

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Bodiam Castle, Bodiam,
Robertsbridge, East Sussex**

**NGR: 578356 125378
(TQ 78356 25378)**

**ASE Project No: 160588
Site Code: BOD16**

**ASE Report No: 2016346
OASIS ID: archaeol6-264220**

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East on land at Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex 18th September 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust. Two trenches measuring 7m in length were excavated. A small wall footing was uncovered below a number of layers of made ground.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Archaeological Background**
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4.0 Results**
- 5.0 The Finds**
- 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary
OASIS Form

TABLES

- Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive
- Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples
- Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts
- Table 4: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts
- Table 5: Finds quantification table

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Site plan
- Figure 3: Trench 1 plan, section and photograph
- Figure 4: Trench 2 plan, section and photographs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), has been commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of a shop and patio extension at Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex (hereafter referred to as 'the site'), NGR 578356 125378 (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 – Mudstone with superficial deposits of Alluvium - Clay, Silty, Peaty and Sandy.

1.2.2 The site is located to the south-west of the castle, north of the river Rother and surrounded by parkland.

1.3 Scope of Report

1.3.1 The current report provides the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out in September 2016. The on-site work was undertaken by John Cook (Senior Archaeologist) and by Sophie Nicholson (Assistant Archaeologist). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The following background information has been drawn from the Conservation Management Plan of the site undertaken by Drury McPherson Partnership (2015) for the National Trust, with due acknowledgement. Please see that original report for more detail.
- 2.1.2 The vicinity of the castle, between the River Rother and the Kent Ditch, has been visited from Mesolithic times. There was a late Iron Age settlement near Sandhurst and a Roman settlement, probably a port associated with the iron-working industry of the Weald, where a major Roman road from Rochester crossed the Rother. The medieval estate of Bodiam probably originated in the late Saxon period, re-emerging from the larger estate of Ewhurst as a separate manor by the 12th century. Its centre was near Court Lodge, and it became the principal manor of, successively, the de Bodiham, Wardedieu and Dallingridge families.
- 2.1.3 Bodiam Castle was built c.1385-93 for Sir Edward Dallingridge, a successful career soldier turned politician and courtier. The surviving fabric of the castle is almost entirely primary, and the designed landscape in which it is set either contemporary or very nearly so. Research for this plan has revealed that they were established in a pre-existing manorial landscape, and that there was a preliminary phase of building on the east side of its moated island before the final form of the building was fixed.
- 2.1.4 Dallingridge's family held the castle until 1470, after which it descended in the Lewknor family until the 17th century, latterly divided between co-heirs. There are remarkably few documentary records of the castle during this period, when it seems to have been, at best, a secondary residence. The estate was bought in 1623 by Sir Nicholas Tufton, 1st Earl of Thanet, who never lived at Bodiam; his son, the 2nd Earl, sold the estate to Nathaniel Powell in 1645. It seems to have been partly dismantled by the early 17th century.
- 2.1.5 The castle was bought in 1723 by Sir Thomas Webster of Battle Abbey. By the later 18th century it was renowned for its picturesque qualities, attracting many artists including JMW Turner. The castle and a few surrounding acres were bought in 1829 by John 'Mad Jack' Fuller of Rosehill, who actively conserved the ruins for their scenic value. In 1864 it was bought and repaired by George Cubitt (1828-1917). George Curzon, Marquess of Kedleston (1859-1925) acquired the castle in 1917 and undertook extensive consolidation and restoration. He left it to the National Trust on his death in 1925, and the castle and its grounds have been open to the public continuously since 1926.
- 2.1.6 The heritage significance of Bodiam Castle is recognised by its listing at Grade I and the designation of the castle, moat and their immediate setting as a Scheduled Monument. The castle is of exceptional heritage significance for an unusually wide range of reasons. The fabric of the castle is ruined, but what survives is largely unaltered since its original construction. It has remarkable formal architectural qualities and it is one of the earliest buildings in Britain that was consciously planned as a great house as well as a defensible stronghold. The setting of the castle includes the remains of an elaborately contrived, designed medieval land- and waterscape.

