

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle,
East Sussex**

NGR TQ 7204 2085

**Rother District Council Planning Reference
RR/2008/2471/P**

**ASE Project No: 3926
Site Code: BBF 09**

**ASE Report No. 2011092
OASIS ID: archaeol6-100708**

**by
Simon Stevens BA (Hons) MIFA**

**With a contributions by
Elke Raemen and Sarah Porteus**

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**Archaeology South-East
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830
Fax: 01273 420866
Email: fau@ucl.ac.uk**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the site during visits between June 2009 and September 2010. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. Finds recovered during the groundworks included post-medieval pottery, brick, glass and blast furnace slag.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA) was commissioned by Mr Leslie Duggleby to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle, East Sussex (TQ 7204 2085) (Fig. 1)

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 Baldwin's Farm is a Grade II listed building consisting of an L-shaped timber framed structure with elements dating back to the 16th century. It lies at a height of approximately 50mAOD in an isolated position in undulating countryside between Battle and Robertsbridge, immediately to the south of Darwell Reservoir.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area (Sheet 320/1, *Hastings and Dungeness*) the underlying geology at the site consists of an outcrop of Tunbridge Wells Sand with Wadhurst Clay to the north, east and west, and Ashdown Beds to the south.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted by Rother District Council in 2008 for redevelopment work at the site to involve the erection of a new machinery store, farm office, stables, barn and associated accesses and landscaping (planning ref. RR/2008/2471/P). Following consultation between Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council (Rother District Council's advisers on archaeological issues) a condition (No.6) was attached to the permission requiring archaeological monitoring during groundworks at the site. It stated that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details'

1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI), which incorporated a desk-based assessment of the site was produced by ASE (ASE 2009). It outlined the methods to be used at the site, and propositions for publication and archiving of results. It was duly approved by East Sussex County Council prior to the commencement of groundworks at the site.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The stated aims given in the WSI (ASE 2009, 2-3) were to:

'monitor the ground works ... in order to ensure that any deposits and features, artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest, are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.'

Research Aims for this area:

- *To understand the historic development of the settlement and land use of this area of East Sussex*
- *Is there any evidence of the former farm buildings?*
- *What was the original date of construction of the buildings?*
- *What was the form of the buildings and what materials were used in their construction?*
- *Is there any evidence of later modification of the structures?*
- *Are there any deposits or features which pre-date the medieval farm?'*

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological watching brief undertaken on visits to the site between July 2009 and September 2010 by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) and by Gary Webster (Archaeological Assistant). The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and by Dan Swift (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A detailed appreciation of the archaeological and architectural background of the site has been given elsewhere (Morriss 2007). The following information is taken from that unpublished report, with due acknowledgement.
- 2.2 The name 'Baldwin's' is at least of 15th century date and contemporary deeds refer to a farmhouse, one acre garden, and several fields. The earliest parts of the present farmhouse may have been built by John Nately, a husbandman and his wife, Jane, who acquired the farm sometime around 1563. The farm was sold in 1610 for £620 and consisted of a house, barn, garden and 68 acres.
- 2.3 The farm was brought by William Levett in 1672 and the survey listed a messuage, barn, stall, garden, oasthouse, orchard and 65 acres. For most of the 18th century the farm was occupied by the Grove family, passing into the hands of the Christmas family in 1775. Thomas Christmas went bankrupt in 1793 and the sale proceeding describe the farm as 12 acres of arable, 15 acres of meadow, 17 acres of pasture and 4 acres of hops and the rest woodland.
- 2.4 The farm possibly ceased to be a working farm in the 1920s and in the 1930s Parliament passed an Act for the creation of the Darwell Reservoir, which involved the compulsory purchase of the farm and the inundation of half of the farmland. The reservoir was eventually opened in 1950 and the farmhouse was used as a tenanted house and subsequently fell into disrepair. The majority of the surrounding outbuildings were pulled down.
- 2.5 A number of cartographic sources were consulted and commented upon in the WSI (ASE 2009). All of the known archaeological sites within a 1km radius were also taken from the East Sussex Historic Environment Survey and listed (*ibid.*)
- 2.6 In summary, the site lies in a part of Sussex which has only seen limited systematic archaeological fieldwork. However, a watching brief on groundworks for the new Mountfield to Hastings water pumping main uncovered evidence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval activity in the general area (Jones 1985).
- 2.7 A walkover survey & artefact collection was carried out in advance of possible enlargement of Darwell Reservoir by the Field Archaeology Unit (FAU), ASE's predecessor in 1990. The survey identified 93 archaeological features including a fulling mill, deer park earthworks, ironworking sites, a furnace, a possible pond bay, possible kilns, house remains and undated circular earthworks (FAU 1990).
- 2.8 This part of the Weald has a number of known ironworking sites. The earthworks of one such site were destroyed when the reservoir was constructed (Mainwaring Baines 1980).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The archaeological watching brief was maintained during the mechanical excavation at the site associated with the erection of buildings and associated landscaping works. Mechanical excavation was carried out using a Caterpillar 312c 360° excavator fitted with a 6ft (1.8m) toothless ditching bucket. There was also some limited manual excavation where necessary, which was also monitored. All available spoil was scanned both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, and will be offered to Hastings museum in due course. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	12
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photographs	20 digital photos
Bulk finds	-
Registered finds	1 (horseshoe)
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

