

**An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Tunstall School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall
Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8DX**

NGR: 589943 161875

Planning Ref: SW/14/153

**ASE Project No: 7383
Site Code: TPS14**

**ASE Report No: 2015367
OASIS id: archaeol6-225440**



**By
Greg Priestley-Bell**

**With contributions from
Isa Benedetti-Whitton**

Illustrations by Justin Russell

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Revision:			

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tunstall Church of England School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent, between the 26th March and 15th September 2015. The fieldwork was commissioned by Gallagher Limited in advance of the construction of a new school. Although a previous evaluation had recorded a prehistoric pit on the site, the watching brief did not identify any further prehistoric remains. However the current work uncovered further evidence of 17th- to 18th-century brick working on the site, represented by spreads and dumps of CBM, including brick wasters. No structural remains in the form of kilns etc. relating to the brick-working were identified.

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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 Gallagher Limited to carry out a watching brief during groundworks at Tunstall Church of England School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 589943, 161875 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

1.1.2

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The plot is an irregular trapezoid in shape, bounded by Tunstall Road to the north, arable farmland to the east and south, and by fields and the gardens of the Grade II listed Cedar House to the west.

1.2.2 According to the latest data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2015), the solid geology of the site consists of Seaford Chalk Formation, with a capping of silt and clay head deposits.

1.2.3 There is a maximum elevation of around 51m AOD in the south-west corner of the site, falling away to around 43m in the east.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning consent has been granted for the construction of a new primary school with associated external play areas and parking facilities (Planning Reference SW/14/153) (Figure 3). Due to the archaeological potential of the site outlined in the *Desk Based Assessment* (ASE 2013), Condition 17 of the decision notice states 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 by the Local Planning Authority;

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

1.3.2 The first stage of work on the site comprised an archaeological watching brief on geotechnical works on the site (ASE 2014a), followed by a trial trench evaluation of the site (ASE 2014b). The evaluation identified evidence for post-medieval brick manufacture and limited prehistoric activity (see below). As a consequence the KCC Heritage Conservation Group stipulated that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during groundworks on the site in order to fulfil the requirements of the relevant condition.

1.3.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief was subsequently prepared by ASE (2015) and duly approved by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority. All works were carried out in accordance with this document and

with the relevant standards and guidance 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 watching brief carried out on the site between the 26th March and 15th September 2015, and has been prepared in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2015). The work was carried out by Greg Priestley-Bell (Senior Archaeologist), Nathalie Gonzalez (Archaeological Surveyor) and Cat Douglas (Archaeologist). The fieldwork was managed by Neil Griffin and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following information is drawn from the desk-based assessment prepared by ASE in 2013, which considered recorded archaeological sites within a 1km radius of the site. For a more complete background refer to that document.

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 No Palaeolithic or Mesolithic material is recorded within a 1km radius of the site. Neolithic activity is limited to a group of three postholes located to the southeast of the site, which contained worked flint and pottery. Evidence for Bronze Age activity includes a looped and socketed axe found to the south and Bronze Age pottery to the south-east. Late Bronze Age ditches with associated finds, thought to represent elements of a Bronze Age field system, were also identified during an evaluation at Fulston Manor to the east of the site.

2.2.2 Iron Age evidence includes a cemetery recorded to the east of the site, and pottery recovered during metal detecting to the south of the site.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 Evidence for Roman activity in the vicinity of the proposed development includes a possible cropmark to the south, which may form the continuation of a known Roman road, and a series of Romano-British graves to the east.

2.4 Saxon and Medieval

2.4.1 There is no evidence for Saxon activity within a 1km radius of this development. Nine sites of medieval date are recorded, of which six are listed buildings. The others comprise a medieval copper alloy harness fitting found to the south of the site, the site of a now-demolished house to the north which may have had medieval manorial origins, and a medieval trackway recorded to the east.

