

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Wildernesse School, Seal Hollow Road
Sevenoaks, Kent**

**NGR: 554111 156623
(TQ 5411 5662)**

Planning Ref: KCC/SE/0375/2013

**ASE Project No: 7189
Site Code: WLD15**

**ASE Report No: 2015225
OASIS id: archaeol6-216146**



By Hayley Nicholls



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Prepared by:	Hayley Nicholls	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dan Swift	Project Manager	
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**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the redevelopment of the former Wildernesse School site, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent.

No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were identified in Areas 1 to 3. Extensive truncation from a previous structure was identified in Area 5 and the depth of Area 4 did not extend beyond the topsoil.

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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 Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the redevelopment of the former Wildernesse School site, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent (NGR 554111 156623; Figures 1 and 2)

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the latest data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2015) the underlying solid geology of the site comprises Folkestone Formation sandstone. No superficial overlying deposits are recorded.

1.2.2 The site is irregular in shape and lies on a gentle north-east facing slope with the highest point at c. 97m AOD towards the south-west corner falling to c. 88m AOD in the north-east corner.

1.2.3 The south-west corner of the site primarily comprised of the Wildernesse School buildings whilst the north-west, north-east and south-east corners comprised sports pitches and open areas. The site is bounded by Seal Hollow Road to the west, London Road to the north, Summerhouse Wood, playing fields and parkland to the east and by the rear gardens of properties fronting onto Wildernesse Avenue and Seal Hollow Road to the south.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site comprising the demolition of existing buildings, the retention and refurbishment of the existing sports centre, and the construction of a new secondary school, associated access, car parking and surface water drainage scheme. Following the advice of the Archaeological Adviser, the LPA placed the following condition on the planning consent:

AR1 No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

1.3.2 ASE was subsequently commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks of the site in line with a specification produced by the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group (KCCHCG 2014).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The objectives of the archaeological investigation, as set out in the specification (ibid.), were to observe, excavate and record archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area and ensure suitable specialist observation close to sensitive archaeological sites.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the results the watching brief carried out during between 7th April and 4th June 2015. The fieldwork was managed by Paul Mason and the post-excavation work by Dan Swift.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The following background material is derived from the specification (ibid.) with due acknowledgement.
- 2.1.2 The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded in the HER.
- 2.1.3 The site lies within an area of general archaeological potential associated with prehistoric and post medieval activity. A Bronze Age barrow is located, c.220m to the west, indicating Bronze Age activity in the area. This barrow is a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.1.4 The site also was occupied by a farm complex known as Wildernesse Farm. It is quite a substantial complex identifiable on the 1st Ed OS map and remains associated with this farming establishment may survive.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The archaeological methodology was set out in the specification (ibid.). All work was carried out in accordance with this document and in line with professional standards and guidelines (ClfA 2014a; 2014b).

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

3.2.1 Five areas of groundworks were identified for archaeological monitoring. All other groundworks were located over areas of previously existing buildings where the depth of prior impact was assessed and it was determined that no archaeological remains would survive.

3.2.2 The five areas monitored comprised a pond (Area 1), two deep drain runs associated with the pond (Areas 2 and 3), a large area strip to the west of the pond (Area 4) and the foundation cut for the east wall of the east wing of the Trinity School Building (Area 5).

3.2.3 All works were undertaken with a machine excavator equipped with a toothless bucket except where ground conditions made it necessary to use a bucket with teeth.

3.2.4 Contexts revealed during the watching brief were numbered sequentially from [001]. A digital photographic record of the work was kept and is included in the site archive.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited with an appropriate local museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	13
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	43
Permatrace sheets	0

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

4.0 RESULTS

(Figure 2)

4.1 Area 1 monitored between 07/04/15 to 17/04/15

- 4.1.1 The excavation of a balancing pond in the north-east corner of the site (Area 1) revealed no archaeological finds or features.
- 4.1.2 The area measured c. 88m x 63m and had a maximum depth of c. 3m.
- 4.1.3 The natural geology comprised a mid-grey-yellow sand and was encountered at depths of between 0.7m and 1.0m below ground level.
- 4.1.4 The natural substrate was overlain by a subsoil deposit of mid-brown-yellow-grey sandy clay measuring between 0.45m and 0.55m in thickness.
- 4.1.5 The subsoil was in turn overlain by a topsoil deposit of friable dark grey-brown loam with inclusions of slate, clay pipe, and ceramic building material (CBM). The topsoil measured between 0.35m and 0.45m in depth.
- 4.1.6 An alluvial deposit was identified during the excavation of a manhole immediately south-west and associated with the pond. The alluvium comprised a mottled mid orange-brown-yellow clay with a depth greater than 2.05m. The alluvium was overlain by a subsoil and topsoil as described above.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
001	Layer	Topsoil	Area	Area	0.35-0.45
002	Layer	Subsoil	Area	Area	0.45-0.55
003	Layer	Natural	Area	Area	>2.0
004	Layer	Alluvium	2	2	>2.05

Table 2: Area 1; List of recorded contexts

4.2 Areas 2 and 3 monitored between 07/04/15 to 17/04/15

4.2.1 Area 2 comprised an east-west aligned trench running between proposed car parks in the north-west of the site area to a balancing pond in the north-east of the site. Area 3 comprised a north-north-east to south-south-west aligned trench running between the all-weather playing pitches and the balancing pond. No archaeological finds or features were identified during the monitoring of the groundworks in these areas.

