

**Land at Manor Road, East Preston,  
Littlehampton, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Wilmington Homes Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MRP 08/128

**December 2008**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Manor Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 0725 0195

**Site activity:** Field Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 12th – 15th December 2008

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** MRP 08/128

**Area of site:** c. 1 ha

**Summary of results:** A total of nine trenches were opened in the western part of the site. Although a number of trenches showed signs of modern disturbance, no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Littlehampton Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 19.12.08 Jo Pine ✓ 19.12.06
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# Land at Manor Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 08/128

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out Manor Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex (TQ 0725 0195) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Charles Wiggins of Wilmington Homes Ltd, 6 Lansdowne Road, Angmering, West Sussex, BN16 4JX.

Planning permission (appln.no. EP/95/08) has been gained from Arun District Council to demolish the existing buildings on the site, and construct 21 residential properties with associated parking and designated open spaces. The consent is subject to a condition (8) relating to archaeology, which requests that a programme of archaeological work be carried out prior to the commencement of groundworks. This report covers the initial phase of work; an archaeological field evaluation in the western part of the site, by means of trial trenching. This is required to inform the planning process in order to mitigate the effects of development on any archaeological deposits present. Dependent on the findings, this investigation may represent the first stage of dealing with archaeological issues. In addition, a watching brief will be carried out on the remainder of the site.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mark Taylor, Archaeological Officer for West Sussex County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and Sean Wallis between 12th and 15th December 2008 and the site code is MRP 08/128. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Littlehampton Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north side of Manor Road, East Preston, about 200m south of the village centre (Fig.2). East Preston is situated on the south coast, between Littlehampton (4km west) and Worthing (5km east). The site is bounded to the south by Manor Road and to the east by Nursery Close. A number of buildings currently occupy the southern part of the site, including a workshop and a large greenhouse. The rest of the site mainly consists of overgrown garden areas, with a number of derelict sheds and numerous mature trees. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of the silty aeolian deposits, commonly referred

to as 'Brickearth' (BGS 1996). This was confirmed in all the trial trenches, as a light orange brown silty clay, with occasional gravel inclusions. The site is relatively flat, and lies at a height of approximately 7m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

Background archaeological information about the site has been obtained from a consultation of the West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER). A search of 750m radius located very few entries for the vicinity of the site. Many of the entries relate to find spots such as several flint implements recorded to the south west of the site as well as a Bronze Age hoard discovered in 1954. Several Roman find spots have been recorded, including a 2nd century AD cremation recovered immediately to the north west of the site. To the north east, eight largely complete pots, of early 1st century date, were recovered during groundworks; it is assumed that these are also cremation urns. Roman pottery has also been retrieved further to the south, and fragments of a tessellated pavement been recorded to the west of Manor Road. There are no entries in the HER for the Saxon or medieval period, and East Preston is not mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). The remainder of the entries are post medieval or modern in date and include an early 17<sup>th</sup> century windmill, an air raid shelter and an emergency coast defence battery. Two brickworking sites are listed in the HER, one of which is recorded close to the north eastern corner of the site. A former motor garage, which dates from 1919, is located immediately east of the site, on the other side of Nursery Close. The structure and its associated four forecourt petrol pumps are grade II listed.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of the investigation project are;

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- c) To determine whether the possible Roman cremation cemetery identified to the north of the site extends into the development area.

It was proposed to dig 8 trenches in the western part of the site, each 20m long and 1.6m wide, to target the areas which will be most affected by the new buildings, car parking and access road. A contingency for an

additional 10m of trenching was included within the proposal, should it be required to clarify any deposits found in the initial trenching. The trenches were to be excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the features and deposits sampled or excavated by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. The work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological deposits or features which might warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. The project was to comply with the West Sussex County Council requirements for archaeological fieldwork (WSSCC 2007).

