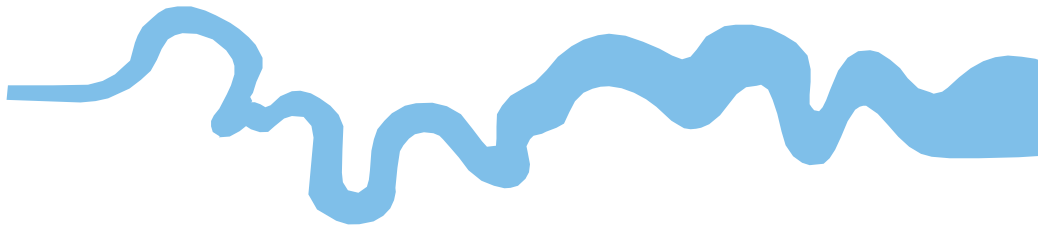


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

**Land at Fishbourne Road East,  
Chichester, West Sussex**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Muddin**

**Site Code: FRF14/150**

**(TR 3098 5539)**

# **Land at Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Excavation**

**For Highwood Group**

by Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code FRF 14/150

**May 2022**



## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TR 3098 5539

**Planning reference:** CC/17/01287/FUL

**Site activity:** Watching brief

**Date and duration of project:** 6th May 2021

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** FRF 14/150

**Summary of results:** The watching brief at Fishbourne Road East established that the site had been heavily truncated when two office blocks were built in the mid 1990s, and that the extent of the disturbance was significantly larger than the concrete footings themselves. The site was already covered with a fairly thick layer of made ground and further material was to be laid down before the new houses were built. As a result it was clear that any drainage associated with the new development would only affect made ground deposits.

**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✓ 20.05.22 Steve Preston✓ 20.05.22
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# **Land at Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex**

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Sean Wallis

**Report 14/150c**

### **Introduction**

This report documents the results of archaeological fieldwork carried out to the south of Fishbourne Road East (SU 8431 0466) (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr Jonathan Wilson of Highwood Group, The Hay Barn, Upper Ashfield Farm, Hoe Lane, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 9NJ.

Planning permission (CC/17/01287/FUL) had been gained from Chichester District Council to re-develop the site for residential housing, following the demolition of the existing commercial buildings. The consent was subject to a standard planning condition (9) relating to archaeology and historic environment requiring a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the District Council's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. The site had been subject to a trial trench evaluation in March 2020, where a number of archaeological features were recorded, including some dating from the medieval period. However, as much of the site was to be built up before the new houses were built, the Chichester District Council Archaeological Officer (Mr James Kenny) agreed that the further fieldwork would be limited to monitoring the removal of the existing concrete footings and the excavation of any particularly deep drainage runs.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Chichester District Council Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis on 6th May 2021, and the site code is FRF 14/150. The archive is currently held at TVAS South, Brighton, and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

### **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located to the south of Fishbourne Road East, to the west of the historic core of Chichester, West Sussex (Figs. 1 and 2). The site is bounded to the east by a small stream, with residential properties beyond, and to the west and south by the A27. At the time of the watching brief the office blocks which formerly occupied the site had been demolished, and the rest of the site was largely landscaped with an access road and car parking areas. The site is relatively flat, but has been built up slightly in the past and lies at a height of approximately 4.50m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the superficial geology consists of

Tidal River Deposits, although it is possible that Alluvial Fan Deposits are present in the north-western part of the site, with some Aeolian Deposits (Brickearth) in the south-east (BGS 1996). Various layers of chalk are present below the superficial deposits.

## **Archaeological background**

The site had been known to contain archaeological features since the mid 1990s, when a small excavation was undertaken prior to the construction of an office block in January 1995 (Kenny 1995). This revealed a number of features dating from the Iron Age through to the post-medieval period. Further features were revealed during a recent evaluation (Williams 2020). The discovery of archaeological features was unsurprising and the site was considered in a desk-based assessment (Wallis 2014). In summary, the potential stems from its position on the archaeologically rich Sussex coastal plain, and more specifically its location in the hinterland of historic Chichester. Most significantly, the area lies about 270m to the east of Fishbourne Roman Palace and is situated close to the Roman road connecting Fishbourne to Chichester. After the desertion of the town towards the end of the Roman period, it became an important settlement again in the late Saxon period.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The primary aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks. This was to comprise the monitoring of the removal of the large concrete footings of the office blocks which occupied the site, along with an archaeological watching brief in respect of the deeper drainage runs (Fig. 3).

