

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at the Proposed New
Academy Building Site, University of Sussex, Falmer, East
Sussex**

Planning Ref: BH/2009/02941

**NGR: 534536 109275
(TQ 345 093)**

**Project No: 4261
Site Code: FNA 10**

**ASE Report No. 2010042
OASIS id: archaeol6-75818**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Currie & Brown UK Limited in advance of redevelopment at the University of Sussex, Falmer. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine not only the presence or absence of archaeological features and/or finds but also to assess past impacts on the landscape relating to the construction of the existing campus buildings and open spaces.

The evaluation uncovered no archaeological finds or features and the results suggest that the chalk hillside has been heavily landscaped, especially in the area of Trenches 2, 3 and 6. Down-slope the site appears less disturbed with little or no truncation recorded in Trenches 4 and 5 where some head deposits and colluvium surviving intact at the valley bottom.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Mark Riches of Currie & Brown UK Limited on behalf of their client the University of Sussex to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of redevelopment at the University of Sussex, Falmer (Fig. 1; NGR 534536, 109275).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site occupies a terraced landscaped hill, Richmond Hill, on the south side of the South Downs. The underlying geology is Upper and Middle Chalk with a band of Head Deposits.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The evaluation follows on from an earlier archaeological desk based assessment report (ASE 2009).
- 1.3.2 Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) requested that a program of work, in this case an archaeological evaluation, be undertaken as a condition of planning permission (BH2009/02941) in advance of the redevelopment:

“No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation including a timetable for the investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.”

Reason: In order to provide a reasonable opportunity to record the history of the site and to comply with policy HE12 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan.

- 1.3.3 As a result, ASE produced a Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation (WSI; ASE 2010a) which was conducted during early April 2010.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The general aim of archaeological evaluation is to gain understanding of the archaeological potential of the site and inform as to the need for any further archaeological mitigation.
- 1.4.2 The specific aims of the archaeological works as listed in the WSI (ASE 2010a) are:
- To assess with a greater degree of certainty the presence or absence of any archaeological features at the site

- To assess whether archaeological remains extend across the development site
- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any such remains and deposits
- To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
- To assess what options should be considered for mitigation

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report presents the findings of the archaeological evaluation which was undertaken by Sarah Porteus and John Cook (Archaeologists) between the 12th and 14th of April 2010. The project was managed by Dan Swift and Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The desk-based assessment (DBA; ASE 2009) suggested limited archaeological potential, with low potential for all periods except the Bronze Age and Iron Age for which a moderate potential was recorded. For in-depth description of the archaeological and historical background the reader is referred to the DBA, what follows is a summary of the DBA as reproduced in the WSI (ASE 2010a).

2.2 The area immediately outside the DBA Study Area is known for Bronze Age settlement and includes Beaker period inhumations, Early Bronze Age barrow sites and Middle and Late Bronze Age downland settlement sites. There is, however, also one Bronze Age site within the Study Area located just within the boundary. At the Mesolithic and Neolithic site in Falmer, a Late Bronze Age settlement may be represented by a large ring ditch with internal structural post-holes and a possible central hearth. However, its location across the dry valley in a similar topographical location to the site suggests the possibility that further remains of this period may exist within the Site.

2.3 A lot of settlement evidence for the Iron Age in Sussex also comes from the Downs, with Iron Age settlement sites and their possible field systems lying just beyond the DBA Study Area.

2.4 The main impact on archaeological potential has been the construction of the buildings (both those within the site and those delimiting it). As the Site is located on an east sloping hill, each building had to have its footprint levelled deep into the ground surface. Any archaeological deposits once located here are thus highly unlikely to have survived. The road to the west side of the site also cuts deep into the hill and would have had a similar impact upon any archaeological remains. The construction of the car park, on the other hand, would have had far less of a damaging effect, particularly on any deep archaeological features, as it was never levelled.

2.5 The east side of the site has been highly landscaped and it is difficult to determine here the true lie of the land. There are clearly two areas that have

been levelled: the area in front of the stairs down to Essex House and the area in front of Arts C. Elsewhere, the land slopes east to perhaps naturally level out between the upper terraced footpath and lower footpath. This levelling would have at least destroyed any shallow archaeological layers and truncated any that are deeper. The construction of the footpaths may have caused less damage to any shallow archaeological features.

