

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Handlye Farm, Barcombe, East Sussex**

**Planning Reference LW/10/1549  
Listed Building Consent LW/10/1548**

**NGR 541120 115650  
(TQ 4112 1565)**

**ASE Project No: 4849  
Site Code: HFB11**

**ASE Report No: 2011093  
OASIS id: archaeol6-102491**



**Prepared by Sam Whitehead and Kathryn Grant  
With illustrations by Fiona Griffin**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by MJB Architecture to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Handlye Farm, Barcombe, East Sussex.*

*The watching brief was carried out on the 26th April during groundwork associated with the construction of a free-standing timber-framed garage and a replacement annex and porch adjoining the house.*

*The monitored ground work revealed no archaeological finds or features. Topsoil and/or made ground were observed directly over natural geology.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the, University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by MJB Architecture to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground work at Handlye Farm, Barcombe, East Sussex (NGR TQ 4112 1565; Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.1.2 The monitored ground works were associated with the construction of a free-standing timber framed garage and replacement annex and porch structures adjoining the house (Figure 2).

### 1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 The archaeological work at Handlye Farm is being carried out to satisfy a condition placed on planning consent by Lewes District Council (Planning Application no. LW/10/1549). Condition 3 of the planning permission states that:

*"No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has/have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that approval".*

*Reason: The development is likely to disturb remains of archaeological interest, having regard to Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.*

1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological work was carried out prepared by ASE (ASE 2011) and approved by Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council. All site work was carried out in accordance with the WSI.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 The general objectives of the archaeological watching brief as outlined in the WSI were to ensure that any historic fabric revealed during the course of the alterations to the building and any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest that were exposed by the proposed ground work were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.3.2 The specific objectives relating to the ground work monitoring were to determine the presence, and if so, the nature of evidence for Bronze Age and Roman activity. Determining the presence or absence of medieval and post-medieval archaeological features associated with the farm is also a key objective.

### 1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Sam Whitehead on the 26th April 2011. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation/editing).

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Location, Geology and Topography

2.1.2 Handlye Farm is located on an unnamed east/west road running west from Barcombe Cross, a small village midway between the A275 and the A26 and approximately 4 miles to the north of Lewes in East Sussex. Rumour has it that this village was created to replace nearby Barcombe Village which was badly affected by the plague.

2.1.2 According to maps of the British Geological Survey (Sheet 319/334) the site lies on the boundary of a narrow strip of Lower Greensand Sandstone within a larger area of Wealden Clays both of which are cretaceous (BGS 2006).

2.1.3 Handlye Farm is located on the south side of the road on fairly flat arable ground. The proposed garage is roughly 35m to the south-east of the farmhouse close to the eastern edge of a grass lawn. The porch addition was on the east side of the farmhouse which is 18th century in date, the annex on the west side.

### 2.2 Overview

2.2.1 The relevant background for the site was outlined in the WSI (ASE 2011) and is reproduced here. The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), and held at County Hall, Lewes. Further archaeological potential is provided by the farmhouse which is Grade II listed, though the earliest origins of the farm are unknown, the earliest phase of the building is thought to be 17th century or earlier (English Heritage 2001).

ESCC HER No.	OS Co-ordinates (TQ)	Description
MES10290	TQ 4230 1600	Medieval pottery findspot
MES10157	TQ 4190 1650	Early Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age flint findspot
MES9978	TQ 4180 1650	Lead musketball findspot
MES9977	TQ 4180 1650	Medieval pottery findspot
MES9976	TQ 4180 1650	Upper Palaeolithic to Late Bronze Age flint findspot
MES9974	TQ 4180 1650	Roman iron nail findspot
MES9969	TQ 4150 1670	Post medieval lead musketball findspot
MES8312	TQ 4174 1570	Railway Station
MES8310	TQ 4193 1575	Post-medieval water pump
MES8303	TQ 4150 1580	Post-medieval brick field
MES7769	TQ 4138 1610	WWII air crash site
MES7696	TQ 4206 1588	WWII anti-tank cylinders
MES7546	TQ 4210 1470	Medieval hamlet
MES7523	TQ 4173 1489	19 <sup>th</sup> century windmill
MES7495	TQ 4080 1550	Upper Palaeolithic flint findspot
MES7474	TQ 4207 1469	Post-medieval building
MES7473	TQ 4204 1486	Post-medieval building
MES7393	TQ 3675 1499	Roman Road
MES1483	TQ 4036 1496	17 <sup>th</sup> century folly
MES1192	TQ 420 160	'Old Thatch' – listed building
MES1189	TQ 4235 1495	Hoard of Bronze Age hand axes

Table 1: Summary of ESCC HER records with 1km of NGR TQ 4112 1565.

