



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



An Archaeological Watching Brief at 8 The Street Berwick East Sussex

WD/2007/1826/F

TQ 5191 0514

**by
Chris Butler**

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the construction of a new detached garage at 8 The Street, Berwick, which is situated in the shrunken village of Berwick, and close to the earthworks of some deserted Medieval house platforms.

The watching brief resulted in the identification of a number of 19th century features and deposits, There were no earlier archaeological features or deposits seen during the watching brief, although an assemblage of residual earlier artefacts including prehistoric flintwork and Medieval pottery was recovered.

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Cover picture: View of the site after the excavation of the garage wall foundation trenches

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by David Lewis, on behalf of Sir Alan and Lady Moses, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the building of a detached garage at 8 The Street, Berwick (TQ 5191 0514). As a result of the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority have put a condition on the planning consent for the development, requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.2** No. 8 The Street is a single storey dwelling converted from a 19th century cowshed (planning consent granted 1998 – WD/98/1340). At the front of the property there is an area of lawn, with an access drive in the north-west corner and paved hardstanding area for parking. The detached garage is located on the site of the hardstanding area (Fig. 1). The ground level of the lawn falls c.0.5m from the converted cowshed to the site of the garage, and the site itself is some 0.75m below the level of the lawn, perhaps representing earlier landscaping.
- 1.3** The site is situated on the east side of ‘The Street’, which may have been the main street through the Medieval village, and becomes a sunken lane to the south of the site, leading to the Parish Church and to the Old Coach Road. On the east side of the site is Church Farm of which the cowshed once formed part, whilst on the north side is March House, a Listed Building (Fig. 2).
- 1.4** Berwick village has been designated as an Archaeologically Sensitive Area (Fig. 1), and the house platforms of the shrunken Medieval village which are situated in fields to the north and north-east of the site are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 1.5** The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319, is at the junction of three different types. Firstly Lower Chalk with Gault Clay to its north, and an outcrop of Head deposit on the east side.
- 1.6** An application (WD/2007/1826) had been submitted for planning permission for the construction of a new single storey detached garage. The planning consent had been granted by Wealden District Council (being the local planning authority). However, given the archaeological sensitivity of the development site, an archaeological planning condition requiring an archaeological watching brief was attached to the consent.
- 1.7** The fieldwork was undertaken between 6th August 2008 and 13th August 2008 by the author.

2. Historical & Archaeological Background

- 2.1** Berwick Parish is in the hundred of Longbridge, rape of Pevensey, deanery of Rype, diocese of Chichester, archdeaconry and county court district of Lewes, and covers an area of 1,097 acres. The old part of the village is situated just to the south of the A27 road between Lewes and Eastbourne, whilst a new settlement has grown up around the 19th century Berwick railway station situated 1.5km further north on what used to be known as Berwick Common.
- 2.2** Little is known about the earlier archaeology of Berwick, although there are numerous prehistoric sites on the South Downs immediately to the south of Berwick village, and there are extensive Roman remains in the Berwick Station and Arlington area to the north, adjacent to a major east-west Roman road from Pevensey to Glynde¹.
- 2.3** Berwick is mentioned in the Domesday Book as having ½ hide held by King Edward and that it never paid tax. Post conquest Reinbert has 1 villager and 4 cottagers with 1 plough. There is 1 mill, 11 acres of meadow, woodland for 6 pigs, and 2 fisheries².
- 2.4** The Parish Church of St Michael & All Saints, was restored in 1857, but is essentially a 12th century building with 14th century additions. The font is probably of Saxon date, suggesting an earlier origin for the church. The church is a Grade 1 Listed Building, and has a unique group of 20th century murals painted during the Second World War by the 'Bloomsbury Group' artists³. A large undated mound is located in the churchyard.
- 2.5** During the 19th century, Fuller Meyrick, Esq., and Lord Gage (who was lord of the manor), were the principal landowners. The main crops at that time were wheat and beans, and there was also a large portion of very rich pasture land. The population in 1861 was 169⁴.
- 2.6** Ordnance Survey maps for 1813, 1878, 1899, 1910 and 1929 were consulted. These show little change to the site. The earliest map is too small a scale to show sufficient detail, but Church Farm and March House appear to be shown, although the cowshed is not shown. The cowshed is present on the 1878 map, and there is then little change between this and the later maps.
- 2.7** The HER records were consulted and produced a number of sites within Berwick village and the surrounding landscape. Additional sites, dating from prehistoric to Saxon, are recorded to the west at Alciston and further south around Alfriston. The sites recorded on the HER for Berwick are shown on Fig. 3, and together with Listed Buildings are detailed below:

¹ Masefield, R. Undated, *Celts, Romans & Countrymen*, Brighton, XPS Ltd

² Morris, J. 1976 *Domesday Book*, Chichester, Phillimore.

