



**Chris Butler MfA
Archaeological Services Ltd**



**A Desk-based Assessment
at
Bridge Point,
Rock Channel,
Rye, East Sussex**

Project No. CBAS0385

By
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Summary

An archaeological Desk-based Assessment has been carried out at Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye, East Sussex in connection with a pre-planning application for the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings on the site and the construction of four or five new residential units.

The Desk-based Assessment has established that the Site was reclaimed from marshland or mudflats in perhaps the 18th century. The land in the vicinity of the Site had a road running through it to meet the Winchelsea road on the opposite south bank of the River Brede. Bridge Point presumably takes its name from this bridge, which was replaced with another further upstream in the early 19th century. The road may have continued in use in a degenerate form until the Site was first built upon in around the 1930's. Bridge Point cottage was built by the early 1960's.

The Site has a high potential for containing Post Medieval remains, which may survive well in those areas of the Site that have not been built upon but are proposed for development.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd has been commissioned by Jonathan Dunn Architects Ltd to carry out an archaeological Desk-based Assessment at Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye, East Sussex, in order to establish the likely presence and importance of any archaeological remains that may be affected by the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings on the site and the construction of four or five new residential units.
- 1.2 The Site is a sub-rectangular plot sited to the south of Rye town centre and the South Undercliff (the A259), centred at TQ 91972 20021 (Fig. 1). It is located on a strip of land defined by Rock Channel to the east and the Rivers Tillingham and Brede to the west and south respectively. The buildings of Bridge Point Moorings stand to the north of the Site. Its moorings are located to the west of the Site behind a banked sea wall and are accessed from the open land to the south.
- 1.3 The Site stands on former marshland, at a height of *c.*5m OD, and is overlooked to the north by the hill on which Rye sits. Low-lying marsh lies beyond the Rivers Tillingham, Brede and Rother, which enclose the hill to every side but the north.
- 1.4 According to the British Geological Survey¹, the geology of the Site comprises the sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of the Ashdown Formation, overlaid by the clay and mud of the Tidal Flat Deposits. The similarly composed Hastings Beds outcrop in a narrow band to the south of the Site between Rock Channel and the River Brede. They are capped with Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits.
- 1.5 The Site lies outside the Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that covers the medieval and Post Medieval Cinque Port town of Rye (Fig. 2). The only other ANA located close to the Site is that for a scheduled early 19th century Martello Tower, which stands *c.*130m to its southwest. Further Scheduled Monuments are located on the hill and comprise the medieval remains of the town defences and an Augustinian chapel, as well as an 18th century water tower.
- 1.6 The Site stands outside Rye Conservation Area, which only extends up to the South Undercliff. The nearest Listed Building to the Site is the 18th century farmhouse of Willow Tree House (formerly Western House; Grade II Listed), which stands opposite the Site, on the other side of the River Tillingham but behind a single-storey building on Winchelsea Road (the A259). The Martello Tower is also a Listed Building (Grade II). The Site is overlooked by the Grade II Listed Buildings that stand along Watchbell Street. The Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Rye² excludes the land beyond the South Undercliff.

¹ http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

² Harris, R.B. 2009. *Rye: Historic Character Assessment Report*. Sussex Extensive Urban Survey.

- 1.7** This Desk-based Assessment initially covers the objectives and scope of the report, then discusses the methodology used in the survey, followed by a review of the archaeological and historical assets of the immediate area. Before a conclusion is drawn together, former impacts upon any potential archaeology within the Site are assessed, as is the possible archaeological impact of the proposed development.

2. Objectives & Scope of Report

- 2.1** The objective of this report is to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource of the Site and its immediate area. This will include information relating to the presence or absence of any archaeology, its character, extent, date, integrity and state of preservation, and the relative quality of the potential archaeological resource.
- 2.2** This will allow an assessment of the merit of the archaeology in context to be made, leading to the formulation of a strategy for the recording, preservation and management of the resource or, where necessary, the formulation of a strategy for further investigation where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be defined.
- 2.3** The report will consider the archaeological resource within a radius of 500m around the Site centre (hereafter, called the Study Area). However, due to the great number of Listed Buildings sited within the Study Area, the assessment will only be concerned with those buildings (Listed or otherwise) that stand within a 150m radius and therefore below the hill.
- 2.4** It should be noted that this report can only take into account the existing known archaeology, and by its nature cannot provide a complete record of the archaeological resource of the Site. Its intention is to provide an overview of the known archaeology in the area of the Site, from which judgements can be made about the potential archaeological resource of the Site itself.

3. Methodology

3.1 This Desk-based Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012); the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (Institute for Archaeologists 2012); and the *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post Excavation Work in East Sussex* (ESCC 2008).

3.2 The research for this Desk-based Assessment has included an analysis of the following resources:

- ESCC Historic Environment Record (Ref: 068/13)
- PastScape (formerly part of the National Monuments Record or NMR)
- The National Heritage List for England (a list of all nationally designated heritage assets)
- Portable Antiquities Scheme database
- Defence of Britain database
- Historic mapping
- Library resources (personal and public)
- British Geological Survey

3.3 The following maps were used:

- John Prowze's 1572 map of Rye Harbour (PRO MPF 212)
- Late 16th century plan of Rye (TNA MPF 1/3)
- Speed (1610; not informative)
- Morden (1695; not informative)
- 1728 copy of Jeake's 1667 town map (ESRO Rye 132/15; not informative)
- Bowen (1756; not informative)
- Kitchen (1750 and 1763; not informative)
- Base map of Rye and its environs in 1771
- Yeakell and Gardner (1778-1783)
- Cole (1808; not informative)
- Moule (1837; not informative)
- Dugdale (1840; not informative)
- Creighton (c.1835)
- Detail from Sherrard and Hall's 1840 map of Rye Harbour
- 1st Edition OS map (1872-1874)
- 2nd Edition OS map (1898)
- 3rd Edition OS map (1909)
- 4th Edition OS map (1929)
- Later OS Maps

Information gained from the map regression exercise is contained in the Post Medieval section below.

- 3.4** The Monuments recorded on the HER are listed in Appendix 1 to this report and are mentioned in the text where relevant. They are shown on Fig. 3. Historical and other sources are given as footnotes as appropriate.
- 3.5** A site visit was undertaken on 9th May 2013 (Fig. 1). Bridge Point cottage has clearly been derelict for several years. Little of the Site can be seen from Rock Channel, as the hedge to the property is overgrown. Bridge Point has two access gates sited beside each other at the northeast corner of the cottage.
- 3.6** One gate has a paved path that leads south between an overgrown lawn and flower bed to a raised central door in the east side of the cottage, which is reached by a ramp. The cottage has plastered walls of brick construction (Cover Plate and Plate 1). It is a considerably long building but its one chimney may suggest that it originated as just one residence. The cottage has undergone recent renovation having been re-roofed and had a PVC conservatory built and a PVC door and double-glazed windows fitted.
- 3.7** A single-storey extension (Cover Plate) stands against the southeast corner of the cottage. It is built of plastered concrete and has an outside door that is accessed up steps from a small area of paving beside the conservatory.
- 3.8** A paved path runs around the extension and past the southeast corner of the garden, which is partitioned with bushes and trellising. The narrow strip of land behind the cottage was inaccessible. A lamp-post stands at the northeast corner of the garden (Plate 2). Its post is covered in vegetation so that only the old fashioned casing of the light itself can be seen.



Plate 1 (left): The cottage, looking northwest
Plate 2 (right): The lamp-post, looking northeast

3.9 The double gate to the property gives entry to the north end of the premises. This area comprises a yard with a wooden shed and a small lawn with a paved path that leads to a corrugated garage (Plates 3 and 4). The main doors to the garage face Rock Channel. The cottage has a wooden door fronting the yard. A gate beside the cottage provides access to a footpath that runs alongside the building up to the ramp for the PVC door.

3.10 A bank with a fence bounds the west side of the Site. It is part of the sea defences, which comprise a sea wall flanked on both sides with a bank (Plate 5). The Site is overlooked to the north by the buildings that stand on Watchbell Street along the top of the southcliffe.



Plate 3: Cottage, yard and shed,
looking south



Plate 4: Lawn and garage,
looking north



Plate 5: Sea defences and moorings behind the
Site with the former warehouses of the quayside
in the background, looking north

4. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 4.0.1 This section considers each archaeological period in turn, reviewing the known archaeological resource of the Study Area, defining its location and extent, character, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality.
- 4.0.2 According to the HER (see Appendix 2), no archaeological fieldwork has occurred below the south cliffs of the hill. A small evaluation excavation did, however, take place at Wish Street, to the immediate west of the hill, in 2002 (EES13967)³. Historic mapping suggests that this site lay within the margins of the river until the 18th century. This may explain the thick layers of hardcore recorded overlying a former garden / orchard soil and the absence of archaeological features other than a wall footing that can be identified from a map of 1859.
- 4.0.3 A watching brief undertaken in 2007 during groundworks for new school buildings to the north of the hill, just outside the Study Area, revealed similar findings⁴. The artefacts mostly dated to the 18th - 20th centuries and several 19th and 20th century deposits probably related to the use of the site as allotments. A grey clay deposit is likely to have represented a drainage ditch shown on historic maps between 1841 and 1929.
- 4.0.4 To date, no archaeological remains predating the medieval period have been discovered within the Study Area, other than a few reused pieces of Roman tile found during a watching brief at The Mint House (EES14718) and the Roman pottery recovered from the spoil of foundations excavated at The Monastery on Conduit Street (EES14240).
- 4.0.5 The review of each period will also bring in evidence from a wider area, especially where there is little known archaeological evidence locally. This will enable a more accurate judgement to be made about the archaeological potential of the Site. This evidence will include that taken from similar landscapes and geologies.

