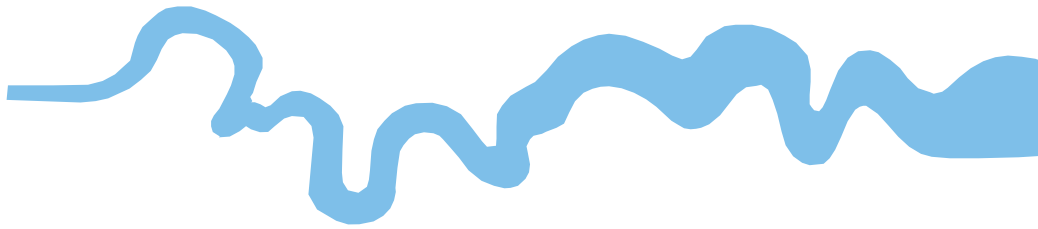


T V A S



SOUTH

**Land at Steyning Grammar School,
Steyning, West Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Emily Gibson

Site Code: SGS26/125

(TQ 1748 1204)

Land at Steyning Grammar School, Steyning, West Sussex

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for BAM Construction Limited**

by Emily Gibson
TVAS South

Site Code: SGS26/125

Planning reference: (DC/26/0322)

September 2026

Summary

Site name: Land at Steyning Grammar School, Steyning, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 1748 1204

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th - 30th July 2026

Project manager: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Louise Bashford

Site code: SGS 26/125

Planning reference: DC/26/0322

Area of site: c.18.6 ha

Summary of results: All thirteen trenches were opened successfully, with some minor logistical adjustments. Two potentially archaeological features were recorded, a post-medieval pit in Trench 3 and an undated ditch in Trench 4. A single sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery is clearly residual in the pit. Ditch 2 mirrors the modern land boundary and may be of no great antiquity. No further finds or features of archaeological interest were uncovered and on the basis of these results, the site is considered to have very low archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton and will be deposited at an appropriate museum in due course, and a copy of the digital records will be sent to the Archaeology Data Service.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 02.09.26
	Steve Preston✓ 02.09.26

Land at Steyning Grammar School, Steyning, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Emily Gibson

Report 26/125

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Steyning Grammar Upper School, Steyning, Horsham, West Sussex, (TQ 1748 1204) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tony Coward, of BAM Construction Ltd, Wrotham School, Borough Green Road, Wrotham, Kent on behalf of the Department for Education.

Planning permission (DC/26/0322) is being sought from Horsham District Council for the part-demolition of existing buildings and sports facilities, and construction of replacement buildings and sports facilities, with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure. Due to the potential for the disturbance or destruction of any surviving below ground archaeology a field evaluation has been requested.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2025), and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Nick Truckle, Principal Archaeologist for Surrey County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Louise Bashford and Gemma Deaney between 27th - 30th July 2026 and the site code is SGS 26/125. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton and will be deposited at an appropriate museum in due course, and a digital copy of the records will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the northern extent of Steyning, enclosed by the Steyning by-pass (A283) to the north and Horsham Road to the west. The site lies c.9km north-east of Worthing (Fig. 1). The site comprises flat school playing fields and green space. The underlying geology is mapped as River Adur 2nd Terrace Deposits (sand and gravel) (BGS 1976). The geology observed on site was a mix of an orange brown sandy-silt and a grey brown gravel with inclusions of chalk. The site lies at a height of c. 15m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been addressed in a desk-based assessment (Hough 2025). In summary, deposits dating from the Prehistoric through to the Medieval period have been recorded within the site's vicinity. Approximately 0.6km to the east, Prehistoric worked flints were recovered. Archaeological investigations c.0.5km to the east uncovered a Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement. The only evidence of Roman activity within the site's environs is the recovery of a ballista bolt found at the latter site.

For the Saxon period, there have been a number of finds and sites recorded. To the east rectangular features, pits, ditches and other evidence for built structures was found; and a Saxon farmstead comprising two buildings and boundary ditch was found 0.3km to the south-east. Steyning is recorded in Domesday Book, as a substantial settlement, with two churches, four mills and 78 inhabitants. An additional settlement was also possibly present 0.5km to the southwest with a record of a deserted medieval village of Charlton Court. An assemblage of 12th-14th pottery has been identified in this area. The site lies between two areas where built medieval remains have been found to the south and agricultural activity is in evidence to the north

A previous watching brief in the school grounds (ASE 2006) for new sports pitches recovered a small volume of medieval finds from topsoil but no features were identified.

