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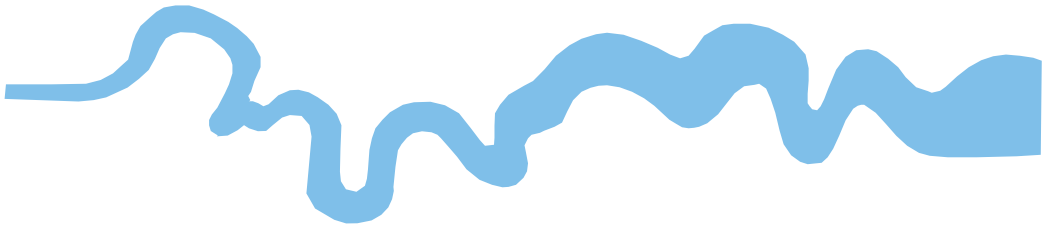

SOUTH

Former Housing Office, Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: SDM16/75

(TQ 3280 0700)

Former Housing Office, Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Brighton and Hove City Council

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SDM 16/76

November 2018

Summary

Site name: Former Housing Office, Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3280 0700

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th–6th November 2018

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: SDM 16/76

Area of site: *c*. 0.2 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by re-development. The area where the trenches were located does not appear to have been significantly affected by the previous buildings on the site, nor their subsequent demolition. A thick deposit of hillwash (colluvium) was recorded in all the trenches, beneath a buried soil. This deposit was quite sterile in nature, with no archaeological finds visible within it. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 07.11.18 Steve Preston✓ 07.11.18

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Former Housing Office, Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 16/76b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried at Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex (TQ 3280 0700) (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Togneri of Brighton and Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ.

Planning permission (BH2018/01016) has been gained from Brighton and Hove City Council to erect a new 7-storey building on the site following the demolition of the existing structures, along with associated landscaping and car parking. The consent was subject to a condition (10) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks.

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 the first instance in order to inform a mitigation strategy if required.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer who advises the City Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos, Sean Wallis and Jim Webster on 5th and 6th November 2018, and the site code is SDM 16/76. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton, and will be deposited with a suitable repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north of the historic core of Brighton, and is centred on NGR TQ 3280 0700 (Figs 1 and 2). It was previously occupied by several buildings, which have recently been demolished. The area generally slopes down towards to the south-east and it is clear that it has been landscaped or terraced in places. However, the evaluation trenches were all excavated in the relatively flat area adjacent to the main road, which lies at a height of approximately 33m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying

geology consists of Head Deposits (BGS 2006). It seems likely that the natural geology was encountered in a test pit in one of the evaluation trenches, beneath a thick deposit of colluvium.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been considered in a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2016). In summary, the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area, and Historic Environment Record entries for the surrounding area reveal extensive evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation. The most obvious site is Hollingbury Castle to the north-west of the site, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This Iron Age hillfort contains three earlier barrows, probably dating from the Bronze Age, along with a possible Roman temple. The site is positioned on the western bank of an ancient river known as the Springbourne, which runs from Falmer to Brighton and follows the course of Lewes Road (A270) in this area. The river valley is now dry, but such places are known for attracting settlement and other activity from the prehistoric period onwards.

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; and

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

Four trenches were to be dug, each 10m in length and 1.60m in width. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the new building. 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 four trenches were dug close to their original planned positions (Fig. 3). All the trenches were 1.60m wide, and measured between 7.50m and 10.10m in length, and between 0.50m and 0.90m in depth. A deposit of mid orange brown clayey silt (52) with moderate chalk and flint inclusions was encountered in all the trenches, beneath made ground and buried soil horizons. Deposit 52 was interpreted as colluvium which had derived from the slope to the north-west as hillwash. After it was first encountered (in trench 3) a test pit was dug through the