³ James, R. 2002. *An Archaeological Evaluation at Blackman's Yard, Wish Street, Rye, East Sussex*. Unpublished ASE Report.

⁴ Hawtin, T. 2008. *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Rye Primary School, Love Lane, Rye, East Sussex*. ASE Report No. 2008130.

4.1 *Palaeolithic Period (750,000BC to 10,000BC)*

- 4.1.1 This period covers a huge expanse of time, during which early hominid occupation of Southern Britain was intermittent. The period is divided into warm and cold periods, with the evidence suggesting that hominid occupation occurred during some of the warm periods. Apart from a small number of exceptional sites (e.g. Boxgrove), most of the evidence for human activity in this period comes from isolated finds of stone tools, often in secondary deposits.
- 4.1.2 No Palaeolithic flintwork has been recovered from Rye. A Lower Palaeolithic axe and a scrapper were discovered at two sites in Playden to the north of Rye whilst a Palaeolithic axe was found further to the north in Iden⁵.
- 4.1.3 On the basis of the artefactual evidence, there is a very low likelihood of finding Palaeolithic material at the Site.

4.2 *Mesolithic Period (10,000BC to 4,000BC)*

- 4.2.1 The start of the Mesolithic period saw Britain largely covered by pine and birch woodland, which was gradually replaced by a mixed deciduous woodland that provided an ideal environment for the bands of hunter-gatherers who exploited the resources on a seasonal basis⁶.
- 4.2.2 There are no known Mesolithic finds from Rye. A Mesolithic borer was discovered in Playden whilst the shell middens from this village, the flintwork found near Secret Wood to its west and the flints from Haughton Wood to its north are Mesolithic / Neolithic in date⁷. The flintwork recovered from early 20th century excavations close to Mockbeggar House, just to the north of Playden, may also be Mesolithic in date.
- 4.2.3 The absence of Mesolithic finds from Rye would suggest that the Site is very unlikely to contain Mesolithic artefacts or features.

⁵ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

⁶ Holgate, R. 2003. 'Late Glacial and Post-glacial Hunter-gatherers in Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*. Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, 29-38.

⁷ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

4.3 *Neolithic Period (4,000BC to 2,500BC)*

- 4.3.1 A number of changes occurred during the Neolithic, with environmental evidence from elsewhere suggesting that some woodland was being cleared for small-scale agricultural activities.
- 4.3.2 Other changes in the earlier part of the Neolithic period include the construction of large-scale monuments and the first industrial activity. However, all causewayed enclosures, burial mounds and flint mines in Sussex are sited on the South Downs⁸, so suggesting that the Neolithic population tended to settle in the river valleys or on the Coastal Plain or adjacent Weald.
- 4.3.3 Part of a prehistoric flint sickle was found at Rye (MES2185)⁹. Playden has two findspots of definite Neolithic date; a single arrowhead represents one findspot whilst the other comprises flintwork that includes an arrowhead and borer. An excavated settlement near Mockbeggar House, to the north of Playden, dates to the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age and consists of a ring ditch and a nearby rectangular enclosure (MES2164)¹⁰.
- 4.3.4 With only one probable Neolithic artefact from Rye, there is a very low possibility that Neolithic finds will be recovered from the Site. If discovered, they are likely to be chance discoveries that represent casual exploitation of the landscape.

4.4 *The Bronze Age (2500BC to 800BC)*

- 4.4.1 There is no archaeological representation of the Bronze Age in Rye. A curvilinear enclosure and possible round barrow (MES2291) are sited between Playden and the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age settlement (MES2164) to its north¹¹. They were first identified as grassmarks in 1979 and are believed to be Bronze Age in date. A Bronze Age pin (MES7203) was found to the east of Rye on Camber Sands.
- 4.4.2 With no finds or features to even imply the exploitation of Rye in the Bronze Age, it is very doubtful that groundwork at the Site will uncover material of this date.

⁸ Peter, D. 1999. 'First Farming Communities and Communal Monuments, in Leslie, K. and Short, B. (Eds) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*. Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 16-17.

⁹ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

¹⁰ Woodcock, A. 1988. 'Gazetteer of Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon Sites in Romney Marsh and the surrounding area' in Eddison, J. and Green, C. (Eds), *Romney Marsh: Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation*. OUCA Monograph **24**, 177-185.

¹¹ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

4.5 *The Iron Age (800BC to 43AD)*

- 4.5.1 One major feature of the Iron Age is the hillfort, of which 20 are known from Sussex. Many of these appear to have originated in the Late Bronze Age, with some having become important centres of control and redistribution in the Middle and Late Iron Age. There are no extant hillforts in Sussex east of Belle Tout near Eastbourne, although Castle Hill and East Hill at Hastings may have held hilltop enclosures¹².
- 4.5.2 At Playden, an excavation recorded a wooden stake of possible Iron Age date whilst an Iron Age silver coin was found nearby as a surface find in 2006¹³.
- 4.5.3 On considering the absence of Iron Age remnants from Rye, the Site is very unlikely to produce deposits of this date.

4.6 *The Roman Period (43AD to 410AD)*

- 4.6.1 In the early Roman period (1st to 3rd centuries BC), the whole of 'Romney Marsh' appears to have been an intertidal wetland exploited for its rich natural resources, including the production of salt¹⁴. The Site would have been situated on the marsh, overlooked by Rye on its hilltop location.
- 4.6.2 At Playden, a concentration of scattered building material and finds (including MES2292) strongly implies the presence of a Roman villa (MES2183) located between the A268 and the Military Road¹⁵. From the date of the pottery and coins, this area appears to have witnessed activity throughout the Roman period.
- 4.6.3 Evidence of a Roman presence at Rye is, on the other hand, almost negligible. One or more Roman coins (MES2186) have been discovered within the town¹⁶. A watching brief (EES14718) during groundworks at The Mint House in 2010 found a few pieces of Roman tile within a thick medieval layer¹⁷. Although these residual finds are likely

¹² Hamilton, S. and Manley, J. 1999. 'Regional Traditions c.1000-100BC', in Leslie, K. and Short, B. (Eds) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*. Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 20-21.

¹³ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

¹⁴ Rippon, S. 2002. 'Romney Marsh: evolution of the historic landscape and its wider significance', in Long, A. Hipkin, S. and Clarke, H. (Eds), *Romney Marsh: Coastal and Landscape Change through the Ages*. OUCA Monograph **56**, 84-100.

¹⁵ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

¹⁶ Tyler, A. 2011. Romney Marsh and the Western River Valleys: An Archaeological Gazetteer. The Romney Marsh Research Trust. Source: <http://www.redcourt.dsl.pipex.com/gazetteer.pdf>

¹⁷ Butler, C. 2010. *An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Mint House, Rye, East Sussex*. CBAS0097

to have been re-used, they may not have travelled very far from their original location. The only other Roman artefacts from Rye are the pottery sherds that were recovered from groundworks at The Monastery on Conduit Street in 1989 (EES14240).

- 4.6.4 The archaeological record suggests that Rye's marginal setting during the Roman period was not favourable for occupation. There is a very low likelihood of finding Roman remains at the Site as it would have been located on marshland.

4.7 *The Saxon Period (410AD to 1066AD)*

- 4.7.1 Rye may have been a Saxon burh (MES5899) in the late 9th / early 10th century as it is one of several possible locations for Eorpeburnham. This fortified town is the fifth smallest of the 33 burhs listed in the Burghal Hideage. Rye was identified as a candidate on the basis of its Burghal Hideage assessment, length of medieval walling and the Saxon Chronicle accounts for the year 892.

- 4.7.2 There is, however, no archaeological evidence to substantiate the claim of a burh at Rye as the only Saxon find from the town is a silver coin of Edward the Confessor. Rye would have been a Hundred meeting place by this time¹⁸.

- 4.7.3 With just the one findspot, which may represent a casual loss, Rye was possibly still exploited rather than settled in Saxon times. There is a very low possibility of Saxon artefacts being recovered from the Site as it remained marshland throughout this period.

