

Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Forge Cottage, Otham Street, Otham, Maidstone, Kent

Site Code OTH/WB/19



Date of report 11/04/2019

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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.....	6
7.1 GENERAL.....	6
8.0 FINDS.....	7
9.0 DISCUSSION.....	7
10.0 CONCLUSION.....	7
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	7
REFERENCES.....	7
APPENDIX 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	8

- AP 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2018)
- AP 2. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 1960)

- Plate 1. General view of site (looking NNW)
- Plate 2. General view of site (looking N)
- Plate 3. General view of site (looking NE)
- Plate 4. General view of site (looking E)

List of Figures

- Figure 1. Site plan and location of area watched
- Figure 2. Proposed development

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Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Forge Cottage, Otham Street, Otham, Maidstone, Kent

Site Code OTH/WB/19
NGR 579708 153034

Date of report: 11/04/2019



AP 1. Aerial view of site (red target) showing the site during development.

(Google Earth 2018: Eye altitude 287m).

1.0 Abstract

1.1. In March 2019 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 tennis court and residential garden at Forge Cottage, Otham Street, Otham in Kent. (Figures 1 & 2 and Plates 1-4).

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

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the excavation on the site for the foundation of a tennis court and residential garden (Plates 1-4).

The archaeological work was undertaken in one phase.

Phase 1: The digging out of the foundation footprint of the tennis court and garden to about 0.30-0.35m below present ground level of about 95.40m AOD (March 2019 & Plates 1-4).

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 nearby KCCHER data of extensive cropmarks and ring ditches.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is Maidstone Borough Council (18/505799/FULL).

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 within the curtilage of Forge Cottage and located south of the main house. The site is bounded on the west by Otham Street and to the south by Simmonds Lane. To the north-west is the county town of Maidstone and to the west is Parkway and to the north the village of Otham and to the south the village of Langley. The site itself is level at about 95m to 95.30m AOD (Figure 1).

2.2 Planning Background

The site has planning permission for the change of use of land to residential garden, construction of a tennis court and erection of a tennis court fence. The Local Planning Authority's (Maidstone Borough Council) planning reference for the proposal is 18/505799/FULL.

The following Condition (3) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring 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 recorded. The Watching Brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted 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 SWAT Archaeology) and monitored the excavation works 24th March 2019.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

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

“The watching brief should be maintained throughout the programme of all works; building alterations, ground excavation and landscaping. The archaeological contractor will confirm the extent of proposed works in advance with the site developer and inform the County Archaeological Officer that arrangements are in place for appropriate monitoring.

The frequency of archaeological monitoring visits, ground works observed and any constraints experienced while carrying out the monitoring should be detailed. In the watching brief report, the archaeological contractor will provide a schedule of visits, date and duration (KCC Watching Brief 2016)

4.2. The ground works were to excavate the ground for a tennis court and residential garden (Plates 1-4).

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 is that the Bedrock Geology of Hythe Formation- Sandstone and Limestone whilst the Superficial Deposits are not recorded (Plates 1-4).

5.2. The application site consists of an area of few archaeological remains although the site itself is recorded as a Farmstead Post-Medieval c.1800AD (MKE 84910). Aerial photographs of 1960 show the site as undeveloped with no farm or other buildings on the site (AP 2),

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by KCC Archaeology (2016) and it also complied with the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA: Dec 2017).

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 in March 2019.

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 topsoil down to formation level (Plates 1-4).

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 ClfA Standards and Guidance, (ClfA: 2017), and methodology discussed on a number of occasions with the Senior 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 brown yellow sandy clay overlaid by topsoil. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the site which was swept with a Fisher CZ 3D metal detector.

7.2 The proposed build is a tennis court and residential garden. The area watched were surveyed in and shown on Figure 1.

7.3 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 archaeological potential. However, no archaeology was revealed on the development site.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the SWAT 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 the landowners for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA.

Appendix 1

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at Forge Cottage, Otham Street, Otham, Kent

SWAT Site Code: OTH/WB/19

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 tennis court and residential garden 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: Maidstone Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 579708 153034

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: 24th March 2019

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

Geology: Bedrock geology is Hythe Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2019) Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Forge Cottage, Otham Street, Otham, 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



AP 2. Aerial photograph c.1960



Plate 1. View of site (looking NNW)



Plate 2. View of site (looking north)

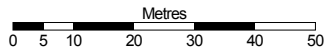


Plate 3. View of site (looking NE)



Plate 4. View of site (looking east)

