

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Former Midhurst Grammar School
Lambert Lane, Midhurst
West Sussex**

**NGR: 488570 121830
(SU 8857 2183)**

Planning Ref: SDNP/14/03338/FUL

**ASE Project No: 7655
Site Code: MMG16
ASE Report No: 2016027
OASIS id: archaeol6-240068**



By Ian Hogg



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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the former Midhurst Grammar School, Midhurst, West Sussex. The evaluation comprised three trenches.

Natural Rother terrace deposits were recorded between 24.33m and 24.84m aOD. A relatively undisturbed sequence of subsoil and topsoil was recorded across much of the site while modern made ground was observed in the areas of previous buildings.

The evaluation appears to confirm that the site lay outside of the historic core of Midhurst and that only a very low level of activity occurred prior to the later post-medieval period. The only feature recorded on the site, a possible hedge line, is of uncertain date.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Former Midhurst Grammar School, Lamberts Lane, Midhurst, West Sussex (Figures 1 and 2, NGR SU 8857 2183).
- 1.1.2 The site lies to the north of Midhurst town centre; it is bound to the north and west by Lamberts Lane, to the south and the east by other properties.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation comprised three machine excavated trenches with a contingency for a further two trenches; this contingency was not activated.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series sheet (317) for Chichester indicates the site to be located on River Terrace Deposits of the River Rother.
- 1.2.2 A review of geotechnical investigations undertaken on the site indicates that a horizon of topsoil and made ground deposits is present overlying Rother Terrace Deposits, to a depth of 0.30m to 0.70m. In localised areas the made ground was recorded as being up to 1.20m thick.
- 1.2.3 The site is located at around 24.7m AOD. To the north, west, and south ground level rises significantly while to the east ground level falls away to the Valley of the River Rother.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission (SDNP/14/03338/FUL) was granted by the South Downs National Parks Authority for the *'comprehensive redevelopment of the former Midhurst Grammar School site including the demolition of all on site buildings to provide 17 new dwellings, car and cycle parking, vehicle and pedestrian access points off Lamberts Lane, an estate road, landscaping, boundary treatment, amenity space and new pedestrian footway along part of Lamberts Lane'* The condition (no. 7) that was subsequently attached to the planning consent states that:

'The potential for there to be deposits associated with medieval and later occupation at the east end of the site would justify an archaeological investigation prior to development in order that deposits of importance that might be present can be identified and preserved, either in-situ and/or by record. Therefore an archaeological investigation of the site shall be carried out in accordance with a specification to be submitted to and agreed by the SDNPA in writing before the commencement of any building works. The specification shall include proposals for the investigation and for mitigation of damage through development to deposits of importance thus identified. The investigation shall be undertaken by an appropriately qualified archaeologist and shall include the recording of findings and subsequent publication of results.'

Reason: The site is of archaeological significance and it is important that it is recorded by excavation before it is destroyed by development.'

- 1.3.2 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2014) was prepared in support of the application. This document concluded the site had low potential for all periods except the late medieval and post-medieval where it had low to moderate potential due to its locations on the outskirts of the town centre.
- 1.3.3 An Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2015) was prepared prior to the commencement of this phase of works, this document set out the methodology for the works. All works were carried out in accordance with the ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2014).

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the 5th and the 6th January 2016 and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2015). The work was carried out by Ian Hogg (Archaeologist), Jake Wilson (Assistant Archaeologist) and Ed Blinkhorn (Archaeologist). The fieldwork was managed by Jon Sygrave and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following information is taken from the Written Scheme of Investigation for the site (CgMs 2015) and the Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2014). For a fuller background please refer to these documents.

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 Very few prehistoric finds are recorded within a 1km radius of the site. The fields between Whiphill Wood, the old Midhurst Grammar School and Starveacre Copse have produced small quantities of prehistoric flintwork including retouched Mesolithic tools (District HER Ref: CD 1545, SU 82SE, NGRX 488410, NGRY 122050; also HER Ref: CD 1546, SU 82SE, NGRX 488390, NGRY 122070).

