



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Watching Brief at Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea East Sussex

RR/2009/923

Project No. CBAS0086

by
Chris Butler

November 2009

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea during groundworks involving a new conservatory.

A wall comprising Tilgate Stone in a lime mortar was recorded running east-west across the trench, and although it was undated, its relationship with the underlying layer suggested it was of 13th to 14th century date. An associated demolition layer with 13th - 14th century CBM and 16th century pottery may provide a date for the demolition of this structure.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Amdega Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs Evans, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks. As a result of the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority have put a condition on the planning consent (RR/2009/923) for the development, requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.2** The site lies within the historic core of the Medieval and Post-Medieval town of Winchelsea. The site is within a designated Archaeological Sensitive Area, and is also located within a Conservation Area (Fig. 1). Mariteau House (Fig. 2) is situated in Quarter 20, and was built c.1765. It has been designated a Grade II Listed Building (DES4166).
- 1.3** Winchelsea is located on a hilltop some 1.5 km inland, with the River Brede on its north side. The ground falls rapidly on all sides into the Pett Levels to its south, and Rye Bay to the east. On the west side a ridge takes the A259 through Icklesham and on to Hastings.
- 1.4** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 320/321), is Wadhurst Clay overlying Ashdown Beds sandstone, mainly Cliff End Sandstone. The upper seams contain horizons of Tilgate Stone, a calcareous sandstone frequently used in the past as a building stone in Winchelsea.
- 1.5** The fieldwork was carried out on the 16th September 2009 by the author.

2.0 Archaeological & Historical background

- 2.1** The new town of Winchelsea was laid out in 39 ‘quarters’ between 1283 and 1292, by the order of King Edward I. Initially the new town seemed to prosper, but in the 14th and 15th centuries it suffered some seven major attacks by the French, who pillaged the town on almost every occasion.
- 2.2** The changing coastline hastened the decline of the town as a port, as a shingle bar spread across the river outlet. By the end of the 15th century, the town had declined and the last merchant had left, and for the next 300 years Winchelsea was in decay. In the last half of the 18th century textile manufactory was undertaken with cambric and crepe being produced.
- 2.3** The site is located in Quarter 20 of the town, situated to the southwest of St Thomas’s Church. A map of the town was reconstructed from the 1292 Rent Roll by Homan¹. He showed that the rental was arranged in a certain order round each quarter, and that the measurement was a *virga*, apparently of 16 feet (4.88 metres). The layout in Quarter 20 differs from the standard pattern in that there were a number of larger plots each having a frontage facing one of the principal streets.
- 2.4** Mariteau House was built by one of the partners of the English Linen Company c.1765. The 1763 map² of Winchelsea show there to be no property present on the site, but the 1767 survey³ shows Mariteau House fronting onto German Street, with large formal gardens to the rear of the house.
- 2.5** Mariteau House is a three-storey mansion, now divided into five separate properties. The original central doorway has been replaced with two modern doorways. To the north is a two-storey addition (Little Mariteau House), and there has been a ground floor addition at the south end.
- 2.6** The Ordnance Survey maps between 1875 and 1929 all show Mariteau House, and over this period there is little change in the plan of the property, apart from the addition to the southern end between 1875 and 1899.
- 2.7** In 1974 excavations were undertaken in the south-western corner of Quarter 19 in German Street, and revealed the foundations of a Medieval stone built house. The house was subject to reconstruction in the late 14th century, and was abandoned in the late 15th or early 16th century⁴.

¹ Homan, W.M. 1949 ‘The Founding of New Winchelsea’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **88**,22-41.

² ESRO AMS 5806/3

³ ESRO AMS 5788/1

⁴ King, A. 1975 ‘A Medieval Town House in German Street, Winchelsea’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **113**, 124-145.

