

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks,
East Hanney, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: YTH20/214

(SU 4189 9287)

Land at Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks, East Hanney, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for JCH Hanney

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code YTH 20/214

April 2021

Summary

Site name: Land at Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks, East Hanney, Oxon.

Grid reference: SU 4189 9287

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 31st March 2021 – 1st April 2021

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: YTH 20/214

Area of site: c. 0.35 ha

Summary of results: Four trenches were opened and features of certain and possible archaeological interest were observed in all of them. Six linear features (ditches or gullies) were investigated but did not provide any clear cut dating evidence except that stratigraphically at least some of them predated the furrows and one contained a small prehistoric struck flint. A possible posthole and a pit, were also recorded but were again undated. The skeleton of an animal was found in one ditch and partially excavated. Two of the trenches also showed much modern disturbance.

A series of furrows aligned parallel to the road was seen in three trenches and one of these produced medieval pottery.

The site is considered to have some archaeological potential for pre-Medieval activity despite few datable find being recovered due to some features pre-dating the furrows.

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

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	Steve Preston ✓ 12.04.21

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Report 20/214b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks, East Hanney, Oxfordshire, OX12 0HX (centred on SU 41893 92871) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Anita Castle, from JCH Hanney Ltd, Willow brook, Basset Road, Letcombe Regis, Oxfordshire, OX12 9JP.

Planning consent (app P15/V1379/FUL) and a subsequent variation of a condition (P20/V2760/FUL) has been gained from the Vale of White Horse District Council for the development of the site for residential use. Two conditions pertaining to archaeology (8 and 9) required the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a written scheme of investigation, approved by Mr Richard Oram, lead archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2021). The fieldwork was undertaken by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse on 31st March and 1st April 2021 and the site code is YTH 20/214. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the village of East Hanney, near Wantage, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1), on the west side of the Oxford Road (A338). It is bordered to the north and south by wooded gardens and to the west by residential properties. There is a pathway at the south. The site is flat and lies at approximately 62m above Ordnance Datum. It is an irregular rectangular plot of land, covering about 0.35ha (Fig. 2), set to meadow with some trees and shrubs. The underlying geology as recorded on maps (BGS 2021) is Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member.

Archaeological background

A desk-based assessment for the site (Tabor 2021) noted that no heritage assets are known on the site but that recent archaeological works have uncovered some evidence in its vicinity. To the east, a substantial Late Bronze Age settlement, with pits and linear features, was revealed during trial trenching. It echoes another one found north of Steventon Road, to the north-west of the site and both characterized by a ladder pattern layout. LIDAR data established the presence of a linear earthwork in the northern part of the site, apparently overlain by medieval and/or post-medieval ridge and furrow. It is suspected that a probable Roman road (Margary's route 164) passed immediately to the east of the site. Finally, to the south of the village, evidence has been found of a Roman settlement and its associated cemetery (Taylor 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development, without compromising their integrity. More specifically the project aimed to determine if any archaeological deposits are present, especially of the Bronze Age and Roman periods, and provide sufficient information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Any feature or deposit were to be assessed according general research priorities (HE 2017) or more local and thematic research agendas (Hey and Hind 2014).

It was proposed to open by machine four trenches, each 25m long and 1.8m wide, targeting the footprints of the proposed new structures. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket will be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would then be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any that might warrant preservation in situ or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. .Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds

Results

The trenches' positions needed to be slightly adjusted from the proposed layout to take into account tree canopies (Fig. 3). Four trenches were mechanically opened using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a bladed bucket, 1.80m wide. A metal detector was used to enhance finds recovery but only modern rubbish was found. The trenches ranged in length from 24.20m to 26m and in depth from 0.75 to 1.15m. A total of 101.8m was exposed. The trenches were all 1.80m wide.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (52), a chalky light yellowish grey clay with very rare small stones and flint inclusions. It was overlain by a 0.35-0.40m thick subsoil (51), a soft mid brownish grey silty clay. On top was topsoil (50), a 0.30m thick friable black or very dark brown loamy silt with common roots.

