

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
at Rose Cottage, Mount Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex, BN7 1HL**

**NGR TQ 41491 09669  
NGR 541491 109669**

**Project No: 4886  
Site Code: RCL 11**

**ASE Report No: 2011117  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-102679**

**Dylan Hopkinson MA**

**June 2010**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was conducted in the gardens of Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes. Archaeology South-East was commissioned to carry out the work by Graham MacDonald, in order to fulfil the archaeological condition of planning permission regarding the construction of extensions to the cottage at the front and back of the building. The work was carried out between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011.*

*A total area of c. 32m<sup>2</sup> was monitored by hand in order to assess archaeological potential and survival at the site. Topsoil was recorded directly overlying natural head deposits at c. 0.55m BGL. The lack of subsoil and/or residual archaeological finds suggests that the whole site has been previously reduced to natural head deposits at some time in the past, probably during construction of Rose Cottage or during construction for the railway cutting immediately south of the site.*

*No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the watching brief.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) a division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) at the Institute of Archaeology (IoA) University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Graham MacDonald (hereafter 'the client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief in the gardens of Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes (NGR 541491 109669; Fig. 1) during groundworks for the construction of extensions to the cottage (Fig. 2).

### **1.2 Location and geology**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series map for the area (sheet 319 / 334 – Lewes and Eastbourne), the site lies on undifferentiated head deposits overlying Upper Chalk.

1.2.2 The site is currently occupied by a single story dwelling and its gardens.

1.2.3 The site covers an area of c. 160m<sup>2</sup> and is bounded to the north, east and west by residential properties and to the south by a railway cutting.

1.2.4 Level natural head deposits were encountered c. 0.55m below existing ground level (BGL).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 The proposed work involves the erection of two single storey side extensions to the property, one to the east and one to the west. Planning permission was sought from Lewes District Council (LDC Planning Ref: LW/11/0253/NP) for the development and was approved under delegated powers by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) subject to conditions.

1.3.2 The site lies directly beyond the northeast corner of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Priory of St Pancras which is bisected in two by the railway cutting; and c. 50m west of the Scheduled Ancient Monument 'The Mount'.

1.3.3 In view of the site's archaeological potential Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), after having inspected photographs supplied by the client of a number of geotechnical test pits that had been excavated on site by the applicant and observed no archaeological remains, Greg Chuter recommended that an archaeological watching brief during groundworks be applied as a condition of planning permission. Accordingly, Condition 2 states:

*"No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has/have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that approval.*

*REASON: The development is likely to disturb remains of archaeological*

*interest, having regard to National Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.”*

- 1.3.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was thus produced by ASE for the proposed archaeological works (ASE 2011) and approved by Greg Chuter.

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.4.1 The general aim of the watching brief was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains exposed during the groundworks to appropriate archaeological standards.
- 1.4.2 The watching brief also assessed past impacts on the site and recorded the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of deposits.
- 1.4.3 Specific aims for archaeological work in Lewes as set out in the Historic Environment Research Framework in the Lewes Historic Character Assessment Report (Harris 2005) and reproduced in the approved WSI (ASE 2011) as aims for archaeological fieldwork in Lewes include:

##### **Pre-urban activity**

**RQ1:** What was the nature of the palaeo-environment (ancient environment), and the prehistoric, Roman, and Early Anglo-Saxon human activity in the area?

##### **Origins**

**RQ5:** What evidence is there for Anglo-Saxon secular settlement (and its economy), both within and without the burh?

**RQ6:** What was the road layout, how did this evolve, and how did it relate to east-west routes, river crossings, a transhumant Downland-Wealden economy, and the burh?

##### **Late Anglo-Saxon and Norman town**

**RQ7:** What was the extent of the town and its suburbs in the 11th and 12th centuries, and to what degree did it change over this period?

**RQ8:** What evidence is there for the evolution of the street plan during this period, especially in relation to the expanding settlement and the development of suburbs?

**RQ9:** What evidence is there for early burgage plots, and when and where did built-up street frontages first occur?

**RQ10:** What different zones (especially with reference to the suburbs) were there during this period, and how did they change (assessing the value of the Domesday Book evidence for late 11th-century change)?

**RQ11:** What archaeological evidence is there for the origins of the priory?

**Later medieval town**

**RQ16:** How have tenements/burgage plots developed from the first built-up street frontages to the plots that survive today?

