

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Sydney Simmons Almshouses, Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey**

**(Planning Ref: MO/2008/1723)**

**NGR 51889 15802**

**Project No: 4936  
Site Code: DRA11**

**ASE Report No: 2011187  
OASIS id: archaeol6-106022**

**By John Cook BSc AIFA**

**July 2011**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Sydney Simmons Almshouses, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey**

**(Planning Ref: MO/2008/1723)**

**NGR 51889 15802**

**Project No: 4936  
Site Code: DRA11**

**ASE Report No: 2011187  
OASIS id: archaeol6-106022**

**By John Cook BSc AIFA**

**July 2011**

**Archaeology South-East  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex  
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830  
Fax: 01273 420866  
Email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)**

**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Sydney Simmon's Almshouses Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey. The work was undertaken on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and was commissioned by Mackeller Schwerdt Architects, on behalf of their client, Sydney Simmons Homes. The excavation of two sets of footing trenches was subject to archaeological monitoring across the development area.*

*No features or finds of archaeological interest were encountered. The stratigraphic sequence identified in the earlier archaeological trial trenching was confirmed.*

## **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

**Bibliography**  
**Acknowledgements**

**SMR Summary Sheet**  
**OASIS Form**

## **FIGURES**

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Site plan showing monitored works

## **TABLES**

- Table 1: Quantification of site archive
- Table 2: List of recorded contexts

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL), was commissioned and was commissioned by Mackeller Schwerdt Architects, on behalf of their client, Sydney Simmons Homes, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development on land at Sydney Simmons Almshouses, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey (NGR 518897, 158022) (Fig 1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The site lies on the north-west side of Dene Road and is bounded on all other sides by residential development and St Giles Church of England Infant School to the north-east. The site contains existing residential units across its centre, with open landscape to the front and rear.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2011) the site lies over bedrock geology of Lambeth Group – Clay, Silt and Sand overlying the Thanet Sand Formation.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning consent (Reference: MO/2008/1723) has been granted for the residential re-development of the site. A condition attached to the consent states that:

*“No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Planning Authority”.*

1.3.1 This programme of archaeological work comprised the preparation of a Desk-Based Assessment (ASE 2011a) followed by archaeological trial trenching (ASE 2011b). The watching brief, detailed in the current report, followed on from the trial trenching.

1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* prepared by ASE was submitted to Surrey County Council for approval prior to commencement of the watching brief. All work was carried out in accordance with this document, as well as with the *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Briefs* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and other codes and relevant documents of the IfA.

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

1.4.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief undertaken by John Cook and Nick Garland on the 20th, 22nd and 27th June and 5th July 2011. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post-

excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 The Desk Based Assessment**

2.1.1 A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) of the site was prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2011a). Please refer to that document for a full archaeological background to the site. The results of the DBA are summarised below.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

2.2.1 Settlement in the upland parts of Surrey in the prehistoric period was sparse until the Iron Age, when farmsteads began to be established across the chalk upland. This is reflected in the HER search undertaken for the DBA, which revealed most entries comprised scattered findspots of artefacts.

### **2.3 Romano-British**

2.3.1 Roman settlement evidence is quite widespread in this part of Surrey, Ashtead lying immediately to the west of Stane Street and a minor road which branches off to the north-west across Ashtead Common.

### **2.4 Anglo-Saxon**

2.4.1 The name Ashtead is of Saxon origin, meaning 'place of ash trees'. Saxon settlement in Surrey was initially limited to the lower river terraces in the north and east of the county, although in the 6<sup>th</sup> century settlements began to appear on the dip slope of the North Downs. However, there are no Saxon entries on the HER within the vicinity of the site.

### **2.5 Medieval**

2.5.1 The site lay within the manor of Ashtead and was granted to the canons of Bayeux after the Conquest. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century until 1397 the manor was held by the Earls of Surrey, and thereafter changed hands frequently. During the medieval period, the main settlement focus developed to the north and west of the site, around The Street and Rectory Lane. The rural landscape comprised a mainly pastoral landscape of open sheepwalk, probably with piecemeal enclosure nearer the village core and wooded commonland on the clay soils to the north.

### **2.6 Post-medieval**

2.6.1 The site lay outside the historic core of Ashtead, forming part of a field system derived from piecemeal enclosure. The open fields to the south were enclosed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and St Giles Primary School built in 1852. The coming of the railway in 1859 stimulated residential development with a period of expansion in the 1930s. The site lies within a polygon identified on the Surrey Historic Landscape Character map as 'post-1811 and pre-1940 large scale estates'.

