

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Maintenance Yard,
The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex**

NGR 558820 127070

**Wealden District Council Planning Reference
WD/2008/1014/CAC**

**Project No: 4331
Site Code: MYM 10**

**ASE Report No. 2010202
OASIS ID: archaeol6-86002**

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November 2010

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Abstract

A monitoring visit was made to the site on 10th August 2010. Limited removal of existing foundations was monitored. A test-pit was then excavated adjacent to the foundations to ascertain the depth of the underlying 'natural', which was encountered at a depth of 400mm. The overlying deposit was a mixture of topsoil and brick rubble.

Unfortunately owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, ASE were not contacted when the main groundworks were undertaken, and hence all subsequent groundworks at the site were not subject to archaeological monitoring.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Jenner Jones Chartered Surveyors to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for redevelopment at The Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex (NGR 558820 127070) (Fig 1)

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies in the centre of the historic village of Mayfield on the western side of Tunbridge Wells Road at a height of c.140m AOD. It is bounded on the other three sides by the buildings of Mayfield C of E Primary School, its playing field and associated parking.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area (Sheet 303, *Tunbridge Wells*) the underlying geology at the site is Tunbridge Wells Sand.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted by Wealden District Council (ref. WD/2008/1014/CAC) for the demolition of existing buildings at the site and for the erection of a small housing development with associated access and parking. Given the archaeological sensitivity of the area, and following consultation between Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council (Wealden District Council's advisers on archaeological issues), a condition (No. 15) was attached to the permission requiring that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of 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.'

Reason: The development is likely to disturb remains of archaeological interest.'

1.3.2 The initial stage of archaeological work was the production of a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), which provided information on the archaeological potential of the site based on cartographic, documentary and other evidence (ASE 2010a). On the basis of the contents of this document, Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council recommended the implementation of a building survey of the standing buildings prior to demolition and the maintenance of an archaeological watching brief during the demolition and subsequent redevelopment.

- 1.3.3 The building survey was duly completed in April 2010 (ASE 2010b). A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was produced for the subsequent work at the site outlining the scope of the archaeological monitoring during demolition and subsequent groundworks at the site (ASE 2010c).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aims and objectives given in the ASE *Written Scheme of Investigation* (*ibid.*) were

'In general, the aim of the watching brief is 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.

The watching brief will also assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

Specific aims include:

- *Is there any evidence for archaeological activity predating the Palace?*
- *Is there any evidence for the remains of Palace buildings on the site?*
- *Is there any evidence of post-dissolution activity?'*

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 The current report provides results of the watching brief undertaken at the site by Liane Peyre (Archaeologist) in August 2010. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site lies in the historic centre of the village of Mayfield close to the 13th century parish church of St. Dunstan. There are numerous historic buildings in the village. The East Sussex County Council Historic Environment Record (formerly the Sites and Monuments Record) holds the following entries within a 500m radius of the site:

Monument UID	Monument/Event Type	Description	Period
MES4360	Trackway	Ridgeway trackway (Probably prehistoric or Roman)	E Neolithic to Post-medieval
MES4626	Farmhouse	Yew Tree Farmhouse, 16 th century house, Listed Building Grade II*	Post-medieval
MES4627	House	Walnut Tree House, 15 th century house, Listed Building Grade II*	Medieval; post-medieval
MES4628	Inn	Middle House Hotel, 1575, Listed Building Grade I	Post-medieval
MES4629	Church	St Dunstan's Church, 13 th century tower otherwise 15 th century, Listed Building Grade I	Medieval; post-medieval
MES4630	Guest House	Stone House, 18 th century, Listed Building Grade II*	Post-medieval
MES4636	Building	Archbishop's Palace, 14 th century and later, Listed Building Grade I	Medieval; post-medieval
MES4638	Findspot	Early-middle Bronze Age, early-type-'B' palstave	Bronze Age
MES4639	Findspot	Partly-polished celt, Neolithic	Neolithic
MES4640	Findspot	Ground celt, Neolithic	Neolithic
MES4658	Building	Courtney and Pound End Cottages, Listed Building	Late Medieval to post-medieval
MES4659	Building	Walnut Tree House, 15 th century house, Listed Building Grade II*	Medieval
MES4660	Building	Gable End and Ancient Cottage, Listed Building	Post-medieval
MES4662	Building	Rose Cottage, Listed Building	Post-medieval
MES4667	Building	Royal Oak, Listed Building	Post-medieval
MES4674	Building	2 Fletching Street, Listed Building, 14 th century shop and later house	Medieval; post-medieval
MES4875	Trackway	Ridgeway trackway (Probably prehistoric or Roman)	Neolithic to post-medieval
MES4876	Trackway	Trackway, probably Prehistoric	Neolithic to post-medieval
MES6992	Findspot	Polished flint axe, Neolithic	Neolithic
MES6993	Well	Well shaft, 1 metre diameter, 6 metres deep	Undated
MES6994	Findspot	Probable Samian dog figurine	Roman
MES16012	Findspot	Coin, 16 th century	Post-medieval
EES14193	Desk-Based Assessment	Assessment of graveyard area	
EES14408	Watching Brief	Watching brief of small area in church and churchyard	Medieval; post-medieval

