

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hailsham Headquarters Building,
Wealden District Council, East Sussex**

Planning ref: WD/2010/2761/F

**NGR 55907 10971
(TQ 5907 0971)**

**Project No: 4991
Site Code: HQH 11**

**ASE Report No: 2011193
OASIS id: archaeol6-107046**

**By
Andrew Margetts**

August 2011

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground works for the refurbishment and extension of Wealden District Council's Headquarters building in Hailsham. No archaeological finds features or deposits were encountered during the work, the site having been significantly truncated by modern services and the construction of the existing building.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London, were commissioned by Willmott Dixon to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive ground works associated with the refurbishment and extension of Wealden District Council's headquarters in Hailsham (NGR: TQ 5907 0971, Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (2011) the site lies at the junction of mudstone and silicate claystone of the Weald Clay formation. No superficial geology has been recorded in the area

1.2.2 The watching brief area occupies level land adjacent to the existing buildings of the operational headquarters for Wealden District Council. The site is an irregular plot of land located in the centre of Hailsham and is bound by Vicarage Lane to the south, residential properties to the east and west and open fields to the north

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Wealden District Council granted planning permission for the proposed refurbishment and extension of the offices and adjacent community hall to provide a single site operational headquarters building for the Council. Note 6 of the planning consent suggested that the East Sussex County Archaeologist be contacted to arrange an archaeological watching brief during construction works. Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist at ESCC, advised Willmott Dixon of the standard procedure for undertaking archaeological watching briefs and, accordingly, Archaeology South-East were commissioned to carry out the work.

1.3.2 Prior to commencement of ground works, an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by ASE (2011) and approved by ESCC. This document set out the aims and objectives of the work and the methods to be used; the methodology was formulated with reference to ESCC standards (ESCC 2008).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 In general, the aim of the watching brief, as set out in the WSI, was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological remains exposed during the ground works (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.

1.4.2 The watching brief would also assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

1.4.3 Specific aims were to determine:

- Whether there any evidence for medieval and post-medieval activity and development on the site

- Whether there any evidence for earlier archaeological features and/or finds on the site?

1.4.4 Consideration was also to be given to the Research Framework set out in the Hailsham Historic Character Assessment report (Harris, 2008).

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report outlines the findings of the archaeological watching brief, undertaken by Andrew Margetts on the 28th of July 2011. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation set out the results of a 1 km radius search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) centred on NGR TQ 5907 0971. Evidence was also drawn from the Hailsham Extensive Urban Survey (Harris, 2008). This information is not reproduced in full but the most pertinent points are summarised below

2.2 Prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon

2.2.1 Relatively little pre-urban archaeology is known in the area; however the HER records that prehistoric features were found in a trial trench evaluation c. 400m to the north of the site (EES 14901).

2.3 Medieval

2.3.1 The name Hailsham is derived from *Hamelesham*, first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. St Mary's Church, Hailsham lies just to the southeast of the site and is first referenced in 1229 when the advowson was granted to Michelham Priory.

2.3.2 By the second half of the 13th century, Hailsham was established as a small town with a weekly market. It is thought that a significant leather industry was established in the town by the 15th century

2.3.3 Medieval features were located in the aforementioned evaluation (EES 14901) and in another evaluation around 300m to the south of the site (EES 14091).

2.4 Post-Medieval

2.4.1 Hailsham market ceased to operate for a time in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, in 1803, barracks for 1,000 men were built on Hailsham Common and the short-lived presence of the military helped the town to thrive in the 19th century. An important cattle market was established by the middle of that century and other industries were also founded in the town.

2.4.2 Linear features and pits, of 16th to 17th century date have been located in an archaeological evaluation c. 350m to the south-east (EES 14495) and a post-medieval post-hole was also located on site EES 14901.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Excavation methodology

- 3.1.1 Intrusive excavations associated with block foundations and services were monitored at all times by an archaeologist. Made-ground of modern origin was removed by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. Machine excavation stopped at the surface of the natural geology
- 3.1.2 The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. The spoil was routinely scanned with a metal detector.

3.2 Recording Methodology

- 3.2.1 All deposits were recorded according to standard ASE practice on standard pro-forma recording sheets. All remains were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum. A photographic record was made in both digital, monochrome and colour transparency (where appropriate).

3.3 Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site produced an archive which is quantified in Table 1. ASE informed Lewes Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Lewes museum in due course. Lewes museum does not give out archive accession numbers in advance of deposition.

Number of Contexts	2
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photograph	3 digital
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

4.1 Summary of Deposits Encountered

- 4.1.1 The deposits encountered during the excavation of the watching brief area (Fig. 2) comprised firstly of c.0.50m of made ground (Context [001]). This consisted of variable mid brown grey and mid brown yellow clay silt with lenses of re-deposited natural. This construction deposit was heavily impacted upon by modern services throughout the area and contained frequent inclusions of modern building materials. Directly beneath Context [001] was context [002] the mid brown yellow natural Weald Clay.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The underlying geology encountered during the course of the ground works comprised Weald Clay. This was clearly truncated by modern services in places.
- 5.2 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered during the course of the watching brief. This was due to the significant disturbance derived from the construction of the existing Hailsham Headquarters Building. The results must therefore be classed as negative evidence.

