

Archaeological Monitoring at the Walnut Tree Public House site, Bull Lane, Eccles, ME20 7HF

NGR: TQ7285 6051
Site Code WTP/WB/12



Report for
Hillreed Homes Ltd

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Contents

1.0 SUMMARY.....	4
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	4
3.0 SCHEDULE OF VISITS.....	5
4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4.1 PROPOSED GROUNDWORKS.....	5
4.2 CONFIDENCE RATING.....	5
5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
6.0 METHODOLOGY.....	6
7.0 RESULTS.....	7
7.1 GENERAL.....	7
8.0 FINDS.....	7
9.0 DISCUSSION.....	7
10.0 CONCLUSION.....	7
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	7
REFERENCES.....	8
APPENDIX 1 - .KCC HER Summary Form.....	8

- Plate 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2007)
- Plate 2. View of site prior to demolition
- Plate 3. View of the site prior to demolition
- Plate 4. View of the site prior to demolition
- Plate 5. View of the Walnut Tree pub prior to demolition
- Plate 6. Interior view
- Plate 7. Foundation trenches
- Plate 8. Drain and service trenches

List of Figures

- Figure 1. General location of site
- Figure 2. Plan of development site

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Date of report: 17/04/12



Plate 1. Aerial view of site (red circle) showing the site prior to development.

(GoogleEarth March 2006).

1.0 Summary

1.1. From February 8th to April 17th 2012 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on groundworks involved in the build of three 4 bedroom detached houses and two 3 bedroom semi-detached houses all with garages and parking spaces at the Walnut Tree pub site at Eccles in Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 1).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the owners and instructions received from Hillreed Homes Ltd, 60 College Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6SJ.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the demolition of the public house (Plates 2-6), machine digging for new foundations (Plate 7), drainage runs (Plate 8), and construction of a new access road.

The archaeological work was undertaken in four phases.

Phase 1: Demolition of the public house from Feb 8th.

Phase 2: Excavation of footings for the new houses from March 5th.

Phase 3: Excavation of drainage runs from March 27th.

Phase 4: Construction of the access road from April 12th.

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any archaeological below ground impact.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is: TM/11/00615/FL.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was medium/high the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning application TM/11/00615/FL for the erection of new housing was submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the Local Planning Authority requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

(4.) No development shall take place until the applicant(s), or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist attended the site and monitored the excavation works from February 8th to April 17th 2012.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were to:

“Contribute to knowledge of the historic core of Eccles village through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the ground works. Particular attention will be paid to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.”

At the request of the LPA Conservation Officer a comprehensive photographic survey was undertaken of the public house prior to demolition. Some of the archive photographs (Plates 2-6) are in this report whilst additional photographs form part of the site archive. Other aims, if archaeology were to be found are itemised in the Archaeological Specification issued by the Heritage Conservation Group, KCC on 13th February 2012.

4.2. The ground works were to excavate footings for the houses, drainage and other service runs and access road (Plates 7, 8).

4.3. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site monitoring took place.

4.4. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey map is West Melbury Marly Chalk with Superficial Deposits of Head Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel (BSG website 1: 50,000). The geology revealed on site was silty sandy gravel. No chalk deposits were revealed.

5.2. The application site (TQ 7285 6051) is located on undulating down land of the North Downs. The site itself is generally level at a height of about 29m aOD.

5.3. The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential associated with archaeological remains presently recorded in the HER. The area surrounding the development site abounds

with cropmarks identified from aerial photographs. These cropmarks are located south east of the development site and are evidence for buried past landscapes and include:

Linear cropmark of a possible Prehistoric enclosure (TQ 76 SW 107)

Cropmarks of three ring ditches, possibly Bronze Age (TQ 76 SW 106)

Prehistoric findspots in the vicinity include a palstave found on the west bank of the River Medway west of St Marks Church, Eccles (TQ 76 SW 41), and a Mesolithic macehead found in the vicinity of Eccles (TQ 76 SW 44).

Roman remains include the large Roman villa at Eccles (TQ 76 SW 10) and Roman building foundations in the near vicinity of Eccles identified from aerial photographs (TQ 76 SW 8).

Anglo-Saxon remains include the cemetery at Eccles Roman villa (TQ 76 SW 37) and possible remains in the village of Eccles.

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Ifa: 2008).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out in five phases according to the needs of the building contractors from February 8th to April 17th 2012.

6.4. Excavation of the overlying ground was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket.

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were to be subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.8. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and methodology discussed with Archaeological Officers, KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 General

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site was silty sandy gravel overlaid by topsoil or tarmac with no archaeological features revealed.

8.0 Finds

No buried archaeological features were located in the Archaeological Monitoring phase and no finds were retrieved.

9.0 Discussion

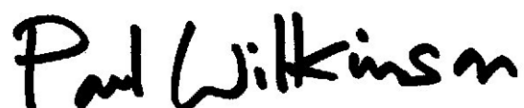
The development is in an area of medium/high potential with some cropmarks in the near vicinity of the development site, and the potential for Roman and Early Medieval remains. The archaeological team were somewhat disappointed that no archaeology was revealed.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

11.0 Acknowledgments

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Dennis Warren for his help and Paul Poulding of Hillreed Homes for commissioning the project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Wilkinson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr Paul Wilkinson FRSA, MIFA.