## **Results**

The site was visited on 6th May 2021 after the existing office blocks had been demolished down to ground level. The footings of these buildings were substantial, consisting of reinforced concrete pads measuring approximately 1.20m wide and 0.80m thick, linked with ground beams which were 0.80m thick. It was clear that the original construction of the office blocks had required the excavation of much larger trenches to enable shuttering to be installed. The concrete was then poured into the shuttering once the steelwork was in place, and the rest of the trenches backfilled after the footings had set. As a result, a considerable area around each concrete pad had already been truncated. These initial observations were discussed in a telephone call with the Chichester District

Council Archaeological Officer, and it was agreed that watching the rest of the footings being removed would not be worthwhile.

Subsequent to the written scheme of investigation for the watching brief being prepared, the plans for the drainage had been altered, so that all the groundworks would be within the thick made ground deposits which covered much of the site (Fig. 3). Due to this, no drainage works were monitored as part of the project.

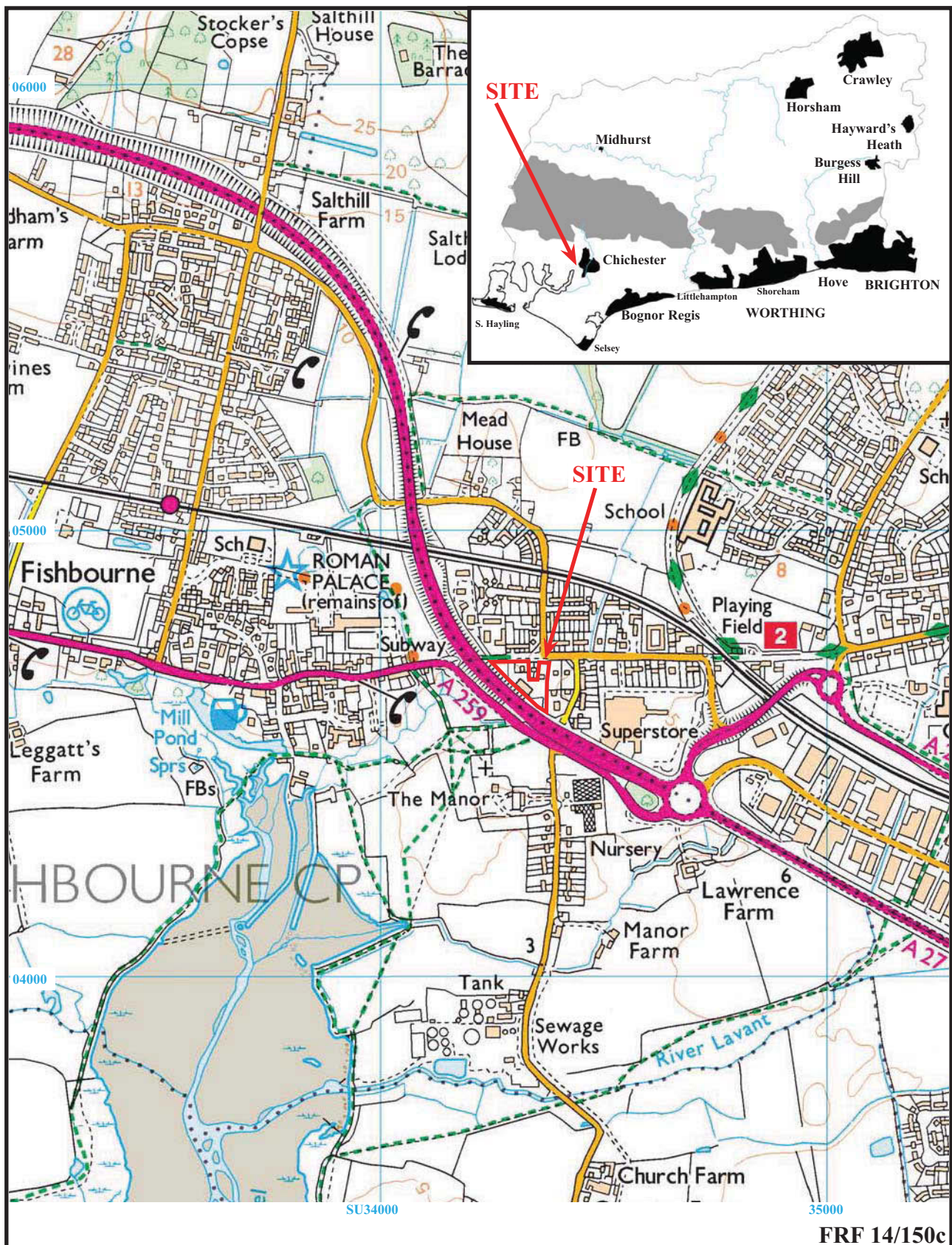
## **Conclusion**

The watching brief at Fishbourne Road East established that the site had been heavily truncated when the two office blocks were built in the mid 1990s, and that the extent of the disturbance was significantly larger than the concrete footings themselves. The site was already covered with a fairly thick layer of made ground and further material was to be laid down before the new houses were built. As a result it was clear that the drainage associated with the new development would only affect made ground deposits.

