

## **NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief was conducted on the excavation of foundation trenches for the erection of a new building abutting 23A High Street, Edenbridge. Three trenches were excavated; one and a half of these were observed under archaeological supervisory conditions. The results of the watching brief suggested that the site has undergone previous truncation, followed by the laying and compaction of made ground in order to create a horizontal surface.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **Site Location (Fig 1)**

- 1.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 44368 46340. The site lies just off the High Street. The site is to the south of property, 23A, and surrounded on its eastern and southern sides by residential and commercial properties.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 Proposals have been made by Rowan Clarke-Allen, to redevelop vacant land currently used as garden space, into a new three storey property which will be attached to property 23A to form a semi detached house. Planning permission (REF: SE/05/00898) for this development, has been granted by Sevenoaks District Council Planning Department (22/04/05) subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief during all ground-penetrating works, in order to ensure that the archaeological interests of the site were protected.

## **3 PLANNING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The site lies within Edenbridge's Conservation area as defined in Sevenoaks District Council's Local Plan, ([www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)).
- 3.2 The site also lies a short distance from the current High Street which dates to the Roman period. The road linked London to Lewes which allowed access to the iron producing areas in the weald and the agricultural areas of the South Downs. The original crossing of the river Eden to the south of the site is thought to date to this period, (KCC, 2005). Roman archaeology has been recorded in the local area, such as roman coins, (SMR, TQ 44 NW 7, TQ 44 NW 9 and TQ 44 NW 6) and pottery (TQ 44 NW 3).
- 3.3 It is also reported that this original crossing lead to the naming of the hamlet, from 'Eadelmesbrege' or Eadhem's Bridge to Edenbridge, ([www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)).
- 3.4 Throughout the medieval period Edenbridge was known as a small market town establishing local industries such as iron production, livestock farming; leather production and tanning.
- 3.5 During the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century the prosperity of the town began to decline due to new technological advancements in iron manufacturing and many industries were unable to keep up with the cheaper influences emerging from London. This only changed when the construction of the two railways allowed greater movement of people for both work and settlement and during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the overspill from London increased the need for housing in the area, ([www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)).

## **4 STRATEGY**

### **Aims of the Investigation**

- 4.1 The general and specific aims of the evaluation are as laid out in the brief issued by Kent County Council, (KCC, 2005). They are:
- To contribute to knowledge of the Edenbridge 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 the deposits.

### **Methodology**

- 4.2 A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for the new building. With consultation from Wendy Rodgers, Kent County Council, The watching briefs on the drainage and landscaping were not carried out due to the findings observed in the first two trenches, which demonstrated that neither the drainage or the landscaping would penetrate deeper than the made ground.
- 4.3 In line with Kent County Council policy the planning reference, SE/05/00898, has been used in place of an independent site code.
- 4.4 All works were carried out in accordance with regional and national guidance, (English Heritage, 1998a and b, IFA 1994) and was monitored by Adam Single and Wendy Rodgers (Kent County Council's Archaeological Advisor to Sevenoaks District Council). The watching brief was supervised by the author.
- 4.5 Standard AOC Archaeology techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of written trench records for each trench excavated, with representative sections drawn and photographic records produced.

## **5 RESULTS (Fig 2 & 3)**

5.1 A total of three foundation trenches were to be excavated on site, one and a half of these were monitored under supervisory conditions. The remaining trenches were unobserved due to the results of the previous trenches. The monitored trenches measured 5.10m long by 0.80m wide and 4.50m long by 1.0m wide. Both trenches were excavated to a depth of 2.20m. The trenches which have been labelled Trench 1 and 2 for clarity are described below:

### **5.2 Trench 1**

- 0.00 – 0.25m [1001]. Modern topsoil overlaid by grass and plants.
- 0.25 – 0.55m [1004]. Mixed grey silty clay deposit with inclusions of brick, tile and concrete fragments.
- 0.55 – 0.90m [1005]. Dark grey silty clay, worked or buried soil. Contained post-medieval and modern pottery.
- 0.55 – 1.20m [1006]. Very compact dark grey brown silty clay, which contained inclusion of brick, tile and chalk. Made ground.
- 0.90 – 2.20m [1007]. Mottled orange and blue silty clay.

