

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

**Land to the rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road,
Rotherfield, East Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Platt

Site Code: MRR13/56

(TQ 5551 2935)

**Land to the rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road,
Rotherfield, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Millwood Designer Homes Ltd**

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MRR13/56

April 2013

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 5551 2935

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th March 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: MRR13/56

Area of site: 600 sq m

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological significance were discovered. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.04.13 Steve Preston ✓ 04.04.13

Land to the rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, East Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

By David Platt

Report 13/56

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, East Sussex (TQ 5551 2935) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ray Pearson, of Millwood Designer Homes Ltd, Borden End East Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1HA.

Planning permission (WD/2010/0529/F) has been gained from Wealden District Council to build two four-bed detached properties with garages and associated parking and access. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by proposed re-development of the site, field evaluation was required as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology, to determine the archaeological potential of the site and to help formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist for East Sussex, archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt on the 27th March 2013 and the site code is MRR13/56. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Lewes Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located 3.5km east of Crowborough and c.8.5km south-west of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The site lies on the western side of Mayfield Road, but accessed off Court Meadow Close, and forms a rectangular parcel of land to the rear of Little Oak (TQ 5551 2935). The underlying geology is Ashdown Beds (BGS 1971) and this was seen in the trenches as a pale greyish yellow silty clay. The site lies at a height of c.160m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing note prepared by Mr Greg Chuter. In summary, the archaeological potential of the site primarily stems from its location close to the historic core of Rotherfield and, as such, it lies within an Archaeological Notification Area. The village is mentioned in Domesday Book, as *Reredfelle*, indicating that it had been established by the late Saxon period (Williams and Martin 2002). However, there is very little archaeological evidence of activity in the area prior to the Saxon

period, although this may merely reflect the lack of archaeological fieldwork within the village. A Mesolithic flint blade was found in a field, about 100m west of the present site. A monastery is thought to have existed in the village during the Saxon period although no traces of such an establishment have been found. Indeed, many of the documents relating to the monastery are believed to be medieval forgeries. The parish church, dedicated to St Denys, is the earliest surviving building in the village, with many elements dating from the 13th century. Other medieval buildings have been identified within the village, usually hidden behind post-medieval facades (Harris 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warranted preservation in-situ, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

It was proposed to dig 2 trenches, each 7m long and both 1.6m wide, targeting the footprints of the proposed new houses. A contingency of 5m of additional trenching was included should it be required to clarify the results of the initial findings.

Topsoil and overburden was to be removed using a JCB-type machine equipped with a ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological deposits or features were encountered these were to be cleaned and excavated using hand tools.

Results

Both trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned N - S and was 7.2m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.37m of topsoil above 0.07m of grey silty clay subsoil overlying yellow/grey silty clay natural geology.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned NE - SW and was 8.2m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.33m of topsoil above 0.07m of grey silty clay subsoil overlying yellow/grey silty clay natural geology.

Conclusion

No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded and the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

