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S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

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

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Felicity Thompson**

**Site Code: PSP12/138**

**(TQ 4190 0125)**

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

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Lewes District Council**

by Felicity Thompson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PSP 12/138

**March 2015**

## Summary

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

**Grid reference:** TQ 4190 0125

**Planning reference:** LW/13/0268

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 16th July 2014 - 26th January 2015

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Felicity Thompson

**Site code:** PSP 12/138

**Area of site:** c. 9800 sq m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the creation of new recreational facilities to the north and north-west of Piddinghoe Sports Park. Despite the fact that the site had not been significantly disturbed in the past, no archaeological features were observed. Broadly dated Neolithic to Bronze Age flints were recovered from colluvial deposits in the southern part of the site.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Lewes Museum or a viable alternative in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓	16.03.15
	Steve Preston✓	16.03.15

# **Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Felicity Thompson

**Report 12/138b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the Piddinghoe Sports Park, Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex (centred on TQ 4190 0125) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Bibb of Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1AB.

Planning permission (LW/13/0268) had been gained from Lewes District Council for the Big Parks Project, to create new recreational facilities to the north and north-west of Piddinghoe Sports Park, and to undertake landscape improvements and improvements to existing buildings within the complex. The permission was subject to a standard condition (3) relating to archaeology, which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. An initial archaeological evaluation was carried out in September 2012 (Wallis 2012) and as a result of the findings from this, Mr Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist with East Sussex County Council, indicated that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the East Sussex Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Odile Rouard, Felicity Thompson and Sean Wallis between 16th July 2014 and 26th January 2015, and the site code is PSP 12/138. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Lewes Museum or a viable alternative in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site lies at the northern end of Piddinghoe Avenue, on the edge of the built-up area of Peacehaven, East Sussex (Fig. 1), and was previously occupied by playing fields, various buildings associated with the sports complex, car parking areas, a council depot and a children's play area. For the purpose of this report the site has divided into two distinct areas of investigation, Areas A and B (Fig. 2). The site is generally flat although there is a gradual slope northwards towards a dry valley. Area A, to the south, lies at a height of approximately 47m above Ordnance Datum and Area B, to the north, at approximately 38m aOD. According to the British

Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Lambeth Group, Woolwich and Reading Formation on the border with Culver Chalk Formation (BGS 2006). Chalk was uncovered towards the north, in Area B and to the south, in Area A, a deposit of probable colluvium overlying sandy clay Woolwich Beds was encountered.

## **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 from most periods (Rudling 2003). A search of the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER ref: 063/15) was carried out in February 2015 to provide background information. In summary, the site is located within, and is surrounded by Archaeological Notification Areas and this is due to the significant amount of archaeology recorded in the vicinity in recent years. Recent archaeological investigations to the north, east, west and south of the site have revealed numerous features, suggestive of a multi-period prehistoric landscape (Fig. 3). The features recorded to the north, east and west have included early Neolithic pits, an early Bronze age barrow and middle Bronze Age roundhouses. There is also evidence of settlement continuing in the area up until the early Roman period (Worrall 2004; Riccoboni 2008; Hart 2010). Immediately to the south a substantial assemblage of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint was recorded and interpreted as *in-situ* lithic working (Riccoboni 2008). The 2012 evaluation of the site itself, established that it had not been significantly disturbed in the past. A possible Bronze Age cremation deposit (though lacking in bone) was recorded in the north-eastern part of the site (in an area not affected by the current works), and finds dating from the late Bronze Age and Iron Age were recovered from colluvial deposits in the north western part of the site (Wallis 2012).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. As the evaluation established that the archaeologically sensitive layers are generally buried beneath thick deposits of made ground and overburden, only certain areas required constant archaeological monitoring. These are primarily the pits and trenches to be dug for new playground equipment, trees, hedging, fencing and boundary walls. New foundations in the area around the council depot were also monitored. Other groundworks around the community pavilion were expected to be too shallow to affect any buried archaeological deposits but limited monitoring was to be carried out to confirm this.

## Results

All ground reduction that required archaeological supervision was carried out using a 360° type mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Two separate areas were monitored, an area for improvements to existing buildings and landscaping (Area A) (Fig. 4), and a children's play area (Area B) (Fig. 5).

### *Area A*

An area centred on NGR TQ 41895 01250, covering approximately 7200 sq m was monitored (Fig. 4). The groundworks observed included the excavation of footings for the new Gateway Building. The footing trenches were up to 20m in length, 1m in width and reached a maximum depth of 1.20m (Pl. 1). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.55m of made ground upon 0.35m of colluvium (52), directly above a mid brown sandy clay deposit, interpreted as the natural geology in this vicinity (Fig. 6). No archaeological features were observed but ten flint flakes, a scraper and fragments of burnt flint were recovered from the colluvial layer (52).

Trenches for a new fence line and porch associated with the Pavilion were also monitored. These trenches were up to 12m long, 3m wide and reached a depth of 1.20m (Pl. 2). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of made ground upon 0.55m of colluvial deposit (52), directly above a sand deposit, interpreted as the natural geology (Fig. 6). No archaeological features were observed but a flint core and two fragments of burnt flint were recovered from layer 52.

