

Chris Butler MCIfA Archaeological Services Ltd



An Archaeological Watching Brief at Manor Park Home Estate, New Road, Hellingly, East Sussex

TQ 59265 11545

WD/2014/1809/F

CBAS0553

by Steffan Klemenic

December 2015

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Manor Park Home Estate, New Road, Hellingly, East Sussex to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of nine residential park home pitches. No archaeological features or deposits were observed, perhaps implying that the prehistoric settlement sites suggested from recent fieldwork, are located further upslope, north of New Road.

Chris Butler MCIfA Archaeological Services Ltd

Unit 12 Mays Farm Selmeston Polegate East Sussex BN26 6TS

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: chris.butler@cbasltd.co.uk

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3		
2.0	Archaeological and Historical Background			
3.0	Archaeological Methodology	8		
4.0	Results	10		
5.0	Finds	11		
6.0	Discussion	13		
7.0	Acknowledgements	13		
Figures				
Fig. 1	Site location			
Fig. 2	Proposed development showing location of monitored service			
	trenches and levels			

Appendices

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Appendix 1 Levels Record

Appendix 2 HER Summery Form

Cover plate: The Site after topsoil stripping, looking southeast

Archaeological Notification Areas

Pre-Construct Archaeology trial trench evaluation

Historic Environment Records

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Mr L. Saunders (the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the construction of an additional nine residential park home pitches on land to the east of the existing park homes, at Manor Park Home Estate, New Road, Hellingly, East Sussex (Figs. 1 and 2; WD/2014/1809/F).
- 1.2 The Site lies within the Archaeological Notification Area (Fig. 3), which covers a concentration of prehistoric and Roman artefacts indicative of settlement. An archaeological evaluation, carried out as part of a pre-determination Environmental Impact Assessment planning process for a proposed housing development within the fields surrounding the Site, south of New Road (WD/2013/0637/MEA), discovered Middle to Late Iron Age/ Romano-British occupation features which appear to extend into the Site. Therefore, the following archaeological condition was attached to planning consent for the proposed development of the Site:
 - 3. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. A written record of any archaeological works undertaken shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of any archaeological investigation unless an alternative timescale for submission of the report is first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 129, 131 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.¹

- 1.3 The Site is located c.1.36km southeast of the historic village core of Hellingly and c.300m north of the eastern outskirts of Horsebridge, centred at TQ 59265 11545. The Site is a rectangular plot of grassland bounded to the northwest by the existing park homes, to the southwest and southeast by a field taken out of cultivation and overgrown, and to the northeast by a driveway to the rear of the six pairs of semi-detached houses on New Road. Further houses stand opposite them, on the northeast side of New Road, with Hailsham House Nursing Home to their north and Park Farm to the east. Beyond all these buildings is the surrounding countryside.
- 1.4 The Site lies at 19m-20m aOD on flat low-lying land, with the land rising very gradually to the east and northeast. The northwest extent of Horse Eye Levels lies c.1.17km to the southeast of the Site. According to the British Geological Survey², the geology of the Site comprises siltstone, mudstone and sandstone of the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation.

Wealden District Council, Notice of Decision, WD/2014/1809/F

http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html, Viewed 12/12/2014

- 1.5 The programme of archaeological works comprised an archaeological watching brief to monitor all groundworks associated with the development, as specified in a brief issued by Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist³. A written scheme of investigation⁴ for the watching brief was submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.6 The watching brief was carried out by Sarah Vine, monitored by Caroline Russell, on the 23rd July 2015, Steffan Klemenic (the author) on the 5th August 2015, and Jeremy Webster on the 6th August 2015.

Email (dated November 2014) from Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist, to Martin Taylor, Director, Planning & Consulting, Hotels & Leisure, GVA

⁴ Cruse, R. 2014. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Manor Park, Hellingly. CBAS0553

