

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent**

NGR: 556456 140709

Planning Ref: TW/14/504142

**ASE Project No: 7312
Site Code: BBS 15**

**ASE Report No: 2015197
OASIS id: archaeol6-216201**

**By Benjamin Sleep
and
Diccon Hart**



JULY 2015

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Faithful+Gould, on behalf of their client, Kent County Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the extension of Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells.

Two areas were subject to archaeological monitoring, although significant modern truncation was noted in both areas. The underlying natural Ardingly Sandstone was observed between 92.32m OD in the southern area and 91.80m OD in the northern area. In the northernmost area, the natural geology was overlain by a subsoil horizon that survived around the perimeter of the monitored area only; much of the area had been subject to severe truncation from excavations for a former swimming pool. In the southern area the absence of any such subsoil horizon suggests extensive horizontal truncation across the monitored area. In both areas, thick deposits of recent made ground were observed overlying natural geology or subsoil.

A modern soakaway, infilled with fragments of furnace lining was noted in the southern area. No other archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the monitoring.

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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 (IoA), University College London (UCL), was commissioned by Faithful+Gould on behalf of Kent County Council (KCC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated the extension of Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 556456 140709 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

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 Ardingly Sandstone Member.

1.2.2 The site comprises an irregular plot measuring some 5.5 hectares in extent. It is bounded by Broomhill Road to the east, by Lower Green Road to the west by Rusthall Coachworks to the south and by pasture to the north. The existing school buildings are situated on piece of land occupying a gentle north-east facing slope with altitudes ranging from 94m to 96m AOD. To the west of the school buildings and lawn areas the terrain drops down sharply to 77m AOD; this slope is densely wooded.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for minor development works on Broomhill Bank School, comprising the construction of a new dance studio, changing room and extension to three existing classrooms, including new external ramp and steps (Planning reference TW/14/504142). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, as outlined in a prior *Desk Based Assessment* of the site (ASE 2014), condition 8 of the Decision Notice stated that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant(s), or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the County Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded; the watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority.'

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

1.3.2 Accordingly, a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) which outlined the scope of the required archaeological works was prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2015) and duly approved by the KCC Heritage Conservation Unit. All works were carried out in accordance with this document and with the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a; 2014b) and Kent County Council's Manual of Specifications (KCC 2011).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief were set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ASE 2015) and are reproduced below with due acknowledgement.

- To record the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any archaeological remains and deposits on site.
- To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site.

1.4.2 Specific research aims with regard to the known archaeological background to the site were:

- Identify any evidence of post-medieval activity on the site.

1.4.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results carried out between 10th March and 15th May 2015 by Catherine Douglas, Suzie Westall and Greg Priestley-Bell. The fieldwork was managed by Darryl Palmer and the post-excavation analysis by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The archaeological background to the site is set out in detail in the Desk Based Assessment of the site (ASE 2014). The following summary is drawn from that document with due acknowledgement.

2.2 Prehistoric (c.750,000 BC – AD 43)

2.2.1 No prehistoric sites are recorded within the study area. Prehistoric activity in the High Weald area was not extensive and the potential for prehistoric discoveries in the study area is low.

2.3 Romano–British (AD 43 – c. AD 410)

2.3.1 No Romano-British sites are recorded within the study area. Romano-British activity in the densely wooded High Weald was restricted to iron-working sites along road networks. The potential for discoveries of this period is low.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon (c.410 AD – AD 1066)

2.4.1 No Anglo-Saxon sites are recorded within the study area. The High Weald remained densely wooded and sparsely populated throughout this period and potential for Anglo-Saxon discoveries in the vicinity of the site is low.

2.5 Medieval (AD 1066 – AD 1485)

2.5.1 No medieval sites are recorded within the study area. During this period the study area would have formed part of Speldhurst parish, appearing to have been in Somerden Hundred and just outside of Tunbridge to the north-east. There is potential that some of the dispersed medieval settlement may have occurred within the vicinity of the site, but no evidence of this has yet to be found. The potential for medieval discoveries in the vicinity of the site is moderate to low.

2.6 Post-medieval (AD 1485 – AD 1900)

2.6.1 Activity within the vicinity of the site commenced towards the end of the 16th century, with mills for iron smelting being established along the River Medway. One of these, at a location named Mill Farm, is still in existence just north of the site.

