

**An Archaeological Evaluation of a
Proposed new Tesco Stores Car Park
At Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex**

Planning Application No.: WD:2010/0167/F

Prepared for RG Carter Project Limited

NGR 553823 129771

**Project No. 4344
Site Code: SWC10**

**ASE Report No. 2010186
OASIS id: archaeol6-84767**

**Alice Thorne
With a contribution by
Lucy Allot**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by RG Carter Projects Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex (NGR TQ 53823 29771). Two evaluation trenches were excavated and demonstrated a deep sequence of modern made ground deposits. Trench 1 contained an undated buried soil horizon 3.70m below the current ground level. Trench 2 contained made ground to the limit of excavation at 5.10m below the current ground level. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by RG Carter Projects Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development on land at Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex (NGR TQ 53823 29771; Figure 1) hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies immediately south of Crowborough Ghyll. Boreholes and test pits undertaken by STATS environmental indicated that the site conditions comprised made ground to a depth of between 2.00m-6.30m overlying either alluvium or clay (STATS 2000). On the basis of published geological sources the underlying solid geology comprises Ashdown Sands of the Cretaceous Wealden Group described as interbedded thin silty clays, siltstones and sandstones, the latter becoming coarser towards the top of the unit (*ibid.*, p12).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application for the construction of additional retail car parking and associated access, pedestrian crossing, ramp and landscaping on the site has been approved by Wealden District Council (Planning Reference WD/2010/0167/F; Figs 2-3). Condition 8 of the planning consent states the following:

No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. A written record of any archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of any archaeological investigation unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the South-East and Policy BE12 of the Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan.

1.3.2 ASE consulted Casper Johnson, County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in his capacity as advisor to Wealden District Council on archaeological planning matters in order to establish the precise scope of archaeological works required. He stipulated that in order to better understand the archaeological potential of the site it would be necessary to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the site (trial trenching) based on a 5% sample.

1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by ASE (2010) with reference to the aforementioned communication between the ASE and

ESCC, and their *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork (ESCC 2008)*. All work was carried out in accordance with this document, and the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aim of the archaeological work is:

- To assess with a greater degree of certainty the presence or absence of any archaeological features within the site with particular reference to the adjacent blast furnace site (see section 2 below).
- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of all archaeological remains and deposits.
- To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site.
- To assess what options, if any, should be considered for mitigation.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Alice Thorne (Senior Archaeologist) and Rob Cole (Surveyor) on the 14th to the 15th of October 2010. This report outlines the results of this programme of fieldwork.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The following information is derived from the WSI (ASE 2010).

2.2 Detailed archaeological and historical background to the site has been obtained by undertaking a 1km radius search of the ESCC Historic Environment Record (HER) centred on the site, the results of which are summarised below (Table 1). The site lies partially within an Archaeological Notification Area

HER/LB No.	NGR (TQ)	Description	Period
EES9200 MES2959	538 295	Bloomery, blast furnace and pond bay at Maynards Gate	16 th century
EES9202	53936 29820	Remains of gun casting furnace revealed in advance of development at Maynard's Gate	Post-medieval
DES5241	53319 29415	Blean Cottage: 18 th century Grade II Listed Building	18 th century
DES6188	53201 28690	Haywards Farmhouse: 17 th century or earlier Grade II Listed Building	17 th century
DES6656	53077 30117	Hydehurst: 17 th century Grade II Listed Building	17 th century
DES6087	54291 28983	Rotherfield Hall: AD1535 Grade II* Listed Building with later additions/alterations	16 th century
DES6155	54402 28974	Grade II* Listed Building comprising late 19 th century flight of steps and retaining wall within curtilage of Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES4681	53940 29235	Grade II Listed Building comprising gateway and flanking walls within curtilage of Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES4541	54262 28988	Grade II* Listed Building comprising stone statue and rectangular pool within curtilage of Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES4542	54128 29060	Grade II* Listed Building comprising 4 rustic bridges within curtilage of Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES4543	54026 28896	Grade II* Listed entrance gateway to Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES5601	54267 28960	Grade II* Listed terraced walled garden with arcade and gazebos within curtilage of Rotherfield Hall	Late 19 th century
DES5442	54331 28964	Grade II Listed courtyard walls with piers, balustrades, steps and sundial	Late 19 th century
DES4906	53128 29306	Oxney Cottage: Grade II Listed Building comprising	18 th century
MES2958	5283 3008	Remains of bloomery site in Toll Wood	Medieval to post-medieval
MES2965	534 297	Crowborough Station – Locally Listed Building	19 th century
MES4755	545 302	Spoil heap probably connected with Maynards Gate Furnace	Post-medieval
MES4762	55 29	Documentary evidence of an Anglo-Saxon Benedictine monastery at Rotherfield. Precise location not available	Anglo-Saxon