4.2.2 Area 2 measured c. 130m x 1.0m and had a maximum depth of between c. 0.7m and 3m below ground level. Area 3 measured c. 70m x 1.0m and had a maximum depth of between c. 0.7m and 3m below ground level.

4.2.3 The sequence of deposits was the same as in Area 1 except that no alluvium was identified in Area 2. An alluvium, matching the consistency of that in Area 1, with a maximum depth of 0.5m was identified in Area 3.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
005	Layer	Topsoil	Area	Area	0.35
006	Layer	Subsoil	Area	Area	0.45
007	Layer	Natural	Area	Area	>2.0
008	Layer	Alluvium	XX	1	0.5

Table 3: Areas 2 and 3; List of recorded contexts

4.3 Area 4 monitored between 07/04/15 to 17/04/15

4.3.1 Area 4 comprised a ground reduction strip to the west of the balancing pond. The measured c. 76m x 38m and had a maximum depth of c. 0.15m – 0.2m below ground level. No archaeological finds or features were identified during the monitoring of the groundworks in these areas.

4.3.3 The depth of groundworks did not extend below the topsoil.

4.4 Area 5 monitored 04/06/15

4.4.1 The excavation of the east wall of the east wing of the Trinity School building revealed no archaeological finds or features.

4.1.2 The area measured c. 51m long, between 8m and 10m wide and between 1m and 3m deep.

4.1.3 The natural geology comprised a mid-yellow-orange sand and was encountered at depths of between 0.5m below ground level at the south end of the trench and 2.5m below ground level at the north end.

4.1.4 The natural substrate was overlain by a substantial deposit of disturbed, back-filled ground comprising dark brown silt sand with frequent inclusions of concrete, and plastic. The extensive disturbance of the natural substrate at the north end of the trench appeared to correspond with the footprint of a previously existing, recently demolished building.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
009	Layer	Modern back-fill	Area	Area	0.5-2.5
010	Layer	Natural	Area	Area	>0.5

Table 4: Area 5; List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 5.1.1 Areas 1 to 3 all revealed a similar sequence of deposits with soft mid grey-yellow quaternary sands overlain by subsoil and topsoil.
- 5.1.2 The only variation to the above sequence was an alluvial deposit which was identified overlying the natural substrate in the south-west corner of Area 1 and the north end of Area 3.
- 5.1.3 The depth of groundworks in Area 4 was deep enough to only assess the topsoil. No underlying deposits were visible.
- 5.1.4 Extensive modern truncation from a recently demolished building had truncated the topsoil and subsoil deposits in Area 5. The natural substrate was overlain by a substantial back-fill deposit in this area.
- 5.1.3 The undisturbed natural geology was encountered at depths of between 0.5m and 2.5m below ground level across the monitored areas.
- 5.1.5 No archaeological finds or features were identified within this phase of works.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 5.2.1 Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were identified across Areas 1 to 3. Groundworks in Area 4 were not sufficiently deep to assess the presence of subsoil. No topsoil or subsoil was identified in Area 5 where extensive modern disturbance had truncated these deposits.
- 5.2.2 The minimum depth of overburden over the natural geology was 0.5m.

5.3 Consideration of research aims and objectives

- 5.3.1 The objectives of the archaeological investigation were to observe, excavate and record archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area and ensure suitable specialist observation close to sensitive archaeological site.
- 5.3.2 The archaeological investigations succeeded in their objectives. There was no evidence for archaeological remains within the site area.

