

**An Archaeological Evaluation at The Sydney Simmons Homes site,
Dene Road, Ashtead**

NGR TQ 1889 5802

Planning Reference No.: MO/2008/1723

**Project No: 4839
Site Code: DRA 11**

**ASE Report No: 2011072
OASIS id: archaeol6-97887**

John Cook BSc AIFA and Andrew Margetts

**With a contribution by
Karine Le Hégarat**

March 2011

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Sydney Simmons Alms Houses Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey. The work was undertaken between the 8th and 9th of March 2011 on behalf of Sydney Simmons Homes. Two trenches, measuring 20m and 30m in length by 1.8m in width were excavated across the area of proposed development.

No dateable finds of archaeological interest were encountered but a concentration of undated and/or natural features was encountered within Trench 2.

The underlying natural Thanet Sand was encountered at a maximum height of 74.41m OD in Trench 1 in the south-east falling to 73.23 m OD in Trench 2 in the north-west.

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SMR Summary Sheet
OASIS Form

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL), was commissioned by Sydney Simmons Homes, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development on land at Sydney Simmons Alms Houses, Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey (Fig 1; NGR 518897, 158022).

1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing building and the construction of eight flats and five bungalows. Much of the proposed building will lie within the footprint of the existing building although impacts will extend to both the front and rear.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies on the north-west side of Dene Road and is bounded on all other sides by residential development and St Giles Church of England Infant School to the north-east. The site contains existing residential units across its centre, with open landscape to the front and rear.

1.2.2 The British Geological Survey (BGS) sheet (286) shows that the site lies on Thanet Sand which overlies Upper Chalk.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A first phase of work comprised the preparation of a Desk-Based Assessment (ASE, 2011). That document concluded that a programme of archaeological trial trenching would be an appropriate next phase of work. Surrey County Council's archaeologist, Gary Jackson, agreed with these conclusions and recommended a condition be attached to any application to be approved:

Planning consent has been granted (Reference: MO/2008/1723) subject to conditions. Condition 9 states:

“No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Planning Authority”.

1.3.2 Accordingly, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ASE 2011) for an archaeological evaluation was produced by ASE and was submitted to Surrey County Council for approval prior to commencement of the work. All work was carried out in accordance with this document, as well as with the *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Evaluations* of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2007), and other codes and relevant documents of the IfA. The WSI (ASE 2011) specified the excavation and recording of 1 x 20m and 1 x 30m trenches, both to be 2m wide.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation were to ascertain:

GENERAL

- Whether archaeological remains are present on the site and if so assess the date, survival and condition of said remains.
- The character date and quality of ancient remains and deposits.
- How they might be affected by the development of the site
- What options should be considered for mitigation

SPECIFIC

- Identify and characterise the remains of any Roman activity on the site

1.4.2 The fieldwork will be carried out within the general parameters defined by the Surrey Structure Plan.

1.4.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the archaeological evaluation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by John Cook on the 8th and 9th March 2011. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and Jim Stevenson (Project Manager, Post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction to background

2.1.1 A Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) of the site was prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2011). Please refer to that document for a full archaeological background to the site. The results of the DBA are summarised below.

2.2 Prehistoric

Settlement in the upland parts of Surrey in the prehistoric period was sparse until the Iron Age, when farmsteads began to be established across the chalk upland. This is reflected in the HER search undertaken for the DBA, which revealed most entries comprised scattered finds spots of artefacts.

2.3 Romano-British

Roman settlement evidence is quite widespread in this part of Surrey, Ashtead lying immediately to the west of Stane Street and a minor road which branches off to the north-west across Ashtead Common.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon

The name Ashtead is of Saxon origin, meaning 'place of ash trees'. Saxon settlement in Surrey was initially limited to the lower river terraces in the north and east of the county, although in the 6th century settlements began to appear on the dip slope of the North Downs. However, there are no Saxon entries on the HER within the vicinity of the site.

2.5 Medieval

The site lay within the manor of Ashtead and was granted to the canons of Bayeux after the Conquest. From the 13th century until 1397 the manor was held by the Earls of Surrey, and thereafter changed hands frequently. During the medieval period, the main settlement focus developed to the north and west of the site, around The Street and Rectory Lane. The rural landscape comprised a mainly pastoral landscape of open sheep walk, probably with piecemeal enclosure nearer the village core and wooded common land on the clay soils to the north.

