Archaeology South-East

ASE

An Archaeological Evaluation at 'Coombelands', Stane Street Pulborough, West Sussex

NGR 505108 119492

ASE Project No: 4951
Site Code: PSS 11

ASE Report No: 2011125
OASIS ID: archaeol6-101925

by
Simon Stevens BA (Hons) MIFA

With contributions by
Karine Le Hégarat, Luke Barber and Sarah Porteus

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Abstract

Four evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated to a cumulative length of 70m to investigate anomalies detected during a geophysical survey of the site. One was found to be a substantial ditch of probable medieval origin, but another 'ladder-like' anomaly was found to be part of a late post-medieval drainage system. A shallow, undated ditch was also encountered and recorded. No prehistoric or Roman-British activity was encountered other than a few worked flints.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA) was commissioned by RPS on behalf of Hanbury Properties Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the west of Stane Street, Pulborough, West Sussex (NGR 505108 119492; Fig. 1)

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site consists of a single *c.*4ha undulating arable field, which slopes from north (*c.*45mAOD*)* to south (*c.*30mAOD), with a slight ridge which runs from east to west roughly in the middle of the field. It is bounded to the east by Stane Street (the modern A29), which runs in a notable hollow at this point. Gardens of houses fronting onto Stane Street Close form the northern boundary, and the southern boundary is with an open meadow. A green lane runs along the eastern edge of the field and provides access (Fig. 2).

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area Sheet 317/322 *Chichester and Bognor Regis*) the underlying geology at the site is Lower Greensand.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 It is understood that the site is under consideration as the potential location for a new residential development of dwellings with associated access, parking and infrastructure.

1.3.2 After consultation between RPS and John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council (WSCC), it was decided that a programme of archaeological work should be undertaken at the site, to provide information during any subsequent planning process. Initial work consisted of the production of a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; RPS 2011a), a geophysical Survey (Archaeological Surveys Ltd. 2011) and a programme of Surface Artefact Collection (ASE 2011c).

1.3.3 Following further consultation between all parties, and based on the results of the previous surveys, a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ASE 2011d) was prepared by ASE, outlining the methodology to be used during limited trial trenching at the site aimed at investigating *'two sets of ladder-like linear enclosures'* (Archaeological Surveys Ltd. 2011, 8) and an associated linear anomaly (RPS 2011b).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The stated aims given in the WSI (RPS 2011b) were to:

> *'determine as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened will be studied.*
>
> *The evaluation will also seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance.*
>
> *The specific aim of the stage 1 of trial trenching is to:*
>
> - *Recover sufficient evidence to understand the nature, date, function and importance of the targeted enclosures and stratigraphically associated linear feature.*

1.4.2 The WSI also noted that mitigation measures might be necessary, dependent on the results of the archaeological evaluation of the site. A second (post-determination) stage of trenching has also been specified by WSCC.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken during May 2011. The on-site work was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), and Rob Cole (Archaeological Surveyor). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A DBA has been produced for the current site (RPS 2011) and for a development (the *Oddstones* site) *c.*200m to the north (Howland 2009). A summary of the broad findings of these reports is given below.

2.2 The current site is adjacent to the Roman road from Chichester to London, known as Stane Street, which runs from broadly from north to south immediately to the east, under the course of the modern A29.

2.3 In the wider area, finds and sites ranging from Neolithic flints to medieval buildings have been recorded within 1km of the site, although the majority of these are concentrated in the centre of Pulborough, some distance to the south.

2.4 A resistivity survey carried out at the *Oddstones* site (ASE 2011a) identified a number of anomalies that might have been archaeological in origin. In addition, results from the survey were strongly indicative of the potential presence of geoarchaeological remains. A recent study has highlighted the potential for the discovery of Palaeolithic assemblages in fissures in the local Greensand deposits (Pope 2010).

2.5 Mechanical trial trenching at *Oddstones* revealed both archaeological and geoarchaeological features (fissures). The archaeological features included the remains of a prehistoric field system (ASE 2011b) of the type known to have been used to sub-divide the landscape at the time (Yates 2007). An archaeological watching brief is ongoing at that site.

