

An Archaeological Watching Brief at St Mary's Terrace, Hastings

**NGR: 582090 109683
Site Code: HAS07**

**Project No. 3162
ASE Report No. 2008026**

OASIS id:archaeol6-40499



**by
Sarah Porteus**

July 2008

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Abstract

A watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East during the insertion of flood defences in Hastings between the 29th October 2007 and the 26th of February 2008. The work included the excavation of pipe trenches of an average width of 1.2 metres to a depth of up to 3 metres in addition to topsoil stripping of the area for the location of the compound. The sections of excavation work undertaken along the route of road and pathways revealed no archaeological deposits. A void space uncovered in front of the Angel pub was found to have originated from settled backfill of an earlier sewerage pipe trench. In the grassed area at the north of the compound site a deposit of degraded concrete suggests that a structure may have stood on the site in post medieval or modern times, this possible foundation was not investigated further as no further impact by the works was anticipated.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) were commissioned by 4 Delivery Limited to maintain a watching brief during ground works associated with a flood alleviation scheme close to St Mary's Terrace, Hastings, East Sussex (Centred NGR 582090 109683). Ground works monitored comprised of the topsoil strip for the compound area and pipe trenches along the proposed route.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site consists of Ashdown Beds of the Wealden Series dating to the Cretaceous period and consisting primarily of fine-grained silty sandstones and siltstones within a clay matrix (Geological Survey of Great Britain Solid and Drift 1:50,000; Sheet 320/321; Hastings and Dungeness). The ordnance datum height of the ground surface level of the site slopes downwards from north to south from a maximum height of 65.90m AOD to a minimum of 30.65m AOD.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The works were permitted by the General Permitted Development Order 1991, Part 16, Class A (a). This act imposes a requirement for the conservation of sites and objects of archaeological interest upon the developer.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The aim of the archaeological works was to monitor any intrusive ground work in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards and a report of the findings produced (ASE 2007).

1.4.2 The specific aims are 'to identify and record evidence of the urban development of Hastings, with particular regard to the site proximity to Hastings Castle. Monitoring will also aim to establish the presence of and record further evidence of any known sites/find spots identified by the desk-based assessment' (ASE 2007)

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The fieldwork was undertaken on a total of 33 days between the 29th of October 2007 and the 26th of February 2008. Fieldwork was undertaken by Teresa Hawtin, Sarah Porteus, Nick Garland, Paul Riccoboni, and Greg Priestley-Bell. This report represents the findings of the archaeological watching brief.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 A full overview of the archaeological background of the site is presented in Wessex (2007). The information from that report is summarised below with due acknowledgement.

2.1.2 Part of the site lies within the conservation area of Hastings Old Town and an area of Archaeological Interest. The site runs adjacent to the edge of the scheduled area surrounding Hastings Castle. No recorded sites or features lie within the route itself. Hearsay evidence of a tunnel running from the Angel public house was thought to cross the area of the proposed works. The site is currently in use as modern roads and pavement and a grassed playing field.

2.2 Mesolithic c 8500-4000BC

2.2.1 Deep weather worn fissures in the cliffs below the castle (Site 1) have yielded flintwork and may have served as shelters in prehistoric times.

2.3 Neolithic – Bronze Age (c 4000-700BC)

2.3.1 No finds or evidence have been found relating to the Neolithic or Bronze age in the area.

2.4 Iron Age c 700BC-AD43

2.4.1 Excavations of the outer ditch of the Medieval Castle were found to be Iron Age in date (Barker and Barton 1977:91-5), Iron Age pottery has also been recovered from the cliff fissures below the castle.

2.5 Romano-British times cAD43-410

2.5.1 Though no settlement site of Romano-British date has been found in the area, pottery, tesserae and at least two coin hoards have been found along with evidence for an iron working site. Coins and pottery suggest activity from between the 1st and 4th century at Hastings (Sussex Archaeological Society, 2008).

2.6 Saxon Times c AD410-1066

2.6.1 Despite of documentary evidence indicating occupation and defences at the site during Saxon times, no Saxon finds or evidence has been recorded archaeologically.

2.7 Norman Conquest 1066

2.7.1 William the Conqueror is believed to have established headquarters at Hastings following the landing at Pevensey in AD1066. A sherd of Conquest pottery uncovered during excavations on the Castle mound (Site 2) suggest that a Conquest date structure may once have stood on the site of the present castle (Barker and Barton 1977, 80-88).