2.6 Post-Medieval

The site lay outside the historic core of Ashtead, forming part of a field system derived from piecemeal enclosure. The open fields to the south were enclosed in the early 19th century and St Giles Primary School built in 1852. The coming of the railway in 1859 stimulated residential development with a period of expansion in the 1930s. The site lies within a polygon identified on the Surrey Historic Landscape Character map as 'Post 1811 and pre-1940 large scale estates'.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Two trenches, one measuring 30m and one measuring 20m (Figure 2) were excavated outside the footprint of the existing buildings but largely within the proposed buildings' footprint. The trenches were both of the standard ditching bucket width of 1.8m wide.
- 3.2** The trench layout is not targeted but is designed to provide a sample of the development area. These trenches were accurately laid out using a GPS survey system or total station and tied in to the National Grid.
- 3.3** The trenches were scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. The trenches were excavated using a suitable mechanical excavator (360° excavator) equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.4** Only undifferentiated topsoil, subsoil and overburden of recent origin was removed by machine and was kept separately. The excavation was taken down to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying 'natural', whichever was uppermost. Due to Health and Safety considerations the trench was not be excavated beyond a safe working depth (generally c. 1.2m) unless suitable precautions (i.e. stepping or battering of trench edges, and/or shoring) were implemented. All machining was undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist.
- 3.5** On conclusion of the excavation, the spoil was backfilled by the client's contractor to their own specification.
- 3.6** A Risk Assessment was produced prior to the commencement of the work.
- 3.7** All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by UCLFAU with colours recorded using visual inspection. Sections were drawn at appropriate scales on plastic drafting film.

Number of Contexts	24
No. of files	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	1
Photographs	24 digital images
Registered finds	N/A
Environmental flots/residue	1

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

Length: 22m Width: 1.8m Depth Max: 1.2m

Trench orientation: south-east to north-west

Number	Type	Same As	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Thickness (m)	OD Height
1/001	Layer		Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.7 max	75.23m
1/002	Layer		Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.2 max	75.06m
1/003	Layer		Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.3 max	74.66m
1/004	Layer		Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	74.41m
1/005	Layer		Former topsoil	N/A	N/A	0.2 max	74.81m

Table 2: Recorded context within Trench 1

- 4.2** The natural deposit, [1/004], a light yellowish brown silt sand was observed between 74.57m OD in the south-east of the trench, 74.66m OD mid trench and 74.13m OD in the north-west of the trench. Overlying this was the subsoil, [1/003], a mid reddish brown sandy silt. Overlying the subsoil mid trench was the topsoil [1/001]. However, in the north-western end of the trench this was overlain by a former topsoil, [1/005], which was overlain by made ground, [1/002].
- 4.3** A modern foul sewer runs in a north to south orientation through the trench. This was not excavated and 2 metres was added to the overall length of the trench in order to account for any shortfall in coverage.
- 4.4** In the south-eastern end 2 field drains ran across the trench 1 on a north to south orientation and the other on an east to west orientation.
- 4.5** No archaeological features or deposits were identified and no artefacts recovered.

4.6 Trench 2

Length: 30m Width: 1.8m Depth Max: 1.1m

Trench orientation: east to west

Number	Type	Same As	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Thickness (m)	OD Height
2/001	Layer	1/001	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.3	75.73m
2/002	Layer		Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.6	75.43m
2/003	Layer		Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.15	74.83m
2/004	Deposit		Sand deposit	Tr.	Tr.	0.1	74.68m
2/005	Layer		Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A	74.58m
2/006	Cut		Linear cut	N/A	0.49m	0.1	74.43m
2/007	Fill	2/004	Linear fill	N/A	0.49m	0.1	74.52m
2/008	Cut		Linear cut	N/A	0.4m	0.08	74.42m
2/009	Fill	2/004	Linear fill	N/A	0.4m	0.08	74.49m
2/010	Cut		Linear cut	N/A	0.47m	0.08	74.34m
2/011	Fill	2/004	Linear fill	N/A	0.47m	0.08	74.39m
2/012	Cut		Irregular cut	N/A	2.0m	0.1	74.17m
2/013	Fill	2/004	Irregular fill	N/A	2.0	0.1	74.35m
2/014	Cut		Pit/Linear cut	N/A	1.6m	0.14	73.93m
2/015	Fill	2/004	Pit/Linear fill	N/A	1.6m	0.14	74.12m
2/016	Cut		Pit cut	0.5m	0.46m	0.06	73.94m
2/017	Fill	2/004	Pit fill	0.5m	0.46m	0.06	73.99m
2/018	Cut		Pit/Linear cut	N/A	0.77m	0.07	73.67m
2/019	Fill	2/004	Pit/Linear fill	N/A	0.77m	0.07	73.78m

