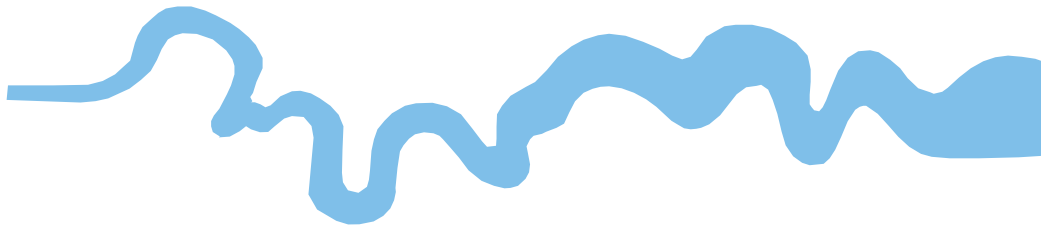


T V A S



SOUTH

**4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone,
East Sussex**

Archaeological Excavation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code HCB19/39

(TQ 4667 0079)

**4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone,
East Sussex**

An Archaeological Excavation

for Ms Michelle Ames

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Planning Reference: LW/18/0827

Site Code HCB 19/39

Summary

Site name: 4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4667 0079

Planning reference: LW/18/0827

Site activity: Excavation

Date and duration of project: 13th - 15th May 2019

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: HCB 19/39

Area of site: c. 31 sq m

Summary of results: Despite the high archaeological potential of the site, based on previous findings in the area, very little was found during the small excavation at Hanover Close, Bishopstone. Although the footprint of a new annexe building was stripped and thoroughly cleaned by hand, the only feature or potential archaeological interest was a probable pit which contained a fragment of post-medieval or modern slate. A few small sherds of abraded pottery, dating from either the Late Iron Age or Roman period, were recovered from the subsoil. Very little subsoil was present on the site and in places the natural chalk geology was encountered below a deposit containing a great deal of chalk fragments. It therefore seems likely that the site was truncated to some extent in the past, possibly when the nearby houses were built in the 1970s.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton and will be deposited at an appropriate local Museum when available.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 05.06.19 Steve Preston ✓ 05.06.19

4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone, East Sussex An Archaeological Excavation

by Sean Wallis
with contributions by Luke Barber

Report 19/39

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services to the rear of 4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone, East Sussex (NGR: TQ 4667 0079). The work was commissioned by the property's owner, Ms Michelle Ames.

Planning permission (LW/18/0827) has been granted by Lewes District Council for the construction of a detached annexe in the rear garden of the property. The consent is subject to two conditions (3 and 4) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in advance of groundworks. This was in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018), and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Greg Chuter, the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer who advises Lewes District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes, Odile Rouard and the author, between 13th and 15th May 2019, and the site code is HCB 19/39. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable repository in due course.

Topography and Geology

The site is located to the south of Hanover Close, a residential area off Hurdis Road, on the north-east edge of Bishopstone, East Sussex (TQ 4667 0079) (Figs 1 and 2). The site is on the south side of, and close to the summit of, Rookery Hill, a very steep ridge, especially to the north. The area generally slopes down more gradually towards the coastal plain to the south-west, although the small area of the site itself is relatively flat and, at a height of about 42m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of the Newhaven Chalk Formation (BGS 2006), and this was confirmed during the excavation.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site largely stems from its position on the south-west facing slope of Rookery Hill, which lies between the historic village of Bishopstone (to the north-east) and the late 20th-century settlement (to the south-west). The hill is a major feature in the landscape, on top of which a number of probable Bronze Age barrows survive as earthworks, and are Scheduled Monuments. A series of archaeological excavations were carried out on Rookery Hill between 1967 and 1975, which revealed a multi-period site with evidence of activity in the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods (Bell 1977). The numerous archaeological features recorded suggested intensive occupation during the Iron Age and later Roman period (*c.* 4th century AD), but possibly the most significant remains discovered related to a large early Saxon settlement. The remains of twenty-two Saxon buildings were identified, including rectangular post-built structures and sunken-featured buildings, largely dating from the 5th century. It is thought that the settlement may have declined after the 5th century, and that the focus may have shifted north-east to the present village of Bishopstone. A cemetery associated with the early Saxon settlement, apparently focussed on one of the prehistoric barrows, and containing over a hundred burials, was recorded to the south of the present site when work started on the modern housing development. Two further Saxon buildings were recorded during a recent archaeological excavation at Anthony Close, immediately to the south of the present site, along with numerous stake-holes which were thought to represent a fenceline (Fisher 2017).

