



Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



**An Archaeological
Watching Brief
at
The Manor House,
Uckfield
East Sussex**

WD/2008/0487

TQ 47312 21550

by
Chris Butler

July 2009

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at The Manor House, Uckfield during groundworks involving a new single storey extension.

A single archaeological feature of possible 18th century date was recorded, and a limited range of Post Medieval artefacts and Mesolithic worked flint was recovered during the watching brief.

Chris Butler MIFA

Archaeological Services

Prehistoric Flintwork Specialist

Rosedale
Berwick
Polegate
East Sussex
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 871021

e mail: chris@reлтub.fsbusiness.co.uk

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr M Haynes, through Mike Hill Architectural Services, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the development at The Manor House, Regency Close, Uckfield, East Sussex (TQ 47312 21550). As a result of the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority have put a condition on the planning consent for the development, requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.2 The Manor House is a two-storey 18th Century Grade II Listed Building. The north wing was rebuilt or added in the 19th century. The house was divided into different properties in the 1970's, and there is an existing 1980's extension adjacent to the new addition.
- 1.3 The site is within the Archaeologically Sensitive Area defined to cover the historic core of the Medieval and Post Medieval town of Uckfield. A number of archaeological sites have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 1.4 The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/334, is Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand.
- 1.5 An application (WD/2008/0487) had been submitted for planning permission for the addition of a single storey extension to the rear of the house. The planning consent had been granted by Wealden District Council (being the local planning authority). However, given the archaeological sensitivity of the development site, an archaeological planning condition requiring an archaeological watching brief was attached to the consent.
- 1.6 A specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief was prepared by the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council¹. This specified that the watching brief would involve the monitoring of the ground reduction and any associated groundworks connected with the development.
- 1.7 The fieldwork was carried out on the 11th March 2009 by the author.

¹ *Specification for an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the development at The Manor House, Regency Close, Uckfield, East Sussex, February 2009.*

2. Archaeological Methodology

- 2.1 On arrival at the site on the 11th March 2009, the previous patio had already been removed. The internal ground level had not been reduced, but the line of a drainage pipe had been excavated to reveal the pipe and a manhole.
- 2.2 A foundation trench for the new extension was excavated along the south and west sides using a tracked mini-digger using a toothless bucket, and under archaeological supervision. Due to limited access, the excavation of the south foundation trench was completed using hand tools. The foundation trench was excavated to a depth of 1m, and was 0.4m wide.
- 2.3 All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 2.4 A photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services and, after any further analysis, will be offered to the appropriate Museum. A site reference of MHU09 has been allocated.

3. Results

- 3.1 The southern foundation trench was excavated alongside the adjacent property, and the foundation trench associated with the existing building had caused some disturbance to a depth of 350mm. The topsoil was a mid to dark brown loose sandy clay loam (Context 1) 250mm deep, which contained pieces of ceramic building material (CBM); mostly tile (5%), and small pebbles (1%). Context 1 contained 19th century artefacts.
- 3.2 Below this was a thin layer (*c.*150mm deep) of dark yellow-brown firm sandy clay (Context 2) with occasional charcoal flecks (1%). Context 2 produced two sherds of 18th or early 19th century earthenware, and two pieces of worked flint. Below Context 2 was a light buff firm sandy clay (Context 5) which contained occasional sandstone pieces to 100mm (1%).
- 3.3 Cut into Context 2 at the eastern end of the foundation trench was a small circular cut 250mm in diameter and 260mm deep, with sloping sides into a dished bottom. This was filled with a loose mid brown sandy clay loam which contained numerous pieces of white mortar pieces (50%), CBM (10%) and sandstone pieces (3%) (Cut & Fill 3). A sample of the fragments of brick and tile suggest that they may be of 18th century date.

