



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Watching Brief at 2, Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex

Project Number CBAS0150

BH2010/00216

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by
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Summary

Following an earlier evaluation excavation an archaeological watching brief was carried out on two areas of ground reduction at 2, Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex. No archaeological features were noted, and no archaeological artefacts were recovered. This was most likely due to the previous construction of a brick built garage in the south western corner of the site, and earlier landscaping at the front of the house.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd (CBAS) was commissioned by Gary Vallier (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks in association with the construction of a new three-storey 3-bed house at 2 Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex.
- 1.2** The site is situated on the east side of Croft Road, and is currently occupied by a detached house and separate garage, with gardens to the south and east sides of the house. Part of the site lies within a designated Archaeological Notification Area, which designates an area of known Prehistoric activity, including human burials (Fig. 1).
- 1.3** There are a number of Prehistoric and later sites recorded on the HER in the immediate vicinity of the site (Fig. 2). These mostly comprise find spots of artefacts, but also include human burials and archaeological features. A number of Listed Buildings are recorded at Withdean and Patcham to the east of the site, although none is in the immediate vicinity of the site. No recent archaeological events are recorded in the vicinity of the site.
- 1.4** As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority placed a condition on the planning consent for the development (BH2010/00216), requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken, to comply with policy HE12 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan.
- 1.5** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 318/333 is Upper and Middle Chalk, with a large outcrop of Clay-with-flints to the west of the site, and Head deposit in the valley bottom to the east of the site.
- 1.6** A written scheme of investigation (hereafter WSI) was initially drawn up in accordance with a brief prepared by the Archaeology Team at ESCC for an archaeological excavation. The work comprised a single T-shaped evaluation trench in June 2010, which produced no evidence of archaeological features, due to the likelihood of this area having been previously terraced¹.
- 1.7** The County Archaeologist required a further phase of work, comprising a watching brief, during the groundworks for which a WSI was prepared and approved. This phase of the fieldwork was carried out by the author on the 5th January and 8th February 2011. The project was managed by Chris Butler for CBAS.

¹ C, Meaton. 2010. *An Archaeological Evaluation at 2, Croft Road Brighton, East Sussex*. CBAS0150

2.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The earliest finds from the area comprise two Palaeolithic ovate handaxes, possibly dating to the Lower Palaeolithic period (MES1048) found to the south of the site at Tongdean. These probably derive from a deposit of Woolwich & Reading Beds, which together with the nearby Clay-with-flints provide a high potential for undisturbed Palaeolithic material².
- 2.2 There is no evidence for Mesolithic activity at or near the site; however there is a significant amount of 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.
- 2.3 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 point of the South Downs to the north of Brighton and Hove. A large assemblage of Mesolithic flintwork was recovered at Red Hill during the Brighton Bypass excavations³, with other Mesolithic sites are located on similar Clay-with-Flints outcrops further north.
- 2.4 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. The causewayed enclosure at Whitehawk, one of eight such sites in Sussex⁴, is situated some 4km to the east of the site; its high position and the scale of its construction would suggest that this area would be within its site catchment both in terms of the manpower required for its construction and the use of the monument throughout its long existence⁵.
- 2.5 In 1952, a Neolithic u-shaped ditch (MES367) was discovered whilst laying a drain at 17 Eldred Avenue. The ditch was traced for 60ft to the west and then for another 60ft in a southerly direction. The ditch contained animal bones, fire-fractured flint and a single sherd of probable Neolithic pottery, and was overlain by a burial of probable Early Bronze Age date. A Neolithic polished flint axe (MES221) was found in 1903 at Patcham.

² Pope, M. 2003 'The Earliest Occupation of Sussex: Recent Research and Future Objectives', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd, 17-28.

³ Butler, C. & Holgate, R. 2002 'The Flintwork' [Excavations at Redhill] in Rudling, D. (ed) *Downland Settlement and Land-Use*, London, Archetype Publications Ltd.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Oswald et al. 2001 *The Creation of Monuments*, Swindon, English Heritage.

