

An Archaeological Watching Brief
At 'Knowlands', St Martins Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

(NGR 541412 109973)

Project No. 2580



By
Paul Riccoboni
(with a contribution by Luke Barber & Trista Clifford)

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Archaeology South-East

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The 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 worldwide, 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 the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by Ichthus Architects Ltd (on behalf of Peter Groom) to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with the construction of new extension (ref: LW/05/2260) at 'Knowlands', St Martins Lane, Lewes, East Sussex (NGR 541412 109973). Three separate site visits were made on 4th, 7th & 8th August 2006. Six archaeological features were recorded and excavated. In total 5 pits were encountered within the limits of the work. These features were then hand excavated to depths no greater than development formation level. Two medieval pits were identified (Cuts 11 & 14). These pits contained pottery dating between the 11th and 13th Centuries AD. One of these pits (Cut 11) was later re-used in the post medieval period (Cut 1). Another post medieval pit was seen cutting through two earlier pits (Cuts 8 & 14)). This pit (Cut 6) contained a near complete early 17th century Flechen jug and a 16th century purse. In addition, one large brick built cess pit? was recorded beneath a supporting wall of the existing house. A brick sample was taken from this structure and dated the feature between the 18th -19th Centuries AD.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology, was commissioned by Ichthus Architects Ltd (on behalf of Peter Groom) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks prior to the construction of a house extension at 'Knowlands', St Martins Lane, Lewes. (NGR 541412 109973) (Fig.1).
- 1.2 Outline planning permission has already been granted by Lewes District Council (ref: LW/05/2260), however, due to the archaeological potential of the site, the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Archaeologist (Lewes District Council's adviser on archaeological issues) recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to the application requiring a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken prior to construction. The recommended programme was in the form of an enhanced archaeological watching brief (otherwise referred to, for example in the *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, as a watching brief).
- 1.3 A Method Statement outlining the requirements was prepared by Neil Griffin of Archaeology South-East and submitted to ESCC for approval. This document outlined a strategy for the archaeological watching brief.

'The general objective of the archaeological work is to monitor the excavation of the new groundworks in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the groundworks are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.'

- 1.4 The British and Geological Survey Sheet 319 (1: 50 000 map) shows the site lies on Upper and Middle Chalk, Undivided.
- 1.5 The fieldwork was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni (Field officer) and Alice Thorne (Field Officer). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. 'Knowlands' is within the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town of Lewes and is situated close to the scheduled remains of Lewes Castle (ES HER Monument Number 12872). Lewes is one of four Saxon *Burghs* in Sussex mentioned in the tenth century *Burghal Hideage* and it is suggested that St Martin's Lane itself may possibly preserve

the route of one of a number of parallel Saxon lanes that run southwards from the High Street.

- 2.2 Cartographic evidence suggests that a building has occupied the plot since at least 1775, although without undertaking more detailed research it is not possible to establish whether any elements of this structure are incorporated into the existing residential property at the site. It is thought that part of the present building was once used as a pig slaughterhouse (*pers. comm.* Peter Groom ('knowlands' owner).
- 2.3 Archaeological observations within the town of Lewes have produced evidence for extensive medieval and post-medieval activity. This largely comprises domestic deposition in the form of rubbish pits, cess pits and wells, generally dating to the medieval period (e.g. Griffin, 2004, James & Barber, 2004, Riccoboni, 2004a, 2004b). Large quantities of medieval material were also recovered by Archaeology South East at the Hospital of St. Nicholas, prior to development in Spital Lane (Barber & Sibun, forthcoming). In a recent excavation at the Baxter Printworks development site, Archaeology South East discovered a Saxon dwelling (c. 900-1065AD) (*pers. comm.*, Simon Stevens 2006). Other research suggests Lewes may have possible Roman origins (Bleach 1997). In fact, a Roman burial was found at St Martins Lane in 1838 by workmen during the excavation of a cesspool (NGR 4144 0995). Unfortunately, it is not known whether the finds have survived.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All excavations were undertaken by hand. Ground reduction commenced before Archaeology South East were informed of the work starting. This initial work uncovered a brick built structure and a pit. Excavation then stopped until staff from Archaeology South East were on site.
- 3.2 The groundwork comprised reduction of an area c. 13m² (Fig. 2). This involved removal of topsoil, subsoil and c. 300mm of natural geology in certain areas.
- 3.3 Once the development area had been reduced four wall footing trenches (c. 600mm wide) were then excavated, also by hand. These excavations were c. 1m in depth. Three of the wall footing trenches were not monitored as initial ground reduction had already reached the underlying natural.
- 3.4 One of the wall footing trenches was excavated through part of the brick built structure. Steel shuttering was put in place to stabilise the

