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A Desk-based Assessment at Cradle Hill School, Seaford, East Sussex

by
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Summary

An archaeological Desk-based Assessment has been carried out at Cradle Hill Primary School, Seaford, East Sussex, where it has been proposed to build a new extension.

The desk-based assessment has established that the school site was a field prior to the school being built, and there is no evidence for previous buildings on the site, or any known archaeology. However, there are numerous sites and finds from the Palaeolithic period to the 19th century in the surrounding landscape, which may indicate the likely presence of buried archaeological remains at the site.

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Front Cover: Cradle Hill School

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services has been commissioned by NPS Property Consultants Ltd for East Sussex County Council to carry out an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of the proposed site for a new extension at Cradle Hill Primary School, Seaford, East Sussex, in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed construction, as part of an initial feasibility study.
- 1.2 The site for the proposed new primary school extension is located on the east side of Lexden Road centred on TQ 49008 00300 (Fig. 1), which is situated on the northern edge of Seaford, north of the Alfriston Road, and close to the parish boundary with East Blatchington. The site is currently the existing Cradle Hill Primary School, and is bounded by housing developments and their associated gardens on all four sides (Fig. 2).
- 1.3 The part of the site on which the school buildings are located is situated at around 37m OD on its north side and slopes down to approximately 34m on its south side. The school site has been terraced into this slope which then continues to slope downhill to the south. The site is not within a designated Conservation Area or Archaeologically Sensitive Area.
- 1.4 The site is approximately 2.4ha in size, and currently comprises the original school buildings which were completed in 1972¹. The school also has a number of temporary classrooms and a swimming pool (Fig. 2), with three playgrounds, and a large playing field on its south side.
- 1.5 The current Cradle Hill Primary School was opened on 9th September 1968 with a roll of 200 pupils to cater for the increasing population resulting from the new housing developments that were being built around it on the Downland on the north side of Seaford. A second phase of building followed in 1971-73², and it now currently has some 450 children. It has been proposed that new accommodation be built on the site to cater for the increase in numbers and to provide new facilities.
- 1.6 Seaford is situated on the south coast, at the east end of a bay created by the mouth of the River Ouse, which now flows into the English Channel at Newhaven a few km to the west. Seaford has the chalk South Downs to its north onto which the town has expanded during the 20th century. The River Cuckmere lies a short distance to the east of the town. Seaford is not mentioned in the Domesday Book³, and is in the Hundred of Flexborough, which is part of the Rape of Pevensey.

¹ ESCC 1992-3 Guide for Parents – Cradle Hill County Primary School

² ESRO (E/SC/261 & E/SC/261/4/1)

³ Morris, J. (Ed) 1976 *Domesday Book*, Chichester, Phillimore

- 1.7** The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey (sheet 319/334), comprises Newhaven Chalk, with a large outcrop of Clay-with-flints to its north and west. The soil at the site is described as a shallow lime-rich freely-draining soil over chalk⁴.
- 1.8** The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) survey for Seaford has designated the site as being settlement, whilst the HLC dating gives the school site a late 20th century date⁵. The Land Utilisation Survey 1931-1935 shows the site to be meadowland and permanent grassland, with arable land to the east of South Down Farm, although there are patches of new housing already appearing to the south and west of the site⁶.
- 1.9** This report initially covers the objectives and scope of the survey, then discusses the methodology used in the Desk-based Assessment, and then reviews the archaeological heritage of the area. Finally a conclusion assesses the potential impact of the development. A full listing of all the known archaeological sites from the HER is contained in Appendix 1 to this report, whilst other sites are listed in Appendix 2, and archaeological events in Appendix 3.

2. Objectives & Scope of Report

- 2.1** The objective of this report is to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource of the site and its immediate area. This will include information relating to the presence or absence of any archaeology, its character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation, and the relative quality of the potential archaeological resource.
- 2.2** This will allow an assessment of the merits of the archaeology in context to be made, leading to the formulation of a strategy for the recording, preservation and management of the resource or, where necessary, the formulation of a strategy for further investigation where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be defined.
- 2.3** The report will consider the archaeological resource within a radius of 1km around the site, whilst also taking into account sites further afield where these may be considered to have an impact or relevance to the site in its landscape setting.
- 2.4** It should be noted that this report can only take into account the existing known archaeology, and by its nature cannot provide a complete record of the archaeological resource of the site. Its intention is to provide an overview of the known archaeology in the area of the site, from which judgements can be made about the potential archaeological resource of the site itself.

⁴ <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

⁵ HLC data provided by ESCC

⁶ <http://landuse.edina.ac.uk/>

3. Methodology

3.1 This Desk-based Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16), the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001), and the *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post Excavation Work in East Sussex* (ESCC 2008). A brief for this Desk-based Assessment was prepared by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council.

3.2 The research for this Desk-based Assessment has included an analysis of the following resources:

- ESCC Historic Environment Record (HER)
- Historic mapping (including that provided with ESCC HER)
- NMR records and aerial photographs
- Portable Antiquities Scheme database
- East Sussex Record Office (ESRO)
- Sussex Archaeological Society Library
- Defence of Britain database
- British Geological Survey
- Aerial Photograph search (Cambridge & Sussex Universities)
- Personal & Public library resources

3.3 The following maps were used:

- Speed 1610
- Morden's Sussex 1695
- Kitchen 1763
- Cole's Sussex 1808
- Moule's Sussex 1837
- 1839 Seaford Tithe map (ESRO - TD/E37)
- 1843 East Blatchington Tithe map (ESRO – TD/E106)
- 1st Edition OS Map (1875)
- 2nd Edition OS Map (1899)
- 3rd Edition OS Map (1910)
- 4th Edition OS Map (1927)

Information gained from the map regression exercise is contained in the Post Medieval section below.

3.4 The Sites and Listed Buildings recorded on the HER and other sources are listed in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report and mentioned in the text where relevant. The Monuments are shown on Fig. 3. Historical and other sources are given as footnotes as appropriate. Three aerial photographs were provided by ESCC. Other aerial photographs were not reviewed, as due to the built up nature of the sites and its surrounding area only immediate post war aerial photographs were likely to be of any use.

- 3.5** A site visit was undertaken on the 17th December 2008. This confirmed that the site comprises a steep drive down to the school level from Lexden Road where the original school building and later additions are on a terrace that has been cut into the slope. On the west side of the building is a tarmac playground with a brick wall retaining the section cut through the slope. The south side of the building has been in-filled to embank the ground as part of the levelling-off of the site to form the terrace on which the buildings sit.
- 3.6** On the south side of the site is a large grassed playing field, which slopes downhill into a dry valley to the south-west. The boundary on all sides has a wooden close-boarded fence, with trees on the inside along the south and east sides. Along the eastern boundary there are numerous recently planted trees and some minor earthworks probably associated with recent garden landscaping.
- 3.7** Immediately to the south of the buildings is a recent small tarmac playground/basket-ball court terraced into the slope, and with the surplus earth embanked along its south side and covered with small trees and bushes. Another larger tarmac playground is located on the east side of the main school building, terraced into the slope, with temporary portacabin classrooms on its north and south sides.
- 3.8** At the front of the school (on its north side) there is a small car park with a wooden close-boarded fence on its east side. Beyond this fence there is a tarmac drive which cuts across the grassed natural slope to the playground on the east side of the building.
- 3.9** No archaeological features were noted. A number of areas of bare earth were inspected for artefacts, and a single piece of fire-fractured flint was recovered from the southern playing field part of the site.

4. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 4.0.1 This section considers each archaeological period in turn, reviewing the known archaeological resource of the area, defining its location and extent, character, date, integrity, state of preservation, and quality.
- 4.0.2 There has been very little archaeological work in the immediate vicinity of the Cradle Hill School site, apart from the recording of burials and the remains of Sutton Church during the 1940's re-developments (EES9326).
- 4.0.3 The review of each period will also bring in evidence for that period from a wider area, especially where there is little known archaeological evidence locally. This will enable a more accurate judgement to be made about the archaeological potential for the site. This evidence will include that taken from similar landscapes and geologies.

4.1 Palaeolithic Period (750,000BC – 10,000BC)

- 4.1.1 This period covers a huge period of time, during which early hominid occupation of Southern Britain was intermittent. The period is divided into warm and cold periods, with the evidence suggesting that hominid occupation occurred during some of the warm periods. Apart from a small number of exceptional sites (e.g. Boxgrove), most of the evidence for human activity in this period comes from isolated finds of stone tools, often in secondary deposits.
- 4.1.2 A number of Palaeolithic handaxes have been found to the north of Seaford (MES8 & MES58)⁷ whilst others have come from East Blatchington and the Cuckmere Valley. It has been suggested that this material derives from the Clay-with-flints deposits⁸.
- 4.1.4 There is a large area of Clay-with-flints deposit to the north and west of the site, and further similar deposits nearby. As these do not appear to extend onto the site the likely impact of in-situ Palaeolithic archaeology being present on the site is considered to be low, but artefacts may have been moved downslope onto the site by erosion and agricultural activity.

