Archaeology South-East

ASE

An Archaeological and Geoarchaeological Watching Brief at the River Bewl Enhancements Scheme, Lamberhurst, Kent.

NGR: Between 569686 136704 and 568665 134708
(Between TQ 697 367 and TQ 686 347)

ASE Project No: 170705
Site Code: RBE17

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OASIS id: archaeol6-314585

By Alice Dowsett

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological and geoarchaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at the River Bewl, Lamberhurst, Kent between the 1st November 2017 and 2nd February 2018. The site comprises the section of the River Bewl watercourse positioned between the River Teise in the north-east and the A21 in the south-west adjacent to Scotney Castle. The fieldwork was commissioned by Southern Water in advance of the execution of the River Bewl Enhancement Scheme, which was implemented under the EU Water Framework Directive which aims to deliver a better water environment through River Basin Management Plans.

The excavation of five ecological features located along the River Bewl were monitored for archaeology. Although no archaeological features were encountered, a small collection of worked timbers were recovered from alluvium in the riverbank.

The overall significance of the archaeology encountered during the River Bewl Enhancement Scheme is low to moderate. The timber artefacts in themselves do not tell us a great deal about their original function, though two hypotheses have been presented in this report. It is likely that the archaeology encountered during the River Bewl enhancements dates to the same period of time when Edward Hussey III was making improvements to the Scotney Castle landscape in the mid-19th century. The artefacts are also of interest because very little archaeology has been found along the River Bewl in this area.

CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Southern Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief encompassing geoarchaeological monitoring on the groundworks associated with an enhancement scheme along the River Bewl watercourse in Lamberhurst, Kent. The site comprises the section of the River Bewl watercourse positioned between the River Teise in the north-east and the A21 in the south-west adjacent to Scotney Castle. The site lies over a natural geology of Wadhurst Clay Formation. The site's position along the course of the River Bewl means that it is also set entirely within an alluvium consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravel. The scheme is covered under permitted development by Southern Water.

1.1.2 The site is located along the River Bewl watercourse between NGR 569686 136704 (TQ 697 367) in the north and NGR 568665 134708 (TQ 686 347) in the south (Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale geological mapping available online, the site lies over a natural geology of Wadhurst Clay Formation (Mudstone Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 134 to 140 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Local environment previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas). The site's position along the course of the River Bewl means that it is set within an alluvium consisting of clay, silt, sand and gravel, however much of the surrounding superficial geology has not yet been mapped (BGS 2018).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The enhancement scheme, which is being implemented under the EU Water Framework Directive which aims to deliver a better water environment through River Basin Management Plans, is being carried out because the Environment Agency (EA) identified the River Bewl as needing improvement to meet greater ecological potential.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This document represents a watching brief report comprising the results from the archaeological watching brief undertaken during specific groundworks detailed below. It has been prepared in accordance with relevant Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d). All work has been reported upon in line with guidelines set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; Historic England 2015) and the KCC Manual of Specifications (2011).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; ASE 2017a) for the scheme identified both archaeological potential and the potential for palaeoenvironmental/waterlogged remains to be preserved within the alluvial clays that exist along the watercourse. It therefore recommended that groundworks be subject to an archaeological watching brief encompassing geoarchaeological attendance. The watching brief was intended to mitigate the impact of the scheme on any unknown heritage assets or palaeoenvironmental deposits which may be affected by it.

2.2 Archaeological context

2.2.1 The following background is paraphrased from the Desk-based Assessment (DBA; ASE 2017a).

2.3 Prehistoric

2.3.1 Prehistoric material within the Weald tends to be sparse. The region was traditionally thought to be covered in dense forest throughout this period, although recent work is starting to modify that picture. Nevertheless, much of the known settlement pattern concentrates around the rim of the Weald, exploiting the better soils of the Chalk and Greensand. There are no known prehistoric heritage assets recorded within the vicinity of the site. Given the site's position in an area of alluvium, the DBA concluded that there is some low to moderate potential for palaeoarchaeological remains to survive, such as waterlogged/peat remains/preserved timbers.

2.4 Romano-British

2.4.1 As the nearest part of Britain to the Continent, Kent experienced contact with Rome from an early date. Following the Roman invasion of AD 43, the region became heavily settled, particularly along the principal route, Watling Street, which linked Richborough with the major urban centres of Canterbury, Rochester and London. Stane Street was subsequently constructed southwards from Rochester, to access the iron resources of the Weald. Much of Kent was characterised by pre-Roman native type farmsteads, although the distribution of other Roman sites and finds are widespread, with all the main river valleys being well populated. There are no known archaeological remains of Romano-British date within the vicinity of the site. The DBA concluded that the potential for the site to contain as yet unknown heritage assets of this date is considered to be unknown as a result of sparse archaeological and documentary evidence within the area.

2.5 Early Medieval

2.5.1 The demise of Roman authority in Britain saw a return to older ways of life, with a gradual decline in both the economy and administration of the colony, and an influx of settlers from Germanic lands across the North Sea. However, knowledge of the period following the departure of the Romans is fragmentary,

in part due to issues with dating evidence, as a result of the lack of official coinage and the decline of the big pottery industries. Although Kent was one of the first areas to be heavily settled by Germanic peoples, they tended to prefer the more tractable soils of the coastal plain and the river valleys. There are no known archaeological remains of early medieval date within the vicinity of the site. The DBA concluded that the potential for the site to contain as yet unknown heritage assets of this date is considered to be unknown as a result of sparse archaeological and documentary evidence within the area.

2.6 Medieval

2.6.1 By Domesday, the Wealden landscape had incorporated settlements and agriculture mainly of a pastoral nature but also included some early 'irregular' open-field systems that were later enclosed. Medieval settlement in the Weald is typified by a dispersed pattern of farmsteads with associated open field systems (often enclosed at an early stage producing irregular field patterns), hamlets and moated sites. Isolated churches served these settlements. Much of the medieval settlement still exists as modern farmsteads. Higher status features of medieval settlement are less evident.

2.6.2 The first documentary reference to Lamberhurst is '*Lamberhurste*' in a Chrism List of 1115, which is thought to mean 'a wooded hill for lambs, or lambing, near a stream'. The area appears to have been a centre of significant industrial activity during this period. The River Teise and its tributaries provided water power for the grist mills to grind corn from the early 1100s, for fulling mills for the cloth industry and later as the motive force behind the forge trip hammers and even a blast furnace.

2.6.3 The first mention of the iron industry in Lamberhurst is in 1522. While there is no documentary or cartographic evidence to suggest any potential for post-medieval iron-working at the site, there is some potential for late medieval iron-working activity within the area.

2.6.4 The only sites of this date recorded within the area on the HER are the scheduled ruins of Old Scotney Castle and the grade II listed causeway and walls about 20m west of Old Scotney Castle. No non-designated heritage assets (e.g. findspots or archaeological remains) of this date are recorded on the HER within the area. The DBA concluded that the potential of the site to contain as yet unknown heritage assets of this date is considered to be low/unknown. If heritage assets of this date are identified at the site, they are likely to consist of localised water management features and are likely to be near to the scheduled area.

2.7 Post-Medieval

2.7.1 From the middle of the 16th century the iron industry dominated the general area for nearly 300 years. There are numerous examples of iron working sites within the Tunbridge Wells District. However, there is no evidence for iron-working activities recorded within the vicinity of the site.

2.7.2 Lamberhurst was also known for its beer brewhouses (there had also been cider brewing historically from the late 10th century), leather workshops, woodworking shops and an unusual number of tailors, clock and watch

makers.

2.7.3 The strong, fertile and well-drained soils, mild climate and prosperity of Kent made it favourable for hop farming, known as 'hopping'. The hop industry was well established in the area surrounding Lamberhurst during this period and the walkover survey of the site indicated extant hop fields to the north-east of the site.

2.7.4 The position of the site along the River Bewl and close to the River Teise also makes the history of these rivers pertinent. Like many other rivers in southern England the River Teise was subject to a Land Drainage Improvement Scheme during the 1950s. Between 1973 and 1975, a 900-metre dam was built across the Bewl Valley, cutting off the headwaters. This formed Bewl Water, a 30-metre-deep storage reservoir, with a surface area of 308 hectares.

2.7.5 In addition to twenty three post-medieval listed buildings and the Scotney Castle RPG eight other post-medieval sites (all gardens or farms) are recorded on the HER within the vicinity.