³ *St Michael & All Saints, Berwick, East Sussex: A Guide*

⁴ *Kelly's Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 1867*

MES2808	TQ51880492	Medieval	St Michael & All Angels Church
MES2809	TQ51870490	Unknown	Earthwork mound in churchyard
MES2810	TQ52590444	Medieval	Berwick Court Farm and dovecote
DES6582	TQ52590445	18 th Century	Berwick Court house- Listed Building
MES2811	TQ520052	Medieval	Deserted Settlement
MES2813	TQ51950516	18 th Century	March House - Listed Building
MES2814	TQ5204	Post Medieval	Forge Cottage – Listed Building
MES2815	TQ51920518	17 th Century	Frenshaw Cottage – Listed Building
MES2818	TQ528059	Undated	Field system
MES2821	TQ52250490	16 th Century	Italian coin
MES7133	TQ51190435	Post Medieval	Windmill
MES7331	TQ52340548	Prehistoric	Burnt flint mound
MES7333	TQ52450587	Undated	Fired clay structure
MES7507	TQ52650554	Roman	Artefact scatter
MES7508	TQ52210467	Medieval	Artefact scatter
DES5836	TQ51910524	19 th Century	Elm House – Listed Building
DES5636	TQ51980524	20 th Century	Telephone box
DES5167	TQ51970513	18 th Century	Stables, cart shed & granary
DES6295	TQ51880515	17 th Century	Thatched Cottage – Listed Building
DES6414	TQ51950526	18 th Century	Cricketers Arms Inn – Listed Building
DES5170	TQ51850494	19 th Century	The Vicarage – Listed Building

- 2.8** A fieldwork project was carried out between Berwick village and Berwick Station in 2005 (EES14255). This was a watching brief on a new water pipeline, and revealed prehistoric flintwork, a possible prehistoric burnt flint mound (MES7331) and a burnt clay feature of unknown date (MES7333)⁵.
- 2.9** A metal detecting rally was held in 2005 in fields between Berwick and Berwick Station, and resulted in a small number of artefacts of Medieval and Post Medieval date being recovered and reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme⁶.
- 2.10** The existing historical and archaeological evidence suggests that the area around Berwick has been exploited since at least Neolithic times. The presence of Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds on the South Downs together with the flintwork and burnt flint found during the recent watching brief, indicates that there may be settlement activity from these periods nearby.
- 2.11** Although there is little evidence for Roman activity at Berwick village, there is a substantial Romano-British settlement at Arlington, to the north of Wilmington, which may extend to Berwick Station, and this would suggest that this area was perhaps being utilised as farmland.

⁵ Butler, C. 2005 *An Archaeological Watching Brief on a new water mains pipe at Berwick, East Sussex*. Unpublished CBAS report.

⁶ Liz Wilson, Sussex Finds Liaison Officer; Pers. Com.

- 2.12** The first real evidence for settlement is in the Medieval period when a small village appears to have grown up around the church. Subsequently the village has shrunk, leaving evidence for the Medieval buildings as earthworks in The Tye to the north and east of The Street. Since then the village has not changed in size to any great extent, and the village as shown on the 1st Edition OS map, has altered very little until the later 20th century, and even then this has only been due to in-fill rather than expansion.

