



Chris Butler
Archaeological
Services Ltd



**Archaeological Evaluation Excavation
on proposed extensions to
50 Hurst Road,
Hassocks,
West Sussex,
BN6 9NL.**

TQ 29415 15761

Planning Ref: DM/24/2504

Project No: CBAS1597

By
David Atkin

August 2025

Summary

An archaeological evaluation excavation was undertaken at 50 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NL in association with planning application DM/24/2504, for the construction of two three-storey rear extensions, a single storey rear extension, a hip to gable enlargements, a rear dormer, a first-floor front extension, an enlarged replacement front dormer, a single storey side extension, solar panels within south, east and west facing roof slopes, new timber front gates, replacement roof tiles, render to walls and replacement window and doors frames .

Two evaluation trenches were opened on the footprint of the proposed development. A simple stratigraphy of the existing patio above the natural geology was present in Trench 1 and patio/made ground, subsoil above the natural geology was noted in Trench 2.

No features of archaeological interest were present.

Report by:	David Atkin	Project Manager	Chris Butler
Reviewed and approved by:	Chris Butler	Date Issued:	14/07/25
Version:	V1		

CBAS Ltd
Unit 12
Mays Farm
Selmeston, Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TS
Tel: 01323 811785
office@cbasltd.co.uk
<https://www.cbasltd.co.uk>

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd (CBAS Ltd) was commissioned by Wooj Property Ltd (the Client) to carry out an archaeological evaluation excavation at 50 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NL (hereafter the Site; Figs. 1 & 2; Appendix 1), in connection with a planning application (Ref: DM/24/2504) for two three-storey rear extensions, a single storey rear extension, a hip to gable enlargements, a rear dormer, a first-floor front extension, an enlarged replacement front dormer, a single storey side extension, solar panels within south, east and west facing roof slopes, new timber front gates, replacement roof tiles, render to walls and replacement window and doors frames (Fig. 3, Appendix 2).
- 1.2 The Site (centre point: TQ 29415 15761) is located on the north side of Hurst Road, in the western outskirts of Hassocks and comprises a rectangular plot containing no. 50 in the south with garden to the rear. The site boundaries are lined with hedge and fencing and the garden is laid to lawn. Further residential plots are present to the east and west, a recreational ground, Talbot Field, is present across Hurst Road to the south and agricultural land is present to the north.
- 1.3 The Site lies on a north-facing hillslope at the northern edge of the South Downs and slopes from a height of c. 67m aOD in the south to c. 60m aOD in the north. According to the British Geological Survey¹ the geology of the Site is sandstone of the Folkestone Formation.
- 1.4 The Site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA; DWS8193) associated with multi-period activity including prehistoric sites, Roman settlement and Anglo-Saxon burials. The Site lies to the west of a confluence of multiple Roman Roads, which are denoted by several ANAs (DWS8607, DWS8680 & DWS8725). Additionally, the line of a possible Roman Road runs through 50 Hurst Road on a north-south alignment. Recent excavations at 36 Hurst Road, to the east, have uncovered evidence for Roman quarrying activity. The development site lies within an area with the potential for surviving archaeological remains, primarily those of a Roman date.
- 1.5 All ground reductions associated with the development hold potential to impact upon any archaeological horizons present within their footprint. For this reason, the following condition was placed on the planning permission².

7. *With regards to Archaeological Monitoring and Recording:*

- i) *No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until a programme of archaeological monitoring has been*

¹ https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.170632741.484708419.1739982008-1590086387.1739982008

² Permission: Reference DM/24/2505. 26th March 2025.

secured in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, for approval by the Local Planning Authority.

- ii) *The applicant will submit a final archaeological report or (if appropriate) a Post Excavation Assessment report for approval by the Local Planning Authority. This shall be submitted within 6 months of the date of completion of the archaeological fieldwork unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To protect heritage assets on the site in accordance with Mid Sussex District Plan Policy DP34.

- 1.6** A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining a programme of archaeological works comprising of an archaeological evaluation excavation to determine the archaeological potential of the Site and its implications for the proposed development. The WSI was produced in response to a brief issued by the Historic Environment Consultant to Mid Sussex District Council³. The WSI was then submitted to Mid Sussex District Council for formal approval.
- 1.7** This report outlines the results from an archaeological watching brief that monitored all groundworks associated with the proposed development. This report will be submitted to the local planning authority, and the archaeological advisors at MSDC for approval.
- 1.8** The fieldwork was carried out by the author and Mark Denham from the 21st to 23rd of July 2025.

³ Brief for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation at Twinham, 34 Hurst Road, Hassocks. 11/04/2025.
Planning Ref: DM/25/0310.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation excavation were to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains on Site and determine their extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date. The results will inform whether archaeological mitigation work is required, which will ensure that any archaeological remains under threat of the proposed development are either excavated and recorded or preserved *in situ* and protected.

2.2 The specific research aims were to recover evidence relating to:

1. the identified Roman settlement activity to the south; and
2. the Roman road project to run through the site; and
3. any other settlement activity.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1** A Historic Environment Record search (Fig. 4; 202425-081) was supplied by the client, the results of which are summarised below and supplemented with information from the CBAS archive. The locations of fieldwork discussed in the text are presented in Figure 5.
- 3.2** Large quantities of Mesolithic flintwork have been found at Hassocks in the past⁴. The Greensand seems to have been an environment which attracted the hunter gatherer groups, leaving evidence of their activities. Possible pits of Mesolithic date were recorded by Toms in the Hassocks sandpit⁵. Mesolithic flintwork was also recovered at Friars Oak to the north-east of the Site⁶.
- 3.3** A leaf-shaped arrowhead and fragment of a polished flint axe were recovered at Friars Oak⁷ indicating continued activity in the area. Neolithic clay spoons have also been found at The Dell, close to Belmont Lane.
- 3.4** Six large cordoned cinerary urns, one "Ashford" type urn and cups of Middle Bronze Age date (MWS891) were found during works in the Hassocks sandpit, which covers an area between London Road and Belmont Lane to the south of Hurst Road. Bronze Age flintwork has been recovered from Friars Oak and other sites close to the Site. The hilltop enclosure on Wolstonbury Hill some 2km to the southwest was constructed in the later Bronze Age⁸. There is little evidence for Iron Age activity around the Site.
- 3.5** Two Roman roads cross at Hassocks. The Greensand Way is an east-west orientated road running along the Greensand ridge which passes to the south of Hurst Road to the south of the site. The London-Brighton Roman Road approaches Hassocks from Friars Oak where it was found in 1994⁹. It passes to the east of the Site and enters a roadside settlement at Ham Farm¹⁰.
- 3.6** The Roman cemetery at Hassocks (MWS3204) was first discovered in the last decade of the 19th century when a sand pit was opened on the west side of the A273 London-Brighton

⁴ Butler, C. 1989 'An Early Mesolithic Site and later Flintwork from Hassocks, West Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **127**, 230-235

⁵ Toms, H.S. 1907 'Pigmy flint implements found near Brighton', *Brighton & Hove Natural History and Philosophical Society* 1-10.

