

**Archaeological Watching Brief
The Cloth Hall, Water Lane
Smarden, Kent**

NGR: 587889 142354

Planning Ref: 16/00154/AS

ASE Project No: 160846

Site Code: SCH 16

ASE Report No: 2017040

OASIS id: archaeol6-274857



By Lucy May



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Prepared by:	Lucy May	Archaeologist	
Reviewed and approved by:	Dan Swift	Project Manager	
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**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden between 11th and the 25th January 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by Kent Design Studios during groundworks associated with the kitchen extension and the relocation of the current main entrance to its original location.

No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered. The stratigraphy across the area consisted of Weald Clay overlain by made ground deposits that relate to the construction and demolition of the previous extension and Weald Clay overlain by garden topsoil in the previously undisturbed area.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) has been commissioned by Kent Design Studio to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks associated with the kitchen extension and the relocation of the current main entrance to its original location at The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden, Kent, hereafter 'the site' (NGR 587889 142354; Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The site currently comprises of a Grade II* listed former textile production building, which was latterly used as a farmhouse and is located in the centre of Smarden.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The general topography of the site is very flat and consists of part of the extension from the building as well as the garden lawn (See Figures 2 and 3).
- 1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey map the underlying geology of the site is Weald Clay Formation – a sedimentary mudstone bedrock formed approximately 125 to 134 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Following submission of a planning application for a new extension to the property (Ref: 16/00154/AS), Ashford Borough Council set the following condition:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

- 1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2016) was submitted in order to provide the specifications for the work to be monitored.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The following aims of the watching brief were identified:
- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any such remains and deposits
 - To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
 - To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site

- To assess what options should be considered for mitigation

1.4.2 Investigation of the site also has the potential to address the following research priorities identified in the draft South East Research Framework:

- Determine the extent and character of medieval and post-medieval activity, particularly in relation to the cloth industry

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out between the 11th and the 25th January 2017. The work was carried out by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) Lucy May (Archaeologist) and Odile Rouard (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Jon Sygrave (Fieldwork) and by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (Post-Excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background below is summarised from the WSI (ASE, 2016).

2.2 Medieval

- 2.2.1 Smarden is a small village in the Weald with settlement starting at the start of the 13th century. The earliest date recorded for the village is the declaration of Adam de Essex becoming rector in 1205.
- 2.2.2 The area became focussed on the wool trade in the late medieval period after Edward III brought wool weavers from Flanders and settled them in the area. In 1333 in recognition of their services, Edward granted the town the right to hold a market. The trade was to go on to become one of Britain's most profitable. The original location for the Flemish on their arrival was Cranbrook, approximately 10 miles to the west of Smarden.
- 2.2.3 In 1432 Archbishop Kempe gifted much land in Smarden to his new college of Wye, part of which they remained until 1545 when they were then seized by the Crown (Henry VIII). Shortly afterwards the lands were granted to Walter Bucler for his service to the Crown.

2.3 Tudor

- 2.3.1 The Weald was to become internationally famous for the production of the Kent Broadcloth, a coloured, heavy woollen cloth about a metre in width. The dimension of these cloths was dictated by statute which said that each cloth should be at least eighty-six pounds, and be at least twenty-eight yards long. Such was the scale of the weaving industry in the 15th and 16th centuries that it is often seen as the first proto-industrialisation of the country.

2.4 17th Century

- 2.4.1 The cloth and wool industries began to come under pressure from a shortage of raw materials, namely wood, due to competition from the iron industry. As a result, exports started to decline at the start of the 17th century. By the time of the Civil War the textiles industry in the Weald was in decline. Some larger producers flourished until the end of the 17th century but these were rare by this time.

2.5 19th Century

- 2.5.1 In the early 19th century a new toll road was built to the west of the town running from Monks Hill to Bardleden. Breenwood's map on 1821 shows the road as recently completed.
- 2.5.2 With the advent of the railway, the towns of Tenterden, Cranbrook and Smarden etc. fought the proposed route of the London to Folkestone railway through their immediate setting. Instead the railway was eventually constructed towards Maidstone and Tonbridge. This proved to be economically disastrous

for the area surrounding Smarden as well as explaining why it remains so relatively well-preserved today.

