

Archaeological Monitoring of land at Runhams Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent

Planning Application Number: MA/21/500564

Site Code: HARR/WB/24



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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

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1. Summary

In January, February and March 2024 SWAT Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham in Kent. The works were commissioned by the developer and carried out during the excavation of ground works associated with the new development of detached houses.

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

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 at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham in Kent. The NGR to the centre of the site is 587325 151329 (Figures 1-3).

2.2 Planning Background

The land has a planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 4(No.) dwellings, incorporating environmental and visual enhancement scheme, was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of MBC, requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The following conditions were attached to the planning consent:

Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:

- i. archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- ii. following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, and that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains. Details are required prior to the commencement of development because ground works are involved.

(MA/21/500564/FULL, Condition 13, 28th May 2021)

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA) and closely monitored the excavation works from the 17th January to the 19th March 2024.

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 concrete footings for the proposed development (Plates 1-8. Figures 1-3).

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 Weald Clay Formation- Mudstone. The Ordnance Datum for the site is about 21m aOD. The Geological Survey of Great Britain shows that the site is located on Hythe Formation-Sandstone and Limestone interbedded, with no superficial deposits being recorded.

5.2 Ground levels are relatively level within the site have clearly been landscaped and terraced, at a height of approximately 92m Ordnance Datum (OD), with the area surrounding the site ranging from 93m OD in the south sloping to 91m OD within the northern extent of the site.

5.3 Prior to the archaeological evaluation the site has been subject to demolition works removing all existing buildings, foundations, and access roads. Conditions were therefore very hazardous within the centre of the site due to the loose saturated overburden (Plate 1 and Plate 2).

5.4 The proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and a search of the KCCHER highlights that to the north is the Grade 1 Listed Church of St Peter & St Paul dating from the 14th-15th century (TQ 84 SW 2).

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Archaeological Investigations were conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification provided by KCC Heritage.

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 area for the concrete foundation footings and access road was carried out by building contractors digging with tracked 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 days;

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Staff</i>
Archaeological monitoring road excavations	17-18 th January 2024	Dr Paul Wilkinson SWAT
Plot 1 foundations	29 th January	“
Plot 2 foundations	26 th February	“
Plot 3 foundations	18 th March	“
Plot 4 foundations	5 th February	“

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	Topsoil: mid grey brown clay silt	(Plates 1-3)
002	Subsoil: Mid orange brown silty clay	(Plates 2-5)
003	Natural: mid orange brown silty clay	(Plate 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 mid orange brown silty clay. No archaeological features were revealed in the subsoil or natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the areas watched (Figures 1-3). The trenching for footings was about 1.50m deep with topsoil about 20cm thick. (Plates 1-8). Overall areas watched were the footprint foundation footings of the proposed dwellings (Figure 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 Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent

SWAT Site Code: HARR/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: Maidstone Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 587325 151329

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: January to March 2024

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

Geology: Bedrock geology of Hythe Formation- Sandstone and Limestone interbedded

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2024) Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Runham Farm, Runham, Harrietsham, Kent

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. Plot 1 foundation trenches (looking North)



Plate 2. Plot 1 foundation trenches (looking NE)



Plate 3. Plot 2 foundation trenches (looking NE)



Plate 4. Plot 2 foundation trenches (looking North)



Plate 5. Plot 3 foundation trenches (looking NE)



Plate 6. Plot 3 foundation trenches (looking NE)



Plate 7. Plot 4 foundation trenches (looking North)



Plate 8. Plot 4 foundation trenches (looking NE)



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of proposed development area

