

**Archaeological Evaluation Report  
Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts  
Ticehurst, East Sussex**

**NGR: 569579 129981  
(TQ: 695 299)**

**Planning Ref: RR/2020/585/P**

**ASE Project No: 210684  
Site Code: TSR21  
ASE Report No: 2022309  
OASIS id: archaeol6-511301**



**By Lia Schurtenberger**

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**Abstract**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The fieldwork was commissioned by RPS on behalf of their client Rydon Homes in advance of residential development. Eight trenches were excavated across the site.*

*Despite the presence of undisturbed subsoil, the only exposed feature was a linear ditch that probably represents a boundary or drainage feature pertaining to Singehurst Farm which is of medieval origins. Based on these results it is considered highly unlikely that development of the site will have any impact on significant archaeological remains.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by RPS, on behalf of their client Rydon Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex (NGR: 569579 129981; Figure1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2022) records the solid geology of the site as Wadhurst Clay formation. No superficial geological deposits are recorded.
- 1.2.2 The site lies within the Wealden landscape on the edge of a plateau (Upper Platts) overlooking the valley of the river Limden to the south. The north-western part of the site is approximately level at c109m AOD. From this area the site slopes gently downwards to the south and east down to c 105m AOD in the south-east of the site. No natural water channels cross the site, a large pond lies to the west of the site.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 A geophysical survey and an *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment* (DBA; RPS 2020) was undertaken on the site to support a planning application for residential development and associated landscaping and infrastructure (RR/2020/585/P).
- 1.3.2 Following planning permission, a programme of archaeological mitigation measures was requested by the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer (ESCC) secured by the following recommended draft conditions:

*3) No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with Policy EN2 (vi) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy*

*27) No phase of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post-investigation assessment (including provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition) for that phase has been completed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological site investigation and post-investigation assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the programme set out in the written scheme of investigation approved under condition 3 of this permission*

- 1.3.3 Accordingly, a *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation* (WSI; RPS 2022) was compiled and approved by all parties prior to the

commencement of fieldwork at the site.

#### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken over 3 days from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2022.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The following background is drawn from the *DBA* (RPS 2020).

### **2.1 Prehistoric**

- 2.1.1 The site lies in the Weald, a heavily forested area between the North Downs and the South Downs. Forest clearance of the Weald commenced during the Neolithic period but appears not to have been on the scale of clearance on lighter, better drained geologies.
- 2.1.2 During the Iron Age, forest clearance accelerated as the area became a centre for the iron industry.
- 2.1.3 In general, evidence for prehistoric activity in the Weald is sparse. Ridge top locations are increasingly seen to have been favoured by prehistoric communities as occupation sites in the Weald, however as the site lies away from a natural water course it may not have been such a favoured location and is more likely to have been under forest during these periods. In addition, no evidence of prehistoric occupation was recorded during the geophysical survey of the site, consequently the archaeological potential for significant prehistoric evidence was considered to be low.

### **2.2 Roman**

- 2.2.1 Evidence for Roman activity within the Weald centres on the iron working industry. However, no evidence of Roman activity has been recorded within a 1km radius of the study site. As a result, the site was considered to have a low archaeological potential for evidence dating to the Roman period.

### **2.3 Medieval**

- 2.3.1 Ticehurst or Tycehurst was first recorded in 1248. The name translates as 'wooded hill, where young goats are kept' The site lay some distance from the historic core, within an agricultural landscape. The Historic Farmsteads Project records Singehurst, c. 125m west of the study site, as a farmstead with medieval origins.
- 2.3.2 The study site is considered to have a low/nil potential for evidence of Anglo Saxon and medieval occupation although evidence of agricultural activity could be represented.

### **2.4 Post-medieval**

- 2.4.1 Throughout the post-medieval and more recent period the site has comprised agricultural land. A low/nil potential is therefore considered for evidence of significant occupation dating to these periods.