Table 3: Recorded context within Trench 2

- 4.7** The natural deposit, [2/005], a mid yellowish brown silt sand was observed at a minimum depth of 74.83m AOD. Cut into the natural substrate were a number of undated linear and pit features, all of which were filled by homogenous greenish sand which was indistinguishable from deposit [2/004].
- 4.8** Two north to south parallel linear features [2/006] (fill [2/007]) and [2008] (fill [2/009]) of 0.49 and 0.40m width and 0.10 and 0.08m depth respectively both had gradually sloping sides with an imperceptible break of slope to a concave base. Both linear features extended 0.40m into the trench and continued beyond the limit of excavation. A third north to south aligned linear [2/010] (fill [2/011]) running parallel to [2/006] and [2/008], continued across the trench beyond the limit of excavation in both directions; the feature had shallow sloping sides and was similar in shape to the other linear features. The linear features may be drainage gullies.
- 4.9** A fourth wide, shallow, irregular linear feature [2/012] (fill [2/013]) of 2.0m width and 0.10m depth was identified to the west of [2/010]. The feature may be an undulation in natural.

- 4.10** Feature [2/014] (fill [2/015]) extended into the baulk and may be either a pit or terminus of a linear feature with a width of 1.6m and depth of 0.14m. Feature [2/018] (fill [2/019]) also extended into the baulk and may be either a pit or linear. It was 0.77m wide and very shallow at 0.07m depth with shallow sloping sides and imperceptible break of slope at base. A possible oval pit [2/016] (fill [2/017]) of 0.46 by 0.50m with a depth of 0.06m was also identified to the west of the trench.
- 4.11** Sealing and appearing to fill the shallow features was a greenish sand deposit [2/004] of 0.10 to 0.20m thickness, devoid of inclusions. This was overlain by subsoil [2/003] a 0.15m thick slightly silty sand with no inclusions and occasional water staining. Overlying [2/003] was a 0.60m thick deposit of loose friable flint gravel subsoil in a silty clay matrix [2/002] with gravels of less than 30mm diameter. The trench was sealed by a dark grey brown silty clay topsoil [2/001] with rounded flint gravels of less than 10mm diameter.
- 4.12** No artefacts were recovered from any of the features, subsoil or topsoil deposits despite excavating the fills in their entirety. A sample was taken from context [2/007].

5.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE

5.1 Environmental Sample by Karine Le Hégarat

5.2.1 A single 10 litre bulk sample was taken during archaeological work on the site to establish evidence for environmental indicators such as wood charcoal, charred macrobotanical remains, fauna and mollusca. The sample was extracted from the fill [2/007] of a linear feature [2/006] that may represent a drainage gully. The sample was processed in a flotation tank and the residue and flot were retained on 500µm and 250µm meshes and air dried. The residue was passed through graded sieves (4 and 2mm) and each fraction sorted for environmental and artefact remains (Table 3 below). The flot was scanned under a stereozoom microscope at x7-45 magnifications and its content recorded (Table 4 below).

Sample Number	Context	Context / deposit type	Sample Volume litres	sub-Sample Volume litres	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal <4mm	Weight (g)	Charred botanicals (other than charcoal)	Weight (g)
1	2/007	Fill of linear feature [2/006]	10	10			*	<2	* cf. <i>Pisum/Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	<2

Table 3: Residue quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250)

Sample Number	Context	weight g	Flot volume ml	Uncharred %	sediment %	Charcoal <2mm
1	2/007	<2	2	97	2	*

Table 4: Flot quantification (*=1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and preservation (+ = poor, ++ = moderate, +++ = good).

