

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Hankham Primary School, Hankham  
Pevensey, East Sussex**

**NGR: 561850 105490  
(TQ 61850 05490)**

**Planning Ref: WD/3151/CC**

**ASE Project No: 6361  
Site Code: KHA 13**

**ASE Report No: 2014207  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-181632**



**By Simon Stevens BA (Hons) MIFA**

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**June 2014**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South East was commissioned by Baxall Construction on behalf of their clients East Sussex County Council to carry out archaeological monitoring on land at Hankham Primary School, Pevensey, East Sussex.*

*No archaeological deposits or features were encountered and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden.*

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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), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Baxall Construction on behalf of their clients East Sussex County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at Hankham Primary School, East Sussex (NGR 561850 105490; Figure 1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The site lies on the western side of Hankham Road in the village of Hankham and comprises a broadly level parcel of land to the south and south-west of the existing complex of school buildings (Figure 2).

1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock is the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. There is no recorded superficial geology (BGS 2014).

### **1.1 Planning Background**

1.2.1 Planning permission has been granted by Wealden District Council for the erection of extensions to the existing buildings at the site, as well as for a new area of car parking (planning ref. WD/3151/CC). Following consultation with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) (Wealden District Council's advisers on archaeological issues), two conditions (nos. 11 and 12) were attached to the permission requiring that

*'No development shall take place until the developer 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 Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.*

*Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.*

*The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 11 and that the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.*

*Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.'*

1.2.2 ASE consulted with ESCC and established that an archaeological watching brief would be required during groundworks undertaken at the site. Consequently, a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for archaeological monitoring was produced by ASE (2014a). The WSI document outlined the methods to be used during an archaeological watching brief and was compiled with reference to the *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork* (ESCC 2008) issued by ESCC and with the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008). All fieldwork undertaken during the evaluation works was carried out in accordance with the WSI.

### 1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 In general, the aim of a watching brief given in the WSI (ASE 2014a) was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological remains exposed during groundworks (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.

1.3.2 The watching brief also sought to assess the past impacts on the site and to pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

1.3.3 Specific research aims (*ibid.*) were to:

*'Characterise any prehistoric remains associated with settlement/utilisation of the range of marshland resources exploited at the edges of the Pevensey levels. This potentially keys into a highlighted requirement to look beyond traditional prehistoric studies of the Downs in recognition of the significance of apparently peripheral areas of the weald, coastal plain and wetland Sussex in analysis of Bronze Age utilisation of the landscape (Hamilton 2007, 13).*

*Characterise any potential Roman activity within the hinterland of the Pevensey Shore fort (Anderita).*

*Evidence of settlement associated with the medieval and post-medieval hamlet of Hankham.*

*Any remains associated with the footpath (line of road?) crossing the site from SW to NE will be sufficiently investigated to date and characterise them.'*

### 1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 The current report provides the results of archaeological monitoring of groundworks at the site carried out in May and June 2014. The on-site work was undertaken by Simon Stevens and Andy Margetts (Senior Archaeologists) and by Antonio Reis (Assistant Archaeologist). The project was managed by Paul Mason (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Managers).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

2.1.1 An archaeological desk based assessment (DBA) for the site was produced by Chris Butler Archaeological Services prior to the grant of planning permission (Butler 2009). The report noted that there is evidence for activity from the Mesolithic period through to the post-medieval period in the general area of the site. It highlights the presence of a possible crop mark extending into the site from the adjacent field, which may indicate the presence of buried archaeological remains (*op. cit.* 12 and 13). The following summaries are drawn from the DBA with all due acknowledgement.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

2.2.1 There is evidence for Mesolithic activity in the immediate vicinity of the site, with find spots of Mesolithic flintwork to the north and east. These include debitage and a tranchet adze, whilst other finds including debitage, cores and microliths have been found in the area between Westham and Pevensey. It has been noted that the Mesolithic sites around the Pevensey Levels occur just above the 5m contour level where they have not been covered by the subsequent accumulation of peat, and may indicate that the Levels provided an ideal landscape for hunting and fishing throughout this period. The DBA suggests that there is a high possibility of Mesolithic activity being present on the site, given its location and good outlook across the Levels.

