Archaeology South-East

ASE

# Archaeological Evaluation Report
# Marringdean Road
# Billingshurst
# West Sussex

**(Phase 2)**

**NGR: 508478 124466**
**(TQ 08478 24466)**

**Planning Ref: DC/13/2379**

**ASE Project No: 6786**
**Site Code: MBL 11**

**ASE Report No: 2014288**
**OASIS ID: archaeol6-187844**

**By Anna Doherty**

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**By Anna Doherty**

**August 2014**

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***Abstract***

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake a second phase of archaeological evaluation at land off Marringdean Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex.*

*No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered. A simple sequence of natural Weald Clay overlain by topsoil was recorded across the majority of the evaluated area; in addition subsoil was noted in trenches in the south-eastern and north-eastern corners of the site. The evaluation trenches, many of which were located to target positive linear anomalies identified in a previous geophysical survey, demonstrated that these did not correspond with archaeological features. A large area of magnetic disturbance in the north-eastern part of the site proved to be the result of a widespread dump of modern material.*

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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 CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land off Marringdean Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex, the site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) 508478 124466 (Figure 1).

## 1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site comprises three adjacent fields to the south of Gillmans Industrial Estate which form a rough 'L'-shaped area of approximately 3.3ha.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2014), the bedrock geology of the site comprises mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Wealden Group; no superficial deposits have been recorded in the area.

## 1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The site is subject to proposals for residential development. (Planning Ref: DC/13/2379) and a decision on the application is pending.

1.3.2 Previous stages of archaeological work have been carried out in advance of associated development in adjacent fields to the north and north-west based on recommendations by West Sussex County Council (WSCC). The first stage was an archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs 2011). A subsequent second stage of magnetometer survey was undertaken between 29th November and 5th December 2011, covering both the area of the current evaluation and fields immediately to the north and north-west (ASE 2011). A previous phase of evaluation (Trenches 1-24) was carried out in these adjacent areas in 2012 (ASE 2012).

1.3.3 The planning recommendations of the WSCC archaeologist relating to the current evaluation are as follows:

- *An archaeological recording exercise shall be carried out at the expense of the developer in accordance with a specification (WSI - written scheme of investigation) to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing before the commencement of construction works.*

- *Reason: To ensure appropriate investigation and recording of archaeological heritage assets on the site prior to commencement of new building works.*

1.3.4 In accordance with the recommendations a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by ASE (2014) and approved prior to evaluation.

## 1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report details the results of the second phase of evaluation at Marringdean Road (Trenches 25-49). The work was carried out by John Hirst with the assistance of Lucy May (Assistant Archaeologist) and John Cook (Archaeological Surveyor) between the 4th and 11th of August 2014. The fieldwork was managed by Paul Mason and the post-excavation process by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift.

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A full archaeological and historical background was prepared as part of the desk-based assessment of the adjacent fields to the north and north-west of the current evaluation area (CgMs 2011), which included a search of entries on the West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 750m radius. Elements of the DBA report are reproduced below with due acknowledgement.

### 2.2 Earlier Prehistoric

2.2.1 The only pre-Bronze Age find from the local area was an isolated Mesolithic flint core found approximately 600m north-west of the site during a watching brief at the Western Billingshurst Housing Development (HER ref: 7143 - MWS7198).

### 2.3 Bronze Age and Iron Age

2.3.1 During the later prehistoric period the area of the site is likely to have been heavily wooded. However, some archaeological evidence has been found in the vicinity

2.3.2 A hoard of five palstaves was found at Billingshurst in 1877-1909 although the exact location is unknown (HER ref: 2904 - MWS182). Approximately 1km to the north- west of the site, a linear feature with associated worked and fire-cracked flint, possibly of Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age date was revealed during archaeological investigations in 2004 (HER ref: 7838 TQ08042614).

2.3.3 Further Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age deposits were recovered approximately 1200m north-west of the site during an archaeological monitoring exercise at the Billingshurst Bypass in 1999. Associated pottery and charcoal were recovered along with burnt sandstone identified as a possible hearth (HER ref: 7147 TQ07982595).

### 2.4 Roman

2.4.1 The route of Stane Street, the Roman Road from London to Chichester runs along the A29 approximately 70m from the western boundary of the site. The alignment of the road was identified during trial trenching in 1984, 200m to the north of the site, which found an agger comprised of iron stone and crushed flints (HER ref: 5191 - MWS4281). A similar surface was found in 2004, 500m north of the site, which also identified possible associated road side ditches though dating was not secure (HER ref: 7352 - MWS7420).

