

DRAFT FOR COMMENT

1 ABSTRACT

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the 11th of February 2008 at Croft Meadow, Steyning, West Sussex (NGR: TQ 0176 0112). The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the proposed development of the site on any surviving archaeological remains.

It was planned to excavate three evaluation trenches. Two trenches were evaluated, and these revealed a layer of naturally deposited chalky sand overlain by a thin layer of topsoil. No archaeological finds or features were present. The third trench could not be excavated since it was located at the site's entrance.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document is a report on an archaeological evaluation at Croft Meadow, Steyning, West Sussex (Figure 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of Warings Contractors Ltd.

Site Location

- 2.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 0176 0112, and is within land bounded by a health centre to the north, housing to the east and south, and Elm Grove Lane to the west. The site is roughly rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 50m (east-west) and 62m (north-south) (Figure 2). The area affected by the development covers a total area of approximately 0.31 hectares (3100 m²). The site is situated on a hill, with the area of the existing building made level and a retained area of hill sloping down to the north at the southern edge of site.
- 2.3 The site was occupied by derelict land and buildings. The proposed development is for a residential home with associated gardens and car parking.

Planning Background

- 2.4 The local planning authority is West Sussex County Council (WSCC). Archaeological advice to the council is provided by West Sussex County Council's Archaeologist, John Mills.
- 2.5 The proposed scheme involves the construction of a residential home with associated gardens and parking across the entire area of the site.
- 2.6 The application site does not fall within a designated area of archaeological importance or within a Conservation Area.
- 2.7 The Archaeological Investigation consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation comprising 3 trenches, with the overall aim of enabling the Archaeological Advisor to West Sussex County Council to make an informed decision on the requirement for any mitigation works. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, prepared by AOC Archaeology and approved by John Mills, (AOC 2008).

Geology and Topography

- 2.8 The British Geological Survey map (BGS Sheet 318), indicates that the site is situated upon chalk. To the immediate north of Steyning are deposits of Upper Greensand and Gault. The site slopes down from north to south, and this slope has been cut into for construction of a large care home formerly on the site.

- 2.9 No geotechnical investigations have been conducted within the proposed development area.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site itself.

Prehistoric

- 3.2 While evidence for a settlement at Steyning is not known until Saxon times, evidence for prehistoric activity in the area has been recorded. An excavation at Testers, White Horse Square uncovered Iron Age ditches, while excavations at Coombe Court recovered Iron Age pottery and flint flakes. A Bronze Age hoard was discovered at Clays Field, while at Newham Lane a small Late Iron Age bevelled bronze ring was found.

Romano-British

- 3.3 Evidence for Roman activity in the Steyning area is quite abundant and consists of a nearby Roman Road, evidence for masonry buildings and several find spots.
- 3.4 The east-west Greensand Way passes 2.25km north of Steyning centre and is the only reliably attributed Roman road in the area.
- 3.5 An excavation at the Market Field recovered 81 pieces of Roman tile/brick and a copper brooch, suggesting occupation in this area.
- 3.6 Late Iron Age/Romano British pottery was recovered at 71 King's Barn Lane and from a rubbish pit at an undisclosed location in Steyning, while at St Andrews Churchyard sherds of Roman brick, pottery and oyster shells were present. A unknown find spot within the Steyning area of a Claudian coin and brooch have also been recorded

Anglo-Saxon (c.451-1065)

- 3.7 The first evidence for the settlement of Steyning was in Saxon times. Legend has it that St. Cuthman built a church (now St Andrew's) where he stopped after carrying his mother in a wheelbarrow. King Alfred the Great's father, Ethelwulf of Wessex, was originally buried in St Cuthman's, before being transferred to Winchester. By AD 858 records show that Steyning was under the patronage of the Royal House of Wessex, and it continued as royal land until the Battle of Hastings.
- 3.8 Little archaeological evidence of the early Saxon period is known from Steyning, although the later Saxon period is well attested from excavations in the area. Two sites have revealed evidence of rubbish pits (Chantry Green House and Tanyard

- Lane), which suggest buildings in the immediate vicinity. The presence of slag in the pits at Tanyard Lane may point to an industrial use for the area, however.
- 3.9 Three timber buildings fronting School Lane and dating from 950-1150 were recorded at excavations at Coombe Court. At Market Field, close to St Andrews Church two Late Anglo-Saxon farmsteads were recorded, the farmstead to the west containing two timber buildings and associated pits. One of the rubbish pits contained a 9th century gold ring and points to high status occupation of this site.
- 3.10 The presence (or absence) of archaeology from excavations in Steyning has given a general location for the Saxon town. Combined with evidence from the Domesday Book, Steyning would appear to be a small village or proto-town in this period.