2.2.2 Scatters of Neolithic flintwork and individual finds of Neolithic axes have been identified from around the Levels, and it is suggested that Later Neolithic and early Bronze Age activity, probably associated with hunting and fishing, was continuing on the periphery of the marshy Levels during this period. The DBA concludes that it is possible that Neolithic artefacts could be present although the likelihood of finding Neolithic artefacts is considered to be low.

2.2.3 During the Early Iron Age it seems likely that surrounding Levels had become untenable due to flooding from the sea. However, there are a few finds of Iron Age pottery from close to the site which may indicate that artefacts or evidence for Iron Age settlement could be encountered.

### **2.3 Romano-British**

2.3.1 There is limited evidence for Roman activity in the immediate area, but the location of the Roman Saxon Shore fort at Pevensey suggests that the possibility of encountering Roman remains at the site must be considered (*ibid.*).

### **2.4 Anglo-Saxon**

2.4.1 During the Anglo-Saxon period this area is thought to have comprised marginal land on the edge of the flooded Levels, and therefore it is considered unlikely that any evidence for Saxon activity will be encountered (*ibid.*)

## **2.5 Medieval and Post-Medieval**

- 2.5.1 The site falls within the curtilage of the medieval and post-medieval hamlet of Hankham and the majority of the surrounding levels were reclaimed by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Map and documentary evidence for the more recent agricultural landscape in the immediate surroundings suggests that it has not altered to any great extent over the last 300-400 years (*ibid.*).
- 2.5.2 A footpath shown on the earliest OS maps of the area, crossing the site from the south-west to north-east is likely to be a continuation of Milton Street, accessing Hankham (then *handcombe*) from the south-west. If any sub-surface remains are associated with this landscape feature, they are likely to be encountered during fieldwork.

## **2.6 Recent Local Fieldwork**

- 2.6.1 Archaeology South-East has recently completed a watching brief on the erection of a temporary classroom at Hankham School, as well as habitat works involving the creation of two newt ponds; enabling works for the proposed development (ASE 2014).
- 2.6.2 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were encountered during the construction works. Natural geology, consisting of light orange Tunbridge Wells Sands, was encountered at depths of between 330mm and 480mm below the ground surface. This was generally sealed by subsoil and topsoil/turf, but a thin layer of colluvium was also observed during the excavation of Pond 2. In addition, a buried, organic-rich alluvial layer (400mm thick) was identified beneath the undisturbed natural geological layer at 1.1m and was interpreted as a storm deposit (*ibid.*).



### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 A watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the redevelopment work, specifically the mechanical and manual excavation of foundations for the larger of the extensions. Monitoring visits were undertaken in May and June 2014.
- 3.2 All excavations were examined for the presence of archaeological features or deposits and all spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts, both visually and by use of a metal detector.
- 3.3 All deposits encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards using ASE standard record sheets. A full photographic record of the area was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.4 The project archive is presently held at Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade, East Sussex, and will be offered to Eastbourne Museum in due course. The contents of the project archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	7
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	29 digital images

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Max. Deposit Thickness mm
001	Layer	Tarmac	Area	Area	90mm
002	Layer	Type 1	Area	Area	260mm
003	Layer	Topsoil	Area	Area	400mm
004	Cut	Truncation			-
005	Layer	'Natural'	Area	Area	250mm
006	Layer	'Natural'	Area	Area	500mm
007	Layer	'Natural'	Area	Area	200mm

