

Archaeological Evaluation

Land South and West of Imberhorne Upper School (SANG), Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex

Planning Ref: DM/23/2699

NGR: TQ 56394 38783

794-PLN-HER-02034

Version Number 1

17 August 2026

Project Information	
Site name	Land South and West of Imberhorne Upper School (SANG), Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex
Project type	Archaeological Evaluation
Site address	Land South and West of Imberhorn Upper School (SANG), Imberhorne Lane East Grinstead, West Sussex
NGR	TQ 36394 38783
Local planning authority	Mid-Sussex District Council
Planning reference	DM/223/2699
Project dates	20 th -24 th July 2026
Archive site code	WIEG26

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology on the proposed areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) on Land South and West of Imberhorne Upper School, Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex. The central grid reference of the site was TQ 36394 38783.
- 1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken between 20th - 24th July 2026 and consisted of ten evaluation trenches.
- 1.3 The commissioning client was Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd on behalf of the developer.
- 1.4 The natural on the site was encountered between 101.86m OD and 85.91m OD with the overall topography rising from north to south.
- 1.5 The evaluation showed no signs of archaeological deposits or features although some of the trenches did show evidence of plough scars with the site having been used as agricultural land in the recent past.
- 1.6 The natural was overlain by subsoil in all but Trench 44 which was overlain with topsoil which was present across the entire site.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out on the site of a proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) on Land South and West of Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex. The site was centred at National Grid Reference TQ 36394 38783.
- 2.2 The site comprises an agricultural field on the western periphery of East Grinstead, to the north of Imberhorne Farm. The northern boundary of the site is defined by woodland, while the eastern, western and southern boundary borders further agricultural fields. The proposed works form part of a larger site boundary that has been subject to previous archaeological evaluation across separate areas, below.
- 2.3 The adjacent Phase 1–4 Residential Development, located to the east of the site, was the subject of a recent evaluation (ASE 2026) (Figure 2) which has demonstrated good survival of archaeological features, with an intact subsoil which sealed the archaeology identified in 175 of the 183 trenches, and only limited truncation of archaeological deposits. The archaeological features were mostly undated, however those dated ranged between the broad prehistoric and others as Middle/Late Iron Age to Late Roman periods. Foci of activity were identified in the form of possible prehistoric features located in the central-western part of the site, and an area of Late Iron Age to Late Roman activity towards the centre of the site. Numerous other undated pits, postholes, ditches and gullies were also recorded across much of the rest of the site. Several post-medieval boundaries and a trackway at the western edge of the site were also recorded and correspond to features illustrated on the 1842 tithe map. An additional area of geophysical survey was also recently undertaken (SUMO 2025).

- 2.4 PCA designed a trenching scheme of ten trial trenches, nine measuring 30m by 1.8m and one measuring 15m by 1.8m. The trenches were proposed to be situated within areas of the SANG development where below-ground impacts will occur, 'Proposed Scrapes' as marked on Figure 2.
- 2.5 Development at the site has been granted planning consent under application DM/23/2699 issued by the local planning authority, Mid-Sussex District Council. The consent included an archaeological condition (no 33). The planning application was supported by a Desk-Based Assessment (Orion 2023) and a Geophysical Survey (SUMO 2022).
- 2.6 The methodology for the evaluation was outlined within a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by PCA 2026. The fieldwork was carried out between 20th -24th July 2026.
- 2.7 All works will be undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
- This Written Scheme of Investigation
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 'Universal guidance for archaeological excavation' (2023b).
 - Sussex Archaeological Standards (2019).
- 2.8 The investigation was conducted by PCA under the supervision of the author; the project was managed by Chris Mayo and was monitored by DCA at Place Services on behalf of the local planning authority. The archaeological work was commissioned by Duncan Hawkins of Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd, acting on behalf of the development.
- 2.9 The site was given the unique site code of WIEG26. The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will, upon completion of the project, be deposited with the appropriate local repository under that code.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The redevelopment of the site is subject to heritage policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (current iteration 2024) and the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031.
- 3.2 Planning consent was granted by the local planning authority in 2025 under application reference DM/23/2699 for the following:
- Hybrid planning application seeking 1) outline planning permission for a mixed use development comprising up to 550 dwellings (Use Class C3), a care village of up to 150 dwellings (Use Class C2), land for a 2 form entry primary school (including early years provision and special needs education provision), mixed use neighbourhood centre, allotments, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage; and 2) full planning permission for playing fields, new sports pavilion, and running track associated with Imberhorne Secondary School, a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated car park, access from Imberhorne Lane, internal road to the SANG, pedestrian/cycle link from Imberhorne Lane and associated landscaping and infrastructure.*

