

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
to the Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent.**

NGR 576933 155820

**Project No. 5234
Site Code: AMK11**

**ASE Report No. 2011254
OASIS ID: archaeol6-112715**

**by
Simon Stevens BA MIFA**

With a contribution by Luke Barber

October 2011

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the mechanical excavation of foundations for a new detached house. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A small assemblage of late post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA) was commissioned by Designscape Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of their client Millburn Properties to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent (NGR 576933 155820) (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies in a built-up area to the east of the modern commercial centre of Maidstone. It occupies a position on the upper slopes of the valley of the River Len (a tributary of the River Medway) at a height of c.30mAOD. Views from the site are currently obscured by surrounding buildings. It is bounded to the south and east by the boundaries of properties fronting onto Ashford Road. Huntsman Lane lies to the north and west.
- 1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey the underlying bedrock at the site is Hythe Beds containing interbedded sandstone and limestone. There is no record of superficial geology (BGS 2011).

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Maidstone Borough Council for the erection of a detached house at the site (planning ref. MA/09/0786). Following advice from the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council (Maidstone Borough Council's advisers on archaeological issues), a condition was attached to the permission, which stated that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has/have 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 in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.'

- 1.3.2 A Specification for the archaeological work was produced by the Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council (HCGKCC). This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in the subsequent reporting and archiving of the results (HCGKCC 2009).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The stated objective of the watching brief given in the Specification (*ibid.*) was to:

'contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in

connection with the groundworks. Particular attention will be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of results.

Specific aims of the work are to identify the presence of absence of medieval and post-medieval occupation and land use.'

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks carried out on a visit to the site on 26th October 2011. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Kent County Council Historical Environment Record (HER) was consulted. There are 182 entries within a 1km radius of the site; the majority are listed buildings in the historic centre of Maidstone. The following are considered some of the more significant entries, or those in the immediate area of the current site:

HER Number	Description
TQ 75 NE 71	Ashford Road - Iron Age/Belgic cremation deposit found in 1963.
75 ME 52	Vinters Park – Romano-British cemetery found in 18 th century.
75 NE 33	Church Street – Roman coin hoard found in 1835.
TQ 75 NE 70	Coin of Emperor Trajan found in the River Len in 1830s.
75 NE 108	Romano-British coin hoard found in 1979.
75 NE 30	Wheeler Street – early Anglo-Saxon cemetery found in 1800s.
TQ 75 SE 298	Knight rider Street - multi-period site dating from prehistory to the C19th.
HER No. TQ 75 NE 429	Vintners Park – historic parkscape. Medieval documentary reference.
TQ 75 SE 338	Mote Park - parkscape incorporated historic building (Mote House).
TQ 75 NE 293	Remains of Padsole Mill. Post-medieval - uncovered in 1999.
TQ 75 NE 492	No. 27 Ashford Road, Grade II listed building. C19th construction.
TQ 75 NE 491	Nos. 29-35 Ashford Road. Listed terrace. C19th construction
TQ 75 NE 317	WWII defensive ditch found at Grammar School opposite site

Table 1: Summary of HER data.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Mechanical and manual groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from ASE. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts, both visually and with a metal detector.
- 3.2** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms.
- 3.3** A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade, as Maidstone Museum is currently unable to accept archaeological archives. The archive consists of the following:

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photograph	9 digital images
Bulk finds	-
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 2: Quantification of Site Archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Foundation Trenches (monitored 26th October 2011)

- 4.1.1 Part of the footing trenches had already been excavated prior to an archaeologist being present on site. However, the exposed sections and base of these excavations were able to be inspected and recorded. The remainder of the footing trenches were excavated under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.1.2 The trenches were a maximum of 1.2m in width and a maximum of 1.3m in depth. Observation the footing trenches revealed a straightforward stratigraphic sequence, described below and summarised in Table 3.
- 4.1.3 The uppermost deposit was context [001], a layer of humic mid brown silty clay topsoil, which was a maximum of 0.32m deep. This overlay context [002], a 100mm thick layer of orangey brown silty clay interpreted as a subsoil, or the interface between the topsoil and the underlying 'natural', context [003], which was a orangey brown silty clay with outcrops of laminar limestone, increasing at depth.
- 4.1.4 No archaeological features or deposits were observed. A small assemblage of late post-medieval material was recovered from the topsoil, reflecting the former use of the area as a garden, where domestic refuse was occasionally discarded.

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness (m)
001	Deposit	Topsoil	0.32m
002	Deposit	Subsoil / interface layer	0.10m
003	Deposit	Natural clay with limestone outcrops	0.20 - 0.40m

Table 3: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS by Luke Barber

5.1 Finds from Topsoil [001]

5.1.1 Context [001] produced a small assemblage of finds that, on the whole, can be placed between the mid 19th and early 20th centuries. The five sherds of pottery include two sherds of plain refined white earthenware (a plate), a sherd of refined white earthenware with blue dendritic transfer-pattern, a sherd of red transfer-printed ware and a polychrome transfer-printed cup base. The two clay tobacco pipe stems include one of mid 18th- to 19th-century date and one of early/middle 18th- century date. A single 6g fragment of well-formed and hard-fired peg tile was also present. This is tempered with sparse fine sand and rare marl inclusions to 2mm. A mid 18th- to early 20th-century date range is certain. The assemblage is summarised in Table 1

Context						
t	Pottery	wt (g)	CBM	wt (g)	CTP	wt (g)
1	5	30	1	8	2	4

Table 1 Quantification of finds

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1** No archaeological deposits, features or finds of any antiquity were encountered during the examination of excavated portions of the footings or during the active archaeological monitoring of the other element of these groundworks. Only a small amount of mid 19th to early 20th century pottery, clay tobacco pipe and ceramic building material was recovered from the topsoil.
- 6.2** Therefore based on currently available evidence, it can be stated with confidence that no significant archaeological deposits were disturbed during the groundworks at the site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS, 2011. British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 24.08.2011 http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