**RQ17:** What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider industry) were there during this period, and how did they change?

**RQ18:** What evidence is there for the development and of institutions, such as the castle, priory, friary, hospitals, chantries, and grammar school?

**RQ19:** What documentary and archaeological evidence is there for late medieval decline?

**Post-medieval town**

**RQ22:** What different zones (e.g. social differentiation, or types of activity: especially consider the brewing and tanning industries) were there during this period, and how did they change?

**1.5 Scope of the report**

- 1.5.1 This report provides an account of an archaeological watching brief undertaken between 16th and 17th May 2011 by Dylan Hopkinson (Archaeologist).
- 1.5.2 The fieldwork was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and the post-excavation analysis was managed by Jim Stevenson (Project Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Lewes has some prehistoric and Roman antiquity. Evidence for earlier prehistoric activity in Lewes is in the form of scatters of residual flints of Neolithic to Late Bronze Age date. It should not be overlooked, however, that Lewes is surrounded by prehistoric monuments of Neolithic to Iron Age date including a causewayed enclosure, various barrows and the Iron-Age hillfort at Mount Caburn and it is not unlikely that prehistoric remains exist buried beneath Lewes itself. Indeed recent the excavations at the 'Lewes Residential' site to the rear of Lewes Library have uncovered evidence of Middle/Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and farming (Swift 2009).
- 2.2** No other significant evidence for Romano-British settlement at Lewes has yet been discovered, although there is some evidence for burials along the ridge and residual artefacts have been found in the town, including pottery, tiles and Roman coins, so it now seems likely that the area of the town was inhabited during the Roman period.
- 2.3** Archaeological evidence of Early and mid-Saxon settlement in Lewes is limited to the finding of a throwing axe, a seax (short sword) found beneath the High Street in 1899, and two pagan cemeteries on the edge of the town, although some residual 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century pottery has also found by ASE within a medieval ditch on the western edge of the Lewes Residential site.
- 2.4** During the later Saxon period, Lewes was established as a burh, a fortress established by Alfred the Great in 878-9 as a defence against Danish raiders, the defences and street pattern of which influenced the layout of the later town. Recent excavations by ASE at Baxters Printworks located a large ditch on the west side of St Nicholas Lane which has been interpreted as the eastern (and previously unlocated) defensive ditch for the burh. At the Lewes Residential site some 26 features have been dated by pottery to the Later Saxon period. The town developed rapidly during this time as a trading centre, with a major mint recorded in the reign of Athelstan (924-39); a coin hoard was recently found on the eastern side of the Baxters Printworks site, comprising 17 silver pennies of Edward the Elder (899-924).
- 2.5** William de Warenne, a Norman baron and brother-in-law of William the Conqueror took a leading role in the Norman Conquest, and was rewarded with extensive lands in Sussex (Mayhew 2008, 1). Following a pilgrimage to the abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul at Cluny, Burgundy, de Warenne and his wife Gundreda persuaded its abbot, Saint Hugh, to send Prior Lanzo and three monks to establish a Cluniac Priory at Lewes. This Priory was founded sometime between 1078 and 1082 on a promontory overlooking the Ouse valley, apparently on and around the site of an earlier Late Anglo-Saxon church. Lewes Priory was the first monastic house in England to belong to the reformed Benedictine Order of Cluny. The application site lies within the northern boundary of the priory precinct which extended as far as the southern side of Southover High Street.
- 2.6** The Priory, dedicated to St. Pancras, became one of the wealthiest monasteries in England, largely due to the great lands presented to it by the founders and their descendents. Yet the Priory had no significant role in

national, political or religious affairs, except during the Second Barons' War when it was occupied by King Henry III both before and after the Battle of Lewes in 1264. The king sought refuge within the priory, which was besieged by Simon de Montfort's men. During the process, the church was set on fire by flaming arrows but the overall structural damage to the Priory was small (Poole 2000, 27). The subsequent royalist defeat made de Montfort the uncrowned King of England until the following year when he was killed at the Battle of Evesham.

