

An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Gardeners' Compound, Knole House, Sevenoaks, Kent

Planning Reference SE/09/02827/FUL

NGR: 553996 154015

ASE Project No. 4322 Site Code: KEG10

ASE Report No. 2010160 OASIS id: archaeol6-91867

Sam Whitehead
With contributions by Rob Cole,
Elke Raemen, Justin Russell and Sarah Porteus

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#### Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Strutt & Parker on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Knole House, Knole Park, Sevenoaks (NGR: 553996 154015). The watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the construction of a timber framed gardeners' compound and associated services within the walled gardens of the 15<sup>th</sup> century stately home. The archaeological watching brief began on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and ran intermittently until 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

The ground works monitored in the watching brief revealed post-medieval structural remains and garden features. Several artefacts of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, including a highly abraded early post-medieval pottery sherd were recovered from the topsoil at the site. Natural yellow sand geology was encountered across the site at approximately 124.0m AOD.

# **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Archaeological Background
- 3.0 Archaeological Methodology
- 4.0 Results
- 5.0 Finds
- 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

#### References

# Acknowledgements

HER Summary Form OASIS Form

# **FIGURES**

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Monitored compound and pipe trench

Figure 3: Detailed plan of pipe trench
Figure 4: Detailed plan of pipe trench
Figure 5: OS Maps 1871 and 1909

# **TABLES**

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

Table 2: List of recorded contexts
Table 3: Quantification of the finds

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the, University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Strutt & Parker on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks within the walled gardens of Knole House, Knole Estate, Sevenoaks (NGR: 553996 154015, Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.
- 1.1.2 The works monitored were groundworks for the construction of a timber framed gardeners compound and associated services (Figure 2).

# 1.2 Location, Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 Knole Park is located on the outskirts of Sevenoaks, east of the A225 and circa 800m east of the centre of the town. Sevenoaks is 'a small market town of possible pre-Conquest origin, situated at the junction of two important routes, the main London to Hastings road and the road to Dartford. The site rests on the crest of a hill within 4km² of ancient parkland, 900m to the east of historic Sevenoaks town centre.
- 1.2.2 According to maps of the British Geological Survey (Sheet 287), the site lies on Sandstone and Mudstone of the Sandgate Formation (BGS 1996).
- 1.2.3 The proposed gardeners' compound is located within the walled garden of Knole House, roughly 130m southeast of the main building, which is *c*900m east of the historic core of Sevenoaks. It is sited with densely vegetated ornamental gardens in an area known as 'The Wilderness'.

# 1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 A planning application was submitted for the erection of the compound (planning reference: SE/09/02827/FUL). The Local Planning Authority placed the following condition (section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) on the planning consent:

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 In the light of the archaeological potential of the site The Heritage Conservation Group (HCG), Kent County Council (KCC) requested that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during the groundworks.
- 1.3.3 A Specification for an archaeological watching brief was prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group (KCC 2010). All site work was carried out in accordance with the Specification (unless otherwise specified below).

# 1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The general objectives of the archaeological watching brief as outlined in the Specification (KCC 2010) were to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. This involved the monitoring of the intrusive groundworks by an archaeologist to ensure that any exposed artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.
- 1.4.3 No specific aims for the watching brief were stipulated in the Specification document (KCC 2010).

# 1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the findings of the watching brief which was undertaken by Sam Whitehead, Gary Webster and Robert Cole (Archaeological Field Officers) from 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010 until 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The project was managed by Jon Sygrave (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation/editing).

