

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane  
Salehurst, Robertsbridge  
East Sussex, TN32 5PJ**

**NGR: TQ 7487 2421**

**Planning Ref: RR/2012/863/L**

**Project No: 5661  
Site Code: RPO 12**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-134392**

**By Dan Swift  
With contributions by  
Luke Barber and Trista Clifford**

**September 2012**

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**Abstract**

*Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Nicol Design Associates to conduct an archaeological watching brief during footings excavations for a new extension at 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5PJ.*

*No archaeological remains of note were recorded in the watching brief, however, it should be noted that throughout most of the trench, natural deposits were not reached, and the potential that archaeology exists beneath the new extension cannot be ruled out.*

*A buried soil horizon was recorded; however, this did not contain any visible dating evidence and so remains undated. A brick-built cistern or soakaway was cut through made ground deposits of 19<sup>th</sup> century date and is therefore more recent than this and is most probably Victorian. The soakaway is preserved in situ. There was no evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation in the location of the proposed development, either associated with the abbey and its outlying buildings or for a more domestic purpose. No data to address the set of specific research aims laid out in section 1.4 was recorded.*

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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 (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Nicol Design Associates Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during footings excavations for a new extension at 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5PJ (NGR: TQ 7487 2421; Figures 1 and 2).

### 1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The British Geological Survey records the bedrock at the site as Ashdown Formation - Sandstone and Siltstone, Interbedded. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 132 to 144 million years ago in the Cretaceous and Jurassic Periods (BGS 2012). The local environment was previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas.

### 1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted for the development (Ref: RR/2012/863/L). Having consulted the East Sussex Assistant County Archaeologist, Greg Chuter, Rother District Council attached a condition for a programme of archaeological work on the site. Condition 4 states:

*“In respect of the replacement extension, 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 archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.”*

*REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest as the development is likely to disturb remains of archaeological interest, in accordance with NPPF and Policy GD1 (viii) of the Rother District Plan.*

- 1.3.2 Accordingly, a WSI (ASE 2012) was submitted to and approved by Greg Chuter, ESCC prior to commencement of the watching brief. All work was carried out in accordance with this document, as well as with the standards and guidance listed in the *ESCC Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) in East Sussex* (ESCC 2008).

## 1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aims of the archaeological investigation were to ascertain the following as far as possible:

### GENERAL

- To record any archaeological remains, finds or features that will be impacted by the excavation of any foundations and service trenches associated with the proposed development. Particularly to define the date, function and character of any such remains.
- To make public the results of the archaeological work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

### SPECIFIC

- Is there any evidence for Saxon or medieval occupation in the location of the proposed development, either associated with the abbey and its outlying buildings or for a more domestic purpose?
- The research framework set down in the Sussex EUS is more relevant to Robertsbridge town centre itself. However research queries relating to the origins of the town may require consideration, depending on the results of the watching brief:

RQ1: What was the nature of the palaeoenvironment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon human activity in the area? Note that for the Anglo-Saxon period, the focal or market place and the adjacent churchyard is a particular area for study.

RQ2: What was the location, form and construction detail of the late 12th century Robertsbridge abbey?

RQ4: What was the extent and development of the medieval market place and did this have a defined boundary or not?

RQ6: What evidence is there for the extent, population, and economic basis of the 13th and 14th century town?

## 1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out 18/8/12 and has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2012). The work was carried out by Diccon Hart and was managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post-excavation).

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The following archaeological sites and findspots held on East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) Historic Environment Record (HER) are located within a 1km radius of the site as shown in Figure 1.

No. on Figure 1	ESCC HER No.	OS Co-ordinates	Description
1	MES 2303	TQ 7492 2424	13 <sup>th</sup> century St Mary's Church
2	MES 2309	TQ 750 243	15 <sup>th</sup> century alehouse with 18 <sup>th</sup> century alterations
3	MES 2325	TQ 749 243	Church Farmhouse listed building
4	MES 2337	TQ 7484 2445	PM building listed building
5	MES 2338	TQ 7492 2419	Goodgrooms Farm listed building
6	MES 2370	TQ 7542 2386	Abbey Building (part of SAM 1002295)
7	MES 2378	TQ 749 242	Medieval abbey building
8	MES 19253	TQ 7489 2432	Saxon village
9	MES 19254	TQ 7456 2379	Medieval Farm
10	MES 19569	TQ 7524 2382	Remains of bridge to abbey site located in bank of stream
11	MES 19570	TQ 7501 2406	WWII pillbox
12	MES 20420	TQ 7488 2421	Post Office Terrace
13	MES 20421	TQ 7481 2424	Church Lane Cottages
14	MES 20422	TQ 7485 2421	The Salehurst Halt Public House

