DEVELOPMENT ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES Ltd

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND TO THE WEST OF THE A281 TRUNK ROAD, COWFOLD, WEST SUSSEX.

[Site Centred at approximately National Grid Reference: TQ 21124 22934]
Planning Reference: DC/25/1826. [DC/22/1815 [initial]



PREPARED FOR JVB CONSTRUCTION LTD

By

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Summary

A post-determination archaeological evaluation involving the excavation of twenty [25m X 2m] trial trenches was carried out by Development Archaeology Services Ltd (DAS) on and between the 12th-14th of October 2026 in advance of the construction of a proposed new residential development with associated access, landscaping and the creation of a new open space on land to the west of the A281 trunk road, Cowfold, West Sussex.

The archaeological trial trenching firmly established the sequence of deposits at the site, while at the same time providing a sufficient sampling of the area of the proposed development site to confirm this sequence and the absence of archaeological features and/or deposits and of finds.

The twenty archaeological trial trenches that were excavated within the area of the proposed development site identified a simple sequence of a modern topsoil horizon overlying a natural horizon of Wealden clays over the whole of the survey area and therefore of the proposed development site. This deposit sequence was recorded within a total of nine representative sections.

No archaeological features and/or deposits were identified at this site and no finds were made.

1. Introduction

1.1 Development Archaeology Services Limited (DAS) was commissioned by JVB Construction Ltd. to undertake a post-determination archaeological evaluation prior to the construction of a proposed new residential development with associated access, landscaping and the creation of a new open space on land to the west of the A281 trunk road, Cowfold, West Sussex, centred at National Grid Reference TQ 21124 22934. The archaeological evaluation was carried out at the development site on the 12th-14th of October 2026.

1.2 This report documents the results of the archaeological evaluation, which was undertaken in accordance with a Specification or Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by DAS. This document was subsequently submitted to and approved by Mr. N. Truckle (in his capacity as archaeological advisor on planning issues to Horsham District Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA)), prior to the commencement of the on-site works. This approach complies with the principles established in *NPPF: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2024), *Standard and guidance for Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluations* (CHIfA, 2020) and *A Guide to Good Recording Practice,* Historic England (2016).

1.3 Copies of this report will be deposited with the clients, Horsham District Council and with the Horsham Museum, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

2. Site Location and Description

2.1 Topographically, the proposed development site lies within an undulating upland area of the Sussex High Weald. The assessment site comprises an area of several enclosures that are situated off the western frontage of the modern A281 trunk road and to the north of the northern outskirts of the village of Cowfold. The modern settlement of Cowfold is situated within the modern civil parish of the same name, administrative district of Horsham, county of West Sussex. The proposed development site is centred at approximately National Grid Reference TQ 21124 22934 and at a height of approximately 38m-41mAOD [**Figures 1 and 2**].

2.1 The development site is situated on seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils and coarse loamy over clayey soils of the Wickham 5 Series, which overlie Wealden clays of the Lower Cretaceous [Soil Survey, 1983; BGS, 1972].



Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000. The application site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)

See Figure 2 for detail of development site / investigation site area.



Figure 2: Site location at an original scale of 1:1,250 at A3, (extract from Architects plan). The survey / investigation area is shown outlined in blue. See Figure 3 for build outline of the proposed development.

3. Planning Background

3.1 A planning application for the proposed construction of a new residential development, which is to comprise the erection of thirty-five new residential dwellings along with associated landscaping and the creation of a new site access road and a new open space on land to the west of the A281 trunk road, Cowfold, West Sussex has been submitted to and granted consent by Horsham District Council, the Local Planning Authority [Planning Reference: DC/22/1815 and subsequently DC/25/1826], [**Figure 3**].

3.2 As the proposed development was perceived to be situated within an area of archaeological potential, a pre-commencement archaeological condition (No. 4) was attached to this granting of planning consent. This stated that:

> *No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*
>
> *The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until the archaeological site investigation and post excavation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition [i] and that provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing.*

3.3 Consultations by Development Archaeology Services Ltd (DAS) on behalf of JVB Construction Ltd. with Horsham District Council's archaeological advisor on planning issues to Horsham District Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA)) had determined that the required programme of archaeological site work should comprise an archaeological field assessment of the area of the proposed development site through archaeological trial trenching to take place prior to development commencing on the site.

3.4 **Condition No. 4 o**f the planning consent required that a specification or a written scheme of investigation for the proposed archaeological trial trenching was to be submitted for approval to Ms. M. Medlicott of Place Services prior to the commencement of the on-site archaeological works. A specification or written scheme of investigation was subsequently submitted to and approved by Horsham District Council , prior to the commencement of the archaeological trial trenching at the site.

3.5 This report documents the results of this programme of site archaeological evaluation trial trenching and will be submitted to the clients, to Horsham District Council for their ratification and approval.



