

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**28 and 29 Kings Avenue,
Chichester, West Sussex**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: KAC11/60

(SU 8592 0380)

**28 and 29 Kings Avenue, Chichester,
West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Crayfern Homes Ltd**

by SeanWallis
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeKAC11/60

October 2011

Summary

Site name: 28 and 29 Kings Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex

Grid reference: SU 8592 0380

Planning reference: CC/10/05534/FUL

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 19th September to 17th October 2011

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: KAC 11/60

Area of site: 0.2ha

Summary of results: The entire eastern part of the site had been badly truncated in the past, probably as a result of natural clay being removed to line the adjacent canal, which was constructed in the early 19th century. The western part of the site had also been affected by previous activity on the site, but to a lesser degree, and a possible Roman pit was identified in the south-west corner of the site. It contained just a single sherd of pottery.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Chichester Museum in due course.

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Report 11/60

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Kings Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex (SU 8592 0382) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Luke Dickson of Crayfern Homes Ltd, Victoria House, 14 St Johns Road, Hedge End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO35 4AB.

Planning permission (CC/10/05534/FUL) had been gained from Chichester District Council to demolish the existing buildings on the site, and to construct six new dwellings, along with associated landscaping, garages and a new access road. The permission was subject to a condition (10) which requires that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Chichester District Archaeologist, Mr James Kenny, which also followed the West Sussex County Council requirements for archaeological fieldwork (WSCC 2007). The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis between 19th September and 17th October 2011, and the site code is KAC11/60. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Chichester Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within a residential area, about 400m south of the historic core of Chichester (Fig. 1). The Chichester Canal lies immediately to the east of the site, whilst there are residential properties to the north and west (Fig. 2). The area immediately south of the site is a former council depot. The site itself had previously been occupied by two houses, along with various garages and other outbuildings. These buildings had been demolished shortly before the watching brief took place, and most of the garden features had also been removed. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Alluvial Fan Deposits with Head Gravel being recorded along the south-western edge of the site. Both of these deposits are described as being 'clayey gravels' (BGS 1996). However, the site had been heavily disturbed in the past, probably when the canal was excavated, and in much of the site made ground deposits lay directly above greyish white sand and gravel. In the western parts of the site, which had been less affected by the construction of the canal, a layer of yellowish

brown sandy clay was observed above the greyish white sand and gravel, with an intervening layer of brownish grey clay in places. The site is relatively flat, although much of the area had obviously been landscaped in the past, and lies at a height of approximately 8m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the coastal plain of West Sussex, which is considered as archaeologically rich (Rudling 2003), and particularly from its position about 400m south of the historic core of Chichester. Although there is a paucity of evidence of Iron Age and earlier settlement within the present city and its immediate surroundings, the speed with which Chichester developed after AD43 does suggest the presence of well-established social structures during the late Iron Age (Davenport 2003). Following the Roman invasion, Chichester developed into a major town, whilst the palace at Fishbourne flourished close to the important harbour to the west. The Roman road from Chichester to Selsey is believed to have passed close to the present site (Rudling 2003). During the medieval period the town grew in importance once again, becoming the centre of an administrative district (Rape) with its own castle, prior to 1100 (Jones 2003). The Chichester Canal was constructed in the early 19th century. Although this had gone out of use by the 1930s, it was converted into an anti-tank obstacle during the Second World War. Historical maps indicate that the houses and roads in this part of Chichester date from the late 19th century.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, including foundation trenches for the new buildings. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer's and groundworkers' schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

The watching brief commenced shortly after the previous buildings on the site had been demolished. The depth and looseness of the made ground deposits meant that monitoring the footing trenches was quite difficult, as they were up to 1.9m deep, and between only 0.6m and 1.5m wide. As a result, the trenches could not be entered for health and safety reasons, and concreting usually took place soon after they had been excavated. It became apparent quite early on that there was a significant amount of made ground across much of the site, with various

dump layers of soil and chalk being recorded immediately above the natural greyish white sand and gravels. The thickness of the made ground varied across the site, but in certain areas was in excess of 3m. In the western parts of the site the made ground was generally not so thick, and lay above a deposit of yellowish brown sandy clay, probably a buried topsoil, which in turn lay above the sand and gravel natural geology (Fig. 4). Monitoring of the foundation trenches identified the sandy clay deposit as natural geology, and noted that this had been removed across the entire eastern part of the site (Fig. 3). The reason for this truncation is almost undoubtedly associated with the canal immediately east of the site, and it is likely that the clay was used to line the base and sides of the canal to make it waterproof. Following removal of the clay, the western bank of the canal was built back up with various dump layers of soil, gravel and chalk, some of which may have been derived from digging the canal.

