

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Wayfield House, St Mary's Road, West Hythe
Kent**

NGR 612787 134260

Planning Ref: Y04/0702/SH

Project no. 3070

Site code WHH07

**By
RD Beck
(with contributions by T. Clifford, G. Driver & L. Allott)**

October 2007

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

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
email : fau-ucl@btconnect.com
website: www.archaeologyse.co.uk**

Summary

On the 30th and 31st of July 2007, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension at Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent. A probable occupation horizon was recorded, together with associated early medieval pottery. This buried deposit lay beneath 900mm (maximum depth) of colluvium, and contained several blocks of Kentish Ragstone which may be associated with the adjacent St. Mary's Church.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Brian Oxley to maintain an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension at Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent (Figs.1&2).
- 1.2 Wayfield House is located at NGR 612787 134260 in the Parish of West Hythe, on the north side of St Mary's Road, West Hythe.
- 1.3 A planning application was approved by Shepway District Council for an extension at Wayfield House (Planning Ref: Y04/0702/SH). The following condition was placed on the consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has been submitted to, and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.4 *A Specification For An Archaeological Watching Brief At The Site of Wayfield House, St Mary's Road, West Hythe* was issued by the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, July 2007 (Shepway District Council's advisors in archaeological matters). Thereafter, all work was carried out in accordance with this document, as well as the *Standards and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Brief* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and other codes and relevant documents of the IFA.
- 1.5 The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey consists of Weald Clay overlain by Landslip, with Marine Alluvium (Clay) to the south (British Geological Survey Folkestone and Dover: England and Wales Sheet 305/306 Solid and Drift Edition 1:50 000 Series).
- 1.6 The fieldwork was undertaken on the 30th and 31st of July 2007 by Robert Beck (Archaeologist).

2.0 The Archaeological Background

- 2.1 Wayfield House lies at the base of an old coastal escarpment which runs along the back of Romney Marsh. The English Channel is last thought to have reached this cliff line during the Roman period, but during medieval times significant land reclamation was undertaken behind the shingle spit (Eddison & Green 1988). In fact, roughly a kilometre to the west, the remains of a Roman Fort are located. Known as Stufall Castle, this fort was one of a number constructed by the

Romans around the Kent coastline, situated to defend the mainland against Saxon pirates. The course of an old Roman road also lies less than a kilometre to the north of Wayfield House.

- 2.2 Furthermore, the development site lies directly opposite the medieval ruins of St Mary's Church, which have Scheduled Ancient Monument status (HER No: TR 13 SW 9 – SAM: KE147). Immediately to the south of the ruins a disused Royal Military Canal is also located.

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 A continuous watching brief was maintained throughout the excavation of the footings trenches. Archaeological monitoring included an inspection of the excavated topsoil and other deposits in order to identify concentrations of artefacts or ecofacts, and an examination of exposed surfaces for archaeological remains.
- 3.2 All significant archaeological remains identified were recorded to accepted professional standards and in accordance with *Standards and Guidance: Watching Brief* produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Full details of the techniques used are contained within the archive.

4.0 Results

- 4.1 Modern concrete (Context 1) covered the majority of the site with an average depth of 100mm. Context 1 overlay colluvium consisting of c.900mm of dark grey sandy silt (Context 2). Context 2 produced a quantity of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), one brass spent rifle bullet and many pieces of sandstone. Context 2 was substantially cut by modern disturbance, dating from the construction of the house onward.
- 4.2 Context 2 overlay a continuous horizon, up to 200mm deep, (Context 3) of medium orange brown silty fine sand with many charcoal fragments, a brick fragment and one section of pottery rim, the latter was found in an inverted position. Context 3 overlay a deposit, greater than 100mm deep, of medium yellow sand (Context 4).

