# Archaeological Evaluation on Land at The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green, Kent

NGR Site Centre 560589 165286

Planning Application Number: 19/02005/FUL



SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112 info@swatarchaeology.co.uk www.swatarchaeology.co.uk

© SWAT Archaeology 2020 all rights reserved

## Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
1.1	Project Background5
1.2	Site Description and Topography5
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND5
2.1	Introduction5
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
3.1	Specific Aims (SWAT 2020)7
3.2	General Aims7
4	METHODOLOGY7
4.1	Introduction7
4.2	Fieldwork8
4.3	Recording
5	RESULTS
5.1	Introduction
5.2	Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence9
5.3	Overview9
6	FINDS
6.1	Introduction
7	DISCUSSION
7.1	Archaeological Narrative10
7.2	Conclusions10
8	ARCHIVE
8.1	General10

9	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	. 11
10	REFERENCES	. 11
11	APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES	. 10

## Figures

Figure 1	Site location map
Figure 2	Site location on plan
Figure 3	Trench location on proposed development
Figure 4	Trench plans and sections

Plates 1-10 Trenches and sections

#### Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by Wendy Rogers, Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in May 2020 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 17/12/2019) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of four trenches which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil (01) made ground (02) superficial deposits and bedrock geology (03) and of limited archaeological potential.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green in Kent (Figures 1-3).
- 1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to Sevenoaks District Council, requested that a programme of archaeological works comprising an archaeological evaluation be undertaken to satisfy one of the proposed planning conditions of the planning application 19/02005/FUL.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in May 2020 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology, prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Wendy Rogers Archaeological Officer at KCCHC.

## 1.1 4 Site Description and Topography

The application site is located within the village of New Ash Green and to the south of North Ash Road and about 150m from the centre of the village (Figure 2).

The NGR to the centre of the site is NGR 560589 165268 (Figure 2).

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the application site is set on a Bedrock Geology of Chalk. Superficial Deposits are recorded as Clay with Flint Formation. The site has planning permission (19/02995/FUL) for:

Partial demolition, extension and alteration of the existing office building, including retained office use (Use Class B1a) in The Manor and conversion and extension of the modern parts to 49no. residential units. The erection of 4no. new build residential houses. Associated landscaping, bin and bike stores and works.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## 2.1 Introduction

Details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the WSI Specification produced by SWAT Archaeology (17<sup>th</sup> December2019) and these include an KCCHER search shows that the only archaeological site in the near vicinity of the proposed development area is the Manor House a Grade II listed building (TQ 66 NW101) and some outlying farm sites (see AP 1, 2, 3).

However, in the Kent Archaeological Review (KAR 20/1970) an article by R M Walsh on the on a possible Roman villa (North Ash Villa) in the vicinity of the proposed development area of The Manor House:

As soon as it was learned that outline town planning had been granted for the establishment of the new village, to be known as New Ash Green, it was realised that the site of a recorded Roman Villa was threatened. This had previously been dug by the Dartford Antiquarian Society in 1914. A rough plan of the Villa, together with a small box of finds, was in existence at Dartford Museum and these have been kindly lent by Mr Ritson to facilitate our researches. Unfortunately, no excavation notes or other documentary evidence, apart from a single paragraph in VCH, could be traced.

Within the terms of our accepted policy, it was agreed that this site should be treated as an emergency and work commenced even though our existing excavation programme made it imperative that this dig was implemented concurrently with another project. With the kind permission of Mr L Bilsby, Director of Span Developments Ltd, it was decided to carry out a season's excavation to ascertain the position and limits of the Roman Villa sited at NGR 5608 1650.

As no surface indications of the site were apparent, a small trial hole was initially excavated and this revealed the flint and clay foundations of a wall. General excavations commenced in April, by trial trenching across the site. A filled-in ditch containing Belgic sherds was discovered, together with traces of the corner of a building which aligned with the wall in the initial test hole some 30 feet beyond the ditch. Trial trenching on two parallel lines, roughly on a north south basis, revealed robber trenches, which subsequently proved to be the remains of the villa walls. A trackway (?) has also been uncovered, formed of a layer of pebbles approximately 2 inches thick and 10 feet wide with flints scattered along what appear to be ruts in the surface.

It is now clear that after the 1914 excavations the foundations were completely removed, probably in order to cultivate the ground.

The excavations have so far revealed that the dimensions of the earlier plan, whilst giving a good indication, are by no means accurate, either in outline or dimensionally.

