

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

**Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue,
Peacehaven, East Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: PSP12/138

(TQ 4195 0118)

**Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue,
Peacehaven, East Sussex**

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Lewes District Council

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code PSP12/138

September 2012

Summary

Site name: Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4195 0118

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th–6th September 2012

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: PSP 12/138

Summary of results: The evaluation investigated those parts of the site which are likely to be most affected by the proposed re-development. It was established that the areas investigated had not been significantly disturbed in the past, and that there was the potential for archaeological deposits to have survived across the site. The only archaeological features recorded were a possible cremation burial and post-hole in the north-eastern part of the site. However, finds dating from the late Bronze Age and Iron Age were recovered from colluvial deposits in the north-western part of the site. The evaluation has shown that there is the potential for archaeological deposits to have survived in all the areas which were investigated, and that the impact of any future development on such deposits will largely depend on the depth of foundations, and the level of ground reduction in the car parking areas and sports pitches.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.09.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 23.09.12

Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 12/138

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex (Fig. 1) (TQ 4195 0118). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Bibb of Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1AB.

Planning permission is to be sought from Lewes District Council to build an extension onto one of the existing buildings (social club) on site, and carry out various alterations to the sports pitches and car parking areas. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits being present, which could be damaged or destroyed by groundworks on the site, Mr Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist for East Sussex, had indicated that a field evaluation should be carried out in advance of the application, to better inform the planning process, to determine the archaeological potential of the site, and to help formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary. Depending on the results of the evaluation, further archaeological work may be required in due course. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The fieldwork was monitored by the East Sussex County Archaeologist, Mr Casper Johnson.

The field investigation was carried out according to a brief for the project, produced by Mr Greg Chuter. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray, Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis on the 5th and 6th September 2012, and the site code is PSP 12/138. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Barbican Museum, Lewes in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies at the northern end of Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex (Fig. 1), and is currently occupied by playing fields, various buildings associated with the sports complex, car parking areas, a council depot, and a children's play area (Fig. 2). The area is generally quite flat, although the ground does rise towards the southern part of the site. However, it is clear that a good deal of landscaping has taken place in the past, particularly in the creation of flat sports pitches. As a result, the children's play area lies at a height of approximately 47m above Ordnance Datum, whilst the eastern part of the site varies from about 46m to 48m.

According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology in the northern part of the site consists of chalk from the Newhaven Formation, with chalk from the later Culver Formation being present in the south (BGS 2006). However, chalk was not encountered during the evaluation. The trenches in the north-eastern part of the site revealed an orange brown sandy gravel, overlain in places by brickearth, whilst two trenches (1 and 4) were only machined down to the brickearth deposit. A deposit of probable colluvium was encountered in all test pits in the children's play area, with natural brickearth only being recorded in one of them (5).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the South Downs, which are considered to be rich in archaeological deposits of all periods (Rudling 2003), and has been summarized in a brief for the project, prepared by Greg Chuter. In summary, there is the potential for archaeological deposits dating from the Mesolithic period onwards being present on the site. Recent archaeological excavations to the north, east and west of the present site have revealed numerous features, suggestive of a multi-period prehistoric landscape. The features recorded have included early Neolithic pits, an early Bronze Age barrow, middle Bronze Age roundhouses, and evidence of continuing settlement of the area up until the early Roman period (Riccoboni 2008; Hart 2010).

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. The work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to a full excavation. The work was to be carried out to comply with the East Sussex County Council requirements for archaeological fieldwork (ESCC 2008).

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Bronze Age were present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Roman period were present;

It was proposed to excavate four trenches in the eastern part of the site, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. These trenches were to each be 10m long and 1.6m wide. In addition, four 1m square test pits were to be excavated by hand in the north-western part of the site, in the area currently occupied by a children's play park. Excavation was to be taken down to the top of the natural geology or the top of the relevant archaeological level. Where archaeological features were revealed, the area was to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the features excavated to satisfy the aims of the brief. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

The four machine dug trenches (1-4) were excavated as planned (Fig. 3), and their lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. Three of the test pits (5-7) in the children's play area were also excavated (Fig. 4), and following consultation with the East Sussex County Archaeologist it was decided that it was not necessary to dig the fourth test pit. Details of the test pits are also given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

This trench was orientated approximately S-N, and was dug to the east of the present clubhouse. About 0.2m of turf and topsoil (59) was removed to reveal a layer of modern made ground (58), which was up to 0.26m thick. This deposit sealed a buried soil horizon (50), which was approximately 0.2m thick, which in turn lay above a mid orange brown subsoil deposit (51) (Fig. 6). The subsoil was up to 0.16m thick and lay directly above the natural geology, which consisted of mid orange brown silty clay (Brickearth) with occasional flint inclusions. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench, and some modern truncation was noted at its northern end. Levels taken within the trench suggest that the underlying geology slopes down gently towards the north.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was orientated approximately SW-NE. It was positioned in the north-eastern part of the site, adjacent to a sports pitch. Up to 0.23m of turf and topsoil (50) was removed to reveal a layer of mid orange brown sandy silt subsoil (51) (Fig. 6). The depth of the subsoil deposit varied between 0.27m and 0.35m, generally being thicker at the southern end of the trench. The subsoil lay directly above the natural geology, which consisted predominantly of orange sand with flint inclusions, with some overlying silty sand in the southern part of the trench. No archaeological features were recorded in the trench, but a struck flint was recovered from the subsoil layer. Levels taken within the trench suggest that the underlying natural geology in this area is generally flat.

