

Medieval Occupation at Sunnymede, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex

An archaeological excavation

By Sean Wallis

SNL15/204 (TQ 4465 1298)

Medieval Occupation at Sunnymede, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex

An Archaeological Excavation

for Sigma Homes Ltd

Planning Reference: LW/16/0459

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SNL 15/204

Summary

Site name: Land at Sunnymede, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4465 1298

Planning reference: LW/16/0459

Site activity: Excavation

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: SNL 15/204

Area of site: c. 345 sq m

Summary of results: The archaeological excavation has revealed a dense cluster of archaeological deposits representing components of a medieval settlement. It was possible to identify three distinct phases of activity spanning the 12th and 13th centuries. The changing nature of the features from each phase, and the fact that most of the pottery assemblages were not mixed, suggest that activity on the site may not have been continuous.

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by Sean Wallis with contributions by Luke Barber

Report 15/204b

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on an irregular parcel of land situated immediately to the east of Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex (NGR: TQ 4465 1298). The work was commissioned by Mr Adam Light of Sigma Homes Ltd, 44-46 Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2PD.

Planning permission (LW/16/0459) has been granted by Lewes District Council for the re-development of a parcel of land (c. 0.44ha) to the north of the historic core of Ringmer, East Sussex. The consent was subject to two conditions (26 and 27) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in advance of groundworks. This was in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework as revised in 2018 (NPPF 2018), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The site was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in August 2015 (Wallis 2015) which demonstrated the site's potential and showed it to contain medieval features which would be damaged or destroyed by the development. As a result, excavation was required to mitigate these effects and to enhance understanding of the nature of these features. This report is concerned with that follow-up excavation, carried out in 2018, which targeted features revealed in the evaluation.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter, the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer, who advises Lewes District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes, Jim Webster and the author, between 15th and 25th October 2018, and the site code is SNL 15/204. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course. Lewes Museum would be the most obviously suitable, but it is not currently accepting new archives.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located immediately east of Norlington Lane, approximately 500m north of the historic core of Ringmer, East Sussex (Figs 1 and 2). The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Gault Formation - Mudstone (BGS 2006). The area targetted for excavation lay towards the west of the overall development site, close to Norlington Lane. The geology recorded during the excavation generally consisted of mid- yellow grey clay, with varying amounts of mudstone and flint inclusions.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of moderate archaeological potential due to its location close to the historic core of Ringmer, which is well known for its medieval pottery industry. The village has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). Recent fieldwork immediately east of the present site uncovered the remains of an old kiln, which had initially been recorded in the late 19th century, along with a series of undated ditches (CgMs 2013). Around 200m to the north of the site, a 13th- to 14th-century pottery production site was excavated in 1994 (Gregory 2014). An archaeological watching brief at the adjacent site to the north-west (Norlington Villas) did not reveal any features, although some sherds of medieval pottery were recovered (Margetts 2011).

An evaluation of the present site was carried out in August 2015. Seven trenches were excavated across the site and a concentration of features dating from the medieval period was recorded in the trench closest to Norlington Lane, which could be associated with a small roadside settlement (Wallis 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the project was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and features within an area of the site where features had been discovered during the evaluation, around Trench 1 located in the western part of the site, close to Norlington Lane.

The Excavation

The excavation area was stripped down to the top of the underlying natural geology, which necessitated the removal of up to 0.50m of topsoil (50) and subsoil deposits (51). The area was stripped by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Care was taken not to strip too close to some of the shrubs around the perimeter of the site, and it was also agreed that the existing access road would be left in place unless it appeared that significant archaeological deposits may be present beneath it. As a result, the excavation covered an area of approximately 345 sq m (Fig. 3)(Pl.12).

All of the archaeological features, including post-holes, gullies and possible surfaces, recorded in the excavation area, were sampled by hand (Fig. 4). The vast majority of the features contained sherds of medieval pottery and, due to the extensive research which has been undertaken on the Ringmer pottery industry, it has been

possible to suggest some continued activity on the site from the beginning of the 11th century until the end of the 13th century (Fig. 50.

It was noted during the machine stripping that there was very little subsoil remaining on the site. In most areas, especially the western part of the site, the natural clay was exposed immediately below a relatively thick deposit of modern garden soil. This suggests that the site level may have been reduced to some extent in the past, although it is difficult to determine whether this was as a result of the obvious activity in the medieval period, or a subsequent episode. Some chalk was noted below the topsoil in the south-west corner of the excavation area, indicating that a deliberate attempt had been made to raise the ground level here at some point in the past. Whatever the reason for the previous ground reduction it is clear that the features exposed on the surface of the natural clay have been truncated to a certain extent, and this certainly explains why some of the post-holes recorded were so shallow.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of all of the excavated features, with dating evidence.

Phase 1: 12th Century

Most of the archaeological features from this phase were recorded in the southern part of the excavation area, to the south of a shallow gully (1000). In a small number of cases, the 12th century features had been truncated during later phases of occupation.

Discrete features

The majority of discrete features from this phase appear to represent the truncated remains of post-holes. Most of these were recorded to the south of gully 1000 and, although there are no clear patterns of post-holes, it is likely that some of the features were related to structures on the site. Post-hole 25 was unusual as it was actually positioned along the line of gully 1000. However, as this gully was quite shallow and difficult to see, it is possible that it may be earlier than 12th century in date. It is also possible that post-hole 25 was positioned at a point where the gully stopped and started again. The post-holes are summarized in Table 1, along with those which contained no dateable finds but are likely to be broadly contemporary.

Table 1: Summary of 12th-century (and pre-13th century) features

Cut	Fill(s)	Dimensions (m)	Depth (m)	Finds / Comments
1	52	0.36 (diameter)	0.10	Pottery (4 sherds). Recorded during evaluation.
6	57	0.27 (diameter)	N/A	Recorded during evaluation but not excavated.
7	58	>0.40 x 0.29	N/A	Recorded during evaluation but not excavated.
8	59	0.33 (diameter)	0.06	Undated.
9	60	0.19 x 0.16	0.03	Pottery (1 sherd).
10	61	0.30 x 0.40	0.19	Pottery (3 sherds). (Pl. 1)
11	62	0.23 (diameter)	0.16	Pottery (1 sherd).
12	63	0.30 x 0.20	0.05	Undated.
13	64	0.30 x 0.25	0.10	Pottery (1 sherd).
14	65	0.27 (diameter)	0.07	Pottery (1 sherd).
15	66	0.38 x 0.30	0.03	Pottery (1 sherd).
16	67	0.18 (diameter)	0.02	Undated.

Cut	Fill(s)	Dimensions (m)	Depth (m)	Finds / Comments
17	73	0.50 x 0.35	0.06	Pottery (1 sherd).
18	74	0.30 x 0.26	0.09	Pottery (3 sherds).
20	76	0.27 x 0.25	0.11	Pottery (1 sherd).
22	69	0.38 (diameter)	0.06	Undated. In area disturbed by pit 2 during evaluation.
25	72	0.50 (diameter)	0.06	Pottery (2 sherds).
29	80	>0.61 x 0.30	0.13	Pottery (11 sherds). Truncated by pit 28.(Pl. 5)

Feature 82 was recorded to the north of the projected line of gully 1000, and was interpreted as representing a shallow spread of material, although it could also have been a very shallow pit. The feature measured at least 2.60m by 1.50m, but was only 0.05m deep. Its northern end had been truncated by a modern service trench, and its southern end by pit 30. Seventeen sherds of 12th-century pottery were recovered from its surface and the excavated section of the feature. Post-hole 37 was observed immediately north of spread 82. The post-hole measured 0.37m in diameter and was up to 0.17m deep (Pl. 7). Seven sherds of 12th-century pottery were recovered from its single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (91).

Linear features

Gully 1000 was aligned approximately E-W across the central part of the excavation area. The feature was very shallow (just 0.04m-0.08m deep) (Pl. 3), and this may explain why it appeared to be discontinuous in plan. However, the presence of post-hole 25 along the line of the gully may indicate that the feature was dug in sections. The gully was approximately 12m in length, and appeared to fizzle out at its eastern end, probably as a result of its shallowness. At its western end it was cut by a 13th-century pit (27), and was not visible to the west of this. It was also truncated by another 13th-century pit (33). Gully 1000 was up to 0.58m wide, and two sherds of 12th-century pottery were recovered from the two slots excavated through it by hand. It is possible that the gully could predate the medieval period, and that the small pottery assemblage is intrusive. This theory is supported by the fact that the gully was the only feature on the site to yield any burnt flint, which is sometimes indicative of prehistoric and Roman sites.