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 development. The specific research aims of this project, informed by the *South-Eastern Research Framework* (SERF 2019) are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels and deposits of any period have survived;
- to consider how we might improve our understanding of local identities, the economy and environment within both the regional and national research corpus;
- to assess how the evidence can contribute to regional research topics set out in the South-East Research Framework, such as:
 - dynamics of the Iron Age/Romano-British transition; characterisation of rural settlement; evolution of craft, industry and domestic consumption (SERF: Roman);
 - Romano-British/Anglo-Saxon transition; rural settlement/village formation; technology, craft and rural production (SERF: Anglo-Saxon);
 - landscape development of villages and other rural settlements; industry and trade (SERF: Medieval);
 - Further investigation of rural landscape and settlement; agriculture; economy; industry; leisure (SERF: Post-medieval, Modern and Industrial).

It was proposed to dig 13 trenches, each 25m long and 1.8-2.0m wide. These were dug by a 360° type machine, fitted with a toothless grading bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. All spoil heaps were monitored for finds. Any identified archaeological deposits were to be investigated by hand or sufficiently sampled to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The evaluation was carried out according to Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' standards (CIfA 2023a and b). The potential and significance of any such deposits located were to be assessed according to research priorities such as those set out in Historic England's *Research Agenda* (HE 2017), or any more local or thematic research priorities necessary such as the *South-Eastern Research Framework Resources Assessment and Research Agenda* (SERF 2019).

Results

Most of the trenches were dug as intended. Trenches 1 and 2 were reduced and moved due to the presence of Heras fencing around the works. Trenches 11 and 12 were slightly moved due to avoid known services. The trenches were all 1.8m wide and ranged in length from 22.40m to 25.70m, and 0.37m to 1.80m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1a. Trench levels are presented in Appendix 1b.

Of the 13 trenches excavated, only two contained potential archaeological features. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2. Those trenches that contained no finds or features of archaeological interest are described briefly below, grouped by their stratigraphy and the natural geology. Trenches with potentially archaeological features or finds are then discussed individually in more detail.

Trenches 1-2, 5 and 8 (Fig. 2; Pl. 1)

These trenches measured between 22.40m to 25.70m long and 0.90m to 0.96m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. No finds or features were observed.

Trenches 6 and 9 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

These trenches measured 25.00m and 24.10m long and 0.52m and 0.46m deep respectively. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a light grey brown silty-sand natural geology. No finds or features were observed.

Trench 7 (Fig. 2)

Trench 7 was 24.80m long and 0.90m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil above a compact light orange brown sandy-silt made ground overlying a light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. No finds or features were observed.

Trenches 10 and 11 (Fig. 2; Pls 3 and 4)

These trench measured 23.50m and 23.00m long , with trench 10 measuring 0.54m deep. Trench 11 measured between 0.40m (north-eastern end) and 1.02m (south-western end) deep. The stratigraphy generally consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel and chalk.

At the southern end of trench 10, at a depth of 0.40m, a brick structure forming a previously known swimming pool was encountered. This was observed to length of 6.30m.

In the south-western end of trench 11, a modern attenuation tank was recorded beneath deposits of made ground. No other finds or features were observed.

Trenches 12 and 13 (Fig. 2)

These trenches both measured 23.60m long and 0.37m and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a grey brown sandy-silt natural geology with moderate inclusions of gravel. No finds or features were observed.

Trenches containing potentially archaeological finds or features

Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 5)

Trench 3 was 24.60m long and 1.00m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.

At approximately 23.0m from the south-eastern end of the trench, a single pit (1) was recorded. It measured 0.95m long, 0.60m wide and 0.15m deep. It contained a single deposit dark grey brown silty-clay deposit (53) with occasional inclusions of burnt clay, charcoal and flint. A single sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered, along with a small deposit of burnt bone. A single post-medieval iron nail was also recovered which provides the *terminus post quem* date for the fill.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl 6)

Trench 4 measured 24.50m long and varied in depth from 0.90m (eastern end) to 1.80m (western end). The stratigraphy generally consisted of topsoil above subsoil overlying a light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. However, for approximately 13.0m from the western end of the trench, a compact light orange brown sandy-silt made ground was observed directly underneath the topsoil.