The three northern plots (4-6) and garage B were in the most disturbed area (Fig. 3), and very little natural clay was encountered here. In contrast, the sandy clay layer was seen throughout the footing trenches for plots 1-3, along with the garages in the north-west (C) and south-west (A) corners of the site, albeit beneath significant amounts of made ground. The line of truncation could be clearly seen in some of the footings (Pl. 1).

Unsurprisingly, no archaeological deposits had survived in those parts of the site which had been truncated, and the only finds within the various made ground layers were clearly post-medieval, and not retained.

Just one feature was recorded in the undisturbed part of the site, a possible pit (1) in the footings for the garage in the south-west corner (A). The feature was at least 2.5m long and 1.1m wide, but just 0.4m deep. Although it was visible in several sections of the footings, it was most clearly defined in the south-facing, northernmost section, where it appeared to lie directly below a mixed deposit of soil and made ground (Fig. 4 and Pl. 2). Unfortunately the feature could not be investigated closely as the footing trench was 1.9m deep and could not be entered. One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from its lower fill of dark brownish grey sandy silt (50). An upper fill of reddish brown sandy silt (51) contained no finds. No other features were recorded in the garage footings, and the surrounding area appeared to have been quite disturbed by tree roots.

Finds

Pottery by Malcolm Lyne

Just one sherd of pottery was recovered during the watching brief, and this came from the fill of a possible pit (1). This fresh Roman sherd is from a cooking-pot in Rowlands Castle greyware. A lack of diagnostic features makes close dating impossible but the Rowlands Castle industry flourished from the Conquest to just after AD300. The fabric variants in use between AD43 and 70 often include calcined-flint amongst the sand element

in the filler so it is likely that the fragment is later than AD70 in date. Pre AD70 Rowlands Castle ware vessels are also frequently handmade or tournette finished, whereas this piece is wheel-turned.

Other Finds by Sean Wallis

Several fragments of post-medieval brick and tile were found during the watching brief. This material all came from the various made ground deposits, and was not retained.

