

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at
Wiston Estate, Steyning, West Sussex**

NGR TQ 515506 112428

**ASE Project No. 4343
Site Code: WES 10**

ASE Report No. 2010049



Kathryn Grant MSc AIFA

May 2010

Wiston Estate, Steyning, West Sussex
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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OASIS id: archaeol6-77379

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Wiston Estate to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring within the grounds of the estate, to the northwest of Steyning during excavations associated with the installation of new hardcore roads. The watching brief took place from 19th to 23^d April 2010. The monitored excavations revealed two undated linear features which have been preserved in situ beneath the new road.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by Wiston Estate to undertake an archaeological watching brief on Wiston Estate, north-west of Steyning, West Sussex, (centred at NGR: TQ 515506 112428; Figure 1), hereafter referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground work for the installation of new hardcore roads.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map (Sheet 318/333, Brighton and Worthing) indicates that the site's underlying geology is Upper Greensand, with Gault Clay to the north and Head deposits and Lower Chalk to the south.
- 1.2.2 Wiston Estate lies on the A283 to the north-west of Steyning, West Sussex. The groundwork associated with the new roads was carried out across open green fields and a wooded area to the northeast of the house (Figure 2).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The watching brief was required as a condition of planning consent for application DC/10/0443 as laid out by John Mills, Senior Archaeologist West Sussex County Council (WSCC). The condition states:

No ground excavations landscaping works or infrastructure works pursuant to the planning permission will commence on the site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing.

Reason: To ensure appropriate investigation and recording of archaeological Heritage Assets on the site during the course of development.

Policies: refer PPS 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment), esp. Policy 12.3 and PPS 5 Practice Guide, paragraph 140; The South East Plan, May 2009, Policy BE6 (Management of the Historic Environment).

- 1.3.2 In advance of the watching brief a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief was prepared by ASE (2010) and was approved by John Mills. This document was compiled with reference to the *Recommended Standard Archaeological Conditions* (WSCC 2007), henceforth "the Standard Conditions" issued by WSCC. All work will be carried out in accordance with these documents and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) (unless otherwise specified below).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The general aim of the archaeological watching brief as outlined in the WSI (ASE 2010) was to record, interpret and report to appropriate archaeological standards on any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains exposed during 'intrusive groundworks' including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. 'Intrusive groundworks' include any work involving ground reduction or topsoil stripping.
- 1.4.2 The archaeological watching brief also assessed the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

1.5 Scope of this Report

- 1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Kathryn Grant from 19th to 21st April 2010 over a course of five visits. The project was managed by Dan Swift.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Wiston House lies to the north-west of Steyning along the route of the A283 in West Sussex. It is located to the north of the South Downs. Chanctonbury Ring, an Iron Age hill fort atop Chanctonbury Hill on the South Downs, lies on the border of the parish and the neighbouring parish of Washington.
- 2.2 The site is quite likely to lie within a former Roman agricultural landscape: a Roman road runs east-west, north of the Washington Road, near a Roman tile kiln; the probable site of a Roman building has previously been reported, to the west. Further Roman archaeological remains, e.g. of buried field systems, may exist within the footprints of the accesses (ASE 2010).
- 2.3 The original manor appears in the Domesday book and was held by William de Braose who had been granted a large area of the county of Sussex as a reward for his services. The house remained with the de Braose family until 1426, when John de Braose died (Pennington 2005). Following his death, the estate passed to his great-nephew, Ralph Sherley
- 2.4 The present house was constructed between 1573 and 1578 by Sir Thomas Sherley (also 'Shirley'), an English government official and descendent of Ralph Sherley. The house that was built by Sherley was much larger than the property as it is seen today. Several alterations to the house were undertaken in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since 1951, the house has been leased by its owners, the Goring family, to the Foreign Office as a conference centre.
- 2.5 In 2003, ASE carried out an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of the estate. Excavation revealed 18th century brick walls thought to be the remains of the Dairy House and four intercutting pits. Although three of these pits were post-medieval in date, the earliest in the sequence was thought to be mid Anglo-Saxon in origin (ASE 2003).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Groundwork (Figure 2)