3. Archaeological Methodology

- 3.1** On arrival at the site on the 6th August 2008 the paved hardstanding was being removed, prior to any groundworks taking place. The topsoil on the east side of the garage footprint was removed first, to create a ramp (Fig. 4). The footprint area of the garage was then removed in spits until the natural Gault clay was reached. The footprint was then reduced by a further c.320mm into the natural.
- 3.2** The footing trench for the garage was then excavated on the east side to a depth of 0.8m, and a width of 0.5m. All excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision using a tracked 360° mechanical digger with a 500mm wide toothless bucket.
- 3.3** The second site visit was carried out on the 7th August 2008 at which time the ramp on the east side had been cut into the natural, and the east-west footing trench had been cut through the natural on the south side. No additional excavation had taken place by the time of the third visit on the 8th August.
- 3.4** The final site visit was made on the 13th August, at which time all of the footing trenches had been excavated through the natural. On the west side of the site, this had resulted in the bank being cut back slightly to accommodate the footing trench, which had revealed a 19th century cut.
- 3.5** There were no archaeological deposits or features to be excavated, although the revealed sections and 19th century features were recorded according to accepted professional standards using context record sheets and digital photography. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.6** 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 TSB07 has been allocated.

4. Results

- 4.1** The topsoil was a dark brown sandy clay loam (Context **1**) with small flint gravel pieces to 20mm (5%), chalk flecks (1%) and roots (2%), and was up to 140mm deep. Below this in the area of the ramp, on the east side of the site, was a layer of made ground of 20th century date some 180mm deep. This comprised a firm mid brown silty clay loam (Context **4**) with MOT (30%), shingle (10%) and brick fragments (5%).
- 4.2** Below the paving slabs of the original hardstanding area, there was a layer of yellow-brown sand (Context **2**) 100mm deep that contained some brick fragments (2%), and had been the base layer for the paving slabs. Forming a foundation for this was a layer 150-200mm deep of rubble and made ground (Context **3**). This comprised a firm mid brown silty clay loam which contained numerous bricks and brick fragments, pieces of concrete, MOT and gravel.
- 4.3** Below Context **3**, and confined to the central part of the garage footprint, was a firm layer of mid grey-brown sandy clay (Context **8**) to a maximum of 100mm deep, which contained flint gravel pieces to 35mm (40%), pieces of brick and tile (5%) and large flint pieces to 120mm (3%).
- 4.4** Below Context **2** was a compact yellow-brown silty clay (Context **5**), which contained some irregular flint pieces to 120mm (2%). This was the natural, and at a depth of c.0.8m it changed to a compact mid grey silty clay (Context **9**) with small white and buff to orange coloured flint pieces (1%).
- 4.5** Below Context **2** and cut into Context **5** was a linear chalk filled feature (Context **6**) running north-west to south-east across the western part of the garage footprint (Fig. 4). The feature was 350mm wide and 100mm deep and contained irregular sized fragments of chalk up to 150mm in size, and may have been a land drain.
- 4.6** On the west side of Context **6**, and situated below Context **3** and above the natural was a 250mm deep layer of loose mid brown sandy clay loam (Context **7**). This contained irregular flint pieces to 70mm (3%), chalk pieces and flecks (2%) and roots (2%). There was no made ground on the west side of Context **6**, and it is possible that the chalk filled linear feature may have formed the western boundary of Context **3**.
- 4.7** A dark charcoal rich layer (Context **10**) was observed in the east bank during the creation of the ramp. This comprised a dark grey to black sandy clay loam, with charcoal pieces and flecks (20%), roots (2%) and chalk pieces and flecks (1%). This layer overlaid Context **1**, which tapers out at this point, and was above Context **5**.

- 4.8** At the base of Context **10**, and above Contexts **1** and **5**, was a horizon *c.* 150mm thick, of dark grey-brown sandy clay loam (Context **11**), which contained numerous chalk pieces to 35mm and flecks (20%), tile and brick fragments (15%), occasional flint nodules (2%) and charcoal pieces and flecks (5%). The brick and tile fragments in Context **11** are all of 19th/20th century date, and no other artefacts were found in this context.
- 4.9** On cutting back the west bank, a different sequence of deposits could be seen. The topsoil comprised a grey-brown sandy clay loam (Context **12**), with numerous roots (3%), irregular flint pieces to 80mm (1%), brick and tile fragments (2%) and charcoal flecks (<1%). Below this and at the north end of the bank was a layer of mid grey-brown sandy clay loam (Context **13**) up to 220mm deep. It contained numerous chalk pieces to 100mm and flecks (50%).
- 4.10** A large V-shaped cut 1.5m wide at the top and 800mm deep (Cut **14**) was also noted in the section, 1.5m from the south end of the west bank. It cut through Context **12**, and into Context **5**, and formed the southern edge of Context **13**. The primary fill (Fill **16**) was a loose mid grey-brown sandy clay loam containing roots (5%), charcoal pieces and flecks (3%) and chalk pieces to 50mm and flecks (2%).
- 4.11** The upper fill (Fill **15**) was a yellow-brown silty clay with roots (3%), shingle (3%), chalk pieces to 80mm (2%), irregular flint pieces to 60mm (2%) and charcoal flecks (<1%). The two fills appear to be similar to the topsoil and underlying Context **5**, except that they are in reverse order in the cut, with the 'topsoil' below the 'natural'. Both contexts contained 18th/19th century brick and tile fragments, and Context **15** produced a later 19th century stoneware sherd.
- 4.12** There were no other features noted during the watching brief, although further artefacts were collected from the ground surface, spoil heaps and sides of the sections.

