

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

**Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst,
Cranbrook, Kent**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson and Sean Wallis

Site Code: SCK10/63

(TQ 7920 3905)

Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Acorn Buildings Ltd

by Tim Dawson and Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

SiteCode SCK10/63

July 2010

Summary

Site name: Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 79185 39045

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 13th–14th July 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: SCK 10/63

Area of site: *c.* 85 sq m

Summary of results: One shallow possible pit was identified in the southern foundation trench. It contained brick and tile probably dating to the 17th or 18th century, but may itself be later.

Monuments identified: Pit

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 21.07.10 Steve Preston✓ 21.07.10

Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson and Sean Wallis

Report 10/63

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Summerhill Cottage, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2AR (TQ 79185 39045) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Benn Nicol, of Nicol Design Associates Ltd, 93 Bohemia Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6RJ on behalf of Mr Darren Poole, Acorn Buildings Ltd, 107 London Road, Hurst Green, East Sussex, TN19 7PN.

Planning permission (10/00251/HOUSE/GM2) has been granted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to construct a new double garage on the site. This is subject to a condition (4) which requires the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Teresa Hawtin, Archaeological Officer at the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, advisers to the Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis and Tim Dawson on the 13th and 14th July 2010 and the site code is SCK 10/63.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Tunbridge Wells Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located c. 1.5km north of Sissinghurst and 3km north-east of Cranbrook (Fig. 1). It lies on the northern slopes of Camden Hill with the ground sloping upwards towards Cranbrook Common to the south (Fig. 2). The land is currently occupied by Summerhill cottage with its grounds and outbuildings. The area of the proposed garage was, until recently, the site of a greenhouse. Bordering the site to the west is the A229 and to the north and south are the neighbouring properties of North Cottage and Fairfield (Fig. 2). The land to the east is farmland. The site itself slopes down steeply from the road on the west edge but levels off in the area around the

house and garden. The underlying geology is described as Tunbridge Wells Sand (BGS 1981) and this was seen during the watching brief. The site is at a height of *c.*70m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the route of a major north-south road linking the Low Weald, in the north, to the High Weald, in the south. Part of this road is thought to be Roman in date, particularly the straight section which runs through Staplehurst, about 4km north of the current site. Although there is a paucity of archaeological finds from earlier periods from the Weald in general, it is known that the area was being exploited, from at least Roman times, for its resources of iron, timber and charcoal. It is possible therefore that evidence of road-side settlement may be found within the development area. Summerhill and the adjacent North Cottage once formed a single farmhouse dating to the 17th century and archaeological remains associated with this farm may also survive.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches for the new garage.

A banked area along the southern edge of the site 3.20m by 15.50m was levelled to provide an extension to the existing driveway. Immediately to the north of this, the foundation trenches for the garage were dug. They were 0.40m wide and varied between 0.85m and 1.10m in depth. The area enclosed by the trenches measured 5.50m by 8.16m. A mini-digger with ditching bucket was used for the ground reduction while a 0.40m toothed bucket was used for the foundation trenches. Spoil heaps were monitored for archaeological finds and all possible archaeological deposits were hand-cleaned. All archaeological features encountered were photographed using colour print, colour slide and black and white print films and plans and sections were drawn to scale of the feature and the immediate surrounding area. Cuts and fills were identified and assigned numbers before they were recorded on individual context sheets.

Results (Figs 3 and 4)

Ground Reduction

The area of bank that was levelled in order to extend the driveway was a maximum of *c.*0.50m deep and consisted of 0.10m of turf topsoil covering 0.30m of light yellow brown subsoil with mixed patches of root disturbance. This overlay yellow clayey sand, which, although indistinguishable from the natural geology, in places at least must have been redeposited (50) as it was later seen to cover archaeological deposits (51). No archaeological features were seen in the area exposed by the levelling of the bank.

Foundation Trenches

The foundation trenches were dug in the form of a rectangle with two openings in the western side (Fig. 3, Pl. 1). One archaeological feature was recorded in the sides of the foundation trench in the south-western corner of the footprint (Fig. 3). This consisted of a shallow cut, possibly a pit, 0.06m deep, 2.06m in length and 0.49m wide (1) (Fig. 4, Pl. 2) which was filled with a dark orange sand containing frequent small and medium fragments of ironstone (51). The fill of this feature yielded many fragments of roughly-made sandy brick and a few smaller pieces of tile. The whole feature was unclear in plan as it was completely covered by a layer of mottled orange and pale yellow clayey sand 0.54m deep (50). This matched the local natural geology and contained no artefacts, which suggests that it was excavated and then immediately used to level the site or build up the bank that previously covered that area of the site.

