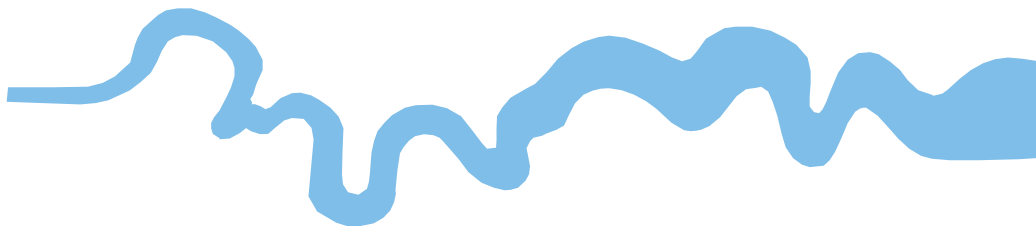


T V A S



SOUTH

**Land East of Keymer Road, (Persimmon Site) (Field 7),
Burgess Hill, West Sussex**

**Archaeological Evaluation
(Phase 5)**

by Emily Gibson

Site Code: KRB23/92

(TQ 3211 1758)

Land East of Keymer Road, (Persimmon Site) (Field 7), Burgess Hill, West Sussex

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Persimmon Homes (Thames Valley)**

by Emily Gibson

TVAS South

Site Code KRB 23/92

October 2025

Summary

Site name: Land East of Keymer Road, (Persimmon Site) (Field 7), Burgess Hill, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3211 1758

Site activity: Evaluation, phase 5 (Field 7)

Date and duration of project: 27th - 28th October 2025

Project manager: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Emily Gibson

Site code: KRB 23/92

Area of site: c. 3.26 ha within an overall area of c.7.9 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was mostly carried out mainly as intended, with 30 trenches opened. Despite the site's potential for archaeology to be present, no deposits nor finds of any archaeological interest were identified. The geophysical anomalies interpreted as recent field drains were confirmed. This part of site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 30.10.25
	Steve Preston✓ 30.10.25

Land East of Keymer Road, (Persimmon Site) (Field 7), Burgess Hill, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Emily Gibson

Report 23/92k

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land east of Keymer Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex (3211 1758) (Fig. 1). The overall site has been divided between two developers, Thakenham and Persimmon Homes. This report is concerned with the final phase (field 7) of the Persimmon Site. The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Hendy of Persimmon Homes (Thames Valley), Persimmon House, Knoll Road, Camberly, Surrey.

Planning permission (DM/22/3049) has been granted by Mid Sussex District Council for the construction of 260 dwellings and associated infrastructure on a 15.2ha site east of Keymer Road. The consent is subject to a condition (12) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by ground works, a field evaluation is required in order to assess the site's archaeological potential and to allow for a scheme of mitigation to be developed as appropriate.

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Mark Baister, Historic Environment Consultant for Essex County Council, acting as archaeological adviser to Mid Sussex District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Emily Gibson and Harriet Wright, on 27th and 28th October 2025 and the site code is KRB 23/92. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeology Services, Reading and the digital records will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a parcel of land east of Keymer Road (Fig. 1). Burgess Hill town centre is c. 1.4km north-west, and Brighton is c. 13.5km south. The site was previously an area of scrubland, populated by a number of trees. Prior to the fieldwork, the land had been entirely cleared, including the removal of topsoil (Pl. 1); subsoil was however still present in all trenches. The site is slightly sloped to the west, from 55m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), rising to 62m aOD in the south-eastern corner. The underlying geology is mapped as Weald Clay (mudstone) with bands of Alluvial and Head Deposits (BGS 2006). The geology observed on site consisted of an orange yellow silty-clay.

Archaeological background

The site's archaeological background had been addressed in a desk-based assessment (Redclift 2022). In summary, there were no known heritage assets within the site; however, a few archaeological deposits have been recorded in the vicinity. These include prehistoric and Roman remains identified during a watching brief on the Ditchling to Wivelsfield Green pipeline and a Bronze Age axe recorded to the south. An Archaeological Notification Area lies c.900m to the west, covering the route of a Roman road. The site itself was likely located within the informal parkland of the medieval '*Frekeberge*' estate and as such would have been occupied by woodland or agricultural land at this time, although no above-ground evidence has been forthcoming to support this. Late post-medieval mapping shows the site as lying within fields beyond the southern limits of Burgess Hill with the surrounding land gradually being consumed by the expansion of the town in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A geophysical survey of the Thakeham Homes part of the overall site identified a small number of magnetic anomalies of possible archaeological origin as well as at least two phases of probable furrows (Beaverstock 2023a). Subsequent trial trench evaluation of the Thakenham Homes site (Matus 2023)(Fig. 2) identified a single undated archaeological feature in addition to a number of furrows and, as such, concluded that that area of the site is of low archaeological potential.