Figure 3: Block plan showing the proposed layout of the development site (extract from Architects plan)

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 A prior archaeological desk based assessment of an area, which included the present archaeological survey area was compiled by DAS Ltd in 2021 [Hall & Pine, 2021]. This study concluded that although the West Sussex Historic Environment Record records the findspot of a polished flint axe of Neolithic date found at Cowfold, the exact location of this find is uncertain. That this find should be considered to be an isolated find as no other archaeological activity or finds from this period have been identified within the search area that was used for this study. So, it was considered that the potential for archaeological activity and finds from this period to be made on this assessment site would be **low**.

4.2 The study concluded that similar considerations would also apply to the findspot of a Bronze Age palstave and ring, which were found to the north of the assessment site. These finds should also be considered to be isolated finds that are not necessarily indicative of the presence of contemporary archaeological activity here. So, the study also considered that the potential for Bronze Age archaeological activity and finds to be encountered on this assessment site would also be **low**.

4.3 This archaeological assessment did not identify any archaeological activity or finds from either the Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon periods within the search area that was used for this study. So, it was concluded that the potential for archaeological activity and finds from these periods to be found on this assessment site would also be **low**.

4.4 The study concluded that the assessment site was situated to the north of the medieval parish church, which had provided a focal point for the contemporary settlement. It was thus considered that the assessment site at least lay on the northern fringes and thus was probably located well beyond this medieval settlement. So, this study concluded that the potential for medieval settlement activity and finds to be found on this assessment site, would also be **low**.

4.5 This study established that the assessment site lay within the bounds of the post-medieval settlement of Cowfold. Several listed buildings from the post-medieval period are situated in close proximity to the assessment site. The map regression that was undertaken for this study had identified the removal of at least one post-medieval parliamentary enclosure field boundary within the area of the assessment site itself. So, the study concluded that the potential for post-medieval settlement activity and finds to be made on the assessment site, would probably be **high**.

4.6 Several listed buildings, comprising the Grade II listed Barrington Cottage, the Grade II listed South and North Cottage, the Grade II listed Red House, the Grade II listed Furzefield and the Grade II listed Brook Hill Cottage along with the parkscape at Hill Farm to the north are all situated in close proximity to the assessment site. The study considered that the settings of these various designated and non-designated heritage assets in relation to the assessment site would be material considerations in respect of any proposed development within the area of the assessment site.

4.7 This archaeological desk based assessment study of 2021 had identified a **low** potential for archaeological activity and finds from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods and a **high** potential for archaeological activity and finds from the post-medieval period to be identified on the assessment site.

4.8 The study also considered that the impact of development on the identified **low** archaeological potential would be **low** and on the identified **high** archaeological potential, would be **high**, based on the then available data.

4.9 The Grade II listed South and North Cottages are situated in close proximity to the east of the assessment site. The Grade II listed Barrington Cottage, Red House, Brook Hill Cottage and Furzefield are all located close by and to the south-east of the assessment site.

4.10 The study finally considered that there would be a **negligible and no significant impact** from the proposed development on the settings of these various designated and non-designated heritage assets from the proposed development on this site.

5. Methodology

5.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out at the development site on and between the 12th-14th of October 2026 by Christopher Pine, Neville Hall and Tom Hall of Development Archaeology Services Ltd (DAS). This involved the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of twenty [25m X 2m] archaeological trial trenches (designated as **Trenches 1-20**) within the area of the proposed new residential development according to the Specification for this project previously compiled by DAS [see **Figure 4**].

5.2 The approved DAS Brief and Specification for this project provided for the excavation of twenty, 25.0m x 2.0m trial trenches producing a total survey area of c.1,000² of trenching

(to include assess and service routes). A trial trench layout proposal accompanied this Brief and Specification.

5.3 There was also provision for a contingency in this Brief and Specification for an additional 250m² by area of trial trenching (if required) should significant archaeological remains be found. In the final event, this contingency was not used.

5.4 All of the trial trenches were mechanically excavated by a 14-ton tracked 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 2.0m wide toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. The required twenty archaeological trial trenches were all excavated to the required lengths of 25.0m and widths of 2.0m. The pattern and distribution of the final trial trench layout is shown on **Figure 4**.

5.5 Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording and the site deposit sequence observed was recorded on standard *pro-forma* context recording sheets. A plan of each trench was compiled on site at a scale of 1:100. These are reproduced at this same scale on **Figures 5-7**. In addition, a total of nine representative sections of this observed site deposit sequence [designated as **Representative Sections 1-9**] were also compiled on site at scales of 1:20. These are reproduced at this same scale on **Figure 8**. A complimentary colour digital photographic record was also maintained, which are reproduced as **Plates 1-49, Appendix 1**. A list of contexts recorded is reproduced in **Appendix 2**.