A soakaway trench and run measured up to 9m long, 3m wide and 3m deep (Pl. 3). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of Tarmac, over 0.50m of made ground, 0.15m of buried soil (53), upon 0.27m of colluvium (52), overlying 0.55m of sand natural which lay directly above a lower chalk natural (Fig. 7). The presence and nature of the buried soil implies that the original ground level sloped gently towards the west. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

A hedge line consisted of a trench up to 40m in length, 1.50m in width and a total depth of 0.70m. This trench had to be excavated in segments in order to avoid the potential collapse of an adjacent wall. The general stratigraphy was observed to be 0.25m of Tarmac and made ground, upon 0.2m of colluvium (52), directly above a sand natural (Fig. 6). However, towards the northern end of this trench the ground works no longer reached the sand natural, only impacting upon a thicker colluvial layer. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

Tree pits monitored were generally 1.5m long, 1.2m wide and 0.9m deep. Nothing of archaeological significance was observed in any of the pits. The general stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of crush and made ground, directly above 0.40m of colluvium (52) becoming increasingly cleaner with depth (Fig. 6).

Of the three boundary trenches monitored in Area A, only one reached sufficient depth to impact upon archaeological deposits (Pls 4 and 5). This was the boundary trench located immediately to the west of the Peacehaven Football Club buildings, that was excavated in two segments. Each segment was 14m long, 2m wide and up to 1.07m deep. The general stratigraphy consisted of 0.47m of paving and made ground, directly above 0.60m of colluvium (52) (Fig. 7). No archaeological finds or features were observed.

### *Area B*

Area B (TQ 41903 0414) covered an area of approximately 2600 sq m (Fig. 5). This area was intended to be the new children's play area and it was ascertained that some of the groundworks associated with the playground may impact on sub-surface archaeological features. Groundworks outlined to be monitored included foundations for a seesaw, a climbing logs area and a line of thirty-seven fence posts.

The seesaw foundation trench measured 5m long by 2m wide and was up to 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil (50), above 0.30m of subsoil (51) directly above a 0.40m deep colluvial layer (52) (Fig. 7). Topsoil was removed prior to the excavation of the foundation trench. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

An area 7m in length, 4m width and up to 0.40m was excavated in order to create the climbing logs zone (Pl. 6). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of turf and topsoil (50) on top of 0.30m of subsoil (51). The levels reached here were not deep enough to impact upon potential archaeological deposits. However, the five pits excavated within this zone to install the climbing logs did reach sufficient depths. All of the pits were up to a further 0.50m deep and the stratigraphy ranged from 0.50m of colluvium (52) in Pit 1 to the south (Pl. 7), to 0.20m of colluvium (52) directly above a chalk natural in Pit 5 to the north (Fig. 8). No archaeological finds or features were observed in these pits.

A 600m line of thirty-seven fence posts was also monitored in Area B (Pl. 8). The post holes were up to 0.70m deep and the general stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil (50) above 0.38m of colluvium (52), directly above 0.20m of chalk natural (Fig. 8). All spoil heaps were checked and only a fragment of 20th-century tile was recovered from the colluvium (52); this was not retained. The stratigraphy implies that this part of the site has been truncated at some point in the recent past. The topsoil and subsoil had been removed down to the colluvial layer with new turf installed, perhaps during the previous phase of park development.

## **Finds**

### *Struck Flint by Steve Ford*

A small collection comprising 12 struck flints were recovered from the colluvium (52) during the fieldwork (Appendix 1). They comprise 10 flakes, a scraper and a core, most of which were in a fresh condition. Some of the flakes are large (>90mm) and most appear to have been derived directly from a good chalk source with a small number from a gravel or beach source. None of the pieces are chronologically distinctive and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be suggested.

### *Burnt Flint by Felicity Thompson*

A total of 12 fragments of burnt flint weighing 206g, were retrieved from colluvial layer (52). This comprised 141g from the Gateway Building footing trench and 65g from the Pavilion porch trench. None of fragments had been worked.

## **Conclusion**

The watching brief at this site successfully examined those areas which were to be most affected by the creation of new recreational facilities at Piddinghoe Sports Park. This involved the monitoring of two areas (A and B). Despite the fact that the site had not been significantly disturbed in the past and the abundance of archaeological activity in close proximity, no archaeological features were observed. Broadly dated Neolithic to Bronze Age flints were recovered from the colluvial deposits in Area A, towards the southern end of the site.

