



**Archaeological Watching Brief at the
Brick Stables and Wagon Lodge,
Abbey Barns, Abbey Road,
Faversham, Kent
September 2010**

SWAT. Archaeology
Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company
School Farm Oast, Graveney Road
Faversham, Kent
ME13 8UP
Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112



Archaeological Watching Brief at the Brick Stables and Wagon Lodge, Abbey Barns, Abbey Road, Faversham, Kent

NGR: 602151 161807

Site Code AB/WB/10

Report for
M A Brice & Sons

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY
Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company
School Farm Oast, Graveney Road
Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP
Tel; 01975 532548 or 07885 700 112
www.swatarchaeology.co.uk

Contents

1.0 SUMMARY.....	1
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	1
3.0 SCHEDULE OF VISITS.....	2
4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
4.1 PROPOSED GROUNDWORKS.....	2
4.2 CONFIDENCE RATING.....	2
5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	2
6.0 METHODOLOGY.....	3
7.0 RESULTS.....	4
7.1 GENERAL.....	4
7.2 DEPOSIT MODEL.....	4
8.0 FINDS.....	4
9.0 DISCUSSION.....	4
10.0 CONCLUSION.....	4
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	4
REFERENCES.....	5
APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (250m radius).....	5
APPENDIX 2 - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SMR SUMMARY FORM.....	8

List of Plates

Cover: Estate map drawn by Elais Allen in the early 17th century

Plate 1. Photograph of entrance to site looking north-east (page ii)

Plate 2. Site prepared for timber infill building (looking south-east).

Plate 3. Timber infill buiding complete (looking north-west).

List of Figures

Figure 1. Elais Allen map of 17th century.

Figure 2. Edward Jacob map of c.1745.

Figure 3. OS map of 1872

Figure 4. O.S. Location of site (in red outline) of Proposed Development.

Figure 5. Plan of Proposed Development.

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1.0 Summary

In June, July, August and September 2010, Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on a proposed development at the Brick Stables and Wagon Lodge, Abbey Barns, Abbey Road, Kent. (Fig. 0).

The works were carried out on behalf of M A Brice & Sons, 22 St Johns Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8EL.

An Archaeological Watch was kept during machine stripping of an area of waste ground where part of the 19th century Machinery Sheds (Plates 1 & 2) stood and the clearing of accumulated debris from the interior of the 19th century Brick stables.

The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any archaeological below ground impact only.

The Planning Application Number is: SW/07/0632 (permission refused but appealed)

Ref. APP/V2255/A/08/2065621.

The Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning applications SW/07/0632 (permission refused but appealed) Ref. APP/V2255/A/08/2065621. for the conversion of stables to dwelling was submitted to Swale Borough Council.

Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Swale Borough Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the groundworks.

The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

‘1.3 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 excavation is observed and items of archaeological interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification for the archaeological work has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.’

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist attended the site and monitored the excavation works on the following dates: 14th, 16th June, 12th, 16th July, 31st August, 15th September 2010

4.0 Aims and Objectives

The reason for the monitoring and recording, as specified by Kent County Council were to:

‘3.1 ...contribute to knowledge of the Faversham area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed in connection with the groundworks....’.

The groundworks involved a complete strip of the ground debris both inside and outside the buildings followed by the laying of concrete building slabs on to the undisturbed ground.

4.1 Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey map is Head Brickearth in the west and Alluvium in the east from Cookes Ditch, a small creek to the south of the site. Both overlie Thanet Bullhead Beds. (KCC 2009: 2.1.)

The application site is located to the south of the scheduled monument of St Saviour’s Abbey and the Faversham Roman villa, again scheduled, is located to the east of the site on the boundary of Abbey Farm.

Abbey Farm, as the name suggests, once belonged to the Benedictine Abbey of Faversham founded in 1147 as a Cluniac establishment. The Abbey only survives as an scheduled archaeological site to the south-west of the Abbey Farm complex. The farm is situated near Faversham Creek and the quay of Standard Key to the west although it is likely the medieval port of Thorne Key to the north would have been utilised.

Fresh water for the farm is provided by Springhead Stream running through the farm complex on the east side. The farm is low lying and has become even lower in time with the local extraction of Brickearth.