## **2.5 Project Aims and Objectives**

The following objectives and aims were identified in the *WSI* (RPS 2022):

- 2.5.1 The trial trenching will determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period.
- 2.5.2 The trial trenching will also seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and any surviving structures of archaeological significance.
- 2.5.3 The trial trenching will be undertaken within the general parameters of 'English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda' (English Heritage 1997), 'Exploring Our Past, Research Agenda' (English Heritage 1998) and the *South-East Regional Framework* (SERF 2018).
- 2.5.4 Within these parameters, the evaluation of this site presents an opportunity to address the following aims:
  - *What is the extent and nature of any prehistoric activity on the site?*
  - *What is the extent and nature of any Roman activity on the site?*
  - *What is the extent and nature of any Medieval activity on the site and its potential relationship with Singehurst Farm?*
  - *What is the impact of current land use?*
  - *Provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy (if required).*

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 Eight trenches were excavated, of which Trenches 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 measured 30 x 1.8m as originally planned, and Trenches 3, 5, and 6 were shortened due to services not known of prior to the start of excavations. Additionally, Trenches 1, 2, and 8 had to be moved in order to avoid the services (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 Trench 2 had to be moved northwards by 8m to avoid hitting an electric cable. Trench 3 was shortened by 10m in the north to avoid hitting a live water pipe. Trench 5 was shortened by 9.5m at the southern end to avoid hitting an electric service. Trench 6 was shortened by 5m at the eastern end to avoid a water level borehole. Trench 8 was moved northwards by 5m to avoid hitting an electric cable.
- 3.1.3 All trenches were checked with a CAT scanner prior to excavation. Excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision using an 8t mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless 1.80m wide grading bucket. The trenches were in spits of up to 0.10m through the overburden until the archaeological horizon was reached.
- 3.1.4 Any archaeological features identified were cleaned by hand where appropriate and subsequently planned via GPS. All potential archaeological features were then checked using trowels, mattocks, and shovels, and were half-sectioned and recorded by hand as well as planned by GPS as necessary.
- 3.1.5 All work was undertaken in line with the *WSI* (RPS 2022), the *Regulations, Standards and Guidance* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014) and with the *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC, CDC, WSCC 2019).

### 3.2 Archive

3.2.1 ASE informed Bexhill Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Bexhill Museum in due course, they do not give out accession numbers until an archive is physically submitted with them.

Context sheets	2
Section sheets	1
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	36
Context register	0
Drawing register	1
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	8

Table 1: 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	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

3.2.2 The site archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set out in: ‘*Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice*’ (AAF 2011); ‘*A Standard and Guide to best practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe*’ (EAC 2013); and ‘*Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*’ (SMA 2020).

## 4.0 RESULTS

(Figures 3 and 4)

### 4.1 Trench 3

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height mAOD
3/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.11-0.15	106.91-107.78
3/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.13-0.18	
3/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench	-	106.64-107.43
3/004	Cut	Gully	-	0.82	0.22	106.63
3/005	Fill	Fill, single	-	0.82	0.22	

Table 3: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 The natural geology [3/003] of Trench 3 was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.35m. It was overlain by subsoil [3/002] measuring between 0.13m and 0.18m, and clear topsoil [3/001] with a thickness ranging from 0.11m to 0.15m.
- 4.1.2 A small linear feature [3/004], such as a ditch or gully, was discovered at the south end of Trench 3, running NE-SW. It was measured to have a width of 0.82m and a maximum depth of only 0.22m. A modern land-drain runs along the western edge of the gully and it is unclear if the linear was feature is associated with the modern land-drain, or truncated by it at a later stage.
- 4.1.3 [3/004] contained a single, homogenous fill [3/005], from which no finds were recovered.
- 4.1.4 The same feature can be seen continuing into Trench 2, which was connected at a right angle in the south of Trench 3 (see Figure 2). The ditch was only excavated and recorded in Trench 3.

