

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Land to rear of 95 London Road
Burgess Hill, West Sussex**

**NGR 530760 119752
(TQ 307 197)**

**MSDC 11/04013/FUL
APP/D3830/A/12/2179133**

**ASE Report No: 2013222
ASE Project No: 5360**

**Site Code: LRB 12
OASIS id: archaeol6-159115**



By Kathryn Grant BA MSc AIFA

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September 2013

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Michael Hill to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex during groundwork associated with the development of land to the rear of 95, London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex. The watching brief was carried out over two stages: two site visits were made in July 2012, followed by two further site visits in August 2013.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds and no evidence for any recent structures were revealed during the archaeological watching brief. At the time of the watching brief therefore, the site was undeveloped. A simple non-archaeological sequence was revealed during all visits to the site. Natural Weald Clay was sealed by intact subsoil and garden soil horizons suggesting that the site was, until the development, untruncated. Modern finds observed within the garden soil horizon suggest that the site had been used for the dumping of domestic refuse in the recent past.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), University College London (UCL), was commissioned by Michael Hill during groundwork associated with the development of land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 530760 119752 and its location is shown on Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the latest data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2013), the site lies on deposits of the Weald Clay Formation.

1.2.2 The site lies on a plot of vacant land which slopes up to the south and is surrounded on all sides by residential development.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted for the erection of four three-bed terraced houses on the site (Planning references: MSDC 11/04013/FUL; APP/D3830/A/12/2179133; Figure 2). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, Condition 8 of the appeal decision stated that:

“The developer shall arrange for an archaeological organisation or appropriately qualified archaeologists to observe the excavations and record archaeological evidence that may be uncovered as a result of the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any building works.”

1.3.2 Accordingly, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological watching brief was prepared by Archaeology South East (ASE 2013a) with reference to the WSCC Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions (version 2b), henceforth “the Standard Conditions” (WSCC 2007). This was submitted to Mid Sussex District Council for approval in advance of development. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with these documents (unless otherwise specified below), and the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were, in summary, to ascertain:

- a) whether archaeological remains survive within the site
- b) the character date and quality of the archaeological remains and deposits
- c) how they might be affected by the development of the site
- d) whether particularly important remains should be preserved *in situ*

1.4.2 With reference to the Burgess Hill Historic Character Assessment Report (Harris 2005) the following specific Research Framework query was to be considered:

RQ1: What was the nature of the palaeoenvironment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and medieval human activity in the area?

1.4.3 The main objective of the work is to make public the results of the work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken in two stages. The initial two site visits were carried out by Dan Swift and Gary Webster in July 2012, followed by two further site visits in August 2013 by Diccon Hart.

1.5.2 The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation work).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Little is known of the history and archaeology of Burgess Hill prior to the development of the modern town during the 19th century. Generally speaking, activity of prehistoric, Roman or medieval date in the vicinity of Burgess Hill is not considered to be intensive.
- 2.2 Fieldwork at Maltings Farm to the southwest of the site recovered an assemblage of struck flint flakes ranging in date from Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age, as well as several Early Bronze Age tree throws indicative of Woodland clearance and a small assemblage of Saxon and medieval pottery (Butler 1998). More recently, work at an adjacent site on Jane Murray Way identified several features of Late Iron Age/Romano-British date, including part of a possible roundhouse and several ditches (ASE 2013b). Watching brief and excavation at Innovation Drive to the west of Burgess Hill also recovered a significant assemblage of struck flint, predominantly of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date but also including some material of Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic date (Sawyer 1997). To the east of Burgess Hill, fragments of butchered animal bone and a small scatter of worked flints of a probable Mesolithic date were recovered during a recent watching brief to the at Birchwood Grove School (ASE 2008a).
- 2.3 Further afield, occupation of Late Iron Age/Romano-British date has also been identified at Theobolds Lane to the northeast of Burgess Hill, which also produced evidence of medieval activity related to the medieval moated site of Theobolds Farm (ASE 2008b). Southwest of Burgess Hill, work at Folders Farm Lane has identified a variety of features considered to represent post-medieval inclosure and clearance of Frekeburgh Wood, although the presence of residual prehistoric pottery suggests some prehistoric activity in the vicinity.
- 2.4 Roman activity has also been identified on the western outskirts of the town, as attested by excavations on the site of Edwards High Vacuum factory (ASE 1996) and the presence of the London to Brighton Roman road.
- 2.5 According to the Burgess Hill Historic Character Assessment Report (Harris 2005), the site lies within Historic Urban Character Area (HUCA) 5 – Fairfield, centred on the former Fairfield, the site of an annual summer fair from 1342 until the 19th century. The area has since been substantially redeveloped and no listed buildings exist within HUCA 5. This development, in conjunction with the absence of any known non-urban archaeological remains within HUCA 5 lead Harris to suggest limited archaeological potential for HUCA 5, with a Historic Environment Value (HEV) of 2. Despite this, the potential for archaeological remains associated with the medieval and post-medieval fair may be present on the site (Mills *pers. comm.*).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The complete adopted methodology may be found in the WSI (ASE 2013). This section gives a brief précis of the detail within the WSI.
- 3.1.2 The groundwork included ground reduction and levelling activity and the machine-excavation of footing trenches for the foundations of the proposed buildings.
- 3.1.3 The groundwork was monitored to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the intrusive works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. Particular attention was made to the extent, character, depth, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.1.4 During the monitored 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 2008)
- 3.1.5 A photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive.

