

Post-Excavation Assessment Final Report

**Archaeological Excavations at
Land South of Crawley Down Road
Felbridge, West Sussex**

**NGR: 536456 139262
(TQ 36456 39262)**

Planning Reference: DM/23/0810

**ASE Project No: 250255
Site Code: FBR23**

**ASE Report No: 2025203
OASIS ID: archaeol6-538224**

By Rachael Geoghegan



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Date of Issue:	November 2025		
Version:	1		

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Barratt Redrow Southern Counties to conduct archaeological investigations at Land South of Crawley Down Road, Felbridge (NGR: 536456 139262) in advance of the redevelopment of the site. The fieldwork took place between 14th July 2025 and 1st August 2025.

Following on from an evaluation, three small excavation areas in the north-western corner of the site (A-C) were undertaken as archaeological mitigation. The main aim of the excavation was to further expose and record the London to Brighton Roman Road that was previously recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation, and to ensure that it, and other proximate archaeological features identified as anomalies in a geophysical survey were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. The routeway, four lengths of roadside ditch and four tree throws were subsequently recorded across the three areas. The only artefacts recovered from the road and its ditches were small amounts of intrusive post-medieval pottery, and residual flint fragments and iron slag. An iron nail, which could not be closely dated, was also recovered. The lack of other archaeological evidence and artefacts suggests that this section of the road sat in a remote landscape.

The report is written and structured so as to conform to the standards required of post-excavation analysis work as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (MoHCLG 2023) and older documents Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; Historic England 2015). Analysis of the stratigraphic, finds and environmental material has indicated a provisional chronology, and assessed the potential of the site archive to address the original research agenda, as well as assessing the significance of those findings. This has highlighted that no further analysis work is required.

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION
2.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
3.0	ORIGINAL RESEARCH AIMS
4.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS
5.0	FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS
6.0	POTENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS
7.0	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appendix 1: Context Register
Appendix 2: Group List
Appendix 3: Bulk Samples

HER Summary
OASIS Summary

TABLES

Table 1:	Quantification of hand-collected bulk finds
Table 2:	Late post-medieval pottery assemblage (c. 1750-1900+)
Table 3:	Stone assemblage
Table 4:	The slag assemblage
Table 5:	Quantification of site paper and digital archive
Table 6:	Quantification of artefact and environmental samples
Table 7:	Context register
Table 8:	Group list

FIGURES

Figure 1:	Site location
Figure 2:	Site plan showing phases of work
Figure 3:	Site plan showing all phases of archaeology
Figure 4:	Phase 1 plan
Figure 5:	Phase 1 selected sections and photographs
Figure 6:	Phase 1 selected sections and photographs
Figure 7:	Unphased selected sections and photographs
Figure 8:	Site plan with 1958 OS map
Figure 9:	Site plan showing phases of work over geophysics

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

- 1.1.1 The site consists of two parcels of land on either side of a bridlepath leading south from Crawley Down Road, Felbridge. The site occupies grass pasture to the west of Felbridge village centre. Crawley Down Road and residences borders it to the north, the Felbridge Water to the south and residences and woodlands to the east and west.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey the sites lie over Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (Sandstone and Siltstone). Superficial deposits are not mapped (BGS 2023).
- 1.2.2 The western half of the site slopes gently from the north down to the stream in the south. The eastern half of the site slopes gently down from the north to a small plateau in the area of Trenches 45 and 48, before sloping more steeply down to the stream in the south.

1.3 Scope of the Project

- 1.3.1 Planning permission for the construction of residential dwellings with associated access, car-parking and services was granted consent by Mid Sussex District Council (ref: DM/23//0810). A condition of the planning required that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken prior to the commencement of any construction work.
- 1.3.2 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Barratt Redrow Southern Counties to undertake archaeological evaluation.
- 1.3.3 Following the production of an evaluation report (ASE 2025), discussions between ASE, Barratt Redrow Southern Counties and Mark Baister (Essex Place Services) in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the LPA, three small excavation areas were agreed as archaeological mitigation. Areas A, B and C sit in the north-western corner of the western land parcel (Figure 2).
- 1.3.4 No separate Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was required for the excavation by Mark Baister but the evaluation methodology as outlined in the WSI was followed (ASE 2023)

1.4 Circumstances and Dates of Work

- 1.4.1 Evaluation (ASE 2025) took place between 3rd December 2024 – 9th December 2024 and 26th March 2025 - 14th April 2025.
- 1.4.2 Excavation took place between 14th July 2025 and 1st August 2025.

1.5 Archaeological methodology

- 1.5.1 All excavation areas were machine stripped using a tracked mechanical 360° excavator. All mechanical excavation was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket under the direct supervision of experienced archaeologists.

Overburden deposits were first removed. Machine excavation was then carried out to the surface of natural geology whereupon archaeological features were exposed. Care was taken not to machine off seemingly homogenous layers that might have been the upper parts of archaeological features. The resultant surfaces were cleaned as necessary, and a pre-excavation plan prepared using Global Positioning System (GPS) planning technology. This was made available to the Project Manager, the Supervisor and the County Archaeologist.

- 1.5.2 This pre-excavation plan was in Autocad and PDF format and printed at a suitable scale (1:20 or 1:50) for on-site use. The plan was then updated by regular visits to site by Archaeology South-East Surveyors who plotted excavated features and recorded levels in close consultation with the Supervisors.
- 1.5.3 All excavation work was carried out in line with the *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (CDC / ESCC / WSCC, 2019) and in line with the *WSI* (ASE 2023) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code, Regulations and Standards and Guidance* (CIfA 2025).
- 1.5.4 After the cleaning and planning of the excavation areas the following sampling strategy was employed:
- all structures and all zones of specialised activity (e.g. funerary, ceremonial, industrial, agricultural processing) were fully excavated and all relationships recorded.
 - ditches and gullies had all relationships defined, investigated and recorded. All terminals were excavated. Sufficient of the feature lengths were excavated to determine the character of the feature over its entire course; the possibility of recuts of parts, and not the whole, of the feature were considered.
 - pits were initially excavated to safe depths (generally 1.2m) and fully recorded. Samples of pits were subsequently mechanically excavated to facilitate further collection of artefacts.
 - post and stake holes were fully excavated ensuring that all relationships were investigated.
 - for other types of features such as working hollows, quarry pits etc., all relationships at least were ascertained. Further investigation was a matter of on-site judgement, but sought to establish as a minimum their extent, date and function.
 - for layers a decision on-site was made as to the extent that they were excavated. The factors governing the judgement included the possibility that they masked earlier remains, the need to understand function and depositional processes, and the necessity to recover sufficient artefacts to date the deposit and to meet the project aims.
 - Consideration was given to employing the single context recording system if remains are sufficiently complicated.
- 1.5.5 All excavated deposits and features were recorded according to current professional standards using the standard context record sheets used by ASE.
- 1.5.6 A full digital photographic record of all features was maintained. This illustrates the principal features and finds both in detail and in a general context. The

photographic record also includes working shots to represent more generally the nature of the fieldwork.

1.5.7 All finds recovered from excavated deposits were collected and retained in line with the ASE artefacts collection policy.

1.5.8 The excavation area and spoil were metal detected for artefact recovery.

Environmental Sampling Strategy

1.5.9 Samples were collected from suitable excavated contexts, including dated/datable buried soils, well-sealed slowly silted features, and sealed features containing evident carbonised remains, peats, water-logged or cess deposits.

1.5.10 The sampling aimed to recover spatial and temporal information concerning the occupation of the site. This was best achieved by sampling a range of feature types (pits, ditches, post-holes, cess pits) from across the site, the fills of which can be compared. Where clearly defined fills were evident within features or in large features with superficially homogenous fills, stratified data was obtained by taking multiple samples spread through the deposits.