5.2.2 The small flot (2ml) was dominated by uncharred vegetation including modern fine roots and leaf fragments, which suggests some post-depositional disturbances and potential modern contamination of the deposit. Environmental evidence was scarce. Sampling produced only infrequent

wood charcoal flecks and a single fragment of a possible common pea/vetch/tare (cf. *Pisum/Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.). No other environmental remains were evident in the sample and no artefacts were recorded in this deposit.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 The evaluation revealed disturbance of fairly modern origin (including services and land drains). Buried former topsoil was also encountered sealed by made ground (construction deposit) indicating work had been undertaken to raise the level of the ground surface probably during the construction of the existing buildings.

6.2 A concentration of undated and/or natural features was encountered within Trench 2 These comprised possible pits and gullies as well as clearly natural features. These features contained no finds and were filled with apparently sterile deposits.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Features of possible archaeological origin were recorded in Trench 2 although no associated finds were recovered from these making further interpretation impossible.

Bibliography

Archaeology South-East 2011. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of The Sydney Simmons Homes site, Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey*

Archaeology South-East 2011. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at The Sydney Simmons Homes site, Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey*

Institute for Archaeologists 2007. *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Evaluations*

Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank Sydney Simmons Homes for commissioning the work and the guidance of Tony Howe of Surrey County Council throughout the project.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	DRA 11					
Identification Name and Address	Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey					
County, District &/or Borough	Mole Valley					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 1889 5802					
Geology	Thanet Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4839					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. X	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Residential		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 8 th -9 th Mar 2011	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Sydney Simmons Homes					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	John Cook					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern X		
<p>100 Word Summary</p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Sydney Simmons Alms Houses Dene Road, Ashtead, Surrey. The work was undertaken between the 8th and 9th of March 2011 on behalf of Sydney Simmons Homes. Two trenches, measuring 20m and 30m in length by 1.8m in width were excavated across the area of proposed development.</i></p> <p><i>No dateable finds of archaeological interest were encountered but a concentration of undated and/or natural features was encountered within Trench 2.</i></p> <p><i>The underlying natural Thanet Sand was encountered at a maximum height of 74.41m OD in Trench 1 in the south-east falling to 73.23 m OD in Trench 2 in the north-west.</i></p>						

OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: archaeol6-97887

Project details

Project name Dene Road, Ashted

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Archaeology South-East at Sydney Simmons Alms Houses Dene Road, Ashted, Surrey. The work was undertaken between the 8th and 9th of March 2011 on behalf of Sydney Simmons Homes. Two trenches, measuring 20m and 30m in length by 1.8m in width were excavated across the area of proposed development.

No dateable finds of archaeological interest were encountered but a concentration of undated and/or natural features was encountered within Trench 2.

The underlying natural Thanet Sand was encountered at a maximum height of 74.41m OD in Trench 1 in the south-east falling to 73.23 m OD in Trench 2 in the north-west.

Project dates Start: 08-03-2011 End: 09-03-2011

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes DRA 11 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type 0 None

Significant Finds 0 None

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England
Site location SURREY MOLE VALLEY LEATHERHEAD Dene Road, Ashted
Postcode KT21 XXX
Study area 0.25 Hectares
Site coordinates TQ 1889 5802 51.3083464936 -0.294127086862 51 18 30 N 000 17 38 W Point
Lat/Long Datum Unknown
Height OD / Depth Min: 73.00m Max: 74.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East
Project brief originator Surrey County Council
Project design originator Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager Andy Leonard
Project supervisor John Cook
Type of sponsor/funding body Client
Name of sponsor/funding body Sydney Simmons Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive
Exists? No

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title An Archaeological Evaluation at The Sydney Simmons
Homes site, Dene Road, Ashtead

Author(s)/Editor(s) Cook, J.

