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**Desk-based Assessment
for the
Coventry Court
Eastbourne, East Sussex**

Project No. CBAS0485

by
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May 2014

Summary

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Eastbourne Homes Ltd (The Client) to carry out an archaeological Desk-based Assessment at Coventry Court, Seaside, Eastbourne, East Sussex, in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed development of new dwellings at the site.

The site is situated on the edge of the Crumbles in a late 18th to early 19th century housing area. The documentary and map evidence suggests that there was little activity in the area before the construction of the tramway and subsequent industrial and occupational construction in the 18th and 19th century. There is no evidence for any earlier archaeological features or activity within the site. Its location on the Crumbles and close to the edge of the Levels possibly hints at the presence of archaeological remains in the broader landscape.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Eastbourne Homes Ltd (The Client) to carry out an archaeological Desk-based Assessment at Coventry Court, Seaside, Eastbourne, East Sussex, in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed development of new dwellings at the site.
- 1.2** The site of the proposed development is located in Eastbourne town centre TQ 625 008 (Fig.1). It is located on Seaside Road, Vine Square and Allfery road. It comprises of 1,890.3 square metres of land which until recently had a detached three storey building comprising of 52 bedsits, all vacant, associated outbuildings, car park and associated space and gardens¹.
- 1.3** The site is not in an Archaeological Notification Area, although there are a number of Archaeological Notification Areas in the immediate area. The site is not in a Conservation Area and there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the site.
- 1.4** The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey is Gault Formation mudstone overlain by a superficial storm beach deposits². Gault formation is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 to 112 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. The superficial deposit of storm beach deposits formed about 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.
- 1.5** This Desk-based Assessment initially covers the objectives and scope of the report, then discusses the methodology used in the survey, followed by a review of the archaeological and historical assets of the area. Before a conclusion is drawn together, former impacts upon any potential archaeology within the site are assessed, as is the possible archaeological impact of the proposed development.

¹ Eastbourne Borough Council Housing Services, Coventry Court Sheltered Housing site, August 2013

² <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, viewed 14/5/2014

2. Objectives and Scope of Report

- 2.1** The objective of this report is to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource of the site and its immediate area. This will include information relating to the presence or absence of any archaeology, its character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation, and the relative quality of the potential archaeological resource.
- 2.2** This will allow an assessment of the merit of the archaeology in context to be made, leading to the formulation of a strategy for the recording, preservation and management of the resource or, where necessary, the formulation of a strategy for further investigation where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be defined.
- 2.3** The report will consider the archaeological resource within a radius of 1km around the site centre. The survey will also take into account sites further afield where these may be considered to have an impact or relevance to the site in its landscape setting.
- 2.4** It should be noted that this report can only take into account the existing known archaeology, and by its nature cannot provide a complete record of the archaeological resource of the site. Its intention is to provide an overview of the known archaeology in the area of the site, from which judgements can be made about the potential archaeological resource of the site itself.

3. Methodology

3.1 This Desk-based Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012); the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001); and the *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post Excavation Work in East Sussex* (ESCC 2008).

3.2 The research for this Desk-based Assessment has included an analysis of the following resources:

- ESCC Historic Environment Record
- PastScape (formerly part of the National Monuments Record or NMR)
- Access 2 Archives
- Historic mapping
- East Sussex Record Office (ESRO)
- Personal and online library resources
- British Geological Survey

3.3 The following maps were used:

- Saxton's (1607)
- Speed (1610)
- Morden (1695)
- Bowen (1756)
- Kitchen (1763)
- Yeakell and Gardiner (1778-1783)
- Cole (1808)
- Moule (1837)
- Dugdale (1840)
- 1841 Eastbourne Tithe map
- 1st Edition OS Map (1875-1876)
- 2nd Edition OS Map (1899)
- 3rd Edition OS Map (1910)
- 4th Edition OS Map (1925)
- Eastbourne Bomb Map
- Later OS Maps

Information gained from the map regression exercise is contained in the Post Medieval section below.

3.4 The Monuments recorded on the HER are listed in Appendix 1 to this report and shown on Fig. 3. They are mentioned in the text where relevant. Historical and other sources are given as footnotes as appropriate.

3.5 The site was visited on the 6th May 2014 by the author. The site is located within a residential area. The ground is flat and is bounded on three sides by public highways and to the south by two three storey council owned residential blocks of flats with associated outbuildings and space at its rear (Plate 1, 2, 3 and 4).

3.6 The building the previously occupied the site has been demolished and no longer stands on the site.



Plate 1:- View of site from Seaside.



Plate 2:- View of site



Plate 3:- View of site from Allfery Road.



Plate 1:- View of site from Vine Square.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.0.1 This section considers each archaeological period in turn, reviewing the known archaeological resource of the area, defining its location and extent, character, date, integrity, state of preservation, and quality.
- 4.0.2 Prior to this project there has been very little archaeological investigation has been undertaken in the vicinity. The HER records show just two archaeological events recorded (EES15332) a borehole survey and (EES9241) an excavation, which was undertaken by a local archaeological society in the early 1930's, in which a Roman pit was discovered. Currently not recorded on the HER are two phases of work undertaken for the Sovereign Harbour Cycle network where remnants of the old railway line were revealed.
- 4.0.3 The review of each period will also bring in evidence from a wider area, especially where there is little known archaeological evidence locally. This will enable a more accurate judgement to be made about the archaeological potential of the site. This evidence will include that taken from similar landscapes and geologies.

4.1 *Palaeolithic Period (750,000BC – 10,000BC)*

- 4.1.1 This period covers a huge expanse of time, during which early hominid occupation of Southern Britain was intermittent. The period is divided into warm and cold periods, with the evidence suggesting that hominid occupation occurred during some of the warm periods. Apart from a small number of exceptional sites (e.g. Boxgrove), most of the evidence for human activity in this period comes from isolated finds of stone tools, often in secondary deposits.
- 4.1.2 A single Acheulian handaxe was found at Lottbridge Drove (MES507). Most local Palaeolithic flintwork comes from the South Downs, with the nearest find spots being sited in the Cuckmere Valley³. The isolated find at Lottbridge Drove is from an unusual location, and is probably not in its original context.
- 4.1.3 The likely potential for in-situ Palaeolithic archaeology being present on the site is considered to be low.

³ Wymer, J. 1999. *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain, Vol.1*. Wessex Archaeology and English Heritage.

4.2 Mesolithic Period (10,000BC – 4,000BC)

- 4.2.1 The start of the Mesolithic period saw Britain largely covered by pine and birch woodland, which was gradually replaced by a mixed deciduous woodland that provided an ideal environment for the bands of hunter-gatherers who exploited the resources on a seasonal basis⁴. The Pevensey Levels, together with the other adjacent Levels, were above sea level during the Mesolithic period, and have subsequently been covered with an accumulation of peat⁵.
- 4.2.2 There is no evidence for Mesolithic activity in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, there are numerous find spots of Mesolithic flintwork around the edges of the Pevensey Levels, just above where the peat horizon stopped encroaching at the 5m contour line. For instance, a tranchet axe was found at Hankham on the southwest side of the Pevensey Levels⁶. Other Mesolithic flintwork has also been recorded from Hankham (MES5042 and MES5051). Tranchet axe-sharpening flakes, cores, debitage, scrappers and microliths were recovered amongst other Mesolithic material to the southeast of Hackam, between Westham and Pevensey⁷. The distribution of the finds may indicate that the Levels provided an ideal landscape for hunting and fishing throughout the Mesolithic period⁸.
- 4.2.3 Given the evidence for Mesolithic activity is associated with the Levels and there is minimal evidence close to the site there is a low possibility that Mesolithic sites or finds may be found.

4.3 Neolithic Period (4,000BC to 2,500BC)

- 4.3.1 A number of changes occurred during the Neolithic, some of which may have had an impact on the local area. Environmental evidence suggests that some woodland was being cleared, and small-scale agricultural activities are likely to have started. However, the scatters of Neolithic flintwork and the individual finds of Neolithic axes⁹ suggest that activity, probably associated with hunting and fishing, continued around the edges of the marshy Levels during this period.

⁴ Holgate, R. 2003. 'Late Glacial and Post-glacial Hunter-gatherers in Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, 29-38.

⁵ Butler, C. 2002. 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

⁶ Wymer, J.J. 1977. *Gazetteer of Mesolithic sites in England and Wales*. CBA Research Report **22**.

⁷ Burton, C.E.C-H. 1940. 'Mesolithic and Bronze Age Flints at Westham, Pevensey', *SN&Q* **8**, 43-44.

⁸ Butler, C. 2002. 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

⁹ Butler, C. 2002. 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

- 4.3.2 Other changes in the earlier part of the Neolithic period include the construction of large-scale monuments. The closest such site is the causewayed enclosure located at Combe Hill on the South Downs above Willingdon. It would have looked out across the Levels, and may have exerted an influence over this area¹⁰.
- 4.3.3 There is no evidence of Neolithic activity in the area, and therefore the likelihood of finding Neolithic sites is considered to be of low potential.

4.4 *The Bronze Age (2500BC to 800BC)*

- 4.4.1 The Bronze Age saw continued clearance of the woodland in the adjacent Weald and Downland landscapes, although there is little evidence for complete clearance or widespread agriculture. The period of greatest exploitation appears to have been in the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, which may suggest that the soils became exhausted and settlement retreated subsequently¹¹. Elsewhere in Sussex, such as the South Downs and Coastal Plain, there is extensive evidence for the landscape having been densely populated by small farming settlements in the Middle and Late Bronze Age.
- 4.4.2 Although there is growing evidence for agriculture in the neighbouring Weald and Downland landscapes during the Bronze Age, the evidence is that the Levels continued to be used for hunting and fishing, although the peat had begun to accumulate during this period¹², perhaps allowing greater access into the area.
- 4.4.3 In 1995, a Late Bronze Age timber platform and associated trackway (MES7375) were discovered on Shinewater Marsh. Copper-alloy artefacts, pottery, and worked and burnt flint were recovered during the limited excavations¹³. This and other trackways / causeways (MES15463 and MES16119) hint at extensive Late Bronze Age activity on the Willingdon Levels. This activity does not appear however to have extended onto the adjacent site at West Langney Lake as no archaeological features or artefacts were recorded here during an evaluation and two later watching briefs (EES13948, EES14058 and EES13947).
- 4.4.4 A Bronze Age stone macehead (MES621) was found at Bedford Well Waterworks on the edge of the Levels. It may have been ritually deposited.

