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**An Archaeological Evaluation Excavation
at
2 Sackville Road,
Eastbourne, East Sussex
EB/2010/0559**

Project Number: CBAS0168

TQ 56084 10267

by
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Summary

An evaluation test pit was excavated at 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, in response to an application for planning permission to construct a new house in the garden of the existing property. The site is located within the purported bounds of a Deserted Medieval Village and port known as the Hydneye and is geologically similar to significant Bronze Age sites discovered within the surrounding marshes.

The topsoil was littered with late 20th century building rubble that overlay layers of calcareous material and clays and peat. Within the water-logged peat layer a few off-cuts of tanned leather were discovered, which although un-dateable represent a potentially significant archaeological discovery.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Peter Lutterer on behalf of Mr Belsey (The Client) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority required a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken prior to a decision being made on the planning application for the erection of an attached dwelling to the side of 2 Sackville Road, including conservatory at rear and parking space to front, and formation of new vehicular access and parking space in front of the existing house (EB/2010/0559).
- 1.3** 2 Sackville Road is located on the north-east side of Eastbourne, on the edge of the Willingdon Levels at approximately 4m OD, and is within the Archaeological Notification Area defining the site of Hydneye village (Fig. 2).
- 1.4** The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/334, is Gault Clay. The site is situated on a spur of Gault Clay and Lower Greensand, which projects out into the Alluvium of the Willingdon Levels.
- 1.5** The appropriate programme of archaeological work comprises an archaeological evaluation as specified by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council. This written scheme of investigation covers the evaluation, and has been prepared for submission to the local planning authority for approval.
- 1.6** The archaeological evaluation excavation was carried out on the 28th October 2010. The fieldwork was undertaken by the author and the project was managed by Chris Butler.

2.0 Archaeological & Historical background

- 2.1 Mesolithic and later flintwork has been found in the wider landscape¹, although not in the immediate vicinity of the site. As the site is situated at around the 5m contour it is possible that there will be discoveries of Mesolithic artefacts, especially as projecting areas of higher ground around the Levels appear to have been preferred sites for hunting camps.
- 2.2 The Willingdon Levels were also exploited throughout later prehistory, as evidenced by occasional finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint artefacts². An east-west aligned prehistoric timber trackway of unknown date (MES15463) was located to the south-east of the site in 2000³.
- 2.3 In 1995 a Late Bronze Age timber platform and associated trackway (MES7375) was discovered on Shinewater Marsh to the east of the site (Fig. 3). Copper-alloy artefacts, pottery, worked and burnt flint was recovered during the limited excavations⁴. This and other trackways/alignments (MES15463 & MES16119) hint at extensive activity in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 4).
- 2.4 Hydneye village (MES517) was a port attached to Hastings from early times although there is practically no significant documentary evidence and the site has been built over by housing development since 1940⁵. Turner maintained that the earliest reference was a deed of 1229 with further mentions in charters throughout the period 1235-60 and 1308⁶.
- 2.5 There was probably a small harbour here which silted up in the period 1250-1350 depriving the community of its livelihood. Turner⁷ referred to stones and foundations of walls which had been found on the site a few years before 1867.
- 2.6 None of the early Sussex maps (e.g. Speed 1610, Morden 1695) show Hydneye, whilst Yeakell & Gardiner's map of 1778-83 shows the area covered with fields⁸. The Tithe map shows no detail of the Hydneye earthworks.

¹ Butler, C. 2002 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **140**, 139-144.

² *Ibid.*

³ Greatorex, C. 2000 Archaeology South-East. no. 1228

⁴ Greatorex, C. 2003 Living on the Margins? The Late Bronze Age Landscape of the Willingdon Levels in Rudling, D. *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd

⁵ Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

⁶ Turner, E. 1867 'The Lost Towns of Northeye and Hydneye', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **19**, 1-35.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ <http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/sussex.html>

- 2.7** The 1st Edition OS map (1874) shows a complex of earthworks forming ‘*The site of Hydneye*’ (Fig. 5). The site is on the west side of the earthworks, but an east-west orientated ditch runs out of the earthworks and its projected line takes it through the site of 2 Sackville Road.
- 2.8** The 2nd (1899) and 3rd (1911) Edition OS maps show little change, although both show a circular mound to the south of the earthworks (MES8523). A community excavation led by Charles Goring, the Vicar, in c. 2005 in the garden of the rectory in the area of the mound recorded a ditch 60cm wide and at least 40cm deep. Romano-British and medieval pottery was also recovered from this excavation.
- 2.9** By the 1940’s the area of both the site and Hydneye had been built over, with a 1947 aerial photograph showing the housing developments that had sprung up by this time.
- 2.10** A number of archaeological events have taken place around the site, most associated with the Bronze Age platform and trackways at Shinewater (e.g. EES14056). An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the construction of a single storey extension at 28 Court Road, a short distance to the south-east of the site in 2004 (EES14026). No archaeological features or artefacts were discovered.
- 2.11** Monuments on the HER (See Fig. 3)

HER Ref.	Name	NGR	Period
MES517	Hydneye village	TQ 612 025	Medieval
MES644	Hampden Park Railway Station	TQ 607 021	19 th century
MES652	Cemetery	TQ 610 028	Saxon
MES7032	Wind pump	TQ 6119 0232	19 th century
MES7033	Wind pump	TQ 613 025	20 th century
MES7375	Timber trackway & platform	TQ 61458 02949	Bronze Age
MES8523	Possible Barrow	TQ 60990 02527	Bronze Age
MES15463	Timber trackway	TQ 6145 0250	Prehistoric
MES16119	Timber causeway	TQ 6136 0304	Bronze Age

