

Archaeological Watching Brief of Land at  
Old Kent Barn, Court Street,  
St Nicholas at Wade, Kent



Date of Report: 22/07/2014

NGR 626475 166750  
Site Code: OLD-WB-14  
(Planning Application F/TH/13/0258)

Report for  
Mr J Rodgers

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Plate 1. Area of Investigation (circled in red). Google Earth, 7/9/2013 eye elevation 179m.

# **Archaeological Watching Brief at Old Kent Barn, Court Road, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent**

NGR 626475 166759  
Site Code: OLD/WB/14

## **1. SUMMARY**

*1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief of land behind Old Kent Barn, Court Road, St. Nicholas at Wade in Kent. A planning application (F/TH/13/0258) for planning permission for the erection of two single storey outbuildings was submitted to Thanet Council whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council.*

*1.2 The Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained throughout the programme of ground reduction and excavation (Plates 2-4). No archaeological features were revealed during the ground works. The Archaeological Watching Brief has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the KCC Specification.*

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr J Rodgers to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The watching brief was carried out from 18<sup>th</sup> March to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The area watched is shown on Fig. 1.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

3.1 The proposed development site is located to the east of St Nicholas Court Farm and centred NGR 626475 166750. The site is on high ground overlooking the relict Wantsum Channel to the west and close to a solar farm to the west (SWAT Archaeology 2011). The proposed development area is the turfed rear garden of the property known as the Old Kent Barn (Fig. 1) and bounded to the south by Court Road, to the east by Stuart Lane, and just beyond to the east the church of St Nicholas. The 13th-century parish church of St Nicholas, after which the parish is named, was a chapel of ease for St Mary's church at Reculver. The first rector is recorded as Adam de Brancaster in 1294. Built in flint, the church houses some fine 16th-century brasses, a carved oak pulpit dated 1615, and a coat of arms of King George III. The parish has twice been enlarged, firstly in medieval times, when it was separated from the parish of Reculver and joined with the little-known chapelry of Sarre in 1310, and again in

the mid-16th century, when it was joined with the parish of St. Giles, Sarre. The benefice is currently part of the Wantsum Group of Parishes.

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, (1:50,000) the site has Bedrock Geology of Margate Chalk Member-Chalk with Superficial Deposits of Head 2, Clay and Silt (Brickearth). The site averages 21.00m-22.00mOD.

Geology found on site was about 0.25m deep with topsoil (100) up to 0.25m thick and composed of a dark brown grey still sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks (marling) and carbon flecks, rare peg tile fragments and frequent small to large sub rounded and sub angular flints. The layer (101) below the topsoil was up to 0.15m thick and consisted of a pale to mid brown friable sandy clay silt with rare chalk flecks and rare small to medium sub angular and sub rounded flint and rare worked flint. This deposit sealed the natural drift deposit of Head Brickearth (102) which was a mid orange brown friable sandy clay silt with areas of degraded chalk from the Chalk bedrock below erupting through the context. This context natural also contained occasional small to medium nodular flints, including possibly Bullhead flints.

#### **4. PLANNING BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Local Planning Authority placed the following condition (6) on the planning consent:

*Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, 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 ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

#### **5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The KCC HER archive shows that there are extensive cropmarks in the surrounding fields including several ring ditches (TR 26 NE 174, TR 26 NE 26 & 27).

Archaeological work associated with the improvements to the A299 and the erection of agricultural buildings at St Nicholas Court Farm has revealed early Iron Age pottery, a Roman amphora (probably associated with a cremation burial), Roman pottery sherds, human skeletal remains and ditches and pits which may all suggest that a Romano-British settlement site existed in the vicinity.

HER entries include:

TR 26 NE 27

Crop marks of several ring ditches have been reported near St. Nicholas Court Farm. They are possibly the remains of Bronze Age barrows.

TR 26 NE 68

Three ring ditch crop mark features and a linear feature have also been identified near to St Nicholas at Wade.

TR 26 NE 112

Cropmark of a ring ditch with an internal feature.

TR 26 NE 162

A Mid Iron Age occupation site and an early Roman wall were found during work in advance of road development.

TR 26 NE 202

The remains of a Romano – British settlement were found at St Nicholas Court Farm. The possible site of a Roman villa. (TSMR Site 0304-1).

TR26 NE 240

A World War 11 pillbox formally located near Potten Street.

In September 2011 SWAT Archaeology conducted an Archaeological Watching Brief on the adjacent field to the west of St Nicholas Court Farm in advance of the construction of a ‘solar farm’. In Trench 1 a cremation group of Roman pots had been disturbed by the machine which had been fitted with a toothed ditching bucket. Although the KCC Specification specifies a toothless ditching bucket for the work on the inverter housing there is no such requirement for the cable trench runs. The cremation group had been so disturbed that one vessel and its contents (Cremation 2) were on the spoil heap and the other (Cremation 1) had about 70% of its pot truncated. The remains of the two pots were collected and excavation of the remainder of the surviving pot were photographed and drawn prior to removal.

