

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on Land at 67, Ifield Road, Crawley, Sussex**

(Centred on NGR 526430 136665)

By

Deon Whittaker MA PIFA

**Planning Consent
CR/2006/0481/FUL**

Project No. 2695
OASIS ID: archaeol6-25199

February 2007

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**April 2007
Version 2**

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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted worldwide, Archaeology South-East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England Archaeology South-East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at 67, Ifield Road, Crawley (NGR 526430 136665). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of approximately 80 metres of foundation footings. Presumed medieval industrial evidence was found consisting of iron slag spreads, a 4 metre diameter pit and two northwest - southeast orientated linear ditches; all features contained iron slag. During an earlier evaluation (Worrall 2006) mid to late 19th century pottery was obtained from the topsoil; only a single fragment of blue and white transfer printed pottery was recovered during the watching brief. The linear features are suggested to be man-made drainage ditches sloping down by over a metre from southeast to north-northwest, towards an old stream and its alluvial deposits. The slag-associated features appear to represent the most westerly located evidence for medieval ironworking from Crawley High Street at present.

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SMR Summary Sheet

Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

Fig. 2: Composite Site Plan 1:250 showing evaluation
trenches 1-5.

Fig. 3: Site Plan – Watching Brief only

Fig. 4: Sections

Appendix 1 Oasis Summary Sheet

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), were commissioned by Whelan Homes Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at 67 Ifield Road, Crawley, West Sussex, (centred NGR TQ 526430 136665) (Figure 1).
- 1.2 An application for planning permission for the residential development of the site was granted to Whelan Homes by Crawley Borough Council (Planning ref. CR/2006/0481/FUL). Following the advice of the West Sussex County Council's Archaeologist (in the County Council's capacity as advisor to the Borough Council on archaeological planning matters), Crawley Borough Council asked the applicant to determine the impact of the proposals prior to the determination of an earlier planning permission (Planning ref. CR/2005/0455/FUL, Condition 12) by means of a programme of intrusive investigation. Subsequently, ASE was commissioned by Whelan Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation in February 2006 in part fulfilment of this requirement (ASE Project number 2340). This identified the presence of archaeological features within the development site (see Section 2 below) and the WSCC Archaeologist asked that a watching brief be maintained during intrusive ground-works associated with the development of the eastern half of the site.
- 1.3 The current document represents a Watching Brief Report prepared with reference to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Michelle Collings (2006) with reference to WSCC and their *Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions* (version 2b), henceforth "the Standard Conditions". All work was carried out in accordance with these documents (unless otherwise specified below), and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).
- 1.4 The site lies just on the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand, near to the borders of the Weald Clay to the east (BGS Sheet 302). During the archaeological evaluation of the site natural ground, a clean orange/mottled grey sandy clay matrix, believed to be indicative of Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand was encountered at 69.86m OD in the south of the site, sloping to 69.29m OD in the north. The general slope is towards an alluvial belt associated with an old stream to the north and west of the site.
- 1.5 The fieldwork was undertaken by Deon Whittaker (Assistant Archaeologist), Michelle Collings (Archaeologist) and Jim Stevenson (Senior Archaeologist), during October - November 2006. The project was managed by Jim Stevenson (Project Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological background of the site has been outlined by John Mills, WSCC Archaeological Officer, in his comments on the Planning Application. These comments are summarised here with due acknowledgement.
- 2.2 The site lies within the former common of West Green and to the east of potential locations of medieval properties. It is also located at a former crossroads that was potentially a focus for Late Saxon and early medieval settlement that pre-dates the medieval Crawley High Street.
- 2.3 Ifield Road lies to the south of High Street, close to the presumed historic core of the medieval Wealden market town of Crawley. A number of archaeological sites have been excavated in the vicinity and in other parts of the town in recent years, supporting documentary evidence which suggests that Crawley was an important centre in the medieval period, its wealth based on the iron industry. The most significant of these sites was excavated at the Asda Site in 2002, located at the southern end of the High Street (Stevens 2007, 1).
- 2.4 The majority of features uncovered at the Asda site dated to the medieval and post-medieval periods, mostly dating from the mid 13th to the third quarter of the 14th century. Two ironworking hearths and large quantities of slag were encountered as well as evidence of the deposition of domestic refuse in pits and ditches. A 13th century well produced a remarkable assemblage of artefacts and environmental evidence including a large group of insect remains (Stevens 2007, i).
- 2.5 Previous excavations at the Old Post Office in 1995, on the opposite side of the High Street to the Asda site, had also revealed 13th to 14th century cess-pits and rubbish pits and the remains of a house probably dating from the 16th century (Stevens 1997); a watching brief uncovered further medieval material in the area at the corner of High Street and Pegler Way (Stevens 1999). Significant quantities of ironworking slag were recovered during the larger of these investigations, providing evidence for industrial processes which have been carried out in the area since at least the Romano-British period (Cartwright 1992).
- 2.6 An evaluation carried out at Victoria Road (James 1998), located within 30 metres of, and some 2-3m higher than, the current project, produced west southwest – east northeast orientated linear ditches. One of these (Trench 1, Context [7]) was eventually used for the disposal of slag waste, a similarity between the features from this site and those from the current work.