2.5 Post-Medieval

2.5.1 A total of seventeen post-medieval sites are recorded within the vicinity of the site, including thirteen listed buildings. Archaeological sites include a hoard of gold coins dating from the 17th century and the remains of a 17th century mansion to the south of the site, a former 18th century park to the north of the site, and Highsted Chalk Quarries (which originated sometime after 1870,) to the east.

2.5.2 The Tunstall Tithe Map of 1840 (Figure 3) shows the site divided into 3 separate apportionments. Parcel 46 had been given over to orchard (which it remained until the 1970s) and Parcel 47 to hops, with parcel 199 described as 'arable'. The names of these parcels were, however, given as "Brick Clamps Plantation" (46), "Part of Brick Clamps" (47), and "Brick Clamps Field" (199) and strongly suggest the presence of brick manufacture and possible clay extraction within the site. No structures are marked within the site on the earlier Ordnance Survey 1 inch draft of 1797. Subsequent historic maps show the site to have remained as orchard and open fields throughout its documented history.

2.6 Previous archaeological work

- 2.6.1 A watching brief undertaken by ASE during geotechnical site investigations found no significant archaeological artefacts, deposits or features with the exception of a small quantity of unstratified post-medieval finds recovered from the ground surface (ASE 2014a).
- 2.6.2 The trial trench evaluation undertaken by ASE (ASE 2014b; ASE 2014c) identified nothing of archaeological interest in the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of the site or along most of the southern side. The core areas of interest were the central northern zone and in the south-western corner.
- 2.6.3 Prehistoric evidence within the site was limited, with only one clear feature: a pit or ditch terminus which was possibly Mesolithic to Neolithic in date.
- 2.6.4 A north-north-east to south-south-west oriented ditch towards the east of the site produced ceramic building material of late medieval to post-medieval date. The position and alignment of this ditch, parallel to the eastern boundary of the site, suggests that it might have formed part of a medieval field system or may represent a slight movement of the field boundary eastward in or since the post-medieval period. Evidence of 17th to 18th century brick manufacture was identified in the form of large but localised clay extraction pits and substantial quantities of discarded wasters (under-fired and vitrified bricks).

2.7 Aims and Objectives

- 2.7.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological watching brief were set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* and are reproduced in full below:
- 2.7.2 The overall aim of the archaeological watching brief is to record any archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that may be impacted by the development. The findings from the watching brief will be reported on in accordance with [the *Written Scheme of Investigation*].

Specific Research Aims

- 2.7.3 In addition, the watching brief has the potential to address the following specific research aims, following the Evaluation that took place in December 2014:
- The watching brief will seek to further the understanding of prehistoric activity in Tunstall.
 - The watching brief will seek to recover more information concerning the 17th and 18th Century brick-making industry in the area.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 All intrusive ground works associated with the scheme were monitored at all times by an appropriately qualified archaeologist unless otherwise agreed in writing with the KCC Archaeologist. Areas where excavations did not penetrate below the depth of modern ploughing were excluded from the watching brief at the discretion of the KCC Archaeologist on the advice of ASE.
- 3.1.2 Soil stripping was carried out using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket of appropriate width whenever practicable. All excavation and plant movement carried out by the ground work contractor was undertaken with due regard for the potential to encounter archaeological remains. Stripped areas were not tracked over until/unless the supervising archaeologist had indicated that it was acceptable to do so.
- 3.1.3 Where new excavations revealed archaeological remains, an opportunity was given for careful hand excavation and the collection of samples by the archaeologist in attendance, taking site health and safety into account. Adequate time was made available for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand to identify and record the remains as far as possible within the limits of the works in order to extract archaeological and environmental information. All hand excavation was undertaken with due regard to the Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Plans of the ASE and the main/Principal/groundworks contractors at all times.
- 3.1.4 Where extensive deposits of brick wasters were identified at the development formation level consideration was given to simply mapping their extent and collecting a representative sample or artefacts from the exposed surface.
- 3.1.5 Spoil from the excavations was inspected by archaeologists to recover artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and routinely scanned with a metal detector.
- 3.1.6 The KCC Archaeologist was kept informed of progress and findings so that they had the opportunity to monitor the archaeological work and advise of any areas within the site where further archaeological monitoring might be curtailed as development progressed.
- 3.1.7 All archaeological features were recorded according to standard ASE practice, taking into account the provisions in Paragraph 4.2 above. Where practicable, all features were planned at 1:20 and section drawings at 1:10. 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 made.

