

**Boundstone Nursery School, Boundstone Lane,
Sompting. West Sussex. BN15 9QY**

**Archaeological Monitoring of Initial Ground
Excavations**

ADUR: Sompting

Planning Reference: ADC/497/06(S)

NGR 517587 105098

Site Code: BNS 07

Project no. 3032

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Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by West Sussex County Council to undertake a watching brief at the site of Boundstone Nursery School in Sompting (NGR 517587 105098) during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension to the existing nursery. Groundworks involved the stripping of access ways, a compound and general ground reduction in advance of footing excavation. A range of residual lithic material was recovered that suggests at least limited Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity of the site. A shallow linear feature was also revealed containing C19th – 20th ceramic building material (CBM).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), were commissioned by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to undertake archaeological monitoring during initial ground excavations at Boundstone Nursery, Boundstone Lane, Sompting, West Sussex (NGR 517587 105098) (Fig 1) hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.2 Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension to the existing nursery (Planning reference ADC/497/06(S)). Following consultation with West Sussex County Council's Historic Environment Team, it was established that the proposed development lay in an archaeologically sensitive area. As a consequence, it was proposed that the site contractor's initial ground excavations for site set-up and access should be archaeologically monitored. The results of this monitoring would then be used to assess the character, survival and vulnerability of any archaeological deposits present on the site and put forward suitable mitigation measures for the impact of the proposed development, if necessary.
- 1.3 A *Scoping for Trial Archaeological Investigation* was subsequently prepared by John Mills, Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council (WSCC 2007a), which outlined the requirements of the archaeological monitoring. A *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* was subsequently prepared in response to this scoping report and with reference to the *Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions* (version 2b), issued by WSCC (WSCC 2007b). 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).
- 1.5 The site is currently occupied by a mixture of hard and soft play areas. According to the British Geological Survey (Solid and Drift Edition; 1:50,000 map sheet Nos. 318/333 *Brighton and Worthing*), the site lies predominantly within the colluvial head deposits, located at the foot of the chalk Downs, on the West Sussex Coastal Plain.
- 1.7 The fieldwork was undertaken variously by Dave Dunkin, Michelle Collins and Deon Whittaker (Archaeologists) between July 3rd 2007 and July 12th 2007. Diccon Hart (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager) managed the project.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological background to the site was summarised on the scoping report issued by WSCC (WSCC 2007) and is reproduced here with due acknowledgement:
- 2.2 The site lies on the Sussex coastal plain, an area rich in archaeological remains, particularly of later prehistoric and Roman date.
- 2.3 In view of the intensive ancient occupation of the coastal plain, this zone is considered to be archaeologically sensitive, an area where larger developments may encounter and damage buried archaeological remains.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The general objectives of the archaeological work, as set out in the *Scoping Report* (WSCC 2007) were to monitor the groundworks in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological and palaeoarchaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. A specific aim of the monitoring was to establish the presence of any Bronze Age or Iron Age activity, in relation to known activity in the area.
 - 3.2 Intrusive groundworks 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). The following works were undertaken under archaeological monitoring:
 - Top soil strip associated with access roads and creation of contractor's compound.
 - Reduction of ground to west of school
 - Excavation of soak-away pit at site compound
 - 3.3 The level to which the contractor's compound and access roads were stripped was the top of clean natural head deposits, as defined by the monitoring archaeologist.
 - 3.4 All excavation was undertaken with a machine equipped with a suitably sized toothless bucket wherever practicable.
 - 3.5 Where new excavations revealed archaeological features, machine excavation ceased. The features were hand excavated and recorded to archaeological standards by the archaeologist(s) in attendance. Exposures were hand cleaned by archaeologists as necessary to clarify the presence/absence and nature of any features. Adequate time was
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made available for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand.

