

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING UNDERTAKEN AT  
46 DOROTHY AVENUE, PEACEHAVEN, EAST SUSSEX.**

**N. G. R. TQ 41125 01160**

**Project Number 08 / 17**

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## CONTENTS.

List of illustrations.

Abstract.

- 1.0. INTRODUCTION.**
- 2.0. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.**
- 3.0. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.**
- 4.0. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.**
- 5.0. INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY.**
- 6.0. RESULTS OF FIELDWORK.**
- 7.0. THE WORKED FLINT.**
- 8.0. SUMMARY.**
- 9.0. ARCHIVE.**
- 10.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**
- 11.0. REFERENCES.**

Historical Environment Record Summary Sheet.

Illustrations.

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.**

**Figure 1.** Site location plan: prior to redevelopment.

**Figure 2.** Groundworks location plan.

***ABSTRACT.***

*Lewes District Council has granted planning permission for the construction of a pair of semi – detached bungalows at 46 Dorothy Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex. However, a condition attached to the approval required the implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation. It is thus unfortunate that groundworks commenced on site without an archaeologist being present.*

*On realisation of this omission, C. G. Archaeology was commissioned to assess and record the unmonitored groundworks and maintain a watching brief on all subsequent excavations.*

*No archaeologically significant cut features, structures or clear in-situ activity surfaces were recorded during the fieldwork. Nevertheless, a small assemblage of humanly – struck flint assigned in the main to the Mesolithic period was recovered.*

*The project has thus provided further evidence for the extensive prehistoric exploitation of the Peacehaven region and its ‘natural’ Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group) formation.*

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION.**

- 1.1. This document presents the results of archaeological recording undertaken by C. G. Archaeology at 46 Dorothy Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex (N. G. R. TQ 41125 01160) (Figure 1).
- 1.2. Lewes District Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of a former dwelling and the construction of a pair of three - bedroom, semi – detached bungalows on the site (Lewes District Council Planning Application Number: LW/08/0875). However, as recent archaeological excavations undertaken in the vicinity of Dorothy Avenue have demonstrated the extensive prehistoric exploitation of the region (see Section 3.0.) it was believed that groundworks associated with the proposed scheme could impact upon archaeologically significant features and deposits. Greg Chuter, the East Sussex County Council Assistant Archaeologist, therefore requested that a condition was attached to the planning approval requiring the institution of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation before the onset of building.
- 1.3. It is thus unfortunate that no archaeological work was undertaken either in advance of, or during the excavation by machine of the footings and two soakaway pits shown on Figure 2. On realisation of this omission a site meeting attended by Christopher Greatorex of C. G. Archaeology and John Needham of John Needham Property Development was held to consider the state of the site and an appropriate archaeological response. As a result of these discussions, C. G. Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the following programme of archaeological investigation as agreed with Greg Chuter at East Sussex County Council.
  - the assessment and recording of the footings and two soakaway pits subject to unmonitored excavation (Figure 2).

- a watching brief maintained on the excavation of all subsequent groundworks undertaken at the site (Figure 2).
- 1.4. The archaeological fieldwork outlined above was carried – out by Christopher Greatorex, Jo Seaman and Annalie Wood of C. G. Archaeology on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008.
- 1.5. It should be noted that no fresh examination of available cartographic and documentary sources or the East Sussex County Historical Environment Record was required as part of the archaeological investigation. Consequently, the primary aim of this report is to simply document and consider the summary fieldwork results.
- 1.6. All aspects of the project described below were commissioned by Mr. John Needham to whom thanks are extended.

## **2.0. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.**

- 2.1. Peacehaven is located on the top of a cliff “where the southern (dip) slope of the South Downs is eroded by the English Channel. There is a gentle seaward slope across the town from c.60m. OSBM at the east end of Telscombe Road, to 25.9m. OSBM at the southern end of Steyning Avenue....Settlement has been established north and south of the pre-existing and slightly sinuous South Coast Road from Newhaven to Brighton” (Harris 2004, 10). Number 46 Dorothy Avenue encompasses a sub-rectangular – shaped plot of relatively flat ground that prior to 1920 presumably formed part of a large tract of ‘open’ downland (see Section 3.1.).
- 2.2. The 1: 50,000 British Geological Survey (Sheet 334: Eastbourne) records the ‘natural’ geology at the site as the Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group) formation of vertically and laterally varying sands and clays.

### **3.0. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.**

3.1. The detailed history of Peacehaven is described within the Historic Character Assessment Report prepared on the town as part of the Sussex Extensive Urban Survey (Harris 2004) and as such does not merit re-examination here. Suffice to say, Peacehaven originated as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century planned town set – out on a gridded street pattern. Construction of the first houses on what was then open downland (see Section 2.1.) began in 1920. “Thereafter, expansion was rapid, with a population of around 3,000 by 1926 and the building workforce as large as 1,000” (Harris 2004, 14). Today Peacehaven “is of interest as an example of an inter – war speculative coastal development, and for the notoriety it has achieved on account of its downland location” (Harris 2004, 17). The town’s only listed building (Grade II) comprises a small 19<sup>th</sup> century flint shepherd’s hut now situated within a private garden at 7 The Compts.