deposit which indicated that it was at least 1.63m deep. Following a telephone conversation with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, it was agreed that the remaining trenches should only be machined down to the top of deposit 52. 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. 4; Pl. 1)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 9.80m long and up to 0.74m deep. Deposit 52 was revealed beneath 0.36m of made ground (50) and 0.19m of buried soil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated N-S, and was 10.00m long and up to 0.63m deep. Deposit 52 was revealed beneath 0.25m of made ground (50) and 0.24m of buried soil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 3 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was orientated W-E, and was 7.50m long and up to 0.50m deep. The trench could not be excavated to its full intended length due to the presence of a man-hole to the east and a bank to the west. Deposit 52 was revealed beneath 0.20m of made ground (50) and 0.22m of buried soil (51). This was the first trench to be excavated, and a test pit was excavated through deposit 52. This suggested that the deposit was at least 1.63m thick, with slightly fewer chalk and flint inclusions lower down. The test pit was stopped when a compact layer of chalk and flint was reached at a depth of 2.05m. It is not clear if this represented the natural geology (Head) or was a further deposit of hillwash. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 4 (Fig. 4; Pl. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately NE-SW, and was 10.10m long and up to 0.90m deep. Deposit 52 was revealed beneath 0.35m of made ground (50) and 0.45m of buried soil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The evaluation investigated those parts of the site which will were to be most affected by the plans for re-development. The area where the trenches were located does not appear to have been significantly affected by the previous buildings on the site, nor their subsequent demolition. However, it is possible that the site may have been truncated to some extent previously, as the buried soil horizon observed in the trenches was quite dark in colour and contained 20th-century material. A thick deposit of hillwash (colluvium) was recorded in all the trenches, beneath the buried soil. This deposit was quite sterile and no archaeological finds were visible within it. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

Baljkas, G, 2016, 'Former Housing Office, Selsfield Drive, Moulsecoomb, Brighton, East Sussex : archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpublished report **16/76**, Brighton.

BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 318/333, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.

NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	9.80	1.60	0.74	0-0.36m made ground (50); 0.36-0.55m buried soil (51); 0.55- 0.74m+ mid orange brown clayey silt (52). **[Pl. 1]**
2	10.00	1.60	0.63	0-0.25m made ground (50); 0.25-0.49m buried soil (51); 0.49- 0.63m+ mid orange brown clayey silt (52). **[Pl. 2]**
3	7.50	1.60	0.50 2.05 (test pit)	0-0.20m made ground (50); 0.20-0.42m buried soil (51); 0.42- 0.50m+ mid orange brown clayey silt (52). **[Pl. 3]**
4	10.10	1.60	0.90	0-0.35m made ground (50); 0.35-0.80m buried soil (51); 0.80- 0.90m+ mid orange brown clayey silt (52). **[Pl. 4]**

