

**Upper Bognor Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex:
written scheme of investigation (WSI) for
archaeological works.**



Looking west across the area of new build towards Nos. 67 and 69 Upper Bognor Road.

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1 Background

An application for planning permission has been submitted (BR/252/21/PL), for a new building; extension to an existing building; a hard standing car parking area; and upgraded service routes and supply to the site of two listed buildings at numbers 67, 69, 71 & 71a Upper Bognor Road on the eastern edge of the Hotham Park Conservation area and within the Upper Bognor Road and Mead Lane Conservation area. It has been determined as a condition of the permission that archaeological mitigation through investigation is carried out following the WSI, in accordance with Arun Local Plan Policy HER DM6.

2 Project archaeologists

The works will be overseen by Mark Roberts, Principal Research Fellow and Tutor for Fieldwork at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, who has forty years of fieldwork experience in both the commercial and research sectors, across all periods from the Palaeolithic to the post-Medieval. His most recent publications demonstrating his fieldwork credentials are Roberts 2018, Roberts 2020, and Roberts and Pope 2018. The work will be carried out on site by Greg Bell who has had over thirty years' experience in the commercial sector working with Archaeology South East (ASE) and who has worked in the vicinity of the site previously (Priestley-Bell 2006).

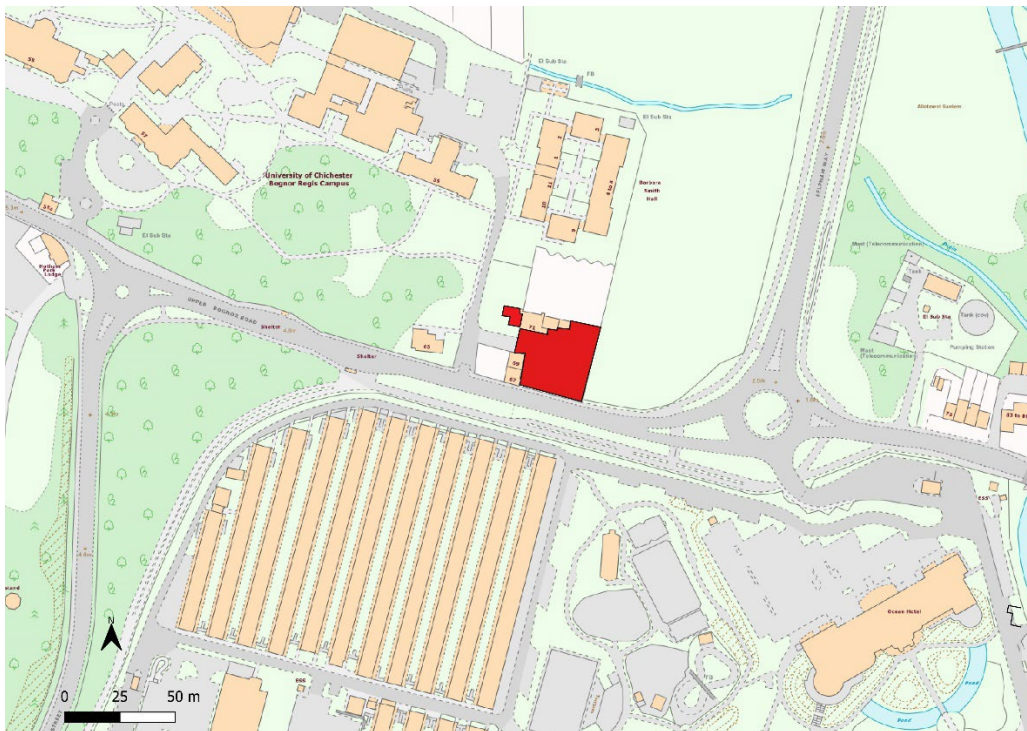


Fig. 1. Location map for the works. The area to be lowered is shaded red

3 Non-technical summary

The works involve stripping off 0.35m of largely rubble waste and some topsoil across the entire area shaded red on Figure 1. Upon completion of this work the foundation trenches will be dug for the new building and the extension to no. 7, services will be connected to new and existing buildings after the foundations have been excavated this will be All of the stripped area shall be subject to an archaeological watching brief, as shall the foundation trenches and service trenches, with recording and mitigation enacted as the need dictates (see Sections 6 & 8 this report). The new car parking area is to be a no-dig area to protect the roots of the existing trees. Upon completion of the construction work the area shall be landscaped, resown in lawn areas and replanted with trees (Figs. 2, 3).

