

Archaeological Evaluation of Land No. 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster, Kent



NGR: 595709 172998

Site Code: MIN/EV/15

(Planning Application: 14/502944/FULL)

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Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| List of Figures..... | 3 |
| List of Plates..... | 3 |
| 1. Summary..... | 4 |
| 2. Introduction..... | 5 |
| 3. Site Description and Topography..... | 5 |
| 4. Planning Background..... | 5 |
| 5. Archaeological and Historical Background..... | 5 |
| 6. Aims and Objectives..... | 6 |
| 7. Methodology..... | 6 |
| 8. Monitoring..... | 6 |
| 9. Results..... | 7 |
| 10. Discussion..... | 7 |
| 11. Finds..... | 7 |
| 12. Conclusion..... | 7 |
| 13. Acknowledgements..... | 8 |
| 14. References..... | 8 |
| 15. KCC Summary Form..... | 9 |

List of Figures:

Figure 1 – Location of site

Figure 2 – Trench location plan

Figure 3- Plans and sections

List of Plates:

Plate 1 – Looking east at proposed development site

Plate 2 – Looking west at Trench 1

Plate 3 – Section 1

Plate 4 – Section 1

Plate 5 – Section 2

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NGR: 595709 172998

Site Code: MIN-EV-15

1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster, Sheppey in Kent. A Planning Application (14/502944/FULL) to develop this site with a two storey extension was submitted to Swale Borough Council, whereby Historic England advised that a Heritage and Archaeological statement be prepared as part of the application for Scheduled Monument Consent. In pre-determination of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource and in accordance with the provisions of National Planning Policy Framework - Section 12 Conservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment (2012), and Scheduled Monuments, of which the application site is one, as protected by Part I of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 a pre-determination evaluation is to be undertaken as provided for in designated areas by Part II of that Act (Class 7 Consent).

Guidance in Circular 11/95 states in paragraph 80:

80. Scheduled ancient monuments are protected by Part I of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, and investigation for archaeological purposes is provided for in designated areas by Part II of that Act. Where these provisions apply, their effect should not be duplicated by planning conditions (cf paragraphs 21-23 above), although authorities granting planning permission in such circumstances are advised to draw the attention of the applicant to the relevant provisions of the 1979 Act.

81. Where, however, planning permission is being granted for development which might affect a monument which has not been scheduled, or which might affect land in an area which is considered to be of archaeological interest but which has not been formally designated as such under section 33 of the 1979 Act, the local planning authority may wish to impose conditions designed to protect the monument or ensure that reasonable access is given to a nominated archaeologist - either to hold a "watching brief" during the construction period or specifically to carry out archaeological investigation and recording before or in the course of the permitted operations on the site.

As part of the determination of Scheduled Monument Consent, Historic England has requested that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation be undertaken under a Class 7 Consent. This document specifies a methodology (written scheme of investigation) for such an evaluation.

The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT Specification 23/09/2015) and in discussion with Rebecca Lambert, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. The results of the one evaluation trench revealed that archaeological features were not present. However a number of fresh pieces of Roman tile and roofing tiles-tegulae and imbrices were retrieved from Context (105).

The natural geology of London Clay with Flint was reached at an average depth of between 0.37m and 0.39m below the modern ground surface at 53.20mAOD.

The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Archaeological Specification.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Friday to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2015) and in discussion with Rebecca Lambert, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. The evaluation was carried out on 7th and 14th December 2015.

3. Site Description and Topography

The proposed development site is situated to the rear of No 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster in Sheppey, Kent. The overall area of development is about 36 sq metres. The site is generally flat at about 53.30m aOD.

The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay with Flint. The Superficial Geology is not recorded (BGS 2015). The geology revealed on site was the natural of Mid Brown Clay (102) overlaid by Mid Brown Clay with Flint (106) overlaid by a Dark Grey Loam (105) with numerous inclusions of Medieval Peg Tile, Roman building materials and Blue and White pottery sherds dating from the 19th century (Figure 3).