1.5.11 A standard bulk sample size of 40litres (or 100% of small features) was taken from dated/datable sealed contexts to recover environmental remains such as fish, small mammals, molluscs and botanicals. Larger samples of 80-100 litres were taken from some contexts, rich in large mammal bones and shell.

1.5.12 Sub-samples of up to 10 litres were kept aside from the bulk samples for specialist processing and analysis to target retrieval of insects, fish bone and parasites for example.

1.6 Organisation of the Report

1.6.1 This post-excavation assessment (PXA) final report has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; English Heritage 2015).

1.6.2 The report seeks to place the results from the site (hitherto referred to together as 'the site') within the local archaeological and historical setting; to quantify and summarise the results; specify their significance and potential, including any capacity to address the original research aims.

1.6.3 Following on from previous archaeological evaluation at the site (ASE 2025; Figure 2) work at the site ran as a single excavation, with the finds and environmental archives all recorded under a single site code: FBR23.

1.6.4 Where possible the results from the evaluation(s) have been integrated and assessed with the results from the main excavation.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following information is drawn from the desk-based assessment (DBA; WA 2023) supplemented with the results of an investigation undertaken to the immediate west of the site (ASE 2019).
- 2.1.2 Geophysical survey had identified anomalies of possible archaeological interest across much of the site area. These included anomalies corresponding with the route of the Roman road (SUMO 2023).
- 2.1.3 Mesolithic flints have been recovered during fieldwalking exercises over the fields surrounding Gulledge Farm to the south of the site (MWS4167; see Appendix 4).
- 2.1.4 An apparent scatter of Neolithic flint implements was found in the field to the south of Gulledge Farm (WSCC HER Ref: MWS3448).
- 2.1.5 There is no evidence for the Bronze or Iron Age activity in the vicinity of the site.
- 2.1.6 The projected route of the London to Brighton Roman Road is noted to run through the north-west corner of the site.
- 2.1.7 In 2019 archaeological investigation undertaken by ASE to the immediate west of the site identified a section of the north-north-east aligned Roman London to Brighton Road running through the south-east corner of the site in its projected location. No other archaeological evidence was found suggesting that this section of the road was in a remote area of the Roman landscape (ASE 2019).
- 2.1.8 Two possible bloomery sites were recorded to the west of the site that may be either Romano-British or medieval in origin (WSCC HER Ref: MWS997).
- 2.1.9 The scheduled remains of a former medieval moated site exist 75m to the southwest of the western field (NHLE entry 109904). The monument survives as two contiguously ditched rectangular islands orientated west-southwest east-northeast with overall dimensions of 90 m long and 47 m wide. The exact age of the moated sites is not currently known as no intrusive survey has been completed, but it is likely to have been constructed between the 13th and 14th century when moated houses were in fashion. There are no surface features to suggest the presence of buildings, however, medieval and post-medieval tiles have been recovered, suggesting a high-status building existed. The moated site may have been built in this location to take advantage of the Roman road which is likely to have still be in use at the time.
- 2.1.10 Approximately 200m to the south of the moated site is also the possible siting of a deserted medieval village (WSCC HER Ref: MWS3812). The deserted village was identified in 1985 after what appeared to be building platforms were recognised.
- 2.1.11 The earliest depiction of the site in detail is the 1840 Tithe map for the parish of East Grinstead (not illustrated). The map shows that the western field comprised one large field not too dissimilar in appearance to today. However, the eastern field was divided into small regular plots, some occupied by small

buildings. A trackway also cut partially through the eastern field that linked up to the bridleway. A different family occupied each plot with the empty plots used for grazing.

- 2.1.12 By 1874, the eastern field had undergone considerable change (not illustrated). All of the former buildings and land divisions had been removed in favour of a more regular field system layout. The changes coincided with the construction of Oak Farm directly north of the eastern field. Two buildings in the eastern field were probably used as farm buildings associated with Oak Farm.
- 2.1.13 By 1896, the two buildings within the site had been demolished (not illustrated). Between 1896 and 1936, a number of developments had occurred to the site and surrounding area. In the eastern field, the land was amalgamated to form the field system we see today. In the western field, the woodland known as Avenue Wood had been allowed to encroach northwards along the north bank of Felbridge Water. Felbridge had also expanded with new residential development along Crawley Down Road, which continued well into the late 20th century. A small cottage located within the site (not illustrated) was constructed between 1896 and 1936.

3.0 ORIGINAL RESEARCH AIMS

3.1 General Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 The main aim of the excavation was to further expose and record the Roman Road recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation and to ensure that it, and any other archaeological features were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

3.2 The general aims of the archaeological investigations as listed in the WSI (ASE 2023) are to ascertain:

- *Whether archaeological remains are present on the site and if so to assess their nature, date, survival and significance*
- *To test anomalies identified by the geophysical survey*
- *How they might be impacted by the development of the site*
- *To enable the LPA Archaeology Officer to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work either in advance of, or during, the development*

3.3 The project also has the potential to inform on the following areas of research from the South-Eastern Research Framework (SERF; KCC 2025).

- *To what degree is the region a crossroads or a backwater in terms of UP and early Mesolithic occupation patterns (Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic)*
- *Communications: complete the main road network (Roman)*
- *Comparisons between urban and rural, coastal and in-land communities (medieval)*
- *Communications: work could be done on the medieval re-use of Roman roads (medieval)*
- *The development of the village in the post-medieval period (post-medieval and modern)*
- *An understanding of the multifaceted landscape (post-medieval and modern)*

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

(Figure 3)

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 A small quantity of residual worked flints suggest some occupation of the prehistoric landscape. Further exposure of the Roman road in Area A contained no dating evidence, beyond residual slag and flint, and intrusive post-medieval pottery. A single iron nail was recovered from one of the ditch termini, though this cannot be closely dated. Four small, undated tree throws were recorded in Areas B and C. No other archaeological evidence was uncovered during the excavation.

4.2 Natural Deposits

- 4.2.1 Excavations in all parts of the site revealed a typical stratigraphic sequence of 0.18m - 0.35m of topsoil and subsoil overlying Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand. These are homogenous deposits of mid blue-grey clay-silt and light yellow-grey clay-silt. No archaeological features were visible in the topsoil or subsoil.

4.3 Residual Earlier Prehistoric Material

- 4.3.1 A residual Mesolithic - Early Bronze Age blade like flake was recovered from the surface of Roman Road (G1). Three other, broadly prehistoric, flint chips were recovered from the fill of ditch (G5).

4.4 Phase 1: Romano-British

(Figures 4, 5 and 6)

- 4.4.1 The Roman Road (G1) ran NNW across Area A. It measured between 6.11m and 8.40m wide, and 0.16m-0.25m deep. At the southern end of Area A, the road consisted of light orange-brown silty-clay with moderate inclusions of ironstone and sandstone [21]. At the northern end of Area A, it consisted of mid brown-yellow clay-silt with occasional large sandstone fragments [29], overlying cemented white-grey silt [28].
- 4.4.2 A single sherd of intrusive post-medieval pottery and a partial residual flint flake of Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age were recovered from [29] of (G1) at the northern end of the area. These form the only finds from the road itself.
- 4.4.3 To the south, two parallel ditches (G2) and (G3) flanked the Roman road (G1). They both terminated c. 0.20m into the area.
- 4.4.4 Ditch (G2), on the north side of the road, measured 2.94m wide by 0.35m deep and contained a single fill consisting of dark grey-brown clay-silt [19].
- 4.4.5 Ditch (G3), on the south side of the road, measured 4.38m wide by 0.42m deep and contained a basal fill consisting of very light grey-yellow clay-silt [23] and an upper fill consisting of dark grey-brown clay-silt [24].
- 4.4.6 The fill [40] of the terminus of ditch (G3) contained a single nail of Roman or later date, along with a single intrusive sherd of post-medieval pottery and

residual iron slag. Residual undated, but likely medieval or earlier slag was also recovered from environmental samples of ditches (G2) and (G3).

