

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Rocklands Holiday Park, East Hill  
Hastings, East Sussex**

**NGR: 583440 109955**

**Planning Permission No: HS/CD/16/00655**

**ASE Project No: 160800**

**Site Code: HRH16**

**ASE Report No: 2016469**

**OASIS id: archaeol6-269548**



**By Giles Dawkes**

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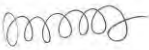
**ASE Project No: 160800**

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**Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent No: S00123929**

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**OASIS id: archaeo16-269548**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the excavation of four new balcony postholes and two drain runs at Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings, East Sussex on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016. The watching brief area lay partially within the area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 1011086) of an Iron Age promontory fort. The watching brief only identified a dumped deposit overlying natural clay and bedrock, relating to a late 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace. There were no finds.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Mr & Mrs L Guilliard to undertake archaeological monitoring at Rocklands Holiday Park, East Hill, Hastings (Figures 1 & 2). The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) 583440 109955.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken to reduce the size of an existing balcony attached to a holiday let (planning permission no: HS/CD/16/00655). The three existing posts supporting the balcony were replaced with four new posts erected closer to the house. In addition, two drainage trenches were also monitored. The work was undertaken on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 by Giles Dawkes, Senior Archaeologist and Lucy May, Archaeologist.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2014), the geology at the site consists of Wadhurst Clay.

1.2.2 The site consisted of a flat terrace formerly laid down to lawn.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Rocklands Holiday Park is located on the East Hill of Hastings, immediately east of the ramparts of an Iron Age promontory fort (Scheduled Monument 1011086). The investigative area lay partly within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument (Figure 1).

1.3.2 Three existing posts supporting the balcony were to be replaced with three new posts erected closer to the house within the scheduled area. A further balcony post and two drainage trenches outside the scheduled area were also to be monitored.

1.3.3 ASE has previously undertaken two heritage statements related to the construction of the existing building (James 2012; James 2014). These concluded that the application site occupied a terrace of probable 19th century date with later disturbance cut into the eastern, external side of the rampart where contemporary settlement would be unlikely and archaeological potential was therefore low.

1.3.4 Initially, in order to apply for scheduled monument consent (SMC; granted on 22/12/15, ref. S00123929) a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ASE 2015) was submitted to Historic England and East Sussex County Council in November 2015.

1.3.5 Planning permission (No: HS/CD/16/00655) was granted on appeal. Condition 6 of the permission required that:

*'No further groundworks required to complete the development shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological works has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of*

*investigation approved by the Local Planning Authority. A written record of any archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of any archaeological investigation unless an alternative timescale for submission of the report is first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority'*

- 1.3.6 A revised WSI (ASE 2016) outlining the methodology for the archaeological watching brief was submitted to and approved by Historic England and East Sussex County Council prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The WSI (ibid.) was prepared with reference to the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014) and the Sussex Archaeological Standards (April 2015). All work was carried out in accordance with these documents.
- 1.3.7 The revision comprised the replacement of the original drawings with a revised version that does not affect the proposed works, and the addition of the minor works within the non-scheduled area. Historic England has confirmed that the existing SMC remains valid (email from Paul Roberts, HE dated 13th July 2016).

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The general aims of the archaeological monitoring were:

- To identify, excavate and record any buried archaeological deposits/features in the areas of proposed development.

1.4.2 The specific research aims of the archaeological monitoring were:

- Are there any intact archaeological deposits existing in the area of the proposed development? If so, can they help to characterise past land use of the area immediately outside the rampart of the hillfort, both contemporaneously with the use and occupation of the fort and in succeeding centuries subsequent to its disuse?

#### **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report details the background of the project and results of the watching brief.

