

**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**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: MMS15/51**

**(TQ 5343 0401)**

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

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**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

**Planning reference:** SDNP/14/01988/LIS

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 9th March – 4th June 2015

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** MMS 15/51

**Area of site:** c. 780 sq m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which would most be affected by improvements to the property's drainage system. Although finds dating from the post-medieval period were recovered from the topsoil, the only archaeological feature recorded was a brick built drain which appears to have been constructed in the early 20th century.

**Monuments identified:** None

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 02.11.15 Steve Preston ✓ 02.11.15
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# Middleton, Milton Street, Polegate, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

**Report 15/51b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Middleton, Milton Street, East Sussex (TQ 5343 0400) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James Stephens, the property's owner.

Listed Building Consent (SDNP/14/01988/LIS) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority for the installation of a new bathroom in one of the first floor bedrooms, along with improvements to the drainage system in the garden. Improvements were also planned to the existing driveway, whilst the ground level around the house was to 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. Following discussions with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer who advises the National Park Authority (Mr Greg Chuter), it was agreed that the archaeological work should consist of building recording in respect of the new bathroom, and a watching brief in respect of the external works. This document is solely concerned with the external watching brief, and the building recording will be covered in a separate report.

As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which might be damaged or destroyed by the planned building work, it was proposed to carry out a watching brief as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012) and the National Park Authority's policies on archaeology and the historic environment.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer. Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2015) were to be followed. The fieldwork was undertaken by Teresa Vieira and Sean Wallis between 9th March and 4th June 2015, and the site code is MMS 15/51. The archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, but will be deposited with Eastbourne Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located within the hamlet of Milton Street, about 4.8km west of the historic core of Polegate, East Sussex. The site is occupied by a Grade II timber framed Listed Building, known as Middleton, and its

associated garden and car parking areas (Fig. 2). According to the British Geological Survey the site is located close to the border of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation and the Zig Zag Chalk Formation (BGS 2006). This was confirmed during the watching brief with chalk being encountered in all the areas monitored. The site slopes up eastwards from the road, and as a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varies from about 98m close to the road, to nearly 101m at the far end of the rear garden.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site had been considered in a brief prepared by the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer (ESCC 2014), and the house itself had been the subject of two desk-based reports (WBSG 2010; Dickinson 2014) as well as the recent survey (Wallis 2015). The house is believed to have originated as a simple two bay structure, possibly built in the second half of the 14th century. The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the medieval and post-medieval hamlet of Milton Street. Due to the age of the house, it was thought possible that sub-surface archaeological remains may be present on the site.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks. This was to involve the monitoring of new drainage trenches, along with any areas of significant ground reduction. Where it was not possible or practicable to preserve archaeological remains *in-situ* the features were to be excavated by hand and fully recorded, to ensure their preservation by record. The watching brief was to be carried out in accordance with the relevant sections of Sussex Archaeological Standards (ESCC 2015) and the guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

## **Results**

Several areas were monitored during the watching brief (Fig. 3). An existing concrete surface to the south and east of the house was broken up and removed in advance of a new drainage channel being dug. The remains of a brick built drain (51) were observed to the rear of the house, and this had been truncated by a modern silt trap (52) (Pl. 1). Drain 51 extended northwards from the back door of the property, and was 4.8m long and 0.5m wide. It was constructed from frogless red bricks, which could date from the mid 18th to early 20th century. However, some of the pottery recorded from a soil deposit (53) immediately beneath the drain can be accurately

dated to the early 20th century. Elsewhere the concrete surface had been laid on top of a very thin soil layer, which in turn lay directly above the natural chalk geology (Pl. 4).