2.7.6 Although this period is more widely represented on the HER within the Study Area, the recorded heritage assets comprise mostly standing buildings and farms. The absence of findspots and other monuments may reflect the rurality of the area, but may also be the result of limited archaeological intervention having occurred. The cartographic assessment shows the course of the River Bewl running through undeveloped open fields and farmland across the available post-medieval mapping.

2.7.7 The DBA concluded that the potential of the site to contain as yet unknown heritage assets of this date is considered to be low in light of ifs position over an undeveloped fieldscape throughout this period. If heritage assets of this date are identified they are likely to relate to localised water management activities and are likely to be near to the scheduled area.

2.8 Undated

2.8.1 Five undated sites are recorded on the HER within the vicinity of the site:

- Lynchets and quarry, 300m west of Little Scotney Farm (HER Ref. MKE99311);
- Site of hop pickers huts, Broadham Wood, 250m south of Little Scotney Farm (HER Ref. MKE99312);
- Site of tile kiln, 850m south west of Little Scotney Farm (HER Ref. MKE99313);
- Hollow way, 200m south of Little Scotney Farm, Lamberhurst (HER Ref. MKE99317); and
- Undated pond bays, near Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst (HER Ref. MKE15970).

2.8.2 In addition, a walkover survey identified a small sub-circular, mound feature of unknown character, along the eastern side of the watercourse.

2.9 Project Aims and Objectives

2.9.1 The broad aims of the watching brief were:

- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any such remains and deposits
- To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
- To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site
- To assess what options should be considered for mitigation

2.9.2 Investigation of the site also had the potential to address the following research priorities identified in the draft South East Research Framework (SERF 2008):

- Can the site inform on to what degree is the region a crossroads or a backwater in terms of Upper Palaeolithic and early Mesolithic occupation patterns?
- Can palaeoenvironmental evidence from the site aid in investigating the introduction of cereals and the extent of cereal agriculture in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age for which there is little evidence at present?
- Is there any evidence of Iron Age activity on the site and if so can this evidence aid in an understanding of the origins of the Wealden Iron industry?
- Is there any evidence of Roman occupation on the site and if so can this evidence aid in an understanding of continuities from earlier periods?
- Is there any evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation on the site or is it likely that it was woodland for much of the period? Can any such evidence aid in an understanding of transitions from Romano-British period?
- Is there any evidence of continuity of land-use between the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods? Is there any evidence of medieval iron-working or other industrial activity? What can such evidence tell us about industrial centres in the wider landscape, social and experiential setting, and in particular about the hinterlands and support networks (especially in terms of labour) of industrial centres?
- Can the site tell us anything about the social aspects of rural housing and material culture, especially for the poor from the 16th to mid-20th centuries?
- Can the site tell us anything about the relationship of different woodland industries to each other, as well as their woodland environment?

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The watching brief monitored specific groundworks as identified in the DBA (ASE 2017a, appendix 4) and was carried out by an experienced archaeologist and geoarchaeologist. Whilst in the field, a more precise selection of the appropriate ecological features to monitor was made. This was based on the scale of intervention and depth of impact for creating the river enhancement features. It was deemed appropriate for a watching brief to be carried out specifically on ecological features 3.5, 8.6, 8.6a, 10.1a and 12.4 (Table 1; Figures 2-6)

Ecological Feature Name	Measure Reference
Embayment teardrop	3.5
Embayment teardrop	8.6
Wetland Feature	8.6a
Hibernaculum	10.1a
Public Access	12.4

Table 1: Specific areas monitored during the watching brief

3.1.2 A watching brief was carried out over 13 days, from 1st November 2017 – 2nd February 2018, at the site of the River Bewl Enhancements Scheme. The excavation of the wetland feature (8.6a) and hibernaculum (10.1a) were monitored from 6th-10th November 2017 in tandem, as they were located directly adjacent to one another. The original wetland feature was a partially flooded river channel, forming a small wetland area measuring 40m x 10m. This small wetland was machine excavated and extended into a larger wetland area measuring 40m x 20m, with a larger expanse to the northern end measuring 45m x 15m (Figure 4). Care was taken to excavate the outer fringes of this wetland before releasing the dammed water, so that visual inspection of the sediments was possible for much of the process. The greatest depth of the wetland scrape was 0.90m bgl, though for most of the area the depth reached c.0.50m.

3.1.3 The excavation of the area for the hibernaculum (10.1a; Figure 4; a feature for hibernating small animals) was carried out using a machine excavator and was located directly to the south of 8.6a. This excavation had a depth impact of 0.40m bgl and was c.25.00m in length x 4.00m in width. It was deemed appropriate for monitoring, in order to observe any possible archaeological features, which may have been revealed during this topsoil strip.

3.1.4 The excavation of the public access feature (12.4; Figure 5) was then monitored from the 15th-17th January 2018. This comprised the machine excavation and re-profiling of a 10m wide bank, along ~30m of the river.

3.1.5 The embayment teardrop feature (8.6; Figure 4) was then machine excavated on the 25th and 31st January 2018, and the 1st of February 2018. This ecological feature was positioned close to 8.6a and 10.1a. It involved re-profiling the bank of the River Bewl where the stream from the wetland feature met the main river, and the creation of a small embayment. The overall area re-profiled was c.8m^2 and ranged from 0.5m-3.5m in depth.

3.1.6 Finally, the machine excavation of a second embayment teardrop feature (3.5) was undertaken on the 2nd February 2018, much further north and downstream of the previous ecological features monitored. This involved the re-profiling of the bank of the River Bewl, close to a smaller stream that fed into the main river, and the creation of a small embayment. This excavation work focussed on a ~5m wide bank, along 10m of the river.

3.1.7 All mechanical excavation proceeded in gradual spits no greater than 200mm in thickness. Care was taken not to machine off seemingly homogenous layers that may include the upper parts of archaeological features. When archaeology was observed by the monitoring archaeologist, sufficient time was given for hand excavation, identification, cleaning and recording to be completed.

3.1.8 All excavation work was carried out in line with the relevant CIfA guidance documents (CIfA 2014c). The site work was directed by a suitably qualified archaeologist. All recording was undertaken in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2017b) and the KCC Manual of Specifications (2011). All timbers encountered were recorded using pro forma sheets.

3.2 Fieldwork constraints

3.2.1 The implementation of the ecological features was intended for preserving and enhancing the local natural environment and ecology, therefore all fieldwork methods employed were selected to help preserve the local ecology. For example, a toothed bucket had to be employed for all excavation work, because it would not cause as much harm as a flat bladed bucket would, to any small animals escaping from the soil or surrounding vegetation during excavation. The toothed bucket was also needed to create a more natural look to the feature.

3.2.2 Visual inspection during the excavation of the wetland feature was not possible at all times due to the murky and silty nature of the wetland.

3.2.3 The ecological features were created in such a way, so as to look most natural; in other words, the plans are indicative of what the final feature looked like.

3.2.4 During the excavation of the public access feature (12.4; Figure 5), a series of timbers were encountered. Due to the fact the ground profile was altered considerably, it was difficult to accurately plan the location of these timbers and their associated contexts. Much of the recording made reference to an alder tree, which was the only feature to remain constant during these works (Figure 5).

3.3 Palaeoenvironmental assessment methodology

3.3.1 All sediments were inspected in the field and visually assessed for palaeoenvironmental potential. During inspection of the sediments, it became clear that all natural deposits contained intrusive modern rooting from the ecology of the current river system. This meant that integrity of the samples taken would be questionable and unreliable for analysis. Therefore no environmental sampling was undertaken during this watching brief.

3.4 Archive

3.4.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited with the National Trust, Scotney Castle in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 2).

Context sheets	23
Borehole/test pit sheets	4
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
BandW photos	0
Digital photos	164
Sample register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	13
Trench Record forms	0

Table 2: 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	2
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 3: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Ecological feature 3.5 monitored on 2/2/18 (Figure 3)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
021	Layer	Topsoil	0.30	38.25
022	Layer	Colluvium	1.50	37.95
023	Layer	Organic alluvium	>0.20	36.45

Table 4: Ecological feature 3.5 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 The deepest deposit encountered was a fine, plastic, blue grey organic clayey silt [023], which was not bottomed. This deposit was >0.20m in thickness, was rooted and contained modern organics from the current riverside ecology. This formed the alluvial deposits from the river system and contained no archaeology. Overlying this was a fine, plastic but friable orange brown clay silt with rooting [022] which was 1.50m in thickness, though this varied dramatically across feature 3.5 which was located on a steep bank of the river. This deposit was interpreted as being colluvium and no archaeology was observed within it. Overlying this was a friable dark grey brown clay silt with rooting [021]. It was 0.30m in thickness and formed the topsoil.

