

Western Heights, Dover

Watching brief report

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Watching-brief, Western Heights, Dover, 2016

1. Summary

Observation of groundworks connected with the formation of the England Coast Path across part of the Western Heights at Dover (NGR 631362 140732 to 631645 141162) provided another opportunity to record details of the below-ground archaeology of the nineteenth-century artillery fortress that occupies the summit of ridge. Nothing of special archaeological significance was revealed in any of the excavations and no datable finds were recovered.

2. Introduction

2.1 In 2016 the Canterbury Archaeological Trust was engaged by Thomas Kennedy (Countryside Access Improvement Plan Officer), Kent County Council, to undertake a watching-brief on the Western Heights at Dover. This was connected with the formation of the England Coast Path (Stretch 1: Ramsgate to Folkestone).

2.2 The great nineteenth-century artillery fortress occupying the summit of the Western Heights is of some considerable historical importance and is accordingly scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Monument No. 1020298). Detailed historical studies and surveys carried out by the former RCHME/English Heritage between 2001 and 2004 (Pattison *et al.* 2004, etc.) and have now greatly advanced our understanding of the fortress and provide a baseline study into which the results of new fieldwork can be fitted.

2.3 The works of 2016 (NGR 631362 140732 to 631645 141162) all fell within the boundary of the Scheduled area and thus required an archaeological presence during the course of the works. They provided Western Heights complex, supplementing a series of previous field observations made by CAT across the area (e.g. Parfitt 2008).

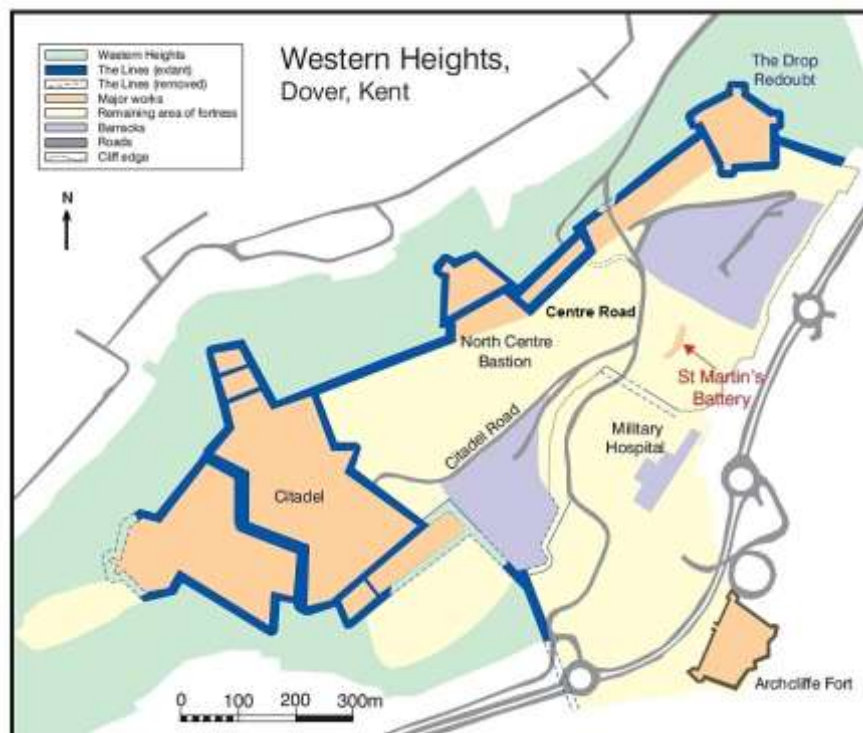


Fig. 1 Outline plan of the Western Heights showing main features of the fortress

2.4 The works inspected in 2016 were connected with two separate operations: –

- i) Construction of a new tarmaced pedestrian footpath along the western side of Centre Road, opposite St Martin’s Battery.
- ii) The excavation ten post-holes for the erection of way-markers in the area of St Martin’s Battery, the Grand Shaft Barracks and the Drop Redoubt. These were all cut adjacent to existing paths and roads.

