



Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works at Orchard Farm, Wormley Lane, Hambledon, Surrey

January 2022

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This document sets out the results from a programme of archaeological works at Orchard Farm, Wormley Lane, Hambledon, Surrey, in advance of the redevelopment of the site. They were carried out on the 20th & 21st December 2021 by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd on behalf of the owner. The results revealed a recent dog burial, modern drains and a series of geological striations, but no significant archaeological deposits or artefacts.

WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY

BACKGROUND

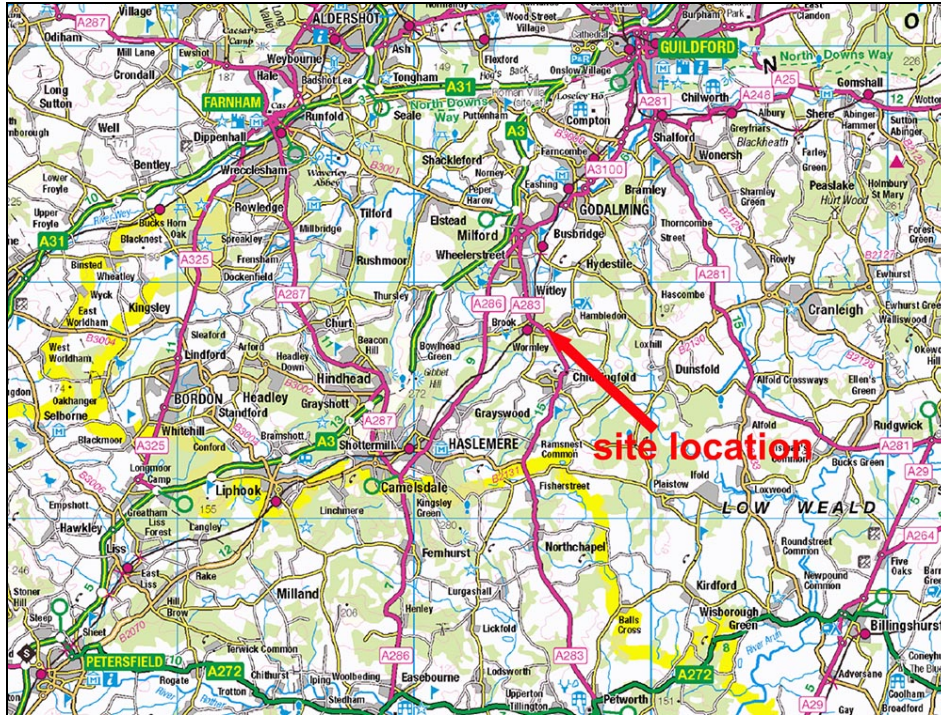


Figure 1 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

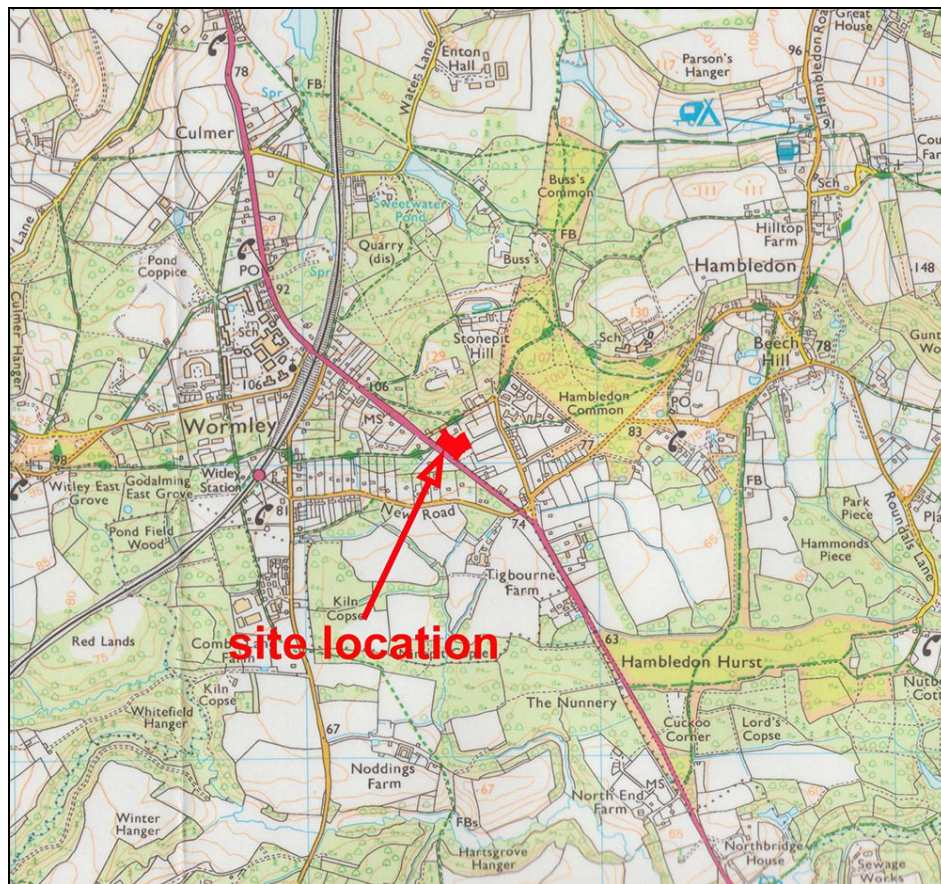


Figure 2 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

Topographical Background

1. Orchard Farm lies between the two villages of Wormley and Hambledon in the Waverley District of Surrey (see Figure 1). It sits within a triangle of land bounded by the Petworth Road (A283) to the south-west and Wormley Lane to the north-west and north-east (see Figure 2). The site sits at 85m aOD and is centred at OS grid reference SU 9551 3808. The underlying geology of the site is the Atherfield Clay Formation, with the sands of the Hythe Formation of the Lower Greensand overlying to the north and the Wealden Clay formation underlying to the south. Head deposits are also recorded in the area of the site.

Project Background

1. The landowner has obtained planning permission (WA/2019/0296) from Waverley Borough Council for the construction of nine dwellings with associated vehicular access and parking following the demolition of the existing farm outbuildings and stables. Condition 17 of that planning permission stated that: “No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.”
2. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd was appointed by the landowner to write and submit a written scheme of investigation (WSA 2021) in order to address Condition 17 of the planning permission, and then to carry out the ensuing archaeological works. This report details the results of the ensuing archaeological work, which was carried out on 20th – 21st December 2021 by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. The project archive, which consists solely of paperwork, will be deposited with Surrey History Centre.

Historical Background

1. A detailed description of the historical and archaeological background to this site can be found in the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) drawn up by Surrey County Archaeological Unit and submitted with the planning application (SCAU 2014). The results from this indicated that the site has a moderate to low potential for buried archaeological remains. It also highlighted that the area of the existing farm buildings had been subject to significant past landscaping (*Ibid.*, p.12).