¹⁰ Oswald et al. 2001. *The Creation of Monuments*. Swindon: English Heritage.

¹¹ Needham, S. 1987. 'The Bronze Age' in *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540*, 97-137 Guildford, Surrey Archaeological Society.

¹² Woodcock, A. 2003. 'The Archaeological implications of Coastal Change in Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd.

¹³ Greatorex, C. 2003. 'Living on the Margins? The Late Bronze Age Landscape of the Willingdon Levels' in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd.

4.4.5 Given the evidence for Bronze Age activity is associated with the Levels, and there is minimal evidence close to the site, there is a low possibility that Bronze Age sites or finds may be found.

4.5 *The Iron Age (800BC to 43AD)*

4.5.1 During the Early Iron Age it seems likely that the Levels had become untenable due to flooding from the sea¹⁴. This may have led to a decrease in activity in the area or more probably a retreat to the higher ground again.

4.5.2 One major feature of the Iron Age is the hillfort, of which 25 are known from Sussex. Many of these also appear to have originated in the Late Bronze Age, with some having become important centres of control and redistribution in the Middle and Late Iron Age. It seems unlikely that the sphere of influence of any Sussex hillfort extended to the area of the Levels.

4.5.3 No Iron Age finds have been recovered close to the site, which would imply that there is a low or very low likelihood of encountering evidence for Iron Age settlement or activity on site.

4.6 *The Roman Period (43AD to 410AD)*

4.6.1 The Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD resulted in dramatic changes to this island's social and economic environments¹⁵. It is likely that many of the rural farmsteads and associated field systems that were in existence in the Late Iron Age continued throughout the Roman period. Where they have been excavated elsewhere, they provide evidence for a mixed farming economy of crops and animal husbandry.

4.6.2 Villa's are unknown in the area, being almost entirely concentrated on the Sussex Coastal Plain and to the immediate north of the South Downs; the closest Roman villa to the site is in Eastbourne. There is also little evidence for any larger Roman settlements, although recent work by HAARG at Kitchenham Farm, Ashburnham, to the northeast of the Levels, has suggested the presence of a large settlement¹⁶.

¹⁴ Greatorcx, C. 2003. 'Living on the margins? The Late Bronze Age Landscape of the Willingdon Levels', in Rudling, D (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd.

¹⁵ Rudling, D. 2003. 'Roman Rural Settlement in Sussex: Continuity and Change', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd.

¹⁶ Cornwall, K. and L. 2007. 'A Roman site on Kitchenham Farm, Ashburnham - First Interim Report', *HAARG Journal*.

4.6.3 The coastline in the Roman period was very much different from today. The large Saxon Shore Fort at Pevensey was built in the late 3rd century AD, on a peninsular that jutted out into the sea and may have provided shelter for a harbour on its protected north side (Fig. 9). A deep clay-lined pit (MES516) containing Roman pottery was found just to the north of the site during roadworks in Roselands in 1929. The presence of this possible waterhole indicates that there may have been a coastal Roman settlement nearby.

4.6.4 There is limited evidence for Roman activity in the immediate area of the site but the presence of the pit suggests that there is a medium possibility of encountering Roman remains.

4.7 *The Saxon Period (410AD to 1066AD)*

4.7.1 In the early Post-Roman period there was a change in the economy and land-usage, with many areas previously cultivated having reverted to woodland, although the adjacent Weald remained an important area of grazing for pigs and other animals¹⁷.

4.7.2 A Saxon Charter, dating to 947, relates to land at West Hankham and Glynleigh, located some distance to the north of the site, which was given by King Eadred to Edmund¹⁸. The Charter describes the location of the manor being granted and includes a reference to salt pans. King Edward held Eastbourne before 1066, whilst Earl Godwin held Willingdon¹⁹.

4.7.3 Few people are likely to have lived in the area of the site during the Saxon period. Therefore, there is a low likelihood of the site containing evidence for Saxon activity.

4.8 *The Medieval Period (1066AD to 1500AD)*

4.8.1 After 1066, the Manors of Eastbourne and Willingdon were granted to the Count of Mortain. Eastbourne had land for 28 ploughs, 25 acres of meadow, a mill and 16 salthouses, whilst Willingdon had land for 36 ploughs, 60 acres of meadow, woodland for three pigs and 11 salthouses²⁰. The salthouses are likely to have been situated around the edges of the Levels, and indicate the importance of this industry to the area.

¹⁷ Gardiner, M. 1990. 'The Archaeology of the Weald - A Survey and a Review', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **128**, 33-53.

¹⁸ Barker, E.E. 1949. 'Sussex Anglo-Saxon Charters Part III', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **88**, 51-113.

¹⁹ Morris, J. (Ed.) 1976. *Domesday Book: Sussex*. Chichester: Phillimore.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

- 4.8.2 Horsey (MES22898) is an early medieval settlement mentioned in the Domesday book located just to the north-west of the site. Other settlements in the wider area, which have not survived, include Cudnow (MES5053) and Hydneye (MES517) to the north of the site. The latter was a port attached to Hastings although there is practically no significant documentary evidence of it and the site has been built over by housing development since 1940²¹. Turner maintained that the earliest reference was a deed of 1229, with further mentions in charters throughout the period 1235-1260 and 1308²². There was probably a small harbour at Hydneye, which silted up in the period 1250-1350 depriving the community of its livelihood. This suggests that this land was still marginal, reflecting the risk from flooding and difficulties in reclaiming the land²³.
- 4.8.3 The remains of a possible 12th-14th century trading vessel (MES504) were found during sewer laying operations in 1963 at the Lottbridge Drove / Seaside roundabout. Its presence suggests that this location was on the edge of the navigable waters.
- 4.8.4 The Cluniacs established a monastic grange (MES514) at Langney sometime prior to 1121, which was dependent on the Priory of St Pancras in Lewes. Parts of the chapel, refectory and dormitory from the grange survive in the house of Langney Priory (MES514; Grade II* Listed), which was built in the 16th century. A medieval lead weight (MES15146) was found in the flowerbeds of Langney Priory in about 2009. The site of a medieval watermill (MES7019) associated with the monastery is unknown but probably stood nearby on marginal land. It was built in the 1160's and may have ceased working during the 13th-14th centuries as a result of land reclamation.
- 4.8.5 There is no Medieval archaeological evidence in close proximity to the site suggesting low potential.

4.9 *The Post Medieval Period (1500AD to the Present Day)*

- 4.9.1 There is little evidence for the Post Medieval use of the area until the 19th century. A letter by Henry VIII²⁴, dated 12th July 1509, commissions the prior of St Pancras monastery, amongst others, to construct sewers through various areas including 'through the marsh of Wellyngdon and Moryngesmyll to Langneygotte, and thence to sea'.

²¹ Burleigh, G.R. 1973. 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

²² Turner, E. 1867. 'The Lost Towns of Northeye and Hydneye', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **19**, 1-35.

²³ Dullely, A.J.F. 1966. 'The Level and Port of Pevensey in the Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **104**, 26-45.

²⁴ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=102620>

- 4.9.2 A lease of 1682²⁵ includes meadow of 4½ acres, which is part of the Totts near Lottbridge Drove, together with pieces of marshland. The presence of Lottbridge Drove may suggest that it was used to move livestock northwest-southeast through the Levels, between areas of grazing. The drove is likely to have originated at an earlier date, however.
- 4.9.3 Saxton' map of Sussex, 1607 depicts several the parishes, hamlets, villages and the market town of E bourne, all of which make the modern town of Eastbourne. The Crombles pond is illustrated and is a feature which survives into the present day. There is an expanse of land to the east which is marked as a large beach.
- 4.9.4 Little has changed for Speed's map of Sussex, dated 1610, however the illustration of a large number of ships in Pevensey Haven suggests that this area was thriving in trade. Morden's map of the county shows a similar situation in 1695. Bowen's map of 1756 is comparable but less detailed, and does not show the beach. The maps of Kitchen (1750), Cole (1808), Moule (1837) and Dugdale (1840) show the gradual increase in the road network, and from 1808 map onwards Sea Houses is marked.
- 4.9.5 Greater detail of the area is shown in Yeakell and Gardiner's map of 1778-1783²⁶ (Fig. 6). Lottbridge Drove runs northwest from the beach with its Crumble Pond, through land parcelled into fields by ditches. The plan of the drainage system is considerably accurate on the map, with Willingdon and West Langney Sewer, Langney Sewer and Willingdon Sewer being clearly identifiable, for example, along with the smaller drains between them. The development site is situated on what is called a Loose Beach.
- 4.9.6 The coastline between Eastbourne and Pevensey was defended during the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century by the construction of Martello Towers²⁷ (e.g. MES512 for Towers 69-72 between Eastbourne and Langney Point, and MES513 / MES7994 for Tower 68 which stood slightly inland of Langney Point, on St. Anthony's Hill).
- 4.9.7 A deed plan of St. Anthony's Hill, dated 24 June 1795²⁸ shows the five acres of land that the government took possession of on that day 'for the purpose of supplying castle for two batteries erecting on Langley Point and for the establishment of a small fort to protect the rear of the said batteries.' The plan depicts the surrounding drainage ditches as they are today, except for an additional ditch to the south side of the hill. The only field with a complete plan is the narrow field to the north of the hill, which had two field entrances or causeways centrally located to either end.