2.1.7 The site has important below-ground archaeological deposits, including the Roman settlement area and the landscape archaeology. In the public consciousness it is an iconic English castle and a major tourist destination.

2.2 Project Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological investigation, as set out in the WSI (ASE 2016) were:

- to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains likely to be threatened by the proposed new development.
- to enable the Archaeologist at East Sussex County Council to make an informed decision on the requirement for any mitigation work that may be required.
- to make public the results of the work, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

2.2.2 The aims and objectives were to be updated as appropriate to respond to archaeological evidence as it was uncovered on site. The notes on the South-East Research Framework public seminar on the medieval period (Weekes 2007) would be used as guidance.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out on 6th and 7th September 2016 comprising two trenches measuring 7m long by 1.5m wide (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 Due to the presence of trees, the location of the trenches were slightly modified.
- 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 5 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. In Trench 1, this was done down to the top of the underlying natural substrate, and in Trench 2 this was done down to a layer of gravel.
- 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.

3.2 Archive

3.2.1 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 (Tables 1 and 2).

Context sheets	14
Section sheets	1
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	65
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	65
Context register	1
Drawing register	1
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	2

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	2 bags
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

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m	Height m AOD
1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.1	4.26
1/002	Layer	Made Ground/Asphalt	Tr.	Tr.	0.22	4.17
1/003	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.20	3.95
1/004	Layer	Made Ground/Brick	Tr.	Tr.	0.28	3.75
1/005	Layer	Gravel	Tr.	Tr.	0.25	3.47
1/006	Layer	Natural Geology	Tr.	Tr.	-	3.22

Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 The natural geology, a mottled, greenish brown, alluvial clay [1/006], was overlain by a gravel layer [1/005], small gravel pebbles <50mm in size within a dark brown silty clay (Figure 3). [1/005] was in turn overlain by a brick dump [1/004]. The brick dump was sealed by a made ground [1/003], road make up and asphalt [1/002] and topsoil [1/001].

4.1.2 No archaeological features were identified, a brick sample was recovered from [1/004].

4.2 Trench 2

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m	Height m AOD
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.1	4.26
2/002	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.22	4.16
2/003	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.39	3.94
2/004	Layer	Made Ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.09	3.55
2/005	Layer	Made Ground/Brick	Tr.	Tr.	0.20	3.46
2/006	Cut	Wall Footing	Tr.	Tr.	-	3.29
2/007	Layer	Gravel	Tr.	Tr.	0.17	3.26
2/008	Layer	Gravel	Tr.	Tr.	-	3.29

Table 4: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 The natural geology was not uncovered in Trench 2, a gravel layer [2/008], small gravel pebbles <50mm in size within a dark brown silty clay, was cut by a sandstone wall footing [2/006] (Figure 4). This was sealed by a gravel made ground layer [2/007] in turn overlain by a brick dump [2/005]. The brick dump was sealed by road make up and asphalt [2/004], made ground layers, [2/003] and [2/002], and topsoil [2/001].

4.2.2 A small sandstone wall footing [2/006] was identified towards the eastern end of the trench, and a brick sample was taken from [2/005].

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Brick samples were retained from two contexts during the evaluation at Bodiam Castle. The finds were washed and air dried. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context (Table 5). All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (2014).

Context	CBM	Weight (g)
1/004	3	5671
2/005	3	5728
Total	6	11399

Table 5: Finds quantification table

5.2 The Ceramic Building Material by Isa Benedetti-Whitton

5.2.1 Six pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 11,399g were collected from two contexts: [1/004] and [2/005]. The material appeared to be all of 19th-20th century date. It was comprised of four bricks and a paver, all in the same fabric (B1: a very hard and dense red fabric with sparse-moderate burnt out oxides up to 3mm and sparse angular white inclusions up to 2mm; paver variant has white steaking), and a machine made fragment of what appeared to be hollow wall tile. This latter piece of CBM is likely the latest dating piece, c.20th century.