Conclusion

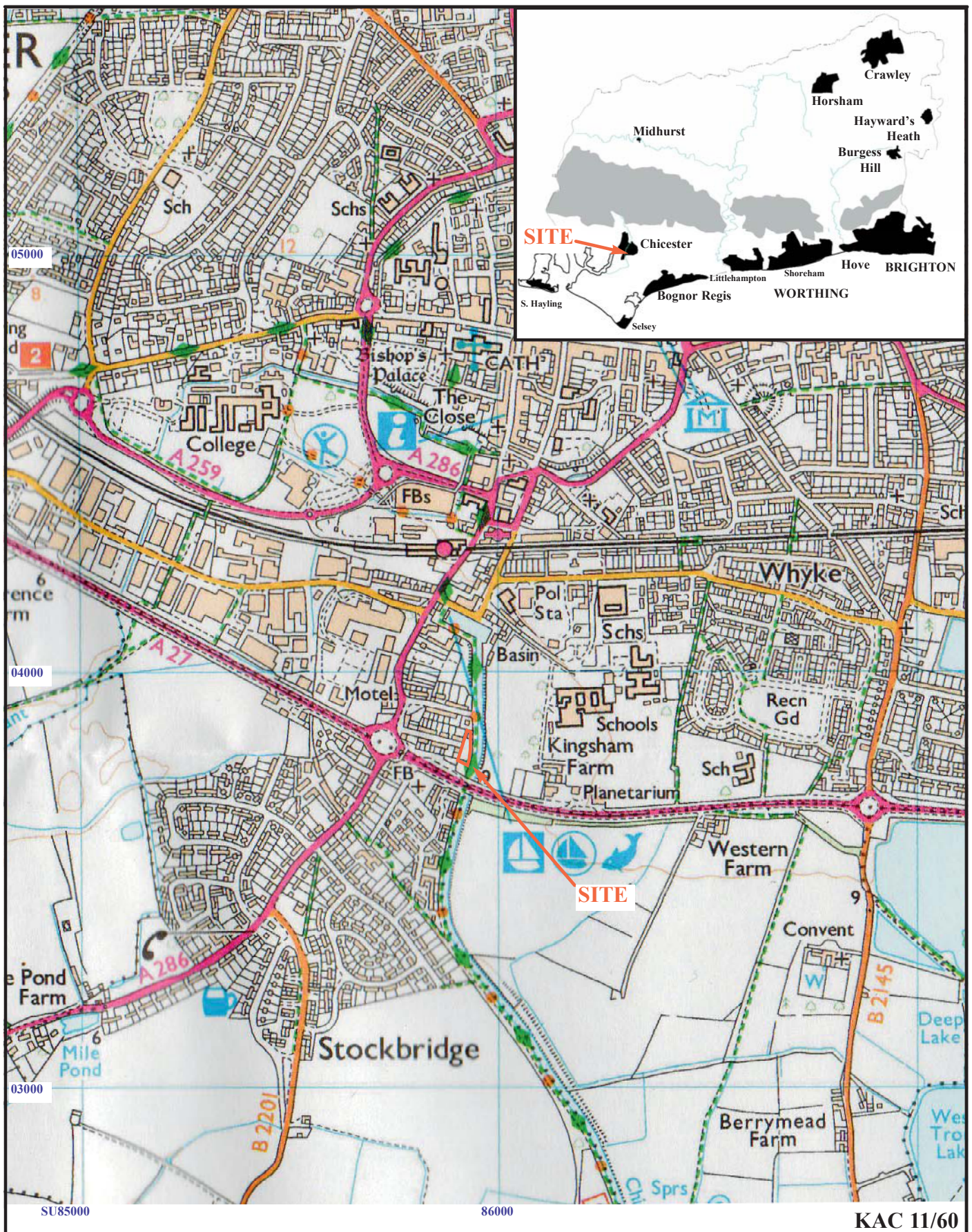
The watching brief at Kings Avenue successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the re-development of the site. It was clear that the eastern part of the site, closest to the canal, had been severely truncated in the past and, as a result, any archaeological features which may have been present in this part of the site would have been completely removed. The scale and nature of this truncation suggests that it was associated with the construction of the canal in the early 19th century, and it is likely that the area was stripped of soil at this time, and the underlying natural sandy clay used to line the canal. The spoil was then dumped back onto the site. The western part of the site had not been subjected to this level of truncation, and a probable Roman pit was identified. No traces of the projected line of the Roman road from Chichester to Selsey were revealed anywhere on the site, which is not surprising given the amount of disturbance noted.

References

- BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 317/332, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
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- Jones, R, 2003, 'Hastings to Herstmonceux : the castles of Sussex' in D Rudling (ed), *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD 2000*, King's Lynn
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- Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, King's Lynn
- WSCC, 2007, 'Standards for archaeological fieldwork, recording and post-excavation work (development control)', West Sussex County Council, Chichester

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill(s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	50, 51	Pit	Roman	Pottery (1 sherd)



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Figure 1. Location of site within Chichester
and West Sussex.

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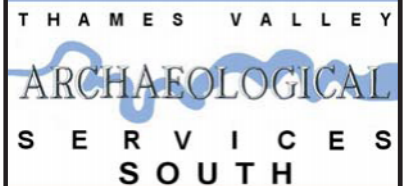
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Kings Avenue.

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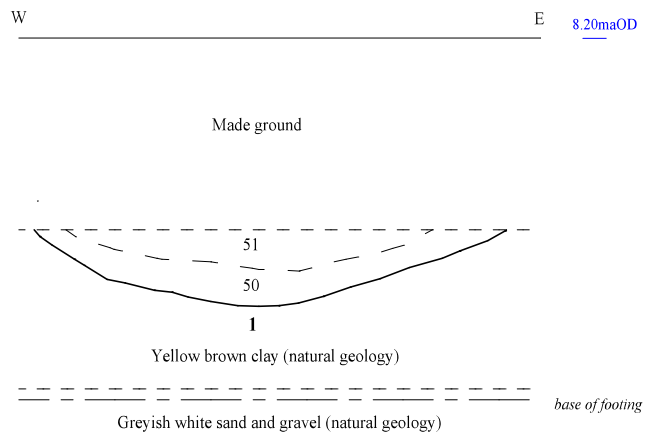