A total of eleven contexts were recorded in the three monitored areas during the groundworks, and these have been tabulated below.

Context	Area	Deposit type	Maximum depth (m)
1	Stable complex	Topsoil	0.20
2	Stable complex	Subsoil	0.05
3	Stable complex	Natural	-
4	Office and Machinery Store	Topsoil	0.20
5	Office and Machinery Store	Natural	-
6	Office and Machinery Store	Masonry foundations	<0.60
7	Office and Machinery Store	Masonry footings	(not seen)
8	Stable complex	Demolition rubble	0.30
9	Moat	Demolition rubble	0.50
10	Moat	Topsoil	0.20
11	Moat	Subsoil	0.40
12	Moat	Natural	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.1 Ground Reduction for the Stable Complex

- 4.1.1 Ground reduction of an area measuring approximately 38m by 28m was undertaken to the north-east of the standing farmhouse building, in preparation for the construction of the barn, stable yard and garage
- 4.1.2 The ground in that part of the site sloped noticeably from north to south and while very little material, (in places actually none, in others 200mm to 300mm), was removed from closest part to the farmhouse, in order to maintain a level surface, c.3m of material was removed from the north-eastern part of the area.
- 4.1.3 The recorded stratigraphic sequence was straightforward. The uppermost deposit was Context [01], a mid-greyish brown silty clay topsoil with a maximum thickness of 200mm. It overlay Context [02], a brownish yellow silty sand, with a maximum thickness of 50mm which lay at the interface of the topsoil, and the 'natural', a clayey sand, which varied in colour between greyish yellow and yellowish orange (Context [03]). Excavation continued into this archaeologically sterile deposit.
- 4.1.4 A small assemblage of artefacts, mostly fragments of blast furnace slag was recovered from Context [01]. The groundworks in the area closest to the house uncovered the scant surviving remains of buildings shown on the historic maps (reproduced in ASE 2009). Where machining was needed, a demolition deposit, Context [08] was encountered and recorded. It consisted of a deposit of brick rubble in a mid-greyish brown silty clay matrix. It measured c.6m by c.6m, and was located in the extreme western corner of the groundworks area. It was a maximum thickness of 300mm, and lay directly over the 'natural'. There was no encountered evidence of foundation trenches. A small assemblage of artefacts was recovered from the demolition rubble, including samples of brick presumably from one of the demolished buildings.

4.2 Strip Footings for Office and Machinery Store

- 4.2.1 The mechanically excavated strip footings measured a maximum of 800mm in width and c.1m in depth. There was some evidence of buildings in this area in the form of partly buried brick foundations, apparently forming two circular structures, known to be late 19th century/early 20th century hop kilns (Morriss 2007, 548). Unfortunately, the mechanical excavation of the footings trenches resulted in the removal of large chunks of the brick masonry, so no coherent trench sections containing masonry could be recorded.
- 4.2.2 The topsoil in this part of the site, Context [04] was similar in character to that previously encountered and was a maximum of 200mm in thickness. It directly overlay the 'natural', recorded as Context [05]. A generic number was given to the brick masonry, Context [06] and a sample brick was retained. The masonry was bonded with a strong grey sandy mortar, and examination of one of the 'chunks' suggested that the brickwork survived to a depth of 600mm below the current ground surface. The undetected footings trenches for the walls were given the generic number, Cut [07].

