

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
No. 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex**

NGR 488604 121633

**Chichester District Council Planning Reference
MI/10/02484/EXT (extension to permission MI/07/01193/FUL)**

**ASE Project No: 5437
Site Code: HSM12**

**ASE Report No: 2012116
OASIS ID: archaeol6-125838**



**By Simon Stevens BA MIFA
With contributions by
Karine Le Hégarat, Luke Barber, Trista Clifford
and Lucy Sibun**

June 2012

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June 2012

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr Gareth O'Connell to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the erection of flats to the rear of No. 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex.

Although no significant archaeological features were encountered, a sizeable assemblage of material was recovered from the overburden, including a single struck flint and pottery spanning the late 13th/14th to 19th centuries. Other material included tile, clay tobacco pipes, glassware and animal bone.

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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 Mr Gareth O'Connell to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the erection of flats to the rear of No. 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex (NGR 488604 121633; Figure 1).

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The site is located on the western side of North Street to the rear of No. 14, at a height of c. 27m AOD. Access is gained from a narrow passageway leading from North Street. It is enclosed by high walls to the north, south and east.

1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey the site lies close to the junction of the Selham Ironshot Sandstone and the Pulborough Sandrock Sandstone deposits, with possible superficial River Terrace gravel deposits (BGS 2012).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 In consultation with James Kenny in his capacity as Chichester District Council Archaeology Officer it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief would be maintained on two test pits at Capron House. As the work being undertaken is pre-determination no formal written scheme of investigation was required. However, the work would be carried out to standard watching brief requirements and an illustrated summery report completed.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

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

To monitor intrusive works associated with the development.

In general, the aim of the watching brief is to record, interpret and report on any archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.

The watching brief will also 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.

The Midhurst Extensive Urban Survey (Harris 2010) suggests that archaeological investigations in Midhurst should address a wide range of research questions. The relevant research questions are set out below:

Pre-urban activity

RQ1: *What was the nature of the palaeo-environment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and early to mid-Anglo-Saxon human activity in the area?*

Origins

RQ2: *What evidence is there for Anglo-Saxon settlement or activity, which may have provided a focus for the siting of the later Norman castle and town?*

RQ3: *What was the road layout, how did this evolve, and how did it relate to major routes, river crossings, and a transhumant Downland-Wealden economy?*

Norman town

RQ4: *What was the extent of the town in the 11th and 12th centuries, and to what degree did it change over this period?*

RQ5: *What different zones (e.g. the market place) were there during this period, and how did they change?*

RQ6: *What evidence is there for the development of burgage plots?*

RQ9: *What evidence is there for the economy of the town, especially with regard to its Wealden hinterland?*

Later medieval town

RQ14: *How have tenements/burgage plots developed from the first built-up street frontages to the plots that survive today?*

RQ15: *What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider industry, the putative multiplication of markets, and the role of the Knights Hospitallers) were there during this period, and how did they change?'*

Post-medieval town

RQ18: *What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider industries), were there during this period, and how did they change?*

RQ19: *How were the medieval and early post-medieval buildings adapted for new functions and changing status (e.g. creation of carriageways, or subdivision of hall houses)?'*