Trench 3 (Fig. 5, Pl. 1)

This trench was positioned close to the eastern boundary of the site, and was orientated approximately S-N. Turf and topsoil (50), up to 0.42m thick, was removed to reveal a deposit of orange brown clayey silt subsoil (51) (Fig. 6). This deposit was approximately 0.18m thick, and lay directly above the natural geology which consisted largely of orange brown Brickearth. However, the natural rose at the northern end of the trench, where the Brickearth contained frequent flint inclusions.

A probable post-hole (1), measuring 0.24m by 0.18m, was recorded in the middle of the trench (Fig. 5). It had a single fill of mid greyish brown sandy silt (52), which contained occasional flint and charcoal inclusions but no archaeological finds. Another feature (2) was investigated at the northern end of the trench, which may represent a cremation burial, based on the amount of charcoal within its fill (53). Five sherds of pottery, dating from the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age, were recovered from this shallow feature, but no cremated bone fragments were found within a soil sample which was taken. Two sherds of similarly dated pottery were recovered from the subsoil in this trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned approximately S-N, and was sited in the southern part of the site, to the east of the tennis courts. Although the trench was in an area which appeared to have been substantially raised, the amount of made ground was not as great as was initially expected (Fig. 7). About 0.17m of turf and topsoil (59) was removed to reveal a made ground deposit (60), up to 0.27m thick, which lay above the buried soil horizon (50). The buried soil was approximately 0.14m thick, and lay above a deposit of mid orange brown subsoil (51). The thickness of the subsoil deposit varied from 0.13m at the southern end of the trench, to just 0.07m at the northern end. The subsoil lay directly above the natural brickearth geology, which appeared to rise towards the north. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Test Pit 5 (Pl. 2)

This test pit was positioned at the northern end of the children's play area (Fig. 4). Approximately 0.1m of turf and topsoil (59) lay above a modern made ground deposit (54), which was up to 0.21m thick (Fig. 7). The made ground contained chalk fragments and modern material, including plastic, and lay directly above a deposit of mid yellow brown silty clay (55), which was interpreted as being colluvium. A number of burnt and struck flint fragments were recovered from this deposit, which was up to 0.43m thick. Another possible colluvial layer (56) was recorded immediately beneath layer 55. It was similar in nature to layer 55, but was lighter in colour, and contained no archaeological finds. Layer 56 was about 0.18m thick, and lay directly above the natural geology, which consisted of orange clay (brickearth) with flint inclusions.

Test Pit 6

Test pit 6 was located in the central part of the children's play area (Fig. 4). Up to 0.14m of turf and topsoil (59) was removed to reveal a modern made ground deposit (54), which was approximately 0.27m thick (Fig. 7). This lay above a probable colluvial deposit of mid yellow brown silty clay (55), which contained burnt and struck flint fragments and four sherds of late Bronze Age or Iron Age pottery. Deposit 55 was about 0.6m thick, and lay above a slighter lighter deposit (56), which contained no archaeological finds, and was at least 0.25m thick. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 1.2m and natural geology was not observed. Excavation stopped at this point due to health and safety considerations, following discussions with the East Sussex County Archaeologist.

Test Pit 7

This test pit was excavated in the southern part of the children's play area (Fig. 4), to a depth of 1.2m (Fig. 7). Approximately 0.09m of turf and topsoil (59) was removed to reveal a modern made ground deposit (54), which was up to 0.27m thick. This lay above a probable colluvial deposit of mid yellow brown silty clay (55), up to 0.42m thick, which contained fragments of burnt and struck flint, along with several sherds of pottery dating from the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. A lighter deposit (56) beneath layer 55 was also interpreted as being colluvium, although this contained no archaeological finds. Natural geology was not recorded in this test pit. Excavation stopped at 1.2m due to health and safety considerations, following discussions with the East Sussex County Archaeologist.

Finds

Pottery by Frances Raymond

The small assemblage of late Bronze Age to Iron Age Pottery from Trench 3 and Test Pits 6 and 7 (Appendix 3) is composed entirely of featureless wall fragments. Some of the fabrics are more typical of specific phases of prehistory, but most had an extended currency and cannot be dated closely.

Methodology

The pottery has been recorded by context following the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997). Details of fabric, surface treatment and colour, wall thickness, fragmentation and condition have been entered on a database and are available in the archive. The sherds were sorted into fabric groups with the aid of a binocular microscope at X20 magnification, while the descriptions were prepared using this and a higher magnification of X40.

