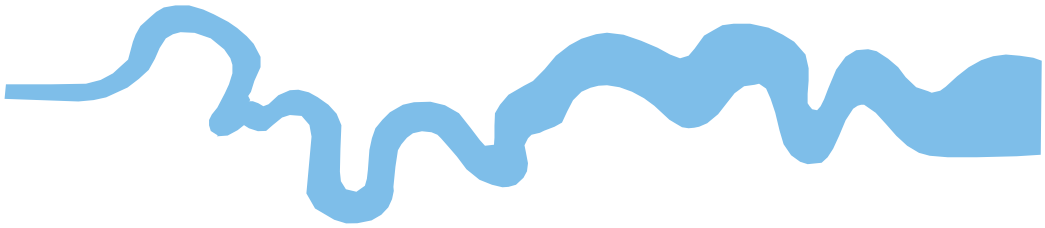
T V A S



SOUTH

Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: MPH22/123

(TQ 8303 1101)

Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Gemselect Limited

by Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code MPH 22/123

June 2022

Summary

Site name: Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 8303 1101

Site activity: Evaluation

Planning reference: HS/FA/19/00533, HS/FA/19/00536 & HS/DS/21/00502

Date and duration of project: 25th - 26th May 2022

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MPH 22/123

Area of site: *c*. 1.75 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation to the west of Frederick Road, Hastings, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the development of the site. The results provided evidence of how the site had been heavily disturbed by the construction of the former hospital complex from the late 19th century onwards. Further disturbance had clearly taken place when the hospital buildings were demolished in the late 20th century. Very few traces of the walls and floor surfaces of the hospital were revealed in the evaluation trenches, although several associated services were recorded. Given the results of the evaluation, the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 17.06.22
	Steve Preston✓ 17.06.22

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Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 22/123

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the west of Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex (TQ 8303 1101) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gordon Ritchie of Gemselect Ltd, 59-60 High Street, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0EN.

Planning permissions (HS/FA/19/00533, HS/FA/19/00536 and HS/DS/21/00502) have been granted by Hastings Borough Council for the redevelopment of the former Mount Pleasant Hospital site for housing. The consents were all subject to standard planning conditions (16 and 17) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks. This was to take the form, initially, of evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which further work might be required.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the 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 (Mr Neil Griffin). The fieldwork was undertaken by Mikaila Walker and Sean Wallis between 25th and 26th May 2022, and the site code is MPH 22/123. 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 west of Frederick Road, about 1.2km north of the historic core of Hastings (TQ 8303 1101) (Figs 1 and 2). The site consists of an irregular shaped parcel of land, measuring about 1.75ha, most of which was formerly occupied by a hospital complex which opened in the 1890s as the Hastings Borough Sanatorium. All of the hospital buildings had been demolished in the late 20th century, and a road into the site had been constructed in the early 21st century for a development which never took place. The hospital complex had been built on the side of a fairly steep hill, and the site was extensively terraced to create level areas for the buildings. Further landscaping appears to have occurred when the modern access road into the site was built. As a result, the height varies dramatically from about 85m above Ordnance Datum in the south-east corner down to

just 62m aOD in the north-west. At the time of the evaluation parts of the site were very overgrown, particularly along the northern boundary (Pls 11 and 12). There were numerous piles of cleared vegetation dotted around the site, along with other spoilheaps. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Ashdown Sand (BGS 1971). However, due to the fact that the site is on the side of a hill and has been heavily disturbed in the past, the natural geology encountered during the evaluation varied from trench to trench. In general the natural consisted of a mid yellow brown sandy clay, although in some trenches an underlying light yellow brown clay was recorded.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been considered in a desk-based assessment (Walsh 2017). In summary, the site is located on the northern outskirts of Hastings, in an area where very few archaeological finds have been recorded in the past. However, the site overlooks a former river valley, and such locations have attracted settlement from the prehistoric period onwards. The Weald was exploited heavily during the Roman period for iron, and a bloomery was recorded to the south-west of the site. It is likely that there was some form of Roman settlement, perhaps a port, at Hastings, and a possible Roman road from Hastings to Rochester has been identified to the north of the site. Although it is now a suburb of Hastings, the settlement at Ore was once a separate entity, and is first mentioned in the early 12th century. Historic maps indicate that the north-eastern corner of the site was previously occupied by a large house known as Oakfield Lodge, which was built sometime after 1840. Hastings Borough Sanatorium was constructed in the central part of the site in the 1890s, and this complex appears to have involved quite major landscaping and terracing works. All of the buildings on the site were demolished in the late 20th century.

