

**An Archaeological watching brief at Holmstead Farm,  
Cuckfield, West Sussex**

**NGR TQ 28231 26403  
NGR 528231 126403**

**Project No: 3536  
Site Code: HOL 09**

**ASE Report No: 2011248**

**Dylan Hopkinson MA**

**October 2011**

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**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**

*Archaeology South-East were commissioned Rural Arisings to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR 528231 126403) during the construction of improvements to the surface water and slurry management arrangements for the farm. The work was undertaken in two parts between 27th April 2010 and 28th April 2010 and between 17th October 2011 and 19th October 2011.*

*According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series map for the area (Sheet 302: Horsham) the site lies on the following geological formations: Ardingly Sandstone, Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand, Horsham Stone and Cuckfield Stone; orangey brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments was identified on the high ground in the north of the site and the observed natural on remaining land was head deposits of mid orangey brown sandy clay with occasional sandstone fragments. The head deposits were generally covered in 0.20 to 0.40m of colluvium, dark orangey brown clayey sand with sandstone fragments. The site was sealed by mid-greyish brown sandy silt topsoil.*

*No archaeological artefacts or features were identified during the monitoring of these works which involved the stripping of deposits down to natural across the site.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) (a division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London) was commissioned by Rural Arisings (hereafter referred to as the client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR 528231 126403, Figures 1 and 2) during the construction of improvements to the surface water and slurry management arrangements for the farm.

### **1.2 Location and geology**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series map for the area (Sheet 302: Horsham) the site lies on the following geological formations: Ardingly Sandstone, Upper Tunbrige Wells Sand, Horsham Stone and Cuckfield Stone.

1.2.2 Holmsted Farm is located on the western side of Holmsted Hill (B2114), to the northwest of Cuckfield.

1.2.3 The site comprises two fields of former pasture land set in an agricultural landscape and on a gently undulating slope from higher ground in the south down to lower levels in the north.

1.2.4 The site covers an area of 11.78 hectares of which 5.8 represents land that will be affected by sub surface impact of the development, the remainder of the development being soft landscaping.

1.2.5 The site was split over two fields; the southern field above the farm complex and the northern field below.

### **1.3 Scope of the report**

1.3.1 This report provides an account of the archaeological watching brief. The work was undertaken in two parts between 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010 and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010 by Andrew Margetts (Senior Archaeologist), and between 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011 by Dylan Hopkinson (Archaeologist).

1.3.2 The fieldwork was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and the post-excavation analysis was managed by Jim Stevenson (Project Manager).

### **1.4 Planning Background**

1.4.1 Planning permission has been granted by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for the creation of reed beds and ponds to be used for fishing and duck shooting associated with improvements to the surface water and cattle slurry management arrangements at Holmsted Farm (Planning Ref. 08/01213/FUL).

1.4.2 Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological remains, a condition (Condition 14) has been attached to the planning consent as follows, at the request of the West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Archaeologist in his capacity as archaeological advisor to MSDC. Condition 14 states:

“No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The site is of archaeological significance and it is important that it is recorded by excavation before it is destroyed by development and to accord with Policy CH11 of the adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016.”

1.4.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI 2009) was produced by ASE. This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in the subsequent reporting and archiving of the results. It was approved by West Sussex County Council before the commencement of work at the site.

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

1.5.1 The general objective of the archaeological work was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks to appropriate archaeological standards.

1.4.2 The watching brief was also designed to assess the past impacts on the site and to pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any encountered deposits.

1.4.3 Specifically the aims of the watching brief were to:

- To preserve by record any important archaeological remains uncovered by the contractor's operations;
- To establish whether any archaeological remains associated with iron working exist within the site;
- To retain samples of artefactual and ecofactual material for further study;
- To make the results available by publication of a suitable report.

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Archaeological and historical potential

2.1.1 The archaeological potential of the site has been gauged in relation to entries recorded on the WSCC Historic Environment Record (HER) within 1.5km of the site (search centred NGR 528231 126403). The entries are summarised below (Table 1) and full details are included as Appendix 1. The location of each entry is annotated on Figure 1.

Table 1: Entries recorded on the WSCC HER within 1.5km of the site.

WSCC HER No.	OS NGR	Summary
302503	527085 125682	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century barn.
439816	528427 125644	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century barn.
302477	529000 127150	Grade II Listed building. 18 <sup>th</sup> century barn.
302499	527116 127075	Grade II Listed building. 18 <sup>th</sup> century barn.
302511	529181 125760	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century barn.
302476	529010 127140	Grade II Listed building. 15 <sup>th</sup> century farmhouse.
302509	528082 127827	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century house.
302475	529004 126674	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302463	527904 125465	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century cottage.
302502	527118 125738	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century farmhouse.
302491	527684 127610	Grade II Listed building. 15 <sup>th</sup> century house.
302472	529132 126204	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302473	529422 126621	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century house.
302464	527970 125521	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302498	527130 127076	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302497	527169 126885	Grade II Listed building. 18 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302510	529181 125760	Grade II Listed building. 16 <sup>th</sup> century house.
302488	528665 125652	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302512	528756 126104	Grade II Listed building. 16 <sup>th</sup> century house.
302507	527006 126444	Grade II Listed building. 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier house.
302506	526965 126405	Grade II Listed building. 18 <sup>th</sup> century or farmhouse.
302505	527001 126245	Grade II Listed building. 16 <sup>th</sup> century house.
2787-MWS89	528120 126710	Post-medieval park
3970-MWS649	528420 126030	Toll house shown on map of 1795
4421-MWS939	528170 127400	Medieval ironworking site
6579-MWS5360	527955 127430	WWII Pillbox
6580-MWS5361	528208 127404	WWII Anti-tank block
6578-MWS5468	527319 127616	WWII Pillbox

