

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Fontwell Avenue, Fontwell, West Sussex

Site Code: FON21

JAC27114
February 2021

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West Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

Written Scheme of Investigation

NGR 495201 106790

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document represents a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land off Fontwell Avenue, Fontwell, West Sussex (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The site lies within the West Sussex Coastal Plain, to the immediate south-west of a modern housing development midway between the villages of Fontwell to the north and Westergate and Eastergate to the south. It is bounded to the north by Level Mare Lane and to the east the redline boundary includes a section of Fontwell Avenue. To the south, are parking / utility areas and a residential property and stables. The site comprises two fields and a series of paddocks, the land sloping gently southwards from c 18m aOD to c 16m aOD.
- 1.3 This document represents a *Written Scheme of Investigation* to be submitted to the Chichester District Council (CDC) Archaeological Advisor (James Kenny) for approval prior to commencement of the work. All work will be carried out in accordance with these documents, as well as with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) procedural documents (CIfA 2014a and 2014b) and the Sussex Archaeological Standards (2019).
- 1.4 It should be noted that further work and/or measures to preserve archaeological remains *in situ* may be required if significant archaeological remains are found in the evaluation. In the event that further archaeological excavation is required a supplementary WSI will be prepared detailing the proposed work and submitted for approval.

2.0 Archaeological Background

- 2.1 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of the site based on an HER search for a 1.5km radial study area was prepared by RPS (2020). The following information is largely drawn from this document, with additional information from recent nearby work.
- 2.2 The geology of the site is recorded as Lambeth Group (Clay, Silt and Sand) with London Clay Formation in the south (Clay, Silt and Sand) – overlain by superficial Head (Clay, Silt Sand & Gravel) (BGS 2020). Raised Storm Beach Deposits 2 are recorded c 500m to the north and Raised Storm Beach Deposits 1 c 1km north-east of the Site. No Raised Beach Deposits are recorded at the Site.
- 2.3 In terms of Designated Heritage Assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck sites lie within the site or its immediate vicinity.
- 2.4 Geo-archaeological investigation undertaken as part of an archaeological evaluation at Fontwell Avenue, c 172m north-east of the

Site (ASE 2015), recorded Aldingbourne Raised Beach Deposits with palaeo-environmental potential at approximately 0.80 to 3.9m below ground level. No Palaeolithic activity was recorded. One Palaeolithic find has been identified within 1.5km of the Site by the research conducted for the DBA, comprising a Palaeolithic axe.

- 2.5 A small assemblage of Mesolithic – Mid Neolithic flint was recovered from the site at Fontwell Avenue, c 172m to the north-east. Mesolithic flint has been found c 1250m to the south-west.
- 2.6 The flint assemblage from the site at Fontwell Avenue (ASE 2015) indicated the possibility of Neolithic activity on the site, and a charcoal rich pit may date to this period. Archaeological investigation at Westergate c 357m to the south-west has identified Early Neolithic occupation in the form of 20 pits, 4 possible post-holes and a tree bole (ASE 2018). These pits produced a fairly large assemblage of finds, including pottery and worked flint. Surface artefacts have been found further afield and a number of isolated artefacts recovered from the Site environs.
- 2.7 The excavations at Westergate also identified two Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker vessels, probably originally placed intact, and Late Bronze Age - Early Iron Age activity in the form of field systems, an enclosure and an oven (ibid). The investigations at the Fontwell Avenue site also identified a heavily truncated Bronze Age enclosure. A late Bronze Age bucket urn has been found at Eastergate in 1954, 131m east of the study site. Archaeological evaluation in the south-west of the study area identified a Bronze Age pit, and evaluation at Westergate Community Centre identified a significant quantity of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery and a posthole.
- 2.8 A section of the Chichester-Brighton Roman Road is thought to be indicated by a linear embankment lying c 560m north-west of the Site. A large V shaped ditch was identified at the Fontwell Avenue site c172m to the north-east, which produced large quantities of Roman coarse greyware and is thought to indicate nearby settlement. Three cremation burials have been found in the study area: one at Nyton 1338m to the south-west, a 2nd - 3rd century burial at Westergate House 725m to the north-west, and a burial in a glass vessel and wood-lined cist at Hale's Barn Field 1084m to the north-west. The above features, together with other scattered finds, suggest Roman period settlement was focussed on the road, the site likely to lie in the agricultural hinterland.
- 2.9 The manor of Eastergate is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The settlement developed in the early medieval period around the Norman church of St George located 932m south of the site. A nearby evaluation at Church Lane identified two north-south ditches, possible earlier churchyard boundaries, one of which contained eleventh to thirteenth century pottery. Other evaluation near the Church has identified multiple features dating to the 11th -14th centuries. The early

medieval period is poorly represented to date within the study area. The site lies well to the north of the medieval settlement at Eastergate and most likely lay in agricultural land at this date.