3.0 Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** A single evaluation test pit was located in the area of the proposed new conservatory, at the north end of the site, by the existing garage (See Fig. 7). The test pit had been sited and marked out on arrival.
- 3.2** The area was scanned with a Garrett ACE 250 metal detector prior to excavation, and the spoil heap and excavated surface were regularly scanned thereafter.
- 3.3** The evaluation test pit measured 1m x 1m and was excavated by hand in careful spits to a depth of between 1.15m and 1.2m (Fig. 8). A further 550mm depth was then investigated in the centre of the test pit by hand auger using an Edelman auger head.
- 3.4** No archaeological features were discovered within the test pit.
- 3.5** A very small number of artefacts recovered from the test pit were bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the *United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines No 2*.
- 3.6** A temporary benchmark (TBM) was established on the right-hand gatepost on the pavement at the front of the existing house, and the section was levelled to this TBM.
- 3.7** All archaeological deposits and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour Chart.
- 3.8** A test pit location plan was drawn at a scale of 1:200 and a north facing section plan was drawn at a scale of 1:10.
- 3.9** A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive.

4.0 Results

- 4.1 A total of eight contexts were discovered within the confines of the test pit during the evaluation excavation (Figs. 8 & 9).
- 4.2 Across the entire trench was a layer of turf line and topsoil (Context 1) varying in depth from 30-110mm. Context 1 was a firm, mid-brown sandy loam containing 4% roots and 1% flint pebbles ranging in size from 30-110mm.
- 4.3 Below the turfline was a layer of firm, mid grey-brown, silty loam (Context 2) varying in depth from 390-500mm. Context 2 contained 2% flint pebbles measuring between 10-32mm; 1% chalk fragments ranging from 3-50mm and 3% flint nodules measuring 30-150mm. This was a very disturbed garden soil filled with late 20th century building rubble – paving slabs, bricks and concrete. A single penny was located within this context dating to 1986.
- 4.4 Below the silty loam, was a spread of compact, ivory-coloured, calcareous clay (Context 3) up to 300mm deep. Context 3 contained 1% inclusions of flint pebbles at 11-29mm. A very large flint nodule was present in the western baulk within this layer measuring approximately 330-215mm across; length unknown.
- 4.5 Within the calcareous layer, a thin spread of small flint pebbles (Context 4) was present in the eastern baulk of the test pit. Though no service cable or pipe was detected within the fine gravel, the layer appeared to be related to services running from the existing house.
- 4.6 Below the calcareous clay layer was a thin spread of compact, ferruginous, silty clay (Context 5), up to 150mm deep, which contained no inclusions.
- 4.7 Directly below the ferruginous clay was a compact, teal-blue coloured, silty clay, without natural inclusions (Context 6), which contained a single oyster shell. The current water table sits within this context at 1.09m below the surface level. Context 6 was excavated by hand to a depth of 115mm at the north of the trench, before the rising water made it unviable to continue with the excavation. A further 250mm of this context was investigated by auger at the approximate centre of the trench.
- 4.8 The remaining contexts were only investigated by augering. Below the teal-blue clay was a layer of fine, black, sticky, peat-like soil (Context 7), which was 100mm deep. Within Context 7 a few off-cuts of waterlogged leather strips were discovered along with a clump of roots and leaf veins.

- 4.9** The top of Context 7 appeared to have a hard upper surface which gave some resistance to the auger; but the auger broke through this and it is possible that the leather came from, or formed, this hard surface.
- 4.10** Below the peat-like soil was a firm, black and grey-mottled silty clay (Context 8) which was augered to a depth of 200mm. A few root strands were present within this context, but no other inclusions were noted.
- 4.11** No other archaeological contexts were noted during the evaluation.

5.0 The Finds

- 5.1** None of the late 20th century ceramic building material and building debris from Contexts **1** and **2** was retained for analysis, as it was deemed to be unimportant in establishing the archaeological nature of the site, probably being associated with the construction of the adjacent houses.
- 5.2** A single penny dating to 1986 (QEII; One Pence) was recovered from Context **2**, indicating a late date for the entire context.
- 5.3** A single, well preserved oyster shell was discovered within the teal-blue clay of Context **6**, no dateable material was recovered within the test pit to establish a date for this context.
- 5.4** Within waterlogged Context **7**, five strips of tanned leather off-cuts were recovered with the auger, and were identified by Lawrence Stevens. The strips range from between 46-76mm in length and have visible cut marks along the sides. Three of the five strips have pointed ends. The leather appears to be black. It is not known what purpose the leather strips may have served, though it seems likely that they are un-used pieces left over from the production of a larger leather item⁹. It is likely that these leather strips have only survived due to the waterlogged, anaerobic conditions of the peat-like clay in which they were found.

⁹ Lawrence Stevens: pers. comm.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1** The garden soil within the test pit had been severely disturbed during earlier building works and contained a large proportion of late 20th century building material. No other dateable items were recovered from the test pit.
- 6.2** Although no discreet archaeological features were discovered within the confines of the test pit, the presence of well-preserved leather strips within the waterlogged layers found by augering, indicate the presence of a potentially significant waterlogged archaeological site.
- 6.3** Although the leather pieces cannot be dated with any certainty, they do demonstrate the presence of human activity and a well preserved waterlogged deposit. Given the presence of the Medieval site of Hydneye, and the significant Bronze Age remains at Shinewater, it is very likely that the leather has derived from a preserved archaeological site, which is likely to be of local, regional and national importance.

