

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at Mountfield First-Time Sewerage Scheme, East Sussex**

**NGR: 574276 120054
(TQ 74276 20054)**

**ASE Project No: 6598
Site Code: MSS 14**

**Planning Reference: RR/728/CM.
ASE Report No: 2014262
OASIS id: archaeol6-185600**



Chris Russel

**With contributions by
Trista Clifford, Karine Le Hégarat, Dawn Elise Mooney**

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Abstract

A total of five trenches were excavated at the First Time Sewerage Scheme at Mountfield, East Sussex. These were targeted over anomalies identified in an earlier geophysical survey. Trench 1 was situated in the north of the site and the remainder were excavated in the south adjacent to the River Line.

The geological substrate was encountered at a maximum height of 45.96m AOD in the north of the site and 32.99m in the south. Sondages dug in the southern ends of trenches close to the River Line revealed solid sandstone geology at 29.92m and 28.54m respectively. Samples taken from deposits noted in one of these sondages contained modern rootlets and plant material and a relatively low percentage of charred macrofossils.

Early activity at or near the site was evidenced by a single Mesolithic flint core recovered from the topsoil in the southern area. Two shallow ditches were recorded in this area. One of these contained post-medieval tile whilst the other failed to produce any dating evidence.

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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) at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), were commissioned by The Clancy Group, to undertake a magnetometer survey and archaeological evaluation trenching and test pits at the location of the first-time sewerage scheme at Mountfield, East Sussex (Figure 1; NGR TQ 574276 120054).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The village of Mountfield extends north/south along Eatenden Lane and Hoath Hill, which runs perpendicular to the River Line and ascends the sloping valley to either side. The lowest point of the village is the River Line itself, which lies here at an altitude of c. 33m AOD. The southern half of the village rises up Eatenden Lane to a maximum altitude of c. 60m AOD, and the northern half rises up Hoath Hill to a maximum altitude of c. 50m AOD, where it meets Church Road running west and the New Cut running east. The railway line between Hastings and Tunbridge Wells cuts east/west through the village adjacent to the River Line, and the A2100 London Road runs south to Battle on the village's eastern side.

1.2.2 Mountfield lies within the eastern High Weald, in a comparatively remote area characterised by significant surviving woodland. Geologically, the majority of the village is situated on the Ashdown Formation. This is an area of interbedded Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone formed approximately 134 to 146 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period in an environment which was previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas. The River Line valley has superficial deposits of alluvium – clay, silt, sand and gravel – formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. At the north end of the village, adjacent to Church Road and the New Cut, the geology changes to the Wadhurst Clay Formation of Cretaceous mudstone (source: British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale mapping and BGS 2014).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The proposed scheme will extend pipework trenches over much of the village, and includes two more substantial areas of development: a pumping station at the north end of the village bordering the New Cut (Area 2) and a water treatment works (WTW) to the south (Area 1), where the River Line crosses the A2100 London Road (Figure 2). A planning application for the scheme has been submitted to East Sussex County Council under reference RR/728/CM.

1.3.2 Following the production of a Desk-based Assessment (ASE 2014a), Casper Johnson, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Archaeologist recommended the following fieldwork to inform the planning process.

- A programme of magnetometer survey of Area 1 and Area 2
- Evaluation trenching in Area 1 and Area 2

- 1.3.3 The first stage of this work, the magnetometer survey, was carried out and reported on in June 2014 (ASE 2014b). The results were used to inform the location of the current evaluation trenching. The exact locations were decided following an on-site meeting between Casper Johnson, ASE and The Clancy Group (see below).
- 1.3.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (ASE 2014c) was prepared for the site with reference to the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2009) and ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* (2008). All work was carried out in accordance with this document.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report documents the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out by Chris Russel (Archaeologist), John Cook (Archaeological Surveyor), Lucy May and Jake Wilson (Assistant Archaeologists) on the 23-25th June 2014. The fieldwork was managed by Neil Griffin and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following background is drawn from the DBA of the site, which involved a search of entries on the East Sussex Historic Environment Record within a 1km radius of the site (ASE 2014a). Elements of this document are reproduced here with due acknowledgement

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 It is believed that much of the Wealden region was covered in dense forest throughout the prehistoric period. Most of the known settlement pattern concentrates around the rim of the Weald, exploiting the better soils of the Chalk and Greensand. However, there is evidence of seasonal resource exploitation by hunter-gatherers in the Mesolithic period. Neolithic hunters may have re-used similar locations but their impact on the environment was significantly greater, as evidenced by the number of stone axes and pollen evidence for small-scale agricultural exploitation of the more tractable soils.

2.2.2 Agricultural activity from the Neolithic onwards and the presence of Bronze Age barrows (burial mounds) within the High Weald points to some level of permanent settlement during these periods. The Iron Age saw the exploitation of iron ore deposits, and the presence of fortified hilltop enclosures suggesting some level of control of this industry.

2.2.3 The most significant known locale of prehistoric activity is on the banks of the River Line in the vicinity of the later pond bay, 450m southeast of the site. A number of flint scatters and tools have been found here, including a polished stone axe sourced from the Lake District. This area is characterised by its proximity to the River Line, and the accompanying change in superficial geology related to alluvial deposits. These factors would have influenced the choice of this place, as may its proximity to the Rye-Uckfield Ridgeway. This implies that other locations on the banks of the River Line around Mountfield would have been similarly favoured.

2.2.4 The Rye-Uckfield Ridgeway, a thoroughfare of likely pre-Roman origin, runs southwest from Vinehall to Mountfield along what is now Solomon's Lane, probably crossing the River Line near the present Riverhall bridge, and continues on to Netherfield. It would have been associated with important ironworking activity in the region from an early date

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 As in the prehistoric period, until recently significant evidence for Roman occupation in the Weald has been lacking, and was mainly confined to roads and ironworking sites. Roman settlements are increasingly found by archaeological fieldwork in the region, although compared to the rest of Sussex, it is still sparse and there is relatively little evidence for agricultural activity in the region at this time.

2.3.2 The only site of this period in the area is the probable bloomery at St John's

Cross, which is indicative of the continued ironworking industry in the region. This may have been accessed from the Rye-Uckfield Ridgeway which crosses the River Line at Mountfield, and is thought to have been in use during the Roman period. A second trackway adjacent to the bloomery may have been in use in this period.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon

2.4.1 During the Anglo-Saxon period, the Weald was largely covered by the great forest of *Andredeswald*, within which the site was located. The heavily forested nature of the region limited early medieval settlement, and the iron-working industry seems to have shrunk in scale in comparison with the Roman period. Many settlements in the area originated as outlying forest pasture of manors situated on the more fertile soils. Many of the north-south aligned roads, tracks and footpaths in the region originated at this time as droveways.

