

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

**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: BCW14/101**

**(TQ 2670 3631)**

**5-7 Brighton Road,  
Crawley, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for PMC Construction Co Ltd**

Planning References : CR/2009/0368OUT  
and CR/2012/0447/CAC

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code  
BCW 14/101

**December 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 2670 3631

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Planning reference:** CR/2009/0368OUT and CR/2012/0447/CAC

**Date and duration of project:** 12th – 17th November 2014

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** BCW 14/101

**Area of site:** c. 0.43ha

**Summary of results:** The evaluation at 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley successfully investigated those parts of the site which would be most affected by the re-development of the area for residential and commercial purposes. At least two medieval pits, containing substantial amounts of iron slag, including smelting slag, were found in the south-east corner of the site, close to Brighton Road. A number of post-medieval and modern features were also recorded, along with an undated gully. No features were identified in the south and south-west parts of the site, despite the fact that a buried soil horizon appeared to have survived in this area.

**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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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 19.12.2014 Steve Preston 19.12.2014
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# **5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Sean Wallis

**Report 14/101b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Guest of PMC Construction Co Ltd, 106 Queens Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 7NE.

Outline planning permission (CR/2009/0368OUT) and conservation area consent (CR/2012/0447/CAC) had been gained from Crawley Borough Council to demolish the existing structures on the site and redevelop the site for residential and commercial purposes. The conservation area consent was subject to conditions (2 and 3) relating to archaeology and the historic environment. Condition 3 required that an archaeological investigation of the site be carried out following demolition of the existing buildings, but prior to the commencement of any building work. The West Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, Mr John Mills, advising Crawley Borough Council, had indicated that this should initially consist of an evaluation by means of trial trenching (Stage 1). The results of this evaluation would then determine whether a further archaeological work (Stage 2) was necessary. Planning condition 3 required a historic building recording of the site, which is covered by a separate report.

This is in accordance with the Department for 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 Mr John Mills of West Sussex County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Theresa Vieira and Sean Wallis between the 12th and 17th November 2014, and the site code is BCW14/101. 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 is centred on TQ 2670 3631 and, until recently, was occupied by a large commercial building and associated features (Fig. 2), the subject of the building survey. At the time of the evaluation it was occupied by the largely demolished car showroom building (former cinema) and its associated car parking areas. A small

workshop was still standing adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The main access to the site was via Brighton Road, to the east, although there was a western entrance from West Street. Apart from Brighton Road, the site is bounded by residential and commercial buildings. The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 79m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Weald clay (BGS 1972), and this was confirmed in all of the evaluation trenches.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site was considered in a recent desk based assessment (SCAU 2012). In summary, although the site is located to the south of the known historic core of Crawley, recent archaeological investigations to the north of the railway line (north of the site) have revealed features dating from the medieval period, including boundary ditches. It is possible that similar features may therefore be present to the south of the railway. There is also the potential for finds and features from earlier periods being present on the site as a number of stray finds of prehistoric material have been found in the area over the years, and an Iron Age occupation site was excavated to the west of the proposed site in the 1970s. The wider area also has a long tradition of iron production, notably from the Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods (e.g., Saunders 1998; Hammond 2011; Pine 2013).

## **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 proposed development.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if there is any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Iron Age period are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the medieval and early post-medieval periods are present. Especially, to determine whether the 'ribbon development' of medieval Crawley, known to have occupied both sides of the High Street as far south as the railway, once extended further south, alongside Brighton Road, and whether the extensive medieval iron working zone to the west of the High Street extended southwards as far as the present site.

Six trenches were to be dug, each measuring 20m in length and 1.8m-2.0m in width. These were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. All

spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the new development.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project, without compromising the integrity of any features that may warrant preservation in-situ, in line with an agreed sampling fraction.

## **Results**

Most of the trenches were dug close to their original planned positions (Fig. 3). It became apparent that one of the planned trenches (5) was positioned across the site entrance. It was therefore decided to shift this trench northwards, and dig an additional trench (7) to the south (Fig. 3). Some trenches were not dug to their full intended length due to the presence of services and site logistics. These changes were discussed with the West Sussex County Council Archaeologist. All the trenches were 1.90m wide, and measured between 11m and 22m in length, and between 0.70–0.87m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

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

This trench was orientated approximately WNW-SES, and was 22.00m long and up to 0.85m deep. It was situated in an area of the site where Japanese Knotweed had been identified and, as a result all the spoil from the trench was deemed to be contaminated. At the western end of the trench the natural yellow clay was encountered beneath 0.55m of Tarmac and made ground, and a probable buried soil horizon (67), which was 0.05m thick.