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the project was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and features within the footprint of the new annexe. It was agreed with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer that the majority of the soil above the natural chalk could be removed by the client without an archaeologist being present, so long as a thin layer of subsoil was left. The area was then to be cleaned by hand down to the natural chalk to expose any possible archaeological features. The treatment of any such features was then to be discussed with the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer to determine whether they could be preserved *in-situ* beneath the concrete slab floor of the new annexe, or should be excavated by hand to enable their preservation by record.

The Excavation

The area which was stripped in the south-west corner of the site measured approximately 31 sq m (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1–3) and had clearly been affected by its use as a back garden, as some re-deposited chalk was recorded between the modern topsoil and a buried soil horizon at the western edge of the site (Fig. 5). In other places the re-deposited

chalk was observed immediately above the natural geology, and there was very little subsoil encountered on the site (Fig. 5). One explanation for this may be that the area was supposedly used as a compound when the housing estate was built in the 1970s. Most of the overburden had been removed without supervision. Due to the gentle slope of the site, and its previous use as a garden, this necessitated the removal of between 0.45m and 0.75m of material.

The area was then cleaned by hand down to the natural chalk geology and a small assemblage of pottery, dating from the Late Iron Age and Roman periods was recovered, along with a small piece of fired clay. The pottery was very abraded, suggesting that it might have been derived from manuring. Three of the sherds came from the top of a large sub-circular feature, which was originally interpreted as being a pit. However, when this feature was investigated by hand, it turned out to be geological in origin.

The only real archaeological feature turned out to be a probable pit (1), which was partially exposed along the western edge of the stripped area. The pit measured at least 1.05m by 0.32m, and was 0.16m deep (Fig. 5; Pl. 4). It was filled with a deposit of dark greyish brown silty clay (52), which contained a small fragment of Welsh roofing slate.

A small rectangular pond had previously occupied the southern part of the stripped area, and the base of the feature was clearly visible where it had been cut into the natural chalk geology.

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered just five sherds of pottery from the site weighing 24g. Two sherds (6g) were recovered from general subsoil (51) while the other three (18g) were from the subsoil (51) above a large feature which subsequently turned out to be geological in origin. All of the sherds are of the same type: oxidized body sherds in grog tempered East Sussex ware. The ware spans the Late Iron Age through the Roman period but these sherds are likely to be of Roman date. All are heavily abraded and presumably represent a manuring scatter.

The pottery is of common type for the area, lacks feature sherds and is essentially unstratified. It does not hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

The subsoil deposit (51) produced a single piece (10g) of dull yellow to pink moderately fine sandy burnt clay. The piece has the hint of an originally flat surface but is essentially of amorphous form. Its date is uncertain. The burnt clay is an isolated unstratified find. It does not hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

Stone by Luke Barber

A 4g fragment of Welsh roofing slate was recovered from the fill of pit 1 (52). Although the slate is certainly of later 18th to 19th century date whether it is intrusive is uncertain. However, the piece does not appear to be abraded suggesting it has not been extensively reworked. The slate fragment does not hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

Conclusion

Given the high archaeological potential of the site, based on previous findings in the area, it was disappointing that very little was found during the excavation at Hanover Close, Bishopstone. Although the footprint of a new annexe building was stripped and thoroughly cleaned by hand, the only archaeological feature was a probable pit which contained a fragment of post-medieval or modern slate. A few small sherds of abraded pottery, dating from either the Late Iron Age or Roman period, were recovered from the subsoil, but it seems likely that the area had been significantly disturbed in the past. Very little subsoil was recorded on the site and in places the natural chalk geology was encountered below a deposit containing a great deal of chalk fragments. It therefore seems likely that the site was truncated to some extent in the past, possibly when the nearby houses were built in the 1970s.

References

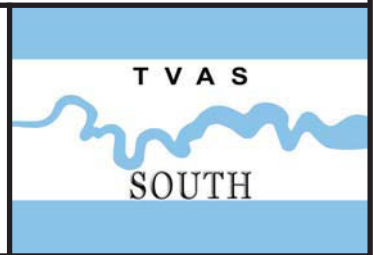
- Bell, M, 1977, 'Excavations at Bishopstone', *Sussex Archaeol Collect* **115**, 1–299
ESCC 2019, *Sussex Archaeological Standards*, East Sussex County Council, Lewes
Fisher, L J, 2017, 'A Post Excavation Assessment Report on the excavations at Anthony Close, Bishopstone, East Sussex', CBAS unpublished report **CBAS0284**, Selmeston
NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London



**4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone,
East Sussex, 2019
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Bishopstone and East Sussex.

