

Archaeological Monitoring on land at Porters Farm, Birchin Cross Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks, Kent

Planning Application Number: 22/02542/FULL

Site Code: PORT/WB/23



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1. Summary

In August 2023 SWAT Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Porters Farm, Birchin Cross Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks in Kent. The works were commissioned by the landowner and carried out during the excavation of ground works associated with the new development of 1no. dwelling and associated parking and landscaping.

The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with an archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation provided by SWAT Archaeology.

Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains, no archaeological features or finds were recorded during the archaeological monitoring works.

2.0 Introduction

The proposed development area (PDA) is situated on land at Porters Farm, Birchin Cross Road near Sevenoaks in Kent. The NGR to the centre of the site is 555470 160886 (Figures 1-2).

2.2 Planning Background

The land has a planning permission (22/505437) from Sevenoaks District Council for the demolition of mixed-use building, comprising part agriculture and part commercial and the erection of 1no. dwelling and associated parking and landscaping. The Local Planning Authority's planning reference for the proposal is 22/02542/FULL (Figures 1, 2, 3).

The following Condition (6) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

(6) 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 groundworks are observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written scheme of investigation 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 policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Paul Wilkinson SWAT) and closely monitored the excavation works on 23, 24th August 2023.

4.1 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The specific aims of the archaeological work and objectives of the monitoring were therefore to:

- To ensure the archaeological excavation and monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;

- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme;
- To secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the appropriate publication of the project results, if required;
- To secure the analysis, long term conservation and storage of the project archive.

4.2 The specific archaeological requirements of the watching brief are summarised below;

- Monitoring of all ground works;
- Mitigation by a programme of archaeological excavation and recording in the event that additional archaeological remains are encountered;
- Post-excavation and publication, where required.

4.2. Proposed Groundworks.

The ground works were to excavate the ground for concrete footings (Plates 1-6. Figures 1-3).

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 geology of the site according to the British Geological Survey is bedrock of Nodular Chalk Formation. Superficial deposits are recorded as Clay, Silt and Sand and exposed on site as yellow/brown sandy silt. The Ordnance Datum for the site is about 196m aOD.

5.2 The proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and A search of the KCCHER has recorded that the adjacent Porter's Farmhouse is listed as:
c.17th timber framed house with early-mid c.19th front span. Old house of 2 storeys with

half hipped tiled roof sweeping very low behind. Old ridge stack. Modern casement windows at ends, in walls of knapped flint with red brick dressings, tiling above. 2-storey, 4-window front part of pale yellow brick with diagonal brick cornice. Low pitched slated roof. Gauged flat brick arches to sash windows and to 4-panel door with plain, rectangular fanlight. Listing NGR: TQ 5548160898 and the farm as a loose courtyard farmstead with buildings on two sides of the yard (MKE 83862).

About 100m to the North is situated Weike Farm (MKE 83864) and about 175m to the North a surface find of a Palaeolithic flake (TQ 56 SE 93).

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Archaeological Investigations were conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification provided by SWAT Archaeology.

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. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the WSI and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2017).

6.3. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Paul Wilkinson SWAT).

6.4. Where possible some areas of excavation were subsequently closely examined with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section but no features were revealed.

6.5. 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.

6.6 Excavation of the area for the concrete foundation footings was carried out by building contractors digging with a small machine (Plates 1-6). All areas of excavation were carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist and inspected and recorded by the archaeologist in attendance (See Table 1, below).

6.8 Timetable

Archaeological monitoring was carried out on the following days;

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Staff</i>
Archaeological monitoring	23, 24 August 2023	Paul Wilkinson SWAT

Table 1 Attendance Schedule

6.9 Recording

- 6.9.1 A complete drawn record comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. Where appropriate, the plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights and form part of the site archive.
- 6.9.2 Photographs were to be taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated footings but no features or archaeological deposits were revealed. The record also includes images of the site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive (Plates 1-6).
- 6.9.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Table 2 below. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (001), whilst the cut of any features is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes.

6.9.4 Stratigraphic Sequence

6.9.5 The stratigraphic sequence recorded during the archaeological works remained relatively consistent across all areas of the site, comprising areas of demolition and subsoil. The following table provides detailed description of each stratigraphic context.

6.9.6

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
001	Concrete demolition and topsoil	Overburden (Plates 1-3)
002	Yellow orange sandy subsoil	Natural (Plates 2-6)

Table 2 Stratigraphic Sequence and Register of Contexts

6.10. The site produced no archaeological features or deposits or finds and no environmental potential was recognised on site.

The Site Archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2017). 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 and CD for photo archive.

6.11 Results

6.11.1 No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The natural geology encountered across the site was yellow orange subsoil. No archaeological features were revealed in the subsoil or natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the area watched (Figures 1-4). The trenching for footings was about 1.10m deep with subsoil about 30cm thick. OD height across the PDA was about 196m aOD (Plates 1-6). Overall areas watched were the footprint foundation footings of the proposed building (Figures 1-3).

7.0 Finds

No finds were retrieved.

8.0 Discussion

The development site is in an area of high archaeological potential. However, no archaeology was revealed on the development site.

9.0 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.

10.0 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.

11.0 REFERENCES

ADS 2013. *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 1st October 2020 *Standard and guidance: for watching Brief*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 1st October 2020. *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*.

SMA 1993. *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*, Society of Museum Archaeologists.

Appendix 1 KCCHER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at Porters Farm, Birchin Cross Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks, Kent

SWAT Site Code: PORT/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 development whereby the KCC Archaeological Officer 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: Sevenoaks District Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 555470 160886

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: August 2023

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

Geology: Bedrock geology Nodular Chalk Formation- Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2023) Archaeological Watching Brief at Porters Farm, Birchin Cross Road, Knatts Valley, Sevenoaks, 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

Plates



Plate 1. Removing grass and topsoil surfaces (looking SE)



Plate 2. Initial trenching (looking NNW)



Plate 3. Foundation trenching (looking SE)



Plate 4. Section of trench



Plate 5. Foundation trenches (looking East)



Plate 6. Foundation trenches (looking SE)

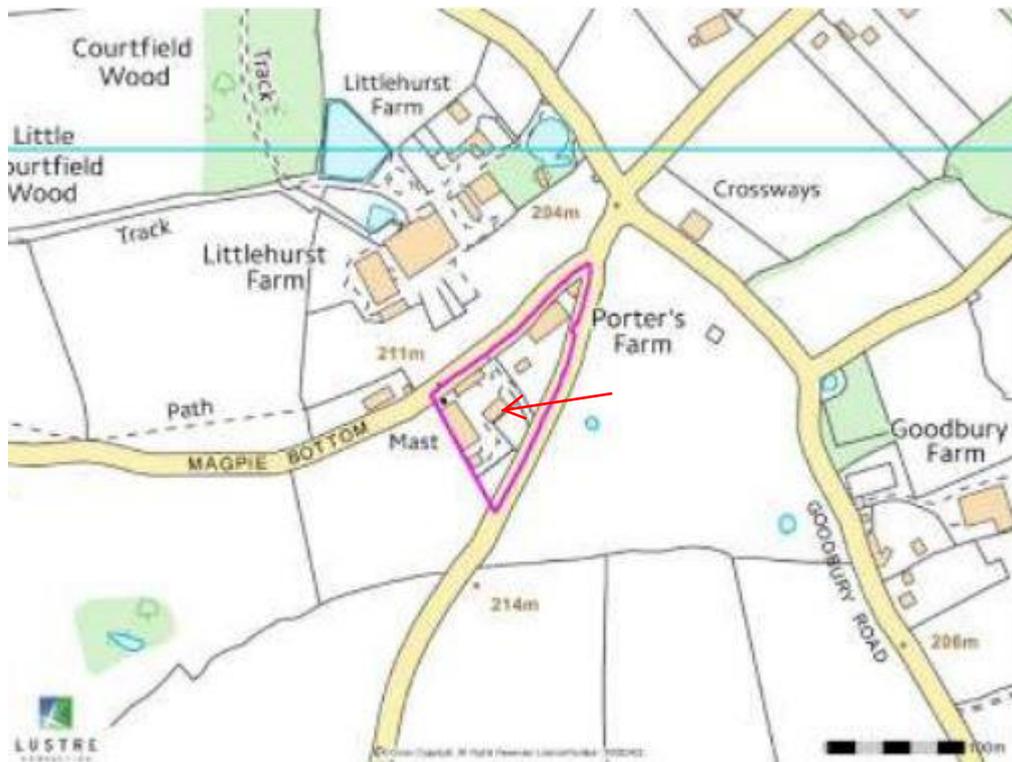


Figure 1. KCHER map of site location at NGR 555470 160886 (red line)



Figure 2. Proposed area of development (existing buildings to be demolished and area of proposed build (red line))



Figure 3. Proposed development and area watched (red dotted line)