

Land at Wicks Farm, Ford, West Sussex

Interim Report on Archaeological Strip-Map-Assess-Sample-Recording

South West Archaeology Ltd. 04.12.2019

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1.1 Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned to undertake archaeological strip-map-assess-sample-record during groundworks associated with the construction of an anaerobic digestion facility on Land at Wicks Farm, Ford, West Sussex as part of a planning condition (WSSC/003/19/F and WSSC/019/17/F). This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2019) drawn up in consultation with John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, Strategic Planning – Environment & Heritage of West Sussex County Council; and was carried out in line with best practice and CfA guidelines. This episode of work covers re-modelling of the site access.

1.2 Site Location

Wicks Farm is located in Ford, West Sussex, approximately 2km north-east of Yapton and 13km east-south-east of the county town of Chichester. The site is situated on relatively flat ground within the existing farm complex and surrounding arable fields at a height of approximately 7m AOD.

The soils of this area are free-draining, slightly acid loamy soils which overlie superficial brickearth deposits c.1.2m thick. These in turn overlie the sedimentary bedrock of the chalk bedrock of the Lewes Nodular, the Seaford, the Newhaven and the Culver Formations (BGS 2019).

1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The following is a summary of the historical and archaeological background, for which more detail can be found in the desk-based assessment, walkover survey and limited historic visual impact assessment carried out as an earlier part of the project (Webb *et al* 2015).

The site is located on the western edge of Ford Civil Parish, but formerly lay partly within Yapton parish and partly within a detached portion of Walberton parish. These parishes lie within the historic Rape of Arundel (west). The modern farm buildings lie just to the west of Wicks Farmhouse, a significant estate within the Manor of Yapton. Its location relative to the village would suggest a late of post-medieval foundation, with a name derived from the surname *Weekes*, rather than the Old English *wīc*. The West Sussex HLC shows these fields as ‘planned private enclosure’.

The archaeological potential of the area is becoming more fully recognised, resulting in increasing amounts of archaeological fieldwork taking place in the region. The raised beach deposits of the Sussex Plain are internationally important for their buried Palaeolithic remains. Two large scale intrusive investigations have taken place at Ford Aerodrome (Place 2004) and Yapton (Holt 2011), which have uncovered Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British settlements and features. A possible Roman villa lies within the Yapton ANA, south-west of the village, and a high density of finds have been reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in both Yapton and Walberton.

Walkover assessment of the site failed to identify any features of great archaeological interest, though subtle earthworks were present which may relate to former field boundaries and the reputed use of the site as a refuelling depot for Ford Airfield during WWII.

1.4 Methodology

The archaeological strip-map-assess-sample-record was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Boyd 2019) drawn up in consultation with John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, Strategic Planning – Environment & Heritage of West Sussex County Council; and was carried out in line with best practice and CfA guidelines. This episode of work covers re-modelling of the site access and includes the widening of the access road and visibility splay. A sub-rectangular area measuring approximately 23m×21m and orientated north to south was excavated by tracked mechanical excavator to the depth of formation under archaeological supervision. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and CfA guidelines. This phase of works took place on 5th September 2019.



FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.

1.5 Results

The archaeological strip-map-assess-sample-record identified an overall deposit model of: topsoil (101), grey-brown friable silt; overlying modern tarmac surface (103) and hardcore bedding layer (102); made-ground deposits (104), (105), (106), and (107), tipped layers of building rubble and stone hardcore; and the natural yellow-brown firm clay (100). A low hedgebank {108} was formed along the roadside comprising re-deposited natural clay and overlay the made-ground deposits.

No features of archaeological interest were identified during this phase of excavations.