4.2 Mesolithic Period (10,000BC – 4,000BC)

- 4.2.1 The start of the Mesolithic period sees Britain largely covered by pine and birch woodland, which was gradually replaced by a mixed deciduous woodland that provided an ideal environment for the bands of hunter-gatherers who were exploiting the resources on a seasonal basis⁹. There is some 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.
- 4.2.2 There is no evidence for Mesolithic activity at or near the site. However, 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 north and west of the site.
- 4.2.3 A small assemblage of Mesolithic flintwork was found on the west side of Seaford at Valley Dip on a Clay-with-flints deposit, and included debitage and three picks¹⁰, whilst other pieces have been collected between Seaford Head and Cuckmere Haven¹¹.

⁷ Woodcock, A 1981 *The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Periods in Sussex*, Oxford, BAR **94**.

⁸ Wymer, J. 1999 *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain*, Vol. **1**, Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage, p171.

⁹ Holgate, R. 2003 'Late Glacial and Post-glacial Hunter-gatherers in Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd, 29-38.

¹⁰ Butler, C. 1996 'Later Prehistoric flintwork from Valley Dip, Seaford, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **134**, 219-224.

- 4.2.5 The evidence for this period suggests that there is little likelihood of any significant Mesolithic activity being present on the site, as the nearby Clay-with-flints deposit does not appear to extend onto the site, although it is possible that isolated artefacts and features may be found.

4.3 *Neolithic Period (4,000BC to 2,500BC)*

- 4.3.1 A number of changes occur during the Neolithic, some of which may have had an impact on the local area. Some of the woodland was being cleared and small scale agricultural activities are likely to have started. However, environmental evidence suggests that although the Downs may have been largely cleared of woodland by the end of the Neolithic, leaving an open landscape, there is little evidence for ploughing taking place¹².
- 4.3.2 Other changes in the earlier part of the Neolithic period include the construction of large-scale monuments and the first industrial activity. The site is midway between the causewayed enclosures of Combe Hill and Offham; two of eight such sites in Sussex¹³. Although both sites occupy high positions, their location on the north side of the Downs suggests they had little influence over the Seaford area¹⁴, although it has been suggested that the Whitehawk causewayed enclosure at Brighton may have exerted some influence along the coastal area¹⁵.
- 4.3.3 Although there are a number of flint mines situated on the South Downs further west in the Worthing area, there is no evidence for any mines in this area¹⁶. There is however evidence for the continued use of Clay-with-flint outcrops during the Neolithic to procure flint and manufacture axes¹⁷.
- 4.3.4 Evidence for Early Neolithic activity has also been found close to the site (MES60) and at other sites nearby. At Rookery Hill, Bishopstone¹⁸ there may have been a settlement, and near Alfriston¹⁹ flintwork was recovered around the Early Neolithic *Long Burgh* long barrow. Later Neolithic flintwork was also found at Valley Dip²⁰, and near Seaford Head²¹.

¹¹ Holden, E.W. 1979 'Flint artefacts from Seaford', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **117**, 224-7

¹² Wilkinson et al. 2002 'The Excavation of Six Dry Valleys in the Brighton Area: The Changing Environment', in Rudling, D. (ed) *Downland Settlement and Land-Use*, London, Archetype Publications Ltd.

¹³ Drewett, P. 2003 'Taming the Wild: The first farming Communities in Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd, 39-46.

¹⁴ Oswald et al. 2001 *The Creation of Monuments*, Swindon, English Heritage.

¹⁵ Drewett, P. 1994 'Dr V. Seton Williams' excavations at Combe Hill, 1962, and the role of Neolithic causewayed enclosures in Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **132**, 7-24.

¹⁶ Barber, et al. 1999 *The Neolithic Flint Mines of England*, Swindon, English Heritage.

¹⁷ Butler, C. 2001 'A Mesolithic and later prehistoric flintworking site at East and West Hills, Pyecombe, West Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **139**, 7-26.

¹⁸ Bell, M. 1977 'Excavations at Bishopstone', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **115**.

¹⁹ Butler, C. 2001 'Horned scrapers and other prehistoric flintwork from Alfriston, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **139**, 215-223.

²⁰ Butler, C. 1996 'Later Prehistoric flintwork from Valley Dip, Seaford, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological*

- 4.3.5 It is likely that Neolithic artefacts could be present and if so may indicate the presence of underlying Neolithic features, although evidence for Neolithic settlement is very rare.

4.4 *The Bronze Age (2500BC to 800BC)*

- 4.4.1 The Bronze Age saw the final clearance of the last woodland on the South Downs, and environmental evidence suggests that the Downland was given over to an open grazed landscape with limited arable agriculture until the end of the period when arable land appears to increase²².
- 4.4.2 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 Patch²³.
- 4.4.3 Field systems have often been found associated with these settlements and others have been recorded from aerial photographs elsewhere on the South Downs. The absence of similar earthworks in the area of the site is due to the area already being covered in houses and the effect of modern agriculture.
- 4.4.4 Bronze Age flintwork has been found in the immediate vicinity of the site (MES59 MES60 & 1706). The presence of these finds would suggest that a Bronze Age settlement may be located nearby. Other finds of Bronze Age date have been made to the north of Seaford at Rathfinney Farm where flintwork was recovered²⁴, whilst flintwork was also found at Valley Dip and around Seaford Head.
- 4.4.5 Another feature of the Bronze Age landscape are the burial mounds (Barrows). None are recorded at the site, although at least one is noted on Seaford Head, with others on the Downs to the north and north-east of the site²⁵.
- 4.4.6 Given the evidence for substantial activity nearby on the South Downs during the Bronze Age, and the discoveries of Bronze Age material close to the site, there is a high probability that significant remains from this period may be found during work at the site.

Collections **134**, 219-224.

²¹ *Sussex Notes & Queries* 1950-3 Vol. **13**, 193-7

²² Wilkinson et al. 2002 'The Excavation of Six Dry Valleys in the Brighton Area: The Changing Environment', in Rudling, D. (ed) *Downland Settlement and Land-Use*, London, Archetype Publications Ltd.

²³ Drewett, P. 1982 'Later Bronze Age downland economy and excavations at Black Patch, East Sussex', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **48**, 321-400.

²⁴ Butler, C. 2001 'Horned scrapers and other prehistoric flintwork from Alfriston, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **139**, 215-223.

²⁵ Grinsell, L.V. 1931 'Sussex in the Bronze Age', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **72**, 66.

4.5 *The Iron Age (800BC to 43AD)*

- 4.5.1 During the Early Iron Age it seems likely that the pattern of settlement and agriculture seen in the Later Bronze Age continues, although house structures dating to this period are rare. The field systems continued in use throughout the Iron Age, whilst some of the settlements originating in the Late Bronze Age also appear to continue in use into the Early Iron Age.
- 4.5.2 Later Iron Age settlements on the South Downs are relatively rare, although many are now known from the Coastal Plain between Hove and Chichester. A discrete scatter of possible Late Iron Age or Roman pottery was recovered at Walls Brow (TV507985) during a 1982-3 fieldwalking survey²⁶.
- 4.5.3 One major feature of the Iron Age is the hillfort, of which some 20 are known from Sussex. Many of these also appear to have originated in the Later Bronze Age, but become important centres of control and redistribution in the Middle and Later Iron Age.
- 4.5.4 Seaford Head hillfort may have originated in the late Bronze Age²⁷, although it seems to have continued in use throughout the Early Iron Age, but had been abandoned by the time of the Roman invasion²⁸. This site is almost certainly a central place and would have dominated the local area from its prominent hilltop location. Investigation of the environmental evidence showed that the land on which the hillfort was built had been used for agriculture right up to the time of its construction.
- 4.5.5 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 settlement or field systems could be present at the site, especially given its location close to the hillfort on Seaford Head.

4.6 *The Roman Period (43AD to 410AD)*

- 4.6.1 The Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD resulted in dramatic alterations to this island's social and economic environments²⁹. On the South Downs many of the rural farmsteads and associated field systems that were in existence in the Later Iron Age continued throughout the Roman period. Where they have been excavated they provide evidence for a mixed farming economy of crops and animal husbandry.

²⁶ Garwood, P. 1985 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 62.

²⁷ Hamilton, S. et al. 1997 'Prominent Enclosures in 1st millennium BC Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **135**, 93-112.

²⁸ Bedwin, O. 1986 'Excavations at Seaford Head Camp, East Sussex, 1983' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **124**, 25-33.

²⁹ Rudling, D. 2003 'Roman Rural Settlement in Sussex: Continuity and Change', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd.

- 4.6.2 Villa's are rare on Downland landscapes, and there is little evidence for Roman settlement or activity in the local area. Some pottery sherds of 2nd to 4th century date, possibly representing domestic debris, was found in the upper ditch fill of Seaford Head hillfort and a discrete scatter of possible Late Iron Age or Roman pottery was recovered at Walls Brow (TV507985) during the 1982-3 fieldwalking survey³⁰.
- 4.6.3 In December 1860, two urns of coarse pottery were dug up in the tower of East Blatchington Church (MES1687). The larger of the two was upright and perfect, but the other was broken. They were said to contain charred bones, which were re-buried. These are likely to have been cremation burial from the Romano-British period.
- 4.6.4 This limited evidence and the possibility of a Roman road connecting Seaford with Firle and Glynde (MES2667) may suggest the presence of farmsteads in the area³¹. However, the possibility of encountering Roman remains at the site is considered to be small.