2.4.2 A ditch and associated coin were discovered approximately 350m to the north-east of the site (HER ref: 4474 - MWS3284). Roman coins, pottery and tesserae were also found along Billingshurst High Street (which follows the line of Stane Street) over 1km north of the site (HER ref: 2898 TQ08622588). These finds have been interpreted as representing the site of a possible villa or rural roadside settlement.

## 2.5 Saxon and Medieval

2.5.1 No Saxon evidence is known in the vicinity of the site and Billingshurst was not recorded in the Domesday survey. However the settlement appears to have been established by the 12th century when St Mary's Church was constructed (HER ref: 2906 TQ08752592). At this time development was focused around the church and the High Street

2.5.2 Archaeological evaluation at Stane Street, found evidence of a medieval field system possibly signifying the rural nature of this area of Billingshurst in the period (HER ref: 7352 -MWS7420).

## 2.6 Post-Medieval

2.6.1 Historic maps show that the fields currently under evaluation lay in undeveloped agricultural land from 1795 onwards. Although there appear to have been some minor alterations to boundaries, the overall field pattern in remained relatively unchanged to the present day. 20th century brickworks were situated to the north of the fields evaluated in 2012, in an area now occupied by industrial units.

## 2.7 Previous Work

2.7.1 In December 2011 Archaeology South-East undertook a detailed fluxgate gradiometer survey of the current evaluation area and of fields to the north and north-west. A number of anomalies were identified, the majority of which were linear in form and positive in response. A single area of possible thermoremanence was noted in the north of the survey area. A large area of magnetic disturbance was also evident in the east of the survey (ASE 2011). The location of the geophysical anomalies is shown in relation to the current evaluation trenches on Figure 2.

2.7.2 Evaluation in fields to the north and north-west of the site, partly targeted on the geophysical anomalies revealed only limited remains. These included a post-medieval field boundary ditch and an undated burnt pit/hearth which corresponded to the previously identified thermoremnant anomaly (ASE 2012).

## 2.8 Project Aims and Objectives

2.8.1 The aims of the evaluation as set out in the WSI (ASE 2014) were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and deposits within the site which particular focus on the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey
- 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
- To enable Horsham District Council to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site

2.8.2 The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- To test the anomalies plotted as a result of the geophysical survey.

2.8.3 The evaluation also sought to inform in the following areas of research from the South-Eastern Research Framework:

- Study of Roman lines of communication
- Aspects of the brick manufacturing industry in the post-medieval period
- The chronology and typology of post-medieval agricultural features.

# 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2014) and with the Standards and Guidance of the IfA (2013) and the Standard Conditions for archaeological fieldwork set out by West Sussex County Council (WSCC 2007)

3.1.2 It was originally planned to excavate twenty-four trenches measuring 30m x 1.8m to test the results of the geophysical survey (ASE 2011) and target 'blank' areas of the site impacted by the development. A number of onsite constraints were encountered, including the need to preserve access into an adjacent field, the presence of live services and the proximity of some trenches to mature trees. As a result Trenches 28, 33, 43, and 44 were slightly shortened, Trench 42 was significantly shortened (to c.2.5m) and Trenches 45 and 47 were interrupted. Trench locations and the locations of geophysical anomalies are shown on Figure 2.

3.1.3 The trenches were accurately located by means of a GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System).

3.1.4 Topsoil and overburden of recent origin was mechanically excavated using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation proceeded in spits until geological deposits were uncovered.

3.1.5 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned with a metal detector.

## 3.2 Recording Methodology

3.2.1 All deposits were recorded using the standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Each trench was recorded using a trench record form, including a representative sketch plan and section.

3.2.2 Digital photographs were taken of each excavated trench and a more general photographic record of the work in progress was also maintained

## 3.3 Archive

3.3.1 An archive from the previous phase of evaluation at the site (ASE 2012) has already been issued the accession number HDM 2011.481 at Horsham Museum. ASE informed the museum that the current phase of work would generate further archive material. It is anticipated that all phases of work will eventually be combined into a single archive but confirmation is still awaited from Horsham Museum. The contents of the archive from the 2014 evaluation are tabulated below (Table 1).