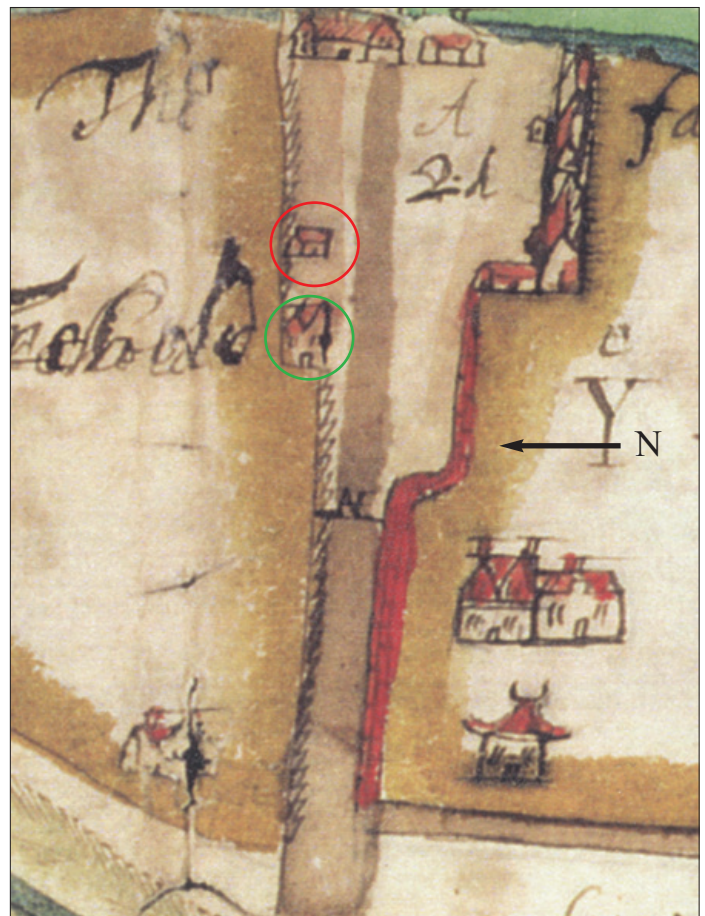


Fig. 1 An early 17th century estate map by Elias Allen shows the late medieval layout of Abbey Farm (private collection).

The farm complex retains all of its traditional buildings and the site is divided by a track with the two great barns forming a yard on the south side and a line of buildings on the north side of where the development site is situated (Fig. 4).

The stables, part of the development site are understood to have been built in the medieval period and seem to be shown on the early 17th century estate map (right, ringed in red) drawn by Elias Allen some fifty years after the removal of the Abbey by Henry VIII in the mid 16th century (Fig. 1). The farmhouse is ringed in green.

However, this building (blue) has by the time of Jacob's map of c.1745 (Fig. 2) been joined by a range of buildings (red) which themselves would be extended to in the 19th century and form part of the development site. The farmhouse is coloured green.

The OS map of 1872 (Fig. 3) shows an L-extension to the stables built during the 19th century and used as a workshop and engine room. The engine used to power a lathe, a drill and a grinder to repair farm machinery.

The National Grid Reference for the new development is NGR 602151 161807. The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential associated with archaeological remains presently recorded in the HER.

The area surrounding Abbey Farm is rich in archaeological remains of all periods. Detail of which are itemised in Appendix 1.

6.0 Methodology

The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the specification compiled by Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Ifa: 2008).

The works comprised the observation of all groundworks, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

The Watching Brief was carried out in several phases according to the needs of the building contractors between the 14th June to 15th September 2010.

Excavation of the overlying waste ground was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

