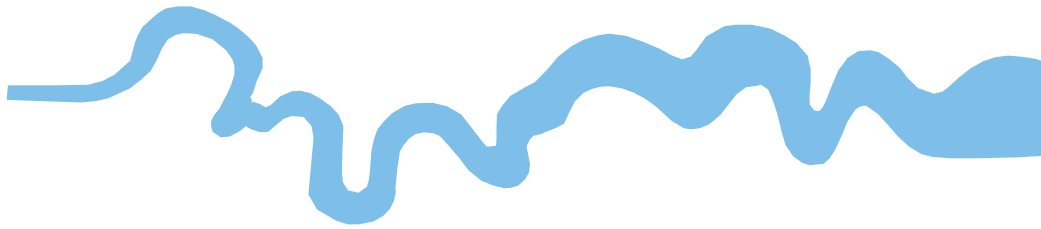


T V A S



SOUTH

**Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway,
Alfriston, East Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Benjamin Matus

Site Code: DBA23/62

(TQ 5179 0217)

Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, East Sussex

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Melanie Whittington

Planning Reference: SDNP/22/01882/HOUS

by Benjamin Matus

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code: DBA 23/62

**April 2023
revised July 2023**

Summary

Site name: Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 5179 0217

Planning reference: SDNP/22/01882/HOUS

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 28th-30th March 2023

Project manager: Odile Rouard

Site supervisor: Benjamin Matus

Site code: DBA 23/62

Summary of results: The watching brief at Dukes Green Barn, Alfriston, successfully investigated those parts of the site which were affected by the construction of a new extension. The material removed consisted of garden soil (50) and an underlying greyish brown silty clay loam (51). The natural chalk geology was exposed between depths of 0.60-1m during excavation of the footing trench with the top of the natural found at approximately 16.60m AOD in the eastern portion and 17.05m AOD in the western portion. The reduction in height of the central area by 0.20m did not expose beyond the garden topsoil. A 20th-century flint and brick garden wall was partially removed during the excavation of the eastern side of the footing trench. No archaeological features were present in any part of the site and no finds were recovered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 19.04.23
	Steve Preston ✓ 10.07.23

Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Benjamin Matus

Report 23/62

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out to the rear of Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway, East Sussex (TQ 5178 0217) (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Ms Melanie Whittington, 21 De Montfort Road, Lewes, BN7 1SP.

Planning permission (SDNP/22/01882/HOUS) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority to construct a new extension to the property. The consent is subject to a standard planning condition (4) which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

Condition 4 states that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'

The archaeological work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation and a written record of all archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of any archaeological investigation unless an alternative timescale for submission of the report is agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.'

Reason: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with policies SD12 and SD16 of the SDNP Local Plan coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 194-205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.'

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the Authority's policies on the historic environment. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Authority, following consultation with the Archaeological Officer for East Sussex County Council, the archaeological adviser to the Authority.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Benjamin Matus between 28th and 30th March 2023, and the site code is DBA 23/62. The archive is currently held at TVAS South, Brighton, and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Alfriston is located north-west of Eastbourne in the South Downs. The site is located less than 1km south of the village of Alfriston, on the western side of the main road, Whiteway, (Figs 1 and 2). The new extension was to be built in the rear garden of the property on the north side of the house, adjacent to the road. The site itself is fairly flat due to the modern construction of the house and levelling of the garden, though it sits approximately 2m above the road to the east, where in the past it likely would have been a gentle east to west slope down to the valley of the Cuckmere river. The site sits at a height of approximately 17.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and the land rises steeply to the west to over 115m aOD on 'The Rails', the river valley bottom to the east being at about 5m aOD. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Lewes Nodular Chalk (BGS 2006), which was confirmed at between 0.60m-1m below the surface of the garden topsoil.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a consultation response from the archaeological officer of East Sussex County Council (East Sussex Historic Environment Record search reference HER208/22). In summary, archaeological sites and finds of a range of periods have been recorded in the environs of the site. These included prehistoric flint of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date, with a Bronze Age burial mound (not surviving) recorded 65m to the south-east of the site. To the north, Iron Age and Roman remains comprise pits, coins and pottery. The settlement of Burnt House and Duke's Green Barn date back to medieval times (11th century) and the village of Alfriston to the north started as a medieval market in the 11th century. The site is located immediately south of the Archaeological Notification Area for Burnt House.

