

Archaeological Watching Brief at Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham, Kent

Site Code NEW/WB/23



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Plates 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. General view of site excavations

Figure 1. Site plan and location of archaeological investigation area

AP 1. View of site 2019 (Google Earth)

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Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham, Kent

NGR 589876 154209



View 1. View of site of the area for ground excavation for swimming pool

1.0 Abstract

1.1. From the 11th to 19th April 2023 Dr Paul Wilkinson of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief of ground works involved in foundations for the construction of a swimming pool at Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham in Kent (Figure 1, AP 1, View 1 and Plates 1-6).

1.2. An Archaeological watching brief presence was kept during the excavations for the construction of a below ground level swimming pool and associated air pump facilities (Plates 1-6).

1.3. The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1: Watching the removal of the topsoil and subsoil (11th April 2023).

Phase 2: Excavation of the below ground levels to facilitate the construction of a swimming pool including installation of an air source heat pump and erection of a new garden wall (12th-19th April 2023).

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 08/03/2023.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is Maidstone District Council (22/504809).

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 which includes all existing buildings, rear garden and front paddock measures approximately 3,245 sq. m in area and is relatively flat, sloping gently to the northeast at an

elevation of 187m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) (Figure 1). The site is bordered with arable fields to the east and north and by an access track to the west and south. Mature trees and hedgerows surround the site (Plates 1-6).

2.2 Planning Background

A planning application (PAN: 22/504809/FULL) for the construction of an outdoor swimming pool, including installation of an air source heat pump unit, erection of new external masonry wall, removal of 1 No. existing tree and hedging, and associated hard and soft landscaping alterations (Figure 1) was submitted to Maidstone District Council (MDC). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), who act as an advisory service to MDC, recommended that a phased programme of archaeological work was the most appropriate measure to satisfy the proposed condition in the first instance.

The following Condition (3) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

Prior to commencement of development, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with NPPF (MA/22/504809/FULL, Condition 3, 23rd December 2022).

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson, SWAT Archaeology) and closely monitored the excavation works from the 11th to 19th April 2023.

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 placing of foundations for the construction of a swimming pool (Plates 1-6) with accompanying drainage works and air source facility.

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 British Geological Society shows that the local geology within the site consists of Clay with-flints Formation - Clay, silt, sand and gravel, sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 23.03 million and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Neogene and Quaternary periods. The underlying bedrock comprising Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation.

5.2 An archaeological investigation has confirmed that the proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and a search of the KCCHER records that Newage Farm is recorded as a regular courtyard farmstead with buildings to three sides of the yard incorporating an L-plan element, with significant loss to its original form (KCC HER: MKE85326). Beyond the 500m search radius and within 1000m the HER records additional post-medieval farmhouses and cropmarks believed to represent First World War trench systems. A Mesolithic mace head is recorded west of Tophill Farm, approximately 1.5km to the southeast of the proposed development area

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 Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham, 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 for the foundations and drainage.

6.3. Excavations within the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a smooth and toothed bucket necessary to remove the topsoil and subsoil down to formation level (Plates 1-6).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist from SWAT Archaeology.

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 Senior 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 orange brickearth (clay-sand-silt) capping Clay with Flint. 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 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 by Dr Paul Wilkinson and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson FRSA., MCIfA.

Appendix 1

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development at Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham, Kent ME17 2EN

SWAT Site Code: NEW/WB/23

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 the construction of an outdoor swimming pool, including installation of an air source heat pump unit, erection of new external masonry wall, removal of 1 No. existing tree and hedging, and associated hard and soft landscaping alterations 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: Maidstone District Council

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 589876 154209

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: 11th-19th April 2023

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

Geology: Bedrock geology is Clay with Flints Formation. Superficial Deposits are not recorded

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2023) Archaeological Watching Brief at Newage Farmhouse, Flint Lane, Lenham, Kent ME17 2EN

