

**Archaeological Watching Brief at
MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BARTON ROAD,
MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 7BT**



NGR: 576608 154743
Site code: MGS-WB-22
Planning reference: MA/21/502002

Date of report: 13 April 2022
Revision **1.0**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site has planning permission for a proposed first floor extension to the sports pavilion to allow for additional teaching space including a two storey side extension for access and toilets, together with an external emergency escape staircase. The County Planning Authority's (Kent County Council) planning reference for the proposal is MA/21/502002.

1.2 The following Condition (8) 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 County 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 previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: *To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with the NPPF.*

Reason for being a pre-commencement condition: Archaeological remains could be damaged by development therefore an approved programme of archaeological watching brief must be in place before development starts.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

2.1 The proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and a search of the KCCHER highlights that the site is adjacent to the site of a Roman villa (TQ 75 SE 18) and 60m to the north archaeological investigation revealed post-medieval pits, ditches and features (TQ 75 SE 140). 35m to the NE a WWII Anti-Tank Ditch is located (TQ 75 SE 57).

3.0 GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The geology of the site according to the British Geological Survey is Hythe Formation-Sandstone and (Subequal/Subordinate Limestone) interbedded. Superficial Deposits are not recorded. The OD height of the PDA is about 51m aOD. NGR for the site centre is 576608 154743.

4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were 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 was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

5.0 MONITORED GROUNDWORKS

5.1 The groundworks comprise a first floor extension to the sports pavilion to allow for additional teaching space including a two storey side extension for access and toilets, together with an external emergency escape staircase.

5.2 The archaeologist has clarified the extent of the works with the developer before work begins to ensure that they target their attendance in accordance with the development programme. The archaeologist was maintaining a diary and description of all works observed and these are included in this report.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

6.1 The archaeological contractor was monitoring the excavations of all groundworks. Excavations were undertaken using a tracked excavator equipped in flat trenching bucket.

6.2 The archaeologist has inspected the surfaces revealed. Any archaeological structures or features revealed will be recorded in plan and section as appropriate according to the requirements stated within approved specification.

6.3 All excavations were watched, examined and subsequently photographed using hi-resolution digital SLR camera. Additionally monitored areas were surveyed using a GPS RTK surveying kit achieving centimetre accuracy in relation to National Grid.

7.0 RECORDING

7.1 All archaeological contexts were recorded individually on context record sheets. A further more general record of the work comprising a description and discussion is included in this report.

7.2 A full colour (digital) photographic record of the work is kept and constitutes a part of project archive. The selection of photographic images which reflect the investigation and monitoring undertaken on this site is included in this report.

7.3 The site archive, include all project records and cultural material produced by the project and is to be prepared in accordance with Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990). On completion of the project the Developer will arrange for the archive to be deposited in a suitable museum or similar repository to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

8.0 PROJECT TIME-FRAME

8.1 Archaeological watching brief was carried out in February between 17th and 28th. A total of 3.5 mandays were allocated to oversee foundations dig.

9.0 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

9.1 Archaeological watching brief was carried out at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road in February 2022. Proposed groundworks comprised excavation of foundation trenches at northern and at the western sides of the pavilion.

9.2 Watching brief has exposed natural geology comprising yellow-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent pebbles overlain by modern backfill and levelling deposits and capped by top soil and the most recent overburden.

9.3 Trenches excavated at the western side of pavilion to the depth of 1.9metres has exposed a sequence of modern made-up deposits contained large plastic pipe laid on the shingle. Natural geology was exposed below 1.6-1.7metres bgl.

9.4 Trenches at the northern side of the pavilion were excavated to the depth of 2.05metres and exposed natural geology from the depth of 0.5metres bgl. Four large plastic pipes were exposed during archaeological monitoring.

9.5 No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefact were revealed during the course of archaeological watching brief.

9.6 A small quantity of modern dating evidence comprising glass shards with brick fragments were noted examined and discarded.

10.0 WATCHING BRIEF DIARY

10.1 17th February. Initial site visit to oversee the site and to discuss with the groundworkers their programme of works.