4.7 The Saxon Period (410AD to 1066AD)

- 4.7.1 In the early Post-Roman period there was a change in the economy and land-usage on the South Downs. Arable cultivation was replaced by a pastoral regime, and some regeneration of woodland and scrub³². Evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement is difficult to find, with the discovery and excavation of larger settlements, such as Bishopstone³³, being comparatively rare, as is the occasional discovery of isolated Saxon buildings, such as the Sunken Featured Building at Itford Farm to the north of Newhaven³⁴.
- 4.7.2 Saxon cemeteries and individual graves are often found. Burials are probably the most common form of evidence for Saxon settlement and provide us with good evidence for the social structure and nature of Saxon society.
- 4.7.3 There is no evidence for Saxon activity at the site, although it is possible that the Medieval settlement at Sutton may have had earlier origins. However, it is considered unlikely that any evidence for Saxon activity will be encountered.

³⁰ Garwood, P. 1985 'The Cuckmere Valley Project Fieldwalking Programme 1982-3', *Institute of Archaeology Bulletin* **22**, 62.

³¹ Bedwin, O. 1986 'Excavations at Seaford Head Camp, East Sussex, 1983' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **124**, 25-33.

³² Gardiner, M. 2003 'Economy and Landscape Change in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Sussex, 450-1175', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd,

³³ Bell, M. 1977 'Excavations at Bishopstone', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **115**.

³⁴ James, R. 2002 'The excavation of a Saxon *grubenhause* at Itford Farm, Beddingham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 41-7.

4.8 *The Medieval Period (1066AD to 1500AD)*

- 4.8.1 Seaford is located in Flexborough Hundred, but was not mentioned in the Domesday Book. It may well have been connected to the settlement and Minster Church at Bishopstone, or the manor at Sutton (Fig. 4)³⁵. Seaford was located at an important strategic position at the mouth of the River Ouse, controlling access up river to Lewes, and seems to have been a settlement prior to 1058³⁶.
- 4.8.2 Both Sutton and East Blatchington have Medieval origins, possibly being villages or hamlets in their own right situated a little further north of Seaford (MES7). The existence of Sutton is confirmed by various documents dating from the 12th and 13th centuries³⁷ to the 15th century³⁸.
- 4.8.3 East Blatchington church has 12th century origins, with parts of the nave being of this date, although the tower was replaced in the 13th century³⁹. The Hospital of St James of Sutton by Seaford was founded sometime before 1260 (MES1691). Although both of these are about 0.6km to the west of the site, their presence suggests considerable Medieval activity in this area.
- 4.8.4 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 west of Seaford on high ground overlooking Cuckmere Haven. It is likely that the new settlement of Poynings Town would have been located adjacent to the current Chyngton Farm, and may itself have succumbed fairly quickly to French raids, with the town then being re-established on its original site at Seaford⁴⁰.
- 4.8.5 The Medieval settlement at Sutton is likely to have been located to the south of the site, where Sutton Place (the manor house), church and Farm were located, whilst the village of East Blatchington is situated 0.6km to the west of the site. The area of the site was almost certainly farmland at this time. The likelihood of finding Medieval remains at the site is therefore considered to be possible.

³⁵ Combes, P. 2002 'Bishopstone', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 49-56.

³⁶ Drewett, P. & Freke, D. 1982 'The Medieval Farm on Bullock Down c.1250-1550' in Drewett, P. *The Archaeology of Bullock Down, Eastbourne, East Sussex*, Sussex Archaeological Society.

³⁷ ESRO (SAS-M/1/331)

³⁸ Combes, P. 2002 'Bishopstone', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 49-56.

³⁹ Whiteman, K. & J. 1994 *Ancient Churches of Sussex*, Seaford, S.B. Publications

⁴⁰ Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

4.9 *The Post Medieval Period (1500AD to the Present Day)*

- 4.9.1 The area of the site was also open farm land throughout the Post Medieval period, as is evidence by various documents. A warranty of 1592 by Sir Thomas Sherley stated that “the demesnes of the manor of Sutton Sandore contained 420 acres over and beside the sheepdowns and such ground as Thomas Elphegge and Hugh Elphegge farmers of the demesnes had converted into arable”⁴¹.
- 4.9.2 A lease of 1750 to “William Fletcher of Sutton in Seaford, yeoman, of the capital messuage and farm called Sutton Farm in Sutton and Seaford and the moiety of the feedings on the Tenant down being a pasture for 500 sheep”⁴². Both documents provide evidence for the surrounding landscape being sheep pasture and occasionally arable land.
- 4.9.3 Yeakell and Gardner's map of Sussex 1778-1783⁴³ shows the site to be an area enclosed with fields between the small settlement at Sutton, and East Blatchington, with open Downland further north.
- 4.9.4 The Seaford Tithe map (Fig. 5) shows the site to be located in fields called ‘adjoining Tenant Down’ and ‘Chalk Pit Piece’, both of which were arable. These fields and others around them were owned by Tilstone, and occupied by Benjamin Waters. A large chalk pit sits at the eastern edge of ‘Chalk Pit Piece’.
- 4.9.5 The East Blatchington/Seaford parish boundary runs along the western edge of these fields, and according to the East Blatchington Tithe map the fields here were owned by John King and occupied by William King Sampson. Apart from Sheep Down, which was pasture the other fields on the East Blatchington Tithe map all use the name ‘Piece’, and they contain a number of small chalk pits
- 4.9.6 The 1st Edition OS map (1875) shows the chalk pit and an adjacent track, but all the earlier field boundaries appear to have gone (Fig. 6). Two boundary stones are shown marking the parish boundary.
- 4.9.7 By the time of the 2nd Edition OS map (1899) the field boundaries have returned (Fig. 7). The track running beside the chalk pit now extends further north to a building within a small enclosure, with a number of stones aligned east-west in the adjacent field. The 3rd Edition OS map (1910) shows that little change has taken place over the preceding decade, although there are now a number of houses alongside the Alfriston Road to the south of the site (Fig. 8).

⁴¹ ESRO (SAS-M/1/368)

⁴² ESRO (SAS-M/1/391)

⁴³ http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell_36.htm

- 4.9.8 By the 4th Edition OS map (1927), there are numerous field divisions and a new road runs east-west across the area (broadly on the line of the current 'Quarry Road') (Fig. 9). The northwards track past the quarry now leads to a group of buildings called 'South Down Farm'. A number of new houses and developments are encroaching into the area from the west.
- 4.9.9 A document in ESRO⁴⁴ refers to 'lands in Seaford and Alciston (193a 3r 37p) consisting of part of Hobbs Down, The Comp, The Drove, land adjoining Tenants Down, Cotton Ditch, part of New Pond Piece, Chalk Pit Piece, Drove Piece and a Brickyard with house' passing to the Seaford West Company.
- 4.9.10 During the First World War two large army camps were established at Seaford⁴⁵. The North Camp was situated near the current North Way and North Camp Lane (TQ 486 001). Initially comprising bell tents, these were replaced by wooden huts⁴⁶, and although the camp does not appear to have extended as far as the site, it is likely that the surrounding area was used for training.
- 4.9.11 During the Second World War the area was once again used for training. Houses in the surrounding area were damaged in German bombing raids⁴⁷, and an Heavy Anti-aircraft (HAA) battery was established just over 1km to the west of the site and manned by B troop 583 HAA Battery, with many local houses being requisitioned by the unit⁴⁸.
- 4.9.12 An aerial photograph taken in 1947 shows housing developments beginning to creep closer to the southern end of the site, with houses along Vale Road. The quarry can still be seen, and there is extensive activity around South Down Farm. There are no crop marks or other indications of past land use shown (Fig. 10).
- 4.9.14 Cradle Hill Primary School was built on land which had been purchased by the County Council in September 1966, and opened on 9th September 1968 with a roll of 200 pupils. It was built by Ringmer Building Works Ltd for a total cost of £74,150⁴⁹. A second phase of building followed in 1971-73⁵⁰, and the school now has some 450 children.
- 4.9.14 Aerial photographs of 1999 and 2006 show the site broadly as it is today, and do not reveal any additional information, despite the latter having been taken in parched conditions.

