THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

SOUTH

The Grange, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: TGR13/05

(TQ 3697 0250)

The Grange, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Brighton and Hove City Council

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TGR 13/05

September 2013

Summary

Site name: The Grange, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 3697 0250

Planning reference: BH2012/0256 and BH2012/0257

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 30th July – 16th September 2013

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: TGR 13/05

Area of site: *c*. 1300 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the rebuilding work in respect of the existing flint walls. A well and cobbled surface were recorded in the residential courtyard area, along with an earlier wall. All these features are likely to date from the late 18th or 19th century.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 18.09.13

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Report 13/05b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Grange, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex (TQ 3697 0250) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Crawford, on behalf of Brighton and Hove City Council.

Planning permissions (BH2012/0256 and BH2012/0257) had been gained from Brighton and Hove City Council for the partial rebuilding and stabilisation of the existing flint walls on the property. The permissions were subject to standard conditions relating to archaeology, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks. Mr Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist with East Sussex County Council had indicated that two distinct elements of work were required in order to satisfy the planning conditions. These were to entail building recording of the walls prior to the commencement of building work, and an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. The building recording was carried out in January 2013 (Wallis 2013), and this report is solely concerned with the watching brief.

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012), and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the East Sussex Assistant County Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis between 30th July and 16th September 2013, and the site code is TGR 13/05. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an approved local museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the historic core of Rottingdean, at the junction of The Green and Whiteway Lane (Fig. 2). The Grange is a large building, which currently houses the village's library, along with a museum and art gallery. There are gardens to the west, north and east of the building. A small part of the building is occupied by a residential flat, which has its own small courtyard garden, immediately adjacent to Whiteway Lane. The western part of the site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 19m above Ordnance Datum, but the ground rises to the east, especially along Whiteway Lane. As a result of this slope, the eastern garden areas of

the property are terraced. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying natural geology consists of Head Deposits associated with the dry chalk valleys which run down Whiteway Lane and the High Street (BGS 2006). However, where the new foundation trenches were of sufficient depth, the natural geology encountered during the watching brief consisted of solid chalk.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Rottingdean village, and also from its position on the South Downs, which is regarded as being archaeologically rich (Rudling 2003). A search of the East Sussex HER (reference 051/12) revealed numerous entries in the vicinity of the site, including several possible barrows dating from the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods on the chalk downland to the north-west of the village. Another barrow was recorded during building work at the Grand Crescent, to the east of the present site. Roman finds from the beach, to the south-west of the site, had led to the suggestion that there may have been a glass working site in the area, which may now be submerged. Although *Rotingedene* is mentioned in Domesday Book (Mills 1993), and presumably has Saxon origins, the HER contains no entries relating to Saxon or medieval finds within the village. However, the parish church of St Margaret, to the north of the site, dates from the medieval period, and may have replaced an earlier Saxon building. The building now known as the Grange probably dates from the second half of the 18th century, although it was added to in the 19th and 20th centuries (Wallis 2013).

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 foundation trenches and pier bases for the various sections of wall which were to be replaced, along with any areas of ground reduction. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer's and groundworkers' schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

Three separate sections of wall were to be rebuilt, and the foundation trenches and pier bases were monitored during the watching brief (Fig. 3). These were located in the front garden (A), the residential courtyard garden (B), and the rear garden (C).

Front Garden (A)

A section of wall, approximately 16m long, was to be replaced in the front garden area. A trench measuring 0.4m - 0.6m wide was excavated adjacent to the wall, along with four pier bases. The pier bases generally measured 1m by 0.8m. Due to the difference in levels on either side of the wall, the excavations were up to 1.6m deep within the front garden, but only 0.5m deep beneath the Whiteway Lane pavement. Within the front garden the stratigraphy consisted of 0.6m of heavily rooted topsoil over 0.25m of possible subsoil (with frequent chalk and flint inclusions). This possible subsoil horizon lay directly above the natural chalk geology. The bricks of the pavement appeared to have been laid on a similar subsoil deposit, which was 0.25m thick and once again lay above the natural chalk. No archaeological features were observed in the footing trench or pier bases, and modern finds from the topsoil were retained on site.

