

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Coach House Cottage, Mayfield
East Sussex**

NGR: 558555 126992

**Wealden District Council
Planning Ref: WD/2013/0896/F**

**ASE Project No: 6278
Site Code: CHC 13**

**ASE Report No: 2013245
OASIS ID: archaeol6-165841**



by Gary Webster

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**by Gary Webster
With contributions by Elke Raemen**

December 2013

**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the landowner Tim Chessells to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with an extension to the existing property at Coach House Cottage, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

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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 was commissioned by the landowner, Tim Chessells, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with an extension to the existing property at Coach House Cottage, Mayfield, TN20 6AN. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 555855 126992 and is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The property is located to the rear of buildings that front onto the north side of the High Street, in the historic medieval town of Mayfield. It lies to the east of the A267, to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

1.2.2 According to current data available from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock is Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. There is no recorded superficial geology (BGS 2013).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Wealden District Council for the erection of an extension to the existing property (planning ref. WD/2013/0896/F). Owing to the location of the site in an *Archaeological Notification Area*, and following consultation between Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council (Wealden District Council's advisers on archaeological issues) a planning condition was attached to the permission requiring that:

'No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post investigation assessment (including provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition) has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition [1] to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the County Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework'

- 1.3.3 In accordance with this a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI; ASE 2013) for archaeological watching brief was prepared, submitted to and approved by East Sussex County Council prior to commencement of work. The WSI outlined the methodology to be used in the field, in this case an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks and in the reporting and archiving of the results (*ibid.*).

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aims stated in the *specification* (*ibid.*) were to ascertain as far as possible:

‘Whether archaeological remains were present on the site and if so assess the date, survival and condition of said remains.

The character date and quality of ancient remains and deposits.

How they might be affected by the development of the site

What options should be considered for mitigation.’

- 1.4.2 In addition, it was anticipated that the results of the watching brief could potentially contribute to the following specific research questions identified in the Historic Character Assessment report for Mayfield (Harris 2008):

Origins

RQ7: *What evidence is there for the development of an urban centre next to a pre-existing church, market place and palace? Is there evidence for early encroachment and small-scale peripheral plots consistent with permissive settlement?*

RQ8: *What evidence is there for the extent, population, and economic basis of the late 13th- century and 14th-century town*

Later Medieval Town

RQ9: *How have tenements developed in the later medieval period (considering in particular, whether permanent settlement was substantially later than suggested here)?*

RQ10: *What evidence is there for encroachment on to the market place/High Street being a later medieval development?*

RQ11: *What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider industry), were there during this period, and how did they change?*

Post Medieval Town

RQ13: *What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity), were there during this period, and how did they change?*

RQ15: *Is there any evidence for late 16th-century decline prior to revival in the 17th century?*

RQ16: *What was the socio-economic impact of coaching and trans-Wealden road transport on the town?*

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report outlines the findings of the archaeological watching brief carried out on the 30th January, the 22nd and 23rd of August, and 21st and 22nd November 2013 carried out by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) and by Catherine Douglas and Gary Webster (Archaeologists).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological background was outlined in the WSI (ASE 2013) was largely drawn from the Historic Character Assessment report for Mayfield (Harris 2008), undertaken as part of the Sussex Extensive Urban Survey. It is summarised here.

2.1.2 Mayfield has been subject to very little previous recorded archaeological investigation, limited to monitoring of similar extension projects (e.g. ASE 2011).

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 Mayfield has little known archaeological potential for the prehistoric period, although several findspots of Neolithic flintwork are reported on the HER, including polished/ ground axes at Old Rectory/Heron's Folly [HER reference: ES6992 – MES6992], Near the River Rother [HER reference: TQ 52 NE5 – MES4639] and at another unspecified location in Mayfield [HER reference: TQ 52 NE6 – MES4640].

2.3 Romano-British

2.3.1 The wider area around Mayfield was exploited for iron production in the Roman period. A probable samian dog figurine was found in the grounds of The Old Rectory/Heron's Folly [HER reference: TQ 52 NE – MES6994].