2.6.2 Maps from the mid 18th century identify numerous farmsteads in the vicinity of the site, though many of these would likely have been established long before the 18th century. Those in close proximity to the site were: Harwarton Farm; a demolished field barn north of Harwarton; Broomhill Bank farmstead; a demolished outfarm north of Broomhill Bank.

2.6.3 Two mansion houses with formal gardens were established in the 19th century; Salomon's House to the north of the site and Broomhill Bank on the site itself.

- 2.6.4 Other features, though not listed on the Historic Environment Record (HER), appear on historical maps. These include a Victorian Chapel opposite the current entrance to the site, a fishpond on the west side of the Lower End Road and a spring to the north of Lake Farm. Two quarries, one to the south-east of Harwarton Farm and the other north of Broomhill Bank Farm have also been identified.
- 2.6.5 The potential for post-medieval discoveries on the site is therefore moderate. Although this potential is somewhat mitigated by the limited scope of the groundworks excavation that took place.

2.7 Modern (AD 1900 – Present)

- 2.7.1 Broomhill Bank became the residence of Sir Howard Kingsley Wood MP, and was sold in 1943, upon his death. The building was then used as a hospital and then later converted into a school.
- 2.7.2 An air raid shelter was constructed to the north of Boomhill Bank during the Second World War, but has since been destroyed.
- 2.7.3 Due to the continuous use of the site during the modern period, the potential for modern disturbance of any previous archaeological material is high.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Monitored groundworks on the site included soil stripping, ground reduction and excavations for new foundations and services in three discrete areas, referred to as Area A, Area B and Area C (Figure 2). In the event, however, it was agreed with KCC that archaeological monitoring of Area B was not required as the minimal depth of groundworks in this area did not exceed the depth of made ground/existing truncations known to exist in this area.
- 3.1.2 Wherever possible, machine excavation was undertaken using a tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features or deposits were revealed, machining was stopped and sufficient time allowed for hand excavation and recording by the attendant archaeologist.
- 3.1.3 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded in accordance with accepted professional standards (CIfA 2014a; 2014b, KCC 2011) using pro-forma context record sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:50, with selected detail drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10.
- 3.1.4 A photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive. The archive (quantified in Table 1 below), including the finds, is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade, and will in due course be offered to a suitable local museum.

3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE

Number of Contexts	5
No. of files/paper record	1 Folder
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	17
Bulk Finds	1
Registered Finds	0
Environmental Flots/Residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

Context	Type	Description	Area	Max. Length (m)	Max. Width (m)	Max deposit Thickness (m)	Max height (m OD)
01	Layer	Topsoil	A	18.60	4.90	0.40	93.44
02	Layer	Modern makeup/paving	A	3.00	1.50	0.40	93.44
03	Layer	Made ground	A	18.60	4.90	0.72	93.04
04	Layer	Natural	A	18.60	4.90	>0.38	92.32
05	Layer	Modern makeup/paving	B			0.18	92.40
06	Cut	Cut for swimming pool	B			1.10 min	92.22
07	Layer	Made ground	B			0.25	92.22
08	Layer	Subsoil	B			0.34	91.97
09	Layer	Natural	B			0.30 min	91.80
1005	Fill	Fill of 1006	A	1.70	1.70	2.1 (min)	93.44
1006	Cut	well/soakaway	A	1.70	1.70	2.8 (min)	93.44

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.1 Area A

4.1.1 Monitored groundworks in this area included: general ground reduction of an area measuring c.18.60m by 4.90m, to a depth of c. 0.40m below ground level (bgl), followed by the excavation of foundation and drainage trenches measuring 0.60m wide to a total depth of 1.20m bgl.

4.1.2 The earliest deposit recorded in Area A comprised the underlying natural Ardingly Sandstone [04], recorded at a maximum elevation of 92.32m OD and visible only within the deeper excavations for services and foundations. This was overlain by a thick layer of 19th-20th century made ground [03], through which a soakaway or well [1006] was cut. This consisted of an unlined circular pit, with a primary fill of slag, coal and vitrified brick furnace lining [1005], overlain by a secondary infill of modern concrete and brick rubble.

4.1.3 Modern topsoil [01], or paving with associated makeup [02] sealed the sequence. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed within Area A.