5.0 The Finds

By Trista Clifford, Gemma Driver and Lucy Allott

A modest collection of finds was excavated from Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe. The assemblage is characterised in Table 1 below:

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	CBM	Weight (g)	Bone	Weight (g)	Flint	Weight (g)	Stone	Weight (g)	Charcoal	Weight (g)
2	7	88	1	74	1	<2			3	714		
3	5	280	1	244	24	246	1	46	1	22	5	4

Table 1 Finds quantification

5.1 Pottery

A total of twelve pieces of pottery weighing 348g were recovered from two Contexts. Context [2], the subsoil, contained three 13-14th century sand-tempered sherds: the first is tempered with abundant, fine, coloured sand. The second is fine sand-tempered redware with a buff coloured slip and the third a medium sand-tempered base sherd with occasional flint inclusions. This Context also produced a small fragment of salt glazed stoneware of 18th century date and three 19th-20th century refined stoneware fragments.

- 5.1.1 Context [3] produced two rim fragments from a large cooking pot with an everted rim. The fabric is frequent coloured flint up to 5mm, with less frequent shell inclusions up to 3mm. The form of the rim suggests a 12th to early 13th century date. Three other fragments were recovered. Two are of a similar fabric to the rim, however the size of the inclusions is smaller; no more than 3mm. The remaining fragment is a body sherd in an abundant, fine sandy fabric with sooting to the inner and outer surfaces, which is of a similar date. None of the fragments from this Context are particularly abraded.

5.2 CBM

Two fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. Context [2] contained a peg tile fragment with a circular hole and the remains of a pale grey mortar on one surface. The fabric is well fired with occasional clay pellets up to 6mm. The tile is probably 18-19th century in date.

- 5.2.1 Context [3] produced a high fired Roman floor tile fragment (L. Barber pers.comm.), c.35mm thick in a fine sandy fabric with occasional yellow clay pellets up to 4mm. The tile is residual within this Context.

5.3 Stone

Three limestone fragments were recovered from Context [2]. A small sandstone fragment was recovered from Context [3]. They are likely to be of local origin and show no signs of having been worked.

5.4 Worked Flint

A single elongated flint nodule with several flake scars, removed from the wider end, was collected from Context [3]. It is not diagnostic of period.

5.5 Charcoal

Five charcoal fragments >4mm were hand collected from Context [3]. The majority of these are crumbly however the best preserved piece is a segment of a small-medium branch.

5.6 Animal Bone

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from the site. Context [2] contained one sheep sized rib fragment. Context [3] comprised of 17 identifiable fragments from both cattle and sheep. The assemblage primarily consists of a fragmented cattle mandible though also includes the distal end of a sheep tibia and the distal end of a sheep humerus.

5.7 The assemblage is not large enough to hold any potential for further analysis.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 To the north of the site, the top of the chalk escarpment reaches a height of c.88m OD. Measured horizontally, Wayfield House lies c.680 to the south, situated at the base of the escarpment, at c.6m OD. The slope, from north to south, across the site is about 3.4 degrees.

6.2 During a program of field walking, carried out on Romney Marsh between 1989 and 1991, Mrs Anne Reeves noted that a new cesspool was excavated in the grounds of Wayfield House, from which she observed pottery sherds. These sherds were identified by Nigel Macpherson–Grant as the following (Reeves, pers. comm.): - Roman 1st - 2nd century, (one sherd, buff pink sandy Canterbury ware) and Saxon 9th – 12th century, (one sherd, profuse shell, Imported 850/875–900AD; one shell filled 9th – 10th century sherd, and one Canterbury sandy sherd, 1075/1100 – 1125AD).

6.3 During the winter of 2000, a local man dug a trench 3.6m wide for the purpose of constructing a parking bay. This excavation was 9.1m west of St. Mary's Church ruins. The site was visited by Anthony E Collins, where at a depth of 0.6m he reported observing an early occupation level. Animal bones and pottery were noted, the latter dating from the 11th to early 14th century. (Collins, A. 2001)

6.4 The escarpment has a history of landslips from at least the Romano – British period (Hutchinson J. 1988). The supply of colluvium, delivered to the foot of the slope below the escarpment, forms Context **2**. Contained within this Context were many pieces of sandstone, all of which were inspected for tool marks etc., none being found. However, there were occasional surfaces at right angles to each other. It was noted that the sandstone in Context **2** was similar to the St. Mary's Church fabric, and could have been a source for this building material.

