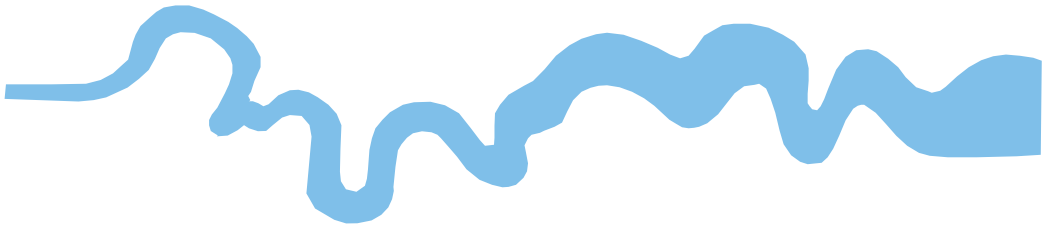
T V A S



SOUTH

Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: NFB18/73

(TQ 7085 1883)

Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Asprey Homes Ltd

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code
NFB 18/73

May 2018

Summary

Site name: Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 7085 1883

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 8th and 9th May 2018

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: NFB 18/73

Area of site: *c*. 1.01 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation at Darvel Down, Netherfield successfully investigated those areas which will be most affected by the development of the site. No archaeological finds or features were recorded, and the anomalies highlighted in a prior geophysical survey all appeared to be geological in origin. It appears that the north-eastern part of the site was significantly disturbed in the past, as made ground and re-deposited natural were recorded immediately above the natural geology, which had clearly been truncated. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 14.05.18
	Tim Dawson✓ 16.05.18

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Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 18/73

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex (TQ 7085 1883) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Julie Arnold of Asprey Homes Ltd, The Granary, Home Farm, Squerryes Estate, Westerham, Kent, TN16 1SL.

Planning permission has sought from Rother District Council for a proposed residential development on land at Darvel Down, Netherfield. It is likely that any consent will be likely to a condition relating to archaeology and the historic environment.

As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development, it was proposed to carry out a field evaluation in order to better inform the planning process.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter, the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer who advises the District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos and Sean Wallis on 8th and 9th May 2018, and the site code is NFB 18/73. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton, and will be deposited with Bexhill Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the west of the historic core of Netherfield, and is centred on NGR TQ 7085 1883 (Figs 1 and 2). It consists of an irregular shaped fallow field, largely bounded by residential properties. The area generally slopes down towards to the north-west and, as a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varies between approximately 146m (SE corner) and 142m (NW corner). According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of clay from the Ashdown Beds Formation (BGS 1980), and this was confirmed during the evaluation. The geology recorded in the trenches generally consisted of light yellow brown clay with varying amounts of sandstone and manganese inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Rouard 2016). In summary, very little has been found in the vicinity of the site, although it is possible that two prehistoric trackways may converge to the east of the site. Historically this part of the Weald was densely forested, and it is possible that prehistoric features dating from the Mesolithic period onwards may have been masked by tree cover. The Weald was exploited for iron production during the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval periods, and this industry has left traces in the form of mill ponds, quarries and furnace sites. However, the area around the present site was heavily quarried for Gypsum, and numerous entries in the East Sussex Historic Environment Record relate to features associated with this industry.

Netherfield may have late Saxon origins as it is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Nedrefelle*, which is thought to mean 'open land infested with adders'. The present village generally runs along the main road, and contains a few historic buildings.

A recent geophysical survey recorded a number of anomalies, some of which may be archaeological in nature. These include a possible ring ditch in the north west corner of the site, which could potentially represent the ploughed remains of a Bronze Age barrow (Russel 2017).

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 the 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 the nature of the geophysical anomalies recorded previously.

