

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Downham, Upper St Johns Road
Burgess Hill, West Sussex**

**NGR: 531162 119386
(TQ 31162 19386)**

**Planning Ref: DM/15/3980
ASE Project No: 7337
Site Code: USJ16
ASE Report No: 2016223
OASIS ID: archaeol6-254623**



By Catherine Douglas



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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531165 119417 during June 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by Havensilver Investments Limited in advance of development of the site.

Two post-medieval pits were encountered in the north end of the site. One of the pits contained a machine cut piece of timber, and the other contained degraded wood and corrugated iron, possibly the remains of a WWII bomb shelter.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Havensilver Investments Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks on land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531165 119417 and its location is shown on Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the latest data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2016) the underlying geology of the site comprises Weald Clay Formation – Mudstone. No superficial deposits have been recorded in the area.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of three 3-bed detached houses (Planning Ref. DM/15/3980). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, a programme of archaeological works was required as a condition of planning consent. Condition 11 of the decision notice therefore stated that:

The developer shall arrange for an archaeological organisation or an appropriately qualified archaeologist to observe the excavations and record archaeological evidence that may be uncovered as a result of the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: The site is potentially of archaeological interest and to accord with Policy B18 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan and Policy DP35 of the Pre Submission Draft District Plan.

1.3.2 Accordingly, ASE was commissioned to, and submitted a WSI (ASE 2016) for, an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The overall aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record any archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that may be impacted by the development.

Specific Research Aims

1.4.2 Specific research aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as follows:

Prehistoric

- Can any traces of prehistoric occupation/activity be identified?

Roman

- Is there any evidence for the London to Brighton Roman Road? Can any traces of activity associated with possible roadside settlements, burials etc be found?

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report discusses the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out at the site by Archaeology South-East between the 11th May 2016 and the 8th June 2016. The work was carried out by Tom Munnery (Senior Archaeologist), Suzie Westall (Archaeologist) and Catherine Douglas (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (fieldwork) and Dan Swift / Jim Stevenson (Post excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Prehistoric

2.1.1 Three prehistoric find spots have been recorded in the vicinity of the site: a Bronze Age palstave was discovered about 500 metres south of the site. A Bronze Age flat axe and a fragment of a Neolithic polished stone axe were found at Saint John's Common about two kilometres west of the site.

2.2 Roman

2.2.1 The course of a Roman Road from London to Brighton passes through Burgess Hill. According to Ordnance Survey data the centre line of its projected alignment lies 15m east of the site boundary

2.3 Medieval

2.3.1 No medieval sites or features have been identified in the vicinity of the site.

2.4 Post-medieval

2.4.1 The Grade II* Listed church of Saint John the Evangelist (TQ 312 192) was founded in the 19th century and is located approximately 200 metres south of the site. The churchyard wall is a Listed Grade II monument.

2.4.2 Approximately 115m to the west of the site is the former Providence Strict Baptist Chapel which is a Grade II Listed Building and now converted into a dwelling.

2.4.3 Early Ordnance Survey sources indicate that the Lodge House (associated with Marle Place to the north of the site), which is to be demolished as part of the redevelopment of the site, was constructed around the turn of the 20th Century. The adjacent Park Centre was extant at 1870 and was formerly St Johns Reading Rooms. A number of brick fields, clay pits and associated potteries are located within approximately 200m south of the site but there is no indication that these extended north of the modern alignment of Lower Church Road (formerly Church Road).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Intrusive groundworks associated with the construction of the new dwellings and car parking were monitored by an archaeologist. The areas included the foundation trenches and ground reduction within the footings of a large building in the northwest part of the site, and two soakaways.
- 3.1.2 The building measured 10m by 10m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.14m below ground surface level.
- 3.1.3 The soakaway in the northeast part of the site measured a length of 10m by a width of 4m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.15m below ground surface level. The soakaway in the southern part of the site measured a length of 6m by a width of 3m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m.
- 3.1.4 The excavation areas were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless ditching bucket during the soakaway excavations.
- 3.1.5 The excavation was taken, in spits of no more than 0.25m, down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying geology, whichever was uppermost, under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 3.1.6 All exposed archaeological features and deposits were cleaned by hand, planned and recorded using standard ASE recording sheets. All features were planned at the scale of 1:20 in relation to the trench outline and sections drawn at the scale of 1:10. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout.

