

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex**

**Planning Ref: LW/2865/CCLB**

**NGR TQ 4144510190  
NGR 541445 110190**

**Project No. 4258  
Site Code: MCP 10**

**ASE Report No. 2010057  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-76553**

**Dylan Hopkinson MA**

**May 2010**

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

**Tel: 01273 426830  
Fax: 01273 420866  
Email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)**

**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> April by Archaeology South-East outside The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex. The work was carried out on behalf of the client British Telecommunications PLC. Works to excavate an underground duct were monitored in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site and record any remains. The site lies within the grounds of Lewes Castle and as such is subject to Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent.*

*The works did not extend deeper than 0.33m below the pavement and did not extend beyond the made ground makeup and previous service trench activity; no archaeological features were identified.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by British Telecommunications PLC, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a duct trench on the pavement adjacent to the northern wall of The Maltings (NGR 541445 110190; Figure 1).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

- 1.2.1 The proposed works involved the installation of an underground duct approximately 36m in length within the tarmac footpath (Figure 2).
- 1.2.2 An archaeological watching brief condition has been attached to the Scheduled Monument Consent as the site lies within the grounds of Lewes Castle. The works also require planning permission and this permission has an archaeological programme of works attached (Condition 2):
- “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 scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.”*
- 1.2.3 Subsequently a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ASE 2010) was prepared in response to this condition and in accordance with the East Sussex Standards (ESCC 2008), and this was submitted to Mr Paul Roberts, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments, and to Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist ESCC for their approval prior to the commencement of works.
- 1.2.4 All work was carried out in accordance the WSI and the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

### **1.3 Scope of the Report**

- 1.3.1 This report details the results of archaeological monitoring of works on the site. The work was undertaken on 29th April 2010 by Dylan Hopkinson (Archaeologist).
- 1.3.2 The project was managed by Andy Leonard and Dan Swift.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and Geology**

- 2.1.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 map (Sheet 319, Lewes), the natural geology of the site comprises undivided Upper and Middle Chalk.
- 2.1.2 Lewes is situated on a prominent chalk spur jutting out into the Ouse valley at the point where the river passes through a narrow gap in the South Downs. The principal focus of historic settlement within the borough proper lay on the flat top of the ridge, in the area now occupied by the High Street and its associated lanes, and extending down the slope towards the area of former quayside that lay along the riverfront in the vicinity of Cliffe Bridge.
- 2.1.3 Castle Precincts lies just off the crest of the ridge, on its southern margin. The ridge is a prominent landscape feature, and will have formed a promontory of land jutting out into the formerly marshy valley of the Ouse.

### **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

- 2.2.1 Significant evidence of prehistoric occupation activity on this chalk ridge has only recently come to light and comprises a number of possible enclosure ditches and pits to the rear of Lewes House on School Hill, some 300m to the east of the site.
- 2.2.2 Romano-British material is sketchy, although a number of findspots of artefacts are known from the town, including a pot containing chicken bones found in a pit cut into the natural chalk beneath the castle mound.
- 2.2.3 Bleach (1997) has reviewed the early history of the town and hinted at a possible Roman or earlier ritual landscape (a barrow cemetery) related to a number of earthen mounds, mostly known from 18th and 19th century sources. He included the castle mound and Brack Mount as possible barrows in origin, subsequently enlarged by the Normans, although this remains speculative.
- 2.2.4 The earliest evidence for major settlement in Lewes is derived from the foundation of the burh in 878-79, one of five fortresses established by Alfred the Great, King of Wessex (871-99) as a protection against Danish raiders. It has been suggested that much of the street pattern that still survives dates from this period, with the geometric grid of small back and side lanes that exist south of the High Street (with further examples suggested by property boundaries and alleyways) possibly replicated to the north (Houghton 1998).
- 2.2.5 Construction of the castle by William de Warenne shortly after the Conquest is thought to have destroyed the street pattern north of the High Street, with the exception of the southern part of Fisher Street and possibly a former east-west aligned lane called Middle Lane that extended along the broad alignment of Castle Ditch Lane to join Fisher Street. The area of the site lay within the castle bailey.

