



Chris Butler MfA Archaeological Services Ltd



An Archaeological Watching Brief at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex

(EB/3010/3018/3019/CC)

CBAS0226

by
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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex during groundworks for the construction of a new car park to the front of the school building. Monitoring commenced after topsoil stripping had taken place across most of the site. The ground was reduced by up to c.0.70m in places but was not deep enough to expose the natural below the layers of made ground encountered; an earlier evaluation excavation had dated the deposition of the made ground to the early 20th century. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were identified during the watching brief.

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Appendix I: HER Summary Form

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Michael Cook Associates on behalf of East Sussex County Council (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex (Fig. 1).

1.2 As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority required a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken prior to a decision being made on the planning applications for the provision of:

EB/3010/CC

A mobile nursery with new landscaped area and 8 car park spaces, to be located to the south west of the main school building for a temporary period of five years to August 2016.

EB/3018/CC

An extension north of the school to provide a three classroom extension, play canopy and hardstanding to south side of existing block of three classrooms. New platform lift extension to north-south corridor link.

EB/3019/CC

External works to the south side of the school, including new extended parking facilities, an improved hard play area, a new enclosed front entrance canopy, new play canopy and associated landscaping (Fig. 7).

1.3 Highfield Junior School is located on the north-east side of Eastbourne, on the edge of the Willingdon Levels at approximately 3m OD, and is within the Archaeological Notification Area defining the site of the deserted medieval village and port of Hydneye (Fig. 2).

1.4 The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/334, shows that the site is situated on a spur of Gault Clay and Lower Greensand, which projects out into the Alluvium of the Willingdon Levels. The site itself sits astride the boundary between the Gault Clay and Alluvium.

1.5 The appropriate programme of archaeological work initially comprised the preparation of a desk-based assessment report and an archaeological evaluation excavation. The desk-based assessment report showed that there is a high potential for archaeological remains at the site¹.

¹ Butler, C. 2011 *Desk-based Assessment for Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex*. CBAS

- 1.6** The evaluation excavation revealed that the ground at the front (south side) of the school had been made up during the early 20th century, with a deep deposit of material that had been brought into the site, from which an assemblage of pottery and glass was recovered². No evidence for a layer of peat was found, and no archaeological features were discovered during the evaluation. The monitoring of the boreholes on the north side of the school showed there to be no remaining topsoil or buried soil, suggesting that this had been removed during the building of the school.
- 1.7** The impact of the proposed development comprises shallow foundations for the mobile nursery at the front of the school, and limited landscaping and excavation for the car parking and other works at the front of the school. It appears unlikely that these works will impact below the depth of the made ground across most of the site, and therefore there will be very limited potential for these works disturbing preserved archaeological remains below the made ground. The exception to this may be at the front edge of the site where the ground level drops onto Dallington Road, where there may be some potential for surviving archaeology.
- 1.8** The County Archaeologist recommended that a targeted archaeological watching brief be carried out during the works at the front edge of the site adjacent to Dallington Road, to ensure that any archaeological deposits and features disturbed by the works were adequately recorded. A written scheme of investigation covering the watching brief was submitted to and approved by East Sussex County Council³.
- 1.9** Fieldwork was undertaken by Caroline Russell on 1st and 3rd August 2011. The project was managed by Chris Butler.

² Meaton, C. 2011 *An Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne*. CBAS Report

³ Butler, C. 2011 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex*. CBAS

2.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

2.1 Monuments on the Historic Environment Record (hereafter the HER) discussed in the following text are tabulated below and illustrated in Figure 3. A separate Desk Based Assessment report has been produced⁴, and the following is an extract summary taken from that report. For the full historical and archaeological background refer to the Desk-based Assessment.

Table 1: Monuments on the HER

HER Ref.	Name	NGR	Period
MES517	Hydneye village	TQ 612 025	Medieval
MES644	Hampden Park Railway Station	TQ 607 021	19 th century
MES652	Cemetery	TQ 610 028	Saxon
MES7032	Wind pump	TQ 6119 0232	19 th century
MES7033	Wind pump	TQ 613 025	20 th century
MES7375	Timber trackway & platform	TQ 61458 02949	Bronze Age
MES8523	Possible barrow	TQ 60990 02527	Bronze Age
MES15463	Timber trackway	TQ 6145 0250	Prehistoric
MES16119	Timber causeway	TQ 6136 0304	Bronze Age

2.2 Mesolithic and later flintwork has been found in the wider landscape⁵, although not in the immediate vicinity of the site. As the site is situated at around the 5m contour it is possible that there will be discoveries of Mesolithic artefacts, especially as projecting areas of higher ground around the Levels appear to have been preferred sites for hunting camps.

2.3 The Willingdon Levels were also exploited throughout later prehistory, as evidenced by occasional finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint artefacts⁶. An east-west aligned prehistoric timber trackway of unknown date (MES15463) was located to the east of the site in 2000⁷.

