

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Princelett Shute, Isle of Wight

NGR SZ 5589 8419 to SZ 5590 8274

Project No. 2582



By
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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the Field Archaeology Unit, University College London, 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.

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 world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in South-East England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit 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.

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavations associated with the installation of a new water pipe between Apse Heath and Princelett Shute on the Isle of Wight . Groundworks included slit trenches and pulling pits as well as an open cut excavation and topsoil stripping for the creation of a site compound. Site visits were made to monitor groundworks between the 20th and 28th November 2006. Monitored excavations reached a maximum of c.1.2 metres below the ground surface. The groundworks did not reveal the presence of archaeological material however a small number of surface finds were collected from the route of the pipeline. It was also noted that land adjacent to the site seemed to have a quantity of worked flint on the ploughed surface.

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SMR Summary Sheet

Fig. 1: Site Location

Fig. 2: Location of Pits 1-5, 9

Fig. 3: Location of Pits 6-8

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), have been commissioned by 4 Delivery Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the proposed scheme to replace a water pipe at Princelett Shute, Isle of Wight (between NGR SZ 5589 8419 to SZ 5590 8274) (see Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Advice was sought by 4 Delivery from the Isle of Wight Council, Historic Environment Service (IWCHES), who advised that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during construction groundworks owing to the proximity of the nearby settlement, which is recorded in Domesday.
- 1.3 In view of 4 Delivery's commitment to maintain a high regard to local heritage and environmental issues, an archaeological watching brief was maintained during specific groundworks associated with the improvement scheme in accordance with the advice of IWCHES.
- 1.4 A Written Scheme of investigation outlining the requirements was prepared by Archaeology South-East. It suggested intermittent periods of attendance by a suitably qualified archaeologist.
- 1.5 The general objective of the archaeological work was to monitor the ground work in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. This was to include artefacts of archaeological interest (e.g. worked flint, burnt flint, pottery, ceramic building material) that may be recovered from within the soil during its removal.
- 1.6 The fieldwork was undertaken initially by Andrew Margetts from the 20th to the 28th November 2006. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).
- 1.7 The British Geological Survey sheet 345 shows that the site is situated on Ferruginous Sands.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located on arable land near to the villages of Apse Heath and Branstone as well as the hamlet of Princelett. The site undulates between approximately 40 and 50 metres above sea level and is close to the small River Yar.

- 2.2 There has been little archaeological investigation in the vicinity of the new pipeline however a nearby settlement is mentioned in the Domesday Book which may indicate a potential for medieval or Saxon activity close by.
- 2.3 A watching brief was maintained by WCA Heritage Ltd on behalf of 4 Delivery Ltd during the excavation of a trial pit at NGR SZ 5588 8274 on 30th March 2006, but did not reveal anything of archaeological significance.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to the knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention was to be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.2 Any machine used for removal of material above undisturbed natural subsoil was fitted with a toothless bucket of appropriate width.
- 3.3 A continual watching brief was maintained during general ground works at the southern end of the pipeline route as highlighted on the attached plan (see Figs. 2 and 3). These works were monitored at all times by an archaeologist until it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (e.g. once excavation reached undisturbed natural subsoils, below which there will be no archaeological remains present - after the recording of any significant remains if present at higher levels).
- 3.4 The remaining groundworks, (monitored intermittently by a suitably qualified archaeologist), comprised the excavation of a number of slit trenches and pulling pits dug in order to facilitate pipe installation as well as topsoil stripping for the creation of compounds and some more extensive open cuts for pipe laying. Slit trenches and pulling pits were each excavated to dimensions of approximately 10 x 2 metres to a depth of c.1.2 metres. Topsoil stripping for the creation of a site compound comprised an area 30 metres square dug to a depth of a maximum 600 millimetres. The more extensive excavation of an open cut at Branstone cross was 5 x 5 metres in area dug to a depth of c.1 metre at which point archaeological monitoring ceased as undisturbed natural sub-soils were reached. The locations of all groundworks can be seen on Fig. 2. All excavations were carried out with tracked machines (equipped with toothless buckets).
- 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. A full photographic record was kept of the work as appropriate.

- 3.6 The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.7 Officers of the IWCHES were kept informed of progress so that they could monitor the archaeological work as necessary.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Compound (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 During the stripping of the site compound a topsoil deposit of mid orange brown sandy silt (Context **1**) was removed to a maximum depth of 600 millimetres below the ground surface. This contained frequent inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 200 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials.

- 4.1.1 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the creation of the compound.

4.2 Pulling Pits and Slit Trenches (Figs. 2 and 3)

Pit 1

- 4.2.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 1 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **1/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained frequent inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 90 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **1/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the abandoned existing water pipeline.

- 4.2.2 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 1.

