

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

**Mount Pleasant Farm, Back Lane,  
Rushlake Green, East Sussex**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: MPF17/33**

**(TQ 6268 1802)**

**Mount Pleasant Farm, Back Lane,  
Rushlake Green, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Michael Wickham**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code MPF 17/33

**March 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** Mount Pleasant Farm, Back Lane, Rushlake Green, East Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 6268 1802

**Planning reference:** WD/2016/1155/F

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 20th – 22nd February

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Teresa Vieira

**Site code:** MPF 17/33

**Area of site:** *c.* 0.39 ha

**Summary of results:** The watching brief to the south of Back Lane, Rushlake Green successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of a new agricultural building. The only archaeological feature recorded was an undated ditch, which was observed in the footprint of the new building following soil stripping.

**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.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 14.03.17
	Steve Preston✓ 14.03.17

# Mount Pleasant Farm, Back Lane, Rushlake Green, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Report 17/33

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on a parcel of land to the south of Back Lane, Rushlake Green, East Sussex (TQ 6268 1802) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the landowner, Mr Michael Wickham.

Planning permission (WD/2016/1155/F) had been gained from Wealden District Council to construct a new agricultural building on the site. The permission was subject to a standard planning condition (3) relating to archaeology and historic environment. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on site which may 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 District Council'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 (Mr Greg Chuter), who advises the District Council on archaeological matters. Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2015) were to be followed.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Teresa Vieira and Jim Webster between 20th and 22nd February 2017, and the site code is MPF 17/33. The preferred depository for the site archive is Lewes Museum, but unfortunately the museum is not accepting new material at the present time. As a result, the archive will be held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services until a suitable depository can be found.

## Location, topography and geology

The site consists of an irregular parcel of arable farmland, located to the south of the historic core of Rushlake Green, East Sussex (Figs. 1 and 2). The area generally slopes down towards the south-east from Back Lane and, as a result, lies at a height of between approximately 76m and 79m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of the Ashdown Formation (BGS 2006) which varies in character across the region. In the areas monitored during the watching brief the natural geology encountered consisted of light brownish yellow sandy clay.

## **Archaeological background**

The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Rushlake Green, which was historically a hamlet within the parish of Warbleton. There are many historic buildings within Rushlake Green, dating from the 15th century onwards, many of which are Listed as recorded in the East Sussex Historic Environment Record. Historic maps show a series of buildings in the field where the new structure is to be built, most of which front onto the road (Back Lane). Flintwork dating from the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods has been found to the north-west of the site, during fieldwalking. The Weald was an important iron producing region from the late Iron Age up until the post-medieval period. Several features relating to this former industry, including a Roman bloomer site, have been recorded in the surrounding area. Bathurst Farm, to the south of the present site, is thought to have originated as a medieval farmstead, along with Crouches Farm, which lies within the settlement of Rushlake Green.

## **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 examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, primarily the ground reduction in respect of the new building and access road. Where archaeological deposits which may warrant preservation *in situ* the features will be excavated by hand and fully recorded, to ensure their 'preservation by record'.

## **Results**

The footprint of the new building, measuring approximately 24m by 10m, was stripped down to formation level, along with the access road, which was up to 3.50m wide. The depths of topsoil and subsoil encountered varied slightly across the site, but in general the natural clay geology was revealed beneath 0.25m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of mid brown clayey silt subsoil (51). The only archaeological feature recorded during the watching brief was a ditch (1) in the eastern part of the new building's footprint. A 2m long slot was excavated through ditch 1 by hand, which revealed that it was up to 1m wide and 0.24m deep. It had a single fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (51), which contained no archaeological finds. No finds were recovered from either of the soil horizons.

