

Archaeological Watching Brief during ground works for construction of a new single storey rear and side extension at 14 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

Site Code SIT/WB/16



Report for Andy Evans
Date of report 04/05/2016

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Contents

1.0 SUMMARY.....	4
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	4
3.0 SCHEDULE OF VISITS.....	5
4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4.1 PROPOSED GROUNDWORKS.....	5
4.2 CONFIDENCE RATING.....	5
5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
6.0 METHODOLOGY.....	6
7.0 RESULTS.....	7
7.1 GENERAL.....	7
8.0 FINDS.....	7
9.0 DISCUSSION.....	7
10.0 CONCLUSION.....	7
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	7
REFERENCES.....	8
APPENDIX 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	8

Plate 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2013)

Plate 2. General view of site

Plate 3. Drainage connection

Plate 4. View of drain trenching

Plate 5. View of trenches

Plate 6. Cutting of foundation trenches

Plate 7. Foundation trenches

Plate 8-9. Foundation trenches

List of Figures

Figure 1. Site plan and location of area watched

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Archaeological Watching Brief during ground works for construction of a new single storey rear and side extension at 14 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

Site Code SIT/WB/16
NGR 592997 173237

Date of report: 04/05/2016



Plate 1. Aerial view of site (red target) showing the site prior to development.

(Google Earth 20/4/2015: Eye altitude 269m).

1. Abstract

1.1. On the 5th, 6th and 7th April 2016 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a side extension at 14 London Road, Sittingbourne in Kent. (Fig. 1 & Plates 1-9).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the owner.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the digging of the foundations for the extension.

The archaeological work was undertaken in one phase.

Phase 1: The digging of the foundations to about 0.90-1.00m below present ground level of about 18.00m AOD. (Plates 2-8)

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of archaeological activity. In particular, any evidence of archaeological activity associated with the known archaeological sites in the area including the adjacent Anglo-Saxon burial ground and the former Roman Road-Watling Street- that runs along the frontage of the property.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is 15/502282.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential has been highlighted by KCC Heritage Conservation the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The site is located to the side and rear of 14 London Road, Sittingbourne in Kent at OS grid reference NGR 592997 173237. The site is located on the north side of London Road and to the west of Sittingbourne town. The site is level at about 18.00 m AOD (Figure 1).

2.2 Planning Background

Planning application 15/502282 was submitted to Swale Borough Council the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition (3) 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 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.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson MIfA., SWAT Archaeology) and monitored the excavation works on the 5th, 6th 7th April 2016.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

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

“The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to knowledge of the early development of Sittingbourne and the location of Anglo-Saxon burial activity alongside the former Roman road known as Watling Street. The watching brief aims to record and investigate remains of archaeological significance that may be exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. (KCC 2016).

4.2. The ground works were to cut the foundation trenches of the rear and side extension (Plates 2-8).

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

4.4. 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 underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey website is Bedrock geology of Seaford Chalk-Chalk. Superficial Deposits are not recorded.

5.2. The application site consisted of an area of known important archaeological remains. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery (TQ 96 SW 14) was discovered in 1869 in a field known as the Rondeau Estate at Milton and just to the north of the development site.

Payne notes about 41 skeletons were found with grave goods in 1869-71 and 1879-80. The area is now built over.

The Blind Lane side of the site was dug first, and about 20 skeletons discovered, with an iron funnel-shaped shield-boss, a spearhead, knives, bronze buckles, a bronze armlet, an iron strike-a-light and an iron-gilt girdle ornament.

In 1879-80 - the Watling Street side was excavated and six other skeletons were found. Near the skull of one was a small black urn 4 inches high, and an iron instrument in the shape of a letter D, perhaps a padlock. The others were dug too carelessly for anything to be preserved. Ten more skeletons were later discovered.

One skeleton had with it 13 beads, the second a chain of links alternately bronze and iron, an "ear-ring" with 4 beads, and two silver needles with eyes. The third was a male skeleton with a shield-boss and two amber-coloured glass goblets. In the other graves were found a long iron sword, four spearheads, one javelin head, three knives, four bronze buckles and a pitcher of red clay.

The eastern and western parts of the Rondeau Estate were built without first removing the brick earth, so probably many skeletons remain undisturbed beneath the houses. Payne presented two skulls to the British Museum (Natural History); one was found with Anglo-Saxon weapons shield etc, the other with an Anglo-Saxon necklace.

These were probably from the Rondeau Estate site.

An Anglo-Saxon squat glass jar - amber coloured and undecorated, probably of 7th century date, was found in graves at the Rondeau Estate. It is now in the British Museum (BM 1883, 12-13, 596).

Three skeletons were found c. 1927, when petrol pumps were being fitted at a new garage, directly west of Gospel Hall.

It appears likely that further excavations immediately to the east would reveal more graves. The site lies south-east of the Saxon burial ground marked on the O.S.25" map.

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by KCC and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA: Dec 2014).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out according to the needs of the building contractors from 5th-7th April 2016.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket necessary to remove the soil down to formation level (Plates 2-8).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA).

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

6.7. 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.

6.8. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (CIfA: 2014), and methodology discussed on a number of occasions with the Principal Archaeological Officer KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 General

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site was deposits of silty clay (Brickearth) overlaid by paving slabs. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the soil which was swept with a Fisher CZ 3D metal detector.

7.2 The site is rectangular in shape and about 3m on the south side, the proposed extension area is shown within the red line on Figure 1.