A gully (6) was investigated, and was seen to be up to 0.40m wide and 0.24m deep, with a single fill of mid brownish grey silty clay (63) (Fig. 5). The only find from this deposit was a struck flint, which need not provide a reliable date for this feature.

Another cut feature (7) was observed between 4m and wall 57. A trial hole was dug into the feature which revealed a drain constructed from post-medieval ridge tiles. The two sherds of pottery from its clayey fill (62) also indicate a post-medieval date. The feature was not excavated or recorded in detail.

Wall 57 was recorded at 10m, and was clearly related to wall 58, which was observed at 16m. Both were constructed from well fired red bricks (unfrogged), with a pink sand and cement mortar. They are likely to be associated with the brewery which is shown on the site on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1870. The area

between the walls was filled with a silty clay (59) which contained modern material (not retained). A trial hole against wall 57 indicated that this deposit was about 0.50m thick. The area between 16m and 18.50m was not excavated to the same depth as the rest of the trench due to the presence of numerous ceramic pipes.

At the eastern end of the trench the stratigraphy consisted of 0.55m of Tarmac and made ground which lay above a deposit of clayey made ground (66), which was at least 0.30m thick. Two red brick walls (64 and 65) were observed in the sides of the trench. These were not recorded in detail, but are also probably associated with the former brewery.

#### Trench 2

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 19.70m long and up to 0.85m deep. The natural clay was encountered beneath 0.55m of Tarmac and made ground, and a buried soil horizon (67), which was up to 0.10m thick. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench. Although the natural clay was largely yellow, it appeared to have been discoloured in places. This could be the result of contamination, but is more likely to be due to chemical processes brought on by the area being covered in Tarmac.

#### Trench 3 (Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 17.70m long and up to 0.70m deep. At the southern end of the trench the natural clay geology was recorded beneath 0.40m of Tarmac and made ground, and a buried soil horizon (67), which was up to 0.20m thick. The northern end of the trench was severely truncated by modern services and the concrete foundations of the former showroom building. The trench contained no archaeological finds or features.

#### Trench 4

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 16.40m long and up to 0.70m deep. The natural yellow clay was encountered beneath 0.45m of Tarmac and made ground, and a buried soil horizon (67), which was up to 0.15m thick. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

#### Trench 5 (Fig. 4 and Pl. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 15.00m long and up to 0.87m deep. At the western end of the trench the natural clay geology was recorded beneath 0.60m of concrete and made ground, and a deposit of demolition rubble up to 0.12m thick. A red brick wall (55) was visible at the western end of the trench, but it had been damaged during machining. The bricks were frogged, and mortared with yellow sandy cement.

Along the rest of the trench the natural geology was observed beneath 0.35m of Tarmac and made ground, and a buried soil horizon (67), which was up to 0.20m thick. Two similar sized features (4 and 5) were noted between 8m and 12m, which could either be post-holes or small pits. The features were clearly modern as they contained fragments of concrete and asbestos and were not excavated.

#### Trench 6 (Fig. 4 and Pl. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately SE-NW, and was 11.00m long, and up to 0.86m deep. It was located in the area immediately west of the former showroom's entrance foyer. Modern concrete (with plastic sheeting beneath it) and its associated bedding layer were removed to reveal an earlier concrete floor, which may have belonged to the earlier cinema. This floor lay directly above the natural clay geology. Two red brick walls (53 and 54) were recorded, and appeared to be related to the earlier concrete floor.

#### Trench 7 (Fig 4 and Pl. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately E-W, and was 12.70m long. At the eastern end the natural clay was observed beneath 0.35m of Tarmac and made ground, and a buried soil horizon (67), which was up to 0.10m thick.

A small sub-rectangular pit (1) was investigated at 1m, and was seen to measure about 0.70m by 0.55m. The pit was only 0.06m deep, with a single fill of mid brownish grey silty clay (50), which contained nine sherds of medieval pottery and several fragments of iron slag. Just to the west of pit 1 was another cut feature, which was interpreted as two intercutting pits (2 and 3). Pit 3 appeared to be sub-circular in plan, whilst the visible edge of pit 2 was fairly straight (Pl. 6). However, when a slot was dug into the feature, no difference in fills was visible, suggesting that it could just be a large irregular shaped pit (Fig. 5). The upper fill comprised mid yellow brown silty clay (51), which contained over thirty sherds of medieval pottery and several fragments of iron slag. The deposit beneath it consisted almost entirely of iron slag (52), of which a small sample was taken for analysis. The feature was not bottomed as ground water was encountered approximately 0.30m below the stripped surface.

