

# Archaeological Watching Brief at Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook, Kent



Date: 23/07/2014

NGR 578575 131050  
Site Code: PMO-WB-14  
(Planning Application TWBC/13/02864/HOUSE)

Report for  
Mr & Mrs Andrew

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Plate 1. Area of Investigation (blue circle). Google Earth 7/9/2013 (eye alt 208m)

# **Archaeological Watching Brief at Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook, Kent**

NGR 578575 131050  
Site Code: PMO/WB/14

## **1. SUMMARY**

*1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief of land adjacent to Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook in Kent. A planning application (TWBC/13/02864/HOUSE) for planning permission for a listed building consent for a two-storey extension to the curtilage building was submitted to the LPA whereby the LPA requested that an Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.*

*1.2 The Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained throughout the programme of ground reduction and excavation (Plates 2-4). No archaeological features were revealed during the ground works, and no archaeological artefacts retrieved.*

*1.3 The Archaeological Watching Brief has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.*

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

2.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Andrew to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in a Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The watching brief was carried out on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

3.1 The proposed development site is located to the north of Hinksden Bridge and just to the west of a Wealden Hall house called the Paper Mill. The NGR centre of the site is 578575 131050. According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, (1:50,000) the site has Bedrock Geology of Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation- Sandstone and Siltstone with no Superficial Deposits recorded. The site averages 20.50mOD with an OS benchmark of 20.67mOD. Geology found on site was about 0.35m deep with topsoil (100) up to 0.30m thick and composed of a dark brown grey sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks (marling) and carbon flecks, rare peg tile fragments and frequent small to large sub rounded and sub angular flints. The layer (101) below the topsoil was up to 0.15m thick and consisted of a pale to mid brown friable sandy clay silt with rare small to medium sub angular and sub rounded flint. This deposit sealed the natural drift deposit of Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation (102) which was mid orange brown friable sandy silt.

#### **4. PLANNING BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Local Planning Authority placed the following condition on the planning consent:

*Dated 11/12/2013*

*Two storey side extension at Paper Mill Oast, Hinksden Road, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent.*

*(3) 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 excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded.*

#### **5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The KCC Heritage advice indicated the complex of buildings known as 'The Paper Mill' seemed to be a post-medieval industrial building serving the horticultural industry of the area and is of local heritage interest.

On inspection of the site and its environs it became clear the site is earlier than the post medieval period and the Wealden Hall House located to the west of the development site dates back to the medieval period. The Wealden House is a distinctive medieval structural type, found most commonly in Kent and Sussex, for which the name 'recessed-hall house' is also used. It is characterised by having an open hall flanked by floored, jettied end-bays, all under a single roof. Because the wall plate is aligned with the front walls of the end bays, it 'flies' over the hall, where it is usually braced from the corner posts of the end bays, giving the distinctive 'recessed' hall appearance. As well as the classic form, with a hipped roof and two-bay hall, varieties of Wealden houses exist; these include houses with one-bay halls, and with gabled rather than hipped roofs. Most important are the half-Wealdens, which have only one end bay. Urban Wealdens frequently have this form, often adjoining other half-Wealdens, sometimes in terraces (as in Coventry and Battle). However, rural half-Wealdens are surprisingly common. In some cases a Wealden hall and single end have been added to an earlier wing. Other examples apparently form part of staged developments, where it was intended that a second end would be added later to a single-ended Wealden as, for example, at Bayleaf, the well-known Kentish Wealden house re-erected at the Weald and Downland open-air museum. The hall house at Paper Mill shows such a development.

It is likely the hall house at Paper Mill was the epicentre of a prosperous medieval farmstead and archaeological remains from this period can be expected on investigation.

## **6. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2014) are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeology exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.

## **7. METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are 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 ground works. Stripping of topsoil and subsoil prior to construction of the ring beam was watched (Plates 2 & 3) but no archaeological features were exposed. The construction methodology used was piling followed by ground reduction for a concrete ring beam and slab foundation.

The area prior to excavation was scanned for finds by a SWAT Archaeologist metal detectorist. Excavation was carried out using a 2 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket for removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The area was subsequently inspected to identify any exposed features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features would have been 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.

No archaeology was revealed in the stripping or ground reduction.

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC Archaeological Specification (2014) by Dr Paul Wilkinson of SWAT Archaeology.

## **8. MONITORING**

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

## **9. RESULTS**

The archaeological watching brief failed to reveal any archaeological features.

## **10. FINDS**

No finds were retrieved.

## **11. DISCUSSION**

A uniform stratigraphic sequence was identified throughout the site consisting of the natural drift geology of Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. The natural geology was sealed by a layer of what appears to be an early ploughsoil or subsoil.

No archaeological features were found cutting either this geological horizon of pale to mid grey brown and orange brown friable sandy clay silt or the natural geology.

Despite the lack of identifiable cut archaeological features, this watching brief has been successful in revealing a stratigraphic sequence throughout the site.

The archaeological watching brief has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. No archaeological activity was found during the watching brief which will inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site.

## 12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Lucy & Ross Andrew for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council for her advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson undertook the fieldwork. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed and the report written by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

23/07/2014

## 13. REFERENCES

### Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2014) *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Kent*

Institute for Field Archaeologists\_ *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Published October 1994, revised Sept 2001 and Oct 2008 and last updated Nov 2013.