⁴⁴ ESRO (ACC5120/140/2 1875-1905)

⁴⁵ Butler, C. 2007 *East Sussex under Attack*, Stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd

⁴⁶ Longstaff-Tyrrell, P. 2000 *Front-Line Sussex*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing Ltd

⁴⁷ Rowland, D. 2001 *Coastal Blitz*, Seaford, S.B. Publications

⁴⁸ Seaford Museum (MFN1278)

⁴⁹ ESCC 1969 Education Committee: *Official Opening of Cradle Hill County Primary School*

⁵⁰ ESRO (E/SC/261 & E/SC/261/4/1)

5 Impact of the Development

- 5.1** The proposed extensions at Cradle Hill school are within an area that appears to have been used as a field throughout the Post Medieval period, and probably throughout the Medieval period as well. It is therefore less likely that there will be any remains or features from these periods encountered. Given the evidence for prehistoric activity both in the immediate area and the surrounding landscape, it is likely that evidence for prehistoric activity may be encountered during any work on the site.
- 5.2** The construction of the current school building by terracing it into the slope will have led to some significant destruction of any archaeological remains on the upper part of the site, whilst the in-filling of the lower part of the slope to form the terrace will have preserved any potential archaeology below the in-fill.
- 5.3** Given the evidence accumulated during this desk-based assessment, the probability of finding remains from each of the different archaeological periods is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Period	Probability
Palaeolithic	Possible
Mesolithic	Possible
Neolithic	Possible
Bronze Age	High
Iron Age	Low
Roman	Low
Saxon	Low
Medieval	Possible
Post Medieval	Possible

- 5.4** It is considered that there will be limited potential for palaeo-environmental remains or geo-archaeological investigations at this site.

6 Conclusions

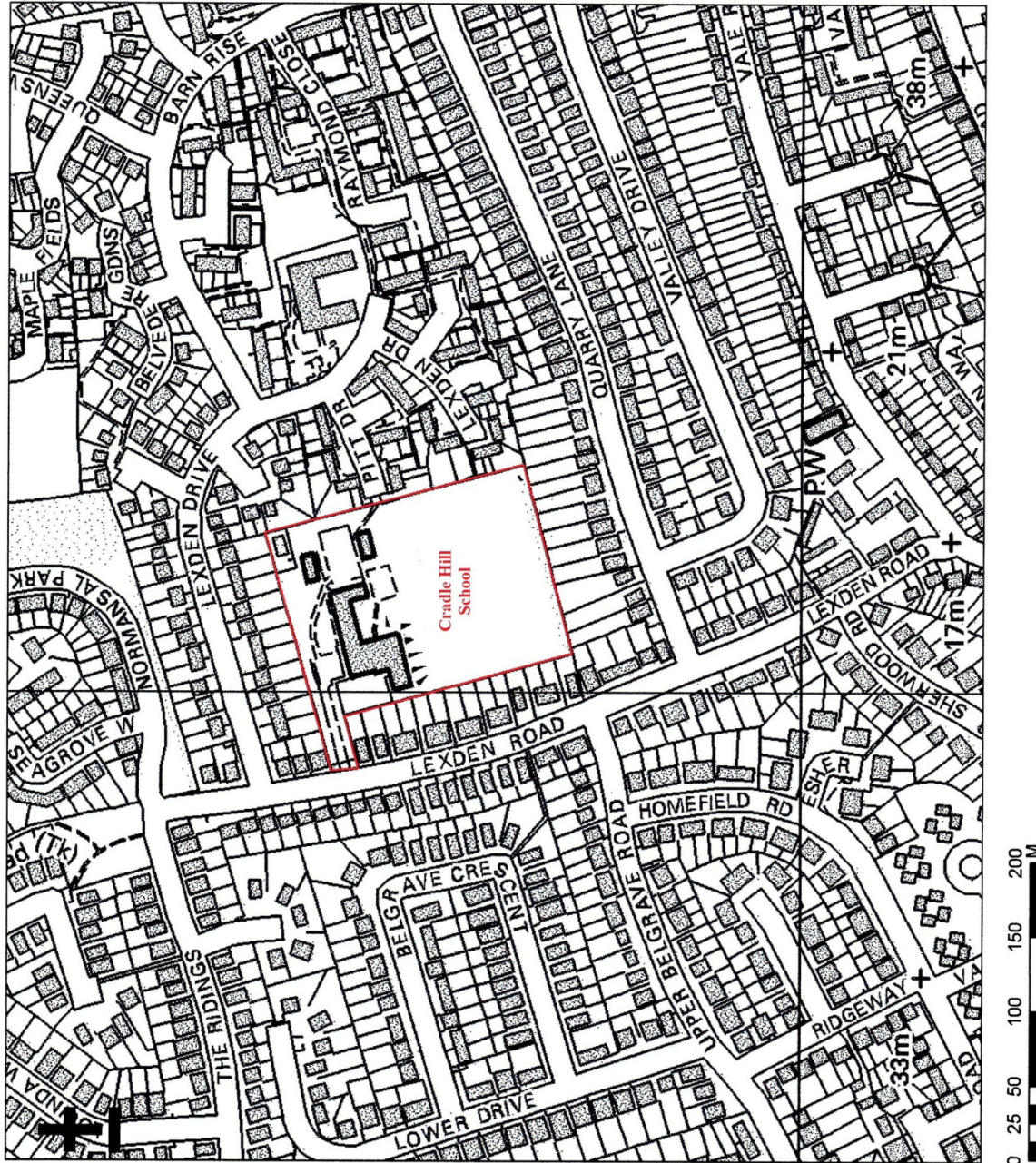
- 6.1** This desk-based assessment has established that there is evidence for activity from the Palaeolithic period through to the Post Medieval period in the wider surrounding area of the site. The map evidence has shown the more recent agricultural landscape in the immediate surroundings, which does not appear to have altered to any great extent over the last 300-400 years until the housing developments of the 20th century.

- 6.2** It has not been possible to establish whether there is below-ground archaeology present on the site, due to the non-intrusive nature of this desk based assessment, although the recovery of a single fire-fractured flint hints at possible prehistoric activity. Any development at the site is likely to disturb and destroy any buried archaeology.
- 6.3** The proposal shows two possible locations for the extension. The first, located at the north side of the current building, will have no archaeological implications on its west side as the original land surface will have been removed by the terracing, however the original slope appears to survive on the east side, and will require mitigation. The second is located on the south side of the current building, where there is likely to have been infill (although subsequent terracing may have removed some of this), and therefore some archaeology may have been preserved below this.
- 6.3** It is therefore recommended that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken prior to and during the development. A geophysical survey could initially be undertaken on the grassed part of the site, which may provide evidence for features running into the area of development. Evaluation trenches could be excavated to determine whether there is any surviving archaeology at risk from this development. A watching brief would then seem to be the most appropriate way of mitigating the possibility of remains surviving in the area of the development.

7 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Neil Henderson of NPS Property Consultants Ltd for commissioning this survey on behalf of ESCC. Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist at ESCC provided copies of the East Sussex HER. I would also like to thank Gianni Bianchi (Head Teacher) and his staff at Cradle Hill School for arranging for me to make a site visit. The staff at the East Sussex Record Office provided help in obtaining the tithe map and other documents, and Rachel Butler recorded the tithe map information. I would also like to thank the staff at the NMR, Swindon and at the Sussex Archaeological Society Library for their help in locating aerial photographs and other sources, and Sue Sutton of Seaford Museum for her help in locating the sources in their possession.

