

# Archaeological Monitoring at The Allotments, Church Lane, New Romney, Kent

NGR: 606850.0mE 124550.0mN  
Site Code CHU/WB/13



Planning application Y04/0207/SH  
Report for EPPS

## **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

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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.....	8
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	8
REFERENCES.....	8
APPENDIX 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	9
APPENDIX 2 – Geoarchaeological Report.....	

- Plate 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2013)
- Plate 2. General view of site
- Plate 3. View of the site showing excavation of drainage runs
- Plate 4. View of cut drainage
- Plate 5. Geoarchaeological test pit

## List of Figures

- Figure 1. Site plan and location of test pits
- Figure 2. Areas watched

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Date of report: 28/10/13



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

**(Google Earth 7/9/2013, eye alt 484m).**

## **1.0 Summary**

1.1. From 14/07/2013 to 16/08/2013 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a new housing estate at the site of the Allotments, Church Lane, New Romney, Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 1). The works were carried out on behalf of Epps.

1.2. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the machine digging for services (Plates 3-4).

The archaeological work was undertaken in three phases.

Phase 1: Geoarchaeological investigation (Plate 5) by Quaternary Scientific (QUEST)

Phase 2: Topsoil strip and road formation build (Plate 4).

Phase 3: Services trenches which comprised of drainage runs (Plate 3).

1.3. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of any archaeological below ground impact.

1.4. The Planning Application Number for the development is: Y04/0207/SH.

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

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Planning Background**

Planning application Y04/0207/SH was submitted to the Local Planning Authority. KCC Heritage on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief and Geoarchaeological Investigation be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

*No developments shall take place until the applicant, or their agents, or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

*REASON: To ensure a proper record of matters of archaeological*

### **3.0 Schedule of Visits**

3.1. An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site and monitored the excavation works from 4/07/13 to 6/08/2013.

### **4.0 Aims and Objectives**

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

- Assess the likely archaeological impact of the proposed development including drainage, access and car parking works.
- Establishing the degree of archaeological activity on the site.
- Establishing the degree of medieval and post-medieval activity on the site.
- Contributing to the environmental and landscape history of the area.

4.2. The ground works were to strip the topsoil, build up the levels with imported hardcore, and excavate trenches for service runs (Plates 2-4).

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 Church Lane site at New Romney lies within the area that in the medieval period formed the harbour of New Romney, situated largely to the south and east of the medieval town. The harbour was silting up by the end of the 14th century and the townsfolk struggled throughout the 15th century to discourage silting by maintaining a flow of water off the marshland into the harbour via a system of sluices. Thus the Church

Lane site is underlain by alluvium, probably mainly supplied by way of surface drainage from nearby marshland and deposited in a semi-natural intertidal environment.

5.2. Nearby archaeological work in Church Road just to the north of the present development work revealed medieval pits and post holes overlain by the earliest layers of a probable medieval road (TR 02 SE 180). A medieval occupation site with evidence for at least two houses was also found in Church Road in 2002 (TR 02 SE 72), and during the investigation of sewage drainage, again in Church Road revealed additional Medieval occupation (TR 02 SE 206)

5.3. Quaternary Scientific (QUEST) carried out a geo-archaeological investigation (Plate 5) and the report (Appendix 2) states that: *'Overall the lithostratigraphic evidence indicates progressive alluvial aggradation across the site with a transition from an intertidal sand/mud flat environment to terrestrial conditions. No artefacts were observed either in the measured sections or in the spoil arising from the Test Pits, and apart from Mollusca, there were no visible organic remains'*.

## **6.0 Methodology**

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification, and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 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 one phase according to the needs of the building contractor's from 14/07/13 to 16/08/2013.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractor's using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket necessary to remove the topsoil and cut the drainage trenches (Plates 3-4).

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

6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were 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 generic methodology discussed with the Archaeological Officer, KCC.

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 General**

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site sand, silt overlaid by topsoil. No archaeological features revealed in the natural geology.

## **8.0 Finds**

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

## **9.0 Discussion**

9.1. The development site at the Allotments, Church Lane, New Romney is situated on land that was once the tidal harbour for the adjacent town of New Romney. To raise the level of the site, Epps the building contractors had decided to raise the level of the entire development by up to a metre by importing hardcore (Plate 2). The only impact on the natural geology was by the trenching for drainage runs (Plate 3) and a piling plus ring beams for the proposed houses. The piling was watched but the ring beams sat in the made up

ground of the site.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1. 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 David Mann of Epps for commissioning the works, and Wendy Rogers (KCC) for her invaluable help. Digitise This generated the Figures.

