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SOUTH

Land at Bright Ridge, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: BRS20/203

(TQ 5731 4171)

.

Land at Bright Ridge, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Shanly Homes

by Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code BRS 20/203

April 2021

Summary

Site name: Land at Bright Ridge, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 5731 4171

Site activity: Evaluation

Planning reference: 20/00872/REM

Date and duration of project: 13th - 14th April 2021

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: BRS 20/203

Area of site: *c*. 0.55 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation at Bright Ridge, Southborough, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the development of the site for housing. Although there had been some minor disturbance from its previous use as an allotment, the site had not been significantly truncated in the past. The only possible archaeological feature observed during the project was a gully which was recorded in the two easternmost trenches. Two slots were excavated through the feature by hand, but no finds were recovered.

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.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 26. 04.21 Steve Preston✓ 26.04.21

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Land at Bright Ridge, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 20/203

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the south of Bright Ridge, Southborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent (TQ 5731 4171) (Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Hendy of Shanly Homes, 21 The Crescent, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8DY.

Planning permission (20/00872/REM) has been granted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to re-develop the site for residential housing. The consent is subject to a planning condition (5) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which requires that an archaeological evaluation be carried out prior to the commencement of the new development.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer (Ms Wendy Rogers) who advises the Borough Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Elisabet Diaz Pila and Sean Wallis between the 13th and 14th April 2021, and the site code is BRS 20/203. 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 immediately to the north of Speldhurst Road and south of Bright Ridge, Southborough, which is situated on the northern outskirts of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent (TQ 5731 4171) (Figs 1 and 2). The main part of the site consists of a roughly rectangular field, formerly used as an allotment. A small rectangular area immediately north of the field is covered with a concrete hardstanding. The topsoil in the field had recently been 'scraped' as part of ecological mitigation works, and the resulting piles of topsoil had been left on the site in long rows (Pl. 1). The site is relatively flat, although there is a gentle slope down towards the south, and generally lies at a height of approximately 116m above Ordnance Datum. The ground drops quite steeply to the south of Speldhurst Road beyond the site. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology largely consists of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (BGS 1997). This was confirmed during the evaluation, and a light brownish yellow sandy clay was revealed in all the trenches.

Archaeological background

The site is located in the Weald, which is a large area covering parts of Kent, Surrey and Sussex, notable for its underlying clay geology. Until recently, very little prehistoric settlement had been recorded in the Weald, although finds of flintwork suggested that the area had been utilized by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. However, this paucity of evidence may be due to the fact that relatively little archaeological fieldwork has been carried out in the area in the past. Indeed, settlement evidence from the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods has been recorded during recent excavations in Burgess Hill and Broadbridge Heath, respectively (Wallis 2016; Taylor 2017). The Weald was utilized for iron production during the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval periods, and numerous features survive from this industry, some of the most obvious being mill ponds which were used to power the foundries. Stray finds of flintwork dating from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods have been found in the area around Southborough. There is also the potential for features relating to post-medieval agriculture to be present on the site, and some of the nearby farm buildings date from the 19th century or earlier.

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 if archaeological deposits from the prehistoric period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits relating to post-medieval agrarian activity are present.

Six trenches were to be dug, each measuring 25m in length. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the new development. 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 trenches were dug close to their original planned positions, although some were moved slightly to avoid the large piles of topsoil which had been left on the site following ecological mitigation (Fig. 3). The previous removal of topsoil and the placing of it in heaps obviously had an effect on the depths of topsoil recorded across the site. The excavated trenches were all 1.50m wide, and measured between 24.80m and 25.30m in length, and between 0.34m and 0.83m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 summarizes the excavated features.

