

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation- phase 2

by Beth Tucker

**Site Code: HFJ15/241
(SU 7536 6376)**

**Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill,
Reading, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation phase 2

for Messrs V J and R J Butler

by Beth Tucker

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HFJ 15/441

May 2022

Summary

Site name: Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire.

Grid reference: SU 7536 6376

Site activity: Evaluation - phase 2

Date and duration of project: 11th May 2022

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Beth Tucker

Site code: HFJ 15/241

Area of site: c. 600sq m

Summary of results: The second phase of this evaluation was undertaken with four trenches dug. All four trenches showed that the natural geology was overlain by modern made ground deposits. No features or finds of archaeological interest were recorded during the evaluation and so the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 17.05.22
	Steve Preston✓ 16.05.22

Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire
An Archaeological Evaluation - phase 2
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Report 15/241b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7536 6376) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Messrs V J and R J Butler of Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 1UR

Planning consent (F/2015/0767) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of a new ground level lagoon and anaerobic digester on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (10) relating to archaeology due to the site's location within the archaeologically rich region of the Loddon Valley and its Blackwater tributary and more specifically the corridor of a Roman road known as the Devil's Highway. An field evaluation has been requested in order to assess the potential of archaeological features or deposits being damaged or destroyed by groundworks. This work also aims to guide the formation of a mitigation strategy should finds or deposits of archaeological interest be identified or recovered. The evaluation took place in two stages, with four trenches to be excavated in each: the first phase trenching in the northern part of the site had revealed no finds or features of archaeological interest (Lewins 2016), and this report details the four trenches required to complete the evaluation.

This was in accordance with the Department of Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kathelen Leary, (former) Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, the advisers to the Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Beth Tucker and Michael Paine on 11th May 2022 and the site code is HFJ 16/241. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority), or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an irregular parcel of land just to the north of Jouldings Lane and 650m south-east of Farley Hill (Fig. 1). It lies around 10km south-east of Reading. The Blackwater River is located 250m to the south. Phase 2 of the evaluation was located in the southern section of the overall site (Fig. 2). The southern edge

of the site lies at a height of 55m above Ordnance Datum sloping upwards to the north and east to a height of 65m above Ordnance Datum at the north edge of the overall site (Pls 5 and 6). The underlying geology for the site was recorded as London Clay Formation (BGS 2000) which was observed during trenching.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the corridor of the Roman road from London to Silchester, locally known as the Devil's Highway. There is a possibility of encountering Roman road-side settlement or burials. The site also lies close to a relatively rich region of the Loddon Valley with extensive cropmarks visible from the air recorded to the west representing Iron Age and Roman occupation (Gates 1975; Lobb and Morris 1993). A small number of previous investigations have taken place around the area of Farley Hill of which seven produced no archaeological features, although two unstratified struck flints and a single Roman or Medieval potsherd were recovered from one of the sites (Ford 1989; 2006; Hammond 2003; Hardy 2001; McNicoll-Norbury 2008; Pine 1999). The phased investigation of Baird Road, Arborfield Garrison to the north-east of the site, however, produced evidence for an early/middle Iron Age farmstead, including the discovery of a roundhouse ring gully and evidence for iron smelting (Hammond 2011). The site of the former Whitehall Brick and Tile Works, also situated within the garrison, produced further evidence for Iron Age occupation continuing into the mid-third century AD, as well as further evidence for iron smelting (Pine 2003).

Four trenches were opened in the first phase of the evaluation (Lewins 2016) in the northern portion of the site (Fig. 3) revealed no archaeological finds or features.

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 aims of the 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 Roman occupation is present on the site; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Any features or deposits of archaeological interest were to be assessed in accordance with local and national research priorities such as the Solent-Thames research agenda (Hey and Hind 2014). Fieldwork was to follow the appropriate recommendations of the CIfA regarding archaeological evaluations (CIfA 2020).

It was proposed to dig 8 trenches, each 15m long and 2m wide, four at the northern end of site in the area of the proposed tanks and four at the southern end in the lagoon area: the latter are those reported here. Excavation of the trenches was to be undertaken by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features or deposits were possibly or certainly present, the area was to be cleaned, excavated, sampled and recorded using the appropriate hand tools in order to satisfy the aims outlined above, but in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or may better be excavated under conditions pertaining to a full excavation. Spoil heaps were monitored for any possible finds of archaeological interest.