5.7 All of the site work was undertaken in accordance with the approved Specification.

6. Results [Figures 5-8; Appendix 1, Plates 1-49]

All of the archaeological trial trenches were excavated to a uniform length of 25.0m and to a uniform width of 2.0m. The survey area comprised land within one enclosed field to the east along with the southern portion of a second enclosed field to the west.

6.1 Trench 1

6.1.1 **Trench 1** was aligned from approximately east-west and was excavated to depths of between 0.40m-0.57m below the site ground levels [**Plates 2 and 3**]. This first trench was

excavated through a site deposit sequence that consisted of a topsoil horizon (**001**), which was above an underlying natural horizon of Wealden Clays (**002**). This natural deposit was encountered at the base of this excavation. This site deposit sequence was recorded within **Representative Section 1** [**Plate 1**].

6.1.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this first trench and there were no finds.

6.2 Trench 2

6.2.1 **Trench 2** was positioned to the west of **Trench 1** and was similarly orientated from east-west. **Trench 2** was excavated to depths of between 0.38m-0.48m below the site ground levels [**Plates 4 and 5**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trench was also recorded in this second trench.

6.2.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this second trench and there were no finds.

6.3 Trench 3

6.3.1 **Trench 3** was situated to the south of **Trench 2** and was excavated to depths of between 0.38m-0.56m below the site ground levels [**Plates 7 and 8**]. **Trench 3** was aligned from approximately north-south. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 2** [**Plate 6**].

6.3.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this third trench and there were no finds. The line of a modern land drain was recorded within this trench.

6.4 Trench 4

6.4.1 **Trench 4** was orientated from northwest-south-east and was located to the south of **Trench 3. Trench 4** was excavated to depths of between 0.47m-0.52m below the site ground levels [**Plates 9 and 10**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