2.5 A total of seven separate visits was made by the writer, between 31 May and 16 June 2016. The bulk of the excavation work was undertaken on 6 and 8 June. On site, the ground-workers from EOS Civil Engineering gave every assistance. Several useful archaeological observations were made, further refining the developing picture of the archaeology of the Heights.

3. Investigated locations

3.1 Centre Road (Fig. 2)

The works along Centre Road were located just within the defended area of the fortress, between 25 and 60 metres north of the demolished South Entrance (Archcliffe Gate), built in 1864 (Fig. 2; Plate I). Excavations took place on both the eastern and western sides of the present road.



Plate I General view of the Archcliffe Gate before its demolition in 1963. The Centre Road, East works lay through the arch, in the area of telegraph pole (*photo*, Dover Museum)

3.1.1 Centre Road, East

On the eastern side of the road, the excavation work related to the remodelling of the existing car park entrance to improve access and included an opening for pedestrians. This involved a small excavation, no more than 0.25m deep, adjacent to the eastern edge of the road. The area cleared measured roughly 1m by 2m.

In the base of the excavation, the top of the natural chalk bedrock was partially exposed. The surface of this is very likely to have been previously truncated by earlier landscaping works in this area. The chalk surface was sealed by a concrete kerb line, Type 1 sub-base, mixed hardcore, soil and turf, all of second half of twentieth century date. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were revealed during the course of the work.

3.1.2 *Centre Road, West*

Works on the western side of the road were equally shallow but rather more extensive. A two-metre wide strip of ground was cleared for a distance of about 35 metres along the western side of the road, cutting into the base of the existing bank by up to 0.60m.

The material excavated was variable in composition but appeared to comprise two distinct deposit groups. In the western face of the cutting and extending for around half a metre eastwards into the excavation, the material comprised deposits of grey-brown soil and chalk rubble. This had the appearance of being original bank material connected with original nineteenth century earthmoving in this area. East of this, the material was more mixed and variable, comprising chalk rubble, some orange clay, brick and concrete rubble. This represented recent material associated with the final landscaping of the road when it was widened during the 1960s, together with backfilling of various service trenches cut here subsequently (there was evidence of an electric cable and a water pipe).

Amongst the loose material exposed was a scatter of yellow and maroon-red brick fragments, with adhering yellow sandy mortar containing chalk/lime grits. It seems very likely that these bricks are derived from the demolished Archcliffe Gate and its associated structures (Plate I).

Tree and brush clearance for a further 50 metres along the western edge of the road served to make the last remnants of the gate foundations, together with the adjacent fortress walls, a little more visible.

3.2 Holes for sign-posts and way-markers

3.2.1 A series of ten post holes was excavated to house sign-posts and way-markers around the eastern portion of the Heights, all within the Scheduled area. The post-holes were cut using a range of hand tools and a mechanical auger. Each was circular in plan, about 0.25m in diameter and between 0.60 and 0.70m deep. From the soil sections exposed and the spoil generated it was possible to suggest an approximate sequence of deposits at each point but given the limited nature of the works, these need not be fully representative of the immediate area. None of the excavated pits reached the natural geology. Various dump deposits relating the landscaping of the fortress defences were recorded but nothing of special archaeological significance was revealed in any of the pits.

3.2.2 *Post-hole 1* (Fig. 2, 58280)

This was cut in the eastern corner of the car park adjacent to St Martin's Battery. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

- Turf and dark brown topsoil (0.10m), *over*
- Mixed dark grey brown and small chalk rubble (0.30m), *over*
- Small chalk rubble and orange brown clay (0.30m).

This clearly represented made-up ground connected with the construction of the nearby gun battery.