Another short length of gully (21) in the south-east part of the excavation area measured only 1.70m in length, but it is possible that it may originally have extended to the north and south as it was only 0.03m deep. Five sherds of 12th century-pottery were recovered from its fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (68).

Gully 38 was investigated in the north-west corner of the excavation area extending north-east from the western limit of excavation for just over 2m, before being truncated by a gully containing 13th-century pottery (1001). The fact that gully 38 was not traced to the north of gully 1001 could indicate that it originally turned in this area and was subsequently re-cut by gully 1001. A slot through gully 38 indicated that it was up to 0.35m wide and 0.06m deep. Three sherds of 12th-century pottery were recovered from its fill of mid orange grey clayey silt (92).

Phase 2 : 12th-13th Century

Several features contained pottery spanning the period from the late 12th to early 13th century. Whilst some of them could date from the preceding or succeeding phases, the features in the north-west corner are considerably different in nature, suggesting a separate period of activity.

Discrete features

A number of post-holes or small pits were recorded across the site, some of them during the earlier evaluation, and these are summarized in Table 2. In general, activity seems to be concentrated in the northern part of the site, although a few features were recorded to the south of gully 1000.

Cut	Fill(s)	Туре	Dimensions (m)	Depth (m)	Finds / Comments
2	53	Pit	0.60 x 0.50	0.08	Pottery (5 sherds). Recorded during evaluation.
5	56	Pit	0.95 x 0.72	N/A	Pottery (2 sherds). Recorded during evaluation but not dug.
19	75	Post-hole	0.29 x 0.25	0.09	Pottery (2 sherds). (Pl. 2)
23	70	Post-hole	0.30 x 0.19	0.05	Pottery (1 sherd).
30	81	Pit	0.84 x 0.60	0.09	Pottery (4 sherds).
36	90	Pit	0.83 x 0.60	0.07	Pottery (7 sherds).
42	96	Post-hole	0.50 (diameter)	0.16	Pottery (16 sherds).
44	98	Post-hole	0.45 (diameter)	0.11	Pottery (3 sherds).(Pl. 9)
49	153	Post-hole	0.30 (diameter)	0.08	Pottery (6 sherds). Recorded in area of surface 1002. (Pl. 10)
3135	3195, 3196	Pit	1.98 x 1.84	0.63	Pottery (36 sherds), struck flint, fired clay, burnt flint.

 Table 2: Summary of 12th- to 13th-century features

Several relatively large sub-rectangular pits were recorded in the north-west corner although, as with most of the features on the site, they were generally quite shallow, suggesting previous truncation from above. Pit 41 measured 2.30m by 1.30m, and was up to 0.20m deep. The feature was half-sectioned, and its compact fill of mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent flint inclusions (95) yielded a pottery assemblage of 20 sherds dating from the late 12th- to early 13th-centuries, along with a fragment of medieval tile and a residual Roman sherd.

Two very shallow pits (46 and 47) were investigated immediately east of pit 41. Although they appeared to intercut, the relationship between pits 46 and 47 was not clear. Pit 46 measured approximately 2.80m by 2.05m, and was up to 0.11m deep. It had a compact fill of mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent flint nodules (150), which contained 87 sherds of pottery dating from the late 12th or early 13th centuries. A further 157 sherds of pottery were recovered from pit 47, which measured 1.95m by 1.58m. This pit was only up to 0.08m deep, and its fill of mid grey silty clay (151) contained fewer flint inclusions compared to pit 46. It appeared that pit 45 had been cut through pit 46, although this was only noticeable in section. Pit 45 was up to 0.31m deep, and 19 sherds of 12th- to 13th-century pottery were recovered from its fill of dark greyish-brown silty clay (99)(Pl. 9).

Due to their shallow depth and the compact nature of their fills, it is possible that features 46 and 47 may actually have been created to provide 'hardstandings', utilizing tightly packed flint and broken pottery. This also seems to be the case with the large 'feature' 1002, along the northern edge of the site. The feature was roughly

rectangular in plan, measuring at least 4.60m by 3.50m, and clearly extended beyond the northern limit of excavation. Hand excavation showed the presence of a very compact deposit of flint pebbles and pottery, within a mid orange grey silty clay matrix (1002)(Pls 10, 11). This had been laid down on top of the natural clay, possibly within a shallow cut. This surface or hardstanding was up to 0.08m thick, and over 380 fragments of late 12th- to early 13th-century pottery were recovered from the two slots (48 and 101). Surface 1002 appeared to have been truncated by a shallow pit (1003), which was recorded in both the hand dug slots.

Pit 1003 was up to 0.23m deep, and its fill of mid orange grey silty clay had far less flint pebble inclusions than surface 1002. Over 140 sherds of late 12th-to early 13th-century pottery were recovered from the two slots dug through the pit (49 and 102). It is likely that pit 1003 was cut by a 13th-century gully (1001), although this relationship was not visible in section. This is probably due to the shallow nature of the gully, which was only 0.07m in the slot excavated close to pit 1003 (40)(Pl. 8).

Phase 3: 13th Century

The few features assigned to this phase contained pottery which clearly dates to the 13th century. These features are generally different in character to those from the preceding phases, and in some cases truncate earlier features.

Discrete features

Pits 26, 27 and 28 appear to be associated with one another as they form a line, and were equally spaced (1.80m-1.85m). The three pits were sub-rectangular in plan, similar in size, and had quite steep sides and flattish bases. All of them appeared to have been deliberately backfilled as their upper fills were a mottled mix of natural clay and mid brownish grey silty clay. Pit 26 was not fully exposed, but is unlikely to have extended much further beyond the western limit of excavation. A 19th century brick was recovered from the surface of the stripped feature, and is clearly intrusive in nature. Pit 27 was cut through a shallow 12th-century gully (1000), and the gully could not be traced to the west of the pit. Pit 28 truncated a probable 12th-century pit (29). The pits are summarized in Table 3.

 Table 3. Summary of 13th-century pits

Cut	Fill(s)	Dimensions (m)	Depth (m)	Finds / Comments
26	77, 78	>1.16 x 1.04	0.49	Pottery (11 sherds). Finds from upper fill 77. (Pl. 4)
27	83, 84	1.13 x 1.11	0.40	Pottery (12 sherds). Finds from upper fill 83.
28	79	1.15 x 1.04	0.43	Pottery (13 sherds).(Pl. 5)

Pit 33 was recorded immediately to the north of pit 28, and clearly truncated the earlier shallow gully (1000). The pit was sub-circular in plan and measured about 1.00m in diameter. It was quite shallow (0.07m), and nine sherds of 13th-century pottery were recovered from its fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (88), along with an iron nail. The pit also contained a small fragment of kiln /hearth lining, although no such features were recorded nearby.

Pit 31 was investigated close to the western edge of the excavation area. It had been truncated on its southern side by a modern service trench, and measured 1.16m by at least 0.57m (Pl. 6). Five sherds of 13th-century pottery were found within its fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (85).

Linear features

Gully 1001 was recorded in the north-west corner of the excavation area, aligned approximately eastwards from the corner, before turning north-east. The feature was traced for about 6m and, although the relationship between the two could not be seen clearly, it is likely that it cut through pit 1003. Gully 1001 also appeared to truncate gully 38, which contained 12th-century pottery. The feature was up to 0.65m wide and 0.07m deep, with a single fill mid greyish brown clayey silt (93 and 94). Forty-seven sherds of pottery were recovered from the gully, along with two small fragments of medieval tile and a presumably intrusive fragment of late post-medieval brick. The sherds from slot 39 were clearly 13th-century in date, whilst the material from slot 40 was mixed, indicating that some of it may have derived from nearby pit 1003.

Phase 4 : Undated

Surprisingly few features contained no closely dateable finds. It is likely that the post-holes recorded in the southern part of the site are associated with the 12th-century ones recorded close by.