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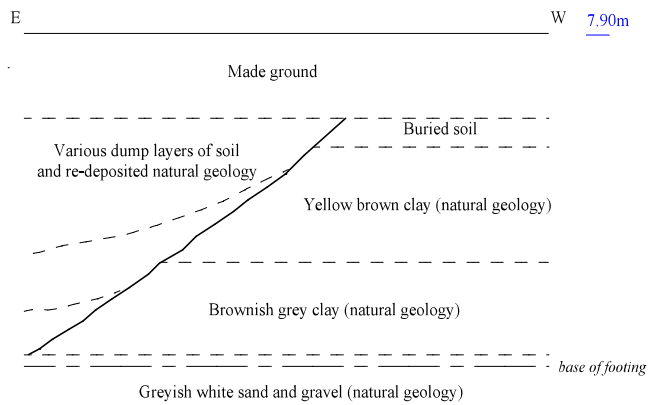
Figure 3. Location of foundations.



Section of garage A, showing pit 1



Foundation trench of plot 3, showing truncation associated with the construction of the canal



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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Footing of Plot 3, showing truncation relating to canal construction, looking south-west.



Plate 2. Footing of Garage A, showing Pit 1 in section, looking north.

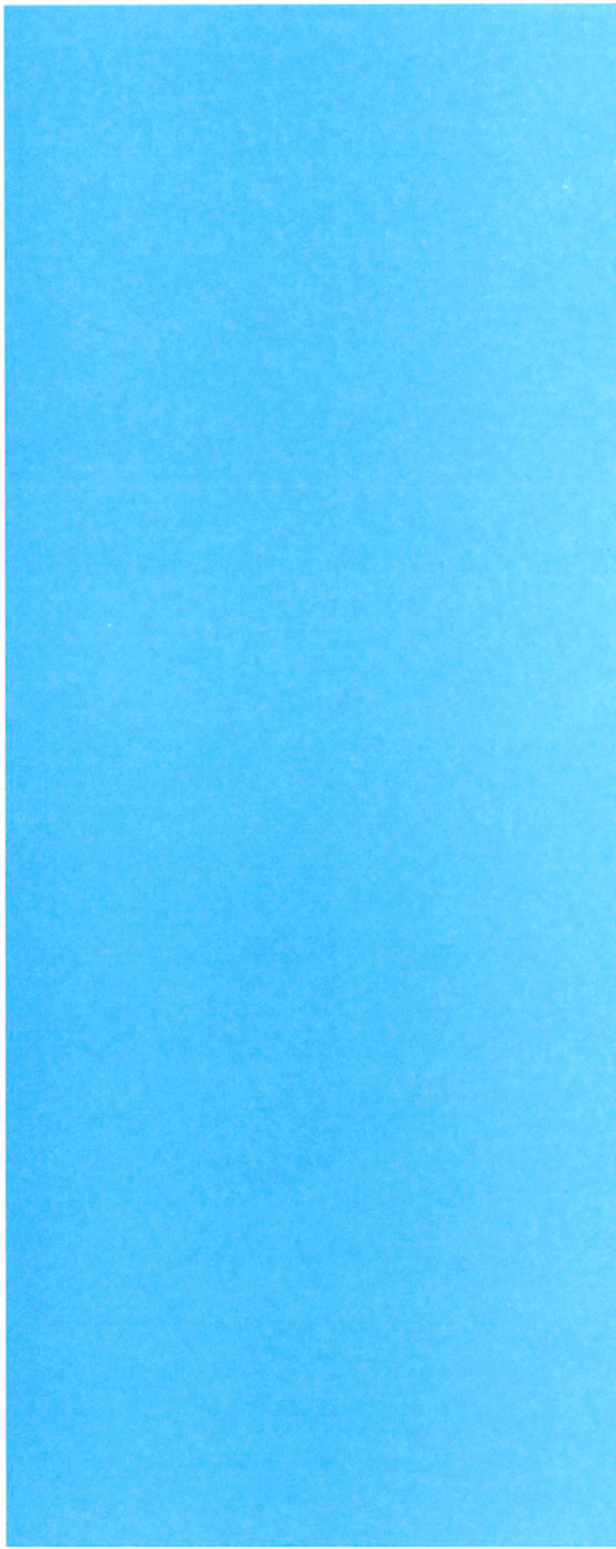
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Plates 1 and 2.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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