Ten trenches were to be dug, each measuring 25m in length and 1.60m-1.80m in width (depending on the size of the machine), which represents a *c*. 5% sample of the development area. The trenches were largely positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the proposed development, although several trenches were to specifically target the geophysical anomalies. The trenches 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 ten trenches were dug close to their original planned positions (Fig. 2), although some had to be shifted slightly or shortened to avoid the mature trees which surround parts of the site. All the trenches were 1.60m wide, and measured between 17.20m and 26.40m in length, and were between 0.40m and 1.10m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 25.20m long and up to 0.46m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.16m of topsoil (50) and 0.15m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig.3; Pl. 1)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 17.20m long and up to 1.10m deep. The trench was shorter than originally planned due to the presence of trees, and the fact that the area had clearly been heavily truncated in the past. The top of the truncated natural geology was observed beneath 0.18m of topsoil (50), 0.55m of re-deposited natural (53), 0.17m of dark grey clayey made ground (52), and 0.10m of mid brown made ground (54). It is not clear why this area had been disturbed in the past, but machine teeth marks were visible on the surface of the truncated natural geology, indicating that this episode probably happened in the 20th century. Unsurprisingly, no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was orientated approximately W-E, and was 20.10m long and up to 0.58m deep. It was slightly shorter than originally planned due to the presence of mature trees. It was clear that the same landscaping episode recorded in trench 2 had occurred in this area as well. As a result, the top of the truncated natural geology was recorded beneath 0.16m of topsoil (50), 0.20m of re-deposited natural (53), 0.10m of dark grey clayey made ground (52), and 0.06m of mid brown made ground (54). Some late 19th or 20th century material (pottery, tile and glass) was recovered from made ground layer 52, but these were retained on site. No archaeological features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 4 (Pl. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 24.90m long and up to 0.46m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.15m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was orientated approximately NNW-SSE, and was 25.30m long and up to 0.40m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.17m of topsoil (50) and 0.13m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 25.00m long and up to 0.50m deep. In the northern half of the trench the natural geology was observed beneath 0.18m of topsoil (50) and 0.17m of subsoil (51). The southern half of the trench had obviously been affected by the same landscaping episode noted in trenches 2 and 3. As a result, the natural geology in this part of the trench was observed beneath 0.15m of topsoil (50), 0.10m of re-deposited natural (53), and 0.12m of dark grey clayey made ground (52). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench, and there was no trace of the geophysical anomalies which had been identified in this area.

Trench 7 (Pl. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 25.00m long and up to 0.44m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.33m of topsoil (50) and 0.05m of subsoil (51). The topsoil in the western part of this trench was particularly thick and dark in colour, compared to that recorded in nearby trenches. It is possible that some form of landscaping had taken place, and that the topsoil was 'imported'. However, the colour of the topsoil may merely reflect localised conditions. No archaeological finds or features were recorded, and the large geophysical anomaly identified previously was not observed in the trench.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3)

Trench 8 was orientated approximately NNE-SSW, and was 22.30m long and up to 0.49m deep. The trench was slightly shorter than originally planned due to the presence of mature trees. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.18m of topsoil (50) and 0.19m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench, and there was no sign of the geophysical anomaly previously identified in this area.

Trench 9 (Pl. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 26.40m long and up to 0.45m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.24m of topsoil (50) and 0.11m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench, and there was no trace of the geophysical anomaly identified in this area.

Trench 10 (Fig.3; Pl. 6)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 24.80m long and up to 0.40m deep. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.10m of topsoil (50) and 0.21m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench, and the geophysical anomalies identified in this area were not observed.

Finds

The only material noted during the evaluation was clearly modern in date (pottery, tile and glass), and came from either the topsoil or from the made ground deposit in trench 3. As a result, these finds were retained on site.

Conclusion

The evaluation successfully investigated those areas which will be most affected by the re-development of the site. No archaeological finds or features were recorded, and the anomalies highlighted in a recent geophysical survey all appeared to be geological in origin. It appears that the north-eastern part of the site was significantly disturbed in the past, as made ground and re-deposited natural were recorded immediately above the natural geology, which had clearly been truncated. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 320/321, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.

English Heritage, 2005, *Research Agenda*, English Heritage, London.