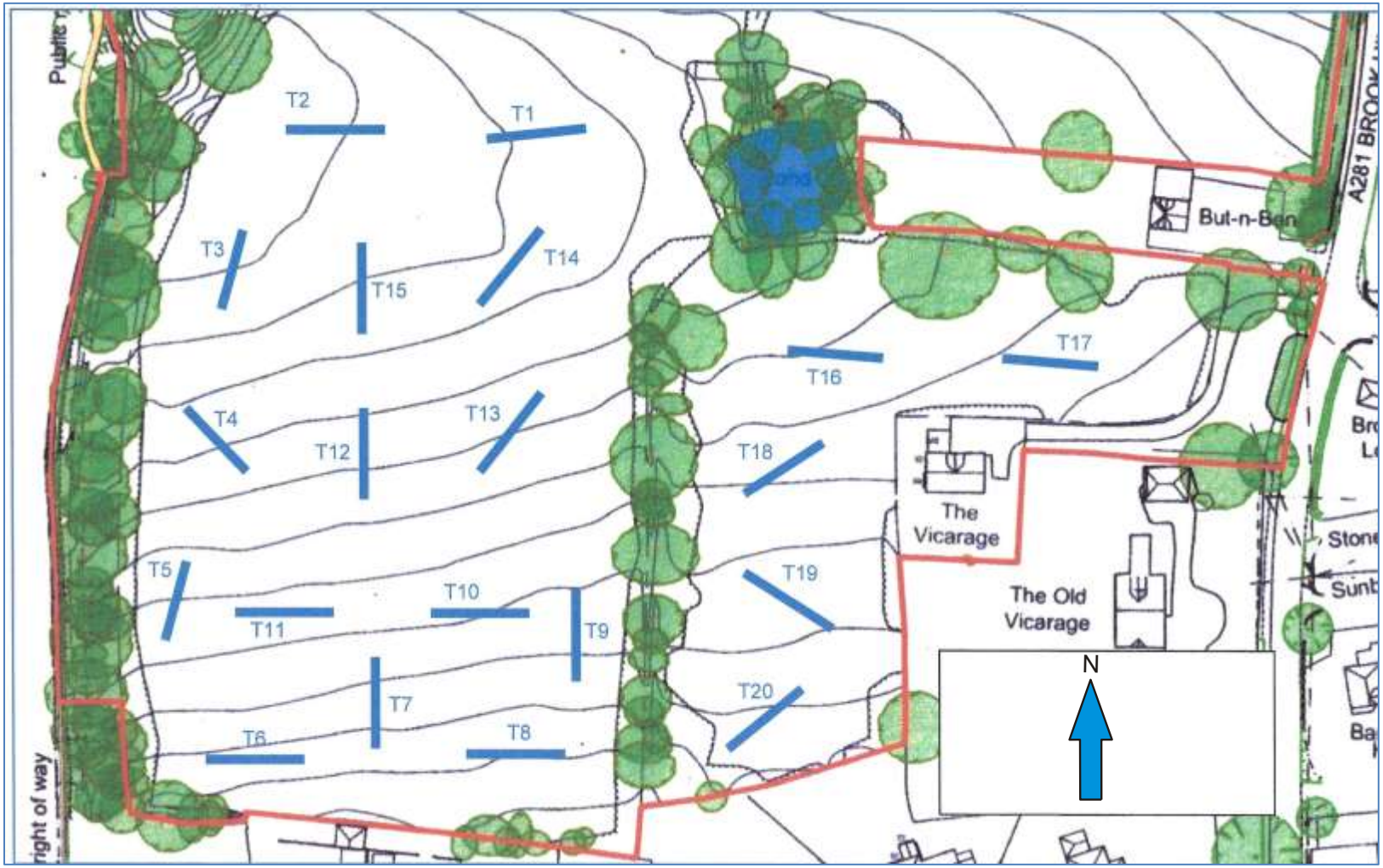

Figure 4: Plan showing the final layout of the archaeological trial trenches. [based on extract from Architects plan]

6.4.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.5 Trench 5

6.5.1 **Trench 5** was aligned from approximately north-south and was positioned to the south of **Trench 4. Trench 5** was excavated to depths of between 0.45m-0.52m below the site ground levels [**Plates 12 and 13**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 3** [**Plate 11**].

6.5.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.6 Trench 6

6.6.1 **Trench 6** was aligned from east-west and was excavated to the south of **Trench 5. Trench 6** was excavated to depths of between 0.52m-0.57m below the site ground levels [**Plates 14 and 15**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.6.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.7 Trench 7

6.7.1 **Trench 7** was orientated from north-south and was situated to the north-east of **Trench 6. Trench 7** was excavated to depths of between 0.42m-0.58m below the site ground levels [**Plates 17 and 18**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 4** [**Plate 16**].

6.7.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.8 Trench 8

6.8.1 **Trench 8** was aligned from east-west and was excavated to the west of **Trench 7. Trench 8** was excavated to depths of between 0.43m-0.68m below the site ground levels [**Plates 19 and 20**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.8.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.9 Trench 9

6.9.1 **Trench 9** was orientated from north-south and was positioned to the north of **Trench 8** and to the north-east of **Trench 7. Trench 9** was excavated to depths of between 0.46m-.0.60m below the site ground levels [**Plates 22 and 23**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 5** [**Plate 21**].

6.9.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.10 Trench 10

6.10.1 **Trench 10** was orientated from east-west and was located to the west of **Trench 9** and to the north-east of **Trench 7. Trench 10** was excavated to depths of between 0.47m-0.60m below the site ground levels [**Plates 24 and 25**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.10.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.11 Trench 11

6.11.1 **Trench 11** was aligned east-west and was situated to the west of **Trench 10**, to the east of **Trench 5** and to the north-west of **Trench 7. Trench 11** was excavated to depths of between 0.48m-0.56m below the site ground levels [**Plates 26 and 27**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.11.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.12 Trench 12

6.12.1 **Trench 12** was orientated from north-south and was excavated to the east of **Trench 4** and to the north of **Trenches 10 and 11. Trench 12** was excavated to depths of between 0.46m-0.62m below the site ground levels [**Plates 29 and 30**]. The same site deposit

sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 6** [**Plate 28**].

6.12.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.13 Trench 13

6.13.1 **Trench 13** was aligned from north east-south west and was positioned to the east of **Trench 12** and to the north of **Trench 10. Trench 13** was excavated to depths of between 0.53m-0.63m below the site ground levels [**Plates 31 and 32**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.13.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.14 Trench 14

6.14.1 **Trench 14** was orientated from north east-south west and was situated to the south of **Trench 1** and to the north of **Trench 13. Trench 14** was excavated to depths of between 0.45m-0.57m below the site ground levels [**Plates 34 and 35**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 7** [**Plate 33**].

6.14.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.15 Trench 15

6.15.1 **Trench 15** was aligned from north-south and was located to the east of **Trench 3**, to the north of **Trench 12**, to the west of **Trench 14** and to the south of **Trench 2. Trench 15** was excavated to depths of between 0.50m-0.52m below the site ground levels [**Plates 36 and 37**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.15.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.16 Trench 16

6.16.1 **Trench 16** was located within the second easterly portion of the survey areas and was orientated from approximately east-west. **Trench 16** was excavated to depths of between 0.52m-0.63m below the site ground levels [**Plates 39 and 40**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 8** [**Plate 38**].

