

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
At Tonbridge Castle,
Tonbridge,
Kent.**

NGR: 55892 14651

ASE Project No: 160214

Site Code: TNC16

ASE Report No: 2016385

OASIS id: archaeol6-265107

By Lucy May

**With contributions by
Kristina Krawiec.**

Illustrations by Antonio Reis

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological monitoring carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge, Kent between 22nd June and 6th October 2016. The client was granted consent for the stabilisation of the bank of the River Medway.

The site is situated within the grounds of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM) of Tonbridge Castle, located in the centre of Tonbridge. However, the stratigraphy across the site consisted of a number of modern made ground deposits from which CBM, glass and 20th century pottery were recovered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Teignmouth Maritime Services Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological monitoring at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge, Kent (Figure 1, NGR 55892 14651).
- 1.1.2 The site is situated within the grounds of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM) of Tonbridge Castle, located in the centre of Tonbridge and is bound to the south and south-west by the River Medway. (Figure 2)

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying bedrock geology of the site comprises Tunbridge Wells Sand formation. This is overlain by Alluvium in the southern part of the site (BGS 2016)

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The work involved stabilising the river bank as well as geoarchaeological monitoring of boreholes and test pits.
- 1.3.2 Historic England granted Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent to the project in order to stabilise the bank of the River Medway in the south-east of the castle grounds.
- 1.3.3 As a condition of the consent Historic England specified that:

(e) No site investigations or other ground works work shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, an archaeological watching brief on ground works, archival work and reporting, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by Historic England, and the works shall subsequently be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. The archaeological site work shall include: geotechnical investigations using boreholes, in order to provide samples that can be inspected by a geo-archaeologist, so that a deposit model of the sub-surface deposits can be made; and an archaeological watching brief on all trial pit excavations, excavation for the new landing stage, clearance of roots along the pile line, and any other works for which disturbance of sub-surface deposits is required.

(f) A report of the archaeological recording shall be sent to the County Historic Environment Record and to Paul Roberts at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed). The site archive shall be deposited with the HER or an accredited museum within 1 year (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The main aim of the archaeological work was to monitor the groundworks in order to ensure that any deposits and features, artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological and palaeoenvironmental interest, were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.4.2 The specific research objectives of the watching brief were:

- To establish whether evidence of medieval activity related to the castle exists.
- To characterise the alluvial sequence in relation to the River Medway.
- To establish the site formation processes in relation to the river and the construction of the castle.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out periodically between the 22nd June and 6th October 2016 and is in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Archaeology South-East, 2016). The work was carried out by Lucy May (Archaeologist) and Kristina Krawiec (Geoarchaeologist). The field work was managed by Paul Mason and the post-excavation work by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The following background information has been taken from the WSI (Archaeology South-East 2016)

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 Little prehistoric or Roman activity has been recorded close to the site. However, Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement activity is known to have extended along river valleys such as the River Medway.

2.3 Medieval

2.3.1 The site is occupied by Tonbridge Castle. The original wooden motte-and-bailey castle was constructed shortly after the Norman Conquest by Richard Fitz-Gilbert (VCH 1908). In 1088, the de Clare family (descendants of Fitz-Gilbert) rebelled against King William II. His army besieged the castle. After holding for two days the castle fell and as punishment the king had both the castle and the town of Tonbridge burnt to the ground.

2.3.2 The castle was rebuilt soon after as a stone shell keep. This was reinforced during the 13th century and a stone wall added in 1295. A twin-towered gatehouse was completed in 1260.

2.4 Post-medieval

2.4.1 The castle was not occupied for much of the post-medieval period but an adjoining mansion was added in 1793.

2.4.2 The site was purchased by the local council in 1900; the mansion is now used for offices and the grounds were opened as a public park.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology (Figure 3)

- 3.1.1 The fieldwork methodology was initially set out in the WSI (Archaeology South-East 2016). All work was carried out in accordance with this document and in line with the relevant professional standards and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a; 2014b).
- 3.1.2 The watching brief monitored all intrusive groundworks including the excavation of trial pits to locate power cables, root clearance from the river bank, sheet piling along the river edge and excavations for a new landing platform.
- 3.1.3 All machines used for excavations were fitted with a toothless bucket of an appropriate size. All machine and hand excavations undertaken by the ground work contractor was with due regard for the potential to encounter archaeological remains.
- 3.1.4 The first stage of monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of two test pits and a single cable percussive borehole parallel with the River Medway. The test pits were hand excavated in order to locate existing buried services. This was monitored by ASE's in-house Geoarchaeologist.
- 3.1.5 The next stage of groundworks involved the monitoring of root clearance and the removal of the fence and signpost beside the river bank, along with excavations for a new landing platform and postholes for the re-installment of the fence and signpost.
- 3.1.6 All archaeological features and alluvial deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by Archaeology South-East. And a full digital photographic record of all deposits, include working shots were taken.