3.2. Despite modern development, the Peacehaven area is rich in known archaeological remains and find-spots of prehistoric and Romano-British date. As early as 1924 a paper published in the annual journal of the Sussex Archaeological Society described an extremely large collection of ‘pygmy’ (i.e. Mesolithic) flints and two Romano-British pots recovered from the local Woolwich Beds (Bernard Calkin 1924). Indeed, the site under current discussion lies just c.300m. to the south-west of an Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA) encompassing the discoveries outlined in sections 3.3. and 3.4.

3.3. In 2004 a sub-rectangular enclosure and associated pits were discovered during a resistivity survey and subsequent archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at Lower Hoddern Farm. The enclosure ditch yielded early to mid Iron Age pottery. A second, similar enclosure was also detected c.60m. to the west (Worrall 2004).

- 3.4. During 2006 - 2007, extensive archaeological investigations were undertaken by Archaeology South East on land to the north of Keymer Avenue and at Seaview Avenue. The following information on this project has been extracted from [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk). (full report by Archaeology South East pending). “At Keymer Avenue the below ground remains of a Mid Iron Age farmstead or community left the most visible trace of human occupation....Seven enclosures and two trackways were identified.... A series of inter-cutting ditches were orientated towards this location. The dense concentrations of fire-cracked flint recovered and the complexity of the re-cut ditches suggest continued use for some time. Near the centre of this enclosure was a possible burial which was backfilled with over a thousand large nodules of flint. A second smaller area revealed a series of pits. One feature from this area contained large quantities of Mesolithic / Early Neolithic flintwork. Two other pits contained Late Iron Age pottery. After the Mid Iron Age the site appears to have been abandoned (*sic.*). At Seaview Avenue three features were found to contain Neolithic pottery and flintwork. One pit also contained burnt sandstone and charcoal indicating that it may have once been used as a cooking pit. Two other deep features were thought to be early prehistoric / Neolithic flint mine shafts or wells”.
- 3.5. It should also be noted that in 2004 / 2005 Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society maintained an archaeological watching brief on the construction of two new dwellings at 52 Dorothy Avenue. No *in-situ* archaeological features were exposed during this work. However, a small assemblage of humanly – struck flint and fire – cracked flint was recovered (information obtained from the East Sussex County Historical Environment Record).
- 3.6. No known find-spots or sites of archaeological significance were impacted upon directly by the redevelopment under consideration here.

#### **4.0. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.**

4.1. The following aims of the archaeological fieldwork can be defined as follows (also see Section 1.3.).

- Ensure that all still visible deposits, cut features and structures exposed as a result of the unmonitored groundworks carried – out at the site are assessed, sampled, recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure that all deposits, cut features and structures exposed during the archaeological watching brief maintained on all subsequent groundworks are excavated, sampled, recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure that all significant discoveries of artefactual and / or ecofactual evidence made across the site are recorded and analysed to an acceptable standard.

## **5.0. INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY.**

5.1. For ease of description the site at 46 Dorothy Road is here divided into two discrete zones.

- the back garden
- the area of new build

It should be noted that the ‘original’ dwelling located at the address was demolished before the involvement of C. G. Archaeology in the project (see Section 1.2.).

### **5.2. The back garden.**

5.2.1. On arrival at the site it became clear that two sub-rectangular – shaped soakaway pits had been excavated at the north-western end of the property’s former back garden (see Section 1.3.) (Figure 2).

5.2.2. These c.2.90m. - long x 1.30m. - wide and c.1.90m. - long x 1.50m. - wide cuttings (depths not ascertained) had been backfilled with rubble to a depth below original ground level of c.0.30m. However, the still visible section faces of each soakaway (i.e. the upper 0.30m.) were examined by C. G. Archaeology and the identified layers documented on individual context record sheets.

### **5.3. The area of new build.**

5.3.1. A number of the footings shown on Figure 2 were excavated and then filled – in with concrete prior to the commissioning of C. G. Archaeology (see Section 1.3.). However, it transpired that the spoil derived from these c.0.80m. to 1.0m. – wide cuttings had been spread across the ‘internal’ area

of the new building footprint and compacted. This 'layer' was 'forked – over' manually in a successful attempt to retrieve any disturbed / now unstratified artefacts of archaeological significance (see sections 6.3.3. and 7.0.).