wall and a resin used to fill in the brick cess pit.

- 3.5 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.6 A full photographic record of the work was kept (*black and white prints, colour slides and digital*) and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable local museum.
- 3.7 An overall site plan was maintained at a scale of 1:50, sections were drawn at 1: 10. The site was levelled with respect to a Bench Mark on the road of St Martins Lane.

4. RESULTS (Fig. 3)

- 4.1 The general stratigraphy across the site varied. In most places the natural geology (Context **4**) was located directly beneath the existing walls of the house. Any previous topsoil and subsoil deposits must have been removed during the initial construction of the house. In the centre of the site, it is assumed any surviving topsoil or subsoil was removed prior to archaeological monitoring. Context **10** (Fig 3; Section 4) illustrates that a topsoil did exist on the site prior to the start of works. Archaeological deposits could be seen located directly beneath this deposit.
- 4.2 Four pits were recorded within the area of development. The earliest of these was Cut **11** (Fig. 3; Section 1). The fill of this pit was Context **3**. The true depth and profile could not be ascertained as it exceeded the depth of the development works. However, a sondage was excavated into Context **3**. This sondage reached a total depth of 200mm but did not reach the base of the feature. Context **3** was a mid orange brown colour, of a silty clay texture and a firm consistency. Pottery sherds dating to the 11th- early 12th century were recovered from this context. It also contained animal bones, tile fragments, oyster shell, charcoal smears, chalk fragments, pea grit and sub angular flint nodules.
- 4.3 Directly above Cut **11** was Cut **1**. This was a near vertical sided pit, which was recorded in section (Fig 3; Section 1). It had a minimum depth of 900mm and a diameter of 1.40m. This pit was truncated by the upstanding wall of the existing property. It cut through Context **3** and the natural geology (Context **4**). Cut **1** was filled by Context **2**.

This was dark grey coloured, silty clay. It contained frequent fragments of tile, chalk flecks, bone fragments and sub angular flint nodules. Pottery dating to the 18th century was recovered from this fill.

- 4.4 Cut **8** was sub circular plan and had a concave sides (Fig 3; Section 4). The total depth of this pit is not known. This Cut was filled by Context **9**. This was a mid greyish brown coloured, silty clay of a firm consistency. It contained chalk flecking throughout and occasional animal bone fragments. No dating evidence was recovered from this fill.
- 4.5 Cut **13** was sub circular in plan with concave sides, but the base of the feature was not seen. Cut **13** was filled by Context **14** (Fig. 3; Section 3). This was a mid orange brown coloured, silty clay of a firm consistency. It contained chalk flecks (<100mm) and gravels (<10mm) throughout. Some pottery dated to the 12th to early 13th century was retrieved from this fill. This feature was interpreted as a medieval rubbish pit.
- 4.6 Cut **6** was noted in plan and section (Fig 3; Section 4) truncating both Cuts **8** and **13**. This feature had concave sides and was sub circular in plan. It was filled by Context **7**, a mid yellowish brown, silty clay with a firm consistency. It contained some occasional chalk nodules (2%) and small rounded stones (2%). It was a mottled fill which contained patches of re-deposited natural throughout. Finds dated to the 16th / 17th century were recovered from this fill, including a near complete Flechen vessel.
- 4.7 To the east of Cut **1** and **11** a brick built structure was encountered. This comprised of two phases of construction. Partially located beneath the upstanding support wall of the existing property, this feature was still void (only partly backfilled). The main body of the structure (Context **12**) was constructed of rectangular hand made bricks, dated to the 18th/19th century. The structure was dome shaped and interpreted as a probable cess pit. The top of structure **12** was a later phase of construction. The top/opening of the structure (Context **5**) was constructed with red hand made bricks also dating to the 18th/19th century. Two large stone blocks capped this opening and the wall of the existing house was built directly on top of these cap stones (Fig 3; Section 2).