Trench 3

The pottery from feature 2 is in fresh condition and is derived from a single relatively thin-walled vessel (walls of 7–8 mm) with a dark grey exterior, which is most likely to be of late Bronze Age to early Iron Age date. The

walls exhibit clear signs of finger moulding and both surfaces have been wiped. The vessel is made from clay containing naturally occurring silt-sized sand, tempered with sparse burnt flint (0.2–3mm). Sparse voids leaving impressions typical of organic material (grass, chaff or roots) are additionally present.

The two sherds from the subsoil are made from a fabric containing sparse flint (0.2–4mm), very common rounded quartz sand (0.1–1mm.) and sparse shell (up to 6mm). The better preserved of the two, which is lightly abraded, has a smoothed reddish brown exterior. A similar date to the pottery from feature 2 is most likely.

Pottery from the Colluvium (Trenches 6 and 7)

Two of the sherds from Trench 7 are in a coarse ware tempered with common, ill sorted burnt flint (0.2–6mm), which is characteristic of the late Bronze Age. Other lightly to moderately abraded fragments of pottery from the same deposit include two in the same fabric as the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age sherds from feature 2.

The rest of the pottery might be of late Bronze Age date, but could equally be of early or middle Iron Age origin. Sherds of this type are in lightly to heavily abraded condition and are made from various unoxidized fabrics. These fall into three broad groups either tempered with common burnt flint (up to 3mm); containing common shell (0.2–4mm); or very common to abundant quartz sand of varying grades.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection comprising 22 struck flints was recovered during the fieldwork as detailed in Appendix 4. All of the pieces were flakes except for one large broken narrow flake. Some of the pieces are relatively fresh with others being patinated a light grey/ blue. The collection does not appear to be homogenous. A variety of types of flint are present including some material which has derived from the interface between Reading Beds and upper chalk which possesses a distinctive orange band beneath the cortex. All of the flint, however, seems to be from a secondary source such as a gravel deposit, rather than direct from the chalk. Apart from the narrow flake which may be of Mesolithic or even Upper Palaeolithic date, none of the other material is closely datable and is likely to be of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

Forty-eight fragments of burnt flint, weighing 2127g, were recovered from the colluvial layer (55) in test pits 5, 6 and 7. None of the fragments had been struck.

Conclusion

The evaluation successfully investigated those parts of the site which are likely to be most affected by the re-development of the site. Although relatively little was found, the results from the machine dug trenches in the eastern part of the site suggest that the archaeologically relevant level has survived in those areas which were investigated, despite recent landscaping work. In the northern part of the site, such archaeological deposits may only be about 0.5m below the present ground surface. In the north-western part of the site, the lack of any buried soil horizon in the test pits indicates that the site has been truncated to some extent in the past, prior to it being built up again with made ground and modern topsoil. Probable colluvium containing archaeological finds from the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age was recorded in all of the test pits, and the levels suggest that the underlying geology may slope down slightly towards the south in this part of the site. Recent archaeological work nearby has indicated that prehistoric features may be sealed beneath deep deposits of colluvium, and this could therefore also be the case as far as the present site is concerned.

References

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- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.00	1.60	1.10	0-0.21m turf and topsoil (59); 0.21-0.47m made ground (60); 0.47-0.59m buried soil (50); 0.59-0.81m subsoil (51); 0.81m+mid orange clayey silt (natural geology). No archaeology.
2	10.10	1.60	0.80	0-0.22m turf and topsoil (50); 0.22-0.62m subsoil (51); 0.62m+ mid orange brown sand (natural geology). No archaeology.
3	11.40	1.60	0.82	0-0.35m turf and topsoil (50); 0.35-0.55m subsoil (51); 0.55m+ mid orange clayey silt (natural geology). Post-hole 1 and possible cremation 2. [Pl. 1]
4	10.40	1.60	0.85	0-0.20m turf and topsoil (59); 0.20-0.45m made ground (60); 0.45-0.65m buried soil (50); 0.65-0.75m subsoil (51); 0.75m+ mid orange clayey silt (natural geology). No archaeology.
5	1.00	1.00	0.92	0-0.10m turf and topsoil (59); 0.10- 0.32m made ground (54); 0.32-0.72m mid yellow brown silty clay (55); 0.72-0.89m light yellow brown silty clay (56); 0.89m+ orange clay (natural geology). No archaeological features. [Pl. 2]
6	1.00	1.00	1.22	0-0.14m turf and topsoil (59); 0.14- 0.40m made ground (54); 0.40-0.98m mid yellow brown silty clay (55); 0.98-1.22m+ light yellow brown silty clay (56). Natural geology not observed. No archaeological features.
7	1.00	1.00	1.20	0-0.09m turf and topsoil (59); 0.09- 0.47m made ground (54); 0.47-0.88m mid yellow brown silty clay (55); 0.88-1.20m+ light yellow brown silty clay (56); Natural geology not observed. No archaeological features.