2.6 20th Century

- 2.6.1 The village lost its market in the 20th century. Today, the location of the former market place is thought to lie to the east of the churchyard. It was likely to have been triangular in shape and to have been located directly adjacent to the High Street. The village remains in the diocese of Canterbury and the deanery of Charing.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The watching brief was concentrated on the area towards the rear of the building where groundworks associated with the proposed kitchen extension and the relocation of the current main entrance to its original location were monitored by an experienced archaeologist.
- 3.1.2 A suitably-sized machine, equipped with a smooth edged grading bucket, was provided by the contractors on site.
- 3.1.3 The demolition of the previous extension to the building was not monitored and ground reduction commenced once this was complete. The area monitored was reduced gradually and stopped at the formation level of c. 0.41m bgl.
- 3.1.4 Once ground was reduced to the formation level, piling contractors arrived on site. No archaeological monitoring was needed for this.
- 3.1.5 Once this process was completed, archaeological monitoring continued and involved excavating the footings for the new extension.
- 3.1.6 All excavation work was carried out in line with the relevant ClfA guidance documents (ClfA 2014).

3.2 The Site Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at an appropriate museum in due course.

Context sheets	4
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	33
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	8
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

Context	Type	Interpretation	Thickness (m)
001	Layer	Destruction debris	0.31
002	Layer	Make up	0.10
003	Layer	Topsoil	0.40
004	Layer	Natural	1.00-1.30

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 The whole area was reduced to the formation level at approximately 0.41m bgl within the footings to between 1.40m bgl and 1.70m bgl.
- 4.1.2 There was evidence of modern truncations from drainage leading to various outbuildings.
- 4.1.3 The stratigraphy across the area consisted of Weald Clay [004], overlain by a make-up deposit [002] consisting of a greyish brown, silty clay with brick and mortar rubble. Above this was the demolition rubble [001], consisting of concrete, bricks and mortar. These contexts are only seen in the area beneath the previously demolished extension.
- 4.1.4 The area outside of the previous extension consisted of Weald Clay with the current garden topsoil [003] overlaying it. This was made up of a friable, mid-brown silty clay with occasion brick, stone, concrete fragments.
- 4.1.5 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.
- 5.2 The stratigraphy across the area consisted of Weald Clay overlain by made ground deposits that relate to the construction and demolition of the previous extension and Weald Clay overlain by garden topsoil in the previously undisturbed area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Kent Design Studio for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers, County Archaeologist for Kent County Council for her guidance and monitoring.

HER Summary

Site code	SCH16				
Project code	160846				
Planning reference	16/00154/AS				
Site address	The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden				
District/Borough	Kent				
NGR (12 figures)	587889 142354				
Geology	Weald Clay				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork					
Sponsor/client	Kent Design Studio				
Project manager	Jon Sygrave				
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens, Lucy May, Odile Rouard				
Period summary					
			Medieval	Post-Medieval	Other
Project summary	<p>An archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden between 11th and the 25th January 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by Kent Design Studios during groundworks associated with the kitchen extension and the relocation of the current main entrance to its original location.</p> <p>No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered. The stratigraphy across the area consisted of Weald Clay overlain by made ground deposits that relate to the construction and demolition of the previous extension and Weald Clay overlain by garden topsoil in the previously undisturbed area.</p>				
Museum/Accession No.					