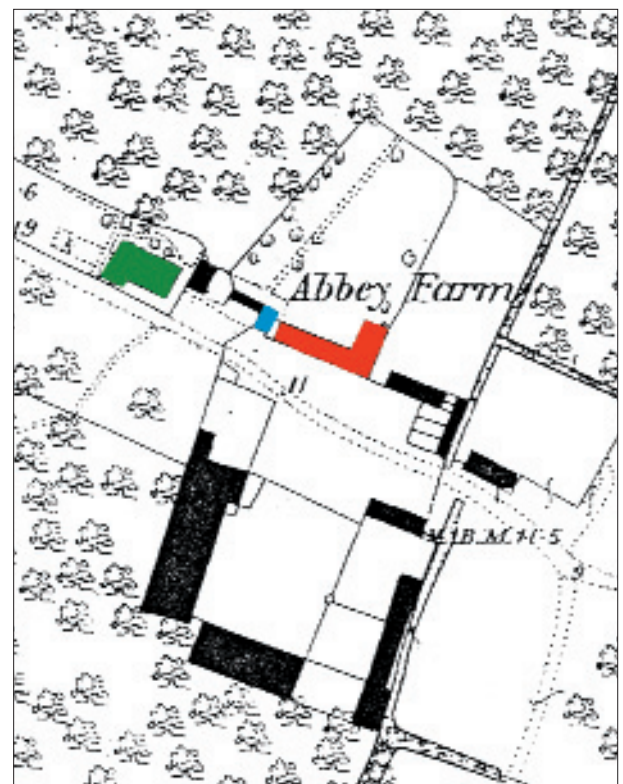
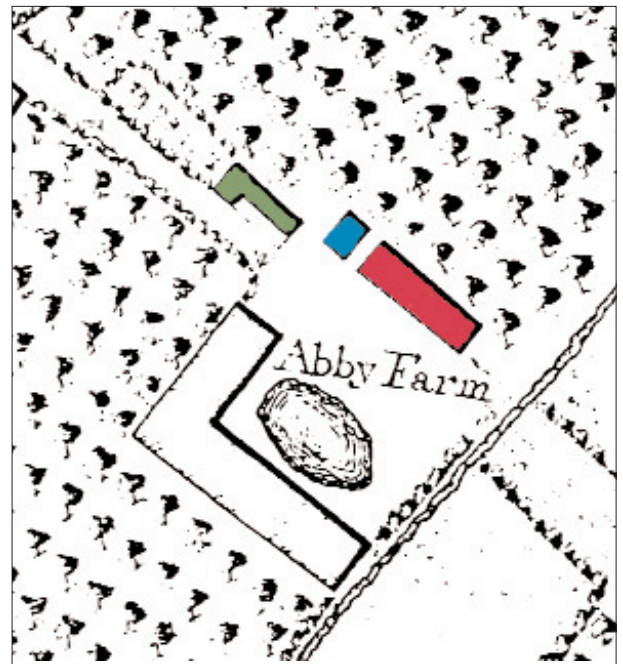


Fig 2 (top) and Fig. 3. show the location of the building about to be developed. .

All excavation were carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing features in plan and section.

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.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and methodology discussed with Archaeological Officers, KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 General

The site, formerly rough ground, was stripped of it's vegetation by machine and excavated by machine for the foundation slab. The overburden outside the buildings was rough ground mixed with rubble whilst inside the building a modern rubble and chalk floor were removed prior to a building slab being constructed.

8.0 Finds

No buried archaeological features located in the Watching Brief phase and no finds were retrieved.

9.0 Discussion

The development is of such a small area with such shallow foundations albeit in an historic setting that it was unlikely that archaeology would have been revealed.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Watching Brief has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the 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 M. A. Brice for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Adam Single Archaeological Officer, Heritage and Conservation (KCC).

Dr Paul Wilkinson MIfA. 18th November 2010

References

HER data (KCC)

IFA (1999 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

Kent County Council (2008) Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at the Brick Stables and Wagon Lodge, Abbey Barns, Abbey Road, Faversham, Kent

Appendix 1. – Summary of Archaeological Sites within 250m of site

The proposed development site lies on the north-east edge of the historic town of Faversham. The area is rich in archaeological remains and full details are available on the HER record provided by the County Historic Environment Record (HER) held in the Planning Dept, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent.

The area surrounding Abbey Barns is rich in archaeological remains of all periods and listed buildings from the C13th onwards. The Abbey Barns themselves (**TR 06 SW 9 MKE 4136**) were founded by King Stephen in 1148 and dissolved in 1538 with most of the buildings demolished apart from the barns. Adjacent to the barns Roman building remains including a villa were found by B. Philp in 1965 (**TR 06 SW 41- MKE 4167**).

Under these Roman remains a Iron-Age farmstead was recognised.

Other prehistoric remains were found close by at the QE School (**TR 06 SW 192- MKE 15722**).

There is a cropmark of a building yet to be identified 120m to the east (**TR 06 SW 75- MKE4197**).

In the same field, but on the southern boundary Roman finds were found during a Watching Brief on a pipeline (**TR 06 SW 228- MKE 17144**).



Figure 4. Location of Proposed Development Site (shown in red).