Table 1: Sites of archaeological interest held on the ESCC HER

2.2 A full DBA of the site has been produced (ASE 2010a). The estimated potential for sites and/or findspots being located within the appraisal area was summarised thus:

- Prehistoric: low
- Roman: low.
- Anglo- Saxon: low
- Medieval: low
- Post-Medieval: moderate

2.3 Hence it was concluded that there was some potential for the discovery of buried archaeological remains at the site (*ibid.*)

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 During the watching brief phase personnel from Archaeology South-East were to monitor the mechanical excavations, examine all sections for the presence of archaeological features, and scan all available spoil for archaeological artefacts. Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the developer only one monitoring visit was made to the site.

3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.

3.3 The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, and will be offered to a suitable local museum in due course. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	2
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Bulk Samples	-
Photographs	-
Bulk finds	-
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 2: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1 A monitoring visit was made to the site on 10th August 2010. Limited removal of existing foundations was monitored. A test-pit was then mechanically excavated adjacent to the foundations to ascertain the depth of the underlying 'natural'.
- 4.2 The stratigraphic sequence was straightforward. The 'natural' consisted of a yellow silty clay (context [02]), which was directly overlain by context [01], a 400mm thick mixture of mid-brown topsoil and brick rubble. No finds were recovered from the overburden.

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
01	Deposit	Made Ground	400mm
02	Deposit	'Natural'	-

- 4.3 Unfortunately owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, ASE were not contacted when the main groundworks were undertaken at the site, and hence all the subsequent groundworks for foundations, services, soakaways etc. etc. were not subject to archaeological monitoring or recording.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The vast majority of the groundworks for the new development were not monitored archaeologically. Although the archaeological potential of the site was for the most part considered to be low (*ibid.*), there was obviously still a possibility that archaeological deposits were disturbed during the groundworks. If this was indeed the case, then the opportunity to record them has been lost.
- 5.2 Little can be said from the results of the monitoring of a single test-pit at the site. Arguably a depth of 400mm would have given some protection to archaeological features cut into the underlying Tunbridge Wells Sand, supporting the argument that archaeological features may have survived at the site. However, in the absence of recorded evidence this remains supposition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE 2010a. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex.* Unpub. ASE Report No. 2010002

ASE 2010b. *The Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex Historic Buildings Record.* Unpub. ASE Report No. 2010050

ASE 2010c. *The Old Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.* Unpub. ASE Document

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The input of Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council at all stages of the project is gratefully acknowledged.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	MYM 10					
Identification Name and Address	The Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	558820 127070					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4331					
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. 10.08.2010	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Jenner Jones Chartered Surveyors					
Project Managers	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisors	Liane Peyre					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>A monitoring visit was made to the site on 10th August 2010. Limited removal of existing foundations was monitored. A test-pit was then excavated adjacent to the foundations to ascertain the depth of the underlying 'natural', which was encountered at a depth of 400mm. The overlying deposit was a mixture of topsoil and brick rubble.</i></p> <p><i>Unfortunately owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, ASE were not contacted when the main groundworks were undertaken, and hence all subsequent groundworks at the site were not subject to archaeological monitoring.</i></p>						

OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: archaeol6-86002**Project details**

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex
Short description of the project	A monitoring visit was made to the site on 10th August 2010. Limited removal of existing foundations was monitored. A test-pit was then excavated adjacent to the foundations to ascertain the depth of the underlying 'natural', which was encountered at a depth of 400mm. The overlying deposit was a mixture of topsoil and brick rubble. Unfortunately owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, ASE was not contacted when the main groundworks were undertaken, and hence all of the subsequent groundworks at the site were not subject to archaeological monitoring.
Project dates	Start: 10-08-2010 End: 10-08-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	4331 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	MYM 10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN MAYFIELD The Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace
Postcode	TN20 6PH
Study area	443.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 5882 2707 51.0204678161 0.264711919126 51 01 13 N 000 15 52 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 130.00m Max: 140.00m

