THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

SOUTH

Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness, Sevenoaks, Kent (Phase 5)

Archaeological Excavation

by David Platt

Site Code: SQK05/124

(TQ 5415 5752)

Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness, Sevenoaks, Kent

An Archaeological Excavation Phase 5 (2015)

For Tarmac Limited

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SQK 05/124

September 2015

Summary

Site name: Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness, Sevenoaks, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 5415 5752

Site activity: Excavation Phase 5

Date and duration of project: 6th – 9th July 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: SQK 05/124

Area of site: 0.31 ha

Summary of results: Two structures and a wide ditch all of post medieval date were observed in the western area of the strip. A single possible Bronze Age gully was observed along with a few flint flakes. A small late Post-medieval structure and ditch were also recorded. The most notable findings were those of a Palaeolithic hand axe and flake.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with at Maidstone Museum, with accession code MNEMG 2011.20

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 29.09.15
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Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness, Sevenoaks, Kent
An Archaeological Excavation, Phase 5

by David Platt

Report 05/124f

Introduction

This report documents the results of the 2015 phase of archaeological excavation carried out at Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness, Sevenoaks, Kent (TQ 5415 5752) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Andrew Josephs of Andrew Josephs Ltd, 16 South Terrace, Sowerby, Thirsk, YO7 1RH on behalf of Lafarge Tarmac Ltd.

Planning permission (SE/08/675) for the extension of an existing quarry has been gained from Kent County Council. The consent included a condition (27) relating to archaeology as the site is considered to have high archaeological potential. In order to satisfy the archaeological condition on the planning permission a formal programme of archaeological excavation was requested for the site. This is in accordance with the Kent Minerals Local Plan Policy. The fieldwork followed a specification approved by Ms Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer with Kent County Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt and Tom Stewart between 6th July and 9th July 2015 with the site code SQK 05/124.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Maidstone Museum with accession number MNEMG 2011.20 in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site comprises an irregular parcel of land of c.0.31 hectares on the northern margins of Sevenoaks, Kent (centred on NGR TQ 5415 5752) straddling the parish boundary between Sevenoaks and Seal (Fig. 1). The existing quarry lies to the south and west of the site with woodland to the east (Fig. 2). The underlying geology comprises of sand and gravel deposits (BGS 1990), this was observed as a mid red brown sandy gravel across the site. The site occupies a long strip which sloped down from east to west, the eastern edge of the site was 96.5m aOD and fell to 93.36m aOD at the western extent.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a cultural heritage assessment for the site (Josephs 2007). This assessment drew on the results of prior fieldwork projects carried out on the site itself in support of the planning application. These comprised geophysical survey (Tibble 2006), fieldwalking (Ford 2006a), evaluation trenching (Ford 2006b) and assessment of Palaeolithic potential (Colcutt in Ford 2006b). In summary, a modest amount of archaeology was recorded. A few stray finds of prehistoric flintwork including a Palaeolithic handaxe along with a single sherd of pre-modern pottery pointed to low level use across the site as a whole. Some relatively modern gravel pits were also found and the parish boundary ditch examined: this had been re-cut in Victorian times. Most of the geophysical anomalies were shown to be geological. However, a small cluster of cut features corresponding to geophysical anomalies is considered to be the site of prehistoric (Bronze Age) occupation. This lies in an area of the quarry yet to be examined. Four earlier phases of archaeological excavation, which took place between 2011 and 2014 have been summarized in previous interim reports (Taylor and Wallis 2012; Wallis 2013; Bray and McNichol-Norbury 2014).

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project were to:

excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the extraction;

produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;

establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site, such as industrial, domestic etc; and

produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

Specific research objectives were to answer the following questions:

What is the nature of the earlier prehistoric activity on the site and what is its date and extent?

What is the date and nature of the Bronze Age deposits on the site?

Are there any structural remains on the site representing occupation and if so are they enclosed or unenclosed? How do they relate temporally and spatially to land division features?

What use was made of floral and faunal resources and can these be identified and assessed from a programme of environmental sampling?
What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the various episodes of activity on the site?

Results

Gully 1017

A single gully 1017 was observed at the western end of the excavation area, it was aligned E-W and was between 0.60–0.62m wide and between 0.17–0.18m deep (Figs 3 and 4). Two slots (400 and 401) were excavated through the gully and two small sherds of prehistoric date were recovered. The western end of the gully was lost in an area of late post-medieval truncation.