Other bibliographic
details ASE Report No. 2011072

Date 2011

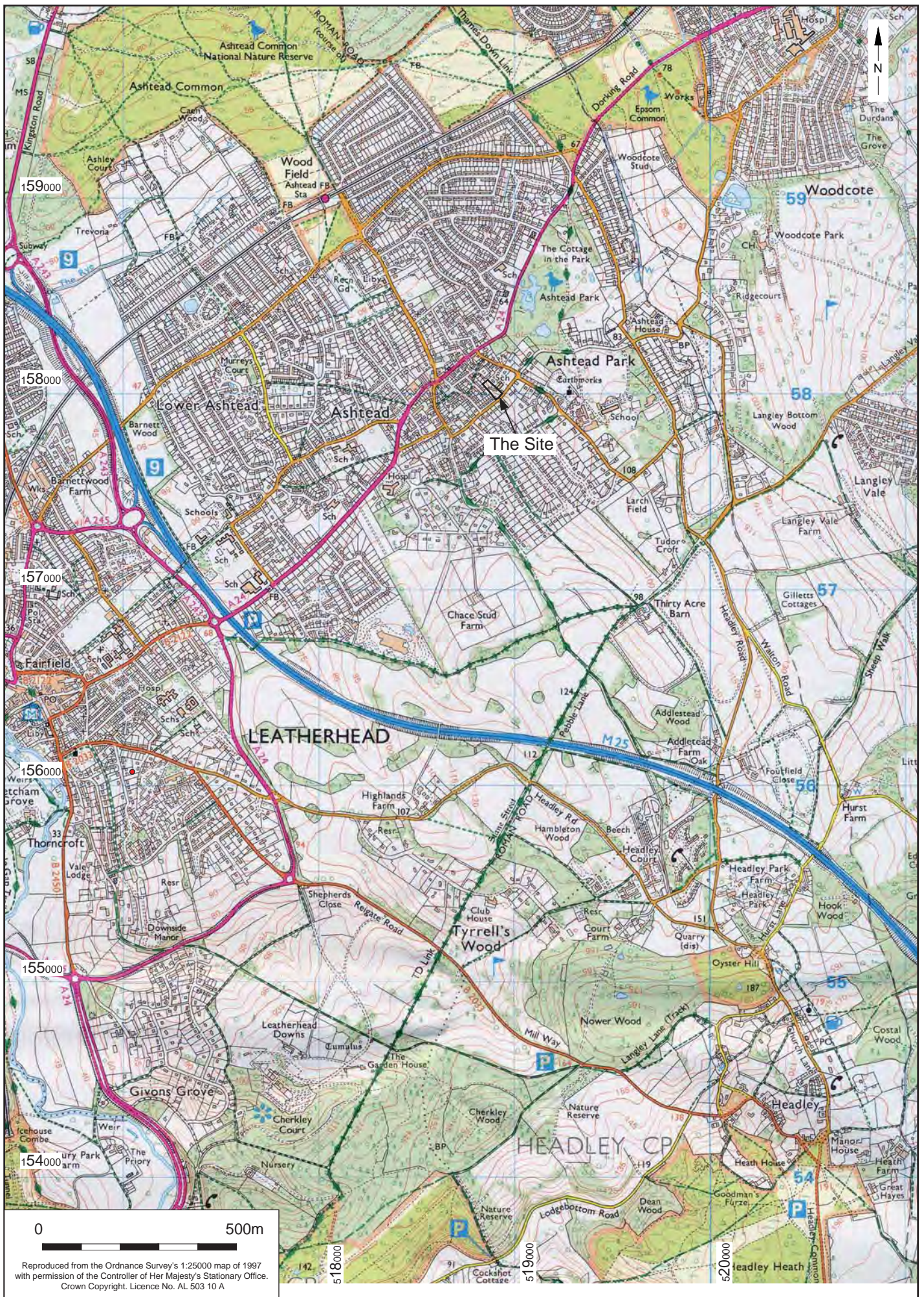
Issuer or publisher Archaeology SE

Place of issue or
publication Portslade

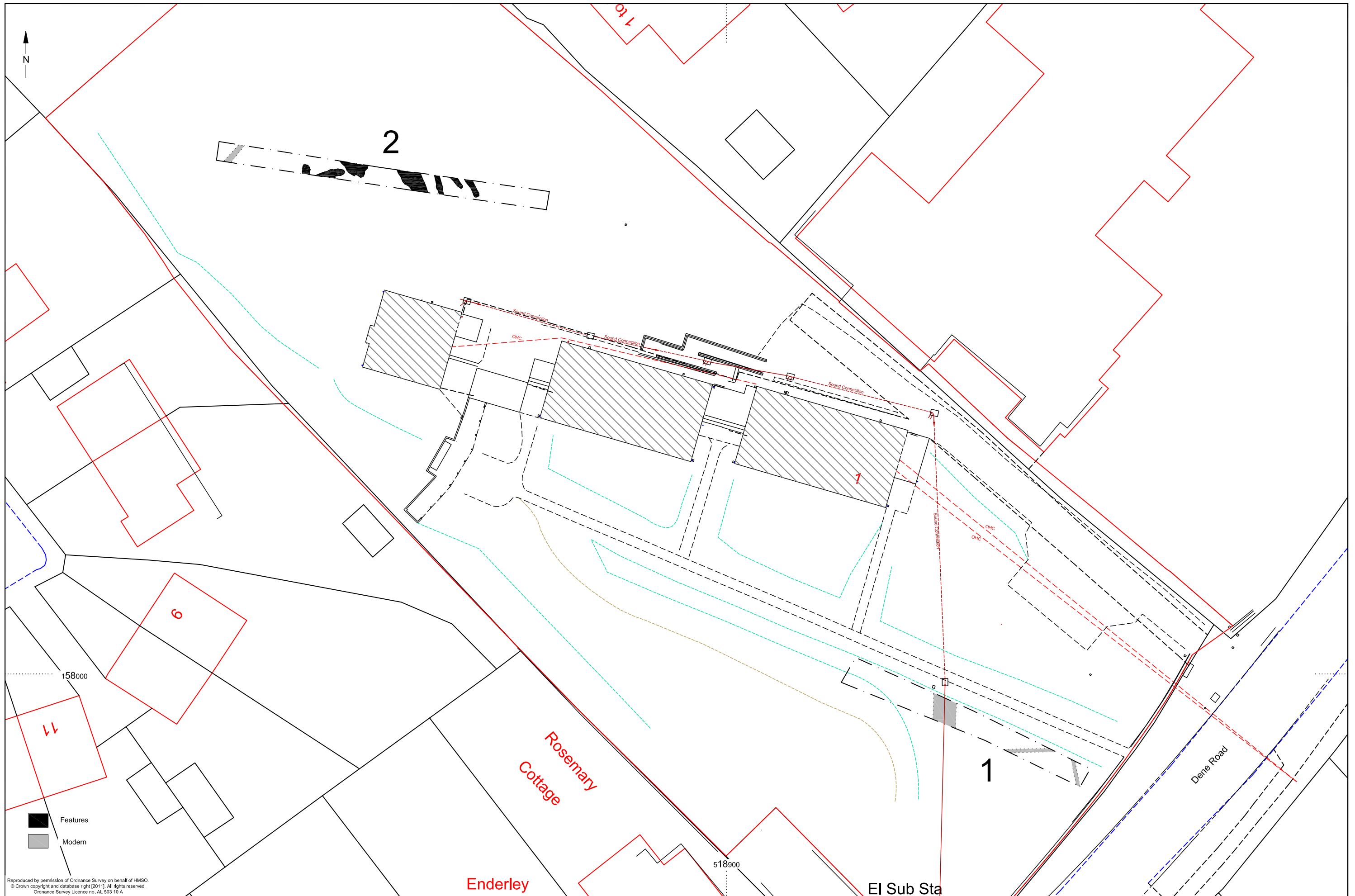
Description Eval Rep

Entered by andrew margetts (andrew_margetts@tiscali.co.uk)

Entered on 30 March 2011



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Project Ref: 4839	April 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011072	Drawn by: JLR	Fig. 1	



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© Archaeology South-East		Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashted		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4839	April 2011	Trench location		
Report Ref: 2011072	Drawn by: JLR			