#### 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The relevant background for the site was outlined in the Specification document carried out by the HCG (KCC 2010) and has been reproduced here with all due acknowledgement. The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Kent County Council (KCC), and held at County Hall, Maidstone.
- 2.1.2 Knole Park is one of the largest private houses in England dating from the 15th century and positioned in 400ha of parkland. The oldest phase of the house dates to the 1400's and comprises of the buildings around Stone Court. The medieval elements of the present buildings date from the 15th century when Archbishop Bourchier of Canterbury built a large fortress-like house around a sizeable central courtyard. This was then extended to encompass Green Court in the 1480 1530's and after this period served as a royal residency for both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The lease passed to Thomas Sackville who expanded the property between 1604 1608, creating the Stable Court and Brew House Court. The Orangery was added in 1823. The gardens themselves are listed in both the Kent County Council Historic Parks & Gardens of Kent Compendium and in English Heritage's Parks & Gardens Register (KCC 2010).
- 2.1.3 In addition, the surrounding area encompasses several other features of archaeological interest. Those within an immediate 500m radius of the site include a Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation floor and artefacts (HER No: TQ 55 NW 33), and a further collection of Mesolithic flint implements (HER No: TQ 55 NW 57) (KCC 2010).
- 2.1.4 In 1946 The National Trust was given the house and 43 acres of the surrounding land

# 2.2 Previous Archaeological Work

- 2.2.1 In July 2007, ASE carried out archaeological monitoring of an underground drainage survey (ASE 2007). The watching brief failed to achieve its objectives of highlighting any new evidence relating to the development of Knole and its water management system due to heavy modern disturbance.
- 2.2.2 An archaeological watching brief was carried out by ASE between February and June 2010 during the excavation of seventeen test-pits and seven inspection chambers (ASE 2010a). The majority of test-pits within the Green Court did not reach depths below post medieval disturbance (most likely to be associated with the drain runs which were fitted as recently as the 1970's) however, a red brick wall was revealed in one of the test-pits. The bricks from this wall were of medieval date and due to the location of the brickwork underneath the main fabric of Knole House, it was deemed likely to be either a structure pre dating 1456 or brick work associated with the underground vaulted water reservoir.
- 2.2.3 In November 2010, ASE was commissioned by Strutt and Parker to carry out a desk-based archaeological assessment of the Bird House complex on the site (ASE 2010b).

#### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1 The Groundworks** (Figure 2)

- 3.1.1 The ground works comprised the removal of the topsoil within the footprint of the building followed by the machine excavation of trenches for the strip footings. Finally, a service trench linking the new compound to the existing gardener's compound and to Knole House itself was excavated.
- 3.1.2 The objectives of the archaeological work were to monitor the excavation of the ground works in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the intrusive works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards. Particular attention was to be made to the extent, character, depth, condition, date and significance of the deposits.

# 3.2 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.2.1 The complete adopted methodology may be found in the Specification (KCC 2010) WSI. This section is a brief summary of the detail within the Specification.
- 3.2.2 Machine excavation was undertaken by a small mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket to minimise damage to deposits. The topsoil/garden soil was removed in spits under the constant supervision of a monitoring archaeologist.
- 3.2.3 During the monitored excavations, all revealed deposits were examined for archaeological features and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2000 and 2001, EH 1991) using pro-forma context record sheets
- 3.2.4 A digital photographic record of the work was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.2.5 The level of deposits has been calculated from the levels recorded in a GPS survey of the new building and the service trench carried out at the end of the project.

#### 3.3 The Archive

3.3.1 The site archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices in Portslade, East Sussex pending submission to a suitable local museum. The contents of the site archive are summarised below in Table 1.

| Number of Contexts           | 14 contexts       |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Number of files/paper record | 1 file            |
| Plan and sections sheets     | 0                 |
| Photographs                  | 96 digital images |
| Finds                        | 1 small box       |

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

#### **4.0 RESULTS** (Figures 2-4)

#### 4.1 The Groundwork

- 4.1.1 The area of the compound measured 12.80m north/west-south/east by 15.50m north/east-south/west. The area was reduced by 0.20m–0.40m corresponding with the varying depth of the topsoil.
- 4.1.2 Following ground reduction, footing trenches were excavated within the reduced area.
- 4.1.3 A 0.90m wide 208m long service trench for electricity and telecommunications cables and a foul water pipe was excavated following the approximate route of existing paths. The depth of the trench varied according to surface topography from 0.40m where the pipe and cables were tied in to the buildings up to a maximum of 1.00m.
- 4.1.4 Fourteen contexts were revealed and recorded during the watching brief monitoring. With the exception of the single context recorded during the ground reduction for the gardeners' compound, the majority of recorded contexts were encountered during the excavation of the service trench, and are summarised below.