2.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 Data from the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (Ref. 362/14) was supplied for a search area with a 1km radius around the Site centre (Fig. 4). A series of archaeological investigations took place in association with the planning application (WD/2014/0637/MEA) to build a residential development on three fields (Fields 1-3) surrounding the Site: systematic fieldwalking of the area was carried out by CBAS Ltd in 2009⁵ (EES14506), followed by a geophysical survey by Pre-Construct Geophysics in 2012⁶, and a subsequent trial trench evaluation by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (West) in 2014⁷ (EES16005). Field 2 is the field located directly south and east of the Site, whilst Fields 1 and 3 are located to the east and west of this field respectively. Were necessary, the results of these investigative works are incorporated with the HER data below.
- 2.2 Of the 38 trenches and 13 test pits opened for the evaluation, Trench 8 to the south and Trench 18 to the east are the closest to the Site (Fig. 5). In both trenches, ploughsoil comprising soft greyish brown silty clay, up to 300mm-450mm thick, overlay the natural deposit, a firm light yellowish brown silty clay. No archaeological features were found in Trench 8, unlike in Trench 18 which contained a northwest-southeast aligned ditch and an almost parallel ditch aligned more west-east, both dating to the Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British period; three pits dating to the Late Iron Age to Romano-British period; and a shallow west-east aligned linear cut interpreted as a natural features as it contained no dating evidence. Both ditches were thought to have extended west and east into Trenches 5 and 21 respectively. There location in Trench 18, however, would suggest that they ran just northeast of the Site, within the back gardens of the houses fronting New Road.
- 2.3 Fieldwalking of the three fields surrounding the Site established that there was prehistoric activity from the Mesolithic period though to the Bronze Age⁸. Mesolithic flintwork, comprising both tools and debitage, was generally scattered across the survey area but there was a discrete scatter (MES15529) in Field 1 and a more dense concentration in the southern part of Field 3 (MES15528). Although there were no definite concentrations, the distribution pattern of Early Neolithic flintwork appeared to match that for the Mesolithic period. Early Neolithic tools included two polished axe fragments. Likewise, Late Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork had no discernible concentration. Whilst trial trenching found no surviving *in situ* evidence for occupation of the Site in the Mesolithic to Neolithic periods, the two possible domestic refuse pits recorded in Trenches 19A and 19B in Field 2, indicate Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age occupation⁹.

⁵ Butler, C. 2009. Report on a Fieldwalking Project to the north of Hailsham, East Sussex. CBAS Report

Bunn. D. 2012. Archaeological Geophysical Survey, Land at Hailsham, East Sussex. Pre-Construct Geophysics Report

Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

⁸ Butler, C. 2009. Report on a Fieldwalking Project to the north of Hailsham, East Sussex. CBAS Report

Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

- **2.4** Further afield, two concentrations of Mesolithic and Late Neolithic/Bronze Age flintwork (MES7145) have been recorded from the two fields located *c*.0.5km west of the Site, directly north of Upper Horsebridge. A Neolithic polished stone axe (MES4365) was found whilst digging a drain in about 1961, *c*.360m northwest of the Site at Park Road. East of the Site, just beyond Amberstone and therefore outside the search area, a Mesolithic site and later prehistoric flintwork is known from Magham Down¹⁰.
- 2.5 Pit and ditch features in Trenches 5, 18 and 33 (Fig. 5) suggest the presence of a Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age settlement site located further to the north, closer to New Road, and therefore, perhaps within the Site¹¹. Occupation of this settlement may have ended immediately prior to the Roman invasion.
- 2.6 Only a small number of Roman pottery sherds (MES15531) were found during fieldwalking, which would imply that the fields were cultivated at the time, with the pottery having been spread out with the manure¹². The results of the trial trenching would seem to support this theory, as no Roman features, deposits or features were found on Site¹³.
- 2.7 No Saxon or medieval artefacts were recovered during fieldwalking¹⁴. The absence of medieval pottery may imply that the area was not cultivated as medieval pottery is quite durable, and would have been spread on the fields with manure. The findings from the evaluation substantiate limited activity on Site during these periods, as no Saxon remains were excavated whilst the medieval period was only represented by finds from the overburden¹⁵.
- **2.8** In the Saxon period, Park Wood (MES22444; HES32293), located *c*.0.79km to the northeast of the Site, was once part of a much larger wood. In the medieval period, the search area was rural in setting. Settlements included the medieval market village of Hellingly (MES21462); a 15th century moated manor house at Horselunges (MES4366; Grade I Listed) located *c*.1.09km northwest of the Site; and a large medieval farm at Amberstone Grange (MES21459), located *c*.1.01km east of the Site.
- 2.9 Fieldwalking revealed that evidence for human activity re-emerged in the mid 16th century¹⁶. Most of the Post Medieval material collected on fieldwalking is likely to have arrived in the fields as a result of manuring, although there may have been a midden in Field 1. Trial trenching

Butler, C. 2002. 'A Mesolithic site and later finds at Magham Down, near Hailsham, East Sussex', Sussex Archaeological Collections 140, 139-144.

Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

¹² Butler, C. 2009. Report on a Fieldwalking Project to the north of Hailsham, East Sussex. CBAS Report

Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

¹⁴ Butler, C. 2009. Report on a Fieldwalking Project to the north of Hailsham, East Sussex. CBAS Report

Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

Butler, C. 2009. Report on a Fieldwalking Project to the north of Hailsham, East Sussex. CBAS Report

recorded Post Medieval field drains, field boundary ditches and plough marks but no evidence of *in situ* settlement for this period¹⁷.

- **2.10** Park Farmhouse to the north of the Site, on the other side of New Road, is an 18th century building. Its threshing barn closer to the road is of probable mid-18th century date. Magham Oast, to the immediate north of Park Farm, is 19th century in date. All three buildings are Grade II Listed, and the closest Listed Building to the Site.
- 2.11 Yeakell and Gardner's map of 1778-1883 shows the Site located within a fieldscape of arable fields. New Road had not been laid out by this time. The Hellingly Tithe map, dated 1842, shows the Site located within the arable field called Great Plain (Plot 467), owned by Lord Chichester and occupied by Daniel Lade who resided at Park Farm.
- 2.12 A footpath is shown to run across the north half of this field by the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1875. Sometime between the 2nd and 3rd Edition OS maps of 1899 and 1910, New Road was laid and housing had been built opposite the field, on the north side of the road. Housing had been built across the north end of the field by the 4th Edition OS map of 1932. A field boundary was removed sometime between 1951-1952 and 1961, to create a large field. By 1974, a caravan site had been established within the northwest corner of this field, and the boundaries of the Site had been defined to its east.

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Humphrey, R. 2014. Land East Of Park Road, Hailsham, East Sussex: Archaeological Evaluation Report PCA Report R11713 (Rev 1)

3.0 Archaeological Methodology (Fig. 2)

3.1 Groundworks at the Site were monitored on three occasions. Sarah Vine visited the Site on the 23rd July to monitor topsoil stripping across the Site. Topsoil stripping was carried out with a 13 tonne tracked excavator (JCB JS130 LC) fitted with a 1.7m wide flat bladed bucket. The ground was reduced by up to 300mm, exposing, and at times excavating slightly into, what appeared to be the underlying natural deposit (Plate 1). No obvious archaeological cut features or deposits were observed, but as it was not entirely clear if the horizon exposed was the natural deposit, and could be seen right across the Site, it was decided that excavation of the service trenches should also be monitored.



Plate 1: View across site after topsoil strip

- 3.2 The author visited the Site on the 5th August to monitor machine excavation of an approximately 25m long stretch of service trench (Trench 1), for the installation of a water pipe and probably other services, along the northeast boundary of the Site. By this time, crush had been laid across a good proportion of the Site and some of the service trench was excavated through this crush. The service trench was c.0.7m wide, the width of the flat bladed bucket on the JCB, and was excavated through any surviving overburden into the natural deposit to a depth of 0.7m.
- 3.3 Jeremy Webster visited the Site on 6th August to monitor machine excavation of a 30m stretch of the northwest-southeast aligned service trench (Trench 2) opened broadly through the centre of the Site. The 0.7m wide service trench was excavated into the natural deposit to a depth of 0.75m-0.85m.
- **3.4** Each excavation had its spoil visually inspected and scanned with a Garrett ACE 250 metal detector for the recovery of artefacts. The spoil from the topsoil stripping was stored around all four edges of the Site. The ground surface was also metal detected after topsoil stripping.

- 3.5 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded on Site. All deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards and to the *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (2015). Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not with reference to a Munsell colour chart.
- 3.6 A full digital 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 but will be deposited in due course with Lewes Museum or other such repository as agreed with the County Archaeologist. The archive does not contain any finds as they hold no potential for further analysis and so have been discarded. The East Sussex Historic Environment Record will be supplied with a CD containing the report in PDF (Archive) format and a selection of site photographs. A site reference of MPH14 has been allocated.
- 3.7 The Site was levelled from a Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) established at the south corner of a garage fronting the driveway beside the Site (see Fig. 2). The level for this TBM (20.431m aOD) was tied into the Ordnance Survey grid system by traversing from an OS Bench Mark (21.541m aOD) located on the house at No. 25 New Road (TQ 5931 1159).