2.4.2 Mountfield is first recorded as *Montifelle*, 'Munda's open land' in 1086. It is thought that '*field*' place-names in the region indicate areas used for common grazing during the early Anglo-Saxon period, suggesting that they had been cleared from the woodland of the Weald at an early date. The name 'Hoath', common across Mountfield, also originates in Anglo-Saxon terminology for pasture-land.

2.4.3 The likely continued use of the Rye-Uckfield Ridgeway would have rendered the ancient crossing-place of the River Line at Mountfield a good place for permanent settlement, although occupation by the late Anglo-Saxon period is likely to have focused around All Saints' church.

2.4.3 Before the Conquest Mountfield was held by Goda, a considerable landowner across the south of England who is unlikely to have lived there in person. After 1066 it was granted to the Count of Eu, who was based at Hastings, and held from him by Reinbert.

2.5 Medieval

2.5.1 From the Anglo-Saxon period until the beginning of the 20th century, settlement at Mountfield was centred around Mountfield Place and All Saints' church, an area which lies at its closest point some 400m west of the development area. Activity within the site is likely to have concentrated on the few dispersed farmsteads cleared from the surrounding woodland, specifically Riverhall and Hoath Farm.

2.5.2 Riverhall first appears in the documentary record c. 1190, which is a strong indication of its early, potentially pre-Conquest, origins. However, the reference may have been to nearby Riverhall Farm, which stands to the east of the village, outside the proposed development area. Although Hoath Farm is not documented until the post-medieval period, its name originates in Anglo-Saxon terminology for pasture-land, indicating agricultural activity in the vicinity at an early date.

2.5.3 The iron-working industry in the Weald became ever more important during

this period. Although there is no specific mention of it in Mountfield until 1548, any activity is likely to have concentrated on the River Line, potentially on the site of the 16th century pond bay at the southeast end of the area.

2.6 Post-Medieval

2.6.1 The greatest impact to the later history of the Weald was not agricultural but industrial as the area experienced the rapid growth of a major iron-working industry, dwarfing any of the earlier extractive phases. The first direct evidence for iron-working within the area is a forge and furnace located around the extant pond bay on the River Line, which appears to have flourished during the 16th century before going out of use in the 17th century. As it passed through Mountfield, the Rye-Uckfield Ridgeway was known in the Tudor Period as the 'Sow Track', so named from the iron 'sows' carried on it, which were long pieces of cast iron for conversion into bars at the forge.

2.6.2 Until the first decade of the 20th century, the village of Mountfield was located around its medieval centre on the eponymous hill at the western edge of the development area around All Saints' Church. The construction of the London turnpike (the present A2100) in the late 18th century and the coming of the railway in the 1850s drew Mountfield's centre of gravity south-eastwards towards the ancient crossing of the River Line at Riverhall, although a station did not open there until 1923. The road from Riverhall to Hoath Farm was built up throughout the 20th century to become Mountfield's new population centre.

2.7 Research Aims and Objectives

2.7.1 The general aims of the evaluation were:

- To clarify the results of the geophysical survey in order to understand the significance of the archaeological resource
- To identify any activity/features not visible on the geophysical survey, for example prehistoric flint scatters
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits/features
- To enable ESCC to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site

2.7.2 The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine if there was any evidence of in situ flint scatters or evidence of an early presence on the landscape?
- To investigate whether Iron Age or Roman activity is present, especially near the River Line
- To determine whether any metalworking evidence is present. In particular, is there any metalworking activity near the 16th century pond bay in the southeast?
- Is there any evidence for the early occupation of Mountfield village and its later evolution and change?

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The scope of the archaeological evaluation was agreed in a site meeting held between ASE (Neil Griffin), the ESCC Archaeologist (Casper Johnson) and Clancy Docwra (Nishil Dhanani) on 17th June 2014 and a detailed methodology was originally set out in the Written Scheme of investigation (ASE 2014 c). All work was carried out with reference to the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2009) and ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* (2008).

3.2 Fieldwork Methodology

3.2.1 In Area 2, to the north, the proposed development involved building up the existing ground level, meaning that the impact to this area would be negligible. However, previous geophysical survey had identified a thermoremnant feature in the south-western corner of this area close to/on the line of the pipeline easement (ASE 2014b). A single 20m trench was therefore excavated, targeting this anomaly (Figure 2). Four further trenches (3x 30m and 1x 20m) were located within the footprint of the proposed water treatment works to the south (Area 1; locations shown on Figure 2). A single trench had been proposed on the route of the pipeline south of the River Line but this was not excavated due to logistical issues.

3.2.2 All trenches were accurately located by means of a Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS) and DGPS Total Station (Leica 1205 R100 Total Station, Leica System 1200 GPS).

3.2.3 Trenches were mechanically excavated by a using a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Machine excavation continued to the top of archaeological deposits or the surface of geological deposits, whichever was uppermost.

3.2.4 A one metre segment of all linear features was excavated. At the request of the ESCC Archaeologist, sondages of c.2m by 2m were machine excavated at the southern ends of Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5 in order to characterise alluvial or other possible geoarchaeological deposits.

3.2.5 Following the inspection of all trenches by the East Sussex County Archaeological Advisor and satisfactory completion of all necessary hand excavation and recording they were backfilled and compacted. No formal re-instatement (e.g. re-turfing, re-seeding, etc.) was undertaken.

3.3 Excavation and Recording Techniques

3.3.1. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by Archaeology South-East and planned using DGPS planning technology. Sections were hand-drawn at a scale of 1:10. A digital photographic record was maintained including general photographs of each trench and detailed shots of all excavated features and deposits

3.4 Archive

3.4.1 ASE informed Bexhill museum that a site archive would be generated following the fieldwork. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE in Portslade and will be deposited at the museum in due course. No accession number has been issued prior to deposition. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	2
Photographs	28
Bulk finds	1 box
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	2

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench1 (Figure 3)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1/001	Deposit	Ploughsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.35m	46.63
1/002	Deposit	Natural Geology	14.03	Tr.	-	45.96
1/003	Deposit	Silty Deposit	5.97	Tr.	1.0m+	46.34.

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 Trench 1 was situated in the north of the site in the area designated for the works site compound. It was targeted over a possible thermoremanent anomaly identified in the results of the geophysical survey (ASE 2014b).