- 3.1.1 The proposals involved existing track improvement and new access creation, comprising a total length of over 1km, with a width of 3.6 metres, and involving excavation to a depth of 300mm. Geotextile was laid upon the stripped surface with a covering of hardcore material. Although the excavations were shallow (0.3m deep) and potential archaeology would in most instances be preserved *in situ* beneath the new road, monitoring was necessary to ensure minimal damage to exposed archaeology as a result of running plant.
- 3.1.2 The monitored excavations can be seen on Figure 3. Although the majority of excavations in the area of Track B were not seen, as groundwork had commenced prior to notification, all of the excavations for Tracks B and C were monitored by an archaeologist at all times.

3.2 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.2.1 The complete adopted methodology for the watching brief is detailed in the WSI (ASE 2010). This section is a brief précis of that methodology.
- 3.2.2 Machine excavation was undertaken by two mechanical excavators fitted, where practicable, with a flat-bladed bucket to minimise damage to deposits.
- 3.2.3 New ground work excavations undertaken by engineering contractors were monitored at all times by an archaeologist. All revealed deposits were examined for archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for any stray, unstratified archaeological artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. 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 photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.2.5 The monitored groundworks were planned at a scale of 1:50 and tied into the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 scale map of the area.

3.3 The Site and Project 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.

Number of Contexts	6 contexts
Number of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	1 plan showing monitored ground works
Photographs	40 digital images
Finds	1 small box

Table 1: Quantification of the Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 3)

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Six contexts were revealed during the monitoring of the intrusive ground works. These have been tabulated and detailed in 4.2 and 4.3. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the excavations. The assigned context numbers pertain to all of the deposits revealed during the excavations.

4.2 The Western Field

4.2.1 A total of three contexts were recorded in the Western Field. Only a small bag of finds including fired clay and an iron object were revealed in the subsoil in this area during the excavations.

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.1m
002	Layer	Subsoil	0.2m+
003	Layer	Natural	0.1m

Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts from the Western Field

4.2.2 Natural geology [003] comprising lightly compacted brownish orange silty clay was observed in the western field. This layer was overlain by light orangey brown fine sandy silt subsoil [002] and covered with mid greyish brown silty topsoil and turf [001]. A linear feature with a width of 1.25m crossed the western end of Track B (Figure 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) on a rough northwest-southeast alignment. This feature is thought to be a track way which can be seen in the aerial satellite photograph of the site. The feature was located 4m south of the existing northern field boundary. The feature was not impacted on and has been preserved *in situ* beneath the new road way.

4.3 The Eastern Field

4.3.1 A total of three contexts were recorded in the Eastern Field. No finds were revealed in this area during the excavations.

Number	Type	Description	Deposit Thickness
004	Layer	Topsoil	0.1m
005	Layer	Subsoil	0.4m+
006	Layer	Natural	0.1m

Table 3: List of Recorded Contexts from the Eastern Field

4.3.2 Natural geology [006] comprising firm orangey yellow clay with brownish grey mottling was observed in the Eastern Field. This layer was overlain by light brown silty clay subsoil [005] and covered with mid greyish brown silty topsoil and turf [004]. A wide linear feature with a width of 10m crossed the middle of Track C (Figures 3.4, 3.5, 3.6) on a rough north-south alignment. This feature was located at the base of a slope in the Eastern Field and is likely to be

either an accumulation of colluvial material (e.g. collected overburden through ploughing) or a palaeochannel leading to the small lake located to the south east. The feature was not impacted on and has been preserved *in situ* beneath the new road way. Several land drains were observed within this field (Figure 3.7). The overburden was very sterile and no artefacts were revealed during the excavations.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 With the exception of the earlier excavation of Track B within the wooded area, all other intrusive groundwork associated with the new road way in the Western and Eastern Field were monitored by an archaeologist. In this respect, the archaeological watching brief has fulfilled its objective as outlined in the WSI (ASE 2010).
- 5.2 No archaeological artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.
- 5.3 The nature of the overburden in the monitored areas suggests some ploughing activity as well as intrusive activity associated with the fitting of land drains, particularly in the Eastern Field. Natural geology was encountered in both areas at an approximate level of 0.3m below present ground level.
- 5.4 The watching brief has therefore shown that since the two features revealed during the excavations will be preserved *in situ* beneath the new road, the archaeological resource has not been impacted by the intrusive ground works in this instance.

REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Sheets *Brighton and Worthing, Sheet 318/333* (Solid and Drift Edition) 1:50 000 Series.

ASE 2003. An Archaeological Evaluation at Wiston House, Steyning, West Sussex. Unpublished ASE Document (Author: Samantha Worrall).

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Online Sources

<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/about/history.aspx> (Janet Pennington 2005) - accessed 27th April 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank Wiston Estate for commissioning the watching brief and John Mills (West Sussex County Council) for his guidance throughout the project. The co-operation and assistance of William Trinick (Wiston Estate) and Simon Stringer (Stringer and Kitson Groundworks) is also much appreciated.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	WES 10					
Identification Name and Address	Wiston Estate, Steyning					
County, District and/or Borough	West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR TQ 515506 112428					
Geology	Upper Greensand and Gault Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4343					
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. 19-04-09 - 23-04-09	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Wiston Estate					
Project Manager	Dan Swift					
Project Supervisor	Kathy Grant					
Period Summary	Palaeo. None	Meso. None	Neo. None	BA None	IA None	RB None
	AS None	MED None	PM	Other		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Wiston Estate to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring within the grounds of the estate, to the northwest of Steyning (NGR TQ 515506 112428) during excavations associated with the installation of new hardcore roads. The watching brief took place from 19th to 23rd April 2010. The monitored excavations revealed two undated linear features which have been preserved in situ beneath the new road.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-77379

Project details

Project name	Wiston Estate new hardcore tracks
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Wiston Estate to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring within the grounds of the estate, to the northwest of Steyning (NGR TQ 515506 112428) during excavations associated with the installation of new hardcore roads. The watching brief took place from 19th to 23rd April 2010. The monitored excavations revealed two undated linear features which have been preserved in situ beneath the new road.
Project dates	Start: 19-04-2010 End: 23-04-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WES 10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Woodland 3 - Mixed

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX HORSHAM STEYNING Wiston Estate
Postcode	BN44 3
Study area	1.00 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TQ 6588 1237 50.8863888889 0.358611111111 50:53:11N 0:21:31W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 50.00m Max: 53.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	West Sussex County Council
Project design originator	west sussex county council
Project director/manager	Dan Swift
Project supervisor	Kathryn Grant
Type of sponsor/funding	private client

body

Name of sponsor/funding body Wiston Estate

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Archive ID WES 10

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

Paper Archive recipient Local Museum

Paper Archive ID WES 10

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Map','Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Wiston Estate, Steyning, West Sussex WB

