

An Archaeological Watching Brief at
The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent

Planning Ref: MA/03/02493

NGR 567363 147385

Project No. 2890
Site Code: HPW07

ASE Report No. 2008129
OASIS id: archaeol6-47346



Andrew Margetts BA PGCE

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits associated with planning consent for 64 holiday lets at The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological supervision of twelve test pits on the 16th and 17th April 2007. These were excavated in order to record extant geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and the general stratigraphy comprised, top soil, over sub soil, over a Loess deposit of Brickearth, with an underlying solid geology of Weald Clay.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit, was commissioned by Paul Lavender of BSF Consulting Engineers Ltd to undertake a watching brief during a programme of geotechnical test pitting at The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent. (site centred NGR 567363 147385).

1.2 Site Geology and Location

1.2.1 The Hop Farm is situated in the parish of East Peckham in an area known as Beltring. It is close, and can be reached by, the A228 Banbridges Road. The test pits were located on flat land some of which is utilised for showground, pasture and the farm compound itself (Fig. 2). The British Geological Survey sheet 287 shows that the site is situated on Brickearth Clay.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning consent was granted by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (reference MA/03/02493) for development of 64 holiday lets. On the basis of present archaeological information, the Archaeological Officer for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council recommended that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological work in order to clarify the archaeological and historical elements within the site. The results would then guide appropriate mitigation measures for future development.

1.4 Scope of the work

1.4.1 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in a phased strategy. This first phase comprised the archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits. The results of this work may inform the next phase of targeted evaluation through trial trenching.

1.4.2 Monitoring the excavation of test pits was undertaken to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.4.3 The works examined included 12 test pits c.1.6 metres in width, 2 metres in length and dug to an approximate depth of 3 metres.

1.4.4 A specification for these works was prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group at KCC. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Margetts on the 16th and 17th April 2007. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview of HER entries

- 2.1.1 The known archaeological background for the site is limited, with few findspots recorded in the vicinity. These are limited to a Mesolithic flint flake recovered during construction work in 1955 and a polished greenstone axe found in the 1920's recorded c 750m to the north-west (HCG KCC 2007).
- 2.1.2 In addition to these prehistoric finds, the site contains several Listed Buildings of post-medieval date that relate to the use of the site as a hop farm and include buildings related to the storage and processing of hops. East Peckham was the centre of the hop producing industry in Kent and until 1997 the site was known as The Whitbread Hop Farm and owned by the Whitbread brewery. The country park is now open to the public and contains the largest collection of Oast houses in the world (The Hop Farm, n.d)

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The first phase of archaeological monitoring considered supervision of geotechnical test pits. Particular note was made of the geology and the potential for Mesolithic flints. If possible it was deemed necessary that experimental sieving should be done.
- 3.2 Test pits were monitored at all times by an archaeologist until/unless it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (e.g. once excavation reaches undisturbed natural subsoils, below which there will be no archaeological remains present - after the recording of any significant remains if present at higher levels). All excavations were carried out with a JCB (equipped with a toothless bucket).
- 3.3 In the event of significant archaeological deposits being encountered the County Archaeologist was to be informed immediately. Adequate time was made available for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand to identify and record the remains as far as possible within the limits of the works in order to extract archaeological and environmental information, as this proved necessary.
- 3.2 This enabled any archaeological deposits and features, disturbed during the proposed works, to be adequately recorded in line with the advice given in PPG16 (the Government's advice on *Archaeology and Planning*).
- 3.3 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards. A full photographic record was kept of the work as appropriate.
- 3.4 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Test Pit 1

- 4.1.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 1 comprised firstly of c.450mm of topsoil [1/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with frequent inclusions of modern building materials (<40mm and chalk marl (<10mm). Directly beneath [1/001], c.50mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil was encountered [1/002], which contained occasional inclusions of chalk marl (<10mm). Beneath [1/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [1/004]. Cut into this deposit was the concrete base of a demolished modern building [1/003]. This foundation was c.700mm in thickness with vertical sides and a flat top and base.