### 4.2 Trenches 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

- 4.2.1 All remaining trenches did not show any signs of archaeological features or finds. Details of deposits recorded in these trenches are in *Appendix 1* at the end of this report.
- 4.2.2 The natural geology [x/003] was discovered at a minimum depth of 0.32m and a maximum of 0.41m. The overburden consisted of subsoil [x/002] with a thickness ranging from 0.13m to 0.24m, but mostly measuring around 0.15m, and topsoil [x/001] measuring between 0.9m and 0.19m in thickness. Both topsoil and subsoil are present over the whole length of all trenches.

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## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 5.1.1 All 8 trenches revealed a sequence of natural, mid orange-brown Weald Clay with ca.10% inclusions of sandstone, overlain by subsoil and topsoil.
- 5.1.2 The depth of the overburden varied between 0.32m and 0.41m, although was predominantly between 0.34m and 0.36m.
- 5.1.3 The natural geology was encountered at a minimum elevation of 105.24m AOD at the southern end of the site (Trench 6) and a maximum elevation of 108.77m AOD at the northern end (Trench 7).
- 5.1.4 Of the 8 trenches evaluated, 2 contained the same undated (by finds) ditch, which was either truncated by a land-drain or associated with it (see photo on Figure 3).
- 5.1.5 The methodology, as set out in the *WSI* (RPS 2022), was predominantly employed successfully during the evaluation. The only exception being that the trenches could not all be compacted by machine tracks due to the high ground saturation with water, and were therefore compacted using only the grading bucket. This change in procedures was observed and signed off by the site manager of Rydon Homes.
- 5.1.6 The conditions on site were very rainy at times but good enough to confidently and efficiently identify and record any archaeological features, and as such it is considered that this evaluation and report has successfully achieved its objectives.

### 5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 5.2.1 Both subsoil and topsoil were mostly intact across site, apart from where services (water, electricity, and land-drains) were mapped. It is therefore considered that the archaeological horizon survives intact at the site.

### 5.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

- 5.3.1 The only archaeological feature, a ditch exposed in Trenches 2 and 3 did not contain any dateable finds. It was truncated or perhaps replaced by a land-drain which ran along its length. The ditch marries up with a linear feature marked on both the 1795 Gardner and Gream map and the Ticehurst 1839 Tithe map (Figure 5). It is therefore considered most likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier derivation and pertains to Singehurst Farm which The Historic Farmsteads Project records as a farmstead with medieval origins.

### 5.4 Potential impact on archaeological remains

- 5.4.1 It is considered highly unlikely that development of the site will have any impact on significant archaeological remains.

## 5.5 Consideration of research aims

- 5.5.1 The objectives and aims as set out in the *WSI* (RPS 2022) were met. Although the precise date of origin of the drainage or boundary ditch recorded in Trenches 2 and 3 remains unknown, it is at least 18<sup>th</sup> century in date, possibly older.
- 5.5.2 It is considered that the archaeological horizon survives intact at the site.
- 5.5.3 No physically dateable evidence of prehistoric, Roman or medieval activity was encountered although the ditch recorded in Trench 2 and 3 most likely pertains to Singehurst Farm which The Historic Farmsteads Project records as a farmstead with medieval origins.

## 5.6 Conclusions

- 5.6.1 Eight trenches were excavated across the site. Despite the presence of undisturbed subsoil, the only exposed feature was a linear ditch that probably represents a boundary or drainage feature pertaining to Singehurst Farm which is of medieval origins. Based on these results it is considered highly unlikely that development of the site will have any impact on significant archaeological remains.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**HER Summary**

<b>Site code</b>	TSR22					
<b>Project code</b>	210684					
<b>Planning reference</b>	RR/2020/585/P					
<b>Site address</b>	Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex					
<b>District/Borough</b>	East Sussex County Council					
<b>NGR (12 figures)</b>	569579 129981					
<b>Geology</b>	Wadhurst Clay formation					
<b>Fieldwork type</b>	Eval					
<b>Date of fieldwork</b>	8/11/22-10/11/22					
<b>Sponsor/client</b>	RPS Group, Rydon Homes					
<b>Project manager</b>	Paul Mason					
<b>Project supervisor</b>	Lia Schurtenberger					
<b>Period summary</b>						
						Uncertain
<b>Project summary</b>	Eight trenches were excavated across the site. Despite the presence of undisturbed subsoil, the only exposed feature was a linear ditch that probably represents a boundary or drainage feature pertaining to Singehurst Farm which is of medieval origins. Based on these results it is considered highly unlikely that development of the site will have any impact on significant archaeological remains.					