Further features identified were all modern. A 2m-wide modern soakaway was observed in the eastern trench 1.16m north of the south-eastern corner. Its fill contained modern drain pipe, brick and china, none of which was retained, and is probably associated with the greenhouse that previously stood on the site (D Poole, pers. comm.). The brick footings of the greenhouse were visible in the ground surface just to the north and west of the soakaway. A modern cable, running north-south from the house to the garden shed was seen crossing the north-eastern corner of the foundation trench.

No deposits were encountered during the course of the excavations that warranted environmental sampling.

Finds

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

A total of 874g of ceramic building material (16 fragments) was recovered during the excavation. Of these, four were brick fragments, and the remainder were tile pieces or small fragments which were not diagnostic. The ceramic building material was recovered from context 1 (51), a shallow pit.

Tiles

The tile fabric was examined at x10 magnification and was uniformly fine, evenly fired clay with fine, well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. The colour was uniformly orange red. The fragments had a rough underside, indicating that they were made using a sanded mould. No peg holes were present. This type of tile was produced from the 13th to 19th century, and is not closely datable.

Bricks

The brick fabric at x10 magnification was very sandy, friable, with poorly-sorted small and medium sized iron - rich inclusions. Larger inclusions (1–2mm) were occasionally present. The colour was streaked and varied from mid and pale purple-brown to yellow-white, with clearly visible planes and folds throughout. The brick was unfrogged, with smooth upper surfaces with slight wire striations, and very rough sides and undersides indicating a sandy mould. The brick fragment was 60mm thick, though the length and width was not known. It can be categorized as Harley (1974) type 4 or 5.

The thickness, the roughness of the brick's surfaces and the absence of a 'frog' indentation in the top would often indicate a date in the later medieval period (a 'Tudor brick') or a date in the second half of the 17th century or earlier. However, the fabric and inclusions appear to reflect the geology of the area, (clay ironstone, and ferruginous sand and sandstone) suggesting the brick is likely to be a product of local, small-scale industry. It could therefore be considerably later, perhaps earlier post-medieval (17th or 18th century). As Harley notes, even when length and breadth of a brick are known, dating by dimensions can be unreliable, and technique, finish and fabric must be taken into account (Harley 1974).

Conclusion

The brick and tile recovered from the shallow pit comprised a modest assemblage of likely post-medieval date. The widespread practice of re-using bricks and tiles adds further imprecision to dating deposits from these material alone, and it is thought that in general, building materials would not have been transported a great distance before re-use. It is conceivable that the building material recovered from the pit was part of a 17th or 18th century (or even later) structure on the site.

Conclusion

Only one feature was observed during the groundworks the site. This, a shallow depression or pit filled with ironstone and fragments of likely 17th- to 18th-century brick and tile, may correspond to the house's original function as a farm with the building material being the remains of an outbuilding. As there was no pattern in the deposition of the brick and tile it is likely that they were deposited as a result of demolition. The whole feature was buried under a layer of clean apparently natural sand, probably representing the landscaping of the site, though no finds were recovered from this deposit so the event cannot be dated. The groundworks did not uncover any further archaeological finds or features.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 304, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Harley, L S, 1974, *A Typology of Brick*, Journal of the British Arch Assoc volume 37, London
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	51	Pit(?)	17th-18th century	Brick and tile

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of all finds

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt. (g)</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	51	Brick and tile	16	874	Bricks likely 17th/18th century; tiles undated

Kent County Council SMR summary form

Site Name: Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent

Site address: Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2AR

Summary: One shallow pit was found during digging of foundations for a new garage

District/Unitary: Tunbridge Wells

Parish: Cranbrook

Periods: 17th-18th century

NGR: TQ 7920 3905

Type of archaeological work: Watching brief

Date of Recording: 13th - 14th July 2010

Unit undertaking recording: Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Geology: Tunbridge Wells Sand

Title and author of report: Summerhill, Camden Hill, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Kent: An Archaeological Watching Brief; Tim Dawson and Sean Wallis