- 2.2.6 Excavations undertaken by ASE on Castle Ditch Lane in 2003 although very limited in scope, produced some very interesting results, and increased the sum of knowledge relating to the historic urban landscape of Lewes. The discovery of the castle ditch, c. 100m east of the site, although not unexpected, was the first time that this feature has been examined under archaeological conditions. Only a very small sample of the ditch could be examined within the confines of the site, and the dimensions remain unknown. In terms of date, the small amount of dating evidence that was recovered was derived from the latest backfilled deposits of 15th-16th century date. The excavation did not sample the earlier fills of the ditch, and thus was unable to cast any light on the date and origin of the feature. A number of other archaeological features spanning the 12th-19th centuries were also revealed within during these works.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 The adopted methodology was as described in the WSI (ASE 2010) and is not repeated here.

#### **3.2 Excavation aims and objectives**

- 3.2.1 In general, the aim of the watching brief was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains exposed during the groundworks (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.
- 3.2.2 Specific research questions appropriate to the site are set out in the Extensive Urban Survey for Lewes (Harris 2005) and have been reproduced below:

##### ***Pre-urban activity***

**RQ1:** What was the nature of the palaeo-environment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and Early Anglo-Saxon human activity in the area?

##### ***Origins***

**RQ4:** What evidence is there for the location of the defences of the Alfredian burh?

**RQ5:** What evidence is there for Anglo-Saxon secular settlement (and its economy), both within and without the burh?

**RQ6:** What was the road layout, how did this evolve, and how did it relate to east-west routes, river crossings, a transhumant Downland-Wealden economy, and the burh?

##### ***Late Anglo-Saxon and Norman town***

**RQ7:** What was the extent of the town and its suburbs in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and to what degree did it change over this period?

**RQ8:** What evidence is there for the evolution of the street plan during this period, especially in relation to the expanding settlement and the

development of suburbs?

**RQ9:** What evidence is there for early burgrave plots, and when and where did built-up street frontages first occur?

**RQ10:** What different zones (especially with reference to the suburbs) were there during this period, and how did they change (assessing the value of the Domesday Book evidence for late 11th-century change)?

**RQ12:** What evidence is there for the origins and early development of the castle (especially with reference to the Brack Mount)?

**RQ15:** What evidence is there for the economy of the town, especially with regard to its Downland and Wealden hinterland?

#### ***Later medieval town***

**RQ16:** How have tenements/burgrave plots developed from the first built-up street frontages to the plots that survive today?

**RQ17:** What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider industry) were there during this period, and how did they change?

**RQ18:** What evidence is there for the development and of institutions, such as the castle, priory, friary, hospitals, chantries, and grammar school?

**RQ19:** What documentary and archaeological evidence is there for late medieval decline?

**RQ21:** How and when did the town walls, gates and associated ditches develop?

#### ***Post-medieval town***

**RQ22:** What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider the brewing and tanning industries) were there during this period, and how did they change?

**RQ23:** How were the medieval and early post-medieval buildings adapted for new functions and changing status (e.g. creation of carriageways, or subdivision of hall houses)?

### **3.3 Status of site archive**

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

3.3.2 Table 1: Quantification of site archive

Number of Contexts	2
Context Register Sheets	1
Photographic Record Sheets	2
Watching Brief Record Sheets	5
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	4



#### **4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)**

##### **4.1 Natural Geology and Overburden**

- 4.1.1 Natural chalk was not encountered at any point during the works.
- 4.1.2 The excavated duct trench was 0.20 metres in width and did not exceed a maximum depth of 0.33 metres.
- 4.1.3 The trench was located on a tarmac pavement [001] adjacent to a road, and the depth of excavation did not extend below the made ground preparation for the pavement and subsequent disturbance by the laying of previous ducts within the made ground [002].
- 4.1.4 Up to 0.22 metres depth of made ground [002] was observed which comprised lenses of mid brown sandy silt and bituminous and sandy material. This was sealed by a tarmac layer 0.12 metres deep.
- 4.1.5 No archaeological features or finds were identified.

