

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Yew Tree Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aidan Colyer and Andy Taylor

Site Code: YTC15/15

(SU 7310 6369)

Yew Tree Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mrs Sarah Firth

by Aidan Colyer and Andy Taylor
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code YTC 15/15

November 2015

Summary

Site name: Yew Tree Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7310 6369

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 18th-24th June 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer and Andy Munding

Site code: YTC 15/15

Area of site:

Summary of results: No deposits of any archaeological interest were observed.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum prepared to accept archive material in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 17.11.15 Steve Preston✓ 16.11.15
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Report 15/15

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Yew Tree Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7310 6369) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Graham Savage on behalf of Mrs Sarah Firth of the above address.

Planning permission (app F/2012/1101) has been gained from Wokingham Council for change of use of a barn and the construction of a new link building and modifications to an existing driveway. The consent is subject to a condition (15) relating to archaeology requiring a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kathelen Leary, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, the advisers to the Council on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer and Andy Munda between the 18th and 24th June 2015 and the site code is YTC 15/15.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a local museum willing to accept archive material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at Yew Tree Farm, Part Lane, Swallowfield, Reading, which lies on the south-eastern margins of Swallowfield and west of the Broadwater river in the Loddon Valley (Fig. 2). The barn is on the northern side of the existing farm buildings. The underlying geology is mapped as Valley Gravel (BGS 1946), which was observed during the watching brief. The site lies at a height of *c.*47m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the Loddon Valley, which is a zone considered to be rich in archaeological activity. Numerous sites have been identified by field survey and aerial photography (Ford 1994; Ford *et al.* 2011; Gates 1975) with excavations at Riseley Farm revealing a Bronze Age ring ditch and Iron Age enclosure (Lobb and Morris 1993). The course of the Roman road from London to

Silchester ('The Devil's Highway') passes just to the south. The main interest in this location is the presence of the main building on the site which has 16th Century origins and may be on the site of an earlier farm. However, a previous watching brief on a part of the site revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Cass 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks, which were expected to be minimal. Foundation trenches were observed during the course of the watching brief and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The foundation trenches observed (Fig. 3) measured 0.70m wide and were dug to depths varying from 0.68m to 1.20m. The stratigraphy in the east of the site consisted of 0.23m of topsoil over 0.82m of made ground over yellow/red natural gravels and yellow/green sand, and a total depth of 1.20m (Fig. 4; Pls 1 and 2). The eastern end of the site was truncated by a modern drainage ditch. In the west of the site, modern demolition rubble (0.3–0.4m deep) directly overlay the natural gravel with clayey patches.

