

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Land East of Drovers Roundabout (Area C)  
Ashford, Kent  
TN25 4XX**

**NGR: TR 0016 4380**

**Planning Ref: 10/01663**

**ASE Project No: 5986  
Site Code: DRA 13**

**ASE Report No: 2013257  
OASIS id: archaeol6-161493**



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**October 2013**

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***Abstract***

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 CgMs Consulting Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land east of Drovers Roundabout, Ashford, Kent. No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the course of the ground works. Although the site was subject to some degree of disturbance (probably derived from modern road construction activities) the archaeological horizon (where it was revealed) seemed to be largely intact. The results must therefore be classed as negative evidence.

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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 CgMs Consulting Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land east of Drovers Roundabout, Ashford, Kent. The site is centred on National Grid References NGR 600200, 143900. The location is shown on Figure 1.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The site (Area C) is part of a greater scheme. It is located to the north of Ashford. It comprises grassland and is bound by Fougères Way to the north, Warren Lane to the east, Simone Weil Avenue to the south and Drovers Roundabout to the west.

1.2.2 The underlying geology of the site is a mix of Hithe Formation inter-bedded sandstone and limestone, Folkstone Formation sandstone and Sandgate Formation sandstone, siltstone and mudstone (BGS 2013).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted by Ashford Borough Council (Number 10/01663). Condition 5 stated the requirement for a programme of archaeological work on the site.

1.3.2 An archaeological Desk Based Assessment (CgMs, 2011) for the site as a whole was produced in 2011. That document demonstrated that it has moderate potential to contain archaeological remains of prehistoric date. Previous work to the north of the site (SWAT, 2011) revealed a ditch of mid to late Iron Age date and work to the north-east revealed undated ditches presumed to be a prehistoric field system (ASE 2013a). A further evaluation (ASE 2013b) recorded a number of poorly dated linear features which may relate to Late Iron Age/early Roman and medieval field systems. Consultation with KCC's Archaeology Advisor also identified that Area C of the scheme lies close to some small medieval ovens found south of Simone Weil Avenue.

1.3.3 Consequently CgMs and KCC have agreed that a programme of intensive archaeological monitoring should be undertaken for works undertaken in Area C of the scheme.

1.3.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ASE 2013c) for the archaeological monitoring was prepared with reference to the consultation between CgMs and KCC Heritage Conservation Group. This was submitted to all parties for approval.

1.3.5 All work was carried out in accordance with this WSI and with the general standards set down in KCC specifications for archaeological watching briefs.

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

### *Aims*

1.4.1 The broad aims of the watching brief were:

- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any such remains and deposits
- To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
- To establish the extent to which previous groundworks and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site

### *Objectives*

1.4.2 Specific objectives in order to fulfil the above aims were to:

- Identify any evidence of prehistoric activity on the site and to determine what impact previous groundworks have had to any archaeology encountered.
- Identify any remains associated with the medieval ovens known to exist to the south of the site

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report outlines the findings of the archaeological watching brief carried out from the 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February and the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2013, carried out by Catherine Douglas (archaeologist), Gary Webster (archaeologist) and Antonio Reis (archaeologist). The project was managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation work managed by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Overview**

2.1.1 The following archaeological background is largely drawn from the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) of the site and is summarised below with due acknowledgement (CgMs 2011). Research for this document included a search of entries on the Kent Historic Environment Record within a 500m radius of the site.

### **2.2 Prehistoric**

2.2.1 Prehistoric evidence is limited to a cluster of find spots to the north-west of the site in the area of *The Warren*. A Neolithic serrated flint axe is recorded as having been found c.300m to the north-west of the site (TQ94 SE5). A Bronze Age bronze axe has been recorded as being found on the Ashford Golf Course c.600m to the north of the site (HER TQ04 SW17). A late Bronze Age urn is recorded as having been found in a sandpit on *The Warren* c. 250m to the north-west of the site (TQ 94 SE9).

2.2.2 There have been a series of evaluations and excavations of the former Ashford Barracks on the south-eastern side of the A20, immediately to the south-east of Area A (ASE 2000; ASE 2007). A small number of features including a ditch, two gullies and a small pit contained Late Iron Age pottery. These probably form the earliest features on a site which continued in use into the early Roman period (see below). These remains have been interpreted as indicative of agricultural usage rather than settlement.

