

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Planet  
Plants, Back Lane, Ightham, Kent.**

**NGR 559130/154830  
Project Number: 10/50/002  
Site Code: PPI 09**

**Planning Reference: TM/09/00328**

**OASIS ID: proarcha1-72454**

**by  
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## Summary

*PRO Archaeology Services was commissioned by Richard and Alessandra McKenna to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks prior to erection of a replacement agricultural building to provide a potting shed, office and storage areas (TM/09/00328) (NGR 559130/154830) at Planet Plants, Back Lane, Ightham, Kent. The site works involved the excavation of 15 stanchion base pits (c. 1m<sup>2</sup>). No archaeological features or finds were discovered.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 PRO Archaeology Services were commissioned by Richard and Alessandra McKenna to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the erection of a replacement agricultural building to provide a potting shed, office and storage areas (TM/09/00328) (NGR 559130/154830) at Planet Plants, Back Lane, Ightham, Kent.

1.1.2 Following consultations between the local planning authority at Tonbridge and Malling District and Wendy Rogers of the Heritage Conservation Team at Kent County Council, (Tonbridge District Council's advisor on archaeological issues), a condition was attached to the planning permission requiring an archaeological watching brief to be maintained throughout the programme of groundworks.

*"No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation can be observed and items of interest and finds are recorded..."*

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The site is located within the Parish of Ightham, Tonbridge and Malling District. It is accessed off Back Lane and is located near the centre of the Planet Plants compound (Figure 2).

1.2.2 The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey is on Hythe Beds overlain by Head deposits to the south east.

### **1.3 Monitored works**

1.3.1 The groundworks which required archaeological monitoring were 15 stanchion base pits excavated in advance of becoming concrete bases providing additional support for the new structure.

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief, as outlined in the Specification, (KCC 2009), were to contribute to the heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of the excavations in connection with the groundworks.

1.4.2 Specific aims were to:

- Clarify the nature of the deposits and assess the potential for Palaeolithic remains
- To clarify the presence of prehistoric activity which may be related to the

Neolithic burials.

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

- 1.5.1 The current report represents the findings of the watching brief undertaken by Paul Riccoboni (Senior Archaeologist) on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Evidence of early prehistoric activity was first documented in the area of Ightham by Benjamin Harrison (1794-1875). Benjamin Harrison lived in Ightham for eighty three years and is one of Ightham's most notable residents. He had a great interest in the archaeology of the local area and collected many Palaeolithic implements. Harrison collected flints from places such as High Field, Oldbury rock shelters and the shode gravels, he presented all of his findings (except one) to the Maidstone museum in 1880 (Harrison, 1928). Harrison recognised that the Tertiary deposits on the high ground of the North Kent meant the rudimentary worked tools were of a pre-palaeolithic age, called 'eoliths' and were the work of what he termed 'Plataeu Man' (Roe 1981). Benjamin Harrison's contribution to the study of early man in this area was and still is unparalleled.
- 2.2 Later scattered prehistoric flint finds have also been recorded within Ightham and Ivy Hatch from the Mesolithic period through to Early Bronze Age; these findspots have been recorded on the Kent HER tabulated below (Table 1).
- 2.3 The Iron Age is the next major time period represented within the parish of Ightham. At Oldbury Hill are the remains of a large Iron Age camp covering 123 acres. Three gold British coins were found on or near Oldbury in 1874, 1885 and 1902 respectively. Scattered Romano-British finds have been recorded in the area of Ightham including a cemetery in the clay and sand pit immediately north of Borough Green Station (Bennett 1907).
- 2.4 No Anglo-Saxon finds have been discovered in the parish but clues to their presence come from the place names. The most likely origin of the word Ightham comes from the Anglo Saxon *eatha* (eight) and *ham* (home). The eight 'hams' are said to be Ightham, St. Clere, Oldbury, Borough Green, Ivy Hatch, Bewley, Redwell and the Mote.
- 2.5 Ightham is not mentioned in the Domesday Book. William I divided Ightham Parish into three manors. On all manors were 'commons' on which the local people had their rights to common. Ightham Common was the original common land of the manor of Ightham. During the Tudor and Stuart periods Ightham became a small village and some of the original buildings from this period still stand, such as 'the town house' originally built in 1480.

