

Archaeological Monitoring on land at Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

Planning Application Number: 23/504717/FULL

Site Code: FUL/WB/24



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1. Summary

In March 2024 SWAT Archaeology carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne in Kent. The works were commissioned by the school and carried out during the excavation of ground works associated with the new development of a replacement two-storey building comprising of 6no. general purpose classrooms, offices and toilets (Swale Borough Council Planning 23/504717/FULL).

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 at Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne in Kent. The NGR to the centre of the site is 590847 162855 (Figures 1-2).

2.2 Planning Background

The land has a planning permission (23/504717) from Swale Borough Council for the erection of a replacement two storey building comprising of 6no. general purposed classrooms, offices and toilets with associated storage and external works.

The following Condition (4) requiring a programme of archaeological monitoring was attached to the planning consent:

(4) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, 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.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Dr Paul Wilkinson SWAT) and closely monitored the excavation works on 3rd to 18th 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 (Plates 1-6. 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 set on bedrock of Seaford Chalk Formation. Superficial deposits are not recorded but exposed on site as grey/brown sandy silt. The Ordnance Datum for the site is about 25m aOD.

5.2 The proposed development area (PDA) is within an Area of Archaeological Potential and A search of the KCCHER has revealed that about 130m to the west are undated ditches (TQ 96 SW 298). About 200m to the SE a Romano-British cemetery is known.

Simon Mason the Principal Archaeological Officer KCC commented on the planning proposal 23/504717/FULL that: *The application site lies within an area that has archaeological*

potential with Roman cremation burials having been found during brickearth operations in the late 19th century in the vicinity. The new development involves the construction of a classroom block on an area of the school site that is presently occupied by a mobile classroom with limited ground disturbance in its foundation. Given the above potential I recommend that in any forthcoming consent provision is made for an archaeological watching brief through the following condition:

AR4 No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, 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.

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 SWAT).

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 was carried out by building contractors digging with a 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	3rd to 18 th March 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 1-8).

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

Context Number	Description	Interpretation
001	Concrete and topsoil	Overburden (Plates 1-3)
002	Brown/grey chalky subsoil overlaying Chalk	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 grey brown chalky subsoil sitting on the natural of chalk. No archaeological features were revealed in the subsoil or natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the area watched (Figures 1-3). The square trenching for footings was about 1.50m deep with subsoil about 20cm thick. OD height across the PDA was about 25m aOD (Plates 1-6). Overall areas watched were the footprint foundation footings of the proposed building (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 Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

SWAT Site Code: FUL/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: Swale Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 590847 162885

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: March 2024

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

Geology: Bedrock geology Seaford Chalk Formation- Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2024) Archaeological Watching Brief on land at Fulston Manor School, Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne, 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. Removing tarmac surfaces (looking NNW)



Plate 2. Trenching subsoil (looking SW)



Plate 3. Trenching subsoil (looking South)



Plate 4. Trenching subsoil (looking SW)



Plate 5. Checking depths of oundation trenches (looking SW)



Plate 6. Foundation trenches (looking East)



Plate 7. Foundation trenches (Looking SW)



Plate 8. Foundation trenches (Looking SE)



Figure 1. KCCHER map of site location at NGR 590847 152885 (Red arrow)

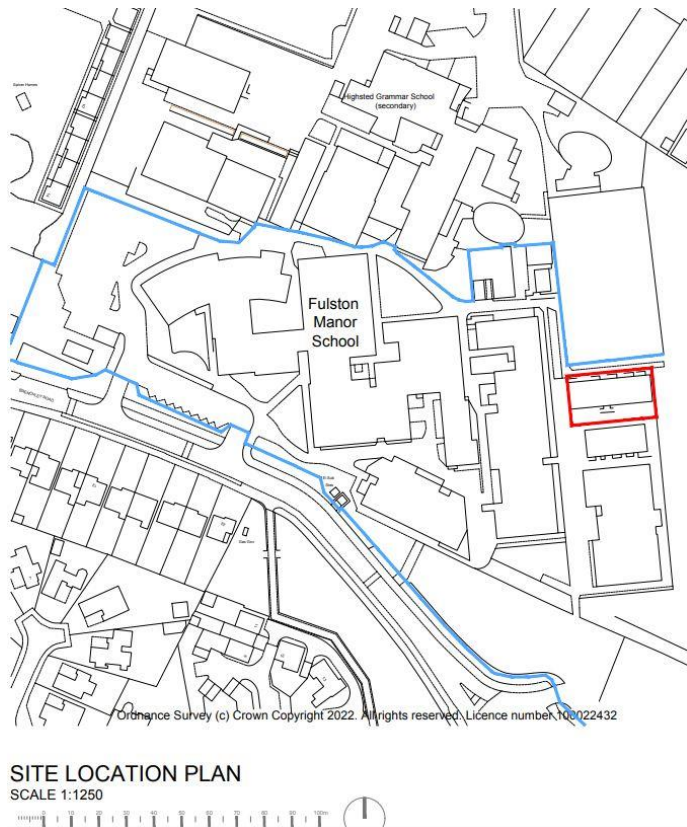


Figure 2. Site location within school (red line)



Figure 3. Proposed development and area watched (red line)