

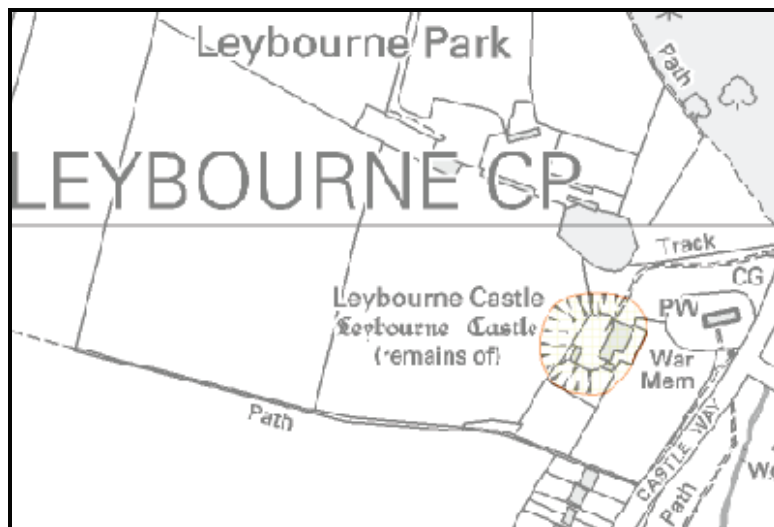
**The Chapel, Leybourne Castle,
Leybourne, Kent.**

Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 23023

NGR TQ 6885 5890

**An archaeological investigation report
Scheduled Monument Consents:
HSD 9/2/5208 and HSD 9/2/5209**

Project no. 2811



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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London was commissioned by Robert George Architects Ltd to undertake an archaeological investigation at 'The Chapel', Leybourne Castle, Kent, in advance of redevelopment. The work took place on the 1st and 2nd May 2007. One trench was excavated and revealed the foundation wall of 'The Chapel' sealed by 20th century made-ground.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University College London, were commissioned by Robert George Architects Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological works prior to the redevelopment of 'The Chapel' at Leybourne Castle, Leybourne, Kent (NGR TQ 6885 5890) (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for the conversion of 'The Chapel' to a residential dwelling (Refs. HSD 9/2/5208 and HSD 9/2/5209). Due to the potential for archaeological deposits to exist on the site the Scheduled Monument Consent was granted on the condition that '*...the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State, as advised by English Heritage*'.
- 1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation prepared in response to the condition placed on the Scheduled Monument Consent was formulated in consultation with Judith Roebuck, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments and with reference to the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 1.4 This report documents the results of a service trench hand excavated by ASE archaeologists within the footprint of the existing 'Chapel' building.

2 Archaeological and Historical Background¹

- 2.1 The monument includes an enclosure castle situated on a gentle east facing slope in an area of greensand. The castle has ruined upstanding remains of medieval masonry dating from c. 1300, surrounded by a partially infilled circular moat.
- 2.2 The enclosed central area of the castle measures c. 48m in diameter and contains the remains of the enclosing wall, which constituted the castle's main defence, with the gateway entrance on the north east side. The gatehouse is formed by two drum towers which survive to the first floor level. They incorporate a number of features including arrow loops, external portcullis grooves and a water chute above the entrance way. Within the eastern tower is a well. On the south-eastern edge of the enclosed area are the remains of a mural tower which survives up to c. 7m high and appears to be contemporary with the gatehouse.

¹ Incorporating information from *English Heritage's Record of Scheduled Ancient Monuments* (www.magic.gov.uk/rsm/23023.pdf)