⁶ Butler, C. 2000 *Saxon Settlement and earlier Remains at Friars Oak, Hassocks, West Sussex*, BAR British Series **295**

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Russell, M. 2021 'Excavations at Wolstonbury Late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure' *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **159**, 47-64.

⁹ Butler, C. 2000 *Saxon Settlement and earlier Remains at Friars Oak, Hassocks, West Sussex*, BAR British Series **295**

¹⁰ Shields, G 1999 'The course of the London to Brighton Roman road south of Burgess Hill' *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **137**, 81-90

Road¹¹, to the south of the Site. By 1949 the sandpit had extended to the south of Talbot Field recreation ground, and westwards beyond Crossways Lane, where the sand was extracted until the late 1950's. All of the burials appear to have been cremations and associated grave goods (predominantly pottery vessels) were found in an unsystematic way by the sandpit workmen. The pottery vessels and other finds recovered from the cemetery have been fully reported on by Malcolm Lyne who established that the majority of the pottery vessels (60.1%) were from the period 150-270AD, with 32% from the period 43-150AD, and only 7.9% from post 270AD¹².

- 3.7** Evidence for Roman settlement (MWS4415) in the form of wells and rubbish pits was found in the early 20th century to the south of Hurst Road, and the remains of a building was recorded in the garden of 29 Hurst Road¹³ (MWS7316 & MWS883). Small scale excavations to the west of Crossways Lane also located Roman rubbish pits. Excavations at Talbot Field in 1999 located the Greensand Way roadside ditch, which appeared to have been filled in and overlaid by Roman settlement activity including pits and post holes. A watching brief at Crossways Barn, to the east of the Site, in 1993¹⁴ found settlement evidence and overall, the evidence suggested the presence of a Roman settlement which may have existed into the 3rd century AD¹⁵. The settlement appears to have been situated along both sides of the Greensand Way. An excavation in the garden of 33 Hurst Road located the Greensand Way and finds of Roman pottery.
- 3.8** At 36 Hurst Road^{16& 17} a large pit containing small quantities of Roman pottery was interpreted as a probable sand quarry. The pottery suggests the pit was infilled in the late 3rd into the 4th century. A ditch, which may be contemporary with the quarry, was also present. Until this discovery all the evidence for Roman settlement and activity had been found to the south of Hurst Road. This activity appears to be later than the main focus of Roman activity at Talbot Field and Crossways Barn.
- 3.9** The north-south route of the Coldharbour to Clayton Wickham Road Roman Road is projected to extend into the Site. This road was first identified in c.1925 and is seemingly important, being well-made: well-cambered, with flint metalling. The road runs north from Coldharbour Farm, where Couchman¹⁸ recorded it as being 27ft (8m) wide with a 5" (130mm) thick flint metalling. The road was found to be based on large blocks of stone with a hard rubble surface where it crosses the Hassocks to Hurstpierpoint road directly south of the Site. Recent geophysical surveys at Talbot Field and south of Crossways Barn (Fig. 6) show a north-south road on an alignment suggested by Couchman. If this is followed north

¹¹ Couchman, J.E. 1925 'A Roman cemetery at Hassocks', *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.* **66**, 34-61

¹² Lyne, M.A.B. 1994(2) 'The Hassocks Cemetery', *Sussex Archaeol Collect* **132**, 53-86

¹³ Couchman, J.E. 1925 'A Roman cemetery at Hassocks', *Sussex Archaeol Collect* **66**, 34-61

¹⁴ Wood, W. K. 1993 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Crossways, Ham Farm, Clayton, South Eastern*
Archaeological Services Project 1993/69

¹⁵ Butler, C. forthcoming *The Roman Settlement at Hassocks. BAR*

¹⁶ Butler, C. 2024. An Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at 36 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex. Project No: CBAS 1493

¹⁷ Butler, Chris (2024) Archaeological Investigations at 36 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex (Chris Butler Archaeological Services) Project No. CBAS 1493

¹⁸ J. E. Couchman. 1925. A Roman Cemetery at Hassocks. Sussex Archaeological Society.

the projected route passes through the Site, it can then be seen as an agger to the right of the modern track at c. TQ295162 to the north of the Site and then follows the track (also the Parish boundary) to Clayton Wickham Farm. The potential route of the Roman road can be seen at the sharp right-hand turn in the modern track some 100 metres further on and can then be traced along the line of hedgerows northwards. Its possible progress northwards can also be traced on the map as it follows the parish boundary, although none of this has been proven yet by excavation¹⁹.

- 3.10** A dozen Saxon urns (MWS892), several containing bones were also found during excavation of the sandpit to the south of the Site. Occupation of the roadside settlement had ceased by this time and the Saxon settlement had shifted further north to Friars Oak, where sunken featured buildings and post hole buildings were found during archaeological monitoring at Friars Oak golf course²⁰.
- 3.11** It has been suggested that the mound at Ham Farm is where the Saxon Hundred Courts were held in Buttinghill Hundred²¹. When the adjacent farmyard was enlarged, in about 1856, part of the mound was cut away and revealed an urn and fragments of others, together with bones and the teeth of animals, however Couchman records that three or four holes excavated into it had shown it to be a natural mound²².
- 3.12** At Land at London Road multiple ditches that formed a large field system splitting into separate enclosures was recorded. Finds indicate the field system dates from the 12th-14th century. A small amount of medieval (MWS5199) and post-medieval (MWS5200) pottery was recovered during the monitoring works at Kings Garden Centre.
- 3.13** Yeakell and Gardner's map of Sussex, 1778-1783 (Fig. 7) shows the Site to be located within a field to the north of Hurst Road and west of Ham Farm. Hassocks evidently was not a significant settlement at this time, although a nucleated settlement was present at Hurstpierpoint.
- 3.14** The Clayton tithe map of 1838 (Fig. 8) shows the Site to lie within Plot 171, an agricultural field. The 1st Edition OS map of 1879 (Fig. 9) shows Crossways to have been built to the west of the Site at the junction of Hurst Road and Belmont Lane. The Site is featureless. The 1897 2nd Edition OS map (Fig. 10) shows the Site to remain unchanged.
- 3.15** By 1910 and the edition of the OS map (Fig. 11) housing development had taken place to the east and west of the Site. The Site remained undeveloped in 1946 and 1956 (Figs. 12 & 13).

¹⁹ Butler, C. forthcoming *The Roman Settlement at Hassocks*. BAR

²⁰ Butler, C. 2000 *Saxon Settlement and earlier Remains at Friars Oak, Hassocks, West Sussex*, BAR British Series **295** & Stevens, S. 2009 *Archaeological Investigations at Hassocks Golf Club, London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex* ASE Report 2009201

²¹ VCH 1940

²² Couchman, J.E. 1925 'A Roman cemetery at Hassocks', *Sussex Archaeol Collect* **66**, 34-61

3.16 LiDAR imagery for the Site and its surroundings was reviewed (Fig. 14), but no features potentially relating to the Roman Road were identified.