- 4.4.7 To the north, ditches (G4) and (G5) were parallel to the Roman road (G1). The ditches extended c. 5.0m into the area before terminating. These ditches were not as substantial as ditches at the southern end and did not immediately flank the road as the ditches to the south did, perhaps suggesting some horizontal truncation in this area.
- 4.4.8 Ditch (G4) to the south of the road measured 1.05m wide and 0.12m deep. It contained a single fill consisting of light-grey clay-silt [31].
- 4.4.9 Ditch (G5) to the north side of the road measured 1.70m wide and 0.09m deep. Ditch (G5) contained a single fill of mid-grey clay-silt [26].
- 4.4.10 An environmental sample from fill [33] of the terminus of ditch (G5) contained small, broadly prehistoric flint chips, as well as some residual slag.

4.6 Unphased and undated features

(Figure 7)

- 4.6.1 Areas B and C contained four small, undated tree throws. They were all irregular / ovoid shaped in plan with uneven edges and bases. They measured between 0.33m and 1.05m wide and were filled with silty clay ranging from mid white, grey to mid orange, brown with occasional flecks of charcoal. No dating material was recovered from any of these features.

5.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the excavations at Crawley Down Road, Felbridge. Finds (other than those of iron and copper alloy) requiring cleaning were washed by hand and left to air dry as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context. The hand-collected bulk finds are quantified in Table 1; material recovered from the residues of environmental samples is quantified in Appendix 3.
- 5.1.2 All metal objects were x radiographed according to Historic England guidelines (Fell et al 2006). Conservation of artefacts, where required, has been carried out, or is ongoing. All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA (2014; 2022) guidelines. If conservation recommendations have been made, they are detailed in the relevant material section. The following specialist reports have been prepared in line with the ClfA (2021) toolkit for specialist reporting.
- 5.1.3 Information on material recovered during the evaluation can be found in a prior evaluation report (ASE 2025). In addition to the excavation material, the current report directly incorporates evaluation material from Trench 8, which falls within the mitigation area.

Context	Lithics	Weight (g)	Pottery	Weight (g)	Slag	Weight (g)	Stone	Weight (g)	Iron	Weight (g)
29	1	3	1	9						
40									1	2
8/004					11	50	7	175		
Total	1	3	1	9	11	50	7	175	1	2

Table 1: Quantification of hand-collected bulk finds

5.2 The Flintwork by Karine Le Hégat

- 5.2.1 Four worked flints, weighing just 4g, were recovered during the excavation, comprising three chips from an environmental sample – fragments measuring less than 10mm² – and a blade-like flake. Only a broad prehistoric date can be assigned to the chips from context [33] (sample <7>). The blade-like flake from the upper fill, [29], of Roman Road [27] is incomplete, consisting of the mesial part. It most likely belongs to the Mesolithic, Neolithic or Early Bronze Age.

5.3 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 Although the initial evaluation (ASE 2025) recovered 41 sherds of pottery (949g), the mitigation area produced just two small sherds, weighing 14g, from two individually numbered contexts. The material has been fully listed by common ware name in Table 2 as part of the visible archive. Overall, the pottery consists of small-sized sherds with moderate signs of abrasion. As such the

material appears to have been subjected to some reworking and may well be intrusive in these deposits.

Context/ sample	Fabric	No	Weight (g)	Comments (including estimated number of different vessels represented by form. ? = undiagnostic of form)
29	Unglazed red earthenware	1	9	Flower pot x1 (reduced, flat D- club rim)
40 <107>	Yellow ware	1	5	Colander x1

Table 2: Late Post Medieval pottery assemblage (c. 1750-1900+).

- 5.3.2 Both sherds of pottery are of the late post-medieval period, probably belonging to the 19th century. It is quite possible these small sherds represent intrusive pieces from the moderate scatter of late post-medieval domestic waste noted at the site during the evaluation stage.
- 5.3.3 The post-Roman pottery assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis beyond that undertaken for this report and is not considered suitable for long-term curation in a museum for the purposes of research. The material has therefore been discarded.

5.4 The Geological Material by Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 The archaeological work on the mitigation area recovered just 7g of stone. All was recovered from the environmental residue from context [40]. The material has been fully listed in Table 3 as part of the visible archive.

Context	Sample	Stone type	No	Weight (g)	Comments
40	107	Coal	6	1	Granules
40	107	Fine ferruginous Hastings Beds Sandstone	1	8	Very worn

Table 3: Stone assemblage

- 5.4.2 The stone assemblage consists of a piece of local Hastings Beds Sandstone that shows no signs of modification and some granules of potentially intrusive coal. The latter could derive from the general 19th- century domestic refuse scatter noted during the evaluation.
- 5.4.3 The stone assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.5 The Metallurgical Remains by Luke Barber

- 5.5.1 A very small quantity of material initially identified as potential slag was recovered from the mitigation area and associated evaluation Trench 8. Barring 11 pieces weighing 50g, hand collected from the fill, [8/004], ditch [8/005], all was recovered from the residues of seven environmental samples, including the magnetic fractions. Each of the latter were carefully examined under x10 magnification to establish the presence/absence of micro slags. Due to the

small size of the sample particles, the sampled material was quantified by weight only. The material is listed in Table 4 as part of the visible archive.

Context	Sample	Fraction	Type	Weight (g)	Comments
8/004	1	>2mm	Fuel Ash	1	x1 somewhat vitrified.
8/004	1	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	9	Granules, worn ferruginous siltstone.
8/004			Undiagnostic iron	50	Includes ferruginous siltstone and potential slag
23	5	>2mm	Undiagnostic iron	5	x3. Weathered. Vitrified/glassy in places
23	5	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	1	Granules of ferruginous siltstone & fine sandstone
24	6	>2mm	Iron smelting	81	x3. Worn. Dense, dark grey with some 'flow'
24	6	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	44	
33	7	>2mm	Undiagnostic iron	4	x1. Slightly vitrified. Worn
33	7	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	3	
35	8	>2mm	Undiagnostic iron	3	x1. Slight 'flow' structure
35	8	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	1	
40	107	>2mm	Iron smelting	5	very worn. 'Flow' structure
40	107	>2mm	Undiagnostic iron	22	x1 with slight vitrification
40	107	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	3	
42	9	>2mm	Hearth lining	11	x1 Vitrified face on silty clay
42	9	>2mm	Iron smelting	129	x11 Dense, some 'flow'. Very worn
42	9	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	4	

Table 4: The slag assemblage

5.5.2 A small but diverse assemblage of slag was recovered – all being extracted by hand from the >2mm fraction of the residues. A tiny piece of fuel ash slag was recovered from evaluation Trench 8 though this slag type can be formed through any high temperature event, including domestic hearths. The small fragment of hearth lining could also be from a domestic hearth, though it is suspected it derives from iron working activity (context [42]). Definite iron working is represented by the 215g of smelting slag from contexts [24], [40] and [42]. The 15 pieces clearly derive from smelting iron using a bloomery furnace, suggesting a medieval or earlier date. However, all pieces are very worn. This, together with the negligible quantities involved suggest they form part of a general reworked background scatter of smelting waste – something not unexpected in the Crawley area. A further 34g (six pieces) of iron slag was recovered though all of these were not diagnostic of process (they could derive from smelting or smithing). That from context [33] was notably worn, though the other pieces are fresher. However, like the smelting waste, they probably

represent part of a background scatter from the numerous ironworks that were once in the area.

5.5.3 Despite the careful search of all of the magnetic fractions none produced any micro slags – the magnetic fractions being composed of only ‘magnetic fines’. These mainly consist of granules of ferruginous siltstone and fine sandstone that either have their own inherent magnetism or, more often, have had that magnetism enhanced through burning. They are not diagnostic of any industrial activity as such heating can occur in a domestic hearth or bonfire. The complete absence of any true micro slags would be in keeping with the suggestion that the recovered slag forms part of a general background scatter rather than relating to a close-by iron works.