APPENDIX 2: Feature Details

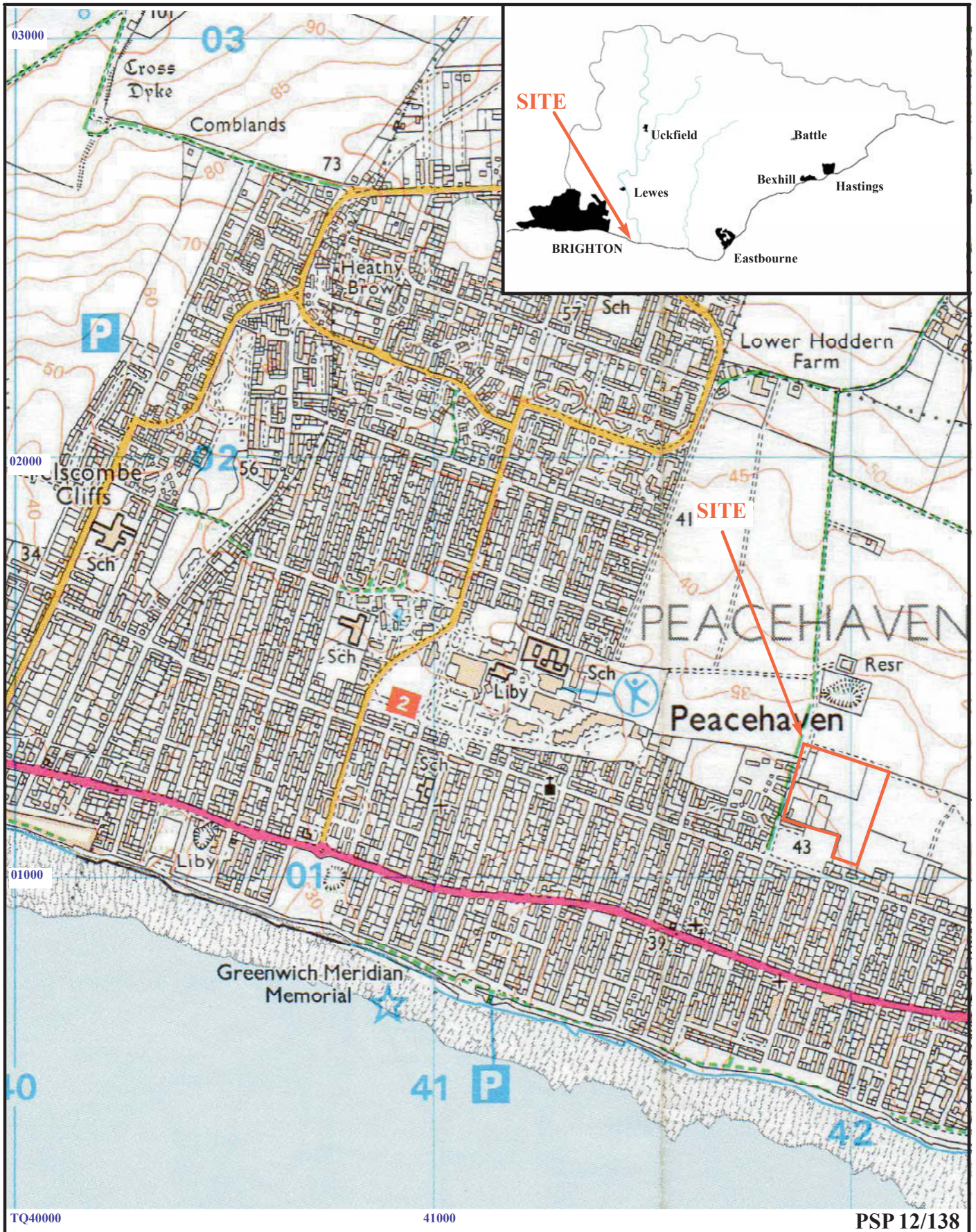
Trench	Cut	Fill(s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
3	1	52	Post-hole	Undated	
3	2	53	Cremation ?	Late Bronze Age – early Iron Age	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery Catalogue by context

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>EVE</i>
3	-	51	2	31	1
3	2	53	5	48	1
6	-	55	4	7	3
7	-	55	6	23	4
TOTALS			17	109	-

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of struck flint

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Flakes</i>	<i>Narrow Flakes</i>
2		51	1	
5		55	12	1
6		55	2	
7		55	4	
7		54	2	



**Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven,
East Sussex, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

