



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Assessment Excavation at Tower House Rye, East Sussex

TQ 9218 2056

by
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Summary

An assessment excavation was carried out by Chris Butler Archaeological Services at Tower House, Rye during November 2008, during which a total of four evaluation trenches were excavated.

Two trenches located in a car parking area revealed a deep stratigraphy of Post Medieval layers dating from late 19th century through to the late 17th century. Below this were deposits dating from the 14th to 15th century, and a possible ditch that been finally filled-in in the mid 16th to early 17th century. A small trench in the garden also revealed a similar stratigraphy but at a shallower level, whilst the fourth trench encountered a large later 19th century kitchen midden.

Although the excavation did not locate any confirmed medieval features, it did demonstrate that there was a deep Post Medieval stratigraphy with the potential for in-situ early Post Medieval and Medieval features and deposits with good preservation, albeit at lower levels. The kitchen midden has the potential to provide the best 19th-century assemblage from the town to date.

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Cover Picture: Excavating evaluation Trench 2 at Tower House, Rye

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mrs Jutta Lorant (the Client) to carry out an Archaeological Evaluation Excavation in advance of the demolition of existing garages and the construction of new houses, flats and garages at Tower House, Rye, East Sussex. As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority have put a condition on the planning consent for the development (RR/2005/2399), requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.2 The site at Tower House is located at TQ 9218 2056, on the north side of Turkey Cock Lane (Fig. 1). The site lies within the north-east corner of the historic core of Rye, close to the Landgate and within the Medieval town walls, and is within an Archaeological Sensitive Area (ASA).
- 1.3 A specification for an archaeological evaluation¹ was issued by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council to establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The excavation is thus to determine the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site. A Written Scheme of Investigation was agreed with the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council².
- 1.4 The desk-based assessment³ has concluded that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. Prior to 1378 the area was common land called 'The Halton', but was then granted to the Austin Friars, although the actual property boundaries are uncertain. After this date the site may have formed part of the Friary precinct, however the Medieval ground levels in this part of the town are unknown, and the effect of the town wall on the site is unclear.
- 1.5 The site currently comprises Tower House and its associated walled garden, together with a number of small outbuildings. The south-western portion of the site is currently occupied by a number of garages and an open metalled parking and turning area (Fig. 2).
- 1.6 The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey (sheet 320/321), is Ashdown Beds capped with Wadhurst Clay.

¹ Archaeology Team ESCC 2008 *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation in advance of the construction of a new residential development at land at Tower House, Rye, East Sussex* [RR/2005/2399]

² Butler, C. 2008 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at Land at Tower House, Rye, East Sussex*, CBAS.

³ Hall, N. 2008 *Land at the rear of Tower House, Hilders Cliff, Rye, East Sussex: An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*, Development Archaeology Services Ltd.

- 1.7 The evaluation excavation was carried out between the 26th and 28th November 2008, under the direction of the author, assisted by Keith Butler and Jim Ball.

2. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 2.1 The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment report⁴ identified a number of sites from the East Sussex HER in the immediate vicinity of the site, together with a large number of Listed Buildings.
- 2.2 There is little evidence from the Rye area for Prehistoric or Roman activity, and it is only in the Late Saxon period that there is evidence for any occupation, when Rye formed part of the manor of Rameslie. At Domesday, Rye was situated in the Hundred of Guestling.
- 2.3 During the 12th and 13th centuries, Rye became an important port, and became a Cinque Port in 1197. After being sacked by the French in 1377, a town wall was built, with a gun battery being added in the 15th century. A single gateway (the Landgate) of this wall survives a short distance to the north-east of the site, and the line of the town wall passes along the northern frontage of Turkey Cock Lane and immediately to the north of the site.
- 2.4 An Augustinian Friary was located on Conduit Hill between 1380 and its dissolution in 1538. A former chapel constructed around 1380 survives on the eastern side of Conduit Hill, and is situated just to the south-west of the site⁵.
- 2.5 In the 16th Century Rye was an important port, and had prospered after the decline of nearby Winchelsea. The town had a population of some 5,000 people between 1550 and 1570, but as it declined due to the silting up of the harbour, the population fell to some 1,500 people by 1600⁶.
- 2.6 Tower House (formerly known as Dormy House or the Dormy House Club) is a Grade II Listed Building with an 18th century exterior which covers an older core.

⁴ Hall, N. 2008 *Land at the rear of Tower House, Hilders Cliff, Rye, East Sussex: An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*, Development Archaeology Services Ltd, Fig. 10.

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ Mayhew, G. 1987 *Tudor Rye*, Falmer, CCE, University of Sussex.

- 2.7 A number of archaeological interventions have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the site⁷. Human burials and pottery of 13th century date were discovered during the construction of an air raid shelter and during later excavations in the grounds of the Friary. An excavation in 1979 at 1-3 Tower Street encountered a wide and shallow ditch on the north side of the town wall which was interpreted as being open until the 17th century⁸. A watching brief undertaken in 1999 in the grounds of Rye Lodge Hotel, to the south of the site, recorded 19th century deposits and residual Medieval pottery.

3. Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1 The written scheme of investigation⁹ proposed four trenches (Fig. 2), two of which were arranged to investigate the car parking area, whilst the remaining two trenches investigated different parts of the garden. A CAT scan was carried out prior to the excavation, and confirmed that there were no live services.
- 3.2 The four trenches were positioned broadly in accordance with the WSI, with just minor adjustments due to obstructions. Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated using a Bobcat 328 five-ton 360° tracked excavator under archaeological supervision, with a 1.3m wide toothless bucket. Trench 1 was 10m long and 1.3m wide. Trench 2 was 7m long and 1.8m wide, having been reduced in length due to the wall at the north end and the necessity to keep open the access around its southern end.
- 3.3 Trench 3 was 7m long and 2m wide, and was excavated using an EB10 mini-digger due to the limited access into this part of the site. Trench 4 was excavated by hand, and was initially 2m x 2m in size, but was reduced in size when a concrete drain was encountered during its excavation.
- 3.4 All excavation was carried out in spits until either archaeology was encountered, the natural was reached, or further excavation was halted due to the depth of the trench.
- 3.5 The exposed archaeological features were then cleaned by hand and excavated in accordance with ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation work in East Sussex* dated April 2008 (the Recommended Conditions). A metal detector was used to scan the trenches and spoil heap.

⁷ Hall, N. 2008 *Land at the rear of Tower House, Hilders Cliff, Rye, East Sussex: An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*, Development Archaeology Services Ltd, Fig. 10.

⁸ Hadfield, J. 1981 'An Excavation at 1-3 Tower Street, Rye, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **119**, 222-225.

⁹ Butler, C. 2008 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation Excavation at Land at Tower House, Rye, East Sussex*, CBAS.

- 3.6** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.7** All of the features were levelled to the Ordnance Datum by reference to a Bench Mark at the southern end of Rope Walk of 4.18m OD.
- 3.8** A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services and, after any further analysis, arrangements will be made for it to be deposited at suitable local museum. A site reference of THR08 has been allocated.