HER/LB No.	NGR (TQ)	Description	Period
MES4781	541 307	Earthwork mound used as a rifle butt during both World Wars	Modern
MES4796	544 290	Terraced formal gardens at Rotherfield Hall	19 th century
MES4875	6450 3115	Newenden-Hawkhurst-Ticehurst-Wadhurst ridgeway	Prehistoric or Roman origin
DES9701	5470 2952	Pond bay and possible furnace at Alder Shaw	16 th century
DES9029	5398 2983	Post-medieval furnace at Jarvis Brook	16 th century
DES9530	5409 2965	Medieval Settlement at Mill Oast Farm	Medieval
DES8635	5557 2972	Medieval and post-medieval town core	Medieval to post-medieval

Table 1: Summary Table of Archaeological Sites identified from the ESCC HER

- 2.3 The site lies immediately west of the location of the Maynards Gate gun-casting blast furnace, the remains of which were excavated in 1975-1976 (Bedwin 1978, 163-178). Documentary evidence suggests that this blast furnace was in operation from at least 1562 and abandoned by 1653 with the area slowly reverting to nature and agricultural use until the land was acquired for development in 1974. The excavated remains, were confined to those areas of the site threatened by development at that time and comprised the robbed out remains of the base of the furnace, a working floor, the wheel pit and three metre deep gun casting pit.
- 2.4 It is difficult to precisely pinpoint the blast furnace site in relation to the proposed development site and the absence of levels of the published drawings also makes it very difficult to gauge the depth at which these remains were encountered. However, the report shows that the main focus of activity was immediately south of Crowborough Ghyll and that the top of the pond bay was some 4.5m above the level of the sandstone working floor (*ibid.*p167). The configuration of the blast furnace site shows the pond extending westwards of the excavated remains and feasibly therefore within the proposed development site.
- 2.5 Historical Ordnance Survey maps and other sources of information indicate that the site remained undeveloped agricultural land until the construction of the Millbrook estate in the late 1970s. When the area was infilled to create a development plateau (STATS 2000, 11). The site has not subsequently been developed apart for use of part of the site as a car park and more recently the installation of a telecommunications mast towards the eastern end of the site (*ibid.*).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The methodology comprised the machine excavation of two evaluation trenches (Fig. 2). Due to the presence of live services, including electricity and BT cables, some alteration to the original trench plan was required.
- 3.2 Trench 1 was located on the western side of the site. Due to the depths of made ground encountered, it was agreed in consultation with Greg Chuter of ESCC that the stepped trench was to be shortened. The final trench measured 7m x 6.7m at the top, stepped to 4m x 1.8m at the base, and was excavated to a depth of 4.20m.
- 3.3 Trench 2 measured 14m long, 1.8m wide and was excavated to a depth of 2.8m. Due to the presence of live services, the trench could not be stepped to facilitate safe access. A sondage totalling 5.10m deep was excavated at the northern end to investigate the sequence of deposits.
- 3.4 The site was fenced off with Heras fencing. As an additional precaution given the depths of the trenches, both trenches were fenced off with secondary rings of Heras.
- 3.5 The site was CAT scanned prior to excavation.
- 3.6 Due to the depths of the trenches, all recording of deposits took place from the trench edge.
- 3.7 The ESCC Archaeological Officer attended site on the morning of the 15/10/10 to monitor progress.
- 3.8 The trenches were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum and tied in to the OS by means of survey grade digital GPS.
- 3.9 A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the work.

