

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
on Land at Green Close, Ringmer, Sussex**

(Centred on TQ 4514, 1269)

By

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Planning Consent LW/06/0299

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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 Green Close, Ringmer, Sussex (TQ 4514, 1269 OS). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of two test pits, a BT service trench and an eight metre square by eleven metre deep pit for the site of a sewage tank. Limited post-medieval remains were found consisting of patches of debris and a north - south orientated curvilinear ditch / gully containing a post medieval clay pipe stem. No sequential relationships were established although post-medieval dating evidence was acquired from across the site. The sole feature is suggested to be a man-made drainage gully.

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SMR Summary Sheet

Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

Fig. 2: Site Plan 1:250

Fig. 3: Trench A Plan and Section

Fig. 4: Trench B Section

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), was commissioned by 4 Delivery Ltd to undertake a watching brief over groundworks associated with the construction of an underground storage tank at Green Close, Ringmer, East Sussex (site centred NGR 545141 112695) (see figure 1).
- 1.2 Planning consent was granted by Lewes District Council (reference LW/06/0299) for the installation of a glass reinforced plastic control kiosk and vent as part of sewer upgrade works, although the scheme itself does not require planning permission. 4 Delivery Ltd are committed to completing such schemes with high regard to local heritage and environmental issues. As part of this commitment, consultation with the County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has been undertaken.
- 1.3 In light of this archaeological potential, the County Archaeologist, (ESCC) has advised that an archaeological watching should be carried out in line with advice given in PPG16 (the Government's advice on *Archaeology and Planning*).
- 1.4 A Specification for the work was prepared by Neil Griffin of Archaeology South-East and duly agreed with the County Council prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.5 The extent and purpose of the archaeological work is to monitor the excavation of new groundworks to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the groundworks are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.
- 1.6 The works examined included:
- General ground reduction (including the creation of the contractor's temporary compound).
 - Excavations for the new underground detention tank
 - Other associated significant ground works i.e., drainage cuts
- 1.7 The British Geological Survey map Sheet 319 (Lewes) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) indicates that the site lies on Gault Clay.
- 1.8 The fieldwork was undertaken by Deon Whittaker (Assistant Archaeologist) and Paul Riccoboni (Senior Archaeologist), during September 2006. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located on common ground forming an island in a cul-de-sac called Green Close, Ringmer. The site is centred at NGR 545141 112695.
- 2.2 The County Archaeologist (ESCC) identified that the works lie within the medieval and post-medieval village of Ringmer. This area of the village was an important pottery production area, containing a large number of kilns, several of which have been investigated by excavation and dated to the 12th to 14th centuries.
- 2.3 The general character of the surrounding buildings suggests that construction in and around the site last took place in the mid 20th century.

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 The groundworks comprised the stripping of an 40m x 40m roughly triangular plot, which comprises the island and forms the construction compound (see fig.2). An approximately 30m long by 600mm wide and 600mm deep BT service trench was first excavated across the site (see fig. 2) with 2m x 2m test pits at either end. An 8m x 8m square trench (A) was stripped which would eventually go down to 11m plus to contain the underground storage tank as was a drainage trench (B), 'L' shaped with an approximate area of 33m sq.
- 3.4 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.5 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 the Barbican Museum, Lewes.

- 3.6 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 natural (Context **3**) is an exposed Late Albian Upper Gault clay band which is dominant in the immediate area running roughly east to west from Eastbourne to south of Petersfield. This occurs on site at a depth of 0.55 metres (see figure 4 for stratigraphical section).
- 4.2 Above the natural (**03**) is a 250mm deep, orange – brown clayey silt layer of colluvial subsoil. The interface with context (**11**) was very diffuse, possibly disturbed. Elsewhere there is a clean boundary between natural and subsoil (with a separate context number (**2**)). Very occasional chalk flecks were present as were small (less than 50mm) patinated flint nodules. Pottery fragments dating from the late 13th to 14th century were recovered from this layer (**11**) in trench B.
- 4.3 Above the subsoil is a layer of made ground, context (**7**), averaging 200mm in depth. This is a mix of grey gault natural and mixed clayey silt matrices, containing frequent chalk nodules (up to 20% of volume) and modern building debris at the surface. Context (**6**) was a layer of compacted chalk beneath the topsoil context (**5**).
- 4.4 One defined feature was found, together with several spreads of post medieval debris in trench A, with two fragments of pottery found in trench B without an associated feature.
- 4.5 **Trench A (Fig. 3)**
- 4.5.1 Trench A was a 8m x 8m square trench containing a roughly north - south curvilinear ditch / gully (context **10**) 1m wide, 200mm deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. Nineteenth Century clay pipe fragments were recovered from this feature's fill (context **8**) which was a homogenous dark grey, silty clay. In addition to the ditch, Trench A revealed several patches of post-medieval building debris including clay pipe fragments. These were at the same level as the top of the ditch and are likely to be contemporary. The surface exposed probably constitutes the original post-medieval working surface, the ditch probably used for drainage. A sample was taken and analysed (see 4.8 below)

4.6 **Trench B** (Fig. 4).