4.8 *The Medieval Period (1066AD to 1500AD)*

- 4.8.1 Rye was in existence by 1131 and possibly by 1086, although it was not mentioned by name in the Domesday Book¹⁹. Due to its excellent natural harbour, Rye prospered to become a member of the Cinque Port Confederacy by 1190²⁰. French raids on Rye led to its town walls being built from c.1329 onwards.

- 4.8.2 The main quay at Rye was initially to the east side of the town beyond the Landgate suburb but it moved to the west side when the East Strand was destroyed through inundation in the 14th century²¹. The Strand subsequently became the trading heart of the community. It had a market to its north whilst the suburb of Wish grew up further

¹⁸ Gardiner, M. 1999. 'Late Saxon Sussex c.650-1066', in Leslie, K. and Short, B. (Eds) *An Historical Atlas of Sussex*. Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 30-31.

¹⁹ Martin, D. and Martin, B. 2009. *Rye Rebuilt: Regeneration and Decline within a Sussex Port Town, 1350-1660*. Domtom Publishing Ltd.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

to the north on low-lying land sited between a sea wall and the tidal edge of the River Tillingham. The landing facilities to the east of the town nonetheless continued in use, with a new jetty having been built there in 1486.

- 4.8.3 Guildford Level to the immediate east of Rye was reclaimed by the late 15th century unlike the land to the south of the town²². The course of the River Tillingham has shifted over time²³ and so in the medieval period the river may have flowed closer to or further from the Site than at present, or possibly even through it. If on the tidal mudflats, the Site's location, facing the open estuary some distance away from the south cliffs of the hilltop, may have made it too unprotected and inaccessible for the mooring of boats. The Site has a low to moderate potential for producing medieval finds associated with, for instance, fishing (e.g. weights and hooks) and trade (e.g. pottery vessels and ballast), as items deliberately or accidentally cast overboard may survive in the tidal mudflats of the Site.

4.9 *The Post Medieval Period (1500AD to the Present Day)*

- 4.9.1 Rye continued to boom into the 1570's, due in part to the decline of Winchelsea. Its prosperity is shown on John Prowze's map of Rye harbour in 1572 (Fig. 4), which shows ships moored at the Strand, larger ships standing off in the bay and moored in The Camber and boats and barrels lying on the mud between the Rother and the town gate. A strip of land, labelled as 'the marsh between the shore and the land', curves around the south side of Rye between two water channels, one of which runs alongside the south cliffs beneath the Gun Garden (MES19857). The Site may be located on this marsh. A plan of Rye in the late 16th century does not show the full extent of the waterways to the south of the town, making an interpretation of this area difficult.
- 4.9.2 The silting up of the harbour resulted in the decline of Rye's fortunes in the late 16th and 17th centuries. This downturn is reflected in the size of its population, which declined from some 5,000 people between 1550 and 1570 to about 1,500 people in 1600²⁴.
- 4.9.3 An outline plan based upon Jeake's map of Rye in 1667²⁵ labels the area below the south cliffs as 'Tidal flats flanking River Brede'. A base map of the town and its immediate environs in 1771²⁶ (Fig. 5) shows the north water channel to have meandered to meet that to its south (i.e. Brede), leaving a pocket of land cut off to the

²² Rippon, S. 2002. 'Romney Marsh: evolution of the historic landscape and its wider significance', in Long, A. Hipkin, S. and Clarke, H. (Eds), *Romney Marsh: Coastal and Landscape Change through the Ages*. OUCA Monograph **56**, 84-100.

²³ Martin, D. and Martin. B. 2009. *Rye Rebuilt: Regeneration and Decline within a Sussex Port Town, 1350-1660*. Domtom Publishing Ltd.

²⁴ Mayhew, G. 1987. *Tudor Rye*. Falmer: CCE, University of Sussex.

²⁵ Martin, D. and Martin. B. 2009. *Rye Rebuilt: Regeneration and Decline within a Sussex Port Town, 1350-1660*. Domtom Publishing Ltd.

²⁶ *Ibid*

west and east. A track is shown to lead south from the Strand to cross a bridge, the west pocket of land and then a second bridge to the east of where the Rivers Tillingham and Brede meet. The north stretch of this track is likely to represent the beginnings of Rock Channel. The Site may have been sited to the west of the track or even partly over it. Bridge Point cottage is likely to have taken its name from the south bridge.

- 4.9.4 In 1771, there were salt marshes to the west and east of Rye, along the River Tillingham and the new channel of the River Rother. St Mary's Marsh to the north of the Rye was drained by a series of ditches unlike the lands to the south of the town.
- 4.9.5 Yeakell and Gardner's map of 1778-1783²⁷ (Fig. 6) depicts a piece of land that projects from the Strand with the Rock Channel road and its south bridge but no remains of the north water channel and its bridge. The track continued south to flank the east side of the River Brede towards Winchelsea.
- 4.9.6 The coastline of East Sussex and Kent was defended during the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century by the construction of Martello Towers. Tower No. 30 (MES2203) was built c.130m to the southwest of the Site to defend the sluice of the Royal Military Canal (MES4112) and the sluices of the Rivers Brede and Tillingham (MES8456 and MES8469)²⁸. It stood beside the Royal Military Road, which was built as a more direct road to Winchelsea in 1804-1809.
- 4.9.7 Creighton's map of Rye in c.1835²⁹ shows no bridge across the Brede, to the east of the junction with the River Tillingham. Instead, there is a bridge over the Brede slightly further upstream, linking the Royal Military Road with the old Winchelsea road. Detail from an 1840 map of Rye harbour³⁰ shows the land to the east of the Site to have been drained into two areas, with part of the old north water channel having been used for the purpose.
- 4.9.8 The 1st Edition OS map of 1872 (Fig. 7) shows Rock Channel forking into three strands, after passing a building to the east beside the remnants of the north water channel. The north strand of road has a building fronting its south side and leads southeast to a shipbuilding yard. The middle strand ends at a building whilst the west strand continues on as a track that follows the river around to meet the north strand at the shipbuilding yard. The Site lies over the west strand of road. Willow Tree House (DES3772) stands beyond rough pasture on the west side of the River Tillingham.

²⁷ <http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/sussex.html>

²⁸ Butler, C. 2007. *East Sussex under Attack*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing.

²⁹ http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~genmaps/genfiles/COU_Pages/ENG_pages/ssx.htm

³⁰ *Ibid.*

- 4.9.9 Elsewhere, the land confined by the South Undercliff, the River Tillingham and the River Brede (then called Rock Channel at this point) comprises plots of pasture for sheep, a timber yard to the northwest corner, a coal and timber yard (MES8468) and Rother Iron Works (MES8467) at the east corner and a strip of rough pasture beside Rock Channel to the east of the shipyard. 'The Quay' (MES2190) stretches alongside 'The Strand' road and is occupied by warehouses (including MES21567, MES21569 and MES2219), shops (including MES21568) and a Custom House.
- 4.9.10 The Rye to Rye Harbour railway line (MES8464) was already operating by 1872. It ran southeast across the River Brede just south of the junction with the River Tillingham.
- 4.9.11 The west strand of road / track is clearly banked on one or both sides by 1898, the time of the 2nd Edition OS map (Fig. 8). Mooring posts have been erected to either side of Rock Channel. Terraced houses have been built to front the south side of the South Undercliff and some of the pasture was in use as allotment gardens by this time. The rough pasture is identified as saltings.
- 4.9.12 As seen from the 3rd Edition OS map (Fig. 9), there is no change to the immediate area around the Site by 1909. The west strand is labelled a footpath. The housing has extended west over the former timber yard and more allotment gardens have been established to the south of this new housing.
- 4.9.13 The 4th Edition OS map of 1929 (Fig. 10) shows a timber yard sited between the north and middle strands of road / track. The new allotment gardens to the north have been built upon. A map of 1938-1940 depicts two buildings located beside the fork in Rock Channel. The south building looks to have stood within the north end of the Site.
- 4.9.14 During World War II, Rye became a Nodal Point and was heavily defended from all directions³¹. Pillboxes were, for instance, placed to cover the River Brede frontage at the River Rother junction (MES8133), Rock Channel House (MES8135) and Brede Sluice (MES8136). A total of 38 incidents were recorded in the borough of Rye during World War II, including the dropping of 88 high explosive bombs³².
- 4.9.15 Bridge Point was built by 1961-1962 and is labelled on the 1971-1977 OS map (Fig. 11). It has its extension by then but the conservatory and garage are of a later date. The grounds of the cottage are smaller in size than today, as it now has slightly more land to the south and east. The Site has high potential for containing deposits of made ground used to reclaim the land in the 18th century, any remains associated with existing and former sea defences and evidence of the original Rye to Winchelsea road.

³¹ Butler, C. 2007. *East Sussex under Attack*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing.

³² Kirkham, J.C. (ed) 2002. *Rye's War 1939-1945*. Rye: Rye Museum Association.

