



# Chris Butler MfA Archaeological Services



## Archaeological Watching Brief at 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex

EB/2010/0766

Project No. CBAS0220

by  
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## Summary

*A watching brief was maintained during the excavations for the footings associated with the erection of a new single-storey extension at 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. All trenches were excavated by hand exposing the top of the natural chalk, with only the north-west corner cutting into the natural by some 400mm. No archaeological features in the form of pits, postholes or ditches were encountered during the watching brief, and only 20<sup>th</sup> century artefacts were recovered.*

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mrs Angela Hughes (The Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief at 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, TQ 5953 0075 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 As a result of the site's location, and the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority required a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken during the erection of a single-storey extension to the side and front of the house, and the addition of a balcony to the rear dormer window (EB/2010/0766).
- 1.3 202 Willingdon Road is located on east side of Willingdon Road on Ocklynge Hill to the north of Eastbourne Old Town, at approximately 63m OD, and lies close to the top of an east facing slope which overlooks the Willingdon Levels. To the west it is bounded by Willingdon Road, and to the east, south and north by suburban residential development. The site is located within an Archaeological Notification Area defining the site of a Saxon Cemetery which was discovered during road construction work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 1).
- 1.4 The geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/334, is Hollywell Nodular Chalk.
- 1.5 The appropriate programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a brief prepared by ESCC, comprised an archaeological watching brief to monitor any ground works associated with the construction of the single storey extension. A written scheme of investigation covering the watching brief was submitted and subsequently approved by the local planning authority for approval<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6 A burial licence under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 was obtained from the Ministry of Justice in advance of the watching brief. The fieldwork was undertaken on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011 by the author.

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, C. 2010 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex*, CBAS

## **2.0 Archaeological & Historical background**

- 2.1** Although Mesolithic flintwork has been found in the wider landscape, there have been few discoveries in the immediate vicinity of the site<sup>2</sup>. The Willingdon Levels were also exploited throughout later prehistory, as evidenced by occasional finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint artefacts, and the discovery in 1995 of a Late Bronze Age timber platform and associated trackway (MES7375) on Shinewater Marsh.
- 2.2** This and other trackways/alignments (MES15463 & MES16119) hint at extensive activity in the Late Bronze Age on the Levels, which is reflected in the immediate area of the site by the discovery of Bronze Age pottery and flintwork at Pockocks Field (MES7263) and Ocklynge School (MES16378). Iron Age pottery was found during the building of a garage in Windmill Close (MES773).
- 2.3** There is a significant amount of evidence for Roman activity in the area. A probable early Romano-British (RB) settlement was found to the west of the site, comprising a large midden and some 8 or 9 rubbish pits one containing a fine RB urn. Other finds comprised RB wheel-turned potsherds, a bronze ring, and a fragment of leather (MES537).
- 2.4** On the lower ground to the east of the site Roman pottery was found at Pockocks Field (MES7263), while Romano British flint walls and other features were found during road construction nearby (MES7287). A large quantity of Late Iron Age, Romano British and early Saxon pottery was recovered from this site as well as Roman coins and brooches. Quantities of briquetage amongst the pottery suggests that this site may be connected to salt production. There were also suggestions of a Roman villa being discovered during the building of the Hospital (MES7288).
- 2.5** An early Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered on Ocklynge Hill in 1822, 1909 and 1921 during road working and levelling operations. In 1822, over 100 skeletons were found buried closely together (MES534). In 1971 when Nos. 99 and 101 Willingdon Road were demolished, an excavation was undertaken during which a further 26 Anglo-Saxon graves were discovered.
- 2.6** In the spring of 1955, when the service road to the residential development, directly north of Nos. 99 and 101 Willingdon Road was being constructed, the remains of about six human skeletons were discovered.

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<sup>2</sup> Wymer, J.J. 1977 *Gazetteer of Mesolithic sites in England and Wales*, CBA Research Report 22.

