

T V A S



SOUTH

**146 and 147 High Street,
Lewes, East Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: HSL17/196

(TQ 4126 0998)

**146 and 147 High Street, Lewes,
East Sussex**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms Dinah Loeb

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSL 17/196

February 2018

Summary

Site name: 146 and 147 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4126 0998

Planning reference: SDNP/14/04657/FUL

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th February 2018

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: HSL 17/196

Area of site: 25.6 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be affected by the development. An area beneath the former stable block was reduced, with concrete and an underlying soil deposit being removed. This exposed three brick walls, which are likely to date from the 18th to mid 19th century. These obviously relate to a structure or structures which predated the former stable block.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton, and will be deposited at a suitable depository in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 01.03.18 Steve Preston ✓ 01.03.18

146 and 147 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Report 17/196b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out to the rear of 146 and 147 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex (TQ 4126 0998) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by one of the property's owners, Ms Dinah Loeb.

Planning permission (SDNP/14/04657/FUL) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority to convert the existing stable block and outbuildings into a residential dwelling. The permission was subject to standard conditions (9 and 10) relating to archaeology and the historic environment requiring a programme of archaeological work. This was in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012), and the Authority's policies on archaeology. It was determined that the archaeological investigation should take the form of a watching brief, which would be preceded by a historic building recording. The building recording was carried out in November 2017, and a separate report prepared on the findings (Elliott 2017).

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Chris Greatorex, the East Sussex Archaeological officer who advises the Authority on archaeological matters in East Sussex. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos and Sean Wallis on 6th February 2018, and the site code is HSL 17/196. The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton and will be deposited at a suitable depository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies immediately to the west of the medieval walled town of Lewes, and part of the town wall actually forms the eastern boundary of the plot (Figs 1 and 2). The site consisted of a former stable block and various outbuildings, positioned around a small yard. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Seaford Chalk Formation (BGS 2006), but this was not revealed during the watching brief as the ground reduction did not extend that far down. The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 30m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site had been gleaned from a brief issued by the East Sussex County Archaeological Officer (ESCC 2017), a heritage statement produced by Nicola Furner Architects (Furner 2017), and from the Lewes Extensive Urban Survey (Harris 2005). In summary, the site is located within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the historic core of Lewes, which was an important town in the medieval period, with Saxon origins. The relationship between the defensive earthworks of the Saxon *burh* and the later medieval defences is not fully understood, partly due to the built up nature of the town. However, the west gate through the medieval town wall was located on the High Street, immediately to the south-east of the present site, and part of one of the gate towers has survived in the cellar of 147 High Street. The ditch associated with the town wall ran directly beneath the present site, and structural remains of the bridge across this ditch, and the west gate itself, have been recorded in the cellars of 146 and 147 High Street. The bridge is historically important, as the Battle of Lewes (1264) is believed to have culminated in the storming of the West Gate and the subsequent capture of the town by forces loyal to Simon de Montfort. The present buildings on the site largely date from the 19th century, although they contain earlier elements. They are Grade II Listed.

Objectives and methodology

The primary aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the development. This was to include monitoring the foundation trenches for the new building, along with any areas of significant ground reduction. Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2015) were to be followed.

Results

Due to changes in the design of the new building, no deep foundations or piles were required, as the building was to be constructed using a steel frame secured to a raft foundation. However, it was necessary to reduce the area beneath the existing stables to enable the new raft foundation to be laid down. Concrete and an underlying made ground deposit (50) were removed down to a depth of between 0.28m and 0.37m. The ground reduction revealed three walls (51, 53 and 54), along with the foundations of the stable partition walls (52 and 56) which had been recorded during the historic building recording (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2).

Wall 51 was observed to the north of stable wall 52, and ran across the entire width of the reduced area. The wall was not keyed into the eastern boundary wall, and tapered slightly in width from 0.40m (east end) to 0.35m (west end). It had survived to a height of at least two courses, and was constructed of red bricks (measuring 230mm x 108mm x 52mm), bonded with a light grey sandy mortar. A sample brick was taken from the wall, and it would appear that the wall was probably constructed between the 18th and mid 19th century.

Walls 53 and 54 were recorded to the south of stable wall 52, and may be contemporary with one another as they share the same alignment. It is therefore possible that the gap between them may represent a doorway. Both walls seemed to have a return northwards, although neither return could be seen to the north of wall 52. Wall 53 was not keyed into the eastern boundary wall, and only one course of red bricks (measuring 230mm x 110mm x 52mm) was visible. The bricks had been bonded with a light grey sandy mortar. The east–west section of the wall was about 0.30m wide, whilst the north–south section was slightly wider (0.37m). A brick sample was taken which suggests that the wall dates from the 18th to mid 19th century.