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## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following is a summary of the fuller background in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ASE 2016).
- 2.2 Early prehistoric activity on the East Hill is scant, although Mesolithic flint scatters have been recorded from the coast further east around Fairlight, and a former windmill mound near the East Hill lift has been postulated as a possible Bronze Age barrow. The hill is widely regarded to have been used as a promontory fort in the Iron Age, 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.
- 2.3 The East Hill has been identified for many years as a promontory fort of Iron Age date, based primarily on the presence of a prominent, heavily vegetated earthen bank aligned north-south along its eastern edge (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.
- 2.4 The earthwork has been surveyed by Historic England as part of a larger survey of the East Hill, and the results are summarised here. The earthwork (hereafter the 'rampart') is aligned NW-SE and runs for at least 144m. It is complex, with evidence for three possible phases of development, and appears to have been (at least partly) built along the line of a natural sandstone ridge. There are several breaches of indeterminate date in the rampart – all predate the 1873 Ordnance Survey mapping. The northern part of the rampart is larger, being 80m in length, up to 20m in width and up to 3.5m high (eastern face; 3m high on the western face). The eastern face has been partly scarped, probably as a result of works connected with modern landscaping of the Holiday Park. The western face appears to overlie a shallower scarp slope which may represent an earlier phase or just slumping of the main rampart. The southern end of this part of the rampart is marked by a later quarry pit (and a later breach in the rampart), beyond which (for a 30m stretch to the south as far as a modern concrete bridge) the rampart is less steep, narrower (12m) and lower in height (1.5m to the east; 1m to the west). The eastern face of the rampart has been heavily cut back in this area, and the ground level appears to have been reduced by at least 3.5m, again representing modern landscaping. A further 19m length of rampart to the south of the concrete bridge has been disturbed by quarrying and modern landscaping, and masked by vegetation, with a steep eastern slope up to 2m high. A further stretch of bank is separated from the main rampart by a breach now used, and modified, by a footpath, and extends to the cliff edge. This bank was substantially modified in the 19th century as a firing range, and its relationship with the main earthwork rampart is unclear.

- 2.5 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. 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 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'. The location of the breach is unclear, but it has been suggested that it was in the area now occupied by a concrete bridge. 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 19th 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.
- 2.6 The history of Rocklands is lacking in recorded detail. In 1728 the area of the Holiday Park lay within a field called 'Barn Field', and remained undeveloped on Samuel Cant's map of 1750 and Yeakell and Gardner's 2-inch survey of 1778. Rocklands House was built c 1800 as the summer residence of James Milward, a local landowner of some prominence, and is shown on the Ordnance Survey Draft map of the same date. This map shows two buildings, one aligned N-S (which must represent Rocklands House itself, as is clear from later mapping), and one just to the south-west immediately adjacent to a curving boundary that represents the rampart – this appears to have occupied the approximate location of the existing holiday let and its immediate predecessor, although this is by no means certain. This structure was not marked on the Hastings All Saints Tithe map of 1839 or the 25-inch OS map of 1873-75, although Rocklands House is prominent on both maps. By 1899 a small square building with a shallow north-western extension had reappeared on the site, only to have disappeared by the time of the 1909 OS map; an indenture of 1893 lists the following at Rocklands: 'messuage or dwelling house with the Gardener's cottage, yard, garden, stables and coachhouse, offices and outbuildings' (ESRO MIL 2/15/4). In the 1920s the Rocklands Home Co-educational School was established, which included a significant amount of building, including the original core of the building predating the existing holiday let, which is shown on the 1929-38 map. During the Second World War, and into the 1950s, Rocklands was used by the military – the East Sussex Record Office catalogue lists a planning document relating to an 'Ablutions Block for G Camp' at Rocklands in 1958 (ref. ESRO dhc40d/DH/C/40/58/327)3.



### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 All work was undertaken in accordance with standards and guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC 2008).

3.1.2 All four balcony post holes were excavated by hand in an area 1m by 1m, to a maximum depth of 1m below ground level through 19<sup>th</sup> century dumped deposits. Deeper excavation was undertaken by rotary auguring (0.6m in diameter) which was archaeologically monitored. The drain runs along the northern non-scheduled side of the building were up to 0.2m deep and linked to the existing combined sewer system. The drain runs were excavated by hand.