#### **5.0 DISCUSSION**

- 5.1 No archaeological deposits were identified on the site due to the shallow depth of the duct trench and the fact that the trench was cut through previously disturbed made ground from existing services.

#### **6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ASE 2010: *The Maltings, Castle Precinct, Lewes Castle, Lewes, East Sussex: Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme of Investigation*. ASE March 2010

Harris 2005: *Lewes; Historic Character Assessment Report. Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS)*. R B Harris. March 2005

### HER Summary Form

Site Code	MCP 10					
Identification Name and Address	The Maltings, Castle Precinct, Lewes Castle, Lewes, East Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 541445 110190					
Geology	undivided Upper and Middle Chalk (Not encountered)					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4258					
Type of Fieldwork	<del>Eval.</del>	<del>Excav.</del>	<b>Watching brief.</b> ✓	<b>Standing Structure</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Other</b>
Type of Site	<del>Green Field</del>	<b>Shallow Urban</b> ✓	<del>Deep Urban</del>	<b>Other</b>		
Dates of Fieldwork	<del>Eval.</del>	<del>Excav.</del>	<b>W.B.</b> 29/04/10	<b>Other</b>		
Sponsor/Client	British Telecommunications PLC					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Dylan Hopkinson					
Period Summary	<del>Palaeo.</del>	<del>Meso.</del>	<del>Neo.</del>	<b>BA</b>	<b>IA</b>	<b>RB</b>
	<b>AS</b>	<b>MED</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>Other Modern</b> ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> April by Archaeology South-East outside The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex. The work was carried out on behalf of the client British Telecommunications PLC. Works to excavate an underground duct were monitored in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site and record any remains. The site lies within the grounds of Lewes Castle and as such is subject to Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent.</i></p> <p><i>The works did not extend deeper than 0.33m below the pavement and did not extend beyond the made ground makeup and previous service trench activity; no archaeological features were identified.</i></p>						

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-76553**

**Project details**

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> April by Archaeology South-East outside The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes, East Sussex. The work was carried out on behalf of the client British Telecommunications PLC. Works to excavate an underground duct were monitored in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site and record any remains. The site lies within the grounds of Lewes Castle and as such is subject to Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent.</p> <p>The works did not extend deeper than 0.33m below the pavement and did not extend beyond the made ground makeup and previous service trench activity; no archaeological features were identified.</p>
Project dates	Start: 29-04-2010 End: 29-04-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MCP 10 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	LW/2865/CCLB - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 3 - Utilities
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	'Measured Survey','Photographic Survey','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Pipelines/cables (e.g. gas, electric, telephone, TV cable, water, sewage, drainage etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES LEWES The Maltings, Castle Precinct, Lewes Castle, Lewes, East Sussex
Postcode	BN7 1YT
Study area	7.20 Square metres
Site coordinates	0 0 541445 00 00 N 110190 00 00 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

#### **Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Dylan Hopkinson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Telecommunications company
Name of sponsor/funding body	British Telecommunications PLC

