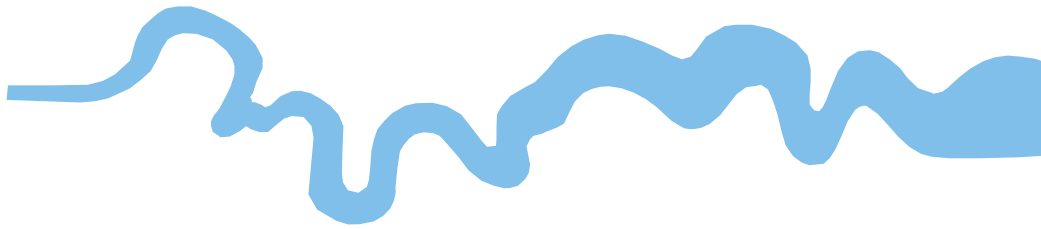


T V A S



SOUTH

**6/7 The Dock, Firle,
Lewes, East Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster

Site Code: DFL17/185

(TQ 4711 0731)

**6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes,
East Sussex**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Chris Difford and Ms Louise Difford

by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DFL17/185

April 2018

Summary

Site name: 6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4711 0731

Planning reference: SDNP/17/01120/HOUS

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 14th February - 7th March 2018

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Jim Webster

Site code: DFL 17/185

Summary of results: The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of the new extensions to the property. An area to the rear of the existing building was reduced down to the natural chalk, and a post-hole dating from the late 15th or 16th century was recorded, along with an 18th-century brick-built well.

Location and reference of archive: The preferred depository for the site archive is Lewes Museum. Unfortunately the museum is not accepting new material, so the archive will be held at TVAS Brighton until a suitable repository can be found.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 18.04.18 Steve Preston✓ 18.04.18

6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster

Report 17/185

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex (TQ 4711 0731) (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Ms Rebecca Kinneavy of BBM Sustainable Design Limited, on behalf of the property's owners, Mr Chris Difford and Ms Louise Difford.

Planning permission (SDNP/17/01120/HOUS) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority for the construction of a two-storey rear extension, a single-storey side extension, and a new free-standing studio. The permission was subject to a standard planning condition (2) relating to archaeology and historic environment, in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012) and the Authority's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on site which may be damaged or destroyed by the building work, it was proposed to carry out a watching brief. 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 Authority on archaeological matters.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jim Webster between 14th February and 7th March 2018, and the site code is DFL 17/185. The archive is currently held at TVAS Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of The Dock, within the historic core of Firle, East Sussex (Fig. 2). The new studio was to be situated to the north of the existing house, within the garden. The site itself was relatively flat, and lies at a height of approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (BGS 2006), and this was confirmed during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the medieval market village of Firle as documented by the East Sussex Historic Environment Record. The village is first mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Ferle*, which is thought to be derived from the Old English for 'place where oak trees grow' (Mills 1993). The medieval parish church, dedicated to St Peter, stands about 175m south-east of the site. Historic maps from the 19th and early 20th centuries suggest that there have been buildings on the site since at least the mid 19th century, but a number of changes have taken place since then. It was therefore possible that elements of earlier structures, or features associated with them, might be present on the site.

Objectives and methodology

The primary aim of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks. Where archaeological deposits which may warrant preservation *in-situ* were encountered, their treatment was to be discussed in consultation with the client and the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer. 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).

Results

Prior to the commencement of the project, an earlier extension to the house had been demolished. The entire area to the rear of the property was then reduced by up to 0.90m, using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The rear garden sloped up slightly towards the east, so that the necessary depth of reduction was less severe close to the existing house. The stratigraphy consisted of up to 0.48m of topsoil (50) and what appeared to be a buried topsoil (51), which lay directly above the chalk natural (Fig. 4; Pl. 2). The complete lack of any subsoil horizon indicated that the area had been disturbed in the past, and this was confirmed by the discovery of a brick-built well (53). The stripped area was extended to expose the well fully in plan (Pl. 3).

The external diameter of the well was 1.25m, and it had been constructed from curved red bricks. A sample brick was taken, and it appears to date from the 18th century. The well was cleaned by hand and recorded.

Although a construction cut (1) for the well was identified, no finds were recovered from its backfill (52) or the soil and chalk fill of the well itself (55). The groundworkers indicated that the well would be capped with concrete and, as a result, no further excavation of the feature took place.