- 2.7** In 1970 a rescue excavation was carried out when Nos. 99 and 101 Willingdon Road were demolished prior to redevelopment. A further 26 Anglo-Saxon burials were recovered<sup>3</sup>. All of these discoveries immediately adjacent to the site suggest the presence of a large 7<sup>th</sup> century cemetery, perhaps serving a number of settlements on the lower ground, and located along what became the Borough Boundary.
- 2.8** The site of the Medieval Manor House of Redmeld (MES769) is located to the south-east of the site; This later became Rodmill Farm and is now completely redeveloped. Two Medieval post mills situated close to the site (MES771 and MES7008) were excavated in 1970<sup>4</sup>, whilst at 85 Willingdon Road, limited excavation revealed four pits containing a large amount of medieval cooking pot, and quantities of sheep and cattle bones (MES7009).
- 2.9** In 2004 excavation at Pockocks Field recorded a substantial stone wall, possibly part of a manorial style building, an associated cobbled farmyard and a timber structure built on a small hut platform. Dating suggests an occupation of these features from the 12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century. Further excavation in 2005 uncovered a substantial post medieval cellared building adjoining a large late medieval building of chalk block construction (MES7283).
- 2.10** In the Post Medieval period the hilltop continued to be used as a location for windmills<sup>5</sup>. A mill located adjacent to the site (MES770) was the third and last designed by Thomas Mortimer around 1767. After his death in 1774 it passed to his daughter Elizabeth, but on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1811 it caught fire, due to the dry state of the machinery which had not been greased properly.
- 2.11** Ocklynge Mill (also known as Bakers Mill) was situated a short distance to the south of the site (MES642), and was probably built between 1811 and 1820. It does not appear on the Willingdon Tithe Map of 1842. The mill ceased to work in 1894, and stood derelict until sold for redevelopment in 1933.
- 2.12** The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map (1874) shows the site to be at a junction of tracks with the Eastbourne Municipal Boundary passing along the track (now Willingdon Road) on its west side (Fig. 3). The 2<sup>nd</sup> (1899) Edition OS map shows little change, but by the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS map (1911) houses have been built along the west side of Willingdon Road almost as far as the site.

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<sup>3</sup> Stevens, P. M. 1980 'Ocklynge Hill Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Eastbourne', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **118**, 211-244.

<sup>4</sup> Stevens, L. 1982 'Some Windmill Sites in Friston and Eastbourne, Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **120**, 93-138.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

- 2.13** By the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition OS map (1930's) development along both sides of Willingdon Road extended as far as the site, although the site itself still remained open ground crossed by the trackway. This situation is the same on the 1947 aerial photograph.
- 2.14** The OS map of the 1960's show the site to still be open ground, with the track marked as a footpath, but houses now extend past the site on the west side of the road. However by the 1970's OS map houses (including no. 202) are now also located along the east side of Willingdon Road.
- 2.15** An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 200 Willingdon Road, early in 2011. Hand dug footing trenches for an extension to the rear of the upstanding residential property were excavated under archaeological supervision. No significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified, and the watching brief failed to reveal any evidence for the Anglo-Saxon burial ground.
- 2.16** Monuments on the HER (See Fig. 2)