3.3 The Site Archive

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

Context sheets	6
Section sheets	1
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	54
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	4
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Results from the building footings and soakaways (Figures 2 and 3)

4.1.1 All contexts encountered during the watching brief have been summarised in Table 3, below.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
100	Layer	Topsoil / made ground	trench	trench	0.38
101	Layer	Natural	trench	trench	0
102	Cut	Pit	1.75	0.8	0.5
103	Fill	Fill, single	1.75	0.8	0.5
104	Cut	Pit	2.8	1.5	0.6
105	Fill	Fill, single	2.8	1.5	0.6

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1.2 The natural [101] comprised Weald Clay Formation, which was mottled grey-blue and yellow and very sticky. The level of the natural ranged from 0.33 – 0.73m below ground surface level.
- 4.1.3 A possible pit [102] was identified in the northeast area of the building footings. It measured a length of greater than 1.75m by a width of greater than 0.80m and had a depth greater than 0.50m. This was an arbitrary cut containing a single timber, encountered at 19.67m AOD. The timber is discussed in detail in Section 5. The pit contained a single fill [103] comprised of redeposited weald clay, very similar in appearance to the natural, but with a slightly more grey-blue tinge. The timber has been dated to the post-medieval/modern period.
- 4.1.4 A large pit [104] was identified in the northwest corner of the soakaway in the northeast part of the site. The pit was encountered 0.75m below the ground surface level and it measured a length of 2.80m by a width of 1.50m and a depth of 0.60m. It contained a single fill [105] comprised of redeposited grey-brown silty clay. The pit contained corrugated iron and degraded wood, and is therefore also post-medieval/modern.
- 4.1.5 Both features [102] and [104] were immediately overlain by a layer of disturbed topsoil / made ground [100], comprised of dark grey brown loose silty loam and ranging in thickness from 0.38m – 0.75m.
- 4.1.6 No archaeological finds were identified in the soakaway in the southern end of the site. >0.37m of Weald Clay was immediately overlain by 0.33m of mixed topsoil / made ground [100].

5.0 THE TIMBER by Alice Dowsett, Kristina Krawiec and Marvin Demicoli

(Figure 4)

5.1 Introduction and methodology

5.1.1 A single timber was recovered from the site from pit [102] and was gently cleaned and recorded on *pro forma* sheets at the ASE facilities; it was also sampled for species identification and photographed.

5.1.2 To identify the species, the sample was sectioned along three planes (transverse, radial and tangential) according to standardised procedures (Gale & Cutler 2000). The sample was then examined under a transmitted light microscope at 50x to 400x magnification in order to determine the wood taxa used at the site. Identifications were made by M. Demicoli by comparing the wood anatomical characteristics with specimens documented in Schweingruber (1990).

5.2 Results

Timber number	Context	Part of structure?	Site Context	Dimensions LxBxD (cm)	Knotted?	Straight grained?	Reused?	Tool marks	Joints/ fixings	Unintentional marks	Method of conversion	Bark	Sapwood	Sample taken?	Taxonomic Identifications
n/a	102	N	Pit	169x21x10	Y	N	N	parallel and straight (with occasional diagonal) saw marks on one side	N	one dent from machine	box halved	N	N	Y	<i>Quercus</i> sp.