- 2.7** The Priory expanded through the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The main buildings, including the great Priory church, were built in Quarr limestone between c.1082 and c.1100 and in Caen limestone from c.1145 to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century the monastery was rarely free of debt (caused in part by the French wars). This limited the scope of its later building projects to largely repair work and led to the reduction in the number of monks at Lewes from over 100 in 1240, to 50 by 1279, 40 by 1381 and just 29 by 1534 (Mayhew 2008, 5).
- 2.8** At the time of its dissolution in November 1537, Lewes Priory was still one of the great English monasteries and the chief house of the Cluniac Order in England (Mayhew 2008, 6).
- 2.9** Thomas Cromwell (who organised the dissolution of the monasteries in England) contracted the Italian military engineer Giovanni Portinari and his men to destroy the churches at Lewes Priory in March 1538 (Mayhew 2008, 6). This was achieved in a matter of days by excavating trenches to undermine the walls, so that the masonry could be propped up with timber and set alight for the stonework to crash down. The surviving domestic buildings in the prior's lodgings complex were adapted as a home for Thomas Cromwell's son (*ibid*, 8).
- 2.10** On Cromwell's execution in 1540 his Lewes land was in part retained by the crown and granted to King Henry VIII's divorced fourth wife, Anne of Cleves (Poole 2000, 34). The rest of the old precinct, c. 20 acres of the original 39 acres, was leased for 21 years to Nicolas Jenney, a former Priory servant (Mayhew 2008, 8). On his death in 1550, the remaining time of the lease was acquired by William Newton. Newton used stone from the Priory; for example, to build Southover Grange just beyond the north wall of the former Priory precinct. On the death of Anne in 1559, the manor of Southover passed to Sir Richard Sackville who used the prior's lodgings only sporadically (Poole 2000, 34; Mayhew 2008, 9).
- 2.11** His son later occupied Lord's Place (as it was known from the 1570s) for just a few days a year. Lord's Place and the borough of Southover passed to John Tufton, the second Earl of Thanet, and it was his son Thomas who in 1668 sold the ruinous house to local builders as a source of building material (Poole 2000, 35; Mayhew 2008, 9). He sold the manor of Southover and the Priory lands to Nathaniel Trayton in 1705 (Poole 2000, 36-37). When Trayton's son died in debt in 1761, the estate was left to his chief creditor Samuel Durrant. On his death in 1782, the land was passed to his cousin, also Samuel Durrant.
- 2.12** Later episodes of quarrying at the Priory site, including of the extensive

cross-shaped dovecot, are recorded as having occurred during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in order to supply the construction industry or improve the pasturage (Mayhew 2008, 10).

- 2.13** In 1845 works for the new railway line between Lewes and Brighton cut a diagonal section across the ruins of Lewes Priory. This cutting forms the southern boundary of the site.
- 2.14** The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows a structure located within the footprint of the existing dwelling in the north-western corner of the site.
- 2.15** A plan of the upstanding ruins, together with elements of recently excavated masonry remains, was published in 1906 (St John Hope 1906). This shows the site to the northwest of the priory church.
- 2.16** Two areas either side of the railway line are designated as Scheduled Monuments (SM 28890). The northeast corner of the northern of these two areas lies immediately southwest of the site boundary.
- 2.17** The site is also c. 50m to the west of the Scheduled Monument of The Mount (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. ES 55).

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

- 3.1.1** All groundwork excavations were monitored by an archaeologist and took place between 16th and 17th May 2011. The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI 2011), the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008), and the East Sussex County Council Standards (ESCC 2008). Greg Chuter was kept informed of the progress of the work.
- 3.1.2** Two areas totalling c. 32m<sup>2</sup> located to the east and west of the existing cottage were excavated by contractors, by hand to a depth of 0.55m BGL (Fig. 2).
- 3.1.3** The areas were monitored to assess archaeological potential and survival, and all were left open over the two days of the works to allow any potential features to weather out. Adequate time was made available during the work for the archaeologists to investigate and record anything of potential archaeological or historical interest that was uncovered.
- 3.1.4** All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection.
- 3.1.5** Section drawings of the excavated profiles were drawn at a scale of 1:10, sample section drawings of the overlying deposits were also drawn at 1:10 scale on plastic drafting film, and a photographic record was made recording all features and contexts.