- 3.4** The western foundation trench was excavated through a layer of mid brown loose sandy clay loam 300mm deep (Context 4), which contained roots (1%) and charcoal flecks (1%). This layer became progressively lighter in colour further down and almost merged into the underlying Context 5. Context 4 contained pieces of 18th century clay pipe, pottery and CBM, together with a number of pieces of prehistoric flintwork.
- 3.5** Context 5 was a light buff firm sandy clay which contained occasional sandstone pieces to 100mm (1%), and became progressively lighter in colour further down, although it had darker streaks and patches throughout. This context was sterile, and was treated as the natural.
- 3.6** Apart from the ceramic sewer drain and a plastic drain (see Fig. 2), there were no other features noted during the archaeological watching brief.

4. Finds

- 4.1** The excavation produced a small assemblage of finds, which are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 The Finds

Context No.	Pottery	CBM*	Flintwork	Others
1	2 (70g)	1 (266g)	-	1 glass (1g) 1 slag (13g) 1 bone (1g)
2	2 (19g)	-	2 (9g)	-
3	-	4 (34g)	-	-
4	1 (4g)	1 (6g)	5 (20g)	1 clay pipe (3g) 1 slate (1g)

- 4.2** The five pieces of pottery comprised two sherds of late 18th/19th century brown glazed earthenwares from Context 2, two sherds of 18th/19th century stoneware, one each from Contexts 1 and 4, and a large sherd from a blue-and-white china plate from Context 1. A single stem fragment of 18th century clay tobacco pipe was also recovered from Context 4.
- 4.3** Seven pieces of prehistoric worked flint were found. These included two small soft hammer-struck flakes (one fire-fractured) from Context 4, three flake fragments (two fire-fractured) and a chip. In addition to these pieces of debitage, a small end scraper was also found in Context 1. This small group of worked flint is almost certainly Mesolithic in date.

- 4.4** The CBM included four fragments, taken as a sample from the fill of Cut **3**, of which three pieces were in a hard-fired sandy orange fabric with occasional larger inclusions of sand, and a fourth in a soapy fabric with large grog inclusions. All of these are likely to date from the 18th or early 19th century. Other fragments of tile from Context **1** and **4** are probably 19th century.
- 4.5** Other finds include small pieces of slate, window glass and animal bone from Contexts **1** and **4**. A single piece of Post Medieval blast furnace slag was found in Context **1**.

5 Discussion

- 5.1** Given the substantial evidence for Mesolithic activity in the Uckfield area, it is of no real surprise that Mesolithic flintwork was found during the watching brief. There are a number of find spots of individual pieces or groups of Mesolithic flintwork (e.g. MES4824, MES4825 & MES4827) nearby.
- 5.2** Further west at The Rocks, an excavation produced a large assemblage of some 10,000 pieces of Mesolithic flintwork, possibly associated with the use of the rocks as hunting camp shelters², whilst recent investigations at Butcher's Wood have revealed Mesolithic flintwork at a rock shelter site associated with a C14 date towards the end of the Mesolithic period³.
- 5.3** This small group of Mesolithic flintwork includes a single scraper and a number of pieces have been fire-fractured. This would indicate the presence of a hunting camp or longer stay camp in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 5.4** The remaining evidence appears to be connected with the construction of the house in the 18th century and subsequent later activity. Cut **3** may be a post hole, which appears to date from the 18th century, and given its location, may be associated with the building of the house.