Residential Courtyard Garden (B)

A short section of wall fronting onto Whiteway Lane was to be replaced, and this involved the excavation of a new pier base measuring 1.45m by 0.8m (Pl. 1). Due to differing ground levels on either side of the wall, the pier base was 1.25m deep beneath the Whiteway Lane pavement and 1m deep within the courtyard. Immediately beneath the existing wall the stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of brown grey clayey silt, which lay above a deposit of greyish brown clayey silt up to 0.4m thick. This deposit lay above a probable subsoil horizon, which was 0.25m thick and lay directly above the natural chalk geology. The area within the courtyard garden had been disturbed by previous activity associated with the construction of a well and earlier wall, although this was most obvious in the west facing section of the pier base (Fig. 4). A cobbled surface (50) was exposed immediately beneath the modern concrete slab, and abutted an earlier boundary wall (51) which was constructed from flint and lime mortar. The existing wall partially sat on top of the earlier one, although the later wall was built slightly further south. A deposit of mid brown grey clayey silt (52) with occasional fragments of chalk, brick and tile was recorded immediately beneath the cobbled surface. This deposit also abutted the earlier wall, and lay above a number of chalk blocks (53) which formed the domed roof of a well. A small hole was cut through the wall (54) of the well in the north-west corner of the pier base, and it was possible to take a number of photographs through this opening. The wall was largely constructed from flint nodules and lime mortar, along with occasional bricks, and had an internal diameter of 1.5m. A circular opening in the centre of the domed chalk roof was discernable, but this had been blocked by later made ground and the concrete slab. A deposit of mid brown grey clayey silt (55) lay beneath the chalk roof and abutted the wall of the well, indicating that the roof of the well may have

been a later addition. This sealed a deposit of light grey clayey silt (56) with frequent chalk inclusions, on which the foundations of the earlier wall sat. Natural chalk geology was observed beneath deposit 55, although it occurred much higher up elsewhere within the pier base where the ground had not been disturbed by the construction of the well. Whilst no closely dateable finds were recovered during the excavation of the pier base, the well (54) and earlier boundary wall (51) both appear to be late 18th or 19th century in date based on stratigraphy and the materials used.

Rear Garden (C)

A new footing trench, measuring 5.2m in length, was excavated in the rear garden after a section of the flint wall was removed (Pl. 2). The trench was 0.8m wide, and two wider (1.3m) pier bases were excavated at either end. The ground level differed on either side of the wall due to terracing and, as a result, the excavations were 0.75m deep to the west of the wall and 1.3m deep to the east. On the west side of the wall the stratigraphy consisted of 0.4m of topsoil which lay above a deposit of mid grey brown sandy silt, at least 0.35m thick. To the east of the wall up to 0.25m of turf and topsoil lay above a layer of re-deposited chalk. This layer was 0.35m thick and lay above a deposit of mid brown grey sandy silt which contained some late 19th century material (not retained). At the northern end of the trench, which was deeper (1.3m), a possible subsoil horizon was recorded beneath this deposit. The only subsoil observed in the southern end of the trench appeared immediately beneath the wall. The trench was not deep enough to expose the underlying chalk natural. No archaeological features were observed.

Conclusion

The watching brief at the Grange successfully examined those parts of the site which were to be most affected by construction work in respect of the new sections of wall. The only features of possible archaeological interest observed were a well, a wall and a cobbled surface in the courtyard garden area, which are likely to date from the late 18th or 19th century.

References

BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 318/333, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.

Mills, A D, 1993, *English Place-names*, Oxford

NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)

Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, King's Lynn

Wallis, 2013, 'The Grange, The Green, Rottingdean, East Sussex , building recording', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 13/05, Brighton