Bibliography

ASE 2011, Hailsham Headquarters Building, Wealden District Council, East Sussex: A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

BGS 2011 British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 01.08.2011 http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

ESCC, 2008, *Standards For Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work in East Sussex*.

Harris, 2008, Hailsham Historic Character Assessment Report

Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank Wilmott Dixon for commissioning the work and Greg Chuter ESCC for his help and guidance throughout the project.

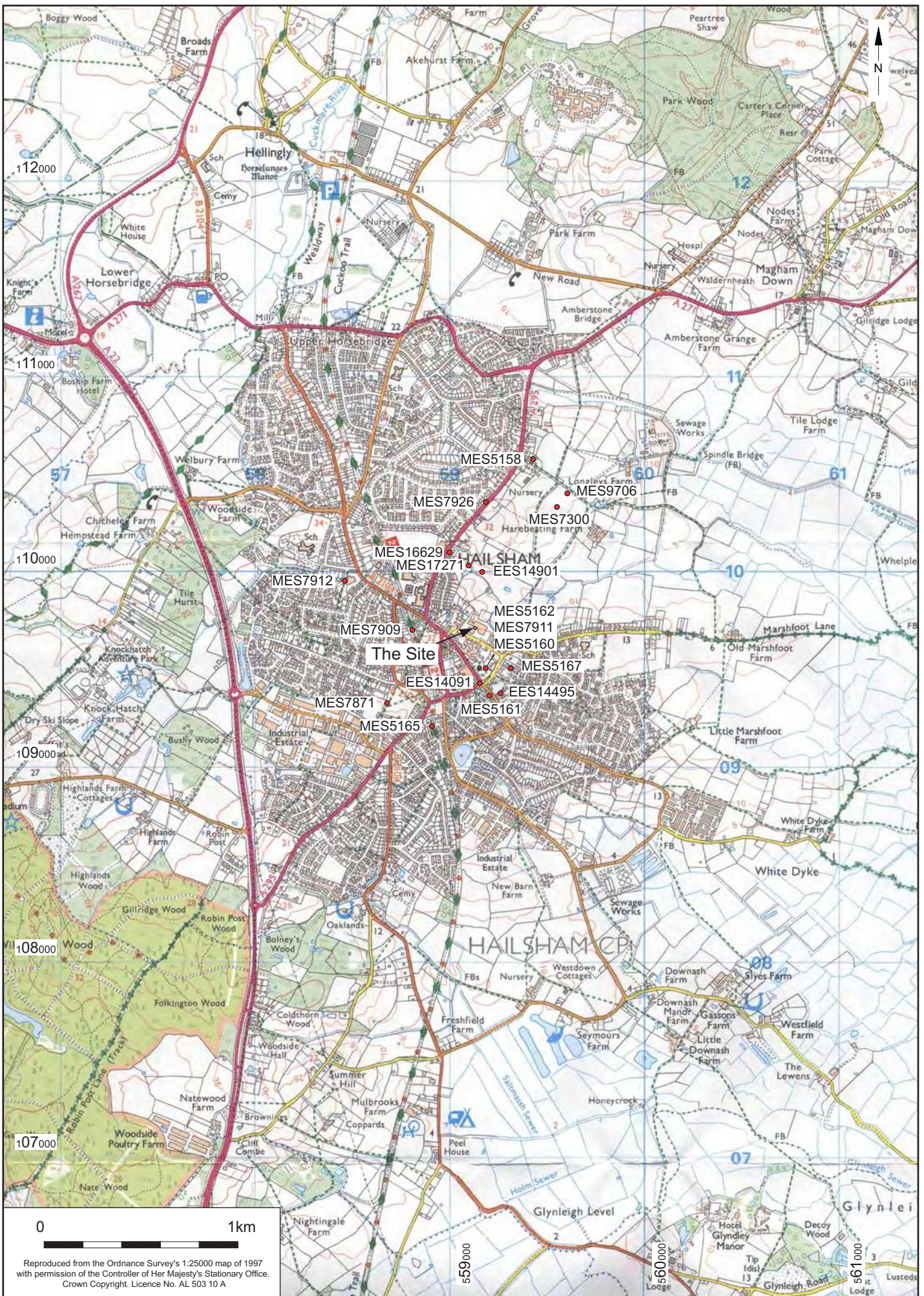
SMR Summary Form

Site Code	HQH 11					
Identification Name and Address	Hailsham HQ, Wealden District Council					
County, District &/or Borough	Hailsham, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR TQ 5907 0971					
Geology	Weald Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4991					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Si	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Offices ✓		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 28/07/2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Wilmott Dixon					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard and Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Andrew Margetts					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground works for the refurbishment and extension of Wealden District Council's Headquarters building in Hailsham. No archaeological finds features or deposits were encountered during the work, the site having been significantly truncated by modern services and the construction of the existing building.</p>						