Table 2 - list of recorded contexts

- 4.1 The stratigraphic sequence seen during the groundworks was remarkably consistent across the monitored area, noted during both general ground reduction and the excavation of footings trenches, which were a maximum of 750mm in width and 2.1m in depth.
- 4.2 The surface consisted of tarmac, context [001], laid on a bed of 'Type 1', context [002], which overlay a mid-brown silty clay topsoil, context [003], which directly overlay the brownish yellow silty clay 'natural', context [005]. Both contexts [003] and [005] had been truncated by the foundations for a temporary classroom, recorded as context [004].
- 4.3 A lens of bluish grey clay, context [006] was noted in the sections of the footings trenches, sometimes at a depth in excess of 1m below the ground surface. The deposit could not be investigated *in situ* on grounds of safety, but examination of excavated spoil did not suggest there was any organic content. There was also no dating evidence. The lowest deposit encountered in the footings trenches lay below this, a whitish yellow, silty clay with some sand, context [007].
- 4.4 No archaeological features were encountered and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 No archaeological features were encountered and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden. The site was found to have been heavily truncated by previous building work.
  
- 5.2 No colluvium was encountered during the watching brief, and although the deposit interpreted as evidence of storm flooding during a previous watching brief at the site (ASE 2014b) was seen, there was no obvious organic content, and the deposit could not be investigated in detail or dated.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank Baxall Construction for commissioning the work and Greg Chuter of ESCC for his advice and guidance during this project. The cooperation and hospitality of the on-site contractors is also gratefully acknowledged.

## HER Summary

Site Code	KHA 14					
Identification Name and Address	Hankham Primary School, Hankham, Pevensey					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	561850 105490					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	6361					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other <i>Existing Playground</i>		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 22.05.2014 – 10.06.2014	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Baxall Construction on behalf of East Sussex County Council					
Project Manager	Paul Mason					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other <i>None</i>		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South East was commissioned by Baxall Construction on behalf of their clients East Sussex County Council to carry out archaeological monitoring on land at Hankham Primary School, Pevensey, East Sussex.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological deposits or features were encountered and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden.</i></p>						

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-181632

#### Project details

Project name            An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hankham Primary School,  
Hankham, Pevensey, East Sussex

Short description of    Archaeology South East was commissioned by Baxall  
the project            Construction on behalf of their clients East Sussex County  
Council to carry out archaeological monitoring on land at  
Hankham Primary School, Pevensey, East Sussex. No  
archaeological deposits or features were encountered and no  
artefacts were recovered from the overburden.

Project dates            Start: 22-05-2014 End: 10-06-2014

Previous/future work    Yes / Not known

Any associated            6361 - Contracting Unit No.  
project reference  
codes

Any associated            KHA 14 - Sitecode  
project reference  
codes

Any associated            WD/3151/CC - Planning Application No.  
project reference  
codes

Type of project            Recording project

Site status                None

Current Land use        Other 14 - Recreational usage

Monument type            NONE None

Significant Finds        NONE None

Investigation type    ""Watching Brief""

Prompt                    Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

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**Project location**

Country                    England

Site location              EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN WESTHAM Hankham Primary School

Postcode                  BN24 5AY

Study area                400.00 Square metres

Site coordinates        TQ 61850 05490 50.8257004645 0.29830235431 50 49 32 N 000  
17 53 E Point

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation    Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator    East Sussex County Council

Project design originator    Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager    Paul Mason

Project supervisor        Simon Stevens

Type of sponsor/funding body    Client

Name of sponsor/funding    Baxall Construction on behalf of East Sussex County Council

body

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	Eastbourne Museum Service
Digital Archive recipient	Eastbourne Museum Service
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Eastbourne Museum Service
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Report","Unpublished Text"

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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report - Hankham Primary School, Hankham, Pevensey, East Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No. 2014207



