

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Waterside Reach, Sovereign Way
Tonbridge, Kent**

**NGR: 559060 146333
(TQ 59060 46333)**

Planning Ref: 10/01770/FUL

**ASE Project No: 6373
Site Code: TSH14**

**ASE Report No: 2014037
OASIS ID: archaeol6-170739**



By John Cook

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February 2014

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of Sovereign House, Tonbridge, Kent.

Despite known archaeological activity in the surrounding area, no evidence of archaeological remains was recorded and no artefacts were recovered in the evaluation. This may be due to extensive truncation caused by the construction and demolition of Sovereign House which appears to have resulted in the removal of any potential subsoil and/or potential shallow archaeological deposits right down to the natural clay and the deposition of a c. 1m thick layer of demolition material / made ground in all evaluated areas.

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Archaeological Background
3.0	Archaeological Methodology
4.0	Results
5.0	The Finds
6.0	The Environmental Samples
7.0	Discussion and Conclusions

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary
OASIS Form

TABLES

Table 1: Quantification of site archive
Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts
Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts
Table 4: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location
Figure 2: Trench location
Figure 3: Photographs of Trenches 1, 2 and 3

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of Sovereign House, Tonbridge, Kent, hereafter referred to as 'the site' (centred NGR TQ 59060 46333; Figure 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.2 The solid geology of the site is Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium - clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2014).
- 1.2.3 The study site is situated at approximately 22m AOD. The site is located near the centre of Tonbridge, to the east of the High Street, situated between the River Medway and Botany Stream.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission for the sites development was given (Ref.:10/01770/FUL) with the following archaeological condition (19):

No development of any phase in accordance with Condition 2 shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work relating to that phase in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

- 1.3.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation (CgMs 2013) was prepared and submitted to KCC prior to fieldwork.

1.4 Aims and Objectives (*ibid.*)

- 1.4.1 The general aim of the evaluation is to establish the presence/absence of significant archaeological remains which would be a constraint on development anywhere within the site.
- 1.4.2 The evaluation should attempt to:
- Ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site
 - Establish the extent to which previous development and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the site

- Establish the likely impact on geoarchaeological and archaeological deposits of the proposed development

1.4.3 Site specific aims that should be addressed by the evaluation include:

- Establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation associated with the medieval settlement of Tonbridge
- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes
- To assess the potential impact of development on any archaeology
- To assess the existing impacts on archaeological potential
- To enhance understanding of the landscape and environmental history of the area
- To evaluate the presence of prehistoric deposits or features

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report provides an account of the archaeological evaluation undertaken on the 24th January 2014 by John Cook (Senior Archaeologist), and Liz Chambers (Assistant Archaeologist).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following archaeological summary is taken from a Desk Based Assessment of the site (CgMs 2008).

2.2 Palaeolithic

- 2.2.1 The SMR records only a single site of Palaeolithic date within the study area. An Acheulian hand axe was found in the garden of No. 1 Woodside Road c. 1km southwest of the study site (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 35 - MKE15997). The alluvial deposits associated with the River Medway are thought to be of Holocene date. Therefore, the site is considered to have no potential for in-situ remains or artefactual material of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic date. In the Upper Palaeolithic, hunter-gathers exploited valley floor locations. However, in view of the lack of evidence locally, a low potential for in-situ remains and lithics (worked and waste flint) is suggested. Even if present, any deposits would be buried at depth within and beneath alluvium.

2.3 Mesolithic

- 2.3.1 The Kent SMR records the discovery of Mesolithic flint implements at Martin's Field, Tonbridge (SMR ref: TQ 54 NE 15-MKE179). However, the location of Martin's Field is unknown. In view of the low level of Mesolithic material from the study area, a low potential is identified for finds or other evidence on the study site itself.

