

# Archaeological Monitoring of land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High St, Staplehurst, Kent

NGR: 578615 143189



Planning application MA/13/1657  
Report for Raspberry Homes Ltd

## **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

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# Contents

1.0 SUMMARY.....	4
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	4
3.0 SCHEDULE OF VISITS.....	5
4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4.1 PROPOSED GROUNDWORKS.....	5
4.2 CONFIDENCE RATING.....	5
5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
6.0 METHODOLOGY.....	6
7.0 RESULTS.....	7
7.1 GENERAL.....	7
8.0 FINDS.....	7
9.0 DISCUSSION.....	7
10.0 CONCLUSION.....	7
11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	7
REFERENCES.....	7
APPENDIX 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	8

Plate 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2013)

Plate 2. Site strip

Plate 3. Site strip

Plate 4. View of excavated trenches

Plate 5. Excavating trenches

Plate 6. View of service trenches

List of Figures

Figure 1-3. Site and development plans

# Archaeological Monitoring of land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High St, Staplehurst, Kent

Date of report: 20/10/14



**Plate 1. Aerial view showing the site prior to development.**

**(GoogleEarth 7/9/2013, eye alt 215m).**

## **1.0 Summary**

1.1. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a terrace of three new homes to the rear of the Royal Oak in Staplehurst, Kent (Fig. 1 & Plate 1).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of Raspberry Homes Ltd.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the stripping of the site (Phase 1) and the machine excavation of the foundation trenches (Plates 4-5). The archaeological work was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1: Stripping of topsoil (Plates 2-3).

Phase 2: Foundation trenches and service connections (Plates 4-5).

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of any archaeological below ground impact.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is MA/13/1657.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was highlighted in the KCC Specification of the site being on the alignment of a Roman road, and Staplehurst as a medieval market town the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Planning Background**

Planning application MA/13/1657 was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Maidstone Borough Council. KCC Conservation Group on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition (10) was attached to the planning consent:

10. *The developer shall arrange for a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that in the event that archaeological are found on site, the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. No works shall start on site until a written programme and specification for the work has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority;*

*Reason: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest.*

### **3.0 Schedule of Visits**

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA from SWAT Archaeology monitored the excavation works on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

### **4.0 Aims and Objectives**

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were to:

*'contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks' (KCC 2014)*

4.2. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site monitoring took place.

4.3. 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 site is to the east of the High Street (Plate 1 & Fig 1). The site is located on ground behind the Royal Oak Public House. The building works watched were the topsoil strip followed by machining of foundation trenches to a depth of 1.00-1.20m and connection with existing services (Plates 2-6).

5.2 The British Geological Survey (1990, sheet 288 Maidstone) shows the site as lying on an extensive area of Weald Clay Formation which form the natural geology. The geology revealed on site (Plate 4) was a natural geology of Weald Clay overlaid by a strata of bright orange yellow sandy clay overlaid by a thin (23cm) layer of dark brown sandy silty topsoil.

### 5.3 Archaeological Data

Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer KCC highlights the possibility of a Roman road passing through or close to the site (Fig. 1 & Plate 1). In addition Staplehurst could have early medieval origins based on the Anglo-Saxon name which means a stake in a forest clearing possibly for tribal gatherings or fairs. In addition post-medieval activity of the adjacent inn could be revealed on the development site.

## 6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification, and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 2008).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of any revealed subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out in one phase according to the needs of the building contractors.

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

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

6.6. 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.

6.7. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and the methodology itemised in the Archaeological Watching Brief Specification produced by the Heritage Conservation Group, KCC (2014).

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 General**

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered.

## **8.0 Finds**

No buried archaeological features were located in the Archaeological Monitoring phase and no finds were retrieved.

## **9.0 Discussion**

The Watching Brief phase of works on the site included watching the strip of topsoil (Plates 2-3), the digging of the foundation trenches (Plates 4-5), and connection to existing services (Plate 6).

## **10.0 Conclusion**

The Archaeological Monitoring 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 Mark Corti for commissioning the works.

Dr Paul Wilkinson, FRSA., MIfA

## **References**

HER data (KCC 2014)

IFA (1994 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

KCC (2014) Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent

## APPENDIX 1

## Kent County Council HER summary form

<b>Site Name:</b> Land to the rear of Royal Oak, High St, Staplehurst, Kent	
<b>Site Address:</b> See above	
<b>Summary:</b> An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on 03,04/09/14 on the above site. No archaeological remains were revealed.	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Maidstone	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> 578615 143189 <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)</b>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> Watching Brief	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 03,04/09/14	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Geology:</b> Weald Clay Formation	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> Archaeological Monitoring of Land to the rear of the Royal Oak, High St, Staplehurst, Kent. P. Wilkinson	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  n/a  <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> P Wilkinson	<b>Date:</b> 20/10/14



**Plates**



**Plate 2. Phase 1, view of the site after topsoil strip (looking south-west)**



**Plate 3. Phase 1, view of the site after topsoil strip (looking west)**



**Plate 4. Phase 2. Trenches being excavated (looking SSW)**





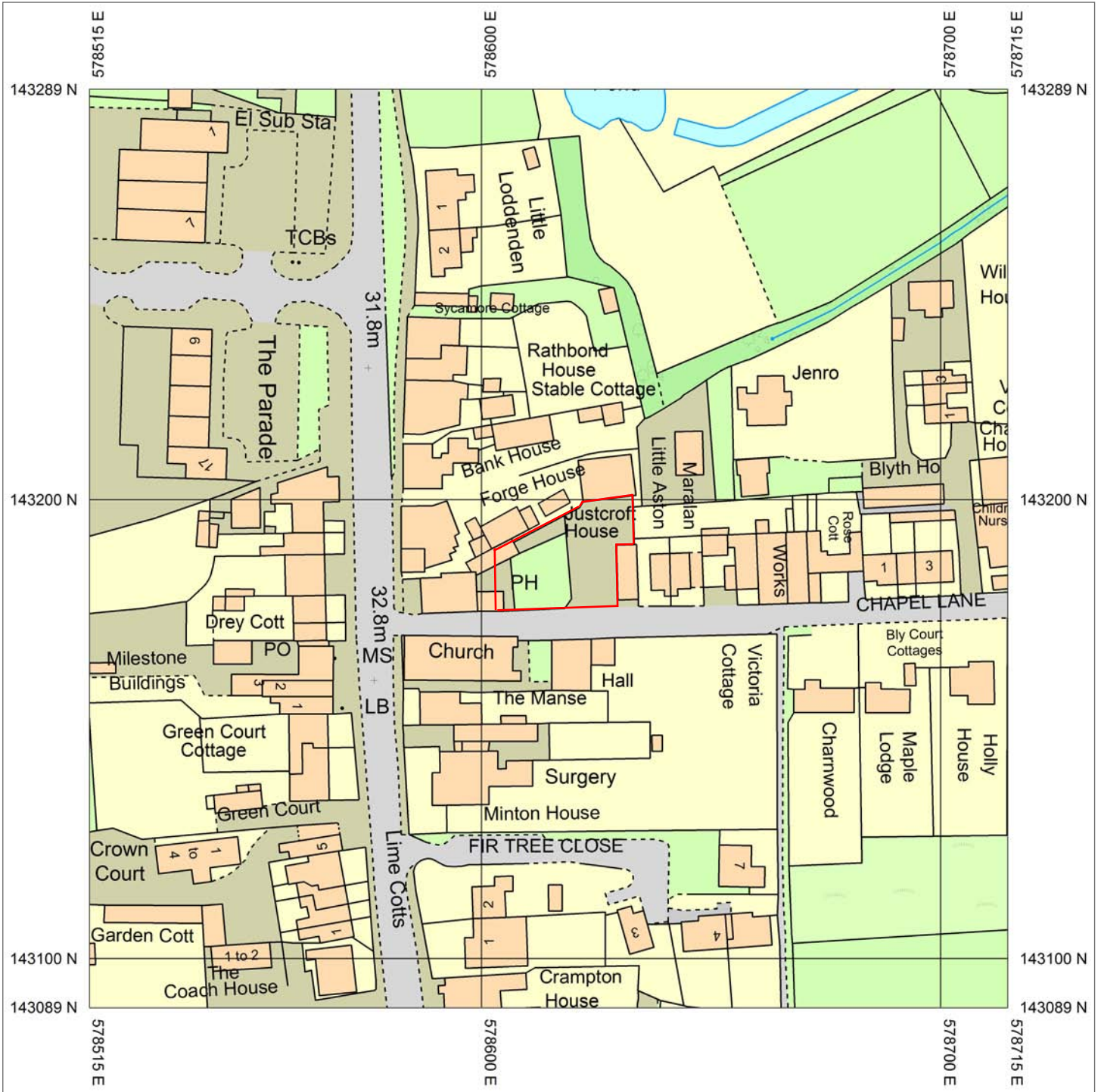
Plate 5. View of site showing depth of trenches and geology (looking SE)





**Plate 6. View of site showing service trench (looking SW)**





Pride of Kent

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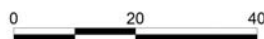
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High Street  
Staplehurst  
Kent  
TN12 0AH