7.0 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Peter Lutterer and Mr. Belsey for commissioning this evaluation and for providing a labourer for the excavation. Thanks are also extended to the owners of 2 Sackville Road for their patience and assistance and to Sid Eyre for his enthusiasm and help with the metal detecting. The project was managed by Chris Butler for CBAS and monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter.

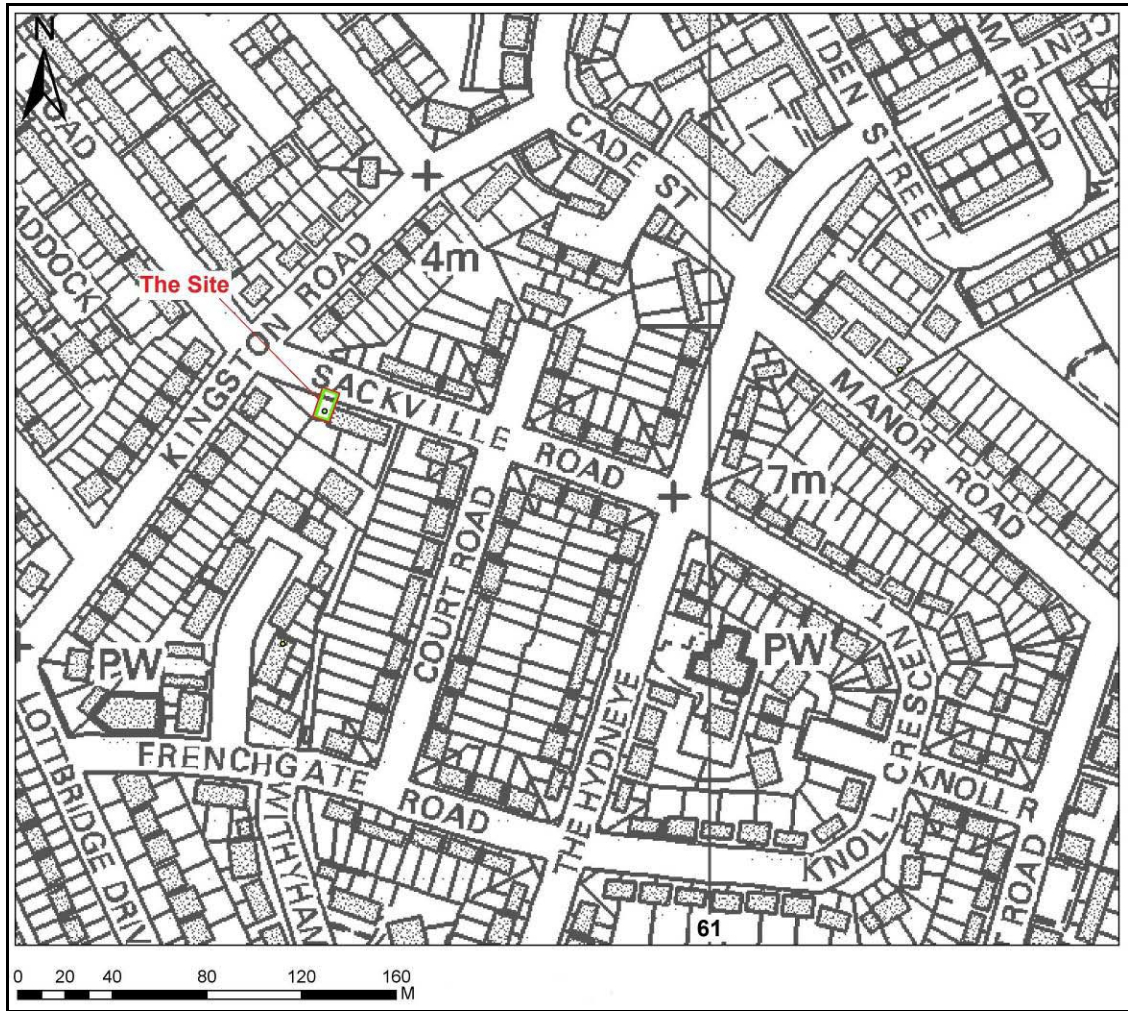


