

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

**Bridge House, 68-70 East Street,
Horsham, West Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: ESH11/59

(TQ 1750 3040)

**Bridge House, 68-70 East Street, Horsham,
West Sussex**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Geoffrey Osborne Ltd

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code ESH 11/59

February 2012

Summary

Site name: Bridge House, 68-70 East Street, Horsham, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 1750 3040

Planning reference: DC/09/1978

Site activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 23rd September 2011 – 17th November 2011

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: ESH 11/59

Area of site: c. 0.23 ha

Summary of results: The only features observed of possible archaeological interest were a shallow undated pit and wells and walls of late 19th or 20th century date. Large areas of the site had been previously truncated, probably when Bridge House and the council depot were constructed.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 28.02.12 Joanna Pine✓ 28.02.12

Bridge House, 68-70 East Street, Horsham, West Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Report 11/59

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land to the south of East Street, Horsham, West Sussex (TQ 1750 3040) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Owen McGillivray, Assistant Surveyor with Geoffrey Osborne Ltd, Wray Coppice, Oaks Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0LE.

Planning permission (DC/09/1978) has been gained from Horsham District Council to demolish the existing buildings on the site, and construct several new residential apartment blocks with associated car parking areas. The permission is subject to a condition (16) relating to archaeology, which requires that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the District Council's policy (DC10) on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by John Mills, Senior Archaeologist with West Sussex County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis between 23rd September and 17th November 2011, and the site code is ESH 11/59. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Horsham Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site consists of an irregular-shaped parcel of land, to the east of the historic core of Horsham. It is bounded to the north by East Street, to the east and south by Denne Parade, and to the west by a mixture of residential and commercial properties (Figs 1 and 2). Prior to redevelopment, the north and east parts of the site were occupied by Bridge House and its associated car park, whilst the south-west part of the site was occupied by a large council depot building. Following the demolition of these buildings the site was relatively flat, although there was a noticeable drop where the council depot had once stood. As a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varied from about 46m at the southern end of the site, to about 47m along the East Street frontage. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (BGS1972). This was confirmed during the evaluation, where the natural geology generally consisted of light yellow brown clayey sand.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the historic core of Horsham, and the fact that the site is split between two of the town's Historic Urban Character Areas (East Street and Denne Street). Apart from a few isolated stray finds of prehistoric and Roman date, there is little archaeological evidence of activity in the town before the medieval period (Rudling 2003). Despite the fact that elements of the parish church date from the late 12th century, the only evidence of Horsham prior to 1300 consists of a few sherds of pottery, although this may reflect the lack of substantial archaeological investigations within the town (Harris 2004). The present site is located to the south of East Street, which is medieval in origin. However, the extent of development along this road is unclear, and the available historic maps suggest that there were no buildings on the present site until after the railway was built in the mid 19th century.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the monitoring exercise was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all intrusive groundworks, including areas of ground reduction, and the excavation of foundation trenches and service runs. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer's and groundworker's schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

Prior to the commencement of the watching brief, the existing buildings on the site were demolished, and the site levelled (Fig. 3).

Bridge House/Block A

The foundations of Bridge House had been quite substantial, and the building had been partially cellared. As a result, the area within the footprint of this building had been significantly disturbed by its construction, and subsequent demolition. Nevertheless, a brick built well (56) was observed during the digging of the new footings (Pl. 4). The well had been poorly backfilled after it went out of use, and the loose rubble (57) had collapsed into the new footing trench, leaving just the brickwork in place. The well was most likely late 19th century in date, and had probably been backfilled when Bridge House was built in the 20th century.

No archaeological features were recorded immediately to the east of Bridge House, where the stratigraphy generally consisted of approximately 0.2m of demolition rubble and made ground, lying directly above the natural geology.