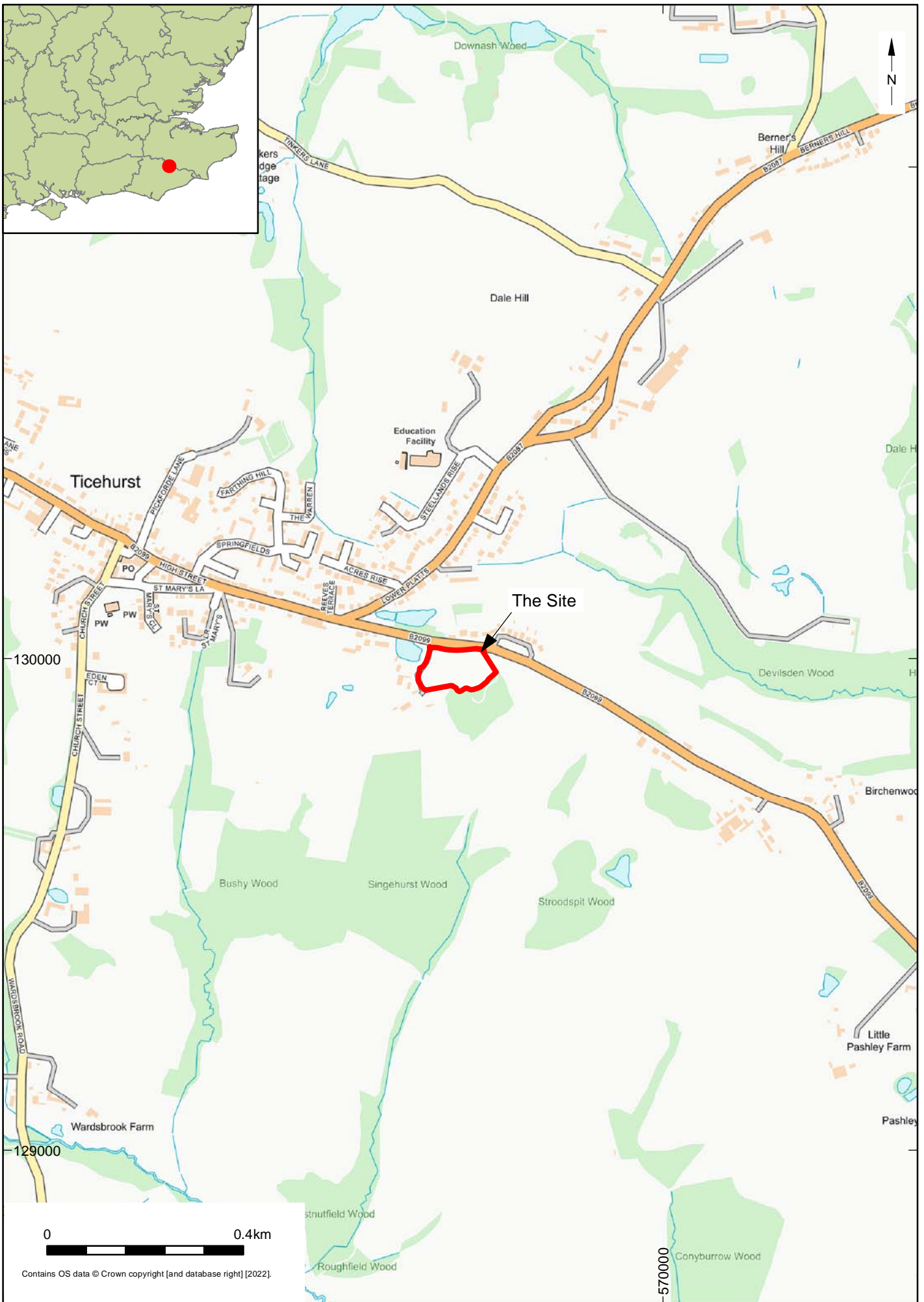
**OASIS Form****OASIS ID (UID):** archaeol6-511301**Project Name:** Evaluation at Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex**Activity type:** Evaluation**Project Identifier(s):** 210684**Planning Id:** RR/2020/585/P**Reason for Investigation:** Planning requirement**Organisation Responsible for work:** Archaeology South-East**Project Dates:** 08-Nov-2022 - 10-Nov-2022**HER:** East Sussex HER**HER Identifiers:** [no data]**Project Methodology:** An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex NGR 569579 129981, between the 8th and 10th November 2022. Eight trenches measuring 20-30m in length were excavated. Several services had to be avoided during the excavation, which resulted in the moving and shortening of 6 trenches.**Project Results:** Despite the presence of undisturbed subsoil, the only exposed feature was a linear ditch that probably represents a boundary or drainage feature pertaining to Singehurst Farm which is of medieval origins. Based on these results it is considered highly unlikely that development of the site will have any impact on significant archaeological remains.**Keywords:****Archive:**