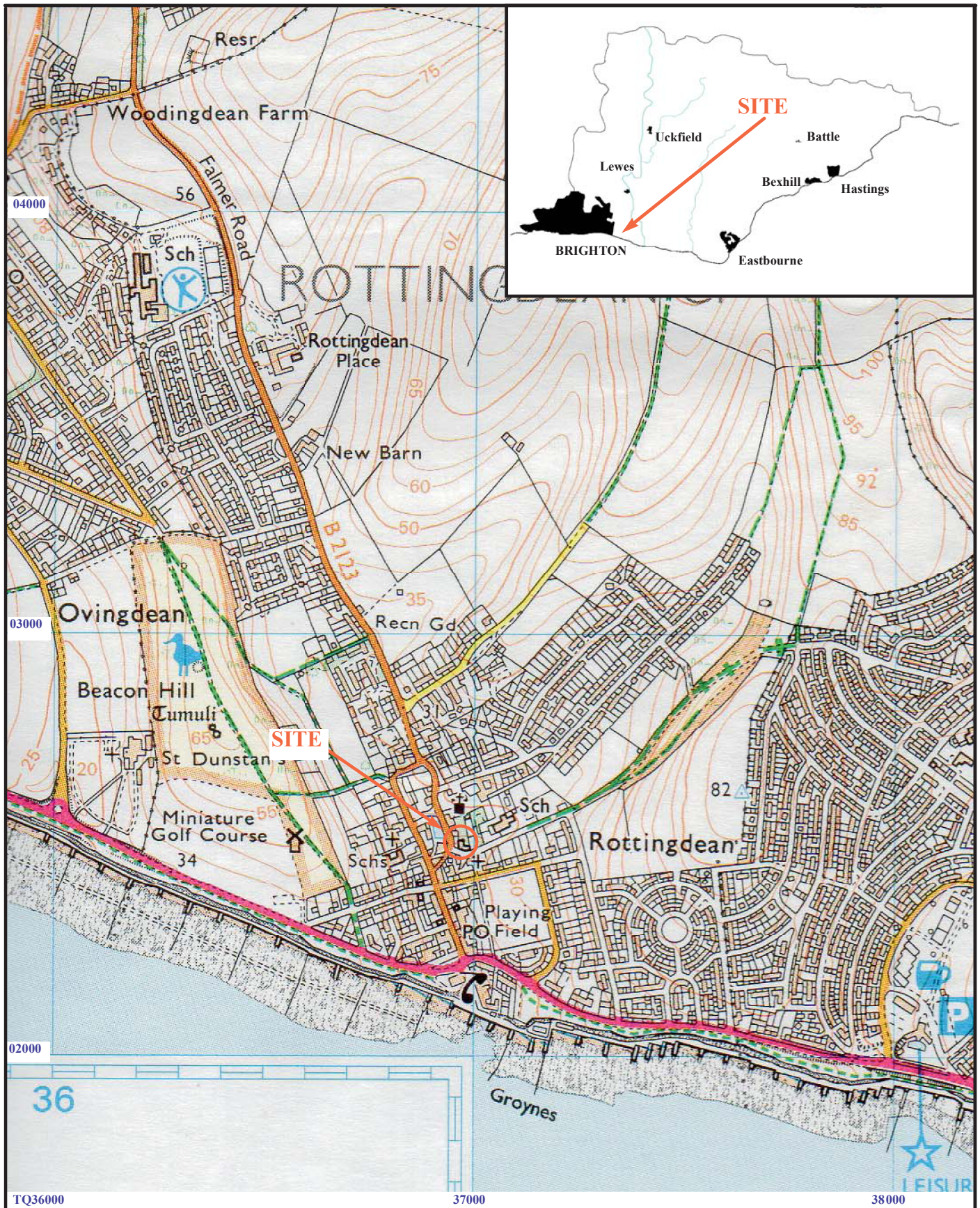

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Figure 1. Location of site within Rottingdean and East Sussex.

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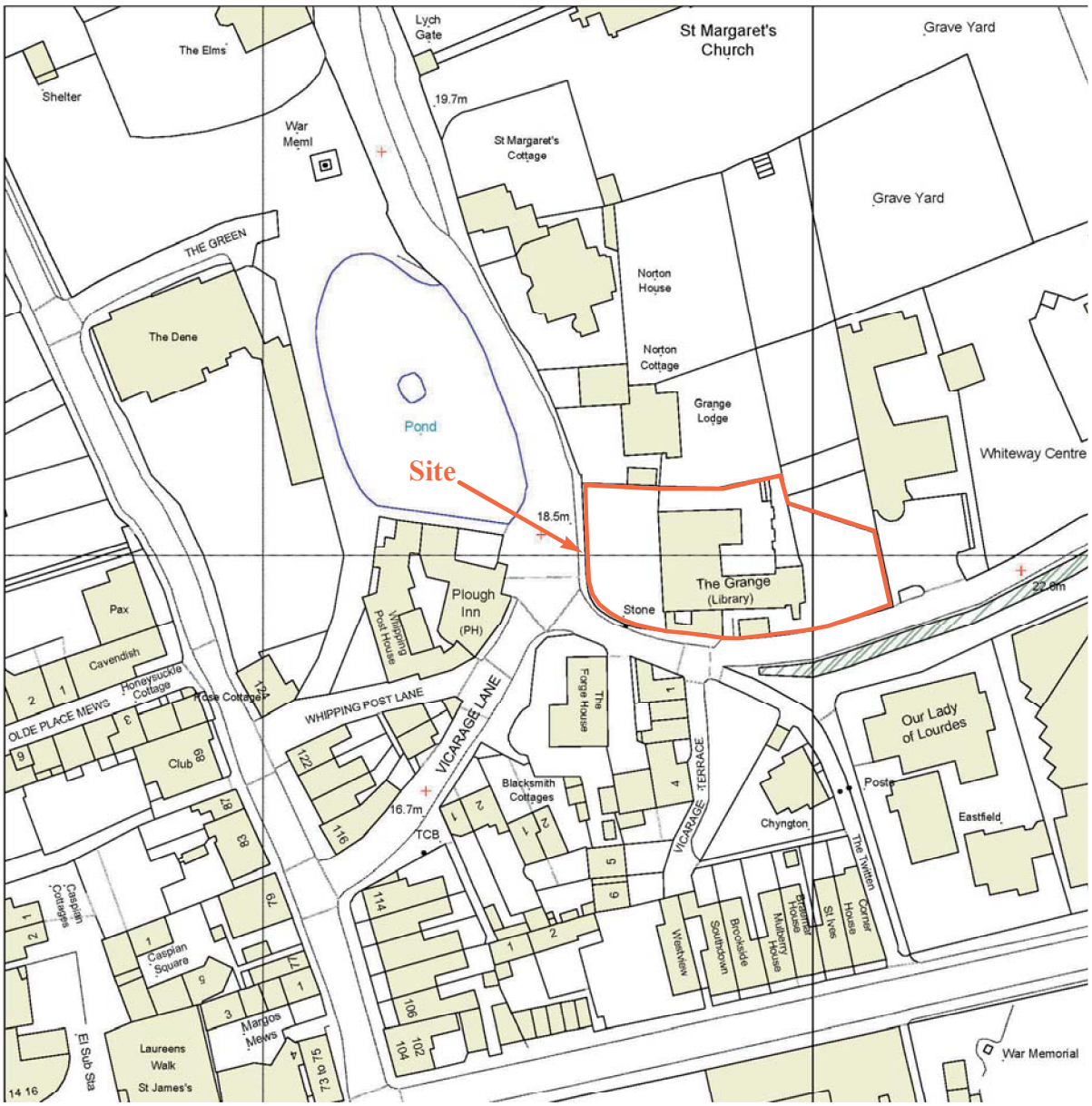