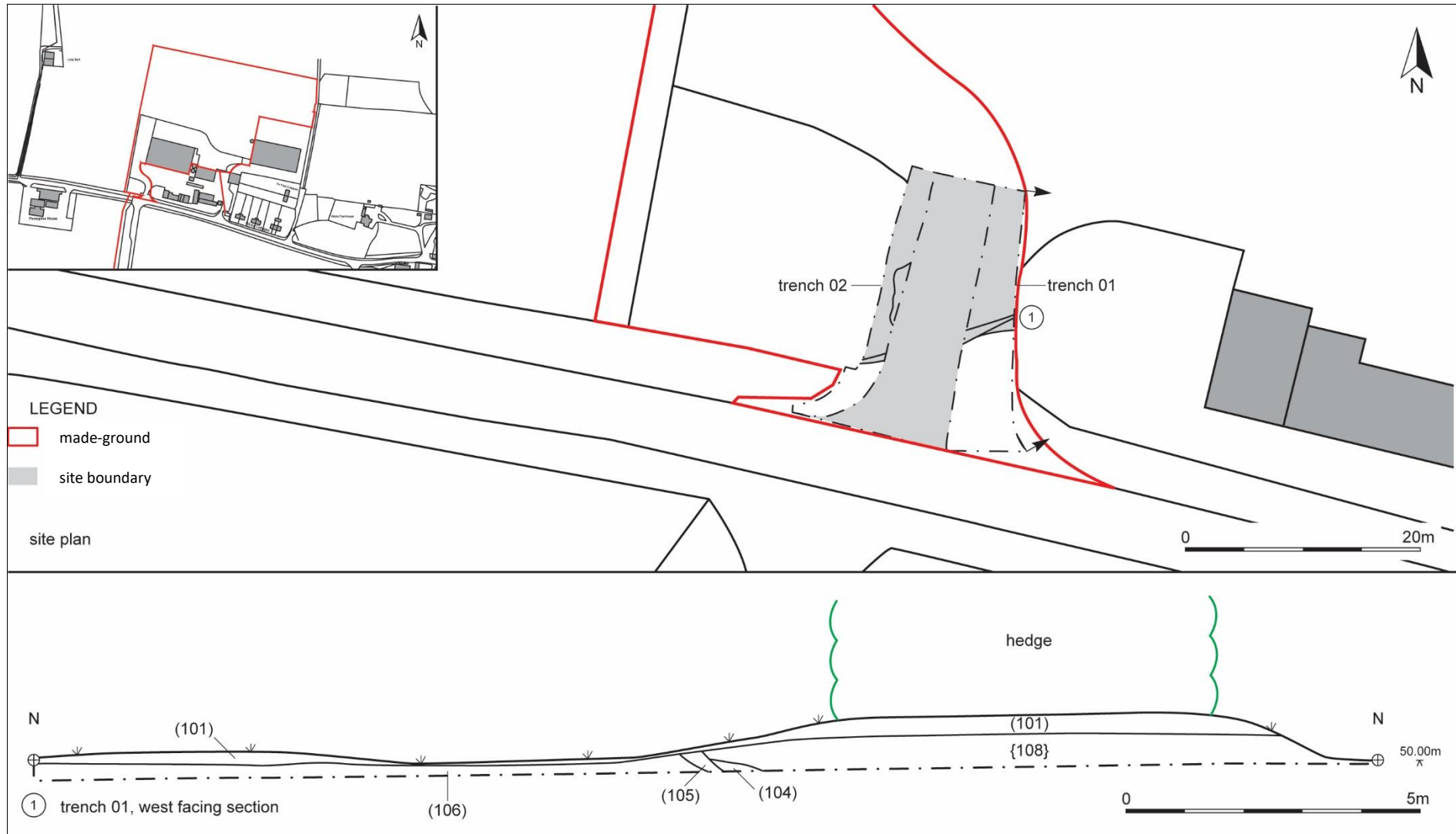


FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN AND SECTION. HEIGHTS AT AN ARBITRARY TBM OF 50M AOD.

1.6 Conclusion

This phase of the excavations identified that this part of the site has been largely disturbed by the creation of the existing farm access during the 20th century. It identified that the road access to the yard had been built over 20th century building rubble, some of which may have been derived from the demolition of former structures on the site possible associated with the WWII refuelling depot once situated on the site.



FIGURE 3: ROAD ACCESS TRENCH 01 SHOWING MADE-GROUND RUBBLE DEPOSITS; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (2M SCALE).

1.7 References

- Boyd, N. 2019: *Land at Wicks Farm, Ford, West Sussex: Written Scheme of Investigation*. SWARCH WSI no. WSWF16WSiv4.
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