2.6 The programme of surface artefact collection at the current site was undertaken in late April 2011. Conditions for surface artefact collection were almost ideal and a range of artefacts was recovered, including Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork, Romano-British pottery and later medieval post-medieval pottery, ceramic building material (tile, brick etc), post-medieval building stone (slate etc), bottle glass, clay tobacco pipe and modern items. However, no categories of artefacts were recovered in significant quantity and there were no obvious spatial concentrations of material.

2.7 The geophysical survey showed several potential archaeological features in the field, with a notable set of anomalies close to the western boundary including *'two sets of ladder-like linear enclosures'* and a potential linear feature running parallel to the field boundary (Archaeological Surveys Ltd. 2011, Fig. 2),

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 A pattern of four evaluation trenches, (two measuring 15m by 1.6m and two measuring 20m by 1.6m) was produced by Rob Masefield of RPS targetted on anomalies found during the geophysical survey (RPS 2011b Fig. No JLI1167-02, and Fig. 2).

3.2 The location of each of the trenches was scanned with a CAT scanner for the presence of buried services prior to the commencement of work The archaeological evaluation trenches were then excavated by a JCB 3cx excavator fitted with a five-foot (1.54m) wide toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of staff from Archaeology South-East.

3.3 The mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of the 'natural' geological deposits, or to the top of any recognisable archaeological deposits, whichever was the higher. Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation. Revealed surfaces of the 'natural' were manually cleaned in an attempt to identify individual archaeological features. Spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.

3.4 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards, using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. All trenches and features were levelled to the Ordnance Datum.

3.5 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East office in Portslade and will be offered to suitable museum in due course. It consists of:

Number of Contexts	20
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	2
Photographs	15 digital photos
Bulk finds	1 small box
Brick Samples	1 sample
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	not retained

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
1/001	Deposit	Ploughsoil	400mm
1/002	Deposit	'Natural'	-
1/003	Cut	Ditch	*c.*9m
1/004	Fill	Ditch	*c.*2m
1/005	Cut	Drain	not excavated
1/006	Fill	Drain	not excavated
1/007	Cut	Ditch	*c.*9m
1/008	Fill	Ditch	*c.*2m
1/009	Cut	Drain	not excavated
1/010	Fill	Drain	not excavated

4.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 20m and to a depth of 400mm (40.20mAOD) at the western end and to 390mm (40.59mAOD) at the eastern end at which the underlying 'natural' was encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden consisted of a mid-greyish brown clayey sand ploughsoil, context [1/001], which directly overlay the 'natural' greyish yellow sand/sandstone, context [2/002]. Although the ploughsoil was progressively lighter in colour towards the interface with the 'natural', there was no clear evidence of a subsoil layer.

4.1.2 The most striking feature identified in the trench was a *c.*9m wide ditch, contexted as Ditch [1/003] and [1/007], which ran from north to south across the trench on the alignment of the linear feature detected during the geophysical survey. A mechanically excavated sondage in the centre of the trench showed that it extended to a depth of *c.*3m below the current surface (37.57mAOD). The single encountered fill was an orangey brown clayey sand, recorded as contexts [1/004] (at the eastern end of the trench) and [1/008]. Two small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from Context [1/004]. Samples for analysis of environmental potential were taken from both encountered fills.

4.1.3 This feature had been truncated by two late probably post-medieval drains, both on the alignment of the *'ladder-like'* features detected during the geophysical survey. Cut [1/005] was 650mm in width and extended to a depth of 870mm. It ran from north-east to south-west across the trench and contained a brick drain, the trench for which had been backfilled with a mixture of greyish yellow sandstone, orangey brown silty sand and slag/clinker, context [1/006].

4.1.4 The other similar feature was cut [1/009], which was of comparable width, with a similar fill, context [1/010]. It ran from north-west to south-east across the trench, and was not fully excavated. It truncated the larger ditch to an extent that the eastern part was originally thought to be a separate feature, and given different cut and fill numbers ([1/003] and [1/004] respectively).

4.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	420mm
2/002	Deposit	'Natural'	-
2/003	Cut	Ditch	150mm
2/004	Fill	Ditch	150mm
2/005	Cut	Drain	not excavated
2/006	Fill	Drain	not excavated

4.2.1 Trench 2 was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of 270mm (40.91mAOD) at the northern end and to 420mm (40.42mAOD) at the southern end at which the underlying 'natural' was encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden and 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 1 and were recorded as contexts [2/001] and [2/002] respectively.