**Fig.1: Cradle Hill
School, Seaford:
Site location
map**



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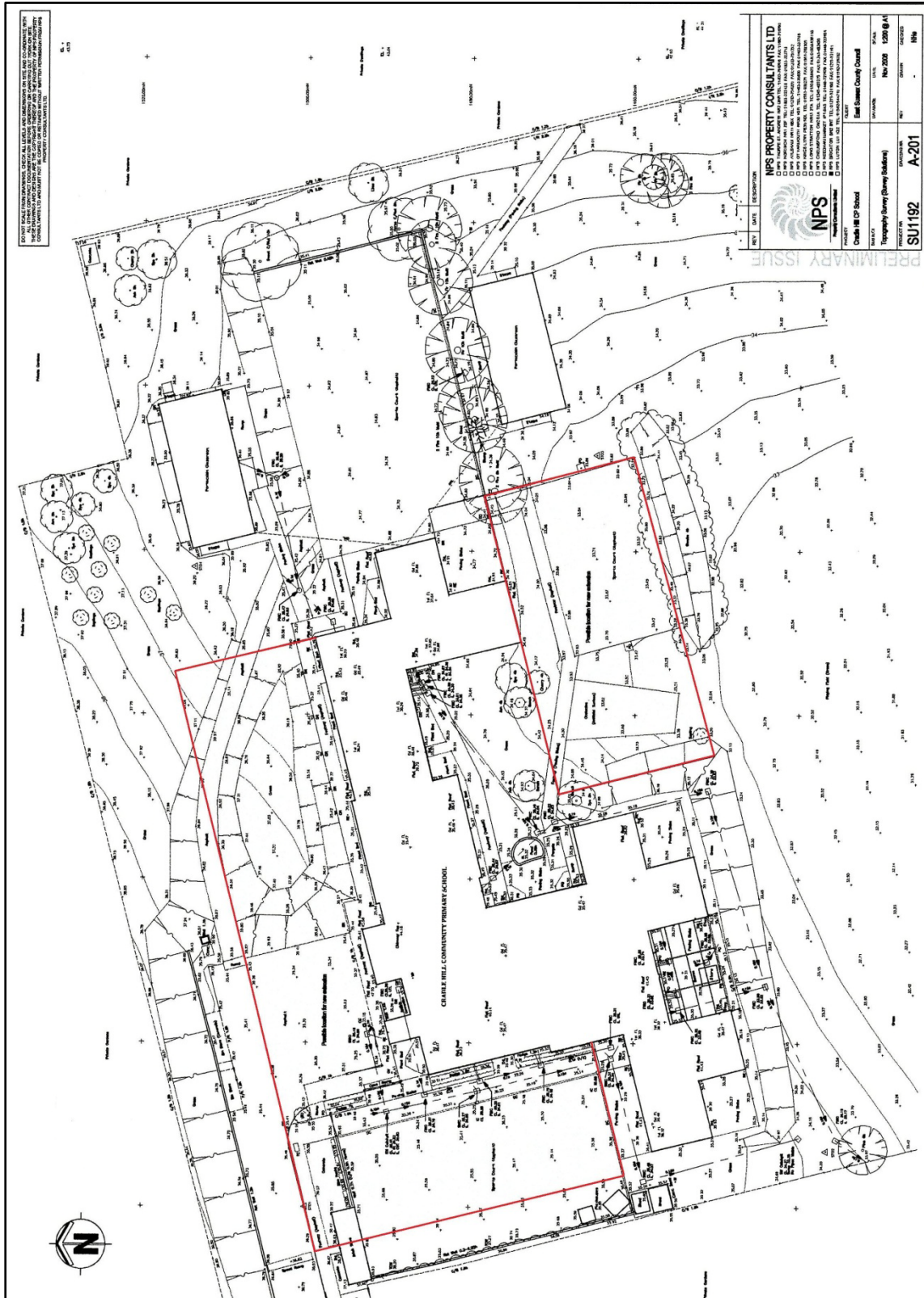
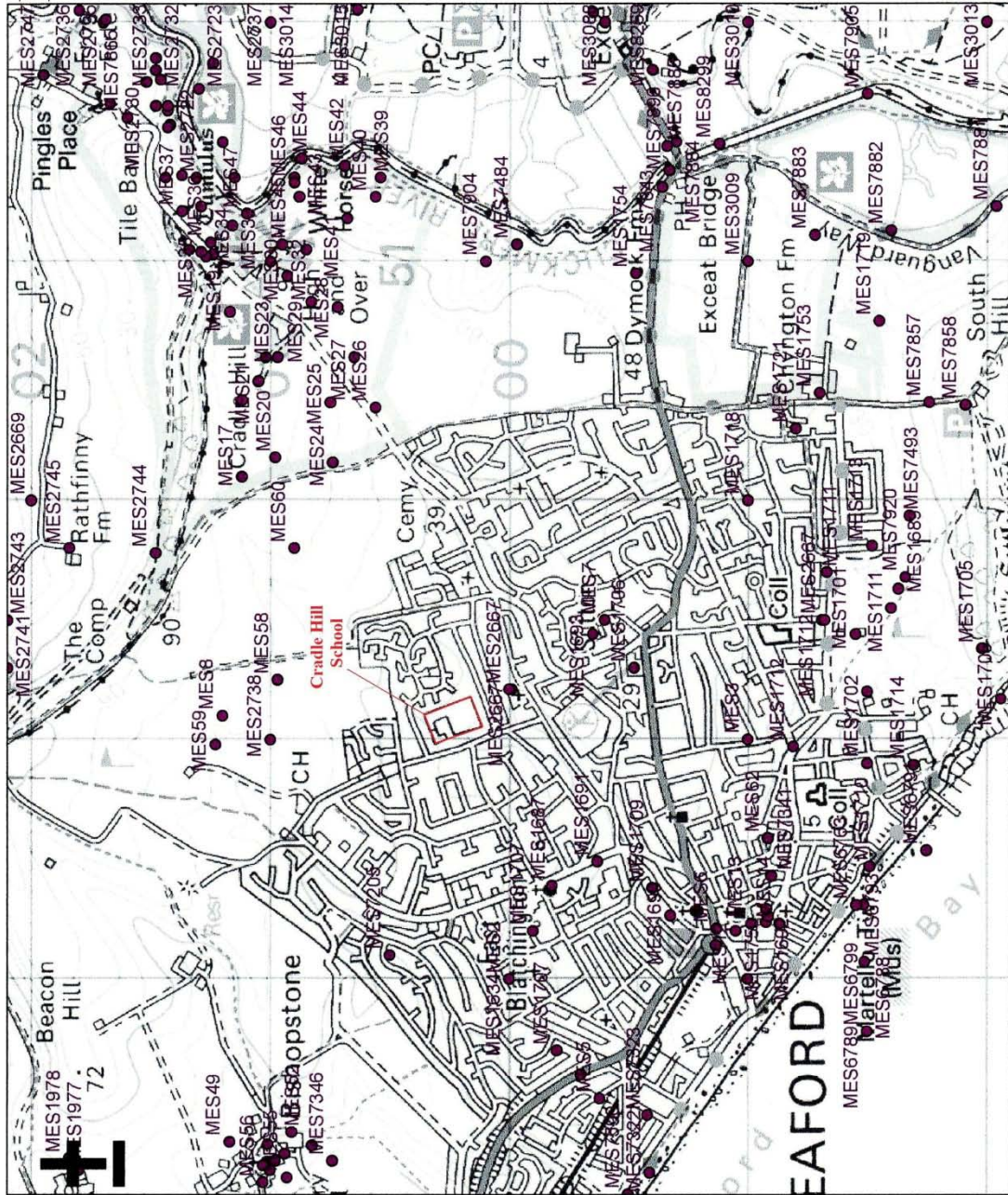


Fig. 2: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: Site Plan, showing main part of school and proposed new extensions
(Adapted from plan provided by NPS Consultants Ltd)

Fig.3: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: Site Location & Monuments on HER



● Mon (point)

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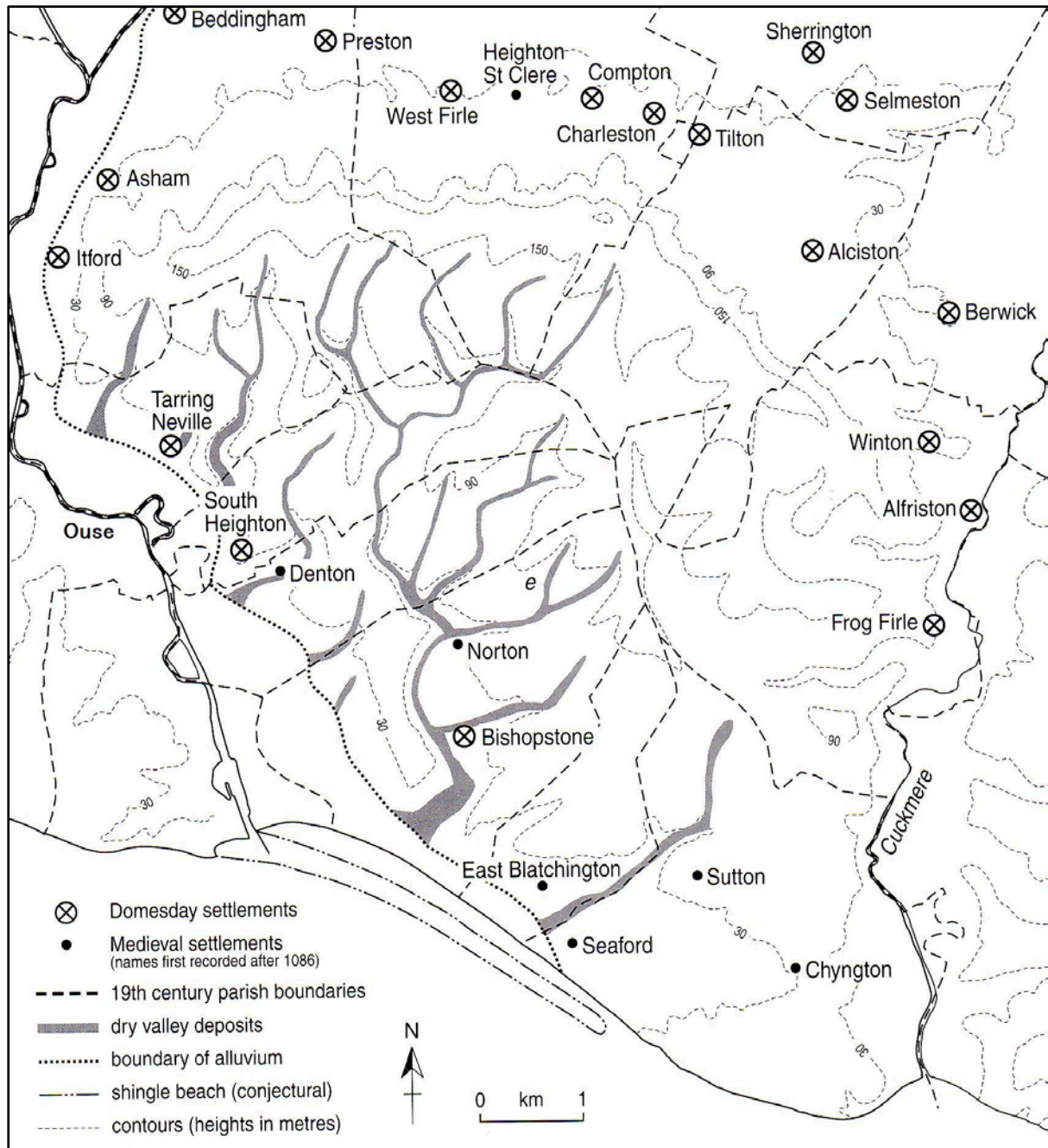