Summary of results by period (*from bottom up*):

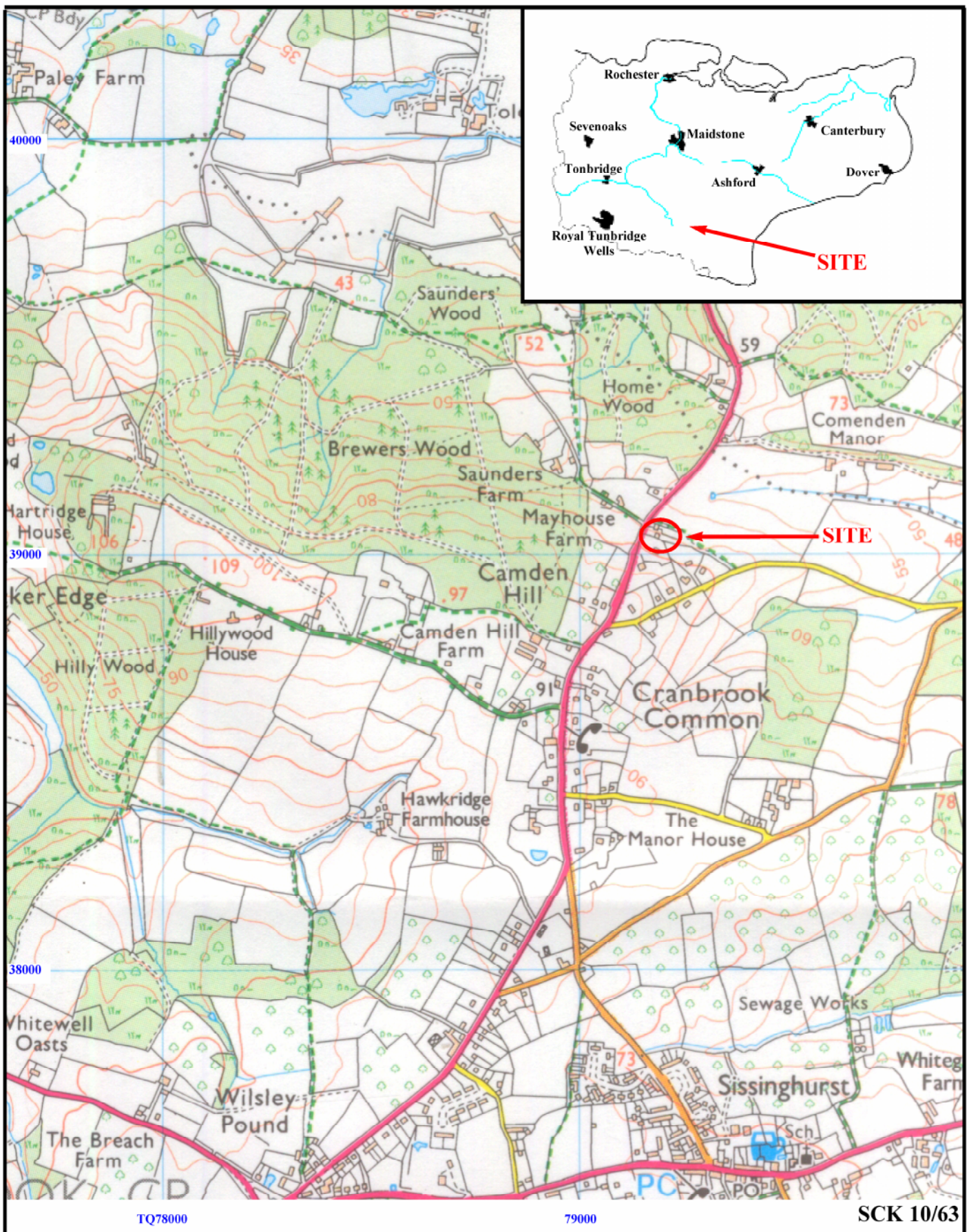
Shallow pit containing 17th-18th century brick and tile

Layer of clean yellow-orange sand, undated

Location of archive and finds: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading RG1 5NR and will be deposited at Tunbridge Wells Museum in due course.

