

**Archaeological Evaluation Report  
Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane  
Hastings, East Sussex**

**NGR: 583145,110135  
(TQ 83145 10135)**

**Hastings Borough Council  
(Planning Reference: HS/FA/13/00380)  
(Appeal Reference APP/B1415/A/13/2210361)**

**ASE Project No: 160111**

**Site Code: BLH 16**

**ASE Report No: 2016186**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-250714**



**By John Cook**

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<b>Revision:</b>			

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**Abstract**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex 18th April 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by Mount Ephraim Projects Limited. One trench measuring 25m in length was excavated. No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trial trench.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Mount Ephraim Projects Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development of land at Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) 583145 104967 and its location is shown in Figure 1.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale geological mapping available online (BGS 2016), the site lies on Wadhurst Clay Formation, comprised of soft, dark grey thinly-bedded mudstones ("shales") and mudstones with subordinate beds of pale grey siltstone, fine-grained sandstone (locally calcareous where it is known as Tilgate Stone or colloquially "Hastings Granite"), shelly limestone, clay ironstone and rare pebble beds.

1.2.2 The site is bounded by residential buildings to the north and open fields to the east, west and south. The site is generally level at approximately 61m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 A planning application for the demolition of 7 no. existing garages and the erection of two detached dwellings with parking and turning was approved on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2014 (Planning Ref. HS/FA/13/00380; Appeal reference APP/B1415/A/13/2210361). Planning permission was granted subject to conditions, including a requirement for a programme of archaeological work (Condition 8):

8. No development shall take place within the site area until a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such details include details that the developer shall notify the Council in writing 14 days prior to the start of any ground works.

1.3.2 The proposed development is situated within an Archaeological Notification Area defining an area of prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity. Immediately to the south on East Hill are the remains of an Iron Age hillfort and medieval chapel. A series of earthworks on the hill slope between the site and the fort may be the remains of the field system associated with the settlement. Finds of Roman material in the vicinity suggest settlement and activity continued into the Roman period. By the medieval period the town of Hastings had been established to the south-west, and the area of Barley Lane was known as Wickham, which suggests the site of an outlier farm. The site appears to have seen little activity in the modern periods, which raises the potential for any archaeological remains that do exist to be in good condition.

1.3.3 Consultation between the client and the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Archaeologist in his capacity as archaeological advisor to Hastings Borough Council has established that a trial-trench evaluation is required. Specifically the requirement is for a 25m evaluation trial trench running perpendicular to the slope (north – south) towards the western side of the plot with a contingency to excavate a further 20m trench (or two x 10m trenches) to test the areas of maximum impact from the proposed development

#### **1.4 Scope of Report**

1.4.1 The current report provides the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out in April 2016. The on-site work was undertaken by John Cook (Senior Archaeologist) and by John Hirst (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 A WSI was prepared in advance of excavation (ASE 2016) for which a ESCC Historic Environment Record (HER) search was conducted over a 500m search radius around the site (HER reference number 151/16). This identified 139 HER data entries, 88 archaeological events, 1 Archaeological Notification Area, 2 Conservation Areas, 3 Scheduled Monuments and 360 Listed Buildings. The results of the search are summarised below.
- 2.1.2 The purpose of this section is to assess the current historic environment context of the site and its environs. The following also incorporates information from a previous desk based assessment (DBA) prepared for a site to the southeast of Barley Lane (ASE 2014) and from the Sussex Urban Survey for Hastings (Harris 2010).
- 2.1.3 The site is situated within the Archaeological Notification Area for Hastings Historic Core (DES8725), which incorporates evidence of human activity from the Mesolithic to the present day.

### Prehistoric

- 2.1.4 Early prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site includes a Mesolithic flint flake recovered from an excavation at Rocklands Lane c.500m to the east (MES24259) and a Mesolithic flint scraper (MES29312) found 200m further to the east. Sherds of Neolithic pottery (MES862) were found c.500m southwest of the site, during the construction of the East Hill lift in 1902.
- 2.1.5 A Bronze Age Round Barrow (MES861) formerly existed c.600m southwest of the site on East Hill, but appears to have been destroyed due to erosion. A barbed and tanged arrowhead (MES881) was also found during excavations on East Hill in 1856 and a flint flake of probable later Bronze Age date was recovered during the excavations at Rocklands Lane.
- 2.1.6 East Hill, to the immediate south of the site, is widely regarded to have been used as a promontory fort in the Iron Age (see below), and later activity includes some level of Roman occupation, traditionally regarded as a villa although the evidence for this is weak. The hill saw use as a cemetery in the early medieval period, whilst later medieval activity includes an enclosed field system and an enigmatic rectangular enclosure (St. George's Enclosure) of unknown character but possibly associated with a beacon site. Subsequent use included various phases of military activity and a golf course.