2.8 Medieval Times

- 2.8.1 The current castle is believed to date from the 13th or 14th century and was excavated in AD1824. The castle and outer bailey are a scheduled monument (No. 12869). Evidence of a church predating the build of a new church in 1869 consisted of "...a fragment of wall and some worked stones are built into houses in a court on the west of Castle Hill Place" (VCH 1937, 25-6), the exact location of the church is unknown but believed to lie in the area of the present Castle Hill Road and Castledown Terrace (Wessex 2007).
- 2.8.2 During Elizabethan times the playing fields to the South of 'The Angel' pub were known as Calbeck Field (Baines 1955:152). Priory Charters suggest buildings were present on the land up to at least 1526. No buildings or structures appear in this area on the map of old Hastings of 1850 (Hastings Press, 2008).

2.9 Post-medieval Period

- 2.9.1 East Sussex Sites and Monuments Records (ESSMR) show the development of barracks and a magazine (site 3) in AD1759 and the construction of Pelham Crescent (site 4), Pelham Place (site 5) and St Mary-in-the-Castle (site 6) in AD1828. Development also included the construction of the Baptist Church in Wellington Square (site 7) in AD1838. A Cliff Railway (site 8) was built in AD1902 to serve visitors to the town and castle.

2.10 Recent Archaeological Excavation

- 2.10.1 Recent archaeological work listed in Wessex (2007) comprises of an evaluation prior to the construction of the visitors centre and a watching brief undertaken on the groundworks of a housing development to the north west of the outer defences. Neither of these excavations uncovered in situ archaeological remains.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 New ground works were to be monitored by the archaeologist until it became clear that no archaeological remains were present.
- 3.2 Ground works were undertaken using a tracked 22 tonne machine fitted with a toothless bucket, where practical, for the removal of deposits with archaeological potential.
- 3.3 Any archaeological features or deposits were to be recorded in line with the advice given in PPG16 (the Government's advice on *Archaeology and Planning*).
- 3.4 Spoil was inspected to recover any artefacts/ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.5 A continual watching brief was undertaken on all excavation works between the 29th of October 2008 and the 7th of November 2008. Following this time it was agreed with the county archaeologist that an intermittent watching brief be maintained until the end of the project 26th February 2008.

Number of Contexts	4
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	Digital record, colour transparency and black and white.
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1** The pipeline was mostly excavated through deposits sealed by existing roads and footpaths. The pipeline ran through one grassed area which had been mostly unaffected by development. This area was stripped of topsoil for the compound area for the works.
- 4.2** The topsoil strip for the compound and easement covered an approximately triangular area measuring 50 metres by 140 metres. The trenches for the insertion of flood defence pipes measured, on average, 1.2metres in width to a depth of up to 3 metres, Approximately 350 metres of pipe trench excavations were monitored over the course of the watching brief.
- 4.3** The grassed area was monitored during the topsoil stripping. A number of post Victorian brick and tile fragments and modern glazed ceramic fragments were identified in the topsoil. An area of degraded concrete (**005**), figure 3, was identified at the highest point of the area stripped, surrounding this were a few large sub-angular sandstone blocks. As the limit of excavation had been reached and the area was not to be affected by the compound structures, no further excavation of the degraded concrete was undertaken.
- 4.4** The pipeline followed the line of existing services. Levelling of the area for the insertion of the present roads and footpaths had also removed the topsoil deposits for most of the length of the pipeline.
- 4.5** Towards the north of the site in the area directly in front of the Angel pub, a void was observed during excavation works (figure 4). The void extended approximately 2 metres beyond the edge of the trench with a width of 0.60 metres and an approximate height of 0.40 metres. A disused sewerage pipe below the level of the void suggested that it had resulted from the settling of backfill of the sewerage pipe trench and therefore a non-archaeological anomaly.

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
001	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20m	
005	Deposit	Degraded concrete	2.50m	1.00m	Tr.	64.90
002	Layer	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20m	
003	Layer	Natural Clay	Tr.	Tr.	1.30m	
004	Layer	Natural Sandstone	Tr.	Tr.	Tr.	

