

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Lullingstone Roman Villa  
Kent**

**NGR: TQ 53018 650070**

**ASE Project No: 160939**

**Site Code: LUL16**

**ASE Report No: 2016446**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-268290**





**By Catherine Douglas**

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**Abstract**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Lullingstone Roman Villa on the 8th November 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by English Heritage. The installation of two bollards within the area of the pedestrian footpath that leads from Lullingstone Roman Villa to the property's carpark were monitored.*

*No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. The lowest deposit encountered was subsoil from which a small fragment of CBM was retrieved but was proven to be undiagnostic.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by English Heritage, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Lullingstone Roman Villa, Kent, NGR: TQ 53018 650070 (Figure 1).

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 Lullingstone Roman Villa stands on the west side of the River Darent, south-west of the village of Eynsford and a little north of Lullingstone Castle. It is built against sloping ground, which rises to the west. The remains of the villa are protected by a modern cover building.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 mapping (BGS 2016), the underlying geology of the site is White Chalk Subgroup: Chalk with flints with discrete marl seams, nodular chalk, sponge-rich and flint seams throughout. Overlying superficial deposits of clay-with-flints formation are also recorded in some areas of the site.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

1.3.1 Lullingstone Roman Villa is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List for England no 1007463) in the guardianship of English Heritage Trust.

1.3.2 Plans were made for the installation of two bollards within the existing pedestrian footpath, to a depth of 200mm. As the installation of each bollard was to require excavation to a depth of 450mm, English Heritage decided that archaeological attendance under a watching brief was required.

1.3.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared (English Heritage 2016) providing the basis for the conduct of the archaeological watching brief and any subsequent mitigation and analysis.

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

1.4.1 The purpose of the watching brief, as outlined in the WSI (ibid.), was to preserve by record the presence and nature of potential archaeological deposits encountered during the works, and to signal to interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of archaeological material for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support treatment to a proper and satisfactory standard.

### **1.5 Scope of Report**

1.5.1 This report discusses the results of the archaeological watching brief undertaken by ASE at Lullingstone Roman Villa, on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The fieldwork was undertaken by Catherine Douglas, and managed by Neil Griffin (fieldwork) and Dan Swift (post excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Overview**

2.1.1 The following information is taken from the WSI (ibid).

### **2.2 The Roman Villa**

2.2.1 The remains consist generally of the lowest courses of the villa's mortared flint walls, although in some areas (the southern wall of the baths and the Deep Room) the walls stand to a height of several feet. In some rooms Roman floor surfaces remain, although in most areas excavation continues below the Roman floor surface and Roman floor levels were subsequently re-established. The villa was a multi-phased building, dating from the early-2<sup>nd</sup> century with additions and alterations continuing until the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century a semi-circular building (possibly a shrine) was constructed north of the villa, and in c.AD 300 a large granary was constructed to the northeast of the villa and a mausoleum on the rising ground to the west.

2.2.2 The villa was apparently abandoned after a fire in the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The remains of the villa were buried by material washed down the hillside to the west. A church, probably pre-conquest and certainly in existence by the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, was established to the immediate west on the site of a Roman mausoleum; both structures were encountered during the excavation of the villa site. The church was associated with the medieval settlement of Lullingstane, which appears to have been deserted by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The villa site was identified in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century but was not excavated until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the principal range of the villa was fully exposed. The site was taken into guardianship in 1958 and a cover building constructed over the remains of the villa in the early 1960s.

2.2.3 The grounds around the site have been landscaped. On the terrace northeast of the villa are the heavy consolidated remains (wall footings) of the circular building. The land running down to the river on the east side of Lullingstone Lane contains the car park. The traffic island to the north of the car park covers the remains of the large granary excavated at the same time as the villa but subsequently reburied.

### **2.3 Recent Archaeological Investigation**

2.3.1 During the late 1930s an archaeological study of the Darent Valley was undertaken by the Darent Valley Archaeological Group. The survey was interrupted by the Second World War but evidence of Roman occupation was observed in the neighbourhood of the north gate of Lullingstone Park.