⁴ Butler, C. 2011 *Desk-based Assessment for Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex*, CBAS Report

⁵ Butler, C. 2002 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Greatorex, C. 2000 *Archaeology South-East*. no. 1228

- 2.4** In 1995 a Late Bronze Age timber platform and associated trackway (MES7375) was discovered on Shinewater Marsh to the north-east of the site (Fig. 3). Copper-alloy artefacts, pottery, worked and burnt flint was recovered during the limited excavations⁸. This and other trackways/alignments (MES15463 & MES16119) hint at extensive activity in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 4).
- 2.5** The Willingdon Levels were formed in the Iron Age/Roman periods when this former lowland flooded and was then buried in alluvial deposits. This event sealed the former prehistoric landscape beneath c. 1 – 2 metres of clay. This sequence of events has recently been identified during a geoarchaeological watching brief at Arkwright Road immediately to the south of the site where the clay was located at depths of between 1.2m and 1.8m below ground level, and peat deposits survive at a depth of c. 1.5 metres below the current ground surface⁹.
- 2.6** Three archaeological features, two ditches and a pit, were identified cut into the top of the alluvium during an archaeological evaluation at the proposed site of St Wilfrid's Hospice to the south-west of the site. The ditches were similar in form and type of fill and are likely to have been contemporary Late Iron Age/early Roman date, forming part of a more extensive field boundary system¹⁰.
- 2.7** Hydneye village (MES517) was a port attached to Hastings from early times although there is practically no significant documentary evidence and the site has been built over by housing development since 1940¹¹. Turner maintained that the earliest reference was a deed of 1229 with further mentions in charters throughout the period 1235-60 and 1308¹².
- 2.8** There was probably a small harbour here which silted up in the period 1250-1350 depriving the community of its livelihood. Turner¹³ referred to stones and foundations of walls which had been found on the site a few years before 1867.

⁸ Greator, C. 2003 *Living on the Margins? The Late Bronze Age Landscape of the Willingdon Levels* in Rudling, D. *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd

⁹ Peyre, L. 2011 *Arkwright Road Eastbourne, East Sussex: Geoarchaeological Watching Brief*, ASE Report 2011051.

¹⁰ Dawkes, G. & Pope, M. 2010 *St Wilfrid's Hospice, Eastbourne, East Sussex: Report on an Archaeological and Geoarchaeological Evaluation*, ASE Report 2010143

¹¹ Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

¹² Turner, E. 1867 'The Lost Towns of Northeye and Hydneye', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **19**, 1-35.

¹³ *Ibid.*

- 2.9** None of the early Sussex maps (e.g. Speed 1610, Morden 1695) show Hydneye, whilst Yeakell & Gardiner's map of 1778-83 shows the area covered with fields¹⁴. The Tithe map shows no detail of the Hydneye earthworks and the site is located in a large field called 'Court Hidney'.
- 2.10** The 1st Edition OS map (1874) shows a complex of earthworks forming 'The site of Hydneye' to the north of the site (Fig. 5). The area of the site is broadly outlined as a separate field. The 2nd Edition OS map (1899) shows little change. The 3rd Edition OS (1910) map shows a sewage pumping station situated to the west of the site, and a brickfield¹⁵ to the east (Fig. 6).
- 2.11** A circular mound is shown to the north of the site (MES8523). A community excavation led by Charles Goring, the Vicar, in c. 2005 in the garden of the rectory in the area of the mound recorded a ditch 60cm wide and at least 40cm deep. Romano-British and Medieval pottery was also recovered from this excavation.
- 2.12** The 4th Edition OS map (1925) shows a similar situation, with allotment gardens between the site and the brickworks. The 1938 OS map shows that the area to the north of the site had been laid out with road in preparation for housing development, and a small building may be located in the southern part of the site. Later maps show the development surrounding the site to the north, east and west and then industrial estates to the south.
- 2.13** On the 12th April 1947 Eastbourne Education Committee released a Notice of Intent to build the school; tenders were issued in 1948 for a school comprising nine classrooms, lavatories and stores on the ground floor, and a basement heating chamber. The school was opened in late 1949¹⁶.
- 2.14** A number of archaeological events have taken place around the site, most associated with the Bronze Age platform and trackways at Shinewater (e.g. EES14056). An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the construction of a single storey extension at 28 Court Road, a short distance to the south-east of the site in 2004 (EES14026). No archaeological features or artefacts were discovered.

¹⁴ <http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/sussex.html>

¹⁵ Beswick, M. 2001 *Brickmaking in Sussex*, Middleton Press.