4. Results

- 4.1** Trench 1 was excavated on a broadly east-west orientation, in front of and parallel to the garages on the southern side of the car parking area (Fig. 2). The upper layer comprised a 50mm thick layer of shingle forming the surface of the car park, above *c.*250mm of made ground comprising concrete pieces to 300mm (5%) and sandstone pieces to 300mm (10%) in a dark yellow-brown sandy loam (Context 1).
- 4.2** Below the made ground was a 240mm to 300mm thick layer of firm dark brown sandy loam (Context 2). This contained sandstone pieces to 100mm (3%), charcoal pieces and flecks (4%) and ceramic building material (1%). The pottery recovered from this layer was mid to late 19th century in date. Below Context 2 was a firm mid brown layer of sandy clay loam up to 980mm thick (Context 4). This contained pieces of flint shingle to 30mm (3%), charcoal flecks (1%) and chalk flecks (<1%), together with ceramic building material and early to mid 19th century pottery with residual 15th to 17th century pottery.
- 4.3** Below Context 4 was a thin layer of Context 5 which commences 3.7m in from the east end and increases in depth to 260mm at the east end of the trench (Fig. 3; Section 1). Context 5 was a mid brown (lighter than Context 4) firm sandy clay loam containing sandstone pieces to 30mm (1%) and charcoal flecks (1%). Immediately below this layer was a thin horizon 100mm thick of a dark brown silty clay loam (Context 17) containing oyster shell (5%) together with a few sherds of mid 15th to mid 16th century pottery, and was probably a midden of food waste.
- 4.4** At the west end of Trench 1, and below Context 4, was a mottled yellow-brown firm silty clay (Context 16) containing sandstone pieces to 100mm (1%). This became progressively more compact further down and no artefacts were recovered from this context, which may therefore be the natural.

- 4.5** At the east end of Trench 1 and below Contexts **5** and **17**, was a firm dark brown silty clay loam (Context **18**). It contained sandstone pieces to 250mm (1%) ceramic building material (1%) and oyster shell (1%), together with sherds of 14th century pottery. The boundary between Context **18** and Context **16** was unclear as the two appeared to merge into one another. Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 2.2m at the east end, at this depth excavation was stopped as the water table had been reached and the trench began to fill with water making further excavation impossible.
- 4.6** Trench 2 was excavated on a north-south orientation at the east end of the car parking area (Fig. 2). The upper layer comprised a 50mm thick layer of shingle forming the surface of the car park, above *c.*250mm of made ground comprising concrete pieces to 300mm (5%) and sandstone pieces to 300mm (10%) in a dark yellow-brown sandy loam (Context **1**). The presence of bundles of metal reinforcement rods within Context **1** made excavation here problematic.
- 4.7** Below the made ground in Trench 2 was a 300mm to 400mm thick layer of firm dark brown sandy loam (Context **2**). This contained sandstone pieces to 100mm (3%), charcoal pieces and flecks (4%) and ceramic building material (1%). The pottery recovered from this layer was later 19th century in date.
- 4.8** The base of a flimsy brick wall comprising un-mortared bricks (Wall **3**), of 18th to early 19th century date, was encountered at the base of Context **2** and sitting on the underlying Context **4**. This wall was two bricks wide (250mm) and survived to a height of two to three courses; it ran north-south for 4.6 metres before turning a 90° corner to exit the trench on the west side (Fig. 3; Section 2).
- 4.9** Below Context **2** was a firm mid brown layer of sandy clay loam up to 500mm thick (Context **4**). This contained pieces of flint shingle to 30mm (3%), charcoal flecks (1%) and chalk flecks (<1%), together with ceramic building material and early to mid 19th century pottery with residual 17th to 18th century pottery.
- 4.10** Below Context **4** was a mid brown firm sandy clay loam (Context **5**) which extended across the entire trench, and contained sandstone pieces to 30mm (1%) and charcoal flecks (1%). Along most of the trench this context was 600mm deep, but at the south end the trench was excavated to a total depth of 2.7m and Context **5** was found to be almost 1m thick. Context **5** contained late 17th to early 18th century pottery, with a few intrusive 19th century sherds.
- 4.11** Below Context **5** at the south end of Trench 2 was a firm mid brown silty clay loam with patches of yellow-brown clay (Context **8**) containing sandstone pieces to 250mm (2%) and charcoal flecks and pieces (2%). This context contained sherds of mid 14th to mid 15th century pottery. Context **8** may be the same as Context **18** in Trench 1.

- 4.12** At the north end of Trench 2 a north-east to south-west orientated linear feature (Cut **6**) was located (Fig. 3; Section 2) below Context **5**. This contained a dark green-brown firm silty clay loam (Fill **7**), which was noted to be moist and smelly. In accordance with the WSI this was not excavated, but in cleaning up the feature it was noted that the fill contained fragments of ceramic building material, oyster shell (too fragile to recover samples) animal bone, and mid 16th to early 17th century pottery. A small soil sample was also taken from Context **7**.
- 4.13** As the deeper part of the trench was filling with water due to the water table having been reached, and the depth of the trench precluded further excavation due to health and safety concerns, the trench was then recorded and backfilled.
- 4.14** Trench 3 was excavated in the southern part of the walled garden, and was 7m long and 2m wide (Fig. 2). The north-west end of the trench was only 1m wide due to the restricted access for the digger. It was excavated on the last day of the excavation when it rained heavily throughout. The topsoil was a dark brown silty clay loam 350mm thick (Context **21**), and contained frequent roots (5%) and small pebbles to 15mm (2%).
- 4.15** Below the topsoil was a thick midden deposit of a loose mid brown silty clay loam up to 900mm thick (Context **22**), with frequent pieces of ceramic building material, marine molluscs, animal bone and mid to later 19th century pottery sherds and clay pipe fragments. Due to the large quantity of artefacts in this deposit, only a representative sample was collected.
- 4.16** Below the midden was a firm mottled yellow-brown to mid grey silty clay (Context **23**) which had no artefacts in it, and was probably the natural. The excavation of Trench 3 ceased at a depth of 1.2m (Fig. 3; Section 3).
- 4.17** Trench 4 was excavated by hand in the small walled garden on the north side of the site close to the house. Originally 2m x 2m it was reduced in size as a concrete drain was encountered just below the ground surface. A gravel surface and associated underlay was removed before excavation could begin.
- 4.18** The first layer below the underlay was a friable mid to dark brown silty clay loam 90mm thick, with occasional small pebbles (<10mm) and small pieces of tile (Context **9**). Below this was a thin layer 90mm thick of a friable light yellowish-brown silty clay loam (Context **10**) containing ceramic building material. Both these layers contained 18th and 19th century material.
- 4.19** Below Context **10** was a 110mm thick layer of light to mid grey sand (Context **11**), and below this was a 40mm thick layer of tarmac (Context **12**).