2.4 Neolithic-Bronze Age

- 2.4.1 From around 4000 BC the mobile hunter gathering economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled agriculture-based subsistence. The pace of woodland clearance to create arable and pasture-based agricultural land varied regionally and locally, depending on a wide variety of climatic, topographic, social and other factors. The trend was one of a slow, but gradually increasing pace of forest clearance. Within the Medway Valley, it is likely that in parallel with clearance of the North Downs, the first farmers initially cleared areas along the valley floor and lower valley sides, where alluvial and lighter, gravel-based soils occur. By the 1st millennium, i.e. 1000 BC, the landscape was probably a mix of extensive tracts of open farmland, punctuated by earthwork burial and ceremonial monuments from distant generations, with settlements, ritual areas and defended locations reflecting an increasingly hierarchical society. However, within a 1km radius of the study site there are no Neolithic or Bronze Age sites or finds recorded on the Kent SMR. The absence of Neolithic sites and finds suggests that this section of the Medway Valley was not cleared at least until the late Bronze Age. Accordingly, a nil-low potential is identified for Neolithic sub-surface remains and for lithics (worked and waste flint) within the site.

2.5 Iron Age

- 2.5.1 The Iron Age is characterised in this region by settlement stability and the large-scale organisation of the landscape, developments that began in the Late Bronze Age. Settlement evidence is plentiful and diverse, ranging from

individual farmsteads occupied by a single household, to enclosed settlements holding much larger communities. 'Castle Hill' hillfort some 2.km southeast of the study site probably played a pre-eminent part in the local settlement hierarchy. The Kent SMR records the discovery of a single Iron Age coin near Tonbridge (SMR ref: TQ 54 NE 5-MKE169). The Grid Reference for the SMR entry locates the find c. 60m northwest of the study site. However, the SMR description suggests the coin may have been found elsewhere in Tonbridge. In view of the paucity of evidence from the vicinity of study site, a low potential is identified for Iron Age material at the study site itself.

2.6 Roman

- 2.6.1 A coin of Constantine, minted at Treves, was found on the mound of Tonbridge Castle c.200m northwest of the study site (SMR ref: TQ 54 NE 7 - MKE171). In view of the paucity of evidence from the study area, a low potential is identified for Roman material at the study site itself.

2.7 Saxon

- 2.7.1 There is no documentary evidence for Saxon settlement at Tonbridge and archaeological investigations in the town have not identified features pre-dating the 11th century. Accordingly, a nil potential is identified for Saxon settlement remains and stray finds on the site.

2.8 Medieval

- 2.8.1 The town of Tonbridge (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 21-MKE9452) which formed part of the outer defences of the castle (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 2-MKE166) is first mentioned in 1241. Archaeological investigations at Lyons, East Street (c.300m northeast of the study site) identified pits, gullies, post-holes and possibly the tail of the eastern rampart of the town wall (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 46-MKe17792). The features dated to between the 11th and 13th centuries. Archaeological monitoring at 67-71 High Street c. 30m northwest of the study site recorded a sequence of medieval floor and dump deposits relating to possible workshops or industrial activity (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 73 - Mke20494). At the base of the sequence a thick dump layer dated to the mid 13th-14th centuries suggested that land levels between the riverbanks were being raised. Above this were a series of floor and dump layers interpreted as activity within a timber structure. Later cartographic evidence (1838 Tonbridge Tithe Map) shows the study site on land separated from the rear of properties off the High Street by a small stream. The land is shown undeveloped and probably used for pasture. The archaeological potential of the study site for the medieval period can therefore be defined as low.

2.9 Post-Medieval & Modern

- 2.9.1 In this period, our understanding of settlement, land-use and human utilisation of the landscape is enhanced by cartographic sources, which can give additional detail to data contained within the SMR. The 1838 Tonbridge Tithe Map shows the study site beyond the limits of settlement within undeveloped land, probably used for pasture. 4.10.3 The Tithe Map shows a

