

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land off Mortimer  
Street, Worthing, West Sussex.**

**(NGR 514402 102952)**

**By**

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*(with a contribution by Charlotte Thompson)*

**Project No. 2466**

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## ***Archaeology South-East***

*Archaeology South-East is a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.*

*UCL Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, Archaeology South-East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.*

*Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England, Archaeology South-East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.*

*Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.*

*Abstract*

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land off Mortimer Street, to the rear of St Andrews Court, Worthing, West Sussex. Planning permission had been granted for the construction of three town houses, with associated parking and works to the boundary walls (Planning reference: WB/05/0695/FULL). Three site visits were made on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006. One site visit was to monitor the ground reduction in advance of the construction of a car park. The second two site visits were made to monitor the excavation of wall footing trenches. These were excavated in a pattern across the site reaching depths of up to 2m below the current ground surface. The average depth of the excavation beneath the current surface was c. 1m. No finds or features of archaeological significance were revealed.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), (a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit), was commissioned by M & S Developments to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with the construction of a proposed new housing development on land to the rear of St Andrews Court, Victoria Road and off Mortimer Street, Worthing, West Sussex (NGR 514402 102952) (Fig. 1).

1.2 An application for planning permission for the construction of new housing had been submitted by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) (Planning Reference: WB/05/0695/FULL). Following consultations with the Archaeology Service of the County Council, it was recommended that planning permission for these proposals should be subject to a planning condition requiring a programme of archaeological work (draft condition No. 8)

*'No development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with the written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the County Planning Authority.'*

1.3 Mark Taylor (WSCC) decided that an archaeological watching brief would be the appropriate response to assess the archaeological potential of the site.

1.4 A Method Statement outlining the requirements was prepared by Jon Sygrave of ASE (Sygrave, 2006), and was submitted and duly approved by Mark Taylor of WSCC prior to the archaeological works taking place. The Method Statement indicated the possibility that the construction plans may need to be altered to preserve any potential remains *in situ*.

1.5 The site is within the centre of the historic core of Worthing. Discoveries have been made of Roman and medieval artefacts. The site is bounded on all sides by a wall (probably Victorian in origin). The Church of St Andrew lies to the north. The site is accessed via Mortimer Street immediately to the west. A narrow path lies to the south and gardens surround the rest of the site (Fig. 1). The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey, (Sheet 318/333, 1:50,000 scale) is Brickearth.

1.6 The fieldwork was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni (Field Officer) on 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Projects Manager).

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The County Sites and Monuments Record held by West Sussex County Council lists the following known archaeological remains within a 1km radius of the site.

No	SMR Number	NGR	Description
1	3317 - MWS371	TQ 14400 03337	Windmill (post mill) shown at Worthing by the OS in 1813 and 1875.
2	3231 - MWS305	TQ 14200 02780	Roman potsherds found in 1960 on the site of a new block of flats known as Woburn Court.
3	3232 - MWS306	TQ 14790 02610	While laying a surface water sewer along the W side of Liverpool Road, workmen discovered a few sherds of Roman pottery.
4	3234 - MWS308	TQ 14310 02870	Coins of Diocletian and Constantine found in 1826-8 when the foundations for Park Crescent were made.
5	3243 - MWS314	TQ 14420 02820	Probable EBA flint found.
6	3247 - MWS318	TQ 14900 02610	R-B ditch containing grain and pottery found in 1967 on the site of Barclay's Bank, South Street.
7	3254 - MWS324	TQ 14380 03340	Coin of Domitian found in garden of 9 Cross Street.
8	3301 - MWS360	TQ 14400 02700	Roman and Medieval (see 3302) pottery found.
9	3303 - MWS361	TQ 14600 02600	Roman (see 3304) and Medieval pottery found.
10	4321 - MWS3616	TQ 14759 02902	Archaeologically Sensitive Area. Numerous finds over the past 50 years.
11	3230 - MWS304	TQ 14200 02850	Hundreds of C1 and C2 potsherds including jugs, vases, dishes and a clay oven ware found by workmen when laying a sewer for a block of flats in Wykeham Road.
12	3302 - MWS364	TQ 14400 02700	Roman (see 3301) and Medieval pottery found.
13	7860 - MWS7953	TQ 14367 02812	Triumphal arch at the entrance to Park Crescent, with bearded heads and girls' heads as terms stamped CROGGON.
14	5843 - MWS4596	TQ 14650 03300	A chance find of a polished axes that had been rechipped recorded by J P Gardiner in her thesis
15	6121 - MWS4785	TQ 143 024	Brickworks (post Medieval - 1800 AD to 1899 AD).