2.6 The site is heavily criss-crossed by a series of services. The excavation of their trenches probably had the same archaeological impact as described above for the laying of the footpaths. It is therefore seen that those areas not yet apparently exposed to damage or destruction are small and fragmentary, with the three largest areas being located to the front of Arts C, behind the Russell building and between the Russell Building, the west wing of Arts E and the road.

2.7 Recent Archaeological Investigations

2.7.1 Four sites have recently been subject to archaeological investigations by ASE close to the site.

2.7.2 Geoarchaeological work and an archaeological evaluation at Wollard's field in advance of construction of the East Sussex Record Office, revealed a Holocene colluvium overlying Pleistocene deposits with loess silts, solifluction and fluvial gravel. The evaluation revealed linear features associated with seasonal water flow (ASE 2008a).

2.7.3 A geoarchaeological watching brief prior to the construction of the Community Stadium in Falmer revealed little potential, though the area within Stanmer Park identified a partially disturbed dry valley sequence with archaeological and paleoenvironmental potential (ASE 2008b). Further archaeological and geoarchaeological work carried out between September 2008 and January 2009 at the Community Stadium (ASE 2010b) uncovered evidence of possible Mesolithic pits, a possible Neolithic flint mine and Bronze age ring ditches. A possible sunken floored building (SFB) of potential Saxon date was also identified.

2.7.4 An archaeological watching brief at Falmer High School to the south of the site revealed residual Mesolithic or early Neolithic flint and flint of probable Bronze Age date. Geoarchaeological investigations identified Holocene and Pleistocene deposits (ASE 2010c).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Six trenches (Fig. 2) with a combined length of 41 metres were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless bucket. Machine excavation was undertaken under constant supervision by a qualified archaeologist in spits of no more than 0.10m thickness.

3.2 Machine excavation was taken down to the top of 'natural' substrate. In the case of Trench 6, excavation ceased at 1.2 m depth for health and safety reasons.

- 3.3** The surface of the excavated area was cleared of loose spoil and inspected for archaeological features.
- 3.4** Any finds recovered were bagged separately and clearly labelled by context and retained for examination by ASE specialists.
- 3.5** All contexts were recorded on pro forma context recording forms and individual trench record sheets.
- 3.6** A digital photographic record was maintained of the excavations.
- 3.7** A long running section of the stratigraphy of each trench was recorded at a scale of 1:20. Trenches were levelled in relation to ordinance datum heights.
- 3.8** Following inspection by Greg Chuter the trenches were sequentially backfilled with subsoil then topsoil and compacted to produce as neat and level a surface as possible in order that reinstatement may be undertaken at a later date.

Number of Contexts	20
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	1 digital CD
Bulk finds	1 small box
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 3)

4.1 Trench 1

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
1/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20	77.672
1/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.10	77.472
1/003	Natural	Natural	N/A	N/A	N/A	77.372

Summary

Trench 1 measured 6m in length. The natural chalk [1/003] was encountered at a depth of 7.372m AOD. Overlying the natural chalk was 0.10m thick pale orangish brown clayey silt subsoil with occasional to moderate chalk flecks [1/002]. Overlying the thin subsoil was a 0.20m thick dark brown humic silt topsoil [1/001] containing moderate amounts of building rubble and CBM. From the deposits revealed it is uncertain to what extent the natural deposits in this area have been truncated, the topsoil is likely to be imported as a quantity of modern building debris was recovered within the deposit. No archaeology was observed.

4.2 Trench 2

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.30	76.823 - 77.393
2/002	Deposit	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.10	76.423 - 76.523
2/003	Natural	Natural	N/A	N/A	N/A	76.693 - 76.423

Summary

Trench 2 measured 10m in length. The natural chalk [2/003] was encountered at a depth of 76.423m AOD at the south west end and 76.693m AOD at the north east end. Directly overlying the natural chalk was a made ground deposit [2/002] comprising of a light greyish brown deposit with lenses of sand and moderate CBM inclusions. To the north east of the trench this deposit was 0.10m thick, at the south west end the trench the made deposit was thicker it appeared the material may have been banked up as part of the landscaping of the site to provide a level surface. Overlying the made ground was a 0.30m thick deposit of loose dark brown humic sandy silt topsoil [1/001]. A cut feature in the natural chalk was modern containing electrical fuses and building detritus, ground reduction had most likely truncated archaeological potential in this location. No archaeology was observed.