¹⁶ http://www.hjs.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=58

3.0 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** The watching brief commenced after initial ground preparation and topsoil stripping had been largely completed to the front of the school building. Approximately 0.10m - 0.15m of topsoil had been removed.
- 3.2** On the first day of archaeological monitoring, a trench (Trench 1) was excavated to run parallel to the south side of the school building, aligned approximately west to east (Fig. 7). It measured 62.4m x 1.9m x 0.26m deep maximum, with the topsoil having still been in place to the very west end of the trench only. The trench was generally 0.17m deep upon removal of the topsoil (the maximum depth of impact at this location). A machine with a toothless bucket was used for the excavation.
- 3.3** It was initially considered by the foreman (GPB Construction) and the on-site archaeologist that excavation of this trench may hasten the end of the watching brief if it was to expose only made ground across the length of the site. However, a context was observed to the east end of the trench which may have been possible natural and so required further investigation. Furthermore, it was later advised that the machine was to excavate slightly deeper to both the west end and south side of the site, thereby potentially encountering the natural.
- 3.4** The site was therefore visited for a second and final time the following day when ground reduction recommenced from the west end of the site, directly south of Trench 1 (Fig. 7). The site was terraced with the south half excavated to a depth of 0.30m lower than the north half. To the very south side of the site, beside the school entrance gate on Dallington Road, the machine excavated to a maximum depth of 0.69m below the original grass surface in order to reach the formation level. Only made ground was recorded at this depth.
- 3.4** All exposed surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and finds. Removed spoil was also scanned for the presence of unstratified finds. A Garrett ACE150 metal detector was used throughout.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards and to the ESCC Recommended Standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart. No levels were recorded.

- 3.6** 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, and will be deposited in Eastbourne Museum in due course. A site reference of HJS11 was used, and a museum accession number of 2011.11 has been allocated by Eastbourne Museum.

4.0 Results (Plates 1-5)

4.01 A total of eight contexts were recorded during the watching brief. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 The topsoil (Context **100**), retained at the very west end of Trench 1 only, was a friable mid brown clayey silt that contained no obvious inclusions.

4.1.2 A made ground (Context **101**) was recorded to the west end of the trench, beneath the predominantly striped topsoil (Context **100**). This was a friable pale to mid orange-brown or brownish-orange sandy silt that contained occasional to frequent small areas of mid reddish orange or pale pink sand, frequent areas of small flints (a few cm³ in size maximum) and occasional areas of crush with brick fragments.

4.1.3 Context **102** was a strip of tarmac that was found within Context **101**, approximately 21.30m from the west end of the trench. It measured 0.5m by 0.9m and contained occasional brick fragments.

4.1.4 A 2.10m long stretch of pale pink sand and degraded concrete (Context **103**) was also observed within the main made ground (Context **101**), just over 1m to the east of the tarmac strip (Context **102**). It is possible that the sand underlay the concrete.

4.1.5 To the east of the stretch of sand and concrete (Context **103**), the made ground (Context **101**) was generally similar to that seen elsewhere except that it contained larger patches of frequent flints, one patch was recorded as 5.90m long.

4.1.6 A dump of light pink floor tiles was observed 4.30m east of the halfway mark along the trench (Context **104**). The dump measured 2.4m long and extended the full width of the trench. No sample was taken of the tiles, which were clearly of 20th century date. To the immediate east of the dump, a patch of chalk was recorded measuring 0.75m by 0.55m (Context **106**).

4.1.7 Approximately 3.6m west of the eastern third of the trench, a new made ground (Context **105**) replaced Context **101**. It was initially believed that this pale orange-brown sandy silt / silty sand was possible natural (see paragraph 4.2.1 below). It was relatively sterile and contained occasional flints (a few cm³ in size maximum).

4.1.8 The eastern third of the trench exposed two old land drains (both tiled), two service pipes (one of which was ceramic) and two ditch features with dark fills that were presumably modern services; all ran southwards down the slight incline of the land. The surface finds from the ditches were modern and collectively comprised the occasional sherd of clear glass, a sherd of pottery and a fragment of white tile. These finds were not collected as they were clearly of 20th century date. They were the only finds found during excavation of the trench.

4.2 The rest of the site

4.2.1 Outside Trench 1, two further contexts were recorded. A pale to mid greyish brown silt with no obvious inclusions was recorded to the immediate south of the trench, at its west end only (Context **107**). Further south, this layer led into a clean silty clay that comprised occasional sandstone inclusions (Context **108**). This was predominately mid brownish-orange or orange-brown in colour but was also mottled a mid greyish-brown and a pale yellow-brown. Large areas of chalk within it reveal this context to have been highly disturbed in places. Context **107** underlay the made ground of Context **101** whilst Context **108** lay beneath the topsoil (Context **100**). No finds were retrieved from either context.

4.2.2 As with Context **105**, it was first thought that Contexts **107** and **108** were variations on the natural deposit. However, the results from the earlier evaluation excavation¹⁷ made it clear that these contexts must each have been a deposit of made ground, as the natural was encountered at a greater depth than the level reached during the watching brief.

