# Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent

# **Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

NGR: TQ 9890 4110

Report for **Hillreed Homes** 

July 2010

# **SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY**

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# Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in Advance of Development at Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent

NGR: TQ 9890 4110

#### 1 SUMMARY

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) have been commissioned to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of a proposed development at Knoll Lane, Ashford, Kent, in advance of a planning application for a new housing complex (figure 1).

The site is within an area of **moderate** archaeological potential associated with the Prehistoric (primarily of the Bronze Age and Iron Age), Romano-British and Medieval periods. The archaeological evidence has been reviewed and it is recommended in this case that further archaeological work may be required and that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out. This will provide an additional assessment of the nature, depth and level of survival of any archaeological deposits present within the extent of the site.

#### 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Planning Background

Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (2001) states:

'Positive planning and management can help to bring about sensible solutions to the treatment of sites with archaeological remains and reduce the areas of potential conflict between development and preservation. Both central government and English Heritage have important roles to play (see Annex 1). But the key to the future of the great majority of archaeological sites and historic landscapes lies with local authorities, acting within the framework set by central government, in their various capacities as planning, education and recreational authorities, as well as with the owners of sites themselves. Appropriate planning policies in development plans and their implementation through development control will be especially important'

(2001:14)

'The needs of archaeology and development can be reconciled, and potential conflict very much reduced, if developers discuss their preliminary plans for development with the planning authority at an early stage. Once detailed designs have been prepared and finance lined up, flexibility becomes much more difficult and expensive to achieve. In their own interests, therefore, prospective developers should in all cases include as part of their research into the development potential of a site, which they undertake before making a planning application, an initial assessment of whether the site is known or likely to contain archaeological remains.

The first step will be to contact the County Archaeological Officer or equivalent who holds the SMR, or English Heritage in London. The SMR provides information about the locations

where archaeological remains are known or thought likely to exist. Where important remains are known to exist or where the indications are that the remains are likely to prove important, English Heritage are also ready to join in early discussions and provide expert advice.

(2001:19)

'These consultations will help to provide prospective developers with advance warning of the archaeological sensitivity of a site. As a result they may wish to commission their own archaeological assessment by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or consultant. This need not involve fieldwork. Assessment normally involves desk-based evaluation of existing information: it can make effective use of records of previous discoveries, including any historic maps held by the County archive and local museums and record offices, or of geophysical survey techniques'

(2001:20)

This Desk-Based Assessment therefore forms the initial stage of the archaeological investigation and is intended to inform and assist decisions regarding archaeological mitigation for proposed development and associated planning applications.

# 2.2 The Proposed Development

The proposed development by Hillreed Homes will comprise of the construction of 40 new homes and 24 new apartments (including access, services and parking facilities) and the provision for a Public Open Space (1.17ha) with associated access and landscaping.

At the time of preparing this report the site layout has been proposed (Figure 1).

#### 2.3 Projects Constraints

There were no known constraints associated with this project.

## 2.4 Geology and Topography

The British Geological Society (BGS sheets 305 and 306) show that the local geology upon which the proposed development is located consists of 4<sup>th</sup> terrace, river gravel.

The topography of the site comprises of an area of 3.2 hectares of grassland, situated on a gentle north-facing slope at a height of 60-50 OD. This area has, on occasion, been used for grazing and informal recreation. The northern boundary abuts the rear gardens of existing housing separated by a tree-lined hedgerow. The north east boundary is marked by Knoll Lane. The south eastern side is marked by Cuckoo Lane (from the junction with Knoll Lane to the junction with Wesley School Road). Wesley School Road then forms the southern boundary. The western boundary comprises of a significant tree-lined ditch (figure 2).

#### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 Introduction

The Desk-Based Assessment was commissioned by Hillreed Homes in order to supplement a planning application for the construction of housing.