- 4.20** Below the tarmac was a 150mm thick layer of a light reddish-brown loose silty clay loam which contained numerous small pieces of ceramic building material (Context **13**). Below this was a layer up to 200mm thick of a light to mid brown firm silty clay (Context **14**) with numerous charcoal pieces and flecks, together with animal bone and two pieces of early 17th century clay pipe.
- 4.21** Below Context **14** was a narrow linear feature, varying between 200mm and 440mm wide, and 120mm deep, (Cut and Fill **15**) running north-west to south-east across the southern part of the trench. It contained a mid to dark brown silty clay loam with rare charcoal flecks and a single sherd of mid 15th to mid 16th century date.
- 4.22** Below Context **14** and cut by Context **15** was a layer of light to mid brown firm sandy clay loam with charcoal pieces and fragments (Context **20**). It contained ceramic building material, animal bone, together with pottery of 14th to mid 16th century date. The excavation of Trench 4 ceased at a depth of 1.3m as it was not possible to excavate further due to the confined space (Fig. 3; Section 4).

5 Finds

5.1 The excavation produced a large assemblage of finds from the four trenches which is summarised below in Tables 1 to 4.

5.2 *The Pottery and Clay Pipe* by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The evaluation recovered a moderately sized assemblage of pottery and clay pipes which is quantified by period in Table 1.

5.2.2 Sherd size is very variable, ranging from small (under 20mm across) to large (over 100mm across), the medieval material tending to be in the former category. Despite this the vast majority of the assemblage is in fairly fresh condition suggesting it has not been subjected to repeated reworking, though admittedly the hard-fired nature of much of the ceramics would make them quite resistant to abrasion. However, the majority of the clay pipes, which are not resistant to abrasion, are also quite fresh.

Table 1: Pottery & Clay Pipe

Context	Late C13th – 14th	Late C14th – early/mid 16th	Mid C16th – mid 18th	Mid C18th – 19th	Clay Pipe (C17th – 19 th)	Spot Date
Spoil Tr. 2	-	-	2/9g	3/24g	1/1g	Mixed C17th – 19th
2 Tr. 1	-	-	1/9g	22/420g	3/6g	Mid/late C19th
2 Tr. 2	-	-	1/1g	20/248g	9/15g	Later C19th
3 Tr. 2	-	-	-	-	-	C18th – early 19 th (Brick only)
4 Tr. 1	-	3/80g	3/45g	6/92g	3/18g	Early/mid C19th Hi resid. C15th – 17th
4 Tr. 2	-	-	4/37g	6/48g	7/33g	Early/mid C19th Hi resid. C17th – 18th
5 Tr. 2	1/24g	-	9/185g	3/100g	5/60g	Late C17th – early 18 th Low intru. C19th
7 Tr. 2	-	-	8/334g	-	-	Mid C16th – early 17 th
8 Tr. 2	11/83g	3/19g	-	-	-	Mid C14th – mid 15 th
9 Tr. 4	-	1/35g	-	-	-	C18th – early 19 th (CBM): pot resid.
10 Tr. 4	-	-	-	7/54g	4/16g	C19th Resid. C16th – 18 th CBM
14 Tr. 4	-	-	-	-	2/11g	Early C17th
15 Tr. 4	-	1/28g	-	-	-	Mid C15th – mid 16 th
17 Tr. 1	-	1/13g	3/53g	-	-	Mid C15th – mid 16 th
18 Tr. 1	6/31g	-	-	-	-	C14th
20 Tr. 4	3/15g	6/154g	-	-	-	Mid C15th – mid 16 th Low resid C14th – mid 15 th , Low intru C17th/18 th CBM
21 Tr. 3	-	-	-	6/31g	-	C19th
22 Tr. 3	-	-	6/356g	97/4,909g	13/64g	Mid/late C19th Low resid. C17th – 18th

Quantification of pottery by period (number of sherds/weight in grams) and clay pipes

Pottery

5.2.3 The earliest pottery from the site consists of 21 sherds of well fired fine to medium sand tempered wares most likely from the Rye kilns. Both cooking pots and glazed jugs are present, the latter with quite crude glazing. Considering the firing temperature of these vessels they are unlikely to be before the later 13th century and could easily be placed in the second half of the 14th century. There are also two sherds from green glazed jugs of probable French origin in Layer **8**. Although most of these early sherds are small they do not show extensive signs of abrasion. Most are residual in later contexts, most notably those of the 15th to mid 16th centuries (e.g. Contexts **8** and **20**) though the small group from Layer **18** appear to be *in situ*.

5.2.4 Some 15 sherds of Transitional pottery, of the late 14th/early 15th to mid 16th century are present. These include a mix of well/hard fired sparse fine/medium sand tempered oxidised wares, probably locally manufactured between the end of the 14th and middle of the 15th centuries. There are also a few sherds of hard-fired and hard-fired sandy earthenwares, both oxidised and reduced, which are probably of mid 15th to mid 16th century date and almost certainly from the late Rye industry.

- 5.2.5** There are also a few hard-fired glazed jug sherds and lower fired early glazed red earthenwares (e.g. Layer 17) which probably belong to the later 15th to mid 16th centuries. This same layer also produced two sherds of Raeren stoneware of similar date. At least four contexts are probably of this period, all producing small assemblages of pottery, often with residual earlier material: Layers 8, 17 and 20 and Cut/fill 15.
- 5.2.6** The early post-medieval period is quite well represented with some 37 sherds spanning the early/mid 16th through to the mid 18th centuries. These sherds are frequently residual in later deposits but a number of contexts appear to be of this date (notably in Trench 2). Unsurprisingly the locally made glazed red earthenwares, are constantly present though few feature sherds are present (jars and cups were noted).
- 5.2.7** In addition there are a few sherds of Surrey/Hampshire Borderware of the mid 16th to 17th centuries. Considering the small size of the assemblage there are a notable number of imports. These include the fairly common Frechen stoneware bottles (Cut 6, Fill 7: 2/174g and Trench 1, Layer 4: 2/27g) as well as Dutch Redwares (a handled cauldron in Cut 6, Fill 7: 2/124g and another possible sherd in Trench 2, Layer 4: 1/10g). There is also a later 16th to early 17th century German white slipware hammer-headed plate, probably from the Weser industry, residual in Layer 22.
- 5.2.8** The later material in this group belongs essentially to the 17th century, though a few sherds belong to the early/mid 18th century. The local glazed red earthenwares are still present but notably, tin-glazed wares appear. These are best represented in Layer 5, where four sherds (105g) include a large part of a plate with blue painted decoration. Other sherds were recovered from the spoil and Trench 4, Layer 4, where they are residual pieces.
- 5.2.9** The latest pottery of this general period is of the first half of the 18th century and includes a few glazed red earthenware sherds, a possible Staffordshire coarse agate dish, a Staffordshire combed slipware dish (both residual in Layer 22), London stonewares (also residual in Layer 22) and white salt-glazed stoneware (e.g. a tankard from Trench 2, Layer 4). There is also a single sherd of Chinese porcelain of the same period from Trench 2, Layer 5.
- 5.2.10** The majority of the assemblage post-dates 1750 and is characterised by industrial wares, most of which are of the 19th century. Locally produced glazed red earthenwares are well represented, particularly large jars and bowls as are unglazed flower pots (mainly from the upper levels). These coarsewares are complemented by Midlands/Newcastle late slipware bowls, yellow ware bowls and English stonewares, notably ginger beers and blacking bottles. Sanitary and tablewares are normally in pearlware and transfer-printed wares though some utilitarian plain white refined earthenware preserve jars are also present (e.g. Trench 2, Layer 2).