4.3 Excavations for the Moat

- 4.3.1 The mechanical excavation of a single trench was monitored. It was located to the south-east of the stable complex and was 1.3m wide, 2.3m deep and c.30m long. The stratigraphic sequence was found to be similar to that encountered during monitoring of the groundworks for the south-western part of the stable complex. At this point the demolition rubble (recorded as context [09]) was a maximum of 500mm in thickness, but it appeared to have been dumped over the topsoil (recorded as context [10], which was a maximum of 200mm in thickness. The topsoil overlay a deposit of brownish yellow subsoil, context [11], which was a maximum of 400mm in thickness. This in turn overlay the 'natural', context [12]. No finds were recovered during this stage of the monitoring.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds, mainly consisting of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered during the watching brief (Table 3). Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were counted, weighed and bagged by context and by material. None of the finds require further conservation.

Context	Pot	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)	Slag	Wt (g)
1			1	2214			28	1056
6			1	2834				
8	3	292	9	6258	1	48		
Total	3	292	11	11,144	1	48	28	1056

Table 3: Quantification of the Finds

5.2 The Pottery by Elke Raemen

- 5.2.1 Three conjoining fragments from a Bristol-glazed stoneware preserve jar (height 140mm) were recovered from context [08]. The jar dates between the mid 19th and early 20th century.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

- 5.3.1 A total of eleven fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) with a combined weight of 11 144g were recovered from three contexts. The brick sample from context [01] consisted of a floor brick of 220mm by 110mm by 45mm dimensions with an abraded upper surface. The brick is unfrogged and made of a fine orange sandy fabric with sparse black iron rich inclusions and is of probable late 18th to 19th century date. The brick sample from context [06] had a similar fabric to the brick from [01] but of standard dimensions (230mm by 110mm by 55mm thickness). The 18th to 19th century brick is unfrogged with sharp arises and had a soft loose greyish yellow lime mortar adhering.

- 5.3.2 Context [08] contained a brick sample of two identical unfrogged bricks with vitrified headers and sharp arises. Both bricks were in a similar fabric to the other samples but had a number of unidentified white inclusions. The vitrified bricks are of 18th to 19th century date and probably intended to create a diaper pattern to brickwork. Also recovered from context [08] was a curved peg tile fragment the same fabric as the brick from the context and some abraded fragments of peg tile in a the same fabric. All the fragments are of probable 17th to 19th century date.

5.4 Glass by Elke Raemen

- 5.4.1 Context [08] contained a pale green bottle neck fragment. The piece, of late 19th- to early 20th-century date, is likely to have derived from a wine or mineral water bottle.

5.5 Other Finds by Elke Raemen

- 5.5.1 A total of 28 pieces of blast furnace slag, dating from the 16th century onwards, was recovered from topsoil context [01]. Context [08] also contained a large, complete iron horseshoe (wt 810 g) with calkins on both heels and of 18th- to early 20th-century date (RF <1>).

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 No significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief at Baldwin's Farm. Monitoring of groundworks closest to the historic farmhouse showed that buildings in the vicinity had been demolished and the rubble levelled. No evidence for footings or foundations was encountered, and it is possible that the buildings had little or no below ground elements.
- 6.2 The excavation of footings trenches further to the north did reveal traces of the hop kilns known to have been constructed between 1878 and 1908 (Morriss *op. cit.*), however it proved impossible to recreate a coherent ground plan from the limited groundworks. Clearly the kilns were brick built and circular in plan, but little else can be said. The date of demolition is unknown.
- 6.3 The range of finds recovered from the topsoil and demolition deposits was somewhat limited. The presence of domestic pottery and glass so close to an historic house was to be expected, as was the brick and tile in the demolition deposits, and from the hop kiln. Equally, the recovery of a horse shoe from a farm setting was unsurprising.
- 6.4 Hence, the only category of artefact which cannot be assigned to 'everyday life' at the site is the ironworking slag. Following the appearance of the blast furnace in England by 1500, there were numerous production sites across the Weald, producing huge quantities of such slag (Hodgkinson 2008, 49-62). However, it is not indicative of the location of a blast furnace in the immediate vicinity as '*furnace slag in particular was used for repairing roads, for making up field gateways*' (Cleere and Crossley 1995, 275). Hodgkinson (*op. cit.*, 146) lists two known blast furnaces in Mountfield parish, and it is likely that this durable material came from one or both of those to the farm to be used for surfacing tracks or as hardstanding.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Although no significant *in situ* archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the monitoring of the groundworks at Baldwin's Farm, the provision of an archaeological watching brief was prudent given the potential archaeological sensitivity of a site with such a known history (see Section 2.0).

