

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Old Coppers, Mayfield  
East Sussex**

**NGR 558351 126939**

**Project No. 4934  
Site Code: MOC11**

**Wealden District Council Planning Reference WD/2011/0430/L**

**ASE Report No. 2011129  
OASIS ID: archaeol6-102359**

**by  
Simon Stevens BA MIFA**

**With a contribution by  
Sarah Porteus**

**June 2011**

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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](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)**

**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the erection of an extension to Old Coppers, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex. Mechanical and manual excavations of strip footings were monitored as well as limited ground reduction. The only observed features were two late post-medieval brick and stone-built wells. No other significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered.*

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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 Pumphouse Designs on behalf of their clients Mr and Mrs Thompson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the erection of an extension to Old Coppers, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex (NGR 558351 126939) (Fig. 1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 The house lies on the northern side of the High Street/Station Road at a height of approximately 12mAOD. It is bounded to the west by the grounds of Colkins Mill Church and to the east by a lane called *The Grove*. The garden of a property called *St. Anthony* lies to the north.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1: 50 000 map of the area (Sheet 303, *Tunbridge Wells*), the underlying geology at the site is Tunbridge Wells Sand, with Wadhurst Clay to the north and south.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Planning permission was granted by Wealden District Council for the demolition of an existing garage and for the erection of a single storey extension to the existing building (planning reference WD/2011/0430/L) Following consultation between Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council (Wealden District Council's advisers on archaeological issues) a condition was attached to the permission requiring the:

*'implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be carried out in accordance with that approval.*

*Reason: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, as the development is likely to disturb remains of archaeological interest, in accordance with requirements within PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and Policy BE12 of Non Statutory Wealden Local Plan.'*

1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* was duly produced by ASE. This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in the subsequent reporting and archiving of the results (ASE 2011). It was approved by East Sussex County Council before the commencement of work at the site.

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The objectives and aims given in the *WSI* (ASE 2011, 3) were to

*'record, interpret and report on any archaeological and palaeoarchaeological remains exposed during the groundworks (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.*

*The watching brief will also assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.'*

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks at the site carried out during late May and early June 2011. The work was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), and by Nick Garland (Archaeologist). The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Senior Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A search of the East Sussex County Council Historic Environment Records (HER) showed that the following sites/finds are located with a 1km radius of the site. Desk based assessments (DBAs) and listed buildings of an undetermined age have not been included:

Monument/Event no.	Monument/Event Type	Description
MES4613	Bloomeries	Medieval/post-medieval
MES4626	Timber framed house	16 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4627	Timber framed house	15 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4628	Timber framed house	16 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4629	St Dunstan's Church	13 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4630	Guest house of convent	18 <sup>th</sup> Century
MES4636	Archbishop's Palace	c. 1280 AD
MES4637	Bloomery	Medieval/post-medieval
MES4638	Palstave Axe	Middle Bronze Age
MES4639	Partly polished Flint Axe	Neolithic
MES4640	Polished Flint Axe	Neolithic
MES4647	Farm	medieval
MES4656	Mayfield Station	19 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4661	Coggins Mills	Medieval Hamlet
MES4674	Timber framed house	14 <sup>th</sup> century
MES4876	Trackway	prehistoric
MES16012	Coin	16 <sup>th</sup> century
MES17045	Brickworks	19 <sup>th</sup> century
EES14582	Watching Brief	negative
EES14722	Evaluation	negative
EES14732	Watching Brief	negative

Table 1: HER data

- 2.2 There has been virtually no recorded archaeological investigation in Mayfield or in the immediate surroundings owing to the modest level of development which has occurred in the area. Threat-led archaeological fieldwork within the town is limited to an archaeological evaluation (EES14722) conducted in 2009, which uncovered evidence of a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick drain, a medieval/post-medieval ditch terminus and artefactual evidence from the medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 2.3 The Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Mayfield suggests that the earliest evidence for the town relates to the probable building of a wooden church by Archbishop Dunstan in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. A weekly market and a three day fair were instigated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, shortly after the construction of the Archbishop's Palace. The rate of growth of the town is uncertain but by 1388-9, records show that 85 shops were damaged in a fire, suggesting that the town was of some size by that time (Harris 2008).
- 2.4 The site lies within Harris's (2008, 33), '*Station Road Historic Urban Character Area*', which is described as '*on the western edge of, and mostly outside, the medieval and early post-medieval town*' (*ibid.*). However there are a number of known medieval ironworking sites in the general area (Cleere and Crossley 1995).