3.3 An archaeological planning condition was included, as follows:

33. *No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until a programme of archaeological investigation has been secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority (Part 1).*

(ii) *No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place within a phase (as identified in the Written Scheme of Investigation) until the completion of the programme of archaeological evaluation for that phase, identified in the Written Scheme of Investigation defined in Part 1 and confirmed by the local authority archaeological advisors.*

(iii) *A mitigation strategy detailing the excavation / preservation strategy shall be submitted to the local planning authority following the completion of the archaeological evaluation.*

(iv) *No development or preliminary groundworks can commence on those areas containing archaeological deposits until the satisfactory completion of fieldwork, as detailed in the mitigation strategy, and which has been approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

(v) *The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.*

Reason: To protect the archaeological interest of the site and to accord with Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 -2031 and the NPPF.

3.4 The Written Scheme of Investigation by PCA (2026) designed the evaluation works for the proposed creation of the SANG.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 The Desk-Based Assessment for the wider development recorded that the... “underlying geology of the site is Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand. The site is on a north facing slope dropping from c. 115m aOD at the southern boundary to c. 95m aOD at its northern boundary” (Orion 2023, 4).

4.2 Recent evaluation work in the adjacent fields recorded that... “Natural geology was encountered at a maximum elevation of 111.61m AOD in Trench 183 and a minimum elevation of 93.08m AOD in Trench 61. This consisted of Upper Tunbridge Wells sandstone and siltstone with a band of Grinstead Clay Member mudstone, a light-brownish orange silty clay brick earth with manganese flecks, including patches of small to large ironstone and sandstone patches where the rock bed was higher to surface. There is heavy rooting across the site.” (ASE 2026, 15).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following background is reproduced from the report for the adjacent archaeological evaluation (ASE 2026, 10-11).

5.1 Prehistoric

- 5.1.1 Neolithic and Mesolithic flint scatters indicating possible flint working and occupation sites, found during fieldwalking at Gullege Farm (Historic Environment Record numbers MWS3448 and MWS4167). Both of these sites are situated just to the west of the study site.

5.2 Romano-British

- 5.2.1 Fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys recovered some Roman finds, among the other finds recovered. A piece of Roman slag was recovered in the northernmost of the fieldwalking areas undertaken to the northwest of the wider development (HER MSW8273). Roman coins and Roman pottery were found by fieldwalking 200m to the west of the development (see HER MSW8274), and another possible Roman coin was recovered to the north-east of the development (HER MSW8279).
- 5.2.2 Furthermore, the alignment of a Roman Road was projected as running roughly north south 250m to the west of the development.

5.3 Medieval

- 5.3.1 The fieldwalking undertaken to the west of the development recovered a number of finds indicative of a multi-period settlement site (HER MSW8273). During this survey, finds were recovered which indicated that an early medieval building was present
- 5.3.2 A cropmark of a potential medieval building is recorded to the south of Gullege Farm (HER MSW4035), and fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys just to the south of the cropmark recovered a considerable quantity of coins and pottery of medieval date (HER MSW8275). Furthermore, the cottages at Imberhorne Farm are recorded as being of medieval origin (HER MSW8087). An Edward the IV silver penny was recovered by metal detector in the north of the development.
- 5.3.3 Fieldwalking undertaken to the west of the development (in a field just to the north of Gullege Farm) recovered pottery and tiles suggestive of a building being situated in the vicinity, including glazed tiles indicating a potential building of high status (HER MSW8274).
- 5.3.4 The earliest map which shows the development in any detail is the 1842 Tithe map (see ASE 2026, Figure 109). This shows the development as comprising a number of enclosed fields. The OS Maps from 1878 through 1913 show the gradual consolidation of the enclosed fields. In the later 20th century, the last of the smaller field boundaries have been removed, while more modern residential settlement is established to the north and east.

5.4 Relevant Archaeological Work

Geophysical Survey

- 5.4.1 There have been two phases of geophysical survey undertaken across the wider development. A survey of the site revealed anomalies relating to a former trackway, field boundary and an area of disturbance that could be agricultural or naturally derived (SUMO 2022).
- 5.4.2 More recent geophysical survey of the area subject to recent evaluation, just to the east of the site, has recorded magnetic responses that have tentatively been assigned to the category of possible archaeology. There include rectilinear and curvilinear patterns that could represent enclosures. Numerous uncertain anomalies may have been caused by variations in the underlying geology, agricultural processes or buried ferrous objects. Former field boundaries and land drains were also located. A few zones of magnetic disturbance are visible which have been caused by the removal of a pond, field boundaries and former woodland (SUMO 2025).