The site itself occupies part of the land likely belonging to a mansion, "Burnt House" immediately to the east (Fig. 2) dating to around 1700, part of a wider desmene (Foller's Manor) with likely medieval origins, though the earliest documentary evidence is of late 16th century date. Archaeological investigations at Burnt House revealed several struck flints of Mesolithic and Neolithic origin, as well as Bronze Age remains including a cinerary urn and round Barrow. Several Roman coins were also found east of the site. A Saxon cemetery was identified roughly 100m to the north-west of the site.

Objectives and methodology

The primary aim of the project is to record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to primarily involve monitoring any areas of significant ground reduction in respect of the erection of the new

extension (Fig. 2). Where archaeological deposits which may warrant preservation in-situ were encountered, their treatment was to be discussed with the client and the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer. Where it is 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’.

All significant ground reduction was to be carried out with a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. A toothed ditching bucket was permitted for compact deposits, however not deemed necessary. The watching brief was to be carried out in accordance with the relevant sections of Sussex Archaeological Standards (ESCC 2019), and the guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020a).

The specific research aims of this project are;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods are present.
- d) To determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Medieval period are present.
- e) To inform a strategy for mitigation if required
- f) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *Historic England Research Agenda* (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary.
- g) The work will be carried out within the broad parameters of the emerging *South East Research Framework* (SERF 2012).

The primary aim of the project is to record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This will primarily involve monitoring any areas of significant ground reduction in respect of the erection of the new extension (Fig. 2). Where archaeological deposits which may warrant preservation in-situ are encountered, their treatment will be discussed following consultation with the client and the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer. Where it is not possible or practicable to preserve archaeological remains in-situ the features will be excavated by hand and fully recorded, to ensure their ‘preservation by record’. All significant ground reduction was to be carried out with a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. A toothed ditching bucket was permitted for compact deposits, however not deemed necessary.

Results

A wall (52) made of flint, stone and occasional brick rubble, parallel to the road on the eastern side of the site, was partly removed (down to ground level) prior to archaeological monitoring. This wall measured approximately 13.50m in length from its southern extent where it was abutting the easternmost garden-room (Fig. 3, Pl. 7), with a section of approximately 4.20m left intact to the north of the excavation area. The wall itself was constructed of irregular medium to large sized flint nodules and mortar, with occasional brick rubble. It had been built into the natural chalk and rose over 3.0m high from this point in the natural, making it approximately 1.50m tall from ground level on its western side, having had a section of between 1.50m buried into the topsoil (50) and subsoils (51) and (53) on the west and eastern sides respectively. This wall had an approximate width of 0.35-0.50m and was thicker where it started abutting the garden-room to the south of the area, becoming slightly thinner along its course to the north.

Once archaeological monitoring commenced, this wall was further removed entirely (Pl. 1) down to a depth of approximately 1m across the entirety of the eastern portion of the trench, going through topsoil (50) that had a thickness of approximately 0.2m and a subsoil (51) which had a thickness of up to 0.60m. A fill (53) between the wall itself and the construction cut of the wall was present in section below the subsoil (51) and consisted of a combination of the subsoil, a mid greyish brown silty clay loam, and the crushed mortar and chunks of flint rubble from the wall (52), giving it a slightly lighter grey colouring. Its approximate thickness was 0.25–0.30m (Fig. 4). After this point the natural geology presented itself (Fig. 4) at approximately 16.60m AOD. Excavation continued a further 0.50-0.60m into this natural chalk on the eastern and north-eastern portion of the footing trench (Pl. 2).

In the western portion of the trench footing the natural geology was observed at approximately 0.75m (17.05m AOD) having excavated down through the topsoil (50) which here had a thickness of 0.25m and the subsoil (51) which on this western side had a lesser thickness of approximately 0.5m. Excavation then continued a further 0.35m into the natural chalk geology (Pl. 3). In the northern portion, at the midpoint along the trench a step was created which joined the shallower western and deeper eastern sides (Pl. 4).

The central area within the footing trench was reduced and levelled by approximately 0.20m, remaining within the garden topsoil (50) (Pls 5 6) (Appendix 1).

