

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
the Former Clinic Building, Library Way,  
Uckfield, East Sussex**

**Planning Reference: WD/2006/3202/F**

**NGR TQ 4725 2132**

**ASE Project No. 2927  
Site Code: LWU 07**

**ASE Report No. 2009150  
OASIS id: archaeol6-66513**



**Kathryn Grant MSc AIFA  
With contributions by Sarah Porteus**

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**October 2009**

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## **Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers on behalf of their client to undertake a programme of archaeological work at the Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield (NGR TQ 4725 3132) during a partial demolition of the existing building and associated works for the construction of a new office building on the site. The watching brief took place from 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September 2009.*

*With the exception of a single modern feature dated by some ceramic pipe fragments to the later 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the ground works monitored in the watching brief.*

*Natural geology comprising Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay was encountered at a depth c.36.95m AOD in the northern part of the site and at c.36.55m AOD in the south.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London (CAAUCL), was commissioned by VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers on behalf of their client to undertake a programme of archaeological work at the Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield (NGR TQ 4725 3132/ Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

- 1.2.1 Planning permission was granted by Wealden District Council for the partial demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new office building on the site (Planning Ref: WD/2006/3202/F).

- 1.2.2 The East Sussex County Council Archaeologist, Casper Johnson, was consulted by Wealden District Council and in light of the known archaeological potential of the site recommended that a programme of archaeological works be implemented on the site in line with advice given in PPG16 (the Government's advice on Archaeology and Planning). Condition 2 of the planning permission states that:

"No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 1.2.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the archaeological watching brief was prepared (ASE 2007) in consultation with Casper Johnson who approved the document prior to archaeological works commencing on site. All work was carried out in accordance with the WSI (unless otherwise specified below) and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.3.1 The general aim of the archaeological watching brief as outlined in the WSI (ASE 2007) was to monitor the intrusive ground works to ensure that any exposed features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Kathryn Grant and Nick Garland (Archaeological Field Officer) from 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Geology and Topography**

- 2.1.1 According to the British Geological Survey maps (Sheet 319 for Lewes), scale 1:50,000, the underlying geology at the site comprises Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay.
- 2.1.2 The site is bounded to the south by Library Way with other building located to the north, east and west. Uckfield High Street is located to the east of the site.

### **2.2 Overview**

- 2.2.1 The site lies in an area of East Sussex which has seen little in the way of published archaeological investigations, and hence the archaeological potential of the general area is largely unknown.
- 2.2.2 The history of Uckfield prior to its emergence as a market town during the 13<sup>th</sup> century is poorly understood. At least two Mesolithic find spots are recorded in the vicinity of the site (MES4824, MES4825) and there is also some evidence of Romano-British iron working and agricultural activity in the area.
- 2.2.3 The development of Uckfield during the 13<sup>th</sup> century was broadly concurrent with the emergence of other market centres in the area, including Crawley and Horsham and this has been taken to indicate economic growth in the Weald at this time. Archaeological evidence from this period is scarce, though the continuation of iron-working into the post-medieval period demonstrates the continuing importance of this industry in the area. Quantities of bloomery slag have been recovered close by (MES7132).
- 2.2.4 There are a large number of Listed Buildings within the vicinity of the site and concentrated in Uckfield High Street, dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> (DES5448) to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 The Groundworks (Figure 2)**

- 3.1.1 Excavations associated with the construction of the new building were undertaken by engineering/building contractors, Mid Sussex Homes Ltd., and were monitored at all times by an archaeologist until it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (e.g. once excavation had reached undisturbed natural subsoils, below which there would be no archaeological remains present - after the recording of any significant remains if present at higher levels).
- 3.1.2 The ground works included the reduction of the ground level and overlying Tarmac to the required formation level of the new build and the excavation of footing trenches and associated works for the proposed extension to the south of the existing building for a new office (Figure 2).
- 3.1.3 The objectives of the archaeological work were to monitor the excavation of new ground works in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the intrusive works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. Particular attention was to be made to the extent, character, depth, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.2.1 The complete adopted methodology may be found in the WSI (ASE 2007). This section is a brief précis of the detail within the WSI.
- 3.2.2 Machine excavation was undertaken by a 5.5 tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket where practicable.
- 3.2.3 During the monitored excavations, all revealed deposits were examined for archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for any stray, unstratified archaeological artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets
- 3.2.4 A digital photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.2.5 The level of deposits has been estimated from the levels supplied by the client on the architectural plans.

#### **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 below in Table 1.

3.3.2

Number of Contexts	5 contexts
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	1 Plan showing monitored groundworks & 1 section
Photographs	30 digital images
Finds	1 small box

Table 1: Quantification of the Site Archive



## 4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1 The footprint of the new build measured approximately 173m<sup>2</sup>. The foundation trenches, measuring approximately 0.8m wide and 1.1m deep, were excavated under the supervision of a monitoring archaeologist. Five contexts were revealed during the intrusive ground works. These have been tabulated below (Table 2) and summarised in 4.3.