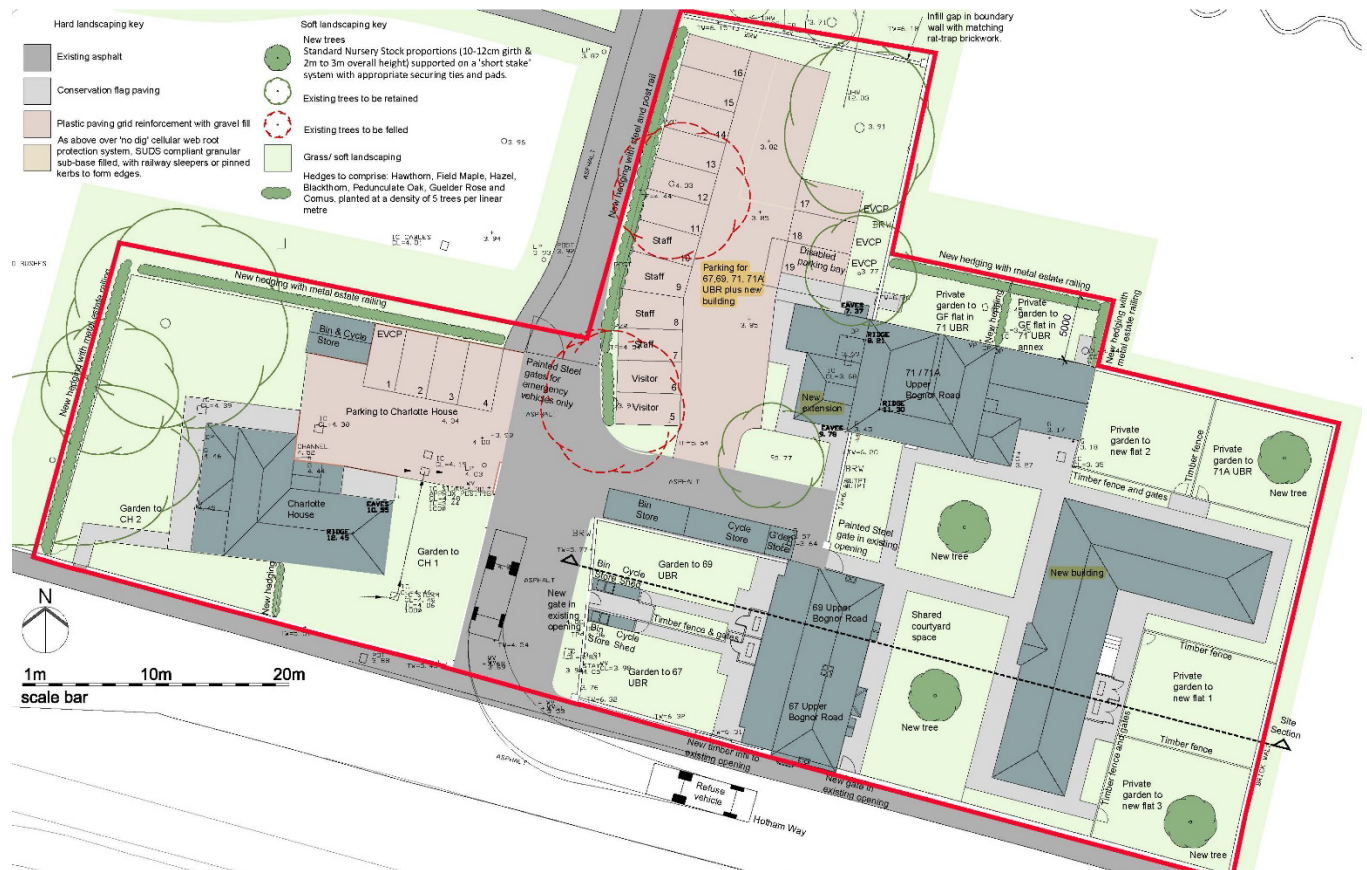


Fig. 2. Site plan showing the completed construction and landscaping works (Saunders Architects).