- 6.5 Context 2 overlay a probable occupation horizon (Context 3). Context 3 had no obvious humic content and was most likely formed as a result of cultural activity, including fires, causing discoloration to the underlying sand (Context 4). It is also possible that Context 3 represents a continuation of those deposits noted by Anthony Collins, during the excavation of a parking bay some 9m to the west of St Mary's Church ruins. Furthermore, it is likely that both deposits have either late Anglo-Saxon or Medieval antecedents.
- 6.6 Notably the junction between the land surface (3) and the underlying natural (4) was abrupt with no transitional subsoil and no rooting or worm action present. This may indicate some degree of deliberate landscaping, or cultural activity, prior to the deposition of Context 3, and that Context 3 was then quickly sealed beneath Context 2.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 In view of the fieldwork results, the current development is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the archaeological record.
- 7.2 A continuous watching brief ensures that all significant groundworks are fully monitored. In view of this, a high degree of confidence is given for the identification of remains within the area of investigation, during the course of this watching brief.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Mr Brian Oxley, For providing Collins, A. 2001: A Medieval Site at West Hythe Kent. *Unpublished Report*, and other related information. Also, the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council. For the use of their Brief for background information which has been re-used in this Report.

9.0 Bibliography & Sources

Collins, A. 2001: A Medieval Site at West Hythe Kent. *Unpublished Report*

Eddison, J. & Green, C. 1988. *Romney Marsh: Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation*. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology

Hutchinson, J. 1988: Recent Geotechnical, Geomorphological and Archaeological Investigations of the Abandoned Cliff backing Romney Marsh at Lympne, Kent. In Eddison, J, and Green, C, (editors), *Romney Marsh: Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation*. OUCA Monograph 24, 88, 89.

Appendix I: SMR Summary Form

Site Code	WHH07					
Identification Name and Address	Wayfield House, St. Mary's, Road, West Hythe, Kent.					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent County Council and Shepway District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 612787 134260					
Geology	Weald Clay overlain by Landslip and Marine Alluvium (Clay) to the south.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3070					
Project Type`	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Rural Garden		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 30/7/07 31/7/07	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr & Mrs Brian Oxley					
Project Manager(s)	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Robert Beck					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED X	PM X	Other		
<p><i>On the 30th and 31st of July 2007, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension at Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent. A probable occupation horizon was recorded, together with associated early medieval pottery. This buried deposit lay beneath 900mm (maximum depth) of colluvium, and contained several blocks of Kentish Ragstone which may be associated with the adjacent St. Mary's Church.</i></p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-32544

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Wayfield House, West Hythe
Short description of the project	On the 30th and 31st of July, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension at Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent. A buried land surface was recorded, together with associated early medieval pottery. This buried land surface lay beneath 900mm (maximum depth) of colluvium, and contained several rocks of Kentish Ragstone which may be associated with the adjacent St. Mary's Church.
Project dates	Start: 30-07-2007 End: 31-07-2007
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	3070 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WHH07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	SITE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Visual Inspection'
Development type	Small-scale extensions (e.g. garages, porches, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SHEPWAY HYTHE Wayfield House, St Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent
Postcode	CT21 4NU
Study area	20.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TR 612787 134260 50.8604223747 1.713309092310 50 51 37 N 001 42 47 E Point
Height OD	Min: 6.00m Max: 6.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Robert Beck
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client

