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Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief  
Castel Sedement, La Rue de la Falaise, Trinity, Jersey



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Absolute Archaeology

On behalf of

The National Trust

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## **Summary**

This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief during groundwork associated with the erection of a boundary wall at the property known as Castel Sedement, La Rue de la Falaise, Trinity, Jersey. The work was commissioned by Godel Architects (the agent) on behalf of Mr & Mrs Alan Cabot (the Client). The work was carried out on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

The excavation of the foundation trench revealed a topsoil / turfline, overlaying a subsoil layer which in turn was seen to seal a light clayey sand. No archaeological features were identified during the excavation and no artefacts were recovered from the trench, or the spoil which was monitored throughout.

The results of the investigation were negative and no further investigation is recommended in association with the current programme of work. However, it should be noted that the clayey sand deposit may represent loess or redeposited material, raising the possibility for archaeological deposits to be encountered at a lower depth. Therefore, the potential for land in the vicinity of the Project Site to preserve archaeological deposits should not be ruled out.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief during groundwork associated with the erection of a boundary wall at the property known as Castel Sedement, La Rue de la Falaise, Trinity, Jersey. The work was commissioned by Godel Architects (the agent) on behalf of Mr & Mrs Alan Cabot (the Client). The work was carried out on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

The programme of investigation was carried out as a direct response to the requirement for an archaeological watching brief as determined in the decision notice for planning reference P/2012/1729 which states that *'notwithstanding the details set out in the Desk Based Assessment, hereby approved, a project design for an Archaeological Watching Brief shall be submitted to the Minister for Planning and Environment, for approval, prior to the commencement of the works and the requirements of the approved brief shall be carried out in full.'*

## 2. Project Site

The Project Site is located in the NE of Jersey within the parish of Trinity and historically within the Vingtaine de Rondin. The Project Site is set within a rural landscape, with neighbouring dwellings situated to the east and south. The Project Site is north of the historic building known as Les Catieaux, probably named so due to the proximity of a substantial earthwork (Le Chastel-Sedement) directly east of the Project Site and separated only by the Rue de Falaise.

Le Chastel-Sedement is a substantial surviving earthwork, probably of defensive origin. The precise nature of the monument is unclear and has been disturbed greatly since its creation, so that only the northern portion of what may have been a circular earthwork, analogous to a keep, survives. The earthwork forms the eastern boundary on La Rue de Falaise, and is directly opposite the Project Site.

The Project Site and the buildings surrounding it has been designated as an Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP), whilst the fields to the east, where the main earthwork of Chastel-Sedement survives have been designated as a potential Listed Place (formerly proposed SSI), whilst the fields to the north and south of the Project Site have also been designated a potential Listed Place (formerly Archaeological Site).

The Project Site is centred on UTM 566830, 5453190, at c.103m aJD and is situated upon Boulay Rhyolite. The area all around the Project Site slopes from NW to SE ranging in heights from c.108m aJD to c.97m aJD, over distance of c.180m. Around the Project Site however, there are drops of c.5m, from c.108m aJD to c.103m aJD over 90m.

## 2.1. Archaeological Background

The Project Site is located adjacent to the prominent earthwork called Chastel-Sedement and within a wider earthwork enclosure. The earthwork of Chastel-Sedement is first recorded in AD 1367 in a Partage d'héritages of Philippe de Barentin, a descendant of the infamous Drogo de Barentin, but is more famously related to the "villa/city" described in Pero Niño's assault on the island in 1405. Niño, a Spanish corsair and Knight, after joining forces with some Breton leaders mounted a plundering mission against Jersey, which is described as "a very rich English island called Jersey the Great" (Evans 1928: 168). During the attack, some of the local population flee to a great city, one of five "castles" on the island, and this is almost certainly Chastel-Sedement.

Excavations immediately adjacent to the central earthwork did reveal Medieval activity and as the Project Site lies within the outer earthwork enclosure of this "villa/city" it also had the potential to preserve archaeological deposits.

## 3. Approach To Archaeological Investigation

The broad aim of the watching brief was to identify and record features of archaeological interest discovered during groundwork associated with the project, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on any archaeological resource.

All work was undertaken in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2008).

The primary aims were:

- To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits within the resources available;
- To provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to warn the appropriate parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

### **3.1. Methodology**

Archaeological control was maintained over the mechanical ground reduction method (i.e. dictating stripping levels and using a toothless/grading bucket, and anything else needed to obtain a record of significant or complex archaeological remains).