| <b>HER Ref.</b> | <b>Name</b>                    | <b>NGR</b>     | <b>Period</b>            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| MES515          | Rubbish pit                    | TQ 603 001     | Roman                    |
| MES534          | Inhumation cemetery            | TQ 5952 0070   | Saxon                    |
| MES537          | Settlement                     | TQ 5921 0026   | Roman                    |
| MES641          | Windmill                       | TQ 599 001     | Post Medieval            |
| MES642          | Ocklynge/Bakers Mill           | TQ 595 005     | 19 <sup>th</sup> century |
| MES645          | St Elizabeth's Church (Listed) | TQ 5897 0064   | Post Medieval            |
| MES769          | Manor House of Redmeld         | TQ 598 006     | Medieval                 |
| MES770          | Windmill                       | TQ 5952 0070   | 18 <sup>th</sup> century |
| MES771          | Windmill                       | TQ 595 007     | Medieval                 |
| MES773          | Windmill Close – Pottery       | TQ 596 005     | Iron Age                 |
| MES779          | Road & coins                   | TQ 589 003     | Medieval                 |
| MES780          | Footpath                       | TQ 590 013     | Post Medieval            |
| MES7008         | Post Mill                      | TQ 5950 0069   | Medieval                 |
| MES7009         | Pits                           | TQ 5955 0054   | Medieval                 |
| MES7263         | Pococks Field - Settlement     | TQ 6028 0056   | BA/Roman                 |
| MES7283         | Pococks Field – Manor House    | TQ 60250 00590 | Medieval/PM              |
| MES7287         | Saltworking/settlement         | TQ 60309 00768 | Roman                    |
| MES7288         | Possible villa site            | TQ 60110 00980 | Roman                    |
| MES7363         | Settlement                     | TQ 60110 00980 | Saxon                    |
| MES7984         | ROTOR domestic site            | TQ 59470 01210 | 20 <sup>th</sup> century |
| MES8492         | Ditch                          | TQ 60065 01319 | Bronze Age               |
| MES10270        | Copper-alloy vessel            | TQ 60300 00500 | Medieval/PM              |
| MES16378        | Occupation – Ocklynge School   | TQ 5922 0083   | BA - Saxon               |

### **3.0 Methodology**

- 3.1** The concrete floor for the existing redundant conservatory was first broken up to a width of 500mm for the footing trench using a pneumatic drill.
- 3.2** The footing trenches were then dug by hand using a mattock, spade and shovel to a depth varying between 1.1m and dropping to 1.24m in the east-west footing and 1.56m to 1.86m in the most easterly north-south footing and 500mm raising to 80mm in the westerly north-south footing (Fig. 4). All measurements were taken from the surface of the concrete floor. Existing services were left in situ.
- 3.3** Due to the very limited space, the spoil from the excavations was loaded straight into wheelbarrows and deposited into a skip. This precluded the use of a metal detector at this stage and the amount of metal within the modern deposits ruled out its use before excavation commenced. However, the spoil was closely monitored for any artefacts, metal or otherwise.
- 3.4** No archaeological features or deposits were noted during the watching brief, with only a single piece of disarticulated bone being recovered. All deposits were 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.
- 3.5** A full 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 Ltd. A site reference of WRD11 has been allocated, and the archive will be offered to Eastbourne Museum in due course.



#### **4.0 Results (Figs 5 & 6)**

- 4.1** Context 1 was the existing floor surface for the redundant conservatory. Made of a buff coloured concrete it contained approximately 5% shingle of <30mm in size, and was 140mm thick.
- 4.2** Context 2 lay underneath Context 1 and was cut by Context 3. This was a mid grey, loose to firm deposit, made up of 50% chalk and 50% of a clayey-silt. The chalk within the matrix was 20-80mm in size and the deposit had an overall depth of 460mm. The interface between this context and Context 3 was difficult to make out as there was no sharp defining edge, just a gradual bleeding of one context into another. The context was devoid of artefacts apart from one small piece of bone.
- 4.3** Context 3 was a loose, modern, made-ground deposit. Mid grey-brown in colour and made up of a silty-clay, it contained frogged London bricks at 15%, glass at 1%, yellow builders sand at 20% and paint-tins and other modern debris at 2%. It was 1.06m in depth and was interpreted as a general made-ground deposit.
- 4.4** Context 4 was sealed under Context 2 and possibly cut by Context 3. It was a firm dark grey-brown clayey-silt (at an approximate ratio of 30/70), with bioturbation in the form of roots at 2%, chalk pieces and flecks at 1% and 10-20mm in size and charcoal at <1%. Again, the edges between all the contexts were very diffuse. It is possible that this was a surviving topsoil deposit well sealed under Context 2.
- 4.5** Context 5 was the subsoil underlying Context 4. This was a firm, mid-light grey deposit, again a clayey-silt (at an approximate ratio of 30/70), some 90mm in depth. There was evidence of rooting at 1% and it contained chalk pieces between 10-60mm in size at 2%. Underlying Context 5 was the natural Hollywell Nodular Chalk.
- 4.6** Context 5 was the natural Hollywell Nodular Chalk. Excavation ceased when this was reached apart from the north-east corner of the footing trench, where a 1m length was excavated some 410mm into the natural.