- 2.8** An archaeological assessment excavation at Truncheons, to the south of Mariteau House, in 1990 found evidence for a north-south aligned tenement boundary and possibly Medieval buildings fronting onto German Street⁵. Recent archaeological work in the area of Mariteau House may have uncovered evidence for a cellar⁶.
- 2.9** Other archaeological excavations have been carried out on a number of sites in Winchelsea⁷. In 2005 a watching brief was undertaken at Plat Cottage in Quarter 19, where a possible Medieval wall footing was encountered on the east side of the building, and an assemblage of pottery dating from the 14th century through to the 19th century was recovered⁸.

3. Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** On arrival at the site on the 16th September 2009, the previous conservatory that had been built in the 1970's had already been demolished, although an existing brick dwarf wall at the southern end was being retained for the new conservatory.
- 3.2** A foundation trench 3m long and 0.5m wide for the new conservatory was excavated by hand, and under archaeological supervision (Fig. 3). A small hole 0.5m x 0.5m in size was also excavated adjacent to the house as the foundation for a lintel which was being used to cross a modern drain which ran below the new conservatory. The spoil was removed from the site after careful checking for artefacts. A Garrett ACE250 metal detector was used to scan the revealed surfaces and features.
- 3.3** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.4** A photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services and, after any further analysis, will be offered to the appropriate Museum. A site reference of LMH09 has been allocated.

⁵ Martin, D. 2004 'An Assessment at 'The Truncheons', 1990: Quarter 20' in Martin, D. & Rudling D. *Excavations in Winchelsea, Sussex 1974-2000*, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd, 99-104.

⁶ G. Chuter *pers. com.*

⁷ Martin, D. & Rudling D. 2004 *Excavations in Winchelsea, Sussex 1974-2000*, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd.

⁸ Butler, C. 2005 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Plat Cottage, Winchelsea, East Sussex*, CBAS Report.

4. Results

- 4.1** The foundation trench for the new conservatory extended from the north side of the existing dwarf wall, and was excavated through a 200mm deep layer of made ground (Context **1**). This comprised a dark grey-brown sandy loam containing numerous shingle pieces to 20mm (10%) and fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) (<1%).
- 4.2** In the southern part of the foundation trench, and within Context **1**, was a layer of concrete up to 300mm thick (Context **8**), which was the foundation raft for the previous conservatory. A single course of 20th century bricks sitting on top of the concrete were noted in the section, and had presumably formed part of the now demolished conservatory wall (Fig. 4).
- 4.3** Below Contexts **1** and **8** was a mid brown firm sandy clay loam up to 280mm deep (Context **2**) containing flint pebbles up to 40mm (<1%) and CBM (<1%). This layer ran along the entire length of the trench, and contained the largest group of artefacts from the site, albeit dating from the 14th through to the 19th centuries.
- 4.4** Cut into Context **2** below Context **8** was a shallow feature measuring 1.1m wide and 200mm deep, which extends out of the trench on the east side (Cut **4**). It contained a compact yellow-brown sandy clay (Fill **3**) with flint shingle pieces (3%), CBM (2%) and pieces of slate (<1%). In the section (Figs. 4 & 5) it can be seen that this cut is within Context **2**. The artefacts range from this feature range in date from the 16th century through to the early 19th century.
- 4.5** Towards the north end of the trench a wall (Context **5**) was encountered running east-west across the trench at a depth of 450mm (Figs. 3 & 4). The wall was 400mm wide and comprised small pieces of roughly cut Tilgate Stone up to 150mm in size, faced along the outer edge, and bonded into buff coloured lime mortar which includes white chalk/limestone pieces and small CBM pieces (Figs. 6 & 7).
- 4.6** In the bottom of the trench, and therefore not fully investigated as it was below the level to which the trench was excavated, was a mid brown layer of compact sandy clay loam (Context **6**). This layer contained mortar pieces to 20mm (2%), charcoal pieces and flecks (1%) and CBM fragments (<1%), together with a single sherd of 13th century pottery. This layer appears on both sides of Wall **5** (Fig. 4), and it was not clear whether the wall had been cut into this layer or the layer had built up after the wall was constructed.
- 4.7** Overlying Context **6**, and mostly on the south side of the wall, was a thin spread of demolition material (Context **7**). This comprised a mid brown loose sandy clay loam with pieces of Tilgate Stone to 200mm (10%), 13th-14th century CBM (5%) and slate (1%). The two sherds of pottery from this layer provide a 15th to mid 16th century date.