Pit 2

- 4.2.3 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 2 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **2/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained frequent inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 60 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was encountered the natural Ferruginous Sands (Context **2/002**), c.1000 millimetres of this was removed until the limit of excavations was reached.

4.2.4 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 2.

Pit 3

4.2.5 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 3 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **3/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained frequent inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 70 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **3/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the existing medium pressure gas main.

4.2.6 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 3.

Pit 4

4.2.7 This slit trench was smaller than the majority being 600 millimetres in width, c.2 metres in length and c.1.5 metres in depth. The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 4 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **4/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained frequent moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 40 millimetres in size. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **4/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the existing medium pressure gas main.

4.2.8 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 4.

Pit 5

4.2.9 This slit trench was smaller than the majority being 600 millimetres in width, c.2 metres in length and c.1.5 metres in depth. The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 5 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **5/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained frequent moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 40 millimetres in size. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **5/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the existing medium pressure gas main.

4.2.10 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 5.

Pit 6

4.2.11 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 6 comprised firstly c.200mm of plough-soil (Context **6/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up to 40 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was

encountered the natural Ferruginous Sands (Context **6/002**), c.1000 millimetres of this was removed until the limit of excavations was reached.

- 4.2.12 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 6.

Pit 7

- 4.2.13 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 7 comprised firstly c.200mm of topsoil (Context **7/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 50 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **7/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the existing water pipeline.

- 4.2.14 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 7.

Pit 8

- 4.2.15 The deposits encountered during the excavation of Pit 8 comprised firstly c.200mm of topsoil (Context **8/001**). This mid orange brown sandy silt contained moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 50 millimetres in size as well as occasional modern building materials. Directly beneath this was a layer c.1000 millimetres deep of mid orange yellow silty sand (Context **8/002**). This deposit was devoid of inclusions and was derived from the backfill of the existing water pipeline.

- 4.2.16 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 8.

Pit 9

- 4.2.17 The deposits encountered during the excavation of the open cut at Branstone cross consisted firstly c.200mm of topsoil (Context **9/001**) this mid orange brown sandy silt contained moderate inclusions of flint nodules, stone fragments and pebbles up-to 40 millimetres in size. Directly beneath this was encountered the natural Ferruginous Sands (Context **9/002**). Approximately 800 millimetres of this was removed at which point archaeological monitoring ceased as undisturbed natural sub-soils were reached.

- 4.2.18 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of Pit 9.

- 4.3 A small quantity of surface finds were recovered from the route of the pipeline these are discussed in section 5 below

- 4.4 It was noticed by the archaeologist present that in the fields adjacent to the route of the pipeline, near Apse Heath, there appeared to be a quantity of worked flint on the surface of the ploughed soil. However this was outside of the study area.

5 The Finds by Charlotte Thompson

- 5.1 A small group of unstratified finds were recovered from the watching brief and are quantified on Table 1 see below.

| Context | Stone | Weight (g) | Flint | Weight (g) |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| unstratified | 1 | 30 | 2 | 14 |

Table 1: quantification of the finds (by count/weight)

Stone

- 5.2 An unstratified roughly cuboid piece of red/brown stone (possibly burnt chert) was recovered which may have been a tesserae. It is too coarse to be from a mosaic, but could be from a tessellated floor: however, it is conceivable that the stone has simply broken naturally in this shape.

Flint by Lucy Allott

- 5.3 Two unstratified endstruck flint flakes were recovered. The larger of the two has use damage along one side. They are undiagnostic and of indeterminate date.