Table 4: Timber record

5.2.2 This timber is a possible sawn waste offcut derived from the creation of oak (*Quercus* sp.) planks and was shaped via box halved conversion. This timber was found as an isolated find within Weald Clay, in a poorly-defined pit feature. The unworked side has one dent which occurred during recovery by the machine. The unworked side is knotted and uneven, whilst the worked side is likely to have been machine cut, as interpreted from the presence of straight and parallel saw marks. There are occasional diagonal saw marks and the timber lacks bark although sapwood was present. Due to the freshness and hardness of this timber, as well as the machine saw marks, this timber dates from the post medieval/modern period.



Plate 1 End of timber, 10x5cm, showing boxed halved conversion



Plate 2 Worked side of timber, machine saw marks running parallel along the timber



Plate 3 Saw marks on worked side of timber



Plate 4 Unworked side of timber with one dent made by the machine digging it out



Plate 5 The dent made by the machine

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 6.1.1 Natural Weald Clay was identified during the groundworks at 0.33 – 0.73m below ground surface level.
- 6.1.2 Two post-medieval pits were encountered at the north end of the site. One of the pits contained a machine cut piece of timber, and the other contained degraded wood and corrugated iron. The feature is possibly the remains of a WWII bomb shelter such as an Anderson shelter, but the feature was very degraded and unclear.
- 6.1.3 Both features were immediately overlain by mixed topsoil / made ground ranging in thickness from 0.33m – 0.75m.

6.2 Research aims

- 6.2.1 The overall aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record any archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that may be impacted by the development.
- 6.2.2 The watching brief established a general paucity of archaeological remains, aside from the two post-medieval/modern features.
- 6.2.3 Specific research aims of the archaeological watching brief were defined as follows:

- Can any traces of prehistoric occupation/activity be identified?

There is no potential to address this research aim given the results of this evaluation.

- Is there any evidence for the London to Brighton Roman Road? Can any traces of activity associated with possible roadside settlements, burials etc be found?

There is no potential to address this research aim given the results of this evaluation.

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HER Summary

Site code	USJ16				
Project code	7337				
Planning reference	DM/15/3980				
Site address	Land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex				
District/Borough	West Sussex				
NGR (12 figures)	531162 119386				
Geology	Weald Clay Formation				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	11 th May - 8 th June 2016				
Sponsor/client	Havensilver Investments Limited				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Tom Munnery, Suzie Westall, Catherine Douglas				
Period summary					
				Post-Medieval	
Project summary	<p>This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531165 119417 during June 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by Havensilver Investments Limited in advance of development of the site.</p> <p>Two post-medieval pits were encountered in the north end of the site. One of the pits contained a machine cut piece of timber, and the other contained degraded wood and corrugated iron, possibly the remains of a WWII bomb shelter.</p>				