3.2 The Site Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 1 and 2)

Context sheets	4
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	140
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	6
Test Pit/ Bore hole Record forms	3

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 (Figure 3)

Context Number	Type	Interpretation	Depth(m)
001	Layer	Topsoil	0.10-0.15
002	Layer	Made ground	0.18-0.45
003	Layer	Made ground	0.82
004	Layer	Pipe backfill	0.2

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

4.1 First stage of groundworks

- 4.1.1 Test Pit 1 (TP1) was excavated to a depth of 1.44m below ground level where a pre-cast concrete pipe was encountered. This was overlain by a grey yellow sand [004] 0.20m thick, in turn was overlain by a gritty silt clay 0.82m thick [003]. This layer contained fragments of brick, window glass and coal and was beneath a further made ground layer [002], which also contained Ceramic Building Material (CBM), glass and 20th century pottery. The test-pit was sealed by topsoil and turf [001].
- 4.1.2 The second test pit (TP2) was excavated to the west of Test Pit 1 and encountered a second concrete service at 0.60m below ground level. This was overlain by the same series of made ground deposits as those recorded in TP1.
- 4.1.3 The borehole was drilled 10.50m to the west of TP2, parallel with the river. The bedrock, a fine sand with frequent siltstone seams, was encountered 5.50m below ground level. This was overlain by a sandy organic silt 0.75m thick. This in turn was overlain by 2.00m of organic silt, with frequent plant remains and woody fragments. At 4m below ground level a large piece of *Quercus* roundwood was encountered. The organic silts were overlain by a disturbed, oxidised sandy alluvial silt clay 1.20m thick. This in turn was overlain by the same made ground deposits as those recorded in the test pits.

4.2 Second stage of groundworks

- 4.2.1 The removal of iron fence panels and a signpost involved having to occasionally machine and hand dig small holes surrounding the concreted-in posts. This revealed the same deposits found within Test pits 1 and 2.
- 4.2.2 The river front was cleared of all roots and timber revetment and the sheet piling was installed. No deposits were seen whilst this occurred as the sheets were piled through the water and silts of the river.
- 4.2.3 An area approximately 8m x 2m was excavated with a machine ready for the installation of the new landing platform. This revealed the same deposits recorded within the test pits.

- 4.2.4 Once the landing platform was complete, the fence needed to be re-instated. This involved machine auguring and hand digging twelve postholes of approximately 0.30m diameter by 0.50m depth. These were within close proximity to the previous postholes and therefore revealed the same deposits.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The stratigraphy across the site consisted of a number of modern made ground deposits which produced CBM, glass and 20th century pottery. Modern made ground was recorded at depths of 1.44m below ground level

5.2 Consideration of research aims

- 5.2.1 The research aims and objectives were successful in establishing that the evaluated areas have no evidence of medieval activity existing that could have related to the castle.
- 5.2.2 Due to the amount of modern made ground and the impact from various services running across site, the alluvial sequence and the site formation were characterised, in relation to the river and the construction of the castle. The borehole demonstrated that a deeply buried alluvial sequence was present alongside the current course of the river and that these deposits have the potential to preserve palaeoenvironmental remains. The presence of large diameter oak roundwood within the borehole may derive from a naturally occurring 'bog' oak but may also relate to former structures along the river frontage. The borehole was too small an intervention to determine the origin of this material.

5.3 Conclusion

- 5.3.1 The project was successful in determining that there were no surviving archaeological deposits within the sampled area and that deposits relating to the former course of the river were present.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Teignmouth Maritime Services Ltd for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project and Historic England for their guidance.