The investigation took approach of an archaeological watching brief, with provision for the recording of archaeological features or finds. The programme of work was designed to inform the record on the extent of preserved archaeological remains on the Project Site and to allow for the implementation of a suitable strategy in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and enable the discharge of the planning condition.

## **4. Results**

Monitoring was maintained during the excavation of c. 15m (l) of the foundation trench in conjunction with the construction of a boundary wall to the east of the property known as Castel Sedement. The trench measuring 900mm in width x 900mm in depth, revealed a topsoil / turfline (1) sealing 450mm of silty clay subsoil (2), which was seen to overlay a light clayey sand layer (3). Due to poor weather conditions threatening the stability of the trench, it was agreed to excavate a series of trial holes along the remaining line of the foundation (c. 15m), in order to assess the potential for buried archaeology whilst avoiding collapsing the trench. The investigation revealed similar stratigraphy along the route of the proposed wall. This strategy was agreed in consultation with Jersey Heritage.

No archaeological features or artefacts were identified during the watching brief and no finds were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

## **5. Conclusion**

The results of the investigation were negative and no further investigation is recommended in association with the current programme of work. However, it should be noted that the clayey sand deposit may represent loess or redeposited material, raising the possibility for archaeological deposits to be encountered at a lower depth. Therefore, the potential for land in the vicinity of the Project Site to preserve archaeological deposits should not be ruled out.

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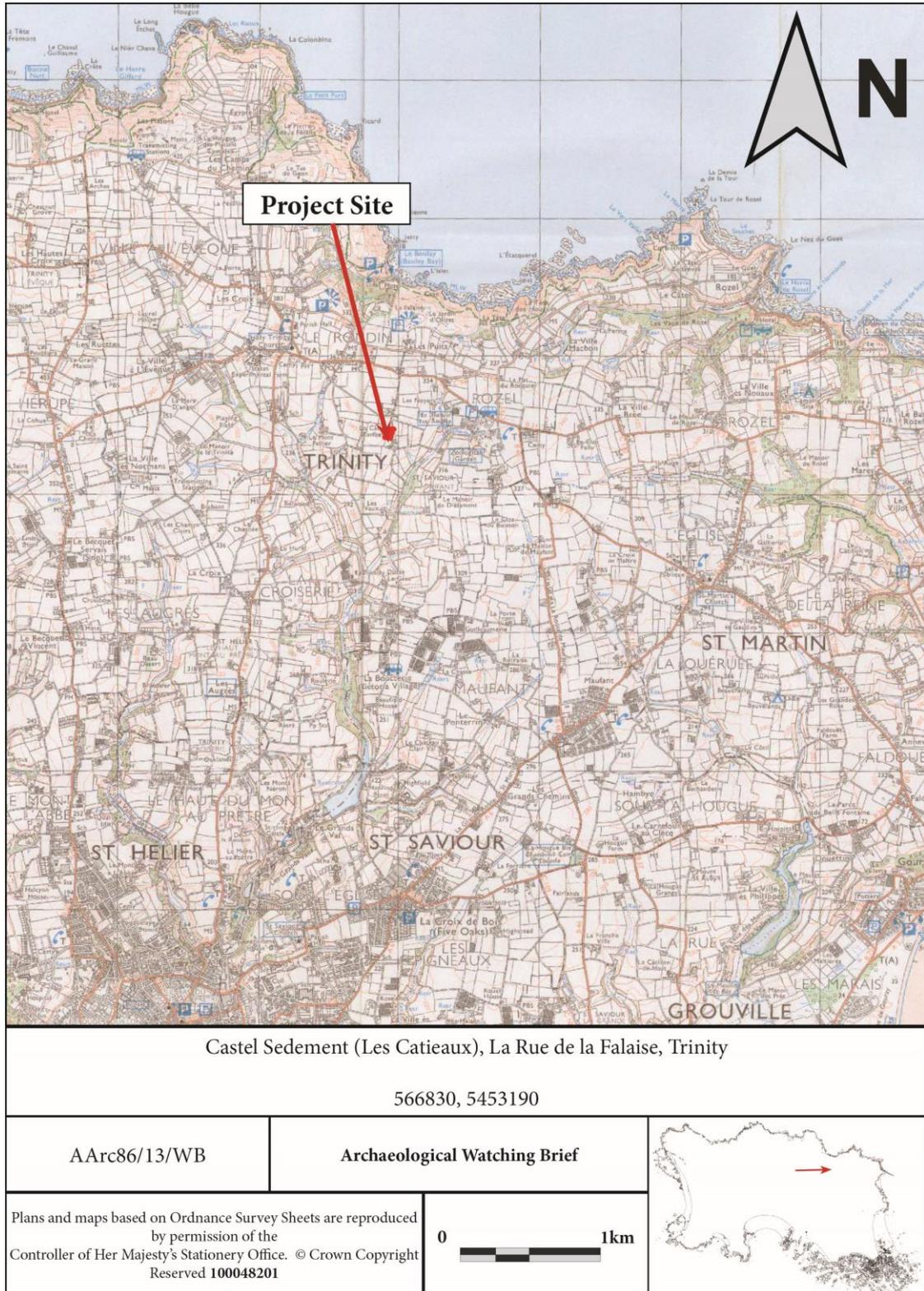
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## 7. Figures