- 2.4 ASE undertook an archaeological evaluation on this site in February 2006 excavating five trial trenches, two of which contained archaeological remains, comprising two pits and a gully. The two pits were sampled and found to contain a large amount of iron working slag, probably of a medieval date (Worrall 2006). The proximity of one of the evaluation trenches (trench 3) (ibid, fig. 2) to the intended groundworks indicated the potential for similar archaeological remains to be revealed as construction work progressed.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The objective of the archaeological watching brief was to record any archaeological remains exposed as a result of the groundworks. Particular attention was to be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3 Intrusive groundworks for foundation trenches were undertaken in the vicinity of Evaluation Trench 3 (i.e. the eastern half of the site) and were monitored by an archaeologist until it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (e.g. once excavation reached undisturbed natural subsoils).
- 3.4 All excavation was undertaken with a machine equipped with a suitably sized (600mm) toothless bucket wherever practicable.
- 3.5 Where archaeological remains were encountered, machine excavation ceased to allow the remains to be investigated further.
- 3.6 The archaeologists inspected the surfaces revealed. Any archaeological structures or features revealed were recorded in plan and section as appropriate.
- 3.7 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest as were the fills of the pit and ditches.
- 3.8 A full photographic record of the work was kept using digital format and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course.
- 3.9 All excavations were monitored by examining the surface of each area

as it was stripped, first topsoil and then subsequent layers, also by examining the section of the trenches after they had been partially or fully excavated. Throughout the works the contractor made all the excavations fully accessible to the archaeologist and was happy to strip and re-strip according to the archaeologist's requirements until all potential archaeological layers were fully explored and exhausted.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The site is situated upon a natural deposit of light orange sandy clay with patches of grey clay mottling (Context 1013). This occurs at an average depth of 600 millimetres below ground level, where subsoils are present and was excavated to 1.2 metres at which depth excavation ceased. The deposit is of a firm to friable consistency and was devoid of inclusions and finds

4.2 Above the natural deposit lies a subsoil (context 1001), a mid reddish brown colour made of fine slightly clayey silt. Depth varies generally from 100mm to 300mm.

4.3 A number of features have been cut into the natural as follows:

- Contexts [1002] , [1004] and [1007]

Linear ditches lying adjacent to one another, with only [1007] appearing to continue through the site (see Figure 3). Context [1009] possibly represents a continuation of linear [1004] although the profile has changed considerably (Fig. 4) and thus may be a separate feature. All these features contain very similar fills and are either coeval or very close in date and subject to a sequence of deposits.

- Context [1011]

The edges of [1011], a 4 metre diameter pit, are partially visible in several footing trenches (Fig. 3). This pit contains a fill (1012); very similar to that found in the above mentioned linear features and so either coeval or very close in date and subject to the same sequence of deposits.

4.4 All the above contexts have been filled with fine reddish brown clayey silt. At their surface lies a layer of iron slag which extends beyond the edges of the features onto the surrounding natural, suggesting that at the time of deposition when the iron slag was being deposited, the natural was exposed.

