

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at St Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker,  
Arlington, East Sussex: Installation of a New Substation**

**NGR: 555200 109370  
(TQ 5520 0937)**

**Project No: 4810  
Site Code: SBH11**

**ASE Report No: 2011127  
OASIS id: 102366**

**Sarah Porteus  
With illustrations by Justin Russell**

**June 2011**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at St Bede's High School, Upper Dicker during the installation of a new substation. The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of a pit of 2 metres square by 0.60m deep.*

*No archaeological finds or features were identified and no evidence was found of activity related to the nearby Michelham priory.*

*Weald Clay was overlain by heavily rooted subsoil and a thin layer of topsoil which appeared to have been heavily truncated within the recent past.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East, a contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London, were commissioned by UK Power Networks to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works relating to the installation of a new substation on land at St Bede's Senior School, off Michelham Priory Road, Upper Dicker (NGR 555200 109370, Fig. 1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The site occupied a patch of level grassed ground in use as playing fields near to a hedgerow.

1.2.2 The underlying geology is Wealden Clay.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 The excavations are not subject to standard planning regulations, however, UK Power Networks consulted East Sussex County Council (ESCC) County Archaeologists and a watching brief was recommended. ASE duly submitted a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the watching brief which was accepted by ESCC.

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The general aims of the watching brief as given in the WSI (ASE 2011) were:

*To record, interpret and report on any archaeological remains exposed during the ground works (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.*

*To assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.*

1.4.2 The general aim is to investigate whether there:

*Is any evidence for medieval and post-medieval activity associated with Michelham Priory?*

### **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report represents the findings of the watching brief undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 by Sarah Porteus (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Field work) and Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

2.0.1 A search of the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER) was made for ASE by Greg Chuter, ESCC Assistant Archaeologist. Records within a 1km radius of the site are listed in Table 1 and shown on Figure 1.

### **2.1 Prehistoric (45000BC-AD42)**

2.2.1 Prehistoric activity within the 1km radius of the site includes findspots of flint items of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date. No Iron Age findings are recorded.

### **2.2 Roman (AD43-409)**

2.2.1 Finds of Roman date within the area have included a copper alloy ring and lead objects. No settlement or features are known in the immediate vicinity.

### **2.3 Medieval (AD410-1539)**

2.3.1 No evidence has been found for early medieval activity within the area. The site of medieval Michelham Priory (Scheduled Ancient Monument: 31385), is c. 200m to the south east of the site and was founded in AD1229 and dissolved in 1536. Various excavations within the area have uncovered a stone built medieval hall for domestic use dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century turning more towards industrial use in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A moat post-dating the hall construction is also present at the Michelham priory site and the medieval hamlet of Upper Dicker is also recorded.

2.3.2 Further finds of medieval date have included silver coins and a lead token.

### **2.4 Post-medieval (AD1539 – present)**

2.4.1 A number of metal object findspots of post-medieval date located by metal-detectives are recorded including a lead seal, iron objects, copper alloy thimble, silver coin, copper alloy strap fitting and copper alloy bell.

2.4.2 Also of post-medieval date are a brickyard and a water mill.

2.4.3 Of more recent date are WWII Nissen huts, anti-tanks buoys and headquarters.

<b>ESHER No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
MES2787	Medieval Michelham Priory
MES2794	Medieval Michelham Priory
MES7125	Mesolithic and Neolithic flints
MES7796	Medieval and post-medieval hamlet, Upper Dicker
MES7812	Post-medieval building
MES7876	8 anti-tank buoys
MES8251	19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century St Bede's Private School
MES8252	Former 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century school
MES8254	18 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> century wooden watermill
MES8255	20 <sup>th</sup> century primary school
MES8268	Post-medieval brickyard
MES12848	Multiple post-medieval metal findspot
MES12849	Multiple post-medieval metal findspot
MES12879	Multiple post-medieval metal findspot
MES12882	Roman copper alloy finger ring
MES14379	Multiple post-medieval metal findspot
MES14380	Later medieval or post-medieval metal findspot
MES15622	Early Mesolithic to Bronze Age flint findspot
MES15871	Post-medieval metal findspot

Table 1: ESHER listings within c. 1km radius of the site

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)**

- 3.1** The monitored ground works consisted of a single 2m square pit (new substation) excavated to a depth of 0.60m. A cable trench for the substation had been excavated by a previous contractor prior to the commencement of this project; this was therefore not monitored in the watching brief.
- 3.2** All excavations were undertaken in spits of c. 10cm using a flat bladed ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.
- 3.3** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the WSI (*ibid*) and with ESCC standard conditions (ESCC 2008) and the guidelines of the IfA (IfA 2000, 2001) using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets.
- 3.4** Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.5** A digital photographic record was maintained throughout.
- 3.6** The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and with a metal detector in order to recover artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest.