- 2.6** Bronze Age finds include the crouched burial overlying the Neolithic ditch mentioned above (MES367) and further crouched burials (MES313) to the north-east of the site of probable Early Bronze Age date. Another burial was found in 1846 associated with pottery and three gold armlets (MES339) on the Downs at Patcham.
- 2.7** Roman and Saxon activity is represented by isolated finds of coins, including two Roman coins (MES280) and a Saxon coin of King Offa (MES293). Large Romanised villa complexes appeared on the Coastal Plain, on the north of the South Downs, and on the southern edge of the South Downs. Some of these developed out of existing Iron Age settlements, but others appear to have been new settlements. Local examples include Southwick, Brighton (Preston) and West Blatchington.
- 2.8** Withdean was granted to Lewes Priory by William de Warenne, and the second William de Warenne confirmed 8 hides in Withdean to the Priory in 1095⁶. The Manor of Withdean remained in the possession of Lewes Priory until 1537, and was granted to Anne of Cleves in 1541.
- 2.9** Withdean Manor house (MES306), which dated to the 15th-16th centuries, was situated within the current Withdean Park, where some of the walls of the Manor house may survive within the current boundary wall. The hamlet of Withdean (MES8521) had become depopulated by the 18th century enclosures, reducing to a single farm. The later Manor House, known as Withdean Court, was also situated within Withdean Park and was demolished in 1936.
- 2.10** The Patcham Tithe Map⁷ of 1846 (Fig. 3) shows the site on the west side of the strip of land belonging to the London and Brighton Railway running north-south through the valley. Part of the site is within a field, whilst the western part is woodland. The Roe family who owned the Withdean Manorial estates in the 18th century had planted numerous plantations, of which this piece of woodland is likely to have been one.
- 2.11** The 1st Edition OS Map (1875) shows little change from the Tithe map, although there are a number of land holdings marked out with dashed lines, which may reflect parcels of land being sold with a view to future development (Fig. 4). The later property boundaries of 2 Croft Road appear to follow one of these lines. To the east the railway has now been built, and there has been some development along the valley bottom.
- 2.12** There is little change by the time of the 2nd Edition OS map (1898), but by the 3rd Edition OS map of 1911 the landscape around the site is being further divided up into smaller plots, and housing development is beginning to encroach from the south (Fig. 5).

⁶ *Victoria County History*, Vol. 7, p217.

⁷ ESRO TD/E46 1846

- 2.13** By the 4th Edition OS map (1931) the woodland has been cut back and housing development has filled the area around the site (Fig. 6). A house now occupies the site of 2 Croft Road and others have been built on plots to the north and south, whilst further north there is a remnant of the woodland and open farmland. Development has encroached further from the south and along the valley to the east of the railway.
- 2.14** The 1947 aerial photograph shows the site and immediate area to still be largely wooded with the houses only just visible in heavily wooded gardens. Further development has taken place to the west, and to the north of the wood. The major housing developments that covered the Downs to the north and west of the site took place in the 1950's and 60's.
- 2.15** An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 2 Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex in June 2010, in advance of a new proposed 3-storey residential development. A trench was excavated over the footprint of the new building, attaining a total length of 15m by 1.5m wide. The topsoil was found to directly overly the natural chalk substrata. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified during the work.
- 2.16** The site is located on a steep southeast facing down land valley slope, and it is thought likely that terracing associated with the upstanding development along Croft Road has truncated much of the former steeply graded ground surface. Conversely, it was thought that some potential for surviving archaeological deposits may exist where two new parking bays are to be constructed in the northwest of the development area, a location which appears to comprise relatively undisturbed hillside.