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered 1226 sherds of pottery, weighing 9261g, from 41 contexts (catalogued in Appendix 2). The overall assemblage is of variable condition with a great range of sherd sizes. Although the general trend is toward small sherds (ie up to 30mm across) larger sherds are also present (ie to *c*. 100mm across) in a few deposits. Much of the pottery shows moderate signs of surface damage from burial in acidic conditions. This makes the assessment of post-depositional reworking difficult but there has clearly been some reworking though on the whole this does not appear to be excessive. Residual sherds are present in a number of deposits and a few intrusive pieces are also present. However, overall the context groups appear to be quite coherent, probably at least in part due to the relatively short chronological range of the activity on site.

With a single exception the assemblage is composed entirely of medieval material, all of which can be placed in one continuous period of activity. Although the maximum date range of the material suggests a span covering c. 1125/50 to 1300 the majority can best be placed between c. 1175 and 1225.

The pottery has been recorded using the fabric series established for Lewes (Barber in prep). All of the pottery was quantified using sherd count, weight and estimated number of vessels by fabric for each context. All rims were recorded by reference to the Lewes rim form series (Barber forthcoming) and notes were made on any decoration and use wear. The combined site assemblage is summarized in Table 4 where fabrics are listed together with their Lewes codes.

Table 4: Pottery assemblage: fabrics and total quantification

Fabric	Expansion	Period	No	Wt (g)	Comments (including estimated number of different vessels
code				_	represented)
ESW	East Sussex Ware (grog tempered)	Roman	1	4	Undiagnostic of form (hereafter ?) x1
SNL 3a	Lewes Saxo-Norman Flinty Ware (oxidized)	EM	36	310	Cooking pots x17; chimney pot x1; ? x13
SNL 3b	Lewes Saxo-Norman Flinty Ware (reduced variant)	EM	1	4	? x1
SNL 3d	Lewes Saxo-Norman Flinty Ware (red flint variant)	EM	14	65	Cooking pot x7; ? x6
SNL 5	Clay Hill/Ringmer Flinty Ware (fine flint and quartz)	EM	482	4216	Dripping dish? x1; frying pan? x1; frying pan x1; chimney pot x1; cooking pots x72; jugs x2; ? x40
HML 1a	Early Ringmer medium sandy ware with common flints	HM	501	3460	Cooking pots x55; frying pans x3; jugs x3; ? x17
HML 1b	Developed Ringmer: fine/medium sandy ware with sparse flint	HM	180	1138	Bowls x3; cooking pots x24; ?jug x1; ? x18
HML 3a	Developed Ringmer: well-fired fine/medium sandy ware, very rare flint	HM	7	43	Bowl x1; ?pipkin x1; jug x1; ?jug x1; ? x1
HML 9a	Developed Ringmer: fine sandy ware	HM	2	3	? x2
HML 9c	Ringmer/Rye-type fine sandy ware with iron oxides	HM	2	18	Jug x1; ? x1

EM - Early Medieval c. 1050-1200/25; HM - High Medieval c. 1200/25-1350/75).

Roman

A single heavily abraded oxidized East Sussex Ware body sherd was residual in pit 41 (95). The sherd, which is not diagnostic of form, probably derives from a background manuring scatter.

Medieval

Although the assemblage includes both Early and High Medieval fabrics they appear to relate to a single continuous period of activity that straddles the c. 1200/25 boundary between the two ceramic periods. As such the assemblages are considered together.

The earliest type represented is Lewes Flinty Ware, a type tempered with profuse fine/medium alluvial flint grits, occasionally with rare shell and quartz inclusions. The vast majority consist of the common oxidized type (SNL 3a). Rims are scarce but include some simple everted examples (Lewes rims CP2a and CP3c) of late 11th to mid 12th century type as well as more developed types with concave tops (Lewes CP5p) that are more typical of the second half of the 12th century. The quantities of these vessels present and their regular association with the later fabrics clearly indicate they were in contemporaneous use. However, their numbers are not high and activity at the site obviously started when these wares were already a minor component of the ceramic market. The SNL 5 Clay Hill type wares, tempered with fine fluvial flint grits and notable quantities of quartz, are thought to appear around the middle of the 12th century and replace the earlier Lewes Flinty Wares. At the current site they are well

represented, forming the 2nd largest fabric group in the assemblage (Table 4). The precise date SNL 5 types ended is uncertain but is most likely between *c*. 1200 and 1225 though by this time it had already largely been replaced by the more sandy High Medieval wares (HML 1a in particular). The SNL 5 sherds in the current assemblage are typically dominated by cooking pots, the vast majority of which have variations of the concave-topped rim (CP 5g, 5h and 5i mainly) though some more developed 13th-century types are also present (eg CP 6q). A scatter of other vessel types are present in SNL 5, including an unglazed jug with deep furrowed wide strap handle with central row of pricking and a J4b rim with rim-top stabbing (surface 101 (155)). Typically decoration is virtually absent on the SNL 5 vessels – the only features of note being some finger tipping on the CP 5g rim of a cooking pot (post-hole 9 (60)) and an applied vertical clay strip on a sherd of undiagnostic form (pit 47 (151)).

The High Medieval types are totally dominated by the earliest of the Ringmer products, namely HM 1a and HM 1b (Table 4). These represent the pivotal point where quartz becomes the main tempering agent and flint is rapidly phased out. Cooking pots with the concave rim types, in the tradition of the earlier SNL 5 fabric, dominate the HM 1a wares (CP 5e, 5g, 5h and 5i mainly) but there is a sprinkling of more developed rectangular club rims (eg CP 6a and 6g). Again there are a couple of frying pans represented, both with socketed tubular handles, and a few jugs. The latter all have deeply furrowed wide strap handles with pricked or knife-tip stabbing and no glazing. This certainly suggests an early date in the later 12th or beginning of the 13th century – the proportion of glazed jugs rapidly increasing in the early 13th century. With the exception of a couple of vertically applied clay strips, one with finger tipping, on vessels of uncertain form, no other features are present. The more developed HML 1b fabric is also represented and interestingly still includes a number of the concave topped rim types (CP 5e, 5g and 5i) though proportions of more developed rectangular clubbed types are higher (eg CP 6g and 6q). Of note is a bowl with finger-tip decoration around its concave B5e rim (pit 31 (85)). Certainly the forms present in the current assemblage and the repeated association with SNL 5 and HML 1a fabrics in apparently uncontaminated groups suggests this fabric may begin a little earlier than the early 13th century date previously though (Barber forthcoming).

The remaining High Medieval fabrics are represented by a sparse scatter of sherds that are difficult to interpret. The HM 3a sherds include a range of vessel types, including the first glazed jug from the site (pit 36 (90)). However, many of the sherds are notably worn and the jug sherd from pit 36 (90) is clearly intrusive in this group. These and the few contemporary finer HML 9a and 9c sherds, which are also notably worn, probably derive from a background scatter spanning c. 1225/50 to 1350 that may be related to manuring of the land at this time. However, it is these types (notably the HML 9a) that were being produced at the nearby kilns on Norlington Lane (Gregory 2014) and it is possible the current material represents outlying waste from these.

The current site contained a number of cut features, including pits, post-holes and ditches. Some of the pits in particular produced some quite large assemblages. Considering the relative absence of chronological mixing (in contrast to pits in the urban core of Lewes) these offer a useful insight into local fabric ratios in the later 12th to early/mid 13th century. The three best are summarized in Table 5.

14010 01	Rey context pottery assento	10500	
Cut	47	48	101
Deposit	151	152	155
Feat type	Pit	Pit	Pit
Date	с. 1175-1225	с. 1175-1225	
Fabric			с. 1200-1225
SNL 3a	4/42g [2.5%] (CP x3)	2/14g [1.8%] (CP x1)	1/16g [0.2%] (CP x1)
SNL 3d	-	1/4g [0.9%] (CP x1)	-
SNL 5	98/1102g [62.4%] (CP x11; ?FRY x1; ? x1)	46/262g [41.8%] (CP x7)	107/1160g [22.2%] (CP x16; dripping dish x1; fry x1; chimp x1; jug x1)
HML 1a	40/352g [25.5%] (CP x5)	44/186g [40%] (CP x6)	302/2064g [62.7%] (CP x14; fry x3; jug x2; ? x2)
HML 1b	15/60g [9.6%] (? x1)	17/86g [15.5%] (CP x4; bowl x1; ?jug x1)	70/524g [14.5%] (CP x8)
HML 3a	-	-	2/24g [0.4%] (?Jug x1)
Totals	157/1556g	110/552g	482/3788g

 Table 5: Key context pottery assemblages

CHIMP – chimney pot; DISH – dish; CP – cooking pot; FRY – frying pan; BOWL – bowl; JUG – jug). Percentages are based on sherd count.

