

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**34 Roedean Crescent,
Brighton, East Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: RCB12/27

(TQ 3458 0344)

**34 Roedean Crescent,
Brighton, East Sussex**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For A & A Construction Group Ltd

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeRCB12/27

April 2012

Summary

Site name: 34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3458 0344

Planning reference: BH2011/03501

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th March to 13th April 2012

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: RCB 12/27

Summary of results: An area to the rear of the existing house was stripped down to the top of the natural chalk in advance of a new patio, but no archaeological finds or features were observed.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Brighton Museum in due course.

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34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Report 12/27

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex (TQ 3458 0344) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Alan Sablon of A & A Construction Group Ltd, Unit 35, Bolney Grange Business Park, Stairbridge Lane, Bolney, West Sussex, RH17 5PB.

Planning permission (BH2011/03501) had been gained from Brighton and Hove City Council to construct a new two storey front extension and rear swimming pool, along with various other external alterations. The permission was subject to a condition (3) relating to archaeology, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of building work. Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist with East Sussex County Council, who act as archaeological advisors to the City Council, advised that this should take the form of a watching brief, to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the City Council's policy (HE12) on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Greg Chuter. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis between 6th March and 13th April 2012, and the site code is RCB 12/27. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Brighton Museum, in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies on the south side of Roedean Crescent, about 4 km east of the historic core of Brighton, East Sussex (Fig 1). Roedean School is situated approximately 500m to the south-east of the site, whilst the Brighton Marina complex lies about 350m to the south-west. Roedean Crescent is situated on the side of a hill, and the surrounding area generally slopes down towards the south-east. As a result of this slope, the height above Ordnance Datum rises from about 58m at the rear of the property to just over 61m close to the pavement in front of the house (Fig. 2). According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Newhaven Formation Chalk, and this was confirmed during the watching brief (BGS 2006).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within Roedean Bottom, on the south-east facing slope of Red Hill. In summary, the site is located within an archaeologically sensitive area due to its position on the chalk downlands which were the focus for occupation, ceremonial, and funerary activity from the Neolithic period onwards. A number of earthworks are recorded on the summit of Red Hill, some of which may represent Bronze Age round barrows. Several inhumation burials, dating from the prehistoric and Roman periods have been found on the hill, including a crouched inhumation which is thought to be late Neolithic or early Bronze Age in date, from Roedean Crescent itself. Further crouched burials were discovered nearby, at Roedean Way and Roedean Road. A small hoard of Roman coins, dating from the 3rd to 4th century AD, were found on the allotments which formerly stood on the area now occupied by Roedean Crescent. However, a watching brief at the east end of Roedean Crescent revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Wallis 2011). Field systems dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods have been identified in the slightly wider landscape and the site is about 2km south-east of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure known as Whitehawk Camp (Allen 2005; Rudling 2003).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to include the monitoring of footing trenches for the new front extension, along with any areas of ground reduction, particularly that associated with the new swimming pool. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer's and groundworker's schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

An initial visit established that the northern part of the site had been severely truncated when the existing house was built. As a result, a decision was made not to monitor the groundworks in front of the house, as any archaeological deposits which may have been present would have been removed by this truncation. The East Sussex Archaeological Officer was consulted about this course of action.

A retaining wall for the new rear patio was to be built, and most of the area between this wall and the back wall of the house was stripped down to the natural chalk (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). This was carried out using an excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. The stripped area measured approximately 5m by 17m (the width of the house). The topsoil (50) in this area was between 0.15m and 0.25m

thick, and had been heavily disturbed by plant roots (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). However, patches of a thin subsoil deposit (51) were observed immediately above the chalk in places, indicating that the area had not been significantly affected by past activity. No archaeological features were observed, and no finds were recovered from the soil deposits. The only features which had truncated the chalk were a modern garden pond and a service trench. A short section of the wall foundation trench was monitored to ensure that the chalk in this area was not re-deposited material, and this confirmed that it was natural geology.

The proposed new swimming pool will no longer be constructed.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

The watching brief at this site successfully examined those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the planned building work. The northern part of the site had clearly been truncated when the existing house was built and, as a result, groundworks in this area were not monitored. The garden to the rear of the house had not been significantly disturbed in the past, but no archaeological features were recorded in an area which was stripped in advance of a new patio.