3.0 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** An archaeological watching brief was maintained on two areas on the north-eastern side of the site (Fig. 7). The first took place on the 5th January, and involved the reduction of the ground surface to the natural chalk, in an area of 9m east to west by 2.6m north to south. The second area that was reduced was located to north of the first area, and was situated in front of the house. This reduction measured 2m north to south by 5m east to west; this area was also excavated to the natural chalk.
- 3.2** Before being excavated the areas of the reductions were first scanned with a CAT scan, and were also scanned with a Precision Gold metal detector. The spoil from the excavations was piled up at the side of the excavations and was also subjected to a visual inspection and also scanned with the metal detector for retrieval of artefacts.
- 3.3** The excavations were carried out using a 3 tonne 360° tracked digger with a 0.5m wide toothless bucket. On the second day this was replaced with a 1.8 tonne tracked digger using a 1m wide toothless bucket. The soil was removed in shallow spits until the natural chalk was reached.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 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. A site reference of CRB10 has been allocated.

4.0 Results

- 4.1** In the first area of reduction, there were two layers apparent. Firstly Context **5**, which was a layer of mid-brown silty clay loam with a loose consistence, and having a thickness of up to 500mm at the northern side of the excavations, with this depth reducing to 300mm on the south side. This layer contained 20th century ceramic building material (CBM) (10%), flecking and pieces of chalk up to 50mm (1%), and moderate rooting (5%). The CBM was concentrated in the upper parts of the layer, and was associated with the recent demolition of the garage. No artefacts were recovered from this layer.
- 4.2** Below Context **5** was Context **8**, which was the natural off-white chalk which had a firm consistence. This layer had inclusions of sub-angular flint nodules up to 60mm (<1%) and minimal rooting (<1%). It was noted that the chalk sloped steeply down from the Croft Road frontage and from the north side it sloped down to the house.
- 4.3** Both Contexts **6** and **7** were associated with the previously demolished garage. Context **6** was only apparent at the western end of the reduction in the southern baulk, and comprised the remnants of the concrete floor of the garage. Context **7** ran along the northern side of the reduction, and was the remains of the red brick foundations of the north wall of the demolished garage. This had been laid onto the chalk natural.
- 4.4** In the second area of the reduction in front of the house, only two layers were apparent. Context **9** was a layer of dark to mid brown silty clay loam with a loose consistence, and had inclusions of 20th century CBM (1%), chalk pieces up to 150mm (1%), and heavy rooting (5%). This layer was up to 650mm in depth but was shallower in most places; and was a layer of topsoil combined with the spoil from the earlier reduction to the south. No artefacts were recovered from this layer.
- 4.5** Below Context **9** was Context **10**, and was the same as Context **8**. This was the natural off-white chalk, with a firm consistence and having inclusions of sub angular flint pieces up to 150mm (<1%). The chalk sloped down towards the house from the west.
- 4.6** No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief.

5.0 The Finds.

- 5.1** The only artefacts noted during the watching brief were pieces of 20th century ceramic building material. None were retained.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1** During the course of the watching brief no archaeological features or artefacts were noted. The results of the previous evaluation excavation showed that the topsoil was directly overlying the natural chalk substrata, and no significant archaeological features or deposits were identified during the work. The area appeared to have been subjected to significant amount of landscaping which would have had an impact on the former ground surface⁸.

