

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Sevenoaks School, Sevenoaks, Kent

Planning Ref: SE/07/01991

NGR TQ 53287 54133 Project No. 3527 Site Code: SOS 08

ASE Report No. 2008206 OASIS id: archaeol6-54239



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January 2009

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by architectural engineers, CM Parker Browne to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new Performing Arts Centre at Sevenoaks School, Tonbridge Road, Sevenoaks Kent. The archaeological watching brief took place between 4th September and 2nd October 2008.

The groundworks revealed deposits consisting of modern made ground associated with construction works for the school's changing rooms and squash courts that were previously on the site. Archaeological deposit survival appears to have been greatly reduced during successive terracing and levelling activity. This appears to have removed or displaced any historic deposits that may have once overlain the natural stratum.

No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by architectural engineers, CM Parker Browne to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation and ground works associated with the construction of a Performing Arts Centre at Sevenoaks School, Tonbridge Road, Sevenoaks (NGR TQ 53287 54133; Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development consists of:
 - The demolition of existing buildings and grubbing out of the foundations
 - The excavation of foundation trenches for the new building
 - The landscaping and access work within the grounds
 - Construction of a pumping station and excavation of other service trenches
- 1.1.3 In 2008, R Durtnell & Sons Ltd were appointed as the main contractors for the project and work commenced on site in August 2008.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 287), the underlying geology is Hythe beds, although Sandgate Beds and Folkestone Beds are recorded to the west.
- 1.2.2 Sevenoaks School is located to the east of the A225 Tonbridge Road, at the southern end of Sevenoaks town centre. The site lies to the south of D-block, between the Sackville Theatre and the Marley Sports Hall (Fig 2). The new Performing Arts Centre is being constructed on the site of the old changing rooms and squash courts.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 A specification for the archaeological watching brief was provided by Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group (KCC 2008) and approved by the Local Planning Authority of Sevenoaks District Council.
- 1.3.2 Planning permission for the construction of the new Performing Arts Centre was granted by Sevenoaks District Council (Planning Ref.: SE/07/01991). Owing to the site being within an archaeologically sensitive area, Sevenoaks District Council imposed the following condition for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the ground works:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written

programme and specification which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority' (KCC 2008).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The specific aim of the watching brief was to 'contribute to the knowledge of Sevenoaks' (KCC 2008) through the recording of any archaeological remains.
- 1.4.2 The key objective of the archaeological watching brief was to ensure that any archaeological features, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts exposed and affected as a result of the groundworks were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Dylan Hopkinson, Paul Riccoboni, Nick Garland and Kathryn Grant (Archaeological Field Officers) between 4th September and 2nd October 2008. The project was managed by Giles Dawkes (Fieldwork) and Louise Rayner and Dan Swift (Post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Kent County Council (KCC), and held at County Hall, Maidstone, was consulted and the results are summarised below. Details were taken of all archaeological sites and listed buildings within a 500 metre radius of the centre of the site. The identified sites are discussed below, tabulated in Appendix 1 and plotted where possible on Figure 1 (numbered 1 20).
- 2.1.2 The school itself was founded in 1432 and overlooks the 15h century estate of Knole Park (KCC 08).

2.2 Archaeological Periods Represented

2.2.1 Prehistoric

Iron Age 600 - AD 42

2.2.2 Historic

Roman AD 42 - 410 Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval AD 410 - 1065 Medieval AD 1066 - 1485 Post Medieval AD 1486 - date

2.3 Summary

2.3.1 Prehistoric

A Gold Iron Age stater of Tasciovanus (1: TQ 55 SW 5) was discovered to the west of Tonbridge road at an unknown date by a Mr. Fairholt. No further prehistoric remains have been encountered.

2.3.2 **Roman**

A Romano-British brass coin of Valens (2: TQ 55 SW 6) was discovered in Buckhurst avenue at an unknown date. This find-spot was located to the north of the site.

2.3.3 **Anglo-Saxon**

No finds or sites of Anglo-Saxon date were found within the study area.