## **2.7 Results of the Trial Trenching**

2.7.1 Two trenches, measuring 20m and 30m in length by 1.8m in width were excavated across the area of proposed development. No dateable finds of archaeological interest were encountered but a concentration of undated cut features was encountered within Trench 2. The underlying natural Thanet Sand was encountered at a maximum height of 74.41m OD in Trench 1 in the south-east falling to 73.23 m OD in Trench 2 in the north-west.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Aims and Objectives**

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were in general to identify and record any archaeological remains uncovered during the machine excavations.

3.1.2 More specifically the objectives of the investigation were to:

- Establish, if possible, the date, function and the full extent of the features found in the trial trenching

#### **3.2 Methodology**

3.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the agreed WSI (ASE 2011c).

3.2.2 The works requiring archaeological monitoring were limited to the rear of the development in the area of Trench 2 (Figure 2).

3.2.3 Machine excavations were undertaken using a flat-bladed ditching bucket in order to minimise damage to resources during monitoring works, and were carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

3.2.4 Hand excavation and recording was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists 2001 Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief.

Number of Contexts	5 contexts
No. of files/paper record	1 folder
Photographs	97 Digital

Table 1: Quantification of site archive



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Footing trenches

4.1.1 The work monitored on site included the excavation of footing trenches to the north of existing buildings (Fig. 2). The total length of trenching excavated measured c. 200 metres. The trenches measured 0.6 metres in width and were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8 metres. The stratigraphy recorded in the trenches was uniform.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
001	Layer	Topsoil	As Tr	As Tr	0.3m
002	Layer	Subsoil	As Tr	As Tr	0.2m
003	Layer	Subsoil	As Tr	As Tr	0.35m
004	Layer	Deposit	As Tr	As Tr	0.2m
005	Layer	Natural	As Tr	As Tr	N/A

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

### 4.2 Summary

4.1.1 The natural substrate was a firm mixed layer of mid yellowish brown sand and sandy clay [005] lay underneath the sand. This layer [005] occurred at approximately 0.85m to 1.1m depth and was observed to a maximum depth of 1.8m.

4.1.2 Overlying the natural, [005] was a greenish sand deposit, [004]. Overlying this was a dark orangish brown silt clay deposit (possible subsoil) with occasional flint nodules [003]. Overlying this was a layer of subsoil, a light brown silt clay, [002]. The final deposit in the sequence was the topsoil [001] which contained modern remains (discarded on site) including plastic, brick and glass

4.1.3 No archaeological finds, deposits or artefacts were observed apart from the modern material identified in the topsoil.

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** The monitoring of the foundations trenches for the proposed extension at Sydney Simmons Almshouses, Ashted revealed no archaeological finds, deposits or artefacts.
- 5.2** The stratigraphy observed during the excavations affirmed the sequence recorded in the archaeological evaluation.
- 5.3** Despite the excavations occurring over areas identified as having potential archaeological features in the archaeological evaluation (Fig 2) no ancient remains were observed. This is probably due to the narrow window provided by the footing trenches of 0.6m width compounded by soil conditions at the time of excavation.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Archaeology South-East, 2011a *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of The Sydney Simmons Homes site, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey*

Archaeology South-East, 2011b *An Archaeological Evaluation at The Sydney Simmons Homes site, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey*

Archaeology South-East, 2011c *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Watching Brief at The Sydney Simmons Homes site, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey*

BGS 2011 British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 12.07.2011 [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)

Institute for Archaeologists, 2007 *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Briefs*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank Sydney Simmons Homes for commissioning the work and the guidance of Gary Jackson of Surrey County Council throughout the project.