Table 1: ESCC HER data

2.2 The site lies within an archaeological notification area associated with the Saxon medieval and post-medieval village of Salehurst (Salhert) (Figure 1, no 8). All known sites within Salehurst relate to historic buildings established since 13<sup>th</sup> century with the village's Saxon origins attested by documentary sources. A medieval farm is also known to the south west of the site (Figure 1, no 9)

2.3 Approximately 500m to the southeast of the site lies the scheduled Cistercian abbey (SAM No.: 1002295) (Figure 1, no's 6 and 7), founded in 1176 and dissolved in 1538. The remains of the bridge to the abbey (Figure 1, no 10) lie to the west.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The hand-excavation (by contractors) of the new footing trenches was monitored by an archaeologist. All hand excavation undertaken by the ground work contractor was undertaken with due regard for the potential to encounter archaeological remains.
- 3.1.2 Every opportunity was made for careful hand excavation and the collection of samples by the archaeologist in attendance taking site health and safety into account. Adequate time was made available for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand to identify and record the remains as far as possible within the limits of the works in order to extract archaeological and environmental information.
- 3.1.3 This approach enabled any archaeological deposits disturbed during the works to be adequately recorded in line with the advice given in NPPF which has replaced PPS 5.
- 3.1.4 The spoil from the excavations was inspected by archaeologists to recover artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and routinely scanned with a metal detector.
- 3.1.5 The ESCC Archaeologist was kept informed of progress so that he could monitor the archaeological work.
- 3.1.6 All features were recorded according to standard ASE practice. Where practicable, features were planned at 1:20 and section drawings at 1:10. Drawings were on plastic draughting film. Features and deposits were described on standard pro-forma recording sheets used by ASE. All remains were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum. A photographic record was made.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork Constraints**

- 3.2.1 There were no constraints on the fieldwork.



### 3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 ASE informed Hastings/ Rye/ Rother by email 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 with them in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	7
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Photographs	7 digital

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Foundation trench monitored on 18/8/12

(Figures 2 and 3)

4.1.1 Natural clay [07] was identified in the northeast corner of the foundation trench only. This was at a height of c. 20.40m OD and was overlain by a buried soil horizon [06]. This was overlain by 19<sup>th</sup> century made ground deposits [02] and [05] and the modern concrete slab [01].

4.1.2 Cut through the buried soil [06] to the east and the 19<sup>th</sup> century made ground [05] to the west, a post-medieval cistern or soakaway was recorded.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Thickness m
01	-	Surface	Trench	Trench	-
02	Layer	Made ground	3.20	0.45	1.00
03	Cistern	Cistern	2.60	0.90	3.10 min
04	Cut	Cistern	4.10	0.90	3.10 min
05	Layer	Made ground	Trench	Trench	1.20
06	Layer	Buried soil	2.50	1.00	0.30
07	Layer	Natural clay	2.50	0.50	n/a

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

## 5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief at 1 Post Office Terrace, Robertsbridge. Table 1 shows an overview of the finds.

Context	Pottery	wt (g)	Glass	wt (g)	CTP	wt (g)
2	26	350	2	42		
5	7	172			1	<2
Total	33	522	2	42	1	0

Table 4: Quantification of finds

## 5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 A small assemblage of pottery was recovered during the archaeological work from just two individually numbered contexts. All of the pottery is of the late post-medieval period with none necessarily predating 1790/1800.

5.2.2 Context [02] produced a range of domestic wares, perhaps spanning 1790/1800 to 1875. Sherd sizes tend to be small to medium (to 60mm across) with only slight signs of abrasion suggesting they have not been subject to extensive reworking. Locally made glazed red earthenwares are the most common (8/202g) with at least two bowls and an externally sooted pipkin being represented. There are also six sherds (26g) from a single yellow ware jug with white and red-brown annular slipped line decoration. The earliest finewares consist of creamware (5/20g) sherds from a plate and bowl, plain pearlware sherds (2/6g) from a tea bowl and saucer and transfer-printed pearlware (2/6g) from a mug and unidentifiable vessel with flow blue decoration. The transfer-printed pearlware appears to be quite late (perhaps 1825-1850) and it is quite possible the creamware were older vessels in contemporaneous use. There are also three (94g) sherds of mid-late 19<sup>th</sup>- century refined white earthenware vessels, one with pink lustre decoration, the other being the 61mm diameter (27mm tall) base from a lidded pot. The latter is stamped MAN // M 1/8 on its base. There is also a single sherd (2g) from an English porcelain fluted saucer.