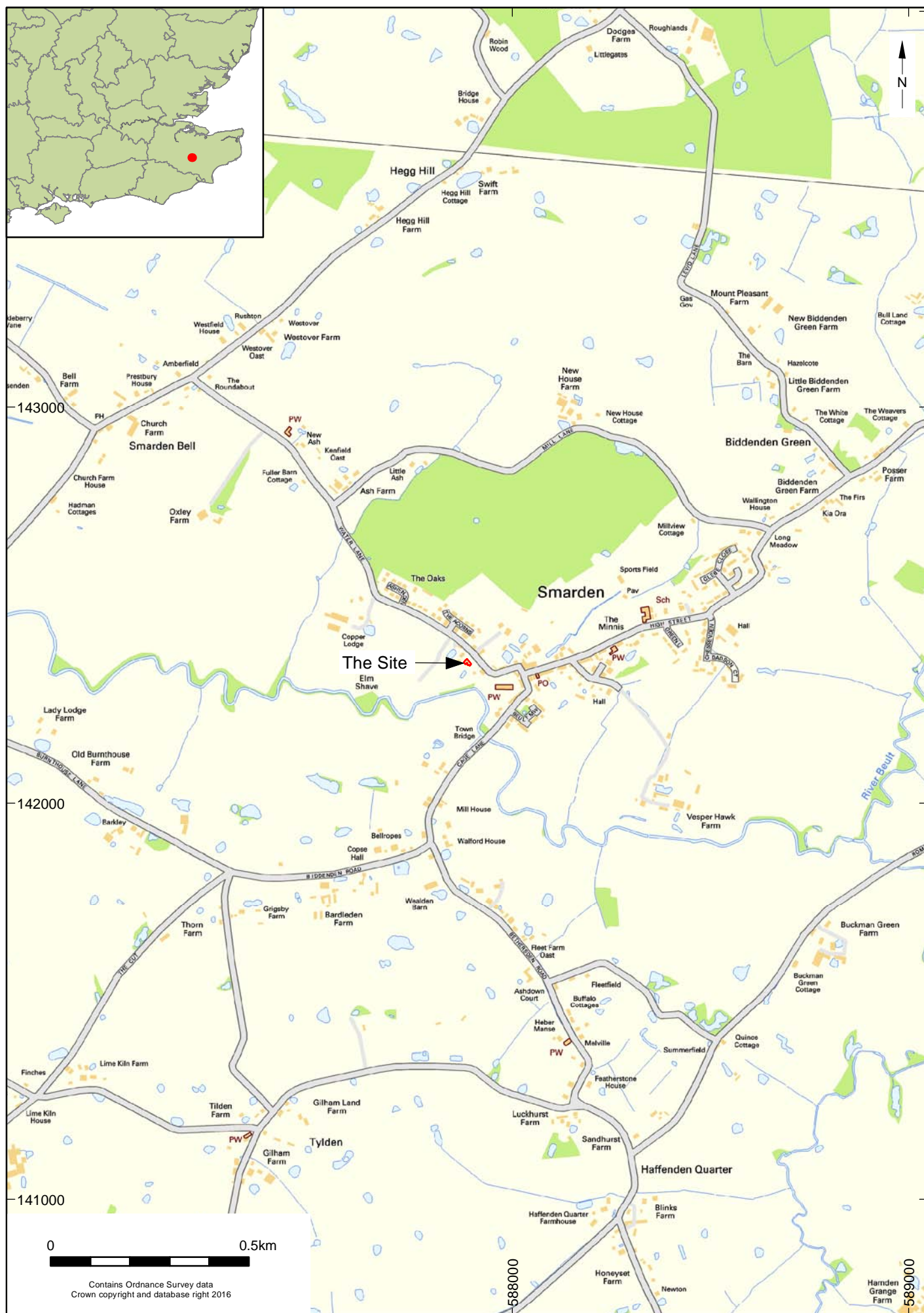
OASIS ID: archaeol6-274857

Project details

Project name	An archaeological Watching Brief at The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden, Kent
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden between 11th and the 25th January 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by Kent Design Studios during groundworks associated with the kitchen extension and the relocation of the current main entrance to its original location.</p> <p>No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered. The stratigraphy across the area consisted of Weald Clay overlain by made ground deposits that relate to the construction and demolition of the previous extension and Weald Clay overlain by garden topsoil in the previously undisturbed area.</p>
Project dates	Start: 11-01-2017 End: 25-01-2017
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SCH16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	160846 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT ASHFORD SMARDEN The Cloth Hall
Postcode	TN27 8QB