Project archives

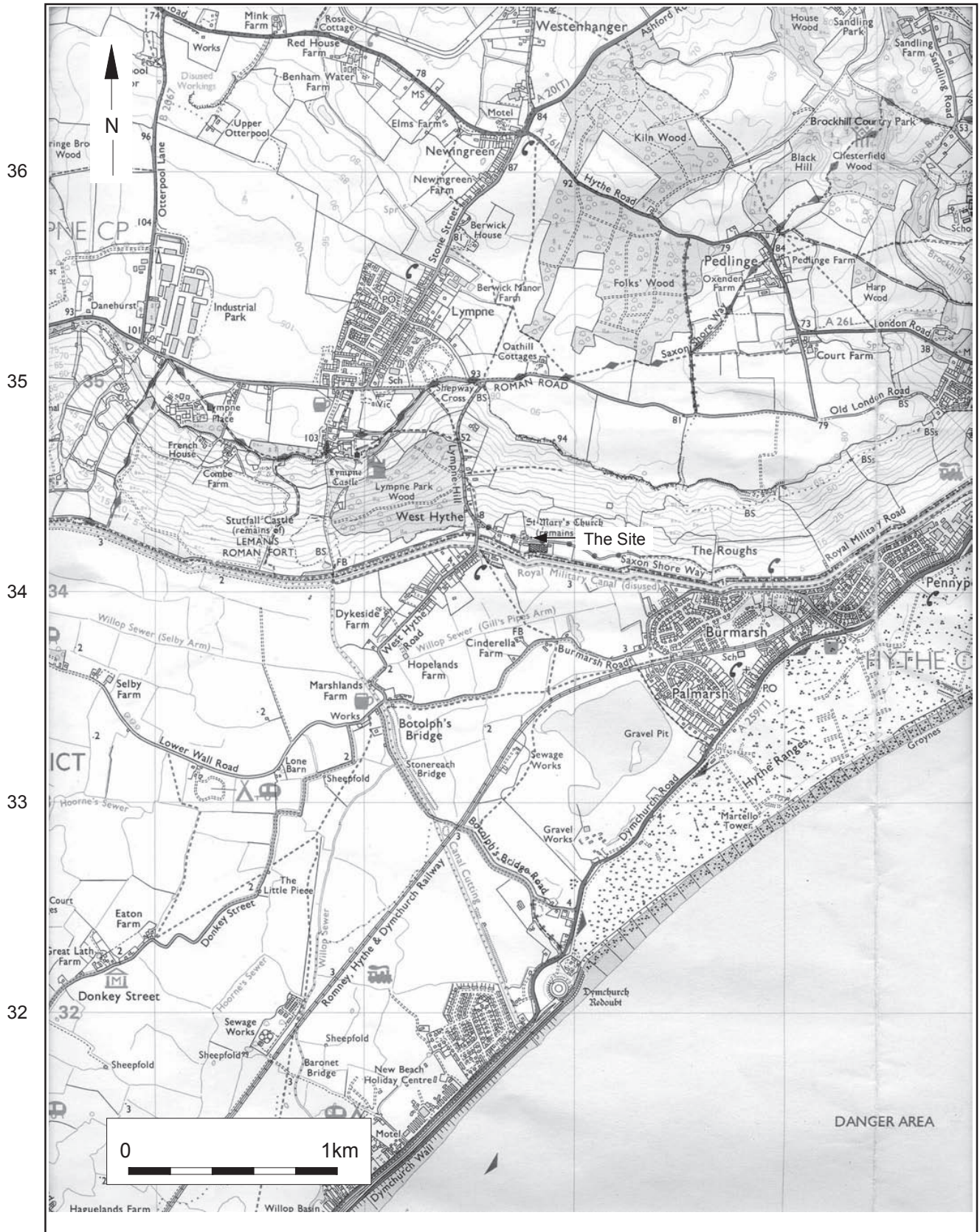
Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey'