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

5.6 The Bulk Metalwork by Rae Regensberg

5.6.1 A complete, general purpose iron nail with a sub-rectangular, slightly domed, head and a rectangular stem section was retrieved from the single fill of ditch [039]. The nail weighs 1.8g, has a length of 27.8mm and the head is 11.1mm x 12.5mm. Nails of this type were in use from the Roman period up to the post-medieval period.

5.7 The Environmental Samples by Mariangela Vitolo

Introduction

5.7.1 Seven bulk soil samples were recovered from Romano-British ditch fills during both the evaluation (Trench 8) and mitigation phases of work at the site. Additional samples were taken during the evaluation phase from Trenches 26, 17, and 53; however, these did not yield environmental assemblages of note (ASE 2025, 23-24). As these trenches fall outside the area subject to mitigation, their results are not included in this report. The following report presents the information derived from charred plant remains and charcoal recovered from the mitigation area and associated evaluation trenches, with a focus on agrarian economy, vegetation environment, and fuel selection and use.

Methodology

5.7.2 All samples measured 40L in volume and were processed in their entirety by flotation using a 250µm mesh for retention of the flots and a 500µm mesh for the heavy residues, before being air-dried. The heavy residues were passed through graded sieves of 8, 4 and 2mm and each fraction sorted for environmental and artefactual remains (table 9). Finds and ecofacts extracted from the residues have been distributed to specialists and they are included in the relevant reports where they add further information to the hand-collected assemblages.

5.7.3 The flots were first sub-sampled – when required- and then scanned under a stereozoom microscope at 7-45x magnifications, and their contents were recorded (table 10). Nomenclature used follows Stace (2010). Charcoal specimens were initially examined with the naked eye to assess characteristics such as fragmentation angle—where horizontal fragmentation is often

indicative of oak—and the presence of roundwood and signs of percolation. Selected fragments were then viewed in transverse section under a low-power microscope to confirm identification as oak.

Results

- 5.7.4 The samples generally produced large flots, most of which contained 80–90% uncharred material, including rootlets and seeds of elder (*Sambucus* sp.) and goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.). This uncharred component is indicative of low-level disturbance, likely caused by root activity. Charred plant remains were scarce and limited to leguminous weed seeds (Fabaceae), indeterminate tubers, and buds. These may have been accidentally collected along with other plant material—such as branches and twigs—gathered for fuel. Tubers could also have been uprooted and subsequently discarded into the fire.
- 5.7.5 Charcoal was preserved in small quantities and did not warrant full analysis. However, the recovered fragments were identified as oak (*Quercus* sp.), a large tree characteristic of mixed deciduous woodland. Oak is a durable hardwood, highly valued not only for its excellent burning properties—producing long-lasting heat and minimal smoke—but also for its use in timber and joinery. Its presence in the assemblage may reflect deliberate selection for fuel, particularly for tasks requiring sustained heat such as cooking or metalworking. Alternatively, the fragments could derive from structural wood or domestic refuse, suggesting that oak was readily available and utilised in multiple aspects of daily life at the site.

Discussion

- 5.7.6 The environmental evidence recovered from the mitigation area provides limited but nonetheless informative insights into local vegetation, fuel selection, and aspects of the agrarian economy during the Romano-British period. The macrofossil assemblage was notably sparse, with charred plant remains restricted to leguminous weed seeds (Fabaceae), indeterminate tubers, and buds. These remains likely represent incidental inclusions, possibly collected alongside branches and twigs gathered for fuel. The presence of tubers may suggest opportunistic foraging or the accidental burning of uprooted plants. The scarcity of crop remains and processing waste implies that the sampled contexts were not directly associated with food preparation or crop processing activities. Instead, the assemblage may reflect secondary deposition or domestic refuse disposal. The uncharred component in the flots is indicative of low-level bioturbation, likely caused by root activity, and suggests some degree of post-depositional disturbance. However, these uncharred remains could have preserved as a result of anoxic conditions. In this case, their presence could also reflect the local ruderal vegetation, which may have colonised open or disturbed ground near the ditch features.
- 5.7.7 Charcoal was preserved in small quantities and did not warrant full quantification or detailed taxonomic analysis. Nonetheless, the recovered fragments were identified as oak (*Quercus* sp.), a species typical of mixed deciduous woodland. Oak is a dense hardwood, prized for its high calorific value and slow-burning properties, making it an ideal fuel for domestic and industrial purposes. Its use may reflect deliberate selection, particularly for tasks requiring sustained heat, such as cooking or craft production. Additionally, oak's value as a construction material suggests that its presence

could also derive from the burning of structural timbers or woodworking waste. The identification of oak, even in limited quantities, points to the availability of mature woodland resources in the vicinity. This aligns with broader patterns of woodland exploitation during the Romano-British period, where oak was commonly used for both fuel and timber. The absence of other taxa may be due to preservation bias or selective collection practices.

- 5.7.8 Although the environmental assemblage is limited, it contributes to a broader understanding of site activity and resource use. The dominance of oak charcoal and the incidental nature of the charred plant remains suggest domestic-scale fuel use, with little evidence for intensive crop processing or structured waste disposal. The assemblage reflects a landscape where mixed deciduous woodland was accessible and utilised, and where ruderal vegetation possibly thrived in disturbed areas around the ditch features.

6.0 POTENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

- 6.1.1 The Roman road and roadside ditches recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation were further exposed and recorded. No metalled surface was recorded; however, clear evidence of the road was recorded in the form of varying deposits. These included an upper deposit of silty-clay with moderate inclusions of ironstone and sandstone overlying, in the northern exposure, a cemented white-grey silt. Roadside ditches parallel to the road were recorded on either side of the road. There was a lack of Roman dating evidence, but small quantities of residual prehistoric flint and intrusive post-medieval pottery were recovered. The area around the road was archaeologically negative. In the other two mitigation areas only tree throws were recorded.
- 6.1.2 The findings largely corroborate the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey of this part of the site (SUMO 2023) illustrated on Figure 9 of this report.
- 6.1.3 A typical stratigraphic sequence of only 0.18m - 0.35m of topsoil and subsoil overlay the road remains and so any development activity in this area is likely to impact upon the archaeological remains.
- 6.1.4 Of the South-Eastern Research Framework (SERF; KCC 2025) research areas, only *Communications: complete the main road network (Roman)* can effectively be addressed by the findings of the excavation.
- 6.1.5 The stratigraphic record, nor the finds or environmental material have any potential for further work.
- 6.1.6 The findings are locally significant in that they corroborate the mapped route of the London to Brighton Roman Road.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 7.1.1 A stratigraphic sequence of 0.18m-0.35m of topsoil and subsoil overlying the Upper Tunbridge Sands was recorded in all three areas. The natural geology was a mid-grey-yellow silty sand with occasional sandstone fragments. No archaeological features were visible in the topsoil or subsoil. The London to Brighton Roman Road, four lengths of roadside ditch and four tree throws were recorded across the three areas.

7.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 7.2.1 The southern end of Area A and Areas B and C were sealed beneath deeper layers of intact subsoil and topsoil than the northern end of Area A. Despite being covered by intact topsoil and subsoil, the ditches at the northern end of the area did not appear to have survived as well as the ditches to the south.

7.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

- 7.3.1 The archaeological features consisted of the Roman Road and its roadside ditches in Area A, and four tree throws in Areas B and C. The four tree throws were undated.
- 7.3.2 The Roman Road was discovered to run along a NWW alignment through the northwestern corner of the site. No traces of metalling were present within the excavated area, but several deposits delineated the course of the routeway. These included an upper deposit of silty-clay with moderate inclusions of ironstone and sandstone overlying, in the northern exposure, a cemented white-grey silt.
- 7.3.3 Parallel to the routeway, four segments of ditch were recorded on either side of the road. Four termini were identified, creating a gap on both sides of the road which may have facilitated access onto and off the road to the east and west.
- 7.3.4 The only artefacts recovered from the road and its ditches were small amounts of intrusive post-medieval pottery, and residual flint fragments and iron slag. An iron nail, which could not be closely dated, was also recovered.
- 7.3.5 The route of the road aligns with the route of Rowplatt Lane to the north, historic mapping, such as the 1958 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 8), and was previously excavated in an evaluation to the immediate west of the site (ASE 2019). The routeway was first identified by Margary as part of a Roman road (Margary number 150) running between London and Brighton (Margary 1973).