5. Impact of Development

- 5.1** This Desk-based Assessment has established that Rye witnessed limited activity in the Neolithic and Roman periods, and was perhaps a fortified town in the Saxon period although the archaeological record cannot substantiate this. The lack of archaeological evidence pre-dating the medieval period may imply that the island-like location of Rye on the edge of marshland was only suitable for the exploitation of its natural resources, until the advantages of its harbour were realised in the medieval period.
- 5.2** Located below the south cliffs of the hill, the Site was probably sited on ‘marsh’ between two water channels in the 1570’s. The use of the term ‘marsh’ on a historic map of this date may be loosely defined and cover tidal mudflats. By 1771, the two water channels had met leaving land cut off to the west, which had a road crossing it leading from Rye’s quayside to Winchelsea. The bridge sited at the bend between the Rivers Tullington and Brede is likely to have been the origin of the name for Bridge Point cottage. It was replaced with another bridge further up Brede River when the Royal Military Road was built in the early 19th century. The Site overlay a footpath in the late 19th century until sometime between 1929 and 1938-1940 when a building was possibly built within the north end of the Site. Bridge Point was standing by 1961-1962.
- 5.3** Construction of the first possible building on the Site and then of the cottage with its extension, conservatory and garage, is likely to have disturbed or destroyed any archaeological remains located within their footprint. Any archaeological features present are most likely to survive within the garden to the east and south of the cottage.
- 5.4** Given the evidence accumulated during this Desk-based Assessment, the probability of finding remains from each of the different archaeological periods is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Period	Potential
Palaeolithic	Very Low
Mesolithic	Very Low
Neolithic	Very Low
Bronze Age	Very Low
Iron Age	Very Low
Roman	Very Low
Saxon	Very Low
Medieval	Low to Moderate
Post Medieval	High

- 5.5** In addition, the Site has a high potential for the survival of waterlogged remains and palaeo-environmental deposits.
- 5.6** The proposed development will involve the demolition of the cottage, its shed and garage and the construction of four or five new three bed residential units (Fig. 12). Excavation of any footings or pilings and associated services may disturb or destroy any archaeological remains sited within their footprint. This is particularly the case for the garden, which has never been built upon and will now be developed.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The Desk-based Assessment has established that the Site was reclaimed from marshland or mudflats in perhaps the 18th century. The land in the vicinity of the Site had a road running through it to meet the Winchelsea road on the opposite south bank of the River Brede. Bridge Point presumably takes its name from this bridge, which was replaced with another further upstream in the early 19th century. The road may have continued in use in a degenerate form until the Site was first built upon in around the 1930's. Bridge Point cottage was built by the early 1960's.
- 6.2** Any archaeological deposits present within the Site, particularly of a medieval and Post Medieval date, are most likely to survive within the garden to the east and south of the cottage. These two areas have not been built upon and will be developed under the proposed scheme.
- 6.3** On considering that the archaeological potential of the land below the south cliffs of Rye has yet to be intrusively investigated, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken prior to the proposed development, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. An evaluation excavation would enable further decisions to be made regarding the mitigation strategy for either in-situ preservation of the archaeology or its preservation by record.
- 6.4** The setting of the scheduled Martello Tower and Listed Willow Tree House will not be affected by the proposed development, as neither is inter-visible with the Site located on the opposite side of the River Tillingham.

7. Acknowledgements

- 7.1** I would like to thank Derek Rankin of Jonathan Dunn Architects Ltd for commissioning this Desk-based Assessment. Sophie Unger, HER Officer at ESCC, provided copies of the East Sussex HER.

