Archaeology South-East

ASE

Archaeological Investigations at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent

NGR 599110 142340

Planning ref: AS/10/ 380 (formerly AS/10/TEMP/0002)

Project No.4636
Site Code: WSA 10

ASE Report No: 2011266
OASIS ID: archaeol6-114716

Chris Russel

With contributions by Anna Doherty and Karine Le Hégarat
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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Kent County Council Property Group to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of a Multi Agency Hub at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent.

In many of the monitored areas, excavation did not impact on the archaeological horizon and in others, significant modern truncation was encountered. However, the features excavated in Area 1 suggest the presence of a trackway and/or field/enclosure of earlier Roman date. Finds and environmental remains suggest that these features were probably located close to occupation areas.

CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by Kent County Council Property Group to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent (hereafter referred to as the site). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 599110 142340 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the site lies on River Terrace Deposits (Sand and Gravel) in the north and west and Alluvium (Clay, Silt Sand and Gravel) in the east and south. Outcrops of Weald Clay occur both to the north and to the south of the site (BGS. 2011).

1.2.2 Previous on-site geoarchaeological investigations have revealed a general geological sequence consisting of Weald Clay overlain by terrace gravels with the geological sequence capped by alluvium (ASE 2010). The mapping suggested the potential for a complex interplay between Holocene Alluvium and the reworking of Earlier Pleistocene gravels.

1.2.3 The site was situated at a maximum height of 42.2m AOD in the north-west with a fall off in contour values to 38.8m AOD in the east. It is currently occupied by buildings, car parking areas and playing fields associated with Wyvern School. It occupies a low-lying position within the Wealden portion of the Medway Valley. The site lies on the western margin of the modern floodplain edge within a meander loop of the main river. The current main school building sits on a low terrace some 3m above the floodplain and much of the proposed development area either straddles the eastern edge of this terrace or the lower floodplain margins.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The proposed redevelopment of the site entailed the construction of a new primary wing to Wyvern School, the construction of a Multi Agency Hub (MASH) and a nursery with new access roads and car parking facilities. Anticipated groundworks included the creation of site access, ground reduction for a piling mat and excavations associated with drainage and service works (planning reference: AS/10/ 380 formerly AS/10/TEMP/0002). It was stated by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council (KCC) that;

On the basis of present archaeological information, the Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council recommended that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological work in order to clarify the historical and archaeological elements within the site.

1.3.2 A specification outlining the requirements for the programme of archaeological monitoring was subsequently produced by KCC (KCC 2010).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The specification (KCC 2010) set out the general methodology to be followed and a series of aims and objectives to be achieved by the archaeological investigations.

1.4.2 The geoarchaeological aims were stated as:

- Gaining a better understanding of the controls over terrace formation, its age and post-depositional history at the site.
- Recovering and recording the depositionary context of, any faunal remains within the Pleistocene sediments.
- Investigating the nature of vertical and horizontal spatial variation in artefact density within the gravel unit.
- Recording the sedimentary character of the geological sequence.
- Characterising the deposits and obtaining dating evidence and evidence for environmental conditions at the time of deposition of the Pleistocene sediments.

1.4.3 The archaeological aims were stated as:

- Contributing to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.
- Identifying, excavating, recording and analysing any significant archaeological remains that will be disturbed by the proposed development
- Understanding the broad pattern of settlement dynamics and how key elements of the archaeological landscape (sites, activities, deposits and finds) relate to each other spatially, functionally and chronologically.
- Clarifying the nature, date and extent of archaeological remains identified during the recent archaeological evaluation work on the site.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the programme of archaeological monitoring which was undertaken in two distinct phases. The first was carried out between the 1st of November and the 6th of December 2010 by Chris Russel (Archaeologist) with the assistance of John Cook (Surveyor) and Ben Sharp (Assistant Archaeologist). The second phase took place on the 15th and 16th of August 2011 and was undertaken by Nick Garland.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 An assessment of the potential of the site was made by Kent County Council Heritage Conservation group and set out in a specification for the investigations at Wyvern School (KCC 2010). An HER search was subsequently carried out within a 500m radius of the site. A full list of the data is provided as in Appendix 1.

2.2 Geoarchaeological Potential

2.2.1 The site lies on 3rd Terrace Gravel deposits which hold the potential to preserve Palaeolithic remains. The alluvial deposits that overlay the gravels were also deemed to hold the potential to preserve remains of a similar age.

2.2.2 While the Medway gravels have not locally produced Palaeolithic material they provide a valid context in which to expect the preservation of lithic artefacts and faunal remains.

2.2.3 The site also sits exactly at the interface between relatively higher drier ground and Medway River where one might expect water-side occupation to occur throughout the Holocene.

2.3 Later Prehistoric to Medieval

2.3.1 No monuments or find-spots relating to the later prehistoric, Roman or medieval periods were found in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, just over 2 km to the south lies the north-western excavated extent of an important Late Iron Age and Roman landscape excavated in near contiguous areas at Brisley Farm (Stevenson in prep) and Westhawk Farm (Booth et al 2008). These excavations revealed a large settlement including enclosed and unenclosed elements, round-house structures, a shrine enclosure and an iron-producing workshop. Of particular note were Late Iron Age/conquest period burials with weapons, interred in barrow-like enclosures, which appear to have remained as venerated monuments well into the Roman period.