2.1.2 The application site lies at the southern edge of the main area of medieval and early post-medieval iron working in Sussex at Holmsted Forge. This 17th century water-powered iron working site is located 700 metres to the north; and a probable medieval ironworking bloomery site is known at Walks Wood, 1.3 km to the south-east.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the WSI, the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) and the WSCC Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions (WSCC 2007).
- 3.1.2 All ground-works were monitored down to the natural geology.
- 3.1.3 These works were recorded by an archaeologist to assess the level of archaeological survival.
- 3.1.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection.
- 3.1.5 Section drawings of the excavated profiles were drawn at a scale of 1:10, sample section drawings of the overlying deposits were also drawn at 1:10 scale on plastic drafting film, and a full photographic record was made recording all features and contexts.

#### **3.2 Site archive**

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be offered to the local museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

##### 3.3.2 Table 2: Quantification of site archive

Number of Context Sheets	4
Photographic Record Sheets	2
Photographs	14
No. of files/paper record	1



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Natural

4.1.1 The natural deposits identified were mid yellow brown sand with sandstone fragments observed over the southern half of the southern field on the highest part of the site; over the remainder of the site (northern half of the southern field and northern field) the natural comprised head deposits of mid orangey brown sandy clay with occasional sandstone fragments (Figure 3).

### 4.2 Overburden

4.2.1 Over the downslope area of the site where head deposits were observed, a layer of colluvium was seen to have accumulated; this was dark orangey brown clayey sand with sandstone fragments that ranged between 0.20m and 0.40m in depth.

4.2.2 The whole site was sealed by mid-greyish brown sandy silt with occasional sandstone fragments 0.25 to 0.30m in depth.

### 4.3 Archaeology

4.3.1 No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered in either field

Table 3: List of contexts

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness (m)
001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.25 - 0.30m
002	Deposit	Natural Sand	-
003	Deposit	Colluvium	0.20 - 0.40m
004	Deposit	Natural Head Deposits	-

**5.0 THE FINDS**

**5.1 Summary**

5.1.1 No finds were recovered during the monitoring of ground-works.

**6.0 DISCUSSION**

- 6.1** There was an overall lack of artefacts across the site and it is thought likely that the use of the land was of a low intensity throughout the prehistoric and subsequent periods.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

WSI 2009. *Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5JF - Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished ASE report

WSCC 2007. *Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions*. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) document

**Acknowledgements**

ASE would like to thank Rural Arisings for commissioning the work and John Mills of WSCC for his guidance throughout the project.

**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	HOL 09					
Identification Name and Address	Holmstead Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5JF					
County, District &/or Borough	Mid Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 528231 126403					
Geology	Ardingly Sandstone, Upper Tunbrige Wells Sand, Horsham Stone and Cuckfield Stone					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3536					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	<u>Excav.</u>	<b>Watching brief.</b> ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	<b>Green Field</b> ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	<b>W.B.</b> 27-04-10 to 28-04-10 and 17-10-11 to 19-10-11	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Rural Arisings					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Andy Margetts and Dylan Hopkinson					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern	<b>None</b> ✓	
100 Word Summary.						
<p>Archaeology South-East were commissioned Rural Arisings to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR 528231 126403) during the construction of improvements to the surface water and slurry management arrangements for the farm.</p> <p>Orangey brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments was identified on the high ground in the north of the site interpreted as Upper Tunbrige Wells Sand formations and the observed natural on remaining land was head deposits of mid orangey brown sandy clay with occasional sandstone fragments. The head deposits were generally covered in 0.20 to 0.40m of colluvium, dark orangey brown clayey sand with sandstone fragments. The site was sealed by mid-greyish brown sandy silt topsoil.</p> <p>No archaeological artefacts or features were identified during the monitoring of these works which involved the stripping of deposits down to natural across the site.</p>						