5.2.3 Context [05] produced only seven sherds, all of which can best be placed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sherds range to large in size (over 60mm across) but again show low to slight signs of abrasion. A single large sherd (116g) from a cylindrical jar in Nottingham stoneware is present along with fragments of a chamber pot and two bowls with annular slip decoration (3/34g) in yellow ware. The three transfer-printed pearlware sherds from this deposit are all from a late willow pattern plate.

**5.3 The Glass** by Luke Barber

5.3.1 Context [02] produced two shards of glass, both of mid to later 19<sup>th</sup>- century type, One fragment (20g) from a green wine/beer bottle is present along with a 22g piece from the 28mm diameter base of a cylindrical cobalt blue phial.

**5.4 The Clay Tobacco Pipe** by Luke Barber

5.4.1 Context [05] produced a single fresh stem fragment of later 18<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>- century type.

5.4.2 The assemblages of pottery, glass and clay pipe do not hold any potential for further analysis and are recommended for discard.

**5.5 The Pin** by Trista Clifford

5.5.1 Two stem fragments, probably from the same copper alloy dress pin, were recovered from context [02]. The head is missing. The pin is of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No archaeological remains of note were recorded in the watching brief, however, it should be noted that throughout most of the trench, natural deposits were not reached, and the potential that archaeology exists beneath the new extension cannot be ruled out.
- 6.2 The buried soil horizon did not contain any visible dating evidence and so remains undated.
- 6.3 The brick-built cistern or soakaway was cut through made ground deposits of 19<sup>th</sup> century date and is therefore more recent than this and is most probably Victorian. The soakaway is preserved *in situ*.
- 6.4 There was no evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation in the location of the proposed development, either associated with the abbey and its outlying buildings or for a more domestic purpose.
- 6.5 No data to address the set of specific research aims laid out in section 1.4 was recorded.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ASE 2012. *1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5PJ Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

BGS 2012: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 26/9/12

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank Nicol Design Associates Ltd for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Greg Chuter County Archaeologist East Sussex County Council for his guidance and monitoring. Justin Russell produced the figures for this report; Andy Leonard project managed the excavations and Jim Stevenson project managed the post-excavation process.

**HER Summary Form**

Site Code	RPO 12					
Identification Name and Address	Archaeological Watching Brief Report 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane Salehurst, Robertsbridge East Sussex, TN32 5PJ					
County, District &/or Borough						
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 7487 2421					
Geology	Ashdown Formation					
Arch. South-East Project Number	5661					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	<b>Watching Brief</b>	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	<b>WB.</b> 18/8/12	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Nicol Design Associates Ltd					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Diccon Hart					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	<b>PM</b>	<b>Modern</b>		
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Nicol Design Associates to conduct an archaeological watching brief during footings excavations for a new extension at 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5PJ.</p> <p>No archaeological remains of note were recorded in the watching brief, however, it should be noted that throughout most of the trench, natural deposits were not reached, and the potential that archaeology exists beneath the new extension cannot be ruled out.</p> <p>A buried soil horizon was recorded; however, this did not contain any visible dating evidence and so remains undated. A brick-built cistern or soakaway was cut through made ground deposits of 19th century date and is therefore more recent than this and is most probably Victorian. The soakaway is preserved in situ. There was no evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation in the location of the proposed development, either associated with the abbey and its outlying buildings or for a more domestic purpose. No data to address the set of specific research aims laid out in section 1.4 was recorded.</p>						

## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-134392**

### Project details

Project name	Watching brief at 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Nicol Design Associates to conduct an archaeological watching brief during footings excavations for a new extension at 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5PJ. No archaeological remains of note were recorded in the watching brief, however, it should be noted that throughout most of the trench, natural deposits were not reached, and the potential that archaeology exists beneath the new extension cannot be ruled out. A buried soil horizon was recorded; however, this did not contain any visible dating evidence and so remains undated. A brick-built cistern or soakaway was cut through made ground deposits of 19th century date and is therefore more recent than this and is most probably Victorian. The soakaway is preserved in situ. There was no evidence of Saxon or medieval occupation in the location of the proposed development, either associated with the abbey and its outlying buildings or for a more domestic purpose. No data to address the set of specific research aims laid out in section 1.4 was recorded.
Project dates	Start: 18-08-2012 End: 18-08-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	RPO 12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status (other)	archaeological notification area
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	SOAKAWAY Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX ROTHER SALEHURST 1 Post Office Terrace, Church Lane, Salehurst, Robertsbridge, East Sussex,
Postcode	TN32 5PJ
Study area	15.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 7487 2421 50 0 50 59 24 N 000 29 31 E Point