5. Finds

5.1 The excavation produced a small assemblage of finds, which are summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1 The Finds

Context Number	Pottery No./gms.	CBM* No./gms.	Glass No./gms.	Other No./gms.
U/S	1 12 th -mid 13 th century (2g) 8 19 th century (45g)		2 19 th century (63g)	1 flint flake (13g) 2 shell (6g)
1	1 12 th -mid 13 th century (7g) 2 19 th century (18g)		1 19 th century (2g)	1 flint flake (18g) 1 FF flint (3g)
3	2 19 th century (23g)	++		
4	2 19 th century (10g)	1 brick (81g)		1 core fragment (137g) 1 metal frag (14g)
5				1 flint frag (2g)
7	3 19 th century (25g)	1 tile (10g)		
8	2 19 th century (14g)	2 tile (65g)	1 19 th century (91g)	1 flint flake (9g) 1 nail (5g)
12	1 Mid 13 th -mid 14 th century (5g) 1 19 th century (11g)	++		
15	1 19 th century (16g)	++		

*Ceramic Building Material; ++ = present but not collected

5.2 *The Pottery* by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The earliest pottery from the site consists of a slightly abraded cooking pot bodysherd from Context **1**. The sherd, which is tempered with moderate/abundant flint grits to 1mm with rare shell inclusions, is likely to be of 12th century date. A heavily abraded unstratified sherd of Medieval pottery was also recovered. This is tempered with moderate/abundant sand and flint (to 1mm) with sparse shell inclusions and of probable mid 12th to early 13th century date.

5.2.2 In addition, Context **12** produced a residual fine/medium sand tempered greyware sherd of mid 13th to mid 14th century date. All of the Medieval pottery has clearly been reworked but the material does demonstrate the presence of early activity in the vicinity. Whether the sherds have derived direct from domestic activity or have been secondarily derived from manuring is uncertain.

5.2.3 The remainder of the pottery assemblage is of the 19th century and represents a typical range of domestic wares. Kitchen wares include unglazed earthenware flower pots, glazed red earthenware jars, a yellow ware bowl (with blue mocha decoration – Context 12) and English stoneware bottles (including a later 19th century Bristol glazed example from Context 15).

5.2.4 Table wares include a little moulded pearlware (Context 4), a range of transfer-printed china and some low-grade English porcelain. The 19th century sherds are on the whole small and may have been subjected to some reworking. They would be typical of lower or lower middle class domestic occupation.

5.3 *Ceramic Building Material* by Luke Barber

5.3.1 Large quantities of brick and tile, mostly broken fragments, but also including some complete examples, were noted in many of the contexts at the site. These are likely to date from the 18th through to the 20th century.

5.3.2 One brick and three peg tile fragments were recovered as samples (Table 1). All of this material is of late 18th to 19th century date. The brick is tempered with sparse fine/medium sand and medium fired whereas the tile, although of a similar fabric, is notably harder fired.

5.4 *Prehistoric Flintwork*

5.4.1 A small assemblage of five pieces of worked flint was recovered from residual contexts during the watching brief (Table 1). The flint is all dark grey in colour with a light buff to white cortex, typical of flint that has been sourced from the South Downs.

5.4.2 The pieces included three small hard hammer-struck flakes, a flake fragment and a fragment from a probable core. None of these pieces was particularly diagnostic, although they are likely to be later prehistoric in date.

