



# **Chris Butler MifA Archaeological Services Ltd**



## **An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief at the Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex**

Project No. CBAS0112 and CBAS0214

NGR: TV 51828 99552

by  
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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to the car park at the Seven Sisters Country Park, in advance of the proposed construction of a 32m x 8m reed-bed toilet waste disposal system. Two trenches were excavated with a cumulative length of 15m. Colluvial deposits between 800mm and 1200mm deep were recorded in both trenches, and found to contain significant levels of worked prehistoric flint, predominantly dating to the Bronze Age. No cut features were identified within the upper levels of colluvium, however in Trench A, a possible lynchet deposit and ditch were revealed from c.860mm below the ground surface, which corresponded to the alignment of a shallow upstanding topographic anomaly.*

*The lynchet and ditch both survived below the proposed formation depth of the development. Nonetheless, a watching brief was recommended both to monitor for archaeological features within the colluvium, and to obtain a controlled sample of cultural material from within it.*

*Subsequent to the evaluation, a watching brief was undertaken during the initial excavation of the reed bed, during which a sample of the colluvium was sieved to enhance the retrieval of cultural artefacts. This revealed the remains of a 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century wall, and some small cut features which are likely to be relatively recent in date.*

*The artefacts recovered during the work suggest that there has been activity in the area from at least the Mesolithic period, and large quantities of artefacts have accumulated against the lynchet from the Bronze Age through to the medieval period, suggesting that there was activity further upslope throughout these periods.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by The Hamson Partnership for East Sussex County Council to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to the car park at the Seven Sisters Country Park (Fig. 1), in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed construction of a 32m x 8m reed-bed toilet waste disposal system on the site (Fig. 4).
- 1.2** Although the evaluation recorded no features above the proposed formation depth of the development, a watching brief subsequently occurred during the excavation of the reed-bed to monitor the work for archaeological features within the colluvium, and to obtain a controlled sample of cultural material from within it.
- 1.3** The Seven Sisters Country Park is located at Exceat, on the east side of the River Cuckmere, at the junction with the A259 Eastbourne to Seaford road and a minor road to Litlington. It is centred at TV 51828 99552. The site lies at around 5m OD on the edge of the river floodplain, with the ground rising steeply to the east of it into Friston Forest. The River Cuckmere is located on the west side of the river valley, although the old course of the river is situated a short distance to the south of the site.
- 1.4** The site is currently on the edge of the car park to the Seven Sisters Country Park, in an area of trees and scrub, with a flint wall on the southwest side, adjacent to the Litlington Road, marking the boundary of the site. The site is not a Scheduled Monument but it is adjacent to the Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA) covering the buildings that form the visitor centre of the country park (Fig. 2). The site is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.5** The Seven Sisters Country Park was established in 1971 by East Sussex County Council, when they purchased Exceat. The visitor centre is located in an 18<sup>th</sup> century barn, and other facilities make use of other farm buildings of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date. The country park is now managed by the South Downs Joint Committee.

- 1.6** As a result of the site's location and the archaeological potential of the area, the archaeological team at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) required an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken. Hence, a desk-based assessment was prepared<sup>1</sup> which also incorporated a Written Scheme of Assessment (WSI) drawn up in accordance with a brief prepared by the archaeology team at ESCC. This document outlined the scope of the archaeological evaluation excavation to be undertaken in advance of the development. It was submitted and subsequently approved by ESCC. The work comprised two evaluation trenches located within the development footprint, measuring a total length of 15m (Fig. 4).
- 1.7** A WSI was also prepared to cover the watching brief<sup>2</sup>. It was approved by ESCC upon submission. The area monitored by the watching brief is shown in Figure 4.
- 1.8** The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey (sheet 319 / 334), shows it to be situated on the boundary of the Seaford Chalk Formation and the Alluvium of the River Cuckmere valley. The upper slopes of the South Downs to the east of the site are comprised of Newhaven Chalk Formation with a capping of Clay-with-Flints.
- 1.9** The evaluation excavation was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2011 by Clive Meaton and Dave Atkin, whilst Dr Caroline Russell, Dave Atkin, Annalie Seaman and Peter Bidmead carried out the watching brief between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Chris Butler managed the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, C. 2010. *A Desk Based Assessment & Written Scheme of Investigation for The Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex*. Unpublished CBAS Report.

<sup>2</sup> Butler, C. 2011. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex*. Unpublished CBAS Report.

## 2.0 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A desk-based assessment of the site was prepared to accompany the planning application for the development and the results of the historical and archaeological background are summarised below<sup>3</sup>. Sites discussed in the following text are shown on Figure 3.
- 2.2 There has been very little archaeological work in the immediate vicinity of the site, apart from a programme of fieldwalking undertaken in 1982-3<sup>4</sup>, and work in Westdean and on the west side of the river valley.
- 2.3 At least seven Palaeolithic handaxes have been found at Exceat (MES3009 / 3010), although their exact provenance is unknown. The River Cuckmere valley has a number of findspots of Palaeolithic material, and it has been suggested that the material may derive from Clay-with-flints deposits<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.4 There is some evidence for Mesolithic activity near the site, although very little Mesolithic flintwork was collected during the 1982-3 fieldwalking survey. There is evidence for Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups exploiting the resources of the South Downs, either for hunting and gathering or to obtain flint with which to make their tools, especially during the Later Mesolithic. Locations on the edge of river valleys were probably favoured for longer stay camps.
- 2.5 The majority of the evidence for Mesolithic activity on the South Downs is found on outcrops of Clay-with-flints, which tend to be found capping some of the highest points of the South Downs, such as those to the east of the site. A small assemblage of Mesolithic flintwork was found at Exceat (MES3088) comprising 14 tranchet adzes, seven picks and a single core, although the exact find spots are not known. Another tranchet adze and two other axes were found at Westdean (MES3089).
- 2.6 Numerous scatters of later Neolithic / Bronze Age flintwork were identified during the 1982-3 fieldwalking project<sup>6</sup>, including at Chyngton Farm, South Hill and Walls Brow. Evidence for Early Neolithic activity has also been found near Alfriston<sup>7</sup> where flintwork was recovered around the Early Neolithic *Long Burgh* long barrow. Later

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<sup>3</sup> Butler, C. 2010. *A Desk Based Assessment & Written Scheme of Investigation for The Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex*. Unpublished CBAS Report.

<sup>4</sup> Garwood, P. 1985. 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 49-68.

<sup>5</sup> Wymer, J. 1999. *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain*, Vol. 1, Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage, p171.

<sup>6</sup> Garwood, P. 1985. 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 62.

<sup>7</sup> Butler, C. 2001. 'Horned scrapers and other prehistoric flintwork from Alfriston, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **139**, 215-223.

Neolithic flintwork has also been found in the area of Seaford Head<sup>8</sup>, and between South Hill and Cuckmere Haven<sup>9</sup>. These were mostly localised discrete concentrations, and could represent activity areas or small settlement sites.

- 2.7** A Neolithic oval barrow is situated a short distance to the northeast of the site (MES3012), and comprises a low earthen mound 28m long and up to 14m wide, surviving to a height of 1.2m. A quarry ditch surrounds the mound and survives as a buried feature. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (12791).
- 2.8** The evidence suggests that the surrounding downland landscape may have been quite densely populated by small farming settlements, surrounded by fields during the Middle and Later Bronze Age. Examples have been found on the Downs to the north of Seaford, with an example fully excavated at Black Patch<sup>10</sup>.
- 2.9** In addition to the finds mentioned above (see section 2.6), other possible Bronze Age flintwork was noted on the west side of the river valley (MES15494).
- 2.10** A discrete scatter of possible Late Iron Age or Roman pottery was recovered at Walls Brow (TV507985) during the 1982-3 fieldwalking survey<sup>11</sup>.
- 2.11** There are no finds or features from the site or its immediate vicinity that date from the Iron Age. However, there is a possibility that artefacts or evidence for activities, such as salt production, could be present at the site, especially given its close location to the hillfort on Seaford Head.
- 2.12** Two inhumations associated with Roman pottery were found after a cliff fall at Hope Gap<sup>12</sup>. A single sherd of East Sussex Ware pottery was discovered on the west side of the river valley (MES15494) whilst Roman coins and a brooch were recovered from Brock Hole Down (MES12102 & MES12619/20).
- 2.13** There is no evidence for Saxon activity at Exceat, although it is possible that the medieval settlements of Exceat and Westdean may have had earlier origins, and the name Exceat may have a Saxon origin meaning the land of the Aese (the first kings of Kent)<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> *Sussex Notes & Queries* 1950-3 Vol. **13**, 193-7

<sup>9</sup> Holden, E.W. 1979. 'Flint artefacts from Seaford', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **117**, 224-7.

<sup>10</sup> Drewett, P. 1982. 'Later Bronze Age downland economy and excavations at Black Patch, East Sussex', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **48**, 321-400.

<sup>11</sup> Garwood, P. 1985. 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 62.

<sup>12</sup> Bannister, N. 1999. *Historic Landscape Survey of Chyngton Farm*, National Trust.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.villagenet.co.uk/sevensisters/villages/exceat.php>

- 2.14** After 1066 Exceat was given to Earl Mortain, King William's half brother. He gave the land to the Monastery of Grestein and their nearby Priory at Wilmington. There was land for four ploughs, three villagers, six smallholders and one slave<sup>14</sup>. During the 1100's the area was important as West Dean and Exceat paid more in taxes than nearby Lewes, the villages having been associated with Seaford in their ties with the Cinque Ports.
- 2.15** Exceat village and church appear to have been located on Exceat Hill (MES3003), where the foundations of the church were excavated in 1913<sup>15</sup>, although no evidence has been found for an associated village which may have been a dispersed rather than a nucleated settlement. The population of Exceat had increased to about 250 in 1296<sup>16</sup>.
- 2.16** In 1305 King Edward I, who was at nearby Lewes, visited the villages implying a still great importance in the history of the realm, again probably due to the local naval power. Exceat was the more important of the two villages until the 1300's when the Black Death decimated the village and the subsequent raids by the French led to the village being abandoned by the mid 1400's<sup>17</sup>.
- 2.17** In 1347 the Poynings family took possession of Seaford and its adjacent lands. As Seaford had been ravaged by pestilence and French raids, Lord Poynings decided to build a new town to the east of Seaford on high ground overlooking Cuckmere Haven. The location of the new town is hinted at by the name Walls Brow (MES1719), and was identified by a large concentration of medieval pottery during the fieldwalking project in 1982/3<sup>18</sup>. Poynings Town may itself have succumbed fairly quickly to French raids, with the town then being re-established on its original site at Seaford<sup>19</sup>.
- 2.18** In 1428 the only resident of Exceat was a Henrius Cheseman. The church was reported to be in ruins 32 years later, and in 1528 Exceat was formally united with Westdean Parish<sup>20</sup>. When the population increased again in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Exceat was not re-populated. A number of causeways (MES16120-23) cross the river valley close to the site, and these together with some of the ditches and dykes resulting from land reclamation or division may have medieval origins.

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<sup>14</sup> Morris, J. 1976 *Domesday Book: Sussex*, Chichester, Phillimore.

