

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Western Court Lodge,  
Udimore, East Sussex**

**NGR 586305 118920**

**Project No. 2514**

**by  
Michelle Collings**

**November 2006**

**Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2006 during ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches in advance of building an extension to the existing property at Western Court Lodge, Udimore, East Sussex. No archaeological finds or deposits were recovered.*

## **Archaeology South-East**

*Archaeology South-East is a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.*

*UCL Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, Archaeology South-East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.*

*Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England, Archaeology South-East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.*

*Archaeology South-East, as part of UCL Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit (UCLFAU), was commissioned by Gale and Dunn Partnership Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with building an extension (Planning Reference RR/206/349/P) to Western Court Lodge, Udimore, East Sussex (site centred NGR 586305 118920).
- 1.2** Following discussions with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) it was decided it would be prudent to maintain an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of new groundworks until it become clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present. A Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological monitoring was produced by Neil Griffin of ASE in June 2006, outlining the methods to be used during the watching brief. The methodology was agreed with East Sussex County Council prior to the commencement of work at the site.
- 1.3** The on-site monitoring was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni (Project Supervisor) on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Projects Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The site is situated within a former manor estate which now serves as a farm complex in Udimore, East Sussex (NGR 586305 118920). According to the British Geological Survey Map (Solid and Drift Edition Sheet 320/321) the underlying geology at the site is Wadhurst Clay.
- 2.2** There are the remains of a dry moat which enclosed St Mary's Church and the old Court Lodge manor house. Although only two areas of the moat now exist and the Court Lodge was dismantled in 1912 and re-erected at Groombridge, the site was considered to have archaeological potential. It is recorded that both Edward I and III had stayed at Court Lodge and there is potential relating to the long history of the manor estate.
- 2.3** The site lies immediately southeast of St Mary's church, the nave of which is Norman, dating from 1170, and the chancel dates from the 13th century.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1** The archaeological watching brief was maintained during the main phase of ground reduction and subsequent excavation of foundation trenches. All excavation was monitored, all sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features or deposits and all spoil was scanned for the presence of artifacts. A soakaway was excavated on the site without the presence of the archaeologist, therefore this stage of works was not monitored.
- 3.2** All archaeological deposits, features and finds encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards using context record sheets based upon the Central Excavation Unit recording system, as modified for use by Archaeology South-East. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.3** A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East and will be offered to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery in due course (accession number WCL06).

### **4.0 RESULTS**

- 4.1** The results of the archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the trenches and ground reduction are given below.

<b>Depth of Overburden</b>	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Underlying 'Natural'</b>	<b>Archaeological Features</b>	<b>Archaeological Artefacts</b>
520mm	Residential	Clay	x	x

- 4.2** No archaeological deposits or features were observed and no artefacts were recovered from the overburden. This consisted of dark greyish brown organic silty clay topsoil (Context 001, 0.28m in depth) and mid brownish orange clay silt subsoil (Context 002, 0.24). This appeared to be a layer of made ground formed from re-deposited natural. Beneath this was the natural, a mid yellowish orange firm clay (Context 003). Ground reduction revealed natural ground over the entire area; this was a variable deposit of clay with occasional sandstone.

### **5.0 DISCUSSION**

- 5.1** Despite close monitoring of the ground reduction no archaeological deposits or features were observed.
- 5.2** The area monitored was extremely small and cannot be taken as clear evidence of the absence of surviving archaeological remains elsewhere within the former manor estate and vicinity. The long history of the manor estate suggests that the archaeological potential is greater than that indicated by the monitoring that was undertaken.

**6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1** The use of information supplied by East Sussex County Council's Archaeological Officers is gratefully acknowledged, as is the co-operation of Gale and Dunn Partnership Limited.

