

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief 19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex**

Prepared by

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Planning Reference: LW/09/1209  
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### **APPROVED REPORT**

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**Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief involving the hand excavation of two footing trenches was carried out by Deon Whittaker on behalf of PRO Archaeology Services in advance of the construction of a proposed extension at 19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex. The archaeological investigation was carried out at the development site on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2010. The watching brief revealed a simple sequence of a modern topsoil deposit overlying a natural horizon composed of Greensand deposits.*

*No significant archaeological features, structures and/or deposits were identified and no finds were made.*

## **1. Introduction**

The author was commissioned by Mr. Paul Riccoboni of PRO Archaeology Services on behalf of his client Mr P Smith - to undertake an archaeological watching brief. The site has planning permission for a two storey extension to the west and south elevations- replacement roof to existing single garage and single storey link extension between garage and house (Planning Approval Ref: LW/09/1209). The archaeological investigation was carried out at the development site on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2010.

This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief, which was undertaken in accordance with a Specification prepared by PRO Archaeology Services in compliance with the principles established in *PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2010), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991) and *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluations* (IFA, 1999).

Copies of this report will be deposited with Mr. Paul Riccoboni and his clients, Mr Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council, Local Planning Authority and Local Historical Society.

## **2. Site Location and Description**

The site is located at 19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8SU (NGR: 53276 11531). Ditchling is situated at the southern edge of the Low Weald just 1.3km north of the scarp of the South Downs, which rise to their highest point at Ditchling Beacon (248m OD) south of the village. The village is on the south-east slope of a minor ridge, rising from 58m OD at the southern end of South Street towards Lodge Hill (over 85m OD) immediately north-west of Ditchling. [**Figures 1 and 2**].

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey 318/333 the site lies on Folkestone Beds with Lower Greensand immediately to the north.

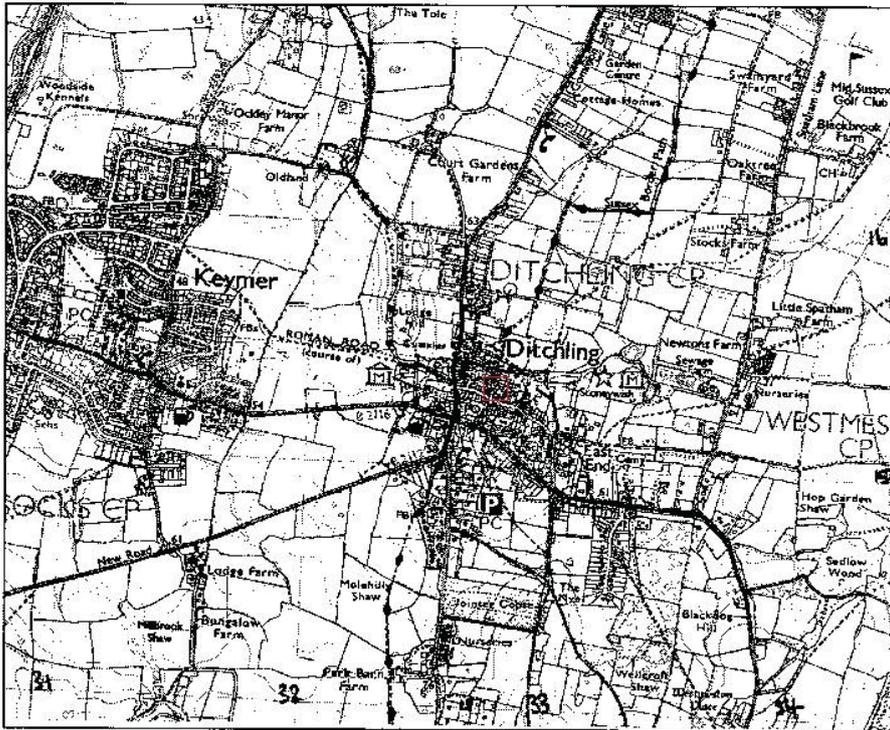


Figure 1: Site location of village of Ditchling at 1:50 000 (OS copyright number 10004873)