At this stage we can say the villa was oriented approximately east-west and measured 100 feet by 50 feet almost exactly. Other features which have also been uncovered in near proximity to the villa include what could be a pond or ditch on the south side in close proximity to the supposed position of the Bath Wing. Several depressions in the woods at a distance not exceeding 50 feet from the villa, one of which is still referred to as a pond, were quite possibly in use in Roman times and further researches on these features are called for.

Finds include many fragments of roofing tile, oyster shells, pottery sherds, including two small pieces of Samian, a coin of Galienus and a bronze ring which was possibly used in conjunction with some sort of harness. The centre of the villa had not previously been completely excavated and just below plough soil the remains of a storage jar were discovered in conjunction with a quantity of iron slag. More finds can be expected in this area in the future and we are also hopeful of finding refuse pits with their associated occupational debris. In view of the apparently complete destruction of the site, it would appear that this would lend itself to a mechanical trial trenching in the future to answer a lot of the outstanding queries (KAR Issue 20/1970).

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

## 2.2 Specific Aims (SWAT 2020)

- 2.2.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (SWAT 2020) were to:
- **2.1** (6.1) The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation is to establish or otherwise the presence of any potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development. The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for archaeological activity and in particular the earlier history of the PDA and also any other Prehistoric, Roman and later archaeological activity.

#### 2.2 General Aims

- 2.2.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;
  - establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
  - ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
  - determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT Dec 2019 and KCC Manual of Specifications 'B') and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (ClfA 2017).

## 3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 A total of four evaluation trenches and test pits were excavated across the Site (Figures 3-7).
- 3.2.2 The trenches was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed and toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable natural or archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.
- 3.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were 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. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and ClfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

## 3.3 Recording

- 3.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights. These are retained in the site project archive.
- 3.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. 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 site project archive.
- 3.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

## 4 RESULTS

## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A total of four evaluation trenches and test pits were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

## 4.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded comprising a mix of demolition material sealing an intact subsoil of mid brown clay silt overlaying the natural chalk bedrock. TOPSOIL (Trenches 1-2)

Topsoil (CRN 01) was present in the undeveloped parts of the site and was typically 0.2m (bgl) below ground level.

MADE GROUND (Trenches 2-4)

Made Ground (CRN 02) materials were present at a depth range of 0.2 – 0.5m bgl. The composition of Made Ground was inconsistent across the site; beneath the car park it typically comprised of tarmac, underlain by gravels, characteristic of highways construction, whereas elsewhere it comprised a mix of clays, sands and gravels and was indicative of reworked superficial materials, likely associated with the original construction.

SUPERFICIAL STRATA (Trenches 1-4)

Clay with Flints deposits (CRN 03) were seen to underlie the Made Ground to a maximum depth of 1.2m bgl and generally consisted of a firm to stiff clay matrix with gravels of flint. Uppermost part of the subsoil to the depth of (0.8m bgl) was a post medieval colluviums (dated

on basis of recovered brick and peg tile fragments) and was exposed in Trench 1 and 2 SOLID STRATA (Trench 1, 2 and 3)

Solid strata (CRN 04) of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation group were observed present at depths between 0.3mbgl to 8.0mbgl. This stratum generally consisted of a stiff weathered stiff cream unstructured silty clayey chalk, with occasional brown veins

4.2.1 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figures 1-8 provide a site plan, trench location plan and sections and plans whilst Plates 1-25 include selected site photographs.

## 4.3 Overview

4.3.1 The trenches were located across the footprint of the proposed buildings to ensure full coverage of potential archaeological remains.

## 5 FINDS

6.1 No finds of any archaeological merit were recovered from the archaeological evaluation.

## 6 Discussion

## 6.1 Archaeological Narrative

The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation was to establish presence of any potential archaeological features. The archaeological investigation failed to expose any meaningful archaeology and all four trenches exposed material from modern deposits. The evaluation revealed absence of archaeological features, deposits and artefacts.

Trench location was designated to give a good coverage of an area to be impacted on by the proposed development. Two designated trenches within car park area, to the north of trench 4 were abandoned because this area will not be impacted on during the proposed development. The trench 4 located on the car park was positioned within area of the proposed building. Location of the trench was adjusted to omit disturbed area of modern drain and three boreholes. The car park area around trench 4 was flat. In the past natural slope was reduced to form a levelled platform for the car park. The thickness of the made ground was increasing in depth in north direction. The thickness of the made ground exposed in boreholes (BH1, SPT03, and SPT04) was 0.6m.