2.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

2.4.1 There is little Saxon evidence from Mayfield. There is an account of a wooden church being built here by Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the 10th century; however, it has recently been claimed that that this may have been an attempt to legitimise Canterbury's claim to a manor which was acquired in the 11th or early 12th century. In 1261 Mayfield was granted a weekly market and a three day fair. This economic growth was probably related to the construction of a palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury shortly after 1260. Parts of the current St Dunstan's Church are thought to date from the 13th century.

2.4.2 Mayfield became a strong trading settlement over the course of the late 13th to 15th centuries. Records show that 85 shop places were damaged by a fire in 1388/9. By this time, the original burgage plots seem to have been amalgamated into larger plots containing permanent buildings. The current site appears to be located in an area likely occupied by a yard to the rear of such a building. Such yard spaces may have housed medieval or early post-medieval ancillary buildings, working areas or rubbish pits.

2.5 Post-Medieval

2.5.1 The palace at Mayfield fell out of use during the primacy of Thomas Cranmer (1533-55) and was granted into private ownership. This decline was

mirrored in a temporary contraction in the size of the town; however, by the late 17th century, there had been a significant growth in the population. The development of an iron working industry and the involvement in the production of ordnance were important industries at this time, as was leather working.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The fieldwork consisted of three separate phases of work. Phase 1 took place in January 2013 (reported on in an ESCC negative watching brief form) and included in this report. This comprised the removal of 25 tree trunks across an area measuring 19m x 16m in the garden of the property and the levelling and movement of topsoil.
- 3.1.2 Phase 2 took place in August and involved ground reduction an area directly to the west of the existing property, measuring 4m x 6.72m. In addition, mechanical excavation of the footings for the proposed orangery to the south of the property. These were 0.5m wide and 0.4m deep. The area inside these footings was reduced by 0.25m. Phase 3 took place in November 2013 and involved ground reduction (also to 0.25m) adjacent to the existing house and the excavation of small drainage channels and a soakaway.
- 3.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2013) and the Standard Conditions for fieldwork recommended by ESCC (2008).
- 3.1.4 All mechanical excavation was undertaken by a mini digger fitted with a toothless bucket, where practical, with limited manual excavation. The excavations were monitored by an experienced archaeologist from ASE 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 and record encountered contexts..
- 3.1.5 All archaeological remains and deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only. All archaeological remains were recorded on plastic drawing film at appropriate scales.

3.2 The Site Archive

- 3.2.1 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 in Portslade. The contents of the archive are tabulated below.

Number of Contexts	6
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	33
Bulk finds	1

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

4.1 Phase 1

4.1.1 A total of two contexts were recorded during this phase and these have been tabulated below.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness m
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.55m
002	Layer	Natural geology	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts for Phase 1

4.1.2 The removal of the twenty-five tree trunks and shrubs revealed the natural greyish yellow silty clay 'natural' geology [002] beneath a 0.55m thick deposit of friable, mid to dark brown silty clay topsoil, context [001]. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were revealed or recovered.

4.2 Phases 2 and 3

4.2.1 A total of five contexts were recorded during this phase and these have been tabulated below.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness m
002	Layer	Natural geology	-
003	Layer	Made Ground/Topsoil	c. 0.50m
010	Masonry	Garden Wall	-
011	Fill	Fill of [12]	-
012	Cut	Rubbish Pit	-

Table 3: List of recorded contexts for Phases 2 and 3

4.2.2 Mechanical ground reduction and excavation of footings trenches for the extensions revealed the natural geology [002] directly overlain by a deposit of topsoil/made ground [003], which was a mid-grey silty clay containing building rubble and rubbish. This deposit slightly increased in thickness toward the north of the site.

