

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Steyning Grammar School, Steyning,
West Sussex (STE 06)**

**NGR: TQ 17500 11950
HORSHAM: Steyning
Planning Reference: DC/0416/06**

ASE Project No. 2563

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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit 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.

The 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, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit 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 during ground works associated with a new artificial playing field at Steyning Grammar School, Steyning, West Sussex on the 17th, 19th and 20th July 2006. A small assemblage of archaeological finds were recovered from the top and sub soils but no archaeological features were observed.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Impact of proposed Development	2
3	Archaeological Methodology	3
4	Results	4
4.1	<i>Stratigraphy</i>	4
4.2	<i>The Finds</i>	4
5	Discussion	6
6	Acknowledgements	7
7	References	8
8	Oasis Form	9

FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site Location Plan
Fig. 2 Site Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), was commissioned by McArdle Sport-Tech to undertake an archaeological watching brief during top soil stripping works at Steypning Grammar School, Steypning, West Sussex (NGR 17500 11950, Fig. 1).

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) advised the local planning authority that an archaeological condition be attached to the planning consent (Planning Ref: DC/0416/06) requiring a programme of archaeological work. The recommended programme was in the form of an archaeological watching brief.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining the requirements was prepared by Archaeology South-East and duly approved by John Mills (Archaeologist), West Sussex County Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken on 17th, 19th and 20th July 2006 by Deon Whittaker and Jon Sygrave. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

The aim of the watching brief was to ensure that all archaeological deposits and features exposed during ground works were recorded to a professional archaeological standard and that artefacts and environmental samples were retrieved where appropriate.

The British and Geological Survey Sheets 318/333 shows the site lies on Lower Chalk.

2 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development consists of the landscaping of an area c. 6000m² and construction of a new artificial football pitch. The site slopes gently from the north west to south east and the landscaping will result in c. 500mm being reduced in the north west and c. 500mm of made ground in the south east

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

As was stated in the Method Statement (ASE 2006), all new groundwork excavations undertaken by the contractors were monitored by an archaeologist (Fig. 2). The top and sub soil was excavated by the contractors using a 20T tracked machine fitted with a smooth bucket. Once the area strip had been observed, to the top of the underlying natural deposits, and no archaeological features observed, the area was further reduced/made up by the contractors using a bulldozer.

The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist in order to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and a metal detector used over the surface of the exposed underlying natural deposits.

All ground works were planned in relation to known positions along the site boundaries.

All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the Method Statement.

The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. All finds are the property of the landowner, but will be donated to a suitable museum.

Archaeological deposits were levelled in relation to ground surface heights provided by the client.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Stratigraphy

The machine excavation of the top and sub soil was monitored by a member of ASE staff. The top soil was described as a mid greyish brown clayey silt 150mm to 350mm thick with occasional chalk flecks and numerous 20th century finds. The sub soil was described as a mid orange brown clayey silt 150mm to 250mm thick with occasional chalk fleck and 20th century finds. A small quantity of archaeological finds was recovered from the top and sub soils. The underlying natural sediment was described as a clean mid orange brown clayey silt with moderate chalk flecks.

Several areas of truncation/disturbance were recorded over the site. A previous 'hall' road, built during the construction of St Andrews Primary School, ran west to east through the centre of the site and numerous recent tree boles were observed in the south east of the site. Other small pits backfilled with 20th century material were observed across the site.

No archaeological features were observed.

4.2 The Finds

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the top and sub soils, which are set out in the table below.

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	CBM	Weight (g)	Bone	Weight (g)	Flint	Weight (g)
[+]	9	54	1	38	1	94	12	98

Table 1: quantification of finds from STE06 by count and weight (g)

Pottery by Luke Barber

The watching brief recovered a small quantity of unstratified pottery, most of which consists of small sherds showing some signs of abrasion. The earliest material consists of seven sherds from medieval cooking pots. Three fabrics are represented, though most are either tempered with moderate flint (to 1mm) and sparse shell or fine sand with sparse/moderate flint/chalk inclusions to 2mm. Although no feature sherds are present the fabrics suggest an early/mid 12th- to early/mid 13th- century date range for this material. In addition there is a rim sherd from a jug in a fine sand tempered buff ware. This piece, which has a thin, patchy pale green glaze is likely to be of the 13th century. The latest sherd is from the rim of a bowl in glazed red earthenware. The good quality finish on this vessel suggests a very late 18th- or more likely 19th- century date.

A single fragment of tile was recovered. This consists of a peg tile tempered with moderate medium sand and fired to give buff surfaces. A 13th - to 14th - century date is probable.

Worked Stone by Lucy Allott

Twelve assorted flint flakes and blades, weighing 98g, were collected from unstratified deposits. Flint from several distinct raw material sources are present and these range from blue/black flint from clay with flint sources through yellow-green flint more common in river gravels to white and grey flints from the chalk downlands (Butler 2005). Some of the lithics have platform preparation scars and five pieces have some evidence of secondary working through retouch. Retouch on these pieces is generally abrupt or semi-abrupt and the forms of the pieces are not distinct. The yellow-green flint blade has a retouched notch on the left medial ventral surface as well as some further retouch along the right proximal ventral. This piece is heavily patinated and although the notch retouch is also patinated the other retouch scars appear fresher. This piece may have been opportunistically reused.

The assorted assemblage from STE06 is limited and undiagnostic, and as it originated from unstratified deposits it presents no potential for further work.

Animal Bone by Lucy Sibun

A single piece of unstratified animal bone was recovered. This has been identified as the distal shaft of a cattle humerus. The surface of the bone has suffered heavy weathering but it appears that the distal end of the shaft has been chopped through.

