

Archaeological Monitoring of land at Little Blackhall, Blackhall Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent

NGR: 554237 155378



Planning application SE/13/01452/HOUSE
Report for Offset Architects

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Archaeological Monitoring of land at Little Blackhall, Blackhall Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent

Date of report: 22/10/14



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

(GoogleEarth 01/01/2008, eye alt 387m).

1.0 Summary

1.1. On the 1st October 2014 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a triple garage at Little Blackhall, Blackhall Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 1).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of Offset Architects.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the stripping of the site (Phase 1) and the machine excavation of the foundation trenches (Plates 4-5). The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Stripping of topsoil.

Phase 2: Foundation trenches and service connections.

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 SE/13/01452/HOUSE.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was highlighted in the KCC correspondence of the site being associated with the medieval town of Sevenoaks and the proximity to the important medieval park and estate of Knole Park the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

A planning application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Sevenoaks District 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 (8) was attached to the planning consent:

(8) No development shall take place until the applicant, 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 programme and specification which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To conserve the significance of the heritage asset as supported by the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA from SWAT Archaeology monitored the excavation works on 1st October 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 2014)

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 to the east of Sevenoaks. The site is located on grounds to the north of Knole Park Golf Course and just to the south-west of Knole House and Estate. The building works watched were the topsoil strip followed by machining of foundation trenches to a depth of 1.00-1.05m and connection with existing services (Plates 2-6).

5.2 The British Geological Survey (1: 50.000 website) shows the site as lying on an extensive area of Folkestone Formation which forms the natural geology. The geology revealed on site (Plate 4) was a natural geology of sandy clayey gravel overlaid by a strata of dull brown orange sandy clayey gravel overlaid by a thin (20cm) layer of dark brown sandy silty topsoil.

5.3 Archaeological Data

Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer KCC highlights the possibility of medieval remains associated with the nearby Knole House and Estate (Plate 1). In addition Sevenoaks could have medieval origins that may have left remains in the vicinity of the development.

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 one phase 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 (2014).

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 strip of topsoil, the digging of the foundation trenches (Plates 2-5), and connection to existing services (Plate 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 Claire Iqbal from Offset Architects 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 (2014) Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent

APPENDIX 1

Kent County Council HER summary form

Site Name: Land at Little Blackhall, Blackhall Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent	
Site Address: See above	
Summary: An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on 01/10/14 on the above site. No archaeological remains were revealed.	
District/Unitary: Sevenoaks	Parish:
Period(s):	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): 554237 155378 (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Watching Brief	
Date of Recording: 01/10/14	
Unit undertaking recording: SWAT Archaeology	
Geology: Folkestone Formation	
Title and author of accompanying report: Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Little Blackhall, Blackhall Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent. P. Wilkinson	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) n/a <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds: SWAT Archaeology	
Contact at Unit: P Wilkinson	Date: 22/10/14

Plates



Plate 2. View of the site after topsoil strip and cutting trenches (looking north-east)



Plate 3. View of the site after topsoil strip and cutting of trenches (looking west)



Plate 4. Trenches being excavated (looking south)



Plate 5. View of site showing service connections (looking south-west)



Plate 6. View of site showing trench and geology (looking south)