Results

Four trenches (trenches 1-4) were opened during the course of this phase of the archaeological evaluation to target the location of the proposed surface level lagoon. Four trenches (trenches 5-8) had been opened in the previous phase to target the location of the anaerobic digesters. The locations of trenches 1 and 4 were adjusted due to obstructions, water pipes and water springs in the northern and eastern parts of this phase of the site (Fig. 3).

The trenches measured between 12.5m and 16.9m in length and varied from 0.8m to 1.95m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or recorded during the course of this evaluation. Deep made ground was encountered in Trenches 1 and 2 and as a consequence they were not fully excavated down to the natural geology except in test pits at the start and end of each of the trenches.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned SE-NW and was 12.5m long, and was dug to 1.2m deep with the exception of the two test pits at either end of the trench which were taken to 1.95m in depth. The trench was slightly shorter than intended due to a water springs at the eastern end of the trench. The stratigraphy in the test pits consisted of 0.15m of topsoil, above 0.35m of mid brown silty-clay made ground with modern inclusions, overlying 1.0m of black silty-clay made ground and 0.45m of mid greyish-green mottled clay made ground overlying the light greyish-yellow clayey-sand natural geology. The test pits were excavated between 0-2.2m and 10.2-12.5m from the west end of the trench. It was not clear if the natural geology had been truncated, but no buried old topsoil was noted. The test pits confirmed the level of the surviving natural geology was significantly lower than the foundations for the new lagoon. No artefacts nor features of archaeological interest were recovered from this trench recorded.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned N-S and was 14.9m long, and the trench was 1.2m deep with the exception of the two test pits at the north and south ends which measured 1.8m and 1.6m in depth respectively. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil, 0.2m of mid brown silty-clay made ground with modern inclusions, 0.4m of black silty-clay made ground and 0.85m of mid greyish-green mottled clay overlying the light greyish-yellow clayey-sand natural geology. The test pits were excavated between 0-2.2m and 10.2-12.5m from the south end of the trench, and confirmed the level of the natural geology. No artefacts nor features of archaeological interest were recovered from this trench recorded.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned E-W and was 15.7m long and 1.1m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil, 0.38m of black silty-clay made ground with modern inclusions, above 0.3m of dark grey silty-clay made ground and 0.3m of mid greyish-green mottled contaminated clay overlying the light greyish-yellow clayey-sand natural geology. A brick-lined modern land drain was recorded at 2.9m from the west end of the trench. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded or recovered from this trench.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3; Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned NE-SW and was 16.9m long and 1.5m in depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil, above 0.3m of mid brown silty-clay made ground with modern inclusions, above 0.2m of black silty-clay made ground and 0.9m of mid greyish-green mottled clay overlying the light grey-yellow clayey-sand natural geology. A modern land drain was recorded at 7.7m from the south-west end of the trench. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded or recovered from this trench.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered during the course of these works.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation undertaken at Hill Farm has now excavated all 8 proposed trenches in two phases, No artefacts nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed Throughout both phases of trenching

the only features encountered were modern land drains and in some places a considerable thickness of made ground. Therefore, it is considered that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