4.3 Trench 3

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.18	75.880
3/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22	75.700
3/003	Deposit	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.08	75.480
3/004	Deposit	Buried Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.12	75.400
3/005	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.04	75.280
3/006	Natural	Natural	N/A	N/A	N/A	75.240

Summary

Trench 3 measured 5m in length. The natural undisturbed head deposits [3/006] were encountered at 75.240m AOD. Overlying the head deposits was 0.04m thick orangish brown chalky clayey silt subsoil [3/005]. This was overlain by a buried dark brown humic silty clay topsoil [3/004] of 0.12m thickness. The topsoil was sealed by a 0.08m thick deposit of greyish white chalk rubble made ground [3/003] containing CBM. Overlying the made ground was an imported topsoil deposit [3/002] of dark brown humic sandy silt of 0.22m thickness which was in turn overlain by loose dark brown humic silt topsoil. In Trench 3 it appears the natural deposits have not been truncated, however no archaeological features were observed.

4.4 Trench 4

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20	71.147
4/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.40	70.947
4/003	Natural	Natural colluvium	N/A	N/A	N/A	70.547

Summary

Trench 4 measured 5m in length. The natural brownish orange colluvium [4/003] was encountered at a depth of 70.547m AOD. Overlying the colluvium was a 0.40m thick deposit of orangish brown clayey silt subsoil [4/002] with occasional flint and chalk inclusions. The subsoil was overlain by a loose friable dark brown clayey silt [4/001] of 0.20m thickness. No archaeological features were observed, though the natural stratigraphy appears intact.

4.5 Trench 5

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
5/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Deposit	Deposit	0.30	65.776
5/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Deposit	Deposit	0.10	65.476
5/003	Natural	Natural colluvium	N/A	N/A	N/A	65.376

Summary

Trench 5 measured 9m in length. The natural brownish orange colluvium [5/003] was encountered at a depth of 65.376m AOD. Overlying the colluvium was a 0.40m thick deposit of orangish brown clayey silt subsoil [5/002] with occasional flint and chalk inclusions and occasional CBM inclusions. The subsoil was overlain by loose friable dark brown clayey silt [5/001] of 0.20m thickness. No archaeological features were observed, though the natural stratigraphy appears intact.

4.6 Trench 6

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
6/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20	69.262
6/002	Deposit	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	1.00	68.262

Summary

Trench 6 measured 5m in length. The trench was excavated to a safe working depth of 1.2m, beyond which no further excavation took place. Chalk rubble made ground

[6/002] was present from the maximum excavated depth 67.262m AOD and continued below the limit of excavation. Overlying the made ground was loose dark brown clayey silt [6/001] 0.20m thick. Considerable landscaping appears to have taken place in this location, no archaeological features were identified.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small assemblage of finds, mainly consisting of ceramic building material, was recovered during the archaeological work. An overview can be found in Table 2.

Context	CBM	Wt (g)	Fe	Wt (g)
1/001	3	2888		
2/002	7	2302		
5/002	2	352		
6/002	3	1474	1	14
Total	15	7016	1	14

Table 2: Quantification of finds

5.2 The Metalwork by Elke Raemen

5.2.1 A complete iron nail was recovered from [6/002]. The piece (L106mm) is machine-made and of late post-medieval date.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.3.1 A small quantity of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered from four of the six trenches. The earliest fragments were recovered from the subsoil of trench 5 [5/002], a fragment of red brick in a chunky silt fabric with moderate fine calcareous inclusions and poorly formed edges is of probable 18th or 19th century date. Also within context [5/002] was a highly abraded fragment of under fired, reduced pegtile with moderate medium sized quartz and black sand within the fabric, this fragment may be of medieval or early post-medieval date. Made ground deposit [6/002] contained fragments of machine made, 20th century brick with well defined frog and a slab of concrete mortar of similar date. The made ground deposit [2/002] contained six abraded fragments of brick in a sandy red fabric with coarse iron rich red inclusions of 19th or 20th century date and a fragment of late 19th early 20th century perforated brick. Perforated brick was also recovered from the topsoil [1/001], also within this context were fragments of 20th century machine made interlocking service pipe with internal brown glaze.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

6.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were uncovered.