<sup>15</sup> Budgen, W. 1916 'Excete and its Parish Church', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **58**, 138-170

<sup>16</sup> *History of Settlement and Barracks*, Seven Sisters Country Park Factsheet **4**.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.villagenet.co.uk/sevensisters/villages/exceat.php>

<sup>18</sup> Garwood, P. 1985 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 62.

<sup>19</sup> Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

<sup>20</sup> *History of Settlement and Barracks*, Seven Sisters Country Park Factsheet **4**.



- 2.19** A manor house was located on the site of the Seven Sisters Country Park visitor centre in 1527, and in 1614 20,000 tiles were to be “employed (sic) upon the manor house at Exceat”<sup>21</sup>. This later became the site of a farm, 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings of which survive today at the site. By the year 1536, Exceat had been absorbed into the extensive estates of the Gage family of Firle, near Lewes.
- 2.20** ‘Excete’ is shown on Speed’s map of 1610 and again on Morden’s map of 1695. In both cases the maps are too small a scale to show much detail, and the location probably relates to the manor / farm described above. Yeakell and Gardner’s map of Sussex 1778-1783<sup>22</sup> shows the farm adjacent to the site, with the site itself possibly being open ground (Fig. 6). The original course of the River Cuckmere meandering immediately to the south of the site can be seen, whilst the system of dykes and ditches (or innings) on the flood plain largely reflects those surviving today.
- 2.21** A 1764 estate map for Chyngton Farm<sup>23</sup>, which is situated on the west side of the river valley, names the areas to the south of the site (now located between the 19<sup>th</sup> century river cut and the old river course) as ‘Upper Salts’ and ‘Lower Salts’, hinting at their use for salt panning in the recent past.
- 2.22** The Timeline map (taken from an 1813 Ordnance Survey one inch map) shows the farm at Exceat with a large rectangular, possibly walled, enclosure on its east side. As well as the road northwards to Litlington, a track (passing through the current car park) joins Exceat farm to the village of Westdean. The Tithe Map of 1840 provides a detailed picture of the land use in the country park, when about one-third of the land, on either side of Newbarn Bottom, was arable.
- 2.23** Stretching across the river valley, from the cluster of buildings at Exceat to the bridge on the western side, is Exceat causeway - a large dyke, possibly built in medieval times, of chalk boulders, which carries the coast road across the valley floor. It was decided in 1840 to reduce the height, and with the surplus chalk increase its width, leaving only a narrow section on its south side at the original height. Until the river improvements in 1846, the causeway acted as a sea wall, with the meanders and neighbouring meadow (then saltmarsh) being covered to a depth approaching two metres by the sea during spring tides<sup>24</sup>.
- 2.24** In 1846 a straight cut was constructed for the River Cuckmere (MES8299), running from Exceat Bridge south to the mouth of the river, and cutting off the previously meandering course of the river. This work was carried out during 1846, at a cost of £751, involving the excavation of 24,809 cubic yards of clay by hand and

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<sup>21</sup> *History of Settlement and Barracks*, Seven Sisters Country Park Factsheet 4.

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell\\_36.htm](http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell_36.htm)

<sup>23</sup> Bannister, N. 1999. *Historic Landscape Survey of Chyngton Farm*, National Trust.

<sup>24</sup> Larkin, M. *History of the Seven Sisters*, Seven Sisters Country Park Factsheet.

wheelbarrow, and the construction of a new east bank between the new 'watercourse' and the meanders<sup>25</sup>.

- 2.25** The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map (1878) shows the farm buildings at Exceat with a group of small paddocks on the east side (Fig. 7). A footpath crosses the site of the current car park and the rest of this area appears to be open ground. This situation is unchanged on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS maps of 1899 and 1911. Although the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition OS map (1927) is also similar, the road now continues eastwards towards Friston replacing the earlier track.
- 2.26** Exceat had remained part of the Gage Estate until 1823, when an exchange was arranged with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. After a short spell in private hands, Exceat was purchased by the East Sussex County Council in 1971.
- 2.27** A large training camp was built at West Brow (MES1719) during the First World War, and much of the surrounding area was used for training. A rifle and grenade range (MES7904) was established at Brock Hole Bottom on the west side of the river<sup>26</sup>. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a 2ft gauge railway was constructed to move shingle from the beach to a grading works situated just to the south of the site (MES8269), and is shown on the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition OS map. This went out of use in the early 1960's.
- 2.28** During the Second World War the beach at Cuckmere Haven was heavily defended by anti-tank cubes, scaffolding, mines and pillboxes<sup>27</sup>. The defensive works stretched as far back as the road at Exceat, where two roadblocks were installed, one on the road to Eastbourne (MES7880), and the other at Exceat Bridge (MES7885). Pillboxes were constructed at the bridge (MES7884/7896) and to the south (MES7848) and east (MES7889) of Exceat.
- 2.29** Later in the war a decoy site (MES7905) was established at Cuckmere Haven in an attempt to get German bombers to drop their bombs here rather than on Newhaven port. Friston airfield, situated a short distance to the east of Cuckmere Haven was an emergency landing ground and then later became a satellite airfield<sup>28</sup>.
- 2.30** A 1947 aerial photograph shows the site to be an open area, and it is only since then that the area has been planted with woodland as part of Friston Forest. The most recent aerial photographs of 1999 and 2006 both show the site as it is today.

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<sup>25</sup> Larkin, M. *History of the Seven Sisters*, Seven Sisters Country Park Factsheet.

<sup>26</sup> Barber, L. pers. com.

<sup>27</sup> Butler, C. 2007. *East Sussex under Attack*. Tempus Publishing Ltd: Stroud.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Evaluation Excavation**

- 3.1.1 In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, two 1.5m wide evaluation trenches were excavated with a cumulative length of 15m. Trench A measured 10m in length and Trench B 5m. Both were located within the footprint of the proposed development.
- 3.1.2 The evaluation trenches were excavated using a 2.5 tonne 360 degree tracked excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide flat bladed ditching bucket. A CAT scan was undertaken prior to the excavation of both. No buried services were identified.
- 3.1.3 Mechanical excavation of the evaluation trenches continued to 1.2m below the ground surface or until the surface of the underlying natural substrate was exposed. Care was taken not to damage potential archaeological deposits through excessive use of the machine. All exposed sections and surfaces were inspected for archaeological features, structures or finds. Removed spoil was also scanned for the presence of unstratified artefacts, and a metal detector was used during the course of the work.
- 3.1.4 All archaeologically significant deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards and to ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* dated April 2008 (Recommended Standards). Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not with reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.1.5 Both trenches were levelled in relation to an Ordnance Datum Spot Height located at the junction between the Litlington Road and the A259. The value (4.0m OD) was traversed on to site and a Temporary Bench Mark established on the southwest corner of the concrete base of the existing sewage pump (4.02m OD). Ordnance Datum level values pertaining to each trench are given in the text below.
- 3.1.6 A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd. A site reference of SSP10 was issued.

## 3.2 Watching Brief

- 3.2.1 The watching brief commenced once the vegetation within the site and the adjacent area of the spoil heaps had been grubbed out. The site was initially excavated with a 2.5 tonne 360 degree tracked excavator. After its track split on the second day, this machine was replaced with a three tonne excavator. Each machine was fitted with a 1.5m wide flat bladed ditching bucket, except when removal of the heavily rooted topsoil proved too difficult and a toothed bucket was employed instead.
- 3.2.2 Excavation of the topsoil and colluvium was monitored. Finds were recovered whilst watching the machine. The topsoil was stripped across the entire site but levelling of the slope for the reed-bed meant that less colluvium was removed down the slope, to the extent that at the northwest corner of the site, the upper colluvium was only just exposed at the base of the excavation. No lower colluvium was revealed to the downhill southwest side of the site. With the exception of its southeast end, this baulk was built up with re-deposited topsoil, up to 310mm thick, to reduce the amount of excavation work required to level the site.
- 3.2.3 The excavated spoil was deposited to the east of the site. However, to prevent the sieving of mixed deposits, wheelbarrows of upper colluvium, and lower colluvium, were wheeled directly off the excavation to be temporarily deposited at the southeast end of the site. Here it was then sieved through a wooden framed sieve with a 5mm mesh for finds recovery. The WSI for the watching brief requested that up to 10% of the colluvial deposits be sampled. However, this was unachievable, given the large amount of spoil that was being generated, and the overall general lack of artefacts. A 4% sample was more likely to have been attained. Finds were also retrieved whilst monitoring the machine.
- 3.2.4 A Garrett ACE150 metal detector was used at regular intervals to scan the spoil and excavated surfaces. No metal objects were recovered.
- 3.2.5 All archaeologically significant deposits and features were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards and to ESCC's Recommended Standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not with reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.2.6 Archaeological deposits and features were levelled in relation to a Temporary Bench Mark (with a superficial value of 10.0m), established by the site surveyors on the southwest corner of the concrete base of the existing sewage pump. The Site Datum level values pertaining to each archaeological deposit and feature are recorded on the plan and section drawings (Figs. 9, 10 and 11).

3.2.7 A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd. The watching brief used the same site reference as the evaluation excavation (SSP10).

## 4.0 RESULTS (Figures 8-11 and Plates 1-4)

**4.01** A total of 23 contexts were recorded during the fieldwork. In the evaluation excavation, a single linear cut feature was exposed in Trench A, whilst the watching brief uncovered a wall footing and associated flint dump, a potential post-hole and a possible tree bowl. All contexts are summarised in Appendix I.

### 4.1 Evaluation Excavation

#### 4.1.1 *Trench A*

Trench A (Plate 1) was orientated broadly northeast to southwest, measuring 10m long by 1.5m wide and attaining a maximum depth of 1.2m below the ground surface. The trench was positioned so as to investigate a shallow linear bank, running roughly northwest to southeast, parallel to the Litlington Road. Trench A cut through the bank at its southwestern end.

4.1.2 Figure 8 illustrates the southeast-facing baulk section of Trench A. Context **1** formed the topsoil, being up to 220mm deep and comprising a mid brown clayey loam containing small sub-angular flint nodules to 50mm (1%). The topsoil overlay a subsoil or colluvial deposit (Context **2**), a friable light yellowy brown silty clay between *c.*200mm and 350mm thick and containing sub-angular flints to 40mm (1%) and chalk pieces / flecking to 30mm (<1%). Beneath Context **2**, Context **3** was recorded measuring between 320mm and 450mm thick, and forming a friable mid brownish orange silty clay containing chalk pieces to 30mm (3%) and sub-angular flints to 100mm (2%). Although Context **3** appeared homogenous across the extent of the trench, it was noted that the chalk pieces / flecking were almost entirely concentrated in its southwestern half. Both Contexts **2** and **3** were interpreted on site as colluvial deposits, and may have actually formed the same deposit, albeit with different levels of moisture content.

4.1.3 Below the colluvium, Context **8** was recorded, being a loose mid brown sandy silty clay containing chalk pieces to 10mm (1%), charcoal (1%) and sub-angular flints to 150mm (40%). It measured up to 400mm in thickness, thickening to the southwest and continuing beyond the end of the trench. At its northeast side the deposit had a pronounced edge and may have been contained within a cut event, although this was not proved. Stratigraphically it was certainly later than Context **6**, although the exact extent of its interface with Context **6** was unclear. Context **6** displayed uncertain edges but was at least 1000mm wide and 240mm deep. It comprised a friable mid brown silty clay containing chalk pieces / flecking to 5mm (2%) and sub-angular flints to 200mm (20%). To the southwest of Context **6** and also sealed beneath Context **8**, a northwest to southeast aligned linear feature was exposed. This was recorded as cut Context **7** and was only partially revealed in a machine excavated sondage (Fig. 8). It measured *c.*800mm wide with a minimum depth of *c.*400mm, but it was not bottomed as it filled with groundwater immediately after hand excavation commenced. Its single fill was recorded as Context **10**, a compact mid brown silty clay containing sub-angular flints to 100mm (5%) and frequent charcoal (3%).