2.3.4 Medieval

A medieval well (3: TQ 55 SW 21), dating to the 16th century was uncovered during gasworks on the corner of the High street and Knole Lane to the north-west of the site. It was approximately 3 feet in diameter and was brick lined.

While the origins of Sevenoaks lie in Saxon times, the development of the town occurred mainly during the medieval period (4: TQ 55 SW 32) with ribbon development along the High Street.

St Nicholas's Church was originally built in the 13th century (5: TQ 55 SW 35), of which the North Aisle still remains, and was later altered in the 17th and 19th centuries. It is located to the north-west of the site.

2.3.5 **Post-Medieval**

The continued growth of Sevenoaks during the post-medieval period saw the construction of several houses (7: TQ 55 SW 30, 11: TQ 55 SW 11, 12: TQ 55 SW 12, 14: TQ 55 SW 15) and shops (6: TQ 55 SW 35) which still survive to the north of the site today. A remaining post-medieval inn also resides to the north of the site on the High Street as three separate dwellings (8: TQ 55 SW 16, 9: TQ 55 SW 9, 10: TQ 55 SW 10).

A range of further notable buildings were constructed during the reconstruction of Sevenoaks School between 1724 and 1732. The school was originally built in 1432 by Sir William Sennocke (13: TQ 55 SW 13) but was rebuilt in the 18th century by Lord Burlington. At this time two almshouses (18: TQ 55 SW 27), a wall (17: TQ 55 SW 29) and an ornamental archway were also built (16: TQ 55 SW 28).

A post-medieval <u>brick-lined</u> well (19: TQ 55 SW 41), dating to the 19th century was found at London Road, to the north of the site. It was uncovered during a Watching Brief by Compass Archaeology in 2003.

The school itself lies within the vicinity of Knowle Park, an historic park and garden. A pair of early 19th century lodges (15: TQ 55 SW 23) associated with the park and connected by ornamental iron gates, lies to the south of the site.

The reported site of the Battle of Sole fields in 1450 also lies to the southwest of the site (KCC 08).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Ground-works

3.1.1 The first phase of monitored ground works comprised the diversion of services in the northeast corner of the site during which no significant deposits were uncovered. The second phase of monitored work consisted of the excavation of a pumping station which involved the removal of topsoil and subsoil deposits down to natural sandstone. The third and final phase of work was the ground reduction of the main area to a depth of approximately 1m. This involved re-levelling the area so that it was stepped on two levels (Figure 4). The upper platform was reduced to 142.5m OD and the lower area was reduced to 139.65m OD.

3.2 Excavation Methodology

- 3.2.1 Machining was undertaken by a 360-degree mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed ditching bucket. All of the intrusive ground works were carried out under archaeological supervision to ensure that any exposed archaeological remains were identified and recorded as per the KCC specification document (KCC 2008).
- 3.2.2 During the monitored excavations all revealed deposits were examined for the presence of archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for the presence of any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets and measured section drawings. Level data was obtained with the assistance of the main contractors, R Durtnell & Sons Ltd, through existing site pans and onsite surveying.
- 3.2.3 A full photographic record of the areas exposed during the ground works including any associated deposits and features was kept (monochrome prints, colour slide and digital images) and will form part of the site archive.

3.3 The Archive

3.3.1 The site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, East Sussex pending submission to a suitable local museum. The contents of the site archive are summarised in Table 1.

Number of Contexts	9 contexts
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	1 (1: 10) section sheet
Photographs	4 monochrome, 4 colour slide, 52 digital
	images

Table 1: Quantification of the Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The Pumping Station