The topsoil (50) and subsoil (51) (Fig. 4) were present across the entire site, with greater thickness in the eastern section, where they would have been lying against the now removed wall. Both of these deposits contained no archaeological finds. The thinner stratigraphy on the western side of the trench is indicative of the

east-west slope, with the land previously been higher before construction of the property and subsequent flattening into the side of the slope.

Finds

The archaeological work did not uncover any archaeological finds.

Conclusion

The watching brief at Duke's Green Barn, Alfriston, investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of a new extension. The material removed consisted of garden soil (50) and an underlying greyish brown silty clay loam (51), as well as the partial removal of a flint, mortar, and brick rubble wall (52) on the eastern edge of the site.

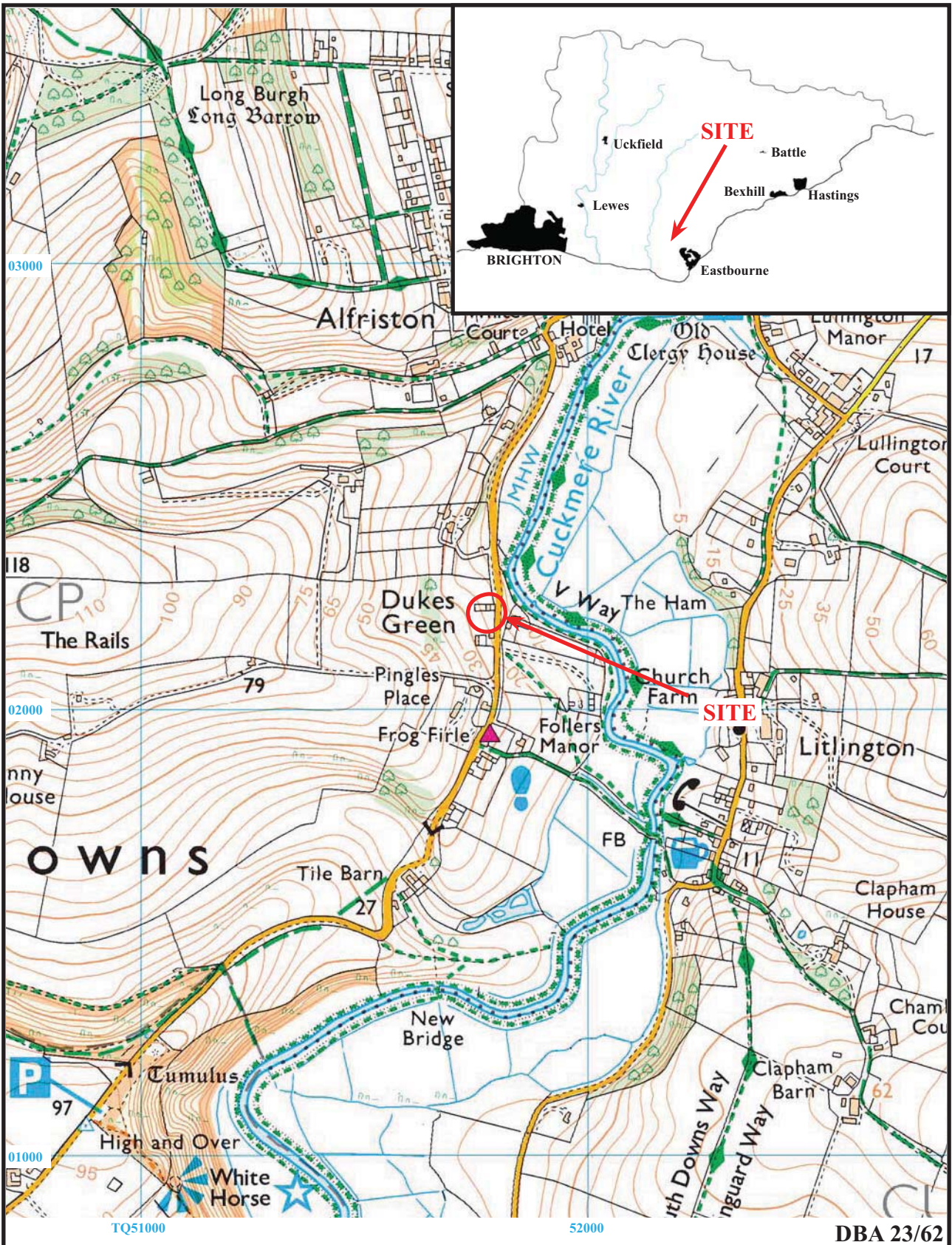
It is possible that the extant garden wall may relate to the eastern wall of a building with a larger footprint illustrated in the 1843 tithe map of the area. (Fig. 5). There are issues rectifying the size differences between modern OS maps of the area with this tithe map, with the building footprint represented as much larger on the 1843 map. This makes it difficult to know whether this wall relates to a later garden boundary wall at the road's edge or as a part of this larger building's eastern wall. If the 1843 map is accurate in its positioning, this prior building would have been further to the west in the garden, though as mentioned the issues with rectifying the scale difference of the tithe map means this cannot be conclusive. The wall is also abutting the modern garden-room of the property which also could indicate construction after or at the same time as the modern property and looks to have been mortared up against this external building (see top left of Pl. 7) dating it to after the mid-19th century. It could be possible that this single stretch of wall was preserved from the 1843 building and then later utilised as the boundary of the modern garden. Natural chalk geology was exposed in all parts of the footing trench. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

