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Archaeological Services Ltd**



**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
Spells Yard, Worthing, West Sussex**

WB/10/1033/FUL  
WB/10/1035/LBC

Project No. CBAS0405

TQ 1470 0266

by  
Keith Butler PIfA

November 2013

## ***Summary***

*An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the groundworks for a residential and commercial development at Spells Yard after the former commercial buildings on the site had been demolished. The Grade II listed building 89 Portland Road, was not demolished. The groundworks produced a fairly large assemblage of artefacts all dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and would appear to be contemporary with the former buildings on the site. All features noted were also of this date. The natural silty clay was undisturbed, this and the lack of any earlier artefacts would suggest that there had been little or no earlier activity on the site.*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd (CBAS) was commissioned by Kitmarr Ltd to conduct a standing building survey and watching brief at Spells Yard, Grafton Place, Worthing, West Sussex. The property is situated at the junction between Grafton Place and Portland Road, centred on TQ 1470 0266 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** Planning permission (WB/10/1033/FUL & WB/10/1035/LBC) has been granted for the demolition of existing non listed buildings on the site and erection of development comprising 10 residential apartments on ground, first and second floors, a 77sqm commercial unit, bicycle storage, refuse and recycling store, 11 car parking spaces, new pedestrian twitten, lift and stair lobby to first floor level and change of use and conversion of No. 89 Portland Road (Listed Building) to provide a residential dwelling house. The local planning authority has put a condition on the planning consent for the development, requiring an appropriate programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.
- 1.3** No. 89 Portland Road is a Grade II Listed Building (UID 1250475). It is described as built before 1814. 3 storeys and attic. Grey headers and yellow-coloured brick window surrounds. 2 sashes each house, with glazing bars but the left hand ones narrower and blind, except on 1st storey of No 77, and on ground floor, where there are doors (that of No 79 recessed; No 77 having an additional door, probably to through passage). Slate roof, with dormer to each house (No 77 a casement, No 79 sash with glazing bars). Nos 75 to 89 (odd) form a group.
- 1.4** The geology of the site according to the British Geological Survey (Sheets 318/333) is Brickearth over Chalk.
- 1.5** The appropriate programme of archaeological work comprises the following:
- a. Prior to the development commencing a standing buildings survey corresponding to an English Heritage Level 3 survey shall be carried out.
  - b. During the works an archaeological watching brief shall be carried out to record any parts of the building currently obscured and to monitor the demolition of the non listed buildings.
  - c. During the works an archaeological watching brief shall be carried out during any ground works to record any archaeological remains which may be destroyed or damaged by the development.

- 1.6** A written scheme of investigation<sup>1</sup> was prepared, submitted to and approved by Worthing Borough Council.
- 1.7** The archaeological watching brief was maintained during the groundworks on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013, and was carried out by the author. The project was managed by Chris Butler for CBAS.

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, C. 2013 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Standing Building Recording & Monitoring at Spells Yard, Worthing, West Sussex*. CBAS

## 2.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 A Historic Environment Record search established that there were a total of 98 archaeological sites (Fig. 2) and 109 Listed Buildings within a 1km radius of the site. Only those sites within a 100m distance of the site are considered within this WSI.
- 2.2 The earliest finds are of Roman pottery, with a number of find spots close to the site (MWS306, MWS360 and MWS362). Coins of Diocletian and Constantine have been found to the north-west of the site (MWS308), and a Roman ditch with pottery was found to the east of the site (MWS318).
- 2.3 Medieval pottery has also been found close to the site (MWS361), although Medieval settlement appears to be centred between North Street and the High Street (MWS4985 and MWS4527).
- 2.4 In the 18th century, and probably earlier, the hamlet of Worthing comprised the modern High, North, and Warwick streets. One building dated 1762, of flint with brick dressings, survived in the High Street in 1945, but by 1978 the earliest surviving houses there were of the early 19th century<sup>2</sup>. Between 1798 and c.1812 the town expanded very rapidly<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.5 No. 89 Portland Road was built before 1814, and appears to form part of this rapid expansion of the town during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a Grade II Listed Building (UID 1250475). The 1848 Tithe Map (Fig. 3) shows the building on the site, with open ground to the north between the site and Christs Church.
- 2.6 The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map of 1875 shows the building, with the surrounding area completely built up (Fig. 4). Later OS maps show the immediate area to change little, with infill and the redevelopment of Liverpool Gardens.
- 2.7 The Worthing Historic Character Assessment Report places the site in Historic Urban Character Area 08 (Richmond Road) and gives the area of Grafton Place a Historic Environment Value (HEV) of 2 (the highest HEV in Worthing is 4)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Worthing: Growth of the town', *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 6 Part 1: Bramber Rape* (Southern Part) (1980), pp. 97-103. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=18223&strquery=grifton+place> Date accessed: 29 July 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, R. 2009 *Worthing Historic Character Assessment Report*, Sussex Extensive Urban Survey