4.2.3 No other features or deposits were noted during the watching brief.

¹⁷ Meaton, C. 2011 *An Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne*.
CBAS Report

5.0 Discussion

- 5.1** The watching brief to the front of Highfield Junior School encountered no features, deposits or finds of archaeological interest. The ground works for the redevelopment were not of sufficient depth anywhere across the site to extend through the layers of made ground encountered. This was true even to the south side of the site where excavation was at its deepest beside Dallington Road. Here, however, the made ground may have been at its thickest as the earlier evaluation excavation to the front of the school revealed it to thicken north to south. The made ground was not dated independently of the evaluation, which dated its deposition to the early 20th century.
- 5.2** The methodology employed during the watching brief was appropriate to the requirement to target the area of the development that appeared most likely to disturb potential archaeological remains. A high level of confidence was achieved as a result of this.

6.0 Acknowledgments

- 6.1** We would like to thank Stuart Eatock of Michael Cook Associates, on behalf of East Sussex County Council, for appointing CBAS Ltd to undertake the watching brief. Thanks are also extended to the site manager, Bozidar Spirovski of Cheesmur Building Contractors and the on-site staff of GPB Construction Ltd for their assistance in accommodating the watching brief. Chris Butler managed the project for CBAS Ltd, and Greg Chuter monitored it for ESCC.