#### 3.2 Desktop Study – Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999)

This desktop study has been produced in line with archaeological standards, as defined by the Institute of Filed Archaeologist (1999). A desktop, or desk-based assessment, is defined as being:

• '...a programme of assessment of the known or potential archaeological resource within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. It consists of a collation of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely character, extent, quality and worth of the known or potential archaeological resource in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate' (1999:2)

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is, therefore, an assessment that provides a contextual archaeological record, in order to determine:

- the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- the formulation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where
  the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a
  mitigation strategy or other response to be devised
- the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological work within a programme of research.

IFA (1999:2)

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Desk-Based Assessment

#### 4.1.1 Archaeological databases

The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) and the local Historic Environment Record (HER) held at Kent County Council were used. The search was carried out within a 1220m radius of the proposed development site (5 July 2010). A full listing of the relevant HER data is included in Appendix 1. The Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was also used as an additional source as the information contained within is not always transferred to the local HER.

#### 4.1.2 Historical documents

Historical documents, such as charters, registers, wills and deeds etc were not relevant to this specific study.

# 4.1.3 Cartographic and pictorial documents

A map regression exercise was undertaken during this assessment (figure 3). Research was carried out using resources offered by Kent County Council and the Internet.

### 4.1.4 Aerial photographs

Aerial and satellite photographs show the assessment area mirrors the Ordinance Survey Maps of the area between 1896 and the present day.

#### 4.1.5 Geotechnical information

To date, no known geotechnical investigations have been carried out at the site.

#### 4.1.6 Secondary and statutory resources

Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological studies, landscape studies, dissertations, research frameworks and Websites are considered

appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment where necessary.

#### 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 5.1 Introduction

	Palaeolithic	<i>c</i> . 500,000 BC – <i>c</i> .10,000 BC	
oric	Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC - c. 4,300 BC	
Prehistoric	Neolithic	c. 4.300 BC – c. 2,300 BC	
Pre	Bronze Age	c. 2,300 BC – c. 600 BC	
	Iron Age	c. 600 BC – c. AD 43	
Roma	ano-British	AD 43 – c. AD 410	
Anglo	-Saxon	AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medie	eval	AD 1066 – AD 1485	
Post-	medieval	AD 1485 – AD 1900	
Mode	rn	AD 1901 – present day	

Table 1 Classification of Archaeological Periods

The Archaeological record, both in and around Ashford is diverse and comprises of stone tools dating from one of the earliest phases of human activity (the Lower Palaeolithic) through to the post-medieval and industrial periods. Ashford is situated on both sides of the River Great Stour. The proposed development site is situated to the east of Knoll Lane, on grassland, in the parish of Singleton (which forms part of the south western environs of Ashford). Its' geographic and topographic location is within a landscape that has been the focus of hunting, trade, communication and farming since the Mesolithic. The presence of archaeology within the assessment area is the direct result of this and it would not be surprising therefore to discover additional archaeology within the confines of the proposed development site.

This section of the assessment will focus on the archaeological and historical development of this area, placing it within a local context. Each period classification will provide a brief introduction to the wider landscape, followed by a full record of archaeological sites, monuments and records within the site's immediate vicinity. Timescales for archaeological periods represented in the report are listed in Table 1 and locations of monuments and spot finds are presented in figure 4.

# 5.2 Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas

No scheduled monuments or listed buildings are recorded within the confines of the proposed development site.

# 5.3 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

The prehistoric period around Ashford is comparable with traditional patterns observed elsewhere along the River Stour valley.

Ashford is the tentative find-spot for two Lower Palaeolithic hand-axes (Wymer 1995) and excavations at Westhawk Farm, near Kingsnorth (2km south east of the proposed development) produced material from this period (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008). The Portable Antiquities Scheme also records a Lower Palaeolithic hand-axe from the Ashford area (PAS ID: KENT5277). Excavations at Park Farm also at Kingsnorth recorded trace elements dating from the Upper Palaeolithic (Hicks 1993). The Palaeolithic represents the earliest phases of human activity in the British Isles, up to the end of the last Ice Age, and although there is no record of Palaeolithic material being found within the proposed development area, there is the possibility that Palaeolithic archaeology may exist.

