

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

**Land at Wanderdown Road,
Ovingdean, East Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: WRO15/288

(TQ 3595 0395)

Land at Wanderdown Road, Ovingdean, East Sussex

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for KSD Support Services Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRO 15/288

January 2016

Summary

Site name: Land at Wanderdown Road, Ovingdean, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3595 0395

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 4th – 7th January 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: WRO 15/288

Area of site: c. 0.5ha within overall site of 2.6 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation close to Wanderdown Road successfully investigated those parts of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development. Despite a large percentage of the proposed site being sampled, and with no evidence of significant past disturbance, just two archaeological features were recorded. However, one of these features appears to be an inhumation burial, which is likely to date from either the prehistoric, Roman or Saxon periods.

Location and reference of archive: The preferred repository for the site archive is Brighton Museum. The museum is not accepting new material at the present time, so the archive will be held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading, until a suitable repository can be found.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 13.01.16 Steve Preston ✓ 13.01.16

Land at Wanderdown Road, Ovingdean, East Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 15/288

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on a parcel of land to the north-east of Wanderdown Road, Ovingdean, East Sussex (centred on TQ 3595 0395) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Allison Keech of Enplan, on behalf of KSD Support Services Ltd, Patcham Place, London Road, Brighton, BN1 8YD as advised by Mr. Chris Place of Place Consulting. Planning permission is to be sought from Brighton and Hove City Council to redevelop the site for housing. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by development, it was proposed to carry out a field evaluation on the site as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 128) and the City Council's policies on archaeology, to better inform the planning process. The evaluation was to determine the archaeological potential of the site, and help to formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary. This approach has been recommended by Mr Greg Chuter, the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer.

A single component of work was proposed at this stage; namely field investigation by means of machine trenching. Depending on the finds of this evaluation, further archaeological work may be requested, as will be determined through consultation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council, who advises Brighton and Hove City Council on archaeological matters, and followed the appropriate *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2015).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Naomi Humphreys, Teresa Vieira, and Sean Wallis between 4th and 7th January 2016, and the site code is WRO 15/288. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading. The preferred depository for the archive is Brighton Museum. Unfortunately the museum is not accepting new material at the present time, so the archive will be held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services until a suitable depository can be found.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located about 500m north-east of the historic core of Ovingdean, East Sussex, and is centred on NGR TQ 3595 0395 (Figs 1 and 2). It consists of an irregular elongated parcel of land which runs along the ridge of a hill parallel to Wanderdown Road, which is situated to the south-west. The site itself is accessed via Ovingdean Road. The site generally slopes down towards the north-east, although there is also a slight slope down towards Ovingdean Road. The highest part of the site lies at a height of approximately 82m above Ordnance Datum. Most of the site had been used for grazing animals until recently, and there was a small rectangular manège in the central area. The south-eastern corner consisted of woodland, subject to a tree preservation order and therefore not to be developed or evaluated. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology of the site consists of Newhaven Chalk Formation (BGS 1996). This was confirmed during the evaluation with chalk geology being revealed in every trench.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been considered in a recent desk-based assessment (PAC 2015). In summary the site is situated on the South Downs, which are considered to be archaeologically rich for most periods (Rudling 2003). Numerous finds and features dating from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and post-medieval periods have been found in the surrounding area. Of particular significance to the proposed site, a crouched burial, thought to date from the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age periods, was found during road widening in 1936. The exact position of this burial is not known, but the Historic Environment Record places it close to the northern boundary of the site. This burial may have originally been associated with a barrow, parts of which may still survive within the site. Further barrows are recorded to the north and south of the site, and similar features may be present within the proposed site, as ridges were preferred locations for such monuments. A Saxon burial was found to the south of the site during the construction of new house. Due to the fact that much of the chalk downland in the area has not been ploughed since the Second World War, traces of field systems and settlements dating from the prehistoric and Roman periods have been observed in the vicinity (PAC 2015). The proposed site is located about 500m north-east of the historic core of Ovingdean, which is first recorded in Domesday Book (1086) as *Hovingedene* (Mills 1993).

