

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Whitehawk Primary School, Whitehawk Road,
Brighton, East Sussex**

An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: WSB09/97

(TQ 3335 0475)

**Whitehawk Primary School, Whitehawk Road,
Brighton, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Brighton and Hove City Council**

by Sean Wallis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code WSB 09/97

November 2009

Summary

Site name: Whitehawk Primary School, Whitehawk Road, Brighton, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3335 0475

Site activity: Field Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th October 2009

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: WSB 09/97

Area of site: c. 1.3 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has not revealed any deposits of archaeological interest. Natural geology was revealed at shallow depth to the north of the school suggesting that this area had been terraced with the removal of superficial deposits. In contrast, the area to the west of the school was built up, with the original ground surface and underlying colluvial deposits buried beneath made ground. Apart from a number of 18th to 20th century finds from the original ground surface, only a single prehistoric struck flint was recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Brighton Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 4.11.09
	Steve Preston ✓ 29.10.09

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Report 09/97

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Whitehawk Primary School, Whitehawk Road, Brighton, East Sussex (TQ 3335 0475) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nigel McCutcheon, Architecture and Design Manager, Brighton and Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SR, on behalf of the City Council.

Planning consent is to be sought from Brighton and Hove City Council to redevelop certain parts of the existing primary school. The proposals will involve the demolition of the existing dining hall and caretaker's house, and the construction of a new dining hall and library, along with a further extension close to the main school entrance. In addition, the access roads and car parking areas are to be remodelled. In order to further inform the planning process, an archaeological field evaluation, by means of trial trenching, has been requested by Mr Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council Archaeological Service, who act as archaeological advisers to the City Council.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Phillip Parker and Sean Wallis on 27th October 2009, and the site code is WSB 09/97. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Brighton Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the Brighton suburb of Whitehawk, approximately 1.8km east of the city centre, and is about 1.4km inland (Fig. 2). The suburb was originally developed in the 1930's, in a dry downland valley, and the school dates from this earliest phase of building work in the area. The school actually lies near the bottom of this valley, with the ground rising steeply to the west towards Whitehawk Camp, which is partly occupied by Brighton Racecourse. The ground also rises to the east of the site, although the gradient on this side is less severe. The school site itself has been terraced into the natural slope, whilst the adjacent playing field and car

parking areas appear to have been landscaped to some extent. In spite of this landscaping, the site still generally slopes up eastwards from Whitehawk Road, and lies at a height of between approximately 58m and 61m AOD. According the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of upper or middle chalk (BGS 1984).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its close proximity to the Neolithic causewayed enclosure known as Whitehawk Camp (Oswald et al 2001, fig 5.31). The school is located in a dry valley, with Whitehawk Camp on the hill to the west, and is likely to contain colluvial (hillwash) deposits relating to the silting up of the valley during the Holocene and post-glacial periods as a result of both natural and man made activities (Allen 2005). These deposits can contain a stratified sequence of artefactual and ecofactual evidence of human activity during these periods, especially in relation to the wider landscape around the Neolithic enclosure and possibly including in-situ occupation deposits.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be undertaken in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeologically deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits relating to human activity in the Holocene and post-glacial periods are present; and
- to determine if any deposits associated with the wider landscape around the Neolithic enclosure are present.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, each 12m and 1.6m wide, in those areas which will be most affected by the new school buildings. The trenches were to be excavated using a JCB type mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision.

Results

The trenches were dug close to their original intended positions although, due to logistical problems, both were slightly shorter than the 12m intended (Fig. 3).

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was aligned approximately north -south. Due to the presence of trees and fixed benches, the trench was shortened to 9m. A circular brick built structure, possibly a well with a capping stone, was encountered during the digging of the trench, and a baulk was therefore left in to avoid further disturbance in this area. The rest of the trench was excavated to a depth of between 1.2m and 1.25m, with a test pit dug to 1.4m at the southern end.

The turf and topsoil was only 0.14m thick, and lay directly above a deposit of chalk and flint (51). This layer was a dump of re-deposited natural geology, probably associated with landscape activities when the school was built, and two further dump deposits were noted at the southern end of the trench (Fig. 4). Layer 52 consisted of an orange brown clayey silt, probably re-deposited colluvium, whilst layer 53 comprised more chalk and flint. Only layer 51 was observed at the far north end of the trench. These various layers of made ground varied in thickness from 0.66m at the northern end of the trench to 0.77m at the southern end. Along the whole of the trench they lay directly above a deposit of mid greyish/brown clayey silt (54), which probably represents a buried soil horizon. This layer varied in thickness between 0.29m and 0.4m and contained animal bone, burnt flint fragments, brick and tile fragments, glass, metal, and pottery dating from the 18th to 20th centuries (not retained).