References

- BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **319/334**, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth.
- ClfA, 2020, *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Reading
- ESCC, 2019, *Sussex Archaeological Standards*, East Sussex County Council, Lewes (2nd edition)
- NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- TVAS, 2022, *Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway, Alfriston, East Sussex Written Scheme of Investigation specification for archaeological watching brief*

APPENDIX 1: Context information

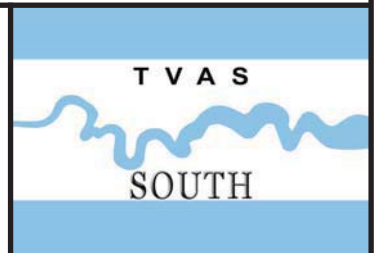
<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Height m AOD (from top of context)</i>	<i>Thickness (m)</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Topsoil (50)	Dark greyish-brown silty loam, highly rooted with <1% inclusions (small-medium sized stones and natural flint nodules, and occasional brick rubble).	17.50m to 17.30m	0.20m - 0.40m	17.30m AOD after removal of 0.20m from central area.
Subsoil (51)	Mid greyish-brown silty clay loam, with <1% inclusions (small-large stone including flint nodules).	17.10m to 17.30m	0.40m - 0.85m	The lighter grey lower portion of subsoil on eastern side of trench is due to demolition of garden wall and the mortar pressed against the trench wall and subsoil.
(52)	Wall made of approximately 90% large flint nodules, and mortar, with occasional brick rubble of unknown date.	19.50 to 16.50m	2.50m	
(53)	Mid greyish-brown silty clay loam, a combination of subsoil (51) and mortar from the construction/extraction of the wall.	16.90m to 16.55m	0.25m - 0.30m	
(1)	Construction cut of wall (52)	17.50m to 16.50m	1.0m	Approximately 0.10m into the natural chalk geology

