

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent,  
DA12 5TY**

**NGR: 565766 170801  
(TQ 65766 70801)**

**Planning Reference: GR/15/893**

**ASE Project No: 160027  
Site Code: SIN 16**

**ASE Report No: 2016069  
OASIS id: archaeol6-243035**



**Gary Webster  
February 2016**

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**Abstract**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by AGB Environmental and Kent County Council in advance of construction of a new building, outdoor play area and car park.*

*No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were found during the evaluation*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by AGB Environmental on behalf of Kent County Council and Singlewell Primary School to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 565766, 170801 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale geological map available online (BGS 2016), the site lies on a bedrock of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation, a chalk formed 71 to 89 million years ago. The superficial geology is not recorded.

1.2.2 The site is located in Singlewell, southern Gravesend, just to the north of the east-west A2 road. The site comprises a playground and playing fields immediately adjacent to a school building. The playground and school building have been terraced into the slope.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 The proposed works involve the construction of a new building to accommodate eight new classrooms and other facilities, a hard play area and car parking. Kent County Council has approved the application (GR/15/893) subject to an archaeological condition (ASE 2016)

1.3.2 A Desk Based Assessment (DBA) and walkover survey were conducted by ASE in May of 2015, and a report was produced (ASE 2015). This looked in detail at the historic background and cartographic evidence for the site.

1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced in February 2016 by ASE, which outlined the methodology that will be carried out on site (ASE 2016). All work was carried out in accordance with this WSI, 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 findings of the archaeological evaluation that took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2015. The work was carried out by Gary Webster (Archaeologist) and Lucy May (Assistant Archaeologist). The project was managed by Paul Mason (field work) and Jim Stevenson (post-excavation)

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Background**

- 2.1.1 The site was subject of a desk-based assessment and walkover survey by Archaeology South-East (ASE 2015). For a full historic background please consult that document, which has been summarised below.
- 2.1.2 Palaeolithic to Late Iron Age artefacts and features have been found within the wider vicinity of the site. One of these was sited just 80m from the southern boundary of the site and included a substantial trackway formed of two roughly north-south aligned parallel ditches, which, if it continued northwards along its exposed alignment, may well have extended into the site itself. It is possible that further evidence for prehistoric activity may exist within open areas of the site where modern truncation by construction has not occurred. The archaeological potential of the site for these periods was therefore considered to be high.
- 2.1.3 The site is situated immediately north of Watling Street, a major Roman road linking London with the Channel ports. The archaeological potential of the site for this period was therefore defined as high.
- 2.1.4 During the Anglo-Saxon/early medieval period the site is likely to have been used as agricultural land, therefore the archaeological potential of the site for this period was considered to be low to moderate.
- 2.1.5 During the medieval and post-medieval periods, the site is likely to have been used as agricultural land, associated with the cluster of farmsteads at Shinglewell/Ifield to the west. However, the existence of unrecorded agricultural building or enclosures is a possibility. The archaeological potential of the site for these periods was considered to be low.

### **2.2 Aims and Objectives**

- 2.2.1 Here are the aims and objectives as described in the WSI (ASE 2016).
- 2.2.2 The archaeological works aimed to:
- Establish whether the prehistoric remains observed in close vicinity extended into the area of development.
  - Establish whether Roman remains associated with Watling Street were present
  - Confirm the agricultural nature of the site for the later periods.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 Three trenches were mechanically excavated under the archaeological supervision of the author using an 8 tonne machine excavator fitted with a flat-bladed 1.6m wide bucket. The trenches were each 20m in length. The layout can be seen in Figure 2.
- 3.1.2 The trenches were laid out using a GPS, with their positions linked to the Ordnance Survey. They were within areas of impact of the proposed construction.
- 3.1.3 All trenches were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) before excavation commenced.
- 3.1.4 The trenches were excavated to the top of archaeological deposits or to the surface of the natural geology, whichever was uppermost.
- 3.1.5 All deposits were recorded on standard ASE recording sheets.
- 3.1.6 Natural sand was identified in all the base of the trenches.
- 3.1.7 A photographic record was maintained throughout the excavation.