2.3.2. These sites also revealed evidence for medieval settlement, including farmsteads of 13th to 16th century date.

2.4 Post-Medieval

2.4.1 The HER search revealed more extensive evidence relating to the post-medieval period. Residential and agricultural activity is represented to the north by Leacon Cottages and Buckford Manor and to the east by watercress beds. Commercial activity is clustered to the south of the site where a windmill, a mill and mill house are recorded. Defensive structures in the form of Second World War pillboxes are seen to the north. The present railway line is also recorded on the HER survey and this is situated to the north of the site.

2.5 Previous Archaeological Work

2.5.1 An archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South East in September 2010 (ASE 2010) identified several cut features that appeared to respect the line of

the Great Stour which flows to the south east of the site. Unfortunately these did not yield any datable material although medieval pottery was recovered from sub-soil deposits in Trenches 4 and 5.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The archaeological monitoring followed the methodology set out in the specification document prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council (KCC 2010). All work was also carried out in accordance with the relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

3.2 Excavation Methodology

3.2.1 The areas monitored are located on Figure 2, which also shows the locations of the previous evaluation trenches (ASE 2010). The current monitored areas include:

- Ground reduction in two distinct areas to the east of the existing school buildings (Areas 1 and 2) for works associated with the construction of a site compound and haul road.
- Partial monitoring of ground reduction to the east of the Wyvern School main building to accommodate a piling mat (Area 3).
- Ground reduction in a discreet area to the west of the main school building (Area 4) to accommodate spoil.
- Ground reduction for the access road and compound to east of the existing school access road (Eastern Haul Road).
- Access road ground reduction to the north of the main school building running parallel to the A28 (Northern Haul Road).
- Drainage excavations to the east of and immediately adjacent to the main school building (Pipe Trench).
- Three test pits excavated to the east of the main school building dug to facilitate compaction testing
- Geoarchaeological monitoring of a single drainage sump to the immediate west of the school building.

3.2.2 All ground reduction and trenching was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist, with the exception of areas where prior truncation or disturbance could be demonstrated (see 3.3).

3.2.3 Wherever possible, machine excavation was undertaken using a tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Where archaeological features or deposits were revealed, machining was stopped and excavation was continued by hand. The spoil from the machine excavations was scanned for the presence of any artefacts, both visually and using a metal detector.

3.3 Constraints on Fieldwork

3.3.1 Two major factors combined to constrain archaeological investigations on site. The first was the high level of truncation of the geological horizon observed along the Eastern Haul Road strip and also in Area 1. The second factor was the waterlogged conditions encountered in Area 1. Heavy rain quickly filled the area with water. When the area was pumped out, a layer of silt remained, obscuring previously observed features. Interventions undertaken in features in this area also quickly filled with ground water seeping from below.

3.4 Recording Methodology

3.4.1 All encountered archaeological deposits and features were recorded using pro-forma context record sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were planned at a scale of 1:50, with selected detail drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10.

3.4.2 A digital photographic record of the work was also maintained.

3.5 Site Archive

3.5.1 Archaeology South-East informed Ashford Museum that the fieldwork would be taking place and that an archive would be generated. Pending a decision on whether the museum will accept the archive, it will continue to be held at ASE offices in Portslade. The archive is quantified in Table 1.

Number of Contexts	30
No. of files/paper record	1 file
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	11
Photographs	13 Digital
Bulk finds	1 box
Registered finds	none
Environmental flots/residue	3

Table 1: Site Archive Quantification

4.0 RESULTS (Fig 2 and 3)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Of the areas described above, only Area 1 revealed archaeological features. The Eastern and Northern Haul Road areas had been heavily truncated by modern activity and, with the exception of the trenches dug for the drainage tank/pipe and reception chamber, the remainder of the excavations were not of a sufficient depth to reveal the geological horizon. A full list of contexts is provided below in Table 2, including dimensions and maximum heights above ordinance datum.

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth	Max. height (m OD)
1001	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.35m	39.70m
1002	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.30m	30.89m
1003	Layer	Made Ground	-	-	1.37m	39.89m
1004	Layer	Natural Geology	-	-	-	38.53m
1005	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	4.11m	1.3m	0.40m	38.53m
1006	Fill	Fill of [1005]	4.11m	1.3m	0.40m	38.53m
1007	Layer	Sandy Gravel Layer	-	-	0.30m	38.85m
1008	Layer	Sandy Layer	-	-	0.10m	38.55m
1009	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	7.85m	1.9m	0.40m	38.65m
1010	Fill	Fill of [1009]	7.85m	1.9m	0.40m	38.65m
1011	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	7.85m	0.82m	0.39m	38.56m
1012	Fill	Fill of [1011]	7.85m	0.82m	0.39m	38.56m
1013	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	7.85m	0.79m	0.34m	38.58m
1014	Fill	Fill of [1013]	7.85m	0.79m	0.34m	38.58m
1015	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	3.20m	1.30m	0.33m	38.52m
1016	Fill	Fill of [1015]	3.20m	1.30m	0.33m	38.52m
1017	Cut	Cut of Linear Terminus	1.57m	2.00m	0.30m	38.60m
1018	Fill	Fill of [1017]	1.57m	2.00m	0.30m	38.60m
1019	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	7.85m	1.50m	0.46m	38.62m
1020	Fill	Fill of [1019]	7.85m	1.50m	0.46m	38.62m
1021	Cut	Cut of Poss Tree Throw	2.0m	0.80m	0.25m	38.47m
1022	Fill	Fill of [1021]	2.0m	0.80m	0.25m	38.47m
1023	Cut	Cut of Linear Feature	7.85m	1.40m	0.60m	38.57m
1024	Fill	Fill of [1023]	7.85m	1.40m	0.60m	38.57m
1025	Layer	Blue Grey sandy Deposit			0.95m	36.25m
1026	Layer	Compact Layer	-	-	0.40m	36.55m
1027	Layer	Gravel Rich Alluvium			1.50m+	35.88m
1028	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.25m	42.28m
1029	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.60m	41.58m
1030	Layer	Natural Geology	-	-	-	40.98m
1031	Layer	Made Ground	-	-	0.45m	42.03m

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.2 Area 1 (Fig 3)

4.2.1 The reduction of Area 1 revealed natural alluvial geology, [1004], at around 38.53m AOD. However, the eastern most extent of Area 1 was only stripped to a depth of 0.10m and failed to reveal the geological horizon.

