

Archaeological Watching Brief Report Capron House, North Street Midhurst, West Sussex

> NGR 488650 121866 (SU 88650 21866)

South Downs National Park Authority Planning Reference SDNP/12/01318/FUL

ASE Project No: 6565 Site Code: CAP 12

ASE Report No: 2014041 OASIS ID: archaeol6-170155



By Simon Stevens BA MIFA

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By Simon Stevens BA MIFA

With contributions by Luke Barber and Trista Clifford

February 2014

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

WB: Capron House, North Street, Midhurst ASE Report No: 2014041

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a 750mm deep service trench at the site. No significant archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.

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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 Brendan Flynn of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of a pipe trench at Capron House, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, hereafter referred to as 'the site' (NGR 4886510 121866; Figure 1).

1.2 Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 Capron House, a Grade II listed building, is located on the western side of North Street, to the north of the centre of the town of Midhurst at a height of c. 25m AOD. The pipe trench ran across the car-park to the north of Capron House and then across a former lawn to the rear of the property.
- 1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology at the site consists of Selham Ironshot Sandstone with overlying superficial Sussex Rother Terrace deposits (BGS 2013).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission for a change of use and extension of the existing buildings was granted by the SDNPA in 2012 (planning reference SDNP/12/01318/FUL). Following consultations between the SDNPA and James Kenny, the Chichester District Council Archaeologist (ASdNAP/s adviser on archaeological issues in the district), a condition (no. 6) was attached to the permission requiring that:

'any archaeological features of national significance which are revealed when carrying out the works hereby permitted shall be retained in-situ and reported to the Local Planning authority in writing within 5 working days. Works shall be halted in the area/part of the building affected until provision has been made for the retention and/or recording in accordance with details submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of structures on the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with Saved Policy BE3 of the Chichester District Local Plan First Alteration 1999.'

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 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.

1.4.2 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.

1.4.3 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?

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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 the results of the archaeological work at the site carried out by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) in January 2014. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Fieldwork) and by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (Post-Excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A brief summary of the archaeological background of Midhurst is given below taken from various recent sources (Magilton and Spencer 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 was 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). Magilton (op. cit.) 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 No large scale archaeological excavations 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).
- 2.5 Further afield in the town, a watching brief during replacement of gas mains in Duck Lane and Sheep Lane was equally unproductive (ASE 2011). A watching brief at 14 North Street (ASE 2012b) identified no significant archaeological features. However, a large 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. Post-Medieval material was also encountered during a recent watching brief at Market Square (ASE 2013).
- 2.6 A watching brief was undertaken at the current site in site in August 2012 during the excavation of two small test-pits; one in the car-park, the other in the garden to the rear of the house. No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered (ASE 2012c)

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A watching brief was maintained during the mechanical and manual excavation of a service trench. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features and all available spoil was scanned both visually and by metal detector.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3 A photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive which is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, and has been accepted for deposition at Chichester Museum under the site code CAP 12. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	5
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	31
Bulk finds	1 box

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The pipe trench was 600mm wide (except in areas of localised section collapse) and a maximum of 750mm in depth. It ran from the north wall of the site, across an area of car park, then through a former garden/lawn to the rear of the standing building before splitting to approach the building at two points. All excavation, both mechanical and manual was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from ASE.
- 4.1.2 Weather conditions during the two days of the watching brief varied between bright sunshine and heavy rain. However, on the whole, the light conditions for the recognition of archaeological deposits or features, and for the recovery of archaeological artefacts were adequate.

4.2 The Car-Park

Context Number	Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
101	Deposit	Tarmac	180mm
102	Deposit	Make-up/levelling	220mm
103	Deposit	Made ground/Topsoil	390mm
104	Deposit	'Natural'	-

Table 2: Recorded contexts under the car-park

4.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence encountered in the trench as it crossed the car park was straightforward. There was an intermittent exposure of the surface of the 'natural' orangey brown silty clay, context [101] at the base of the trench. It was overlain by a deposit of made ground/topsoil, context [103] consisting of a mid-greyish brown silty clay from which a small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered. It was overlain by a modern levelling deposit, context [102] and the current tarmac surface of the car-park, context [101]. There was heavy disturbance from various services.