4.2.2 Two features were identified in the trench. Ditch [2/003] was 1.7m wide and 150mm deep and ran from north-west to south-east across the trench. The single fill was context [2/004], a mid-brownish grey silty sand. The feature appeared to have been heavily plough-truncated, and no datable evidence was recovered from the surviving fill. However, the ditch is very shallow and not aligned with Stane Street which could suggest a prehistoric date

4.2.3 The other feature was part of the drainage system detected during the geophysical survey and previously encountered in Trench 1. Cut [2/005] was 650mm wide, and ran from north-west to south-east across the trench. A sondage excavated through the yellow sandstone and clinker backfill, context [2/006], located a ceramic pipe.

4.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	710mm
3/002	Deposit	'Natural'	-
3/003	Cut	?Drain	not excavated
3/004	Fill	?Drain	not excavated

4.3.1 Trench 3 was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of 710mm (39.04mAOD) at the north-eastern end and to 350mm (38.70mAOD) at the south-western end at which the underlying 'natural' was encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden and 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 1 and were recorded as contexts [3/001] and [2/002] respectively.

4.3.2 The only feature encountered in the trench was another element of the drainage system detected during the geophysical survey. Cut [3/003] was 650mm wide, and ran from north-west to south-east across the trench. The visible fill was context [3/004], compacted yellow sandstone with pieces of brick. The feature was not excavated.

4.4 **Trench 4** (Fig. 6)

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	480mm
4/002	Deposit	'Natural'	
4/003	Cut	Ditch	not excavated
4/004	Fill	Ditch	not excavated
4/005	Cut	Drain	not excavated
4/006	Fill	Drain	not excavated

4.4.1 Trench 4 was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of only 150mm (39.10mAOD) at the western end and to 480mm (39.34mAOD) at the eastern end at which the underlying 'natural' was encountered and mechanical excavation ceased. The overburden and 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 1 and were recorded as contexts [3/001] and [2/002] respectively.

4.4.2 The substantial ditch encountered in Trench 1 was again located in this trench on the alignment detected during the geophysical survey, and appeared to be *c.*9m in width. It was recorded as ditch [4/003]. The fill was again an orangey brown silty sand, context [4/004]. A single sherd of medieval pottery and two struck flints were recovered during manual cleaning of the feature.

4.4.3 Limited manual excavation of the feature was undertaken on its western edge to check for the presence of a further part of the drainage system, which was not immediately visible in the surface of the older feature. It was duly encountered, and recorded as Cut [4/005] of unknown extent, backfilled with context [4/006], a mixture of orangey brown silty sand, yellow sandstone and slag/clinker.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the evaluation.

5.2 Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 Two struck flints weighing 12g were recovered from context [4/004] during the course of the evaluation work at the site. Both pieces were manufactured from fine-grained light grey flint with white mottled patches. Both flints are broken. The first piece consists of the proximal end of a flake and the second piece represents an unclassifiable retouched piece. The artefact exhibits some direct abrupt retouches on the right-hand edge and the broken artefact could represent a denticulate. The technological traits are not sufficient to assist with dating.

5.2.2 This assemblage is too small to have any potential for further study but should be retained to allow integration with any assemblage recovered in the event of further work.

5.3 The Post-Roman Pottery by Luke Barber

5.3.1 The evaluation recovered four post-Roman pottery sherds from three contexts.

5.3.2 Context [1/001] contained the unabraded body sherd from a 19th- century unglazed earthenware flower pot.

5.3.3 Context [1/004] produced two small and somewhat abraded body sherds of 13th- to mid 14th- century date. Both are in a medium sand tempered fabric.

5.3.4 The earliest sherd was recovered from [4/004]. This produced a single unabraded cooking pot body sherd tempered with abundant chalk and rare flint grits to 1mm. Although the interior of the sherd is reduced black, the exterior is oxidised a dull orange. More diagnostic sherds would be needed to refine the dating, but a late 10th- to mid 12th- century date is probable.

5.4 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.4.1 A small assemblage of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered from two contexts.