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/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Liane Peyre
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Jenner Jones Chartered Surveyors

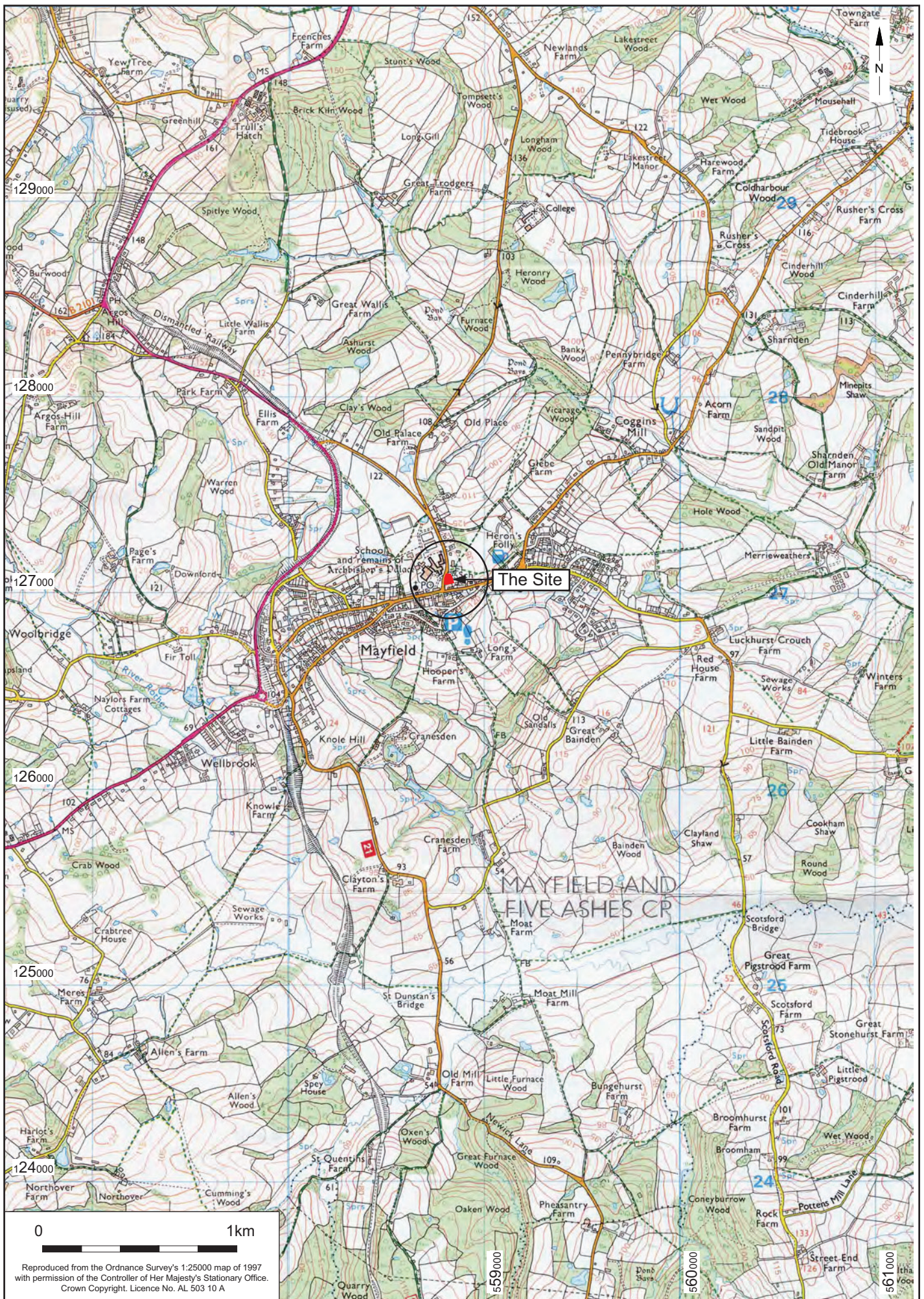
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	local museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Miscellaneous Material', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'