²⁵ ESRO ASH/4501/1083

²⁶ <http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakelllarge36.htm>

²⁷ Butler, C. 2007. *East Sussex under Attack*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing.

²⁸ <http://sussexhistoryforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=1669.0>

- 4.9.8 A second deed plan of the hill, dating from 1805²⁹ details the land purchased by the government from the late Mr Medley in '1793' and the surrounding five acres or so of land that the government intended to buy. Mrs Medley owned the land directly beyond this. Mr John Goring occupied the land to the northeast, which was to be fenced off from the government land.
- 4.9.9 Other Napoleonic defences comprised the re-armament of the existing forts at Langney, as well as the building of a redoubt at Eastbourne. The Ordnance Survey draft of 1813³⁰ shows two buildings (MES7955) sited to the rear of Tower 69 (MES512) on Langney Point. These have previously been interpreted as possible guardhouses but the information recorded on the plan of 1795 (Fig. 7) may instead suggest that they were the batteries of West Langney Fort. The Ordnance Survey draft also depicts a battery (MES7949) beside Langney Gate and barracks (such as MES7947) along both the coast road (Seaside / the A259) and Lottbridge Drove. A series of lanes are shown on the map to lead into the Bourne Levels from the west, and were presumably used to move stock into and out of the area.
- 4.9.10 A map of Eastbourne³¹, published in 1819 (Fig. 9), shows the area to the east of Eastbourne up to Lottbridge Drove, and probably beyond, as 'Pasture Fields'. The Crumble Sewer is seen to flow past the Martello Tower on St. Anthony's Hill (MES513 / MES7994). To the southeast is the loose shingle of the Crumbles, with the redoubt, West Langney Fort and five Martello Towers (Nos. 67 and 69-72). A draft of c.1820 (not reproduced) shows fields called Great Horsey, Little Horsey and Jordans Field on the Willingdon to Ditton road, amongst others in Willingdon including tenantry land³². However, it is hard to relate them to the site due to their location some distance away from the site.
- 4.9.11 The first indications of land ownership in the area is on the Eastbourne Parish Tithe maps of 1841 (Fig. 10). The large plot of land, on which the site is located, is recorded as impropriate rector and his lessees. From this it can be deduced that the land has been granted to a rector from the church and this rector leases the land to other tenants. In the centre of the plot there is a series of large ponds illustrated and marked as the Crombles.
- 4.9.12 The 1st Edition OS map of 1879 (Fig. 11) shows much of the area is still undeveloped not far from the tides high water line. To the north-east there is the Crumbles pond, north-west there is the nursery and several of the levels drainage ditches are visible. In the vicinity of the development area there looks to be possible farm buildings.

²⁹ <http://sussexhistoryforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=1669.0>

³⁰ Timeline Historical Map **199**

³¹ Elleray, D.R. 1995. *Eastbourne A Pictorial History*. Phillimore (map possibly drawn by W. Figg in 1816)

³² ESRO ACC3412/3/81

- 4.9.13 The tramway served the beach gravel extraction on the Crumbles, and can be seen on the broader OS map to extend onto the beach before dividing into three separate branches; the gravel pits on the beach are recorded as MES7968-MES7971. MES7968 is the closet branch orientated just off east-west and located south of the site. In 1857-1862, the London Brighton and South East Railway negotiated with the Duke of Devonshire to purchase not less than 48,000 cubic yards of shingle from the Crumbles, at 1 penny per cubic yard³³. They constructed a railway close to Eastbourne railway station, which ran through open countryside and along the Horsey Sewer, to turn south to cross the turnpike road (Seaside) near the junction with Lottbridge Drove. The railway was 6.4m wide and ran for 5.6km. It was known as the Ballast Line or the Crumbles Railway, and served the gasworks from 1870 onwards. In 1874, the Crumbles were also used for firing practice (firing ranges MES7961 and MES7962).
- 4.9.14 The Eastbourne Gas Company was formed in 1852³⁴, and was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1868³⁵, whilst the brickworks was in existence by 1866, and was operated by James Peerless, who leased the land from the Devonshire Estate in 1860³⁶. It continued to operate there until 1899. A smaller brickworks was located at Rose Lands, and was operated from 1860 to the 1880's by the Eastbourne Brick Co. Ltd³⁷.
- 4.9.15 By the 2nd Edition OS map of 1899 (Fig. 12) a row of terraced housing has been constructed between Allfery Road and a lane leading to a laundry, Beach Farm and the Crumbles Sewer. This road is now called Vine Square. There are 14 houses depicted on the site with their long narrow gardens at the rear. At the rear of the site there are terraced houses fronting Allfery Road and the lane. There is also an open space named Vine Square to the rear of the site. In the wider area St Andrews Church and its related school are to the south-west of the site, the tram to the south and north. Also to the north between the site and the tramway there are large allotment gardens.
- 4.9.16 It should also be noted that the gasworks has also expanded southwards; ESRO holds a plan of the land intended to be acquired for this expansion, which was drawn in 1879 by H.E. Jones, the Engineer for Eastbourne Gas³⁸. The main brickworks had migrated northeast, with allotment gardens having been established along the northern edge of the earlier workings. Rose Lands was a nursery by this time, with a refuse destructor works and air compressing station located on its north side.
- 4.9.17 The tramway now had additional sidings serving the gasworks, north of the site. It continued onto the Crumbles, where it ran to the east, while a branch turned southwest before returning westwards to Seaside on an existing earthwork (MES7968) shown on

³³ Botha, A. 2006. *The Crumbles Story*. Eastbourne: ALB Books

³⁴ Wright, J.C. 1902. *Bygone Eastbourne*. Spottiswood and Co. Ltd.

³⁵ ESRO amsh/AMS5616/2/70

³⁶ Beswick, M. 2001. *Brickmaking in Sussex*. Middleton Press.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ ESRO QDP/448

the 1st Edition OS map. Housing development had expanded northeast along the southeast side of Seaside. The tramway also later served the refuse destructor works and air compressing station, the brickworks and a timber yard.

- 4.9.18 The possible animal pen on St Anthony's Hill now looks to have been defined by a fence line rather than by ditches, and a second larger such enclosure had been erected in the same former field, on the south side of the hill.
- 4.9.19 The Martello Towers (MES512 and MES513 / MES7994) on this stretch of coastline all disappeared in the late 19th or early 20th century. Tower 71 was demolished after having been used as target practice for the testing of the new rifled Armstrong Guns in 1860³⁹. Tower 72 had been washed away by the sea sometime prior to 1872⁴⁰, as had West Langney Fort. Tower 70 had likewise been undermined by the sea and was abandoned in 1872 along with Tower 69. Tower 67 was demolished in 1922, whilst Tower 68 was knocked down in c.1925 to make way for residential development.
- 4.1.20 Close to these towers on the shoreline, south of the site, there are a collection of 19th to 20th century features identified on the HER. MES8228 and MES8229 are a collection of fisherman's net stores indicating the importance of fishing to the area. MES 8224 is a boat repair shop and MES8226 and 8227 are club houses for the local rowing club and the workings mens club, respectively.
- 4.9.21 The 3rd Edition OS map of 1910 (Fig. 13) shows little change to the immediate area around the site.
- 4.9.22 During the First World War, a temporary tented camp was set up at Horsey Bank, in the area of the junction of Churchdale Road and Astaire Avenue⁴¹. The allotment gardens shown on the 2nd and 3rd Edition OS maps (Figs.14 and 15) were put to good use during these years, although it is recorded that the Eastbourne Gas Company refused a request to plough up land for allotments, but a compulsion order overturned this⁴².
- 4.9.23 From December 1911, Eastbourne Aviation Company Ltd had their manufacturing aerodrome (MES7491) at a site directly to the north of Lottbridge Drove⁴³. From about this time, this site also became the school aerodrome for the Eastbourne Aviation School and the Fowler Flying School.

³⁹ http://sussexhistoryforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=1669.0;prev_next=next#new

⁴⁰ <http://www.martello-towers.co.uk/south-coast/towers>

⁴¹ Elliston, R.A. 1999. *Eastbourne's Great War 1914-1918*. Seaford: S.B. Publications.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ CCI Gazetteer of Flying Sites

- 4.9.24 In August 1914, the hangars and buildings of the aerodrome were taken over by the Royal Navy Air Service⁴⁴. The aerodrome at St. Anthony's was a RNAS flying school from April 1915 to April 1918, when it became a training depot station for the RAF until 1919. In November 1918, the RAF airfield comprised 242 acres, having predominantly expanded northwest across the Levels (Fig. 16). During the Phase 2A watching brief on the Sovereign Harbour cycle path an identity disc was found. It is engraved R.N.A.S. / TURNER / ERNEST / EDWARD / A M / F364/ CCE. Ernest Edward Turner is recorded as having been born in 1894 in Bangalore, India, and entered the RNAS in 1914⁴⁵; it is presumed that he served at St Anthony's.
- 4.9.25 The aerodrome was licensed for civilian use again in April 1920⁴⁶ and finally closed in 1925. The only remaining structure of the aerodrome is a guardroom (MES7991) from the RNAS phase of use, which is now a bungalow on Leeds Avenue. The large hangar (MES7990) stood extant nearby until the storm in 1987; its foundations are still visible today.
- 4.9.26 A site on the Crumbles, in the region of the present day Sovereign Centre, was used by the Eastbourne Aviation Company as a seaplane factory, and also for the refuelling and servicing of patrolling seaplanes⁴⁷. The hangars on the Crumbles were converted to an aircraft factory, and during the war the Eastbourne Aviation Company built a total of 252 aircraft.
- 4.9.27 By the 4th Edition OS map of 1928 (Fig. 17), the tramway has developed to include additional sidings at the gasworks. The return route of the tramway to Seaside from the Crumbles had been dismantled by this time. The opposite side of Seaside Road has started to be developed with housing and the refuse destructor works, air compressing station and the electric light works. There are a few allotments surviving. Eastbourne Corporation had a licence to place a footbridge over the Horsey Sewer in 1926⁴⁸, and had an agreement for works in the Horsey Sewer in 1937⁴⁹. Close to the site there has been the development of an engineering works and a secondary laundry.
- 4.9.28 The decline of the tramway began in 1920 when the ballast used on the railways changed to granite chippings and there was no further requirement for the shingle. Shingle continued to be taken to the Duke of Devonshire's depots at Eastbourne Station to be used for building purposes until 1931⁵⁰. The shingle beds at the

⁴⁴ CCI Gazetteer of Flying Sites

⁴⁵ National Archives ADM 188/1175

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ McMahan, L. and Partridge, M. 2000. *A History of the Eastbourne Aviation Company 1911-1924*. Eastbourne Local History Society.

