

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway  
East Sussex**

**NGR 545077 107959**

**ASE Project No: 5451  
Site Code: BFC12**

**ASE Report No: 2012091  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-123446**

**By Simon Stevens BA MIFA  
With contributions by  
Karine Le Hégarat and Luke Barber**

**April 2012**

**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the new A27 Beddingham to Firle cycleway.*

*A single archaeological feature was encountered. This was a shallow gully-like feature which contained a residual struck flint and a heavily abraded sherd of medieval pottery. The feature corresponds quite closely with a path marked on the OS mapping and it may be that the feature is in fact the in-filled depression of the path at its southernmost extent.*

*No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.*

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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 (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald (BBMM) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the new A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway (NGR 545077 107959; Fig. 1).

### **1.2 Topography and Geology**

1.2.1 The route of the new cycleway is located to the north of the current alignment of the A27, to the west of the Beddingham roundabout and rail crossing. It traverses a shallow valley to the north of Comps Farm which runs broadly north to south and contains an open drain/waterway. According to current data from the British Geological Survey the underlying bedrock is the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation, with superficial geology of Head Deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. There is a limited deposit of alluvium associated with the drain/waterway (BGS 2012).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Following consultation between BBMM and Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), it was decided that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the works, given the archaeological potential of the general area (See Section 2.0)

1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was duly produced by BBMM outlining the techniques to be used in the field, and in the production of a report and an archive (BBMM 2012).

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The aims stated in the *Written Scheme of Investigation (ibid.)* were to:

*'identify, record and analyse any archaeological deposits disturbed by the proposed development. The recording will aim to characterise (nature, date, complexity and extent) any deposits which are encountered during the groundworks. This will preserve the archaeological resource "by record" and offset the loss of the historic data caused by the development.'*

### **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks at the site during March and early April 2012. The on-site work was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), Nick Garland (Archaeologist) and Gary Webster (Assistant Archaeologist). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A full account of the archaeological background of the site is included in the WSI (*ibid.*). The following summary is derived from the WSI (*ibid.*).
- 2.2 Finds of prehistoric material are rare in the immediate area, although the routeway is overlooked by Mount Caburn to the north-west, a Scheduled Monument (No. 1014527) consisting of a multivallate hillfort, and other features, providing a date range of activity from the Bronze Age to the Second World War (Drewett & Hamilton 1999).
- 2.3 The routeway lies c.600m to the north of the site of a Roman villa, known as the Preston Court Farm Villa, or simply as Beddingham Villa. The site was systematically investigated between 1987 and 1992 and awaits full publication, although some elements have published reports (e.g. Waldron, Taylor & Rudling 1999).
- 2.4 The new cycle route is located c. 175m to the south of the Scheduled Monument (No. 1021436), an Anglo-Saxon cemetery found c. 275m north of Comps Farm. Three accompanied graves dated to the early part of the 6<sup>th</sup> century were found in October 2008, following disturbance to a hitherto unknown cemetery by metal detectorists. Burnt material recovered from one of the grave fills suggests that the as-yet-unexplored part of the cemetery may contain cremated remains (Beesley 2009).
- 2.5 There is plentiful evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in this part of the Ouse corridor including so-called 'squatter' occupation at the aforementioned Roman villa (White, 1999, 28). Pottery dated to the late fourth or fifth century was located at the site, including bowls with pedestal feet thought to have fallen out of use by the mid-fifth century (Rudling 1998, 55-9).
- 2.6 The excavator suggests a link with the local Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery at Drayton Field, which was partially excavated in the early 1800s (Welch 1983, 396-7), but arguably the presence of a female inhumation is indicative of the presence of more than a mere handful of warriors using the ruinous villa as a temporary base. Another partially excavated cemetery centred on a group of barrows on Beddingham Hill is also evidence of occupation in the area at this time given the presence of a disc brooch dated to c. 500AD among the grave goods (*ibid.*).
- 2.7 Finds of medieval pottery with associated earthworks suggest medieval occupation the area, and there are a total of 34 listed buildings identified within a 1km radius of the site, including the medieval parish church of St. Andrew, Beddingham to the west

### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The work was conducted in line with the specification outlined in the WSI (BBMM 2012) and in line with East Sussex (ESCC 2003) and Institute for Archaeologists guidance documentation (IfA 2008).
- 3.2 Groundworks including the mechanical excavation of test-pits, mechanical topsoil stripping, mechanical pipe trench excavation and mechanical ground reduction were archaeologically monitored. All mechanical excavations were conducted using a flat-bladed bucket in horizontal sweeps.
- 3.3 All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts.
- 3.4 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard *pro-forma* Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.5 The project was surveyed using digital GPS survey equipment with reference to the national grid and heights in metres above Ordnance Datum.
- 3.6 A photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive which is currently held by ASE offices in Portslade to be deposited with Lewes Museum in due course. The archive will be prepared in line with the requirements of Section 8 of the WSI (BBMM 2012) and consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	6
No. of files/paper record	1
Photograph	64 digital photographs
Bulk finds	1 small box

