

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**S O U T H**

**50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton,  
East Sussex**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: RCB11/24**

**(TQ 3477 0340)**

**50 Roedean Crescent,  
Brighton, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Richard Long**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code RCB11/24

**March 2011**

## Summary

**Site name:** 50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 3477 0340

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 15th–17th March 2011

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** RCB11/24

**Area of site:** c. 950 sq m

**Summary of results:** No finds or features of archaeological interest were discovered.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 24.03.11
	Steve Preston ✓ 24.03.11

# 50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

**Report 11/24**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 5RH (TQ 3477 0340) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Long of 50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 5RH.

Planning permission (BH2010/03571) has been gained from Brighton and Hove City Council to construct a new garage, along with extensions on the north and south sides of the property. This permission is subject to a condition which requires that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during groundworks in order to mitigate the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits.

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 City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the archaeological adviser to Brighton and Hove City Council, Mr Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist with East Sussex County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis and Felicity Howell between 15th–17th March 2011 and the site code is RCB 11/24.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton and will be deposited at Brighton Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is situated at the junction of Roedean Crescent and Roedean Vale, about 4km east of the historic core of Brighton and about 1km west of Ovingdean, East Sussex (Fig. 2). Roedean School is located approximately 200m to the south-east, whilst the Brighton Marina complex lies about 500m to the south-west.

The site is currently occupied by a detached house and its associated driveways and gardens. Due to the natural slope of the Downs in this area, and the fact that there has been some historic landscaping in connection with the existing house, the site generally slopes down towards the south-east, from a height of approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Upper Chalk (BGS 1981), and this was confirmed in all the areas monitored during the watching brief.



## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within Roedean Bottom, on the south-east facing slopes of Red Hill, considered to be an archaeologically sensitive area due to its position on the chalk downlands, which were the focus for occupation, ceremonial and funerary activity from the Neolithic period onwards. A number of earthworks are recorded on the summit of Red Hill, some of which may represent Bronze Age round barrows. Inhumation burials dating from the prehistoric and Roman periods have been found on the hill, including a crouched inhumation thought to be late Neolithic or early Bronze Age in date, from Roedean Crescent itself. Further crouched burials were discovered nearby, at Roedean Way and Roedean Road. A small hoard of Roman coins, dating from 3rd to 4th centuries AD, was found on Roedean Crescent, in an area that was formerly allotments. Field systems dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods have been identified in the wider landscape. The site is about 2km south-east of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure known as Whitehawk Camp (Allen 2005; Rudling 2003).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be affected by the proposed groundworks. This involved the monitoring of foundation trenches for the new garage, on the east side of the existing house, along with the footings for a new extension on the north side of the property. The design of the proposed extension on the southern side of the house meant that only the digging of a small trench for a concrete pad needed to be observed during the watching brief.

## **Results**

A L-shaped footing trench was excavated on the north-western side of the property, measuring 5.4m by 1.8m (Pl.1). The trench was 0.7m wide and the average depth was 0.9m. The original natural slope of the underlying chalk was evident within the footing trench, with the top of the chalk being recorded at between 0.35m (to the west) and 0.85m (to the east) below the present ground surface. In the deepest part of the trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.55m of made ground which lay above a buried topsoil horizon, 0.1m thick, which overlay 0.2m of subsoil, which in turn lay directly above the natural chalk (Fig. 4). In the shallower part of the trench, 0.35m of topsoil and subsoil lay above the chalk. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench.

The footing trenches for the proposed new garage were observed on the eastern side of the existing house. It was clear from the surroundings that the area had been subject to landscaping in the past, probably when the

present house was built. This was confirmed in the foundation trenches, where natural chalk was encountered beneath relatively shallow (*c.* 0.2m) deposits of made ground and modern topsoil. The area where the northern footing trench was dug had been further disturbed by a service trench, whilst the footings of a brick garden wall had truncated the part of the southern garage foundation trench closest to Roedean Vale. No archaeological finds or features were recorded within the garage foundation trenches, which were 0.7m wide.