## **5.0 Finds**

- 5.1** The only retained finds came from Context **2**, and comprised a small piece of animal bone, probably from a sheep tibia, and a modern nail.
- 5.2** Other artefacts from Context **3** were not retained, and included frogged London bricks, metal paint cans, and fragments of glass, all of mid to later 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

## **6.0 Discussion**

- 6.1** The excavation of the footing trenches by hand allowed a tighter control over the recovery of any artefacts from the spoil than the more usual machine excavation, however, apart from the modern tins and assorted debris from Context **3** and the bone from Context **2**, the excavation was devoid of any notable artefacts.
- 6.2** Context **2** is the most interesting of all the deposits. Its make-up and stratigraphic relationships would suggest that it comprised re-deposited material derived either from the construction of the house, most likely from the front close to the road or possibly from the road working and levelling itself, that first began in 1822. The results from the excavation at the site mirror those of a similar excavation next door at 200 Willingdon Road.
- 6.3** As very little in the way of human remains have been found on the east side of the road, it may be that the road respects and demarcates the edge of the Saxon cemetery and the road is in fact of some great antiquity and has, over time, become fossilised in the landscape and even though no significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the course of the work it should be emphasised that even negative evidence makes a valuable and positive contribution to the growing body of archaeological knowledge. This is especially so in this instance as the lack of evidence helps to define the potential easterly extent of the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon burial ground.
- 6.4** The aims of the watching were successful in so far as they revealed a complete lack of significant archaeological features or artefacts within the footprint of the extension. The overburden, Context **3**, was clearly of 20<sup>th</sup> century origin, probably relating directly to the *c.*1960s construction of the upstanding residential dwelling.

- 6.5** The methodology adopted for this watching brief proved to be satisfactory, and the confidence rating should be considered to be very reliable.

## **7 Acknowledgements**

- 7.1** We would like to thank the client, Mrs Angela Hughes, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, and the on-site contractors, Phil, Lee and Casey for their co-operation during the project.
- 7.2** The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler, and monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter.