⁴⁸ ESRO SRA7/15/33

⁴⁹ ESRO SRA4/6/16

⁵⁰ Botha, A. 2006. *The Crumbles Story*. Eastbourne: ALB Books.

Crumbles were leased to Hall and Co.⁵¹ who then began to use lorries to move the shingle, stopping rail movements completely in 1932. The tramway continued to serve the gasworks and other industrial sidings, taking thousands of tons of coal to the gasworks (Fig. 18)⁵².

4.9.29 During the Second World War the coastline was put into a state of defence with anti-tank cubes, walls and ditches (e.g. MES7997), minefields (e.g. MES8007) and scaffolding located on the beach, and other defences such as pillboxes positioned to the rear (e.g. MES7999, MES8017 and MES8018)⁵³. Unexploded bombs fell in allotments near Lottbridge Drove on 14th September 1940, while the gasworks was attacked on the 19th October, setting alight the Number Three gasholder⁵⁴. On 12th March 1941 eight bombs were dropped to the south of the Phase 2 site around Churchdale and Southbourne Roads, and on the following night bombs were dropped to the north of the gasworks. On the 26th August 1942, a German FW190 fighter-bomber was shot down and crashed into a ditch beside Lottbridge Drove. Further bombs were dropped on open ground near the gasworks as well as on the Crumbles on 6th June 1943. As can be seen from the Eastbourne bomb map (Fig. 19) the site adjacent to the development site was bombed, however there is no record of any bombs directly falling onto the site.

4.9.30 A 1947 aerial photograph (Fig. 20) shows residential development to have extended almost as far north as the Horsey Sewer. By the early 1960's (modern OS maps are not reproduced), the housing developments had reached the southern edge of the sewer, and the tramway is still shown. Between 1947 and 1961, the Horsey Sewer was straightened to the north of the gasworks, cutting off the former drove way onto Lottbridge Drove. It also shows that the terraced houses on the site are still standing at this time.

4.9.31 There is a building present on the site in 1962 but it is unclear whether this is the terraced houses or another building. There are fewer internal divisions present than shown on earlier OS maps. By 1975 (Fig. 21) the Coventry Court sheltered housing complex had been built. This 1975 OS map shows that a lot of construction had been undertaken in Eastbourne and the tramway had gone by the time of the 1975 OS map, as it had finally closed in 1966⁵⁵. The 1975 map also shows the commercial developments at the southeast end of Lottbridge Drove. The commercial developments had extended beyond the Horsey Sewer, along both sides of Lottbridge Drove by the 1981 OS map. This map also shows new housing developments along the north side of the Horsey Sewer. There has been large scale house building and the modern road network is dotted on this map suggesting that it is under construction. Other than infilling with housing there has been little change between this map and the present day. There is high potential of finding Post Medieval archaeology on the site.

⁵¹ <http://www.cambrianmodels.co.uk/eastsxng.html> (Gazetteer of Narrow Gauge Railways in East Sussex)

⁵² Botha, A. 2006. *The Crumbles Story*. Eastbourne: ALB Books.

⁵³ Butler, C. 2007. *East Sussex Under Attack*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing.

⁵⁴ Humphrey, G. 1998. *Eastbourne at War*. Seaford: S.B. Publications.

⁵⁵ Botha, A. 2006. *The Crumbles Story*. Eastbourne: ALB Books.

5. Impact of the Development

- 5.1** This Desk-based Assessment has established that there is no archaeological evidence of human activity within the vicinity of the site until the construction of the 19th century terraced houses. Although this may partly reflect the lack of archaeological intervention that has taken place within the area, it nonetheless strongly emphasises the marginal location of the site, on the beach, throughout prehistory and into the Roman and Saxon periods. Although these lands are likely to have been exploited for their resources throughout this broad time frame.
- 5.2** If the site was cultivated in the past, ploughing may have disturbed or destroyed any shallow archaeological layers present. The excavation of any associated drainage is likely to have had the same impact upon any archaeological remains found at a greater depth below the ground surface. The main impact upon the archaeological potential of the site is the construction of the two previous developments on the site.
- 5.3** Given the evidence accumulated during this Desk-based Assessment, the probability of finding remains from each of the different archaeological periods is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Period	Potential
Palaeolithic	Low
Mesolithic	Low
Neolithic	Low
Bronze Age	Low
Iron Age	Low
Roman	Low
Saxon	Low
Medieval	Low
Post Medieval	High

- 5.4** There is no impact on any Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings.
- 5.5** The proposed development for new housing at the site is currently in the process of being designed. The excavation of any footings and service trenches may cause the most damage to any surviving archaeological deposits within the site. The overall impact is, however, partly dependent upon the depth of the overburden overlying the natural. If thin, groundwork's with a shallower depth of impact may also have a detrimental effect upon the archaeological resource.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The site is located on the edge of the old loose beach, and as such may have witnessed limited exploitation of its natural resources prior to the post medieval period when the area was possibly first settled. In the medieval period, from the 12th century onwards, the site is likely to have been used for grazing. Gradually the site was engulfed by Eastbourne's 19th and 20th century expansion.
- 6.2** It has not been possible to establish whether there is any below-ground archaeology present on the site, due to the non-intrusive nature of this Desk-based Assessment and the lack of previous archaeological work in close proximity to the site. Pre-existing archaeological deposits within the site, such as those that represent medieval and Post Medieval farming, are likely to survive beneath the lawn of the rear garden, and potentially within the footprint of the existing houses, where not directly impacted by foundations or cellars.
- 6.3** Given the limited potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, and the high level of previous impact on the site, it is recommended that there is no further archaeological work undertaken.

7. Acknowledgements

7.1 We would like to thank Eastbourne Homes Ltd for commissioning this Desk-based Assessment. Sophie Unger provided copies of the East Sussex HER.

7.2 Also like to thank the staff at the NMR in Swindon, the East Sussex Record Office and the Sussex Archaeological Society Library for their help in locating aerial photographs and other sources in their possession.



Fig1: Coventry Court: Site Location
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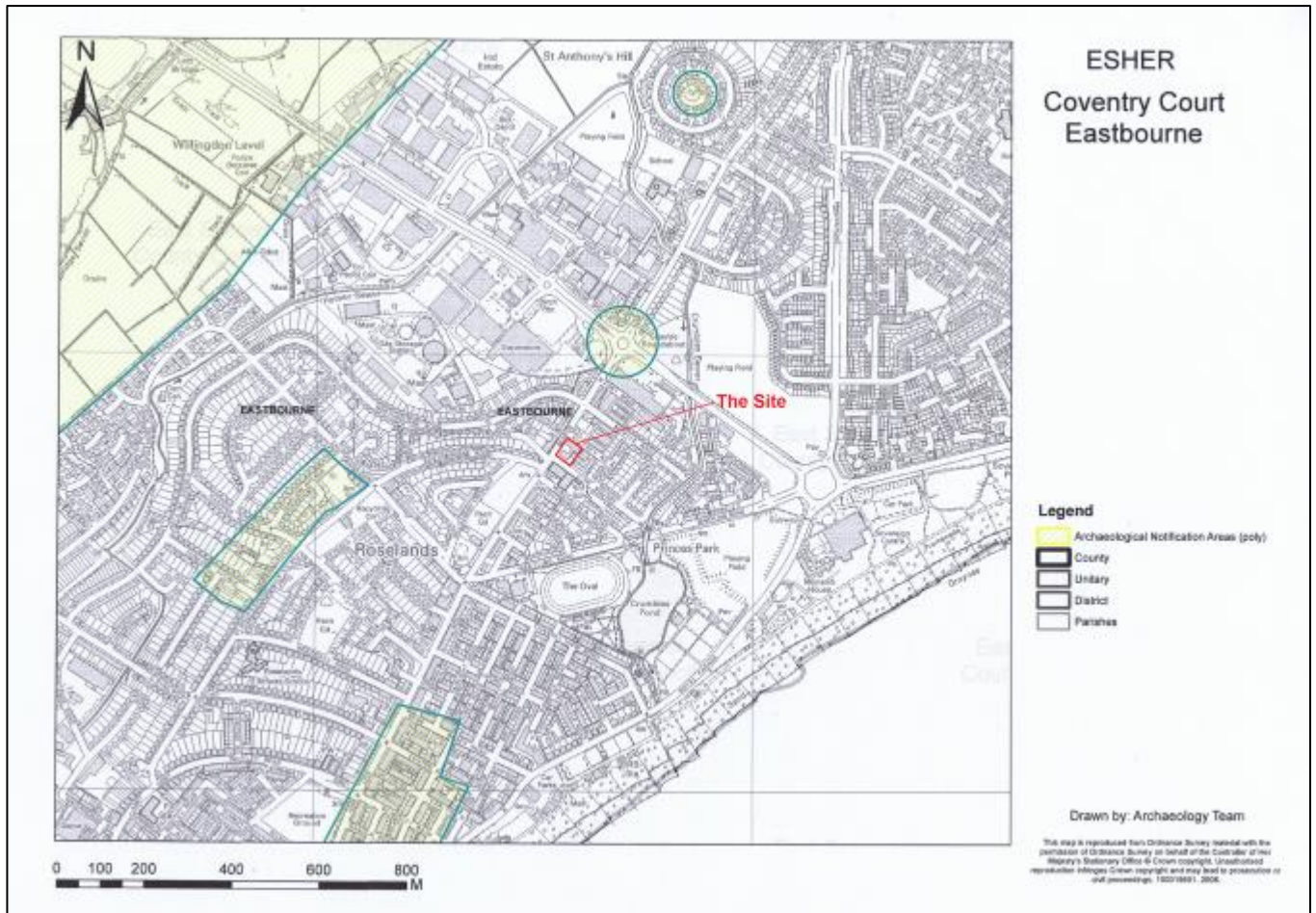