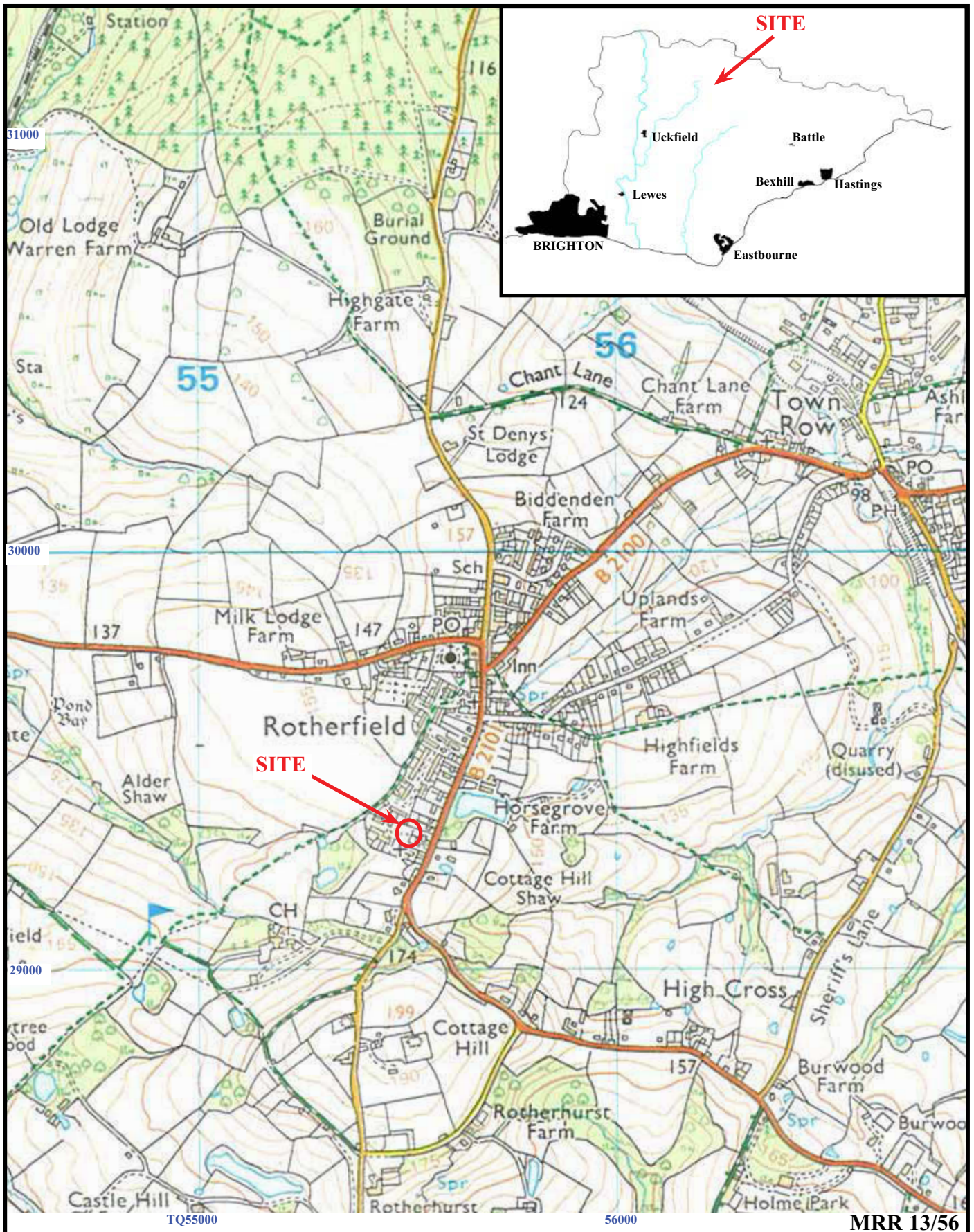
References

- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 303, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Harris, R B, 2008, *Rotherfield: Historic Character Assessment Report*, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London, (TSO)
Rudling, D (ed), 2003, *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