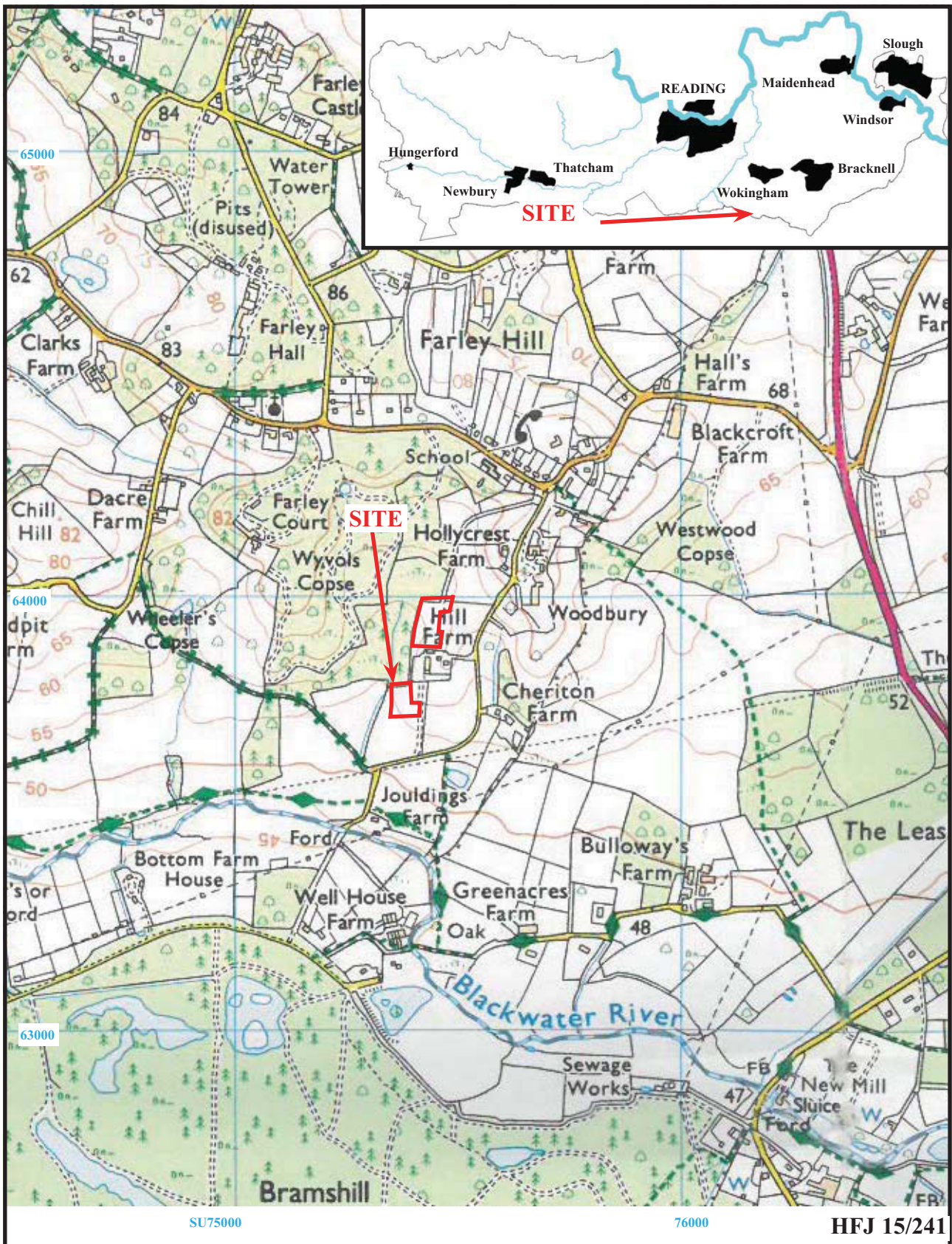
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at WNW, W, SW and S end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	12.5	2.0	1.2 (1.95 test pits)	0–0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.5m mid brown silty-clay made ground; 0.5-1.5m black silty-clay made ground; 1.5-1.95m mid greyish-green contaminated clay; 1.95m+ light greyish-yellow clayish-sand natural geology. [PI. 1]
2	14.9	2.0	1.2 (1.6 and 1.8 test pits)	0–0.1m topsoil; 0.1-0.3m mid brown silty-clay made ground; 0.3-0.7m black silty-clay made ground; 0.7-1.55m mid greyish-green contaminated clay; 1.55m+ natural geology. [PI. 2]
3	15.7	2.0	1.1	0–0.12m topsoil; 0.12-0.5m black silty-clay made ground; 0.5-0.8m dark grey silty-clay made ground; 0.8-1.1m mid greyish-green contaminated clay; 1.1m+ natural geology. [PI. 3]
4	16.9	2.0	1.5	0–0.1m topsoil; 0.1-0.4m mid brown silty-clay made ground; 0.4-0.6m black silty-clay made ground; 0.6-1.5m mid greyish-green contaminated clay; 1.5m+ natural geology. [PI. 4]