#### 3.2 The Site Archive

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Hastings Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	4
No. of files/paper record	6
Plan and sections sheets	1
Digital photos	8
Trench Record Forms	4
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 1: Quantification of site archive

## 4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1 Groundworks were undertaken on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016.
- 4.2 A re-deposited orange brown clay was recorded in the southern most three of the balcony postholes ([1/1], [2/1] & [3/1]). This deposit contained inclusions of 19<sup>th</sup> century brick, tile, as well as concrete fragments and tarmac. The density of the inclusions decreased noticeably with depth. The deposit was 1.9m thick in the west (post 3) and 2.8m thick in the east (post 2).
- 4.3 In the fourth balcony posthole the existing modern concrete slab (4/1) directly overlay the natural clay ([4/2]).
- 4.4 In the drain run excavations, only natural clay was recorded ([5/1]).
- 4.4 No finds were recovered and no archaeological samples were taken.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief demonstrated that the terrace that the new building is located on is of late 19<sup>th</sup> century date and unrelated to the Iron Age promontory fort. The terrace was almost certainly created by a 'cut and fill' excavation into the hillside.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank Mr & Mrs L Guilliard for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Casper Johnson, County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council, and Paul Roberts, Historic England, for their guidance and monitoring.

**HER Summary**

Site Code	HRH16					
Identification Name and Address	Rocklands Holiday Park, East Hill, Hastings					
County, District &/or Borough	Hastings, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	583440 109955					
Geology	Wadhurst Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	160800					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site				Other		
Dates of Fieldwork			21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2016			
Sponsor/Client						
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave					
Project Supervisor	Giles Dawkes					
Period Summary						
				Other Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the excavation of four new balcony postholes and two drain runs at Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings, East Sussex on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016. The watching brief area lay partially within the area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 1011086) of an Iron Age promontory fort. The watching brief only identified a dumped deposit overlying natural clay and bedrock, relating to late 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace. There were no finds.</i></p>						

**OASIS Form**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-269548**

Project details

Project name Rocklands Holiday Park

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the excavation of four new balcony postholes and two drain runs at Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings, East Sussex on the 21st and 22nd November 2016. The watching brief area lay partially within the area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 1011086) of an Iron Age promontory fort. The watching brief only identified a dumped deposit overlying natural clay and bedrock, relating to late 19th century terrace. There were no finds.

Project dates Start: 21-11-2016 End: 22-11-2016

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference 160800 - Contracting Unit No. codes

Any associated project reference HRH16 - Sitecode codes

Type of project Recording project

Site status Scheduled Monument (SM)

Current Land use Other 2 - In use as a building

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country England

Site location EAST SUSSEX HASTINGS HASTINGS Rocklands Holiday Park

Postcode TN35 5PB

Study area 0.1 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 583440 109955 50.876148264671 0.250939002803 50 52 34 N 000 15 03 E Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project originator brief East Sussex County Council

Project originator design East Sussex County Council

Project director/manager JON SYGRAVE

Project supervisor Giles Dawkes

Type of sponsor/funding body private client

Project archives

Physical recipient Archive Hastings Museum

Digital recipient Archive Hastings Museum

Digital available Media "Text"

Paper recipient     Archive Hastings Museum

Paper available     Media "Photograph","Report","Unpublished Text"