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 whether any evidence of prehistoric activity is present;

to determine whether any deposits relating to Neolithic or Bronze Age burials are present; and

to determine whether any evidence of Roman activity is present.

Twenty-three trenches were to be dug, each measuring 10m in length and 2m in width, and representing a c. 8.8% sample of development area. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development. 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.

Results

The trenches were dug close to their original planned positions, although some had to be moved slightly due to site restrictions associated with protected trees and badger setts. Due to site logistics a smaller machine was used and, as a result, the trenches were 1.6m wide. To compensate for this, most trenches were extended in length. The trenches measured between 8.20m and 12.30m in length, and between 0.28m and 0.69m in depth (Fig. 3). Two trenches (4 and 5) were excavated in the area of the rectangular manège, and it was clear that this had been created by a 'cut and fill' exercise. The trenches which contained archaeological features are detailed below, and a complete list of the trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 18 (Figs 3-5; Pls 3 and 5)

Trench 18 was orientated approximately SE-NW, and was 10.20m long and up to 0.39m deep. The natural geology was revealed beneath 0.16m of topsoil (50), and 0.13m of subsoil (51). A small pit or post-hole (1) was investigated at the north-western end of the trench. This feature measured 0.46m by 0.34m and was 0.26m deep. The only find from its fill of light brownish grey silt (52) was a small fragment of burnt flint, weighing 22g.

Trench 19 (Figs 3-5, Pls 4, 6, 7)

This trench was 10.20m long and up to 0.41m deep, and was orientated approximately SE-NW. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.22m of topsoil (50) and 0.11m of subsoil (51). A pit (2) was partially exposed at the north-western end of the trench. This feature was at least 0.70 wide and had an upper fill of mid greyish brown silt with frequent chalk inclusions (53). The pit was initially sectioned and appeared to be about 0.24m deep. However, subsequent investigation of the pit revealed the top of a human skull. At this point it was decided to cease excavation, and the feature was backfilled. It seems very likely that this feature represents an inhumation burial, which, although undated, could be likely to date from either the prehistoric, Roman or Saxon periods. No datable artefacts were recovered from the pit.

Finds

Apart from the human skull in trench 19, which was left *in situ*, covered and protected, the only archaeological find from the evaluation was a small fragment of burnt flint, weighing 22g, from feature 1 in trench 18.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation close to Wanderdown Road successfully investigated those parts of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development. Just two archaeological features were recorded. Both of which were undated though one contained a human skull and appears to be an inhumation burial.