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-106022**

---

**Project details**

Project name	Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashtead
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Sydney Simmons Alms Houses Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey. The work was undertaken on the 20th, 22nd and 27th June and 5th July 2011 on behalf of Sydney Simmons Homes. Two sets of footings were excavated across the area of proposed development. No features or finds of archaeological interest were encountered. The stratigraphic sequence identified in the earlier archaeological trial trenching was confirmed.
Project dates	Start: 20-06-2011 End: 05-07-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	4936 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

---

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	SURREY MOLE VALLEY LEATHERHEAD Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashtead
Postcode	KT21 1EA
Study area	211.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 1889 5802 51.3083464936 -0.294127086862 51 18 30 N 000 17 38 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: -1.80m Max: -1.20m

---

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
----------------------	------------------------

Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Surrey County Council
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	John Cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Sydney Simmons Homes

---

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey','other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	n/a
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Report','Survey'

---

### Project bibliography 1

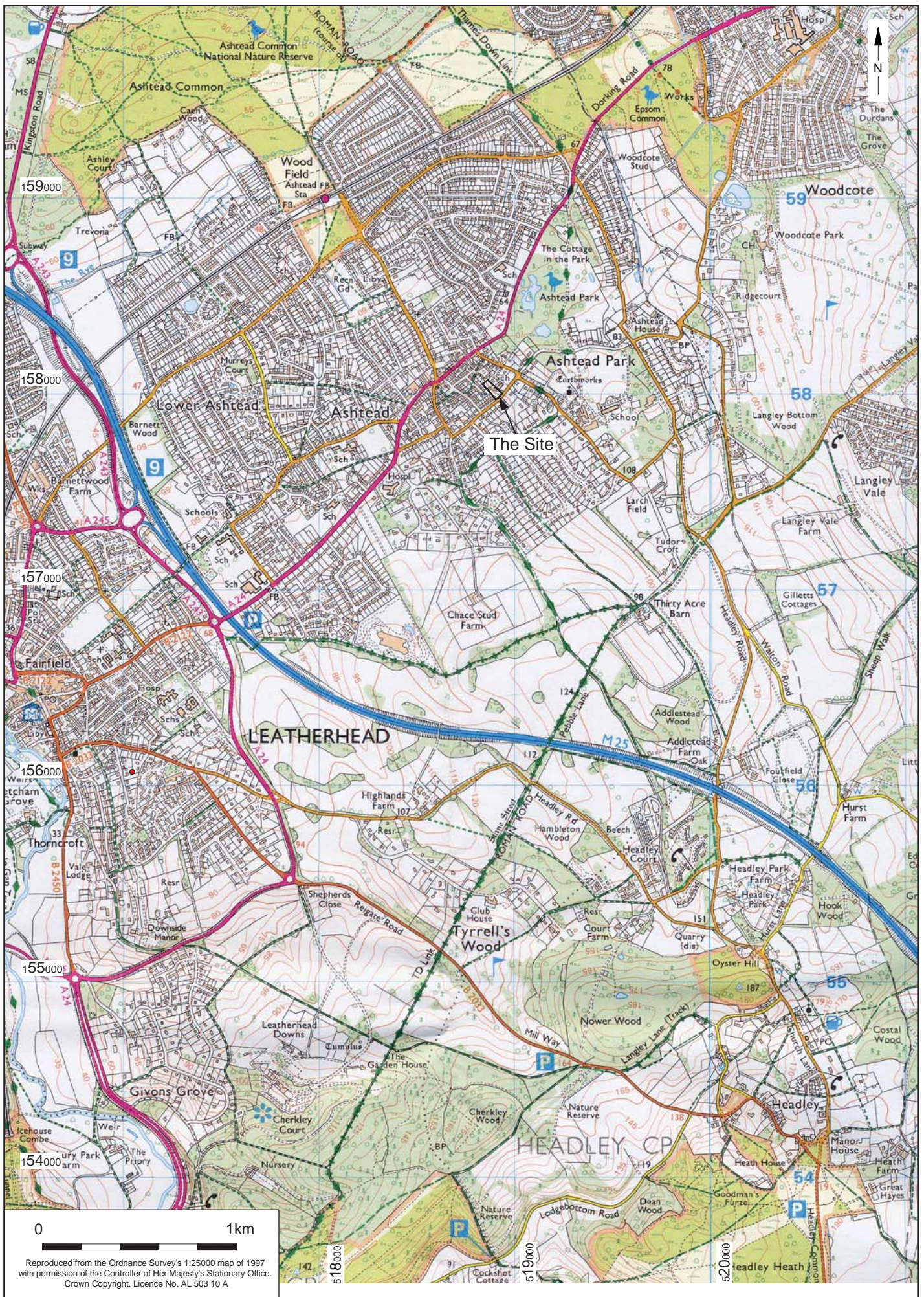
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, J.
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or	Portslade

