

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Centurion Way Cycle Route, near Preston Farm
Lavant, West Sussex**

NGR: 485660 111100

**ASE Project No: 7626
Site Code: PFL15**

**ASE Report No: 2015307
OASIS id: archaeol6-221346**





By Hayley Nicholls

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the South Downs National Park to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a single geotechnical test pit on the route of the Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston farm, Lavant, West Sussex.

No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological watching brief. A ploughsoil deposit was identified across the test pit, overlying the natural chalk.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 3.0 Results**
- 4.0 Conclusions**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary
OASIS Form

TABLES

Table 1: Quantification of site archive
Table 2: List of recorded contexts

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location
Figure 2: Site plan and trench location

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by the South Downs National Park to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a single geotechnical test pit on the route of the Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston farm, Lavant, West Sussex (NGR 485660 111100; Figure 1)

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the latest data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2015) the underlying bedrock geology of the site is Lewes Nodular Chalk formed approximately 86 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. This is overlain by superficial head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.
- 1.2.2 The test pit is situated above the east bank of the Lavant, behind farm buildings erected in the 1960-70's and lies on a west-north-west facing slope at approximately 50m AOD.

1.3 Background

- 1.3.1 The South Downs National Park Authority received funding from the Department of Transport Cycling Ambition scheme to extend the existing cycle route known as Centurion Way from Binderton and West Dean. The extension is mostly located along the route of the former Chichester to Midhurst railway line however in the area of the test pit the route diverges from the railway line to pass around farm buildings at Preston farm (built after the line was decommissioned).
- 1.3.2 An analysis of the HER data for the line of this cycle route was carried out for Royal Haskoning DHV as part of the feasibility study for the project (Royal HaskoningDHV 2014). It identified no known archaeological features along the route of the cycle path.
- 1.3.3 However, the Preston Farm test pit, which sits on a slight elevation to the east and above the valley floor of the Lavant lies in the vicinity of the winterbourne stream which is known to have medieval deserted villages along its length – Domesday records a settlement at Preston. The recent lidar survey as part of Secrets of the High Woods confirmed that the village site (ie crofts and tofts) is on the west bank of the Lavant. To the north of the test pit site there are moderately well-preserved late prehistoric field systems remaining as lynchets on the higher slopes and it is considered possible that some evidence of those would be found under hillwash in the test pit.
- 1.3.4 After consultation with the local authority planning archaeologist it was determined that a Watching Brief was required because of:
- the size of area being stripped for the test pit
 - the archaeological potential of the site.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results the watching brief carried out on the 18th June 2015. The fieldwork was managed by Neil Griffin and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

2.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 2.1.1 The archaeological methodology was set out in the specification (South Downs National Park 2015). All work was carried out in accordance with this document and in line with professional standards and guidelines (CIfA 2014a; 2014b).
- 2.1.2 All works were undertaken with a machine excavator equipped with a 0.4m wide toothless bucket.
- 2.1.3 The location of the test pit was accurately established using a Leica Viva CS15 RTK GPS instrument.
- 2.1.4 Contexts revealed during the watching brief were numbered sequentially from [1/001]. A digital photographic record of the work was kept and is included in the site archive.

2.2 The Site Archive

- 2.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited with the South Downs museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	2
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	2
Permatrace sheets	0
Watching Brief Record Forms	1

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Test Pit 1 (Figure 2)

- 3.1.1 The monitored test pit was rectangular in shape with a length of 3m and a width of 0.95m. The test pit was situated to the east and rear of the Preston farm agricultural buildings.
- 3.1.2 No archaeological finds or features were identified during the monitoring process.
- 3.1.3 The natural geology comprised a firm light yellow-white slightly silty chalk with frequent flint nodules and was encountered at a depth of 0.3m below ground level.
- 3.1.4 The natural substrate was directly overlain by a ploughsoil comprising loose dark brown silt with frequent small lumps of chalk and flint. The deposit measured 0.3m in thickness.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
1/001	Layer	Ploughsoil	>3	>0.95	0.3
1/002	Layer	Natural geology	NA	NA	NA

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological watching brief. A ploughsoil deposit was identified across the test pit, overlying the natural chalk.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Anne Bone at South Downs National Park Authority for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and James Kenny Chichester District Archaeologist for his guidance and monitoring. The work was undertaken by Hayley Nicholls. Lauren Gibson produced the figures for this report; Neil Griffin project managed the excavations and Dan Swift and Jim Stevenson project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	NA				
Site code	PFL15				
Project code	7626				
Planning reference	NA				
Site address	Preston Farm, Lavant, West Sussex				
District/Borough	South Downs National Park				
NGR (12 figures)	485660 111100				
Geology	Chalk				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	18.06.15				
Sponsor/client	South Downs National Park				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Hayley Nicholls				
Period summary					
					Other
Project summary (100 word max)	<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the South Downs National Park to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a single geotechnical test pit on the route of the Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston farm, Lavant, West Sussex.</p> <p>No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological watching brief. A ploughsoil deposit was identified across the test pit, overlying the natural chalk.</p>				
Museum/Accession No.	Forthcoming				

