

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

**Middleton, Milton Street,
Polegate, East Sussex**

Building Recording

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: MMS15/51

(TQ 5343 0401)

**Middleton, Milton Street,
Polegate, East Sussex**

**Building Recording
For Mr James Stephens**

Planning Reference: SDNP/14/01988/LIS

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MMS 15/51

November 2015

Summary

Site name: Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 5343 0401

Site activity: Building Recording

Planning reference: SDNP/14/01988/LIS

Date of project: March – April 2015

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Project supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MMS 15/51

Summary of results: The first floor bedroom was successfully recorded prior to its conversion into a new bathroom. Some historic elements were exposed during the building work, although the installation of the new bath itself did not impact significantly on the house.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the East Sussex Records Office in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 02.11.15 Steve Preston ✓ 02.11.15

Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate, East Sussex Building Recording

by Sean Wallis

Report 15/51

Introduction

This report documents the results of building recording at Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate, East Sussex (TQ 5343 0401) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the property's owner, Mr James Stephens. The history and evolution of the house have previously been considered in an archaeological interpretive report (Dickinson 2014), and it has also been subject to an investigation by the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG 2010).

Planning permission (SDNP/14/01988/LIS) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority to install a new bathroom in the first floor bedroom, and to create a new drainage system in the garden. Improvements are also planned to the existing driveway, whilst the ground level around the house will be reduced to alleviate dampness. The consent was subject to a number of conditions (4, 5, 6 and 8) relating to archaeology and the historic environment.

The East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, Mr Greg Chuter, had indicated that the necessary archaeological work should initially consist of a building recording targeting the part of the house which will be affected by the proposed works, including a watching brief during the building work if appropriate. The results of this were to be integrated into an existing archaeological report on the house (Dickinson 2014) as an appendix. Following the building recording there was to be a watching brief to monitor the external drainage works, the results of which will be discussed in a separate report.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the National park Authority's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. The building recording was carried out to a specification approved by the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, and the fieldwork element of the project took place in March and April 2015. The site code is MMS 15/51.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies within the hamlet of Milton Street, about 4.8km west of the historic core of Polegate, East Sussex. It is occupied by a house, known as Middleton, and its associated gardens and car parking area. The house is positioned on the side of a west facing slope and, as a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varies from

about 97m AOD close to the road, to approximately 100m AOD in the south-east corner of the site. According to the British Geological Survey the site is located close to the junction of the Zig Zag and West Melbury Marly Chalk Formations (BGS 2006).

Methodology

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) for a level 2 record (RCHME 1996; English Heritage 2006).

The objectives of the project were:

- to record the first floor bedroom prior to the commencement of any building work;
- to highlight constructional details and methods, and materials used;
- to highlight the most important architectural details, including carpenters marks and any other inscriptions and significant features, such as fixtures and fittings;
- to note any construction materials that may have been re-used; and
- to monitor the building work, by way of a watching brief, to record any historic features revealed.

The project comprised a summary analysis of the structure using the architects' plans of the site, along with photographs taken shortly before, and during, the planned building work. The resulting collection of photographs has been catalogued (Appendix 1). Figures 3 to 5 show the directions of the views photographed. The watching brief will be detailed in a separate report.

Historic Background

The history and development of the building have been considered in detail in a recent desk-based assessment (Dickinson 2014), which itself drew on an earlier report by the Wealden Buildings Study Group (WBSG 2010).

It is believed that the property may have originated as two bay open hall, with possible front and rear aisles. Dating of this sort of structure is problematic as the style continued in use for some time. However, a 13th to 15th century date is suggested for this earliest phase.

A large open bay was probably added to the south of the original hall in the late medieval or early post-medieval period. Whilst the rafters of the early hall are heavily sooted, the rafters of this later bay and the wall between the two phases are not, which has led to the suggestion that the building may have fallen out of use as a house around this time, and may have had a specialist non-domestic use. It appears that considerable distortion may have occurred to the building following the construction of the later bay. This included settlement to the south-east, and racking movement to the frame and in particular the roof structure.