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
1/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.45m
1/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.45-0.50m
1/003		Concrete base	
1/004	Deposit	Natural	0.95m+

Table 1: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 1

4.2 Test Pit 2

- 4.2.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 2 comprised firstly of c.500mm of topsoil [2/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with frequent inclusions of modern building materials (<50mm) and chalk marl (<10mm) with occasional sandstone fragments (<20mm). Directly beneath [2/001] was c.50mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil [2/002], which contained occasional inclusions of manganese (<20mm). Beneath [2/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [2/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.50m
2/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.50-0.55m
2/003	Deposit	Natural	0.55+

Table 2: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 2

4.3 Test Pit 3

- 4.3.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 3 comprised firstly of c.400mm of topsoil [3/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (<40mm) and chalk marl (<10mm) with occasional finds of 'Hop Screws'. Beneath [3/001] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [3/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.40m
3/003	Deposit	Natural	0.40m+

Table 3: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 3

4.4 Test Pit 4

4.4.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 4 comprised firstly of c.300mm of topsoil [4/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (<50mm) and chalk marl (<10mm) with occasional finds of 'Hop Screws'. Directly beneath was c.100mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil [4/002], which contained occasional inclusions of manganese (<20mm). Beneath [4/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth Clay [4/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.30m
4/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.30-0.40m
4/003	Deposit	Natural	0.40m+

Table 4: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 4

4.5 Test Pit 5

4.5.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 5 comprised firstly of c.300mm of topsoil [5/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (<50mm) and chalk marl (<10mm) with occasional finds of 'Hop Screws'. Directly beneath was c.50mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil [5/002], which contained occasional inclusions of manganese (<20mm). Beneath [5/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [5/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
5/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.30m
5/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.30-0.35m
5/003	Deposit	Natural	0.35m+

Table 5: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 5

4.6 Test Pit 6

4.6.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 6 comprised firstly of c.400mm of topsoil [6/001]. This consisted of mid greyish brown clay silt with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (<40mm) and chalk marl (<10mm) with occasional finds of 'Hop Screws'. Directly beneath was c.100mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil [6/002], which contained occasional inclusions of manganese (<20mm). Beneath [6/002] was encountered the mid orange yellow Brickearth natural [6/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
6/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.40m
6/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.40-0.50m
6/003	Deposit	Natural	0.50m+

Table 6: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 6

4.7 Test Pit 7

4.7.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 7 comprised firstly of c.10mm of gravel [7/001]. Directly beneath was c.300mm of dark grey black silty sand [7/002], a made ground deposit containing frequent

inclusions of modern building materials (<50mm). Beneath [7/002] was c.200mm of remnant topsoil [7/003]. This consisted of dark greyish brown clay silt with occasional inclusions of modern building materials (<40mm). Directly beneath was c.50mm of dark orange brown silty clay subsoil [7/004], which contained frequent inclusions of charcoal flecks. Beneath [7/004] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [7/005].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
7/001	Deposit	Gravel	0.00-0.01m
7/002	Deposit	Made ground	0.01-0.31m
7/003	Deposit	Topsoil	0.31-0.51m
7/004	Deposit	Subsoil	0.51-0.56m
7/005	Deposit	Natural	0.56m+

Table 7: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 7

4.8 Test Pit 8

- 4.8.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 8 comprised firstly of c.200mm of hardcore [8/001]. Directly beneath this was c.600mm of mid greyish brown re-deposited natural clay with frequent inclusions of modern building materials (<50mm). This was interpreted as a deposit of made ground [8/002]. Beneath was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [8/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
8/001	Deposit	Hardcore	0.00-0.20m
8/002	Deposit	Re-deposited clay/made ground	0.20-0.80m
8/003	Deposit	Natural	0.80m+

Table 8: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 8

4.9 Test Pit 9

- 4.9.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 9 comprised firstly of c.200mm of made ground [9/001]. This consisted of dark grey black silty sand with moderate inclusions of modern building materials (<100mm). Directly [9/001] was c.100mm of dark orange brown silty clay subsoil [9/002], which contained moderate inclusions of charcoal flecks. Beneath 9/was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [9/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
9/001	Deposit	Made ground	0.00-0.20m
9/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.20-0.30m
9/003	Deposit	Natural	0.30m+

Table 9: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 9

4.10 Test Pit 10

- 4.10.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 10 comprised firstly of c.200mm of made ground [10/001]. This consisted of dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of modern building materials

(<50mm) and charcoal (<30mm). Directly beneath was c.100mm of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil [10/002]. Context [10/002] was the final deposit revealed as the test pit was abandoned due to a concentration of services.