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

### **3.0 Archaeological Methodology**

- 3.1** A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of the footing trenches for the proposed housing development. On arrival at the site the buildings that had previously occupied the site had all been demolished, with the exception of 89, Portland Road in the south-eastern corner of the site. A general reduction of the ground surface had taken place before arrival at the site of up to 300mm, across the site, which had included the removal of concrete yard surfaces. The flint boundary wall had also been removed.
- 3.2** The footing trenches were 1.5m deep and had a width of between 450mm for the narrowest to 800mm for the widest. The trenches were excavated using an 8.5 ton 360° tracked excavator with various sized toothed and toothless buckets. The toothed buckets being used in the areas where the foundations of the flint boundary wall were still present and at various times throughout the excavations when the remains of foundations were encountered.
- 3.3** The footings were excavated in shallow spits under archaeological supervision. The spoil from the excavations was loaded onto a dumper truck, and piled up on the northern end of site for removal by grab lorry. The spoil was visually inspected for artefactual recovery and also scanned with a Precision Gold metal detector.
- 3.4** All of the recording was taken from ground level due to the depth and the un-stable nature of some of the trenches. The footing trench at the southern end of the site was particularly un-stable due to the laying of a drain pipe and the close proximity of the boundary wall and adjacent property at the southern end of the site.
- 3.5** All archaeological deposits, features and finds were excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart
- 3.6** A full photographic record of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held by Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd. A site reference of SYW 13 has been allocated.

## 4.0 Results

- 4.1** During the excavations of the footing trenches only two deposits were noted in the majority of the trenches. Context **6** was a disturbed mixed deposit comprising the remains of the topsoil from the earlier reduction of the ground surface and the demolition rubble from the removal of the former buildings. The depth of this deposit varied in depth up to 500mm at the deepest over the centre of the site, and was not apparent in the western footing trench at all (**Plate 1**). This deposit was a mid brownish-grey silty clay loam with a loose consistence, containing inclusions of demolition rubble comprising ceramic building material (10%), pieces of mortar (5%), pieces of concrete (2%) and flint nodules up to 150mm (2%). Artefacts recovered from this deposit were of pottery, metal, oyster shell and clay pipe stems.



**Plate 1:** Western Footing Trench

- 4.2** Below Context **6** was Context **1** which was the assumed natural, and was a orangey-brown silty clay with a firm consistence. The only inclusions in this deposit were light rooting in the western footing trench. This deposit was apparent to the limit of excavation at 1.5m, with no artefacts being recovered from this deposit.
- 4.3** Context **2** was a cut and fill located at the southern end of the western boundary trench. The north side of the cut was gently sloping at the top which changed to almost vertical in its lower part. The southern side of the feature contained the remains of the foundations of the southern boundary wall. The feature was only apparent in the western baulk of the trench and measured 1.4m in length and had a depth of 1.2m. The base of the cut was flat. The fill was a greyish brown colour silty clay loam, with inclusions of ceramic building material (<1%), pieces of concrete (<1%) and pebbles. The fill had a loose consistence and was 1.2m deep. No artefacts were recovered from this fill. I was told by the contractor that there had been heavy rooting in this area, which had to be removed during the demolition process (**Plate 2**).





**Plate 2:** Western Footings Trench Context 2

- 4.4** Context 3 was a layer of Tarmac at the southern end of the site, which, before the demolition of the southern flint boundary wall, was the surface of the alley between this wall and the property to the south. The Tarmac path was 600mm wide with a depth of up to 100mm.
- 4.5** Below Context 3 was Context 4, which was only apparent in the southern boundary footing trench. This was a deposit of made ground associated with a ceramic drain pipe. This deposit was a mixture of mid brown to dark orangey-brown silty clay loam to silty clay with a very loose consistence. The deposit was 800mm thick with the ceramic drain pipe at this depth. This deposit produced artefacts of pottery, bone and oyster shells.