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

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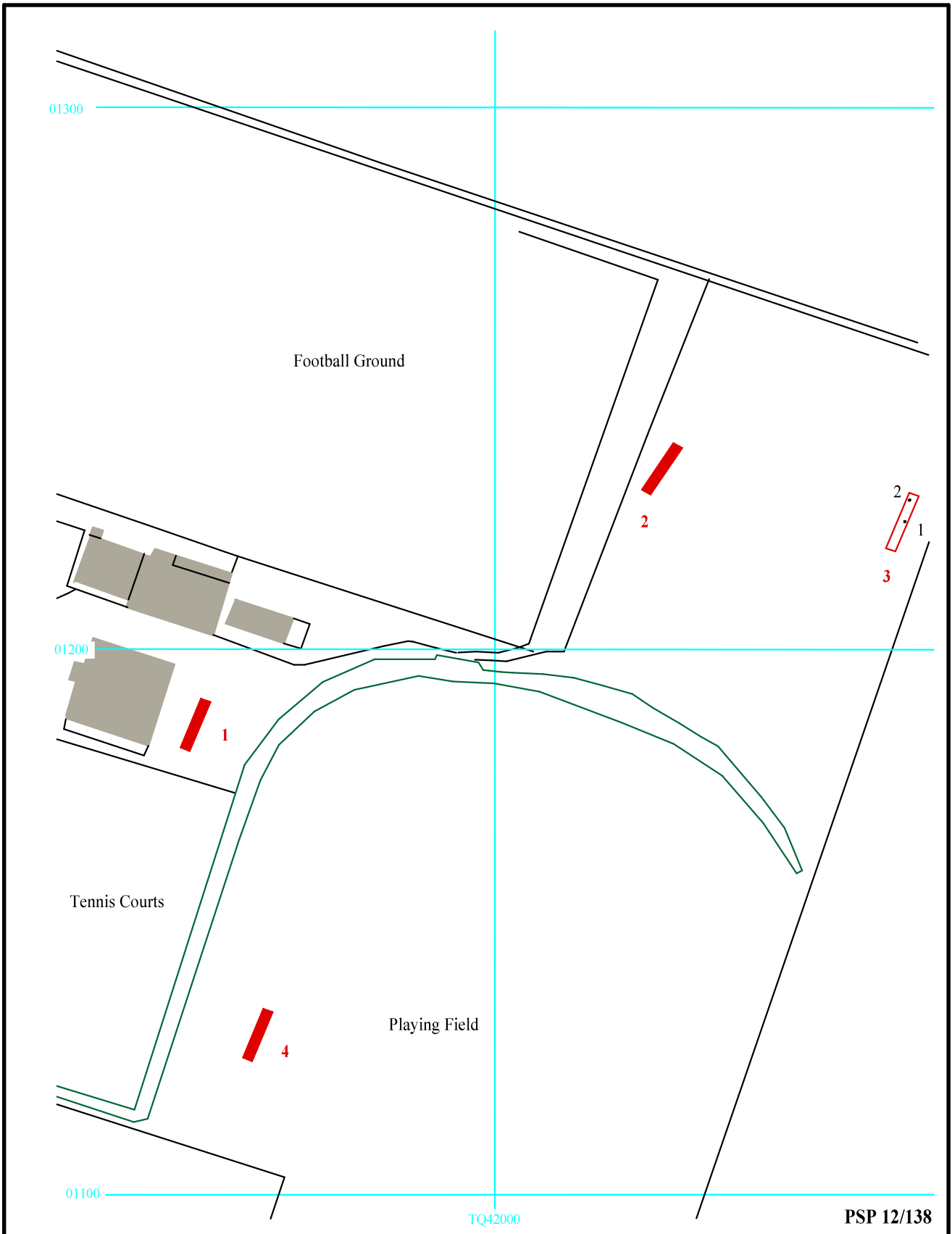
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**Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven
East Sussex, 2012**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site

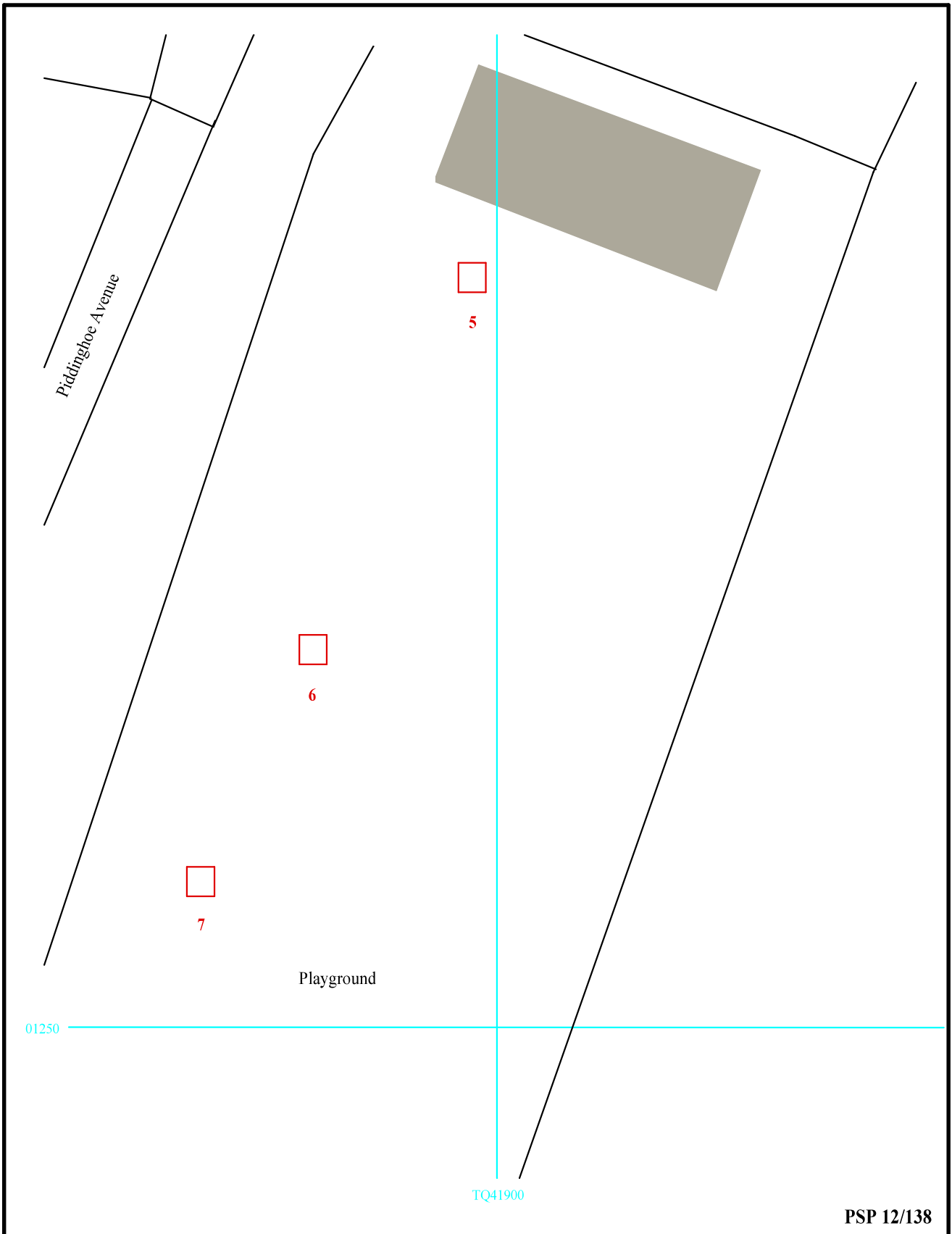
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Figure 3. Location of machine dug trenches.