Finds

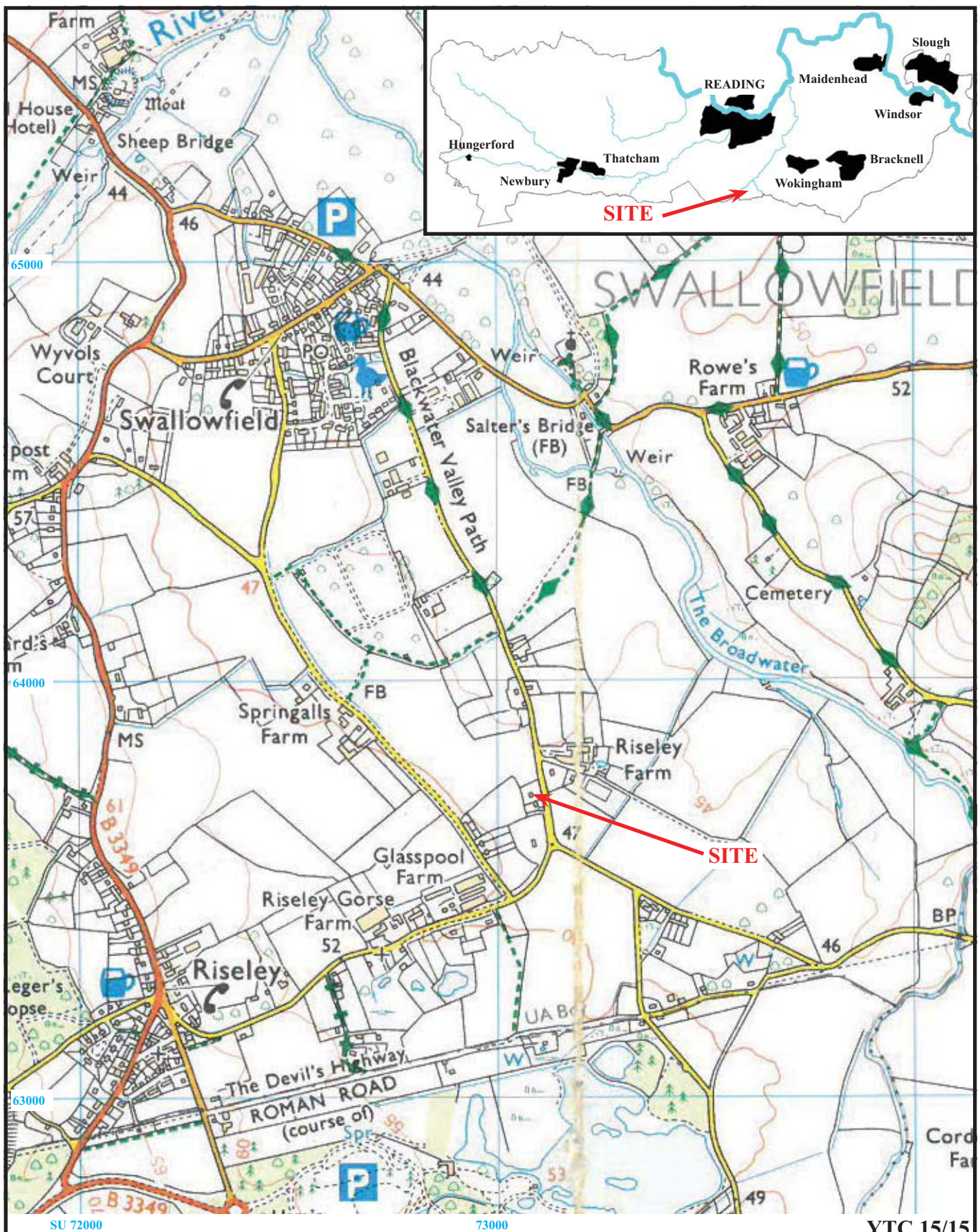
No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the site's potential for the presence of archaeology, no deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed during the course of the watching brief.

References

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
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- Ford, S, 1994, 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **75**, (for 1994-7), 11-33
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- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Pubn 1, Reading
- Lobb, S J and Morris, E L, 1993, 'Investigation of Bronze Age and Iron Age features at Riseley Farm, Swallowfield', *Berkshire Archaeol J* **74** (for 1991–3), 37–68 (and fiche)
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