- 5.2.11** Although material of this date was recovered from a number of contexts, most notably the upper soil horizons, Layer **22** in Trench 3 stands out for the quantity of material produced. This midden deposit produced an assemblage probably dating to between 1850 and 1870 despite containing a few residual pieces of the 17th to 18th centuries.
- 5.2.12** Nineteenth century coarsewares in this deposit include bowls, jars and a lid in glazed red earthenware; sherds from at least four Midlands/Newcastle late slipware bowls and yellow ware bowls and an oven dish. English stoneware is particularly well represented with sherds from at least 18 different vessels being present, essentially blacking and ginger beer bottles, the latter including three examples from Charles West, High Street, Rye.
- 5.2.13** Although there is a single sherd of creamware and a few pearlware sherds the bulk of the finewares are composed of refined white earthenwares, usually with transfer-printed decoration. Plates, saucers, cups and chamber pots are present, decorated with Willow pattern, other Chinese patterns, Wild Rose pattern and various floral designs. Only one maker's mark is present: that of Podmore, Walker & Co, dated c. 1834-1859. There is also at least one glazed basalts teapot and an English porcelain teacup with purple sprigged floral decoration.

Clay Pipe

- 5.2.14** Some 47 fragments of clay pipe were recovered from the site. Virtually all the material is in a very fresh condition and has certainly not been subjected to extensive reworking. The earliest pieces consists of a bowl and stem fragment belonging to the first half of the 17th century (Trench 4, Layer **14**).
- 5.2.15** There are more fragments of the mid to late 17th century even though many are residual in later deposits. Mid/late 17th- century pieces include a mouthpiece fragment (Trench 2, Layer **2**) and a bowl with a maker's stamp (a hand) on the base of the heel (Trench 1, Layer **4**).
- 5.2.16** A number of mid/late 17th century stem fragments, a bowl of c. 1650-1670, another of c. 1680-1710 and a stamped early 18th century bowl of London type were recovered from Trench 2, Layer **5**. The latter bowl, stamped RB under a crown on its reverse is known in London on pipes dating to between 1700 and 1740¹⁰. Although a few 18th century stem fragments are present they are never very common (e.g. four stem fragments residual in Trench 2, Layer **4**) and the majority of pipe fragments can be placed in the 19th century.
- 5.2.17** The largest group of 19th century pipes comes from the midden, Layer **22**, in Trench 3. This group includes only one residual piece (a later 17th century bowl fragment) but contains a complete bowl with fluted decoration and three spurs with maker's initials. Although one is illegible, the others are WA (William Apps of Rye: 1839 -1851+) and IS (possibly James S hoesmith of Fairlight Down and Ore: 1841-66)¹¹.

¹⁰ Atkinson, D. and Oswald, A. 1969. 'London Clay Tobacco Pipes' in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 3 ser., 32, 171-227.

¹¹ Atkinson, D. 1977. *Sussex Clay Tobacco Pipes and the Pipemakers Crain Services*, 13. Eastbourne.

5.2.18 Although the pottery and clay pipe assemblage is relatively small and lacks medieval material, it is of significance in beginning to highlight the range of imported wares in the town during the 16th to 17th centuries. The assemblage from the 19th century midden layer also offers the opportunity to study the range of domestic wares in use in Rye during the Victorian period.

5.3 *Building Materials* by Luke Barber

5.3.1 A moderate collection of building materials was recovered from the site. The building material appears to essentially span the 15th to 19th centuries and there is a high degree of residuality in later contexts. This may be due to the demolition of earlier structures in the area allowing the material to become incorporated into 17th to 19th century deposits or the re-use, whether for new builds or repairs to existing structures, extending the useful life of the earlier materials.

5.3.2 Dating of ceramic building materials is notoriously difficult; the degree of residuality on the current site makes this acute given the nature of the deposits and only a general overview is given here. All building material is quantified in Table 2.

Brick

5.3.3 The earliest bricks from the site are of 'Flemish' type, typically a dull yellow (though occasionally pinkish), crudely formed and tempered with abundant fine/medium sand (sometimes with chalk or iron oxide inclusions to 3mm). These are usually low-fired, though a few are medium fired. Dimensions vary but they are generally thin, measuring between 38 and 50mm high. Although some may be of the 14th century most are likely to belong to the 15th to mid 16th century period. A near complete example, measuring c. 170 x 85 x 40mm, was residual in Layer 4 and various other fragments were recovered from other deposits (eg Trench 4, Layers 10, 14 and 20). A 50mm high piece from Trench 3, Layer 22 shows wear on its upper face suggesting it had at one time been used for flooring/a hearth surround.

5.3.4 The majority of brick fragments are probably of the later 16th to early/mid 18th centuries. These are usually fairly well formed, tempered with sparse to moderate fine sand, often with iron oxide inclusions to 4mm, and medium fired. On the whole they are larger than the 'Flemish-type' bricks with heights ranging between 50 to 60mm. A group of four fragments from Trench 3, Layer 22 gave height measurements of 50, 56, 57 and 58mm.

Table 2: Building Materials

Context	Brick	Tile	Mortar	Stone
2 Tr. 1	1/25g	Peg 4/160g	-	-
2 Tr. 2	-	Peg 3/52g	-	-
3 Tr. 2	1/3,500g	-	-	-
4 Tr. 1	1/762g	Peg 10/628g Floor 2/266g	-	4/96g
4 Tr. 2	3/899g	Peg 4/105g	-	1/10g
5 Tr. 2	-	Peg 6/274g Drain 1/75g	-	5/773g
7 Tr. 2	1/442g	Peg 2/781g	-	-
8 Tr. 2	-	Peg 3/60g	-	3/110g
9 Tr. 4	2/1,274g	Peg 4/87g Ridge 1/30g Mathematical 1/288g	1/404g	-
10 Tr. 4	3/1,010g	Chimney 1/169g	-	-
14 Tr. 4	1/118g	-	-	-
20 Tr. 4	9/1,712g	Peg 11/752g	1/149g	5/1,221g
21 Tr. 3	1/493g	-	-	-
22 Tr. 3	6/5,199g	Peg 7/712g Floor 1/181g	-	4/2,391g

Quantification of building materials (number of fragments/weight in grams)

5.3.5 The latest bricks are probably of the 18th to early/mid 19th centuries. Although the tempering is similar to those of the preceding period the bricks are much better formed, generally harder fired and are more consistently thicker (usually 60mm or more). A complete sample from Wall **3**, measuring 232 x 85 x 69mm, is of this period as was a 60mm high fragment from Trench 4, Layer **9** and an intrusive piece in Trench 4, Layer **20**. A well formed 43mm high floor brick with worn upper face and in a similar fabric from Trench 3, Layer **22** is likely to be of this period.

