

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Ockendon Academy
South Ockendon, Essex**

**NGR: 558200,181900
(TQ 58200 81900)**

Planning Ref: 14/00229/FUL

**ASE Project No: 8203
Site Code: THOA 14**

**ASE Report No: 2014258
OASIS id: archaeol6-187331**



By Dylan Hopkinson

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August 2014

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by The Ockendon Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at The Ockendon Academy.

The work involved the excavation of a single trench and a number of potential features were investigated and proved to be of natural origin or late post medieval service trenches.

A single potential undated pit was identified though this may be a natural rather than manmade feature.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary
OASIS Form

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Location of archaeological evaluation trench
- Figure 3: Pit [05] viewed looking north

TABLES

- Table 1: Quantification of site archive
- Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

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 The Ockendon Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at The Ockendon Academy, Errif Drive, South Ockendon, Essex, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is situated on the north-west edge of South Ockendon, Essex (NGR 558200, 181900; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2014), the site lies on Sedimentary Bedrock of the London Clay Formation – (Clay, Silt and Sand) with superficial deposits of the Lynch Hill Gravel Member – (Sand and Gravel).

1.2.2 The site comprises a small area of land within the grounds of the academy immediately to the east of the existing academy buildings and is otherwise surrounded by academy playing grounds and car parking. The grounds are bounded to the north by open grassland and on all other sides by public thoroughfares and residential properties. To the east lies Eskley Gardens, to the south Errif Drive from which the main access to the site is gained, and to the west lays Hamble Lane.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Full planning permission has been granted by Thurrock Council for the development of this land comprising the construction of new classroom facilities (14/00229/FUL). The work involves the construction of a single storey extension to the existing maths and science blocks.

1.3.2 As the site lies in an area highlighted by the Historic Environment Record as having the potential for archaeological deposits to be present ECC Place Services, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to any grant of planning consent. This advice was in line with guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and the condition states that:

"No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority."

1.3.3 Accordingly a Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was compiled (ASE 2014) and approved prior to commencement of the fieldwork.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 The current report provides the results of the archaeological evaluation; the work was carried out between 23th and 25th July 2014. The on-site work was undertaken by Andrew Letch (Senior Archaeologist). The project was managed by Adrian Scruby (Project Manager) and by Mark Atkinson, Jim Stephenson and Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Managers).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A series of cropmarks (HER 14665), including a number of linear features, an enclosure and a range of pits have previously been identified in the school grounds. Elements of these were investigated in 2007 during the construction of a new fitness suite and fire access track to the northwest of the current development. This revealed the remains of part of a Middle Iron Age occupation site comprising at least three, possibly four, inter-cutting ring gullies, representing the demolition and re-building of a single roundhouse over time. Two door support post-holes were identified and an external three-post structure that may be the surviving remains of a granary. Intermixed with the successive roundhouse remains were several phases of north-east/south-west aligned boundary ditch of broadly similar date.

2.2 Project Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 A project design brief was developed for the project by ECC Place Services (ECC 2014) and a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up from this document (ASE 2014). The aims of the evaluation were listed in the WSI; the general objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to determine as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains likely to be threatened by the proposed works.

2.3.2 The project specifically intended to assess any finds identified within the wider background of previous work in the area (2.1) and to this end two specific aims were posed.

- To identify evidence of occupation associated with the prehistoric occupation already identified within the school grounds;
- To identify evidence relating to the continuation of the cropmark landscape.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The ECC Place Services Design Brief (ECC 2014) required the evaluation trench to be cut within the footprint of the proposed classroom, comprising a single 30m trench on a broadly north-west to south-east alignment.
- 3.2 The trench was shortened to 23m due to the presence of tarmac hard-standing to the north and was scanned prior to excavation using a cable avoidance tool.
- 3.3 All mechanical excavation was carried out with a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching blade under the supervision of an ASE Archaeologist.
- 3.4 Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.25m to the top of the underlying natural substrate.
- 3.5 Hand excavation of identified features was undertaken by sondage and half-section. All deposits were recorded using standard ASE recording sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only.
- 3.6 Trenches were located and levelled using GPS and tied into the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.7 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned by eye, for unstratified artefacts.
- 3.8 All work was carried out in accordance with IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

3.9 Archive

- 3.9.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Thurrock Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are summarised below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	9
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	12