At the western end of the trench, a ditch (2) was recorded measuring at least 4.50m wide and 0.85m deep. It contained a single yellow brown sandy-silt deposit (54) with occasional inclusions of chalk and gravel. No finds were recovered.

Finds

Pottery by Samuel Rishman

A single sherd of Prehistoric pottery weighing 9g was recovered from pit 1 (The pottery was recorded using the methodology set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 2010). The sherd was examined using a binocular microscope (x10). The sherd and its fabric provide a date range from the Early Late to the Latest Bronze Age. but was found alongside an iron nail is is clearly residual.

The fabric (F1) is a hard, very coarse fabric with sparse (7%), poorly sorted crushed, angular calcined flint up to 5mm. The clay matrix is silty and slightly micaceous, fracture is laminated, surface feels rough, and firing is unoxidised with a very dark grey colour. Hand-built. This featureless, worn and abraded body sherd, is typical of a Late Bronze Age date of c.1100-800 BC.

Metalwork by Luke Barber

A single iron nail weighing 9g was recovered from pit 1 (53). The nail was headless, hand forged and Post-medieval in date.

Conclusion

Of the 13 trenches excavated, two contained certain or probable archaeological features. Trenches 3 and 4 were in close proximity to each other within the north-western corner of the trenched area. Pit 1 within Trench 3 was the only dated feature, producing a post-medieval nail and a sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery, with the latter clearly redeposited in a much later feature. Ditch 2 in Trench 4 was undated, but could possibly form part of a field boundary within which the school playing fields now sit; it may be of fairly recent date. Disturbance relating to the school buildings was evident in Trenches 10 and 11, but nothing more.

On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have very low archaeological potential.

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- PCRG, 2010, *The Study of Prehistoric Pottery: General policies and guidelines for analysis and publication*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group Occas Pap **1** and **2**, 3rd edn
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APPENDIX 1a: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	22.40	1.80	0.96	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. [Pl. 1]
2	23.00	1.80	0.90	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.
3	24.60	1.80	1.00	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. Pit 1. [Pl. 5]
4	24.50	1.80	0.90 (E) / 1.80 (W)	E end: 0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel. W end: 0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ compact light orange brown sandy-silt made ground. Ditch 2. [Pl. 6]
5	25.20	1.80	0.91	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.91m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.91m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.
6	25.00	1.80	0.52	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology. [Pl. 2]
7	24.80	1.80	0.90	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30m-0.90m compact light orange brown sandy-silt made ground; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.
8	25.70	1.80	0.95	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.90m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.90m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.
9	24.10	1.80	0.46	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.46m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.46m+ light grey brown silty-sand natural geology.
10	23.50	1.80	0.54	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.54m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.54m+ grey brown silty-sand natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel and chalk. [Pl. 3]
11	23.00	1.80	0.40 (NE) / 1.02 (SW)	NE end: 0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.40m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.40m+ grey brown silty-sand natural geology with moderate inclusions of gravel and chalk. SW end: 0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.92m light yellow grey made ground; 0.92-1.02m red construction sand; 1.02m+ attenuation tank. [Pl. 4]
12	23.60	1.80	0.37	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.37m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.37m+ grey brown sandy-silt natural geology with occasional inclusions of gravel.
13	23.60	1.80	0.43	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.43m light grey brown silty-sand subsoil; 0.43m+ grey brown sandy-silt natural geology with moderate inclusions of gravel.

APPENDIX 1b: Trench levels

Trench	End of trench	Top of trench (m aOD)	Bottom of trench (m aOD)
1	S	16.30	15.34
2	SE	15.88	14.98
3	SW	15.97	14.97
4	W	16.57	15.67 / 14.77
5	W	16.06	15.15
6	S	14.94	14.42
7	SW	15.66	14.76
8	W	15.20	14.25
9	SW	14.94	14.48
10	S	13.61	13.07
11	S	13.05	12.36 / 12.03
12	W	13.82	13.45
13	SE	13.82	13.39