3.2 The Site Archive

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

Number of Contexts	26
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Colour photographs	Na
B&W photos	Na
Digital photos	70
Permatrace sheets	1
Trench Record Forms	Na

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Overview of the monitored works

4.1.1 Intrusive groundworks were monitored in a total of six separate areas across the site as shown in Figure 2. Generally the monitored works comprised ground reduction in advance of the construction of sports pitches, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), access road and parking, and the footprint of the proposed new school itself (see Figure 2). In addition, the work included the excavation of a north-south aligned service trench measuring c. 0.60m wide in the far north of the site (Figure 2). In all but one area, ground reduction reached the level of the underlying natural geology; the remaining area (shaded green in Figure 2) was subject to topsoil stripping only (see Table 2). In addition, six soakaway test pits (TP1-TP6), each measuring 2m long, 0.50m wide and up to 2.5m deep were machine excavated in the north-eastern corner of the site (Table 3).

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. length (m)	Max. width (m)	Max. deposit thickness (m)
1001	Deposit	Topsoil	Site	Site	0.6
1002	Deposit	Subsoil	Site	Site	0.2
1003	Deposit	Natural	Site	Site	N/A
1004	Deposit	Spread	1.8	0.6	0.15
1005	Deposit	Dump deposit	6.86	4.7	?
1006	Cut	Pit	0.62	0.48	
1007	Fill	Primary fill of pit 1006	0.62	0.48	0.06
1008	Fill	Upper fill of pit 1006	0.48	0.38	0.19

Table 2: Monitored groundworks: list of recorded contexts

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length (m)	Max. width (m)	Max. deposit thickness (m)
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.15
1/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.35
1/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.30
2/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.30
2/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na
3/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.20
3/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.40
3/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na
4/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.30
4/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.40
4/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na
5/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.20
5/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.20
5/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na
6/001	Layer	Topsoil	Pit	Pit	0.20
6/002	Layer	Subsoil	Pit	Pit	0.45
6/003	Layer	Natural	Pit	Pit	Na

Table 3: Soakway pits: list of recorded contexts

4.2 Results

Geology and overburden

- 4.2.1 The natural geology, comprising yellowish brown clay [1003] was recorded at a maximum height of 49.71m above Ordnance Datum (OD) in the south-west corner of the site, falling away to 46.16m OD in the north-west corner, 44.64m OD in south-east and a minimum of 43.09m OD in the north-east corner. This was overlain by a subsoil horizon of dark brown silty clay [1002] and a topsoil horizon of dark yellowish brown silty clay [1001]. Generally, the combined depth of subsoil and topsoil measured between 0.40m and 0.50m deep, though in several localised areas, total depths of up to 0.80m were recorded. These include the south of the site, between the southern sports pitch and the access road, the western end of the school building and in soakaway test pits TP2-TP4 and TP6.