OASIS Form

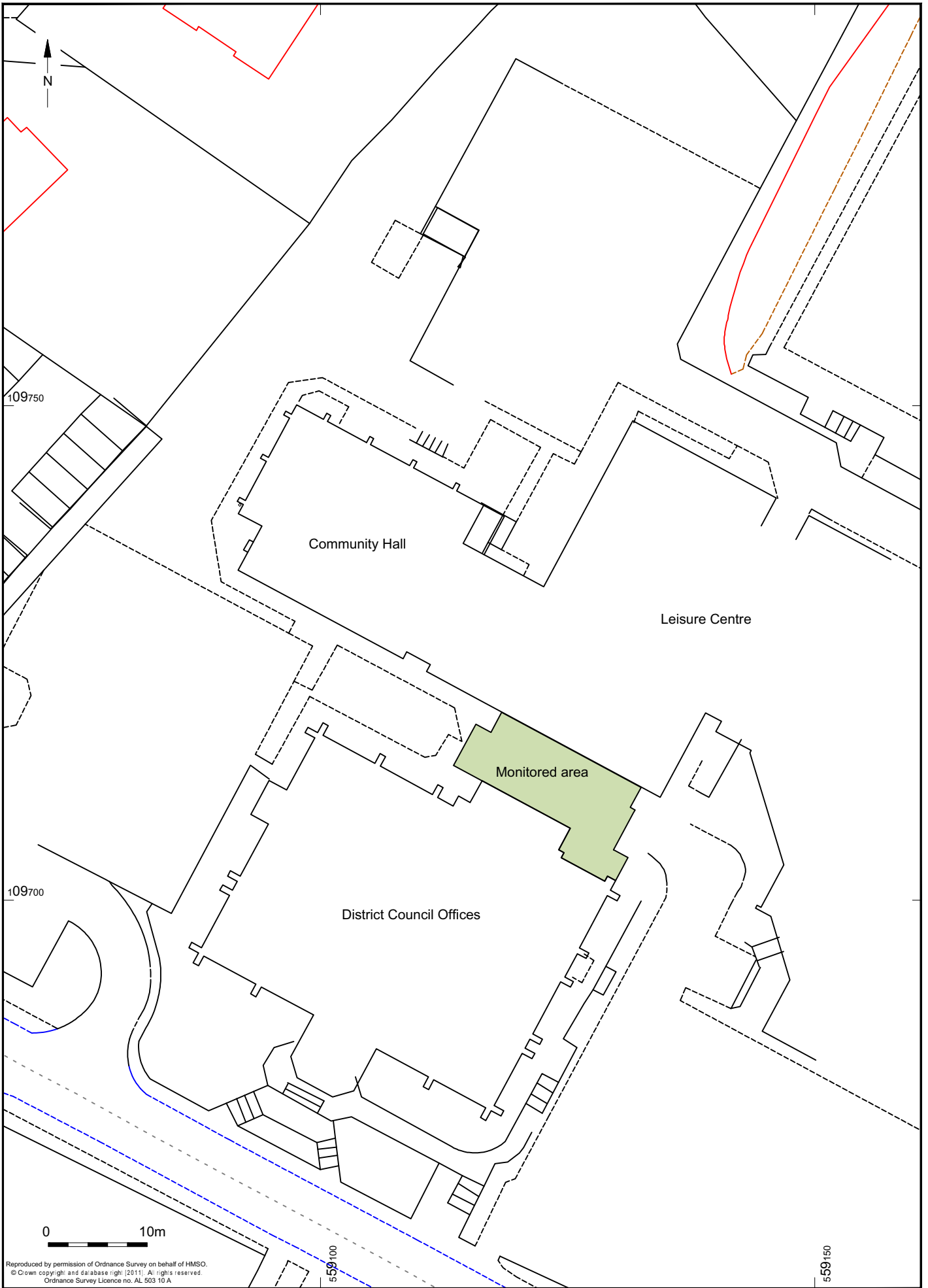
OASIS ID: archaeol6-107046	
Project details	
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hailsham Headquarters Building, Wealden District Council, East Sussex
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground works for the refurbishment and extension of Wealden District Council's Headquarters building in Hailsham. No archaeological finds features or deposits were encountered during the work, the site having been significantly truncated by modern services and the construction of the existing building.
Project dates	Start: 28-07-2011 End: 28-07-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HQH11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS Modern
Significant Finds	0 None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN HAILSHAM Hailsham Headquarters Building, Wealden District Council
Postcode	BN27 1AD
Study area	50.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 5907 0971 50.8643962384 0.260691755787 50 51 51 N 000 15 38 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 17.00m Max: 22.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief	East Sussex County Council

originator	
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Andrew Margetts
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Wilmott Dixon
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Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Paper Archive Exists?	No
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© Archaeology South-East		HQ Building, Hailsham		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4991	Aug 2011	Site location		
Report Ref: 2011193	Drawn by: JLR			



© Archaeology South-East		HQ Building, Hailsham	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4991	Aug 2011	Location of watching brief	
Report Ref: 2011193	Drawn by: JLR		

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