2.2.3 As part of the wider scheme of works on the current site, a seven trench evaluation was carried out on an adjacent parcel of land to the east of Area A (ASE 2013a). It uncovered several undated ditches interpreted as possible elements of a prehistoric field system. A previous watching brief on the northern part of this wider site (SWAT 2011) had also revealed a ditch of Middle to Late Iron Age date

2.2.4 Other evidence of prehistoric activity is known from slightly further afield including a few Middle/Late Iron Age features found during a watching brief at Lodge Wood (part of the High Speed 1 scheme) c.1km to the west of Area A (OAU 2000). More extensive prehistoric remains were found on the High Speed 1 project at Beechbrook Wood c. 3km to the north-west, including a Neolithic pit, several barrows and settlement sites dating to the Middle/Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age (MoLAS 1999).

### **2.3 Roman**

2.3.1 An agricultural landscape, consisting largely of linear features was recorded at Ashford Barracks, immediately to the south-east of Area A. It is thought to date to the Late Iron Age/early Roman period with some features containing pottery certainly datable to the post-conquest period (ASE 2000; 2007). Evidence of Late Iron Age/earlier Roman settlement has been recorded in other locations north-east of Ashford, including at Beechbrook Wood and Eureka Park (MoLAS 1999; ASE 2006).

## **2.4 Saxon and Medieval**

- 2.4.1 No Saxon sites or find-spots have been recorded within a 500m radius of the site.
- 2.4.2 A watching brief and subsequent excavation carried out on land to the south of the A28 (Simone Weil Avenue) found several late 12<sup>th</sup> to late 13<sup>th</sup> century ovens together with associated enclosures, pits and possible post-built fences or other light structures (OAE 2010).

## **2.5 Post-Medieval**

- 2.5.1 The nearby Ashford Barracks were constructed in 1797 to house 2000 soldiers (TQ94 SE41). This establishment was expanded and modernised over many years until it was closed in 1998. Other post-medieval sites recorded on the Kent HER within 500m radius of the study site are Ashford Isolation Hospital (TR04 SW109), Ashford Hospital (TR 04 SW106) and various WWII structures and defences.
- 2.5.1 The earliest relevant map is Hasted's Map of Kent (1793). At this time, the site lay beyond the historic core of Ashford within agricultural fields. The Ashford Tithe map (1840) depicts the site as being part of a large field between Warren Lane and Maidstone Road. By the time of the first edition OS map (1871) a volunteer rifle range crosses the middle of the site. The Ashford to Maidstone railway is first shown on the 1898 OS map but the rest of the site remained unchanged. Apart from the disappearance of the rifle range there were few changes to the site in subsequent mapping.

## **2.6 Recent Archaeological Investigation**

- 2.6.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken to the north-west of the site (Area A, ASE 2013b). A number of linear features were recorded and may represent two differently aligned phases of agricultural field system which were unfortunately very poorly-dated. One of these is similarly aligned to Late Iron Age/ early Roman features recorded immediately to the south at Ashford Barracks and to medieval ditches recorded to the south east at land off Warren Lane. The other possible alignment contained one sherd of later 12<sup>th</sup> to earlier 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The features were sealed by uniformly thick deposits of subsoil and topsoil.



### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The methodology comprised an intensive archaeological watching brief which in this instance was agreed to comprise reducing areas to achieve a clean surface for inspection and subsequent sign off by KCC's archaeologist.
- 3.1.2 The fieldwork consisted of the mechanical stripping of overburden, such as topsoil and subsoil in the north-eastern part of the site. The remaining monitored works comprised excavation of 2 drainage runs and a soak-away in the southern half of the site.
- 3.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2013c) and with the guidance set down in KCC's standard specifications for archaeological watching briefs. All excavation was done by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The excavations were monitored by a competent archaeologist until it was deemed to be beyond the archaeological horizon, or already heavily disturbed. Adequate time was given for the archaeologist to look over all excavations thoroughly
- 3.1.4 All archaeological remains and deposits were recorded using standard ASE context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only. All archaeological remains were recorded on plastic drawing film at appropriate scales.
- 3.1.5 Archaeological structures, features and deposits exposed or excavated were planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2500 scale by means of total station or taped offsets from known points and levelled with respect to OD.