Trench 1 (Figs 3-5; Pls 1 and 5)

Trench 1 was aligned almost NE-SW and was 25.80m long and 0.75-0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.35m of subsoil overlying natural geology. The first 15m from the south-west end saw some south-north plough scars visible on the stripped surface except between 4m and 8m where modern disturbance was noted. At 18m from the same end of the trench, ditch 14 was recorded (**PI. 5**). It was at least 1.05m wide and 0.30m deep, orientated almost south-north. It was filled with a firm dark grey silty clay, with rare small stones and natural flints and very rare charcoal flecks. Part of the skeleton of a sheep was recovered from ditch 14. No other finds were recovered.

Trench 2 (Figs 3-5; Pls 2 and 6)

Trench 2 was aligned almost NW-SE and was 26m long and 0.75-0.95m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.35m of subsoil overlying natural geology. In the first 16m from the SE end a modern deposit with rubbish and rubble was visible below the turf and in places deeply impacting the ground level. At least three furrows were identified, matching those seen in trenches 3 and 4 (Fig. 3). At about 18m from the south-east end, small ditch 11 was aligned almost south-north. It had a concave profile with steep sides. It was 0.60m wide and 0.25m deep. Its fill was a firm dark brownish grey clay with very rare small stones. Another small ditch, 12, was aligned northeast-southwest until it was truncated by furrow 13 (**PI. 6**). It had steep sides

and a concave profile too. It was 0.75m wide and about 0.24m deep. Its fill was a yellowish-brown-grey clay with the scarce small stone inclusions. No finds were recovered from either feature.

Trench 3 (Figs 3-5; Pls 3 and 8)

Trench 2 was aligned almost NE-SW and was 25.80m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.40m of subsoil overlying natural geology. This layering was disturbed between 5m and 18m from the northeast end as a massive modern truncation occurred, visible below the turf. It is unclear what this disturbance related to. The building visible on the 19th century Ordnance Survey map, now completely demolished and invisible, was apparently located more to the southeast. The full depth of this large truncation was not ascertained as water poured in at 1m deep. Only furrow 10 was visible (**PI. 8**), interrupted by it. It likely continued towards one of the furrow seen in trench 2. Three sherds of Medieval pottery were recovered from furrow 10.

Trench 4 (Figs 3-5; Pls 4 and 7)

Trench 4 was aligned mostly SE-NW, with the last 7m more inclined towards the NW. It was 24.20m long and 0.75m deep. A deeper slot was made at the NW end, 1.15m deep, to confirm the interpretation of the geological horizon. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.40m of subsoil overlying natural geology. Two potential furrows were noted (one unexcavated and cut 8, matching 13 in trench 2). A ditch was present, 21, aligned NW-SW, with two slots made, 6 and 7 to establish its relation respectively with gully 5 and furrow 8. The relationship between furrow 8 and this ditch remained unclear (**PI. 7**). The ditch was steep-sided and flat-based, 0.94m wide and 0.35m deep. Its single fill, a firm grey brown clay with rare inclusions (flints, small stones), was sterile. Barely visible in the trench it seems there was a linear cut perpendicular to it, 9. It had a steep NW side. It did not continue the other side of furrow 8. Its fill was a mid brownish grey clay with rare small stones inclusions. It was at least 0.30m wide and 0.27m deep. The relationship slot made between ditch 21 and gully 5 showed that the latter was truncated. The E-W gully was 0.54m wide and 0.20m deep with a steep slope at south and a slightly rounded base. It was filled by a soft mid grey silty clay. Parallel to gully 5 but located further north was gully 20, investigated by slots 1 and 3. From the first one, it showed that it is bordered by a possible posthole, 2. The second one truncated pit 4. Gully 20 was 0.50m wide and 0.21m deep. It had a concave profile. It was filled by a firm mid to dark brownish grey clay and very rare natural flint inclusions. 2 was a possible sub-circular posthole, 0.34 x 0.38m and 0.10m deep. This shallow concave feature had a firm grey clay infill. Pit 4 measured 0.90m by at least 0.45m. It had steep sides and a rounded base. The lower fill was

mid to dark brownish grey silty clay with very rare charcoal and small bits of chalk while the upper fill was a softer grey silty clay. A single prehistoric flint spall came from ditch slot 1 No finds were recovered from the other features in this trench.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Three sherds of pottery weighing 11g were collected from furrow [10] fill (64). The three sherds were joining pieces of Late Saxon to medieval Oxford ware (Mellor 1994, fabric OXY) were recovered. The sherds have thinly reduced surfaces but are otherwise oxidised. They are likely to be part of a cooking pot. The sherds are undiagnostic and can only be broadly dated to the 11th to 13th centuries.