3.1.6 The areas and feature locations were recorded against scaled site plans by hand measurement.

### **3.2 Site archive**

3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be housed by Lewes museum in due course. Lewes Museum does not give out archive accession numbers. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Watching Brief Record Sheets	2
Number of Context Sheets	2
Photographic Record Sheets	1
Photographs	21
No. of files/paper record	1

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

#### **4.0 RESULTS**

- 4.1** Two areas totalling c. 32m<sup>2</sup> located to the east and west of the existing cottage were excavated by contractors, by hand to a depth of 0.55m BGL (Fig. 2).
- 4.2** The same sequence was uncovered across the whole of both areas:
- 4.3** A thickness of up to c. 0.55m of topsoil (greyish brown sandy silts with occasional gravels and chalk pieces [001]) directly overlay natural clean head deposits (mid brown fine sandy silt with a high incidence of crushed and compacted chalk pieces less than 2cm in diameter [002]).
- 4.3** A single feature was investigated in the north-eastern corner of the eastern area. This proved to be a modern garden feature and contained topsoil and finds of late post-medieval transfer printed pottery and plastic. A modern manhole was also recorded in the western area.
- 4.4** Surprisingly, no archaeological finds or features were identified during the watching brief.

#### **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** A single cut feature was investigated but proved to have no archaeological significance and was attributed to activities relating to the garden of Rose Cottage. Areas of disturbed natural were also identified relating to outhouses and existing extensions to the cottage and to the drainage system for the property.
- 5.2** The railway cutting to the south of the property was excavated in 1845 while the first structures identified on the site are shown on the 1873 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25". It is possible therefore that the site was subject to severe modification related to the works on the railway cutting or to the construction of Rose Cottage. Indeed, the lack of any subsoil or residual archaeological finds would suggest that the whole site had been previously reduced to natural head deposits at some time in the past
- 5.3** The strategy of archaeological monitoring by watching brief during the hand excavation within the development footprint, has been successful in fulfilling the aim of assessing archaeological character and deposit survival.

## **Bibliography**

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## **Acknowledgements**

ASE would like to thank Graham MacDonald for commissioning the work and Greg Chuter of ESCC for his guidance throughout the project.

### HER Summary Form

Site Code	RCL 11					
Identification Name and Address	Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1HL					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 541491 109669					
Geology	Undifferentiated Head deposits overlying Upper Chalk.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4886					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	<del>Excav.</del>	<b>Watching brief.</b> ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	<del>Green Field</del>	<b>Shallow Urban</b> ✓	<del>Deep Urban</del>	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	<del>Eval.</del>	<del>Excav.</del>	<b>W.B.</b> 16-05-2011 to 17-05-2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Graham MacDonald					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Dylan Hopkinson					
Period Summary	<del>Palaeo.</del>	<del>Meso.</del>	<del>Neo.</del>	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	<b>PM</b> ✓	<del>Other Modern</del>		
100 Word Summary						
<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was conducted in the gardens of Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes. Archaeology South-East was commissioned to carry out the work by Graham MacDonald, in order to fulfil the archaeological condition of planning permission regarding the construction of extensions to the cottage at the front and back of the building. The work was carried out between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011.</i></p> <p><i>A total area of c. 32m<sup>2</sup> was monitored by hand in order to assess archaeological potential and survival at the site. Topsoil was recorded directly overlying natural head deposits at c. 0.55m BGL. The lack of subsoil and/or residual archaeological finds suggests that the whole site has been previously reduced to natural head deposits at some time in the past, probably during construction of Rose Cottage or during construction for the railway cutting immediately south of the site.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the watching brief.</i></p>						

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-102679**

### **Project details**

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief at Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief was conducted in the gardens of Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes. Archaeology South-East was commissioned to carry out the work by Graham MacDonald, in order to fulfil the archaeological condition of planning permission regarding the construction of extensions to the cottage at the front and back of the building. The work was carried out between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011.</p> <p>A total area of c. 32m<sup>2</sup> was monitored by hand in order to assess archaeological potential and survival at the site. Topsoil was recorded directly overlying natural head deposits at c. 0.55m BGL. The lack of subsoil and/or residual archaeological finds suggests that the whole site has been previously reduced to natural head deposits at some time in the past, probably during construction of Rose Cottage or during construction for the railway cutting immediately south of the site.</p> <p>No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the watching brief.</p>
Project dates	Start: 16-05-2011 End: 17-05-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LW/11/0253/NP - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	RCL 11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Site status (other)	Adjacent to Scheduled Monuments
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE Post Medieval