- 2.6 Ightham's most famous historic building is Ightham Mote which dates back to the Middle Ages, its first owner being Sir Ivo de Haut, who possessed it in about 1180.
- 2.7 Archaeology South East conducted an archaeological evaluation of a site on Ismay's Road, Ivy Hatch but no finds or features were discovered (Griffin 2003). PRO Archaeology Services also conducted a watching brief at Hidden Cottage, High Cross Road, Ivy Hatch (Riccoboni 2009) but no significant archaeological remains were discovered. Below is Table 1 summarising the HER data obtained detailing a 1km search of the study area by Kent County Council.

Table 1: Detailing a 500m radius of the study site

No	Event	Site UID	NGR	Description
1	Round Barrow	TQ 55 NE 24 - MKE250	TQ 592 555	Three or four arrowheads, a polished celt and a scraper were found in 1871 on the surface of a tumulus at Tebbs Farm, Ightham
2	Find spot	TQ 55 NE 30 - MKE256	TQ 593 556	Roman pottery and coins found in Mains Field
3	Find spot	TQ 55 NE 34 - MKE260	TQ 585 556	Neolithic implements
4	Find spot	TQ 55 NE 35 - MKE261	TQ 591 556	An "oval scraper with a polished cutting edge" was found in 1871 on the slopes of a tumulus at Tyers Knoll, Ightham.
5	Round Barrow	TQ 55 NE 36 - MKE262	TQ 5890 5542	Payne notes the former existence of a barrow on Hope Farm, from the slopes of which arrowheads and other implements were obtained
6	Find spot	TQ 55 NE 70 - MKE296	TQ 59 55	Palaeolithic Implements now at Maidstone museum
7	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 3 - MKE377	TQ 587 549	Perforated Quartzite Hammer found by Harrison
8	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 10 - MKE384	TQ 588 544	A Neolithic pottery spoon on display in Maidstone Museum was found 'many years ago' at Ivy Hatch, near Ightham
9	Monument	TQ 55 SE 14 - MKE388	TQ 586 549	Post Medieval sandpits; Neolithic implements; late bronze age cup; Romano-British pottery
10	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 15 - MKE389	TQ 5842 5447	Romano-British cremation burial
11	Monument	TQ 55 SE 16 - MKE390	TQ 5868 5450	Mesolithic flint working site found in 1933 in a sandpit at Ivy Hatch, near Ightham.

No	Event	Site UID	NGR	Description
12	Monument	TQ 55 SE 17 - MKE391	TQ 5918 5498	Neolithic burials found at Beach wood Hole
13	Monument	TQ 55 SE 20 - MKE394	TQ 587 545	Romano-British burial group. In 1936 a probable burial group was found in Fielder's Sand Pit, Ivy Hatch. It comprised a samian cup form 46, a 2nd c. red ware jar and fragments of a narrow necked-jar which are now in Maidstone Museum.
14	Monument	TQ 55 SE 22 - MKE396	TQ 582 547	William Lambarde's "Carde" of c. 1570 shows a beacon at Ightham
15	Monument	TQ 55 SE 25 - MKE399	TQ 586 540	"Ancient remains"
16	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 32 - MKE406	TQ 5874 5442	Two Mesolithic cores and twenty two Mesolithic blades or flakes from a sand pit at the Plough Inn, Ivy Hatch are now in Maidstone Museum.
17	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 34 - MKE408	TQ 5915 5485	Palaeolithic implements
18	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 35 - MKE409	TQ 5989 5495	Palaeolithic implements
19	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 36 - MKE410	TQ 5886 5445	Palaeolithic Implements
20	Find spot	TQ 55 SE 37 - MKE411	TQ 5879 5471	Palaeolithic Implements
21	Listed Building	TQ 55 SE 94- MKE35814	TQ 5872 5435	FORGE COTTAGE Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1600 to 1699
22	Listed Building	TQ 55 SE 96 – MKE35815	TQ 5818 5479	RASPIT HILL Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1924 to 1925
23	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 191- MKE35816	TQ 5873 5572	THE OLD COTTAGE Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1753 to 1832
24	Listed Building	TQ 55 SE 113 - MKE35827	TQ 5870 5429	THE OLD HOUSE Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1710 to 1710
25	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 185 - MKE35829	TQ 5884 5574	LANGLEYS Grade II listed building. Main

