



**Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works at Sefter
Farm, Pagham Road, Pagham, West Sussex**

March 2009

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological works at Sefter Farm, Pagham Road, Pagham, West Sussex, carried out by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. on behalf of Barfoots of Botley. The programme consisted of an evaluation of the site of a proposed anaerobic digestion plant. No significant archaeological features were noted.

BACKGROUND

Topographical Background



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

1. Sefter Farm lies c. 1.5m to the north of the village of Pagham and c. 4 miles to the south-east of Chichester in West Sussex (Fig.1). The site lies at 3m aOD and is centred at OS grid reference SZ 8915 9945. The underlying geology of the site is flint gravels and clay. The development site itself slopes gently to the south and west towards two small streams.

Project Background

1. Barfoots of Botley have obtained planning permission (no: P/92/08) from West Sussex County Council for the construction of an agricultural anaerobic digestion plant at Sefter Farm, Pagham Road, Pagham, West Sussex. Condition 7 of that permission called for the developer to secure “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 in writing by the County Planning Authority”.
2. The written scheme of investigation for such a programme of archaeological work was set out in a Method Statement drawn up by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd (WSA 2008) and approved by the planning authority, and in the document ‘Recommended Standards and Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control)’ issued by WSCC.
3. This report documents the results from this programme of archaeological work, which was carried out from 8th - 12th December by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. The project archive will be deposited with West Sussex Records Office.

Historical Background

1. The earliest mapping evidence available which shows the site is the Yeakell and Gardner 2 inch to 1 mile map of 1778-1783 (Norgate 2001). This indicates that the western part of the site at that time was wooded, while the eastern portion was a field. The site is currently under grass.
2. There is no record of any known archaeological remains within the immediate vicinity of the site, although Sefter Farm is known to have been in existence from at least the 17th century (VCH 1973 p.229).



Figure 2 Yeakell and Gardner 2inch to 1 mile map of 1778-1783.
The development site is indicated in red.