## **References**

- BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **317/332**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.
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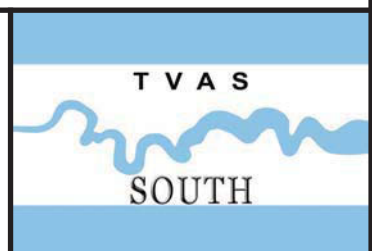


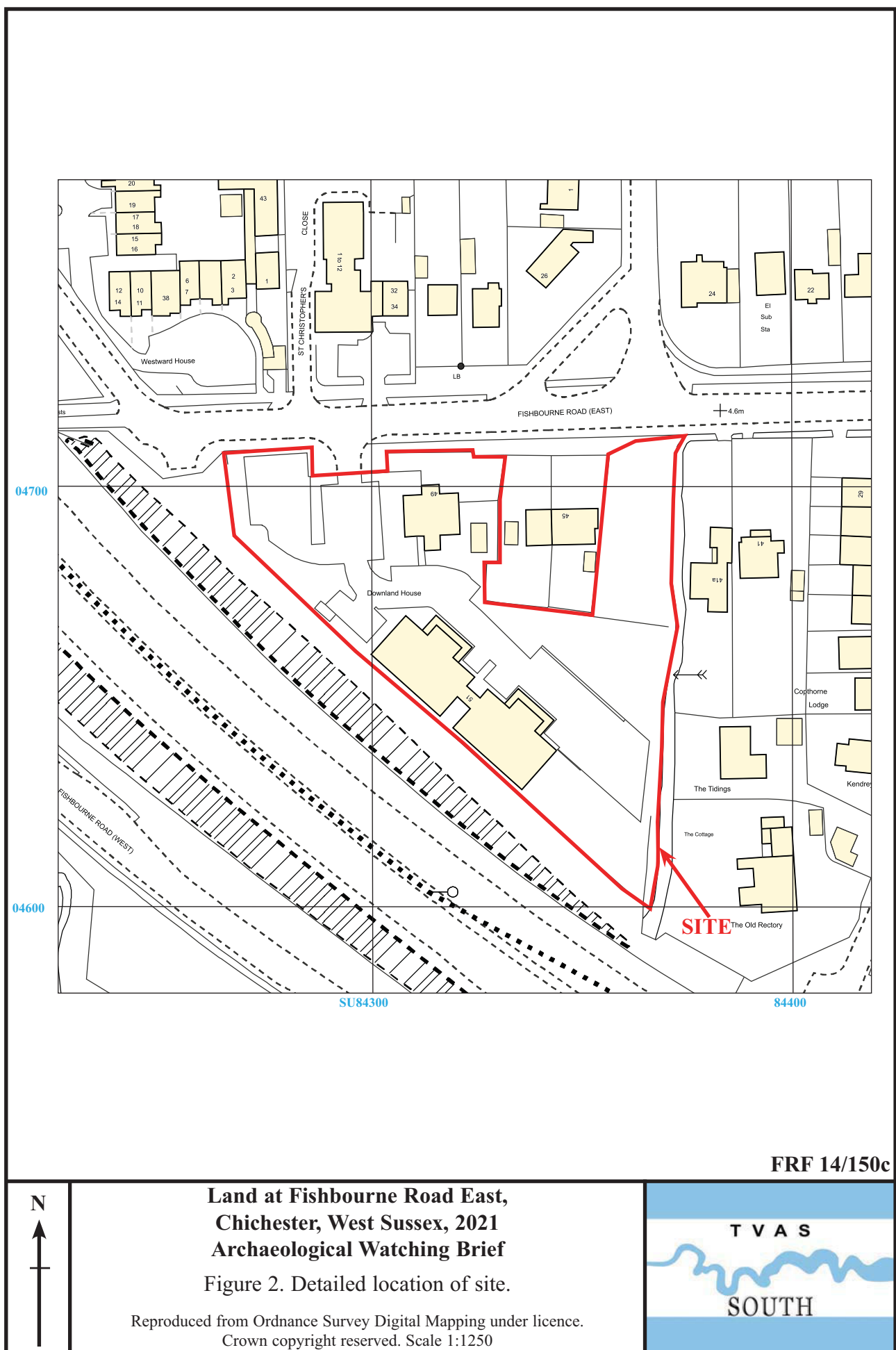


**Land at Fishbourne Road East,  
Chichester, West Sussex, 2021  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

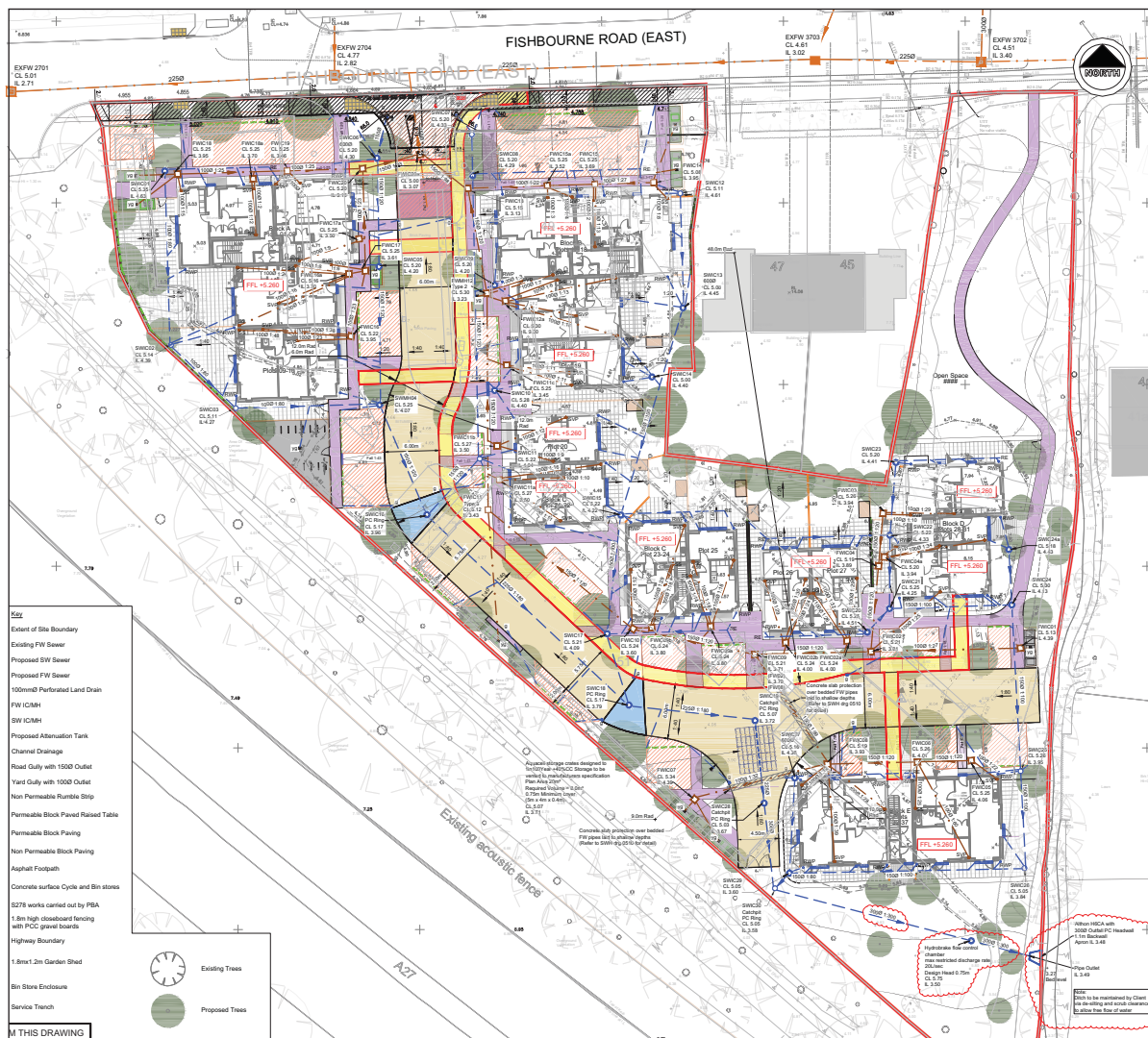
Figure 1. Location of site within Chichester and West Sussex.

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## Land at Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex, 2021 Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 3. Detailed plan of the new development, showing the various service runs and new houses.





Plate 1. General shot showing the removal of a ground beam to expose the concrete pad beneath, looking South-west.



Plate 2. General shot showing a concrete pad being removed, looking South-west.