To the west of the house, two areas were monitored in advance of a soakaway and a reed bed (Figs 3 and 4). Topsoil (50) and subsoil (54) were removed by hand to expose the natural chalk geology. No archaeological features were noted cutting into the chalk. The reed bed measured 2.40m by 1.20m, and natural geology was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.30m (Pl. 3). The soakaway measured 1.60m square, and natural chalk was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.78m. The difference in the depth of the natural geology resulted from the fact that the garden sloped down towards the road, largely due to a higher build up of topsoil close to the house. Fragments of pottery, tile, glass and clay pipe were recovered from the topsoil, along with a bone shirt button. Although some of the pottery dated from the early post-medieval period, most of the material dates from the 19th or 20th century.

It became apparent that the ground reduction associated with the new driveway would only affect the existing surface, and the associated grading work was not monitored.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Luke Barber

The archaeological monitoring recovered a small quantity of pottery from the site (Appendix 1).

The earliest pottery consists of two bodysherds from the 17th century. Both show minor signs of abrasion, but have clearly not been subjected to extensive reworking. They presumably originate from nearby occupation. The remainder of the assemblage is of the late post-medieval period. This material exhibits slight signs of abrasion again and is generally composed of small fragments. Overall it appears to have seen some reworking. There are a few sherds of glazed red earthenware, creamware and pearlware that could be an indication of some refuse disposal between *c.* 1760 and 1830 but if this is the case, it was only at a low level. The vast majority of the assemblage can be placed between *c.* 1830 and 1930, probably with the emphasis on *c.* 1850 to 1910. A range of kitchen, table and tea wares is represented all of which would be very much in keeping with a household of lower social status.

The site assemblage consists of just two unstratified early post-medieval sherds of well-known local types and essentially open/unstratified groups of industrialized wares that are common at a national level.

### *Clay Pipe* by Luke Barber

Six relatively fresh clay pipe fragments were recovered from the topsoil (50). The largest piece consists of a complete bowl of hybrid AO26/28 type that is likely to date to between c. 1790 and 1830 (Atkinson and Oswald 1969). Unfortunately only the first of the maker's initials (an 'I') is legible on the long spur. The remaining pieces are stem fragments. Three of these (12g) are of probable 18th century date, the remaining two (6g) consisting of elliptical-sectioned types of the 19th century. One of the latter is decorated with moulded leaf decoration down its seam. The clay pipe assemblage does not contain any maker's marks of interest and is from unstratified deposits.

### *Glass* by Luke Barber

Two uncorroded shards of glass were recovered from the topsoil (50): a 6g fragment from a green wine/beer bottle and an 8g fragment from a colourless window pane. Both are of 19th to early 20th century date.

### *Worked Bone* by Luke Barber

A complete 13mm diameter turned bone shirt button with two fixing holes (each 1mm diameter) was recovered from the topsoil (50). The reverse is a plain, though slightly domed, but the front has a hollowed annular groove around a recessed centre that houses the perforations. Precise dating is difficult but the button would not be out of place in the 19th century.

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Luke Barber

Three pieces of peg tile, in two different fabrics, were recovered from the topsoil (50). The largest piece (38g: 12mm thick) is well formed and fired, tempered with sparse fine quartz, occasional iron oxides and marl pellets to 1mm. The other two pieces (42g: both 11mm thick) are similar, but also contain notable swirls of marl. All can be placed between the mid 18th and early 20th centuries.

A complete red frogless brick sample (1/2946g: 230 x 110 x 60mm) was taken from a brick built drain (51) which was recorded to the rear of the house. The brick is well formed and fired, being tempered with common iron oxides and marl pellets/swirls to 3mm. The brick could be placed anywhere between the mid 18th and early 20th centuries.

### *Animal bone by Lizzi Lewins*

Four pieces of animal bone, weighing a total of 44g, were recovered, all from topsoil (50). The condition of the bone was good although fragmented. Little surface erosion or abrasion was seen. A single tooth was identified as coming from a large mammal, likely a cow. A piece of sheep/goat left mandible had two premolars and all three molars (p3, p4, m1, m2, m3) still held in place. Two unidentifiable fragments from medium-sized mammals (sheep/goat or pig) showed a small amount of erosion. No butchery marks or other taphonomic processes were observed.