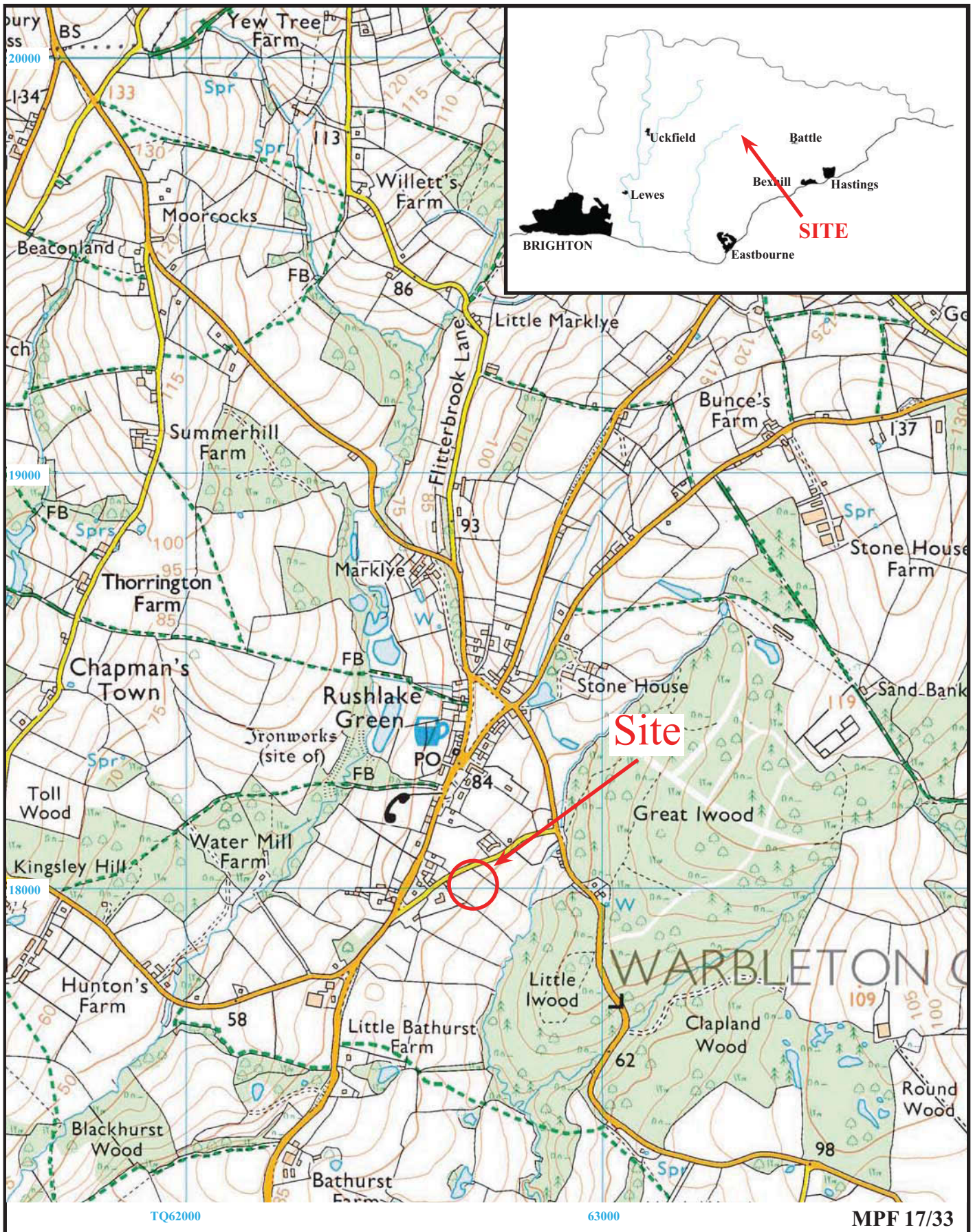
## **Conclusion**

The watching brief to the south of Back Lane, Rushlake Green successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of a new agricultural building. The only archaeological

feature recorded was an undated ditch, which was observed in the footprint of the new building following soil stripping.

## **References**

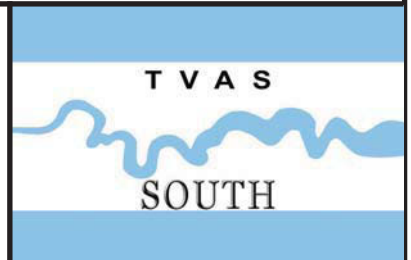
- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 319/334, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.
- English Heritage, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology*. Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 1, English Heritage, Portsmouth (2nd edn).
- ESCC, 2015, *Sussex Archaeological Standards*, East Sussex County Council, Lewes.
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO).