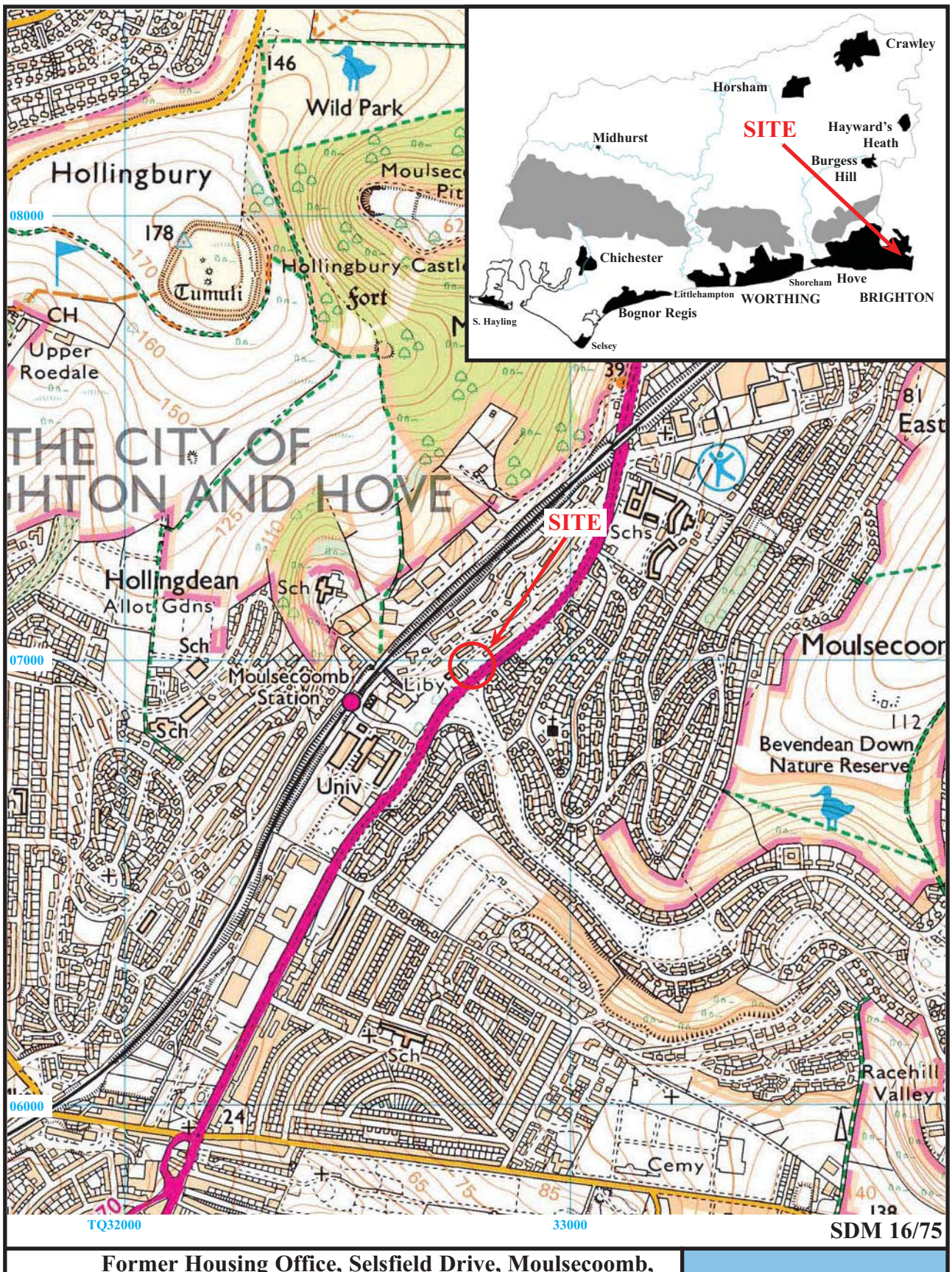

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Figure 1. Location of site within Brighton and East Sussex.