2.3.2 Between 1947 and 1961 the site was subject to archaeological excavation under the direction of G.W. Meates. The villa, ancillary buildings to the west and the granary to the northeast were uncovered. With the exception of the circular building northwest of the villa, the remains of the ancillary buildings were re-buried. A cover building was erected over the villa remains, a car park created to the east of Lullingstone Lane and the villa opened to the public in 1963.

- 2.3.3 In 1986 the Central Excavation Unit of English Heritage undertook a small scale excavation in the car park in advance of pipe laying. It was demonstrated that the area had been within the bed of the river throughout Roman and medieval times. Some naturally deposited river gravels contained Roman tiles. In addition a layer of heavy flint cobbling had been produced along the river bed, perhaps in order to create a firm bottom to the river for the watering of cattle.
- 2.3.4 In 2007 a general watching brief was carried out by Canterbury Archaeological Trust during general improvement works. This included the provision of new sewerage, ground works to the north of the villa and the installation of services in the car park. Excavation for sewerage found fragments of flints, Roman brick and a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Some of the flints had traces of mortar on them. The deposition of this material, together with records of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century excavation, suggests that this was the site of an excavation spoil heap.
- 2.3.5 In 2013 the pedestrian footpath from the road to the carpark was installed. The path follows the line of the 2007 excavation for services. Early archaeological monitoring and records has shown that the potential for stratified Roman deposits in this area occurs at a depth (600mm). Excavations for the footpath were carried out to a maximum depth of 200mm and the spoil was checked by a metal detectorist.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 Two post holes were excavated 1m apart from each other, within the public footpath east of the villa. The post holes each measured 0.45m x 0.45m and were excavated to a depth of 0.45m below the ground surface level. (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 The excavation was carried out by hand using a pick and shovel. All excavation carried out by the ground work contractor was undertaken with due regard for the potential to encounter archaeological remains.
- 3.1.3 The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist to recover artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.
- 3.1.4 All excavated deposits were recorded according to current professional standards using ASE recording sheets. A digital photographic record was maintained.

#### **3.2 The Site Archive**

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at a suitable museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	2
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	11
Context register	1
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	1
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box )	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 The post holes (Figures 2 and 3)

4.1.1 Two post holes were excavated 1m apart from each other, within the public footpath east of the Roman villa. The post hole furthest to the north was excavated to 41.18m AOD, and the other posthole was excavated to 41.22m AOD. All contexts encountered in both post holes have been summarised in Table 3, below.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	Layer	Made ground	<0.45	<0.45	0.2	41.64
2	Layer	Chalky silt subsoil	<0.45	<0.45	0.25	41.18

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

4.1.2 The natural geology was not encountered. The lowest deposit encountered was subsoil [2] comprised of mid-dark brown silt, containing frequent chalk, flint. This measured a length greater than 0.45m by a width greater than 0.45m (the dimensions of the post holes) and had a thickness of 0.25m.

4.1.3 The subsoil [2] was immediately overlain by a layer of made ground [1]. This comprised 0.10m of blue sandy gravels, overlain by 0.10m of orange sandy gravels, forming the make-up of the public footpath.

4.1.4 No archaeological features were identified. A single small piece of undiagnostic CBM was identified in the subsoil [2] in the post hole furthest to the north (posthole 1).