Animal Bones by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of non-human bone was recovered from ditch 14 (68), within Trench 1. Weighing 156g, a total of 18 fragments were present for analysis. Overall, the fragments were well-preserved, with excellent surface preservation, and limited evidence of postmortem damage. Using reference to Hillson (1992), osteological analysis was undertaken to determine the minimum number of animals present, and the species of origin.

Elements present at the time of analysis included fragments of unfused vertebral bodies and neural arches, a single rib (left side), left and right ilia (hip blades) and femora (and associated unfused epiphyses). The lack of element duplication suggested the presence of a single juvenile individual. Based on the cross-sections of the rib shaft and the ilia, it is possible the remains were from a sheep/goat, however, given the age of the individual and the skeletal elements present, this is only a tentative identification. No further information was able to be retrieved from the immature remains.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint, a spall (piece less than 20x20mm) was recovered from Ditch 1 (53) in trench 4. It is not closely datable but likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Conclusion

Four trenches were opened and produced mixed results. If one put aside the series of furrows observed in three trenches, features of archaeological interest were uncovered in trenches 1, 2 and 4. They consisted mainly of seven linear features of various orientations, some of them pre-dating the furrows according to the stratigraphy. A possible posthole and a pit completed the list of features noted. Unfortunately the only dating evidence was a prehistoric struck flint other than the stratigraphic relationships. The only pottery recovered was of Medieval date from one of the furrows. On the basis that some features pre-date the medieval furrows, the site is considered to have some archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25.80	1.80	SW-NE	0.75-0.80	0–0.35m topsoil (friable dark brown loamy silt); 0.35-0.70m subsoil (soft mid brownish grey silty clay); 0.70m+ natural geology (chalky light grey clay with rare small stones and flints). Ditch 14. [PI. 1 and 5]
2	26.00	1.80	ESE-WNW	0.75-0.95	0–0.35m topsoil; 0.35-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m+ natural geology. Ditch 11, gully 12 and furrow 13. [PI. 2 and 6]
3	25.80	1.80	NE-SW	0.80	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.65m subsoil; 0.65m+ natural geology. Furrow 10. [PI. 3 and 8]
4	24.20	1.80	SSE-NNW	0.75-1.15	0–0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m+ natural geology. Gullies 5 and 20, ditch 21, pit 4, furrow 8 and posthole 1. [PI. 4 and 7]