Significant Finds	NONE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

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### **Project location**

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES LEWES Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes
Postcode	BN7 1HL
Study area	37.23 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 41491 09669 50.8686096567 0.01101881936710 50 52 06 N 000 00 39 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Lat/Long Datum (other)	Below existing GL
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.55m Max: 0.55m

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### **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
Project supervisor	Dylan Hopkinson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding	Graham MacDonald

body

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet'

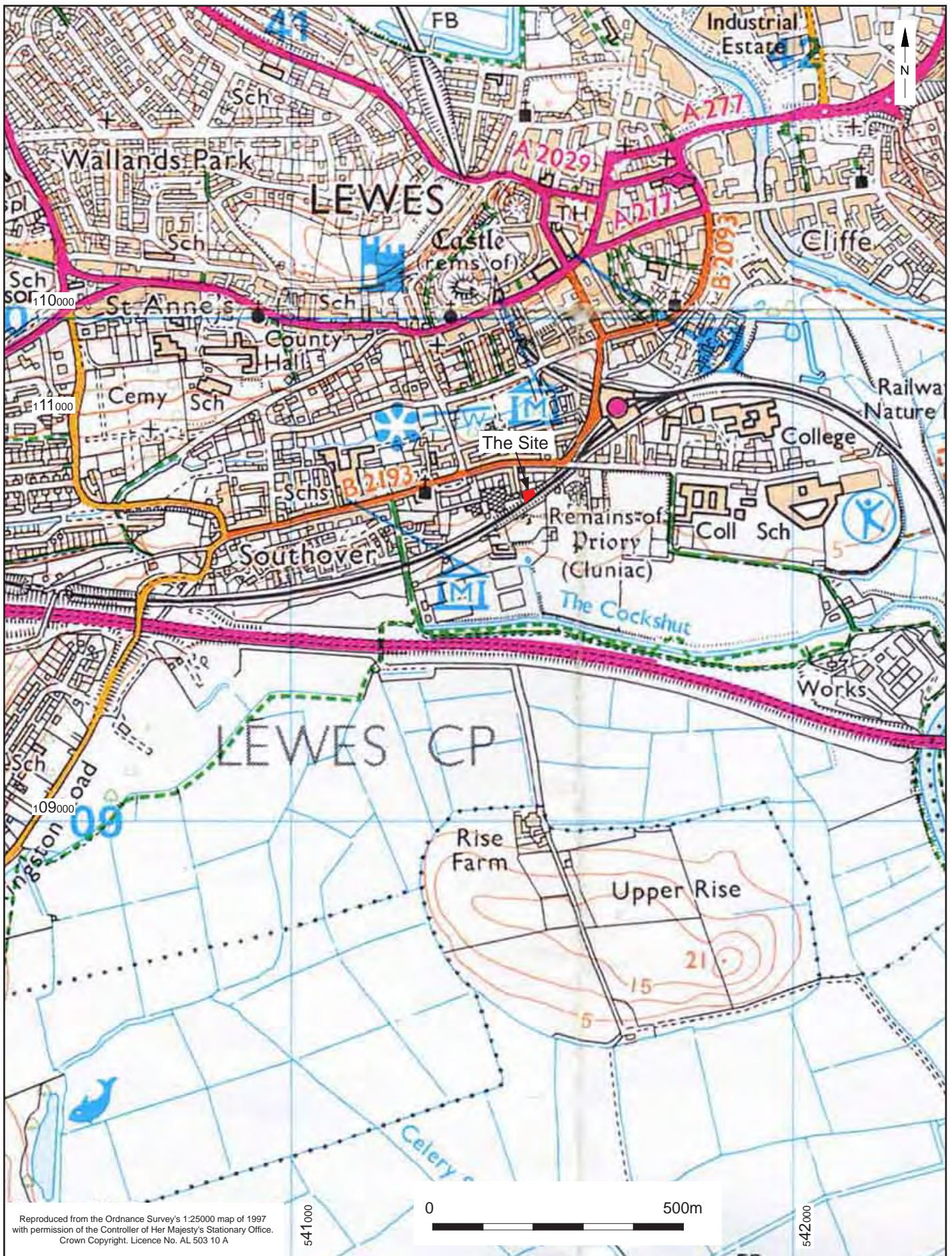
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**Project bibliography 1**

