

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
White Meadows Primary School
Whitelea Road, Wick Littlehampton
West Sussex**

NGR 502540 102940

WSCC Planning Reference WSCC/087/10/LU

**Project No: 4701
Site Code: WML10**

**ASE Report No: 2011155
OASIS ID: archaeol6-105637**

**by
Simon Stevens BA MIFA**

September 2011

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the amalgamation of two schools, Flora McDonald Junior and Wickbourne Infants, to create one school to be known as White Meadows Primary School, located on Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex.

The majority of the groundworks at the site (Areas A and C) were completed without archaeological monitoring.

Area B, which was monitored, was found to be heavily truncated by existing services and no archaeological remains were encountered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA) was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the amalgamation of the two schools, Flora McDonald Junior and Wickbourne Infants, to create one new school to be known as White Meadows Primary School, located on Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex (NGR 502540 102940; Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies at a height of c.6m AOD and is situated on the Coastal Plain of West Sussex in the settlement of Wick, which lies on the eastern bank of the River Arun c.2km from where it meets the sea at Littlehampton. The school lies within a heavily built environment to the west of the A284.
- 1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the superficial geology of the site consists of River Terrace Deposits and the underlying bedrock is Chalk (BGS 2011).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Owing to the known archaeological sensitivity of the area, John Mills, the Senior Archaeologist at West Sussex County Council recommended that a condition was attached to the planning consent (reference: WSCC/087/10/LU) for an archaeological watching brief during ground excavations associated with the new development. Condition 16 states that:

'No ground excavations, landscaping works or infrastructure works pursuant to the planning permission will commence on the site until a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved programme of archaeological work shall be carried out in full.'

Reason: To ensure investigation and recording of archaeological Heritage Assets on the site during the course of development.'

- 1.3.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was duly produced by ASE (ASE 2011). This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in the subsequent reporting and archiving of the results. It was approved by West Sussex County Council before the commencement of work at the site.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The general aims given in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ibid) were as follows:

'The general objective of the archaeological work is to monitor all excavations associated with the development....in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the excavations are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards'

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks carried out during visits to the site between early June and late July 2011. The work was undertaken by Simon Stevens and Andy Margetts (Senior Archaeologists). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following information is drawn from an archaeological Desk Based Assessment of the Littlehampton Academy, some 750m to the east of the proposed site, prepared by L-P: Archaeology (L-P Archaeology 2008).
- 2.2 The site is located on the lower Sussex coastal plain. Although there is evidence for Palaeolithic activity on the raised beaches of the Coastal Plain to the north, the vicinity of the site has less potential for such remains. This pattern continues in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods although it is thought that Mesolithic activity may have been widespread; the dearth of material being a consequence of coastal change, 20th century development and a lack of research.
- 2.3 The Bronze Age marks a significant change in the utilisation of the landscape, with funerary monuments along the chalk downs and settlement evidence and exploitation of the natural resources focussed near the coast. A Bronze Age occupation site has been identified c. 1km to the east of the site, although this is based on finds recovered during the construction of housing in 1946. No formal archaeological investigation has been undertaken at the site. There are two further Bronze Age settlements further to the northeast, both confirmed through evaluation trenching.
- 2.4 The Iron Age is also well represented. An Early Iron Age enclosure is noted at Wickbourne and Early Iron Age pottery sherds recovered from Littlehampton Roman Villa may represent a possible Iron Age settlement at the villa site. However, the majority of the evidence dates to the mid-late Iron Age, with activity at the former Horticultural Research International site (an *in situ* vessel, two ditches and a linear feature), Watermead Industrial Estate (a substantial Late Iron Age or Roman settlement) and the Rustington Bypass (a sub-rectangular feature containing Late Iron Age pottery was recorded).
- 2.5 The Roman period in the Sussex coastal plain is represented by significant reorganisation of Late Iron Age infrastructure. The most obvious example of continuity from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period is possibly the winged corridor villa at Littlehampton, which was occupied from 1st – 3rd centuries. The Iron Age settlement at Watermead also continued into the Roman period, where a number of ditches are thought to represent the remnants of enclosures, while a series of postholes and beamslots are indicative of a timber structure at the site.
- 2.6 Other Roman features found in the area include rubbish pits, ditches and burials. A Roman cremation burial was found approximately 1km north of the site and a number of unstratified finds of pottery and coins have been noted as findspots in the locale.
- 2.7 The economy and land-usage of the area changed dramatically in the early medieval period. Arable farming across the region ceased and in many cases Saxon settlements were formed over previously arable fields. It has been suggested that a *witan* (a group of influential and important men) was held at Lyminster although there is to date no physical evidence for a Saxon hall in the area.