Fig 2: Coventry Court: ANA map
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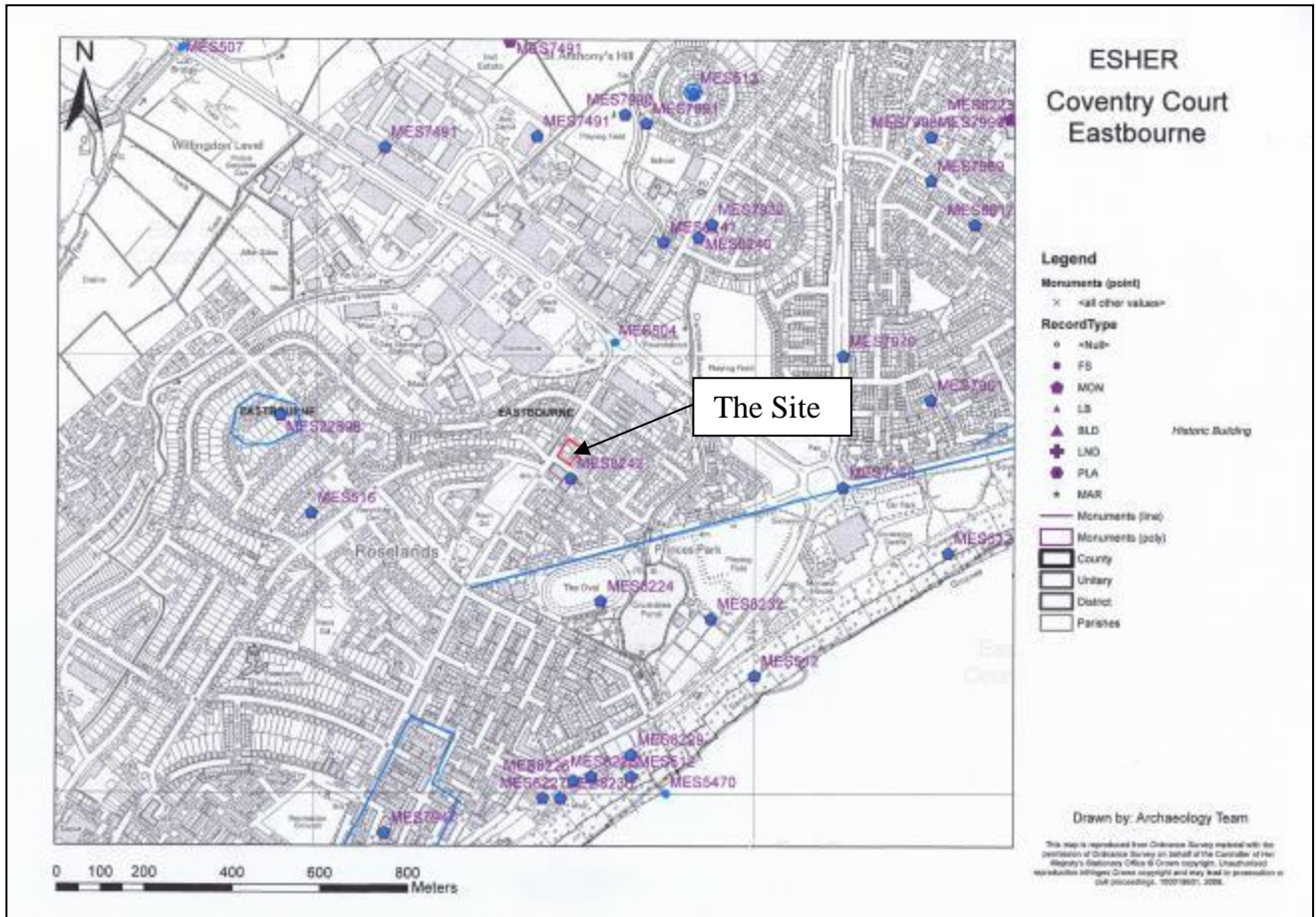


Fig 3: Coventry Court, HER map
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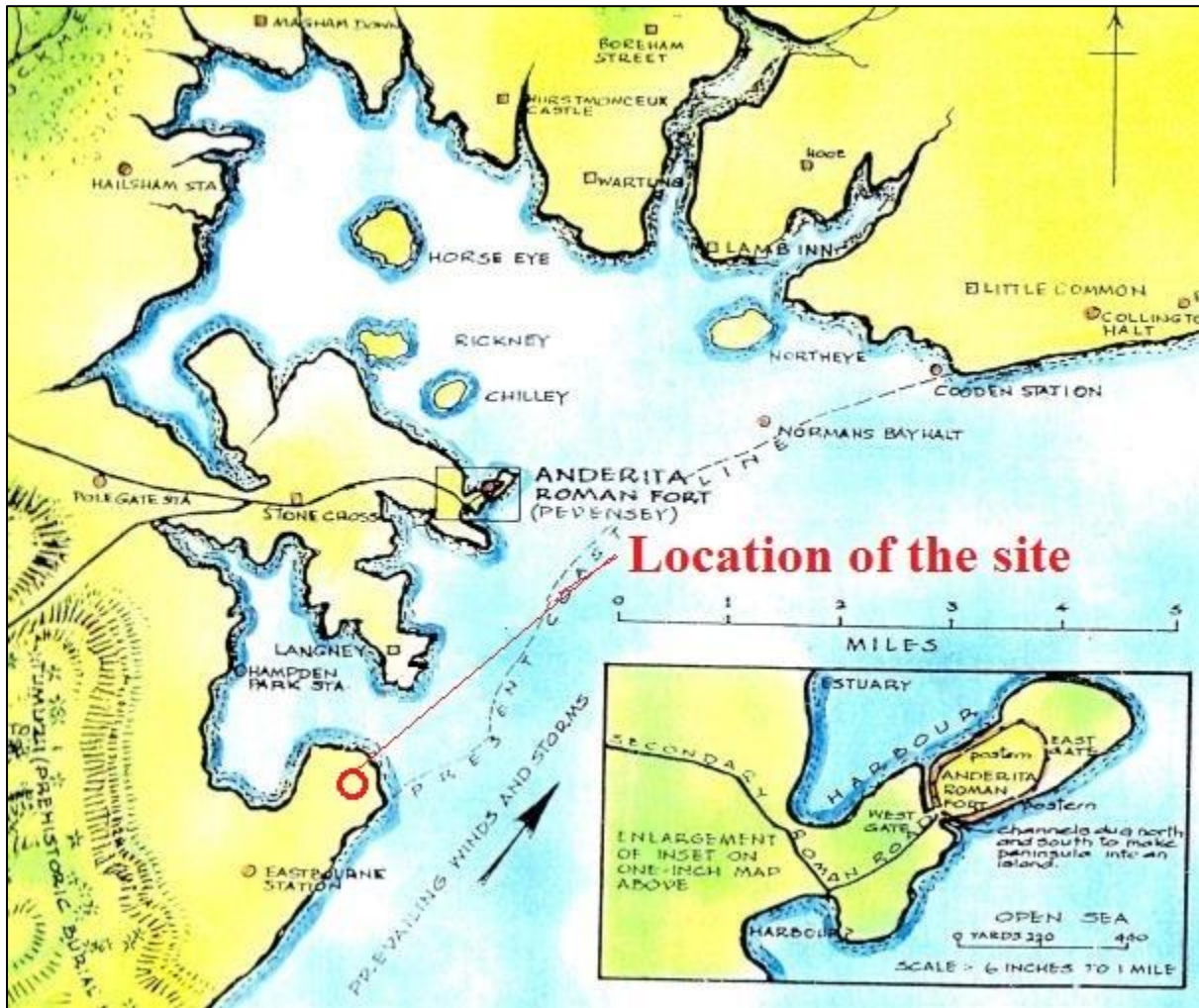