Archaeological features recorded

- 4.2.2 Only three archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the archaeological watching brief. At the far north of the site, within the north-south aligned service trench, a thin spread of mid yellowish red silty sand with 60% brick fragments and brick dust [1004] was recorded directly overlying the natural clay. A further spread or dump consisting of loose red silty sand with 90% brick wasters [1/005] was recorded towards the centre of the site, within the footprint of the proposed new school building. Analysis of a sample of the brick wasters from this deposit has identified two principal brick types, both of which are considered likely to date to the 17th-18th centuries.
- 4.2.2 A small undated pit [1006] was also recorded towards the centre of the site, within the footprint of the proposed new school building. This contained a primary fill [1007] of light bluish grey very fine sandy silt with moderate manganese flecks and an upper fill [1008] of dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 The watching brief produced only one class of finds: CBM which was collected as two finds samples.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Isa Benedetti-Whitton

5.2.1 A total of 25 pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 4591g were recovered from two contexts: nine brick pieces and five spall-like fragments from a substantial dump deposit [1005] (finds sample 1); four spall-like fragments and seven very much abraded brick pieces from the subsoil [4/002] in soakaway test pit TP4 (finds sample 2).

5.2.2 Within the material from [1005], two brick forms were discernible. Both forms were fairly large and unfrogged with much creased faces and bases; the first type had sunken margins which are associated with medieval/late medieval bricks, while the second type had clearly striated upper surfaces from where the brick has been 'swept' flat whilst in the mould, but which has sunk slightly during the drying process to cause a slightly raised edge. The second type with the raised edges appear slightly later, but are not well formed enough to represent a significance difference. It is possible these bricks represent two styles of brick making, one earlier and one later.

5.2.3 All of the bricks were over-fired, and nearly at the point of vitrification. Subsequently no distinct fabrics were decipherable, which is not problematic as it is likely the clay for these bricks came from one local source.

5.2.4 It is likely that the assemblage represents waste material from the 17th - to 18th-century brickworks that are believed to have operated in the vicinity of the site. A large quantity of similar material was recovered during the evaluation and was dated to between the later 16th century and c. 1800 (ASE 2014).

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary of results

6.1.1 The watching brief identified a single cut feature and two additional archaeological deposits. The cut feature was an undated pit [1006] recorded during ground reduction within the proposed school building footprint. The remaining archaeological deposits consisted of dumps of probably 17th- to 18th-century brick wasters, including a small spread/dump deposit of CBM [1004] recorded during the excavation of a service trench on the northern edge of the site and a more substantial dump deposit of brick [1005] recorded during ground reduction within the proposed school building footprint. Further small quantities of similarly dated brick were noted within subsoil [1002] immediately to the north of the proposed school building and within subsoil [4/002] in soakaway test pit TP4.

6.2 Original Aims and Objectives

6.2.1 The watching brief did not identify any further prehistoric remains on the site. The single prehistoric pit or ditch terminus recorded during the evaluation contained a significant quantity of comminuted burnt flint, possibly representing 'burnt mound' material (ASE 2014b). The prehistoric feature lay within Trench 13, which was located on the floor of a small valley with well-defined rising ground to the west and a gently rising slope to the east. It is possible therefore that the feature was associated with a Bronze Age 'burnt mound' or earlier prehistoric cooking site in the floor of the valley (the presence of two blade-like flakes within the pit or ditch terminus *might* favour an earlier, perhaps Neolithic, origin).

6.2.2 The lack of prehistoric remains elsewhere on the site might therefore be partly explained in terms of prehistoric activity focussed on the floor of the valley and not extending onto the rising ground to the west. However a more likely reason for this absence was that much of the site has been truncated by post-medieval clay extraction for brickmaking (see below) and that the prehistoric feature recorded during the evaluation survived on a comparatively undisturbed 'island' of ground.

7.2.3 Although dumps or spreads of CBM, including brick wasters, were recorded in several areas, no clamp kilns or other structural features relating to the suggested 17th- and 18th-century brick-making industry were identified. The proposition that the site had once been used for brick production is based on evidence from the Tunstall Tithe Map of 1840 (ASE 2014b).