2.2.2 Numerous modern archaeological interventions in Midhurst town centre have failed to identify any *in situ* prehistoric activity.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 There is a possibility dubious reference to an assemblage of Roman pottery being recorded from Beggars Corner, Midhurst (HER Ref: CD 1683, Map Sheet SU82SE, NGRX 487650, NGRY 121880).

2.3.2 The many modern archaeological interventions in Midhurst have revealed no evidence of significant Roman occupation.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

2.4.1 No finds or sites of these periods are recorded in the district HER within a 1km radius of the site.

2.5 Late Medieval and Post-Medieval

2.5.1 Midhurst was founded as a feudal market town and a market charter was granted in 1223 and the town was represented as a Borough in 1248 (District HER Ref: CD1456, Map Sheet SU82SE, NGRX: 488646, NGRY: 141494). An early Castle was present at Midhurst on St Anne's Hill but it was abandoned in favour of the site of Cowdrey House by c.1280 (District HER Number CD1450, Map Sheet SU82SE, NGRX 488880, NGRY 121460).

2.5.2 The site lay beyond the edge of the late medieval and early post-medieval town in an area of horticultural land to the rear of properties on North Street.

2.5.3 The Ordnance Survey map of 1808 shows the core of Midhurst to the south of the site with North Street stretching northwards and the 'Back Lane' of Lamberts Lane which encompassed the site stretching north west then east. At this date, the site was still horticultural land to the north west of Midhurst.

- 2.5.4 The Midhurst Tithe map of 1841 shows the site as horticultural land. The map clearly distinguishes between residential and commercial properties – which are shown pink, and ancillary or agricultural buildings which are shown grey. No buildings are actually shown within the site, though a substantial grey building is shown just east of the eastern boundary.
- 2.5.5 Midhurst Grammar School is known to have closed in 1859 before re-opening in 1880. However, the Ordnance Survey map of 1874 clearly shows the Grammar School building immediately east of the site. The site itself was undeveloped agricultural or horticultural land at this time. In 1895 the site was largely unchanged from 1874; however, by 1910, buildings of the Grammar School had begun to extend into the site.
- 2.5.6 By 1938 much of the site had already been developed with Grammar School buildings including a substantial swimming pool on the north-west. The south east of the site was the least occupied with new buildings.
- 2.5.7 By 1961 the bulk of the site had been developed with buildings and by 1975 much of the remaining open space within the site had been lost to car parking and hard standing.
- 2.5.8 The Grammar School continued to operate at the site until 2008 when it was closed and replaced with the Midhurst Rother College.

2.6 Project Aims and Objectives

2.6.1 The aims of the evaluation were:

- To establish whether any archaeological evidence survives on the site
- The evaluation aimed to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed redevelopment
- The evaluation also sought to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance

2.6.2 Within these parameters, the evaluation of this site presented an opportunity to address the following objectives:

- To determine the presence of activity pre-dating the later medieval period
- To establish the presence or otherwise of later medieval activity on the site. Can this evidence be related to cultivation or back lands activity related to later medieval properties? Can the limit of the property boundaries be defined? How does this evidence relate to other contemporary features identified in the area?

- To establish the environmental context of prehistoric, Roman, medieval, post medieval and modern activity
- Evaluate the likely impact of past land use and development
- Provide sufficient information to, if appropriate, construct an archaeological mitigation strategy

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Three trenches were excavated in total, one measuring 20.00m x 1.80m in plan and one measuring 15.00m x 1.80m the remaining trench had to be shortened from 20.00m to 17.00m due to the presence of services. All three trenches were moved slightly to avoid services and spoil heaps. The contingency for two further trenches was not activated.
- 3.1.2 All trenches were scanned using a cable avoidance tool prior to excavation. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.10m to the top of the underlying natural substrate, or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was higher.
- 3.1.3 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets. Vertical sections were taken across features where necessary and a comprehensive photographic record taken.
- 3.1.4 Trenches were located and planned using GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.1.5 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned by eye for unstratified finds.

