

**Summers Place, Stane Street,  
Billingshurst, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd**

by Simon Cass

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SPB 07/33

**March 2007**

## Summary

**Site name:** Summers Place, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 0950 2720

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 12th–22nd March 2007

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Simon Cass

**Site code:** SPB 07/33

**Summary of results:** No finds or features of archaeological relevance were located.

**Monuments identified:** None

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.03.07
	Steve Preston ✓ 28.03.07

# Summers Place, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Simon Cass

**Report 07/33**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out Summers Place, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex (TQ 0950 2720) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Bland of Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd, Broadlands Business Campus, Langhurstwood Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4QP.

Planning permission (DC/06/1435) has been gained from Horsham District Council to redevelop the site for residential and business use, with conversion of the extant manor house building. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology (25), requiring a programme of archaeological work in order to mitigate the effects of development on any archaeological deposits present. In the first instance this was to involve field evaluation, the results of which inform a strategy for further mitigation if required.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr John Mills, Archaeological Officer of West Sussex County Council, adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Cass, Jennifer Lowe and Natasha Bennett between the 12th and 22nd March 2007 and the site code is SPB 07/33. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Horsham Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located approximately 1km to the north of Billingshurst and 3km south-west of Horsham in West Sussex, along the A29, also known as the route of Stane Street Roman road. The manor house around which this evaluation centres is set back from the road c. 200m to the east (Fig. 2). The site is on a small rise though the slope is quite shallow, with the top of the rise c. 100m to the south-west of the manor building. The area subject to evaluation is at an approximate height of 56m AOD. Currently the land is used as gardens associated with the manor house and the garden statuary department of Sothebys (Auctioneers). The underlying geology is listed as Wealden Clays, observed in all trenches, though an outcropping of sandstone is very close by (BGS 1981).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the manor complex, with documented occupation from the 13th century. At least four buildings have been on the site in this time, though only the most recent two are known to be on the same footprint. A map of 1806 appears to show several structures to the north and north-east of the then manor house (replaced by the current building in the 1880s). In addition to this, the Roman road of Stane Street passes close by (Rudling 2003). It is possible therefore that there are deposits associated with the medieval property and pre-18th-century house, such as outbuildings and plot boundaries may survive. In addition the presence of Roman or earlier (prehistoric) activity is possible.

## **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 development. Specifically, this was to entail determining if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site; if archaeological deposits of any period are present, to determine if any prehistoric activity is on the site and to determine if any deposits relating to medieval and/or early post-medieval occupation or land-use are present.

The fieldwork had two components - hand dug test pitting and machine trenching. Six trenches were to be dug according to a plan prepared by the county archaeological officer. The trenches were to be of various lengths (between 5m and 21m). This was to be carried out under constant archaeological supervision. The spoil and revealed surfaces were to be checked with a metal detector to locate any metal finds. Ten test pits, 1m square were also to be hand-dug at the ends of the evaluation trenches prior to machining. The purpose of these was to investigate the possibility of flint scatters within any undisturbed topsoil/subsoil deposits

## **Results**

### *The hand-dug test pits*

A test-pit was dug by hand at each end of trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4, with trench 5 having a single test-pit at its eastern end. Trench 6, being sited within an area of Tarmac surface was deemed unsuitable for this approach and no test-pit was dug here.

The test pits were all 1m by 1m and positioned within the areas of trenching (Fig. 3). They varied in depth from 0.35 to 0.8m. In the southern test pits, the stratigraphy generally consisted of 0.2m of topsoil over layers of made ground and redeposited natural, often with heavy root disturbance, which in turn overlay the natural

geology (Wealden Clay). The test pits to the east of the house (7, 8 and 9) were less disturbed by root action but again had approximately 0.2–0.25m of topsoil above layers of redeposited natural and/or dumping deposits. No artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded in the test pits. Details of the individual test pits can be found in Appendix 1.

### *Machine trenching*

The trenches were excavated by 1.5- and 3-tonne excavator using a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket and ranged in length from 5.0 and 12.5m long and varied in depth from 0.35-1m. Unfortunately, due to the constraints upon the trenches from extant buildings and live services it was not possible to excavate all the trenches to their desired full length. This resulted in approximately 4.5m of the total trench length being lost. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 2.

#### Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was 10.0m long and orientated NW–SE. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of turf and topsoil (greyish brown sandy clay) above 0.18m of made ground, consisting of bands of redeposited natural clay, sharp sand and topsoil. This lay above 0.39m of brown silty clay with charcoal, brick pieces, glass, metal and modern pottery, interpreted as relating to the construction of a chapel on this end of the house in the 1960s. Below this was an orange/white clay, the natural geology (Wealden Clay). One possible feature was found at the south-east end of this trench, interpreted as a burnt out tree/shrub or a fire pit of approximately 1.2m diameter and 0.3m depth (Fig.4) **[Plate 2]**. Finds from this consisted of a small amount of burnt bone, frequent charcoal flecking and a large piece of modern brick.

#### Trench 2

This trench was 10.5m long and orientated north–south. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of turf and topsoil, above 0.23m of red/brown silty clay with brick and tile glass, modern metal nails and modern pottery – again, believed to relate to 1960s activity in this area. Below this was the natural Wealden clay. No archaeological deposits were observed.

#### Trench 3 (Plate3)

This trench was 11.5m long and orientated north-south. The stratigraphy comprised 0.13m of turf and topsoil above 0.9m of a mixed deposit of topsoil and natural clay, potentially a levelling/landscaping dump. Below this

was 0.3m of yellowish brown silty clay with brick and tile, glass and modern pottery. This lay directly above the natural yellow/white clay. There were traces of linear marks in the clay which may be the product of previous disturbance from a toothed bucket. No archaeological deposits were observed.

#### Trench 4

This trench was 13.0m long and orientated NW–SE. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of turf and topsoil above 0.1m of reddish brown silty clay subsoil, sealing natural orange/white clay. No archaeological deposits were observed.

#### Trench 5

This trench was 5.0m long and orientated east–west. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of turf and topsoil with frequent roots and finds including plastic, rubber, etc. This lay directly above the natural orange/white clay.

#### Trench 6

This trench was 12.5m long, orientated west–east and south–north on an L-shaped plan. The stratigraphy encountered in this trench consisted of 0.05m of Tarmac above 0.17m of make-up stone and sand. Sealed by this was 0.15m of brownish grey gravelly clay which lay above 0.3m of yellow sand, above 0.33m of reddish brown gravelly clay, all of which was made ground. The natural clay encountered at a depth of 1.0m was stained blue/grey in places.

### **Finds**

The only artefacts observed were modern items. These were retained on site.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this two-stage evaluation have not revealed any finds or deposits of archaeological interest. All of the trenches revealed modern made ground overlying the natural clay geology, or evidence of machine disturbance of the latter. It is though, unclear if this disturbance has led to excessive truncation of the natural geology apart from in some obvious areas such as for service trenches. A single feature cutting the natural geology was initially considered as of archaeological interest but on examination was confirmed to be of modern date. In summary, the areas examined by this evaluation have no archaeological potential.

## References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 301, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO.
- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton.

## APPENDIX 1: Test pit details

Test pit	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	1	1	0.8m	0-0.28m topsoil with frequent root disturbance; 0.28-0.58m Redeposited layer? Grey/reddish brown silty clay with brick, pot, glass and metal; 0.58-0.8m Disturbed subsoil? Orange/brown silty clay with brick, pot, glass and metal; Not bottomed.
2	1	1	0.76	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.37m dumping/levelling layer; 0.37-0.76m brown dump layer/made ground; 0.76m+ natural clay
3	1	1	0.43	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.43m disturbed subsoil; 0.43m+ natural clay
4	1	1	0.38	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.38m disturbed subsoil reddish brown silty clay with brick and glass and root disturbance, water pipe; 0.38m+ natural clay
5	1	1	0.45	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.45m disturbed subsoil reddish brown silty clay with moderate root disturbance and occasional redeposited natural with brick and clay pipe; 0.45m+ natural clay
6	1	1	0.52	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.22m levelling/dump layer (redeposited natural/ topsoil mix); 0.22-0.52m buried soil (modern disturbance present); 0.52m+ natural clay <b>[Plate 1]</b>
7	1	1	0.57	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.32m redeposited natural clay; 0.32-0.57m Subsoil? (grey/brown silty clay); 0.57m+ natural clay
8	1	1	0.35	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ natural clay
9	1	1	0.26	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.26m subsoil; 0.26m+ natural clay



