

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent.**

**NGR 556027 173551**

**Project No. 3082**

**By  
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**December 2007**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during construction of several extensions at Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks including general ground reduction and the excavation of foundations for the new extensions. Monitoring took place at intermittent periods from the 13<sup>th</sup> of August to the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted during the course of watching brief and it seems likely that modern disturbance may have served to destroy any archaeological remains had they been present. The general stratigraphy comprised topsoil over made-ground, with the underlying solid geology formed by Upper Chalk.*

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### **SMR Summary Sheet**

**Fig. 1:** Site Location

**Fig. 2:** Location of Monitored Works

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Archaeology South East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by the Rok Group to undertake a watching brief during construction of several extensions at Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent. (site centred NGR 556027 173551, Fig. 1).

1.2 Dartford Borough Council's planning reference for the proposal is DA/05/01038.

1.3 The Local Planning Authority placed the following condition on the planning consent:

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

1.4 Monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. The groundworks examined included general ground reduction and the excavation of foundations for the new extensions.

1.5 The archaeological contractor had close liaison with the County Archaeologist with regard to the frequency of visits and appropriate action to be taken.

1.6 A specification for these works was prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Clive Meaton (Senior Archaeologist), Tom Collie (Archaeologist), and Alice Thorne (Archaeologist) at intermittent periods from the 13<sup>th</sup> of August to the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2007. The project was managed by Jon Sygrave (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

## **2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1 The British Geological Survey sheet 271 shows that the site is situated on Upper Chalk.

2.2 The archaeological potential was based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded in the SMR. Within c. 200m of the site and also along the Roman road a probable late Saxon

brooch (SMR No: TQ 57 SE 25), and Roman coins (SMR No: TQ 57 SE 45 and TQ 57 SE 28) have been found.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to knowledge of the local area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention was paid to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 3.2 The groundworks involved the excavation of foundation trenches to a maximum depth of c.1.2m and width of c.600mm and ground reduction to a similar depth in other areas of the site (Fig. 2).
- 3.3 Groundworks were monitored at all times by an archaeologist until/unless it becomes clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (e.g. once excavation reached undisturbed natural subsoils, below which there will be no archaeological remains present). Where possible excavation was undertaken using a flat bladed bucket in a single direction to enable archaeological remains to be recorded prior to disturbance from being driven over. If possible archaeological remains were encountered, machine excavation ceased to allow the remains to be investigated further.
- 3.4 The archaeologist inspected the surfaces revealed. The main contractor allowed the archaeological contractor reasonable time and resources to undertake any inspection or recording required.
- 3.5 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards. A full photographic record was kept of the work as appropriate. The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.

### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

- 4.1 The general stratigraphy across the site remained consistent and comprised firstly a c.150mm thick deposit of mid grey brown recent topsoil (Context 1). This firm silty clay contained frequent charcoal and ceramic building material flecks and occasional sub angular flints and pebbles (<20mm). Directly beneath Context 1 was Context 2, a made ground deposit between c.200 and 800mm thick. It was of a variable consistency, composition and colouration containing frequent inclusions of modern building materials, plastic and metal. Beneath

Context **2** was above Context **3**, which comprised the compact chalk natural. This was interspersed with pockets of orange brown silty clay and was heavily impacted upon by services.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

- 5.1 The underlying geology encountered during the course of the groundworks comprised Upper Chalk.
  
- 5.2 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted during the course of watching brief. The site had received a degree of disturbance during the construction of the existing buildings, to which Context **2** relates. This would have served to destroy any archaeological remains had they been present for it seems possible that the natural ground could have been truncated to some depth by this disturbance. The topsoil appeared to have been removed and replaced during the previous phases of construction on the site.

**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	PRI07					
Identification Name and Address	Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent					
County, District &/or Borough	Dartford Borough Council					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 556027 173551					
Geology	Upper Chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3082					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 13 <sup>th</sup> August – 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2007	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Rok Group					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave and Louise Rayner					
Project Supervisor	Andrew Margetts					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during construction of several extensions at Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks including general ground reduction and the excavation of foundations for the new extensions. Monitoring took place at intermittent periods from the 13<sup>th</sup> of August to the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted during the course of watching brief and it seems likely that modern disturbance may have served to destroy any archaeological remains had they been present. The general stratigraphy comprised topsoil over made-ground, with the underlying solid geology formed by Upper Chalk.</i></p>						

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**OASIS ID: archaeol6-34649**

**Project details**

Project name            Priory Mews, Dartford, Kent WB

Short description of the project    An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during during construction of several extensions at Priory Mews, Watling Street, Dartford, Kent. The work comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks including general ground reduction and the excavation of foundations for the new extensions. Monitoring took place at intermittent periods from the 13th of August to the 21st of September 2007. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted during the course of watching brief and it seems likely that modern disturbance may have served to destroy any archaeological remains had they been present. No archaeological features or artefacts were noted, and the general stratigraphy comprised, top soil, over made-ground, with the underlying solid geology formed by Upper Chalk.