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct²³ and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs²⁴, Sussex County Council's Sussex Archaeological Standards²⁵; and the Treasure Act²⁶.
- 4.2 Two trenches were opened up, Trench 1 measuring 1.4m by 1.30m and an 'L' shaped trench, Trench 2, measuring 5m by 5m by 2m wide were located as shown on Fig. 15. The trenches were located to target the footprint of the extension. Trench 1 was reduced in size after consultation with the Historic Environment Consultant after a modern soakaway was noted in Trench 1 proposed location. The trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision, using a 3 tonne rubber tracked machine fitted with a flat-bladed bucket, in accordance with the *Sussex Archaeological Standards*.
- 4.3 The spoil was stored on site, adjacent to one side of each trench, and visually inspected on a frequent basis for the recovery of any artefacts of archaeological interest. A Garrett Ace 150 metal detector was used to scan the spoil, deposits and any features revealed.
- 4.4 All features and deposits were recorded in accordance with the *Sussex Archaeological Standards*. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not with reference to a Munsell Colour Chart.
- 4.5 The trenches were surveyed in by using an Emlid Reach GNSS receiver, which was also used to level in the trenches. The levels are recorded on the section drawings.
- 4.6 A full digital photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the Site archive, along with on-site paperwork and drawings. The archive is presently held by CBAS Ltd but will subsequently be deposited with a museum or other repository as agreed with the Historic Environmental Consultant to Mid Sussex District Council. The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) will be supplied with a CD containing the report in PDF/A format and a selection of site photographs. A site reference of HHS25 has been allocated.

²³ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2019. *Code of Conduct*.

²⁴ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014. *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*.

²⁵ Chichester District Council, East Sussex County Council & West Sussex County Council 2019. *Sussex Archaeological Standards 2019*.

²⁶ UK Parliament 1996. *Treasure Act 1996*.

Type	Details	No. of pages
Paper archive (15 pages in total)	Context Register	1
	Context Record Sheet	8
	Trial Trench Register	1
	Trial Trench Record Form	2
	Photographic Index	1
	Drawing Index	1
	Levels Record Sheet	0
	Metal Detector Use Record	1
	Environmental Sample Sheet	0
	Drawings	1 sheet (A)

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1)



Plate 1: Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 effectively became a large test pit after its reduction in intended size due to the presence of the soakaway, and measured 1.4m x 1.3m in size. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.48m.
- 5.1.2 The upper context (Context **1/001**) was the modern patio and associated modern made ground. It was between 120-140mm in depth and sat above a contaminated or redeposited blue-grey deposit.
- 5.1.3 Below the modern surface was a soft dark blue-grey sandy-silt deposit, 100mm in depth, (Context **1/002**). No inclusions were noted. This sat above the natural geology.
- 5.1.4 The remainder of the trench to the limit of excavation (hereafter LOE) consisted a soft, mid-yellow, sandy-silt (**1/003**) that contained no inclusions and was exposed for a depth of 0.36m.

5.2. Trench 2 (Plate 2)



Plate 2: Trench 2

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was an 'L' shaped trench orientated east-west and north-south and measured 5m by 5m by 2m in size and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.35m.
 - 5.2.2 The topsoil in Trench 2 (**2/001**) was the same deposit as in Trench 1, albeit a slightly thicker deposit between 200 - 230mm.
 - 5.2.3 Context **2/002** was a soft to firm, dark grey, made ground deposit between 200 - 250mm.
 - 5.2.4 Context **2/003** was the same as (**1/003**), a deposit between 300 - 340mm to the LOE with the exception of the western end where the clay natural (**2/004**) was exposed.
- 5.3 No archaeological features or artefacts were found in either trench.

6.0 Finds

6.1 No artefacts were recovered from either trench during the evaluation excavation.

6.2 A single piece of worked flint, probably a blade segment from an Early Neolithic composite sickle, and a fragment of Roman brick or tile were found in the subsoil of the trial trenches excavated on the site of the proposed tennis court to the north of the house²⁷.

²⁷ Atkin, D. 2025 Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at 50 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NL.

7.0 Discussion

- 7.1** The aims and objectives of this project have been successfully met by the work undertaken, and this report provides a record of the results. Two evaluation trenches were opened over the footprint of the proposed new extensions. Neither trench located any archaeological features or artefacts.
- 7.2** The results of this evaluation, alongside recent investigations at 34 and 36 Hurst Road, are contributing to a more detailed understanding of Romano-British activity in Hassocks. Until recently, evidence of Roman settlement was confined to areas south of Hurst Road. Pottery recovered from 34 Hurst Road appears broadly contemporary with finds from Talbot Field and Crossways Farm, and predates the features and pottery recorded at 36 Hurst Road.
- 7.3** The absence of archaeological features at 50 Hurst Road may suggest that this area is outside the northern limit of Romano-British settlement activity, with the core of the activity concentrated further south, although given the presence of a likely Roman Road adjacent to the site this absence is surprising. From the excavated evidence it seems that the construction of the existing house has probably resulted in some truncation of the site, which may have removed any archaeological evidence.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1** As the evaluation has indicated an absence of archaeological features, and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological intervention is necessary.
- 8.2** It is noted however that any further archaeological mitigation work required on Site remains at the discretion by the Historic Environmental Consultant to Mid Sussex District Council.

9.0 Acknowledgments

- 9.1** We would like to thank Chris Dawkins of Wooj Property Ltd (the client) for commissioning CBAS Ltd to undertake the evaluation.
- 9.2** Thanks are extended to Chris Butler for the specialist reports, and to Kirstie Riley for producing the illustrations.