It is likely that the building was adapted and converted to domestic use in the 17th century, and the earliest documentary evidence is a lease from 1676. Floors were probably added to the earlier phases at first-floor level during this period, and it is possible that the northern lean-to was added. As a result, it is likely that the bedroom in the south-east corner of the building originated at this time. A brick chimney appears to have been inserted in the 18th or 19th century, possibly replacing an earlier one. Modern alterations include under-building and replacement of much of the timber frame in brick and stone.

The house was originally in the parish of Arlington. Historic maps suggest that the original front door, which faces the road, may have gone out of use in the late 19th century. Although this door still exists, access to the property is currently through a rear entrance.

Description

The survey took place in March and April 2015, both before and during the planned building work, and concentrated on the first floor bedroom (C) in the south-east corner of the building (Fig. 5). The room is partly situated within the eaves of the building, and the slope of the hipped roof can be clearly seen in the east and south walls. The external face of the east wall can be observed from the kitchen, as the first floor does not extend the full width of the rear aisle (Pl. 1). It is possible that this room was created in the 17th century, when the first floor was added to the building, although the partition wall between bedrooms B and C may be a later addition, as the stud rails on this wall appear later than those on the northern wall of bedroom C, and could even be machine cut (Pls 2, 3).

The distorted nature of the building, caused by racking movements in the frame, is particularly visible in bedroom C (Pls 4–6). As a result, the west wall of the room measures 3.57m internally, whilst the east wall is 3.85m long. Some elements of the timber frame of the building could be seen within the room, and these were further exposed when the wallpaper previously covering them was removed (Pls 7–9). The tie beam was visible along the east and south walls, and the removal of the wallpaper revealed the junction between the tie-beam and the south-east post of the building. It was suggested by Dickinson that a number of windows were inserted during the post-war period which may have weakened the structure. This is clearly visible in bedroom C, as the window was inserted into a hole which had partially cut into the southern tie-beam (Pl. 10).

Following the removal of the wallpaper, the underlying plasterwork was revealed on all the walls of the room. Although, the southern wall appears to be filled with brickwork externally, this was not visible inside the room. A number of floorboards in the south-west corner of the room were removed during one of the survey

visits, and a small void was revealed between the external stone wall of the ground floor and some modern brickwork (Pl. 12). The area of this void is depicted on the architect's plan of the ground floor, but its function is not clear. One interesting feature within bedroom C is the stained glass window in the west partition wall (Pl. 11).

It became apparent during the project that the works associated with the installation of a new bath and associated fittings within bedroom C would not significantly affect the historic fabric of the building. This was due to the decision to lay the necessary pipework through small drilled holes in the floor and south wall of the room. As a result, the actual installation work was not monitored.