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 Mechanical and manual excavations of the foundations of the new structure were monitored, as well as the limited ground reduction work. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard 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 Barbican House Museum, Lewes, which at the present time does not issue unique accession numbers for archives. The archive consists of the following:

Number of Contexts	8
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photograph	26 digital photos
Bulk finds	Brick Sample (discarded)
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 2: Quantification of Site Archive

## 4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 2)

4.1 A total of seven contexts were recorded during the works and these summarised in the table below.

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Max.length (m)	Max. Width (m)	Max. Depth (m)
001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.25
002	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.50
003	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-
004	Structure	Collapsed well/soakaway	1.4m diameter		Trench
005	Cut	Cut for well/ soakaway	Not seen		
006	Structure	Well/soakaway	0.98m diameter		Trench
007	Cut	Cut for well/ soakaway	Not seen		

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

- 4.1 It was noted during a visit to the site on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011, that some ground reduction had been undertaken to the rear of the property. Observation of available sections showed a straightforward stratigraphic sequence consisting of a 250mm thick layer of light greyish brown topsoil, context [001], which overlay a 450mm to 500mm thick layer of light grey subsoil, context [002], which in turn overlay the light yellow silty clay 'natural' deposits, context [003].
- 4.2 The mechanical and manual excavation of the footings trenches for the extension were monitored on the following two days. They were excavated by a Kubota U25-3 mini-excavator and were 600mm wide and a maximum of 1.0m deep. There was also some limited ground reduction using the same machine, within the footprint of the new extension.
- 4.3 The entire length of the trench located to the rear of the property was excavated through the archaeologically sterile 'natural' deposit, context [003] which became noticeably more stony and laminar towards the base of the trench. The area between the trench and the house was mechanically reduced by c.50mm, again only through 'natural' Tunbridge Wells Sand.
- 4.4 The northern arm of the foundation trench was located in an area in which some topsoil, context [001] and subsoil [002] were intermittently present, although neither were ever more than 200mm in thickness. The topsoil also contained a higher concentration of brick rubble than noted to the rear of the property. It was noted that tarmac and concrete had been mechanically removed from this area and stockpiled prior to the monitoring visits.
- 4.5 A collapsed well/soakaway was encountered close to the north-eastern junction of the footings trenches, visible only in the eastern baulk of the trench. It consisted of a deposit of mid-greyish brown ?garden soil and modern brick rubble (consisting of frogged bricks, some marked 'Warnham') recorded as context [004], which was c.1.4m in diameter and extended to the base of the trench. The construction cut for the well, cut [005] could not be clearly defined as the section could not be cleaned safely owing to the danger of collapse.

- 4.6 Another similar feature was encountered to the south. The masonry forming the structure of the well (context [006]) was more intact until it was disturbed by the footings trench, and consisted of brick and stone set in a strong lime mortar, forming a well with a maximum diameter of 980mm, thinning to 620mm at the top, which was just below current ground level. A brick sample was retained for dating purposes. The feature extended below the base of the trench, and was in undetected construction cut [007]. Although the upper 700mm of the well was still 'open', the lower part was filled with a mixture of mid-greyish brown silty clay garden soil and brick rubble, context [008]. It is possible that this feature was also a soakaway rather than a well.

## **5.0 THE FINDS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered from the limited overburden at the site. However a sample of brick from one of the wells was retained.

### **5.2 The Ceramic Building Material** by Sarah Porteus

5.2.1 A single brick was recovered from context [006] weighing 3086g with complete dimensions of 235mm by 102mm by 60mm. The brick was in an orange sandy fabric with moderate black iron rich inclusions and grey vitrified headers. The brick was mortared with loose cream sandy lime mortar and was unfrogged with sharp arises, the brick is of probable 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered during the archaeological monitoring of the groundworks at the site. Cartographic evidence shows that the house post-dates the Ordnance Survey map of 1875 (reproduced in Harris 2008 as Map 3), and it is likely that both of the wells/soakaways were built after this date, especially in the case of the feature recorded as cut [005], fill [004], which was clearly modern.
- 6.2 Therefore based on currently available evidence, the results from the watching brief go some way to confirming Harris's contention that the site lies at some distance from the focus of the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Mayfield further to the east. (*op. cit.*).

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The implementation of an archaeological watching brief at the site was a condition of the planning process and would have resulted in the identification, recording and publication of any significant archaeological remains, had they been encountered at the site.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ASE. 2011. *Old Coppers, Mayfield, East Sussex TN20 6BT Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpub. ASE document.

Cleere, H. and Crossley, D. 1995. *The Iron Industry of the Weald*, Merton Priory Press, 2nd edition

Harris, R. 2008. *Mayfield Historic Character Assessment Report*. Unpub Sussex Extensive Urban Survey document (EUS)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are due to Pumphouse Designs for commissioning the work. The input of Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council at all stages of the project is also gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due for the co-operation of the groundworkers from AJN Brickwork.