A small post-hole (2), 0.40m in diameter, was also recorded in the stripped area, quite close to the house. This feature was circular in plan and up to 0.20m deep, with a single fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (54) (Fig. 4; Pl. 4). Three small sherds of pottery were recovered from this deposit, along with part of an iron knife. The finds suggest that the post-hole may date from the late 15th or 16th century. The post-hole was fully excavated after it had been half-sectioned and recorded.

The excavation of a new service trench was monitored in front of the building (Fig. 3). However, it was clear that the trench followed the line of an existing drain and, as a result, only contained modern backfilled material.

The new studio did not require any deep foundations, so the construction work in respect of this structure was not monitored.

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

Post-hole 2 (54) produced three small, slightly abraded, oxidized bodysherds from the same well-fired vessel tempered with sparse fine/medium quartz (6g). Such well-fired wares are typical of both the Ringmer and Rye industries in the mid 15th to 16th centuries. The pot assemblage is small and lacking in feature sherds.

Ironwork by Luke Barber

Post-hole 2 (54) also produced part of a scale-tang knife with solid iron trefoil pommel (34g). The pommel (25 wide x 20mm long) and scale tang (17mm wide at pommel tapering down to 13mm wide at the blade and measuring 70mm long) are complete, but only 42mm of the 17mm wide blade survives. A brief search of the main reference works has not located a good parallel but the general style would be in keeping with the later 15th to 16th century date suggested by the pottery recovered from the same feature.

Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

A single complete brick sample was recovered from well 53 (1/2386g). This consists of a neatly formed curving dull red well-brick with convex stretcher measuring 235mm and internal concave stretcher 175mm. The brick is

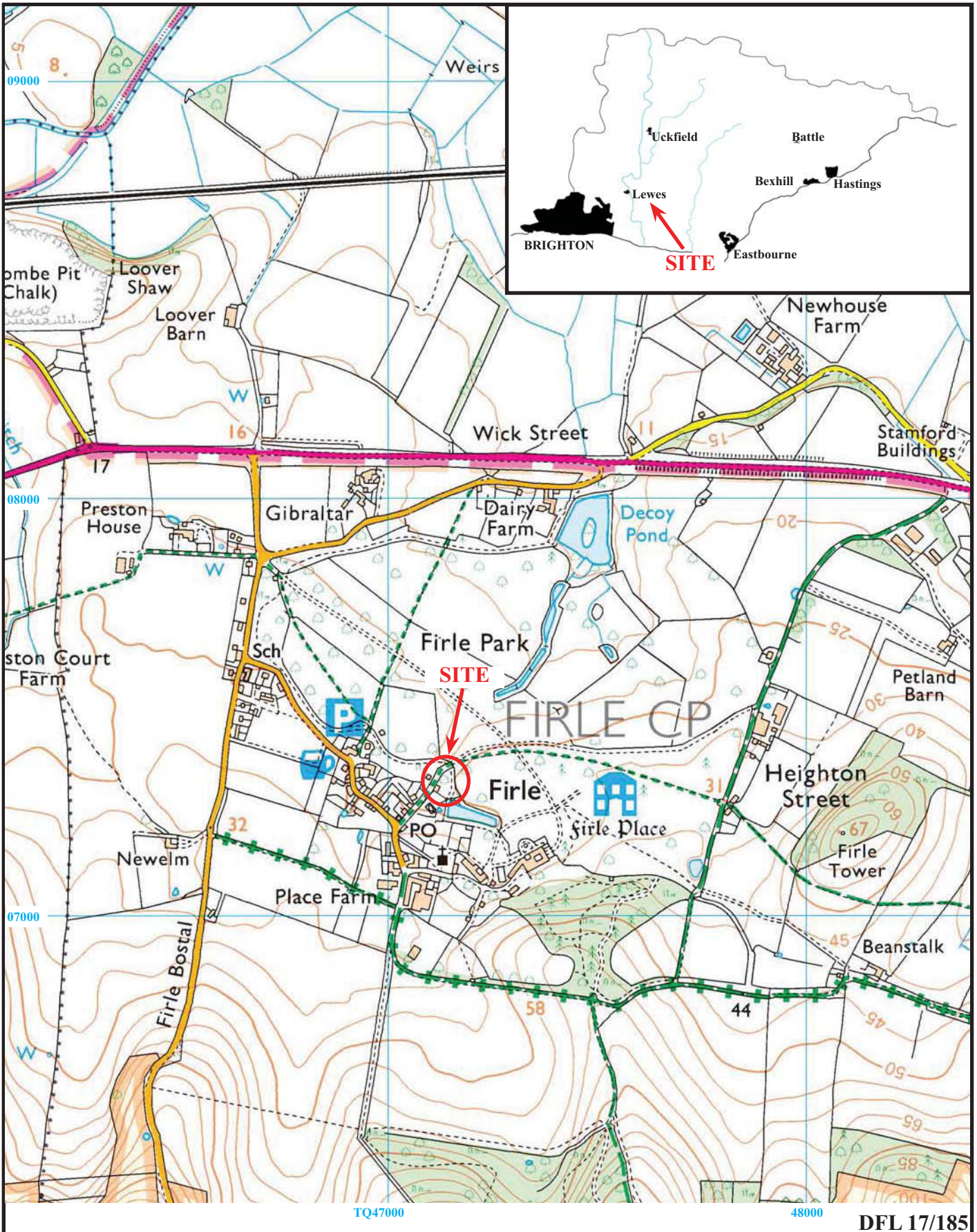
105mm wide and 65mm thick. The brick has a 'sugary' matrix but no quartz is actually visible apart from in a few poorly sorted 'seams'. There is moderate black and purple iron oxide inclusions to 3mm and moderate buff very fine sandstone inclusions to 4mm. The fabric, neatness of finish and medium/good firing suggests the brick is most likely of the 18th century.

