

Archaeological Monitoring on land at Bircholt Court, PHR Farms, Bircholt Lane, Brabourne, Kent

Planning Application Number: PA/2023/1084

Site Code: BIRC/WB/24



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Contents

1.0 SUMMARY.....	3
2.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.2 PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	4
3.0 SCHEDULE OF VISITS.....	4
4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	4
4.2 PROPOSED GROUNDWORKS.....	5
4.4 CONFIDENCE RATING.....	6
5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	6
6.0 METHODOLOGY.....	6
7.0 FINDS.....	8
8.0 DISCUSSION.....	8
9.0 CONCLUSION.....	9
10.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	9
11.00 REFERENCES.....	9
APPENDIX 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	10

Plates 1-6. General views of the site and site trenching

List of Figures

Figure 1. Existing site plan

Figure 2. Site location

Figure 3. Proposed site plan

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1. Summary

In May 2024 SWAT Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Bircholt Court, Bircholt Lane, Brabourne in Kent. The works were commissioned by the landowner and carried out during the excavation of ground works associated with the new development of a biomass boiler and water main pipe from Bircholt Court.

The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with an archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation provided by SWAT Archaeology.

Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains, no archaeological features or finds were recorded during the archaeological monitoring works.

2.0 Introduction

The proposed development area (PDA) is situated on land to the front of Bircholt Court, Bircholt Lane, Brabourne in Kent. The NGR to the centre of the site is 607551 141224 (Figures 1-2).

2.2 Planning Background

The land has a planning permission for the installation of a GF175 Biomass Boiler and associated works. The Local Planning Authority's (Ashford Borough Council) planning reference for the proposal is PA/2023/1084.

The following Condition (5) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

(5) In the event that underground works become necessary, all works shall stop until a watching brief, as undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority has been developed. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and Recorded in accordance with Policy ENV15 of the Local Plan.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA) and closely monitored the excavation trench works with visits on the 7th May.

4.1 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The specific aims of the archaeological work and objectives of the monitoring were therefore to:

- To ensure the archaeological excavation and monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme;
- To secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the

appropriate publication of the project results, if required;

- To secure the analysis, long term conservation and storage of the project archive.

4.2 The specific archaeological requirements of the watching brief are summarised below;

- Monitoring of all ground works;
- Mitigation by a programme of archaeological excavation and recording in the event that additional archaeological remains are encountered;
- Post-excavation and publication, where required.

4.2. Proposed Groundworks.

The ground works were to excavate the ground for a trench to facilitate the required water pipe (Plates 1-6. Figures 1-2).

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

4.4. 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 geology of the site according to the British Geological Survey is Folkestone Formation-Sandstone. The Ordnance Datum for the site is about 14-15m aOD.

5.2 The proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and a search of the KCCHER highlights that about 200m north is the possible site of a deserted medieval village (doubtful) TR 04 SE 8.

About 225m NNW is the cropmark of a double ring ditch (TR 04 SE 130) and on the site itself the possible location of the Church of Margarets mentioned in Wills dated 1490 and 1577 (TR 04 SE 2).

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Archaeological Investigations were conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification provided by SWAT Archaeology.

6.2 The works comprised the close monitoring and supervision of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the WSI and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2017).

6.3. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA).

6.4. Where possible some areas of excavation were subsequently closely examined with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section but no features were revealed.

6.5. 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.

6.6 Excavation of the trench for the cold water pipe was carried out by building contractors digging with a small machine (Plates 1-6). All areas of excavation were carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist and inspected and recorded by the archaeologist in attendance (See Table 1, below).

6.8 Timetable

Archaeological monitoring was carried out on the following day.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Staff</i>
Archaeological monitoring	7 th May 2024	Paul Wilkinson SWAT

Table 1 Attendance Schedule

6.9 Recording

6.9.1 A complete drawn record comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. Where appropriate, the plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights and form part of the site archive.

6.9.2 Photographs were to be taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated footings but no features or archaeological deposits were revealed. 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 (Plates 1-6).

6.9.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Table 2 below. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (001), whilst the cut of any features is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes.

6.9.4 Stratigraphic Sequence

6.9.5 The stratigraphic sequence recorded during the archaeological works remained relatively consistent across all areas of the site, comprising areas of subsoil. The following table provides detailed description of each stratigraphic context.