10.2 21st February. The groundworks commenced at western side of the pavilion. A plastic drain pipe was exposed.

10.3 22nd February. Further trenches at western side of the pavilion were excavated.

10.4 25th February. Further groundworks commenced at northern side of the pavilion and comprised excavation of foundation for a staircase.

10.5 28th February. Final trench was excavated at northern side of the pavilion.

11.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Watching brief carried out at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT has successively fulfilled the aims and objectives of approved specification and revealed common stratigraphic sequence comprising top-soil with made-up ground concealing natural geology.

11.2 No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of archaeological watching brief.

11.3 Archaeological investigation has concluded that western side of the pavilion contain modern made-up ground reaching the depth of 1.6metres below existing ground levels whilst at the northern side the natural geology was accessible from the depth of approximately 0.5metres bgl.

11.6 The absence of archaeological findings in all excavated foundations and in generated spoils suggests that no significant archaeological remains are present within proposed development area and that proposed ground works won't be having any impact on archaeological resource therefore no further work is recommended from heritage point of interest.

12.0 ARCHIVE

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

12.2 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. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a designated Kent Museum.

13.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

13.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank to the Developer for commissioning the project. The fieldwork was carried out by Peter Cichy.

13.2 On completion of the project, the archaeological contractor is to arrange for the transfer, subject to the landowners consent, of the documentary, photographic and material archive to SWAT Archaeology, and to ensure that the appropriate level of resources for cataloguing, boxing and long term storage are provided for a set fee until such times that designated museum in Kent can accept the archive.

13.3 The archaeological contractor is to allow the site records to be inspected and examined at any reasonable time, during or after the evaluation, by the developer, and the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer.

13.4 Copies of all reports compiled as a result of the watching brief will be submitted to the developer as CD containing a .pdfA version. In addition a CD containing a .pdfA version of the report and a selection of site photos in jpeg format to be sent to the KCC Archaeological Officer and once approved sent to the KCC HER for inclusion in HER Records.

13.5 The work the archaeological contractor is to abide by the Code of conduct and the Codes of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The report was written by: SWAT Archaeology (Peter Cichy) The Office, School Farm Oast, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP Date: 13/04/2022.

APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Watching Brief at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT

SWAT Site Code: MSG-WB-22

Site Address: Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT

Summary: *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by The Client to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council. The Archaeological Watching brief was negative throughout the entire course of investigation and recorded modern made up ground concealing natural geology.*

No further mitigation is proposed

District/Unitary: Maidstone Borough Council & Kent County Council

Period(s): modern

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 576608 154743

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: February 2022

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

Geology: Hythe Formation- Sandstone and (Subequal/Subordinate Limestone) interbedded. Superficial Deposits are not recorded. The OD height of the PDA is about 51m aOD.

Title and author of accompanying report: SWAT Archaeology (P. Cichy 2022) Archaeological watching brief at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7BT.

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Plates



Plate 1: Showing the site. Western side of the pavilion prior to the commencement of groundworks, looking north.



Plate 2: Showing the site. Northern side of the pavilion prior to the commencement of groundworks, looking east.



Plate 3: Excavations at western side of the pavilion. Looking south with one- and two-metres scales.



Plate 4: Showing plastic drain exposed in foundation trench at western side of the pavilion. Looking south with one- and two-metres scales.



Plate 5: Further foundation trench excavated at western side of the pavilion. Looking south with two-metre scale.



Plate 6: Showing staircase foundations at northern side of the pavilion. Looking east with one two-metres and two one-metres scale bars.



Plate 7: Showing exposed geology and plastic pipe in foundation trenches excavated at northern side of the pavilion. Looking northeast with one two-metres and two one-metre scales.



Plate 8: Viewing northern foundations from the east. One two-metres and two-one metre scales.