Number of Contexts	11
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	1
Photographs	21
Bulk finds	1 small bag
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	1 sample

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 4)

4.1.1 Trench 1 measured 7m x 6.7m by 4.20m deep. Ground surface at the western edge of the trench was located at 104.375m AOD and at 104.406m AOD on the eastern side. The sequence of deposits encountered was as follows:

- Context 1/001 comprised a tarmac, aggregate and crushed brick surface deposit, measuring between 0.20m to 0.30m thick. This layer represents modern surfacing.
- Below this, Context 1/002 comprised a firm, mid orange–brown loam with frequent poorly sorted angular sandstone blocks. This layer measured 2.70m in depth. This layer was very clean, with only very occasional modern ceramic building material (CBM) fragments and a piece of wooden fence post. This layer represents modern made ground.
- Beneath 1/002, Context 1/003 comprised a firm mid orange–brown loam with very frequent angular sandstone inclusions. This layer measured 0.60m in depth. A fragment of modern ceramic drain pipe and a small piece of modern brick were observed. This layer represents modern made ground.
- Below this, Context 1/004 comprised a soft to firm dark greyish-brown brown loam, with mottled pale grey and orangish brown patches. This deposit was 0.40m thick, and was found to contain occasional small fragments of ceramic field drain and un-decayed grass stems. This layer represents a buried soil, possibly a deeper layer of re-deposited made ground, or a buried topsoil.
- Below this, Context 1/005 comprised a soft to firm mid greyish-brown brown sandy silt, with orange-brown mottling and occasional small patches of dark organic-rich silts. This layer measured 0.40m thick and some rooting was observed within this deposit. No artefactual inclusions were noted, but an environmental sample was taken to assist with characterising the deposition processes (see section 5). This layer represents a buried soil.
- Beneath 1/005, Context 1/006 comprised bright reddish-orange sandy silt, with frequent sandstone inclusions. This layer represents the surface of the natural Ashdown sands.

4.1.2 No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trench.

4.2 Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 4)

4.2.1 Trench 2 measured 14m x 1.8m by 2.8m deep. A sondage totalling 5.10m deep was excavated at the northern end of the trench. Ground surface at the northern end of the trench was located at 104.132m AOD and at 103.763m AOD at the southern end. The sequence of deposits encountered was as follows:

- Context 2/001 comprised dark greyish brown silty clay measuring between 0.20m to 0.40m thick. This layer contained modern aggregates, plastic, iron and brick and had been heavily disturbed.

This layer represents the remnants of turf/topsoil.

- Below this, Context 2/002 comprised a firm mid orange–brown loam with light grey sandy clay mottling, concentrated particularly towards the base of the deposit. The layer contained very frequent poorly sorted sub-angular sandstone blocks, and was a very clean, homogenous deposit. However, very occasional chips of CBM and some small patches of redeposited grass and turf were observed. This layer measured between 1.40m – 1.80m in depth, increasing in depth to the north of the trench. This layer represents modern made ground.
- Beneath 2/002, Context 2/003 comprised a firm mid orange–brown loam with very frequent angular sandstone inclusions. This layer measured 0.40m in depth and represents modern made ground.
- Below this, Context 2/004 comprised a firm dull orange–brown loam deposit with bright orange-brown mottling, often associated with blocks of iron-rich sandstone. This layer contained frequent stone fragments and frequent mottled patches of dark greyish-black organic rich clayey silts. Fragments of grass stems were visible within the deposit. Several dark, stained organic rich lenses of soil were present at the northern end of the trench, thought to result from repeated episodes of soil dumping. This layer measured approximately 1.20m thick, and represents modern made ground.
- Below this, Context 2/005 comprised soft light greyish-brown loam with orange-brown mottling. This layer contained frequent sandstone fragments, occasional fragments of wood and occasional fragments of 19th century ceramic field drain. This deposit was excavated to a depth of 5.10m, after which the machine arm could reach no further. This layer represents modern made ground.