Height OD / Depth    Min: 20.40m Max: 20.40m

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Diccon Hart
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Nicol Design Associates Ltd

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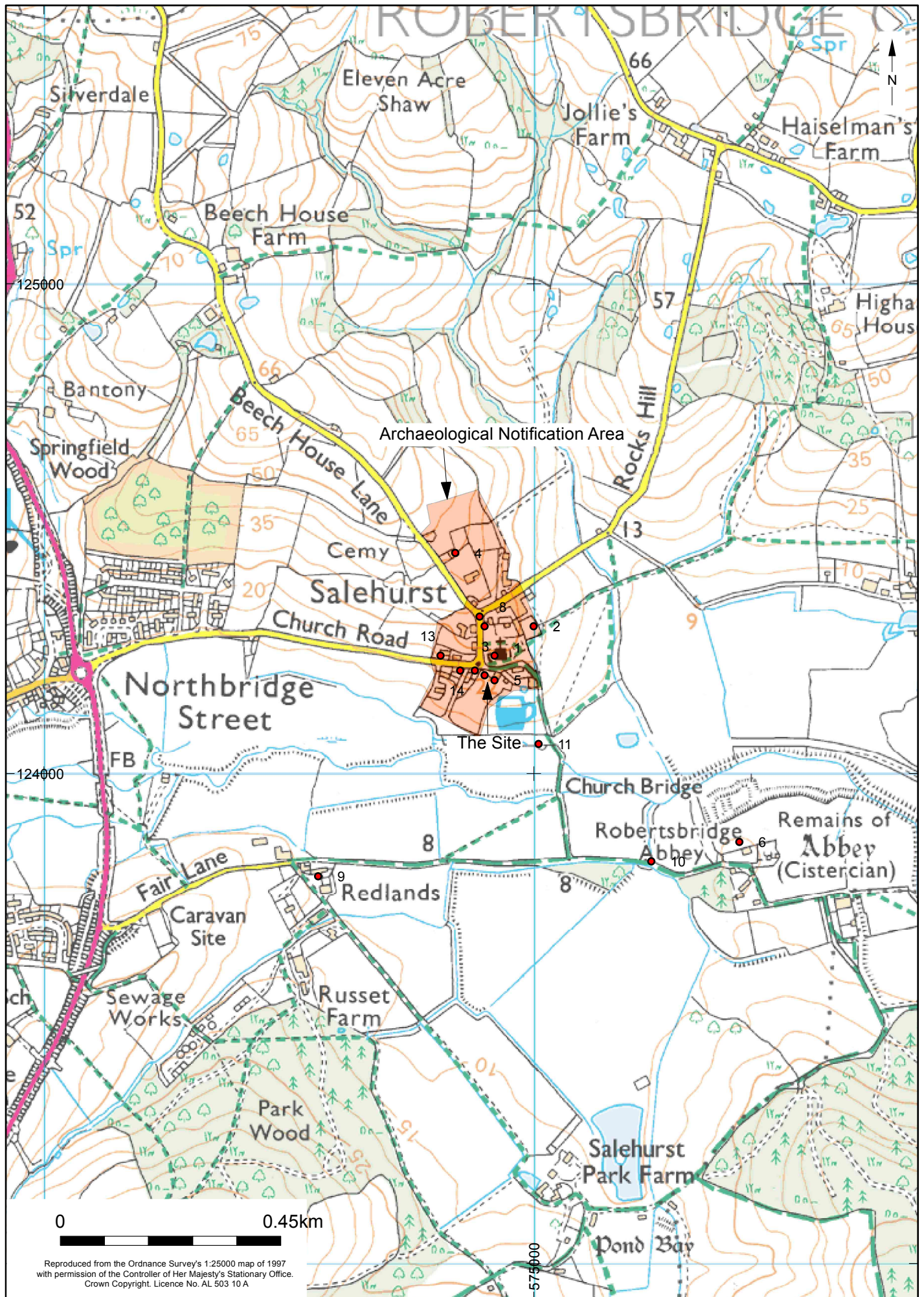
**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	Hastings/ Rye/ Rother
Physical Archive ID	RPO 12
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Hastings/ Rye/ Rother
Digital Archive ID	RPO 12
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Hastings/ Rye/ Rother
Paper Archive ID	RPO 12
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