### 4.2

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness	Approximate Height m AOD
001	Deposit	Subsoil	0.3m	c37.05
002	Deposit	Made ground	0.3 – 0.6m	-
003	Deposit	Natural	-	c.36.55 – c.36.95
004	Cut	Ditch/Pit Cut	-	-
005	Fill	Fill of [004]	1.2m	-

Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts

### 4.3 Summary of Contexts

Natural geology [003] comprising mixed yellow silty sand and silty clay (Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay) was encountered at a depth of c.36.95m AOD in the northern part of the site and at c.36.55m AOD in the south. Overlying the natural strata was either grey-brown silty clay made ground [002] (Figure 5), which was predominantly in the central part of site and probably providing a foundation deposit to the Tarmac surface, or light greyish brown silty clay subsoil [001] (Figure 4). The site was initially covered with a Tarmac surface.

A modern feature with a 'v' shaped profile [004] was revealed in the north-eastern corner of the site (Figure 2). The mid brown clayey silt fill [005] contained later 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century CBM fragments. It was difficult to establish the exact nature of the feature as it was only observed in section.

No further deposits were revealed during the works.

## 5.0 FINDS QUANTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT by Sarah Porteus

- 5.1 The only finds recovered from the site were two small fragments of unglazed ceramic pipe weighing a total of 26g, made from a fine orange fabric with sparse fine quartz and coarse red iron rich silt inclusions of probable later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date. These were recovered from fill [005].

**6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1** With the exception of one modern feature containing later 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic pipe fragments, no archaeological features were encountered during the archaeological watching brief.
- 6.2** All of the footing trenches/intrusive groundworks revealed the same sequence of natural Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay at a depth of between 36.55m AOD and c.36.95m AOD overlain by either subsoil or made ground and sealed by a Tarmac surface.
- 6.3** The archaeological watching brief has therefore shown that since no features or deposits predating the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were encountered within the area of the new extension, the archaeological resource has not been impacted by the intrusive ground works.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The co-operation and assistance of VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers, Mid Sussex Homes Ltd and Casper Johnson of ESCC has been much appreciated throughout the duration of the watching brief programme.

### SMR Summary Form

Site Code	LWU 07					
Identification Name and Address	Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield					
County, District and/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR TQ 4725 2132					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2927					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	<b>Watching Brief</b>	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	<b>Shallow Urban</b>	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	<b>WB. 21-09-09 - 25-09-09</b>	Other		
Sponsor/Client	VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers/ESCC					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer					
Project Supervisor	Kathy Grant					
Period Summary	Palaeo. None	Meso. None	Neo. None	BA None	IA None	RB None
	AS None	MED None	<b>PM 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century CBM</b>	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers on behalf of their client to undertake a programme of archaeological work at the Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield (NGR TQ 4725 3132) during a partial demolition of the existing building and associated works for the construction of a new office building on the site. The watching brief took place from 21<sup>st</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September 2009.</p> <p>With the exception of a single modern feature dated by some ceramic pipe fragments to the later 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the ground works monitored in the watching brief.</p> <p>Natural geology comprising Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay was encountered at a depth c.36.95m AOD in the northern part of the site and at c.36.55m AOD in the south.</p>						

## OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-66513

### Project details

Project name	The Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by VKHP-Douglas Rose Consulting Engineers on behalf of their client to undertake a programme of archaeological work at the Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield (NGR TQ 4725 3132) during a partial demolition of the existing building and associated works for the construction of a new office building on the site. The watching brief took place from 21st-25th September 2009. With the exception of a single modern feature dated by some ceramic pipe fragments to the later 19th to early 20th century, no archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the ground works monitored in the watching brief. Natural geology comprising Tunbridge Wells Sand and Grinstead Clay was encountered at a depth c.36.95m AOD in the northern part of the site and at c.36.55m AOD in the south.
Project dates	Start: 21-09-2009 End: 25-09-2009
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	LWU 07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WD/2006/3202/F - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN UCKFIELD The Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield
Postcode	TN22 2
Study area	173.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 4725 2132 50.9718795642 0.09751914133930 50 58 18 N 000 05 51 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 36.55m Max: 36.95m

