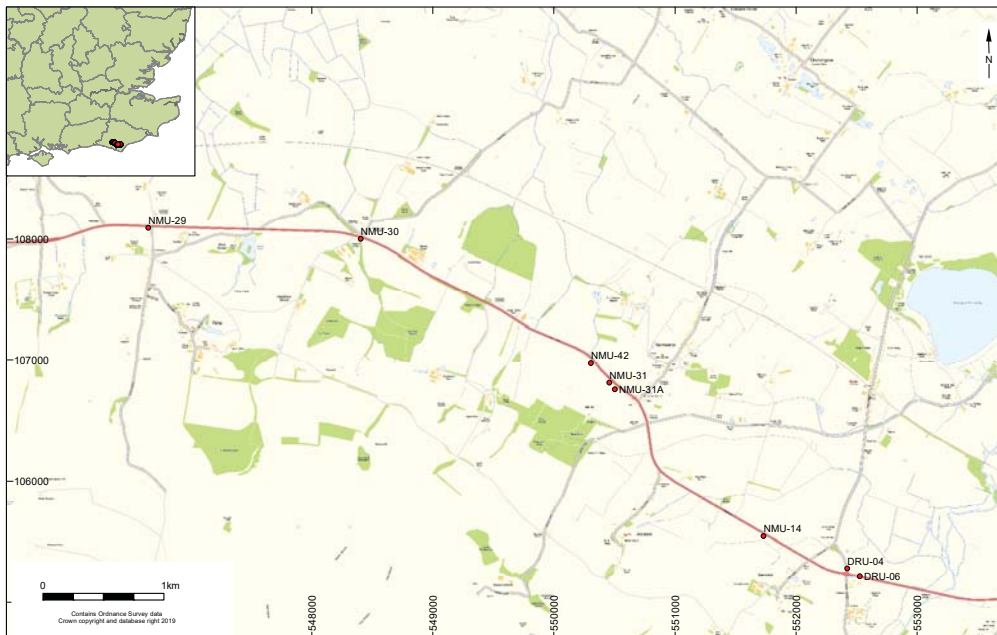


**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme
East Sussex**

**NGR: 546480, 108114 (TQ 46480 08114) to
557747, 105552 (TQ 57747 05552)**

**ASE Project No: 190460
Site Code: LER19
ASE Report No: 2019250
OASIS id: archaeol6-364278**



© Archaeology South-East		A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme, East Sussex		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 190460	Sept 2019	Site location		
Report Ref: 2019250	Drawn by: JR			



By Ian Hogg

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Prepared by:	Ian Hogg	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dan Swift	Project Manager	
Date of Issue:	September 2019		
Version:	1		

**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East on geotechnical works along the route of the A27 Lewes to Polegate improvement scheme. The fieldwork was commissioned by WSP on behalf of Highways England. The work involved the monitoring of the excavation of eight trial pits.

No archaeological finds, deposits or features were identified in any of the trial pits, however, deposit survival was very good within the areas of farmland and on the verge of the A27 only limited disturbance was noted. As archaeological remains are known to exist within, and in close proximity to, the scheme it is likely that when the road improvement groundworks themselves occur there will be an adverse impact on archaeology.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by WSP o/n behalf of Highways England to undertake an archaeological watching brief on geotechnical trial pits along the 15km route of A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme (NGR: 546480 108114 to 557747 105552; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2019) indicates that the 15km scheme lies upon various geological formation mainly comprising Gault and Weald Clay formation occasionally overlain by Head deposits or alluvium. West Melbury Chalk and Zig Zag Chalk Formations were also present in the west of the scheme.

1.2.2 The site lies on the land to the north of the South Downs within gently undulating farmland bisected by the A27.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Highways England have developed the preliminary design for a scheme of road improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate. As part of this initial work they have commissioned WSP and their subcontractors to undertake a programme of geotechnical investigations along the route of the scheme. Following consultation with the County Archaeologist for East Sussex County Council, it was agreed that an archaeological watching brief was required during the excavation of the geotechnical trial pits.

1.3.2 Accordingly, an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSP 2019b) was prepared, and approved by Greg Chuter in his capacity as County Archaeologist. This document set out the methodology this Watching brief would take. All works were carried out in accordance with this document and with the *Sussex Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork* (2015), specifically Annex C (Watching Brief); the relevant Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standards and guidance documents (ClfA 2019); and Historic England guidelines (HE 2015a).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aims of the watching brief were:

- To record, as far as possible, the location, extent, condition, significance and quality of any survival archaeological remains encountered
- Where a site includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, to submit an appropriate field evaluation (in this case the WB)
- Identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposal

1.4.2 The specific objectives of the watching brief were:

- To locate evidence associated with the sites of the Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and non-designated Arlington to Ouse Valley Romano-British road (DES9301 and MES4753) and Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) Pevensey to Cuckmere Romano-British road
- To assess their importance in national, regional or local context

