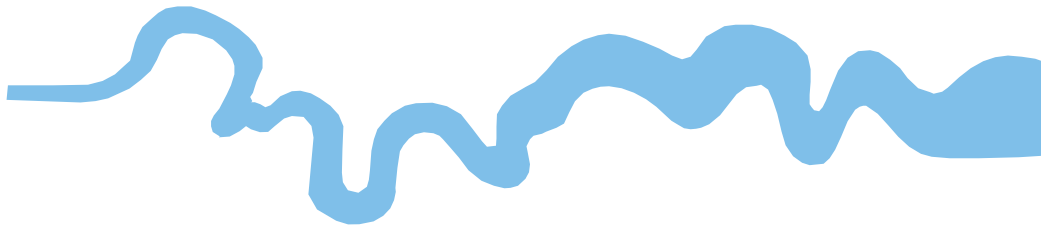


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road  
Crowborough, East Sussex**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: HMC19/183**

**(TQ 5135 3017)**

**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road,  
Crowborough, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Belsize HC20 Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code HMC19/183

**September 2022**

## Summary

**Site name:** Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 5135 3017

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Planning references:** WD/2019/1935/MAJ

**Date and duration of project:** 12th - 13th September 2022

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** HMC 19/183

**Area of site:** c. 1 ha

**Summary of results:** The archaeological evaluation investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development. It is clear from the results that most of the site has been significantly affected by previous activity, most likely from when the present building was constructed in the early 20th century. Prior to Harecombe Manor being built, it is likely that the area sloped down from Southview Road. The construction of the building and its associated gardens resulted in some parts of the site being truncated ("cut") and others being built up ("filled"), to provide flat areas. Although the natural geology was recorded in all of the trenches, sometimes below a buried soil horizon, no archaeological finds or features were recorded. Given the results of the evaluation, the site is believed to have low potential for archaeological features being present.

**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.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.09.22
	Steve Preston ✓ 27.09.22

# Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

**Report 19/183b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex (TQ 5135 3017) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Sukh Lall of Neo Projects Ltd, 231 Elliott Street, Tyldesley, Manchester, M29 8RG, on behalf of Belsize HC20 Ltd.

Planning permission (WD/2019/1935/MAJ) had been gained from Wealden District Council for the demolition of the existing care home on the site, and the construction of a replacement building. The consent is subject to two planning conditions (4 and 5) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, one of which (4) required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks. It was agreed with East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council that some of the requirements of condition 5, covering the building and some of its contents, would not be covered by the archaeological work described in this report.

This was 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 Officers (Mr Neil Griffin and Mr Chris Greatorex). The fieldwork was undertaken by Sam Rishman and Sean Wallis on 12th and 13th September 2022, and the site code is HMC 19/183. 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 south-east of Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex (TQ 5135 3017) (Figs 1 and 2). The site consists of an irregular shaped parcel of land, measuring about 1ha, which is occupied by Harecombe Manor and its associated gardens, car parking areas and driveways. Harecombe Manor had formerly been a care home, but was derelict at the time of the evaluation. The gardens to the east and south of the building were largely overgrown. The site lies on the side of a hill, and generally slopes down towards the south, south-

east and east. However, it has been heavily affected by historic landscaping works, particularly in respect of several terraced areas. As a result, the height varies from about 216m above Ordnance Datum at the northern end of the site, down to about 209m aOD where the southernmost (6) and easternmost (3) trenches were excavated. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Ashdown Beds (BGS 1971), and this was confirmed in all the trenches as a light yellow brown sandy clay, with various amounts of sandstone inclusions. In some trenches, solid sandstone was observed beneath overlying deposits.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2020). In summary, the site lies to the south of the historic core of Crowborough, which is a relatively modern settlement that developed from a small hamlet within the parish of Rotherfield. Very little of archaeological interest has been found in the area around the site, although this could reflect the lack of systematic archaeological investigation in comparison to better studied areas and geologies such as the chalk downs, gravels of major river valleys and the coastal plain. However, recent archaeological work to the east of the site, at the former Rockington Nursery, revealed traces of a settlement dating from the Late Iron Age or Early Roman period. While it is sometimes assumed that most of the Weald was heavily wooded prior to the post-medieval period, Crowborough and Rotherfield both have Saxon place-names, indicating some level of occupation. Harecombe Farm is thought to have dated from the 18th century, and is shown on the tithe map from the 1840s. It appears to have been totally demolished at the end of the 19th century, before the present building was constructed. It is possible that sub-surface features relating to the former farm complex may have survived on the site.

