

**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**

**Wilbury House, Church Street,  
Crawley, West Sussex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: WHC12/96**

**(TQ 2638 3660)**

**Wilbury House, Church Street,  
Crawley, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Mr Noweed Choudhary**

by Sean Wallis  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code WHC12/96

**November 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Wilbury House, Church Street, Crawley, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 2638 3660

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 24th October 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** WHC 12/96

**Area of site:** 485 sq m

**Summary of results:** Several possible archaeological features containing iron slag fragments were recorded in the rear garden of the property, one of which is clearly post-medieval in date.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 01.11.12 Steve Preston ✓ 30.10.12
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# Wilbury House, Church Street, Crawley, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

**Report 12/96**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Wilbury House, Church Street, Crawley, West Sussex (Fig. 1) (TQ 2638 3660). The work was commissioned by Mr Noweed Choudhary of 15 Manor Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3DG.

Planning permission (CR/2012/0146/CAC) has been gained from Crawley Borough Council to demolish the existing house, and build a new two-storey structure, along with associated access and car parking. The permission is subject to a condition (2) relating to archaeology, which requires that an investigation be carried out prior to the commencement of groundworks.

As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits which could be damaged or destroyed by the proposed re-development of the area, a field evaluation was undertaken to determine the archaeological potential of the site, and to help formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary. This is in accordance with the *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 Mr John Mills, Senior Archaeologist with West Sussex County Council, who act as advisers to the Borough Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis on 24th October 2012, and the site code is WHC12/96. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Crawley Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site lies on the south-west side of Church Street, West Green, Crawley, opposite St Peter's Church (Fig. 2). The existing house fronts onto the street and there is a Tarmacadamed drive to the north of the building which leads into the rear garden. The site is relatively flat, although the back of the garden has been built up slightly, and lies at a height of approximately 72m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (clay and sandstone), and this was confirmed in all the evaluation trenches as a light greyish yellow sandy clay (BGS 1972).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the historic core of Crawley, which is regarded as being a 13th-century 'New Town'. The development of the town appears to be substantially related to the medieval Wealden iron industry, with various locations around the town having contained iron-working sites. Just to the north of St Peter's Church, an archaeological evaluation at Ifield Road recorded three archaeological features which contained large amounts of iron-working slag, probably of medieval date (Worrall 2006). Further evidence of the iron industry has been found nearby during work associated with the High Street relief road (Saunders 1998; Hammond 2011). Wilbury House itself may date from the early 19th century, as it seems to appear on the Ifield tithe map of 1839. At this time the west side of Crawley High Street was also within Ifield parish, and the parish church was situated several kilometres away. St Peter's Church was built in 1893, with St Peter's becoming a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1901 (Harris 2008).

## **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 specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the medieval period are present and, if so, do they relate to iron production?

It was originally proposed to dig four 8m long trenches in those parts of the site which will be most affected by the new development. All the trenches were to be about 1.6m wide, and excavated by a JCB<sup>o</sup> type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation was to be taken down to the top of the natural geology or the top of the relevant archaeological level. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## Results

Due to site logistics, it was not possible to fully excavate the trench to the north of the existing house (3). The proposed trench to the rear of the house could not be excavated or re-positioned due to the presence of numerous services. This modification to the original scheme was agreed by the West Sussex County Archaeologist, Mr Mark Taylor. The three trenches which were excavated (Fig. 3) therefore varied between 2m and 8.4m in length, and were between 0.65m and 0.83m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Fig. 4; Pl. 1)

This trench was orientated approximately W–E, and was 8.30m long and up to 0.83m deep. Turf and topsoil (50), up to 0.44m thick, was removed to reveal a probable subsoil horizon of mid reddish brown silty clay (51). This deposit layer was about 0.27m thick, and lay directly above the natural sandy clay. A pit (1) and gully (2) were investigated at the eastern end of the trench, although the relationship between the two features could not be established (Fig. 5; Pl. 2). The majority of pit 1 was visible within the trench, and the feature was at least 1.80m long and 1.4m wide. It had a single fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (52), up to 0.33m deep, which contained several lumps of iron slag but no closely dateable finds. The pit had been truncated by a modern service pipe. Gully 2 was at least 0.95m long and 0.3m wide, with a single fill of very similar mid greyish brown clayey silt (53). The gully was 0.43m deep, and the only finds recovered from it consisted of lumps of iron slag.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was 8.40m long and orientated approximately W–E. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.68m. The stratigraphy generally consisted of 0.40m of turf and topsoil (50) above a probable subsoil horizon of mid reddish brown silty clay (51), which was up to 0.26m thick. This lay directly above the natural sandy clay. Several areas of modern disturbance were noted within the trench, but were not recorded in detail. The only archaeological feature was a gully (3), which was observed between 2.4m and 2.9m. This feature was 0.48m wide and 0.08m deep, with a single fill of mid greyish brown silty clay (54). This contained several fragments of iron slag, along with one sherd of post-medieval pottery. The gully had been truncated by a modern post-hole.