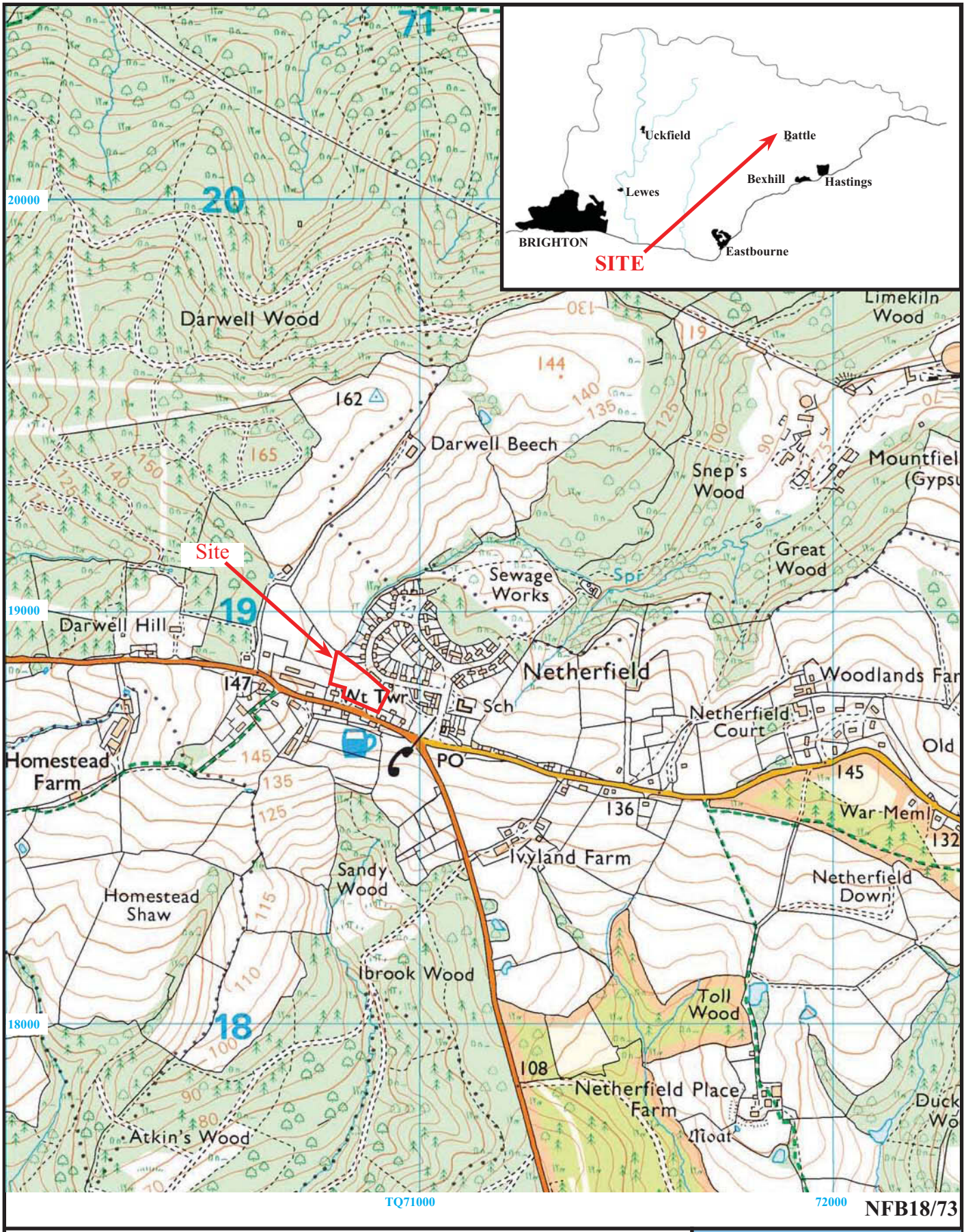
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO).

Rouard, O, 2016, 'Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex: archaeological desk-based assessment (heritage statement)', Archaeology South-east unpublished report 2016473, Portslade.

Russel, C, 2017, 'Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex: detailed magnetometer survey', Archaeology South-east unpublished report 2017068, Portslade.

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	25.20	1.60	0.46	0-0.16m topsoil (50); 0.16-0.31m subsoil (51); 0.31m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation).
2	17.20	1.60	1.10	0-0.18m topsoil (50); 0.18-0.73m re-deposited natural (53); 0.73-0.90m dark grey clayey made ground (52); 0.90-1.00m mid brown made ground (54); 1.00m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 1**
3	20.10	1.60	0.58	0-0.16m topsoil (50); 0.16-0.36m re-deposited natural (53); 0.36-0.46m dark grey clayey made ground (52); 0.46-0.52m mid brown made ground (54); 0.52m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 2**
4	24.90	1.60	0.46	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.35m subsoil (51); 0.35m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 3**
5	25.30	1.60	0.40	0-0.17m topsoil (50); 0.17-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation).
6	25.00	1.60	0.50	N end: 0-0.18m topsoil (50); 0.18-0.35m subsoil (51); 0.35m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). S end: 0-0.15m topsoil (50); 0.15-0.25m re-deposited natural (53); 0.25- 0.37m dark grey clayey made ground (52); 0.37m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation).
7	25.00	1.60	0.44	0-0.33m topsoil (50); 0.33-0.38m subsoil (51); 0.38m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 4**
8	22.30	1.60	0.49	0-0.18m topsoil (50); 0.18-0.37m subsoil (51); 0.37m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation).
9	26.40	1.60	0.45	0-0.24m topsoil (50); 0.24-0.35m subsoil (51); 0.35m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 5**
10	24.80	1.60	0.40	0-0.10m topsoil (50); 0.10-0.31m subsoil (51); 0.31m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds Clay Formation). **Pl. 6**



Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield,
East Sussex, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation

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

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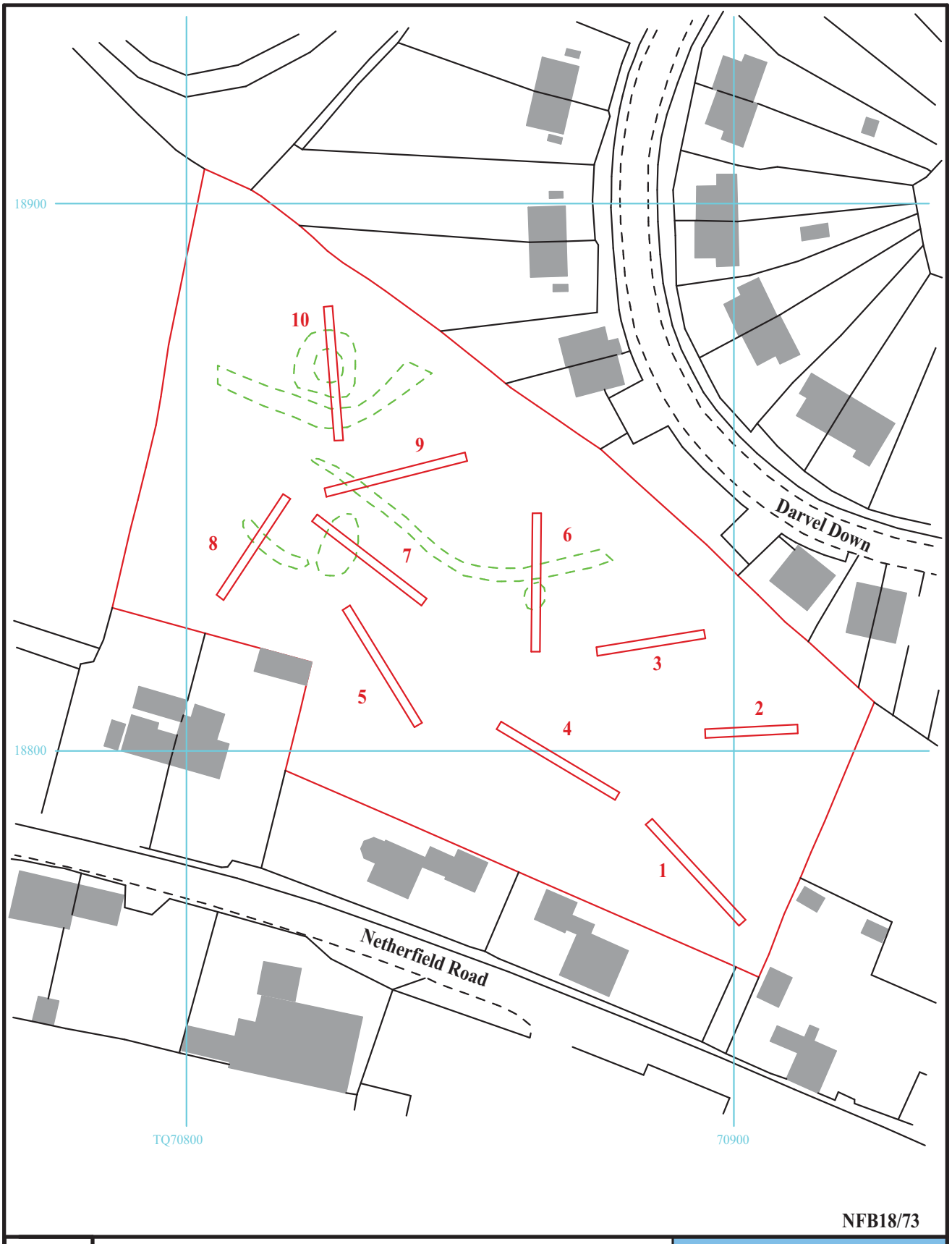

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Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield, East Sussex, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing evaluation trenches and results of geophysical survey (in green).