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; and

to inform a mitigation strategy if required.

Fourteen 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, and to avoid a known badger sett close to the northern boundary. 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.

Sufficient of any archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to an agreed sampling fraction based on the significance of the feature, to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

The trenches were dug as close to their original planned positions as possible, although most had to be moved and / or shortened to avoid features such as trees and existing spoilheaps (Fig. 3). The excavated trenches were all 2.00m wide, and measured between 2.30m and 25.50m in length, and between 0.15m and 2.30m in depth. The clay or sandy clay geology was observed in most of the trenches. 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 15.00m long and up to 0.60m deep. It had to be moved some distance from its original intended position as the north-eastern part of the site was heavily overgrown. The natural sandy clay geology was encountered beneath up to 0.45m of made ground, and some areas of modern disturbance were noted along the trench. A small area of Tarmac was noted at the far eastern end of the trench, lying directly above the natural geology. The trench was shorter than planned partly due to a lack of space, but also due to the fact that the western end appeared to show the same modern truncation as that recorded in the eastern end of trench 3. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 16.00m long and up to 0.50m deep. It was excavated on a small area of flat ground, and was shortened due to lack of space. The natural sandy clay geology was recorded directly beneath 0.40m of made ground. A probable land drain or service trench was noted in the central part of the trench, but no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 3

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 8.20m long and up to 0.40m deep. The trench was note excavated to its full intended length due to a lack of space, and the fact that a large modern truncation was

revealed at the eastern end. The natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.20m of made ground, and modern disturbance was noted throughout the trench. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 4 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 19.30m long and up to 0.58m deep. The natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.36m of made ground. Some modern truncation was noted at the far eastern end, and two pipes were uncovered along the length of the trench. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 5 (Fig. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was excavated in an area which had clearly been built up in the past. Due to the depth of the made ground and lack of space, the trench was just 2.30m long and up to 2.30m deep. The natural clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.85m of soil made ground, 0.90m of re-deposited natural (made ground), and 0.35m of probable buried soil. Due to the depth of the trench, and the fact that there was no space to step or batter back, the trench could not be safely entered. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 6 (Fig. 4; Pl. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 23.40m long and up to 0.60m deep. The natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.30m of topsoil (50) and 0.12m of subsoil (51). Two land drains were noted within the trench, but no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 7 (Pl. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 15.00m long and up to 0.58m deep. The trench was shorter than originally planned due to a lack of space. The natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.35m of topsoil (50) and 0.07m of subsoil (51). A modern truncation was noted at the far northern end of the trench, but no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 8 (Fig. 4; Pl. 6)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 25.50m long and up to 1.04m deep. There was a marked difference in the stratigraphy recorded in either end of the trench. In the southern part of the trench, the natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.84m of made ground, indicating that the area had been stripped previously and then built up with imported material. The made ground was not present in the northern and central parts of the trench, where the natural geology was recorded below 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.10m of subsoil (51). Some modern disturbance was noted in the trench, but no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 9 (Fig. 5; Pl. 7)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 19.50m long and up to 0.25m deep. The trench was slightly shorter than originally planned due to the presence of trees, spoilheaps, and a fenced off pond. The natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath just 0.05m of topsoil (50). Several areas of modern disturbance were recorded along the length of the trench, but no archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 10 (Fig. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 13.20m long and up to 0.52m deep. The trench was shorter than originally planned due to trees at the southern end and the presence of a concrete encased pipe at the northern end. A former Tarmac surface and its associated bedding layer were encountered at the far southern end of the trench, directly above the natural sandy clay geology. The stratigraphy along the rest of the trench generally consisted of 0.10m of topsoil (50) directly above the natural geology. A modern service ran along the entire length of the trench, and an associated manhole was recorded in the central area. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 11 (Pl. 8)

This trench was orientated approximately E-W, and was 19.60m long and up to 1.65m deep. In the south-eastern corner of the trench, the natural sandy clay geology was observed immediately below 0.15m of made ground. However, most of the eastern end of the trench was occupied by a large modern truncation. This contained some fairly large chunks of brick rubble, suggesting that material from the demolished hospital buildings had been pushed into the hole. It is possible that the truncation may actually represent a former basement, which had been backfilled when the hospital was demolished. In the western half of the trench the natural clay geology was recorded between about 1.50m of made ground. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 12 (Fig. 5; Pl. 9)