Tannery bordering Botany Stream and running parallel to the Lower High Street. Documentary sources record Tonbridge Tannery established by Warren Piper at the site in 1812. The Kent SMR records the site of the late 19th century Tannery on land to the west of the study site (SMR ref. TQ 54 NE 36-MKE16776). The 1867 Ordnance Survey shows buildings within the north-western part of the study site and the western part of the of the study site occupied by gardens and yards. It is likely that these buildings were associated with the Tonbridge Tannery to the west of Botany Stream. The remainder of the study site is shown undeveloped, probably used for pasture. The 1897 Ordnance Survey shows little change to the study site. However, the map shows the south-eastern part of the study site as Recreation Ground. In addition, 3 circular features are shown along a northeast-southwest alignment within the central part of the site. It is unclear what the features represent. The 1908 Ordnance Survey shows little change to the study site. In 1908 Warren Piper sold Tonbridge Tannery to the Stagg family. By 1936 the Tonbridge Tannery had been relocated on to the study site. The 1936 Ordnance Survey shows the layout of the tannery buildings. The south-eastern part of the site remained undeveloped. By 1959 (OS 1959) the eastern-most Tannery building had been extended and the south-eastern part of the site was in use as Allotment Gardens. The 1960-1969 Ordnance Survey shows further extensions to the easternmost tannery building. Little changes to the remainder of the study site. The 1972-1974 Ordnance Survey shows little change to the study site. The map regression exercise demonstrates that the site lay relatively undeveloped until the early 20th century when Tonbridge Tannery was built on the site. The Tannery complex was demolished in the 1970's and replaced by Benn House. Accordingly, whilst early 20th century footings of the Tannery may be present, significant Post-Medieval or modern remains are not expected on the site.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

(Figure 2)

- 3.1 Three trenches, two measuring 10m x 1.8m and one measuring 5m x 1.8m, were machine excavated across the area of proposed development under archaeological supervision.
- 3.2 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by a 21 ton 360° excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Only undifferentiated topsoil, subsoil and overburden of recent origin was removed by machine and kept separately. The excavation was taken, in spits of no more than 0.1m for the top and subsoil, down to the top of the underlying 'natural'.
- 3.3 The underlying natural substrate was then manually cleaned and inspected to identify any potential archaeological deposits or features. All trench bases and the surface of the spoil removed from the trenches was scanned visually and with a metal detector for the presence of any stray, unstratified artefacts.
- 3.4 All encountered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2013).
- 3.5 A photographic record of the trenches was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.6 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE. The contents of the archive are tabulated below. Lewes Museum has been contacted with regards to housing the archive at the end of the project.

Number of Contexts	9
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	1
Photographs	18

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.0.1 In all trenches a thick layer of made ground / demolition material was recorded. No archaeological features or finds were found.

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 measured 5m in length and 1.8m in width and was orientated on a north east-south west alignment. The trench was moved to the north from the prescribed location, but in the same orientation in order to avoid buried services and was excavated to the surface of the natural horizon. No archaeological features or finds were observed within this trench.

4.1.2 The natural [1/003], a light/mid yellowish orange alluvial clay, was observed at c. 21.00m OD. A made ground layer, [1/002], a mixture of gravels and CBM, lay over the natural and underneath a layer of asphalt [1/001].

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
1/001	Dep	Made ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.1
1/002	Dep	Made ground	Tr.	Tr.	1.0
1/003	Dep	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.2 Trench 2

4.2.1 Trench 2 measured 10m in length and 1.8m in width and was orientated on a north east-south west alignment. The trench was excavated to the natural horizon. No archaeological features were observed within this trench. A significant amount of contamination was identified.

4.2.2 The natural [2/003], a light/mid yellowish orange alluvial clay, heavily contaminated apart from a small area to the south west end of the trench, was observed at c. 21.05m OD. A made ground layer, [2/002], a mixture of gravels and CBM, lay over the natural and underneath a layer of topsoil [2/001].

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
2/001	Dep	Top soil			0.15
2/002	Dep	Made ground			1.0
2/003	Dep	Natural			

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.3 Trench 3

4.3.1 Trench 3 measured 10m in length and 1.8m in width and was orientated on a east-west alignment. The trench was excavated to the natural horizon with a sondage at the southern end. No archaeological features were observed within this trench. Modern truncation and concrete footings were encountered.