The Mesolithic period reflects a society of hunter-gatherers active after the last Ice Age. The archaeological investigations at Westhawk Farm (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008) and Park Farm also produced lithic material from this period (Hicks 1993). However, the Kent HER has no record of Mesolithic archaeology within the assessment area.

The Neolithic, the beginning of a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry, is also represented (by a flint assemblage) at Park Farm (Hicks 1993) and at Brisley Farm (c.400m to the south of the Knoll Lane site) by a series of field boundaries and artefacts (Archaeology South East). However, despite the scattered presence of Neolithic archaeology within the environs of Ashford and within the assessment area, there is no evidence for Neolithic activity within the proposed development area.

The Bronze Age (BA), a period of large migrations from the continent and more complex social developments on a domestic, industrial and ceremonial level is also represented in the Ashford area by sporadic features and artefacts. To the north of Ashford, situated between Kennington and Wye are numerous find spots of Prehistoric tools, pottery and traces of settlement (Cotter, Macpherson-Grant and Savage 1993). The excavations at Westhawk Farm (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008) revealed a Mid to Late Bronze Age field system and material and features dating from the late Bronze Age have also been recorded 3km to the east of the Knoll Lane site at Westbrook Farm (Rady 1992). Field boundaries and other features have also been unearthed at Brisley Farm (HER Ref: TQ94 SE162). Again, despite the scattered presence of Bronze Age archaeology within the assessment area, there is no evidence for BA activity within the confines of the development area.

Prehistoric material, comprising of flint artefacts (HER Refs: TQ94 SE157 and TQ94 SE158) has also been recorded during archaeological investigative work on the site of the John Wesley School, immediately to the south of the proposed development. However this assemblage could not be assigned a specific archaeological period. The close proximity of this material to the proposed development would therefore suggest that prehistoric archaeology is likely to exist within the Knoll Lane site.

### 5.4 Iron Age

The Kent HER has one record of Iron Age archaeology within the assessment area, at Brisley Farm (HER Ref: TQ94 SE158). Excavations revealed an extensive field system with a settlement and related cemetery. Archaeology from this period has also been noted at Westbrook Farm (Rady 1992). When dealing with the later Iron Age one should consider that

very early imported Roman pottery found on archaeological sites usually indicates a Late, Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) presence and Park Farm has produced just such an assemblage.

#### 5.5 Romano-British

The Romano-British period (R-B) is the term given to the Romanised culture of Britain under the rule of the Roman Empire, following the Claudian invasion in AD 43.

The predominant feature of the Roman infrastructure within Kent is arguably the extensive network of Roman roads connecting administrative centres, towns and military posts, increasing the flow of trade, goods, communications and troops. It should not be surprising therefore that R-B archaeology has been recorded within the environs of Ashford.

A major roadside settlement was discovered at Westhawk Farm. This settlements' alignment (NE-SW) was dictated by the Roman road from Canterbury to the Weald, probably established soon after the mid-1st century AD. A second road, from Lympne, formed a junction with the first, around which developed the settlement, perhaps 15 hectares in extent (Booth, Bingham and Lawrence 2008). Additionally, the course of the Roman Road (part of which is the B2067) that enters Ashford at Kingsnorth from the south east, before disappearing, may pass within 150 metres south of the development site.

Other archaeological investigations, such as at Brisley Farm (HER Refs: TQ94 SE162 and 163) and Park Farm (Hicks 1993) revealed evidence of field systems indicative of intensive farming within the Ashford environs. The presence of a Villa, discovered in 1942, c. 5km north west of the development site at Little Chart also supports the evidence for a strong Roman presence around southern Ashford.

#### 5.6 Anglo-Saxon

The Anglo-Saxon period is traditionally an ephemeral archaeological era (most references of an Anglo-Saxon presence coming from historical sources such as Domesday) and the area in and around Ashford is no different. Ashford is mentioned in Domesday but the parish of Singleton is not. The Kent HER and the Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) have no record for Anglo-Saxon archaeology within the assessment area or within the environs of Ashford. The only known area that has produced Anglo-Saxon material is centred within the parish of Brabourne (over 8km to the east of the proposed development site), but this remains unrecorded (pers comm).

