

Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent

NGR: 599033 141131



Planning application 08/01503/AS
Report for Persimmon Homes Ltd

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent

Date of report: 02/10/14



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

(GoogleEarth 7/9/2013, eye alt 774m).

1.0 Summary

1.1. From 30th October 2013 to 18th September 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 52 houses, associated car parking at the site of Knoll Lane, Ashford in Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 2).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of Persimmon Homes Ltd.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the machine reduction of for access roads, house foundations and drainage (Plates 2-6).

The archaeological work was undertaken in three phases.

Phase 1: Services trenches that were to connect to the existing services of the adjacent road were watched (Plate 4)

Phase 2: Road reduction and construction (Plates 5-6).

Phase 3: House foundations (Plate 2).

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 08/01503/AS.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was highlighted in the KCC Specification and the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment by SWAT Archaeology (2010) the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning application 08/01503/AS was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Ashford Council whereby 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 (12) was attached to the planning consent:

No development 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 programme and specification and timetable that has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

3.0 Schedule of Visits

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA from SWAT Archaeology monitored the excavation works on 29th, 30th Oct 2013, 7th, 8th August, 10th, 17th, 18th September 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 2007)

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 Archaeological record, both in and around Ashford is diverse and comprises of stone tools dating from one of the earliest phases of human activity (the Lower Palaeolithic) through to the post-medieval and industrial periods. Ashford is situated on both sides of the River Great Stour. The proposed development site is situated to the east of Knoll Lane, on grassland, in the parish of Singleton (which forms part of the south western environs of Ashford). Its geographic and topographic location is within a landscape that has been the focus of hunting, trade, communication and farming since the Mesolithic.

5.2 The prehistoric period around Ashford is comparable with traditional patterns observed elsewhere along the River Stour valley.

Ashford is the tentative find-spot for two Lower Palaeolithic hand-axes (Wymer 1995) and excavations at Westhawk Farm, near Kingsnorth (2km south east of the proposed development) produced material from this period (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008). The Portable Antiquities Scheme also records a Lower Palaeolithic hand-axe from the Ashford area (PAS ID: KENT5277). Excavations at Park Farm also at Kingsnorth recorded trace elements dating from the Upper Palaeolithic (Hicks 1993).

5.3 The Mesolithic period reflects a society of hunter-gatherers active after the last Ice Age. The archaeological investigations at Westhawk Farm (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008) and Park Farm also produced lithic material from this period (Hicks 1993).

5.4 The Neolithic, the beginning of a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry, is also represented (by a flint assemblage) at Park Farm (Hicks 1993) and at Brisley Farm (c.400m to the south of the Knoll Lane site) by a series of field boundaries and artefacts (Archaeology South East).

5.5 The Bronze Age (BA), a period of large migrations from the continent and more complex social developments on a domestic, industrial and ceremonial level is also represented in the Ashford area by sporadic features and artefacts. To the north of Ashford, situated between Kennington and Wye are numerous find spots of Prehistoric tools, pottery and traces of settlement (Cotter, Macpherson-Grant and Savage 1993). The excavations at Westhawk Farm (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008) revealed a Mid to Late Bronze Age field system and material and features dating from the late Bronze Age have also been recorded 3km to the east of the Knoll Lane site at Westbrook Farm (Rady 1992). Field boundaries and other features have also been unearthed at Brisley Farm (HER Ref: TQ94 SE162).

5.6 The Kent HER has one record of Iron Age archaeology within the assessment area, at Brisley Farm (HER Ref: TQ94 SE158). Excavations revealed an extensive field system with a settlement and related cemetery. Archaeology from this period has also been noted at Westbrook Farm (Rady 1992). When dealing with the later Iron Age one should consider that very early imported Roman pottery found on archaeological sites usually indicates a Late, Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) presence and Park Farm has produced just such an assemblage.