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

- 4.1.1 A number of features were investigated within the trench either to assess their archaeological significance or to document their likely modern or natural origins (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 In the north of the trench five small sub circular features were investigated and proved to be clearly natural in origin; these were not recorded although they were surveyed.
- 4.1.3 Approximately 3m to the south of these natural features was a larger shallow sub circular feature [05] (Figure 3). This measured 0.55m by 0.74m and was 0.08m in depth, and it was filled with a single fill of light grey silt [04]. The feature was interpreted as a possible pit of potentially prehistoric origin; however no finds were recovered from the fill.
- 4.1.4 A little over one metre further south a linear anomaly was investigated that was seen to cross the trench and was 0.80m wide [07]. This was filled with a soft grey silty fill of very similar composition to the natural [06], and it was interpreted as variation of the natural deposits.
- 4.1.5 Towards the southern end of the trench a suspected modern pipe trench was observed [09], and two sondages were excavated to confirm this into a loose gravel fill [08].
- 4.1.6 In the southern end of the trench a deposit of modern made ground was identified overlying the natural which comprised crushed concrete and brownish grey silt [02], this was interpreted as the make-up deposits for a former compound in this area. This deposit and the remainder of the trench was sealed directly by the topsoil deposit [01].
- 4.1.7 No finds were recovered from any of the deposits or investigated features.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness	Height m AOD
01	Deposit	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.18m	16.78
02	Deposit	Modern Made Ground	7.30m	Trench	0.32m	16.62
03	Deposit	Natural	-	-	-	16.26
04	Fill	Shallow pit	0.74m	0.55m	0.08m	15.99
05	Cut	Shallow pit	0.74m	0.55m	0.08m	15.99
06	Fill	Natural feature	Trench	0.80m	0.20m	16.03
07	Cut	Natural feature	Trench	0.80m	0.20m	16.03
08	Fill	Modern service	Trench	3.90m	1.00m +	16.26
09	Cut	Modern service	Trench	3.90m	1.00m +	16.26

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of results

- 5.1.1 A single possible feature was identified [05]; this was interpreted as a sub-circular pit due to the clearly defined regular nature of the sides and the nature of the fill, however no finds were recovered. A number of smaller sub-circular variations and a linear anomaly are interpreted as naturally occurring.
- 5.1.2 There was no evidence for the continuation of the prehistoric features and crop mark landscape found to the west.

5.2 Existing Impacts

- 5.2.1 A number of modern impacts were recorded within the evaluation trench including a large service cut that truncated the overburden down to the natural and an additional waste water pipe in the north of the trench which was observed within the overburden.
- 5.2.2 The construction of the former compound in the southern third of the trench appears to have involved the stripping of previous overburden down to the natural horizon, and although this may have impacted slightly on the natural interface it does not appear to have disturbed any archaeological features or deposits.

5.3 Impact on archaeological remains

- 5.2.1 Given the paucity of archaeological remains identified it is considered unlikely that the development will have any significant impact on the historic fabric of the area, specifically features relating to the previously identified crop marks.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank John Fry, the Estates Manager at The Ockendon Academy for commissioning the archaeological work and for his assistance throughout the project. Thanks also to his colleagues. Richard Havis of ECC Place Services monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological work was undertaken by Andy Letch and Andrew Lewsey of Archaeology South-East. Andrew Lewsey produced the figures for this report. The fieldwork was managed by Adrian Scruby. Mark Atkinson, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site Code	THOA 14					
Identification Name and Address	The Ockendon Academy, Eriff Drive, South Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5AY					
County, District &/or Borough	Thurrock					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR: 558200,181900					
Geology	Sedimentary Bedrock of the London Clay Formation – (Clay, Silt and Sand) with superficial deposits of the Lynch Hill Gravel Member – (Sand and Gravel)					
Arch. South-East Project Number	8203					
Type of Fieldwork	<u>Eval. X</u>					
Type of Site	Green Field X					
Dates of Fieldwork	<u>Eval.</u> <u>23-07-2014</u> to <u>25-07-2014</u>					
Sponsor/Client	The Ockendon Academy					
Project Manager	Adrian Scruby					
Project Supervisor	Andy Letch					
Period Summary						
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by The Ockendon Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at The Ockendon Academy.</p> <p>The work involved the excavation of a single trench and a number of potential features were investigated and proved to be of natural origin or late post medieval service trenches.</p> <p>A single potential undated pit was identified though this may be a natural rather than manmade feature.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-187331

Project details

Project name	Ockendon Academy
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by The Ockendon Academy to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at The Ockendon Academy. The work involved the excavation of a single trench and a number of potential features were investigated and proved to be of natural origin or late post medieval service trenches. A single potential undated pit was identified though this may be a natural rather than manmade feature.
Project dates	Start: 23-07-2014 End: 25-07-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	THOA 14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX THURROCK SOUTH OCKENDON Ockendon Academy