**Plate 3:** Southern Footings Trench

- 4.6** The foundations of the southern flint wall (Context **5**) were also apparent in this trench, running in the centre of the trench. These were 350mm wide and had a depth of 760mm and comprised un-worked flint nodules up to 200mm in size, and bonded with a light grey sandy mortar. The very base of the foundations comprised broken red bricks.



**Plate 4:** Southern Footings  
Trench Context **5**

- 4.7** Context **7** was located in the inner southern footing trench and only visible in the northern baulk of the trench. This was remains of a brick built manhole (**Plate 5**). The bricks had stretchers measuring 220mm with headers of 110mm and a thickness of 60mm. These were laid in stretcher bond and bonded with a light grey sandy mortar.



**Plate 5:** Inner Southern Trench  
Context **7**

- 4.8** Context **8** was only apparent in the northern footing trench and was a deposit of light greyish-brown silty clay with a friable consistence (**Plate 6**). This deposit had a thickness of up to 600mm and was above the natural silty clay Context **1**. The deposit had inclusions of ceramic building material (mainly broken bricks) (1%) pieces of mortar (5%) and flint nodules up to 200mm (1%). This deposit associated with the pavement of Grafton Place which ran directly along the northern side of the site. No artefacts were recovered from this deposit.



**Plate 6:** Northern Footings Trench also showing Context **9**

- 4.9** Also apparent in this trench was an irregular area of very dark brown staining (Context **9**) in the natural silty clay (Context **1**) located 1.5m in from the western end of the trench and only apparent in the northern baulk of the footings trench (**Plate 6**).
- 4.10** No other archaeological features or deposits were noted during the monitoring of the excavation of the footing trenches.
- 4.11** The demolition of the southern range of industrial buildings had made it possible to inspect the western end wall of 89 Portland Road (**Plate 7**). This appeared to confirm the observations made during the building survey<sup>5</sup>, that the house had originally extended further west, as the end wall only butted up to northern and southern walls of the building.



**Plate 7:** Western Elevation of 89  
Portland Road

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<sup>5</sup> Butler, K. 2013 *A Standing Building Survey on the Buildings at Spells Yard, Worthing, West Sussex*. CBAS0405

## 5.0 The Finds.

**5.0.1** A moderately large sized assemblage of artefacts was recovered during the watching brief and is quantified in Table 1.

**5.0.2** The assemblage of pottery and clay pipe from the site is late in date, has an uncertain degree of residuality, is not from securely sealed deposits and consists of common types of the period well known in the area. As such it is not considered to warrant any further analysis and is recommended for discard.

**Table 1: The Finds**

Context	Pottery	Shell/Bone	Other	Comments
Surface	12/182g	-	Clay pipe 1/1g Stone 1/41g Glass 1/14g Metal 1/27g	c. 1800-1850
4	36/2183g	Shell 8/419g Bone 1/4g	Clay pipe 6/17g Mortar 1/245g Glass 2/467g	c. 1860-1880 (High resid c. 1800-1860)
6	40/1950g	Shell 11/551g Bone 1/87g	Clay pipe 9/24g Stone 3/234g Metal 3/84g	c. 1860-1880 (High resid c. 1800-1860)

Number/weight (gms)

## 5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

**5.1.1** The archaeological work recovered a relatively large assemblage of pottery from the site. All of the material can be placed firmly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though one or two vessels could be as early as the very late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The assemblage is in good condition; generally being characterised by large unabraded sherds (the average sherd for Context 6 being a notable 60.6g). As such it would appear the material has not been subjected to any notable degree of reworking. Despite this Contexts 4 and 6 demonstrate a notable chronological range of material suggestive of either residuality or the longevity of a number of the older wares.

**5.1.2** The low fragmentation and lack of abrasion on the creamwares and early pearlwares would certainly suggest they were in contemporaneous use with some of the later refined whitewares and stonewares, perhaps as late as the 1860s to 1880s. If this is the case then the assemblage would be more in keeping with a lower class household.

