

# Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent

Site Code: CRAN/EV/18

NGR Site Centre: 604976 139289

Planning Application Number: 16/00053/AS



02 July 2018

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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## **Summary**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Alexandra Lawton-Bryant to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.*

*The fieldwork was carried out in February 2018 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 2018) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology. Despite the potential for archaeological remains and relatively good preservation conditions, no archaeological features were recorded.*

# Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Kent

NGR Site Centre: 604976 139289  
Site Code: CRAN/EV/18

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by the landowners to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Cranwell House, Mersham in Kent (**Figure 1**). A planning application (16/00053/AS) was approved by Ashford Borough Council (ABC) for the erection of one residential dwelling and access road next to Cranwell House.

1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to ABC, requested that the programme of works comprising an archaeological evaluation followed by appropriate mitigation measures, if considered necessary. This recommendation was subsequently added as a Condition (5) to the planning approval, which stated that;

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and following on from the evaluation has secured the implementation of:*

*1. Any safeguarding measures identified in the evaluation as necessary, to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or*

*2. Further archaeological investigation in accordance with a timetable which has previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

*Reason: To ensure appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of any development proposals and the subsequent mitigation of adverse impacts through preservation in situ or by record.*

(16/00053/AS. Condition 5)

1.1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in February 2018 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2018), prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Wendy Rogers, the Senior Archaeological Officer, at KCCHC.

## **1.2 Site Description and Topography**

1.2.1 The site is situated on the frontage of Church Road and close to the M20 and the Eurostar Terminus. The village of Sevington is situated to the north west and the village of Brabourne Lees is to the east. The OS location is NGR 604976 139289.

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Society (BGS), the site lies on Bedrock Geology of Weald Clay Formation- Mudstone. The Superficial Deposits are not recorded. Ground levels are about 49m aOD.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 Details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by SWAT Archaeology (2018) and include a medieval metal working site about 250m to the east (TR 03 NE 64). 100m to the south west there is recorded an outfarm west of west of Goodrich Cottage (MKE 88724) and 75m to the north east was the site of Bridge House Farm.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Specific Aims (SWAT 2018)**

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification. These were to;  
*'establish or otherwise the presence of any potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development. The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for Medieval activity and also any other Prehistoric, Roman and later archaeological activity'. The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and will commence with evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include further detailed archaeological excavation, or an archaeological watching brief during construction work or an engineering solution to any preservation in situ requirements'.*

(SWAT Archaeology 2018: 6.2)

## **3.2 General Aims**

3.2.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2018) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2017).

### **4.2 Fieldwork**

4.2.1 A total of two evaluation trenches were proposed within the extents of the Site. Trench 1 (15m x 1.8m) on the proposed footprint of the building and Trench 2 (15m x 1.8m) on the proposed access road and drive (Figure 1).

4.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon and/or the natural geology, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

4.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were 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. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

### **4.3 Recording**

4.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.

4.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

4.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 A total of two evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

### **5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence**

5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising topsoil sealing an intact subsoil which overlay the natural clay geology.

5.2.2 The topsoil generally consisted of mid grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones, topped with grass, overlying the subsoil which consisted of light to mid orange brown silt clay. Natural geology comprised relatively soft light orange brown silty clay.

5.2.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figure 1 provide a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-3 include selected site photographs.

### **5.3 Overview**

5.3.1 No archaeological features or finds were recorded within any of the trenches.

## **6 FINDS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 No finds were retrieved.



## **7 DISCUSSION**

### **7.1 Archaeological Narrative**

7.1.1 Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains no archaeological features were recorded within any of the two trenches.

7.1.2 The presence of the subsoil would suggest that preservation levels are relatively high and that if archaeological remains were present then they would have suffered minimal disturbance.

### **7.2 Conclusions**

7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Development proposals are unlikely to impact on archaeological remains. Further archaeological mitigation, should it be necessary, will need to be determined in consultation with the Kent County Council and local planning authority.

7.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

## **8 ARCHIVE**

### **8.1 General**

8.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

8.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

9.1.1 SWAT would like to thank Alexandra Lawton-Bryant for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

9.1.2 Paul Wilkinson supervised the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. David Britchfield (MCIfA) produced the draft text for this report which was edited by Dr. Paul Wilkinson (MCIfA).