The western end of pit 2 was obscured by a rectangular brick built structure (56). This was constructed from well fired frogged bricks, with a yellow sandy cement mortar. It clearly dated from the late 19th or early 20th century, and may have been related to the large house which once stood in this part of the site. The area to the west of feature 56 was heavily rooted, but natural geology was observed beneath the Tarmac and made ground.



## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Luke Barber

The evaluation recovered a small assemblage of pottery: some 52 sherds, weighing 538g, from four contexts. Overall the assemblage spans the 13th to mid 19th centuries. All of the types are well known from previous excavations in Crawley (Barber 1997; 2008).

The earliest group, probably dating to the 13th or early 14th centuries, was recovered from pit 1 (50). The nine sherds are all slightly abraded suggesting some reworking. Earlswood ware (Turner 1974) totally dominates the group with sherds from a buff cooking pot (4/26g – Sussex fabric Q/M4) and fine to very fine sandy jug sherds (2/8g: Q/M5 and 3/58g: Q(f)/M9). The latter have typical Earlswood decorative traits of green glazing over a white slip, often with combing. One sherd also has red slipped lines over the white, possibly imitating Rouen-style decoration. There is also a 2g fragment of ceramic that is undiagnostic of fabric.

Deposit 51 produced the largest group from the site at 33 sherds. These are notably fresher than those in context 50 and also appear to be essentially of 14th century date. Earlswood is again represented in the form of four (14g) green glazed jug sherds (Q/M5), two with white slip under the glaze. These sherds are notably more abraded than the others in the group and they could be residual pieces. There are 11 sherds (72g) of moderate fine/medium oxidized sand tempered ware (Q/M13 type), including a late flaring rim from a bowl or wide-mouthed cooking pot. A significant proportion of the group is composed of sherds from four West Sussex Ware jugs (Barton 1979), two coarser with either applied decoration or white slip line decoration under the green glaze (3/38g: Q(f)/M13) and two much finer (9/72g: Q(f)/M2). The latter are decorated with combing or applied oblique brown clay strips. The remaining pottery consists of Surrey Whitewares (6/92g: Q/M10). These include an externally sooted pipkin, a cooking pot with clubbed rim and a probable bowl. Many of these vessels have internal green glazing. The fabrics are slightly variable in coarseness, but are generally closer to Kingston products than to those normally labelled Coarse Borderware. However, as has been shown by Jones (1998), whitewares in Surrey have a much more diffuse range of fabrics than is seen in London.

Feature 7 (62) produced a heavily abraded foot from a tripod vessel in sandy glazed red earthenware, likely to be of the 16th century (30g), and a bodysherd in Transitional earthenware (12g: Q(f)/M24), likely to date to between 1450 and 1550.

The only late post-medieval pottery was recovered from pit 5 (61). This produced seven sherds of the early part of the 19th century. These consist of three sherds (52g) of glazed red earthenware (including a horizontal

handle from a large bowl), a sherd of late creamware (34g: part of a serving dish) and three pieces of late pearlware (28g: including a willow pattern plate).

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Luke Barber

Just three tile fragments were recovered from the site, all of which are of post-medieval date. The earliest consists of a 325g fragment from a well formed and fired 21mm thick ridge tile, which was recovered from feature 7 (62). The piece is tempered with common medium quartz, sparse fine sandstone to 3mm and common iron oxides to 4mm (most to 1mm) and has traces of adhering orange sandy bedding mortar on its underside. The tile is difficult to closely date with certainty but a mid 16th to mid 18th century date is likely.

The other tile consists of two quite roughly finished but hard fired peg tile fragments from 19th-century pit 5 (61). One is tempered with sparse fine sand and moderate iron oxides to 1.5mm (34g), the other with sparse fine sand, common iron oxides to 1mm and abundant marl streaks (20g). Both are in keeping with the pottery date for this feature.

### *Slag* by Luke Barber

Numerous fragments of iron slag were recovered during the evaluation. The assemblage is summarised in Appendix 3. The slag from the site essentially appears to relate to iron smelting, something that is to be expected from the medieval town that was a key site in the pre-blast furnace industry. The dumping of waste products from smelting in pits is well known and not unexpected here. There is nothing in the assemblage to suggest production on or immediately next to the evaluated area.