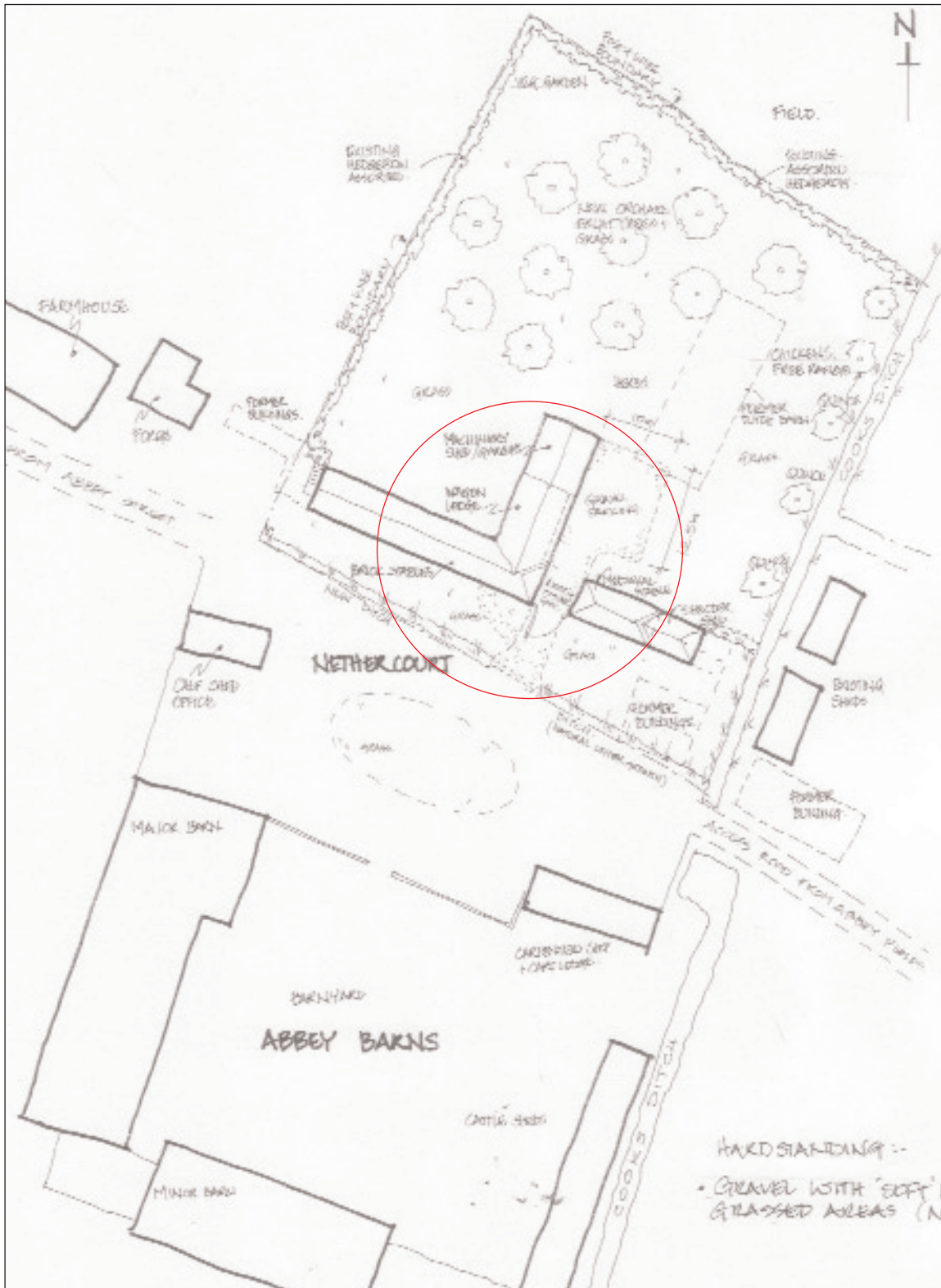


Figure 5. Proposed development (in red circle).

Appendix 2- Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at Nether Court, Abbey Barns, Abbey Street, Faversham, Kent
SWAT Site Code: AB/WB/10

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on buildings at Nether Court, Abbey Barns, Faversham. Planning Consent was requested (SW/07/0632) for a conversion to a dwelling whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that an Archaeological watching Brief be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2010) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.

The Archaeological Watching Brief consisted of numerous site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: Swale

Parish: Faversham

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 602151 161807

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: June-September 2010

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Head Brickearth

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2010) Archaeological Watching Brief on buildings at Nether Court, Abbey Barns, Faversham 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: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 15th October 2010



Plate 2. Proposed development showing removal of rubble/topsoil for building slab



Plate 3. Proposed development as built.