- 4.1.1 A square excavation measuring 5m x 5m was dug for a new pumping station to the southeast of the main construction area (Figure 2). The excavation was taken down to the level of the natural deposits [006] under archaeological supervision using a 360-degree mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed ditching bucket.. The total depth of the excavation was 1.55m. The natural clays and gravels [006] were encountered at a maximum depth of 1.32m below ground surface. The sequence of deposits encountered in the pumping station excavation was the same in all four sections of the excavation (Figure 3).
- 4.1.2 Above the natural [006] were a series of modern made ground levelling deposits [002] to [005].
- 4.1.3 Directly over the natural deposits lay made ground [005], a dark grey-black silty-clay with gravel with light grey-brown mottling. The deposit contained large fragments of concrete, measuring up to 0.8m in size. This deposit was 0.2m thick.
- 4.1.4 Overlying this, a modern deposit [004] of compact dark brownish-red crushed ceramic building material (CBM). This deposit had a maximum thickness of 0.27m and is interpreted as dumped material associated with the construction of the previous school buildings occupying the site.
- 4.1.5 A modern deposit [003] comprising mid grey-brown silty-clay with CBM inclusions overlay deposit [004]. This layer had a maximum thickness of 0.25m and represents a further layer of modern made ground. [003] was overlain by a mid grey-yellow clay deposit [002] with 50-60% flint nodules which had a maximum thickness of 0.3m.
- 4.1.6 Topsoil [001] of mid-dark grey-brown silty-clay with 10% flint with a maximum thickness of 0.3m covered the modern strata in the area of the new pumping station.

Number	Туре	Description	Interpretation	Max. thickness	Max. Height mOD
[001]	Deposit	Friable, mid-dark greyish brown silty clay with some flint (2%).	Topsoil.	0.3 m	139.945
[002]	Deposit	Firm, mid greyish yellow clay silt with 50-60% flint nodules.	Levelling.	0.3 m	139.645
[003]	Deposit	Friable, mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional CBM (10%).	Made ground/levelling.	0.25 m	139.345
[004]	Deposit	Compact/firm, dark brownish red crushed CBM (80%).	Dump from previous construction of School buildings.	0.27 m	139.095
[005]	Deposit	Firm, dark greyish black, with light greyish brown mottling, silty clay/gravel with large concrete fragments (<200-800mm).	Made ground.	0.2 m	138.825
[006]	Deposit	Firm, light yellowish brown clay silt with 10% gravels.	Natural.	N/A	138.625

Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts in the Pumping Station Excavation

4.2 The Performing Arts Centre

- 4.2.1 Major ground reduction works were carried out in the central construction area for the new Performing Arts Centre (Figure 2). These consisted of the removal of disused services and the reduction of the ground level in two large steps (Figure 4).
- 4.2.2 In the north, the ground was reduced from c. 145.7m OD to c. 142.5m OD. In the south the ground surface was reduced further to c. 139.65m OD.
- 4.2.3 To the south a natural deposit [009] comprising brownish-orange clayey-silt was encountered at a depth of approximately 140m OD.
- 4.2.4 Above natural deposits was a layer of modern made ground consisting of grey-brown clay silt [008] (Figure 5). This deposit was up to 0.3m thick and was overlain by a substantial deposit of orange-brown clayey-silt [007] with occasional modern rubble which was up to 2.2m thick. To the north of this area natural was not reached as excavation ceased within the deposits of made ground [008].

Number	Type	Description	Interpretation	Max. Thickness	Max. Height mOD
[007]	Deposit	Firm, orange brown clay silt with occasional modern rubble.	Made ground.	2.2 m	142.5 m
[800]	Deposit	Grey brown clay silt	Made ground	0.3 m	140.3 m
[009]	Deposit	Brownish orange clay silt	Natural	N/A	140 m

Table 3: List of Recorded Contexts in the Performing Arts Centre area

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological deposits or features were recorded during the archaeological watching brief at the Performing Arts Centre, Sevenoaks School.
- 5.2 The area monitored contained substantial deposits of made ground with an abundance of modern concrete and brick throughout. These deposits represent dumps and levelling in association with the construction of the school's changing rooms and squash courts.
- 5.3 The observed natural geology varied in colour from brownish-orange to light yellowish-brown and was recorded at a maximum height of 140m OD in the south of the site dropping away to 138.625m OD in the east of the site.
- 5.4 The archaeological potential of the site, in terms of deposit survival, appears to have been greatly reduced during successive terracing and levelling activity. This appears to have removed or displaced any historic deposits that may have once overlain the natural stratum.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The co-operation and assistance of Gary Stamp and Peter Kouprianoff of R Durtnell and Sons Ltd is gratefully acknowledged as is the assistance of the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group. Thank you also to the architectural engineers CM Parker Browne for commissioning the work carried out at Sevenoaks School. Gratitude is also expressed to Giles Dawkes (ASE) for his project management and Dan Swift (ASE) for his post-excavation management and editing.