4.1.2 Drift geology, [1/002], was encountered at a maximum depth of 45.96m AOD and was overlain by a compact grey brown plough soil [1/001]. A silty mid orange grey brown deposit [1/003] was noted in the south-west of the trench, underlying [1/001] and a sondage was dug to a depth of 1.0m as an investigation but failed to reach the base. No finds were recovered from this deposit and no clear edge could be discerned between it and the more compact drift geology. The origin of this deposit is unclear.

4.1.3 A small assemblage of finds was collected from the plough soil including fragments of blast furnace slag but no archaeological features were observed

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.35	33.40
2/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.07	33.17
2/003	Deposit	Geology	Tr.	Tr.	-	32.99
2/004	Cut	Cut of ditch	1.59	0.98	0.26	31.58
2/005	Fill	Fill of [2/004]	1.59	0.98	0.26	31.58

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 Trench 2 was situated in the southern area of the site. Drift geology, [2/003], was encountered at 32.99m AOD in the north of the trench and 31.55m in the south. This was overlain by orange brown silty subsoil, [2/002], with a maximum depth of 0.60m. The sequence capped by light grey brown silty topsoil, [2/001] with a maximum depth of 0.35m.

4.2.2 A single linear feature [2/004] was observed in the south of the trench running north-west to south-east, cutting natural geology and overlain by the subsoil. This had gradually sloping sides and a flat base and was filled by mid-grey brown fine silt [2/005] with moderate manganese inclusions.

4.2.3 Post-medieval peg tile was recovered from the fill of the shallow ditch, [2/005], and non- diagnostic roof tile was collected from the topsoil [2/001].

4.3 Trench 3 (Figure 5)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.31	31.57
3/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.07	31.28
3/003	Deposit	Geology	Tr.	Tr.	-	30.56
3/004	Cut	Cut of ditch		0.98	0.26	30.98
3/005	Fill	Fill of [3/004]		0.98	0.26	30.98
3/006	Deposit	Upper Clay Geology	-	Tr.	0.71	30.73
3/007	Deposit	Manganese Rich Clay	-	Tr.	0.40	30.32
3/008	Deposit	Sandstone Geology	-	Tr.	-	29.92

Table 4: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

4.3.1 The uppermost geological horizon, [3/003], was encountered at a maximum depth of 30.56m AOD in Trench 3. This was overlain by silty subsoil, [3/002], with a maximum depth of 0.31m. The sequence was capped by topsoil, [3/001]. The overburden deposits in Trench 3 were identical to those noted in Trench 2.

4.3.2 Trench 3 was located over anomalies noted in the geophysical survey (ASE 2014b). Although no archaeological features corresponding to these responses were noted, a single shallow linear feature [3/004] was revealed, running from north-west to south-east, cutting natural geology and overlain by subsoil. This had steep sides and a concave base and was filled by a dark orange grey clay fill, [3/004], which produced no finds.

4.3.3 A single late Mesolithic struck flint core was recovered from the topsoil [3001].

4.3.4 At the request of the ESCC Archaeologist a sondage was dug at the southern end of Trench 3 revealing the geological sequence to 1.52m below ground level where solid sandstone geology, [3/008], was encountered. Manganese rich silty clay [3/007] with a depth of 0.40m was observed directly above the sandstone and this was overlain by light orange brown silt [3/006] with a depth of 0.40m, which was in turn overlain by drift geology [3/003].

4.4 Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.54	31.08
4/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.80	30.91
4/003	Deposit	Geology	Tr.	Tr.	0.52	30.81
4/006	Deposit	Alluvium	-	Tr.	0.34	30.98
4/008	Deposit	Clay Geology	-	Tr.	-	29.94

Table 5: Trench 4 list of recorded contexts

4.4.1 Drift geology, [4/003], was encountered at a maximum height of 31.08 AOD in the north of Trench 4 and at around 30.00m in the south. This was overlain by subsoil [4/002] and topsoil [4/001] which were identical to those described in Trench 2. In the south of Trench 4 the geological horizon was overlain by a possible alluvial deposit made up of dark brown clay silt [4/006] with a maximum depth of 0.30m. Although Trench 4 was sited over anomalies noted in the geophysical survey (ASE 2014b) no archaeological features were observed.

4.4.2 A sondage was dug at the southern end of Trench 4 to reveal the geological sequence here (location shown on Figure 2). This revealed solid Clay geology [4/008] at around 29.98m AOD. This was overlain by yellow grey manganese rich silty clay [4/003] with a depth of 0.40m. This in turn was overlain by the possible alluvial deposit [4/006] then subsoil and topsoil as described above. Environmental samples taken from deposits [4/006] and [4/003] revealed the presence of modern roots and plant material and but very little material likely to derive from human activity.

4.5 Trench 5 (Figure 6)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
5/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.28	30.94
5/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.14	30.72
5/003	Deposit	Geology	Tr.	Tr.	0.70	30.56
5/004	Deposit	Irregular Feature				30.16
5/008	Deposit	Manganese Rich Clay Geology	-	Tr.	0.54	29.08
5/009	Deposit	Sandstone Geology	-	Tr.	-	28.54

Table 6: Trench 5 list of recorded contexts

4.5.1 The geological horizon [5/003] was encountered at a maximum height of 30.56m AOD in Trench 5. This was overlain by subsoil [5/002] and topsoil [5/001] which were identical to the overburden deposits described in Trench 2.

- 4.5.2 A single amorphous feature [5/004] was noted in the south of the trench which was considered to be geological in origin upon excavation. No archaeological features were noted in Trench 5. This feature potentially relates to anomaly 2.12 noted in the results of the geophysical survey (ASE 2014c).
- 4.5.2 A sondage was dug at the south end of Trench 5 to a depth of 1.66m where the solid sandstone geology, [5/009] was encountered. This was overlain by manganese rich deposit [5/008] of 0.54m thickness. This was overlain by orange brown silty drift geology, [5/003], which was revealed to be 0.70m in depth.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the evaluation. Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context. Finds were all packed and stored according to IfA (2013) guidelines. None of the finds require further conservation. An overview is shown in Table 7 below.

Context	CBM	wt (g)	Flint	wt (g)	Slag	wt (g)
1/001					1	25
2/001	1	49			2	129
2/005	2	209				
3/001			1	58	1	263
Total	3	258	1	58	4	417

Table 7: Summary of the finds assemblage

5.2 The Ceramic Building Material by Trista Clifford

5.2.1 Three fragments of roofing tile were recovered from Trench 2 weighing a total of 258g. The tile was all of a similar fabric with moderate quartz and coarse rounded iron rich and siltstone inclusions. Peg tile with a square nail hole in one corner (diameter 7mm) was recovered from [2/005], the remaining pieces were undiagnostic. The tile is post-medieval in date.