4. Planning Background

As part of the determination of Scheduled Monument Consent, Historic England has requested that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation be undertaken under a Class 7 Consent. The WSI document specifies a methodology (written scheme of investigation) for such an evaluation. SWAT. Archaeology therefore proposes to carry out an Archaeological Evaluation under a Class 7 Consent to ensure the proposed development does not impact on the archaeological horizon or features. The project will conform to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Dec 2014). The archaeological works are to be monitored by Historic England.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The application site lies within an area with known archaeology. Archaeological investigations (events) in the near vicinity include an archaeological excavation in 1983-1988 by Brian Philp on land to the north of the Minster Abbey where archaeological remains from the Late Bronze Age to the Post-medieval period were examined (Philp 1992). In 1993 twenty evaluation trenches were excavated by Canterbury Archaeological Trust to the north of the Abbey and revealed Prehistoric

archaeology and the remains of stone buildings possibly dating back to the 12th century (CAT 1995 year book). In addition various investigations by the Sheppey Archaeological Society in the vicinity of Falcon Gardens have taken place (TQ 97 SE 65 & 67).

The application site lies within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument of the Nunnery at Minster Abbey (National Heritage List No. 1012674). The Scheduled Monument includes the remains of the Benedictine nunnery of St Mary and St Sexburga and is a rare example of a pre-conquest nunnery which has survived comparatively well. Archaeological investigations have shown that archaeological remains are to be encountered across the site from both the Saxon nunnery and the later 12th century complex. The Grade 1 Listed church of St Mary and St Sexburga is also contained within the site and therefore the Scheduled Monument contains both buried archaeological remains and Listed standing buildings of National Importance and of the highest grade.

6. Aims and Objectives

The archaeological evaluation is being undertaken to investigate the presence or absence of any archaeological features, and assess the potential impact of development on the postulated archaeological resource.

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification (WSI) called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising one trench within the footprint of the proposed development. However, the location of the evaluation trench had to be moved to be adjacent to the proposed development area because the preferred area has been developed as a Children's Play Area. Because of the constraints of the site hand tools were used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to expose the natural geology and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the approved specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in **bold**. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC (Manual B), SWAT and ClfA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The evaluation has identified no archaeological features within the trench (Figure 3).

Trench 1

The plan and sections are recorded in Figure 3 (see also Plates 3-5). The trench lay on an NS alignment and measured approximately 4m by 1m.

Undisturbed natural geology **(102)** was identified across the trench as Mid Brown Clay, at a depth of approximately 0.80m (52.49mOD) below the present ground surface at 53.29m OD at the S and N ends of the trench.

The natural geology **(102)** was sealed by a layer of Mid Brown Clay with Flint **(106)** 0.26m thick. An layer of Dark Grey Loam **(105)** 0.22m thick, a thin layer of Gravel/Black Loam **(103/104)** and Black Loam Topsoil **(104)**.

10. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation at 3 Falcon Gardens has revealed no archaeological features but in the Dark Grey Loam (105) Roman building ceramics were retrieved suggesting the presence of possible Roman buildings in the vicinity- or the reuse of Roman building material by the medieval ecclesiastical builders of the nearby Abbey.

11. Finds

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Context 106 | Roman tegula fragments |
| Context 106 | Roman Imbrex fragments |
| Context 106 | Medieval roof tile fragments |
| Context 106 | Modern blue/white pottery sherds |

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site has revealed no archaeological features but has retrieved fragments of Roman building ceramics.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of topsoil **(104)**, a layer of Dark Grey Loam **(105)** sealing the subsoil **(106)** which overlay the natural geology of Mid Brown Clay **(102)**. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the Archaeological Specification.

13. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Rebecca Lambert, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. Illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The fieldwork was undertaken by Paul Wilkinson and Peter Cichy and the project was managed and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCI(A).