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping at 1:1250

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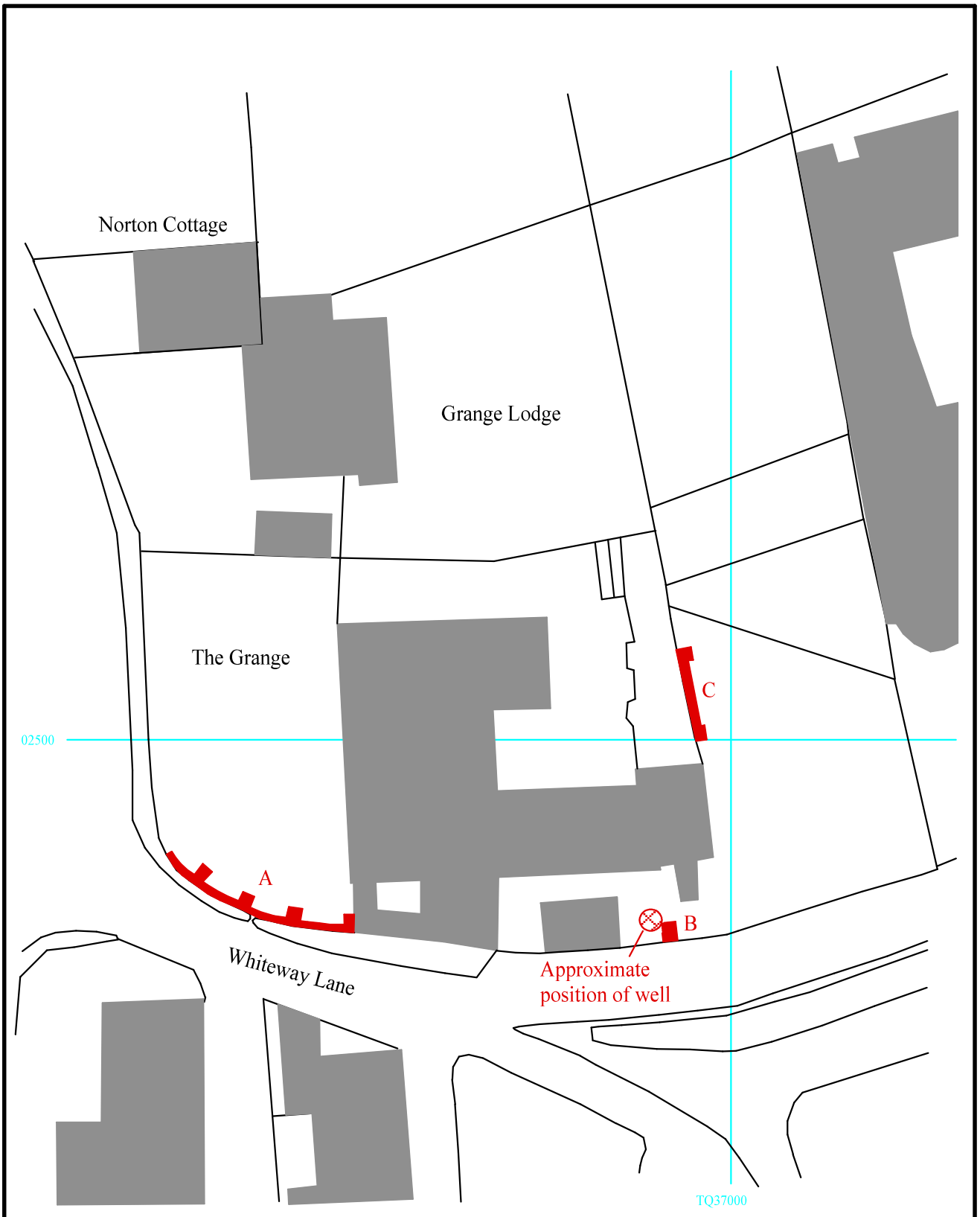