5. FINDS

Luke Barber, Trista Clifford and Lucy Sibun

5.1 The archaeological work recovered a small assemblage of finds quantified below in Table 1.

Context	Pottery	CBM	Bone	Shell	Stone	Clay Pipe	Metal	Glass
[2]	7/94	1/10	2/34		1/44	3/10		
[3]	10/332		20/694	1/82				
[5] wall sample		1/2856						
[7]	10/1060	22/2104	4/222	3/170	4/1100	2/14	1/18	2/12
[12] wall sample		1/3554						
[14]	9/166		1/4					

Table 1: Finds quantification (no./weight in grams)

5.2 Pottery

Luke Barber

5.2.1 The small assemblage of pottery from the site spans quite a wide chronological range. All of the material, although ranging in sherd size, is unabraded suggesting it has not been subjected to reworking. The earliest material is from Context **3**. This contains a number of hand-made cooking pot sherds tempered with fine/medium (to 1mm across) multi-coloured flint, sometimes with shell inclusions. The vessels are quite well fired and are usually oxised. Only two feature sherds are present, a crude simple out-turned rim and a decorated bodysherd with a single incised/scratched line. Although difficult to date closely, this assemblage is of probable 11th- to mid 12th- century date. Context **14** contained a small assemblage of oxidized cooking pot sherds tempered with sparse sand and moderate fine (to medium) multicoloured flint. These vessels are better made and fired when compared to those in Context **3** and a 12th- to early 13th- century date is probable. Only one everted beaded rim is present. The early post-medieval period is represented by an assemblage from context **7**. This group, which probably dates from the early/mid 17th century, includes a fragmented, but virtually complete plain Frechen jug with cylindrical neck. In addition there are two residual sherds of mid 13th- to 14th- century sand tempered wares (including a Ringmer product) and mid 16th- to 17th- century wares including reduced hard-fired earthenware and yellow-glazed Borderware. Context **2**, dated to the early 18th century, contained residual (or old) 16th- to 17th- century oxidized hard-fired earthenware, green-glazed red earthenware and

Frechen stoneware sherds as well as two Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware sherds.

- 5.2.2 The clay pipes from the site are few in number but are in fresh condition. All consist of plain stem fragments – the three from context **2** dating to the mid/late 17th century and those from context **7** being of early 17th- century types.

5.3 Building Material

Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 A small collection of ceramic building material was recovered, virtually all of which is from context **7** (dated early/mid 17th century). This deposit produced virtually exclusively medium/hard-fired peg tile fragments (with diamond-shaped peg holes) in one of two main fabrics. The most common fabric is dull red orange in colour and tempered with sparse fine sand with c. 3% iron oxide inclusions to 1mm; the other is dull yellow in colour tempered with sparse fine sand with red clay streaks visible. Both types have sanded surfaces, are quite crudely made (with thicknesses up to 14mm), and are in keeping with the ceramic dating of this context. In addition there is an eroded piece of low-fired silty/fine sand-tempered red brick. This piece, which has a height of 30mm, is of 16th- century type and may be residual. Context **2** produced a single well-fired red peg tile fragment of similar type to those noted in Context **7**. The only other ceramic building material collected from the site consists of two complete brick samples from *in situ* walls (Contexts **5** and **12**). Both are frogless, made in sanded moulds and quite well fired. They are also of similar dimensions (Context **5** – 230 x 110 x 64mm and Context **12** - 238 x 110 x 62mm) though the fabrics are different: that from Context **5** is fine sand with iron oxide inclusions to 4mm, while that from Context **12** is fine sand with red grog inclusions to 6mm. The mortar adhering to the bricks is also notably different: that from Context **12** being light grey sandy mortar with large inclusions of coal mixed in, while that from Context **5** being a plain buff sandy mortar. Both bricks are likely to be of 18th- to 19th- century date though they were obviously laid at different times.
- 5.3.2 A small assemblage of stone was recovered. Context **2** produced a fragment of Horsham roofing slate while Context **7** contained four large pieces of residual (or old) medieval West Country roofing slate and a piece of re-used Caen stone exhibiting mortar on its broken face. The latter is part of a medieval architectural piece from a door or window. It has part of a small square recess to take a window bar or door/shutter bolt.

