



**Report On An Archaeological Excavation at Westons Farm,
Iping Road, Milland, West Sussex**

June 2006

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An excavation was carried out on the site of the Scheduled Roman mansio at Westons Farm, Iping, West Sussex, in order to fulfil the terms of archaeological conditions attached to both a Scheduled Monument Consent and a planning permission. All of the excavated trenches lay on the line of the western rampart of the mansio, which survived in part below ground level. A buried soil layer beneath the rampart suggested a date of c.AD200 for the construction of the mansio. Also beneath the rampart, and therefore pre-dating the mansio, archaeological features were excavated which clearly related to an earlier settlement on the site, possibly having its origins in the first century AD.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

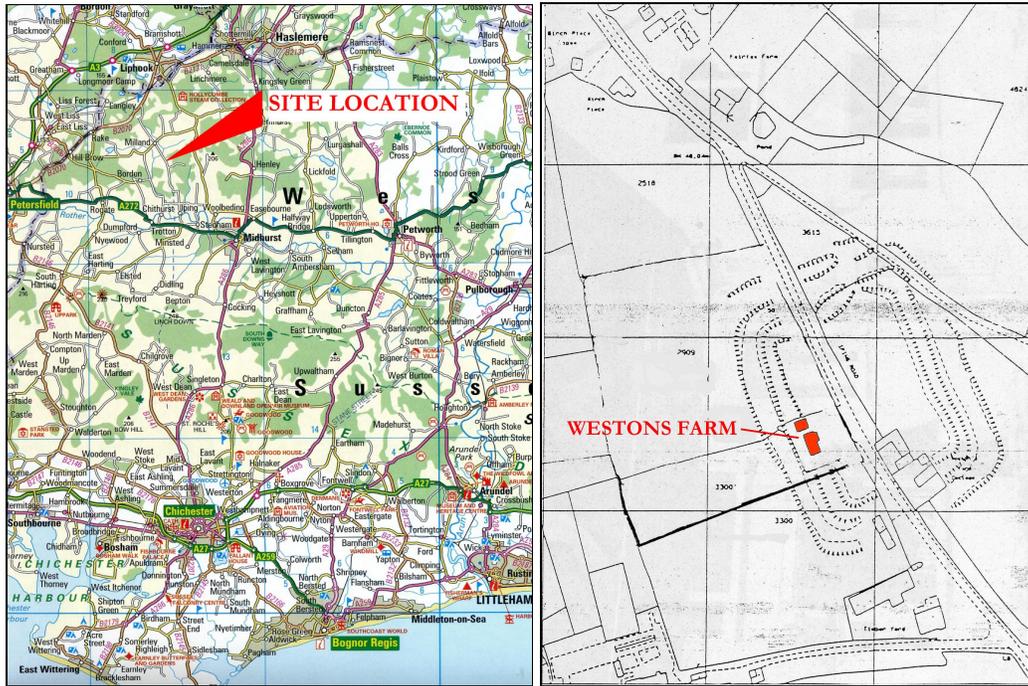


Figure 1 Site location © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
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1. Westons Farm lies approximately 1 mile to the south-east of the village of Milland in West Sussex (Figs.1 & 2), at c. 50m aOD and OS grid reference SU 8439 2606. The underlying geology of the site was found to be the sands and clays of the Weald Clay formation.
2. The new owners of Westons Farm, Mr. & Mrs. P. Lyons, proposed to carry out improvements and extensions to the existing building. Since the house sits within the limits of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 29242) they applied for and obtained Scheduled Monument Consent (HSD 9/2/7295) in order to excavate the footings and drainage runs for the proposed work. They also obtained planning permission from Chichester District Council (05/02310/DOM). Both the consent and the permission had attached conditions requiring the carrying out of archaeological work. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by the owners to carry out such archaeological work. The methodology for the work was set out in a Method Statement drawn up by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. (WSA 2005). This report details the results.
3. The archaeological excavation was carried out from Wednesday 5th October until Monday 10th October 2005 by George Anelay and Ken Mordle of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Westons Farm sits within the enclosing ditch of the Roman *mansio* at Iping, lying astride the Roman road which runs from Chichester to Silchester. Little is known about the Iping *mansio*; it was only discovered in the 1950's, despite the survival of substantial earthworks which represent the remains of the surrounding rampart and ditch. No previous archaeological excavation has been undertaken on the site, although local memory recalls that Roman pottery was found in the foundation trenches when Westons Farm was built.
2. A *mansio* is an official posting station along the line of a Roman road. They were positioned at regular intervals and were intended for the exclusive use of Imperial officials. Evidence from other *mansiones* indicates that the interior could contain a residential building (similar to a modern motel), together with associated stabling and store buildings. It is not uncommon for civilian settlements to grow up around the *mansio* itself.