publication

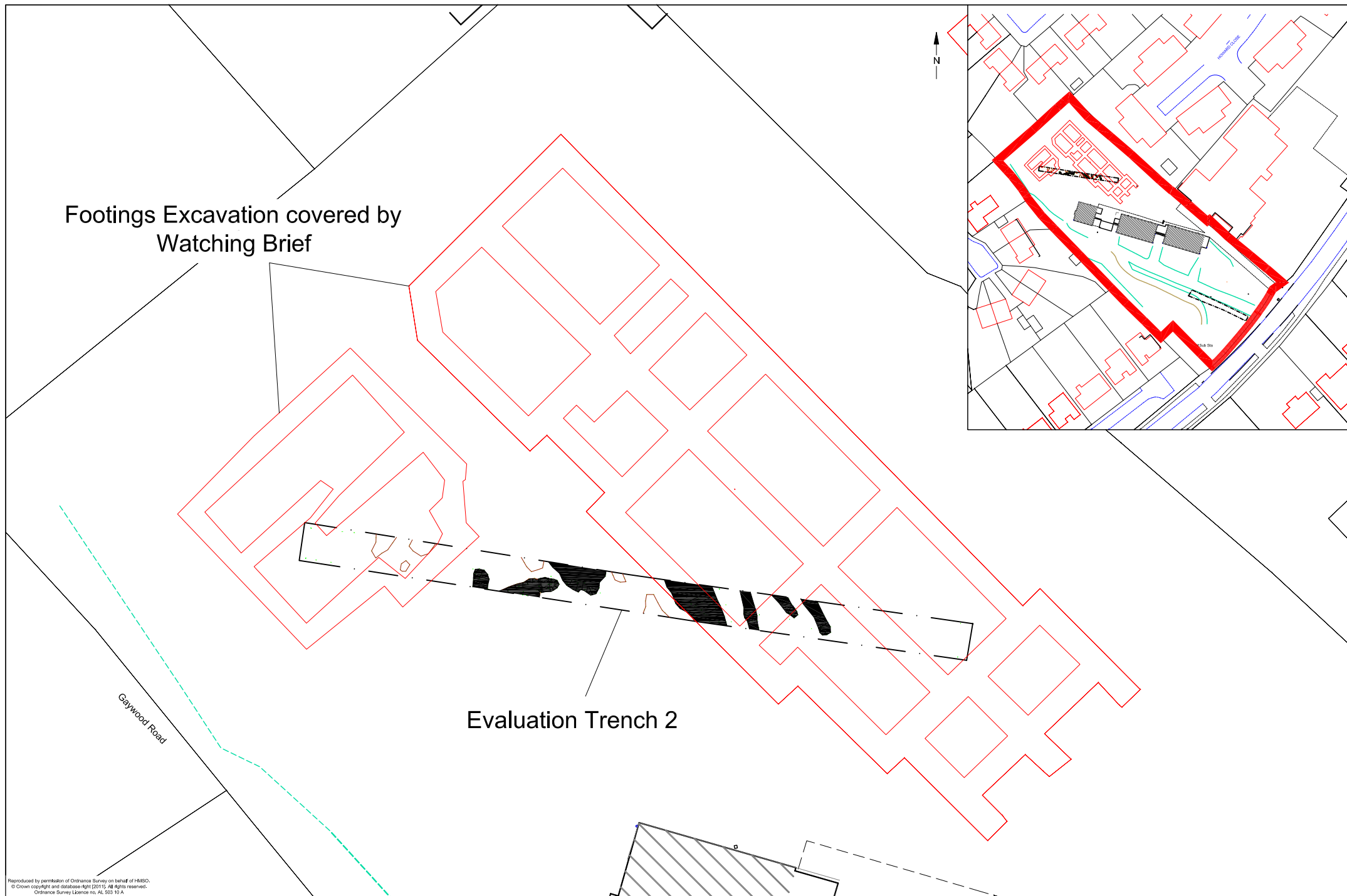
---

Entered by            John Cook (john.cook@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on            28 July 2011



© Archaeology South-East		Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashted		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4936	July 2011	Site location		
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JC			



Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.  
 © Crown copyright and database right (2011). All rights reserved.  
 Ordnance Survey Licence no. AL 503 10 A

© Archaeology South-East		Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashted	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4936	July 2011	Excavated footings showing evaluation trench location	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JC		



Head Office  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex BN41 1DR  
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax: +44(0)1273 420866  
email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)



London Office  
Centre for Applied Archaeology  
Institute of Archaeology  
University College London  
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY  
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778  
Fax: +44(0)20 7383 2572  
Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

©Archaeology South-East