

# Archaeological Watching Brief on land at 376 High Street, Rochester, Medway, Kent

Site Code ROCH/WB/20



Date of report 27/02/2020

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# Archaeological Investigation on Land at 376 High Street, Rochester, Medway, Kent

Site Code ROCH/WB/20  
NGR 575162 167883



AP 1. View of proposed development site (Google 2018)

## **1.0 Abstract**

1.1. From 7<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief of ground works involved in the construction of a two-storey rear extension and including demolition of the existing single storey rear projections at 376 High Street, Rochester in Kent (Figure 1, AP 1 and Plates 1-6).

1.2. An Archaeological watching brief presence was kept during the demolition and excavations (Plates 1-6).

1.3. The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Watching demolition and excavation of ground to the rear (7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020).

Phase 2: Watching excavation of ground and foundation trenches (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020).

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 SWAT Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation Specification dated 23/01/2020.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is Medway Council (MC/19/2799).

1.6. Although the archaeological potential has been highlighted by the SWAT Archaeology WSI Specification 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 Star Hill to Sun Pier Conservation Area and located within the area known as Chatham Intra which grew as ribbon development along the road

between Rochester and Chatham (AP 1) and the NGR to the centre of the site is NGR 575162 167883.

## 2.2 Planning Background

The groundworks involve the partial demolition of an existing rear storey extensions and the build of a new two storey rear extension.

The following Condition (10) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

*No development shall commence 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 in accordance with Policy BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.*

## 3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson SWAT Archaeology) and closely monitored the excavation works from 7<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

## 4.0 Aims and Objectives

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

*(3.1) The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention will be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.*

4.2. Proposed Groundworks.

The ground works were to excavate the ground for the erection of a two storey extension (Plates 1-6).

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 Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation- Chalk. Superficial deposits are recorded as Alluvium- Clay, Silt, Sand and geology revealed on site was brown sandy silt (Plates 1-6).

5.2 The archaeological potential was accessed from the (KCCHER) which has provided details of any previous investigations and discoveries. It is possible that archaeological remains associated with the growth and development of Chatham may survive on the site. In addition during the medieval period a religious hospital complex, St Bartholomew's was established a short distance away (TQ 76 NE 1188) but only the still standing chapel remains (TQ 76 NE 1216). Any additional medieval settlement in the vicinity of the hospital is not known.

Roman pottery has been found in the vicinity of the site whilst further west and north of the High Street is a Roman cemetery with grave cuts and a cremation burial (TQ 76 NW 735).

## **6.0 Methodology**

6.1. The Archaeological Investigations were conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by SWAT Archaeology 'Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 376 High Street, Rochester, Medway, Kent'.

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 toothed bucket necessary to remove the demolition material and subsoil down to formation level (Plates 1-6).

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 investigation work was carried out in accordance with current CfA Standards and Guidance, (CfA: 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.

7.2 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 high 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 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 landowner/developer 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 376 High Street, Rochester, Medway, Kent ME1 1DJ, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** ROCH/WB/20

**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 housing 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:** Medway Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** 575162 167883

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Date of recording:** 7<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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

**Geology:** Bedrock geology is Chalk- Soil deposits encountered on site were Clay/silt

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2020) Archaeological Watching Brief of land at 376 High Street, Rochester, Medway, 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



Plate 1. View of the site (looking N)



Plate 2. View of demolition in progress (looking N)



Plate 3. View of ground reduction (looking NNW)



Plate 4. View of foundation trenches (looking NNE)



Plate 5. Foundation trenches (looking N)

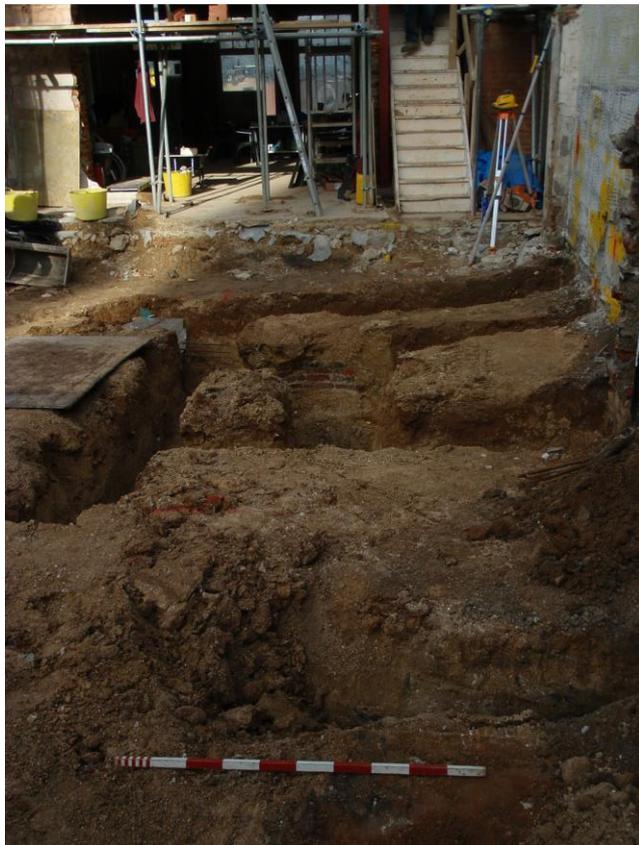
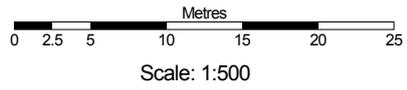


Plate 6. Foundation trenches completed (looking NE)

Figure 1



**376 High Street  
Rochester  
ME1 1DJ**

Supplied by: National Map Centre  
License number: 100031961  
Produced: 22/01/2020  
Serial number: 2196307

Plot centre co-ordinates: 575165,167897  
Download file: swat\_376highst.zip  
Project name: swat\_376highst