5.4 Conclusions

- 5.4.1 No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were identified in Areas 1 to 3. Extensive truncation from a previous structure was identified in Area 5 and the depth of Area 4 did not extend beyond the topsoil.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Wilmott Dixon for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers County Archaeologist for Kent County Council for her guidance and monitoring. The excavation was directed by Simon Stevens with Ed Blinkhorn and Hayley Nicholls providing secondary supervisory cover. The author would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the excavations. Justin Russell produced the figures for this report; Paul Mason project managed the excavations and Dan Swift project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site Code	WLD15				
Identification Name and Address	Wildernesse School, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks				
County, District &/or Borough	Kent				
OS Grid Refs.	554111 156623				
Geology	Folkestone Formation sandstone				
Arch. South-East Project Number	7189				
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief		
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork			WB. 07/04/15 – 04/06/15		
Sponsor/Client	Wilmott Dixon				
Project Manager	Paul Mason				
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens				
Period Summary					
				Other Modern	
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the redevelopment of the former Wildernesse School site, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were identified in Areas 1 to 3. Extensive truncation from a previous structure was identified in Area 5 and the depth of Area 4 did not extend beyond the topsoil.</i></p>					

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-216146

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief At Wildernesse School, Sevenoaks, Kent
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the redevelopment of the former Wildernesse School site, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks. Undisturbed topsoil and subsoil deposits were identified in Areas 1 to 3. Extensive truncation from a previous structure was identified in Area 5 and the depth of Area 4 did not extend beyond the topsoil.
Project dates	Start: 07-04-2015 End: 04-06-2015
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WLD15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS SEAL Wildernesse School, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks, Kent.
Postcode	TN13 3SN
Study area	11.60 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 554111 156623 50.9188858915 0.21126609482 50 55 07 N 000 12 40 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 87.00m Max: 96.50m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	ASE

Project director/manager Paul Mason

Project supervisor Simon Stevens

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Wilmott Dixon

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Local Museum

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Correspondence","Photograph","Plan","Report","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Nicholls, H

