

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Elm Court, Seaford  
East Sussex**

**NGR: TV 4850 9946**

**Project No: 5096  
Site Code: ECS 11**

**ASE Report No: 2011303  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-116075**

**Dan Swift  
Illustrations by Justin Russell**

**December 2011**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to conduct a watching brief at Elm Court, Blatchington Road, Seaford East Sussex during groundworks for the installation of a temporary library building.*

*No archaeological finds or features were found.*

*The northern part of the site, where a drainage channel was located, was sloped and did not appear to have been terraced. The majority of the site, however, had been heavily levelled. Foundations trenches variously revealed thicknesses of made ground and foundations which had truncated colluvial/alluvial layers [02] and [03]. In most of the site [02] had been completely removed and modern deposits directly overlay [03]. Although there is perhaps potential for some archaeology to exist on the site, none was viewed in the watching brief.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Institute of Archaeology (IoA) Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at University College London (UCL), was commissioned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to conduct a watching brief at Elm Court, Blatchington Road, Seaford East Sussex (NGR TV 4850 9946; Figure 1), henceforth referred to as 'the site', during groundworks for the installation of a temporary library building.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey website (<http://maps.bgs.ac.uk>) the geology at the site is alluvium, a variable deposit ranging between silty, peaty and/or sandy clay.

1.2.2 The site is situated at the location of a former youth club. Land at the site forms part a lower valley slope which falls from north to south. This had been terraced into at sometime in the past to form a level building platform.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 According to the specification provided by the Environmental Advice Team, East Sussex County Council (EATESCC, July 2011) a planning application had not been submitted at the time of the watching brief, however, when granted it will have the following archaeological condition:

*No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the planning authority. The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. A written record of any archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the District Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of any archaeological investigations unless otherwise agreed in writing with the District Planning Authority.*

*Reason: The development is likely to disturb items of archaeological interest*

1.3.2 The specification (EATESCC 2011) was produced by ESCC Archaeology Team for Carol Burns, Project Officer Major Projects - CRD Property, East Sussex County Council, following advice made by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council who advised that a Programme of Archaeological Works condition be applied to the planning permission. The specification (*ibid*) formed the required written scheme of investigation.

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were listed in the specification (*ibid*) as:

- to contribute to knowledge of the Seaford area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed and impacted as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.
- Particular attention will be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report provides details of the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted at the site on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011. The fieldwork was undertaken by Dan Swift and project managed by Andy Leonard. Post-excavation work was project managed by Jim Stevenson.

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 According to the specification (*ibid*), the archaeological potential of the site is defined as high, but with probable areas of recent impact in relation to the former building that occupied this site. This building has recently been demolished to ground level, with the parking areas left *in situ*.
- 2.2 The site is of archaeological interest due to finds of medieval material immediately to the west, which indicate that this area was occupied during the medieval period, possibly in association with two medieval hospitals and certainly at a junction of two historic routeways. The site also lies in close proximity to the medieval and post-medieval Cinque Port Town of Seaford.
- 2.3 The following HER data was listed in the specification (*ibid*) and is reproduced here:

HER Number	Grid Reference	Site summary/description
MES3	TV 4891 9945	Site of windmill
MES1690	TV 48 99	Hospital of St Leonard
MES1691	TV 4849 9963	Hospital of St James
MES1709	TV 4838 9940	Seaford gasholder medieval settlement (site)
MES17252	TV 4846 9966	Residual medieval pottery recovered during watching brief

Table 1: HER data

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The adopted fieldwork methodology complied with that listed in the specification (*ibid*) and in the ESCC Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) in East Sussex (ESCC 2008).
- 3.1.2 Upon arrival at site a small trench for drainage had been mechanically excavated to the north of the proposed building plot, this was recorded and photographed as found.
- 3.1.3 Further work then continued with the mechanical excavation of foundations for the temporary library building. This consisted of a strip foundation along the eastern edge of the structure and lines of pad foundations along the southern and northern perimeter of the structure.
- 3.1.4 After 2 days of monitoring and as no archaeological features, deposits or finds were made in any of the above interventions; it was agreed by telephone between the author and Greg Chuter (Assistant County Archaeologist East Sussex) that no further monitoring was required.
- 3.1.5 In the drainage trench, excavations were undertaken using a flat bladed bucket, the foundations were excavated using a toothed bucket once it was ascertained that building debris existed to some depth.
- 3.1.6 The main contractor allowed the archaeological contractor reasonable time and resources to undertake inspection and recording as required. No archaeological structures or features were revealed.
- 3.1.7 All deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards on ASE *pro forma* recording sheets.
- 3.1.8 Digital photographs of the work were kept as part of the site archive and for inclusion in the fieldwork report.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork Constraints**

- 3.2.1 There were no constraints on the fieldwork.