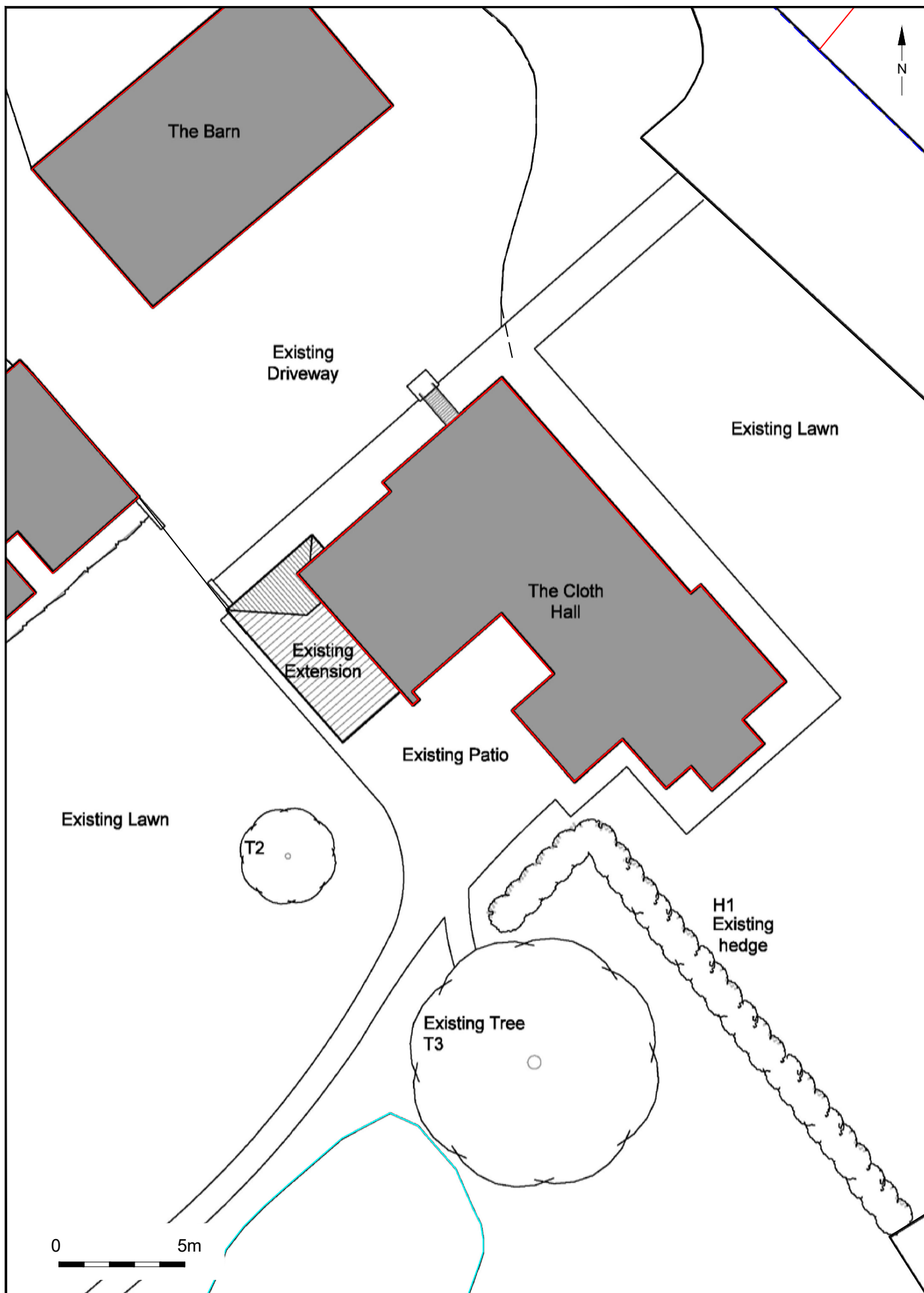
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 587889 142354 50.905140958263 0.25866661812 50 54 18 N 000 15 31 E Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South East
Project design originator	ASE
Project director/manager	Jon Sygrave
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Project supervisor	Giles Dawkes
Project supervisor	Lucy May
Project supervisor	Odile Rouard
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Kent Design Studios
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report"

Entered by Lucy May (l.may@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on 31 January 2017