4.0 Results (Plates 2 & 3)

- **4.1** The topsoil (Context **001**) across the Site comprised soft mid brownish grey silt with occasional charcoal flecks, up to 280mm thick.
- 4.2 Across the Site, the topsoil (Context **001**) rested above a natural deposit, possibly weathered (Context **002**). On exposure after topsoil stripping, this natural deposit was recorded as firm pale orange-brown silt with occasional manganese flecks. In Trench 2, it was recorded as friable pale yellow-orange sandy clay, 350mm-400mm thick, containing occasional to moderate small subrounded pebbles, occasional chalk and manganese flecks, and moderate fine to medium sized roots. In Trench 2, a lens of ironstone, 50mm-200mm thick, was at times observed at the interface between Context **002** and the underlying natural deposit (Context **003**).
- **4.3** In Trench 1, the natural deposit (Context 003) was recorded as a firm mid yellowy brown sand, with c.2% angular sandstone inclusions (up to 50mm^3). In Trench 2, where this deposit was excavated into by 200mm-280mm, it was recorded as a firm pale to mid greyish orange sand with moderate manganese flecks.
- **4.4** No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the archaeological watching brief.



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking east



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking northwest

5.0 The Finds

5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.1.1 The archaeological monitoring recovered just two sherds of pottery from the Site, both coming from Context **001**. These comprise a 4g sherd from a refined whiteware bowl (4g) and the base of an English porcelain cup (4g), both of late 19th- to mid 20th- century date.
- 5.1.2 The pottery has no potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.2 The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 Context **001** produced seven fragments of brick and tile. The brick (3/274g) is all well-formed, well/hard fired and tempered with sparse fine quartz, common marl streaks and sparse iron oxides. One fragment is partially self-glazed due to its high firing. All brick can be placed between the mid 18th and 19th centuries.
- 5.2.2 The oldest piece of tile (12g) comprises a well-formed and fired peg tile fragment tempered with sparse fine quartz and sparse iron oxides to 0.5mm. A mid 18th to 19th century date is probable. The other tile is of machine-made nib tiles of the 20th century, tempered with sparse quartz and common iron oxides and marl pellets to 0.5mm (3/18g).
- 5.2.3 The brick and tile has no potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.3 The Slag by Luke Barber

- 5.3.1 Context **001** produced five pieces of slag weighing 14g. All are fuel ash slag derived from coal burning and undoubtedly date to the Late Post Medieval period.
- 5.3.2 The slag has no potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.4 The Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.4.1 Context **001** produced six small scraps of local Wealden stones, none of which had been modified by man. These consist of three pieces (6g) of ferruginous medium-grained sandstone and three pieces (8g) of ferruginous siltstone.

5.4.2 The stone has no potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

5.5 The Prehistoric Flintwork by Steffan Klemenic

- 5.5.1 A single flint blade (4g) was found in Context **001**. The blade has a brown patination, however more recent damage in two places shows the flint to be of a light grey colour. This blade was likely removed using a soft hammer. It has a small portion of chalk cortext in the dextral dorsal surface, and may have broken during its removal from the core as it is missing its distal end, due to a bend-break fracture. The brown patination covers this break, suggesting antiquity. The blade is likely to be of Mesolithic/ Early Neolithic date.
- 5.5.2 This piece of flint does not merit any further work and has been discarded.

5.6 The Glass by Jan Oldham

- 5.6.1 A small quantity of glass was recovered during the watching brief, from a single context. The glass has been recorded by colour, type and weight.
- 5.6.2 From Context **001** came two glass shards: a dark green glass shard, curvature indicating from the body of a vessel, likely to be a beer or wine bottle (16g), and a clear glass shard, flat sided and probably from a sauce type bottle (15g).
- 5.6.3 Both of these glass shards are from vessels of a late 19th early 20th century date, present as domestic refuse. They require no further analysis and have been discarded.