## **Results**

The majority of the trenches were excavated close to their original proposed positions (Fig. 3), although a number could not dug to their full intended length, due to the presence of trees and other logistical constraints. Due to numerous trees, and dense undergrowth, trench 5 was moved south and realigned east-west. It was originally planned to demolish a garden wall to enable trench 8 to be dug. However, it was decided to dig two smaller trenches either side of the wall, which were numbered 8 and 9. These changes to the original scheme were discussed with Mark Taylor during his site monitoring visit on 15th December.

The trenches ranged in length from 5.5m (9) to 22.4m (6), and in depth from 0.34m (6) to 0.75m (9). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The natural brickearth was encountered in all the trenches and, due to frequent tree root disturbance, the top c. 0.2m of this deposit was removed as it contained some mixing with the overlying subsoil. A number of trenches contained modern features which were noted on the trench record sheets, but not recorded in detail. None of the material recovered from these features was retained.

### Trench 1

This trench was orientated north-south and was 20.1m long. Up to 0.09m of topsoil overlay a layer of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil which was about 0.19m thick. This lay directly above the natural clayey silt brickearth. Apart from a small area of modern disturbance, containing brick fragments, concrete and clinker, no archaeological features were recorded in this trench.

### Trench 2

Trench 2 was 18.2m long, and orientated north-south. The stratigraphy noted in this trench consisted of 0.14m of topsoil which overlay up to 0.17m of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil. The natural brickearth was observed

immediately beneath this deposit, along the whole length of the trench. The eastern section of the trench was greatly disturbed by the footings of a 19th–20th century structure, which was probably a former greenhouse. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench, although a note was made of an area of modern disturbance, containing brick and concrete fragments, and a redundant water pipe.

#### Trench 3

Due to logistical problems caused by the lack of available space, this trench was only 16.0m long. It was dug immediately east of the existing greenhouse, and orientated north- south. Up to 0.11m of topsoil was removed to reveal a layer of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil, about 0.26m thick, which overlay the natural brickearth. The partial remains of a 19th – 20th structure, probably a greenhouse, were noted in the eastern section of the trench, and consisted of brick wall footings and a possible crushed chalk surface. These structural remains did not penetrate the natural brickearth to any great extent. Apart from one small modern truncation, containing brick fragments, no archaeological features were observed in this trench.

#### Trench 4 (Plate 1) (Fig. 4)

Trench 4 was orientated north east - south west, and was 19.5m long. Turf and topsoil, up to 0.12m thick, was removed to reveal a layer of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil. This deposit lay directly above the natural brickearth. Three modern pipes were noted on the trench record sheet, but no archaeological finds or features were recorded.

#### Trench 5

This trench was 20.0m long and orientated north west - south east. Due to the presence of numerous mature trees, in the north west corner of the site, this trench was relocated further south. The stratigraphy noted along the trench consisted of about 0.1m of topsoil which overlay the dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil. This deposit was up to 0.13m thick, was lay directly above the brickearth natural. No archaeological finds or features were recorded within this trench.

#### Trench 6

This trench was orientated north east - south west, and was 22.4m long. Up to 0.15m of turf and topsoil was removed to reveal a layer of greyish brown silty clay subsoil, which was about 0.12m thick and lay directly above the natural brickearth. Apart from two modern pipes, no archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench.

#### Trench 7 (Plate 2)

Trench 7 was orientated north- south. Due to the presence of numerous mature trees, the trench was only 17.2m long. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil which overlay up to 0.19m of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil. This deposit lay directly above the natural brickearth. As this was the first trench excavated, a test pit

was dug at the southern end of the trench, to a depth of 0.74m to confirm the interpretation of the stratigraphy . Three modern features, containing brick fragments, were noted on the trench record sheet, but no archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

#### Trench 8

Trench 8 was orientated east - west and was 9.0m long. In general, the stratigraphy consisted of 0.09m of topsoil which lay above a layer of dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil, up to 0.13m thick. This overlay the natural brickearth along much of the trench, apart from the central area, where a large modern truncation was noted. A modern man-hole was also recorded in the southern section of the trench. Apart from these modern features, no archaeological finds or deposits were recorded.