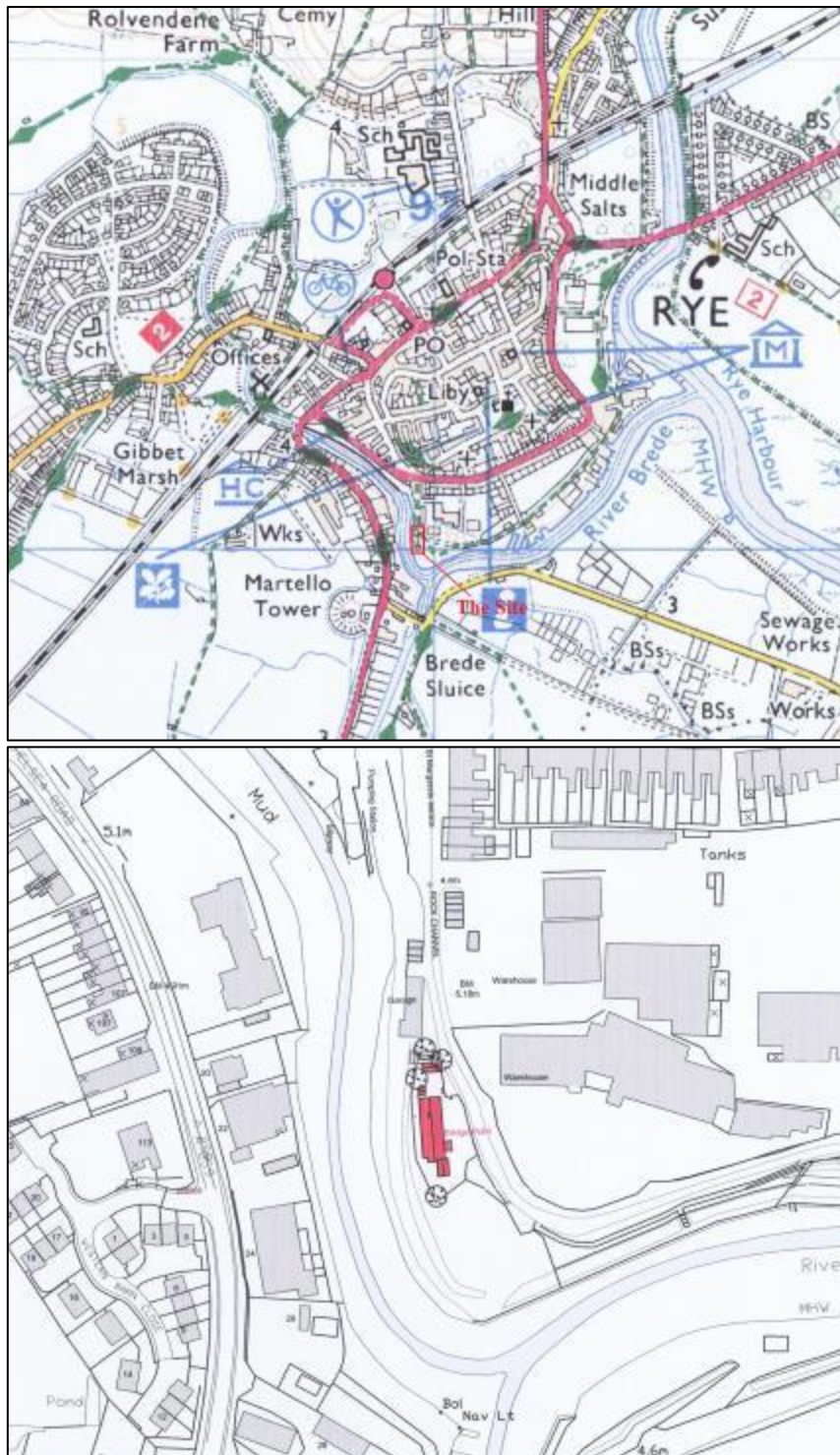


Fig. 1: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: Site location map and site plan
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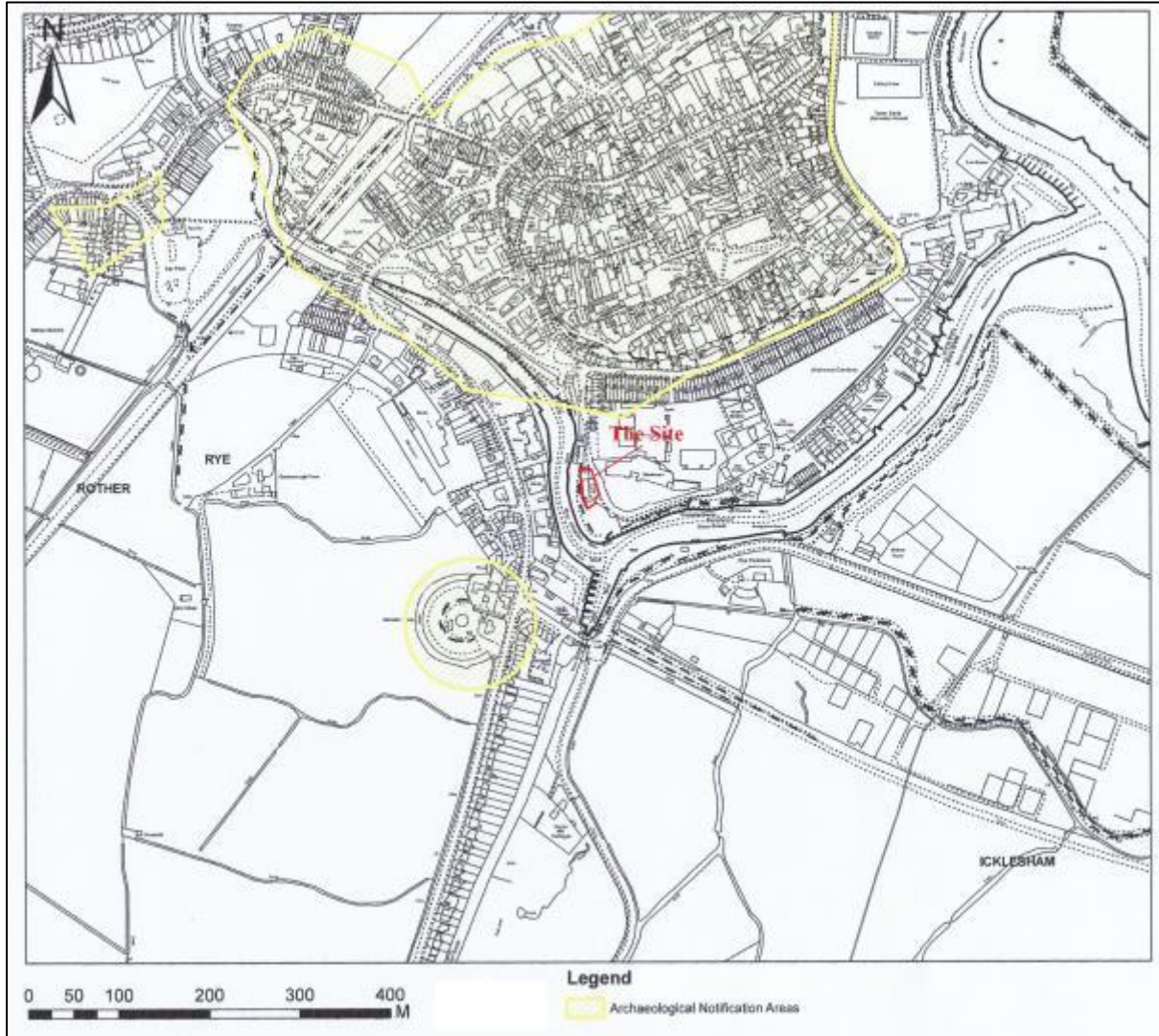


Fig. 2: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye:
Map showing Archaeological Notification Areas
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)
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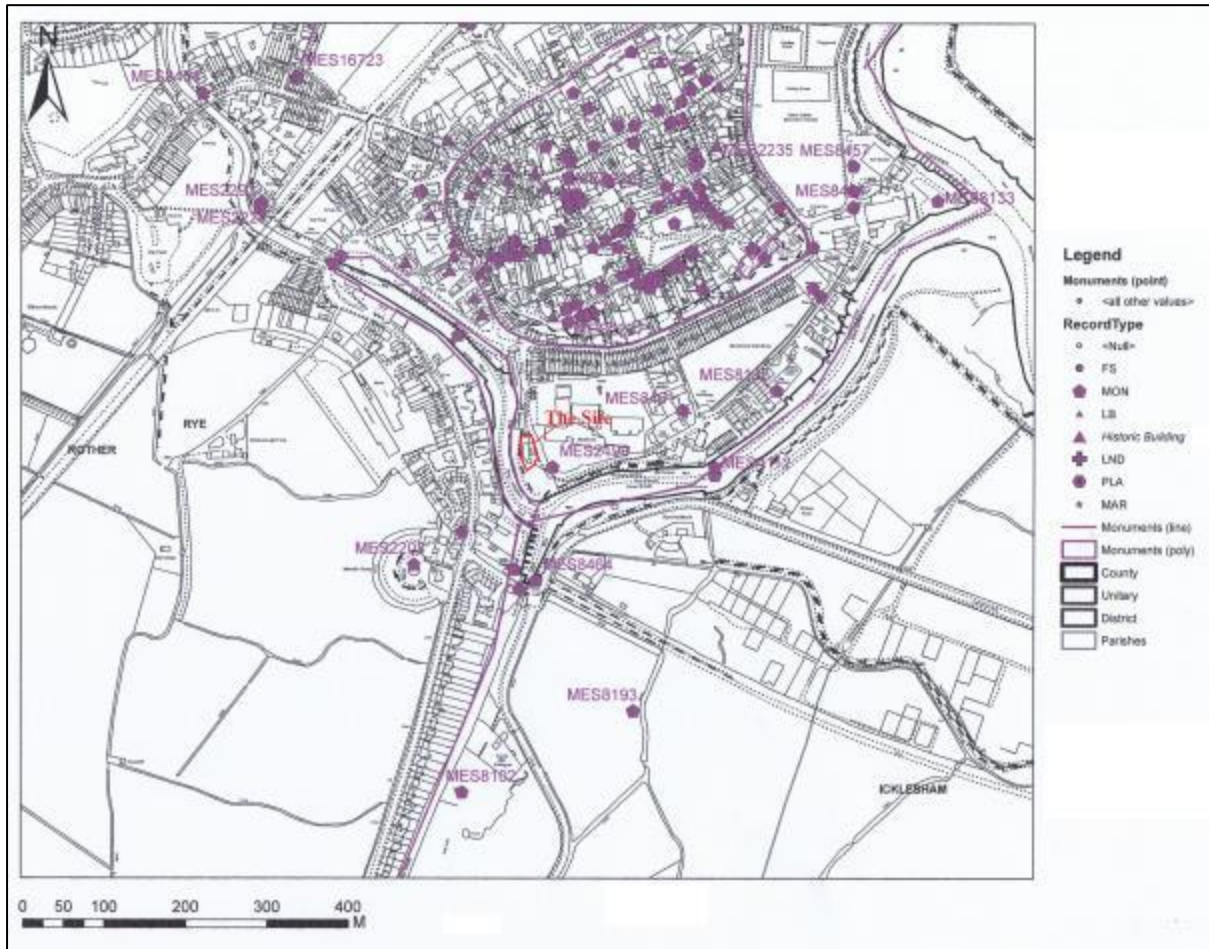


Fig. 3: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye:
Map showing Monuments recorded on the HER
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)
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Fig. 4: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye:
John Prowze's map of Rye harbour in 1572
(PRO MPF 212)

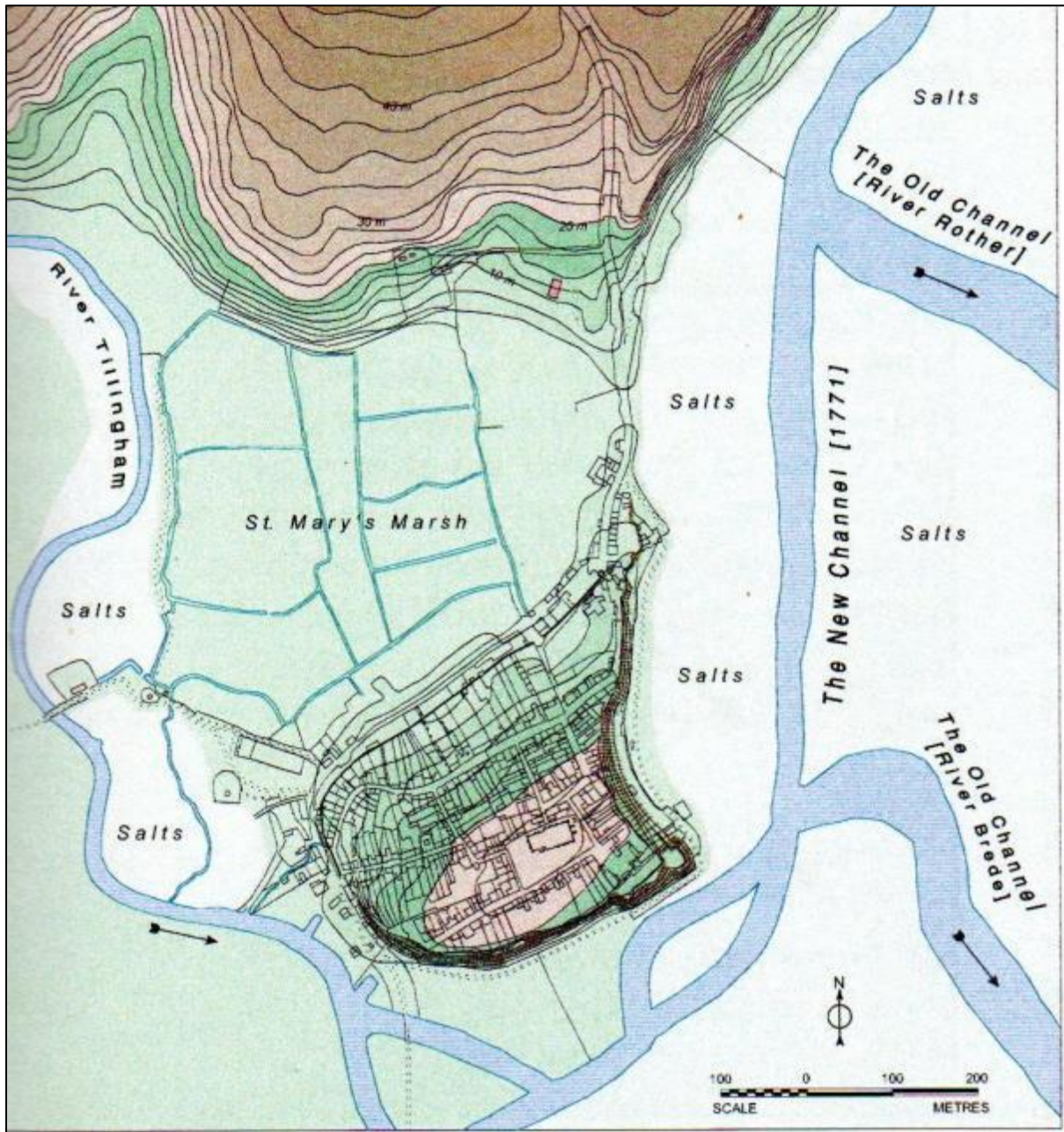


Fig. 5: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye:
A base map of the town and its immediate environs in 1771
(Martin, D. and Martin. B. 2009)