6.16.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.17 Trench 17

6.17.1 **Trench 17** was orientated from east-west and was positioned to the east of **Trench 16. Trench 17** was excavated to depths of between 0.52m-0.59m below the site ground levels [**Plates 41 and 42**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.17.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.18 Trench 18

6.18.1 **Trench 18** was aligned from north-east, south-west and was located to the south of **Trench 16. Trench 18** was excavated to depths of between 0.47m-0.75m below the site ground levels [**Plates 44 and 45**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench within **Representative Section 9** [**Plate 43**].

6.18.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds. The line of a modern cast iron water pipe was recorded at the south-western end of this trench.

6.19 Trench 19

6.19.1 **Trench 19** was orientated from north west-south east and was situated to the south of **Trench 18. Trench 19** was excavated to depths of between 0.49m-0.68m below the site ground levels [**Plates 46 and 47**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.19.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

6.20 Trench 20

6.20.1 **Trench 20** was aligned from north east-south west and was situated to the south of **Trench 19. Trench 20** was excavated to depths of between 0.54m-0.58m below the site ground levels [**Plates 48 and 49**]. The same site deposit sequence, which was recorded within the preceding trenches was also recorded within this trench.

6.20.2 No archaeological activity was identified within this trench and there were no finds.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 The archaeological trial trenching firmly established the sequence of deposits at the site, while at the same time providing a sufficient sampling of the area of the proposed development site to confirm this sequence and the absence of archaeological features and/or deposits and of finds.

7.2 The twenty archaeological trial trenches that were excavated within the area of the proposed development site identified a simple sequence of a modern topsoil horizon overlying a natural horizon of Wealden clays over the whole of the survey area and therefore of the proposed development site. This deposit sequence was recorded within a total of nine representative sections.

7.3 No archaeological features and/or deposits were identified at this site and no finds were made.

8. Acknowledgements

8.1 Thanks are gratefully extended to JVB Construction Ltd. for commissioning this work and to Horsham District Councils archaeological advisor / consultee, N. Truckle, for his assistance at all project stages.

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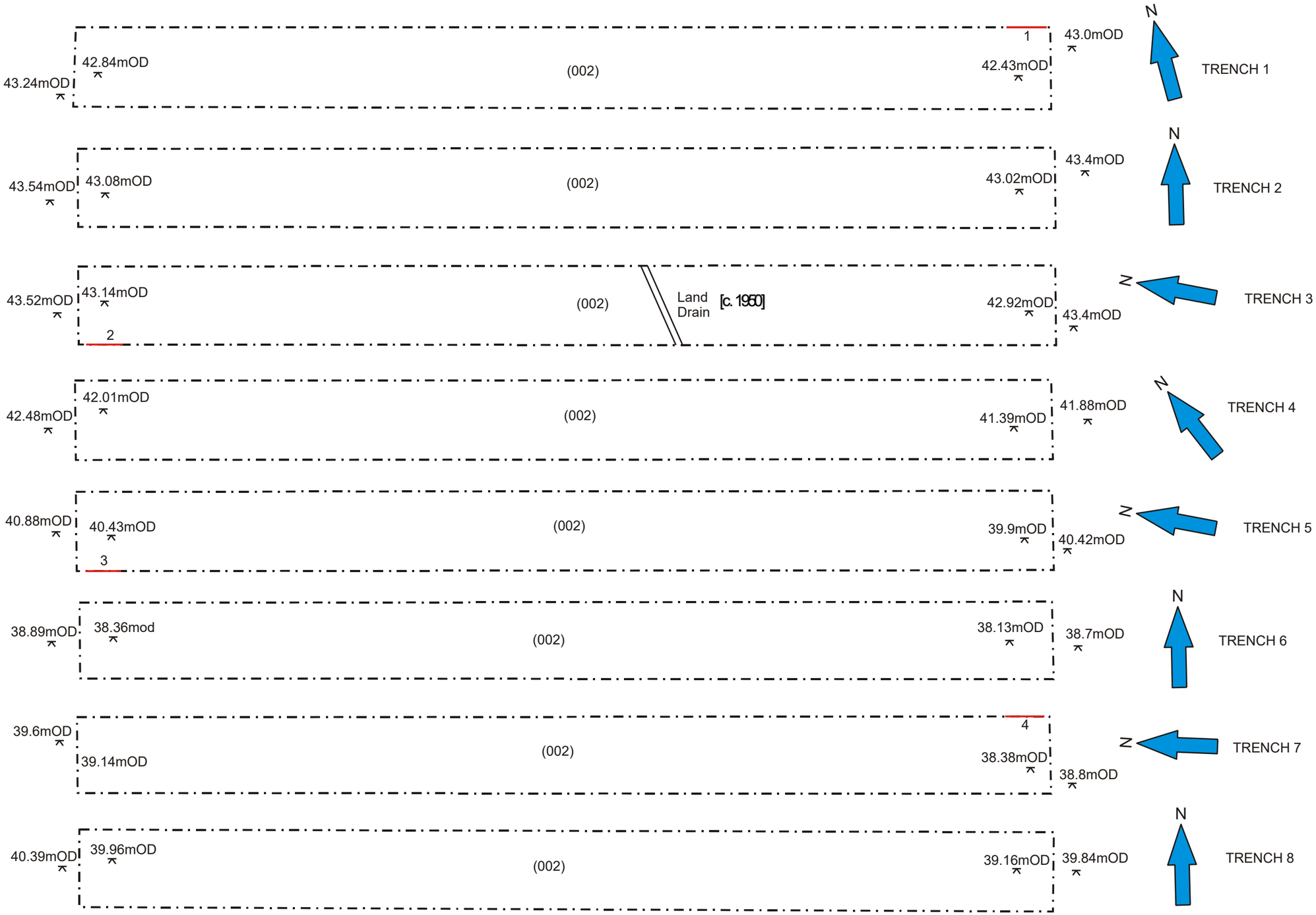