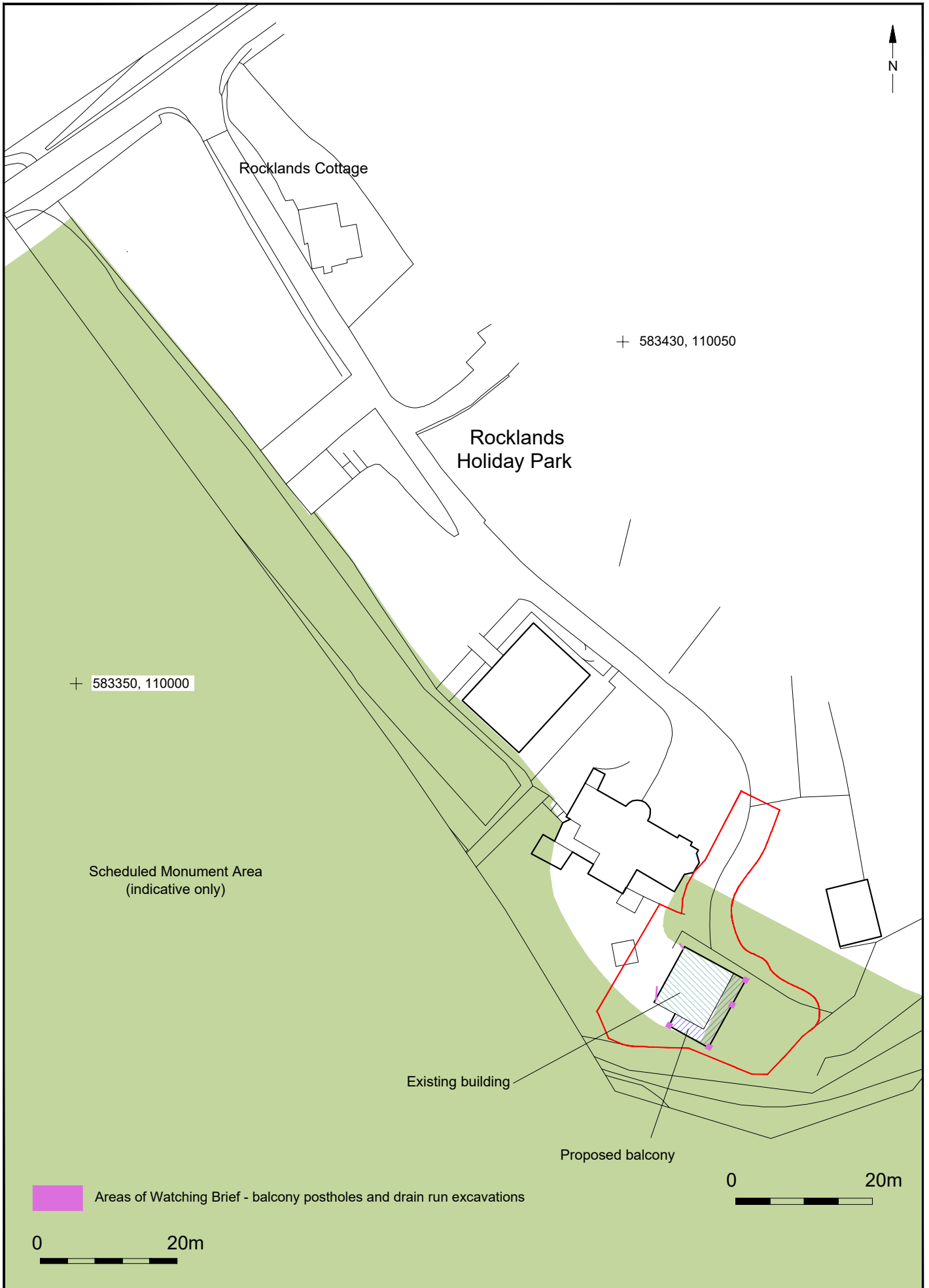
Entered by             Giles Dawkes (giles.dawkes@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on             23 November 2016



Contains Ordnance Survey data  
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© Archaeology South-East		Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160800	December 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016469	Drawn by: LG			