## **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 dating from the Roman period are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits relating to Harecombe Farm are present.

Eight trenches were to be dug, each 15m in length. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the new development, although no work was to take place within the footprint of the existing building. The trenches were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Any archaeological deposits identified were to be hand cleaned, dug, recorded and sampled to satisfy the aims outlined above. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## **Results**

The trenches were dug as close to their original planned positions as possible, although some had to be moved and / or shortened to avoid features such as trees, walls, live services, and a general lack of space in certain parts of the site (Fig. 3). Trench 1 had to be dug in two sections (1A and 1B) to avoid a live electricity cable. The East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer was kept up to date by telephone and email, and agreed the necessary changes. The excavated trenches were all 1.60m wide, and measured between 2.00m and 15.20m in length, and between 0.44m and 1.70m in depth. The natural geology was observed in all 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 SW-NE, and was excavated in the car park in front (north) of the building. A live, underground, electricity cable was detected running across the car park, so the trench had to be dug in two sections (1A and 1B), measuring 2.00m and 4.70m long, respectively, and up to 0.72m deep. The natural sandstone geology was generally encountered beneath 0.65m of Tarmac and various made ground deposits. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 3.40m long and up to 1.70m deep. The trench was located in a narrow terraced area immediately to the east of the building and west of a retaining wall which had a large hedge running along it. The narrowness of the terrace and the large amount of spoil generated meant that the trench had to be shortened. The natural geology was recorded beneath 0.35m of topsoil (50), 1.05m of made ground, and 0.25m of buried soil, indicating that this area had been built up considerably when Harecombe Manor was built in the early 20th century. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

#### Trench 3 (Fig. 4; Pls 3 and 4)

This trench was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 15.20m long and up to 0.89m deep. The trench was excavated through a flat hardstanding, immediately to the east of a high retaining wall. The landscaping work carried out to create the flat area was clearly visible within the trench, the stratigraphy of which varied dramatically from one end to the other. At the southern end, the natural geology was recorded beneath 0.24m of Tarmac and associated bedding layers, 0.43m of re-deposited natural made ground, and 0.21m of buried soil. The original slope of the hill was detectable in the southern end of the trench due to the buried soil horizon. At the northern end of the trench, the natural geology was recorded immediately below the Tarmac and bedding layers. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

#### Trench 4 (Fig. 4)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 6.00m long and up to 0.47m deep. The trench was shorter than originally planned due to a lack of space, as it was positioned between a high retaining wall and mature trees. The natural geology was encountered below 0.19m of topsoil (50), 0.14m of made ground, and 0.09m of buried soil. A land drain was also observed within the trench, but no archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

#### Trench 5 (Fig. 5; Pl. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately SSW-NNE, and was 14.50m long and up to 0.85m deep. It was excavated in a flat garden area, which had clearly been terraced. The natural geology was generally encountered beneath about 0.53m of topsoil (50) and 0.26m of made ground. However, the northern end of the trench was shallower, with the topsoil (50) horizon lying directly above the natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were present.

#### Trench 6 (Fig. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately SSE-NNW, and was 18.25m long and up to 0.72m deep. It was excavated in the same terraced garden area as Trench 5. At the northern end of the trench, the natural geology was lay immediately below 0.38m of topsoil (50). At the southern end of the trench the natural geology was recorded beneath 0.41m of topsoil (50), 0.21m of made ground, and 0.22m of buried soil. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench.

#### Trench 7 (Fig. 5)

This trench was orientated approximately SSW-NNE, and was 11.00m long and up to 0.97m deep. The trench was excavated along a narrow terrace between the main building and a retaining wall. It was shorter than originally planned as a large concrete tank was uncovered at the northern end of the trench. Part of the trench could not be excavated due to the presence of a concrete ramp. The natural geology was generally encountered

below about 0.13m of topsoil (50), 0.19m of made ground, and 0.12m of buried soil. The southern end of the trench was deeper (0.97m) due to the fact that it had been disturbed in the past. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

#### Trench 8 (Fig. 5; Pl. 6)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 8.30m long and up to 0.90m deep. It was dug immediately to the south of the building, but excavation was difficult due to the presence of some pipes which had to be left *in situ*. The natural geology was generally encountered below about 0.15m of topsoil (50), 0.20m of made ground, and 0.27m of buried soil. No archaeological features or finds were recorded in the trench.