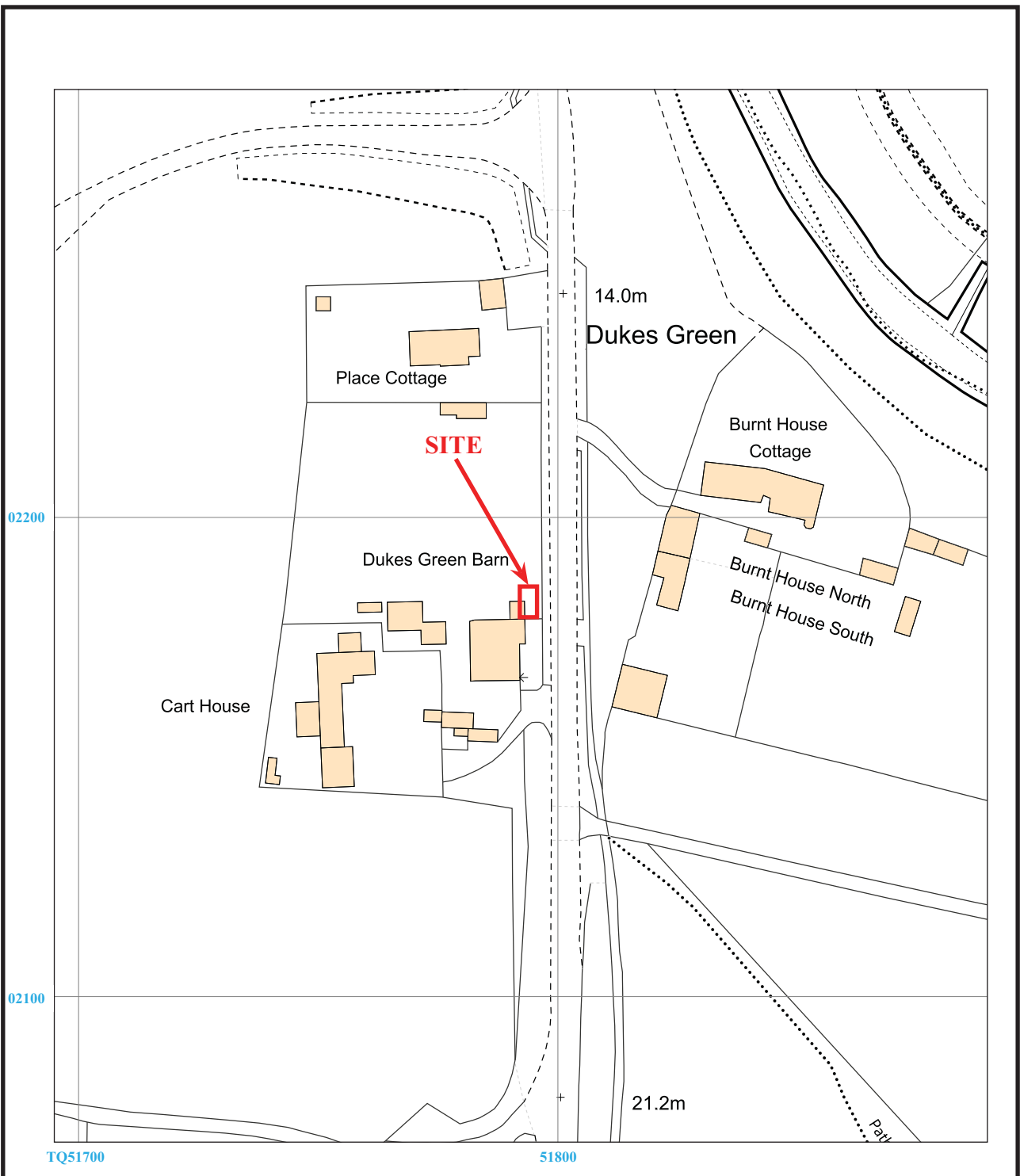


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Archaeological Watching Brief**

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

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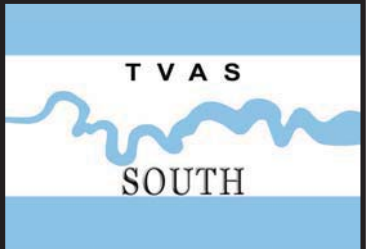