References

HER data (KCC 2011)

IFA (1999 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

KCC Generic Archaeological Watching Brief 2012

Appendix 1

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development site at the former Walnut Tree public house, Bull Lane, Eccles ME20 7HF, Kent

SWAT Site Code: WTP/WB/12

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a housing development whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that Archaeological Monitoring be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of numerous site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: Tonbridge **Parish:** Eccles

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) TQ 7285 6051

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Monitoring

Date of recording: Feb to April 2012

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)

Geology: Underlying geology is Head Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2012) Archaeological Monitoring at The site of Walnut Tree public house, Bull Lane, Eccles, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

See above

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology, Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 17th April 2012

Plates



Plate 2. General view of site prior to demolition facing south west



Plate 3. The Walnut Tree public house viewed on the south side facing south east



Plate 3. The rear of the Walnut Tree public house facing north east



Plate 4. The frontage of the Walnut Tree public house facing north west



Plate 5. Interior view of the main front bar



Plate 6. Close-up of foundation trench showing exposed geology



Plate 7. View of drainage and services trench

Figures

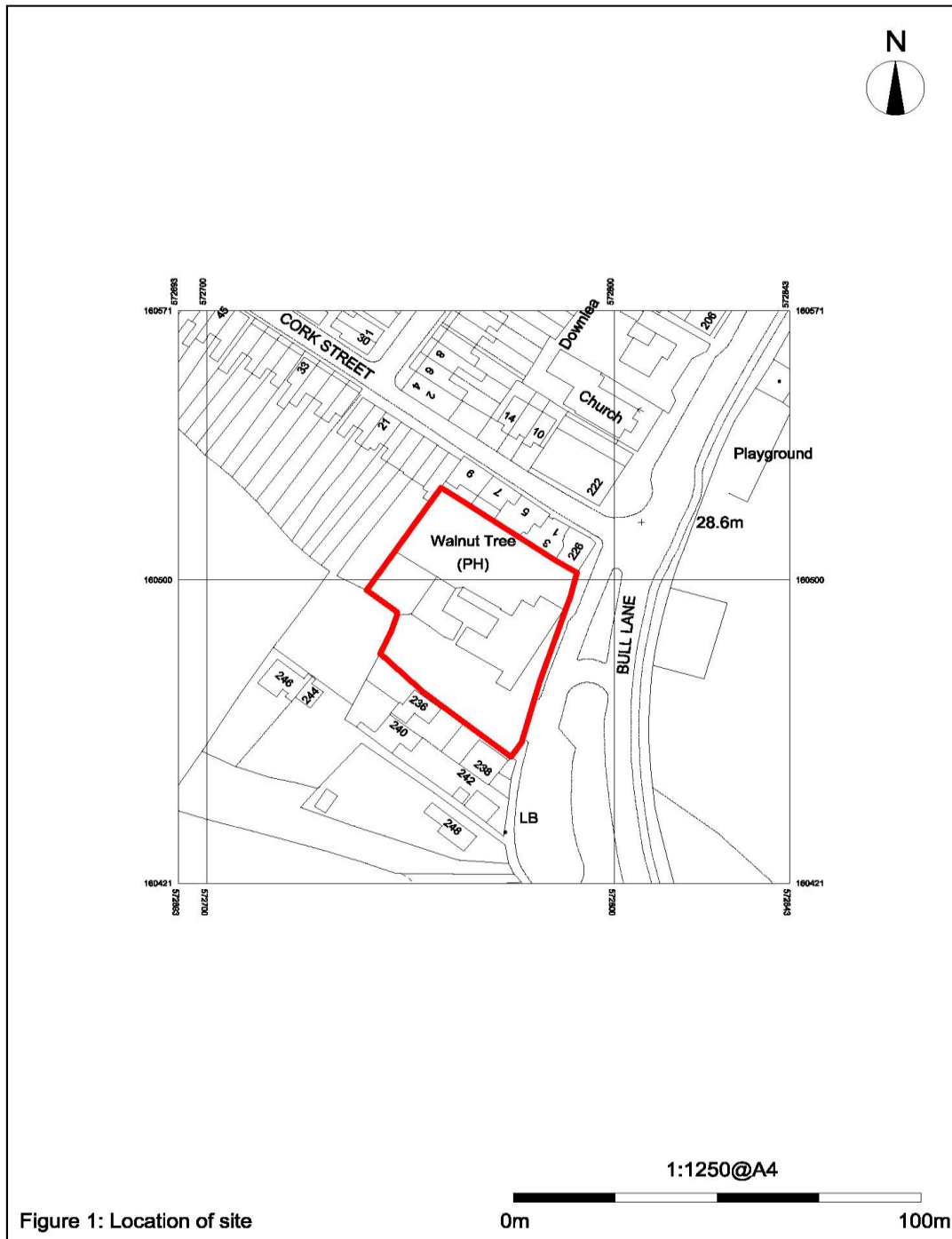


Figure 1: Location of site



Figure 2. Proposed development