5 DISCUSSION

The finds from the top and sub soil suggest that there could be archaeological features dating to the 12th and 13th century and possibly the 18th or 19th century in the vicinity of the site or that features have been truncated by 20th century activity on the site. However no archaeological features were observed during the watching brief.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to David Darnell and McArdle Sport-Tech for commissioning the archaeological work and providing all required assistance throughout the watching brief.

7 REFERENCES

ASE 2006 *Steypning Grammar School, Steypning, West Sussex Archaeological Watching Brief Project Design* ASE Unpub.

Butler, C. 2005. *Prehistoric Flintwork*. Tempus, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England.

8 OASIS FORM

8.1 OASIS ID: archaeol6-17465

Project details

Project name	Steyping Grammar School
Short description of the project	Watching brief during top/sub soil strip ahead of works associated with a new football pitch. no archaeological features recorded but finds recovered from the top/sub soil (medieval pot, worked flint)
Project dates	Start: 17-07-2006 End: 20-07-2006
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	2563 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	STE06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	WORKED FLINT Late Prehistoric
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX HORSHAM STEYNING Steyping Grammar School
Postcode	BN44
Study area	6000.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 17500 11950 Point
Height OD	Min: c.19.00m Max: c.19.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Jon Sygrave
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Worked stone/lithics'

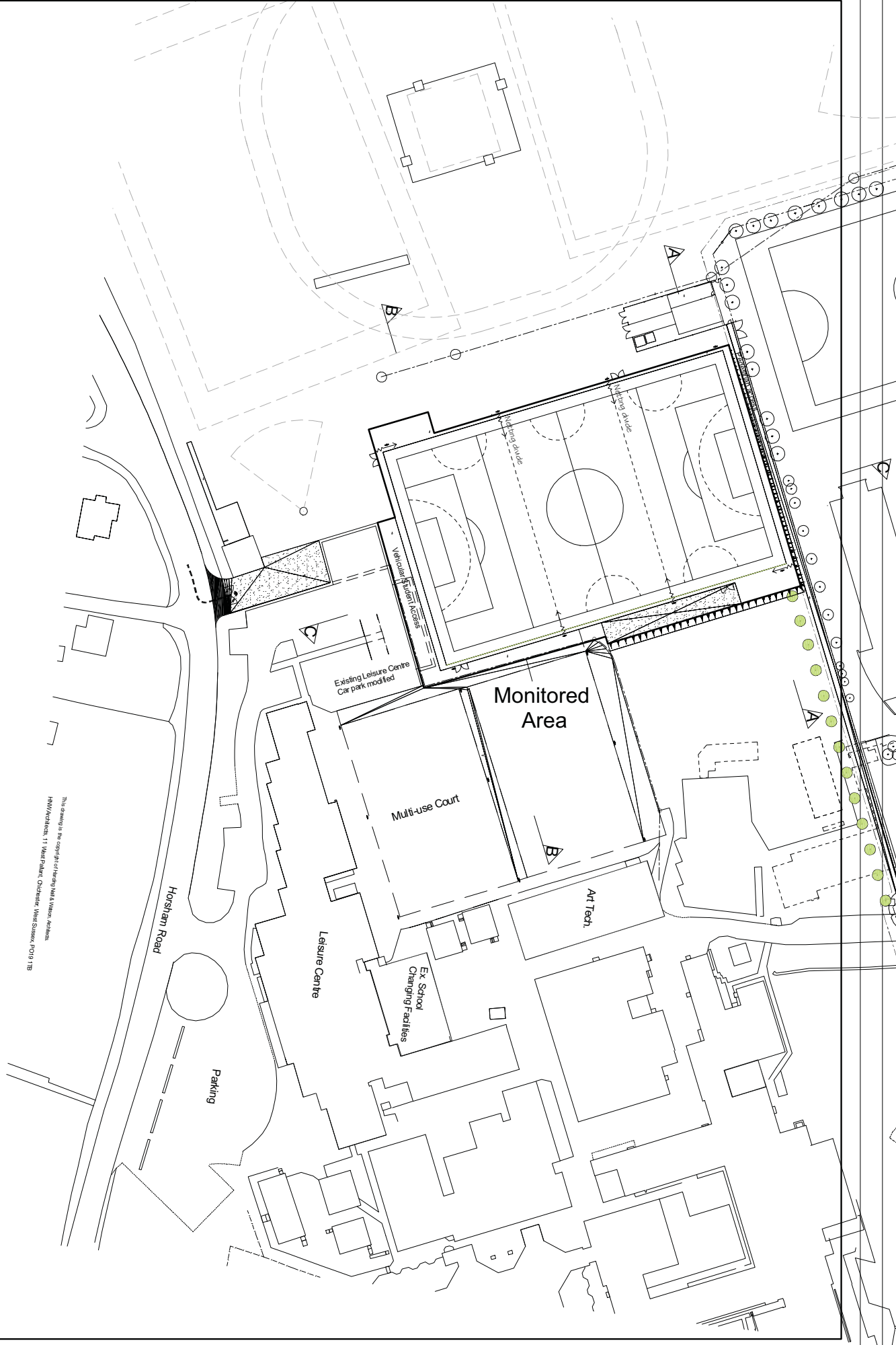
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Plan', 'Report'

Entered by	jon sygrave (jonsygrave@yahoo.co.uk)
Entered on	18 August 2006



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			Steyning Grammar School	Fig. 1
Ref: 2563	Aug 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

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© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			Steyning Grammar School		Fig. 2
Ref: 2563	Aug 2006	Drawn by: JLR	50m	Site Plan	