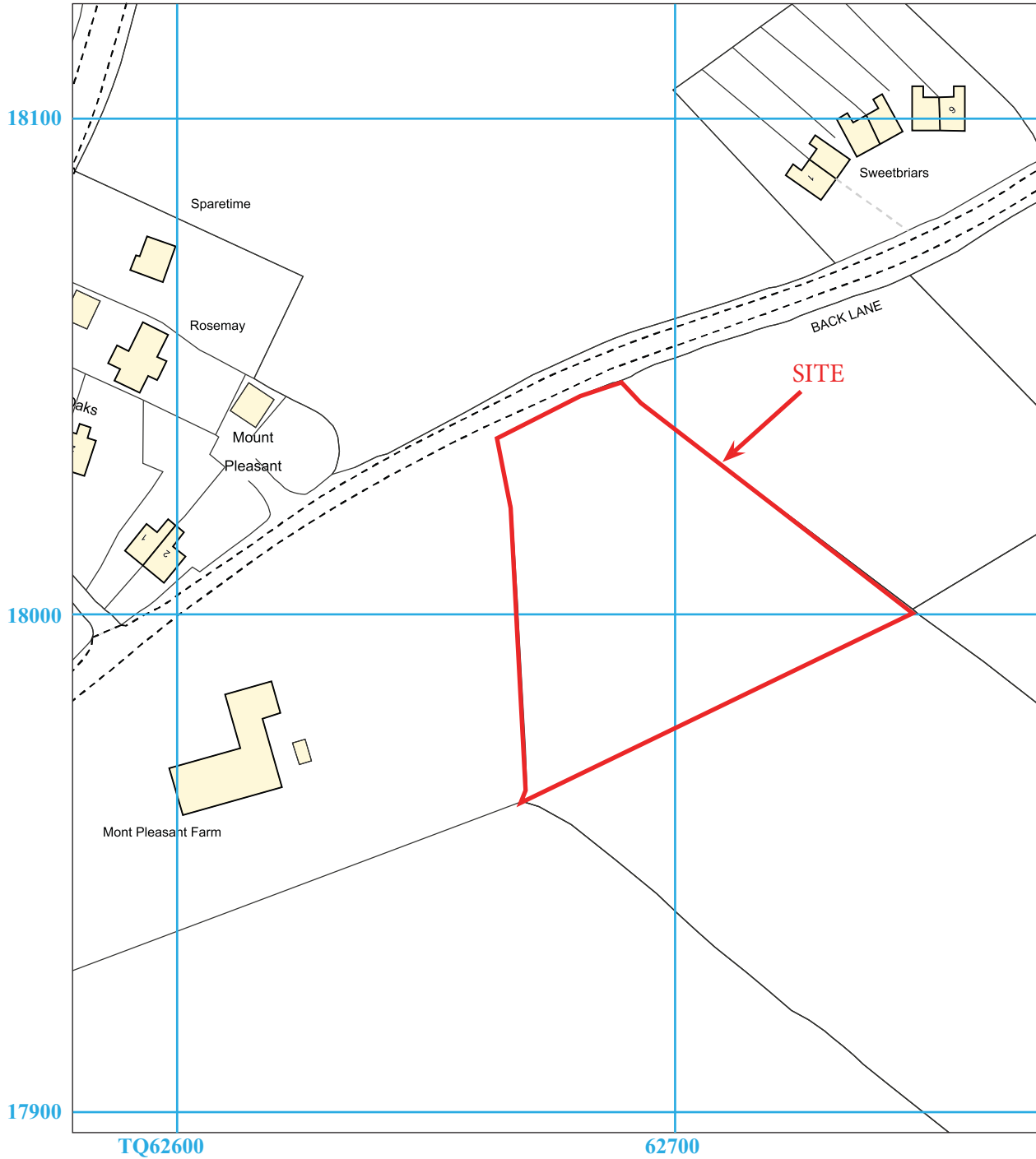


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Figure 1. Location of site within Rushlake Green and East Sussex.