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of Contexts | 57 |
| No. of files/paper record | 1 |
| Photographs | 85 digital images |

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

# 4.0 RESULTS

## 4.1 Summary

4.1.1 A simple and uniform sequence of natural deposits and overburden was recorded in the majority of trenches. Across the evaluated area, natural geology consisted of firm blue-orange Weald Clay. In the south-eastern (T38, T40 and T41) and north-eastern (T45, T46 and T47) corners of the site natural geology was overlain by a deposit of subsoil varying from *c*.0.1-0.2m in thickness, overlain by *c*.0.2m of topsoil. In most of the trenches, subsoil was not present and natural geology was directly overlain by *c.*0.2m of topsoil. A full list of recorded contexts, and their heights AOD, is provided in Appendix 1 (see Figure 3 for a photograph of a typical excavated trench)

4.1.2 In the north-eastern part of the site a modern dump deposit of 0.6-1.15m in depth was noted, containing concrete, metals and plastics. It was recorded at the eastern end of Trenches 45 and 46 and across Trench 48 (see photograph on Figure 3). The deposit corresponds with a large area of magnetic disturbance noted in the geophysical survey of the site (Figure 2). Stratigraphically, it directly overlay natural geology. In Trench 46 it was overlain by nearly a metre of redeposited clay and then by subsoil and topsoil. Owing to the depth of the trench, the deposit was exposed but not removed in this area. In the other trenches it was directly overlain by the overburden.

4.1.3 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the Phase 2 evaluation.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 The evaluation generally revealed natural geology at heights of between 23-25.5m AOD, overlain by a simple sequence of subsoil and topsoil in the south-eastern and north-eastern corners and directly by topsoil everywhere else.

5.1.2 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

### 5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 The majority of the site appears to be unaffected by significant past impacts although the absence of subsoil in most areas may suggest some degree of horizontal truncation, for example through ploughing.

5.2.2 A modern dump of material was encountered in several trenches in the north-eastern corner of the site; although the dumped material did not obviously appear to sit within a cut, it was encountered to much greater depths (21.10m AOD) than the surface of natural geology elsewhere, suggesting that there may have been significant truncation in this area.

### 5.3 Consideration of research aims

5.3.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that positive linear anomalies identified in a previous geophysical survey (ASE 2011; Figure 2), which were targeted by 17 of the 24 trenches, do not appear to correspond with archaeological features. It has also shown that a large area of magnetic disturbance in the eastern part of the site was caused by a widespread dump of modern material directly overlying natural geology in the area of Trenches 45, 46 and 48.

5.3.2 The results contribute only negative evidence to the other research aims concerning the study of Roman lines of communication, aspects of brick manufacturing industry in the post-medieval period and the chronology and typology of post-medieval agricultural features.

### 5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 The negative results suggest that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on archaeological features or deposits within the fields investigated as part of the Phase 2 evaluation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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WSCC 2007 Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control), Version 2b issued by West Sussex County Council

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting Ltd for commissioning the work and for his assistance throughout the project, and John Mills County Archaeologist West Sussex County Council for his guidance and monitoring.

## HER Summary

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Site Code | MBL 11 | | | | | |
| Identification Name and Address | Land of Marringdean Road, Billingshurst | | | | | |
| County, District &/or Borough | West Sussex, Horsham, Billingshurst | | | | | |
| OS Grid Refs. | TQ 08478 24466 | | | | | |
| Geology | mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Wealden Group | | | | | |
| Arch. South-East Project Number | 6786 | | | | | |
| Type of Fieldwork | Eval. | | | | | |
| Type of Site | Green Field | | | | | |
| Dates of Fieldwork | 04.08.14-11.08.14 | | | | | |
| Sponsor/Client | CgMs Consulting Ltd | | | | | |
| Project Manager | Paul Mason | | | | | |
| Project Supervisor | John Hirst | | | | | |
| Period Summary | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Summary

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake a second phase of archaeological evaluation at land off Marringdean Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered. A simple sequence of natural Weald Clay overlain by topsoil was recorded across the majority of the evaluated area; in addition subsoil was noted in trenches in the south-eastern and north-eastern corners of the site. The evaluation trenches, many of which were located to target positive linear anomalies identified in a previous geophysical survey, demonstrated that these did not correspond with archaeological features. A large area of magnetic disturbance in the north-eastern part of the site proved to be the result of a widespread dump of modern material.