The author would finally like to thank the staff and students of Sevenoaks School for their patience and understanding during these works.

Appendix 1: Gazetteer of Sites, Finds and Listed Buildings within a 500 m Radius of Sevenoaks School

	NGR	SMR Reference	Period	Details/Description
1.	TQ 53 54	TQ 55 SW 5	Iron Age	Gold Iron Age stater of Tasciovanus dating between 800 BC to 42 AD
2.	TQ 531 546	TQ 55 SW 6	Roman	Romano-British brass coin of Valens (AD 364-376) found in Buckhurst Avenue
3.	TQ 5316 5429	TQ 55 SW 21	Medieval	16 th century well located on the corner of High street and Knole Lane. Approx 3 feet in diameter and brick lined
4.	TQ 5308 5457	TQ 55 SW 32	Medieval	MEDIEVAL TOWN Included in English Heritage MPP Provisional list of urban areas - July 1992
5.	TQ 5311 5430	TQ 55 SW 1	Medieval and Post-Medieval	ST NICHOLAS'S CHURCH North Aisle originates in 13 th century, also altered in 17 th and 19 th centuries
6.	TQ 5305 5470	TQ 55 SW 35	Medieval and Post-Medieval	OLD HIGH STREET Medieval and Post-medieval shops
7.	TQ 5298 5467	TQ 55 SW 30	Medieval and Post-Medieval	Medieval House built in 16 th century and rebuilt in 17 th and 18 th century.
8.	TQ 5312 5422	TQ 55 SW 16	Post-Medieval	NO 13, HIGH STREET Post-Medieval Inn located on the High Street dating to 1613 – now split into three houses including no 13, 15 and 17.

9.	TQ 5312 5422	TQ 55 SW 9	Post-Medieval	NO 15, HIGH STREET Post-Medieval Inn located on the High Street dating to 1613 – now split into three houses including no 13, 15 and 17.
10.	TQ 5313 5423	TQ 55 SW 10	Post-Medieval	NO 17, HIGH STREET Post-Medieval Inn located on the High Street dating to 1613 – now split into three houses including no 13, 15 and 17.
11.	TQ 5316 5437	TQ 55 SW 11	Post-Medieval	NO 18, HIGH STREET Post-medieval house dating to 1700 with later additions
12.	TQ 5313 5451	TQ 55 SW 12	Post-Medieval	NO 50, HIGH STREET Post-medieval house dating to 1686, also known as the 'Red House' built for John Couchman of Tooting.
13.	TQ 5317 5419	TQ 55 SW 13	Post-Medieval	SEVENOAKS SCHOOL School and Almshouses established in the 1432 by Sir William Sennocke but rebuilt by Lord Burlington between 1724-32.
14.	TQ 5313 5426	TQ 55 SW 15	Post-Medieval	CHANTRY HOUSE Hall house (red brick) built in late 17th century –brick wall in garden built in 1686 which possible dates the house.
15.	TQ 55 SW 2	TQ 55 SW 23	Post-Medieval	KNOLE PARK LODGE Pair of early 19 th century lodges connected by ornamental cast iron gates