Fig. 3. Aerial view of the Upper Bognor Road development, the layout of the houses within the curtilage wall can be clearly seen and compared to Figs. 1 & 2. The garden area for the new build has since been cleared. Frame width 0.25km.

4 Location

The site is located in the eastern suburbs of Bognor Regis, SZ 94316 99525, 10km ESE of the county town of Chichester and 0.55km north of the English Channel. It lies east of the village of Felpham and SE of the village of South Bersted. The site sits immediately north of the Upper Bognor Road, 100m west of its junction with the roundabout junction with Felpham Way. The development is part of the estate of the Bognor Campus of Chichester University and covers an area of 0.2ha or 2174m², including the existing buildings (Fig. 1).

5. Geology and topography

The area of works is entirely located on the southern section of the Lower Coastal Plain, which is bounded by the buried cliff line of the Brighton-Norton Raised beach some 7.15km to the north and the coastline of the English Channel 0.55km to the south (Roberts and Pope 2018). The solid geology at the site comprises the Reading Formation of the Lambeth Group, they unconformably overlie the upper bed of the White Chalk Group in southern England – the

Portsmouth Chalk Formation, which outcrops immediately to the north and east of the site (Aldiss 2001; Hopson 2005). The Chalk here comprises the southern margin of the Littlehampton Anticline a structural feature eroded away by successive Pleistocene marine transgressions (Roberts in Roberts and Pope 2018). Late Middle Pleistocene marine gravels of an MIS 7 regressional beach, are also mapped at the site, partially overlain by a dissected remnant of Devensian loess known locally as the Brickearth. To the east of the site lies the confluent stream of the Aldingbourne and Lidsey Rifes that debouches into the channel below the Butlins Holiday Camp. The floodplain of the rife borders the site and there exists the possibility that the site might abut both Holocene deposits and the enlarged valley of the periglacial rife.



Fig. 4. Geological map of the area around the site (red asterisk). Note the Chalk outcrop and the alluvial sediments of the rife.

The topography of the Lower Coastal Plain is largely gentle, altitudinally rising northwards towards the downs; although across its disposition, the plain is cut into by the distal end of dry valleys that originate further up the downland dip slope. This phenomenon, however, is restricted to the higher parts of the Lower Coastal Plain, in the area of the site the topography

is essentially flat and between one and three metres above sea-level, dropping slightly eastwards into the valley of the rife.

6 Site preparation and excavation

The operating methodology will to strip the area of its current topsoil to a depth of c. 0.35m onto the surface of the underlying subsoil. A preliminary visit to the development (cover page, Fig. 5), showed the surface area of the site of the new build (Fig. 2), to be a mixture of building rubble, organic detritus from the clearance of vegetation and constituents from the decay of the curtilage walls. The stripping will take place using a 360° excavator fitted with a grading bucket, the material will then be stored on site before screening and re-application upon the completion of the construction. The works shall start at the east end of the site and progress westwards, a similar removal of topsoil/rubble is envisaged in the extension to number 71a. The foundation trenches 0.6m wide by 1.0m deep, will be dug for the new build and the extension, these works constitute some 72m of trenching at the new build and 19m at the extension. Other areas that are identified as requiring to be stripped and any new dig or expanded service trenches shall also be subject to a watching brief.



Fig. 5. The surface of the area east of nos. 67, 69 Upper Bognor Road looking north.