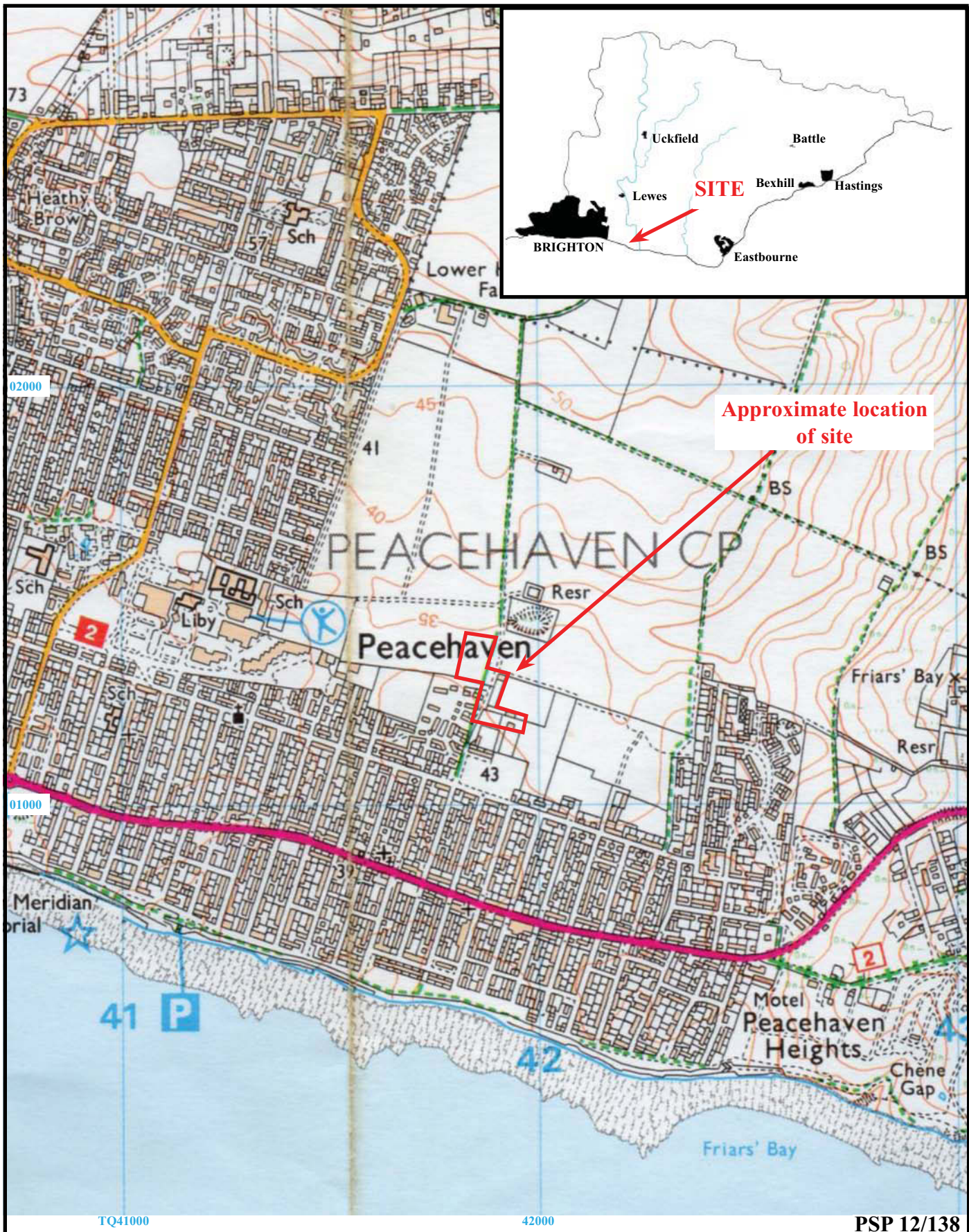
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## APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of struck flint

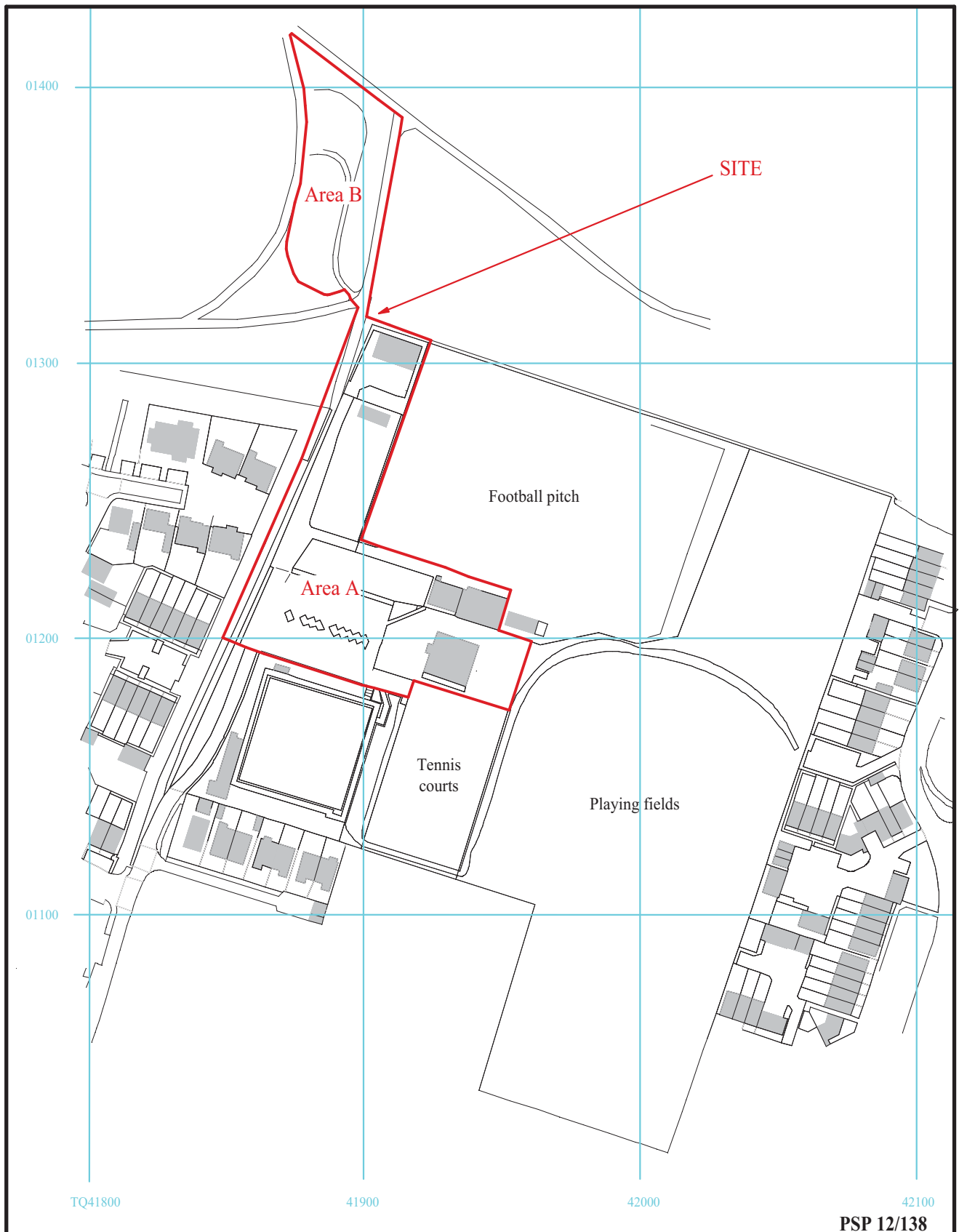
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Type</i>
Gateway Building Footing	52	10	Flakes
Gateway Building Footing	52	1	Scraper
Pavilion Porch	52	1	Core