4.2.3 The only features encountered were a 1.4m long, 300mm wide stretch of modern brick-built garden wall [010]. The other feature identified was a 19th/20th century rubbish pit [012], located in the south-west section of the footing excavations. Due to the mixed nature of the made ground and disturbance evident on site, the edges of the pit were indistinct, and therefore the feature was of unknown extent. The fill, context [011] contained glass, metal cookware and ceramics, selections of which were recovered for dating purposes.

4.1.3 Ground reduction for a path and patio area adjacent to the house, as well as the excavation of trenches for drainage and a soakaway (measuring 3m by 2.3m by a maximum of 1.1m in depth) revealed a similar straightforward

stratigraphic sequence of topsoil, context [003], and 'natural' Tunbridge Wells Sand, context [002]. Again no archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small finds assemblage was recovered from a single context on site. Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context. Finds are stored according to IFA guidelines (2008). None of the finds require further conservation.
- 5.1.2 The assemblage, consisting of five glass fragments and a piece of pottery from a single context, is small and lacks intrinsically significant objects. It is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and the assemblage is recommended for discard.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)
11	1	160	5	596

Table 4: An overview of the finds

5.2 The Pottery by Elke Raemen

- 5.2.1 A white china candle holder fragment was recovered from [11]. The piece is of 19th-century date.

5.3 The Glass by Elke Raemen

- 5.3.1 Context [11] contained a small assemblage of glass. Included is a cylindrical aqua Worcestershire sauce bottle as well as an aqua stopper, both embossed "Holbrook & Co". A clear glass square bottle was recovered as well. Both bottles are complete and of late 19th-century to early 20th-century date. In addition, the context contained two molten fragments of aqua glass, probably from bottles. A cork fragment was also found.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Very little of archaeological significance was identified during the archaeological watching brief. The remains of an old garden wall were discovered in the footprint of the orangery. This was most likely knocked down during the construction of the previous extension to the property. The rubbish pit dates from the late 19th century / early 20th century.
- 6.2 It is perhaps slightly surprising that no archaeological finds or features of note were found, however, this may be explained by the fact that the construction work for the extensions was very shallow and that the removal of trees in the garden caused only very localised disturbance. It might also be reasonable to assume from the results that the monitored areas only ever comprised gardens in the past.
- 6.3 It has not been possible to address the research questions outlined in the WSI (ASE 2013) owing to the lack of archaeological evidence uncovered during the works.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	CHC13					
Identification Name and Address	Coach House Cottage, Mayfield					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	558555 126992					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	6278					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site		Shallow Urban				
Dates of Fieldwork			January to November 2013			
Sponsor/Client	Tim Chessells					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Gary Webster					
Period Summary						
			PM ✓			
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the landowner Tim Chessells to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with an extension to the existing property at Coach House Cottage, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-165841

Project details

Project name	Coach House Cotage, High Street, Mayfield
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the landowner Tim Chessells to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with an extension to the existing property at Coach House Cottage, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 30-01-2013 End: 22-11-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	6278 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CHC 13 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WD/2013/0896/F - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN MAYFIELD AND FIVE ASHES Coach House Cottage, High Street, Mayfield
Postcode	TN20 6AN
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 58555 26992 51 0 51 01 11 N 000 15 39 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Gary Webster
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Sir Tim Chessells