- 5.3.2. The excavation of the remaining c.0.70m. - wide footings highlighted on Figure 2 was then subject to a constant archaeological watching brief (see Section 1.3.). This work was carried – out by the client using a tracked mechanical digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. In this way the careful removal of the compacted spoil (see Section 5.3.1.) *in-situ* 'overburden' and underlying 'natural' geology continued under the supervision of C. G. Archaeology until the depth of footing (c.0.70m. – 0.85m.) required by the client had been reached.
- 5.3.3. Each context identified during the watching brief was investigated manually in order to assess its archaeological / palaeoenvironmental potential and then documented on an individual context record sheet.
- 5.4. A 35mm. black and white film and digital photographic record of the fieldwork was maintained as appropriate.

## **6.0. RESULTS OF FIELDWORK.**

6.1. Only five archaeological contexts were assigned during the fieldwork. These layers are described in numerical order below.

### **6.2. The back garden.**

6.2.1. The examination of two soakaway pits located at the north-western end of the site (see sections 1.3. and 5.2.) (Figure 2) identified an uppermost surviving layer of loose, dark brown sandy clay topsoil **(1)** with occasional chalk and flint inclusions (c.5mm.).

6.2.2. Context 1 possessed an average thickness of c.0.25m. and was found to overlie a deposit of compact but friable, mid orange – brown sandy clay subsoil **(2)** containing occasional flecks of chalk and ceramic building material (c.1mm. – 2mm.). Only the uppermost c.50mm. of Context 2 was exposed within the cuttings. No other layers were observed.

6.2.3. No cut features, structures or artefacts of archaeological significance were discovered during the investigation of the two soakaway pits.

### **6.3. The area of new build.**

6.3.1. A c.0.20m. to 0.30m. – thick layer of compacted spoil **(3)** (initially ‘forked – over’ by hand: see Section 5.3.1.) was stripped from those footings subject to archaeological monitoring (see Section 5.3.2.) (Figure 2). Context 3 comprised a mixed ‘deposit’ of topsoil **(1)** subsoil **(2)** ‘overburden’ **(4)** and ‘natural’ geology **(5)**. Its removal exposed an *in-situ* horizon of compact, dark grey – brown loam clay **(4)** incorporating occasional charcoal flecks, chalk inclusions (c.5mm.) and fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic building material. Context 4 possessed a maximum thickness of c.0.20m. and is

interpreted as a layer of ‘overburden’ associated with the modern house that once stood on the site (see Section 1.2.) (Figure 1).

6.3.2. The excavation of Context 4 revealed an immediately underlying horizon of friable, red - brown sand (**5**). Context 5 clearly represents a discrete stratum of the ‘natural’ Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group) formation (see Section 2.2.).

6.3.3. No archaeologically significant cut features, structures or clear *in-situ* activity surfaces were identified during the watching brief. However, a small assemblage of prehistoric humanly – struck flint was recovered from the investigation of Context 3 (see sections 5.3.1. and 5.3.2.) and the interface of contexts 4 and 5 (see Section 5.3.2.). These artefacts of some importance are described within Section 7.0.

**Table 1: Context Register.**

<b>CONTEXT NUMBER.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION.</b>	<b>PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS.</b>
<b>1.</b>	Sandy clay topsoil	Above 2
<b>2.</b>	Sandy clay subsoil	Below 1
<b>3.</b>	Layer of spoil derived from groundworks not subject to watching brief	Above 4
<b>4.</b>	Loam clay overburden	Above 5 Below 3
<b>5.</b>	Woolwich Beds	Below 4

## **7.0. THE WORKED FLINT by Chris Butler.**

### **7.1. Introduction.**

7.1.1. A small assemblage of 45 pieces of worked flint weighing 585g. was recovered during the fieldwork (see Section 6.3.3. and Table 2). In addition, a further seven pieces of un-worked fire - fractured flint (154g.) were found.

7.1.2. The assessment comprised a visual inspection of the assemblage, counting the number of pieces of each type of worked flint present, noting details of the range and variety of pieces, general condition, and the potential for further detailed analysis. Classification follows Butler 2005. A hand written archive of the assemblage was produced at this stage.

### **7.2. The assemblage.**

7.2.1. The raw material comprised predominantly a light blue - grey patinated flint with a smaller quantity of mid to dark grey flint, all of which can be derived from local sources and is typical of the worked flint recovered from the Peacehaven area.

**Table 2: The worked flint assemblage.**

Hard hammer-struck flakes	10
Soft hammer-struck flakes	8
Soft hammer-struck blades	3
Soft hammer-struck bladelets	7
Bladelet fragments	4
Flake /blade fragments	6
Core tablet	1
2-Platform flake core	1
2-Platform Bladelet core	1
3-Platform blade /flake core	1
Multi-platform flake /bladelet core	1
Microburin	1

Microlith	<u>1</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

7.2.2. The debitage comprised a range of hard and soft hammer-struck flakes, blades and bladelets, many of which had evidence for platform preparation, together with a number of fragments of blades and bladelets. Four cores were found, and represented a range of carefully worked examples, with evidence for platform preparation and core rejuvenation. They tended to be multiple platform cores, with evidence for the removal of flakes, blades and bladelets. A single core tablet was also found.