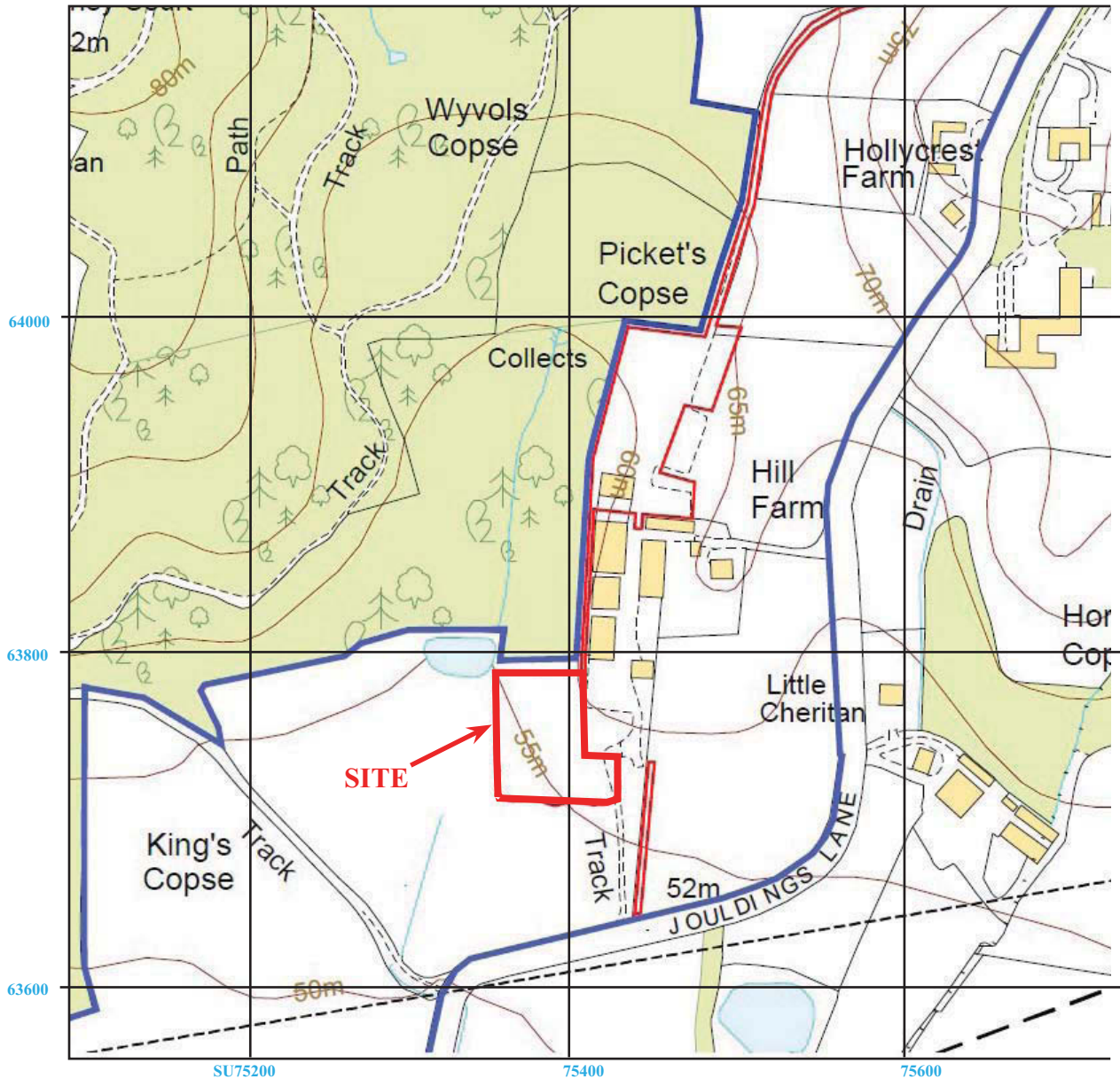


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Figure 1. Location of site within Farley Hill and Berkshire.