- 2.10 In the post medieval period, the productive agricultural landscape was heavily exploited and there are numerous historic farmsteads. Follyfoot Farm, a nineteenth century farmstead, is situated 80m to the south. North Field Farm, not recorded as a historic farmstead, lies c. 50m south-west of the site.
- 2.11 Historic mapping shows the site lying within an enclosed landscape under arable cultivation by the late 18th century, and occupying the east end of a wedge shaped field, with the small preserved area of Eastergate Common extending to the east and north-east of the Site. A farm lay to the immediate south-west of the site, identified as North Field Farm on the 1805 map, the site probably forming part of the holdings of this farm. A road on the line of Fontwell Avenue was established by this date. The land within the site was divided into three plots by the mid 19th century. It was subsequently re-divided into two plots, and was principally occupied by a single large field into the late 20th century. Development of the land diagonally opposite the Site to the north-east dates to the 20th century.

3.0 Research Aims and Objectives

3.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation in summary:

- To identify if archaeological remains are present on the site and if so assess the date, survival and condition of said remains.
- To record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains on the site
- To record the nature and extent of any previous impacts on the archaeological sequence across the site.

3.2 Site Specific Research Objectives:

- To identify any raised beach sediments which may have potential for early prehistoric deposits and provide dating, using sampling and radiocarbon dating if the appropriate deposits / materials are recovered.
- To identify any further evidence of the later prehistoric occupation of the landscape identified on sites in proximity at Fontwell Avenue and Westergate, including Neolithic pits, late Neolithic – Early Neolithic (Beaker) period activity, and Bronze Age enclosures, pits and ditches.

- To determine if there is any evidence of continuity of occupation into the early Iron Age, generally poorly represented within the wider landscape, but for which evidence has potentially been found to the south of the site at Westergate.
- To determine if there is evidence of mid-late Iron Age and Roman settlement or field systems.
- To identify any evidence of medieval occupation and / or landuse.

3.3 Research Frameworks/Agendas: Relevant Aims and Objectives

Given the above site specific aims, the investigations also have the potential to address the following regional research questions with reference to the Fishbourne and Chichester Archaeological Research Framework (FRCF 2008):

- To identify [and establish the chronology] of different Prehistoric farming regimes [pastoral and crop cultivation] using environmental sampling as well as the study of land division (FRCF 2008).
- To examine how the existing field system was adapted, from Prehistoric times and through to the medieval period in order to establish a chronology (FRCF 2008).

In the event that significant archaeological remains are identified by the evaluation, the research objectives will be revised in function of these findings.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 A total of thirteen 30m by 2m trial trenches will be excavated across the site (Figure 2). Spoil will be banded around the trenches.
- 4.2 The trench layout is designed to provide a representative sample of the proposed development area whilst avoiding extant buildings and known buried services. These trenches will be accurately laid out using a total station or by taped offsets from fixed known points. Some modification to the suggested trench positions may be necessary due to other currently unknown obstructions. Significant variations to the trench layout will be discussed with RPS and the CDC Archaeological Officer.
- 4.3 The trenches will be scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner. The trenches will be excavated using a suitable mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 4.4 Only undifferentiated topsoil, subsoil and overburden of recent origin will be removed by machine and will be kept separately. The excavation will be taken down to the top of the first significant

archaeological horizon or the top of the underlying 'natural', whichever is uppermost. Due to Health and Safety considerations the trench will 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) have been implemented; the indicative depth of 1.2m may be reduced if the trench sides appear to be particularly unstable. All machining will be undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist.

- 4.5 On conclusion of the excavation, the spoil will be backfilled by machine, in appropriate sequence, spread evenly and compacted to ensure a surface flush or nearly flush with the ground surface. No reinstatement of the original surface (i.e. turf) will be undertaken.