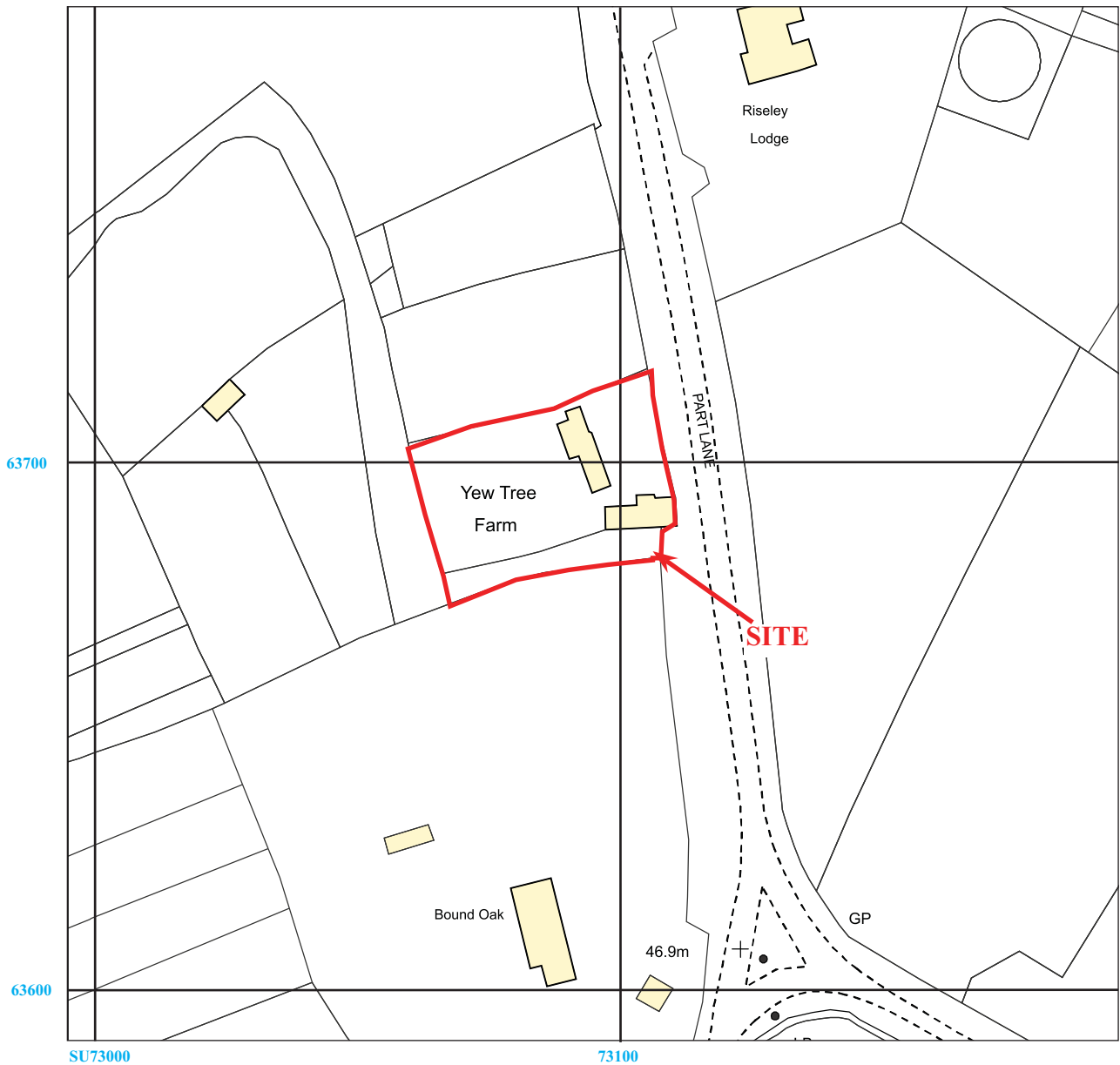


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Figure 1. Location of site within Swallowfield and Berkshire.

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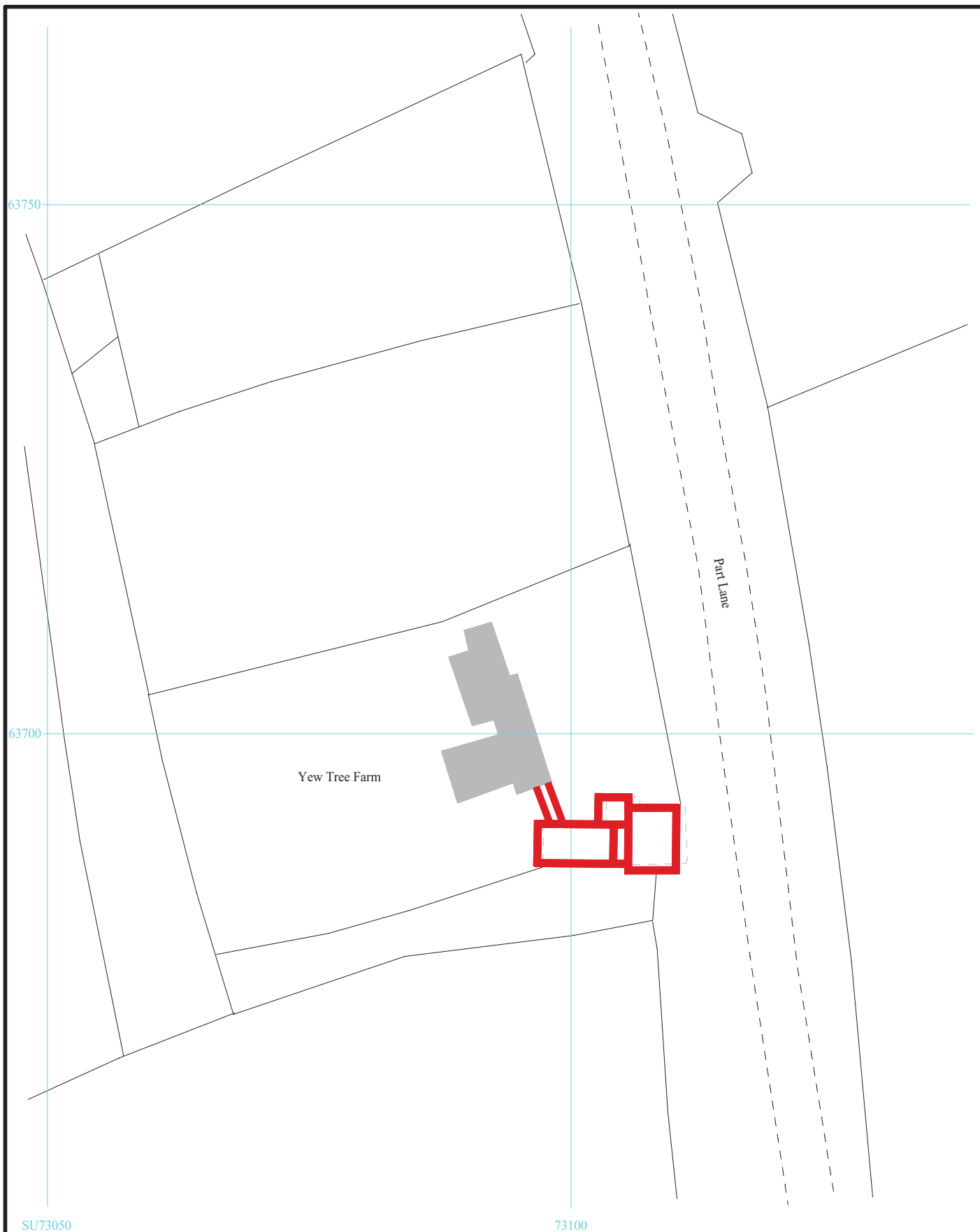