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

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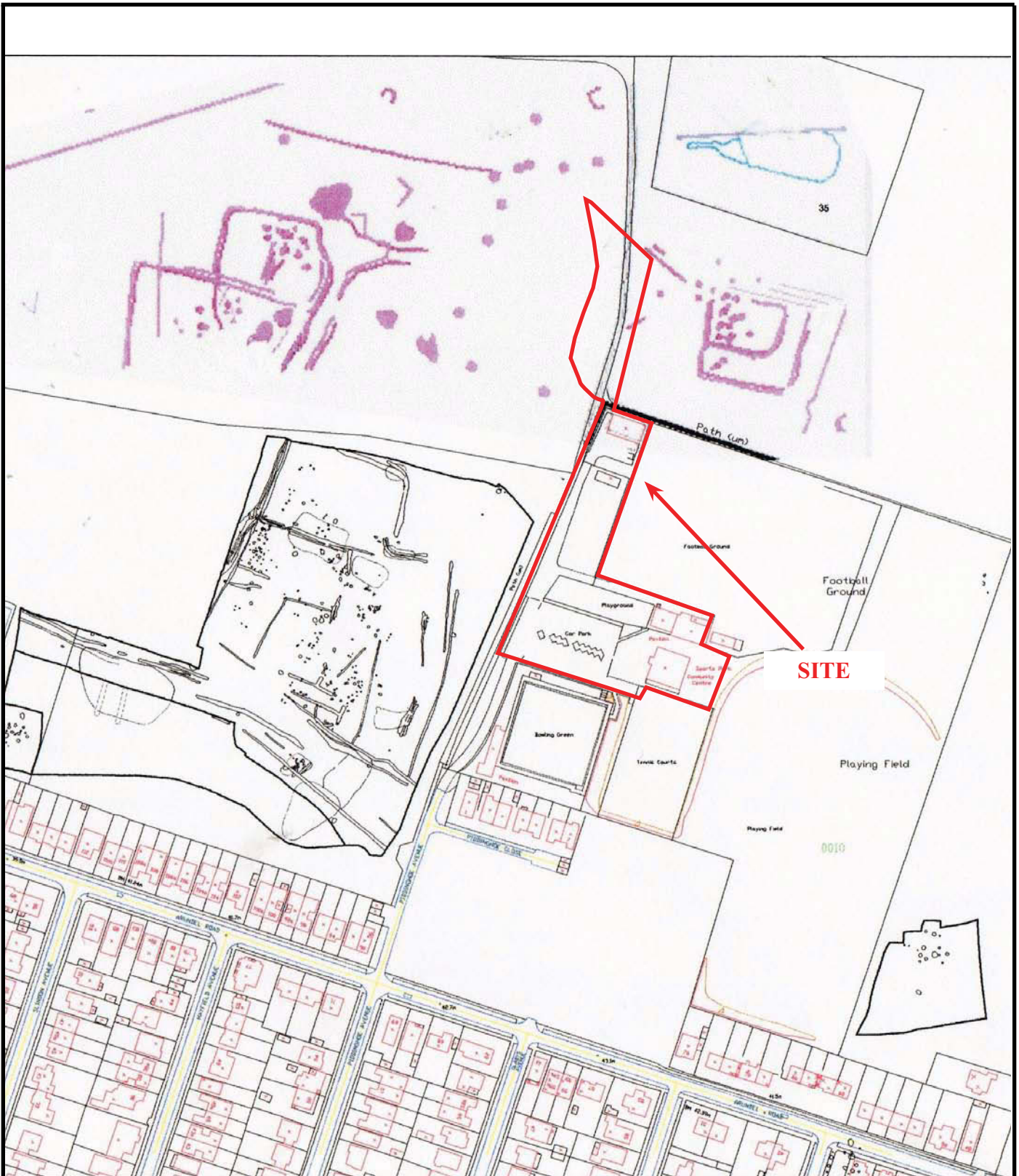


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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site