### **Conclusion**

The watching brief at this site successfully examined those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the improvements to the drainage system around the house. Despite the fact that the house dates from the medieval period, no finds of this date were recovered. The only archaeological feature recorded was a brick built drain to the rear of the house. Although the frogless red bricks could potentially date from the late post-medieval period, pottery from immediately beneath the drain indicates that it was probably built in the early 20th century. An assemblage of material from the post-medieval and modern periods was recovered from the topsoil.

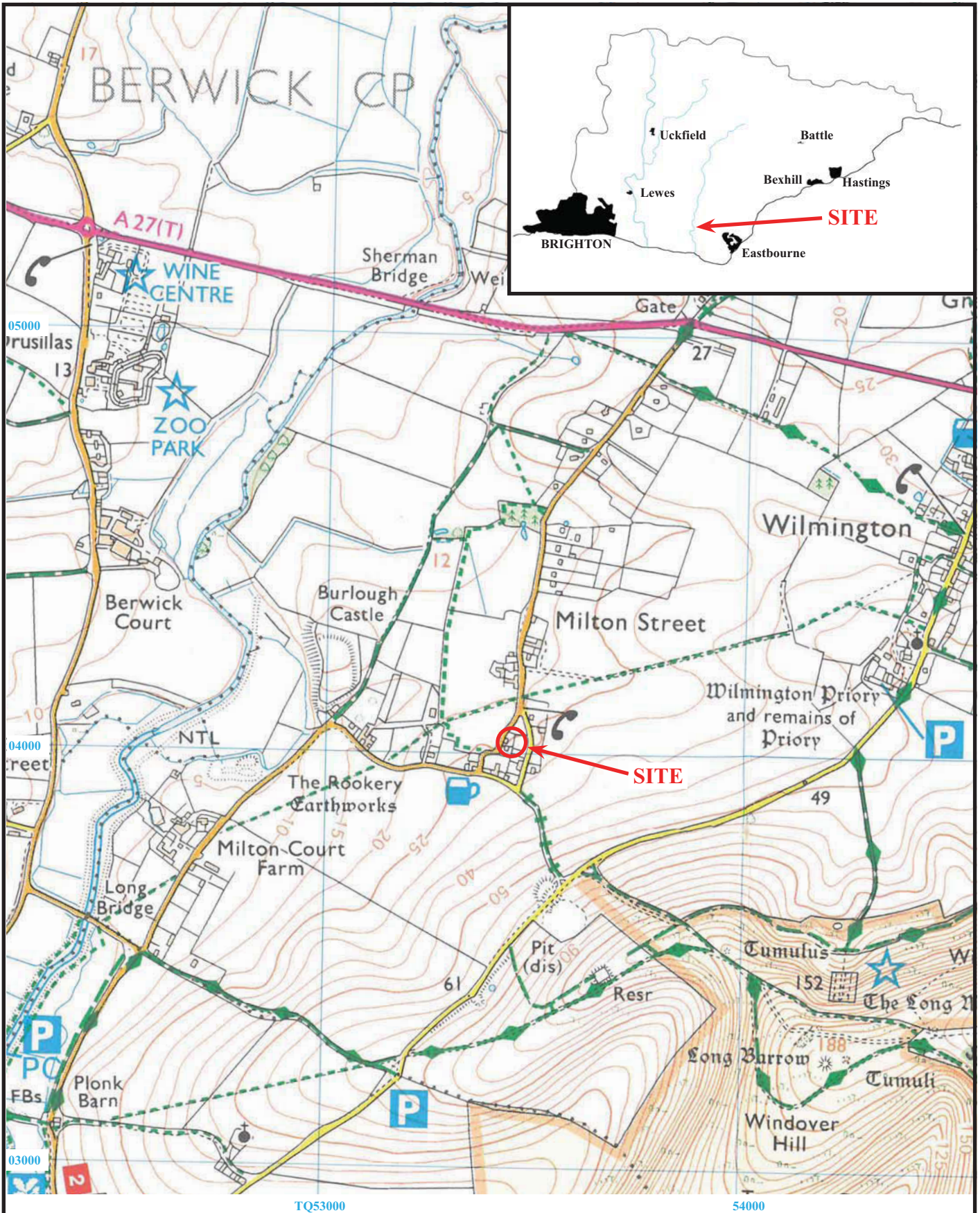
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Appendix 1 : Catalogue of pottery