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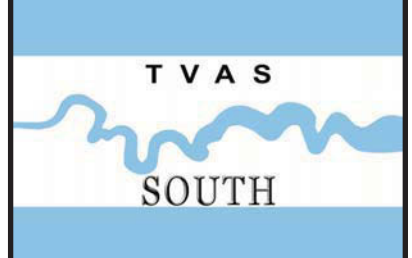


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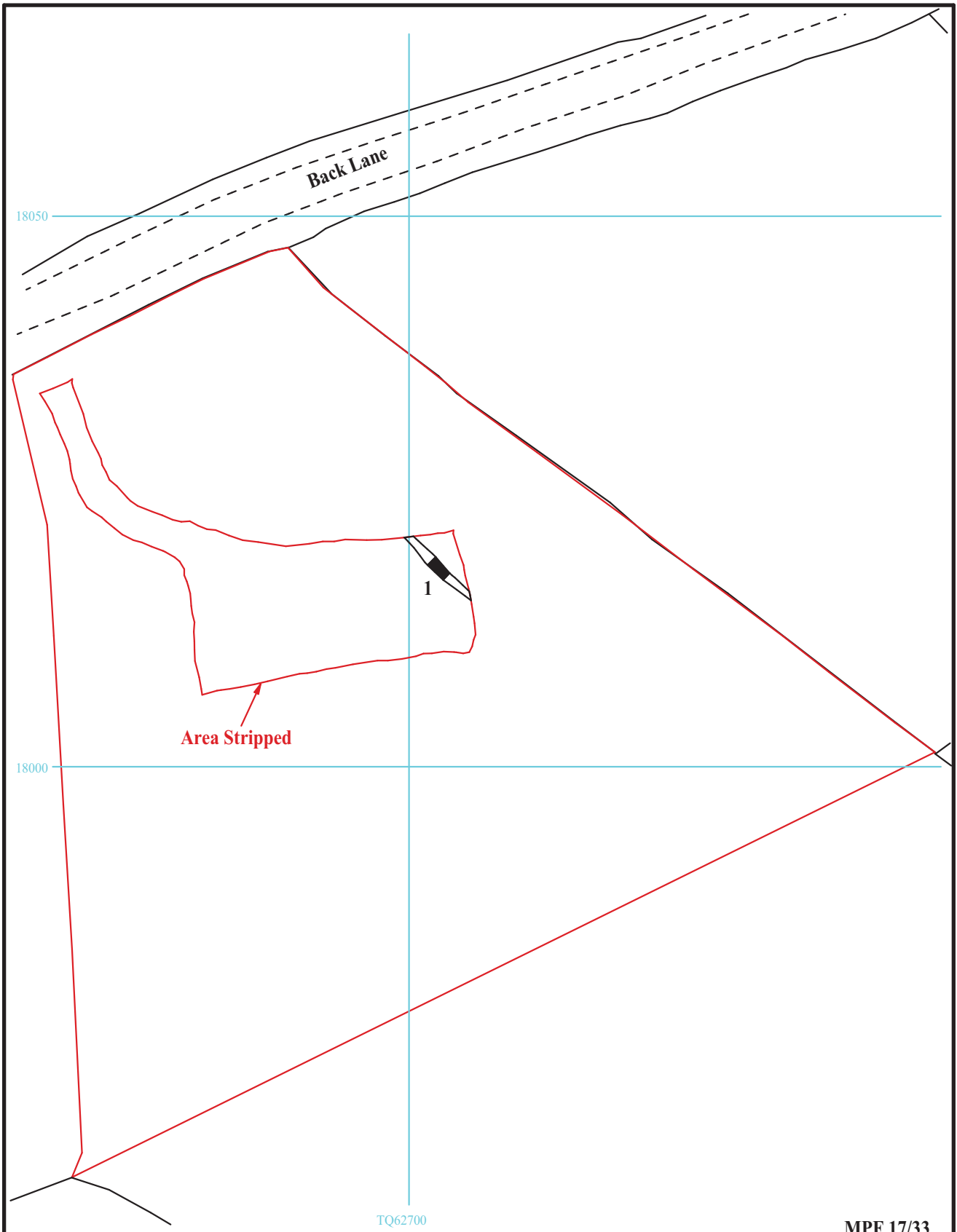


