

# Archaeological Monitoring of Land at 22 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent

NGR: 575412 155434



Planning application MA/13/0941  
Report for Chartway Group Ltd

## **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

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# Archaeological Monitoring of Land at 22 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent

Date of report: 02/07/14



**Plate 1. Aerial view showing the site prior to development.**

**(GoogleEarth 7/9/2013, eye alt 224m).**

## **1.0 Summary**

1.1. From 24<sup>th</sup> March to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a new residential scheme comprising 37 flats, associated car parking and cycle storage at the site of 22 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone in Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 2).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of Chartway Group Ltd.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the machine reduction of the site and deep foundation pads (Plates 2-5).

The archaeological work was undertaken in three phases.

Phase 1: Site reduction (Plates 2-3).

Phase 2: Deep foundation pads (Plate 5).

Phase 3: Services trenches that were to connect to the existing services of the adjacent road were also watched.

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

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is MA/13/0941.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was highlighted in the KCC Specification the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Planning Background**

Planning application MA/13/0941 was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Medway Council. KCC Conservation Group on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition (17) was attached to the planning consent:

*The developer shall arrange for 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. No works shall start on site until a written programme and specification for the work has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: to enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest.*

### **3.0 Schedule of Visits**

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA from SWAT Archaeology monitored the excavation works on 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, April, and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

### **4.0 Aims and Objectives**

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

*'contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks' (KCC 2011)*

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

4.3. 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 site is located at 22 Tonbridge Road which in 1960 had a large detached house fronting onto Tonbridge Road which forms the southern boundary of the site (GoogleEarth 1960). The site is rectangular in shape, aligned roughly north to south perpendicular to Tonbridge Road. Measuring 66m on its longest side and about 30m wide, it covers an area of about 1,980 sq m. The current ground levels are between 49.10mOD and 49.60mOD with a gradual decline towards the east in the direction of the River Medway.

5.2 The British Geological Survey (1990, sheet 288 Maidstone) shows the site as lying on the eastern limits of an extensive area of Lower Cretaceous Hythe Beds which form the natural geology. The geology revealed on site (Plate 6) was a yellow cream sandy gravel- in some areas yellow orange- overlaid by a thick (45-48cm) layer of dark brown sandy gravel topped by a layer (22-27cm) of dark brown black sandy silty clay.

### 5.3 Archaeological Data

The Kent Historic Towns Survey identifies Maidstone as being of pre-Conquest origin. However, the Maidstone area was a focus of Roman activity with numerous Roman buildings identified. These include a Roman building at the Mount c. 850m to the north-east of the site (TQ 75 NE 28). Another Roman building about c.500m to the south-west of the site is located at the junction of Bower Lane and Florence Road (TQ 75 NE 38). The location of these building may suggest a river crossing in the vicinity of the site and Tonbridge Road, located on the southern boundary of the site may be on the line of a Roman road serving the Villa Estates of East Farleigh and Teston and beyond. To the south of the development site there could be a Roman cemetery as postulated by Beal Poste in 1859 (TQ 75 NE 32). Earlier archaeological activity is to be found in the vicinity of St Peter's Church some 250m north-east of the site where an archaeological investigation revealed a ditch with a probable Bronze Age date (TR 75 NE 388).

## 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 any revealed subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out in three phases according to the needs of the building contractors.

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

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

6.6. 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.

6.7. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and the methodology itemised in the Archaeological Watching Brief Specification produced by the Heritage Conservation Group, KCC (2011).

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 General**

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered.

## **8.0 Finds**

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

## **9.0 Discussion**

The Watching Brief phase of works on the site included watching the tarmac car park surface and the upper layers of the subsoil being removed by a 360 machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket which was basically an area strip down to the subsoil. No archaeology was revealed at this stage. Subsequent work was to dig deep trenches to allow the substantial concrete footings to be constructed (Plates 3-5).

## **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 Chartway Group for commissioning the works.

Dr Paul Wilkinson, FRSA., MIfA

## References

HER data (KCC 2014)

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

KCC (2011) Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent

### APPENDIX 1

### Kent County Council HER summary form

<b>Site Name:</b> Land at 22 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent	
<b>Site Address:</b>  See above	
<b>Summary:</b>  An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out from 24 <sup>th</sup> March to 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2014 on the above site. No archaeological remains were revealed.	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Maidstone	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> 575412 155434  <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)</b>	



<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b>	
Watching Brief	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 24/03/14- 19/05/14	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Geology:</b> Sandy Gravel	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b>	
Archaeological Monitoring of Land at 22 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent.	
P. Wilkinson	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>	
n/a	
<b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> P Wilkinson	<b>Date:</b> 02/07/14

## Plates



**Plate 2. Phase 1, view of the site after tarmac and part subsoil strip (looking NNE)**





**Plate 3. Phase 1. Ground reduction on west side of site (looking NNW)**



**Plate 4. View of site showing reduced level**





**Plate 5. Phase 2. View of deep footings (looking east)**



**Plate 6. View of exposed geology in deep footings (looking NNW)**



Tonbridge Road

Maidstone

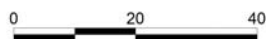
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Scale 1:1250

Supplied By: National Map Centre Kent

Serial number: 001148404

Plot Centre Coordinates: 575412, 155434

**Figure 1**  
**OS Licence 100039**