6 DISCUSSION

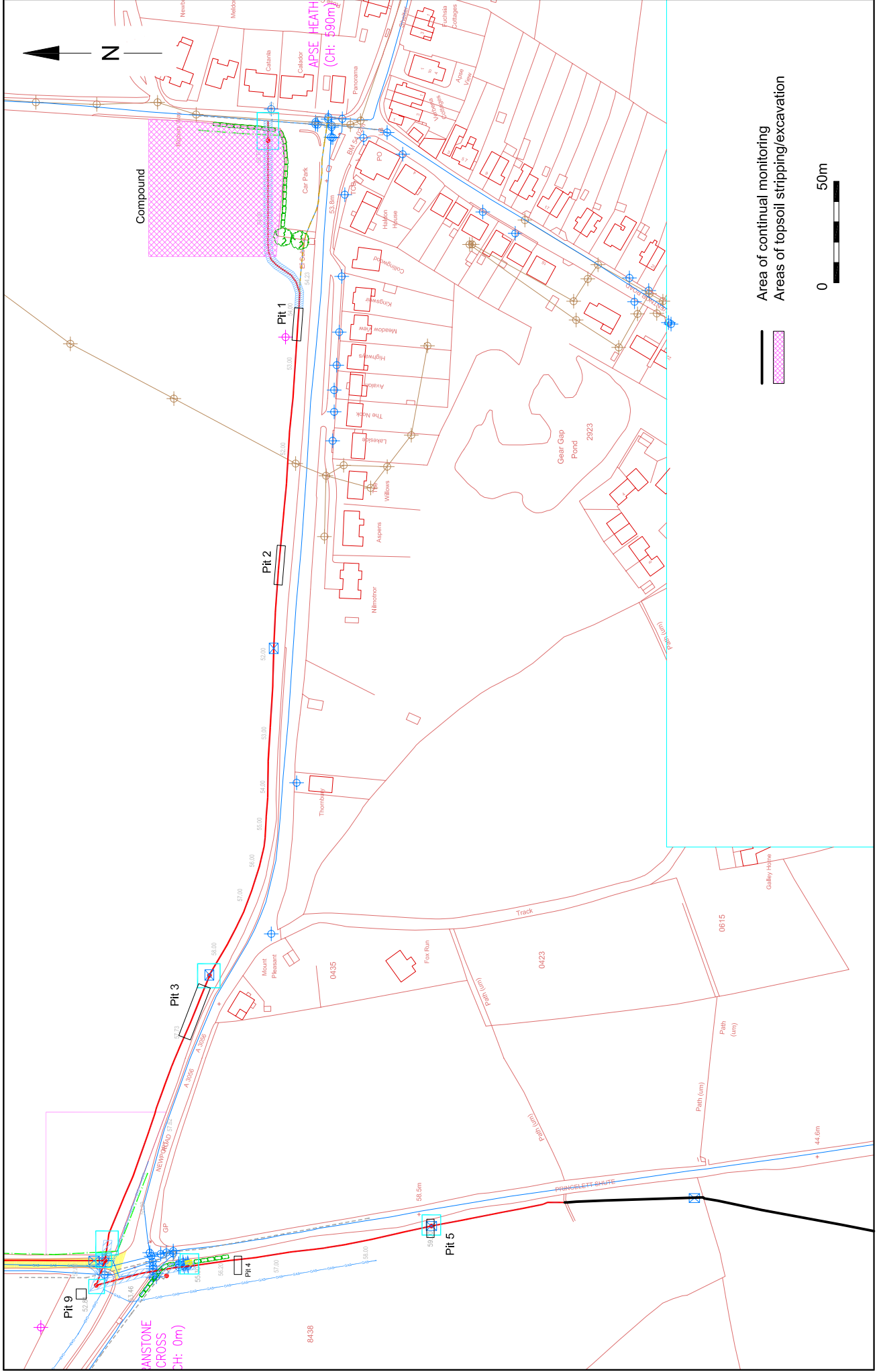
- 6.1 The underlying geology encountered during the course of the groundworks consisted of Ferruginous Sands.
- 6.2 Many of the areas where groundworks associated with the installation of the new pipeline were undertaken were much disturbed through previous service trenching. However where this was not apparent no evidence of an archaeological nature was encountered.
- 6.3 A small number of surface finds were collected from the route of the new pipeline and it was noted by the author that a quantity of archaeological material seemed to be evident just off of the monitored area (see section 4.4 above). It seems likely therefore that although archaeological evidence from the project was scarce some potential for archaeological activity in the immediate vicinity of the site may exist.

7. Bibliography

Wilson, K. 2006. *Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief of Pipeline Geotechnical Investigations adjacent to Princelett Chute, Shanklin, Isle of Wight*. WCA Heritage unpub. Client report.