#### 6.2 Conclusions

- 6.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.
- 6.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work show that the proposed development is not likely to impact on any archaeological remains.

## 7 ARCHIVE

## 7.1 General

- 7.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.1.2 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 will be retained by SWAT Archaeology until a Kent museum archive procedure is in place.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 8.1.1 SWAT would like to thank the developer for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.
- 8.1.2 Bartek Cichy supervised the archaeological evaluation and survey and illustrations were produced by B. Cichy. Paul Wilkinson MCIfA edited the text for this report.

## 9 REFERENCES

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

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, Standard and guidance: for field evaluation.

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

SMA 1995. Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive, Society of Museum Archaeologists

Compiled by: SWAT Archaeology (PW). The Office, School Farm Oast, Faversham, Kent

Dated 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

## **Appendix 1: Trench Tables**

Trench 1	Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Depth: 0.35-0.65m Trench alignment: WNW-ESE			
	Ground level at WNW end: 131.52m OD Ground level at ESE end: 130.82m OD			
	Trench located on undeveloped plot with grass and surrounded by trees and bushes			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)(bgl)	
	Top soil	Firm compaction, dark brown/black clayey silt		
101		with moderate flint pebble (<30mm), occ. Sub-	0.0.25	
101		angular flint cobbles, freq. small roots, grass	0-0.55	
		vegetation surrounded by trees and bushes.		

	Subsoil – Post	Firm compaction, Dark brown mottled mid brown	
	medieval	clayey silt with moderate chalk (<10mm), flint	
102	colluvium	(<50mm) and occ. fragments of brick and peg tile	0206
102		(<40mm). Context located at ESE end of the	0.5-0.0
		trench, overlying 103. Increasing in depth	
		towards ESE.	
	Subsoil –	Firm compaction, mid slightly orangey brown silty	
103	superficial clay	clay with frequent chalk (<40mm) and flint	0.6+
		(<100mm; all sorts of shapes, derived from chalk)	
	Subsoil –	Firm compaction mid orangey brown heavy clay	
104	superficial clay	with abundant flint nodules (<200mm) and chalk	0.35+
		(<50mm). Context located within	
	Bedrock - chalk	White chalk bedrock with occ. Iron stains, freq.	
		flint nodules (<300mm). Top surface cracked and	
105		covered with narrow parallel scars willed with	0.35+
		clay and disturbed by roots. Outcrop of bedrock	
		located within central extent of the trench.	
106	Modern active	N-S aligned modern trench cutting through chalk	0.31
100	services	bedrock and backfilled. Active services	0.3+

Trench 2	Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Depth: 0.35-0.65m Trench alignment: NE-SW			
Trench 2	Ground level at NE end: 130.83m OD Ground level at SW end: 132m OD			
	Trench located on u	undeveloped plot with grass and surrounded by trees	and bushes	
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)(bgl)	
	Top soil	Firm compaction, dark brown/black clayey silt		
201		with moderate flint pebble (<30mm), occ. Sub-	0.0.4	
201		angular flint cobbles, freq. small roots, grass	0-0.4	
		vegetation surrounded by trees and bushes.		
	Subsoil – Post	Firm compaction, Dark brown mottled mid brown		
	medieval	clayey silt with moderate chalk (<10mm), flint		
202	colluvium	(<50mm) and very rare fragments of brick and	0407	
202		peg tile (<40mm). Context overlying 103.	0.4-0.7	
		Increasing in depth towards NE. Context		
		disturbed by modern tree roots.		
	Subsoil –	Firm compaction, mid slightly orangey brown silty		
203	superficial clay	clay with frequent chalk (<40mm) and flint	0.7+	
		(<100mm; all sorts of shapes, derived from chalk)		
	Subsoil –	Firm compaction mid yellowish brown silty clay		
204	superficial clay	(90%) with abundant flint nodules (<300mm) and	0.55	
204		chalk (<50mm). Context located within SW end of	0.55+	
		the trench		
	Bedrock - chalk	White chalk bedrock with occ. Iron stains, freq.		
		flint nodules (<300mm). Top surface cracked and		
205		heavily disturbed by tree roots. Small 1m by 0.4m	0.6+	
		Outcrop of bedrock located within SW end of the		
		trench.		