All three of these groups contain low quantities of Lewes Flinty Wares. These are either residual or were old vessels in contemporaneous use. If the percentages of the three main fabrics are compared they show the declining SNL 5 types being replaced by the more advanced HML 1a and HML 1b types. Most of these pit groups do not have any later types (HML 3a, HML 9a and 9c) so can be placed before c. 1225 and considering the fabrics involved they clearly straddle *c*. 1200. As such they provide a very useful set of comparative figures for the c. 1175 to 1225 period. Cooking wares totally dominate and interestingly all cooking pot rims from pit 47 (151) and surface 1002 (152) (excluding one possibly residual SNL 3a CP 2a) are of the concave topped types (CP 5e 5g and 5h). Surface 1002 (155) also includes later types (CP 6a, 6q and 7b) alongide the concave types (CP 5a, 5e, 5g, 5h, 5i and 5q). It also contains a little early HML 3a fabric and the first definite jugs confirming it to be the latest of the three groups.

Summary

The assemblage from the site suggests three periods when refuse was deposited. Initially some low-level manuring of arable land appears to have occurred during the Roman period. However, it was not until *c*. 1150 that activity appears to have begun on the site itself. This would appear to have peaked between *c*. 1175 and 1225 before coming to an end. The final period appears to represent either a more intense period of manuring during the 13th to mid 14th centuries or waste products scattered from the nearby pottery production sites. The absence of later ceramics suggests a retraction in activity following the Black Death and that the land was not subjected to manuring after that.

The assemblage appears to be of domestic nature and there was nothing to suggest wasters from production – indeed many of the vessels had been sooted through use. Even considering its relatively early date, the low numbers of jugs and general absence of decoration suggests the associated household was of low status. All the pottery was locally sourced – no regional or international wares being present. Although imported wares at Lewes had declined in the High Medieval period they were present and, in an assemblage of this size, one may expect to see at least a few such sherds if the household was well-connected.

Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

A relatively small assemblage of brick and tile was recovered during the archaeological work (6 fragments weighing 828g). The material was in mixed condition, with the earlier types being notably abraded and/or affected by an acidic subsoil and the later ones being quite fresh.

Due to the small size of the assemblage it has been recorded by form and date rather than by fabric. Although fabric samples have previously been collected for this area a careful watch was made to identify any new potential types not previously recorded. In the event no new types were noted. The assemblage is summarized in Appendix 3.

The ceramic building material is from two quite chronologically distinct periods. The earliest corresponds with the main period of activity on the site which relates to the later 12th to early 13th centuries. Although the two scraps present are most likely to be of the early 13th century, a slightly earlier, later 12th-century date, cannot be ruled out. Too little material is present to comment on meaningfully, particularly considering the pieces involved are slightly ambiguous regarding form. Whatever the case, tile was clearly not in common use at the site, not an unexpected situation considering the early date of activity.

The remainder of the assemblage is of the late post-medieval period and appears to relate to material being spread on the fields during the 18th and 19th centuries, some of which was subsequently intruded into earlier features.

The ceramic building material assemblage is too small and isolated to hold any potential for further analysis beyond that undertaken for this report.

Metallurgical Remains by Luke Barber

A single 8g fragment of kiln/hearth lining was recovered from pit 33 (88). This consists of a red fine sandy clay with a reduced zone under a surface thin vitrification. Whether this is from a domestic hearth, kiln or oven is impossible to say.

Metalwork by Luke Barber

The excavations recovered a single piece of metalwork – a 4g fragment from an iron farrier's nail with rectangular head measuring 17 x 8mm pit 33 (88). Although the associated pottery is of later 12th to 13th century date and the nail is heavily corroded it is not clear if this is an intrusive late post-medieval piece. The fact that no other medieval ironwork was recovered suggests much/most may have been totally mineralized in the acidic subsoil. This in turn hints at a later date for this piece.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

One small fragment of burnt flint, weighing 3g, was recovered during the excavation from gully 1000. This may be significant as the gully appeared slightly different in nature to many of the features which were clearly medieval in date. It is therefore possible that the gully may be earlier in date.

Conclusion

The archaeological excavation revealed a modest number of archaeological features, the presence of which had previously been suggested in an earlier evaluation of the site. The vast majority of the features contained medieval pottery, and it is possible to identify three distinct phases of activity spanning the 12th and 13th centuries. The changing nature of the features from each phase, and the fact that most of the pottery assemblages were not mixed, indicates that activity on the site may not have been continuous even though the pottery sequence indicates no dramatic breaks.

Much of the activity in the 12th century appears to be concentrated in the southern part of the excavation area, to the south of a shallow gully (1000). However, it is possible that some features from this period may have been truncated or obscured by later activity in the northern part of the site. The large number of post-holes containing 12th-century pottery suggest the presence of a building or buildings close to Norlington Lane. However, the post-holes do not make any clear patterns, and there was no evidence for features such as beam slots. It is possible that any such features may have been removed by truncation from above at some point in the past, as the shallowness of many of the features does seem to suggest that the original ground surface may have been reduced.

Although two pits recorded during the evaluation may date from the phase spanning the late 12th and early 13th centuries, most of the activity from this period appears to be concentrated in the north-west corner of the site. This could of course be due to the fact that any 12th century buildings in the southern part of the site were still standing during the later phase. The features are mostly pits, but some of them appear to be deliberately created hardstandings utilizing flint pebbles and broken pottery. The function of these compact surfaces is unclear, but they

could have been used as working areas. The rectangular shape of the large feature at the northern end of the site (1002) may indicate the presence of a building, with the surface representing an internal floor. However, no clear evidence of a structure can be seen, and it does not explain why the surface was partially removed by a large pit (1003).

The 13th-century features were also located in the north-west part of the site, and largely consisted of pits. Three large rectangular pits appear to have been dug in a line, and deliberately backfilled after a time. It is not clear what the function of these features may have been originally. The gully (1101) recorded in the north-west corner of the excavation area could suggest that later activity shifted northwards during the 13th century, and this may explain occupation appears to cease on the site.

Acknowledgements

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Webster, and the author. Illustrations were produced by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos and the author.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Features

Cut	Fill	Group	Туре	Phase	Comments / Dating Evidence
8	59		Posthole		
9	60		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
10	61		Posthole	12th century	Pottery. Pl. 1
11	62		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
12	63		Posthole		
13	64		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
14	65		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
15	66		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
16	67		Posthole		
17	73		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
18	74		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
19	75		Posthole	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 2
20	76		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
20	68		Gully		
21	69			12th century	Pottery.
			Posthole	12+h 12+h+	Dottom
23	70	1000	Posthole	12th-13th century	Pottery.
24	71	1000	Gully	12th century	Pottery. Pl. 3
25	72		Posthole	12th century	Pottery.
26	77, 78		Pit	13th century	Pottery. Pl. 4
27	83, 84		Pit	13th century	Pottery.
28	79		Pit	13th century	Pottery. Pl. 5
29	80		Posthole	12th century	Pottery. Pl. 5
30	81		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery.
31	85		Pit	13th century	Pottery. Pl. 6
32	87		Posthole		
33	88		Pit	13th century	Pottery.
34	89	1000	Gully	12th century	Pottery.
35	86		Pit	12th century	Pottery.
36	90		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery.
37	91		Posthole	12th century	Pottery. Pl. 7
38	92		Gully	12th century	Pottery.
39	93	1001	Gully	13th century	Pottery.
40	94	1001	Gully	13th century	Pottery. Pl. 8
41	95		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery.
42	96		Posthole	12th-13th century	Pottery.
43	97		Posthole		
44	98		Posthole	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 9
45	99		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 9
46	150		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery.
47	151		Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery.
48	152	1002	Compact Surface	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 10
49	153	1002	Posthole	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 10
100	154	1003	Pit	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 10
100	155	1003	Compact Surface	12th-13th century	Pottery. Pl. 10 & 11
101	155	1002	Pit		Pottery. Pl. 10 & 11 Pottery. Pl. 10 & 11
102	82	1005	Spread	12th-13th century 12th century	Pottery. P1. 10 & 11 Pottery.