- 4.1.4 Interestingly, deposits **8** and **6**, as well as the linear cut **7** and its fill **10**, lay beneath and respected the alignment of the upstanding bank. Indeed, during the on-site excavations Context **6** was recorded as a possible formative lynchet bank, the presence of which is currently fossilised in the landscape as the upstanding bank. If this is the case, then it is likely that the linear Cut **7** marks the location of an associated field boundary.
- 4.1.5 The underlying substrata was recorded as Context **4**, a friable mid orangey brown silty clay, measuring between 320mm and 400mm thick and containing sub-angular flints to 50mm (2%). This overlay Context **5** which was not bottomed and comprised a friable creamy buff silty clay containing chalk pieces to 5mm (20%). Both deposits were interpreted as colluvium.
- 4.1.6 Relatively significant amounts of flintwork were recovered from Contexts **1**, **2**, and **3**, as well as from deposit **8**. A small amount was recovered from Context **10**, the fill of cut **7**.
- 4.1.7 The ground surface of Trench A at its northeast end was levelled to 3.95m OD and its base to 2.78m OD. At its southwest end the ground surface was levelled to 3.47m OD and the trench base to 2.43m OD.
- 4.1.8 *Trench B*  
Trench B (Plate 2) was orientated broadly northwest to southeast, measuring 5m long by 1.5m wide and attaining a maximum depth of 1.2m below the ground surface. The position of Trench B was located so as to interface with the upstanding northwest to southeast aligned bank, although at this position it was a much less pronounced topographic feature.
- 4.1.9 Figure 8 shows the southwest-facing baulk section of Trench B. Context **9** was recorded as the topsoil, a friable mid brown clayey loam measuring up to 300mm in thickness and containing chalk pieces to 10mm (1%) and sub-angular flints to 30mm (1%). Below the topsoil Context **11** was revealed, measuring up to 500mm in depth and forming a friable light yellowy brown sandy silty clay containing chalk pieces to 20mm (2%) and sub-angular flints to 100mm (5%). Directly beneath Context **11**, Context **12** was recorded. It measured at least 600mm thick, but was not bottomed, and comprised a friable mid brown sandy silty clay containing chalk pieces to 10mm (2%), sub-angular flints to 100mm (3%) and charcoal (1%). Both Contexts **11** and **12** were interpreted as the same sequence of colluvium identified in Trench A (Context **9** is the same as Context **1**, Context **11** the same as Context **2** and Context **12** the same as Context **3**).
- 4.1.10 No cut features were identified in Trench B, however as with Trench A, a significant amount of prehistoric flintwork was recovered from the colluvium deposits **11** and **12**.

4.1.11 The ground surface of Trench B at its northwest end was levelled to 3.71m OD and its base to 2.63m OD. At its southeast end the ground surface was levelled to 3.57m OD and the trench base to 2.38m OD.

## 4.2 Watching Brief

4.2.1 The watching brief exposed the same sequence of deposits across the site as recorded in the evaluation excavation (Plate 3): the topsoil of Context **13** (Contexts **1** and **9** in the evaluation), overlay the upper colluvium of Context **15** (previously Contexts **2** and **11**), which in turn overlay the lower colluvium of Context **21** (previously Contexts **3** and **12**). For a description of these three deposits, see Section **4.1**. The topsoil had a depth of between 220mm and 500mm, whilst the upper colluvium was between 160mm and 390mm deep along the northeast side of the site, where it had been fully removed. The lower colluvium had been excavated by as much as 400mm, but was not bottomed anywhere on the site.

4.2.2 A context (Context **14**) was allocated for the purpose of finds recovery as no distinction could be made between finds from the topsoil (Context **13**) and the top part of the upper colluvium (Context **15**). This is because it had not been possible to remove the heavily rooted topsoil without excavating partly into the upper colluvium.

4.2.3 Three features were exposed in plan during excavation of the reed-bed: Contexts **16**, **18** and **19** (Figs. 9, 10 and 11). The remains of a 5.6m long wall footing (Context **16**), between 460mm and 540mm wide, cut the upper colluvium of Context **15** (Fig. 10 and Plate 4). This cut ran broadly northwest to southeast from the southwest-facing baulk of the site to Trench A of the evaluation; any continuation of this linear feature was not observed in Trench A or beyond it. The southern half of the wall footing was unclear but looked to have curved slightly eastwards.

4.2.4 A slot excavated through the northern end of the wall footing showed the cut to have been 500mm wide and 180mm deep at this point (Fig. 10). The profile was that of a wide V, with a rounded tip for a base, although the southwest-facing baulk of the site showed the cut as having had vertical sides and a flatter base.

4.2.5 The wall footing was filled with a friable mid whitish brown clay (Context **17**) that contained frequent flint nodules (up to 150mm x 110mm x 65mm), degraded mortar in the form of frequent pea grain (a few mm<sup>3</sup> in size), and the occasional red brick (up to 130mm x 110mm x 55mm) and fragment of Construction Building Material (CBM). A concrete block (c.400mm x c.300mm by c.200mm) was recovered from the fill and it had a central hole perhaps for a fence post.



- 4.2.6 A dump of flint nodules (Context **18**), measuring 2.02m by 1.34m in plan, lay adjacent to the wall footing and above the upper colluvium of Context **15** (Fig. 10 and Plate 4). Its flint nodules were up to 150mm x 10mm x 120mm in size.
- 4.2.7 The wall footing, therefore, seems to have been for a mortared wall, mainly of flint construction but also of red brick, that may have partly collapsed or been deliberately demolished, with the flint nodules having been heaped together for possible reuse. This wall was not recorded on any early OS map and so presumably pre-dates 1878.
- 4.2.8 The third feature seen in plan cut the upper colluvium of Context **15** (Fig. 11). This was a possible oval post-hole (Context **19**) that was sited in the southeast corner of the site. It measured 400mm x 320mm x 120mm deep and although the edges of the cut were ill defined, it had gentle-sloping concave sides and a rounded base. The single ash-like fill (Context **20**) was a friable dark grey silty clay that contained frequent charcoal flecks.
- 4.2.9 A cut (Context **22**) was seen in the southwest-facing baulk of the site (Figs. 9 and 11). It cut the lower colluvium (Context **21**), and was 610mm wide and 210mm deep. It had one well-defined side, which was gentle sloping, and a flat-bottomed base. The fill (Context **23**) was a friable pale brown silty clay that contained frequent chalk inclusions (up to a few mm<sup>3</sup>) and small grit-sized flints. Frequent flints lay across the base of the cut, and these were generally several 10mm<sup>3</sup> in size although there was one large flint nodule present. The fill contained no finds or charcoal, and was similar to the upper colluvium (Context **15**) that overlay it. Its sterility may suggest that the cut was not an archaeological feature but a possible tree bowl, for instance.
- 4.2.10 Three services were found to the southeast end of the site (Fig. 9). One ran southwest to the manhole on the southwest baulk of the site. It could only be traced for 2.1m. Another service ran northwest from the southeast end baulk of the site but again was only visible for just 2.1m. The third service was a water pipe that ran across the southwest corner of the site.

## 5.0 FINDS

5.0.1 The archaeological work recovered a relatively small assemblage of finds. These are quantified in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Quantification of finds (no./weight in grams)

Context	Pottery (by period)	Ceramic Building Material	Flint	Other	Deposit Date
1	-	Peg tile 2/40g	Flint 37/502g FF flint 6/244g	Stone 1/8g	Mid C18th – early 20th
2	HM – 2/13g	-	Flint 56/1158g FF Flint 8/158g	Shell 1/6g	Mid C13 – early 14 <sup>th</sup>
3	-	Peg tile 1/17g	Flint 57/1543g FF Flint 3/152g	-	Late medieval/early post-medieval tile
8	-	-	Flint 17/570g FF Flint 2/108g	-	-
9	-	-	Flint 6/179g	Glass 1/5g Metal 1/36g	C20th
10	-	-	Flint 3/37g FF Flint 1/18g	-	-
11	-	-	Flint 27/491g FF Flint 6/187g	-	-
12	LIA-RB – 2/16g LS – 1/2g	Tegula 1/104g	Flint 37/931g FF Flint 7/223g	-	Mixed RB to C11th
14	LIA-RB – 2/6g SN – 413g	Peg tile 5/300g	Flint 26/609g FF Flint 2/71g	Burnt clay 1/10g Bone 1/65g	C19th – mid 20th
15	LBA-EIA – 1/2g M-LIA – 3/15g LIA-RB – 32-127g LS – 2/10g SN – 21/81g HM – 9/44g	Peg tile 3/25g	Flint 156/2242g FF Flint 18/497g	Shell 3/5g	Mixed pot: Late Bronze Age to early C14th but late medieval/early post- medieval tile too
17	-	Brick 3/1919g Peg tile 8/241g	-	Mortar 3/301g	C17th – mid 18th
20	-	-	-	Burnt clay 6/33g	-
21	LBA-EIA – 7/17g M-LIA – 3/6g LIA-RB – 4/7g SN – 4/10g	-	Flint 106/1178g FF Flint 18/312g	-	Mixed pot: Late Bronze Age to C11th/12th

(Key: LBA-EIA – Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age c. 1500-400BC; M-LIA – Mid/Late Iron Age c. 400-100BC; LIA – RB – Late Iron Age to Roman c 100BC-410AD; LS – Late Saxon c. 850-1050AD; SN – Saxo-Norman c 1050-1225AD; HM – High Medieval c. 1225-1375AD)

5.0.2 The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis at this time. However, it is recommended that the pottery be retained as future detailed analysis may be able to refine some of the dating, particularly for the prehistoric material. The ceramic building material from Context **17** is also recommended for retention, as this is the only dating evidence for this apparently early post-medieval structure. The remaining material is recommended for discard.

## 5.1 Pottery by Luke Barber

5.1.1 The pottery from the site was all recovered from the colluvium. The upper colluvium (Context **15**) produced 67 small sherds measuring between <10 to 30mm across. These span a considerable period of time. The small nature of the sherds together with the general lack of feature sherds makes close dating of some problematic. This is particularly the case for the prehistoric pottery where similar tempering agents were used over a considerable period of time. A single abraded scrap of LBA/EIA pot was recovered from Context **15**. This consists of a bodysherd tempered with moderate/abundant medium calcined flint. There are also three small abraded sherds tentatively ascribed to the M-LIA. These consist of two (12g) tempered with sand and shell (to 2mm) and a 4g sherd tempered with sand and common fine calcined flint to 1mm.

