

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at:
The Bank Building, High Street, Burwash, East Sussex**

Planning Reference: RR/2004/2600

NGR 5670 1240

Project No. 2559



**by
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October 2006

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the 15th August and 23rd August 2006 during the excavation of trenches and ground reduction in advance of redevelopment on the site of the former Bank Building, High Street, Burwash, East Sussex. No archaeological deposits or features were observed and it is likely that the site had been terraced during the construction of the former Bank Building.

Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

UCL Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, Archaeology South-East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England, Archaeology South-East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of UCL Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), was commissioned by EOS Developments Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the redevelopment of the former Bank Building, High Street, Burwash, East Sussex (NGR 56762 12476, Fig. 1).
- 1.2** The proposed redevelopment is situated within the medieval village of Burwash on the site of the former Bank Building, which had recently been demolished.
- 1.3** East Sussex County Council (ESCC) advised the local planning authority that an archaeological condition should be attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work (**Planning Reference: RR/2004/2600**). The recommended programme was in the form of an **archaeological watching brief** to be maintained during the excavation of new groundworks until it become clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present.
- 1.4** A Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological monitoring was produced by Jon Sygrave of ASE in July 2006, outlining the methods to be used during the watching brief. The methodology was agreed with East Sussex County Council prior to the commencement of work at the site.
- 1.5** The on-site monitoring was undertaken by Jon Sygrave and Michelle Collings on three separate visits between 15th to 23rd August 2006. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Projects Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site is situated to the north of the main street within an archaeologically sensitive area, which incorporates the medieval village of Burwash, in the Sussex/Kent Weald (NGR 56762 12476).
- 2.2** The site is considered to have high archaeological potential. Based on the date of the construction of the parish church, the village appears to have been founded in the late 11th century, but may well have had earlier origins. The High Street, on which the proposed redevelopment is situated, is lined with Tudor and post medieval buildings and would undoubtedly have been the focus for medieval tenements and houses.
- 2.3** The First Edition O.S. 25" –1-mile scale map of 1873, the Second Edition 25" – 1 mile scale O.S. map of 1898 and Third Edition 25" – 1-

mile scale O.S. map of 1909 all show relatively little change to the layout and boundaries of the land on which The Bank Building stood. Moreover there seem to have been few changes to the village itself during this period. The First Edition and 1910 Edition 6" – 1 mile scale O.S. maps further indicate that little changed in the village and the surrounding area during this period. Indeed, the village has changed little over the past 200 years. The most obvious redevelopment of the High Street took place during the 1970's to the immediate south of the Bank Building, on the site of the former Congregational Chapel and four cottages.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** The archaeological watching brief was maintained during the preliminary excavation of a test trench and sondage (for engineering purposes) and subsequent striping and excavation of foundation trenches (Fig. 2). During the latter, mechanical excavation continued into the archaeologically sterile sandstone natural. In addition to this the excavation of a trench for a soakaway was monitored. Here the mechanical excavation continued into the archaeologically sterile underlying Weald Clay. All excavation was monitored, all sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features or deposits and all spoil was scanned for the presence of artefacts.
- 3.2** All archaeological deposits and stratigraphy encountered was recorded according to accepted professional standards using context record sheets based upon the Central Excavation Unit recording system, as modified for use by Archaeology South-East.
- 3.3** A full digital photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course.

4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

- 4.1** Demolition of the former bank building had already taken place prior ASE's site attendance, but no intrusive ground works were undertaken at this time. It was observed that the rear garden area of the site abruptly stepped up by up to c.1.5m above the rest of the site where the new house was to be situated, leaving a roughly level terrace.
- 4.2** The archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the foundation trenches, soakaway and associated ground investigation are given below.

Trench/ Area Number	Stratigraphy	Land Use	Underlying 'Natural'	Archaeological Features	Archaeological Artefacts
Trench 1	Context 1 – 300mm Context 2 – 300mm	Urban	Not reached	✘	✘
Sondage 2	Context 3 – 300mm	Urban	Not reached	✘	✘
Trench 3 (soakaway)	Context 4 – 300mm Context 5 – 280mm Context 6 – 470mm Context 7 – 310mm Context 8 – natural	Urban/ Garden	Clay (Context 8)	✘	✘
Foundation Trenches	Context 2 – 20mm Context 9 – >800mm	Urban	Sandstone (Context 9)	✘	✘

- 4.3** No archaeological deposits or features were observed in any of the trenches and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden. This consisted of light orangey brownish yellow coarse gravel silt made ground (Context 001) and orangey dark yellow silty clay made ground (Context 002) within the area of the footprint of The Bank Building (observed in Trench 1 and the Foundation Trenches). Sondage 2 was excavated to 300mm entirely through a mixed modern deposit of concrete and silty gravel formation layer (Context 3).
- 4.4** To the north of the site (Trench 3), in the garden plot the overburden consisted of greyish mid-brown slightly silty coarse sand topsoil (Context 004) and greyish light brown silty coarse sand subsoil (Context 005). This overlay 780mm of made ground comprising a compact silt-clay containing small fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) and plaster (Context 6) overlying a similar deposit with no CBM or plaster fragments (Context 7). The natural geology, comprising a dark orangey yellow clay (Context 008), was exposed within the base of this trench.
- 4.5** Ground reduction within the footprint of the proposed development was undertaken without the need for archaeological monitoring as it had already been established that c.600mm of made ground existed in this area (i.e. Trench 3). The monitored foundation trenches were subsequently excavated through a thin spread of the lower extent of the overburden (Context 2) to a maximum depth of c.900mm. The underlying natural geology comprised a mid yellow to mid brown compact sand (Context 009).
- 4.6** No archeologically significant features, finds or deposits were located during the course of the watching brief.