4.2.2 Ditches 1 and 2

To the east of Area 1, two ditches were recorded, running parallel on an approximately north east to south west alignment. Both ditches terminated at the same point, around 9 metres from the north-eastern limit of excavation and both were truncated by modern disturbance towards the centre of Area 1 and were not detected further to the south-west.

Two interventions, cut numbers [1011] and [1013] were excavated through Ditch 1, the southernmost of these features. The profile was steep sided with a concave base, measuring around 0.8m wide and 0.35m deep. The ditch was filled by friable, mid/light blue grey silty clay (contexts [1012] and [1014] respectively). Late Iron Age/early Roman grog-tempered pottery was recovered from both interventions towards the base of the fills, although fill [1014] contained one sherd of certain Roman pottery; the environmental sample taken from context [1012] also produced evidence for Barley.

Ditch 2 was situated immediately to the north-west of Ditch 1. The terminus was excavated (cut number [1017]) and two interventions, [1009] and [1019], were undertaken further to the south-west. Although this feature appears to be directly associated with Ditch 1, it was significantly wider (*c*.2m) with a more gently sloping u-shaped profile. The fill was a mottled, orange grey silty clay (contexts [1010], [1018] and [1020] respectively). In the south-westernmost intervention, a lens of charcoal rich material was also observed within fill [1020].The terminus yielded one sherd of Late Iron Age/ early Roman pot and two pieces of struck flint, whilst the two sections through the ditch proper contained a greater number of sherds, which were concentrated in the top 0.10m of the fill; again a single sherd of post-conquest pottery was recovered in fill [1014]. In the south-westernmost intervention, [1019], Ditch 2 was cut by Ditch 3.

4.2.3 Ditch 3

Ditch 3, [1023], was not visible in plan but the section revealed that it clearly cut Ditch 2 (Fig 3, Section 3). To the south-west, this feature was truncated away by modern disturbance, whilst to the north-east it was not distinguishable in plan from Ditch 2, and may have terminated between this intervention and that through cut [1009]. The ditch appeared to follow the same alignment as Ditch 2 but was slightly narrower; it was filled by context [1024], a light blue grey fine silt with orange brown mottling. No finds were recovered from the fill.

4.2.4 Ditch 4

South west of the modern truncation noted above, Ditch 4 was visible running on a similar orientation to Ditches 1-3. A single section was dug, where the water-logged conditions would allow. The cut, [1015], was of fairly similar profile and dimensions to Ditch 3 and there was a close correlation between the alignments of these two features, although the onsite conditions and the level of truncation present made it impossible to confirm that they were the same ditch. Ditch 4 was filled by, [1016], a light blue clay silt with orange brown mottling, containing no finds. This feature was cut by two modern land drains.

4.2.5 Ditch 5

Ditch 5 was situated to the south-west of Ditch 4. In contrast to the linear features described above, it was aligned north-west to south-east. A single intervention showed that the cut, [1005], was 1.3m wide and 0.40m deep and filled by a single blue grey clay silt fill [1006], which showed evidence of moderate root disturbance. A single weathered sherd of undiagnostic Roman pottery was recovered from the middle of the fill. This feature is almost certainly the same feature identified during the evaluation phase as [10/023].

4.2.6 Tree-throw

A discrete feature, [1021], was located close to Ditch 4. It was approximately 2.0m in diameter, 0.80m in width and 0.25m in depth. The fill, [1022], and base of this feature were heavily disturbed by root action and the fill contained degraded roots, suggesting that it represents a natural tree-throw. No finds were recovered.

4.2.7 Overburden and modern truncation

Aside from an area of modern truncation observed in the centre of area one, two modern land drains were also visible in plan as was a linear area of truncation in the east. In Area 1, the geological horizon was directly overlain by 0.30-0.35m of topsoil, [1001].

4.3 Area 2

4.3.1 Area 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.30m and revealed topsoil, [1001], to the limit of excavation.

4.4 Area 3

4.4.1 Excavations to reduce this area by approximately 0.40m to accommodate a piling mat showed subsoil, [1002], of approximately 0.10m depth to the limit of excavation overlain by approximately 0.30m of topsoil [1001]. Subsequent works associated with piling in this area were unmonitored.

4.5 Area 4

4.5.1 A discrete area to the west of Wyvern School was stripped to accommodate spoil. This excavation only reached a depth of 0.1m. A light grey brown, clay silt topsoil [1028] was seen to the limit of excavation.

4.6 The Northern Haul Road

4.6.1 Monitoring of the Northern Haul Road showed the geological horizon to be at approximately 40.98m AOD. The natural geology, [1030], in this area was recorded as mid orange clay silt. Above this was a friable mid brown grey clay silt subsoil, [1029], with flint inclusions. This subsoil was overlain by a layer of made ground, [1031], which was dark brown in colour and consisted of clay silt containing brick and plastic. The sequence here was capped by light grey brown clay silt topsoil, [1028].