### Trench 3 (Pl. 4)

This trench was aligned approximately SW–NE, and situated to the north of the existing house. The trench had to be abandoned after 2m of it was excavated, due to logistical problems. Tarmac, up to 0.15m thick, lay above a layer of made ground. This was up to 0.2m thick, and lay above another made ground deposit of greyish brown

clay, up to 0.3m. This deposit lay directly above the natural greyish yellow sandy clay geology. The area had clearly been disturbed by modern services, and no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery weighing 11g was found in Gully 3 fill (54). It is Glazed Red Earthenware, a fine sandy fabric, usually with a brown or green glaze, and occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. It has a date range from the 16th to the 18th century. (Brears 1969). Such pottery is a common find in the area, and the sherd is from near the rim of a large bowl, a typical vessel type in the tradition. It is somewhat abraded, and could easily be residual.

### *Slag* by Sean Wallis

A small collection of iron slag fragments were recorded during the evaluation, but were discarded after being weighed. All three excavated features contained slag fragments, with the largest amount (1521g) being recovered from gully 3 in Trench 2.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst it was not possible to excavate all the proposed trenches during the evaluation, due to logistical problems and the presence of services, the project did successfully investigate the rear of the property, which has been little affected by previous activity on the site. Several archaeological features containing fragments of iron slag of possible archaeological interest were recorded, but only one could be dated. This was a gully dating from the post-medieval period. Although the eastern part of the site could not be fully investigated, the presence of numerous services, and the fact that made ground lay directly above the underlying natural close to the existing house, suggests that this area has been heavily disturbed in the past.