### *Animal Bone* by Felicity Thompson

A very small amount of animal bone was found in pit 2 (51). A total of six fragments, weighing 9g, were analysed. All the fragments are from cattle mandibular molar. The teeth fragments are in a fair condition and demonstrate no evidence of pathology.

### *Struck Flint* by Steve Ford

A single struck flint was recovered from gully 6(61) in trench 1. It was a broken flake made from a brown slightly cherty flint. The flint is not chronologically distinctive but is of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

## Conclusion

The evaluation at 5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley successfully investigated those parts of the site which would be most affected by the re-development of the area for residential and commercial purposes. At least two medieval pits, containing substantial amounts of iron slag, were found in the south-east corner of the site, close to Brighton Road. There is nothing specifically to suggest that iron smelting was taking place within the site, but this material is probably unlikely to have travelled very far before being disposed of. It adds to the already considerable body of evidence for the iron industry in the area. A number of late post-medieval and modern features were also recorded, along with an undated gully. Most of the late post-medieval and modern features appear to be associated with various buildings (brewery, house and cinema) which formerly stood on the site, and are shown on historic maps. No features were identified in the south and south-west parts of the site, despite the fact that a buried soil horizon appeared to have survived in this area.

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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	22.00	1.90	0.85	W end : 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.55m made ground; 0.55-0.60m buried soil; 0.60-0.80m+ natural geology (clay). E end : 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.55m made ground; 0.55-0.85m+ clayey made ground. Gully 6, drain 7, and walls 57, 58, 64 and 65. <b>[PI. 1]</b>
2	19.70	1.90	0.85	0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.55m made ground; 0.55-0.65m buried soil; 0.65-0.85m+ natural geology (clay).
3	17.70	1.90	0.70	S end : 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.40m made ground; 0.40-0.60m buried soil; 0.60-0.70m+ natural geology (clay). N end : ground beneath reinforced concrete floor heavily disturbed. <b>[PI. 2]</b>
4	16.40	1.90	0.70	0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.45m made ground; 0.45-0.60m buried soil; 0.60-0.70m+ natural geology (clay).
5	15.00	1.90	0.87	W end : 0-0.20m concrete; 0.20-0.60m made ground; 0.60-0.72m demolition rubble; 0.72-0.87m+ natural geology (clay). E end : 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.35m made ground; 0.35-0.55m buried soil; 0.55-0.60m natural geology (clay). Wall 55 and pits 4 and 5. <b>[PI. 3]</b>
6	11.00	1.90	0.86	0-0.15m concrete; 0.15-0.30m made ground; 0.30-0.42m concrete; 0.42-0.65m+ natural geology (clay). Walls 53 and 54. <b>[PI. 4]</b>
7	12.70	1.90	0.73	W end : 0-0.08m Tarmac; 0.08-0.40m made ground; 0.40-0.73m+ heavily rooted natural geology (clay). E end : 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.35m made ground; 0.35-0.45m buried soil; 0.45-0.55m natural geology (clay). Brick structure 56 and pits 1, 2 and 3. <b>[PIs 5 and 6]</b>