Immediately beneath the buried soil was a layer of light orange/brown clayey silt (55), which is thought to represent colluvium. This deposit was observed along the length of the trench, and a small test pit into was dug at the southern end. No finds were initially retrieved from this deposit, However wet sieving of a 20L soil sample produced a single flint flake, a fragment of animal bone and three small pieces of burnt flint. The flots also contained a small amount of charred plant remains with wood charcoal and weed seeds represented.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Due to the presence of a gate, this trench had to be shifted slightly north-east of its original intended position. The trench was aligned approximately north east - south west, and measured 10.8m in length. However, the north-east end of the trench could not be fully excavated due to the presence of a service pipe. The remainder of the trench was excavated down to the top of the natural chalk, which showed signs of periglacial striping,. A test

pit was dug to a depth of 1.2m midway along the trench to confirm that the interpretation of the stratigraphy was correct.

Tarmac (56) and its associated bedding layers (57), up to 0.17m thick, were removed along the entire length of the trench. This exposed a thin layer of mid orange brown clayey silt (58), possibly colluvium, which in turn lay above the natural chalk (Fig. 4). At the western end of the trench the chalk lay less than 0.3m below the present ground surface. No archaeological deposits were revealed.

Finds

A number of finds, including glass, metal, brick and tile fragments, burnt flint, and pottery dating from the 18th to 20th century were recorded in the buried soil horizon in trench 1 (54). These were not retained.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single small flint flake was recovered from sieving of a sample from layer 55 in trench 1. The flake is unpatinated and partly cortical. It does not have any closely datable chronological attributes and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be suggested.

Burnt flint

Three small pieces of burnt flint (3g) were recovered from sieving of the sample from layer 55 in trench 1.

Animal bone

One small pieces of unidentified animal bone was recovered from sieving of the sample from layer 55 in trench 1.

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits were revealed during the evaluation and only a single prehistoric struck flint was certainly of archaeological interest. The marked difference in the two trenches has provided good evidence that the area around the school was heavily landscaped when it was built in the 1930s. The area to the north of the school (trench 2) has been truncated through terracing, with most of any colluviul deposits which may have existed, having being removed. As a result, only deeper archaeological features such as pits or ditches, which

may have penetrated the natural chalk, are likely to have survived in this area. However, no such features were found in this trench.