#### Trench 9

This trench was orientated north east - south west and was 5.5m long. The topsoil here was up to 0.5m thick and contained various dump layers of ash, clinker and modern household rubbish. A layer of greyish brown silty clay subsoil, up to 0.15m thick, was noted immediately beneath the topsoil, and this lay directly above the natural brickearth. Apart from two modern truncations, containing brick, glass and china, no archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench.

### **Finds**

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the logistical problems, caused by the presence of trees and the general lack of space, the evaluation provided a very good coverage of the western part of the proposed development site. The project has shown that, apart from those areas closest to the buildings at the southern end of the site, much of the site has been largely undisturbed. It is therefore felt that the absence of archaeological deposits in the trial trenches is a good indication of the paucity of sub-surface features in general, and that the site has little archaeological potential.

### **References**

BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheets 317/332, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth  
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO  
WSCC 2007, Standards for archaeological fieldwork, recording and post-excavation work (development control), West Sussex County Council, Chichester

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	20.10	1.60	0.52	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.28m subsoil; 0.28m+ natural geology (brickearth).
2	18.20	1.60	0.56	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.31m subsoil; 0.31m+ natural geology (brickearth).
3	16.00	1.60	0.54	0-0.11m topsoil; 0.11-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m+ natural geology (brickearth).
4	19.50	1.60	0.41	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ natural geology (brickearth). <b>[Plate 1]</b>
5	20.00	1.60	0.42	0-0.10m topsoil; 0.10-23m subsoil; 0.23m+ natural geology (brickearth).
6	22.40	1.60	0.34	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ natural geology (brickearth).
7	17.20	1.60	0.48	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.32m subsoil natural geology (brickearth). Test pit at southern end 0.74m deep. <b>[Plate 2]</b>
8	9.00	1.60	0.63	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.22m subsoil natural geology (brickearth).
9	5.50	1.60	0.75	0-0.50m topsoil; 0.50-0.65m subsoil natural geology (brickearth).





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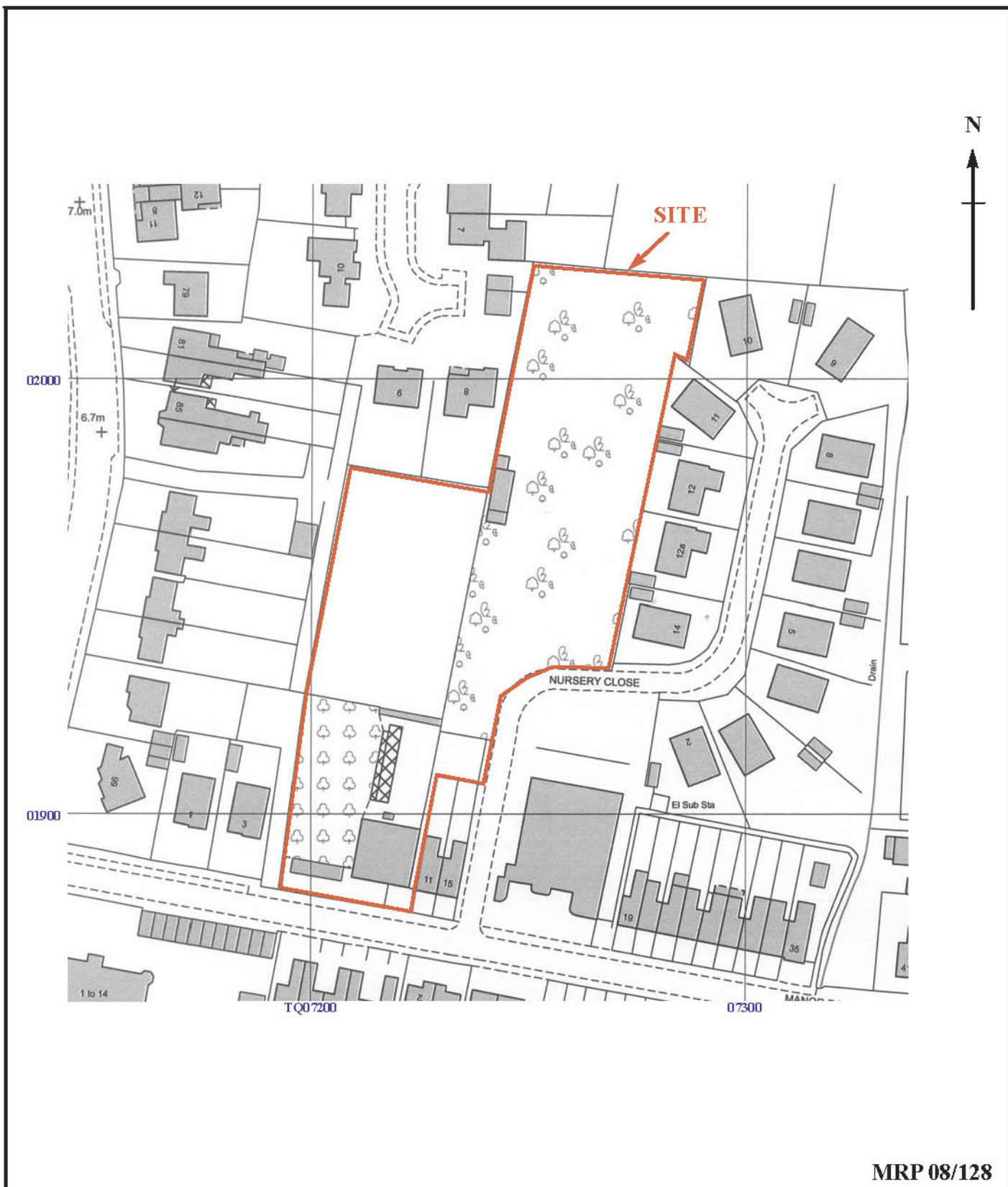
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Figure 1. Location of site within East Preston and West Sussex.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Manor Road.