Post Medieval ditch 402

A ditch was observed at the western end of the site and aligned north–south and was *c*.5m in width. This ditch contained a dark grey brown sandy silt fill with brick and ceramic material of post-medieval date. This was located between structures 452 and 453.

Structure 452

Structure 452 was aligned north–south and was 1.7m wide and extended beyond the baulk to the north. It consisted of a single course of bricks that were rounded on the southern extent and covered with a layer of mortar and was post medieval in date.

Wall 453

Wall 453 was aligned north–south and was 0.30m wide and extended beyond the baulk to the north. It consisted of a single course of bricks bound with mortar and was post medieval in date.

Finds

Pottery by Andy Taylor

Two small sherds of handmade oxidised ware of prehistoric date were recovered from slot 401 of gully 1017, these were both flint tempered with quartz and charcoal inclusions and weighed 2.5g in total.

Struck Flint by William Attard

In total, four struck lithic pieces were recovered during the fieldwork All pieces were made of flint and were recovered as surface finds, with variable levels of preservation, from very fresh to river-rolled. Two of the four finds display some patination.

Hand axe (Pl. 2)

Cordate hand axe, largely complete. Made from mottled dark grey/light brown flint with orange-grey patination along one edge. The flint used is of moderate quality, with approximately 5% of the surface being comprised of visible flaws. A small area of cortex remains at the proximal end. All removal scars appear to be contemporary and part of the construction of the hand axe, with the exception of minor crush damage to the edges and a single scar at the distal end. The former is likely the result of post-depositional movement, probably in a river-rolling context. The latter is very 'fresh', with sharp edges and no patination, indicating a modern date, possibly during recovery.

Levallois flake? (Pl. 2)

Flake tool made of dark grey flint. This piece exhibits an extensively worked dorsal face as well as a clear striking platform. The flake terminates in a partial hinge fracture, although it is unclear whether this is related to flaws in the flint or an overzealous strike. A milky patination covers approximately 50% and 30% of the dorsal and ventral faces respectively. Aside from very light crush damage to portions of the edges, the piece as a whole is in good condition, although moderately river-rolled. When viewed ventrally, the right edge displays parallel retouching along most of its length, but this is fresh and is likely to be modern damage (Mallouf 1982). The rounded shape of the distal end of the flake suggests a scraper, although notably there is no retouch present in this area.

Scraper

Struck flake of mixed mid/light grey flint. Unusually thick profile and an extensively worked dorsal face. Crush damage to proximal end, possibly due to initial flake removal or to subsequent working of dorsal face. Irregular overall shape (approximately oblong) precludes clear identification of tool or core type. 10% of the dorsal face is comprised of visible flaws. Direction of flake scars on dorsal face suggests possible use as a core, although an unusually small one and certainly in the final stages of reduction. In some circumstances this can be indicative of resource or time pressures at the point of manufacture.

Struck flake/debitage flake.

An un-retouched flake made of medium grey flint. Around 40% of the flake is comprised of a light-grey flaw, present on both dorsal and ventral sides. The distal end terminates partly with a feathered and partly with a stepped fracture, the latter presumably following flaws in the body of the flint. Given the non-utilitarian size and

shape of the flake it is likely that this piece is debitage, although as it was not recovered *in situ* it is difficult to say this for certain.

A note on previous work at Sevenoaks Quarry

Previous research at the site suggests a low level of site usage (Ford 2006a), inferred from a low finds density and few cut features. By far the most notable of the few finds discovered during this research is a Palaeolithic hand axe (see Colcutt in Ford 2006) with a similar level of preservation to the hand axe detailed above. Whilst this is not necessarily indicative of a nearby Palaeolithic site, it is worth noting in the event of any future finds of a similar age.