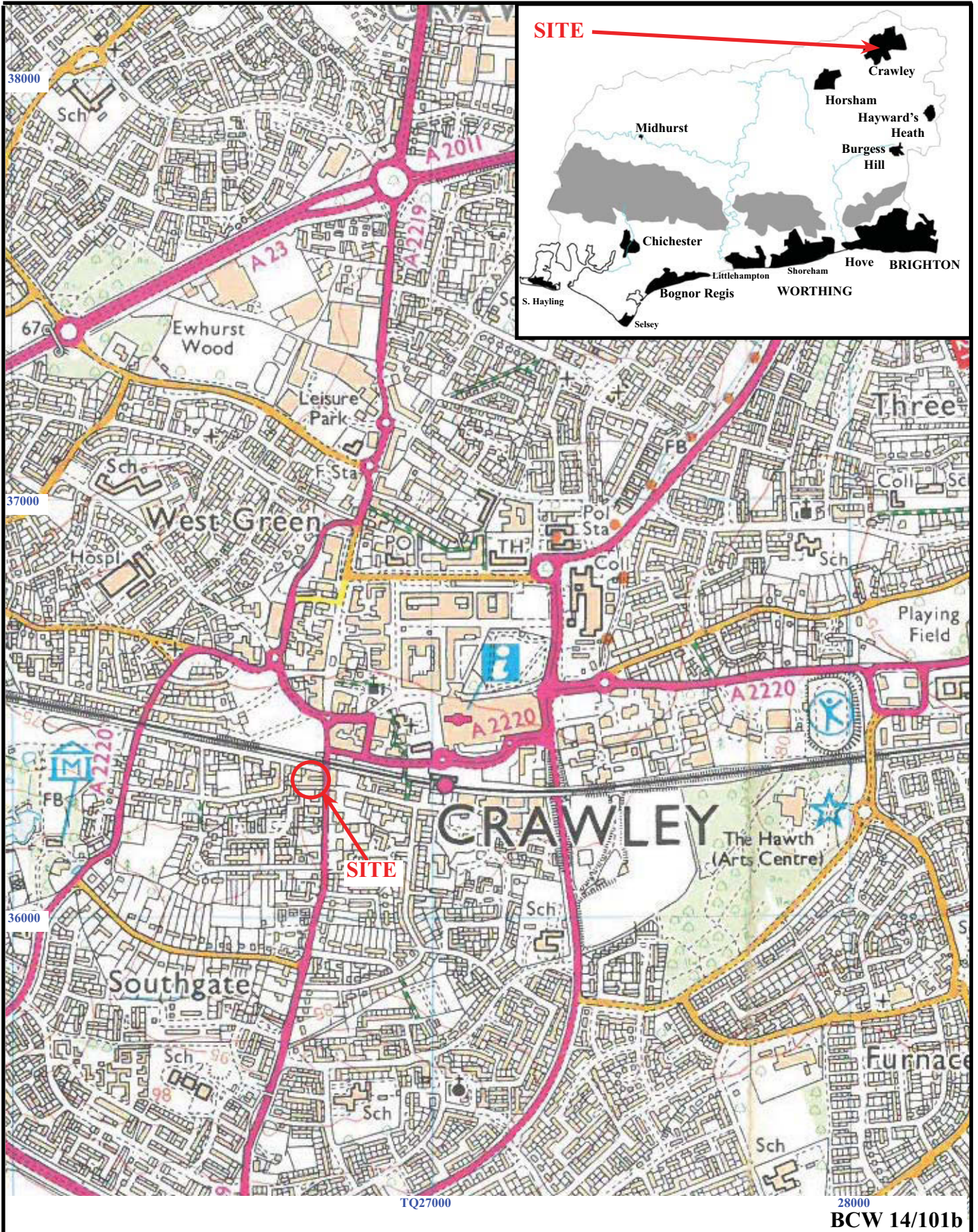
## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
7	1	50	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
7	2	51, 52	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
7	3	51, 52	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
5	4	60	Pit / post-hole	Modern	Concrete
5	5	61	Pit / post-hole	Modern	Concrete
1	6	63	Gully	Undated	
1	7	62	Drain	Post-medieval	Tile
6		53	Wall	Modern	Brick
6		54	Wall	Modern	Brick
5		55	Wall	Late post-medieval	Brick
7		56	Brick structure	Late post-medieval	Brick
1		57	Wall	Late post-medieval	Brick
1		58	Wall	Late post-medieval	Brick
1		59	Made ground	Modern	Stratigraphy
1		64	Wall	Late post-medieval	Brick
1		65	Wall	Late post-medieval	Brick
1		66	Made ground	Modern	Stratigraphy
		67	Buried Soil	N/A	

### APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of iron slag

<i>Context</i>	<i>Slag type</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
50	Undiagnostic	12	510	Aerated brown/black cinder. Quite dense with some charcoal. Could be smelting or from primary smithing
51	Undiagnostic	8	80	
51	Smelting tap slag	2	116	Hand-picked from soil sample
52	Undiagnostic	14	5356	Aerated brown/black cinder, quite dense. Probably smelting
52	Smelting	3	4120	Aerated cinder but with notable surface flow
52	Smelting tap slag	2	20	Typical dense tap slag