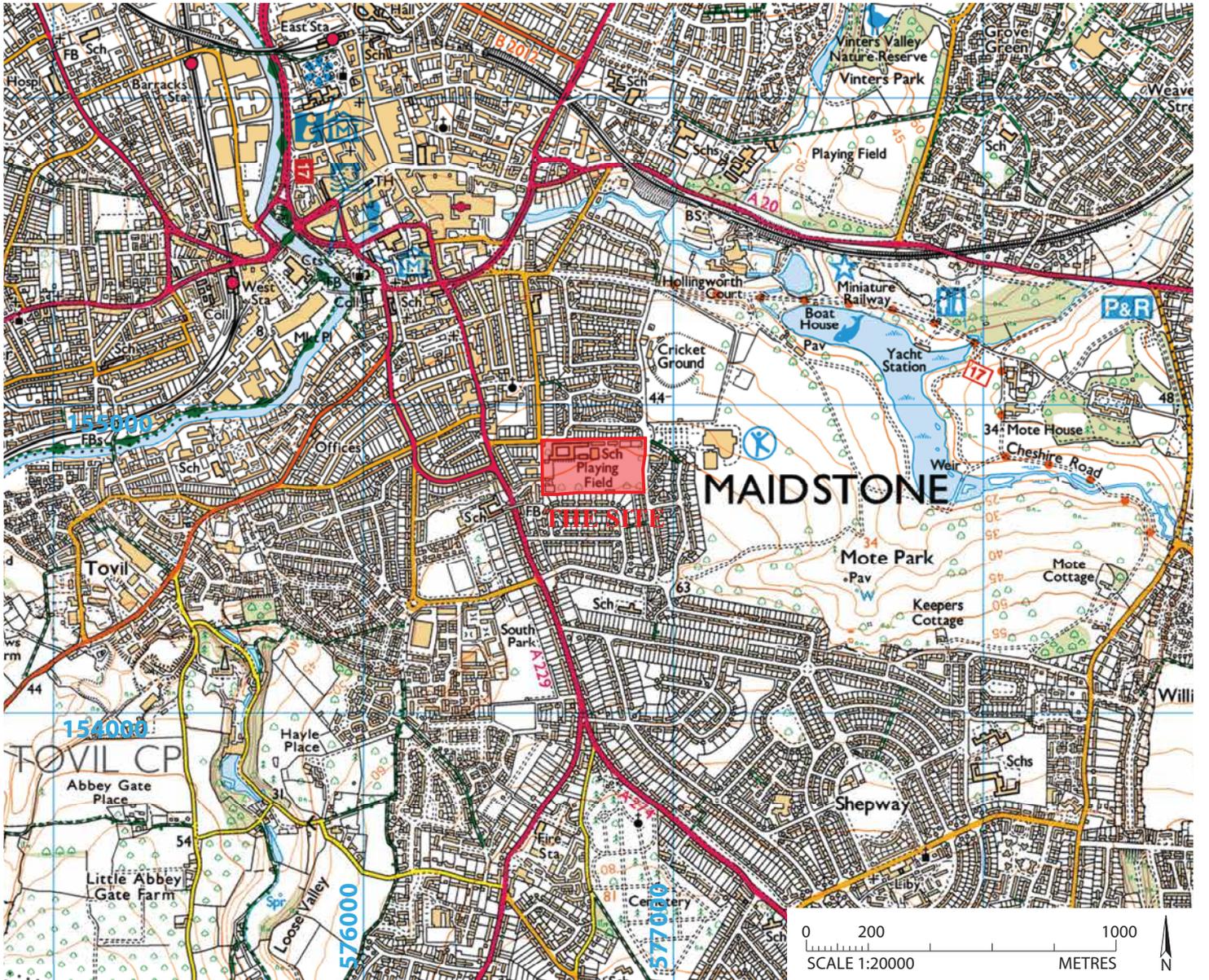
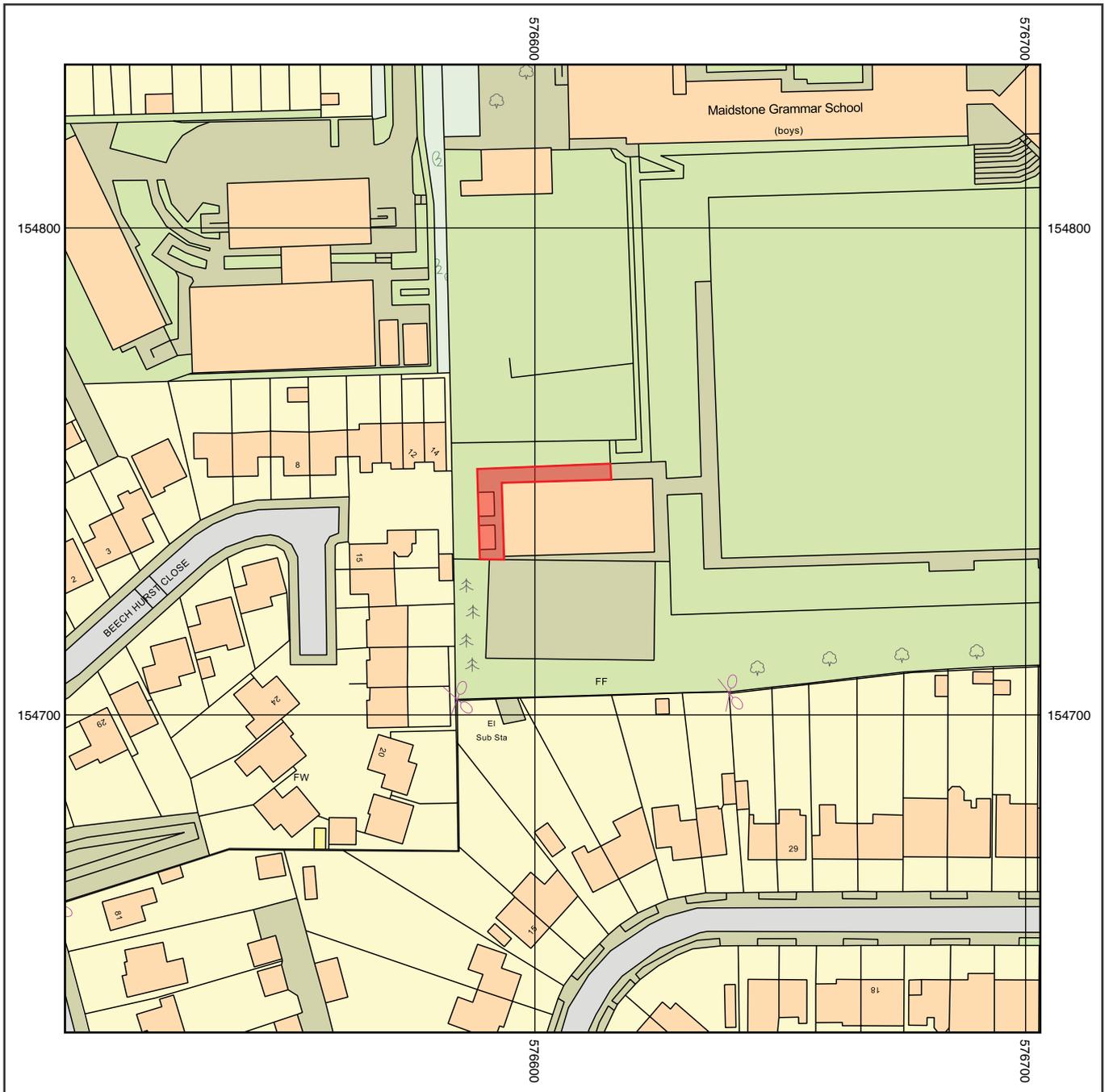


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:20000.



Supplied by: National Map Centre
 License number: 100031961
 Produced: 13/04/2022
 Serial number: 137949

Metres
 0 5 10 20 30 40 50
 Scale: 1: 1250

MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
 BARTON ROAD
 MAIDSTONE
 ME15 7BT

Figure 2: Watching Brief area (red) in relation to OS map, scale 1:1250.