

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Land at Sissinghurst Primary School,
The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent**

NGR: TQ 7952 3756

Planning Ref: 13/00439/FUL

**ASE Project No: 7412
Site Code: SPY15**

**ASE Report No: 2015135
OASIS ID: archaeol6-210280**



Odile Rouard

**With contributions by
Luke Barber and Hayley Forsyth**

Illustrations by John Cook

MAY 2015



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Date of Issue:	12 th May 2015		
Revision:			

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent. Five trenches were mechanically excavated across the site to reveal the underlying Tunbridge Wells sand between 75.57m and 77.05m OD. A single feature of probable mid 18th-19th century date was identified in Trench 2, in the south-west of the site. However, the presence of earlier, residual material within the feature suggests activity in the wider vicinity of the site from the later 15th century onwards.

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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), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by CgMs, on behalf of their client Pentland Homes, to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent prior to the redevelopment of the site. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 7952 3756 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site comprises an L-shaped plot of land immediately north of The Street, Sissinghurst. It is bounded to the north by a cemetery, to the west by the 'Milk House' Public House and to the east by Trinity Church and residential dwellings.
- 1.2.2 The British Geological survey (2015) shows the site to be located on Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. No superficial deposits have been recorded in this area.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted for residential development of the site (Planning reference: 13/00439/FUL), consisting of the conversion of former Primary School to three residential units and the construction of three bed terraced dwellings, parking barn and open parking facilities. Due to the archaeological potential of the site, condition 13 of the Decision Notice stated that:

'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 specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological work shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved timetable.'

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.'

- 1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which outlined the scope of an archaeological evaluation was duly prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to the commencement of fieldwork (ASE 2015). All work was carried out in accordance with this document (unless otherwise specified below) as well as the relevant standard and guidance documents of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a; 2014b).

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation of the site by trial trenching undertaken in April 2015. The archaeological work was undertaken by Odile Rouard (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Paul Mason (Fieldwork) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Pentland Homes in 2015 (CgMs 2015). A brief summary of the results follows.

2.1 Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 There is only extremely limited evidence for Prehistoric activity within the study area, with no records representing the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic or Bronze Age periods.
- 2.1.2 The only record dating to the Iron Age is a single gold coin (MKE75050 at NGR TQ 7905 3810).

2.2 Roman

- 2.2.1 A Roman Road, running from Rochester through Maidstone and continuing onto Hastings has been recorded running along Common Road immediately to the west of the Site (Margary 1955). The metalling of this road has been observed outside the Bull Public House, close to the Study Area.
- 2.2.2 Metal detecting in the area has recovered a few Roman, or probably Roman artefacts, including a 4th century coin c. 800m south-east of the Study Area (MKE75097 at NGR TQ 798 374), a copper alloy ferrule c. 1km south-east (MKE75098 at NGR TQ 799 373) and some copper alloy casting waste c. 500m east (MKE75218 at NGR TQ 797 378).

2.3 Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 2.3.1 No sites or finds of Anglo Saxon or early medieval date are recorded within a 1km radius of the site.
- 2.3.2 Sissinghurst was not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 AD, nor was the parish of Cranbrooke, within which it lies. It existed as a manor by 1332 (Hasted, 1798) and a chapel was built c. 400m south-east of the Site in the mid- to late-15th century.
- 2.3.3 The site is known to have comprised agricultural land until c. 1850 and this was probably how it was utilised during these periods.

2.4 Late medieval and post-medieval

- 2.4.1 Andrew's, Dury and Herbert's map of 1769 records Sissinghurst as 'Milk House Street' and the Site as divided between development on the south and open land on the north. This is also how the site is shown in the Ordnance Survey of 1797.
- 2.4.2 The Ordnance Survey of 1870 shows the site as occupied by the buildings of a Boys and Girls School and open space. The school buildings appear to have been largely unchanged between 1870 and 1980.

2.4.3 Between 1980 and 2012 the school buildings were substantially extended to the east in the northern part of the site.