### 3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 ASE informed Seaford Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. They do not issue accession numbers prior to physical deposition of an archive. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Seaford Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 2).

Number of Contexts	4
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Photographs	15

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS (Fig 2)

### 4.1 Drainage trench viewed on 29/12/11

4.1.1 In the northern part of the site a small drainage channel had been excavated. This revealed apparently undisturbed natural deposits and was in an area that did not appear to have been terraced and which sloped from the north down to the south. The following sequence was observed.

4.1.2 Various layers of colluvium/alluvium were recorded overlain by topsoil [01].

4.1.3 The lowest of these [03] was a firm mid-brown sandy silt with occasional unworked angular flints. This was overlain by [04] which was a firm, off-white layer of chalk, flint, sand and silt sealed by [02], a loose mid-brown sandy silt with very frequent unworked angular flints.

4.1.4 The topsoil [01] was a loose mid-grey silty, sandy layer with occasional unworked angular flints. This was heavily rooted.

4.1.5 No archaeological finds or features were found.

### 4.2 Foundation trenches monitored on 29/12/11 and 30/12/11

4.2.1 The foundations for the temporary library were excavated in an area that had been previously levelled for construction of the building which had just been demolished.

4.2.2 Initially, a foundation trench was excavated. This was 8.5m long, 0.60m wide and 1.6m deep. The trench revealed [03] overlain by [02] overlain by concrete slab.

4.2.3 Secondly, rows of pier pads were excavated. These were 2m long, 0.60m wide and were between 0.90m and 1.40m deep. These revealed various thicknesses of [03] overlain by modern made ground and concrete foundations relating to the construction of the recently demolished building between 0.50m – 1.20m in thickness.

4.2.4 No archaeological finds or features were found.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
+	+	Modern made ground and foundations	various	various	0.50 – 1.20
01	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.10 – 0.30
02	Layer	Colluvium	Trench	Trench	0.15 – 0.40
03	Layer	Colluvium	Trench	Trench	0.20 – 0.40
04	Layer	Alluvium?	Trench	Trench	0.20

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 No archaeological finds or features were found.
- 5.2 The northern part of the site, where the drainage channel was located, was sloped and did not appear to have been terraced.
- 5.3 The majority of the site, however, had been heavily levelled. Foundations trenches variously revealed thicknesses of made ground and foundations which had truncated colluvial/alluvial layers [02] and [03]. In most of the site [02] had been completely removed and modern deposits directly overlay [03].
- 5.4 Although there is perhaps potential for some archaeology to exist on the site, none was viewed in the watching brief

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Environmental Advice Team, East Sussex County Council July 2011. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief during the Groundworks Associated with the Development at Elm Court Youth Club, Blatchington Road, Seaford, East Sussex*

ESCC. 2008. *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) in East Sussex*

## **INTERNET REFERENCES**

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) accessed 13 12 11

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank ESCC for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist East Sussex County Council for his guidance and monitoring.

**HER Summary Form**

Site Code	ECS 11					
Identification Name and Address	Elm Court, Seaford					
County, District &/or Borough	Seaford, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	TV 4850 9946					
Geology	Alluvium					
Arch. South-East Project Number	5096					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site		Shallow Urban				
Dates of Fieldwork			WB. 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2011			
Sponsor/Client	ESCC					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Dan Swift					
Period Summary						
				Modern		
<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to conduct a watching brief at Elm Court, Blatchington Road, Seaford East Sussex during groundworks for the installation of a temporary library building.</p> <p>No archaeological finds or features were found.</p> <p>The northern part of the site, where a drainage channel was located, was sloped and did not appear to have been terraced. The majority of the site, however, had been heavily levelled. Foundations trenches variously revealed thicknesses of made ground and foundations which had truncated colluvial/alluvial layers [02] and [03]. In most of the site [02] had been completely removed and modern deposits directly overlay [03]. Although there is perhaps potential for some archaeology to exist on the site, none was viewed in the watching brief</p>						

## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeoi6-116075**

### Project details

Project name	WB at Elm Court Seaford
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to conduct a watching brief at Elm Court, Blatchington Road, Seaford East Sussex during groundworks for the installation of a temporary library building. No archaeological finds or features were found. The northern part of the site, where a drainage channel was located, was sloped and did not appear to have been terraced. The majority of the site, however, had been heavily levelled. Foundations trenches variously revealed thicknesses of made ground and foundations which had truncated colluvial/alluvial layers [02] and [03]. In most of the site [02] had been completely removed and modern deposits directly overlay [03]. Although there is perhaps potential for some archaeology to exist on the site, none was viewed in the watching brief.
Project dates	Start: 01-12-2011 End: 02-12-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECS 11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES SEAFORD elm court
Postcode	BN25 1UD
Study area	400.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TV 485 994 50.7745552779 0.106409484597 50 46 28 N 000 06 23 E Point

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Environmental Advice Team, East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Environmental Advice Team, East Sussex County Council
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Dan Swift
Type of sponsor/funding body	East Sussex County Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	East Sussex County Council

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Seaford Museum
Digital Archive ID	ECS 11
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Seaford Museum
Paper Archive ID	ECS 11
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Diary','Photograph','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Swift, D.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No: 2011303
Date	2011

Issuer or publisher ASE

Place of issue or  
publication Portslade

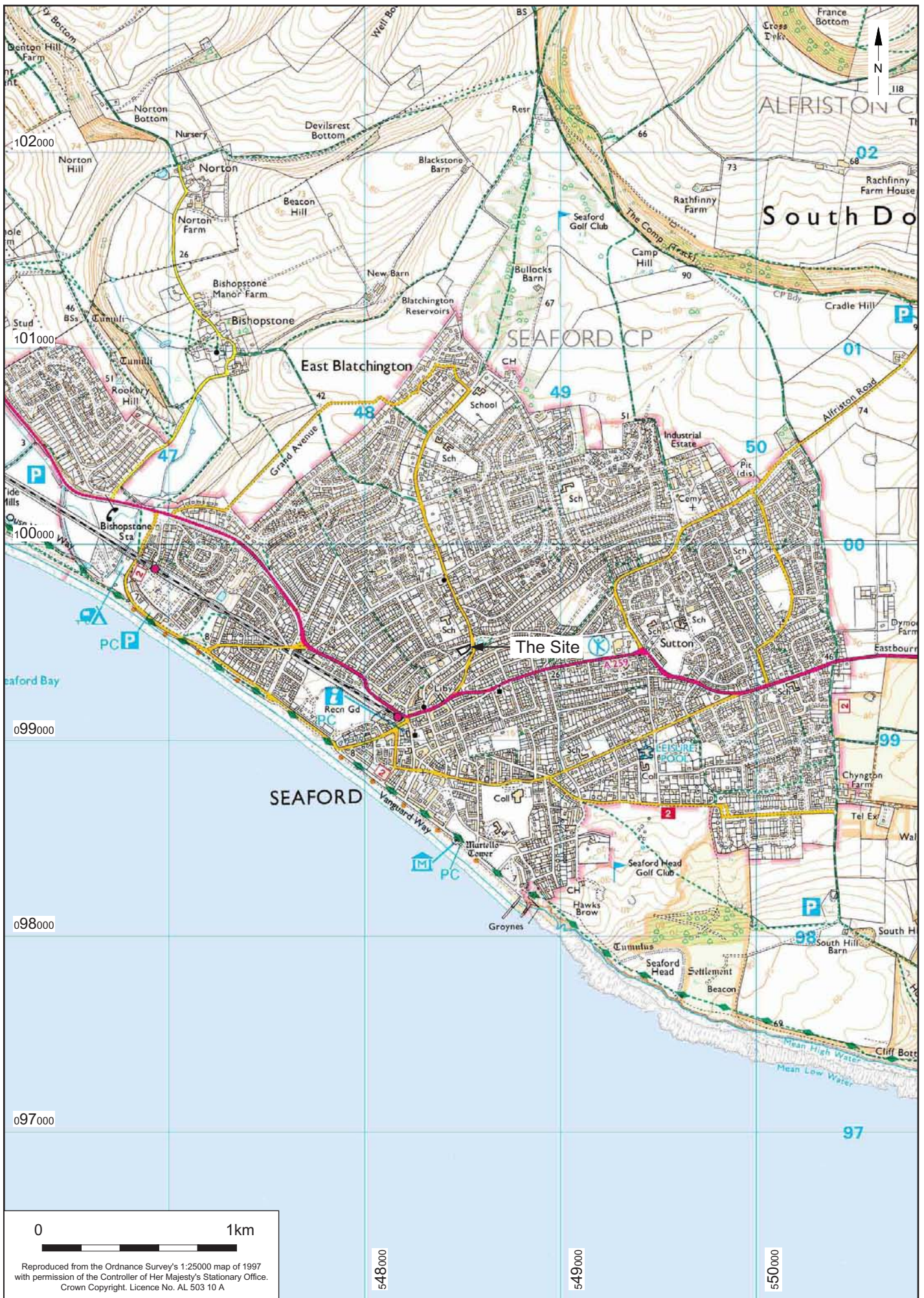
Description grey lit bound rep

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Entered by Dan Swift (d.swift@ucl.ac.uk)