4.3.2 The natural [3/003], a light/mid yellowish orange alluvial clay, was observed at c. 20.00m OD. A made ground layer, [3/002], a mixture of gravels and CBM, lay over the natural and underneath a layer of topsoil [3/001].

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
3/001	Dep	Top soil			0.3
3/002	Dep	Made ground			0.8
3/003	Dep	Natural			

Table 4: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The archaeological investigation uncovered no archaeological activity at the site.

5.2 Extent of modern truncation / overburden

- 5.2.1 Any potential subsoil and topsoil, and therefore any shallow potential archaeological material, had been removed by previous modern construction/demolition activity in all trenches. Trench 2 contained significant contamination due to hydrocarbons.

5.3 Conclusions

- 5.3.1 Despite known archaeological activity in the surrounding area, no evidence of archaeological remains was recorded and no artefacts were recovered in the evaluation. This may be due to extensive truncation caused by the construction and demolition of Sovereign House which appears to have resulted in the removal of any potential subsoil and/or potential shallow archaeological deposits right down to the natural clay and the deposition of a c. 1m thick layer of demolition material / made ground in all evaluated areas.

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BGS 2014. British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 31.01.2014 <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

CgMs Consulting 2008. *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment on Proposed Development at Sovereign House, Sovereign Way, Tonbridge, Kent*

CgMs Consulting 2013. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation at Waterside Reach, Sovereign Way, Tonbridge, Kent*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank CgMs for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Heritage Conservation Group of Kent County Council for their guidance and monitoring. The evaluation was directed by John Cook. The figures for this report were produced by the author. Paul Mason project managed the fieldwork, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	TSH14					
Identification Name and Address	Sovereign House, Tonbridge					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 59060 46333					
Geology	Aluvium – clay, silt, sand and gravel over Tunbridge Wells sand formation					
Arch. South-East Project Number	6373					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.					
Type of Site		Shallow Urban				
Dates of Fieldwork	24/01/14					
Sponsor/Client	CgMs					
Project Manager	Paul Mason					
Project Supervisor	John Cook					
Period Summary						
<p>Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of Sovereign House, Tonbridge, Kent.</p> <p>Despite known archaeological activity in the surrounding area, no evidence of archaeological remains was recorded and no artefacts were recovered in the evaluation. This may be due to extensive truncation caused by the construction and demolition of Sovereign House which appears to have resulted in the removal of any potential subsoil and/or potential shallow archaeological deposits right down to the natural clay and the deposition of a c. 1m thick layer of demolition material / made ground in all evaluated areas.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-170739

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Evaluation at Waterside Reach, Sovereign Way, Tonbridge
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the redevelopment of Sovereign House, Tonbridge, Kent. Despite known archaeological activity in the surrounding area, no evidence of archaeological remains was recorded and no artefacts were recovered in the evaluation. This may be due to extensive truncation caused by the construction and demolition of Sovereign House which appears to have resulted in the removal of any potential subsoil and/or potential shallow archaeological deposits right down to the natural clay and the deposition of a c. 1m thick layer of demolition material / made ground in all evaluated areas.
Project dates	Start: 24-01-2014 End: 24-01-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	TSH14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Methods & techniques	"Test Pits"
Development type	Not recorded
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING TONBRIDGE Waterside Reach
Postcode	TN9 1RG
Study area	2000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 590 463 51.1932188517 0.275750892133 51 11 35 N 000 16 32 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 20.00m Max: 21.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Kent County Council
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	John Cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting Limited