#### **3.2 Archive**

- 3.2.1 ASE informed a local museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. 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	14
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Digital photos	29
Permatrace sheets	0
Trench Record Forms	3

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS (Figure 3)

### 4.1 Trench 1

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m
1/001	Layer	Tarmac	Trench	Trench	0.1
1/002	Layer	Hardcore	Trench	Trench	0.16-0.25
1/003	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	0.33-0.46
1/004	Layer	Natural	3.5	Trench	-

Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 The natural geology [1/003] was overlain with a layer of hardcore [1/002]. The sequence was capped with tarmac [1/001]. The natural geology was identified at a height of 58.42m AOD.
- 4.1.2 The bedrock geology [1/004] was identified at the south of the trench, laying underneath [1/002].
- 4.1.3 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.

### 4.2 Trench 2

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2-0.25
2/002	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2
2/003	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	0.17-0.23
2/004	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	0.6
2/005	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-
2/006	Layer	Subsoil	10	Trench	0.2-0.35

Table 4: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

- 4.2.1 The natural geology [2/005] was overlain with a subsoil [2/002]. The sequence was capped with topsoil [2/001]. The natural geology was identified at a height of 59.9m AOD.
- 4.2.2 A sondage was excavated at the northwest of the trench. This revealed sand layers [2/003] and [2/004], geological variations of the head deposit [2/005].
- 4.2.3 A layer of darker grey subsoil [2/006] was identified at the northwest of the trench, underlying the topsoil.
- 4.2.4 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.



### 4.3 Trench 3

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m
3/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.13-0.19
3/002	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2-0.38
3/003	Layer	Disturbed topsoil	3	Trench	0.1-0.2
3/004	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-

Table 5: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

- 4.3.1 The natural geology [3/004] was overlain with a subsoil [3/002]. The sequence was capped with topsoil [3/001]. The natural geology was identified at a height of 55.73m AOD.
- 4.3.2 At the northern end of the trench, subsoil was overlain by an additional layer of disturbed topsoil [3/003], beneath topsoil [3/001]
- 4.3.3. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.

**5.0 THE FINDS**

5.1 No finds were recovered during the excavation.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence**

6.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence recorded across the site was natural geology (a head deposit consisting of a clayey sand with flint), overlain with subsoil and capped with topsoil. The natural geology was encountered between 55.73m and 59.9m AOD.

6.1.2 Three trenches were excavated down to natural geology, a total of 60m in length. No archaeological remains were identified.

### **6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts**

6.2.1 The stratigraphy in trenches 2 and 3 was intact, with the archaeological horizon preserved. Trench 1 was terraced into the natural geology, presumably to level the area for the current playground.

### **6.3 Consideration of Research Aims**

6.3.1 *Original aim* Establish whether the prehistoric remains observed in close vicinity extend into the area of development.

- No prehistoric remains were found on site.

6.3.2 *Original aim* Establish whether Roman remains associated with Watling Street are present.

- No Roman remains were identified on site.

6.3.3 *Original aim* Confirm the agricultural nature of the site for the later periods.

- No field systems or any archaeology associated with agriculture was identified.

### **6.4 Conclusions**

6.4.1 Despite the potential of the area, no archaeological remains were uncovered in the areas evaluated.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ASE 2015. *Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (Heritage Statement) at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent*. Unpublished Grey Literature

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British Geological Survey website, accessed in February 2016  
([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk))

CIfA, 2014a, *Code of Conduct*

CIfA, 2014b *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank AGB Environmental for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at KCC for her guidance and monitoring.

### HER Summary

<b>HER enquiry no.</b>	-					
<b>Site code</b>	SIN 16					
<b>Project code</b>	160027					
<b>Planning reference</b>	GR/15/893					
<b>Site address</b>	Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent					
<b>District/Borough</b>	Gravesend					
<b>NGR (12 figures)</b>	565766 170801					
<b>Geology</b>	Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation					
<b>Fieldwork type</b>	Eval ✓	Excav	WB	HBR	Survey	Other
<b>Date of fieldwork</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2016					
<b>Sponsor/client</b>	AGB Environmental					
<b>Project manager</b>	Paul Mason					
<b>Project supervisor</b>	Gary Webster					
<b>Period summary</b>	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	Other	
<b>Project summary (100 word max)</b>	<p><i>This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by AGB Environmental and Kent County Council in advance of construction of a new building, outdoor play area and car park.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were found during the evaluation.</i></p>					
<b>Museum/Accession No.</b>						