2.5 Project Aims and Objectives

2.5.1 The general aims of the evaluation were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and deposits within the site
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits
- To enable Kent County Council to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site

2.5.2 In addition, the evaluation will seek to inform on the following areas of research from the South-Eastern Research Framework (SERF):

- The evolution of settlement in the Iron Age period
- The transition to the Roman period and the study of its agricultural economy

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 Five trenches were proposed to be excavated for the evaluation, one measuring 15m x 1.8m, two measuring 10 x 1.8m, one measuring 7.5 x 1.8m and one measuring 5 x 1.8m (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 Mechanical excavation using a flat-bladed bucket, under archaeological supervision, was taken in small spits down to a maximum depth of 75.58m OD.
- 3.1.3 All archaeological features were recorded according to standard ASE practice. All features were planned using DGPS survey equipment, and sections were drawn by hand at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Drawings were on plastic draughting film. Features and deposits were described on standard pro-forma recording sheets used by ASE. All remains were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the evaluation.
- 3.1.4 The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the ASE archaeologist to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. All finds recovered from excavated deposits were collected and retained in line with the ASE artefacts collection policy.

3.2 Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at a suitable repository in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of contexts	17
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk samples	None
Photographs	13
Bulk finds	1 x bag
Registered finds	None

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 2

- 4.1.1 This trench measured 9m by 2m and was located in the southern part of the site on an east-west orientation. The natural sandy clay [2/003] was observed at a maximum height of 77.05m OD.
- 4.1.2 One feature was identified within this trench, consisting of a possible shallow pit [2/004] with a single fill [2/005] of light to mid grey brown silty clay. The feature was very shallow (about 0.08m deep) and it is possible this was just a spread. The finds recovered from the feature, which include pottery, glass and tile suggest an 18th-19th century date for the infilling of the feature, although there is earlier, presumably residual material, ranging in date from the late 15th century onwards.
- 4.1.3 The trench was sealed by approximately 0.19m of made ground [2/002] and 0.07m of tarmac [2/001]. The contexts are detailed in Table 4 below.

Context	Type	Description	Width	Deposit thickness m	Max. height m AOD
2/001	Layer	Tarmac	-	0.06 – 0.08	77.403
2/002	Layer	Made-up Ground	-	0.15 – 0.23	
2/003	Natural	Natural	-	-	77.05
2/004	Cut	Pit	-	-	
2/005	Fill	Fill of [2/004]	-	0.08	

Table 2: List of recorded contexts for Trench 2

4.2 Negative Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5

- 4.2.1 Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5 did not contain any archaeological finds or features. Brief summary descriptions of these trenches are presented below and the recorded contexts detailed in Table 4 below.
- 4.2.2 Trench 1 was located in the north-west corner of the site and ran north/south. It measured 9.10m long by 2m wide. This trench was very much disturbed by modern footings and drains. The natural Tunbridge Wells sand [1/003] was visible in the northern part of the trench, at a maximum height of 76.48m OD. This was sealed by approximately 0.14m of demolition material [1/004]. 0.20m of made ground [1/002] and 0.09m of tarmac [1/001].
- 4.2.3 Trench 3 measured 4.30m by 2m and was located in the northern part of the site. It ran north/south. The natural Tunbridge Wells sand was observed at a maximum height of 75.60m OD. This was sealed by a sequence of subsoil [3/002] and topsoil [3/001].
- 4.2.4 Trench 4 measured 6.50m by 2m and was located in the eastern part of the site. It ran south-west/north-east. No archaeological features were identified but modern disturbances were recorded in the south-west corner of the

trench. The natural Tunbridge Wells sand was observed at a maximum height of 75.62m OD. This was sealed by a sequence of subsoil [4/002] and topsoil [4/001].

- 4.2.5 Trench 5 measured 14.20m by 2m and was located in the eastern part of the site, immediately north of Trinity Church. It ran west/east. No archaeological features were identified but modern disturbances were recorded in the eastern part of the trench. The natural Tunbridge Wells sand was observed at a maximum height of 76.22m OD. This was directly sealed by topsoil horizon [5/001].