Date 2014

Issuer or publisher Archaeology South-East

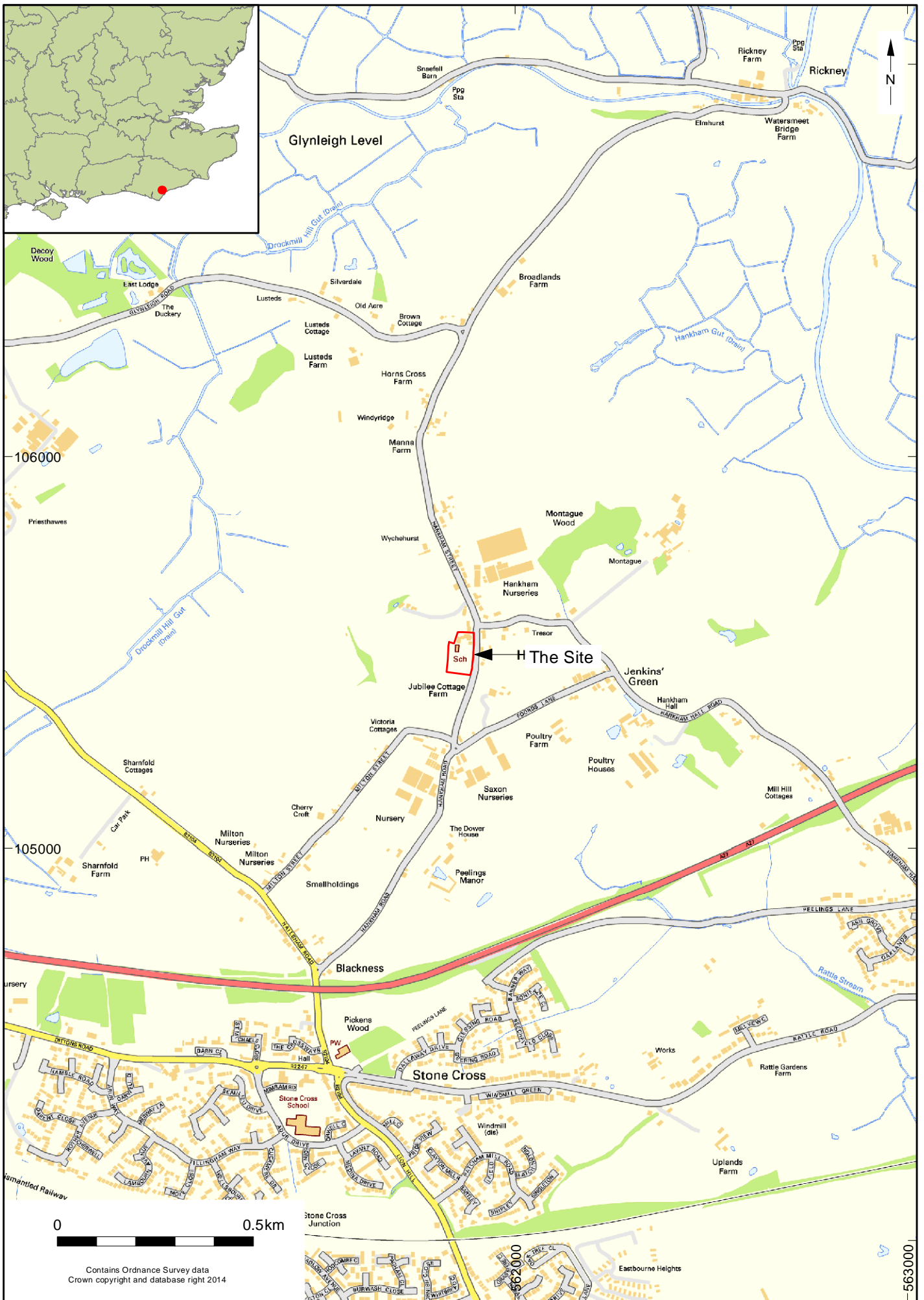
Place of issue or publication Portslade, East Sussex