This trench was orientated E-W, and was up to 1.90m deep, but just 3.20m long. The trench was not dug to its intended length due to the fact that it had clearly been positioned on a former spoilheap or dump of modern material. Due to the local topography it was not possible to re-site the trench. The natural geology was not recorded in the trench. The stratigraphy generally consisted of 1.15m of soil made ground, 0.33m of grey clay made ground, 0.07m of yellow clay made ground, and at least 0.35m of made ground with ceramic building material (CBM). A dump of very recent rubbish was recorded in one of the sections, between the soil made ground and grey clay made ground. Unsurprisingly, no archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 13 (Fig. 5; Pl. 10)

This trench was orientated approximately E-W, and was 8.20m long and up to 1.55m deep. The trench was shorter than originally planned due to trees in the area and the presence of a large modern truncation at the western end. At the eastern end of the trench, the natural sandy clay geology was generally encountered beneath 0.80m of loose made ground, 0.35m of compact made ground, 0.10m of compact clay and CBM. Much of the trench was occupied by a large modern truncation containing concrete and plastic sheeting. As this had clearly truncated the natural geology, no attempt was made to reach the bottom of this feature. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Trench 14 (Pl. 9)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 16.50m long and up to 1.35m deep. The trench had to be moved slightly and shortened due to a lack of space in this part of the site. The area had clearly been badly disturbed in the past. At the southern end of the trench, the natural sandy clay geology was encountered beneath 0.45m of topsoil (50) and 0.45m of made ground. A concrete footing was noted about 6m from the southern end of the trench, and the construction cut for the wall was clearly visible in section where a small patch of undisturbed ground was noted. In this area, the natural geology was recorded below 0.10m of made ground, 0.30m of topsoil and 0.45m of possible buried topsoil. The part of the trench to the north of the concrete footing contained a Tarmac surface with concrete beneath it. The Tarmac surface was recorded below about 0.70m of made ground, but no attempt was made to remove the surface as it was clear that the natural geology would have been truncated in this part of the trench. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation to the west of Frederick Road, Hastings, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development of the site. The results provided a good idea of how the site had been heavily disturbed in the past by the construction of the former hospital complex from the late 19th century onwards. Further disturbance had clearly taken place when the hospital buildings were demolished in the late 20th century. Interestingly, very few traces of the walls and floor surfaces of the hospital were revealed in the evaluation trenches, although several associated services were recorded. The site would also have been significantly affected by the construction of an access road in the early 21st century.

The north-eastern part of the site (trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4) had obviously been truncated in the past as made ground was recorded directly above the natural geology. Trench 5 was situated in an area which had been built up significantly, although it was not clear if this happened when the hospital was built or when the 21st century access road was created. The north-western part of the site appears to have been relatively undisturbed by past activity, and this is supported by the historic map evidence. The trenches in this part of the site (6, 7 and northern part of trench 8) contained topsoil and subsoil horizons, indicating that the area had not been truncated in the past, although no archaeological features were revealed. Trenches 9, 10 and 11 were positioned in parts of the site which had clearly been terraced in the past to create level areas, mostly for the hospital complex. The landscaping works would have truncated the natural geology, which was recorded immediately below made ground deposits. Traces of the former hospital complex were noted in trenches 10 and 11. Trench 12 appeared to be positioned over a modern spoilheap, and the natural geology was not recorded, whilst trench 13 contained a large modern truncation. Traces of a former hospital building were revealed in trench 14 in the south-east corner of the site, along with clear evidence that the construction of the building would have truncated the natural geology.

Given the results of the evaluation, the site is believed to have a low potential for archaeological features being present.

References

BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet **320**, Drift Edition, Keyworth

NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London

Walsh, E, 2017, 'A heritage statement for the former Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, TN35 5AA', CBAS unpubl rep **0823**, Selmeston