4.2 Area C

4.2.1 Monitored groundworks in Area C consisted of excavations for foundations pads and trenches only, to a maximum depth of c. 1.10m bgl. Much of this area had suffered significant truncation from excavations associated with a modern swimming pool [06], although the full sequence survived around the periphery of the area.

4.2.2 The Natural Ardingly Sandstone [09] was recorded within Area 2 at a maximum height of 91.80m OD. This was sealed by a horizon of mid yellowish brown sandy clay [08], in turn sealed by a layer of 19th-20th century made ground [07] and capped by modern paving and associated makeup [05].

4.2.3 No archaeological finds or features were observed in Area C.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** Two areas of the site were subject to archaeological monitoring, revealing the underlying natural Ardingly Sandstone between 92.32m OD (Area A) and 91.80m OD (Area C). Evidence of extensive truncation was apparent in both Areas A and B. In Area A, the absence of any surviving subsoil horizon suggests a degree of horizontal truncation of the sequence. In Area B, on the other hand, a subsoil horizon did survive around the periphery of the area, although the majority of the area had been subject to more localised, deep truncation from excavations associated with a former swimming pool in this area.
- 5.2** In view of the extent and depth of known truncation within the two monitored areas of the site it is perhaps unsurprising that no archaeological features were observed. Having said this, the presence of fragments of furnace lining within the modern soakaway pit [1006] is notable, in view of the evidence for mills for iron smelting along the course of the river Medway and its tributaries during the post-medieval period. The source of the furnace lining fragments within soakaway [1006] must of course remain a matter of conjecture, though it is conceivable that the material is derived from the known mill site at Mill Farm, just to the north of the site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Faithful+Gould for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council for her guidance and monitoring. The authors would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the excavations; Justin Russell who produced the figures for this report; Darryl Palmer who project managed the fieldwork and Jim Stevenson who project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	BBS15					
Identification Name and Address	Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Tunbridge Wells					
OS Grid Refs.	556456 140709					
Geology	Ardingly Sandstone Member					
Arch. South-East Project Number	7312					
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.	Excav.	WB. 10/03/15 – 15/05/15	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Faithfull+Gould					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer					
Project Supervisor	Cat Douglas, Suzie Westhall, Greg Priestley Bell					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other ✓ Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Faithful+Gould, on behalf of their client, Kent County Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the extension of Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells.</p> <p>Two areas were subject to archaeological monitoring, although significant modern truncation was noted in both areas. The underlying natural Ardingly Sandstone was observed between 92.32m OD (Area A) and 91.80m OD (Area C).. In the northernmost area, the natural geology was overlain by a subsoil horizon that survived around the perimeter of the monitored area only; much of the area had been subject to severe truncation from excavations for a former swimming pool. In the southern area the absence of any such subsoil horizon suggests extensive horizontal truncation across the monitored area. In both areas, thick deposits of recent made ground were observed overlying natural geology or subsoil.</p> <p>A modern soakaway, infilled with fragments of furnace lining was noted in the southern area. No other archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the monitoring.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-216201

Project details

Project name Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells

Short description of the project

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Faithful+Gould, on behalf of their client, Kent County Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the extension of Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells. Two areas were subject to archaeological monitoring, although significant modern truncation was noted in both areas. The underlying natural Ardingly Sandstone was observed between 0.60m and 0.70m below ground level. In the northernmost area, the natural geology was overlain by a subsoil horizon that survived around the perimeter of the monitored area only; much of the area had been subject to severe truncation from excavations for a former swimming pool. In the southern area the absence of any such subsoil horizon suggests extensive horizontal truncation across the monitored area. In both areas, thick deposits of recent made ground were observed overlying natural geology or subsoil. A modern soakaway, infilled with fragments of furnace lining was noted in the southern area. No other archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the monitoring.