## **Finds**

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

## **Conclusion**

Despite a number of logistical restrictions, the archaeological evaluation at Harecombe Manor, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development of the site. It is clear from the results that most of the site has been significantly affected by previous activity, most likely dating from when the present building was constructed in the early 20th century. Prior to Harecombe Manor being built, it is likely that the area sloped down from Southview Road. The construction of the building and its associated gardens resulted in some parts of the site being truncated ("cut") and others being built up ("filled"), to provide flat areas. The scale of the early 20th century earthmoving was impressive, particularly as most of the work would have been carried out by hand. Although the natural geology was recorded in all of the trenches, sometimes below a buried soil horizon, no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

On the basis of these results from the evaluation, the site is believed to have low archaeological potential.

## **References**

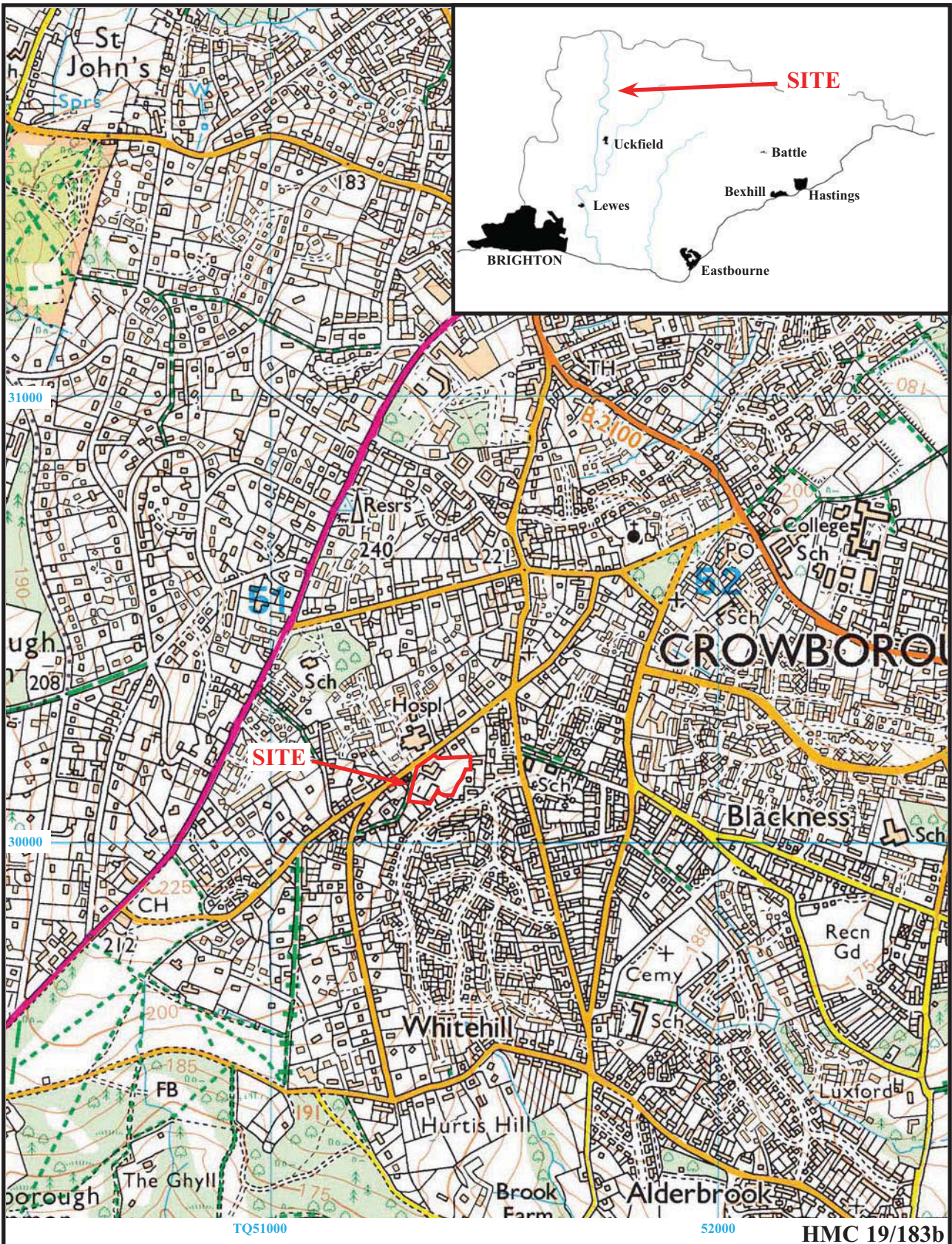
- Baljkas, G, 2020, 'Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex - an archaeological desk-based assessment', unpublished TVAS South report **19/183**, Brighton.
- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet **303**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth.
- NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.



## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1a	2.00	1.60	0.69	0-0.07m Tarmac; 0.07-0.14m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.14-0.19m made ground (gravel); 0.19-0.65m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.65-0.69m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PI. 1]</b>
1b	4.70	1.60	0.77	0-0.07m Tarmac; 0.07-0.14m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.14-0.19m made ground (gravel); 0.19-0.65m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.65-0.77m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PI. 1]</b>
2	3.40	1.60	1.70	0-0.35m Topsoil (50); 0.35-1.40m made ground; 1.40-1.65m buried soil; 1.65-1.70m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PI. 2]</b>
3	15.20	1.60	0.89 (SW) 0.44 (NE)	South-west end: 0-0.07m Tarmac; 0.07-0.18m bedding layer (hardcore); 0.18-0.24m bedding layer (brick rubble); 0.24-0.67m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.67-0.86m buried soil; 0.86-0.89m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). North-east end: 0-0.07m Tarmac; 0.07-0.24m bedding layer (hardcore); 0.24-0.31m bedding layer (brick rubble); 0.31-0.44m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PIs 3 and 4]</b>
4	6.00	1.60	0.47	0-0.19m Topsoil (50); 0.19-0.33m made ground; 0.33-0.42m buried soil; 0.42-0.47m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds).
5	14.50	1.60	0.85	0-0.53m Topsoil (50); 0.53-0.79m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.79-0.85m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PI. 5]</b>
6	14.30	1.60	1.00 (S) 0.45 (N)	South end: 0-0.41m Topsoil (50); 0.41-0.62m made ground (re-deposited natural); 0.62-0.84m buried soil; 0.84-1.00m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). North end: 0-0.38m Topsoil (50); 0.38-0.45m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds).
7	11.00	1.60	0.60 (N) 0.97 (S)	0-0.13m Topsoil (50); 0.13-0.32m made ground; 0.32-0.44m buried soil; 0.44-0.60+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). Depth at southern end (0.97m) is due to modern disturbance.
8	8.30	1.60	0.90	0-0.15m Topsoil (50); 0.15-0.35m made ground; 0.35-0.62m buried soil; 0.62-0.90m+ natural geology (Ashdown Beds). <b>[PI. 6]</b>

