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Report On An Archaeological Watching Brief at Tortington Priory Barn, Tortington, West Sussex.

By George Anelay. February 2013.

Background

The owner of Tortington Priory Barn (Scheduled Monument No: SM28897) obtained Scheduled Monument Consent (Ref:45562) from English Heritage & planning permission (AB/122/12) from Arun District Council for the erection of a single storey outbuilding on land adjacent to Priory Lane (see Fig.1). Conditions on both the consent and the permission required an archaeological intervention. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was appointed by the owner to carry out an archaeological watching brief on the associated groundworks in order to comply with these conditions. The watching brief took place on the 20th February 2013. The results are set out below. The site archive, which consists solely of paperwork, will be deposited in West Sussex Records Office.



Figure 1 Site Location (TQ00670606). © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100036068.

Results

The site of the proposed outbuilding lies c.100m north of the Augustinian Priory, the only above ground remains of which lie to the east of, or are incorporated into, a post-medieval barn.

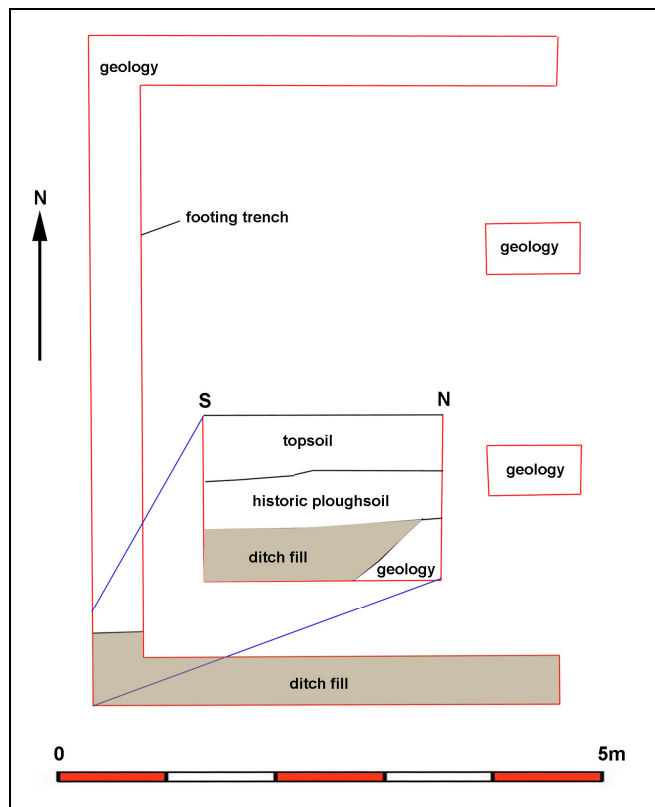


Figure 2 Plan of the excavated footing trench.

The groundworks associated with the construction of the outbuilding consisted of a footing trench of rectangular plan, open to the east save for the holes for two pier bases (see Fig.2). The trench was 0.45m wide and sloped from 0.75m – 0.55m deep west to east to compensate for the existing slope of the ground. In the trench two layers were recorded overlying the natural orange/yellow clay and gravel geology, which was reached at a depth of 0.5m below ground level. The upper layer, 0.25m thick, was composed of the mid-grey/brown silt topsoil with occasional flint gravel. The lower layer, 0.25m thick, was composed of a mid-orange/brown clay silt with frequent flint gravel. This lower layer is probably the remains of an historic ploughsoil. Extending for the length of the southern arm of the footing trench and c.0.15m up the western arm a further deposit was noted below this, similar in nature but with a higher clay content. This would appear to be the upper part of the fill of a ditch or depression. No artefacts were noted in its upper surface. It was not possible in this limited trench to determine the nature or date of this feature.



Figure 3 View across the footing trench towards Tortington Priory Barn.