5.7 The Metal by Jan Oldham

- 5.7.1 Two items of ferrous metal were recovered from the spoil heap, both heavily corroded: a 60mm length of barbed wire (131g), and a cylindrical piece of iron with a hole through the complete 64mm length (131g). The cylindrical piece is sheared off to one edge and the diameter of the hole is 12mm. It is likely to be a piece of garden machinery or similar, of late 19th to early 20th century date.
- 5.7.2 The metal finds require no further analysis beyond the recording of this report and have been discarded.

6.0 Discussion

- 6.1 An archaeological watching brief took place at the Site to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of nine park home pitches. Topsoil stripping exposed no obvious archaeological features or deposits, and the excavation of sections of the service trenches confirmed that the natural deposit had been exposed on topsoil stripping.
- 6.2 There was no evidence of the prehistoric settlement sites that, based on the results from trial trenching the adjacent fields in 2014, were thought to have been located closer to New Road. Two ditches in Trench 18 (Fig. 5), directly east of the Site, were seen to head towards the rear gardens of the houses immediately north of the Site and thus miss the site, while the ditches in Trenches 5 and 7 also miss the site if they continue on their alignments. Trench 8, which was the closest to the site, and Trenches 9, 10 & 17 which are also nearby, had no features in them. It is therefore possible that the site sits in a field within the field system identified in the evaluation excavation, and this explains the lack of features found.
- 6.3 It was known from the 2009 fieldwalking survey and the trial trenching that there was limited activity within the immediate area of the Site between the Roman and medieval periods. This was confirmed from the finds recovered on Site, which comprised one single Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flint and an assortment of Late Post Medieval finds, dating from the mid 18th century onwards. No features associated with Post Medieval agriculture were encountered.
- 6.4 From the evaluation report for the adjacent site, it is clear that at least some of the archaeological features found there were quite ephemeral. If any archaeological features were present on this Site, there was perhaps not the time for them to weather out given the limited duration of the watching brief. However, the fact that no features were observed in the sections of the drainage excavations, and that there was a limited quantity of artefacts, all of which came from the topsoil, may imply that the prehistoric settlement sites were located further upslope, on slightly higher ground, closer to Park Farm, north of New Road. Alternatively it is possible that at some stage in the past the site has been levelled or truncated which has removed both finds and features.

7.0 Acknowledgements

- **7.1** I would like to thank Mr L. Saunders for commissioning this archaeological watching brief. Thanks are extended to the site contractors for their assistance and co-operation on site.
- 7.2 The project was managed for CBAS Ltd by Chris Butler MCIfA, and monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter, Assistant County Archaeologist. Luke Barber and Jan Oldham reported on the finds.