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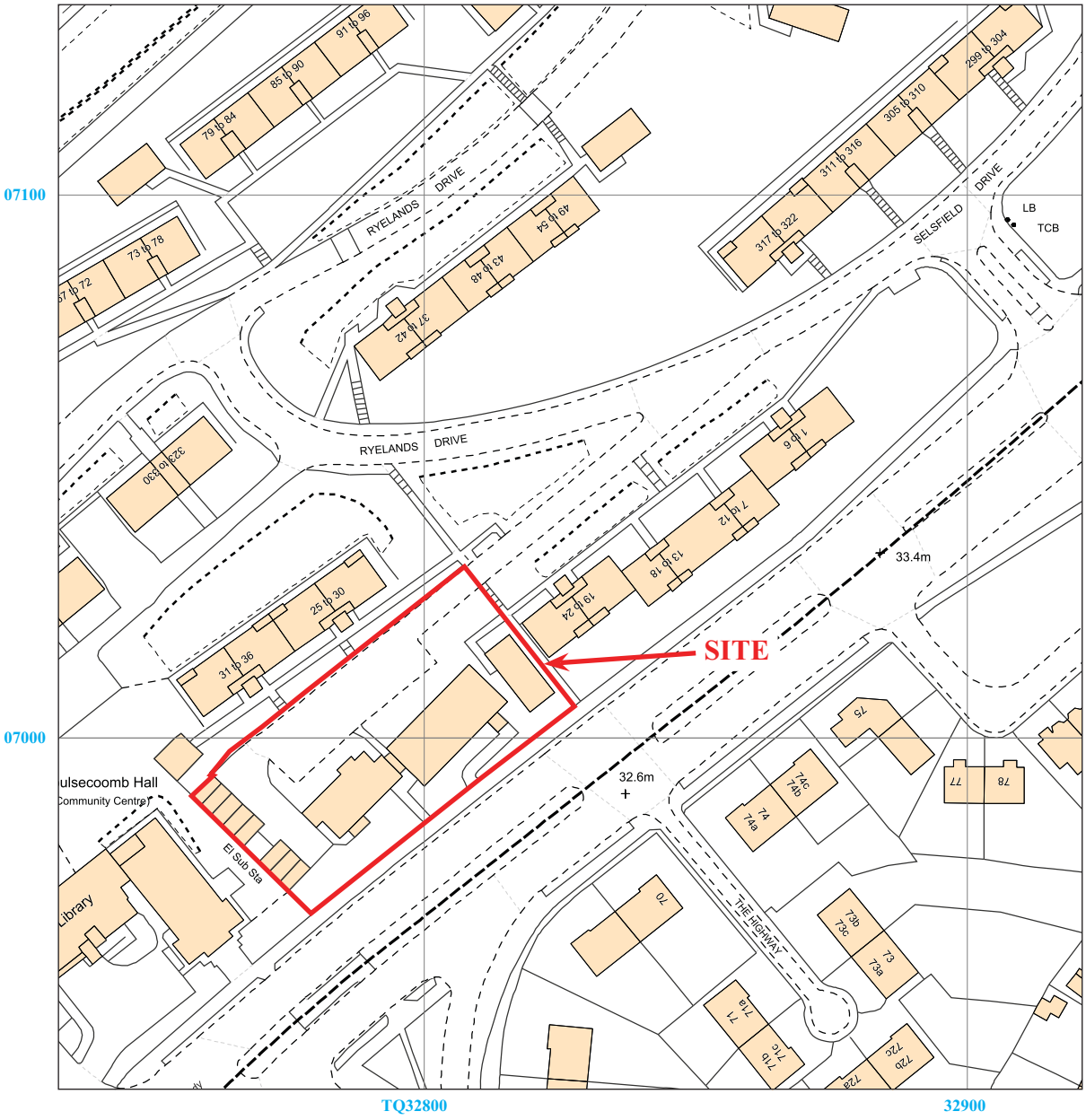

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Figure 2. Detailed site location.