Figure 1
Site location



Scale: 1:1250

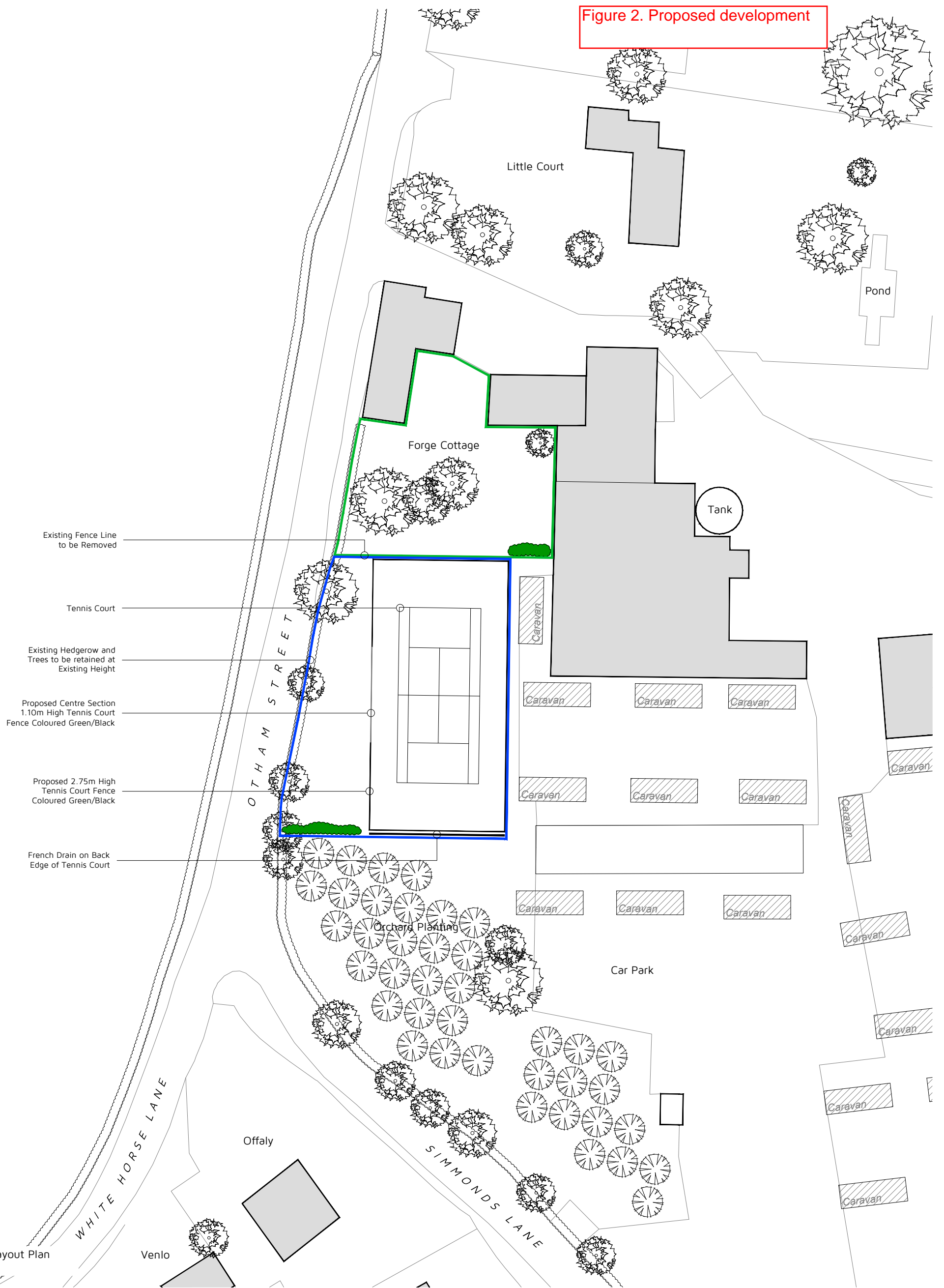


Forge Cottage
Otham Street
Otham
ME15 8RL

Supplied by: National Map Centre
License number: 100031961
Produced: 25/01/2019
Serial number: 2073241

Plot centre co-ordinates: 579715,153018
Download file: forge.zip
Project name: swat1

Figure 2. Proposed development



- Existing Fence Line to be Removed
- Tennis Court
- Existing Hedgerow and Trees to be retained at Existing Height
- Proposed Centre Section 1.10m High Tennis Court Fence Coloured Green/Black
- Proposed 2.75m High Tennis Court Fence Coloured Green/Black
- French Drain on Back Edge of Tennis Court

Existing Site Layout Plan
1:500 @ A3

0 5 10 15 20 25
Metres (1:500)

Site Area: 0.2 Ha

Tennis Court Footprint: 662 m²

- Existing Garden
- Proposed Extension to Garden
- Existing Hedgerow
- Proposed Hedgerow & Planting

Rev: A Reason: AMENDED TO LPA REQUEST

Date: OCT 2018

Client: W B CHAMBERS & SON

Project: FORGE COTTAGE, OTHAM STREET, OTHAM, MAIDSTONE, ME15 8RL

Title: PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN

Drawing: DHA/12793/03 Rev: A Scale: 1:500 Date: AUG 2018



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CAD Reference: DHA_12793_Forge Cottage

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