| Context<br>Number | Context<br>Type | Context<br>Description | Deposit<br>Thickness<br>(maximum) | Approximate<br>Height<br>m AOD |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 001               | Deposit         | Topsoil/Garden soil    | 0.40m                             | 164.1m                         |
| 005               | Deposit         | Made Ground            | 0.12m                             | -                              |
| 006               | Deposit         | Rubble                 | 0.18m                             | -                              |
| 007               | Deposit         | Silt Accumulation      | 0.30m                             | -                              |
| 800               | Deposit         | Silt Accumulation      | 0.40m                             | -                              |
| 009               | Deposit         | Natural Geology        | -                                 | 124.0m                         |
| 010               | Masonry         | Culvert Structure      | 0.25m                             | -                              |
| 011               | Masonry         | Culvert Support        | -                                 | -                              |
| 012               | Masonry         | Wall                   | 0.51m                             | -                              |
| 014               | Deposit         | Made Ground            | 0.45m                             | -                              |
| 015               | Deposit         | Made Ground            | 0.30m                             | -                              |
| 016               | Cut             | Rubbish Pit Cut        | 0.25m                             | -                              |
| 017               | Fill            | Rubbish Pit Fill       | 0.25m                             | -                              |
| 018               | Masonry         | Wall                   | 1.00m                             | -                              |
| 019               | Masonry         | Wall                   | 0.50m                             |                                |

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

#### 4.2 Gardeners Compound

- 4.2.1 A single context ([001]) was recorded during the ground reduction for the Gardeners Compound (see Table 2). This context comprised mid reddish brown silty sand topsoil. Although some artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered from the topsoil (Table 3, 5.1), no archaeological cut features were encountered during the ground reduction.
- **4.3** Service Trench (Figures 3 and 4)
- 4.3.1 Natural geology comprising compact firm yellow sand [009] was encountered at a depth of approximately 124.0m AOD within the service trench.
- 4.3.2 Part of a brick wall foundation [018] was revealed in the north-eastern end of the

trench in the northwest facing section. It was made up of red post-medieval bricks measuring 230mm by 110mm with a depth of 70mm. The bricks were laid in regular courses and were bonded with an off-white sandy mortar. The wall was 1m tall and consisted of thirteen courses. This brickwork was interpreted as the possible foundations for the greenhouse that was located there *c*.100 years ago (Figure 5).

- 4.3.3 Two other areas of brickwork ([12], [19]) were revealed towards this end of the trench. Context [012] was located opposite wall [018] and consisted of red post-medieval bricks measuring 230mm by 110mm with a depth of 70mm. This context represents wall footing of eight regular courses standing 0.51m tall and 0.35m wide. Three meters southwest of context [012] was another brick wall [019] which was only observed in the southeast facing section. This wall also comprised eight courses and the dimensions were the same as those for context [012]. The similarity between the bricks in contexts [012] and [019] and the parallel northwest-southeast alignments of these walls suggest that they may have been part of a single feature/function. The brick dimensions in these features are fairly standard throughout the post-medieval period, but the similarity in the types of brickwork used in these features may be evidence that they were roughly contemporary.
- 4.3.4 Four contexts were revealed between walls [012] and [019]. Overlying natural geology [009][ was 0.40m thick layer of light bluish grey silty sand [008] with occasional ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions. This was overlain by 0.30m thick dark greyish blue silty sand [007] with occasional charcoal flecks. Next in the sequence was a thin layer of made ground [006] (c.0.18m thick) comprising light grey silty sand with orange-brown mottling, occasional CBM fragments and frequent rubble inclusions. Covering context [006] was a further layer of made ground [005] (c.0.12m thick) consisting of mid orange-brown silty sand with frequent CBM inclusions.
- 4.3.5 A northwest-southeast aligned brick-built culvert [010] bonded with light greenish grey/yellowish coarse sandy mortar, was encountered crossing the middle of the service trench. The bricks used in this feature measured 220mm by 70mm with a depth of 10mm. The culvert was 0.25m tall and 0.35m wide. Ragstone slabs [011] reinforced the culvert from the southern side.
- 4.3.6 A rubbish pit [016] was encountered partially in plan and in the northeast facing section of the service trench (Figure 4). It was filled with mid greyish brown silty sand [017] with occasional animal bone fragments, modern CBM and charcoal flecks. Mede ground [005] (as above) sealed this feature.
- 4.3.7 Two made ground deposits [014] and [015] were found throughout the remainder of the service trench excavations. The lower deposit [015] consisted of light orangebrown clayey sand with occasional CBM fragments and the upper deposit [014] of mid orange-brown silty sand with occasional CBM and charcoal flecks.