References

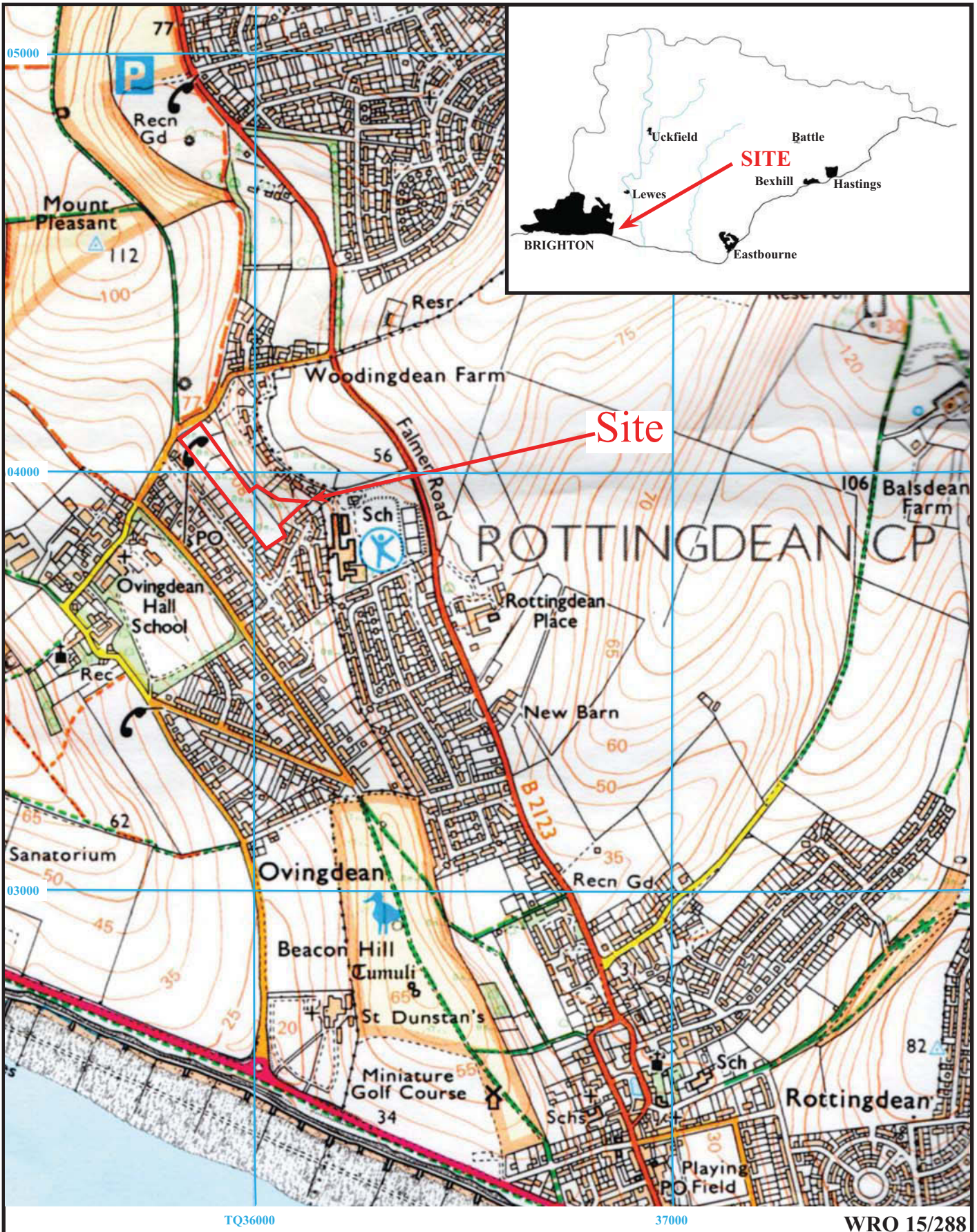
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	12.10	1.60	0.33	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.27m subsoil (51); 0.27-0.33m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.28m aOD. [Pl. 1]
2	12.10	1.60	0.30	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.26m subsoil (51); 0.26-0.30m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.19m aOD.
3	11.10	1.60	0.28	0-0.16m topsoil (50); 0.16-0.23m subsoil (51); 0.23-0.28m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.59m aOD.
4	14.00	1.60	0.48 (W) - 0.65 (E)	W end: 0-0.02m all-weather surface; 0.02-0.25m light yellow-grey sand; 0.25-0.38 hardcore made ground; 0.38-0.48m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench (W end) at 81.01m aOD. E end: 0-0.02m all-weather surface; 0.02-0.22m light yellow-grey sand; 0.22-0.38m hardcore made ground; 0.38-0.41m chalk made ground; 0.41-0.49m buried topsoil (50); 0.49-0.58m subsoil (51); 0.58-0.65m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench (E end) at 80.91m aOD.
5	11.40	1.60	0.40 (W) - 0.69 (E)	SW end: 0-0.02m all-weather surface; 0.02-0.25m light yellow-grey sand; 0.25-0.32m hardcore made-ground; 0.32-0.40m natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench (SW end) at 81.08m aOD. NE end: 0-0.02m all-weather surface; 0.02-0.24m light yellow-grey sand; 0.24-0.40m hardcore made-ground; 0.40-0.50m chalk made-ground; 0.50-0.57m buried topsoil (50); 0.57-0.62m subsoil (51), 0.62-0.69m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench (NE end) at 80.90m aOD.
6	12.00	1.60	0.53	0-0.30m topsoil (50); 0.30-0.46m subsoil (51); 0.46-0.53m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.09m aOD. [Pl. 2]
7	14.00	1.60	0.45	0-0.25m topsoil (50); 0.25-0.37m subsoil (51); 0.37-0.45m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.14m aOD.
8	12.00	1.60	0.38	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30-0.38m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 80.20m aOD.
9	12.20	1.60	0.52	0-0.28m topsoil (50); 0.28-0.43m subsoil (51); 0.43-0.52m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 80.24m aOD.