4.7 The Eastern Haul Road

4.7.1 Ground reduction was undertaken east of the main site access point for Wyvern

School to construct a haul road. Excavations along the haul road revealed natural alluvial geology, [1004], at approximately 39.05m AOD This had been heavily truncated by apparently modern activity and was overlain by made ground, [1003], which consisted of tarmac, re-deposited natural and demolition rubble. This, in turn was overlain by a friable, mid yellow brown sandy silt subsoil, [1002]. The sequence was capped by mid orange brown silty clay topsoil, [1001].

4.8 Reception Chamber and Pipe Trench

4.8.1 Drainage works consisting of the excavation of a reception chamber and associated pipe trench were monitored adjacent to the existing eastern annex of Wyvern School. No record could be made of the reception chamber as the excavation was greater than 3.0m deep and access was restricted but measurements were taken for the stratigraphy visible in the associated pipe trench. No archaeological finds or features were observed during these drainage works.

4.8.2 At the western extent, this revealed alluvial geology at around 37.0m AOD overlain by approximately 2.5m of made ground [1003] and [1025]. Context [1025] consisted of yellow grey brown silty sand and appeared localised at the western end of the trench.

4.8.3 Towards the middle of the trench, the natural alluvium [1004] was encountered at around 37.30m AOD and was and contained a flint rich horizon, [1027]. This alluvium was overlain by 0.17m of made ground, [1026]. Context [1026] was made up of compact blue grey silty clay. This sequence was capped by topsoil [1001], to a depth of 0.15m.

4.8.4 The eastern extent of the pipe trench showed the alluvial geology, [1004], at 37.35m AOD. The flint rich horizon, [1027], noted above was again present. Above the alluvial deposit, made ground [1026] was observed to a depth of 0.3m and the sequence was capped by topsoil [1001] which was 0.32m deep.

4.9 The Test Pits

4.9.1 A series of three test pits were excavated to the south of the footpath accessing Wyvern School. These were 1.8m wide and 2.5m long and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m. All three revealed 0.05-0.10m of subsoil, [1002], to the limit of excavation, overlain by approximately 0.30m of topsoil [1001].

4.10 Drainage Tank to Immediate West of School

4.10.1 Provision was made for archaeological monitoring during the excavation of a drainage tank, sited immediately to the west of the school building. On the basis of earlier modelling of geotechnical results, it was anticipated that this 3m deep excavation would reveal a sequence through the terrace gravels on the higher, northern part of the site.

4.10.2 Below 0.4m of made ground, 0.7m of disturbed fluvial sands and gravels were encountered. This layer, containing pieces of modern building debris was also interpreted as made ground arising from the levelling of the terrain ahead of the original school construction.

4.10.3 Below 1.1m, intact fluvial sands and gravels were encountered, but due to instability, the trench was shored using a box-support, making detailed observation and

sampling impossible.

4.10.4 Pale yellow, loosely consolidated sands with gravel seams up to 0.2m in thickness were observed to a depth of 2.2m. Below this, partially iron oxide-cemented reddish brown sands with abundant, sub-rolled fluvial gravels were encountered. At 2.6m these met the underlying Gault Clay solid abruptly. No artefacts or faunal remains were encountered.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds, mostly consisting of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery, was recovered during the archaeological investigations. The finds assemblage is quantified in Table 3

Context	Pot	Wt (g)	Flint	Wt(g)
U/S	4	22		
1006	1	16		
1010	24	390		
1012	8	94		
1014	14	222		
1018	1	12	1	6
1020	3	66		

Table 3: Quantification of Finds

5.2 **The Late Iron Age to Roman Pottery** by Anna Doherty

5.2.1 Introduction

A small assemblage of 58 sherds, weighing 842 grams, of Late Iron Age to earlier Roman pottery was recovered from six stratified contexts. The pottery was recorded on pro-forma sheets, using fabric and form codes previously employed in the Ashford area, at the Brisley Farm site (Thompson in prep). It was quantified by sherd count, weight, Estimated Vessel Number (ENV) and Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVE). The assemblage is in very poor condition, being heavily abraded; however, this appears to be a widespread phenomenon in Ashford, which is probably related to soil conditions rather than depositional factors. Many of the sherds are covered with naturally-occurring iron-rich concretions, which is a contributing factor to the relatively large average sherd weight.

5.2.2 Overview of assemblage

The assemblage is dominated by grog-tempered wares and the only diagnostic forms identified are wheel-thrown, plain or cordoned necked jars which fall broadly into the Aylesford-Swarling tradition. In all of the contexts which contain small to moderate groups of sherds, the grog-tempered wares are accompanied by 'Romanised' fabrics. Most of these are undiagnostic although there is one example of North Kent grey ware and a possible sherd of Canterbury oxidised ware, recovered respectively from Ditches 1 and 2. Generally speaking, these fabric types tend not to be seen in the Ashford area until *c*.AD70; however, grog-tempered wares were particularly long-lived locally so contexts containing individual or small groups of sherds in this fabric type may be of any Late Iron Age or Roman date.

5.2.3 Discussion

The presence small to medium stratified pottery groups (c.10-30 sherds) in Ditches 1 and 2 probably indicates domestic settlement activity in the general vicinity. However, there are relatively few diagnostic feature sherds, meaning that the assemblage is of limited value in interpreting the status and function of the site.