7.4 Conclusions

- 7.4.1 Following on from an evaluation, three small excavation areas in the north-western corner of the site (A-C) were undertaken as archaeological mitigation. The main aim of the excavation was to further expose and record the London to Brighton Roman Road that was previously recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation, and to ensure that it, and other proximate archaeological features identified as anomalies in a geophysical survey were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. The routeway, four lengths of roadside

ditch and four tree throws were subsequently recorded across the three areas. The only artefacts recovered from the road and its ditches were small amounts of intrusive post-medieval pottery, and residual flint fragments and iron slag. An iron nail, which could not be closely dated, was also recovered. The lack of other archaeological evidence and artefacts suggests that this section of the road sat in a remote landscape.

7.5 Artefacts and Archive Deposition

- 7.5.1 The finds and environmental samples ultimately deposited as part of the archive are dependent on specialist recommendations and regional archive requirements. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited, with permission from the landowner, at a local museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 5 and 6).
- 7.5.2 The site archive will be assembled in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections* (SMA 2020).

Context sheets	42
Section sheets	3
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	56
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	56
Context register	1
Drawing register	3
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	0

Table 5: Quantification of site paper and digital archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box)	2 boxes
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	6
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 6: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Barratt Redrow Southern Counties for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Mark Baister, Historic Environment Consultant, Essex County Council in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the LPA for his guidance and monitoring. The excavation was directed by Rachael Hills with Simon Stevens providing secondary supervisory cover. The author would like to thank all archaeologists who worked on the excavations. Adam Cheshire produced the figures for this report; Jon Sygrave managed the excavations and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

Appendix 1: Context Register

Context	Type	Interpretation	Parent	SubGroup	Group
1	deposit	topsoil		1	
2	deposit	subsoil		2	
3	deposit	natural		3	
4	deposit	topsoil		4	
5	deposit	subsoil		5	
6	deposit	natural		6	
7	deposit	topsoil		7	
8	deposit	subsoil		8	
9	deposit	natural		9	
10	cut	tree throw	10	10	
11	fill	fill, single	10	10	
12	cut	tree throw	12	11	
13	fill	fill, single	12	11	
14	cut	tree throw	14	12	
15	fill	fill, single	14	12	
16	cut	tree throw	16	13	
17	fill	fill, single	16	13	
18	cut	ditch	18	14	2
19	fill	fill, single	18	14	2
20	cut	construction cut	20	15	1
21	fill	fill, single	20	15	1
22	cut	ditch	22	16	3
23	fill	fill, basal	22	16	3
24	fill	fill, upper	22	17	3
25	cut	ditch	25	18	5
26	fill	fill, single	25	18	5
27	cut	roman road	27	19	1
28	fill	fill, basal	27	19	1
29	fill	fill, upper	27	19	1
30	cut	ditch	30	20	4
31	fill	fill, single	30	20	4
32	cut	ditch terminus	32	21	5
33	fill	fill, single	32	21	5
34	cut	ditch terminus	34	22	4
35	fill	fill, single	34	22	4
36	deposit	subsoil		23	
37	cut	construction cut	37	24	1

Context	Type	Interpretation	Parent	SubGroup	Group
38	fill	fill, single	37	24	1
39	cut	ditch	39	25	3
40	fill	fill, single	39	25	3
41	cut	ditch terminus	41	26	2
42	fill	fill, single	41	26	2

Appendix 2: Group List

Context	Type	Interpretation	Group	Group Desc
18	cut	ditch	2	Roadside Ditch
19	fill	fill, single	2	Roadside Ditch
20	cut	construction cut	1	Roman Road
21	fill	fill, single	1	Roman Road
22	cut	ditch	3	Roadside Ditch
23	fill	fill, basal	3	Roadside Ditch
24	fill	fill, upper	3	Roadside Ditch
25	cut	ditch	5	Roadside Ditch
26	fill	fill, single	5	Roadside Ditch
27	cut	roman road	1	Roman Road
28	fill	fill, basal	1	Roman Road
29	fill	fill, upper	1	Roman Road
30	cut	ditch	4	Roadside Ditch
31	fill	fill, single	4	Roadside Ditch
32	cut	ditch terminus	5	Roadside Ditch
33	fill	fill, single	5	Roadside Ditch
34	cut	ditch terminus	4	Roadside Ditch
35	fill	fill, single	4	Roadside Ditch
37	cut	construction cut	1	Roman Road
38	fill	fill, single	1	Roman Road
39	cut	ditch	3	Roadside Ditch
40	fill	fill, single	3	Roadside Ditch
41	cut	ditch terminus	2	Roadside Ditch
42	fill	fill, single	2	Roadside Ditch

Appendix 3: Bulk Samples

Residue quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and weights in grams, with charcoal identifications

Sample Number	Context	Parent	Context Type	Sample Volume (L)	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal 2-4mm	Weight (g)	Other (quantity */ weight [g])
1	8/004	8/005	Ditch	40	*	<1	**	2	MAG. MAT. >2mm (**/1g); MAG. MAT. <2mm (**/8g); SLAG >2mm (*/1g)
5	24	22	Ditch	40			*	<1	MAG.MAT >2mm (*/0g); MAG.MAT<2mm (**/0g); SLAG >2mm (*/5g).
6	23	22	Ditch	40	*	<1	**	<1	MAG.MAT<2mm (***/12g); MAG.MAT>2mm (***/32g); SLAG>2mm (*/82g).
7	33	32	Ditch	40	**	<1	**	1	FLINT>2mm (**/1g); SLAG>2mm (*/4g); MAG.MAT >2mm (**/0g); MAG.MAT <2mm (**/2g).
8	35	34	Ditch	40	*	1	**	<1	MAG.MAT<2mm (**/0g); MAG.MAT >2mm (*/0g); SLAG >2mm (*/0g); FLINT >2mm (*/0g); SLAG >2mm (*/3g).
9	42	41	Ditch	40	*	1	**	1	MAG.MAT>2mm (**/0g); MAG.MAT<2mm (***/2g); SLAG >2mm (*/140g); IRON>2mm (*/12g);
10	40	39	Ditch	40	**	2	***	2	SLAG>2mm (**/27g); STONE >2mm (*/8g); POTTERY >8mm (*/5g); MAG.MAT(**/0g); MAG.MAT<2mm (***/1g); COAL>2mm (*/0g);

Table 10: Flot quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and weight in grams

Sample Number	Context	Parent	Context type	Weight (g)	Flot volume (ml)	Volume Scanned	Uncharred (%)	Sediment (%)	Seeds Uncharred	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal 2-4mm	Charcoal <2mm	Wild Macro remains Charred	Identifications	Preservation
1	8/004	8/005	Ditch	28	200	50	60	25		*	**	**	*	Fabaceae 1	+
5	23	22	Ditch	114	125	125	30	60	* <i>Chenopodium</i> sp			*	*	indeterminate tuber 1	+
6	24	22	Ditch	13	175	175	80	15	** <i>Chenopodium</i> sp			*	*	indeterminate bud 1, indeterminate tuber 1	++
7	33	32	Ditch	4	50	50	80	10	* <i>Sambucus</i> sp			*			
8	35	34	Ditch	30	300	100	90	5				*			
9	42	41	Ditch	45	400	100	90	5				*			