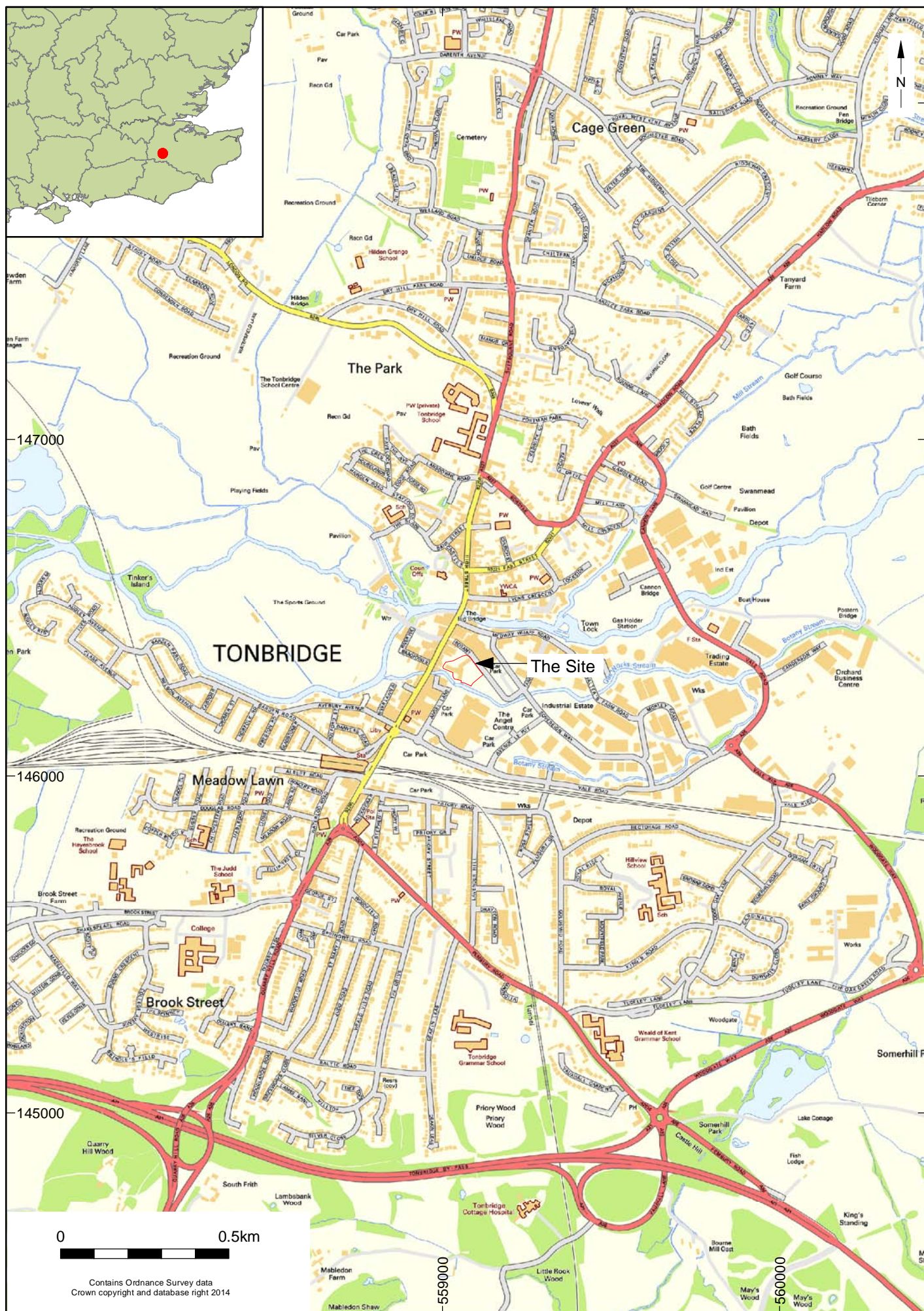
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Archive ID	TSH14
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Archive ID	TSH14
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