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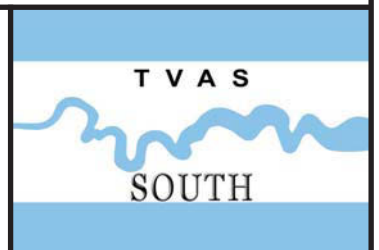


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

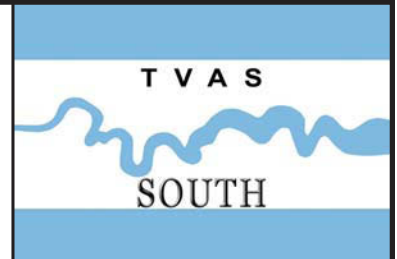
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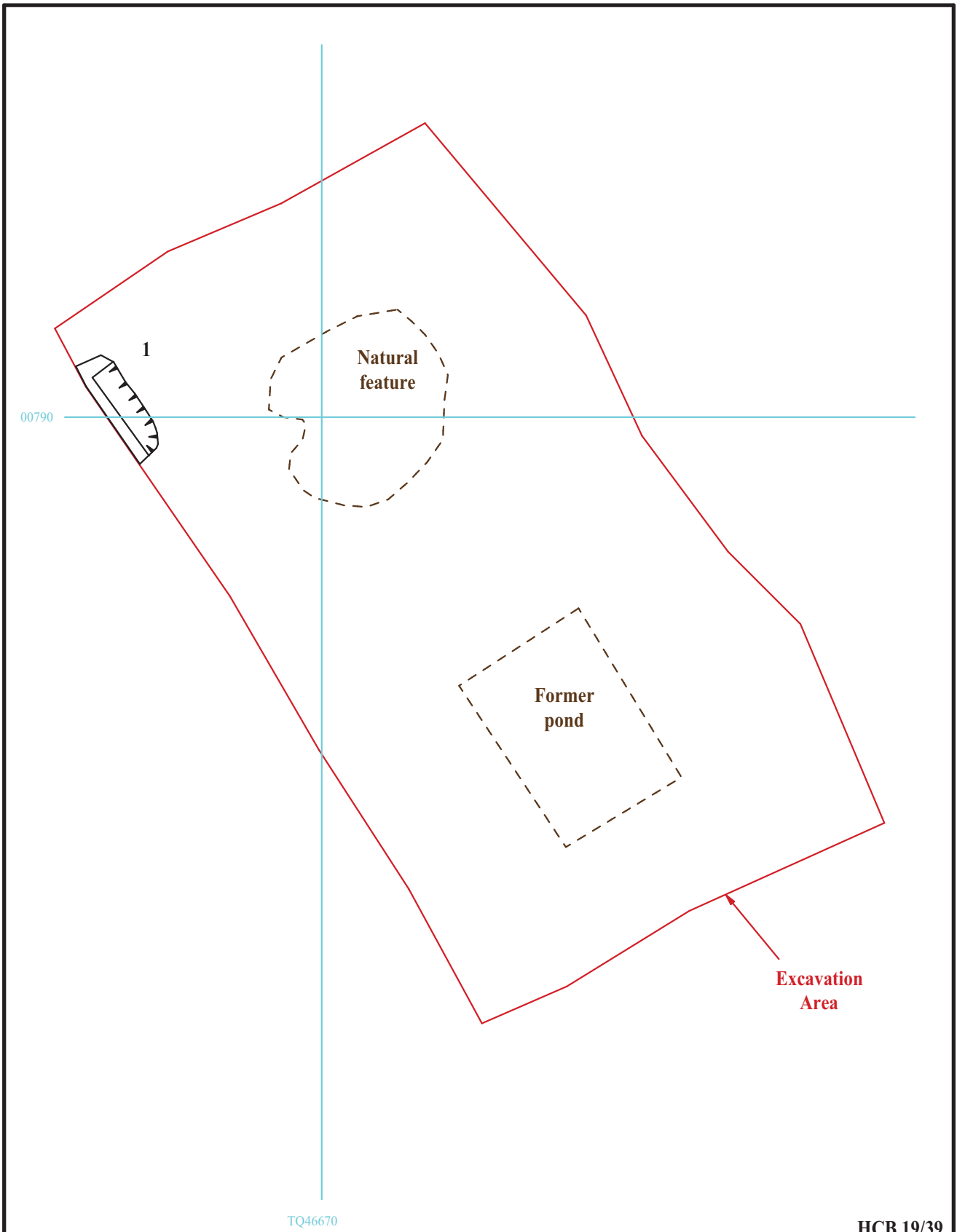




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Figure 3. Site plan showing excavation area.