- 5.1.3** Overall the assemblage is typically domestic in nature. Coarsewares are never common but include several fragments from glazed red earthenware bowls, including a club rim with external foliage rouletting below (Context 6). English stoneware is also well represented in all deposits, most notably a complete light grey Bristol glazed blacking bottle from Context 4 (55mm diameter rim, 131mm tall and weighing 551g). This vessel has an oval stamped cartouche near its base equating to George Skey, Wilnecote, Tamworth (Staffordshire) and post-dating 1860.
- 5.1.4** Context 6 produced a complete salt-glazed convex oval stoneware lid with knob handle (865g). The same deposit produced part of a Nottingham stoneware bowl with rouletted line of circles on its exterior. Other kitchen wares include a scatter of yellow ware (including a large bowl, small bowl and jug, the latter two having industrial slipped annular lines) and the rim of a Sunderland-type slipware bowl (Context 4).
- 5.1.5** The finer wares contain a notable quantity of vessels that can be placed between c. 1790 and 1830, the earliest of which is creamware. This type was recovered from all deposits (surface: 3/38g, Context 4: 5/95g and Context 6: 8/93g) and includes a range of plates, bowls and at least two chamber pots. The pearlware includes fragments of at least three blue shell-edged plates of both early and late types, together with some hand-painted teabowls and saucers (though none match). Transfer-printed pearlware is even more common with pieces from plates, serving dishes, bowls and tureens being recovered from all pottery-producing deposits (surface: 4/39g, Context 4: 9/403g and Context 6: 9/333g).
- 5.1.6** Interestingly there are at least two different water-closets represented, both with blue English landscape designs (Context 6), not things one would expect in a low-status household. There are notably fewer blue transfer-printed vessels of post 1830/40 date though a few willow-patterned plates and a wash basin with floral pattern are represented. There is also a scatter of plain refined whiteware vessels, including the rear pipe from another water closet (also Context 6) and preserve jars (the latter including a James Keiller marmalade jar fragment Context 6). The assemblage includes a scatter of English porcelain, including an ivy-shaped condiment, an electrical insulator and at least two different cups.

## **5.2 The Clay Tobacco Pipe** by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1** All of the clay pipe from the site is in relatively fresh unabraded condition and clearly has not been subjected to reworking. All but one of the pieces are stem fragments that can only be generally placed between c. 1750 and 1900. The single bowl fragment (Context 4) is from a fluted bowl with unmarked heel of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **5.3 The Glass by Chris Butler**

**5.3.1** Context 4 produced an Azure blue medicine bottle with applied neck and rim, 158mm tall and body 37mm x 60mm, weighing 348g. It was embossed on the side: GRANULAR CITRATE OF MAGNESIA, and on the base 'MR'. This can be dated to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**5.3.2** Context 4 also produced a large fragment of a clear drinking glass. It had a thick sided lower bowl with a short plain stem and a plain foot, and probably dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **5.4 Marine Shell and Animal Bone by Chris Butler**

**5.4.1** Marine shell was found in Contexts 4 and 6. Most of the shell was Oyster, with just a single fragment of Scallop shell from Context 4. The majority of pieces were complete upper or lower valves, and most have infestations.

**5.4.2** Two pieces of animal bone were found; a sheep rib from Context 4 and an unidentified fragment from a large ungulate from Context 6.

### **5.5 The Geological Material by Luke Barber**

**5.5.1** All of the stone recovered from the site consists of Welsh roofing slate of 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

### **5.6 Other Material by Luke Barber & Chris Butler**

**5.6.1** Context 4 produced a single slab of hard grey abundant medium sandy render with a pink fine sandy surface finish below both a whitewash and subsequent coat of white paint.

**5.6.2** Context 6 produced an alloy dinner fork (31g) with no maker's name, but with an electroplaters mark on the handle, and dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a catch from a steel padlock engraved 'HARDENED', probably of 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The only other metal finds were two iron roofing nails.