Fig. 6: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: Yeakell and Gardner's map of 1778-1783
(<http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/sussex.html>)

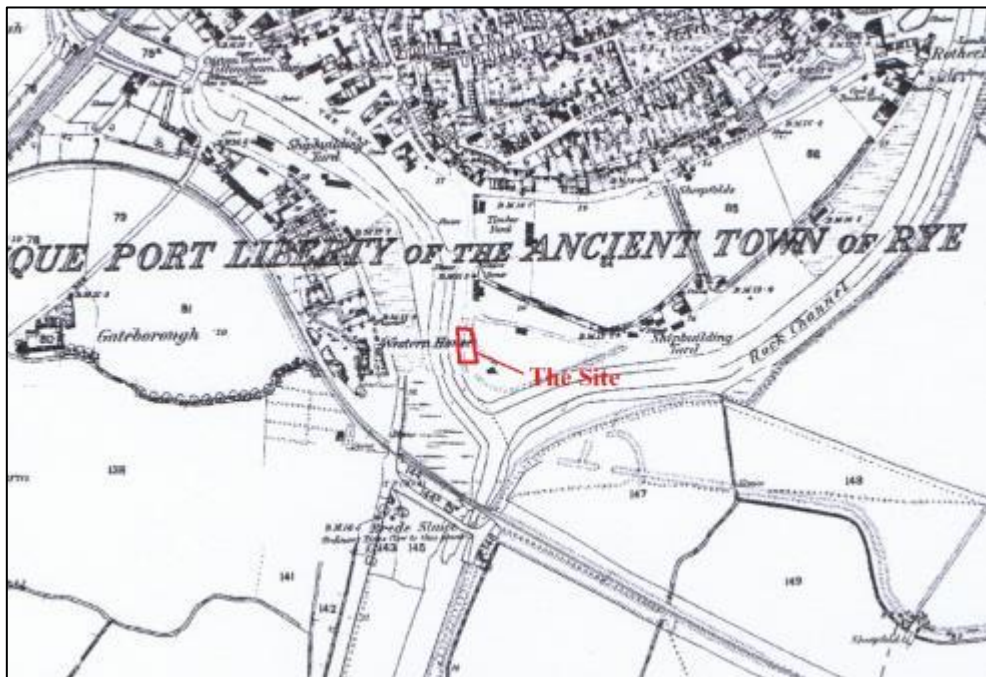


Fig. 7: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: 1st Edition OS map (1872)

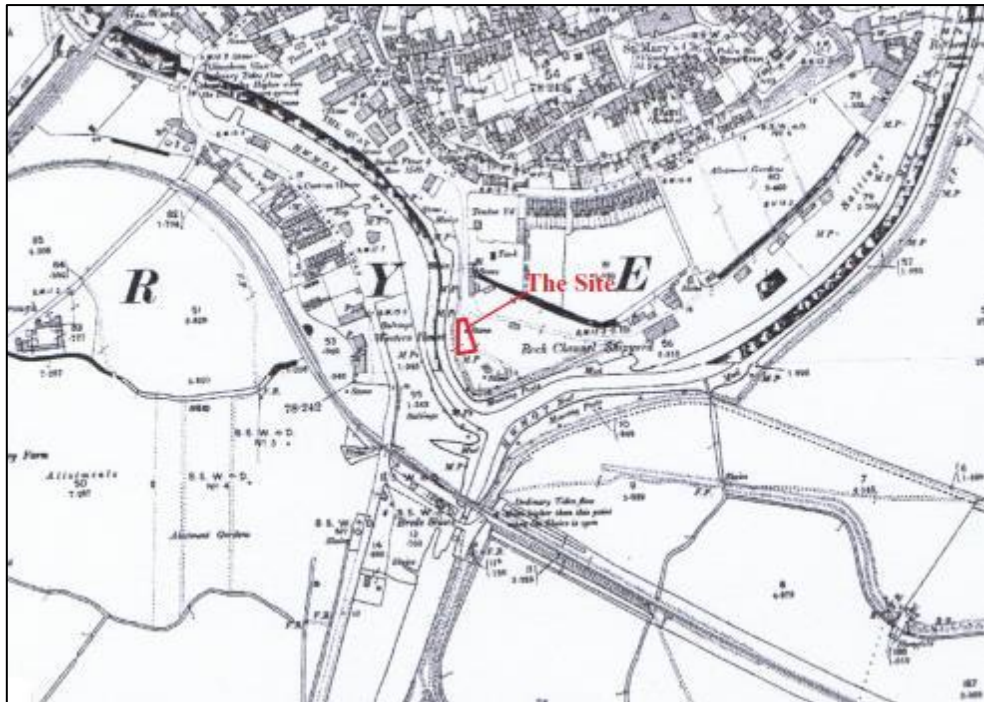


Fig. 8: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: 2nd Edition OS map (1898)



Fig. 9: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: 3rd Edition OS map (1909)

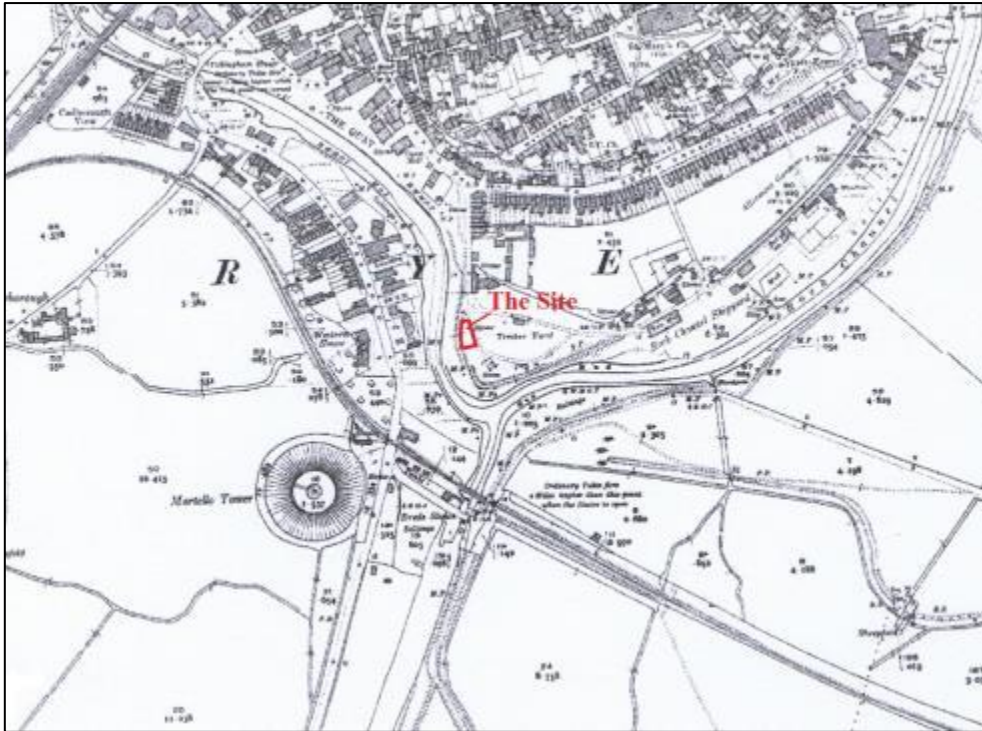


Fig. 10: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: 4th Edition OS map (1929)