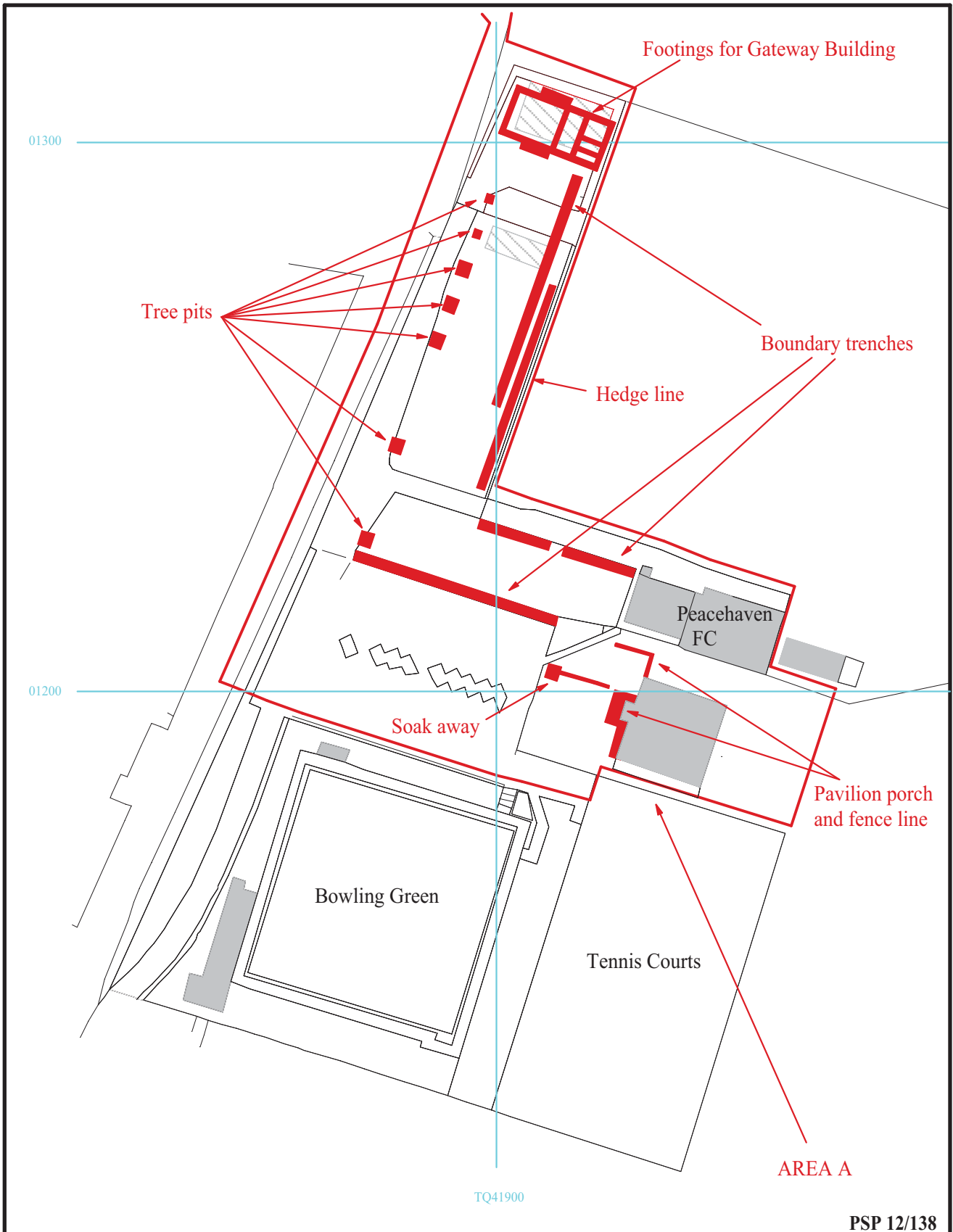
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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Plan showing archaeological features recorded at Keymer and Seaview Avenues, along with geophysics at Lower Hoddern Farm. Not to scale.