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# Land at Manor Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex, 2008



Figure 3. Plan of trenches.

# Manor Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex, 2008

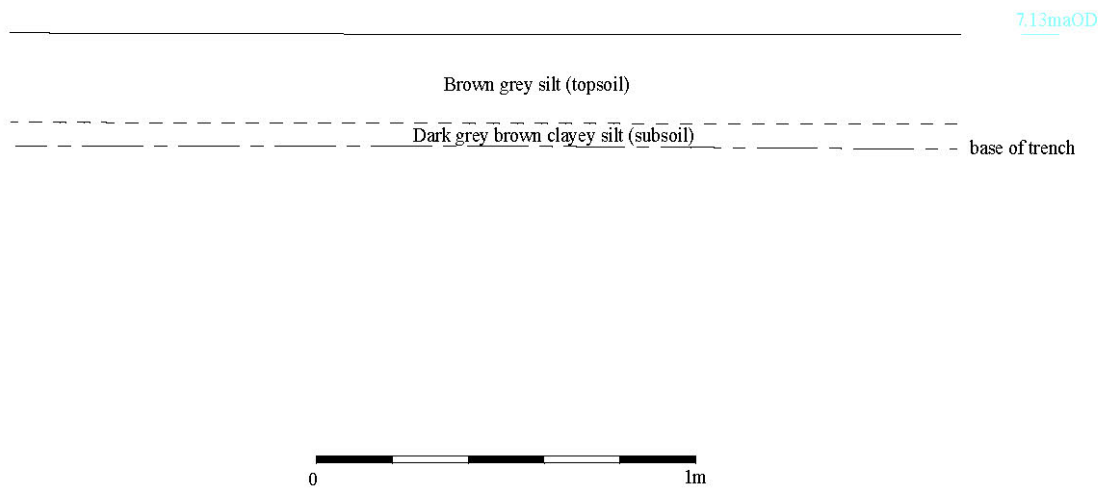


Figure 4. Representative section from Trench 4.





Plate 1. Trench 4, looking north east, scales: 1m and 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 7, looking north, scales: 1m and 2m.