Figure 1 Project Site Location





## 8. Photographs

Photograph 1 SSW Facing View of Foundation Trench (Scales 2 x 500mm)



Photograph 2 NNE Facing Section of Foundation Trench (Scales 1 x 500mm)



Photograph 3 SSW Facing Section of Trial Excavation (Scale 1 x 500mm)



## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Context Descriptions

Trench Number: 1							
<b>Description:</b>  Boundary Wall Foundation Trench					<b>Orientation</b>	NNE - SSW	
					<b>Depth</b>	900mm	
					<b>Width</b>	900mm	
					<b>Length</b>	c. 40m	
Contexts (1) – (3)							
Context Number	Type	Depth	Width	Length/ Diameter	Colour (Munsell Ref)	Finds	Excavation Date
1	Topsoil / Turfline	200mm	>900mm		Dark Greyish Brown	None	11.11.2013
2	Soft Silty Clay Subsoil Layer	450mm	>900mm		Mid Greyish Brown	None	11.11.2013
3	Soft Clayey Sand Layer	>350mm	>900mm		Light Yellowish Brown	None	11.11.2013

**Appendix 2 General chronological table (guide only)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Information</b>
Prehistoric	250000 – 100/56 BC	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in the island to the official conquest of Gaul by the Romans.
Palaeolithic	250000 - 10000 BC	Defined by a number of key sites showing Neanderthal and Early Human activity, for example La Cote de St Brelade. Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology.
Mesolithic	10000 – 5000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age and the beginning of the Holocene. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement with evidence for the exploitation of the coastal zones of the islands. Example at Lihou Priory on Guernsey.
Neolithic	5000 – 2400 BC	The Channel Islands saw an earlier transition to the Neolithic than in Britain. Emergence of monumental architecture, first (potentially) with menhirs later by chambered tombs and subsequently gallery graves. Development of complex society, more sedentary lifestyles and more clearly defined symbolic behaviour.
Chalcolithic/Beaker phase	2400 – 1800 BC	Earliest introduction of copper to western Europe. Expansion of the pan-European Beaker phenomenon, including prestigious material culture and individual burials. Bell Beakers found throughout the archipelago including local emulations called Jersey Bowls. Cist-in-Circle monuments.
Bronze Age	1800 – 800 BC	The Introduction of Bronze as a material, used by the elite at first and later available to the populace more widely. Barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition. Large quantities of bronze metalwork found throughout the islands and in Jersey in particular.
Iron Age	800 – 100/56 BC	Little change to domestic life in the islands. Return of monumental architecture in the form of promontory forts (at C�atel Rozel, Fremont etc) in the earlier periods, followed by warrior and horse burials in the Middle to Later stages (Guernsey only).

Gallo-Roman	100/56 BC – 400 AD	Used to describe a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions in France and the Channel Islands with Roman culture. Represented by the identification of Gallo-Roman ceramics and roofing material recently excavated at Grouville Parish Church, confirming the first evidence of Gallo-Roman occupation in Jersey.
Early Medieval	400 – 973 AD	Represents the time from the end of the Roman period c.400 AD to the annexation of the Channel Islands as a region of Normandy under William Longsword in 973.
Medieval	973 – 1600 AD	Norman and post-Norman phases of Channel Island life. The islands remained loyal to the English crown despite the loss of territories in NW France under King John. Period of fortification building throughout the archipelago and in Jersey at Mont Orgueil and later at Elizabeth Castle. 1600 AD is an arbitrary date, but enables the separation of periods with more intensive industries.
Post-Medieval	1600 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid change in Jersey including the growing urbanisation of St Helier, the involvement of the island in the English Civil War and the Napoleonic Wars. Industrial activity did not impact the island as it did Britain and the rest of Europe.
Modern	1900 – 1950 AD	Radical alterations to the landscape during WWI and particularly WWII. Extensive defensive fortifications across the Channel Islands and forming part of Hitler's Atlantic wall.