5.4 Glass

Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 Two fragments of heavily corroded glass were recovered from Context 7. Both are from the same clear glass bottle/flask with folded-over rim and are of 17th- century type.

5.5 Animal Bone

Lucy Sibun

- 5.5.1 The majority of the small bone assemblage was recovered from [3] dating to the 11th-12th century. Context [3] contained fragments of cattle and sheep mandible, teeth and horncores as well as a sheep tibia. Knife marks on the sheep horncore are conducive with skinning the animal. Single fragments of pig (mandible) and horse (tooth) were also present. One further fragment of pig tooth was recovered from 12th–13th century [4]. Seventeenth-century [7] contained fragments of cattle (vertebra) and dog (innominate and longbone), and 18th-century [2] contained a cattle innominate displaying knife marks, and a sheep scapula.

5.6 Shell

Trista Clifford

- 5.6.1 The watching brief at 'Knowlands', produced two contexts which contained marine molluscs: Contexts 3 and 7, both pit fills, the details of which have been tabulated below:

Context	Species	Count	Total Weight
3	<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	1 lower valve	82g
7	<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	3 lower valves	170g

Table 2: Shell quantification

- 5.6.2 The common edible oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) is the only species identified within the assemblage.

5.7 The Copper Alloy Objects

Trista Clifford

- 5.7.1 One context produced a single copper alloy object: Context 7, the fill of a pit. The object is a length of cast copper alloy from a purse frame dating to the 15th- 16th century. It has an inverted, L- shaped section. The upper surface is curved and thickened. The inner element is drilled with two attachment perforations. Two further perforations are terminated by breaks at either end of the object. All surfaces are worn.

- 5.7.2 The current assemblage of finds is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis though the majority should be kept for long-term curation with a view for analysis if any more material is recovered from the site.

6. INTERPRETATION

- 6.1 The earliest recorded features were the medieval pits (Cut **11**, **13**). These pits contained refuse from the 11th to 13th Centuries. The finds included pottery sherds and animal bones. Such items are usually found in large concentrations within rubbish pits from this period and such activity might have been expected in a location close to the High Street. The depth of these pits was not ascertained due to the limited impact of the development works.
- 6.2 Pit **11** was later re-cut with an 18th century refuse pit. Cut **1** was positioned directly above the earlier medieval Cut **11**. Reasons for this are unknown, but it may be possible that the medieval pit was still visible (as a hollow) as late as the 18th century.
- 6.3 The early 17th century rubbish pit (Cut **6**), truncated pits **8** & **13**. It is therefore considered likely that both pits are medieval in origin although only **14** (cut **13**) contained medieval pottery. Cut **6** contained interesting domestic items such as a Frechen jug (16th / 17th century) and a copper alloy purse frame (dated to the 15th / 16th century). Also a piece of medieval architectural detail made from Caen stone, probably once part of a door or window.
- 6.4 The brick built structure interpreted as a cess pit (Contexts **12** & **5**), was an interesting find. As it was only partially backfilled the shape of the structure could be seen from its opening. Unusually, the supporting wall of the existing house was built directly on top of this partially hollow structure. A date of the 18th / 19th century was derived from brick samples taken from this structure.
- 6.5 The archaeological watching brief proved that archaeological features and finds existed on this development site. The nature of the features recorded suggests that the site has been the focus for human activity since the 11th or 12th century. Due to its limited depth, some of the archaeological deposits still remain beneath the development, in the case of medieval pit **11** to a depth of at least 200mm. Although the cess pit (**12** & **5**) was partially truncated by one of the foundation trenches, it remains mostly in tact, having been filled by a resin for stability.