Tile

5.3.6 The majority of the tile from the site consists of peg tile (roofing). The earliest pieces are probably those from Layer **8** which are crudely made, tempered with moderate medium sand and iron oxides to 2mm and medium fired. These may be of the 14th to mid 15th century. The vast majority of tile fragments from the site, although still quite crudely finished, are tempered with sparse/moderate fine/medium sand and hard-fired. These frequently have a buff/cream surface and are probably of mid 15th- to 17th- century date. Where present, peg-holes are of crude diamond form. Only one tile has complete dimensions – a probable 16th- century example with diamond peg-holes from Trench 2, Fill **7**: 240 x 155 x 12mm.

5.3.7 Later tile, of the early/mid 18th to 19th centuries, is also present albeit in lesser quantities. This material is similar to that of the early post-medieval period but generally these tiles have a more consistent finer fabric, are much more neatly finished and are consistently well fired a dull orange red (e.g. Layer **2**). In addition a single piece of well-made mid 18th to 19th century ridge tile was located in Trench 4, Layer **9**, together with an 18th century mathematical tile fragment (mimicking a brick header measuring 10 x 62mm).

5.3.8 Three floor tile fragments of probable late 15th to early 17th century date were also recovered. These include two pieces from sparse fine sand tempered green glazed tiles with slight bevelled edges, measuring 23 and 27mm thick, residual in Trench 1, Layer 4. Trench 3, Layer 22 produced the only other piece, again tempered with sparse fine sand and with a bevelled edge, from a 24 mm thick tile with white slip under a clear glaze. This piece has been cut post-firing to create a triangular tile.

Other ceramic material

5.3.9 A fragment of well formed and fired 19th century chimney pot with internal sooting was recovered from Trench 4, Layer 10 and a single fragment of salt-glazed 19th- century drain was recovered from Trench 2, Cut 6, Fill 7 where it is almost certainly intrusive.

Stone

5.3.10 The most common stone from the site consists of West Country slate from medieval roofing. Pieces were found in Trench 1, Layer 4 (x3), Trench 2, Layers 5 (x3) and 8 (x2) and Trench 4, Layer 20 (x2). In addition a single piece of 19th century Welsh slate was recovered from Trench 2, Layer 4. The assemblage also includes a number of pieces of local Tilgate stone, often split into thin beds.

5.3.11 The presence of mortar on many examples demonstrates its use in construction, though whether this was for walling and/or roofing (as the similar Horsham stone) is uncertain as despite many pieces being thin (12-23mm thick) these pieces are often used to level up courses during wall construction. Tilgate stone was recovered from Layers 4, 5 (x2 weighing 742g), 20 (x1) and 22 (x3). The only other stone from the site consists of a 42mm thick fragment of Purbeck limestone paving slab from Layer 22 and an irregular piece of ferruginous Wealden shelly limestone from Layer 20.

Mortar

5.3.12 Two amorphous lumps of grey fine sandy lime mortar were recovered from the site. The piece from Trench 4, Layer 20, contains rare chalk and shell inclusions to 6mm and is dated by the ceramics to the mid 15th to mid 16th century. The piece in Trench 4, Layer 9 may be residual.

5.3.13 The current assemblage of building materials is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis due to the high degree of residuality.

5.4 *Animal Bone* by Pat Stevens

5.4.1 The animal bones from Tower House amounted to 123 fragments (Table 4) of which 81 were identified to species with confidence (Table 3). All the bones were examined for butchery, erosion, gnawing ageing and any pathological evidence. Unfortunately it was impossible to age any of the bones, although all the animals identified were adult.

Table 3: Animal bones by Species

Species	No.
Cattle	35
Horse	21
Sheep	16
Pig	2
Dog	1
Rabbit	1
Domestic Fowl	1
Duck	2
Domestic Goose	2
Large ungulate	32
Small ungulate	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>123</i>

- 5.4.2** Cattle were the most common species by bone number at 28%, followed by horse (17%) and then sheep (13%). Unidentified large ungulates made up 26%, whilst small ungulates were 8%.
- 5.4.3** Overall there was little evidence for butchery on the bones (17%), with most of the evidence coming from cattle, most of which were long bones which had been chopped through the midshaft. A single cattle bone had been sawn, whilst three others had battered ends. A small number of horse and sheep bones had also been chopped.
- 5.4.4** There were several marks, probably knife marks, running longitudinally midshaft, on two metatarsal and one metapodial bone of sheep. These are probably skinning marks; a fairly common occurrence on sheep lower leg bones.
- 5.4.5** A small number of bones had been gnawed by dogs (15%), of which the majority were cattle. This would indicate that these bones had either been fed to dogs, or had been lying around before being disposed of. Just under 5% of the bones had evidence for erosion, which is also an indication of the bones having been lying around before disposal.
- 5.4.6** The only instance of pathology recorded comes from a horse. A portion of the proximal end of a metacarpal is mis-shapen by a spongy growth. It is possible that this is damage caused by the horse over-reaching itself, which is a fairly common occurrence.
- 5.4.7** This bone assemblage is likely to be domestic waste, although none of the bones had been cooked. The bones recovered from the later 19th century kitchen midden (Context 22) were all small with the total assemblage of 14 bones only weighing 94gms. There was no evidence for industrial bone waste.

5.5 *Marine Molluscs* by Rachel Butler

- 5.5.1** The assemblage consisted of 124 marine molluscs (Table 4) of which the majority (114 (92%)) were oyster. The remainder comprised 9 cockles (7.5%) and a single scallop (0.5%).
- 5.5.2** All of these species occur on sand or gravel, but at differing distances from the shore line. Cockles can be collected from the beach at low tide, but oyster and scallops occur further out to sea and would therefore need to be collected by boat.
- 5.5.3** Oyster occurs throughout the site and in every period. The mid 15th to mid 16th century deposit in Trench 1 (Context **17**) contained 31 oysters, and no other types, but the later 19th century midden (Context **22**) contained oyster, cockles and scallop, perhaps suggesting a broadening of diet or a change in the way in which the shellfish were being collected.
- 5.5.4** There is virtually no shell infestation recorded, except for those from Context **22**, where a number of the oyster shells have varying degrees of infestation.

Table 4 Other Finds

Context Number	Glass No./gms.	Animal bone No./gms.	Marine Molluscs No./gms.	Flintwork No./gms.	Other No./gms.
T1 (2)	5 (70g)	1 (4g)	1 oyster (52g)		1 nail (8g)
T1 (4)		39 (3.590kg)	41 oyster (1.564kg)		
T1 (17)			31 oyster (1.367kg)		
T1 (18)		5 (136g)	4 oyster (117g) 1 cockle (<1g)		
T2 Spoil		2 (13g)		1 Flake (427g)	
T2 (2)	12 (230g)	1 (5g)	6 oyster (42g)	2 FF (25g)	
T2 (4)	3 (96g)	8 (97g)	4 oyster (68g)		
T2 (5)	1 (5g)	13 (1.904kg)	8 oyster (203g)		1 iron object (175g)
T2 (7)		2 (565g)	2 oyster (39g)		
T2 (8)			2 oyster (54g)		
T3 (21)	1 (12g)				
T3 (22)	11 (1.127kg)	14 (94g)	13 oyster (834g) 8 cockles (23g) 1 scallop (42g)		1 nail frag 1 screw frag (not iron) (119g)
T4 (9)	2 (17g)	2 (14g)			1 iron object (71g) 1 aluminium bottle Top (2g)
T4 (10)		2 (11g)	1 oyster (39g)		1 nail (9g)
T4 (14)		15 (438g)			
T4 (20)		19 (592g)	1 oyster (36g)		4 nail frags (213g) 2 iron slag (254g)