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Pottery

Cut	Fill	Date	Fabric	Form	Rim	No	Wt (g)	ENV	Comments
	51	C12th-mid 13th	SNL 3a	СР		2	36	2	Oxid
	51		SNL 3d	?		1	6	1	Oxid
	51		SNL 5	?		2	10	2	Oxid
	51		HML 1a	?		2	2	1	Oxid
9	60	1150-1200	SNL 5	CP	CP5g	1	62	1	Oxid. Fing tip on rim top
10	61	1150-1200	SNL 3b	?		1	4	1	Reduced
10	61	1100 1200	SNL 3d	?		1	1	1	Oxid
10	61		SNL 5	?		1	2	1	Oxid
10	62	1100-1175	SNL 3a	?		1	14	1	Oxid
13	64	1100-1175	SNL 3a	?		1	4	1	Oxid
13	65	1150-1200	SNL 5a	?		1	4	1	Oxid Ox, worn
					CD51				
15	66	1150-1200	SNL 5	CP	CP5h	1	2	1	Reduced
21	68	1125-1200	SNL 3a	?		2	6	2	Oxid
21	68		SNL 3d	СР		2	10	2	ox & redu ?ext sooted
21	68	1155 1050	SNL 5	?		1	2	1	Oxid
23	70	1175-1250	HML 3a	?		1	2	1	Ox, worn
24	71	1100-1175	SNL 3d	?		1	2	1	Oxid
25	72	1100-1175	SNL 3a	?		1	4	1	Oxid
25	72		SNL 3d	?		1	2	1	Reduced
17	73	1125-1200	SNL 5	?		1	2	1	Oxid
18	74	1150-1200	SNL 5	?		3	8	2	Oxid
19	75	1175-1250	SNL 5	СР		1	2	1	?Ext sooted. Ox
19	75		HML 1a	?		1	2	1	Worn, bitone
20	76	1125-1200	SNL 5	?		1	2	1	Worn, redu
26	77		SNL 5	?		3	4	3	Ox, worn
26	77	pot 1200-1300 but large C19th brick	HML 1a	?		2	4	2	Ox, worn
26	77		HML 3a	BOWL	B5g	2	10	1	Ox, worn
26	77		HML 9c	?	0.05	1	2	1	Ox, worn
28	79	1175-1225 or 1150-1200	SNL 3d	CP		1	2	1	Ext sooted, ox
20		with intrusive C13th	SIVE 50	CI		1	2	1	Ext sooted, ox
28	79	with indusive ersti	SNL 5	СР	CP5h	1	2	1	Blacked rim edge, ox
28	79		SNL 5	?	01.511	8	38	7	Diacked IIII edge, ox
28	79		HML 1a	?		2	8	2	Redu/ox, worn
				?					,
28	79	11.50, 1000	HML 9a		CD5:	1	2	1	Oxid
29	80	1150-1200	SNL 5	СР	CP5i	1	14	1	Reduced
29	80		SNL 5	?		9	42	5	prob CP, ox
29	80		HML 1a	СР		1	8	1	Base redu, ext sooted
30	81	1150-1200	SNL 5	?		3	8	3	Oxid
30	81		HML 1a	?		1	2	1	close to SNL5, ox
	82	1150-1200	SNL 3a	СР		2	4	2	x1 ext sooted. Resid.Ox
	82	1150-1200	SNL 5	СР		14	52	1	Oxid
	82	1150-1200	HML 1a	?		1	2	1	Ox, worn
27	83	1200-1275 (resid C12th)	SNL 3a	?		2	6	2	Ox, worn
27	83		SNL 3d	СР		2	14	2	x1 ext sooted. Ox
27	83		SNL 5	?		1	1	1	Oxid
27	83		HML 1a	?		1	6	1	Reduced
27	83		HML 1b	BOWL	B6g	1	6	1	Ox, worn
27	83		HML 1b	CP	CP5g	1	6	1	Ox, worn
27	83		HML 1b	?	0155	3	14	3	Redu/ox, worn
27	83		HML 9a	?		1	14	1	Ox, worn
31	85		SNL 3a	?		2	10	2	Oxid
			SNL 3a SNL 5						Oxid
31	85 85			CP	D5-	2	16	1	
31			HML 1b	BOWL	B5e	1	10	1	Oxid. Fing tip on rim top, g gl spots int
35	86	1125-1200	SNL 3a	СР	CP5p	1	20	1	Oxid
35	86		SNL 5	?		1	1	1	Oxid
33	88	1200-1275 (resid C12th)	SNL 3a	?		1	6	1	Oxid
33	88		HML 1b	?		8	14	3	Ox, worn
34	89	1100-1175	SNL 3d	СР		1	14	1	Ext sooted, ox
36	90	1150-1225 (intrusive C13th)	SNL 3a	?		1	6	1	Ox, worn
36	90	,	SNL 3d	?		1	4	1	Oxid
36	90		SNL 5	?		2	6	1	Oxid
36	90		HML 1a	?		2	4	1	Ox, worn
20									
36	90		HML 3a	JUG		1	1	1	Ox, worn. Gr gl spots ext

