



Water Lane, Smarden, Kent;  
Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

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# Water Lane, Smarden, Kent; Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

NGR Site Centre: 587720 142409



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**Summary**

*SWAT Archaeology has been commissioned by the Client to prepare an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment relating to the proposed development area (Site) of Land at Water Lane, Smarden in Kent.*

*There is a requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the client to explain the significance of any particular designated archaeological assets that have been identified in the vicinity of the study site and demonstrate any potential impacts that a planning proposal will have upon their significance.*

*The PDA is located to the north of the River Beult and bounded to the North by Water Lane and beyond the hamlet of The Oaks. The village of Smarden is located to the East.*

*The map regression show that the PDA has been agricultural since 1871 (MAPs 1-4).*

*The proposed development is for 30 residential dwellings.*

*The assessment has found that the adjacent archaeological assets will remain unaffected by the proposed development with the proposed development producing 'no harm' on their settings or significance of these archaeological assets.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Planning Background**

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by the Client, to carry out a Archaeological Desk-based Assessment relating to a proposed development area at land at Water Lane, Smarden, Kent centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 587720 142409 (Figure 1).

1.1.2 In acknowledgement of the Site being located close to the Smarden Conservation Area and close to a number of designated assets this document has been prepared to support the planning application to Ashford Borough Council to assess the impact of the proposed development. This document comprises the baseline for this Archaeological Desk-based Assessment.

### **1.2 Site Description**

The PDA (Proposed Development Area) is located in the Parish of Smarden and within the limits of the Weald and the Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the PDA include the Grade 1 Listed Church of St Michael dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and with the nearest Listed Building situated about 65m east of the PDA is The Cloth Hall (TQ 84 SE 8) formally called Turk Farmhouse (MAP 1).

#### *Geology*

1.2.1 The British Geological Society (BGS 1995) shows that the local geology at the PDA is bedrock geology of Mudstone of the Weald Clay Formation - Mudstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 126 to 134 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Local environment previously dominated by shallow seas. The bedrock is overlain by Superficial Deposits of sand and gravel.

### **1.3 Scope of Document**

1.3.1 This assessment was requested by the Client in order to determine, as far as is possible, the nature, extent and significance of the development affecting the significance and impact on any known archaeological remains. The assessment forms

part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement and is intended to inform and assist with decisions regarding archaeological assets and is to be used in the support of planning applications associated with the proposed development.

1.3.2 The assessment was carried out in accordance with the current guidelines as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). The purpose of an assessment is to establish the known or potential cultural heritage resource in a local, regional, national or international context. This specifically includes:

- the identification of site specific statutory and non-statutory cultural heritage constraints (including planning constraints)
- the examination of available cartographic and documentary sources
- a walkover survey to assess the surviving known archaeological resource
- an assessment of potential impacts upon the known archaeological assets

## **2 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 National legislation and guidance relating to the protection of, and proposed development on or near, important archaeological sites or historical buildings within planning regulations is defined under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). In addition, local authorities are responsible for the protection of the historic environment within the planning system.

2.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in July 2018 and is the principal document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework in which Local Planning Authorities can produce their own distinctive Local Plans to reflect the needs of their communities.

### **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

2.2.1 The Historic Environment, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021): Annex 2, comprises:

*‘All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.’*

2.2.2 NPPF Annex 2 defines a Heritage Asset as:

*‘a building monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.*

2.2.3 NPPF Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment sets out the principal national guidance on the importance, management and safeguarding of heritage assets within the planning process. The aim of NPPF Section 16 is to ensure that Local Planning Authorities, developers and owners of heritage assets adopt a consistent approach to their conservation and to reduce complexity in planning policy relating to proposals that affect them.

## **2.3 Designated Heritage Assets**

2.3.1 Designated heritage assets are defined in NPPF Annex 2 as:

*‘World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.’*

2.3.2 Designation is a formal acknowledgement of a building, monument or site’s significance, intended to make sure that the character of the asset in question is protected through the planning system and to enable it to be passed on to future generations.

2.3.3 Statutory protection is provided to certain classes of designated heritage assets under the following legislation:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990);

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979); and
- Protection of Wrecks Act (1973).

2.3.4 There are a number of criteria to address, and they include the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the Heritage Assets.

#### *Heritage Assets*

2.3.5 Any Heritage Asset that includes a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Wreck, Registered Park or Garden, conservation area or Landscape can be identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage Assets are the valued components of the historic environment and will include designated Heritage Assets as well as assets identified by the Local Planning Authority during the process of decision making or through the plan making process.