5.2.2 The brick could date from any point from the late 18th-early 20th century. None of the brick was frogged, and apart from one of the [2/005] bricks they were irregular in shape and cracked from heat-damage, although the approximate dimensions remained consistent (222-226 x 96-100 x 60-68mm). The presence of lime mortar on nearly all of the exterior surfaces of these irregular bricks indicates that they were originally part of the wall core. Therefore the aesthetic was not as important as the facing bricks, of which the more neatly formed brick from [2/005] is most likely an example.

5.2.3 The CBM has been retained but is suggested for discard before deposition of the archive.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary of stratigraphic sequence

6.1.1 The evaluation revealed a consistent stratigraphic sequence of topsoil over layers of made ground and modern disturbance. The natural geology, a greenish brown alluvial clay, was only observed in the base of Trench 1 and not uncovered in Trench 2 due to the depth of the trench.

6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

6.2.1 The natural substrate appeared mostly undisturbed in Trench 1 with the ground having been made up and encountered at >1m depth.

6.3 Consideration of research aims

6.3.1 No archaeological features were identified within Trench 1. However, the natural geology was encountered throughout the trench with little or no truncation. A small wall footing was identified in Trench 2 at an approximate depth of 1m. Dating this wall footing is difficult because no wall is present on the 1839 tithe map (ESCC 2016) or OS mapping. But the wall footing may relate to a small internal division within a yard that would not be represented on the historical maps. The wall footing could therefore predate the tithe map or it could be modern.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	
Site code	BOD16
Project code	160588
Planning reference	
Site address	Land at Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex
District/Borough	Rother
NGR (12 figures)	578356,125378
Geology	Wadhurst Clay Formation – Mudstone with superficial deposits of Alluvium - Clay, Silty, Peaty and Sandy
Fieldwork type	Eval
Date of fieldwork	Start: 06-09-2016 End: 07-09-2016
Sponsor/client	The National Trust
Project manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	John Cook
Period summary	none
Project summary	This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East on land at Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex 18th April 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust. Two trenches measuring 7m in length were excavated. A small wall footing was uncovered below a number of layers of made ground.

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-264220

Project details

Project name Archaeological Evaluation Report Bodiam Castle, Robertsbridge, East Sussex

Short description of the project This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex 18th April 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by The National Trust. Two trenches measuring 7m in length were excavated. A small wall footing was uncovered below a number of layers of made ground.

Project dates Start: 06-09-2016 End: 07-09-2016

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 160588 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status National Trust land

Current Land use Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Amenity area (e.g. public open space)

Project location

Country England

Site location EAST SUSSEX ROTHER BODIAM Bodiam Castle

Postcode TN32 5UD

Study area 200 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 78356 25378 50.999519659478 0.542178854989 50 59 58 N 000 32 31 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 3.22m Max: 4.26m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator Archaeology South East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson

Project supervisor John Cook

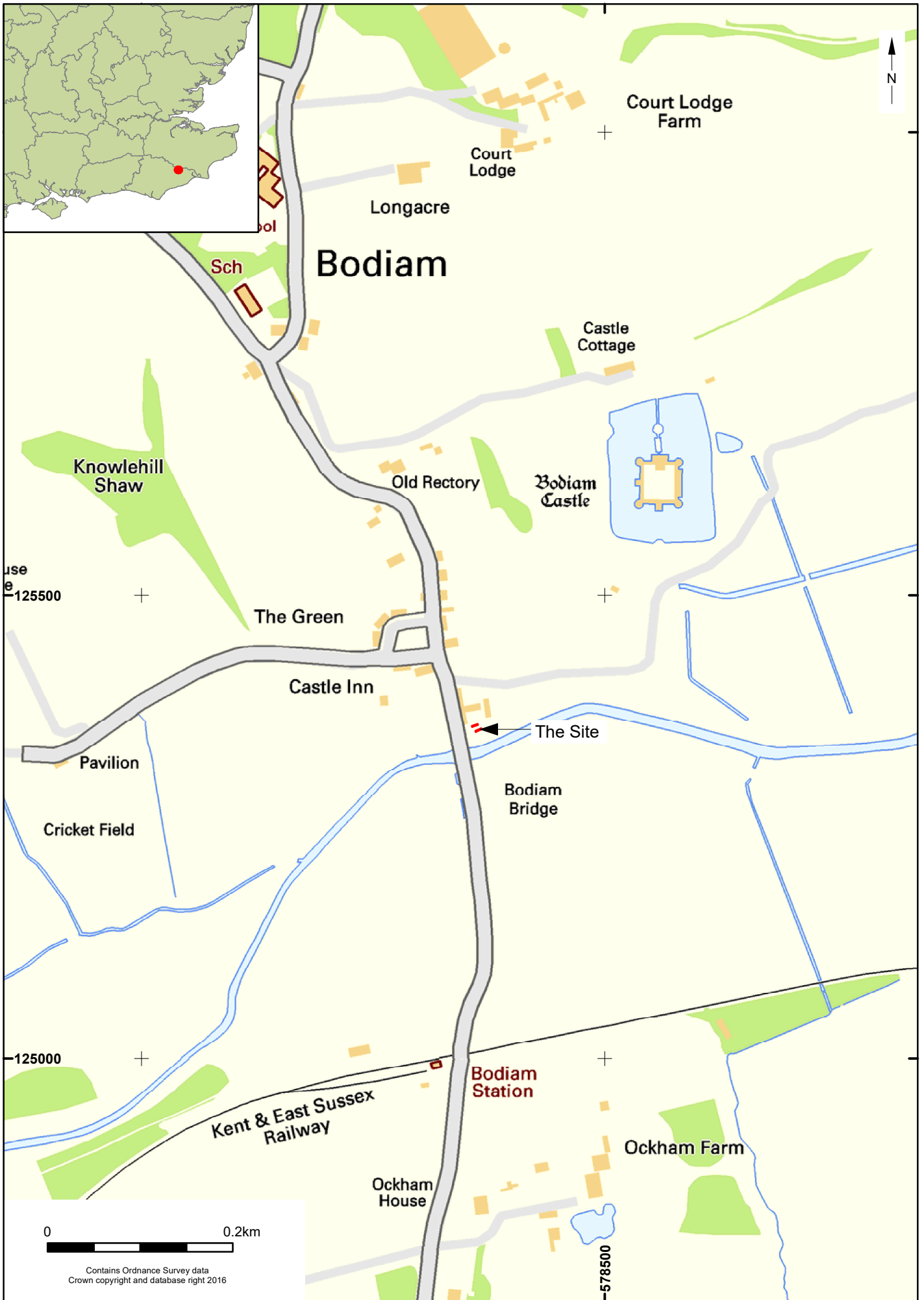
Type of sponsor/funding body National Trust