The area to the rear of Bridge House had previously been a car park, and was stripped of Tarmac and about 0.45m of overburden, down to the top of the natural geology. Another well (51) was revealed in this area (Pl.1), along the footings of two walls (53 and 54). The well was brick built, with an internal diameter of 1.2m. Its construction cut (1) was clearly visible, and measured about 1.9m in diameter, but no finds were seen within its fill (50). However, several fragments of late 19th mass produced transfer printed pottery were recovered from the backfill of the well itself (52). The walls were observed just to the north-west of well 51, and they had clearly been truncated by the footings of Bridge House (Pl. 3). About 2.5m of wall 53 had survived, and it consisted of one course of bricks laid on rubble footings. The wall was constructed from standard sized frogged bricks. It was abutted by wall 54, of which only the chalk and lime mortar foundations survived. Wall 54 ran at a right angle from wall 53 for 4.2m, before turning again for another 2.5m. Both walls are likely to date from the late 19th or early 20th century

Crane Base

A possible pit (2) was observed when an area was stripped in advance of a crane base (Figs 3 and 4). This feature was sub-circular in plan, and measured 1.45m by 1.05m (Pl. 2). The pit was only 0.12m deep, but the lack of any buried soil horizons in the area indicates that it may have been badly truncated from above. No finds were recovered from its single fill of greyish green sandy clay (55).

Block B

The footings for block B were monitored, and once again the stratigraphy consisted of made ground deposits lying directly above the natural geology. A number of 20th century wall foundations and services were seen in the new footing trenches and lift pit.

Block C

The lift pit for block C was monitored, in the area of the site which had previously been occupied by the large council depot building. This area was noticeably lower than the north-east part of the site, indicating that

truncation had taken place in the past, probably when the depot was built. As a result of this, it was decided not to monitor the remaining footings for blocks C and D, as the area had clearly been truncated by the depot building and its subsequent demolition. This course of action was taken following discussions with Mr. John Mills, the county archaeological officer.

Finds

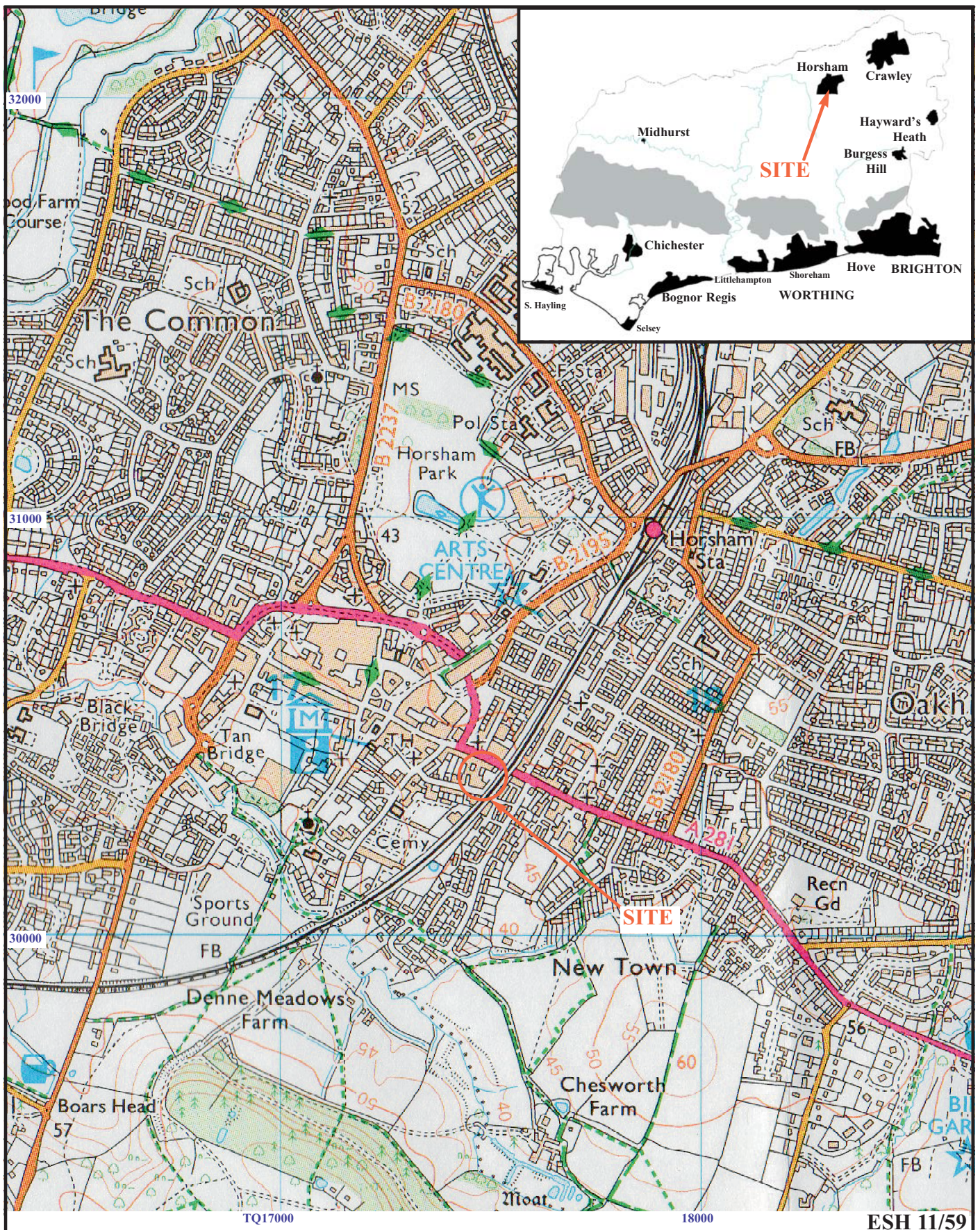
The only archaeological finds noted during the watching brief were of late 19th century or 20th century in date, such as bottle glass and transfer-printed white ware. These were retained on site.