Digital Archive - to be deposited with Bexhill Museum;

**Reports in OASIS:**Schurtenberger, L., (2022). *Evaluation at Land at Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst, East Sussex*. Portslade: Archaeology South-East.

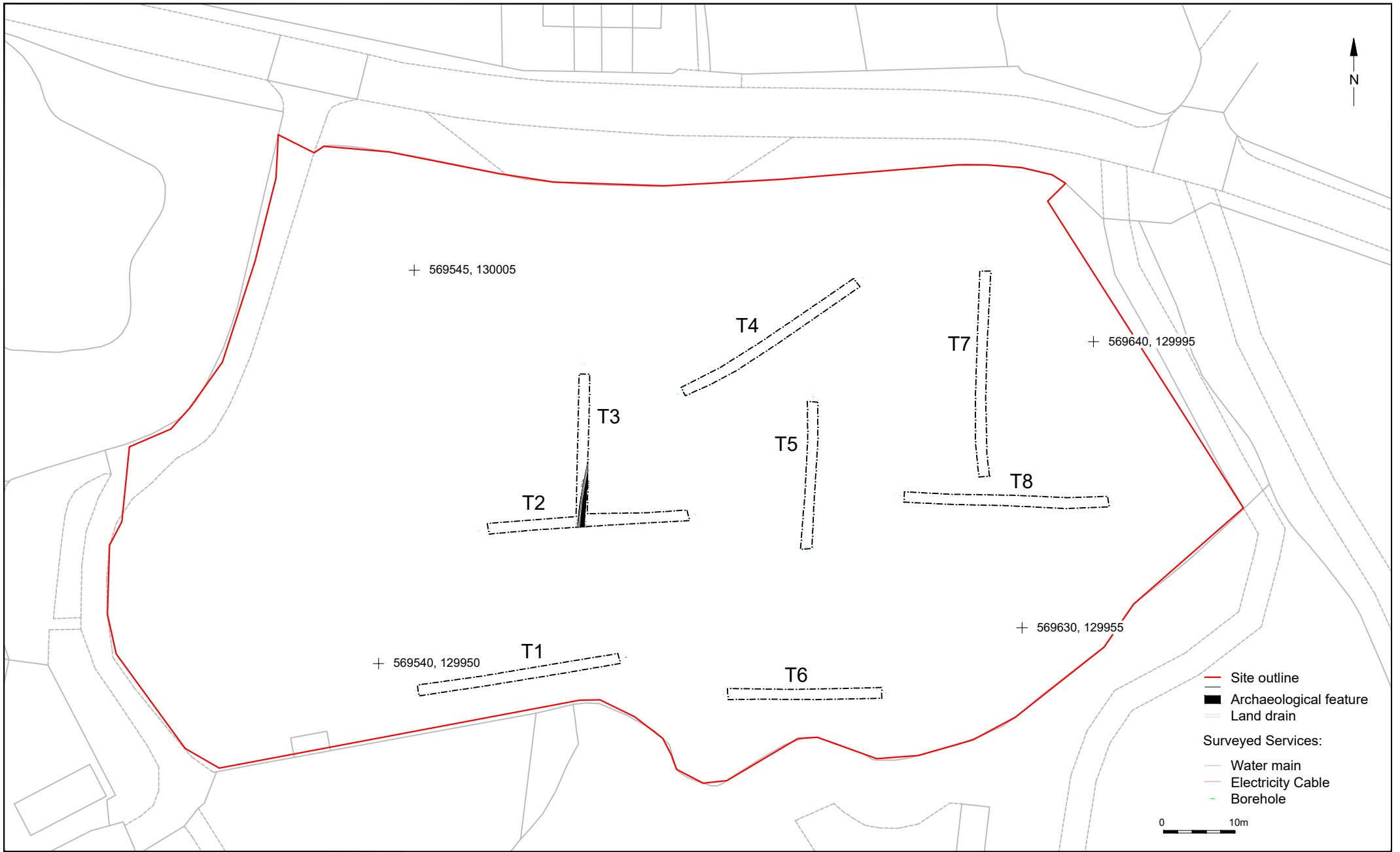
**Appendix 1: List of recorded contexts**