- 2.3 On the west side of the interior, inside the enclosing wall, is a rectangular building 11m north-south by 6m east-west, thought to be a chapel. Although the building may incorporate some of the earlier construction of the castle, it is believed to relate to the private house which was built within the castle ruins during the 16th century.
- 2.4 Surrounding the central area is a moat, visible to the north, west and south as an earthwork up to 15m wide and 1m deep. To the east the moat has become infilled and is no longer visible from ground level surviving as a buried feature. An entrance causeway crosses the moat to the north.
- 2.5 There is little documentary evidence which records the earliest history of Leybourne Castle but it has been suggested that the castle was originally Norman, dating to the 11th or 12th century. The majority of the upstanding masonry, however, dates to the early 14th century and the gateway was built during the reign of Edward III.
- 2.6 The 16th century house, erected in the ruins of the castle remained until 1930 when the present house was built along the eastern line of the castle wall.
- 2.7 An enclosure castle comprises a defended residence or stronghold built mainly of stone in which the principal defence comprises the walls and towers bounding the site. Outside the walls a ditch, either water filled or dry and crossed by bridges may be found. Enclosure castles were first constructed at the time of the Norman Conquest but saw considerable development in form during the 12th century when defensive experience gained during the Crusades was applied to their design. The majority of examples were constructed in the 13th century although a few were built as late as the 14th century. Enclosure castles are widely dispersed throughout England, with a slight concentration in Kent and Sussex supporting a vulnerable coast and a strong concentration along the Welsh border, where some of the best examples were built under Edward I. They are rare nationally with only 126 recorded examples. Considerable diversity of form is exhibited, with no two examples being exactly alike. With other castle types, they are major medieval monument types which, belonging to the highest levels of society, frequently acted as major administrative centres and formed the foci of developing settlement patterns. All examples retaining significant remains of medieval date are considered to be nationally important.
- 2.8 Leybourne Castle survives comparatively well, despite the later construction of a house within the defences. Large areas of the ward and surrounding moat have remained undisturbed and contain both archaeological remains and environmental evidence. These will provide an insight into the construction of the castle as well as the economy and way of life of the inhabitants of a 13th century enclosure castle.

- 2.9 The precise origins of 'The Chapel' remain shrouded in uncertainty. Whilst the structure almost certainly retains some elements of medieval masonry, it is likely that much of the present building relates more to the 20th century Godfrey house². Whatever the exact make-up of the above ground remains, intrusive groundworks in the vicinity of 'The Chapel' has the potential to shed light on both the origins and history of the building and the wider context of the castle.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 The general aim of the archaeological work was to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the proposed groundworks are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.
- 3.2 The intrusive ground works are understood to comprise excavation of a pipe trench measuring up to 0.5m wide and 0.8m deep, extending diagonally across the interior of 'The Chapel' floor for a distance of some 6.0m (Figs. 2 & 3):
- 3.3 The pipe trench was excavated archaeologically by hand and consisted of two elements, as set out below.
- 3.4 Initially, a test pit measuring up to 1.50m by 0.50m, with a potential maximum depth of 0.80m was excavated. The test pit was situated at the southern end of the pipe trench and was excavated to 0.80m below ground level. Archaeological deposits were encountered and Judith Roebuck, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments was informed.

4 Excavation and Recording Techniques

- 4.1 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by ASE.
- 4.2 Archaeological structures, features and deposits exposed or excavated were planned in relation to the trench and the trench planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2500 scale by means of total station or taped offsets from known points.
- 4.3 Judith Roebuck, the English Heritage Inspector for Ancient Monuments was kept informed of progress so that she could monitor the archaeological work as necessary. Wendy Rogers, Heritage Conservation Unit, Kent County Council, was also informed of progress.

² See for instance correspondence between P. Kendall and R. George dated 26th March 2003.

4.4 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

4.5 Levels were reduced from a benchmark of 16.93m OD situated on the southwest corner of Leybourne church.

5 Results of the excavation

5.1 Initially, a test pit measuring 1.50m by 0.50m was hand excavated from within the recess of the window in the east wall of the Chapel. This trench was then extended to the full length of the service trench (Fig 3). Deposits within the service trench were found to be the same as in the test pit

5.2 Deposits within the test pit and the rest of the service trench revealed the same stratigraphic sequence. A dusty modern surface deposit [1] up to 10cm in thickness overlay a patchy rammed surface [2] up to 5cm in thickness, also modern in appearance. Beneath [2], a thick layer of made ground [3] c. 65cm thick was excavated. This material [3] appeared to seal the masonry foundation [4] of the main southwest - northeast wall of the Chapel that appeared to continue across the window bay implying that the window was a later addition (Fig. 3). At the base of the trench, at the required maximum depth of 80cm from present ground level, beneath [3], clean sand [5] was encountered. At the north end of the trench several lumps of chalk were recorded set into the sand [5] at the base of excavations.

