

# Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at the site of the proposed Grain Store, St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent



Date: 10/12/2013

NGR 625783 166918

Site Code: GRAIN-EV-13

(Planning Application F/TH/13/0901)

Report for  
St Nicholas Court Farms Ltd

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Plate 1. Area of Investigation (in red)

# **Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at the site of the proposed Grain Store, St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent**

NGR 625783 166918  
Site Code: GRAIN/EV/13

## **1. SUMMARY**

1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation and assessment of land at St Nicholas Court Farm in Kent. A planning application (F/TH/13/0901) for planning permission for a Grain Store and associated parking was submitted to Thanet Council whereby KCC Heritage requested that an Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment be undertaken in order 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 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council.

1.2 The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of 5 trenches which encountered no archaeological features. The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by St Nicholas Court Farms Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation and assessment at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 30<sup>th</sup> November to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

3.1 The proposed development site is located to the west of St Nicholas Court Farm and centered NGR 625783 166918. The site is on high ground overlooking the relict Wantsum Channel to the west and a solar farm to the north-east (SWAT Archaeology 2011). The proposed development area is open agricultural fields bounded to the north by the Thanet Way (A299), to the east by Potton Street, and to the east by the farm complex of St Nicholas Court Farm. According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, (1:50,000) the site has Bedrock Geology of Margate Chalk Member-Chalk with Superficial Deposits of Head 2, Clay and Silt (Brickearth). The site averages 16.00m-17.00mOD.

## **4. PLANNING BACKGROUND**

4.1 It is likely that the Local Planning Authority would have or may place an Archaeological

Condition on the current planning application. In consultation with Wendy Rogers Archaeological Heritage Officer KCC it was agreed that SWAT Archaeology who were on site could proceed with a pre-determination archaeological evaluation which, if negative, may enable the Local Planning Authority not to place an Archaeological Condition on the current planning application (f/TH/13/0901).

4.2 Requirements for the archaeological evaluation comprised trial trenching targeting a representative 5% sample of the impact area with 5 trenches (Fig. 1) designed to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

## **5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

5.1 The KCC HER archive shows that there are extensive cropmarks in the surrounding fields including several ring ditches (TR 26 NE 174, TR 26 NE 26 & 27). Archaeological work associated with the improvements to the A299 and the erection of agricultural buildings at the farm has revealed early Iron Age pottery, a Roman amphora (probably associated with a cremation burial), Roman pottery sherds, human skeletal remains and ditches and pits which may all suggest that a Romano-British settlement site existed in the vicinity.

5.2 HER entries include:

TR 26 NE 27

Crop marks of several ring ditches have been reported near St. Nicholas Court Farm. They are possibly the remains of Bronze Age barrows.

TR 26 NE 68

Three ring ditch crop mark features and a linear feature have also been identified near to St Nicholas at Wade.

TR 26 NE 112

Cropmark of a ring ditch with an internal feature.

TR 26 NE 162

A Mid Iron Age occupation site and an early Roman wall were found during work in advance of road development.

TR 26 NE 202

The remains of a Romano – British settlement were found at St Nicholas Court Farm. The possible site of a Roman villa. (TSMR Site 0304-1).

Further information on the potential of this area is provided in the County Historic Environment Record held in the Heritage Conservation, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX (telephone 01622 221536)

5.3 In September 2011 SWAT Archaeology conducted an Archaeological Watching Brief on the field to the north-east in advance of the construction of a 'solar farm'. In Trench 1 a cremation group of Roman pots had been disturbed by the machine which had been fitted with a toothed ditching bucket. The cremation group had been so disturbed that one vessel and its contents (Cremation 2) were on the spoil heap and the other (Cremation 1) had about 70% of its pot truncated. The remains of the two pots were collected and excavation of the remainder of the surviving pot were photographed and drawn prior to removal. The handful of small pieces of burnt bone left for collection were not of a condition to allow meaningful work to be undertaken by an osteoarchaeologist.

The pottery was analysed by the pottery specialist and Cremation 1 is dated to between c.50-75 AD and Cremation 2 to between c.75-100 AD.

Subsequently 20 worked flints were retrieved from trench runs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in a reasonably tight distribution pattern. The lithic specialist reports that:

"This assemblage comprised twenty pieces of worked flint, with most contexts producing only a single example. One round 'thumbnail' scraper of likely Beaker Period/Early Bronze Age date was recovered from Trench 1. [101], but patination suggests it is likely to be residual in that context. Most of the other flintwork was unpatinated, as expected in areas of brickearth geology, but showed damage from the processes of natural abrasion, ploughing and perhaps trampling".