5.4.3 A single small fire-fractured flint was found in Context 1, and is likely to be prehistoric in date.

5.5 *Glass*

5.5.1 Four fragments of 19th century glass were found, comprising three fragments of dark green bottles, probably mineral water bottles, and included one base fragment with a kick-up. The fourth fragment was from a small clear glass bottle or jar.

5.6 *Other Finds*

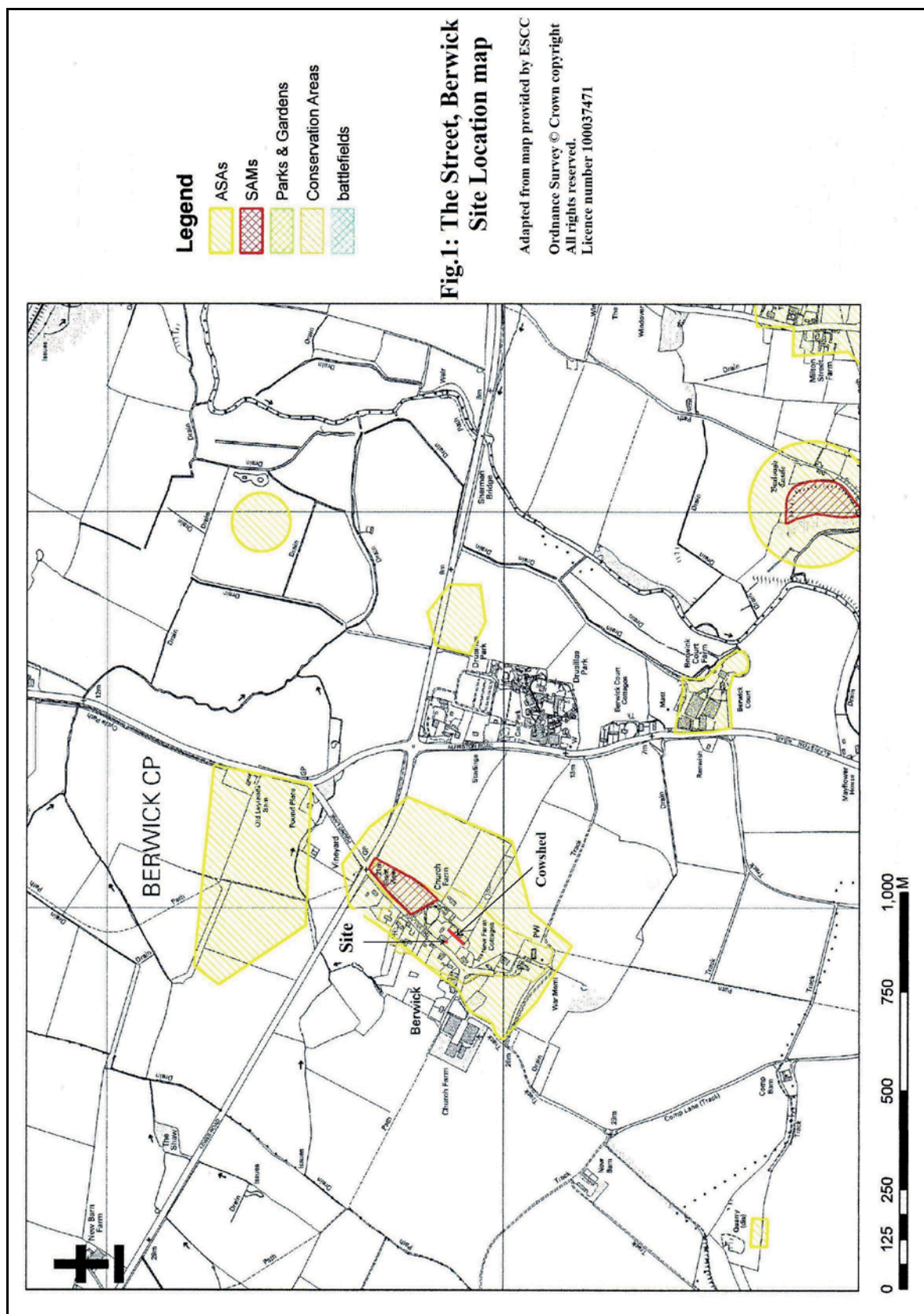
- 5.6.1** Two unstratified fragments of marine mollusc shell were found, one was an oyster shell whilst the other was from a scallop.
- 5.6.2** Two metal objects were found, both of which were made from iron. The first was a small circular plate, possibly from the base of a bottle, whilst the second was a roofing nail.