- 4.8** To the north of the wall a possible drain (Context **9**) running east-west across the trench was encountered. This appeared whilst cleaning up the bottom of the foundation trench, when the ground gave way and revealed a void cutting Context **6**, below the trench depth. There was no structure to it, and it had no real bottom or sides, but was not investigated any further as it was below the depth of the foundation trench.
- 4.9** A small hole 0.5m x 0.5m in size was excavated adjacent to the house (Fig. 3) as the foundation for a lintel which was being used to cross a modern drain which ran below the new conservatory. The only context encountered in this was Context **1**, which contained large quantities of small-sized shingle. Although only a few artefacts were recovered from this, the pottery was dated to c. 1790-1820.
- 4.10** No other features were noted during the watching brief. It was agreed with the builder that a protective membrane would be laid in the bottom of the trench to protect the wall and associated deposits before concrete was poured into the trench.

5. Finds

- 5.0** The excavation produced a small assemblage of finds, which are summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

5.1 Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.1.1** The earliest pottery recovered consists of a relatively fresh oxidised cooking pot body sherd tempered with fine flint sand (Context **6**). This sherd is likely to be of the early to mid 13th century though it is uncertain if the piece is residual in this context. Context **2** also produced a medieval sherd: a 6g residual body fragment with notable abrasion, from a green glazed sandy jug, possibly a later 13th century Rye product.
- 5.1.2** A little Transitional pottery, of the 15th to mid 16th century was also recovered. The two sherds of high-fired oxidised earthenware from Context **7** may be contemporary with that deposit though the two pieces (5g) from Context **2** are residual. Context **2** also produced part of the base of a probable Raeren stoneware mug of similar date.
- 5.1.3** The next period represented by the ceramics is the 18th century. A chip (1g) of Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware (c. 1730-1780) and two fragments (1g) from a Chinese porcelain tea bowl were recovered from Context **2**. In addition a sherd of London stoneware (9g) and three of creamware (38g) were recovered from Context **1**.

5.1.4 The 19th century is represented by relatively few sherds: a pearlware sherd from Context **1** (2g) with blue transfer-printing is likely to be of the early 19th century as is a pearlware sherd (3g) in Context **2**. The remaining pieces (all from Context **2**) include unglazed earthenwares (flower pots), English stoneware and refined white earthenware of slightly later 19th century date.

Table 1: Pottery, CBM and Stone

Context	Pottery	Clay tobacco pipe	Ceramic Building Material (CBM)	Stone	Date
1	-	-	Peg tile 3/17g	1/15g	Late post-medieval
1 (hole by house)	5/50g	-	-	-	c. 1790-1820
2	15/52g	7/15g	Peg tile 12/266g	7/123g	Mixed: C14th – 19 th
3	-	-	Peg tile 4/118g	7/166g	Mixed: C16th – early 19th
6	1/7g	-	Peg tile 1/1g	-	c. 1200-1275
7	2/8g	-	Peg tile 3/196g Floor tile 1/128g	1/15g	c. 1425-1550

5.2 Clay Tobacco Pipes by Luke Barber & Chris Butler

5.2.1 Four stem fragments were recovered from Context **2**, all of which are in fresh condition. One can be ascribed an early 18th century date, while the others are more in keeping with a mid 18th to 19th century range.

5.2.2 Three fragments from the same bowl were also recovered from Context **2**. They have a grape and leaf design above a large leaf at the base of the bowl, and probably date to the first half of the 19th century.

5.3 Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

5.3.1 Two heavily abraded small pieces of peg tile, tempered with moderate medium sand, are likely to be of 13th to 14th century date (Context **2** 12g and Context **6** 1g). There is notably more peg tile of the Transitional period. These tiles are generally quite crudely formed, tempered with sparse fine sand and sparse/moderate calcareous pellets, are hard-fired and often have a distinctive cream/buff surface.