Sample Number	Context	Parent	Context type	Weight (g)	Flot volume (ml)	Volume Scanned	Uncharred (%)	Sediment (%)	Seeds Uncharred	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal 2-4mm	Charcoal <2mm	Wild Macro remains Charred	Identifications	Preservation
10	40	39	Ditch	41	275	100	90	5	* <i>Chenopodium</i> sp			*			

HER Summary

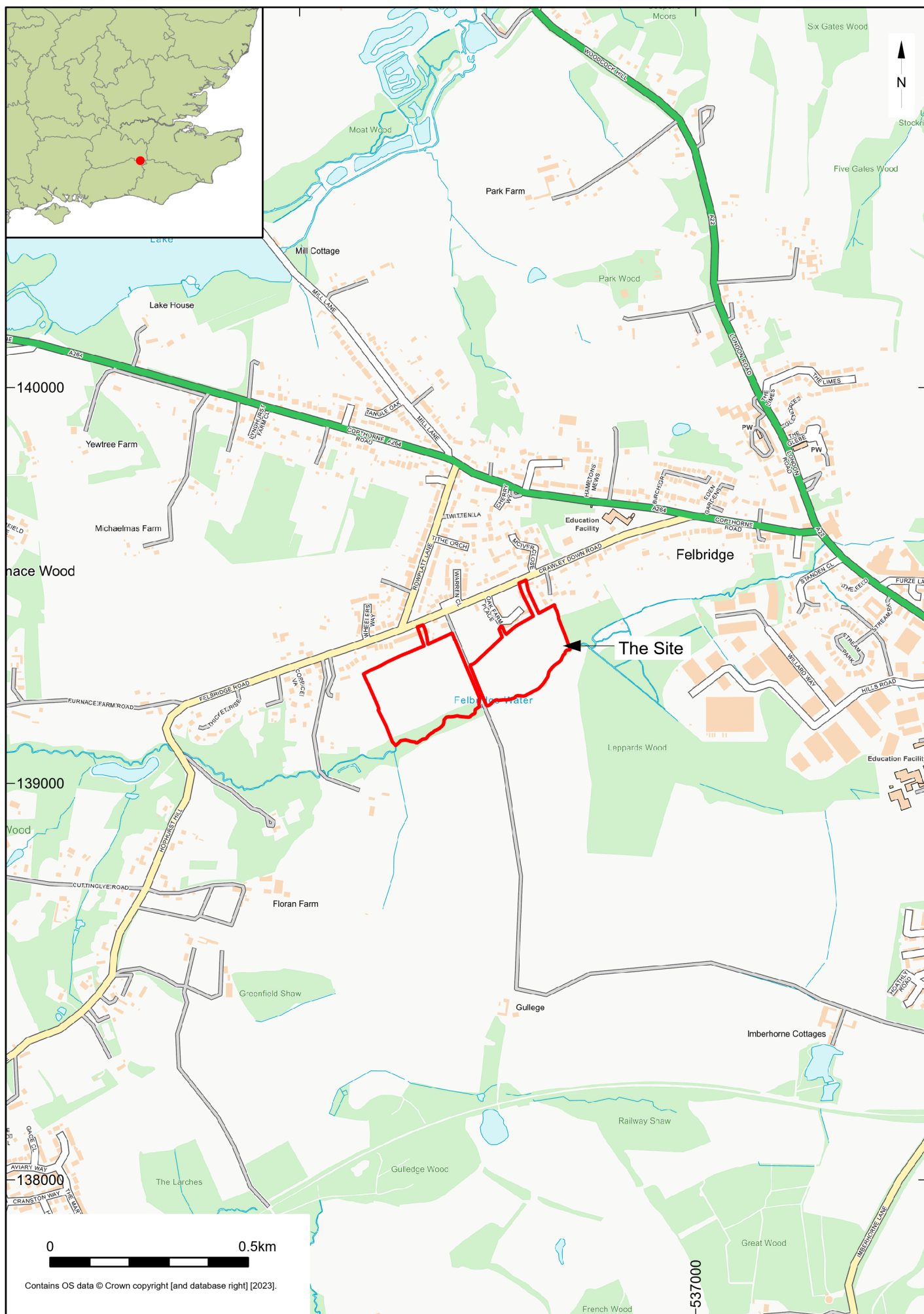
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Project code	250255				
Planning reference	DM/23/0810				
Site address	Crawley Down Road, Felbridge				
District/Borough	East Grinstead				
NGR (12 figures)	536456 139262				
Geology	Upper Tunbridge Sands				
Fieldwork type		Excav			
Date of fieldwork	14 th July – 1 st August 2025				
Sponsor/client	Barratt Redrow Southern Counties				
Project manager	Jon Sygrave				
Project supervisor	Rachael Geoghegan				
Period summary		Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	
Project summary	Following on from an evaluation, three small excavation areas in the north-western corner of the site (A-C) were undertaken as archaeological mitigation. The main aim of the excavation was to further expose and record the London to Brighton Roman Road that was previously recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation, and to ensure that it, and other proximate archaeological features identified as anomalies in a geophysical survey were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. The routeway, four lengths of roadside ditch and four tree throws were subsequently recorded across the three areas. The only artefacts recovered from the road and its ditches were small amounts of intrusive post-medieval pottery, and residual flint fragments and iron slag. An iron nail, which could not be closely dated, was also recovered. The lack of other archaeological evidence and artefacts suggests that this section of the road sat in a remote landscape.				

Finds summary

Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
Flint	Flint	Meso-EBA	1
Pottery	Ceramic	Post-Medieval	1
Nail	Iron	Roman - Medieval	1