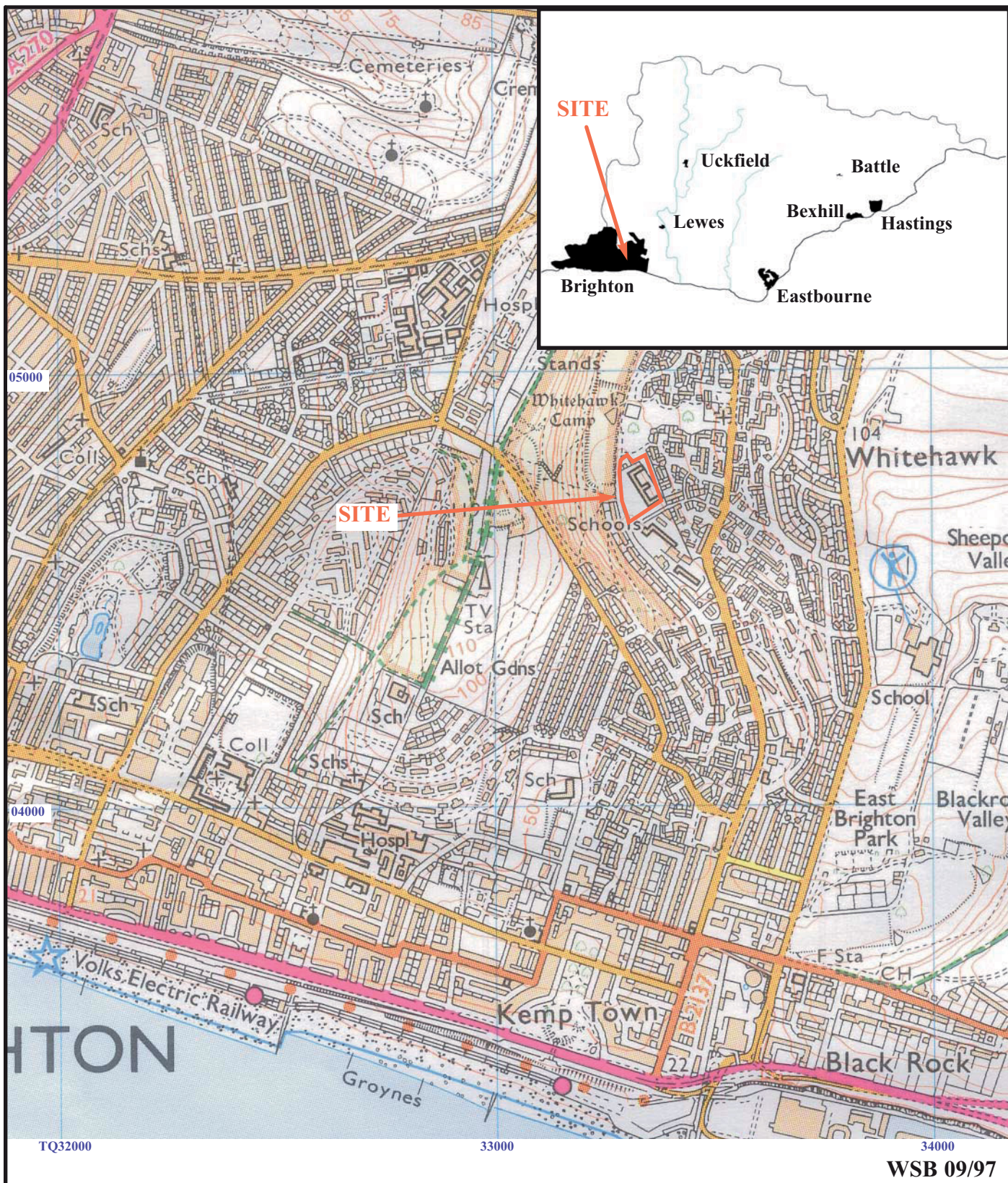
In contrast, the area to the west (trench 1) of the school appears to have been built up during the original building work, meaning that any colluvial layers have survived, albeit buried beneath made ground. It seems likely that these colluvial deposits, which lie at a depth of *c.* 1.2m below the present ground surface will be little disturbed during the proposed development.

References

- Allen, M J, 2005, Beaker settlement and environment on the chalk downs of Southern England, *Proc Prehist Soc*, **71**, 219-246
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- Oswald, A, Dyer, C and Barber, M, 2001, *The creation of monuments: Neolithic causewayed enclosures in the British Isles*, Swindon
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9.00	1.60	1.25 (N) 1.20 (S)	0-0.13m turf and topsoil (50); 0.13-0.46m re-deposited chalk and flint (51); 0.46-0.65m orange/brown clayey silt (52); 0.65-0.90m re-deposited chalk and flint (53); 0.90-1.19m greyish/brown clayey silt (54); 1.19m+ light orange/brown clayey silt (55). Test pit dug at southern end of trench to 1.40m. [Plate 1]
2	10.80	1.60	0.32 (NE) 0.43 (SW)	0-0.07m Tarmac (56); 0.07-0.12m bedding layer for Tarmac (57); 0.12-0.28m orange/brown clayey silt (58); 0.28m+ natural geology (chalk). Test pit dug through chalk to 1.20m. [Plate 2]

