

Archaeological Evaluation Report Godwins Nursery, Old Horsham Road, Beare Green, Surrey

NGR 517490 143893

Mole Valley District Council Planning Reference No. MO/2013/0326/PLAMAJ

ASE Project No: 6377 Site Code: GNB 13

ASE Report No: 2013300 OASIS ID: archaeol6-164521

by Simon Stevens BA MIFA

With contributions by

Luke Barber, Trista Clifford, Karine Le Hégarat and Elke Raemen

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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

EVAL: Godwins Nursery, Beare Green ASE Report No: 2013300

Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), was commissioned by Crest Nicholson South to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to redevelopment work at Godwins Nursery, Old Horsham Road, Beare Green, Surrey. A total of six archaeological trial trenches were mechanically excavated at the site in November 2013

Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil horizons were recorded in all of the trenches and the natural substrate was mostly undisturbed. However, no archaeological deposits or features were encountered although a two pieces Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintwork and late post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden. This finds assemblage is of little intrinsic significance.

EVAL: Godwins Nursery, Beare Green

ASE Report No: 2013300

CONTENTS

	_	
1	.0	Introduction
	.v	IIIII OUUCIIOI

- 2.0 **Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 **Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 **Results**
- 5.0 The Finds
- 6.0 **Discussion and Conclusions**

Bibliography Acknowledgements

HER Summary Sheet OASIS Form

TABLES

Table 1:	Quantification of site archive
Table 2:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 2
Table 3:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 3
Table 4:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 4
Table 5:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 5
Table 6:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 6
Table 7:	Recorded Contexts in Trench 7
Table 8:	Quantification of the finds assemblage

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location Figure 2: Trench location

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 Crest Nicholson South to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to redevelopment work at Godwins Nursery, Old Horsham Road, Beare Green, Surrey (Figure 1). The site is centred at NGR 517490 143893.

1.2 Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies in the High Weald at a height of c.106mAOD, on the north-eastern side of Old Horsham Road, the local thoroughfare before the construction of the A24. The plot is broadly rectangular and encompasses a property called 'Little Breakspeare' as well as some standing remains of the former nursery. The boundaries away from the street frontage are mature hedge and tree lines; there is a steeply-sided railway cutting immediately to the south-east.
- 1.2.2 According to current data available from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock is Weald Clay. There is no recorded superficial geology (BGS 2013).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning Consent (Ref. MO/2013/0326/PLAMAJ) has been granted by Mole Valley District Council for the erection of 24 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping following demolition of all garden nursery buildings (with retention of 'Little Breakspeare'). Following consultation with Surrey County Council (Mole Valley District Council's advisers on archaeological issues) a condition (no.9) was attached to the permission requiring that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The site lies within an Area of High Archaeological Potential where it is considered necessary to preserve as a record any archaeological information before it is destroyed by the development in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV49 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.'

1.3.2 The initial phase of archaeological work consisted of the production of a desk-based assessment (DBA) of the archaeological potential of the site (ASE 2013a). This document was submitted to Surrey County Council Archaeological Officer, who subsequently recommended a further phase of archaeological work at the site

1.3.3 In accordance with this a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was prepared by ASE (ASE 2013b) and was duly submitted to the Surrey County Council Archaeological Officer for approval prior to commencement of the work. The WSI outlined the methodology to be used in the field, in this case an archaeological evaluation of the site by mechanically excavated trial trenches, and in the reporting and archiving of the results (*ibid*.).

1.4 Research aims and objectives

1.4.1 The aims stated in the *specification* (*ibid.*) were to:

'To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.

To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered.

To enable the County Archaeologist to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition.

The archaeological evaluation of the site has the potential to contribute to the following research priorities defined by the draft South-East Research Framework (SERF):

The investigation of early medieval settlement and exploitation of the Weald

The chronology and typology of farm buildings and lesser noticed post-medieval agricultural features

The extent to which farms changed/specialised over time.'