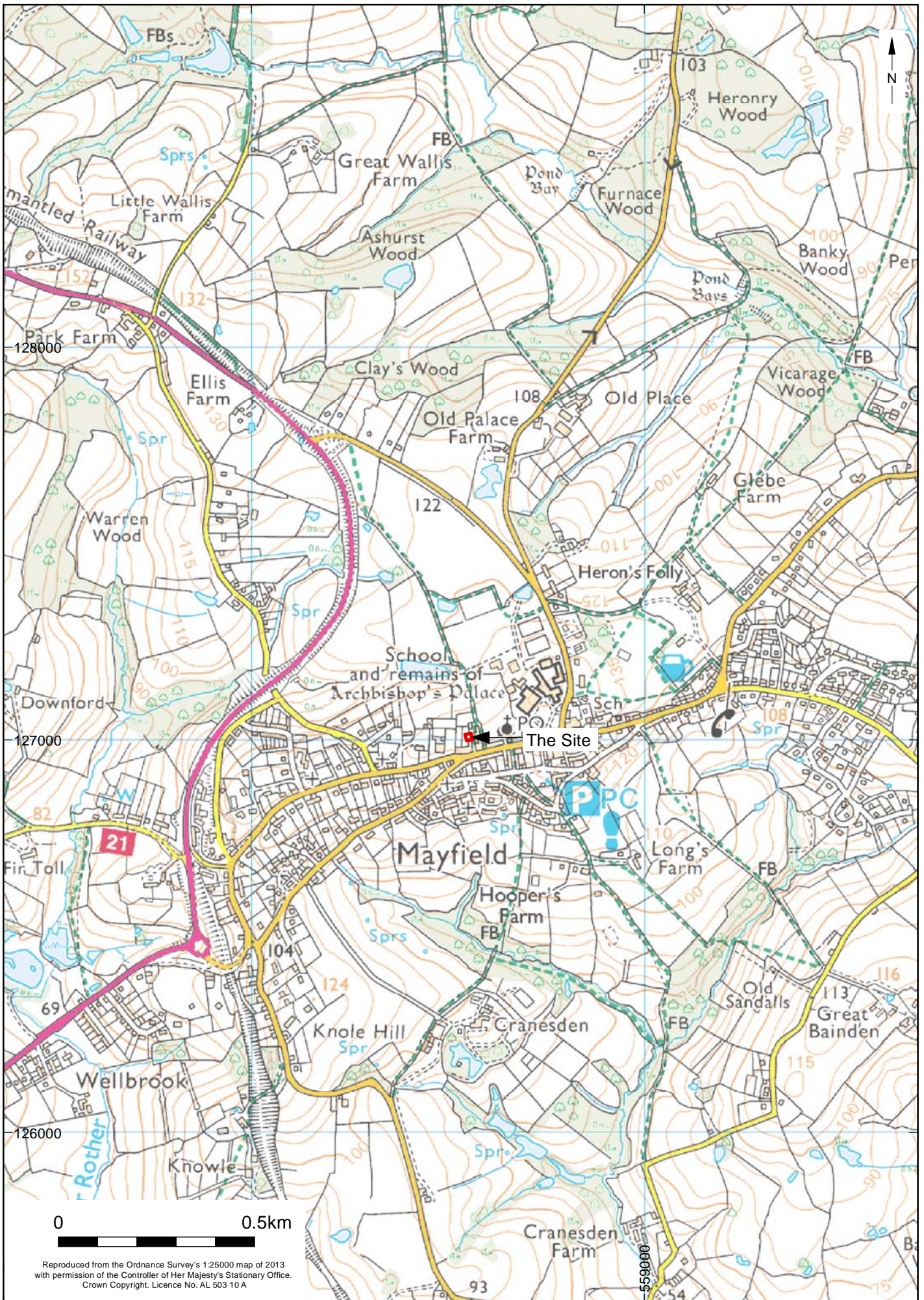
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Digital Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Notebook - Excavation"," Research"," General Notes","Report","Unpublished Text"