Top of deposit	Context	Description	Interpretation
23.53 – 23.57mOD	[1]	Loose mid-greyish brown fine silt and medium sand with occasional CBM, stone	Modern surface material
23.43 – 23.47mOD	[2]	Indurated mottled silty sand and tar rammed surface with occasional flint, CBM, glass and pottery –including Willow Ware	20 th century surface
23.38 – 23.32mOD	[3]	Loose mid-reddish brown fine silt and fine sand with frequent building stone, CBM, occasional animal bone, slate, pottery and Fe objects	20 th century made ground

23.50mOD	[4]	Stepped wall footing consisting of 4 courses of roughly hewn stone, bonded with a creamy yellow hard coarse sandy mortar	Masonry foundation for external wall
22.73 – 22.77mOD	[5]	Firm mid brown coarse to medium sand with occasional lumps of chalk	Natural deposits

6 Dating Summary

6.1 Context [3] contained a large amount of CBM (brick and peg tile) broadly dating from the late 15th to the end of the 17th century; with smaller quantities of pottery broadly dating from the 13th to 20th centuries, animal bone fragments, Fe objects (mainly nails) and slag. Context [3] is therefore interpreted as a 20th century deposit incorporating earlier residual material.

7 The Finds

By Trista Clifford and Lucy Sibun

7.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered from context [3] during the watching brief at Leybourne Castle, quantified in the Table below:

Context	Pottery	weight (g)	CBM	weight (g)	Bone	weight (g)	Iron	weight (g)
3	6	88	7	4144	4	108	8	266

7.2 The earliest pottery recovered is 13th-14th century in date. The fabric is grey shelly ware. Three fragments, including a rim from a cooking pot, were recovered. A single sherd of fine sandy earthenware with sparse iron oxide inclusions dating to the 15-16th century and two 20th century fragments of white porcelain were also recovered.

7.3 Five medium fired red bricks were recovered. The fabric is fine sand with sparse iron oxide inclusions. The bricks are unfrogged with indented margins, therefore could date from the late 15th century to the end of the 17th century. The context also contained a complete peg tile in two fragments. The tile is square, with two diagonal square nail holes. The fabric is well fired fine sand. The tile is likely to be contemporary with the brick.

7.4 Seven iron nails with circular head and shank and an elongated triangular hinge plate were also recovered; these are probably of a slightly later date than the ceramic building materials.

- 7.5 Four fragments of bone were recovered. Two fragments of sheep were identified as a left mandible complete from the 3rd molar to 2nd premolar displaying three cut marks, and a left tibia shaft. A cattle calcaneus and longbone fragment were also present.