16	6125 - MWS4789	TQ 14600 02500	Brickworks (Post Medieval - 1800 AD to 1899 AD).
17	7285 - MWS7348	TQ 14762 02470	Two flint walls probably relating to the original Inn and stables at the site were exposed, as well as some more modern brick build features.
18	5581 - MWS7349	TQ 14699 02872	A large number of post medieval walls, pits, ditches, pottery and metal finds were exposed during an evaluation.
19	7303 - MWS7369	TQ 14133 02886	No significant archaeological features were revealed; a small quantity of probable residual material was recovered, including medieval pottery and prehistoric flint.
20	7329 - MWS7397	TQ 14825 02846	One trench was mechanically excavated, revealing an extensive prehistoric feature together with modern structures related to the demolished church hall. The feature which produced prehistoric flint, small quantities of fire-cracked flint and a small assemblage of probable BA pottery, perhaps represented a natural channel or degraded ditch.
21	7479 - MWS7552	TQ 14789 02882	A wattle and daub hut was found during a watching Brief between the old and new Library in Worthing.
22	3304 - MWS362	TQ 14600 02600	Roman and medieval (see 3303) pottery found.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

3.1 It was stated in the Method Statement (Sygrave, 2006) that the works to be examined included:

- 1) Breaking out the existing concrete slabs or foundation trenches
- 2) Excavation of any construction or service trenching
- 3) All general ground reduction associated with the development.

3.2 A series of wall footing trenches were excavated across the site. The trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision. They were cut by a 7 ton 360° tracked excavator fitted with a c. 600mm wide toothless ditching bucket. All the trenches were c. 600mm in width and up to a maximum of 2m in depth beneath the current ground surface. The average depth of the trenches

was *c.* 1m.

- 3.3 The excavations undertaken by the groundwork contractors were monitored at all times by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The monitoring included a *c.* 100mm strip over the area of a temporary car park. The main ground works were the excavation of wall footing trenches.
- 3.4 Monitoring was to take place until/unless it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains are present.
- 3.5 The trenches were excavated simultaneously and were all connected to each other.
- 3.6 The spoil from the excavations were inspected by the archaeologist to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. Also a metal detector was used to scan spoil heaps.
- 3.7 All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the Method Statement.
- 3.8 A full photographic record (black and white and colour slide) of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable museum in due.
- 3.9 There were no contexts/deposits thought suitable for environmental samples.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 The Ground Reduction in advance of the car park construction (Fig 2)**

- 4.1.1 The excavation in advance of the car park involved a *c.* 100mm ground reduction. This excavation was within one deposit (Context **1**). This was a dark greyish brown, silty clay of a friable consistency. It contained modern finds throughout and was interpreted as a modern topsoil.
- 4.1.2 No archaeological features or finds were found in this area of the site.

### **4.2 The Wall Footing Trenches (Fig 2)**

- 4.2.1 There were nine conjoining wall footing trenches excavated in total (Fig 2). The stratigraphy in all of the trenches was very similar and simple. From latest to earliest it comprised the following Contexts: Context (**1**), a *c.* 350mm thick



topsoil deposit. This is described above (4.1.1). Directly beneath this deposit was Context (2), a c. 350-400mm thick layer of subsoil, light orange brown in colour of a silty clay texture and firm consistency. There were no finds from this layer. The natural Brickearth (Context 3) was located directly beneath Context (2). This was a light brownish orange Brickearth.

4.2.2 No archaeological features were cutting into this deposit.

## **5.0 The Finds and Environmental Samples** by Charlotte Thompson

5.1 No finds or ecofacts were recovered from this watching brief.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The archaeological evaluation proved that there were no archaeological feature or finds on this development site. The stratigraphy proved that the land was probably once agricultural land and the depths and consistency of the overburden would support this.

6.2 The site is set within a walled enclosure. This is probably why it has escaped development in the past. For at least the last 20 years the site has been used as an allotment/orchard. This may have also been the case as far back as the Victorian period.