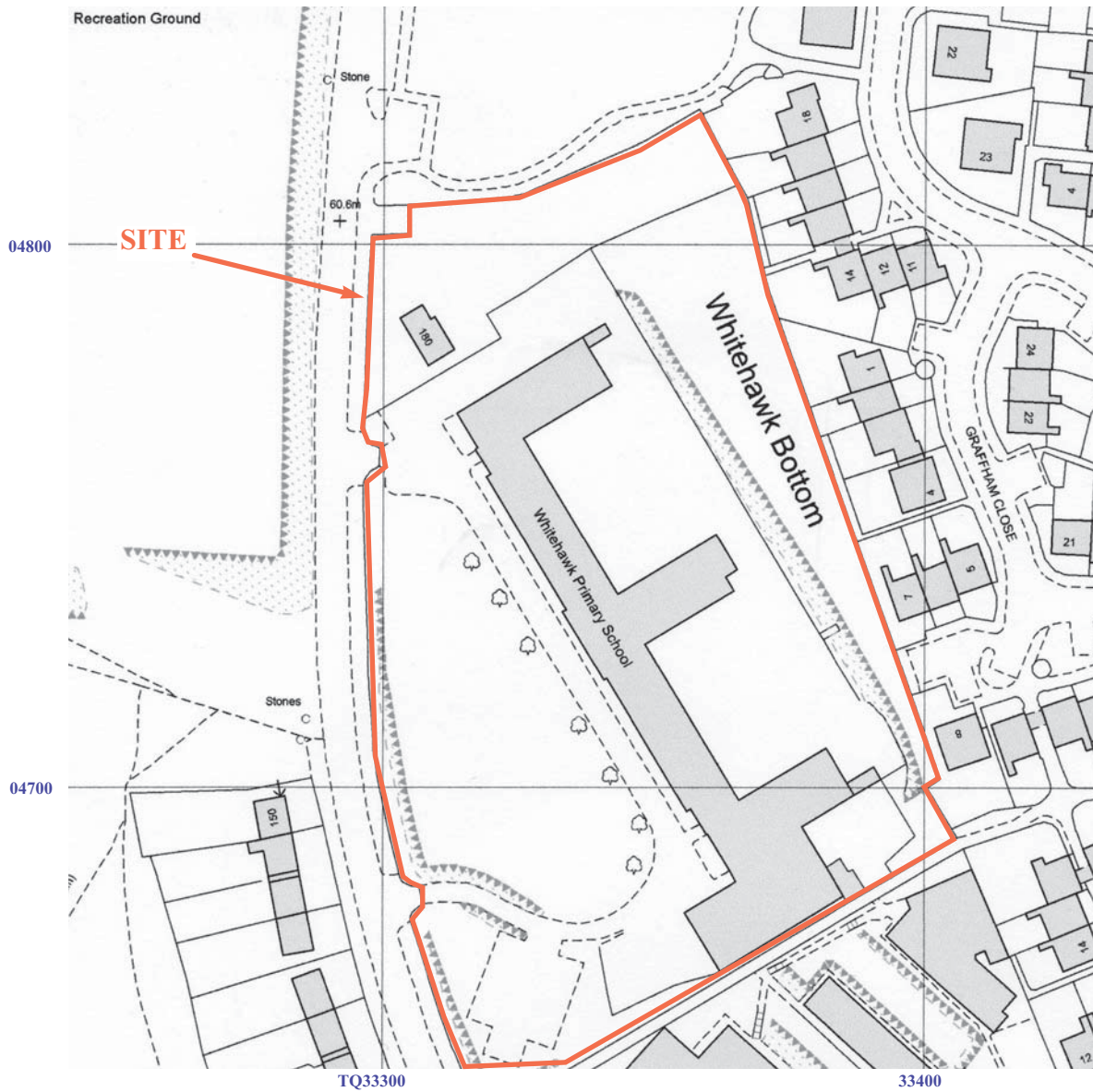


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Figure 1. Location of site within Brighton and East Sussex.

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Figure 2. Location of site within Whitehawk.