5.3.2 All of the peg tile in Context **7** is of this type and there are further examples residual in Context **2** (3/164g) and Context **3** (2/57g). Also of this period is a fragment of floor tile from Context **7**, in a fine sandy oxidised fabric with slightly bevelled edge and white slip below a clear glaze. Later tile from the site is represented by a scatter of sparse fine sand tempered pieces with occasional iron oxides, typical of the 18th and 19th centuries.

5.4 Stone by Luke Barber & Chris Butler

5.4.1 The most common stone recovered consists of pieces of Medieval West Country roofing slate from Context **2** (6/108g) and Context **3** (6/17g). There is also a single piece of 19th century roofing slate from Context **1**.

5.4.2 A few pieces of the local Tilgate Stone were recovered from Contexts **2** and **7**, and all of the stone making up the wall (Context **5**) was also Tilgate Stone.

Table 2: Other Finds

Context No.	Flintwork	Glass	Bone/shell	Others
2	2 (39g)	13 (225g)	7 bone (19g) 11 shell (148g)	1 iron frag (25g)
3	-	-	1 bone (2g)	-
6	-	-	1 bone (12g)	-
7	-	-	6 bone (60g) 2 shell (32g)	-

5.5 Flintwork by Chris Butler

5.5.1 Two possible pieces of worked flint were recovered from Context **2**. The first was a small hard hammer-struck flake with a hinge fracture (3g) that had been removed from a beach pebble nodule. The second was a small beach pebble core (36g) with two removals from a single platform on the cortical surface.

5.5.2 These two pieces may indicate that there has been some prehistoric activity at the site, although neither piece is particularly diagnostic. However, given that beach pebbles are the only source of raw material in the area, the apparent crudeness, which is common with such small raw material size, would suggest a later prehistoric date.

5.6 Glass by Chris Butler

5.6.1 All of the glass was recovered from Context **2** (Table 2). Five fragments were from the same light blue-green coloured poison or medicine bottle, whilst four clear glass fragments also appeared to come from the same mineral water bottle. The remaining glass came from a number of different bottles, and one piece was window glass.

5.6.2 Apart from the window glass, which may be earlier, all of the remaining glass could be dated to the late 19th or early 20th century.

5.7 Metal

5.7.1 A single unidentified piece of iron was recovered from Context **2**.

5.8 Bone & shell

5.8.1 A total of 15 pieces of bone were recovered from four contexts (Table 2). The bone comprises mostly small fragments, although a number of larger pieces were found in Context **7**, including possible cattle and sheep. Some small unidentified mammal/bird bones were also present. A tooth (cattle) was found in Context **6**.

5.8.2 The marine shell comprised 11 oyster fragments from Context **2**, many of which had infestation holes. Context **7** produced one fragment of oyster, and a large Common Cockle fragment.

6 Discussion

- 6.1** The possible evidence for prehistoric activity is interesting, as little has been found at Winchelsea in the past. Due to the lack of a suitable raw material, worked flint in the area is generally small and poorly knapped.
- 6.2** Context 6 appears to be an in-situ horizon relating to 13th century activity, perhaps indicating that the site was occupied during the earliest phase of New Winchelsea. Unfortunately it was not possible to investigate this further as the foundation trench was not being cut any deeper.
- 6.3** Wall 5 appears to be contemporary with or just post-date Context 6, so it could be the foundation of a 13th century property. This building may well have been demolished in the 16th century, as the demolition layer adjacent to the wall and above Context 6 contains both 13th to 14th century CBM which may have come from a demolished building and some 15th to 16th century pottery which perhaps provides a date for its demolition.
- 6.4** Other Medieval wall foundations excavated in Winchelsea have been between 500mm and 710mm wide, with smaller foundations possibly for timber framed constructions⁹. The construction method used elsewhere in Winchelsea in the Medieval period comprises stone foundations bedded into the clay, with a lime mortar used to bond the upper courses. Yellow bricks are also frequently used. The lime mortar normally has a heavy admixture of small water-worn pebbles¹⁰.
- 6.5** The remaining evidence appears to be connected with the construction of the house in the 18th century and subsequent later activity during the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- 6.6** The evidence from the watching brief appears to confirm that there was a building on the site in the 13th to 15th centuries. It does however seem unlikely that this was a house fronting onto one of the streets, as it is set back some way from the street frontage. It is therefore possible that this was either an outbuilding or perhaps a property boundary wall.