5.1.2 There is a notable increase in the quantity of Late Iron Age to Roman pottery (most is probably Roman). The sherds are notably weathered and abraded and are dominated by grog-tempered East Sussex Ware (28/118g), including three simple jar rims. Other more Romanised fabrics include three sandy wares (7g) and an orange colour coated sherd that has lost its slip (2g). Two sherds are tentatively ascribed a Late Saxon date. These are slightly abraded, but not to the same degree as the earlier wares. Two fabrics are represented: an oxidised ware tempered with abundant coarse multicoloured flint to 1mm (5g) and a reduced sherd with abundant finer flint to 0.5mm and some sand (5g).

5.1.3 There is also an increase in Saxo-Norman pottery suggesting a notable rise in activity during the 12<sup>th</sup> to early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The pottery at this time is dominated by oxidised and reduced wares tempered with moderate to abundant multicoloured flint grits to 0.5mm with no, or little, sand. The sherds are quite thin walled and well fired but again show slight to moderate signs of abrasion. The latest sherds from the upper colluvium consist of a mixture of sandy fabrics with rare to common flint inclusions to 0.5mm. Most sherds are oxidised and quite well fired and a date between 1225/50 and 1300/25 is likely. A further two sherds of this date, both with sparse to common flint inclusions, were recovered from the upper colluvium during the evaluation (Context **2**).

- 5.1.4 The pottery from the lower colluvium (Context **21**) is quite similar in range to that in Context **15**. The LBA-EIA is represented by seven sherds in reduced fabrics tempered with sparse to abundant calcined flints to 1.5mm. Some of these sherds, although small (to 20mm across) are relatively fresh suggesting they had not been subjected to extensive reworking before being incorporated into the colluvium. Five M-LIA sherds were also recovered though these are all heavily abraded. Similar fabrics to those noted above are present (sand and rare fine flint x1 and sand and shell x2). All of the LIA-RB sherds from Context **21** consist of heavily abraded sherds of East Sussex Ware (two further sherds of East Sussex Ware were recovered from the lower colluvium of the evaluation – Context **12**).
- 5.1.5 The latest sherds from this colluvium consist of four Saxo-Norman pieces probably dating between the 11th and 12th century. These include fabrics with multicoloured flint grits to 1mm (oxidised and reduced) of 11<sup>th</sup>- to early 12<sup>th</sup> century date and sand and finer flint, more in keeping with a 12<sup>th</sup> century date. A further sherd of general Saxo-Norman date in a sand and flint tempered reduced fabric was recovered from the lower colluvium of investigated during the evaluation (Context **12**). This could date to between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries but more diagnostic pieces would be needed to be certain.
- 5.1.6 All in all the pottery from the colluvium suggests the area has seen moderate levels of manuring arable land from the Later Bronze Age on, with a notable increase in the Roman period. However, although the colluvium investigated incorporated this earlier material the deposit itself is clearly of medieval date. The lower colluvium would appear to have accumulated during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, sometimes incorporating some recently ploughed out prehistoric material. The quantity of Saxo-Norman pottery in the upper colluvium clearly shows intensive manuring and cultivation was again occurring up until the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, at a level not seen since Roman times. However, this upper colluvium incorporated lower levels of later 13<sup>th</sup> (to early 14<sup>th</sup>) pottery suggesting it was deposited at this time. It is possible arable cultivation was declining with the rise of pastoralism toward the end of this date range. An absence of later accumulation may account for the few pieces of intrusive peg tile in the deposit (see 5.3 below).

## **5.2 Prehistoric Flintwork** by Chris Butler

- 5.2.1 The fieldwork at the Seven Sisters Country Park produced an assemblage of 527 piece of worked flint, weighing 9.431kg, of which 239 pieces (weighing 5.402kg) came from the evaluation and 288 pieces (weighing 4.029kg) were from the watching brief (Table 2). In addition there were 71 pieces of fire-fractured unworked flint weighing 1.97kg, of which 33 pieces (weighing 1.09kg) were from the evaluation and 38 (weighing 880g) were from the watching brief.

**Table 2. The Prehistoric Flintwork**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Watching Brief</b>	<b>Total</b>
Hard hammer-struck flakes	126	166	292
Soft hammer-struck flakes	33	35	68
Hard hammer-struck blades	1	1	2
Soft hammer-struck blades	3	1	4
Soft hammer-struck bladelets	1	3	4
Flake & blade fragments	65	73	138
Bladelet fragments	2	1	3
Chips	3	-	3
Core	1	-	1
Core fragments	2	4	6
Core reused as hammerstone	1	-	1
Crested blades	1	1	2
End scrapers	-	2	2
Notched flake	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>527</b>

- 5.2.2 Most of the flint pieces were either patinated white or had a blue-grey patina. Cortex where present was a smooth buff colour. A minority of pieces were either a dark grey or black colour. All of the flint has derived from the Chalk Downland.
- 5.2.3 The assemblage was dominated by hard hammer-struck flakes, which formed 55% of the assemblage, whereas soft hammer struck flakes and blades only made up 13.5% of the assemblage. Flake and blade fragments made up 26% of the assemblage. Cores were almost absent from the assemblage, whilst there were only three recognisable tools.
- 5.2.4 The debitage comprised mostly hard hammer-struck flakes with broad platforms, prominent bulbs of percussion, and numerous hinge fractures or breaks, typical of later prehistoric flintworking. The soft hammer-struck flakes generally had smaller platforms and diffuse bulb of percussion, and had more evidence of previous removals. Very few of the hard hammer-struck flakes had prepared platforms, and the proportion for soft hammer-struck flakes was only slightly higher.
- 5.2.5 Blades and bladelets were present in small numbers, and fragments of both blades and bladelets were also present. Some of the flakes, especially soft hammer-struck flakes were bladelike in appearance. Few of the blades had any evidence of platform preparation, but almost all of the bladelets had prepared platforms.

- 5.2.6 There was little evidence for in-situ flintknapping, with only a single later prehistoric two-platform flake core, a core re-used as a hammerstone and six core fragments being found. There were also few chips or other flintknapping waste, apart from two crested blades.
- 5.2.7 Formal tool types were almost completely absent from the assemblage. Two end scrapers were found; the first was manufactured on a hard hammer-struck cortical flake from Context **15**, with minimal abrupt retouch at the distal end. The second was on a larger hard hammer-struck flake from Context **21**, again with minimal semi-abrupt retouch at the distal end. The final tool was a notched hard hammer-struck flake from Context **15**, with a notch retouched into the distal end.
- 5.2.8 The assemblage appears to be completely residual with a mixture of types, and evidence of different technologies being present in the same contexts. There is little difference between the assemblages from the upper and lower colluvium, although the lower colluvium does seem to have a higher proportion of soft hammer-struck pieces, and blades and bladelets, suggesting an earlier date.
- 5.2.9 A small quantity of the pieces are typical of Mesolithic or early Neolithic flintworking, but these only make up around 6% of the assemblage, however they do indicate that there was some activity in the area in these periods. In particular Context **10** (fill of Cut **7**) produced three soft hammer-struck flakes, although without any evidence of platform preparation, which are likely to be Neolithic in date
- 5.2.10 The majority of the assemblage derives from later prehistoric flintworking, although in the absence of distinctive pieces or diagnostic tools, it is difficult to place the assemblage into a close timeframe. However, a date in the Bronze Age appears most likely, although given the very mixed nature of the assemblage, it could easily have accumulated over the entire period from the later Neolithic through to the end of the Bronze Age.
- 5.2.11 Despite carefully sieving a reasonable proportion of the colluvium during the watching brief, very little evidence was found for the smaller pieces, such as chips and small fragments that you would expect to find if flintknapping or tool manufacturing was taking place on the site. The almost total absence of these pieces, and cores and core debitage, suggests that these activities were taking place some distance from the site.

### 5.3 Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 A small quantity of ceramic building material was recovered from the site, most of which was recovered from Context **17**. This deposit produced three brick fragments of probable 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century date. All are quite crudely formed and vary from medium/hard to hard-fired. The two pieces with original surfaces are (accidentally) self-glazed and 53mm tall. The pieces are tempered with sparse fine sand with occasional iron oxide and marl pellets to 2mm. The peg tile from Context **17** is all quite well formed and fired, being tempered with sparse fine sand with occasional flint, marl or chalk inclusions to 2mm. The tiles vary in thickness between 12 and 13mm. They appear to be of a similar date to the brick.
- 5.3.2 Colluvium (Context **15**) produced three relatively small pieces of peg tile tempered with sparse fine sand with occasional iron oxide and marl pellets. The largest piece is quite well formed and fires, with partial self-glazing on its upper face. A 16<sup>th</sup>- to early 18<sup>th</sup>- century date range is probable. A quite similar peg tile fragment was recovered from the lower colluvium during the evaluation (Context **3**) though this could be intrusive. The same deposit also produced a slightly abraded fragment of flange from a Roman tegula tile tempered with moderate fine sand and rare iron oxide inclusions to 1mm. Contexts **1** and **14** produced further peg tile fragments, but these pieces all consist of well made very hard-fired examples tempered with sparse fine sand and marl streaks. A later 19<sup>th</sup>- to early 20<sup>th</sup>- century date is probable.

### 5.4 Other Finds by Luke Barber & Chris Butler

- 5.4.1 Context **1** produced a single piece of West Country slate, likely to be of medieval origin. Contexts **14** and **20** produced fragments of silty burnt clay with one flattened face. The date of this material is uncertain. Context **17** produced some mortar fragments. These are all of an off-white lime mortar with abundant flint gravel aggregate to 4mm. It would not be out of place with the 17<sup>th</sup>- to mid 18<sup>th</sup>- century date of the ceramic building material from this deposit.
- 5.4.2 There were few other finds recovered during the fieldwork (Table 1). A chopped piece of cattle leg bone was found in Context **14**, and oyster shell fragments were recovered from Contexts **2** and **15**.
- 5.4.3 The only other finds were 20<sup>th</sup> century in date, and comprised a small piece of bottle glass from Context **9**, and a fragment of thin metal plate with a handle also from Context **9**, perhaps from the liner from a Second World War ammunition case.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1** The archaeological evaluation assessment undertaken within the footprint of the proposed reed-bed on land adjacent to the car park at the Seven Sisters Country Park proved to be successful in its aims and objectives. It established the presence of archaeological cut features and the depth of overlying colluvial deposits.
- 6.2** Both evaluation trenches were located in part to investigate an upstanding topographic feature, which crosses the development footprint of the proposed reed-bed from the northwest to the southeast, becoming more pronounced to the southeast. At the southwest end of Trench A, where it interfaced with the surface feature, several notable archaeological deposits and features were recorded. Deposit Context **6** was aligned with the upstanding bank and appeared to be a formative lynchet against which subsequent colluvium deposits had gathered and thickened. Context **6** was also noteworthy for the relatively high frequency of flint contained within its matrix, although no datable material was recovered from this context. However, the linear feature or ditch recorded as cut Context **7** lay immediately to the southwest of the possible lynchet, and also lay at depth, below the surface bank. It is thought likely that this ditch was a former field boundary, concomitant with the deposition of Context **6**. Finds from the fill of cut Context **7**,
- 6.3** Context **10**, included a small amount of prehistoric flintwork which probably dated to the Neolithic period. Of further interest was the flint rich deposit Context **8**, which was found to seal the ditch. This context produced prehistoric flintwork, which includes residual Neolithic material, but is predominantly Bronze Age in date. This deposit displayed a hard edge on its northeast side, which ran on the same alignment as the linear it sealed. Thus it is thought possible that Context **8** may be the primary fill of a re-cut event to a broader later ditch. In fact, part of its composition may have been derived from the possible lynchet deposit, Context **6**. Most significantly both deposits **6** and **8**, along with cut feature **10** all appeared to respect the surface topography.
- 6.4** The excavation of Trench B revealed no sub-surface evidence for the upstanding bank. However, whilst no cut features were identified, a minimum of 1200mm of colluvium was recorded which revealed the same stratigraphic profile as noted in Trench A. Hence, the upper colluvial deposits from both trenches (Contexts **2**, **3**, **11** and **12**) are thought to represent contemporary depositional events, almost certainly being the product of slope erosion from the valley side which rises immediately to the northeast of the site. A relatively large amount of prehistoric flintwork was recovered from all four contexts. This material was mixed in character and date, but much of it was dated to the Bronze Age. Very little pottery was found during the evaluation.