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of two

test pits at the site in August 2012. The on-site work was undertaken by John Cook (Archaeological Surveyor). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A summarised account of the archaeological background of Midhurst is given below from various references (Magilton and Thomas 2001, Harris 2010, ASE 2012). In essence, there appears to have been little traceable human activity in the area until the foundation of the town in the Middle Ages. However, this conclusion must be tempered by the recognition that little recorded fieldwork has been undertaken in the town.
- 2.2 The fortification at St. Anne's Hill may be a Norman foundation, but dating remains somewhat vague (Magilton 2001a). However, documentary sources suggest that some form of settlement existed at Midhurst by the reign of Henry I in the early 12th century (Cooper 1868), and it is generally accepted that Midhurst originated as a Norman planned town (Magilton 2001b).
- 2.3 The new town possessed substantial defences, partly investigated at the Spread Eagle Hotel located at the junction of South Street and West Street, (SEAS 1996, Magilton 2001c). Magilton (*ibid.*) suggests part of the town's defensive ditch was dug shortly after the Conquest. A weekly market had been established in the town by 1223, and Midhurst had gained borough status by 1248, suggesting an expanding economic base (Bleach and Gardiner, 43).
- 2.4 The current site lies to the rear of the frontage of the western side of the main north-south medieval thoroughfare within regular burgage plots possibly established within the period AD1150-1349 (Harris 2010). This part of the town continued to thrive through the later medieval and post-medieval periods, and is still the town's main thoroughfare (now the part of the A272) and commercial centre. The property fronting onto North Street is a thriving bakery.
- 2.5 No large scale archaeological work has been undertaken in the core of the medieval town to date. Archaeological work in North Street has been limited to two recording projects. An evaluation at Capron House in 1996 to the north of the current site produced a small assemblage of medieval pottery (Magilton 2001d). No deposits of archaeological significance were located at the former bus station adjacent to Capron House during an evaluation and watching brief undertaken in early 2000 (ASE 2000). A watching brief during replacement of gas mains in Duck Lane and Sheep Lane was equally unproductive (ASE 2011).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Monitored groundworks consisting of the manual excavation of strip footings for the new flats. All monitoring was conducted in accordance with WSCC standards (WSCC 2007), the WSI (ASE 2012) and IfA guidelines (IfA 2001).
- 3.2 All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts.
- 3.3 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.4 A photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive.
- 3.5 The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade. The archive has been accepted for deposition at Chichester Museum. It consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	7
No. of files/paper record	1
Photograph	35 digital images
Bulk Finds	2 boxes

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Groundworks consisting of the excavation of the footings trench for the construction of the new flats were monitored on three visits to the site during April and May 2012. The trench was a maximum of 700mm in width and 1m in depth. Conditions varied from bright sunshine to heavy rain.

4.2 The Footings Trench

Context	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
001	Layer	Concrete	150mm
002	Layer	Made Ground	890mm
003	Layer	'Dirty' Natural	>130mm
004	Masonry	Wall	-
005	Fill	Pit	>900mm
006	Cut	Pit	-
007	Layer	Brick Rubble	450mm

Table 2: Recorded Contexts

- 4.2.1 The monitoring of the excavation of the footings revealed a straightforward stratigraphic sequence. In the majority of the monitored trenches there were only two distinguishable layers; the oldest deposit encountered at the site was found at the base of the footings trenches. Context [003], an orangey brown sand, appeared to be redeposited 'natural' sand as it contained occasional flecks of charcoal. It was overlain by context [002], a layer of humic dark brown garden soil which occupied much of the trench, and from which a sizeable assemblage of artefacts was recovered.
- 4.2.2 A pit [006] of uncertain dimensions was encountered close to the north-west corner of the footings trench. Late post-medieval/modern pit [006] truncated [003] and [002] and continued below the base and both baulks of the trench. The identifiable fill was [005], a mixture of garden soil and brick rubble. A stretch of brick wall ran across the trench closer to the street frontage. Masonry [004] could not be recorded in detail in the confines of the trench, but consisted of red bricks measuring 220mm by 110mm by 60mm bonded with a strong yellow sandy mortar, apparently forming part of the foundation of a recently demolished Victorian structure.
- 4.2.3 The only variation to the character of the overburden was encountered in the north-western part of the footings trench where the concrete floor of the recently demolished structure, context [001] survived. It overlay a layer of brick rubble and crushed stone make-up/levelling, context [007], which in turn overlay the garden soil [002].

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small collection of finds was recovered during the watching brief.

Context	Pottery	wt(g)	CBM	wt(g)	Bone	wt(g)	Shell	wt(g)	Flint	wt(g)	FCF	wt(g)
2	212	5410	22	1974	30	684	15	370	1	4	2	18

Context	Stone	wt(g)	Iron	wt(g)	Lead	wt(g)	Copper Alloy	wt(g)	CTP	wt(g)	Glass	wt(g)
2	6	168	6	112	3	64	1	94	18	52	17	1334

5.2 The Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 A single struck flint weighing 4g and two fragments of burnt unworked flint were recovered from context [002]. The piece of flint debitage displays moderate post-depositional edge damage. It consists of a small flake manufactured from a light grey flint but is otherwise undiagnostic.