This suggests that any finds not derived from modern ploughsoil contexts had seen a degree of exposure prior to incorporation within their context, or perhaps derived from former ploughsoil contexts. Thumbnail scraper aside, many of the other tools and flakes were simple, expedient or sometimes crude pieces which would not be out of place in broadly Bronze Age/Later Bronze Age (or later) assemblages. One small utilised flake from Trench 1 [102] and a knife from Trench 5 [501] could be of Mesolithic/Earlier Neolithic or Neolithic date, but a later date cannot be discounted" (SWAT Archaeology 2011).

## **6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2013) was:

- Establishing the degree of earlier prehistoric activity on the site given its topographic position and record of numerous ring ditches and barrows in the area;
- Establishing the degree of Iron Age and Romano-British activity on the site.
- Establishing the degree of medieval and post-medieval activity on the site;
- Providing an assessment of archaeology located and providing a statement of significance on all heritage assets within development area;
- Assessing the likely archaeological impact of the proposed development

## **7.0 METHODOLOGY**

7.1 Trial trenching was carried out on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov-3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2013 with the excavation of 5 trenches. Trench location was agreed prior to the excavation between KCC and SWAT. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. All trenches measured about 25m in length and 1.80m wide. The trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance.

## **8.0 MONITORING**

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

## **9.0 RESULTS**

The archaeological evaluation consisted of 5 trenches, 25m in length and 1.8m in width. They were located throughout the proposed development site. The trenches were situated either on arable land or grassland.

### **Trench 15 – 25m x 1.80m x < 0.32m**

Trench 15 was located south of the farm track and was aligned northwest-southeast. Topsoil (1500) consisted of dark brown grey firm sandy silty clay with moderate chalk flecks (marling), peg tile fragments, carbon flecks and small to large sub angular and sub rounded flints and flint nodules to a depth of 0.32m. The topsoil overlay the natural Head Brickearth (1501). No features were seen in this trench.

### **Trench 16 – 25m x 1.80m x < 0.38m**

Trench 16 was located southwest of Trench 15 and was aligned east-west. The topsoil (1600) was up to 0.32m thick and covered the natural Brickearth (1601). No archaeological features were seen in this trench.

### **Trench 17 – 25m x 1.80m x < 0.38m**

Trench 17 was located roughly in the centre of the development site and was aligned north-northeast – south-southwest. The topsoil (1700) was up to 0.34m thick and sealed the Brickearth (1701). No features were observed.

**Trench 18 – 25m x 1.80m x < 0.39m**

Trench 18 was located at the southwest edge of the development site and was aligned east-west. The topsoil (1801) measured 0.32m thick and covered the Brickearth (1801). No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

**Trench 19 – 25m x 1.80m x < 0.37m**

Trench 19 was located at the northwest corner of the development site, just south of the farm track and was aligned northeast-southwest. The topsoil (1900) was up to 0.33m thick and sealed the Brickearth (1901). No features were observed.

**10.0 FINDS**

10.1 The retained worked flints will be the subject of a specialist report from Paul Hart who wrote up the lithic material from the nearby solar array site.

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**11.0 DISCUSSION**

11.1 Unlike the trial trenches in the field to the north of this development area on site NICK EV 13, the five trenches dug in advance of the construction of a new granary store did not contain the archaeological layer found in all but one of the trenches from the neighbouring site.

11.2 The granary site was located on a gentle slope up to 2m lower than the site NICK EV 13, not on the relatively level top of the rise where the other trenches were located. Although no archaeological features were seen cutting the natural geology of Head Brickearth, unpatinated struck flints were found in the interface between the topsoil and the natural..

11.3 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. No archaeological activity was found during the evaluation which will inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site. The evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

**12.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The impact of the proposed development on areas of the site will be high with foundation excavations for the proposed grain store and associated parking.

**13.00 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Jim Pace for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council for her advice

and assistance.

Julie Martin supervised the fieldwork, assisted in the field by Paul Hart. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA 10/12/2013

## 14.00 REFERENCES

### Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2013) *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent*.

Wilkinson P. (Sept 2011) *Archaeological Watching Brief of Land at St Nicholas Court Farm, St Nicholas at Wade, Thanet, Kent*. Published document on [www.swatachaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatachaeology.co.uk) (2011).

Wilkinson P. (Dec 2013) *Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of land at St Nicholas Court Lodge Farm, Kent*.