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	BBF 09					
Identification Name and Address	Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle					
County, District &/or Borough	Rother District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Reference.	TQ 7204 2085					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3926					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	SAC
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 29.06.2009 - 28.09.2010	SAC		
Sponsor/Client	Leslie Duggleby					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
100 Word Summary.						
<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the site during visits between June 2009 and September 2010. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. Finds recovered during the groundworks included post-medieval pottery, brick, glass and blast furnace slag.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-100708

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle, East Sussex.
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the site during visits between June 2009 and September 2010. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. Finds recovered during the groundworks included post-medieval pottery, brick, glass and blast furnace slag.
Project dates	Start: 29-06-2009 End: 28-09-2010
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	3926 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BBF09 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	RR/2008/2471/P - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX ROTHER MOUNTFIELD Baldwin's Farm
Postcode	TN32 5LB
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 7204 2085
Height OD / Depth	Min: 45.00m Max: 55.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr Leslie Duggleby

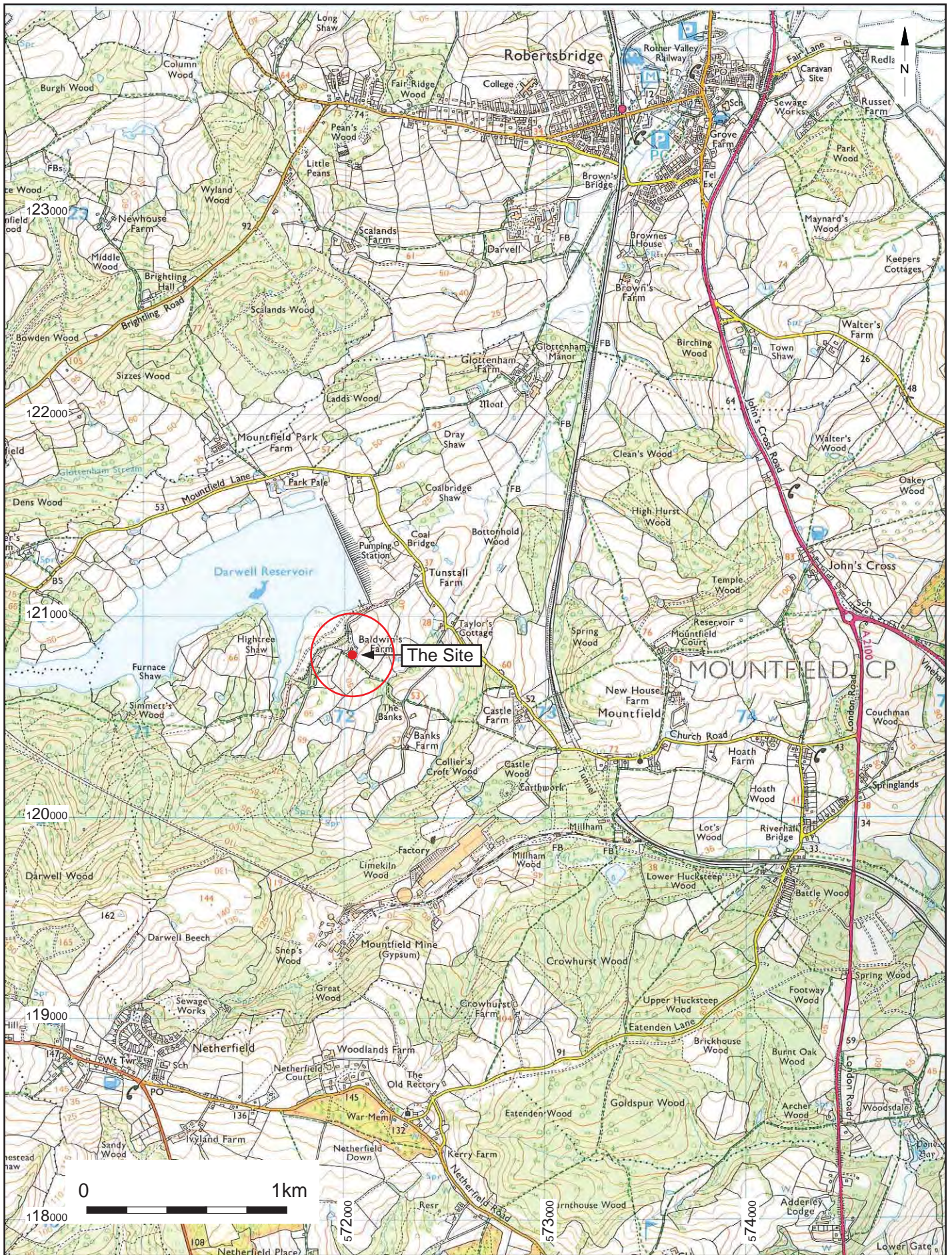
Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Hastings museum?
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Industrial'