Discussion

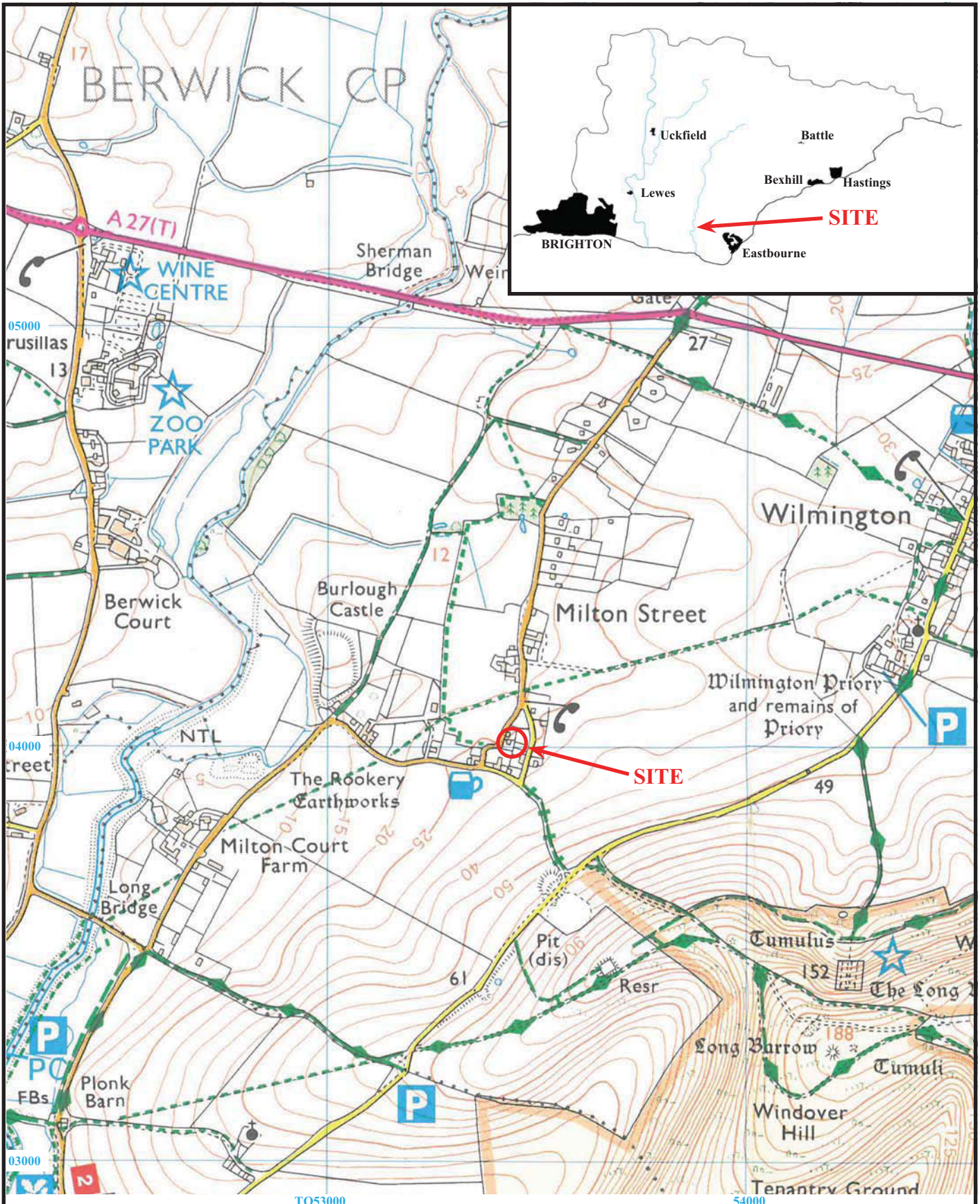
The building recording carried out in spring 2015 successfully recorded those elements of the house which were to be most affected by the installation of a new bathroom in one of the first-floor bedrooms. Although some historic elements were revealed during the preparatory work, most notably following the removal of wallpaper from the timber frame, it soon became apparent that the actual installation would have little effect on the historic fabric of the building. Nevertheless, the project succeeded in providing a detailed record of the first-floor bedroom before its conversion into a bathroom.

References

- BGS 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000 Series, Sheet 319/334, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth
- Dickinson, A, 2014, 'Archaeological interpretative report incorporating assessment of significance on Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 5RN', unpublished report, Rye
- ESCC, 2015, 'Sussex Archaeological Standards', East Sussex County Council unpublished guidance document, Lewes
- EH, 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings*, English Heritage, London
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
- RCHME, 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings, A Descriptive Specification* (3rd edn), London
- WBSG, 2010, 'Middleton', unpublished report by the Wealden Buildings Study Group, Polegate

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue: all digital images

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	External, general view, looking NNW.
2	External, general view, looking WSW.
3	External, general view, looking NNE.
4	External, general view, looking NE.
5	External, general view, looking E.
6	External, general view, looking SE.
7	External, detail of front door, looking E.
8	Internal, ground floor, looking SW towards staircase.
9	Internal, ground floor, looking S towards kitchen. [Pl. 1]
10	Internal, ground floor, looking N towards staircase and entrance hall.
11	Internal, ground floor, looking W up staircase.
12	Internal, first floor, looking SW towards bedroom C. [Pl. 2]
13	Internal, first floor, looking SSW towards bedroom C. [Pl. 3]
14	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, looking SSE.
15	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, looking SSE. [Pl. 4]
16	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, looking SW. [Pl. 5]
17	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, looking NNW.
18	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, looking NE. [Pl. 6]
19	Internal, first floor, bedroom C, detail of timber framing in SE corner, looking E. [Pl. 7]
20	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, looking SSE. [Pl. 8]
21	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, looking NE.
22	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, looking N.
23	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, looking S. [Pl. 9]
24	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, detail of window in S wall, looking SSE. [Pl. 10]
25	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, detail of window in W wall, looking W. [Pl. 11]
26	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, void below floorboards in SW corner. [Pl. 12]
27	Internal, first floor, bedroom C during building work, void below floorboards in SW corner.