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Part Lane.

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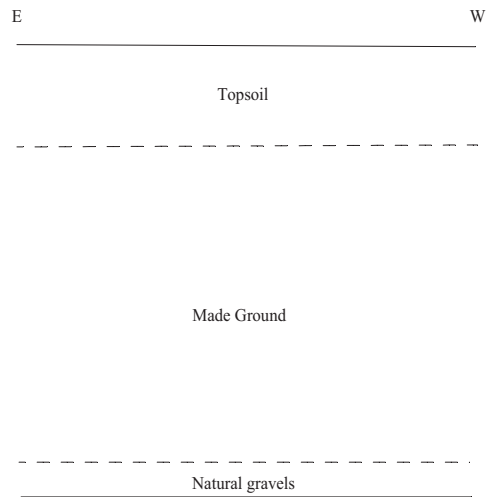


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Figure 3. Monitored Works



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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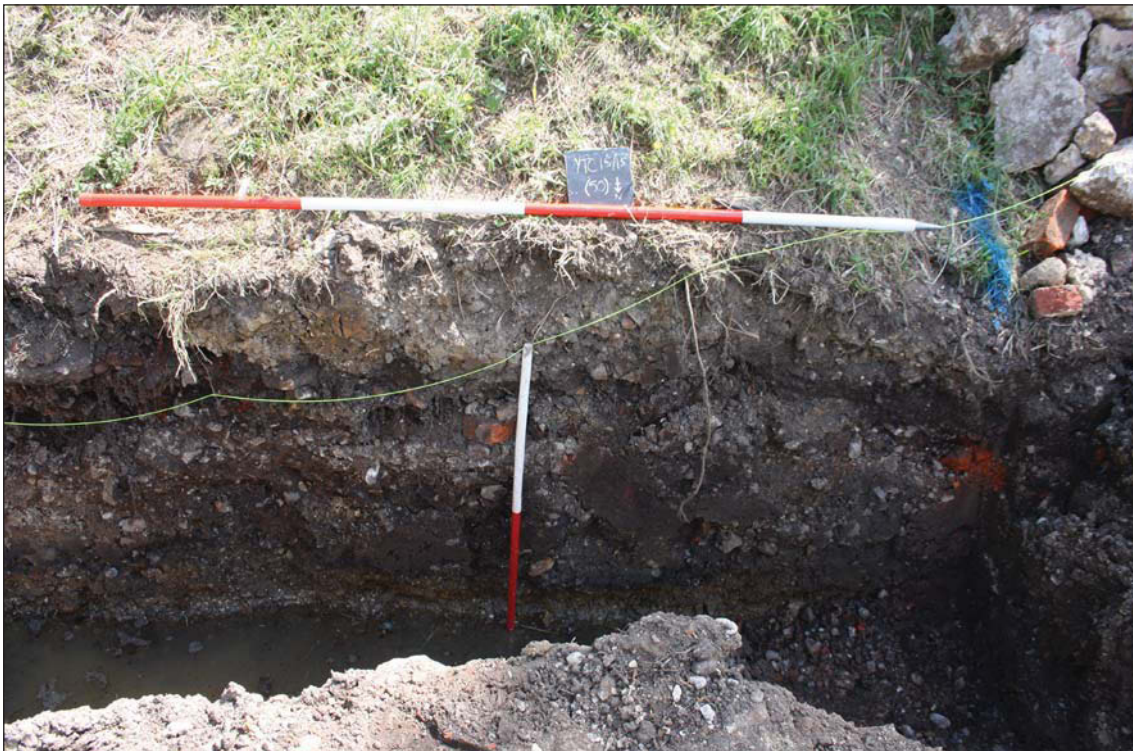