Project dates Start: 10-03-2015 End: 15-05-2015

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference BBS15 - Sitecode codes

Any associated project reference 7312 - Contracting Unit No. codes

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Monument type SOAKAWAY Modern

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type ""Watching Brief""

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT TUNBRIDGE WELLS SPELDHURST Broomhill Bank School

Postcode TN3 0TB

Study area 5.50 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 564 407 51.1436161941 0.236131909755 51 08 37 N 000 14 10 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 91.80m Max: 92.32m

Project creators
Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project originator brief Kent County Council

Project originator design ASE

Project director/manager Darryl Palmer

Project supervisor Catherine Douglas

Type of sponsor/funding client body
Name of sponsor/funding body Faithfull+Gould

Project archives
Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Tunbridge Wells museum

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"

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

Paper Archive recipient Tunbridge Wells museum

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"

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

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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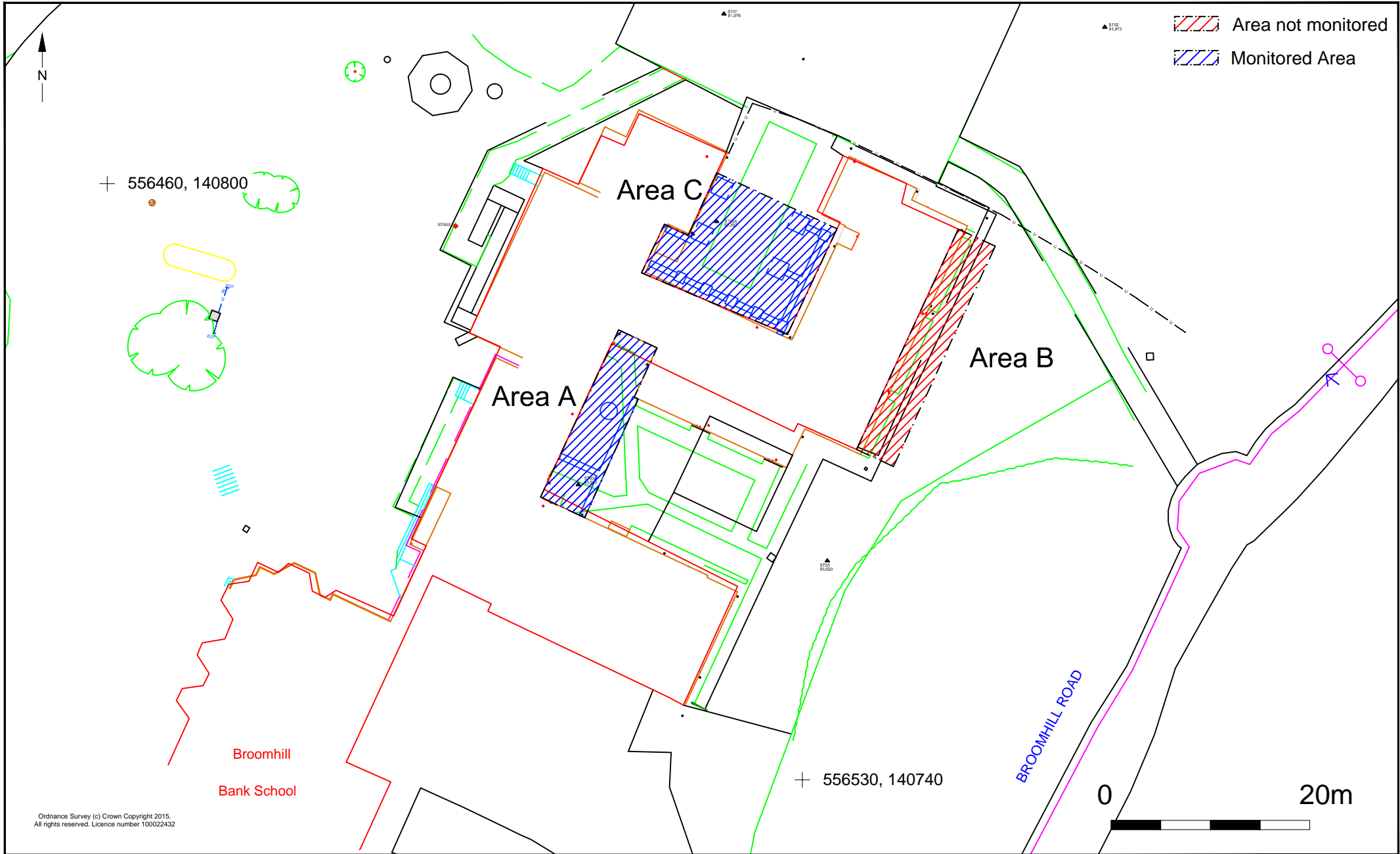
Description A4 bound report