16.	TQ 5317 5419	TQ 55 SW 28	Post-Medieval	Post-medieval ornamental archway leading to school at rear of almshouses.
17.	TQ 5317 5419	TQ 55 SW 29	Post-Medieval	Post-Medieval wall connected to Sevenoaks school almshouses (built between 1724-32)
18.	TQ 5317 5419	TQ 55 SW 27	Post-Medieval	Two 18 th century Almshouses built at same time as school (1724-32)
19.	TQ 52919 54746	TQ 55 SW 41	Post-Medieval	Post-medieval brick lined and domed 19 th century Well found during Watching Brief in 2003 at 49, London Road, Sevenoaks.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	SOS08	SOS08				
Identification Name	Performing	Arts Centre	, Sevenoaks	School, Tonl	bridge Road	d,
and Address	Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks, TN13 1HU, Kent.				
County, District &/or	Kent, Seve	noaks Distri	ict			
Borough						
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 53287	54133				
Geology	Hythe beds	3				
Arch. South-East	3527					
Project Number						
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching	Standing	Survey	Other
			Brief	Structure		
Type of Site			Deep	Other		
			Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork			4/09/08 -	Other		
			2/10/08			
Sponsor/Client	CM Parker	Browne				
Project Manager	Giles Dawl	ces				
Project Supervisor	Dylan Hop	Dylan Hopkinson, Paul Riccoboni, Nick Garland and Kathy Grant				
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	None	None	None	None	None	None
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
	None	None	None	Modern	terracing	and
				leve	elling	
100 Word Cummory	20 Word Summers					

100 Word Summary.

Archaeology South-East carried out an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks and services associated with the construction of a new Performing Arts Centre at Sevenoaks School, Tonbridge Road, Sevenoaks Kent, between 4th September and 2nd October 2008.

The WB revealed previous modern terracing and levelling activity.

No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were encountered.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-54239

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Watching Brief at Sevenoaks School. Kent

Short description of

the project

Archaeology South-East carried out an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks and services associated with the construction of a new Performing Arts Centre at Sevenoaks School, Tonbridge Road, Sevenoaks Kent, between 4th

September and 2nd October 2008. The deposits encountered were consistent with dumping levelling and the creation of made ground associated with previous construction phases of the School. No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were encountered.

Start: 04-09-2008 End: 02-10-2008 Project dates

Previous/future

work

No / No

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Community Service 1 - Community Buildings

Monument type **NONE None** Significant Finds **NONE None** Investigation type 'Watching Brief' Planning condition Prompt

Project location

Country **England**

Site location KENT SEVENOAKS SEVENOAKS Sevenoaks School

Postcode TN132

Study area 1380.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 53287 54133 51,2651740493 0,197398173201 51 15 54 N 000

11 50 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 138.62m Max: 140.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator

Kent County Council

Project design originator

Archaeology South-East

Project

Giles Dawkes

director/manager

Project supervisor Nick Garland Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive No Exists?

Digital Archive

recipient

Local Museum

Digital Contents

'other' 'Text'

Digital Media available

ı

Paper Archive

recipient

Local Museum

Paper Contents

'other'

Paper Media available

'Context sheet','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General

Notes','Photograph','Report'