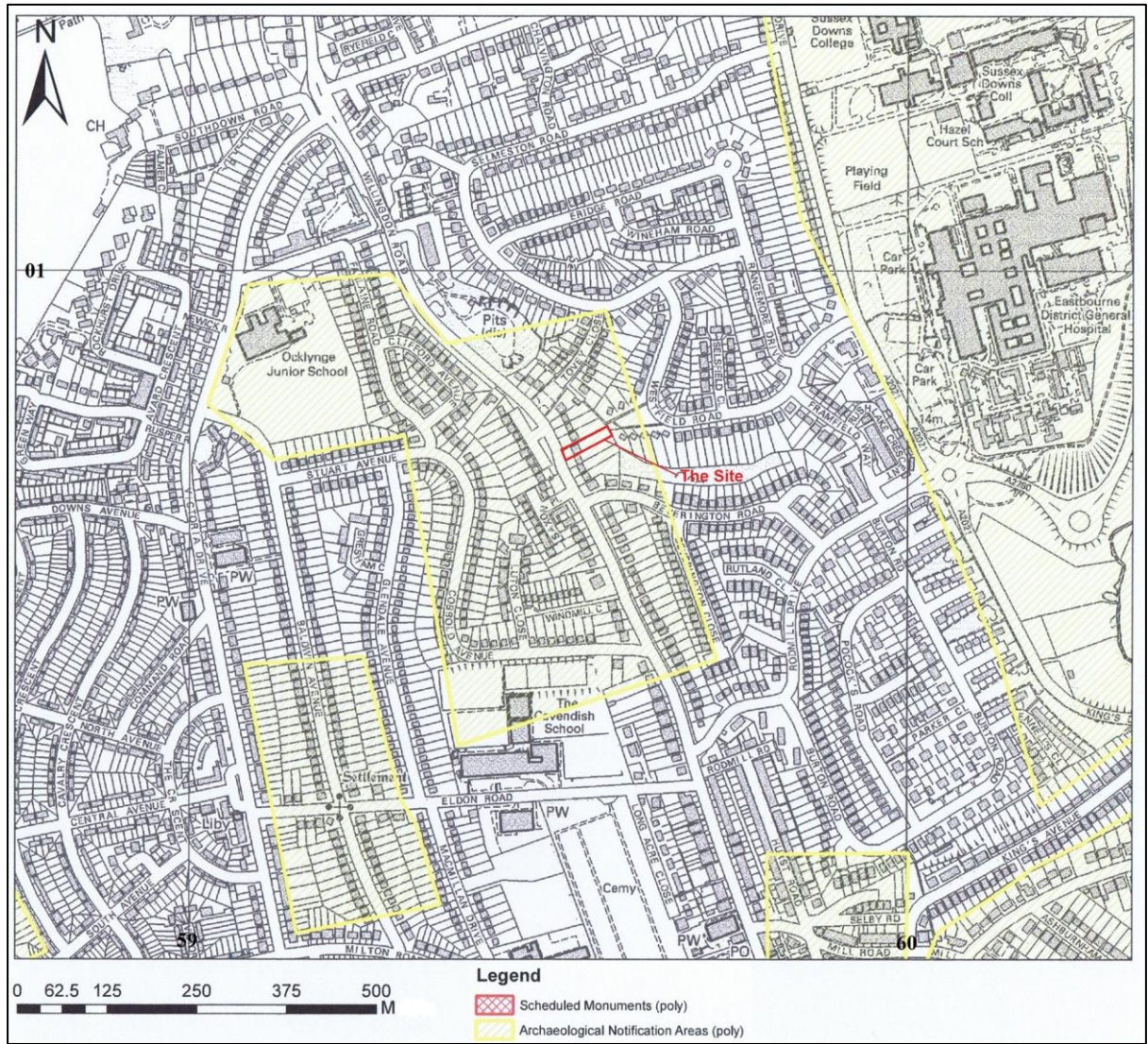


Fig. 1: 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne: Site Location and Archaeological Notification Areas  
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)  