3.2 Archive

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

Number of Contexts	11
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Digital photos	11
Permatrace sheets	1
Trench Record Forms	3

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 was located in the south-east of the site and measured 20.00m x 1.80m in plan. The trench was 0.81m deep at the northern end and 0.77m deep at the southern end. Excavation ceased at the top of the natural Rother terrace deposits.

4.1.2 The natural mid yellowish brown sandy silt Rother terrace deposits [1/02] was recorded at between 24.40m and 24.84m aOD. They were overlain by mid brown grey clay silt cultivation soil [1/01] between 0.50m and 0.62m thick.

4.1.3 No archaeology was recorded in this trench.

4.2 Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
2/01	Layer	Cultivation soil	8.00	1.80	0.31-0.33	25.18-25.20
2/02	Layer	Subsoil	15.00	1.80	0.16-0.18	24.55-24.85
2/03	Layer	Natural	15.00	1.80	-	24.39-24.67
2/04	Layer	Made ground	7.00	1.80	0.66	25.21
2/05	Cut	Ditch	1.80	0.81	0.17	24.65
2/06	Fill	Ditch fill	1.80	0.81	0.17	24.65

Table 2: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 Trench 2 was located in the south of the site and measured 15.00m x 1.80m in plan. The trench was 0.87m deep at the south-eastern end and 0.52m deep at the north-western end. Excavation ceased at the top of the natural Rother terrace deposits.

4.2.2 The natural mid yellowish brown sandy silt Rother terrace deposits [2/03] was recorded at between 24.39m and 24.67m aOD. The natural deposits were cut by a shallow linear [2/05]; the linear was aligned south-west to north-east, it had gently sloping sides and an undulating base. The linear was heavily rooted and may have been a hedgeline or a small boundary ditch; it measured 1.80m in length, 0.81m in width and 0.17m in depth. The fill [2/06] comprised mid brown grey silt and contained a flint blade of probable Mesolithic or Neolithic date and an undiagnostic piece of CBM.

4.2.3 The linear was sealed by between 0.16m and 0.18m of mid grey silt subsoil [2/02]. The subsoil was overlain in the centre and north-west of the trench by dark grey cultivation soil [2/01] consisting of dark brown grey silt between 0.31m and 0.33m in thickness. At the south-eastern end of the trench the subsoil was overlain by 0.66m of dark grey rubbly silt modern made ground [2/04].

4.3 Trench 3

- 4.3.1 Trench 3 was located in the north of the site and measured 17.00m x 1.80m in plan. The trench was 0.89m deep at the eastern end and 0.95m deep at the western end. Excavation ceased at the top of the natural Rother terrace deposits.
- 4.3.2 The natural mid yellowish brown sandy silt Rother terrace deposits [3/03] was recorded at between 24.33m and 24.34m aOD. They were overlain by pale brown grey silt subsoil [3/02] between 0.16m and 0.52m thick. The subsoil was sealed by between 0.37m and 0.60m of dark grey rubbly silt modern made ground [3/01].
- 4.3.3 No archaeology was recorded in this trench.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A single struck flint and one piece of ceramic building material were retrieved from the linear fill [2/06].

5.2 The Flintwork by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 The archaeological evaluation produced a blade weighing 4g. The flint is red brown and exhibits a thin stained cortex. The distal end is absent, and the proximal end is also damaged. The artefact displays fine direct abrupt retouch towards the right distal end. Based on technological and morphological traits the retouched blade is likely to be Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in date.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Isa Benedetti-Whitton

5.3.1 A single much abraded piece of ceramic building material was recovered from context [2/06]. It was too worn to determine whether it was a fragment of brick or tile and no dating was possible; it was a small enough to be a residual fragment.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

6.1.1 Natural Rother terrace deposits were recorded across the site between 24.33m and 24.84m aOD. The natural deposits were overlain by subsoil across much of the site; this was overlain by cultivation soil and in disturbed areas modern made ground. The natural deposits were directly overlain by a cultivation soil in the south-east of the site.