3.2.3 *Post-hole 2* (Fig. 3, 58279)

This was cut at the top of St Martin's Steps, on the northern side of St Martin's Battery. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

- Brown loam topsoil (0.30m), *over*
- Orange clay with flints (0.35m)

These deposits appear to represent dumped material on the upper slopes of the natural combe once occupied by the Grand Shaft barracks (Plate II).

3.2.4 *Post-hole 3* (Fig. 3, 58278)

This was dug at the bottom of St Martin's Steps overlooking the site of the Grand Shaft Barracks. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey loam with brown pea gravel (0.25m) *over*
Brown clay with small chalk (0.45m)

This was made up ground associated with construction of the Steps. The brown pea gravel noted in the upper deposit is likely to derive from early surfacings of the pathway.

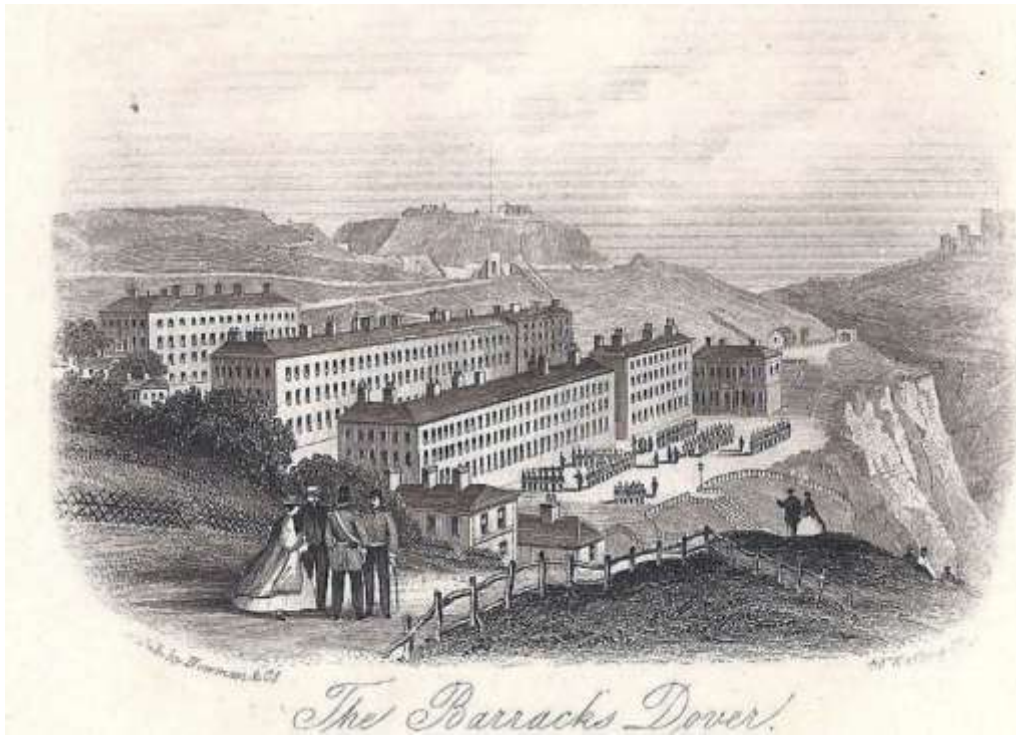


Plate II General view of Grand Shaft Barracks from top of St Martin's Steps in the 1850s

3.2.5 *Post-hole 4* (Fig. 3, 58277)

This was cut near the south-western edge of the Grand Shaft Barracks parade ground below St Martin's Steps. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey-brown gritty loam, crushed grey mortar and occasional yellow bricks (0.65m)
Four separate attempts were made to cut this post-hole; each time buried loose concrete and rubble prevented penetration below 0.30m. The rubble encountered will doubtless relate to the demolished barracks complex. Early maps suggest that the excavations lay adjacent to the site of a wash-house.