- 3.7** The site archive, quantified in the table below, is currently housed at the ASE offices in Portslade and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course.

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	1 digital CD
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

#### **4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)**

- 4.1** Within the test pit undisturbed Weald Clay [003] was identified at c. 0.32m below ground surface. It was overlain by moderately compact yellowish brown clayey silt subsoil [002] of c. 0.30m thickness which was heavily rooted from the nearby hedgerow. The subsoil was overlain by patchy thin light brown topsoil [001] of maximum 0.02m thickness.
- 4.2** The topsoil appears to have been stripped at some point in recent history, perhaps during the insertion of a gas tank immediately to the east of the current works.

List of recorded contexts

<b>Number</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max. Length</b>	<b>Max. Width</b>	<b>Deposit Thickness</b>
001	Dep	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.02
002	Dep	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.30
003	Dep	Natural	N/A	N/A	N/A

- 4.3** No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the excavation area.

#### **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** The watching brief during the excavation of a 2metre square pit of 0.60m depth revealed no finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest.
- 5.2** No evidence was found of activity related to the nearby Michelham priory.
- 5.3** The natural clay was overlain by heavily rooted subsoil and a thin layer of topsoil which appeared to have been heavily truncated within the recent past.



## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ASE 2011 *St Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker, Arlington, East Sussex: Installation of a New Substation*. Unpublished written scheme of investigation.

English Heritage 1991. *The Management of Archaeological Projects*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: English Heritage

ESCC 2008. *Standards and Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork*

IFA 2000. Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*

IFA 2001. Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance* documents

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeology South-East would like to thank UK Power Networks for commissioning the work and Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council for his guidance throughout the project. The co-operation of the staff at St Bede's Senior School is also greatly appreciated.

**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	SBH11					
Identification Name and Address	St Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker					
County, District &/or Borough	Hailsham, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	555200 109370					
Geology	Wealden clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4810					
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. 16/5/11	Other		
Sponsor/Client	UK Power Networks					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Sarah Porteus					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other None		
<p>100 Word Summary</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at St Bede's High School, Upper Dicker during the installation of a new substation. The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of a pit of 2 metres square by 0.60m deep.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological finds or features were identified and no evidence was found of activity related to the nearby Michelham priory.</i></p> <p><i>Weald Clay was overlain by heavily rooted subsoil and a thin layer of topsoil which appeared to have been heavily truncated within the recent past.</i></p>						

## OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-102366

### Project details

Project name	Land of Michelham Road, St Bede's Senior School watching brief
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at St Bede's High School, Upper Dicker during the installation of a new substation. The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of a pit of 2 metres square by 0.60m deep. No archaeological finds or features were identified and no evidence was found of activity related to the nearby Michelham priory. Weald Clay was overlain by heavily rooted subsoil and a thin layer of topsoil which appeared to have been heavily truncated within the recent past.
Project dates	Start: 16-05-2011 End: 16-05-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SBH11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	4810 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 4 - Regularly improved
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN HAILSHAM St Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker
Postcode	BN27 3
Study area	2.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 5520 0937 50.8623955990 0.205591388902 50 51 44 N 000 12 20 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East

Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Sarah Porteus
Type of sponsor/funding body	Electricity Authority/Company
Name of sponsor/funding body	UK Power Networks
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Archive ID	SBH11
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Archive ID	SBH11
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An archaeological watching brief at St Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker, Arlington East Sussex: Installation of a new Substation
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© Archaeology South-East		St. Bedes Senior School, Upper Dicker		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4810	June 2011	Site location		
Report Ref: 2011127	Drawn by: JLR			





© Archaeology South-East		St. Bede's Senior School, Upper Dicker	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4810	June 2011	Location of works	
Report Ref: 2011127	Drawn by: FG		

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