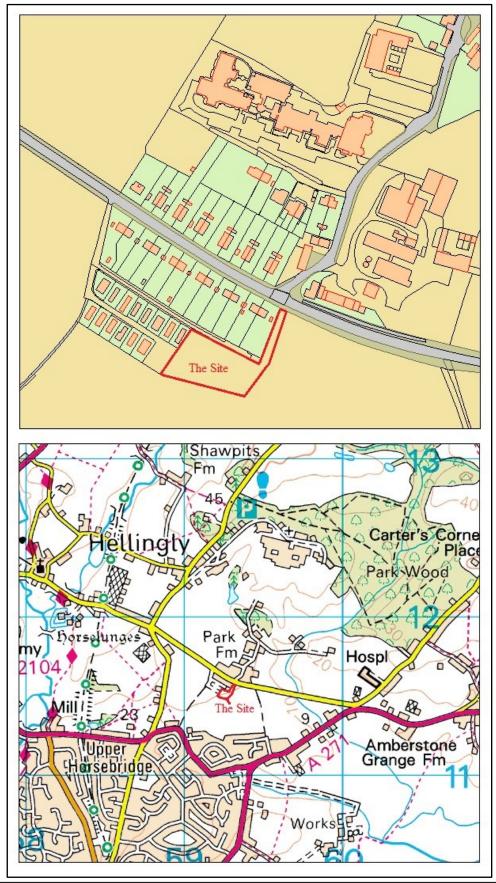


Fig. 1: Site location
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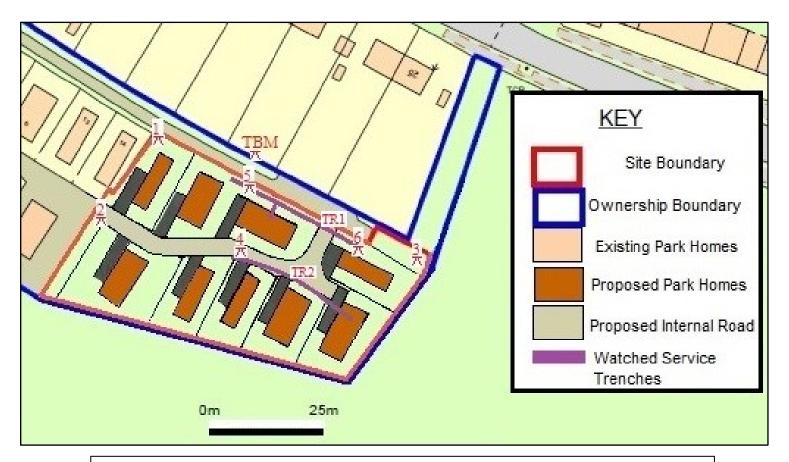
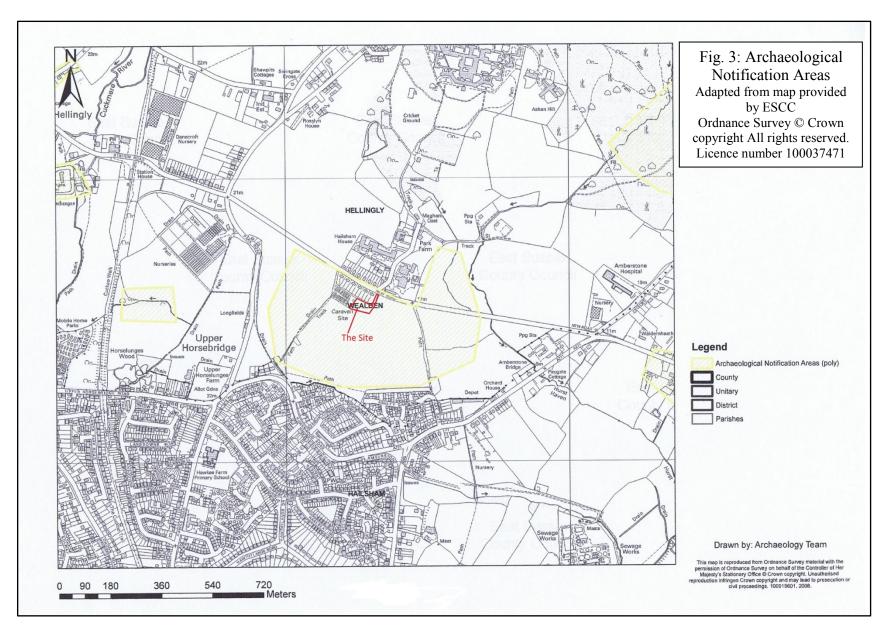
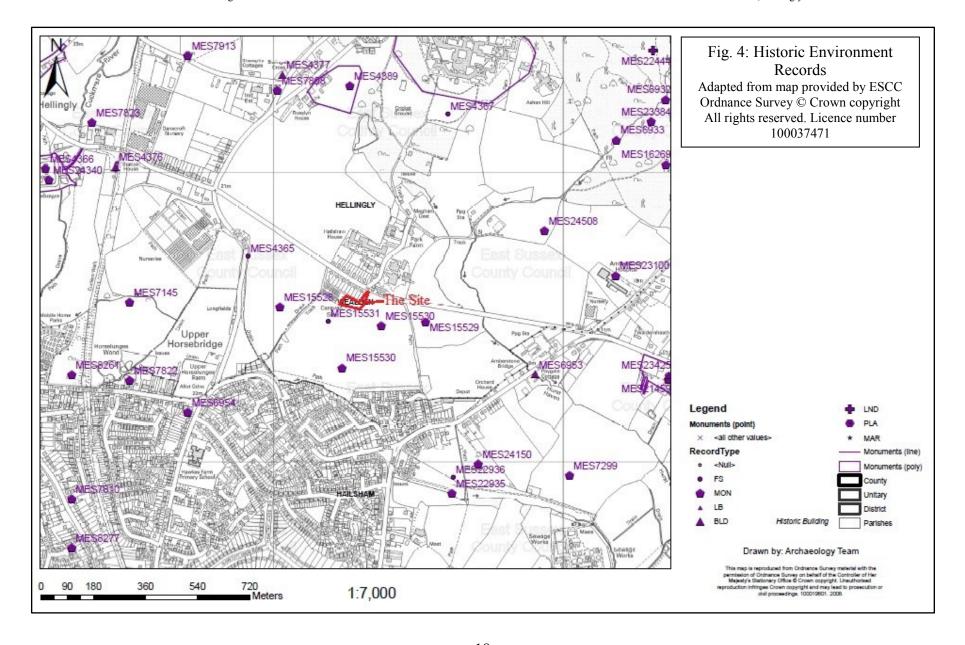


