

**A Summary Report on the  
Archaeological Watching Brief at  
St. John Sub Castro Church, Lewes, East Sussex**

**NGR TQ 414103**

**Project No. 3812  
Site Code: STJ 09**

**ASE Report No. 2009162**



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With contributions from Elke Raemen and Luke Barber**

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**1.0 Introduction, Aims and Methods**

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by Mackellar Schwerdt Architects to undertake an archaeological watching brief at St John Sub Castro Church, Lancaster Street, Lewes (NGR 414103; Figure 1), hereafter referred to as ‘the site’.
- 1.2 The groundworks requiring monitoring were the excavation of a service trench in front of the church building (south), in addition to an excavated area within a room located in the south-west corner of the church, which involved the careful removal of part of the existing floor structure to allow for connecting the proposed facilities. These works were in preparation for new toilet and upgraded kitchen facilities.
- 1.3 During the monitored excavations all revealed deposits were examined for the presence of archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for the presence of any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets. A digital photographic record of the areas exposed during the ground works was kept and will form part of the site archive.
- 1.4 This summary report outlines the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Kathryn Grant and Sarah Porteus (Archaeological Field Officers) over the course of two site visits; the first on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and the second on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation).

**2.0 Results (Figure 2)**

- 2.1 The monitored excavations revealed five contexts. Natural geology was not reached during the watching brief although the subsoil (002) revealed within the service trench was becoming more orange towards the limit of excavation at a depth of 0.5m which may indicate that natural was not much deeper. Subsoil (002) comprising mid greyish brown clayey silt (0.25-0.3m thick) was revealed within the service trench and was overlain by mid grey loose clayey silt topsoil (001) and turf (0.2-0.3m thick). A few finds including oyster shell fragments, ceramic building material (CBM), pottery sherds, an iron nail and animal bone fragments were recovered during the excavations (see Table 1). An electricity cable was observed crossing the service trench at an oblique angle and a soakaway was uncovered towards the northern end. In addition, a made-ground deposit (003) comprising brown sandy silt with chalk flecks was uncovered beneath the stone slabs of the path and those within the church (004). A mortar and lime base/interface (005) was revealed between the stone slabs and the made ground within the church. No other deposits were encountered during the watching brief. No archaeological features were revealed during the excavations.

**3.0 The Finds by Elke Raemen**

- 3.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the archaeological work (Table 1). All finds were found in the topsoil or subsoil. Thanks are due to Luke Barber for comments on the pottery.

3.2

Context	Pot	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Bone	Wt (g)	Shell	Wt (g)	Fe	Wt (g)
1	2	40	2	64						
2	4	112	2	26	5	140	7	178	1	38

Table 1: Quantification of the finds

### 3.3 The Pottery

The earliest piece consists of a high fired sandy earthenware base fragment from subsoil [002]. The piece is of late 15<sup>th</sup>- to 16<sup>th</sup>-century date. The same context also contained a fragment of mid 16<sup>th</sup>- to 17<sup>th</sup>-century German stoneware (Frechen). Other pieces recovered consist of mid 18<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>-century glazed red earthenware ([001] and [002]), an unglazed red earthenware flower pot fragment ([002]) dating to the 19<sup>th</sup>- to early 20<sup>th</sup>-century and blue transfer-printed pearlware plate fragment of early 19<sup>th</sup>-century date ([001]).

### 3.4 Other Finds

Ceramic building material (CBM) consists of four tile fragments, all dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. A single nail was recovered from the subsoil and dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Oyster shell valves were recovered from subsoil [002]. Included is a mature lower valve with extensive parasitic damage. All other pieces are immature, with both upper and lower valves represented. A few fragments of animal bone were also recovered.

### 3.5 Potential

Given the small size of the assemblage and its unstratified, mixed nature, there is no potential for further analysis. No further work is required.