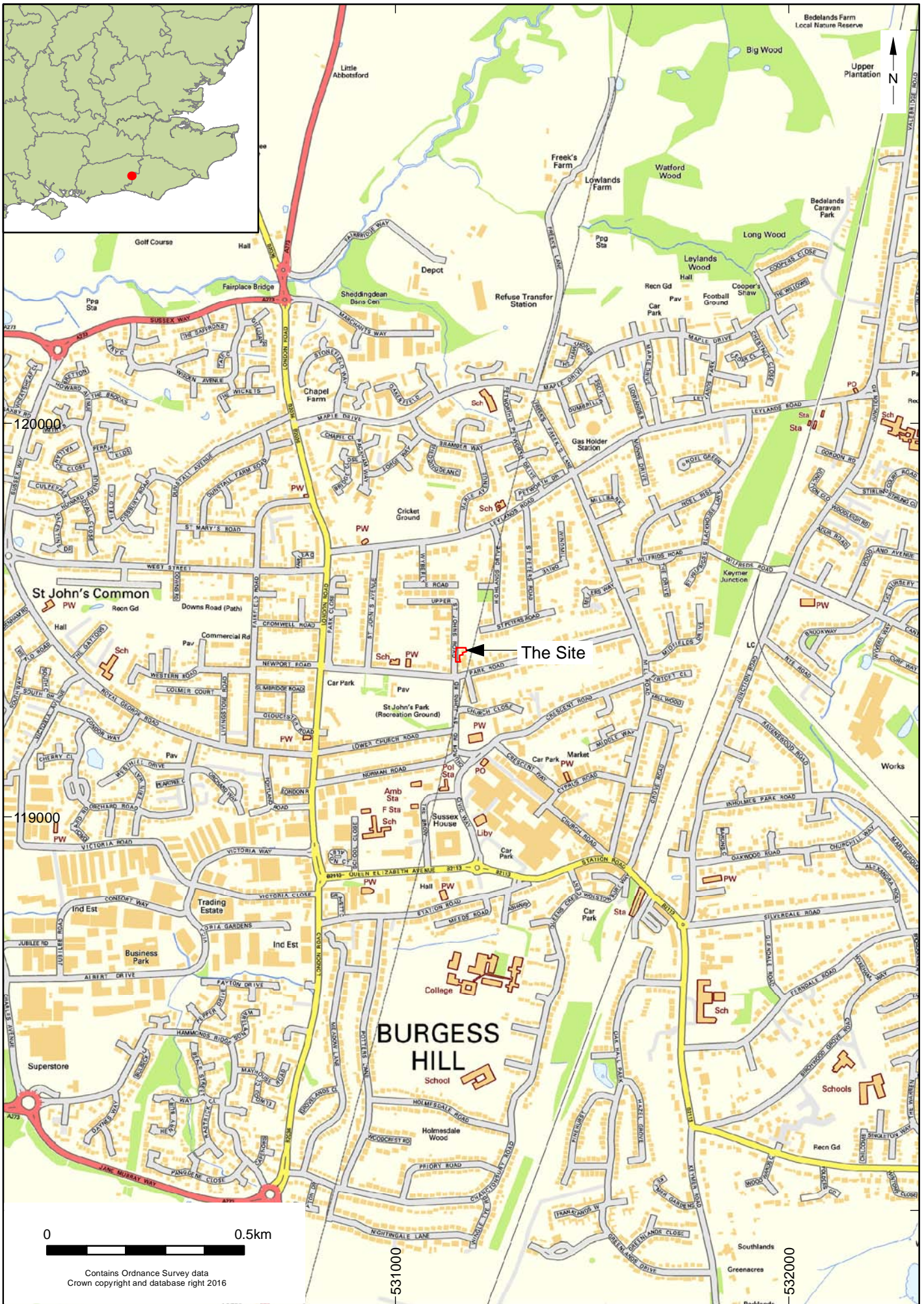
OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-254623