<u>Trench 1</u>

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 24.80m long and up to 0.54m deep. The natural geology was generally encountered beneath 0.31m of topsoil (50) and 0.17m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

<u>Trench 2 (Pl. 2)</u>

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 25.30m long and up to 0.34m deep. The natural geology was generally encountered beneath 0.08m of topsoil (50) and 0.22m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

<u>Trench 3 (Pl. 3)</u>

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 24.80m long and up to 0.43m deep. The natural geology was generally encountered beneath 0.21m of topsoil (50) and 0.18m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

<u>Trench 4</u>

This trench was orientated approximately SSE-NNW, and was 25.80m long and up to 0.63m deep. The trench was notably deeper at its southern end where the natural geology was encountered beneath 0.39m of topsoil (50) and 0.16m of subsoil (51). A potential feature close to the south end of the trench turned out to be a treebole on further investigation, and was not recorded in detail. At the northern end of the trench the natural geology was recorded beneath 0.14m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

<u>Trench 5 (Pl. 5)</u>

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 25.10m long and up to 0.54m deep. The southern half of the trench was notably deeper and the natural geology was encountered beneath 0.32m of topsoil (50) and 0.16m of subsoil (51). In the northern half of the trench the natural geology was generally recorded beneath 0.10m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of subsoil (51). Gully 1 was recorded in the central part of the trench, and a slot was excavated through it by hand. The feature was seen to be up to 0.40m wide and 0.12m deep, with a single fill of mid yellow brown sandy clay (52). No finds were recovered from the slot. It is likely that this is the same feature as that recorded at the southern end of trench 6 (2).

Trench 6 (Pls 4 and 6)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 25.00m long and up to 0.83m deep. The natural geology was generally encountered beneath 0.25m of topsoil (50) and 0.23m of subsoil (51). The central part of the trench was notably deeper, largely due to the depth of topsoil in this area. Gully 2 was recorded at the southern end of the trench, and a slot was excavated through it by hand. The feature was seen to be up to 0.50m wide and 0.14m deep, with a single fill of mid yellow brown sandy clay (53). No finds were recovered from the slot, and it is likely that this is the same feature as that recorded in trench 5 (1).

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development. Although there had been some minor disturbance from its previous use as an allotment, the site had not been significantly truncated in the past. The only possible archaeological feature observed during the project was a gully which was recorded in the two easternmost trenches. Two slots were excavated through the feature by hand, but no finds were recovered.

References

BGS, 1997, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 287, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.

NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

Taylor, A, 2017, 'Early to Middle Iron Age occupation north of Old Guildford Road, Broadbridge Heath, Horsham, West Sussex', in J McNicoll-Norbury, D Sanchez, A Taylor, F Thompson and S Wallis, *Archaeological Investigations in Sussex: Prehistoric and Roman features in Selsey, Worthing, Angmering and Horsham, and Medieval occupation in Hailsham, Horsham and Crawley*, TVAS Occas Pap **17**, Reading, 41–7

Wallis, S, 2016, *Middle/Later Bronze Age Occupation at Manor Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex,* TVAS Occas Pap **9**, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	24.80	1.50	0.54	0-0.31m topsoil (50); 0.31-0.48m subsoil (51); 0.48-0.54m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand).
2	25.30	1.50	0.34	0-0.08m topsoil (50); 0.08-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30-0.34m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). **Pl. 2**
3	24.80	1.50	0.43	0-0.21m topsoil (50); 0.21-0.39m subsoil (51); 0.39-0.43m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). **Pl. 3**
4	25.60	1.50	0.63	North-west end: 0-0.14m topsoil (50); 0.14-0.34m subsoil (51); 0.34-0.39m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). South-east end: 0-0.39m topsoil (50); 0.39-0.55m subsoil (51); 0.55-0.63m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand).
5	25.10	1.50	0.54	North-east end: 0-0.10m topsoil (50); 0.10-0.32m subsoil (51); 0.32-0.39m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). South-west end: 0-0.32m topsoil (50); 0.32-0.48m subsoil (51); 0.48-0.54m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). Gully 1. **Pl. 5**
6	25.00	1.50	0.83	South end: 0-0.25m topsoil (50); 0.25-0.48m subsoil (51); 0.48-0.55m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). Central part of trench: 0-0.55m topsoil (50); 0.55-0.75m subsoil (51); 0.75-0.83m+ natural geology (Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand). Gully 2. **Pls. 4 and 6**

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence / comments*
5	1	52	Gully	Undated	Probably the same feature as gully 2.
6	2	53	Gully	Undated	Probably the same feature as gully 1.