Conclusion

The 2015 phase of excavations revealed a single feature of archaeological interest, that being a gully (1017) of possible prehistoric date. A few flint flakes may be contemporary. Two brick built structures were observed of late post-medieval date along with a ditch and another area of disturbance also of post medieval date. The most notable finds were that of a Palaeolithic hand axe and a probably Palaeolithic flake made by the Levallois technique. These add to the hand axe found earlier during the initial evaluation.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

Cut	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence*
400	450	Gully	Prehistoric	Stratigraphic
401	451	Gully	Prehistoric	Pottery
402	454	Ditch	Post medieval	Brick
	452	Structure	Post medieval	Brick/ concrete
	453	Wall	Post medieval	Brick

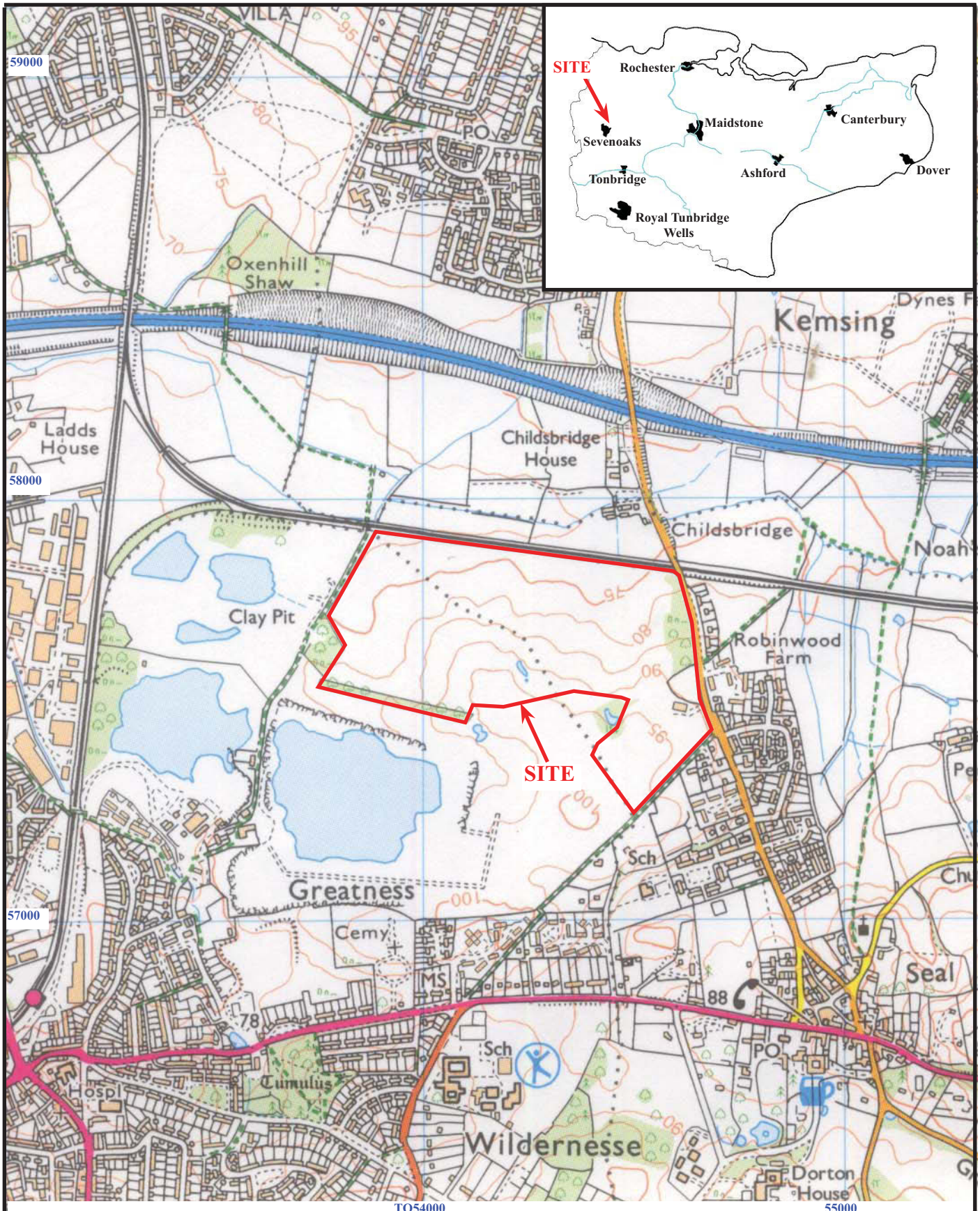

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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Greatness, Sevenoaks and within Kent.