Figure 5: Trenches 1-8 at scales of 1:100

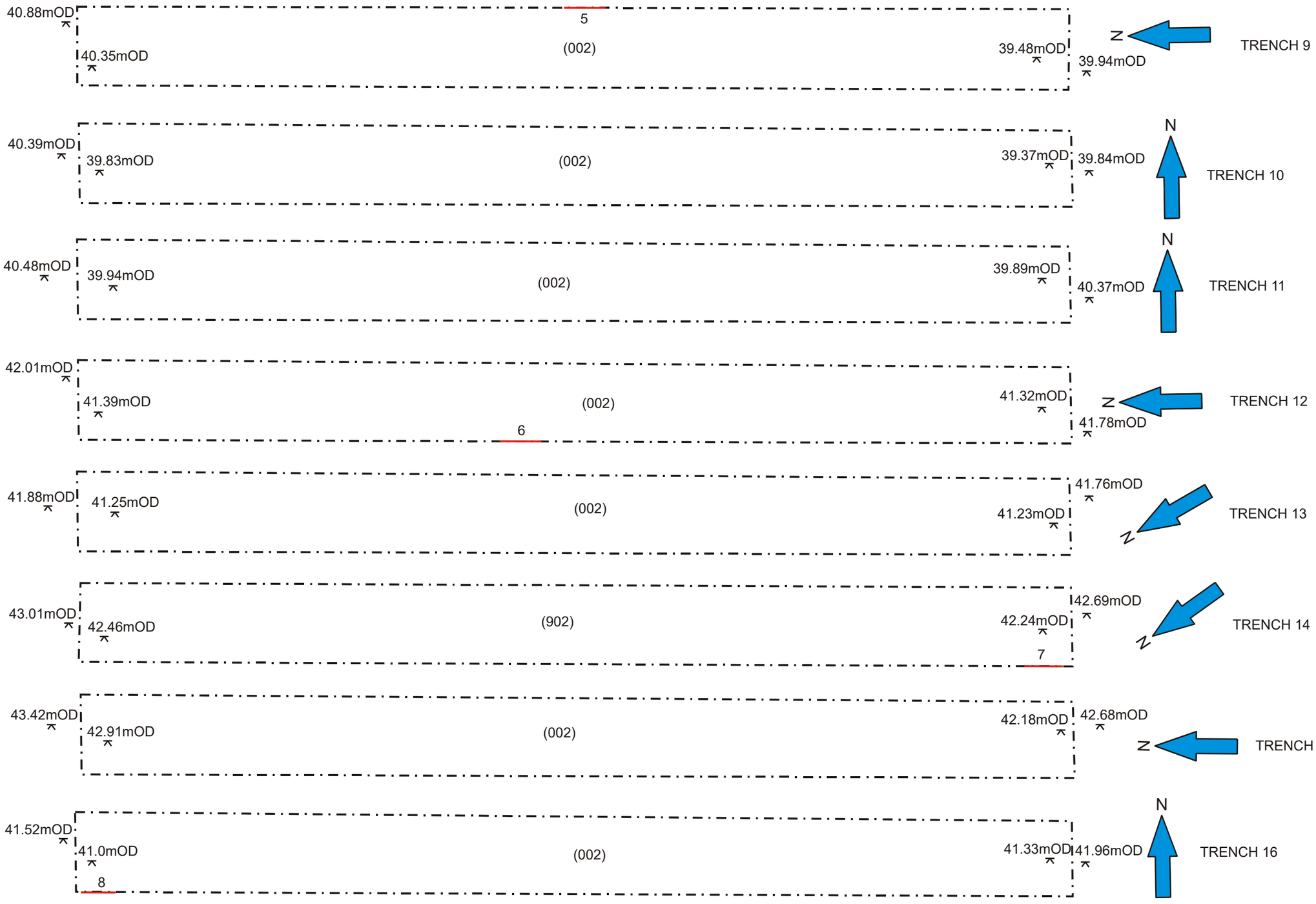


Figure 6: Trenches 9-16 at scales of 1:100

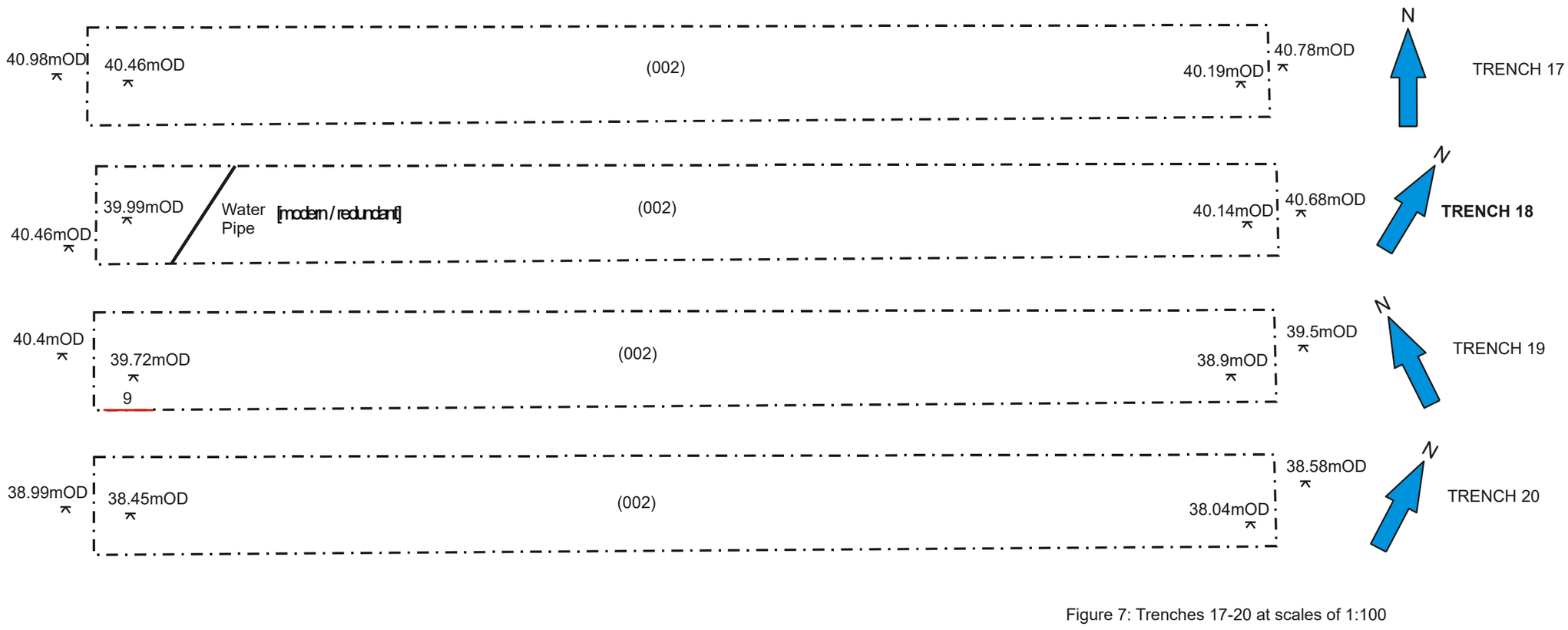
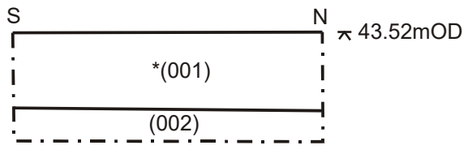


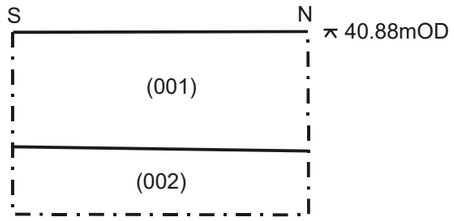
Figure 7: Trenches 17-20 at scales of 1:100



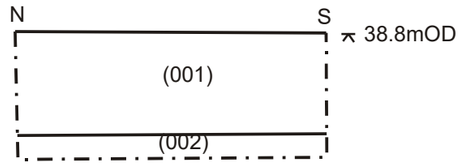
Trench 1, Representative Section 1, South Facing Section, scale 1:20



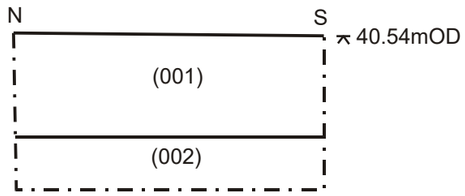
Trench 3, Representative Section 2, East Facing Section, scale 1:20