5.7 A major Roman roadside settlement was discovered at Westhawk Farm. This settlements' alignment (NE-SW) was dictated by the Roman road from Canterbury to the Weald, probably established soon after the mid-1st century AD. A second road, from Lympne, formed a junction with the first, around which developed the settlement, perhaps 15 hectares in extent (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008). Additionally, the course of the Roman Road (part of which is the B2067) that enters Ashford at Kingsnorth from the south east, before disappearing, may pass within 150 metres south of the development site.

5.8 The modern town of Ashford retains a lot of its medieval character through the presence of numerous extant streets and churches. The Kent HER has several records within the assessment area. Records TQ94 SE1, 24 and 74 all allude to Singleton Manor House and moat. HER Ref: TQ94 SE77 refers to a barn associated with the above Manor. Other Medieval features within the assessment area include a track way, field system and pottery assemblage at John Wesley School (HER Ref: TQ94 SE157 and 158).

5.9 The topography of the site comprises of an area of 3.2 hectares of grassland, situated on a gentle north-facing slope at a height of 60-50 OD. This area has, on occasion, been used for grazing and informal recreation. The northern boundary abuts the rear gardens of existing housing separated by a tree-lined hedgerow. The north east boundary is marked by Knoll Lane. The south eastern side is marked by Cuckoo Lane (from the junction with Knoll Lane to the junction with Wesley School Road). Wesley School Road then forms the southern boundary.

5.10 The British Geological Survey indicated the geology is of Weald Clay. The geology revealed on site was a medium brown sandy silty clay with no inclusions (Plate 4).

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 (2007).

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 turf 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 foundation trenches, drainage and service runs (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 Persimmon Homes Ltd for commissioning the works.

Dr Paul Wilkinson, FRSA., MIIfA

References

HER data (KCC 2010)

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

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Booth P, Bingham A-M and Lawrence S. 2008: *The Roman Roadside settlement at Westhawk Farm, Ashford, Kent: excavations 1998-9*. Oxford Monographs 2, Oxford Archaeology

Cotter J, Machpherson-Grant N and Savage, A. 1993: *River Stour, near Kennington, Ashford*. Canterbury's Archaeology 1992-1993. pp. 43-45. 17th Annual Report. CAT

Hicks M. 1993: *Park Farm, Ashford*. Canterbury's Archaeology 1992-1993. pp. 41-42. 17th Annual Report. CAT

Rady J. 1992: *Waterbrook Farm, Ashford*. Canterbury's Archaeology 1991-1992. pp. 32-34. 16th Annual Report, CAT

Wymer J. 1999: *The Lower Palaeolithic of Britain*, Vols 1 & 2. Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage.

APPENDIX 1

Kent County Council HER summary form

Site Name: Land at Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent	
Site Address: See above	
Summary: An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out from 30 th Oct 2013 to 18 th September 2014 on the above site. No archaeological remains were revealed.	
District/Unitary: Maidstone	Parish:
Period(s):	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): 599033 1411131 (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Watching Brief	
Date of Recording: 39/10/13- 18/09/14	
Unit undertaking recording: SWAT Archaeology	
Geology: Weald Clay	
Title and author of accompanying report: Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Knowl Lane, Ashford, Kent. P. Wilkinson	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) n/a (cont. on attached sheet)	
Location of archive/finds: SWAT Archaeology	
Contact at Unit: P Wilkinson	Date: 02/10/14

Plates



Plate 2. View of foundation trenches (looking NNE)



Plate 3. Ground reduction and foundation trenches (looking NE)