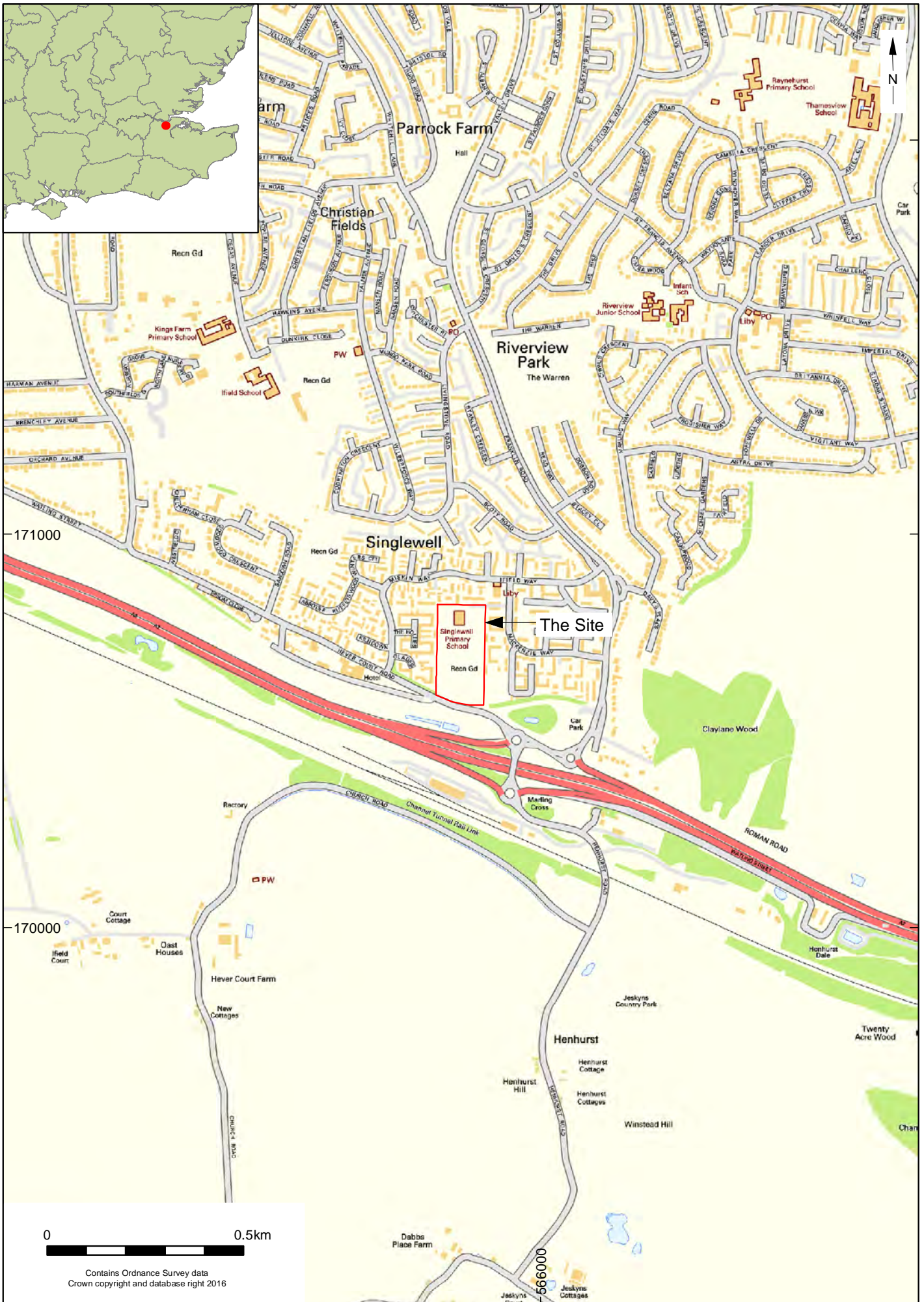
## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-243035

#### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent,
Short description of the project	This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend, Kent on the 14th and 15th February 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by AGB Environmental and Kent County Council in advance of construction of a new building, outdoor play area and car park.
	No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were found during the evaluation
Project dates	Start: 14-02-2016 End: 16-02-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	SIN 16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT GRAVESHAM GRAVESEND Singlewell Primary School
Postcode	DA12 5TY
Site coordinates	TQ 65766 70801 51.411432321816 0.383887673737 51 24 41 N 000 23 02 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 55.73m Max: 59.9m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East