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2011) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

### Maps

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1929-1952)

### Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>



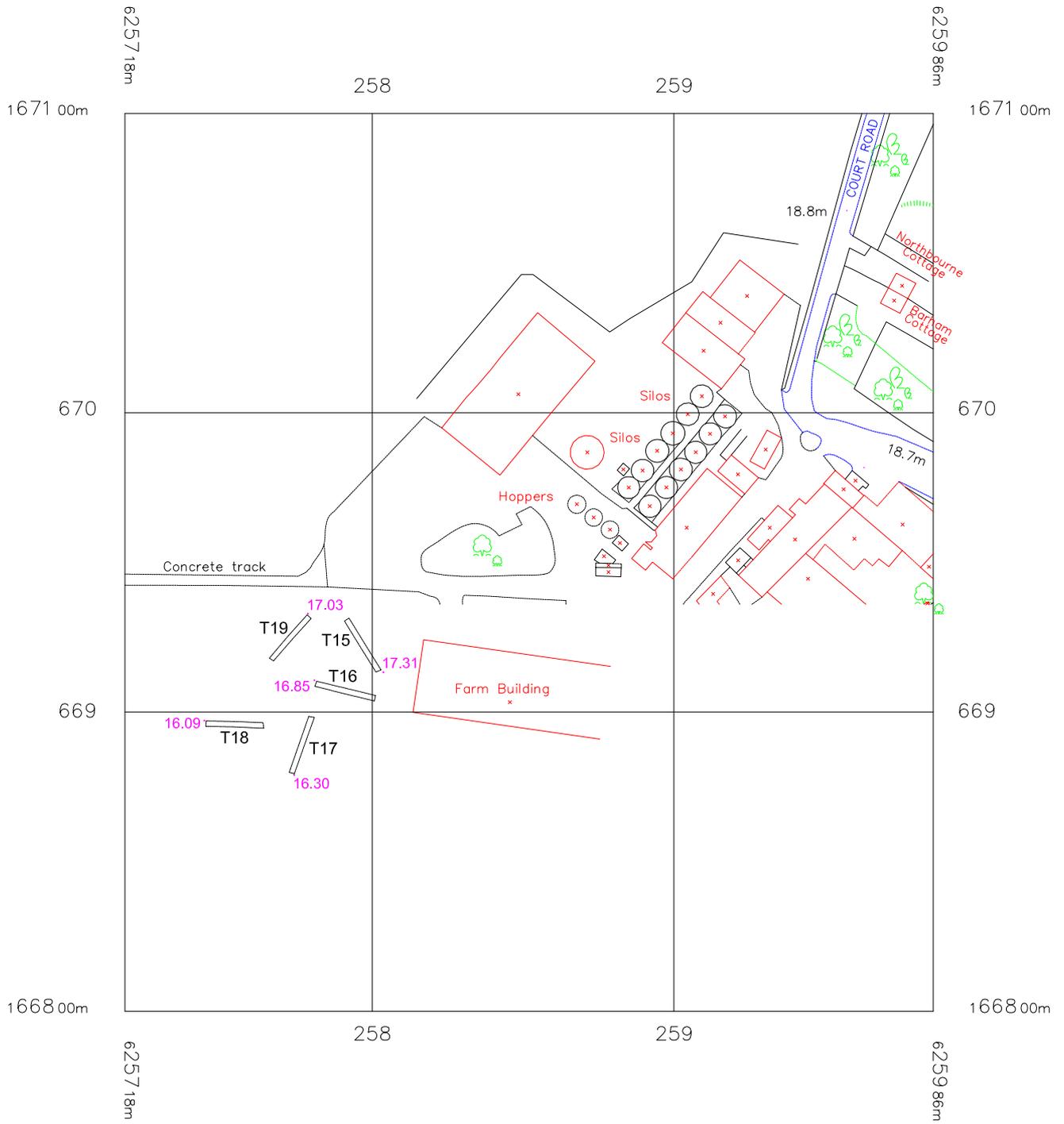
**Plate 2 – General shot of trenches, looking south-west.**



Plate 3 – Trench 15, looking north-west

**APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>St Nicholas Court Farm St Nicholas at Wade, Kent</i>	
<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>GRAIN/EV/13</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>As above</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at St Nicholas Court Farm, Kent. A planning application (F/TH/13/0587) for the construction of a Grain Store along with parking at the above site was submitted to Thanet District Council (TDC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Thanet District Council would have requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order 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 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of five trenches which encountered no archaeological features; some worked lithics were also retrieved.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Thanet</i>	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b> <i>Prehistoric</i>	
<b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 625783 166918</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Evaluation</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>Dec 2013</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Head Brick earth</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Evaluation at the site of the proposed Grain Store, St Nicholas Court Farm, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i>  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>10/10/2013</i>



1:2000@A4



Figure 1: Location of Site

0m

200m