

Archaeological Watching Brief on land at
South Meadow, 45 Greenhill Road, Otford,
Kent TN14 5RR

Site Code OTT/WB/19



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Archaeological Investigation on Land at South Meadow, 45 Greenhill Road, Otford, Kent

Site Code OTT/WB/19
NGR 55358 16013



AP 1. View of proposed development area (2018)

1.0 Abstract

1.1. From 29th to 27th February 2020 to Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA and Stewart Brown of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Investigation of ground works involved in the construction of a single storey front extension, new fence and triple garage at 45 Greenhill Road, Otford in Kent (Figure 1, AP 1 and Plates 1-5).

1.2. An Archaeological watching brief presence was kept during the foundation and service excavations across the site. (Plates 1-5).

1.3. The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Enabling site reduction on 20th to 21st February (Plates 1-2)

Phase 2: excavation of areas for slab construction on 27th February (Plates 3-5)

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief were to determine whether any significant archaeological remains had survived within the footprint of the proposed groundworks. In particular, any evidence of archaeological activity associated with the known archaeological sites in the area included on the KCCHER data and highlighted in the Sevenoaks District Council Written Scheme of Investigation Specification.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is Sevenoaks District Council (18/03110/HOUSE).

1.6. Although the archaeological potential has been highlighted by the Kent Heritage Archaeological Officer's Assessment the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The site is located on land to the north of Greenhill Road (Figure 1) just to the east of the A225 and upslope from the village of Otford. Just to the south is the route of the Pilgrim's Way whilst to the west and downhill is located the River Darent.

2.2 Planning Background

The following Condition (5) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

No development shall be carried out on the land 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 specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To investigate and record archaeological features as supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson and Stewart Brown SWAT Archaeology) and closely monitored the excavation works on: 20th to 27th February 2020.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The specific aims of the archaeological work were to:

(4.2) The programme aims to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, irrespective of period, liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

4.2. Proposed Groundworks.

The ground works were to excavate the ground for services, drainage, garage construction and foundations (Plates 1-5).

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 Bedrock Geology of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and New Pit Formation- Chalk. Superficial deposits are not recorded but shown on site to be brown silty loam overlaying chalk (Plates 1-4).

5.2 The area of Greenhill Road has a long history of land use prior to the houses being built in the 1930s. The tithe map shows 'La Combe' as being used for arable farming, and a detailed survey of the Archbishop's Manors in Kent and Sussex by Henry Lovel about 1284-5, quotes 664 acres of demesne arable land at Otford including 68 acres of 'La Coumbe'.

5.3 The siting of the Roman villa on Pilgrim's Way and the Romano-British site at the top of Greenhill both point to the use of the upper slopes of the valley during the Iron Age and indeed a number of lynchets can still be seen on the western slopes of Otford Mount.

5.4 Although lynchets are not easily dateable, by analogy with other areas of southern England they were probably formed during the Iron Age. The discovery of Iron Age pottery sherds in the coombe also suggests the use of the immediate area during this period.

5.5 In their History of Otford, Dennis Clarke and Anthony Stoyel suggest the coombe at Greenhill to be one of the likely sites where man first settled in Otford and indeed over the years a number of worked flints have been found in the vicinity.

5.6 The first positive evidence came in 1970 while a bulldozer was moving earth to make a tennis court in the garden of 46 Greenhill Road, and uncovered a Middle Bronze Age burial. At the time there was no evidence to suggest the burial had been under a mound or that it was part of a cemetery, and it was thought that the find represented an isolated burial (KCCHER TQ 56 SW 27).

5.7 A middle Bronze Age urn complete with uncontaminated cremation, was found during mechanical levelling for a tennis court in the garden of no 46 Greehill Road. The bones appear to have been cremated, then deliberately crushed and placed in a container, possibly a bag of cloth or leather, which had perished completely. Excavation of the find spot by the Otford and District Historical Society's Archaeological Group revealed a cylindrical hole some two feet in diameter with a flat bottom on which the inverted vessel had rested. The hole had apparently been backfilled with soil. Three small sherds of similar reddish pottery, black in fracture were revealed nearby.

5.8 The urn is collared with an undecorated neck. The collar is decorated with hurdle and diagonal patterns made by two stranded cords of different thicknesses, which were impressed on the vessel during its leather hand stage. Finger nail impression was used to supplement the cord decoration. The vessel probably dates to about 1000BC and was apparently fired in the inverted position.

5.9 Excavation of the area was continued east of the burial close to the eastern boundary of the garden. Various test holes revealed a distinct soil horizon containing pottery sherds, worked flints, bone fragments and charcoal.

5.10 Hollows were excavated which contained flint nodules in a red brown clay matrix. One hollow had signs of burning beneath the flint fill. A post hole was also revealed. Molluscan evidence suggested that the area had been recently cleared of woodland at the time of the flint filled hollows. Some Iron Age activity on the site was indicated by the recovery of a small quantity of IA pottery from the immediate area of the burial.

5.11 A piece of blue glass bead of possible Romano-British date was also found. A C14 date has been obtained from an area of burning at the base of a sub-soil hollow. The results are as follows: Ref No HAR 3690 Date bp. 4230+/- 80 Date bc. 2280+/- 80.

<1> KAR 25 1971 143 (*B Philp*) (OS Card Reference). SKE45276.

<2> KAR 27 1972 199 (*Cliff Ward*) (OS Card Reference). SKE45282.

<3> *Arch cant* 87 1972 242 (*PE Leach*) (OS Card Reference). SKE35917.