⁹ Martin, D. & Martin, B.J. 2004 *New Winchelsea Sussex: A Medieval Port Town*, UCL Field Archaeology Unit Monograph 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

7 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr & Mrs Evans for commissioning CBAS to undertake the archaeological watching brief. Gareth Elvidge at Amdega Ltd made all the arrangements for the watching brief with CBAS and I would like to thank the builders for their co-operation during the watching brief. Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist monitored the project for East Sussex County Council.

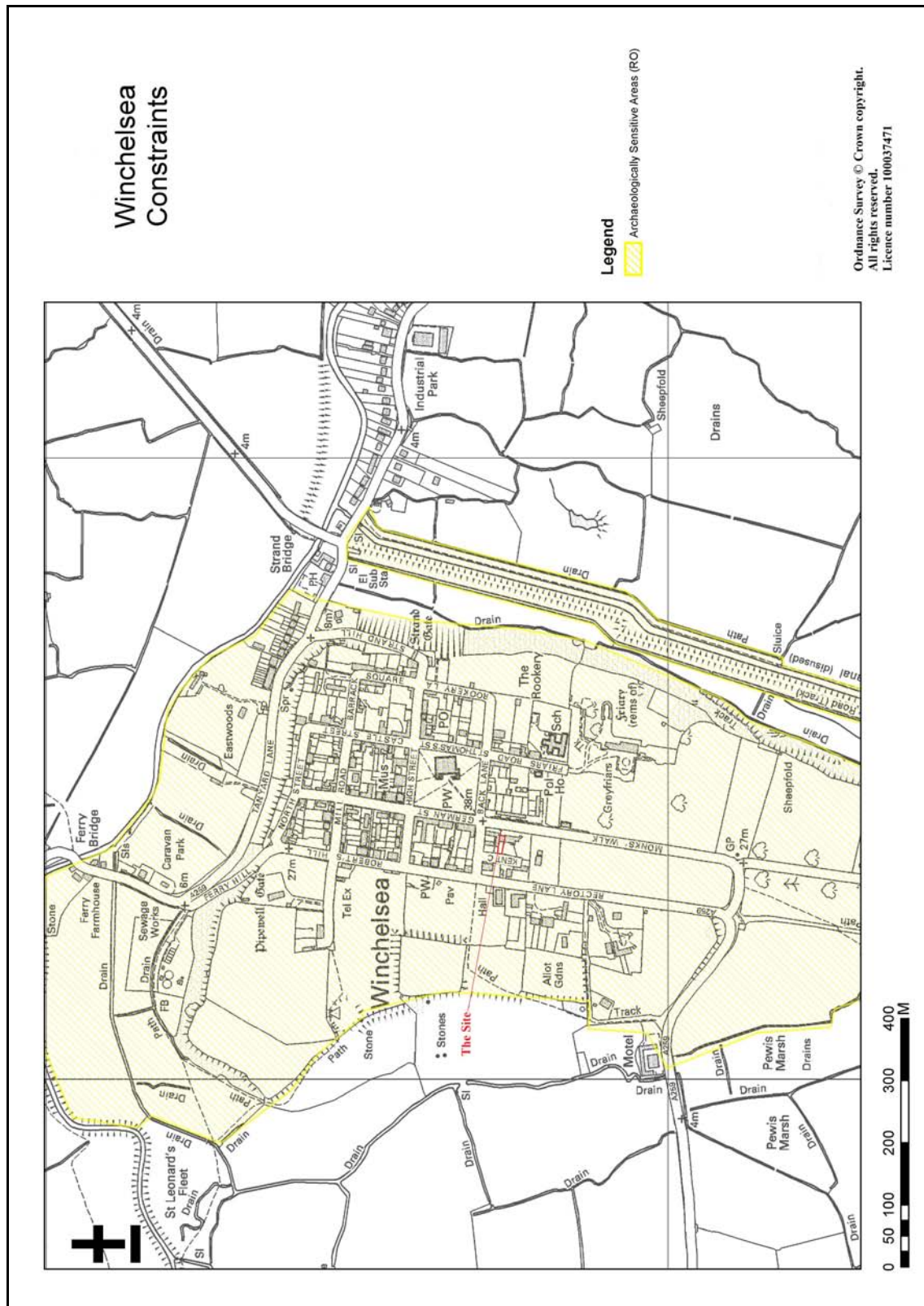


Fig. 1: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Site location map and the
Archaeologically Sensitive Area

(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

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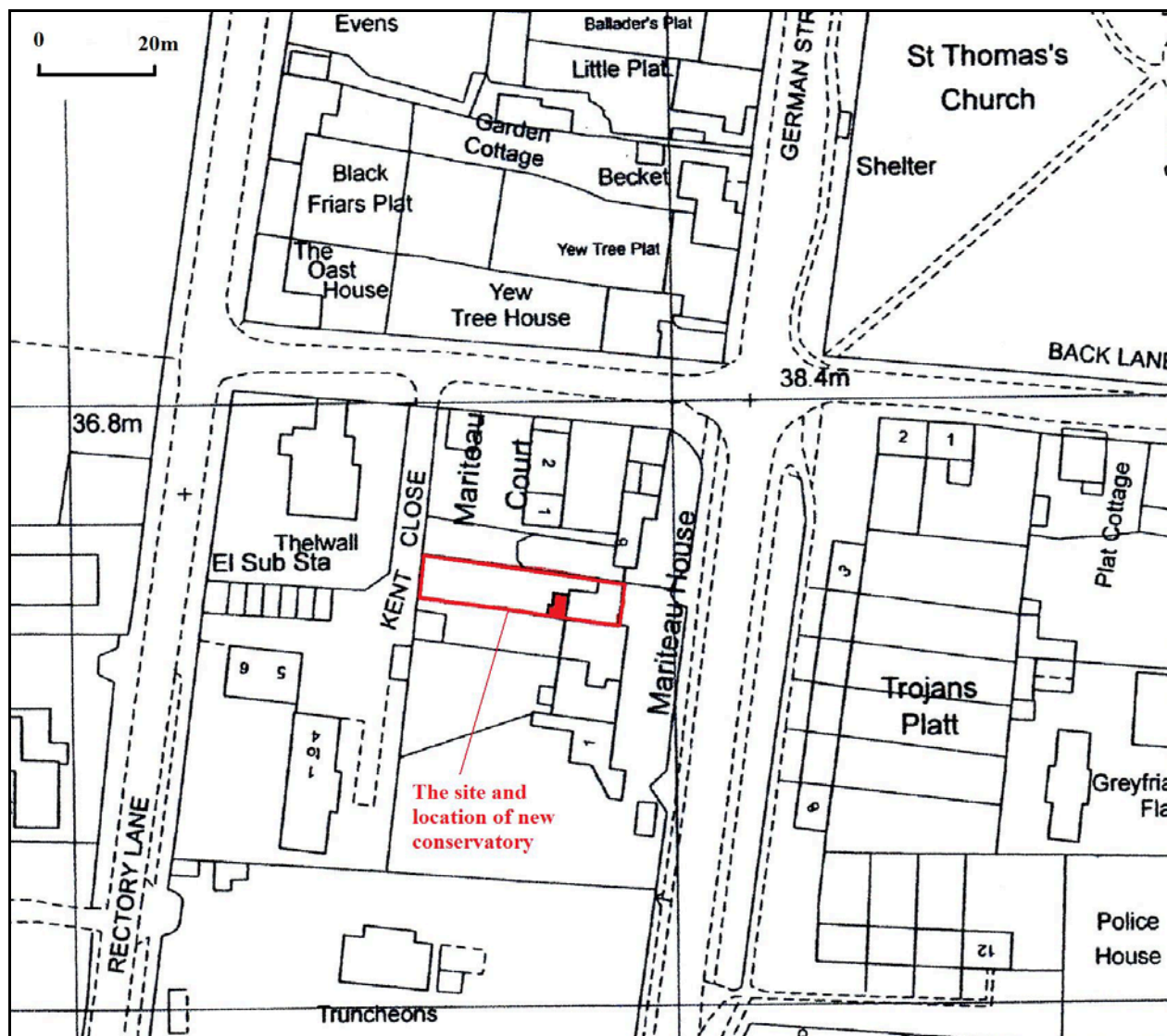