Extensive geophysical surveys of the Persimmon site have been undertaken, generally identifying no magnetic anomalies suggestive of buried archaeological features, but revealing a series of positive linear anomalies likely to represent a late post-medieval or modern field drainage system (Beaverstock 2023b; Cicu and Beaverstock 2024; Beaverstock 2024; Martin 2025). Evaluation of the Persimmon site was intended to involve the excavation of 65 trenches, which for reasons of ecological and construction logistics had to be carried out in phases (Fig. 2). Field 5 has been evaluated across three phases, which identified two undated gullies towards the west of the field (Jansen 2024a and b; Cicu 2024). Field 6 was evaluated through the

excavation of 16 trenches (Leary 2025) which failed to identify features nor recover any artefacts of archaeological significance. The current phase of work occupies field 7 (Fig. 2).

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 had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present; and
- to inform a strategy for mitigation if required.

Thirty-two trenches were intended to be opened in this phase of the work (Trenches 34–65), each being 25m long and 1.80–2m wide. These were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps would be monitored for finds. Any uncovered deposits or features of archaeological significance would be cleaned, photographed and recorded using a single context recording system, with adherence to guidelines from the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2023a and b) and those set forth in *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2019). The potential and significance of any archaeological deposits revealed would then be assessed according to Historic England's *Research Agenda* (HE 2017) or more relevant local or thematic research priorities such as those contained within the *South-East Research Framework Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (SERFA 2019).

Results

As previously mentioned, the top soil had been already cleared prior to the commencement of the fieldwork. Of the 32 trenches, two were abandoned (Trench 44 and 64) after discussions with the client due to their placement within areas that were not threatened by development. The location around Trench 44 was to be retained as landscaping feature and the location around Trench 64 was to be retained as an ecological habitat. The remaining 30 trenches were excavated mostly as intended, with slight changes (reorientation or shortening) due to restrictions caused by on site logistics (avoiding hedges and amphibian fencing, as well as spoilheaps).

The trenches were between 23.00m and 28.50m long and 0.14m and 0.45m deep; all were 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches, giving lengths, breadths, depths and descriptions of sections and geology is given in

Appendix 1. No archaeological finds nor features were recorded, as such the trenches are only described briefly below, grouped by their stratigraphy and the natural geology.

Trenches 34, 35 and 37 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 2)

These trenches measured between 23.00m and 26.10m long and 0.28m to 0.31m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of subsoil overlying a brown orange silty-clay natural geology.

Trenches 36, 38 - 43, 45 - 47, 50 - 62 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 3)

These trenches measured between 23.70m and 26.00m and 0.23m to 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of subsoil overlying a mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology. The trenches to the north (36, 52, 42, 37) were notably more rooted, reflective of the density of the previous scrubland within this area. Land drains observed in Trench 46 correspond to linear geophysical anomalies (Fig. 2) recorded in the survey (Martin 2025).

Trench 48, 49, 56, 63, 65 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 4)

These trenches measured between 25.20m - 28.50m long and 0.14m to 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of subsoil overlying a grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology. These trenches were located on the site's highest elevation along the southern boundary, reflecting a slight variation in the natural geology on the higher ground. The intensity of rooting observed in these trenches also reflects the impact of the previous scrubland, especially along the southern boundary where it was more dense.

Conclusion

The evaluation was mostly carried out as intended, with 30 of the 32 proposed trenches opened. Some required slight repositioning due to on site logistics. Despite the site's potential for archaeology to be present, no deposits nor finds of any archaeological interest were identified. The geophysical anomalies interpreted as recent field drains were confirmed. This part of site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