Plate 1. Footings, looking South, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Footings, looking West.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

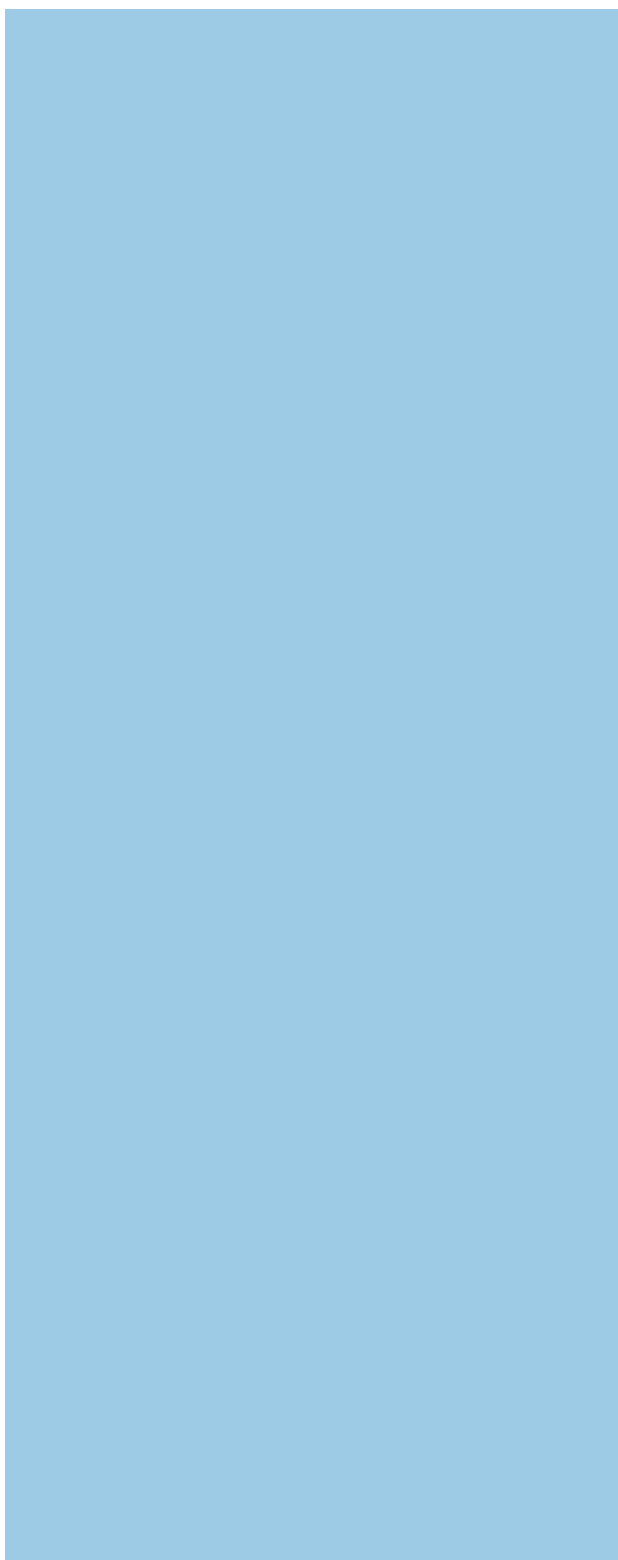
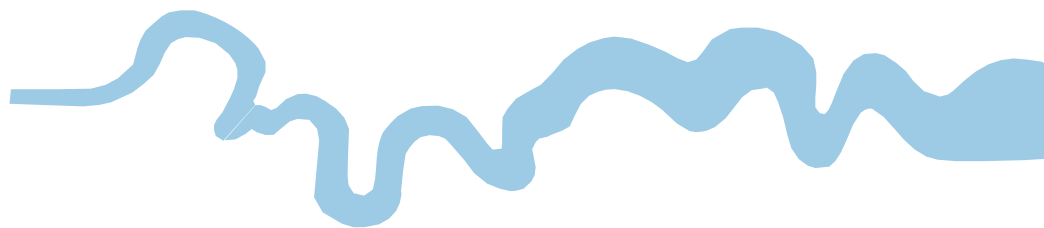
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TIME CHART

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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