Digital Archive recipient	Hastings museum ?
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Hastings museum?
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Miscellaneous Material','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'

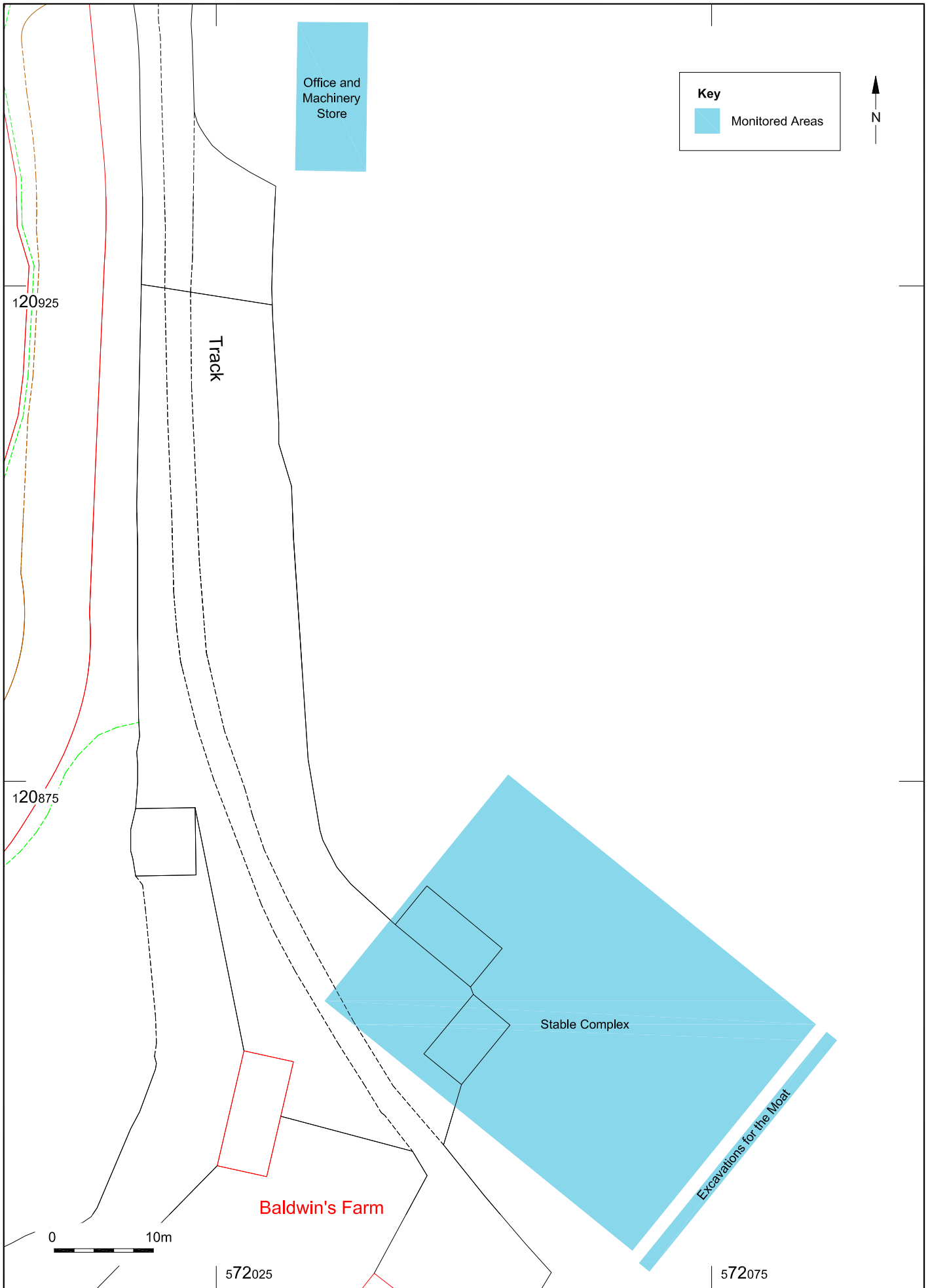
Project bibliography 1

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© Archaeology South-East		Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 3926	May 2011	Site location plan	
Report Ref: 2011092	Drawn by: FEG		

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© Archaeology South-East		Baldwin's Farm, Mountfield, Battle	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 3926	May 2011	Areas of archaeological monitoring	
Report Ref: 2011092	Drawn by: DJH		

Head Office
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office
Centre for Applied Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

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