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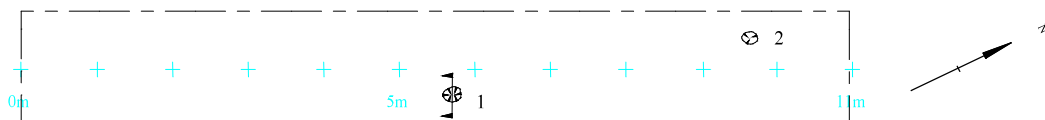


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East Sussex, 2012
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Figure 4. Location of hand dug test pits.



Trench 3



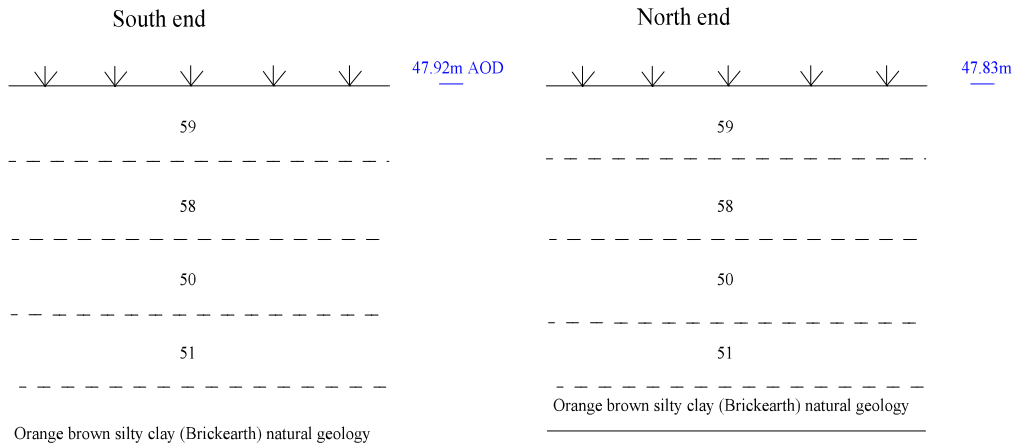
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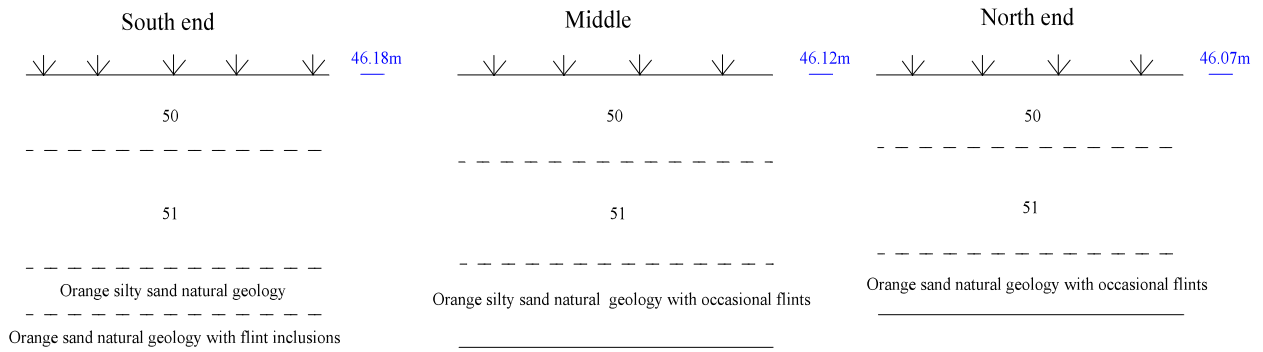
Figure 5. Plan of trench 3



