

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
During the Removal of Roots
and Silt from the Lower Pond
Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe
Tenterden, Kent**

NGR: 589370 130000

ASE Project No: 170041

Site Code: TEN17

ASE Report No: 2017029

OASIS id: archaeol6-274384





By Odile Rouard

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Revision:			

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive works to remove reeds and silt from the lower pond at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent.

There had been considerable disturbance caused by rooting. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by the National Trust (NT) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive works to remove reed roots and silt from the Lower Pond at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent (centred on NGR 589370 130000; Figure 1.)

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 Smallhythe Place is a 16th century house located to the south of Tenterden. The lower pond (on the southern edge of the estate) was the subject of this watching brief and measured 13m in length by 8m in width with a depth of approximately 1.2m. The proposal comprised the removal of the reed roots as well as the removal of the silt from the bottom of the pond.
- 1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey of the area, the underlying geology at the site is Wadhurst Clay Formation – mudstone, with possible superficial deposits of Tidal Flat Deposits – sand.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 The general objective of the archaeological work was to monitor any intrusive ground works to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

Specific Aims

- 1.3.2 Because of the close proximity to the Grade II* listed building and because several excavations that were undertaken in the vicinity revealed a medieval shipyard, it was deemed possible that archaeological remains belonging to the medieval and/or post-medieval period might be present.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological work on the site. The monitoring was undertaken by Odile Rouard (Archaeologist) on the 18th and 19th of January 2017. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (fieldwork) and Dan Swift (post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The information below is largely paraphrased from a previous archaeological watching brief report that was produced in 2006 (ASE 2006).
- 2.2 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by Kent County Council records no prehistoric or Roman entries within 2km of Smallhythe Place. This serves to highlight the once inherent marginality of the area, located at a point where the heavily indented coastline butted the Wealden forests of South East England. Indeed, it is likely that for much of the prehistoric period, the area now occupied by the arable prairies of Romney and Walland Marsh existed as a fluctuating system of wetlands situated behind a shingle barrier.
- 2.3 Contrastingly, Smallhythe has long been known as an important medieval shipyard, both building and repairing warships and merchant craft during the 15th and early 16th centuries. Low lying earthworks in Elfwick Field to the west of Smallhythe Road have long been interpreted as slipways, where ships could be constructed, launched or repaired. Furthermore, in Forstal Field, cartographic and textual evidence indicates that the south-east corner was once used as a wharf (James et al 2005).
- 2.4 Smallhythe originally existed as a small settlement, established by the mid-13th century, and maritime activity is known to have taken place there since the early 14th century. A major factor in its rise was the diversion of the main course of the Rother round the north of Oxney after the Knelle Dam was constructed to the west of the Isle in c.1330. Smallhythe Place itself was constructed in the early 16th century, when Smallhythe was still a relatively wealthy trading centre. It is a long timber-framed, continuously-jettied house, with much of its wooden framing externally exposed. In the years since its construction it has functioned as an administrative building, farmhouse, private house, and most recently a museum. It is a Grade II* listed building.
- 2.5 Several recent programmes of archaeological work have been undertaken at Smallhythe. In 1998 Time Team carried out a programme of geophysical survey, and associated excavations in both Elfwick Field and Forstal Field (Bellamy and Milne 2003). The former area revealed a possible lime or brick kiln, whilst the latter produced clinker built ships' timbers, situated beneath post-medieval disturbance. Both sites provided significant amounts of shipbuilding debris, such as iron clenched nails and roves. A watching brief undertaken during improvements made to the Barn, revealed late medieval pottery, large ships' nails, and brick (Knight 2004). Most recently an Archaeological and Historic Landscape Survey was commissioned by the National Trust, and includes a comprehensive analysis and review of Smallhythe Place both in archaeological and historic terms (James et al 2005).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 A watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the removal of reed roots and silt from the lower pond.
- 3.1.2 All excavations were examined for the presence of archaeological features or deposits and all spoil was visually scanned for the presence of artefacts.
- 3.1.3 All deposits encountered were recorded according to accepted professional standards using ASE standard record sheets. A full photographic record of the area was kept and forms part of the site archive.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 Because of the presence of severe rooting and waterlogged conditions, it was extremely difficult to monitor the groundworks.

3.3 The Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The project archive is presently held at Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade, East Sussex, and will be deposited with the National Trust in due course. The contents of the project archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	29 digital images

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken over a two day period in January 2017.
- 4.1.2 The stratigraphy on the sides of the pond was observed to be the natural mottled yellow-grey Wadhurst Clay (003) overlain by blue-grey alluvial clay (002), and overlain in turn by dark brown loamy topsoil (001).
- 4.1.3 No archaeological deposits, finds or features were identified.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
1	Layer	Topsoil	13m	8m	0.15-0.20m
2	Layer	Alluvial clay	13m	8m	0.10-0.30m
3	Layer	Natural	-	-	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified. There had been considerable disturbance caused by rooting.
- 5.2 The objective of the watching brief – to monitor any intrusive ground works to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards was achieved.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank the National Trust for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Nathalie Cohen, National Trust Archaeologist, for her guidance and monitoring. The watching brief was conducted by Odile Rouard. Neil Griffin managed the excavations and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site code	TEN17				
Project code	170041				
Planning reference					
Site address	Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent TN30 7NG				
District/Borough	Ashford, Kent				
NGR (12 figures)	589370 130000				
Geology	Wadhurst Clay Formation – Mudstone with possible superficial deposits of Tidal Flat Deposits – Sand.				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	18 th & 19 th January 2017				
Sponsor/client	National Trust				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Odile Rouard				
Period summary	No finds				
Project summary	<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive works to remove reeds and silt from the lower pond at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent.</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified. There had been considerable disturbance caused by rooting.</i></p>				