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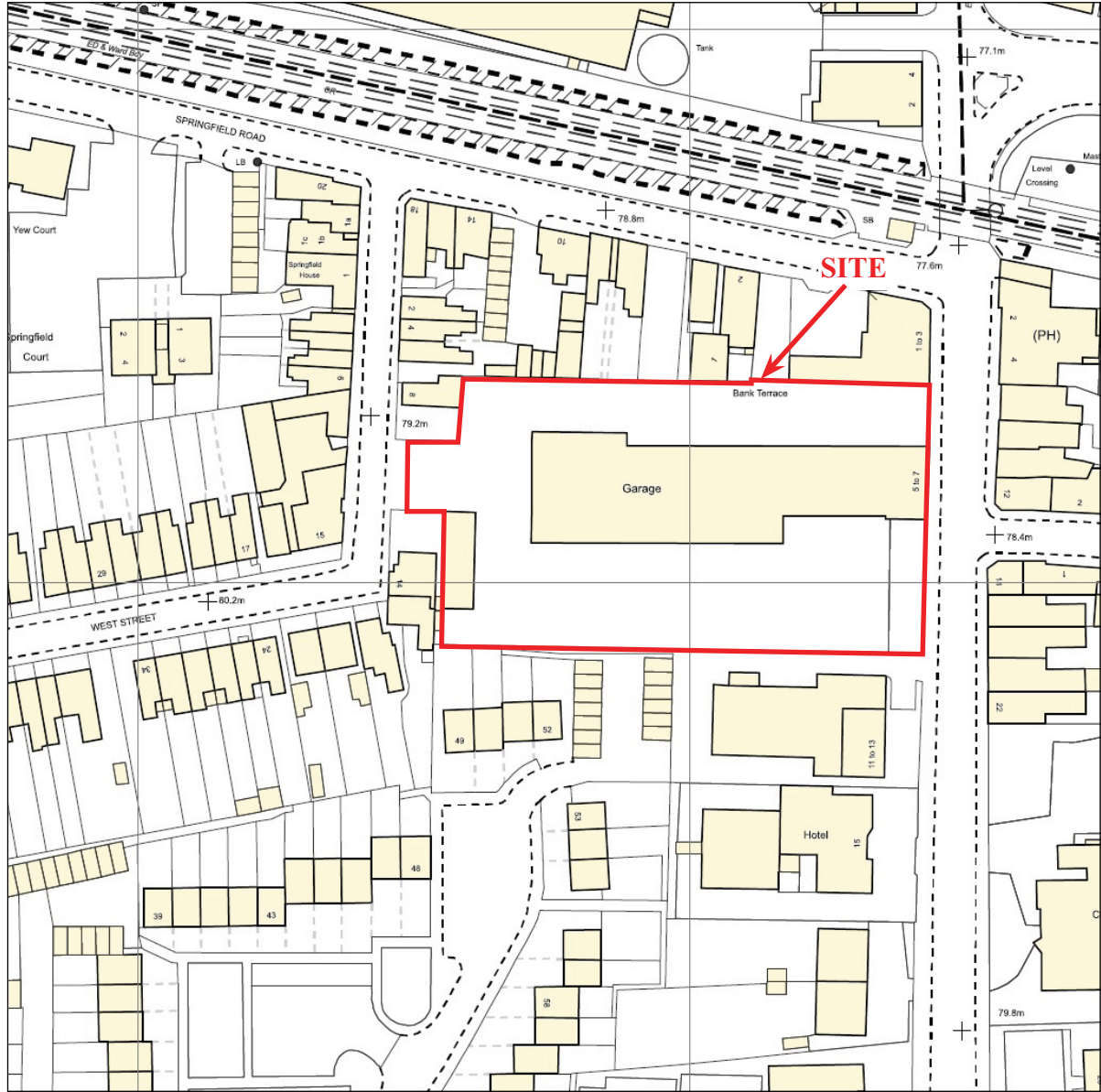
Figure 1. Location of site within Crawley and West Sussex.