- 6.6 The methods used in this project are considered appropriate and the confidence rating is high that the best results were achieved. Most of the features and deposits could be recorded in section or plan, enabling the stratigraphy on site to be understood. Their depth has also resulted in their survival beneath the current development.

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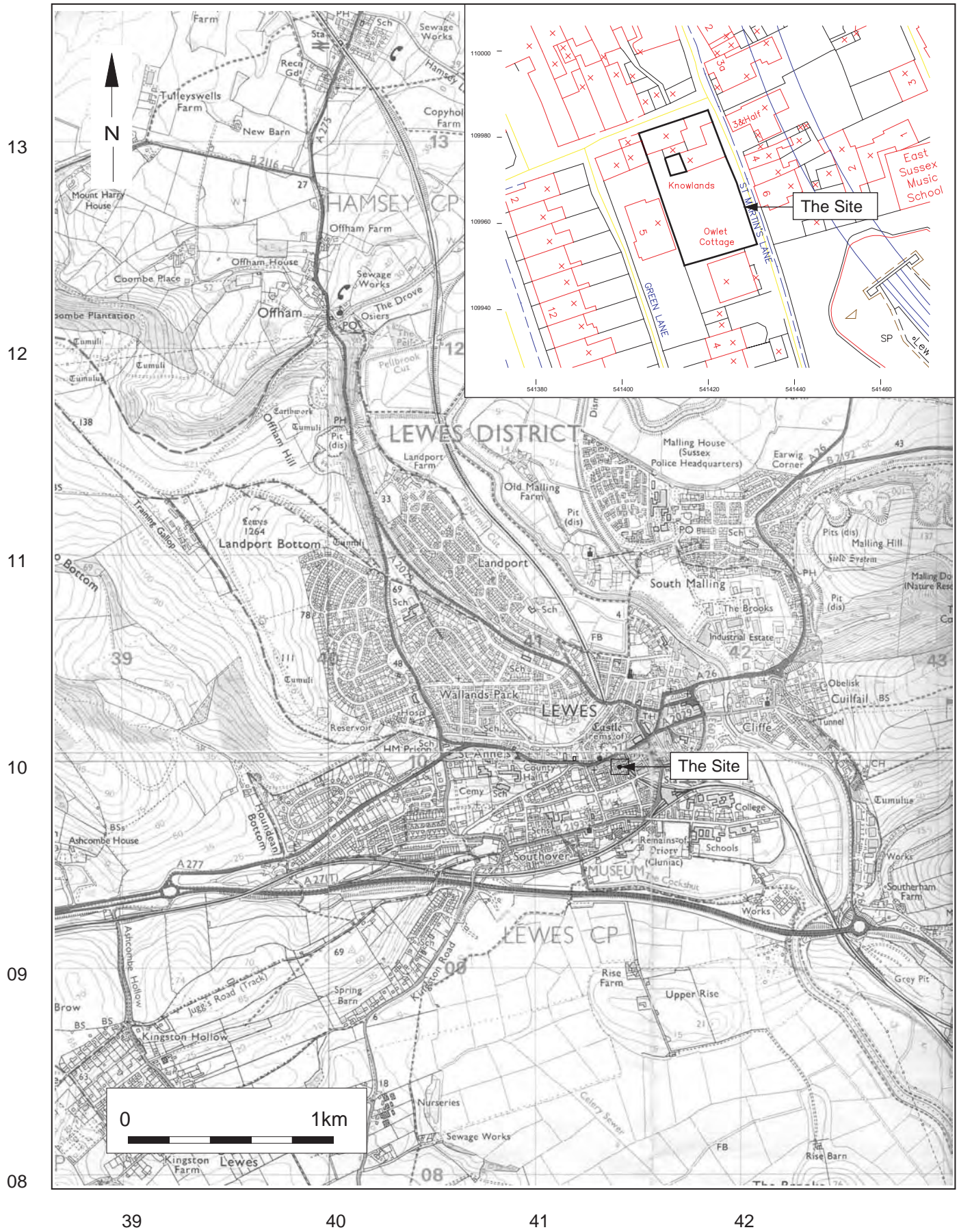
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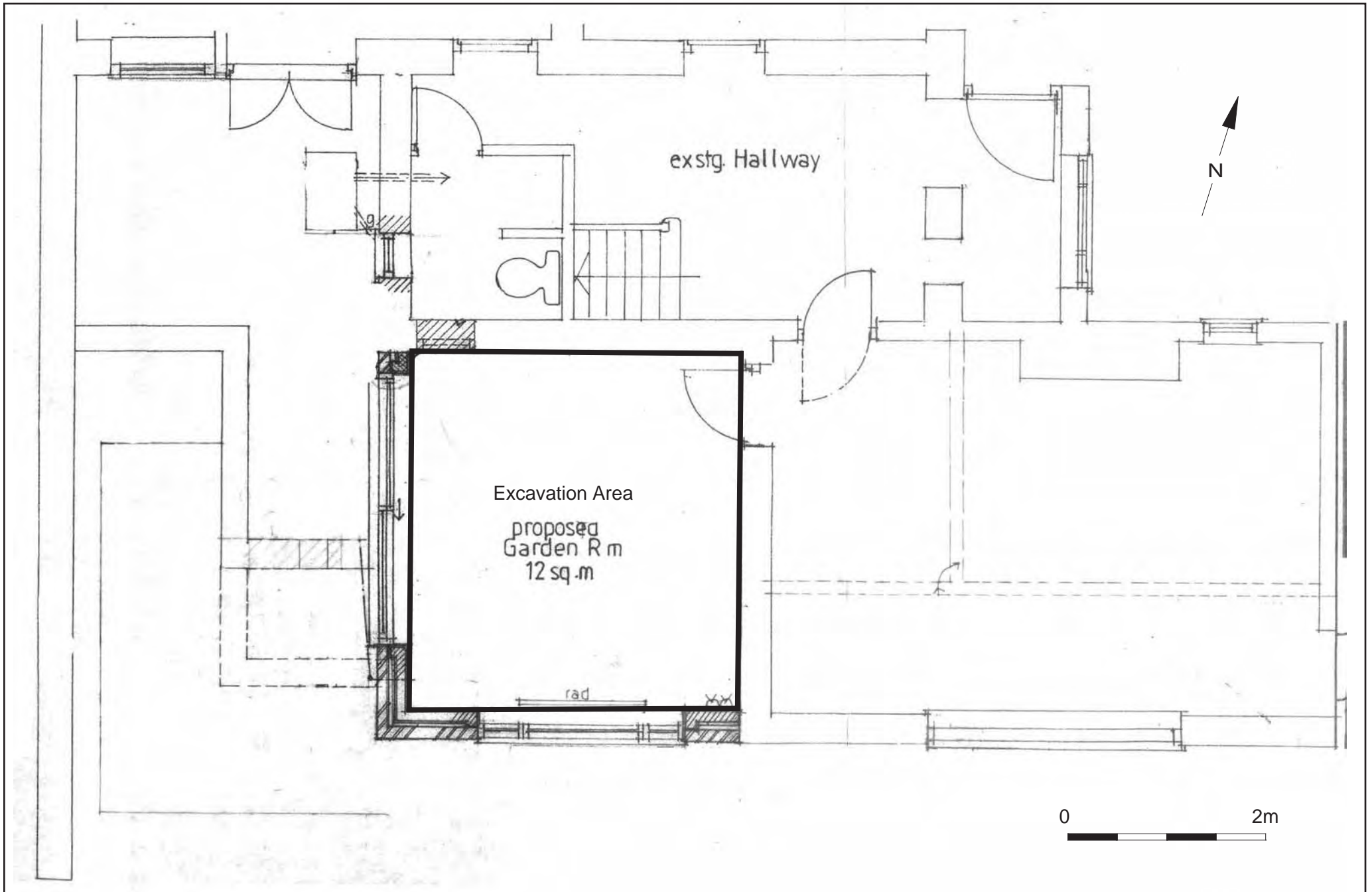
SMR Summary Form