## **6.0 Discussion**

- 6.1** The archaeological watching brief at Spells Yard, Worthing on the footing trenches for the new residential and commercial development, took place after the demolition of the previous buildings on the site. The exception to this was the Grade II listed building 89 Portland Road which remained and was located in the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 6.2** During the excavation of the footing trenches no archaeological features were noted, with the upper levels of the ground having been heavily disturbed from the demolition process to a depth of up to 500mm, especially in the centre of the site. This demolition layer had impacted into the topsoil which lay directly above the natural silty clay. The natural was undisturbed, with the only features noted being the remains of the former flint boundary wall and the remains of a brick built manhole. Also noted in the northern trench was an irregular area of staining which was thought to be associated with the Tarmac covering of Grafton Place which was located directly to the north of the site.
- 6.3** A moderately large assemblage of pottery and other finds was recovered during the monitoring which have been dated to 19<sup>th</sup> century with a few pieces possibly dating to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery from Contexts **4** and **6** has a very narrow date range of between 1860 and 1880. This could possibly be due to the surface of the yard having been covered with hard standing thus sealing these contexts below, with the residual earlier material coming from the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century activity associated with the building of the first houses on and around the site.
- 6.4** The mapping evidence shows that the first building on the site was 89 Portland Road, which was built before 1814. Later the northern part of the western range and the southern range were built before 1875, and are shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map dated to that year. It would seem most likely that these buildings would have had a yard between them which is also suggested by the contemporary date of the pottery.
- 6.5** The narrow date range of the artefacts and the undisturbed nature of the natural silty clay would suggest there had been little or no activity on the site before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However the disturbed nature of the topsoil and impact of the earlier buildings and their demolition may well have removed any evidence that had been present.

## **7.0 Acknowledgements**

- 7.1** I would like to thank Kitmarr Ltd for commissioning this archaeological watching brief. Luke Barber and Chris Butler reported on the artefacts.
- 7.2** The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler MIfA, and it was monitored by Mark Taylor for WSCC.





Fig. 1: Spells Yard, Worthing: Location of the site  
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number 100037471