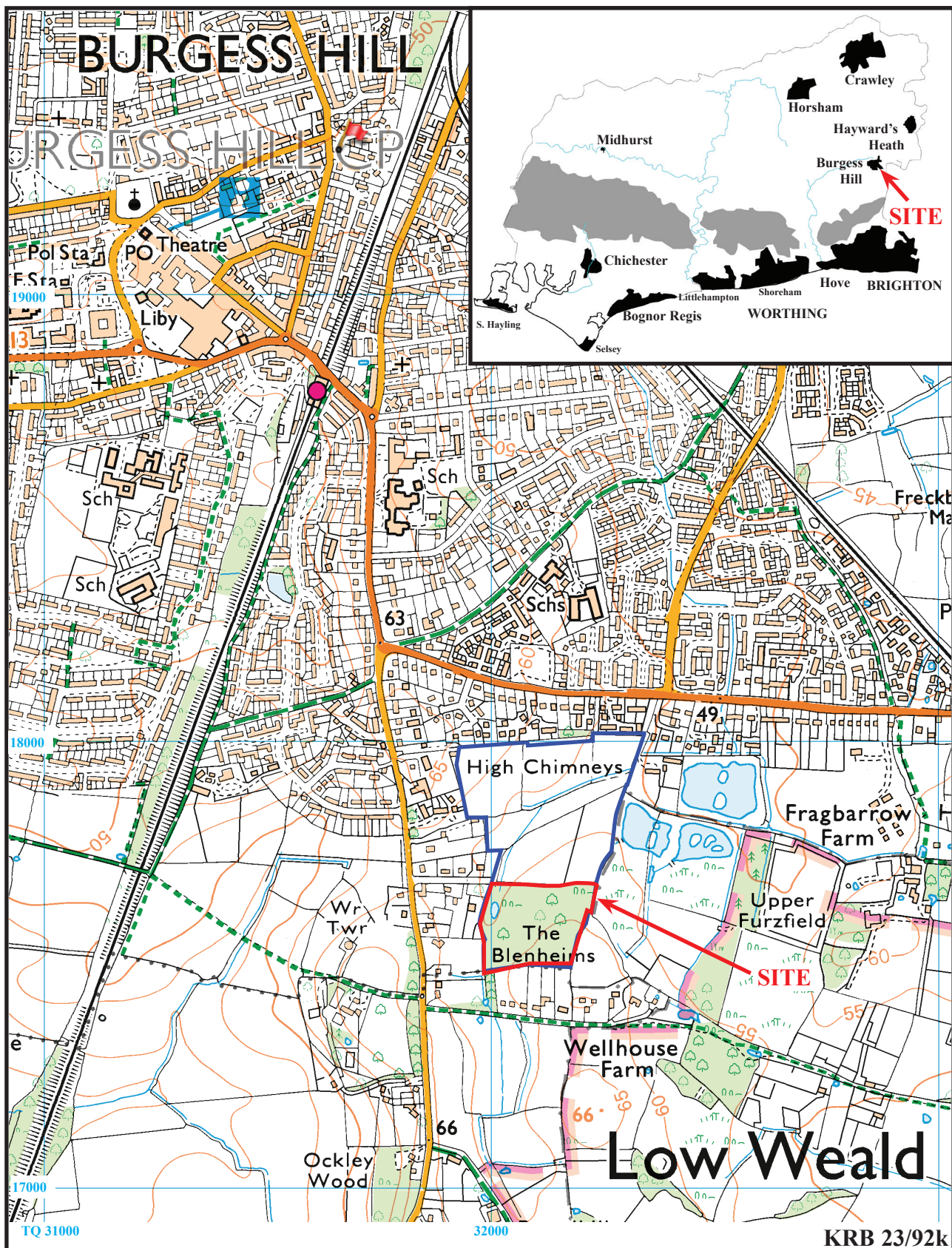
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
34	26.10	1.8	0.31	0-0.28m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.28m+ brown orange silty-clay natural geology [Pl. 2]
35	23.00	1.8	0.29	0-0.26m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.26m+ brown orange silty-clay natural geology.
36	25.80	1.8	0.23	0-0.19m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.19m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
37	26.10	1.8	0.28	0-0.26m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.26m+ brown orange silty-clay natural geology.
38	25.20	1.8	0.40	0-0.37m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.37m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
39	25.90	1.8	0.28	0-0.19m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.19m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
40	25.40	1.8	0.38	0-0.38m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.38m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
41	23.70	1.8	0.30	0-0.30m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.30m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
42	25.20	1.8	0.30	0-0.15m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.15m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
43	26.00	1.8	0.23	0-0.13m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.13m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
44		1.8		<i>Not opened</i>
45	25.30	1.8	0.35	0-0.30m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.30m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology. [Pl. 3]
46	25.40	1.8	0.45	0-0.42m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.42m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
47	25.20	1.8	0.40	0-0.38m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.38m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
48	26.80	1.8	0.22	0-0.10m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.10m+ grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology.
49	25.80	1.8	0.15	0-0.08m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.08m+ grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology.
50	25.70	1.8	0.28	0-0.27m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.27m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
51	25.00	1.8	0.30	0-0.27m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.27m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
52	26.00	1.8	0.23	0-0.18m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.18m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
53	25.40	1.8	0.30	0-0.25m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.25m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
54	25.80	1.8	0.28	0-0.20m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.20m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
55	25.70	1.8	0.26	0-0.20m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.20m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
56	28.50	1.8	0.14	0-0.07m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.07m+ grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology.
57	25.80	1.8	0.24	0-0.24m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.24m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
58	25.40	1.8	0.33	0-0.28m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.28m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
59	25.70	1.8	0.40	0-0.38m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.38m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
60	25.40	1.8	0.38	0-0.38m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.38m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
61	26.00	1.8	0.26	0-0.21m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.21m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
62	25.70	1.8	0.43	0-0.43m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.43m+ mottled blue yellow silty-clay natural geology.
63	25.50	1.8	0.18	0-0.09m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.09m+ grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology. [Pl. 4]
64		1.8		<i>Not opened</i>
65	25.20	1.8	0.20	0-0.10m dark grey brown silty-clay subsoil; 0.10m+ grey brown silty-clay rooted natural geology.