OASIS Summary

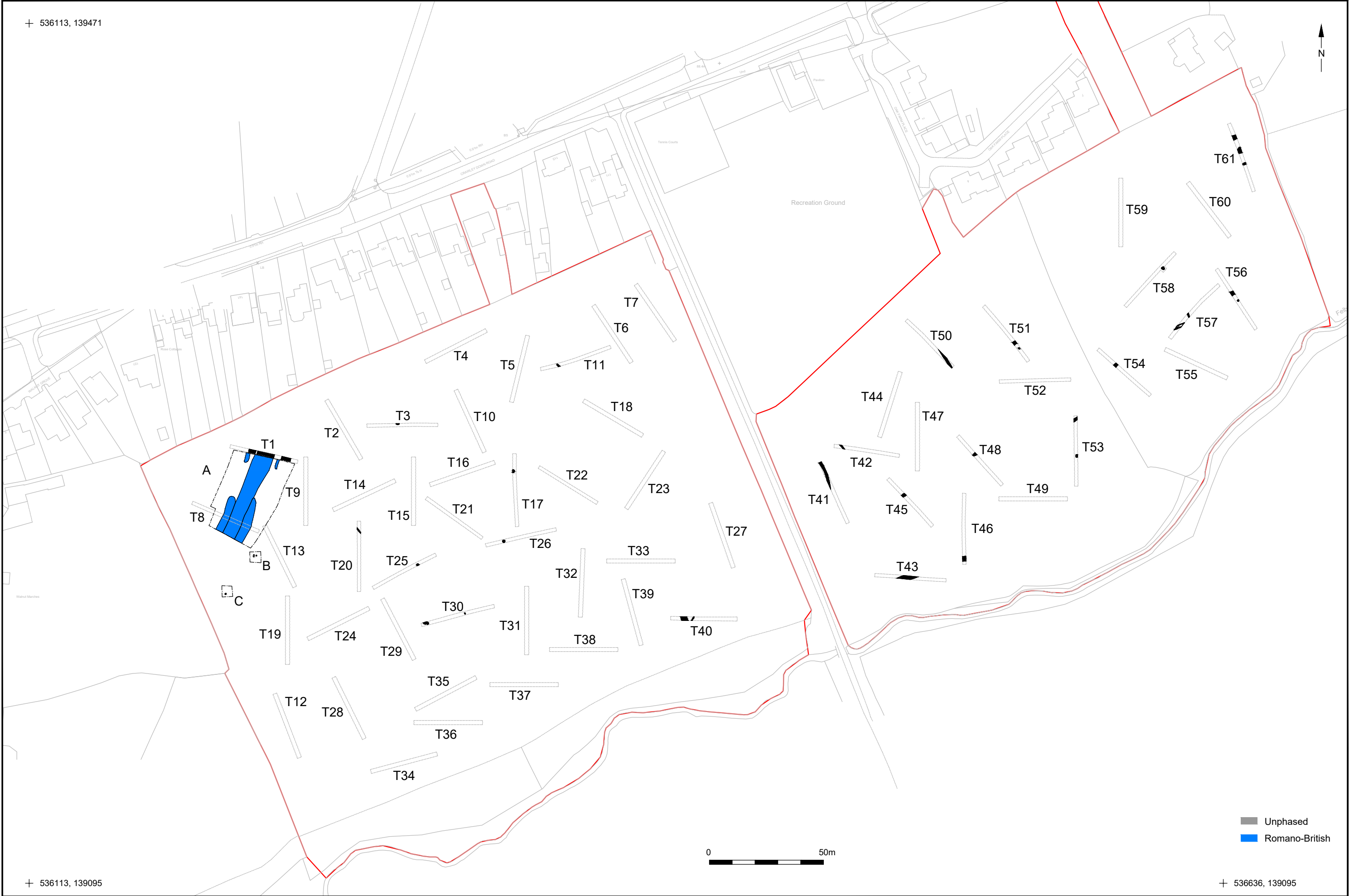
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Project Name	Open Area Excavation at Land South of Crawley Down Road, Felbridge, West Sussex
Sitename	Land South of Crawley Down Road, Felbridge, West Sussex
Sitecode	FBR23
Project Identifier(s)	250255
Activity type	Open Area Excavation
Planning Id	DM/23/0810
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeology South-East
Project Dates	14-Jul-2025 - 01-Aug-2025
Location	Land South of Crawley Down Road, Felbridge, West Sussex NGR: TQ 36456 39262 LL: 51.136378561878566, -0.050973539359177 12 Fig: 536456,139262
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: West Sussex Local Authority District: Mid Sussex Parish: East Grinstead
Project Methodology	All excavation areas were machine stripped using a tracked mechanical 360° excavator. All mechanical excavation was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket under the direct supervision of experienced archaeologists. Overburden deposits were first removed. Machine excavation was then carried out to the surface of natural geology whereupon archaeological features were exposed. Care was taken not to machine off seemingly homogenous layers that might have been the upper parts of archaeological features. The resultant surfaces were cleaned as necessary and a pre-excavation plan prepared using Global Positioning System (GPS) planning technology. This was made available to the Project Manager, the Supervisor and the County Archaeologist. Excavation and recording was then undertaken in line with WSCC and CiFA standards.
Project Results	Following on from an evaluation, three small excavation areas in the north-western corner of the site (A-C) were undertaken as archaeological mitigation. The main aim of the excavation was to further expose and record the London to Brighton Roman Road that was previously recorded in Trenches 1 and 8 of the evaluation, and to ensure that it, and other proximate archaeological features identified as anomalies in a geophysical survey were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. The routeway, four lengths of roadside ditch and four tree throws were subsequently recorded across the three areas. The only artefacts recovered from the road and its ditches were small amounts of intrusive post-medieval pottery, and residual flint fragments and iron slag. An iron nail, which could not be closely dated, was also recovered. The lack of other archaeological evidence and artefacts suggests that this section of the road sat in a remote landscape. in adjacent areas. The lack of other archaeological evidence and artefacts would suggest that this section of the road sat in a remote landscape.
Keywords	Road - ROMAN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Barratt Redrow Southern Counties
HER	West Sussex HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Jon Sygrave



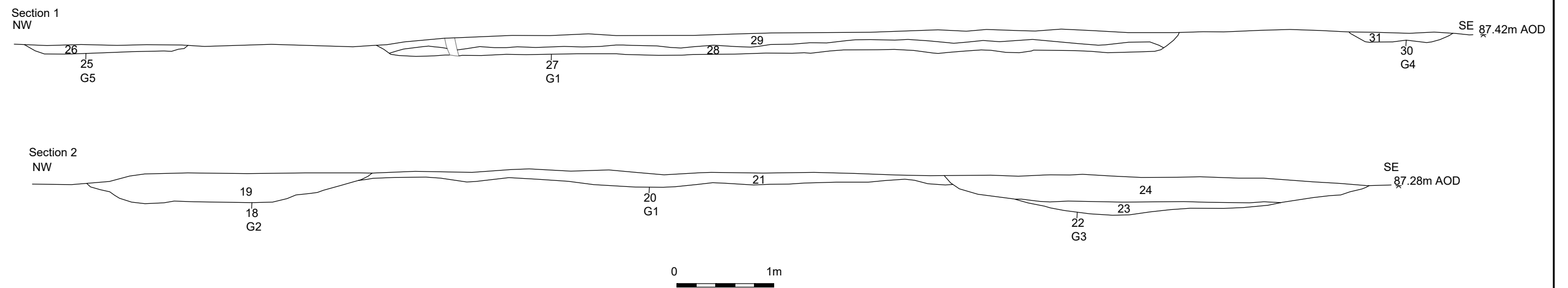
© Archaeology South-East		Crawley Down Road, Felbridge	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 250255	October 2025	Site Location	
Report Ref: 2025203	Drawn by: AC		



© Archaeology South-East		Land South of Crawley Road, Felbridge	Fig.2
Project Ref: 20255	October 2025	Site plan showing phases of work	
Report Ref: 2025203	Drawn by: AC		



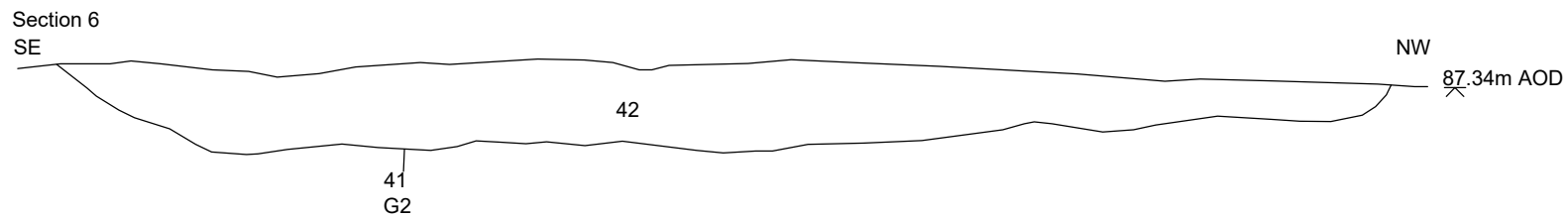
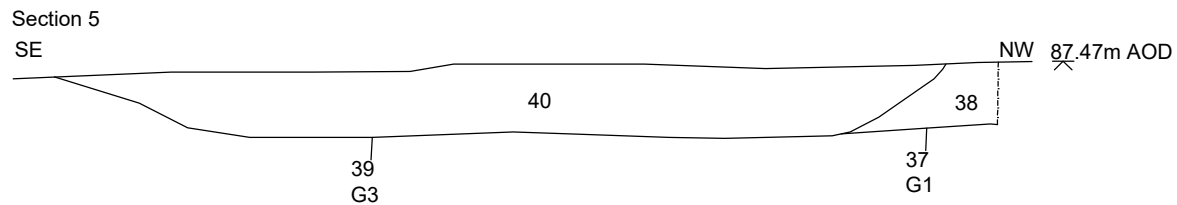
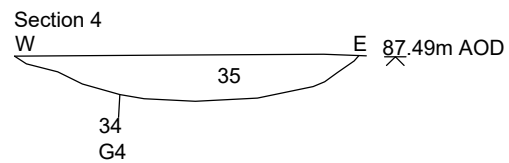
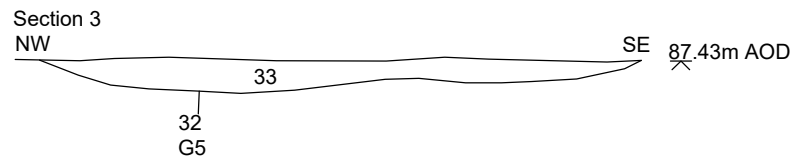