0 50m

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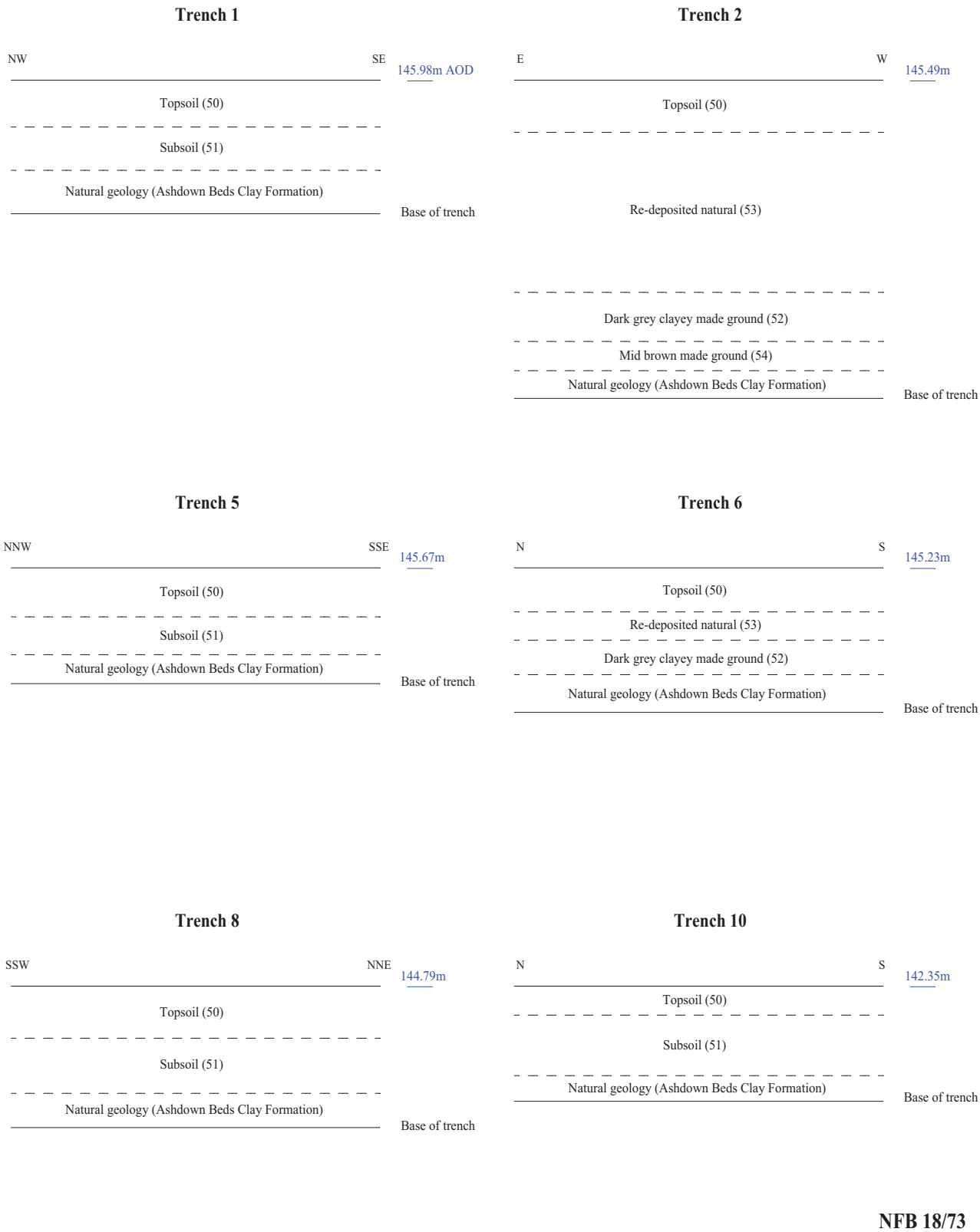

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Figure 3. Representative Sections.

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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking East.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Plate 2. Trench 3, looking East.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Plate 3. Trench 4, looking North-west.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Plate 4. Trench 7, looking South-west.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Plate 5. Trench 9, looking East.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Plate 6. Trench 10, looking North.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

Land at Darvel Down, Netherfield,
East Sussex, 2018
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 6.

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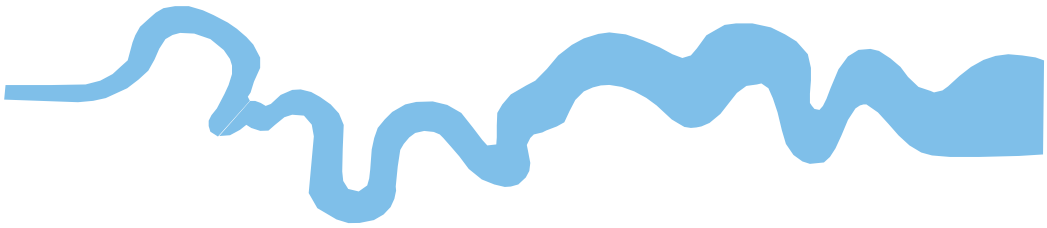
TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age	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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