7.2.3. Apart from the bladelets there was also further evidence for the manufacture of microliths in the form of a single microburin, together with a single microlith. This was a largish obliquely-blunted microlith with additional retouch on the opposing edge, unfortunately with a recent break.

7.2.4. The majority of the assemblage can be assigned to the Mesolithic period, and has parallels with the material recovered from recent fieldwork undertaken on land to the north of Keymer Avenue (Butler, forthcoming) (see Section 3.4.). It was noted that the hard hammer-struck flakes without prepared platforms tended to be in the mid to dark grey flint, and some may be later prehistoric in date.

### 7.3. **Research potential.**

7.3.1. This assemblage is important, and adds to the increasing bank of evidence for extensive Mesolithic activity at Peacehaven, predominantly associated with the Woolwich Beds formation.

7.3.2. It is recommended that no further work be undertaken on this assemblage, although the flintwork should be retained for possible further study in the future. The handwritten assessment summary is held within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

## **8.0. SUMMARY.**

- 8.1. No archaeologically significant cut features, structures or clear *in-situ* activity surfaces were recorded at 46 Dorothy Avenue, Peacehaven. The fieldwork also failed to uncover a single context of palaeoenvironmental potential.
- 8.2. Nevertheless, a small assemblage of humanly - struck flint assigned in main to the Mesolithic period was recovered from the site. The spatial association of Mesolithic flintwork and the local 'natural' Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group) formation has thus again been demonstrated.
- 8.3. It is of course regrettable that no archaeological monitoring of the groundworks highlighted on Figure 2 was undertaken. The cutting of two soakaway pits in the presumably relatively undisturbed back garden of the property is particularly unfortunate. Even so, the subsequent programme of investigation and recording undertaken by C. G. Archaeology is believed to have satisfied the Project Objectives set out in Section 4.0.
- 8.4. The fieldwork carried – out at 46 Dorothy Avenue has provided further evidence for the extensive prehistoric exploitation of the Peacehaven region. Indeed it is highly likely that *in-situ* archaeological remains await discovery in the immediate vicinity of the site.

**9.0. ARCHIVE.**

- 9.1. It is intended that the full paper and digital records arising from this project will be collated in accordance with '*Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*' (UKICI 1990) and deposited with the retained flint assemblage in a suitable local museum.

**10.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**

- 10.1. C. G. Archaeology would like to thank Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council and Mr. John Needham of John Needham Property Development for their assistance during the project.

## 11.0. REFERENCES.

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## HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET.

<b>Site Code.</b>	DAP 08					
<b>Site identification and address.</b>	46 Dorothy Avenue, Peacehaven					
<b>County, district and / or borough.</b>	East Sussex					
<b>O.S. grid ref.</b>	TQ 41125 01160					
<b>Geology.</b>	Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group)					
<b>Project number.</b>	08 /17					
<b>Fieldwork type.</b>	<b>Eval.</b>	<b>Excav.</b>	<b>W.Brief.</b>	<b>Survey.</b>	<b>Other.</b>	
			X			
<b>Site type.</b>	<b>Rural.</b>	<b>Urban.</b>	<b>Other.</b> Brown Field			
<b>Date of fieldwork.</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2008					
<b>Client.</b>	John Needham Property Development					
<b>Project manager.</b>	Christopher Greatorex					
<b>Project supervisor</b>	Christopher Greatorex					
<b>Period summary.</b>	<b>Palaeo.</b>	<b>Meso.</b>	<b>Neo.</b>	<b>B. Age.</b>	<b>I. Age.</b>	<b>R – B.</b>
		X				
	<b>A. S.</b>	<b>Med.</b>	<b>P. Med</b>	<b>Other.</b>		
<b>Project Summary.</b>						
<p>Lewes District Council has granted planning permission for the construction of a pair of semi – detached bungalows at 46 Dorothy Avenue, Peacehaven, East Sussex. However, a condition attached to the approval required the implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological investigation. It is thus unfortunate that groundworks commenced on site without an archaeologist being present. On realisation of this omission, C. G. Archaeology was commissioned to assess and record the unmonitored groundworks and maintain a watching brief on all subsequent excavations. No archaeologically significant cut features, structures or clear <i>in-situ</i> activity surfaces were recorded during the fieldwork. Nevertheless, a small assemblage of humanly – struck flint assigned in main to the Mesolithic period was recovered. The project has thus provided further evidence for the extensive prehistoric exploitation of the Peacehaven region and its ‘natural’ Woolwich Beds (Lambeth Group) formation.</p>						