Fig. 1: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Site Location
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)
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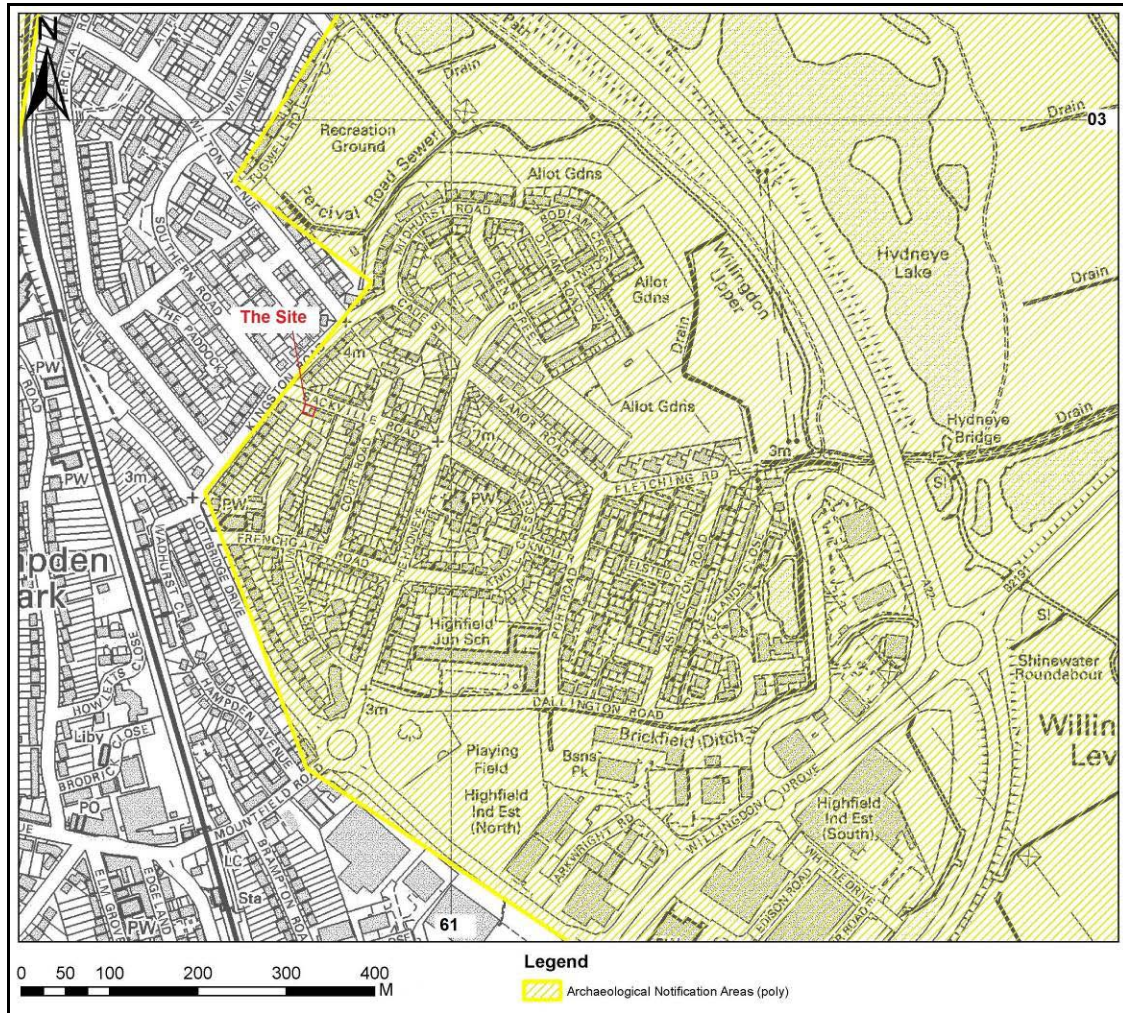


Fig. 2: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Site Location & Archaeological Notification Area
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

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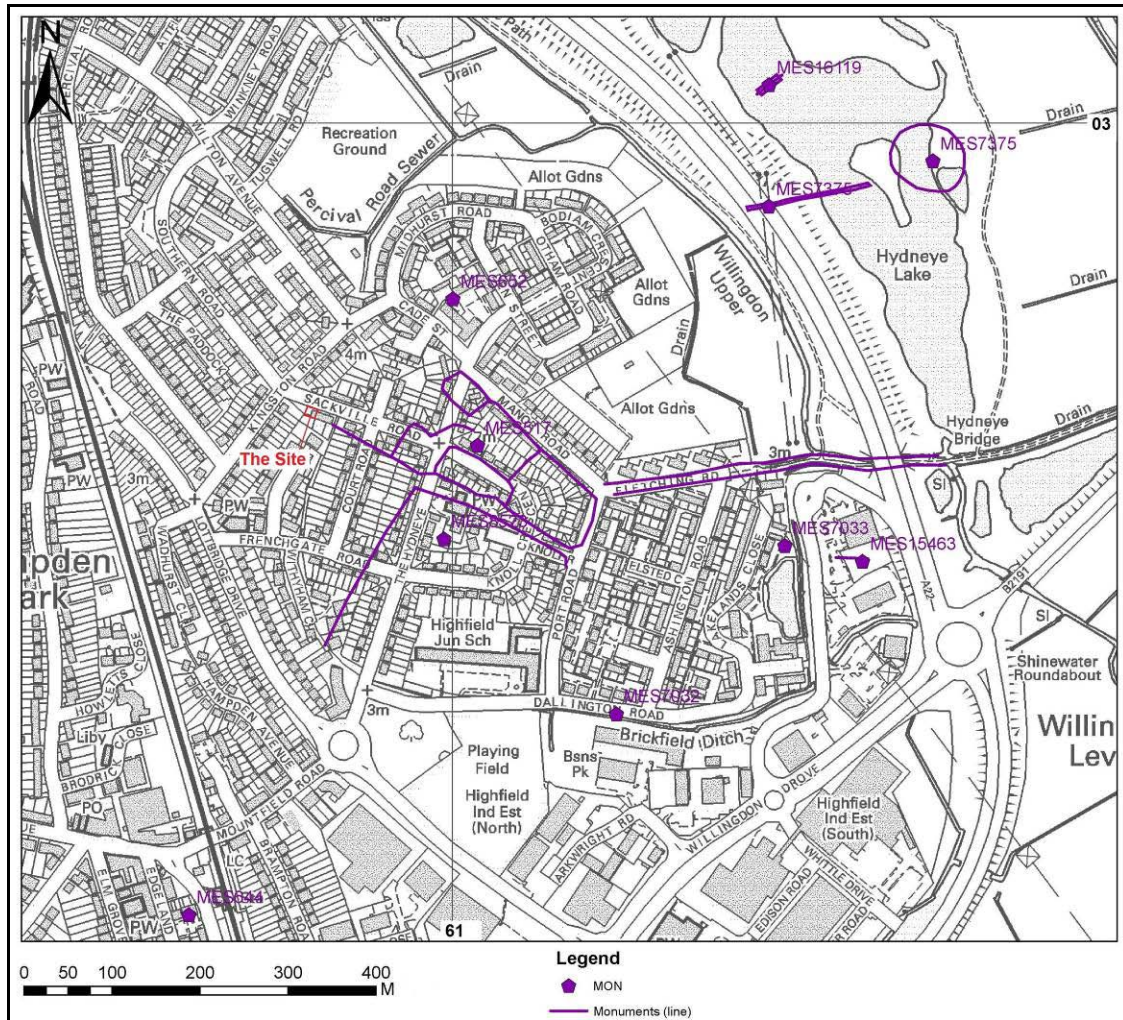