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.6 Summary

The underlying geology of the site was identified as Ashdown Beds of the Wealden Series consisting primarily of fine-grained greenish yellow silty sandstones and siltstones (**004**). Above the sandstone lay a thick layer of mid-yellow clayey silt with a thickness of 1.30 metres (**003**). The majority of the site was covered in modern tarmac road surfaces and associated gravel

hard coursing. In the grassed area to the north, the natural clay was overlain by a mid-brownish grey silty clay with a thickness of between 10 and 20 centimetres (002). The topsoil in the grassed area comprised a friable mid greyish brown silty clay (001) 15 to 20 centimetres thick, containing occasional fragments of modern ceramics, degraded concrete (005), brick and tile.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Degraded concrete (005) and sandstone blocks in the topsoil to the north of the playing field area may indicate the location of a demolished modern/post medieval structure. The location of this structure, on top of a hill with an uninterrupted view to the sea and harbour, makes an excellent viewpoint. No structure is shown as present on the site on the map of 1850 (Hastings Press, 2008) it is likely that any structure here post dated that time. The limit of the excavation in this area had been reached with no further impact expected on this deposit so further investigation of this deposit was not undertaken.
- 5.2 A void in the natural sandstone was uncovered in front of the Angel pub. Hearsay evidence reported in Wessex (2007) tells of underground tunnels being present leading from the pub away westwards. The void uncovered during the present works followed the line of a disused sewer. This is not believed to be the tunnel mentioned in the desk based assessment and a more likely explanation for the void is settling of backfilled material laid during the backfilling of the sewer pipe trench. Another possibility is that the line of a natural void/fissure proved the most convenient place to lay the sewerage pipe so the pipe follows the void rather than vice-versa. If the tunnel to the pub does exist it is possibly located further to the north along Plynlmmon Road as was indicated by a number of locals and the landlord of the Angel pub.
- 5.3 No other archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. It is believed that the levelling of ground and construction of roads and pavements removed any existing archaeological deposits across a majority of the site. No new evidence relating to the development of Hastings was uncovered.

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Hastings Press, 2008. www.hastingspress.co.uk/history/19/otmap.htm. Consulted 11/04/08.

CARTOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Geological Survey of Great Britain Solid and Drift 1:50,000; Sheet 320/321; Hastings and Dungeness

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The co-operation of Casper Johnson of East Sussex County Council and the staff of 4 Delivery Limited is greatly acknowledged.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	HAS07					
Identification Name and Address	St Mary's Terrace, Hastings TN34					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex, Hastings district.					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 582090 109683					
Geology	Ashdown Beds of the Wealden series.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3162					
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. 29/10/2007 -26/2/2008	Other		
Sponsor/Client	4 Delivery Ltd					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Sarah Porteus					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>A watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East during the insertion of flood defences in Hastings between the 29th October 2007 and the 26th of February 2008. Work included the excavation of pipe trenches of an average width of 1.2 metres to a depth of up to 3 metres and topsoil stripping of the area for the site compound. Excavation along roads and pathways revealed no archaeological deposits. In the grassed area at the north of the compound site a deposit of degraded concrete suggests that a structure may have stood on the site in post-medieval or modern times.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-40499

Project details

Project name	Watching Brief at St Mary's Terrace Hastings
Short description of the project	A watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East during the insertion of flood defences in Hastings between the 29th October 2007 and the 26th of February 2008. The work included the excavation of pipe trenches of an average width of 1.2 metres to a depth of up to 3 metres in addition to topsoil stripping of the area for the location of the compound. The sections of excavation work undertaken along the route of road and pathways revealed no archaeological deposits. A void space uncovered in front of the Angel pub was found to have originated from settled backfill of an earlier sewerage pipe trench. In the grassed area at the north of the compound site a deposit of degraded concrete suggests that a structure may have stood on the site in post medieval or modern times, this possible foundation was not investigated further as no further impact by the works was anticipated.
Project dates	Start: 29-10-2007 End: 26-02-2008
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	General Permitted Development Order 1991, Part 16, Class A(a)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX HASTINGS HASTINGS St Mary's Terrace, Hastings

Postcode TN34

Study area 8000.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 582090 109683 50.8759409130 0.249009718421 50 52 33 N
000 14 56 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator 4 Development Ltd