4.5 **Context [1002]**

Context [1002] (figs 3 & 4 - Section 1) is obscured by the limit of excavation and truncated by a modern ceramic drain. From the alignment of the one visible edge [1002] is most probably a north-west to south-east orientated linear. Figure 2 shows possible pit Context [3/004] from Worrall's evaluation (Worrall 2006) with a deposit of slag rich material (3/005) running north - south and possibly joining ditch [1004] and ditch [1002] and filling in the depression above pit [3/004] (ibid.). The cut of the ditch [1002] shows a slightly concave, 45 degree slope on its south side. The upper break of slope is indistinct and the lower break of slope is not visible as the feature has not been fully excavated. Dimensions at the limit of excavation are 2 metres wide by 300mm deep.

- 4.6 Context [1002] is filled by context (1003). Context (1003) consists of reddish brown, fine clayey silt with 90% inclusions of irregular spheroid pieces of iron slag, averaging 60mm in diameter. The percentage of inclusions is so high that consequently the soil / iron slag matrix is generally loose in consistency. The inclusions are unsorted.

4.7 **Context [1004]**

Context [1004] (figs 3 & 4 - Section 2) is another linear appearing to run parallel with [1002], and is of equal width (2 metres) but only 150mm deep. The relationships to [1002] and [1007] via (3/005) (ibid.) are uncertain with [1004] perhaps terminating in (3/005) which seals an earlier pit fill (3/006). The profiles of the edges of (3/005) and [1004] are not too dissimilar but no firm relationship has been established. Shallower concave sides of approximately 25 degrees merge gradually with a gentle concave base, the break of slope both upper and lower being imperceptible.

- 4.8 Context [1004] is filled by context (1005) a reddish brown, very fine clayey silt with 10% inclusions of irregular spheroid pieces of iron slag, averaging 10mm in diameter. The percentage of inclusions is much lower than the adjacent ditch [1002] and the fill somewhat finer than (1003) with the slag pieces forming thin lenses suggesting repeated deposits of a similar nature. The fill matrix (1005) can be seen either side of the cut as a thin layer (1006) on top of the natural. This suggests that the feature has overflowed, with the iron slag having been repeatedly washed in or flooded out either naturally or by some industrial process. (1006) can be seen in localised spreads across the site to a depth of 10 – 20mm.

4.9 **Context [1007]**

Context [1007] (figs 3 & 4: Section 3) is another linear appearing to run parallel with [1004]. [1007] is of equal width (2 metres) and depth (150mm) to context [1004]. Shallow concave sides of approximately 25 degrees merge gradually with a gentle concave base, the break of

slope both upper and lower being imperceptible. This ditched is believed to reappear westwards across the site, although with a modified profile.

4.10 Context [1007] is filled by context (1008) a reddish brown, very fine clayey silt with 10% inclusions of irregular spheroid pieces of iron slag, averaging 10mm in diameter. The percentage of inclusions is very similar to that of the adjacent fill (1005) and appears to have been deposited in a similar process with the slag pieces forming thin lenses suggesting repeated deposits of a similar nature. There is, however, no indication that the feature has overflowed beyond its edges.

4.11 **Context [1009]**

Context [1009] (Fig.3) is visible only in north-west corner of the excavated area. Running parallel to the north-westerly end of [1007], it is likely to be a continuation of ditches [1002] or [1004]. [1009]. It is a steep sided ditch (circa 90 degrees). Having an indistinct break to the top of the cut, the side is interrupted by slump material with a strong break to a flattish base. The north side of the feature is truncated by groundworks and the surviving dimensions are 1 metre in width and 400mm in depth.

4.12 Context [1009] is filled by context (1010) a reddish brown, very fine clayey silt with 10% inclusions of irregular spheroid pieces of iron slag, averaging 10mm in diameter. The fill corresponds very closely to that of context [1004] with the slag pieces forming thin lenses suggesting repeated deposits of a similar nature.

4.13 Due to the similar nature of the ditch fills it was impossible to determine the exact relationships between them. The plan (Fig. 3) would suggest that [1002] is only visible within the north eastern corner of the site, continuing to the north-west, beyond the monitored area. It is possible that the ditch recorded as [1007] in the central trenches actually represents either the merging or crossing of [1007] and [1004], as recorded in the eastern most trench. These two ditches then separate again to the west and are subsequently recorded as [1007] and [1009]. There were, however, no signs of re-cutting in section 4 (Fig.4) and so the relationship remains determined only by the similarity of the fills.

4.14 **Context [1011]**

Context [1011] is a pit, sub-circular in plan, with a diameter of 4m and depth of 400mm, with edges appearing in several trenches (Figs 3 & 4: Section 5). In section the pit has a gradual break from the top edge to a slightly concave 60 degree slope terminating in a gradual break to a flattish base.