5.3 The Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

5.3.1 A single piece of struck flint was recovered during the evaluation work at the site. It came from the topsoil in Trench 3 (context [3/001]), and consists of a small single platform blade core weighing 58g. A dark grey flint was selected for its manufacture. The core is very fine and regularly worked. It was used to remove small bladelets and is indicative of some late Mesolithic activity in the area.

5.4 The Metallurgical Remains by Trista Clifford

5.4.1 Four fragments of slag, weighing a total of 417g were recovered from topsoil deposits. The assemblage includes blast furnace slag from all contexts and ferrous slag undiagnostic of process from [2/001] of 16th century or later date.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Dawn Elise Mooney

6.1 Introduction and Methods

- 6.1.1 During archaeological works at the site, two bulk soil samples were taken in order to recover environmental remains such as plant macrofossils, wood charcoal, fauna and mollusca, and to assist finds retrieval. Samples <1> and <2> were taken from natural deposits [4/006] and [4/003] respectively, within a sondage excavated in Trench 4.
- 6.1.2 Both samples were processed by flotation. Flots and residues were retained on 500µm and 250µm meshes respectively, and air dried. The dried residues were passed through graded sieves of 8mm, 4mm and 2mm and each fraction sorted for environmental and artefactual remains (Table 8). The dry flots were scanned under a stereozoom microscope at 7-45x magnifications and their contents recorded (Table 9). Preliminary identifications of macrobotanical remains have been made through comparison with published reference atlases (Cappers *et al.* 2006, NIAB 2004), and nomenclature used follows Stace (1997).
- 6.1.3 Charcoal fragments recovered from the heavy residue of sample <1> were fractured along three planes (transverse, radial and tangential) according to standardised procedures (Gale & Cutler 2000). Specimens were viewed under a stereozoom microscope for initial grouping, and an incident light microscope at magnifications up to 400x to facilitate identification of the woody taxa present. Taxonomic identifications were assigned by comparing suites of anatomical characteristics visible with those documented in reference atlases (Hather 2000, Schoch *et al.* 2004), and by comparison with modern reference material held at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Identifications have been given to species where possible, however genera, family or group names have been given where anatomical differences between taxa are not significant enough to permit satisfactory identification. Nomenclature used follows Stace (1997) and taxonomic identifications of samples are recorded in Table 8.

6.2 Results

- 6.2.1 Sample <2> produced a very small flot dominated by uncharred rootlets and modern plant material. Very occasional charred fungal sclerotia were noted, but no charred macrobotanical remains were recorded. The residue produced a small number of charcoal fragments <4mm. The flot of sample <1> was larger, however modern rootlets and plant material still comprised around 95% of the material. Charred wood fragments were fairly common, although most were <2mm in size. The residue also contained moderately frequent charcoal fragments, including small roundwood and twigs. A selection of these were identified as oak (*Quercus* sp.), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), and hazel/alder (*Corylus/Alnus*), along with wood of the Maloideae family which includes hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), rowan, service and whitebeam (*Sorbus* sp.), apple (*Malus* sp.) and pear (*Pyrus* sp.). A small number of charred seeds of wild taxa were also noted in the flot of sample <1>, including corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*), blackberry/raspberry (*Rubus* sp.), goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), lesser stitchwort (*Stellaria*

graminea) and seeds of the carrot family (Apiaceae).

6.3 Discussion

- 6.3.1 The presence of modern roots and plant material in the samples suggest that the sediments are likely to have been disturbed. Overall, the low presence of charred plant macrofossils provides no clear evidence for human activity. The provenance of these samples from natural soil deposits of unknown date means that the samples have little potential to contribute to discussions of the history of the site. Corn spurrey, lesser stitchwort, goosefoots and plants of the Apiaceae family are all common weeds of grassland throughout the British Isles. The single seed of blackberry/raspberry may represent a cultivated variety, but is more likely to derive from wild bramble growing in waste ground or hedgerow environments. The woody taxa are all commonly found in woodlands, woodland margin and hedgerow environments, and are known to make good fuel woods (Taylor 1981). As the samples do not derive from archaeological features, there is no certain indication that the charred remains recovered are of anthropogenic origin. The charcoal and charred seeds may represent the burning of material including grassland flora used as kindling, or the assemblage could have occurred naturally as the result of a lightning strike. In the absence of any further information on the provenance of the remains, the macrobotanical assemblage is of very low significance.

Sample Number	Context	Context / deposit type	Sample Volume litres	Sub-Sample Volume litres	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal <4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal Identifications	Charred botanicals (other than charcoal)	Weight (g)	Other (eg ind, pot, cbm)
1	4/007	NS	40	40	**	2	***	<2	<i>Quercus</i> sp. (10), <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> (4), <i>Corylus/Alnus</i> (4), Maloideae (2)	* cf. <i>Corylus avellana</i> nut shell	<2	Magnetised material ***/6g
2	4/008	NS	20	20			*	<2				

Table 8: Residue quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and weights in grams

Sample Number	Context	Weight g	Flot volume ml	Volume scanned	Uncharred %	Sediment %	Seeds uncharred	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal <4mm	Charcoal <2mm	Weed seeds charred	Identifications	Preservation
1	4/007	2	110	110	95	0	* <i>Sambucus nigra</i> , <i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	**	**	***	*	<i>Spergula arvensis</i> (1), <i>Rubus</i> sp. (1), <i>Chenopodium</i> sp. (1), <i>Stellaria graminea</i> (1), Apiaceae (1), indet. (1)	+
2	4/008	<2	5	5	98	1				*			

Table 9: Flot quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and preservation (+ = poor, ++ = moderate, +++ = good)

7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Overview of Stratigraphic Sequence

- 7.1.1 The single trench situated in Area 2 (Trench 1) revealed the geological substrate [1/002] at a maximum height of 45.96m AOD. This was directly overlain by ploughsoil [1/001]. A silty deposit [1/003] was noted in the extreme south-west of the trench. This was distinct from [1/002] in compaction, inclusions and moisture content although it was unclear if this was as a result of natural processes or of human action.
- 7.1.2 The trenches in the southern area revealed drift geology at a maximum height of 32.99m AOD in the north-west and 30.56 in the north-east. Close to the River Line, the substrate was noted at around 30.50m AOD. All trenches in the southern area contained a subsoil which remained consistent in composition and depth across the site. The sequence in the south was capped by a silty clay topsoil which also displayed a regularity of composition and depth across the site.
- 7.1.3 Sondages excavated in Trenches 3, 4 and 5 revealed variable basal geology as well as variations within the overlying drift geology. Trenches 3 and 5 revealed sandstone geology at a maximum height of 29.92m AOD (in Trench 3). Both trenches showed that this was directly overlain by manganese rich silty clay deposits. The sondage in Trench 4 revealed solid Weald clay at 29.94m AOD which was overlain by siltier drift geology [4/003]. A possible alluvium [4/006] was seen to overly [4/003] in the south of the trench. Environmental samples collected from [4/006] and [4/003] contained modern roots and plant material and a relatively low percentage of charred macrofossils and unfortunately failed to reveal any evidence of human influence in the formation of these deposits.