HER Summary

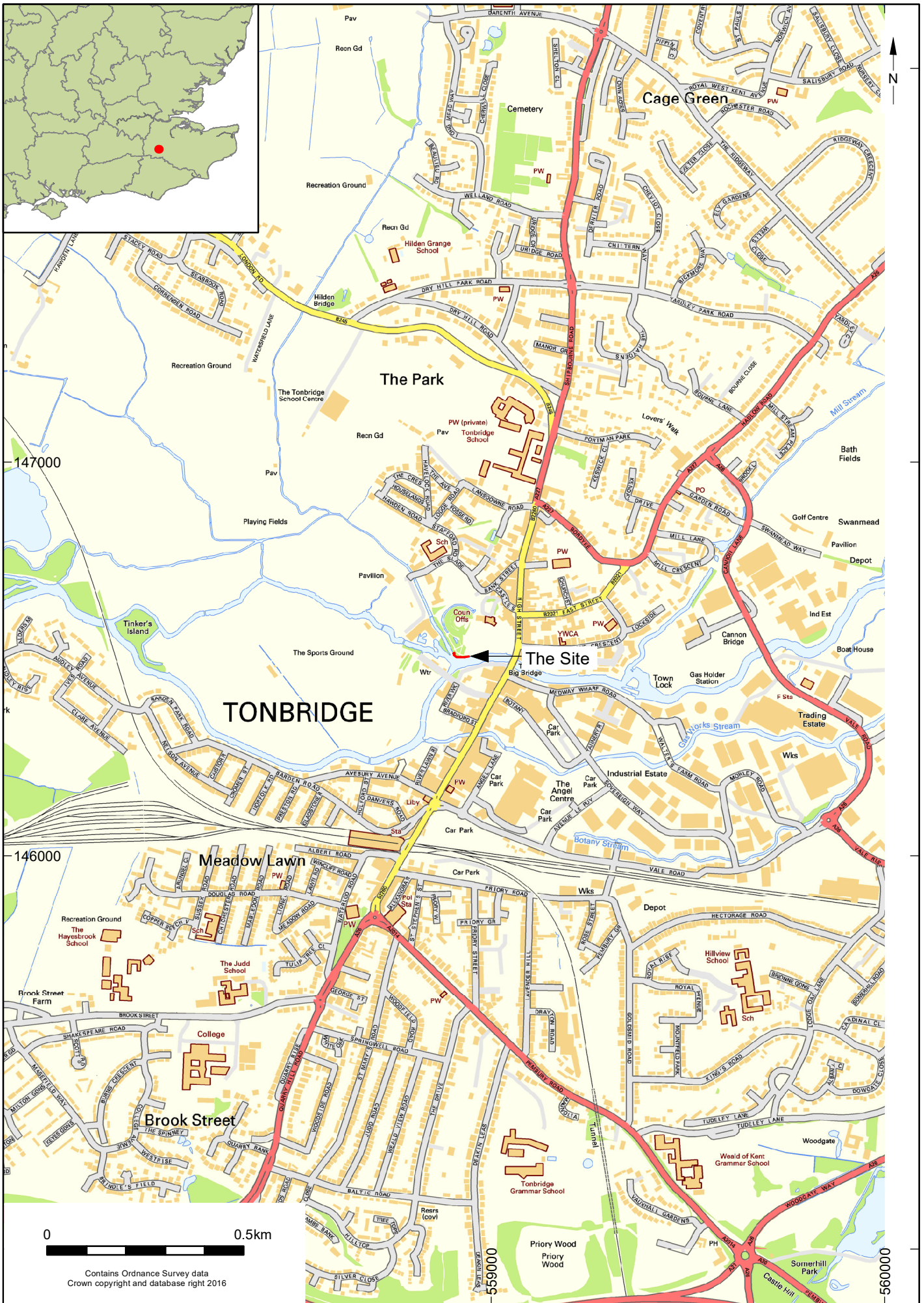
Site code	TNC16				
Project code	160214				
Site address	Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge				
District/Borough	Kent				
NGR (12 figures)	55892 14651				
Geology	Tonbridge Wells Sand Formation				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	22 nd June 2016- 6 th October 2016				
Sponsor/client	Teignmouth Maritime Services Ltd				
Project manager	Paul Mason				
Project supervisor	Kristina Krawiec & Lucy May				
Period summary					
			Medieval	Post-Medieval	
Project summary (100 word max)	<p>This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological monitoring carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge, Kent between 22nd June and 6th October 2016. The client was granted consent for the stabilisation of the bank of the River Medway.</p> <p>The site is situated within the grounds of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM) of Tonbridge Castle, located in the centre of Tonbridge. However, the stratigraphy across the site consisted of a number of modern made ground deposits which all had evidence of CBM, glass and 20th century pottery. Therefore, the project was, successful in determining there were no surviving archaeological deposits within the sampled area.</p>				