5.3 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.3.1 The watching brief recovered a relatively large assemblage of pottery from the site. The condition of the sherds is variable, ranging from small with some signs of abrasion to large with no, or only very minor, abrasion. As such the assemblage has only been subjected to low/moderate reworking. A range of wares are represented that span the late 13th/14th to 19th centuries. All of the pottery was recovered from context [002].

5.3.2 The earliest material consists of five sherds (440g) of High Medieval pottery that can be placed within a late 13th- to 14th- century date range, though most probably relate to the second half of this range. There is a bodysherd from a vessel in a medium fired fine reduced sandy fabric (2g) but the remainder consist of well fired fine/medium sandy wares sherds, mainly from green glazed jugs.

5.3.3 There are nine sherds (120g) of Transitional pottery spanning the late 14th to mid 16th centuries. Three of these sherds are from well fired oxidised fine sand tempered jugs decorated with whites slipped lines and/or green glaze. These merge with the High Medieval jugs but their general finish suggests a later 14th- to mid 15th- century date range. The bulk of the assemblage of this period consists of hard-fired fine buff sandy wares in the Painted Ware tradition of the early/mid 15th to mid 16th century. At least two jars are present with wide flaring rims typical of the ware. There is also a green glazed handle from a possible Tudor Green cup.

5.3.4 The Early Post-Medieval period is represented by 16 sherds (440g) that span the mid 16th to mid 18th centuries. Earthenwares dominate the assemblage with seven sherds (240g) of local glazed red earthenware being present spanning the full chronological range (a bowl was the only discernable form). In addition there are six sherds (150g) of Surrey-Hampshire Border ware of mid 16th- to 17th- century date. Brown, green and yellow glazed whiteware vessels are all represented though no feature sherds are present. A single 2g sherd of tin-glazed earthenware is probably of 17th- century date. Two stoneware sherds are present: a 30g fragment from a German Frechen bottle (mid 16th to 17th century) and part of a London stoneware tankard (18th century).

5.3.5 The Late Post-Medieval period produced by far the greatest part of the assemblage. The material is summarised in Table 4. A fairly standard range of domestic wares and forms is present.

Fabric	No.	Weight	Comments
Unglazed earthenware	5	162g	Flower pots x2
Glazed red earthenware	18	758g	Bowls x3, Dish x1
Sunderland-type slipware	18	962g	Bowls/handled bowls x4
English stoneware	8	304g	Spirit bottle x1, Bottle x2, Ink bottle x2, Preserve jar x1
Nottingham stoneware	1	20g	Jar x1
Yellow ware	5	164g	Bowls x3
Creamware	6	88g	Plate x1, Food mould x1
Pearlware	23	386g	Plates x3, Mugs (banded & blue marbled) x2, Bowl x1, Jars x2
Pearlware transfer-printed	13	196g	Plates x3, Mug (Flow Blue) x1, Nursery mug x1, Saucers x1
Blue transfer-printed whiteware	43	974g	Tureen lid (willow pattern) x1, Serving dish (willow pattern) x1, Plates (willow pattern, Floral & Wild Rose) x4, Bowls/jugs x3
Black/brown transfer-printed whiteware	5	80g	Plates x2 (black floral), Bowl (brown pattern)
Purple transfer-printed whiteware	4	48g	Plate x1 (classical vase)
Plain whiteware	26	402g	Plate x1, Bowl x1, Mug x1, Preserve jar x1
Hand-decorated whiteware	3	60g	Bowl x1 (blue sponged), Jar/vase? X1 (hand painted)
English porcelain	11	216g	Mug x1, Tea cup x1, Saucer x1

Table 4: Late post-medieval pottery assemblage from context [002]

5.3.6 The assemblage suggests some activity in the later 18th to early 19th but with the bulk being of mid 19th- century date. The three makers' marks present confirm this. These include marks for Davenport (on the marbled pearlware mug), Copeland & Garrett (on a blue floral transfer-printed whiteware plate) and Samuel Moore & Co (the purple transfer-printed plate).