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

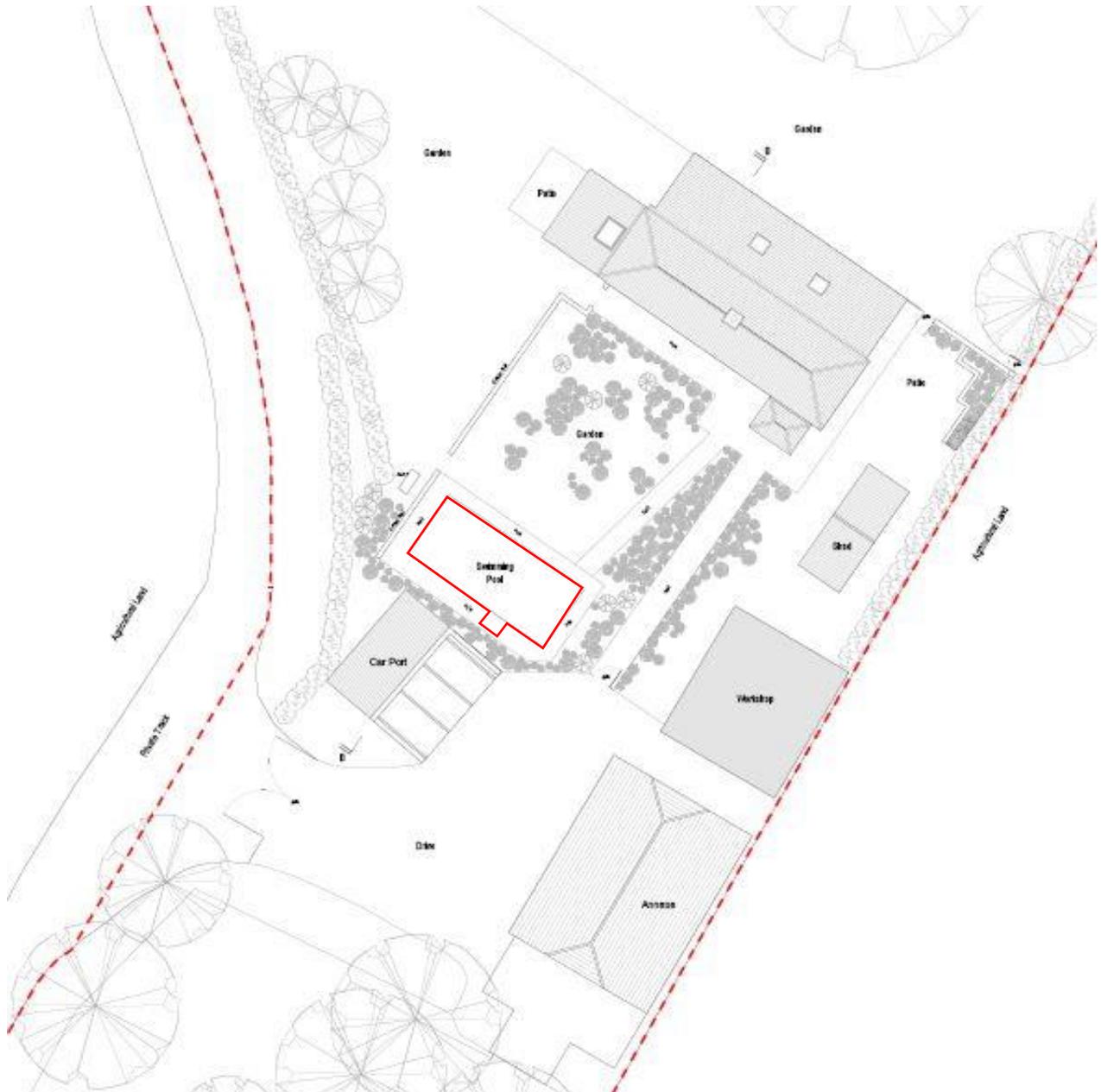


Figure 1: Location plan of swimming pool at NGR 589876 154209 with area watched (red line)



AP 1. View of site of proposed swimming pool -red arrow (Google Earth 2021)



Plate 1. View of the site with clearance of the topsoil (looking NW)



Plate 2. View of the initial section (looking NE)



Plate 3. View of excavation of swimming pool (looking ENE)



Plate 4. View of the swimming pool excavations and drain facility (looking SE)



Plate 5. View of eastern section (facing SSW)



Plate 6. Completed excavations (looking SE)