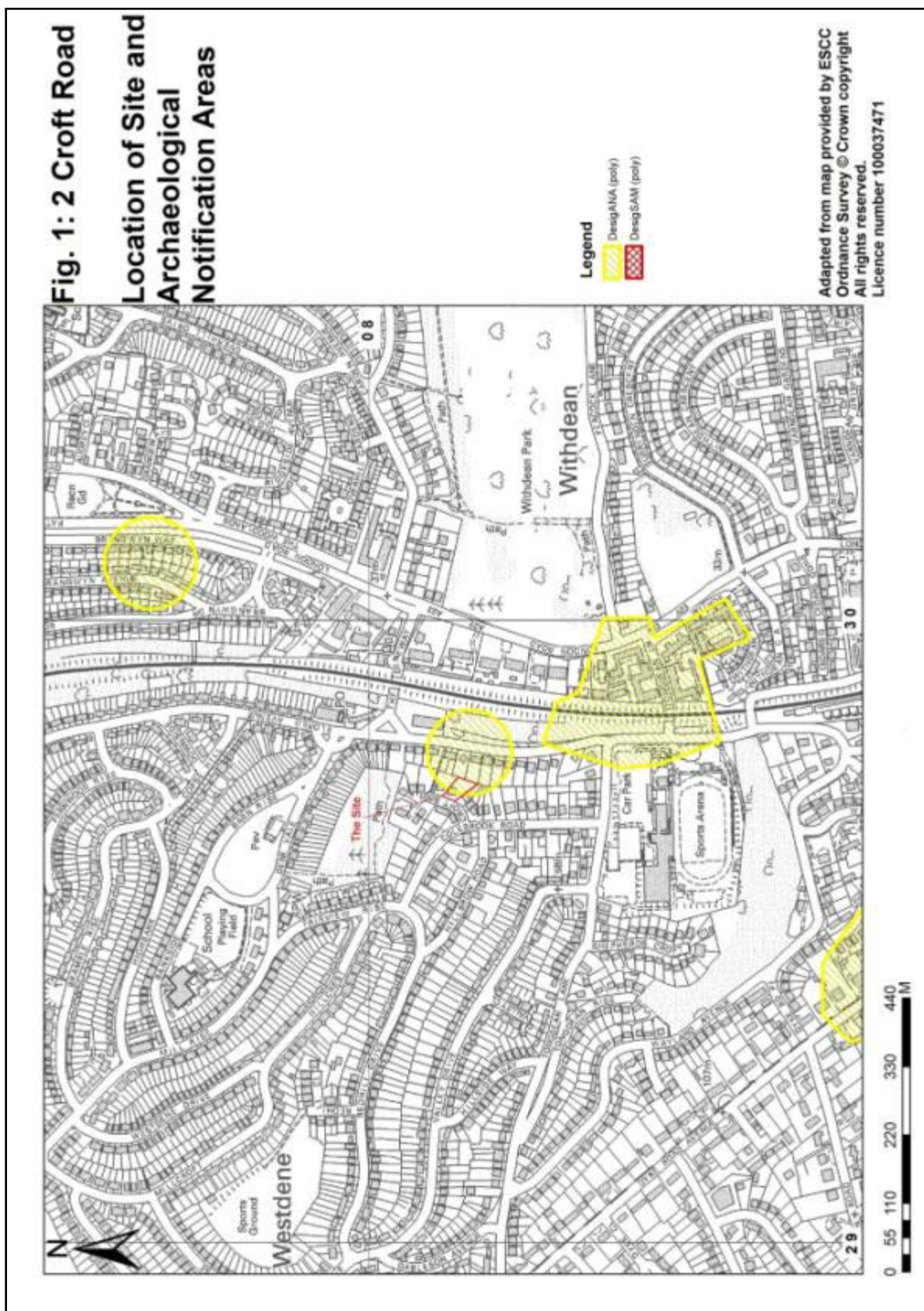
- 6.2** It was thought that some potential for surviving archaeological deposits may have existed in the northwest of the development area, which appeared to comprise relatively undisturbed hillside. However, the watching brief has shown the previous landscaping and groundworks, probably connected with the construction of the adjacent houses, has completely removed any evidence of possible past activity at the site.

- 6.3** The methodology employed in the watching brief has resulted in a very high level of certainty that any archaeological features and deposits that were present at the site would have been identified and recorded.

7.0 Acknowledgements

- 7.1** I would like to thank Mr Gary Vallier for commissioning this archaeological watching brief, and his on-site contractor for their co-operation and assistance during this fieldwork. I would also like to thank Greg Chuter who monitored the work for ESCC and Chris Butler who managed the project for CBAS Ltd.