- 2.2.2 MES 7393 refers to a Roman Road uncovered during a watching brief undertaken for the construction of the Ditchling to Wivelsfield Green pipeline in 1993, approximately 500m to the south of the site. Evidence of metalling was found c. 100m to the south of the assumed route of the road, although no evidence of road surfacing or roadside features (e.g. ditches) was found. An evaluation trench excavated at Ashurst Farm in 2009, following a resistivity survey, identified an 8m wide band of cobbles exactly on the line of Margary's proposed road-line. Although again there was no evidence for any roadside ditches, a small boundary ditch was found c. 4.5m to the north of the road. The line of the Roman road has been designated an Archaeological Notification Area by the East Sussex County Council Historic Environment Record.
- 2.2.3 Approximately 1km to the southeast of the site a hoard of 15 Bronze Age well-patinated socketed and looped axes were found during fruit-tree plantation (MES 1189). The bronze axes were sold to an unknown buyer and their current location remains unknown (SAC, 1931 30-68).
- 2.2.4 Handlye Farmhouse (English Heritage, 2001) is a Grade II Listed Building, comprising a T-shaped building of two storeys and an attic. The north wing is 17<sup>th</sup> century, possibly earlier, and is timber framed although the ground floor is now faced with painted brick. The east wing is 18<sup>th</sup> century and built of red brick with a half-hipped gable end.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 The Ground Work (Figure 2)

- 3.1.1 The ground work comprised the mechanical removal of topsoil within the footprint of the proposed garage, the machine excavation of footings for the garage and a single footing for the proposed annex. Footings for the new porch were hand dug by the client.
- 3.1.2 ASE was also commissioned to carry out Historic Building Recording (HBR) on any alterations to the existing building. However, in the event the client confirmed that such alterations were not required and the building record was therefore not undertaken.

#### 3.2 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.2.1 The complete adopted methodology may be found in the WSI (ASE 2011).
- 3.2.2 All machine excavation was conducted under the supervision of a monitoring archaeologist.
- 3.2.3 During the excavations, all revealed deposits were examined for archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets
- 3.2.4 A digital photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.2.5 As no archaeological deposits were encountered, levels were not taken, however levels for the site can be approximated from spot heights on the road (Figure 2).

#### 3.3 The Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, East Sussex pending submission to Lewes Museum who have been contacted regarding this site. Lewes Museum do not give out accession numbers for archaeological archives until submission of the archive. The contents of the site archive are summarised below in Table 2.

Number of Contexts	3 contexts
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	0
Photographs	10 digital images
Finds	none

Table 2: Quantification of the site archive



## 4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The watching brief carried out on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011 involved the monitoring of three excavated areas (Figure 2): a free-standing garage, and a new porch and annex adjoining the existing house. The results for each area have been presented respectively below.

4.1.2 A total of three contexts were recorded during the watching brief monitoring. These have been tabulated below (Table 3). No finds were collected for analysis during the excavations.

Context Number	Context Type	Context Description	Deposit Thickness (maximum)
001	Deposit	Topsoil/Garden soil	0.30m
002	Deposit	Made Ground	0.40m
003	Natural	Sandy-clay	-

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

### 4.2 The Garage

4.2.1 The footprint of this structure measured 9.10m north/south by 6.50m east/west. The area was reduced by 0.20m–0.70m corresponding with the topography of the land.