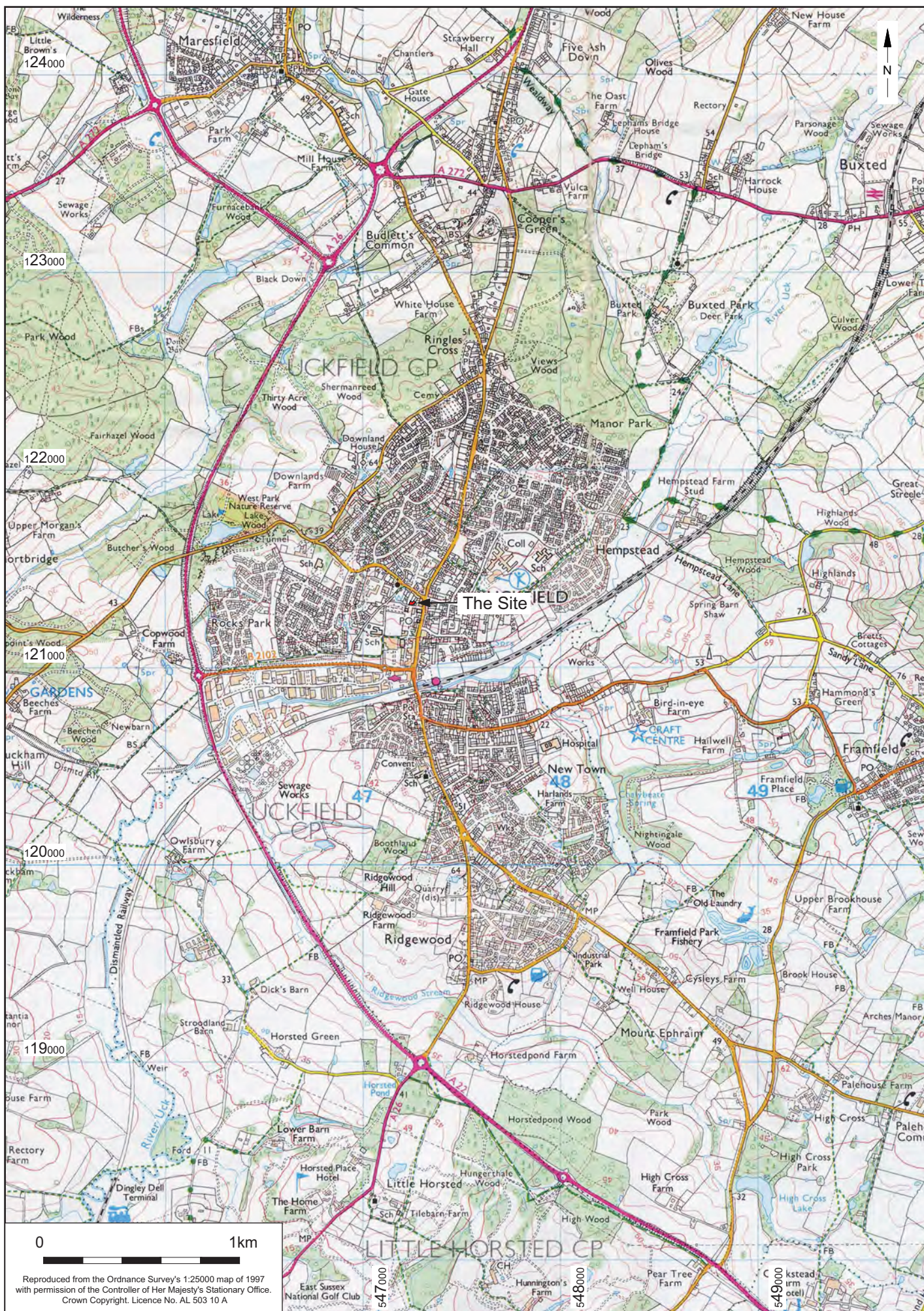
### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Kathryn Grant

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Entered by	Kathryn Grant (kathryn.grant@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	30 October 2009