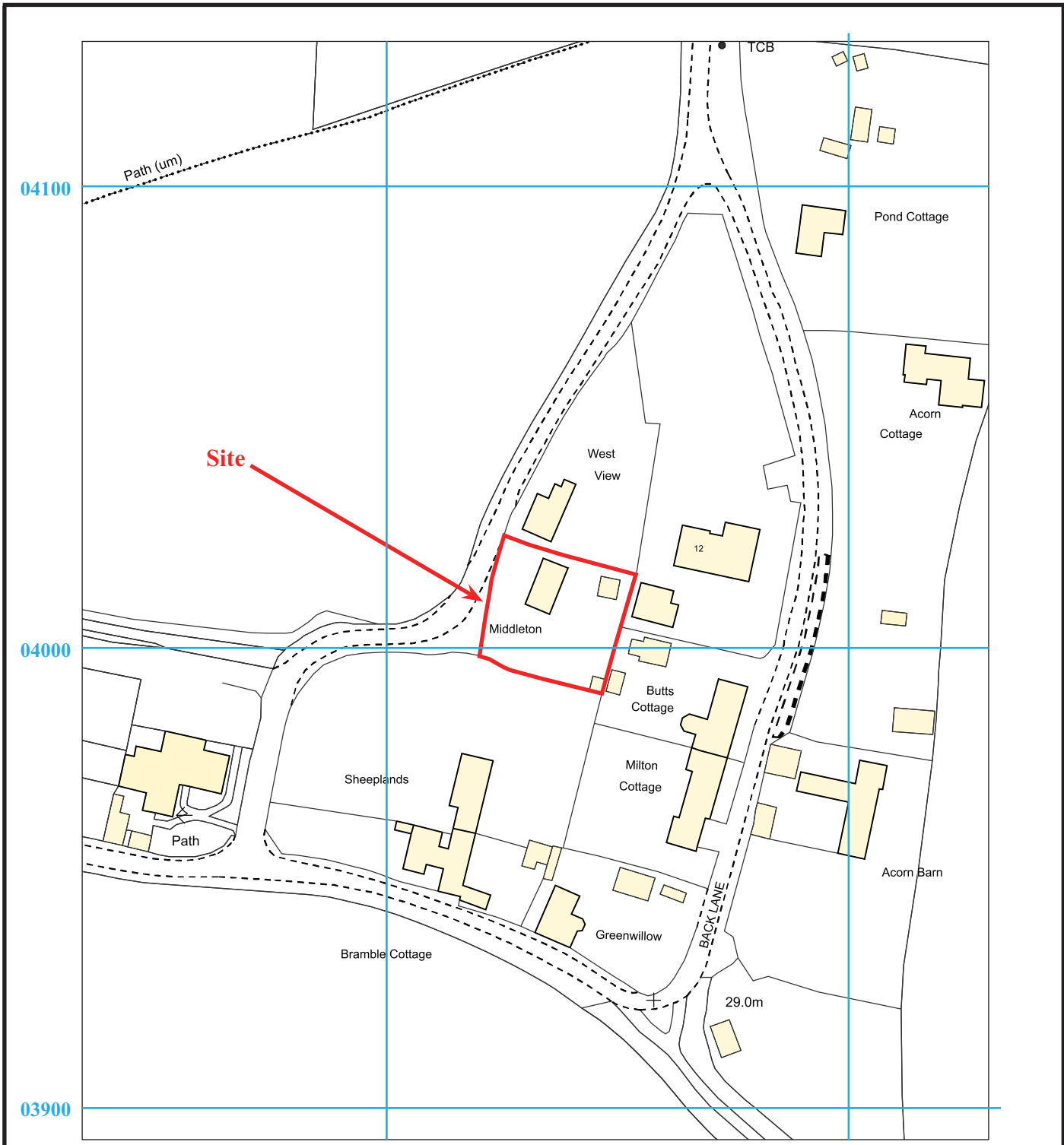
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**Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Milton Street and East Sussex.