5.3 **The Flintwork** by Karine Le Hégarat

5.3.1 Two struck flints weighing 6g were recovered. Both pieces originate from the fill [1018] of ditch terminus [1017]. The first flint was collected during field work and the second was found while processing sample <10>. Both artefacts represent pieces of flint debitage comprising a flake manufactured from fine grained dark grey flint and the proximal end of a flake made from a honey coloured flint. None of these struck flints are diagnostic of date.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Karine Le Hégarat

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Five samples were taken during investigation work at the site to recover environmental remains such as wood charcoal, charred macrobotanical remains, fauna and mollusca as well as to assist finds recovery. All five samples came from ditch features. Sample <1> was extracted from Ditch 5, fill [1006]. Sample <8> originated from Ditch 1 (fill [1012]). Samples <11>, <9> and <10> came from Ditch 2, respectively fills [1020] and [1010] and [1018]. All these features produced ceramics dated to the Romano-British period.

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Samples were processed in a flotation tank and the residues and flots were retained on 500µm and 250µm meshes and were air dried prior to sorting. The residues were passed through graded sieves (4 and 2mm) and each fraction sorted for environmental and artefact remains (Table 4). The flots were scanned under a stereo zoom microscope at x7-45 magnifications and their contents recorded (Table 5). Preliminary identifications were made for the macrobotancial remains by comparing them with specimens documented in reference manuals (Cappers *et al.* 2006, Jacomet 2006, NIAB 2004).

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Flots consisted almost entirely of uncharred vegetation including fine rootlets, leaves, fine stem fragments and a very limited amount of uncharred seeds including knotgrass/dock (*Polygonum/Rumex* sp.) as well as seeds from the goosefoot and pink (Chenopodiaceae and Caryophyllaceae) families.

6.3.2 All six samples produced assemblages of wood charcoal fragments, which occurred in varying quantities. Charcoal fragments were highly abundant in sample <11> [1020] and while samples <9> [1010] and <8> [1012] contained moderate sized assemblages, samples <1 and 10> ([1006] and [1018]) produced fewer pieces. Charcoal assemblages from these ditch deposits included large fragments >8mm in size. Many fragments displayed poor preservation, exhibiting sediment infiltration and sediment concretion. However, fragments from charcoal-rich deposit [1020] were relatively better preserved and although sediment infiltration was apparent on several fragments, many remained identifiable with sufficiently clear anatomical features.

6.3.3 Other environmental remains were sparse in these samples. They were limited to a single charred grain of barley (*Hordeum* sp.) which was recorded in the flot from sample <8> [1012]. The residues produced a small amount of pottery including a rim, some burnt clay, and a piece of flint debitage.

6.4 Discussion

6.4.1 The flots contained high proportions of uncharred vegetation consisting principally of roots which were also recorded during the site investigation. Their presence could indicate some post-depositional disturbance within the ditch features with the possibility of contamination by later intrusions. However, when deposits remain sufficiently moist, uncharred plant remains contemporary with the infilling of the features can survive. Such conditions were encountered at this site. While samples

<1 and 8> were extracted from deposits which were recorded as moist, samples <9, 10 and 11> came from deposits which were saturated at the time of excavation. Unfortunately, although evidence for moist and waterlogged deposits was revealed at the site, the assemblage of uncharred wild/weed seeds present in the samples is too limited to provide significant information regarding the local vegetation environment.

6.4.2 It was hoped that sampling might also assist in providing evidence regarding agricultural economy. Although sample <8> has provided evidence for barley, no additional interpretation can be gained from this small assemblage. A previous evaluation phase at the site revealed a similar paucity of macrobotanical remains.

6.4.3 Nonetheless, the bulk environmental samples taken during the programme of archaeological monitoring have confirmed the presence of moderate to large amounts of wood charcoal fragments. A fluctuating water table could explain the high degree of sediment infiltration observed on several fragments. No identifications have been undertaken for the charcoal fragments as they are not in their primary context. The charred wood fragments almost certainly derive from distinct burning events not directly associated with the ditch features and would therefore provide little significant information regarding fuel use and woody vegetation.

Sample Number	Context	Context / deposit type	Sample Volume litres	sub-Sample Volume litres	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal <4mm	Weight (g)	Other (eg ind, pot, cbm)
1	1006	Fill of [1005]	40	40	*	<2	*	<2	Industrial debris */<2g
8	1012	Fill of [1011]	20	20	**	4	**	<2	Pottery */60g - Burnt clay */2g -
9	1010	Fill of [1009]	20	20	**	12	**	4	Pottery */22g - Slate */<2g
10	1018	Fill of [1017]	20	20	*	4	*	<2	Flint */<2g
11	1020	Fill of [1019]	40	40	****	334	****	62	

Table 4: Residues quantification. (* = 0-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51 – 250, **** = >250) and weights (in grams).

Sample Number	Context	weight g	Flot volume ml	Uncharred %	sediment %	seeds uncharred	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal <4mm	Charcoal <2mm	crop seeds charred	Identifications	Preservation
1	1006	14	250	96	4	* Chenopodiaceae, Caryophyllaceae						
8	1012	2	8	98	1				*		*Hordeum* sp. (1)	++
9	1010	2	20	98	2	*Polygonum/Rumex* sp. (1)						
10	1018	8	65	97	3	unid. seed (1)			*			
11	1020	14	150	86	5	*Polygonum/Rumex* sp. (1)	*	**	***			

Table 5: Flots quantification. (* = 0-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51 – 250, **** = >250) and preservation (+ = poor, ++ = moderate, +++ = good)

7.0 DISCUSSION

7.1 Geoarchaeological Overview

7.2.1 Where observed, no fine grained palaeolandsurfaces were associated with the fluvial sands and gravels of the Pleistocene terrace deposits which underlay much of the site. In most cases, impact depths were not sufficient to directly disturb intact terrace deposits. During geoarchaeological monitoring of the drainage tank to the west of the school, the terrace deposits were observed and comprised sands and gravels derived from both Wealden and Downland geologies; no artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from the observed sections through these deposits.