Trial Trench Evaluation

- 5.4.3 An archaeological evaluation has recently been completed across adjacent agricultural fields as part of the wider development which are proposed for residential development. The work saw the excavation of 183 trenches, 92 of which contained archaeological features.
- 5.4.4 The evaluation recorded good deposit survival with an intact subsoil identified in 175 of the trenches, which sealed the archaeology and only limited truncation of archaeological deposits by occasional land drains, rooting and wheel ruts. The archaeological features were mostly undated; some were dated as broadly prehistoric and others as Middle/Late Iron Age to Late Roman. One focus of activity in the central-western part of the site was of undated, possibly prehistoric date, while another towards the centre of the site was of Late Iron Age to Late Roman Date. Numerous other undated pits, postholes, ditches and gullies were also recorded across much of the rest of the site. Several post-medieval boundaries and a trackway at the western edge of the site were also recorded and correspond to features illustrated on the 1842 Tithe Map (ASE 2026).

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The full methodology for the archaeological evaluation was outlined within the site-specific Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, PCA 2026). Ten archaeological evaluation trenches (nine measuring 30m by 1.8m, one measuring 15m by 1.8m) were planned to be excavated, recorded and backfilled.
- 6.2 The trenches were marked out using a GeoMax GNNS survey instrument loaded with the pre-defined set out data as derived from the trench location plan within the WSI.
- 6.3 All trench locations were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to detect for the

presence of buried services prior to machining and again at 300mm intervals, until the desired depth and horizon was achieved.

- 6.4 All evaluation trench excavation was undertaken using a JCB 3CX 180-degree mechanical excavator. The mechanical excavator was fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket.
- 6.5 The machining was conducted under constant archaeological supervision, and the excavation was carried out in 100mm spits until the natural deposit were found.
- 6.6 Archaeological deposits were excavated by PCA staff using hand tools, i.e. trowels, shovels and mattocks.
- 6.7 Adopting a single context recording methodology, all deposits, structure and features were recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets with sections within each trench recorded at a scale of 1:10 with trench plans recorded by means of GeoMax GNNS survey instrument. Digital photographs were taken throughout the archaeological evaluation.
- 6.8 The recording system adopted during the investigations was fully compatible with those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, now presented within PCA's Site Manual (Taylor & Brown 2009, updated 2018). The site archive was compiled to be compatible with other archaeological archives produce within the county.
- 6.9 The trenches were surveyed, and the heights of all interventions and below ground deposits encountered were calculated and recorded in metres above ordnance datum (m OD), using GeoMax GNSS survey equipment.
- 6.10 In this report all context numbers (cuts, layers and fills) are written in squared brackets [], small finds are denoted by SF and environmental samples are bracketed with curly brackets {}.

7 NEGATIVE EVALUATION RESULTS, BY TRENCH

- 7.1 The table below shows each of the trenches which produced no archaeological results.

Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Depth to Natural (m)	Top of a trench (m OD Height)	Context Nos		
						topsoil	subsoil	natural
38	30	1.8	0.5	0.40	88.16	+	78	79
39	30	1.8	0.5	0.30	88.78	+	80	81
40	30	1.8	0.4	0.40	89.12	+	82	83
41	30	1.8	0.45	0.34	90.06	+	84	85
42	30	1.8	0.4	0.31	90.59	+	86	87
43	30	1.8	0.5	0.35	91.94	+	88	89
44	30	1.8	0.4	0.30	93.27	+	-	90
45	30	1.8	0.3	0.30	100.39	+	95	96
46	30	1.8	0.5	0.47	101.56	+	93	94
47	30	1.8	0.37	0.37	102.15	+	91	92

7.2 Negative Trench Photos:



Plate 1: Trench 38, facing south (1m scale)



Plate 3: Trench 44, facing east (1m scale)



Plate 2: Trench 41, facing north (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 45, facing northeast (1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 47, facing south (1m scale)

8 PHASED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

8.1 Phase 1: Natural Geology

- 8.1.1 Natural deposits were encountered in all evaluation trenches, these deposits comprised of a yellowish-brown silty sand including fragments of manganese and sandstone fragments. This was encountered between 101.86m OD in Trench 47 and 85.91m OD in Trench 38.
- 8.1.2 The overall topography of the site appears to rise from north to south from 88.16 OD in Trench 38 and 102.15m OD in Trench 47.

