

Archaeological Watching Brief at 124 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent

Planning Ref: MA/06/2140

NGR TQ 576371 154981

**Project No: 4260
Site Code: USS10**

**ASE Report No. 2010045
OASIS id: archaeol6-75849**

Liane Peyre

April 2010

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Designscape Consultancy to conduct an archaeological watching brief prior to the redevelopment of a yard behind 124 Upper Stone Street, to make way for the proposed construction of eight residential apartments. This phase of monitoring was a condition of the planning permission after consultation with The Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council

The monitored groundworks consisted of the excavation of an investigation trench measuring 3.0m long, 0.6m wide and 1m in depth, by mechanical excavator with a flat bladed ditching bucket. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London (CAAUCL), were commissioned by Designscape Consultancy to undertake an archaeological watching brief on behalf of their client during investigative ground works associated with the construction of a new build residential apartment block at Upper Stone Street, Maidstone (Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site according to the British Geological Survey map is Hythe Beds.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 Planning permission to convert the land to the rear of 124 Upper Stone Street into two blocks of residential apartments was granted with the following archaeological conditions (Reference MA/06/2140).

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.

- 1.3.2 The archaeological potential of the site has been gauged in relation to known archaeological sites and the location of chance archaeological finds in the surrounding area (HER data). Based on this information and the scope of the redevelopment works it was deemed appropriate that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during intrusive ground works, which involved a preliminary investigative test trench.
- 1.3.3 A specification for the watching brief was outlined by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council (2009).

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The purpose of the archaeological watching brief was to ascertain the character, quality and degree of surviving archaeological remains on site, and to record them appropriately.
- 1.4.2 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to the 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 would be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report represents the findings of the watching brief undertaken by Liane Peyre (Archaeologist) on the 6th April 2010. The project was managed by Dan Swift (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site lies in alignment with a Roman Road which is considered to have been a major route between Rochester and central and east Kent and the coast. Barton Roman villa lies 250m to the south east.
- 2.2** The HER data lists over 223 records of finds spots, monuments and listed buildings within a 1km radius of the site. The majority of these are listed buildings, making up for 164 of the records. There are 40 records for monuments ranging from standing masonry which is thought to be Roman (TQ75 NE139), Roman cremations and burials to World War 2 defensive features. There are 19 registered finds spots recorded from Lower Stone Street (TQ75 NE122), with artefacts ranging from struck flint, to a gold and silver coin hoard dating from Henry V – Henry VII (13th – 14th century).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. These ground works were monitored by an archaeologist until archaeological features or deposits, the undisturbed natural substrate or the development formation level were reached.
- 3.2** Where new excavations revealed significant archaeological remains, an opportunity would be made for careful hand excavation and the collection of samples by the archaeologist in attendance, taking site health and safety into account. Adequate time would be made for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand to identify and record the remains as far as possible within the limits of the works in order to extract archaeological and environmental information, should this prove necessary.
- 3.3** The spoil from the excavations would also be inspected by archaeologists to recover artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and routinely scanned with a metal detector.
- 3.4** The monitored groundworks comprised of the excavation of an investigative test trench running east – west along the back yard of 124 Upper Stone Street (Figure 2)
- 3.5** A digital photographic record was kept throughout the works.
- 3.6** A measured plan was kept of the location of intrusive modern disturbances found on the site.
- 3.7** All contexts were recorded on standard pro forma recording sheets.

Number of Contexts	2
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	Digital, 1CD
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

- 4.1** The site had been predominantly used as a storage area and as a car park. In the excavated area observed the stratigraphy consisted of two deposits, a layer of disturbed natural/made ground containing tarmac fragments and modern ceramic building material [001] covered with a thin tarmac layer, forming the yard surface, and the underlying mid brown-yellow sandy natural [002]. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
001	Deposit	Tarmac and disturbed natural/ made ground	Trench	Trench	0.6m
002	Deposit	Natural:	Trench	Trench	0.4m observed

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

- 5.1** No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.
- 5.2** There were no archaeological features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling present.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1** The monitored groundworks were excavated by mechanical excavator to a maximum depth of 1.0m. The resulting stratigraphy consisted of a tarmac layer and disturbed natural/made ground, directly above natural. It is possible that this simple stratigraphy is a result of previous truncation and levelling on the site.
- 6.2** No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the watching brief. There was, consequently, no evidence of Roman activity, or post medieval construction phases in the investigated area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