#### 5.0 FINDS

**5.1** A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the topsoil. This has been summarised below in Table 3.

| Context | Pot | Wt (g) | СВМ | Wt (g) | Glass | Wt (g) | СТР | Wt (g) |
|---------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-------|--------|-----|--------|
| 001     | 1   | <2     | 5   | 154    | 3     | 104    | 1   | 2      |

Table 3: Quantification of the finds

# **5.2** The Pottery by Elke Raemen

5.2.1 A small, highly abraded fragment in a frequent, medium sand- tempered fabric was recovered from context [001]. The fragment is like to be of early post medieval date.

# 5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.3.1 A total of five fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered. Three fragments of peg tile (3/38g) of probable 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date were identified in a poorly mixed orange fabric with sparse coarse quartz, chunky orange silt and sparse red iron rich inclusions. Also recovered were two conjoining fragments of curved tile (2/114g) heavily sooted on the interior. These are likely to be fragments of chimney pot and are also of probable 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

### **5.4** Other Finds by Elke Raemen

5.4.1 A small stem fragment from a clay tobacco pipe of 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date was also recovered from context [001].

#### 6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological features encountered during the watching brief shed some light on the changes that took place on the estate in the post-medieval and early modern periods.
- 6.2 Contexts [005–017] are likely to relate to the construction, use and demolition of a greenhouse visible on the OS maps from 1871 until 1909 which was, according to anecdotal evidence, demolished in 1910. Context [018] is the probable continuation below ground of a substantial garden wall which runs alongside the present gardeners' compound and aligns with two pillars standing in the middle of the lawn.
- A small scatter of unstratified finds of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, including a single heavily abraded early post-medieval pottery sherd, was recovered from the topsoil during the ground reduction for the gardeners compound.
- Natural geology comprising compact firm yellow sand [009] was encountered at a depth of approximately 124.0m AOD within the service trench.
- Despite the site's proximity to several prehistoric occupation floors and findspots, no evidence for prehistoric activity was encountered during the ground works.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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#### **CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES**

OS 1871 (1:10,560)

OS 1895 (1:2,500)

OS 1909 (1:2,500)

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeology South East would like to thank Strutt & Parker for commissioning the work and The Heritage Conservation Group KCC) for their advice and guidance during the project.

# **SMR Summary Form**

| Site Code                          | KEG 10                                |                                     |   |  |            |            |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|------------|------------|
| Identification Name and Address    | Knole House, Knole Estate, Sevenoaks  |                                     |   |  |            |            |
| County, District and/or Borough    | Kent                                  | Kent                                |   |  |            |            |
| OS Grid Refs.                      | NGR: 5539                             | 96 154015                           |   |  |            |            |
| Geology                            | Sandgate S                            | Sandstone a                         | nd Mudstones                                    |  |            |            |
| Arch. South-East<br>Project Number | 4322                                  |                                     |   |  |            |            |
| Type of Fieldwork                  | Eval.                                 | Excav.                              | Watching<br>Brief                               | Standing<br>Structure  | Survey     | Other      |
| Type of Site                       | -Green<br>Field                       | Shallow<br>Urban                    | Deep<br>Urban                                   | Other  |            |            |
| Dates of Fieldwork                 | Eval.                                 | Excav.                              | WB.<br>6 September<br>to 26<br>November<br>2010 | Other  |            |            |
| Sponsor/Client                     | Strutt & Pa                           | rker                                |   |  |            |            |
| Project Manager                    | Jon Sygrav                            | ⁄e                                  |   |  |            |            |
| Project Supervisor                 | Sam Whitehead, Robert Cole            |                                     |   |  |            |            |
| Period Summary                     | <del>Palaeo.</del><br><del>None</del> | <del>Meso.</del><br><del>None</del> | Neo.<br>None                                    | BA<br>None   | IA<br>None | RB<br>None |
| 100 Word Summon                    | AS<br>None                            | MED<br>None                         | PM  | Other Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -early 19 <sup>th</sup> century Topsoil finds only |            |            |