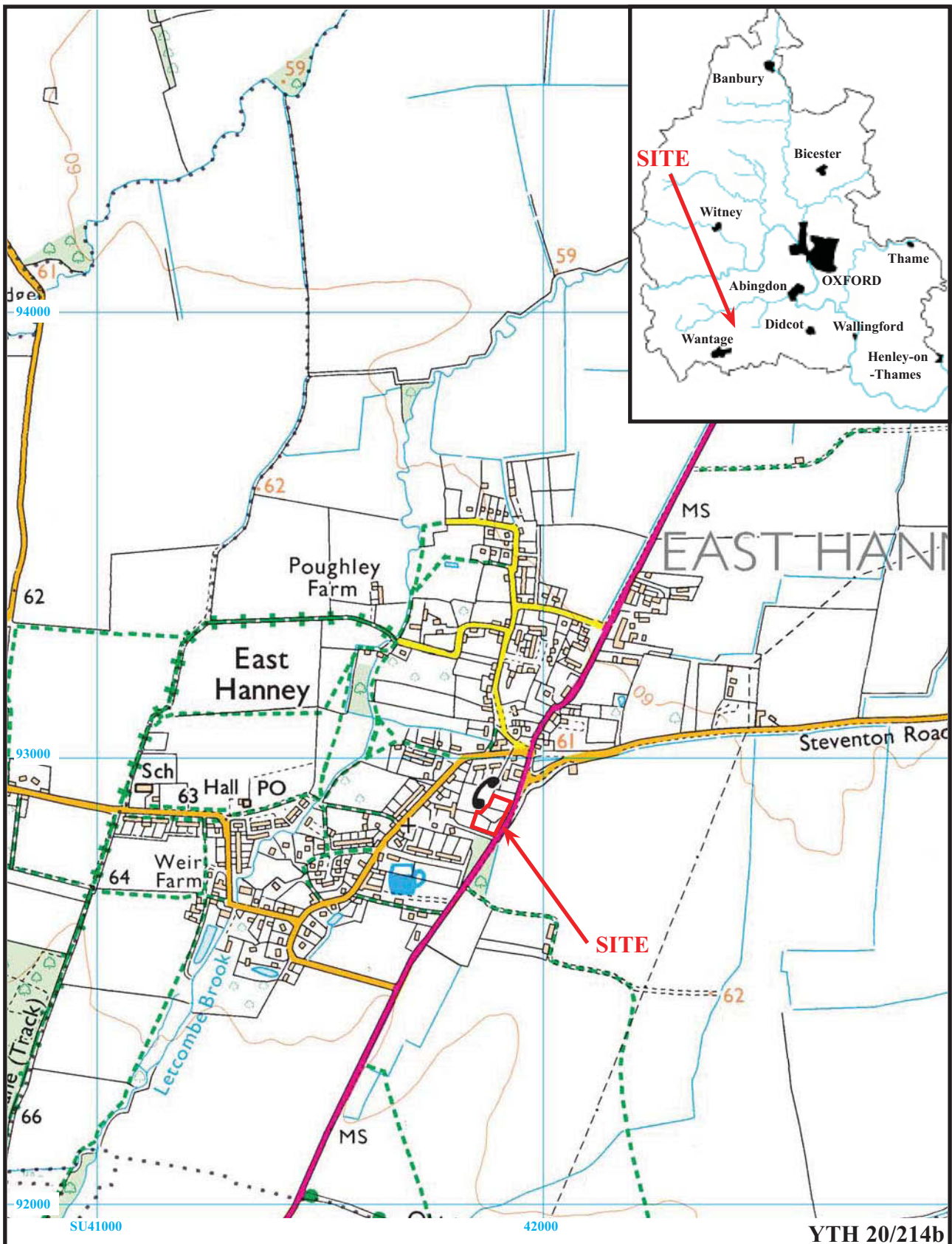
APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
4	20	1	53	Ditch		
4		2	54	Possible posthole		
4	20	3	55	Ditch		
4		4	56-57	Pit		
4		5	58	Gully		
4	21	6	59	Ditch		
4	21	7	60	Ditch		
4		8	61, 63	Furrow	Medieval?	Association
4		9	62	Gully?		
3		10	64	Furrow	Medieval	Pottery
2		11	65	Ditch		
2		12	66	Furrow	Medieval?	Association
2		13	67	Ditch	<Medieval?	Stratigraphy
1		14	68	Ditch		

APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogue

<i>Fill</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Dates</i>
64	10	OXY	U	3	11	1			fine-medium sandy, oxid with thinly reduced surfaces	11-13C+

Type: U – undecorated body sherd.