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

- 3.7 Reporting principles were listed in the WSI (*ibid.*):

The final report shall be fully illustrated and present the results of the archaeological works, and will contain the following information:

- An introduction;
- A description of the site (location, topography and context);
- A methodology for the watching brief;
- A results section;
- A methodology for the recording;
- A summary of the history of the site;
- A selection of appropriate photographs to illustrate features described in the text;
- A combined discussion of all aspects of archaeological mitigation; and
- A fully referenced bibliography.

## 4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A straightforward stratigraphic sequence was revealed during monitoring of the groundworks.

### 4.2 The Watching Brief

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
001	Deposit	Topsoil	350mm
002	Deposit	Subsoil	100mm
003	Deposit	Alluvium	900mm
004	Deposit	Chalk	-
005	Cut	Path?	-
006	Fill	Fill of 005	150mm

4.2.1 Groundworks, including the excavation of test-pits, topsoil stripping, pipe trench excavation and ground reduction were monitored, and revealed a stratigraphic sequence consisting of a dark brown silty clay humic topsoil, context [001], which overlay an intermittent greyish brown silty clay subsoil, context [002], which for the majority of the scheme overlay 'natural' chalk, context [004].

4.2.2 However in the vicinity of the artificially straightened watercourse immediately to the north of Comps Farm, a deposit of grey alluvial clayey silt, context [003] was located between the subsoil and the surface of the chalk. This deposit extended to a maximum of 30m either side of the watercourse, thinning evenly to nothing by that point.

4.2.3 Monitoring of groundworks at the eastern end of the designated area (as part of ecological mitigation) did not exceed the depth of the topsoil, context [001].

### 4.3 The Feature

4.3.1 A single, shallow archaeological feature was encountered and recorded.

4.3.2 Gully-like feature [005] was ill-defined and ran from north-east to south-west across the monitored area to the north-west of Comps Farm. It was 460mm wide and 150mm deep, with a 'u'-shaped profile.

4.3.3 The single fill was context [006], a mid-greyish brown sandy clay, which contained a single piece of struck flint and a heavily abraded sherd of (probably) medieval pottery.

## 5.0 THE FINDS

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 An overview of the limited finds assemblage by context is given in Table 2.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	Flint	Wt (g)
006	1	4	1	14

Table 2: Quantification of finds

### 5.2 The Flint by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 A single struck flint weighing 14g was recovered during the course of the watching brief at the site. The artefact came from context [006]. It consists of a blade-like flake fragment, the proximal end of which is absent. The piece is in a relatively poor condition. Nonetheless, it exhibits parallel margins on the dorsal surface, which indicates a blade-based industry. The artefact could therefore be of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date.

### 5.3 The Post-Roman Pottery by Luke Barber

5.3.1 The monitoring recovered a single heavily abraded sherd of post-Roman pottery from the site (context [006]). This consists of a fragment from the neck of an oxidised green glazed jug tempered with moderate/abundant fine quartz and common quartz and flint grits to 1mm. A date range between c.1175 and c.1275 is considered most likely.



## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief instigated on the groundworks for the new Beddingham to Firle cycle route did not uncover evidence of further Anglo-Saxon burials to add to the corpus of those known from the immediate area. Archaeological remains were limited to a single gully of indeterminate age, and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden.
- 6.2 The single artefacts of both prehistoric and medieval date are not indicative of occupation at the site; the single flint is probably a casual loss and may have travelled some distance from its original point of deposition by plough action, and the heavily abraded pot medieval sherd was probably deposited during manuring of the local fields. Both finds are considered to be residual in nature.
- 6.3 The gully-like feature [005] corresponds quite closely with a path marked on the OS mapping (Fig. 2) and it may be that the feature is in fact the in-filled depression of the path at its southernmost extent.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank BBMM for commissioning the work, and Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council for his guidance throughout the project.