Fig 4: Coventry Court, The Roman Coastline

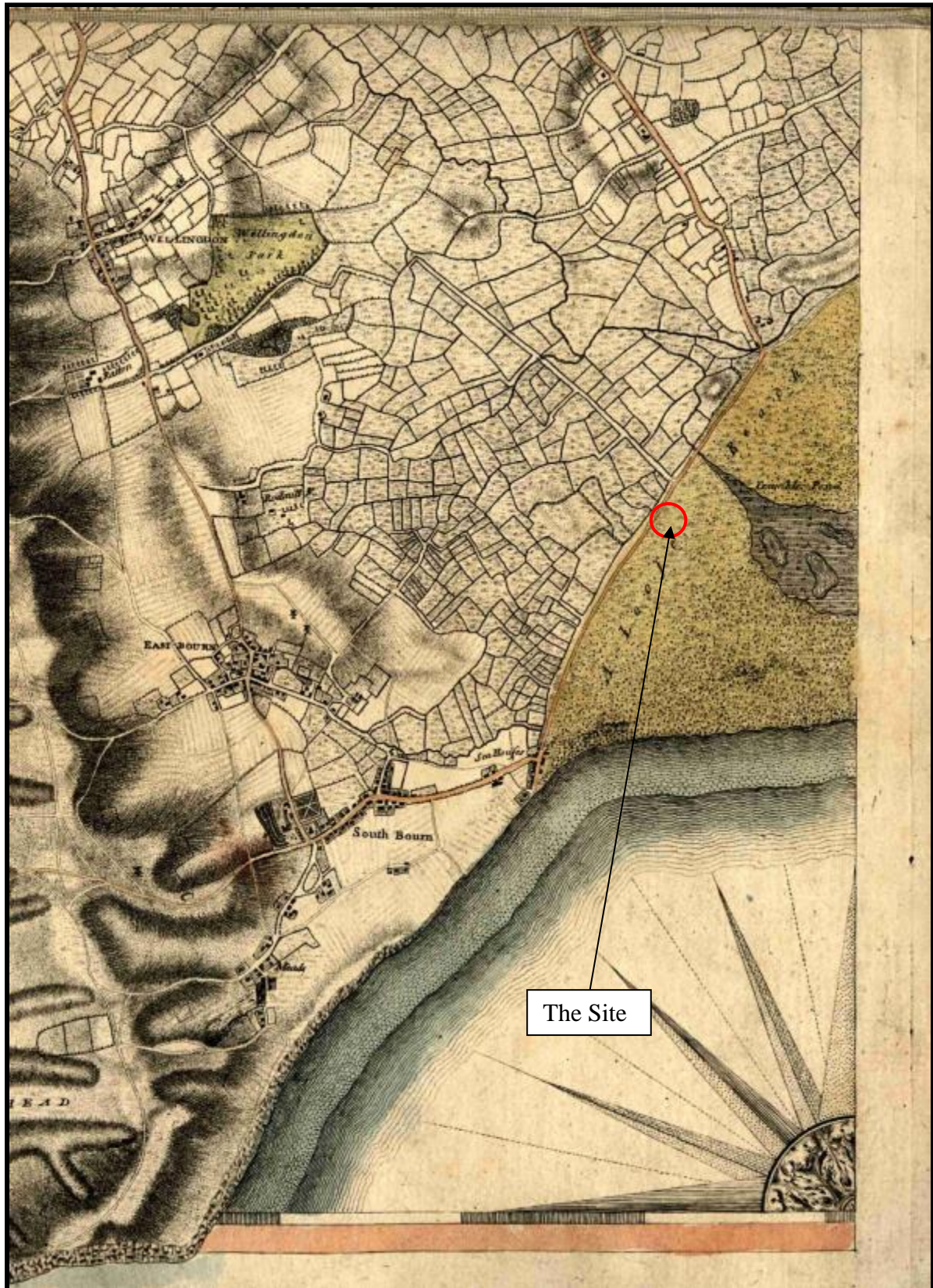


Fig 5: Coventry Court, Yeakell & Gardiner 1778-1783 map of Sussex

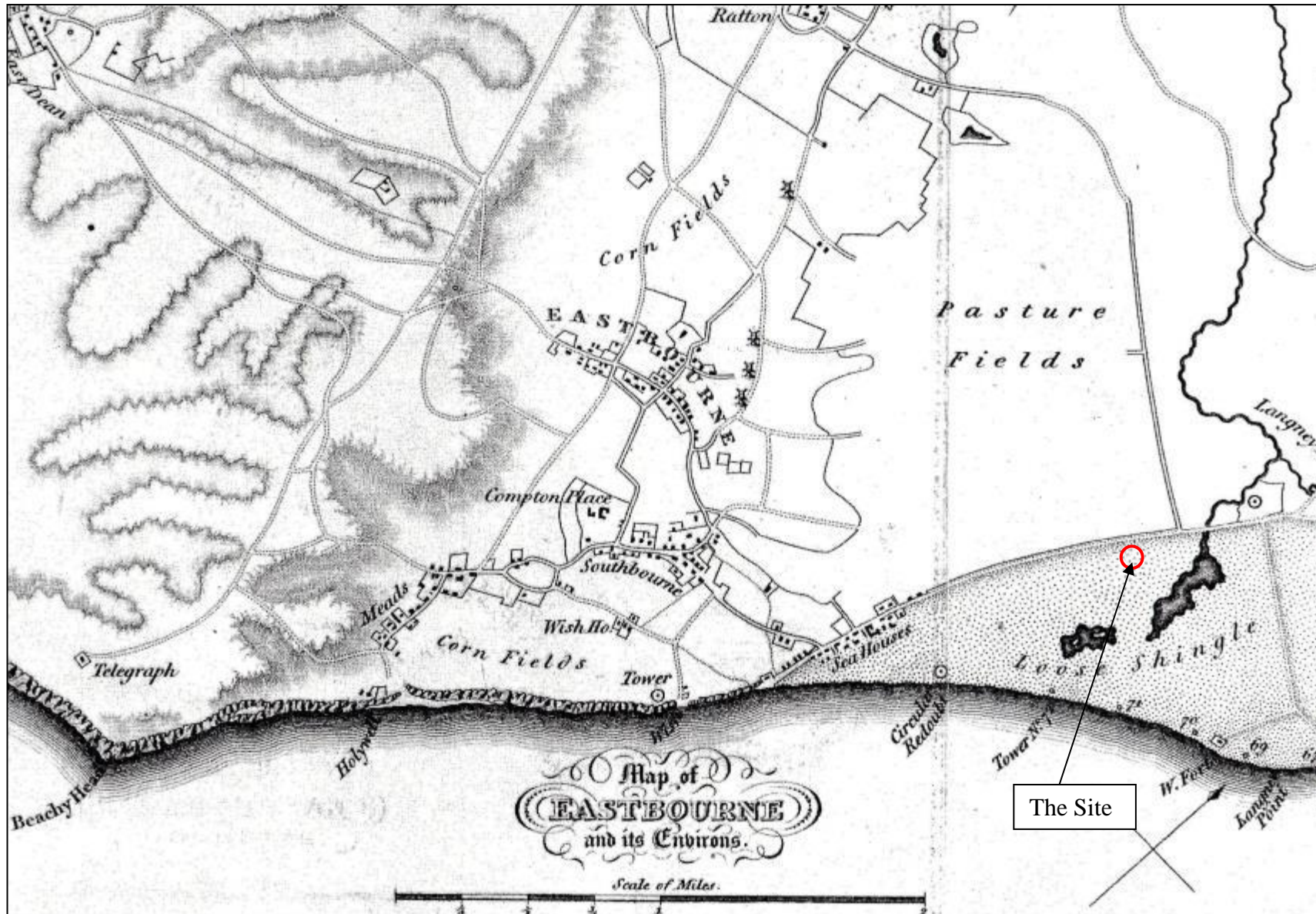


Fig. 6: Coventry Court, Map of Eastbourne, 1819
(From Elleray, D.R. 1995. *Eastbourne A Pictorial History*)



Fig. 7: Coventry Court: Eastbourne Tithe Map, 1841
(Reproduced from copy provided by ESCC)

Apportionment

Plot	Landowner	Occupier	Name & description of land	Comments
444	Lord Burlington	William Rason	Thirteen Acres, Pasture	
445	Lord Cavendish	Moses Filder	Rose Lands, Pasture	
446	Lord Cavendish	Moses Filder	Horse Land, Pasture	
447	Lord Cavendish	Moses Filder	Poplars, Pasture	
448	Impropriate rector and his lessees	Impropriate rector and his lessees	The Crumbles, Pasture	Rectorial glebe: Earl of Burlington (2/3), Gilbert Davies (1/3)
449	Ordnance, Board of	Ordnance, Board of	Number 71 tower and shingle, part of	



Fig. 8: Coventry Court: 1st Edition OS map, 1874
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The Site



Fig. 9: Coventry Court: 2nd Edition OS map, 1899
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Coventry Court,
Eastbourne

Fig. 10: Coventry Court: 3rd
Edition OS Map 1909
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The Site

Fig. 11: Coventry Court: 4th
Edition OS Map 1925
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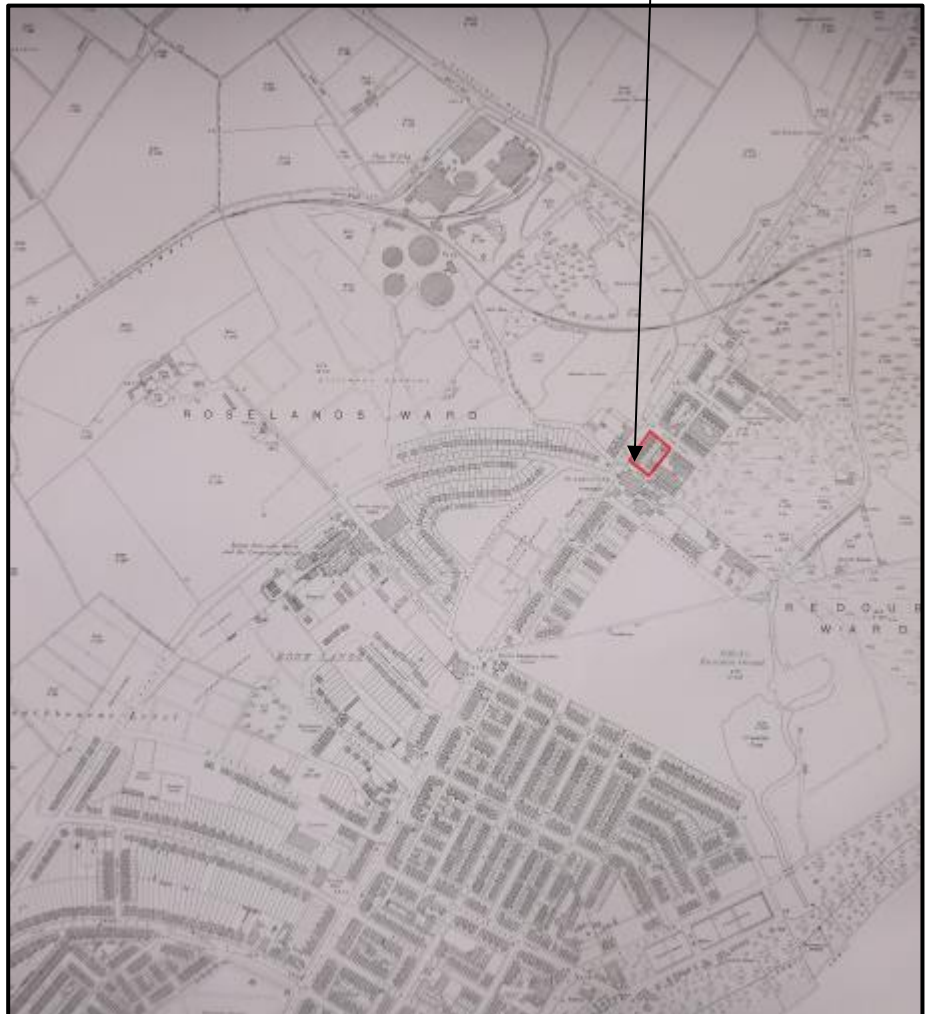