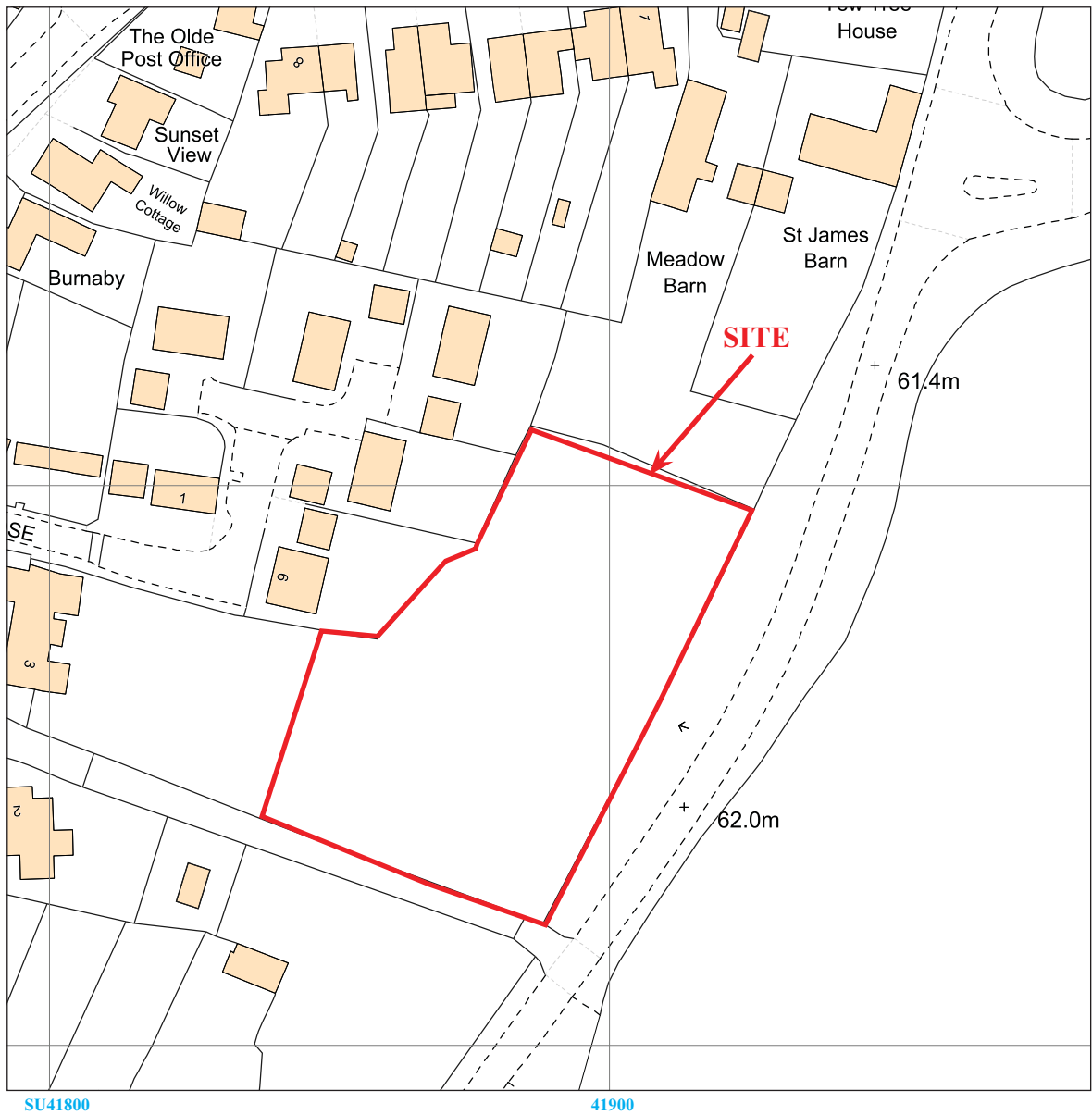


**Land adjacent to Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks,
East Hanney, Oxfordshire, 2021
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within East Hanney and
Oxfordshire.