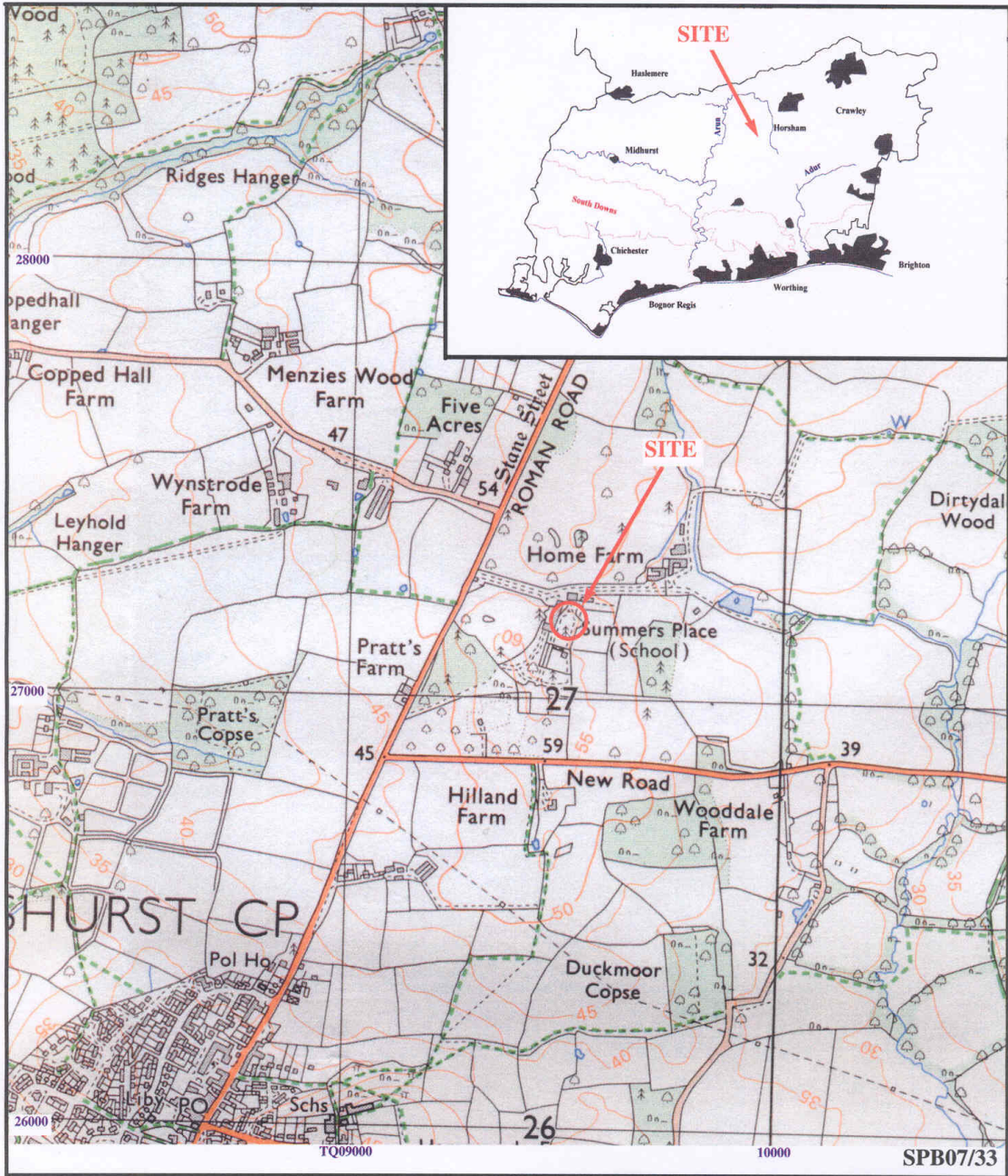
## APPENDIX 2: Trench details

0m at South or West end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	10	1.8	0.8m	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.37m dumping/levelling layer; 0.37-0.76m brown dump layer/made ground; 0.76m+ natural clay; Pit 1 <b>[Plate 2]</b>
2	10.5	1.8	0.43	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.43m disturbed subsoil; 0.43m+ natural clay
3	11.5	1.8	0.52	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.22m levelling/dump layer (redeposited natural/topsoil mix); 0.22-0.52m buried soil (modern disturbance present); 0.52m+ natural clay <b>[Plate 3]</b>
4	13.0	1.8	0.35	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ natural clay
5	5.0	1.8	0.6	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.32m redeposited natural clay; 0.32-0.57m Subsoil? (grey/brown silty clay); 0.57-0.6m+ natural clay
6	12.5	1.8	1.0	0.5m Tarmac; 0.5-0.22m stone and sand make-up layer; 0.22-0.37m gravelly clay made ground; 0.37-0.67m sand made ground; 0.67-1.0m gravelly clay made ground. 1.0m+ natural clay