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief that was carried out on the site between the 12th and 19th August 2019.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following historical context, unless stated, makes reference to the A27 East of Lewes Improvement Scheme Environment Assessment Report (EAR), Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage (WSP 2019a) and also the WSI for the watching brief (WSP 2019b). The scheme is located within the rich landscape of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). There is evidence of Palaeolithic settlements and Neolithic woodland clearance which continued into the Bronze Age and Iron Age (Brandon, 1998, 137). Prehistoric wetlands, known as the Willingdon Levels (DES10069), are nearby. A prehistoric hillfort is present in the wider area at Mount Caburn (c. 3km from scheme), dating from the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Ages. Several dykes and linear features are also present at Ranscombe (c.3km from scheme). There is evidence of Iron Age activity within the scheme footprint comprising the non-designated Drusilla's settlement (DES9308) which continued in use into the Romano-British period.
- 2.2 Romano-British occupation of the Sussex landscape was considerably varied in the South Downs. There is evidence of continued Iron Age activity, but also the utilisation of the chalklands in the Ouse Valley by Roman settlers. There is evidence of Romano-British activity within the scheme footprint comprising the non-designated Roman roads of Arlington to Ouse Valley (MES4753), Pevensy to Cuckmere (DES9300) and Greensand Way (DES10070, DES9301). Several Romano-British settlements within the scheme footprint have been uncovered at Old Laylands (DES9307) and Drusillas (DES9308). A Roman villa complex (DES8786) was also uncovered at Beddingham, located within the scheme footprint.
- 2.3 There is strong evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement activity. Several cemeteries have been revealed including the scheduled cemetery (10021436) and scheduled inhumation cemetery at Manor Cottages (1010700), located c.0.6km from scheme. A non-designated Saxon cemetery (DES9615) at Glynde, in addition to Saxon cemeteries, monastery and medieval hamlet (DES8786) at Prescott Court, Beddingham are also located nearby.
- 2.4 Dating to the late medieval period, the scheduled sites of Wilmington Priory (10022912) and of Burlough Castle (DES9735) are both located in the wider area (c.0.6km and c.1.8km from scheme). There are several medieval settlements located close to the scheme at Selmeston (DES8604), Folkington (DES8891) and Bay Tree Farm (DES9204). The nucleated medieval settlements of Wilmington (DES9203) and the northern extent of Alciston (DES9089) are located within the scheme footprint. There is evidence of post-medieval activity comprising the manorial estate of Wooton Manor (1043258) in the wider area and Wooton Manor Grade II Registered Park and Garden (1001693).
- 2.5 The development of manorial landscape parks continued into the later post-medieval period, as demonstrated by Firlie Place Grade II Registered Park and Garden (1000235), located close to the scheme. The development of agricultural villages and hamlets during the period is illustrated by the erection of several domestic and commercial properties such as Tollgate Cottage (1234610), Forge Cottage (1043363) and Corner Cottage (1191088), all of

which are located close to the site. The continuation of agricultural practices is illustrated by the presence of Carrs Barn (MES32351) and Leylands Barn (MES32442), both located within the scheme footprint. Evidence of industrial practices is represented by the site of the former brickyard (MES24667), also located within the Scheme footprint.

- 2.6 There is evidence of modern activity deriving from the First World War (1914-1918) by the erection of the Grade II War Memorial (DES1078) at Selmeston, located in the area. Further military activity associated with the Second World War (1939-1945) is present at Wilmington airfield (MES7867) and a WW2 hangar (MES7868) located in the locality. A WW2 airfield (DES9313) is also located within the scheme footprint.
- 2.7 Archaeological remains, therefore are known within close proximity to the scheme and within the scheme footprint itself. These comprise earthworks and communication routes, which date from the Romano-British period. Ground disturbance (trial pits) had the potential to disturb archaeological remains associated with the sites of the Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and non-designated Arlington to Ouse Valley Romano-British road (DES9301 and MES4753) and Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) Pevensy to Cuckmere Romano-British road. Although there has been previous ground disturbance there is potential for further, unknown remains to be present. Therefore, there is high potential for unknown buried archaeological remains to be present along the course of the proposed scheme footprint.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of the excavation of eight geotechnical trial pits along the route of the scheme (Figure 1). The trial pits, each measuring 2.00m x 0.90m in plan, were excavated by a JCB 3CX back hoe excavator using a toothless bucket.

3.1.2 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets. Vertical sections were taken across features where necessary and a comprehensive photographic record taken.