8 Conclusions

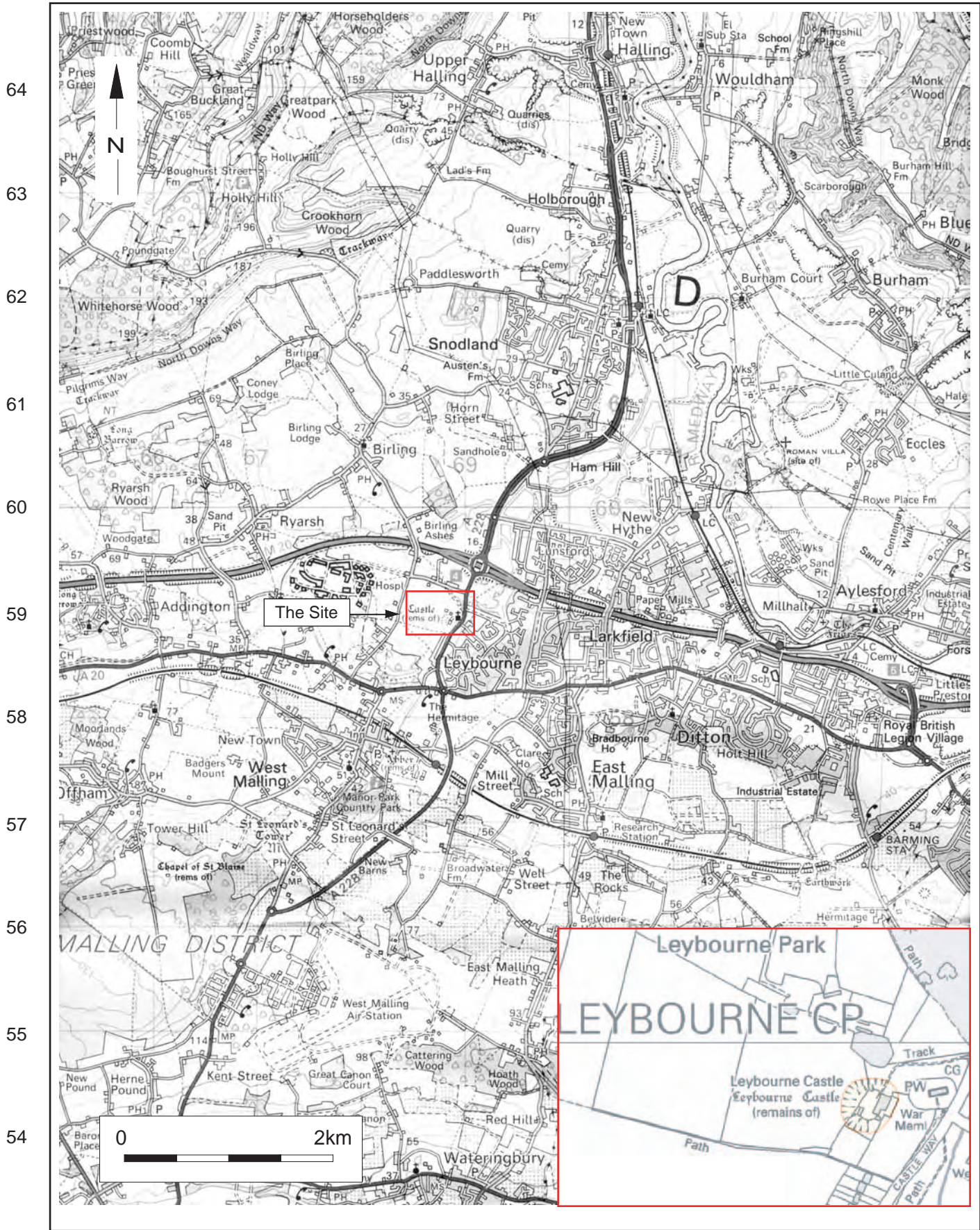
- 8.1 Conclusions based on the observations in the service trench are limited. Contexts [1], [2] and [3] appear to be modern made-ground, with context [3] clearly containing a mixture of dated material including 20th century pieces. The window bay appears to have been a later addition but the masonry foundation [4] that underlay [3] remains undated. No datable material was found associated with the masonry.

Acknowledgements

The assistance of Judith Roebuck (English Heritage) and Wendy Rogers (HCG KCC) is gratefully acknowledged.