100 Word Summary.

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Strutt & Parker on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Knole House, Knole Park, Sevenoaks (NGR: 553996 154015). The watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the construction of a timber framed gardeners' compound and associated services within the walled gardens of the 15<sup>th</sup> century stately home. The archaeological watching brief began on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and ran intermittently until 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The ground works monitored in the watching brief revealed post-medieval structural remains and garden features. Several artefacts of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, including a highly abraded early post-medieval pottery sherd were recovered from the topsoil at the site. Natural yellow sand geology was encountered across the site at approximately 124.0m AOD.

#### **OASIS Form**

#### OASIS ID: archaeol6-91867

#### **Project details**

The Gardners' Compound, Knole House, Sevenoaks Project name

the project

Short description of Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Strutt and Parker on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Knole House, Knole Park, Sevenoaks (NGR: 553996 154015). The watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the construction of a timber framed gardeners' compound and associated services within the walled gardens of the 15th century stately home. The archaeological watching brief began on the 6th September 2010 and ran intermittently until 26th November 2010. The ground works monitored in the watching brief revealed post-medieval structural remains and garden features. Several artefacts of late 18th to early 20th century date, including a highly abraded early post-medieval pottery sherd were recovered from the topsoil at the site. Natural yellow sand geology was encountered across the site

at approximately 124.0m AOD.

Project dates Start: 06-09-2010 End: 26-11-2010

Previous/future

work

Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference

codes

KEG10 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status National Trust land

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Monument type **BRICK WALLS Post Medieval** 