References

- Allen, M J, 2005, Beaker settlement and environment on the chalk downs of Southern England, *Proc Prehist Soc*, **71**, 219-246
BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 318/333, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Department of Communities and Local Government Planning Policy Statement 5, London (TSO)
Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, King's Lynn
Wallis, S, 2011, 50 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 11/24, Reading



RCB 12/27

**36 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex, 2012
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Brighton and East Sussex.

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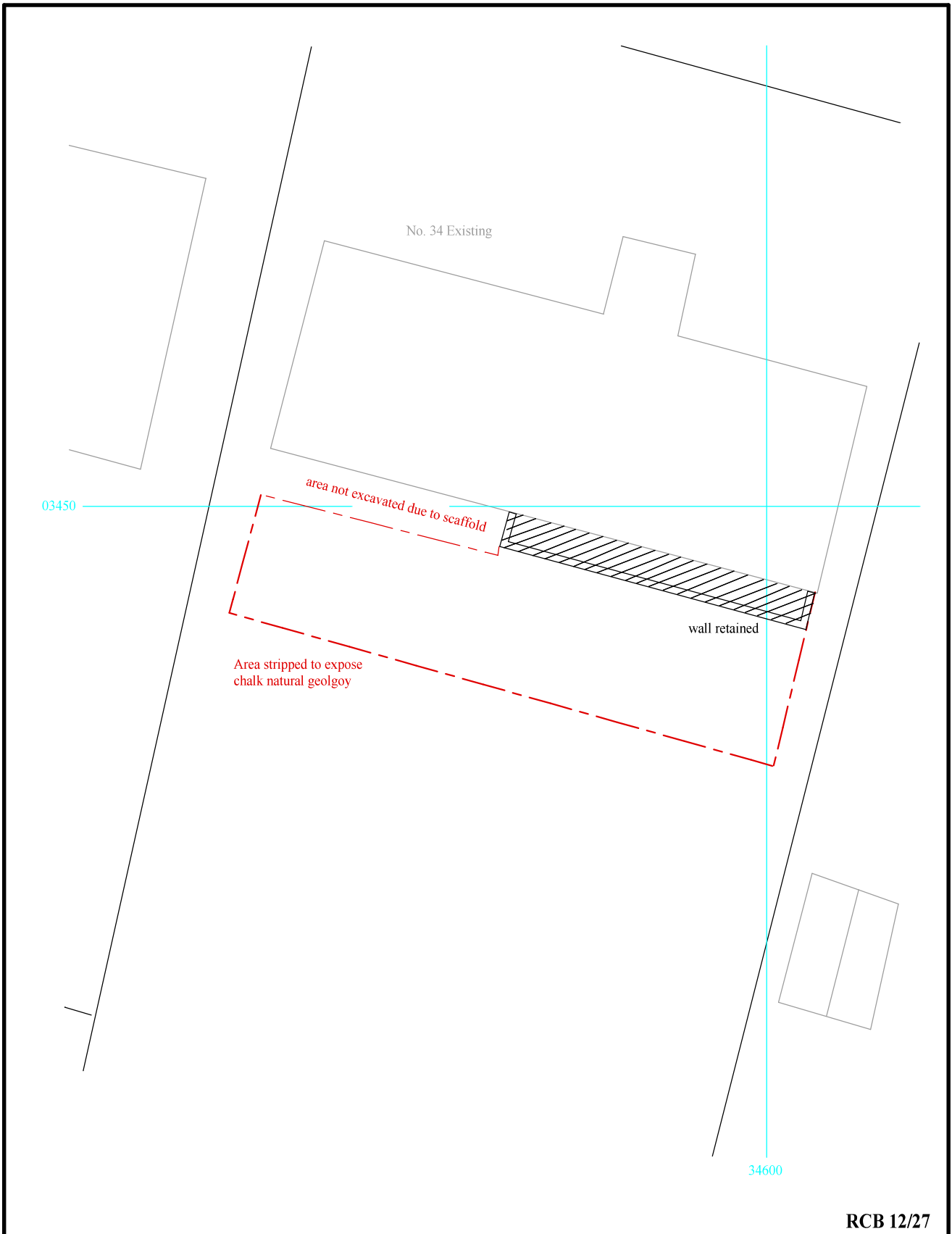


**34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex, 2012
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Roedean Crescent.