Project archives

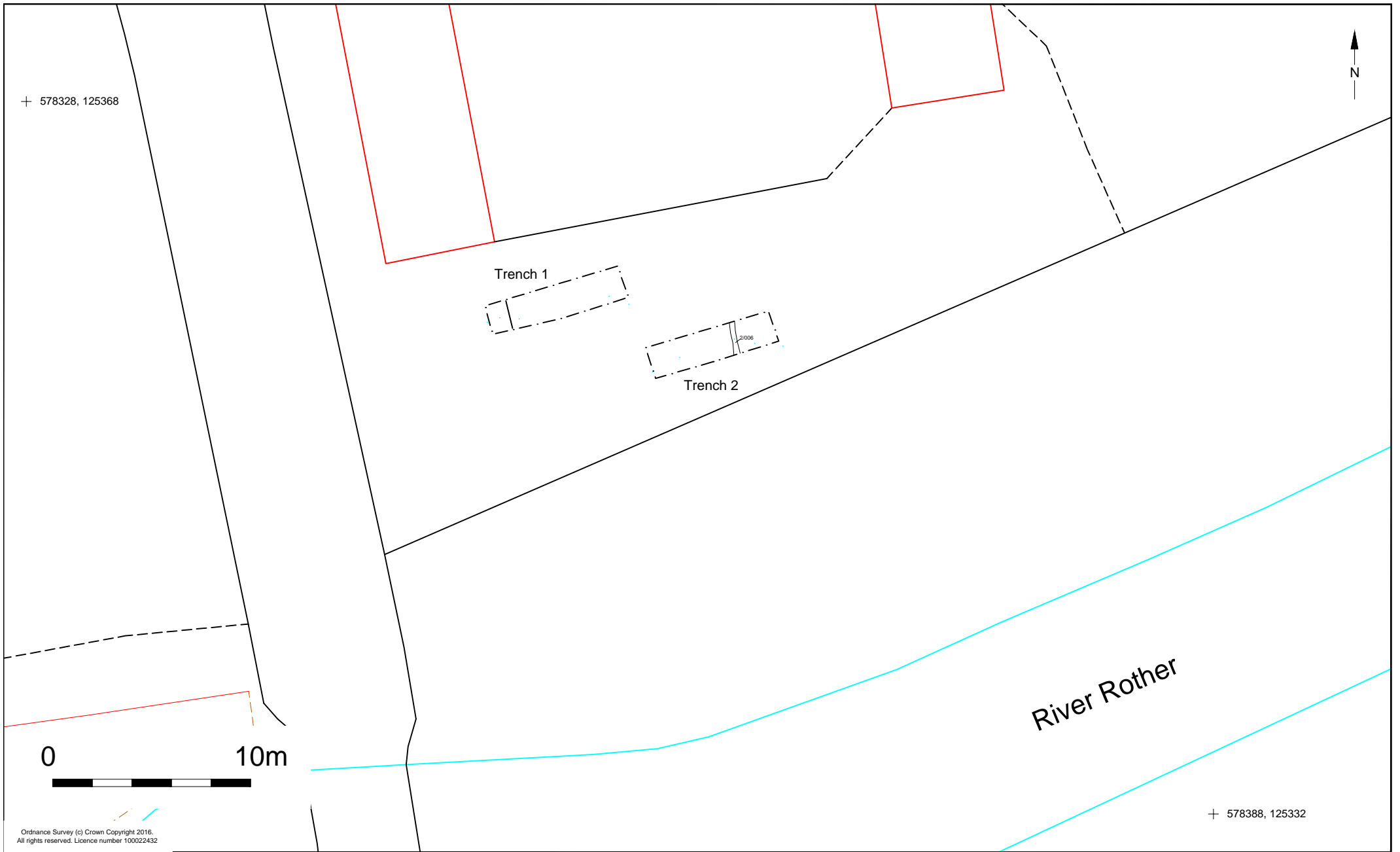
Physical Archive recipient n/a

Physical Contents "other"

Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Report","Section","Survey "
Project bibliography	1
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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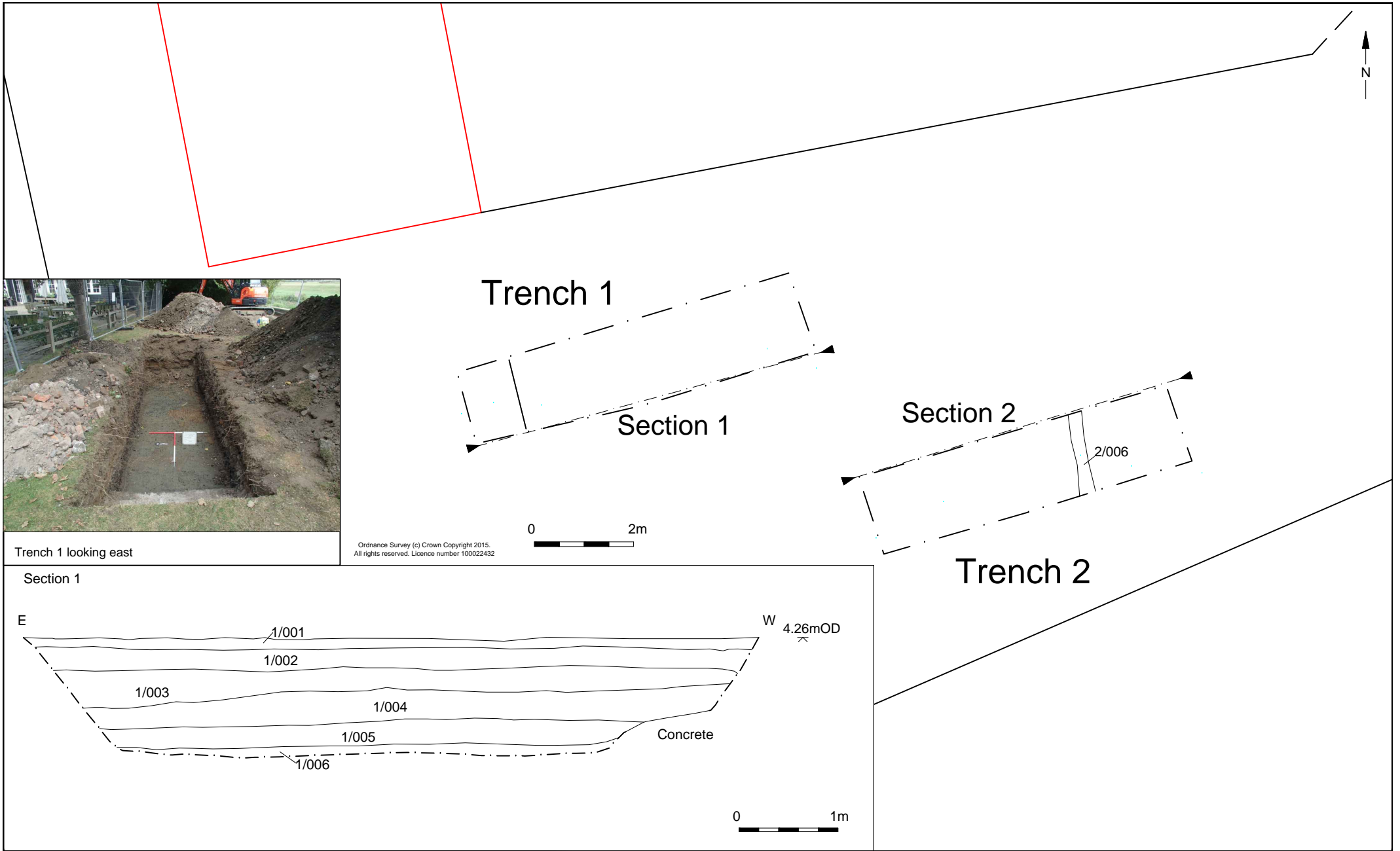


© Archaeology South-East		Bodiam Castle Cafe & Patio extension, Bodiam, East Sussex		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160588	September 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016346	Drawn by: JC			

