



Sussex Downs College,  
Cross Levels Way,  
Eastbourne,  
East Sussex

Report on Programme of Archaeological Works





**SUSSEX DOWNS COLLEGE, CROSS LEVELS WAY,  
EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX**

**Report on Programme of Archaeological Works**

Prepared for  
**HNW Architects  
11 West Pallant  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1TB**

On Behalf of  
**Sussex Downs College  
Cross Levels Way  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 2UF**

By  
**Wessex Archaeology  
Portway House  
Old Sarum Park  
SALISBURY  
Wiltshire  
SP4 6EB**

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EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX**

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**SUSSEX DOWNS COLLEGE, CROSS LEVELS WAY,  
EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX**

**Report on Programme of Archaeological Works**

**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by HNW Architects acting on behalf of Sussex Downs College to carry out a programme of archaeological works on land at Sussex Downs College, Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne, East Sussex, in advance of redevelopment of college buildings.

The Site (centred on NGR 560065 101320) was located in an area designated as archaeologically sensitive. The area adjacent to Sussex Downs College has been subject to a variety of archaeological excavations in recent years which have revealed multi-period archaeological potential, dating specifically to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British, late medieval and post-medieval periods. A previous geophysical survey (ASE 2007) identified a number of linear anomalies, provisionally identified as field systems, which had the potential to extend towards the site at Sussex Downs College.

Two phases of fieldwork were undertaken. An archaeological test pit evaluation followed by an archaeological watching brief took place between the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008.

The test pit evaluation comprised five machine-excavated test pits within the footprint of the proposed development. The pits were all archaeologically blank, revealing an undisturbed sequence of natural deposits.

The watching brief was maintained on all excavation within the development footprint, and corroborated the deposit sequences recorded during the test pit evaluation. A single north-east to south-west aligned ditch was revealed during the course of the works. This feature may be Bronze Age in date and may form a continuation to the previously identified field systems at Pockocks Field to the south. However, given the distance from the Pockocks Field site and the differing alignment of the ditch, no direct link can be assumed.

## **Acknowledgements**

The project was commissioned by Andy Clemas of HNW Architects, on behalf of Sussex Downs College, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank him for his assistance. Thanks are also due to Casper Johnson and Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council, David Turner of Rok, and Paul Standen of Sussex Downs College for their advice and assistance.

The watching brief was undertaken by Julia Sulikowska, David Parry, Chloe Hunnisett and Oliver Spiers, with geoarchaeological work carried out by David Norcott. This report was compiled by Chloe Hunnisett and Julia Sulikowska with illustrations prepared by Linda Coleman and Will Foster. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd.

# SUSSEX DOWNS COLLEGE, CROSS LEVELS WAY, EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX

## Report on Programme of Archaeological Works

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by HNW Architects acting on behalf of Sussex Downs College (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a programme of archaeological works on land at Sussex Downs College, Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne, East Sussex (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**). The Site covered an area of c. 0.23 hectares, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 560065 101320.

1.1.2 Development proposals for the Site were for construction of an extension to the existing college buildings, with associated infrastructure including access and parking.

1.1.3 In response to the development proposals, a staged scheme of archaeological mitigation works was specified by East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) Archaeological Officer. This comprised:

- **Stage 1:** Archaeological test pit evaluation, leading, if necessary, to:
- **Stage 2:** Archaeological strip, map and record excavation
- **Stage 3:** Archaeological watching brief on construction and associated ground-reduction works.

1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Wessex Archaeology 2008), detailing the methods and standards to be employed during the archaeological works. This document was prepared in keeping with the relevant standards and guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and approved by ESCC's Archaeological Officer prior to the start of archaeological fieldwork.

#### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The Site was relatively flat, situated at c14m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and west of the lower-lying marshland of the Eastbourne Levels. At the time of fieldwork, the Site was occupied by playing fields associated with Sussex Downs College.

- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is mapped as Head deposits overlying the West Melbury Marly Chalk and / or Gault Formations (BGS Sheet 319/334). Although potentially belonging to either Formation, the glauconitic clay loams observed in the field compare more favourably with the glauconitic mudstones of the Gault.
- 1.2.3 Previous geotechnical investigations carried out on the site during January 2008 identified made ground to a depth of up to 1.6m (ASIL, 2008). The absence of such made ground deposits within the archaeologically investigated area suggests this modern material may be a localised phenomenon.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site.
- 2.1.2 A previous desk-based assessment (CgMs 2005) was centered on Pockocks Field, approximately 0.7km to the south. The results of this assessment, along with additional information provided by ESCC are summarised below.
- 2.1.3 The area adjacent to the Sussex Downs College has been subject to a number of archaeological investigations in recent years. These have, indicated remains belonging to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British, late medieval and post-medieval periods. However, the extent of past archaeological work has been limited by the relatively small size of developments in this area.

### **2.2 Palaeolithic (450,000BC-12,000BC)**

- 2.2.1 Other than a single hand axe recovered from Lottes Bridge Drove, no Palaeolithic finds are recorded from the vicinity.

### **2.3 Mesolithic (12,000BC-4000BC)**

- 2.3.1 No finds of Mesolithic date are recorded in the area, although it has been noted that the location may have been 'ideal for hunter gatherer groups wishing to exploit the upland environment whilst taking advantage of the wetland environment to the east' (CgMs 2005).

### **2.4 Neolithic and Bronze Age (4000BC-600BC)**

- 2.4.1 A barrow and a series of ditches are recorded by the Sites and Monuments record approximately 0.35km to the north-west of the Site, close to Hampden Park Drive.
- 2.4.2 Previous archaeological excavations at Pockocks Field have also identified Bronze Age pits and ditches. These features suggest a dryland environment at this time. A middle Bronze Age cremation burial has also been recorded from nearby St Anne's Road.

## **2.5 Iron Age and Romano-British (600BC-AD410)**

- 2.5.1 The Iron Age / Romano-British periods are most predominantly represented in the area.
- 2.5.2 Previous archaeological work on the Pococks Field site revealed evidence dated to this period. Large quantities of pottery recorded within the vicinity of Pococks Field suggested the presence of a significant settlement or activity site.
- 2.5.3 A substantial earthwork dated to the Iron Age period was recorded to the south of the Site during excavations by the Eastbourne Natural History and Archaeological Society (ENHAS).
- 2.5.4 Romano-British building material, high quality ceramics and coins from Eastbourne Hospital and Cross Levels Way to the south of the Site, point to the existence of one or more substantial (and potentially high-status) buildings.

## **2.6 Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval (AD410–1066)**

- 2.6.1 Several Anglo-Saxon cemetery sites lie to the south-west of the Site. These have no known accompanying settlements, and it is probable that the cemeteries served the towns of Willingdon and Eastbourne.

## **2.7 Late-Medieval and Post-Medieval (AD1066–to date)**

- 2.7.1 Archaeological investigations on the low lying area to the south-east of the Site revealed evidence for a possible farmstead or manorial complex of late-medieval date. Earthwork building platforms, metallated surfaces and 'pond' like structures suggesting domestic activity, and the complex appears to have been occupied from the twelfth century to c.1700.

## **2.8 Recent Investigations**

- 2.8.1 A geophysical survey of the nearby Pococks Field site (ASE 2007) identified a series of field systems along with possible associated discrete features. These features are tentatively dated to the Bronze Age and Romano-British periods and related features may continue onto the higher ground to the north.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1.1 The general aim, as laid-out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2008) of the archaeological works was to determine or confirm the presence/absence, nature and depth of any remains present on the area of the Site subject to development works.



- 3.1.2 The specific aim was to determine the presence/absence, nature, distribution and condition of any archaeological features present below the made ground, indicated by borehole data, in the mitigation area of the Site. Furthermore, to provide information on which to base future decisions concerning the treatment of any archaeological remains on the Site.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 All works were conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (as amended 1994).

- 4.1.2 Specific methodologies employed for the evaluation and watching brief are summarised below.