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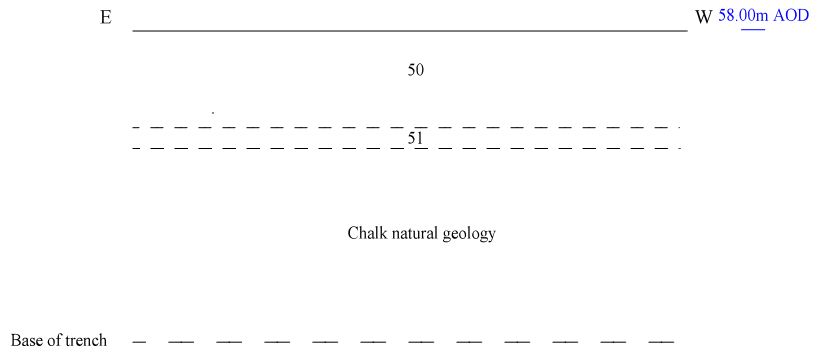
RCB 12/27

**34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, East Sussex, 2012
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



Footing trench for retaining wall



RCB 12/27

**34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton,
East Sussex, 2012
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. General site shot, looking north west: Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking south west. Scale: 0.5m.

RCB 12/27

34 Roedean Crescent, Brighton, West Sussex, 2012
Archaeological watching brief

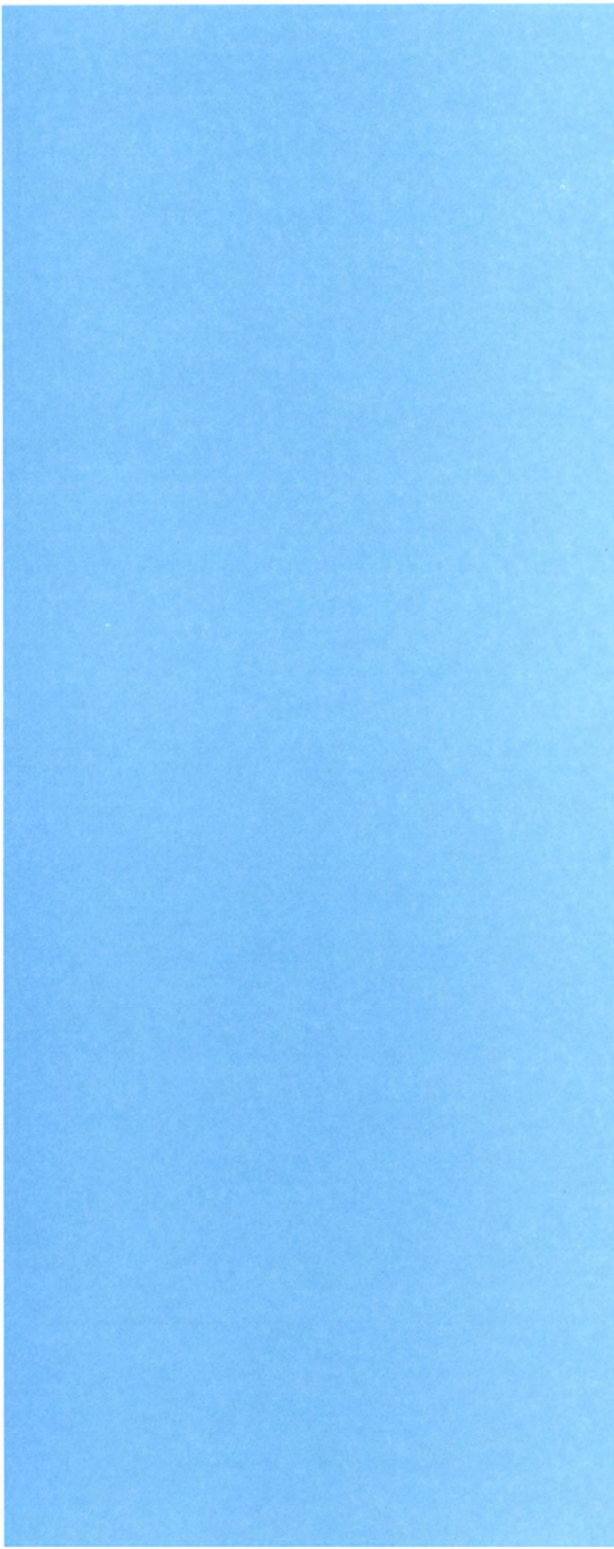
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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