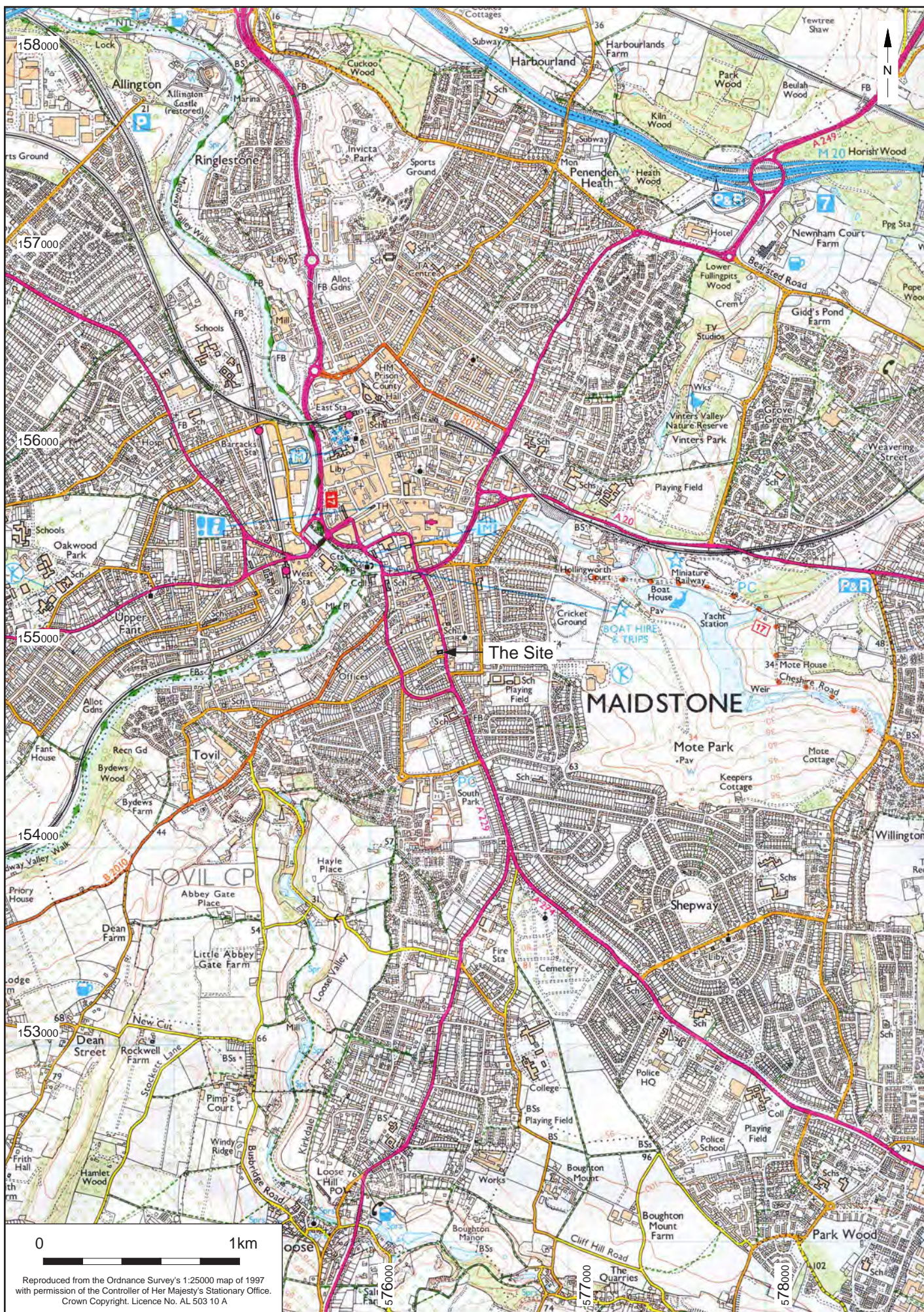
Archaeology South-East would like to thank Designscape Consultancy for commissioning the work and Adam Single, Heritage Conservation Group KCC for his assistance throughout the project. The illustrations were prepared by Justin Russell (ASE).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