Due to a change in the design of the proposed southern extension, the only area which needed to be monitored was a rectangular trench, measuring 0.6m by 0.7m, which was dug for a concrete pad (Pl.2). The stratigraphy within this trench consisted of 0.15m of topsoil over made ground deposits, up to 0.25m thick, which lay above a buried soil horizon. This soil horizon was only 0.08m thick, and lay directly above the natural chalk. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

The foundation trench for a small retaining garden wall was also monitored in the north-east corner of the site. However, due to the shallowness of the footings (*c.* 0.4m), the natural chalk was not reached, and just topsoil and made ground were observed in section. This minor feature (the finished wall will only be about 0.4m high) was not included in the planning application and is therefore not depicted on Figure 3.

## **Finds**

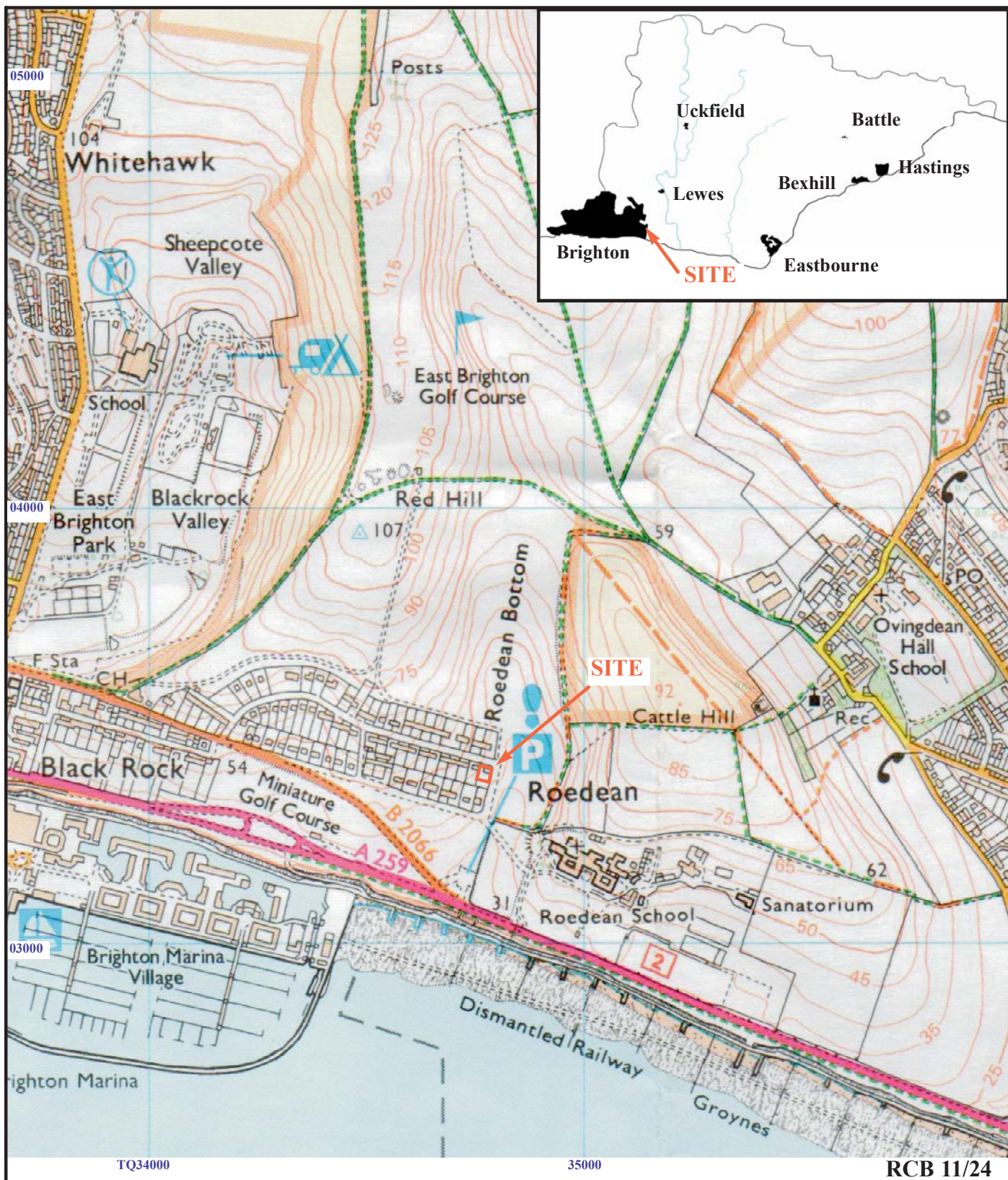
No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the site's position in an area where numerous archaeological finds and features have been recorded, no archaeological deposits were observed during the watching brief. It is clear that the area had previously been landscaped, presumably when the existing house was built, and this was confirmed in the various trenches monitored. Whilst some parts of the site have been truncated as a result of this landscaping, other areas have been built up to create the present levelled ground surfaces around the house.