8.2 Phase 2: Undated

- 8.2.1 The natural was overlain by a mid-greyish brown silty sand subsoil which included occasional charcoal flecks and bioturbation in all but Trench 44. Topsoil completed the sequence.

9 DISCUSSION, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

9.1 Discussion

- 9.1.1 The archaeological investigation was designed to determine the presence or absence of surviving archaeological deposits and features at the site and, if present, to investigate, record and established their significance. This preliminary investigation aims to provide archaeological information to be considered by Mid-Sussex District Council when further

advising in regard to development on the site.

9.1.2 There were no archaeological features encountered during the investigation. There were a number of trenches where agricultural ploughing had left scarring on the base of the trenches.

9.1.3 The evaluation work was completed in extremely hot and arid conditions, with no significant rain having fallen for weeks.

9.2 Research Objectives

9.2.1 The following site-specific research questions were posed within the WSI:

- Are the anomalies detected by geophysical survey indicative of genuine archaeological remains, and if so, what is their nature, date and extent?

9.2.2 There was no indication of archaeological remains which could have registered on a geophysical survey.

- To determine the presence or absence of prehistoric activity
- To determine the presence or absence of Roman activity
- To determine the presence or absence of medieval activity
- To determine the presence or absence of post-medieval activity

9.2.3 There was no evidence of prehistoric, Roman, medieval or post-medieval activity.

- To ascertain whether any traces to the post medieval usage of the site for agricultural purposes are evident

9.2.4 The presence of ploughscars and a subsoil in all but Trench 44 was evidence that the site had been subject to agricultural activity until very recently.

- To establish the extent of past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource

9.2.5 The only impact apparent on the site was ploughing.

9.2.6 Similarly to the adjacent evaluation (ASE 2025) it was considered that this project had the potential to inform on the following areas of research from the South-East Research Framework (SERF) (KCC 2019):

- The use of the Weald in later prehistory: how good is the evidence for occupation or exploitation of the Weald in later prehistory? Was it a barrier to communication? (SERF Middle Bronze Age/Iron Age)
- Examples of continuity and change in rural settlement patterns and types throughout the Roman period are important. All instances of rural settlement sites are valuable resources that require mapping, phasing, dating and comparison with other known examples in order to determine patterns of change or regionality (SERF Roman)
- What impacts on the landscape came about during the later [Roman] period and into the sub-Roman phase? Are there discernible changes in agricultural practices and re-forestation? (SERF Roman)

- What building types are used on rural settlements? How common are roundhouses and how late do they remain in use? (SERF Roman)
- Field systems, and their relationship to preceding and succeeding systems, need to be better understood. (SERF Roman)

9.2.7 Given that no archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the investigation, nothing can be concluded from the work other than a lack of activity and / or evidence.

9.3 Statement of Significance

9.3.1 The archaeological evaluation of the evaluated parts of the SANG area (which comprised only the small areas where ground impact is proposed) has therefore shown no significance.

9.4 Archiving

9.4.1 The completed archive produced during the evaluation and all subsequent site work by PCA comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited with the appropriate local museum/archive depository, expected to be East Grinstead Museum.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd for commissioning the work.

10.2 Thanks, is also given to the DCA at Place Services for monitoring the project on behalf of the local planning authority.

10.3 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for his project management and editing of this report, Laila Paguyo for her hard work on site and PCAs graphics department for their illustrations.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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12 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Trench	Type	Phase	Section no	Interpretation	Length	Width	Depth	Levels high	Levels low
78	38	Layer	2	38	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.37	87.99	86.16
79	38	Natural	1	38	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	87.71	85.91
80	39	Layer	2	39	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.31	88.61	87.2
81	39	Natural	1	39	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	88.32	87.18
82	40	Layer	2	40	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.18	88.92	88.48
83	40	Natural	1	40	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	88.68	88.33
84	41	Layer	2	41	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.23	89.89	89.37
85	41	Natural	1	41	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	89.72	89.32
86	42	Layer	2	42	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.23	90.49	90.17
87	42	Natural	1	42	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	90.17	90.03
88	43	Layer	2	43	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.23	91.77	91.17
89	43	Natural	1	43	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	91.58	91.03
90	44	Natural	1	44	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	92.55	92.48
91	47	Layer	2	45	Subsoil	15	1.8	0.29	102.13	102.05
92	47	Natural	1	45	Natural sand	15	1.8	-	101.86	101.84
93	46	Layer	2	46	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.32	101.4	100.87
94	46	Natural	1	46	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	101.05	100.79
95	45	Layer	2	47	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.24	100.32	100.06
96	45	Natural	1	47	Natural sand	30	1.8	-	99.97	99.7