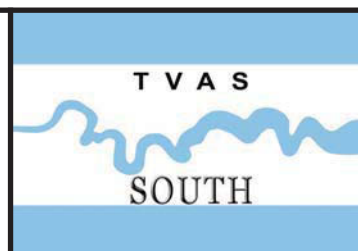
Plate 3. General shot showing the area following the removal of a concrete pad, looking South.



Plate 4. General view of the site, looking North-west.

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**Land at Fishbourne Road East,  
Chichester, West Sussex, 2021  
Archaeological Watching Brief  
Plates 1 to 4.**



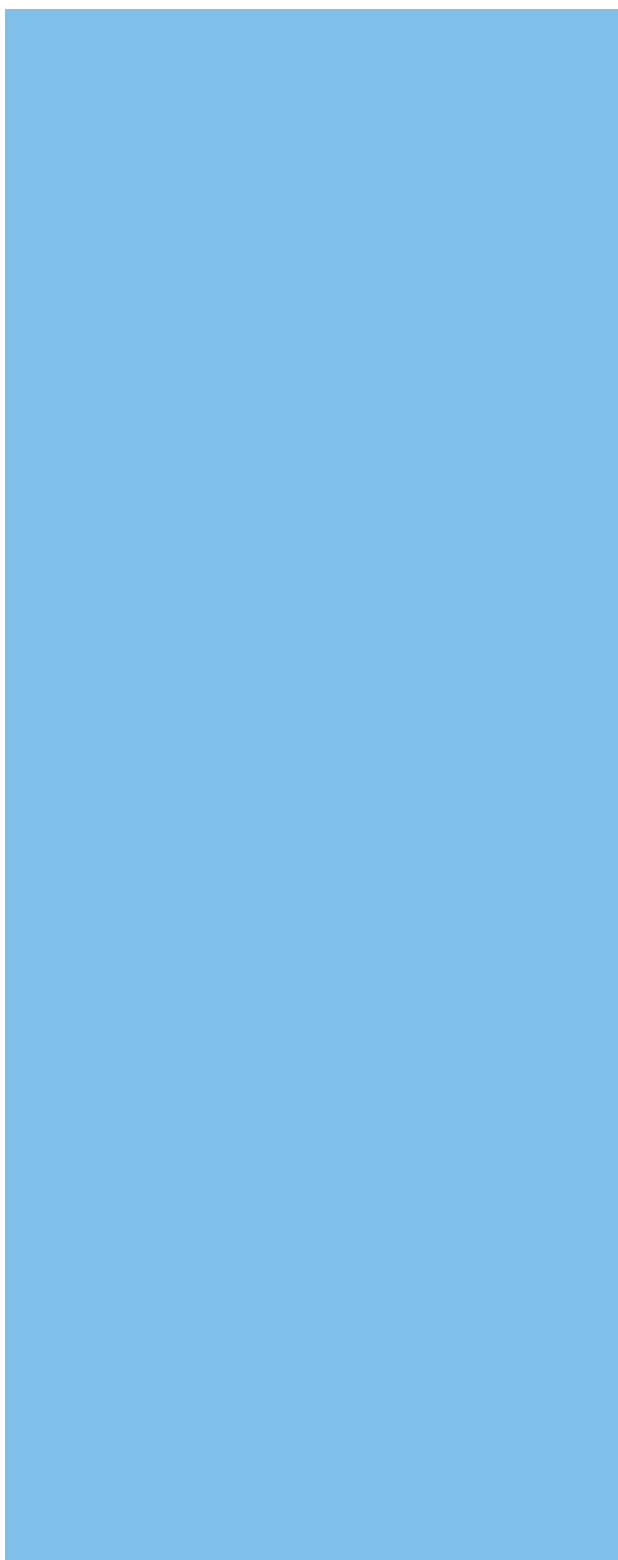
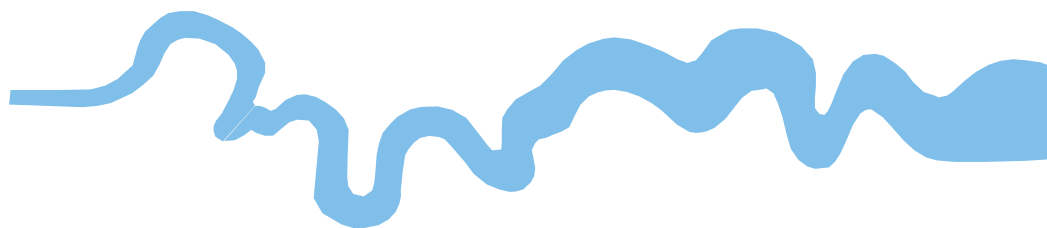


## TIME CHART

### 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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