Context	Type	Description	Width	Deposit thickness m	Max. height m AOD
1/001	Layer	Tarmac	-	0.08 – 0.10	76.91
1/002	Layer	Made-up Ground	-	0.12 – 0.30	
1/003	Natural	Natural	-	-	76.48
1/004	Layer	Demolition Layer	-	0.15 – 0.33	
3/001	Layer	Topsoil	-	0.31 – 0.34	76.27
3/002	Layer	Subsoil	-	0.22 – 0.27	
3/003	Natural	Natural	-	-	75.60
4/001	Layer	Topsoil	-	0.24 – 0.38	76.31
4/002	Layer	Subsoil	-	0.19 – 0.26	
4/003	Natural	Natural	-	-	75.62
5/001	Layer	Topsoil	-	0.18 – 0.28	76.58
5/002	Natural	Natural	-	-	76.22

Table 3: List of recorded contexts for Trenches 1, 3, 4 and 5

5.0 THE FINDS

context	pottery	Wt(g)	cbm	Wt(g)	bone	Wt(g)	stone	Wt(g)	glass	Wt(g)
2/005	1	32	6	202	1	4	4	192	1	1

Table 4: Quantification of finds

5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.1.1 A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the site (context [2/005]). This consists of a 28g base sherd with clear internal glazing from a hard-fired vessel of early/mid 16th- to 17th- century date. The sherd is quite fresh suggesting it has not been subjected to significant reworking, however, its high firing would make it quite resistant to abrasion so it may have seen more reworking than the condition suggests.

5.2 The Glass by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 Context [2/005] produced two small (1g) shards of 1mm thick glass from the upper portion of a cylindrical bottle. The glass has no signs of significant corrosion and is suspected of being of early/mid 18th- to mid 19th- century date.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 Context [2/005] produced six pieces of tile. These include two small fragments (64g) of very worn 21mm thick floor tiles. These are tempered with moderate sand with abundant marl and dull red iron oxide/clay pellets to 5mm. The tiles do not have bevelled edges and although were originally green glazed wear has removed all but a strip of glaze on the side of one of the fragments. A late 15th- to 16th- century date is probable for these tiles.
- 5.3.2 The remaining tile from [2/005] consists of roof (peg) tile fragments in one of three fabrics. There is a 4g chip from a well formed and fired tile tempered with sparse fine sand and moderate iron oxides to 1mm. This is almost certainly of mid 18th- to 19th- century date. Two larger pieces of 12mm thick peg tile (56g), quite well formed and fired, but tempered with sparse fine sand, common clay pellets to 2mm and rare marl. These are not particularly diagnostic but an early post-medieval date is suspected, perhaps between the later 16th and mid 18th centuries. The final tile fragment (68g) is quite well formed and fired, 11mm thick and tempered with sparse fine sand and common (burnt out/voided) calcareous inclusions to 1mm. Although calcareous tempered tiles are well known in East Sussex in the later 15th to 16th centuries the current piece is suspected of representing a slightly later Kentish tradition, perhaps of the mid 16th to 17th centuries.

5.4 The Geological Material by Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 Context [2/005] produced three pieces (80g) of fine ferruginous carstone and a single piece (110g) of non-calcareous iron mottled fine-grained Wealden sandstone. None of the pieces shows any sign of having been modified by

man and the types are local to Sissinghurst.

- 5.4.2 The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.5 Animal bone by Hayley Forsyth

- 5.5.1 The excavations at Sissinghurst Primary School produced just one single hand-collected medium mammal rib fragment from context [2/005] weighing 4g. The bone fragment is in moderate condition with some signs of surface erosion.
- 5.5.2 No evidence of burning, butchery, gnawing or pathology has been noted. Due to the size of the assemblage, it holds no potential for further analysis.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 6.1.1 The stratigraphy in Trenches 3, 4 and 5 varied very little. The natural sandy clay was located between 75.58m and 76.23m OD and was sealed by 0.19 to 0.27m of subsoil (although there was no subsoil recorded in Trench 5), in turn sealed by 0.18 to 0.38m of topsoil.
- 6.1.2 Trenches 1 and 2 had no topsoil or subsoil. In these trenches the natural Tunbridge Wells sand was located between 76.22m and 77.05m OD and was overlain with 0.12 to 0.30m of made ground and 0.06 to 0.10m of tarmac. In Trench 1, the natural geology was sealed by a demolition layer at least 0.15m thick.