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	15.00	2.00	0.60	0-0.45m made ground; 0.45-0.60m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 1]**
2	16.00	2.00	0.50	0-0.40m made ground; 0.40-0.50m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 2]**
3	8.20	2.00	0.40	0-0.20m made ground; 0.20-0.40m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand).
4	19.70	2.00	0.58	0-0.36m made ground; 0.36-0.58m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 4]**
5	2.30	2.00	2.30	0-0.85m soil made ground; 0.85-1.75m re-deposited natural made ground; 1.75-2.10m possible buried soil; 2.10-2.30m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand)
6	23.40	2.00	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil (50); 0.30-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42-0.60m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 4]**
7	15.00	2.00	0.58	0-0.35m topsoil (50); 0.35-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42-0.58m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 7]**
8	25.50	2.00	1.04 (S) 0.48 (N)	South end: 0-0.84m made ground; 0.84-1.04m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 8]** North end: 0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.30m subsoil (51); 0.30-0.48m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand).
9	19.50	2.00	0.25	0-0.05m topsoil (50); 0.05-0.25m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 7]**
10	13.20	2.00	0.52	West end: 0-0.30m Tarmac and bedding layer; 0.30-0.52m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). Rest of trench: 0-0.10m topsoil (50); 0.10-0.50m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand).
11	19.60	2.00	0.15 (E) 1.65 (W)	East end: 0-0.15m made ground; 0.15m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 8]** West end: 0-1.50m made ground; 1.50-1.65m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand).
12	3.20	2.00	1.90	0-1.15m soil made ground; 1.15-1.48m grey clay made ground; 1.48-1.55m yellow clay made ground; 1.55-1.90m made ground with CBM. **[Pl. 9]**
13	8.20	2.00	1.55 (E) 1.20 (W)	East end: 0-0.80m loose made ground; 0.80-1.15m compact made ground; 1.15-1.25m compact layer of clay and CBM; 1.25-1.45m possible buried soil; 1.45-1.55m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). **[Pl. 10]** West end: 0-1.20m modern made ground.
14	16.50	2.00	1.35	South end: 0-0.45m topsoil (50); 0.45-0.90m made ground; 0.90-1.35m+ natural geology (Ashdown Sand). North end: 0-0.70m made ground; 0.70m+ Tarmac (left in-situ).