4.2.2 No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trench.

5.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Lucy Allot

- 5.1 A single sample, <1>, measuring 40 litres was taken from context [1/005] to help establish the conditions of deposition and formation. Ten litres of the sample were sieved through 8 and 4mm sieves and the sample was scanned for archaeological inclusions and environmental indicators to establish whether it merited further processing. The sample comprised fine sandy silt with occasional (<10%) organic inclusions consisting of rootlets and small indeterminate humic matter. Artefacts and environmental remains that may assist in furthering our interpretation of the deposit were absent and the rootlets are relatively fresh and appear to be of comparatively modern origin. Unfortunately the composition of this deposit does not conclusively indicate whether or not it was waterlain.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A deep sequence of made ground was encountered across the site.
- 6.2 Trench 1 contained 2.70m of made ground, before a buried soil horizon containing modern fragments of cbm and grass was encountered at 100.775m AOD (1/004). Below this, an undated buried soil layer was encountered at 100.375m AOD (5/005). Context 5/005 may represent a deeper deposit of made ground, although there remains a possibility that this layer may constitute a deposit of pond infill. The environmental sample from this layer unfortunately was not able to assist in characterising the depositional processes which may have influenced the formation of this layer. However, fresh rootlets observed during excavation and processing may indicate a fairly modern origin. Natural geology was reached at 99.975m AOD.
- 6.3 Trench 2 contained modern made ground to the limit of the machine reach and the base of excavation at 99.032m AOD.
- 6.4 No archaeological finds or features were observed during fieldwork, although potential remains may survive sealed below the made ground deposits.
- 6.5 A review of the historic maps has indicated that the site is located some way to the west of the 1975 excavation of the late 16th century gun-casting furnace. The topographic contours of the site as shown on the 1969 Ordnance Survey Metric edition map do indicate a potentially substantial pond, located to the west of the furnace bay and passing through part of the evaluation area (Fig. 3). However, the site plan taken from the Sussex Archaeological Collections Journal (Bedwin 1978, 166) contained no co-ordinate data, and as a result the plan has been geo-rectified using boundary features shown on the 1969 Metric edition Ordnance Survey map. The resultant plan (fig. 3) must therefore be seen as best fit only.
- 6.6 The depth of modern deposits across site is significant, confirming the results of the recent geotechnical study of the site (STATS 2000). The level of the adjacent stream lies approximately 9.5m below the current ground level of the development area, suggesting that if archaeological remains associated with the stream, furnace and feeder pond exist within the site, they could be buried at a substantial depth.
- 6.7 Detailed design plans are not currently available for the development but it is unlikely that any car park works will extend below the depth of made ground.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ESCC, *Recommended Standard Conditions For Archaeological Fieldwork (2008) , Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) in East Sussex*.

STATS Ltd, 2000. *Servomex Limited, Millbrook Industrial Estate, Crowborough, East Sussex*. Unpub. Client report No. 32634/02.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	SWC10					
Identification Name and Address	Sybron Way, Crowborough,					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 553823 129771					
Geology	Ashdown Beds					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4344					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Made Ground		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 14-15 October 2010	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	RG Carter Project LTD					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Alice Thorne					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other ✓ Modern		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by RG Carter Projects Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex (NGR TQ 53823 29771). Two evaluation trenches were excavated, and demonstrated a deep sequence of modern made ground deposits. Trench 1 contained an undated buried soil horizon 3.70m below the current ground level. Trench 2 contained made ground to the limit of excavation at 5.10m below the current ground level. No archaeological finds or features were observed.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-84767

Project details

Project name	Sybron Way
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by RG Carter Projects Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex (NGR TQ 53823 29771). Two evaluation trenches were excavated, and demonstrated a deep sequence of modern made ground deposits. Trench 1 contained an undated buried soil horizon 3.70m below the current ground level. Trench 2 contained made ground to the limit of excavation at 5.10m below the current ground level. No archaeological finds or features were observed.
Project dates	Start: 14-10-2010 End: 15-10-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	4344 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	SWC10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Car park (flat)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN CROWBOROUGH Sybron Way
Postcode	XXXXXX
Study area	19.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 53823 29771 51.0461031575 0.194660115932 51 02 45 N 000
11 40 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 45.00m Max: 50.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Alice Thorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Rg Carter Project Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey','other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Diary','Map','Photograph','Plan','Report'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation of a
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Torne, A