RESULTS

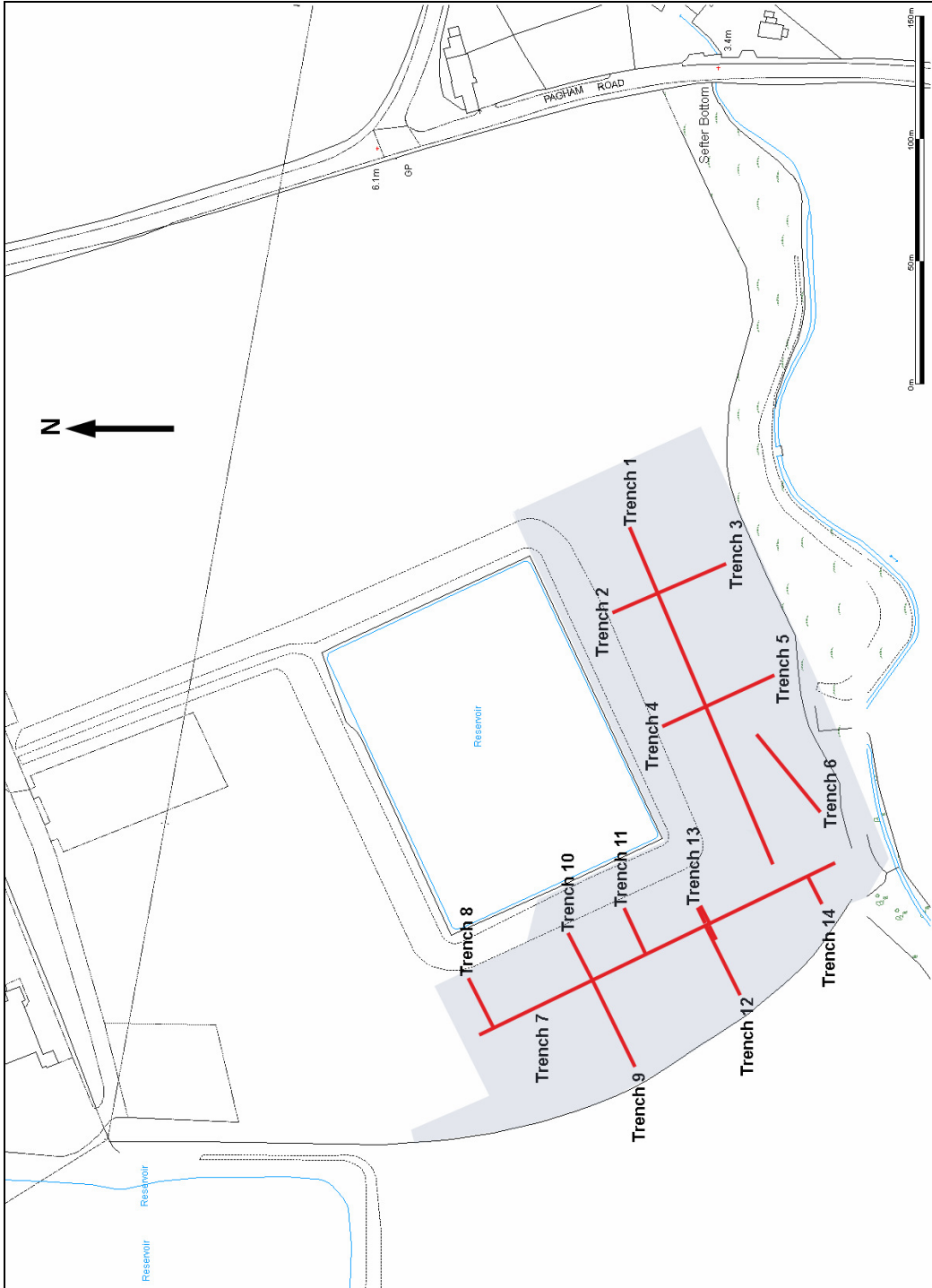


Figure 3 Plan of the site.

WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY

1. A total of 628m of 2m wide trenching was dug across the area of the development site, thus exposing just over 5% of the total. The depth of the trenches was sufficient to expose the surface of the undisturbed geology, c. 0.3m below the surface of the field, except at the eastern end of Trench 1. Here a deeper excavation was made to investigate the make-up of that geology. It was found to consist of tidal river deposits of orange/yellow flint gravel and sandy clay with some chalk and occasional non-flint pebbles. The proportions of these constituents varied considerably across the site.