## References

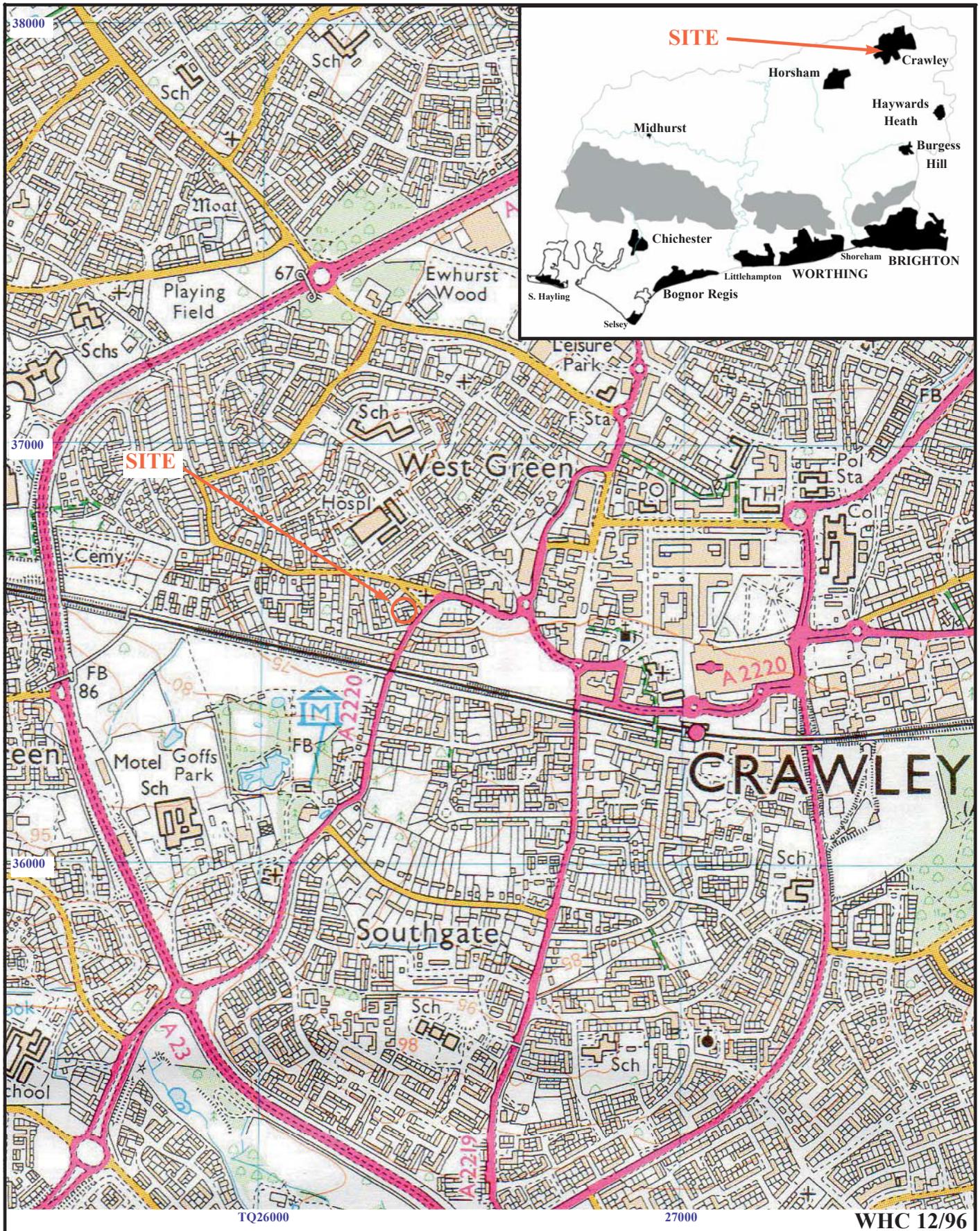
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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	8.30	1.50	0.83	0-0.44m turf and topsoil (50), 0.44-0.71m subsoil (51), 0.71m+ light greyish yellow sandy clay (natural geology). Pit 1 and gully 2. <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>
2	8.40	1.50	0.68	0-0.40m turf and topsoil (50), 0.40-0.66m subsoil (51), 0.66m+ light greyish yellow sandy clay (natural geology). Gully 3. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
3	2.00	1.50	0.65	0-0.15m Tarmac, 0.15-0.35m rubble made ground, 0.35-0.65m greyish brown clay made ground; 0.65m+ light greyish yellow sandy clay (natural geology). <b>[Pl. 4]</b>

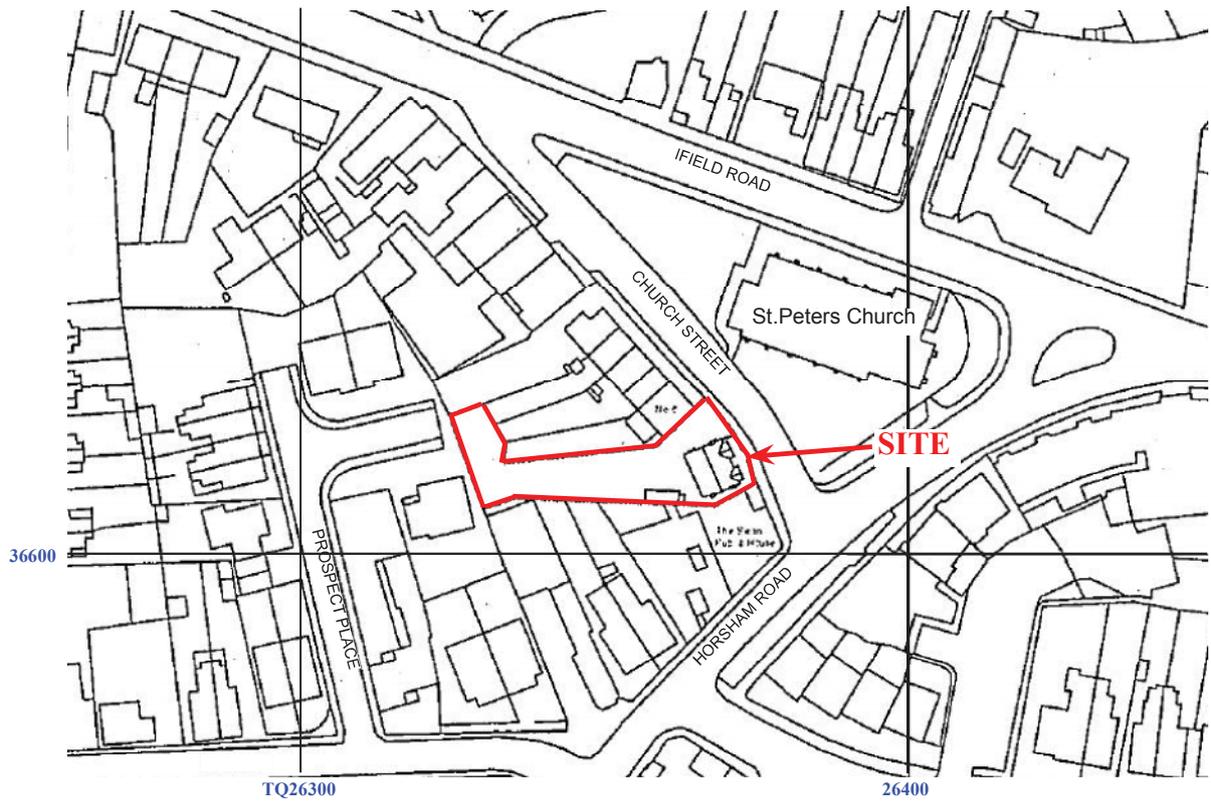
## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill(s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Pit	Undated	-
1	2	53	Gully	Undated	-
2	3	54	Gully	Post-medieval	Pottery