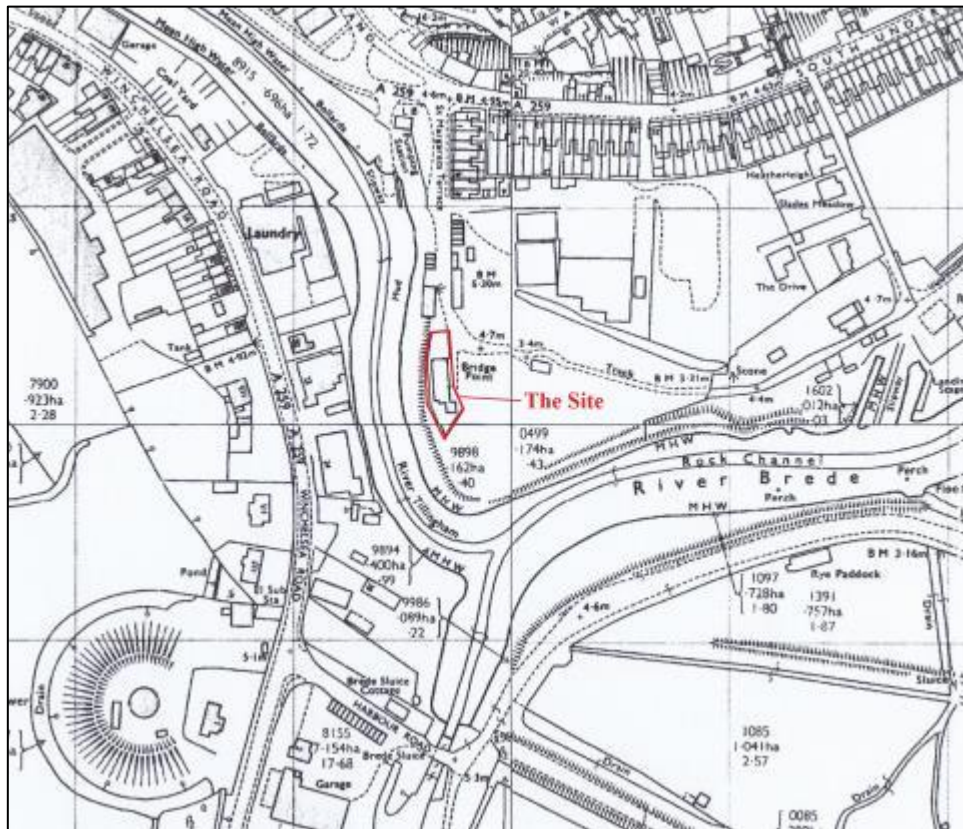


Fig. 11: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye: 1971-1977 OS map

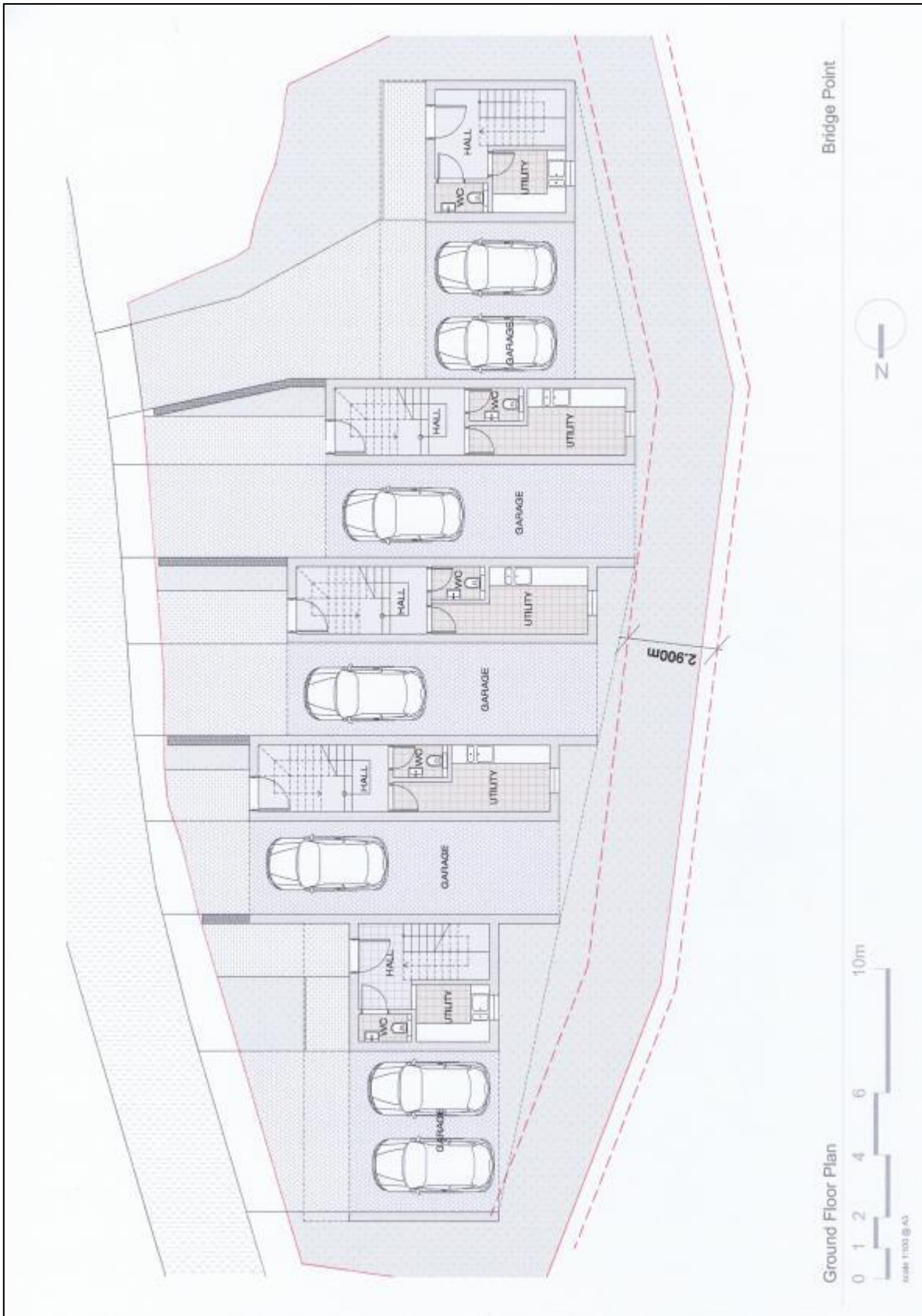


Fig. 12: Bridge Point, Rock Channel, Rye:
Ground plan of the proposed development
(Provided by the Client)

Appendix 1: Archaeological Monuments and Listed Buildings Recorded on the HER

HER No.	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
MES2184	TQ 92 20	Medieval	Friary Tower Keep Town Town Defences Town Gate	Medieval town, defences and Augustinian friary
MES2185	TQ 92 20	Prehistoric	Findspot	Flint sickle
MES2186	TQ 92 20	Roman	Findspot	Roman coins
MES2190	TQ 92 20	Post Medieval	Site Warehouse	Town Quay - Four warehouses dated between 1750 and 1850
MES2201 DES2690	TQ92172032	Post Medieval	Water Tower	Water tower built between 1733-1735. <i>Scheduled Monument</i>
MES2203	TQ 9183 1988	Post Medieval	Martello Tower	Martello Tower No. 30 <i>Grade II Listed</i> <i>Scheduled Monument</i>
MES2293	TQ 9164 2032	Post Medieval	Site Smock Mill	Gibbet Mill, Ferry Road - C19 windmill
MES2294	TQ 9208 2042	Medieval Post Medieval	Pit Footpath	An evaluation (EES14200) at land adjacent to Market Road recorded C13 and C14 medieval pits and a Post Medieval garden path.
MES4112	TQ 9165 1968	Post Medieval	Military Canal Military Road	Early C19 canal
MES5899	TQ 92 20	Saxon	Burh	The only evidence of a burh is from the Burghal Hideage.
MES8102	TQ 91890 19600	Post Medieval	Windmill	Castle Mill - C19 windmill
MES8135	TQ 92276 20094	Post Medieval	Pillbox	Garden of Rock Channel House - Extant
MES8136	TQ 91954 19874	Post Medieval	Pillbox	Sluice Keepers Cottage, Brede Sluice - Extant
MES8139	TQ 91838 20340	Post Medieval	Air Raid Shelter	Wish Street - Extant
MES8170	TQ 91740 20260	Post Medieval	Gun Emplacement	Wish Street - WWII machine gun emplacement