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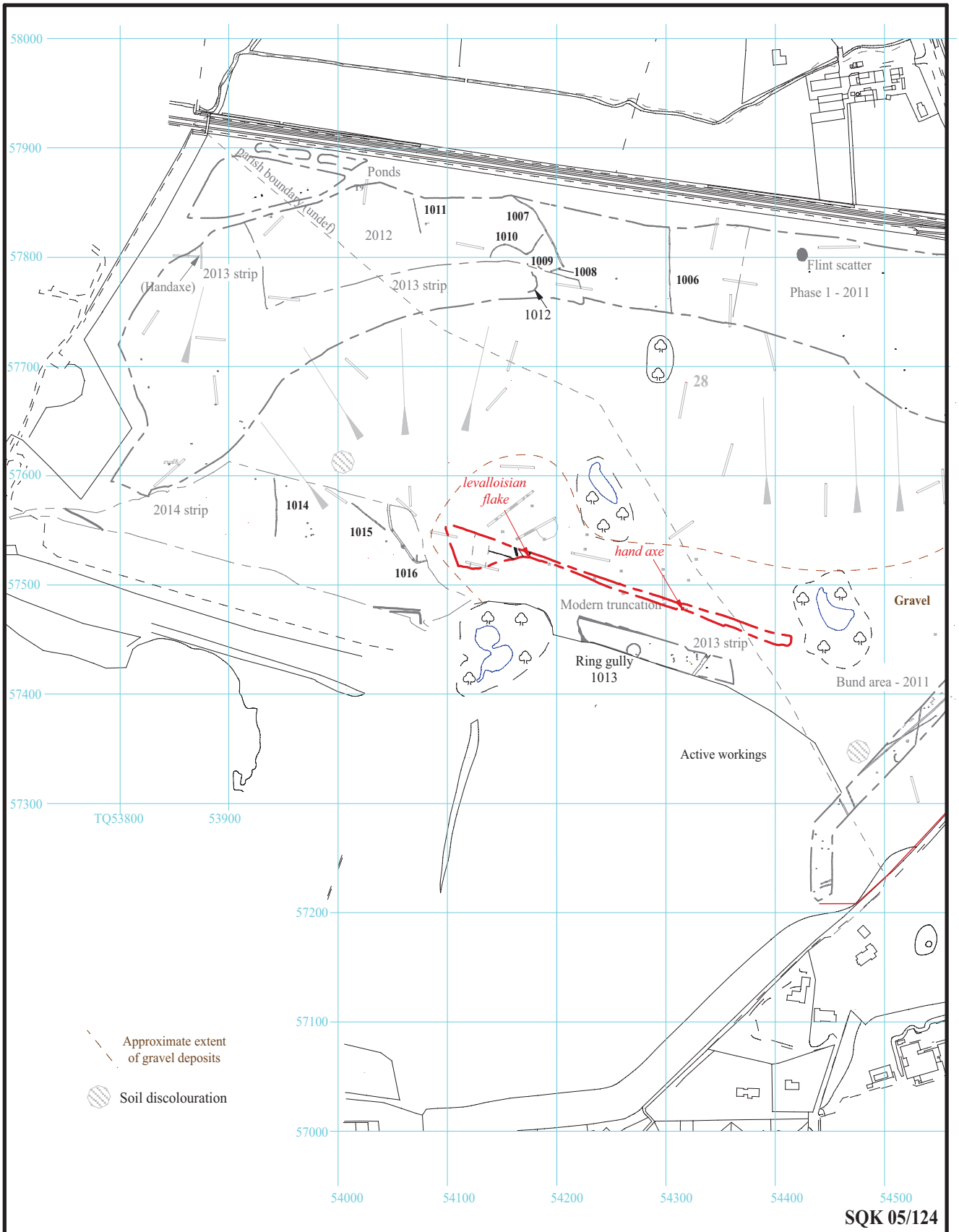

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Figure 2. All archaeological works, highlighting 2015 fieldwork.

