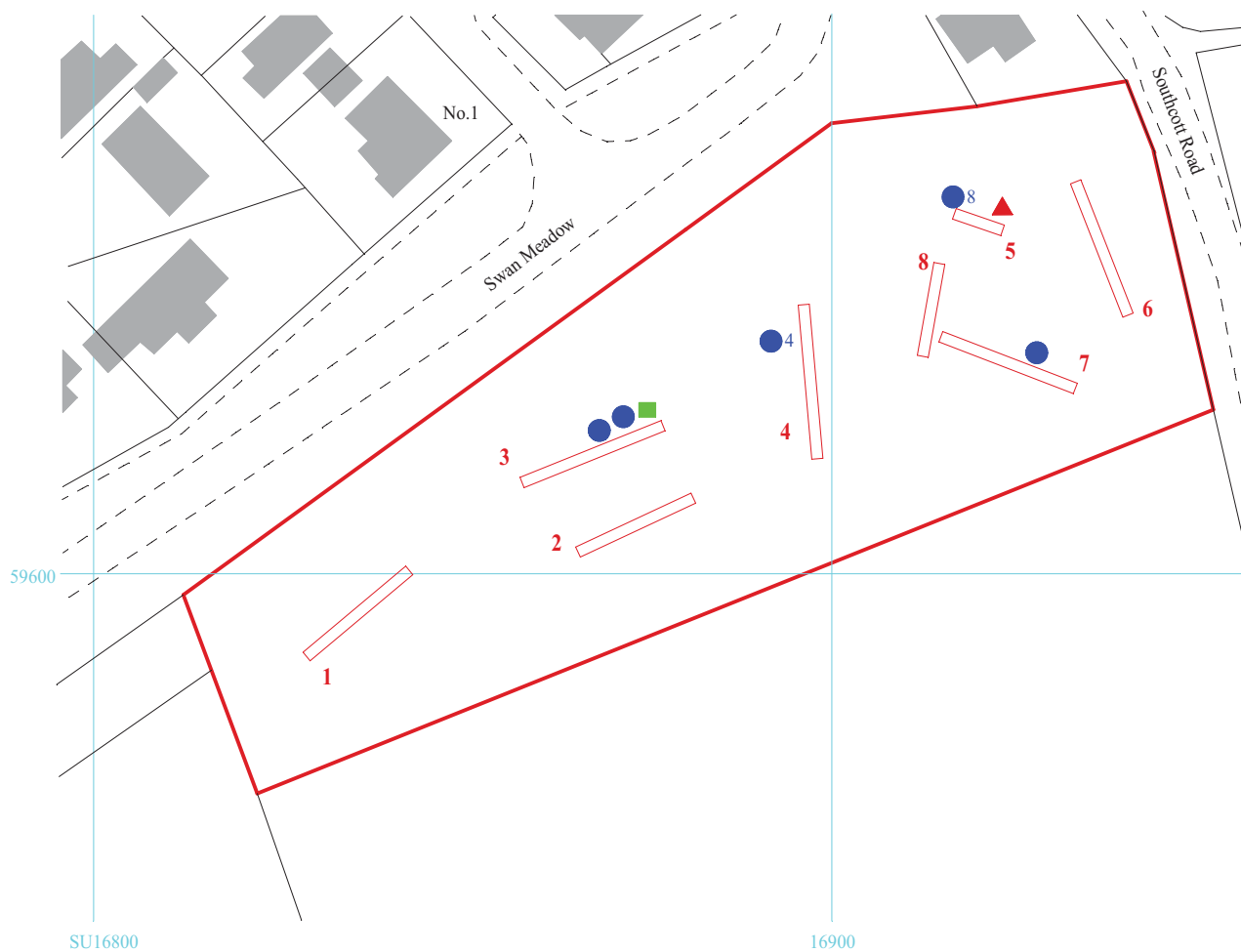
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Figure 5. Sections.

0 1m

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Figure 6. Location of trenches.