HER No.	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
MES8174	TQ 92278 20319	Post Medieval	Air Raid Shelter	6 Wish Street - Part extant
MES8193	TQ 92100 19700	Post Medieval	Anti Aircraft Battery	Removed
MES8456	TQ 91960 19850	Post Medieval	Lock	Brede Sluice
MES8460	TQ 92330 20210	Post Medieval	Boat Yard	Moon Marine, Rock Channel East - C20.
MES8461	TQ 92160 20070	Post Medieval	Scout Hut	Rock Channel West - C20 sea cadet HQ.
MES8464	TQ 9198 1986	Post Medieval	Level Crossing Railway Railway Bridge	Former Rye to Rye Harbour line.
MES8465	TQ 91890 19920	Post Medieval	Level Crossing	Former level crossing
MES8466	TQ 91913 20188	Post Medieval	Corn Mill	Simply Italian, South Undercliff - C19 to C20 grist mill
MES8467	TQ 92320 20270	Post Medieval	Foundry	Rother Iron Works, South Undercliff - C19 to C20 Rye foundry
MES8468	TQ 92320 20220	Post Medieval	Coal Depot Timber Yard	South Undercliff - C19 to C20 timber and coal yards
MES8469	TQ 91730 20250	Post Medieval	Sluice	Tillingham Sluice
MES16367	TQ 9216 2049	Medieval	Chapel	Medieval chapel associated with St Austin's Friary <i>Scheduled Monument</i>
MES16372	TQ 9209 2050	Medieval	Town Wall	Surviving section of Rye town wall <i>Scheduled Monument</i>
MES16374	TQ 9224 2026	Medieval	Tower	Ypres Tower. Probably C14. Used as the town prison until 1865. <i>Grade II Listed Scheduled Monument</i>
MES16393	TQ 9213 2022	Medieval	Friary	Church Square - Possible site of a friary.
MES19572	TQ 9209 2038	Medieval	Town	Medieval market town within the town walls.
MES19857	TQ 9225 2025	Post Medieval	Battery	Gun Garden - C16 Tudor gun battery

HER No.	NGR	Period	Type of Site	Notes
MES21334	TQ 9199 2039	Post Medieval	Structure	A watching brief at 29 - 30 High Street (EES14856) recorded the brick foundations of an C18 structure shown on early OS mapping.
MES21570	TQ 9185 2009	Post Medieval	Harbour	Late Post Medieval harbour area named Rye Harbour
MES21664	TQ 9202 2046	Post Medieval	Town Wall	53 Cinque Ports Street - Foundations of the C14 town wall were discovered during a watching brief (EES15071).
DES3772	TQ 91874 20008	Post Medieval	Building	Willow Tree House (Formerly Western House), 113 Winchelsea Road - C18 farmhouse. <i>Grade II Listed</i>

Appendix 2: Events Recorded on the HER

Event ID	NGR	Event Type	Notes
EES9364	TQ 92300 20300	Arch intervention / excavation	St Austin's Friary – 1953
EES9506	TQ 9208 2042	Evaluation	Land adjacent to Market Road – 1994
EES13967	TQ 9175 2033	Evaluation	Blackman's Yard, Wish Street - Evaluation of three trial trenches in 2002 uncovered layers of hardcore over a former garden / orchard soil, and a sandstone and brick wall footing identified on the 1859 Tithe map.
EES14048	TQ 9226 2028	Arch intervention / excavation / test pit	Rye Museum - Watching brief undertaken in 2000 during repair works at Ypres and Womens' Towers and associated structures. A photographic record was taken of the areas affected.
EES14074	TQ 9196 2040	Arch intervention / excavation / trial trench	Market Road - An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 1999 involving the hand excavation of two test pits. Test Pit 1 revealed the inner face of the medieval town wall. Test Pit 2 revealed no archaeology.
EES14104	TQ 9223 2025	Arch intervention / excavation	Gun Garden - An archaeological investigation in 1997 found the foundations of a former ammunition magazine to be largely intact and confirmed existing evidence of the building's size and plan. A floor surface and drainage system survived within the structure. An earlier pit with medieval pottery was observed beneath the foundations.
EES14136	TQ 9205 2047	Arch intervention / excavation / test pit / watching brief	59 and 59A Cinque Ports Street - A series of archaeological investigations were undertaken prior to development between 1993 and 2001. Medieval and Post Medieval features and the town wall were recorded.
EES14145	TQ 9208 2027	Feld survey / measured	Lamb Cottage, West Street - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 2000. The earliest section of the house dated to the mid / late C14 and comprises three bays of a probable four bay hall house with a contemporary rear aisle. The eastern bay was demolished in the mid C16 and replaced with a Wealden style hall house with vaulted cellar.
EES14200	TQ 91970 20410	Arch intervention / excavation / trial trench	Land adjacent to Market Road - An evaluation in 1994 recorded two medieval pits, two possible medieval pits and a Post Medieval path. Site of intense activity during WWII, with associated groundworks likely to have destroyed and disturbed archaeology. A section of the medieval town wall was uncovered.

Event ID	NGR	Event Type	Notes
EES14240	TQ 92160 20489	Arch intervention / watching brief	The Monastery, Conduit Street - Building work on foundations within the chapel in 1989 disturbed human remains and pottery. The excavations were not archaeologically monitored. The finds were recovered from the spoil. Pottery ranged in date from the Roman period to the Tudor period. The human bone is assumed to have come from monastic burials within the chapel.
EES14288	TQ 91963 20414	Arch intervention / watching brief	Old Market Dairy site, Cinque Port Street - The excavation of six engineering test pits was archaeologically monitored in 1999. Two test pits revealed the north face of the medieval town wall. Three other test pits revealed the top of a dark clay fill probably of the ditch. The clay fill contained late C18 material.
EES14374	TQ 92230 20300	Watching Brief	12 Church Square - Maintained on the construction of a rear conservatory. The footings of a probable C19 outhouse were recorded. Remaining areas comprised a thick layer of Victorian garden soil. Finds included C17 / 18 clay pipes, animal bone and CBM.
EES14463	TQ 92059 20221	Building Interpretative Survey	7 Watchbell Street - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 1981.
EES14464	TQ 92199 20392	Building Interpretative Survey	Cannon House, East Street - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 1982. They identified the house as a late C17 / early C18 timber-framed building.
EES14484	TQ 9194 2039	Arch intervention / excavation / trial trench	Former Winter's Dairy site, Cinque Port Street - A watching brief (?in 1998) recorded no archaeological features.
EES14718	TQ 9191 2030	Watching Brief	The Mint House, The Mint - Watching brief undertaken by CBAS in 2010 during groundworks associated with building work. A few pieces of (? re-used) Roman tile were found. A layer of burnt clay and charcoal could represent burning of Rye by the French in 1377 followed by a period of abandonment. A blacksmith may have been on the site in c.1500-1650. A building with a cellar on the S part of the site was demolished in the late C17 / early C18. This may have coincided with the building of The Mint House, or a predecessor. Some surviving C16 buildings on the N part of the site were destroyed during an air raid in WWII.
EES14740	TQ 9201 2054	Archive interpretation / documentary research	Extensive Urban Survey of Rye
EES14849	TQ 9198 2026	Building Interpretative Survey	10 - 11 Mermaid Street - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin. [DM & BM: Mid / late C15]

Event ID	NGR	Event Type	Notes
EES14856	TQ 9199 2039	Arch intervention / watching brief	29 - 30 High Street - A watching brief was maintained in 2010 by CBAS during groundworks associated with the new Rye Library. The foundations of two parallel brick walls were discovered (MES21334). These are most likely the remains of an C18 structure, shown on early OS mapping, which was demolished during the construction of a later building. Medieval and Post Medieval artefacts were recovered.
EES14866	TQ 9204 2020	Field survey / Photographic	9 Watchbell Street - Photographic record of a wall prior to its demolition. [DM & BM: Mid C16]
EES14925	TQ 9211 2022	Building Interpretative Survey	46 Church Square - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 1981. [DM & BM: Late C14 / early C15]
EES15070	TQ 9202 2046	Arch intervention / excavation / test pit	53 Cinque Ports Street - 2m square test pit excavated in 1993 to assess archaeological potential. It recorded a section of the medieval town wall.
EES15071	TQ 9202 2046	Watching Brief	53 Cinque Ports Street - Maintained in 2003 during groundworks associated with the demolition of the former Central Garage. The foundations of the C14 town wall were exposed. A Scheduled section of the town wall was recorded. This section incorporated the remains of a large c.1800 warehouse / workshop. Medieval and Post Medieval deposits were associated with the wall and upstanding remains.
EES15079	TQ 9191 2024	Building Interpretative Survey	Old Trader and Traders Cottage, Traders Lane - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 2006. Phase 1 survives as a C15 south bay and open hall bay. In Phase 2, a mid C16 hall was floored over and a chimney was inserted.
EES15159	TQ 9213 2049	Building Interpretative Survey	White Friars, Conduit Hill (MES2234) - Undertaken by David and Barbara Martin in 1984. They identified this building as the remaining section of a C16 timber-framed building heavily restored in the early C18.
EES15202	TQ 9212 2021	Watching Brief	46 Church Square - Watching brief undertaken by CBAS in 2012. C18 and C19 made ground was recorded, along with a main deposit dating from at least the C16 to early C18. A possible C16-17 wooden drain cut through this main deposit.
-	TQ 9213 2049	Evaluation	1 White Friars, Conduit Hill - Evaluation undertaken by CBAS in 2012. Three test pits excavated in the cellar recorded layers of made ground possibly all laid in the 17 th century.

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, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and was a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and until recently taught A-Level Archaeology at Bexhill 6th Form College.

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

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

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