### HER Summary Form

Site Code	MOC11					
Identification Name and Address	The Old Coppers, High Street, Mayfield					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District, East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	558351 126939					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sand					
4488	4934					
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. May - June 2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Pumphouse Designs on behalf of Mr and Mrs Thompson					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
100 Word Summary.						
<p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the erection of an extension to Old Coppers, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex. Mechanical and manual excavations of strip footings were monitored as well as limited ground reduction. The only observed features were two late post-medieval brick and stone-built wells. No other significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered.</i></p>						

## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-102359**

### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Old Coppers, Mayfield, East Sussex
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the erection of an extension to Old Coppers, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex. Mechanical and manual excavations of strip footings were monitored as well as limited ground reduction. The only observed features were two late post-medieval brick and stone-built wells. No other significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 31-05-2011 End: 02-06-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	4934 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	MOC11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Monument type	WELL Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX WEALDEN MAYFIELD Old Coppers, Station Road
Postcode	TN20 6BT
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 58351 26939 51.0194203623 0.257972511314 51 01 09 N 000 15 28 E Point

Height OD / Depth     Min: 120.00m Max: 130.00m

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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	Darryl Palmer/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Pumphouse Designs

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography',' Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Lewes Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Miscellaneous Material', 'Report',' Unpublished Text'

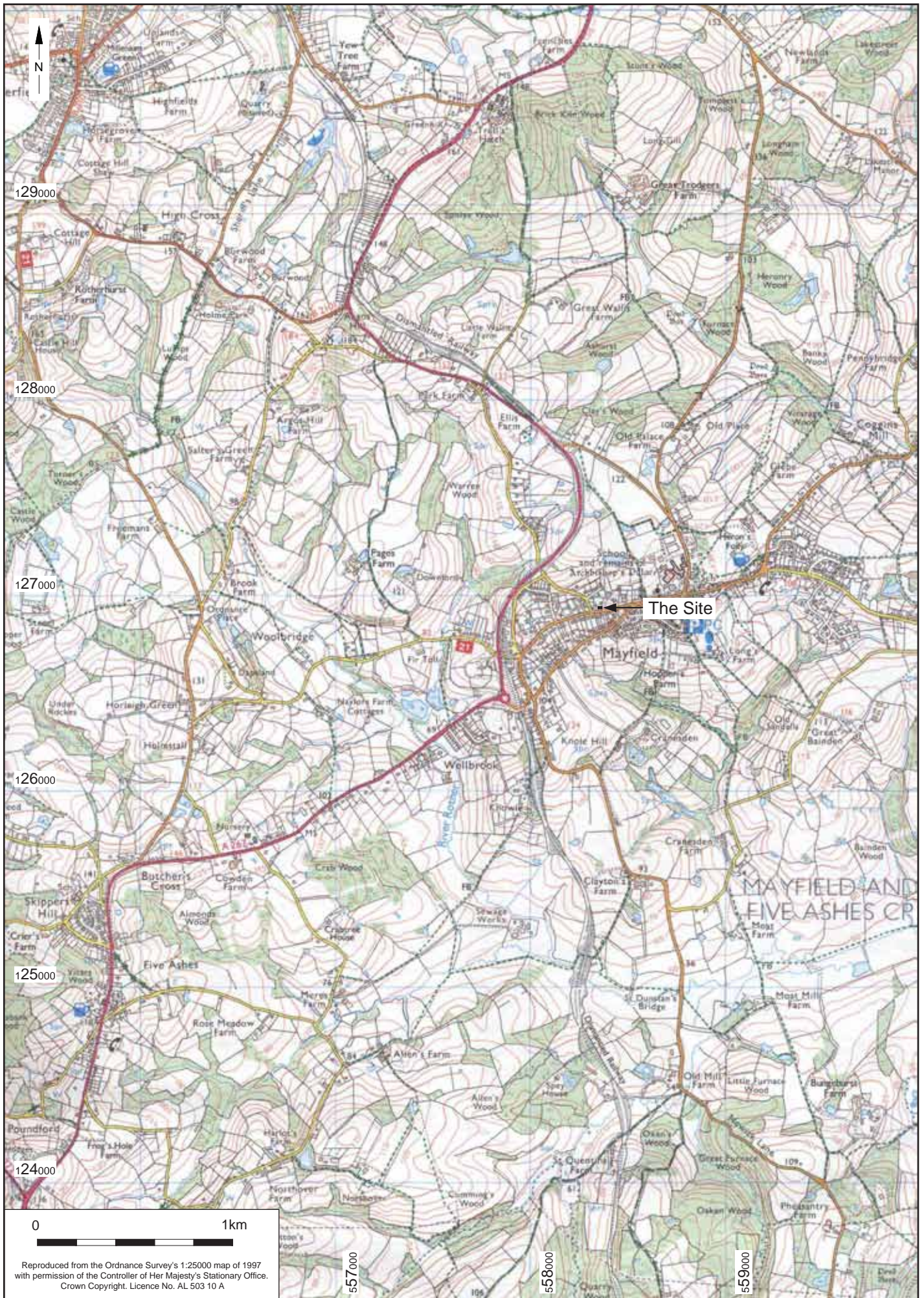
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**Project bibliography 1**