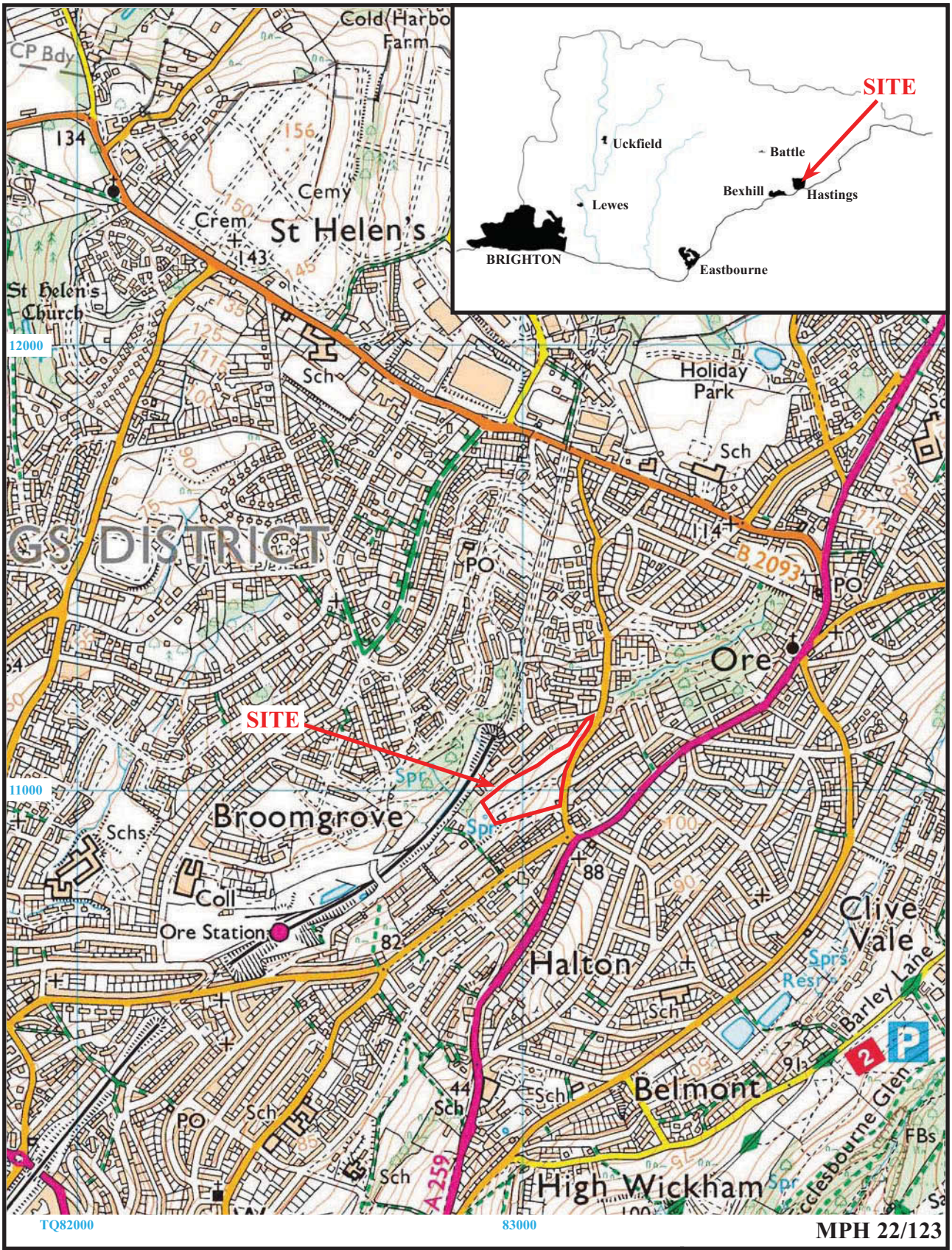

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Figure 1. Location of site within Hastings and East Sussex.

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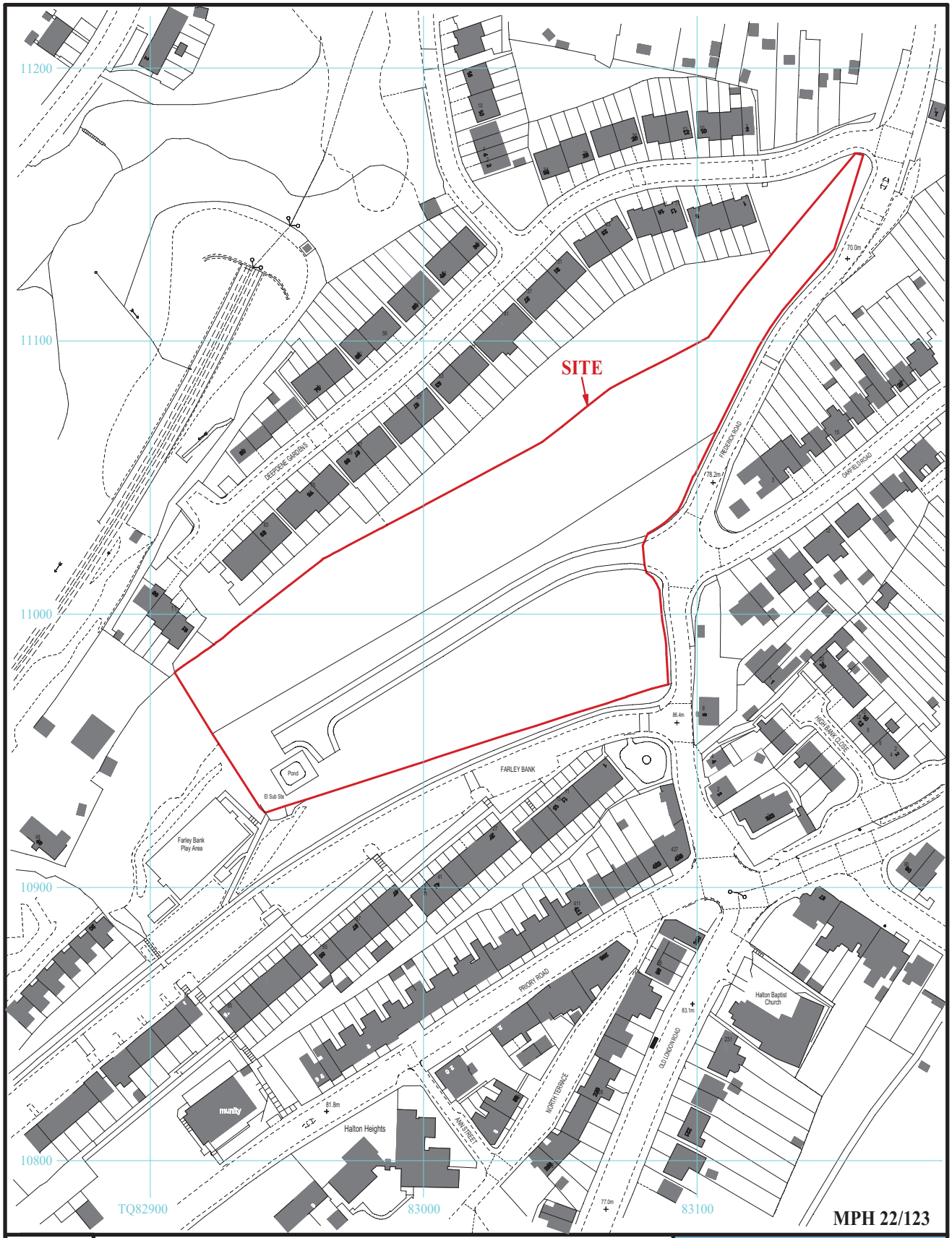