## **References**

- Allen, M J, 2005, 'Beaker settlement and environment on the chalk downs of Southern England', *Proc Prehist Soc*, **71**, 219–46
- BGS, 1984, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 318/333, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Department of Communities and Local Government Planning Policy Statement 5, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD 2000*, Brighton



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Figure 1. Location of site within Brighton and East Sussex.

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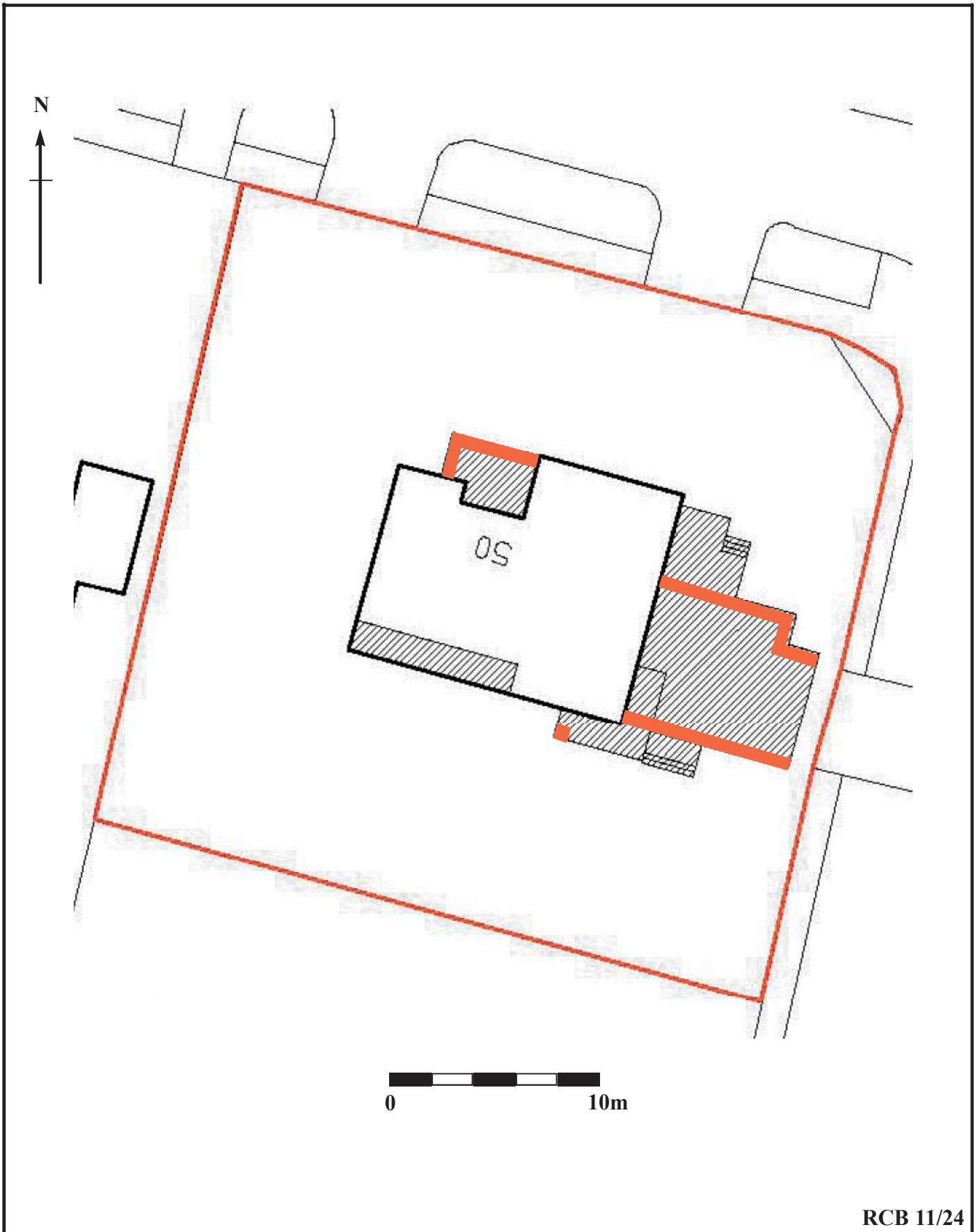