### **4.2 Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation**

- 4.2.1 The Stage 1 Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation investigated an area of c0.04ha, within which five test pits were excavated, each of which was approximately 2m long and 1.5m wide. These were laid out in accordance with the WSI (WA 2008), although ground-constraints made it necessary to re-position pit TP4 north of its proposed location.

- 4.2.2 Excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision, using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Excavation continued to a depth of 1.2m below ground level (BGL), or until such time as it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be present had been exhausted. Spoil from the pits was visually scanned for artefacts.

- 4.2.3 Pits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro-forma recording system, and are summarised in **Appendix 1**. A representative section of each pit was drawn.

- 4.2.4 Pits were mapped and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid system (including heights above OS datum) with Leica 1200 Series GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment.

- 4.2.5 A photographic record of the evaluation, its conduct and setting, was maintained in 35mm colour transparency (slide) and digital (.jpg) formats.

- 4.2.6 Following instruction from the Client not to do so, test pits were left open (ie not backfilled) on completion of the works.

### **4.3 Archaeological Watching Brief**

- 4.3.1 In accordance with the WSI (WA 2008), an archaeological watching brief was maintained by a suitably qualified member of Wessex Archaeology staff on all ground-reduction works (including topsoil stripping, cutting of foundation trenches, service trenches and other construction impacts) within the development footprint.
- 4.3.2 Archaeological remains were characterised and dated through excavation of an appropriate sample of the feature. Features were fully recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro-forma* recording system. All artefacts were retained from excavated contexts.
- 4.3.3 As with the Evaluation (see above), the location and extents of the works, along with the position and datum height of the sole archaeological feature identified, was planned using Leica 1200 Series GPS equipment.
- 4.3.4 A digital photographic record of the watching brief was maintained.
- 4.3.5 Soils and geological sequences exposed by the watching brief were described and characterized on-site by a geoarchaeologist.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Test Pit Evaluation**

- 5.1.1 The soil sequences recorded in the test pits are tabulated as **Appendix 1**.
- 5.1.2 In the test pits shallow topsoil (A-horizon) overlay a thicker subsoil (B-horizon). These layers contained very few coarse inclusions, and neither yielded any archaeological finds.
- 5.1.3 Below the modern soil, a layer of dark yellowish brown clay with frequent flint inclusions was encountered at a depth of 0.65-0.8m below ground level. Originally believed to be colluvial in nature, this is in fact a geological deposit similar to Clay-with-Flints and would pre-date any archaeological features. Beneath this and continuing down to the limits of excavation was the light olive brown clay loam of the underlying geology (most likely belonging to the Gault Formation). In involutions within its surface (cryoturbative features of likely Devensian date) soliflucted chalk deposits were observed.
- 5.1.4 The sequence of sediments identified in the test pits differed from that described in the results of previous geotechnical investigation (Borehole 1, ASIL 2008). No made ground was recorded across the Phase 1 area, which suggests that the borehole was dug into an area of localised disturbance. Only in Test Pit 1 was modern disturbance recorded, comprising a construction cut for a tarmac pathway. This reached a depth of c. 0.25m and did not impact on the underlying natural deposits.

## 5.2 Watching Brief

5.2.1 Details of the soil sequences observed in the Watching Brief are tabulated in **Appendix 2**. The watching brief was maintained on three Separate elements of the groundworks (**Figure 1**):

- Excavation of foundation trenches
- Shallow stripping of a 17m x 18m area within the foundation trenches (ie the footprint of the proposed building)
- Excavation of pipe drain trenches adjacent to the proposed building

5.2.2 Topsoil overlay subsoil in the areas of the foundation trenches and the open strip. In the pipe trench (aligned east – west, south of the building footprint) topsoil was absent. In its place, up to 0.3m of made ground overlay subsoil.

5.2.3 Beneath the modern soil was a dark yellowish brown clay with moderate to frequent flint inclusions, a geological clay-with-flint type deposit, below which bands of pale buff soliflucted chalk occurred as a fill for involutions in the upper horizon of underlying light olive brown clay loam geology.