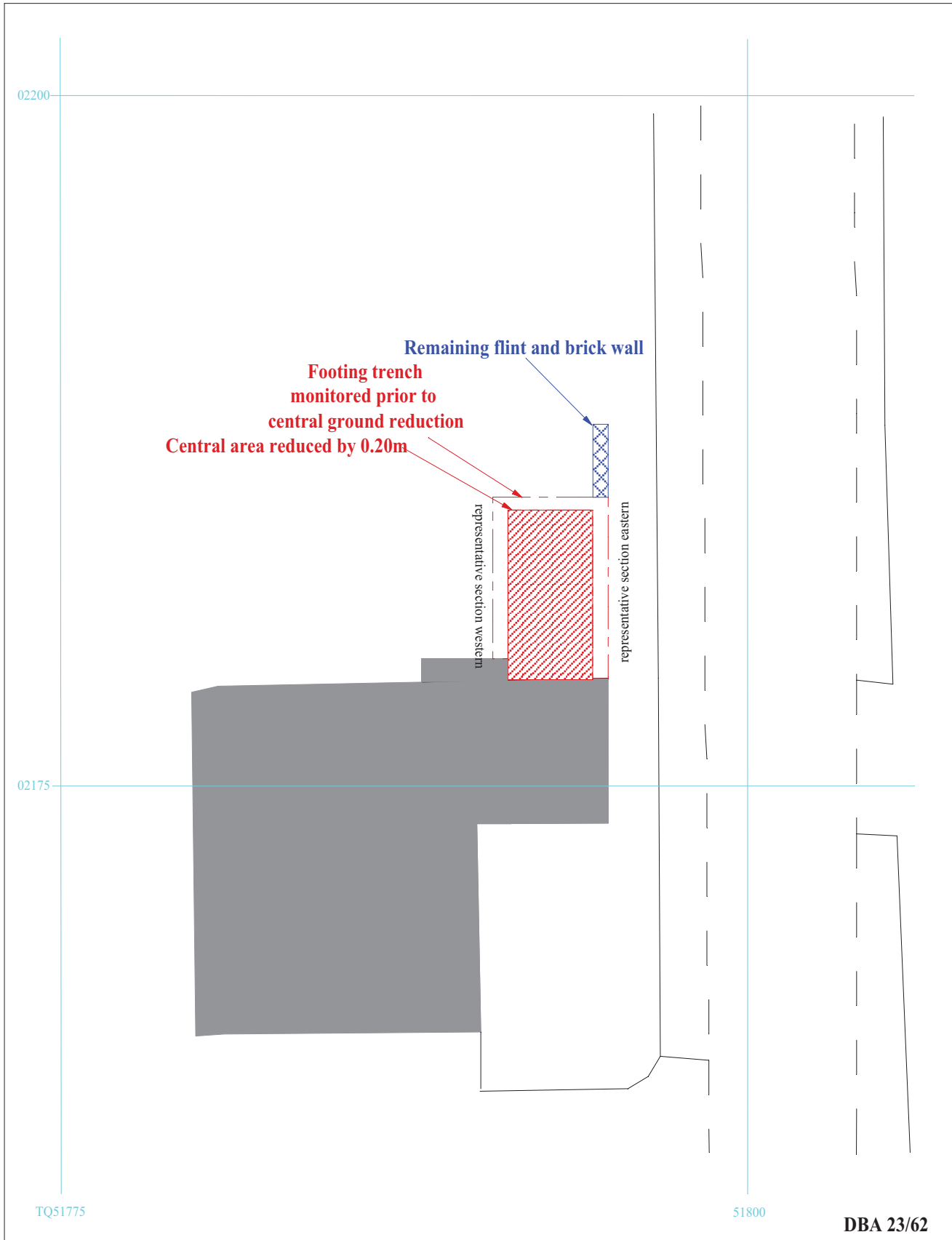
DBA 23/62



**Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway,
Alfriston, East Sussex, 2023
Archaeological Watching Brief**
Figure 2. Detailed site location.

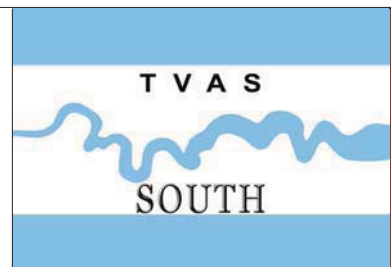
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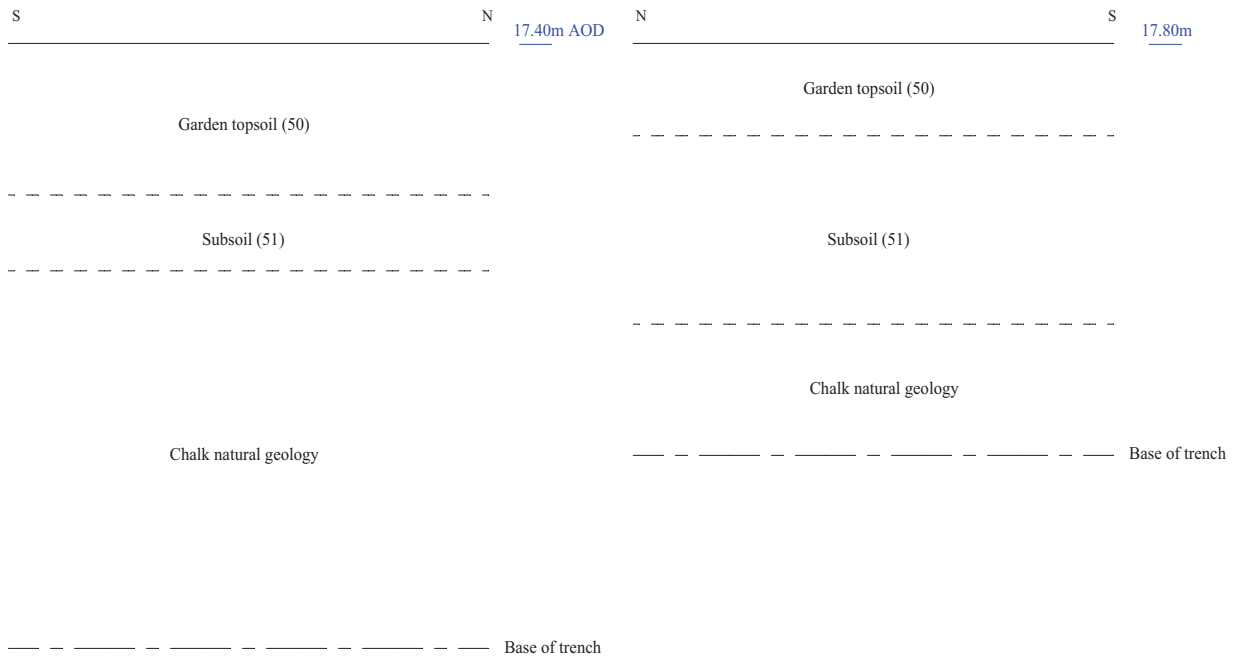
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Figure 3. Plan showing the areas monitored during the watching brief