4.2 Ecological feature 8.6 monitored on 25/1/18, 31/1/18 and 1/2/18 (Figure 4)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
018	Layer	Topsoil	0.60	38.50
019	Layer	Colluvium	1.90	37.90
020	Layer	Organic alluvium	>1.00	36.00

Table 5: Ecological feature 8.6 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 The deepest deposit encountered was a plastic blue grey fine silt that contained abundant decomposing organic material and was well-rooted [020]. This deposit was >1.00m in thickness and formed an organic alluvium at 36.00m AOD. Within this alluvium was a large section of a tree measuring 2.30 x 0.55 x 0.55m. This piece was deemed natural, due to the absence of any tool marks or joints. Overlying this deposit was a friable-plastic light yellow grey fine clay silt with orange-brown mottling [019]. This contained occasional organic matter and rooting. This deposit was up to 1.9m in thickness, though this varied due to the slope of the river bank, and was interpreted as colluvium. This was finally overlain by a friable mid yellow grey brown clay silt [018]. This deposit was 0.60m in thickness and formed the topsoil at 38.50m AOD. No archaeology was observed during the excavation of this ecological feature.

4.3 Ecological feature 8.6a and 10.1a monitored from 6/11/17-10/11/17 (Figure 4)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Deposit Thickness m	8.6a Height m AOD	10.1a Height mAOD
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.30	38.70	39.90
002	Layer	Colluvium	0.20	38.40	39.60
003	Layer	Weathered	>0.20	38.20	-

		Wadhurst Clay			
004	Layer	Alluvium with plants	>0.20<0.40	38.40	-
005	Timber	Trimmed branch	-	-	-
006	Layer	Silty clay	>0.55	38.20	-

Table 6: Ecological features 8.6a and 10.1a list of recorded contexts

4.3.1 The deepest deposit encountered outside the fringes of the original wetland was a crumbly, dry grey brown silty sandy clay with 20% mudstone inclusions [003], which was not bottomed. The top of this deposit was located at 38.20m AOD and was >0.20m in depth. This deposit was well rooted, oxidised and mottled with orange. This was likely the weathered surface of the Wadhurst Clay.

4.3.2 At the deepest part of the original wetland along the southern fringe, was a compact blue grey silty clay [006], which was not bottomed. The top of this deposit lay at 38.20m AOD, and was found to be >0.55m in depth. This deposit was rooted and mottled with orange, and contained one piece of waterlogged wood, though this wood was deemed to be natural. This deposit was interpreted as being oxidised alluvium. Across the centre of the original wetland feature, and slightly overlaying [006] was a fine but dense blue grey silty clay with abundant rooting and large amounts of decomposing organics and living plants [004]. The top of this deposit was located at 38.40m AOD and was 0.20m in depth, though this deepened towards the centre of the original channel. This deposit was a recent alluvial deposit.

4.3.3 Within [004] a timber (T005) was found (section 5.3.2). This was the only archaeology found at the wetland feature. The edges of the original central channel that lead into the River Bewl from the south were located and this original channel appeared to have been completely silted up.

4.3.4 Overlying [003] outside the fringes of the original wetland feature, and slightly overlying [006], was a crumbly orange-brown silty sand [002], which was 0.20m in depth (38.40-38.20m AOD). This deposit was rooted and was interpreted as being colluvium. Overlying [002] was a loose grey brown silty clay [001], 0.30m in depth (38.70-38.40m AOD), which formed the topsoil.

4.3.5 Deposits encountered during excavations for Feature 10.1a comprised a crumbly orange-brown silty sand [002], which was not bottomed (>39.60m AOD). This deposit was rooted and was interpreted as being colluvium. Overlying [002] was a loose grey brown silty clay [001] which was 0.30m in depth (39.90-39.60m AOD), which formed the topsoil. This excavation had a maximum impact of 0.40m bgl. No archaeological features were observed.

4.4 Ecological feature 12.4 monitored from 15/1/18-17/1/18 (Figure 5)

Context	**Type**	**Interpretation**	**Deposit Thickness m**	**Height m AOD**
007	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	c.41.25
008	Layer	Colluvium	>1.45	41.00
009	Layer	Alluvium	>0.40	39.35
010	Layer	Dark organic alluvium	>0.40	39.35

011	Layer	Weathered alluvium	0.20	39.55
012	Timber	Small timber point	-	-
013	Timber	Large pieces of wood	-	-
014	Timber	Upright left in situ	-	-
015	Timber	Upright not worked	-	-
016	Timber	Horizontal with lap joint	-	-
017	Layer	River bed	-	39.01

Table 7: Ecological feature 12.4 list of recorded contexts

4.4.1 Two neighbouring deposits encountered at the public access feature (12.4) comprised the deepest deposits. To the south-east of the alder tree (Figure 5), a fine, compact blue grey clayey silt with organic material and large roots [009] was encountered, and was not bottomed. This deposit was interpreted as being alluvium from the River Bewl, and it contained three large natural timbers (T013). T014 was also found in [009], though this timber was not excavated so it was not clear which deposit it was deliberately placed in. The neighbouring deepest deposit, located north-east of the alder tree (Figure 5), was a fine, fairly loose, dark green-grey, silty sandy clay with fragmented and degraded plant matter [010], which was not bottomed. This deposit was interpreted as being alluvium from the River Bewl, and it contained one upright timber (T015). Due to no worked end being located, it is not clear if this upright had been deliberately placed in the ground, however it was interpreted that T015 was contemporary with the sedimentation of [010].

4.4.2 Overlying [009] and [010] was a loose light grey mottled with light orange clayey silty fine sand with rooting [011]. This deposit was ~0.20m in thickness and was interpreted as being oxidised/ weathered alluvium. This deposit contained T012 and T016 as well as brick of probable later 18th century to early 19th century date.

4.4.3 Overlying [011] was a friable, fine, orange-brown silty sand with rooting [008]. This was interpreted as being colluvium and varied from 0.25m in thickness at the water's edge, to being 1.70m thick further up the riverbank. One modern wooden upright post was found within this context (not recorded). A loose grey-brown silty sand with rooting capped these deposits as a topsoil [007]. The top of this deposit lay at 41.25m AOD at the top of the riverbank, and was 0.25m thick.

4.4.4 The river bed itself [017] held a small number of artefacts. Within the river, directly adjacent to the alluvium that held T016, a large worked stone and a piece of probable 18th to early 19th century wall was found lying in the water.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A small assemblage of ceramic building material (CBM), one worked stone, and a small assemblage of timbers, were recovered during the watching brief on works associated with the River Bewl Enhancements, Lamberhurst. The CBM was washed and air dried, quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context (Table 8). The finds were packed and stored following CIfA guidelines (2014a). The worked stone was recorded on site and then placed back into the river. The two smallest timbers were transported back to ASE offices for further assessment. Most timbers were too large, and not significant enough for preservation, and were therefore put back into the ecological feature, after on-site recording.

Context	CBM	Weight (g)
10	2	1278
15	1	10188
Total	3	11466

Table 8: Finds quantification

5.2 **The Ceramic Building Material** by Isa Benedetti-Whitton

5.2.1 Three pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 11,466g were recovered from two contexts: [011] and [017]. The more substantial of these was a piece of brick wall comprised of seven bricks, two of which were complete, held together by a very fine and friable dirty grey lime mortar with charcoal flecks. The wall fragments had been submerged in the river, which had caused staining to the surface of the bricks. Two further loose brick fragments were recovered from the riverbank. The bricks were extremely hard fired, to the extent of near-vitrification.

5.2.2 The complete bricks each measured approximately the same, 230 x 90 x 57mm, which are not dimensions that fit happily into any of the known typical dimensions-by-date range of any post-medieval brick. The type of mortar is similar to those commonly used in the late 17th and 18th century, and the move towards a longer brick also happens during the mid-later 18th century. A later 18th century to early 19th century date therefore seems most likely for both the chunk of brick recovered from submerged context [017], and also the two loose brick fragments of similar dimensions collected from the riverbank [010].