<4> *Dr IH Longworth, Brit Mus (OS Card Reference). SKE41507.*

<5> *Arch Cant 91 1975 185-187 and fig 4 (JA Pyke and CP Ward) (OS Card Reference). SKE36036.*

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Archaeological Investigations were conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification provided by KCC Heritage.

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

6.3. Excavations within the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a flat blade bucket necessary to remove the subsoil down to formation level (Plates 1-5).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Stewart Brown and 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 investigation work was carried out in accordance with current ClfA Standards and Guidance, (ClfA: 2017), and methodology discussed on a number of occasions with the Principal Archaeological Officer KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site was deposits of brown silty soil. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the site.

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

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Investigation has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the KCC Heritage 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 landowner for commissioning the project.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Stewart Brown and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIFA.

Appendix 1
Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at 45 Greenhill Road, Otford, Kent

SWAT Site Code: OTT/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 house extension development whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken to closely monitor the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site attendance and supervision which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: Tunbridge Wells Sevenoaks District Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 581083 133023

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: 20th to 27th February 2020

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

Geology: Bedrock geology is Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2020) Archaeological Watching Brief on land at South Meadow, 45 Greenhill Road, Otford, 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: Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA



Plate 1. View of the foundation trenches (looking West)



Plate 2. View of foundation trenches (looking West)



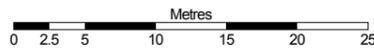
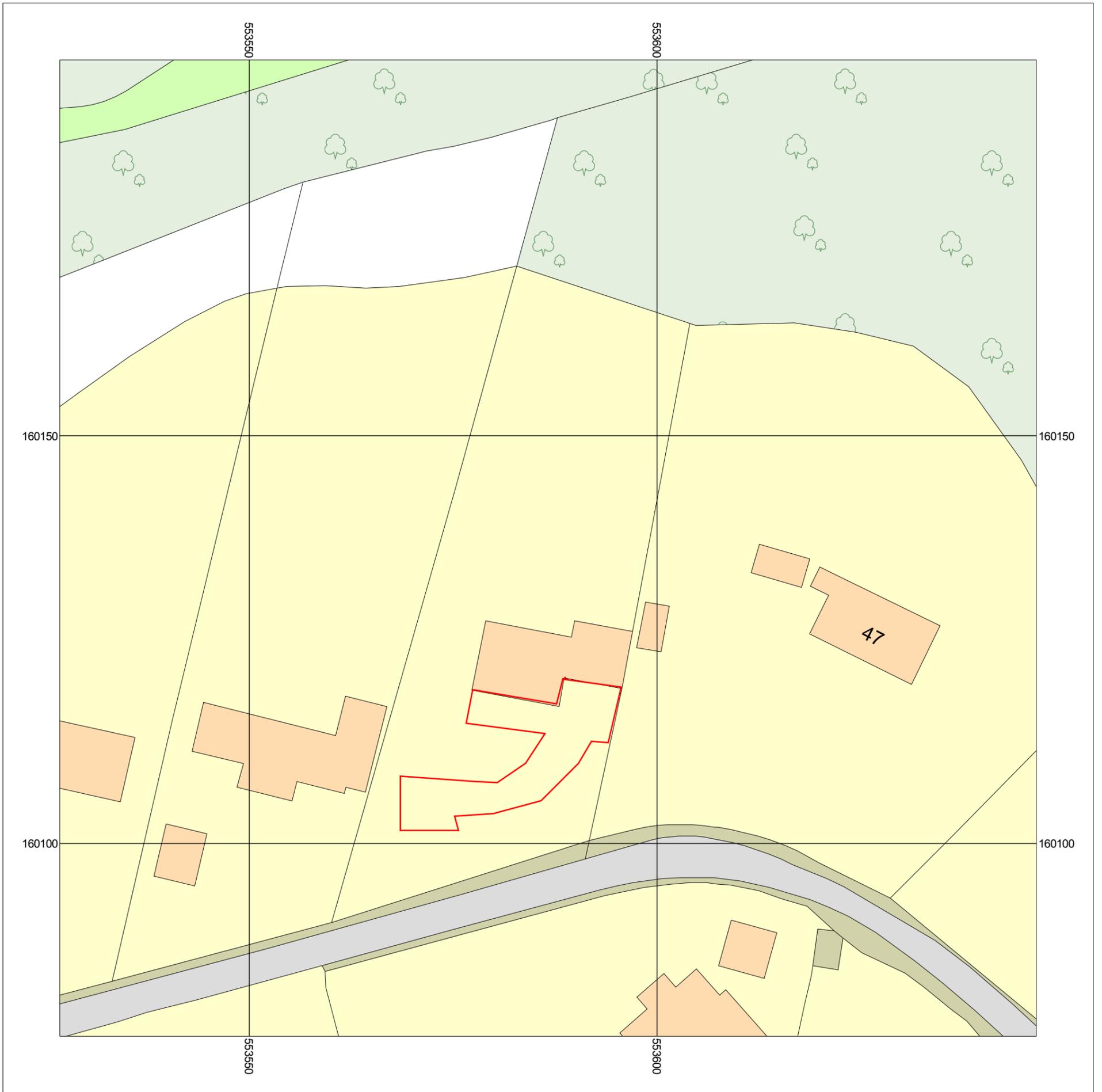
Plate 3. Foundation trench (looking East)



Plate 4. Foundation slab trenches (looking West)



Plate 5. Foundation slab trench (looking West)



Scale: 1:500



South Meadow
45 Greenhill Road
Otford
Sevenoaks
TN14 5RR

Supplied by: National Map Centre
License number: 100031961
Produced: 20/02/2020
Serial number: 2207174

Plot centre co-ordinates: 553587,160136
Download file: swat_45greenhill.zip
Project name: swat_45greenhill