## 4.0 Discussion and Conclusion

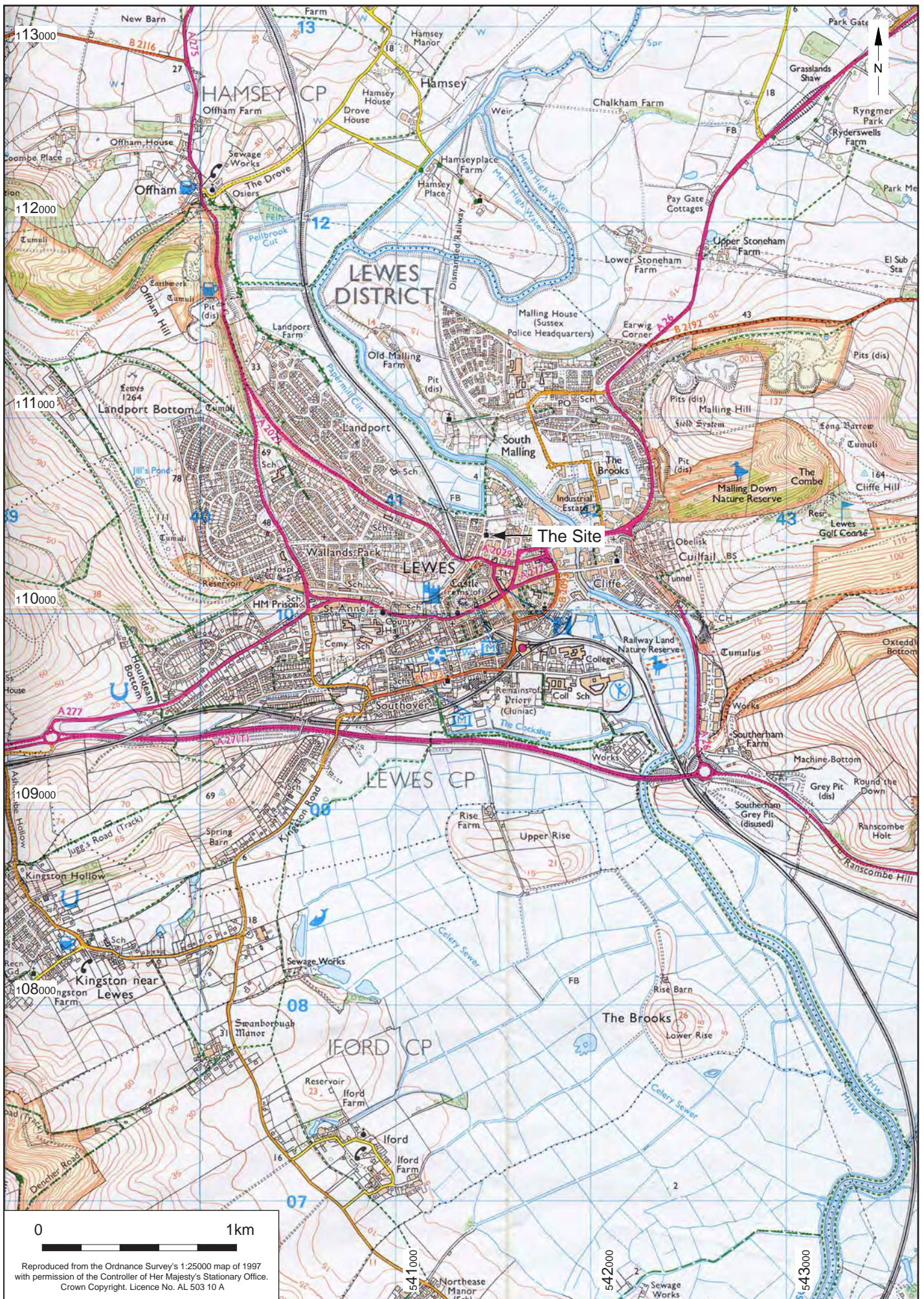
4.1 No archaeological features were revealed during the monitored groundworks at St. John Sub Castro Church. A small quantity of residual finds, including post-medieval pottery and CBM, was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits within the service trench. Limited modern truncation was evidenced in the form of a below ground electricity cable and a soakaway.