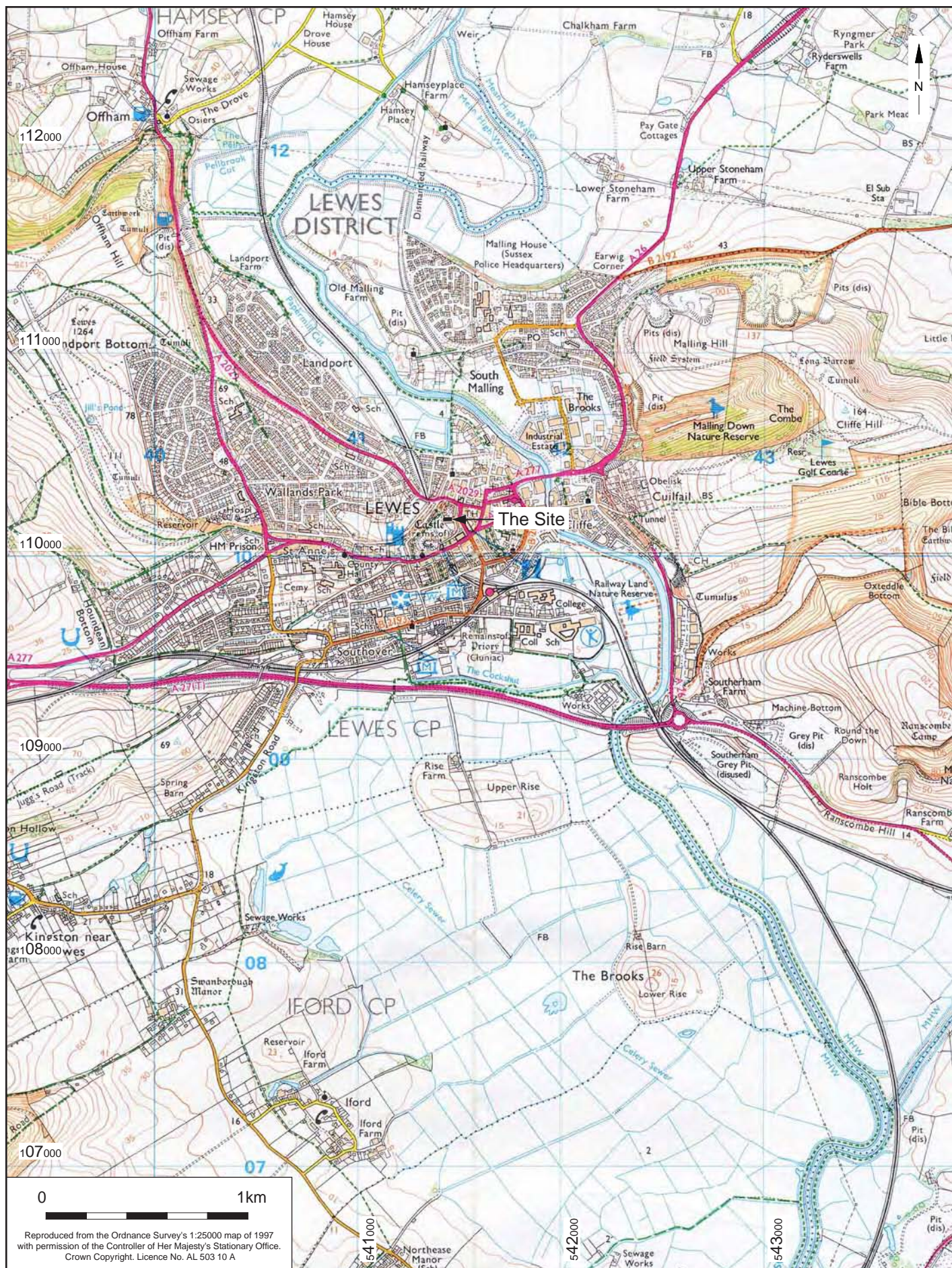
#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Miscellaneous Material','Report'