Dr Paul Wilkinson, FRSA., MIFA

28/10/2013

## **References**

HER data (KCC 2013)

IFA (1994 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

KCC Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief



## **Appendix 1**

### **KCC HER Summary Form**

**Site Name:** Development site at the site of the Allotments, Church Lane, New Romney, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** CHU/WB/13

**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 new housing development whereby Shepway Council requested that Archaeological Monitoring be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

**District/Unitary:** Shepway

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 606850.0mE 124550.0mN

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Monitoring

**Date of recording:** July-August 2013

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

**Geology:** Underlying geology Alluvium

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2013) Archaeological Monitoring at The Allotments, Church Lane, New Romney, 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:** 28/10/2013

## Plates



**Plate 2. General view of the site showing build up of site under progress, facing south-west**



**Plate 3. The site showing the excavation of drainage runs (facing south)**



**Plate 4. Drainage trenches and in background hardcore build up over the entire site (facing south-east)**



Plate 5. Geotechnical test pit (TP. 2)

## **CHURCH LANE, NEW ROMNEY, KENT (NGR: TR 066 245): GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK REPORT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarises the findings arising out of the geoarchaeological investigations undertaken by Quaternary Scientific (University of Reading) in connection with the proposed development at Church Lane, New Romney, Kent (National Grid Reference: TR 066 245) and during archaeological assessment of the site by Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (Figure 1). The Church Lane site at New Romney lies within the area that in the medieval period formed the harbour of New Romney, situated largely to the south and east of the medieval town. The harbour was silting up by the end of the 14th century and the townsfolk struggled throughout the 15th century to discourage silting by maintaining a flow of water off the marshland into the harbour via a system of sluices (Vollans, 1988). Thus the Church Lane site is underlain by alluvium, probably mainly supplied by way of surface drainage from nearby marshland and deposited in a semi-natural intertidal environment.

The soils of Romney Marsh were mapped in great detail by R.D Green (1968). He shows the site occupied by the Imperfectly Drained Phase of the Guldeford Soil Series, developed on calcareous marine alluvium. Green describes a profile in this phase as: Greyish brown; very firm silty clay with scattered shells passing down at 21" (0.53m) to yellowish brown silty clay with sandy silty laminae, passing down at 45" (1.14m) to grey rusty mottled sand with silty clay laminae, becoming bluish black below 70" (1.78m). It seems likely that in the context of the present site, the upper part of such a profile might represent silting since the medieval period, i.e. since the harbour ceased to function as an anchorage, while the lower, more sandy part might reflect more active water movement associated with tidal conditions and the active flow of water into the harbour through the system of sluices.

The main aim of the geoarchaeological investigations at the Church Lane site was to observe and interpret the sub-surface stratigraphy across the site, and to highlight sediments of potential geoarchaeological significance.



Figure 1: Location of Test Pits 1 and 2 at Church Lane, New Romney, Kent (NGR: TR 066 245). Original figure provided by SWAT.

## METHODS

Two test pits (Test Pits 1 and 2; Figure 1) were opened towards the northern end of the site and the lithostratigraphic sequences were described in the field (Tables 1 and 2) using standard procedures for recording unconsolidated and organic sediment, noting the physical properties (colour), composition: gravel (Grana glareosa; Gg), fine sand (Grana arenosa; Ga), silt (Argilla granosa; Ag) and clay (Argilla steatoides); inclusions (e.g. organic remains, artefacts); and unit boundaries e.g. sharp or diffuse (Tröels-Smith, 1955).

## RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LITHOSTRATIGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

The Church Lane lithostratigraphic sequences resemble quite closely the soil profile described by Green (1968) in the Guldeford Soil Series. In both the Church Lane sequences the upper part of the sequence includes evidence of pedological processes, including mottling and root and worm penetration. Both sequences become more sandy downward and pass down from oxidised (grey-brown) to unoxidised (blue grey) sediment at levels of 1.3m bgs (Test Pit 1) and 1.6m bgs (Test Pit 2) (cf 1.78m bgs in profile described by Green 1968). In Test Pit 2 articulated bivalve shells (cf *Scrobicularia plana*) were present indicating deposition in intertidal conditions. Overall the lithostratigraphic evidence indicates progressive alluvial aggradation across the site with a transition from an intertidal sand/mud flat environment to terrestrial conditions. No artefacts were observed either in the measured sections or in the spoil arising from the Test Pits, and apart from Mollusca, there were no visible organic remains.

**Table 1: Lithostratigraphic description of Test Pit 1, Church Lane, New Romney**

Depth (m bgs)	Composition
0.00 to 0.35	As2 Ag1 Ga1; dark brown sandy silty clay topsoil with modern root material. Diffuse contact in to:
0.35 to 1.30	Ag2 Ga1 As1; grey brown sandy clayey silt with brown mottling; becoming sandier with depth (Ga2 Ag1 As1). Worm and root hollows throughout. Diffuse contact in to:
1.30 to 1.40	Ag2 Ga2; blue grey sand and silt.