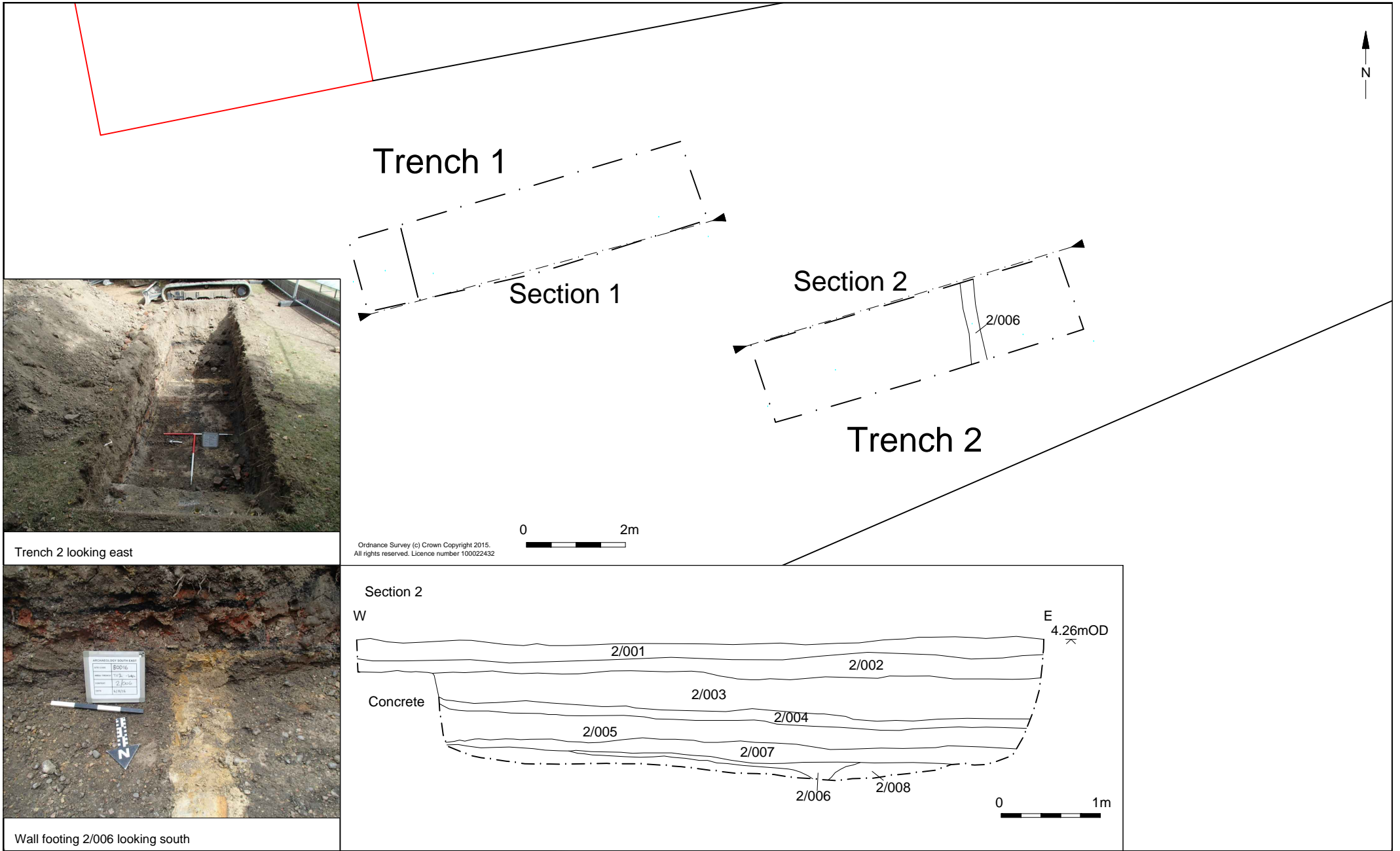


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© Archaeology South-East		Bodiam Castle Cafe & Patio extension, Bodiam, East Sussex	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160007	September 2016	Site plan	
Report Ref: 2016346	Drawn by: JC		



© Archaeology South-East		Bodiam Castle Cafe & Patio extension, Bodiam, East Sussex	Fig.3
Project Ref: 160588	September 2016	Trench 1 plan, section and photograph	
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© Archaeology South-East		Bodiam Castle Cafe & Patio extension, Bodiam, East Sussex	Fig.4
Project Ref: 160588	September 2016	Trench 2 plan, section and photographs	
Report Ref: 2016346	Drawn by: JC		

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