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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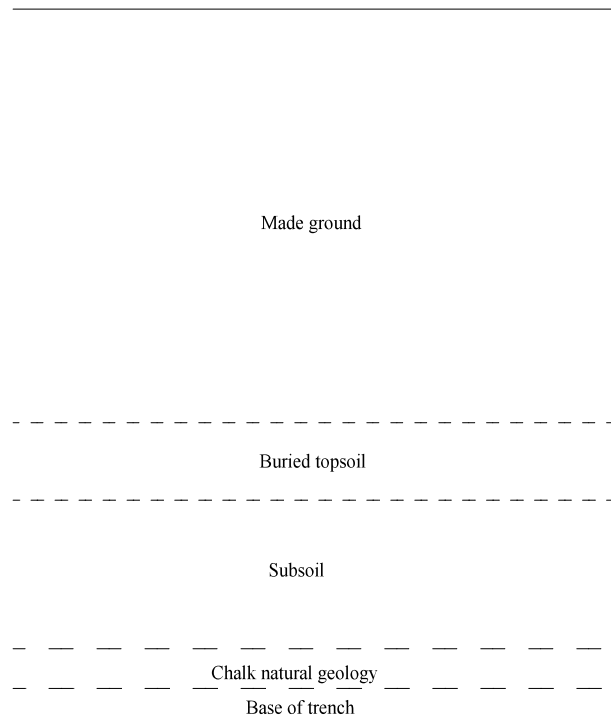


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Figure 3. Location of foundation trenches observed.

North West foundation trench



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Figure 4. Representative section, north west trench.





Plate 1. North footing trench, looking south-east, Scale: 1m



Plate 2. South footing trench, looking south, Scale: 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

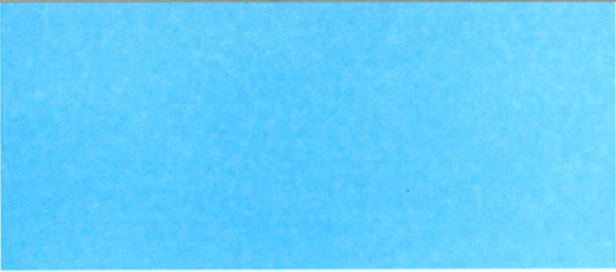
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## TIME CHART

	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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