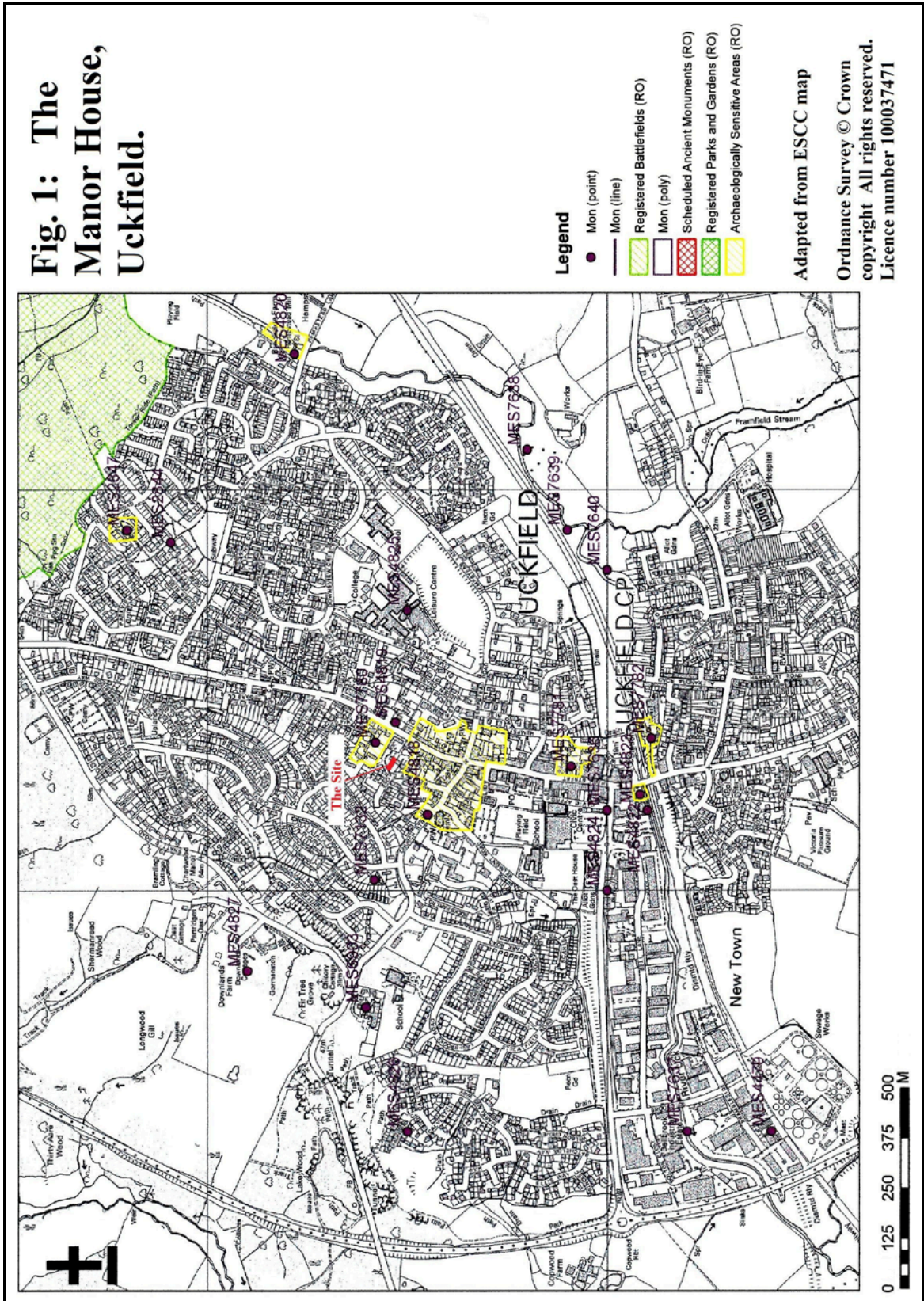
6 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr Haynes for commissioning CBAS to undertake the archaeological watching brief. Mike Hill made all the arrangements for the watching brief with CBAS and I would like to thank the builders (Tony Gosling Construction Ltd) for their co-operation during the watching brief. Greg Chuter, Assistant Archaeologist monitored the project for East Sussex County Council.

² Hemmingway, M.F. 1980-82 *Sussex Archaeological Society Newsletters* **31, 34 & 38**

³ Butler, C. (Forthcoming) A Mesolithic rock shelter site at Butcher's Wood, Uckfield.