Conclusion

The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of the new extensions to the property. An area to the rear of the existing building was reduced down to the natural chalk, and a post-hole dating from the late 15th or 16th century was recorded, along with an 18th century brick built well.

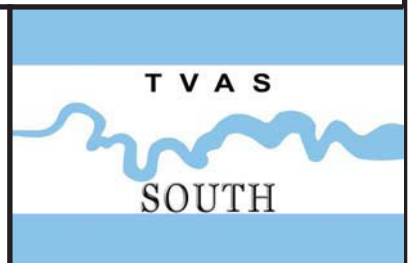
References

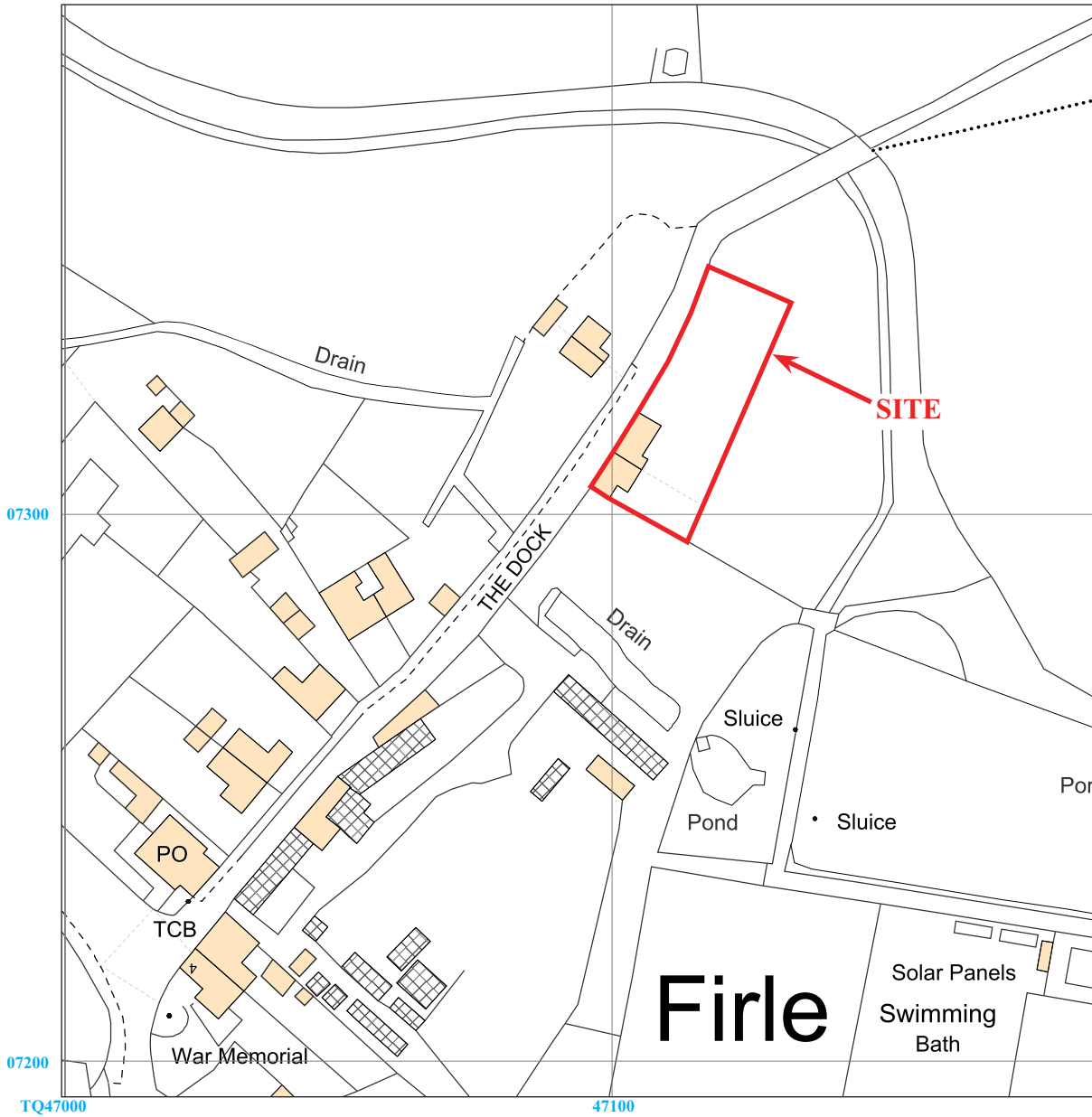
- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **319/334**, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.
- ESCC, 2015, *Sussex Archaeological Standards*, East Sussex County Council, Lewes.
- Mills, 1993, *English Place-names*, Oxford.
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London