Fig. 4: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: Map showing the Domesday and Medieval Settlements between the Rivers Ouse and Cuckmere

Adapted from Combes, P. 2002 'Bishopstone'

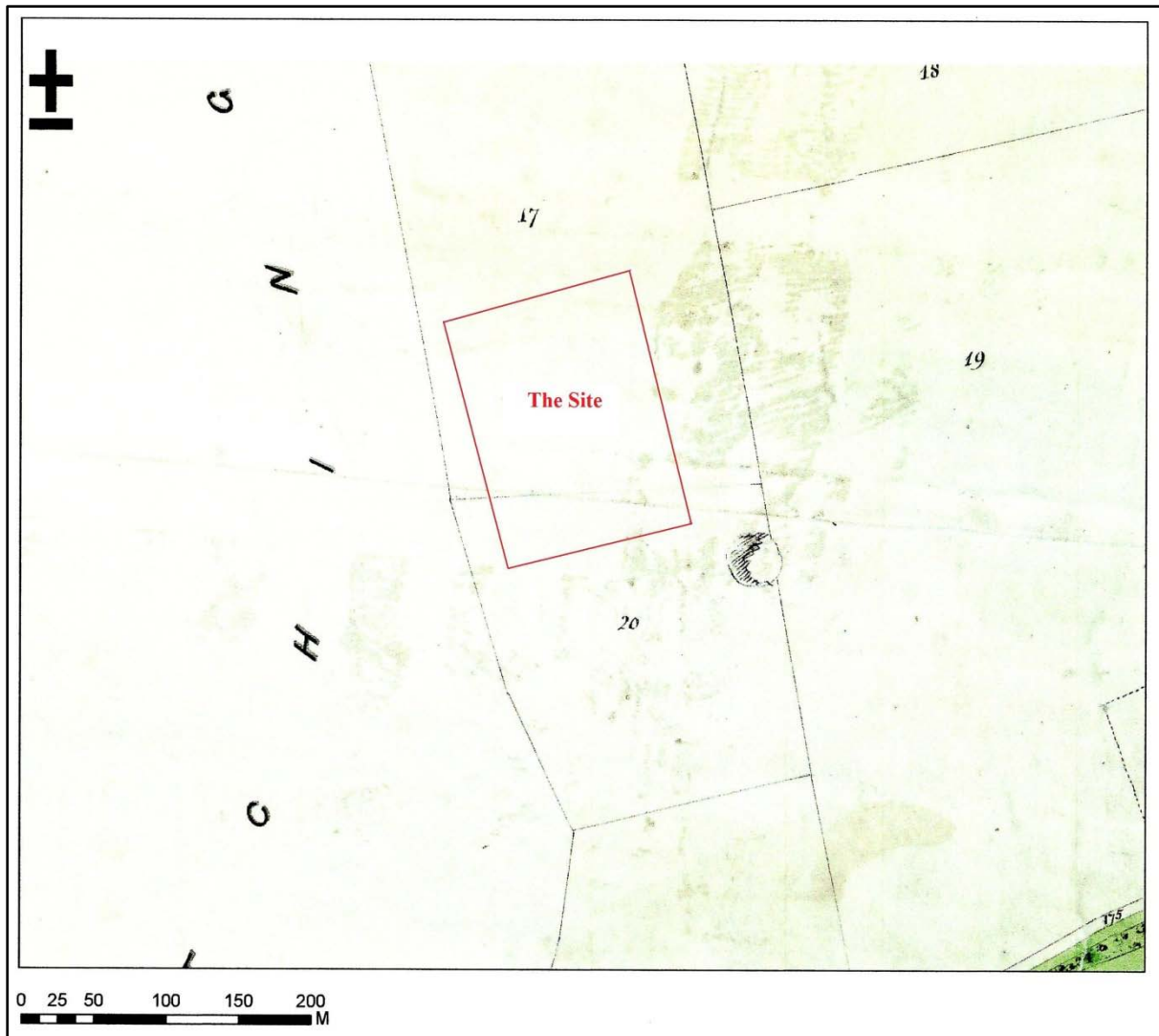
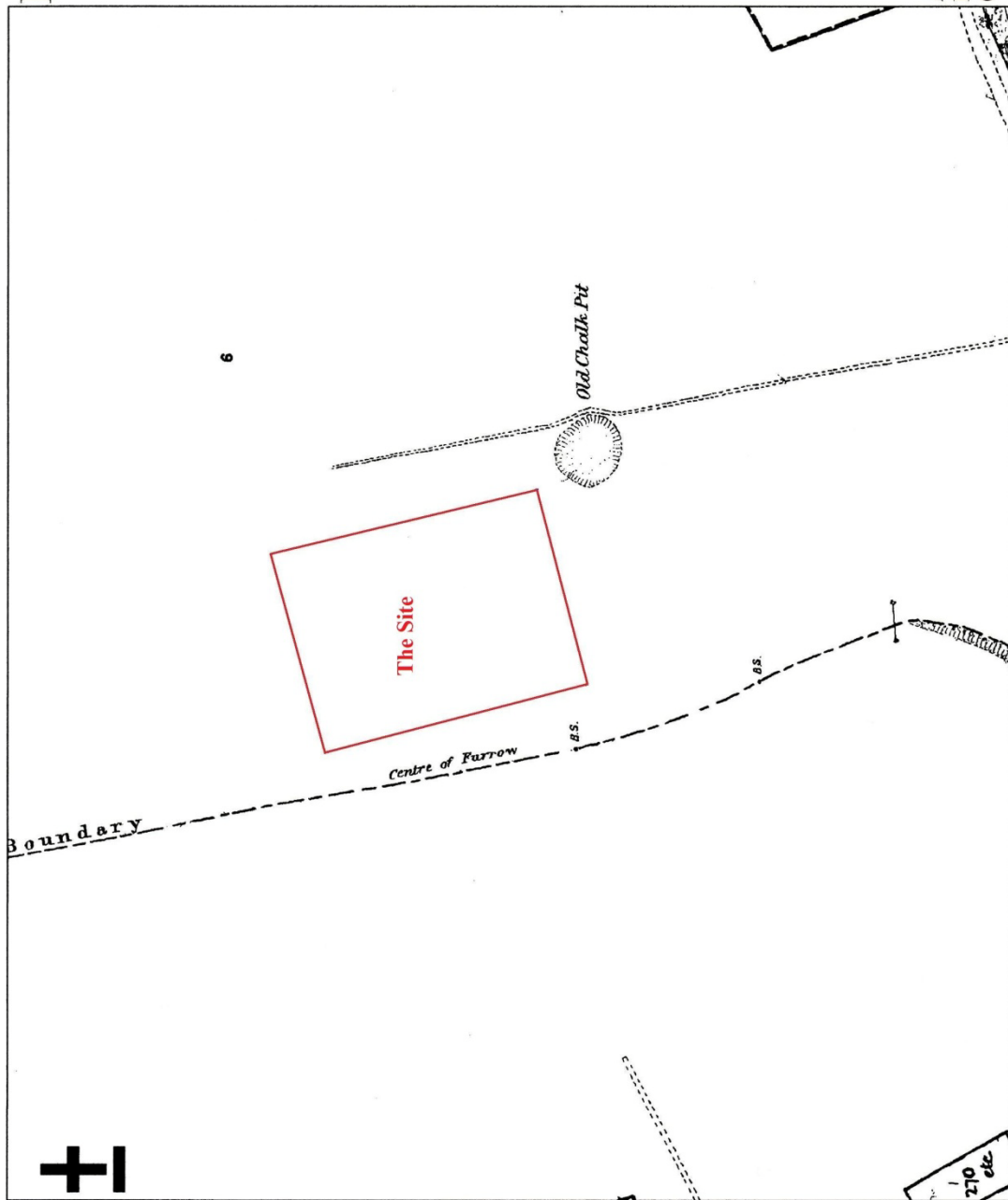