⁸ C, Meaton. 2010. *An Archaeological Evaluation at 2, Croft Road Brighton, East Sussex*. CBAS



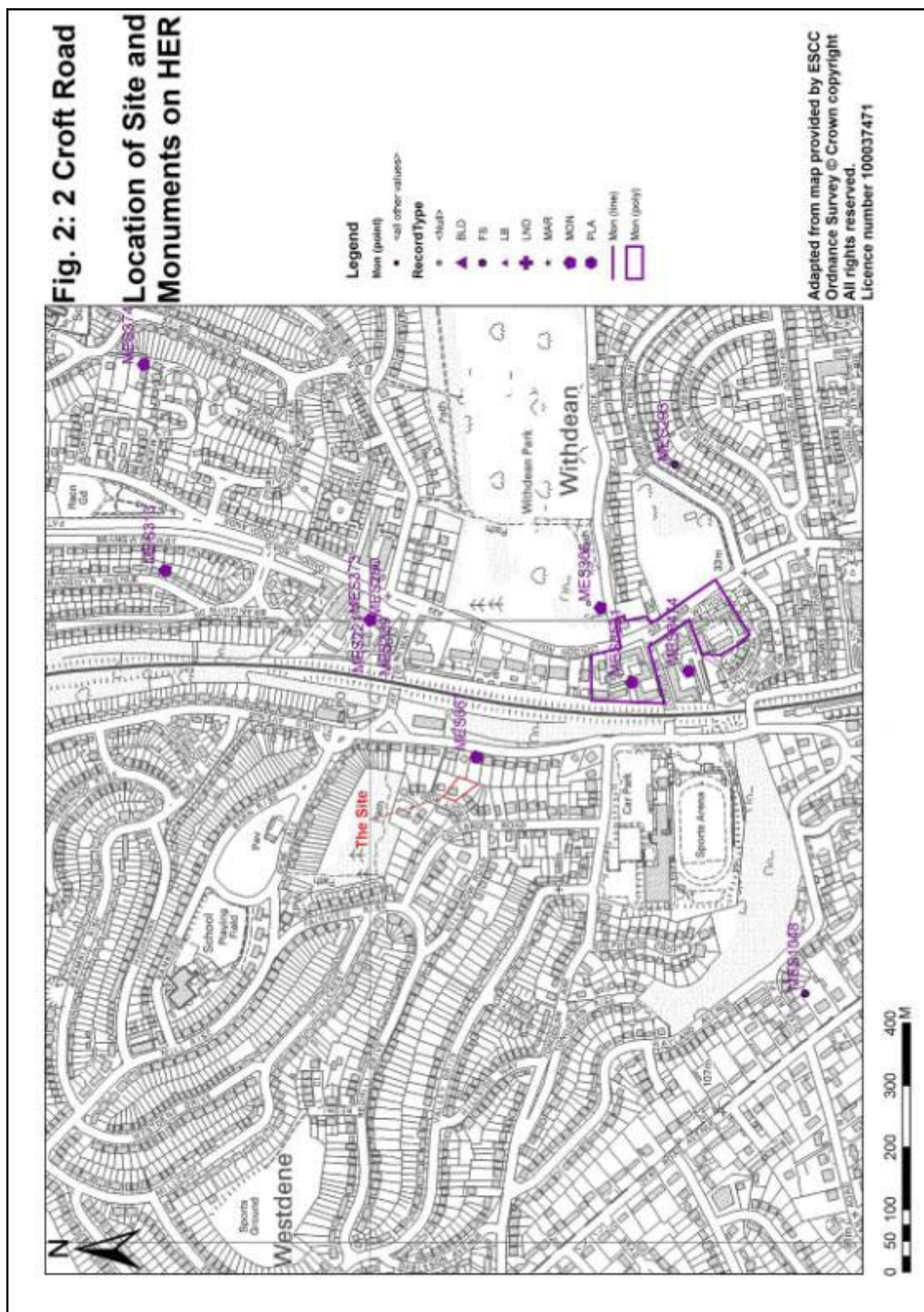




Fig. 3: 2 Croft Road, Brighton: 1842 Tithe Map.
(Based on map provided by ESCC)



Fig. 4: 2 Croft Road, Brighton: 1st Edition OS Map.
(Based on map provided by ESCC)