#### 3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 Kent museums are not currently accepting archaeological archives. ASE holds the site archive at its offices in Portslade and will continue to do so until a suitable museum or archive repository can be identified. The contents of the archive are tabulated below.

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	c.30

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

**4.0 RESULTS**

(Figure 2)

**4.1 Site strip monitored on 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013**

4.1.1 Almost the entirety of the north-eastern half of the site was stripped to the archaeological horizon. The deposits encountered comprised a variable mid yellow brown and mid brown grey clay sand with frequent inclusions of sandstone and limestone fragments. This mixture of Hythe and Sandgate Beds was seen to be disturbed via modern activities probably associated with the construction of the nearby roads and roundabout. The natural horizon was overlain by deposits of mid brown silt clay subsoil which was in-turn overlain by a dark brown clay silt topsoil deposit.

4.1.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the site strip. Some of the depressions associated with construction activities were excavated and were seen to incorporate modern debris.

**4.2 Soakaway and Drainage runs monitored on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2013**

4.2.1 Two drainage runs (measuring c.20m x 1.8m and c.10m x 2.5m) and a soakaway (measuring c.5m square) were excavated in the southern half of the site to the archaeological horizon (c.0.35m below ground level) at which point archaeological monitoring ceased.

4.2.1 No archaeological features or finds were encountered during these drainage works and identical deposits to those identified in the above described 'site strip' were revealed.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2-0.25m
002	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.15m
003	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the course of the ground works. Although the site was subject to some degree of disturbance (probably derived from modern road construction activities), the archaeological horizon (where it was revealed) seemed to be largely intact. The results must therefore be classed as negative evidence.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council for her guidance and monitoring. The figures for this report were produced by Justin Russell; the fieldwork was project managed by Andy Leonard and Jim Stevenson project managed the post-excavation process.

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**HER Summary Form**

Site Code	DRA 13					
Identification Name and Address	Land East of Drovers Roundabout (Area C), Ashford, Kent.					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Ashford					
OS Grid Refs.	TR 0016 4380					
Geology	Sandgate Beds and Hythe Beds					
Arch. South-East Project Number	5986					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Roadside (verge) X		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 25 <sup>th</sup> Feb – 18 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2013	Other		
Sponsor/Client	CgMs Consulting					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Cat, Douglas, Antonia Reiss, Gary Webster, Ian Hogg (archaeologists)					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern X		
<p>Summary</p> <p>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 CgMs Consulting Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land east of Drovers Roundabout, Ashford, Kent.</p> <p>No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the course of the ground works. Although the site was subject to some degree of disturbance (probably derived from modern road construction activities) the archaeological horizon (where it was revealed) seemed to be largely intact. The results should therefore be classed as negative evidence.</p>						

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-161493

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#### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Drovers Roundabout (Area C)
Short description of the project	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 CgMs Consulting Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land east of Drovers Roundabout, Ashford, Kent. No archaeological features or finds were encountered during the course of the ground works. Although the site was subject to some degree of disturbance (probably derived from modern road construction activities) the archaeological horizon (where it was revealed) seemed to be largely intact. The results should therefore be classed as negative evidence.
Project dates	Start: 25-02-2013 End: 18-09-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	DRA 13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 12 - Verge
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 3 - Disturbed
Monument type	0 None
Significant Finds	0 None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT ASHFORD ASHFORD Drovers Roundabout (Area C)
Postcode	TN25 4XX
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TR 0016 4380 51 0 51 09 28 N 000 51 45 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

Height OD / Depth    Min: 50.00m Max: 60.00m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Catherine Douglas
Project supervisor	Antonio Reis
Project supervisor	Ian Hogg
Project supervisor	Gary Webster
Type of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive Exists?	No

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land East of Drovers Roundabout (Area C), Ashford, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	n/a
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No: 2013257
Date	2013