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-112336**

### Project details

Project name	Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East were commissioned Rural Arisings to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR 528231 126403) during the construction of improvements to the surface water and slurry management arrangements for the farm. The work was undertaken in two parts between 27th April 2010 and 28th April 2010 and between 17th October 2011 and 19th October 2011. According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series map for the area (Sheet 302: Horsham) the site lies on the following geological formations: Ardingly Sandstone, Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand, Horsham Stone and Cuckfield Stone; orangey brown sand with occasional sandstone fragments was identified on the high ground in the north of the site and the observed natural on remaining land was head deposits of mid orangey brown sandy clay with occasional sandstone fragments. The head deposits were generally covered in 0.20 to 0.40m of colluvium, dark orangey brown clayey sand with sandstone fragments. The site was sealed by mid-greyish brown sandy silt topsoil. No archaeological artefacts or features were identified during the monitoring of these works which involved the stripping of deposits down to natural across the site.
Project dates	Start: 27-04-2010 End: 19-10-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HOL 09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Visual Inspection'
Development type	Landfill
Development type	Agricultural water and slurry management
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX MID SUSSEX HAYWARDS HEATH Holmstead Farm, Culckfield
Postcode	RH17 5JF
Study area	11.78 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 28231 26403 51.0221283756 -0.171445519815 51 01 19 N 000 10 17 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	West Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Andy Margetts - Dylan Hopkinson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Civil Engineers
Name of sponsor/funding body	Rural Arisings

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	n/a
Physical Contents	'other'
Digital Archive recipient	local museum
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	local museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet'

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**Project bibliography 1**

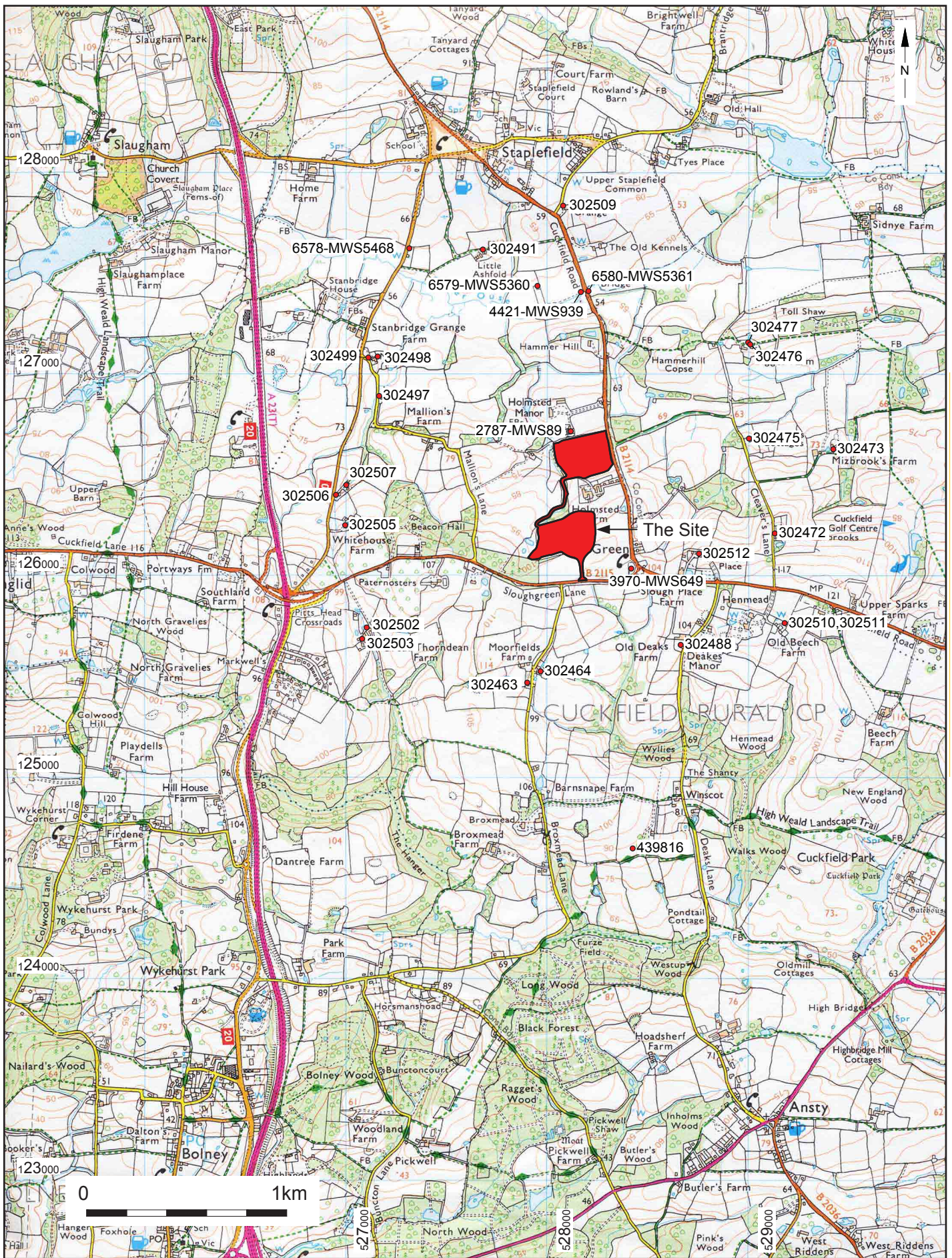
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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© Archaeology South-East		Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3536	October 2011	Site location		
Report Ref: 2011248	Drawn by: DJH			

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© Archaeology South-East		Holmstead Farm, Cuckfield	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 3536	October 2011	Detailed site plan	
Report Ref: 2011248	Drawn by: JLR		



North field after stripping of topsoil and colluvium



South field during stripping of topsoil

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)

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