4.2.2 Following ground reduction, a footing trench was excavated within the reduced area.

4.2.3 Three contexts were recorded during the watching brief monitoring, the topsoil [001], a layer of brick rubble interpreted as made ground [002] and the natural clays [003]. The topsoil [001] was a loose and friable greyish mid-dark brown clayey-sand which was between 0.20m and 0.30m thick. The made ground [002] overlay the clay natural, and in turn was overlain by the topsoil. Deposit [002] comprised brick rubble, broken tile, flint and chalk cobbles. There were no finds associated with the made ground to enable a date to be established although the bricks were frogged suggesting they came from a later building (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards– Sarah Porteus *pers. comm.*). The rubble was undoubtedly from a demolished building but it was not *in situ* and did not form a surface. It seems likely, given the undulating nature of this area of the garden, that this material had been imported and used to landscape a low spot before the area was grassed over to form part of the lawn. It has been suggested that this area may have been a vegetable patch as late as 1976 when the current owners took over the property (Robin Beech *pers. comm.*). The made ground was located in the north half of the garage footprint and was thickest in the north-west corner.

### 4.3 The Porch

4.3.1 A hand-excavated trench (c. 1m deep and 0.5m wide) was dug for the footings of a proposed porch. These excavations revealed a thin layer of concrete directly over the top of natural geology [003]. No topsoil was recorded in this area and no archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. The porch will reuse the existing aperture to the building.

#### **4.4 The Annex**

- 4.4.1 The proposed annex was to be constructed within the area of an existing workshop at the west of the main house complex using the existing opening to the main building. Only a small footing, measuring 1-2m in length, was excavated along the northern doorway and this demonstrated only modern disturbance.

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

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief demonstrated that topsoil and/or modern made ground overlay the natural geology and no archaeological finds, features or deposits encountered during the excavations.
- 5.2 The results indicate that in the area of the garage recent efforts were probably made to raise low-lying areas of the garden by importing brick rubble as a levelling deposit. Top and subsoil had been removed prior to this levelling in this area.
- 5.3 No HBR record was made during the watching brief as no alterations were proposed to the fabric of the building.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeology South East would like to thank MJB Architecture for commissioning the work and Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, ESCC for his guidance throughout the project.

## HER Summary Form

Site Code	HFB 11					
Identification Name and Address	Handlye Farm, Barcombe					
County, District and/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR: 541120 115650					
Geology	Wealden Clays					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4849					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	<del>Green Field</del>	<del>Shallow Urban</del>	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 26-04-2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Strutt & Parker					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave					
Project Supervisor	Sam Whitehead, Robert Cole					
Period Summary	<del>Palaeo.</del> None	<del>Meso.</del> None	<del>Neo.</del> None	BA None	IA None	RB None
	AS None	MED None	PM	Other		
100 Word Summary						
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by MJB Architecture to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Handlye Farm, Barcombe, East Sussex.</i></p> <p><i>The watching brief was carried out on the 26th April during groundwork associated with the construction of a free-standing timber-framed garage and a replacement annex and porch adjoining the house.</i></p> <p><i>The monitored ground work revealed no archaeological finds or features. Topsoil and/or made ground were observed directly over natural geology.</i></p>						

## OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeo16-102491

### Project details

Project name	Handlye Farm, Barcombe
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by MJB Architecture to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Handlye Farm, Barcombe, East Sussex. The watching brief was carried out on the 26th April during groundwork associated with the construction of a free-standing timber-framed garage and a replacement annex and porch adjoining the house. The monitored ground work revealed no archaeological finds or features. Topsoil and/or made ground were observed directly over natural geology.
Project dates	Start: 26-04-2011 End: 26-04-2011
Any associated project reference codes	HFB 11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