6.3 The watching brief has shown that the cemetery from the nearby Church of St Andrew did not extend into this area. This may help to ascertain the extent of the original graveyard.

6.4 The archaeological evaluation of the site by mechanically excavated trenches was prudent given the archaeological sensitivity of the area, especially the proximity of the Church of St Andrew.

## **7.0 REFERENCES**

Sygrave J. 2006. *Mortimer Street, Worthing, West Sussex. Archaeological Watching Brief; Method Statement*. ASE Document 2466.

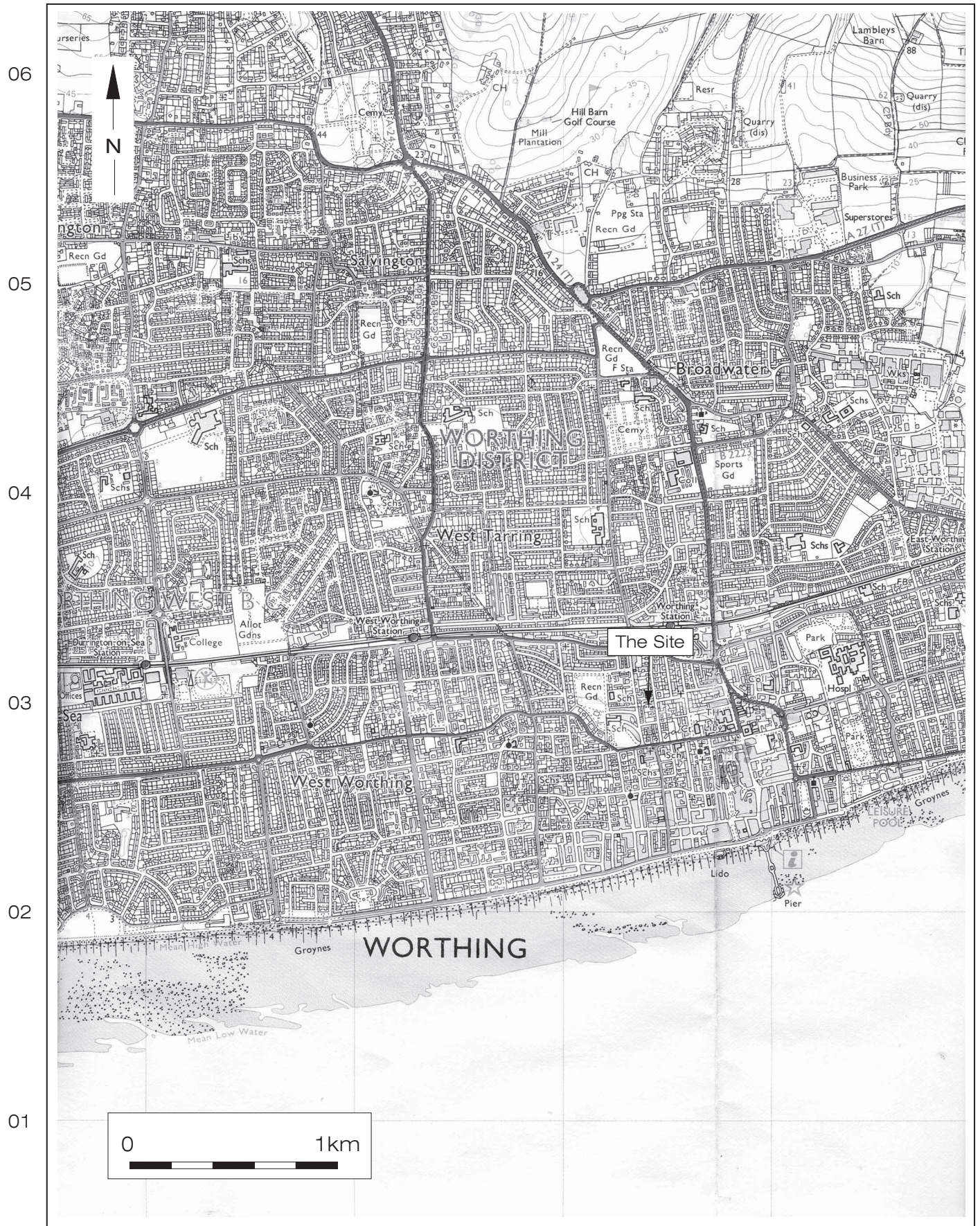
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The co-operation and assistance of Mark Taylor & John Mills of West Sussex County Council and also Keith Watson for supplying the SMR data. The co-operation of staff at the site is also gratefully acknowledged.