6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes,
 East Sussex, 2018
 Archaeological Watching Brief
 Figure 1. Location of site within Firle and
 East Sussex.

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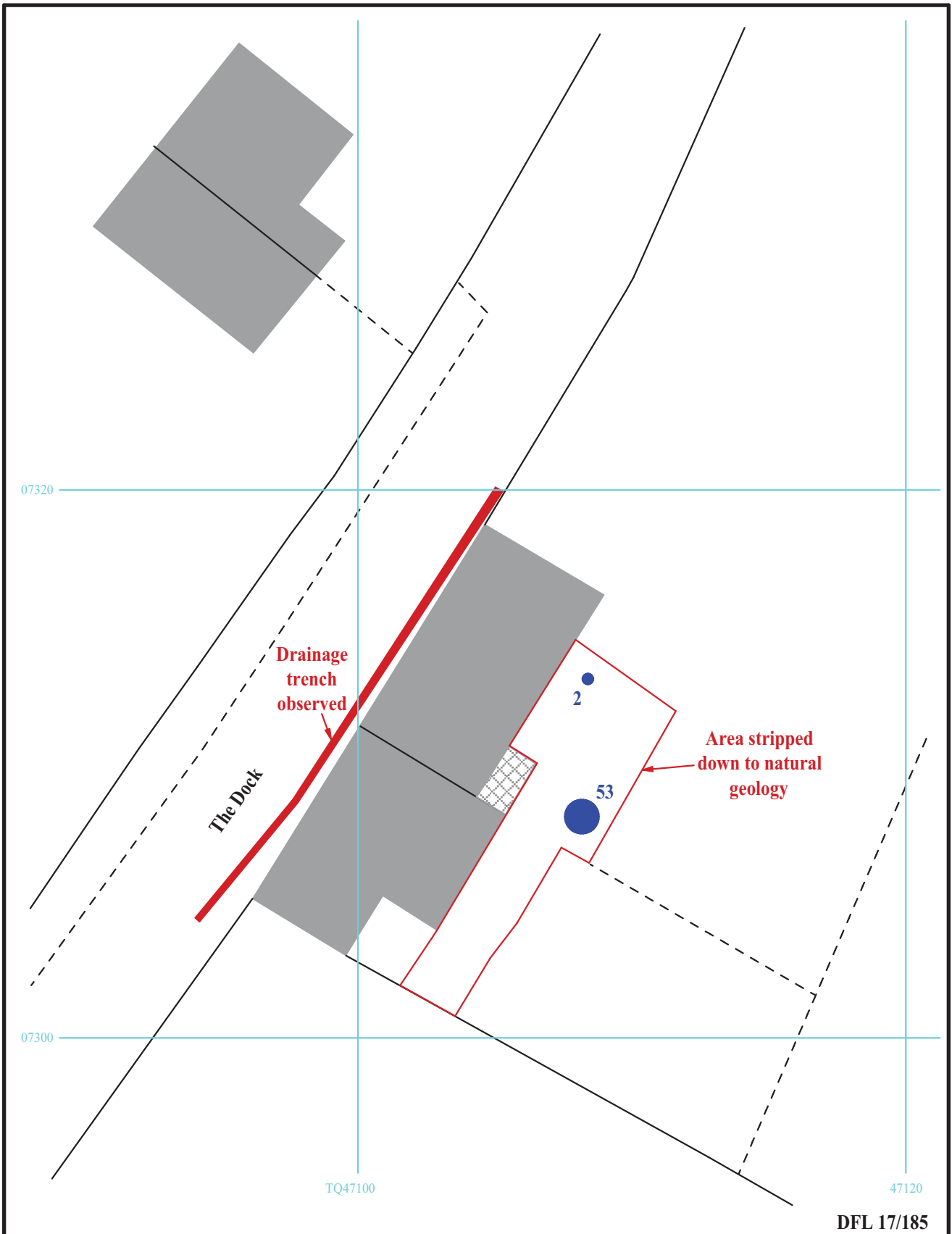
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Archaeological Watching Brief**
Figure 2. Detailed site location.