#### 5.7 Medieval

The modern town of Ashford retains a lot of its medieval character through the presence of numerous extant streets and churches. The Kent HER has several records within the assessment area. Records TQ94 SE1, 24 and 74 all allude to Singleton Manor House and moat. HER Ref: TQ94 SE77 refers to a barn associated with the above Manor. Other Medieval features within the assessment area include a track way, field system and pottery assemblage at John Wesley School (HER Ref: TQ94 SE157 and 158). A further Field system was recorded at Brisley Farm (Archaeology South East) and a 12<sup>th</sup> –14<sup>th</sup> century farmstead at Singleton School is recorded on the ADS (ADS Record ID - EHNMR-1469381). Other Medieval sites within the vicinity of Singleton recorded on the ADS include a moat (ADS Record ID - NMR\_NATINV-419559) and 'Court Lodge', a 13<sup>th</sup> century building near Kingsnorth (ADS Record ID - NMR\_NATINV-419596).

#### 5.8 Post-Medieval

The Post Medieval period within the assessment area is also represented by several Kent HER records, most of which are related to Singleton Manor House (see above HER Refs.). The excavations at Brisley Farm revealed a feature containing clay pipe and a pewter spoon (HER Ref: TQ94 SE163).

#### 5.9 Modern

The Modern development within the assessment area has been limited to domestic housing and a school. (fig 4).

#### 5.10 Undated

The Kent HER does not have undated records for the assessment area.

#### 5.11 Cartographic Sources and Map Regression

A map regression exercise (Figure 3) carried out on the proposed development area has shown that the site lay undeveloped, being used for agriculture and that this land use has continued, more or less unchanged up to the present day.

#### 5.12 Aerial Photographs

Aerial and satellite photographs show the assessment area mirrors the Ordinance Survey Maps of the area between 1896 and the present day, reinforcing the evidence provided by the map regression exercise.

#### 6 ARCHAOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

### 6.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

The potential for finding remains that date prior to the Iron Age within the confines of the proposed development site is considered **low-moderate**.

#### 6.2 Iron Age

The potential for finding remains dating to the Iron Age is considered **moderate**. The archaeological record of the surrounding landscape offers the potential for surviving archaeological deposits dating to this period as is evident from the numerous discoveries in the area.

#### 6.3 Romano-British

The archaeological evidence for this period within the assessment area, as outlined above, suggests that the potential for the presence of Roman archaeology is **moderate**.

#### 6.4 Anglo-Saxon

Anglo-Saxon archaeology is by its very nature mostly ephemeral and scarce (as reflected in the assessment). Therefore the potential for finding remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon period is considered as **low-moderate**.

# 6.5 Medieval

The archaeology from this period, represented by several buildings (or parts of) and a satisfactory distribution of archaeological discoveries within the assessment area, suggests

that there may be medieval archaeology within the development area. The potential for finding remains dating to the medieval period is therefore considered as **moderate**.

#### 6.6 Post-Medieval

The evidence for post-medieval occupation and other activities in the area is as abundant as that of the medieval period. Being the period we associate as immediately preceding our present time frame, the post medieval era is by its nature one that usually survives in the archaeological record within urban and rural contexts even though it can suffer severe truncation by modern construction and farming methods. Therefore, the potential for finding remains dating to the post-medieval period is considered as **moderate**.

#### 7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

#### 7.1 Existing Impacts

The archaeological and historical records suggest that the assessment area has for the most part, been continuously occupied for at least 3000 years. The impact of continuous occupation usually comprises of the disturbance of the earlier phases by those that follow. Inevitably it is usually the post-medieval and modern periods that have the greatest impact as housing and industry grows exponentially. However, the map regression exercise would indicate that the site of the proposed development has remained fallow for at least 200 years (figure 3). Consequently any damage to the uppermost archaeological horizons is likely to have been affected by pre-industrialised farming practices (grazing and crop rotation). The impact caused by animal husbandry and shallow ploughing is likely to be minimal and it is therefore considered to be **low**.