Wall 54 appeared as a 'T' shaped section of masonry within the reduced area. The east–west section of the wall was 0.24m wide, and the north–south section was at least 0.20m, but ran beyond the western edge of the reduced area. The brickwork appeared to be similar to that of wall 53, but a sample could not be taken due to the compact nature of the mortar.

The function of the walls revealed in the reduced area is unclear, although they clearly predate the existing stable, which is first shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1873 and was unlikely to be very much older than that. Wall 51 is unlikely to be contemporary with walls 53 and 54, as there is only about one metre between them, and the northern returns of 53 and 54 do not appear to run up to wall 51 and both the brick fabrics and the mortar used differ. A sherd of pottery from the layer above the buried walls (50) suggests that they may have been demolished and covered over at some time between 1750 and 1850, which would fit in with the available map cartographic evidence.

The area to the south of walls 53 and 54 could represent a buried floor surface (55), as there were patches of clay visible in the reduced area. However, as the area was not going to be reduced further, a small pit was dug to see whether any dating evidence could be retrieved. Unfortunately the only find was a small fragment of slate, which cannot be used to provide an accurate date.

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

A single sherd of pottery, weighing 58g, was recovered from the made ground layer (50) immediately below the existing concrete slab. This consists of a fresh sherd (58g) from a local glazed red earthenware dish with bulbous club rim and internal dark brown/black glaze. The vessel is best placed between *c.* 1750 and 1850. The sherd is late in date and of a type well known of in Lewes.

The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

A relatively small assemblage of brick was recovered during the archaeological work: two sample pieces being collected. The material is in good condition and is summarized in Appendix 2.

The ceramic building material assemblage is too small to comment on meaningfully, particularly in the absence of associated pottery dating. However, both samples are of different fabrics and are set in different mortars demonstrating they do not belong to the same phase. However, both are of types that can probably best be placed in an 18th to mid 19th century date range.

Geological Material by Luke Barber

Two small pieces (8g) of West Country roofing slate came from a possible surface (55). The type is common in the town between the late 12th to 14th centuries though it probably survived on some roofs later still. The current pieces are probably residual. The stone is of a well-known type for the area/period.

Conclusion

The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be affected by the development. An area beneath the former stable block was reduced, with concrete and an underlying soil deposit being removed. This exposed three brick walls, which are likely to date from the 18th to mid 19th century. These obviously relate to a structure or structures which predate the former stable block, but unfortunately no detailed historic maps are available for the area prior to the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1873.

References

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- Elliott, G, 2017, '146 and 147 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex : historic building recording', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **17/196**, Reading
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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of recorded features