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report provides the results of the archaeological evaluation of the site carried out by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) and Chris Russel (Archaeologist) in November 2013. The project was managed by Paul Mason (Project Manager) and by Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following information is précised from the DBA and includes the results of documentary and cartographic research (ASE 2013b). Although the paucity of known local archaeological sites is clear, this may be a result of the dearth of fieldwork in the area, rather than a true reflection of the survival of archaeological remains on the High Weald.

2.2 Prehistoric and Romano-British

2.2.1 No prehistoric sites or Romano-British sites have been recorded within or in close vicinity to the development area.

2.3 Anglo-Saxon

2.3.1 No early medieval sites have been recorded within or in close vicinity to the development area. The land around Beare Green was probably associated with the early Anglo-Saxon tribal capital of Dorking although little is currently known of the nature of Saxon occupation in the surrounding rural area.

2.4 Medieval and post-medieval

- 2.4.1 Beare Green is first recorded as late as 1497, but its name implies that it was held from Dorking by Walter de la Bere, who owned land in the region in 1263. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the manor including the site of Breakspear Farm was given to the secular nobility. The agricultural landscape around Beare Green is largely a fossilised late medieval landscape, comprising small irregular fields carved from the surrounding woodland or enclosed from former open fields, interspersed with areas of commonland.
- 2.4.2 In 1755 the Horsham to Epsom turnpike road the present A24 was laid out across Holmwood Common utilising a pre-existing route which runs past the site as the Old Horsham Road.
- 2.4.3 A property deed of 1814 is the first documentary reference to Breakspear Farm, which is described as a farm of 154 acres. By the end of the century Brakespear Farm was in the hands of the Oakdene Estate, centred at Oakdene House, less than half a mile to the west.
- 2.4.4 The Ordnance Survey mapping shows the development of the landscape from 1871 in some detail. The 1871 map shows an empty field over much of the proposed development site, excepting a small area of property apparently an orchard belonging to Brakespear Farm, demarcated by a boundary hedge. A small unidentified building is shown in the south-west corner of the site by 1896: it may be the forerunner to a 1920s summerhouse recollected by the site's present owner, which was demolished by 1972.

EVAL: Godwins Nursery, Beare Green

ASE Report No: 2013300

2.5 Conclusion

2.5.1 Based on a range of evidence the DBA concluded that the archaeological potential of the site on a date-by-date basis, was as follows (*ibid.*):

Prehistoric Low Potential
Romano-British Low Potential
Anglo-Saxon Low Potential
Medieval Low Potential
Post-Medieval Low Potential

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.1.1 A pattern of evaluation trenches was agreed with all interested parties, designed to avoid on-site obstacles and known buried services. Seven trenches were excavated, totalling 160m in length and 1.8m were excavated (Figure 2). Following further liaison between ASE and the on-site contractors, it was agreed that Trench 1 could not be excavated owing to the presence of adjacent standing buildings.
- 3.1.2 The mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of 'natural' geological deposits, or to the top of any recognisable archaeological deposits, whichever was the higher. Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation. Revealed surfaces of the 'natural' were manually cleaned in an attempt to identify individual archaeological features. Spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.1.3 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms.

3.2 The archive

3.2.1 The archive has been offered, in the first instance, to Dorking Museum. ASE is currently awaiting a response.

Number of Contexts	18
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Photographs	6 digital images
Bulk finds	1 small box

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated on 18th November 2013 by a 15 tonne 360° excavator under constant supervision of personnel from ASE. Weather conditions were good, with strong diffuse light throughout the day. There was some localised rearrangement of trenches owing to the presence of trees both within the site, and overhanging the site boundary from an adjacent plot.

4.2 Trench 2

Context Number	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.31m
2/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.28m
2/003	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 2: Recorded Contexts in Trench 2

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was located in the former garden of 'Little Breakspeare'. It was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of 0.59m.
- 4.2.2 The overburden consisted of two distinct layers. The uppermost was context [2/001], a mid-brown humic silty clay topsoil. This overlay a deposit of orangey brown silty clay subsoil, which in turn overlay the 'natural' brownish orange Weald Clay.
- 4.2.3 Heights on the topsoil ranged from 104.72m AOD to 105.29m AOD
- 4.2.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although a small assemblage of post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.