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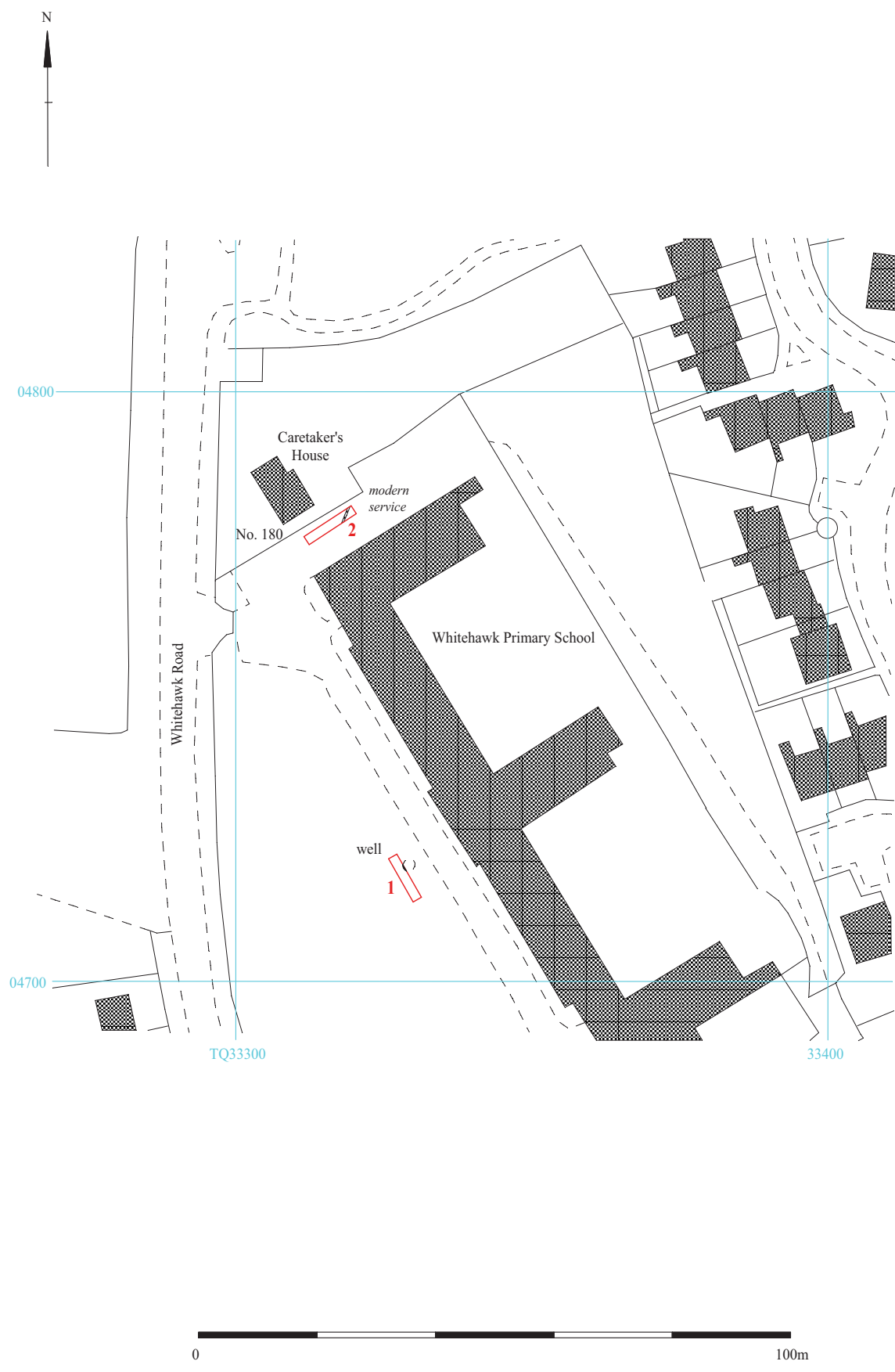


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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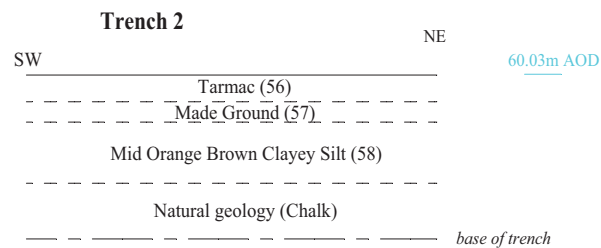
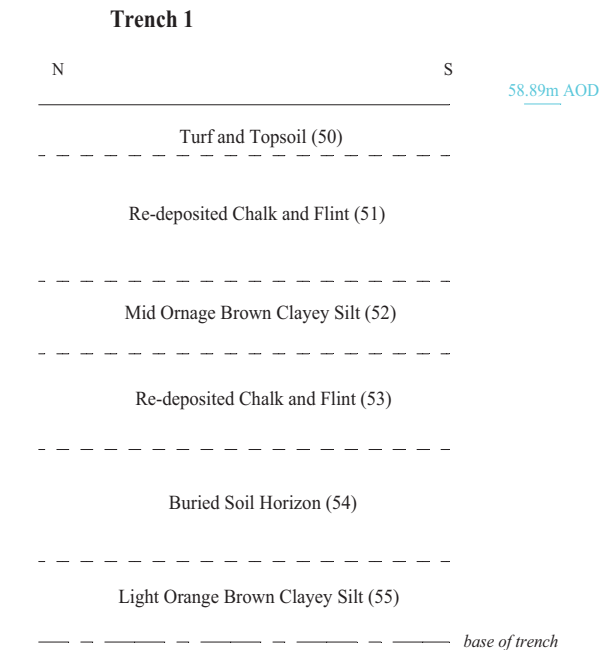


Figure 4. Representative Sections.