7.2 Truncation and Overburden

7.2.1 Excavations in four the monitored areas were deep enough to reveal the alluvial geological substrate. Monitoring of the Northern Haul Road revealed the geological horizon at around 40.98m AOD. In the Eastern Haul Road this was encountered at around 39.05m AOD and was truncated by apparently modern activity. In Area 1 the alluvial horizon was encountered at around 38.53m AOD and was again truncated by modern activity (possibly the remains of a crush haul road) as well as field drains. The drainage excavations to the east of the main school building encountered the substrate at between 37.0m and 37.35m AOD and although no truncation was observed, the alluvium here was directly overlain by made ground hinting that this area too had been disturbed.

7.2.2 Evidence of recent disturbance at Wyvern School was seen in the form of made ground which was noted in both haul roads and in the drainage works adjacent to the main school building, where it was around 2.5m deep. Clay silt sub-soil was observed in both haul roads, the Test Pits and in Area 3. Where encountered, the topsoil was a uniform silty clay of between 0.30m and 0.35m in depth.

7.3 Archaeological Overview

7.3.1 A number of ditches were identified in Area 1 which were on similar alignments to undated features noted during the field evaluation of the site (ASE 2010). The orientation of these features probably had a relationship with the course of the nearby Great Stour River.

7.4 Possible Trackway (Ditches 1-4)

7.4.1 Ditches 1 and 2 ran parallel to each other on a north-east south-west alignment and terminated at exactly the same point, near the north-eastern extent of Area 1. Both contained reasonably substantial assemblages of pottery, probably dating to after *c.*AD70. Although the two ditches were of slightly differing profile, it seems likely that they were directly associated. They may have formed a trackway running by the side of the Great Stour River. Alternatively they could represent a boundary ditch which was shifted to modify a field or enclosure lying to the north-west.

7.4.2 Ditches 3 and 4 may be parts of a single linear feature, which has been interrupted by modern truncation. In one intervention, Ditch 3 was shown to cut one of the possible trackway ditches (Ditch 2). Although it produced no finds, the fact that this feature runs along a very similar alignment to original ditches suggests that it may be a recut of Roman date.

7.5 Field Boundary (Ditch 5)

7.5.1 A single sherd of pottery from Ditch 5, suggests that it is also of Roman date. It ran roughly at right angles to Ditches 1-4 but unfortunately these all appear to have been truncated away at the point where they would have intersected with it. It therefore remains unclear whether Ditch 5 forms part of a contemporary field/enclosure with Ditches 1-4 or whether it represents an earlier or later boundary.

7.6 Material Culture and Environmental Remains

7.6.1 The largest concentration of finds came from the north-east of Area 1, in Ditches 1 and 2. The recovery of fairly substantial groups of pottery from these features, suggests that they may be related to settlement activity nearby rather than being purely agricultural in nature.

7.6.2 This interpretation is supported by environmental evidence showing that charcoal was present in each of the sampled ditches. The fill of Ditch 1 also contained evidence of the presence of barley on site, although this was limited to a single grain.

7.7 Conclusion

7.7.1 In many of the monitored areas, excavation did not impact on the archaeological horizon and in others, significant modern truncation was encountered. However, the features excavated in Area 1 suggest the presence of a trackway and/or field/enclosure of earlier Roman date. Finds and environmental remains suggest that these features were probably located close to occupation areas. Although this evidence is limited, it may suggest that the extensive Late Iron Age and Roman landscape known to the south-east at Brisley Farm (Stevenson in prep) and Westhawk Farm (Booth *et al* 2008) extended as far as the current site or alternatively it may represent a small separate settlement divided from these sites by the Great Stour River.

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Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank KCC for commissioning the work and for their guidance throughout the project.

Appendix 1: Results of 500m HER Search Centred on Wyvern School

HER NUMBER	GRID REFERENCE	MONUMENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION
MKE 8237	TQ 9890 4213	Windmill	Post medieval windmill
MKE 16641	TQ 99542 42290	Watercress beds	Post medieval/modern watercress farm
MKE 21689	TQ 9917 4263	Listed Building	Leacon Cottages. Post medieval house.
MKE 22626	TQ 9885 4249	Listed Building	Bucksford Manor. Post medieval house.
MKE 22817	TQ 9895 4212	Listed Building	Buxford Mill.
MKE 39577	TQ 9910 4280	Pillbox	Modern pillbox
MKE 39578	TQ 99 42	Pillbox	Modern pillbox
MKE 44253	TQ 8018 4305	Railway	Post medieval/modern railway

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	WSA 10					
Identification Name and Address	Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent.					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Ashford.					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 99052 42368					
Geology	Alluvium					
Arch. South-East Project Number			3513			
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.** 1.11.10-16.8.11	Other		
Sponsor/Client	A2C Developments Ltd					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave					
Project Supervisor	Chris Russel/Nick Garland					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	**RB**
	AS	MED	PM	Other	Modern	

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Kent County Council Property Group to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of a Multi Agency Hub at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent.

In many of the monitored areas, excavation did not impact on the archaeological horizon and in others, significant modern truncation was encountered. However, the features excavated in Area 1 suggest the presence of a trackway and/or field/enclosure of earlier Roman date. Finds and environmental remains suggest that these features were probably located close to occupation areas.