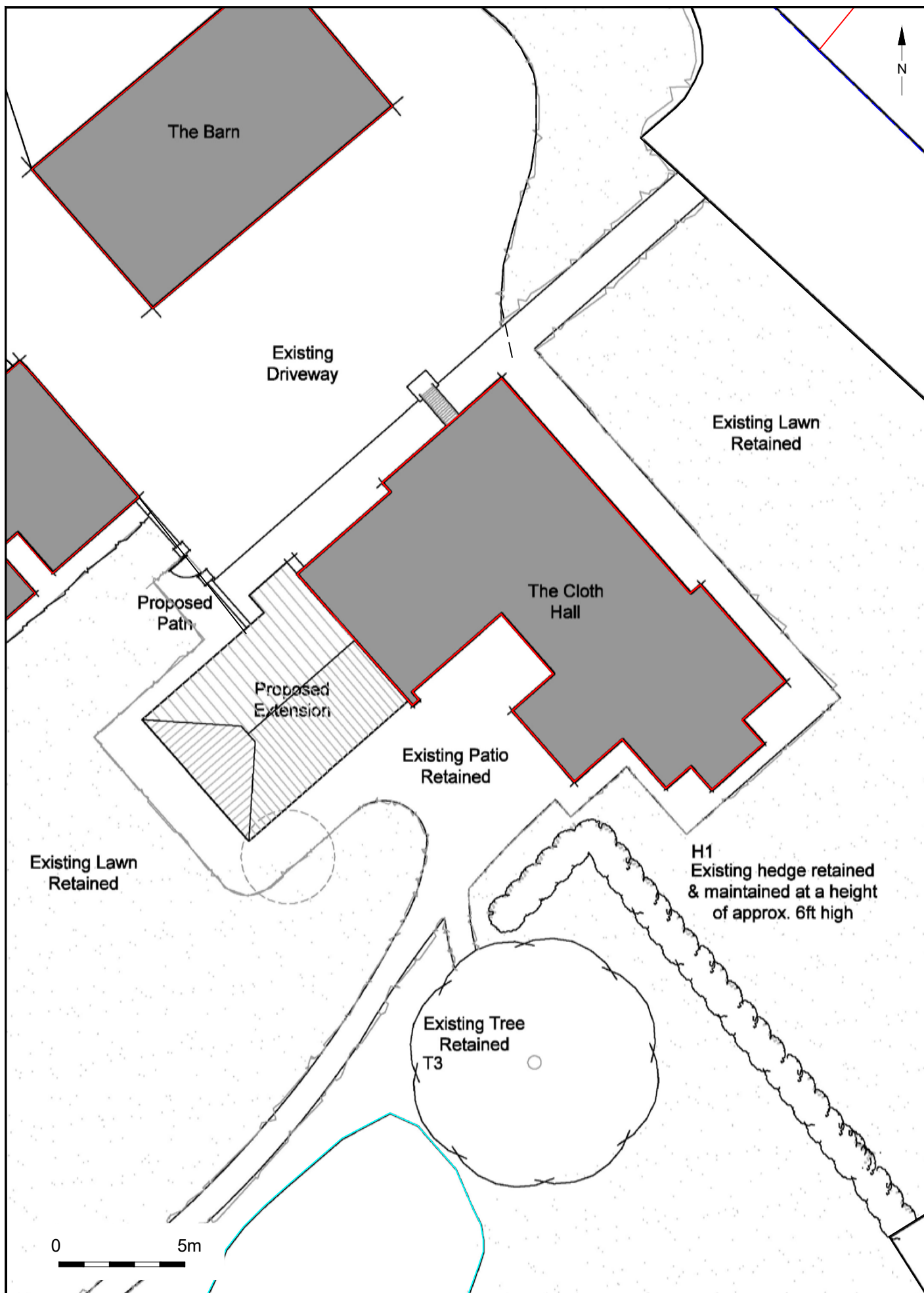


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© Archaeology South-East		Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160846	Feb 2017	Site location	
Report Ref: 2017040	Drawn by: AR		



© Archaeology South-East		Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160846	Feb 2017	Site plan with previous extensions	
Report Ref: 2017040	Drawn by: AR		



© Archaeology South-East		Cloth Hall, Water Lane, Smarden	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 160846	Feb 2017	Site plan with proposed extention	
Report Ref: 2017040	Drawn by: AR		



Monitored area, looking south east



Monitored area looking north east



General shot of footing

Sussex Office

Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
tel: +44(0)1273 426830
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Essex Office

27 Eastways
Witham
Essex
CM8 3YQ
tel: +44(0)1376 331470
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk

London Office

Centre for Applied Archaeology
UCL Institute of Archaeology
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY
tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