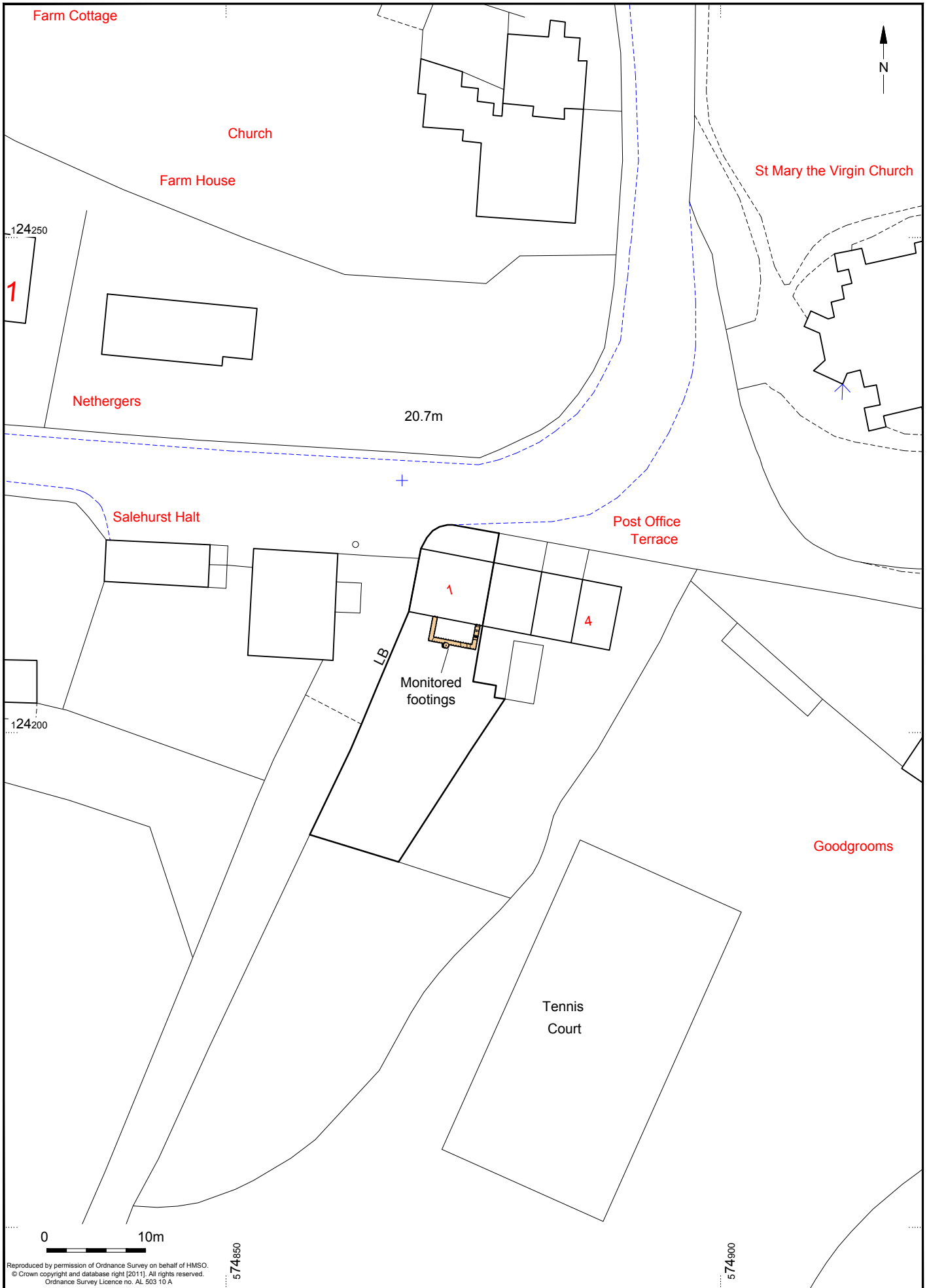
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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological watching brief at 1 Post Office Terrace, Salehurst
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Swift, D
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Entered on	26 September 2012



© Archaeology South-East		1 Post Office Terrace, Salehurst	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5661	Sept 2012	Site location and HER data	
Report Ref: 2012204	Drawn by: JLR		



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© Archaeology South-East		1 Post Office Terrace, Salehurst	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 5661	Sept 2012	Plan of monitored area	
Report Ref: 2012204	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		1 Post Office Terrace, Salehurst	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 5661	Sept 2012	Plan, section and photographs	
Report Ref: 2012204	Drawn by: JLR		

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