5.2.3 The CBM assemblage was considered to be of little further archaeological value and so has been discarded.

5.3 **Geological Material** by Alice Dowsett

5.3.1 One stone object was recovered during the excavations, from [017], the bed of the River Bewl. This object was found directly next to the piece of brick wall. It measured 54 x 34x 16cm and had been shaped into a rough rectangular cuboid. It was in fairly good condition, although had been weathered by river

water. Some indentations, chips and depressions were visible on the stone. There was a small hollow in the centre on one side, as well as a long indented edge that had been cut away. The stone was not recovered from the site and specialist assessment was undertaken via photographs.

5.3.2 The parent geological material is likely to be a local Hastings Beds sandstone. This stone object could have been something that was used in a drain, culvert or small bridge (Luke Barber, *pers. comm*).

5.4 Timber by Alice Dowsett and Stacey Adams

Introduction and methodology

5.4.1 A total of six timbers were recorded from the River Bewl Enhancement Scheme (Table 9). Of these six, two were brought back to the ASE offices for closer inspection. The four other timbers were recorded in the field on pro forma sheets. From the six recorded, only three exhibited human working, but due to association and position, the other three are also discussed. The retrieved timbers were gently cleaned and recorded on pro forma sheets, sampled for species identification and then photographed. To identify the species, the samples were sectioned along three planes (transverse, radial and tangential) according to standardised procedures (Gale and Cutler 2000). The samples were 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 S. Adams by comparing the wood anatomical characteristics with specimens documented in Schweingruber (1990).

Results

Timber number	Context	Part of structure?	Site Context	Dimentions LxBxD (cm)	Knotted?	Straight grained?	Reused?	Tool marks	Joints/ fixings	Unintentional marks	Method of conversion	Bark	Sapwood	Sample taken?	Taxonomic Identifications
005	004	N	found upright in middle of wetland feature	80x5x5	Y	N	N	one end sawn/cut	N	N	whole	N	N	Y	*Quercus* sp.
012	011	N	found in oxidised alluvium, unknown orientation	29x3x3	Y	Y	N	worked on 4 sides of point, clean, flat facets, fine axe stop marks	N	N	whole	Y	Y	Y	*Alnus* sp.
013	009	N?	3 natural pieces of wood found in alluvium, horizontal	300x22 x22	Y	N	N	N	N	much of it was broken into pieces	whole	N	N	N	*Quercus* sp.
014	009	Y?	upright timber, left in situ, in close proximity to T013	?x6x6	?	?	?	?	?	machined the top off	whole	?	?	N	
015	010	Y?	upright timber, found in close proximety to T016	50x7x7	Y	N	N	N	N	N	whole	N	N	N	
016	011	Y	found loose/ horizontal in ground, spatially sociated with T015, curved in shape	214x28 x30	Y	N	N	9 axe stop marks in joint, each 8-10cm in breadth	halving lap joint	1 piece of the joint broke off	whole	N	N	Y for dendro	*Quercus* sp.

Table 9: Details of the timbers recorded from the River Bewl Enhancement Scheme

Timber 005

5.3.2 T005 was a single piece found in isolation, upright but submerged in the middle of the wetland feature (8.6a) within alluvium [004]. It was quite hard, but appears waterlogged throughout. Timber T005 is a branch from an oak tree, which shows signs of being sawn at one end. This conclusion has been made from observing a flat facet at the tree trunk end of the branch, although there are no tool marks that have survived. This could be evidence of pruning and is of unknown age. This was the only timber found in [004]. Some natural wood was found nearby in [006], which appeared to be debris from a tree.

Timber 012

5.3.3 This timber was found in oxidised alluvium [011], in an unknown orientation. It was found in close proximity to T013 and T014. The timber was in good

condition, although the upper section has been broken off. This timber is a small piece of alder roundwood (3cm diameter) which has been worked into a point at one end. It has indistinct tool signatures, but appears to have been worked by an axe, due to the presence of several faint axe stop marks. This piece is likely to have been an upright stake during its period of use. It is of unknown age, although it is likely to be post-medieval (see section 6.1.7).

Timber 013

5.3.4 T013 comprises three natural pieces of wood. They were recorded on site due to their proximity to T012 and T014 (being the closest), as well as T015, T016. They were found covered in a white substance, first considered to be lime wash, but this is now thought to have been a natural white mould. These three pieces of wood were all roundwood, of ~22cm in diameter, and were lying approximately horizontal, with one piece lying at right angles to the other two. Their arrangement in the ground looked natural and they were not considered to be purposefully placed. They held no signs of human-working. The timbers were broken during excavation. These timbers are of unknown age, but are likely to be post-medieval (see section 6.1.7).

Timbers 014 and 015

5.3.5 These two timbers were found in close proximity to T012, T013 and T016. Both T014 and T015 were found upright on either side of a central alder tree. Both timbers were in moderate condition. T014 was left in situ, as this part of feature 12.4 was to be left in its original state. T015 was machined out of the organic alluvium, and showed no signs of working, but was situated close to T016. Both uprights were made of roundwood and measured 6-7cm in diameter. The fact that they were both found upright is likely to be significant, as it is quite unusual to find a naturally upright, post-like object in alluvium. However there original function is not able to be ascertained due to a lack of tool marks or joints. They are of unknown age, but are likely to be post-medieval (see section 6.1.7).

Timber 016

5.3.6 This timber (Figure 5) was the most significant piece found during the River Bewl enhancements. It is by far the largest worked piece (2.14m in length), but also likely served a structural function. This oak timber was found lying horizontally in the oxidised alluvium and was spatially associated with T015. It was found in moderate condition. This timber is a piece of large roundwood (30cm diameter) with a halving lap joint cut towards one end and is rather unusual due to its curved nature. The lap joint indicates that this piece was part of a larger structure, and would have been paired with a matching lap joint during its period of use. There were also very clear tool signatures on this timber. One side of the lap joint cut was particularly well preserved and displayed nine distinctive axe stop marks (Figure 5). It can be surmised that this timber was worked with a broad bladed axe (Goodall 2011), judging from the ~10cm long tool signatures. This piece of wood was selected for dendrochronological analysis, however it was not possible to date by dendrochronology (Ian Tyres *pers comm*.).

Significance and Potential

5.3.7 The presence of these timbers, particularly those that were worked, is considered to be of moderate significance, because very little archaeology has previously been found in the local area of the River Bewl. However, they preserve very few tool marks or joints that could provide further information regarding their original functions. The axe marks on T016, though clear and numerous, could date to a wide range of periods (Damian Goodburn, *pers.comm*.). The interpretation is further complicated by many of the timbers not being found in situ, which makes it difficult to reconstruct what their original function was. These timbers hold no potential for further analysis. No further work is recommended as all records and identification work has been undertaken during assessment. It is recommended that the timbers are discarded.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of lithological sequence

6.1.1 The sequence of deposits can be summarised across the River Bewl Enhancements Scheme, as the sequence is quite similar across the localised landscape.

6.1.2 The oldest and deepest deposit was encountered only around the fringes of the wetland feature, which was a crumbly, dry grey-brown silty sandy clay with mudstone inclusions [003]. This was interpreted as being weathered Wadhurst Clay and the top of which was located at 37.55 AOD and was >0.20m.

6.1.3 The next deepest deposit, which was encountered at all ecological feature locations directly adjacent to the waterway, was a fine blue-grey silty clay with modern rooting and decomposing organics [004, 009, 010, 020, 023]. Though these deposits had some small variation in composition, all were interpreted as being organic alluvium, and having been derived from the river system. This alluvium ranged from 0.20 - >1.00m in thickness and the top was found between 36.00-39.35m AOD.

6.1.4 Along the southern fringe of ecological feature 8.6a, a compact, fine, blue-grey mottled with orange, silty clay with rooting [006] could be found. This deposit was interpreted as being oxidised/weathered alluvium and may appear at this location due to fluctuation of water levels in the wetland feature; where the southern side of the feature has a much gentler slope than the northern bank. This deposit was found at 38.20m AOD and was >0.55m in thickness. A similar oxidised alluvium was found at the public access feature (12.4) [011], and was found overlaying the organic alluvium. This deposit was found to be 0.20m in thickness at 39.55m AOD.

6.1.5 Though there was some small variation, a friable orange-brown silty sand with rooting [002, 008, 019, 022], interpreted as colluvium, was found at all locations. This sediment was found to directly overlay the weathered Wadhurst Clay formation at 8.6a, while at 3.5, 8.6, 10.1a and 12.4, it was found to directly overlay the organic alluvium and weathered alluvium. This deposit ranged widely from 0.20-1.90m in thickness, the top of which could be found at 37.90-41.00m AOD. A loose grey-brown silty sand with rooting [001, 007, 018] sealed the deposits at 8.6, 8.6a, 10.1a and 12.4. While a similar dark grey-brown clay silt sealed the deposits at embayment 3.5. All these capping deposits comprised the topsoil, ranging from 0.25-0.60m in thickness and the top of which could be found from 38.50-41.25m AOD.