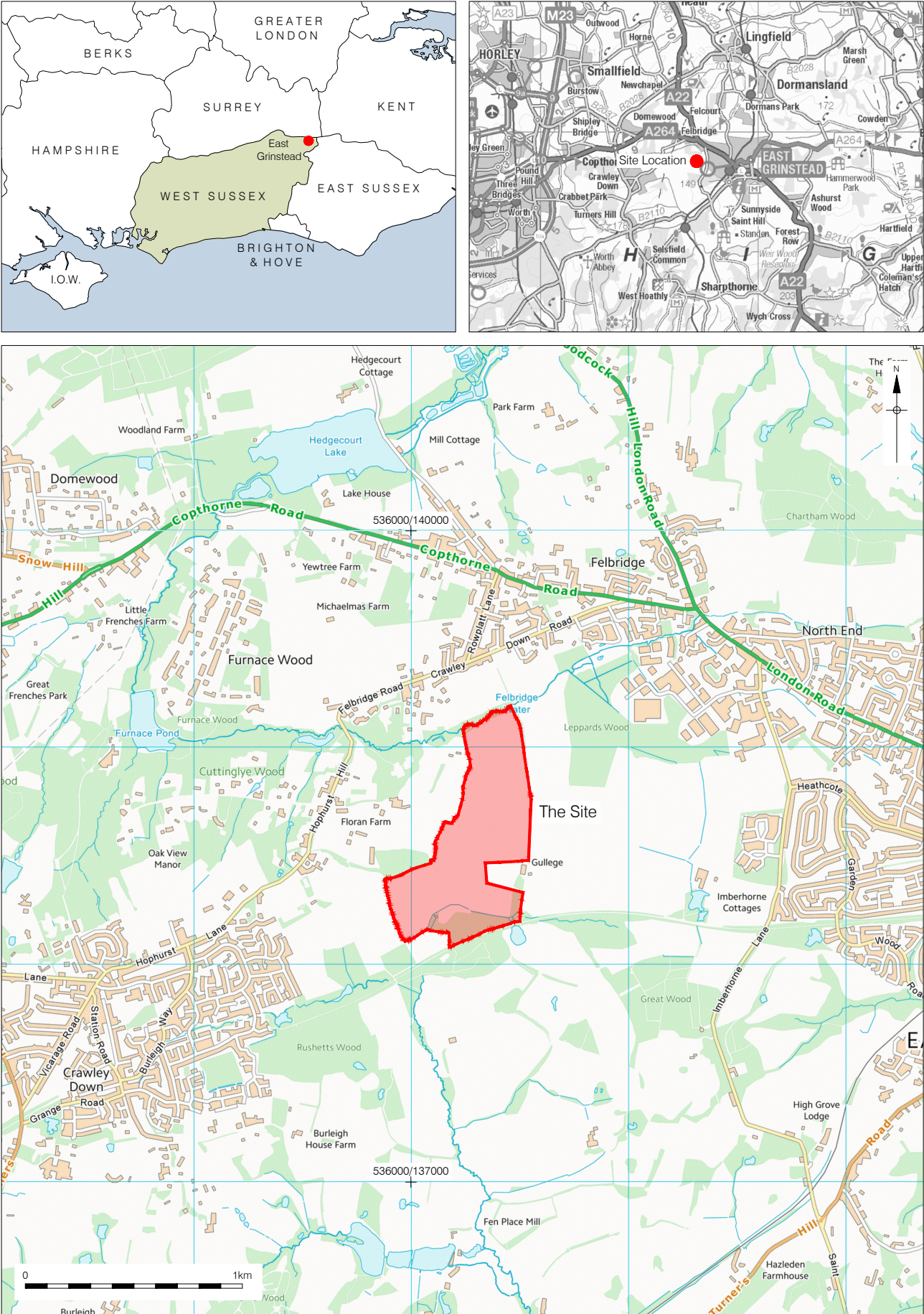
13 APPENDIX 2: MATRIX

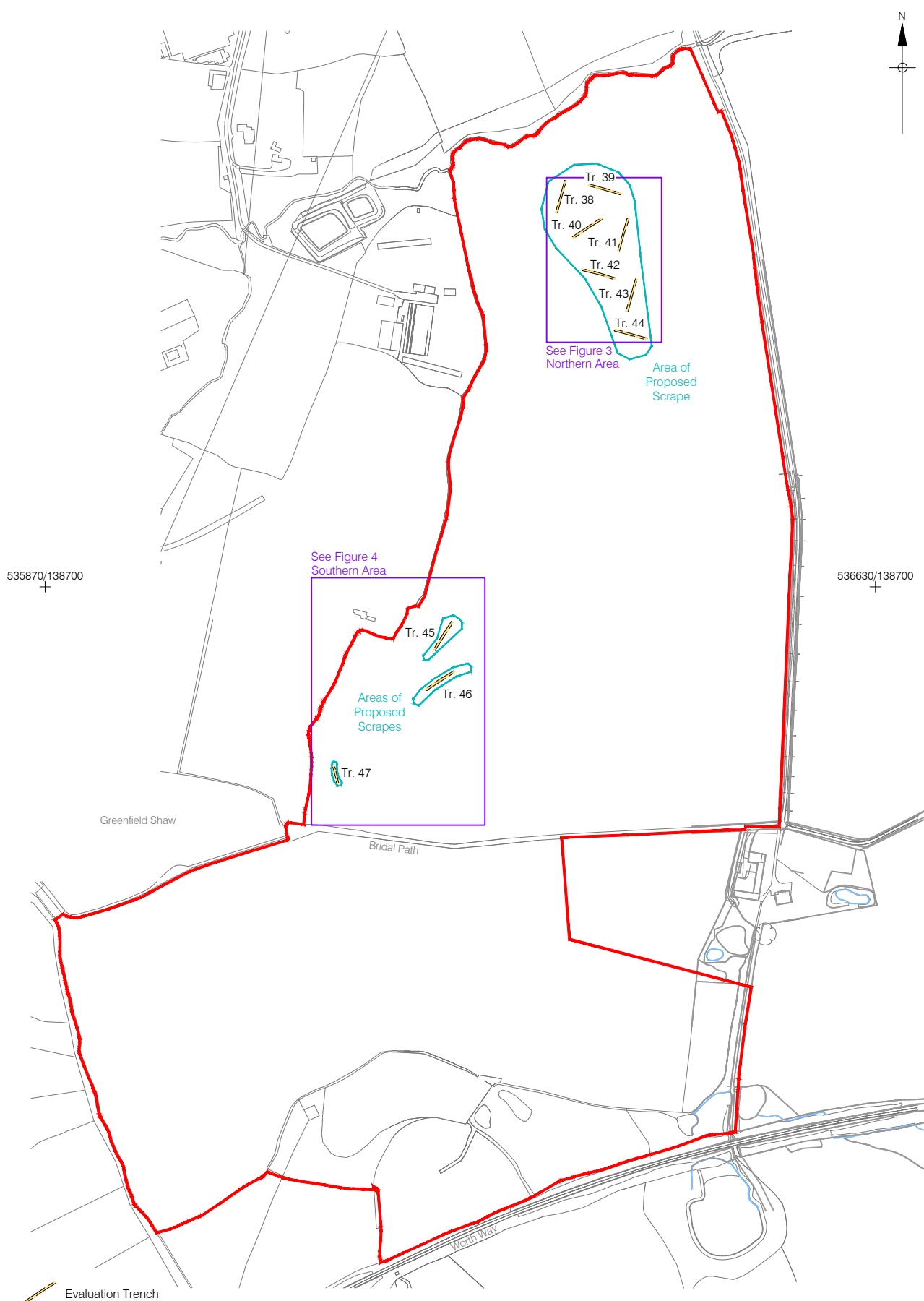
Tr. 38	Tr. 39	Tr. 40	Tr. 41	Tr. 42	Tr. 43	Tr. 44	Tr. 45	Tr. 46	Tr. 47
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
78	80	82	84	86	88		95	93	91
79	81	83	85	87	89	90	96	94	92
NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE

14 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID (UID)	preconst1-545062
Project Name	Evaluation at Land south and west of Imberhorne Upper School (SANG)
Sitename	Land south and west of Imberhorne Upper School (SANG)
Sitecode	WIEG26
Project Identifier(s)	K11413
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	DM/23/2699
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	20-Jul-2026 - 24-Jul-2026
Location	Land south and west of Imberhorne Upper School (SANG) NGR: TQ 36394 38783 LL: 51.132088629675486, -0.052040344459263 12 Fig: 536394, 138783
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: West Sussex Local Authority District: Mid Sussex Parish: East Grinstead
Project Methodology	Ten archaeological evaluation trenches (nine measuring 30m by 1.8m, one measuring 15m by 1.8m) will be excavated, recorded and backfilled.
Project Results	The natural on the site was encountered between 101.86m OD and 85.91m OD with the overall topography riding from north to south. The evaluation showed no signs of archaeological deposits or features although some of the trenches did show evidence of plough scars with the site having been used as agricultural land in the recent past. The natural was overlain by subsoil in all but trench 44 which was overlain with topsoil which was present across the entire site.
Funder	Private or public corporation Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd
Person Responsible for work	Chris Mayo
HER Identifiers	

Report generated on: 11-08-2026:1532





0 250m

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12/08/2026 PJ

Figure 2
Detailed Site Plan showing Areas of Proposed
Scrapes and Evaluation Trench Locations
1:5,000 at A4