14. References

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2014). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

SWAT Archaeology (December 2015) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation of land at 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster, Kent*

SWAT Archaeology (2015) Archaeological Desk based Assessment 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster, Kent

KCC Specification Manual Part B

KCC HER data 2015

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at 3 Falcon Gardens Minster Kent

SWAT Site Code: MIN/EV/15

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the proposed development site above.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed no archaeology but retrieved fragments of Roman building material.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 595709 172998

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: Dec 2015

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

Geology: Underlying geology is London Clay

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2015) Archaeological Evaluation at 3 Falcon Gardens, Minster, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 13/01/2016

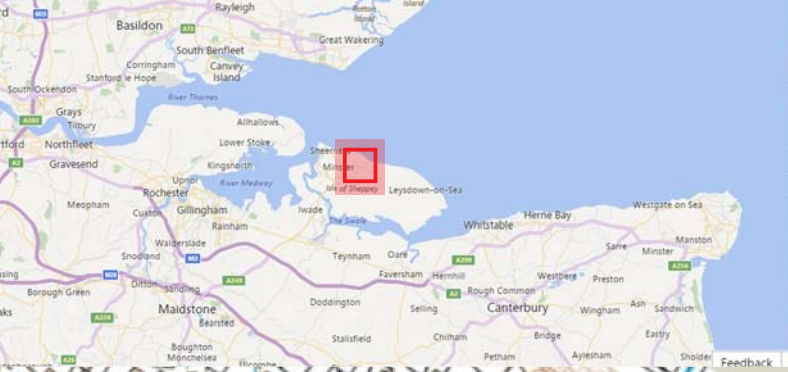
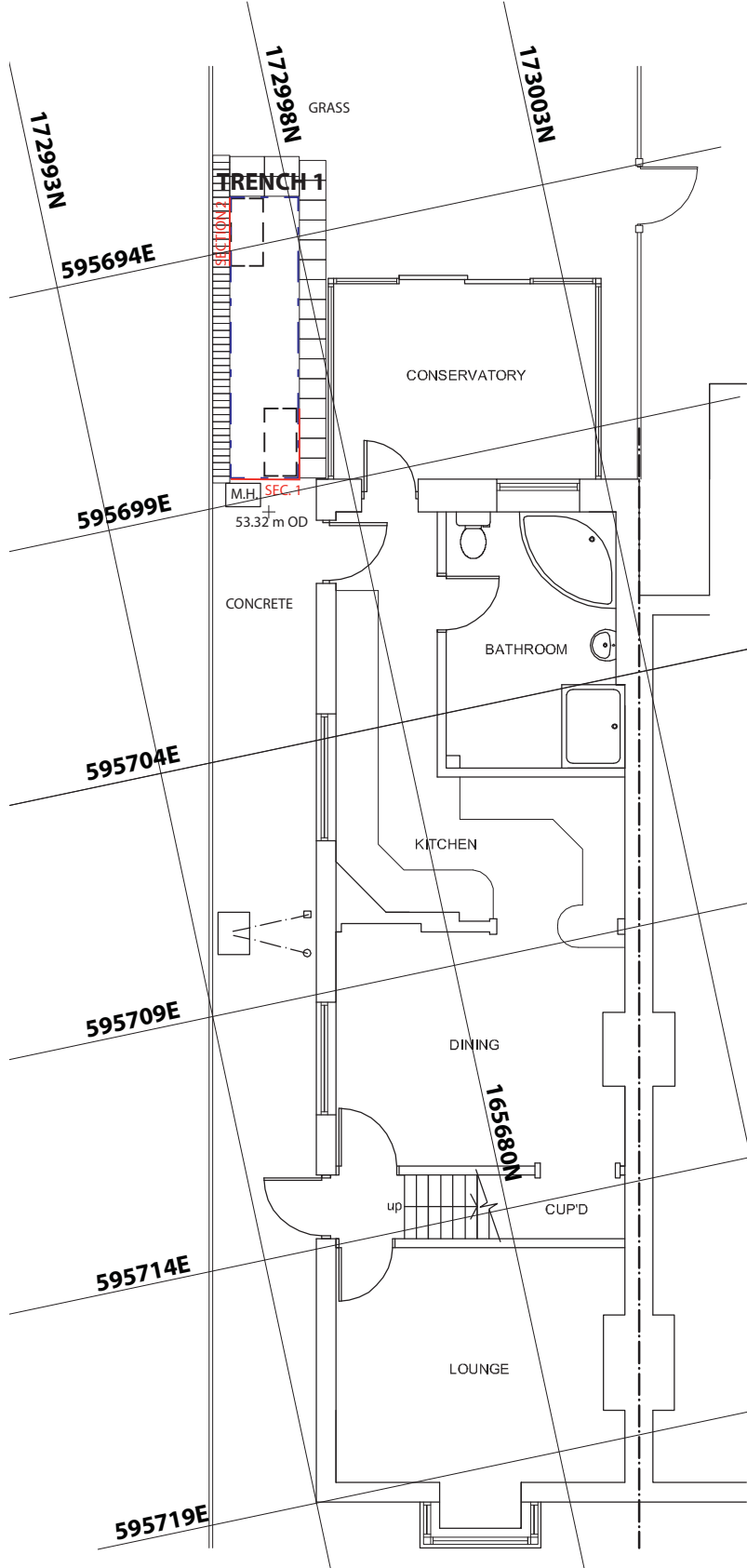