6.1.2 Only a single feature was recorded on the site; this small linear, probably a hedgeline or gully ran roughly perpendicular to North Street and on the same alignment as adjacent historical boundaries.

6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

6.2.1 Isolated truncation had occurred in the location of the previous buildings and of services, mainly in the north and west of the site. Elsewhere, an undisturbed sequence was recorded.

6.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

6.3.1 The only archaeological feature was small and linear, possibly a hedge line. A flint blade of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date and an undiagnostic fragment of CBM were recovered. The alignment of the feature may suggest that the feature is not of any great antiquity.

6.4 Consideration of research aims

6.4.1 The only feature contained a single flint blade and an undiagnostic piece of CBM making dating of the feature troublesome. The presence of struck flint suggests some prehistoric activity in the area, but the CBM suggests the feature is more likely to be later especially given that its alignment is similar to that shown on historic maps.

6.4.2 No specifically dated remains were found that can be associated with later medieval Midhurst, Trench 1 in the south-east of the site was located closest to the historic core of the settlement and this trench exhibited largely undisturbed stratigraphy suggesting the site lay outside of the town.

6.4.3 Given the limited nature of the remains on site, providing the environmental context of the site is extremely difficult.

6.5 Conclusions

6.5.1 The evaluation appears to confirm that the site lay outside of the historic core of Midhurst and that only a very low level of activity occurred prior to the later post-medieval period. The only feature recorded on the site, a possible hedge line, is of uncertain date.

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English Heritage 2008. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Project Planning Notes 3 (PPN3): Archaeological Excavation*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary

Site Code	MMG16					
Identification Name and Address	Former Midhurst Grammar School, Lamberts Lane, Midhurst					
County, District &/or Borough	West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	SU 8857 2183					
Geology	Rother Terrace Deposits					
Arch. South-East Project Number	7655					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.					
Type of Site		Shallow Urban				
Dates of Fieldwork	5-1-2016 to 6-1-2016					
Sponsor/Client	CgMs Consulting					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave					
Project Supervisor	Ian Hogg					
Period Summary						
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the former Midhurst Grammar School, Midhurst, West Sussex. The evaluation comprised three trenches.</i></p> <p><i>Natural Rother terrace deposits were recorded between 24.33m and 24.84m aOD. A relatively undisturbed sequence of subsoil and topsoil was recorded across much of the site while modern made ground was observed in the areas of previous buildings.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation appears to confirm that the site lay outside of the historic core of Midhurst and that only a very low level of activity occurred prior to the later post-medieval period. The only feature recorded on the site, a possible hedge line, is of uncertain date.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-240068

Project details

Project name Former Midhurst Grammar School, Lambert Lane, Midhurst

Short description of the project Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the former Midhurst Grammar School, Midhurst, West Sussex. The evaluation comprised three trenches. Natural Rother terrace deposits were recorded between 24.33m and 24.84m aOD. A relatively undisturbed sequence of subsoil and topsoil was recorded across much of the site while modern made ground was observed in the areas of previous buildings. The evaluation appears to confirm that the site lay outside of the historic core of Midhurst and that only a very low level of activity occurred prior to the later post-medieval period. The only feature recorded on the site, a possible hedge line, is of uncertain date.