- 6.5** The depth of the archaeological deposits and features found during the evaluation excavation meant that due to the depth of the impact of the reed-bed excavation none of the features found in the evaluation were re-located during the watching brief. The top of the possible lynchet deposit (Context **6**) was *c.*880mm below the ground level, whilst the flint rich deposit (Context **8**) was *c.*960mm deep. The linear feature (cut Context **7** filled by Context **10**) was deeper again, being *c.*1120mm below the ground surface. The excavation of the reed-bed was much shallower than these features, and there was no adverse impact on them.
- 6.6** The monitoring of the removal of the colluvium only encountered features associated with the later post medieval use of the site. However due to the sieving of the colluvium, it produced a reasonable assemblage of pottery and flintwork from the colluvium that has provided an interesting summary of the past land use of the site and its immediate upslope environment. In doing so the watching brief achieved its aims in enhancing our knowledge of the past landscape history of the site and its immediate environment.
- 6.7** The earliest features on the site were found on the evaluation, and appear to date from the Neolithic or Bronze Age, and suggest that by the end of the Bronze Age there was a field boundary on the west edge of the site, and from that time, probably due to agricultural activity, material has moved downslope to form a deep layer of colluvium against the east side of the lynchet.
- 6.8** This material includes Bronze Age flintwork and pottery, Iron Age and Roman pottery, and Saxon and medieval pottery, and clearly shows a long history of land use in the area of the site. The early OS maps show the area to be open ground, and this was still the case in 1947 when an aerial photograph shows the site to be an open area. It is only since then that the area has been planted up with woodland as part of Friston Forest<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Butler, C. 2010. *A Desk Based Assessment & Written Scheme of Investigation for The Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex*. Unpublished CBAS Report.

## **7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**7.1** We would like to thank The Hamson Partnership and East Sussex County Council for commissioning this programme of archaeological works, especially Paul Comber of Hamson's who organised the project. Gregory Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, monitored the project for East Sussex County Council.

**7.2** Chris Butler managed the project. He also reported on the flintwork whilst Luke Barber reported on all the other finds including the pottery and ceramic building material. Jane Russell and Andrew Bradshaw prepared the drawings for the report.

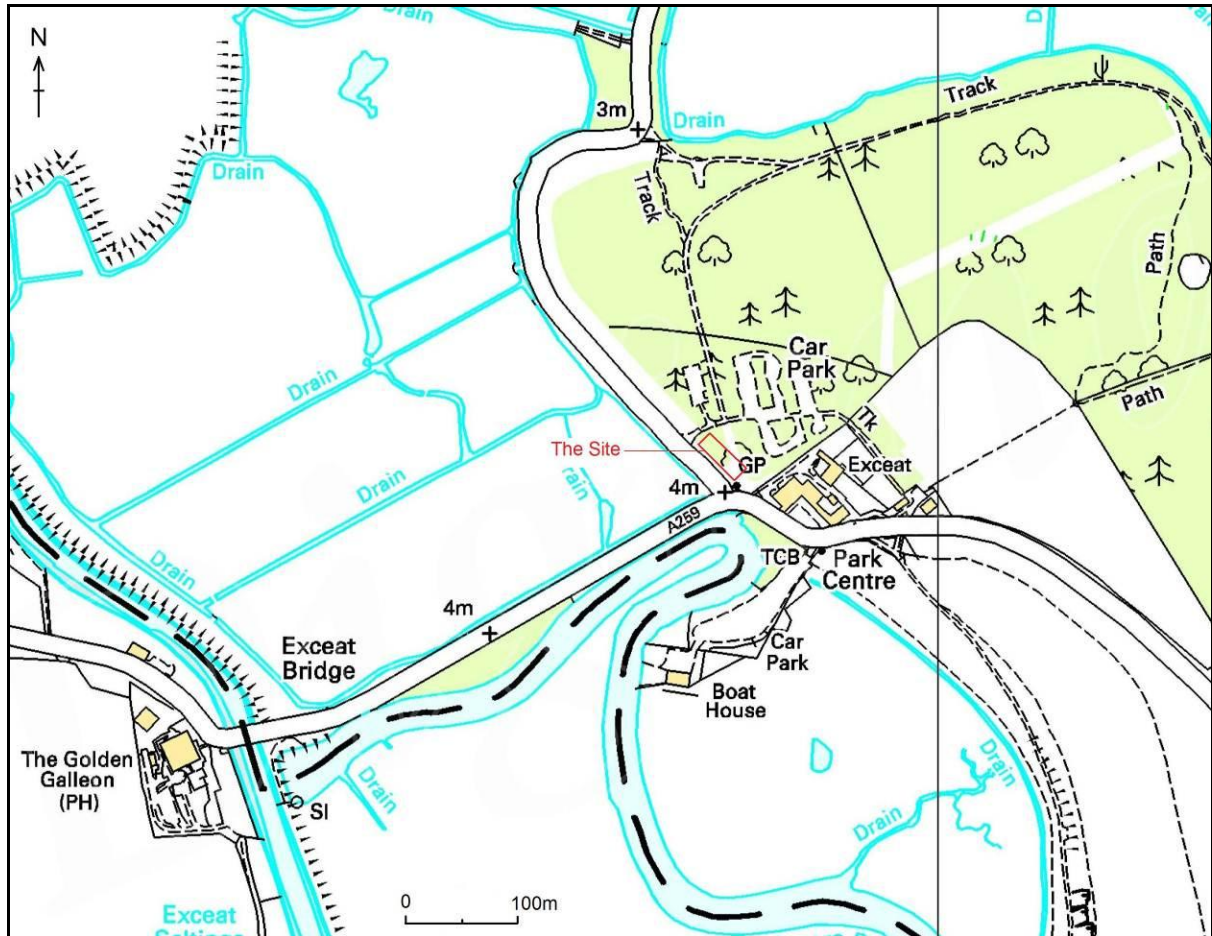
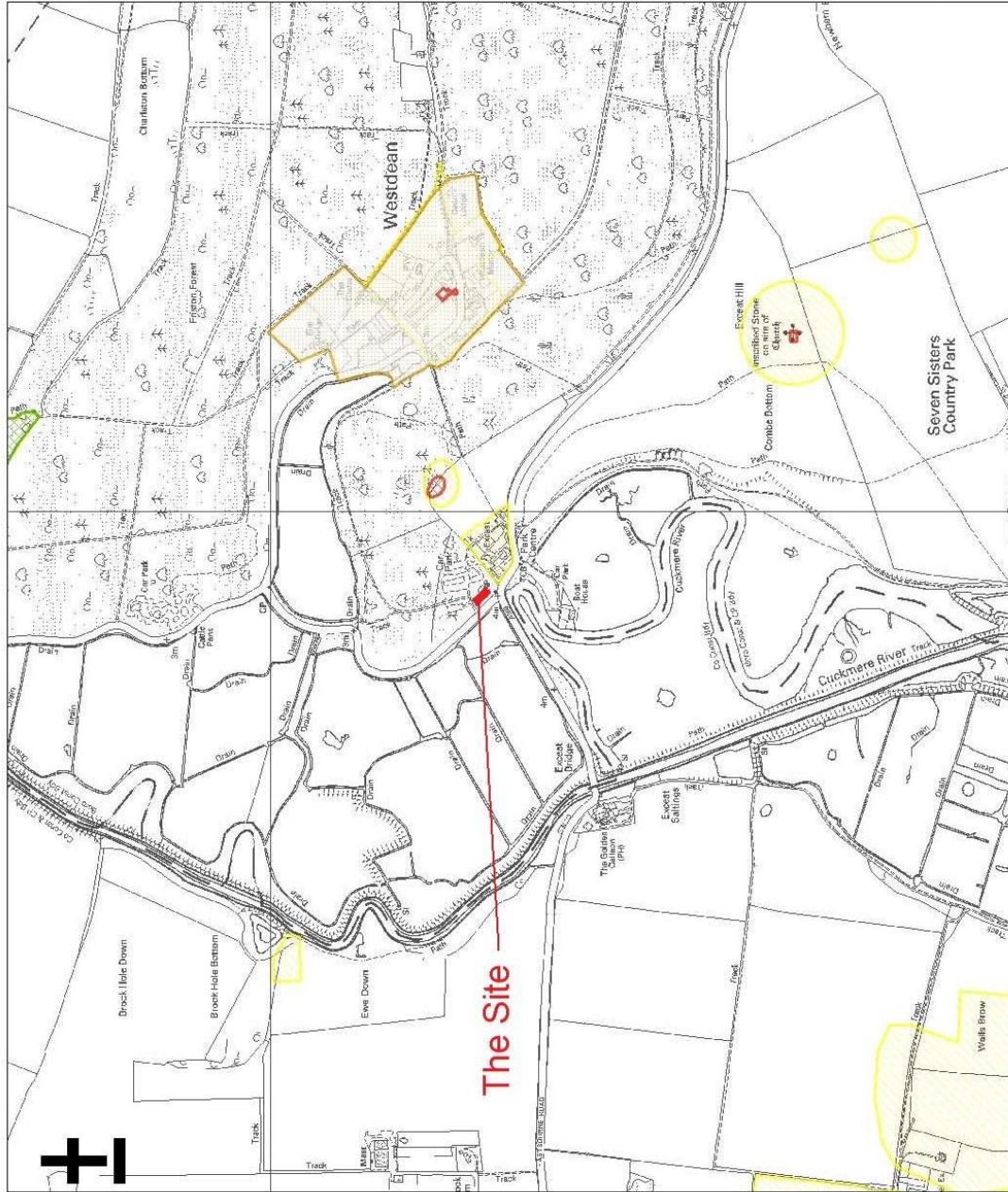


Fig. 1: Seven Sisters Country Park: Site location map  
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**Fig. 2:  
 Archaeologically  
 Sensitive Areas  
 & Scheduled  
 Monuments**