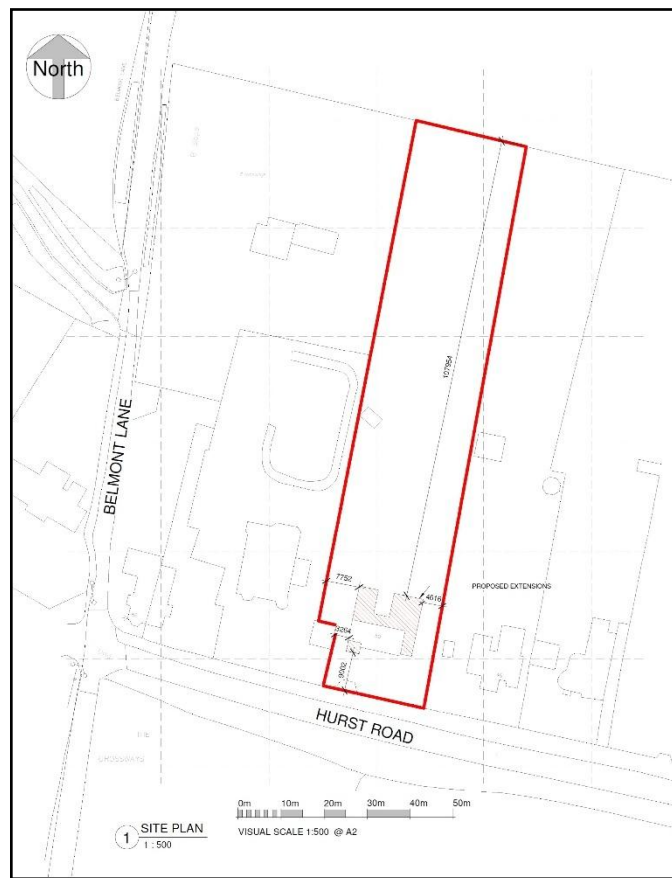
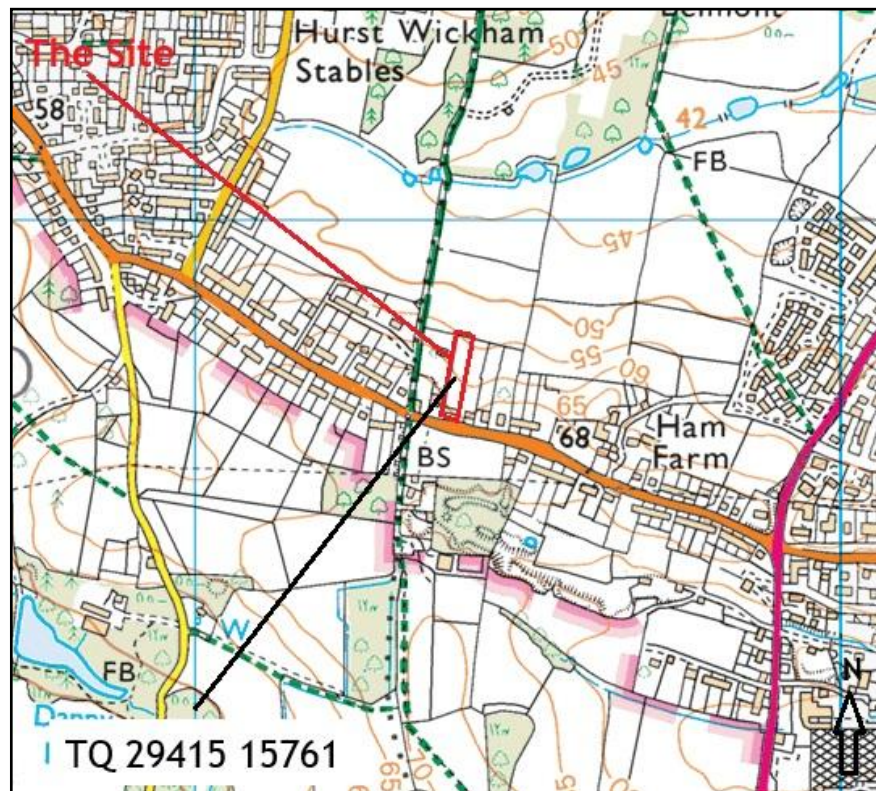


Fig. 1: Site location
Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100037471

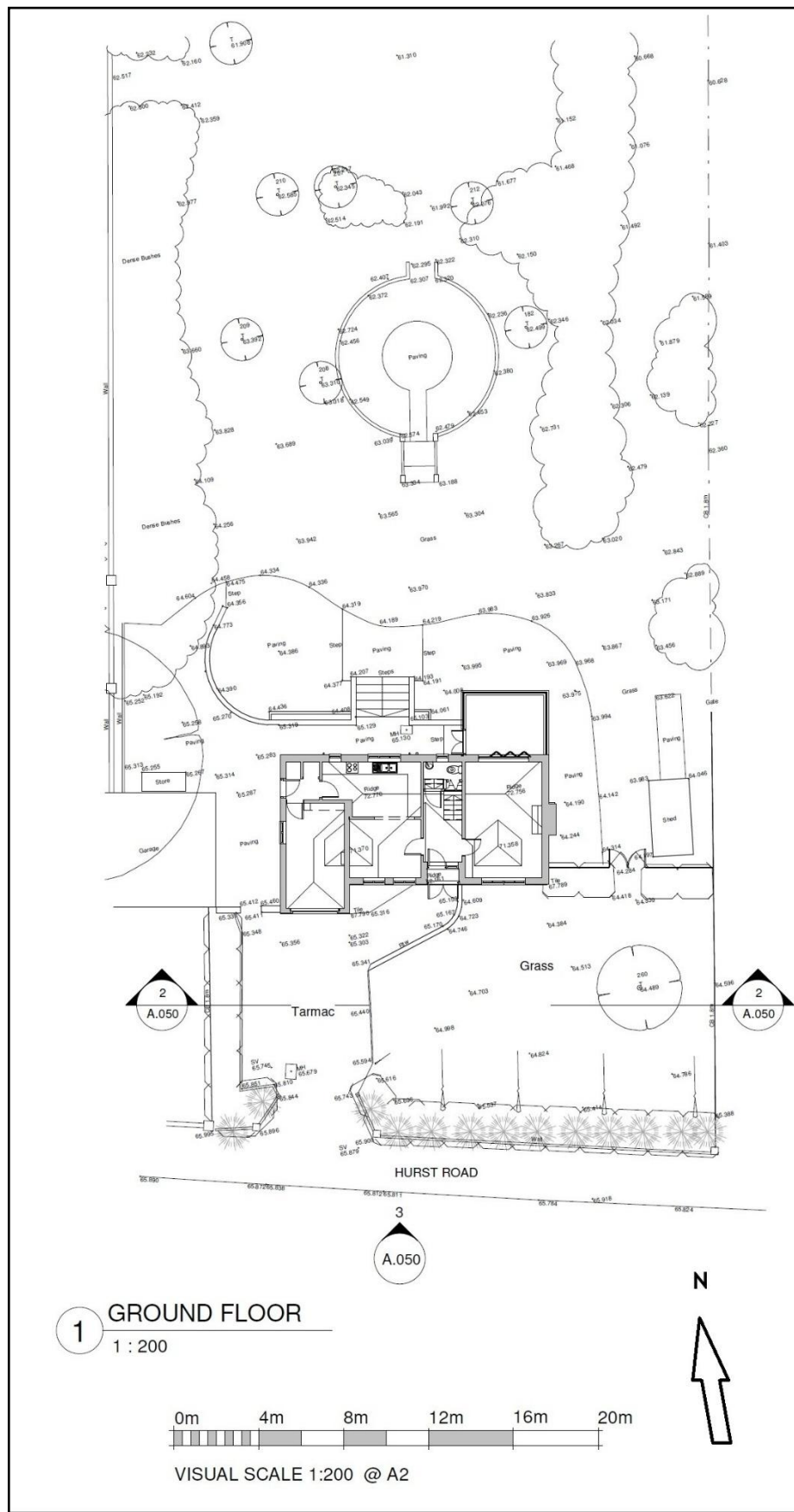


Fig. 2: Existing Site Plan
(Provided by the Client)