3.2.6 *Post-hole 5* (Fig. 4, 58276)

This was cut on a terraced area at the upper west corner of the old Grand Shaft Barracks complex. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Turf and dark brown loam (0.15m) *over*
Fine brown-orange clay (0.50m)

These layers must represent redeposited material lying on an artificial chalk-cut terrace. Early maps suggest that the terrace was formerly occupied stables.

3.2.7 *Post-hole 6* (Fig. 4, 58274)

This was dug on the south-western side of Centre Road where the 1960s road cutting breaks through the rampart adjacent to the North Entrance. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Grey loam with much small chalk rubble (0.35m) *over*
Small chalk rubble disturbed during road construction (0.35m)

These deposits represent loose material associated with the 1960s road cutting.

3.2.8 *Post-hole 7* (Fig. 2, 58284)

This was cut at the junction of Centre Road and Citadel Road at the northern end of the new footpath built as a separate part of the present programme of works (see above). The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey brown loam topsoil (0.30m) *over*

Grey chalky loam with chalk lumps and occasional flint nodules (0.40m)

It seems likely that these deposits represent original nineteenth century dump deposits disturbed when Centre Road was widened here during the 1960s.

3.2.9 *Post-hole 8* (Fig. 2, 58283)

This was cut adjacent to South Military Road, at the southern end of new footpath, opposite the entrance to the St Martin's Battery car park. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey brown loam topsoil (0.15m) *over*

Small chalk rubble (0.50m)

The chalk rubble dump layer is likely to represent original nineteenth century material deposited as part of the fort rampart adjacent to Archcliffe Gate.

3.2.10 *Post-hole 9* (Fig. 5, 58254)

This was cut adjacent to the footpath above the Sixty-four Steps, on the north (external) side of the Redoubt ditch. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey-brown chalky loam, topsoil (0.25m) *over*

Loose small and medium chalk rubble (0.45m)

The chalk rubble dump layer must relate to the original nineteenth century landscaping of the hillside outside the main defences.

3.2.11 *Post-hole 10* (Fig. 5, 58273)

This was cut adjacent to the footpath on the outside of the Drop Redoubt ditch, opposite the Redoubt's east caponier. The recorded soil sequence consisted of:

Dark grey-brown chalky loam, topsoil (0.40m) *over*

Loose small chalk rubble (0.25m)

As with Post-hole 9, the chalk rubble dump layer must relate to the original nineteenth century landscaping of the hillside outside the main defences (Plate III).



Plate III General view of the Drop Redoubt and Western Heights in 1808–9
(detail from a painting by Capt. Durrant showing recent excavations outside the Redoubt)

4. Finds

No archaeological finds were discovered during the course of the ground works.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The new footpath construction work in 2016 has provided some further opportunity to examine the nature of the below-ground deposits and structures present within the Scheduled Area on the Western Heights at Dover.

5.2 The deposits recorded relate to the extensive nineteenth-century landscaping that occurred during the construction of the defences of the Heights fortress. Later deposits revealed relate to twentieth century service trenching and road widening. Nothing of special archaeological significance was revealed in any of the excavations and no datable finds were recovered.

5.3 No unauthorised damage was caused to the fabric of the Scheduled Ancient Monument during the course of the present works and no further analysis of the archaeological information recorded is presently required.