**CULVERT Post Medieval** Monument type

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

#### **Project location**

Country England

Site location KENT SEVENOAKS SEVENOAKS Gardners' Compound, Knole House,

Sevenoaks, Kent

Postcode **TN15 0RP** 

Site coordinates TQ 553996 154015 50.9165452728 0.210991475626 50 54 59 N 000 12

39 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 124.00m Max: 124.00m

**Project creators** 

Name of Organisation

Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator

Kent County Council

Project design originator

The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council

Project

Jon Sygrave

director/manager

Project supervisor

sam whitehead

Entered by

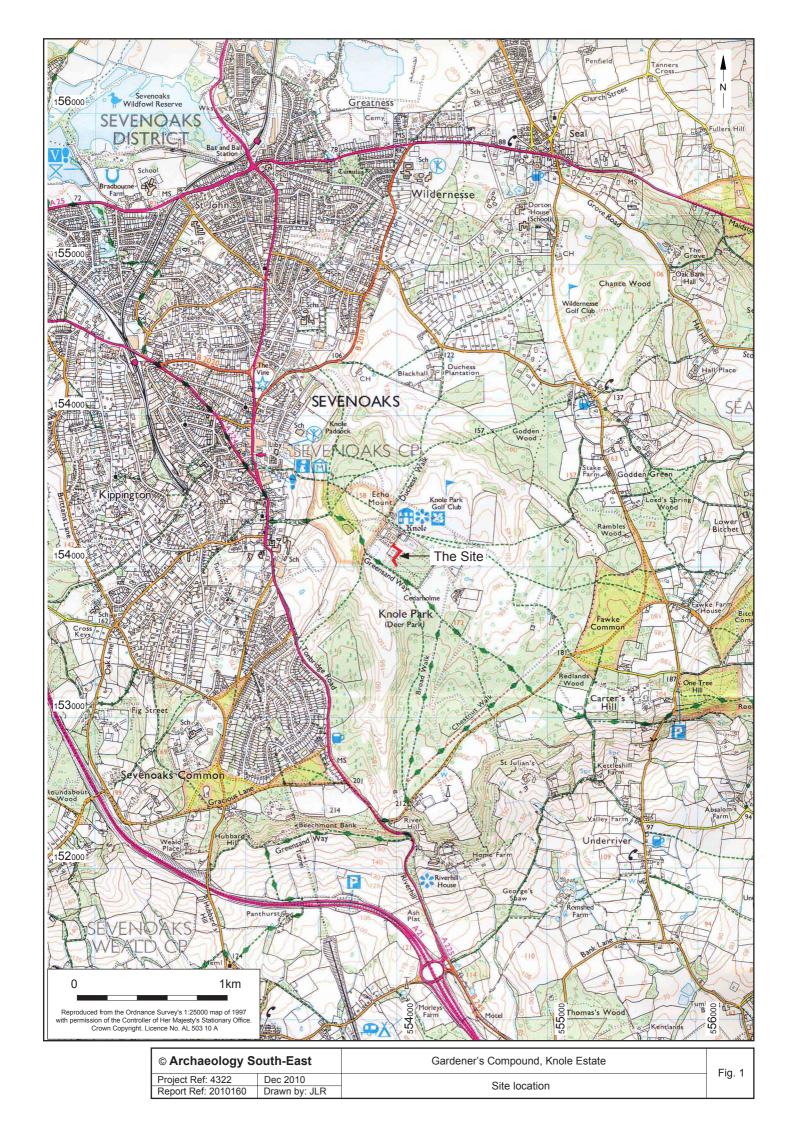
Kathryn Grant (Kathryn.Grant@ucl.ac.uk)