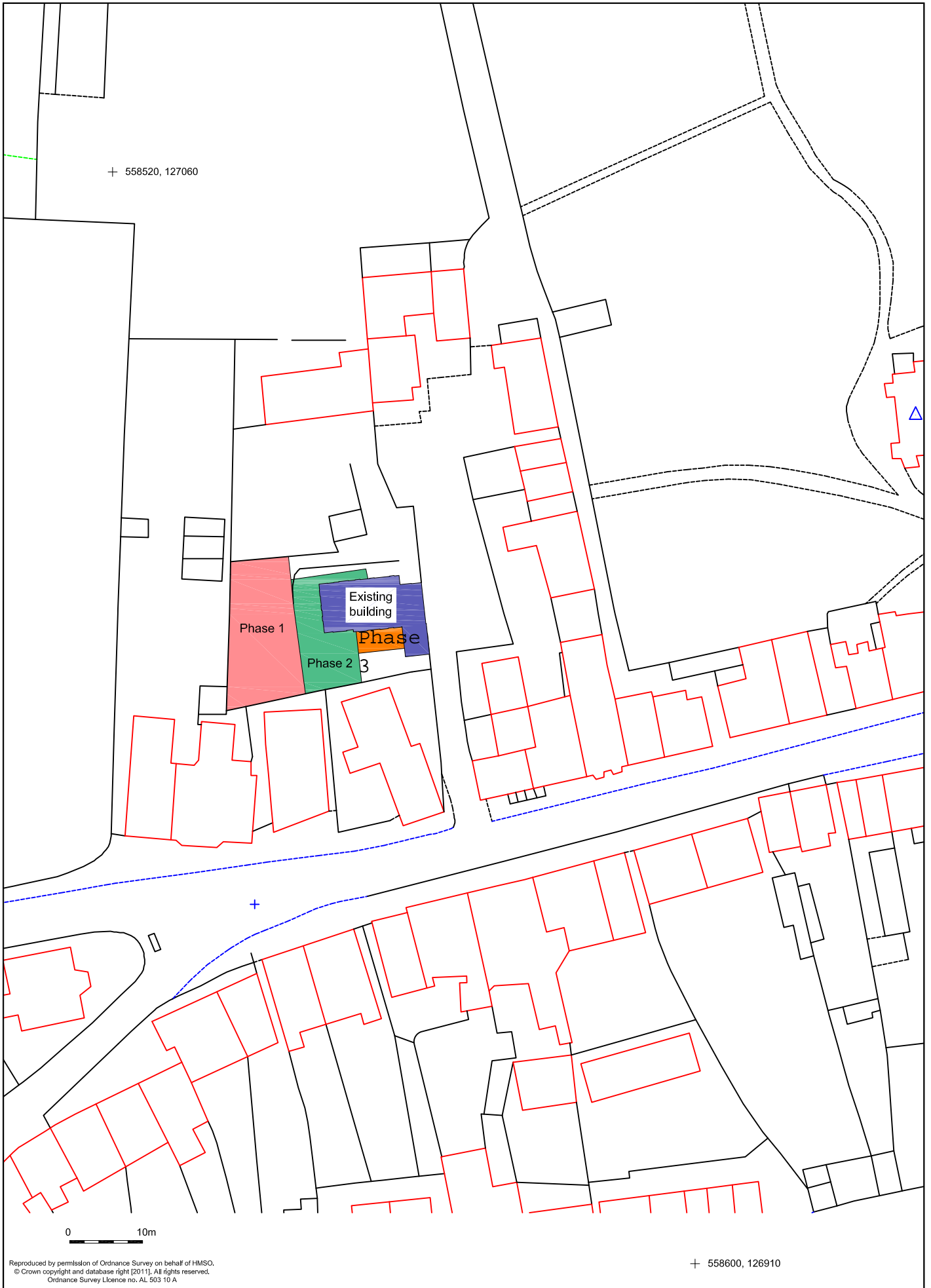
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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© Archaeology South-East		Coach House Cottage, Mayfield	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6278	December 2013	Site location	
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© Archaeology South-East		Coach House Cottage, Mayfield	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 6278	December 2013	Location of monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2013245	Drawn by: RHC		



Photograph showing Phase 1 tree removal



Photograph showing Phase 2 excavations for a foundation trench to the west of the existing building



Photograph showing the shallow nature of excavations within the footprint of the new extension to the west of the existing building (Phase 2)



Photograph showing the modern garden wall revealed during the Phase 3 groundworks



Photograph showing the 19th / 20th century pit during the Phase 3 groundworks (the modern garden wall can be seen in the background near to the ranging pole)

Head Office
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office
Centre for Applied Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

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