Project details

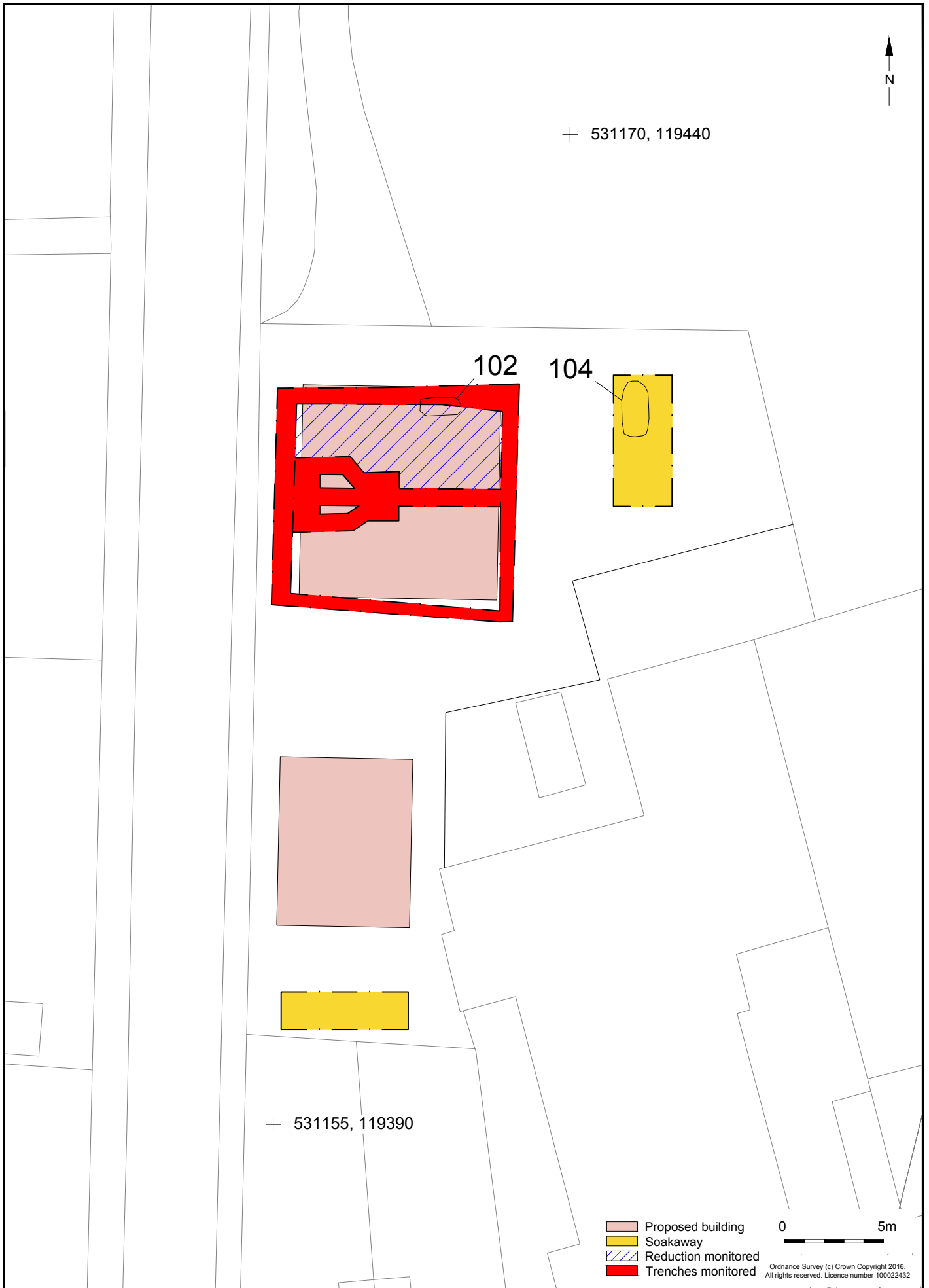
Project name	Land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex
Short description of the project	This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at land at Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 531165 119417 during June 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by Havensilver Investments Limited in advance of development of the site. Two post-medieval pits were encountered in the north end of the site. One of the pits contained a machine cut piece of timber, and the other contained degraded wood and corrugated iron, possibly the remains of a WWII bomb shelter.
Project dates	Start: 11-05-2016 End: 08-06-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Significant Finds	WOOD Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX MID SUSSEX BURGESS HILL Downham, Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex
Postcode	RH15 8HB
Study area	30 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 531162 119386 50.886036613757 0.1770765617 50 53 09 N 000 10 37 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Mid Sussex District Council
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Tom Munnery

Project supervisor Suzie Westall
Project supervisor Catherine Douglas
Type of sponsor/funding body Client
Name of sponsor/funding body Havensilver Investments Limited
Project archives
Physical Archive recipient Local Museum
Physical Contents "Wood"
Digital Archive recipient Local Museum
Digital Media available "Database","GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Local Museum
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1
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Project Ref: 7337	06 2016	Site location	
Report Ref: 2016233	Drawn by: NG	Fig. 1	



© Archaeology South-East		Upper St Johns Road, Burgess Hill	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7337	06 2016	Site plan	
Report Ref: 2016223	Drawn by: NG		

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