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

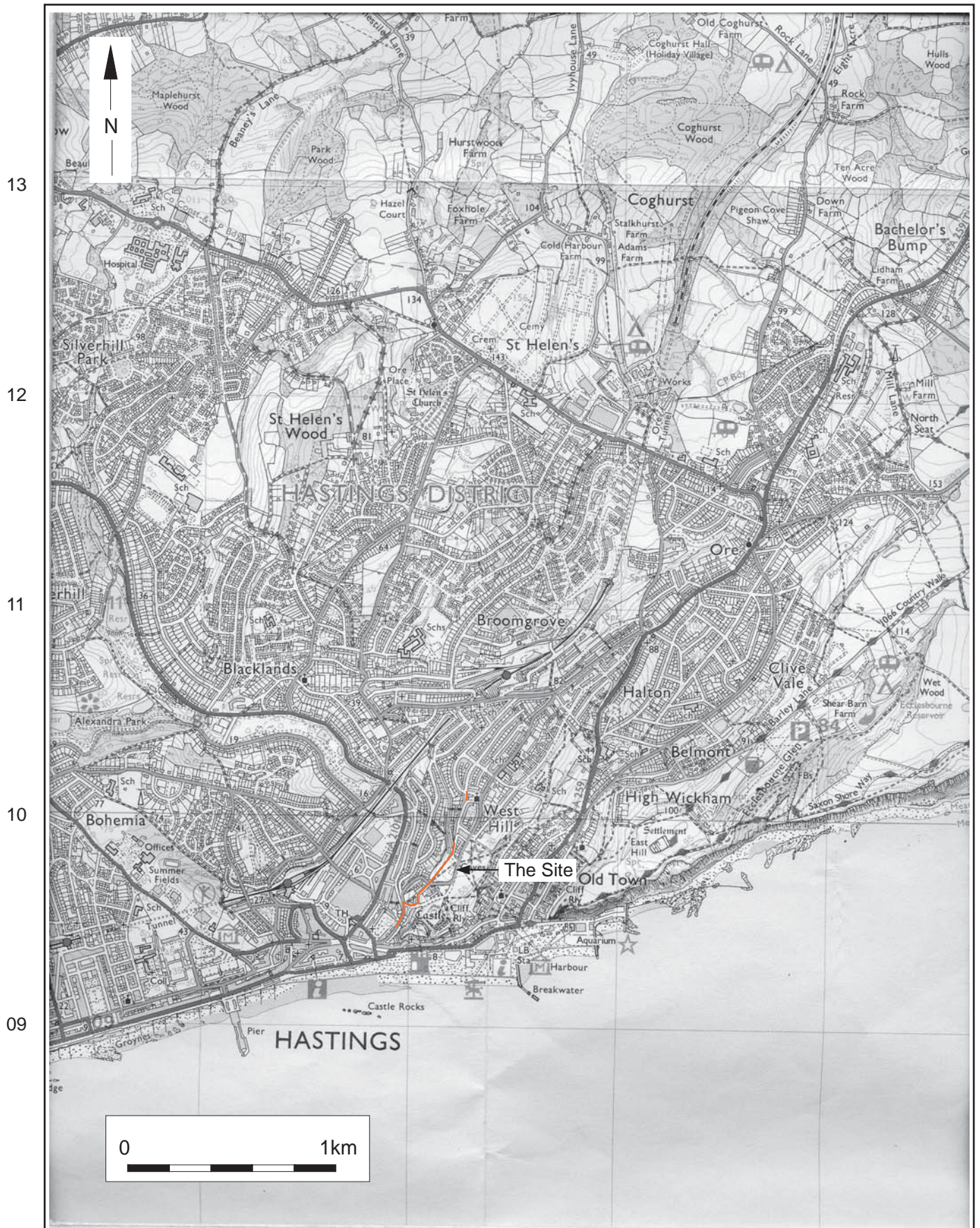
Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Sarah Porteus

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Entered by Sarah Porteus (s.porteus@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 11 April 2008