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-274384

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive works to remove reeds and silt from the lower pond at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified. There had been considerable disturbance caused by rooting.
Project dates	Start: 18-01-2017 End: 19-01-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	TEN17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	National Trust land
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	HOUSE AND GARDEN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	proximity of archaeological site

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT ASHFORD TENTERDEN Smallhythe Place
Postcode	TN30 7NG
Study area	350 Square metres

Site coordinates

Height OD / Depth	Min: 32m Max: 33m
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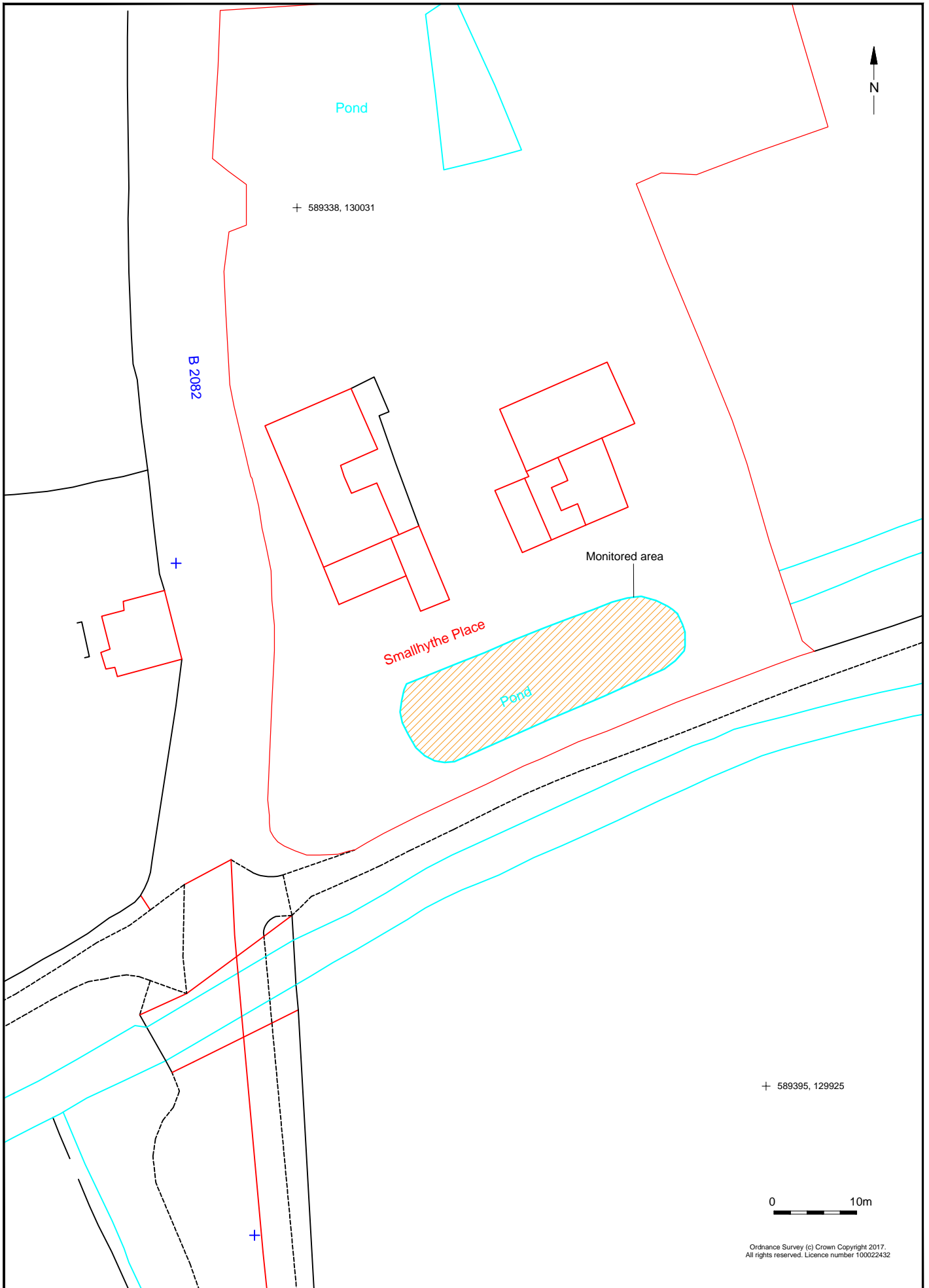
Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	National Trust
Project design originator	National Trust
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Odile Rouard

Type of sponsor/funding body	National Trust
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	National Trust
Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive recipient	National Trust
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","other"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	National Trust
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Map","Photograph","Plan","Unpublished Text"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Rouard, O.
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	
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Entered on	25 January 2017



© Archaeology South-East		Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 170041	Jan 2017	Site location	
Report Ref: 2017029	Drawn by: AR		



© Archaeology South-East		Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 170041	Jan 2017	Location of monitored area	
Report Ref: 2017029	Drawn by: AR		



Pond before, looking south west



Pond after, looking south east



Pond after, looking east

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