6 *Discussion*

- 6.1** It appears that much of the site has been disturbed by activity in the 19th century, perhaps associated with the original construction and use of the cowshed, and other activities connected with Church Farm, and then with the construction of the hardstanding for car parking. This will have removed any evidence for earlier activity at the site.
- 6.2** A few sherds of 12th to 14th century pottery were the only indications of Medieval activity, but provide the first firm dating evidence for the shrunken Medieval village in the nearby fields. The pottery sherds were abraded, so it is not clear whether they have derived directly from domestic activity or have been secondarily derived from manuring field around the settlement.
- 6.3** The pieces of worked flint and the fire-fractured flint found hint at possible prehistoric activity in the immediate area. Given the evidence for prehistoric activity on the South Downs nearby, it is likely that there were later prehistoric farming settlements nearby.

7 *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank David Lewis for making the arrangements for the archaeological watching brief, and County Town Builders for their co-operation during the watching brief. Greg Chuter, Assistant Archaeologist at East Sussex County Council provided the HER data. Luke Barber identified and commented on the pottery and CBM.



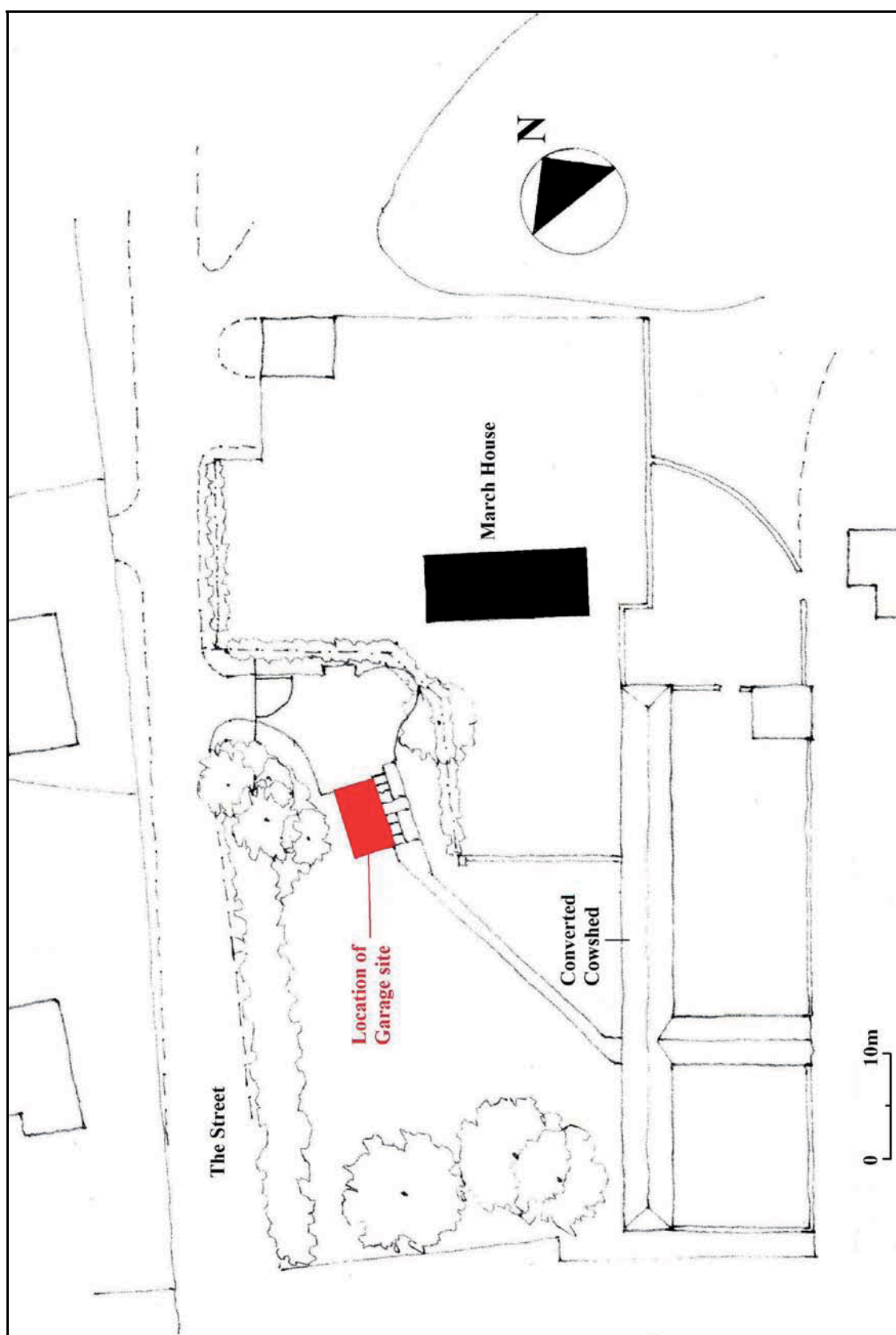
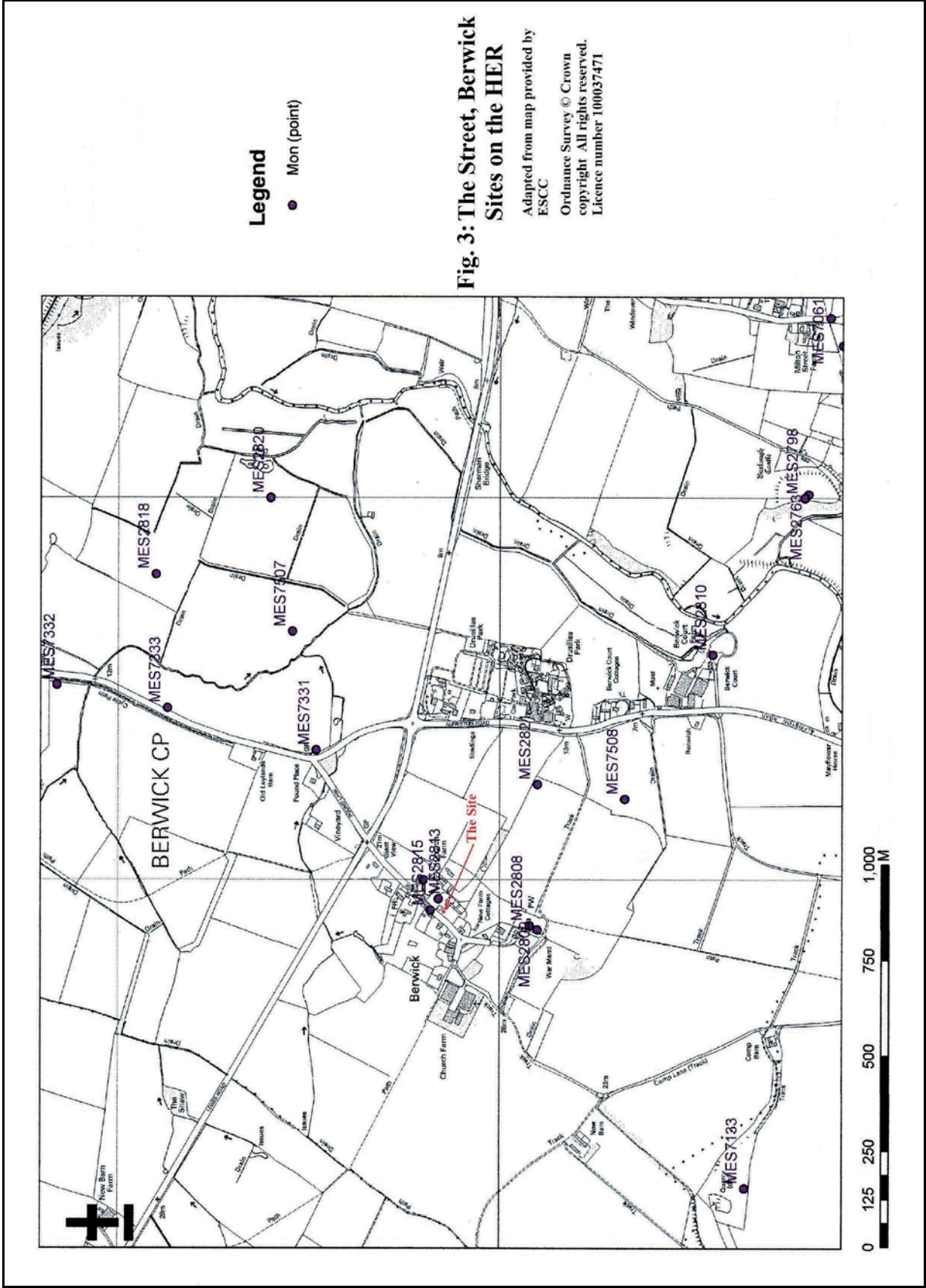