**APPENDIX 3:** Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
1	1	51, 52	Pit/Burnt Tree Bole	Modern	Brick

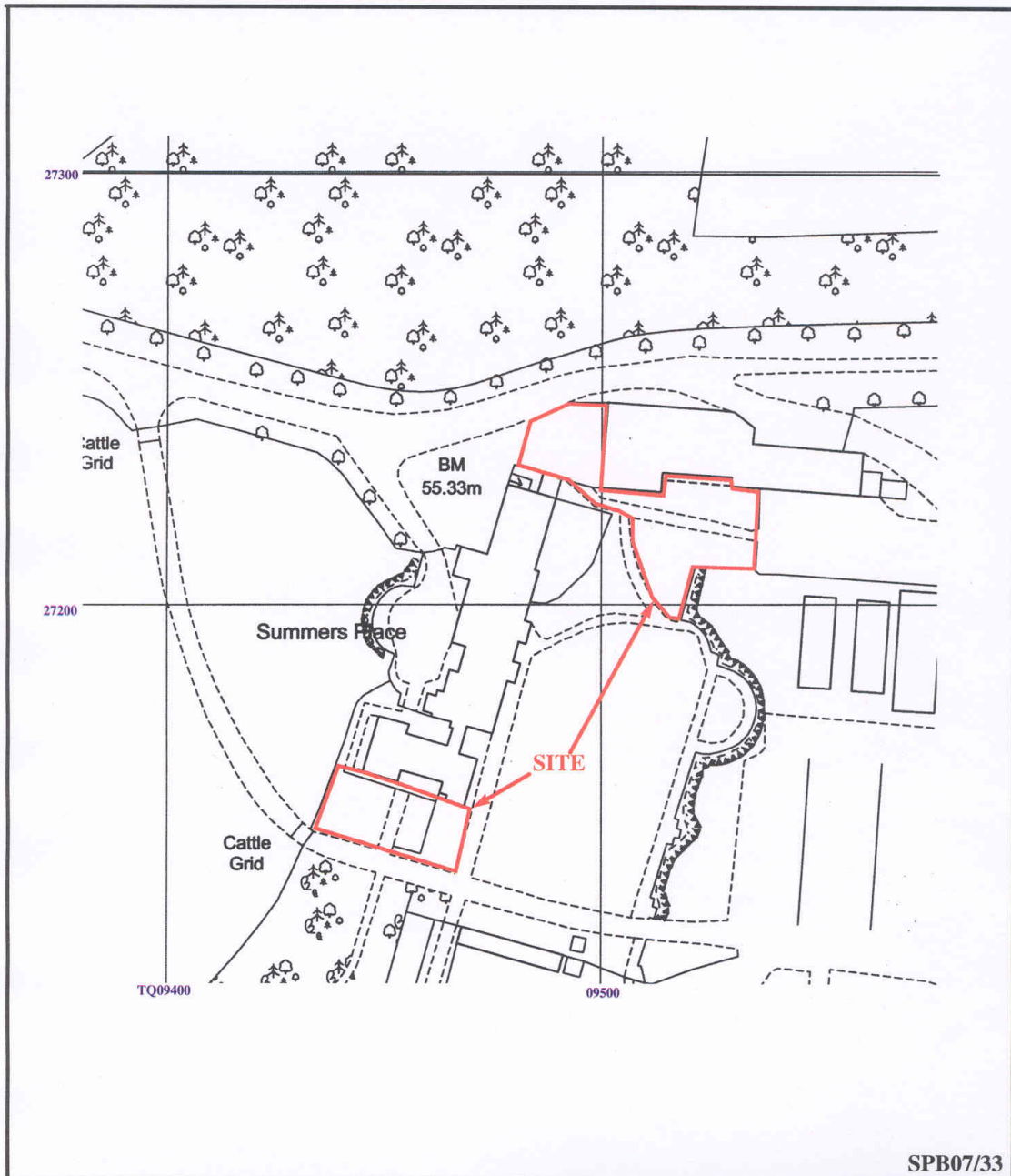


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West Sussex, 2007  
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Figure 1. Location of site within in relation to Billingshurst, Stane Street and West Sussex.