6.1.6 Overall no archaeological features were encountered. In total eight waterlogged timbers were found across the scheme. One of these timbers was a trimmed branch (T005) from the wetland feature (8.6a). However, by far the most concentrated area of artefacts was at the public access feature (12.4). The remaining seven timbers were found here; two were proven to be worked by tools (T012 and T016), and two were thought to have been deliberately placed due to their upright position (T014 and T015). The other three timbers were likely natural, but were found in association with the other worked timbers (T013). Other artefacts recovered from the public access feature (12.4) included a large worked stone and several pieces of CBM which probably date

to the later 18th century to early 19th century. The likely reason for this localised concentration is its close proximity to a 19th century or earlier bridge, which crosses the River Bewl slightly north of feature 12.4 (see section 6.3.2; Figure 2).

6.1.7 Although there is a lack of datable material, the condition of the timbers coupled with their association with CBM dating from the later 18th century to early 19th century, further supported by the proximity to a 19th century bridge which is part of the Scotney Castle estate, all point towards a post-medieval, Victorian date for the majority of the archaeology found.

6.1.8 The original wetland feature (8.6a) was still fully functioning and only one sawn off branch was encountered within this feature. It is likely that this wetland was fairly modern in date; possibly no more than 100 years old (see section 6.2.2).

6.1.9 The methodology employed was effective for monitoring and recording the archaeology along the River Bewl enhancement scheme at ecological features 3.5, 8.6, 8.6a, 10.1a and 12.4.

6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

6.2.1 The deposits of the River Bewl enhancement scheme were found to be largely untouched by human presence, both in the modern day and in the past.

6.2.2 There is a possibility that the wetland area (8.6a) was extended during the last 100 years (National Trust personnel, *pers comm*); and therefore the bank of soil to the south of the feature could have been artificial. Two culverts have previously been placed at the northern and southern ends of the original wetland feature, with walkways over the top that run across the channel. It is unknown exactly when these were installed.

6.3 Discussion of archaeology

6.3.1 This part of the valley of the River Bewl, which houses 'The Old Castle' on its banks, is currently part of the Scotney Castle National Trust parkland, with grassy slopes and wooded higher ground. Although the original moated old Scotney Castle is medieval, most of the aesthetic of the current landscape is a result of improvements made by Edward Hussey III in the 19th century. The 'New House' of Scotney Castle is located up-slope of the River Bewl valley, and was also built by Hussey from 1837-1844 (Johnson *et al*. 2017).

6.3.2 This period of improvements also included the construction of the bridge over the river at TQ 6872 3495; a Grade II listed structure with the main construction period being 1820 to 1860 (ASE 2017a; Figure 2). This bridge is under 50m downstream from the collection of worked timbers, CBM and stone found at public access feature 12.4. One hypothesis for the interpretation of the artefacts found at feature 12.4 is that they represent the debris from the construction or maintenance of the 19th century bridge. The remnants of the construction work could have been removed from the site of the bridge and discarded into the accumulating alluvium of the river, c.50m upstream.

6.3.3 The area of landscape to the south-west of the old castle moat, and straddling the River Bewl, has been recorded as being a flat area which appears to have

been a floodplain (Johnson *et al*. 2017). It has been suggested that before the Bewl reservoir dam was constructed in 1975, this flattened area would have been either seasonally or permanently flooded at points in the past (Johnson *et al*. 2017). It is possible that during the landscape improvements enacted by Hussey, that some of the banks of the River Bewl were artificially raised, in order to prevent the river from flooding so often. Therefore a second hypothesis for the presence of the timbers located at feature 12.4, could be that they were used as strengthening insertions in an artificial bank. This hypothesis is further supported by the presence of two upright timbers, which may have been used as reinforcing posts for the riverbank.

6.3.4 The LIDAR imagery (ASE 2017a), suggests that no previous routeway passed through the area of 12.4, where the collection of timbers, stone and CBM were found. This would suggest that these artefacts were not part of a bridge or pathway in this exact location.

6.3.5 From 1077 to the present day, the River Bewl was an important political boundary between Kent and Sussex (1077-1894) and between the parishes of Lamberhurst and Goudhurst (1077-present) (Sawyer 1968; ASE 2017a). Due to this river acting as a political boundary, it would have likely been difficult for any substantial construction to be built along the Bewl (Johnson *et al*. 2017). The minimal presence of archaeology, and indeed complete lack of any medieval archaeology, encountered along the River Bewl during this watching brief supports this hypothesis.

6.3.6 In the locality of the wetland feature 8.6a, it appears that there was an original channel cut out of the natural geology by water flowing down the hillside and into the River Bewl. This channel gradually silted up over time, which eventually caused the water to overflow, and spread into the immediate low-lying ground; forming the small wetland area. It is unclear whether the creation of this wider wetland feature was completely naturally formed, or whether people artificially cut out some of the lower lying ground to help extend the wetland. This feature could have been used by farmers as a water source for livestock. Cartographic analysis suggest that the channel has been in place since at least 1870 (Figure 6), but it is more difficult to tell how long the wider wetland feature has been present.

6.4 Consideration of research aims

6.4.1 The watching brief during the River Bewl enhancements scheme successfully assessed the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of all sediments and archaeological remains. It was determined that the area of the River Bewl enhancement scheme was largely untouched by human presence, both in the modern day and in the past. Where archaeology was encountered, it was recorded and sampled where necessary. No further mitigation measures were required.

6.4.2 None of the research priorities identified in the draft South East Research Framework (SERF 2008) can be addressed for this project. This is due to the lack of archaeological remains certainly predating the post-medieval period. The archaeology that was encountered cannot easily be related to rural housing or woodland industries, however, it is possible that the recovered worked timbers may be derived from 18th or 19th century managed woodland

in this part of the Weald.

6.5 Conclusions

6.5.1 The excavation of five ecological features located along the River Bewl were monitored for archaeology. Although no archaeological features were encountered, a small collection of worked timbers were recovered from alluvium in the riverbank. No geoarchaeological deposits viable for further assessment were encountered during these works.

6.5.2 The overall significance of the archaeology encountered during the River Bewl enhancement scheme, which was concentrated at the public access feature (12.4), is low to moderate. The timber artefacts in themselves do not tell us a great deal about their original function, though two hypotheses have been presented in this report. It is likely that the archaeology encountered during the River Bewl enhancements dates to the same period of time when Edward Hussey III was making improvements to the Scotney Castle landscape in the mid-19th century. The artefacts are also of local interest because very little archaeology has been found along the River Bewl in this area.

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HER Summary

HER enquiry no.						
Site code	RBE17					
Project code	170705					
Planning reference	Permitted Development; EU Water Framework Directive					
Site address	River Bewl, Lamberhurst, nr. Scotney Castle					
District/Borough	Lamberhurst					
NGR (12 figures)	569686 136704 to 568665 134708					
Geology	Wadhurst Clay					
Fieldwork type	~~Eval~~	~~Excav~~	**WB**	~~HBR~~	~~Survey~~	~~Other~~
Date of fieldwork	November 2017 - February 2018					
Sponsor/client	Southern Water					
Project manager	Paul Mason					
Project supervisor	Alice Dowsett					
Period summary	~~Palaeolithic~~	~~Mesolithic~~	~~Neolithic~~	~~Bronze Age~~	~~Iron Age~~	
	~~Roman~~	~~Anglo-Saxon~~	~~Medieval~~	**Post-Medieval**	~~Other~~	
Project summary **(100 word max)**	An archaeological watching brief was conducted at the River Bewl, Lamberhurst, Kent between NGR 569686 136704 and 568665 134708, between the 1st November 2017 and 2nd February 2018. The excavation for five ecological features located along the River Bewl were monitored for archaeology. Although no archaeological features were encountered, a small collection of worked timbers were recovered from alluvium in the riverbank. This archaeology is likely to be post-medieval in date and relate to the Scotney Castle estate improvements from the 19th century.					
Museum/Accession No.	TBC					