4.6.1 Trench B was 'L' shaped with an approximate area of 33m sq (see figs. 2 and 4). Lying between the made ground **(07)** and natural **(03)** is subsoil **(11)** described as orange - brown silty clay, with small (less than 50mm) chalk flecks and patinated flint nodules, producing two pottery fragments of late 13th to 14th date.

4.7 **BT service trench**

4.7.1 Two 2 metre square test pits were dug at either end of a thirty metre BT services trench, possessing topsoil **(01)**, subsoil **(02)** and natural **(03)** contexts similar to elsewhere on the site. Context **(04)** which is the fill of a ditch, is a close match for ditch fill **(08)** from the excavation of Trench A and may represent a continuation of the gully **[10]**. Dating evidence in the form of clay pipe fragments were found in both contexts **(04)** and **(08)**.

4.8 **Context (08) Bulk Sample** by Lucy Allott

4.8.1 One small sample (7ltrs) was taken to determine the nature and content of the ditch deposit. The deposit consisted of gravel in a green-grey clay matrix. It was bucket floated to establish whether there were any archaeological or environmental remains present.

4.8.2 No charred botanical remains, bone or shell were noted in this sample. Small fragments of industrial waste, one cbm fragment, one clay pipe shaft fragment and one worked flint were present. The presence of these archaeological remains suggest that the ditch feature is archaeological rather than a natural gully deposit as was suspected during field work. The clay pipe fragment provides a post-medieval date for the ditch fill.

5.0 **SUMMARY**

5.1 An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at Green Close, Ringmer, Sussex (TQ 4514, 1269 OS). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of two test pits, a BT service trench and an eight metre square by eleven metre deep pit for the site of a sewage tank. Limited post-medieval remains were found consisting of patches of debris and a north – south orientated curvilinear ditch / gully containing a post-medieval clay pipe stem. No sequential relationships were established although post-medieval dating evidence was acquired from across the site. The sole feature is suggested to be a 19th century man-made drainage gully. Residual

pottery fragments from the late 13th to 14th centuries were recovered from the subsoil.

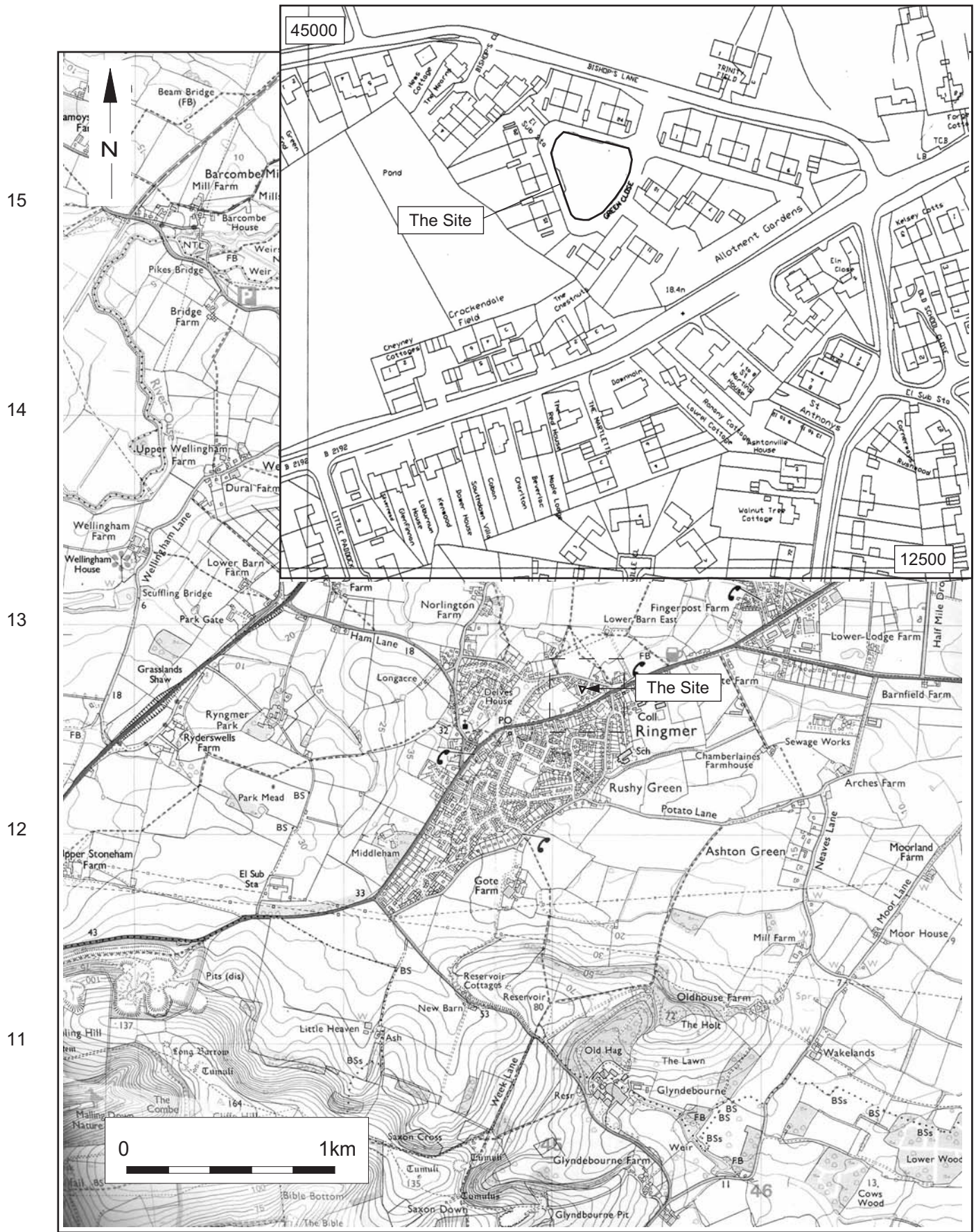
- 5.2 Geology consists of Upper Greensand and Gault deposits with a layer of clayey silt **(03)** above. Above this lies an orange brown silty clay matrix **(11)** and a dark brown grey silty clay matrix **(02)**. Above this lies a modern (circa 1950's) 200mm deposit of made ground **(07)** with a 50mm compacted chalk surface **(06)**. Finally 100mm of poor silty topsoil **(05)** and **(01)** has been redeposited.