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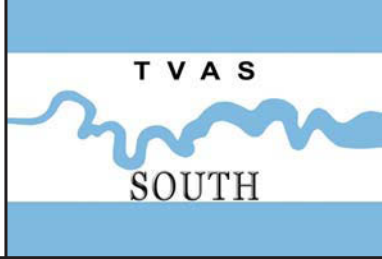


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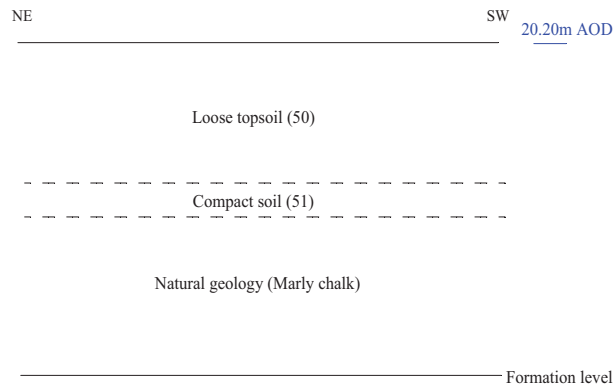


**6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes,
East Sussex, 2018
Archaeological Watching Brief**

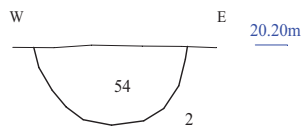
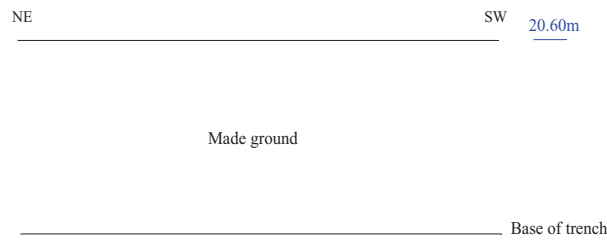
Figure 3. Site plan showing area monitored.



Reduced Area at Rear of Property



Drainage Trench at Front of Property



DFL 17/185

**6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes,
East Sussex 2018
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Sections.

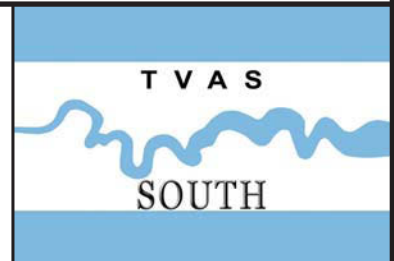




Plate 1. General stratigraphy of stripped area, looking East.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. General view of site, looking South-west.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Well 53 (construction cut 1), looking East.
Scales: 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 4. Post-hole 2, looking North.
Scales: 0.50m and 0.20m.

DFL 17/185

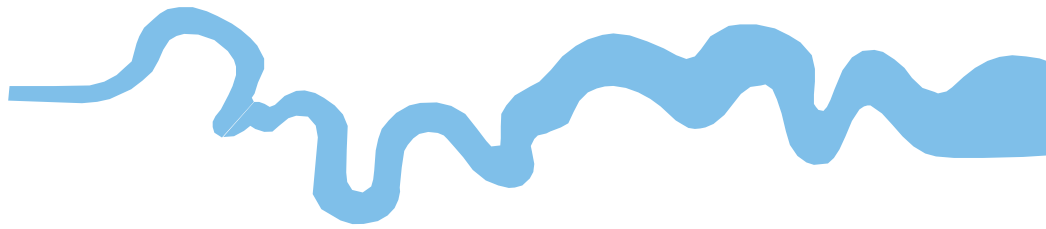
6/7 The Dock, Firle, Lewes,
East Sussex, 2018
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 - 4.



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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