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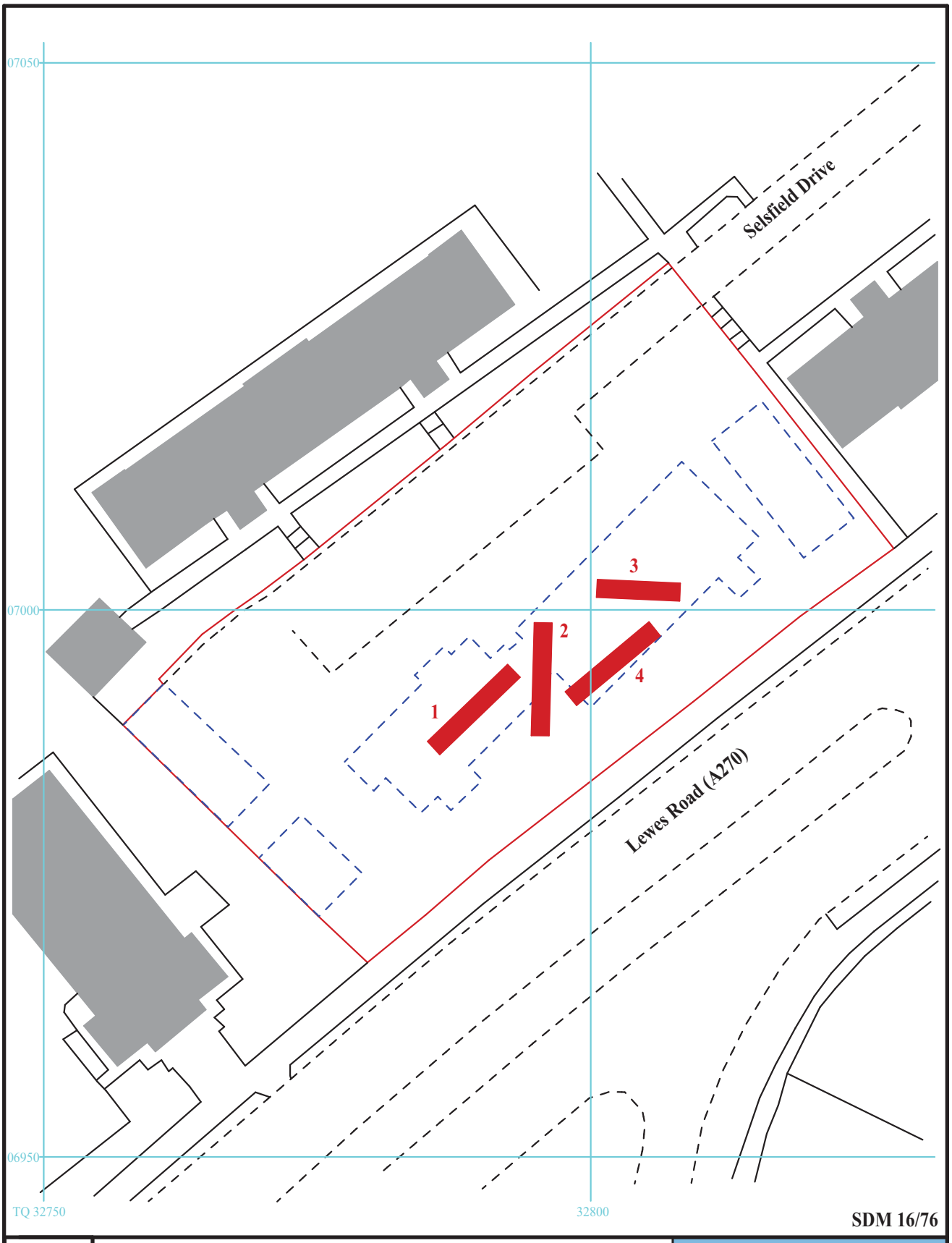

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Figure 3. Plan of site showing locations of trenches.