3.2 The Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, East Sussex. The archive will be offered to a local museum and will be deposited on completion of all fieldwork and reporting. No accession number has been assigned to this archive in advance of deposition.
- 3.2.2 The contents of the site archive are summarised below:

Number of Contexts	3 contexts
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Photographs	c.40

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 2012 Archaeological Work

4.1.1 This stage of work involved archaeological monitoring of machine removal of overburden and levelling on the site. Modern contamination within the deposits was evident. The ground reduction was not of sufficient depth to impact the natural substrate horizon.

4.1.2 At this stage, a test pit was also excavated, under archaeological supervision, in the centre of the site to determine the thickness of the overburden. The test pit ceased at a depth of 300mm below ground level where a sterile silty clay subsoil layer (see description in 4.2.3) was encountered.

4.2 2013 Archaeological Work

4.2.1 The groundwork carried out in August 2013 consisted of the excavation of footing trenches for the foundations of the new buildings. All of the main external and dividing foundation trenches (c.0.6m wide) were monitored to depths of between 0.8 and 2m. The excavation of a foundation trench for a small retaining wall on an east-west orientation to the south of the new buildings was also monitored.

4.2.2 A total of three contexts were revealed during these works.

Context Number	Context Type	Context Description	Deposit Thickness Max
001	Deposit	Topsoil	400mm
002	Deposit	Subsoil	280mm
003	Deposit	Natural Geology	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.2.3 The main stratigraphy of the site consisted of topsoil/garden soil, over subsoil, which in turn was overlying natural geology. Natural yellow Weald Clay geology [003] was recorded c.300-640mm below ground level. This was overlain by mid yellowish brown firm silty clay subsoil [002], which was sealed by dark grey brown firm silty clay topsoil [001].

4.2.4 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed during the monitored groundwork.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological features, deposits or finds and no evidence for any recent structures were revealed during the archaeological watching brief. At the time of the watching brief therefore, the site was undeveloped.
- 5.2 A simple non-archaeological sequence was revealed during all visits to the site. Natural Weald Clay was sealed by intact subsoil and garden soil horizons suggesting that the site was, until the development, untruncated.
- 5.3 Modern finds observed within the garden soil horizon suggest that the site had been used for the dumping of domestic refuse in the recent past.

Bibliography

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Michael Hill for commissioning the archaeological work. The guidance and advice of Mid Sussex District Council is also gratefully acknowledged.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	LRB 12					
Identification Name and Address	Land to rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill					
County, District and/or Borough	West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	530760 119752 (TQ 307 197)					
Geology	Weald Clay Formation					
Arch. South-East Project Number	5360					
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. 10/07/2012 – 22/08/2013	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Michael Hill					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Diccon Hart, Dan Swift and Gary Webster					
Period Summary	Palaeo. None	Meso. None	Neo. None	BA None	IA None	RB None
	AS None	MED None	PM None	Other NONE		
Summary						
<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Michael Hill to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex during groundwork associated with the development of land to the rear of 95, London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex. The watching brief was carried out over two stages: two site visits were made in July 2012, followed by two further site visits in August 2013.</p> <p>No archaeological features, deposits or finds and no evidence for any recent structures were revealed during the archaeological watching brief. At the time of the watching brief therefore, the site was undeveloped. A simple non-archaeological sequence was revealed during all visits to the site. Natural Weald Clay was sealed by intact subsoil and garden soil horizons suggesting that the site was, until the development, untruncated. Modern finds observed within the garden soil horizon suggest that the site had been used for the dumping of domestic refuse in the recent past.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-159115