7.2 Discussion of Archaeological Remains

- 7.2.1 Two archaeological features were revealed in the evaluation at Mountfield. A shallow ditch, [2/004], was seen to run approximately east to west in the south of Trench 2. Although it produced tile which of post-medieval date it did not correspond with any boundaries shown on historic maps.
- 7.2.2 A second ditch was seen in Trench 3 running south-west to north-east in the north of the trench. Unfortunately no datable finds were recovered from this feature.
- 7.2.3 Blast furnace slag was collected from the topsoil in Trenches 1, 2 and 3 and a single Mesolithic flint core was collected from the topsoil in trench 3.

7.3 Consideration of Research Aims

7.3.1 In relation to the general aims of the evaluation outlined in the WSI (ASE 2014c and section 2.7), the following points can be made:

- It appears that the majority of the anomalies noted in the geophysical survey were the result of either modern activity or natural processes.
- Two linear features were noted in the evaluation trenches which did not appear in the results of the geophysical survey. One contained post-medieval tile and the second was undated.
- Deposit survival was good across both areas: no truncation of the geological horizon was noted and no layers of made ground were encountered.

7.3.2 In relation to the specific research aims, the evaluation has provided the following evidence:

- No in-situ flint scatters were revealed during the evaluation although a single late Mesolithic flint core was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 3.
- No evidence for Iron Age or Roman activity was revealed during the evaluation
- Although furnace slag was recovered from Trenches 1, 2 and 3 these were isolated pieces and not from secure contexts. No other evidence for metalworking, relating to the 16th century pond bay was revealed during the evaluation.
- The two ditches noted in Trenches 2 and 3 to the south may represent an earlier form of land division relating to the post-medieval development of Mountfield; however these features are poorly dated and do not correlate with any boundaries shown on historic maps.

7.4 Conclusions

7.4.1 The evaluation trenches at Mountfield First Time Sewerage Scheme failed to reveal any archaeological features definitively linked to the metalworking industry known to exist in the area although isolated pieces of furnace slag were collected from both areas. Two narrow, shallow ditches were noted one of which contained post-medieval tile, the other of which was undated. Evidence of earlier activity on or near the site came from a single Mesolithic flint core collected from the topsoil of Trench 3. Samples taken from the sondage in Trench 4 contained modern plant material suggesting that the deposits here are either relatively recent or have been disturbed.

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HER Summary Form

Site Code						
Identification Name and Address	Mountfield First-Time Sewerage Scheme, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR: 574276 120054					
Geology	Ashdown Formation Sandstone & Mudstone/ Wadhurst Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	6598					
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. 24/06/12- 26/06/14	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	The Clancy Group					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Chris Russel					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p>A total of five trenches were excavated at the First Time Sewerage Scheme at Mountfield, East Sussex. These were targeted over anomalies identified in an earlier geophysical survey. Trench 1 was situated in the north of the site and the remainder were excavated in the south adjacent to the River Line.</p> <p>The geological substrate was encountered at a maximum height of 45.96m AOD in the north of the site and 32.99m in the south. Sondages dug in the southern ends of trenches close to the River Line revealed solid sandstone geology at 29.92m and 28.54m respectively. Samples taken from deposits noted in one of these sondages contained modern rootlets and plant material and a relatively low percentage of charred macrofossils.</p> <p>Early activity at or near the site was evidenced by a single Mesolithic flint core recovered from the topsoil in the southern area. Two shallow ditches were recorded in this area. One of these contained post-medieval tile whilst the other failed to produce any dating evidence.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-185600

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Mountfield First Time Sewerage Scheme
Short description of the project	<p>A total of five trenches were excavated at the First Time Sewerage Scheme at Mountfield, East Sussex. These were targeted over anomalies identified in an earlier geophysical survey. Trench 1 was situated in the north of the site and the remainder were excavated in the south adjacent to the River Line.</p> <p>The geological substrate was encountered at a maximum height of 45.96m AOD in the north of the site and 32.99m in the south. Sondages dug in the southern ends of trenches close to the River Line revealed solid sandstone geology at 29.92m and 28.54m respectively. Samples taken from deposits noted in one of these sondages contained modern rootlets and plant material and a relatively low percentage of charred macrofossils.</p> <p>Early activity at or near the site was evidenced by a single Mesolithic flint core recovered from the topsoil in the southern area. Two shallow ditches were recorded in this area. One of these contained post-medieval tile whilst the other failed to produce any dating evidence.</p>
Project dates	Start: 24-06-2014 End: 26-06-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	Report 2014114 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	Report 2014203 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	FLINT CORE Late Mesolithic
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Service infrastructure (e.g. sewage works, reservoir, pumping station, etc.)

Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX ROTHER MOUNTFIELD Mountfield First Time Sewerage Scheme
Postcode	TN32 5LN
Study area	2.50 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 574276 120054 50.8854748854 0.238357555537 50 53 07 N 000 14 18 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 29.92m Max: 45.96m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Clancy Docwra
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Chris Russel
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Contents	"Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Mountfield First Time Sewerage Scheme