Extensive impact is to be expected within the development area once construction begins. The excavation of deep footings and the installation of services will be the main cause of this impact and it is therefore considered as **moderate**.

#### 7.2 Proposed Impacts

At the time of preparing this archaeological assessment, the extent of the proposed development was for the construction of housing with associated access, parking and utilities, plus the provision of a Public Open Space.

# 8 MITIGATION

The purpose of this archaeological desk-based assessment was to provide an assessment of the contextual archaeological record, in order to determine the potential survival of archaeological deposits that maybe impacted upon during any proposed construction works.

The assessment has generally shown that the area to be developed is within an area of **moderate** archaeological potential.

It is therefore recommended in this case that further archaeological work may be required and that an <u>archaeological watching brief</u> should be carried out.

#### 9 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

#### 9.1 Archive

Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this desk-based assessment will be submitted to Ashford Borough Council within 6 months of completion.

#### 9.2 Reliability/limitations of sources

The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held by Canterbury Archaeological Trust, Oxford Archaeology, Archaeology South East, and at Kent County Council, and therefore is considered as being reliable. The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) were also used.

# 9.3 Copyright

Swale & Thames Survey Company shall retain full copyright on the commissioned report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights are reserved, excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to Hillread Homes (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

#### 10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

Period	HER Reference	Туре	National Grid Reference	Description
Medieval & Post- Medieval	TQ94 SE1	Building & Monument	TQ 9889 4164	Singleton Manor. Medieval House & Moat with Post-Medieval alterations
Medieval & Post Medieval	TQ94 SE24	Building	TQ 988 416	Singleton Manor. Medieval house with Post-Medieval alterations
Medieval	TQ94 SE74	Monument	TQ 988 416	Singleton Manor. Medieval House & Moat with Post-Medieval alterations
Post-Medieval	TQ94 SE77	Building	TQ 9882 4165	Barn and Site associated with Singleton Manor

Period	HER Reference	Туре	National Grid Reference	Description
Prehistoric & Medieval	TQ94 SE157	Findspot	TQ 98839 41029	Results of archaeological Watching Brief in 2006 on the site of the John Lesley School prior to construction. Discoveries include Prehistoric flint, Medieval pottery, field system and trackway.
Medieval	TQ94 SE158	Findspot	TQ 98715 41025	Results of archaeological Watching Brief in 2006 on the site of the John Lesley School prior to construction. Discoveries include Prehistoric flint, Medieval field system and possible settlement.
Prehistoric	TQ94 SE162	Monument	TQ 98813 40627	Excavations at Brisley Farm revealed a Prehistoric landscape, including settlement from the Late Bronze Age through to the Early Iron Age
Post-Medieval	TQ94 SE163	Monument	TQ 98794 40764	Excavations at Brisley Farm also revealed Post-Medieval features and finds



Figure 1. Plan of the Proposed Development site.



Figure 2. Aerial Photograph showing location of the Proposed Development Area.

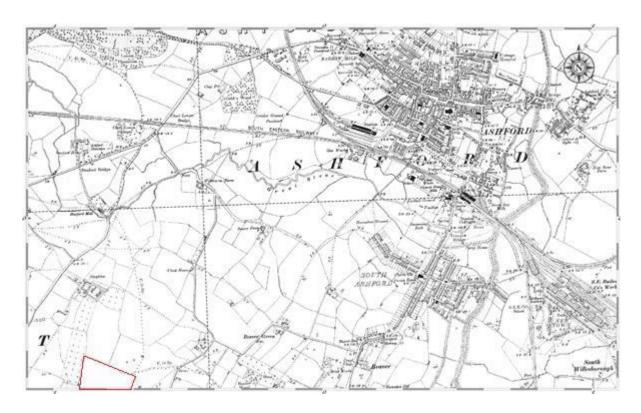


Figure 3. OS Map (1896) showing location of Proposed Development Area (in red).