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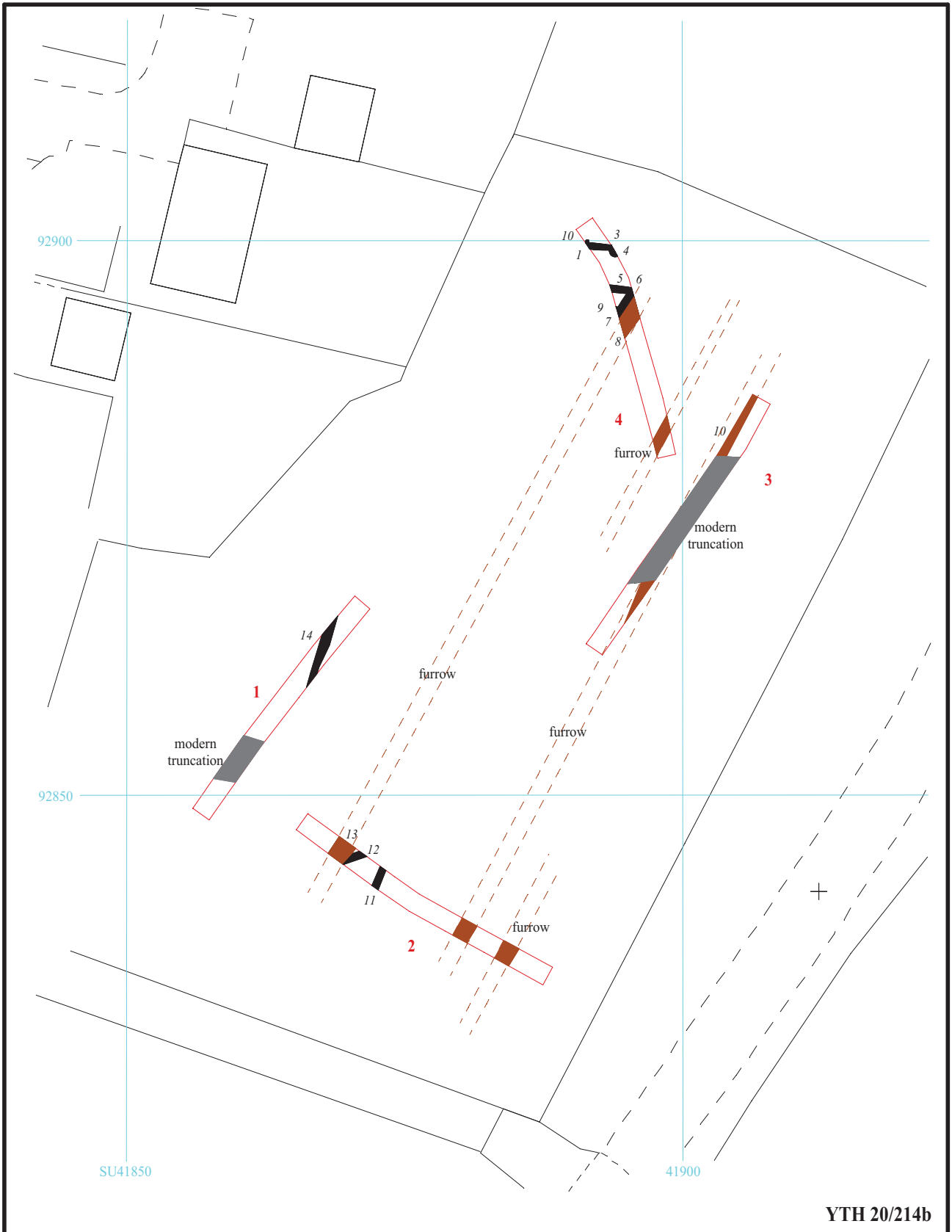
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**Land adjacent to Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks,
East Hanney, Oxfordshire, 2021
Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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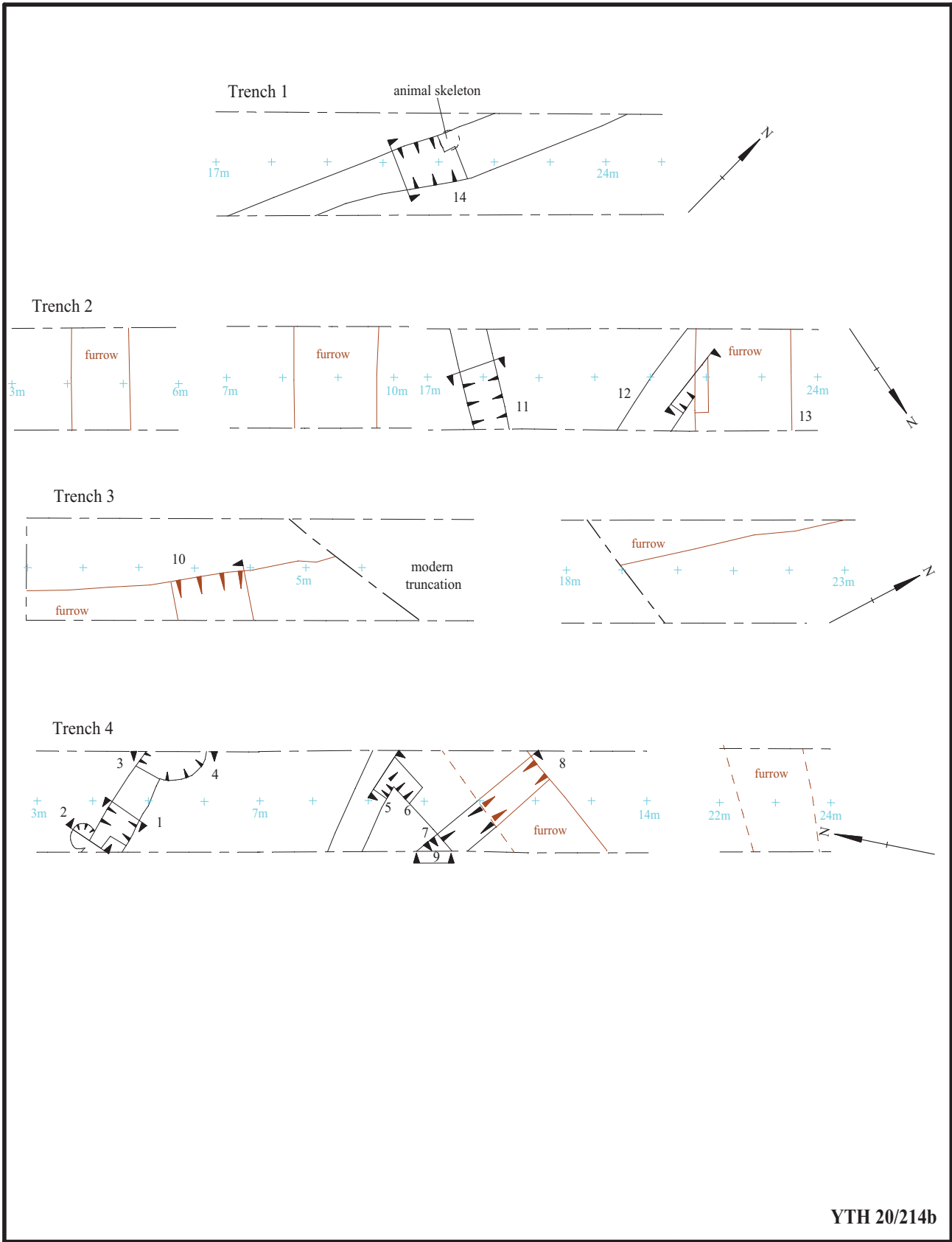
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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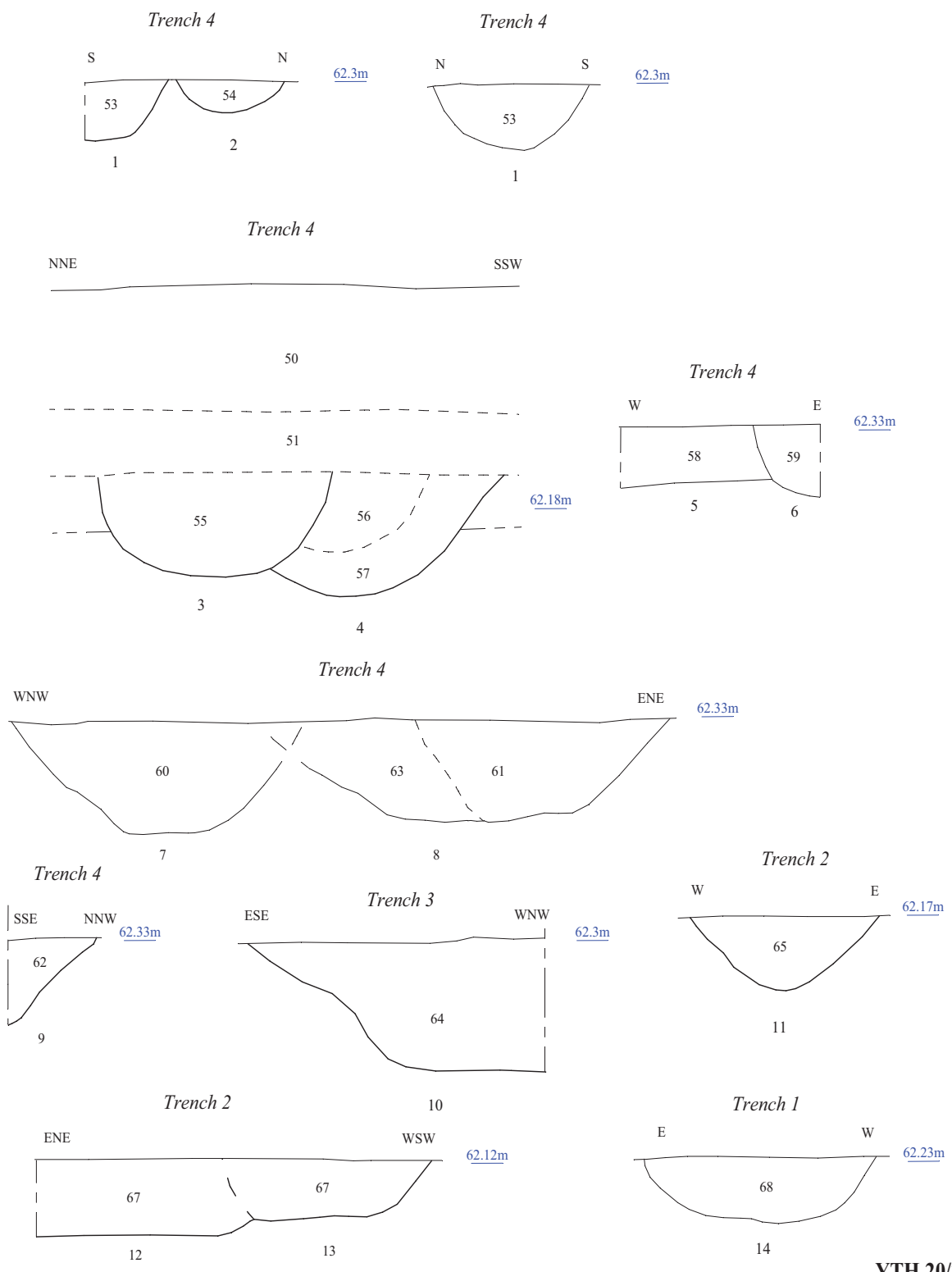