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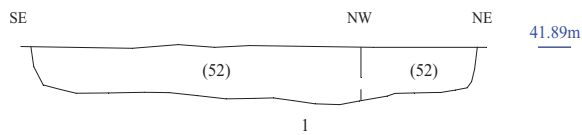
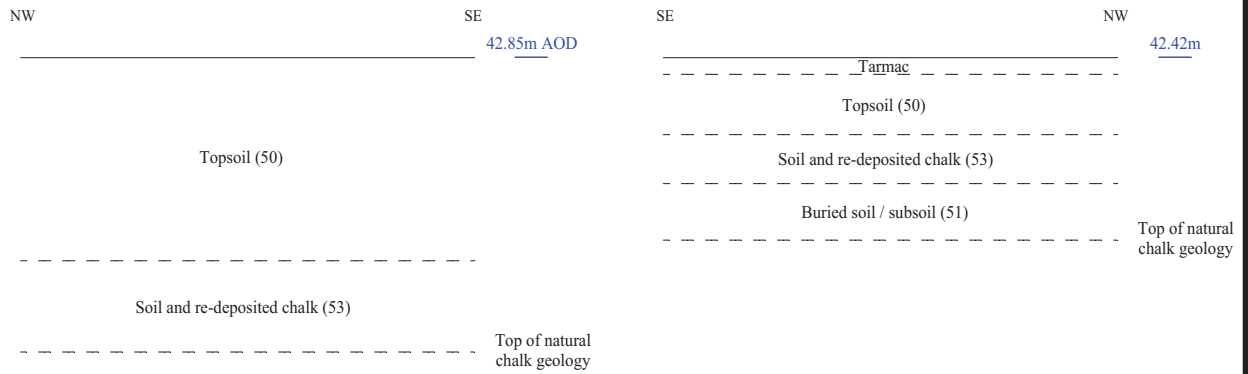
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Figure 4. Detailed plan of all features examined in excavation area.



Eastern edge of stripped area

Western edge of stripped area



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Figure 5. Sections.

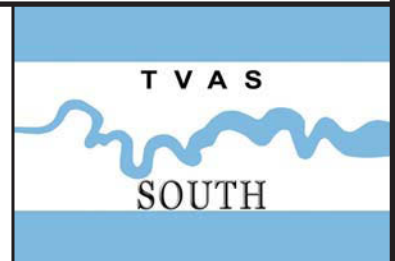




Plate 1. General view of excavation area, looking south-east.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. General view of excavation area, looking West.
Scales: 2m and 1m.



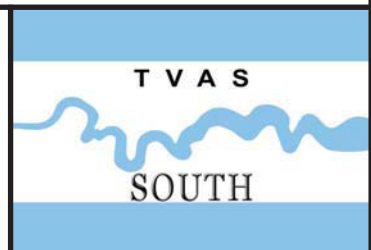
Plate 3. General view showing stratigraphy along western edge of excavation area, looking South.



Plate 4. Pit 1, looking South-east.
Scales: 0.30m and 0.10m.

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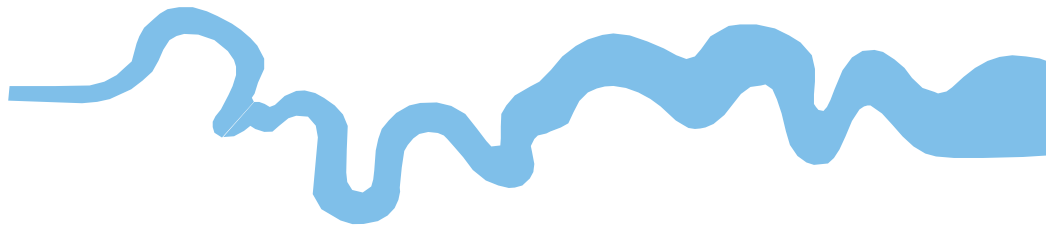
**4 Hanover Close, Bishopstone,
East Sussex, 2019
Archaeological Excavation
Plates 1 to 4.**



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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