Project bibliography 1

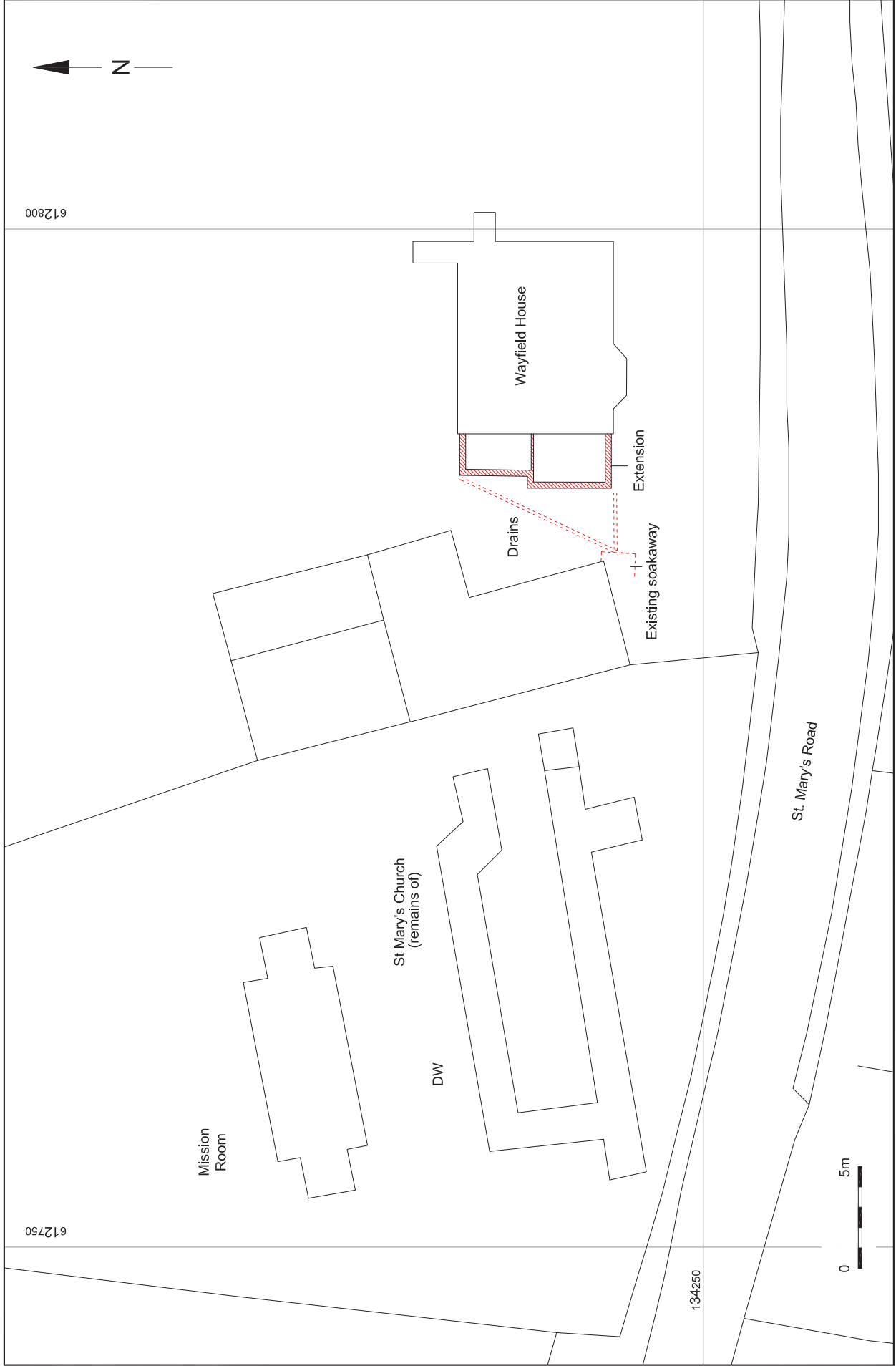
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Wayfield House, St Mary's Road, West Hythe, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Beck, R.D.
Other bibliographic details	Projec No. 3070
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex. BN41 1DR
Description	Soft bound report

Entered by	Clive Meaton (c.meaton@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	11 October 2007



© Archaeology South-East			Wayfield House, St. Mary's Road, West Hythe		Fig. 1
Ref: 3070	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan		

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Fig. 2