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
10/001	Deposit	Made ground	0.00-0.20m
10/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.20-0.30m

Table 10: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 10

4.11 Test Pit 11

4.11.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 11 comprised firstly of c.300mm of topsoil [11/001]. This consisted of light greyish brown clay silt. Directly beneath was c.100mm of mid yellow brown silty clay subsoil [11/002]. Beneath [11/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [11/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
11/001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.00-0.30m
11/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.30-0.40m
11/003	Deposit	Natural	0.40m+

Table 11: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 11

4.12 Test Pit 12

4.12.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of test pit 11 comprised firstly of c.300mm of topsoil [12/001]. This consisted of light greyish brown clay silt. Directly beneath was c.100mm of mid yellow brown silty clay subsoil [12/002]. Beneath [12/002] was the mid orange brown Brickearth natural [12/003].

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Depth
12/001	Deposit	Made ground	0.00-0.30m
12/002	Deposit	Subsoil	0.30-0.40m
12/003	Deposit	Natural	0.40m+

Table 12: List of recorded contexts in Test Pit 12

4.13 Sieving

4.13.1 As no prehistoric flintwork was recovered from the test pits no experimental sieving of spoil was deemed necessary (HCG KCC 2007, 4.3)

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The underlying geology encountered during the course of the test pitting confirmed the presence of Brickearth overlying Weald Clay.
- 5.2 No archaeological deposits were noted during the course of test pitting, and the results are therefore classed *a priori*, as 'negative evidence'. However the twelve excavated test pits represent a tiny sample of land coverage within the proposed development area. Evidence from test pits 4, 5 and 6 do however indicate that this area was utilised in fairly recent times for hop growing and the charcoal found in test pit 10 close to an oast house may be waste from the hop drying process.

6. Bibliography

HCG KCC, 2007 Specification for Archaeological Trial Trenching The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham Kent

The Hop Farm, n.d <http://www.thehopfarm.co.uk/> (accessed 26th August 2008)

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	HPW07					
Identification Name and Address	The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent.					
County, District &/or Borough	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 567363 147385					
Geology	Brickearth overlying Weald Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2890					
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. 16 th – 17 th April 2007	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mrs Cornelia Dyball					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer and Louise Rayner					
Project Supervisor	Andrew Margetts					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits associated with planning consent for 64 holiday lets at The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological supervision of twelve test pits on the 16th and 17th April 2007. These were excavated in order to record extant geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and the general stratigraphy comprised, top soil, over sub soil, over a Loess deposit of Brickearth, with the underlying solid geology formed by Weald Clay.</i></p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-47346

Project details

Project name	Test pits at The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits associated with planning consent for 64 holiday lets at The Hop Farm, Branbridges Road, Beltring, East Peckham, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological supervision of twelve test pits on the 16th and 17th April 2007. These were excavated in order to record extant geology. No archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and the general stratigraphy comprised, top soil, over sub soil, over a Loess deposit of Brickearth, with an underlying solid geology of Weald Clay.
Project dates	Start: 16-04-2007 End: 17-04-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	2890 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Leisure development
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING EAST PECKHAM The Hop Farm
Postcode	TN12 6PY
Study area	39.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 567363 147385 50.9102246506 0.229709586830 50 54 36 N 000 13 46 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Heritage Conservation Kent County Council
Project design originator	The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council
Project director/manager	Diccon Hart
Project supervisor	Andrew Margetts

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Photograph','Plan','Report'