Project

bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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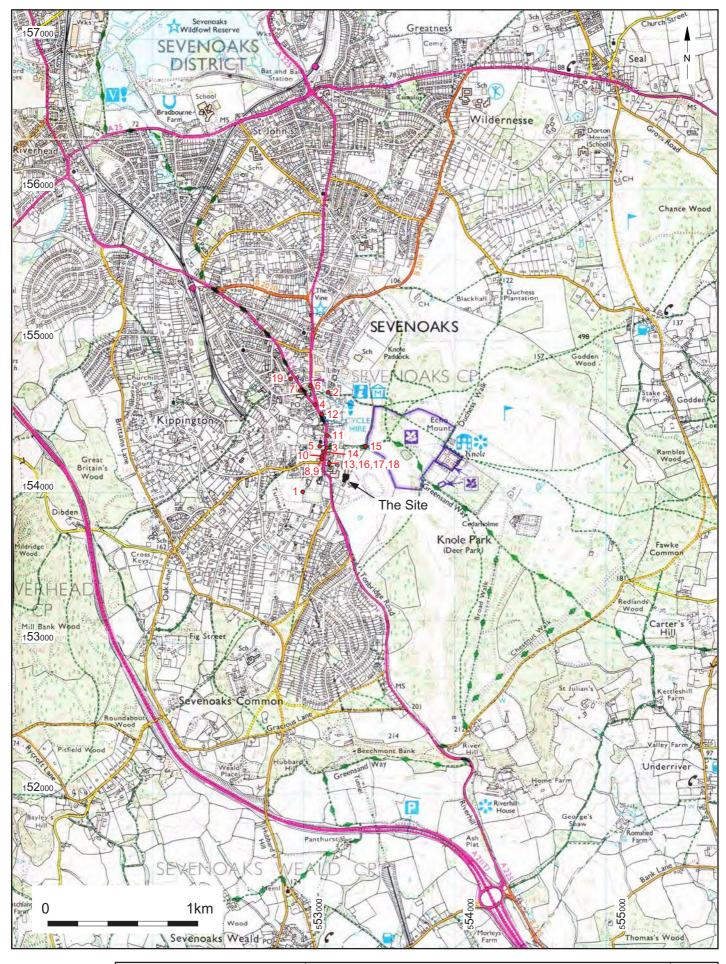
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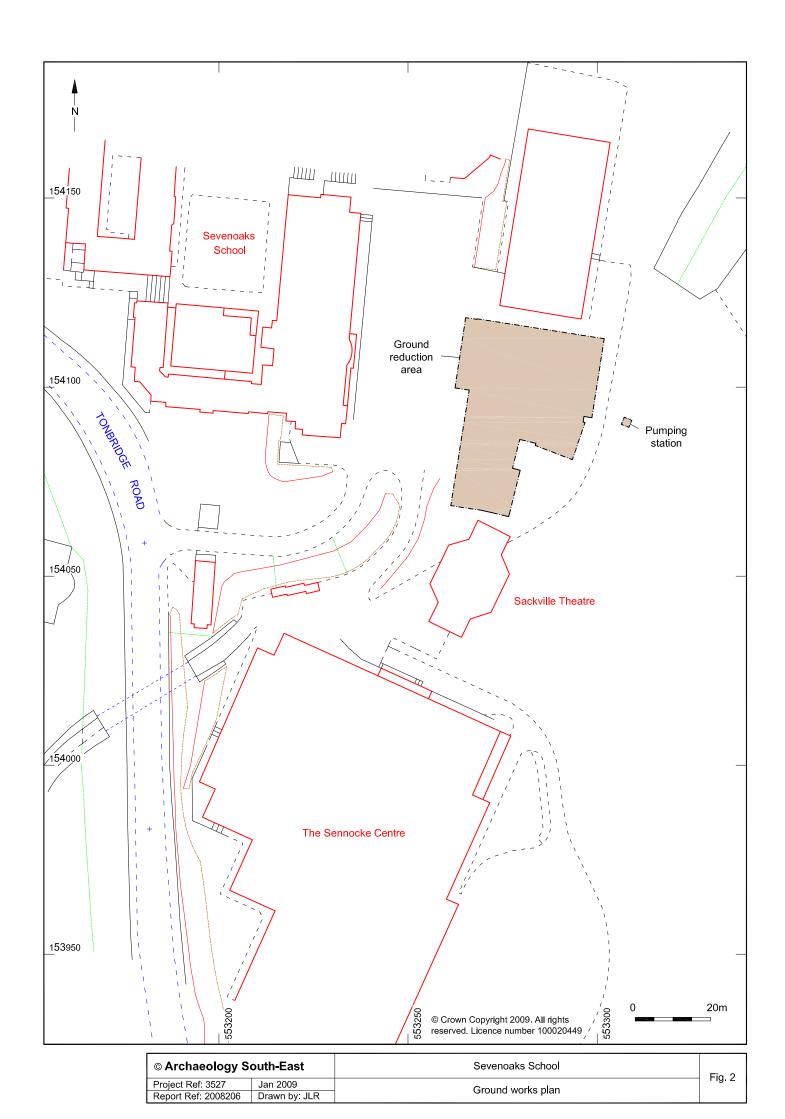




Fig. 3: North facing section of cut for pumping station



Fig. 4: Working shot of ground reduction, facing south-east

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Report Ref: 2008206	Drawn by: JLR			



Fig. 5: North facing section of ground reduction

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Project Ref: 3527	Jan 2009		Fig. 5		
Report Ref: 2008206	Drawn by: JLR				

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