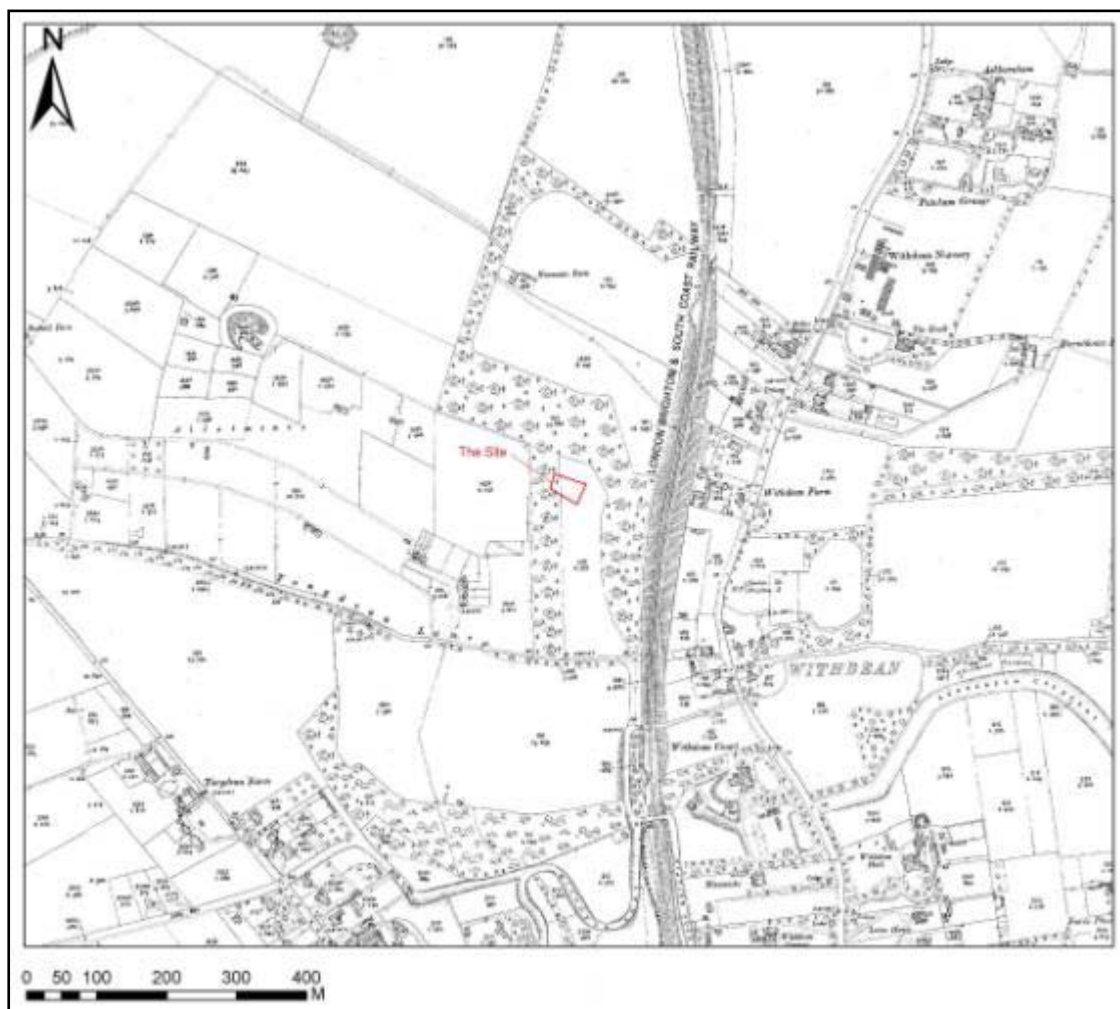


Fig. 5: 2 Croft Road, Brighton: 3rd Edition OS Map.
(Based on map provided by ESCC)