**HER Summary Form**

Site Code	BFC12					
Identification Name and Address	A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	545077 107959					
Geology	Head Deposits overlying Chalk					
ASE Project Number	5451					
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. 21.03.2012 – 04.04.2012	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard/Dan Swift					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. ?✓	Neo. ?✓	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED ✓	PM	Other		
<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the new A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway.</p> <p>A single archaeological feature was encountered. This was a shallow gully-like feature which contained a residual struck flint and a heavily abraded sherd of medieval pottery. The feature corresponds quite closely with a path marked on the OS mapping and it may be that the feature is in fact the in-filled depression of the path at its southernmost extent.</p> <p>No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.</p>						

## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-123446**

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### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief on the A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway, East Sussex
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the new A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway. A single archaeological feature was encountered. This was a shallow gully-like feature which contained a residual struck flint and a heavily abraded sherd of medieval pottery. The feature corresponds quite closely with a path marked on the OS mapping and it may be that the feature is in fact the in-filled depression of the path at its southernmost extent. No other archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 23-03-2012 End: 04-04-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	5451 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BFC12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	GULLY Uncertain
Significant Finds	FLINTWORK Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

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### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES BEDDINGHAM A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway

Postcode	BN8 6JU
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 45077 07959 50.8523497658 0.06127404533190 50 51 08 N 000 03 40 E Point

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Dan Swift
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Balfour Beatty Mott Macdonald

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Report','Unpublished Text'