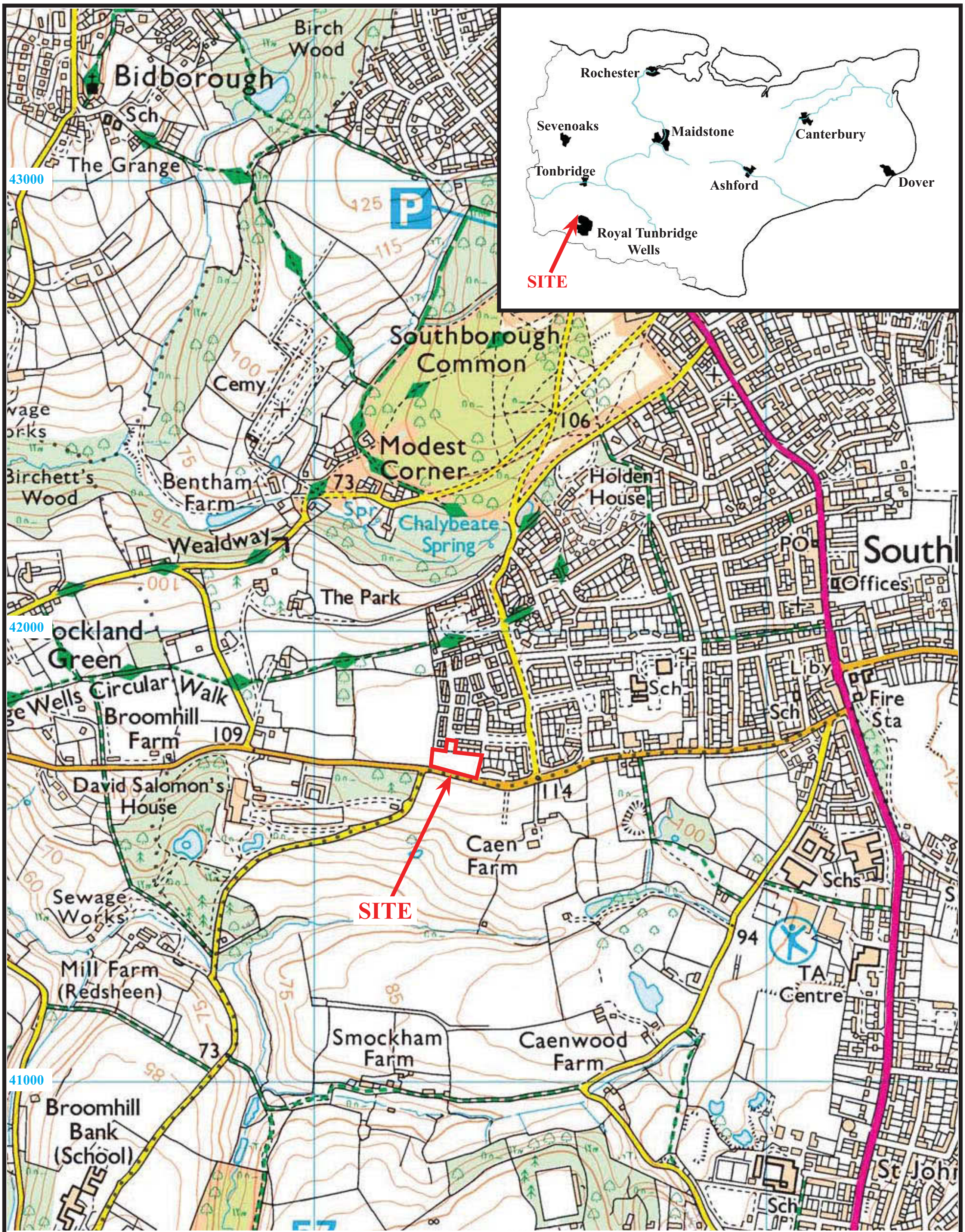

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Figure 1. Location of site within Southborough and Kent.

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Figure 2. Detailed site location.