0 500m

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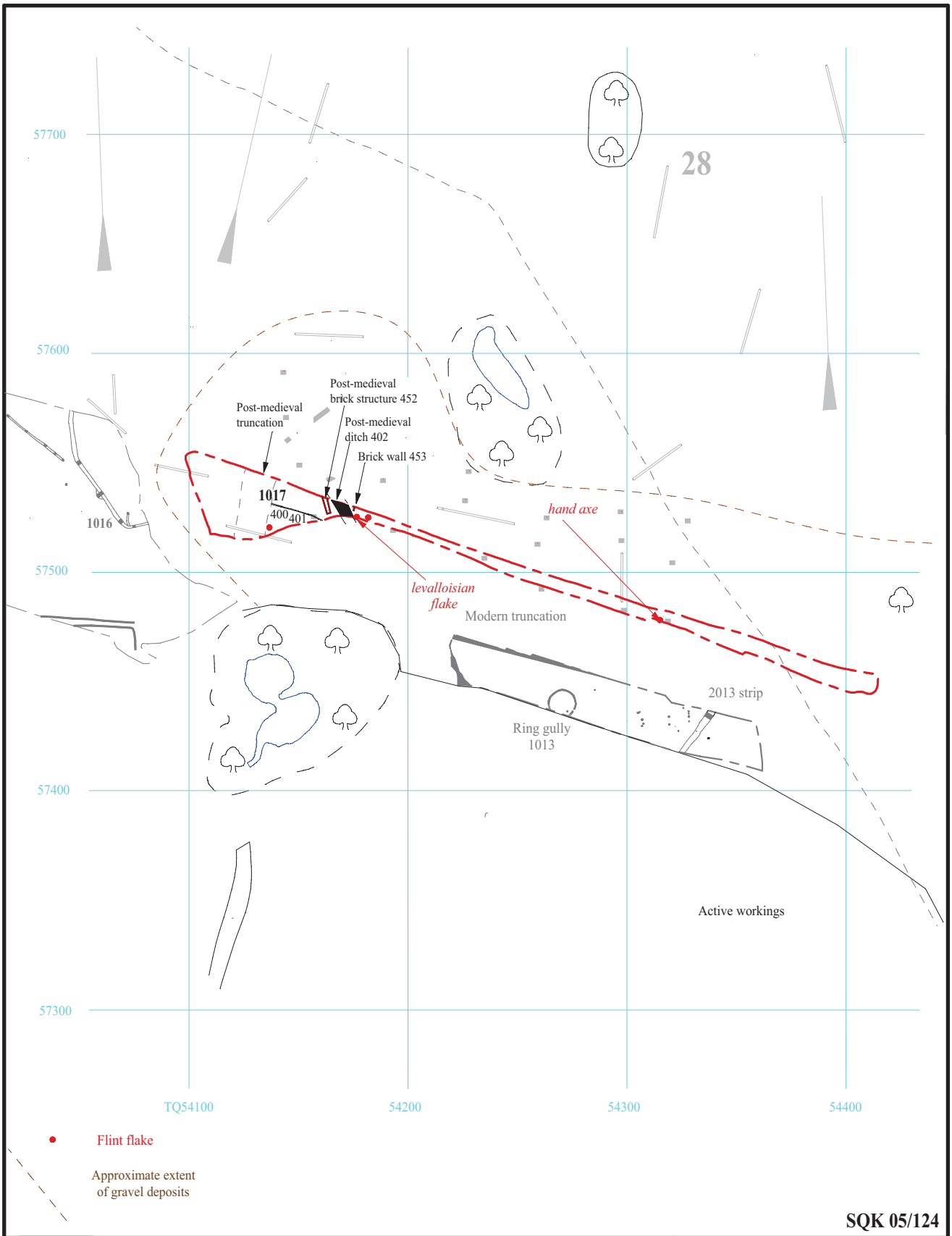

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Figure 3. Plan of 2015 fieldwork

0 250m

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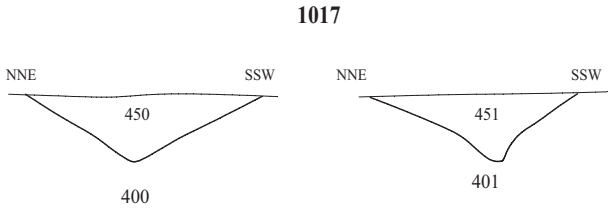

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Figure 4. Sections

0 1m

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Plate 1. Site looking uphill from structure 452, looking east.

Plate 2. Palaeolithic struck flint, Scale: 100mm.

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Sevenoaks Quarry, Greatness,
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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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