**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	MOR 06					
Identification Name and Address	Mortimer Street, Worthing, West Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	County of West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	(TQ 14402 02952)					
Geology	Brickearth					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2466					
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. ✓ 5 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	Other		
Sponsor/Client	M & S Developments					
Project Manager(s)	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Victorian?		
<p><i>100 word summary</i></p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land off Mortimer Street, to the rear of St Andrews Court, Worthing, West Sussex. Planning permission had been granted for the construction of three town houses, with associated parking and works to the boundary walls (Planning reference: WB/05/0695/FULL). Three site visits were made on the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> &amp; 9<sup>th</sup> May 2006. One site visit was to monitor the ground reduction in advance of the construction of a car park. The second two site visits were made to monitor the excavation of wall footing trenches. These were excavated in a pattern across the site reaching depths of up to 2m below the current ground surface. However, the average depth of the excavation beneath the current surface was c. 1m. No finds or features of archaeological significance were revealed.</i></p>						





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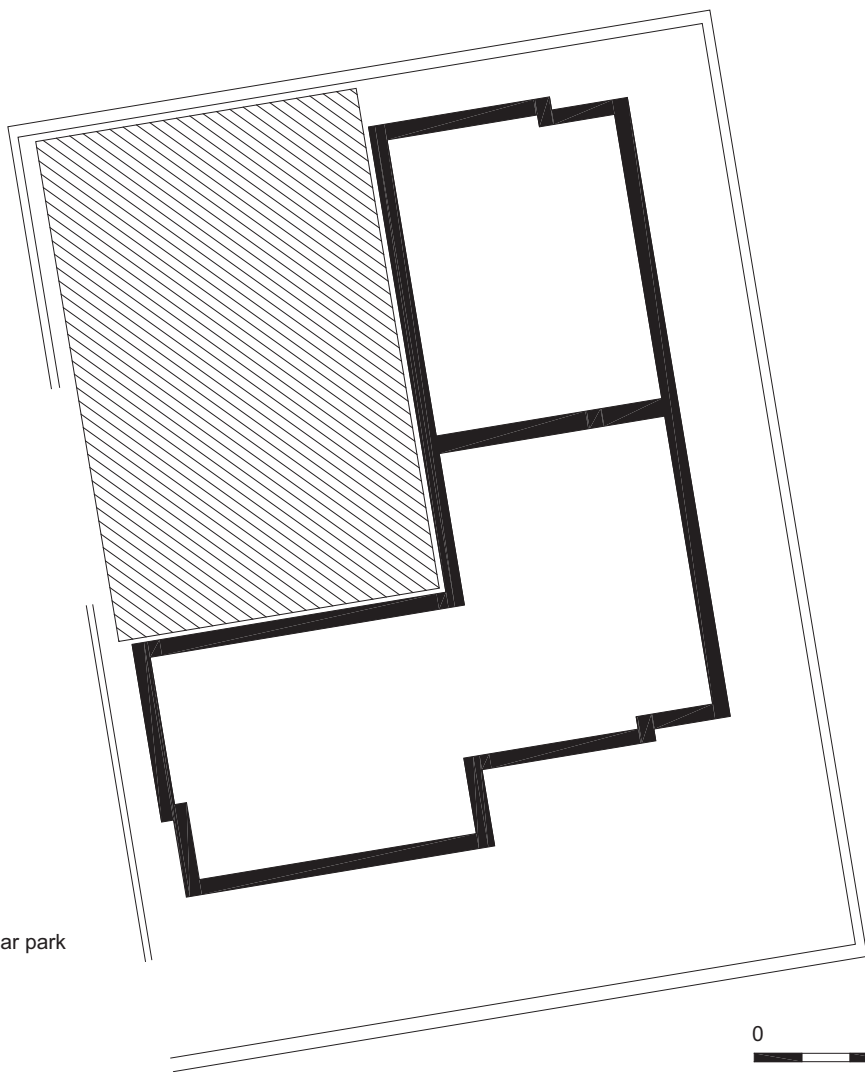
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© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Mortimer Street, Worthing		Fig. 1
Ref: 2466	April 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