Project details

Project name	95 London Road, Burgess Hill
Short description of the project	<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Michael Hill to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex during groundwork associated with the development of land to the rear of 95, London Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex. The watching brief was carried out over two stages: two site visits were made in July 2012, followed by two further site visits in August 2013.</p> <p>No archaeological features, deposits or finds and no evidence for any recent structures were revealed during the archaeological watching brief. At the time of the watching brief therefore, the site was undeveloped. A simple non-archaeological sequence was revealed during all visits to the site. Natural Weald Clay was sealed by intact subsoil and garden soil horizons suggesting that the site was, until the development, untruncated. Modern finds observed within the garden soil horizon suggest that the site had been used for the dumping of domestic refuse in the recent past.</p>
Project dates	Start: 10-07-2012 End: 22-08-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LRB 12 - Sitecode
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX MID SUSSEX BURGESS HILL Land to rear of 95 London Road
Postcode	RH15 8NE
Site coordinates	TQ 307 197 50 0 50 57 40 N 000 08 19 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Other
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Neil Griffin
Project supervisor Kathryn Grant
Type of sponsor/funding body Private

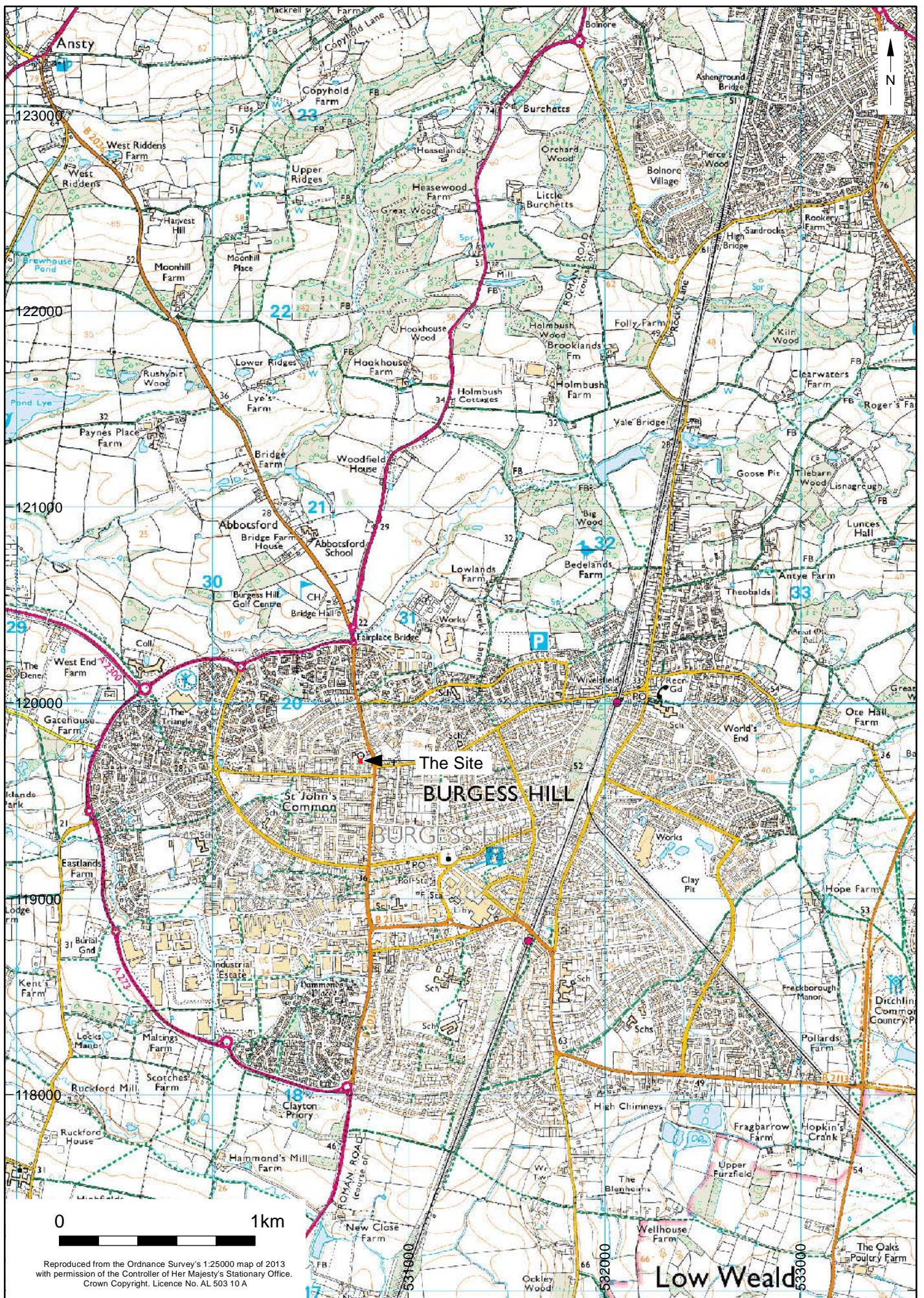
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation', ' Research', ' General Notes", "Photograph", "Report", "Unpublished Text"