Fig. 2: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Location of the site
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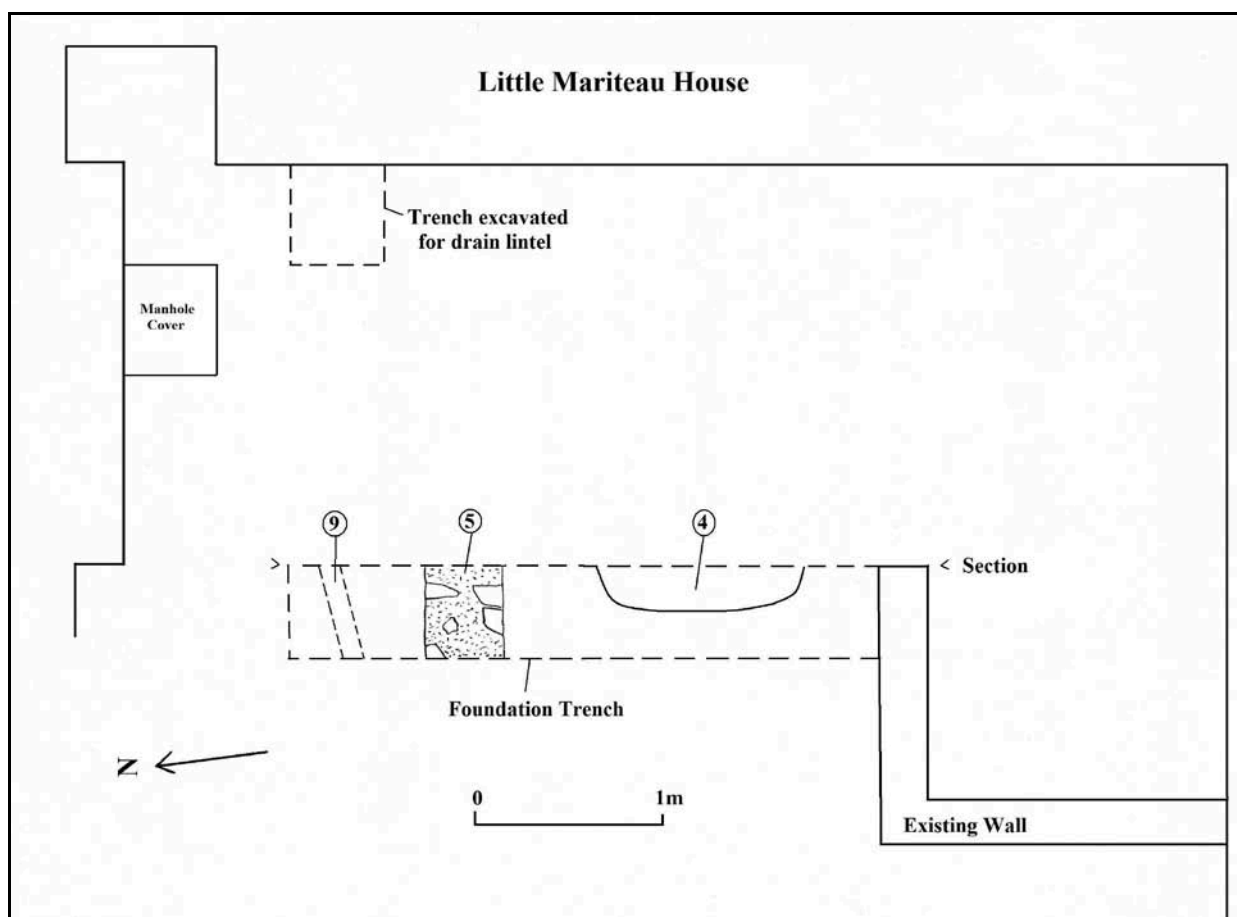