**Table 2: Lithostratigraphic description of Test Pit 2, Church Lane, New Romney**

Depth (m bgs)	Composition
0.00 to 1.60	Ag2 Ga1 As1; grey brown clayey sandy silt with frequent Mollusca (mostly whole gastropods). Some brown mottling. Diffuse contact in to:
1.60 to 2.30	Ag2 Ga2; blue grey silt and sand going in to Ga3 Ag1 silty sand. Frequent articulated bivalves (mostly cf. <i>Scrobicularia plana</i> ).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence observed and recorded in the Test Pits and given the proposed extent of ground disturbance, there is no reason to recommend any further geoarchaeological investigation of the site.



## REFERENCES

Green, R.D. (1968) *Soils of Romney Marsh*. Soil Survey of Great Britain: England and Wales. Bulletin No. 4. Harpenden.

Trøels-Smith, J. (1955) Karakterisering af løse jordarter (Characterisation of unconsolidated sediments), *Danm. Geol. Unders.*, **Ser IV 3**, 73.

Vollans, E. (1988) New Romney and the 'river of Newenden' in the later Middle Ages. In: Eddison, J. and Green, C. (eds) *Romney Marsh: Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation*. Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, Monograph No. 24. Oxford.

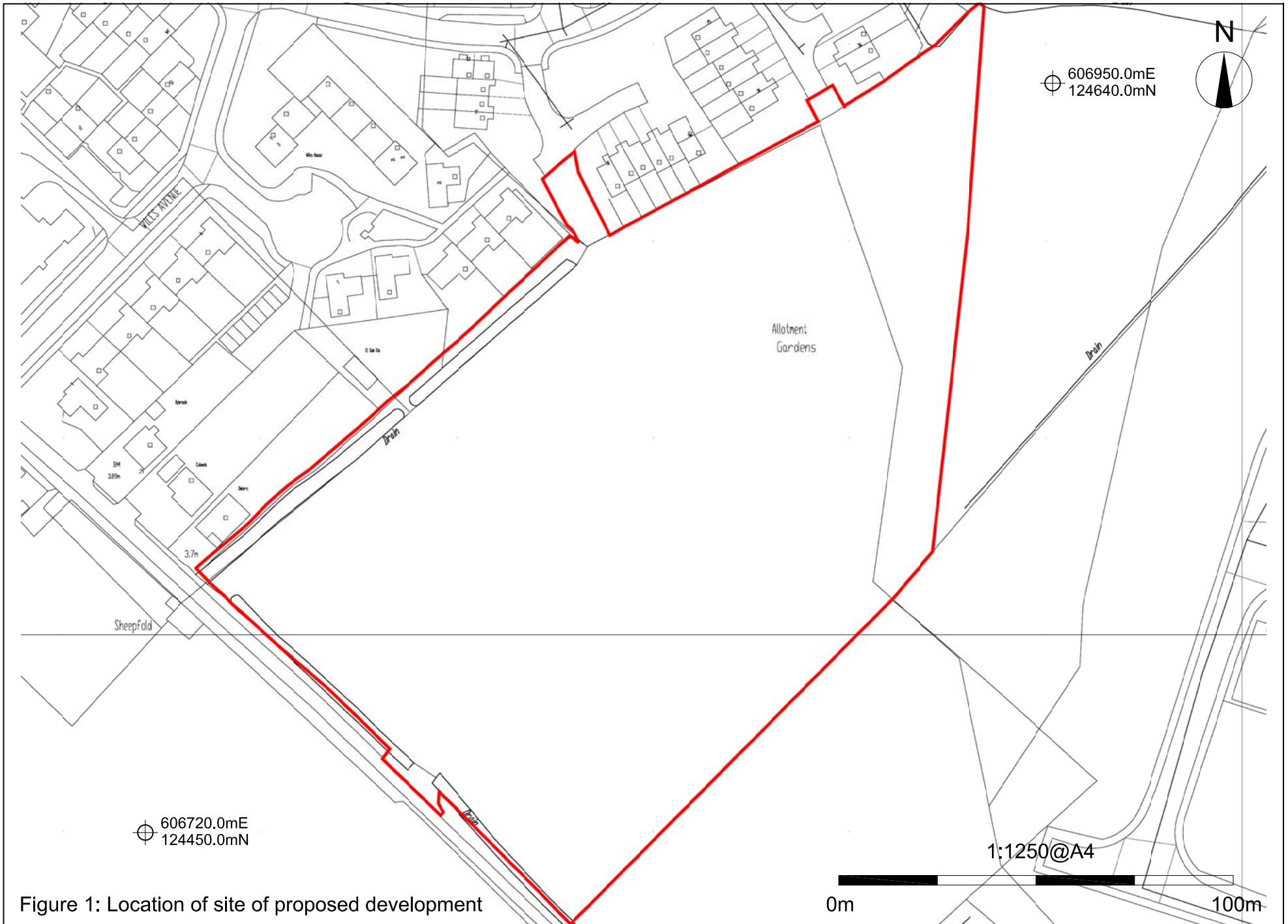


Figure 1: Location of site of proposed development



Figure 2: Location of archaeological tests pits overlain on proposed development plan