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Mount Pleasant Hospital, Frederick Road, Hastings, East Sussex, 2022 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

0 100m

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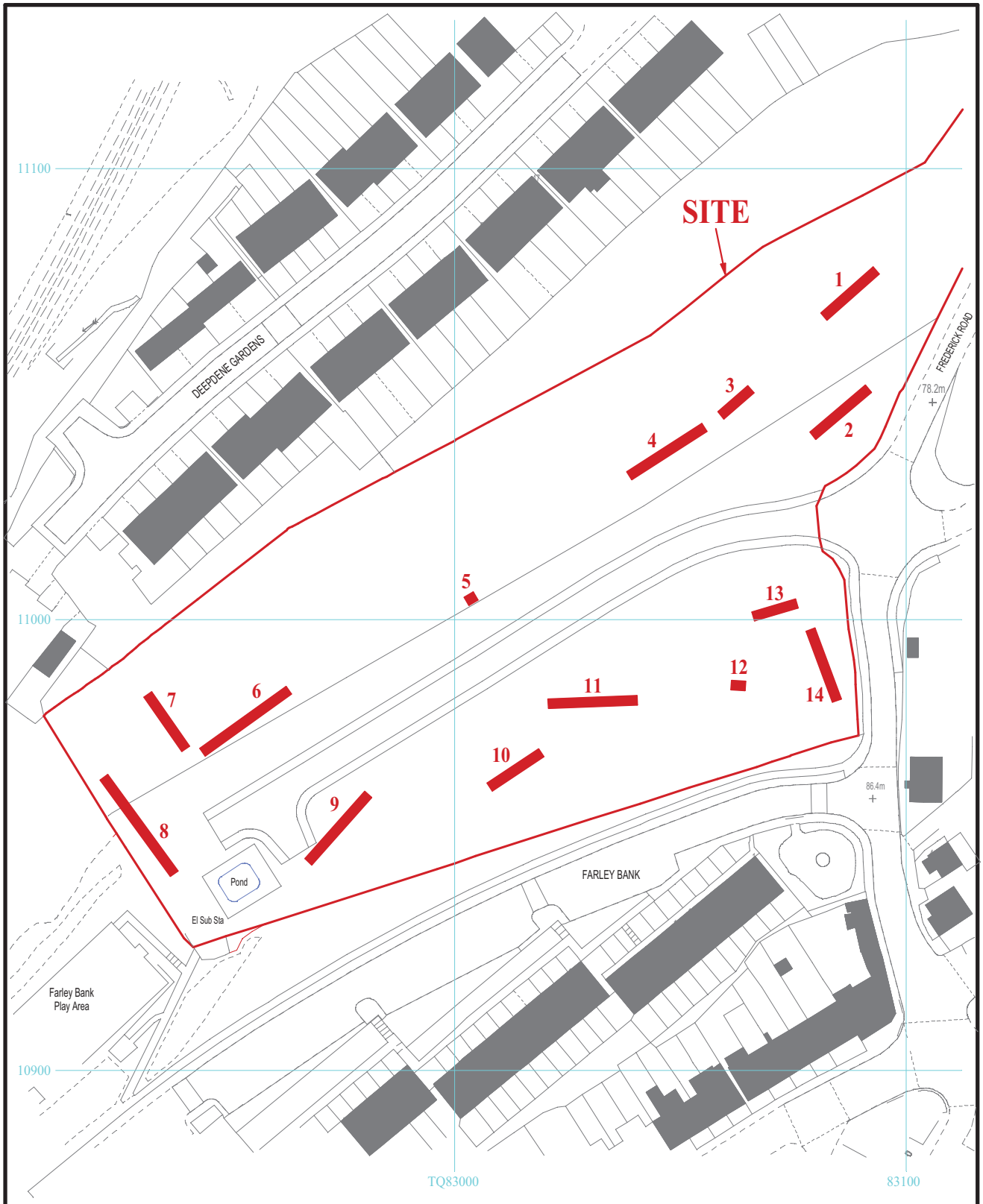

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Figure 3. Plan of site showing the evaluation trenches.