Also recorded in the trench was the construction cut and backfill for the current property adjacent to the site, (1002) and [1003]. Three pipes were observed in the trench, these were not assigned context numbers. The direction of pipes indicates that the truncation observed in Trench 1 would continue through to the trench on the opposite side. No archaeology was observed in this trench.

### **5.3 Trench 2**

- 0.00 – 0.30m [2001]. Modern topsoil overlaid by grass and plants.
- 0.30 – 1.30m [2002]. Very compact dark grey brown silty clay, which contained inclusion of brick, tile and chalk. Made ground.
- 1.30 – 2.20m [2003]. Mottled orange and blue silty clay. Natural

Services pipes and trenches were again observed in this trench but were not assigned context numbers. No archaeology was observed in this trench.

5.4 The trenches which were monitored revealed that the area had been significantly built up during the late post-medieval or modern period. The deposit recorded in both Trench 1 and Trench 2, 1/006 and 2/002, appears to have been laid and compacted on site to adjust the level of the ground to horizontal rather than sloping to the south which can be seen naturally occurring in the nearby High Street. This is confirmed by the creation of a bank and retaining wall to the front of the property, possibly during the construction for the current housing on site. The effect created by this, raises the southern area of the site to a flat horizontal position, which then stands approximately 1.20-1.50m at retaining wall, rising to 2.20-2.50m proud of the next property, 25 High Street, to the south, (See Fig 3).

## 6 FINDS

- 6.1 Post-medieval finds were retrieved from layer [1005]. The occurrence of the pottery was recorded, however due to the truncated nature of this deposit with regard to the late insertion of service pipes and the nature of the excavation, the exact origin of the pottery could not be ascertained.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 No archaeology was revealed during this watching brief. The trenches clearly showed that the site had been previously stripped of any naturally accumulating subsoil, which would have overlaid the natural clay, and replaced it with relatively clean grey clay silt, which was heavily compacted down to form a flat horizontal surface. Due to the lack of dating evidence it remains unclear when this was completed. The properties to north have been built on the same horizontal level so it is possible that the levelling took place during their construction. It is also possible that this deposit was laid for a structure that had previously occupied the site.
- 7.2 This Watching Brief forms the final phase of archaeological work on this site. The results of which will be made public via the ADS OASIS project and a copy of the report will be made available to the local studies library.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage (1998a). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London* (English Heritage London Region 1998).

English Heritage (1998b). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Reports*. (English Heritage London Region 1998).

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.

Kent County Council (2005). *Specification For An Archaeological Watching Brief During The Erection Of A Three Storey Attached House And Parking At 23A High Street, Edenbridge*.

[www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/edenbridgespg.pdf](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/edenbridgespg.pdf) (Website).

## APPENDIX A

OASIS ID: *aocarcha1-10109*

## Project details

Project name	23A High Street, Edenbridge
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted on the excavation of foundation trenches for the erection of a new building abutting 23A High Street, Edenbridge. Three trenches were excavated; one and a half of these were observed under archaeological supervisory conditions. The results of the watching brief suggested that the site has undergone previous truncation, followed by the laying and compaction of made ground in order to create a horizontal surface.
Project dates	Start: 05-09-2005 End: 06-09-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SE/05/00898 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

## Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS EDENBRIDGE 23A High Street, Edenbridge
Postcode	TN8 5AB
Study area	45.12 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 44368 46340 Point

## Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
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Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Adam Single, Kent County Council
Project director/manager	Mark Beasley
Project supervisor	Catherine Edwards
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	AOC Archaeology
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Digital Media available	'Database','Survey','Text'
Digital Archive notes	To be retained at AOC Archaeology until it can be sent to the local museum or archive center.
Paper Archive recipient	AOC Archaeology
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Microfilm','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey','Unpublished Text'
Paper Archive notes	To be retained at AOC Archaeology until it can be sent to the local museum or archive center.

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	23A High Street, Edenbridge. An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Edwards, C

Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	AOC Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Bound report with illustrations.

Entered by	Catherine Edwards (catherinedwards@aocarchaeology.co.uk)
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