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

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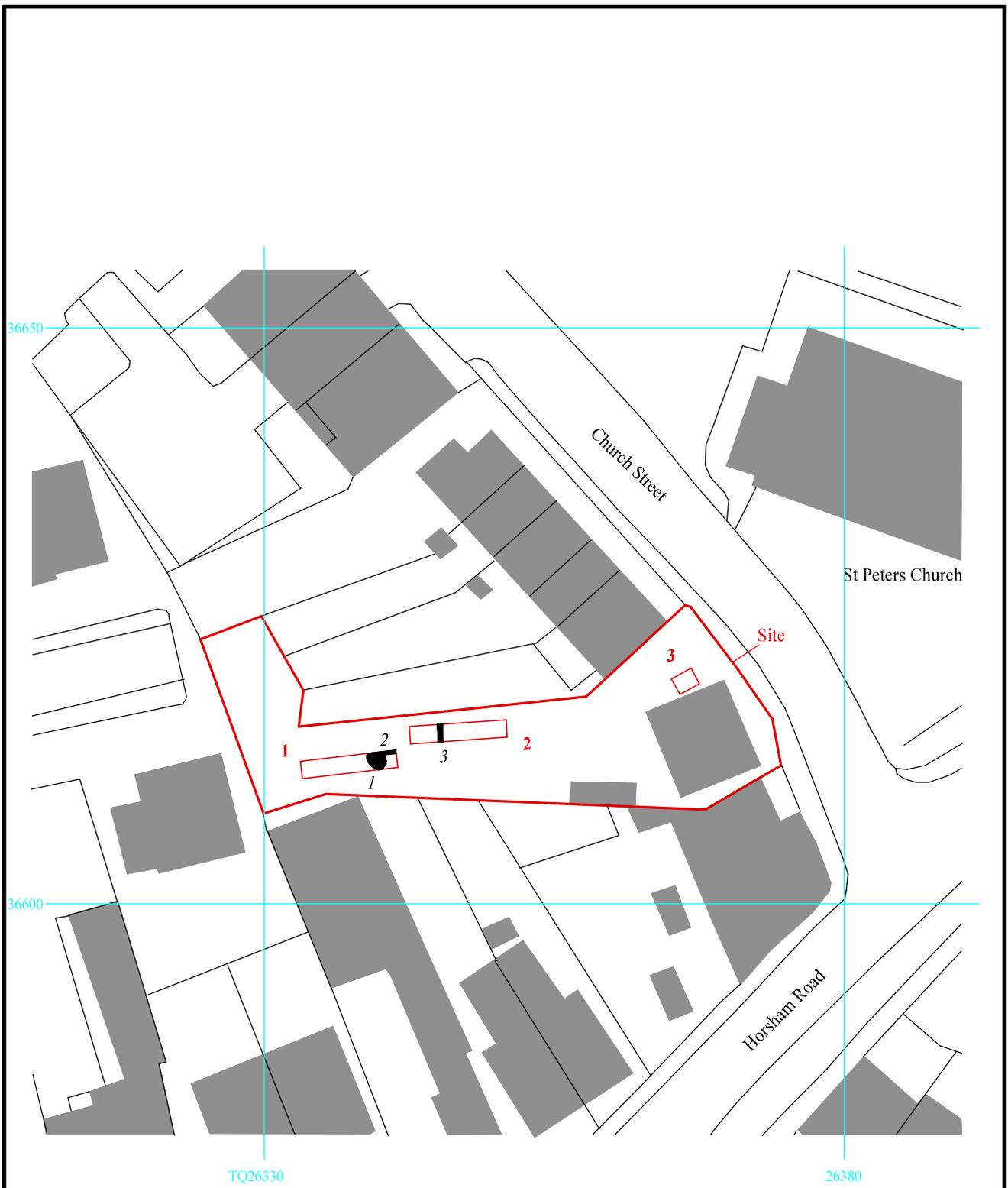