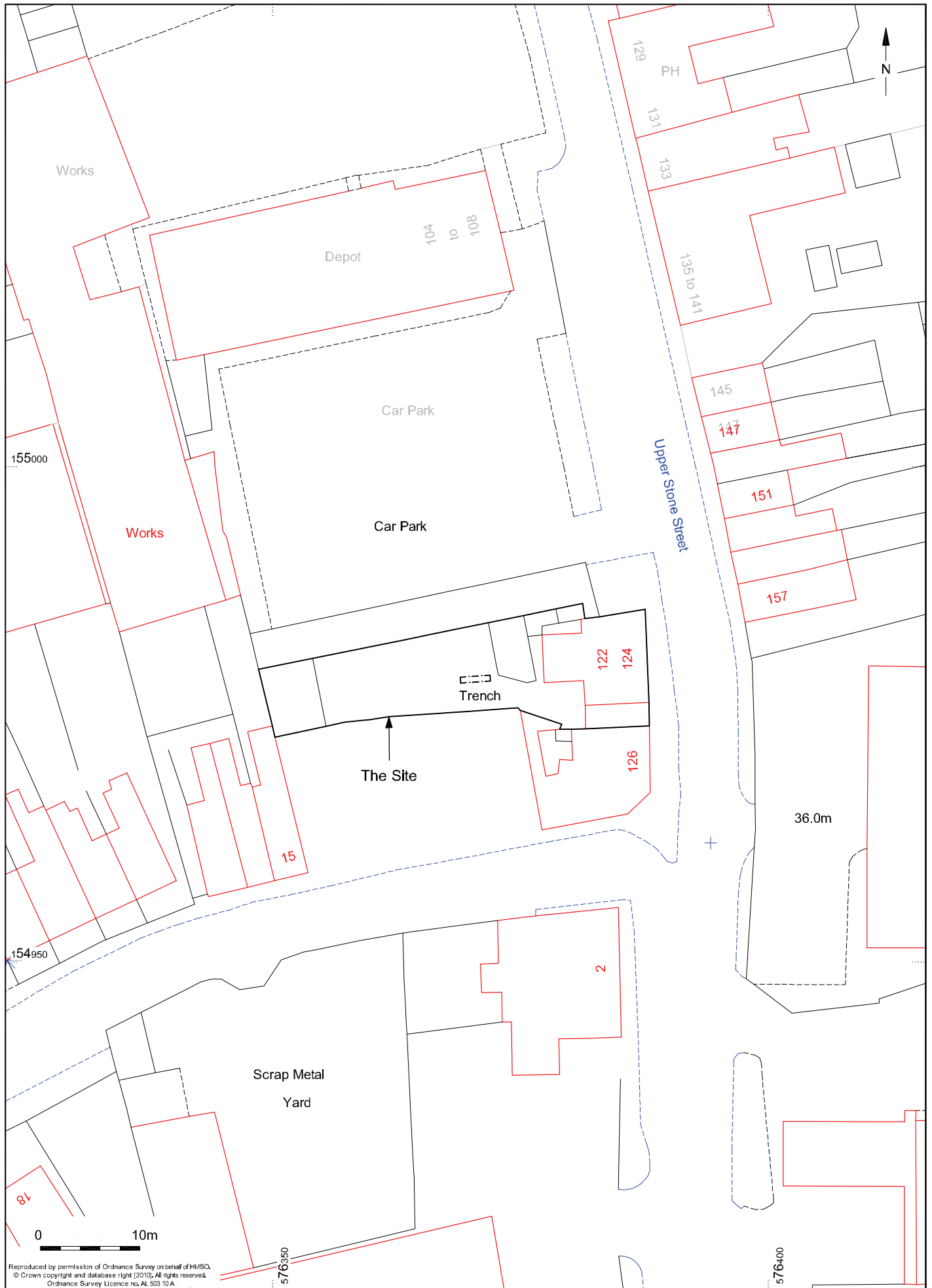
Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council 2009, Specification for an archaeological watching brief at 124 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code						
Identification Name and Address	An archaeological watching brief at 124 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone.					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	576371 154981					
Geology	Hythe Beds					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4260					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Brown Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other farm buildings		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 6 th April	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Designscape Consultancy					
Project Manager	Giles Dawkes					
Project Supervisor	Liane Peyre					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Designscape Consultancy to conduct an archaeological watching brief prior to the redevelopment of a yard behind 124 Upper Stone Street, to make way for the proposed construction of eight residential apartments. This phase of monitoring was a condition of the planning permission after consultation with The Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council</i></p> <p><i>The monitored groundworks consisted of the excavation of an investigation trench measuring 3.0m long, 0.6m wide and 1m in depth, by mechanical excavator with a flat bladed ditching bucket. No archaeological finds or features were uncovered.</i></p>						



© Archaeology South-East		124 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4260	May 2010	Site location	
Report Ref: 2010045	Drawn by: JLR		



© Archaeology South-East		124 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4260	May 2010	Site plan	
Report Ref: 2010045	Drawn by: JLR		

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