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



Plate 2. Trench 4, Ditches 6 and 7 (on left), ditch 8 on right, looking east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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**Land at Swan Orchard, Swan Meadow, Pewsey,
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, ditch 1, looking north west, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 3, possible posthole 4 looking north, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



Plate 6. Trench 3, scoop 5, looking south west, Scales: 1.0m and 0.1m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

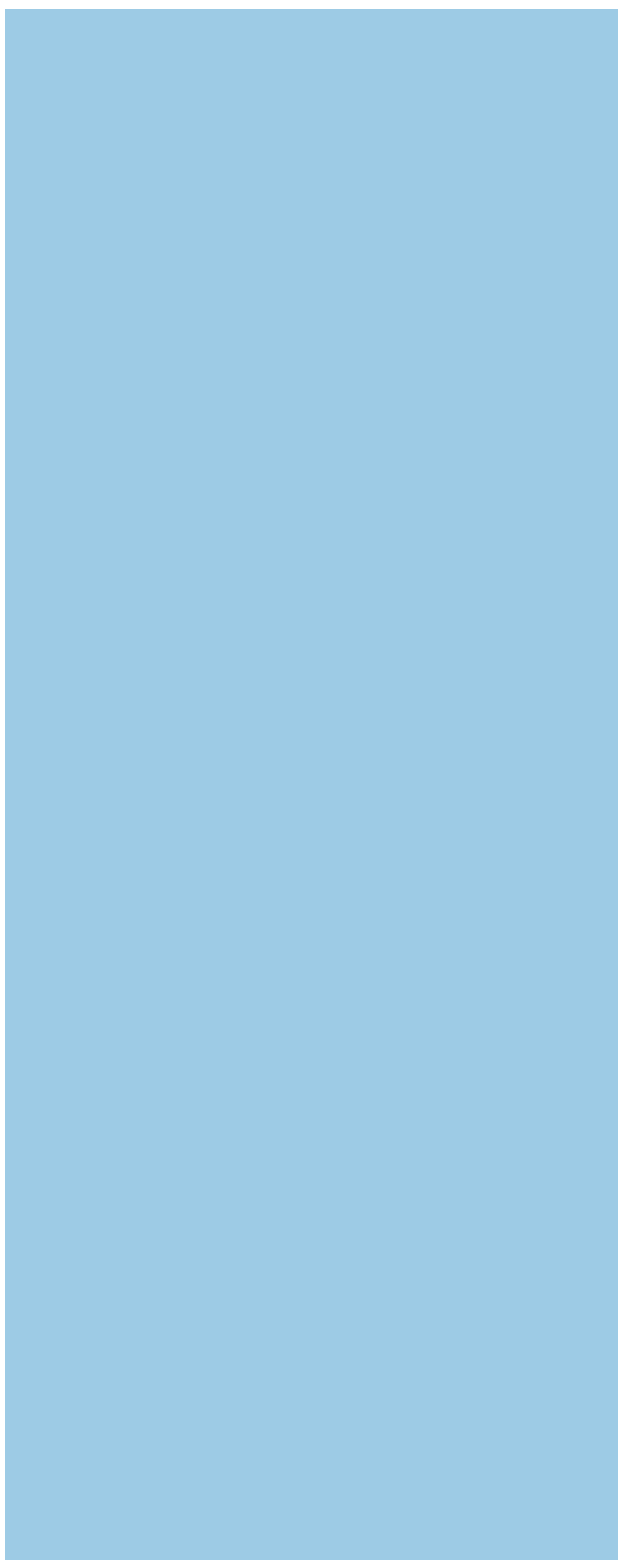
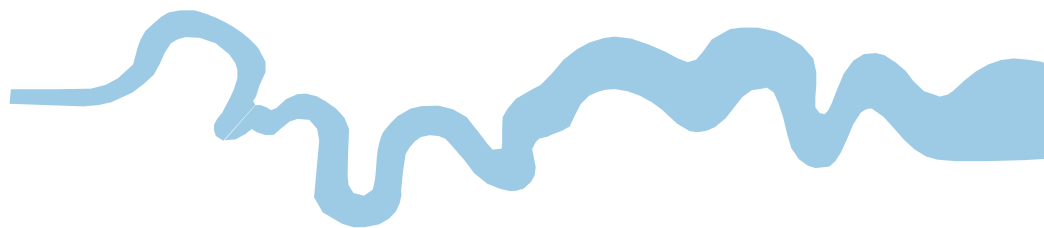
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TIME CHART

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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