5.0 DISCUSSION

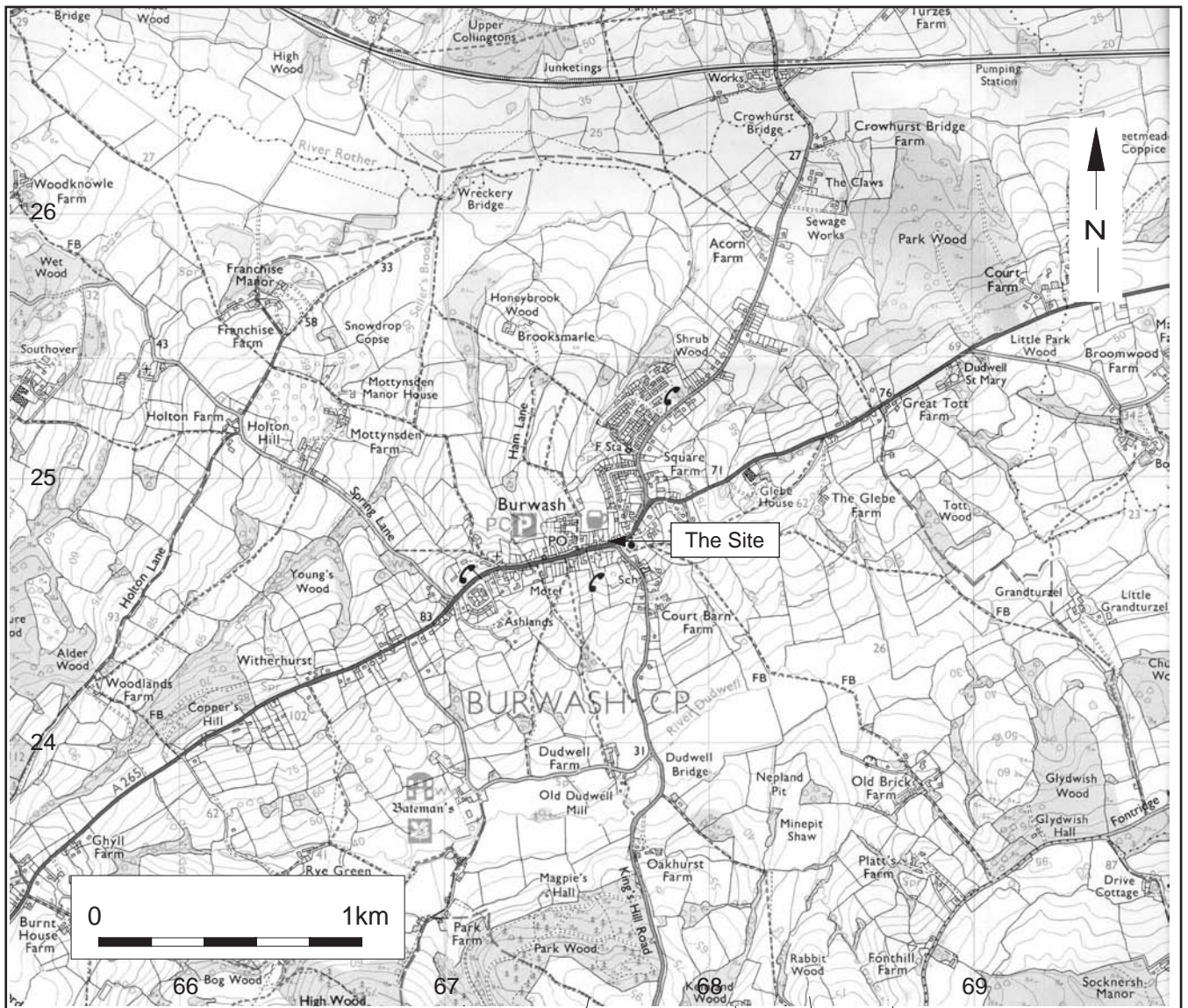
- 5.1** Despite close monitoring of the ground works during the redevelopment of the site, no archaeological deposits or features were observed. It can therefore be assumed that any redevelopment of the site will not have adversely affected significant archaeological deposits.
- 5.2** It is not unlikely that the development site had been significantly truncated at the time the former bank building was constructed as is evidenced by the clear terrace cut into sandstone at the front of the site.
- 5.3** As the monitored area occupied a single small house plot it cannot be taken as clear evidence of the absence of surviving archaeological remains within other residential land plots in the village and within the wider vicinity of the site.