- 3.6 Excavation strategy was in accordance with Annexe A of the standard conditions. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by UCLFAU. Soil colours are recorded using visual inspection and not by reference to the Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.7 Archaeological structures, features and deposits exposed or excavated were planned in relation to the trench and the trench planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2500 scale.
- 3.8 The WSCC Archaeologist was informed of progress on the site and made a single visit to the site.
- 3.9 Environmental sampling was carried out in accordance with section 7 of the WSCC standard conditions.
- 3.10.1 A full photographic record (black and white and colour slide) of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. All archaeological features were photographed. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Portslade (site code BNS 07) and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. All finds are the property of the landowner, but will be donated to a suitable museum.
- 3.11 A metal detector was used to scan spoil derived from the excavations.

4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)

- 4.1 The strip of the access roads and contractor's compound entailed the removal of approximately 0.15m of topsoil (01) and a further 0.35m of subsoil (02) to reach the top of the head/brickearth deposits (05), with occasional exposure of the underlying flint gravel deposits (head gravels) (06), gravel pieces being less than 0.40m in maximum dimension. A proportion of the compound included made ground from the previous compound used for the construction of a public footbridge nearby. Several flint flakes were retrieved from the topsoil.
- 4.2 At the eastern end of the access road (see figure 2), a broadly northeast-southwest orientated shallow irregular linear feature [03], filled with mid brown clayey silt (04) was located and excavated (see figure 3). A piece of 19 – 20th century tile was recovered from this feature.
- 4.3 Reduction of ground to the west of the school involved excavation of c. 0.25m to the surface of the head/brickearth (05). Struck flint was recovered at the horizon between the topsoil and subsoil, and on the

surface of the natural. A spread of fire cracked flint was recovered from the surface of the natural together with a hammerstone and an isolated flake from the southern most portion of the reduced area (see figure 2). No evidence of burning was observed in association with the fire cracked flint and it is likely, therefore that the material is redeposited.

- 4.4 Initial excavation of the soak-away pit revealed 0.20m of brickearth (05) and a further 1.30 metres of head gravel deposits (06).
- 4.5 Excavations of footings towards the north of the development area revealed surviving deposits of brickearth (05) below c. 1.0m of made ground (07) thus suggesting a low potential for surviving archaeology.

5.0 THE FINDS By T Clifford and C Butler

- 5.1 A small collection of finds was recovered during the watching brief at Boundstone Nursery, characterised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Quantification of Finds

Context	Pot	wt (g)	CBM	wt (g)	Flint	wt (g)	FCF	wt (g)
[02] compound					1	42		
[02] nursery					2	56	21	468
[02]	1	32	1	12	7	66		
[02]					1	26		
[01]					10	334		

- 5.2 A single rim sherd from a large flower pot of 19th-20th century date was recovered from context [03].

- 5.3 Two small fragments of roof tile were recovered from context (02) and linear feature [03]. The fabric is well fired, medium coarse sand with clay pellet inclusions up to 1mm. The tile is probably of 19th-20th century date.

- 5.4 The pottery and ceramic building material are not considered to hold any potential for further work and may be discarded.

- 5.5 A small assemblage of 20 pieces of worked flint weighing 514gms was recovered during the watching brief, and is summarised in Table 2. The flint raw material comprises a number of different types, predominantly lightly patinated black and grey coloured, with a light buff coloured cortex.

Table 2. The Flintwork

Type	Number
Hard hammer-struck flakes	10
Soft hammer-struck flakes	3
Soft hammer-struck axe thinning flake	1
Fragments	2
Crested blade	1
End scraper	1
Nosed end scraper	1
Hollow scraper	1
Total	20

- 5.6 This small assemblage comprises mostly debitage. Most of the pieces are flakes and fragments, with many of the flakes (38%) having evidence of platform preparation. One small soft hammer-struck axe-thinning flake was also present. A crested blade provides further evidence for a systematic flintknapping strategy.
- 5.7 The watching brief also produced three scrapers; firstly an end scraper manufactured on an unusual piece of raw material, possibly selected for the colourful stripe running through the flint. A hollow scraper manufactured on a hard hammer-struck flake, and finally an unusual nosed end scraper manufactured on a soft hammer-struck flake, with its proximal end thinned to provide a shaft for hafting the scraper into a handle.
- 5.8 Although this assemblage includes a number of undiagnostic flakes, largely from (01), the remainder of the assemblage would not be out of place in an Early Neolithic context.
- 5.9 This small residual assemblage has little potential for further study. It is recommended that no further work be undertaken on this assemblage, although the flint work should be retained for possible further study in the future as it contains a number of interesting pieces. A handwritten assessment summary should be retained in the archive. In the event of publication, the nosed end scraper should be illustrated and a more detailed description of this piece included.