4.3 Trench 3

Context	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit
Number			Thickness
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.15m
3/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.27m
3/003	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 3: Recorded Contexts in Trench 3

- 4.3.1 Trench 3 was located in the former garden of 'Little Breakspeare'. It was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth 0.42m
- 4.3.2 The two layers of overburden and the underlying 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 2.
- 4.3.3 Heights on the topsoil ranged from 105.73m AOD to 106.41m AOD.
- 4.3.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although a small assemblage of post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.

4.4 Trench 4

Context Number	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.15m
4/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.22m
4/003	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 4: Recorded Contexts in Trench 4

- 4.4.1 Trench 4 was located in the former garden of 'Little Breakspeare'. It was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of 0.37m
- 4.4.2 The two layers of overburden and the underlying 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 2.
- 4.4.3 Heights on the topsoil ranged from 105.46m AOD to 106.15m AOD.
- 4.4.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although a small assemblage of post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.

4.5 Trench 5

Context Number	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
5/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.18m
5/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.23m
5/003	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 5: Recorded Contexts in Trench 4

- 4.5.1 Trench 5 was located in the former garden of 'Little Breakspeare'. It was excavated to a length of 25m and to a depth of 0.41m
- 4.5.2 The two layers of overburden and the underlying 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 2.
- 4.5.3 Heights on the topsoil ranged from 104.77m AOD to 105.44m AOD.
- 4.5.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although a small assemblage of post-medieval artefacts and one piece of struck flint of Mesolithic to Neolithic date was recovered from the topsoil.

4.6 Trench 6

Context	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit
Number			Thickness
6/001	Deposit	Made Ground	0.13m
6/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.29m
6/003	Deposit	'Natural'	-
6/004	Deposit	Made Ground	0.79m

Table 6: Recorded Contexts in Trench 6

- Trench 6 was located in the former garden of 'Little Breakspeare'. The trench 4.6.1 was shortened to avoid the known alignment of a buried service. It was excavated to a length of 30m and to a depth of 1.21m.
- 4.6.2 Two of the layers of overburden (topsoil and subsoil) and the underlying 'natural' were similar in character to those encountered in Trench 2. There was also a layer of recently deposited made ground, context [6/004] encountered at the north-western end of the trench. It was a mixture of garden soil and redeposited Weald Clay containing modern brick rubble, plastic and timber, presumably the result of recent landscaping. It lay between the topsoil, [6/001] and the subsoil, context [6/002].
- 4.6.3 Heights on the topsoil ranged from 104.83m AOD to 105.05m AOD.
- No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although a small assemblage of post-medieval artefacts and one piece of struck flint of Mesolithic to Neolithic date was recovered from the topsoil.

4.7 Trench 7

Context Number	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
7/001	Deposit	Made Ground	0.83m
7/002	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 7: Recorded Contexts in Trench 7

- Trench 7 was located near the north-eastern corner of the site. It was excavated to a length of 15m and to a depth of 0.83m
- 4.7.2 A single layer of overburden/made ground, context [7/001] was found to directly overlay the 'natural' Weald Clay, context [7/002]. Context [7/001] was a recent deposit of varying colour containing various modern material including brick rubble, glass, timber, metalwork and plastic.
- 4.7.3 A water-filled modern soakaway was encountered leading to the abandonment of the excavation of the trench.
- Heights on the topsoil ranged from 104.51m AOD to 104.90m AOD.
- 4.7.5 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds, summarised in Table 8, was recovered from the site. Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context. All finds are packed and stored following IFA guidelines (2008). None of the artefacts require further conservation.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	СВМ	Wt (g)	Flint	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)
2/001	3	14	1	36						
3/001	1	<2	3	116					1	<2
4/001	2	8	1	28					1	20
5/001	3	50	2	64	1	<2	1	14	1	6
6/001			1	58	1	50				
Total	9	72	8	302	2	50	1	14	3	26