Fig. 3: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Site Location & monuments on the HER
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)
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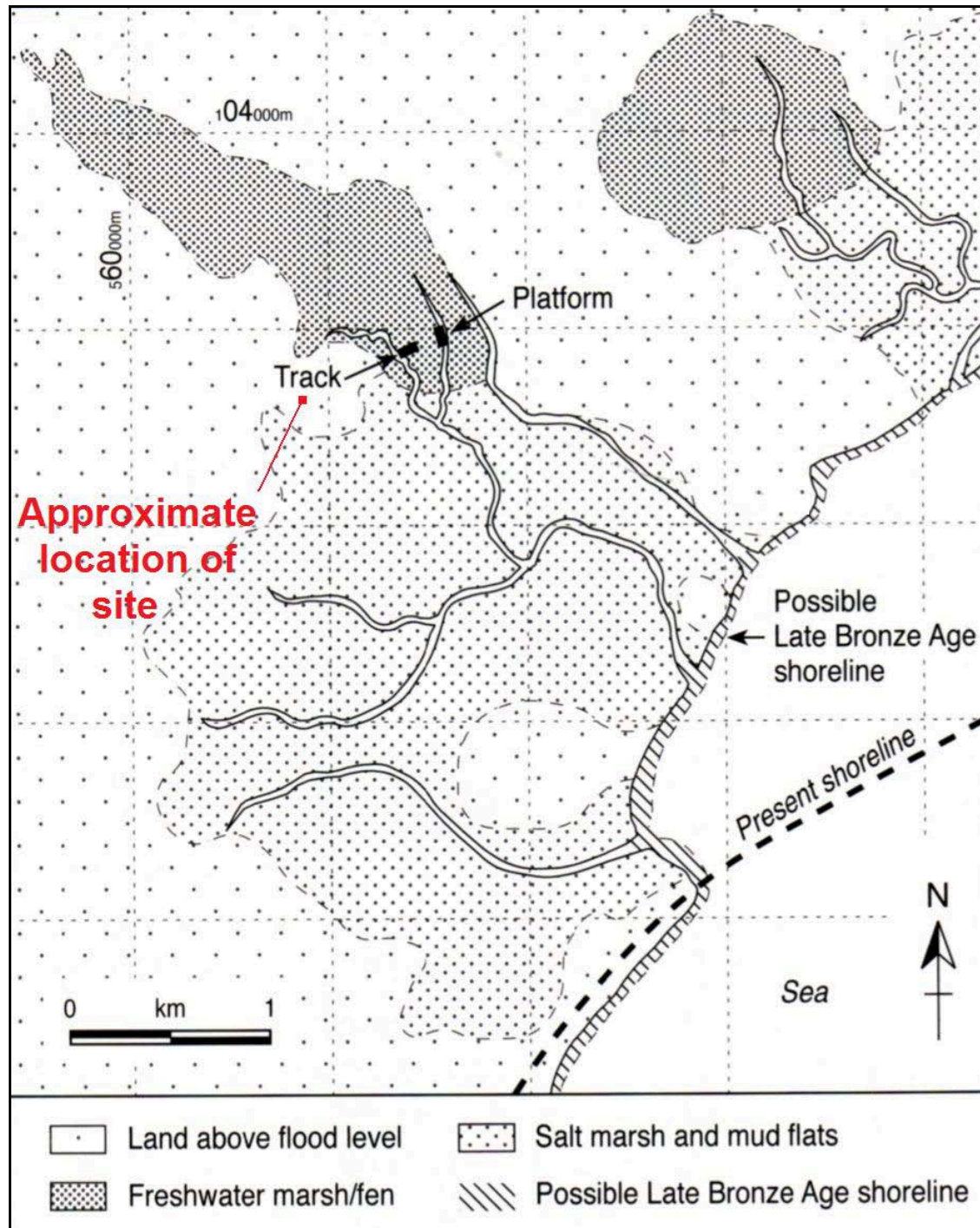


Fig. 4: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Later Bronze Age environment
(Adapted from Greatorex 2003)