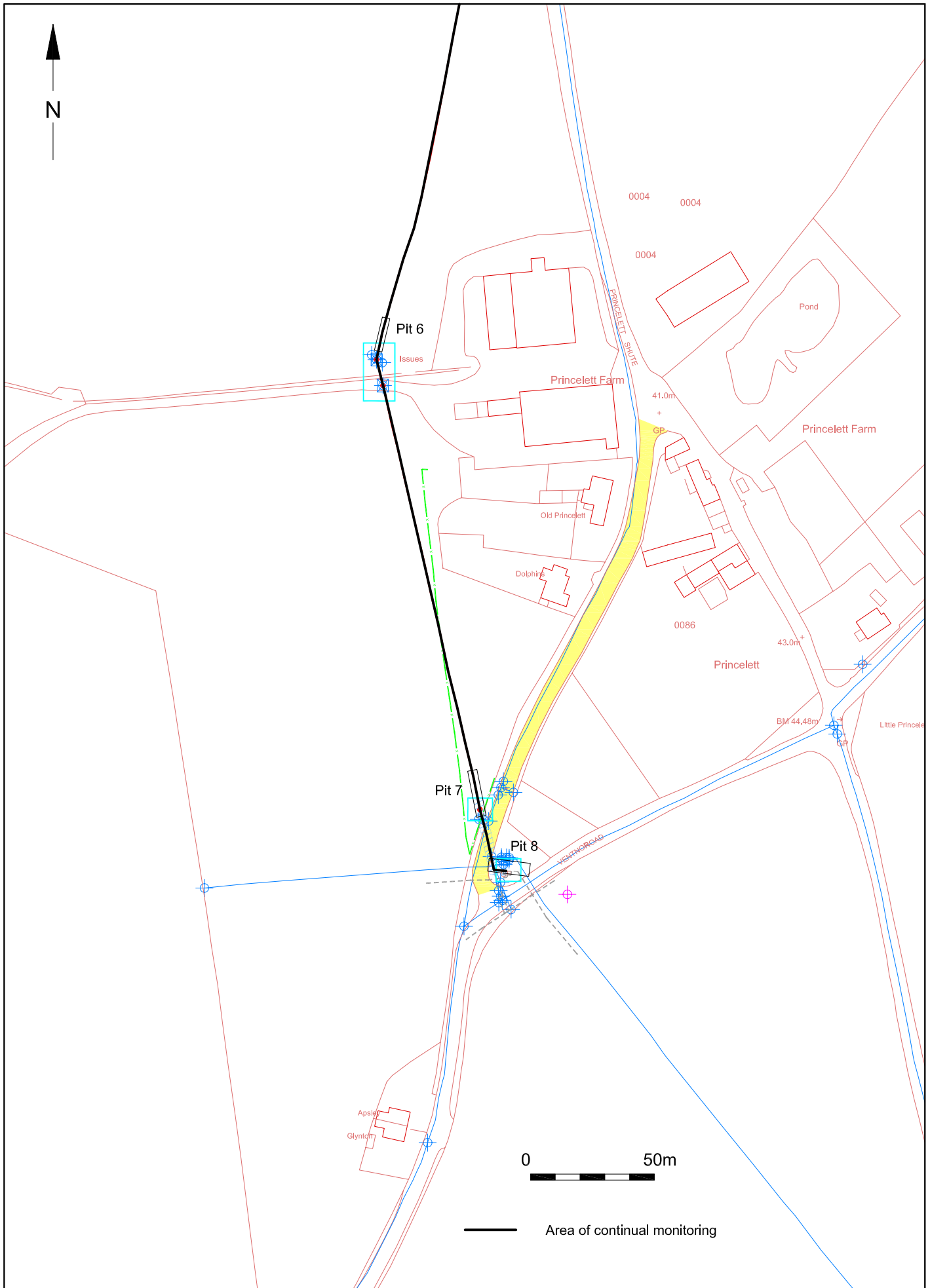
SMR Summary Form

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------|--|--------------------|--------|-------|
| Site Code | PCPO6 | | | | | |
| Identification Name and Address | Princelett Shute, Isle of Wight | | | | | |
| County, District &/or Borough | Shanklin, Isle of Wight | | | | | |
| OS Grid Refs. | NGR SZ 5589 8419 to SZ 5590 8274 | | | | | |
| Geology | Ferruginous Sands | | | | | |
| Arch. South-East Project Number | 2582 | | | | | |
| 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. 20 th – 28 th November 2006 | Other | | |
| Sponsor/Client | 4 Delivery Limited | | | | | |
| Project Manager | Neil Griffin and Louise Rayner | | | | | |
| Project Supervisor | Andrew Margetts | | | | | |
| Period Summary | Palaeo. | Meso. | Neo. | BA | IA | RB |
| | AS | MED | PM | Other Prehistoric? | | |
| <p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavations associated with the installation of a new water pipe between Apse Heath and Princelett Shute on the Isle of Wight. Groundworks included slit trenches and pulling pits as well as an open cut excavation and topsoil stripping for the creation of a site compound. Site visits were made to monitor groundworks between the 20th and 28th November 2006. Monitored excavations reached a maximum of c.1.2 metres below the ground surface. The groundworks did not reveal the presence of archaeological material however a small number of surface finds were collected from the route of the pipeline. It was also noted that land adjacent to the site seemed to have a quantity of worked flint on the ploughed surface.</i></p> | | | | | | |



| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|--|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Princelett Shute, Isle of Wight | |
| Ref. 2582 | Jan 2007 | Location of pits | |
| | | Drawn by: JLR | |

Fig. 2



| | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|--|--------|
| © Archaeology South-East | | Princelett Shute, Isle of Wight | | Fig. 3 |
| Ref: 2582 | Jan 2007 | Location of pits | | |
| | | Drawn by: JLR | | |

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