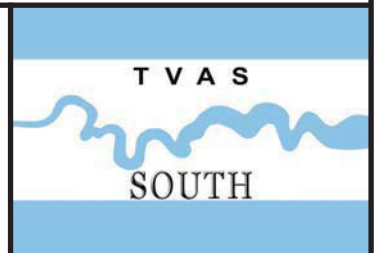




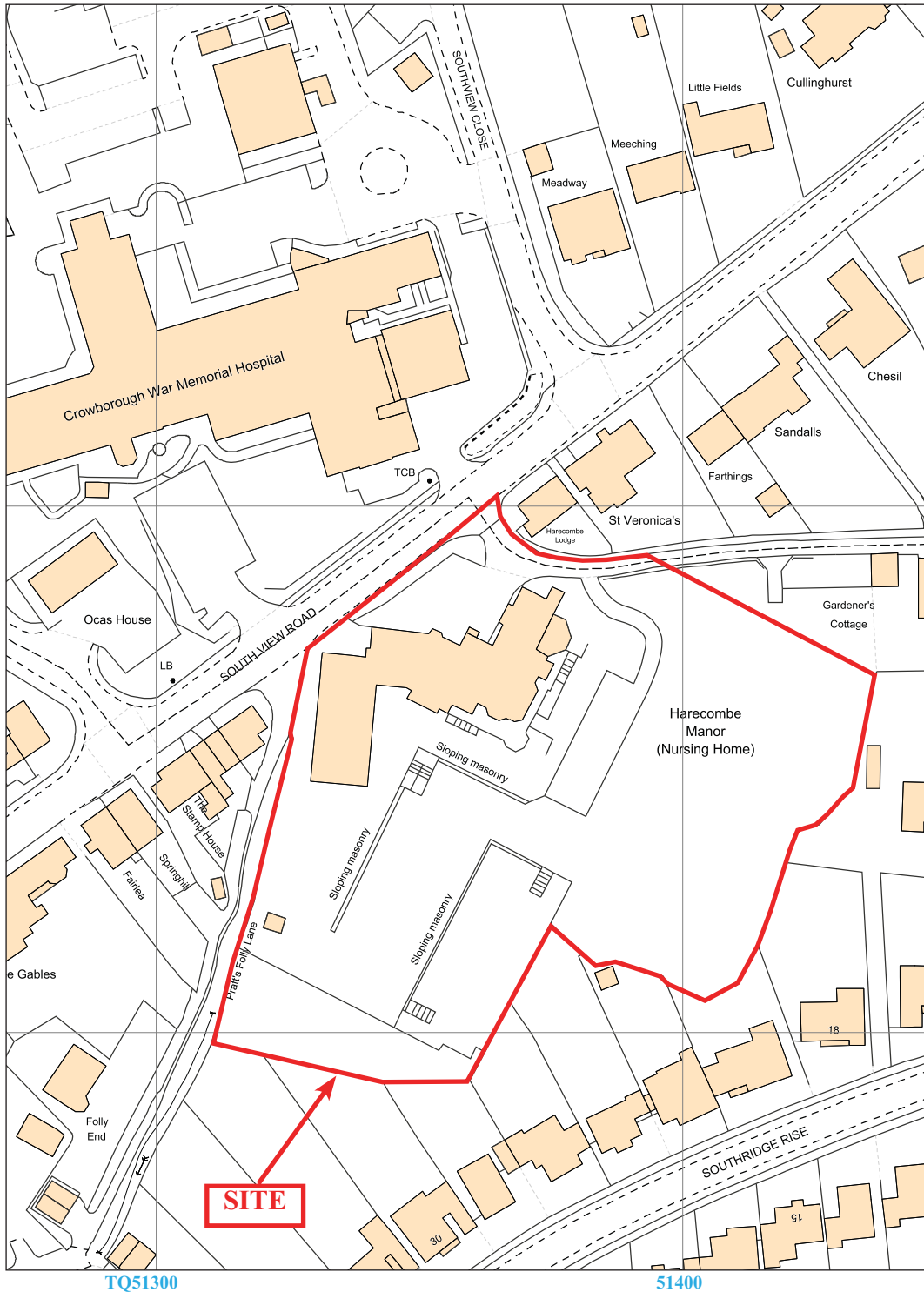
**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough,  
East Sussex, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

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

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HMC 19/183b



**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough,  
East Sussex, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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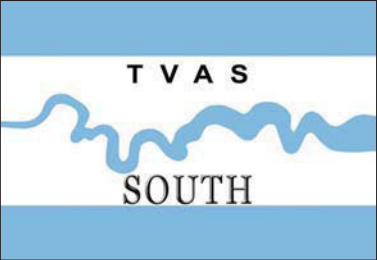




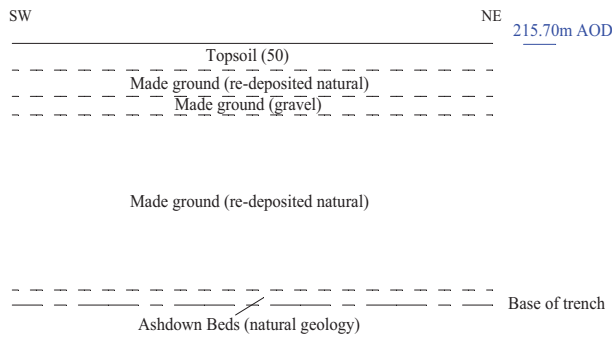
HMC 19/183b

**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough,  
East Sussex, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

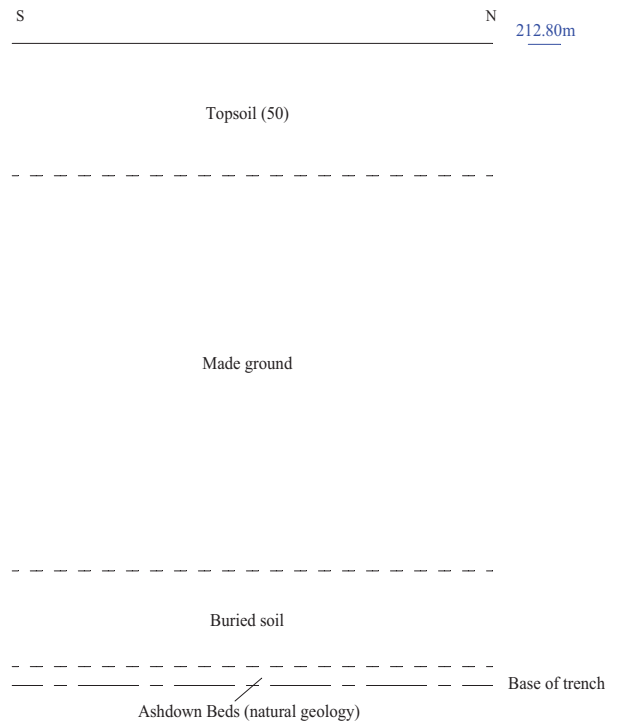
Figure 3. Plan showing the evaluation trenches.