5.4.2 Context [1/001] contained a fragment of peg tile of 18th to 19th century date with moderate fine quartz and moderate fine voids.

5.4.3 Context [1/006] contained two ventilated bricks measuring 213mm by 150mm by 105mm with three cuboid ventilation holes through the centre, the bricks are machine made and stamped 'PHORPRES' making them of late 19th or 20th century date pre 1974.

5.5 The Slag by Luke Barber

5.5.1 Two pieces of slag were recovered from [1/006].

5.5.2 Both of these consist of quite dense, slightly glassy/bubbled fuel ash slag, one with abundant clinker inclusions. Although not particularly diagnostic a post-medieval date is considered more likely for this material.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Karine Le Hégarat

6.1 Two 40 litre bulk samples <1001> and <1002> were taken from contexts [1/004] and [1/008] to establish evidence for environmental remains and to assist finds recovery. Both samples have been processed in their entirety in a flotation tank.

6.2 These samples have produced very small assemblages of environmental remains, predominantly charcoal although some uncharred macrobotanicals have been noted in the flots. Charcoal fragments noticed in the residues were infrequent and predominantly small (<4mm in size). No artefacts were evident in the residues.

6.3 Samples extracted from Trench 1 contained no artefactual remains and relatively low quantities of environmental indicators.

7.0 DISCUSSION

7.1 The archaeological evaluation identified the buried archaeological features detected by the geophysical survey and one other feature not identified during the survey.

7.2 The *'ladder-like'* anomaly was found to be a late post-medieval drainage system and is of no archaeological significance. The substantial ditch (found in Trenches 1 and 4), and the shallower undated ditch encountered in Trench 2 do appear to be archaeological.

7.3 The wide, deep ditch running parallel to the field boundary has been tentatively dated to the medieval period on the grounds of the recovery of pottery of that period, although it must be borne in mind that this material could be residual or even intrusive. The feature also contained flintwork, which is presumed to be residual. Neither of the environmental samples contained datable material or any significant ecofacts. The origin of the ditch therefore remains enigmatic, although its scale suggests it may have marked the edge of a substantial landscape feature such as parkland (John Mills, WSCC, *pers. comm.*), a known aspect of the medieval Weald (Gardiner 1999, 39).

7.4 The shallow undated ditch found in Trench 2 appeared to have been heavily plough-truncated, and could not be dated, but may relate to the former ditch which it is broadly perpendicular to, or could be prehistoric.

7.5 No Romano-British remains were encountered and the flintwork is probably indicative of the prehistoric background of the area rather than evidence of *in situ* prehistoric activity.

7.6 Therefore, based on currently available evidence, it appears that:

- no definite prehistoric features were identified, although it is possible the undated ditch could be prehistoric
- no Romano-British activity was identified
- a substantial ditch also detected by geophysics is of probable medieval origin
- a third, shallower feature not detected in the geophysical survey is probably related to the former ditch
- the *'ladder-like'* feature encountered during the geophysical survey is late post-medieval in origin

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank RPS for commissioning the work. Thanks are also due to John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council for his guidance throughout the project.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	PSS 11					
Identification Name and Address	'Coombelands', Stane Street, Pulborough					
County, District &/or Borough	Horsham District, West Sussex					
OS Grid Reference.	505108 119492					
Geology	Lower Greensand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4951					
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. 24.05.11 - 25.05.2011	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	RPS on behalf of Hanbury Properties Ltd.					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED ✓	PM ✓	Other		

100 Word Summary.

Four evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated to a cumulative length of 70m to investigate anomalies detected during a geophysical survey of the site. One was found to be a substantial ditch of probable medieval origin, but another 'ladder-like' anomaly was found to be part of a late post-medieval drainage system. A shallow, undated ditch was also encountered and recorded. No prehistoric or Roman-British activity was encountered other than a few worked flints.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-101925

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation at 'Coombelands', Stane Street, Pulborough, West Sussex
Short description of the project	Four evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated to a cumulative length of 70m to investigate anomalies detected during a geophysical survey of the site. One was found to be a substantial ditch of probable medieval origin, but another 'ladder-like' anomaly was found to be part of a late post-medieval drainage system. A shallow, undated ditch was also encountered and recorded.
Project dates	Start: 24-05-2011 End: 25-05-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	4951 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	PSS11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	DRAIN Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	FLINTWORK Late Prehistoric
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX HORSHAM PULBOROUGH 'Coombelands', Stane Street
Postcode	RH20 1BQ
Study area	4.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 05108 19492 50.9646980959 -0.503042836335 50 57 52 N 000 30 10 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 30.00m Max: 45.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Rob Masefield, RPS
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	RPS on behalf of Hanbury Properties Ltd.