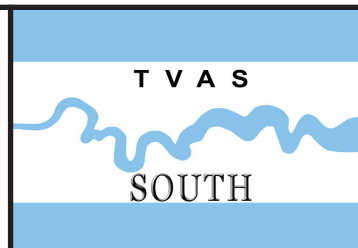


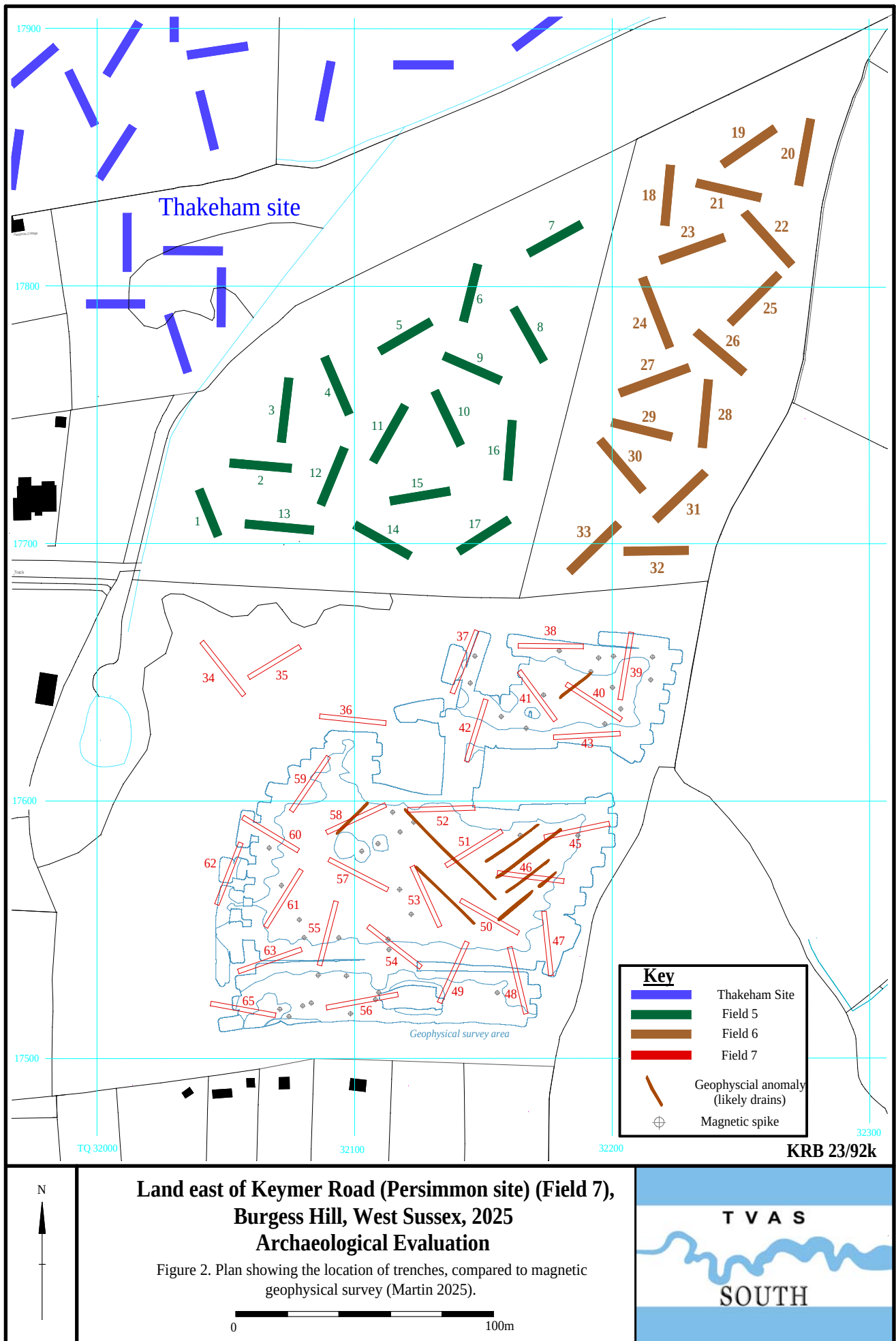
**Land East of Keymer Road (Persimmon site) (Field 7),
Burgess Hill, West Sussex, 2025**