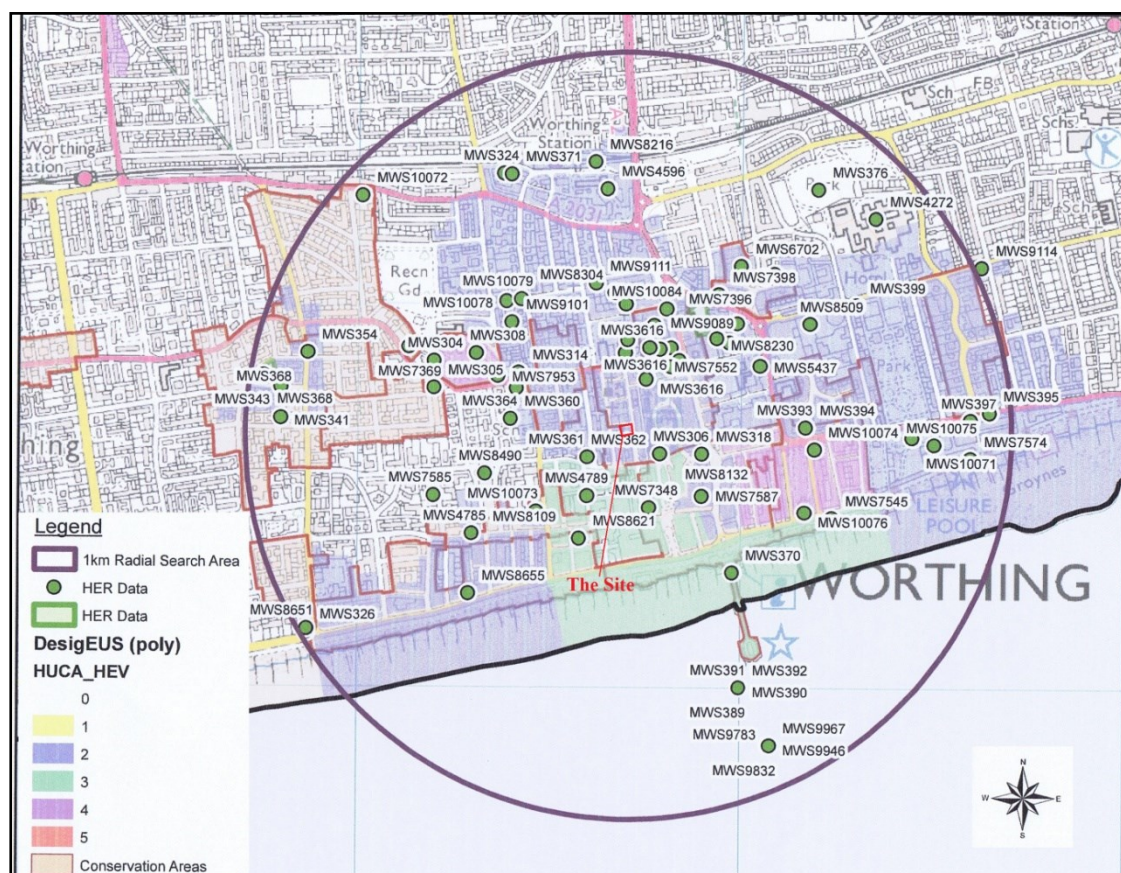


Fig. 2: Spells Yard, Worthing: Sites on the HER  
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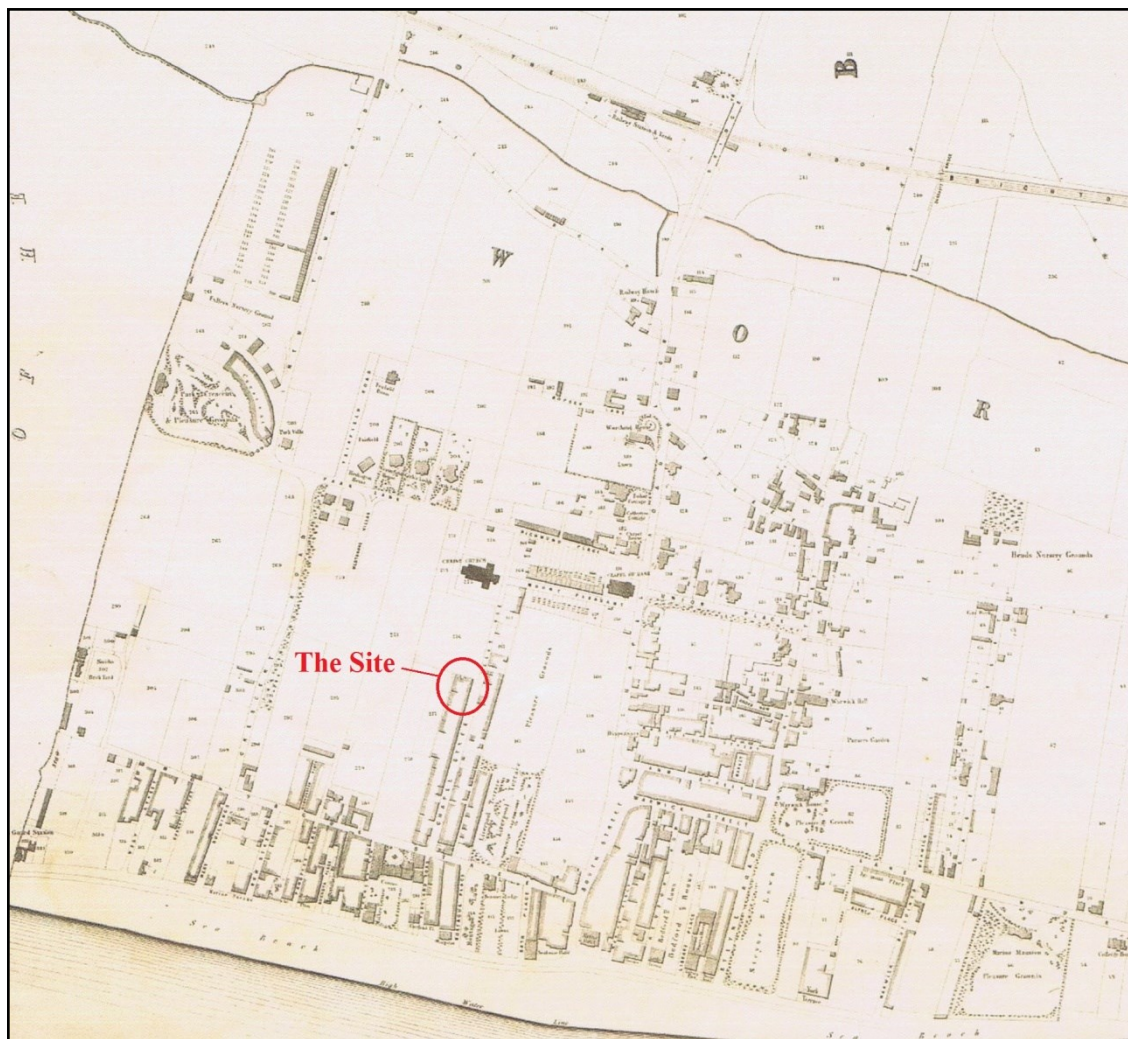