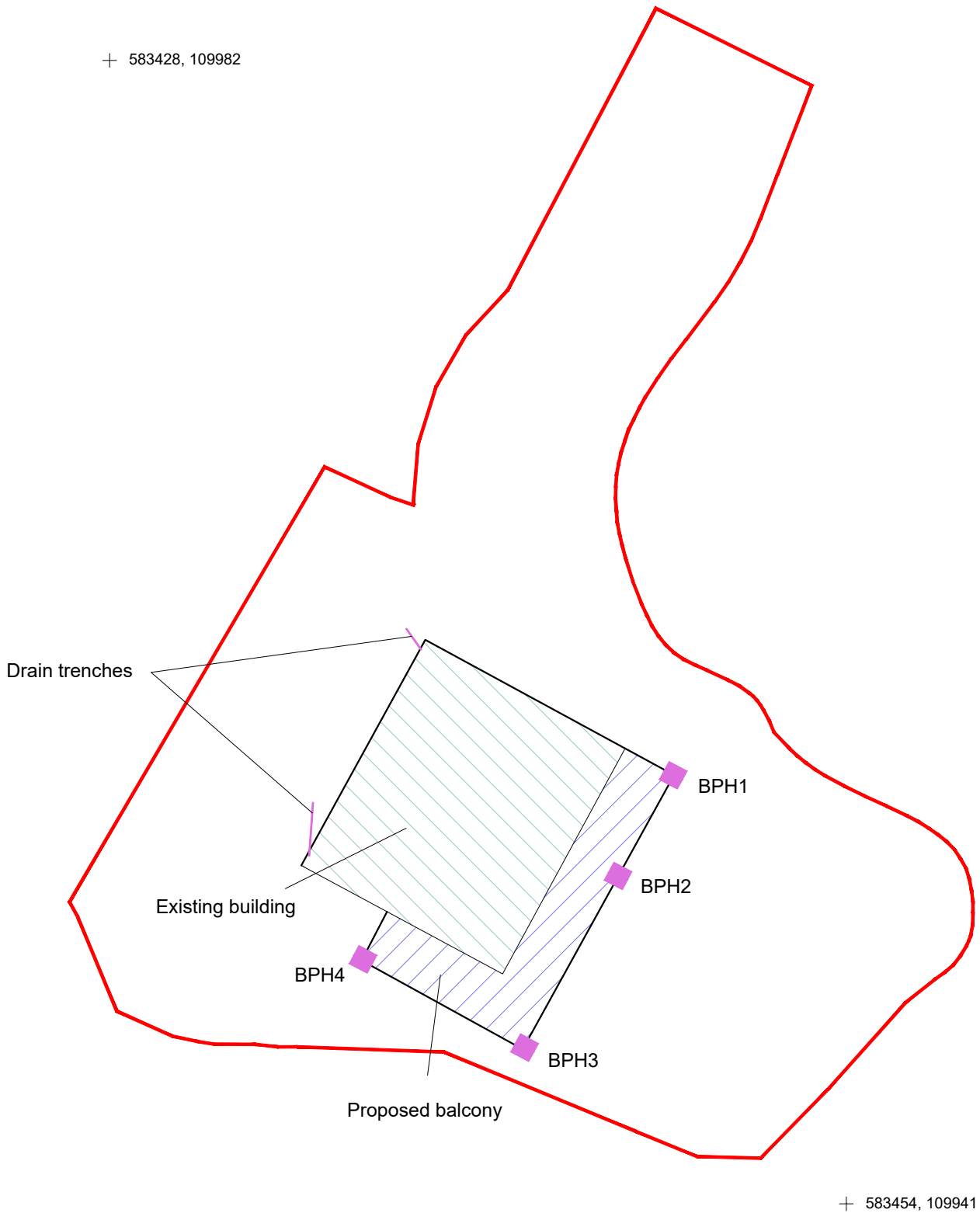


© Archaeology South-East		Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160800	December 2016	Location of Watching Brief	
Report Ref: 2016469	Drawn by: LG		





+ 583428, 109982



Drain trenches

Existing building

BPH4


Proposed balcony

BPH3

BPH2

BPH1

+ 583454, 109941

 Areas of Watching Brief - balcony postholes and drain run excavations



© Archaeology South-East		Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 160800	December 2016	Detail of monitored groundwork	
Report Ref: 2016469	Drawn by: LG		



Balcony posthole 1



Balcony posthole 2



Balcony posthole 3



Balcony posthole 4



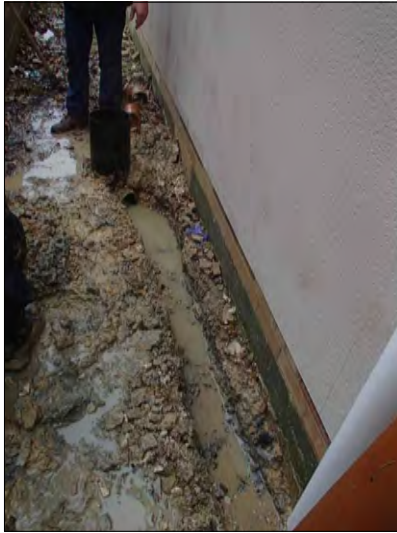
Undertaking pile auguring



Drainage trench in the north-east



General location of Balcony post 4 facing north



Drainage trench in the south-west



Location of drainage trenches. Note that the entire area is terraced into the hillslope to a depth of over 2m



The site facing west. The 19th century terraced area is clearly visible

© Archaeology South-East		Rocklands Holiday Park, Hastings	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 160800	December 2016	Photographs of balcony posthole, test-pit and drainage trenches	
Report Ref: 2016469	Drawn by: LG		

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