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

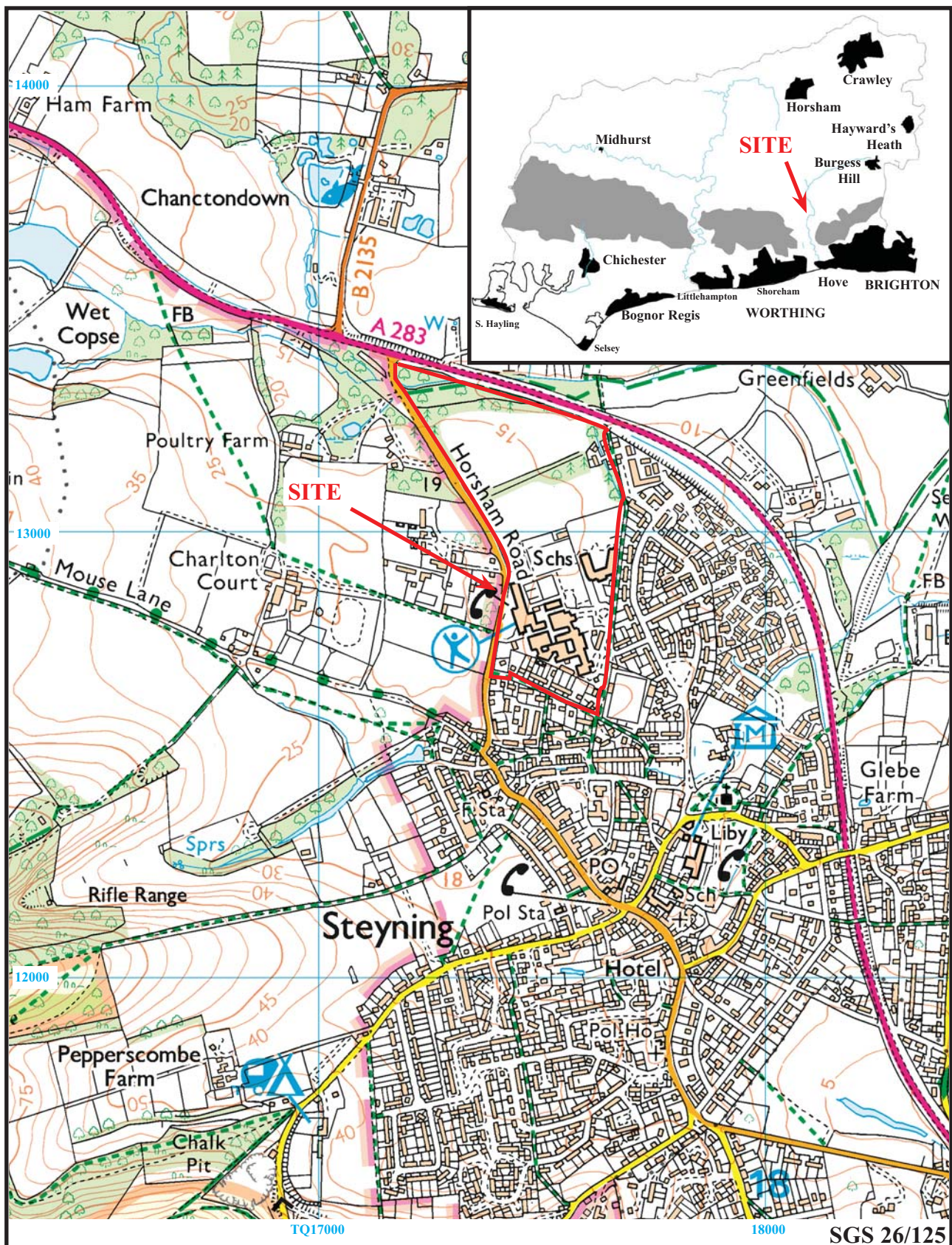
Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
		52	Made ground	Modern	-
3	1	53	Pit	Late Bronze Age (1100-800 BC)	Pottery
4	2	54	Ditch	Undated	-

Sussex HER summary sheet

HER enquiry number						
Site code	SGS 26/125					
Project code	26/125					
Planning reference	DC/26/0322					
Site address	Land at Steyning School, Steyning, West Sussex					
District/Borough	Horsham District Council					
NGR (12 figures)	TQ 1748 1204					
Geology	River Terrace Deposits, 2 (Adur)-Sand and gravel superficial deposits (BGS 1976)					
Fieldwork type	Eval	Excav	WB	HBR	Survey	Other
Date of fieldwork	27th - 30th July 2026					
Sponsor/client	BAM Construction Ltd.					
Project manager	David Sanchez					
Project supervisor	Louise Bashford					
Period summary	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	Modern	
Project summary (100 word max)	All thirteen trenches were successfully open, with some minor logistical adjustments. Two potentially archaeological features were recorded, a pit (1) in Trench 3 and ditch (2) in Trench 4. Pit 1 was dated as Post-medieval, however an intrusive sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery is worthy of note. Ditch 2 remains undated, but possibly forms part of a land boundary. No further finds or features of archaeological interest were uncovered.					
Museum/Accession No.	N/A					