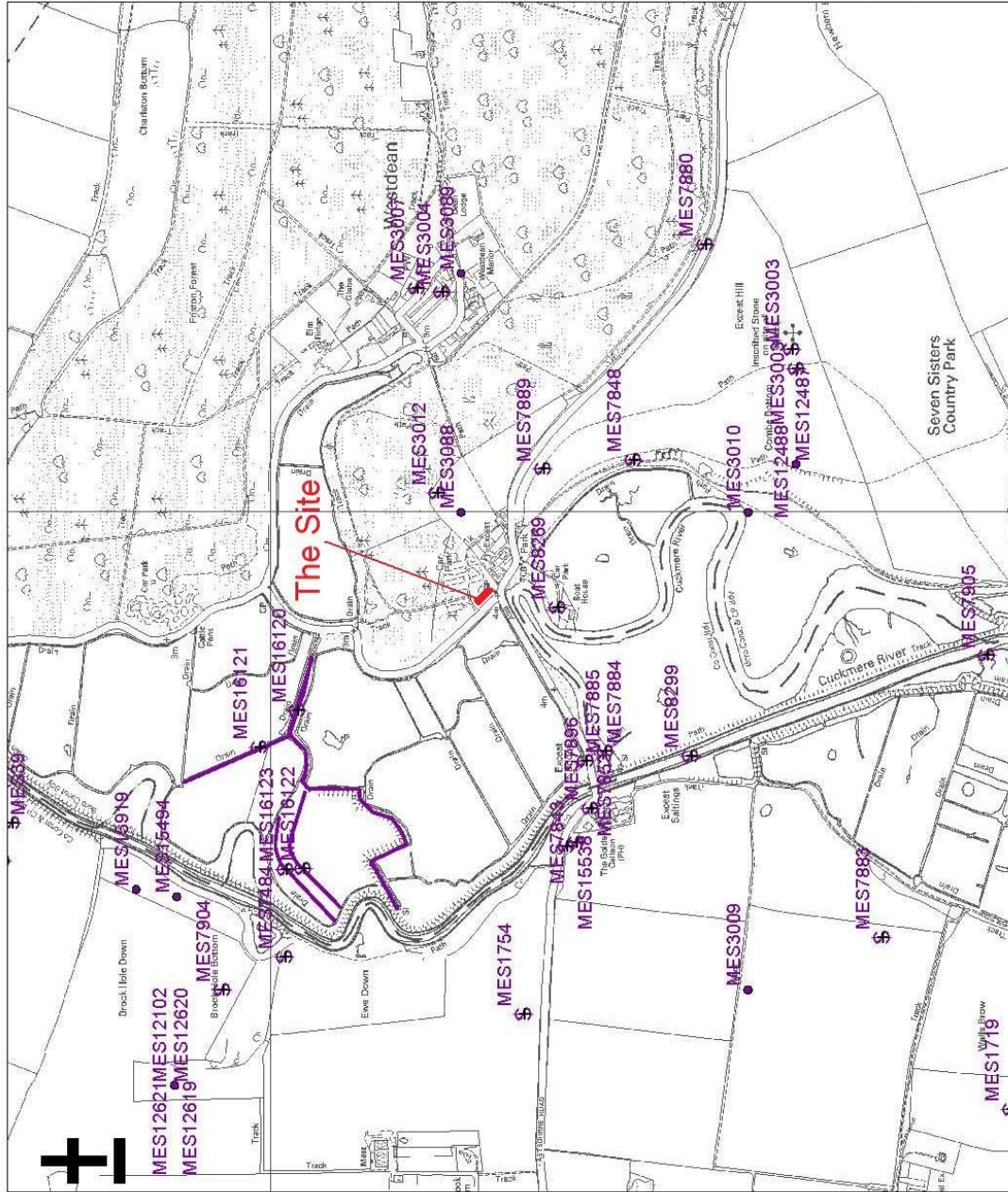


- Legend**
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments (RO)
  - Registered Parks and Gardens (RO)
  - Registered Battlements (RO)
  - Conservation Areas (RO)
  - Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (RO)

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# Fig. 3 Monuments on the HER



Legend	
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●	BLD
●	FS
#	LB
6	LND
△	MAR
△	MON
⌘	PLA
—	Mon (line)
□	Mon (poly)

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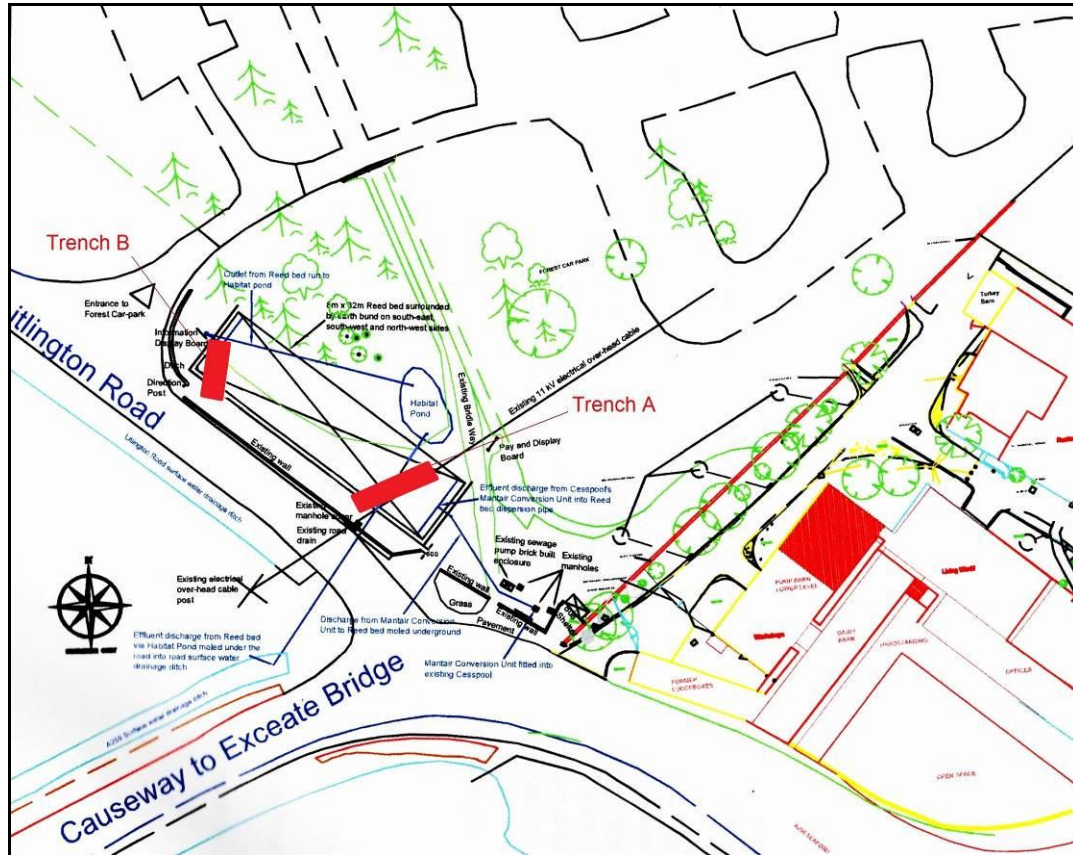


Fig. 4: Seven Sisters Country Park: Location of evaluation trenches  
(Drawing provided by Hamson Partnership)

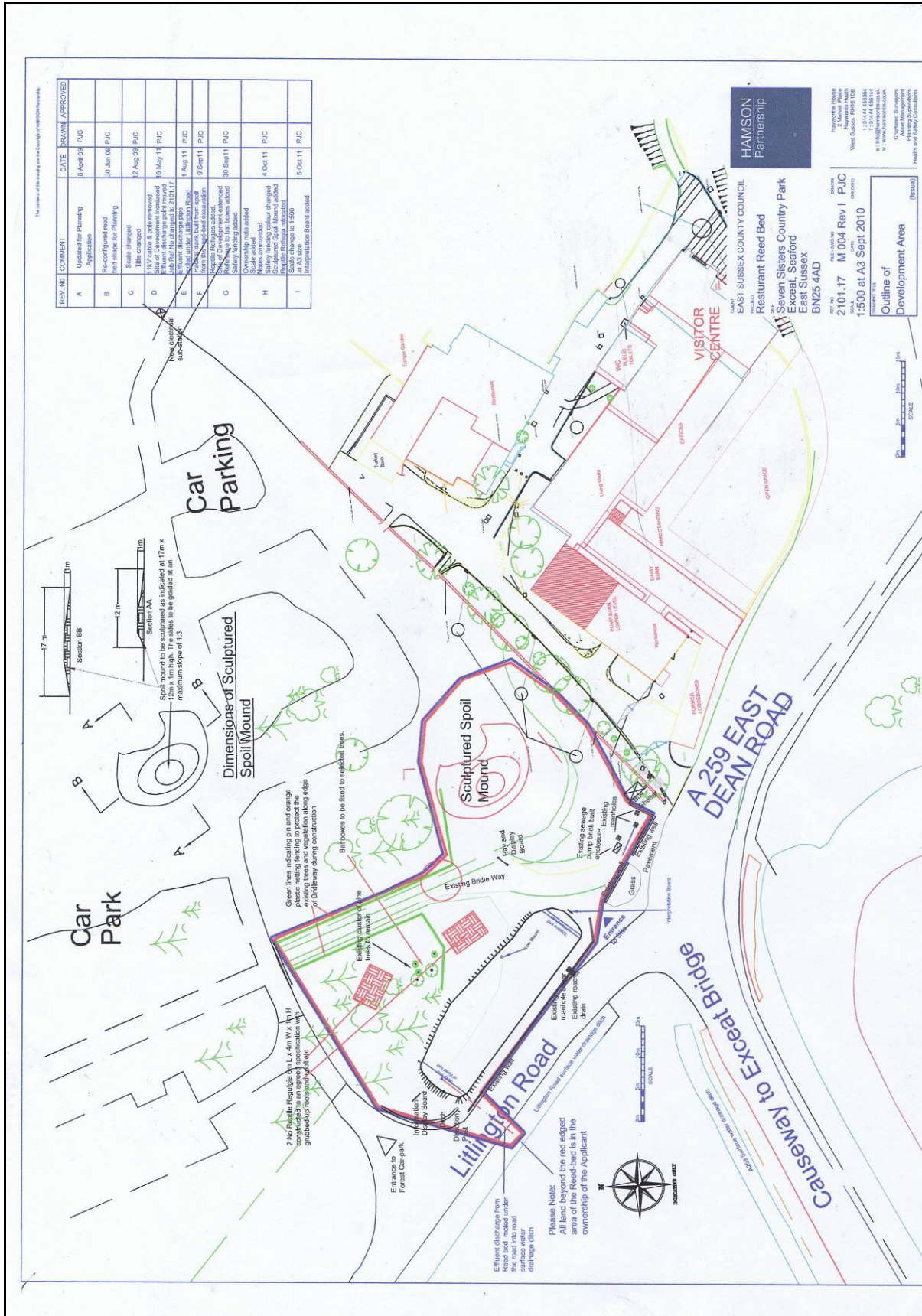


Fig. 5: Seven Sisters Country Park: Site plan showing location of reed bed and other works  
(Adapted from architects drawing)



Fig. 6: Yeakell and Gardner's Sussex Map 1778-1783  
([http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell\\_36.htm](http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell_36.htm))