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Entered on 6 July 2015

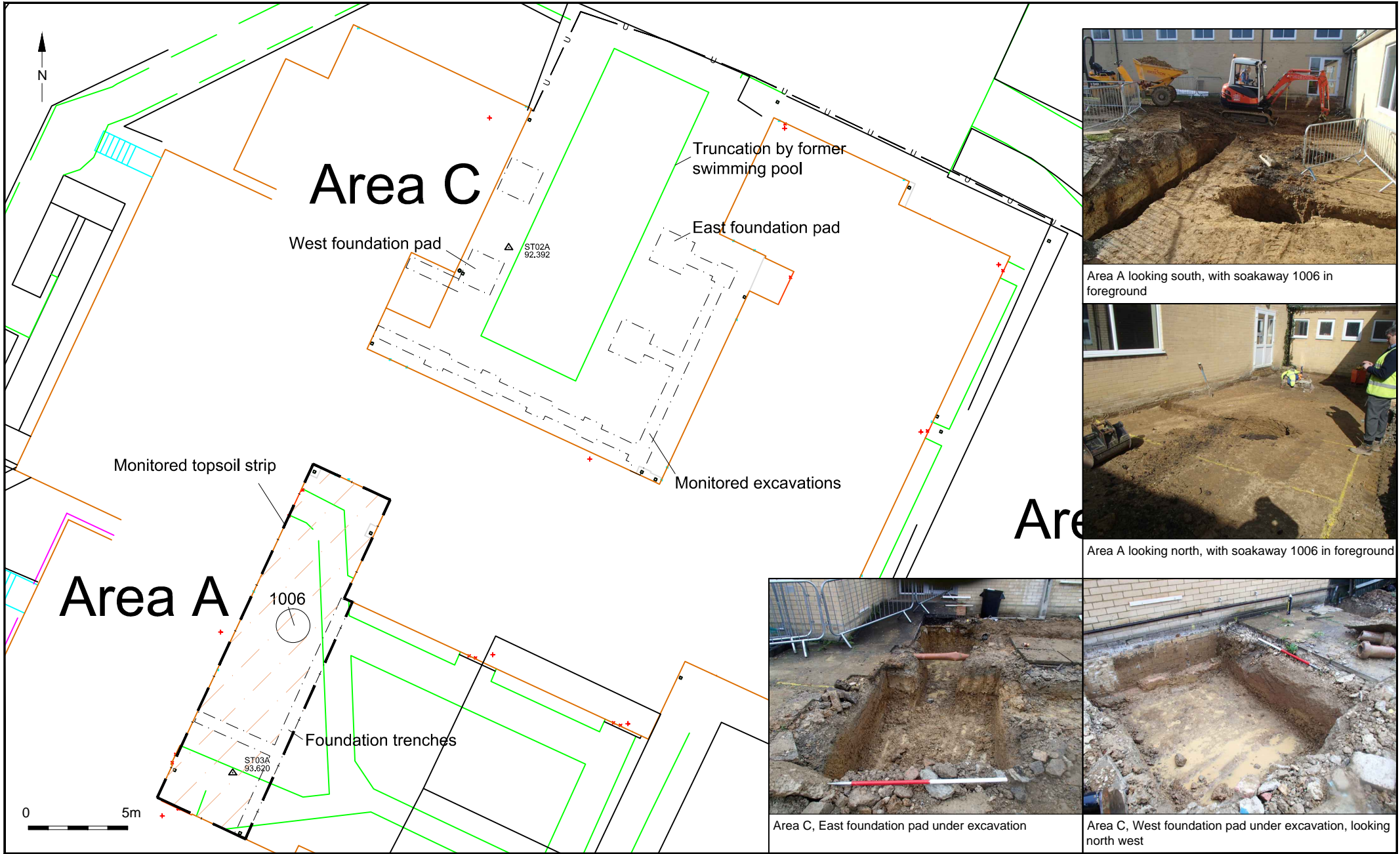


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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 7312	July 2015	Site location		
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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7312	July 2015	Site plan showing monitored areas		
Report Ref: 2015197	Drawn by: JC			



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Project Ref: 7312

July 2015

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Drawn by: JC

Land at Broomhill Bank School, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells

Detailed plan of monitored areas and selected photographs

Fig. 3

Sussex Office

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