5.6 *Glass* by Rachel Butler

- 5.6.1** The glass assemblage comprised 33 fragments (Table 4), including one complete miniature bottle (40mm tall & weighing 5gms) from Context **5**, probably for perfume, and a marble weighing 5gms (Context **9**).
- 5.6.2** Most of the glass appears to be of mid to late 19th century date, with the majority (27 fragments) being bottle glass, three pieces are window glass, and there is a base from the stem of a wine glass. Three fragments of bottle glass, all in a similar pale green coloured glass, are embossed with lettering but not sufficient to be able to identify the source.
- 5.6.3** Context **22** contained some large unabraded fragments of wine, beer or mineral water bottles in a dark green colour. These include two complete bases with kick-ups, and a neck with a possible applied lip, although the bottle looks to be machine made. All the glass from this context is later 19th century in date.

5.7 *Flint* by Chris Butler

- 5.7.1** A single large hard hammer-struck cortical flake, weighing 427gms, was found in the spoil from Trench 2. This flake has been struck from a nodule of Downland flint, and has probably been the result of knapping to create a suitable sized flint block for building in the later Medieval or Post Medieval periods.
- 5.7.2** Two small pieces of pebble flint that had been fire-fractured were found in Context **2** of Trench 2. Although fire fractured flint is commonly associated with prehistoric activity, these pieces are more likely to have been accidentally burnt in more recent times.

5.8 *Metal objects* by Rachel Butler

- 5.8.1** A total of 11 metal pieces were recovered during the excavation (Table 4). Most were either nails or unidentified pieces of iron. Context **20**, which also produced large quantities of tile and brick fragments, produced a number of nails, suggesting that this context may represent a demolition deposit.
- 5.8.2** Two fragments of iron slag weighing 254gms were also found in Context **20**. The aluminium bottle top found in Context **9** had the name 'James Burrough Ltd Distillers' in its upper surface. This company was established in the early 19th century and sold to Whitbread in 1987.

5.9 *Environmental sample*

- 5.9.1** A single soil sample was taken from the fill of Cut **6** (Fill **7**). The sample comprised a single bag of approximately 4 litres size. The entire sample was processed to assess whether there was any potential for organic or micro-faunal remains.

5.9.2 The sample was processed using bucket floatation, with the residue being washed through a 1mm mesh sieve. Once the flot and residue was dry it was sorted by eye to identify material of archaeological and environmental interest. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Environmental Samples

Context	Bone	Charcoal	Seeds	Marine Molluscs	Residue
7	**	***	****	-	CBM, stone

Frequency Key: None - ; Very low * ; Low ** ; Moderate *** ; High ****

5.9.3 The sample produced large quantities of seeds of varying types, together with smaller quantities of charcoal. Bone, including a few pieces of fish bone, was identified in the residue, along with pieces of ceramic building material.

5.9.4 The results this sample would suggest that there is good preservation of environmental evidence in this feature, and also potentially in other features at this site. The flot and residue have been retained in the archive.

6 Discussion

6.1 The evaluation excavation at Tower House, Rye has demonstrated that the Medieval levels (Contexts **8** and **18**) in the car park area are buried at some depth, and will only be affected by foundations that will extend to a depth of 2m or greater. There are however Post Medieval layers, and the potential for the discovery of archaeological features above this level.

6.2 The possible mid 16th to early 17th century ditch in Trench 2 (Cut **6**) would be placed immediately alongside and within the town wall, and may be a boundary or drainage ditch. Interestingly the excavation at 1-3 Tower Street showed that the Medieval ditch on the other side of the town wall had been filled in *c.*1750, and there is documentary evidence for numerous ditches in the 16th and 17th centuries, although none can be accurately located¹².

¹² Hadfield, J. 1981 'An Excavation at 1-3 Tower Street, Rye, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **119**, 222-225.

- 6.3** The presence of this ditch feature, and the midden feature in Trench 1 (Context 17) which is dated to the mid 15th to mid 16th century, would indicate that there has been a substantial amount of activity here in the early Post Medieval period, and that any building work in this area should allow for the archaeological investigation of these and any associated features as they appear to survive well, and are at a higher level than the underlying Medieval layers.
- 6.4** The later 19th century midden in Trench 3 (Context 22) contains a large quantity of artefacts, including pottery, clay pipe, marine molluscs and animal bone. Should further excavation works take place at the site the current evaluation assemblage should be studied in conjunction with any new material recovered. A larger assemblage from the midden, together with a better understanding of its stratigraphic and spatial positioning, would easily provide the best 19th century assemblage from the town to date.
- 6.5** Trench 4, which was close to Tower House, produced a complex series of layers, and one small feature of mid 15th to mid 16th century date. The presence of large quantities of ceramic building material, mostly of 17th and 18th century date, here suggests that this area may have been used for dumping material during the 18th century building work on Tower House. These deposits are at a shallower level than those in the trenches in the car parking area, and are more likely to be affected by any future building work.
- 6.6** The evaluation excavation has been partially successful in meeting the objectives set out in the specification prepared by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council¹³. It has shown that there is Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology surviving at the site, and has ascertained the extent, depth and character of some of those deposits. It has also established that there is no evidence for prehistoric, Romano-British and Early Medieval activity on the site, although these may of course be preserved at even deeper levels.
- 6.7** Much of the archaeology comprises successive layers which have accumulated over the last 600 years, but within this there are discrete deposits such as rubbish middens and other features such as ditches which may define boundaries between properties. The excavation has also provided evidence for these features having potential to provide important environmental and other organic remains.
- 6.8** Due to the depth of these deposits it has not been possible to answer the specific questions raised about Medieval activity at the site, and the nature of the excavations have meant that it has not been possible to provide a full understanding of the site and the relationships between the various features and deposits located.

¹³ Archaeology Team ESCC 2008 *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation in advance of the construction of a new residential development at land at Tower House, Rye, East Sussex* [RR/2005/2399]

- 6.9** It is clear that further archaeological work on this site has the potential to answer many questions about the Medieval and Post Medieval archaeology of this part of Rye. Given the probability that any development at this site will damage or destroy the buried archaeology, consideration should be given to a full excavation of the site. However, the practical difficulties of such an excavation should also be noted; the depth of the archaeology and the high water table.

7 Acknowledgements

- 7.1** I would like to thank Keith Butler and Jim Ball who assisted with the evaluation excavation. Matt of MJ Excavations provided the machinery and excavated Trenches 1, 2 and 3. Jim Ball washed and sorted the artefacts. Luke Barber provided specialist reports on the pottery, CBM and Foreign stone, whilst Pat Stevens reported on the animal bone and Rachel Butler produced reports on the glass, marine molluscs and metalwork. Jane Russell drew the sections for this report.
- 7.2** I would also like to thank Mrs Lorant for commissioning this work and Casper Johnson, County Archaeologist for East Sussex, who provided guidance and monitored the project for ESCC.