6. Bibliography

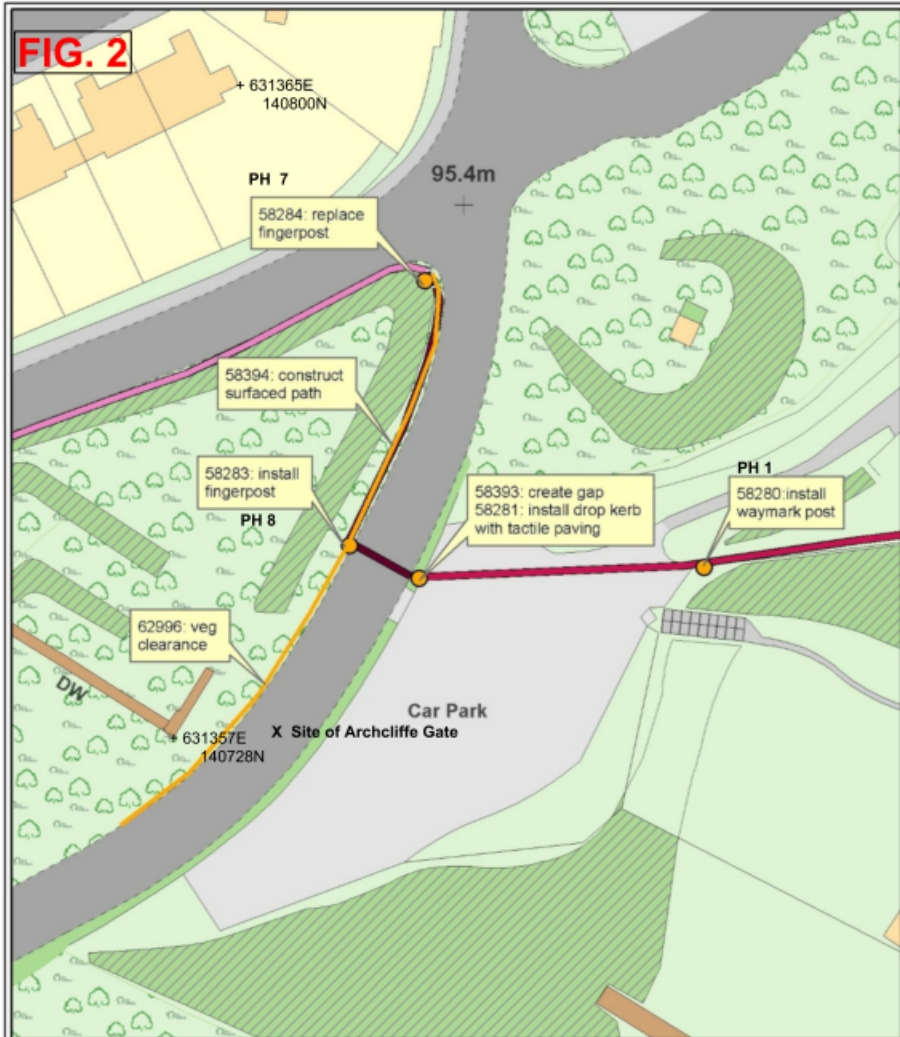
Parfitt, K., 2008 *Dover Western Heights, Water Upgrade, 2007–8, Watching-brief Report* (C.A.T. Archive report, October, 2008).

Pattison, P., and Garrow, D., 2003 *The Western Heights Dover, Kent (No. 5: St Martin's Battery)* (English Heritage Survey Report, 2003).

Pattison, P., Menuge, A. and Williams, A., 2004 *The Western Heights Dover, Kent (No. 2: The Citadel)* (English Heritage Survey Report, revised 2004).