**Fig. 1: The
Manor House,
Uckfield.**



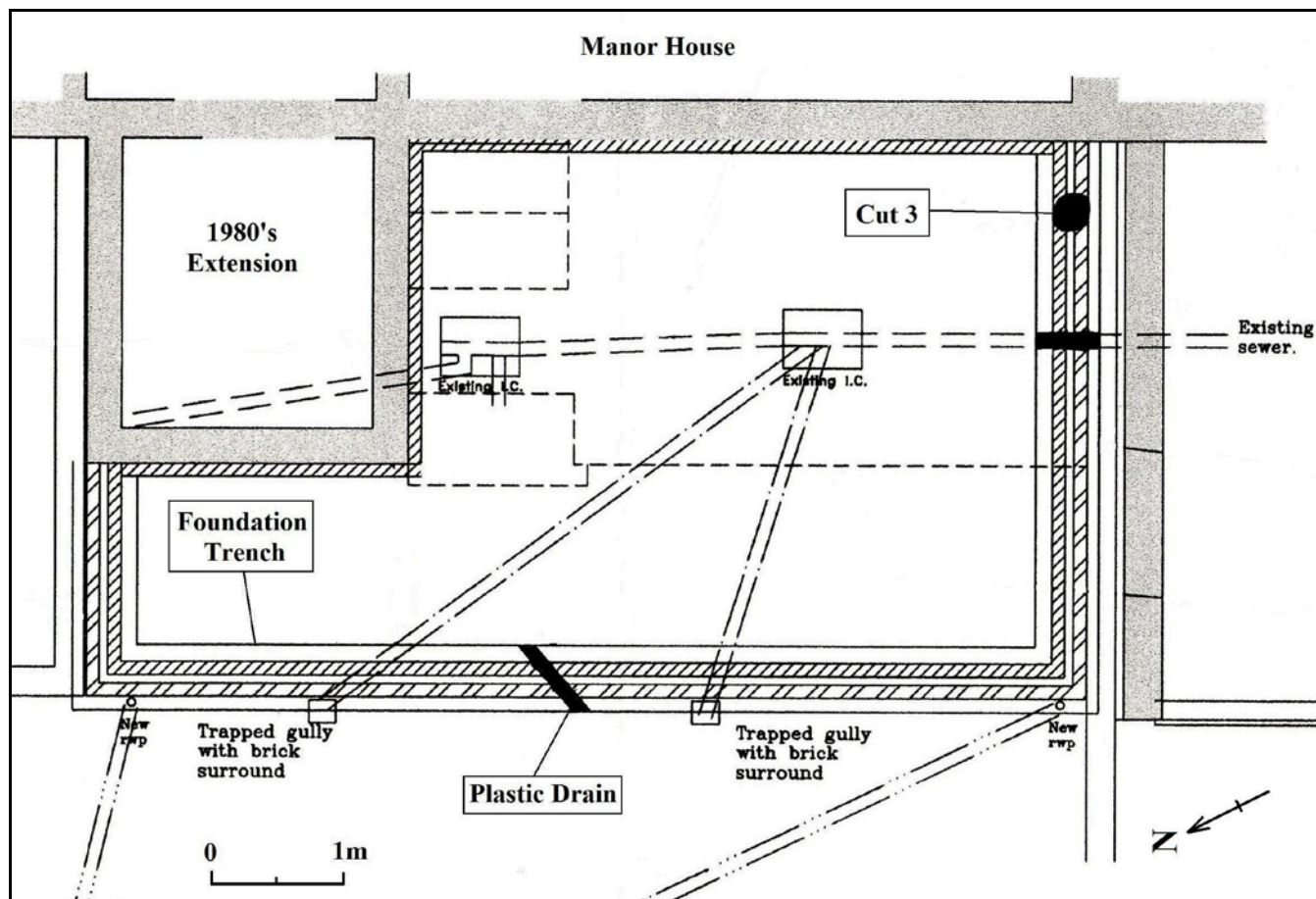


Fig. 2: The Manor House, Uckfield: Site Plan

HER Summary Form

Site Code	MHU09					
Identification Name and Address	Manor House, Regency Close, Uckfield.					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 47312 21550					
Geology	Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	ShallowX Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 11/3/09	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr M Haynes					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MIFA					
Project Supervisor	N/A					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. X	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM X	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was carried out at The Manor House, Uckfield during groundworks involving a new single storey extension.</i></p> <p><i>A single archaeological feature of possible 18th century date was recorded, and a limited range of Post Medieval artefacts and Mesolithic worked flint was recovered during the watching brief.</i></p>						

Chris Butler Archaeological Services

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

Chris Butler Archaeological Services is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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