Other bibliographic details 2010186

Date 2010

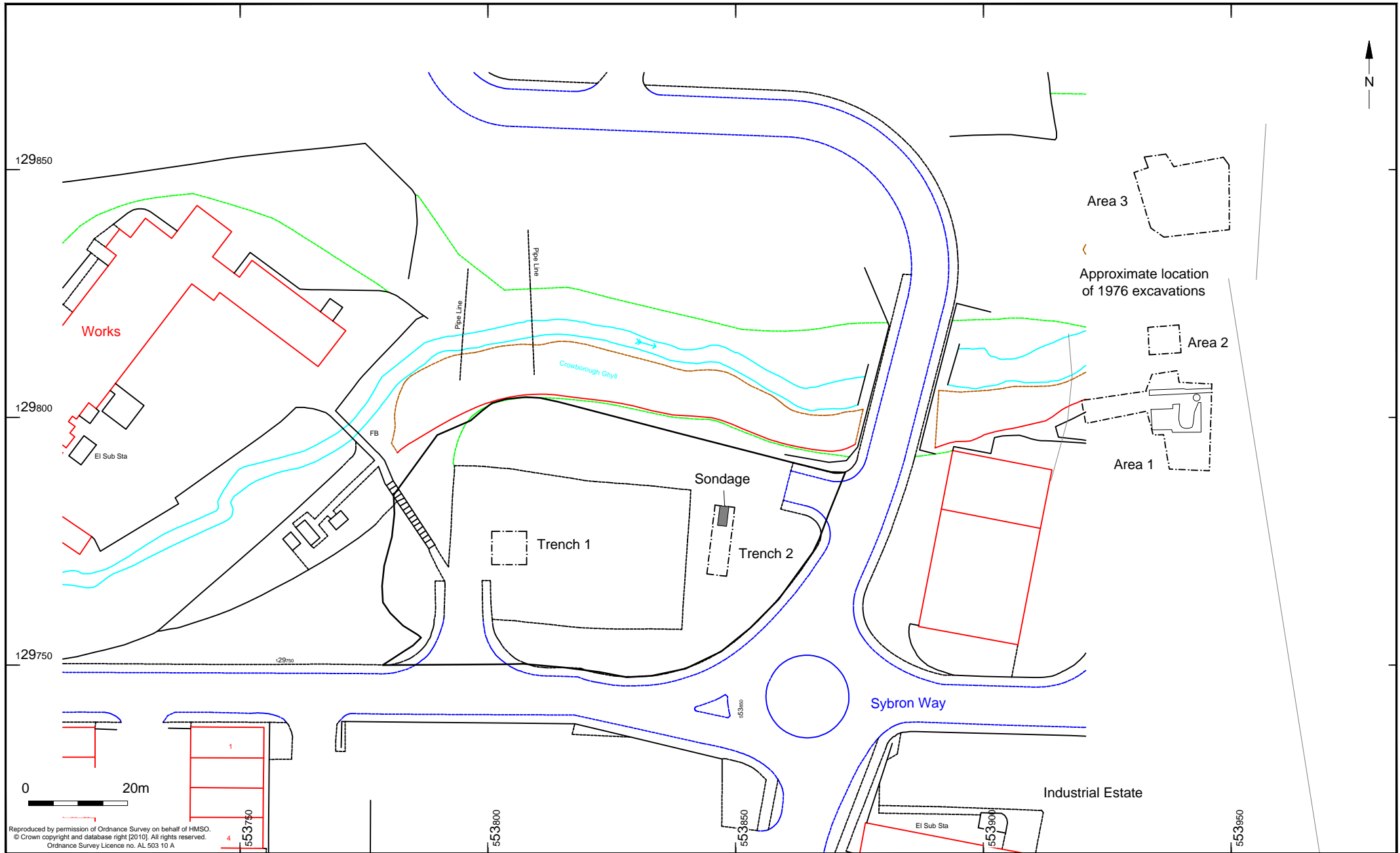
Issuer or publisher Archaeology South-East