3.1.3 The trenches were surveyed by WSP using GPS and tied into the Ordnance Survey.

3.1.4 Spoil and the trench bases were all scanned by eye for unstratified finds.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 ASE informed Lewes Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated and were allocated a site code (LER 19). The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Lewes museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	9
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	8
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	6
Trench Record forms	8
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 1: Quantification of archive

4.0 RESULTS

(Figures 1 and 2)

4.1 Trial Pits NMU -14, DRU-04 and DRU-06

4.1.1 Trial Pits NMU-14, DRU-04 and DRU-06 were located in the centre of the scheme, either side of Drusilla's Roundabout. They displayed the same stratigraphic sequence and did not contain any archaeology. Individual context information can be found in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Natural firm grey Gault Clay [003] was recorded between 13.10m and 24.93m aOD. The natural deposits were overlain by pale brown grey silt clay subsoil [002] measuring between 0.11m and 0.19m in thickness; the subsoil was sealed by between 0.20m and 0.30m of mid brown grey clay silt topsoil [001].

4.2 Trial Pit NMU-29

4.2.1 Trial Pit NMU-29 was located in the west of the scheme route; it was located on the verge on the southern side of the A27. The trench did not contain any archaeology; individual context information is recorded in Appendix 1.

4.2.2 The natural mid orange brown clay silt Head deposits [8/004] were recorded at 16.12m aOD. The natural deposits were overlain by mid grey brown clay silt subsoil [8/003] 0.22m thick. The subsoil was sealed by 0.30m of mid grey sand silt modern made ground [8/002]; this deposit contained fragments of concrete and was probably associated with previous road alterations. The made ground was overlain by 0.19m of dark brown grey silt imported topsoil [8/001].

4.3 Trial Pit NMU-30

4.3.1 Trial Pit NMU-30 was located in the west of the scheme route; it was located on the verge on the southern side of the A27. The trench did not contain any archaeology; individual context information is recorded in Appendix 1.

4.3.2 The natural mid grey Gault Clay [5/003] was recorded at 18.71m aOD. The natural had been truncated in the eastern part of the site by a telegraph pole which had been partially removed; this was only evident as a circular discolouration although the base of the pole was seen 2.10m into the natural deposit during soakaway testing. The natural deposits were overlain by mid brown grey silt clay modern made ground [5/002] containing inclusions of modern CBM and chalk; this deposit measured 0.39m in thickness. The made ground was overlain by 0.12m of dark grey brown silt imported topsoil [5/001]; the topsoil and made ground were both associated with previous road alterations.

4.4 Trial Pits NMU-31, NMU-31A and NMU-42

4.4.1 Trial Pits NMU-31, NMU-31A and NMU-42 were located in the centre and west of the scheme, to the south of the A27. They displayed the same stratigraphic sequence and did not contain any archaeology. Individual context information can be found in Appendix 1.

4.4.2 Natural firm grey Gault Clay [003] was recorded between 25.69m and 45.98m aOD. The natural deposits were overlain 0.28m and 0.32m of dark brown grey clay silt topsoil [001].

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 Natural deposits were recorded in all eight trial pits at between 13.10m and 45.98m aOD. In six of the pits, the natural deposits comprised Gault Clay, while in the most westerly location NMU-29 Head deposits were observed. Where trial pits were excavated within farmland, an undisturbed sequence of topsoil and sometimes subsoil was recorded overlying the natural deposits. Trial Pits NMU-29 and NMU-30 were both located on the southern verge of the A27 and showed signs of disturbance from previous road alteration. Modern made ground was recorded overlaying the subsoil in NMU-29 and the natural deposits in NMU-30; in both case the made ground was sealed by imported topsoil.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 In general, deposit survival was very good within the areas of farmland. Disturbance was noted in the Trial Pits located on the verge of the A27 with the original topsoil having been removed before the area appears to have been raised slightly; despite this subsoil was still extant in one of these pits (NMU-29). The only other truncation noted was in Trial Pit NMU-30 where a telegraph pole had been partially removed.

5.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

5.3.1 Despite the good levels of preservation recorded within most of the Trial Pits, no archaeological remains were recorded.

5.4 Potential impact on archaeological remains

5.4.1 While no archaeological remains were recorded during the watching brief, the lack of disturbance and the shallow depth of the overburden across most of the Trial Pits means that the scheme is likely to have an adverse impact on potential archaeology.

5.5 Consideration of research aims

5.5.1 To record, as far as possible, the location, extent, condition, significance and quality of any survival archaeological remains encountered:

No archaeological remains were recorded during the watching brief. The good deposit survival, particularly within the farmland either side of the A27 suggests that any potential archaeological remains within the route are likely to be well preserved.

5.5.2 Where a site includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, to submit an appropriate field evaluation (in this case the WB);

Identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposal;

To locate evidence associated with the sites of the Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and non-designated Arlington to Ouse Valley Romano-British road (DES9301 and MES4753) and Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) Pevensey to Cuckmere Romano-British road;

To assess their importance in national, regional or local context:

Given the absence of archaeological remains within the trial pits, it is not possible address these objectives.