PSP 12/138

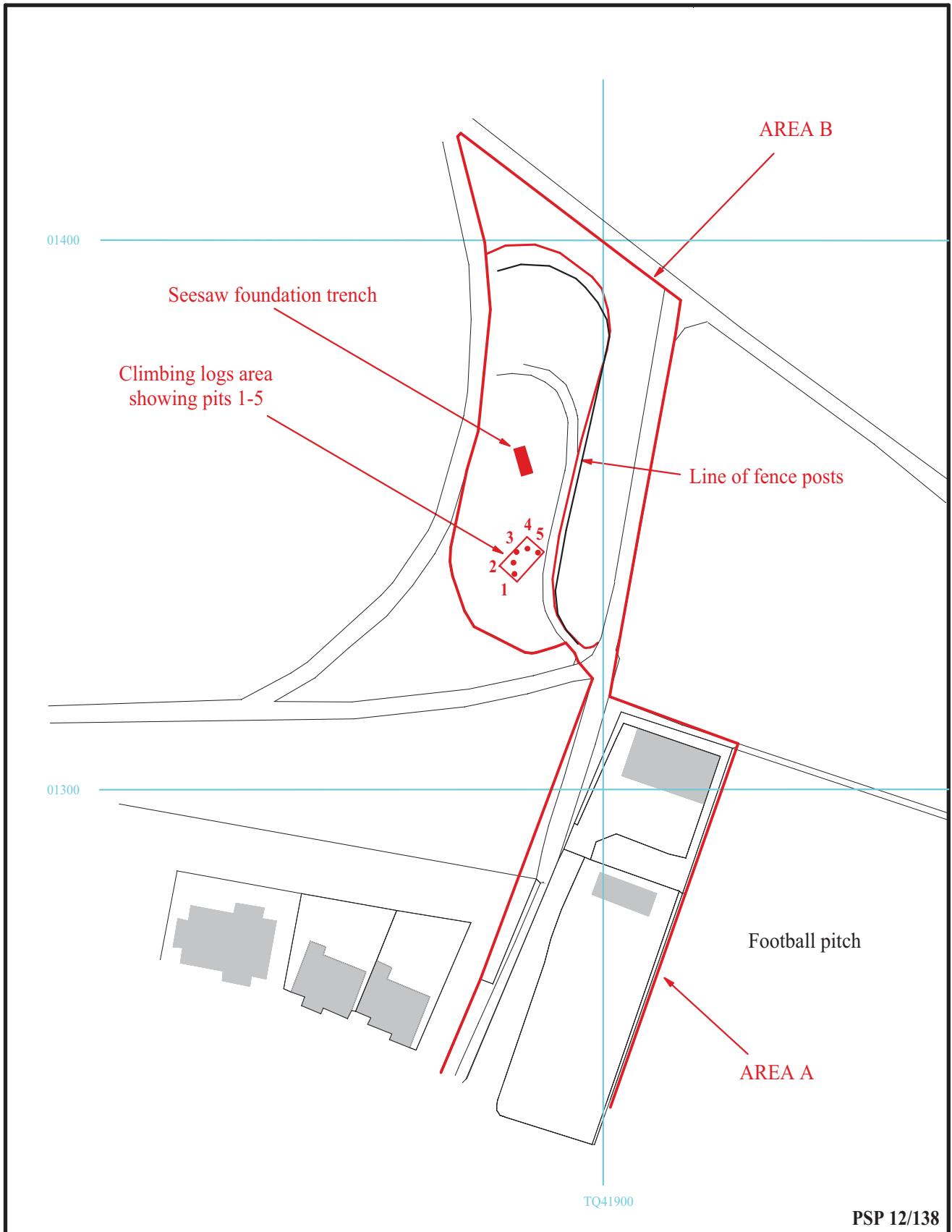


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Figure 4. Monitored locations in Area A



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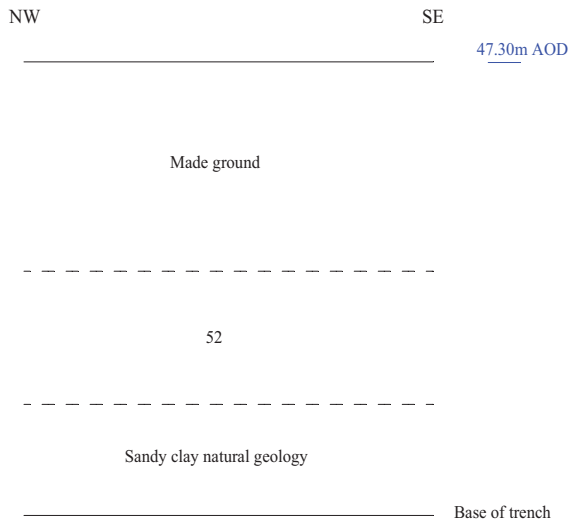


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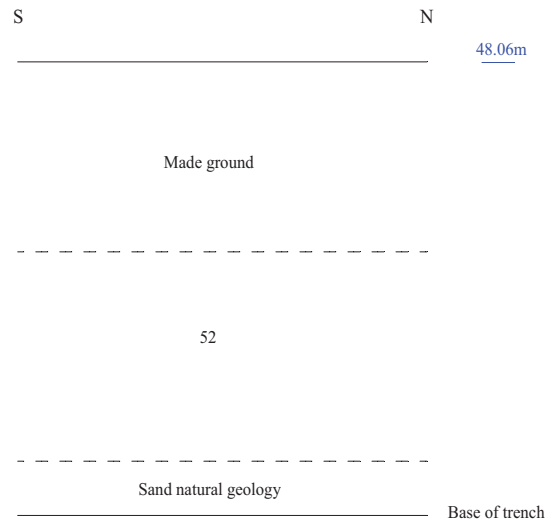
Figure 5. Monitored locations in Area B



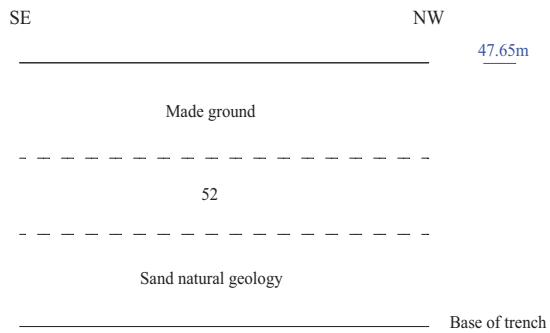
Gateway Building Footing Trench  
(Area A)



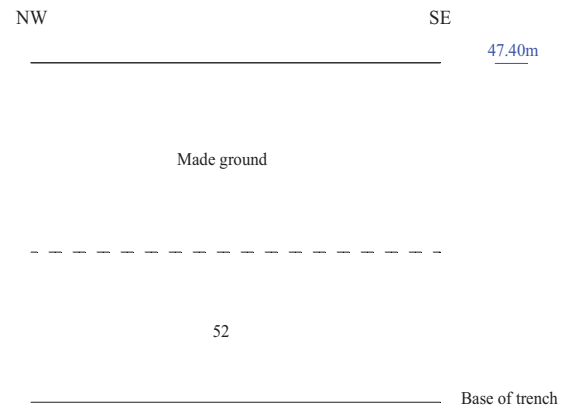
Pavilion Porch Trench  
(Area A)