5.4 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 A moderate sized assemblage of tile was recovered from context [002]. Although tile is notoriously difficult to date reliably, particularly when unstratified/mixed (as is the case here) several periods appear to be represented. Three peg tile fragments (242g) measuring between 12mm and 14mm thick are crudely formed with round peg holes. They are tempered with moderate fine/medium sand and well fired. A 15th- to 16th- century date is suggested for these pieces. A further 10 fragments of peg tile (602g) are quite crudely formed (12mm to 15mm thick) with square peg holes. They are tempered with moderate fine sand and common iron oxides to 2mm and again well fired. A 16th- to early 18th- century date range is probable.
- 5.4.2 The remaining eight pieces (366g) of peg tile are of 18th- to 19th- century types, being well formed and fired and measuring between 10mm and 12mm thick. Fabrics include sparse fine sand with some iron oxide inclusions and another fabric with some coarser grits. A single unglazed floor tile fragment was recovered (770g). This measures 35mm thick and is well formed with vertical edges and is in a fabric tempered with moderate fine sand and common iron oxides. An 18th- to 19th- century date is likely.

5.5 The Clay Tobacco Pipes by Luke Barber

- 5.5.1 The 18 fragments of clay pipe, all recovered from context [002], show only slight signs of abrasion. The earliest consist of six plain stem fragments of 17th- century date (probably c. 1640 onward). There are three stem fragments likely to be of the early 18th century with the remaining fragments being of mid 18th- to 19th- century date. A bowl fragment with crude leaf decoration on the seam is likely to be of early/mid 19th- century date.

5.6 The Glass by Luke Barber

- 5.6.1 A small assemblage of glass was recovered from context [002] at the site. All shows some degree of corrosion but this is never extensive. The earliest material consists of two conjoining pieces of colourless glass from a collar of a vessel of uncertain form (4g). Judging by the general fineness of the glass and the manufacture technique a 17th- to mid 18th- century date is probable.
- 5.6.2 The remaining glass is all of 19th- century date, probably from the middle or latter part of the century. A range of vessels are represented. Drink is represented by five shards (600g) from green glass wine/beer bottles, three colourless glass faceted tumbler bases (308g) and a colourless glass faceted decanter (196g). There are also five fragments (126g) from a slightly corroded mineral water bottle in aqua coloured glass. The remaining fragments appear to relate to household/medicine bottles. These include an aqua rectangular sectioned medicine with partial embossed maker (...BYN & Co) and a similar bottle but in colourless glass. The final vessel represented appears to be a square sectioned bottle in amber coloured glass.

5.7 The Metalwork by Trista Clifford

5.7.1 Six iron nails were recovered from context [002]. Three are general purpose nails with circular or rectangular heads and rectangular sectioned shanks. Complete examples have lengths of 65mm. Three heavy duty nails have rectangular heads and sections with a maximum length of 105mm. The nails are not diagnostic of date but are likely to be late post- medieval in date.

5.7.2 The same context also produced three fragments of lead waste, a modern copper alloy ferrule and a modern stainless steel teaspoon (wt 16g). A small engraved lead alloy plaque fragment (wt 220g), also from the subsoil, possibly derives from a printers block and is of 19th-20th century date.

5.7.3 The assemblage holds no potential for further work and has been discarded

5.8 Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.8.1 Context [002] produced six fragments of 19th- century Welsh roofing slate.

5.9 The Shell by Trista Clifford

5.9.1 The watching brief produced a small assemblage of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) shell from context [002] weighing a total of 370g. The assemblage consists of seven upper and seven lower valves, a minimum number of seven individuals. Some evidence of parasitic activity and shell distortion due to overcrowding is visible.

5.10 The Animal Bone by Lucy Sibun

5.10.1 A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from the overburden [002]. This has been quantified as Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) in the table below. Fragment counts include those recorded as cattle and sheep-sized.