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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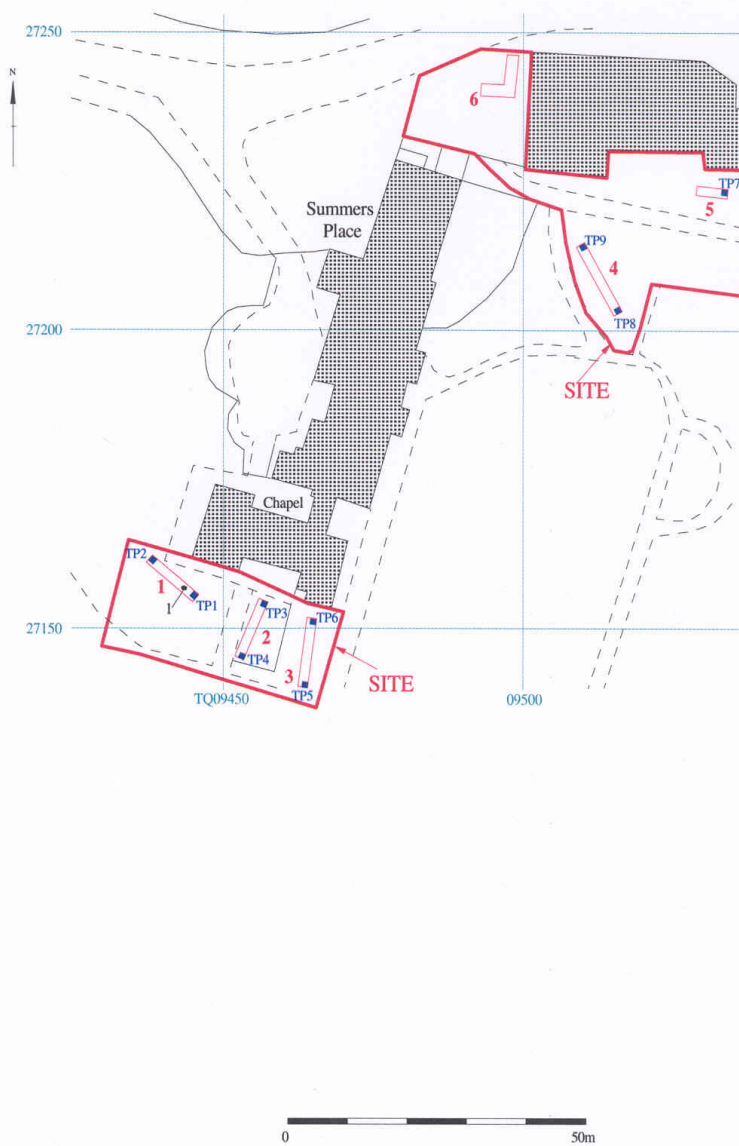


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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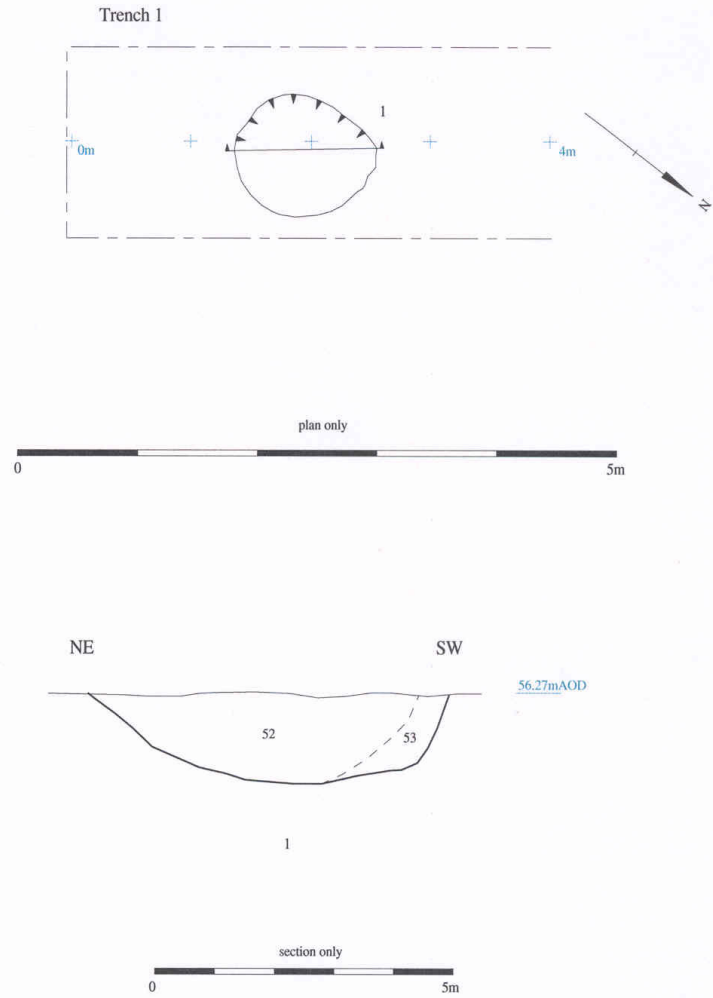