7.0 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 No finds or features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the evaluation.
- 7.2 In the area around Trench 1 the quantity of modern CBM and building rubble seems to suggest that the topsoil has been stripped and replaced, to what extent this may have affected any potential archaeological remains is unclear from the evaluation. The area around Trench 1 contains a number of services which will also have impacted upon any archaeological remains.
- 7.3 Substantial landscaping appears to have taken place in the area of Trench 2 and is likely to have removed any potential archaeological features in this area.
- 7.4 In Trench 3, modern truncation had occurred to a depth of at least 0.50m and this is likely to have removed any potential archaeological features in this area.
- 7.5 Trenches 4 and 5 were apparently untruncated and this area therefore has archaeological potential. In both cases 0.40 to 0.50m of deposits overlay natural deposits.
- 7.6 Extensive truncation to depths of at least 1.2m will have greatly reduced any archaeological potential in the area of Trench 6.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The evaluation uncovered no archaeological finds or features and the results suggest that the chalk hillside has been heavily landscaped, especially in the area of Trenches 2, 3 and 6. Down-slope the site appears less disturbed with little or no truncation recorded in Trenches 4 and 5 where some head deposits and colluvium surviving intact at the valley bottom.
- 8.2 The degree of truncation in the area around Trench 1 remains unclear and some potential for archaeology may exist here between the networks of installed services.
- 8.3 It is understood that little or no impact from the proposed development is likely in the area of Trenches 4, 5 and 6, but that there will be impact in the areas surrounding Trenches 1, 2 and 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ASE 2010a *Land at the Proposed New Academy Building Site, University of Sussex, Falmer, East Sussex: Written Scheme of Investigation* . ASE unpublished client report.

ASE 2010b Falmer Community Stadium: posts excavation assessment. ASE unpublished client report number: 2010041

ASE 2010c *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Land at Falmer High School, Lewes Road, Brighton*. ASE unpublished report number: 2009097

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SMR Summary Form

Site Code	FNA10					
Identification Name and Address	Land at the proposed New Academic Building, University of Sussex, Falmer					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	534536 109275					
Geology	Middle and upper Chalk and head deposits					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4261					
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.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	12 th -14 th April 2010					
Project Manager	Dan Swift					
Project Supervisor	Sarah Porteus					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Currie & Brown UK Limited in advance of redevelopment at the University of Sussex, Falmer. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine not only the presence or absence of archaeological features and/or finds but also to assess past impacts on the landscape relating to the construction of the existing campus buildings and open spaces.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation uncovered no archaeological finds or features and the results suggest that the chalk hillside has been heavily landscaped, especially in the area of Trenches 2, 3 and 6. Down-slope the site appears less disturbed with little or no truncation recorded in Trenches 4 and 5 where some head deposits and colluvium surviving intact at the valley bottom.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-75818

Project details

Project name	An archaeological evaluation on land at the proposed new academy building site, university of Sussex
Short description of the project	<p>Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Currie & Brown UK Limited in advance of redevelopment at the University of Sussex, Falmer. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine not only the presence or absence of archaeological features and/or finds but also to assess past impacts on the landscape relating to the construction of the existing campus buildings and open spaces.</p> <p>The evaluation uncovered no archaeological finds or features and the results suggest that the chalk hillside has been heavily landscaped, especially in the area of Trenches 2, 3 and 6. Down-slope the site appears less disturbed with little or no truncation recorded in Trenches 4 and 5 where some head deposits and colluvium surviving intact at the valley bottom.</p>
Project dates	Start: 12-04-2010 End: 14-04-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES FALMER Proposed new academy site, University of sussex
Postcode	BN1 9
Study area	50.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 34536 09275 50.8667325818 -0.08791760643040 50 52 00 N 000 05 16 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project	Dan Swift

director/manager

Project supervisor Sarah Porteus

Type of sponsor/funding body University

Name of sponsor/funding body University of Sussex

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Local Museum

Physical Archive ID FNA10

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Archive ID FNA10

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography','Text'

Paper Archive recipient local museum

Paper Archive ID FNA10

Paper Contents 'none'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Section','Unpublished Text'

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