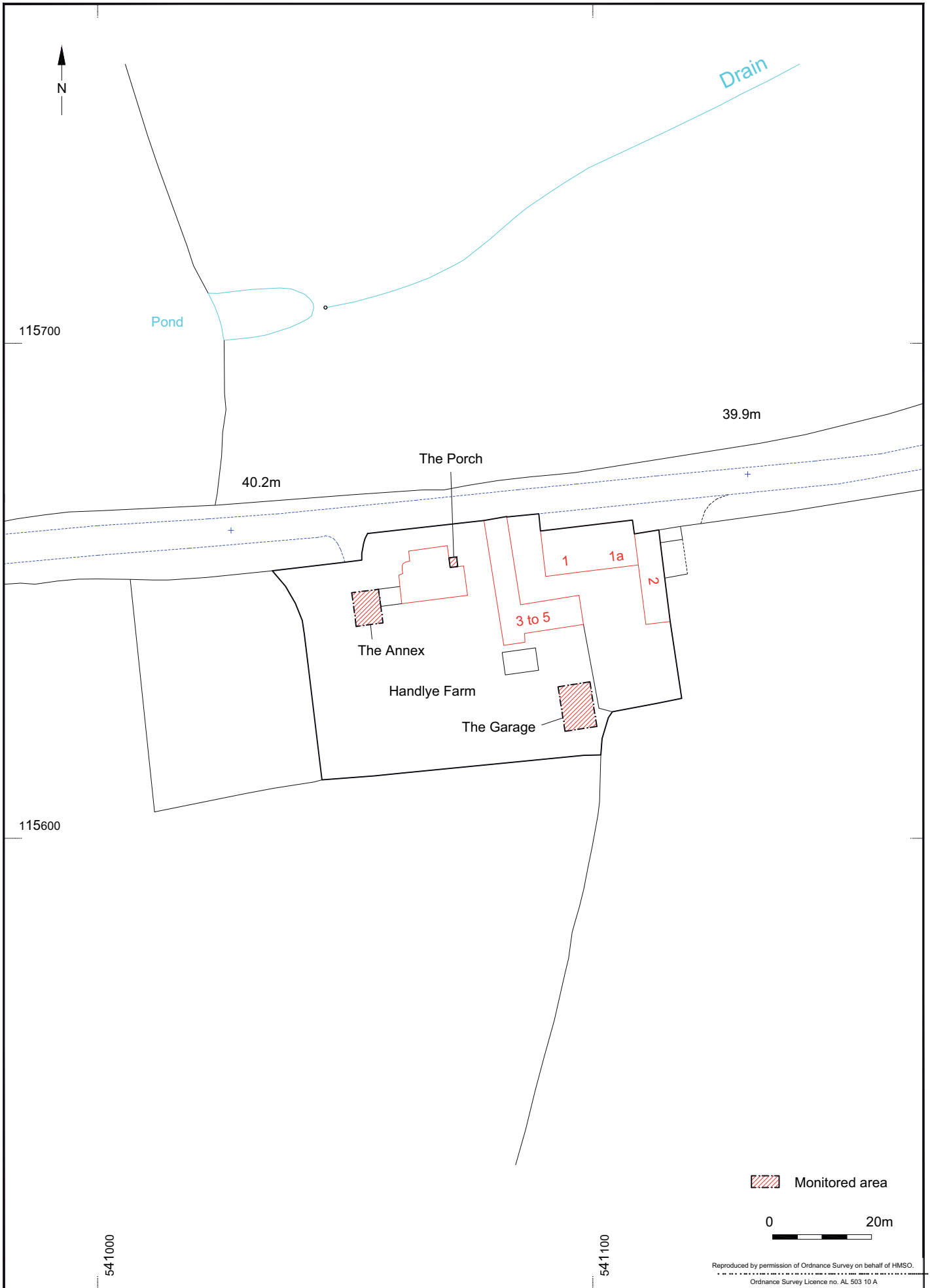
Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES BARCOMBE Handlye Farm, Barcombe
Site coordinates	TQ 4112 1565 50.9224571766 0.00806060374078 50 55 20 N 000 00 29 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Kathryn Grant
Type of sponsor/funding body	Architects
Name of sponsor/funding body	MJB Architecture
Entered by	Kathryn Grant (kathryn.grant@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	3 June 2011



© Archaeology South-East		Handlye Farm, Barcombe		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4849	June 2011	Site location		
Report Ref: 2011093	Drawn by: JLR			



• Archaeology South-East		Handlye Farm, Barcombe	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4849	June 2011	Plan of monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2011093	Drawn by: JLR		



Garage area, looking north-west



Garage area, looking north-east



Porch area, looking west

© Archaeology South-East		Handlye Farm, Barcombe	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 4849	June 2011	Photographs	
Report Ref: 2011093	Drawn by: JLR		

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