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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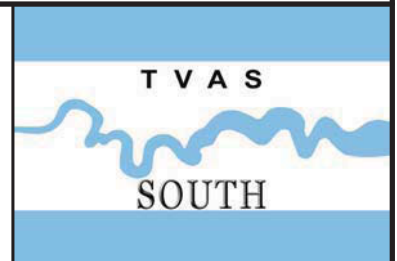


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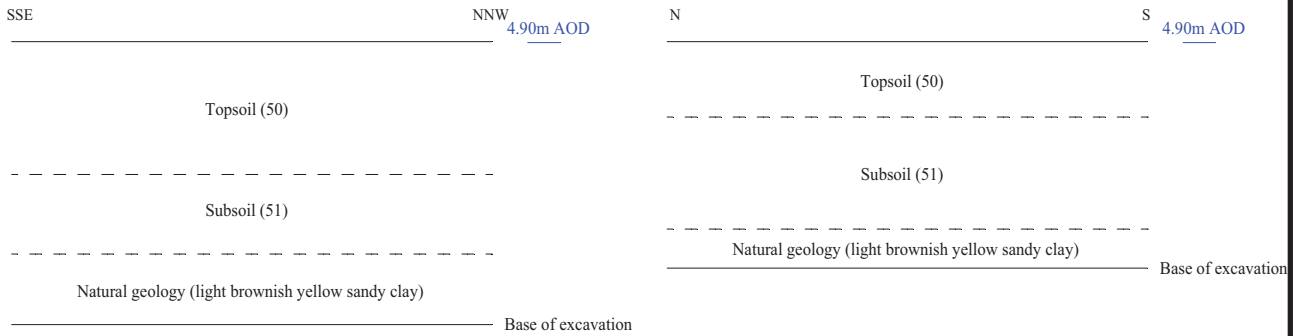
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Figure 3. Site plan showing monitored areas.



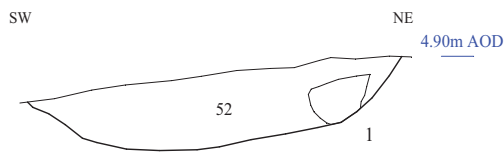
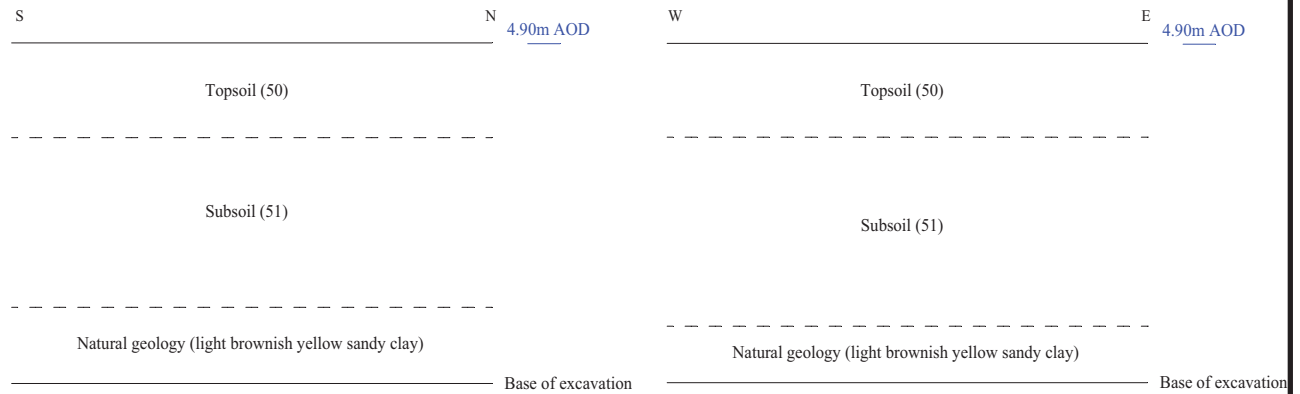
**Access Road**

**Footprint of Barn (SE Corner)**



**Footprint of Barn (NW Corner)**

**Footprint of Barn (NE Corner)**



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Figure 4. Sections.