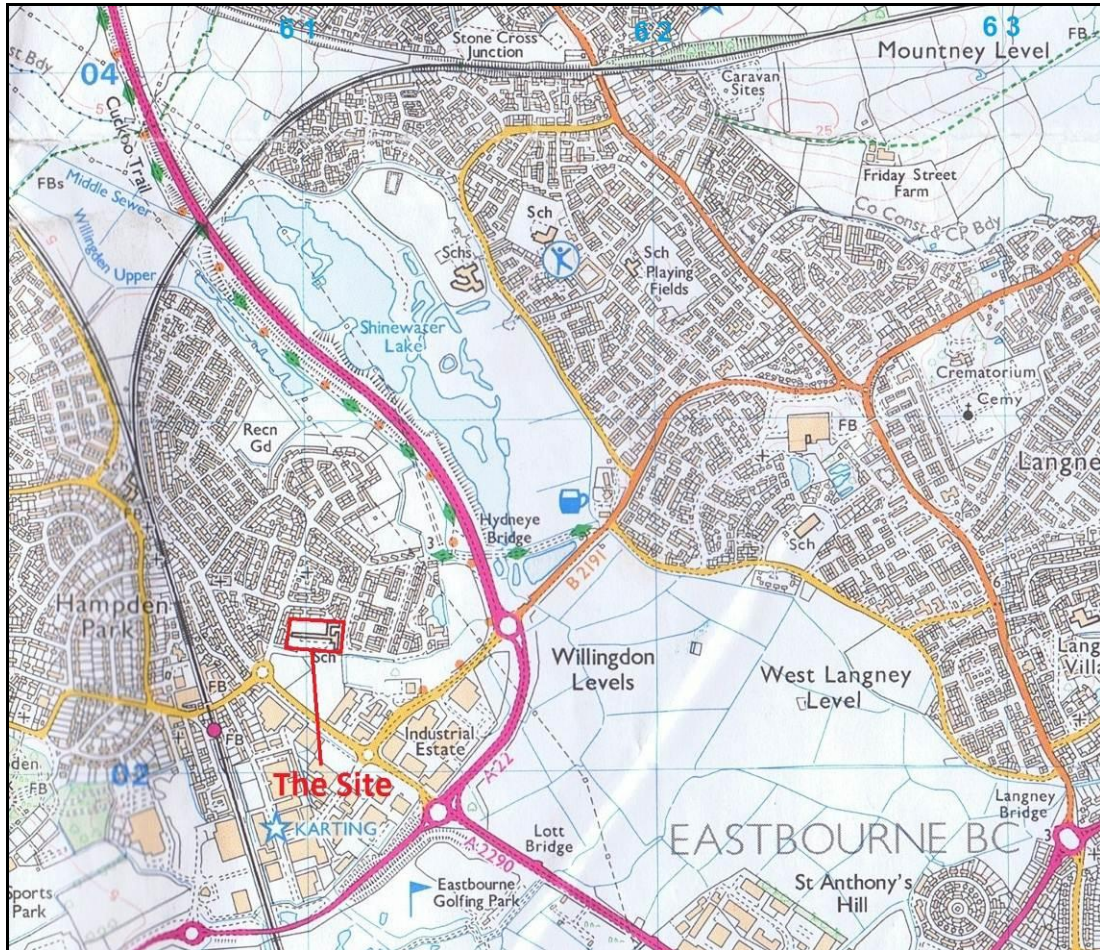


Fig. 1: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Site Location
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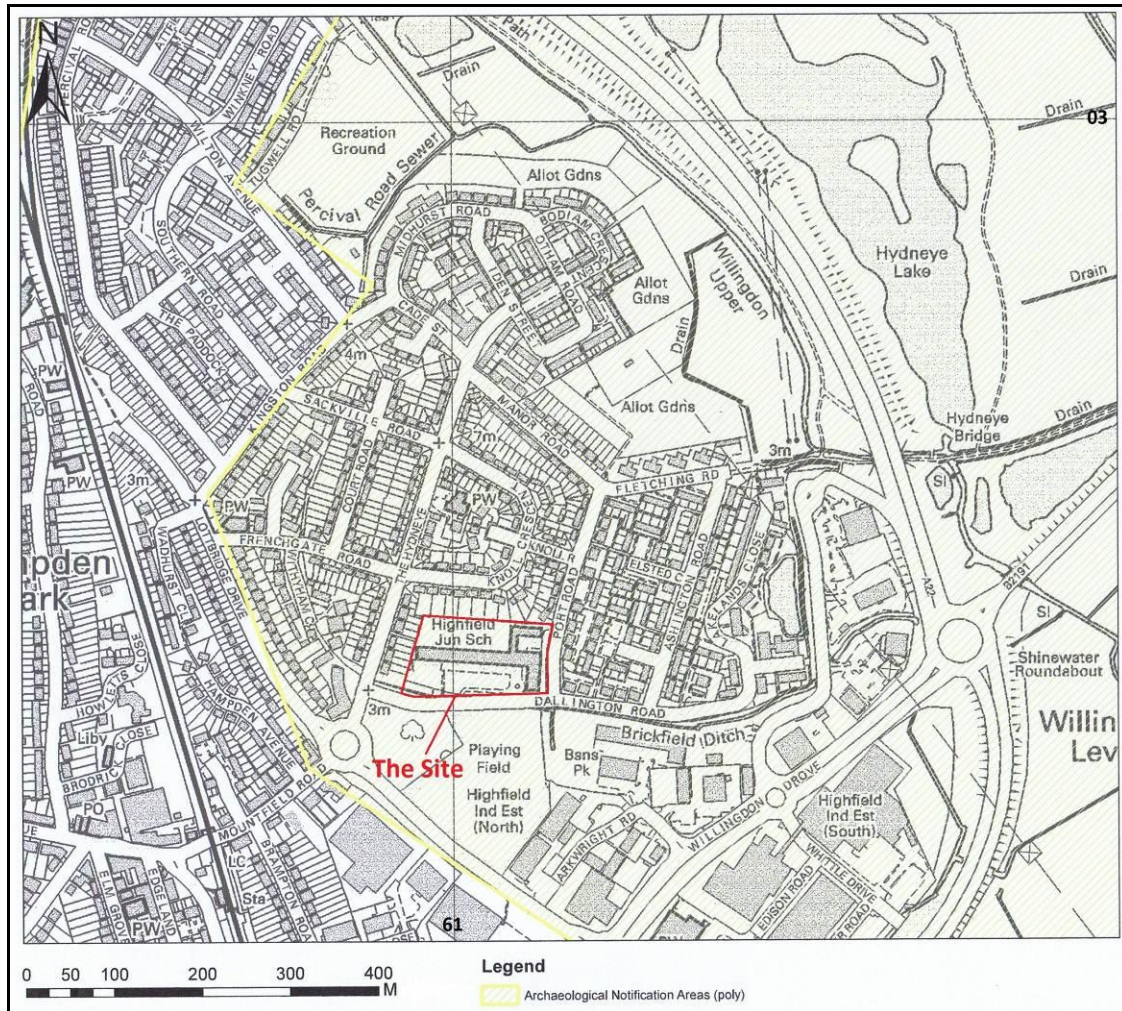


Fig. 2: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Site Location & Archaeological Notification Area