4.15 Context [1011] is filled by (1012) described as a dark brownish black silty clay with 50 – 60% inclusions of iron slag.

- 4.16 All these features are sealed by context (1001), a 100 - 300mm friable to firm layer of reddish brown clayey silt, without inclusions or artefacts. Finally the site is capped by (1000), a loose, dark black – brown, 100 - 200mm thick layer of clayey silty loam with a very high humic content. This contains 19th century and later artefacts (Worrall 2006).
- 4.17 In conclusion the archaeological remains consisted of three or four ditches associated with an iron based industrial process, plus a pit. The pit and the northern-most ditch have been used for waste deposits whilst the other two or three ditches appear to have had iron slag deposited within them and have been flooded. In areas, this has overflowed leading to a thin spread of waste material across parts of the site.
- 4.18 Evaluation trench 4 contained ditch 4/004 (Worrell 2006, fig 3, section 3), which may represent a continuation of either [1007] and/or [1009]. 4/004 exhibits a double concave base, but no visible re-cuts. A distance of 20 metres between [4/004] and [1007]/[1009] makes any relationship conjectural; however its orientation to the north towards the alluvial deposits and the old stream is noteworthy. The base of [4/004] lies at 68.00 metres OD whilst the bases of [1004] and [1007] (at the east end of the site) lie at just over 69.5 and 68.9 metres OD respectively.

5.0 SUMMARY

- 5.1 An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at 67, Ifield Road, Crawley (NGR 526430 136665). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of approximately 80 metres of footing trench excavation, on the eastern half of the site, following an evaluation which identified archaeological features in that area.
- 5.2 Presumed medieval archaeology associated with ironworking was found consisting of iron slag spreads, a 4m diameter pit and at least two northwest-southeast orientated linear ditches. All features contained deposits of iron slag.
- 5.4 Although no dating evidence was recovered from the slag-filled features, the depth of 19th century deposits and no evident truncation to the underlying ditch and pit fills, suggests a medieval or early post-medieval date for the features. This is consistent with evidence from other sites in the vicinity. The linear features are suggested to be man-made drainage ditches.
- 5.5 At the time of excavation, the evaluation at Victoria Road, Crawley (James 1998) provided evidence for the most westerly remains of medieval iron working. However, the current work has moved this

further to the west. The proximity of the alluvial deposits to the north and north-west of the current site (with attendant flooding) may define the limit of iron working remains but this is uncertain.

- 5.6 There is evidence that the drainage ditches at Ifield Road were overflowing, whereas the features at Victoria Road do not show any signs of drainage difficulty. The Victoria Road features are recorded at between 73m and 72m OD whereas the features from Ifield Road are at a maximum of 70m, broadly illustrating a downward slope to the north and northwest towards the old stream and flood plain. This is further illustrated by the maximum depths of features on site, dropping by over a metre from the east end to the north-west corner (over a distance of some thirty metres).

6.0 REFERENCES

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SMR Summary Form

Site Code	IRC06					
Identification Name and Address	67, Ifield Road, Crawley, Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	West Sussex, Crawley Borough					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 526430 136665					
Geology	Upper Tunbridge Wells Sands					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2695					
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. 30 Oct – 6 Nov 2006	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Whelan Homes					
Project Manager	Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Jim Stevenson					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at 67, Ifield Road, Crawley (NGR 526430 136665). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of approximately 80 metres of foundation footings. Presumed medieval industrial evidence was found consisting of iron slag spreads, a 4 metre diameter pit and two northwest - southeast orientated linear ditches, all features containing iron slag. During an earlier evaluation (Worrall 2006) late post-medieval pottery (mid to late 19th) was obtained from the topsoil and a single fragment of blue and white transfer printed pottery was recovered during the watching brief. The linear features are suggested to be man-made drainage ditches sloping down by over a metre from southeast to north–northwest, towards an old stream and its alluvial deposits. This is believed to be the most westerly evidence of medieval iron working deposits from Crawley High Street at present.</p>						