HCGKCC, 2009. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 29 Ashford Road in Maidstone*, Unpub, HCGKCC document

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Kingsley Hughes of Designscape Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of their client John Landolo of Millburn Properties for commissioning the work. The input of Adam Single and of Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officers, Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council at all stages of the project is also gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due for the co-operation and hospitality of the groundworkers.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	AMK11					
Identification Name and Address	Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone					
County, District &/or Borough	Maidstone Borough, Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	576933 155820					
Geology	Hythe Beds					
ASE Project No.	5234					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 26.10.2011	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Kingsley Hughes of Designscape Consultancy Ltd					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the mechanical excavation of foundations for a new detached house. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A small assemblage of late post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-112715

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief to the Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent.
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the mechanical excavation of foundations for a new detached house No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. A small assemblage of late post-medieval artefacts was recovered from the topsoil.
Project dates	Start: 26-10-2011 End: 26-10-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	5234 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	AMK11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	MA/09/0786 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT MAIDSTONE MAIDSTONE Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road
Postcode	ME14 5DR
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 76933 55820 51.2734590835 0.536870757609 51 16 24 N 000 32 12 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Heritage Conservation Kent County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Kingsley Hughes of Designscape Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of their client John landolo of Millburn Properties

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	Yes
Digital Archive recipient	n/a
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	n/a
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Report','Unpublished Text'

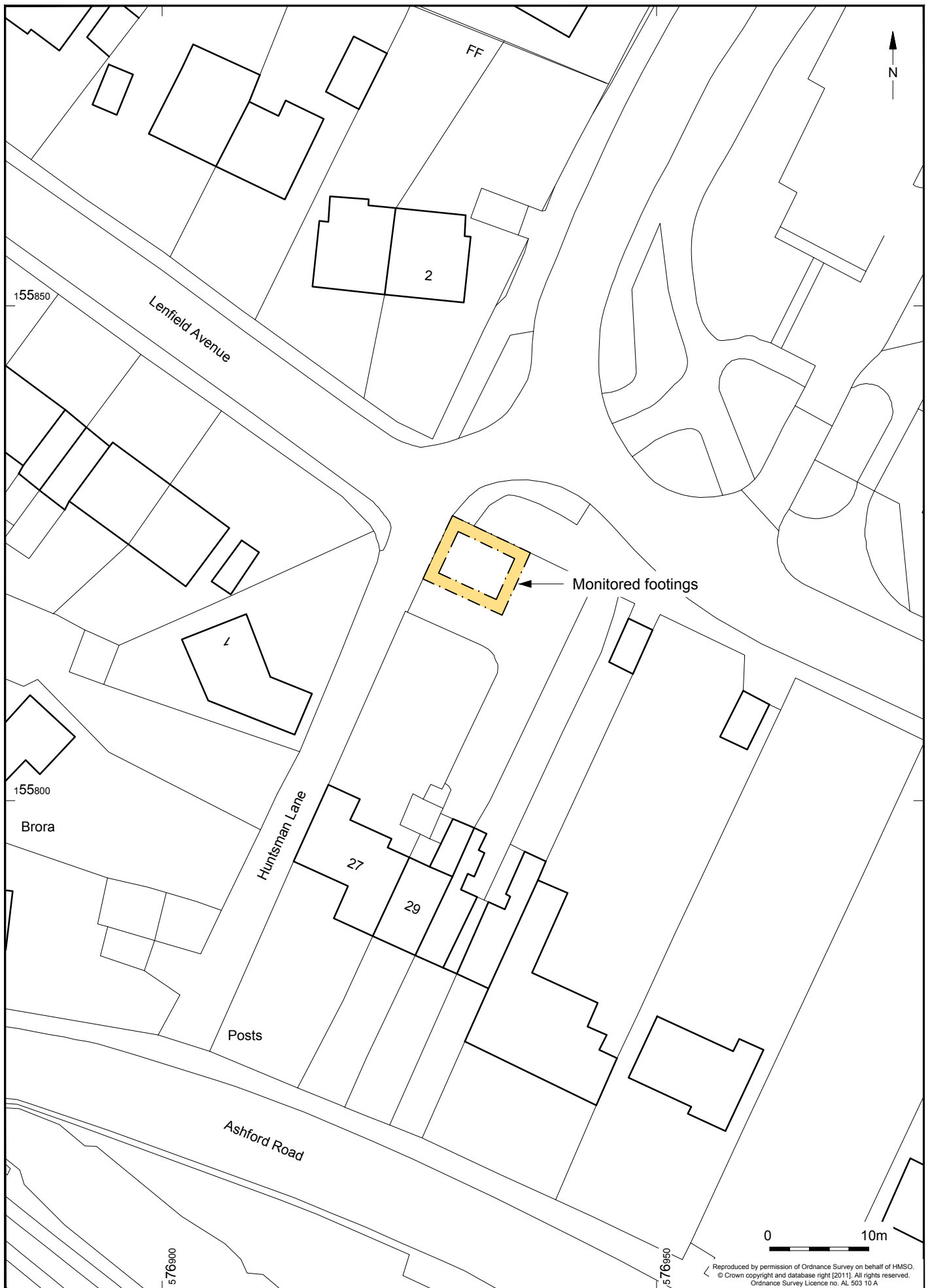
Project bibliography 1

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© Archaeology South-East		Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5234	Oct 2011	Site location	
Report Ref: 2011254	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		Rear of No. 29 Ashford Road, Maidstone	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 5234	Oct 2011	Site plan showing monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2011254	Drawn by: JLR		

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