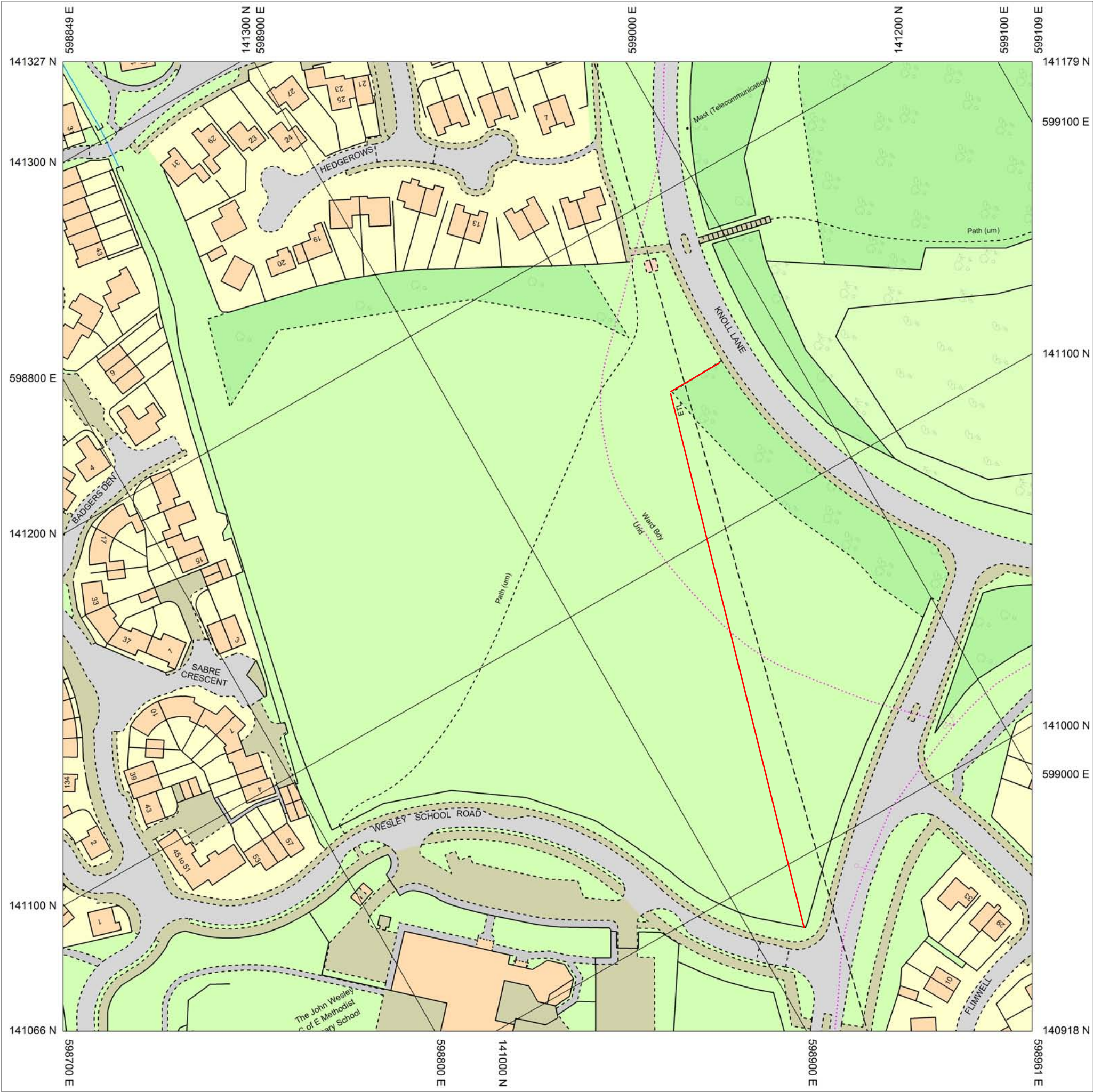
Plate 4. Service trenches



Plate 5. View of road construction (looking SW)



Plate 6. View of road construction (looking NE)



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The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.



Scale 1:1250

Supplied By: National Map Centre Kent

Serial number: 001148394

Plot Centre Coordinates: 598905, 141122

Knoll Lane

Ashford

Figure 1.
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