APPENDIX 1. Oasis Summary Form

Project details

Project name	67 IField Road Crawley WB
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at 67, Ifield Road, Crawley (NGR 526430 136665). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of approximately. Presumed medieval industrial evidence was found consisting of iron slag spreads, a 4 metre diameter pit and two northwest - southeast orientated linear ditches, all features containing iron slag. During an earlier evaluation (Worrall 2006) late post-medieval pottery (mid to late 19th) was obtained from the topsoil and a single fragment of blue and white transfer printed pottery was recovered during the watching brief. The linear features are suggested to be man-made drainage ditches. This is believed to be the most westerly evidence of medieval iron working deposits from Crawley High Street at present.
Project dates	Start: 30-10-2006 End: 06-11-2006
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2340 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	2695 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CRAWLEY CRAWLEY 67 Ifield
Postcode	RH11 7XX
Study area	900.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 264 366 51.1141924008 -0.193976657903 51 06 51 N 000 11 38 W Point
Height OD	Min: 69.29m Max: 69.86m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator Archaeology South East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Deon Whittaker

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body whelan homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Contents 'other'

Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography',

Paper Archive recipient Crawley Museum

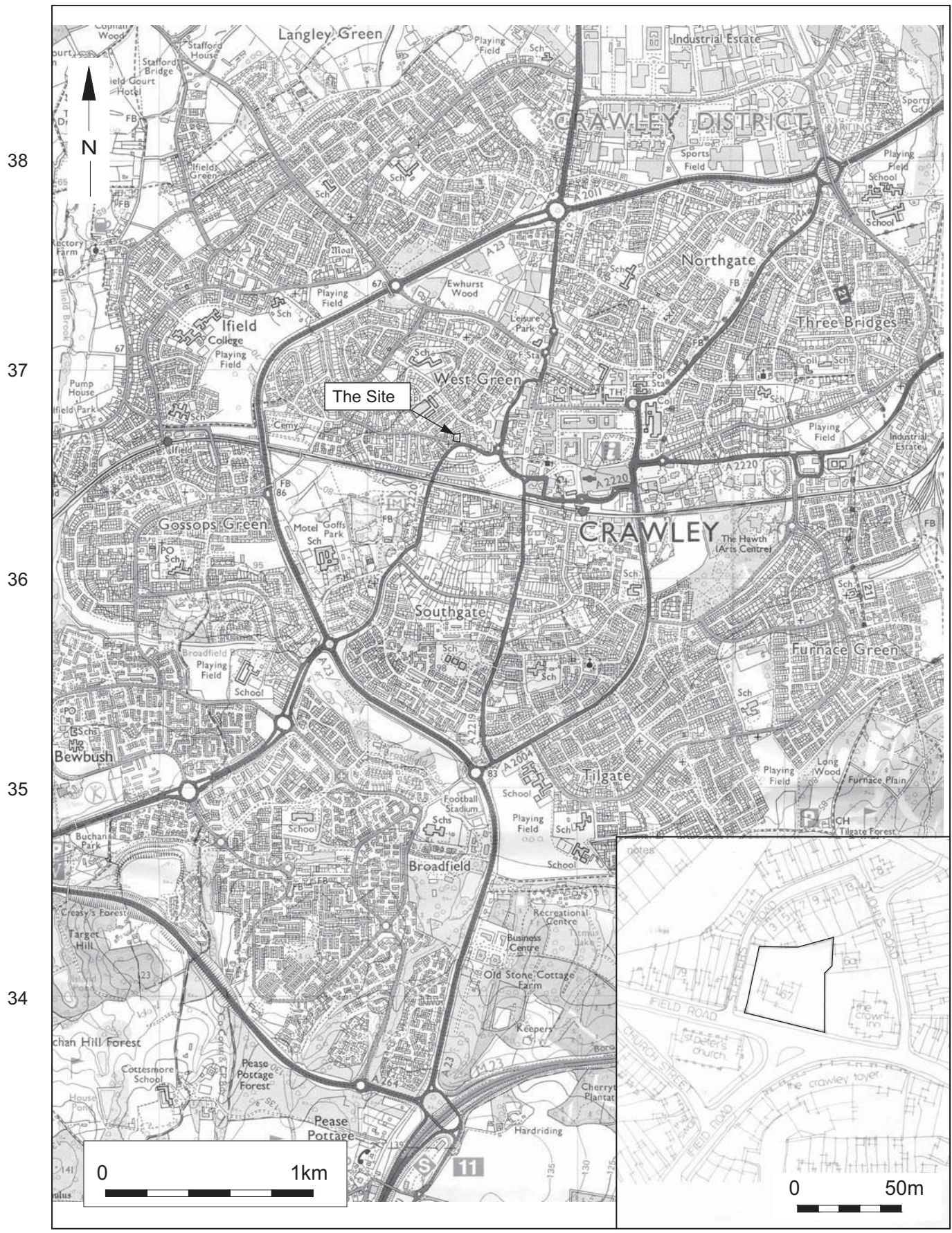
Paper Contents 'other'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Correspondence', 'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Map', 'Report', 'Section', 'Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