6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1** The use of information supplied by East Sussex County Council's Archaeological Officers is gratefully acknowledged, as is the co-operation of EOS Developments Limited, especially Mr. Andrew Muncey.

SMR Summary Sheet

Site Code	BBB06					
Identification Name and Address	The Bank Building, High Street, Burwash					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes District, East Sussex					
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	NGR 56762 12476					
Archaeology South-East Proj. No.	2559					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 15 th & 23 rd Aug 2006	Other		
Sponsor/Client	EOS Developments Limited					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Michelle Collings					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other ✓ nothing found		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the 15th August and 23rd August 2006 during the excavation of trenches and ground reduction in advance of redevelopment on the site of the former Bank Building, High Street, Burwash, East Sussex. No archaeological deposits or features were observed and it is likely that the site had been terraced during the construction of the former Bank Building.</p>						

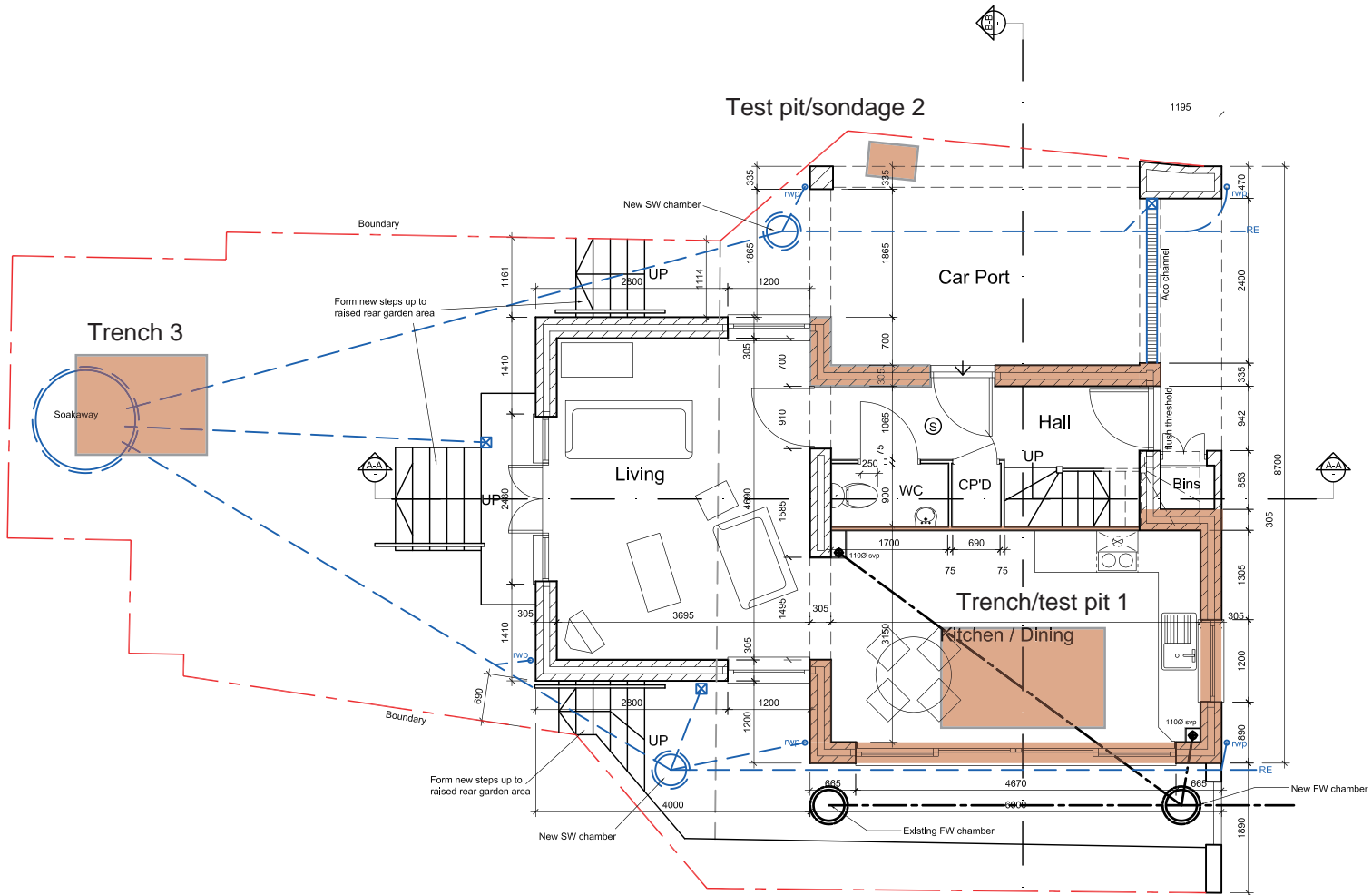


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© Archaeology South-East			Bank Building, Burwash	Fig. 1
Ref: 2559	Oct 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

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Ground Floor Plan

 Monitored groundworks

© Archaeology South-East		Bank Building, Burwash		Fig. 2
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