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36400

36300



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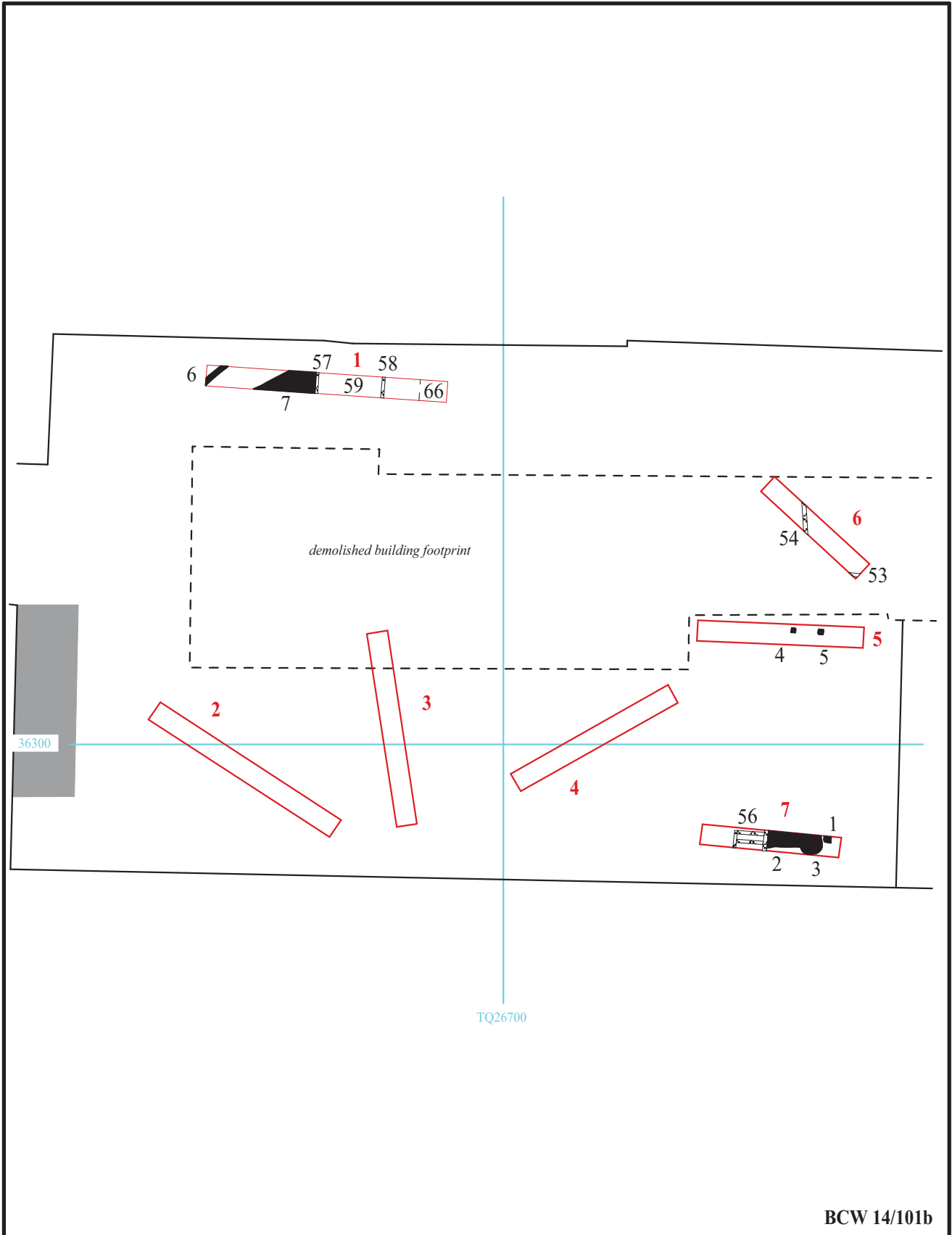


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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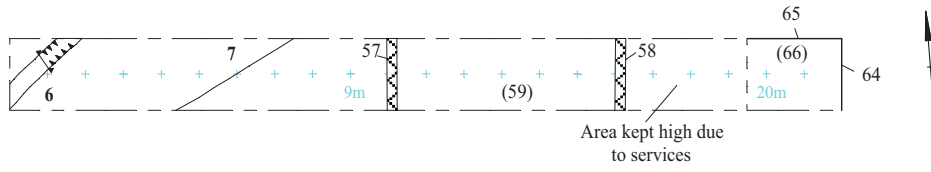
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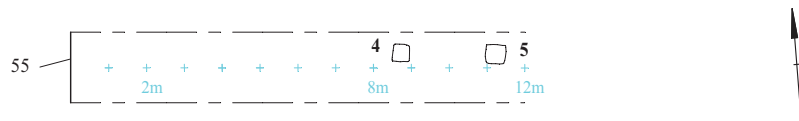
Figure 3. Location of trenches showing features.



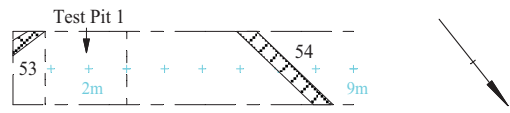
Trench 1



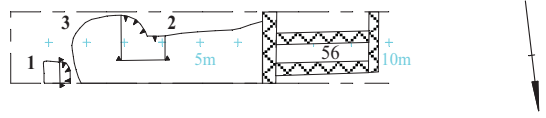
Trench 5



Trench 6



Trench 7



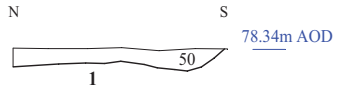
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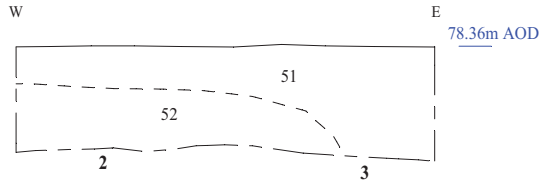
Figure 4. Plan of trenches 1, 5, 6 and 7.