Project bibliography 1

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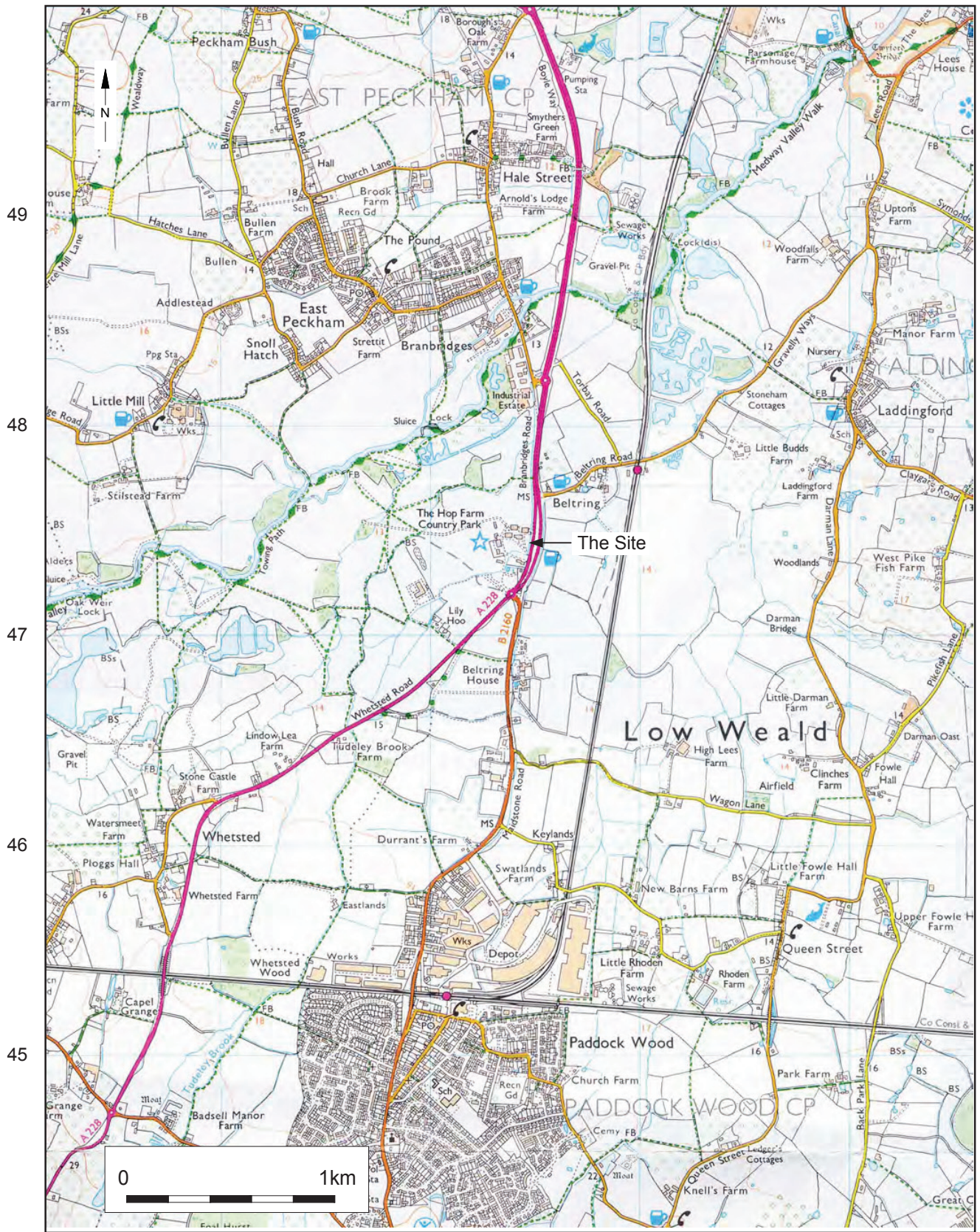
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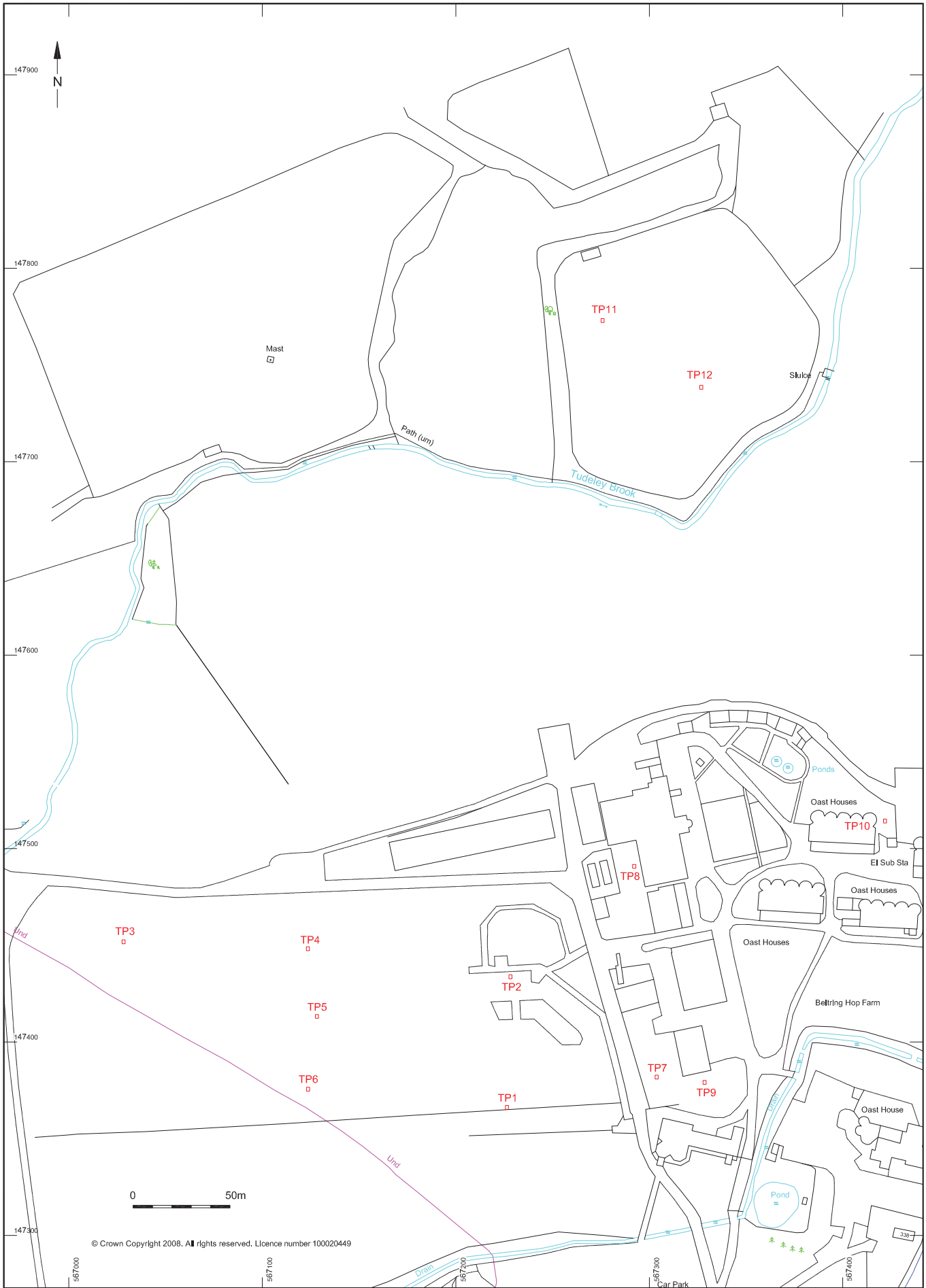
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© Archaeology South-East		The Hop Farm, Beltring	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 2890	Sept 2008	Site Location Plan	
Report Ref: 2007164	Drawn by: JLR		

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© Archaeology South-East		The Hop Farm, Beltring		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 2890	Sept 2008	Location of test pits		
Report Ref: 2007164	Drawn by: JLR			



TP1



TP2



TP3



TP4



TP5



TP6



TP7



TP8



TP9



TP10



TP11



TP12

© Archaeology South-East		The Hop Farm, Beltring	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 2890	Sept 2008	Plates showing Test Pits 1-12	
Report Ref: 2007164	Drawn by: JLR		

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