No	Event	Site UID	NGR	Description
				construction periods 1500 to 1982
26	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 202 - MKE35838	TQ 5945 5505	<b>BEWLEY FARMHOUSE</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1500 to 1599
27	Listed Building	TQ 55 SE 122 - MKE36024	TQ 5877 5441	<b>FIR TREE HOUSE</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1700 to 1799
28	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 175 - MKE36030	TQ 5954 5542	<b>GIBBON'S PLACE</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1480 to 1936
29	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 154 - MKE36362	TQ 5894 5507	<b>K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1935 to 1935
30	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 197 - MKE36595	TQ 5894 5551	<b>CRICKETTS FARMHOUSE</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1500 to 1799
31	Listed Building	TQ 55 SE 100 - MKE36596	TQ 5871 5436	<b>IVORS</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1467 to 1999
32	Listed Building	TQ 55 NE 184 - MKE36597	TQ 5873 5569	<b>HARROW COTTAGE</b> Grade II listed building. Main construction periods 1800 to 1832

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The excavations for the 15 stanchion base pits were completed with a 360° mini tracked excavator fitted with a 600mm wide bucket. The excavations for the foundation pits were taken down to the required formation depths usually c. 1.0m from the present ground surface. The removed spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets based upon the Museum of London context record sheet modified for use by PRO Archaeology Services.
- 3.3 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Paul Riccoboni in Brighton and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course.
- 3.4 The site OD Level was recorded from a known spot height, this measured 140m AOD.

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

Number of Contexts	38
No. of files/paper record	10
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	24 digital 4 B&W
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

## 4.0 RESULTS

Table 3: Results: List of recorded contexts

Pit No.	Deposits	Description	Depth	Height m AOD
1	1/001	Mid brownish grey silty clay with some iron staining and occasional sub angular flints (Subsoil)	0.30m	140m
	1/002	Light orange clay silt with sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' Deposit).	0.25m	139.75
	1/003	Dark brownish orange with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	/
2	2/001	Mid brownish grey silty clay with some iron staining and occasional sub angular flints (Subsoil)	0.30m	140m
	2/002	Light orange clay silt with sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' Deposit).	0.25m	139.75
	2/003	Dark brownish orange with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	/
3	3/001	Dark greyish black mottled silty clay with modern finds and concrete throughout all above a geo textile membrane (Topsoil).	0.30m	140m
	3/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional angular flint nodules (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.70m
4	4/001	Dark greyish black mottled silty clay with modern finds and concrete throughout all above a geo textile membrane (Topsoil).	0.30m	140m
	4/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional angular flint nodules (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.70m
5	5/001	Dark brownish black silty clay with light grey clay mottling (Topsoil).	0.25m	140m
	5/002	Light brownish orange clay silt (Natural 'Head' deposit)	/	139.75m
6	6/001	Mid brownish grey silty clay with some iron staining and occasional sub angular flints (Subsoil)	0.30m	140m
	6/002	Light orange clay silt with sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' Deposit).	0.25m	139.75
	6/003	Dark brownish orange with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	/
7	7/001	Mid brownish grey silty clay with some iron staining and occasional sub angular flints (Subsoil)	0.30m	140m
	7/002	Light orange clay silt with sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' Deposit).	0.25m	139.70
	7/003	Dark brownish orange with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).		

8	8/001	Mid brownish grey silty clay with some iron staining and occasional sub angular flints (Subsoil)	0.25m	140m
	8/002	Light orange clay silt with sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' Deposit).	0.20m	139.75
	8/003	Dark brownish orange with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	
9	9/001	Dark brownish black gritty clay-temporary road surface.	0.25m	140m
	9/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.75m
10	10/001	Dark brownish black gritty clay-temporary road surface.	0.25m	140m
	10/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit)	/	139.75m
11	11/001	Re-enforced concrete- previous floor surface.	0.16m	140m
	11/002	Hardcore layer containing CBM	0.25m	139.86m
	11/003	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.61m
12	12/001	Re-enforced concrete- previous floor surface.	0.12m	140m
	12/002	Hardcore layer containing CBM	0.20m	139.86m
	12/003	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.66m
13	13/001	Re-enforced concrete- previous floor surface.	0.12m	140m
	13/002	Tarmac	0.05m	139.86m
	13/003	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit)..		139.81m
14	14/001	Dark brownish black silty clay with light grey clay mottling (Topsoil).	0.25m	140m
	14/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.75m
15	15/001	Dark brownish black silty clay with light grey clay mottling (Topsoil).	0.25m	140m
	15/002	Dark brownish orange clay silt with occasional sub angular flint gravels (Natural 'Head' deposit).	/	139.75m