### Maps

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1929-1952)

### Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.krnt.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>

Plates



Plate 2. View of topsoil strip (looking north-east)



Plate 3. View of topsoil strip (looking east)





Plate 4. View of ground reduction



Plate 5. Formation level

**APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook, Kent</i>	
<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>PMO/WB/14</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>As above</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook, Kent. A planning application (TWBC/13/02864/HOUSE) for the construction of a two storey extension at the above site was submitted to the LPA whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i>  <i>The Archaeological Watching Brief consisted of watching the ground reduction and excavation which encountered no archaeological features.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Cranbrook</i>	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b> <i>n/a</i>	
<b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 578575 131050</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Watching Brief</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>April 2014</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Watching Brief at Paper Mill Oast, Foxhole Lane, Cranbrook, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i>  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>23/07/2014</i>





**Notes**

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**Revisions**

- 28.05.12 First Issue
- a 03.08.12 Updated
- b 10.12.12 New Scheme
- c 08.04.13 Lean-to scheme
- d 09.04.13 More Detail
- e 30.06.13 New Scheme
- f 04.07.13 Updated
- g 05.08.13 Updated
- h 03.09.13 Updated
- j 23.09.13 Revised

Paper Mill Oast  
Cranbrook TN18 5NJ

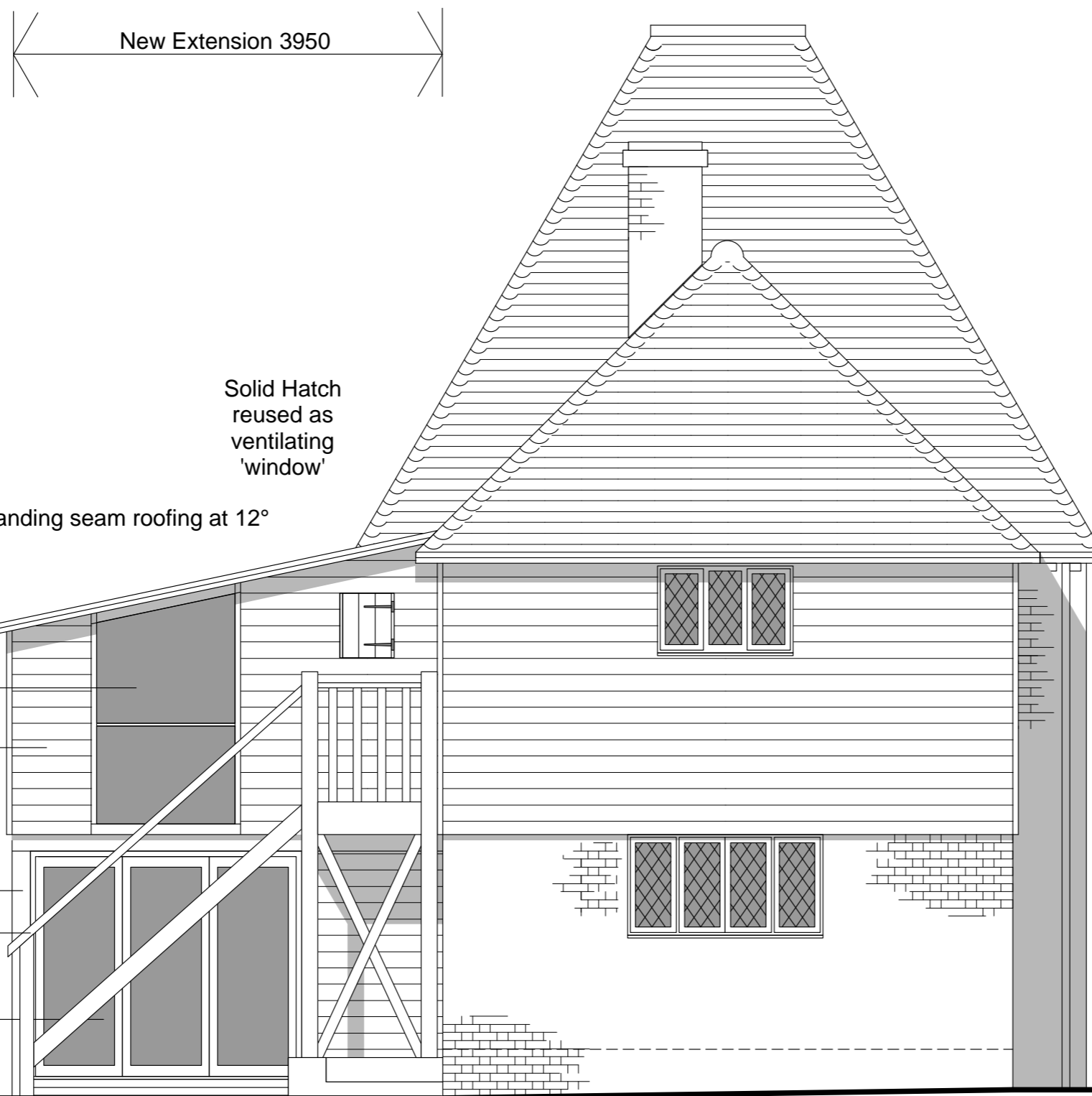
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Proposed South Elevation  
1:50 @ A3 H-964 17j



South Elevation

3.950

5.250





Paper Mill Oast

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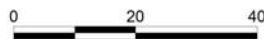
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Foxhole Lane  
Hawkhurst  
TN18 5NJ



Scale 1:1250

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Serial number: 001145858

Plot Centre Coordinates: 578600, 131076