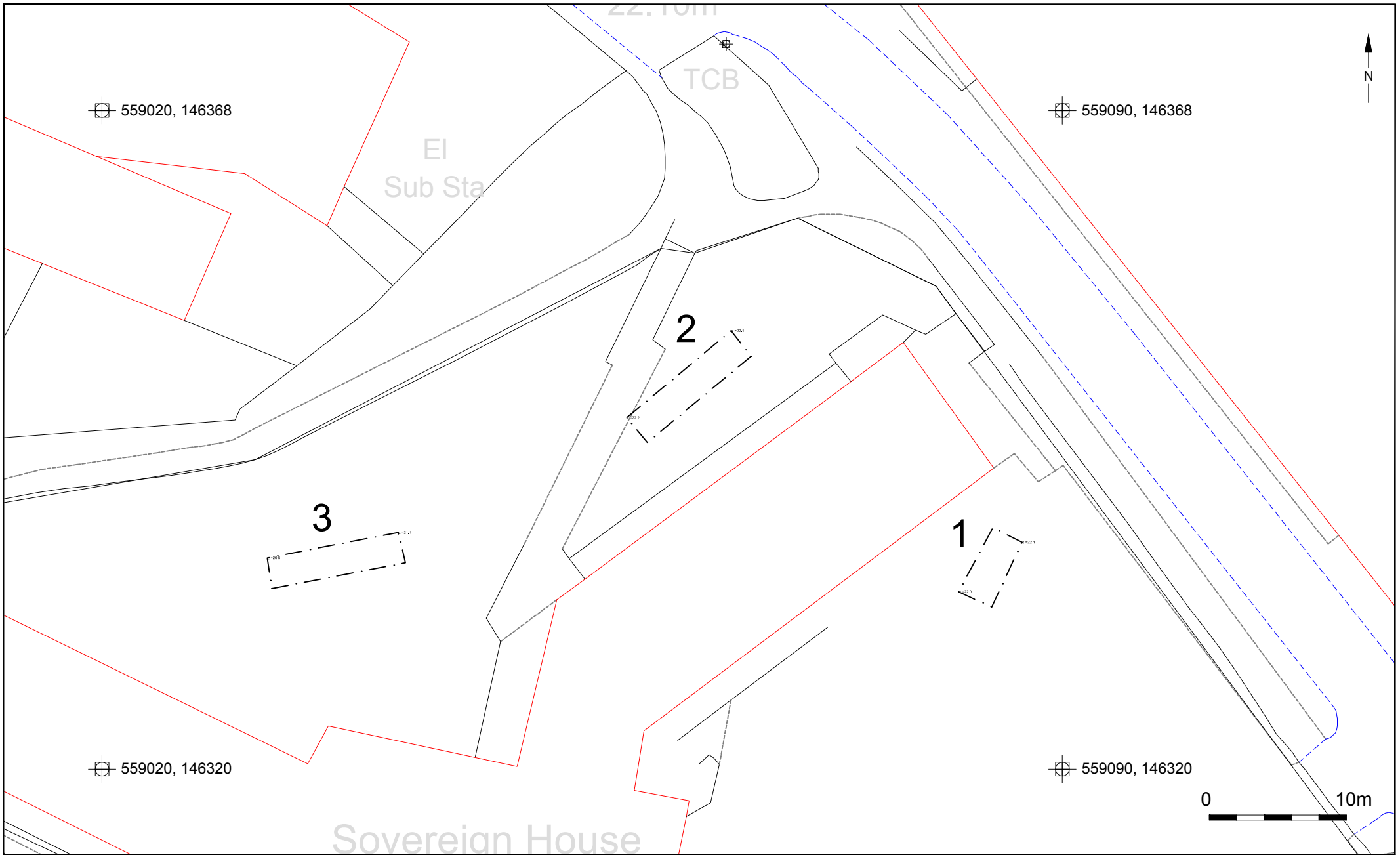
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© Archaeology South-East		Sovereign House, Tonbridge		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6373	January 2014	Site location		
Report Ref: 2014037	Drawn by: JC			



© Archaeology South-East		Sovereign House, Tonbridge	Fig.2
Project Ref: 6373	January 2014	Trench locations	
Report Ref: 2014037	Drawn by: JC		



Fig. 3.1 Trench 1



Fig. 3.2 Trench 2



Fig. 3.3 Trench 3

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