Scale 1:1250

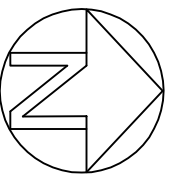
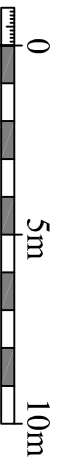
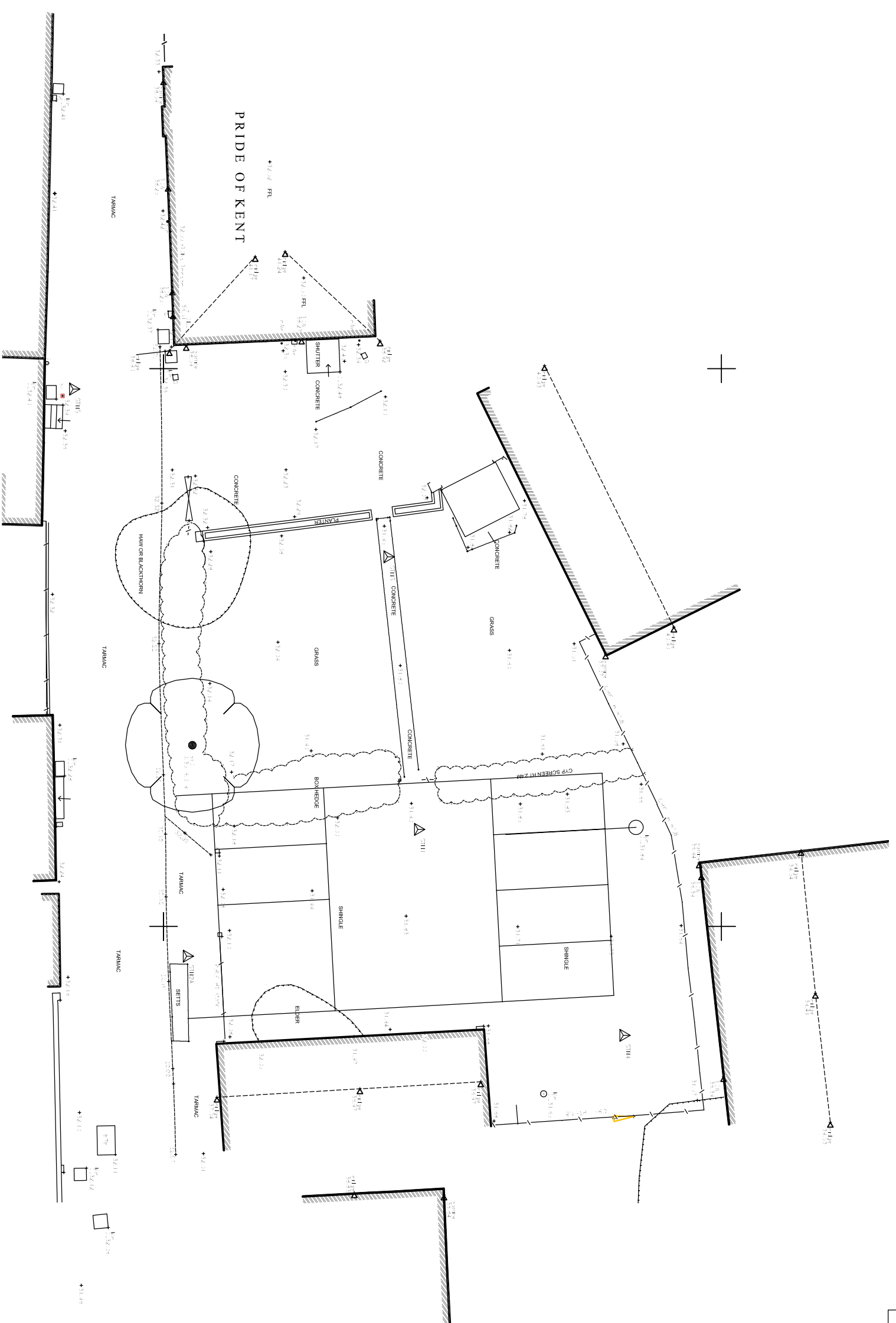
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Serial number: 001154697

Plot Centre Coordinates: 578615, 143189

**Figure 1**  
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Site not surveyed by BDB Design LLP,  
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product title <b>Redevelopment, Pride of Kent, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0AH</b>		drawing title <b>Existing Block Plan</b>	
scale 1:200 @ A3	date July 2013	drawing number <b>2427 - 102</b>	revision







project title <b>Redevelopment, Pride of Kent,          High Street, Staplehurst,          Kent, TN12 0AH</b>		drawing title <b>Proposed Block Plan</b>	
scale 1:200 @ A3	drawing number <b>2427 - 101</b>	revision <b>P1</b>	
date July 2013			