Photo showing trench 2 looking north west

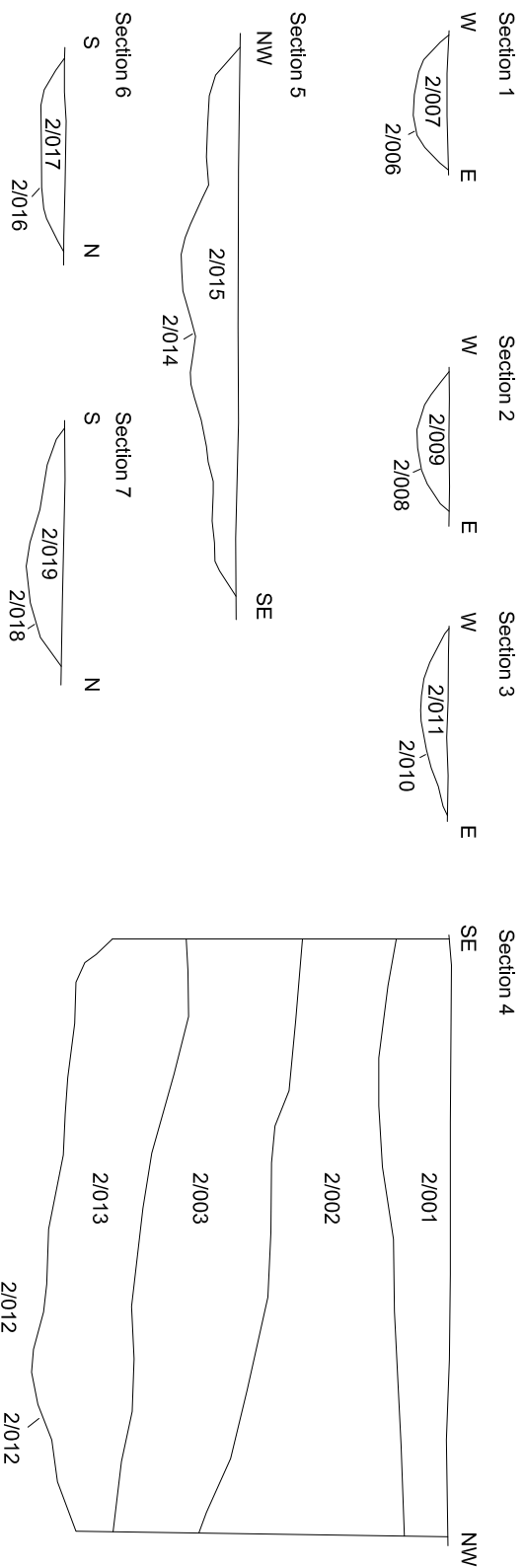
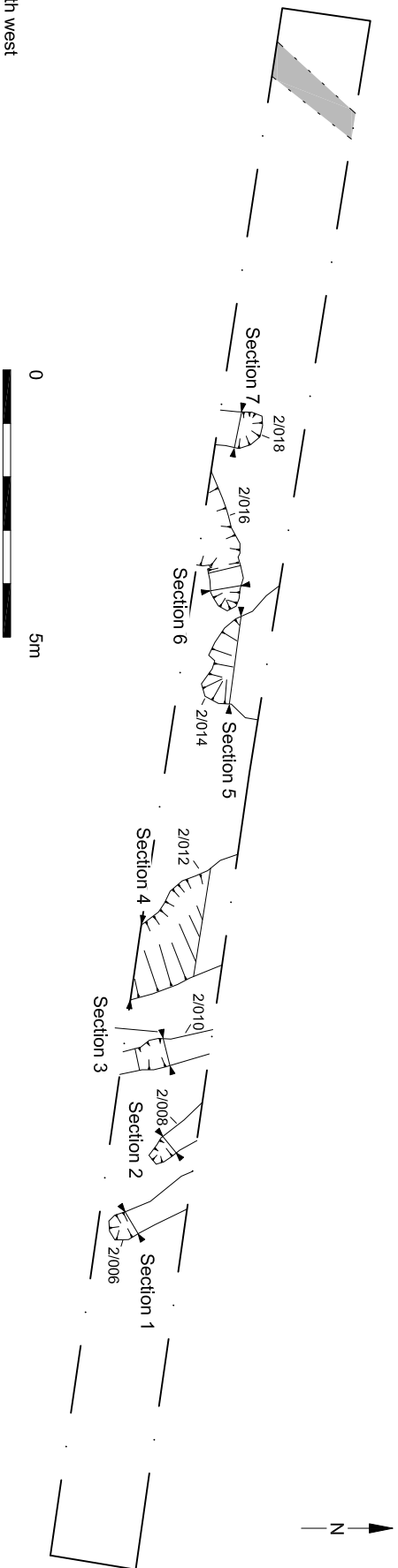


Photo showing 2/012 looking west

© Archaeology South-East		Sydney Simmons Homes, Dene Road, Ashtead	
Project Ref: 4839	April 2011	Trench 2: Plan, Sections and Photos	
Report Ref: 2011072	Drawn by: FEG		
		Fig. 3	

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