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-187844

**Project details**

| | |
|---|---|
| Project name | An archaeological evaluation (Phase 2) at land off Marringdean Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex |
| Short description of the project | Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake a second phase of archaeological evaluation at land off Marringdean Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered. A simple sequence of natural Weald Clay overlain by topsoil was recorded across the majority of the evaluated area; in addition subsoil was noted in trenches in the south-eastern and north-eastern corners of the site. The evaluation trenches, many of which were located to target positive linear anomalies identified in a previous geophysical survey, demonstrated that these did not correspond with archaeological features. A large area of magnetic disturbance in the north-eastern part of the site proved to be the result of a widespread dump of modern material. |
| Project dates | Start: 04-08-2014 End: 11-08-2014 |
| Previous/future work | Yes / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | MBL11 - Sitecode |
| Any associated project reference codes | 6786 - Contracting Unit No. |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Current Land use | Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation |
| Monument type | NONE None |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Methods & techniques | "Sample Trenches" |
| Development type | Rural residential |
| Prompt | National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF |
| Position in the planning process | Between deposition of an application and determination |

| **Project location** | |
|---|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | WEST SUSSEX HORSHAM BILLINGSHURST Land of Marringdean Road, West Sussex |
| Postcode | RH14 9GW |
| Study area | 3.30 Hectares |
| Site coordinates | TQ 08478 24466 51.0087887881 -0.453579989326 51 00 31 N 000 27 12 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 20.00m Max: 22.00m |

| **Project creators** | |
|---|---|
| Name of Organisation | Archaeology South-East |
| Project brief originator | West Sussex County Council |
| Project design originator | Archaeology South-East |
| Project director/manager | Paul Mason |
| Project supervisor | John Hirst |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Consultant |
| Name of sponsor/funding body | CgMs Consulting Ltd |

| **Project archives** | |
|---|---|
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | Horsham Museum |
| Digital Media available | "Images raster / digital photography" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Horsham Museum |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet" |