6.2.4 The spread of brick wasters recorded in the service trench appeared to have been dumped directly on the underlying natural clay and subsequently sealed by subsoil and topsoil. This suggests that the area had already been subject to clay extraction by the time the wasters were deposited. The first operation would have been the stripping and storage of the topsoil; after the suitable clay had been removed, waste material from the brick manufacture would have been disposed of in the abandoned diggings which were then subsequently backfilled. Probable clay pits were identified during the evaluation in Trenches 2, 8 and 11 (ASE 2014b).

6.2.5 Topsoil and subsoil in the area between the southern Sports Pitch and the access road, the western end of the school building footprint and test pits TP2-TP4 and TP6 was recorded as being up to 0.80m deep. The bulk of this material almost certainly represented backfill of clay pits in these areas.

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ASE would like to thank Gallagher Ltd for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Simon Mason of the KCC Heritage Conservation Group for his guidance and monitoring. The monitoring was undertaken by Cat Douglas Nathalie Gonzalez and Greg Priestley-Bell. The figures were produced by Justin Russell. The fieldwork was project managed by Neil Griffin and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson.

HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	Na					
Site code	TPS14					
Project code	7383					
Planning reference	SW/14/153					
Site address	Tunstall Church of England School, Tunstall Road Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 *DX					
District/Borough	Sittingbourne					
NGR (12 figures)	589943 161875					
Geology	Seaford Chalk Formation, with a capping of silt and clay head deposits.					
Fieldwork type	Eval	Excav	WB X	HBR	Survey	Other
Date of fieldwork	26/3/2015 – 15/9/2015					
Sponsor/client	Gallagher Limited					
Project manager	Neil Griffin					
Project supervisor	Cat Douglas and Greg Priestley-Bell					
Period summary	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval X	Other	
Project summary (100 word max)	<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tunstall Church of England School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent, between the 26th March and 15th September 2015. The fieldwork was commissioned by Gallagher Limited in advance of the construction of a new school. Although a previous evaluation had recorded a prehistoric pit on the site, the watching brief did not identify any further prehistoric remains. However the current work uncovered further evidence of 17th- to 18th-century brick working on the site, represented by spreads and dumps of CBM, including brick wasters. No structural remains in the form of kilns etc. relating to the brick-working were identified.</i></p>					
Museum/Accession No.						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-225440

Project details

Project name An archaeological watching brief at Tunstall School, Sittingbourne, Kent

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tunstall Church of England School, Tunstall Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne, Kent, between the 26th March and 15th September 2015. The fieldwork was commissioned by Gallagher Limited in advance of the construction of a new school. Although a previous evaluation had recorded a prehistoric pit on the site, the watching brief did not identify any further prehistoric remains. However the current work uncovered further evidence of 17th- to 18th-century brick working on the site, represented by spreads and dumps of CBM, including brick wasters. No structural remains in the form of kilns etc. relating to the brick-working were identified.

Project dates Start: 26-03-2015 End: 15-09-2015

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes TPS14 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 7383 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Current Land use Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds CBM Post Medieval

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT SWALE TUNSTALL Tunstall C of E Primary School, Tunstall, Kent

Postcode ME10 1FB

Study area 22500 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 89943 61875 51.323644299245 0.726412623177 51 19 25 N 000 43 35 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 42m Max: 55m