APPENDIX

Dover Western Heights, 2016		Digital film record sheet		Film No: 19425	
<i>Shot No.</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Looking</i>	<i>Initials</i>
DSCN 5724	Centre Road	Human	General working shot	W	KP
5725	Centre Road	-	Line of new footpath before excavations began	N	KP
5726	Centre Road	Human	Preparing new crossing	SE	KP
5727	Centre Road	Human	Cleaning chalk, eastern side of road	N	KP
5728	Centre Road	-	Exposed chalk, eastern side of road	NW	KP
5729	Centre Road	-	Exposed chalk, eastern side of road	NW	KP
5730	Centre Road	Human	Digging along western side of road	NW	KP
5731	Centre Road	-	Completed exit from carpark	E	KP
5732	Centre Road	Human	Digging along western side of road	NW	KP
5733	Centre Road	Human	Digging along western side of road	NE	KP
5734	Centre Road	50cm	Deposits exposed in western bank	NW	KP
5735	Centre Road	50cm	Deposits exposed in western bank	NW	KP
5736	Centre Road	-	Completed exit from carpark	SE	KP
5737	Centre Road	-	Completed exit from carpark	NE	KP
5738	Centre Road	-	West pavement under construction	NE	KP
5739	Centre Road	-	Clearing trees & undergrowth on site of Archcliffe Gate	W	KP
5740	Centre Road	-	West footpath excavation complete	N	KP
5741	Centre Road	-	West footpath excavation complete	N	KP
5742	Centre Road	-	West footpath excavation complete	NW	KP
5743	Centre Road	Human	West footpath excavation complete	SW	KP
5751	St Martins Steps	-	Way marker post in position (PH 2)	NE	KP
5752	St Martins Batt.	-	Way marker post in position (PH 1)	E	KP
5753	Centre Road	Human	New path open and in use	W	KP
5754	Centre Road	Human	New path open and in use	NE	KP
5755	Centre Road	-	Way marker post in position (PH 6)	W	KP
5756	Centre Road	-	Way marker post in position (PH 7)	SW	KP
5762	Drop Redoubt	-	Way marker post in position (PH 9)	SW	KP
5765	Drop Redoubt	-	Way marker post in position (PH 10)	SW	KP
5767	Drop Redoubt	-	Way marker post in position (PH 10)	NW	KP
IMG 0104	Centre Road	-	West path base in place	NE	KP
0105	Centre Road	-	West path base in place	NE	KP
0107	St Martins Steps	Human	Way marker post in position (PH 4)	SW	KP
0108	St Martins Steps	-	Way marker post in position (PH 4)	SW	KP
			(ENDS)		

FIG. 2

Key	
	Public Footpath
	Public Bridleway
	Restricted Byway
	Byway Open to All Traffic
	England Coast Path
	Location of Job Site

Coastal Access: Stretch 1 RFK Western Heights Map 4

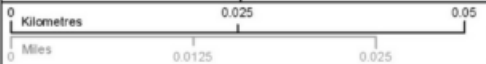
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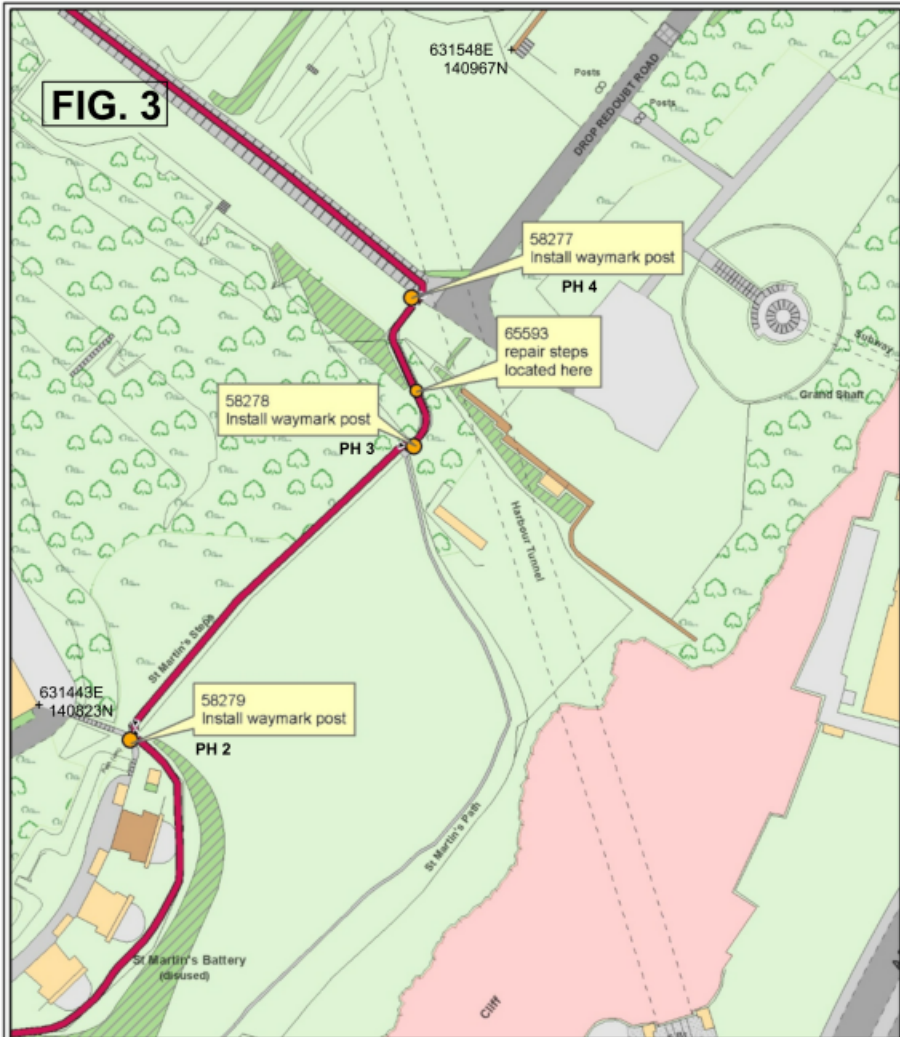