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
50	Graffham whiteware	C17th	1	4	Bowl with internal clear (yellow) glaze.
50	Hard-fired Earthenware (fine/reduced)	C17th	1	4	Uncertain form.
50	Creamware	LPM	3/	6	Mug x1, uncertain x1
50	Pearlware (transfer-printed)	LPM	2	6	Plates x2 (inc willow pattern with illegible maker's stamp)
50	Glazed Red Earthenware	LPM	7	114	Bowl x1, jug x1, uncertain x1
50	Sunderland-type Slipware	LPM	1	6	Bowl x1
50	Seltzer bottle (stoneware)	LPM	6	108	Bottle x1 (iron wash & salt glaze)
50	Yellow Ware	LPM	2	2	Bowls? x2 (both with annular white slipped bands, one with blue line borders, one with black line borders)
50	Blue Transfer-printed Whiteware	LPM	7	36	Cup x1, dish x1 (rectangular willow pattern), plates x3 (floral), uncertain x2 (with flow blue decoration)
50	Refined Whiteware	LPM	7	50	Saucer x1 (fluted), cup x1 (hand-painted floral), bowl x1 (blue sponged decoration), uncertain x4 (x1 with purple sponged decoration)
50	English Porcelain	LPM	2	16	Egg cup x1 (gold gilt line), bowl (overglaze hand painted polychrome pattern, foot-ringed)
53	Glazed Red Earthenware	LPM	1	34	Bread bin x1
53	Blue Transfer-printed Whiteware	LPM	2	42	Plate x1 (willow pattern), ewer x1
53	White Stoneware	LPM	1	6	Jug/vase x1 (moulded decoration)
53	Refined Whiteware	LPM	2	10	Plates x2 (x1 with grey maker's transfer of garter around globe: 'Made in England, Burgess & Lea, Burslem'. This mark dated c. 1906-1912 (Godden 1991)
53	English Porcelain	LPM	1	4	Uncertain x1