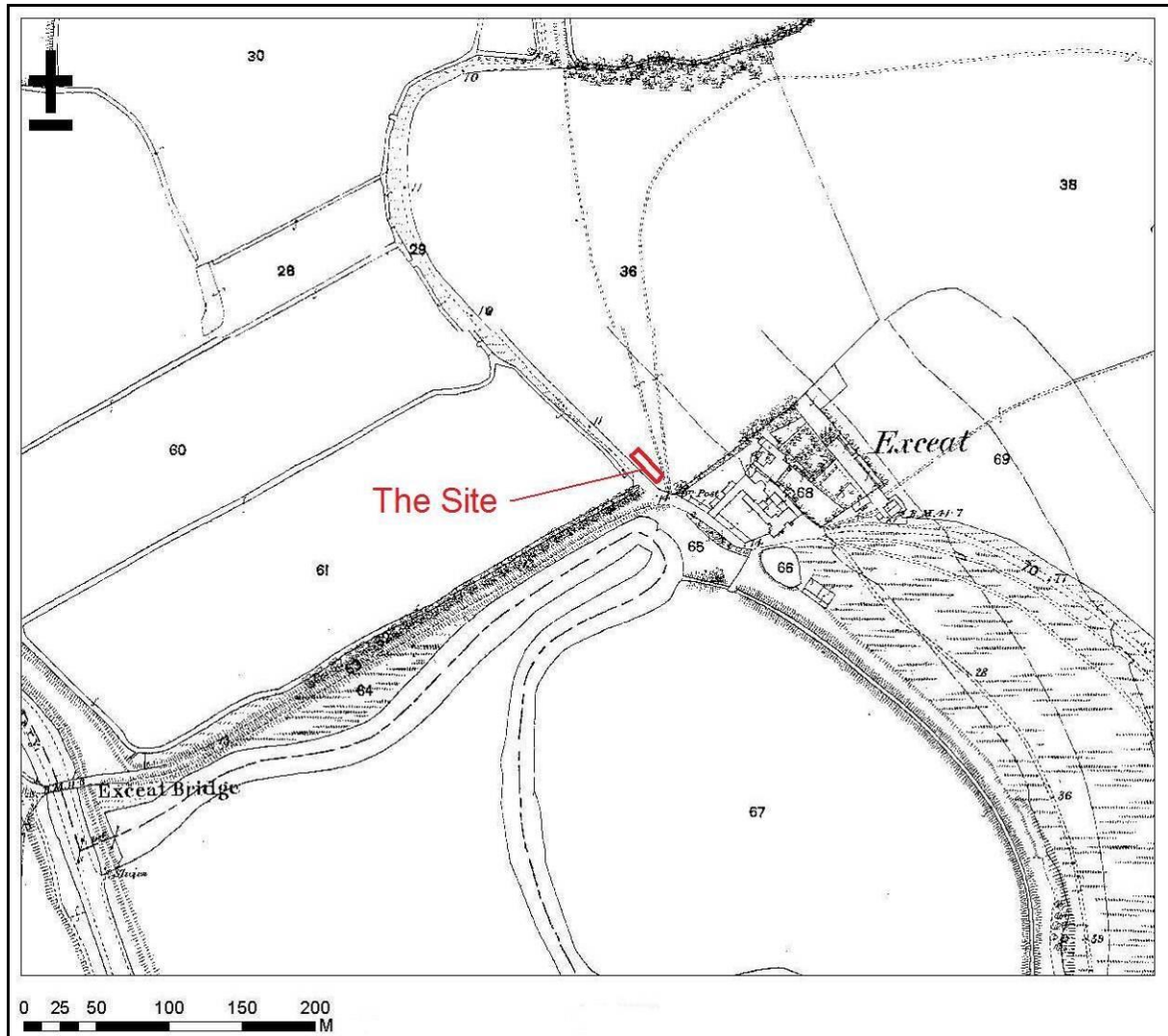


Fig. 7: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map 1878  
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

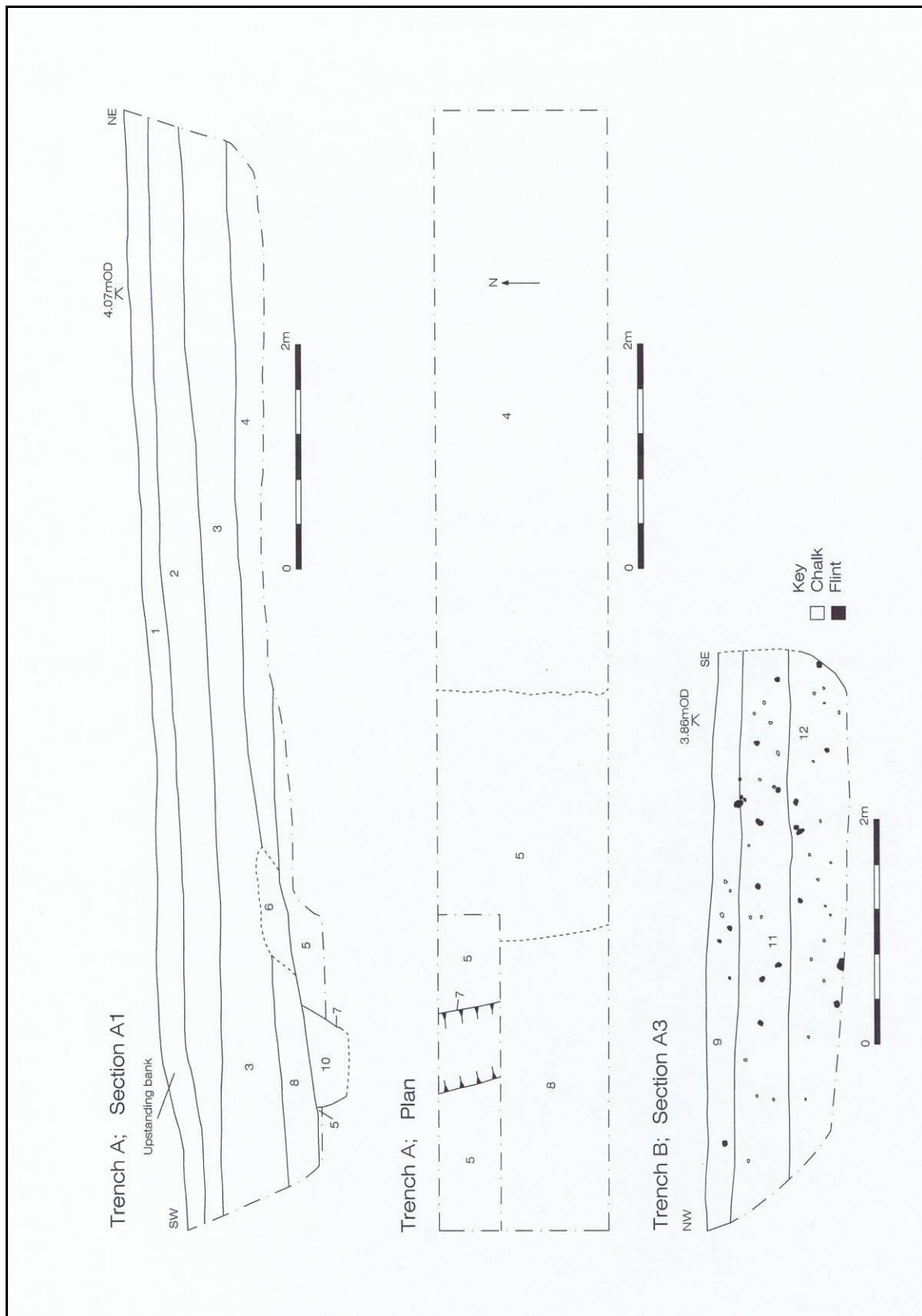
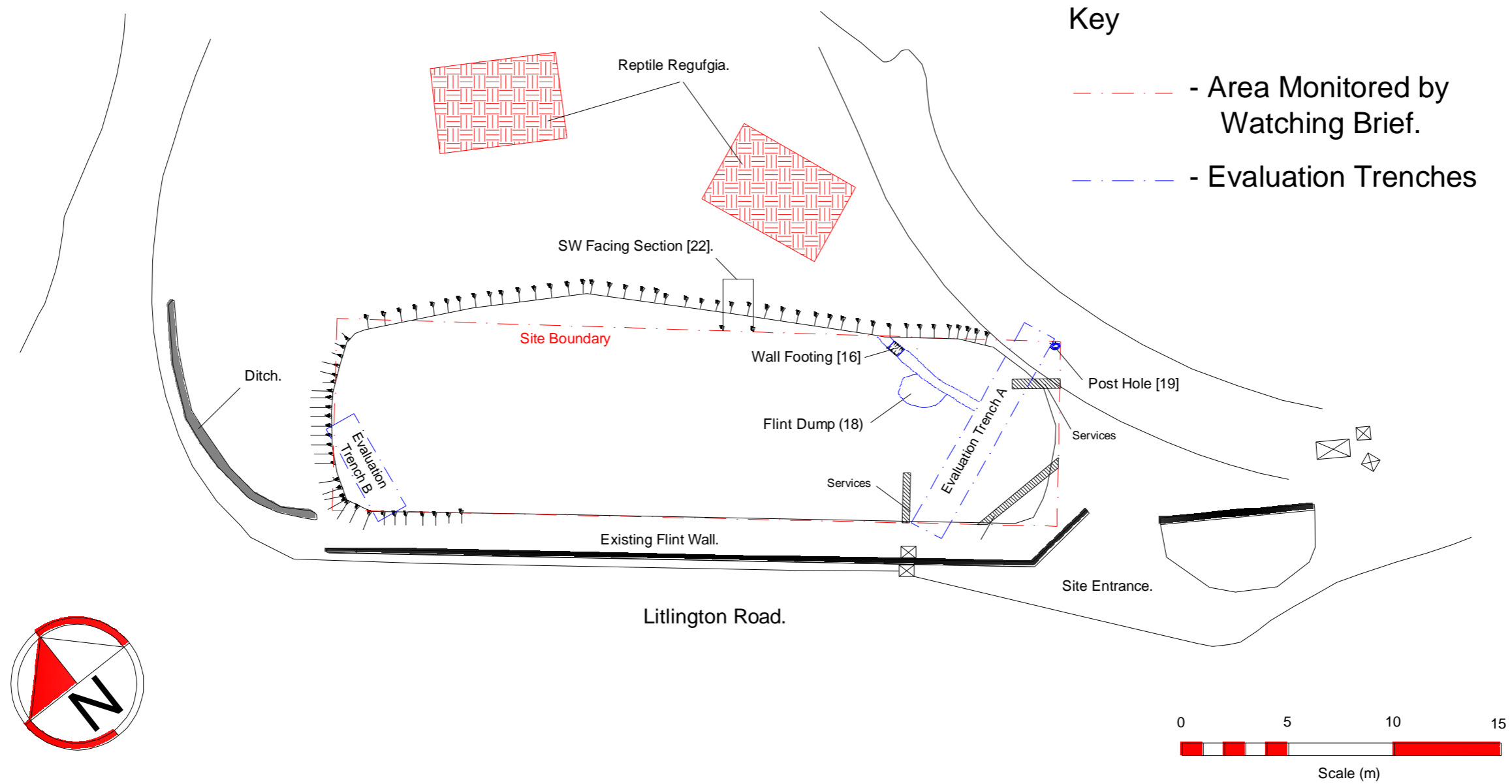


Fig. 8: Seven Sisters Country Park: Evaluation Excavation Phase: Sections and Plan

Adapted from Clients Surveyors Drawing.



Key

- - - - - Area Monitored by Watching Brief.
- - - - - Evaluation Trenches

Seven Sisters County Park - Site Plan.