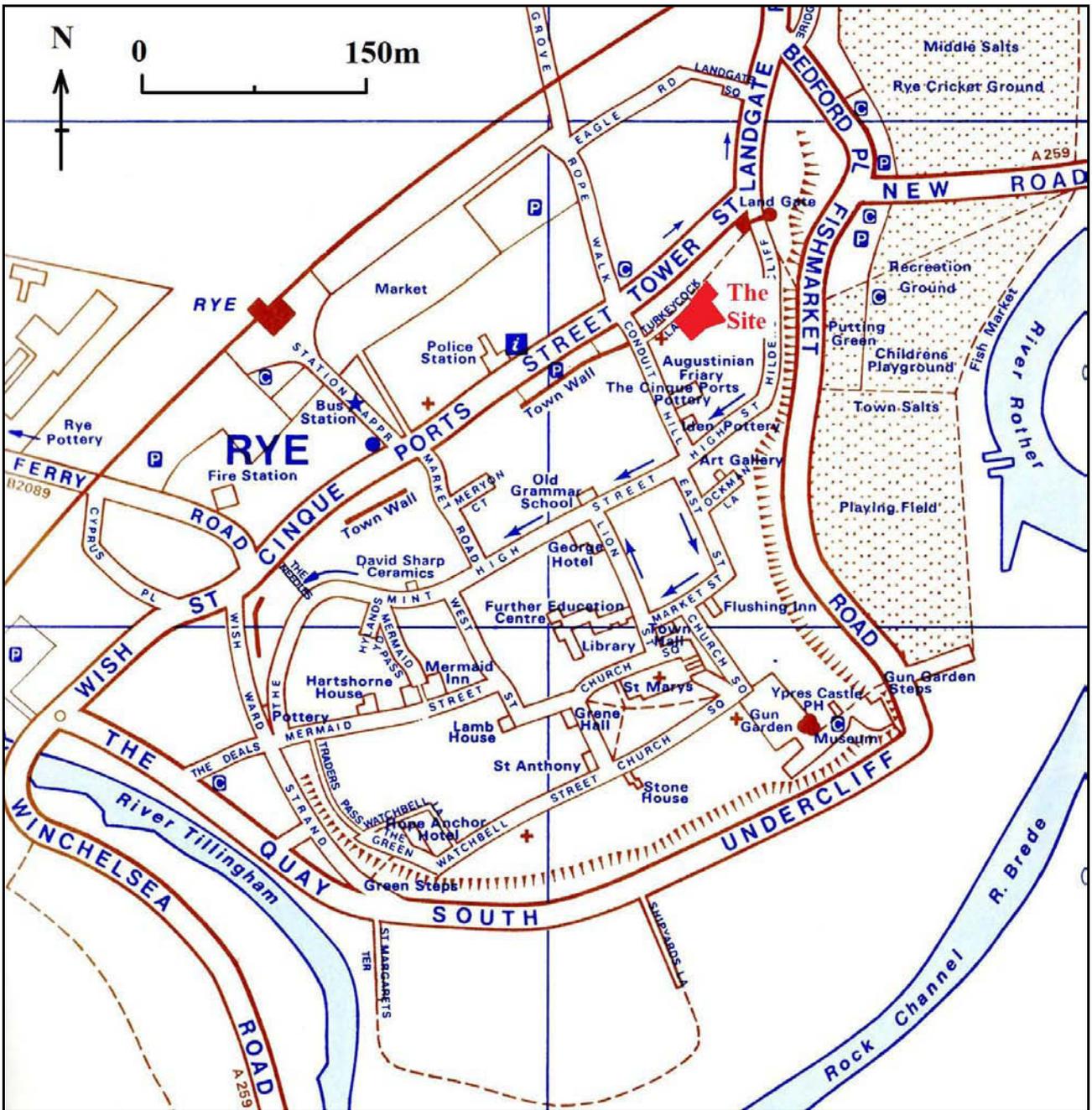


Fig. 1: Tower House, Rye. Location of the Site

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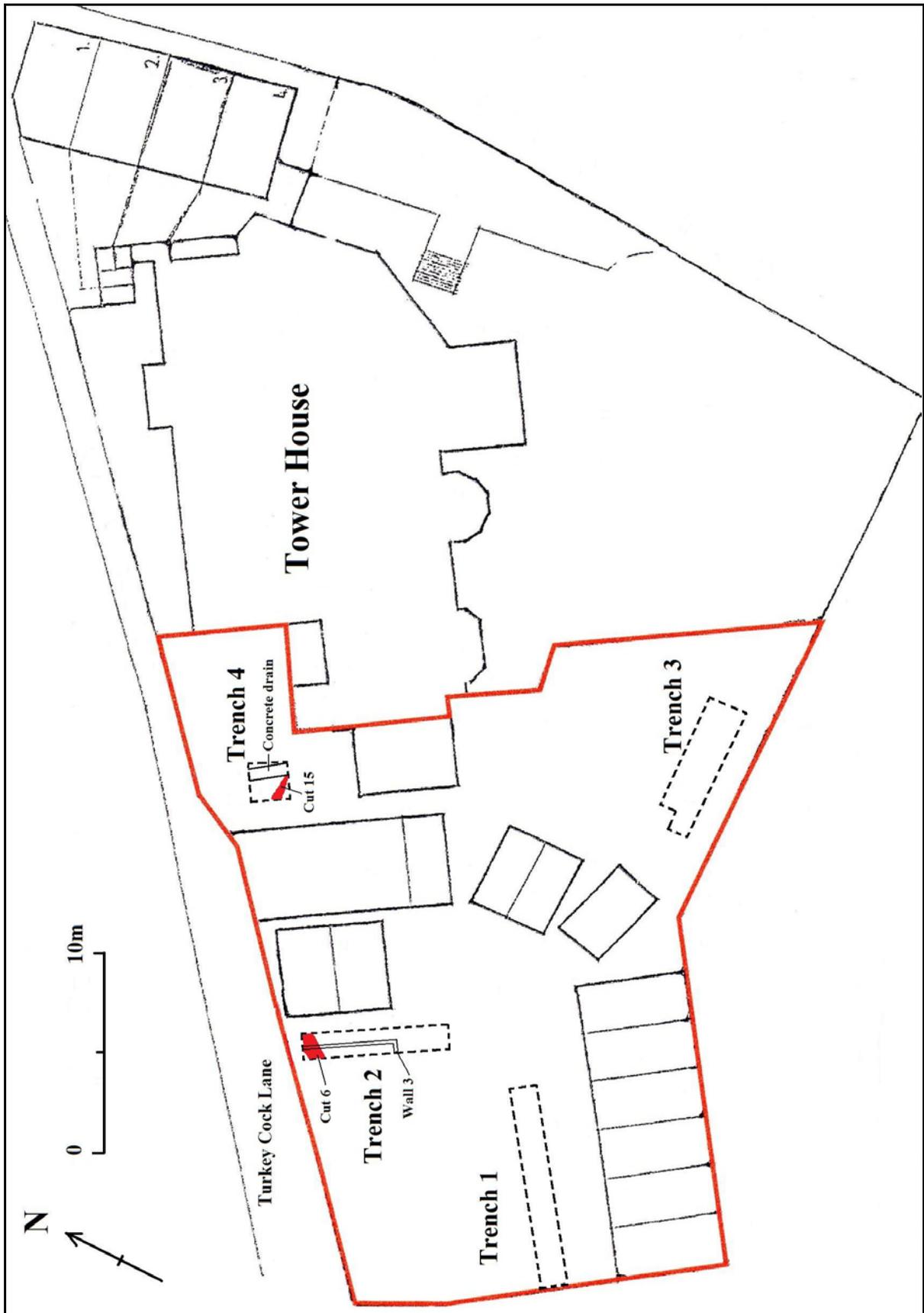