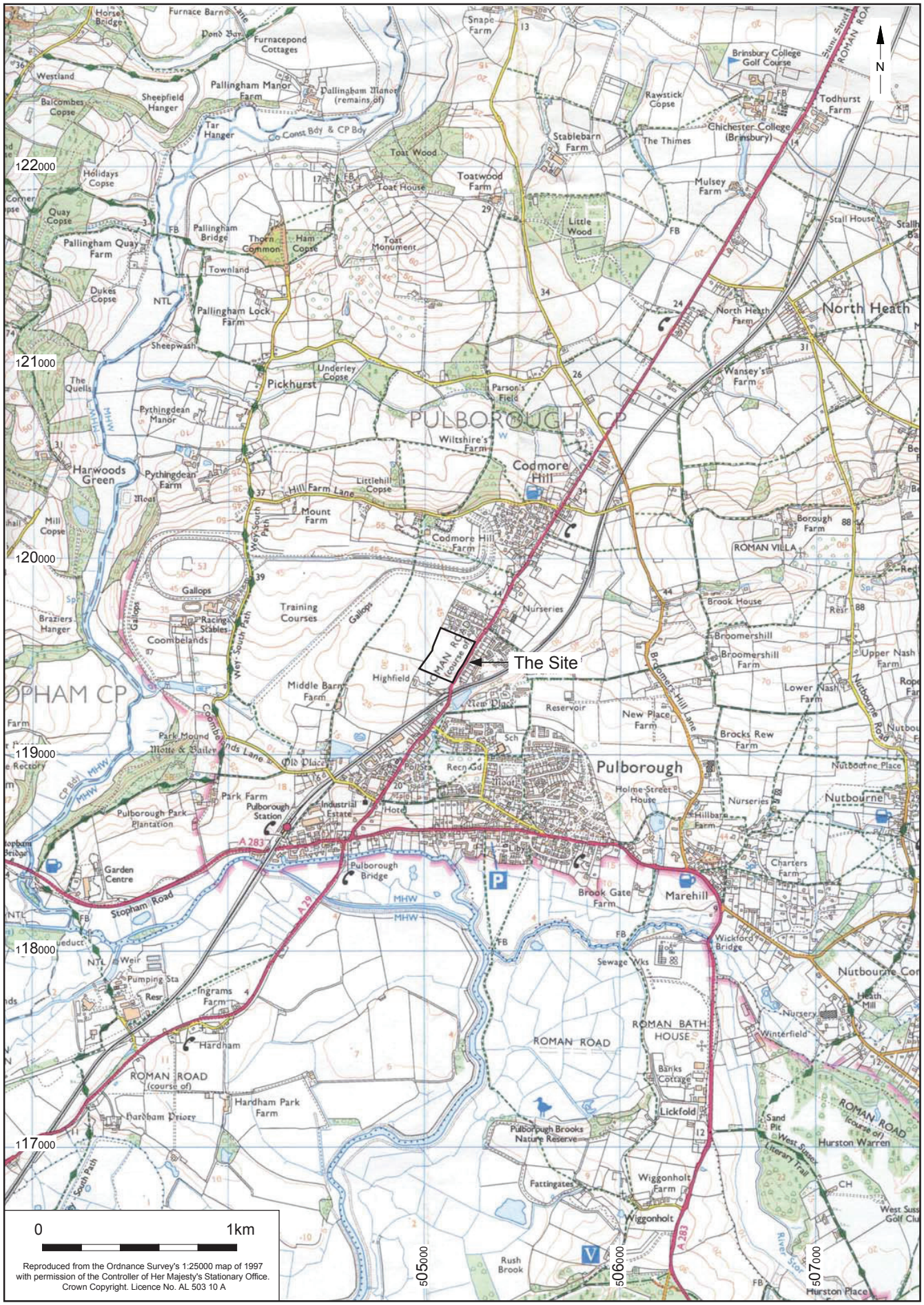
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Horsham Museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive recipient	Horsham Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Horsham Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