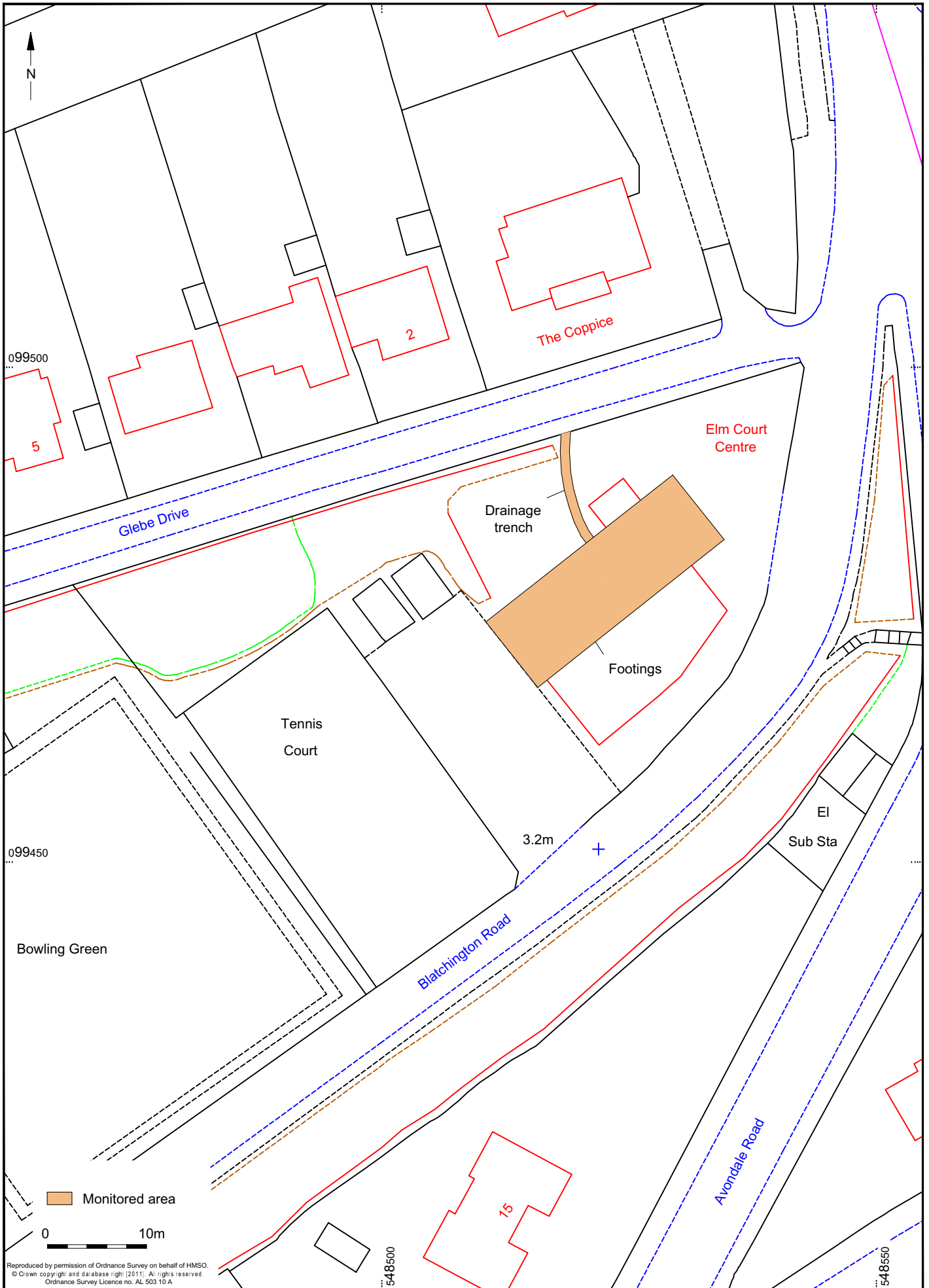
Entered on 20 December 2011





© Archaeology South-East		Elm Court, Seaford	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5096	Dec 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011303	Drawn by: JLR		





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© Archaeology South-East		Elm Court, Seaford	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 5096	Dec 2011	Plan of monitored area	
Report Ref: 2011303	Drawn by: JLR		

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