5.0 Excavation and Recording Techniques

- 5.1 All exposed archaeological features and deposits will be cleaned by hand, planned and recorded. All discrete cut features will be sampled as a minimum by half section (i.e. 50% of feature excavated). At least 25% of any linear feature will be sectioned to produce a vertical section where practicable. A minimum 50% of structural features (beamslots, ring ditches) - actual surviving structural elements (walls, collapse/debris fields) will be exposed, cleaned and preserved for excavation in more appropriate circumstances. 50-100% domestic/industrial working features (hearths, ovens) - unless large & structural, in which case see above. All features will be planned at the scale of 1:20 in relation to the trench outline. Further plans at the scale of 1:20 and sections at the scale of 1:10 will be drawn as necessary. Plans will be drawn on plastic film. A full black & white and colour slide photographic record will be kept of the work. Comparative site levels will be recorded for each feature or important context with reference to an OS bench mark, or if unfeasible to an arbitrary on-site datum.
- 5.2 All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded using the standard context record sheets used by Archaeology South-East. A metal detector will be used to scan the exposed surfaces and all excavated material.
- 5.3 The client and the CDC Archaeological Officer will be informed immediately of any archaeological features or deposits worthy of preservation *in situ*, and generally of any high quality archaeological remains in order that this written scheme of investigation can be reviewed if necessary.
- 5.4 The strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits and structures (which can include soils, timbers, animal bone and human burials) will be developed in consultation with the County Archaeologist, and with reference to English Heritage 2011, *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of*

methods from sampling and recovery to post excavation. The advice of the County Archaeologist will be sought at the project planning stage and a visit arranged to determine the importance and sampling requirements for all deposits exposed during the investigation. Bulk samples for the retrieval of wood charcoal, plant remains, small bones, small finds, snail deposits etc will be taken as required and other scientific dating techniques considered where appropriate. It is anticipated that bulk soil samples will be collected from suitable excavated contexts, including datable buried soils, well-sealed slowly silting features, sealed hearths, sealed features containing evident carbonised remains, peats and water-logged deposits. It is anticipated that soil samples will be 40 litres where possible, or 100% of the context if smaller.

- 5.5 Any human remains uncovered during the work will be left in situ. The local police, the Ministry of Justice, RPS and the CDC Archaeologist will be informed. No human remains will be lifted under evaluation trenching conditions. If they are required to be removed this will be done under a separate scheme of work and with the appropriate licence from the Ministry of Justice.
- 5.6 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, shall be reported to the local Finds Liaison Officer. Should the find's status as treasure be confirmed the Coroner, the landowner and the County Archaeologist will also be informed. A record shall be provided to the Coroner and to the County Archaeologist of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre, and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).

6.0 Processing and identification of recovered material

- 6.1 All pottery, bone and worked flint recovered from the excavation will be washed and marked with an appropriate code to identify the site and context. Most ceramic and other building material (not including significant diagnostic material) and burnt flint will be identified, counted, weighed and discarded. Samples will be retained as appropriate. Finds will be bagged in polythene bags according to type and context.
- 6.2 The lithic and ceramic finds will be identified by specialists within Archaeology South-East, and preliminary identification of faunal remains may be undertaken if the nature of the deposits justifies such study. All finds in an unstable condition will be stabilized using passive conservation techniques where appropriate before being deposited with the receiving museum.
- 6.3 Environmental samples will be processed using tank flotation unless considered detrimental to the samples or recovery rate (such as for waterlogged samples). Bulk samples will target recovery of plant

remains (charcoal and macrobotanicals), fish, bird, small mammal and amphibian bone, and small artefacts. Waterlogged samples will be wet sieved through nested sieves and stored in wet, cool conditions or dried if considered an appropriate form of conservation for the remains. Specialist samples may also be taken from dry or waterlogged contexts. Such samples will target recovery of pollen (using monolith tins), molluscs, foraminifera, parasites and insects. Larger samples (80-100 litres) will be extracted wholesale from deposits rich in marine molluscs and large mammal bones. As a general rule waterlogged wood specimens will be recorded in detail in their original location. If removed they will be cleaned, photographed and a thin section sample will be taken for identification. Specimens will either be stored in wet cool conditions or dried if considered appropriate for the material. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.

7.0 Reporting

- 7.1 Within four weeks of the completion of the fieldwork a full report on the results of the field evaluation will be submitted. It will include the local geology and archaeological evidence. It will describe the work undertaken and results of elements described above. It will include a description of archaeological features and tabulated details of finds from each context. A list of environmental samples and any samples taken for dating will also be included. The report will include a plan showing the trench locations. Further plans, sections and photographs of features located and excavated will be included as necessary. The report will also include a timetable of works carried out, a consideration of the project strategy with a confidence rating and all other data required by the Brief. A digital copy will also be supplied if required.
- 7.2 Following the submission of the summary and main report to the CDC Historic Environment Record (HER), should the evaluation prove to be the sole fieldwork undertaken on the site, then, if deemed appropriate, further written and illustrative material may be prepared for publication in a suitable place, within one year of the completion of fieldwork.

8.0 Preparation and deposition of the finds and archive

- 8.1 The site archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set out in English Heritage's Management of Archaeological Projects 2 and in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission, 1994).
- 8.2 Permission will be sought from the landowner to deposit finds and paper archive in an appropriate local museum.