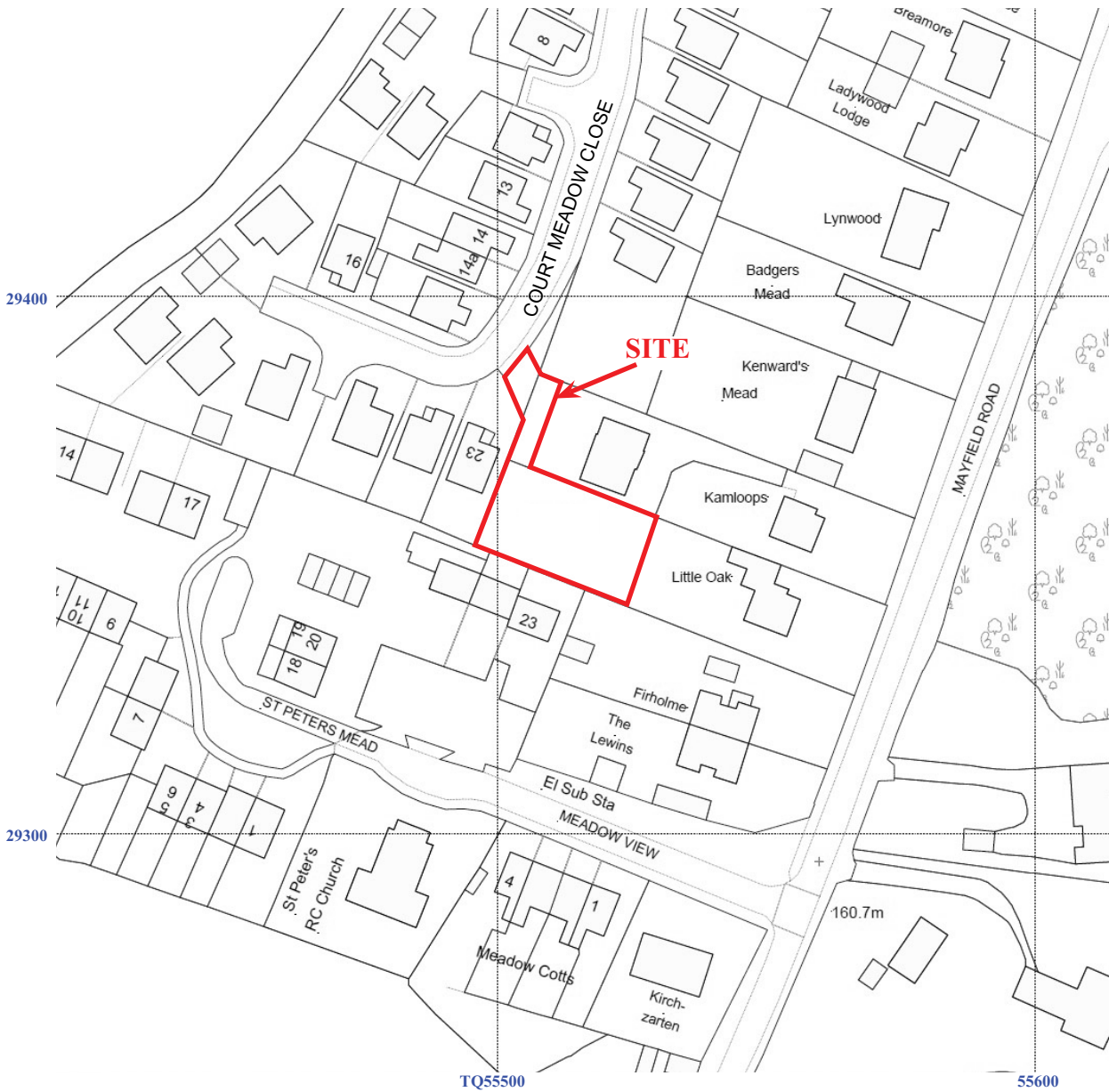
Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	7.2	1.6	0.50	0-0.37m topsoil; 0.37-0.44m grey silty clay subsoil; 0.44m+ yellow/grey silty clay natural geology. [Pl. 1]
2	8.2	1.6	0.43	0-0.33m topsoil; 0.33-0.40m grey silty clay subsoil; 0.40m+ yellow/grey silty clay natural geology. [Pl. 2]



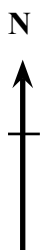
**Rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield,
East Sussex, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**

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

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure map 18 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880



MRR 13/56



**Rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield,
East Sussex, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Mayfield Road.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:1250





MRR 13/56

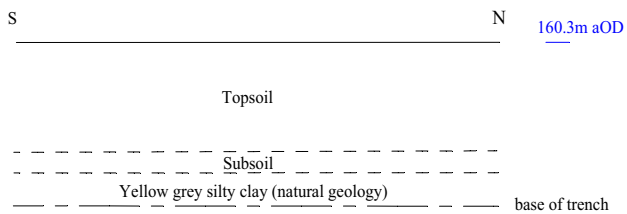


**Rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield,
East Sussex, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches.



Trench 1



MRR 13/56

**Rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield,
East Sussex, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation**

Trench 1. Representative section.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

MRR 13/56

Rear of Little Oak, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield,
East Sussex, 2013
Archaeological Evaluation

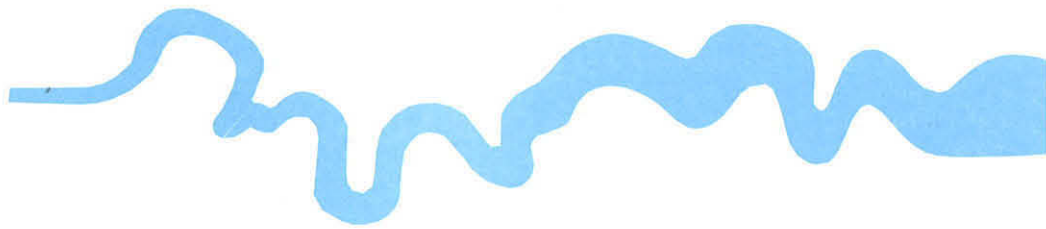
Plates 1 and 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH

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





TVAS (South)
77a Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton
Sussex, BN1 7HB

Tel: 01273 554198
Fax: 01273 564043
Email: south@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk