

Archaeological Watching Brief at the site
of the former Police Station,
Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent



Date: 25/07/2014
Revised 31/07/2014

NGR 523861E 508216N
Site Code: POL-WB-14
(Planning Application SE/11/02471/OUT)

Report for
Persimmon Homes Ltd

Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates.....	3
1. Summary.....	4
2. Introduction.....	4
3. Site Description and Topography.....	4
4. Planning Background.....	5
5. Archaeological and Historical Background.....	5
6. Aims and Objectives.....	6
7. Methodology.....	6
8. Monitoring.....	6
9. Results.....	6
10. Finds.....	6
11. Discussion.....	6
12. Acknowledgements.....	7
13. References.....	7
Appendix1. KCC HER Summary Form.....	10

List of Plates

- Plate 1. Aerial view of area of investigation
- Plate 2. View of site
- Plate 3. View of ground reduction
- Plate 4. View of ground reduction

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site Plan and areas watched
- Fig. 2 Development site layout
- Fig. 3 Location plan showing former police station buildings



Plate 1. Area of Investigation (blue circle). Google Earth 1/1/2008 (eye alt 409m)

Archaeological Watching Brief at the site of the former Police Station, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent

NGR 523861E 508216N
Site Code: POL/WB/14

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief of land formally occupied by the former Police Station, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks in Kent. A planning application (SE/11/02471/OUT) for planning permission for the proposed demolition of the former police station and erection of up to approximately 52 residential units was submitted to the LPA whereby the LPA requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. This involved archaeological monitoring of the groundworks connected with the development and recording of any features revealed.

1.2 The Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained throughout the programme of ground reduction and excavation (Plates 2-4). No archaeological features were revealed during the ground works, and no archaeological artefacts retrieved.

1.3 The Archaeological Watching Brief 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 Persimmon Homes Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The watching brief was carried out from 20th March to 30th June 2014.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 The proposed development site is located to north-east of the A224, London Road north out of Sevenoaks. The NGR centre of the site is 523861E 508216N. The site, which is ca. 1.0km south of the edge of the Darent floodplain is at a level close to 85m OD. The British Geological Survey (BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 287 Sevenoaks, 1971) shows the site occupying part of a small patch of 1st Terrace Gravel which overlies the transition from the Hythe Beds upward across the narrow outcrop of the Sandgate Beds into the Folkestone Beds. At the site itself the alluvial gravel is probably underlain mainly by Folkestone Beds.

3.2 Strata's found on site were demolition mixed with topsoil (100) up to 0.30m thick and composed of a dark brown grey sandy silty clay and frequent carbon flecks, numerous frogged brick fragments and frequent small to large sub rounded and sub angular flints. The layer (101) below the topsoil was up to 0.15m thick and consisted of a very dark to mid brown friable sandy clay silt with rare small to medium sub angular and sub rounded flint and frequent charcoal and coal fragments. This deposit sealed the natural geology of alluvium (102) which was mid orange brown friable sandy clay and gravel.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

4.1 The Local Planning Authority placed the following condition on the planning consent:

(9) No development shall be carried out on the land until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a 'watching brief'.

This shall be undertaken by an archaeologist approved in writing by the Council so that excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

To investigate and record archaeological features as supported by Policy EN25A of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 KCC Heritage advice indicated that the site lies close to the route of the principle road to London from Roman times and a number of finds have been made in the vicinity of the development site. These include a burial of 2nd century date about 200m to the south-east, and find spots of a medieval papal bull and a prehistoric flint retrieved within 500m of the site.

6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

6.1 The purpose of the archaeological watching brief, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2014) are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeology exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 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 ground works. Stripping of demolition/topsoil and subsoil prior to construction of the housing and access road was watched (Plates 2 & 3) but no archaeological features were exposed. The construction methodology used was piling followed by ground reduction for concrete ring beams and slab foundation. The site had been subjected to extensive impact from the former police headquarters buildings which included in some areas below

ground rooms which in turn were demolished and the extensive concrete foundations pulled out of the ground.

7.2 Ground reduction excavation was carried out using a 20 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket for removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The area was subsequently inspected to identify any exposed features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features would have been 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.

7.3 No archaeology was revealed in the stripping or ground reduction. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC Archaeological Specification (2014) by Dr Paul Wilkinson of SWAT Archaeology. Attendance on site was for nine days from 20th March to 30th June on an intermittent basis to fit in with the ground workers programme.

8. MONITORING

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. RESULTS

The archaeological watching brief failed to reveal any archaeological features.

10. FINDS

No finds were retrieved.

11. DISCUSSION

11.1 A uniform stratigraphic sequence was identified throughout the site consisting of the natural drift geology of alluvium. The natural geology was sealed by a layer of what appears to be an demolition/garden topsoil overlaying the layer (101) below the topsoil which was up to 0.15m thick and consisted of a very dark to mid brown friable sandy clay silt with rare small to medium sub angular and sub rounded flint and frequent charcoal and coal fragments.

11.2 The site was reduced by a 20 ton machine fitted with a toothless bucket to the level of the natural geology to enable construction works to be facilitated on firm ground. No archaeological features were found cutting this geological horizon of the alluvium (102) which was mid orange brown friable sandy clay and gravel.

11.2 Despite the lack of identifiable cut archaeological features, this watching brief has been successful in revealing a stratigraphic sequence throughout the site.

The archaeological watching brief has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. No archaeological activity was found during the watching brief

which will inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Persimmon Homes Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council for her advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson undertook the fieldwork. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed and the report written by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

31/07/2014

13. REFERENCES

Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2014) *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent*

Institute for Field Archaeologists_ *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Published October 1994, revised Sept 2001 and Oct 2008 and last updated Nov 2013.

Maps

Ordnance Survey 4th 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/>

Plates



Plate 2. View of site (looking north-east)



Plate 3. View of site reduction showing strata of site (looking east)



Plate 4. View of ground reduction (looking north-west)

APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: <i>Former Police Station, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent</i>	
SWAT Site Code: <i>POL/WB/14</i>	
Site Address: <i>As above</i>	
Summary: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at the site of the former Police Station, Sevenoaks, Kent. A planning application (SE/11/02471/OUT) for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of 52 residential units at the above site was submitted to the LPA whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief 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 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Watching Brief consisted of watching the ground reduction and excavation which encountered no archaeological features.</i>	
District/Unitary: <i>Sevenoaks</i>	Parish:
Period(s): <i>n/a</i>	
Tentative:	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs): <i>NGR 523861E 508216N</i>	
Type of archaeological work (delete) <i>Watching Brief</i>	
Date of Recording: <i>20th March to 30th June 2014</i>	
Unit undertaking recording: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
Geology: <i>Alluvium</i>	
Title and author of accompanying report: <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Watching Brief at the site of the former Police Station, Sevenoaks, Kent</i>	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds: <i>SWAT</i>	
Contact at Unit: <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	Date: <i>31/07/2014</i>

This plan is a preliminary site plan and is not intended to be used for construction. It is subject to change without notice. The client is responsible for ensuring that the plan is accurate and complete. The client is also responsible for ensuring that the plan is in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. The client is also responsible for ensuring that the plan is in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

TK R14.11
BY DATE

General Mark
REV

RR18

PROJECT: Residential Development
Morewood Close
Severnoaks, Kent

CLIENT: PERSIMMON
Together, we make a home

DRAWING: Site Plan

SCALE: 1:250 (A1)
JOB NO.: 436/1334/101
REV:

Figure 1. Site Plan and area watched (inside orange line)

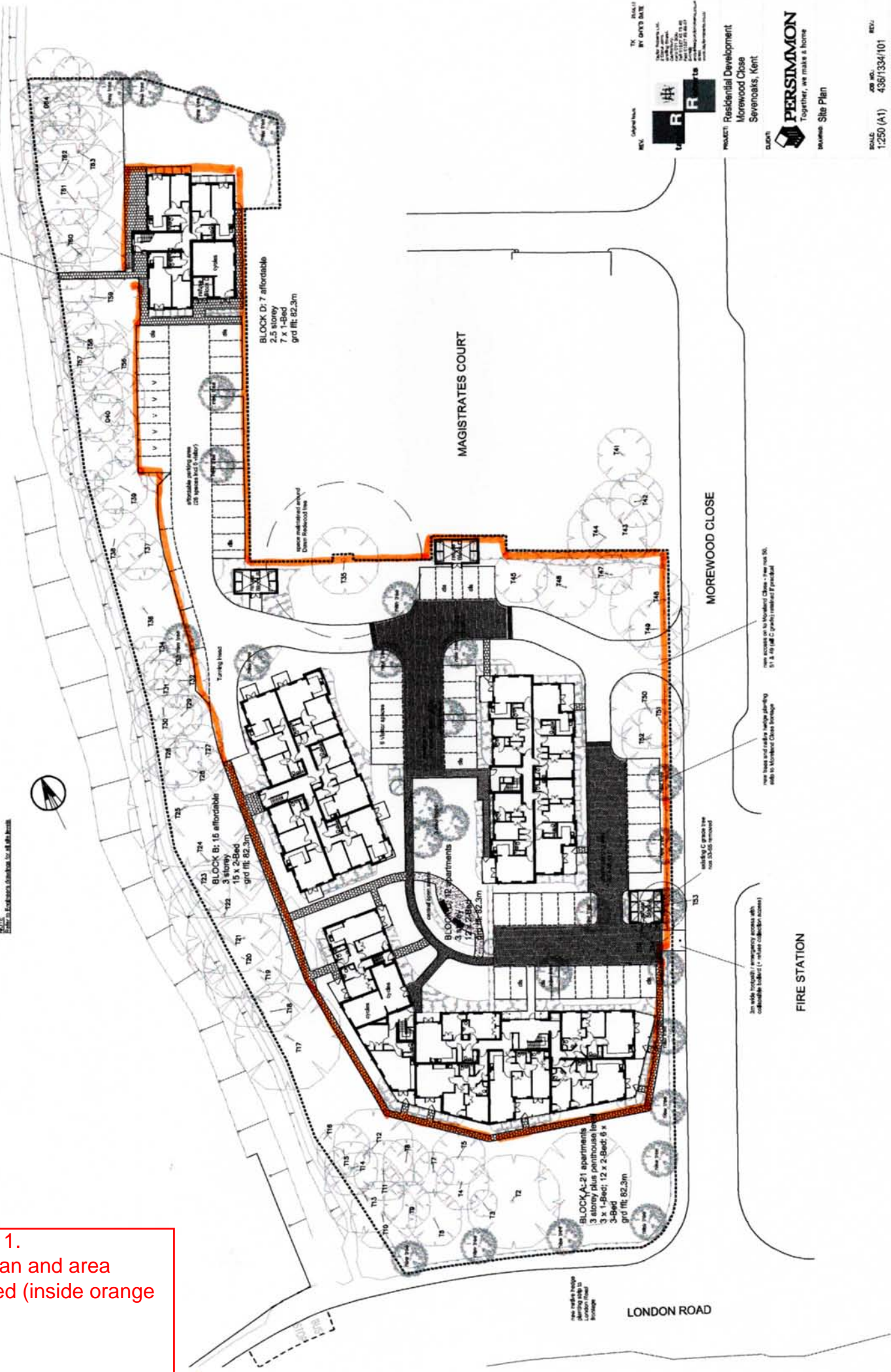
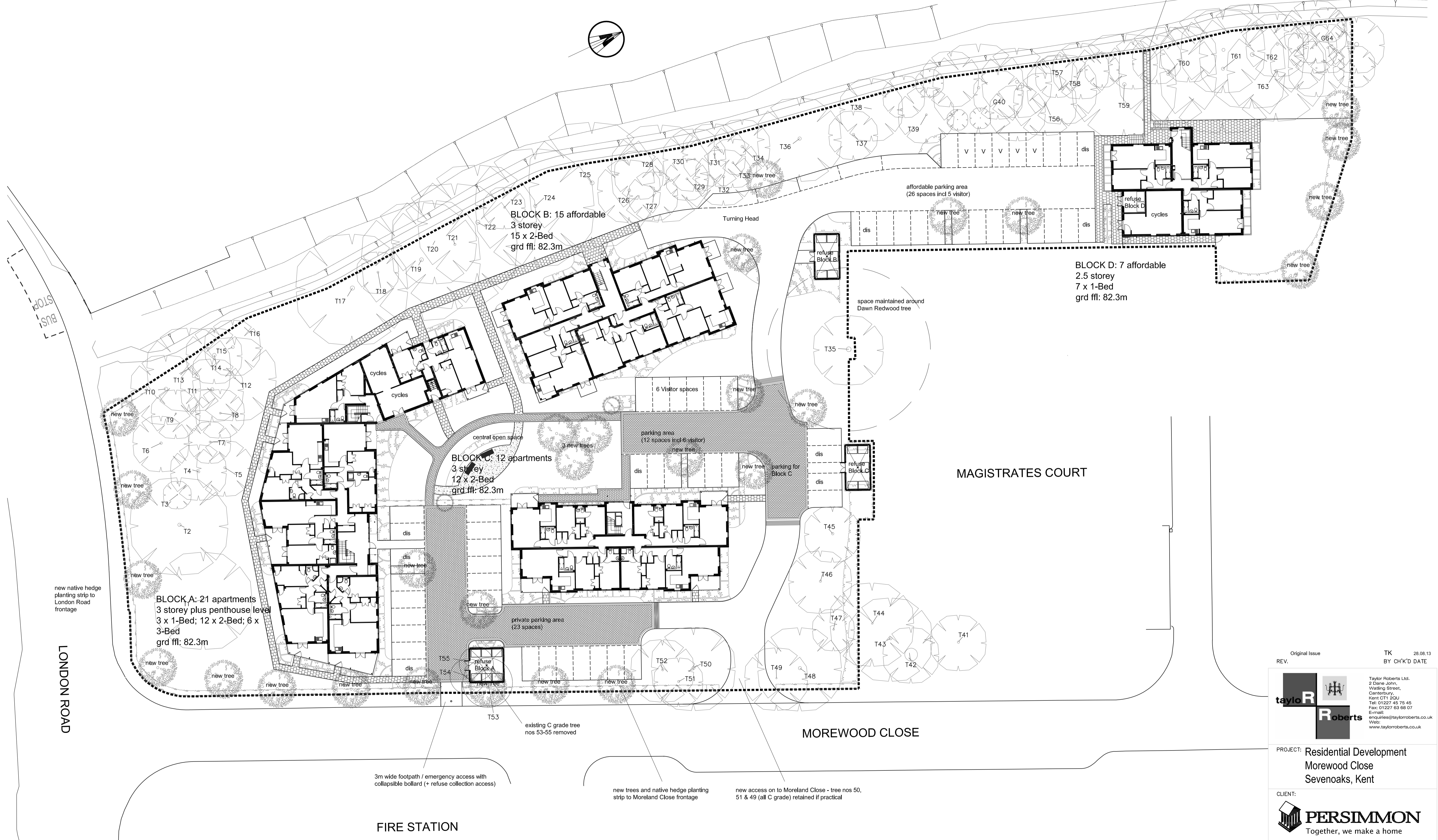


Figure 2
Development Plan

NOTE
Drawing based on Site Survey drawing as produced by Evans & Langford LLP
Drawing No. D7527/S1

NOTE
Refer to Engineers drawings for all site levels

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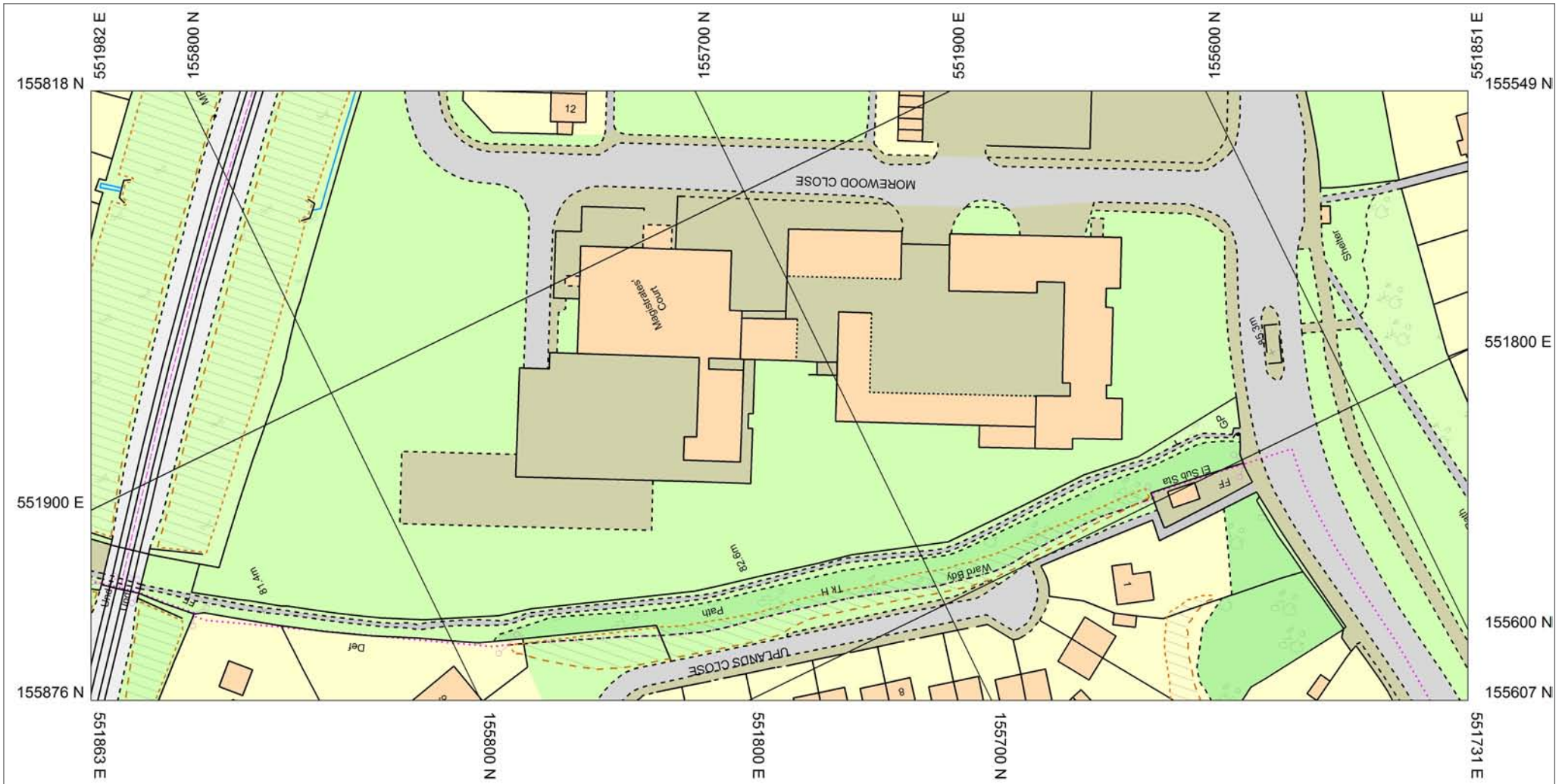
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PROJECT: Residential Development
Morewood Close
Sevenoaks, Kent

CLIENT:
PERSIMMON
Together, we make a home

DRAWING: Site Plan

SCALE: 1:250 (A1) JOB NO.: 436/1334/101 REV.:



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The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.



Scale 1:1250

Supplied By: National Map Centre Kent

Serial number: 001148379

Plot Centre Coordinates: 551857, 155712

Former Police Station,
Morewood Close, Sevenoaks

Figure 3