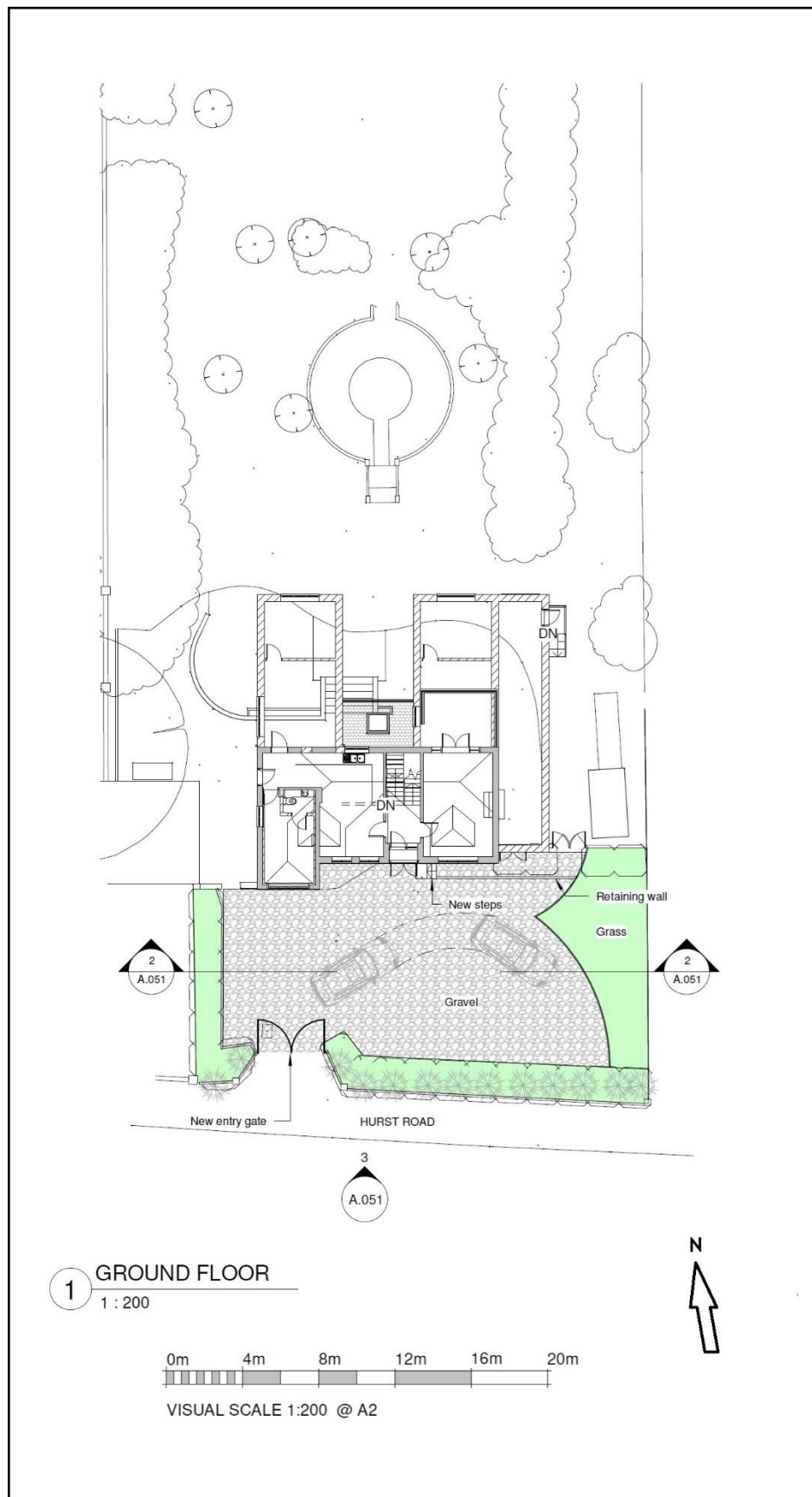


Fig. 3: Proposed Site Plan
(Provided by the Client)

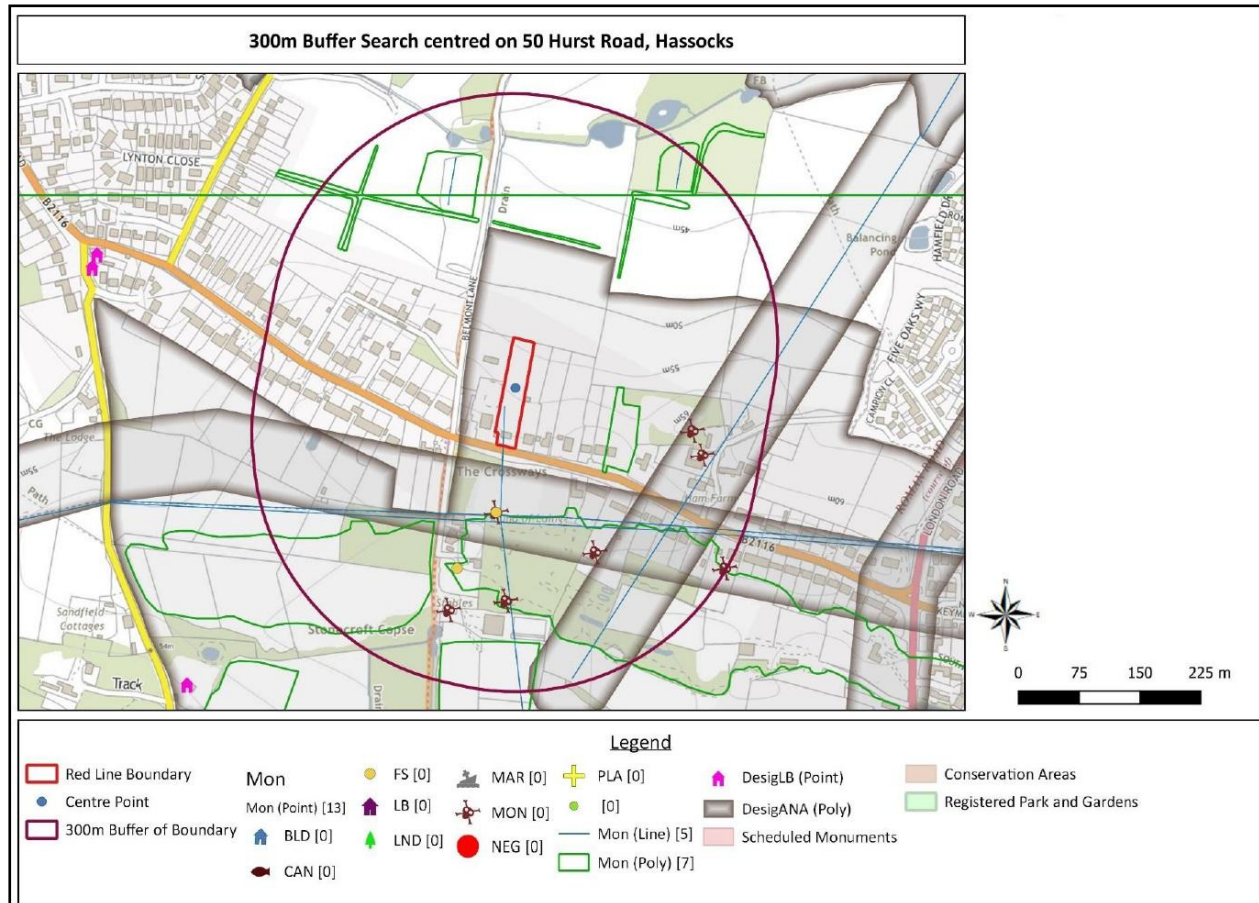
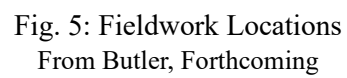