4.3 The Garden

Context Number		Туре	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
1	100	Deposit	Topsoil	>750mm

Table 3: Recorded context in the garden

4.3.1 The excavation of the trench through the garden was hampered by waterlogging and previous rutting of the topsoil occupying the area. There was no clear exposure of the surface of the 'natural' in this area, and the only recorded context was a mid-brown silty clay topsoil, context [100] from which a small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered. There had also been heavy truncation from the laying of services.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief at Capron House, North Street Midhurst.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	СВМ	Wt (g)	Shell	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	СТР	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)
100	4	60	5	108			1	4				
103	43	1218	9	608	7	326	2	32	3	10	22	4070
Total	47	1278	14	716	7	326	3	36	3	10	22	4070

Table 4: Quantification of the finds assemblage

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 The watching brief recovered a relatively small assemblage from just two individually numbered contexts. The condition of the sherds is variable. The tendency is towards smaller sherds with some signs of abrasion, but much larger, fresher, sherds are also present in the main group. As such the assemblage has only been subjected to low/moderate reworking. A range of wares are represented that span the late 17th to 19th centuries.
- 5.2.2 Context [100] produced just three sherds: the rim of an unglazed earthenware flower pot (6g) and pieces from two blue transfer-printed vessels (33g), one of which appears to be a drainer. As a group a date between 1840 and 1900 can be suggested.
- 5.2.3 The remaining pottery was recovered from [103], which produced a much larger group with wider chronological range. The earliest material consists of six early post-medieval sherds indicative of activity between the very late 17th to mid 18th centuries.
- 5.2.4 All of the sherds are quite small and abraded but include glazed red earthenware (13g), green-glazed Border Ware (5g), three sherds of late tinglazed ware (42g: including a blue decorated charger and a plain bowl) and a 14g fragment from a Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware plate of the early/mid 18th century.
- 5.2.5 The remaining sherds in this deposit can all be placed between 1750 and 1900. Coarsewares include an 8g fragment from an unglazed earthenware flower pot, three sherds from a rouletted bowl in Nottingham stoneware (104g) and a complete English stoneware dwarf ink bottle (100g).
- 5.2.6 The finewares are fairly typical of a domestic assemblage. There is the lid from a Staffordshire mottled ware teapot (60g), a 22g Creamware plate fragment, a 44g fragment from a blue sponged pearlware chamber pot and ten sherds (244g) of quite late transfer-printed pearlware. The latter include pieces from four plates, a wash basin and another chamber pot. There is also a notable quantity of refined whiteware with blue transfer-printing, likely to be of the mid 19th century.
- 5.2.7 Forms include three plates, a bowl and another chamber pot. The three

sherds of English porcelain (46g) are from two plates and a cup with decoration limited to blue edged rims and gold gilt lines. The latest sherd consist of plain refined whiteware that is probably of the second half of the 19th century (4/110g). This material includes a bowl, two small plates/saucers (with red marbling and green sponged decoration) and yet another chamber pot.

5.2.8 The only other ceramic was the remains of a 29mm diameter unglazed toy marble (29g).

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Trista Clifford

- 5.3.1 Fourteen fragments of ceramic building material were recovered weighing 716g. The assemblage includes a single piece of brick but mainly comprises roof tile. The assemblage was examined by eye and using a 10x magnification binocular microscope. Six tile and one brick fabric was identified.
- 5.3.2 The assemblage consists of small abraded fragments. Only one tile fragment from [103] exhibited a circular nail hole. This measures 11mm in diameter. Several pieces showed evidence of heating such as reduction and vitrification of surfaces. Due to lack of diagnostic features, a broad date range of c.1400-1900 is proposed for the roof tile.
- 5.3.3 The brick fragment was also reduced and vitrified. It has a similar fabric to MoL 3032 and is of post medieval date, probably 18th century or later.

5.4 The Shell by Trista Clifford

5.4.1 Seven Common Oyster (Ostrea edulis) valves weighing 326g and representing a minimum number of 4 individuals were recovered from context [103]. These are all adult specimens with no evidence of parasitic activity.

5.5 The Registered Finds by Trista Clifford

5.5.1 A single bone toothbrush handle, RF<1>, was recovered from [100]. The handle has drilled holes for the bristles with areas of copper staining around the head indicating either copper alloy bristles or wire used to attach bristles. The handle is stamped with the manufacturer 'Parkinson' and marked with a hand- inscribed 'R', presumably the initial of the owner. It measures 130mm in length. The handle is 19th-early 20th century in date.