RESULTS

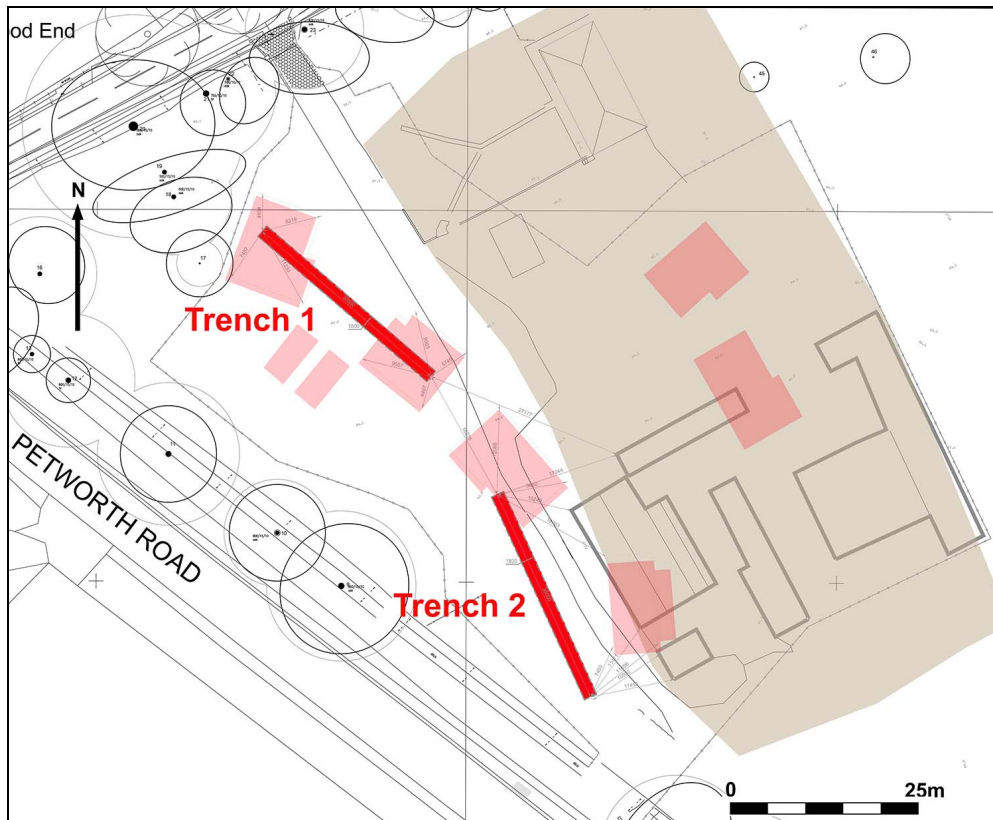


Figure 3 Site plan showing the location of the archaeological trenches, with the proposed new housing shaded in pink and the area of previous disturbance, highlighted by the SCAU DBA, in pale brown

1. Two 30m long and 1.8m wide trenches were excavated within that area of the site to be developed which had not previously been disturbed during the construction of the existing farm buildings (see Figure 3). Neither contained any archaeological features or artefacts, save for a modern dog burial in Trench 2, buried in a black plastic bin-liner, and two interconnected modern land-drains, also in Trench 2. However both trenches contained a series of approximately north-west to south-east running striations containing grey sand and ironstone fragments, almost certainly Head deposits eroding off the Hythe Beds to the north and forming shallow grooves in the underlying geology.
2. Overlying and sealing these infilled striations was a grey/brown clay silt, containing occasional ironstone fragments, which thickened from 0.25m – 0.45m towards the southern end of the site. This is interpreted as an historic topsoil. In Trench 1 this layer was heavily disturbed by rooting, resulting in an admixture with the underlying clay. Overlying this historic topsoil in Trench 2 was a deepening layer of orange/brown clay silt containing frequent modern building rubble, particularly towards the south, which may well originate from the terraced farmyard to the east. This layer sealed the cuts for the drains in Trench 2. Overlying all these layers in both trenches was a dark red-brown topsoil, 0.35-0.4m thick.