### *The Hillfort*

- 2.1.7 The East Hill has been identified for many years as a promontory fort of Iron Age date (MES856), based primarily on the presence of a prominent, heavily vegetated earthen bank aligned north-south along its eastern edge (*i.e.* at the point where the landform falls away into Ecclesbourne Glen), effectively cutting across the neck of the hill and, together with the naturally steep northern slope and the vertical cliff to the south, forming a strongly defensible position. The earthwork has recently been surveyed by English Heritage as part of a larger survey of the East Hill (Fradley & Newsome 2008).

- 2.1.8 The earthwork itself has never been extensively excavated, but its similarity with other coastal sites in Sussex (Seaford Head and Castle Hill, Newhaven) has prompted a putative Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age date (Hamilton & Manley 1997). In 1972 a breach was made through the rampart to provide a 'US Cavalry fort' style entrance to a new café in Rocklands – three years later it was realised that this had impacted upon the Scheduled Ancient Monument and a record was made of the cut. These records are no longer available, but the section revealed 'only clay and soil upcast with a few stones' (Padgham 2009, 19). The location of the breach is unclear, but it has been suggested that it was in the area now occupied by a concrete bridge (*ibid.*). An evaluation of two trial trenches was carried out 40m north of the site and immediately east of the rampart in 2003, and revealed no archaeological features. A 0.3m deep deposit of made ground overlay the natural subsoil, derived from modern terracing and including material slumped from the rampart. Finds were largely 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, but included two possible Bronze/Iron Age worked flints and several flint cobbles (Priestley-Bell 2004). No contemporary features or artefacts have been discovered within the interior of the promontory fort.
- 2.1.9 A number of lynchets and boundary banks (MES 23783 - MES23790) distributed across East Hill may well be remnants of an Iron Age field system within which the earthwork sat. Evidence for later Iron Age activity in the site vicinity is represented by a gold stater (MES866) of Gallo Belgic type, which was found during construction groundworks 720m to the southwest of the site.

#### Romano-British

- 2.1.10 Finds of coins, including a hoard found in 1840 at the supposed former Saint George's Churchyard (MES857), c.235m south of the site, attest to activity within the vicinity of the site in the Roman period. A number of tesserae were reportedly found near Rocklands, approximately 330m southeast of the site, in 1957, which has led to speculation that a Roman villa or signalling station (MES880) existed on East Hill, however this find has not been confirmed and no evidence has subsequently come to light of any Roman structure in this area.



### Saxon – medieval

- 2.1.11 The town takes its name from its location within the territory of the *Gens Hestingorum*, first recorded after their defeat by the Mercian King Offa in AD 771. The town was subsequently referred to as *Haestingaceastre* in the Burghal Hideage, probably of AD 878-9. This original Saxon settlement appears to have begun on the hill to the west of the Priory Valley, close to the modern town centre and was augmented, after the Norman Conquest, by the expansion of the market town (MES19475) to the east (Martin & Martin et al. 2015). The town is mentioned as possessing a mint in the laws of Athelstan c. AD 928, and coins continued to be minted there until the end of Stephen's reign in AD 1154. By the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century the town appears to have developed into a major port that owed sea-service to the crown. While Hastings was clearly a borough of importance during this period, no finds or deposits of Saxon date have been found in the town to date.
- 2.1.12 The town continued to be an important port town after the Norman Conquest, providing one of the shortest crossings to Normandy. However from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century the town's importance decreased due to the gradual silting up of its harbour and the growth of the port towns of Rye and Winchelsea and by the late 14<sup>th</sup> century the town had become much diminished. During this period the site would have been situated beyond the eastern periphery of the medieval town, however there was traditionally a church or chapel of St. George (MES857) located on East Hill, to the south of the site, which was supposed to have been demolished prior to AD 1380. No evidence for this church has ever been found and its existence is more than doubtful.

### Post-medieval – modern

- 2.1.13 By the later 17<sup>th</sup> century the town's economy had improved and its population grown accordingly; this was due to the growth of its beach-based fishing and, on a smaller scale, mercantile fleets, which supported allied trades. Shipbuilding is recorded in 1580 and 1657, and, although poorly documented, probably continued throughout the period. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Hastings and Rye exported cured herrings, with Hastings sending 250 barrels a year to Portsmouth in 1718-20, and 409 barrels to Poole in 1726-32.
- 2.1.14 Hastings was one of several Sussex places that were visited for recreational sea bathing by the 1750s and the development of the town as a seaside resort received a boost with the outbreak of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and a consequent need for renewed coastal defence and for accommodation of soldiers. A folly (MES1007) comprised of three arches cut into natural rock, in a faux 13<sup>th</sup> century style and located c.460m southwest of the site, was allegedly created by John Coussens, an 18<sup>th</sup> Century hoaxer who wished to fool visitors that there was a church in the hill.
- 2.1.15 Hastings defences were revived in the Second World War, with the addition of a major coastal battery (MES19985) on East Hill, which was one of nine along the Sussex coast. Two air raid shelters (MES19980-19981) are also located within 500m of the site.

