



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF Land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP

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Site code: **TMM-EV-21**

NGR: 577050 155454

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 SWAT Archaeology was commissioned by the Client to carry out archaeological evaluation in preparations for the development of land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP.

1.1.2 Archaeological evaluation commenced on 1st February 2021 and was completed by 5th February 2021. Monitoring visit from Senior Archaeological Officer was carried out remotely on 5th February 2021. Works were carried out within Area of PDA where 9 trenches were dug. Evaluation in the field exposed remains of allotment gardens and potential retention wall although only one course brick was found capped by soil mixed up with metal waste, like pipes, metal rings and wires.

1.1.3 Evaluation trenches excavated within car park area has exposed vast modern sequence of hardcore deposits concealing buried top-soil. It looks like the land originally was a slope descending northwards towards the river Len and was subsequently terraced and levelled off with demolition debris.

1.1.4 The southern extent of carpark contained ceramic pipes possibly diverting water from adjacent stream. Pipes are connected to the well/manhole structure which was a part of a paper mill water supply.

1.1.5 Trench 8 located to the south has exposed shallow walls, probably functioning as a soil retention barrier.

1.1.6 No earlier archaeological cuts, structures or deposits were found.

1.2 Planning background

1.3 Site description, Geology and Topography

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2020) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

3.2 Fieldwork

3.2.1 A total of 9 evaluation trenches with short contingency Trench 8A were excavated within the extents of the Site.

3.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned by metal detector for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable 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 LPA and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included 8 working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

3.2.4 On completion, the trenches were made safe and left open in order to provide the opportunity for a curatorial monitoring visit. Backfilling was carried out once all recording, survey and monitoring had been completed.

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.

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 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 as [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 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The principle objective of the archaeological evaluation is 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.
- 4.2 To 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.
- 4.3 To 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.
- 4.4 The opportunity will also be taken during the course of the evaluation to place and assess any archaeology revealed within the context of other recent archaeological investigations in the immediate area and within the setting of the local landscape and topography. In general the work is to ensure compliance with the archaeological requirements from the Senior Archaeologist at Kent County Council that an archaeological evaluation to take place as a post-planning requirement, and to publish the results either on line, or through OASIS and/or in a local journal.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 Introduction and Summary Results
- 5.1.1 Archaeological evaluation on land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP has exposed natural geology comprising yellow-grey to orange-brown clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks.
- 5.1.2 Evaluation trenches in the field exposed remains of allotment gardens and potential retention wall although only one course brick was found capped by soil mixed up with metal waste, like pipes, metal rings and wires.

- 5.1.3 Evaluation trenches excavated within car park area has exposed vast modern sequence of hardcore deposits concealing buried top-soil showing the original land as a slope descending northwards towards the river Len and was subsequently terraced and levelled off with demolition debris.
- 5.1.4 The southern extent of carpark contained ceramic pipes possibly diverting water from adjacent stream. Pipes are connected to the well/manhole structure which was a part of a paper mill water supply. The overflow from inspected well conveys water to the river Len, partially through ceramic pipes that were superseded by plastic ones during the construction of car park.
- 5.1.5 Trench 8 located to the south has exposed shallow walls, probably functioning as a soil retention barrier. Majority of the bricks appears to be post war; bonding material is partially soft yellow sandy but in most places very hard, fine grained concrete-like mortar was used.
- 5.1.6 No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of evaluation.
- 5.2 Trench Narratives
- 5.2.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3) was placed in north-western part of the site in north-northeast; south-southwest alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 18.66metres in length and 0.48metre in maximum depth. (103) comprising light yellow-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks. Modern cut for possible fence post and treebale were exposed in southern part of this trench. A water spring was also exposed at southern end of this trench and rapidly filled-in its northern end. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed in this trench.
- 5.2.2 Trench 2 (Figure 3) was placed in central-western part of the site in east-west alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 14.58metres in length and 0.95 metre in maximum depth where an extension was excavated to better understand exposed remains. It exposed modern levelling deposit comprising garden soil with metal debris capping natural geology context (203). A modern footpath in north-east; south-west alignment was exposed in eastern part of this trench. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.3 Trench 3 (Figure 3) was placed in central-western part of the site in east-west alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 16.50metres in length and 1.05 metre in maximum depth where an extension was excavated to better understand exposed remains. It exposed modern levelling deposit comprising garden soil with metal debris capping natural geology context (203). A one-brick course soil retention wall (remains) was exposed at western end of this trench. Bricks looks modern, definitely post war and bonding material used was hard concrete-like mortar. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.4 Trench 4 (Figure 3) was placed in south-western part of the site in NE-SE alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 15.50metre long and 0.43 metre in maximum depth. Trench has exposed natural

geology (403) comprising orange-brown clay-sand-silt with infrequent angular stones. No archaeological cut or deposits were exposed here.