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length	Width	Depth m	Height
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.09-0.11	105.76-106.05
1/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.13-0.19	
1/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		105.49-105.49
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.08-0.11	106.89-107.19
2/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.19-0.24	
2/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench	-	106.58-106.76
4/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.09-0.12	107.69-108.38
4/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.15-0.20	
4/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		107.32-108.04
5/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.11-0.13	106.61-107.73
5/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.16-0.21	
5/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		106.52-107.43
6/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.1-0.13	105.45-105.71
6/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.12-0.18	
6/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		105.24-105.57
7/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.1-0.14	107.41-108.77
7/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.16-0.17	
7/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		107.18-108.53
8/001	Layer	Topsoil	trench	trench	0.11-0.19	107.12-107.49
8/002	Layer	Subsoil	trench	trench	0.11-0.15	
8/003	Layer	Natural	trench	trench		106.93-107.22

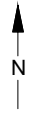


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© Archaeology South-East		Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 210684	December 2022	Site Location	
Report Ref: 2022309	Drawn by: HLF		



© Archaeology South-East		Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 210684	December 2022	Site Plan		
Report Ref: 2022309	Drawn by: HLF			

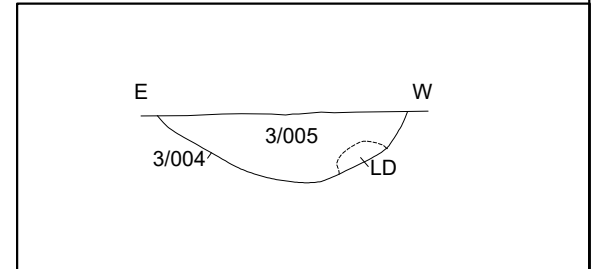


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Section 3/004



Land drain  
3/004  
S1.1

0 2m



Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench 4



Trench 5



Trench 6



Trench 7



Trench 8

© Archaeology South-East		Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 210684	December 2022	Blank trenches	
Report Ref: 2022309	Drawn by: HLF		