5.2.4 A single ditch (1005) aligned north-east to south-west was identified during the Watching Brief. The ditch measured 1.37m wide by 0.27m deep and was poorly defined, becoming more ephemeral to the east of the site, probably because of truncation in antiquity. The single fill of the ditch (1004) was similar to the underlying subsoil deposit, but yielded four small sherds of Prehistoric pottery (see below).

5.2.5 Ditch 1005 was tentatively identified in the section of the eastern foundation trench, although here it was very shallow. It also passed through the location of Test Pit 3; however the truncated nature of the feature and the restricted size of the test pit (1.5 x 1.5m) meant that the full profile of the linear was not visible within the intervention.

5.2.6 The recent geophysical survey (ASE 2007) on Pocock's Field to the south of the Site identified possible field systems dating to the Romano-British and Bronze Age periods. However, the alignment of the linear at Sussex Downs College precluded any direct link with features identified at Pocock's Field. The linear did however provide evidence of Bronze Age activity on the Site, and it is possible that the linear anomalies identified in the geophysical survey which follow a similar north-east to south-west alignment are broadly contemporary, and are perhaps part of the same prehistoric field system.

## 6 FINDS

6.1.1 Artefacts were recovered from the fill of single ditch 1005. These comprised four sherds of pottery (25g) and six pieces of struck flint.

6.1.2 The pottery sherds are all in coarse, flint-tempered fabrics and include one base sherd with a concentration of crushed flint on the underside. Fabrics of this sort and with a 'gritty base' are characteristic of the Late Bronze Age.

6.1.3 The struck flint consists entirely of waste flakes, in relatively fresh condition but with varying degrees of patination. These can only be broadly dated as Neolithic to Bronze Age.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL**

7.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present during the course of the works.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

8.1.1 The archaeological works at Sussex Downs College revealed a single feature – namely a relatively shallow ditch of possible Bronze Age date which may represent part of a wider system of agricultural fields.

8.1.2 In addition, the geological sequence of the Site was clarified, and information gathered was sufficiently different to previous borehole data results to contribute to the overall understanding of the site.

## **9 ARCHIVE**

### **9.1 Preparation and Deposition**

9.1.1 The project archive, containing site documentation, written and drawn records, photographic images, specialist reports and digitally-captured data, is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Salisbury office, under the site code 68830. In due course, and pending agreement of the present landowner to transfer of title, it is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with Eastbourne Museum temporary store.

## 10 REFERENCES

- Archaeology South East, 2007, *Fluxgate Gradiometer Survey of Land at Pockocks Field, Kings Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex*, unpublished client report.
- Ashdown Site Investigation Limited 2008 *Sussex Downs College, Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2UF, Combined Factual and Interpretative Geotechnical Report on the Ground Investigation*, client report no. LW18279
- CgMs Consulting, 2005 (revised 2007), *Land at Pockocks Field, Kings Drive, Eastbourne Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex, Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*, unpublished client report
- British Geological Survey 2006, *Lewis and Eastbourne, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits, Sheets 319/334 1:50000*
- Wessex Archaeology 2008 *Sussex Downs College, Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne, East Sussex, Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works*, unpublished client report ref. 68830.01

## APPENDIX 1- TEST PIT SUMMARIES

| <b>Test Pit 1</b>                    |  | Digital photos: 1783      |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Dimensions: 2.2m x 1.7m x 0.84m deep |  | Ground level m aOD: 9.45m |
| Context                              | Description  | Depth (m)                 |
| 100                                  | Dark greyish brown humic silty loam. Topsoil   | 0-0.09                    |
| 101                                  | Light brownish grey silty clay. Subsoil  | 0.09-0.41                 |
| 103                                  | Dark brownish red silty clay with moderate coarse flint gravels. Colluvium                                       | 0.41-0.75                 |
| 104                                  | Light greyish green clay with patches of weathered chalk – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural | 0.75 +                    |
| 105                                  | Tarmac surface of pathway. Modern  | 0–0.08                    |
| 106                                  | Hardcore underneath tarmac. Modern   | 0.08-0.23                 |
| 107                                  | Construction cut for pathway   | 0-0.23                    |