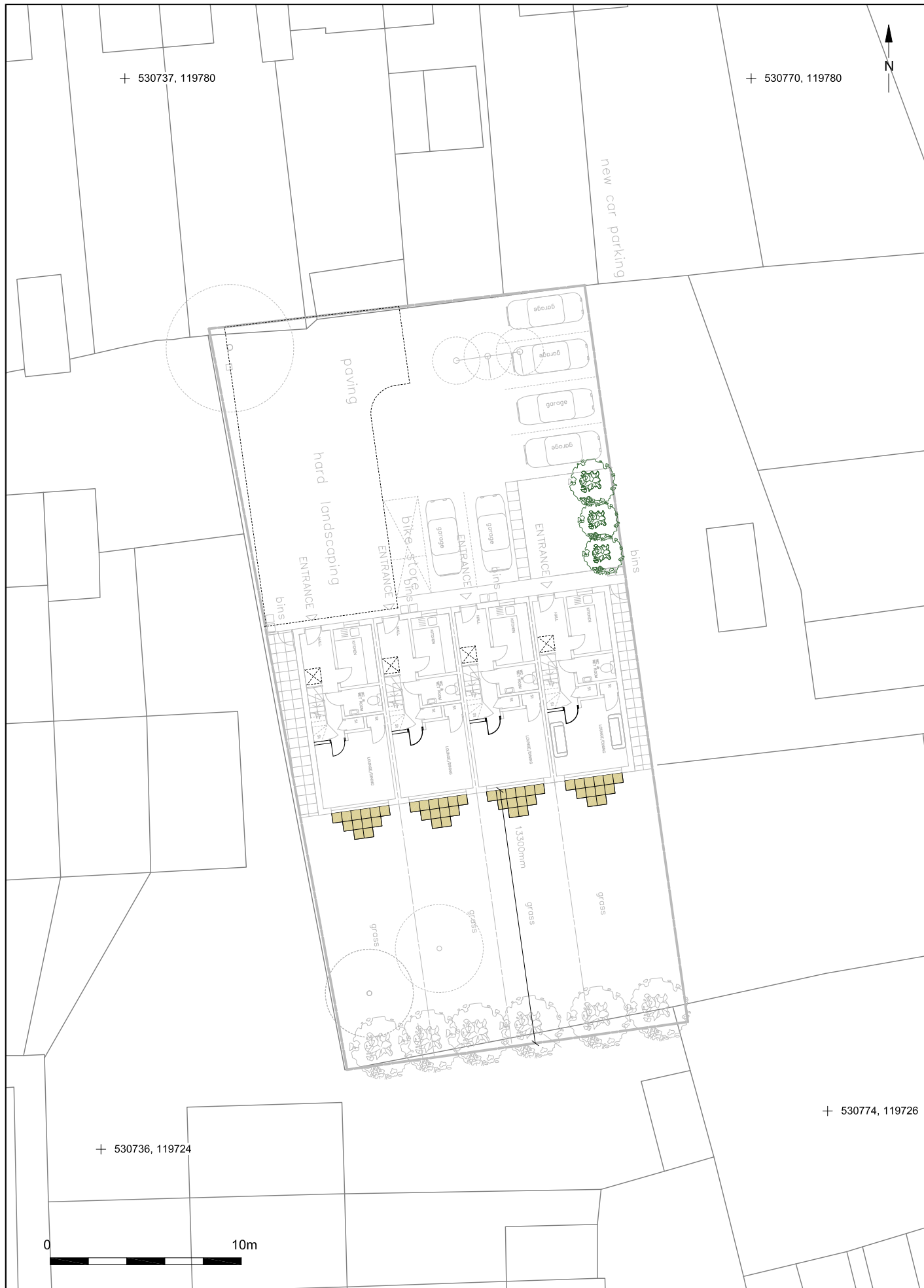
Project bibliography 1

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© Archaeology South-East		Land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5360	Sept 2013	Site location	
Report Ref: 2013222	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		Land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 5360	Sept 2013	Proposed development	
Report Ref: 2013222	Drawn by: FEG		



© Archaeology South-East		Land to the rear of 95 London Road, Burgess Hill	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 5360	Sept 2013	Monitored Groundwork	
Report Ref: 2013222	Drawn by: FEG		

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