7 History and archaeology

Bognor was once the easternmost tithing of the manor and parish of Pagham, which was in the hands of the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The Aldingbourne rife formed the eastern boundary not only the tithing but also, on a more important scale, the Rapes of Chichester and Arundel. The estuary of the rife formed the Medieval haven or harbour, whilst the rife itself is believed to have been navigable up to the Bishop of Chichester's palace and park at Aldingbourne into the later Middle Ages (Fleming 1949).

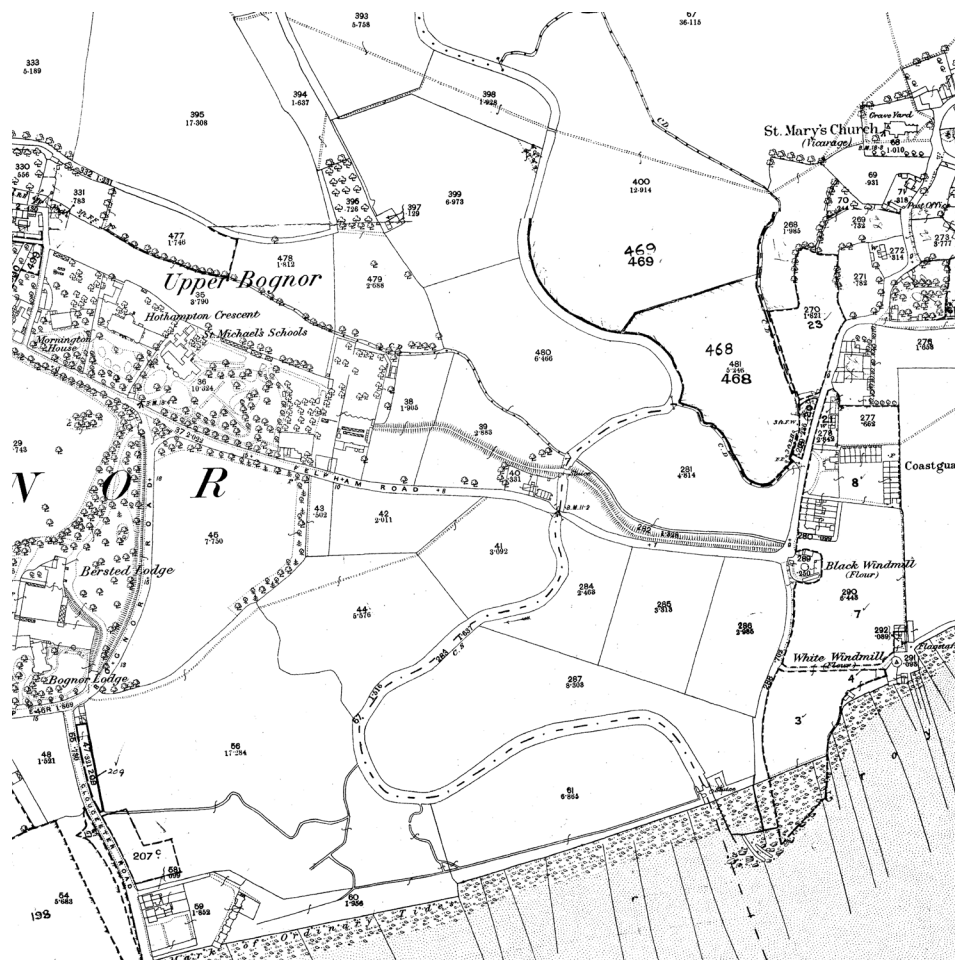


Fig. 6. OS 1st Edition of 1853, showing the site and buildings.

To the west and south-west of the site sat, and still sit, some of Bognor's grand buildings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Fig. 6); including the Dome, Sir Richard Hotham's unsuccessful device for attracting George III to the town (Harris 2009). The two listed buildings at the site are situated at the edge of the parks and gardens of what was intended to become Hothamstead and probably represent dwellings and their associated trades built to service the estate. Conversely, the Yeakell and Gardner map of Sussex 1778-1783 shows there

to be no buildings on the site (Fig. 7), thus providing a broad *terminus ante quem* for their construction.