5.6 Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.6.1 Context [100] produced a 5g fragment from a Welsh school slate while [103] contained a 2g fragment from a Welsh roofing slate. Both are likely to be of mid 19th- to early 20th- century date.

5.7 The Glass by Elke Raemen

5.7.1 A small assemblage comprising 22 fragments of glass (weight 4070g) was recovered from [103]. The glass from this context is of mixed date, and includes 18 green shaft-and-globe wine bottle fragments, mostly bases

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ranging in diameter from 140 to 190mm and representing a minimum of eight different vessels. These date to the late 17th to mid 18th century. A Bristol blue shaft and globe style wine bottle or decanter base dating to the late 18th to mid 19th century was recovered, as well as two mid 19th- to early 20th-century wine bottle fragments. An aqua mineral water bottle fragment of the same date retained a partial embossing "(...)SUP(...)".

5.8 The Clay Tobacco Pipe by Elke Raemen

5.8.1 Three stem fragments were recovered from [103]. The earliest fragment dates to c. 1640-80. Two fragments of 19th-century date were also found, including one with a spur probably dated to c. 1840-80.

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6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The artefacts recovered were relatively late in date and no significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

6.2 The findings of the watching brief are entirely consistent with those from a previous phase of monitoring at the site (ASE 2012c), and from other nearby sites on that side of North Street (e.g. ASE 2000; 2012b). Although rich in artefact, especially of the post-medieval period, none of the sites produced any earlier deposits, features or finds.

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HER Summary

Site Code	CAP 12							
Identification Name and Address	Capron Ho	Capron House, Midhurst						
County, District &/or Borough	Chichester	Chichester District, West Sussex						
OS Grid Refs.	488650 12	1866						
Geology	Selham sa	ndstone						
ASE Project Number	6565							
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief					
Type of Site		Shallow Urban			•			
Dates of Fieldwork			WB. 27.01.2014 – 28.01.2014					
Sponsor/Client	South Dow	ns National	Park Authori	ty				
Project Manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson							
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens							
Period Summary								
_			PM					

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a 750mm deep service trench at the site. No significant archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-170155

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Watching Brief at Capron House, Midhurst,

West Sussex

Short description of

the project

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a 750mm deep service trench at the site. No significant archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.

Project dates Start: 27-01-2014 End: 28-01-2014

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated

project reference

codes

6565 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference

codes

CAP 12 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference

codes

SDNP/12/01318/FUL - Planning Application No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Other 11 - Thoroughfare Current Land use

Monument type **NONE None**

Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval

GLASS Post Medieval Significant Finds

"Watching Brief" Investigation type

Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS Prompt

Project location

Country England

Site location WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER MIDHURST Capron House

Postcode **GU29 9DJ**

100.00 Square metres Study area

WB: Portsmouth Flood Alleviation Scheme ASE Report No: 2013324

SU 88650 21866 50.9888144228 -0.736793526119 50 59 19 N Site coordinates

000 44 12 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

Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson

Project supervisor Simon Stevens

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Client

Name of

sponsor/funding

body

South Downs National Park Authority

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient

Chichester Museum

Physical Contents

"Ceramics", "Glass"

Digital Archive recipient

Chichester Museum

Digital Contents

"other"

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient

Chichester Museum

Paper Contents

"other"