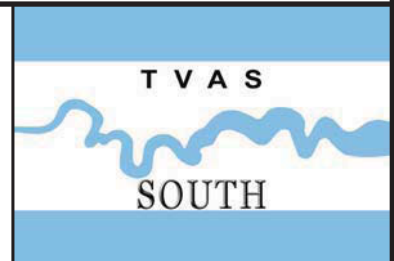




Plate 1. Ditch 1, looking North-west.  
Scale: 0.50m.



Plate 2. General view, looking North-west.  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. General view, looking East.  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. General view of access road, looking North-west. Scales: 2m and 1m.

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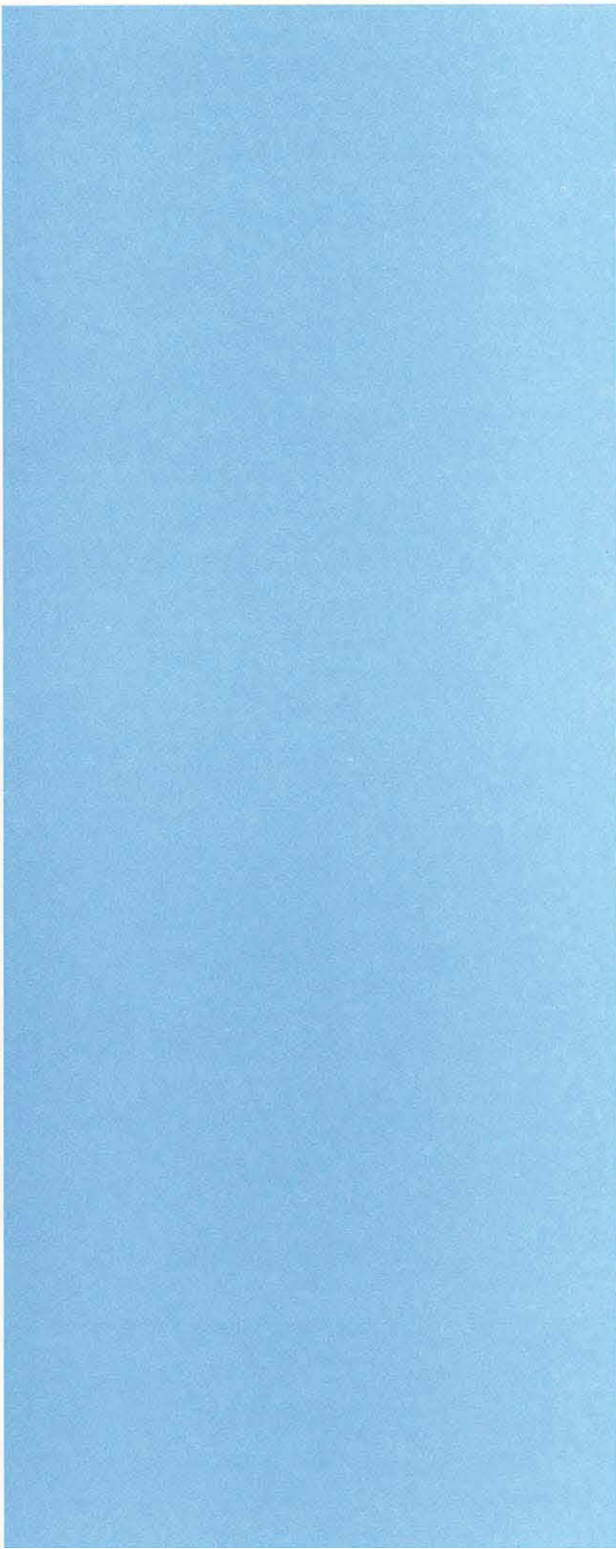
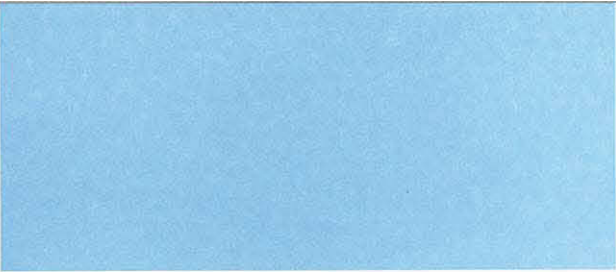
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Plates 1 - 4.**



## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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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