## **5.0 THE FINDS**

- 5.1 There were no finds recovered from this site.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

- 6.1 The watching brief do not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance. The shallow overburden indicates the site had been stripped of topsoil and levelled in the recent past.
- 6.2 During a walkover it was apparent that the site had also been terraced, especially on the western side of the plot. This was probably done to provide level platforms for the polythene tunnels erected when the site was called Coblands nurseries.
- 6.3 The natural 'Head' deposit seen directly beneath the remanding subsoil did not reveal any early prehistoric tools.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Although the groundworks did not reveal any archaeological features or finds this report has proven that the Ightham area has potential to reveal important prehistoric remains.
- 7.2 The excavations for the new agricultural building were limited and the 'key hole' nature of the groundworks makes site interpretation difficult. Previous topsoil removal, terracing and levelling across the development area may have removed shallow archaeological features or finds (had they been present). The extent of this site levelling is unknown, but seemed less obvious at the north eastern end of the site.
- 7.3 A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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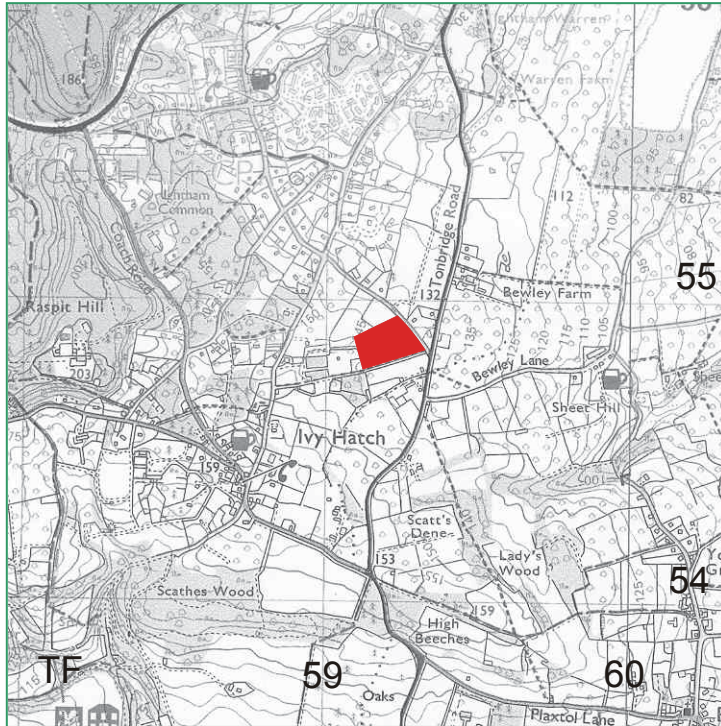
Roe, D. 1981 'The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Periods in Britain.' Routledge & Kegan Paul