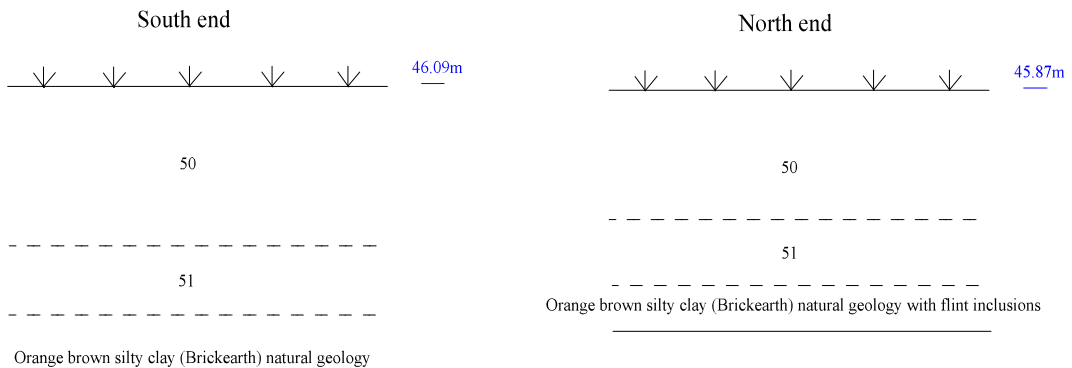
Trench 1



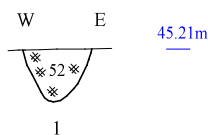
Trench 2



Trench 3



Trench 3

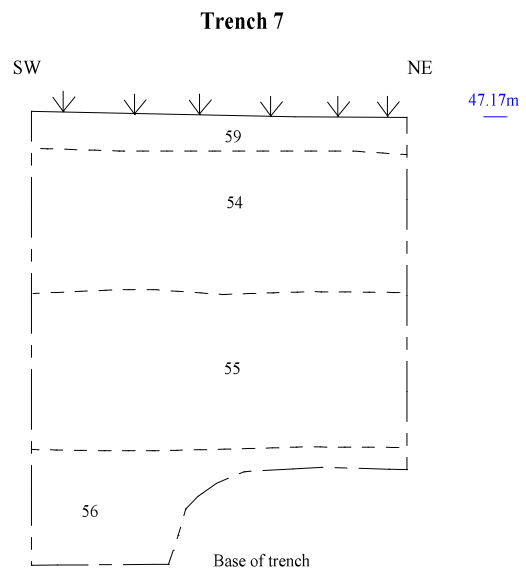
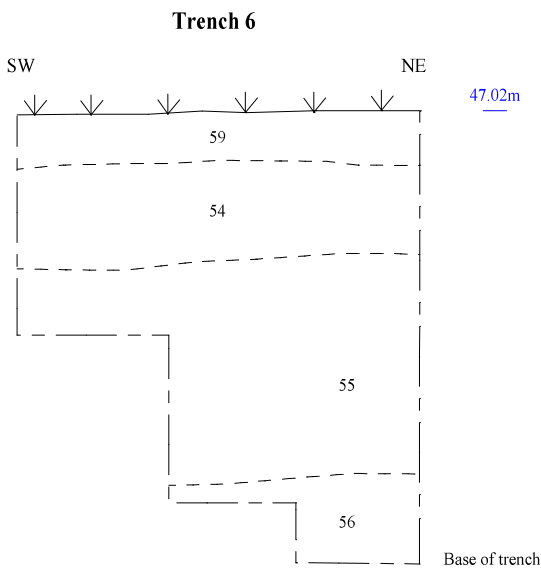
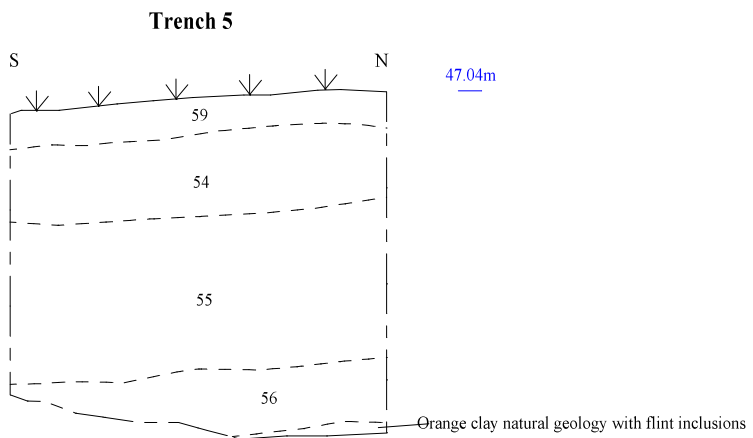
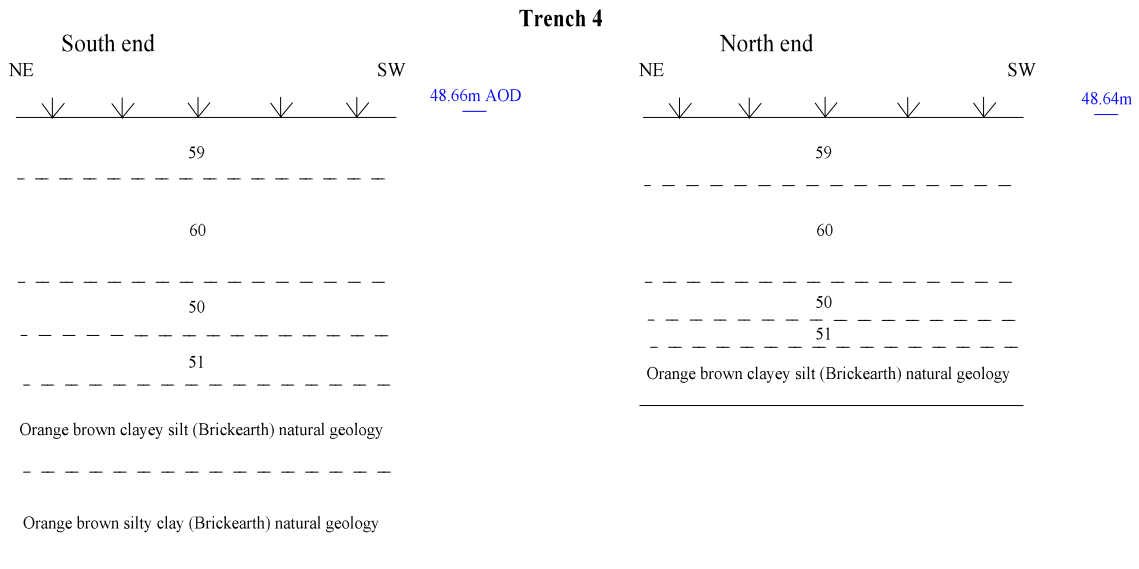