SPECIES	NISP (MNI)
Cattle	11 (1)
Sheep	8 (2)
Pig	5 (3)
Horse	1
Rabbit	4 (1)
<i>Total</i>	29

Table 5: Animal Bone Quantification

5.10.2 Cattle, sheep and pig fragments include long bones, metapodials, cranial fragments and teeth. A single fragment of horse tibia was identified as well as four long bones from a rabbit. The assemblage, which includes some evidence for charring on cattle long bone fragments, butchery on two pig femurs and a sheep scapula and carnivorous gnawing to a sheep metapodial, is suggestive of domestic waste.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for the erection of the flats to the rear of No. 14 North Street resulted in the recovery of a large assemblage of artefacts. Although the scope of the monitored work did not allow the identification and recording of archaeological features of any antiquity, the recovered pottery assemblage includes material dating as far back as the 13th century, and possibly even into prehistory, although the flintwork assemblage is too limited to allow meaningful interpretation.
- 6.2 Given the propensity of medieval town dwellers to deposit their domestic refuse in the plots to the rear of their dwellings (Carver 1987, 59), in towns with a similar paucity of other published pottery sequences, unstratified assemblages have been used to draw tentative conclusions concerning the morphology of the settlement (e.g. in Horsham; Stevens 2008). Therefore, the presence of 13th- and 14th-century pottery has implications for the understanding of the development of the town, and neatly dovetails with Harris's dating of the establishment of the plots in this part of Midhurst within the timeframe AD1150-1349.
- 6.3 Clearly it is more difficult to address some of the other detailed research aims owing to the nature of the archaeological work at the current site. For instance, no 'wasters' were recovered which could have allowed confirmation of the presence of a proposed local medieval pottery industry (Magilton and Spencer 2001, 45). Similarly the early post-medieval assemblage cannot, on its own, address questions of social differentiation in the town, however it clearly demonstrates continuing deposition of material, and hence arguably occupation of the street frontage through the 15th 16th and 17th centuries.
- 6.4 Likewise, the assemblage of later post-medieval material is worthy of note, in the light of a recent call for more in depth consideration of such assemblages from sites in Sussex (Barber 2011, 193). Larger stratified assemblages have been recovered and studied from other towns such as Shoreham (the Ropetackle site; Stevens 2011).
- 6.5 Despite the dearth of archaeological features encountered at the site, the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks has expanded the corpus of medieval and post-medieval material recovered from archaeological work in Midhurst.

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	HSM12					
Identification Name and Address	Rear of No. 14 North Street, Midhurst					
County, District &/or Borough	Chichester District, West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	488604 121633					
Geology	Sandstone					
ASE Project Number	5437					
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. 02.04.2012 – 11.05.2012	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr Gareth O'Connell					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin/Dan Swift					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED ✓	PM ✓	Other		
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr Gareth O'Connell to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the erection of flats to the rear of No. 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex.</i></p> <p><i>Although no significant archaeological features were encountered, a sizeable assemblage of material was recovered from the overburden, including a single struck flint and pottery spanning the late 13th/14th to 19th centuries. Other material included tile, clay tobacco pipes, glassware and animal bone.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-125838

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at No. 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr Gareth O'Connell to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the erection of flats to the rear of 14 North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex. A sizeable assemblage of material was recovered from the overburden, including a single struck flint and pottery spanning the late 13th/14th to 19th centuries. Other material included tile, clay tobacco pipes, glassware and animal bone.
Project dates	Start: 02-04-2012 End: 11-05-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	5437 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	HSM12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	MI/10/02484/EXT - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER MIDHURST No. 14 North Street
Postcode	GU29 9DJ

Study area	70.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 88604 21633 50 0 50 59 12 N 000 44 15 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 28.00m Max: 29.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Chichester District Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Dan Swift
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Gareth O'Connell

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Chichester Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal","other"
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Correspondence","Miscellaneous Material","Plan","Report","Survey ","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

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Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.