6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 6.2.1 Preservation on site varied as modern truncation was evident in some of the trenches recorded. This was largely limited to Trenches 1 and 2 and especially in Trench 1, where modern footings and drains largely obliterated any possible earlier remains. One feature of probable late post-medieval date was identified in Trench 2, below the tarmac and made ground layers.

6.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

Late medieval and post-medieval

- 6.3.1 One feature was identified in Trench 2. It is unclear whether this feature is a pit or just a spread since only a small area was exposed. This feature was also very shallow with a maximum depth of 0.08m. It produced a fair amount of finds including pottery, tile, animal bone and glass. The feature appears to be of later 18th-19th century date, although the presence of earlier, residual material suggests activity in the wider vicinity from the later 15th century onwards.

6.4 Consideration of research aims

- 6.4.1 The prehistoric and Roman periods were not represented in the trenches excavated and the specific research aims pertaining to these periods could not therefore be addressed.

6.5 Conclusions

- 6.5.1 The feature identified in Trench 2 has been dated to the late post-medieval period, although the presence of earlier, residual material does suggest activity from the later 15th century onwards in the vicinity of the site.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CgMs for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Kent County Council for their guidance.

HER Summary

Site Code	SPY15					
Identification Name and Address	Land at Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent, TN17 2JL					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 7952 3756					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation					
Arch. South-East Project Number	7412					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.					
Type of Site	Rural Residential					
Dates of Fieldwork	20/04/2015	21/04/2015				
Sponsor/Client	RPS					
Project Manager	Paul Mason					
Project Supervisor	Odile Rouard					
Period Summary	Late Medieval	Post-Medieval				
Summary						
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent. Five trenches were mechanically excavated across the site to reveal the underlying Tunbridge Wells sand between 75.57m and 77.05m OD. A single feature of probable mid 18th-19th century date was identified in Trench 2, in the south-west of the site. However, the presence of earlier, residual material within the feature suggests activity in the wider vicinity of the site from the later 15th century onwards.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-210280

Project details

Project name	Sissinghurst Primary School
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Sissinghurst Primary School, The Street, Sissinghurst, Kent. Five trenches were mechanically excavated across the site to reveal the underlying Tunbridge Wells sand between 75.57m and 77.05m OD. A single feature of probable mid 18 th -19 th century date was identified in Trench 2, in the south-west of the site. However, the presence of earlier, residual material within the feature suggests activity in the wider vicinity of the site from the later 15 th century onwards.
Project dates	Start: 20-04-2015 End: 21-04-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TUNBRIDGE WELLS CRANBROOK Sissinghurst Primary School
Postcode	TN17 2JL
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 7952 3756 51.1086012325 0.564794768566 51 06 30 N 000 33 53

E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 75.00m Max: 77.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator Kent County Council

Project design originator CgMs Consulting

Project director/manager Paul Mason

Project supervisor Odile Rouard

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Pentland Homes

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Tunbridge Wells

Physical Contents "Ceramics", "Glass"

Digital Archive recipient Tunbridge Wells museum

Digital Contents "Ceramics", "Glass"

Digital Media available "Database", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Tunbridge Wells

Paper Contents "Ceramics", "Glass"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Archaeological Evaluation Report, Land At Sissinghurst Primary School, Sissinghurst, Kent

Author(s)/Editor(s) Rouard, O.