Project dates            Start: 13-08-2007 End: 21-09-2007

Previous/future work    No / No

Any associated project reference codes    PRI07 - Sitecode

Type of project            Recording project

Site status                Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use        Other 5 - Garden

Investigation type        'Watching Brief'

Prompt                    Planning condition



### Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT DARTFORD DARTFORD Priory Mews, Dartford, Kent
Postcode	DA1 1XX
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 556027 173551 50.9340466951 0.214712672045 50 56 02 N 000 12 52 E Point
Height OD	Min: 18.00m Max: 20.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council
Project director/manager	JON SYGRAVE
Project supervisor	Tom Collie
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Rok Group

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Digital Archive  
Exists? No

Paper Archive  
Exists? No

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**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
Title An Archaeological watching brief at priory mews dartford kent  
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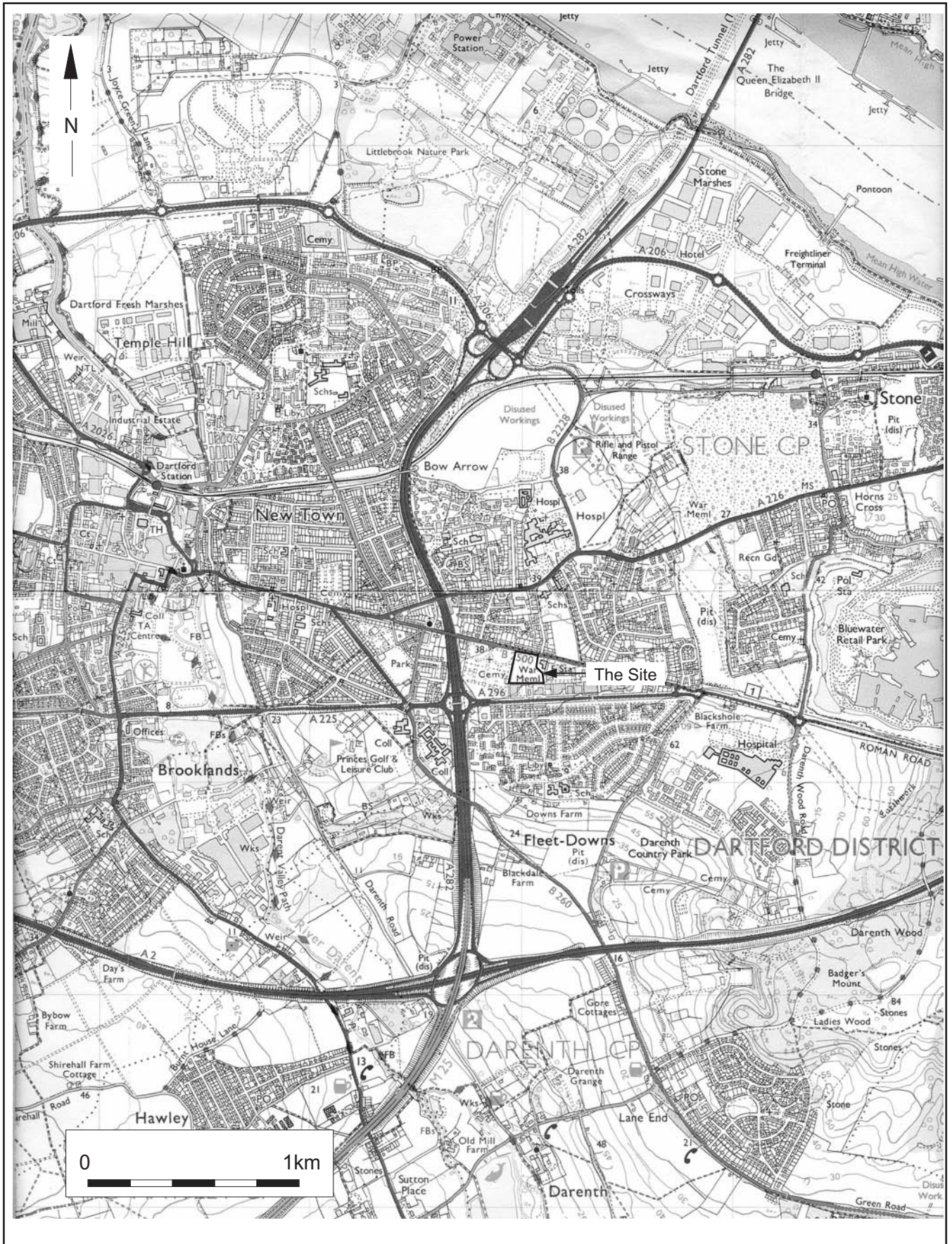
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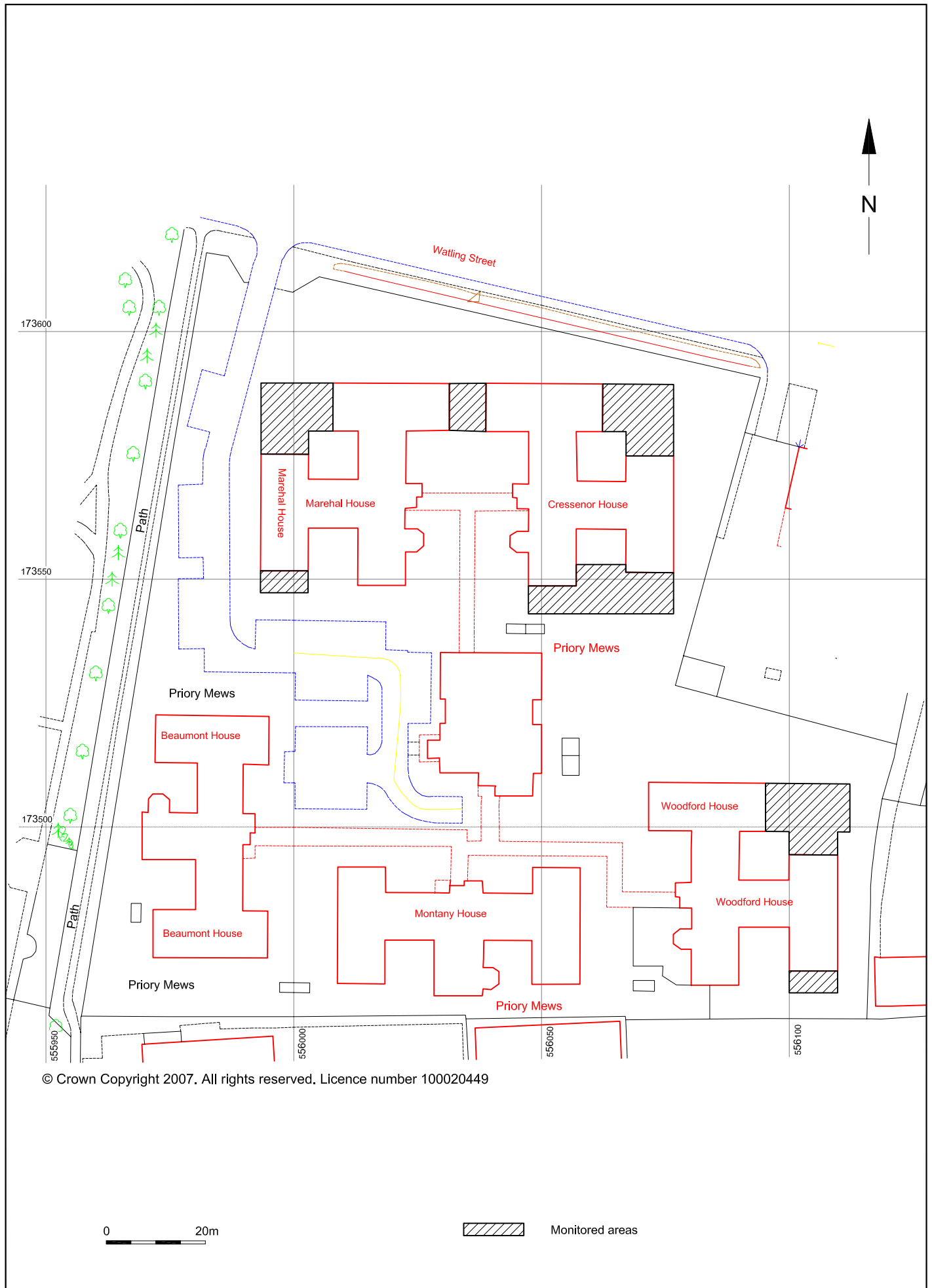
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© Archaeology South-East			Priory Mews, Dartford		Fig. 1
Ref: 3082	Dec 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan		

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© Archaeology South-East			Priory Mews, Dartford	Fig. 2
Ref: 3082	Dec 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Location of Monitored Works	