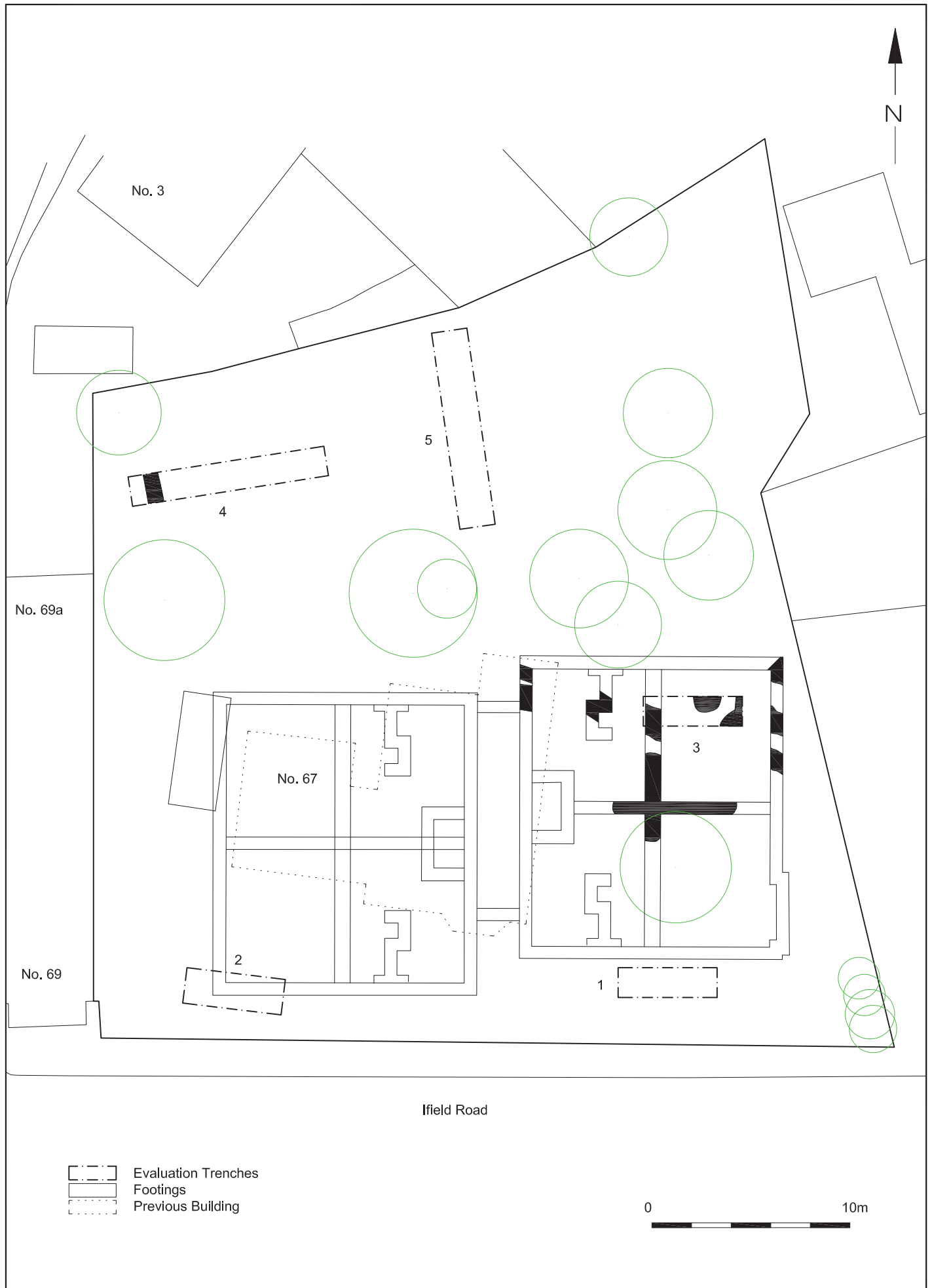
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief on land at 67 Ifield rd crawley west sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Whittaker, D.
Other bibliographic details	2695
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South east
Place of issue or publication	Ditchling
Description	Spiral bound Card back word processed A4 numbered report