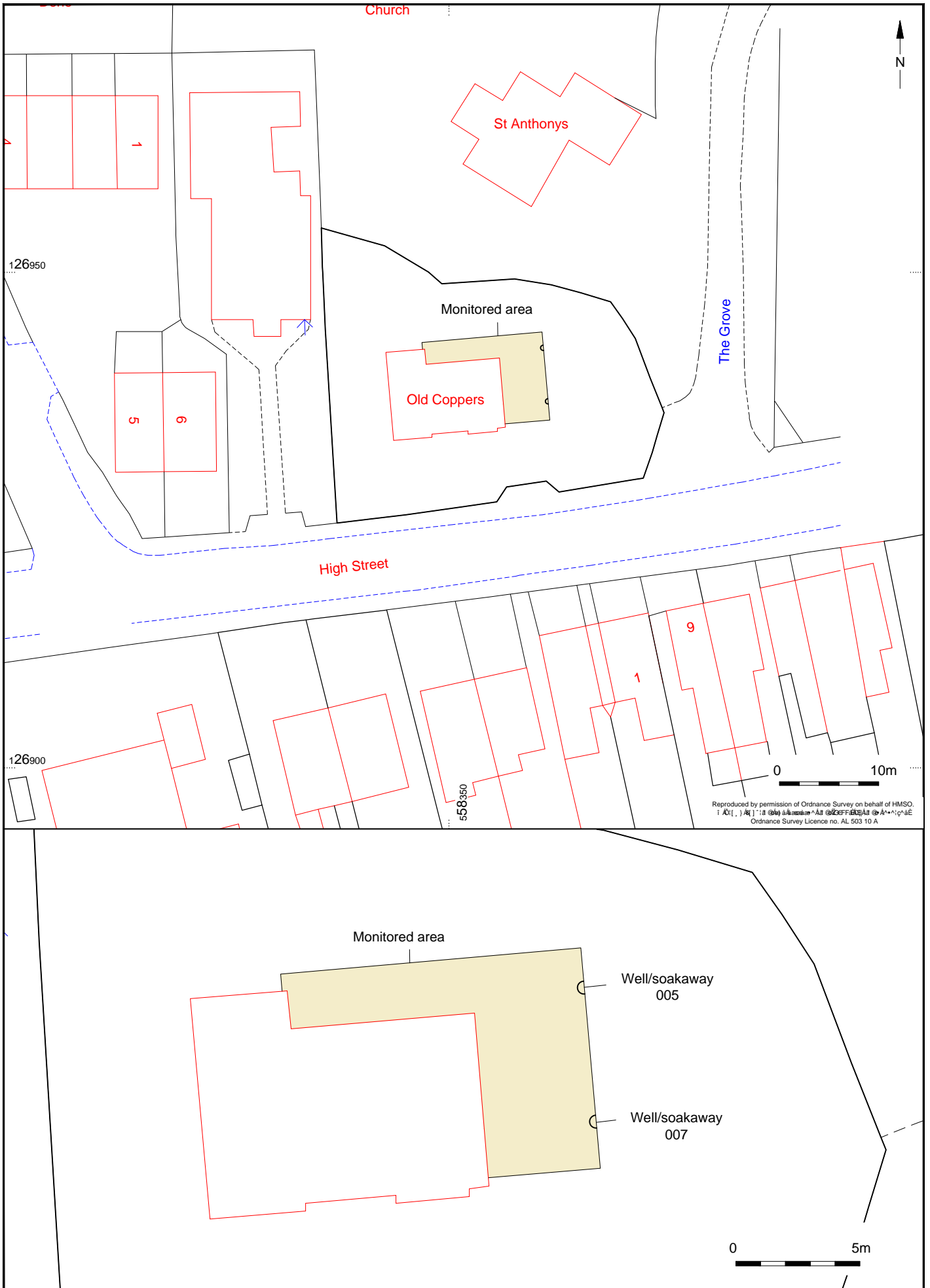
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© Archaeology South-East		Old Coppers, Mayfield	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4934	June 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011129	Drawn by: JLR		



Archaeology South-East Project Ref: 4934    June 2011 Report Ref: 2011129    Drawn by: JLR		Old Coppers, Mayfield Plan of monitored area	Fig. 2
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Well [004] viewed from the west



Well [006] viewed from the west

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](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://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](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

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

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