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FIG. 3

Key	
	Public Footpath
	Public Bridleway
	Restricted Byway
	Byway Open to All Traffic
	England Coast Path
	Location of Job Site

Coastal Access: Stretch 1 RFK Western Heights Map 3 - REVISED

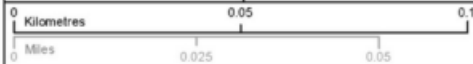
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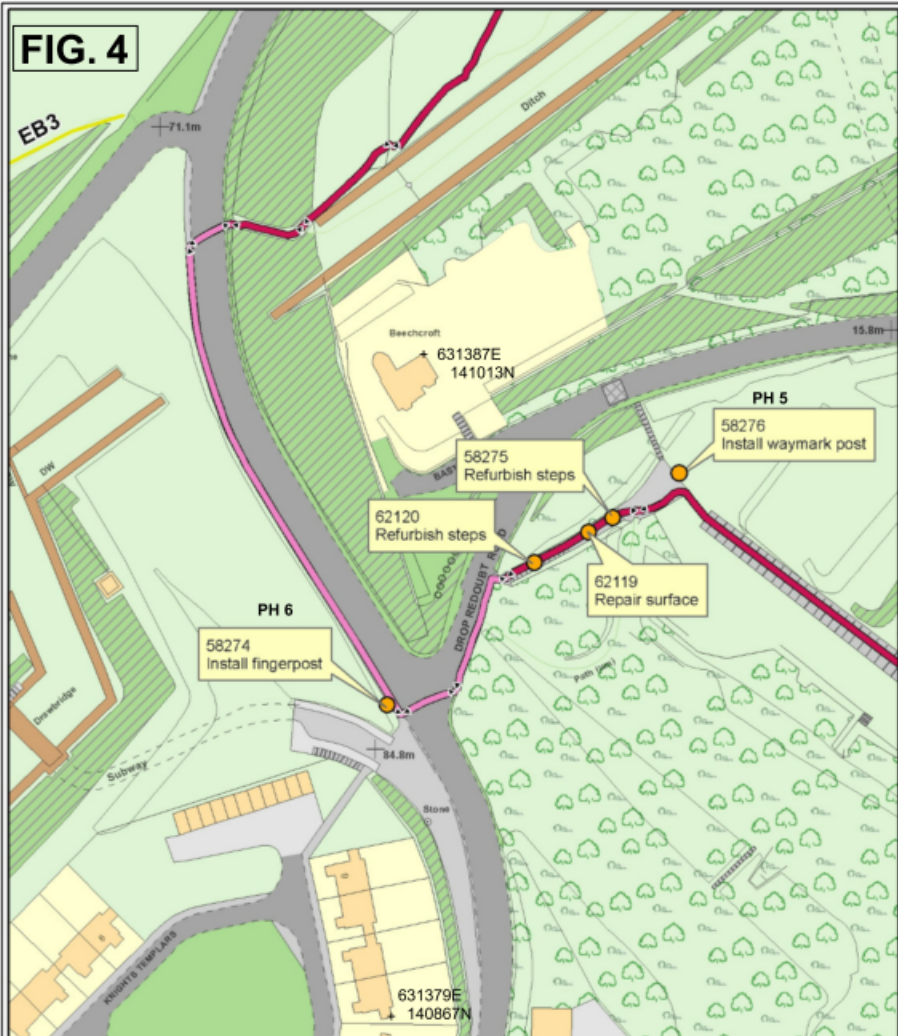