6.9.6

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
001	Tarmac and hardcore	Overburden (Plates 1-3)
002	Orange/brown clay subsoil	Natural (Plates 2-6)

Table 2 Stratigraphic Sequence and Register of Contexts

6.10. The site produced no archaeological features or deposits or finds and no environmental potential was recognised on site.

The Site Archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2017). 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 CD for photo archive.

6.11 Results

6.11.1 No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The natural geology encountered across the site was orange/brown clay subsoil. No archaeological features were revealed in the subsoil or natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the area watched (Figures 1-4). The trenching for footings was about 0.70m deep with tarmac about 20cm thick. OD height across the PDA was about 14.5m aOD (Plates 1-6). Overall areas watched were the trenching for the proposed water pipe (Figures 1-3).

7.0 Finds

No finds were retrieved.

8.0 Discussion

The development site is in an area of high archaeological potential. However, no archaeology was revealed on the development site.

9.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Investigation has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the SWAT Archaeological Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

10.0 Acknowledgments

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the landowner/developer for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

11.0 REFERENCES

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

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 1st October 2020 *Standard and guidance: for watching Brief.*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 1st October 2020. *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.*

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

Appendix 1 KCCHER Summary Form

Site Name: Development of land at Bircholt Court, Bircholt Lane, Brabourne, Kent

SWAT Site Code: BIRC/WB/24

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for development whereby the KCC Archaeological Officer requested that Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken to closely monitor the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site attendance and supervision which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: Ashford Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 607551 141224

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: May 2024

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

Geology: Bedrock geology of Folkestone Formation- Sandstone

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2024) Archaeological Watching Brief at Bircholt Court, PHR Farms, Bircholt Lane, Brabourne, Kent TN25 5LD

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

See above

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

Plates



Plate 1. Setting out and starting ground reduction (looking SSW)



Plate 2. Ground trenching (looking SE)



Plate 3. Ground trenching (looking East)



Plate 4. Ground trenching (looking SSW)



Plate 5. Exposed modern reinforced concrete foundations



Plate 6. Modern reinforced concrete foundations (looking NNE)