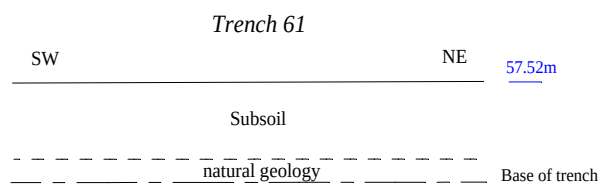
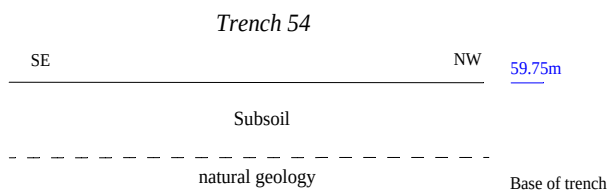
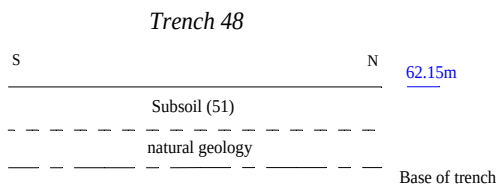
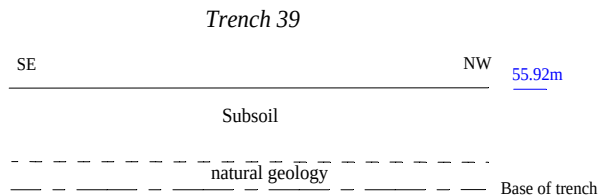
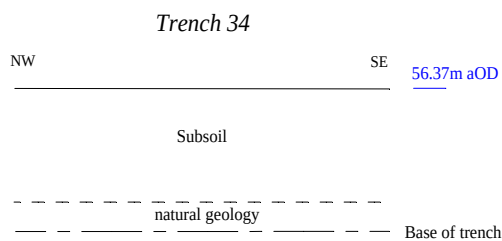
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Burgess Hill and West Sussex.

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Land east of Keymer Road (Persimmon site) (Field 7),
Burgess Hill, West Sussex, 2025
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 3. Sections.

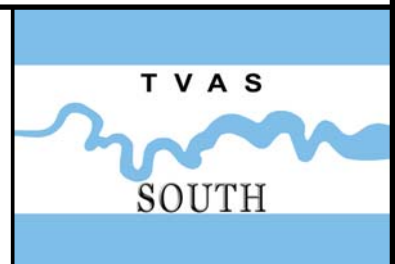




Plate 1. Site, looking North.



Plate 2. Trench 34, looking South-East,
Scales: 1.0m, 1.0m and 0.2m.



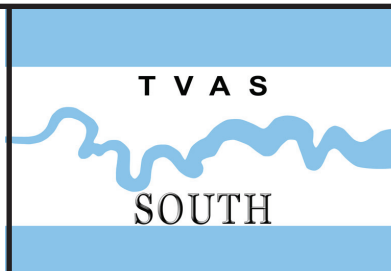
Plate 3. Trench 45, looking South-West,
Scales: 1.0m, 1.0m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 63, looking West,
Scales: 1.0m, 1.0m and 0.2m.