Contact at Unit: Sean Wallis

Date: 15th July 2010



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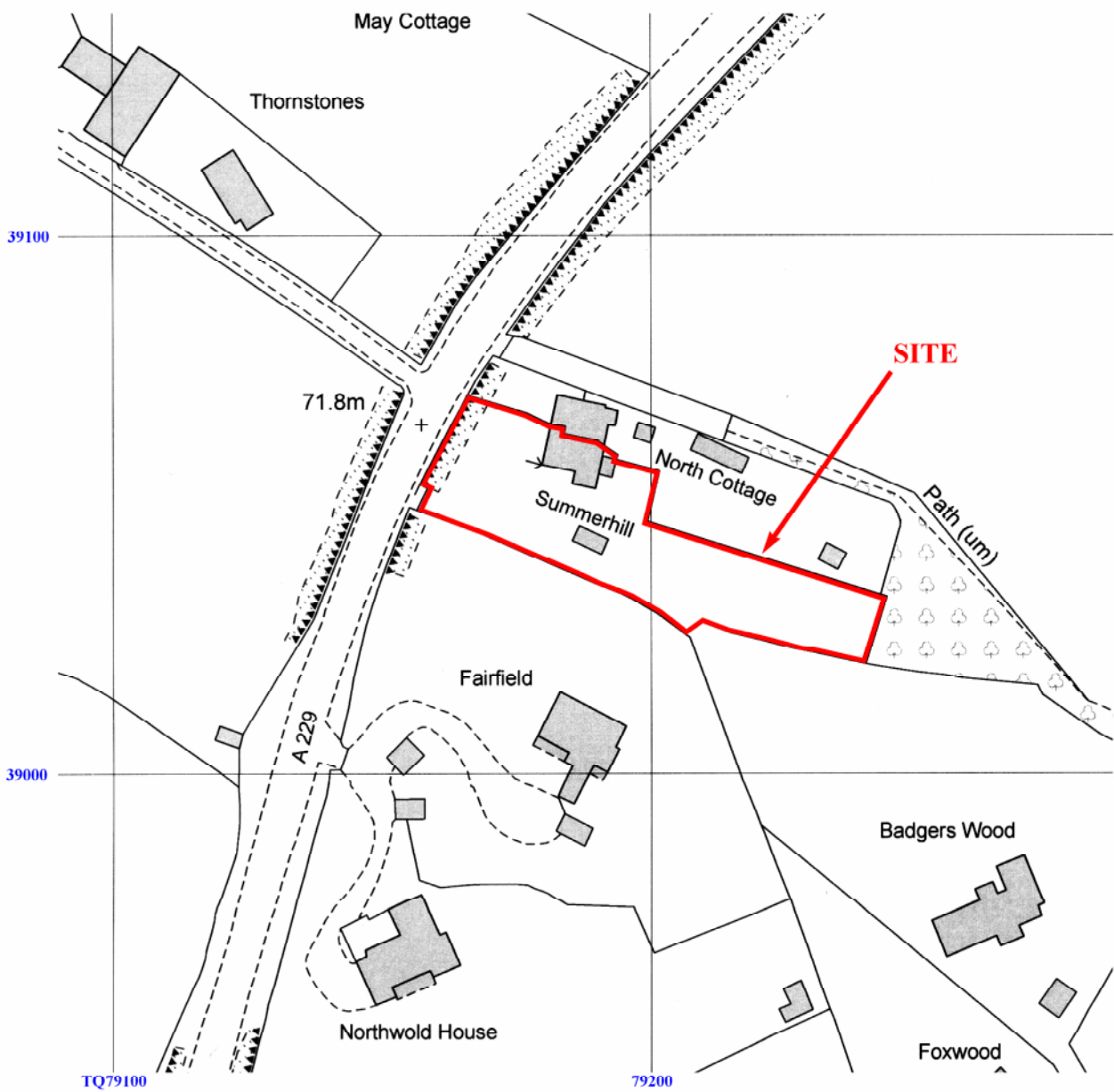
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Figure 1. Location of site within Cranbrook and Kent.

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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Camden Hill.