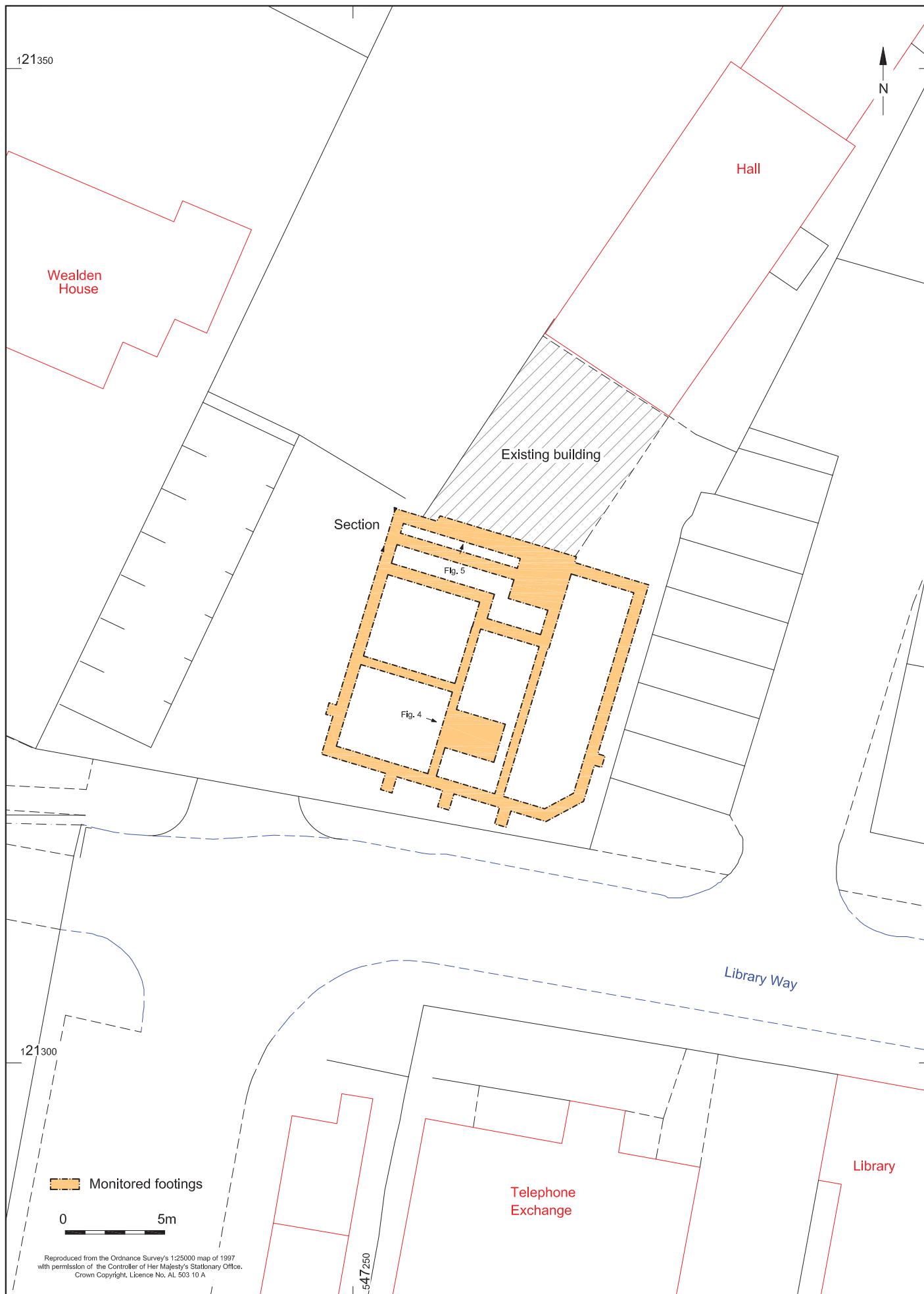




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Project Ref: 2927	Oct 2009	Site location	
Report Ref: 2009150	Drawn by: JLR		

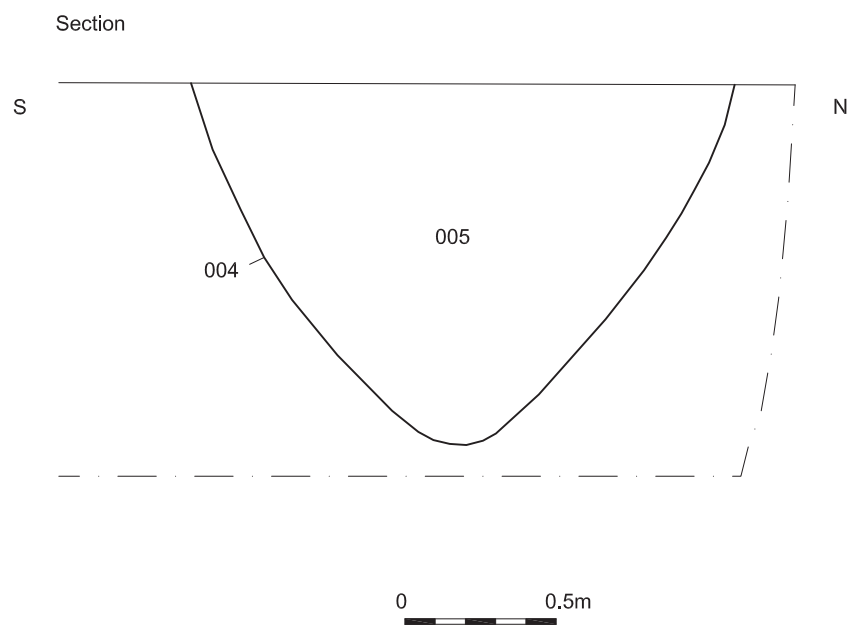
Fig. 1





© Archaeology South-East		Former Clinic Building, Library Way, Uckfield	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 2927	Oct 2009	Site plan showing monitored groundworks	
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Fig. 4: East facing view of foundation trench



Fig. 5: North facing view of make-up under existing building

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