Author(s)/Editor(s) Chris Russel

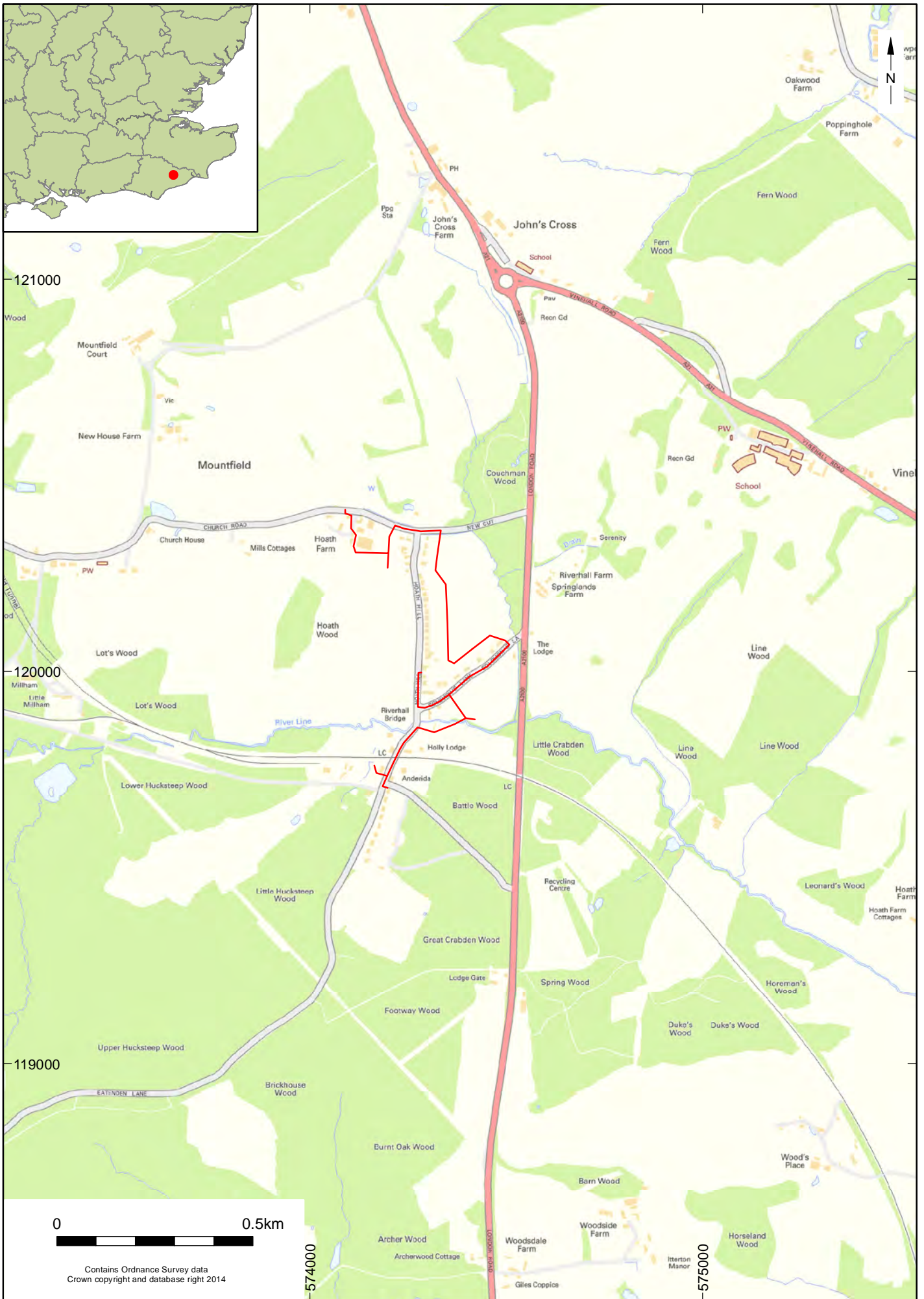
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Date 2014