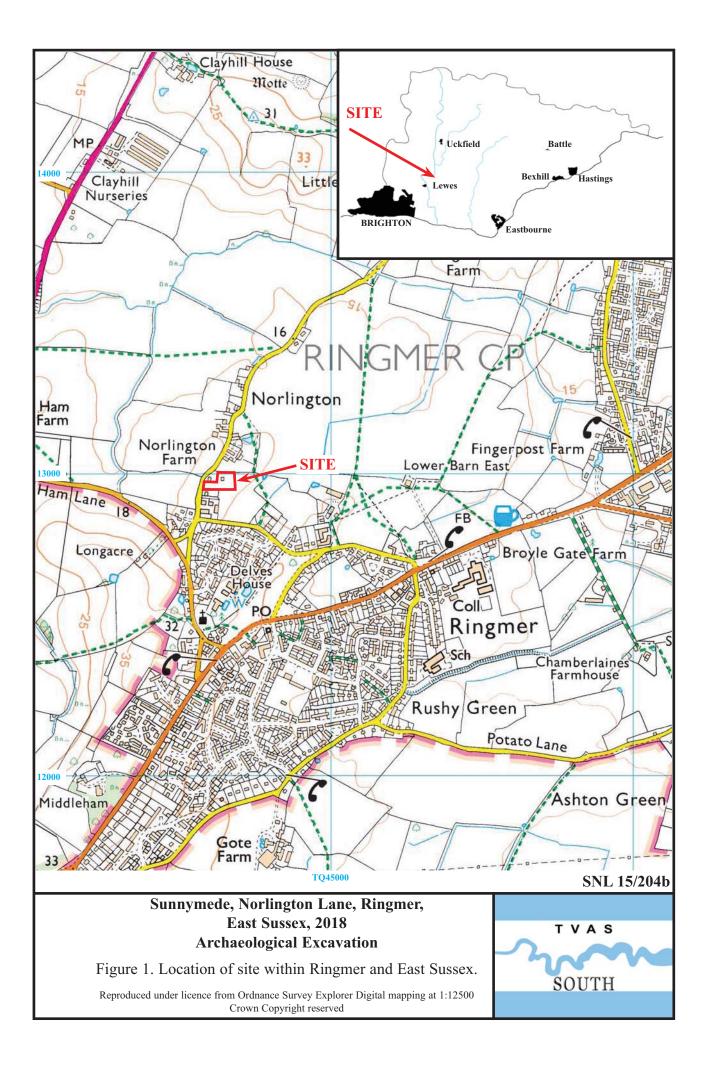
Cut	Fill	Date	Fabric	Form	Rim		Wt(g)	ENV	Comments
37	91	1150-1200	SNL 5	?		6	28	1	Oxid
38	92	1150-1200 ?x1 intru e C13th	SNL 3a	СР		3	12	3	x1 ext sooted, ox
38	92		SNL 5	?		1	2	1	Oxid
38	92		HML 1a	?		1	2	1	Oxid
39	93	1225-1300 (High resid m/l C12th	SNL 5	СР		4	16	2	Ext sooted, ox
39	93	C12th	HML 3a	?PIP	CP9a	1	6	1	Oxid
39	93		HML 9c	?JUG	J3b	1	16	1	Ox, worn. simple spout
40	94	1175/1200-1225	SNL 3a	?	350	1	2	1	Oxid
40	94	11/5/1200-1225	SNL 5	СР	1 CP5g, 1 CP5h	15	58	4	some worn, ox
40	94		HML 1a	СР		18	80	5	some ext sooted, ox
40	94		HML 1b	?		7	24	3	Oxid
41	95	most 1175-1225	SNL 3d	?		2	6	1	Oxid
41	95		ESW	?		1	4	1	very worn, ox
41	95		SNL 5	CP	CP5s	1	6	1	Oxid
41	95		SNL 5	?	0155	9	34	2	prob CP, ox
41	95		HML 1a	?		3	14	3	Oxid
41	95		HML 1b	?		4	8	2	Ox, worn
	95	1175-1225	SNL 5	CP	CP5a	9		3	Oxid
42 42	96	11/3-1223		CP CP	CP5g	7	36	4	
		1150 1200	HML 1a						Redu/ox, worn
44	98	1150-1200	SNL 3a	CP		1	2	1	Oxid
44 55	98 99	1175-1225	SNL 5 SNL 5	? CP	inc CP5h, CP5a	2 13	6 104	2 4	Oxid Oxid
55	99		HML 1a	СР	CP5e	6	52	2	Oxid
46	150	1175-1225	SNL 3a	CP	0150	5	62	3	Oxid
46	150	1175-1225	SNL 3a	CHIMP		2	42	1	Oxid
46	150	1175-1225	SNL 5a	CP	inc CP5g,	34	212	5	most ox
16	150	1175 1005		CD	CP5p	24	150	-	
46	150	1175-1225	HML 1a	СР	inc CP5g	24	150	5	
46	150		HML 1a	JUG		1	90	1	wide strap ha, knife stabbed along edges, oxid. Deep furrowed strap ha
46	150		HML 1b	СР		19	152	7	
46	150		HML 1b	?		2	6	2	Ox, worn
47 47	151 151	1175-1225 1175-1225	SNL 3a SNL 5	CP CP	CP2a inc CP5h,	4 87	42 860	3	Oxid most ox
47	1.5.1	1175 1005	CNIL 5	?	5s, 5i etc	1	4	1	D'1 0 0 11 ADGV
47	151	1175-1225	SNL 5			1	4	1	Pitcher? Oxid. APSV
47	151		SNL 5	?FRY	: OD5	10	238	1	Oxid. Socketed handle
47	151		HML 1a	СР	inc CP5g, 5e, 5a	40	352	9	Redu & ox
47	151	1175 1005	HML 1b	?		15	60	5	Redu & ox
48	152	1175-1225	SNL 3a	CP		2	14	1	Oxid
48	152		SNL 3d	СР		1	4	1	Ext sooted, ox
48	152		SNL 5	СР	inc CP5g, 5a, 5h, 5e	46	262	7	Redu & ox
48	152		HML 1a	СР	inc CP5e, 6q	44	186	6	
48	152		HML 1b	СР		14	54	4	Ext sooted, ox
48	152		HML 1b	?JUG	simple upright	1	12	1	Ox, worn
48	152		HML 1b	BOWL	B6g	2	20	1	Oxid
49	153	1175-1225	SNL 5	?		3	10	3	Oxid
49	153		HML 1a	?		3	4	1	Oxid
100	154	1175-1225	SNL 5	СР	CP5h	44	436	3	most x1 ox CP5g CP, x1 redu CP
100	154	1175-1225	HML 1a	СР		2	18	2	Ext sooted, ox
101	155	1175/1200-1225 (mod resid C12th)	SNL 5	СР	most CP5h, 5g, 5a, 5q	101	940	16	Redu/ox
101	155		SNL 5	?DISH	Squared	2	60	1	Rect dripping dish
101	155		SNL 5	FRY	Squarea	1	30	1	Part tubular ha, ox
101	155		SNL 5	CHIMP		1	22	1	Oxid. Perforated wall
101	155		SNL 5	JUG	J4b	2	108	1	Deep furrowed strap handle centrally pricked, rim top
101	1.5.5		CNIL 2	CD	CD2		17		knife stabbed
101	155 155		SNL 3a	CP	CP3c	1	16	1	Oxid
101			HML 1a	CP	Most	294	1770	14	most ox

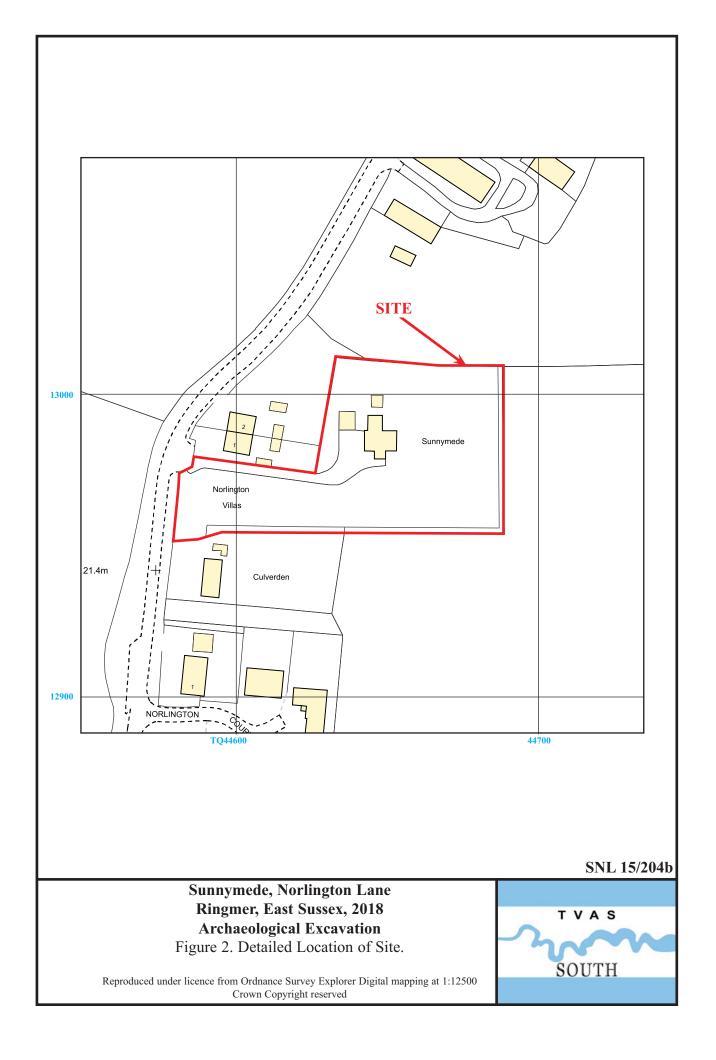
Cut	Fill	Date	Fabric	Form	Rim	No	Wt (g)	ENV	Comments
					CP5g, 5h, 5e, 5a 1 CP7b 1 CP6a				
101	155		HML 1a	?		1	36	1	Pitch/stor jar, oxid. APSV fing tipped. Early/low relief
101	155		HML 1a	?		1	6	1	Oxid. APTSV
101	155		HML 1a	FRY		3	166	3	Oxid. x2 tubular handles
101	155		HML 1a	JUG	J1f	2	72	1	Strap ha, redu. Deep furrowed strap handle, knife stabbed down raised edges
101	155		HML 1a	JUG	J5a	1	14	1	Redu & ox
101	155		HML 1b	СР	inc CP5i, 6q, 10a	70	524	8	most ox, ext sooted
101	155		HML 3a	?JUG		2	24	1	Oxid
102	156	1175/1200-1225	SNL 5	СР	CP6q x2, 5g x3	30	390	9	most ox
102	156		SNL 5	JUG		2	74	1	Oxid. TB
102	156		HML 1a	СР	CP5g, 5i, 10b, 6q	37	388	7	most ox
102	156		HML 1b	СР	CP5e, 5g, 6q	32	228	4	Oxid