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-314585

Project details	
Project name	River Bewl Enhancements, Lamberhurst, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted at the River Bewl, Lamberhurst, Kent between NGR 569686 136704 and 568665 134708, between the 1st November 2017 and 2nd February 2018. The implementation of five ecological features located along the River Bewl were monitored for archaeology. Although no archaeological features were encountered, a small collection of worked timbers were recovered from alluvium in the riverbank. This archaeology is likely post medieval in date and relates to the Scotney Castle estate improvements from the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2017 End: 02-02-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	RBE17 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	170705 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	National Trust land
Site status	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Site status	Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
Current Land use	Open Fresh Water 1 - Running water
Current Land use	Woodland 6 - Parkland
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods and techniques	"Sample Trenches","Visual Inspection"
Development type	River Basin Management Plans
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT TUNBRIDGE WELLS LAMBERHURST River Bewl
Postcode	TN3 8JD

Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 6957 3676 51.104523 0.42237942 51 06 16 N 000 25 20 E Point
Site coordinates	TQ 6855 3477 51.086892 0.40687793 51 05 12 N 000 24 24 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 36m Max: 41.25m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	Alice Dowsett
Type of sponsor/funding body	Southern Water
Name of sponsor/funding body	Southern Water

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	National Trust
Digital Contents	"Wood"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	National Trust
Paper Contents	"Wood"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	A Geoarchaeological and Archaeological Watching Brief at

	the River Bewl Enhancements Scheme, Lamberhurst, Kent.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Dowsett, A.
Other bibliographic details	2017507
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade
Entered by	Alice Dowsett (alice.dowsett.10@ucl.ac.uk)
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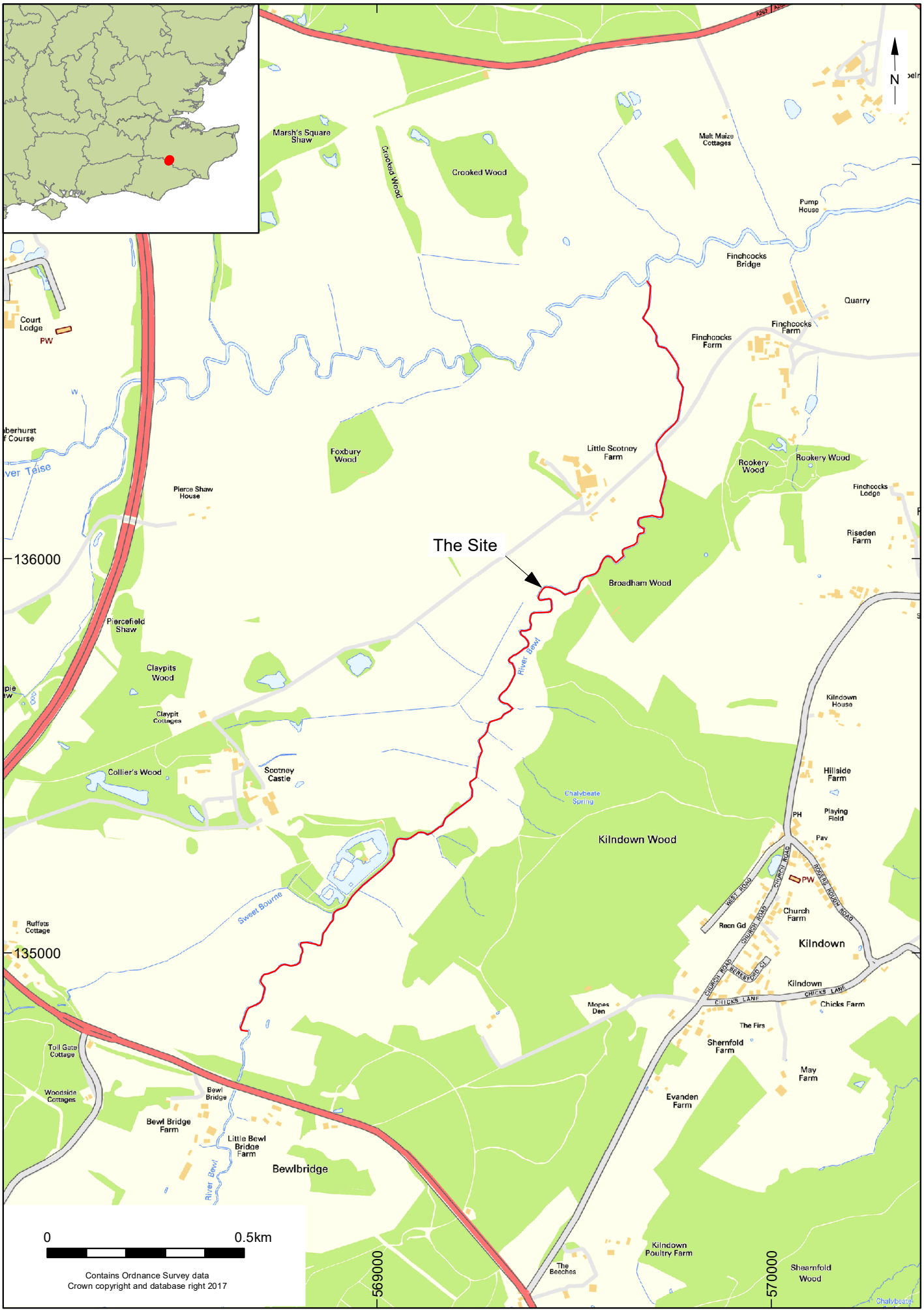
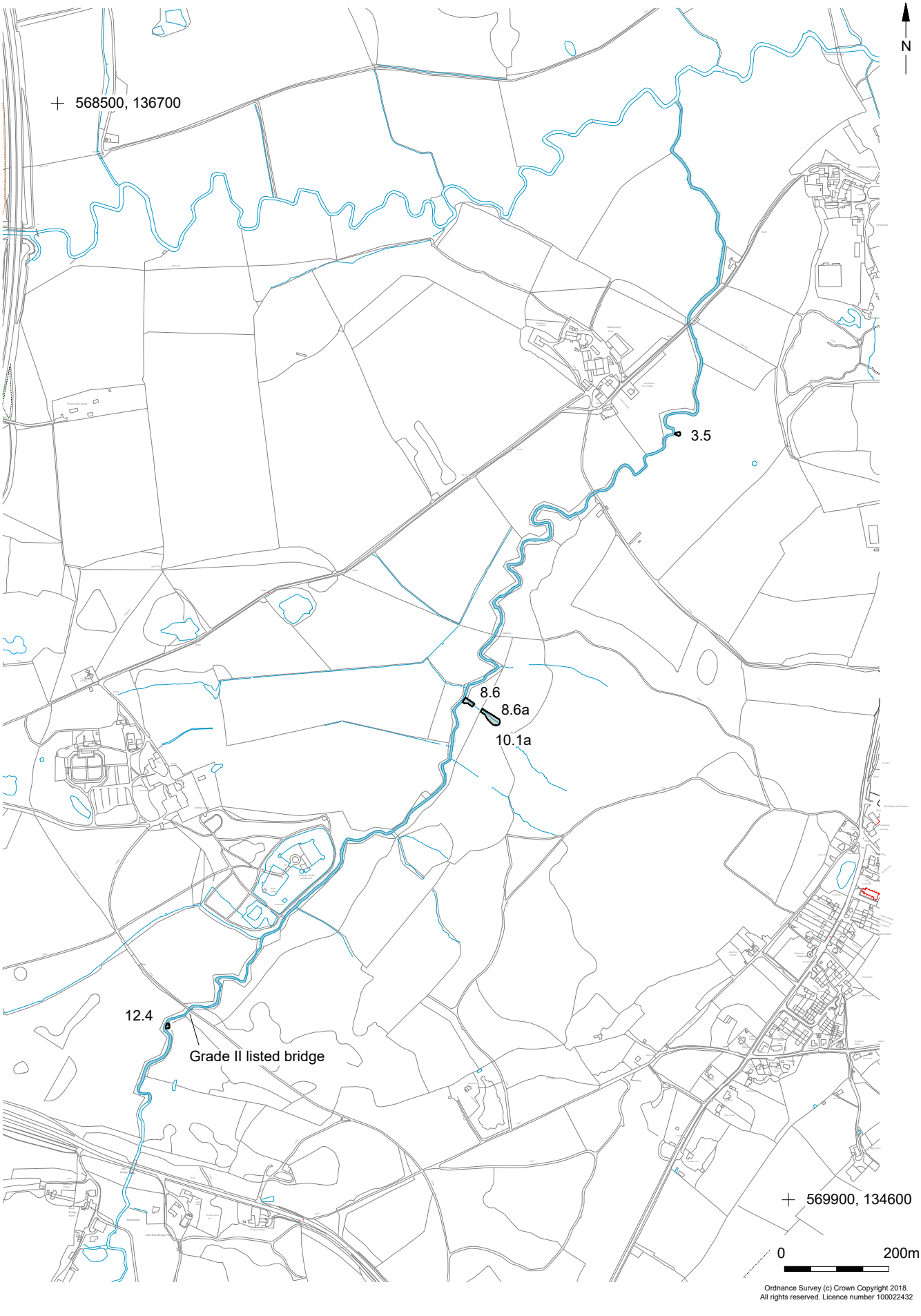
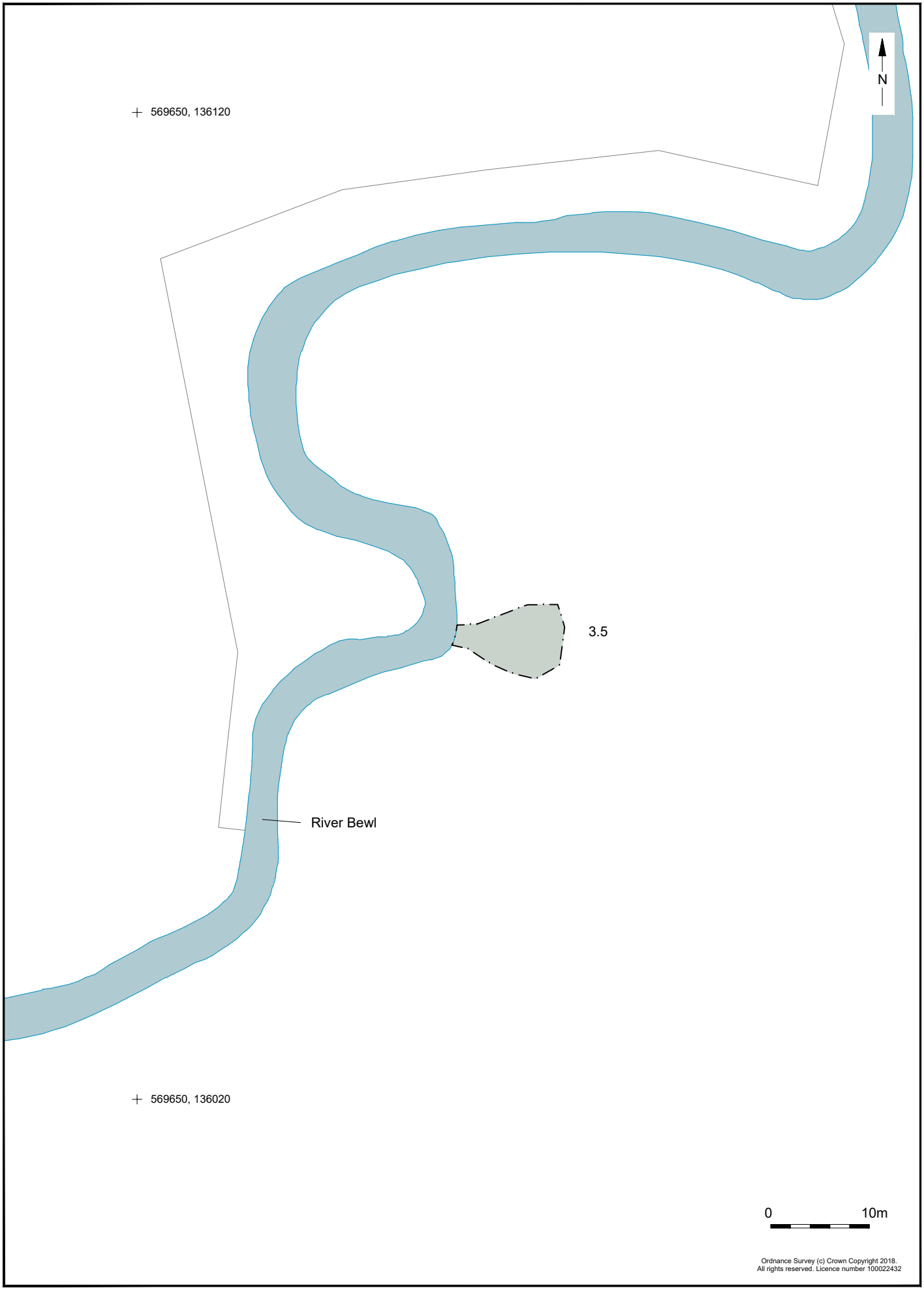