Author(s)/Editor(s) Kathryn Grant

Other bibliographic details ASE report no: 2010049

Date 2010

Issuer or publisher ASE

Place of issue or publication Portslade

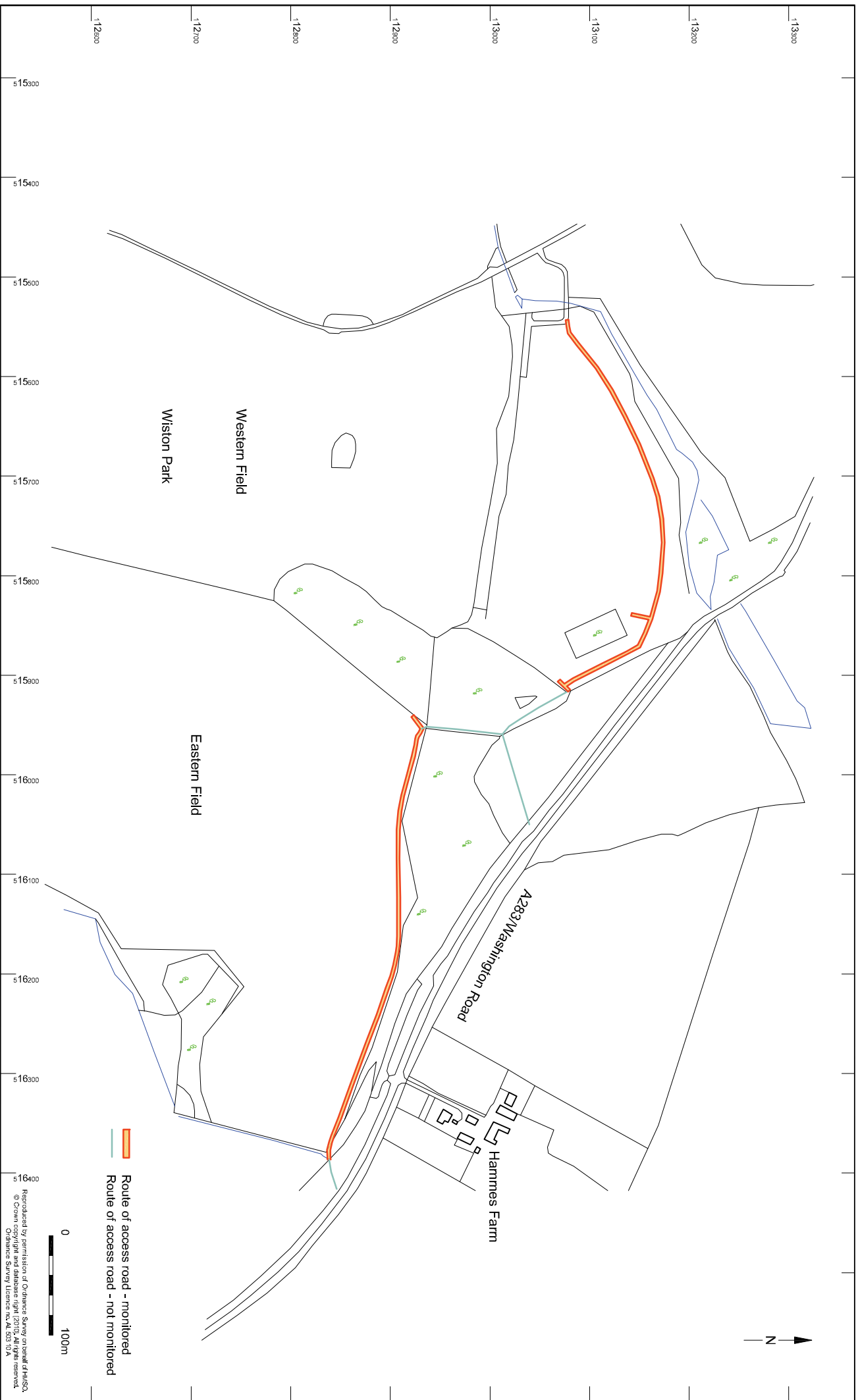
Description grey lit. boundreport

Entered by Dan Swift (d.swift@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 14 May 2010



© Archaeology South-East		Wiston Estate	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4343	May 2010	Site location	
Report Ref: 2010049	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		Wiston Estate	
Project Ref: 4343	May 2010	Proposed route of new road	
Report Ref: 2010049	Drawn by: JLR		
		Fig. 2	