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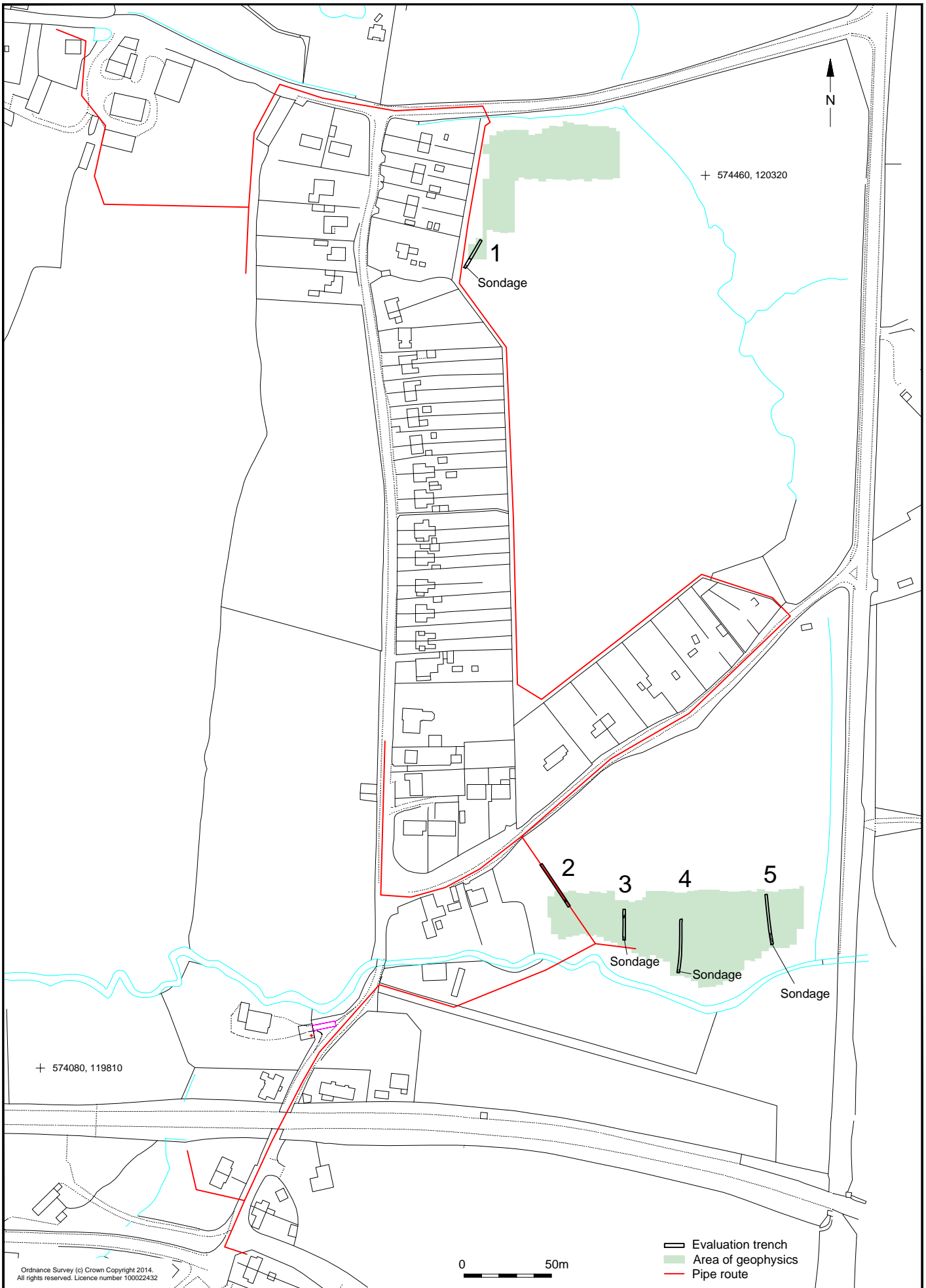
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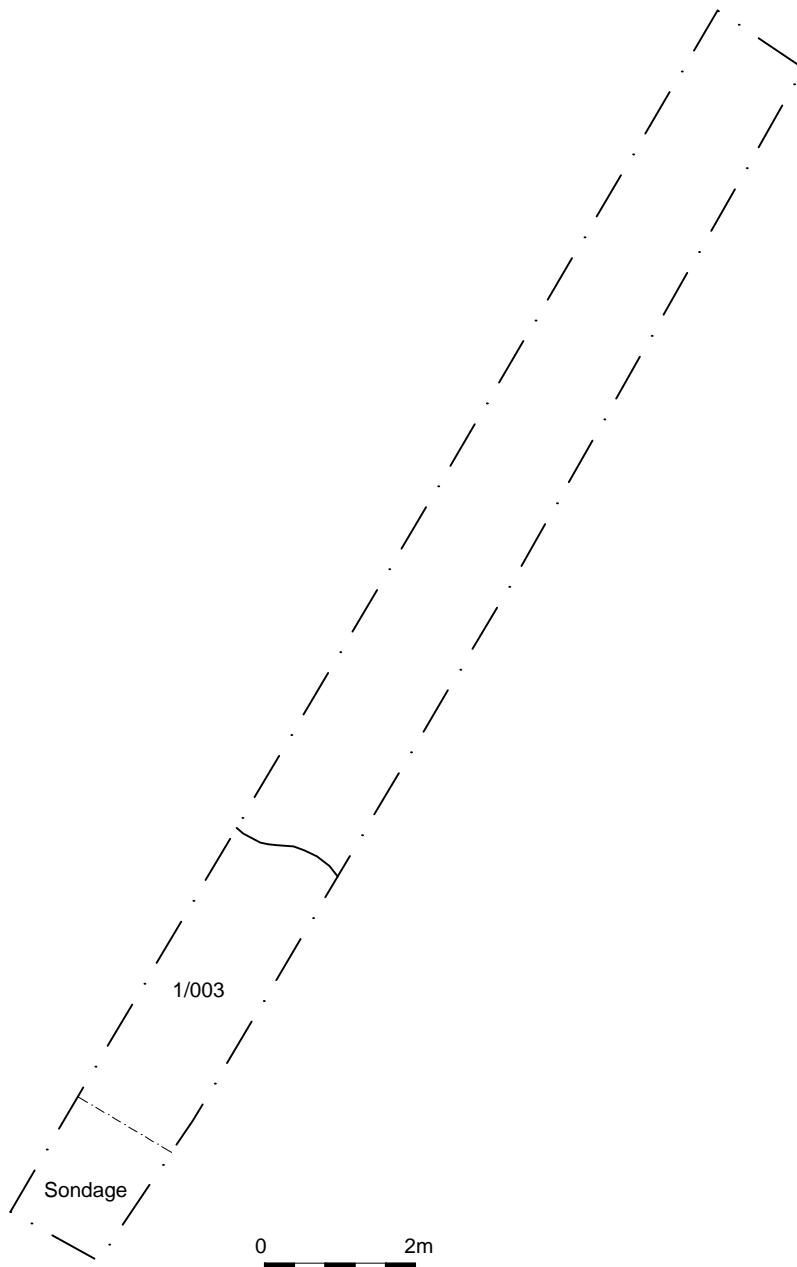
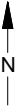


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Project Ref: 6598	July 2014	Site location		
Report Ref: 2014262	Drawn by: JLR			



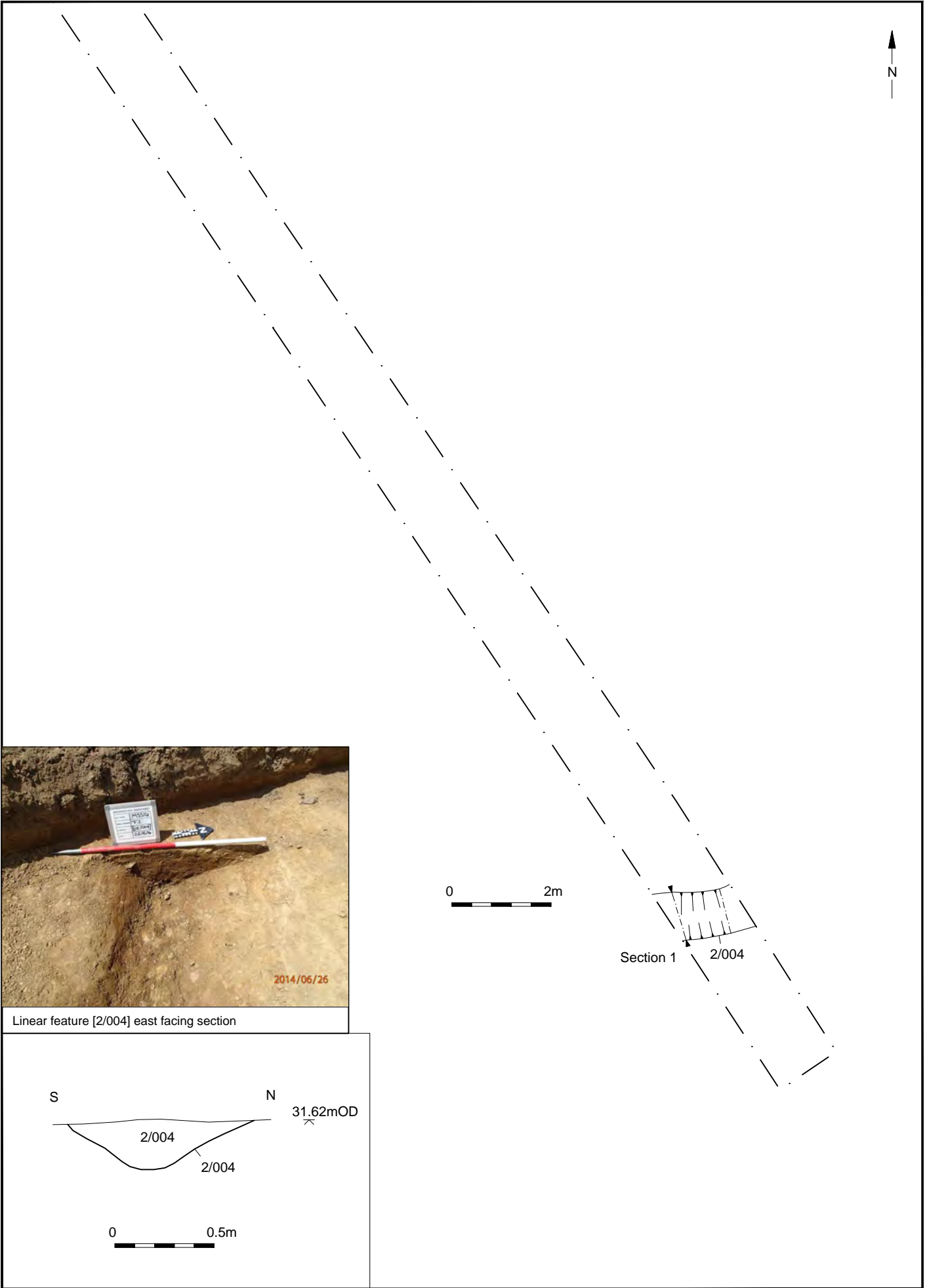
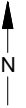
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Report Ref: 2014262	Drawn by: JLR		