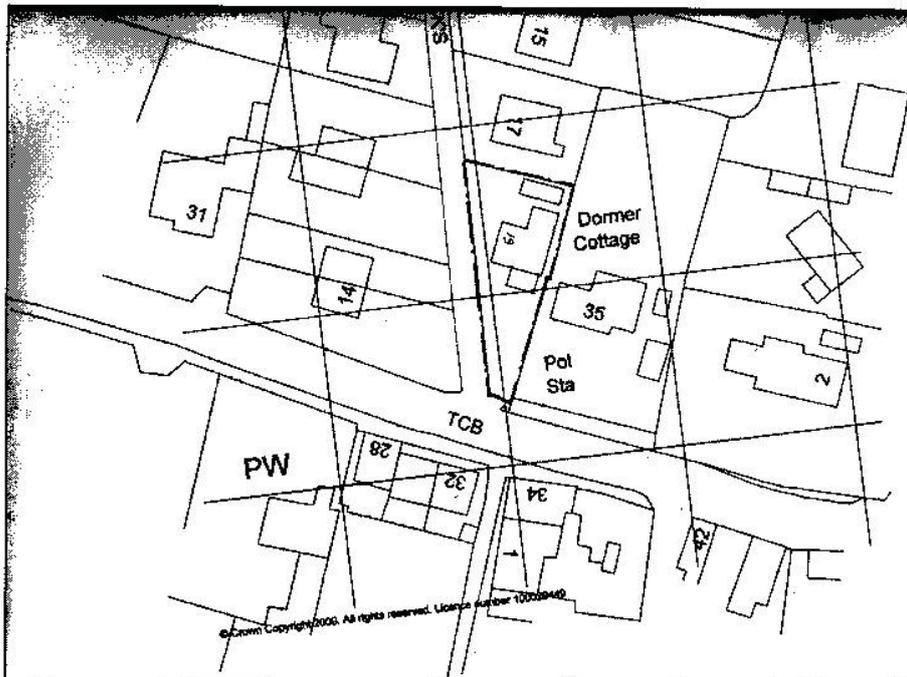


Figure 2: Site location (extracted from drawing supplied by GWP Architects) not to scale

### **3. Planning Background**

The site has planning permission for a two storey extension to the west and south elevations-replacement roof to existing single garage and single storey link extension between garage and house (Planning Approval Ref: LW/09/1209).

The Local Planning Authority has placed the following condition on the planning consent:

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

### **4. Aims and Objectives of the Archaeological Watching Brief**

The objectives of the project were:

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains destroyed or damaged as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks for this development.

Specific aims were:

- to clarify the nature of deposits and assess the potential for prehistoric remains from the Palaeolithic to the end of the prehistoric period.
- to clarify the presence of any medieval and post medieval buildings and activity.
- to allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

### **5. Archaeological and Historical Background**

The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded on the East Sussex Historical Environment Record (HER) (Figure 4). No previous archaeological work has been recorded at the site.

The search of the HER detailing a 0.5km radius was obtained from ESCC which showed 78 archaeological records.

The village of Ditchling is of ancient, probably Saxon origin. It appears in King Alfred's Will as Diceling ('people of Diccel'). Its present nucleated plan, clustered around St Margaret's Church and the cross roads, suggests little major alteration in form since the Middle Ages. The village also possess some old timber framed houses, notably Anne of Cleves House on West Street. There are various buildings dated from the 19th Century mainly around the High Street.

The area of The Dymocks was the main part of the town occupied by the Anglo-Saxon village, but was gradually succeeded by the High Street, South Street and West Street during the later medieval and post medieval periods. Significant expansion after the First World War saw village-centre infill, with detached houses between Fieldway and East End Lane; and semi-detached and detached housing on The Dymocks and East Gardens, to the north of East End Lane (Harris 2005). The Ditchling tithe map, 1839 (copy in *East Sussex Record Office*) shows a building in the very immediate vicinity, if not actually on the current site.

The area of Ditchling and the Folkestone Beds geology has been a focus for prehistoric activity, especially in relation to hunter-gatherer communities. A Mesolithic site at Lodge Hill was discovered where approximately 2000 flints were uncovered (MES1312). Other prehistoric finds include three Neolithic axes found in a field adjacent to Ditchling pumping station (MES1296). A very low bowl or ring barrow situated at highest point of S end of Lodge Hill (MES1305) and in 1939, the late A Hill presented a few small fragments of a LBA cauldron, which he found in the garden of his house, Nether Bowries (MES1306).

There has been a moderate amount of archaeological fieldwork undertaken in Ditchling. Two nearby sites have produced important archaeological finds. Land to the rear of the former Sandrock Public House revealed a medieval boundary ditch and two post medieval pits (Riccoboni, 2004). A watching brief at Menival, 52 East End Lane revealed Mesolithic flintwork and Roman tile together with medieval and post medieval pottery (Butler 2008).