 Scale 1:2500

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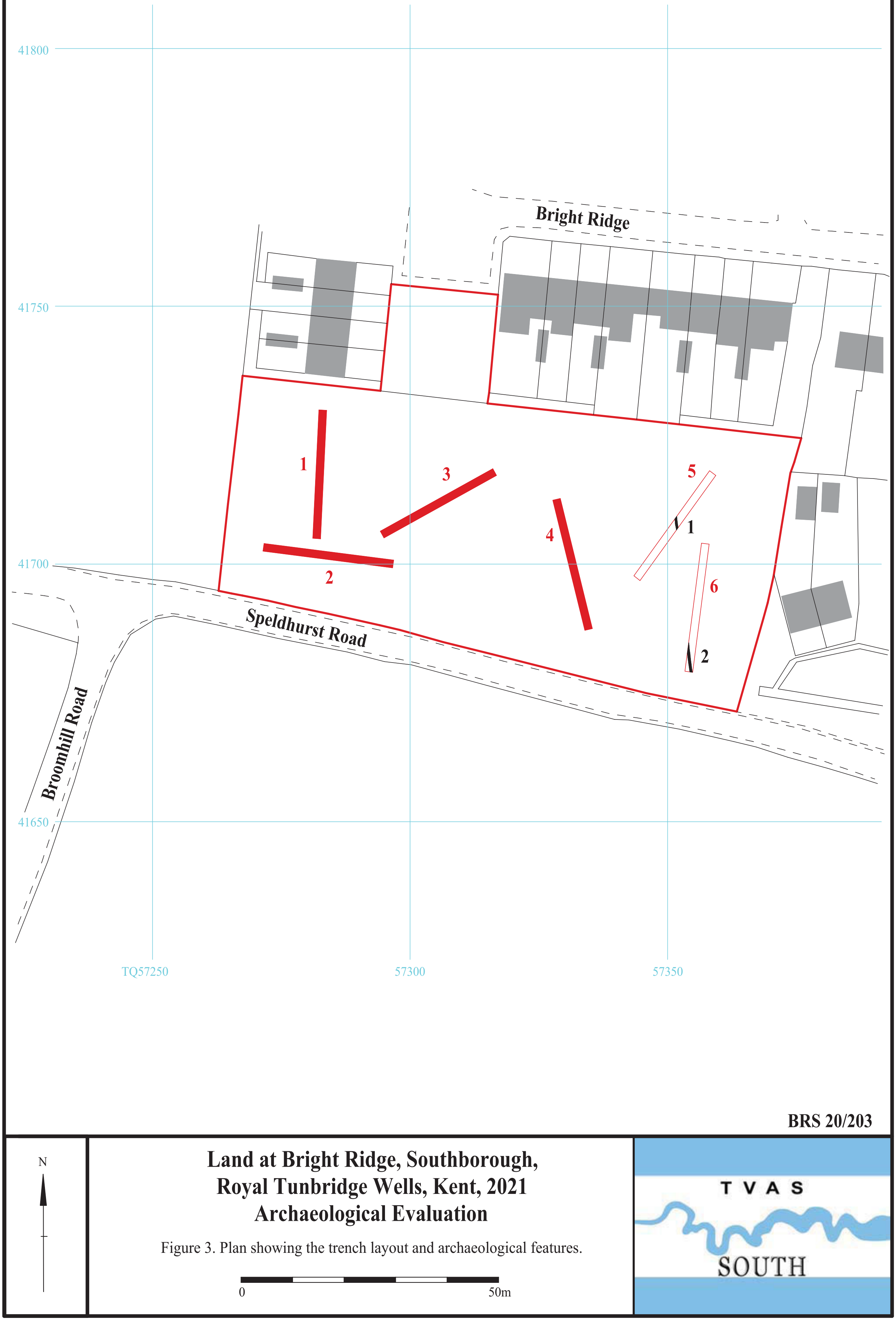

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Figure 3. Plan showing the trench layout and archaeological features.

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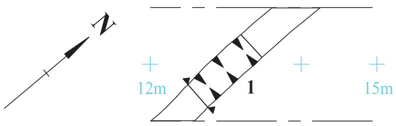
Trench 2



Trench 3

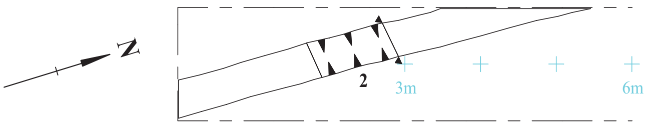


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Figure 4. Plan of trenches 5 and 6.