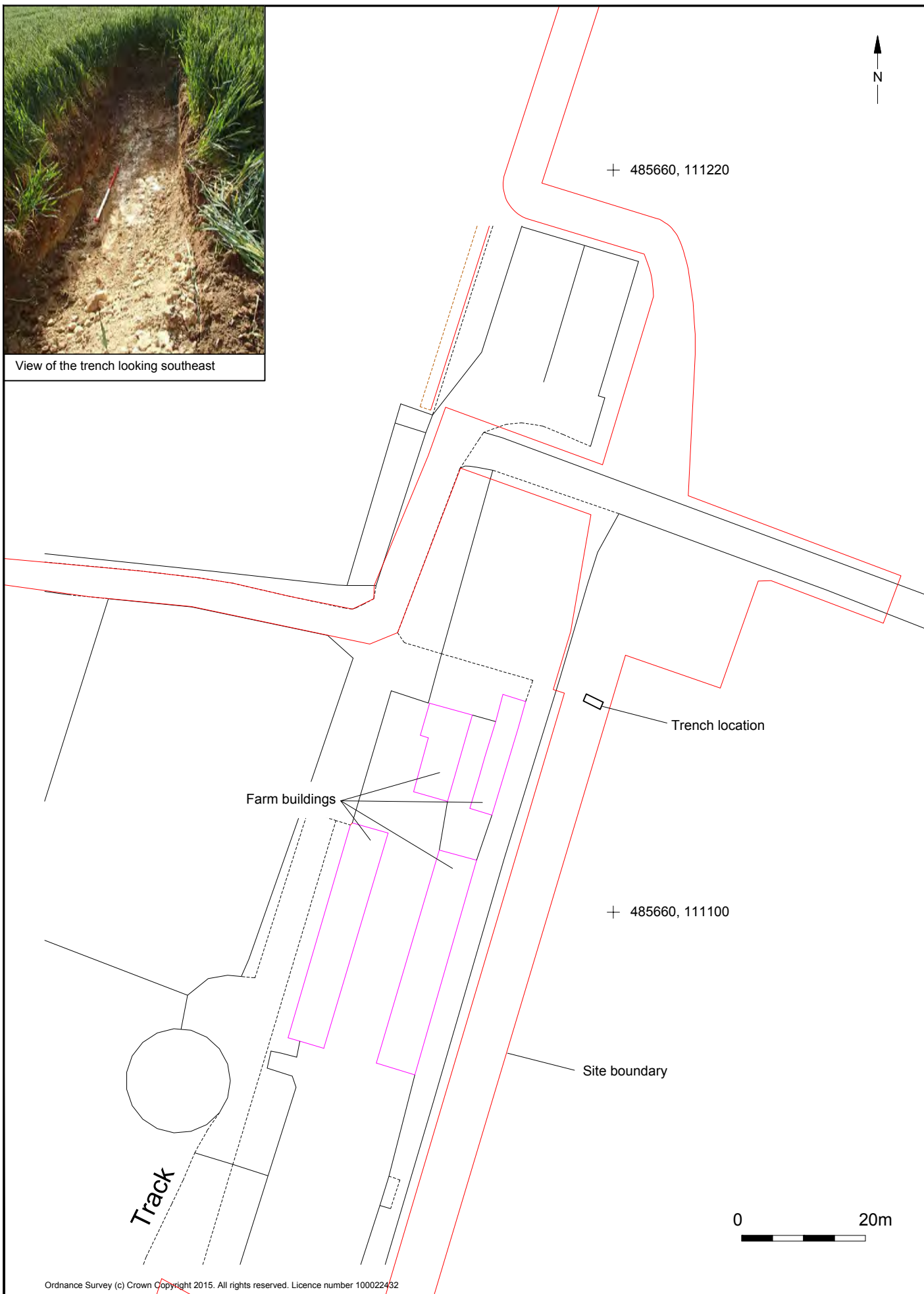
OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-221346

Project details

Project name	Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston Farm, Lavant, West Sussex
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the South Downs National Park to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a single geotechnical test pit on the route of the Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston farm, Lavant, West Sussex. No archaeological finds or features were identified during the archaeological watching brief. A ploughsoil deposit was identified across the test pit, overlying the natural chalk.
Project dates	Start: 18-06-2015 End: 18-06-2015
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	PFL15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	National Park
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER LAVANT Preston Farm, Lavant, West Sussex
Postcode	PO18 0JT
Study area	0.3 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 485660 111100 50.896871118549 -1.309337050202 50 53 48 N 001 18 33 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 47.7m Max: 47.8m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Hayley Nicholls
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	South Downs National Park Authority
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	local museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Correspondence","Photograph","Report","Survey","Unpublished Text"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief On the Centurion Way cycle route, near Preston Farm, Lavant, West Sussex
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© Archaeology South-East		Preston Farm, Lavant	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7626	August 2015	Site plan and trench location	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: LG		

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