Fig. 5: Seaford Tithe Map

Apportionment

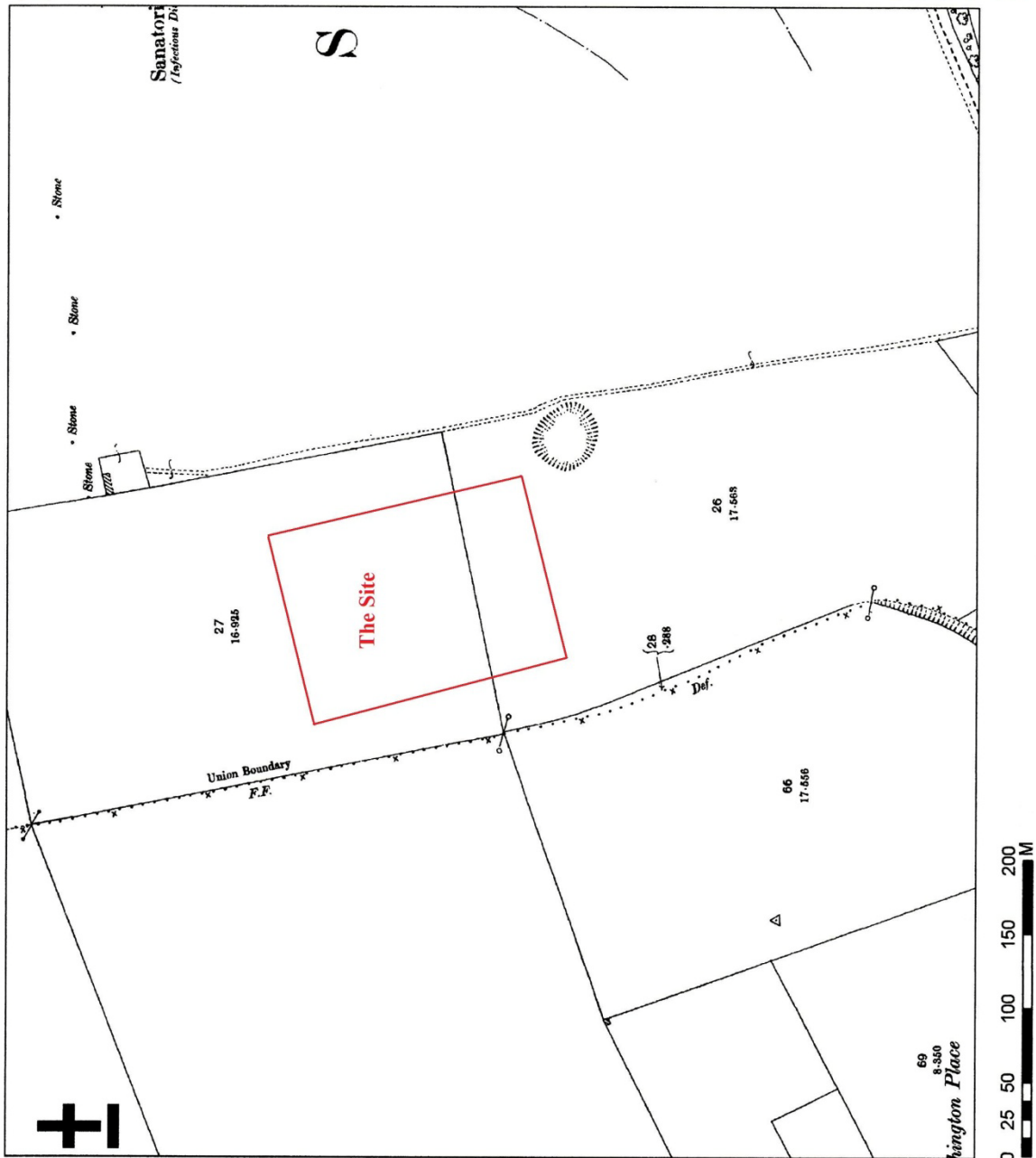
No.	Owner	Occupier	Field name	Use
17	Tilstone	B. Waters	Adjoining Tennant Down	Arable
18	Tilstone	B. Waters	Cotton Ditch	Arable
19	Tilstone	B. Waters	New Pond Piece (part)	Arable
20	Tilstone	B. Waters	Chalk Pit Piece	Arable
21	Tilstone	B. Waters	Drove Piece	Arable

**Fig.6: Cradle Hill
School, Seaford:
1st Edition OS
Map (1875)**



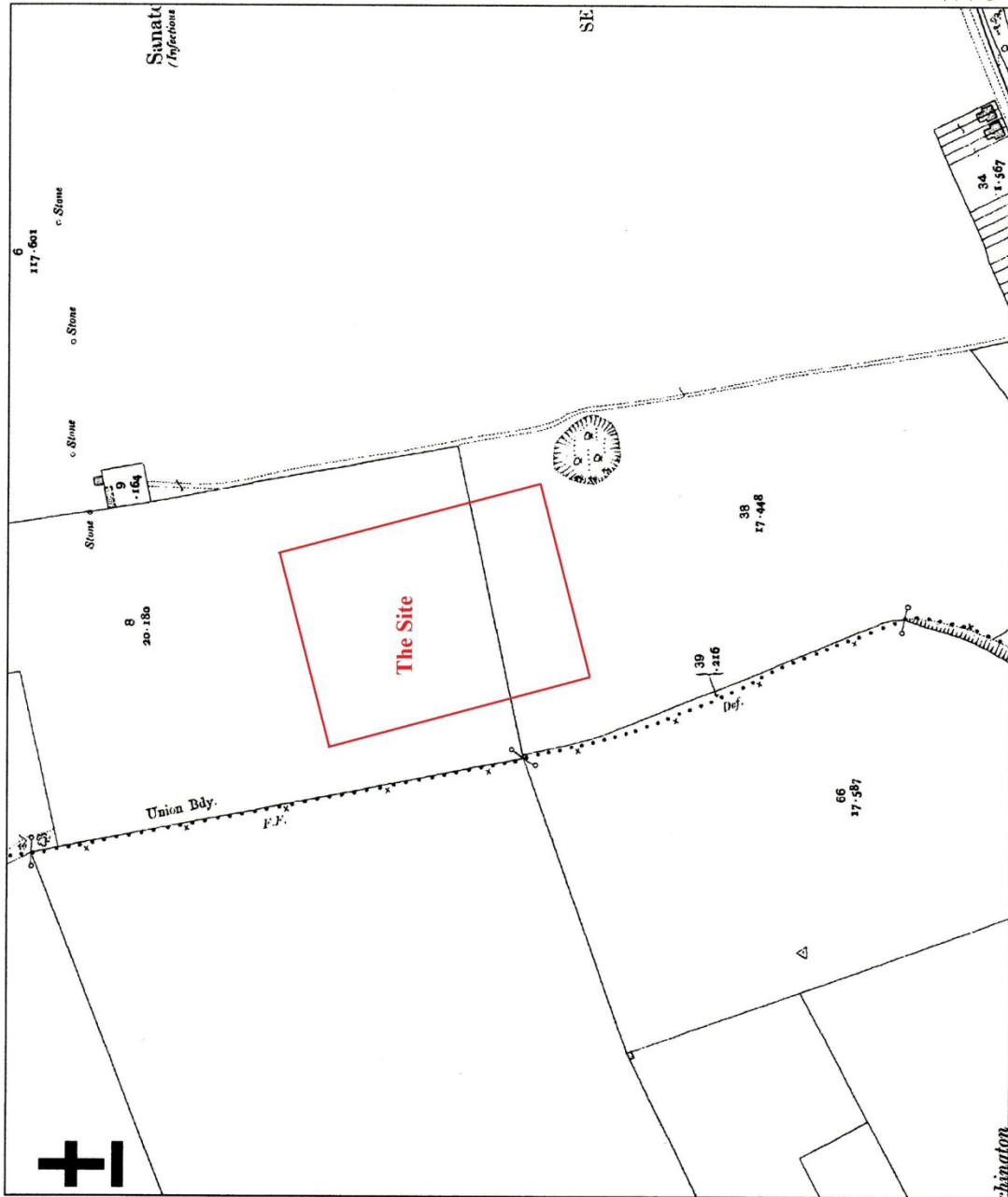
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Fig.7: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: 2nd Edition OS Map (1899).