25 G5, 27 G1 and 30 G4 looking north-east



18 G5, 20 G1 and 22 G4 looking north-east



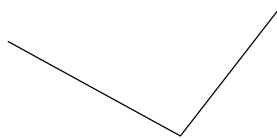
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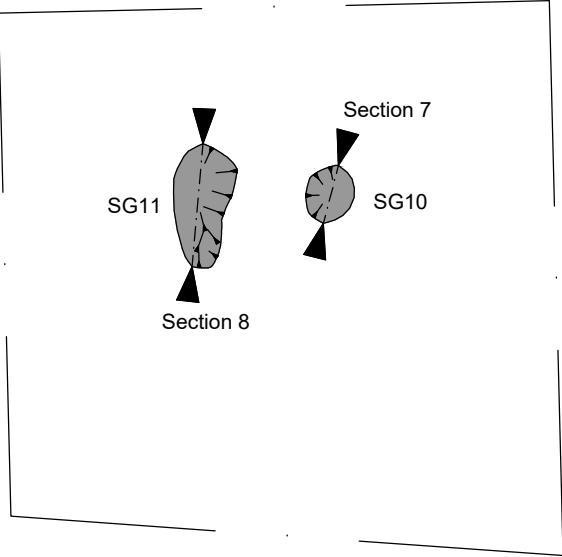
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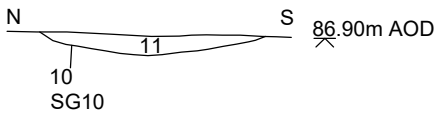
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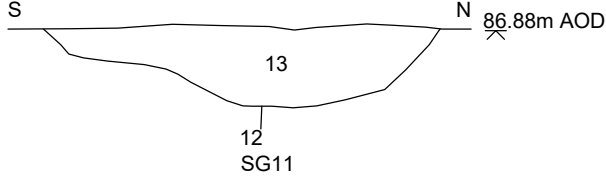
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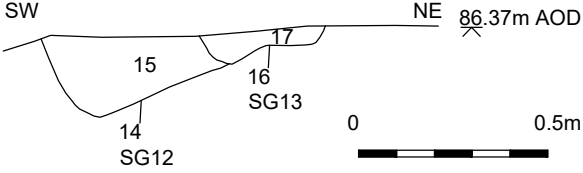
Section 7



Section 8



Section 9



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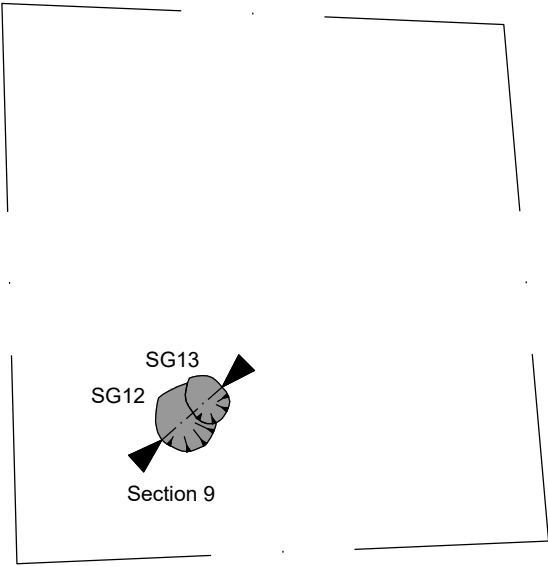


12 SG12 looking south-west



14 SG12 and 16 SG13 looking north-west

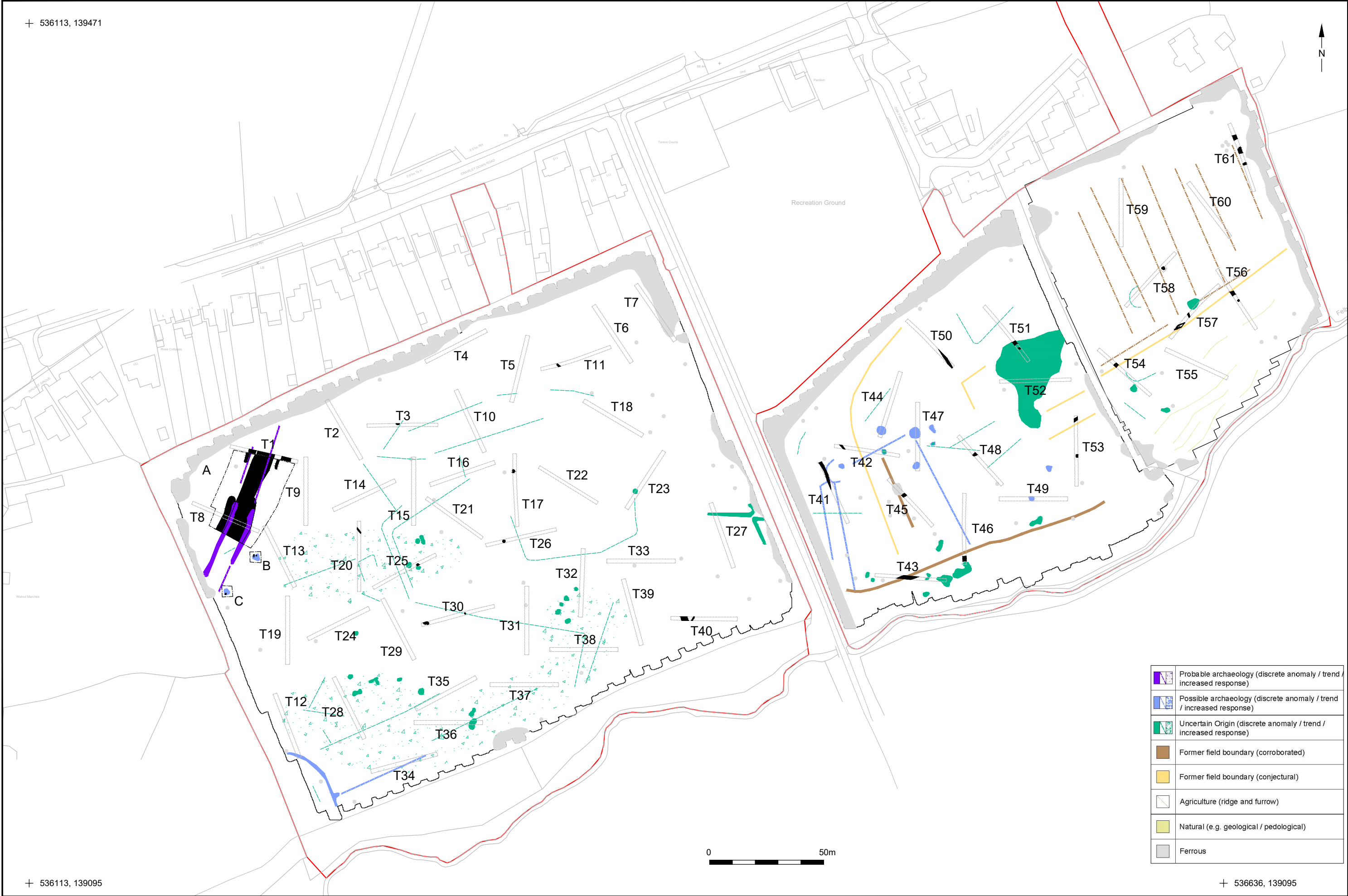
Area C



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