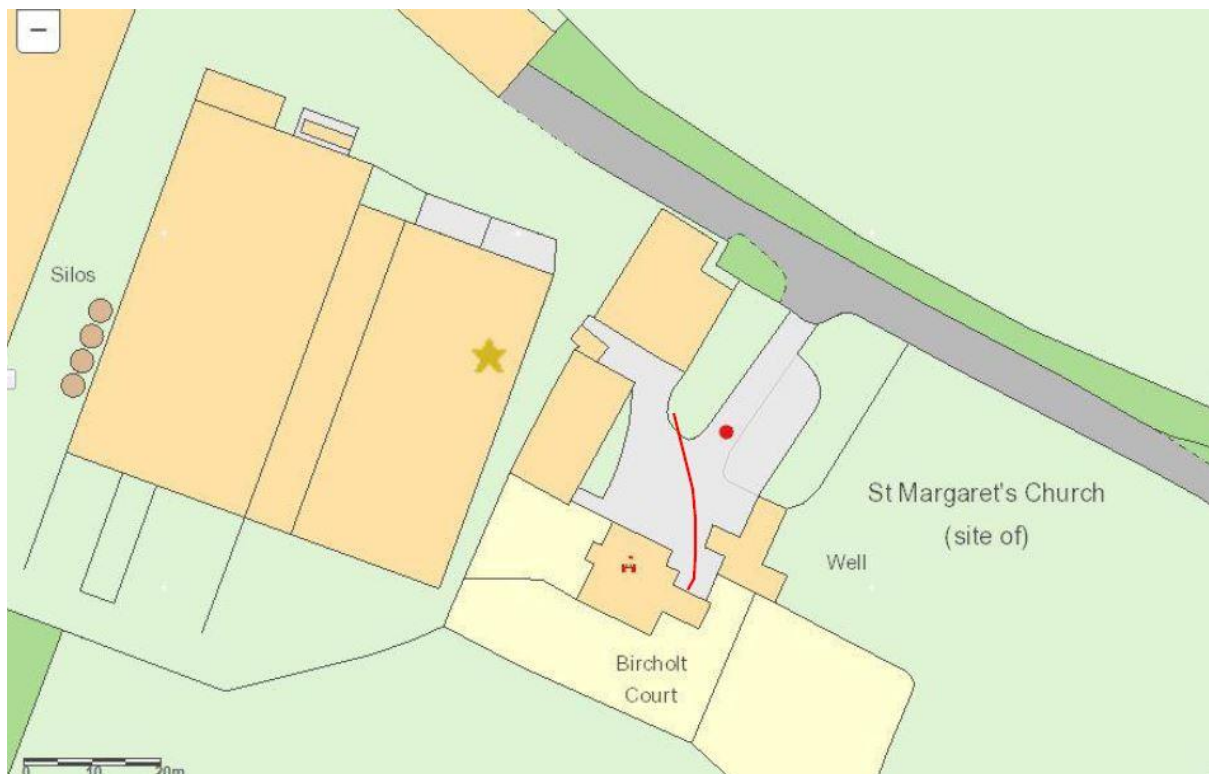


Figure 1. KCCHER map of site location (red line denotes route of water pipe trench)

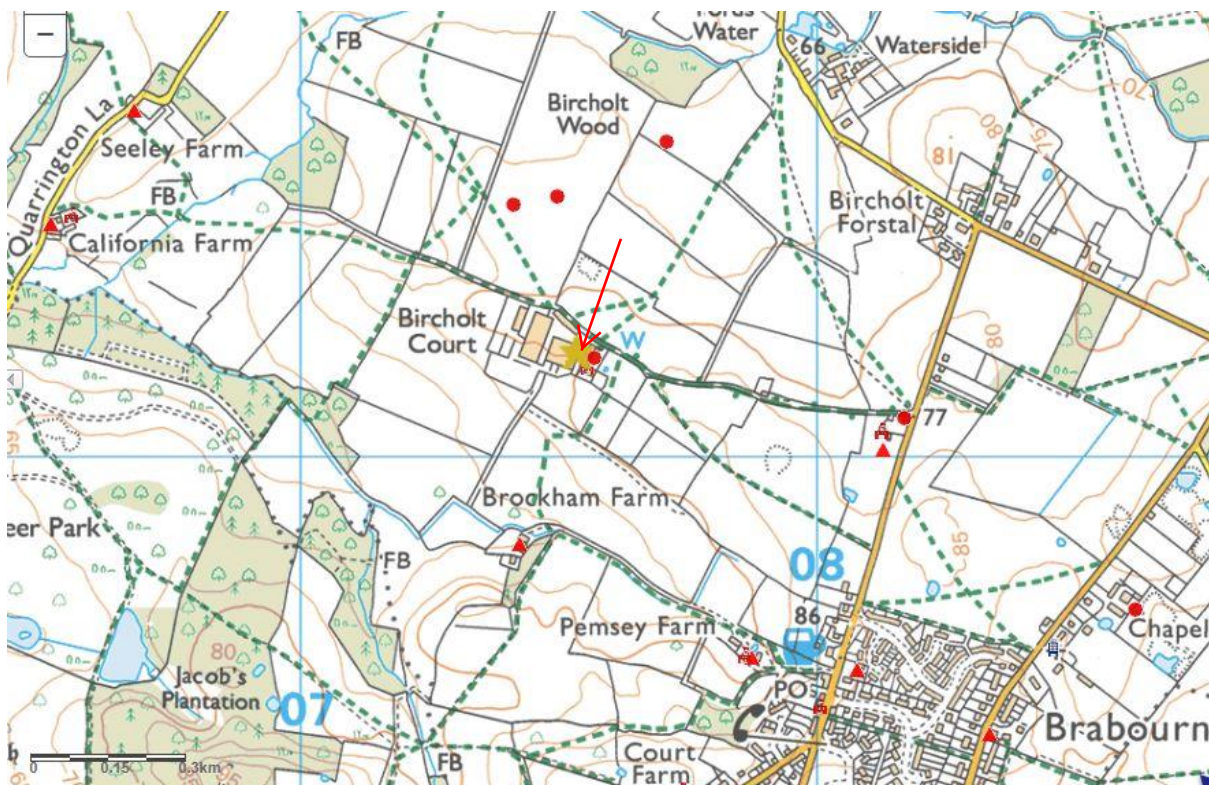


Figure 2. OS plan of proposed area of development at NGR 607551 141224 (red arrow)