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Church Street.

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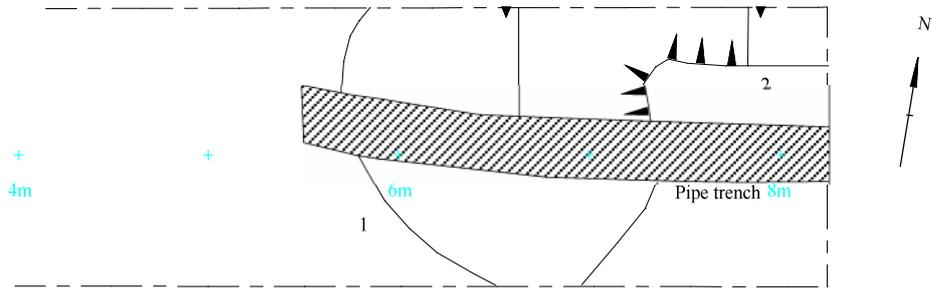
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

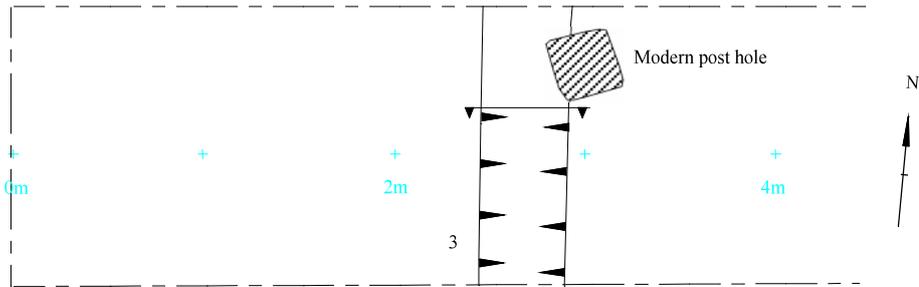


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Trench 1



Trench 2



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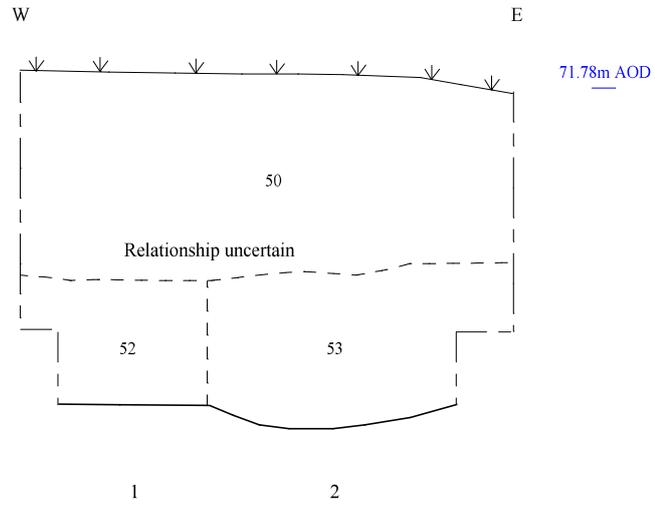
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Figure 4. Plan of trenches.