There have been no previous archaeological investigations on this site.

## **6. Methodology**

Greg Chuter (ESCC Archaeologist) had stipulated that a test pit to check the depth of foundations was to be monitored. This took place before the foundation trenches were excavated.

Hand excavation was carried out of the two footing trenches as shown in Figure 3. These were monitored constantly for signs of subsoils or archaeological evidence.

All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards, using context record sheets.

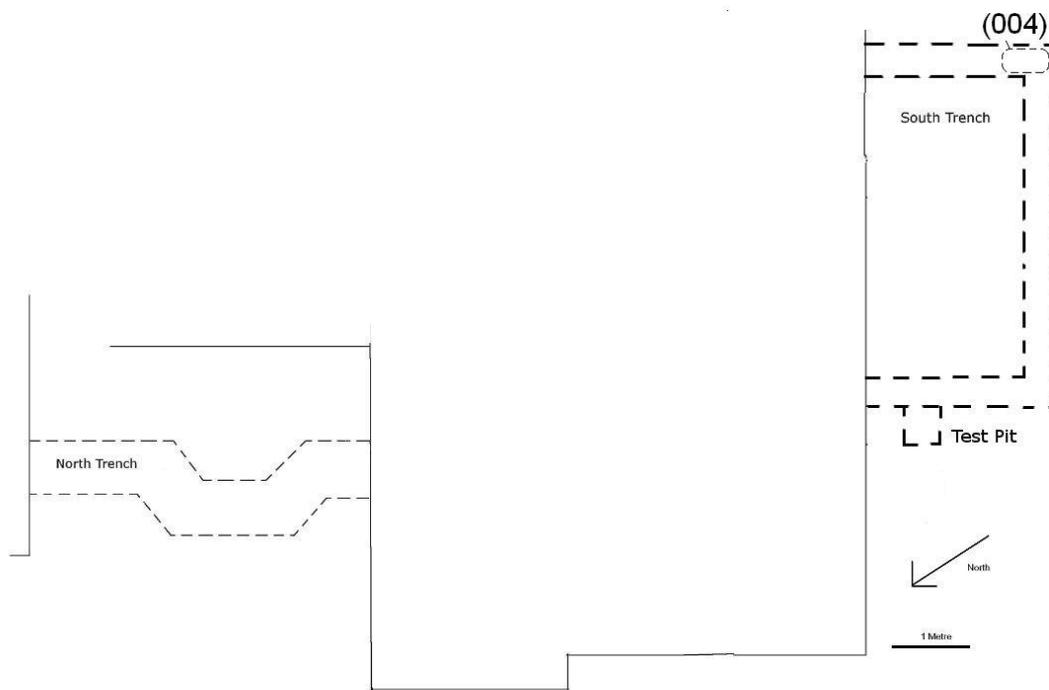
All recording points were accurately tied into the National Grid and located on to the 1:1250 map of the area. A further more general record of the work comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology was also maintained.

Plans indicating the location of all areas monitored were drawn at an appropriate scale.

All plans and sections were drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled.

A full black and white and colour (35mm transparency) and digital photographic record of the work was kept. The photographic record is to be regarded as part of the site archive.

After on site discussion with Greg Chuter it was agreed that it was not necessary to take OD heights on the surface of the natural.



**Figure 3:** Plan showing existing site layout and location of the footing trenches at an original scale of 1: 50

## 7. Results

The extension to the south west of the property consisted of an 8m stretch of footing, dug to 0.5m depth, at 0.6m width. The extension to the north east of the property consisted of a 5m stretch of footing, dug to generally 0.5m depth (in places up to 0.82m), also at 0.6m width.

Following the removal of the paving and hardcore (**001**), both trenches revealed a redeposited sandy soil layer (**002**), containing modern C19 –20th demolition debris, pot fragments and charcoal. This lay directly upon natural Greensand deposits (**003**). In the south-western trench a truncated dog burial was recorded (**004**)/(**005**), dating to the C19th or later dated by pot sherds. The finds consisted of Biscuit ware, blue and white, a piece of late porcelain and a fragment of green glass.

The depth of deposit (**001**) varied from 270mm in the north to 250mm in the south and the depth of the redeposited soil layer (**002**) varied from 300mm in the north to 255mm in the south.