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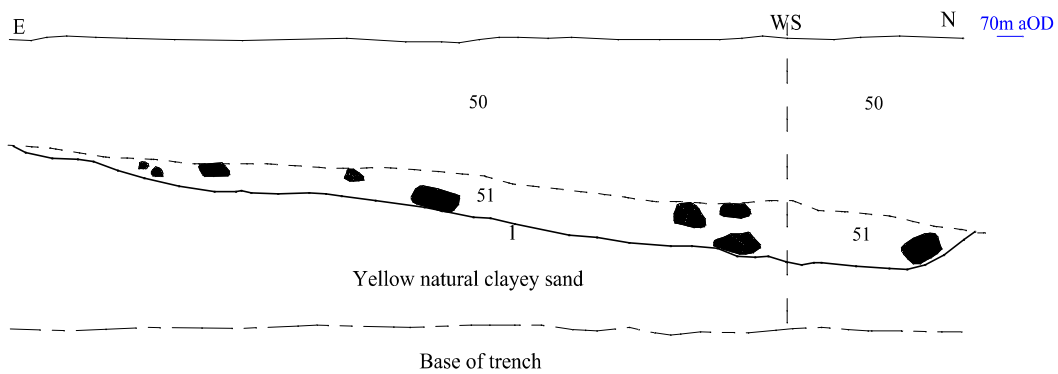


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Figure 3. Plan of site showing positions of groundworks.



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Figure 4. Section.



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Plate 1. General view of the site, looking northwest. Horizontal scale 1m, vertical scale 2m.



Plate 2. Cut 1, looking south. Horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 0.4m.

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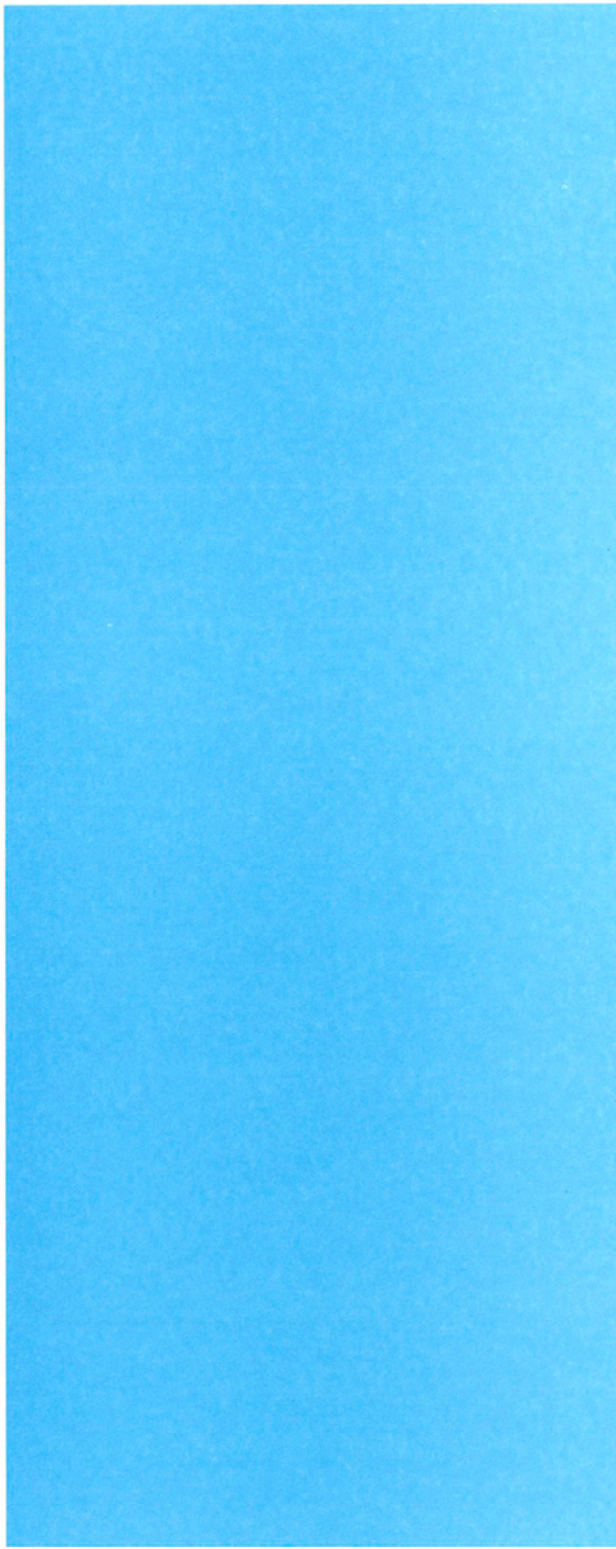
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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