Fig. 7. An extract from the Yeakell and Gardner Map of Sussex compiled between 1778 and 1783. The villages of Little and Great Bognor are clearly shown, together with the long linear field above the Felpham Road (UBR) where the site is located.

Archaeologically, there is a mixture of material in the environs of the site. The closest excavation at 43-47 Upper Bognor Road to the WNW, revealed Mesolithic flintwork, a small amount of Romano-British material and more substantial finds of Saxon pottery and a possible sunken building (Priestley-Bell 2006). Mesolithic material is also recorded by Wymer (1977) from the foreshore in a channel within the valley of the Aldingbourne-Lydsey Rife. A kilometre to the NW another rare, Middle Saxon site was found at Tribe's Yard in Bersted Street (Stevens 2006). Hunter and Pine (1999) located raised beach deposits and several post-Medieval features on the campus at SZ 9420 9965 to the NW of the current site. Further afield to the north on the interfluvium between the Aldingbourne and Lydsey rife at Oldfield Farm evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age and early Roman features and finds were made (Douglas 2014; Margetts 2019a); followed by evidence for Medieval ecclesiastical farming in the form of a croft (Margetts 2019b). Wessex Archaeology (2003) reported the discovery of eighty Bronze Age palstave axes from a presumed founder's hoard on the banks of the Aldingbourne

Rife but no references are given. Analysis of the maps in figures 6 and 7, together with informed inference suggest that the site for most of recorded history the site sat in rural and riparian environs to the west of the major settlement at the time, Felpham. Minor hamlets/villages existed at Bognor and Bersted all at the eastern edge of the old Pagham Manor. The villages here named all have recorded Saxon names (Ekwall 1991), and were still quite separate, rural communities into the beginning of the nineteenth century. Given the location of the site and its proximity to the rife and its harbour, archaeology from any period back to the Mesolithic might be expected.

8 Mitigation

The Grade II listed buildings at the site date to the early part of the C19th and it is to be expected that ancillary structures associated with the use of those buildings will be found during the stripping (Fig. 6). It is not possible, based on the evidence from other archaeological interventions in the area, to predict with any degree of certainty what type or age of other archaeological features might be revealed during the course of the works. However, the mitigation is designed to allow for most eventualities.

8.1 The excavation works have the potential to reveal the sub-topsoil surface across the site (Figs. 1, 2, 5). Therefore, any surviving archaeological cut features or building footings will be encountered at the Reading Beds/Raised Beach - topsoil interface.

8.2 An archaeologist (MBR) and/or his representative will be present on site during the period of intrusive works on the undug area. All the other machine dug interventions across the previously excavated areas shall be monitored as part of an occasional watching brief to record the sedimentary and archaeological records. The fieldwork and post-excavation fieldwork shall be carried out to conform to the Sussex Archaeological Standards (East Sussex County Council 2017), and the guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020) and English Heritage/Historic England (2007, 2015).

8.3 Accordingly, an archaeological watching brief will be carried out across the aforementioned stripped land around the buildings and during the digging of the trenches. Archaeological features will be recorded by GNSS Rover in SI units and metres OD. Eastings and northings shall be in UK National Grid format and transferred to a site plan, the scale of

which shall be decided by the area of feature distribution. These mapping data will also be converted into a geo-referenced layer that will form part of a project package in QGIS, the resulting package will also be shared with the Chichester District Archaeologist James Kenny.

8.4 All excavated features shall be photographed with an appropriately sized scale bar, arisings with finds shall be similarly photographed. General site photographs of the progression of works shall also be undertaken. The features revealed shall be photographed, individually and as groups, by standard methods and if required by the use of a licensed drone.

8.5 Although the methodology of stripping and backfilling to the agreed levels will not impact upon the revealed sub-topsoil surface (Section 6), it might be made part of the condition that some of any revealed features should be sampled to ascertain their date and form. In this case, the selected archaeological features will be hand dug, their excavated dimensions will be recorded in plan and section. The excavated soils shall be separated into the constituent parts on a stratigraphical hierarchy (Hodgson 1976; Jones *et al.* 1999). The holes shall be deemed archaeologically complete upon the discovery of the solid surface (Reading Beds or Pleistocene marine gravel) at their base. At the foundation and service trench excavations, an archaeologist will perform a continuous watching brief and be allowed access to the trench to record and sample any features and finds arising as per the conditions laid out in this WSI.