Entered by	deon Whittaker (mushak@hotmail.co.uk)
Entered on	15 March 2007

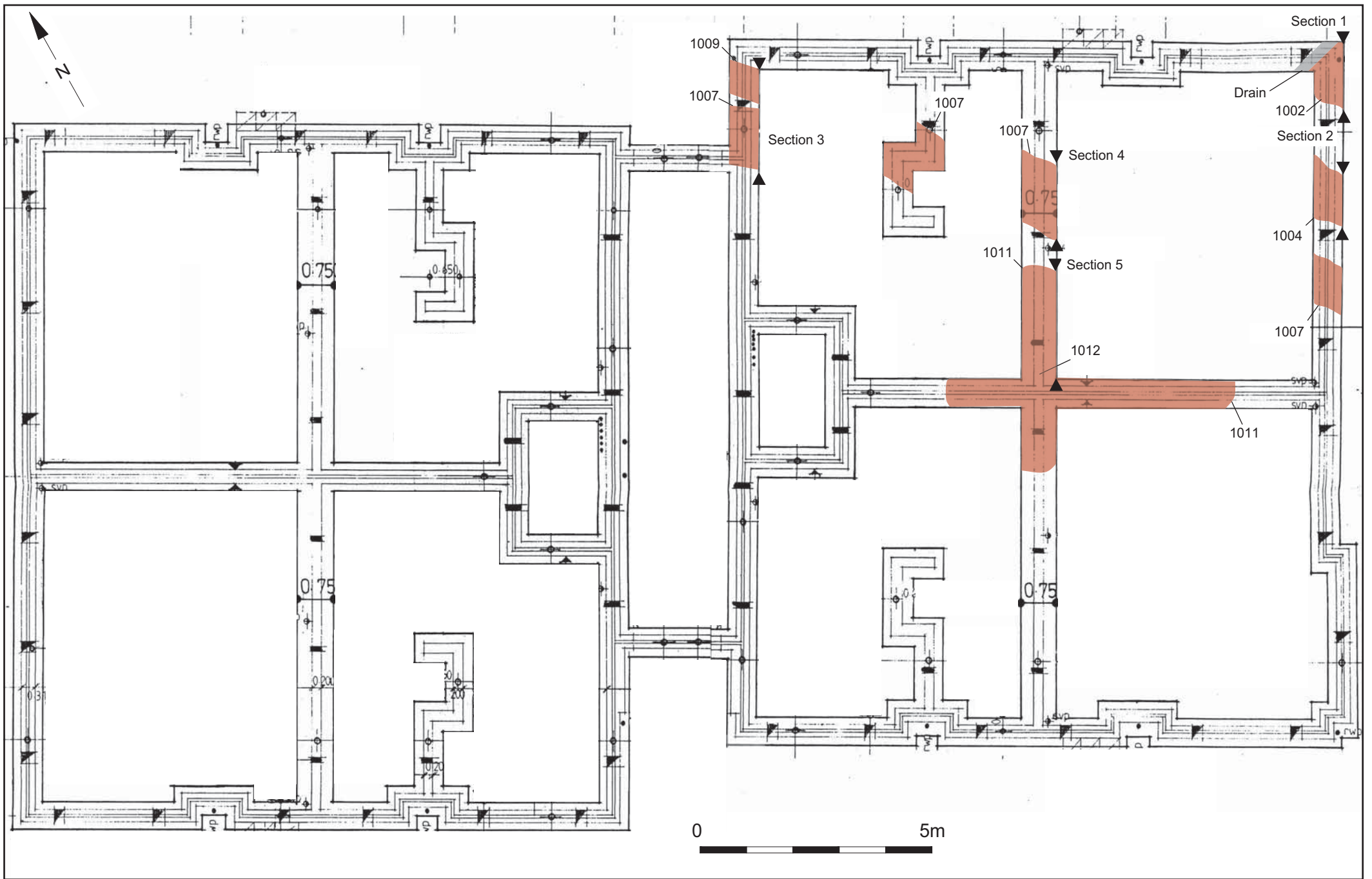


© Archaeology South-East			67 Ifield Road, Crawley	Fig. 1
Ref: 2695	March 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