**Project  
bibliography 1**

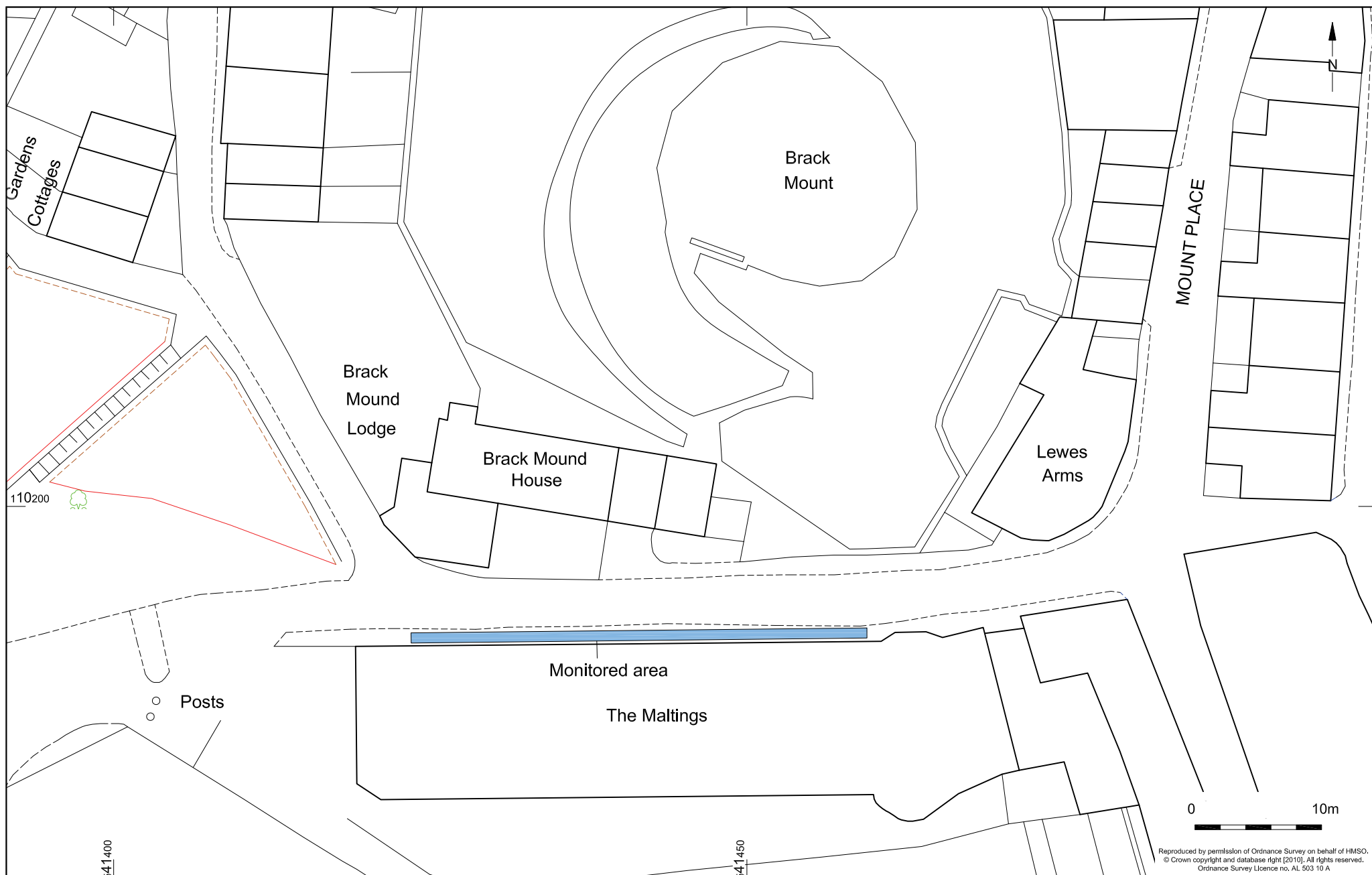
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© Archaeology South-East		The Maltings, Castle Precinct, Lewes Castle	Fig. 1
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The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes

Site plan showing location of monitored area

Fig. 2



Fig. 3: Photograph of a typical section through the exposed stratigraphy



Head Office  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex BN41 1DR  
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax: +44(0)1273 420866  
email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)



London Office  
Centre for Applied Archaeology  
Institute of Archaeology  
University College London  
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY  
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 Fax: +44(0)20 7383 2572  
Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

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