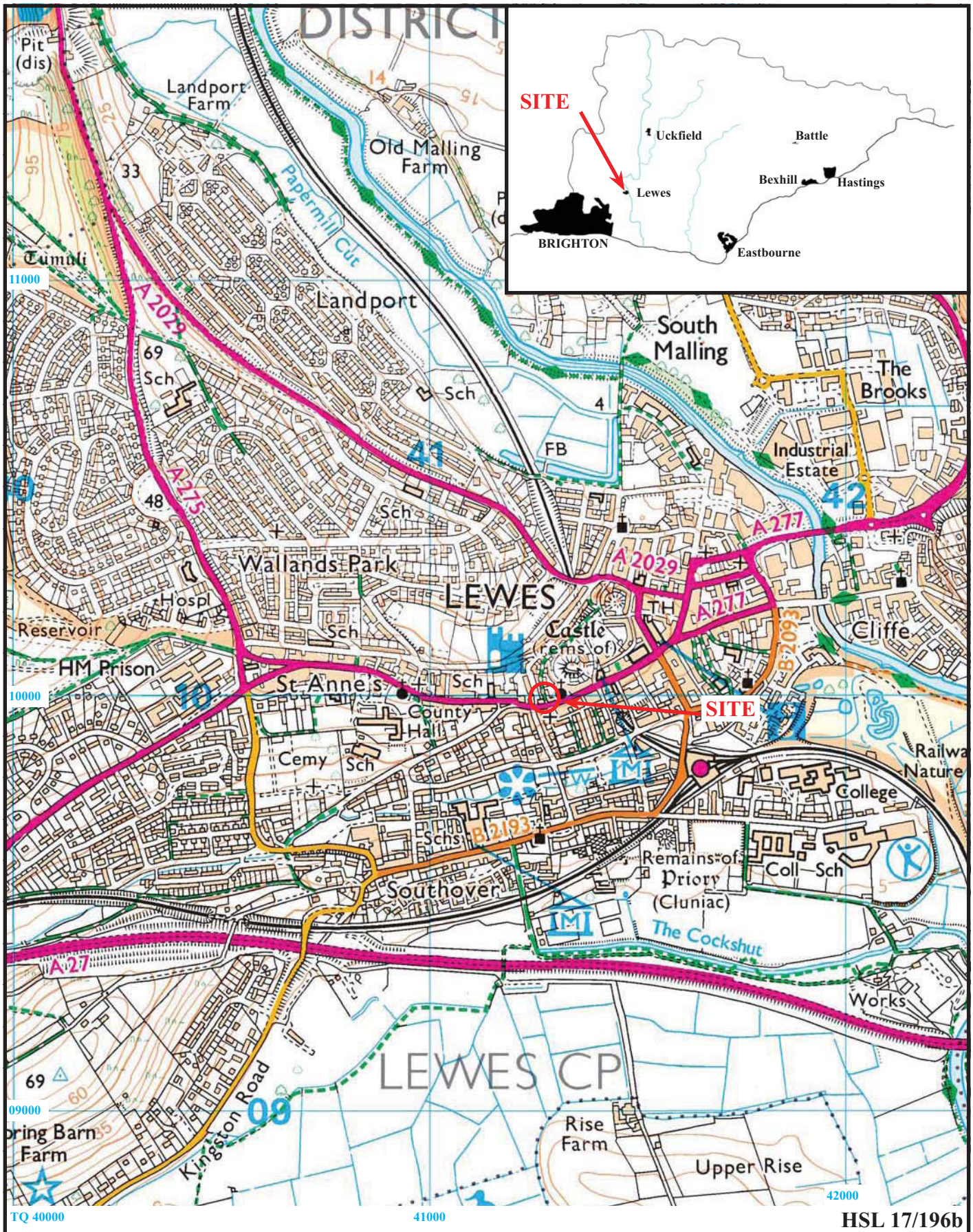
<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
50	Made ground	18th - mid 19th century	Pottery
51	Wall	18th - mid 19th century	Brick
52	Wall	Mid - late 19th century	Stratigraphy and map evidence
53	Wall	18th - mid 19th century	Brick
54	Wall	18th - mid 19th century	Brick
55	Surface	18th - mid 19th century	Stratigraphy
56	Wall	Mid - late 19th century	Stratigraphy and map evidence

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of ceramic building material by context

<i>Context</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
51	Brick	B1a	1	1670	c. 50% complete. Dimensions ? x 108 x 52mm. Set in a light grey/buff abundant medium/coarse sandy mortar with some sub-angular flint grits to 2mm. Mortar on all faces, including broken face.
53	Brick	B2a	1	2926	98% complete. Dimensions 230 x 110 x 52mm. Set in a light grey fine/medium sandy mortar with occasional chalk pellets to 6mm. Mortar on all faces of brick

Fabrics

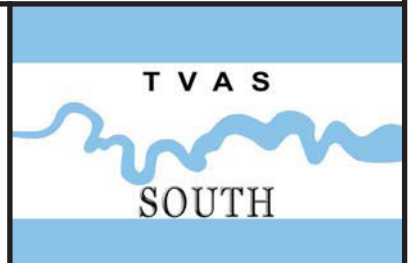
<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Suggested date</i>
B1a	Red orange. Moderate to common 'marl' streaks and pellets, moderate red/purple iron oxides to 3mm	Well formed, well fired	C18th – 19th
B2a	Brick red. Moderate to common black iron oxides to 3mm	Well formed, well fired	C18th – 19th