The pottery was analysed by the pottery specialist and Cremation 1 is dated to between c.50-75 AD and Cremation 2 to between c.75-100 AD.

Subsequently 20 worked flints were retrieved from trench runs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in a reasonably tight distribution pattern. The lithic specialist reports that:

“This assemblage comprised twenty pieces of worked flint, with most contexts producing only a single example. One round ‘thumbnail’ scraper of likely Beaker Period/Early Bronze Age date was recovered from Trench 1. [101], but patination suggests it is likely to be residual in that context. Most of the other flintwork was unpatinated, as expected in areas of brickearth geology, but showed damage from the processes of natural abrasion, ploughing and perhaps trampling”. This suggests that any finds not derived from modern ploughsoil contexts had seen a degree of exposure prior to incorporation within their context, or perhaps derived from former ploughsoil contexts. Thumbnail scraper aside, many of the other tools and flakes were simple, expedient or sometimes crude pieces which would not be out of place in broadly

Bronze Age/Later Bronze Age (or later) assemblages. One small utilised flake from Trench 1 [102] and a knife from Trench 5 [501] could be of Mesolithic/Earlier Neolithic or Neolithic date, but a later date cannot be discounted” (SWAT Archaeology 2011).

## **6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2014) are 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 ground works of the proposed buildings.

## **7. METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the ground works. Stripping of topsoil prior to foundation trench excavation (Plate 4) was watched (Plates 2 & 3) but no archaeological features were exposed.

The area prior to excavation was scanned for finds by a SWAT Archaeology metal detectorist, during and after excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 2 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket for removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of Paul Wilkinson, an experienced archaeologist. The area was subsequently inspected to identify any exposed features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features would have been 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.

No archaeology was revealed in the stripping or ground reduction..

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC Archaeological Specification (2014).

## **8. MONITORING**

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

## **9. RESULTS**

The archaeological watching brief failed to reveal any archaeological features.

## **10. FINDS**

No finds were retrieved.

## **11. DISCUSSION**

A uniform stratigraphic sequence was identified throughout the site consisting of the natural drift geology of Head Brickearth with areas of degraded chalk erupting through from the solid Chalk geology below.

No archaeological features were found cutting either this archaeological horizon of pale to mid grey brown and orange brown friable sandy clay silt or the natural Brickearth drift geology. Taking into account the archaeological features found during the Watching Brief of the solar array in 2011 to the west of the development site and cropmarks seen in the 2007 Google Earth image and listed in the HER, this area was undoubtedly a site of importance from at least the Bronze Age. The sites proximity to the adjacent church suggested the possibility of Anglo-Saxon or Medieval archaeological remains, but none were found.

Despite the lack of identifiable cut archaeological features, this watching brief has been successful in revealing a stratigraphic sequence throughout the site.

The archaeological watching brief has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. No archaeological activity was found during the watching brief which will inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site.

## **12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Mr J Rodgers for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council for her advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson undertook the fieldwork, assisted in the field by Dan Quintain. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed and the report written by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

22/07/2014



## 13. REFERENCES

### Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2014) *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent*.

Wilkinson P. (Sept 2011) *Archaeological Watching Brief of Land at St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Thanet, Kent*. Published document on [www.swatachaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatachaeology.co.uk) (2011).

Wilkinson P. (2013) *Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Thanet, Kent*. Published document on [www.swatachaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatachaeology.co.uk) (2013).

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2011) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

### Maps

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1929-1952)

### Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>



**Plate 2. View of topsoil strip (looking south-west)**



**Plate 3. View of topsoil strip (looking north-east)**



**Plate 4. View of ground reduction (looking north-west)**

**APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Old Kent Barn, Court Road, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent</i>	
<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>OLD/WB/14</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>As above</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land behind Old Kent Barn, Court Road, Kent. A planning application (F/TH/13/0258) for the construction of two outbuildings at the above site was submitted to Thanet District Council (TDC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Thanet District Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Watching Brief consisted of watching the ground reduction and excavation which encountered no archaeological features.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Thanet</i>	<b>Parish:</b> <i>St Nicholas</i>
<b>Period(s):</b> <b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 626475 166750</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Watching Brief</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>March 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 2014</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Head Brick earth</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Watching Brief at Old Kent Barn, Court Road, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>22/07/2014</i>



St Nicholas at Wade, Thanet

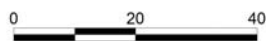
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The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.



Scale 1:1250

Supplied By: National Map Centre Kent

Serial number: 001145838

Plot Centre Coordinates: 626456, 166756

**Figure 1.**  
**Area watched inside red box**