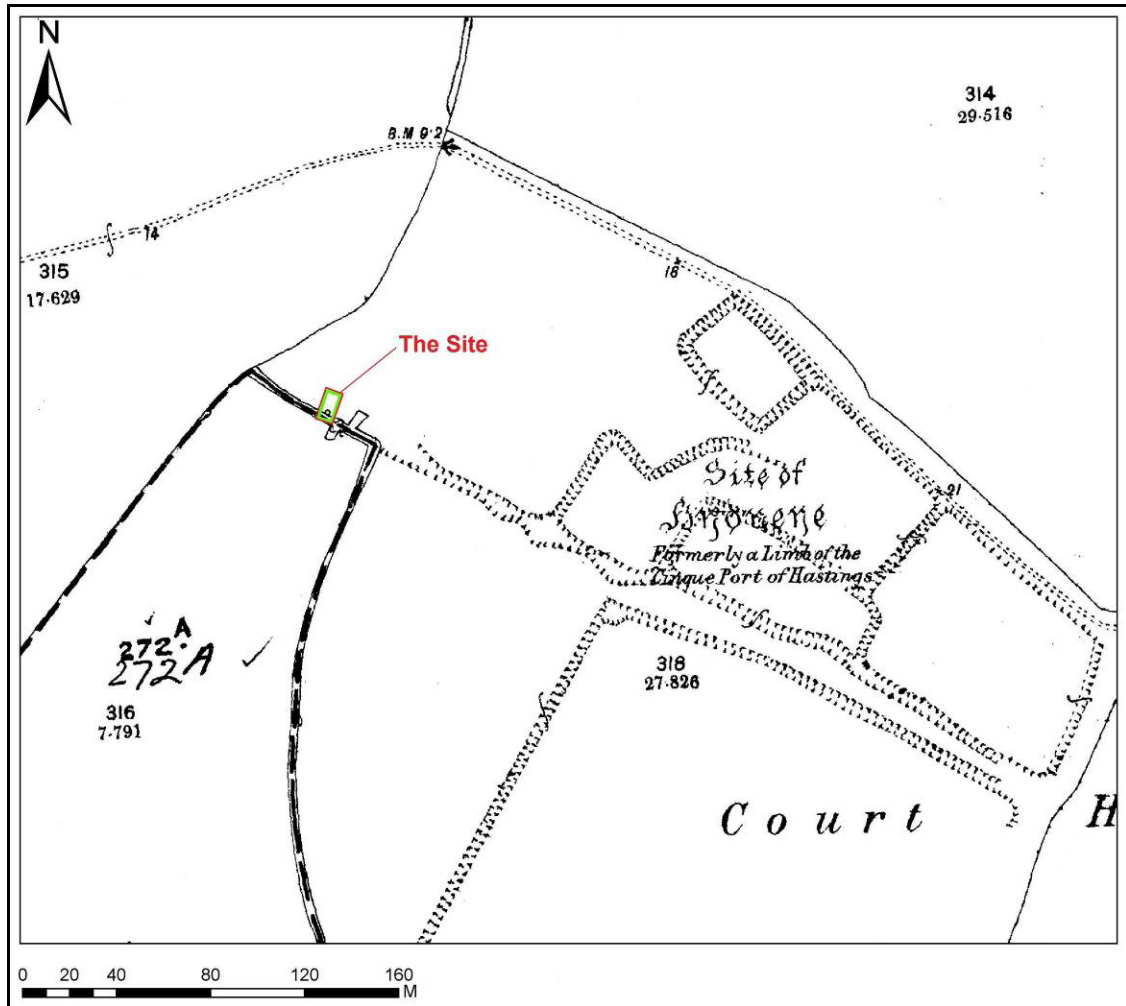


Fig. 5: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: 1st Edition OS Map (1874)
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