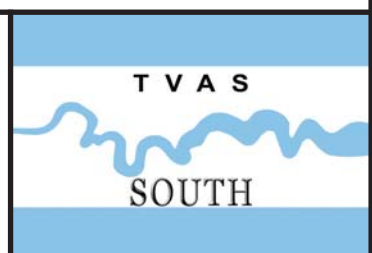
Finds summary

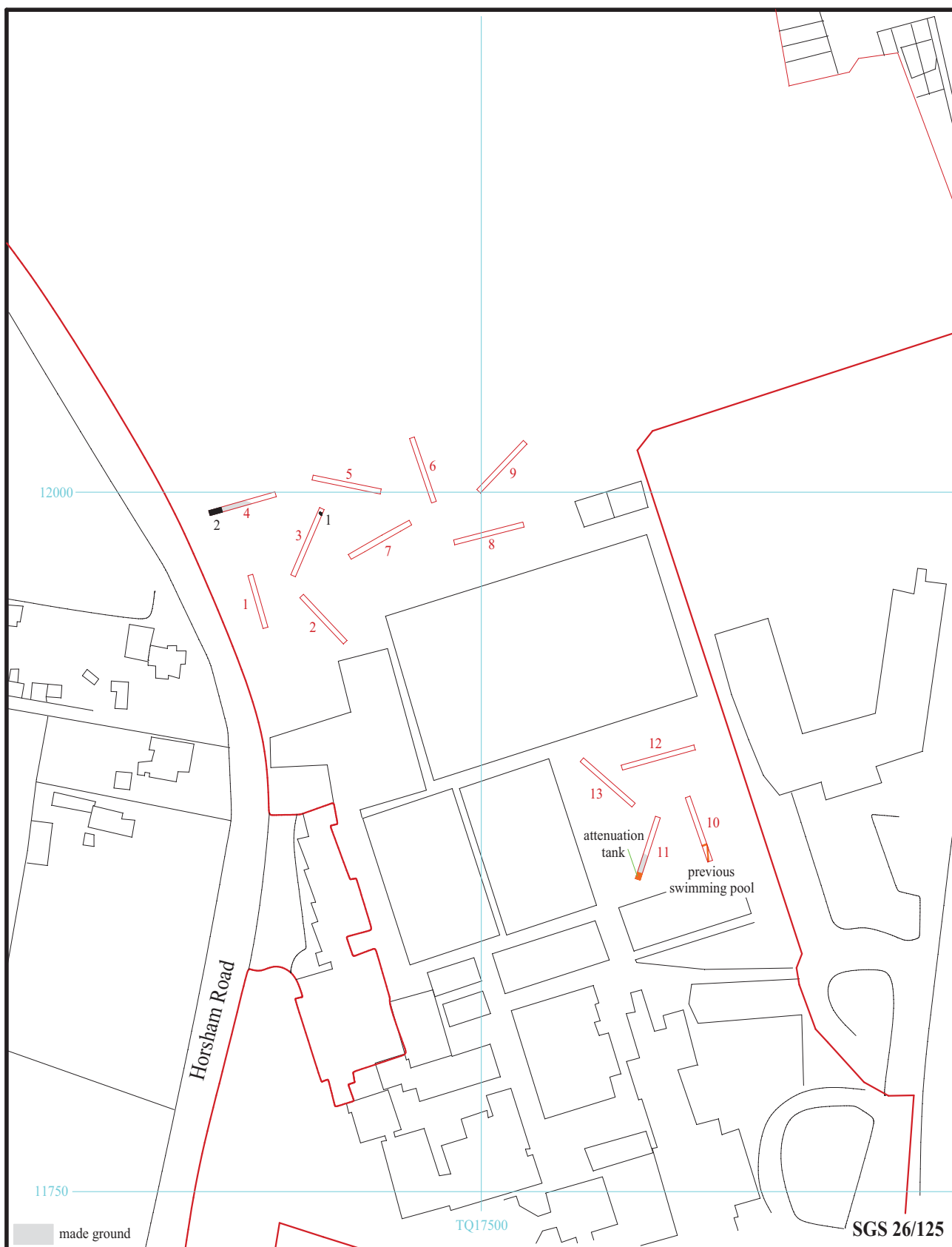
Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
Pottery	Ceramic	Late Bronze Age (c. 1100-800 BC.)	1
Nail	Iron	Post-medieval	1



**Land at Steyning Grammar School,
West Sussex,
Archaeological Evaluation**
Figure 1. Location of site within Steyning and West Sussex.