Medieval (c.1066 - 1485)

- 3.11 Following the Norman Conquest in 1066, ownership of Steyning was passed to the Norman Abbey of Fecamp, with whom it remained until the 15th century. The town clearly grew considerably during the early Norman period as the 1086 Domesday survey records Steyning as a town of 123 dwellings and an estimated population of 1500 - one of the largest towns in the South East. A royal mint, two churches and a market are recorded at this time. A port, although not referenced in the Domesday Book is known as being in existence from the time of Edward the Confessor and although beginning to decline in the 12th century may have provided a spur for the growth of the town.
- 3.12 The Church of St Andrew was constructed between 1090 and 1100 over the earlier Saxon Church, originally of cruciform plan. The nave was reconstructed between 1160 and 1180, and there is the possibility of a Norman crypt containing a shrine to St Cuthbert under the (now) lost Norman eastern arm. Two rare 10th – 11th grave covers were discovered during the 20th century and are now kept in the porch.
- 3.13 No surviving buildings are known in Steyning earlier than the mid 14th century, although several buildings from between 1350 and 1500 are still standing, concentrated on the High Street and the south-western end of Church Street.
- 3.14 Several excavations have uncovered evidence of the Medieval town. At Cuthman's Field, Church Street a 15th century timber framed house with cartshed was recorded, while several mid 14th century houses were excavated at Fletcher's Croft. Excavations at Tanyard Lane and Steyning Museum uncovered occupation evidence dating from the 13th and 14th centuries and at Testers, White Horse Square 12th century tenement boundaries could be seen to alter in the mid thirteenth century.

- 3.15 Steyning began to decline in the 14th century due to the recession of the sea, the silting of the river Adur, the building of a new port at Shoreham and the black death which decimated the population in 1348. By 1350 Steyning had ceased to be a port.

Post-Medieval (c.1485 - modern)

- 3.16 Steyning may have begun to prosper again in the 15th Century as several local buildings survive from this period. In 1555 protestant John Launder was burned at the stake at Chantry Green for his religious beliefs.
- 3.17 By the 18th century Steyning was an important town on the coach route between Brighton and London. Two inns from the period, The White Horse Inn and The Chequer Inn are still extant. Steyning was classed as a rotten borough, returning two representatives to parliament until it was disfranchised in 1832.
- 3.18 Steyning's industries were given a boost with the opening of the railway and station in 1861, and Steyning once again prospered. Other notable employers in the town during this period were breweries and the tanning industry. The most recent building on the site was a large carehome, which has been demolished

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The aims of the Evaluation were defined in the WSI (AOC 2008) as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable WSCC's Archaeologist to make an informed decision on the status of the condition on the planning permission, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.
- 4.2 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The Evaluation comprised of the machine excavation of two trenches. These trenches were moved and reduced in scale due to the removal of an area slightly larger than the existing building footprint prior to the evaluation. A third trench could not be excavated as it lay within the area of the enlarged building footprint and the site entrance. This large footprint meant that the trenches were moved beyond the impact of the building.
- 5.2 The two machined trenches were rectangular in plan and measured 12.00m x 4.00m and 32.00 x 5.00m at base. The evaluation trenches were situated as shown in Figure 2.
- 5.3 All machining was carried out using a 360° tracked excavator with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of the Archaeological Project Supervisor. Undifferentiated topsoil or overburden of recent origin was removed in successive level spits down to the natural geology, as significant archaeological horizons were not encountered above this.
- 5.4 The site code **STJ 3347** was obtained for the project, and used for all fieldwork.
- 5.5 All trenches were accurately located to the National Grid. A temporary benchmark with a value of 16.735mOD was established on the site (Figure 2).
- 5.5 All recording was in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Museum of London's *Archaeological Field Manual* (MoL 3rd edition 1994).
- 5.6 A continuous unique numbering system was employed.
- 5.7 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.

6 RESULTS

Trench 1

OD Height	Thickness	Context	Description
17.74m	0.40m	(1/001)	Dark grey brown clay sandy silt. Topsoil.
17.34m	0.25m	(1/002)	Mid orange brown clay sand. Subsoil.
17.09m	NFE	(1/003)	Light white clay chalky sand. Natural.

- 6.1 Trench 1 measured 12.00m x 4.00m at base. It was moved southwards as an area larger than the existing building footprint had been machined prior to the evaluation. It was located at the south of the site on the north sloping bank.
- 6.2 Trench 1 contained no archaeological finds or features.

Trench 2

OD Height	Thickness	Context	Description
16.03m	0.10m	(1/001)	Dark grey brown clay sandy silt. Topsoil.
15.93m	NFE	(1/003)	Light white clay chalky sand. Natural.

- 6.3 Trench 2 measured 32.00m x 5.00m and was located at the southeast of site, aligned north – south along the eastern edge of site. The trench was rectangular in plan with bunds retained to avoid manholes.
- 6.4 Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features.