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

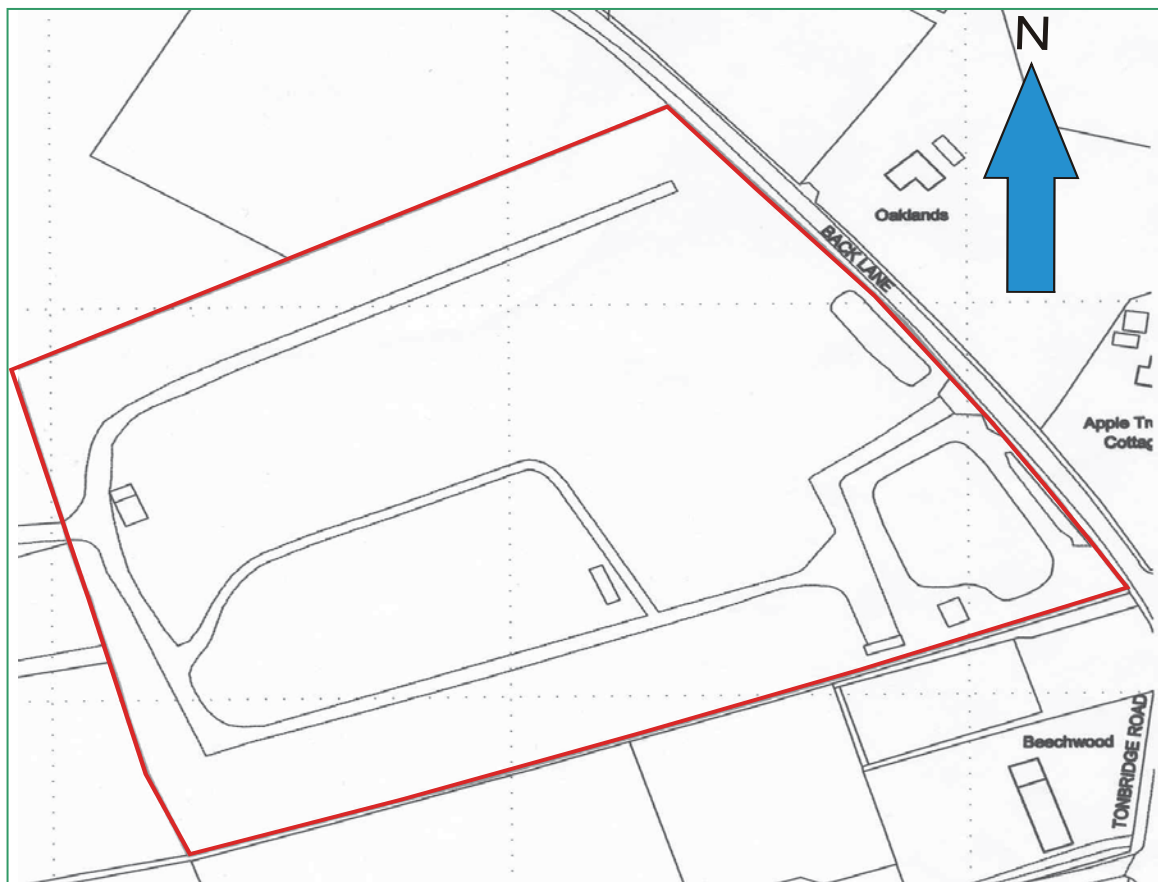
Many thanks to Richard and Alessandra McKenna for commissioning PRO Archaeology to undertake the archaeological work and Ben Croxford of KCC for supplying the HER data used in this report. Also many thanks to Wendy Rogers, Adam Single and Teresa Hawtin for their very much appreciated help and support.