Fig. 4: Historic Environment Record.
Adapted from a map provided by ESCC.
Ordnance Survey ©
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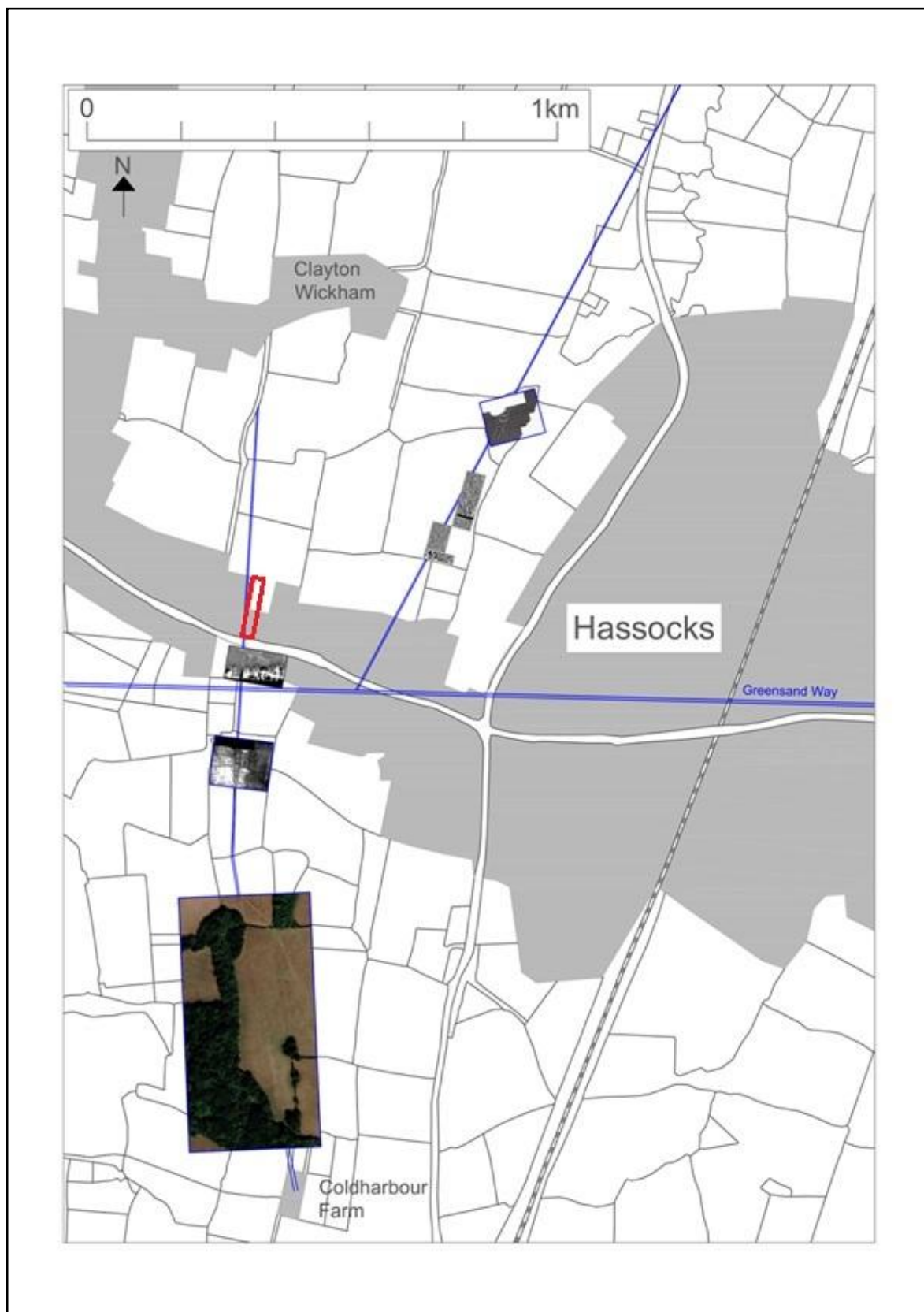


Fig. 6: Roman Roads
From Butler, Forthcoming



Fig. 7: Yeakell and Gardner's Sussex 1778-1783

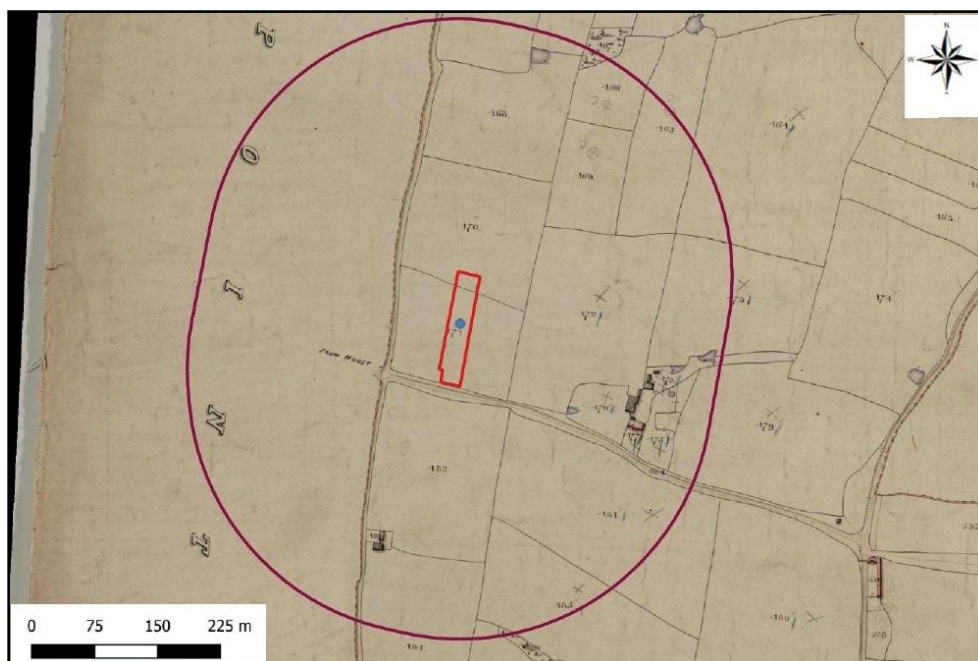


Fig. 8: Clayton Tithe Map (1838)