(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

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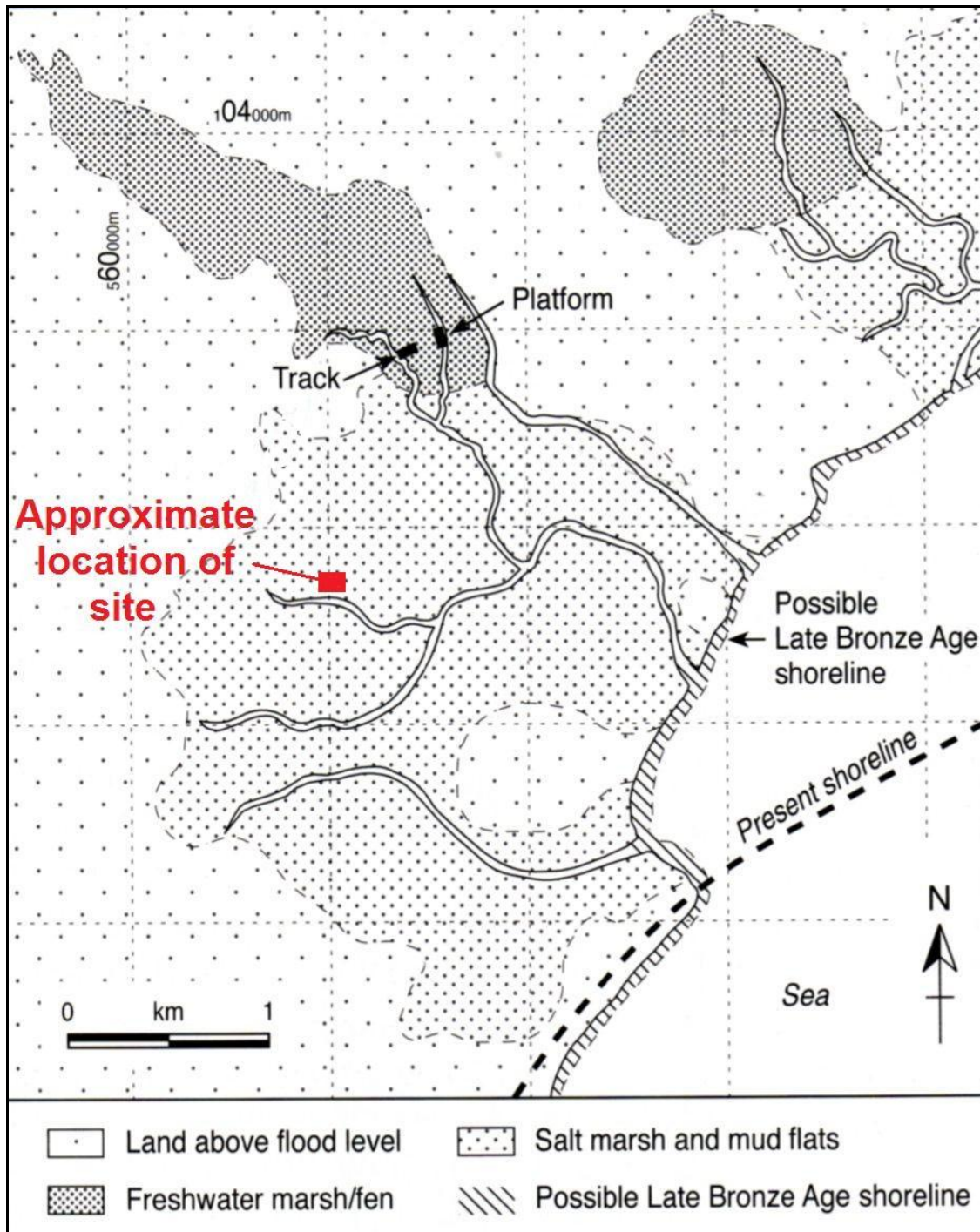


Fig. 4: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Later Bronze Age environment
(Adapted from Greatorex 2003)

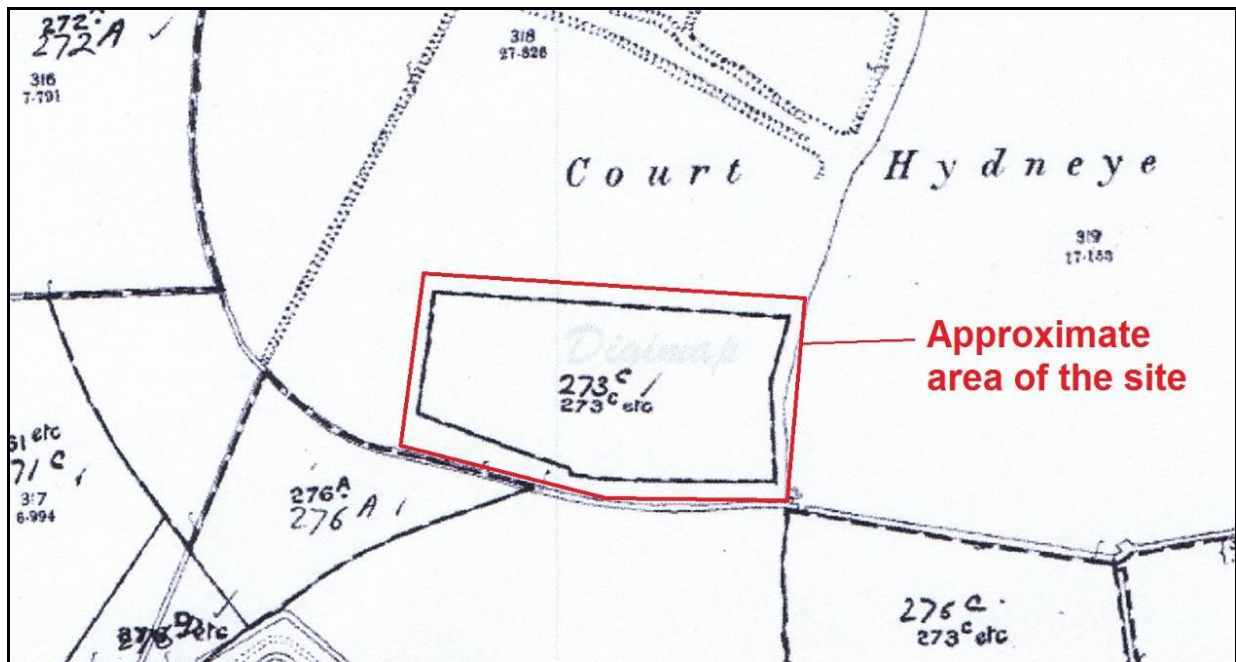


Fig. 5: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: 1st Edition OS Map (1874)