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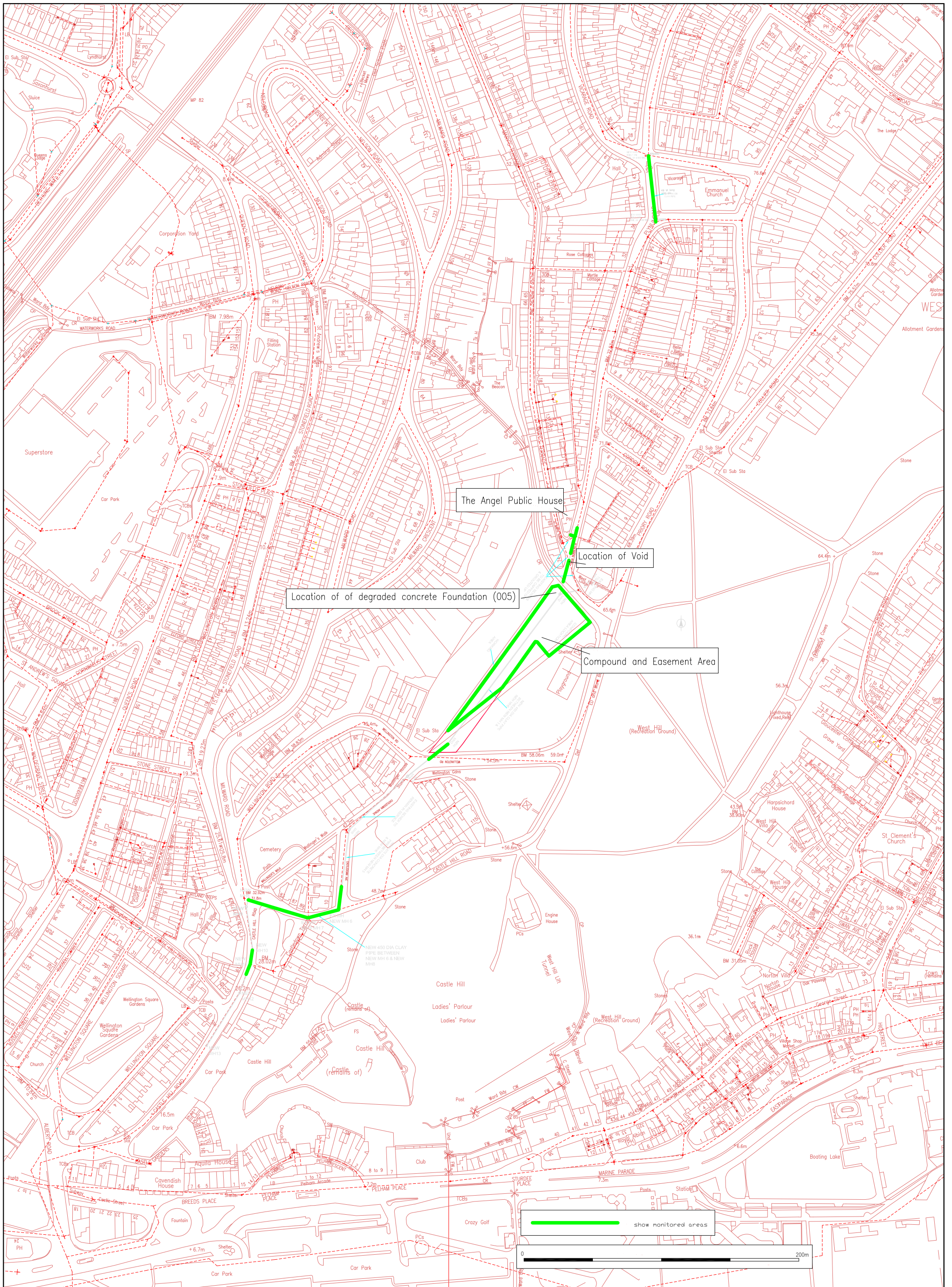
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© Archaeology South-East		St Mary's Terrace, Hastings - Flood Alleviation Scheme		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3162	July 2008	Site Location Plan		
Report Ref: 2008026	Drawn by: SM			

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© Archaeology South-East		St Marys Terrace, Hastings -Flood Alleviation Scheme	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 3162	July 2008	Photograph showing Area of degraded Concrete (005) Identified in grassed area Facing west	
Report Ref: 2008026	Drawn by: SM		



Fig. 4 View into void facing east



Fig. 5 Void space (right of photograph) with sewerage pipe below

© Archaeology South-East		St Marys Terrace, Hastings -Flood Alleviation Scheme	Fig. 4&5
Project Ref: 3162	July 2008	Photographs	
Report Ref: 2008026	Drawn by: SM		

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