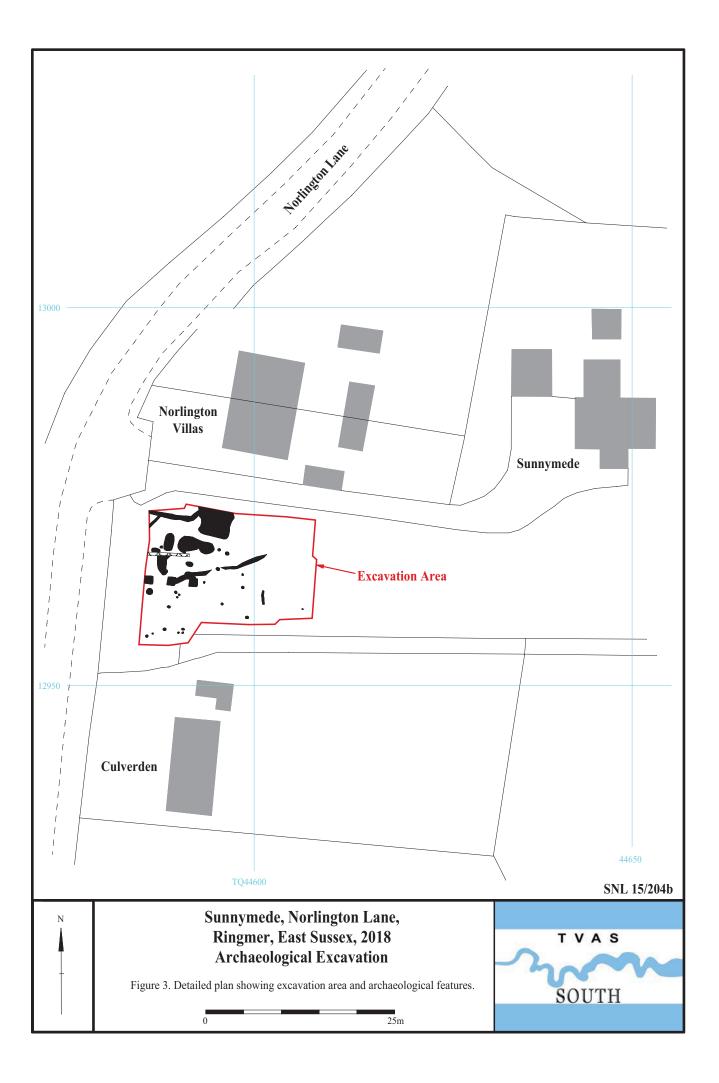
APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Ceramic Building Material

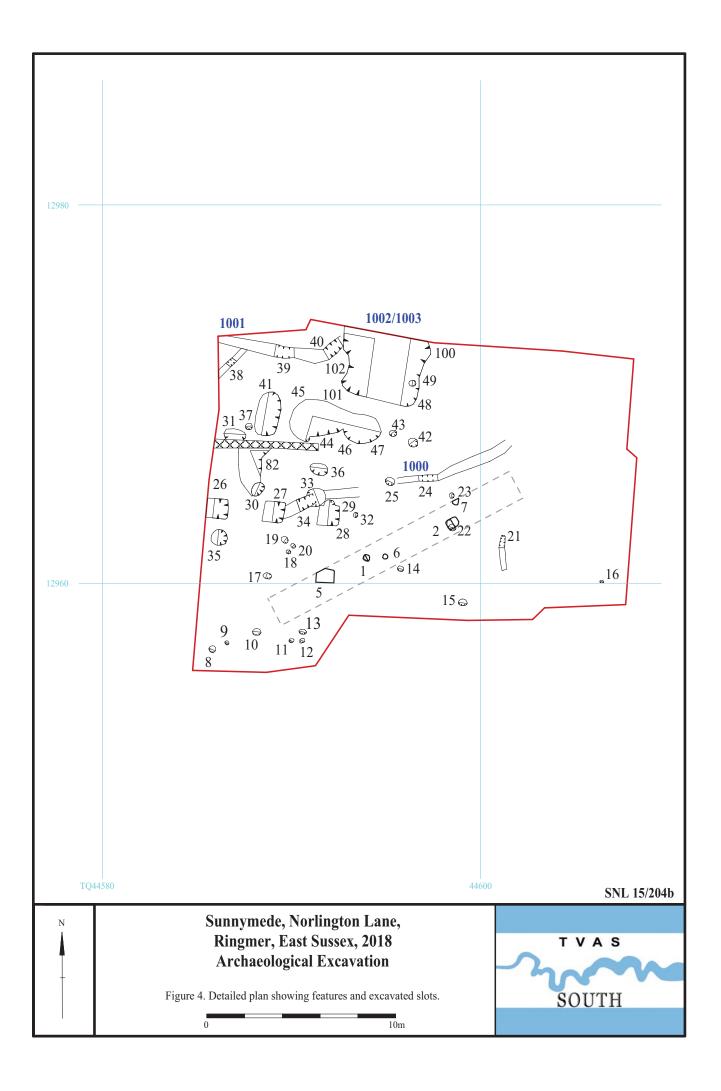
Context	Form	Period	Suggested date	No	Wt (g)	Dimensions	Comments
77	Brick	LPM	C19th	1	728g	?x110x65mm	Shallow frog. Slag tempered
93	Brick	LPM	C18th-19th	2	66g	None surviving	Well formed. Slightly 'sugary' matrix with red iron oxides
							to 2mm
94	Peg tile?	HM	C13th	2	10g	None surviving	Worn. Alluvial flint grits
95	Ridge tile?	HM	C13th	1	24g	16mm thick	Worn. Alluvial flint grits

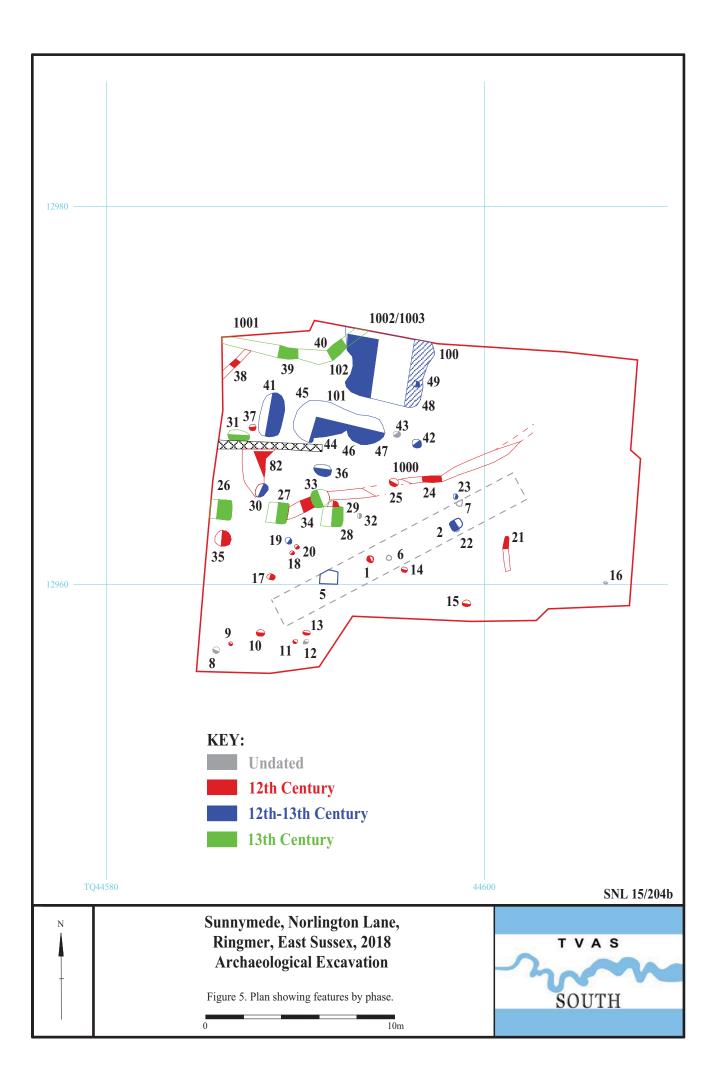
(HM – High Medieval C13th – 14th; LPM Late Post-medieval – C18th – 19th)