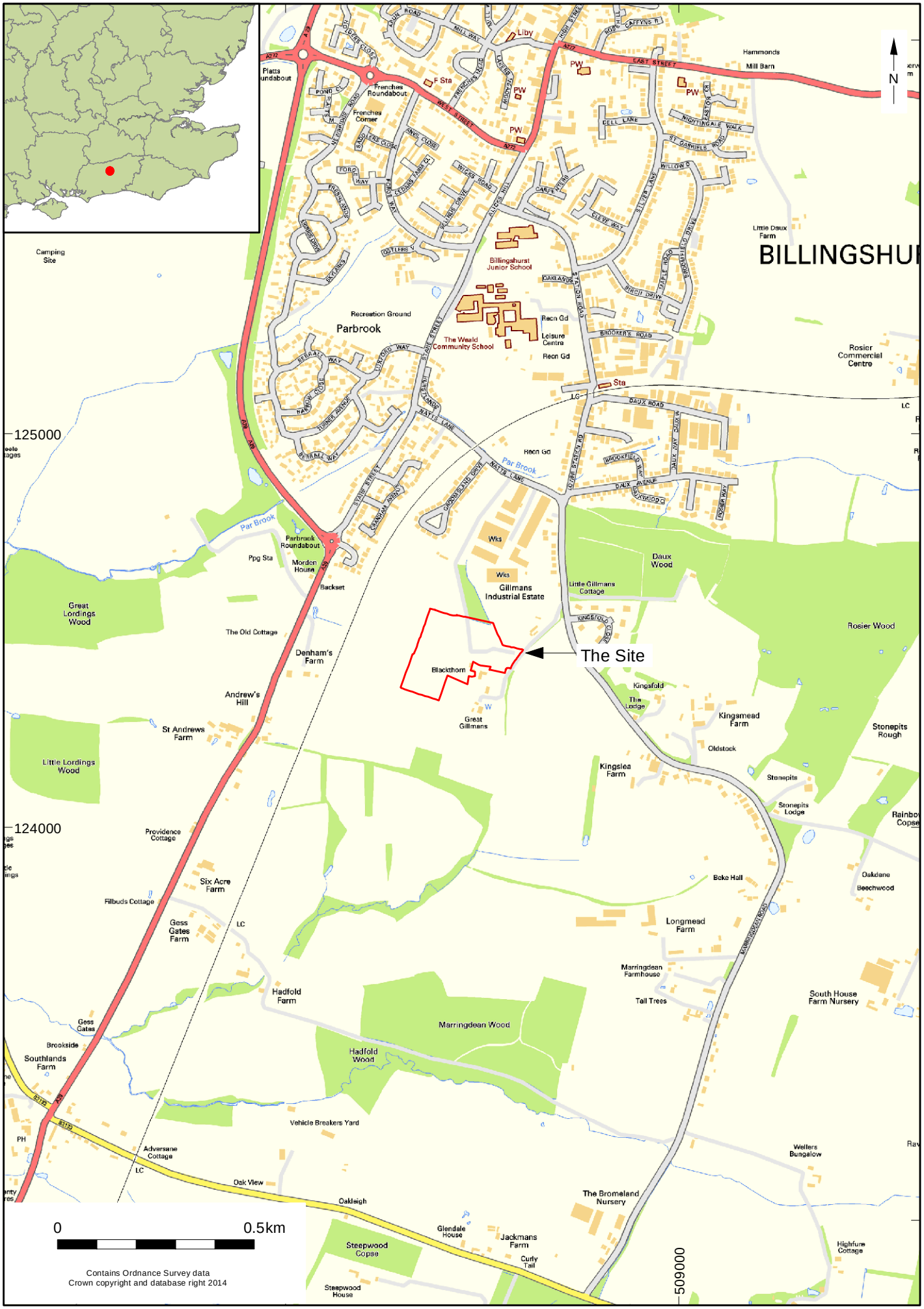
**Project bibliography 1**

| | |
|---|---|
| Publication type | Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript) |
| Title | An Archaeological Evaluation at Marringdean Road, Billingshurst (Phase 2) |
| Author(s)/Editor(s) | Doherty, A |
| Other bibliographic details | 2014288 |
| Date | 2014 |
| Issuer or publisher | Archaeology South-East |
| Place of issue or publication | Portslade |
| Description | PDF of word document with three figures |
| Entered by | Anna Doherty (anna.doherty@ucl.ac.uk) |
| Entered on | 19 August 2014 |

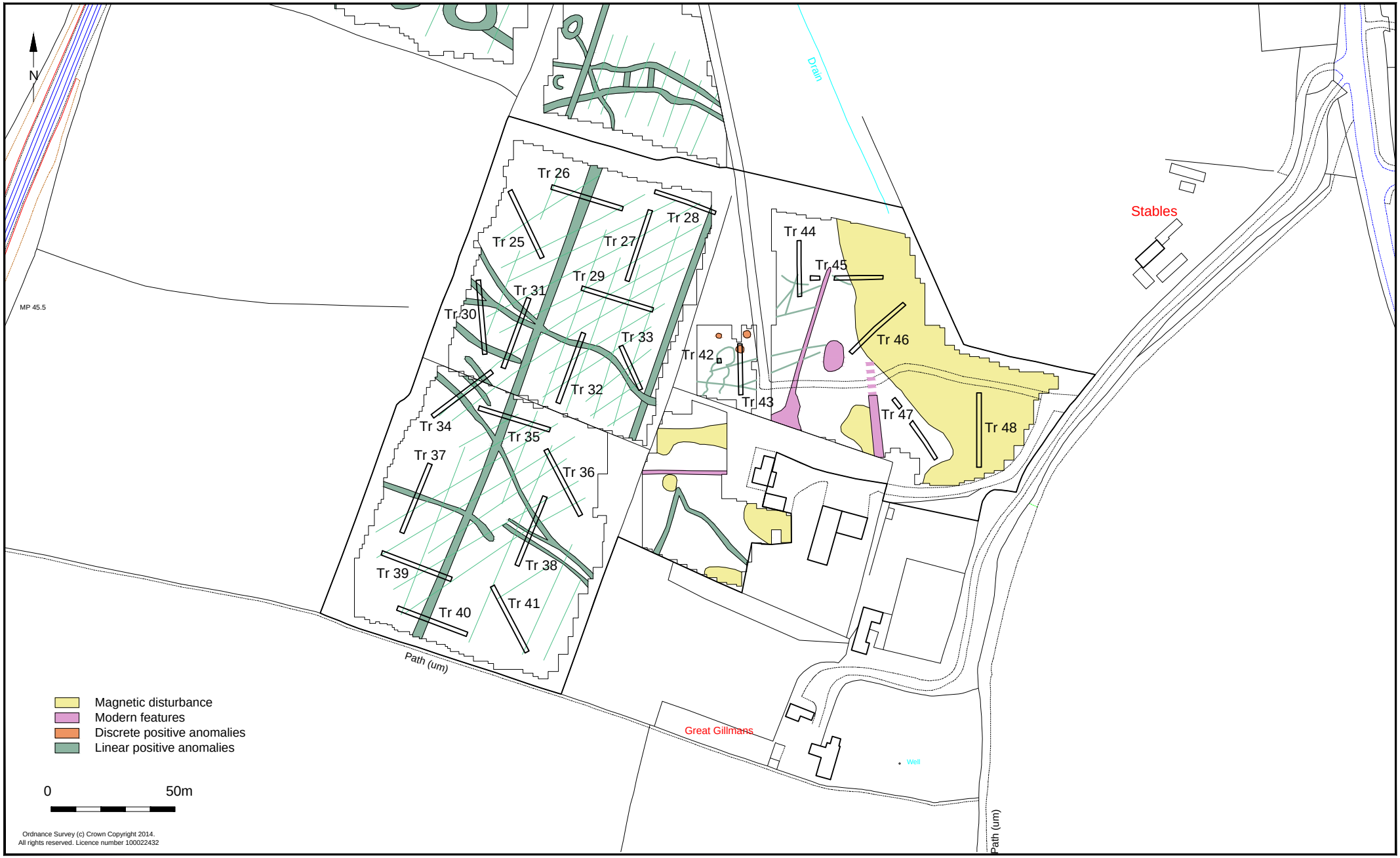
## Appendix 1: List of recorded contexts