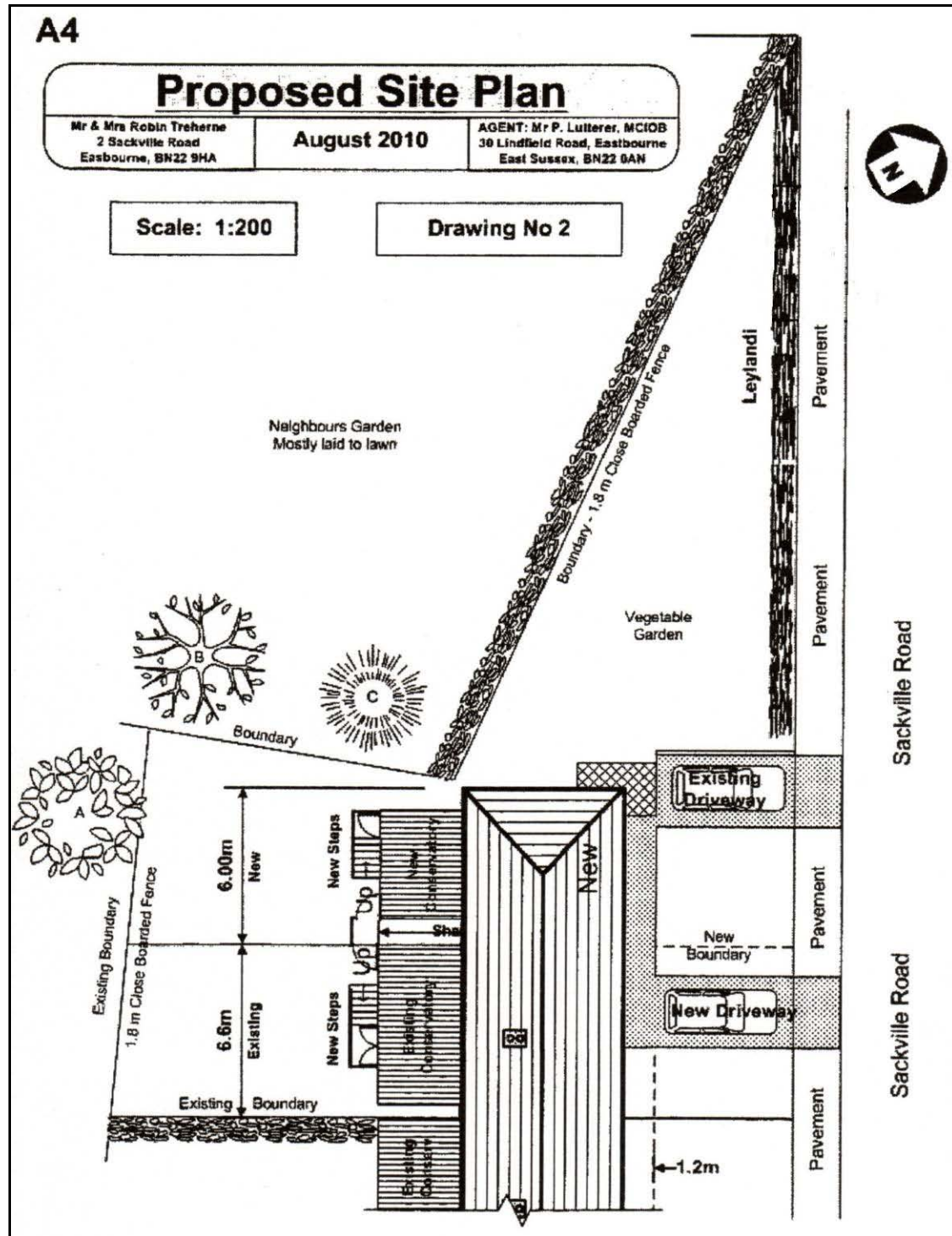


Fig. 6: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Development Plan
(Adapted from architects drawing)