8.6 The trenches and features therein shall be recorded using the single context system, using ASE *pro formae* for all categories (Westman 1984; IfA 2001).

8.7 If samples are taken, they will be at 10l recovery per 15l sealable plastic bucket: minimum sample volume of 40l. The most likely surviving material that would require sampling would be environmental remains, representing either autochthonous naturally occurring assemblages or allochthonous material from human or animal activity. Material found in non-calcareous environments such as the Reading Beds is generally not in good condition, this applies in particular to elements such as molluscs and bones, although carbonised material is often preserved. Material from any samples taken will be analysed by staff at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. Any sampling shall be from sealed contexts only.

8.8 Dating will be based upon the typologies of material recovered or if possible age estimation through radio carbon dating; suitable material, from secure contexts only, shall be sent to SUAC for analysis.

8.9 Both excavated and monitored arisings shall be scanned by metal detector. Items recovered that fall into the category of Treasure shall be reported to the coroner within fourteen days. Treasure is defined as gold and silver objects (>10% Au, Ag), two or more coins from the same find spot over 300 years old at >10% Au, Ag or ten or more finds at <10% Au, Ag. Two or more Prehistoric base metal objects in association (DCMS 2002). Objects that are composed predominantly gold or silver that have been deliberately hidden, with the owners unknown. In addition to the coroner, all metal finds shall be reported to the Sussex Finds Liaison Officer based in Lewes.

8.10 The numbering/lettering system for the interventions will follow each section of trenching as recorded on site, prefixed by the general site code.

8.11 All finds shall be bagged and labelled and processed at UCL's field centre at Boxgrove, close to the works. Samples, if taken, shall be processed at the same location before being sent for specialist analysis. Material requiring conservation shall be treated according to the directions contained within the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines No. 2 (1983), and specialist input from Dean Sully at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. All finds shall be retained and quantified; following this work, modern material from residual contexts and that which is intrusive into sealed contexts will be discarded.

8.12 Any flintwork or exotic rock lithologies recovered from the works shall undergo analysis and writing-up by the author. Faunal remains will be examined and written up by Mariana Nabais. Prehistoric pottery shall go to Mike Seagar-Thomas, Medieval and post-Medieval pottery to Luke Barber. Metal finds will be examined and identified by Mark Stonard. Conservation work and analysis of environmental material shall be undertaken at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL (see above).

8.13 In the event of the discovery of human remains the following protocol shall be observed. The remains shall initially be left *in situ* and a change in the schedule of the works requested.

A separate methods statement and rider to this WSI shall then be completed and submitted. The lifting of any remains would require a Ministry of Justice Licence under Section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857 (OssaFreelance 2012).

8.14 Excavation, post-excavation analysis and reporting will follow the accepted protocols, standards and guidance laid down by the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists, with assessment, analysis, writing-up and project management following Historic England's MoRPHE guidelines (2015).

9 Health and safety

Health and safety considerations require the preparation of a risk assessment, lodged at the IoA and available for inspection; perusal and acknowledgement of the contractor's risk assessment is required before works commence. The wearing of PPE on site and consideration of the contractor's plant and workforce are also an essential part of the H&S brief. The IoA, UCL has full public liability and indemnity that covers all of its fieldwork in the UK, these documents are available on request from the author.

10 Reporting

Within one month of the completion of these works, an archaeological assessment report shall be written, within six weeks of the completion of the works a final report and accompanying plans and photographs shall be written and disseminated to the landowner, WSCC, CDC, and the Archaeology Data Service. An Oasis form and SMR summary form will accompany the report.

11 Archive and find deposition

The landowners, K.J. Fox Ltd are retaining the finds in the short-term, with a decision to be made as to their final disposal after analyses have been completed..

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