Table 8: Quantification of the finds

5.2 The Post-Roman Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 The evaluation recovered a small assemblage of post-Roman pottery, all deriving from topsoil deposits in one of four trenches. All is of late post-medieval date. The relatively small sherd sizes together with moderate signs of abrasion suggest the material has been subjected to some reworking.
- 5.2.2 Context [2/001] produced a 3g scrap of white glazed refined red earthenware (possibly from a wall tile) and two sherds (6g) from refined whiteware vessels one of which is a cup. Although these sherds can be placed anywhere between c. 1850 and 1940 a date in the latter half of this range is perhaps more likely.
- 5.2.3 Context [3/001] produced a tiny 1g scrap from a pearlware vessel of late 18th-to early 19th- century date. Context [4/001] produced a 2g sherd from an unglazed earthenware flower pot and an 8g sherd from a grey English stoneware bottle with Bristol glaze. Together a late 19th- to early 20th- century date is suggested. Context [5/001] produced the earliest sherds from the site: three pieces (50g) of creamware, including a relatively large piece from a serving dish. A later 18th- to very early 19th- century date is suggested though the vessels may represent old pieces discarded later in the 19th century.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Trista Clifford

5.3.1 A small assemblage of eight fragments weighing 302g was recovered from five topsoil contexts. The earliest is a small fragment of tile in a coarse sandy fabric from [4/001] which could be of medieval or later date. Tile from [3/001] is finer and probably of a similar or slightly later date. Context [2/001] and [6/001] contained fragments in similar fine fabrics with very smooth surfaces indicating a date range of 19th-20th century. Two compressed brick fragments from [5/001] are also of later 19th – 20th century date.

5.4 Flintwork by Karine le Hégarat

5.4.1 Two pieces of struck flint weighing 51g were recovered from topsoil deposits during evaluation work at the site. Context [6/001] produced a small core fragment, context [5/001] contained a flake. The fragmentary core was used to remove small blades and is likely to be Mesolithic or early Neolithic in date.

5.5 Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.5.1 Context [5/001] produced a 50g fragment from a Welsh roofing slate most likely to be of mid-19th- to early 20th- century date.

5.6 The Glass by Elke Raemen

- 5.6.1 Three green glass wine bottle fragments (wt 26g) were recovered from three individually numbered contexts. The potentially earliest fragments were recovered from [3/001] and [5/001]. Both were found in the topsoil, with possibly exaggerated surface weathering as a result, and are fairly small and undiagnostic, They could date anywhere between the 18th and early 19th century.
- 5.6.2 In addition, a base fragment of mid-19th- to mid-20th-century date was recovered from [4/001].

5.7 Summary

5.7.1 The current assemblage is small, comprising of finds largely of late date and lacking intrinsic interest.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 Stratigraphic sequence and degree of truncation

- 6.1.1 The evaluation revealed a simple stratigraphic sequence of Weald Clay, overlain by 0.22m to 28m of subsoil, overlain by 0.13m to 0.31mm of topsoil.
- 6.1.2 There was little truncation of the 'natural' deposits and, apart from in Trench 7, an intact subsoil was present throughout the majority of the site. This suggests that there was a good potential for the survival of archaeological remains if they were originally present.

6.2 Archaeological remains

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the evaluation.
- 6.2.1 The presence of a range of late post-medieval material in the former garden of a property is to be expected and offers no great insight into Beare Green's past. The discovery of the two pieces of Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintwork is not unexpected and is indicative of hunter/gatherer activity long recognised in this part of the Weald (Clark & Rankine 1939) and further afield (Tebbutt 1974).

6.3 Conclusion and consideration of research aims

- 6.3.1 Apart from the small assemblage of unstratified artefacts recovered the evaluation has proved to be archaeological negative.
- 6.3.2 The evaluation has succeeded in addressing the general research aims (1.4.2) related to determining the presence and character of any archaeological remains existing on the site, even if this has proved negative. However, because of these negative results, the specific research aims concerning the chronology and nature of the medieval and post-medieval farm are unable to be further addressed.