9.0 Health and Safety

- 9.1 A Risk Assessment will be produced and agreed with RPS prior to the commencement of the work. All relevant main contractor health and safety regulations will be adhered to.

10.0 Insurance

- 10.1 Archaeology South-East is insured against claims for: public and products liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one event for all claims in the aggregate during any one period of insurance; employers' liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one event inclusive of costs; professional indemnity to the value of £15,000,000 any one claim / aggregate any one period of insurance.

11.0 Monitoring

- 11.1 Provision will be made at all stages of the project for the CDC Archaeological Advisor to monitor progress and standards. Adequate provision will be made available by ASE for the CDC Archaeological Advisor to make site monitoring visits at agreed and specified times.

References

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ASE 2015 *An Archaeological Evaluation at Land off Fontwell Avenue, Fontwell, West Sussex* (ASE Project: 7286; ASE Report 2015069) (Nicholls, H.)

ASE 2018 *Archaeological Excavations on Land at Nyton Road, Westergate, West Sussex* (ASE Project 7997; ASE Report 2018129) (Vieira, T.)

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English Heritage, 2011. *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*

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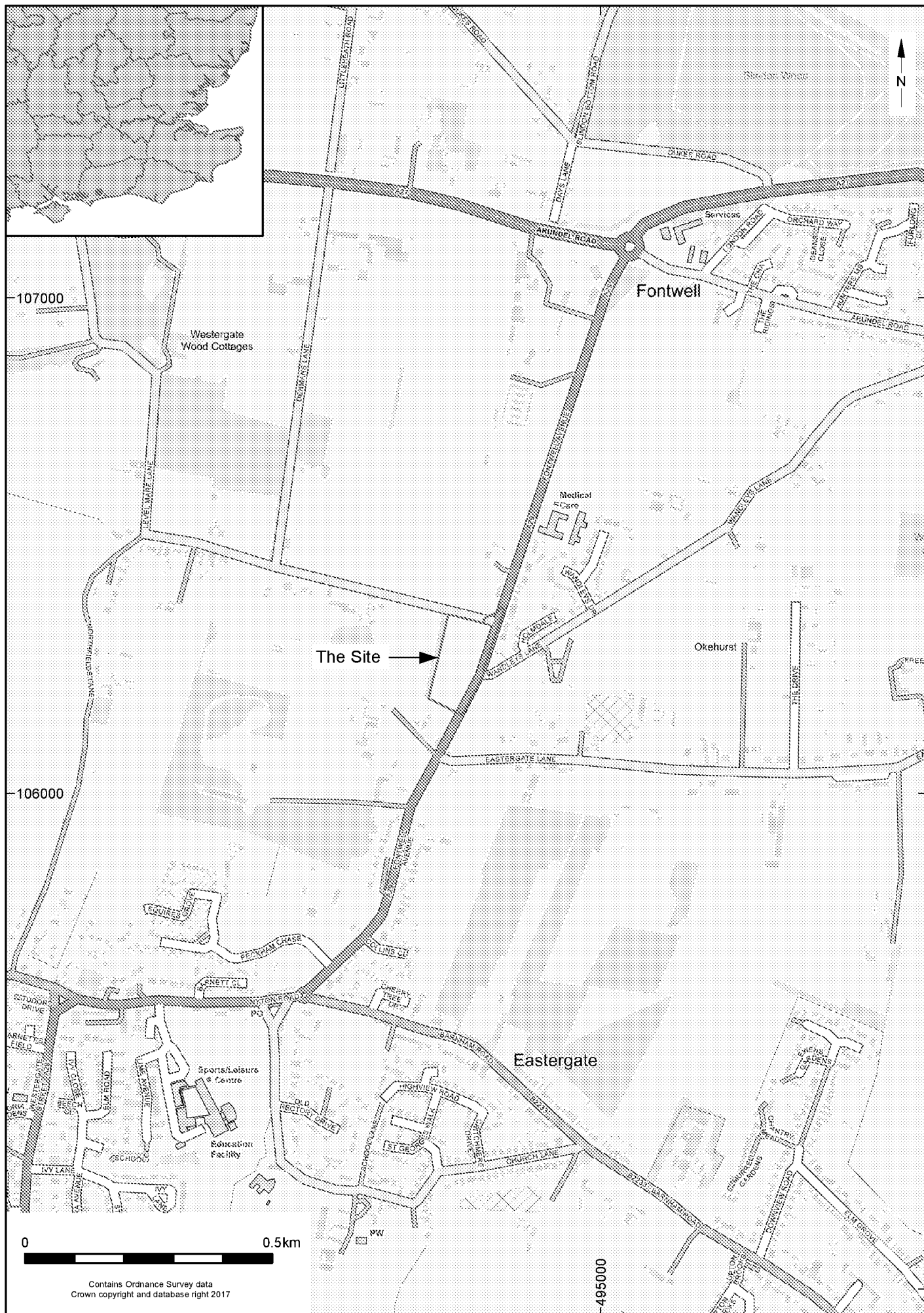
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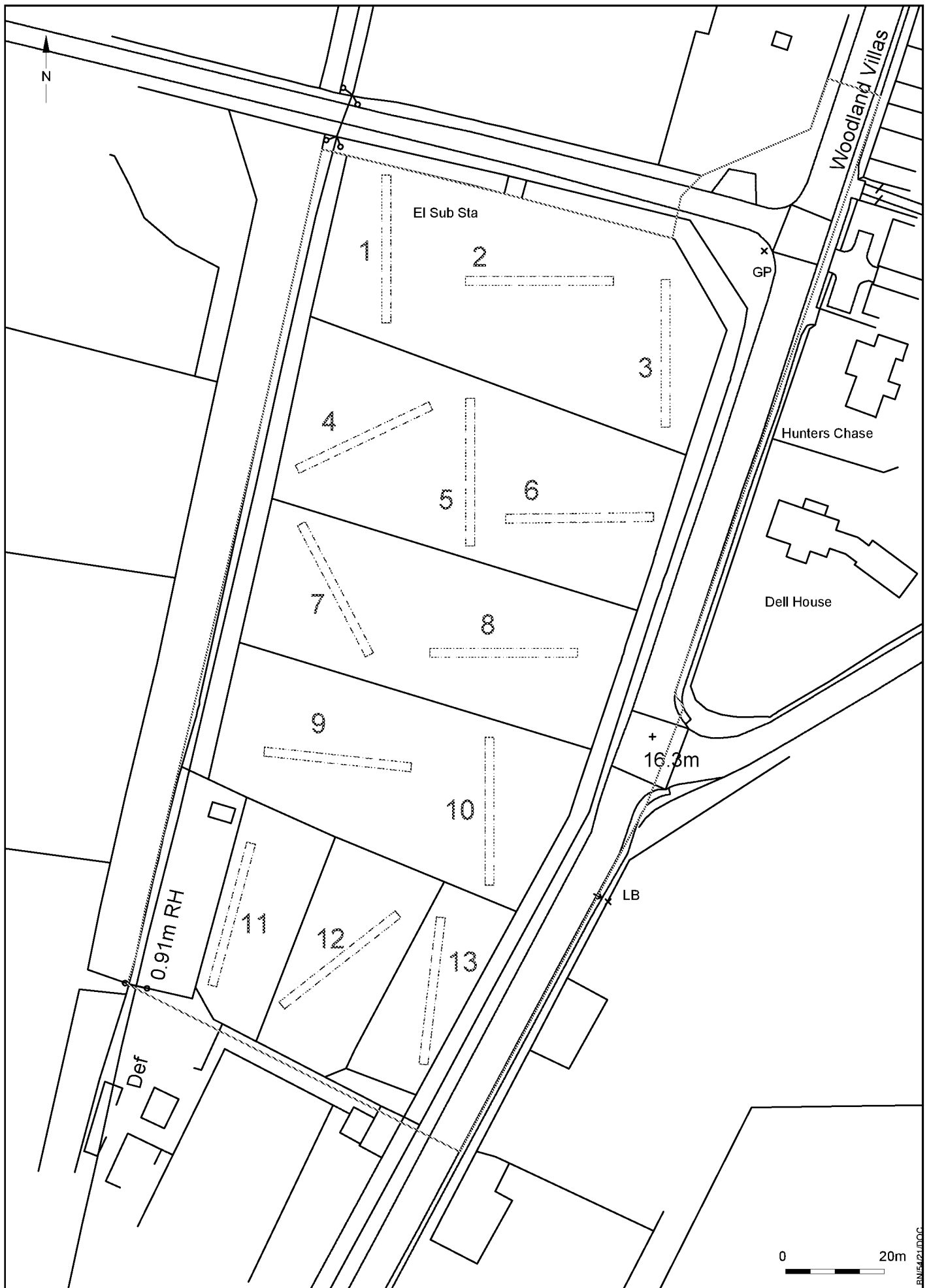
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***Archaeology South-East
February 2021***



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© Archaeology South-East		Fontwell Avenue, Eastergate, West Sussex	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 200007	February 2021	Site location	
Report Ref: WSI	Drawn by: NH		





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