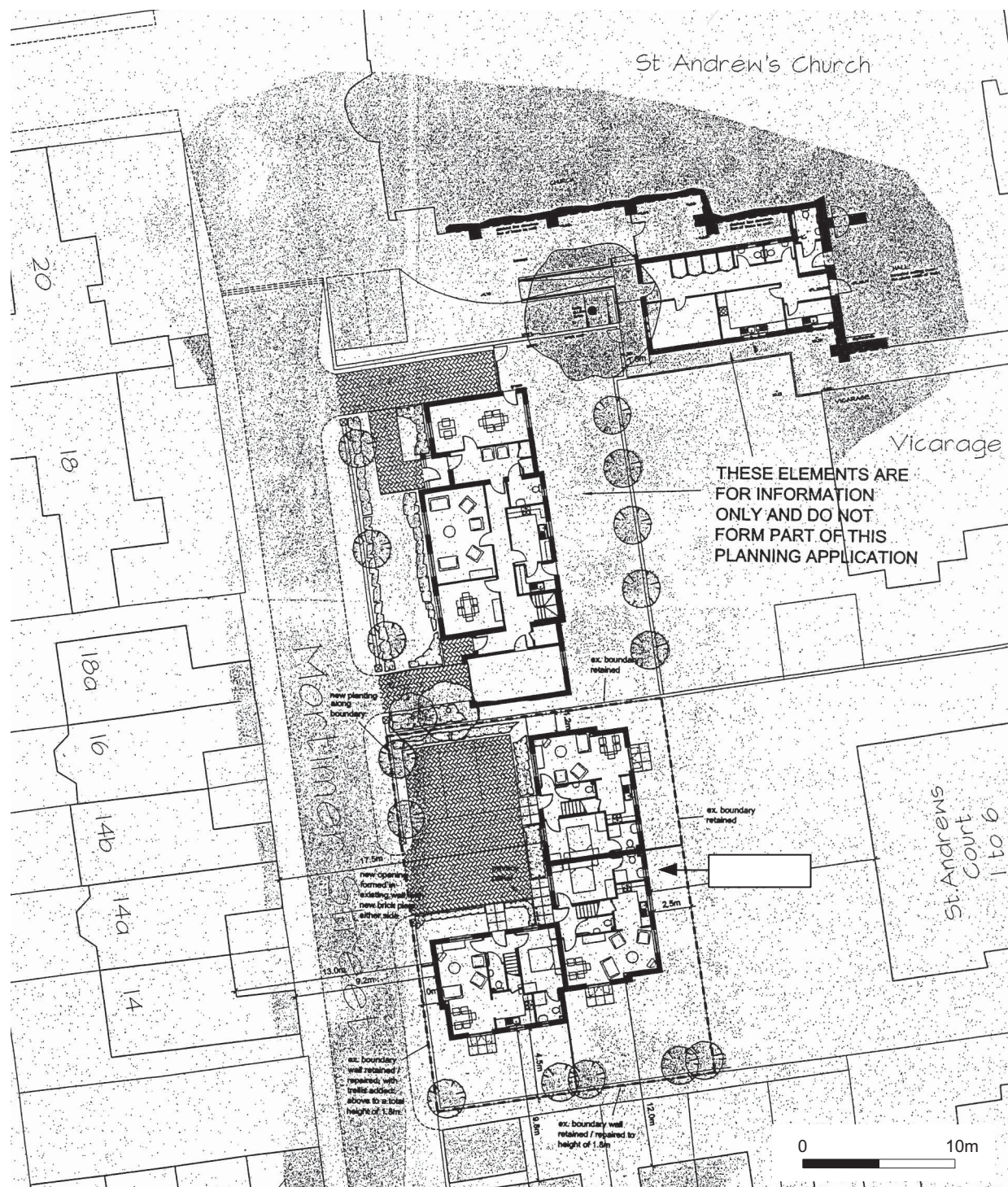
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 Monitored ground reduction for car park  
 Monitored foundation trenches

0 5m



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			Mortimer Street, Worthing	Fig. 2
Ref: 2466	June 2006	Drawn by: FEG	Monitored Groundworks	