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**Land East of Keymer Road (Persimmon site) (Field 7),
Burgess Hill, West Sussex, 2025
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 4.**

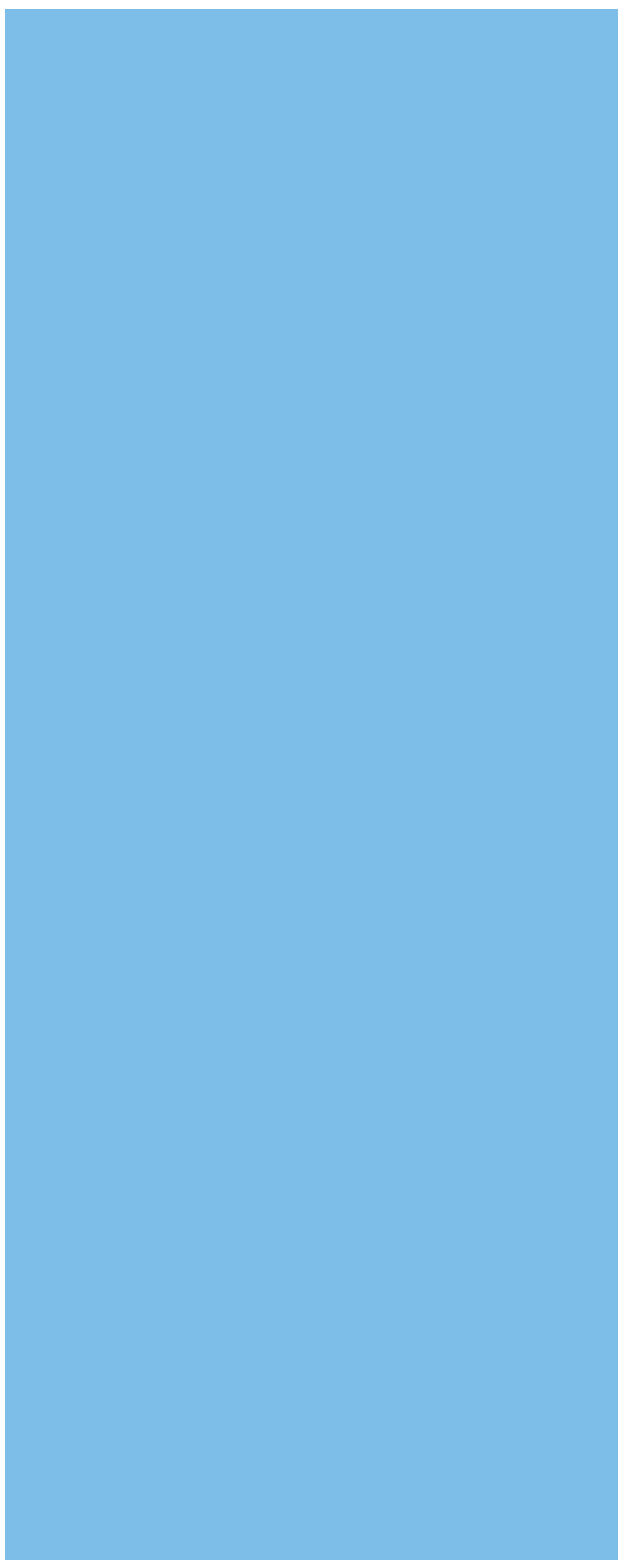
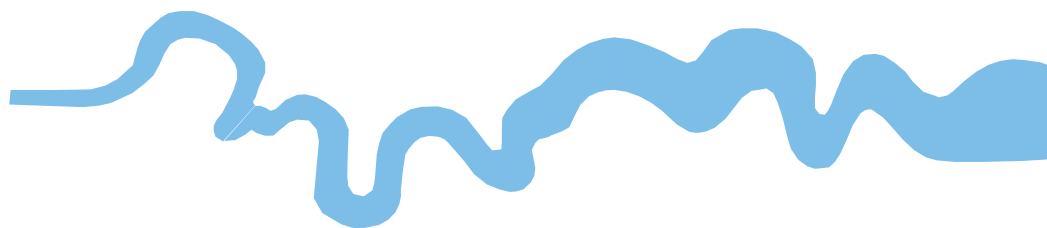


TIME CHART

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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