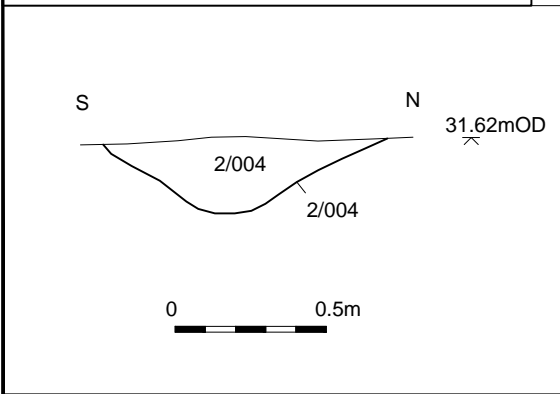
Trench 1 west facing section

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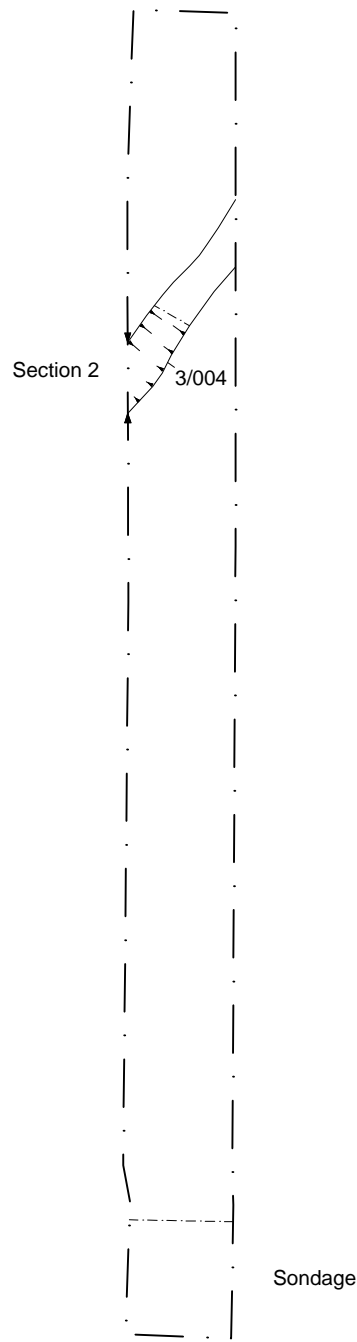
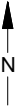
© Archaeology South-East		Mountfield First Time Sewerage Scheme	Fig. 3
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Report Ref: 2014262	Drawn by: JLR		



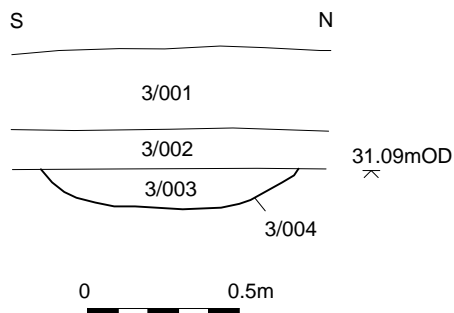
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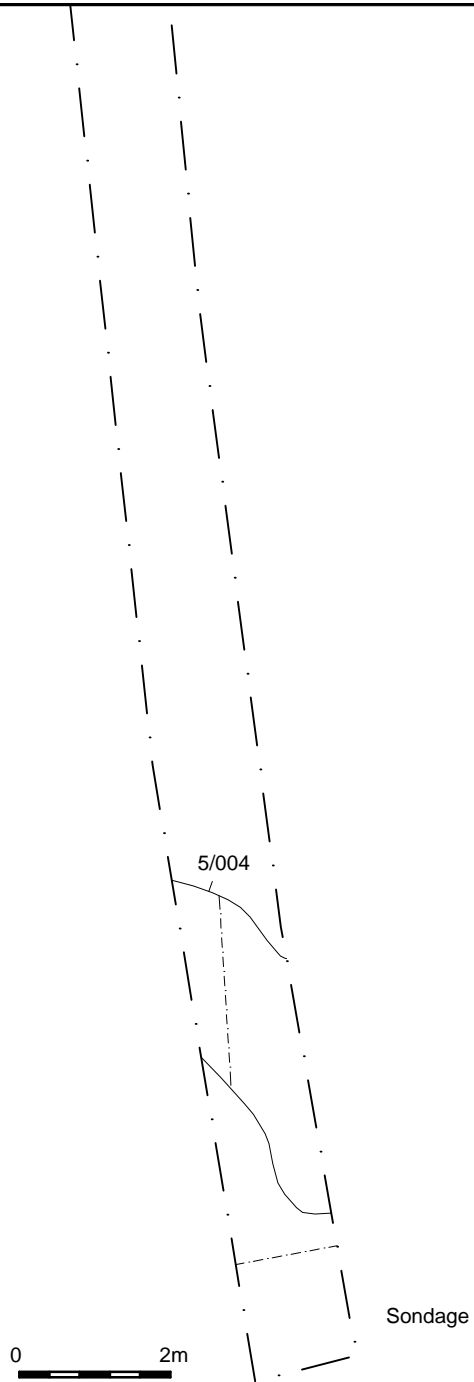
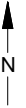


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Project Ref: 6598	July 2014	Trench 2		
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Linear feature [3/004] north-east facing section





Natural feature [5/004]

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Project Ref: 6598	July 2014	Trench 5	
Report Ref: 2014262	Drawn by: JLR		

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