Other bibliographic details 7412 ASE Project Number

Other bibliographic details SPY15 ASE Site Code

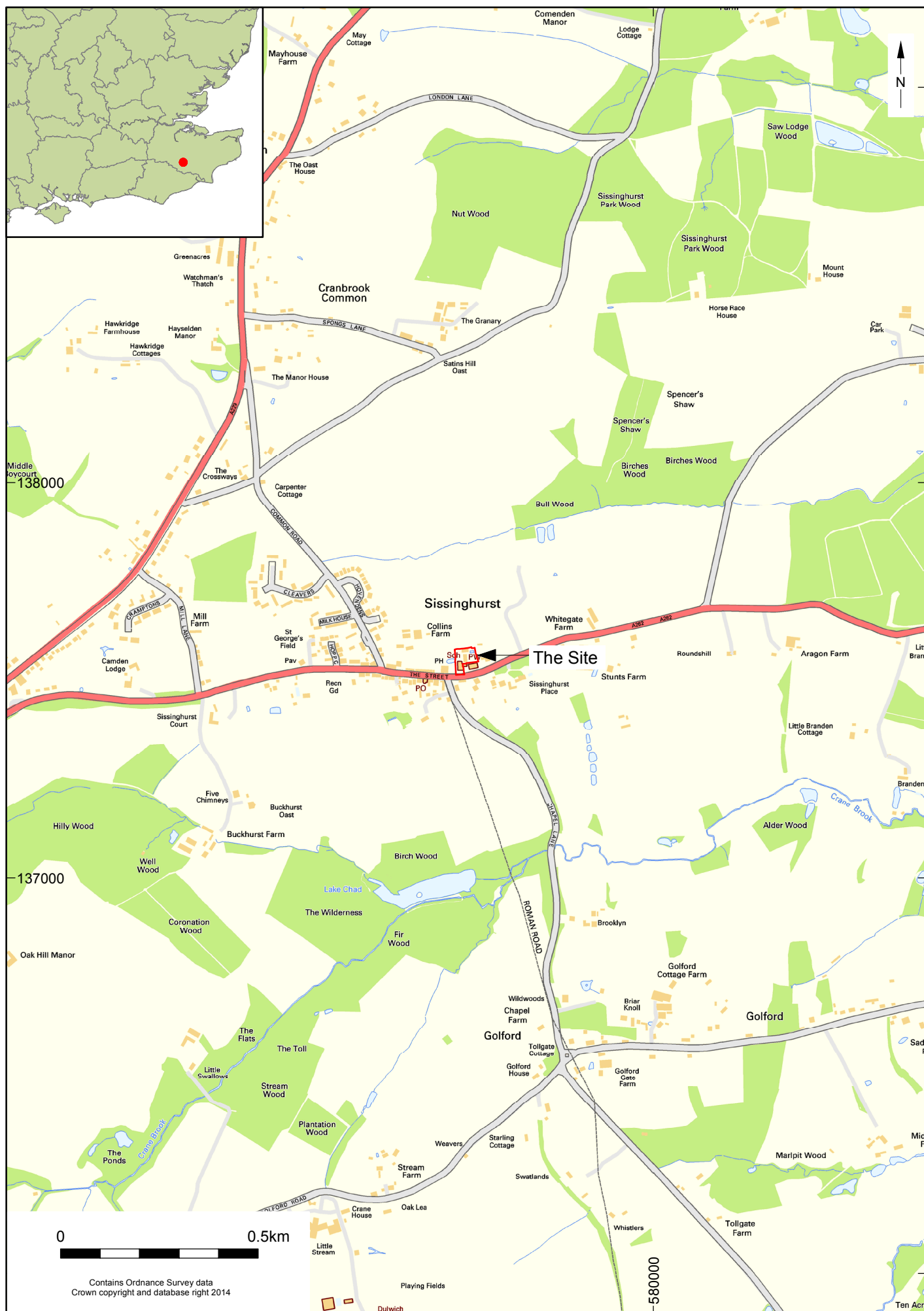
Date 2015

Issuer or publisher Archaeology South-East

Place of issue or publication Portslade

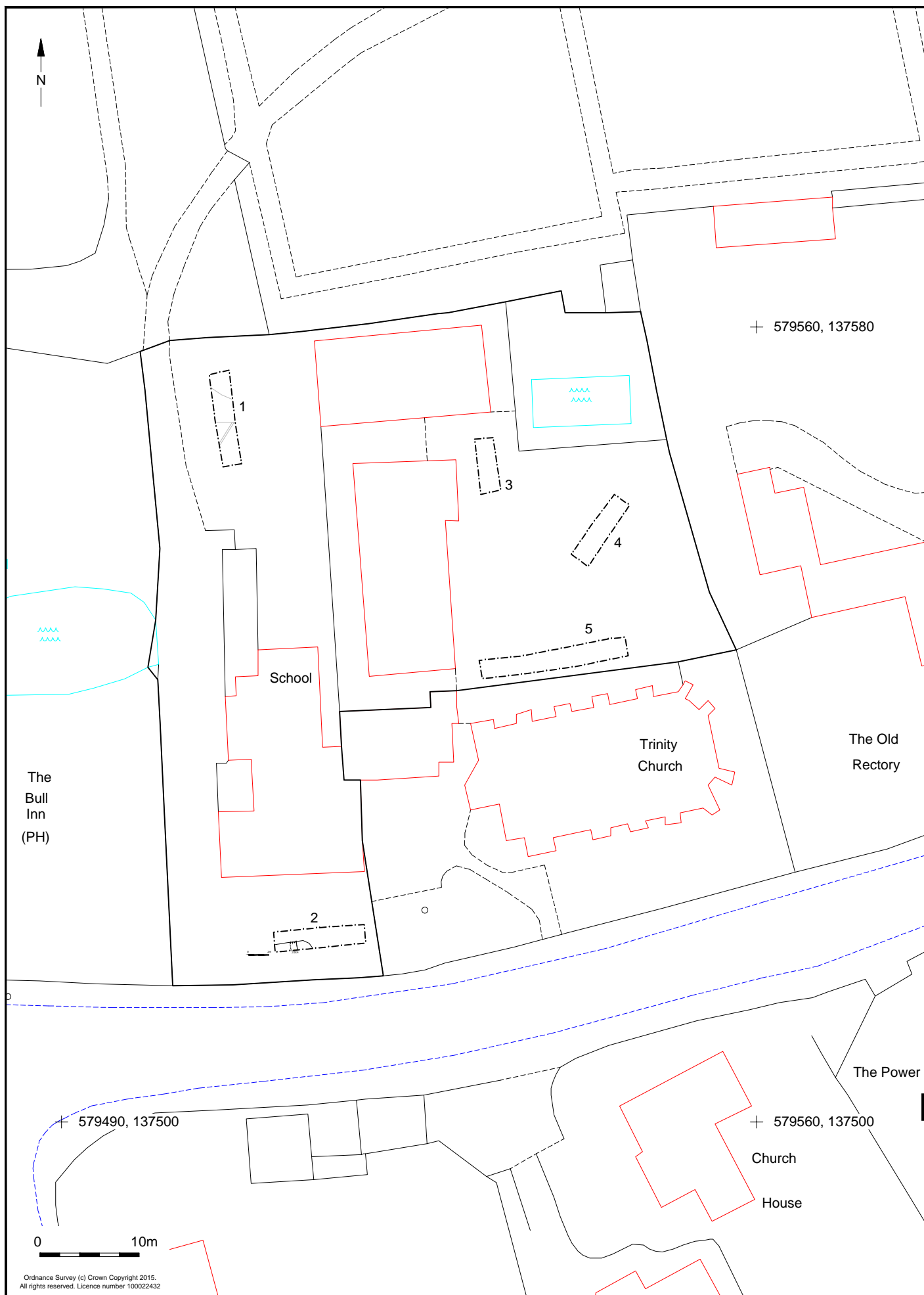
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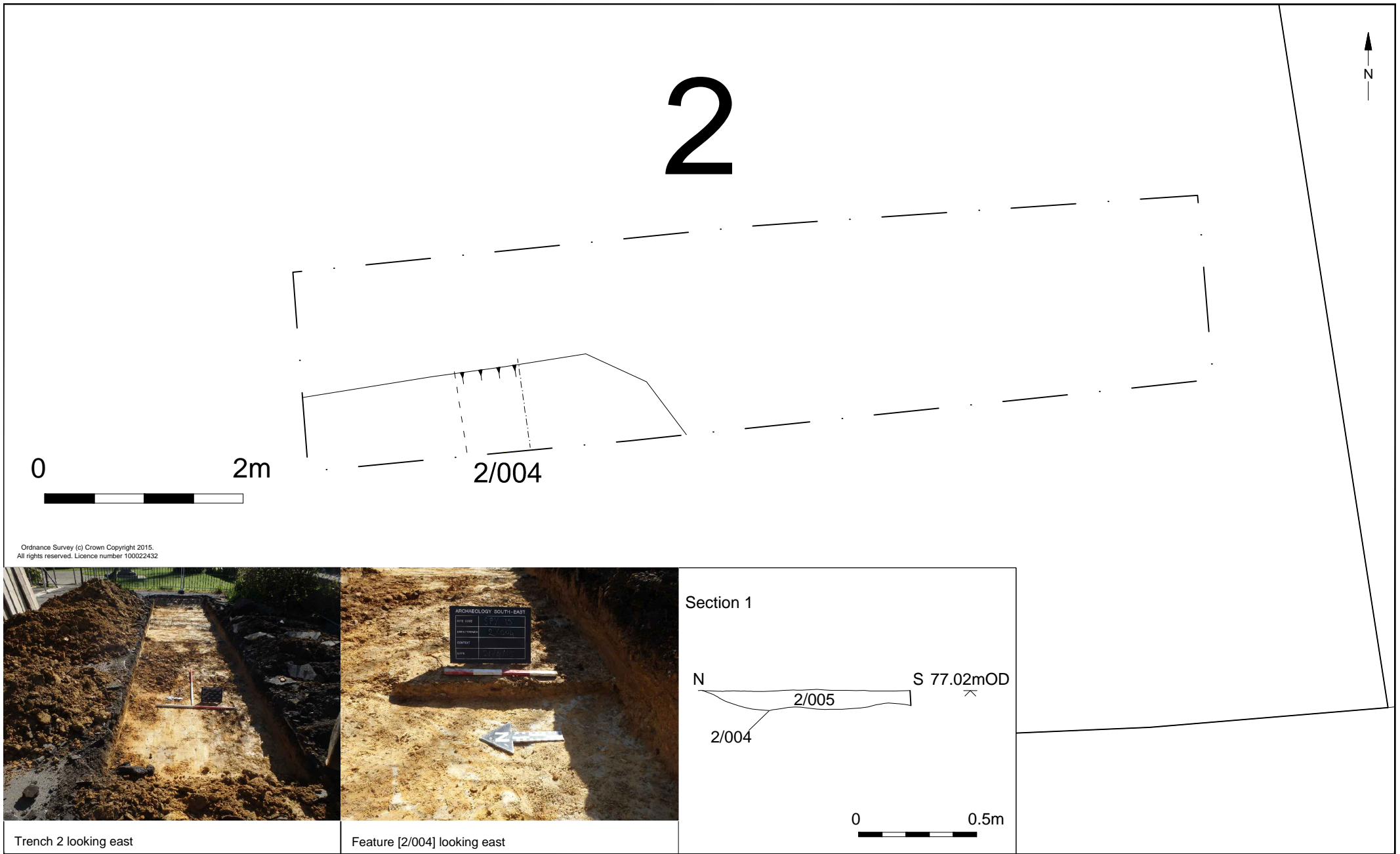
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Project Ref: 7412	Apr 2015	Site location	
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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Sissinghurst Primary School, Sissinghurst	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 7412	Apr 2015	Trench 2: plan, section and photographs	
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Trench 1 looking south



Trench 3 looking south



Trench 4 looking south-west



Trench 5 looking west

© Archaeology South-East		Land at Sissinghurst Primary School, Sissinghurst	Fig. 4
Project Ref: 7412	Apr 2015	Photographs of negative trenches	
Report Ref: 2015135	Drawn by: JC		

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