

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex**

**Planning Reference: WD/2008/3630
NGR 547187 121418**

**Project No. 3400
Site Code: BRU08
ASE Report No. 2008086**



by Deon Whittaker MA.

June 2008

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**AUTHOR
Deon Whittaker MA.**

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**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by Clearwater Property Investments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex (NGR 547187 121418). The evaluation methodology comprised machine excavation, under archaeological supervision, of five c. 1.8m wide trial trenches with a cumulative length of c. 75m. A late C19th brick sewer / drain in Trench 3 and a C20th wall foundation in trench were observed. No other archaeological remains were revealed.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by Clearwater Property Investments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex (NGR 547187 121418), henceforth called the site. The site lies immediately to the west of Holy Cross Church with Belmont Road to the east and Church Street to the north.

1.1.2 The site comprises the proposed refurbishment of the Church Centre and erection of five terraced dwellings and one detached dwelling with ancillary car parking and landscaping (Planning ref.: WD/2008/3630). The works will also incorporate the demolition of a toilet block, a detached outbuilding and the erection of a side porch. No known archaeological monuments, finds or previous interventions were recorded within the boundary of the site. However, the site falls within an archaeologically sensitive area, due to its location within the medieval and post-medieval historic core of Uckfield and archaeological features and deposits of this period may well be present. The surrounding area has also produced evidence for Romano-British activity, thought to be associated with the iron industry, and important evidence for earlier, Mesolithic activity has been identified at several locations within the town. Greg Chuter, Archaeological Officer at East Sussex County Council, has advised that the site be evaluated to determine the presence/potential of archaeological deposits on the site and the impact that the proposed development will have upon them. He has also requested that the 19th century toilet block on the site be fully recorded prior to demolition.

1.1.3 The site was evaluated by Deon Whittaker (Archaeologist) and John Woodall (Site Assistant) between 16th –22nd May 2008.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) Sheet (319) shows the site lies on Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand deposits.

1.2.2 The site lies on the upper part of a south facing slope. It was apparent on initial attendance that significant amounts of terracing had probably taken place, given the relative flatness of the site compared to the slope of adjacent streets.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Greg Chuter, Archaeological Officer at East Sussex County Council, has advised that the site be evaluated to determine the presence/potential of archaeological deposits on the site and the impact that the proposed development will have upon them, as a planning condition (Planning ref.: WD/2008/3630).

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report covers the background to the evaluation together with the methodology and results obtained. This report does not cover the Historic Building Recording work on the 19th century toilet block.
- 1.4.2 The report is intended for distribution to ESCC, the County Archaeologist, and the client and will form part of an archive ultimately held at the appropriate local museum.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The British Geological Survey (BGS) Sheet (319) shows the site lies on Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand deposits.
- 2.2** The East Sussex HER has been consulted as part of the WSI, (Humphrey 2008), and the information summarised as part of that document.
- 2.3** Evidence of early prehistoric activity of Mesolithic date is known from the surrounding area. This includes several find spots and the significant discovery of an early Mesolithic flint-working site at Rocks Field, from which some 10,000 flint artefacts were recovered.
- 2.4** The site is also located within an area of Romano-British activity associated with the Wealden iron industry, served by the London-Lewes Roman road. Evidence for Roman occupation in the vicinity of the site includes the remains of a corn dryer, located within the north eastern perimeter of the town.
- 2.5** Subsequent occupation of the town during the medieval and post-medieval periods is represented by the numerous listed buildings of the surrounding Conservation Area, and by other, industrial remains such as a 19th century Ice House and remains of the Ouse Valley Railway Line.
- 2.6** At the time of the Uckfield Tithe Map of 1841, the site was part of a field known as 'Shelf' and occupied by meadow.
- 2.7** The National (Church of England) School for Uckfield was moved to the site in 1850. A contemporary engraving shows the school building with its present appearance including the adjoining house to the south and a bell turret at the centre gable at the east elevation, which projected less than its present extent.
- 2.8** The buildings are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map of 1874. It was extended in 1884 and a large extension, since demolished was added on the north side of the north-south school rooms. An east-west lavatory block was also shown on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1898 and may have been built as part of the 1884 reorganisation of the site.
- 2.9** Between 1898 and 1911, two classrooms on an east-west axis were added at the far western end of the site.
- 2.10** Twentieth century maps indicate that outbuildings once occupied the area immediately north of the school building including a Horsa hut and a scout hut. These have since been demolished.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 The purpose of the archaeological evaluation was to ascertain the character, quality and degree of survival of archaeological remains on the site and the potential impact of development upon them and to record all archaeological features that will be impacted by the scheme.