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**Land at Steyning Grammar School.
West Sussex
Archaeological Evaluation**

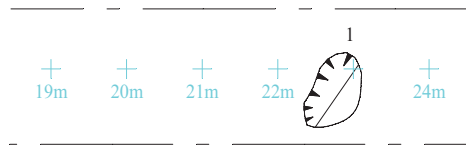
Figure 2. Location of trenches.

0 100m

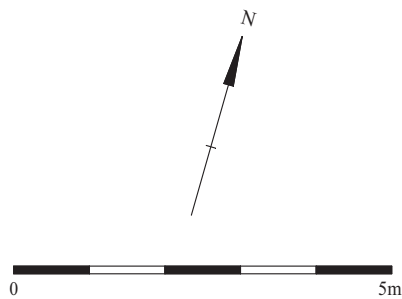
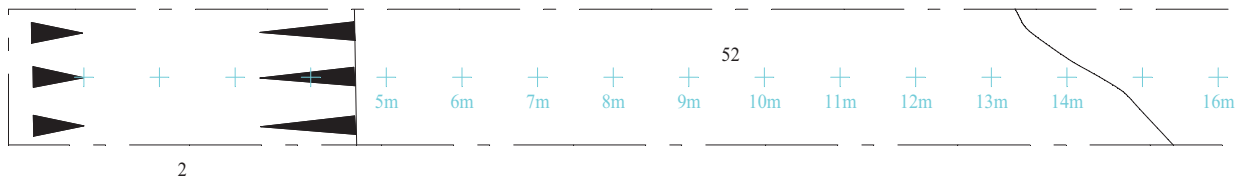


T V A S
SOUTH

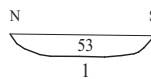
Trench 3



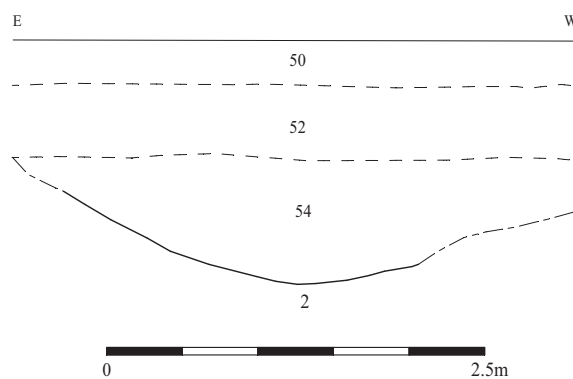
Trench 4



Trench 3



Trench 4



SGS 26/125

**Land at Steyning Grammar School,
West Sussex
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Detail of trenches and sections.

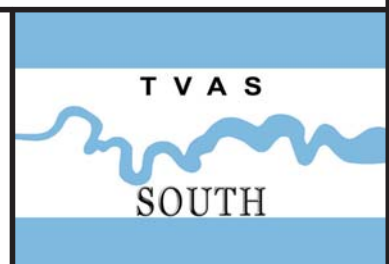




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North, Scales: 1m and 1m.



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



Plate 3. Trench 10, looking North,
Scales: 1m, 1m and 0.4m.



Plate 4. Trench 11, looking North-East,
Scales: 1m, 1m and 0.4m.

SGS 26/125

**Land at Steyning Grammar School,
West Sussex
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 4.**

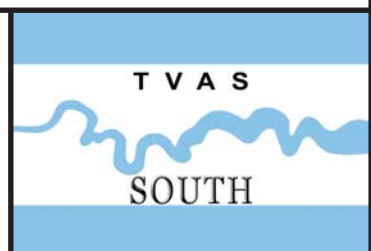




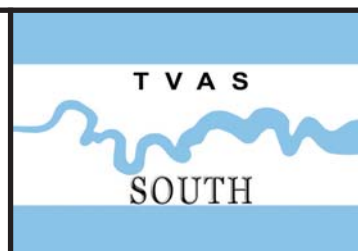
Plate 5. Pit 1, looking North-East, Scales: 1m and 0.10m



Plate 6. Ditch 2, looking North, Scales 1m and 1m.