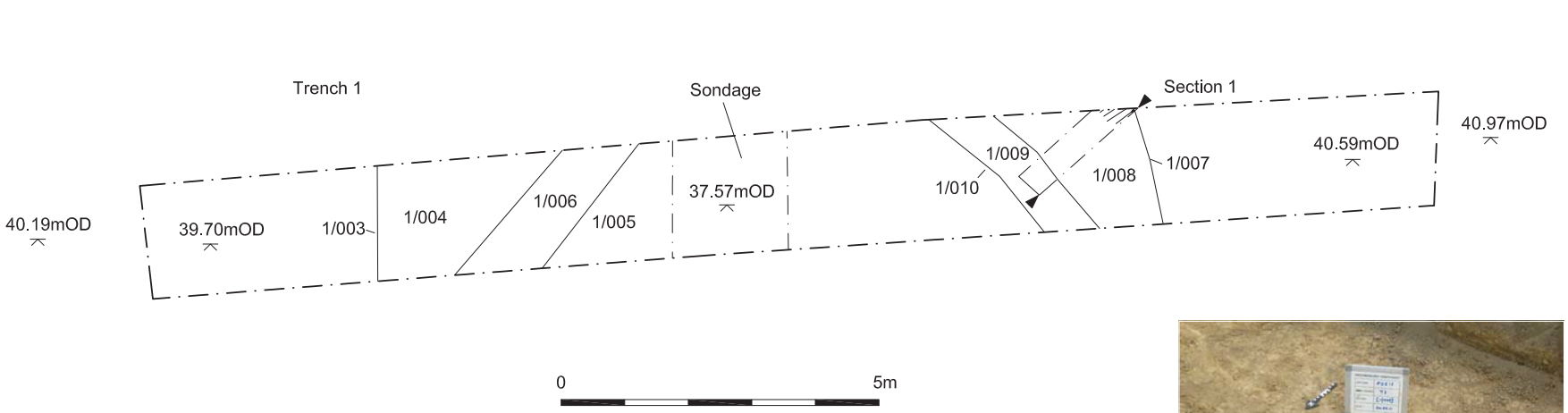
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at 'Coombelands', Stane Street, Pulborough, West Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No. 2011125
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex
Description	Standard ASE client report A4-sized with cover logos



© **Archaeology South-East**		‘Coombelands’ Stane Street, Pulborough	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		

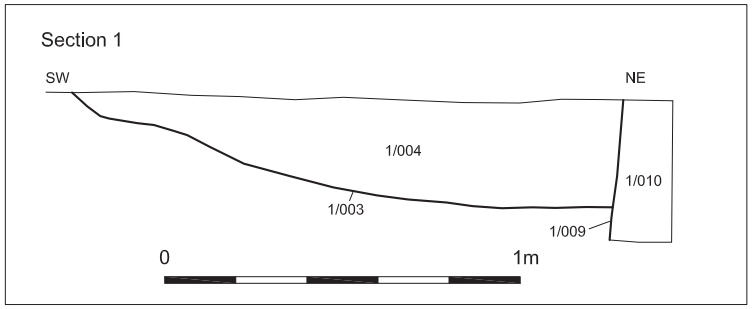
© **Archaeology South-East**		'Coombelands' Stane Street, Pulborough	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Trench location with geophysics results	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		