Fig. 9: 1879 OS Map

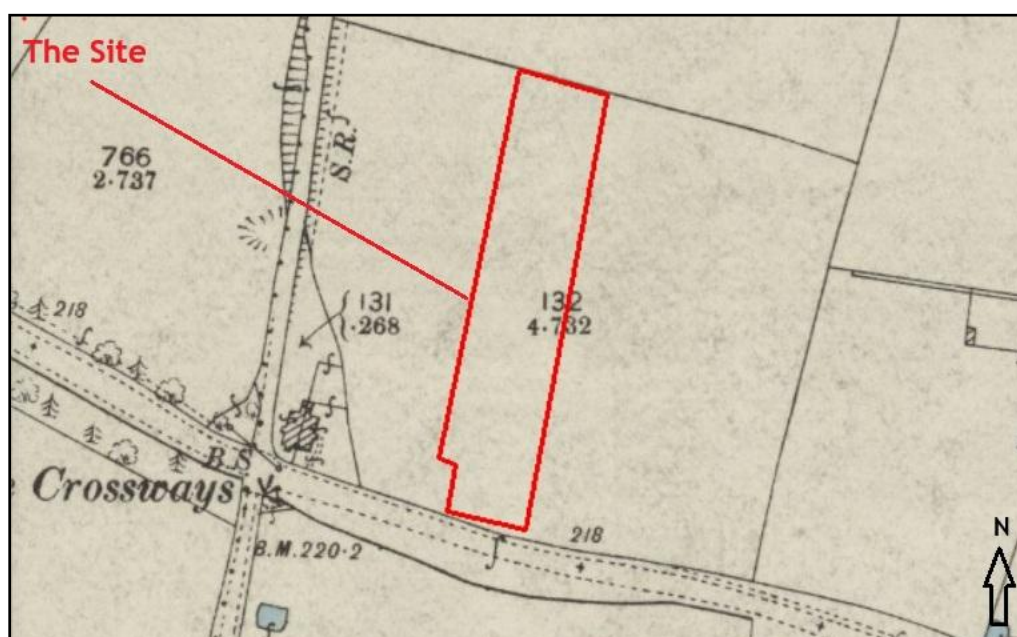


Fig. 10: 1897 OS Map



Fig. 11: 1910 OS Map



Fig. 12: 1946 OS Map



Fig. 13: 1956 OS Map

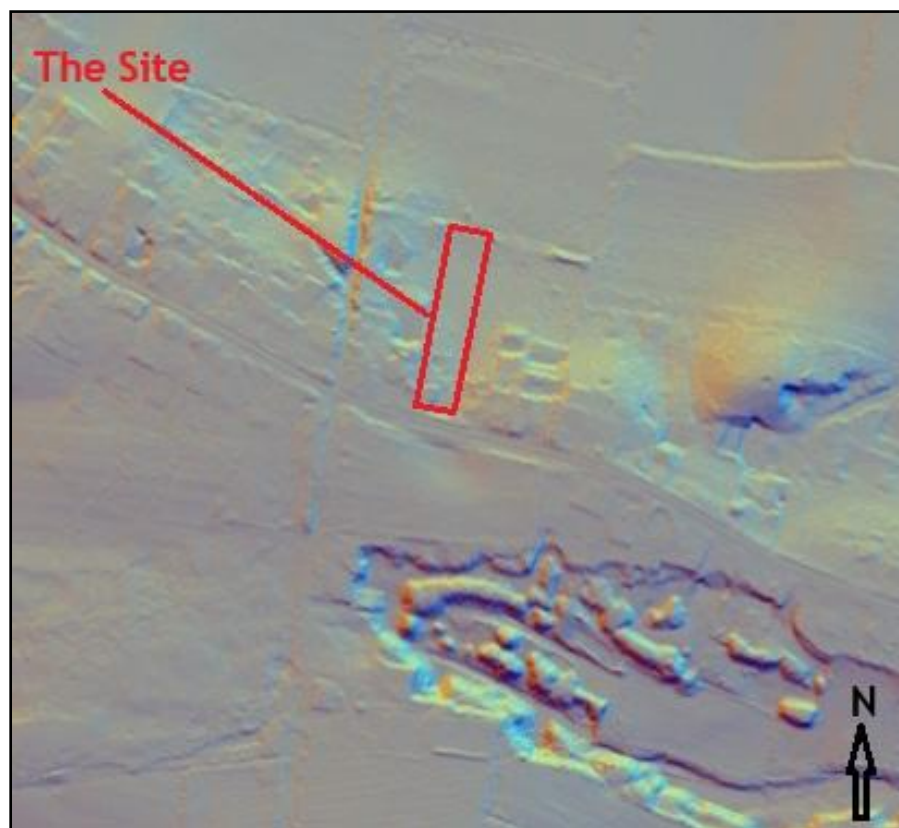


Fig. 14: LiDAR Image
<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore>

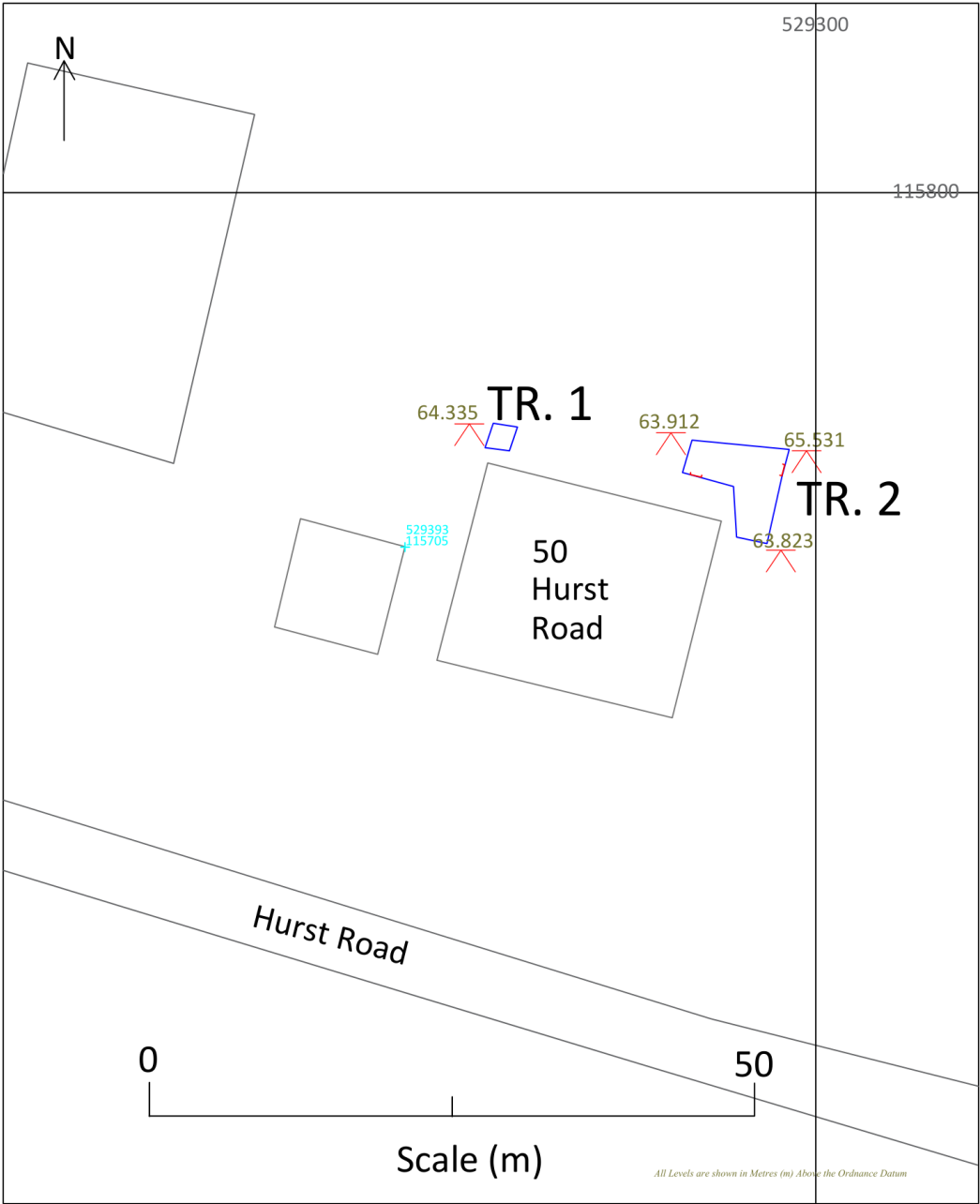


Fig. 15: Trench Location Plan

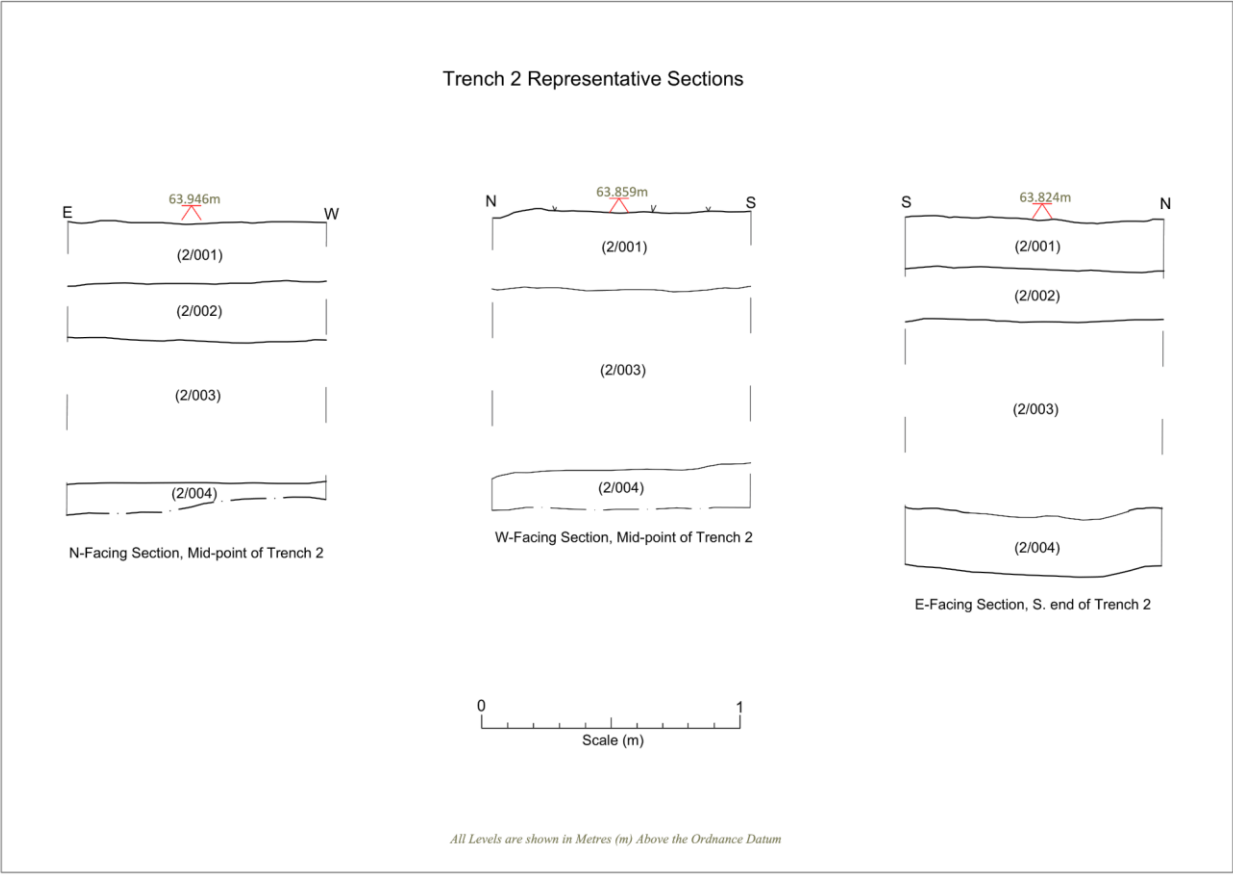


Fig. 16: Representative Sections

Appendix 1: HER Summary Form

HER enquiry number	N/A					
Site code	HHS25					
Project code	CBAS1597					
Planning reference	DM/24/2505					
Site address	50 Hurst Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9NL					
District/Borough	Mid Sussex District Council					
NGR (12 figures)	TQ 29415 15761					
Geology	Folkstone Formation.					
Fieldwork type	Eval X	Excav	WB	HBR	Survey	Other
Date of fieldwork	21st to 23rd of July 2025.					
Sponsor/client	Wooj Property Ltd.					
Project manager	Chris Butler					
Project supervisor	David Atkin					
Period summary	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	Other:	
Project summary (100 word max)	<i>Two evaluation trenches were opened on the footprint of the proposed development. A simple stratigraphy of the existing patio above the natural geology was present in Trench 1 and patio/made ground, subsoil above the natural geology was noted in Trench 2.</i> <i>No features of archaeological interest were present and no archaeological finds were recovered.</i>					
Museum/Accession No.	TBC					

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He was a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and taught A-Level Archaeology at Bexhill 6th Form College having qualified (Cert. Ed.) as a teacher in 2006.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. He has recently undertaken large landscape surveys of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren and is Co-Director of the Barcombe Roman Villa excavation project.

His publications include *Prehistoric Flintwork*, *East Sussex Under Attack* and *West Sussex Under Attack*, all of which are published by Tempus Publishing Ltd.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Building Surveys, Landscape and Woodland Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

Chris Butler MCIfA Archaeological Services Ltd

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Unit 12
Mays Farm
Selmeston
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TS

Tel: 01323 811785

e mail: chris.butler@cbasltd.co.uk