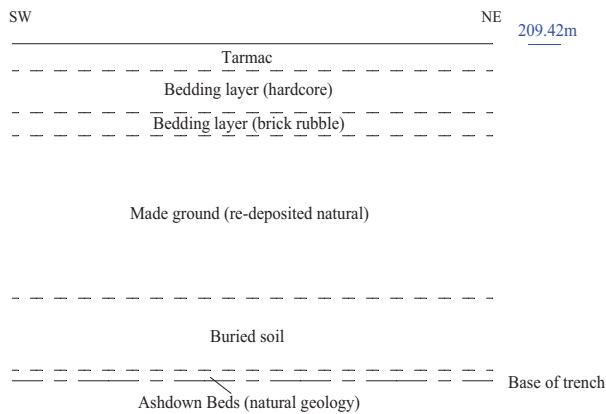
### Trench 1A



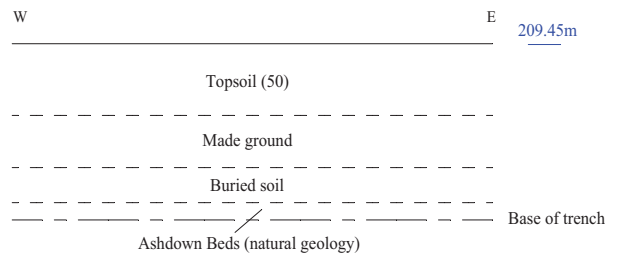
### Trench 2



### Trench 3 (South-west end)



### Trench 4



HMC 19/183b

## Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, 2022 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Representative sections.



**Trench 5**

SW \_\_\_\_\_ NE 209.74m AOD

Topsoil (50)

-----

Made ground (re-deposited natural)

-----

Ashdown Beds (natural geology)

Base of trench

**Trench 6 (South end)**

S \_\_\_\_\_ N 209.46m

Topsoil (50)

-----

Made ground (re-deposited natural)

-----

Buried soil

-----

Ashdown Beds (natural geology)

Base of trench

**Trench 7**

S \_\_\_\_\_ N 213.24m

Topsoil (50)

-----

Made ground

-----

Buried soil

-----

Ashdown Beds (natural geology)

Base of trench

**Trench 8**

W \_\_\_\_\_ E 213.53m

Topsoil (50)

-----

Made ground

-----

Buried soil

-----

Ashdown Beds (natural geology)

Base of trench

HMC 19/183b

**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough,  
East Sussex, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Representative sections.

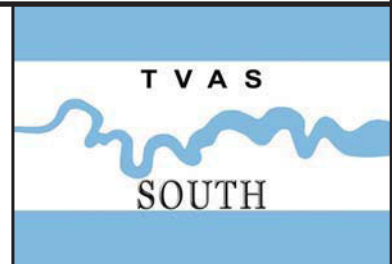




Plate 1. General view of Trench 1, parts A and B, looking West.



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



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



Plate 4. Southern end of Trench 3, looking South-west, with buried soil showing original slope.  
Scale: 1m.



Plate 5. Trench 5, looking South.  
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.



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

HMC 19/183b

**Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough,  
East Sussex, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation  
Plates 1 to 6.**

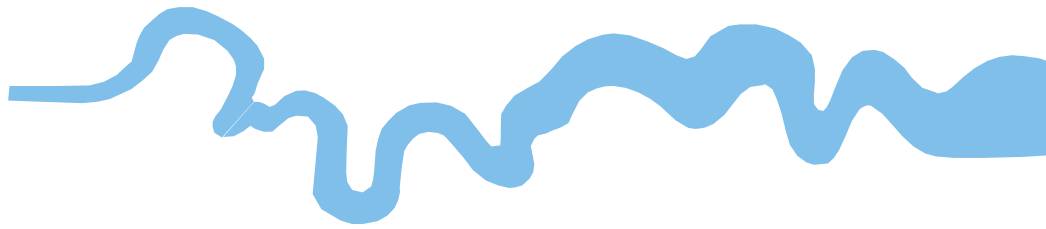


## TIME CHART

	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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