#### *Setting*

2.3.6 The surroundings in which a Heritage Asset is experienced is of importance. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make take several guises; a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, the ability to appreciate that significance or it may have a neutral effect with no changes observed.

#### *Significance*

2.3.7 The value of a Heritage Asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance may be informed by a number of factors which may include; assessment of the significance of the site, setting and building, where relevant, under a number of headings:

- Historic significance – the age and history of the asset, its development over time, the strength of its tie to a particular architectural period, the layout of a site, the plan form of a building and internal features of special character including chimneystacks and fireplaces.



- Cultural significance – the role a site plays in an historic setting, village, town or landscape context, the use of a building perhaps tied to a local industry or agriculture and social connections of an original architect or owner.
- Aesthetic/architectural significance – the visual qualities and characteristics of the asset (settlement site or building), long views, legibility of building form, character of elevations, roofscape, materials and fabric special features of interest.
- Archaeological significance – evolution of the asset, phases of development over different periods, important features, evidence in building fabric and potential for below ground remains.

## **2.4 Planning Policy Guidance**

Planning Policy Guidance that helps to preserve the built and archaeological heritage are:

*Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance (Historic England, 2008)*

2.4.1 Historic England sets out in this document a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of England's historic environment. The Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance are primarily intended to help ensure consistency of approach in carrying out the role as the Government's statutory advisor on the historic environment in England. Specifically, they make a contribution to addressing the challenges of modernising heritage protection by proposing an integrated approach to making decisions, based on a common process.

## **2.5 Sources**

2.5.1 A number of publicly accessible sources were consulted prior to the preparation of this document.

#### *Archaeological databases*

2.5.2 Although it is recognised that national databases are an appropriate resource for this particular type of assessment, the local Historic Environmental Record held at Kent County Council (KHER) contains sufficient data to provide an accurate insight into catalogued sites and finds within both the proposed development area and the surrounding landscape.

2.5.3 The National Heritage List for England (NHLE), which is the only official and up to date database of all nationally designated heritage assets is the preferred archive for a comprehensive HER search.

#### *Cartographic and Pictorial Documents*

2.5.4 A full map regression exercise has been incorporated within this assessment. Research was carried out using resources offered by the Kent County Council, the internet, Ordnance Survey and the Kent Archaeological Society. A full listing of bibliographic and cartographic documents used in this study is provided in Section 9.

#### *Aerial photographs*

2.5.5 The study of the collection of aerial photographs held by Google Earth was undertaken.

#### *Secondary and Statutory Resources*

2.5.6 Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological studies, archaeological reports associated with development control, landscape studies, dissertations and research frameworks are considered appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE**

### **2.6 Introduction**

A search has been made of historic archive material pertaining to this site in County museums and the results are below-

### **2.7 Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KHER)**

2.7.1 A search of the KCC HER was carried out on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024, centred on the proposed site with a search radius of 500m. The search provided a relatively low number of records of Listed Buildings. There are no Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites, registered

battlefields or registered parks and gardens. The PDA resides in the Kent Down Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but is not situated within a Conservation Area.

2.7.2 The PDA is located just to the west of the village of Smarden and north of the River Beult and bounded to the north by Water Lane with the village of Smarden to the east (MAPS 1-3).

2.7.3 In May 2001 during the opening of a new grave, three pieces of flint debitage were recovered. The recently enclosed extension to the burial ground was walked to ascertain whether anymore material was present. In all 380 pieces were recovered amounting to 2285grams of material from an area of approximately 600 sq m. The assemblage has been assessed by a specialist and found to consist of cores, blades, flakes, and angular fractures. Formal tool types were lacking but there were three Mesolithic micro blades and a fragment of knife blade possibly of Neolithic date. One hundred and eight pot-boilers were also found. The scatter appears to be reasonably discrete and is bounded on the south east by the River Beult 30 m away (KCCHER-TQ 84 SE 35).

## **2.8 Historical Map Progression**

*Ordnance Survey map, 1871*

2.8.1 This map is published by Ordnance Survey and shows Turk's Farm with outbuildings and orchards and ponds. Further west is located St. Michaels Church (Rectory) and Graveyard (MAP 1).

*Ordnance Survey Map, 1897*

2.8.2 The buildings and roads are not dissimilar to the previous map but the larger field is now orchard and Turk's Farm is now called Church Gate (MAP 2)

*Ordnance Survey Map, 1907*

2.8.3 The area of the PDA is now orchard with an additional habitation to the south-west called Elm Shave (MAP 3).

2.8.4 KCCHER map showing the known archaeology and including the green flag to the south which identifies an area where a lithic scatter of stone tools including a Palaeolithic handaxe was found in 1968 (MAP 4). More lithic scatters have been found dating from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic when grave digging was taking place and over 300 pieces of worked flint have been retrieved and over 100 stone pot boilers have been gathered (KCCHER TQ 84 SE 35).