3.1.2 Aims

- To understand the nature and development of historic and early prehistoric settlement and land use within this part of East Sussex
- To understand the use and development of access between London and the Sussex Weald
- To record and interpret the 19th century toilet block building

3.1.3 Specific Objectives of the evaluation:

Pre-urban activity

- To investigate and compare prehistoric activity on the site in relation to local find spots and monuments.
- To investigate to what extent, if any, was there any evidence of Mesolithic occupation of the site?
- To increase our understanding of any Mesolithic remains recovered in relation to the surrounding topography, in particular the outcrops of sandstone which have been shown to be a focus for Mesolithic activity in geologically / topographically similar area (notably High Rocks, near Tunbridge Wells and Eridge)
- To investigate whether any Romano British remains exist within the site and, if present, how these may be associated with and relate to contemporary settlement and industrial activities known in the wider area.
- To investigate whether evidence of activity during the Anglo-Saxon period exists within the site and how this may relate to later medieval urbanisation.

Medieval and post-medieval periods

- To investigate whether any evidence for medieval tenements/burgage plots running back from either Church Street or Church Walk exists
- To investigate whether there is any evidence that the medieval or earlier post-medieval churchyard associated with Holy Cross Church extended into the development site.

3.2 The evaluation methodology comprised machine excavation, under archaeological supervision, of five c. 1.8m wide trial trenches with a cumulative length of c. 75m. Trenches were positioned in order to cover areas where intrusive ground works associated with the development are to take place, taking on-site constraints into account.

3.3 The trenches were located (Fig. 2), using tapes to off set from known points. The trenches were levelled using a known Ordinance Datum, from the adjacent church lyche gate.

- 3.4** The trenches were scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. The trenches were mechanically excavated under constant archaeological supervision, using a toothless ditching bucket where possible using a toothed bucket to remove tarmac where necessary.
- 3.5** Only undifferentiated tarmac / topsoil, subsoil and overburden of recent origin was removed by machine and kept separately. The excavation was taken, in spits of no more than 0.25m, down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying 'natural', whichever was uppermost. All machining was undertaken under the supervision of the attending archaeologist. Some modification to the original trench positions was necessary due to on site constraints. Significant variations to the trench layout were discussed with the ESCC Archaeologist and trench layout continued once locations were agreed.
- 3.6** Backfilling and compaction was undertaken by the machine on completion of the work, but there was no reinstatement to existing condition as per the Written Scheme of Instruction (Humphrey, R. 2008). The site agent was often present and reinstatement was carried out in cooperation with the site agent to his satisfaction.
- 3.7** Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned with a metal detector as was the spoil derived from excavated features.

Number of Contexts	27
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	BW & CS
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The natural substrate was located at maximum height of 40.52 metres AOD in the north of the site within Trench 1. Trench 5 revealed the natural at a lower, 37.17 metres AOD.

4.2 Approximately 4 metres south of Trench 1, the ground steps down to a very slightly sloping tarmac car park. This slightly sloping ground continues south, across the site to Trench 5.

4.3 List of recorded contexts for Trench 1

Number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Height m.AOD
001	Deposit	Topsoil	21m	1.8m	0 - 140mm	41.15m
003	Deposit	Made ground	21m	1.8m	140 - 340mm	41.01m
008	Deposit	Backfill	1.8m	300mm	320 - 540mm	40.83m
007	Structure	Foundation	1.8m	300mm	540 - 720mm	40.61
006	Cut	Cut for wall foundation	1.8m	300mm	-	-
002	Deposit	Subsoil	21m	1.8m	340 - 530mm	40.81
004	Deposit	Sandy Silt	21m	1.8m	530 - 780mm	40.62
005	Deposit	Silty Sand Natural	21m	1.8m	@LOE	40.37

LOE = Limit of Excavation

4.3.1 Summary

Trench 1 ran east to west at the north end of the site and was cut short by four metres at the west end due to asbestos contamination.

The natural, [005], in Trench 1 consisted of firm, light greyish yellow, silty sand, with frequent sub angular sandstone pieces at 40.37m AOD in the east end of the trench, through to 40.49m AOD up to 40.52m AOD in the west end of the trench. Above the natural lay a deposit, [004], of friable, mid greyish brown, sandy silt with sub-angular sandstone pieces 20–50mm in size. Overlying [004] was a dark grey, friable, sandy silt with sub angular gravel pieces up to 10mm in size, [002], possibly a buried subsoil

Cutting through [002] & [004] and into [005] was a cut [006] for a modern wall foundation, [007] running north - south. The base of the cut lies at 40.43 metres AOD. The cut was 400mm deep and 300mm across. At the base of the cut [006] was a wall foundation [007] comprised of white concrete with large rounded gravel up to 30mm topped by a course of modern, frogged brick.