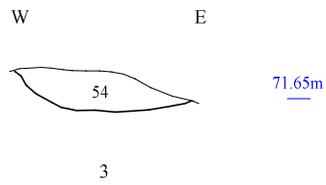


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**Trench 1**



**Trench 2**



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Figure 5. Sections



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



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

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, gully 3 looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m



Plate 4. Trench 3, looking west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m

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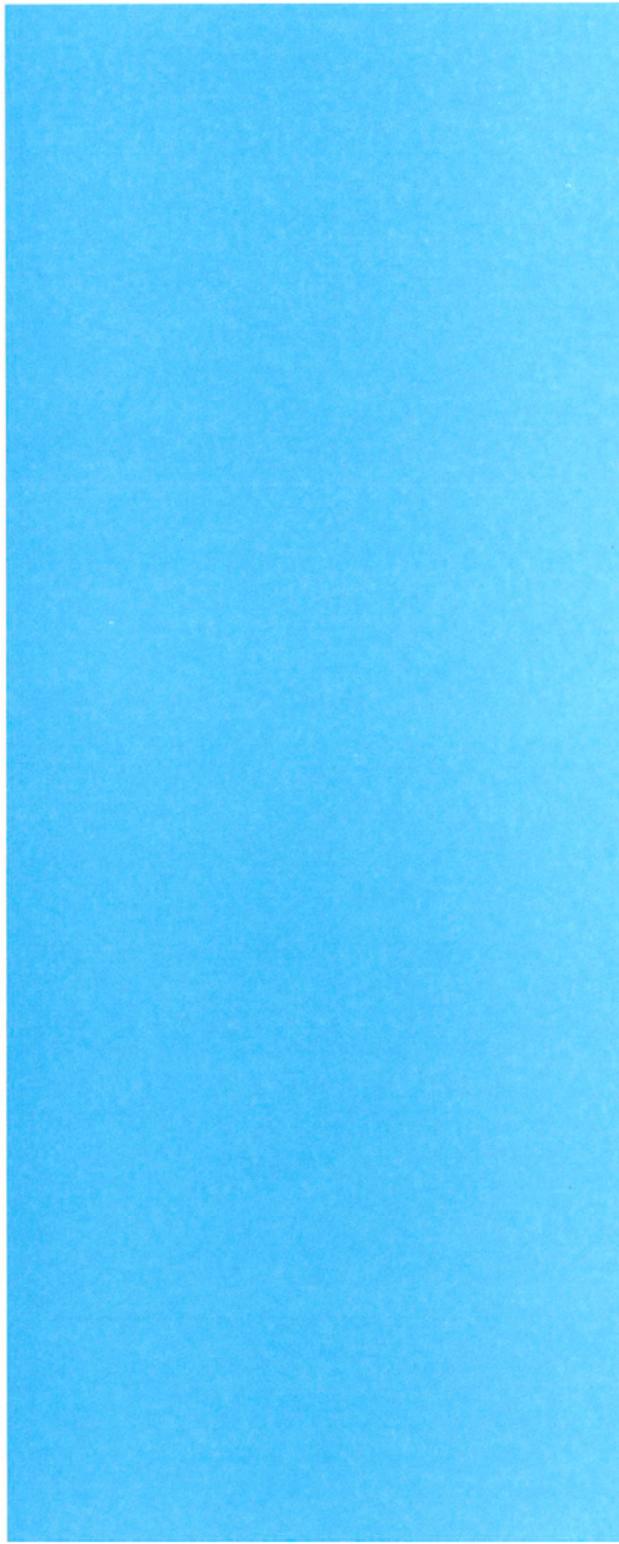
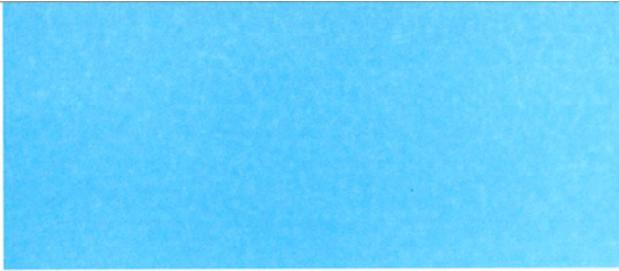
Plates 3 and 4.

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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





**TVAS (South)**  
**77a Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton**  
**Sussex, BN1 7HB**

**Tel: 01273 554198**  
**Fax: 01273 564043**  
**Email: [south@tvas.co.uk](mailto:south@tvas.co.uk)**  
**Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**