OASIS Summary form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-114716

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Investigations at Wyvern School, Ashford
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Kent County Council Property Group to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of a Multi Agency Hub at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent. In many of the monitored areas, excavation did not impact on the archaeological horizon and in others, significant modern truncation was encountered. However, the features excavated in Area 1 suggest the presence of a trackway and/or field/enclosure of earlier Roman date. Finds and environmental remains suggest that these features were probably located close to occupation areas.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2010 End: 16-08-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WSA10 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	4636 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	DITCHES Late Iron Age
Monument type	DITCHES Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Late Iron Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT ASHFORD GREAT CHART WITH SINGLETON Wyvern School
Postcode	TN23 4ER
Study area	5.00 Hectares

Site coordinates	TQ 99052 42368 51.1453101707 0.846152756399 51 08 43 N 000 50 46 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 37.35m Max: 39.05m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	kENT COUNTY COUNCIL
Project director/manager	Jon Sygrave
Project supervisor	Chris Russel/Nick Garland
Type of sponsor/funding body	Kent County Council

Project archives

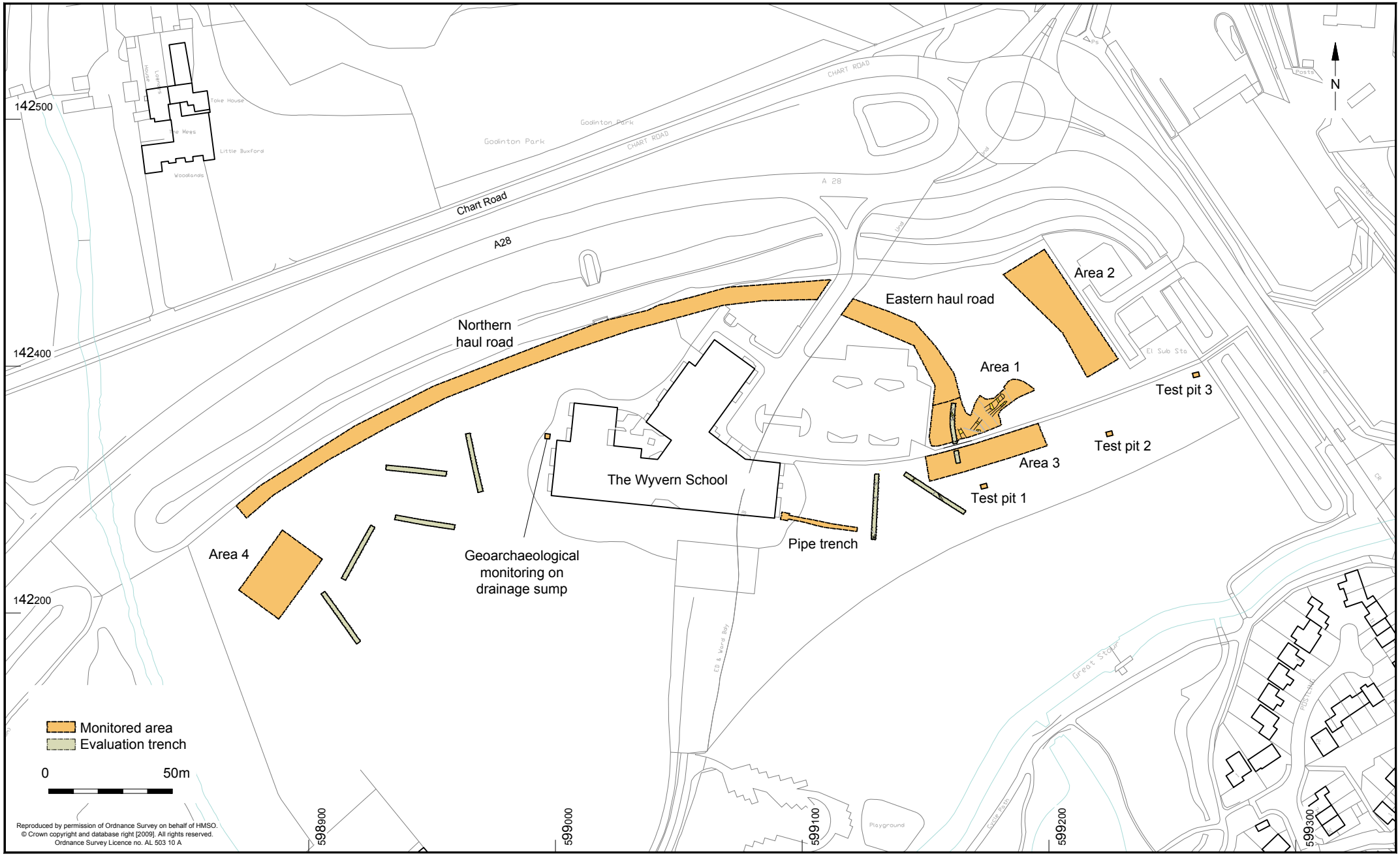
Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Worked stone/lithics'
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Miscellaneous Material','Report'