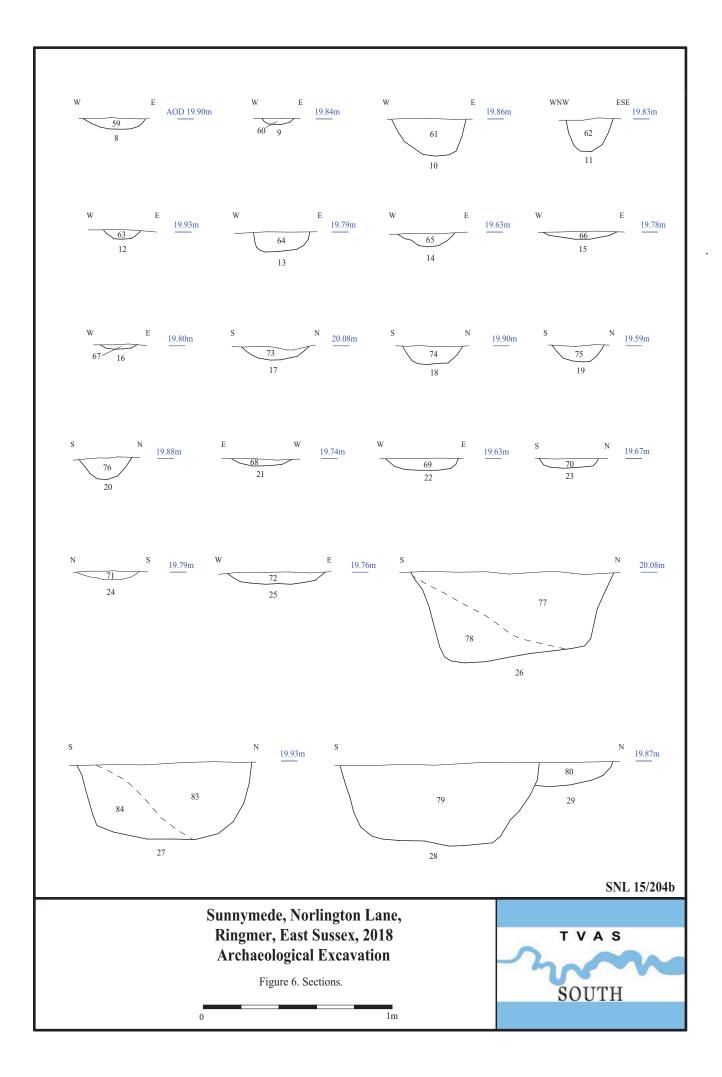


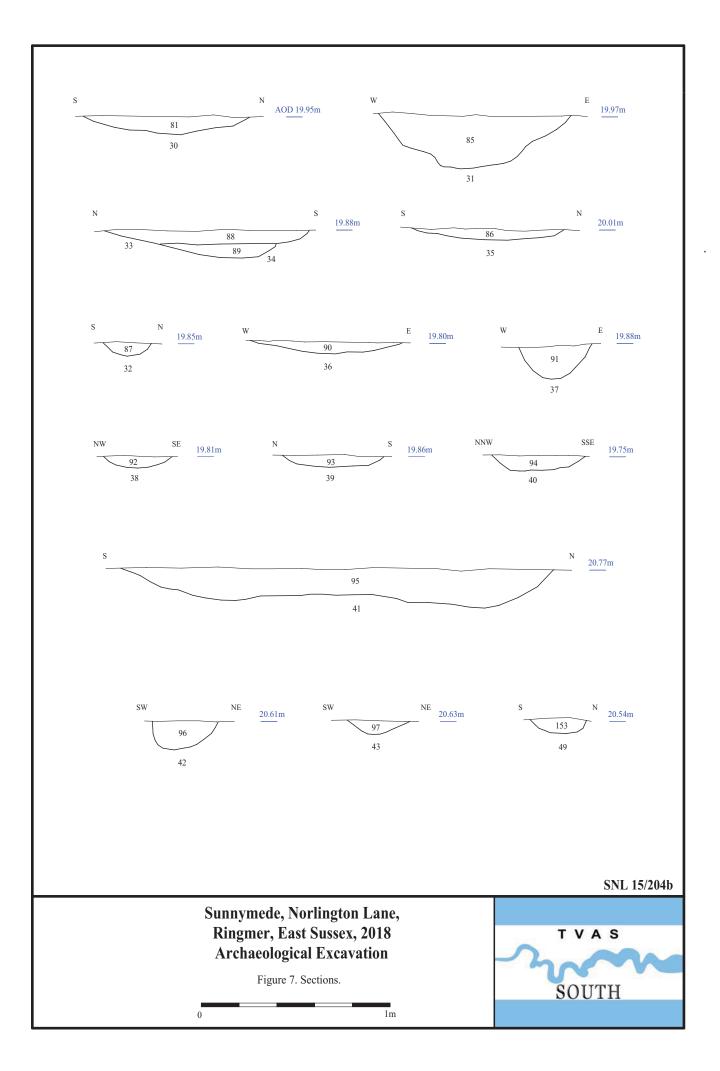












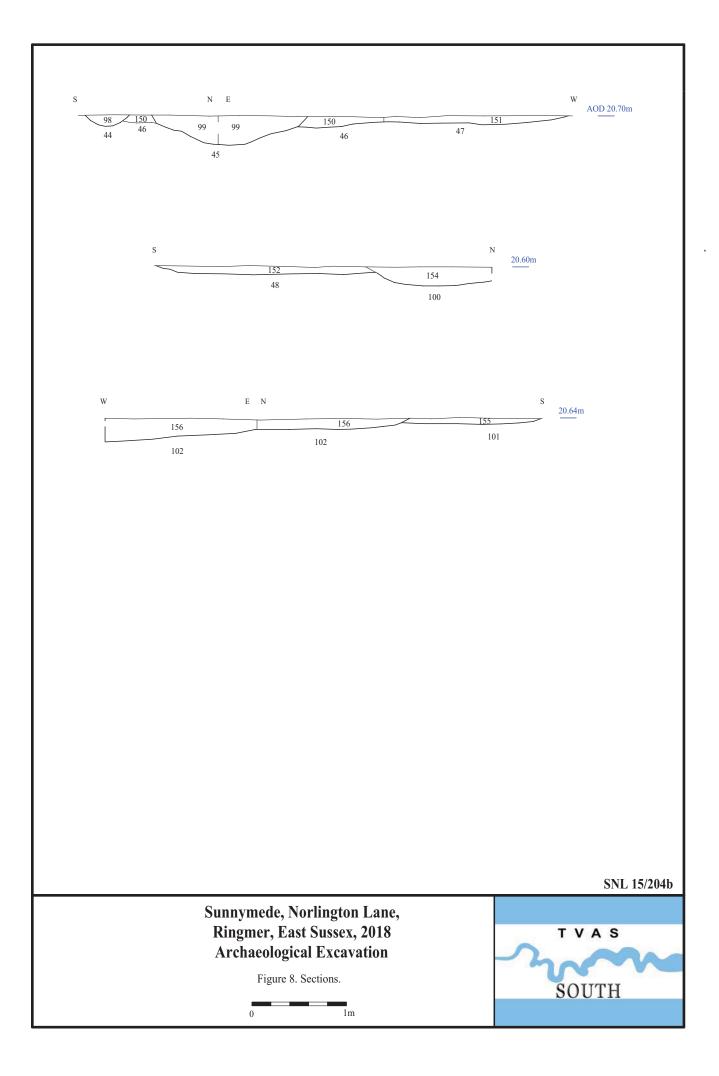




Plate 1. Feature 10, looking North. Scale: 0.30m.



Plate 2. Feature 19, looking West. Scale: 0.30m.



Plate 3. Feature 24, looking East. Scale: 0.30m.



Plate 4. Feature 26, looking West. Scales: 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 5. Features 28 and 29, looking West. Scales: 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 6. Feature 31, looking North. Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.

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Sunnymede, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex, 2018 Archaeological Excavation Plates 1 - 6.





Plate 7. Feature 37, looking North. Scale: 0.30m.



Plate 8. Feature 40, looking North-east. Scale: 0.50m.



Plate 9. Features 44-45, looking West. Scales: 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 10. Features 48-102, looking North-west. Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 11. Features 101 and 102, looking North-east. Scale: 2m.



Plate 12. General Site View. Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Sunnymede, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, East Sussex, 2018 Archaeological Excavation Plates 7 - 12.



TIME CHART

Calendar Years

Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43
Iron Age	AD 0 BC 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
\checkmark	¥



TVAS (South), 77a Hollingdean Terrace Brighton, BN1 7HB

Tel: 01273 554198 Email: south@tvas.co.uk Web: www.tvas.co.uk/south

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