| Context | Type | Description | Deposit Thickness m | Height m AOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.22 | |
| 25/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 26/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.24 | |
| 26/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 27/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.22 | |
| 27/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 28/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.23 | 24.31 |
| 28/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 24.08 |
| 29/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.21 | |
| 29/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 30/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.21 | |
| 30/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 31/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.21 | |
| 31/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 32/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.20 | 25.62 |
| 32/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 25.42 |
| 33/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.23 | |
| 33/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 34/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.22 | |
| 34/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 35/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.19 | |
| 35/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 36/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.24 | |
| 36/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 37/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.23 | |
| 37/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 38/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.26 | |
| 38/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.14 | |
| 38/003 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 39/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.28 | |
| 39/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 40/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.27 | |
| 40/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.14 | |
| 40/003 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 41/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.25 | |
| 41/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.16 | |
| 41/003 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |
| 42/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.24 | 24.73 |
| 42/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 24.49 |
| 43/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.22 | 24.63 |
| 43/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 24.41 |
| 44/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.19 | 23.33 |
| 44/002 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 23.14 |
| 45/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.23 | 22.57 |
| 45/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.16 | 22.41 |
| 45/003 | Layer | Dump deposit | 1.15 | 22.25 |
| 45/004 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 21.10 |
| 46/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.18 | 22.71 |
| 46/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.09 | |
| 46/003 | Layer | Redeposited natural clay | 0.97 | |
| 46/004 | Layer | Dump deposit | Not excavated | |
| 46/005 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |

| Context | Type | Description | Deposit Thickness m | Height m AOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.19 | 22.93 |
| 47/002 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.20 | 22.74 |
| 47/003 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | 22.54 |
| 48/001 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.23 | |
| 48/002 | Layer | Dump deposit | 0.55 | |
| 48/003 | Layer | Natural Weald Clay | | |




| © Archaeology South-East | | Marringdean Road, Billingshurst | Fig. 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Ref: 6786 | August 2014 | Site location | |
| Report Ref: 2014288 | Drawn by: JLR | | |






| É **Archaeology South-East** | | Marringdean Road, Billingshurst | Fig. 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Ref: 6786 | August 2014 | Trench location with results of previous geophysical survey | |
| Report Ref: 2014288 | Drawn by: DJH | | |


Trench 30

Trench 46

| © **Archaeology South-East** | | Marringdean Road, Billingshurst | Fig. 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Ref: 6786 | August 2014 | Photograhs of trenches 30 and 46 | |
| Report Ref: 2014288 | Drawn by: DJH | | |

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