**Archaeology South-East**  
Western Court Lodge, Udimore, East Sussex

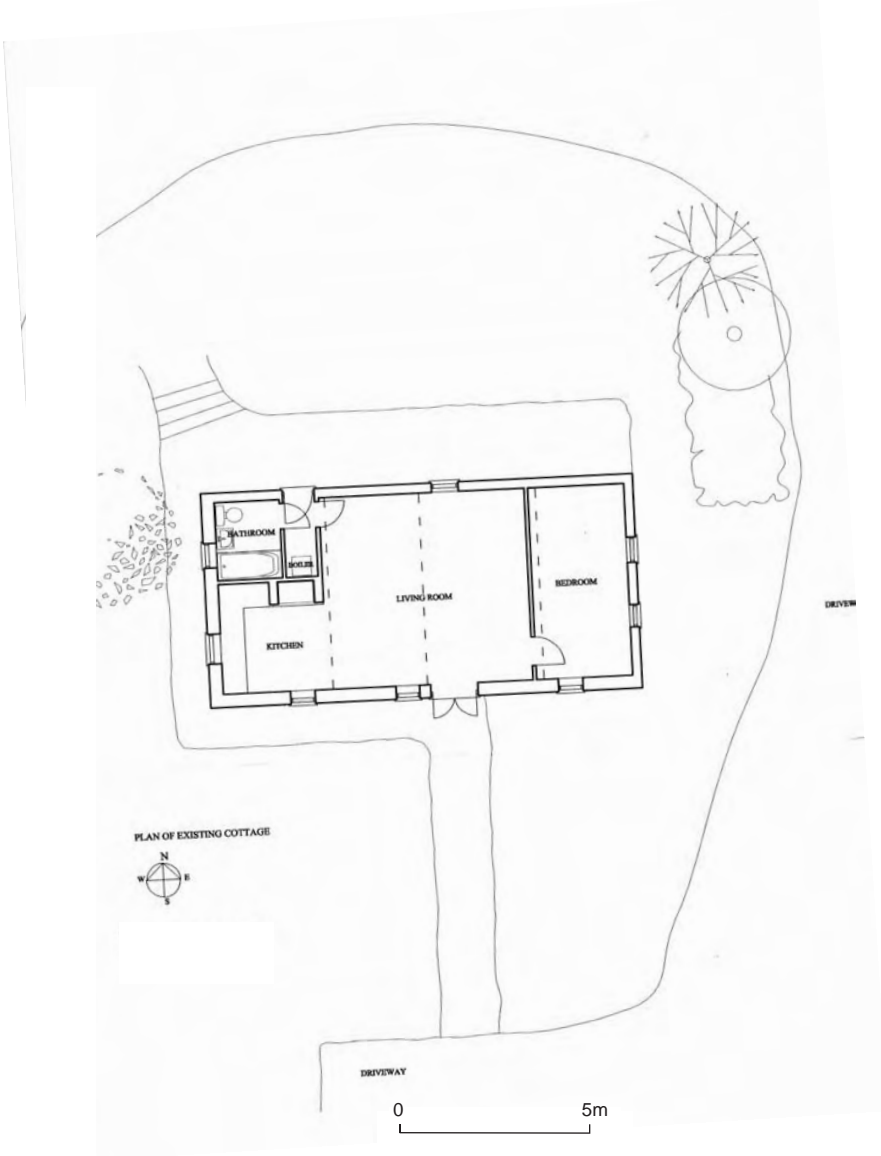
**SMR Summary Sheet**

Site Code	WCL06					
Identification Name and Address	Western Court Lodge, Udimore					
County, District &/or Borough	Lewes District, East Sussex					
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	NGR 586305 118920					
Archaeology South-East Proj. No.	2514					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other former Manor Estate		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. June 2006	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Gale and Dunn Partnership Limited					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during ground reduction and the excavation of foundation trenches in advance of building an extension to the existing property at Western Court Lodge, Udimore, East Sussex.</i></p>						

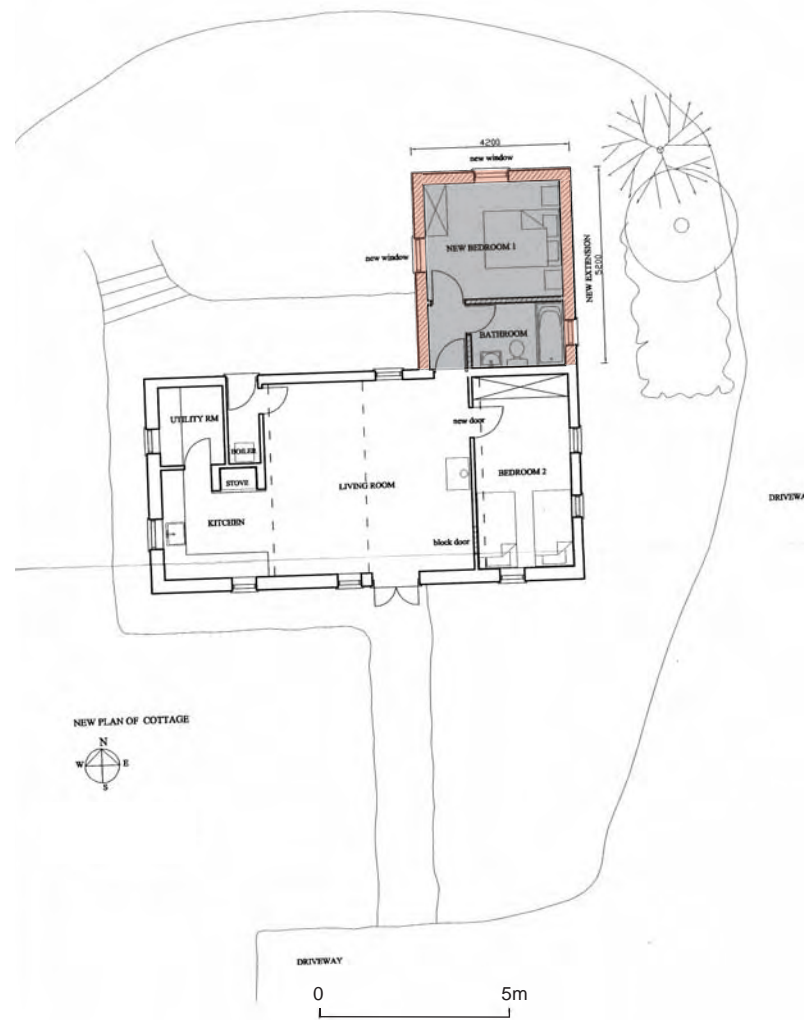


© Archaeology South-East			Western Court Lodge, Udimore		Fig. 1
Ref: 2514	Nov 2006	Drawn by: FEG	Site Location Plan		



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Existing Plan



Proposed Plan

-  Foundation Trenches
-  Area of ground reduction

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Head Office  
Units 1 & 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex BN41 1DR  
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866  
email: [fau@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:fau@ucl.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)



London Office  
Centre for Applied Archaeology  
Institute of Archaeology  
University College London  
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY  
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572  
Web: [www.ucl.ac.uk/caa](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/caa)

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