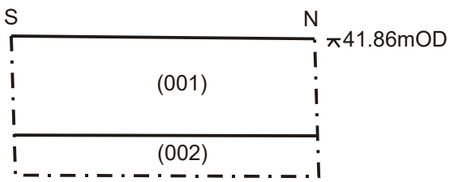
Trench 5, Representative Section 3, East Facing Section, scale 1:20



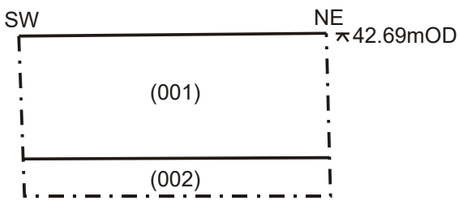
Trench 7, Representative Section 4, West Facing Section, scale 1:20



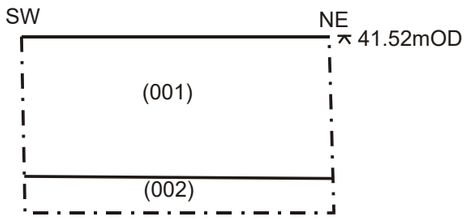
Trench 9, Representative Section 5, West Facing Section, scale 1:20



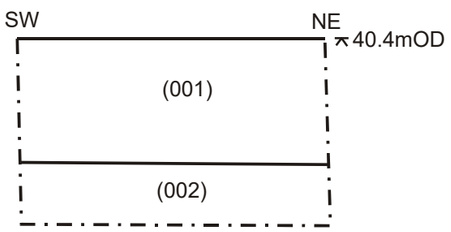
Trench 12, Representative Section 6, East Facing Section, scale 1:20



Trench 14, Representative Section 7, South East Facing Section, scale 1:20



Trench 16 Representative Section 8, South East Facing Section, scale 1:20



Trench 18, Representative Section 9, South East Facing Section, scale 1:20

Figure 8: Representative Sections 1-9 at scales of 1:20

Appendix 1: Plates

1-



Plate 1: Trench 1, Representative Section 1, from the south



Plate 2: Trench 1, from the east



Plate 3: Trench 1, from the west



Plate 4: Trench 2, from the east



Plate 5: Trench 2, from the west



Plate 6: Trench 3, Representative Section 2, from the east



Plate 7: Trench 3, from the north



Plate 8: Trench 3, from the south



Plate 9: Trench 4, from the north-west



Plate 10: Trench 4, from the south-east



Plate 11: Trench 5, Representative Section 3, from the east



Plate 12: Trench 5, from the north



Plate 13: Trench 5, from the south



Plate 14: Trench 6, from the west



Plate 15: Trench 6, from the east



Plate 16: Trench 7, Representative Section 4, from the west



Plate 17: Trench 7, from the south



Plate 18: Trench 7, from the north



Plate 19: Trench 8, from the west



Plate 22: Trench 9, from the south



Plate 20: Trench 8, from the east



Plate 23: Trench 9, from the north



Plate 21: Trench 9, Representative Section 5, from the west



Plate 24: Trench 10, from the east



Plate 25: Trench 10, from the west



Plate 26: Trench 11, from the east



Plate 27: Trench 11, from the west



Plate 28: Trench 12, Representative Section 6, from the east



Plate 29: Trench 12, from the south



Plate 30: Trench 12, from the north



Plate 31: Trench 13, from the south-west



Plate 32: Trench 13, from the north-east



Plate 33: Trench 14, Representative Section 7, from the south-east



Plate 34: Trench 14, from the south-west



Plate 35: Trench 14, from the north-east



Plate 36: Trench 15, from the



Plate 37: Trench 15, from the south



Plate 38: Trench 16, Representative Section 8, from the north



Plate 39: Trench 16, from the west



Plate 40: Trench 16, from the east



Plate 41: Trench 17, from the west



Plate 42: Trench 17, from the east



Plate 43: Trench 18, Representative Section 9, from the south-east



Plate 44: Trench 18, from the north-east



Plate 45: Trench 18, from the south-west



Plate 46: Trench 19, from the north-west



Plate 47: Trench 19, from the south-east



Plate 48: Trench 20, from the north-east



Plate 49: Trench 20, from the south-west

Appendix 2: List of Contexts

001 Modern topsoil/ploughsoil horizon. Soft, mid orange brown clayey silt with no inclusions. Above (**002**). Recorded within **Representative Sections 1-9**. Depth - 0.46m.

002 Natural horizon of Wealden clays. Soft, light orange brown sandy clay with light blue grey mottling and small-large ferrous nodules 1%. Below (**001**). Recorded within **Representative Sections 1-9**. Depth - >0.23m.