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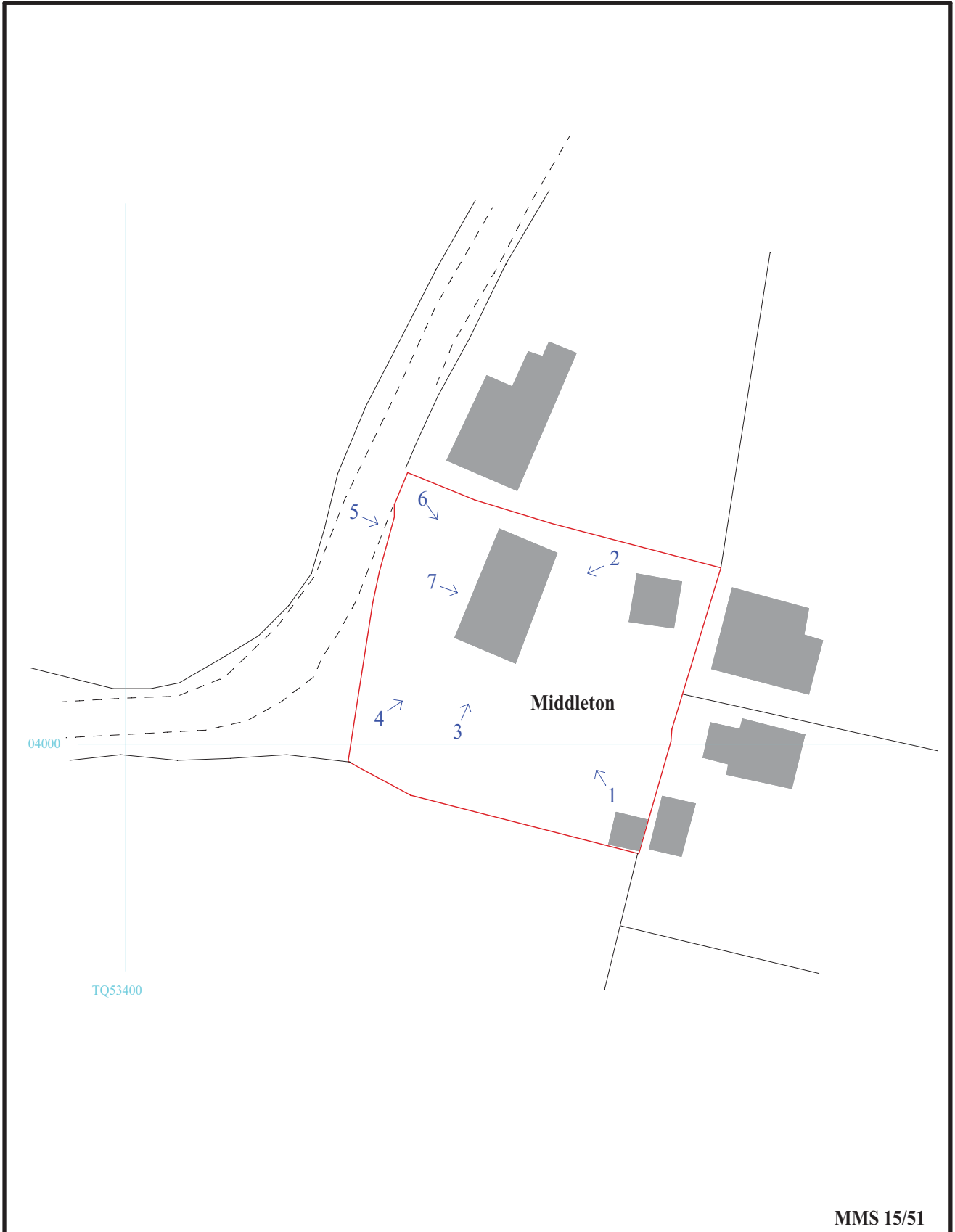
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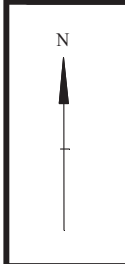
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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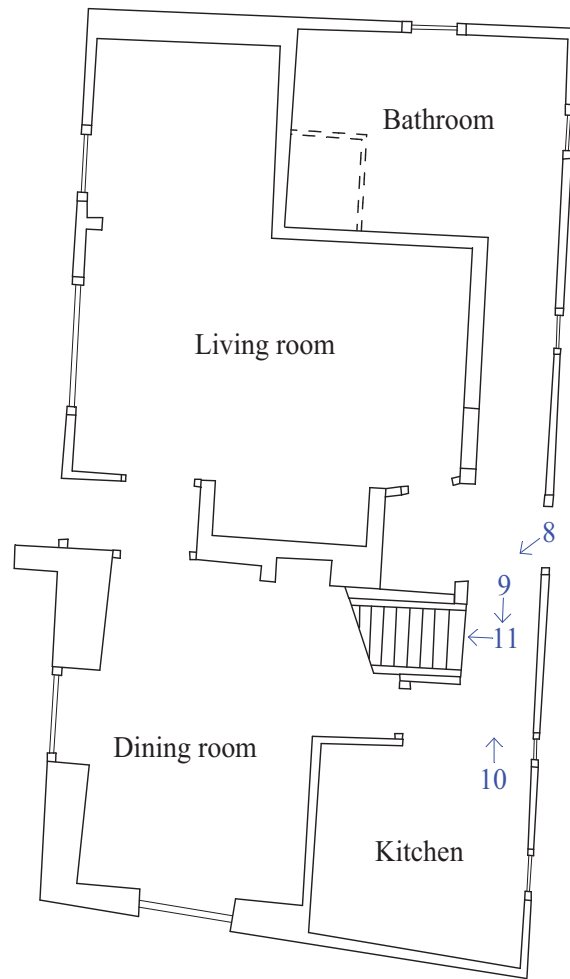


**Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate,
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Figure 3. Plan showing location of external photographs taken.



Ground Floor



MMS 15/51

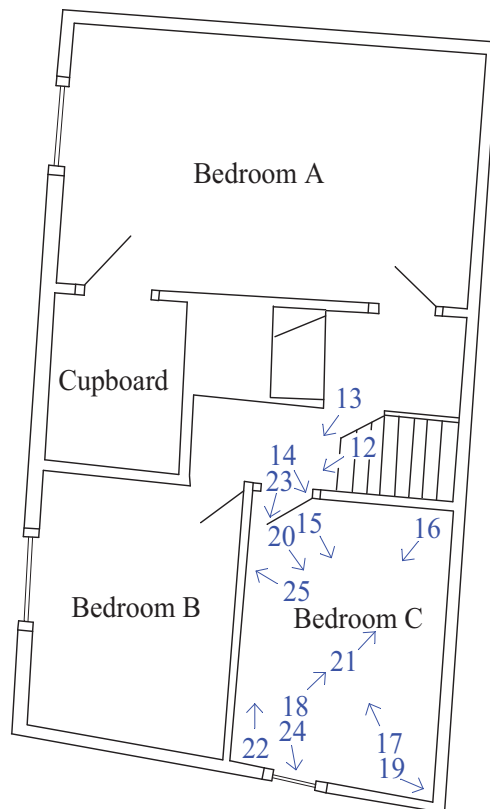
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Figure 4. Plan showing location of internal photographs taken.



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First Floor



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Figure 5. Plan showing location of internal photographs taken.



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Plate 1. Ground floor, looking south towards kitchen, bedroom C above.



Plate 2. First floor, looking SW towards bedroom C.



Plate 3. First floor, looking SSW towards bedroom C.



Plate 4. Bedroom C, looking SSE.

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Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate,
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Plates 1 - 4.

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Plate 5. Bedroom C, looking SW.



Plate 6. Bedroom C, looking NE.



Plate 7. Bedroom C, detail of timber framing in SE corner, looking E.