Place of issue or publication Archaeology South-East

Description Grey Literature report

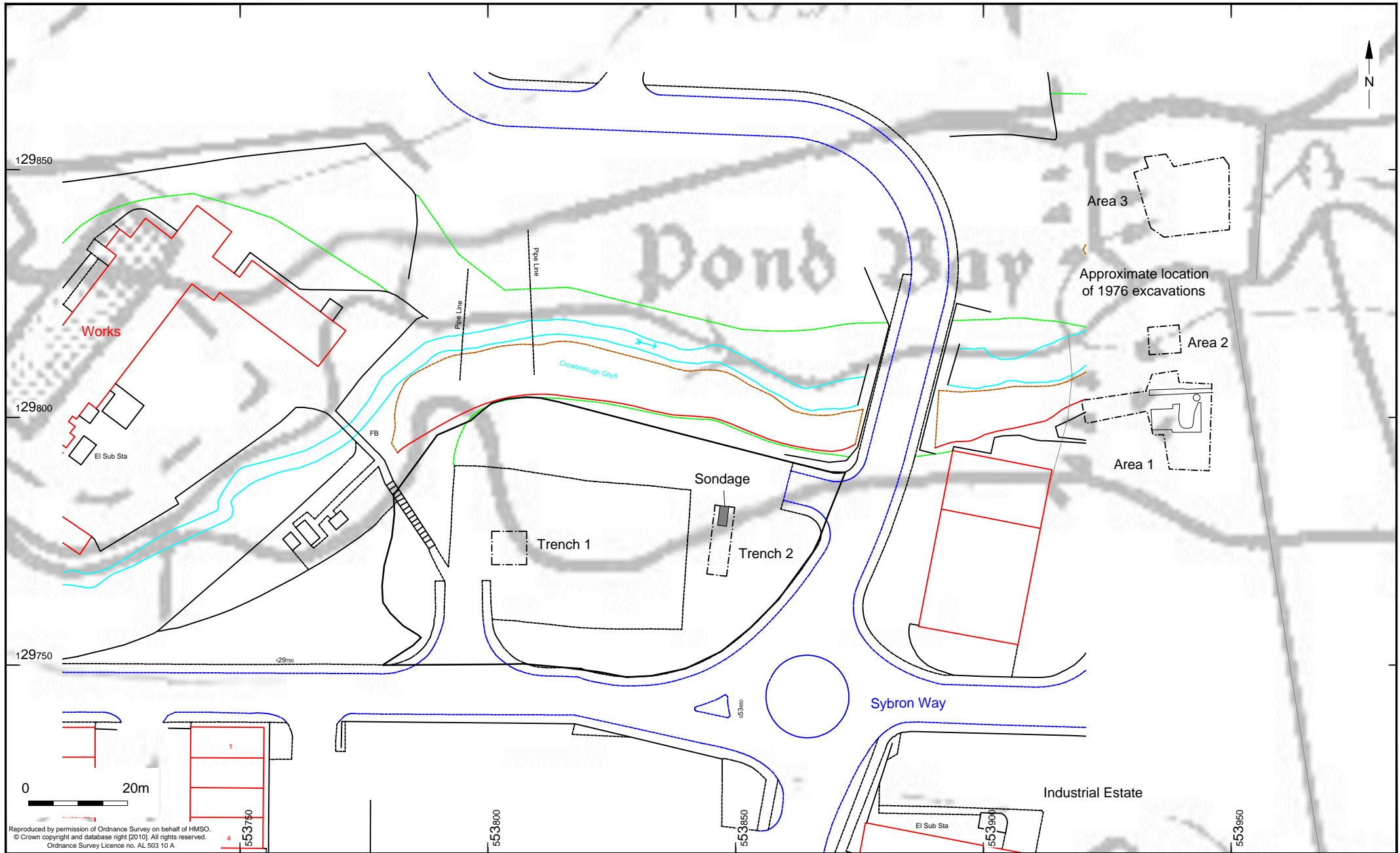
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© Archaeology South-East		Sybron Way, Crowborough		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4344	Oct 2010	Trench location		
Report Ref: 2010186	Drawn by: JLR			



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© Archaeology South-East		Sybron Way, Crowborough	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 4344	Oct 2010	Trench location and 1969 OS	
Report Ref: 2010186	Drawn by: JLR		



Trench 1, general trench shot



Trench 2, general trench shot



Trench 2, sondage

© Archaeology South-East		Sybron Way, Crowborough	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 4344	Oct 2010	Photographs	
Report Ref: 2010186	Drawn by: JLR		

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