OASIS ID: archaeol6-265107

Project details

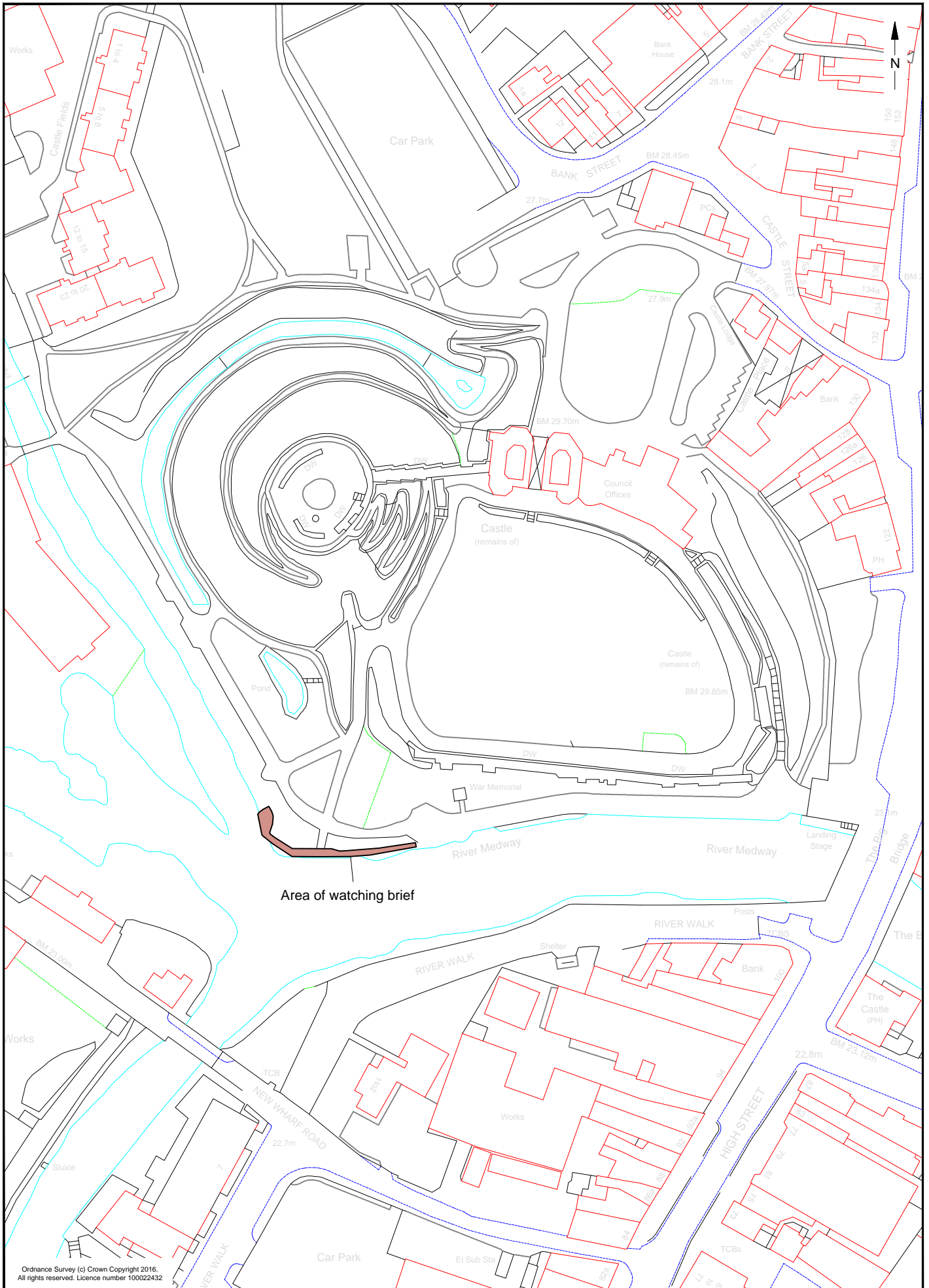
Project name	An archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological monitoring at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief and geoarchaeological monitoring carried out by Archaeology South-East at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge, Kent. The site is situated within the grounds of the scheduled ancient monument (SAM) of Tonbridge Castle, located in the centre of Tonbridge. The client was given consent to start work on stabilizing the river bank. This also involved root clearance, sheet piling and excavations for a new landing platform. However, the stratigraphy across the site consisted of a number of modern made ground deposits which all had evidence of CBM, glass and 20th century pottery. Therefore, the project was, successful in determining there were no surviving archaeological deposits within the sampled area.
Project dates	Start: 22-06-2016 End: 06-10-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	TNC16 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	160214 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	CASTLE Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING TONBRIDGE Tonbridge Castle
Postcode	TN91BG
Site coordinates	TQ 558951 146585 50.909734177625 0.217718206638 50 54 35 N 000 13 03 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	A and M Architectural Partnership
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Paul Mason