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

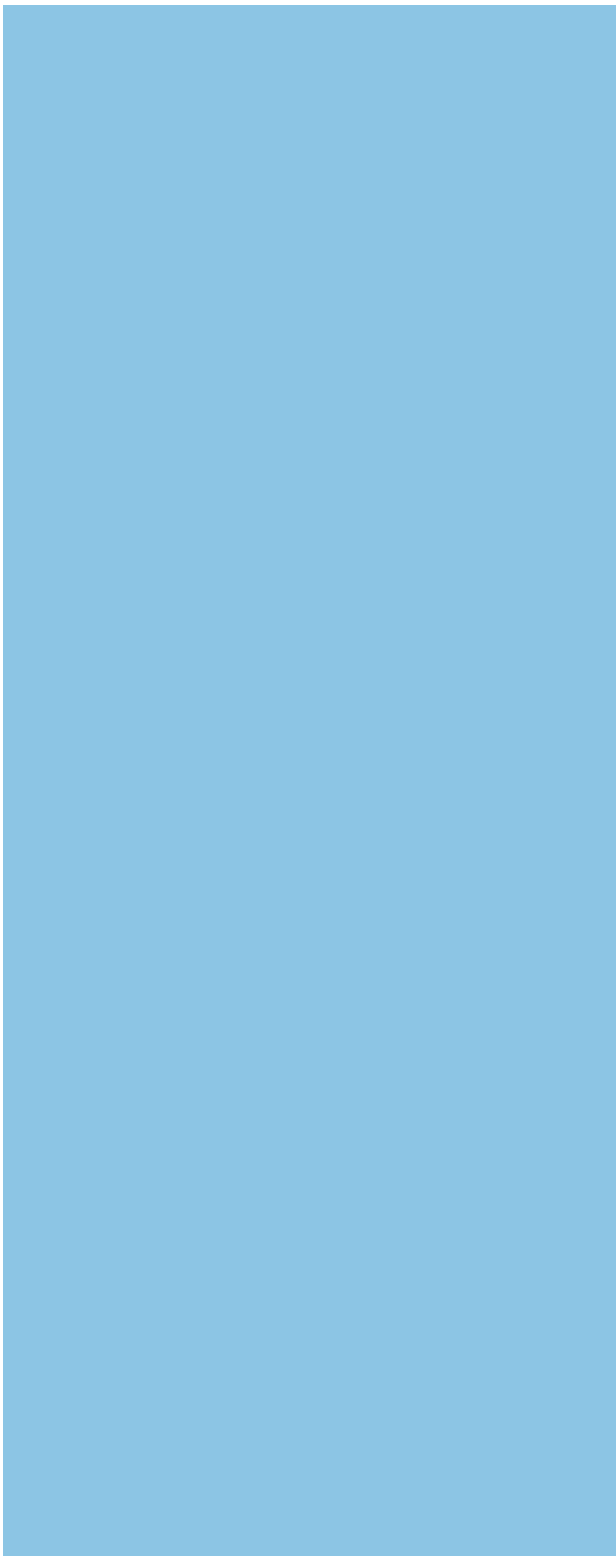
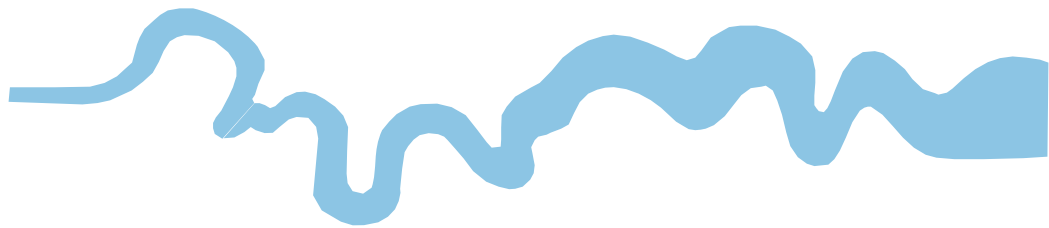


Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north east, Scales: 1m and 2m.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	AD 0 BC 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late 3300 BC	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early 4300 BC	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late 6000 BC	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early 10000 BC	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper 30000 BC	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle 70000 BC	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower 2,000,000 BC	2,000,000 BC





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