TQ53000

54000

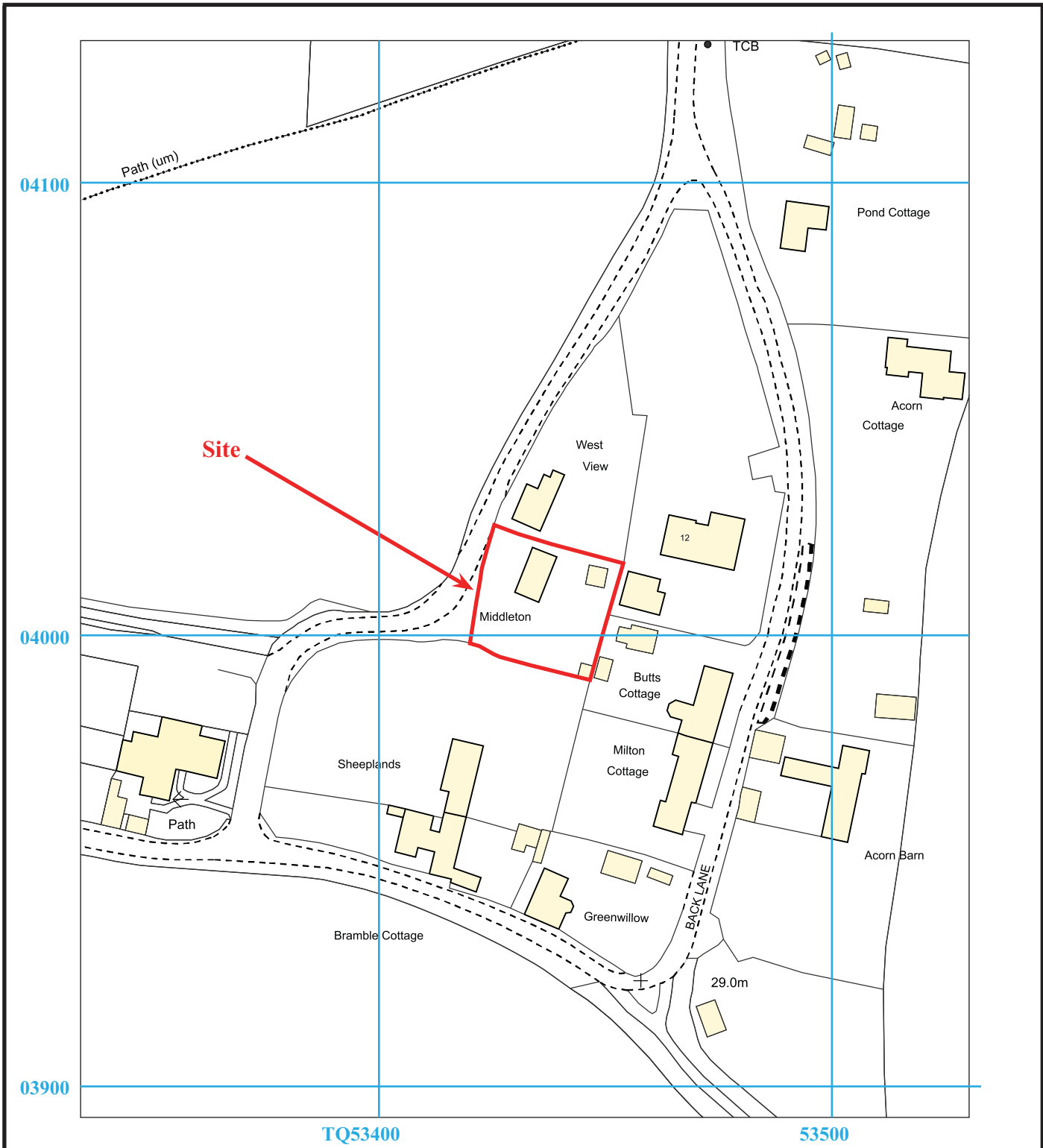
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Figure 1. Location of site within Milton Street and East Sussex.