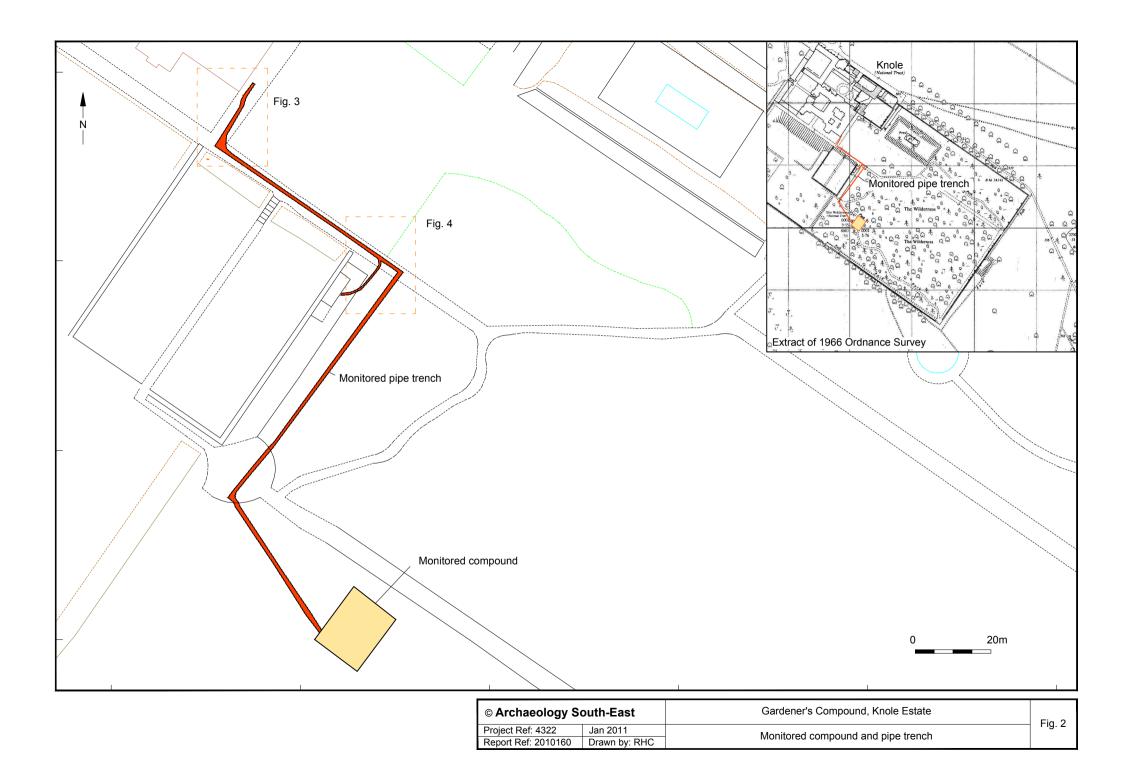
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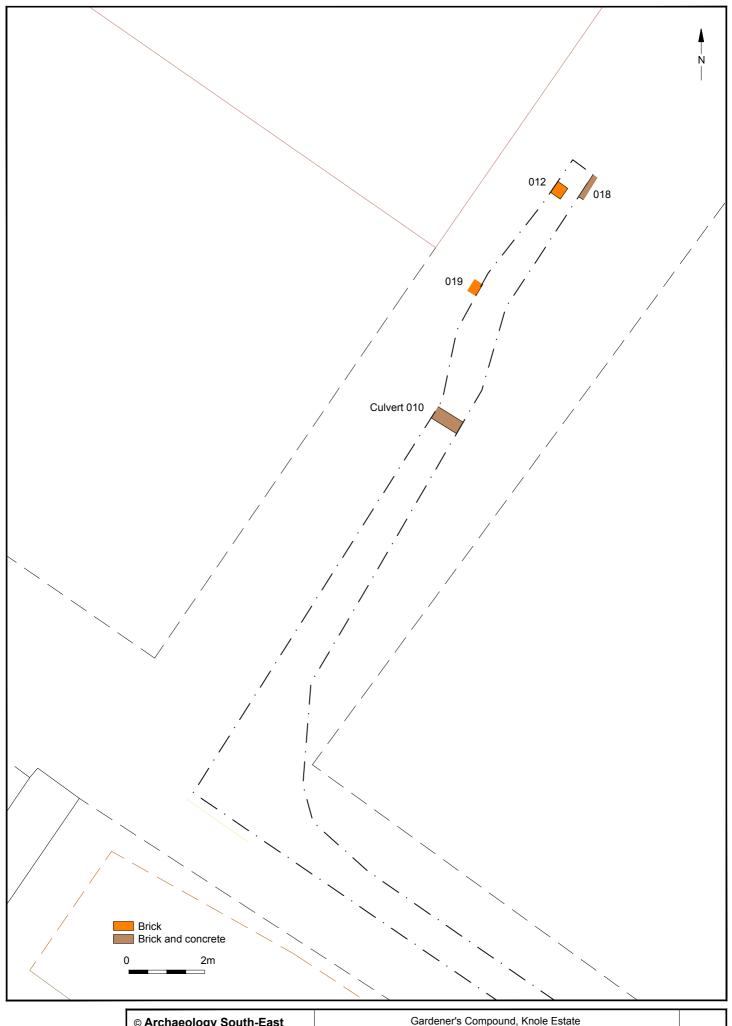
21 January 2011