0 50m

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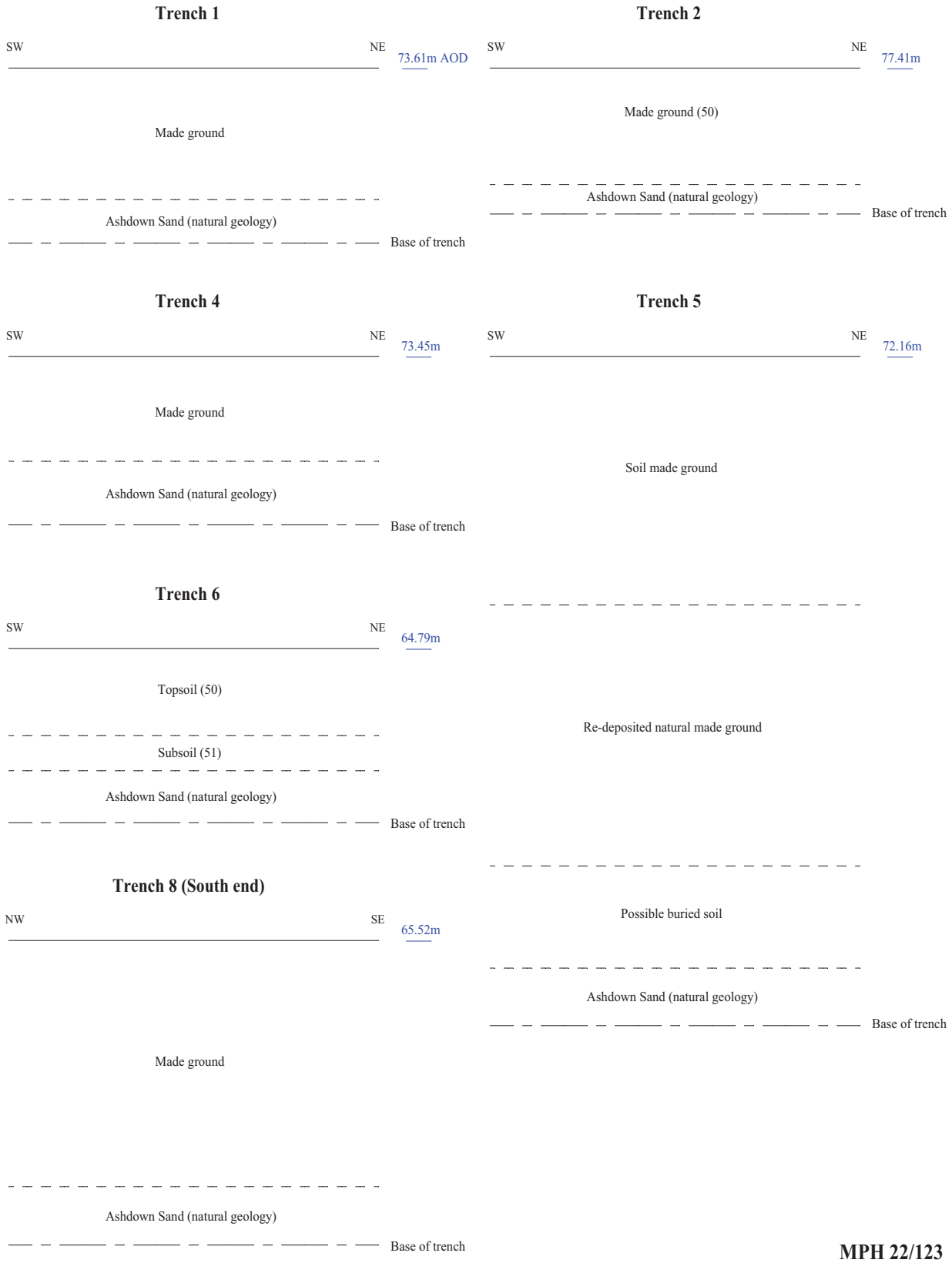

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Figure 4. Representative sections.