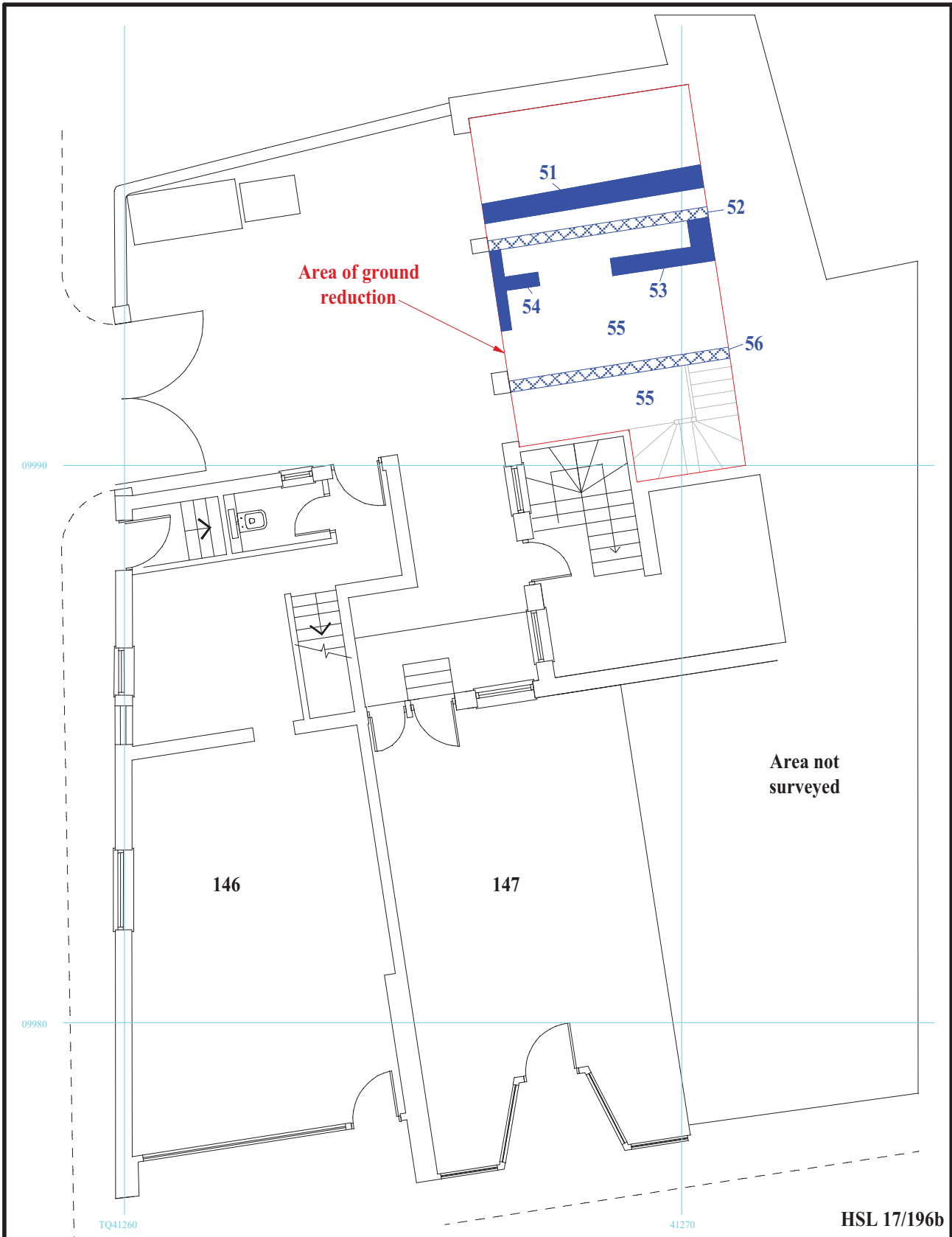


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Figure 1. Location of site within Lewes and East Sussex.

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Figure 3. Site plan showing features recorded.

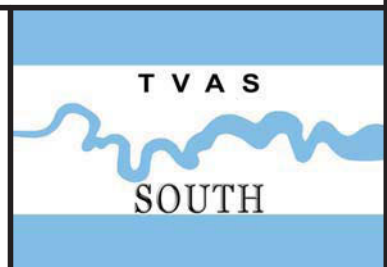




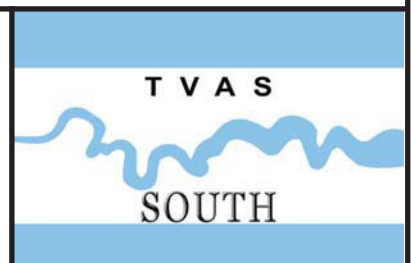
Plate 1. Walls 51 and 52, looking East.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Walls 52, 53, 54 and 56, along with surface 55, looking East,
Scales: 2m and 1m.

HSL 17/196b

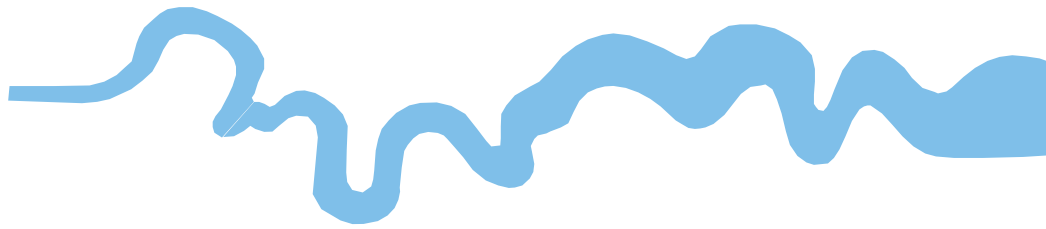
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Plates 1 - 2.



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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