Figure 2 The foundation trenches, looking north

RESULTS

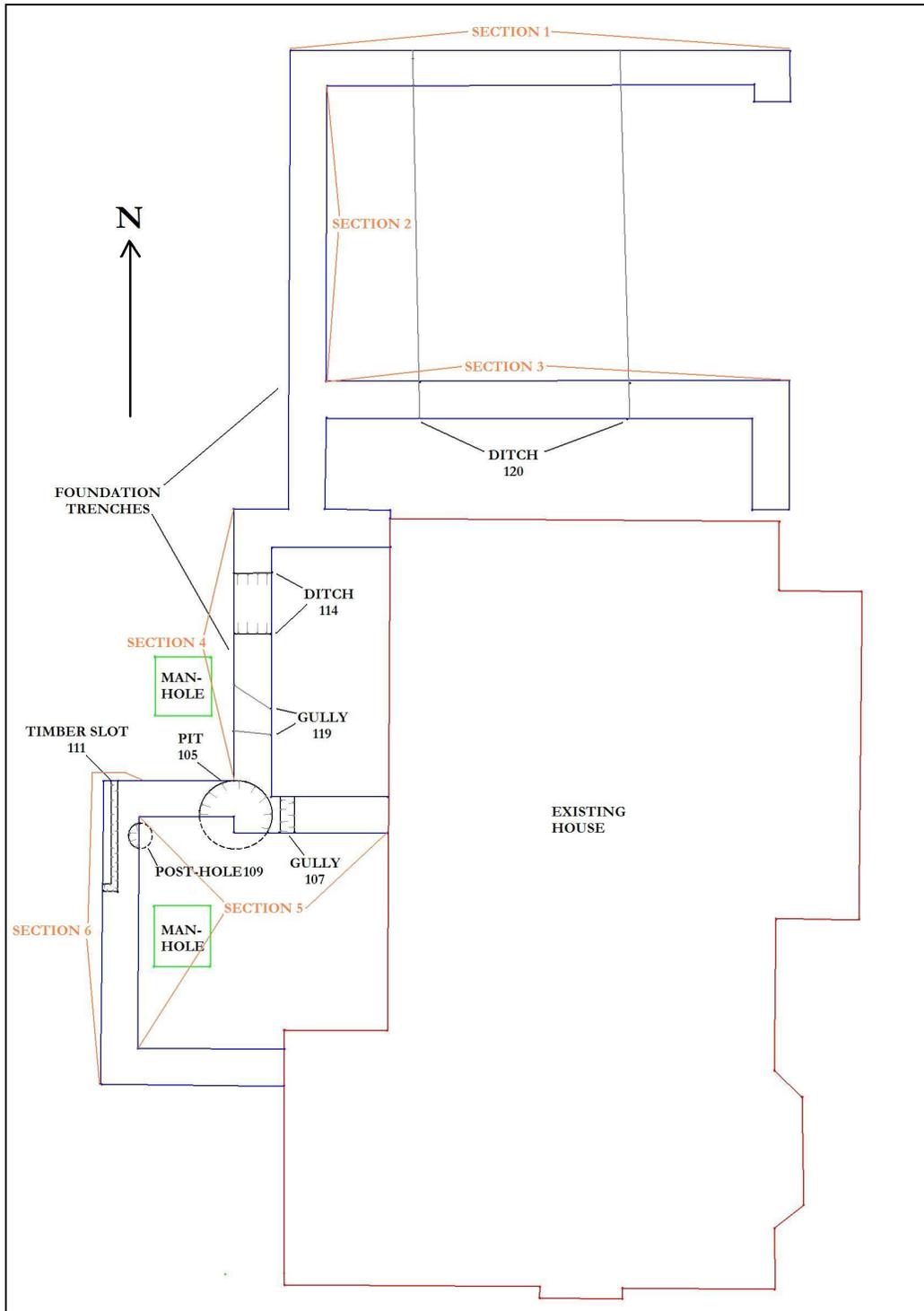


Figure 3 Plan showing excavated foundation trenches and archaeological features

The Rampart

1. As can be seen in Figure 1, Westons Farm sits on top of the line of the western rampart of the *mansio*. Therefore, assuming that the rampart was continuous, it was expected that all the foundation trenches excavated would cut into the remains of it. However, it is obvious from the current contours in the garden of Westons Farm, that the rampart has been the subject of significant re-landscaping in the past, because while in the fields to the north and south the rampart survives as an earthwork, here it has been flattened off.
2. The trenches to the immediate north of the house presented the best opportunity for discovering what had happened to the rampart as it passed through the gardens of Westons Farm, since they were positioned across its line. Figure 3 shows the results: the top of the rampart, on the left (western) edge of the drawings, has been flattened off, and the ground elsewhere appears to have been raised up. The original ground surface, present when the rampart was constructed, is visible as a buried topsoil layer in section 1, although it