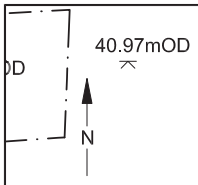
Trench 1: 1/003 looking south east

Trench 1 looking west

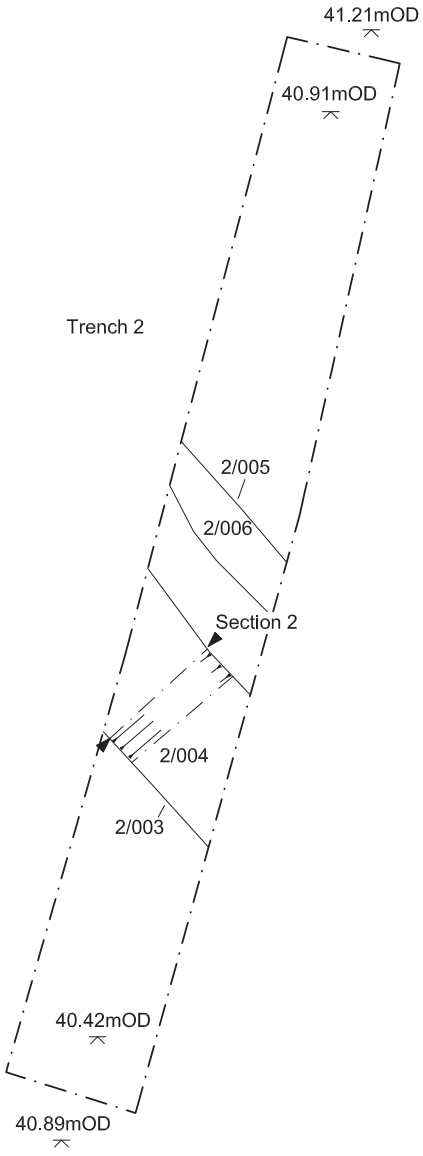
Trench 1: Sondage looking south west



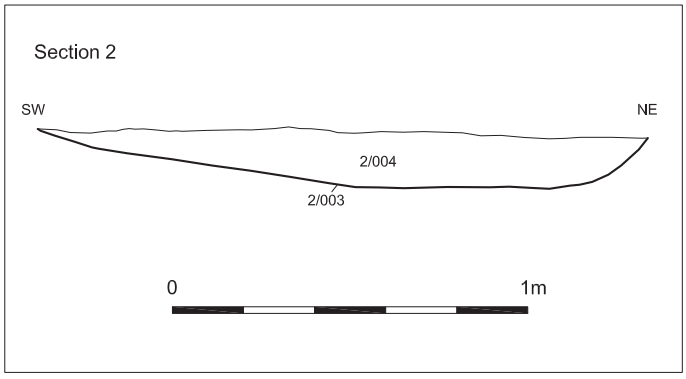
© Archaeology South-East		'Coombelands' Stane Street, Pulborough	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Trench 1: Plan, section and photos	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		