Conclusion

The watching brief successfully examined those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the new buildings. It was clear that large areas had been badly truncated in the past, by Bridge House in the northern part of the site, and by the council depot in the south-west part of the site. Although the level of truncation between these areas was less severe, the complete absence of any buried soil deposits indicates that the entire site had been stripped of overburden in the past. Nevertheless, one undated pit, and a number of features dating from the late 19th or early 20th century had survived, and were recorded.

References

- BGS, 1972, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 302, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Harris, R B, 2004, *Horsham Historic Character and Assessment Report, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS)*, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, English Heritage
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Planning Policy Statement 5, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton



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Figure 1. Location of site within Horsham
and West Sussex.

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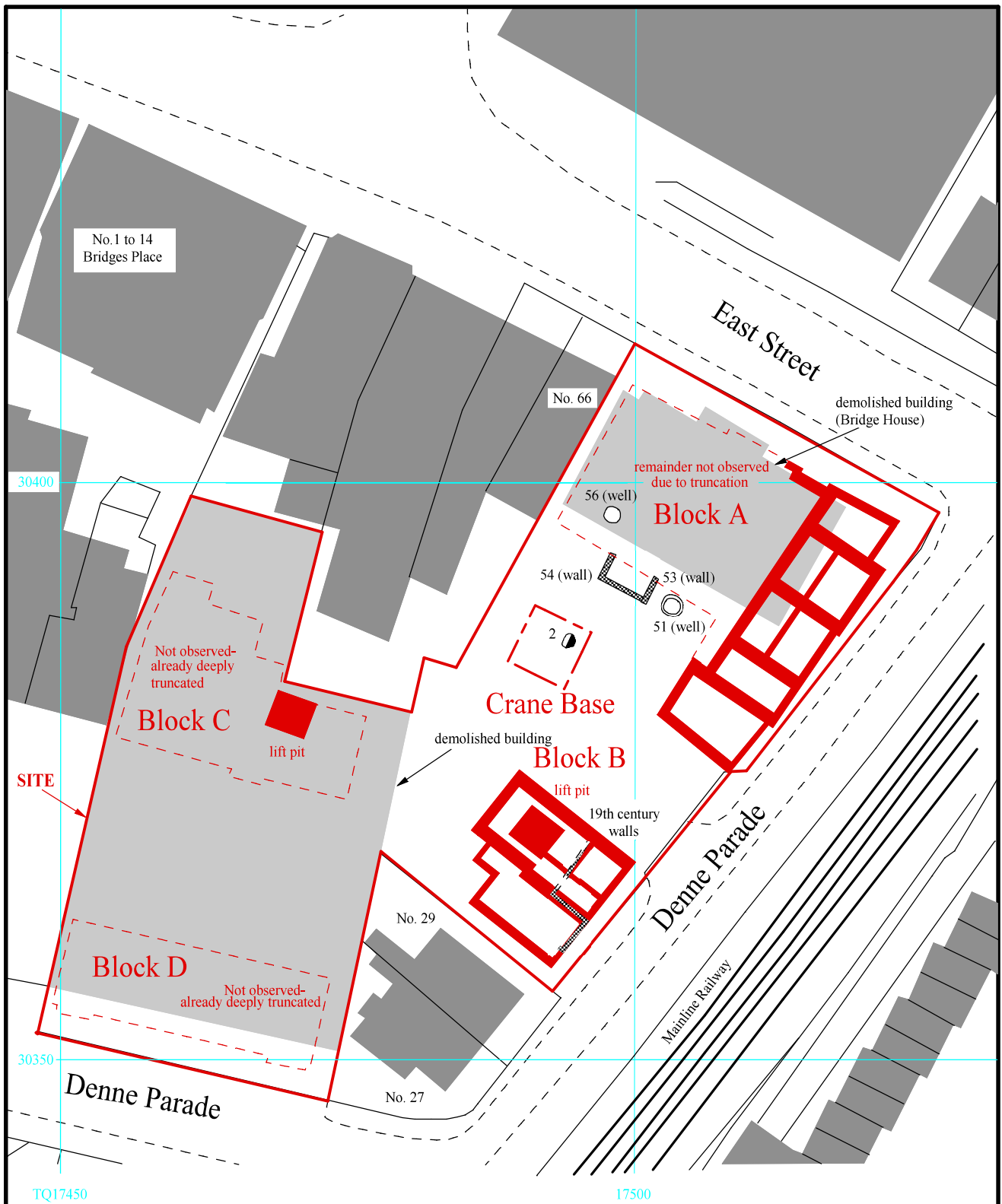


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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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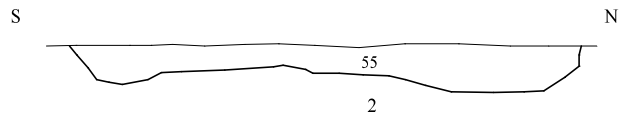


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Figure 3. Location of areas monitored and archaeological features.





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Figure 4. Section.