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Neither natural chalk or head deposits were encountered during the watching brief, as excavations were only taken to a depth of 0.45m below ground surface level (41.18 – 41.22m AOD).
- 5.2 The lowest deposit encountered was subsoil, measuring a thickness of greater than 0.25m. This was immediately overlain by made ground [1]. A small fragment of CBM was retrieved from the subsoil in one posthole but this was proven to be undiagnostic by a CBM specialist (Isa Benedetti-Whitton pers comm).
- 5.3 No archaeological features were encountered during the watching brief. It is likely that any archaeology relating to the villa would exist at a lower level than the area exposed during the ground works.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 2016. *Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological supervision and recording of ground works under a watching brief: Lullingstone Roman Villa, Kent*

Kent County Council 2007. *Standard Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief/evaluation/excavation*

MoLAS 1994. *Site Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork*

### **Website:**

[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk) – accessed on 09/11/16

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

ASE would like to thank English Heritage for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Kent County Council for their guidance and monitoring. The watching brief was conducted by Catherine Douglas. Neil Griffin project managed the excavations, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

## HER Summary

Site code	LUL16				
Project code	160939				
Planning reference	NA				
Site address	Lullingstone Roman Villa				
District/Borough	Kent				
NGR (12 figures)	TQ 53018650070				
Geology	White Chalk Subgroup, with overlying superficial deposits of Clay-with-Flints Formation				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	08-11-16				
Sponsor/client	English Heritage				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Catherine Douglas				
Period summary					
Project summary	<p>This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Lullingstone Roman Villa on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by English Heritage. The installation of two bollards within the area of the pedestrian footpath that leads from Lullingstone Roman Villa to the property's carpark were monitored.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. The lowest deposit encountered was subsoil from which a small fragment of CBM was retrieved but was proven to be undiagnostic.</p>				

## OASIS Form

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-268290

#### Project details

Project name An Archaeological Watching Brief at Lullingstone Roman Villa

Short description of the project This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Lullingstone Roman Villa on the 8th November 2016. The fieldwork was commissioned by English Heritage. The installation of two bollards within the area of the pedestrian footpath that leads from Lullingstone Roman Villa to the property's carpark were monitored. No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. The lowest deposit encountered was subsoil from which a small fragment of CBM was retrieved but was proven to be undiagnostic.

Project dates Start: 08-11-2016 End: 08-11-2016

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes LUL16 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Scheduled Monument (SM)

Current Land use Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument

Monument type VILLA Roman

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Scheduled Monument Consent

#### Project location

Country England

Site location KENT SEVENOAKS EYNSFORD Lullingstone Roman Villa

Postcode DA4 OJA

Study area 2 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 530180 650070 51.362961991444 0.198211967142 51 21 46 N 000 11 53 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 41.18m Max: 41.22m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