Fig. 2: Tower House, Rye: Site Plan showing the location of the trenches and Medieval features

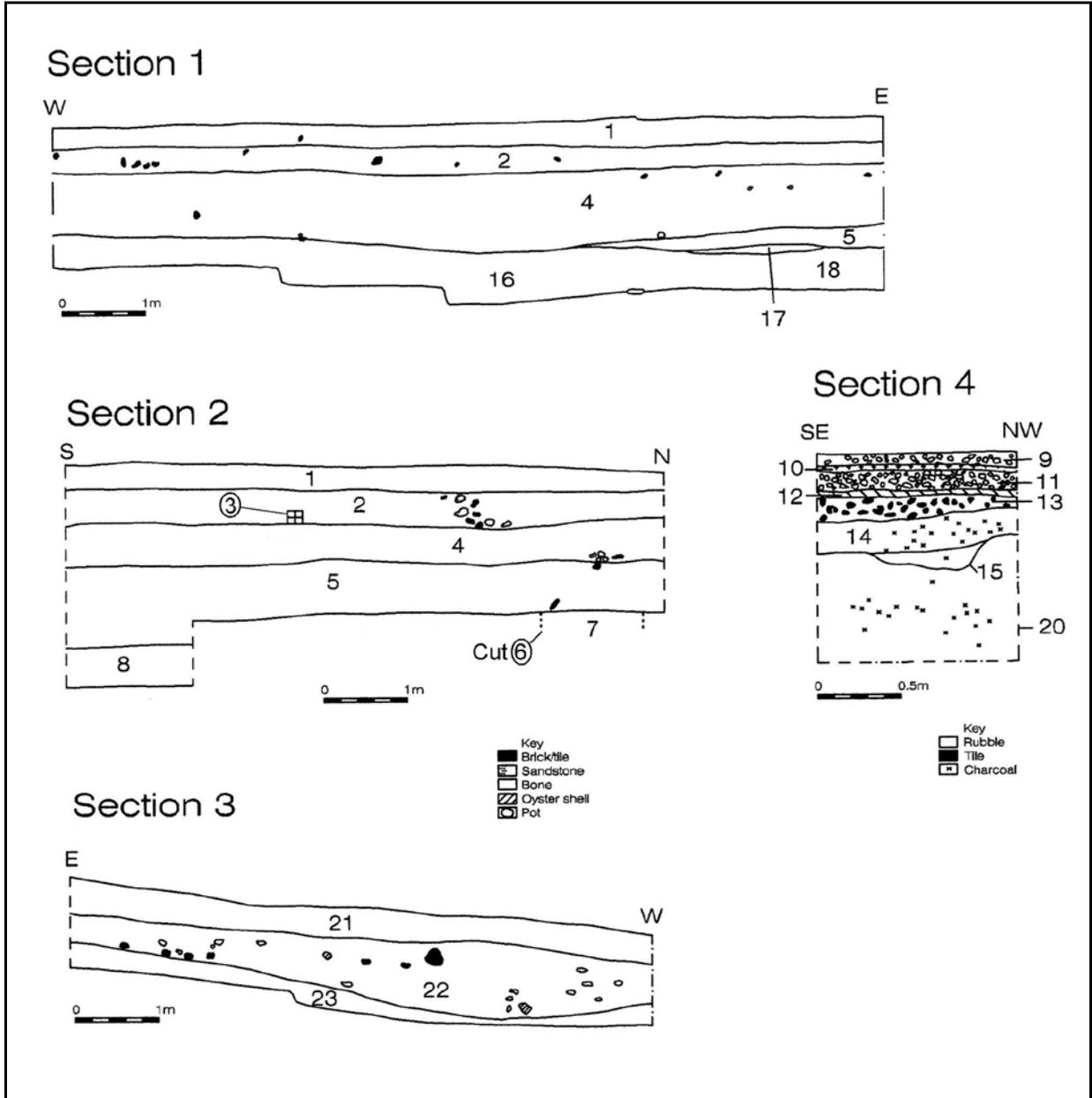


Fig. 3: Tower House, Rye: Trench Sections



Fig. 4: Tower House, Rye: Trench 1 looking west



Fig. 5: Tower House, Rye: Trench 2 with Cut 6 at this end of the trench



Fig. 6: Tower House, Rye: Trench 3: Section through the later 19th century midden



Fig. 7: Tower House, Rye: Trench 4: Section

Appendix 1 - Table of Levels

Location	Level OD
Trench 1 NW corner ground level	7.94
Trench 1 NW corner bottom of trench	6.32
Trench 1 NE corner ground level	7.95
Trench 1 NE corner bottom of trench	6.05
Trench 2 NW corner ground level	7.78
Trench 2 NW corner bottom of trench	6.13
Trench 2 SW corner ground level	7.965
Trench 3 SE corner ground level	10.11
Trench 4 top of section	8.18
Trench 4 bottom of section	6.97

HER Summary Form

Site Code	THR08					
Identification Name and Address	Tower House, Rye					
County, District &/or Borough	Rother District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 9218 2056					
Geology	Ashdown Beds capped with Wadhurst Clay					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. X	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban X	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 26/10/08- 28/10/08	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mrs Jutta Lorant					
Project Manager	Chris Butler					
Project Supervisor	N/A					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED X	PM X	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An assessment excavation was carried out by Chris Butler Archaeological Services at Tower House, Rye during November 2008, during which a total of four evaluation trenches were excavated.</i></p> <p><i>Two trenches located in a car parking area revealed a deep stratigraphy of Post Medieval layers dating from late 19th century through to the late 17th century. Below this were deposits dating from the 14th to 15th century, and a possible ditch that been finally filled-in in the mid 16th to early 17th century. A small trench in the garden also revealed a similar stratigraphy but at a shallower level, whilst the fourth trench encountered a large later 19th century kitchen midden.</i></p> <p><i>Although the excavation did not locate any confirmed Medieval features, it did demonstrate that there was a deep Post Medieval stratigraphy with the potential for in-situ early Post Medieval and Medieval features and deposits with good preservation, albeit at lower levels. The kitchen midden has the potential to provide the best 19th - century assemblage from the town to date.</i></p>						

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, a Mesolithic hunting camp, and a Roman Villa.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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