Postcode	RM15 5AY
Study area	596.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	558200 181900 558200 00 00 N 181900 00 00 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	WGS 84 Datum
Height OD / Depth	Min: 16.02m Max: 16.26m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Place Services
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Adrian Scruby
Project supervisor	Andy Letch
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Ockendon Academy

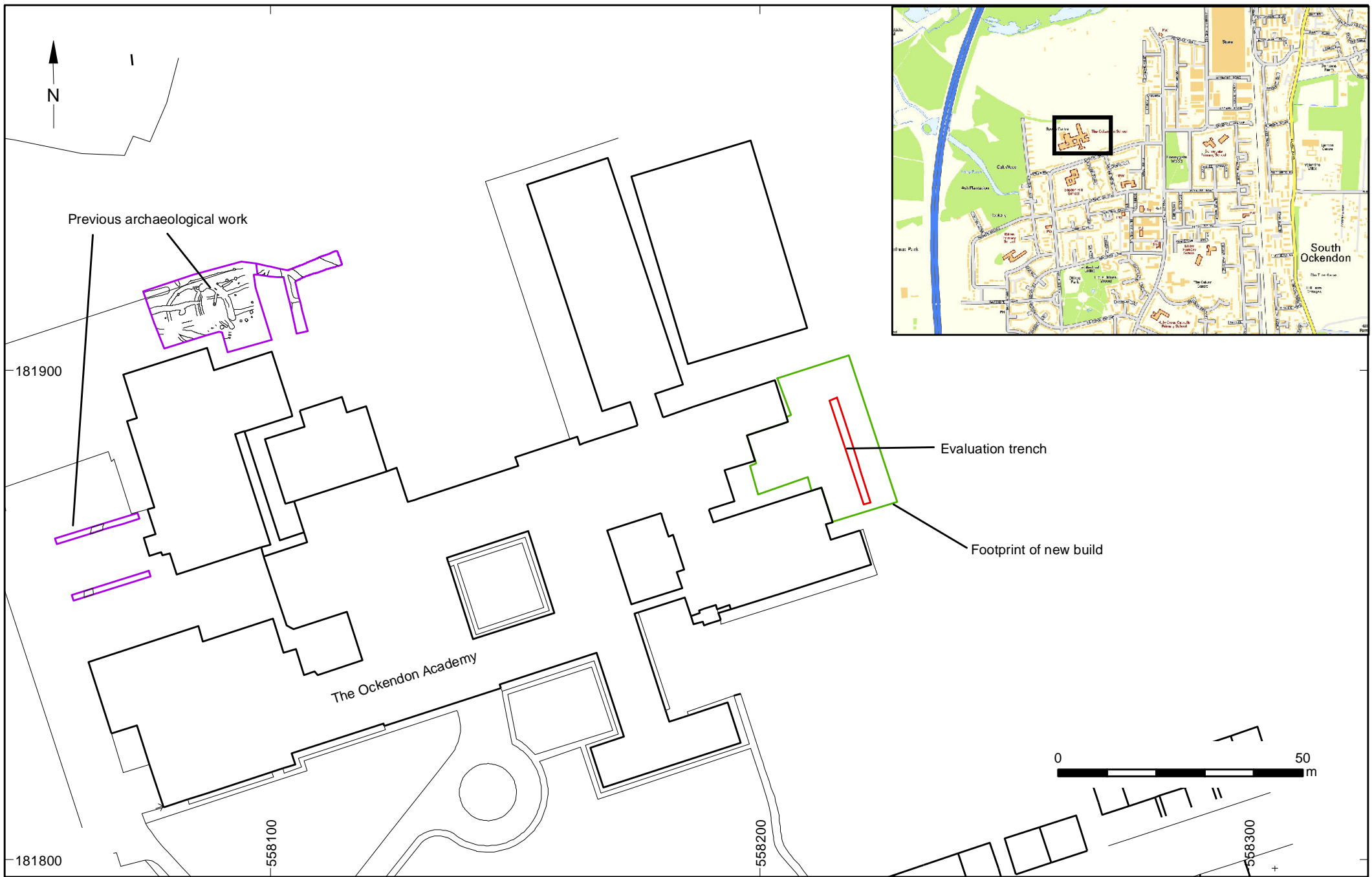
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report"