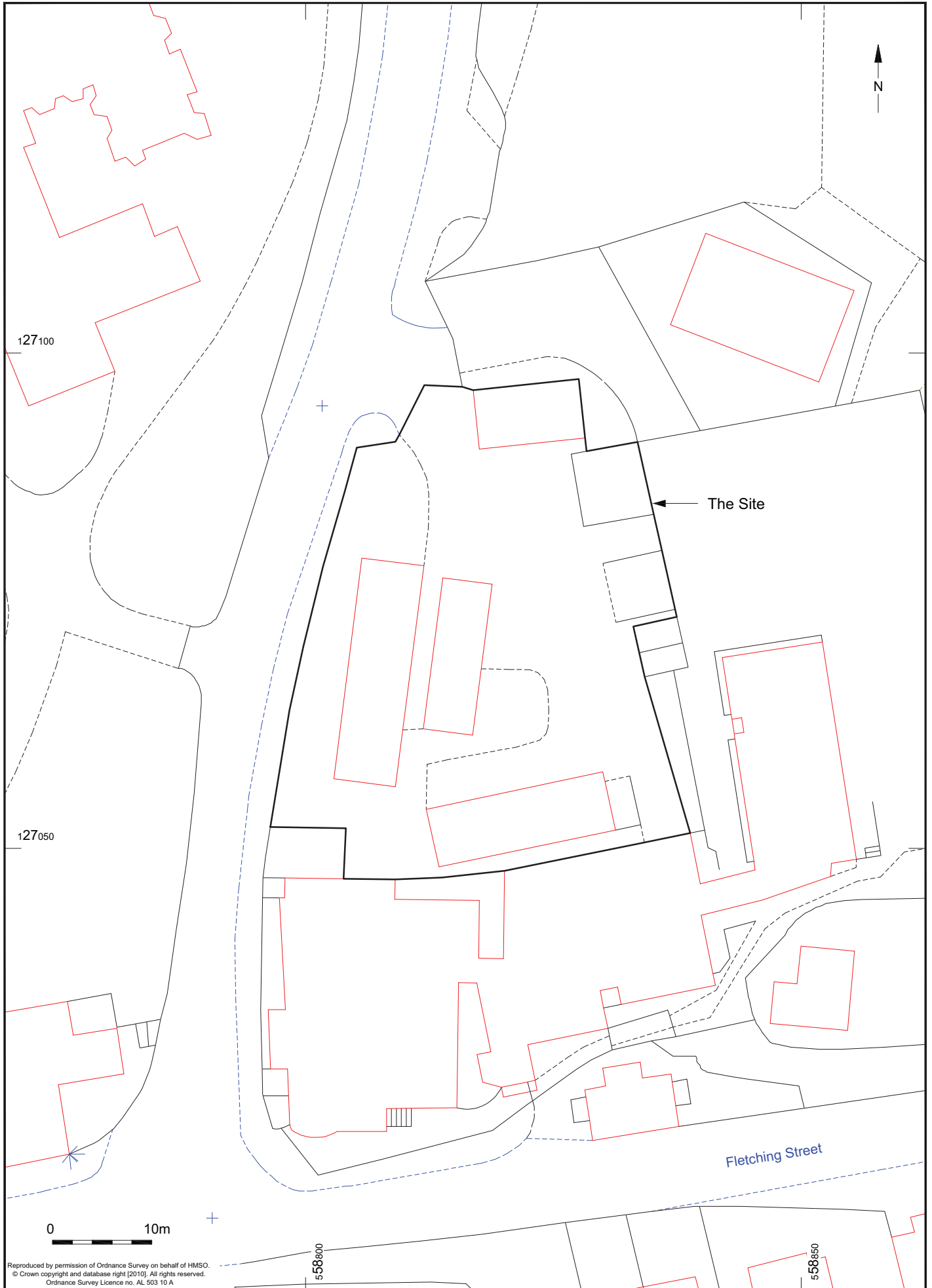
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Maintenance Yard, The Old Palace, Mayfield, East Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.
Other bibliographic details	ASE Report No. 2010202
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex

Description Standard ASE Report - A4-sized with cover logos.



© Archaeology South-East		The Old Maintenance Yard, Mayfield		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4331	November 2010	Site location		
Report Ref: 2010202	Drawn by: DJH			



© Archaeology South-East		The Old Maintenance Yard, Mayfield		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4331	Nov 2010	Site plan		
Report Ref: 2010202	Drawn by: JLR			