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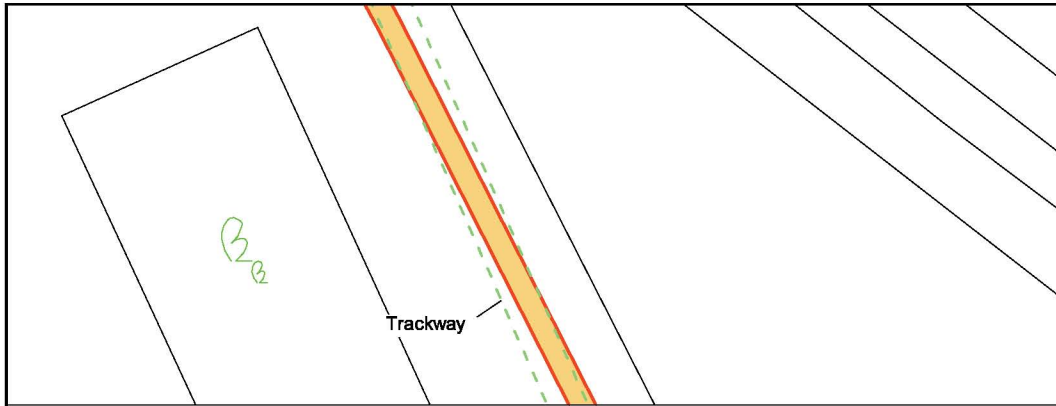


Fig. 3.1: Detail of trackway in western field

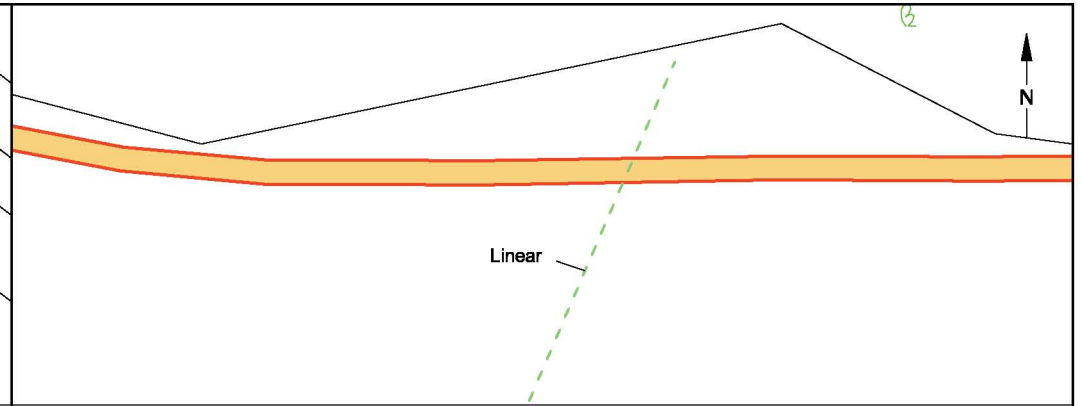


Fig. 3.4: Detail of linear in eastern field



Fig. 3.2: Aerial photo of trackway in western field (Google Earth)



Fig. 3.5: Aerial photo of linear in eastern field



Fig. 3.3: Trackway in western field looking north-west

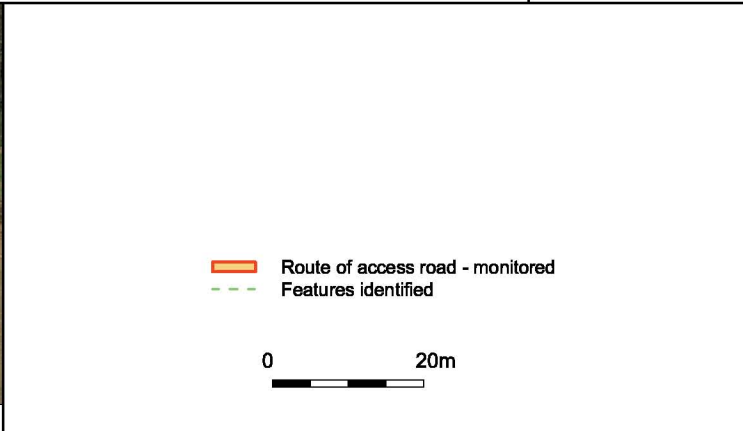


Fig. 3.6: Linear in eastern field, looking west



Fig. 3.7: Field drain, eastern field