Site Code: SSP.10	Project No: CBAS0214	Sheet No. 3 of 3.
Date: 6th June 2012	Dwn By: Caroline Russell & Andy Bradshaw.	
CAD: Andy Bradshaw		

Fig. 9: Plan of site showing area monitored during Watching Brief

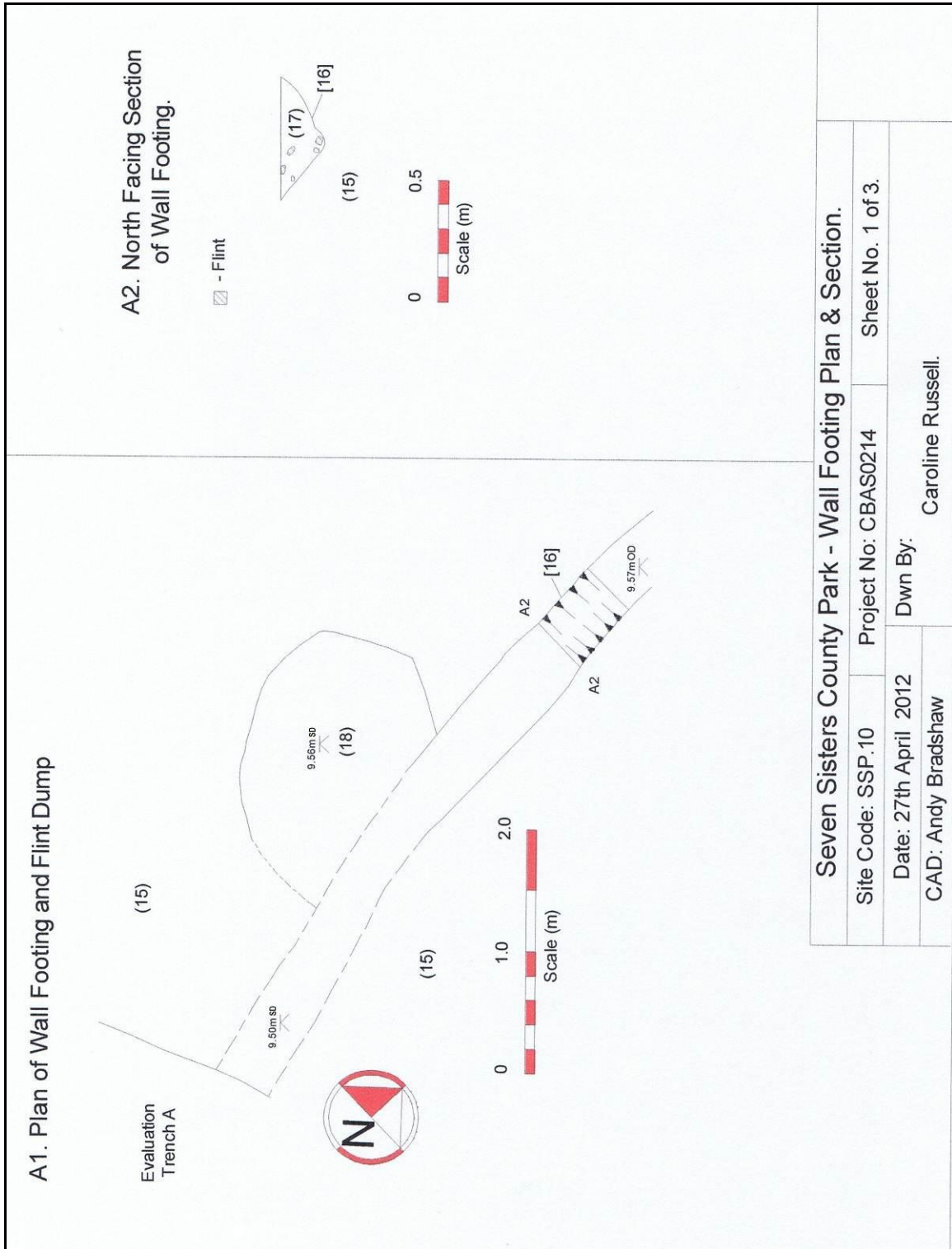


Fig. 10: Seven Sisters Country Park: Plan and section of wall footing

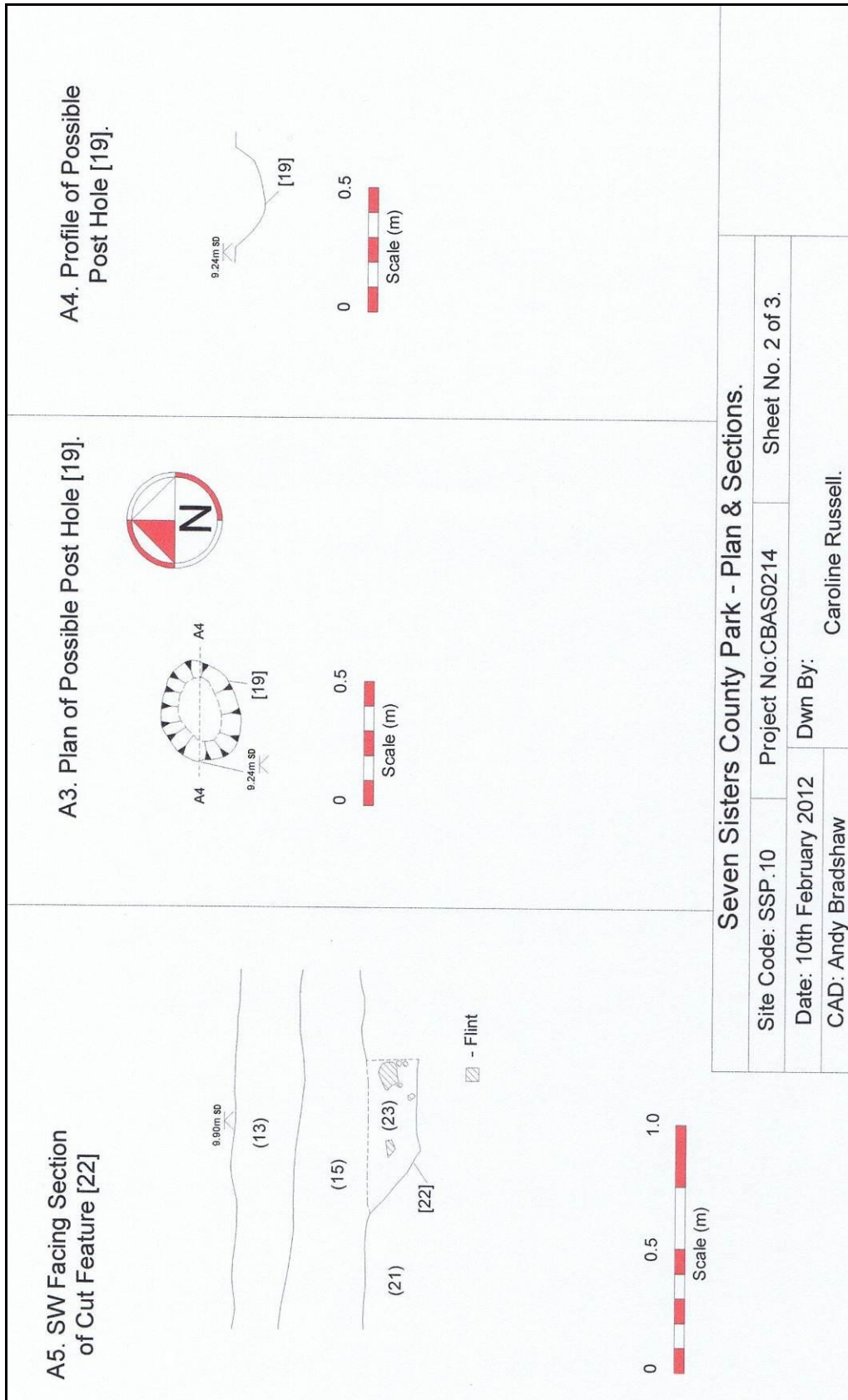


Fig. 11: Seven Sisters Country Park: Watching Brief Sections and Plan



Plate 1: Seven Sisters Country Park: Left: Trench A Cut 7;  
Right: general view of Trench A



Plate 2: Seven Sisters Country Park: Trench B



Plate 3: Seven Sisters Country Park: Watching brief site showing stratigraphy, looking north



Plate 4: Seven Sisters Country Park: Wall footing (Context 16) and flint dump (Context 18), looking broadly north

### Appendix I: Context Register

<b>Recorded during</b>	<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>
Eval.	1	Deposit	Tr. A	Topsoil
Eval.	2	Deposit	Tr. A	Colluvium
Eval.	3	Deposit	Tr. A	Colluvium
Eval.	4	Deposit	Tr. A	Clay-with-flint colluvium
Eval.	5	Deposit	Tr. A	Chalky colluvium
Eval.	6	Deposit	Tr. A	Possible formative lynchet deposit
Eval.	7	Cut	Tr. A	NW-SE linear, filled by (10)
Eval.	8	Deposit	Tr. A	Flinty gravel deposit
Eval.	9	Deposit	Tr. B	Topsoil
Eval.	10	Fill	Tr. A	Fill of [7]
Eval.	11	Deposit	Tr. B	Subsoil / colluvium
Eval.	12	Deposit	Tr. B	Colluvium
WB	13	Deposit	-	Topsoil
WB	14	Deposit	-	Mixed topsoil and upper colluvium
WB	15	Deposit	-	Upper colluvium
WB	16	Cut	-	Wall footing
WB	17	Fill	-	Fill of wall footing [16]
WB	18	Deposit	-	Flint dump adjacent to [16]
WB	19	Cut	-	Possible post-hole
WB	20	Fill	-	Fill of [19]
WB	21	Deposit	-	Lower colluvium
WB	22	Cut	-	Possible tee bowl
WB	23	Fill	-	Fill of [22]



## Appendix II: HER Summary Form

Site Code	SSP10					
Identification Name and Address	Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex County Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TV 51828 99552					
Geology	Seaford Chalk Formation and Alluvium					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. <b>X</b>	Excav.	Watching Brief <b>X</b>	Sta	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field <b>X</b>	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	Excav.	WB. 6 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	Other		
Sponsor/Client	The Hamson Partnership for East Sussex County Council					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MfA					
Project Supervisor	Clive Meaton and Dr Caroline Russell					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA <b>X</b>	IA <b>X</b>	RB <b>X</b>
	AS <b>X</b>	MED <b>X</b>	PM <b>X</b>	Other:		
<p><i>100 word Summary:</i></p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to the car park at the Seven Sisters Country Park, in advance of the proposed construction of a 32m x 8m reed-bed toilet waste disposal system. in Trench A, a possible lynchet deposit and ditch were revealed from c.860mm below the ground surface, which corresponded to the alignment of a shallow upstanding topographic anomaly. The lynchet and ditch both survived below the proposed formation depth of the development. Nonetheless, a watching brief was recommended both to monitor for archaeological features within the colluvium, and to obtain a controlled sample of cultural material from within it. This revealed the remains of a 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century wall, and some small cut features which are likely to be relatively recent in date. The artefacts recovered during the work suggest that there has been activity in the area from at least the Mesolithic period, and large quantities of artefacts have accumulated against the lynchet from the Bronze Age through to the medieval period, suggesting that there was activity further upslope throughout these periods.</i></p>						

## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp.

**Chris Butler Archaeological Services** is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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