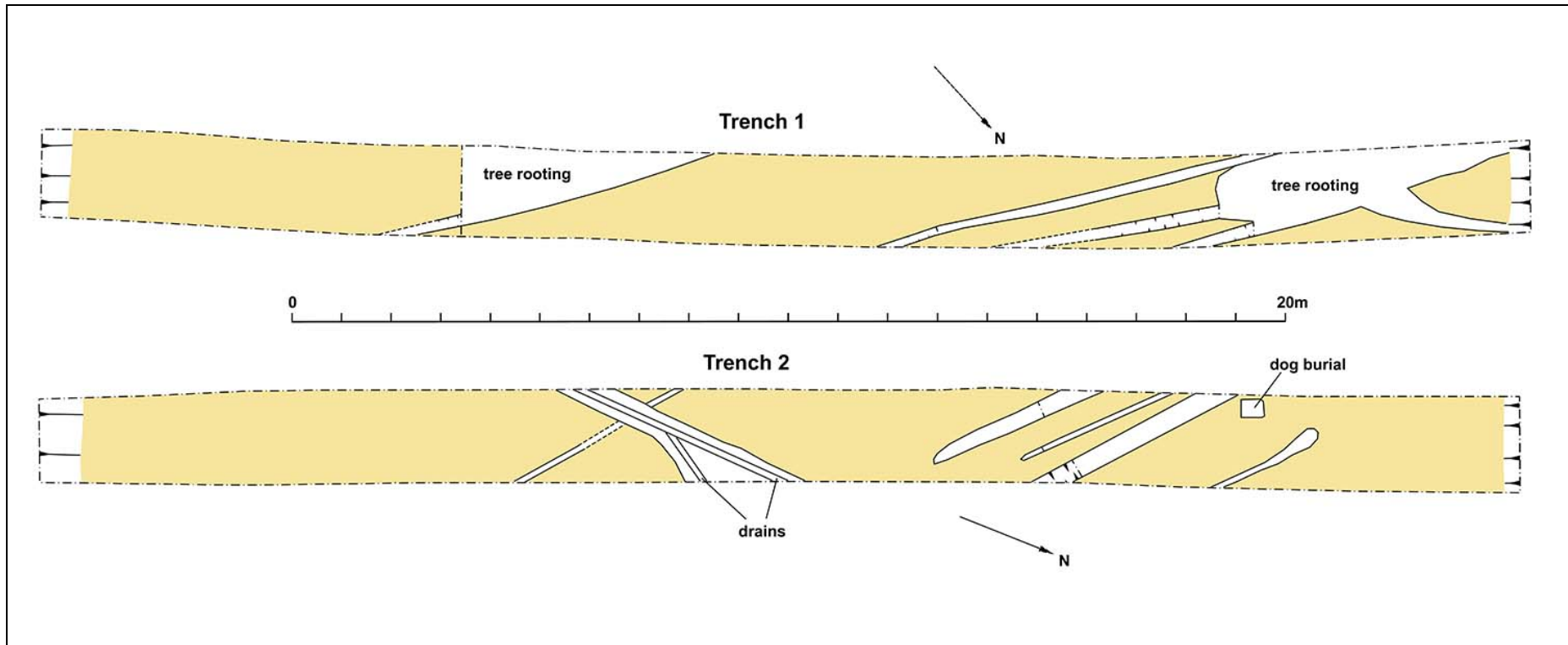


Figure 4 Plans of both trenches, with the underlying geology shaded in yellow. Those features not otherwise labelled are the striations.



Figure 5 Trench 1, looking north, with the two areas of striations visible in the middle ground and the background.



Figure 6 The northern sand filled striations in Trench 1 after sectioning, looking north-west, the dark patch in the background is where a tree stump was removed.



Figure 7 Striations in Trench 2 when first exposed, looking south-east.



Figure 8 Trench 2 looking north, showing the deeper layers of both historic topsoil and redeposited clay silt & rubble at its south end. The dark patch in the middle ground is the effluent from the severed modern land drains



Figure 9 East baulk of Trench 1, showing a section across one of the striations, filled with grey sand, with the historic topsoil here heavily disturbed by rooting and containing frequent lumps of yellow clay.



Figure 10 East baulk of Trench 2 showing a section across one of the striations, filled with grey sand, above which is the darker grey/brown historic topsoil, overlain by the orange brown redeposited material and the modern dark red-brown topsoil

CONCLUSION

1. The trenches at Orchards Farm proved to be of greater geological interest than archaeological, with no indication of any archaeological features or artefacts pre-dating the modern period. The principal features noted were a series of sand and ironstone filled striations, likely to be Head deposits, running approximately north-west to south-east sealed beneath an historic topsoil.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

West Sussex Archaeology Ltd 2021 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works at Orchard Farm, Wormley Lane, Hambledon, Surrey* Unpublished.