# **OASIS:**

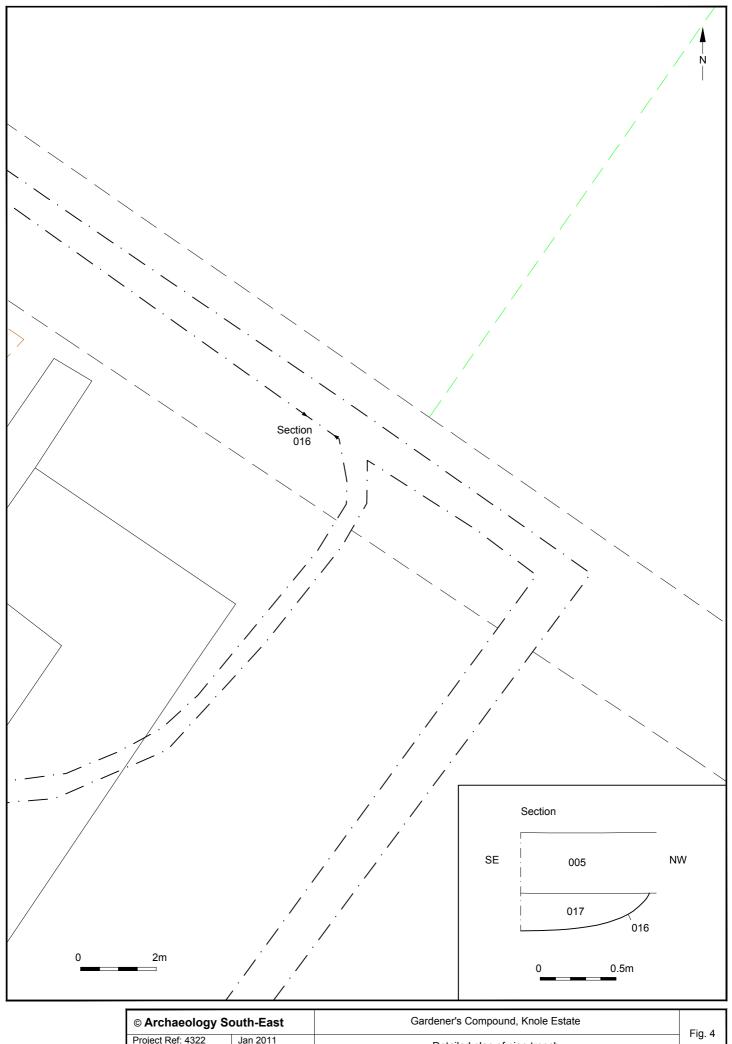
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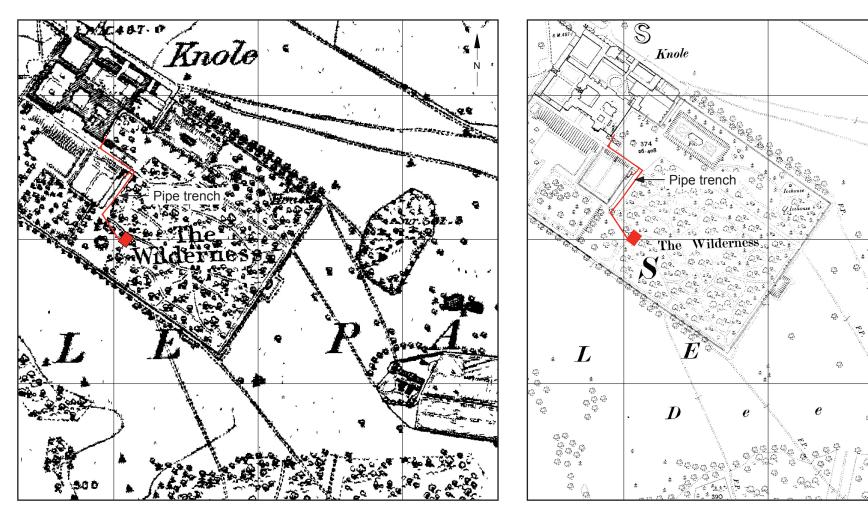




| © Archaeology South-East |               | Gardener's Compound, Knole Estate | Fig. 3  |   |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---|
| Project Ref: 4322        | Jan 2011      | Detailed plan of pipe trench      | 1 lg. 5 | ı |
| Report Ref: 2010160      | Drawn by: JLR | Detailed plan of pipe trench      |         | ı |



| © Archaeology South-East |               | Gardener's Compound, Knole Estate | Fig. 4  |   |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---|
| Project Ref: 4322        | Jan 2011      | Detailed plan of pipe trench      | 1 19. 4 | ĺ |
| Report Ref: 2010160      | Drawn by: JLR | Detailed plant of pipe trends     |         | ĺ |



OS 1:10560 1871 OS 1:2500 1909

| © Archaeology South-East    |        | Gardener's Compound, Knole Estate | Fig. 5  |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Project Ref: 4322 Dec 20    | 10     | Historic maps                     | 1 lg. 5 |
| Report Ref: 2010160 Drawn I | y: JLR | HISTOIIC HIAPS                    |         |

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