does not seem to extend throughout. Unfortunately later disturbance has destroyed the rear of the rampart in section 1, but it appears that it survives in section 3 on approximately that same line as the surviving earthworks to the north. This assumes that the re-deposited sand on top of the clay at the eastern end of the trench does not form part of the rampart, but is a result of later levelling.
3. Ditch 120 is of unknown date or purpose, but it seems to run roughly parallel to the rampart, cut into its eastern side. By the time that it was constructed it seems that the ground behind the rampart had already been raised up.
4. Pottery recovered from the buried soil layer, both here and elsewhere, indicates that the rampart is likely to have been built in, or after, the second century AD, possibly in about AD200.

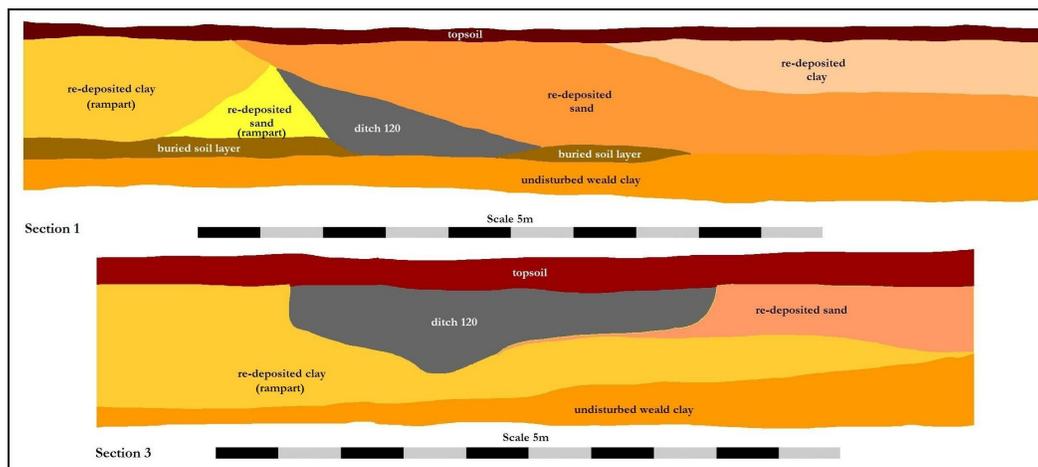


Figure 4 Drawings of sections 1 & 3, both facing south and positioned correctly in relation to one another

Pre-Rampart features.

1. The remaining foundation trenches were excavated through the centre of the remains of the rampart and it was here that archaeological features were found sealed beneath it and therefore relating to a phase of Roman occupation dating to before its construction.