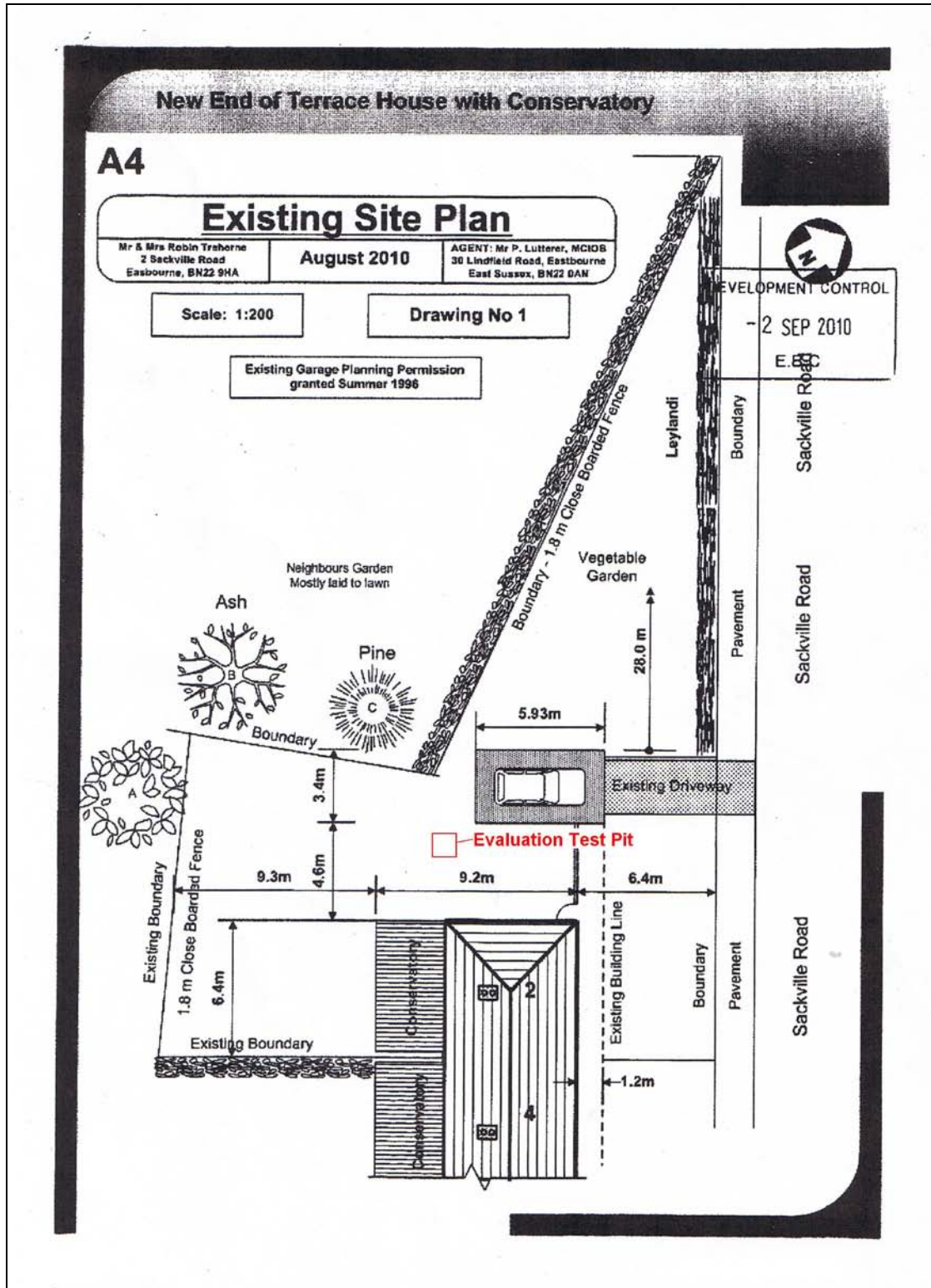


Fig. 7: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Test Pit Location Plan

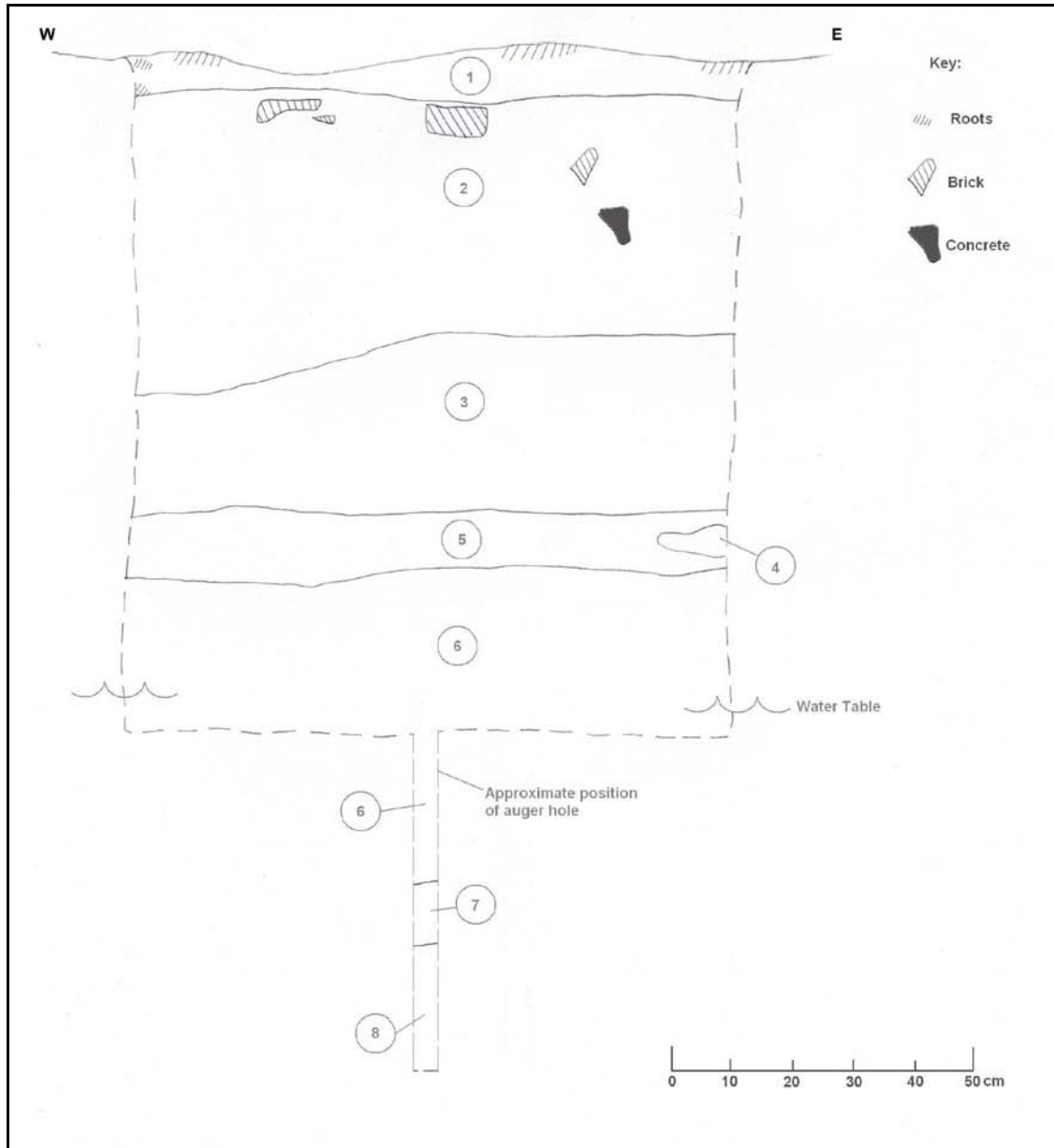


Fig. 8: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Test Pit Section Plan



Fig. 9: 2 Sackville Road, Eastbourne: Photograph of Test Pit
Section Plan

Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd

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, and a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society. He is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and teaches A-Level Archaeology at Bexhill 6th Form College having qualified (Cert. Ed.) as a teacher in 2006. 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 recently undertaken large landscape surveys of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren and is Co-Director of the Barcombe Roman Villa excavation project.

His publications include *Prehistoric Flintwork*, *East Sussex Under Attack* and *West Sussex Under Attack*, all of which are published by Tempus Publishing Ltd.

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

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