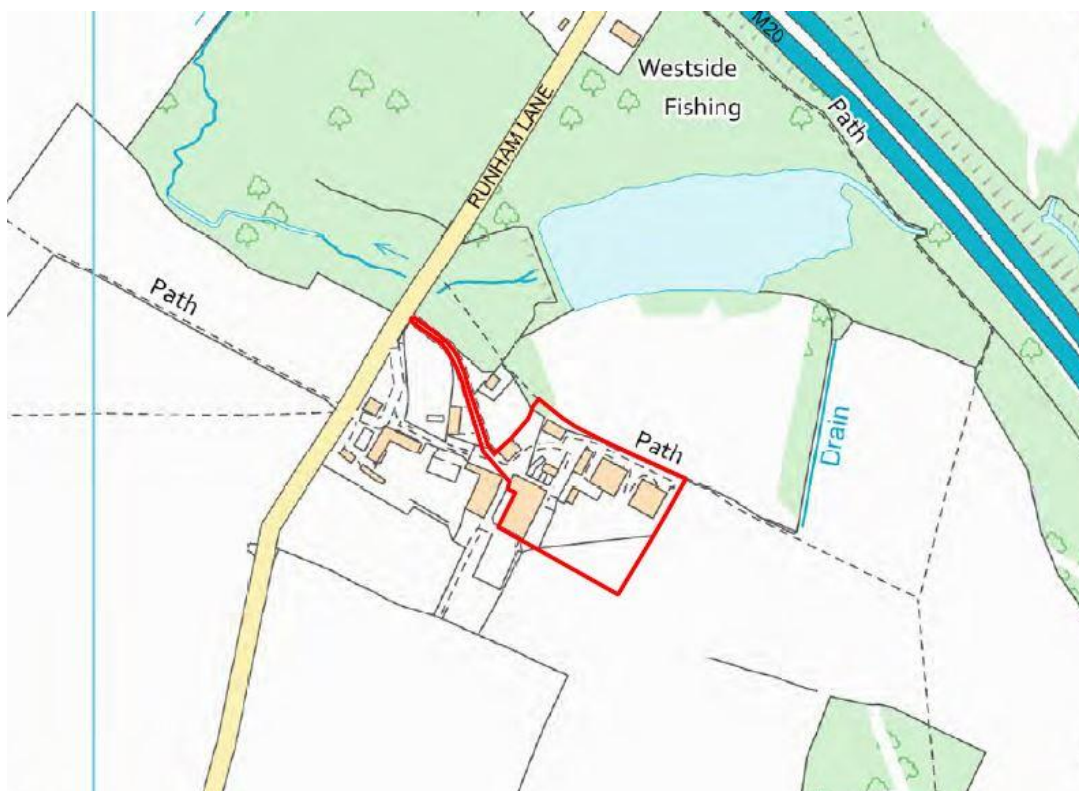


Figure 2. OS plan of proposed area of development and existing farm buildings (red line))

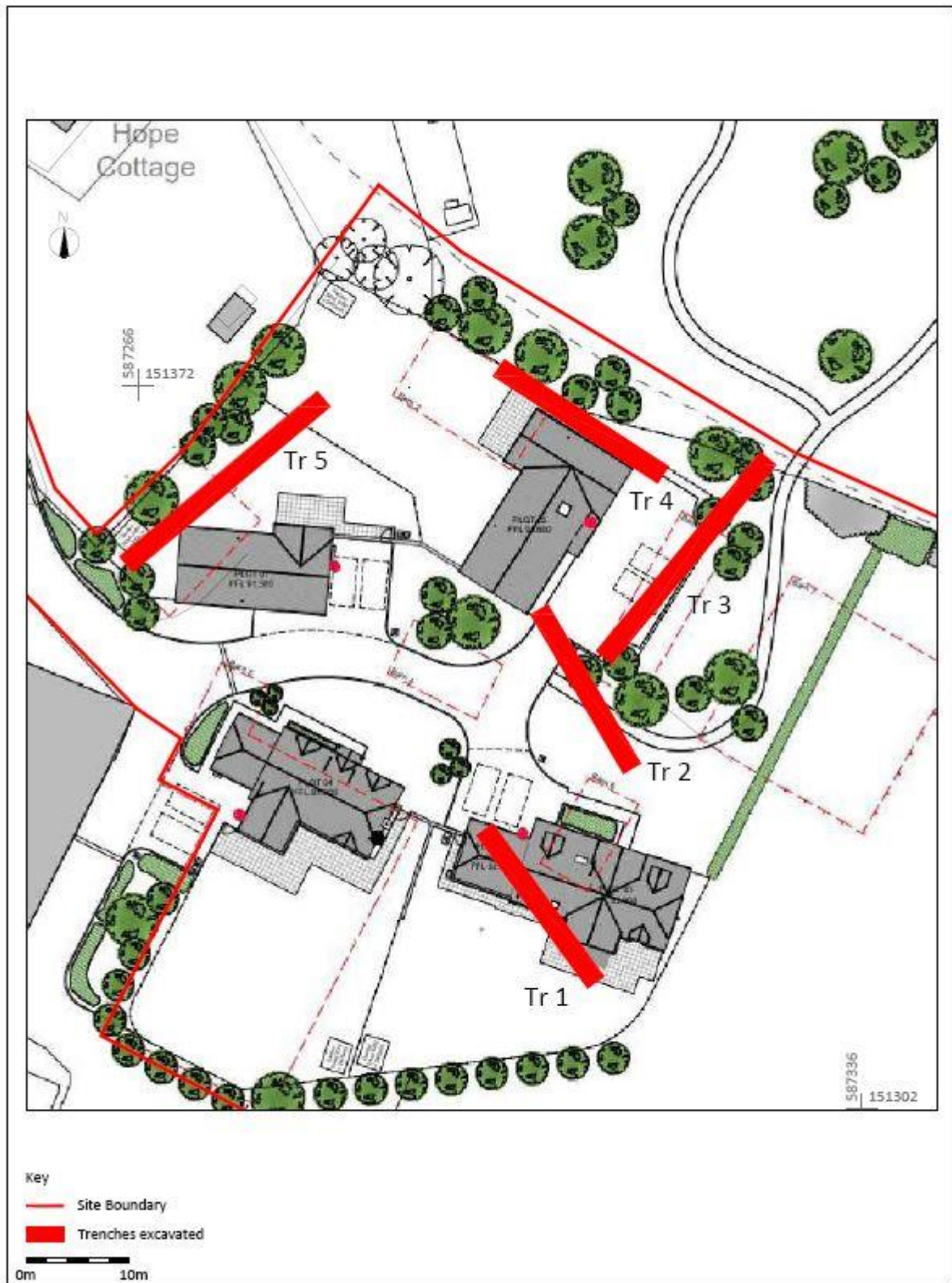


Figure 3. Proposed development and location of negative archaeological evaluation trenches (in red)