6.0 REFERENCES

Griffin, N. 2006 Green Close, Ringmer, East Sussex: *Archaeological Watching Brief, Written Scheme of Investigation*, Archaeology South-East.

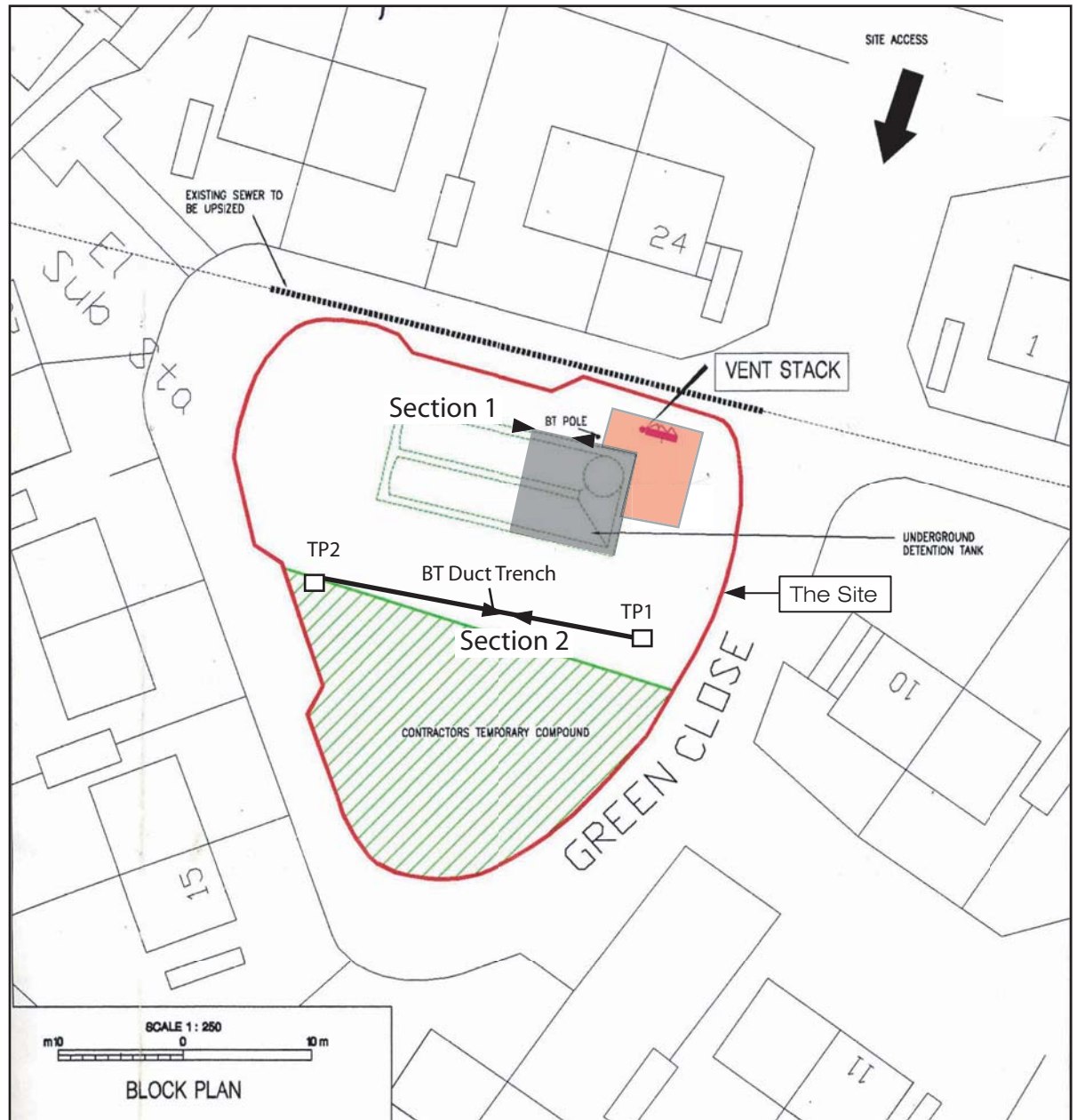
SMR Summary Form






Site Code	GCR06					
Identification Name and Address	Green Close, Ringmer, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex, Lewes District					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 4514, 1269					
Geology	Gault Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2515					
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. Sept. 2006	Other		
Sponsor/Client	4 Delivery Limited					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer					
Project Supervisor	Deon Whittaker					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on land at Green Close, Ringmer, Sussex (TQ 4514, 1269 OS). The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of two test pits, a BT service trench and an eight metre square by eleven