## 5.0 Bibliography

English Heritage, 1991. *The Management of Archaeological Projects*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: English Heritage

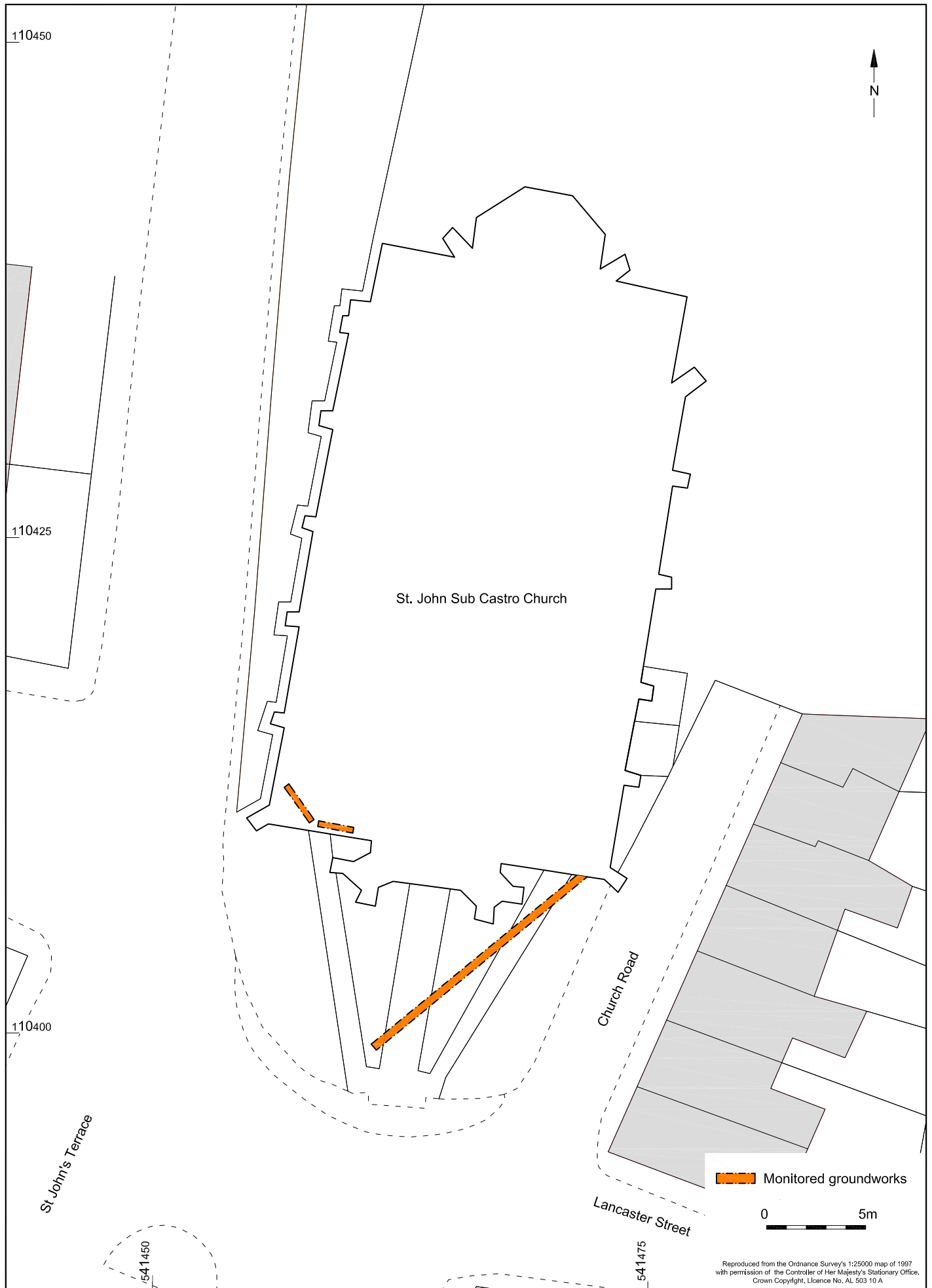
IFA, 2000, The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*

IFA, 2001, The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance* documents



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Project Ref: 3812	October 2009	Site location	
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Fig. 1



© Archaeology South-East		St John Sub Castro, Lewes	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 3812	Oct 2009	Plan showing monitored groundworks	
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