Hedge Line Trench  
(Area A)



General Tree Pit Startigraphy  
(Area A)



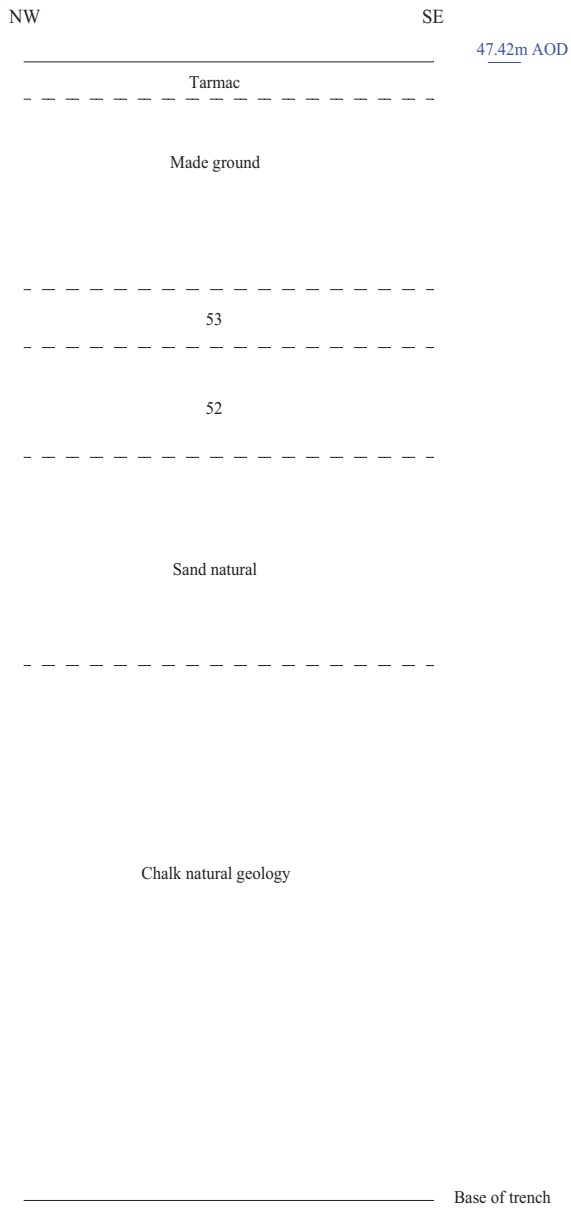
PSP 12/138

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Archaeological Watching Brief

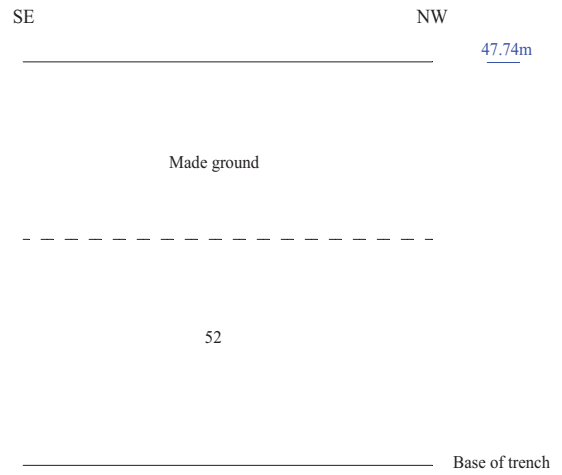
Figure 6. Sections



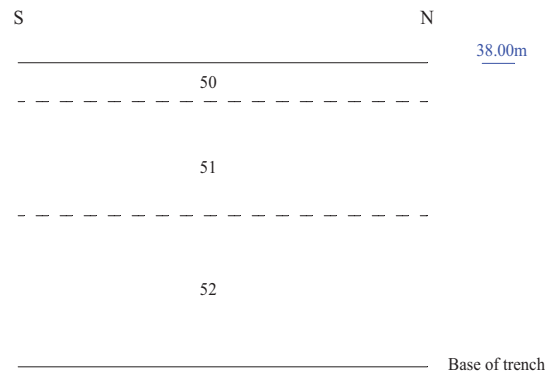
Soak Away Trench  
(Area A)



Boundary Trench  
(Area A)



Seesaw Foundation Trench  
(Area B)



PSP 12/138

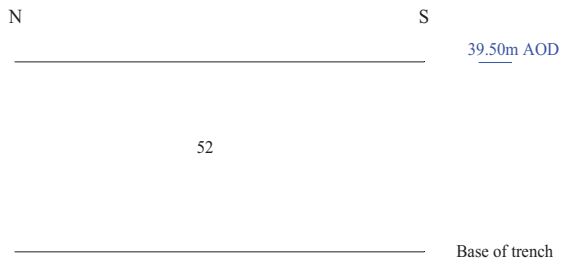
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Figure 7. Sections