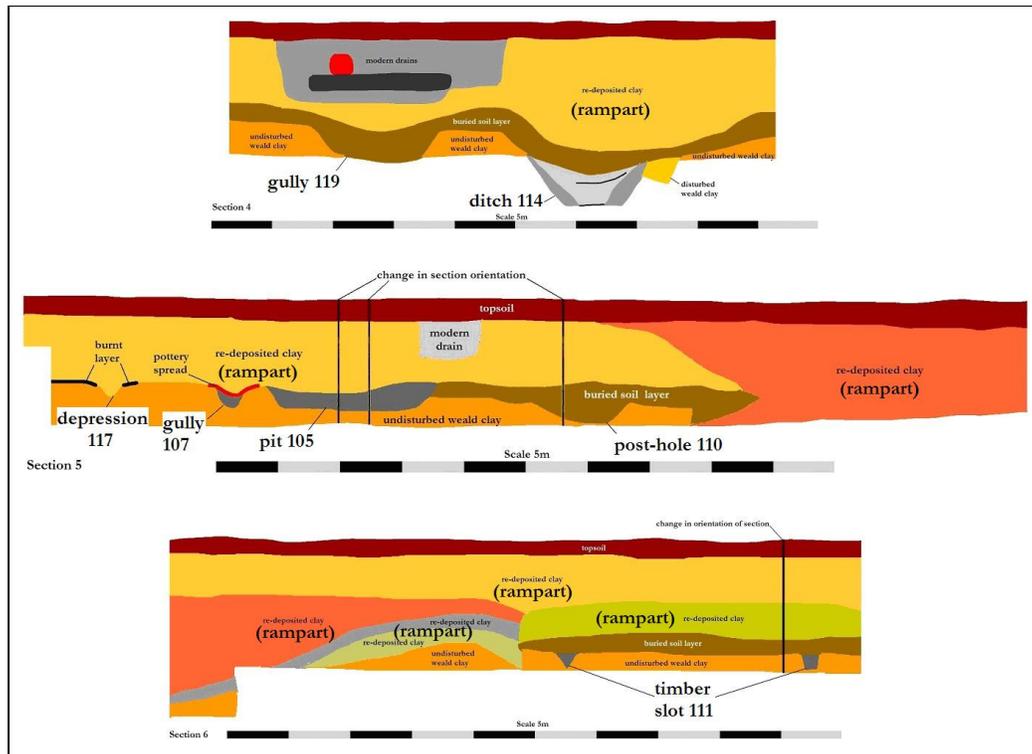


Figure 5 Drawings of section 4 – 6 showing pre-rampart Roman features

Ditch 114 & Gully 119

2. The most northerly of the archaeological features found within the foundation trenches was an east-west running ditch (114). It is possible that this ditch represents the northern boundary of pre-rampart Roman occupation, since no further features were found beyond it; although the limited area investigated makes this a very tentative suggestion. Contained within the fill of this ditch was a substantial quantity of late 1st – late 2nd century pottery, and one small tile fragment.
3. It is important to mention at this point that the soil conditions at Westons Farm appear to be so corrosive that the surface of all the pottery has been eaten waway and the tile almost completely destroyed. Indeed the three fragments of tile recovered from the site are not only very small, but were also very fragile. It is likely that most of any tile that there was has been destroyed.
4. To the south of this ditch and at an angle to it, a shallow gully (119) of unknown function was noted in the sides of the trench, filled with the buried topsoil layer.



Figure 6 Ditch 114 from the north, looking at section 4

Pit 105, Gully 107 & Depression 117

1. To the south of gully 119 a pit (105) was excavated. In addition to a relatively large quantity of late 1st – late 2nd century pottery and one fragment of tile found within its fill, a lump of slag was found, suggesting the presence of metal-working in the vicinity. The pit appeared to have been dug through the buried soil layer, but still be beneath the rampart clays. This suggests more than one phase of Roman occupation on the site, since ditch 114 clearly pre-dated the soil layer.
2. To the east of this pit a shallow gully ran, again containing late 1st – late 2nd century pottery, but also three fragments of dressed/worked stone (one ironstone, one upper and one lower greensand). To the east of the gully the top of the Weald clay, through which these features were dug, was covered by a thin band of burnt material, which partially filled a shallow depression (117). This group of features may all, like pit 105, post-date the buried soil layer, but this can not be proven since it does not extend beyond the pit.

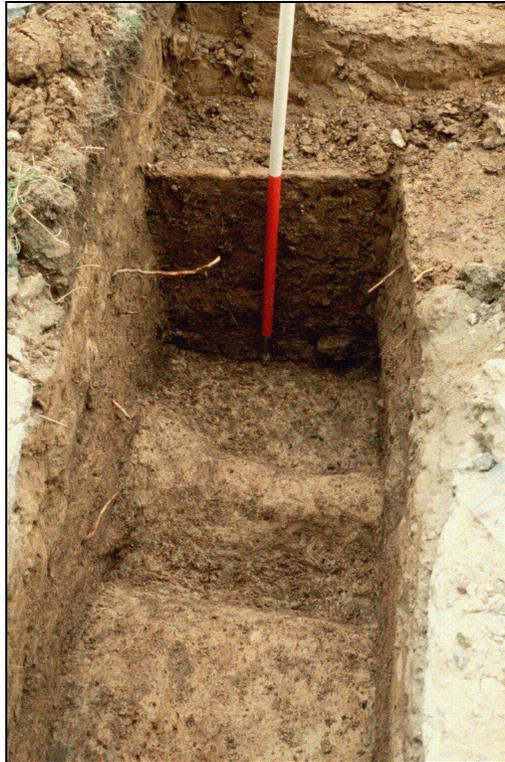


Figure 7 Pit 105 and, in front of it, gully 107, looking west

Post-hole 109 & Slot 111

1. To the west of pit 105 lay another small pit, or more likely a post-hole (109), which pre-dates the buried soil layer since it is filled with it. Immediately to the west of this a long narrow slot (111) was excavated, again under the soil layer. It is possible that this may have been for a beam or plank associated with some timber structure.