7.3 The subsoil was a silty clay (Brickearth) and the site had been stripped of the paving slabs prior to the archaeological watching brief. The foundation trenches were about 1m deep at about 17.00m AOD and some earthenware drainage pipes and relict septic tank were encountered. The site produced no archaeological features or deposits or finds and no environmental potential was recognised on site.

8.0 Finds

No finds were retrieved.

9.0 Discussion

The development site is in an area of important archaeological potential. However, no archaeology and no graves were revealed on the development site.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the KCC Archaeological 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 Andy Evans for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

References

HER data (Historic England 2016)

CIfA (2014) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

KCC Archaeological Watching Brief (2016)

Appendix 1
Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at 14 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

SWAT Site Code: SIT/WB/16

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a new extension to an existing house whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 592997 173237

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: April 2016

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

Geology: Bedrock geology is Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2016) Archaeological Watching Brief on land at 14 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

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

See above

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 20/04/16



Plate 2. View of initial excavation of services



Plate 3. View of the site being tested for services (looking north-east)



Plate 4. View of the trench (looking north-east)



Plate 5. Exposing existing drain



Plate 5. View of the existing drainage connection (looking south-east)



Plate 6. Cutting of the foundation trenches on west side and brick septic tank (looking south)



Plate 7. View of south-west trenches (looking west)

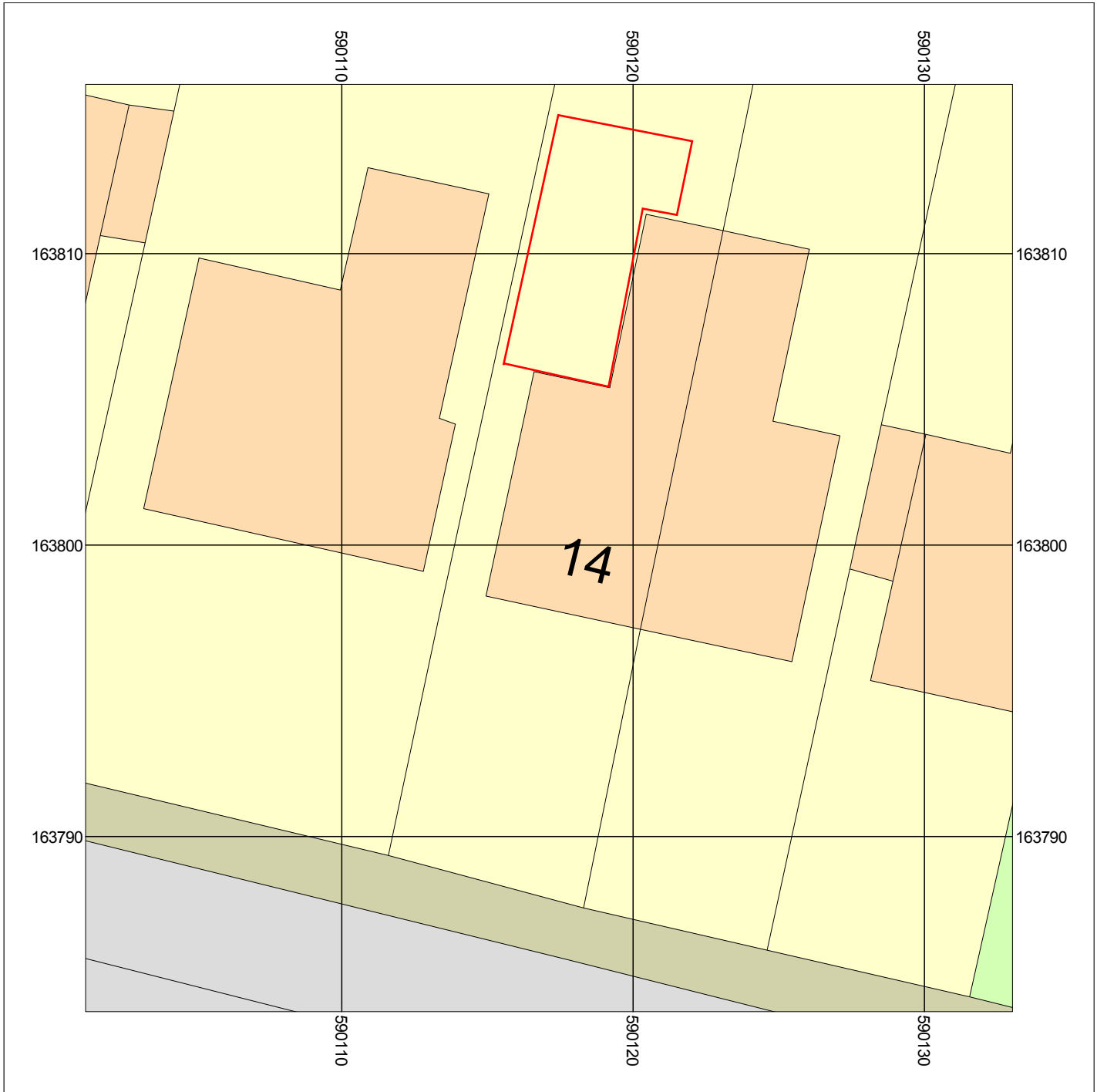


Plate 8. View of south east trench (looking south)



Plate 9. Foundation trenches completed (looking south)

Figure 1.
Area watched



14 London Road
Sittingbourne
ME10 1NA

Supplied by: National Map Centre
License number: 100031961
Produced: 14/02/2017
Serial number: 1798314

Plot centre co-ordinates: 590117,163800
Download file: londonroad.zip
Project name: swat1412