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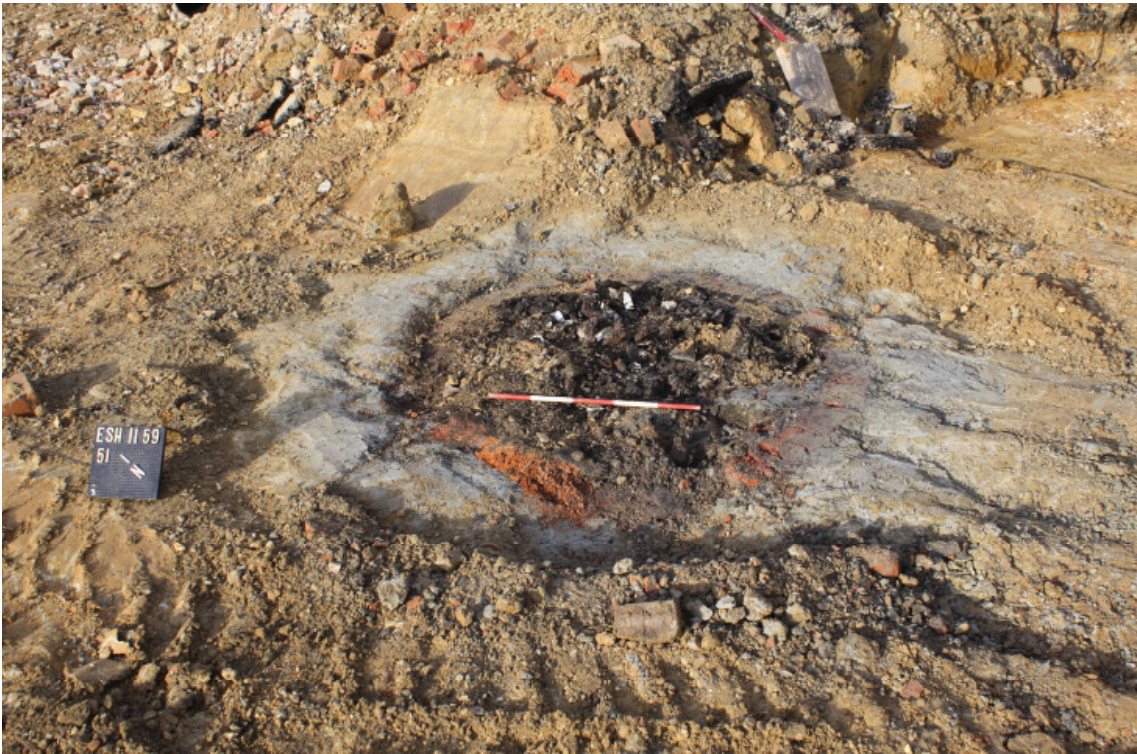


Plate 1. Well 51, looking south-west, Scale: 0.5m.

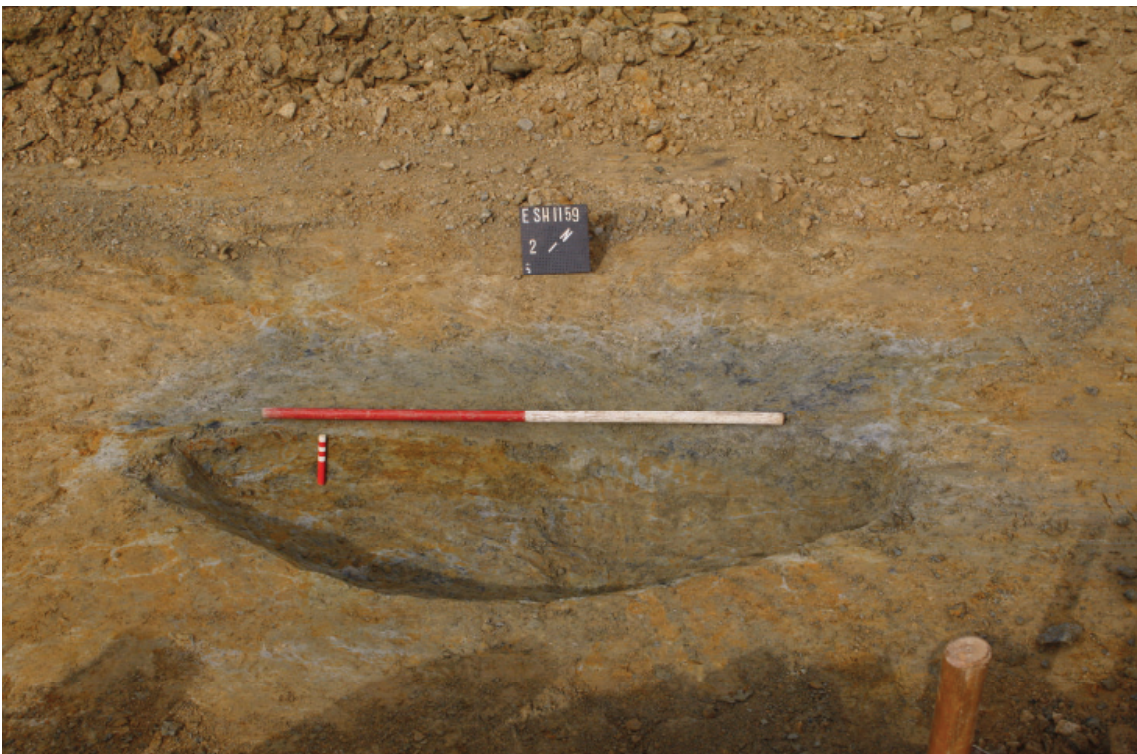


Plate 2. Pit 2, looking north-west, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Walls 53 and 54, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Cross section of well 56, looking north.