Site Code	SML 06					
Identification Name and Address	'Knowlands', St Martins Lane, Lewes					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 541412 109973					
Geology	Head deposits over chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2580					
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. August 06	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Ichthus Architects (on behalf of Peter Groom)					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED ✓	PM ✓	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South East were commissioned by Ichthus Architects Ltd (on behalf of Peter Groom) to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with the construction of new extension (ref: LW/05/2260) at 'Knowlands', St Martins Lane, Lewes, East Sussex (NGR 541407 109962). Three separate site visits were made on 4th, 7th & 8th August 2006. Six archaeological features were recorded and excavated. In total 5 pits were encountered within the limits of the work. These features were then hand excavated to depths no greater than development formation level. Two medieval pits were identified (Cuts 11 & 14). These pits contained pottery dating between the 11th and 13th Centuries AD. One of these pits (Cut 11) was later re-used in the post medieval period (Cut 1). Another post medieval pit was seen cutting through two earlier pits (Cuts 8 & 14)). This pit (Cut 6) contained a near complete early 17th century Flechen jug and a 16th century purse. In addition, one large brick built cess pit (?) was recorded beneath a supporting wall of the existing house. A brick sample was taken from this structure and dated the feature between the 18th -19th Centuries AD.</i></p>						

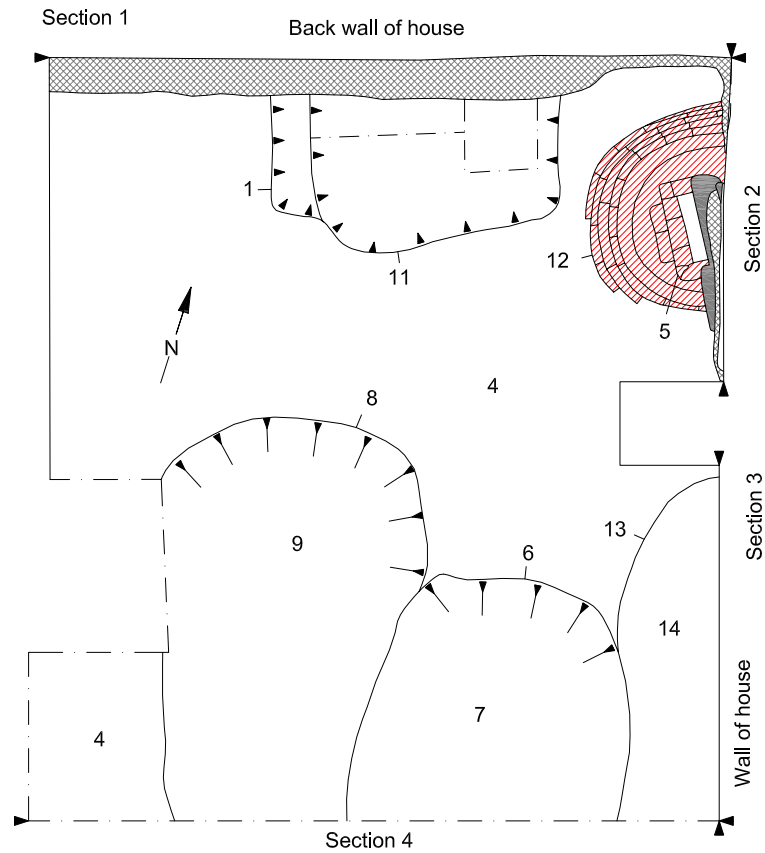


© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			Knowlands, St Martin's Lane, Lewes	Fig. 1
Ref: 2537	May 2007	Drawn by: FEG	Site Location Plan	