5.6 Conclusions

- 5.6.1 No archaeological finds, deposits or features were identified in any of the trial pits, however, deposit survival was very good within the areas of farmland and on the verge of the A27 only limited disturbance was noted. As archaeological remains are known to exist within, and in close proximity to, the scheme it is likely that when the road improvement groundworks themselves occur there will be an adverse impact on archaeology.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank WSP for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Greg Chuter, Former County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council for his guidance and monitoring. The watching brief was conducted by Ian Hogg. Justin Russell produced the figures for this report; Neil Griffin managed the excavations and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

Appendix 1: Archaeologically negative trial pits. List of recorded contexts

Trial Pit	Context	Type	Interpretation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Height m aOD)
NMU-14	1/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.30	24.39
NMU-14	1/002	Layer	Subsoil	2.00	0.90	0.16	24.09
NMU-14	1/003	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	23.93
DRU-04	2/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.26	14.51
DRU-04	2/002	Layer	Subsoil	2.00	0.90	0.19	14.25
DRU-04	2/003	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90		14.06
DRU-06	3/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.20	13.41
DRU-06	3/002	Layer	Subsoil	2.00	0.90	0.11	13.21
DRU-06	3/003	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	13.10
NMU-31	4/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.30	37.41
NMU-31	4/002	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	37.11
NMU-30	5/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.12	19.22
NMU-30	5/002	Layer	Made ground	2.00	0.90	0.39	19.10
NMU-30	5/003	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	18.71
NMU-42	6/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.32	26.09
NMU-42	6/002	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	25.69
NUM31A	7/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.28	46.26
NUM31A	7/002	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	45.98
NMU-29	8/001	Layer	Topsoil	2.00	0.90	0.19	16.83
NMU-29	8/002	Layer	Made ground	2.00	0.90	0.30	16.64
NMU-29	8/003	Layer	Subsoil	2.00	0.90	0.22	16.34
NMU-29	8/004	Deposit	Natural	2.00	0.90	-	16.12

HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	N/A				
Site code	LER19				
Project code	190460				
Planning reference	N/A				
Site address	A27 Lewes to Polegate, East Sussex				
District/Borough	Lewes				
NGR (12 figures)	546480 108114 to 557747 105552				
Geology	Gault Clay, Head Deposits				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	12-08-2019 to 19-08-2019				
Sponsor/client	WSP				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Ian Hogg				
Period summary					
Project summary	<p>The work involved the monitoring of the excavation of eight trial pits. The natural deposits comprised Gault Clay and occasionally Head deposits. No archaeological finds, deposits or features were identified in any of the trial pits, however, deposit survival was very good within the areas of farmland and on the verge of the A27 only limited disturbance was noted. As archaeological remains are known to exist within, and in close proximity to, the scheme it is likely that when the road improvement groundworks themselves occur there will be an adverse impact on archaeology.</p>				
Museum/Accession No.	N/A				

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeol6-364278**

Project details

Project name A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme

Short description of the project

The work involved the monitoring of the excavation of eight trial pits. No archaeological finds, deposits or features were identified in any of the trial pits, however, deposit survival was very good within the areas of farmland and on the verge of the A27 only limited disturbance was noted. As archaeological remains are known to exist within, and in close proximity to, the scheme it is likely that when the road improvement groundworks themselves occur there will be an adverse impact on archaeology.

Project dates Start: 12-08-2019 End: 19-08-2019

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 190460 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes LER19 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport

Current Land use Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 4 - Regularly improved

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type ""Watching Brief""

Prompt Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country England

Site location EAST SUSSEX LEWES LEWES A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme, East Sussex

Postcode BN26 6QL

Study area 15 Kilometres

Site coordinates TQ 46480 08114 50.853388336319 0.081256118876 50 51
12 N 000 04 52 E LineSite coordinates TQ 57747 05552 50.827393506171 0.240113736495 50 49
38 N 000 14 24 E Line

Height OD / Depth Min: 13.1m Max: 45.98m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Highways England
Project design originator	WSP
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Ian Hogg
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultant
Name of sponsor/funding body	WSP
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet"
Entered by	Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	24 September 2019



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Project Ref: 190460	Sept 2019	Site location		
Report Ref: 2019250	Drawn by: JR			



DRU-04 looking west



DRU-06 looking north-west



NMU-31 looking north-east



NMU-14 looking north-east



NMU-29 looking south



NMU-30 looking south



NMU-31 looking east



NMU-42 looking south

© Archaeology South-East		A27 Lewes to Polegate Improvement Scheme, East Sussex	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 190460	Sept 2019	Trial Pit photographs	
Report Ref: 2019250	Drawn by: JR		

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

27 Eastways
Witham
Essex
CM8 3YQ
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