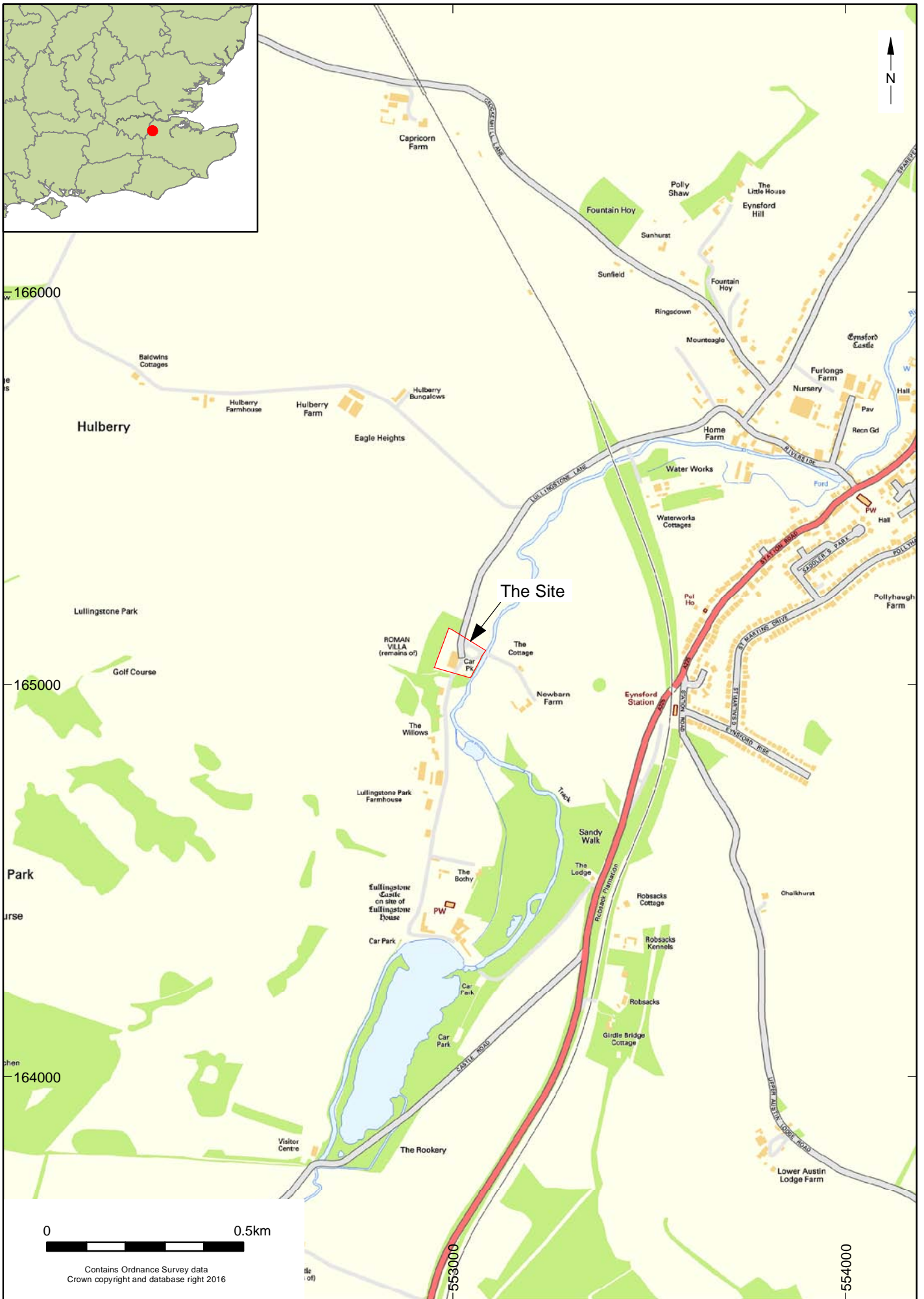
Project brief originator English Heritage