SGS 26/125

**Land at Steyning Grammar School,
West Sussex
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 and 6.**

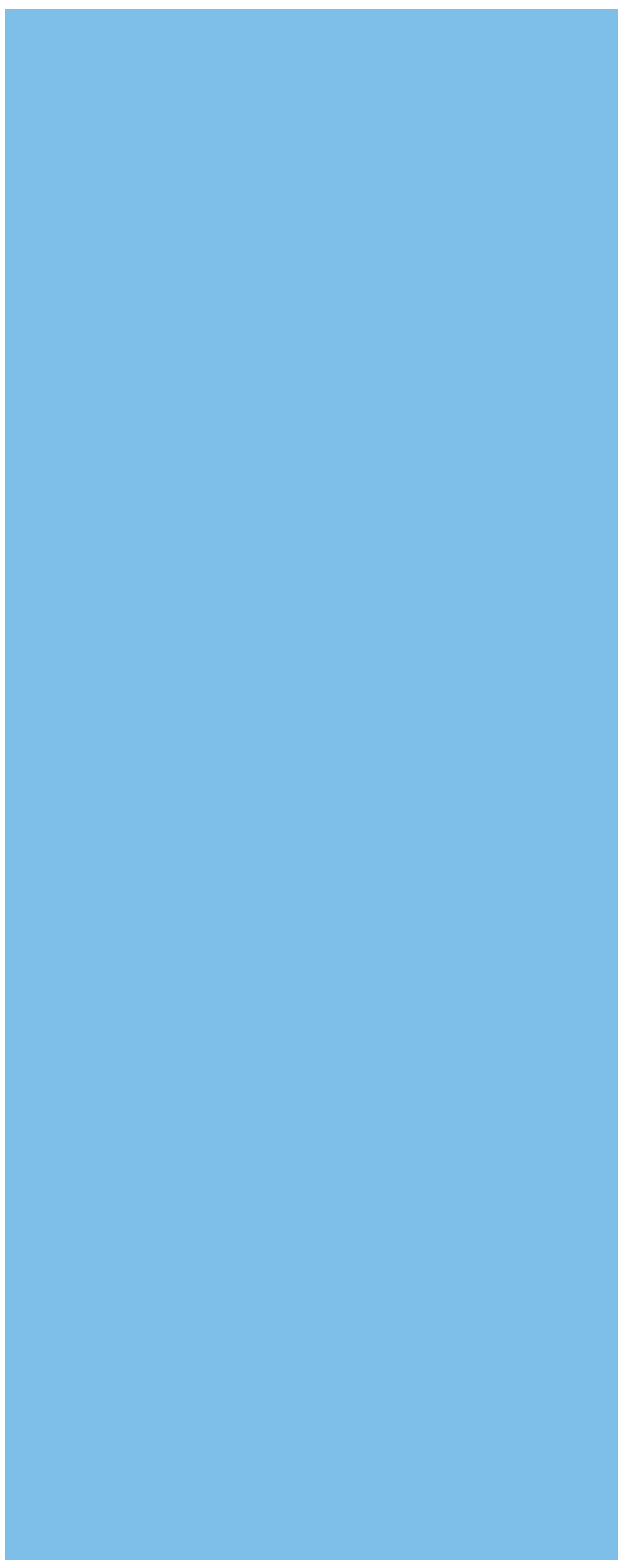
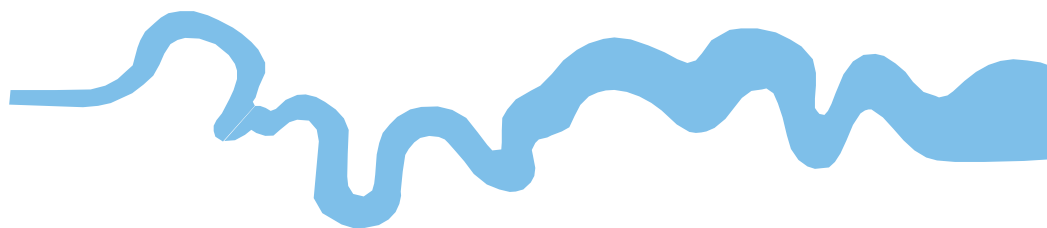


TIME CHART

Calendar Years

Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
	AD 1/1 BC
Iron Age: Late	100 BC
Iron Age: Middle	400 BC
Iron Age: Early	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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