	Modern made	Re deposited compacted chalk gravel on top of	
206	ground	geotextile membrane – Context located at SW	0-0.55
		end of the trench	

	Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Depth: 0.35-0.65m Trench alignment: NW-SE			
Tronch 2	Ground level at SE end: 133.11m OD Ground level at NW end: 133.3m OD			
Trench 5	Trench located alongside 1.2m high retaining wall within narrow plot with grass and			
	flowers. Natural slo	pe was terraced/reduced in the past during construc	tion of the large	
	building to the nort	h.		
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)(bgl)	
	Top soil	Firm compaction, dark brown/black clayey silt		
201		with moderate flint pebble (<30mm), occ.	0 0 15	
501		modern rubbish, freq. small roots, grass	0-0.15	
		vegetation.		
	Bedrock - chalk	White chalk bedrock with occ. Iron stains, freq.		
302		flint nodules (<300mm). Top surface cracked and	0.15+	
		heavily disturbed by modern construction works.		
303	Active services -	Modern trench located alongside SW trench wall	0.15+	
	ВТ		0.13+	
304	Modern concrete	Half metre wide concrete running across the	0.15	
304		trench at SE end	0.13+	

Tronch 4	Dimensions: 20m x 1.8m Depth: 0.25m Trench alignment: WNW-ESE			
mench 4	Ground level at ESE end: 134.79m OD Ground level at WNW end: 134.8m OD			
	Trench located on the car park within area of the new proposed building			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)(bgl)	
401A	Tarmac	Hard tarmac	0-0.1	
401B	Bedding	Pinkish angular aggregate	0.1-0.2	
	Natural -	Compact, mid orangey brown clayey gravel.		
402	superficial clay	Gravel is flint pebble ( average 20mm, max	0.2+	
		70mm) and nodules (<250mm)		
	Natural -	Firm compaction , mid orangey brown clay with		
403	superficial clay	freq. flint nodules(<200mm) and moderate flint	0.2+	
		pebble(<50mm)		
	Natural -	Red mottled mid orangey buff, stiff hard clay		
404	superficial clay	with occ. sparse flint nodules (<200mm) and	0.2+	
		pebbles (<50mm)		
405	Natural -	buff mottled mid orangey brown , stiff hard clay	0.2+	
405	superficial clay	– stone less	0.2 1	
106	Natural -	Hard, red mottled grey gravelly clay with freq.	0 2 0 22	
400	superficial clay	flint (average 20mm, max 120mm). Small 1m by	0.2-0.22	

		0.5m irregular patch, diffusing into underlying	
		404	
	Modern Land	Yellow perforate earthen ware pipe in narrow	
407	drain	trench. N-S aligned context. Truncated by car park	0.2-0.3
		levelling works.	

## Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green, Kent DA3 8HQ

SWAT Site Code: ASH/EV/2020

Site Address: As above

#### Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has a planning permission (19/02005/FUL) whereby Sevenoaks District Council requested that Archaeological works be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed no meaningful archaeology.

District/Unitary: Sevenoaks District Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 560589 165268

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: May 2020

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Chalk

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2020) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at The Manor House, North Ash Road, New Ash Green, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

No meaningful archaeology found

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson





Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.







Figure 4: Trench plans and representative sections

New Ash Green, Manor House - Evaluation Plates



Plate 1: Looking SW at the NE quarter of the site. Trench 1 is visible on the right and trench 2 on the left



Plate 2: Looking NW at Trench 1. Within NW extent chalk bedrock was exposed descending to the SE where it was overlaid by superficial clays of which uppermost is recent (Post Medieval) colluvial removed during excavation.



Plate 3: Looking NNE at section exposed in trench 1.



Plate 4: Looking SW at Trench 2. Similar to trench 1, suerficial clays were exposed throughout the trench and outcrop of chalk bedrock within SW end of the trench. Top soil and underlying post medieval drift deposit were removed during trench excavation. Heavy root disturbance across the trench



Plate 5: Looking NW at section exposed in trench 2, through topsoil and post medieval drift subsoil



Plate 6: Outcrop of chalk bedrock exposed in SW end of trench 2



Plate 7: Made ground (chalk and geo-membrane) at the SE end of trench 2



Plate 8: Looking SE at Trench 3. BT service runs along trench wall on the right; chalk bedrock exposed and modern disturbance



Plate 9: Looking SE at trench 4. Trench 4 is located in the area where the where new houses will be build. Place was chosen to avoid modern services – modern drain runs roughly underneath left edge of the spoil bank on the left. Further to the left three boreholes were located.



Plate 10: Flint gravel exposed within SE half of trench 4