Project bibliography 1

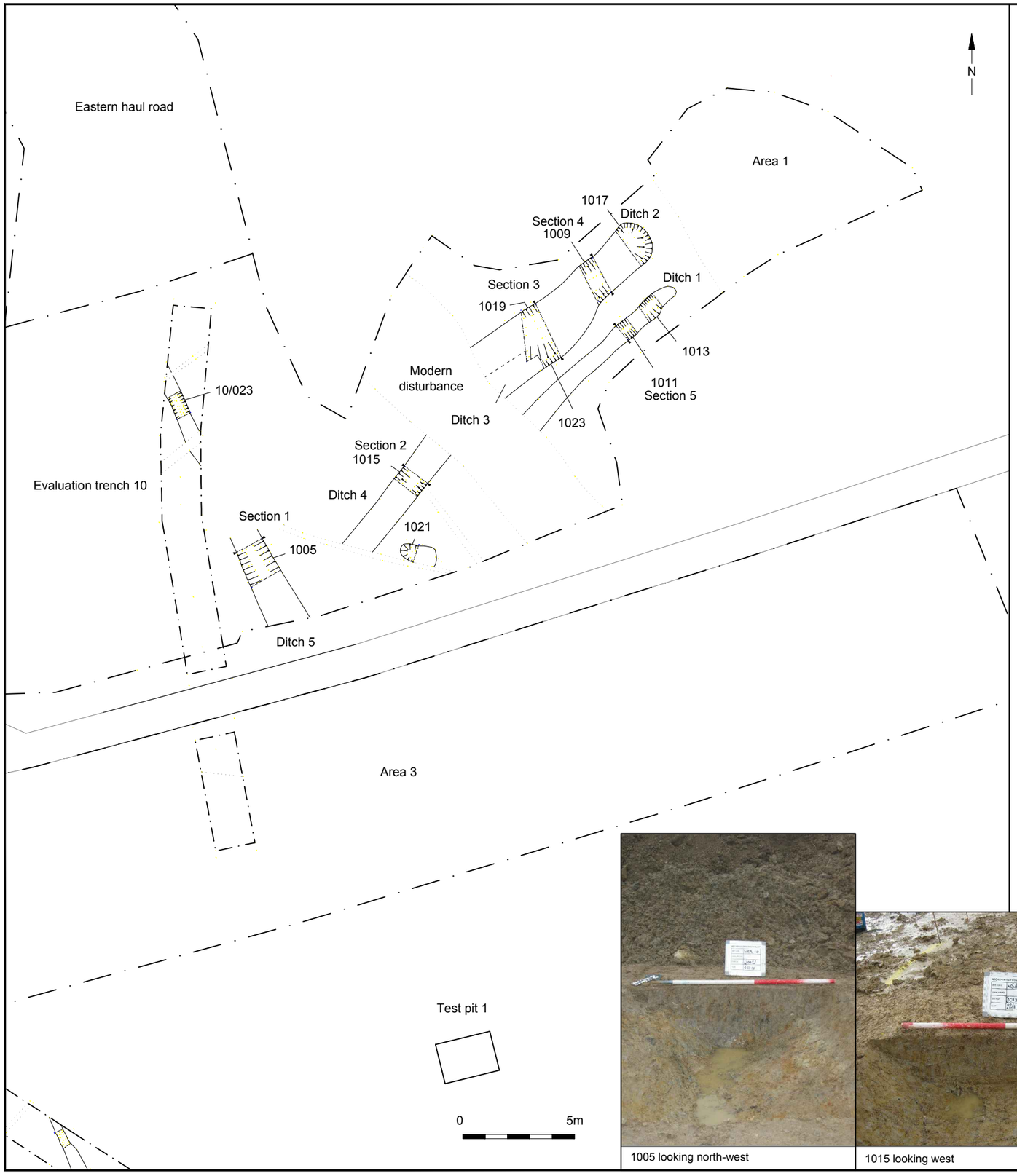
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Investigations at Wyvern School, Great Chart Bypass, Ashford, Kent.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Chris Russel
Other bibliographic details	Report Number:2011266
Date	2011

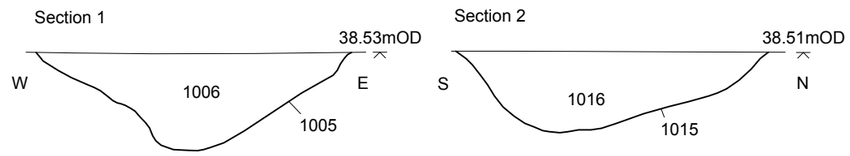
Issuer or publisher	ASE
Place of issue or publication	Portslade
Entered by	Chris Russel (c.russel@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	28 November 2011

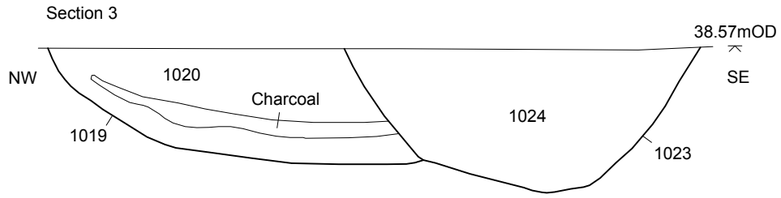
© Archaeology South-East		Wyvern School, Ashford	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4636	Nov 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011266	Drawn by: JLR		

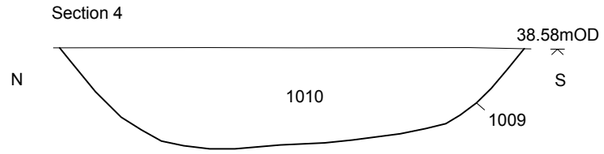


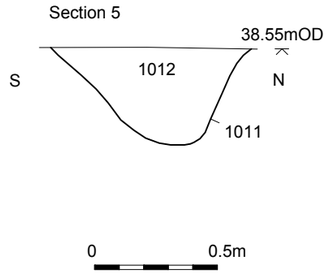
© **Archaeology South-East**		Wyvern School, Ashford	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4636	Dec 2011	Plan of monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2011266	Drawn by: JC/JR		











1005 looking north-west

1015 looking west

1019 and 1023 looking east

1011 looking west

© Archaeology South-East		Wyvern School, Ashford	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 4636	Dec 2011	Area 1: Plan, sections and photographs	
Report Ref: 2011266	Drawn by: JC/JR		

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