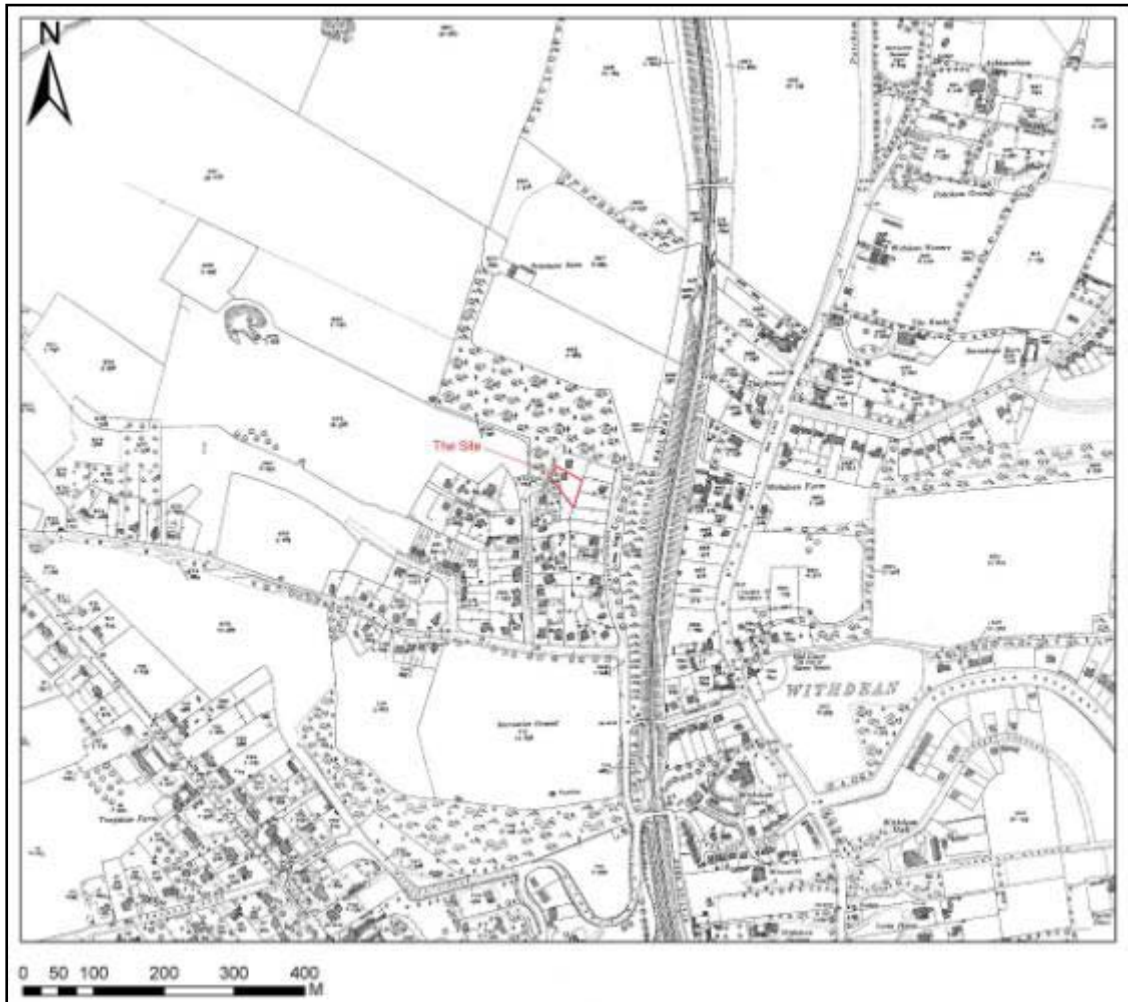


Fig. 6: 2 Croft Road, Brighton: 4th Edition OS Map.
(Based on map provided by ESCC)