**SMR Summary Form**

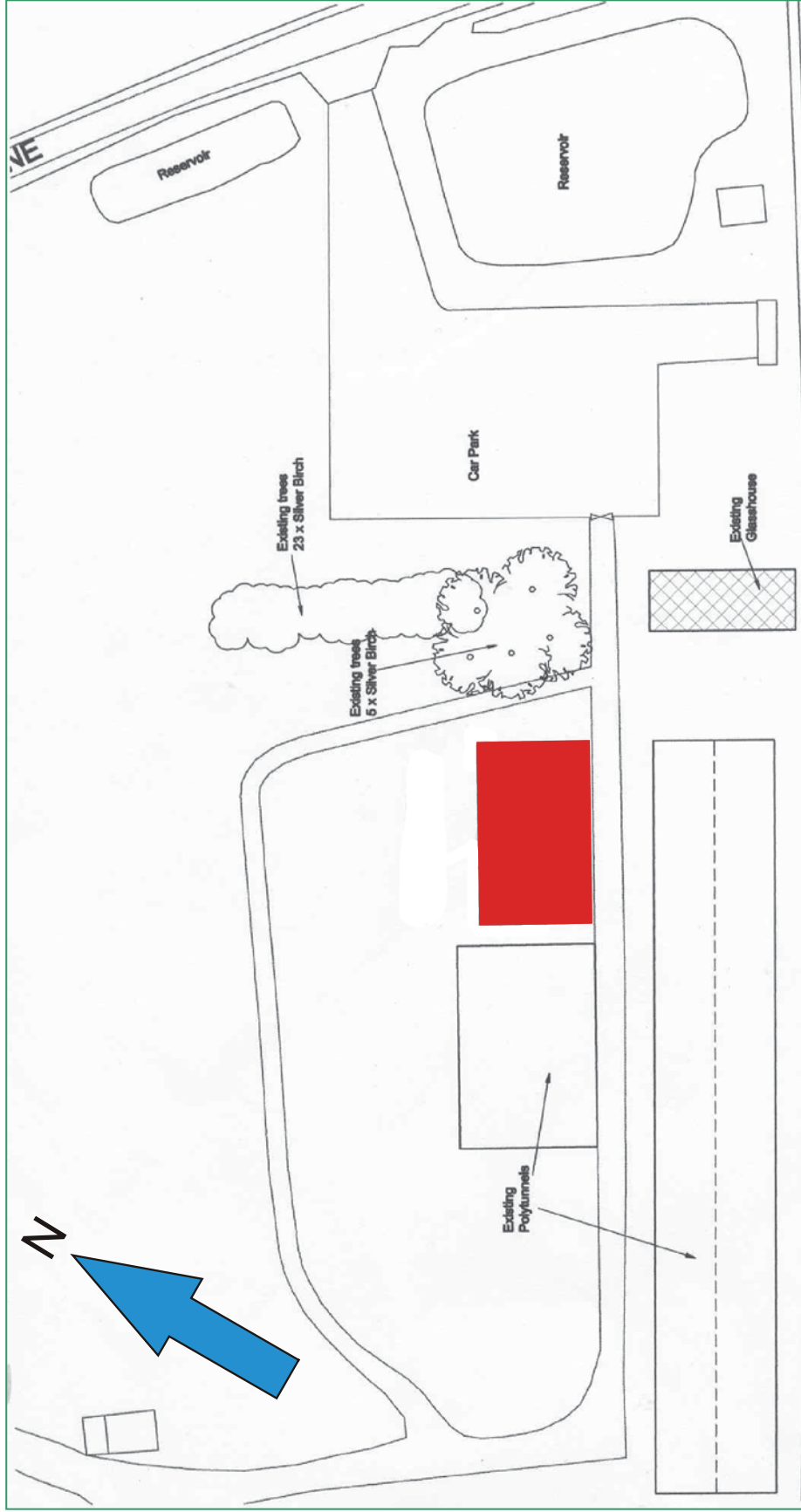
Identification Name and Address	Planet Plants, Back Lane, Ightham, Kent					
Site Code	PPI 09					
County, District &/or Borough	Tonbridge and Malling district, Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	559130 154830					
Geology	Hythe Beds overlain by Head deposits					
PRO Archaeology Project Number	10/50/002					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief: ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 10 <sup>th</sup> February 2010	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr Richard and Alessandra McKenna					
Project Manager	Paul Riccoboni					
Project Supervisor	Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>PRO Archaeology Services was commissioned by Richard and Alessandra McKenna to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks prior to erection of a replacement agricultural building to provide a potting shed, office and storage areas (TM/09/00328) (NGR 559130/154830) at Planet Plants, Back Lane, Ightham, Kent. The site works involved the excavation of 15 stanchion base pits (c. 1m<sup>2</sup>). No archaeological features or finds were discovered.</i></p>						



**Figure 1a:** Site location at a scale of 1:50,000. The site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)



**Figure 1b:** Site location at an original scale of 1:1,250 at A4. The site is outlined in red. (Extract from Architect's plan)



**Figure 2:** Plan showing the monitored area of the site in red at an original scale of 1:500 at A3 (Extract from Architect's plan)