Fig. 2: Proposed development showing location of monitored service trenches and levels (North at top)

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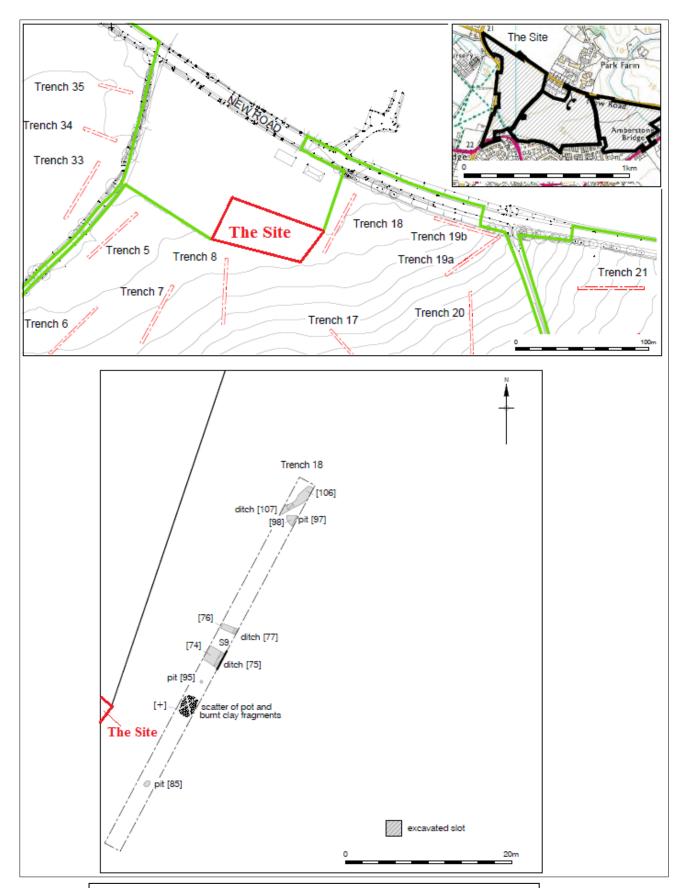


Fig. 5: Pre-Construct Archaeology trial trench (Trench 18) (adapted from PCA 2014)

Appendix 1: Levels Register

Level Number	Reduced Level (m aOD)	Notes		
TBM	20.431	Southeast corner of garage opposite Site		
1	20.101	Northwest corner of Site		
2	19.781	Proposed entrance within northwest side of Site		
3	19.941	Northeast corner of Site		
4	20.051	Centre of Site		
5	18.971	Base of Trench 1, northwest end		
6	18.761	Base of Trench 1, southeast end		

Appendix 2: HER Summary Form

Site Code	MPH14							
Identification Name and Address	Manor Park Home Estate, New Road, Hellingly, East Sussex							
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District Council							
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 59265 11545							
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Formation (siltstone, mudstone, and sandstone)							
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief X	Standing Structure	Survey	Other		
Type of Site	Green Field X	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other	Other			
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 23/07/15- 06/08/15	Other				
Sponsor/Client	Mr L. Saunders							
Project Manager	Chris Butler MCIfA							
Project Supervisor	Steffan Klemenic							
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso. X	Neo. X	BA	IA	RB		
	AS	MED	PM X	Other	•			

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Manor Park Home Estate, New Road, Hellingly, East Sussex to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of nine residential park home pitches. No archaeological features or deposits were observed, perhaps implying that the prehistoric settlement sites suggested from recent fieldwork, are located further upslope, north of New Road.

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 Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists, a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and was 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.

Chris Butler MCIFA Archaeological Services Ltd

Unit 12 Mays Farm Selmeston Polegate East Sussex BN26 6TS

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: chris.butler@cbasltd.co.uk