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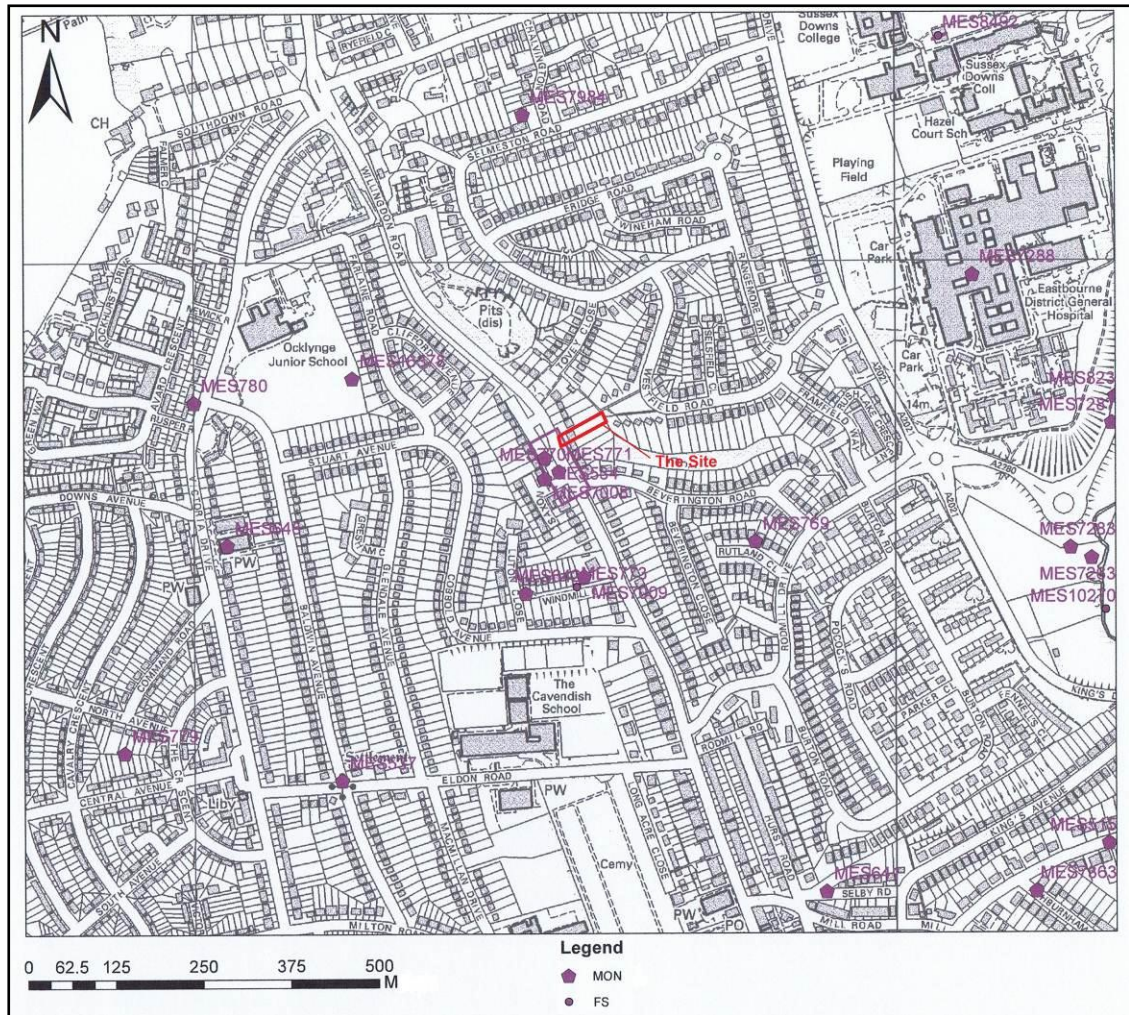


Fig. 2: 202 Willington Road, Eastbourne: Site Location & monuments on the HER  
(Adapted from map provided by ESCC)