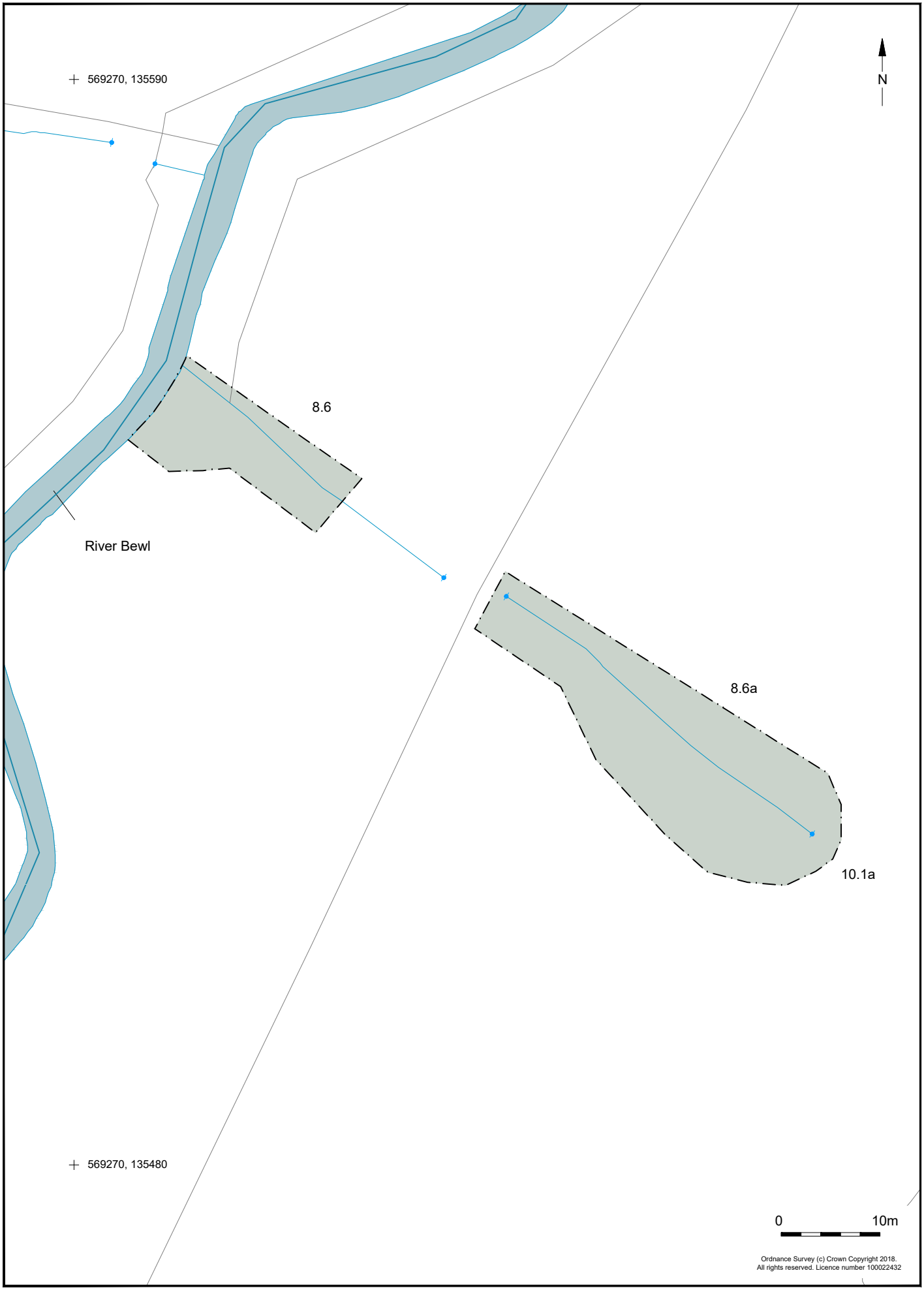
© Archaeology South-East		River Bewl Enhancements, Lamberhurst	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 170705	Sept 2017	Site location	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		