Fig. 12: Coventry Court: Coal empties returning from the gas works along the Ballast Line
(Adapted from Botha, A. 2006)

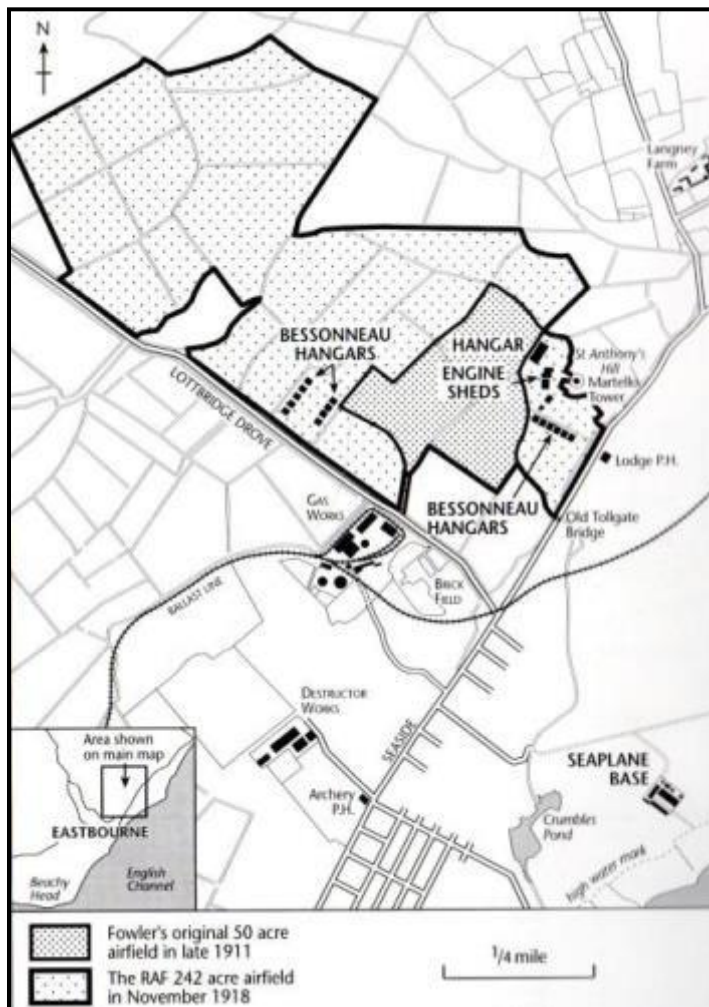
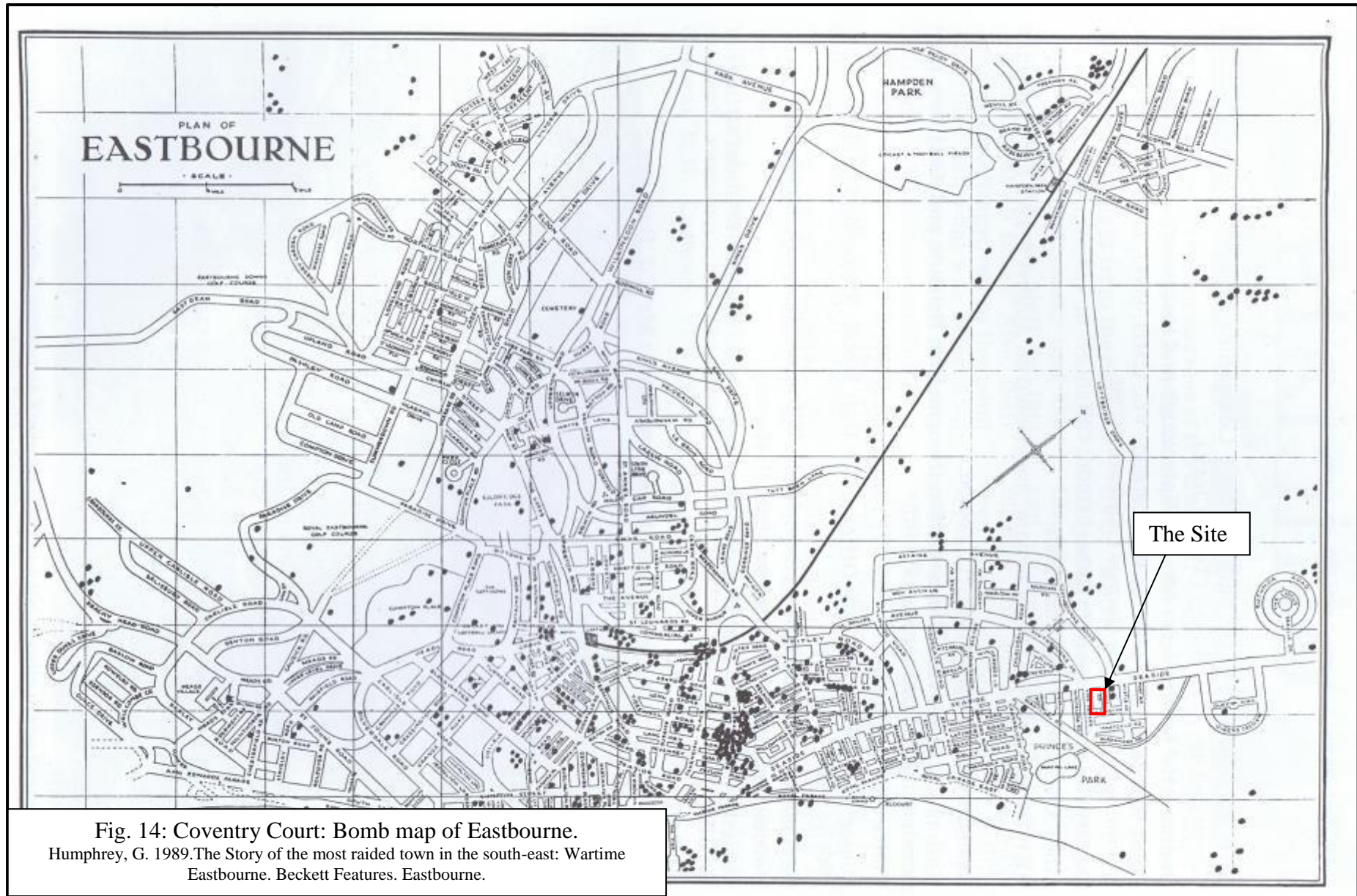


Fig. 13: Eastbourne Cycleway:
Map of the airfield, 1911 and 1918
(McMahon, L. and Partridge, M. 2000.
*A History of the Eastbourne Aviation Company
1911-1924*)