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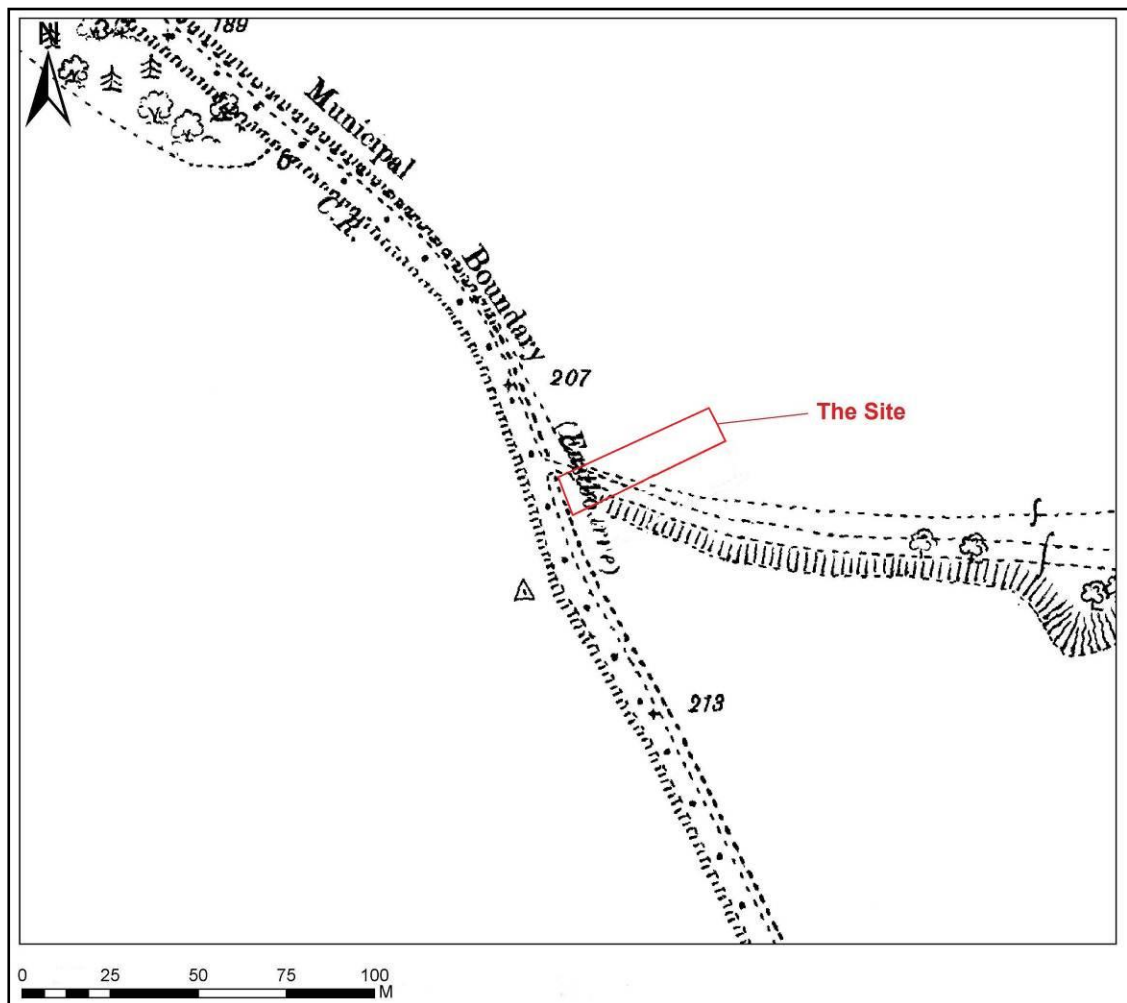


Fig. 3: 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map (1874)