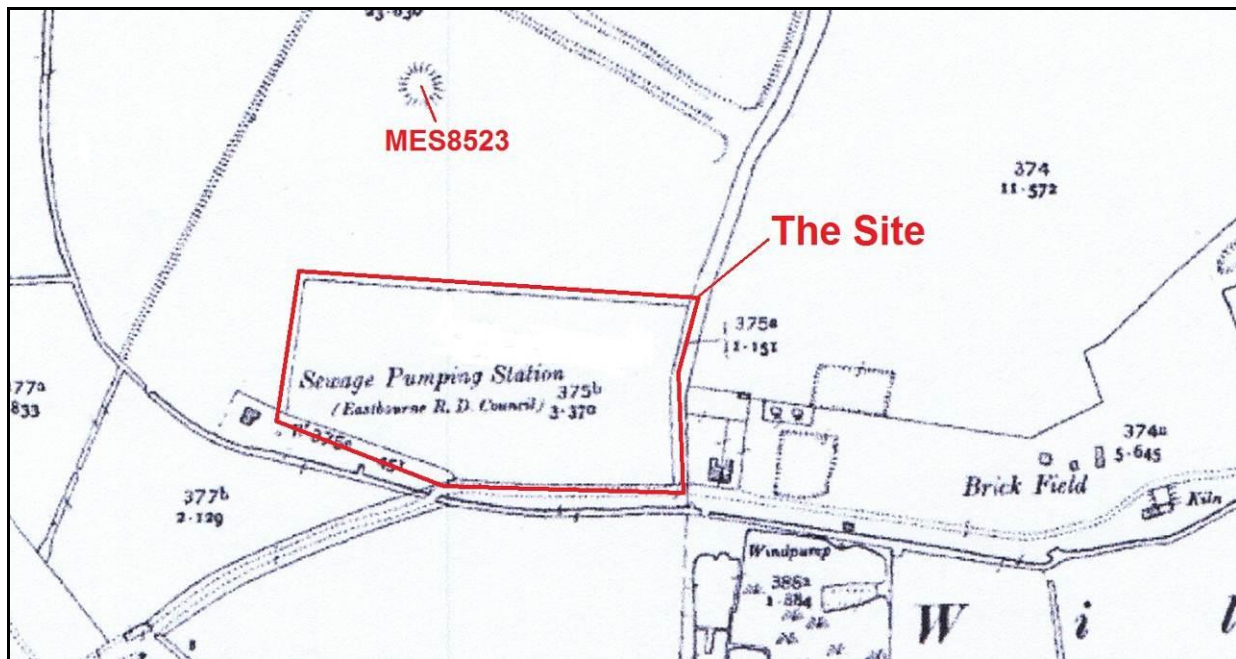


Fig. 6: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: 3rd Edition OS Map (1910)

