Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Felicity Howell

Site Code: LLS11/93

(TQ 4219 1106)
Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Hammond and Son Plumbcare

by Felicity Howell

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LLS 11/93

August 2014
Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 4219 1106

Planning reference: SDNP/14/02133/FUL

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 15th July 2014

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Felicity Howell

Site code: LLS 11/93

Area of site: c. 40 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of a new house. Ground reduction and excavation of footings were observed during the course of this watching brief. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 29.08.14
Steve Preston✓ 26.08.14
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out along at land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex (centred on TQ 4219 1106) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Roy Hammond of Hammond and Son Plumbcare, 28 Mildmay Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1PJ.

Planning permission (SDNP/14/02133/FUL) had been gained from the South Downs National Park Authority to construct a new house on the site. The permission was subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology, which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. Mr Greg Chuter, of East Sussex County Council, who acts as archaeological adviser to the Authority, had indicated that this should take the form of a watching brief, to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012), and the National Park Authority’s policies on archaeology. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the East Sussex Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell on 15th July 2014, and the site code is LLS 11/93. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Lewes Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies to the south side of The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex (Fig. 2). It is located approximately 1.2km north-east of the historic core of Lewes. The site was formerly occupied by garden and car parking areas associated with 20 The Lynchets. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of New Pit Chalk Formation and Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation (BGS 1977). This was confirmed during the watching brief, when chalk was encountered in all the footings. The site slopes fairly sharply down towards the south and the area investigated lies at a height of approximately 24m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems generally from its location close to the historic core of Lewes and its medieval suburb Cliffe, and also from its position on the South Downs, which is regarded as being
archaeologically rich for most periods (Rudling 2003). A search of the East Sussex HER revealed numerous entries in the vicinity of the site. In summary, Neolithic and Bronze Age activity has been recorded to the east and south-east of the site on Malling Hill, along with field systems which may date from the Bronze Age to Saxon periods (the street name reflects the earthworks still visible), and a possible Roman farmstead. The site is close to a network of Roman roads which once converged near Lewes, whilst cemeteries dating to the Roman and Saxon periods have been recorded in the slightly wider vicinity. A post-medieval mill once stood close to the site, and it is possible that associated structures and features may be present within the development area. The HER also records numerous stray dating finds, dating from the Bronze Age onwards, in the area around the site.

**Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the development. This was to include the monitoring of foundation trenches for the structure, along with any areas of ground reduction and associated service runs. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer’s and groundworkers’ schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

**Results**

All of the foundation trenches for the new house were monitored during the watching brief (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The trenches were 0.6m wide and up to 1.3m deep. It soon became apparent that the area under investigation had been somewhat disturbed in the recent past. A significant amount of made ground covered the area under observation, most likely a result of levelling for the road to the north and house plot to the west, as well as the creation of a viewing area in the existing garden to the south. The stratigraphy in the northern footing consisted of 0.75m of made ground, above a 0.30m thick light grey-brown clayey silt (50), which was interpreted as subsoil and was observed directly above the underlying natural chalk (Fig. 4, upper; Pl. 2). This subsoil layer (50) was absent in places suggesting that the site had, in part, been previously truncated down to the natural geology. The stratigraphy in the southern footing consisted of 0.80m of made ground, above 0.40m of subsoil (50), directly above the chalk (Fig. 4, lower). Some brickwork relating to a 20th-century pond associated with the garden was observed within the made ground in this trench.
Conclusion

The watching brief at this site successfully examined those areas which were to be most affected by the new development. No archaeological finds or features were encountered and it is apparent that the 1950s development, of which 20 The Lynchets is part, would have had an impact on the landscape and in turn, on any possible archaeological deposits originally present due to the creation of level terraces for house plots, infrastructure and service trenching.

References

ESHHER, 2011, Search of the East Sussex Historic Environment Record, Lewes
Rudling, D, (ed) 2003, The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000, King's Lynn
Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex, 2014
Archaeological Watching Brief
Figure 1. Location of site within Lewes and East Sussex.
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of areas monitored.

Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex, 2014
Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 3. Location of areas monitored.
Stratigraphy in north footing trench

W | E
---|---

24.7m AOD

Made ground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light grey-brown clayey silt subsoil (50)</th>
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Chalk natural geology

Base of trench

Stratigraphy in south footing trench

E | W
---|---

24m

Made ground

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<th>Light grey-brown clayey silt subsoil (50)</th>
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Chalk natural geology

Base of trench
Plate 1. General site shot.

Plate 2. South facing section, looking north, Scale: 1m.

Land adjacent to 20 The Lynchets, Lewes, East Sussex, 2014
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 - 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>BC/AD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victorian</td>
<td>AD 1837</td>
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<tr>
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<td>AD 1500</td>
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