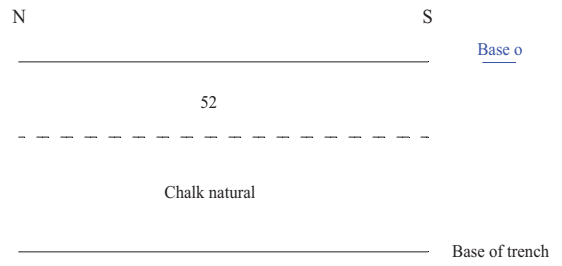




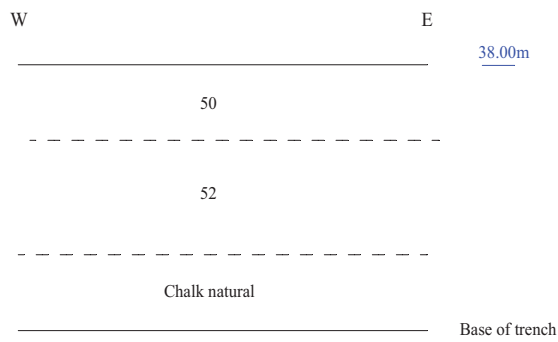
Climbing Log Pit 1  
(Area B)



Climbing Log Pit 5  
(Area B)



Fence Posts General Stratigraphy  
(Area B)



PSP 12/138

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Figure 8. Sections





Plate 1. Gateway building, footing trench, looking S,  
Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Pavilion porch, looking W, Scales: 1m and  
0.5m.



Plate 3. Soakaway, looking N, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Boundary trench, looking N, Scales: 1m and  
0.5m.

PSP 12/138

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Plates 1 - 4.

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**Plate 5. Boundary trench, Area A, looking NW.**



**Plate 6. Climbing log area strip, looking SW.**



**Plate 7. Climbing log hole 1, looking SW,  
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.**



**Plate 8. Fence posts, Area B, looking N.**

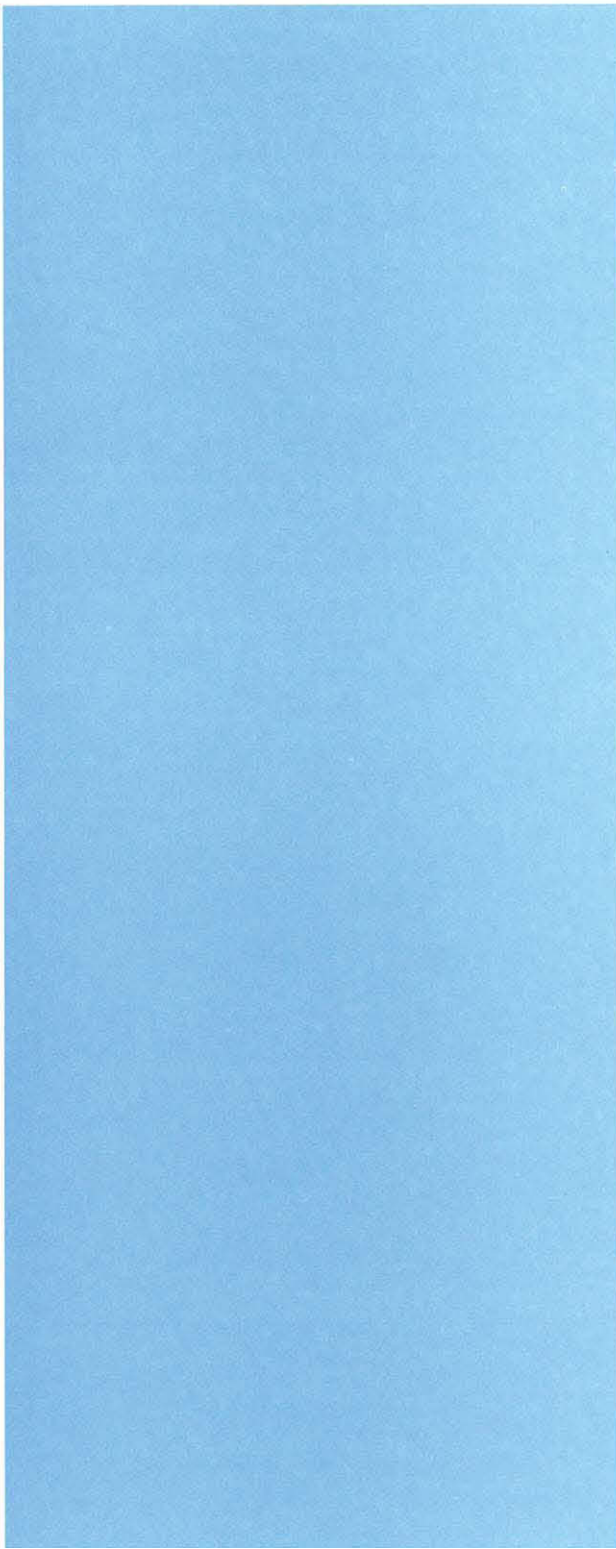
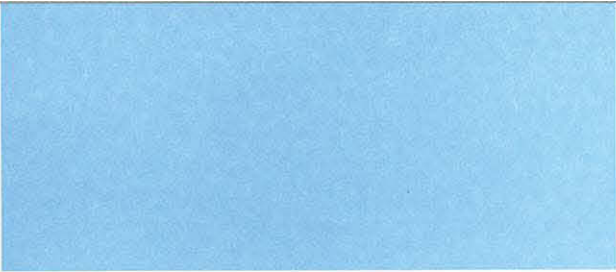
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Plates 5 - 8.**

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## 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
↓	↓



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