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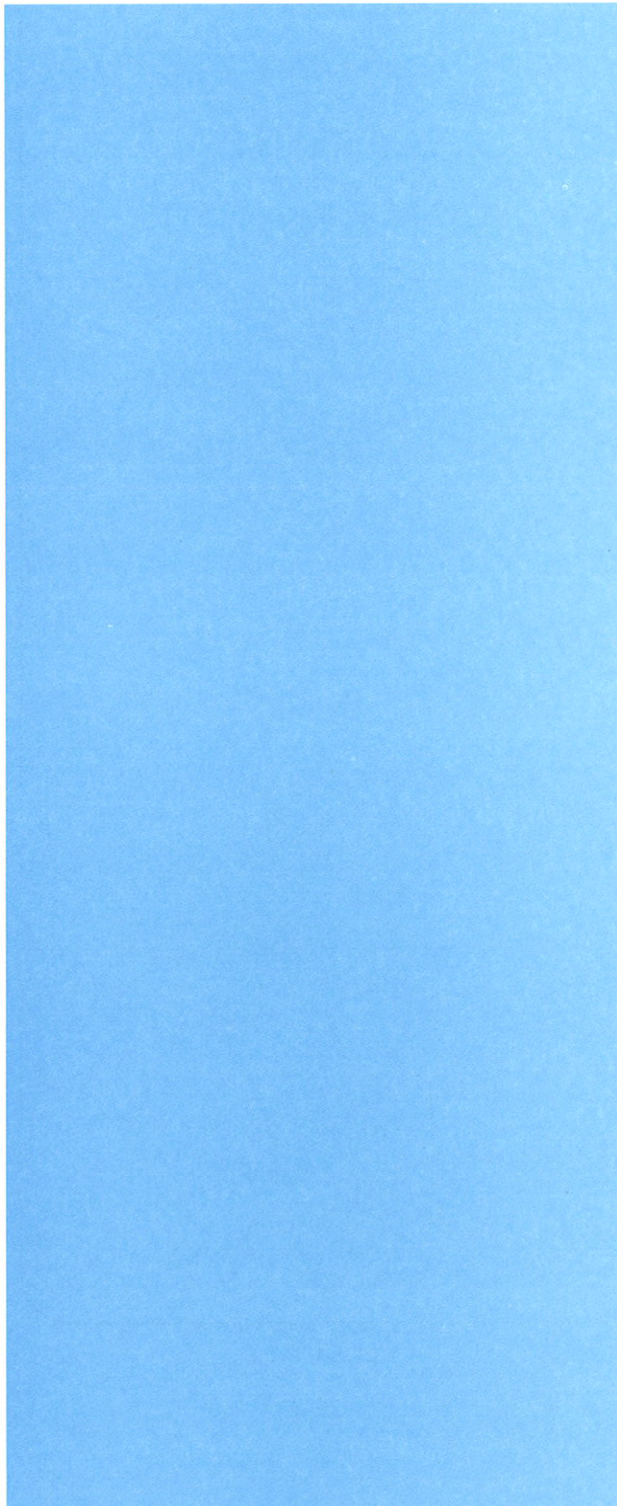
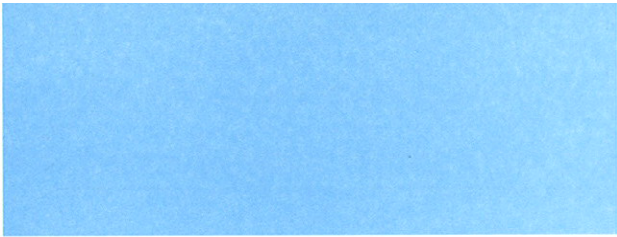
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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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