Eastern part of footing trench

Western part of footing trench



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**Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway
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Figure 4. Representative sections.

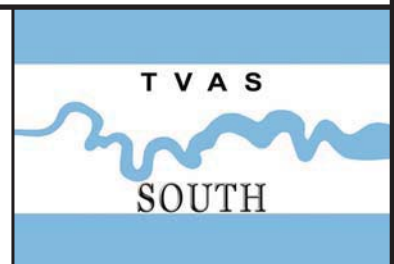




Plate 1. Eastern footing trench section showing the removal of garden wall, looking South-west.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Footing trench section at North-east corner, looking South. Scales: 1m and 1m.



Plate 3. Footing trench section in Western portion, looking East. Scales: 1m and 0.5m



Plate 4. North section of footing trench showing the step dug into the natural (bottom left of photo), looking South. Scales: 1m and 0.5m



Plate 5. General view of central area during 0.2m reduction, looking South-west.



Plate 6. Central area following excavation, looking South. Scales: 1m and 1m

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**Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway,
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Plates 1 to 6.**

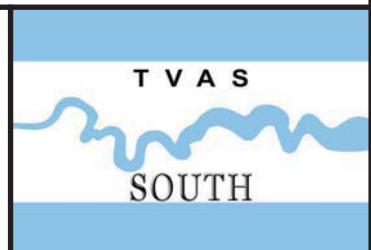
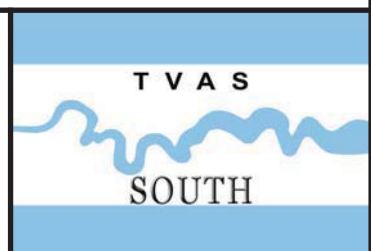




Plate 7. Removed wall shown abutting garden-room (left of photo), looking North-east.

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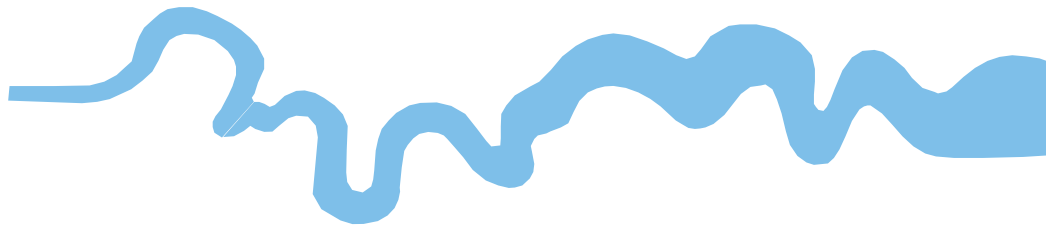
**Duke's Green Barn, Whiteway,
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Plate 7.**



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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