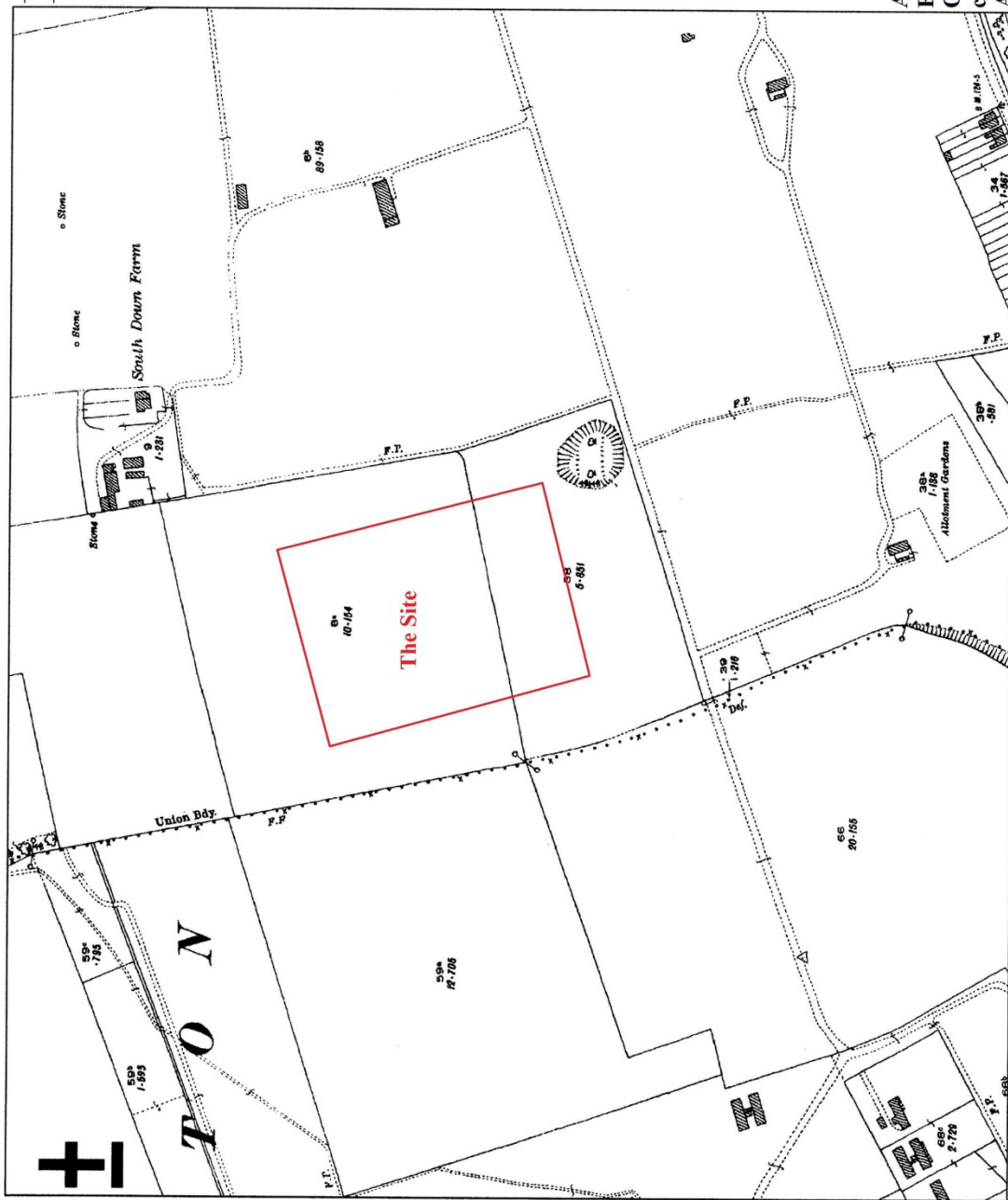
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Fig.8: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: 3rd Edition OS Map (1910).



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Fig.9: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: 4th Edition OS Map (1927).



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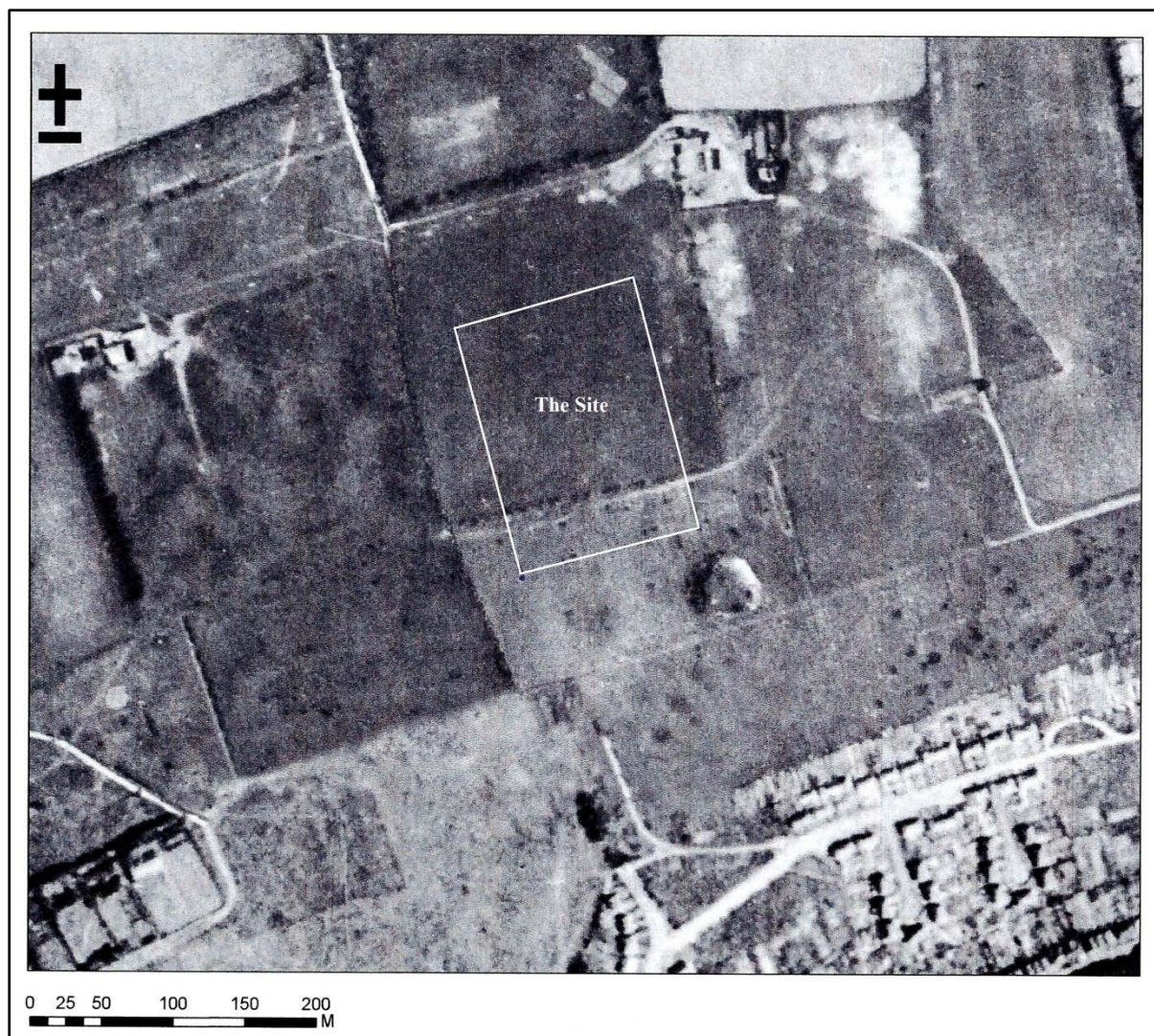


Fig. 10: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: 1947 Aerial Photograph
(adapted from copy provided by ESCC)



Fig. 11: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: View of School from south



Fig. 12: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: View of School from south-east



Fig. 13: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: Site of proposed extension on south side



Fig. 14: Cradle Hill School, Seaford: Site of proposed extension on north side

Appendix 1: Archaeological Sites Recorded on HER

SMR No.	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
MES7	TV 495 996	Saxon	Settlement	Sutton
MES8	TQ 491 012	Palaeolithic	Handaxe	
MES58	TQ 4925 0097	Palaeolithic	Acheulian Handaxe	
MES59	TQ 4898 0123	Late Neolithic/EBA	Horned scraper	
MES60	TQ 498 009	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flintwork	
MES1687	TV 4839 9982	Roman	Cremations	At East Blatchington Church
MES1691	TV 4849 9963	Medieval	Hospital of St. James	
MES1693	TV 4944 9965	Medieval	Church	Sutton
MES1706	TV 48 99	Early Bronze Age	Flint dagger	
MES2667	TQ 4894 0282	Roman	Road	Margary RR144
MES2738	TQ 50 01	Medieval	Boundary bank	For Frog Firle

Appendix 2: Archaeological sites from other Sources

Source	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
1 st Edition OS Map	TQ 491 001	Post Medieval	Old Chalk Pit	Also on Tithes map
1 st Edition OS Map	TQ 489 002	Post Medieval	Boundary stones	On Parish boundary
2 nd Edition OS Map	TQ 492 005	Post Medieval	Boundary stones	At South Down Farm
Butler (2007) ⁵¹	TQ 486 001	First World War	North Camp	Hutted camp
Butler (2007)	TQ479 000	Second World War	HAA Battery	4 x 3.7" HAA Guns

Appendix 3: Archaeological Events from the HER

Reference	NGR	Type	Comments
EEES9326	TV 4944 9965	Sutton Medieval Church	Recorded during development in the 1940's

⁵¹ Butler, C. 2007 *East Sussex under Attack*, Stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

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, and teaches A-Level Archaeology at Bexhill 6th Form College.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys, watching briefs and evaluations, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. Chris is Co-Director of the Barcomvbe Roman Villa excavations. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

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

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