Trench 3

OD Height	Thickness	Context	Description
16.02m	0.10m	(1/004)	Tarmac Car Park.
15.92m	0.30m	(1/005)	Pink orange sandy gravel. Hardcore
15.62m	NFE	(1/003)	Light white clay chalky sand. Natural.

- 6.5 Trench 3 could not be excavated due to its position at the site entrance. Deposits in this area were recorded and are detailed above.

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

- 7.1 The natural geology was light white clay chalky sand with occasional angular and sub-angular flint inclusions (1/003). It was present at the south of site at the top of the bank at a height of 17.09m AOD, sloping down to the north and surviving to the east in the area of Trench 2 at a height of 15.93m AOD. The central area of site had been excavated prior to the evaluation and the natural chalk was truncated up to 2.00m in depth.

- 7.2 Overlying the natural chalky sand (1/003) was a patchy subsoil consisting of mid orange-brown clayey sand (1/002) 0.25m thick. This was only present at the top of the bank to the southeast of site in the area of Trench 1.
- 7.3 Across the rest of the un-truncated site the natural chalky sand was directly overlain by dark greyish brown clayey sandy silt topsoil (1/001). At the top of the bank to the south this was 0.40m thick, and at the base of the bank this was 0.10m thick.
- 7.4 To the west of the site the previous site entrance had been retained measuring approximately 24.00m x 20.00m. It consisted of compact pink orange sandy gravel hardcore (1/005) 0.25m thick overlying the natural, which provided a stable base for the tarmac surface (1/004) which was 0.10m thick.

8 FINDS

- 8.1 No archaeological finds were present.

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The evaluation revealed a layer of thin topsoil (1/001) directly overlying a naturally deposited layer of chalky sand (1/003). No archaeological finds or features were present.
- 9.2 Although a large area of the site had been truncated before the evaluation, this was only slightly larger than the previous building footprint. This is not thought to have truncated any archaeological remains as the previous building was cut into the north sloping bank, with the bank mostly removed to use the natural chalk as a flat, solid base for a foundation.
- 9.3 The thin layer of topsoil (1/001) and tarmac (1/004) across the remainder of the site, directly overlying the natural chalky sand (1/003), as well as the lack of subsoil suggests the site was stripped during the construction of the previous building. The thin layer of topsoil was probably deposited during landscaping.
- 9.4 The level of truncation associated with the construction of the previous building on site would negate the viability of any further work. It is therefore recommended that no further work is required on this site to satisfy the condition on the planning application. However, the final decision will rest with the West Sussex County Council and its archaeology advisor, John Mills.
- 9.5 Due to the nature of the project publication is likely to be limited to a summary in the West Sussex Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (Appendix B).

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC Archaeology Group (2008). *Croft Meadow, Steyning, West Sussex. A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

British Geological Survey map (BGS Sheet 318)

Council for British Archaeology (1987). *First Aid For Finds* (Second Edition).

Department of the Environment (1990). *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16)*.

Museum of London 1994. *Archaeological Field Manual 3rd Edition*

FIG 1

FIG 2

FIG 3

FIG 4

APPENDIX A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
(1001)	Dark grey brown clay sandy silt. Topsoil.	Site	Site	0.40m
(1002)	Mid orange brown clay sand. Subsoil.	12.00m	4.00m	0.25m
(1003)	Light white clay chalky sand. Natural.	Site	Site	NFE
(1004)	Tarmac Car Park.	Trench	Trench	0.10m
(1005)	Pink orange sandy gravel. Hardcore	Sondage	Sondage	0.30m

APPENDIX B – Oasis Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-39200

Project details

Project name	Croft meadow, Steyning
Short description of the project	Two trenches were evaluated, and these revealed a layer of naturally deposited chalky sand overlain by a thin layer of topsoil. No archaeological finds or features were present
Project dates	Start: 11-02-2008 End: 11-02-2008
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	STJ 3347 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX HORSHAM STEYNING Croft Meadow
Postcode	BN44 3XX
Study area	0.31 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 0176 0112 50.8001250853 -0.555825094577 50 48 00 N 000 33 20 W Point
Height OD	Min: 15.62m Max: 17.09m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology Group
Project brief originator	AOC Archaeology
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology Group
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Chris Pole
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Steyning Museum

Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic',' Survey'
Digital Media available	'Database', 'Images raster / digital photography', 'Images vector', 'Survey', 'Text'
Digital Archive notes	held at AOC until transfer
Paper Archive recipient	Steyning Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic' , 'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet' , 'Photograph' , 'Plan', 'Report'
Paper Archive notes	held at AOC until transfer

Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Croft Meadow, Steyning, West Sussex: An Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pole, C.
Date	2008
Description	A4, 16 pages, 4 figures
Entered by	les capon (les.capon@aocarchaeology.com)
Entered on	12 March 2008