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Figure 6. Representative sections.





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Figure 7. Representative sections.





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



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking north west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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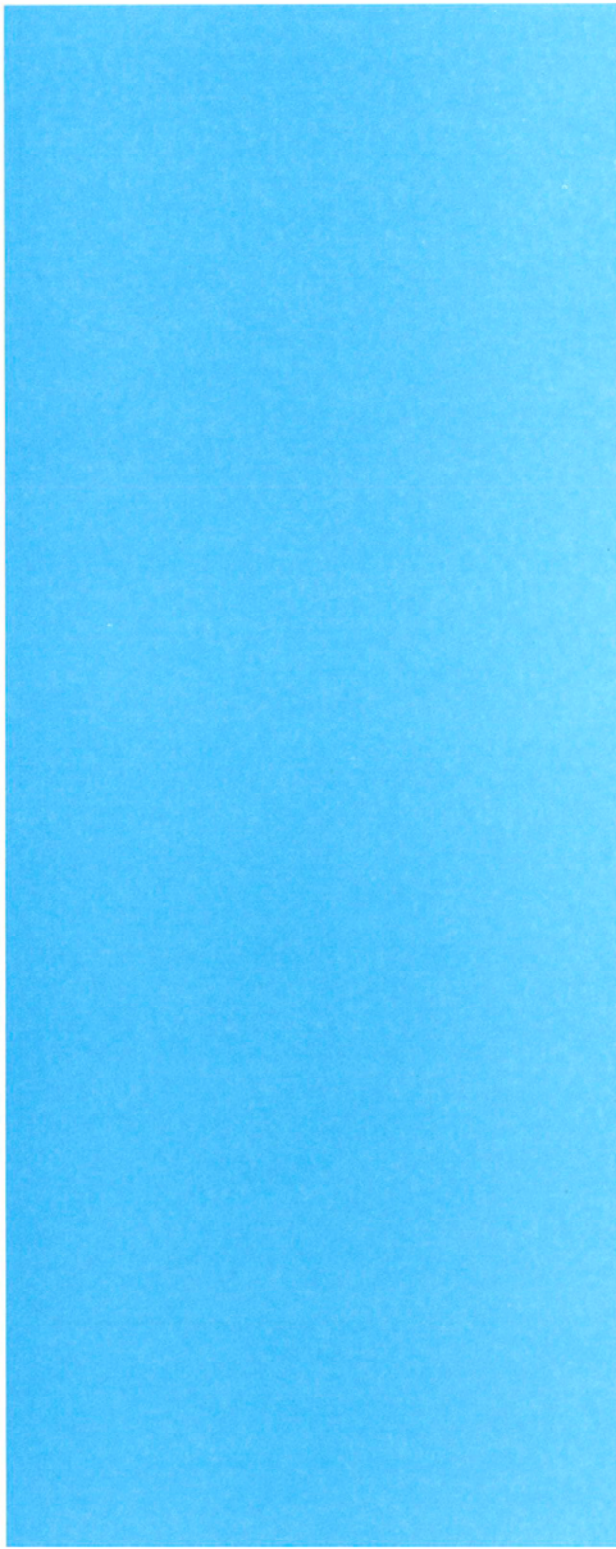
Plates 1 and 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH

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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