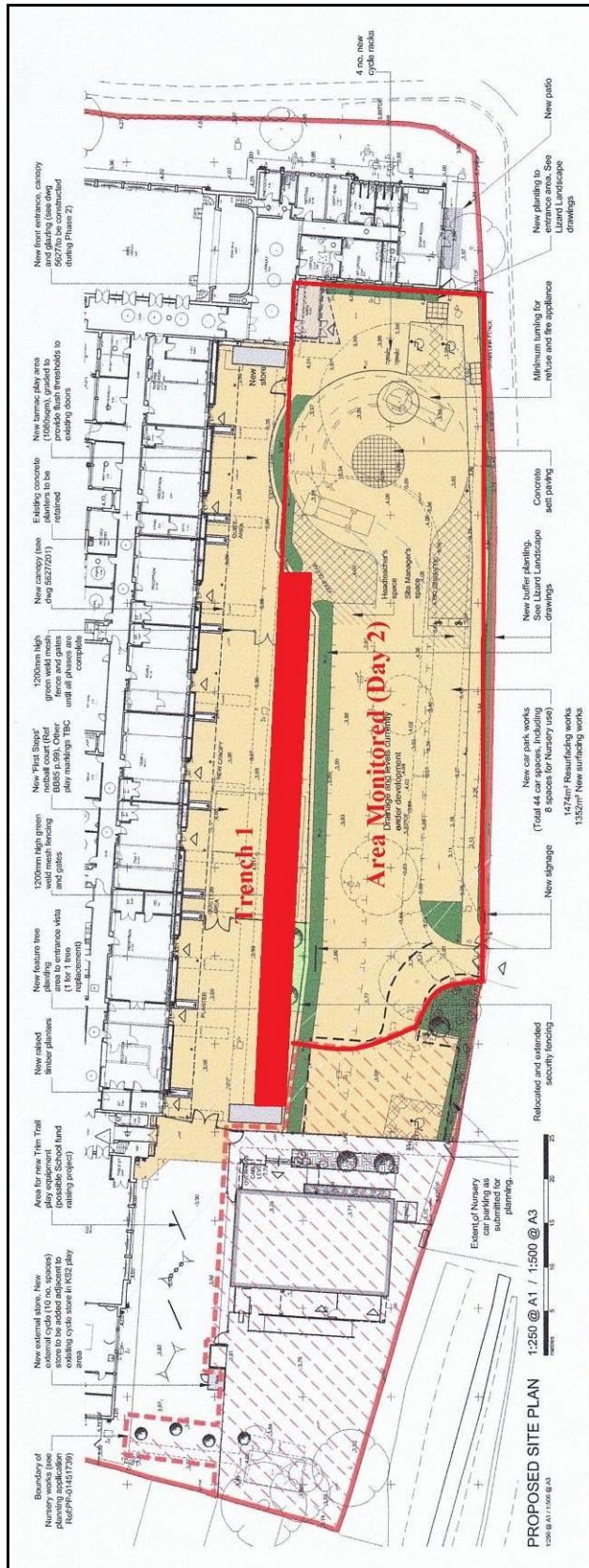


Fig. 7: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Development Plan showing the area monitored adjacent to Dallington Road & the location of Trench 1 (Adapted from architects drawing)



Plate 1:
Highfield
Junior School,
Eastbourne:
Trench 1
looking east

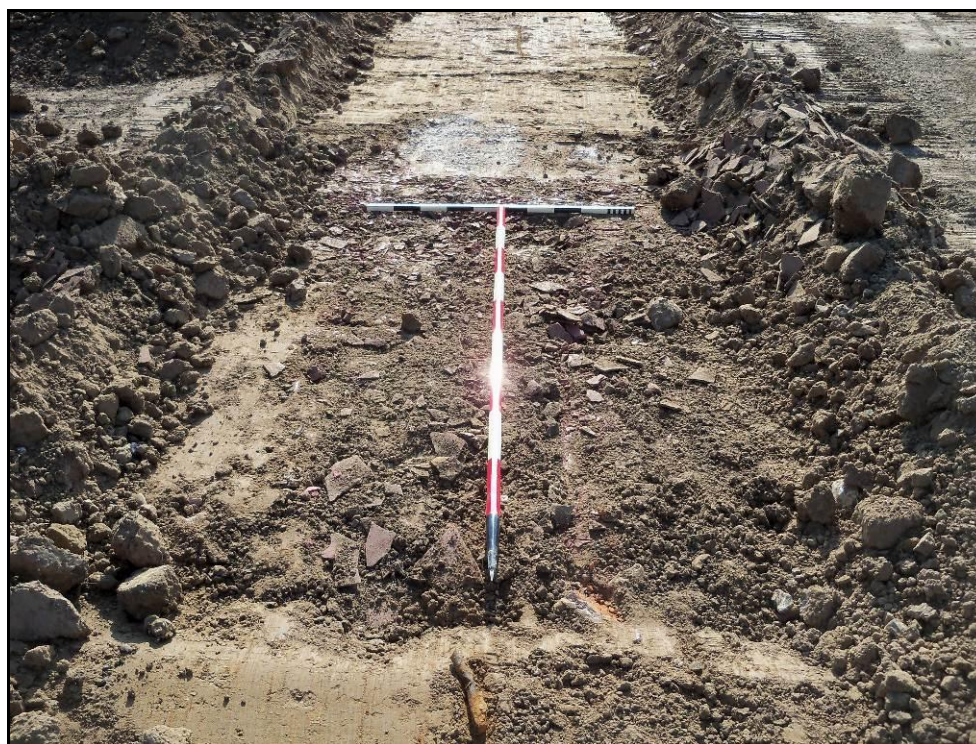


Plate 2: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Dump of floor tiles
(Context **104**) in Trench 1, looking east



Plate 3: Highfield Junior School,
Eastbourne: Trench 1 looking west



Plate 4: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: Southwest corner of site
after ground reduction, looking southeast



Plate 5: Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne: West side of site after ground reduction, looking north

Appendix I: HER Summary Form

Site Code	HJS11					
Identification Name and Address	Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex.					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex, Eastbourne Borough Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 61024 02390					
Geology	Gault Clay and Alluvium					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban X	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 1st & 3rd August 2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	East Sussex County Council					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIFA					
Project Supervisor	Caroline Russell					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM X	Other:		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Highfield Junior School, Eastbourne, East Sussex during groundworks for the construction of a new car park to the front of the school building. Monitoring commenced after topsoil stripping had taken place across most of the site. The ground was reduced by up to 0.70m in places but was not deep enough to expose the natural below the layers of made ground encountered; an earlier evaluation excavation had dated the deposition of the made ground to the early 20th century. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were identified during the watching brief.</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, a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and until recently taught A-level Archaeology at Bexhill 6th Form College. 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 Ltd 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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