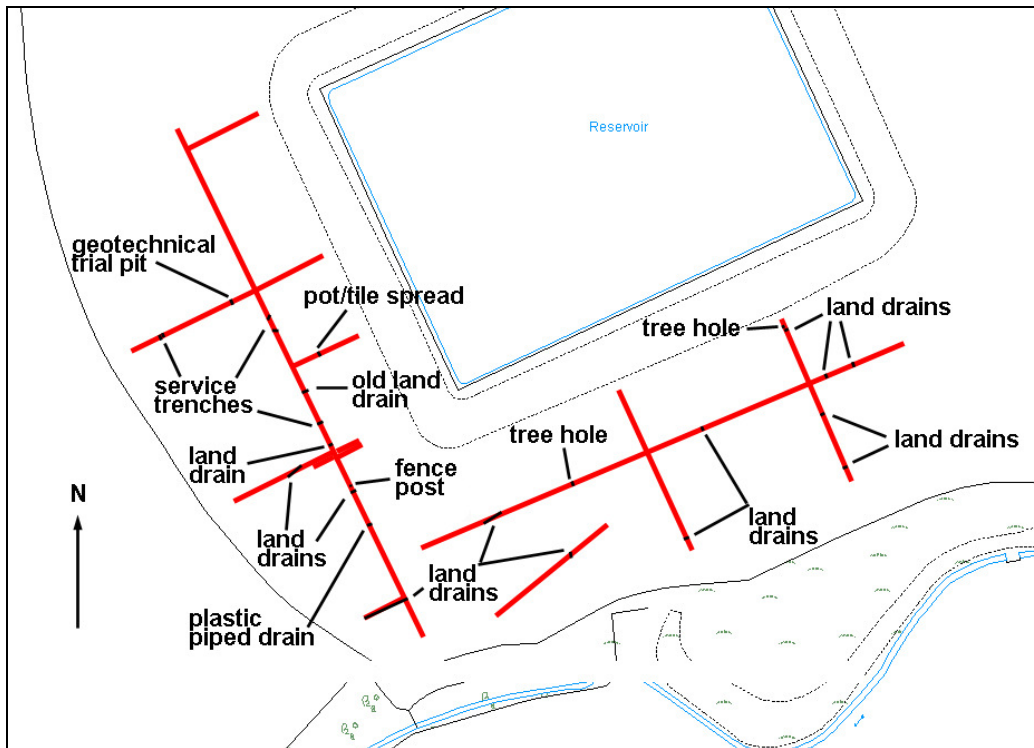


Figure 4 Plan of the features recorded.

2. The majority of the features noted in the trenches excavated were modern land drains (see fig.4), running into the southern and western streams. These consisted of shallow gravel filled channels, c. 0.1m wide, just deep enough to penetrate the gravels and clays below the ploughsoil. In addition to these, there was one modern plastic piped drain, running west, which was buried to twice the depth and may be linked to the existing reservoir on the site.
3. Other modern features noted were: three service trenches in Trench 7, which had been linked to a caravan park on the site; two service trenches in Trench 9, which fed the existing temporary site buildings; a backfilled geotechnical pit, also in Trench 9, excavated as part of the current development; and a fence post set in concrete in Trench 7, which formed part of a fence running east-west from the corner of the reservoir. In addition to these a number of shallow gullies and small circular holes were noted, which upon excavation were found to contain

WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY

frequent fragments of clear plastic sheeting. It is probable that these were created by the machinery used to construct the existing reservoir, since in wet conditions the wheels and feet of such vehicles sink deep into the ground, pressing the topsoil into the underlying clays, together with the plastic which exists within it throughout the field.

4. Only two features of any age were recorded during these archaeological works, the first being an earlier ceramic land drain excavated in Trench 7. This lay a much greater depth than the modern gravel drains, at 1.1m below the current ground surface, in a v-shaped trench running east-west. Each section of ceramic pipe was 0.275m long and 0.085m in diameter, and of the two visible, one had a rectangular slot cut out of its side, presumably to allow water to enter. The second feature was a spread of 19th or early 20th century tile, pottery and flint found lying just below the ploughsoil in Trench 11. This was just under a metre in diameter, and did not appear to be within any sort of pit, merely lying in a shallow scoop upon the undisturbed clays beneath. It is uncertain what this spread represents, possibly the base of a shallow pit dug through the topsoil and subsequently almost entirely destroyed by ploughing. Both these two features, taken together with the evidence from the Yeakell & Gardner map, suggest that during the course of the 19th century, what was once a wooded field, was cleared and drained.



Figure 5 The ceramic land drain in Trench 7, looking east. The scale is 1m.

5. The two remaining features noted during the course of these archaeological works were both irregular shallow pits, 0.5m in depth below the current ground surface, excavated in Trenches 1 & 2. No artefacts were recovered from them and their form suggests that they were created by root growth from small trees or shrubs.

SURVIVAL OF DEPOSITS

1. The only features revealed by this programme of archaeological works relate to the modern period, principally in the form of land drains created in the 19th and 20th centuries to make the field usable for agriculture. The poor quality of the land, due to its low lying position close to two stream channels, could be the reason that no signs of earlier land-use or settlement were discovered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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