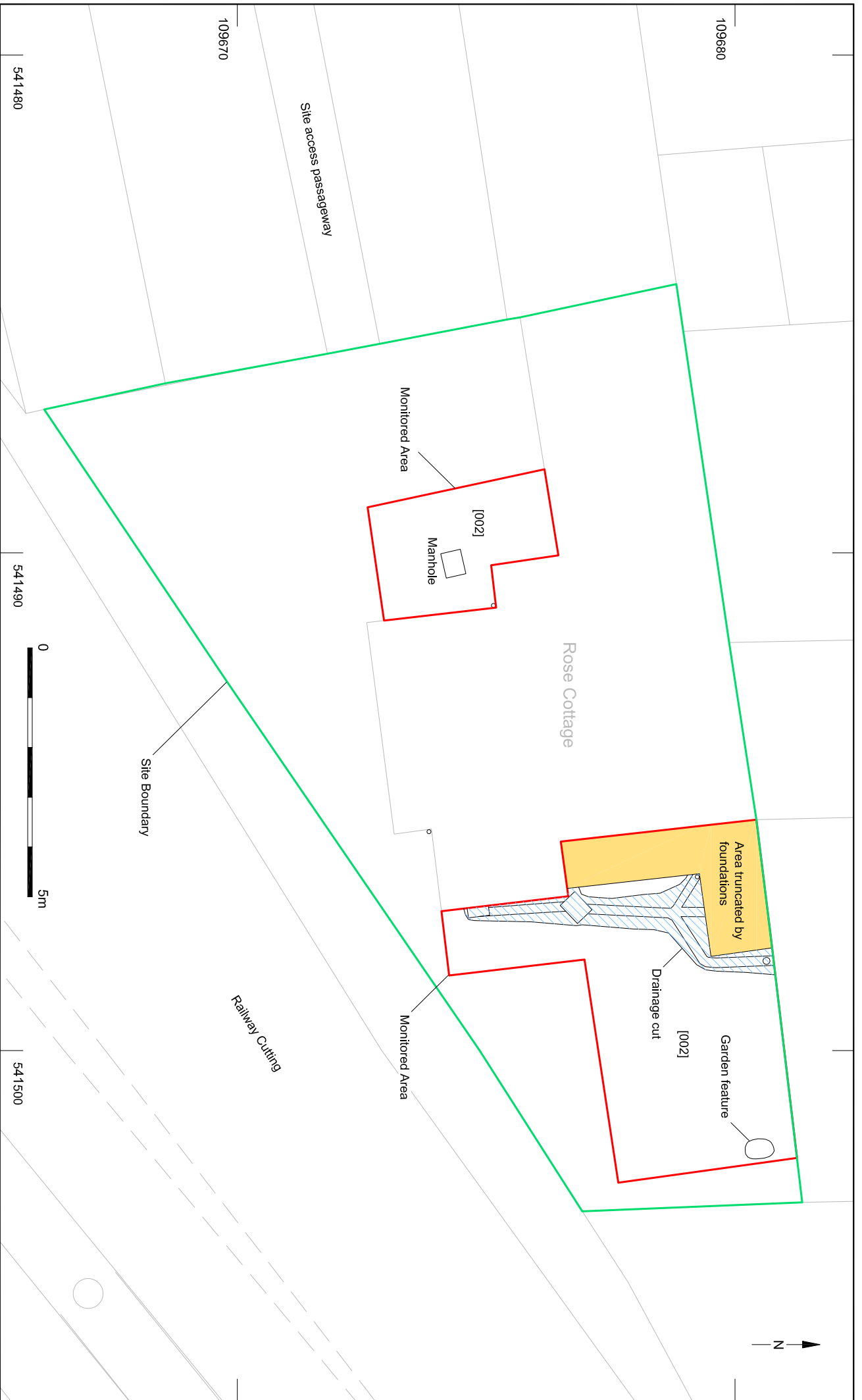
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1HL
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© Archaeology South-East		Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4886	May 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011117	Drawn by: FEG		



© Archaeology South-East		Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes
Project Ref: 4886	June 2011	Site plan
Report Ref: 2011117	Drawn by: DJH	

Fig. 2



Composite photograph of eastern monitored area looking northwest



Garden feature in northeast corner of site



Western monitored area looking north

© Archaeology South-East		Rose Cottage, Mount Street, Lewes	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 4886	May 2011	Selected photographs	
Report Ref: 2011117	Drawn by: DJH		

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