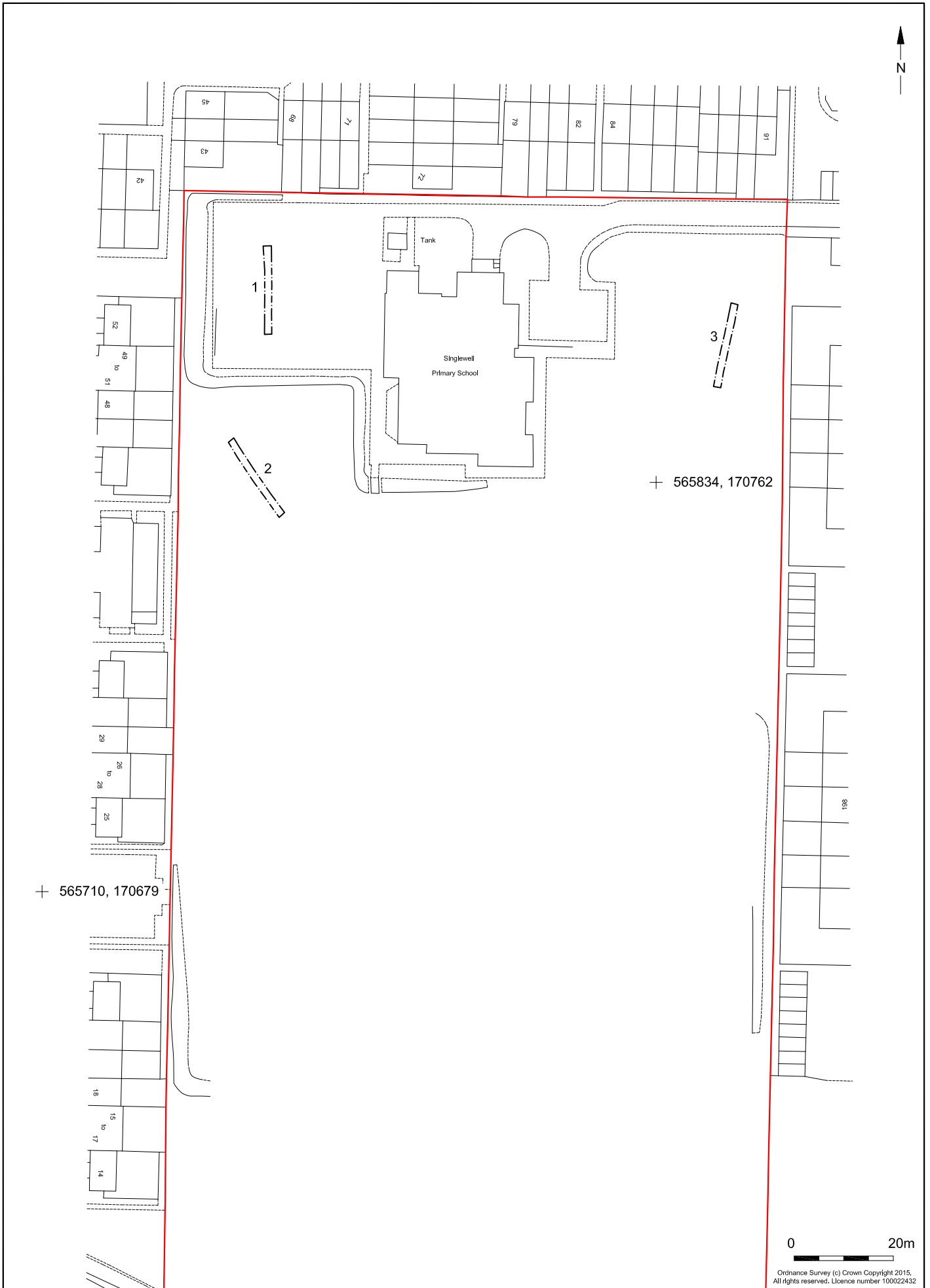
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	Gary Webster
Type of sponsor/funding body	Kent County Council
Project archives Physical Archive Exists?	No



Contains Ordnance Survey data  
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© Archaeology South-East		Singlewell Primary School		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160027	February 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016069	Drawn by: LG			





© Archaeology South-East		Singlewell Primary School, Gravesend		Fig.2
Project Ref: 160027	February 2016	Trench Location		
Report Ref: 2016069	Drawn by: LG			



Trench 1 looking south



Trench 2 looking north-west



Trench 3 looking south

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