Fig. 3: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Site Plan

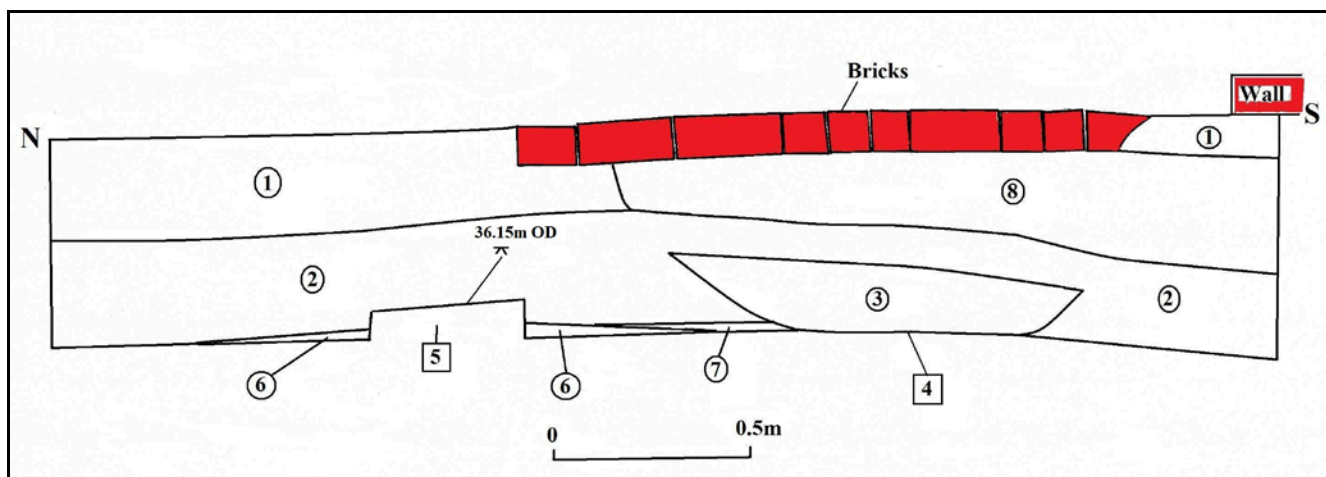


Fig. 4: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Section



Fig. 5: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Photograph of Section



Fig. 6: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Photograph of trench showing the wall



Fig. 7: Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea: Photograph of Wall (5)

HER Summary Form

Site Code	LMH09					
Identification Name and Address	Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea.					
County, District &/or Borough	Rother District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 90374 17275					
Geology	Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	ShallowX Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 16/9/09	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr & Mrs Evans					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIFA					
Project Supervisor	N/A					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED X	PM X	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Little Mariteau House, Winchelsea during groundworks involving a new conservatory.</i></p> <p><i>A wall comprising Tilgate Stone in a lime mortar was recorded running east-west across the trench, and although it was undated, its relationship with the underlying layer suggested it was of 13th to 14th century date. An associated demolition layer with 13th - 14th century CBM and 16th century pottery may provide a date for the demolition of this structure.</i></p>						

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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