## **2.9 Aerial Photographs**

Aerial photographs from 2008 (AP 1) show that the PDA has a collection of modern farm buildings to the west, a cemetery to the south and the village of Smarden to the west (AP's 1, 2).

*Google Earth street views -1 to 3)*

2.9.1 These photographs show the PDA as meadow bounded by hedges.

## **3 CONCLUSION**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The purpose of this Archaeological Desk-based Assessment was to assist the Local Authority to understand the impact of the proposed development as required by the NPPF on the significance of any Heritage and Archaeological Assets affected.

3.1.2 The map regression show that the PDA has been farmland since at least the late 18th century and there are no known archaeological sites or remains on the PDA (Proposed Development Area).

3.1.3 The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment has found that there is known prehistoric archaeology to the south of the PDA and it may be that an Archaeological Watching Brief is required to confirm or otherwise that there is archaeology on the PDA.

## **4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1 Archive**

4.1.1 Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this Archaeological Desk-based Assessment will be submitted to the LPA and Kent County Council (Heritage) within 6 months of completion.

### **4.2 Reliability/Limitations of Sources**

4.2.1 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 at Kent County Council, and therefore considered as being reliable.

### **4.3 Copyright**

4.3.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company and the author 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 the Client (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

## 5 REFERENCES

### 5.1 Bibliographic

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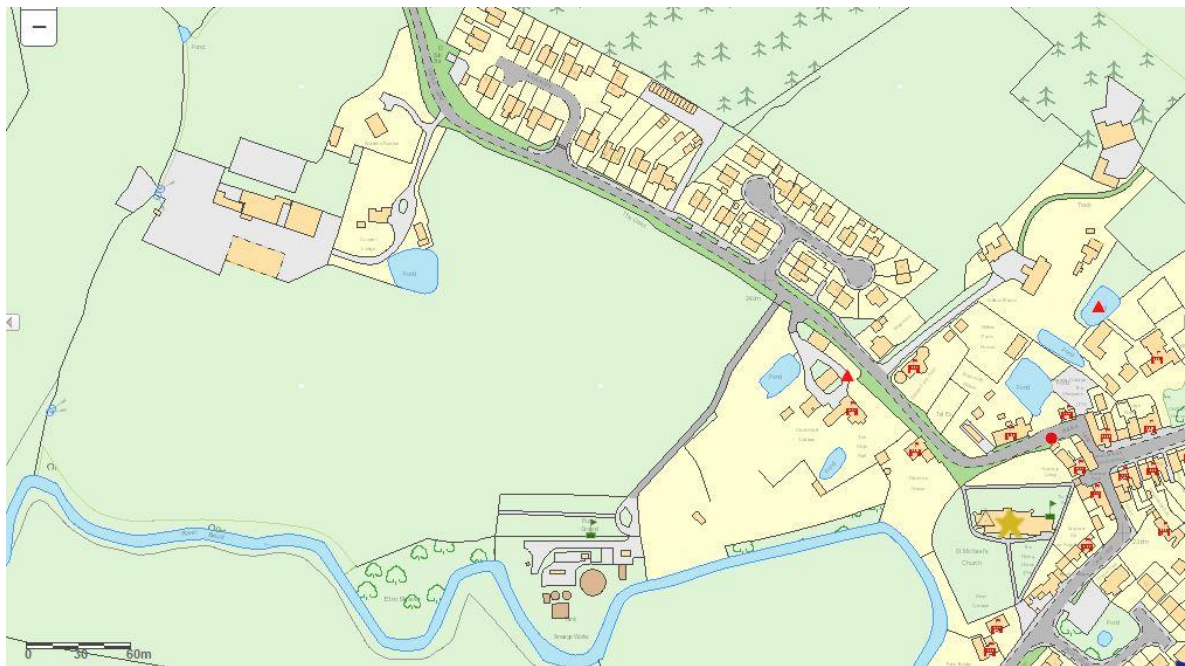
Map 1. OS mapping 1871



MAP 2. OS mapping 1897



MAP 3. OS mapping 1907



MAP 4. KCCHER mapping





AP 1. 1990



AP 2. 2008





AP 3. 2020 looking north with Water Lane to the top (Google Earth)



AP 4. 2020 looking south with Water Lane to the left (Google Earth)





View 1. Looking east along Water Lane



View 2. Looking south along Water Lane