Fig. 3: Spells Yard, Worthing: 1848 Tithe Map

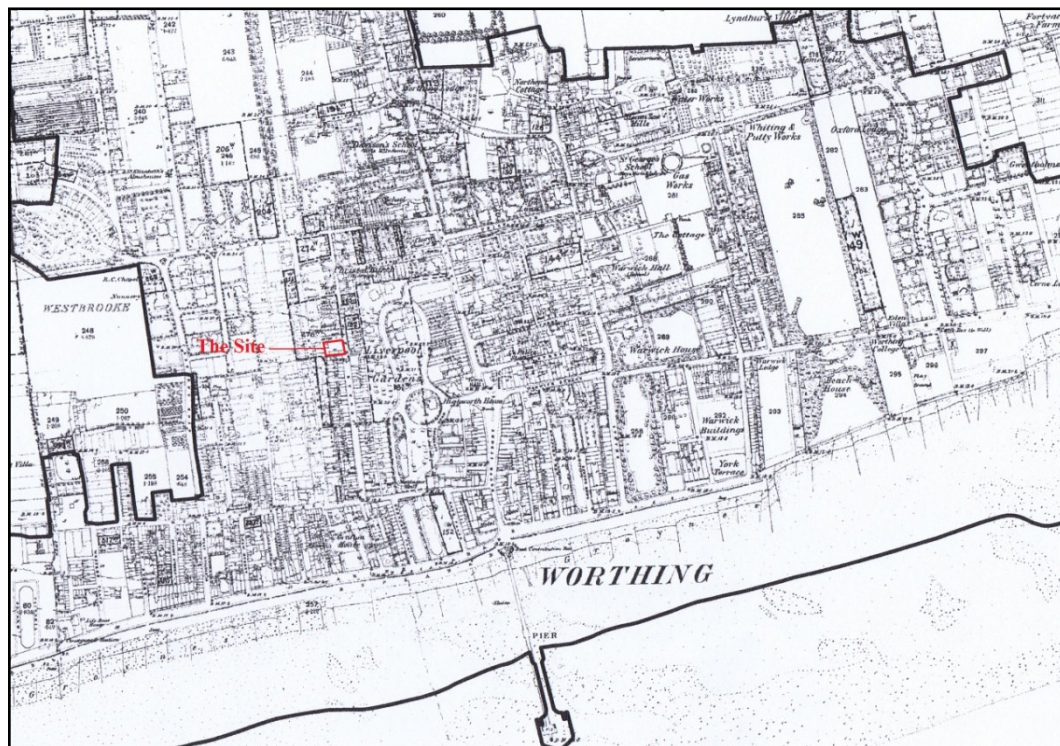
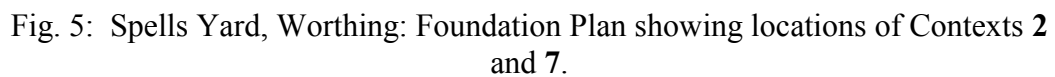


Fig. 4: Spells Yard, Worthing: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map 1875





### Appendix 1: HER Summary Form

Site Code	SYW 13					
Identification Name and Address	Spells Yard, Grafton Place, Worthing West Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	Worthing District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 1470 0266					
Geology	Brickearth over Chalk					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban <b>X</b>	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 10 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> / 10/2013	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Kitmarr Ltd					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MifA					
Project Supervisor	Keith Butler PlfA					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM <b>X</b>	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the groundworks for a residential and commercial development at Spells Yard after the former commercial buildings on the site had been demolished. The Grade II listed building 89 Portland Road, was not demolished. The groundworks produced a fairly large assemblage of artefacts all dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and would appear to be contemporary with the former buildings on the site. All features noted were also of this date. The natural silty clay was undisturbed, this and the lack of any earlier artefacts would suggest that there had been little or no earlier activity on the site.</i></p>						

## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute for Archaeologists, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Until recently he was a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex, and taught A-Level Archaeology. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp.

**Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd** is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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