Fig. 2: The Street, Berwick: Site Plan
Adapted from David Lewis Drawing No 07/BH/02



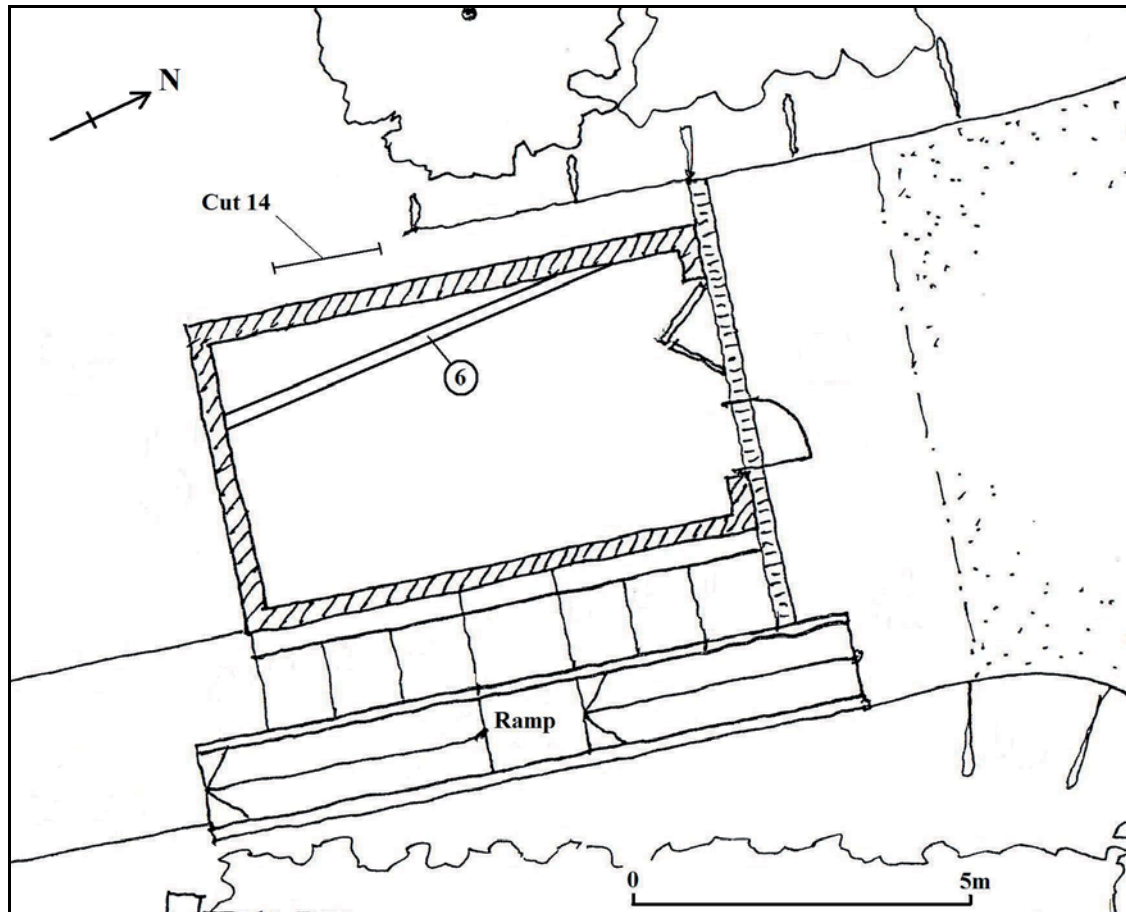


Fig. 4: The Street, Berwick: Garage Plan showing location
of Features 6 and 14.

Adapted from David Lewis Drawing No 07/BH/03



Fig. 5: The Street, Berwick: Contexts 10 and 11 in east bank section



Fig. 6: The Street, Berwick: Cut 14 in west bank section

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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