Issuer or publisher    Archaeology South East

Place of issue or  
publication            Portslade

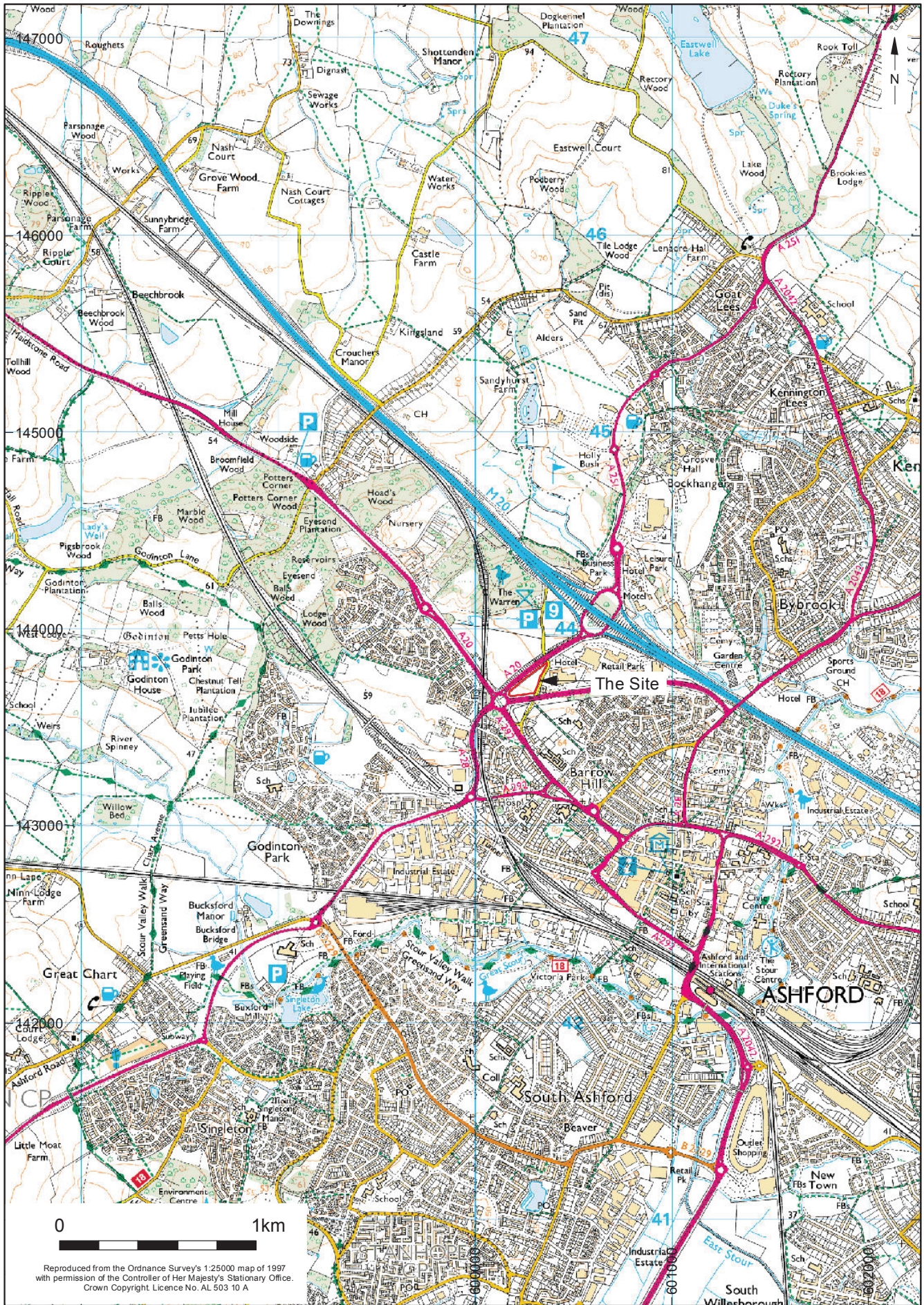
Description            WB Report

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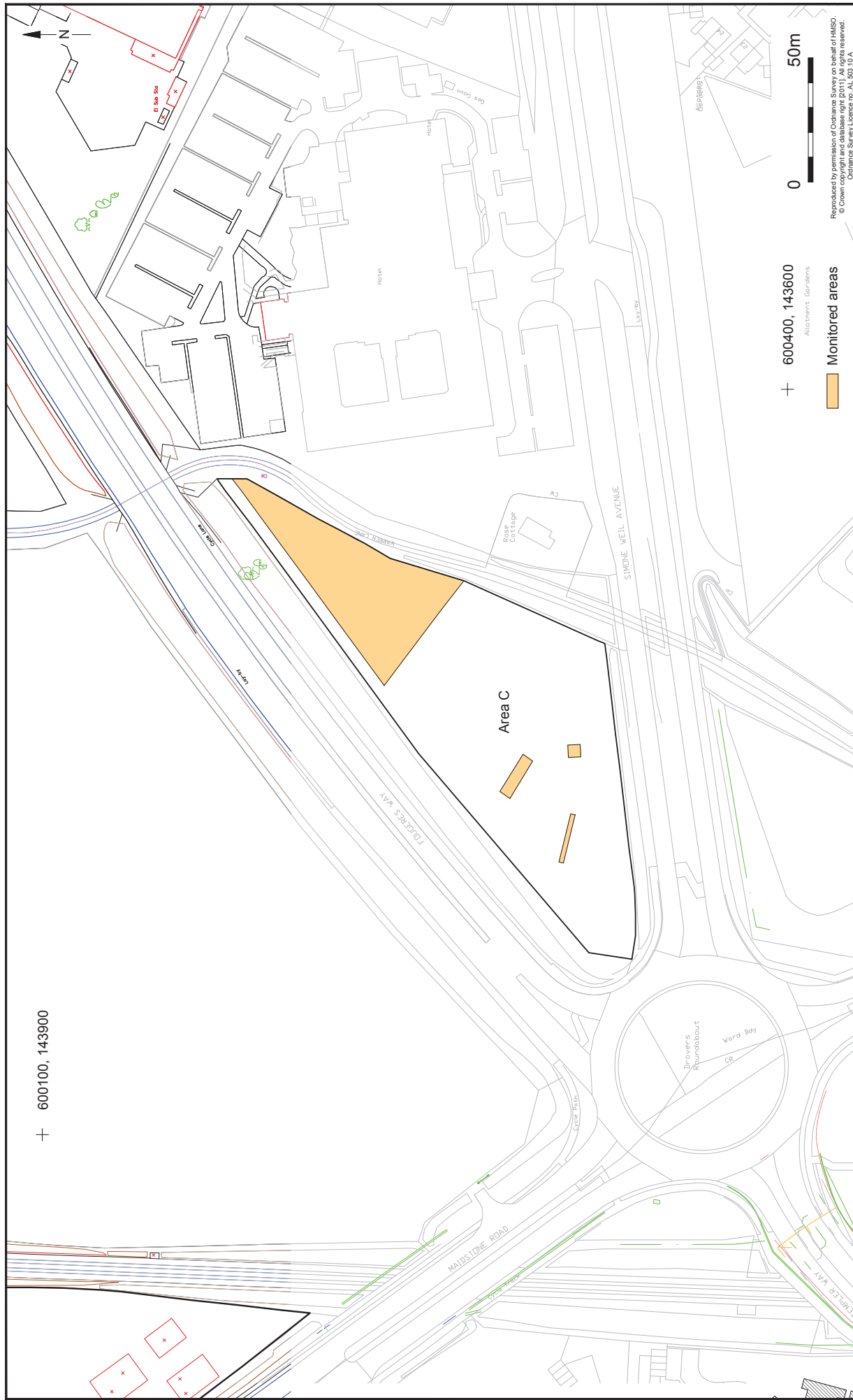
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© Archaeology South-East		Land at Drovers Roundabout (Area C)		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5986	Oct 2013	Site location		
Report Ref: 2013257	Drawn by: JLR			



© Archaeology South-East  
 Project Ref: 5986  
 Report Ref: 2013241  
 Sept 2013  
 Drawn by: JLR

Land at Drovers Roundabout (Area C)  
 Location of monitored areas  
 Fig. 2

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