2.1.16 The town's popularity as a seaside resort declined in popularity from the 1950s, prompting the borough council to seek alternative stimulation of growth in the form of the expansion of the town to accommodate the resettlement of Londoners.

## **2.2 Project Aims and Objectives**

2.2.1 The broad aims of the evaluation are:

- To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of any archaeological 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
- To assess what options should be considered for mitigation (e.g. further archaeological investigation and recording and/or engineering design to allow for meaningful preservation in situ)

2.2.2 Specific aims are:

- To provide an understanding of the geo-archaeological context for any archaeological remains that might be present
- To establish whether any archaeological remains associated with prehistoric, Roman or medieval activity known to exist locally (with particular reference to East Hill) will be impacted by development of the site

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out on 11th April 2016 comprising a single trench (Trench 1) measuring 25m long by 1.8m wide.
- 3.1.2 Due to on-site constraints, some minor modification was necessary to excavate the trench due to its location in the entrance to site.
- 3.1.3 The trenches were scanned prior to excavation using a cable avoidance tool.
- 3.1.4 All excavation was carried out with a 13 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a flat ditching blade under the supervision of an ASE Archaeologist.
- 3.1.5 Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.25m to the top of the underlying natural substrate.
- 3.1.6 All deposits were recorded using standard ASE recording sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only.
- 3.1.7 Trenches were located and levelled using GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.
- 3.1.8 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned by eye, for unstratified artefacts.

### 3.3 Archive

3.3.1 Hastings Museum has been approached to accept the archive in due course and a response is awaited at the time of writing. In the interim the archive will be stored at ASE's offices. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	2
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	8
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	8
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	1

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box )	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Trench 1

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Length m</b>	<b>Width m</b>	<b>Depth m</b>	<b>Height m AOD</b>
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.33-0.35	63.92-67.44
1/002	Layer	Natural Geology	Tr.	Tr.	-	63.57-67.11

Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 The underlying yellowish brown clay [1/002] with occasional small sandstone and mudstone inclusions was overlain by the topsoil [1/001], a dark brown silty clay, with frequent modern disturbance and inclusions.
- 4.1.2 No archaeological features or deposits were identified and no artefacts recovered.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of stratigraphic sequence**

5.1.1 The evaluation revealed a consistent stratigraphic sequence of topsoil with frequent modern disturbance over a yellowish brown clay natural geology.

### **5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts**

5.2.1 The natural substrate appeared mostly undisturbed across the site apart from some root disturbance at the north end of the trench. However, the building footings of existing and demolished buildings may have potentially removed any archaeological remains present in their immediate locality.

### **5.3 Consideration of research aims**

5.3.1 No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trial trench. However, the natural geology was encountered throughout the trench with little or no truncation. This is not likely to be the case where existing and demolished buildings are located. No colluvium was identified within the trench and little overburden with a topsoil of 0.3-0.4m in thickness.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**HER Summary**

<b>HER enquiry no.</b>	151/16				
<b>Site code</b>	BLH16				
<b>Project code</b>	160111				
<b>Planning reference</b>	HS/FA/13/00380, Appeal ref: APP/B1415/A/13/2210361				
<b>Site address</b>	Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex				
<b>District/Borough</b>	Hastings				
<b>NGR (12 figures)</b>	583145,110135				
<b>Geology</b>	Wadhurst Clay Formation				
<b>Fieldwork type</b>	Eval				
<b>Date of fieldwork</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2016				
<b>Sponsor/client</b>	Mount Ephraim Projects Limited				
<b>Project manager</b>	Neil Griffin				
<b>Project supervisor</b>	John Cook				
<b>Period summary</b>	none				
<b>Project summary</b>	An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex, on the 18th April 2016. One trench measuring 25m in length was excavated. No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trial trench.				



## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-250714**

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### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation On Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex
Short description of the project	an archaeological evaluation was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex on the 18th April 2016. One trench measuring 25m in length was excavated. No archaeological finds or features were identified within the trial trench.
Project dates	Start: 18-04-2016 End: 18-04-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	160111 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition

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### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX HASTINGS HASTINGS Land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings
Postcode	TN35 5NX
Site coordinates	TQ 583145 104967 50.871673904725 0.250304017452 50 52 18 N 000 15 01 E Point

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### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
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Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Dan Swift
Project supervisor	John Cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mount Ephraim Projects Limited

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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological evaluation on land at rear of 28-42 Barley Lane, Hastings, East Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, J.
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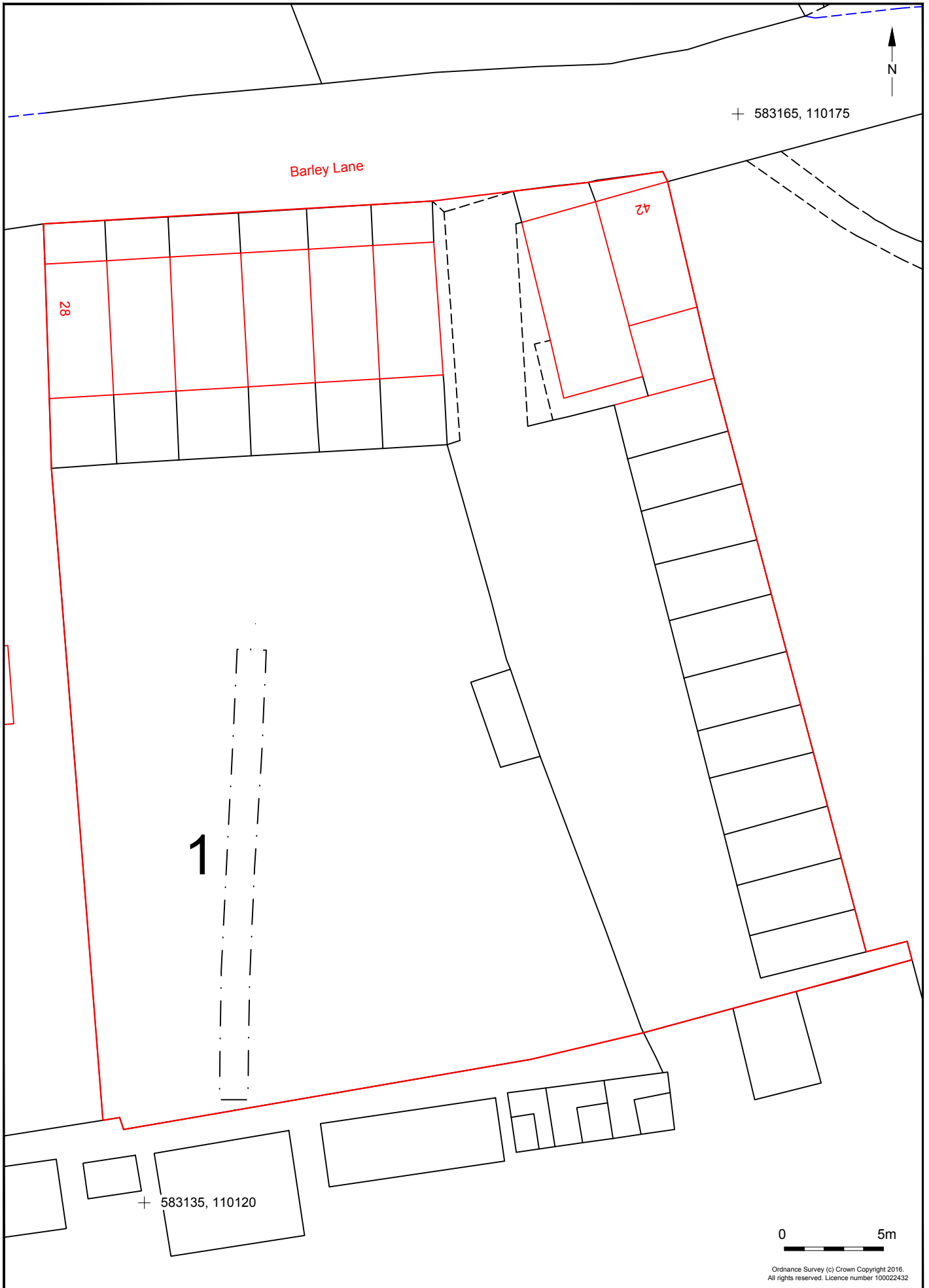
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© Archaeology South-East		Land rear of 28 to 42 Barley Lane, Hastings		Fig.1
Project Ref: 160111	May 2016	Site Location		
Report Ref: 2016186	Drawn by: LG			



© Archaeology South-East		Land rear of 28 to 42 Barley Lane, Hastings	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160111	April 2016	Trench location	
Report Ref: 2016186	Drawn by: LG		

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