Above the brick was backfill, [008] consisting of friable, mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent sub angular CBM fragments from 20 – 100mm in size together with sandstone pieces 20 – 50mm in size.

Overlying this was context, [003], a deposit of friable, mid yellowish brown, sandy silt with a lens of moderate sub-angular brick fragments directly above the demolished wall and probably relating to its demolition. Above [003] lay a friable, mid greyish brown topsoil, [001], with occasional sub-angular sandstone pieces up to 40mm in size.

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

4.4 List of recorded contexts for Trench 2

Number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Height m.AOD
009	Deposit	Tarmac	8m	1.8m	0 -60mm	40.03m
010	Deposit	Made ground	8m	1.8m	60 – 150mm	39.97m
011	Deposit	Silty Sand Natural	8m	1.8m	@LOE	39.88m

LOE = Limit of Excavation

4.4.1 Summary

Trench 2 ran north to south at the north west end of the site.

The natural, [011], in Trench 2 consisted of firm, light orange brown sand, with occasional sub angular sandstone fragments up to 40mm in size. The natural was present at 39.88 m AOD in the north end of the trench, down to 39.65 m AOD in the west end of the trench, a very slight down gradient is in evidence. Above the natural lay a deposit, [010], of yellowish brown gravel with occasional fragments of hardcore. Above [010] was a tarmac / asphalt surface, [009], 60mm thick.

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

4.5 List of recorded contexts for Trench 3

Number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Height m.AOD
012	Deposit	Tarmac	11m	1.8m	0 -70mm	38.87
013	Deposit	Made ground	11m	1.8m	70 – 190mm	38.80
014	Structure	Deposit of mortar / cement	1.8m	300mm	190 – 300mm	38.68
015	Structure	Deposit of sandstone	1.8m	300mm	300 – 320mm	38.57
016	Structure	Brick C19 –20 th drain?	1.8m	300mm	320mm - LoE	38.55
017	Cut	Cut for Structure [016]	1.8m	500mm @ LoE	-	-
018	Deposit	Silty Sand Natural	21m	1.8m	@LoE	38.37

LOE = Limit of Excavation

4.5.1 Summary

Trench 3 ran east to west at the north east end of the site and was cut short to 11 metres at the east end due to the presence of services.

The natural [018] in Trench 3 consisted of friable, mid orange yellow, sandy silt, with frequent sub angular sandstone pieces 30mm – 120mm. The natural

was present at 38.37m AOD in the east end of the trench up to 38.68m AOD in the west end of the trench.

Cut into the natural was a cut, [017], for a modern brick drain or sewer / soakaway. Within this cut was a brick drain or sewer / soakaway, [016], comprised of red brick in a vaulted circular top. This was sealed by a layer of compacted sandstone, [015], in turn covered by a deposit of sand mortar cement, [014] which also continues to run to the north and south of the circular feature, suggesting that the is a drain or sewer running north - south through the trench. Sealing the above contexts was a deposit of loose gravel / type 1 [013], forming a base for the asphalt / tarmac [012].

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

4.6 List of recorded contexts for Trench 4

Number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Height m.AOD
024	Deposit	Tarmac	7m	1.8m	0 -60mm	38.49m
025	Deposit	Made ground	7m	1.8m	40 – 100mm	38.43m
026	Deposit	Made ground	7m	1.8m	100 - 400mm	38.39m
027	Deposit	Silty Sand Natural	7m	1.8m	@LOE	38.09m

LOE = Limit of Excavation

4.6.1 Summary

Trench 4 ran approximately north east to south west at the east end of the site and was bisected obliquely through the southern half by services.

The natural [027] in Trench 4 consisted of friable, greyish yellow, silty sand, with frequent sub angular sandstone pieces up to 80mm. The natural was present at 38.09 m AOD in the north east end of the trench and was not reached in the south west end of the trench was due to the presence of services. Above the natural lay, [026], a deposit of mixed dark grey brown clayey silt and mid orange brown clayey. Significant inclusions were not observed but a lens of CBM fragments were noted at the surface. Sealing the above contexts was a deposit of loose gravel / type 1 [025], forming a base for the asphalt / tarmac [024].