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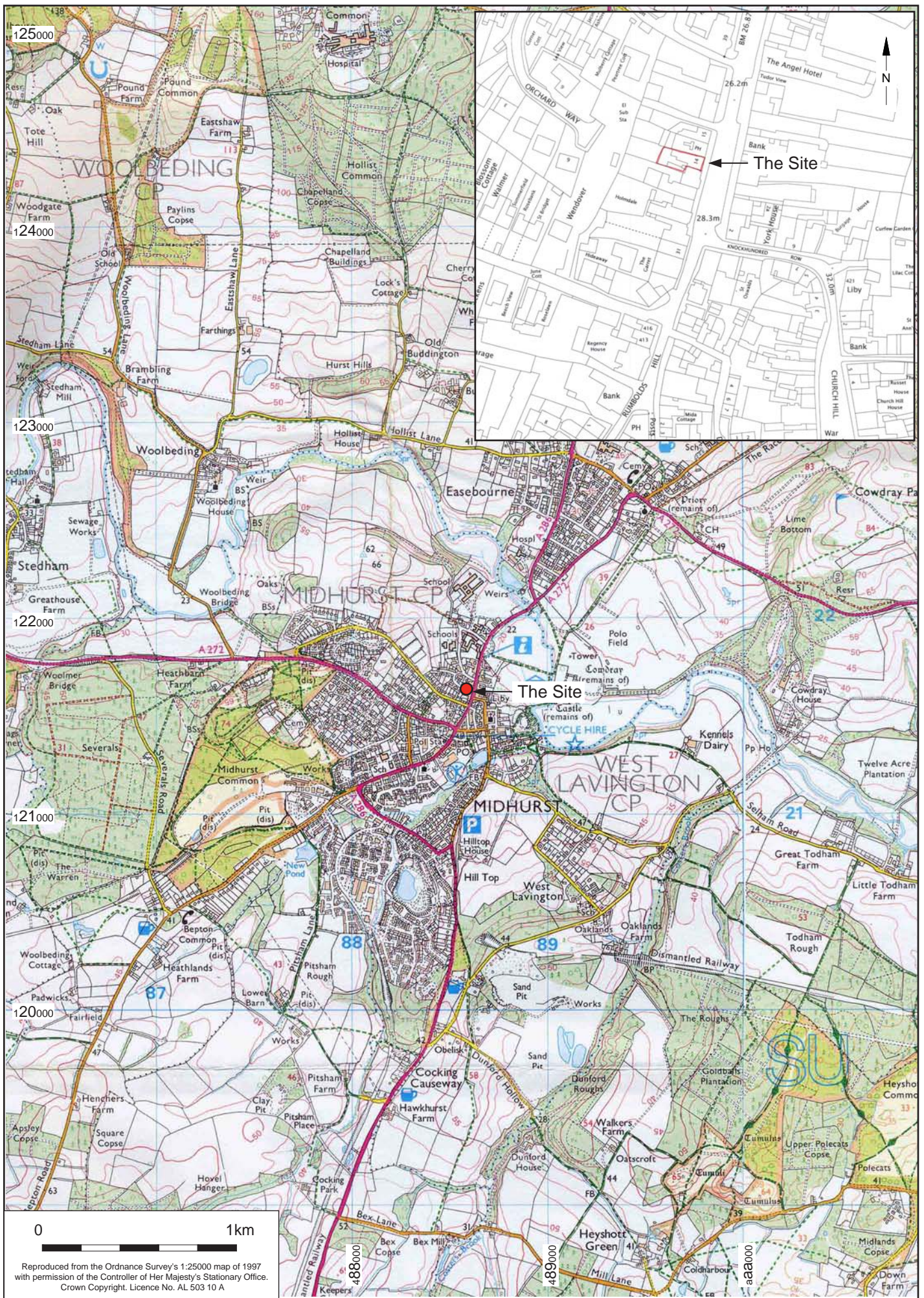
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Project Ref: 5437	May 2012	Site location	
Report Ref: 2012116	Drawn by: AR		

Fig. 1



Archaeology South-East		14 High Street, Midhurst	Fig. 2
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