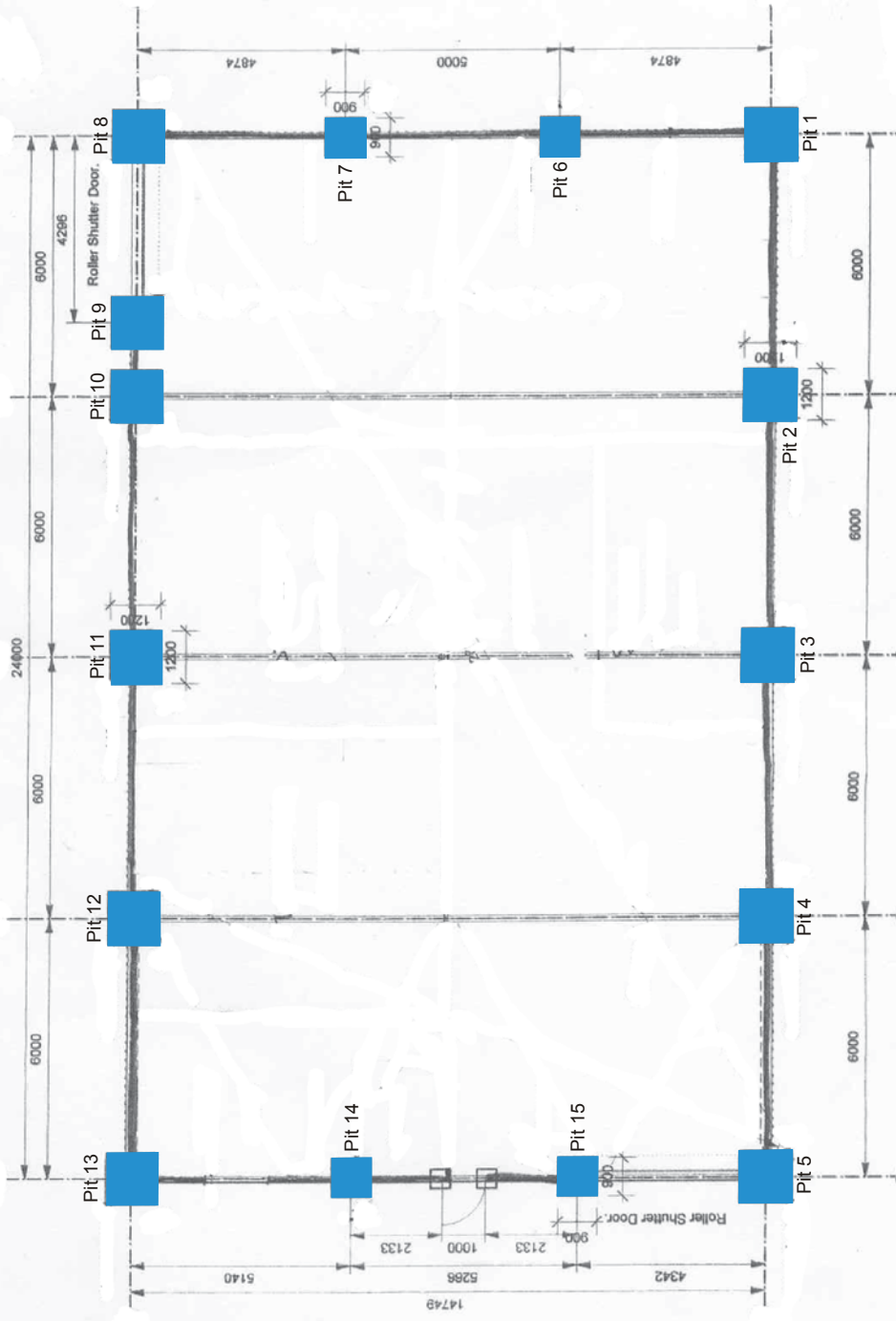
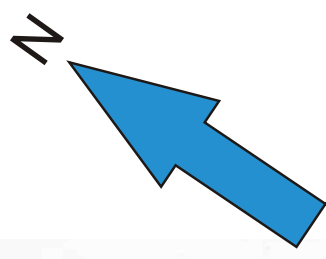


Figure 3: Plan showing the monitored stanchion base pits 1-15 at an original scale of 1:100 (Extract from Architect's plan)



Figure 4: Pit 1 – SW



Figure 5: Pit 2 - SW



Figure 6: Pit 3 – SW



Figure 7: Pit 4 - W



Figure 8: Pit 5 – SW



Figure 9: Pit 6 - SW



Figure 10: Pit 7 – SW



Figure 11: Pit 8 – W



Figure 12: Pit 11 - SW



Figure 13: Pit 13 –SW



Figure 14: Pit 15 – SW



Figure 15: General- W