Figure 8 post-hole 109, to the right of the scale,
and slot 111, to the left (looking north)

The pottery

1. Altogether 431 sherds of pottery weighing 6.39kg were recovered from the excavation, a comparatively large amount considering the small size of the trenches and of the features excavated.
2. The assemblage was dominated by Alice Holt grey wares which were supplied from the pottery kilns only 16 km to the north. Only a small quantity came from the other known local source, that of Rowlands Castle to the south. The only fine wares in the whole assemblage were three sherds of East Gaulish Samian ware, which had suffered severe erosion from the soil conditions.
3. All the pottery recovered fell into a date range of the late first to the late second century AD.

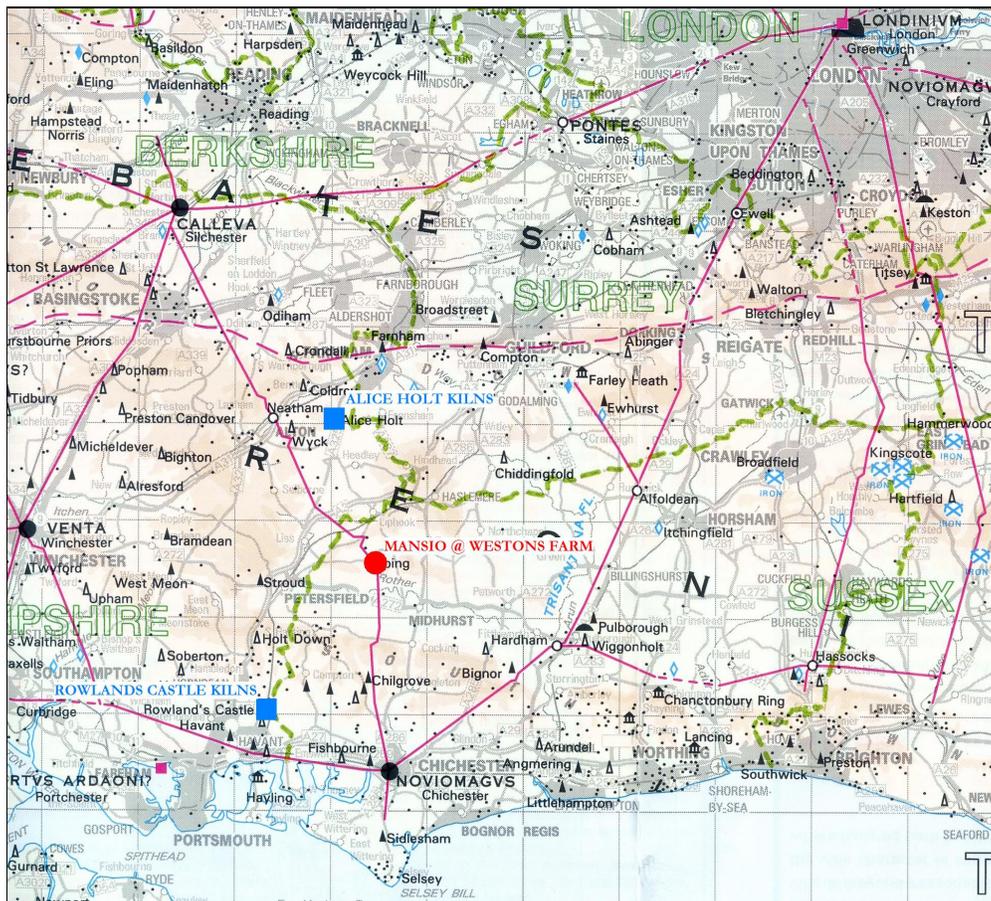


Figure 9 Map of Roman Britain showing Westons Farm and its pottery suppliers

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SURVIVAL OF DEPOSITS

1. The limited extent and size of the foundation trenches necessarily means that a very incomplete picture has been gained of the archaeological remains at Westons Farm. However, it can be asserted that Roman remains do survive on the site and these relate not only to the known *mansio*, but also to a hitherto unknown earlier settlement.
2. Based on the results from this excavation, it would appear that the *mansio* was constructed sometime around the year AD 200 and that it at least partially covered the area of an earlier settlement, which probably had its origins in the second half of the 1st century AD. Several key questions remain to be answered, including ascertaining the sequence of activity in the area. Was it settlement – road – *mansio*, or road - settlement – *mansio*? And did the settlement continue on as a *vicus* to the *mansio*?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. 2005. *Method Statement for an An Archaeological Excavation at Westons Farm, Iping Road, Milland, West Sussex*.
Unpublished.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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