## 10 REFERENCES

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## 11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1			
Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Ground Level: 49.20m aOD			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
101	Mid brown silty sandy clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.12
102	Light to mid brown silt clay with rare rounded stones	Subsoil	0.12-0.60
103	Light grey brown silty clay	Natural	0.60+

Trench 2			
Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Ground Level: 49.00m aOD			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
201	Mid brown silty sandy clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.11
202	Light to mid brown silt clay with rare rounded stones	Subsoil	0.11-0.55
203	Light grey brown silty clay	Natural	0.55+

## 12 APPENDIX 2 – KCC HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** CRAN/EV/18

**Site Address:** As above

**Summary:**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by the landowner to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.*

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**District/Unitary:** Ashford Borough Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 604976 139289

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** Feb 2018

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

**Geology:** Wealden Clay

**Title and author of accompanying report:** SWAT Archaeology (2018) Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Cranwell House, The Forstal, Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent

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

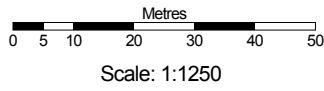
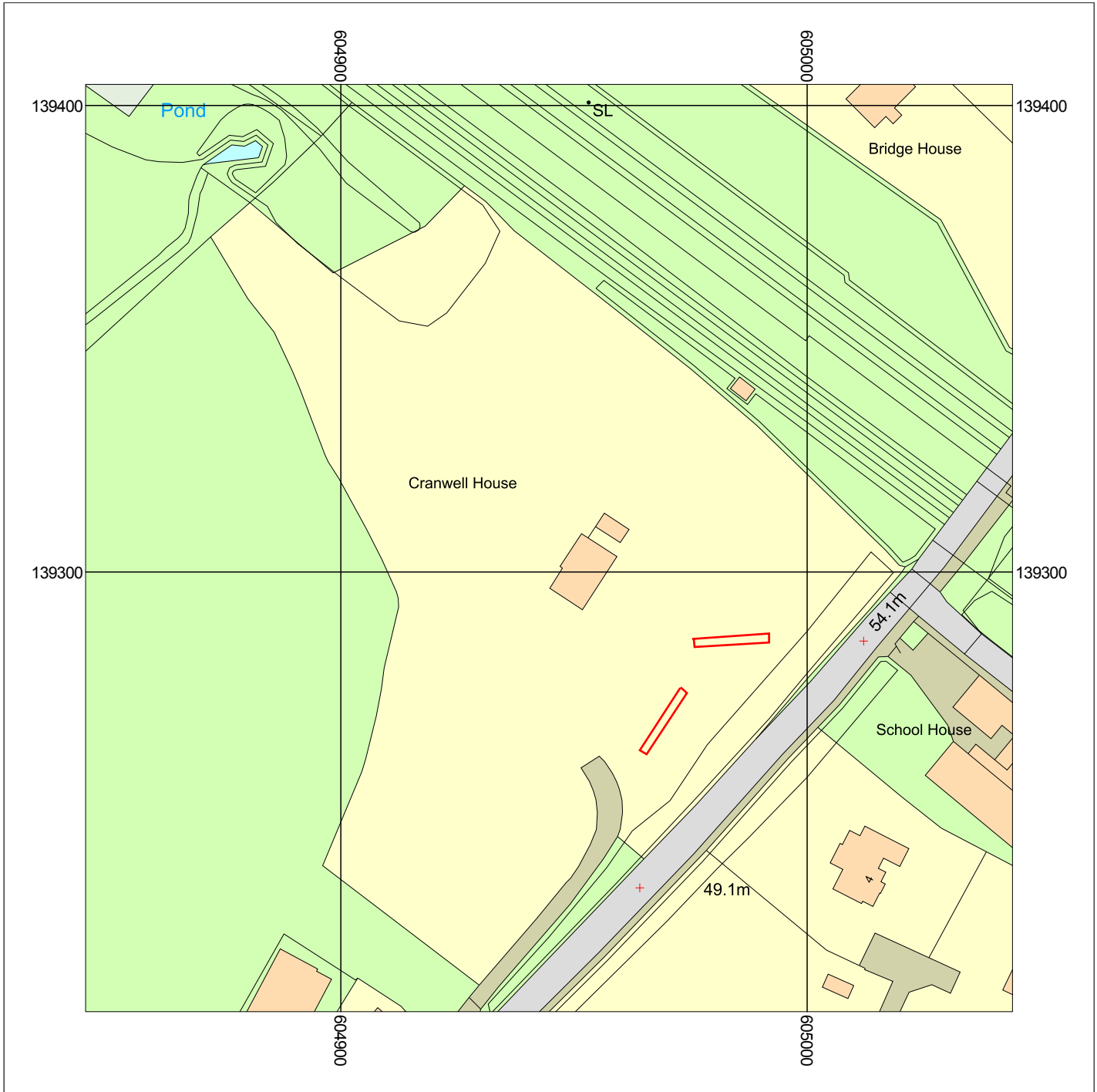
See above

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

**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

**Date:** 02/07/2018

Figure 1  
Trench location



**Cranwell House**  
**The Forstal**  
**Church Road**  
**Mersham**  
**Ashford**  
**TN25 6NU**

Supplied by: National Map Centre  
License number: 100031961  
Produced: 19/01/2018  
Serial number: 1936628

Plot centre co-ordinates: 604945, 139305  
Download file: cranwell.zip  
Project name: swat1901.1



Plate 1. General view of Trench 1(looking E)



Plate 2. View of section of Trench 1



Plate 3. View of Trench 2 (looking SW)