10	12.30	1.60	0.48	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.38m subsoil (51); 0.38-0.48m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.10m aOD.
11	12.30	1.60	0.40	0-0.22m topsoil (50); 0.22-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30-0.40m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.77m aOD.
12	12.00	1.60	0.43	0-0.23m topsoil (50); 0.23-0.37m subsoil (51); 0.37-0.43m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.52m aOD.
13	10.00	1.60	0.40	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.31m subsoil (51); 0.31-0.40m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.93m aOD.
14	10.60	1.60	0.38	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30-0.38m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 82.05m aOD.
15	8.20	1.60	0.35	0-0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.26m subsoil (51); 0.26-0.35m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 82.30m aOD.
16	10.00	1.60	0.37	0-0.12m topsoil (50); 0.12-0.22m subsoil (51); 0.22-0.37m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 82.32m aOD.
17	10.50	1.60	0.52	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.23m subsoil (51); 0.23-0.32m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 82.64m aOD.
18	10.20	1.60	0.39	0-0.16m topsoil (50); 0.16-0.29m subsoil (51); 0.29-0.39m+ natural geology (Chalk). Pit 1. Base of trench at 82.66m aOD. [Pls 3 and 5]
19	10.20	1.60	0.41	0-0.12m topsoil (50); 0.12-0.22m subsoil (51); 0.22-0.41m+ natural geology (Chalk). Pit 2. Base of trench at 82.53m aOD. [Pls 4, 6 and 7]
20	10.00	1.60	0.42	0-0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.25m subsoil (51); 0.25-0.42m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 82.07m aOD.
21	11.00	1.60	0.38	0.0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.26m subsoil (51); 0.26-0.38m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 81.14m aOD.
22	11.00	1.60	0.42	0-0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.28m subsoil (51); 0.28-0.42m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 80.63m aOD.
23	10.60	1.60	0.42	0-0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.29m subsoil (51); 0.29-0.44m+ natural geology (Chalk). Base of trench at 79.52m aOD.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