Figure 1: Site location map, sale 1:10000.

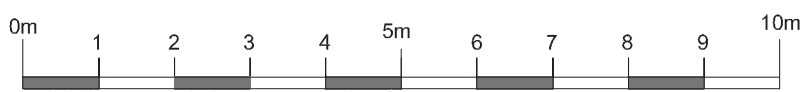


Figure 2: Trench location plan, scale 1:500.



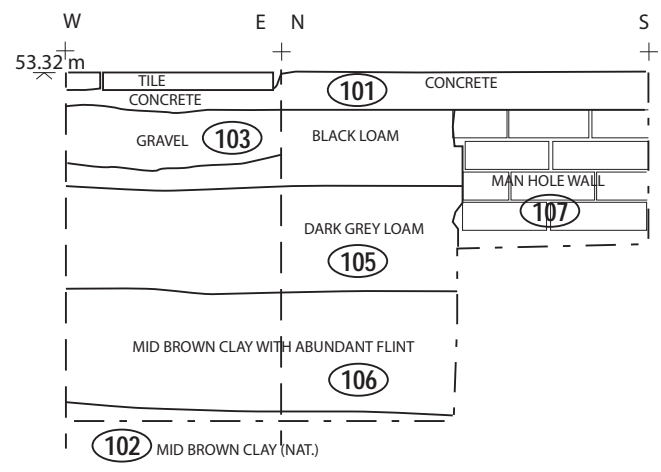


EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN 1:100



SCALE BAR 1:100

SECTION 1 1:20



SECTION 2 1:20

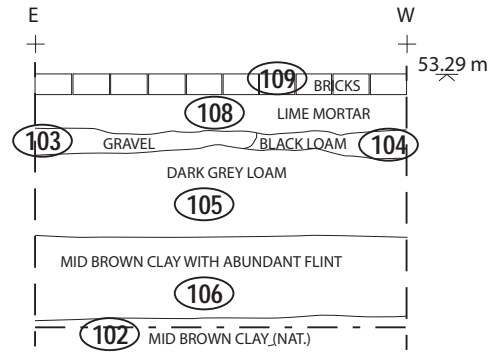


Figure 3: Plan and sections of Trench 1.



Plate 1: Looking east at development site



Plate 2: Looking west at Trench 1



Plate 3: Looking north at south facing part of Section 1



Plate 4: Looking east at west facing part of Section 1



Plate 5: Looking south at Section 2