| <b>Test Pit 2</b>                    |  | Digital photos: 1784      |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Dimensions: 2.0m x 1.5m x 1.25m deep |  | Ground level m aOD: 9.35m |
| Context                              | Description  | Depth (m)                 |
| 200                                  | Dark greyish brown humic loamy silt with sparse small flint gravel. Topsoil  | 0-0.35                    |
| 201                                  | Mid reddish brown silty clay with rare flint gravel. Subsoil   | 0.35-0.62                 |
| 202                                  | Dark reddish brown slightly silty clay with common angular flint gravel. Colluvium   | 0.62-0.78                 |
| 203                                  | Light greyish green clay with patches of weathered chalk within it – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural | 0.78 +                    |

| <b>Test Pit 3</b>                   |   | Digital photos: 1785      |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Dimensions: 1.5m x 1.5m x 1.0m deep |   | Ground level m aOD: 9.38m |
| Context                             | Description   | Depth (m)                 |
| 300                                 | Dark greyish brown loamy silt with sparse sub-angular pebbles. Topsoil  | 0-0.13                    |
| 301                                 | Mid greyish brown loamy clay with rare small pebbles. Subsoil   | 0.13-0.41                 |
| 302                                 | Mid brownish red silty clay, containing moderate flint gravels. Colluvium                                     | 0.41-0.86                 |
| 303                                 | Mid bluish green clay with patches of weathered chalk – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural | 0.86 +                    |

| <b>Test Pit 4</b>                   |   | Digital photos: 1786      |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Dimensions: 1.9m x 1.5m x 0.8m deep |   | Ground level m aOD: 9.45m |
| Context                             | Description   | Depth (m)                 |
| 400                                 | Dark greyish brown humic silt loam with sparse small flint pebbles. Topsoil     | 0-0.08                    |
| 401                                 | Light greyish brown silty clay with rare angular flint inclusions. Subsoil      | 0.08-0.32                 |
| 402                                 | Dark brownish red silty clay with moderate flint pebbles. Colluvium             | 0.32-0.65                 |
| 403                                 | Light bluish green clay – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural | 0.65 +                    |

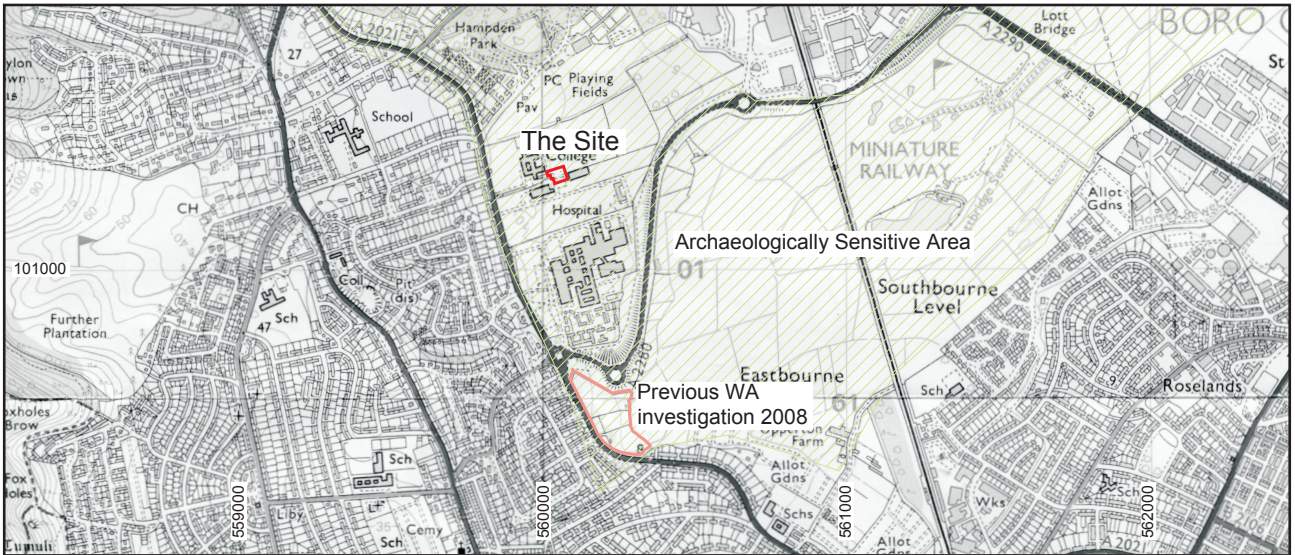
| <b>Test Pit 5</b>                   |  | Digital photos: 1787      |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Dimensions: 1.7m x 1.5m x 1.1m deep |  | Ground level m aOD: 9.28m |
| Context                             | Description  | Depth (m)                 |
| 500                                 | Dark greyish brown clayey loam. Topsoil  | 0-0.26                    |
| 501                                 | Light greyish brown silty clay with rare angular flint. Subsoil  | 0.26-0.53                 |
| 502                                 | Dark brownish red silty clay with rare flint gravel. Colluvium   | 0.53-0.82                 |
| 503                                 | Mid greyish green clay with patches of weathered chalk – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural | 0.82 +                    |