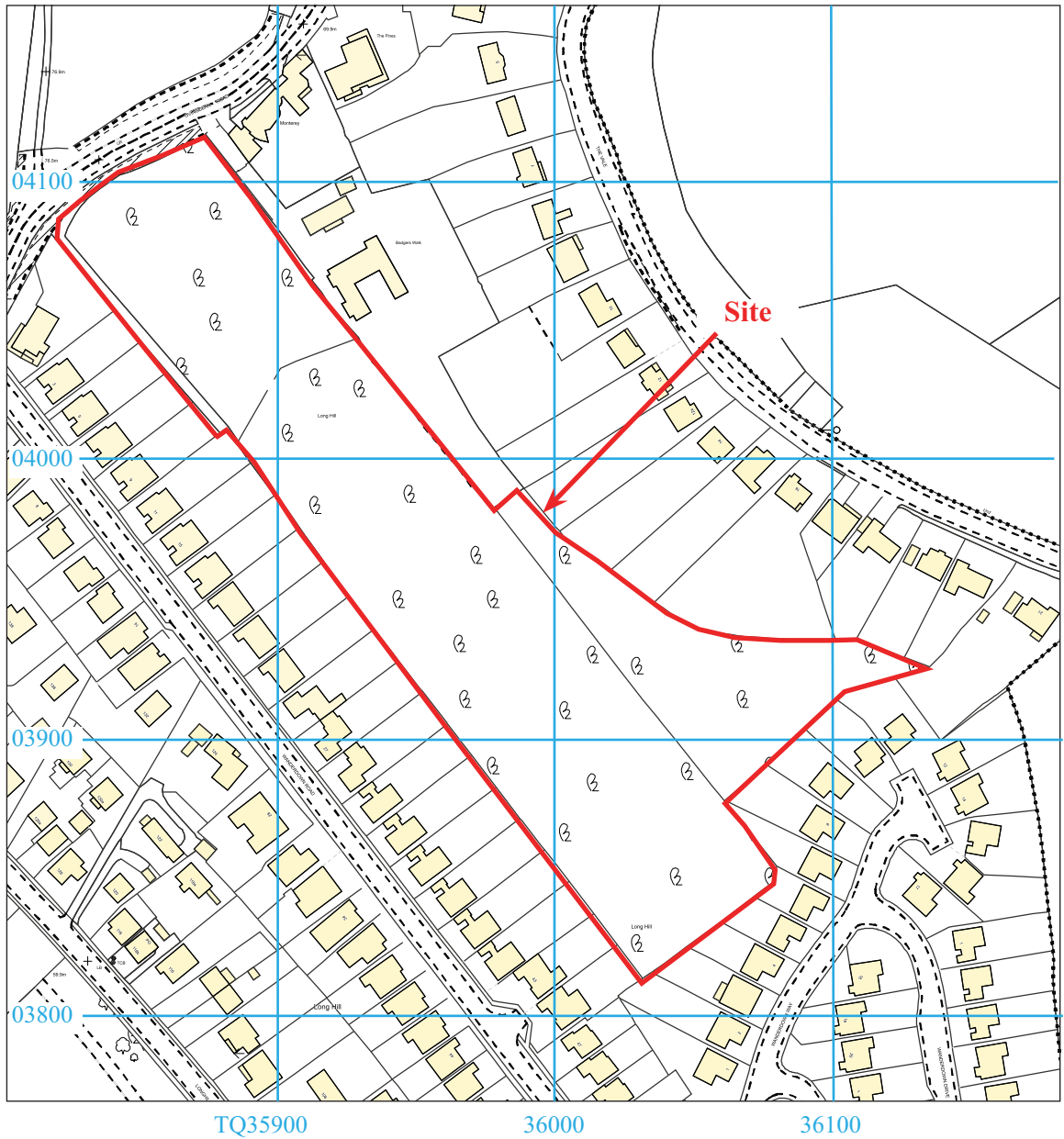
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
18	1	52	Pit / post-hole	Prehistoric ?	Burnt flint
19	2	53	Pit	Prehistoric, Roman or Saxon ?	Human skull