© **Archaeology South-East**		River Bewl	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 170705	April 2018	Location of monitored features	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		River Bewl	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 170705	April 2018	Detail of 3.5	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		



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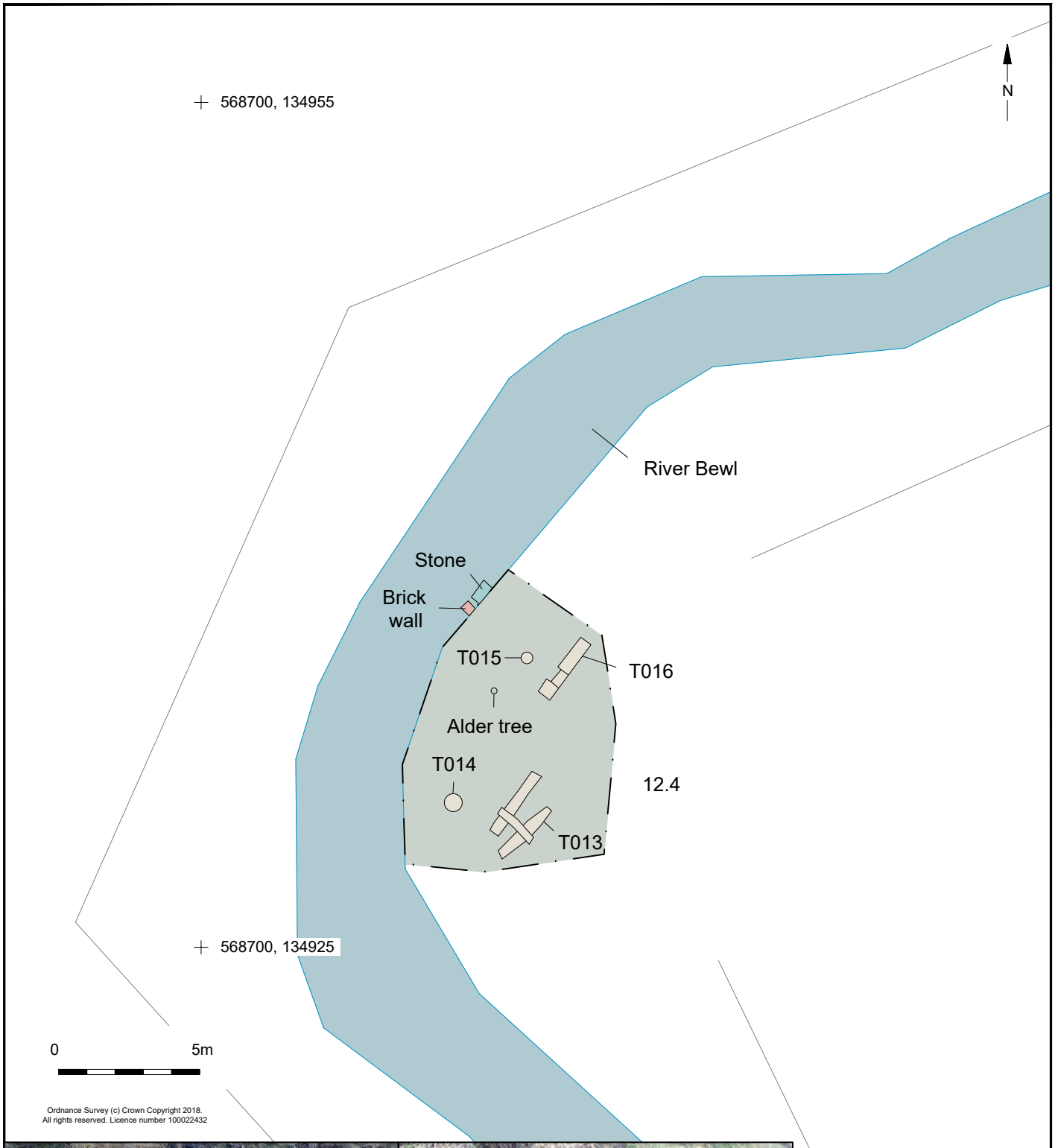
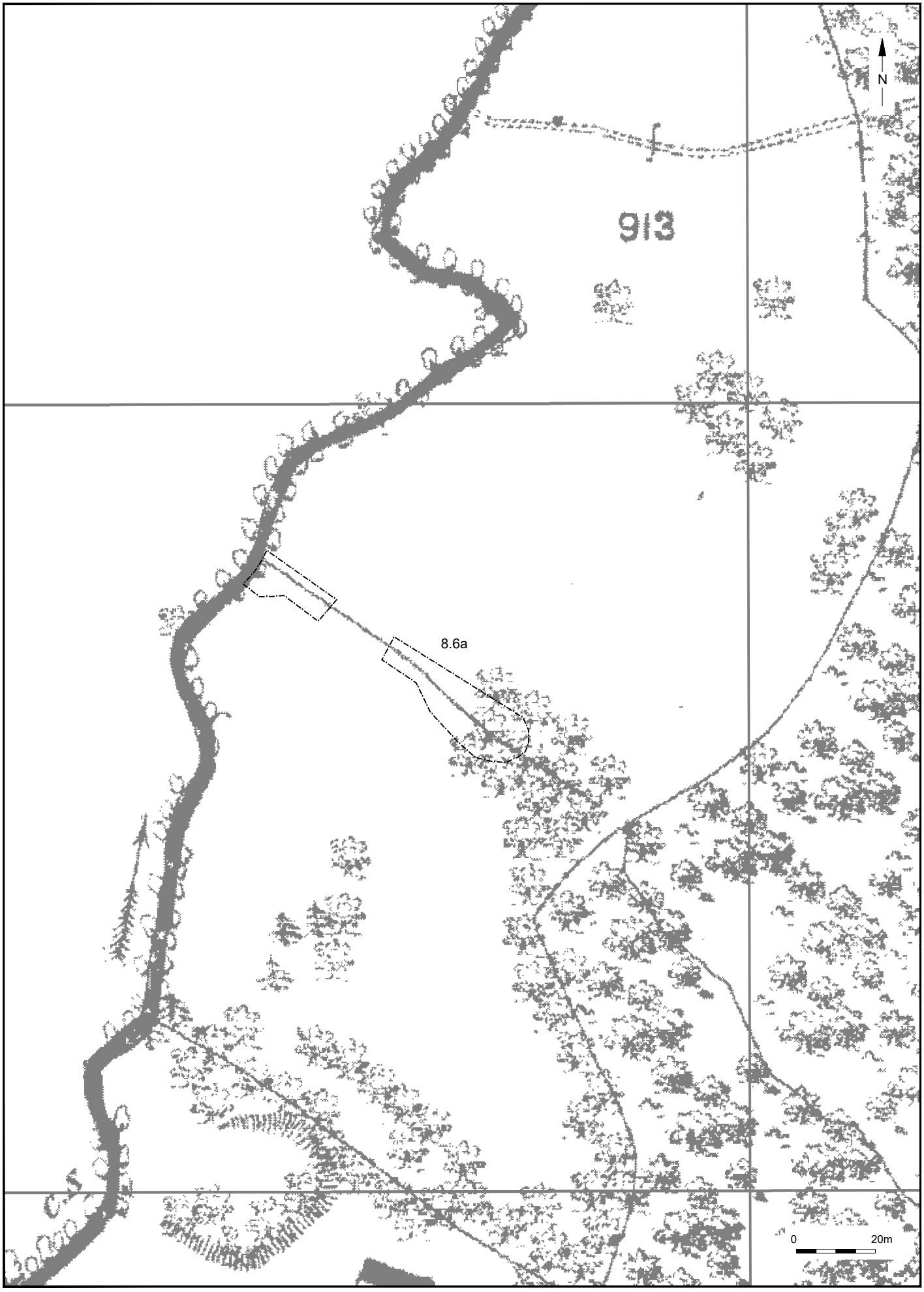
Project Ref: 170705	April 2018	Detail of 8.6, 8.6a and 10.1a	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		



T016 with lap joint

Axe marks

© Archaeology South-East		River Bewl	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 170705	April 2018	Detail of 12.4	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		



© **Archaeology South-East**		River Bewl	Fig. 6
Project Ref: 170705	April 2018	8.6a and 1870 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map	
Report Ref: 2017507	Drawn by: JLR		

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