0 25m

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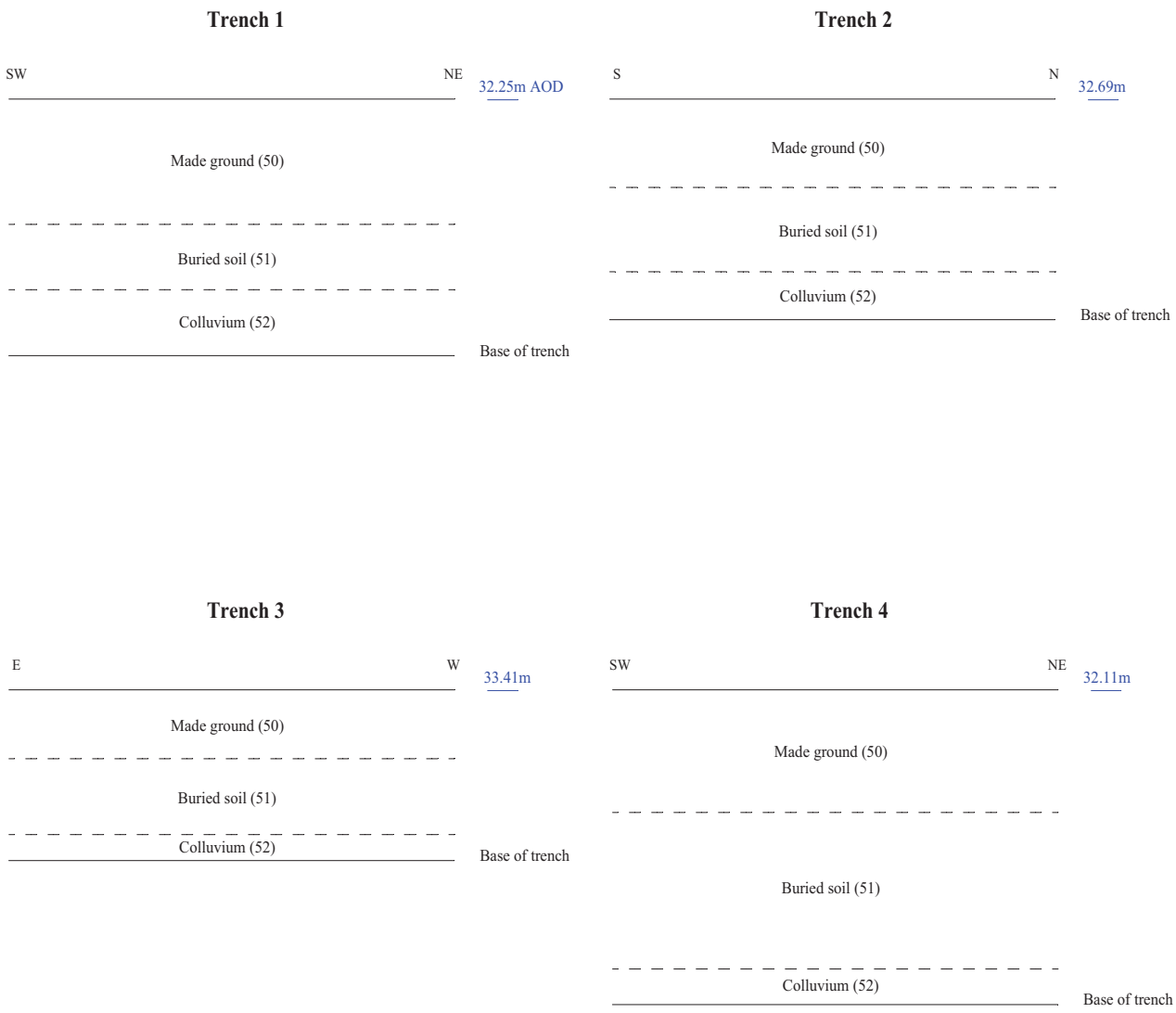

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Figure 4. Representative Sections.

0 1m

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

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

Plate 3. Trench 3, test pit looking South.
Scale: 2m.

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

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Plates 1 to 4.

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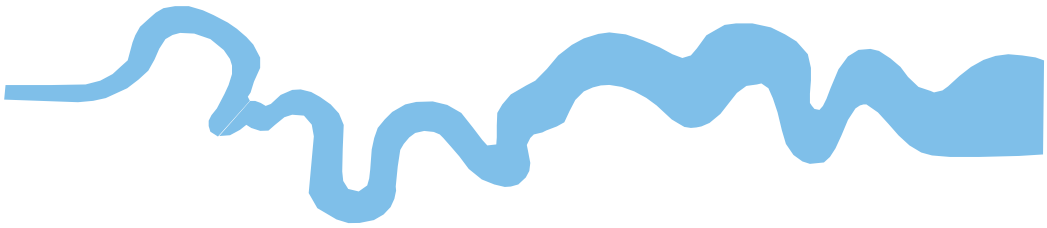
TIME CHART

	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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