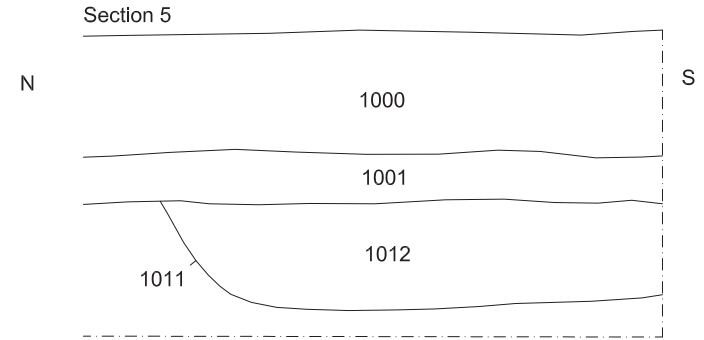
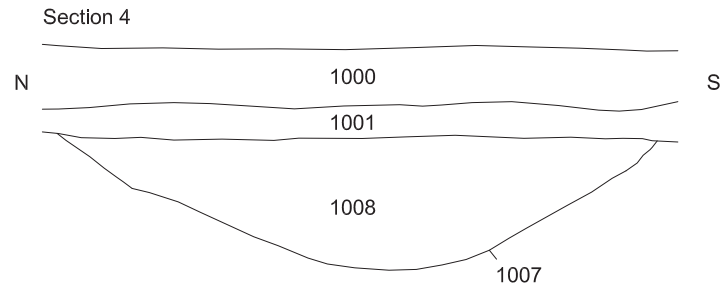
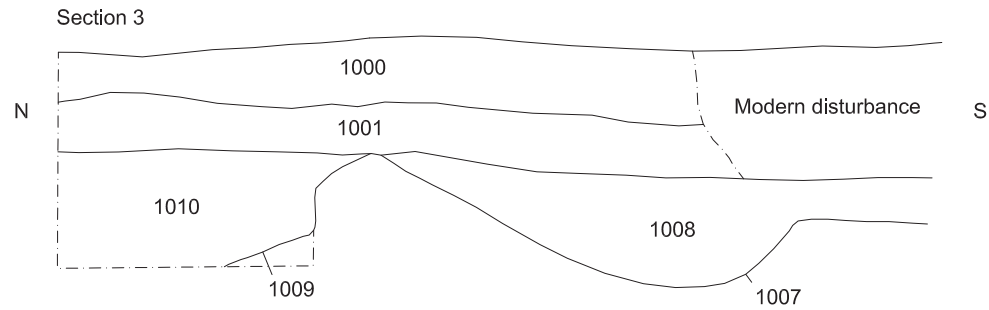
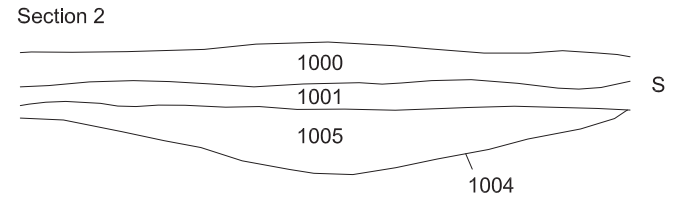
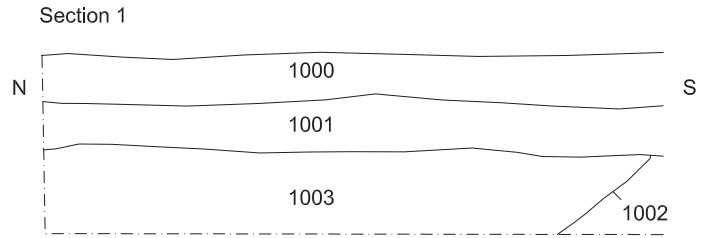
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Ref: 2695	March 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Composite Site Plan		



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Ref: 2695	March 2007	Drawn by: FEG	Sections 1-5	