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

4.7 List of recorded contexts for Trench 5

Number	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Height m.AOD
019	Deposit	Topsoil	10.5m	1.8m	0 -60mm	38.07m
020	Deposit	Redeposited Clayey silt	7.8m	1.8m	60 – 100mm	38.43m
021	Deposit	Redeposited Clayey Silt	7.8m			
022	Deposit	Clayey Silt subsoil?	4m	1.8m	100 - 400mm	38.39m
023	Deposit	Silty Sand Natural	7.8m	1.8m	@LOE	37.17m

LOE = Limit of Excavation

Summary

Trench 5 ran approximately east to west at the southern end of the site. The trench was reduced by 5m to avoid on site constraints.

The natural [023] consisted of friable, mid orange brown sand, with frequent sub angular sandstone pieces and patches of fine white sand. The natural was present at 37.17 m AOD in the east end of the trench. The natural at the west end of the trench was 37.29 metres AOD. Above the natural in the east end of the trench lay [022], a deposit of mid reddish brown clayey silt some 250mm thick which was intermittently present and may represent remnants of subsoil. Overlying this was, [021], a mid reddish brown clayey silt with dark greyish brown lenses with rare cbm fragments. Overlying this was, [020], a mid reddish brown clayey silt with occasional cbm fragments and charcoal flecks. Approximately 400mm thick in the east end of the trench it thinned to 200mm in the west of the trench, where a modern ceramic pipe cut was seen to truncate both [020] and [021]. Sealing the above contexts was a 300mm topsoil [019].

No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 No finds were recovered from the site.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1** It is apparent that some levelling has taken place on the site by comparison with the adjacent road running north – south. The variation in the heights of the un-truncated natural from 40.37 m AOD in the north to 37.07 m AOD in the south gives an indication of the original slope, a drop of just over three meters.
- 6.2** The made ground and tarmac surfaces laying directly on the natural in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 suggest that a significant degree of truncation has taken place either through terracing / levelling throughout much of the site. This truncation is still apparent in the very south of the site, in Trench 5, with only a small trace of original subsoil remaining in the east end of the trench.
- 6.4** The brick built services remaining in Trench 3 are coeval with the existing toilet block and possibly still active.
- 6.5** No ancient features were identified and no artefacts recovered during the evaluation

7.0 CONCLUSIONS'

- 7.1** Much of the present site has been truncated to the natural surface or lower, thus this evaluation is unable to contribute in a positive way to the aims and objectives above although the general purpose is satisfied :

'The purpose of the archaeological evaluation was to ascertain the character, quality and degree of survival of archaeological remains on the site and the potential impact of development upon them and to record all archaeological features that will be impacted by the scheme.'

- 7.2** Locally surviving subsoil deposits in the north of the site suggest that the natural substrate remains untruncated in this immediate vicinity and any archaeological remains existing would likely to have survived and been detected. No structures were observed save the late C19th brick sewer / drain in Trench 3 and the C20th wall foundation in Trench 1.
- 7.3** The consistency in the extent of truncation observed in Trenches 2 – 5, visible through the evaluation trenches, engenders a fair degree of confidence that no surviving archaeology, or horizon likely to contain archaeological material, was present.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Humphrey, R. 2008. *Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex, Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Recording, Written Scheme of Investigation*. Archaeology South East.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	BRU08					
Identification Name and Address	<i>Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex</i>					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex Wealden Uckfield					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 547187 121418					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sands					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3400					
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.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Clearwater Property Investments Ltd					
Project Manager	Diccon Hart					
Project Supervisor	Deon Whittaker					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary. <i>Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by Clearwater Property Investments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation recording at the Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex (NGR 547187 121418). The evaluation methodology comprised machine excavation, under archaeological supervision, of five c. 1.8m wide trial trenches with a cumulative length of c. 75m. A late C19th brick sewer / drain in trench 3 and the C20th wall foundation in trench were observed. No other archaeological remains were revealed.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-43543

Project details

Project name Eval at Belmont Road Uckfield

Short description of the project Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by Clearwater Property Investments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Holy Cross Church Centre, Belmont Road, Uckfield, East Sussex (NGR 547187 121418). The evaluation methodology comprised machine excavation, under archaeological supervision, of five c. 1.8m wide trial trenches with a cumulative length of c. 75m. A late C19th brick sewer / drain in trench 3 and the C20th wall foundation in trench were observed. No other archaeological remains were revealed.