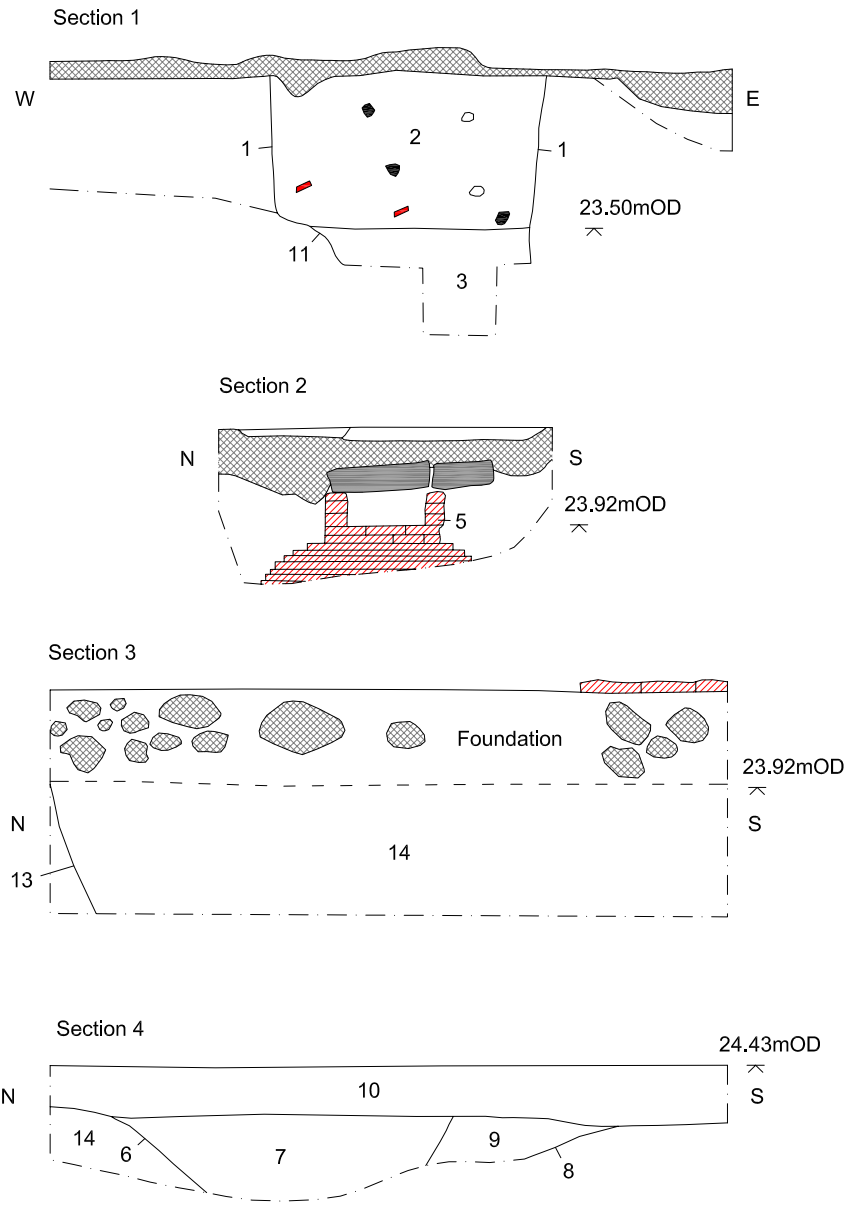
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Ref: 2580	May 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Plan		



- Concrete
- Brick
- Granite
- Tile
- Chalk
- Flint



© Archaeology South-East			Knowlands, St. Martin's Lane, Lewes	Fig. 3
Ref: 2580	May 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Plan and sections	

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