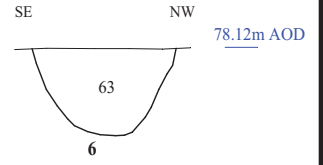
Trench 7



Trench 7



Trench 1



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Figure 5. Sections



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



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

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**5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, looking south east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 3 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES  
SOUTH





Plate 5. Trench 7, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 6. Trench 7, looking south east, Scales: 1m.

BCW 14/101b

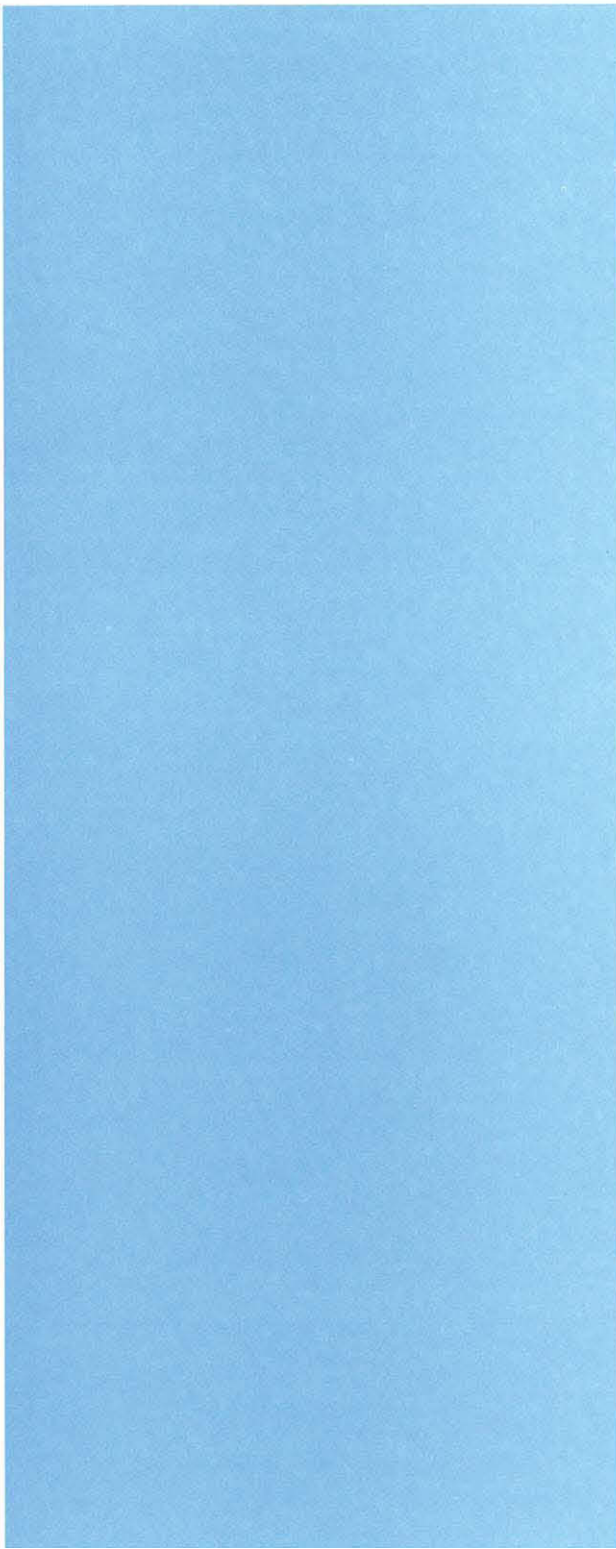
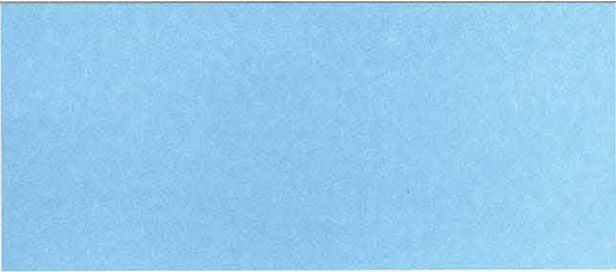
5-7 Brighton Road, Crawley,  
West Sussex, 2014  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 5 - 6.

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES  
SOUTH

## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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)**