References

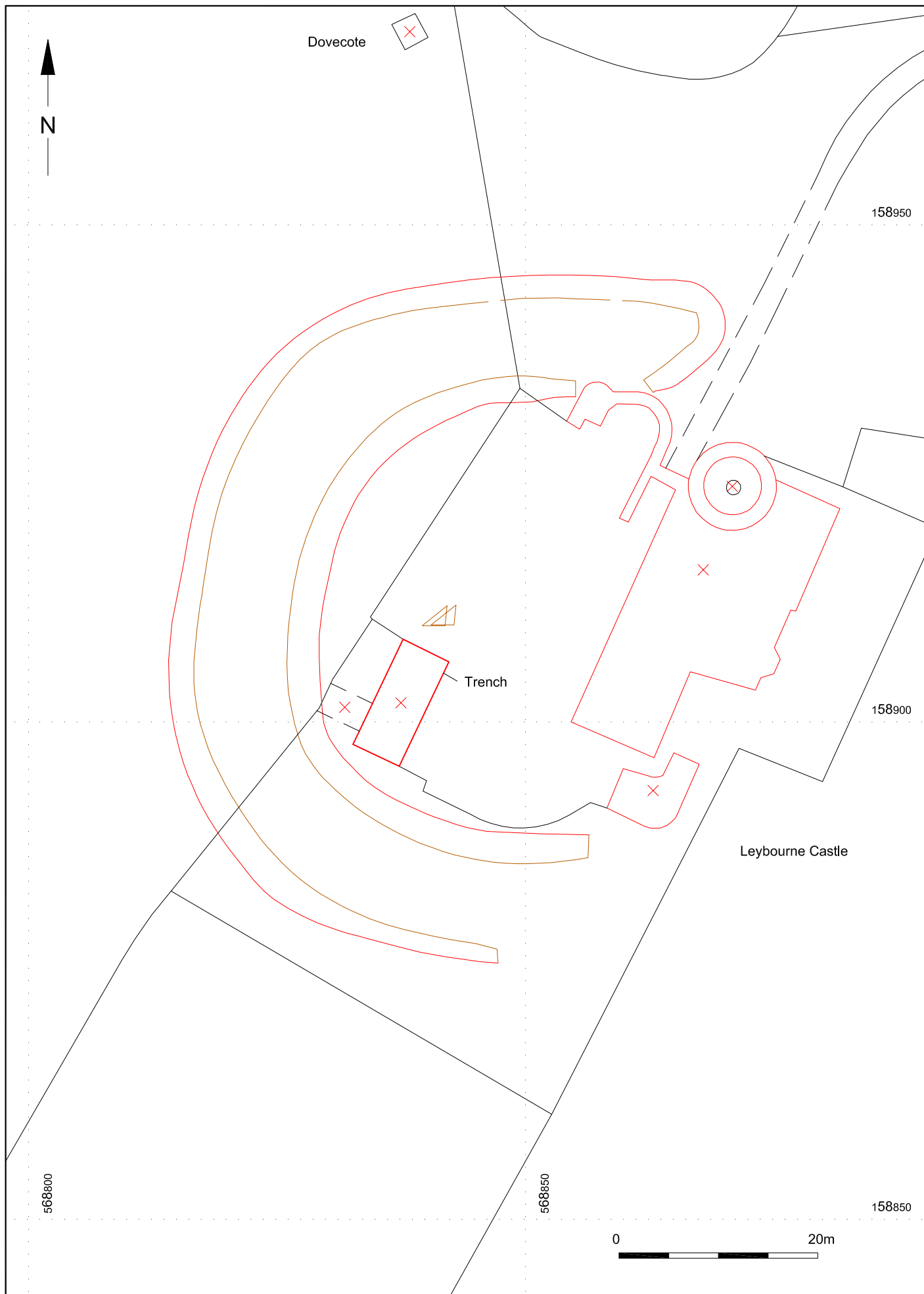
English Heritage, und. *English Heritage's Record of Scheduled Ancient Monuments*, [http:// www.magic.gov.uk/rsm/23023.pdf](http://www.magic.gov.uk/rsm/23023.pdf) (downloaded March 2007)



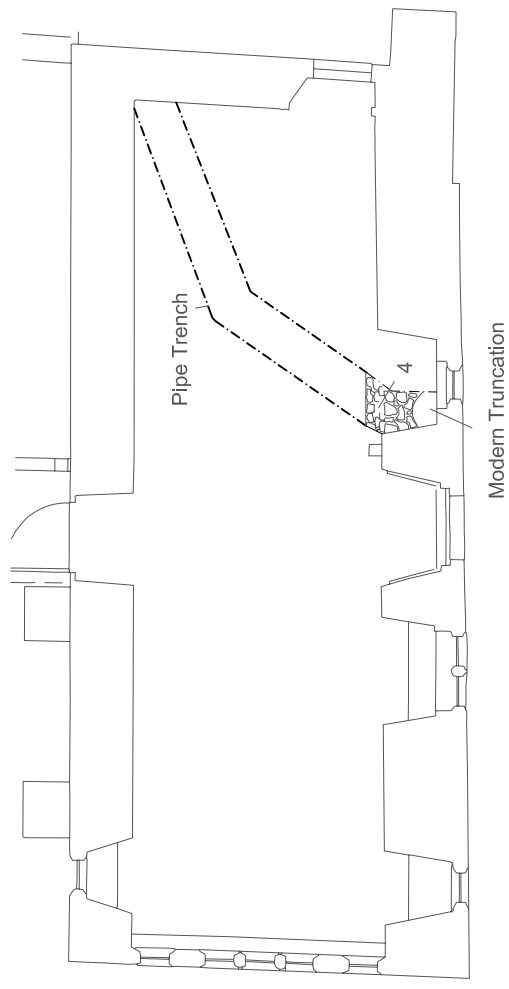
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© Archaeology South-East			Leybourne Castle	Fig. 1
Ref: 2811	June 2007	Drawn by: JNC	Site Location	

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© Archaeology South-East			Leybourne Castle	Fig. 2
Ref: 2811	June 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Plan	



© Archaeology South-East		Leybourne Castle		Fig. 3
Ref: 2811	June 2007	Drawn by: JNC	Trench Location and Masonry Footing [4]	

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