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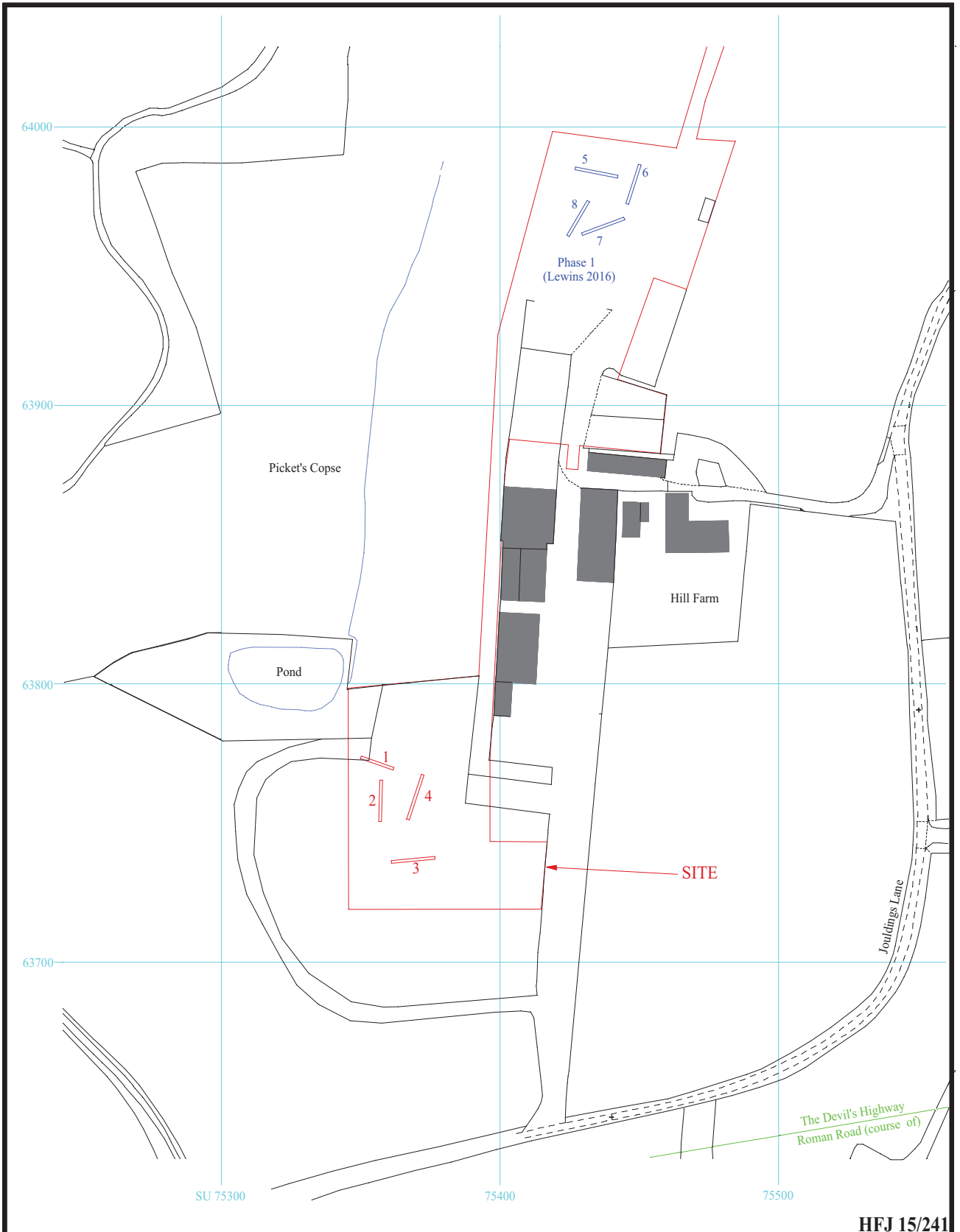
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Jouldings Lane.