6.0 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Archaeological deposits observed during groundworks were restricted to a linear feature of 19-20th century date and a small spread of probably redeposited fire cracked flint. A residual assemblage of struck flint hints at possible Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity of the site but no definite activity of prehistoric date was observed on the site.

7.0 SUMMARY

- 7.1 Archaeology South East was commissioned to undertake a watching brief at the site of Boundstone Nursery School in Sompting (NGR 517587 105098). Groundworks involved the stripping of access ways, a compound and general ground reduction in advance of footing excavation. A small assemblage of residual lithic material attests to at least limited activity on the vicinity of the site. A shallow linear feature was also revealed containing C19th – 20th ceramic building material.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank Petter Bugge of WSCC Property Services for commissioning the work. Thanks are also due to John Mills of WSCC for his advice and guidance during the course of the fieldwork.

9.0 REFERENCES

Hart, D. 2007. *'Boundstone Nursery School, Boundstone Lane, Sompting, West Sussex. BN15 9QY - Archaeological Monitoring of Initial Ground Excavations - Written Scheme of Investigation.* Unpublished Report. Archaeology South East. July 2007

WSCC 2007a. *West Sussex County Council: Adur Age of Transfer Scheme. Oakfield Middle School, Irene Avenue, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 9NZ: Extension wing, access road and car parking. Scoping for Trial Archaeological Investigation.* West Sussex County Council.

WSCC 2007b. *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control).* West Sussex County Council.

APPENDIX 1: SMR Summary Form

Site Code	BNS07					
Identification Name and Address	Boundstone Lane Sompting					
County, District &/or Borough	West Sussex, Brighton					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 517587 105098					
Geology	Quaternary Head Deposits with Brickearth					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3032					
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. 3 Jul – 13 Jul 07		Other	
Sponsor/Client	West Sussex County Council					
Project Manager	Diccon Hart					
Project Supervisor	Deon Whittaker					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo. ✓	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>Archaeology South East was commissioned to undertake a watching brief at the site of Boundstone Nursery School in Sompting (NGR 517587 105098). Groundworks involved the stripping of access ways, a compound and general ground reduction in advance of footing excavation. A range of lithic material was recovered, generally Early Neolithic in character. A shallow linear feature was also revealed containing C19th – 20th ceramic building material.</p>						

APPENDIX 2: Oasis Summary Form

1.1 OASIS ID: archaeol6-31213

Project details

Project name	Bounstone Nursey
Short description of the project	Archaeology South East was commissioned to undertake a watching brief at the site of Boundstone Nursery School in Sompting (NGR 517587 105098). Groundworks involved the stripping of access ways, a compound and general ground reduction in advance of footing excavation. A range of lithic material was recovered, generally Early Neolithic in character. A shallow linear feature was also revealed containing C19th 20th ceramic building material
Project dates	Start: 03-07-2007 End: 13-07-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX ADUR SOMPTING Boundstone Nursery School
Postcode	BN15 9QY
Study area	15000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 4606 2598 51.9299920271 -1.330042218730 51 55 47 N 001 19 48 W Point
Height OD	Min: 0m Max: 0m