The Greensand (**003**) comprised two layers of light yellowish brown sand in the south and light brownish grey sand in the north.

The cut of the surviving dog burial (**004**) was 0.7m long, 0.4m wide and 0.15m deep. The light brownish grey fill (**005**) was a mixture of greensand and topsoil with C19th pot fragments.

No archaeological deposits, features, structures or finds were identified during the course of this excavation.

Following the completion of this excavation, in the light of the absence of archaeological activity on the site, and following consultations between the author and Mr Greg Chuter, it was agreed that archaeological monitoring could cease.

### **Test Pit**

The test pit (Figure 3) revealed natural Greensand deposits directly below a layer of redeposited topsoil. It was not possible to securely establish the site stratigraphy from this test pit due to the immediate adjacent disturbance from a previous extension.

## **8. Discussion and Conclusions**

The archaeological test pit did establish the sequence of deposits at the site, and the subsequent monitoring of the footing trenches was able to confirm this sequence together with the absence of archaeological features and/or deposits and finds.

It would seem that the site has been used during the C19th or later as evidenced by the dog burial and the C19th debris. The site has then been fully stripped down to the natural for the construction of the present building. Soils have been redeposited back onto site possibly to level the site around the current building.

No significant archaeological features and/or deposits were identified and no significant finds were made. It is suspected that the evident truncation of the natural subsoils makes this site a poor candidate for the recovery of archaeological data, despite the rich archaeological heritage of the locality.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

I am indebted to the client - Mr Phil Smith and the groundworkers, for their patience in accomodating the needs of the archaeological process.

## **10. Bibliography**

Butler K 2008 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Minival 52 East End Lane, Ditchling, East Sussex*

British Geological Survey, (1984), *Brighton & Worthing, Solid & Drift Edition, 1:50,000 scale sheet nos. 318/333.*

Riccoboni, P., (2010), *19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8SU, Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Riccoboni, P 2004 *An Archaeological Watching Brief on Land to the Rear of the former Sandrock Public House ASE Report No. 1706*

Soil Survey of England & Wales, (1983), *Soils of South-East England, Sheet 6, 1:250,000 scale.*  
Harris, R. (2005), *Ditchling, Historic Character Assessment Report (EUS).*

**Appendix 1: Plates**



**Plate 1:** Hard core revealed in North Tr.



**Plate 4:** South Tr. East facing view.



**Plate 2:** Redeposited (002) in North Tr.



**Plate 5:** Dog Burial (004)(005) South Tr.



**Plate 3:** Natural (003) in North Tr.



**Plate 6:** Finds from grave fill (005)

**Appendix 2: List of Contexts**

- 001** Modern paving and hardcore 250 –270mm depth
- 002** Redeposited mid brownish grey topsoil with C19th and C20th cbm, charcoal and pot fragments. 255 – 300mm depth
- 003** Natural Greensand , light yellowish brown - light brownish grey sand > 250mm depth
- 004** Cut of dog burial 0.7 x 0.4 x 0.15m depth
- 005** Fill of dog burial – lmid grey sandy soil with C19th pot frags and glass

**APPENDIX 3. East Sussex County Council SMR summary form**

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Site Name: 19, The Dymocks  |                   |
| Site Address:<br>19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8SU  |                   |
| <p>Summary:</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief involving the hand excavation of two footing trenches was carried out by Deon Whittaker on behalf of PRO Archaeology Services in advance of the construction of a proposed extension at 19, The Dymocks, Ditchling, East Sussex. The archaeological investigation was carried out at the development site on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2010. The watching brief revealed a simple sequence of a modern topsoil deposit overlying a natural horizon composed of Greensand deposits.</i></p> <p><i>No significant archaeological features, structures and/or deposits were identified and no finds were made.</i></p> |                   |
| District/ Unitary: Lewes  | Parish: Ditchling |
| Period(s): C19th and C20th  |                   |
| NGR: 53276 11531  |                   |
| Type of archaeological work: Watching Brief   |                   |
| Date of Recording: 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2010  |                   |
| Unit undertaking recording: PAS   |                   |
| Geology: Greensand  |                   |
| Title and author of accompanying report:  |                   |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Two footing trenches were , totalling 11 metres revealing redeposited soils containing modern demolition. Directly beneath this was the Greensand natural, into which had been cut a 19th or later dog burial.</p>  |                   |
| Location of Archive / Finds:  |                   |
| Contact at Unit: P Riccoboni  | Date:             |