0 1m

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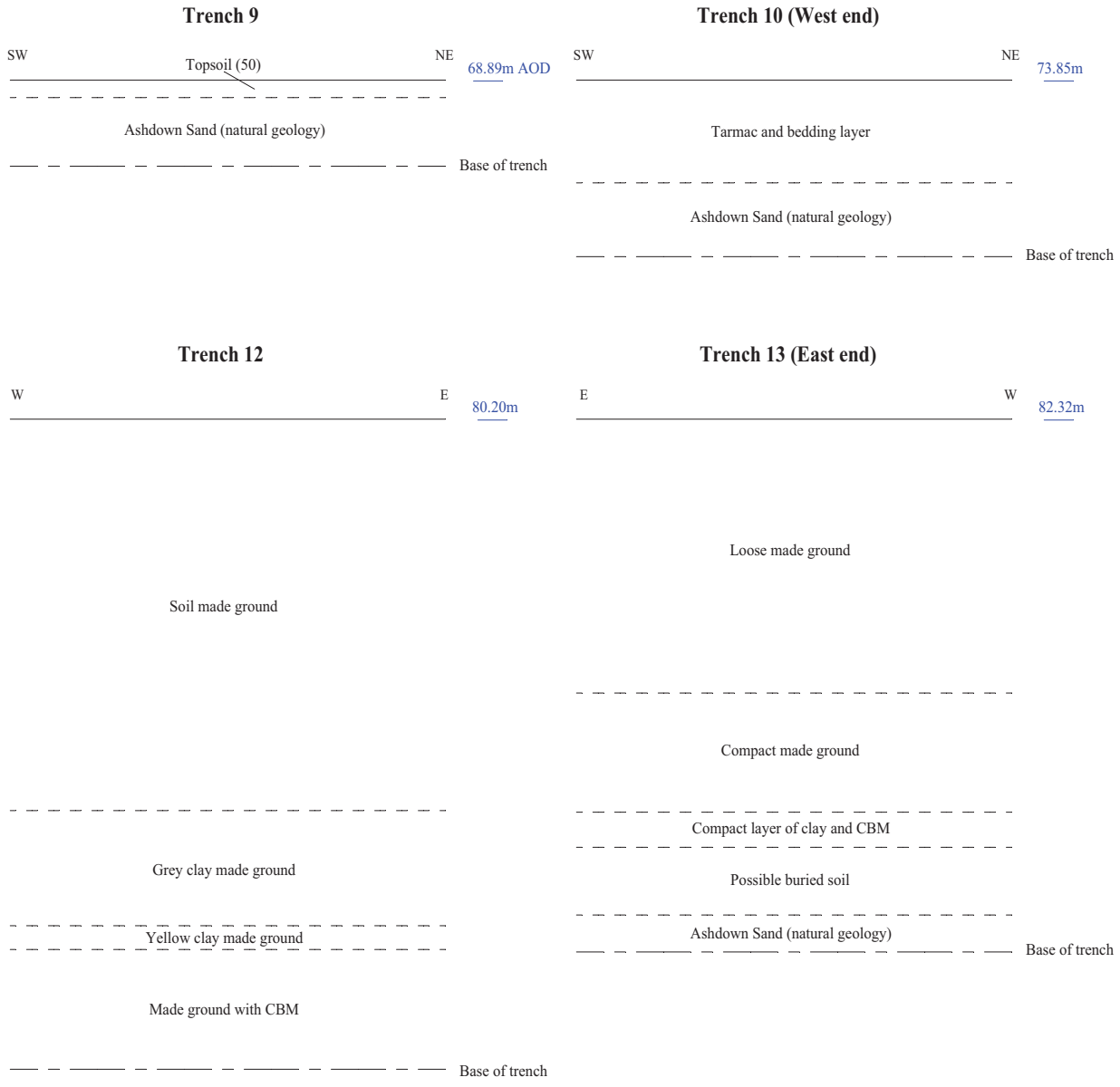

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Figure 5. Representative sections.

0 1m

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

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

Plate 3. Trench 4, looking North-east.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m

Plate 4. Trench 6, looking South-west.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 5. Trench 7, looking North-east.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 6. Trench 8, looking North.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 to 6.

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Plate 7. Trench 9, looking North-east.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 8. Trench 11, looking West.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 9. Trench 12 (North facing sections), looking South-east. Scale: 1m.

Plate 10. Trench 13, looking West.
Scales: 2 x 1m and 0.30m.

Plate 11. General view of north-west corner of the site, looking west from the access road.

Plate 12. General view of north-east corner of site (trenches 3 and 4 in the distance), looking west from trench 2.

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Plates 7 to 12.

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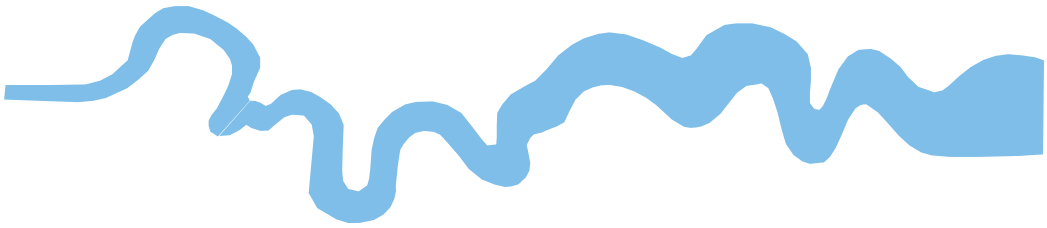
TIME CHART

	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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Offices in:
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