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

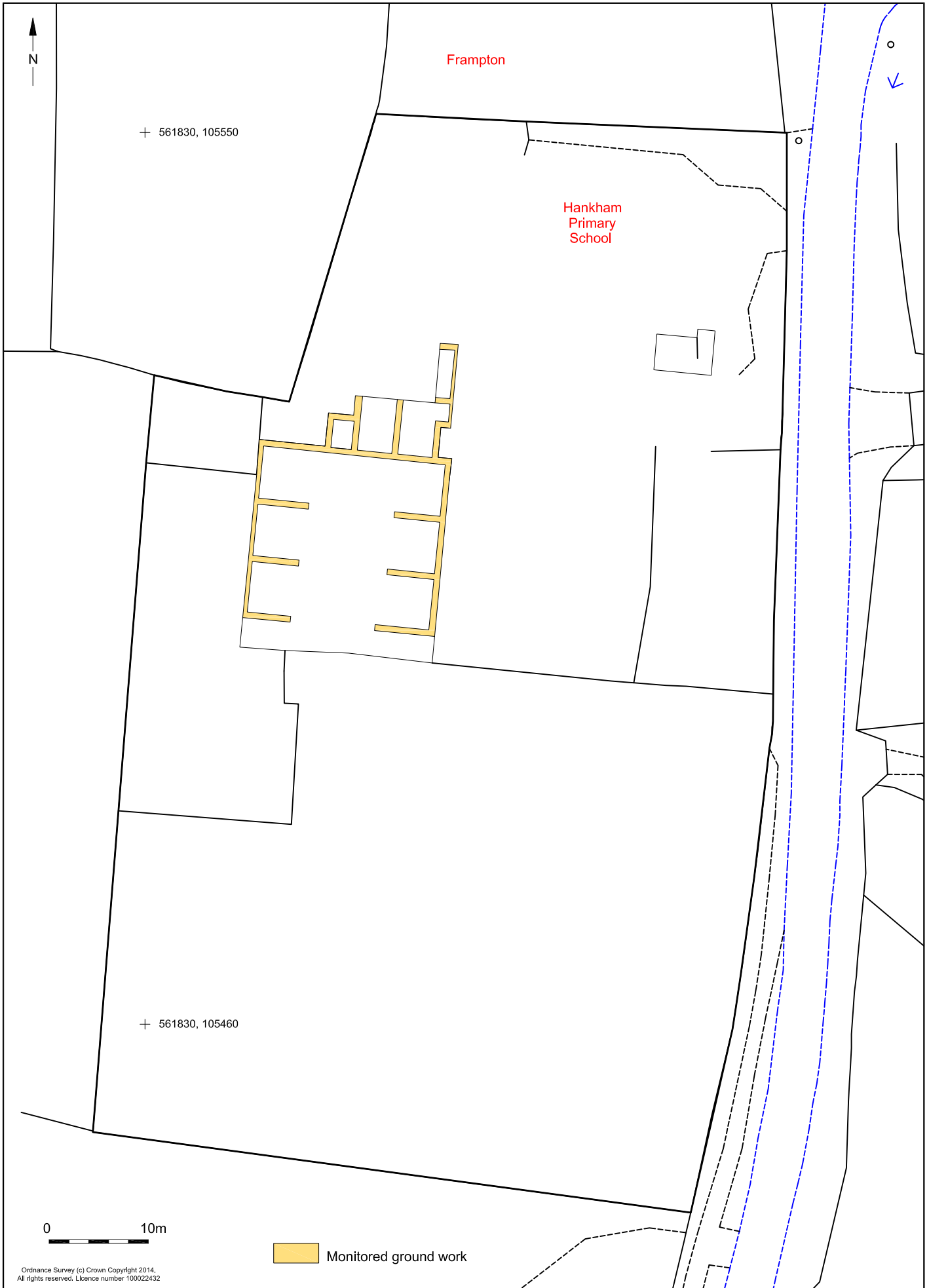
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Entered on 26 June 2014



© Archaeology South-East		Hankham School, Pevensey	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6361	June 2014	Site location	
Report Ref: 2014207	Drawn by: JLR		



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© Archaeology South-East		Hankham School, Pevensey	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 6361	June 2014	Location of monitored area	
Report Ref: 2014207	Drawn by: AR		

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