Paper Media available

"Context sheet","Correspondence","Miscellaneous

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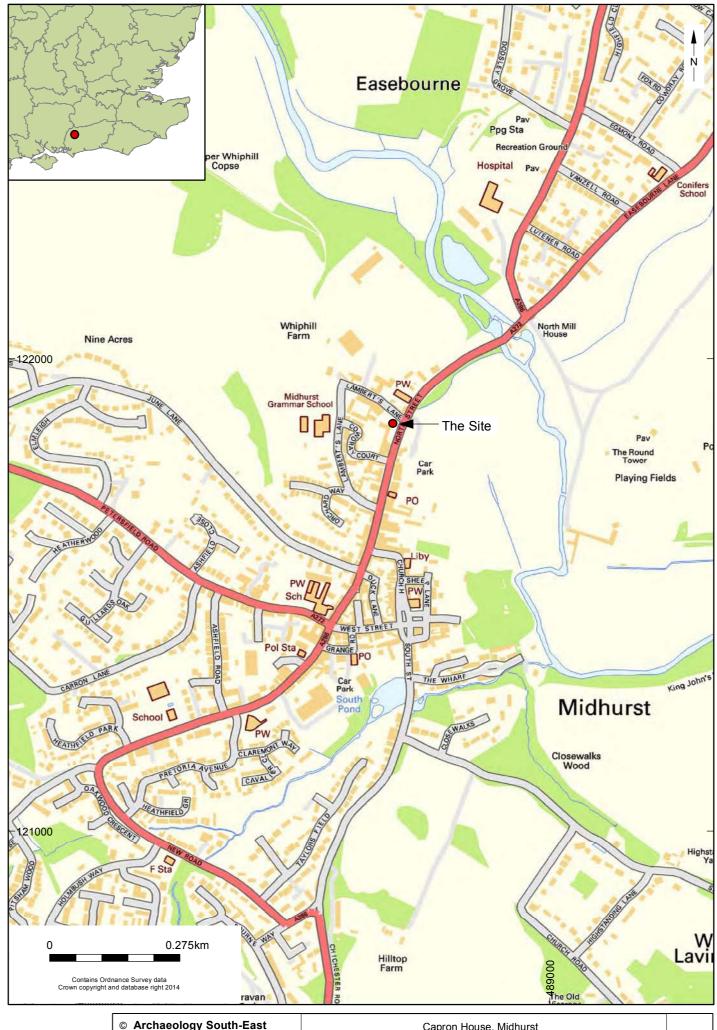
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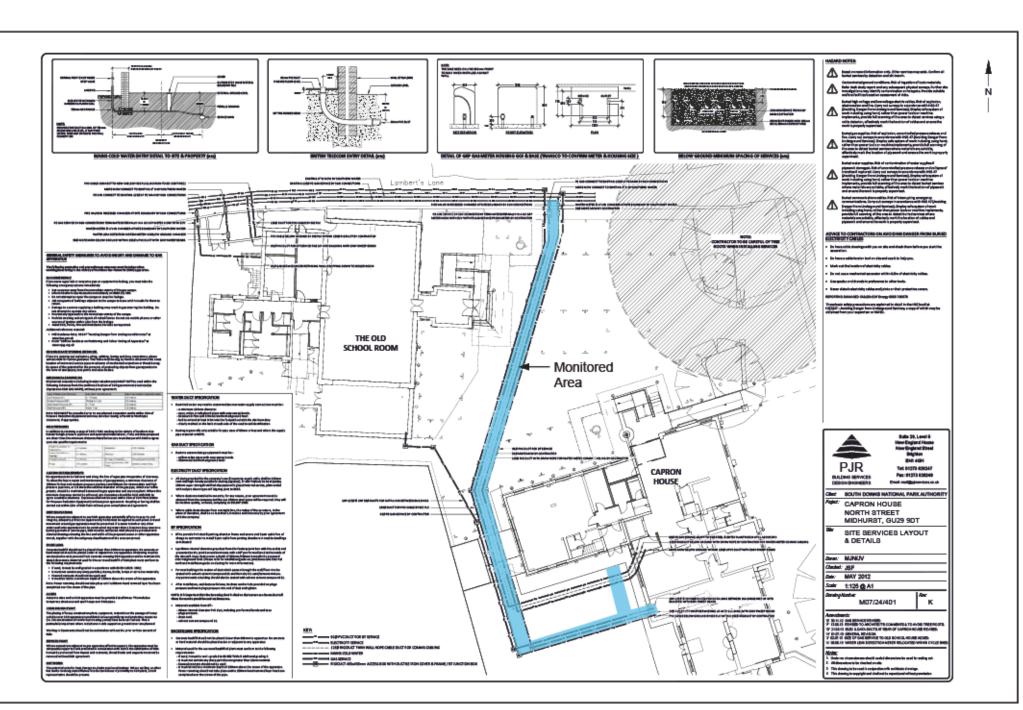
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Entered on 30 January 2014



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Project Ref: 6565	February 2014	Site location	Fig. 1
Report Ref: 2014041	Drawn by: RHC	Site location	



@ Archaeology South-East		Capron House, Midhurst	
Project Ref: 6565	February 2014		Fig. 2
Report Ref: 2014041	Drawn by: RHC	Location of monitored area	

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