EVAL: Godwins Nursery, Beare Green

ASE Report No: 2013300

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	GNB 13	GNB 13						
Identification Name and Address	Godwins N	Godwins Nursery, Old Horsham Road, Beare Green						
County, District &/or Borough	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District, Surrey						
OS Grid Refs.	517490 14	3893						
Geology	Weald Clay	/						
ASE Project Number	6377	6377						
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other		
Type of Site	Green Field ✓							
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 18.11.2013 Excav. WB. Other							
Sponsor/Client	Crest Nicho	olson South						
Project Manager	Paul Mason/Jim Stevenson							
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens							
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. ✓	Neo.	BA	IA	RB		
	AS							

Summary

Six archaeological trial trenches were mechanically excavated at the site in November 2013. No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered, although Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintwork and late post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-164521

Project details

Project name Godwins Nursery, Old Horsham Road, Beare Green, Surrey

Short description of

the project

Six archaeological trial trenches were mechanically excavated at the site in November 2013. No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered, although Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintwork and late post-medieval material was recovered from the

overburden.

Project dates Start: 18-11-2013 End: 18-11-2013

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference

codes

6377 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference

codes

GNB 13 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

MO/2013/0326/PLAMAJ - Planning Application No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds FLINTWORK Mesolithic

Methods & techniques

"Sample Trenches"

Development type Rural residential

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location SURREY MOLE VALLEY HOLMWOOD Godwins Nursery, Beare

Green

Postcode RH5 4RA

EVAL: Godwins Nursery, Beare Green

ASE Report No: 2013300

Study area 5000.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 1749 4389 51 0 51 10 53 N 000 19 07 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator

Archaeology South-East

Project design originator

Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Paul Mason

Project supervisor Simon Stevens

Type of

Client

sponsor/funding body

Name of

Crest Nicholson South

sponsor/funding body

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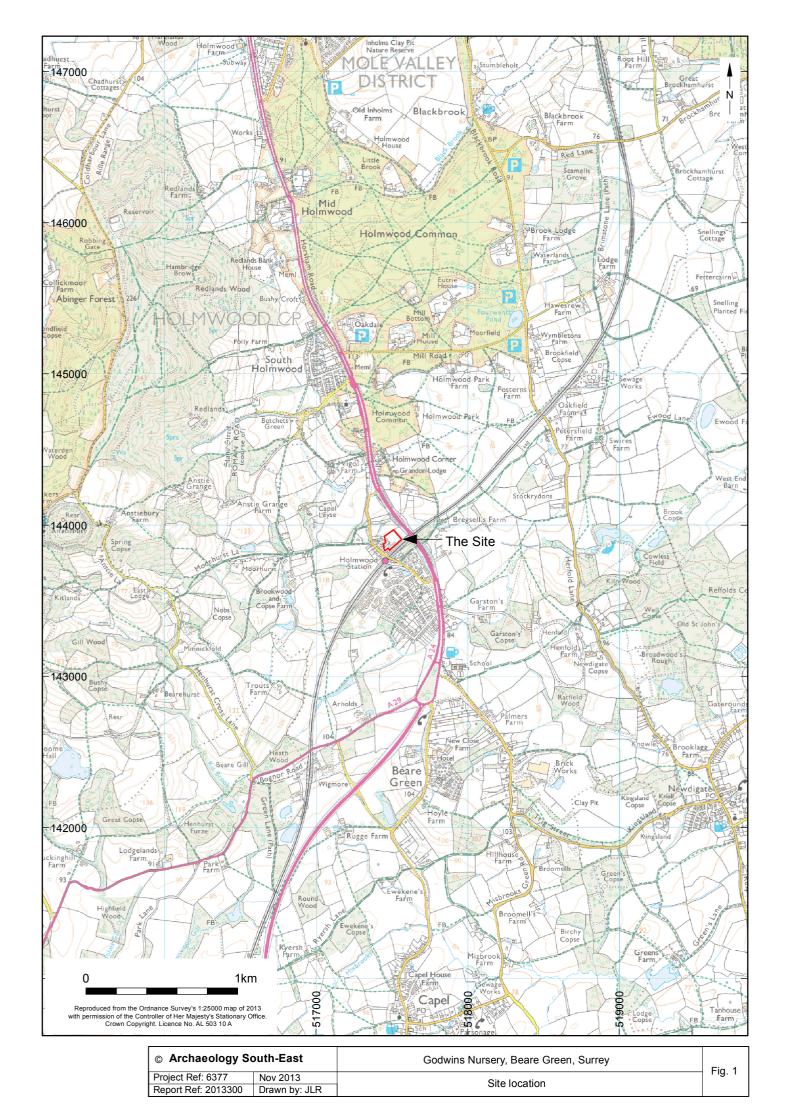
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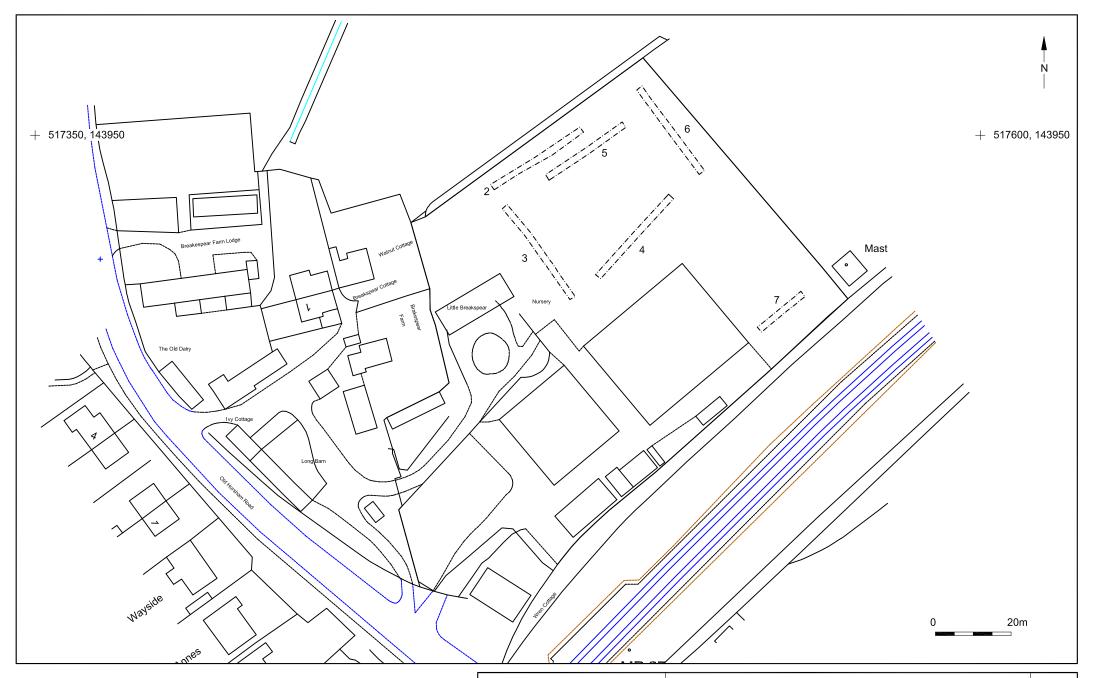
Portslade, East Sussex

Description ASE client report. A4-sized with cover logos.

Entered by Simon Stevens (simon.stevens@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 2 December 2013





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Project Ref: 6377 Nov 2013		Transh lagation	1 19.2	
Report Ref: 2013300	Drawn by: JLR	Trench location		



Trench 2 looking north-east



Trench 4 looking south-west



Trench 6 looking south-east



Trench 3 looking north-west



Trench 5 looking north-east



Trench 7 looking south-west

© Archaeology South-East		Godwins Nursery, Beare Green, Horsham	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 6377	Dec 2013	Tranch photographs	rig. 3
Poport Pof: 2012200	Drawn by: II P	Trench photographs	

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2 2 Chapel Place Portslade East Sussex BN41 1DR tel: +44(0)1273 426830 email: fau@ucl.ac.uk web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

The Old Magistrates Court 79 South Street Braintree Essex CM7 3QD tel: +44(0)1376 331470 email: fau@ucl.ac.uk web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology UCL Institute of Archaeology 31-34 Gordon Square London WC1H 0PY tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 email: fau@ucl.ac.uk web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