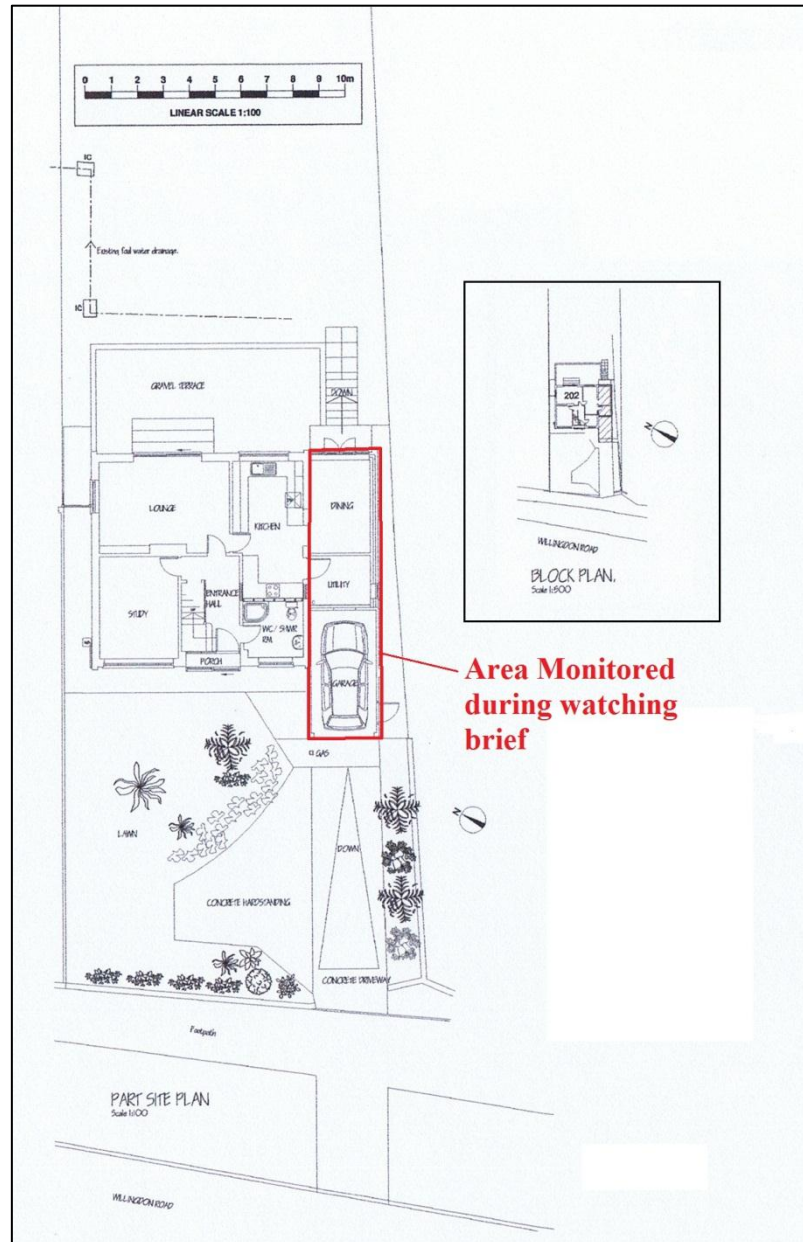


Fig. 4: 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne: Site plan showing area monitored during watching brief





Fig. 5: 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne: Photograph of site



Fig. 6: 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne: Photograph of trench section



### Appendix 1 HER Summary Form

|  |   |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
|--|---|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| Site Code  | WRD11   |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Identification Name and Address  | 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| County, District &/or Borough  | Eastbourne Borough Council                    |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| OS Grid Refs.  | TQ 5953 0075                                  |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Geology  | Hollywell Nodular Chalk.                      |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Type of Fieldwork  | Eval.   | Excav.                 | Watching Brief <b>X</b>      | Standing Structure | Survey | Other |
| Type of Site   | Green Field                                   | Shallow Urban <b>X</b> | Deep Urban                   | Other              |        |       |
| Dates of Fieldwork   | Eval.   | Excav.                 | WB.<br>29.06.11-<br>30.06.11 | Other              |        |       |
| Sponsor/Client   | Mrs Angela Hughes                             |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Project Manager  | Chris Butler MifA                             |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Project Supervisor   | David Atkin                                   |                        |                              |                    |        |       |
| Period Summary   | Palaeo.                                       | Meso.                  | Neo.                         | BA                 | IA     | RB    |
|  | AS  | MED                    | PM <b>X</b>                  | Other              |        |       |
| <p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>A watching brief was maintained during the excavations for the footings associated with the erection of a new single-storey extension at 202 Willingdon Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. All trenches were excavated by hand exposing the top of the natural chalk, with only the north-west corner cutting into the natural by some 400mm. No archaeological features in the form of pits, postholes or ditches were encountered during the watching brief, and only 20<sup>th</sup> century artefacts were recovered.</i></p> |   |                        |                              |                    |        |       |

## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

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.

**Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd** 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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