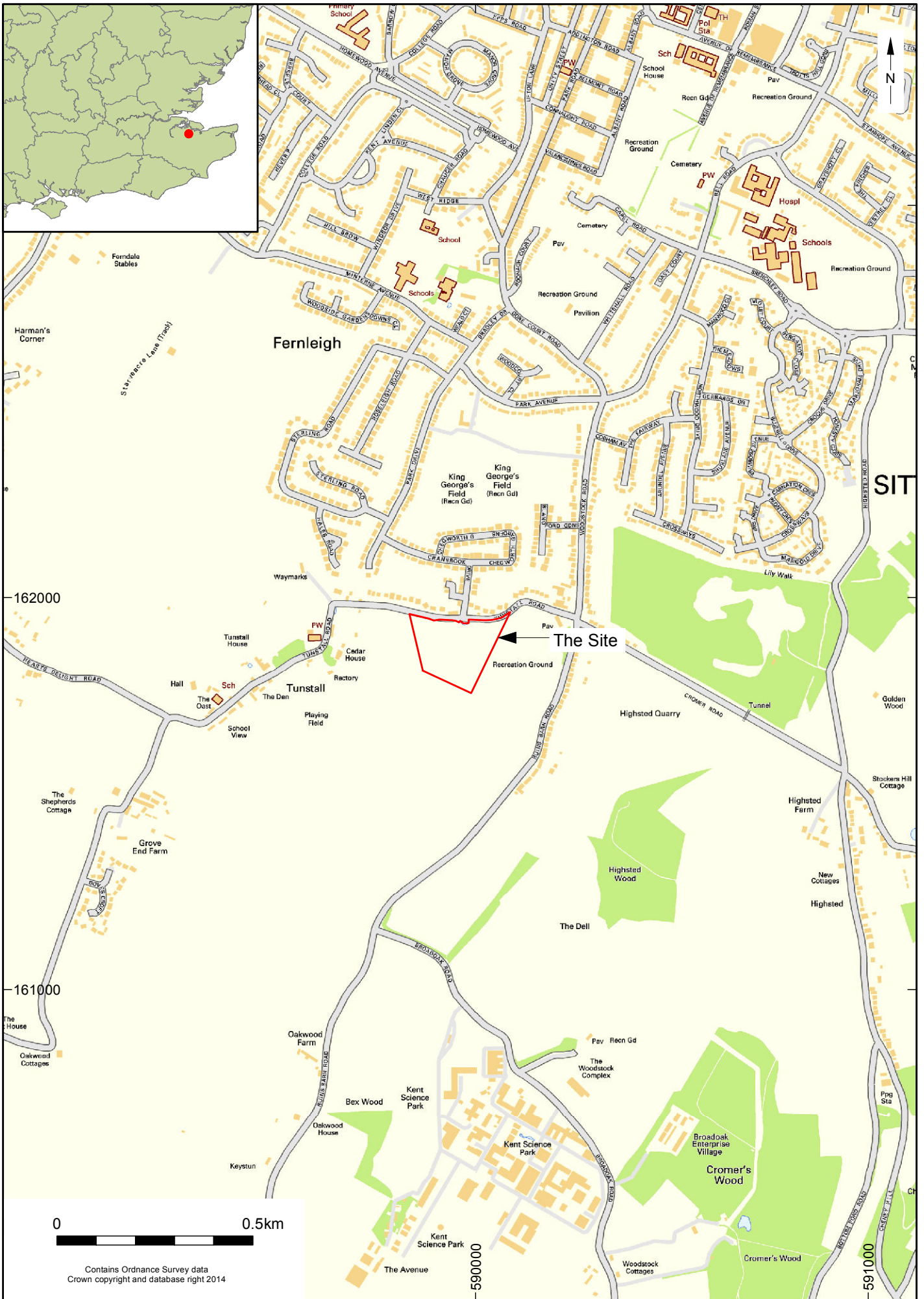
Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Catherine Douglas
Project supervisor	Greg Priestley-Bell
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Gallagher Limited
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Report", "Section"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An archaeological watching brief at Tunstall C of E School, Sittingbourne, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Priestley-Bell, G
Date	2015
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Entered by	Greg Priestley-Bell (gregpbell@btinternet.com)
Entered on	4 October 2015