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Figure 3. Location of areas monitored.

0 20m

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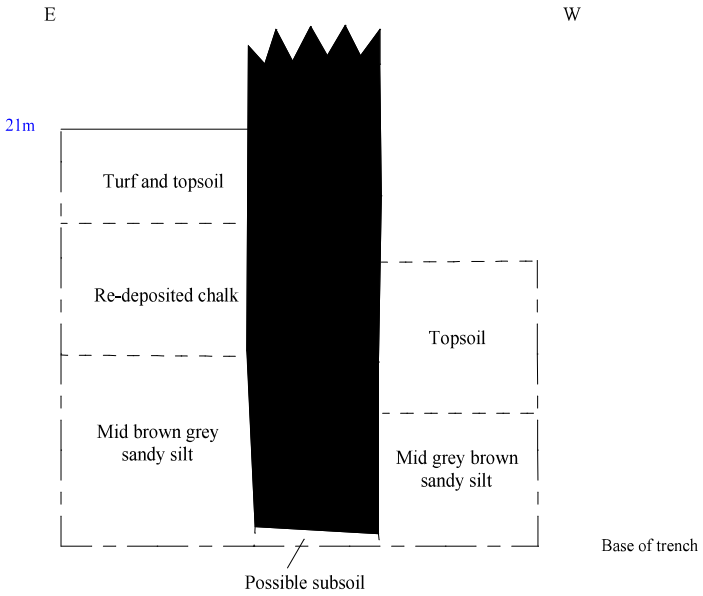
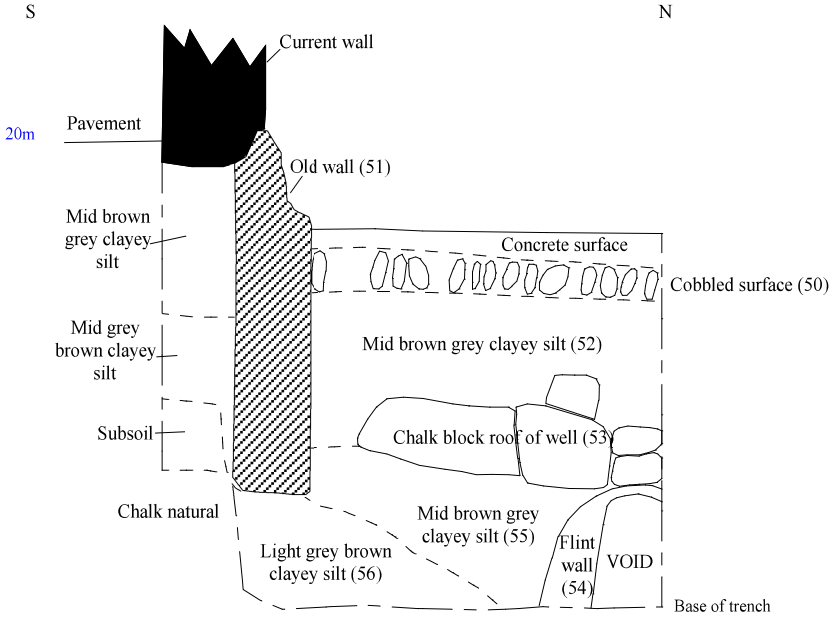
Stratigraphy in rear garden (C) footing trench



Stratigraphy in central area (B) pier base



Possible

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Figure 4. Representative sections.

0 1m

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Plate 1. Hole for pier base, Area B, looking south west. Scale:1m.

Plate 2. Section of wall in Area C, looking south. Scale 0.3m

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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