Project dates Start: 16-05-2008 End: 22-05-2008

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential use

Monument type . None

Monument type . None

Significant Finds . None

Significant Finds . None

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England

Site location EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN UCKFIELD Belmont road

Postcode TN22 2XX

Study area 1500.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 547187 121418 50.8874345963 0.199929854969 50 53 14 N 000
11 59 E Point

Height OD Min: 37.17m Max: 40.52m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator Archaeology South East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Diccon Hart

Project supervisor Deon Whittaker

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

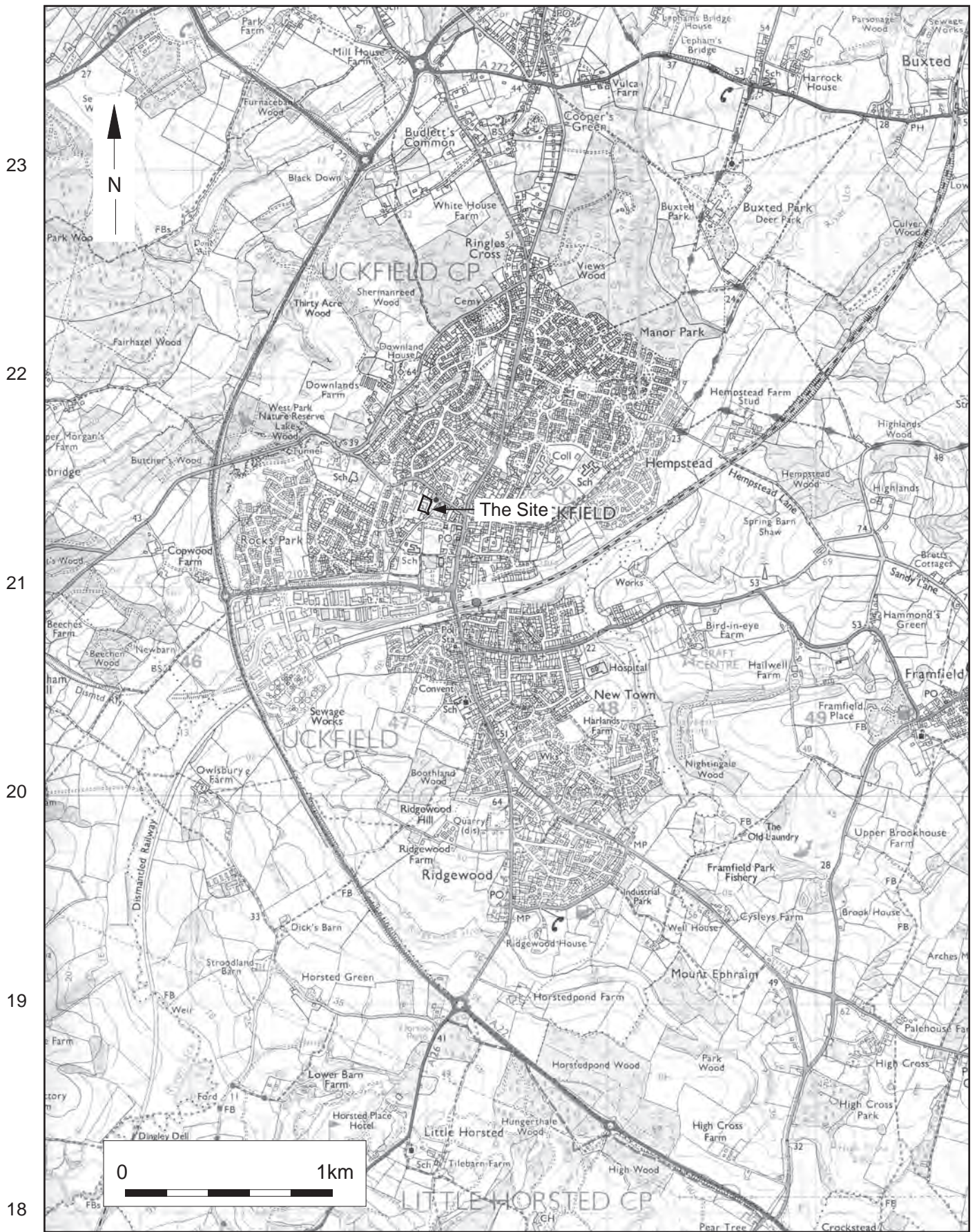
Name of sponsor/funding body Clearwater Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	yes
Digital Archive recipient	Barbican House. Lewes
Digital Contents	-
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Barbican House. Lewes
Paper Contents	Context Sheet, Site Records, permatrace plans and sections
Paper Media available	'Notebook - Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', 'Unpublished Text'

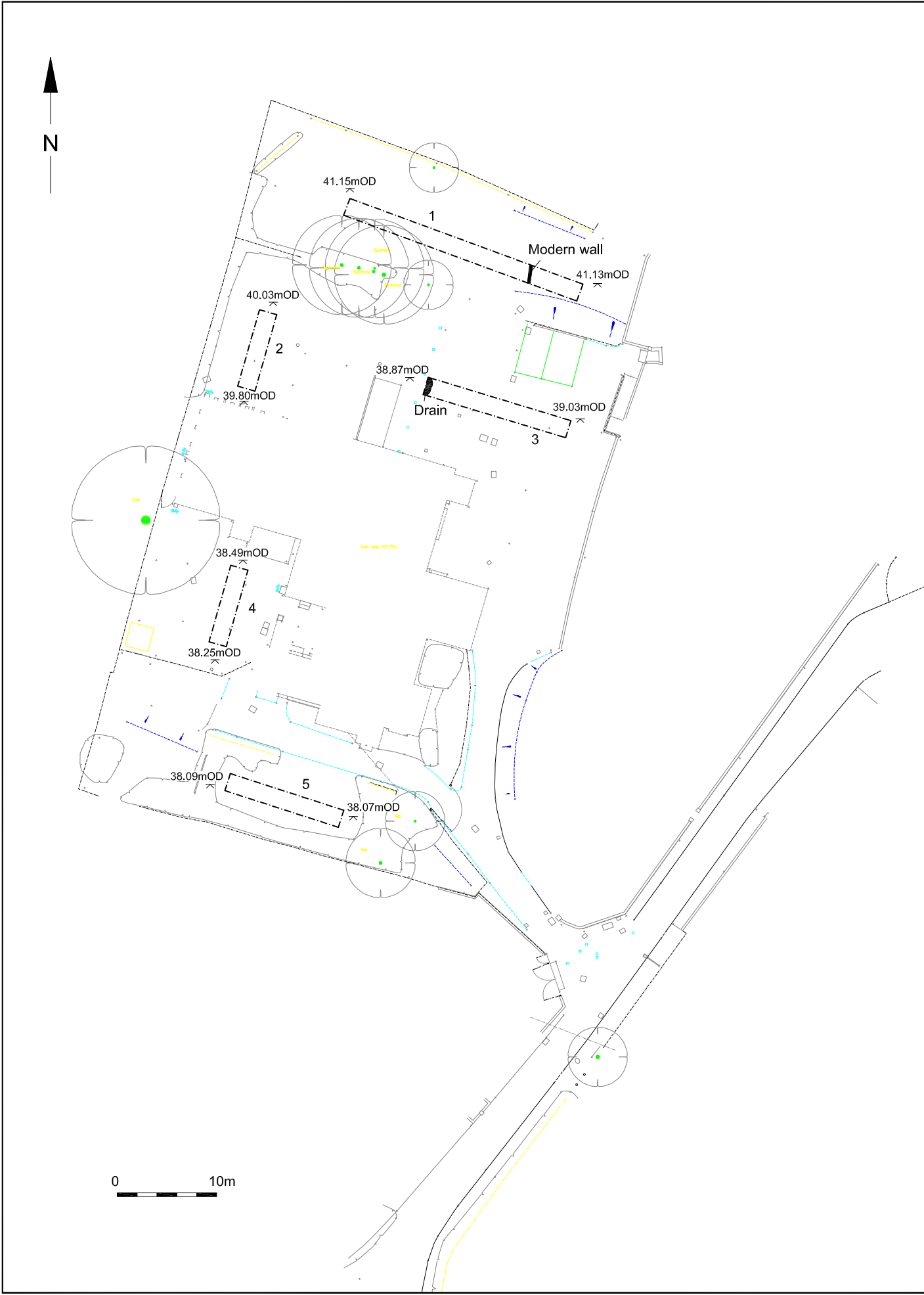
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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© Archaeology South-East		Holy Cross Church Centre, Uckfield		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3400	June 2008	Site Location Plan		
Report Ref: 2008086	Drawn by: JLR			

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© Archaeology South-East		Holy Cross Church Centre, Uckfield		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 3400	June 2008	Trench Location		
Report Ref: 2008086	Drawn by: JLR			

Head Office
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office
Centre for Applied Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

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