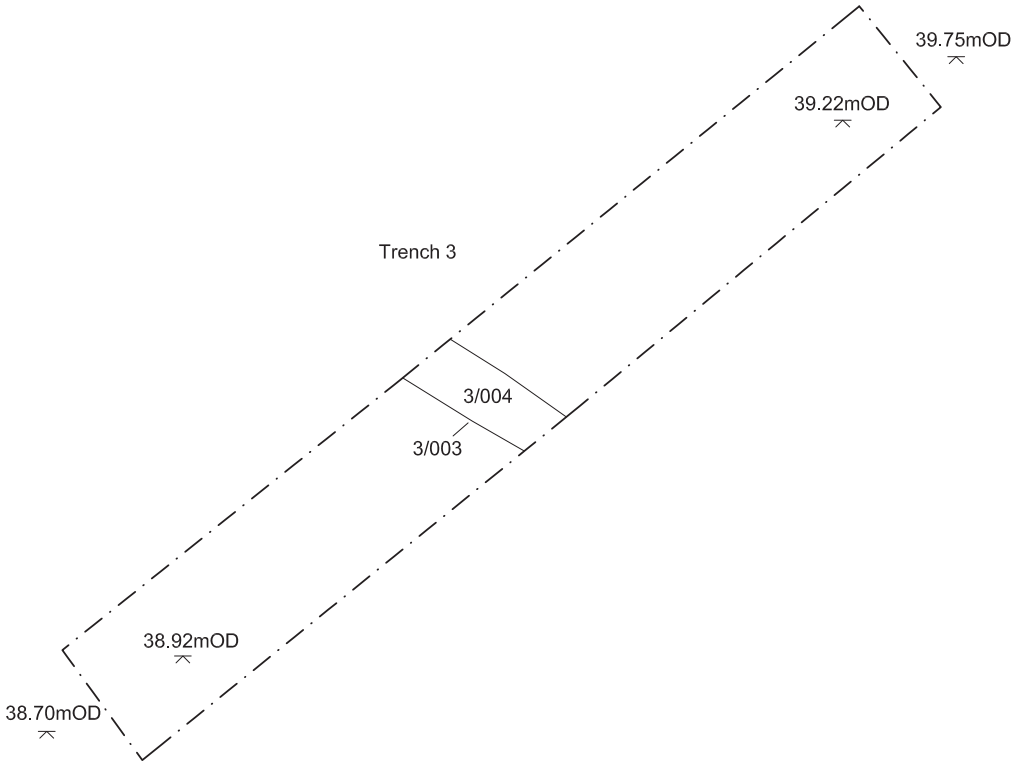
Trench 2: looking north



Trench 2: 2/003 looking north



© Archaeology South-East		'Coombelands' Stane Street, Pulborough	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Trench 2: Plan, section and photo	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		

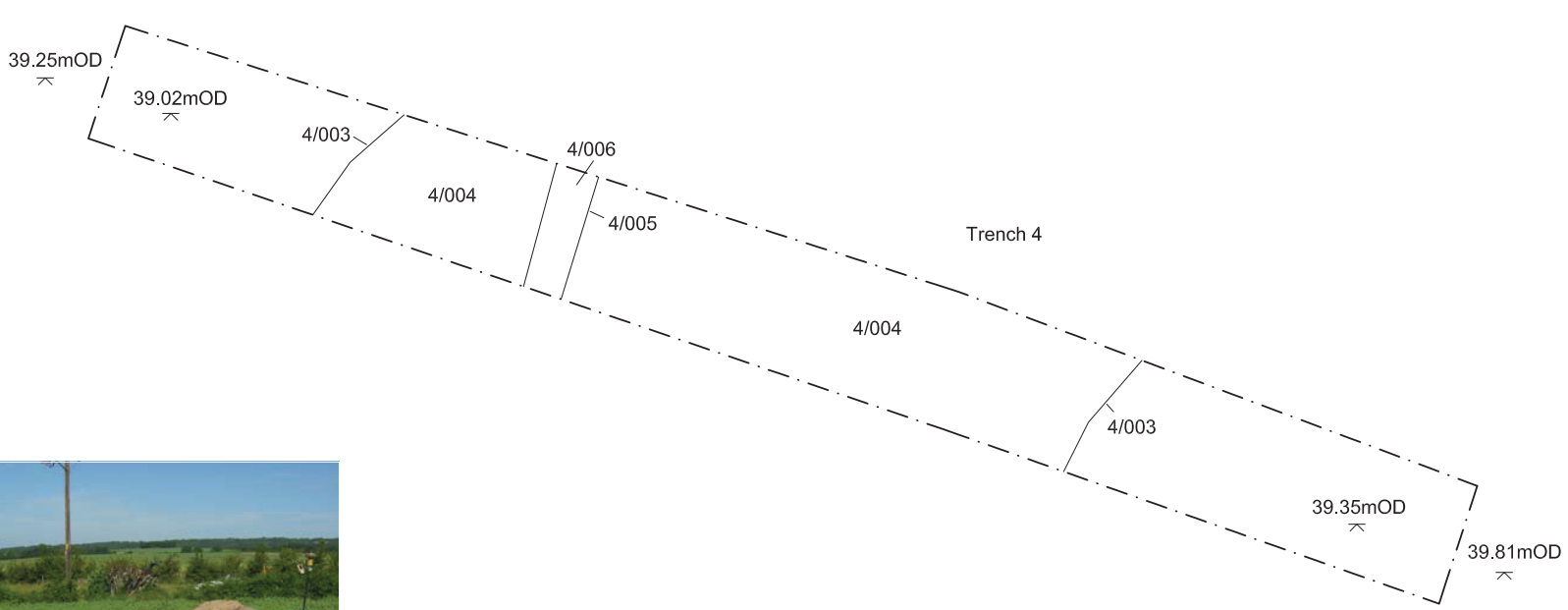


Trench 3: looking north east

N

© Archaeology South-East		'Coombelands' Stane Street, Pulborough	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Trench 3: Plan and photo	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		

Trench 4: looking north west



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Project Ref: 4951	June 2011	Trench 4: Plan and section	
Report Ref: 2011125	Drawn by: FEG		

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