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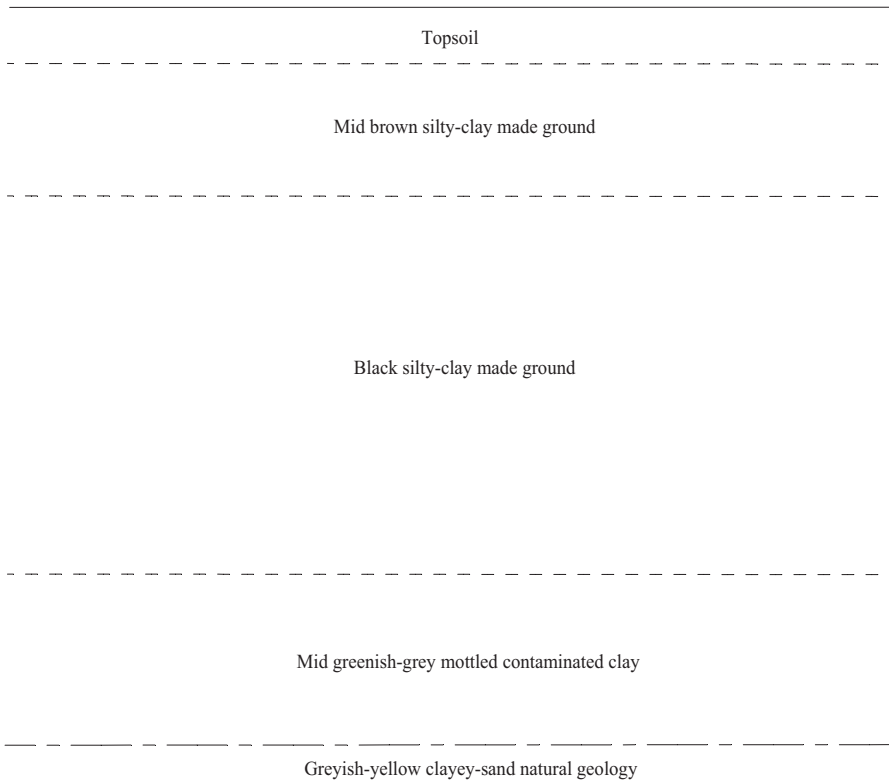
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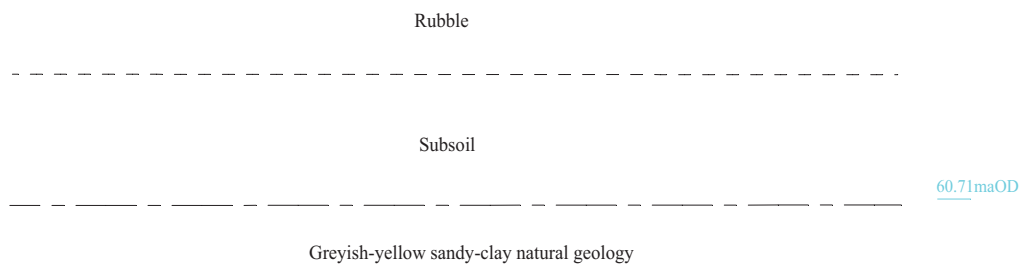
Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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WSW **Trench 1 (test pit)** ENE



SW **Trench 7** NE



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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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



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

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



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

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Plates 3 and 4.

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Plate 5. General view of site looking north



Plate 6. Trench 4, looking east..

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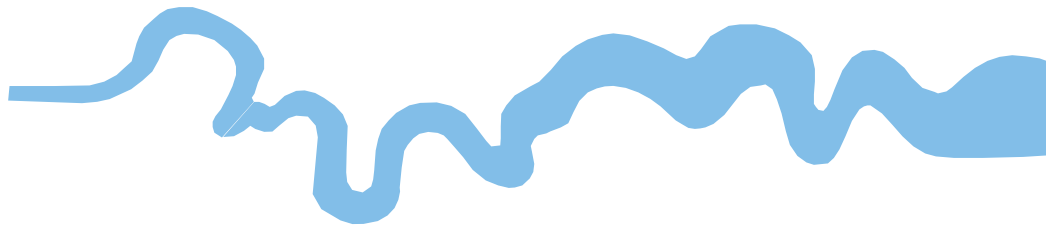
**Hill Farm, Jouldings Lane, Farley Hill,
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Plates 5 and 6.**

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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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