## APPENDIX 2 – WATCHING BRIEF AREAS SUMMARY

| Foundation Trenches and Stripped Area |  |           |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Context                               | Description  | Depth (m) |
| 1000                                  | Dark greyish brown humic silty loam. Topsoil   | 0-0.23    |
| 1001                                  | Light greyish brown silty clay with rare angular flint. Subsoil  | 0.23-0.48 |
| 1002                                  | Dark brownish red silty clay with rare flint gravel. Colluvium   | 0.48-0.75 |
| 1003                                  | Mid greyish green clay with patches of weathered chalk – green sandstone that weathered to stiff clay. Natural             | 0.75+     |
| 1004                                  | Fill of Ditch [1005]. Mid brownish grey silty clay with moderate flint gravel. Very occasional prehistoric pottery shards. | 0.27      |
| 1005                                  | Cut of ditch. Linear with moderate concave sides and a flat base. Oriented north-east to south-west.                       | 0.27      |

| Pipe Trench |   |            |
|-------------|---|------------|
| Context     | Description   | Depth (m)  |
| 1006        | Hardcore / made ground  | 0-0.28     |
| 1007        | Sand levelling/make-up layer  | 0.14-0.2   |
| 1008        | B-Horizon: Base of modern soil profile (brown earth); 10YR 5/3 brown silty clay loam, 2% very fine macropores, very rare charcoal flecks, fine to medium weak blocky structure, clear boundary.   | 0.28-0.48  |
| 1009        | Clay-with-Flints type material ( <i>sensu lato</i> )– 10YR 4/6 dark yellowish brown clay, occ very small manganese flecks, 0.5% macropores, occasional to quite common medium flints (40-60mm), especially to base. Intermittent layer of periglacial chalk material at base too (description as involution fill below). Clear to sharp boundary. | 0.48-0.72m |
| 1010        | Periglacial chalk material – buff / very pale brown silt with abundant coarse sand to pea-grit sized chalk inclusions. Occasional flints to 50mm. sharp boundary.   | 0.72-0.94m |
| 1011        | Light olive brown clay loam, occ small iron mottles, massive. Likely Gault formation.   | 0.72m+     |





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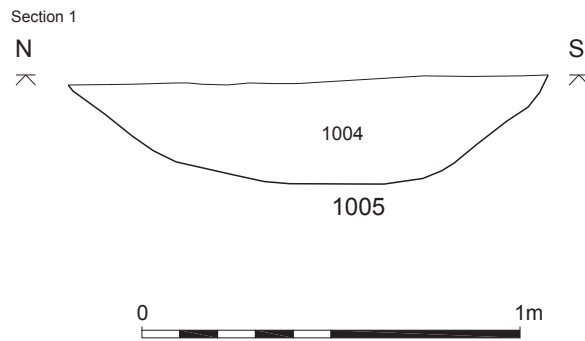


Site location plan showing test pits and watching brief area

Figure 1



Representative section of foundation trench



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**WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.**

Registered Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 113, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