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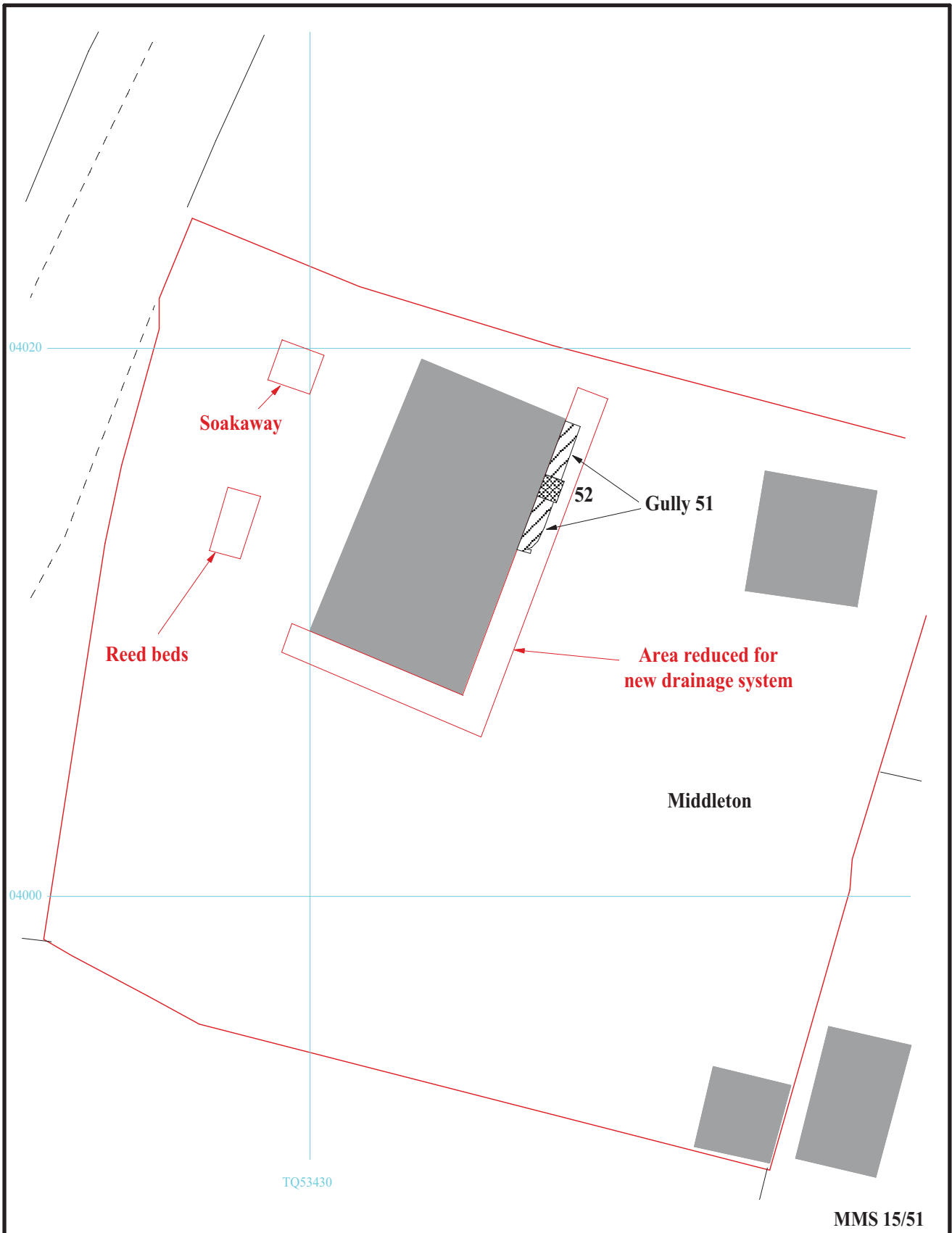


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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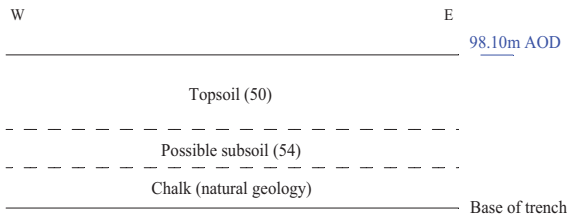
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Figure 3. Plan showing location of areas monitored.

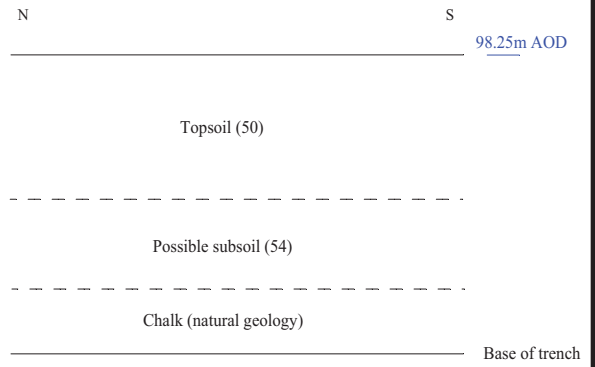




**Reed bed**



**Soakaway**



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Figure 4. Representative sections