0 5m

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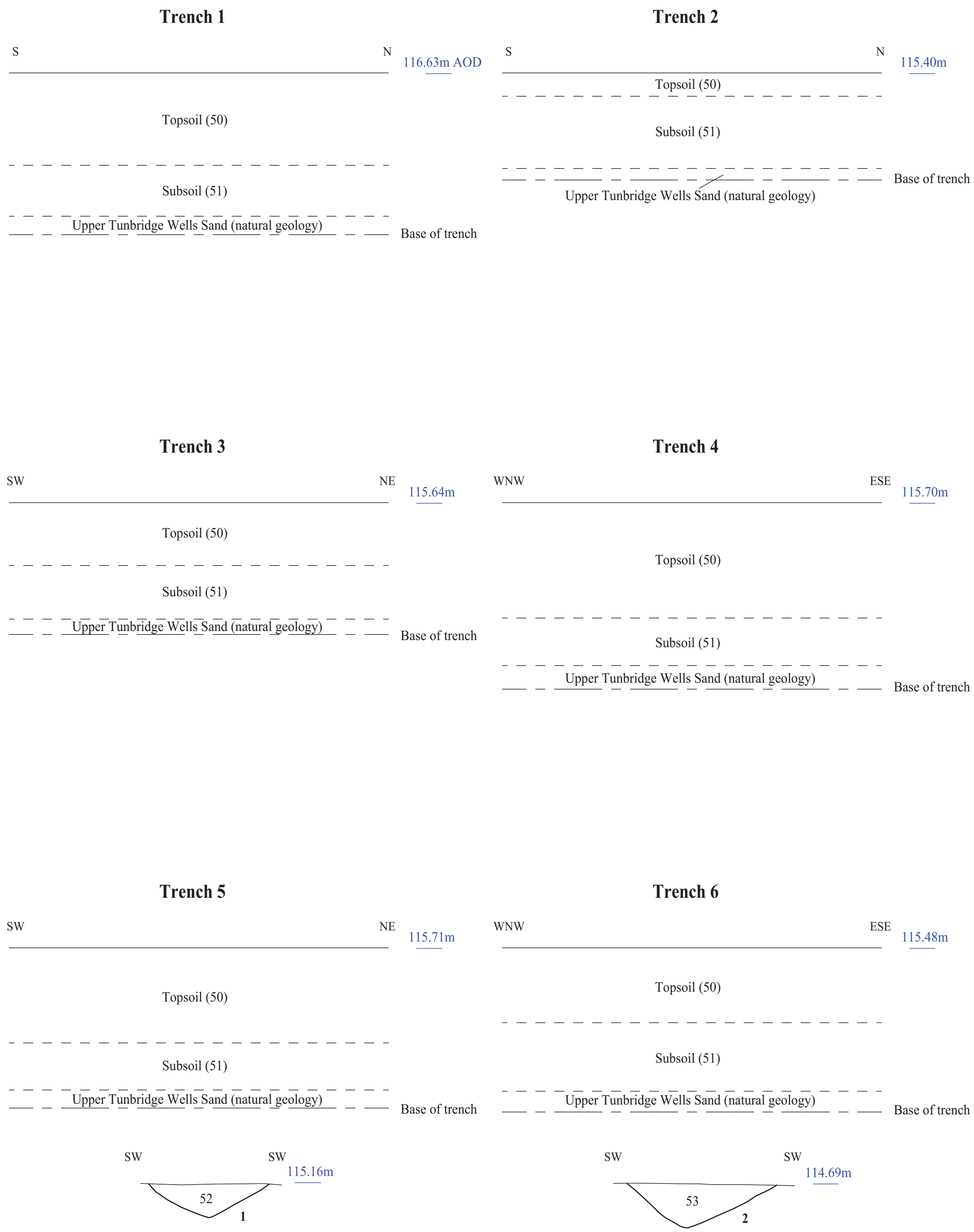

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Figure 5. Sections.

0 1m

Plate 1. General view of site, looking West.

Plate 2. Trench 2, looking West.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 3. Trench 3, looking South-west.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 4. Trench 6, looking North.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 5. Trench 5, gully 1, looking North.
Scale: 0.30m.

Plate 6. Trench 6, gully 2, looking North.
Scales: 0.30m.

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Plates 1 to 6.

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TIME CHART

Period	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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