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FIG. 4

Key	
	Public Footpath
	Public Bridleway
	Restricted Byway
	Byway Open to All Traffic
	England Coast Path
	Location of Job Site

Coastal Access: Stretch 1 RFK Western Heights Map 2

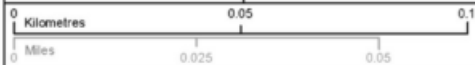
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Checked by	TK	Reference:	WH - MAP 2



FIG. 5



- Key**
- Public Footpath
 - Public Bridleway
 - Restricted Byway
 - Byway Open to All Traffic
 - England Coast Path
 - Location of Job Site

**Coastal Access: Stretch 1 RFK
Western Heights Map 1**

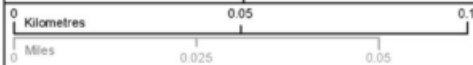
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Created by	TK	Issue Date:	20.01.2016
Checked by	TK	Reference:	WH - MAP 1





Plate IV Footpath along western side of Centre Road under construction, looking north



Plate V Post erected in PH 4 by Grand Shaft Barracks, looking south-west



Plate VI Post erected in PH 6 by North Entrance, looking west



Plate VII Post erected in PH 9 outside Drop Redoubt, looking west

Kent County Council HER summary form

Site Name: Dover Western Heights													
Site Address: Western Heights, Dover, Kent													
<p>Summary: Observation of groundworks connected with the formation of the England Coast Path across part of the Western Heights at Dover provided another opportunity to record details of the below-ground archaeology of the nineteenth-century artillery fortress that occupies the summit of ridge. Nothing of special archaeological significance was revealed in any of the excavations and no datable finds were recovered.</p>													
District/Unitary: Dover	Parish: Dover												
Period(s): Nineteenth-century and twentieth-century													
<p>NGR (centre of site: 8 figures): 631362 140732 to 631645 141162 (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)</p>													
<p>Type of Archaeological work (delete):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Evaluation</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Watching Brief</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Field Walking</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Documentary study</td> <td>Building recording</td> <td>Earthwork survey</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Excavation</td> <td>Geophysical survey</td> <td>Field survey</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Geoarchaeological investigation</td> </tr> </table>		Evaluation	Watching Brief	Field Walking	Documentary study	Building recording	Earthwork survey	Excavation	Geophysical survey	Field survey	Geoarchaeological investigation		
Evaluation	Watching Brief	Field Walking											
Documentary study	Building recording	Earthwork survey											
Excavation	Geophysical survey	Field survey											
Geoarchaeological investigation													
Date of recording: May-June 2016													
Unit undertaking recording: Canterbury Archaeological Trust													
Geology: Clay-with-flints; Chalk													
<p>Title and Author of accompanying report: <i>A watching brief on the Western Heights at Dover, 2016</i> by Keith Parfitt</p>													
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) The soil and rubble deposits recorded relate to the extensive nineteenth-century landscaping that occurred during the construction of the defences of the Heights fortress. Later deposits revealed relate to twentieth century service trenching and road widening.</p>													
Location of archive/finds: Canterbury Archaeological Trust (Dover office)													
Contact at Unit: Keith Parfitt	Date: July 2016												