Project dates Start: 05-01-2016 End: 06-01-2016

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 7655 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes MMG16 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status National Park

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Monument type LINEAR Uncertain

Significant Finds FLINT BLADE Early Neolithic

Significant Finds CBM Post Medieval

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER MIDHURST Former Midhurst Grammar School,
Postcode	GU29 9DZ
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 8857 2183 50.988503072426 -0.737941958867 50 59 18 N 000 44 16 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 24.33m Max: 24.84m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	Ian Hogg
Type of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Midhurst Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Midhurst Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Midhurst Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic", "Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Entered by Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on 25 January 2016

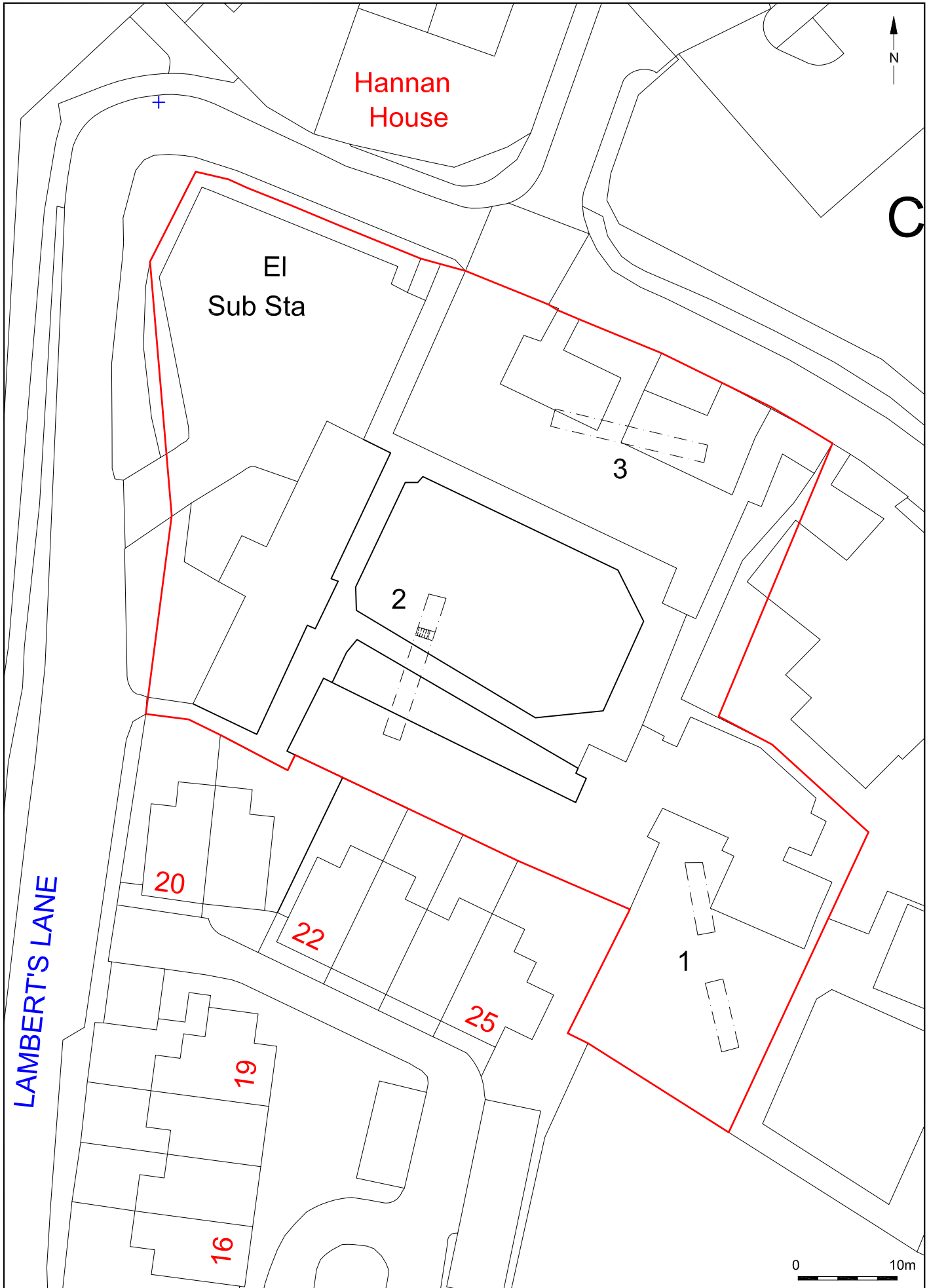
Appendix: Archaeologically negative trenches: list of recorded contexts