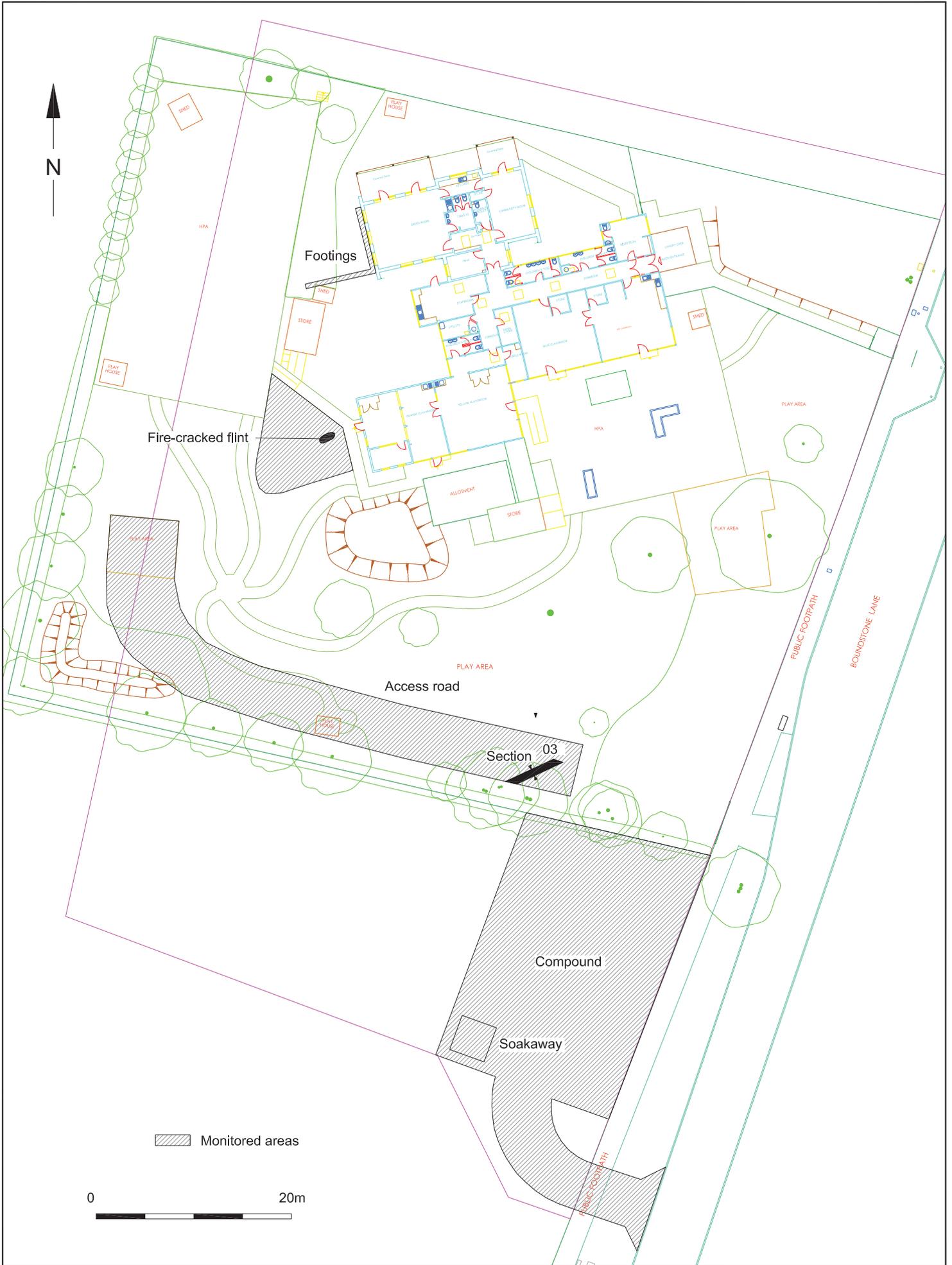
Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Diccon Hart
Project supervisor	Deon Whittaker
Type of sponsor/funding body	County Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	West Sussex County Council

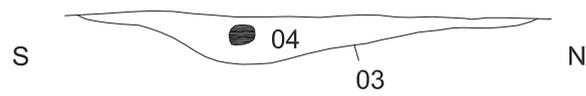
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Physical Contents	'Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Diary','Plan','Report','Section'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Boundstone Nursery School, Boundstone Lane, Sompting. West Sussex. BN15 9QY
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Whittaker, D.
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South East
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Entered on	11 September 2007



© Archaeology South-East		Boundstone Nursery School, Lancing		Fig. 2
Ref: 3032	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site plan showing monitored areas	



Flint



© Archaeology South-East		Boundstone Nursery School, Lancing		Fig. 3
Ref: 3032	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Section	