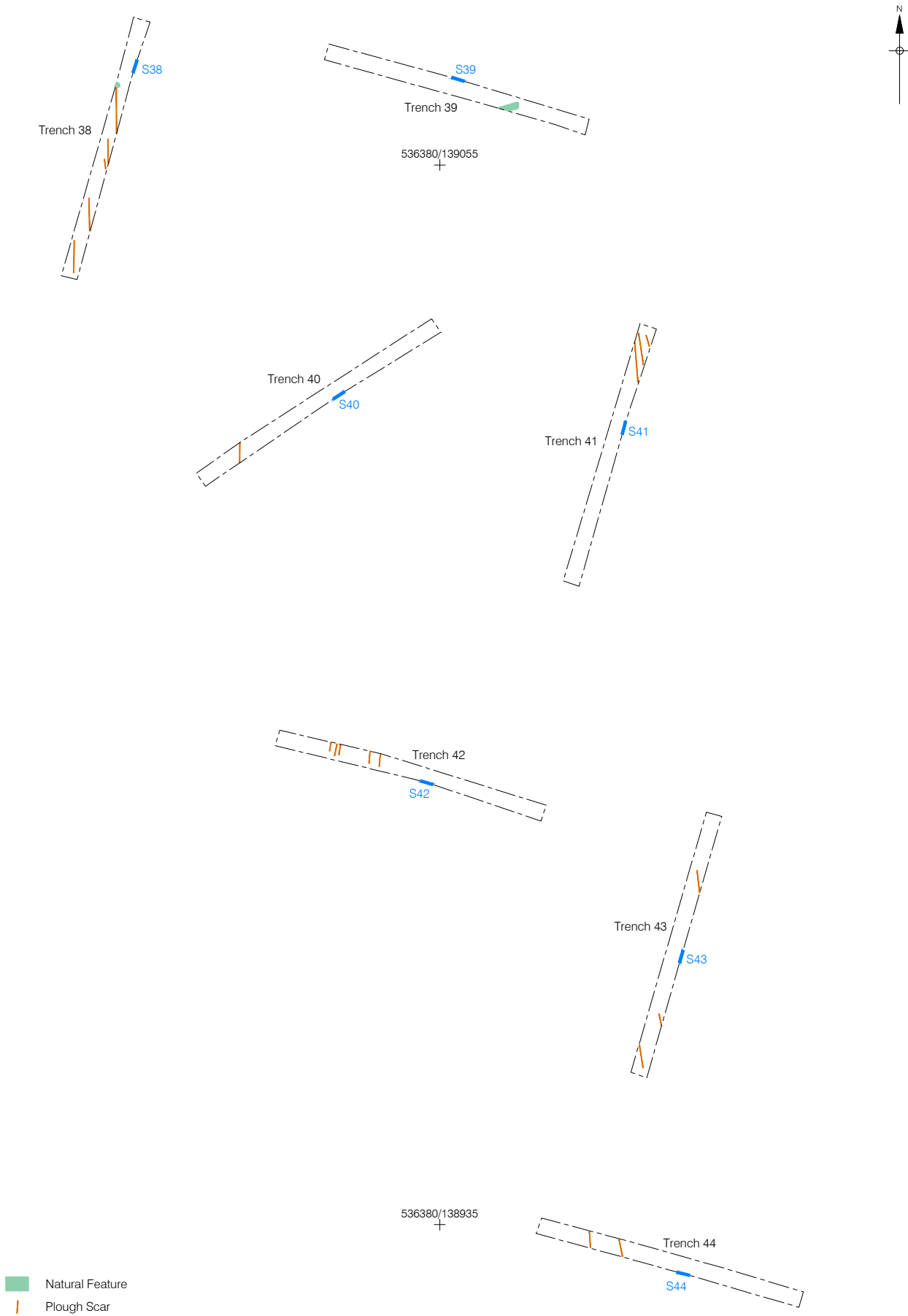


Figure 3
Detailed Trench Plan - Northern Area
1:625 at A4



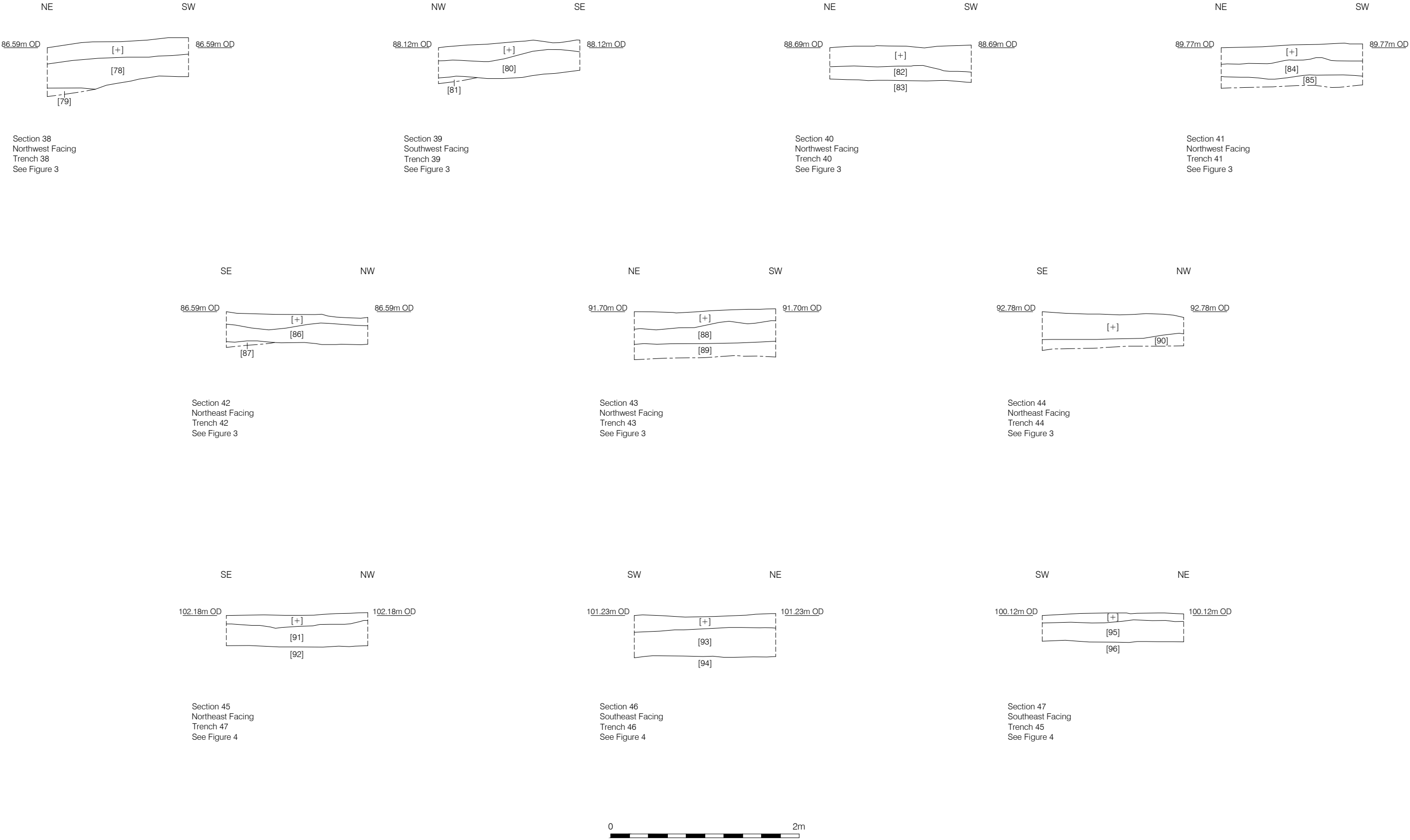


Figure 5
Sections
1:40 at A3