Other bibliographic details 2015255

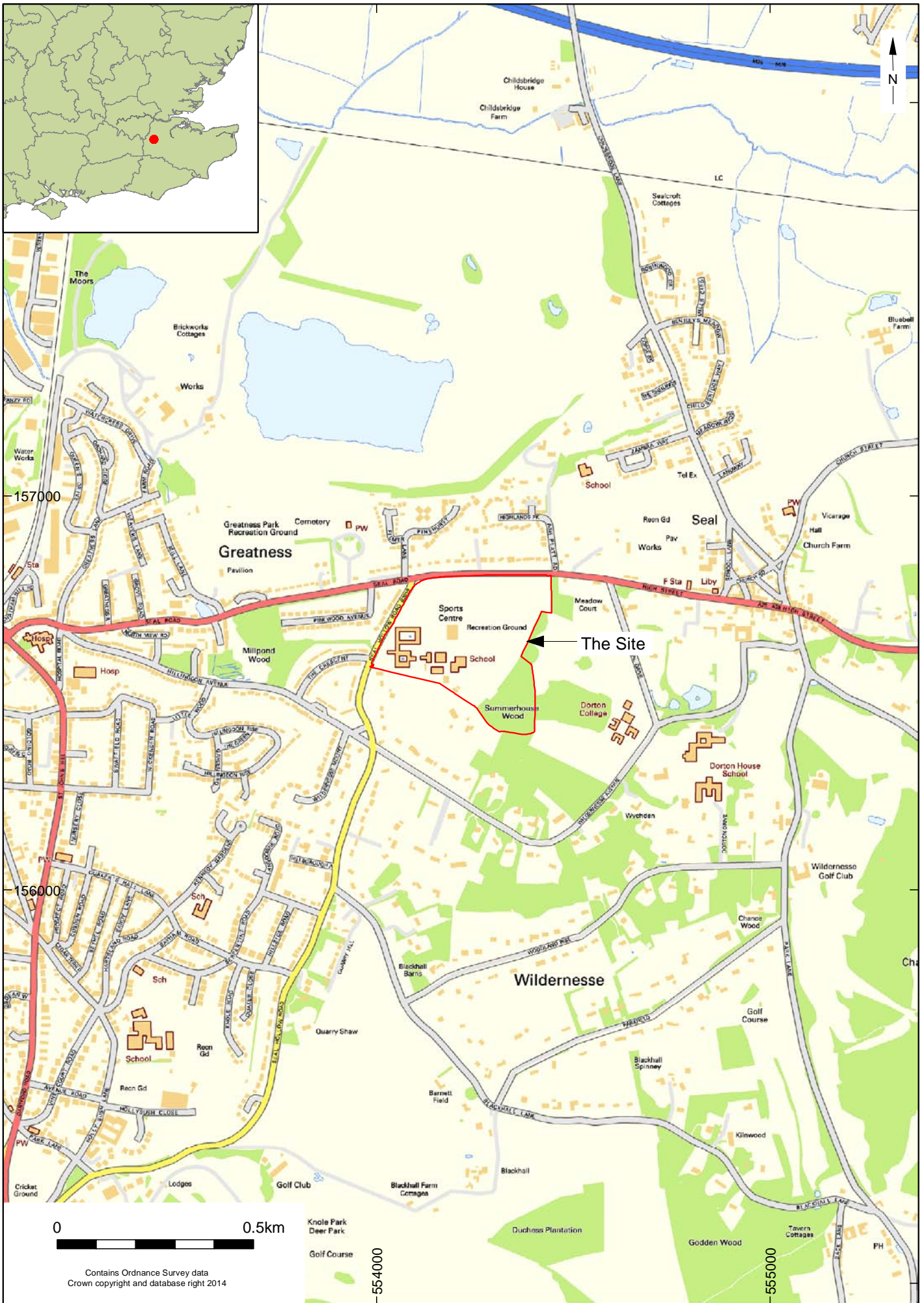
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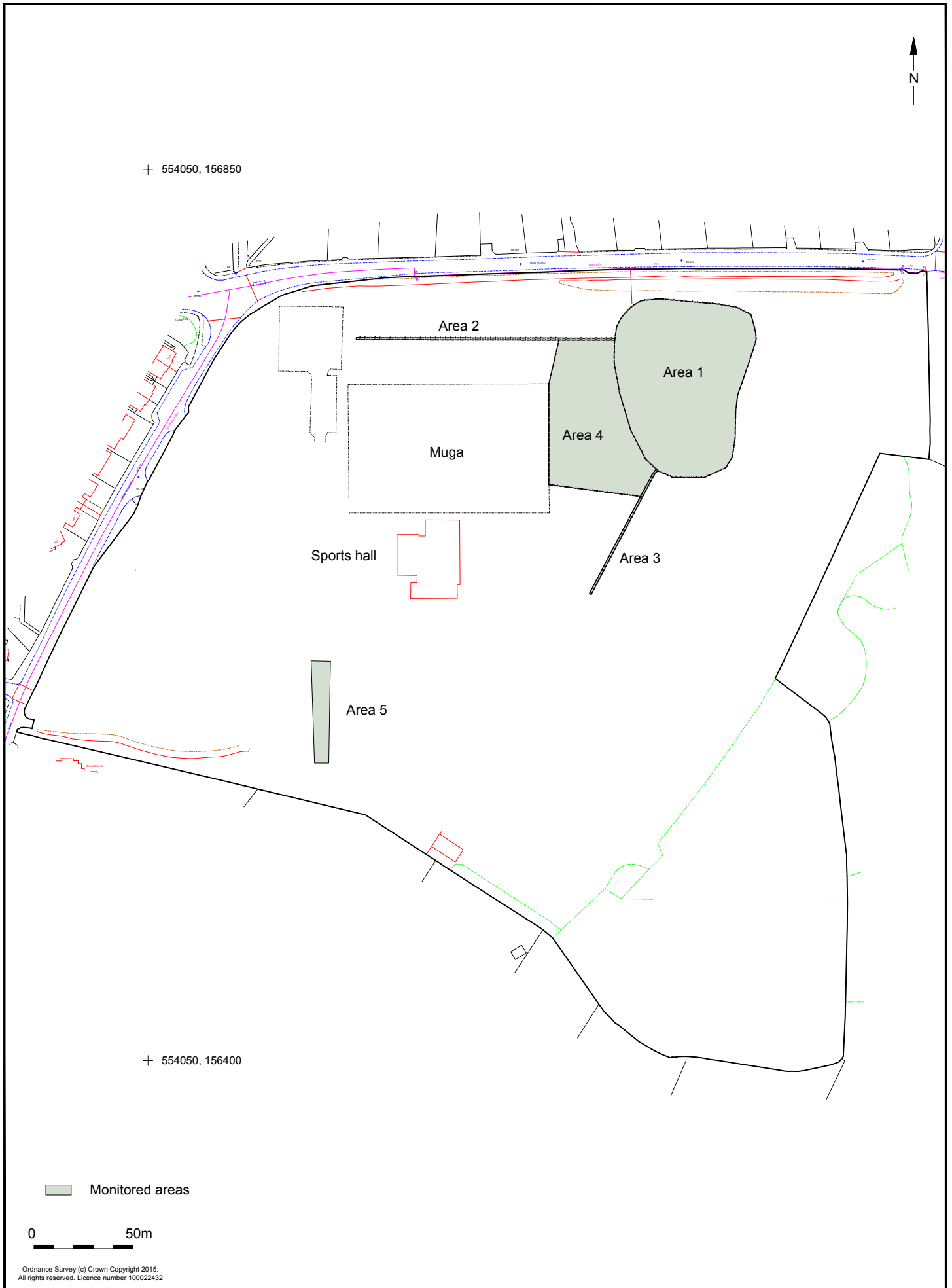
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Project Ref: 7189	June 2015	Site location		
Report Ref: 2015255	Drawn by: JLR			



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© Archaeology South-East		Wildernesse School, Seal Hollow Road, Sevenoaks	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7189	June 2015	Plan of monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2015255	Drawn by: JLR		

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

The Old Magistrates Court
79 South Street
Braintree
Essex CM7 3QD
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