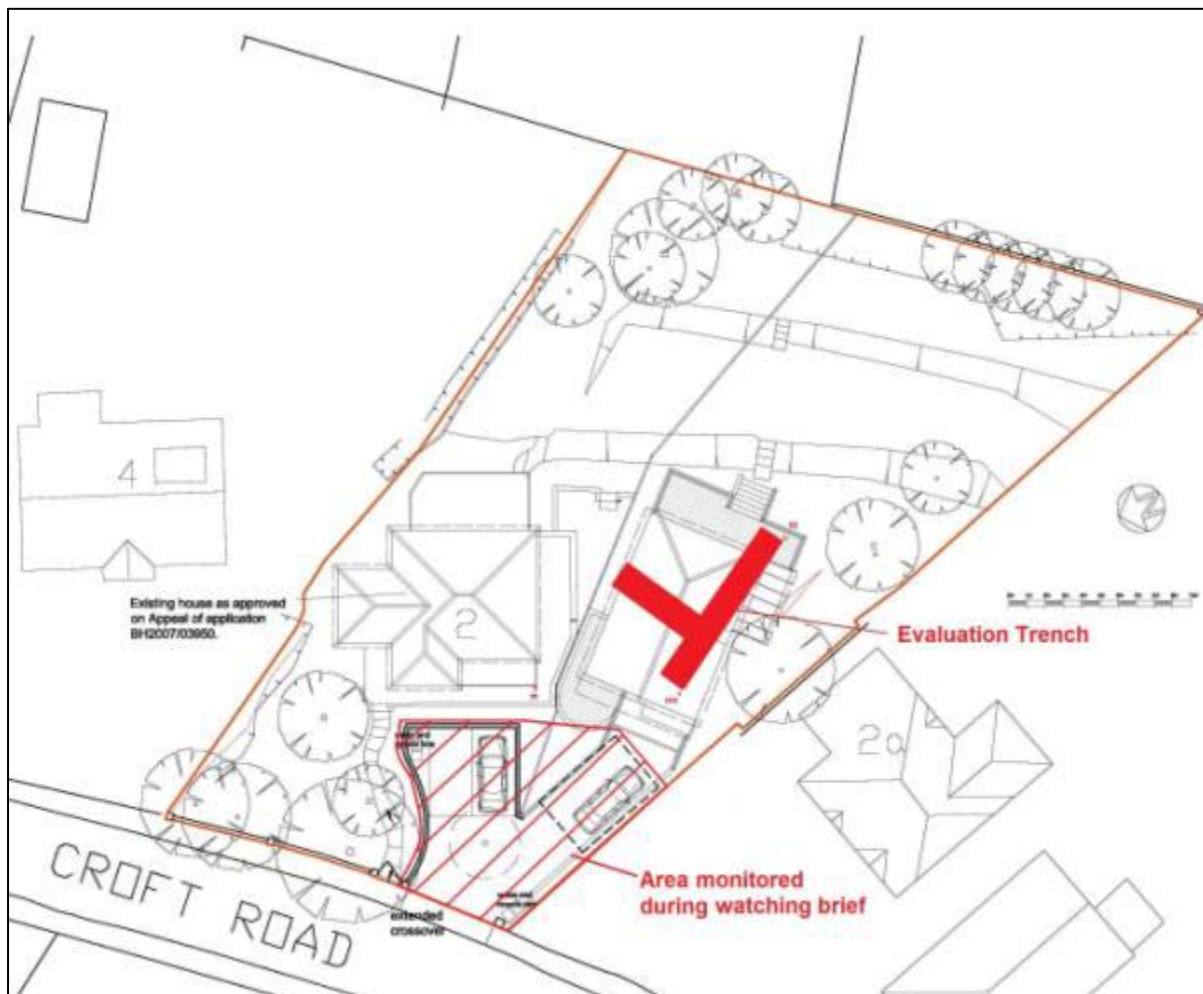


Fig. 7: 2 Croft Road, Brighton: Site plan showing the area monitored and the location of the earlier evaluation trench
(Based on architects drawing)

HER Summary Form

Site Code	CRB 10					
Identification Name and Address	2 Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex County Council					
OS Grid Refs.	529722 107854					
Geology	Upper and Middle Chalk					
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. 5.01.11 & 8.02.11	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr Gary Vallier					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MifA					
Project Supervisor	Keith Butler PifA					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Following an earlier evaluation excavation an archaeological watching brief was carried out on two areas of ground reduction at 2, Croft Road, Brighton, East Sussex. No archaeological features were noted, and no archaeological artefacts were recovered. This was most likely due to the previous construction of a brick built garage in the south western corner of the site, and earlier landscaping at the front of the house.</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 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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