Project supervisor Kristina Krawiec
Project supervisor Lucy May
Type of sponsor/funding body Client
Name of sponsor/funding body Teignmouth Maritime Services Ltd
Project archives
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Local Museum
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient Local Museum
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Report"
Entered by Lucy May (l.may@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on 10 October 2016



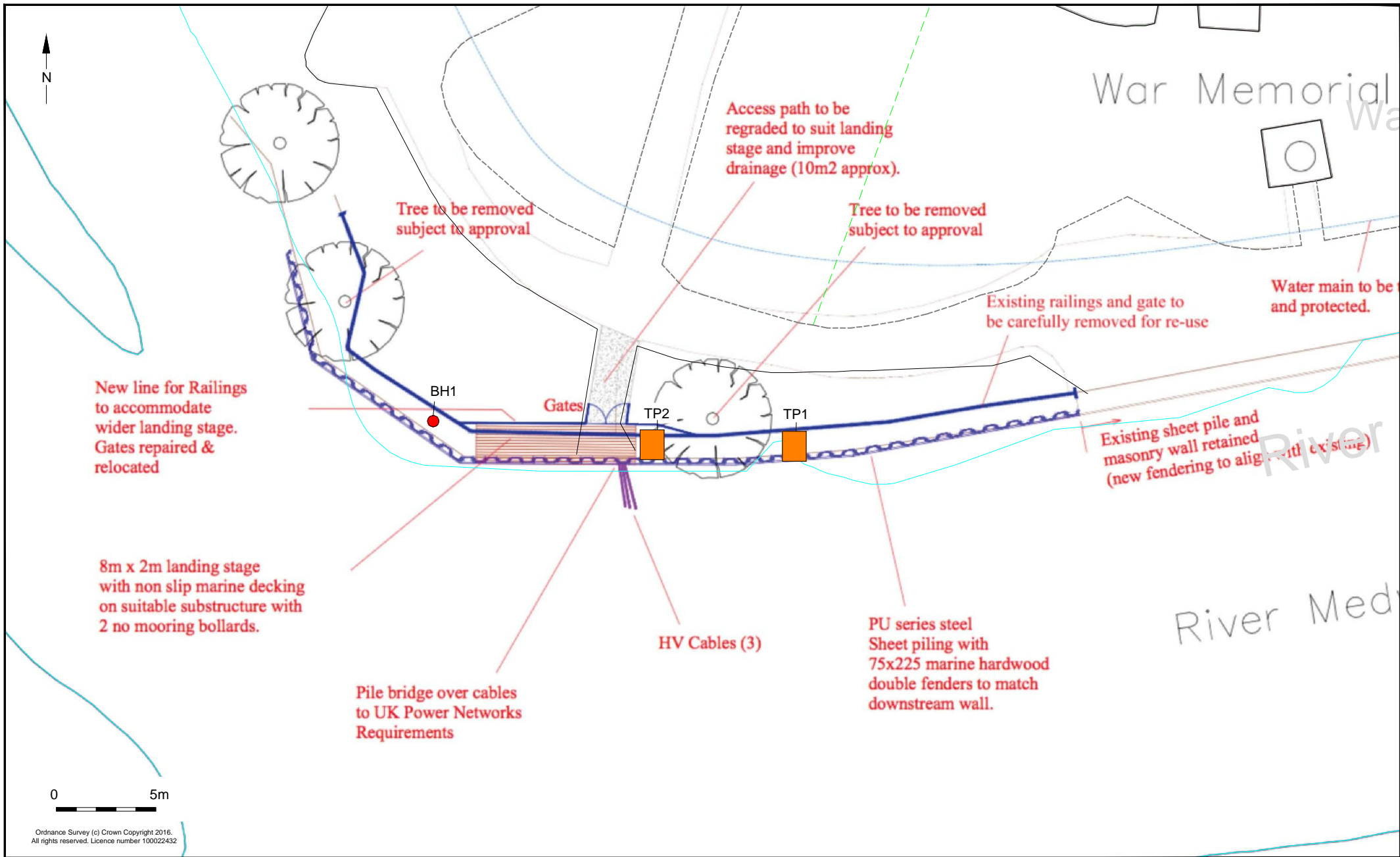
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Project Ref: 160214	Oct 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016385	Drawn by: AR			



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© Archaeology South-East		Tonbridge Castle		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160214	June 2016	Location of monitored area		
Report Ref: 2016385	Drawn by: AR			



© Archaeology South-East		Tonbridge Castle		Fig. 3
Project Ref: 160214	June 2016	Location of monitored work , TP1, TP2, and BH1		
Report Ref: 2016385	Drawn by: AR			



Landing platform, looking south



Post hole



ground works



Ground works

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