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Figure 4. Plan of trenches.





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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North East,
Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking North West,
Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking South West,
Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking South East,
Scales: 1m x2.

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Plates 1 to 4.**

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Plate 4. Trench 1, ditch 14, looking North East,
Scales: 1m and 0.2m.



Plate 5. Trench 2, ditch 12 and furrow 13, looking North West,
Scales: 1m and 0.2m.



Plate 7. Trench 4, ditch 7 and furrow 8, looking North,
Scales: 1m, 0.3m and 0.2m



Plate 8. Trench 3, furrow 10, looking South,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

YTH 20/214b

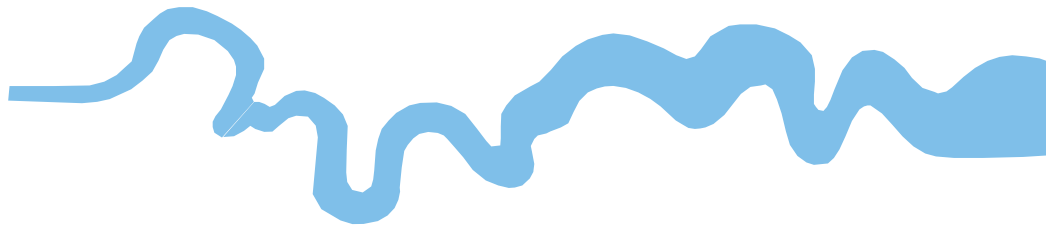
**Land to adjacent to Yew Tree Barn, The Paddocks,
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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 to 8.**

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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