Figure 4. Plan and sections from Trench 1.

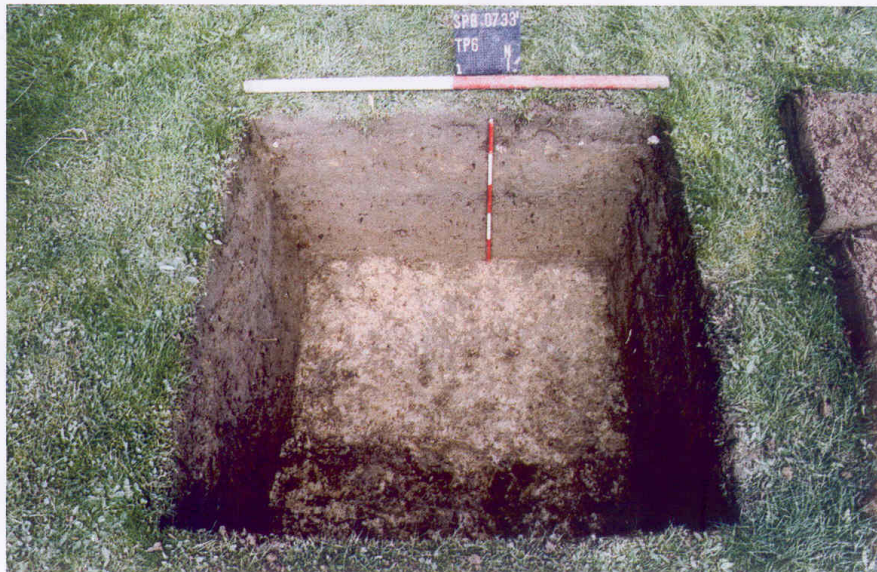


Plate 1. Test pit 6, looking north, horizontal scale 1m, vertical scale 0.5m.

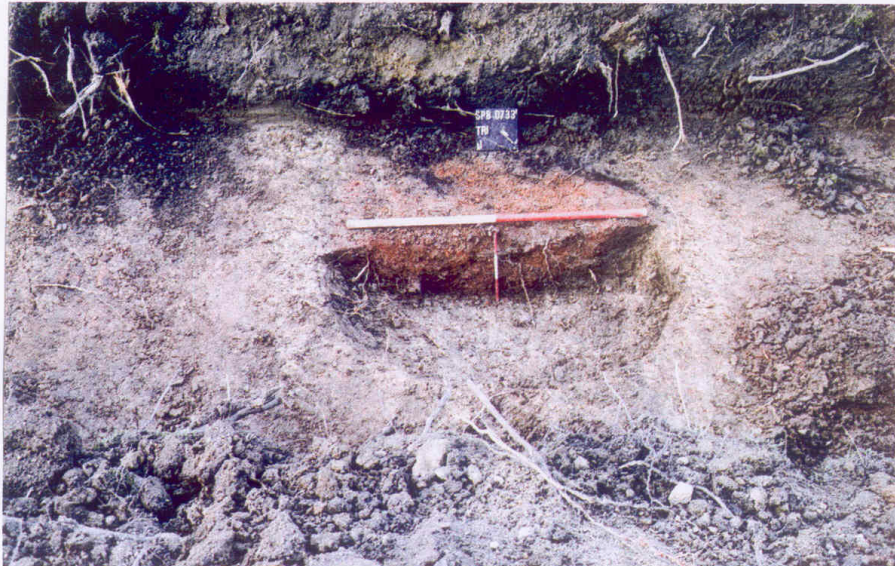


Plate 2. Trench 1, burnt feature, looking north-east, scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking south, scales: 2m and 1m.