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

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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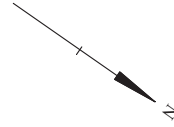
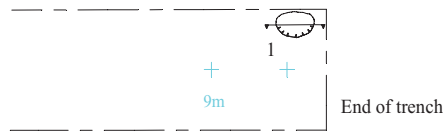


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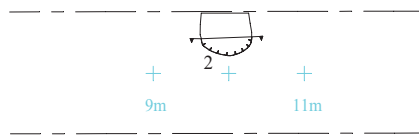
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



Trench 18



Trench 19



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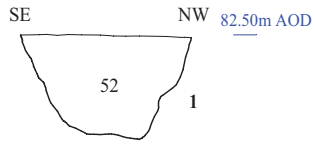
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Figure 4. Plan of trenches 18 and 19.



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Trench 18



Trench 19



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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1 looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 6 looking north east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2

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Plate 3. Trench 18 looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 19 looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 3 and 4

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Plate 5. Trench 18 Feature 1 looking south west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 19 Feature 2 looking south west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 7. Human skull in Trench 19 feature 2 looking south, Scale: 0.3m.

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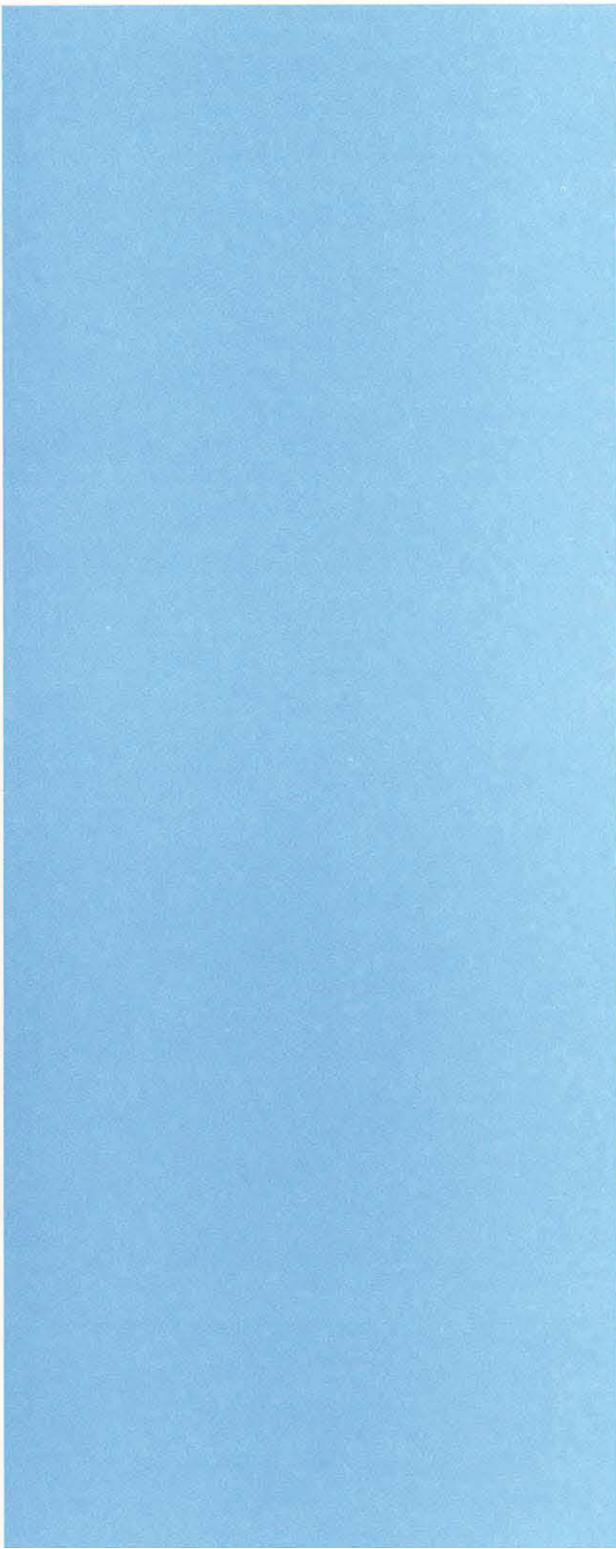
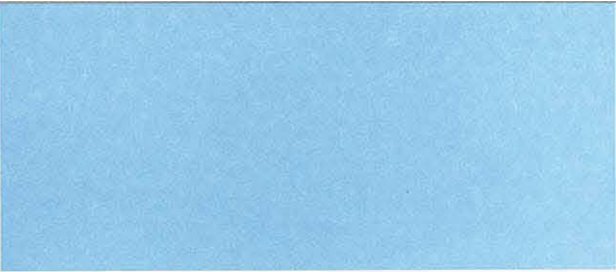
Plates 5-7

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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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