Project design originator English Heritage

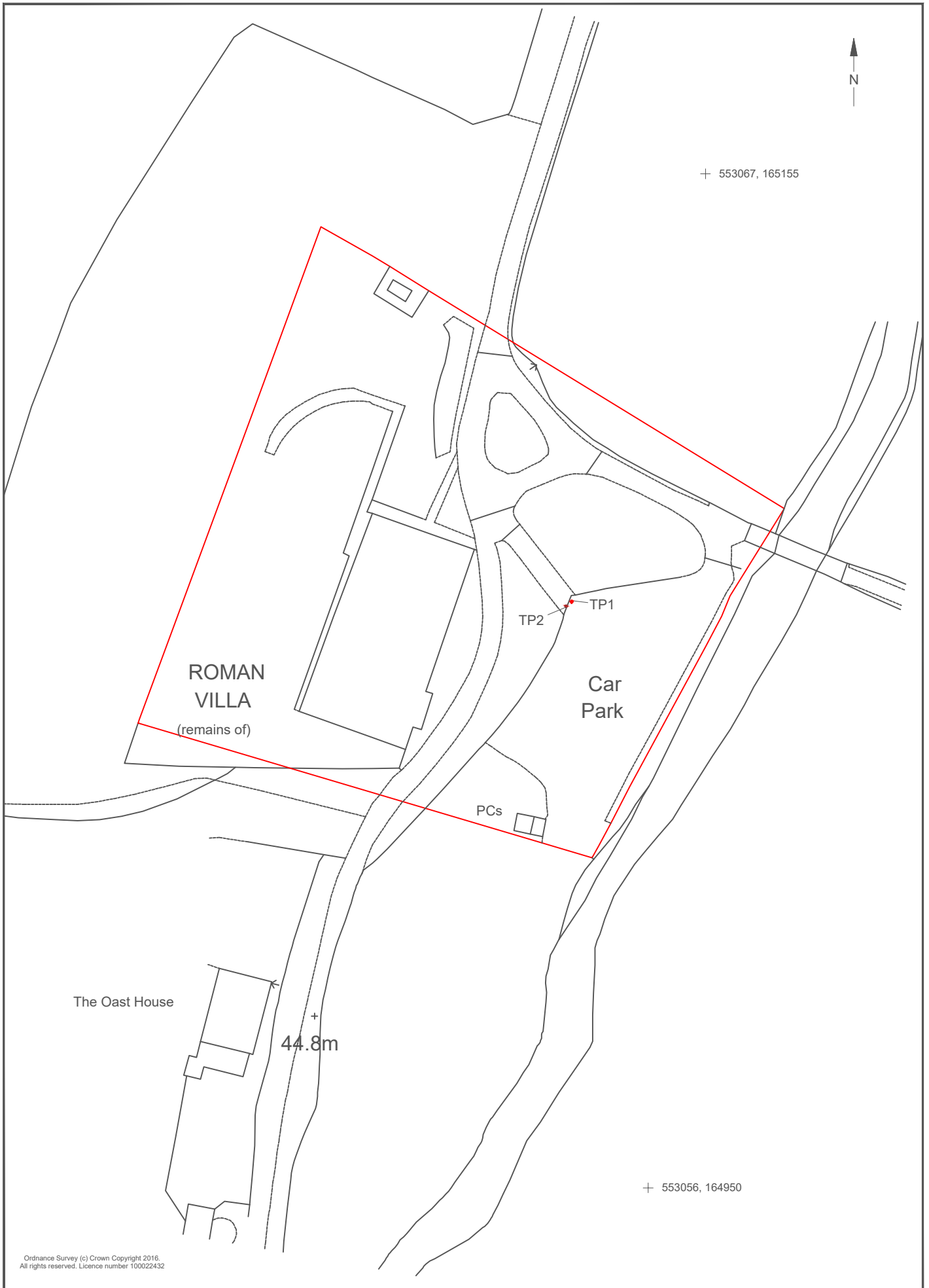
Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Catherine Douglas

Type of sponsor/funding body	English Heritage
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Media available	"Database", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Report", "Survey "
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Lullingstone Roman Villa
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Douglas, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report number 2016446
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex
Description	One small bound paper report
Entered by	Catherine Douglas (catherine.douglas@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	10 November 2016



© Archaeology South-East		Lullingstone Roamn Villa, Kent	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160939	Nov.2016	Site location	
Report Ref: 2016446	Drawn by: AR		



© Archaeology South-East		Lullingstone Roman Villa, Kent	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160939	Nov 2016	Location of test pits 1 and 2	
Report Ref: 2016446	Drawn by: AR		





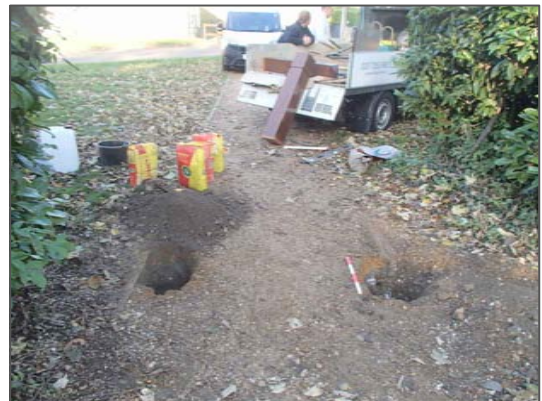
Test pits 1 and 2, looking south east



Test pit 2



Test pit 1



Monitored ground work, looking north west

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