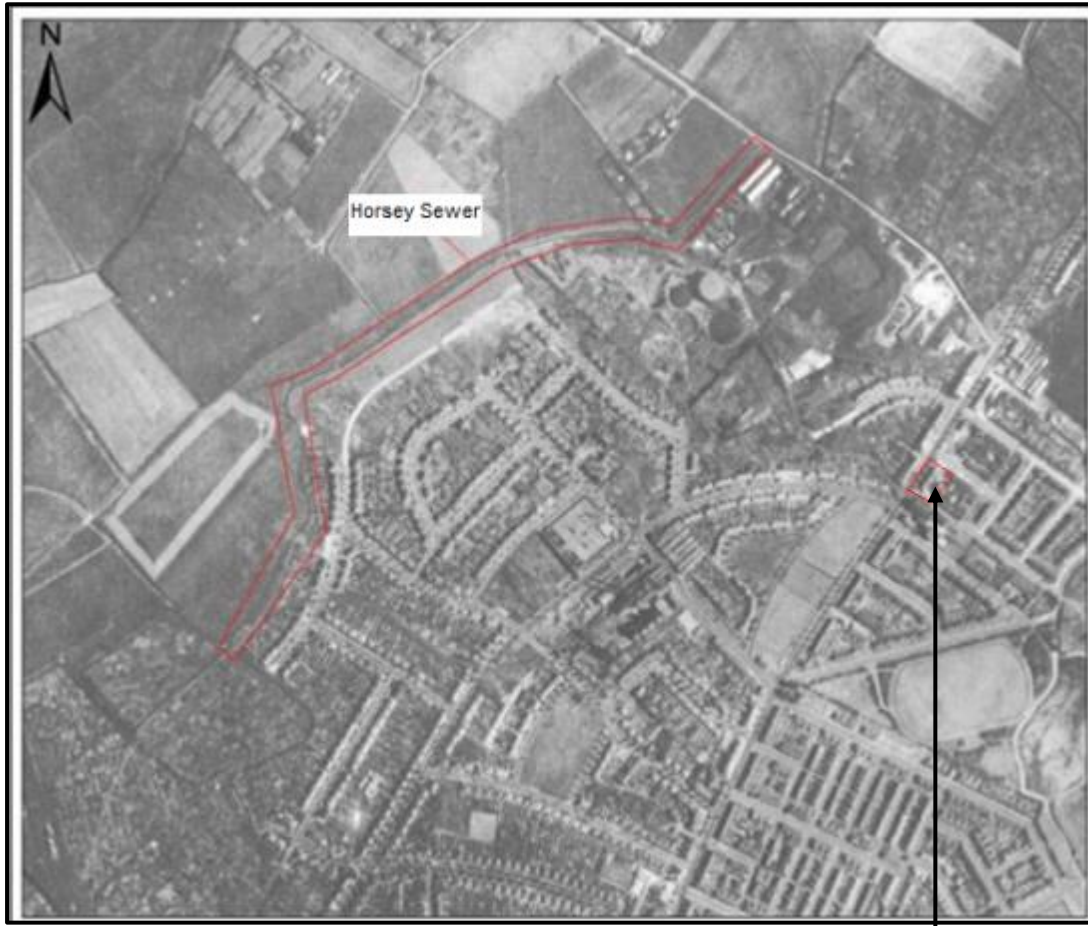


Fig. 15: Coventry Court: 1947 Aerial Photograph

The Site

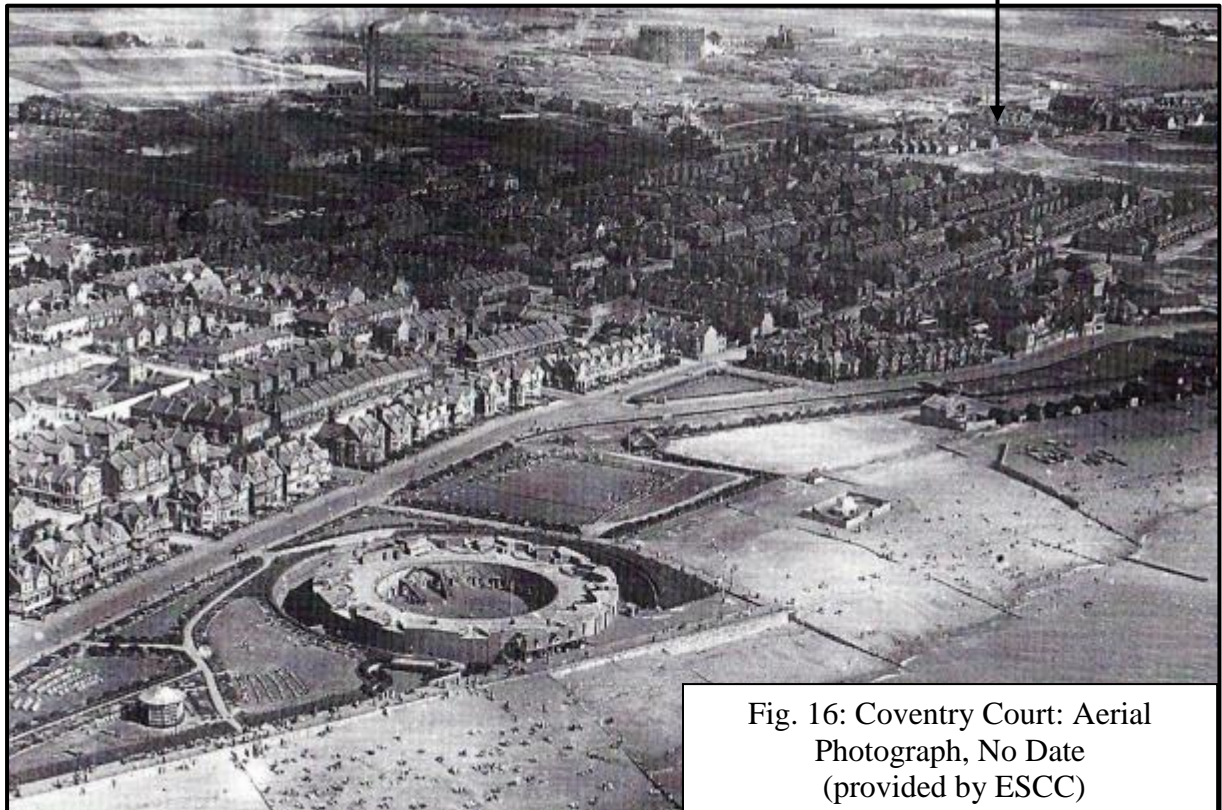


Fig. 16: Coventry Court: Aerial
Photograph, No Date
(provided by ESCC)



Fig. 17: Coventry Court: 1962 OS Map
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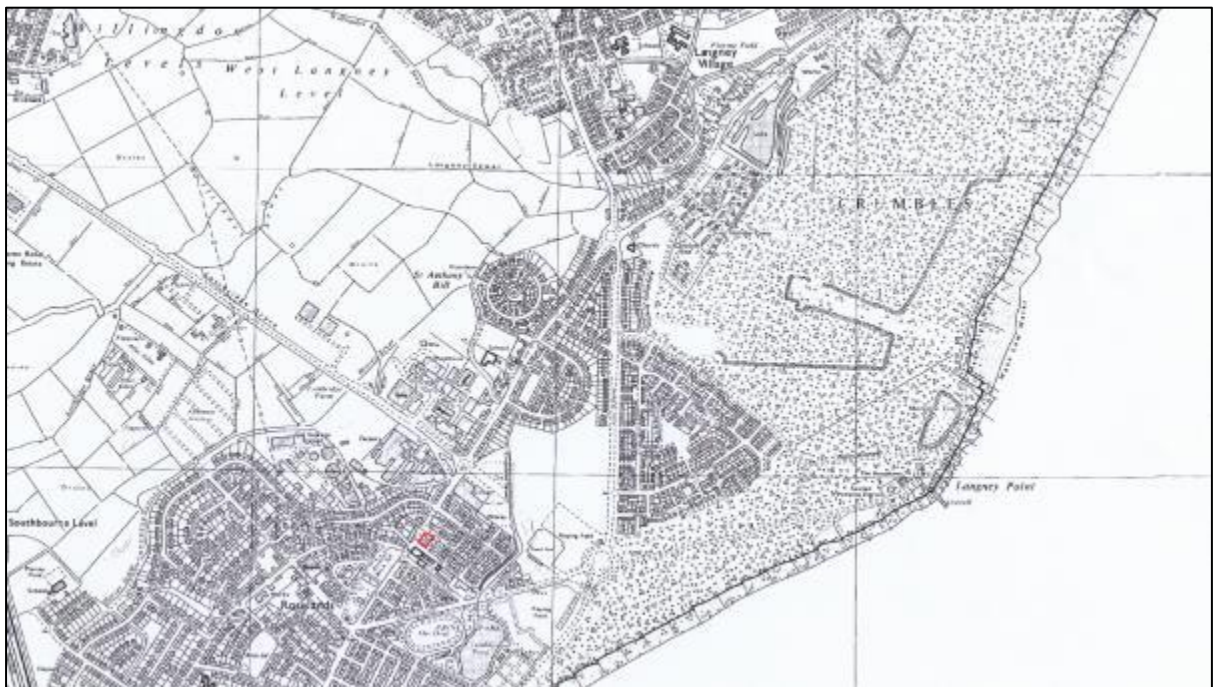


Fig. 18: Coventry Court: 1975 OS
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Appendix 1:- HER and Listed Buildings in a 500m radius of the site

HER No.	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
MES504	TQ 6268 0103	Medieval	Wreck	Boat probably clinker built, Found September 1963
MES507	TQ 6169 0170	Palaeolithic	Find Spot	Axe
MES512	TQ 6328 0042	Post Medieval	Martello Tower	Nos 69-72
MES513	TQ 6285 0160	Post Medieval	Martello Tower	No 68
MES516	TQ 6199 0064	Roman	Pit	
MES5470	TQ 6280 0000?	19th Century	Wreck	The HER state that the NGR is incorrect and the beach has been sited due south of this point.
MES7491	TQ 62326 01595	20th Century	Airfield	
MES7932	TQ 62900 01300	Post Medieval	Building	
MES7947	TV 62164 99897	19th Century	Barracks	Napoleonic
MES7961	TQ 63400 00900	19th Century	Firing Range	
MES7968	TQ 63278 00704	19th Century	Earth work and tramway	
MES7969	TQ 63400 01400	19th Century	Gravel Pit	
MES7970	TQ 63200 01000	Early 19th Century	Gravel Pit	
MES7990	TQ6270 0155	(20th Century) 1914	Hangar (Base)	St Anthony's aerodrome (WW1)
MES7991	TQ62750 01530	(20th Century) 1914	Guardroom	St Anthony's aerodrome (WW1)
MES7997	TQ63801 00951	20th Century	Anti-tank Wall/Ditch	
MES7998	TQ63400 01500	(20th Century) 1939-1945	Weapons Pit	
MES7999	TQ63400 01500	(20th Century) 1939-1945	Pillbox	
MES8017	TQ63500 01300	(20th Century) 1939-1945	Pillbox	
MES8224	TQ6265 0044	AD 19th Century to AD	Boat Repair Shop	

		20th Century 1800 to 1999		
MES8226	TQ62590 00030	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Club House	Rowing Club
MES8227	TV62520 99990	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Club House	Working Men's Club
MES8228	TQ62630 00040	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Net Shops	Two Fishermans net stores
MES8229	TQ62720 00090	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Net Shops	Four Fishermans net stores
MES8230	TV62560 99990	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Royal Navy Shore Establishment	Sea Cadet Headquarters
MES8232	TQ62900 00400	AD 19th Century to AD 20th Century 1800 to 1999	Bowling Club	Royal Sovereign Bowling Club
MES8240	TQ62870 01270	20th Century 1900 to 1999	Old People's Home	
MES8241	TQ62790 01260	20th Century 1900 to 1999	School	
MES8242	TQ6258 0072	20th Century 1900 to 1999	School	
MES22898	TQ6188 0085	Early Medieval 410-1065	Settlement	
DES10804	TV6208 9998	20th Century	Listed Building- Bus Shelter	

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

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Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys, watching briefs and evaluations, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. Chris is Co-Director of the Barcombe Roman Villa excavations. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Fieldwalking, Historic Building Recording, Landscape & Woodland surveys, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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