- 2.8 In the years prior to the Norman Conquest the lands around Littlehampton were owned by Countess Goda, daughter of Ethelred II and niece of Edward the Confessor.
- 2.9 At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Littlehampton was held in the Poling Hundred. The village comprised one hide, one plough, two cottages and one acre of meadow worth a total value of 10 shillings. The River Arun flowed to the sea on the east of Littlehampton (whereas now it is on the west) and the village was accessed from Angmering, along East Street. A solitary findspot of green-glazed pottery approximately 250m to the south of the site is the only archaeological evidence for medieval activity close to the site, suggesting that the land was under agricultural use as part of the lands of Lyminster.
- 2.10 The area of the site and its surrounding landscape was maintained for agricultural use for most of the post-medieval period. The railway to Lyminster was opened in 1846 and a spur line bringing the railway to Littlehampton was opened from Ford in 1863. During the late 19th and early 20th century a number of brickfields were established to the north and north-east of the site.
- 2.11 During the Second World War Littlehampton erected perimeter defences and tank traps around the core of the town. Two tanks traps have been identified to the southeast of the site.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Mechanical and manual groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from ASE. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.2 All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.2 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, and has been accepted for subsequent deposition at Littlehampton Museum. At present this museum does not issue accession numbers. The archive consists of the following:

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photograph	6 digital images
Bulk finds	-
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Following consultation between John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council and ASE, three discrete areas of groundworks at the site were earmarked for archaeological monitoring (Areas A, B and C, Fig. 2).

4.2 Area A

- 4.2.1 An extension in the south-east part of the site was designated as Area A. Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, all groundworks for the new building were completed without archaeological monitoring.

4.3 Area B

- 4.3.1 Groundworks associated with a 'link' between two existing buildings in the centre of the site were designated as Area B. During site visits in early June 2011, it became apparent that this area had been heavily truncated during the laying of existing services and digging of soakaways.
- 4.3.2 The encountered stratigraphic sequence noted in the side of an undisturbed footing consisted of a limited amount of a mid-brown loam topsoil, context [01], which was a maximum of 100mm in thickness. It overlay an orangey brown silty clay subsoil, context [02], which had a maximum thickness of 350mm. It in turn overlay the 'natural' brownish orange silty clay 'natural' Brickearth, context [03].
- 4.3.3 Given the level of truncation the watching brief in this area of the site was discontinued after the two visits, as it was apparent that archaeological remains were unlikely to survive in the locale.

4.4 Area C

- 4.4.1 Unfortunately, owing to a further misunderstanding on the part of the on-site contractors, the groundworks in the area immediately to the east of the existing buildings had also been completed prior to the final site visit in late July 2011.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The majority of the groundworks at the site were completed without archaeological monitoring.
- 5.2 Area B, which was the subject of an archaeological watching brief, was found to be heavily truncated by existing services and no archaeological remains were encountered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE. 2011. *White Meadows Primary School, Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpub. ASE document

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd for commissioning the work and John Mills, Senior Archaeologist, West Sussex County Council for his continued guidance throughout the project.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	WML10					
Identification Name and Address	White Meadows Primary School, Whitelea Road					
County, District &/or Borough	Arun District, West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	502540 102940					
Geology	Brickearth					
ASE Project No.	4701					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 03.06.2011 – 26.07.2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd.					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other <i>No Finds</i>		
<p>100 Word Summary</p> <p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the amalgamation of two schools, Flora McDonald Junior and Wickbourne Infants, to create one school to be known as White Meadows Primary School, located on Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Susse.</p> <p>The majority of the groundworks at the site (Areas A and C) were completed without archaeological monitoring due to contractor error.</p> <p>Area B, which was monitored, was found to be heavily truncated by existing services and no archaeological remains were encountered.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-105637

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at White Meadows Primary School, Whitelea Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex
Short description of the project	<p>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the amalgamation of two schools, Flora McDonald Junior and Wickbourne Infants, to create one school to be known as White Meadows Primary School, located on Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex.</p> <p>The majority of the groundworks at the site (Areas A and C) were completed without archaeological monitoring due to contractor error.</p> <p>Area B, which was monitored, was found to be heavily truncated by existing services and no archaeological remains were encountered.</p>
Project dates	Start: 03-06-2011 End: 26-07-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	4701 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WML10 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	WSCC/087/10/LU - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
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Site location	WEST SUSSEX ARUN LITTLEHAMPTON White Meadows Primary School, Wick
Postcode	BN17 7JL
Study area	10.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 0254 0294 50.8163503995 -0.544250591671 50 48 58 N 000 32 39 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.00m Max: 10.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	West Sussex County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Littlehampton Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Littlehampton Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Report','Unpublished Text'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at White Meadows Primary School, Whitelea Road, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Stevens, S.
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Description	Standard ASE Client Report A4-sized with cover logos.



© Archaeology South-East		White Meadows Primary School, Littlehampton	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4701	Aug 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011155	Drawn by: JLR		



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Project Ref: 4701

Aug 2011

Report Ref: 2011155

Drawn by: JLR

White Meadows School, Littlehampton

Location of monitored areas

Fig. 2

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