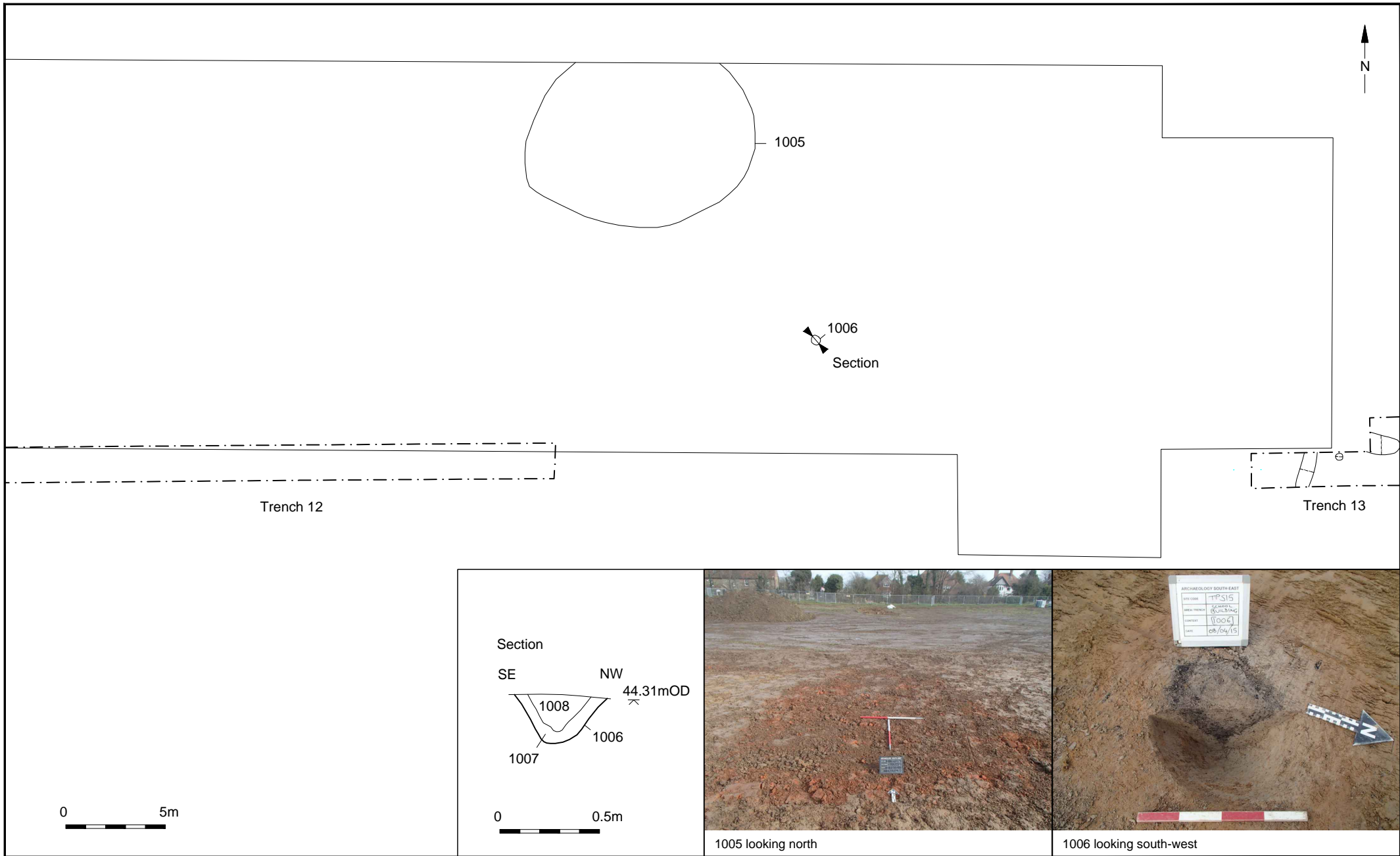
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Project Ref: 7383	Nov 2015	Site location	
Report Ref: 2015367	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		Tunstall C of E School	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7383	Nov 2015	Site plan showing monitored areas	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JLR		

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© Archaeology South-East		Tunstall C of E School		Fig. 3
Project Ref: 7383	Nov 2015	Spread [1005] and pit [1006]		
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JLR			

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