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**Project**

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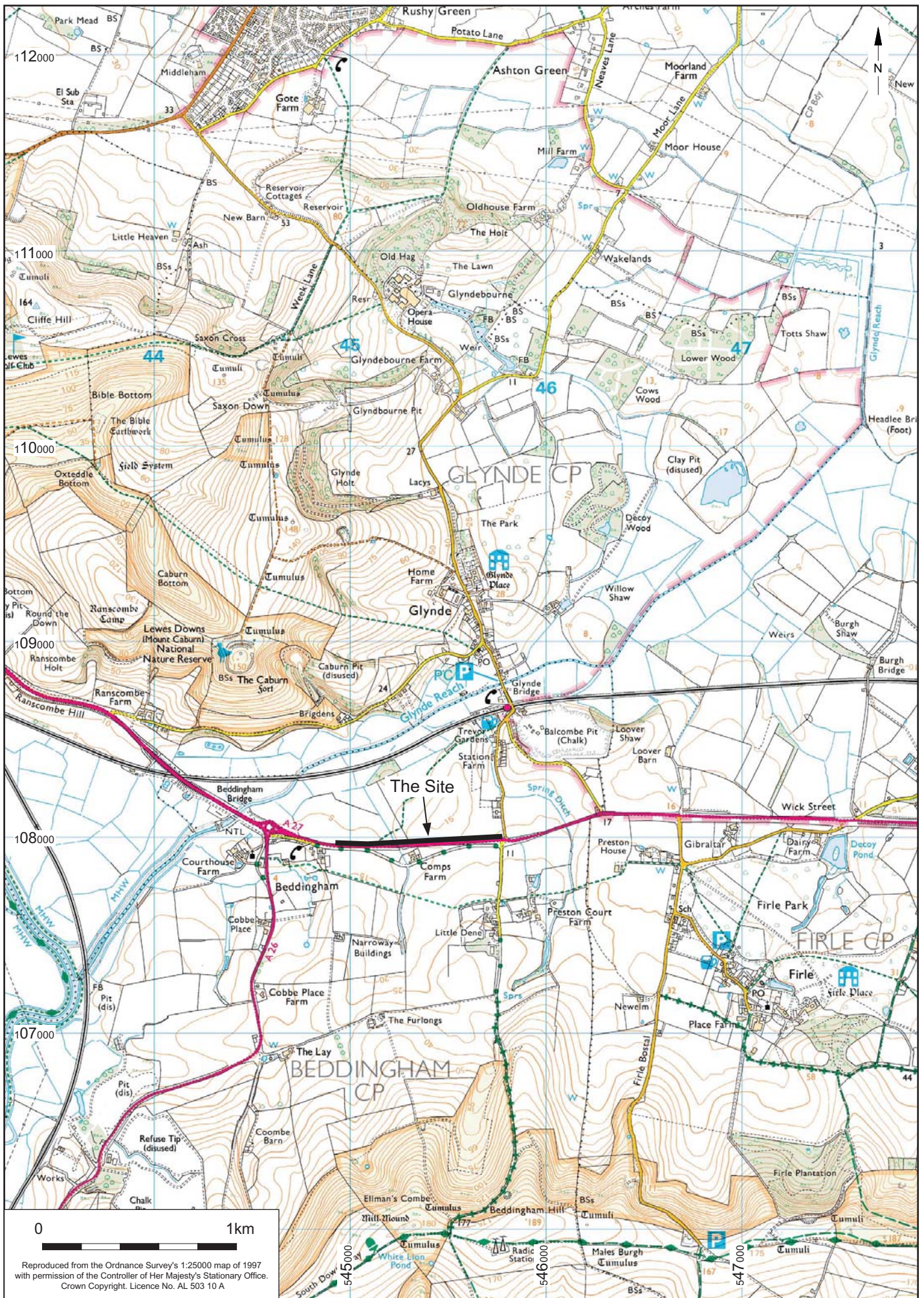
**bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief on the A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway, East Sussex
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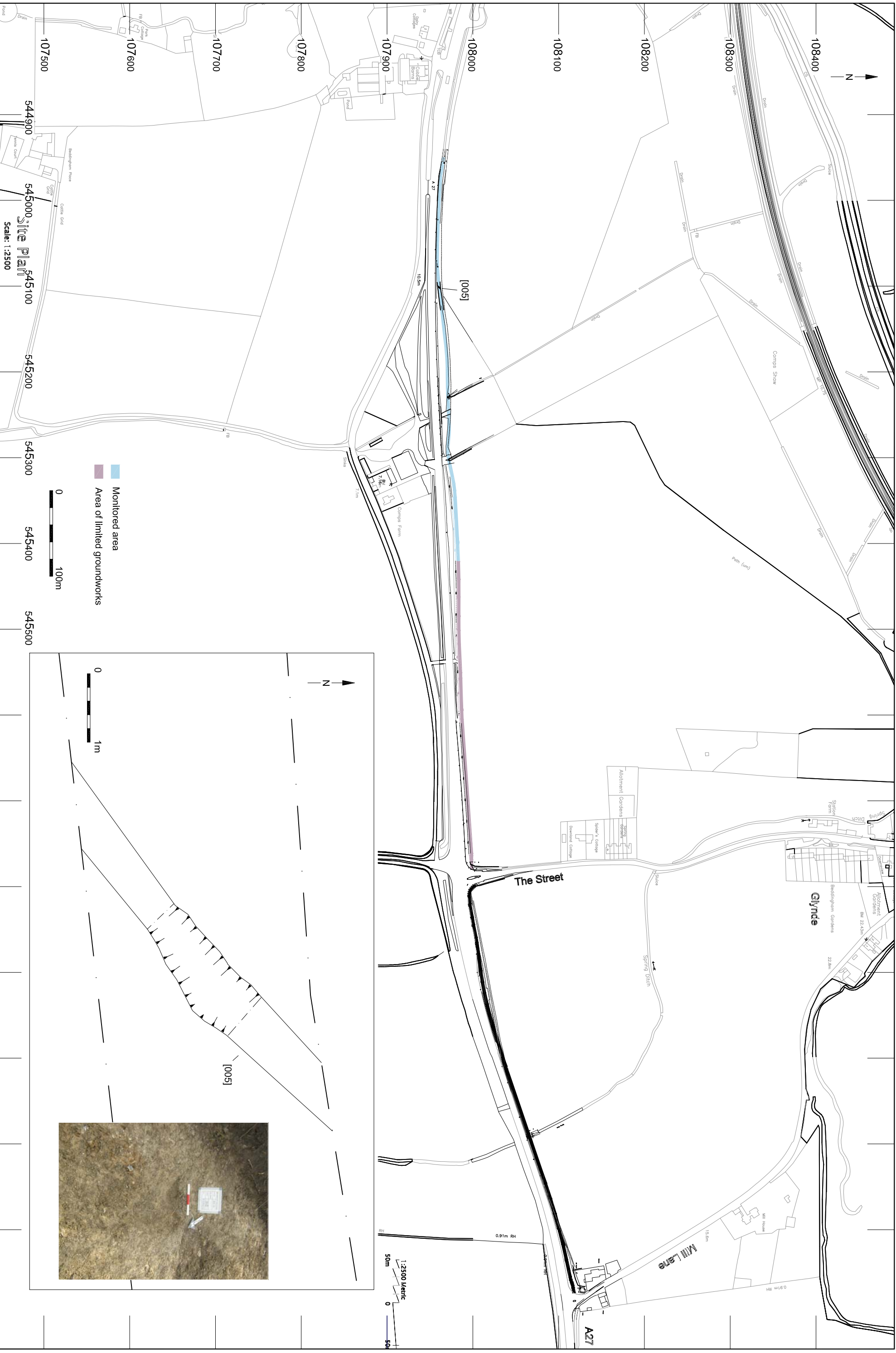
Entered by	Simon Stevens (simon.stevens@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	25 April 2012





© Archaeology South-East		A27 Beddingham to Firle Cycleway		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5451	April 2012	Site location		
Report Ref: 2012091	Drawn by: FEG			





Scale: 1:2500  
Site Plan

Monitored area  
Area of limited groundworks

0 100m

0 1m



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A27 Beddingham to File Cycleway  
Site plan showing monitored area and gully [005]

Fig. 2



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 

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