Project bibliography 1

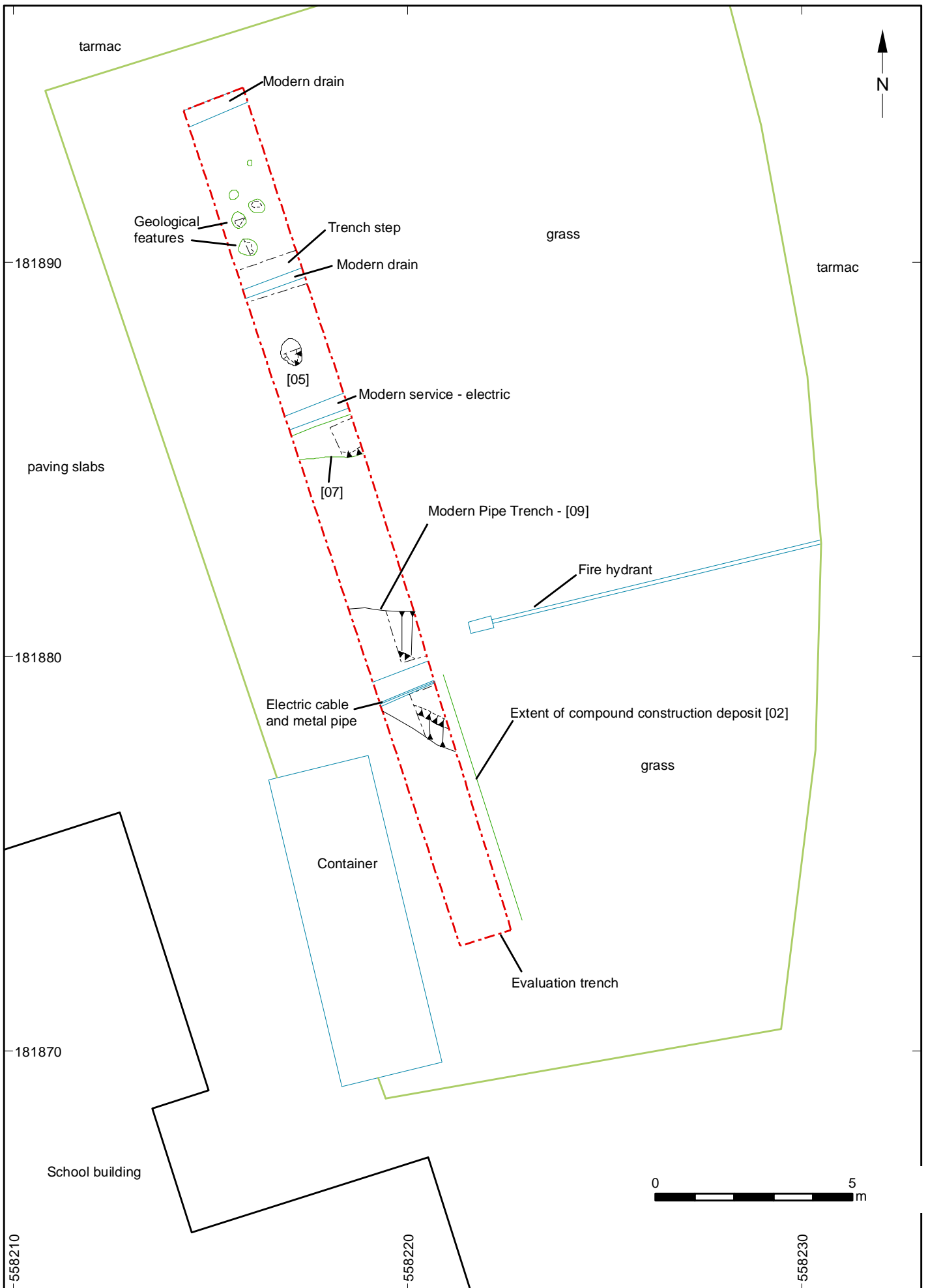
Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type	
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Ockendon Academy
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hopkinson, D.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No: 2014258
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex
Description	A4 Bound Report with 3 colour figures
<hr/>	
Entered by	Dylan Hopkinson (dylan.hopkinson@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	12 August 2014



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© Archaeology South-East		The Ockendon Academy		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8203	July 2014	Location of archaeological evaluation trench		
Report Ref: 2014258	Drawn by: APL			



© Archaeology South-East		The Ockendon Academy	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8203	July 2014	Location of archaeological evaluation trench	
Report Ref: 2014258	Drawn by: APL		



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Project Ref: 8203

August 2014

Report Ref: 2014258

Drawn by: DJH

The Ockendon Academy

Pit [05] viewed looking north

Fig. 3

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