1795 Gardner and Gream map (not to scale)

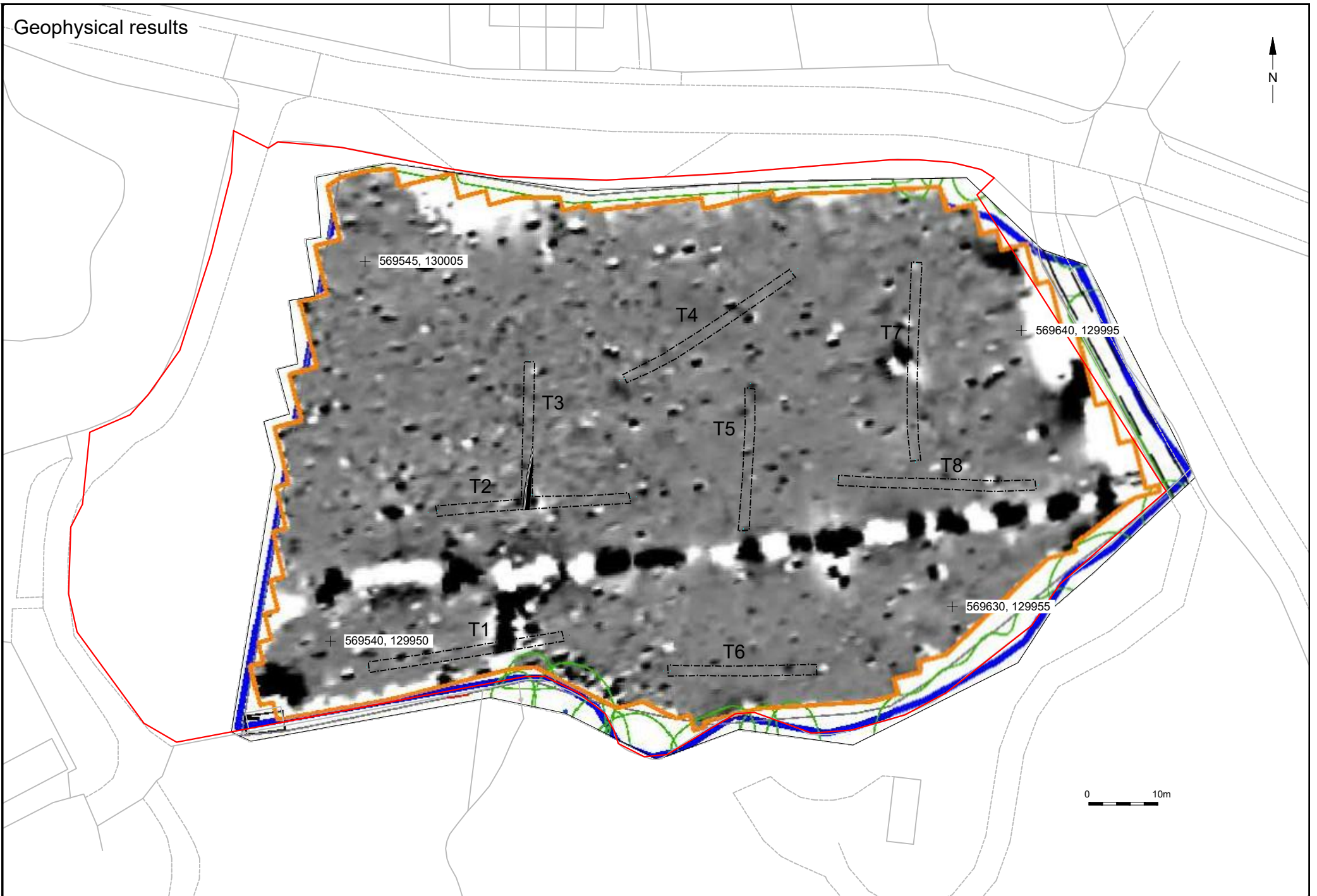


1839 Ticehurst Tithe map

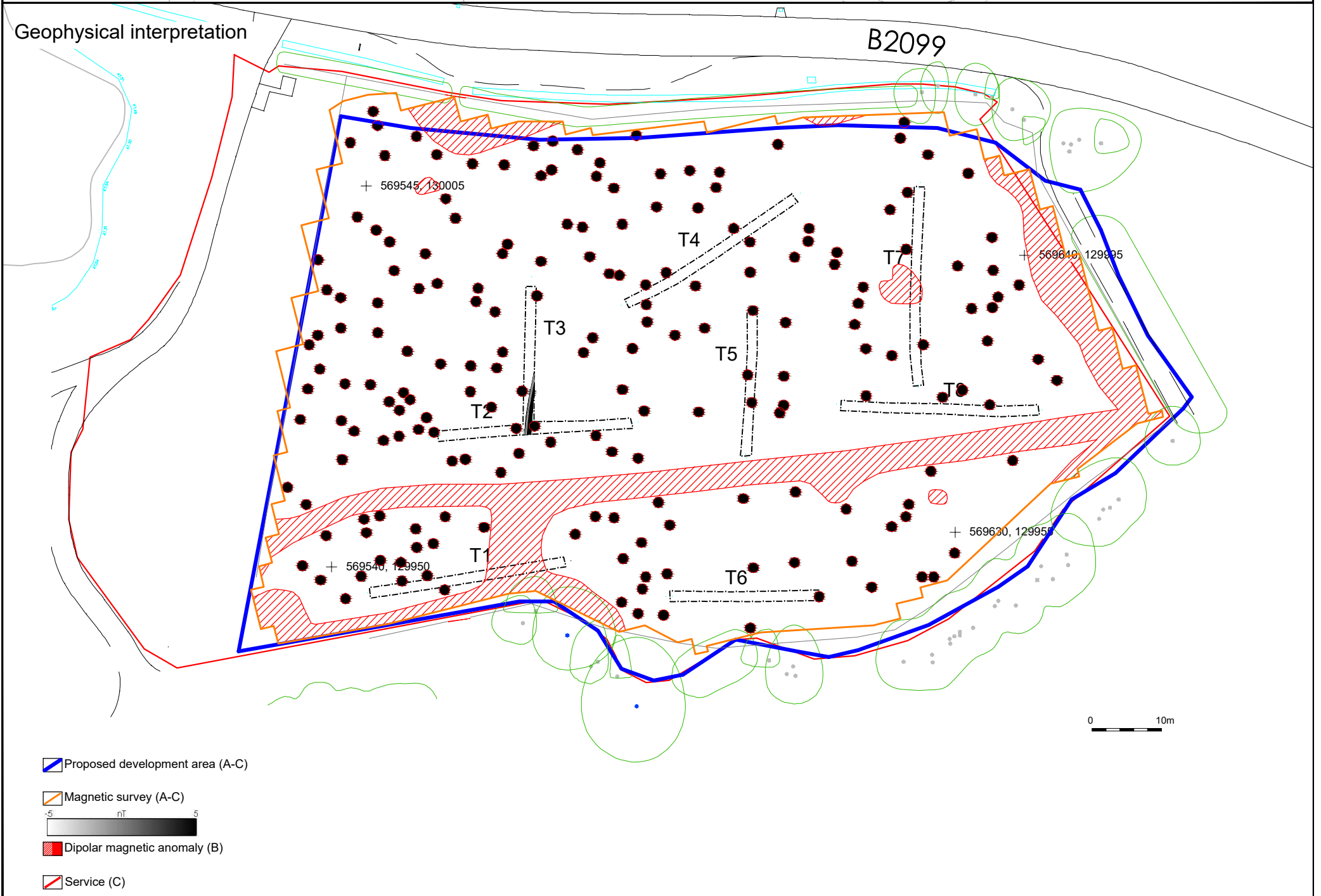






© Archaeology South-East		Singehurst, Upper Platts, Ticehurst		Fig. 5
Project Ref: 210684	December 2022	Trench layout and linear feature overlain onto historic mapping		
Report Ref: 2022309	Drawn by: HLF			

Geophysical results



Geophysical interpretation



-  Proposed development area (A-C)
-  Magnetic survey (A-C)
-  Dipolar magnetic anomaly (B)
-  Service (C)



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