Trench Number	Context	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	01	Layer	Cultivation soil	0.50-0.62	25.02-25.43
1	02	Layer	Natural	-	24.40-24.84
3	01	Layer	Made ground	0.37-0.60	25.14-25.24
3	02	Layer	Subsoil	0.20-0.52	24.54-24.87
3	03	Layer	Natural	-	24.33-24.34

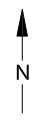


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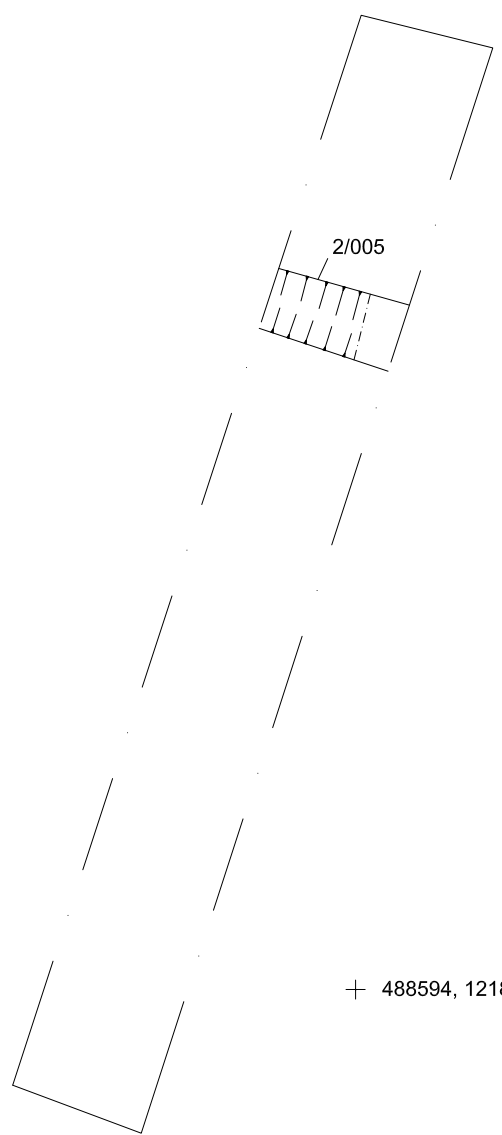
© Archaeology South-East		Former Midhurst Grammar School, Lamberts Lane		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 7655	Jan 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016027	Drawn by: LG			



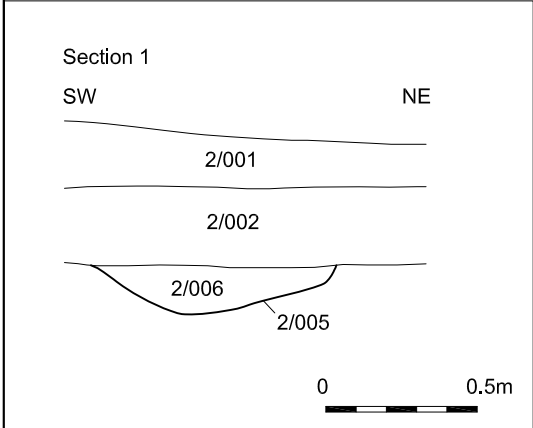
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Project Ref: 7655	Jan 2016	Trench Location		
Report Ref: 2016027	Drawn by: LG			



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2/005 looking north-west



© Archaeology South-East		Former Midhurst Grammar School, Lamberts Lane		Fig.3
Project Ref: 7655	Jan 2016	Trench 2 plan, photograph and section		
Report Ref: 2016027	Drawn by: LG			

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