metre deep pit for the site of a sewage tank. Limited post-medieval remains were found consisting of patches of debris and a north - south orientated curvilinear ditch / gully containing a post medieval clay pipe stem. No sequential relationships were established although post-medieval dating evidence was acquired from across the site. The sole feature is suggested to be a man-made drainage gully.</i></p>						

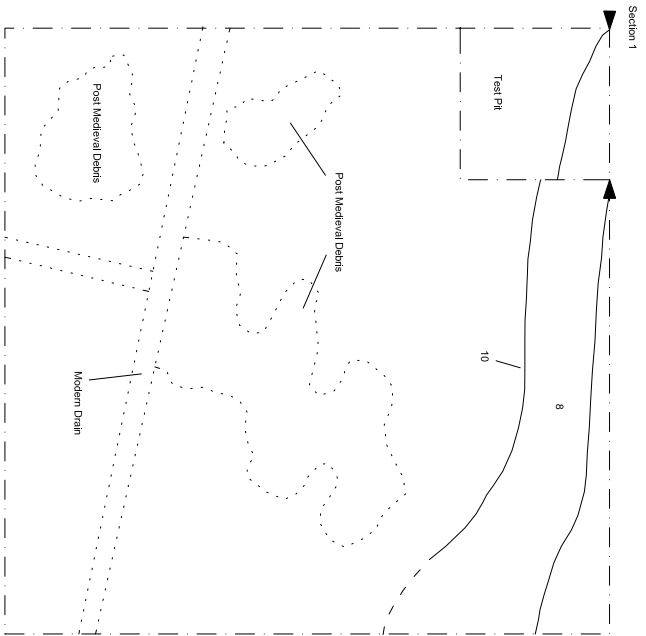
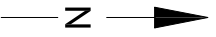


© Archaeology South-East			Green Close, Ringmer	Fig. 1
Ref: 2515	Jan 2007	Drawn by: FEG	Site Location Plan	

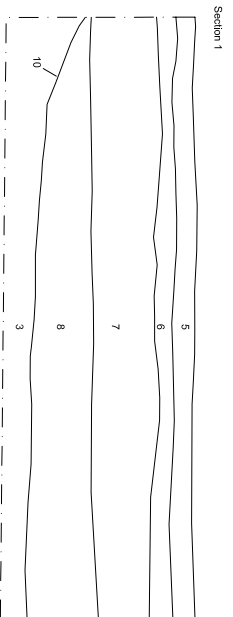
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-  Excavation Area
-  Monitored Area
-  Site Boundary
-  Contractors Temporary Compound
-  New Permitted Development Work



0 2m



0 0.5m

© Archaeology South-East		Green Close, Ringmer	
Ref: 2515	Jan 2007	Drawn by: FEG	Trench A plan & section
			Fig. 3

Section 2