Plate 8. Bedroom C during building work, looking SSE.

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Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate,
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Plates 5 - 8.

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Plate 9. Bedroom C during building work, looking S.



Plate 10. Bedroom C during building work, detail of window in S wall, looking SSE.



Plate 11. Bedroom C during building work, detail of window in W wall, looking W.



Plate 12. Bedroom C during building work, void below floorboards in SW corner.

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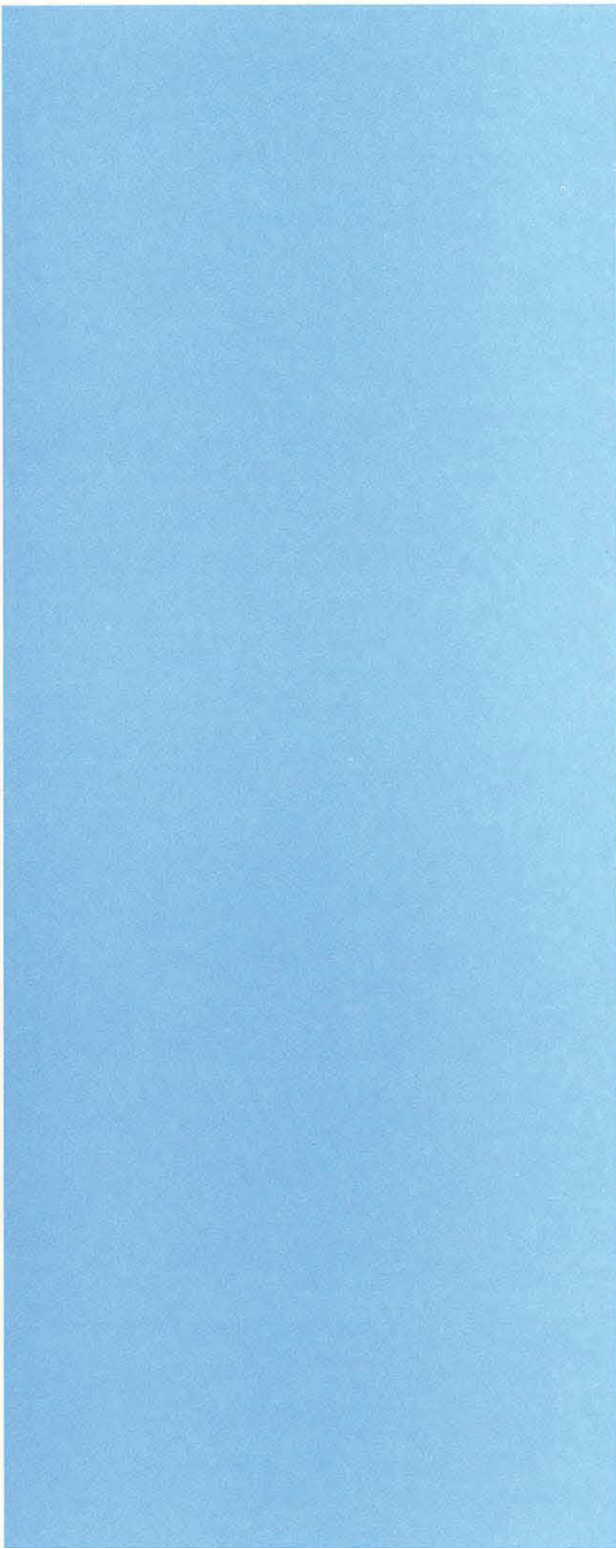
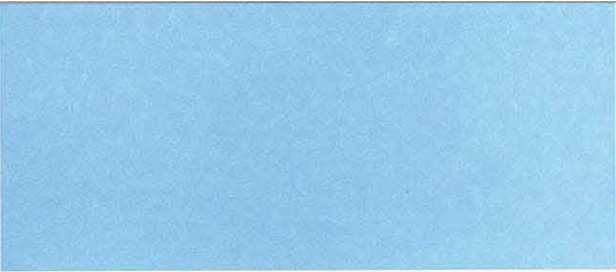
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Plates 9 - 12.

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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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