**Plate 1. Drain 51 and trench around east side of house, looking north-east; Scales 0.5m and 0.3m.**



**Plate 2. Drain 51 and silt trap 52**



**Plate 3. Reed bed section facing north, scale 0.5m.**



**Plate 4. Trench at south of house, looking west, scales 2m, 0.5m.**

**MMS 15/51b**

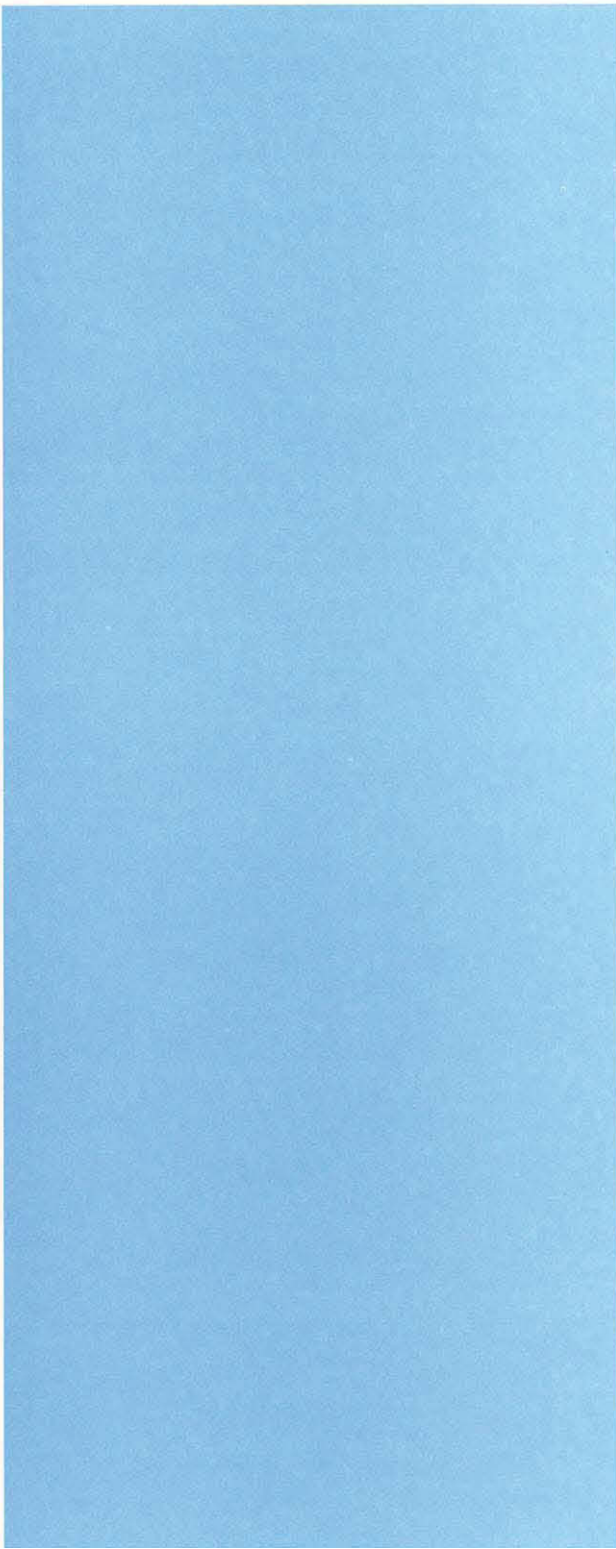
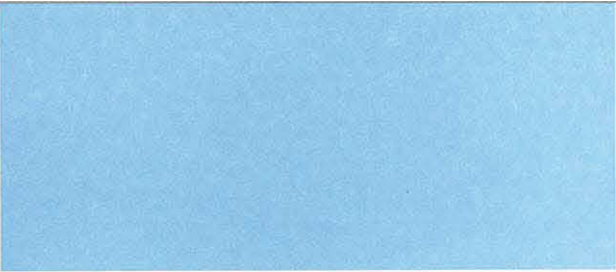
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Plates 1 - 4.**

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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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