- 5.2.5 Trench 5 (Figure 3) was placed in central part of the site in north-south alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 18.56metres in length and 1.4metre in maximum depth. Trench has exposed vast modern levelling deposit capping natural geology context 503 comprising orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.6 Trench 6 (Figure 3) was placed in north-eastern part of the site in east-west alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 15metre long and 1.5metre in maximum depth. Trench has exposed vast modern levelling deposit capping natural geology 603 comprising orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent angular stones. A green staining within exposed natural geology surface derived from overlaying demolition debris. Modern service trench was exposed roughly in the middle part of this trench. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.7 Trench 7 (Figure 3) was placed in north-eastern part of the site in north-south alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 16.68metre in length and 2.8metre in maximum depth. Trench has exposed vast modern levelling deposit capping natural geology context 703 comprising orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.8 Trench 8 (Figure 3) was placed in south-eastern part of the site in east-west alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 18.12 metre in length and 0.8metre in maximum depth. Trench has exposed natural geology context 803 comprising orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent angular stones and sandstone flecks. Trench has exposed modern soil retention wall at its eastern end and ceramic pipe in east west alignment. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.9 Trench 8A (Figure) this contingency trench was placed adjacently to the west of Trench 8 discussed above in the same alignment. It measured 1.8metre wide by 9.45metre in length and 0.25metre in maximum depth. It exposed modern soil retention wall in roughly east-west alignment cutting through natural geology concealed by recent car-park surface consisting of small stones aggregate. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.
- 5.2.10 Trench 9 (Figure 3) was placed in eastern part of the site in north-south alignment and measured 1.8metre wide by 17.32metre long and 2.2 metre in maximum depth. Trench exposed natural geology context 903 comprising orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks. A modern service trench was exposed in southern part of evaluation trench. No archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed here.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and exposed natural geology comprising white-grey to orange-grey clay-sand-silt with infrequent sandstone flecks overlain in central and eastern part of the site by modern levelling deposits comprising soil with demolition debris. It also exposed remains of allotment gardens, water spring and a modern footpath in western part of the site.
- 6.2 Remains of soil retention walls were exposed in Trenches 3, 8 and 8A. Retaining wall exposed in Trench 3 could be directly related to the allotment gardens whilst the walls exposed in trenches 8 and 8A could be a part of paper mill development. The car-park area occupying eastern and central part of the site was originally a slope descending northwards to the river Len therefore the evaluation came to conclusion that these wall were essential at keeping soil in place and preventing from washing it down to the river Len.
- 6.3 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The negative results of this work show that the proposed development won't be having any impact on buried archaeological resource.

7 FINDS

- 7.1 No archaeological finds were revealed during the course of evaluation.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER WORK

- 8.1 There is no requirement for further work.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank to the client for commissioning the project and thanks are extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council for her support and assistance during the fieldwork.
- 9.2 On behalf of the client project was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson, MCIFA and fieldwork was carried out by Peter Cichy who also prepared text and illustrations for this report.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1 General

- 10.2 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CifA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 10.3 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. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a Kent Museum.

APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Evaluation on land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP.

SWAT Site Code: TMM-EV-21

Site Address: As above

Summary: *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by The Client to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of 10 trenches, which recorded a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil with modern made-up ground overlying natural geology.*

Modern footpath, allotment gardens and soil retention walls were exposed during the course of evaluation

No archaeology was found.

Further mitigation is not required.

District/Unitary: Maidstone Borough Council & Kent County Council

Period(s): modern

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 577050 155454

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: February 2021

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

Geology: Sandstone capped by Head Deposits

Title and author of accompanying report: SWAT Archaeology (P. Cichy 2021) Archaeological Evaluation land at Turkey Mill Business Park, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP.

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

References

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Figures and Plates



Plate 1: The site looking south-west.



Plate 2: Western part of the site 'the field' former allotment gardens. Looking west.



Plate 3: Showing evaluation Trench 1. Looking south with two-metre scale inside the trench.



Plate 4: Showing evaluation Trench 3. Modern footpath visible in the middle ground. Looking west with two-metre scale.



Plate 5: Showing evaluation Trench 3. Looking west with two-metre scale.



Plate 6: Modern waste revealed in Trench 3. Looking south with two-metre scale.



Plate 7: Showing evaluation Trench 3 looking eastwards. Retention wall visible in foreground with one-metre scale.



Plate 8: Showing evaluation Trench 4. Looking east with two-metre scale.



Plate 9: Showing evaluation Trench 5. Looking south with two-metre scale.



Plate 10: Showing evaluation Trench 6. Looking west with one and two-metre scales.



Plate 11: Overlook onto Trench 6 looking north-east towards river Len. One metre scale.



Plate 12: Showing Trench 7. Looking north-west with one- and two-metre scales.



Plate 13: Evaluation Trench 7 looking north with one-metre scale at its distant end.



Plate 14: Trench 8 looking west. Slightly curving retention wall visible in foreground. Ceramic pipe visible in background. Looking west with two-metre scales.



Plate 15: Showing Trench 8A and retention wall in foreground. Looking east with one- and two-metre scales.



Plate 16: Showing exposed retention wall in Trench 8A. Looking south-east with one-metre scale.



Plate 17: Wall exposed in Trench 8A looking south with one-metre scale.



Plate 18: Showing retention wall exposed in eastern end of evaluation trench 8. Looking north with one- and two-metre scales.



Plate 19: Showing fresh water well and reservoir situated in south eastern part of the site.



Plate 20: Showing evaluation Trench 9. Looking south with one- and two-metre scales.