

1 SUMMARY

On the 18th October 2005 an archaeological watching brief, on behalf of Claire O’Nion, was undertaken to observe foundation trenching for a two storey house extension at 29 Barton Road. During the course of the works a sequence of deposits dating from the late post-medieval were revealed. The lower portion of the sequence represents late post-medieval topsoil accumulation and ground consolidation. The deposits above this represent modern garden landscaping and construction of an adjacent garage. Of the deposits observed, none were deemed to possess any significant archaeological value.

2 INTRODUCTION

Site Location

- 2.1 The site is located approximately 1km southeast of Maidstone town centre, in the county of Kent. The site is bordered to the south by Barton Road, and to the north, east and west by residential properties (Fig. 1 & 2). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 76524 54900, and property covers a total area of approximately 320m². The watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Claire O’Nion.

Development Proposals

- 2.2 The development involved the construction of a two storey extension to the eastern side of the existing property at 29 Barton Road. This involved the excavation of a limited quantity of foundation trenching.

Planning Background

- 2.3 In accordance with *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16, conditions 16 & 17) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990) and following an application for the Outline Planning Permission (Ref. No.:MA/05/0065), the County Archaeological Officer for Kent required that an Archaeological Watching Brief be carried out. This was undertaken in order to determine the potential archaeological impact to the site during development, in accordance with the Archaeological Specification issued by Kent County Council (KCC, 2005).
- 2.4 The fieldwork was managed Mark Beasley for AOC Archaeology and supervised by the author. The site was monitored by the County Archaeological Officer on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The underlying geology on site is indicated as being Hythe Beds. No geotechnical investigations have been undertaken on site prior to the production of this document.
- 3.2 The site is located on the eastern side of the Medway river valley, and to the south of the North Downs scarp. The site lies at an approximate height of 43.30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Existing Archaeological Disturbance

- 3.3 Prior to the initiation of intrusive works on site, it was believed that there had been no previous substantial disturbance to the existing archaeological deposits present on site.

Archaeological Background

- 3.4 No known previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on site.
- 3.5 *Roman*
The remains of Barton Roman Villa, partially excavated in the 19th century, are known to lie approximately 70m to the northeast of the application site. Features of the villa complex are thought to extend into the property owned by the local Boys Grammar School, directly to the east of the site (SMR TQ75SE 18). Other suspected archaeological remains in the vicinity include the potential course of the Roman road linking Rochester to Hastings. The approximate course of which is thought to parallel that of the modern A229, present 100m to the west of the site (SMR TQ75SE 33).
- 3.6 *Post-Medieval*
By the early 20th century the previously existing farmland had been absorbed by the expanding urban environment, creating the modern suburban landscape. This landscape also incorporated the construction of local institutions, including the Boys Grammar School, built in 1929.

4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The general aim of the watching brief was to mitigate by record the development impact on potential archaeological deposits.
- 4.2 The watching brief sought 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 groundworks. Particular attention was made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.
- 4.3 An additional aim was to enable the County Archaeological Officer for Kent, to monitor the scale and scope of the work in order to make an informed decision on the status of the condition imposed on the planning consent.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 An accession code (**MNEMG:2005.60**) was obtained from Maidstone Museum.
- 5.2 A watching brief condition was imposed on all preparatory ground works and intrusive construction activities. These works consisted of the excavation of approximately 11m of trenching to provide suitable foundations for the construction of the two storey extension.
- 5.3 The work was undertaken with the use of a 2 ton mechanical excavator, utilising a 450mm wide toothed bucket.
- 5.4 A full written record was completed for the trench. Context numbers were allocated to each deposit, in addition to detailed plans and sections being drawn to locate those deposits of archaeological interest. Heights for representative sections were established relative to local datum (43.30m AOD). Detailed trench photographs and working photographs were also taken using a digital camera.
- 5.5 All of the work was carried out in line with Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (English Heritage June 1998); and IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA October 1994).

6 RESULTS

Foundation Trench

- 6.1 At the point of completion, the foundation trench measured approximately 0.5m wide by 11m in length. In plan the foundation trench formed an L-shape, on a north-south/east-west alignment (Fig. 3). The deposits observed varied throughout the length of the trench (Fig. 4). Natural, undisturbed, sub-soil deposits were not encountered.
- 6.2 The lowest deposit encountered in the trench was a firm light brown clayey silt with occasional stony inclusions (1/011), interpreted as being a sub-soil deposit. Several finds were observed within this deposit, comprising occasional fragments of animal bone, clay pipe stems and pottery. The pottery fragments were indicative of the 18th and 19th centuries, although the limited stylistic features present on these small fragments tentatively indicated the latter of these periods. The highest level at which this deposit was observed was at 42.66m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 6.3 Lying directly above (1/011) was a soft medium to dark brown silty clay with moderate stony inclusion (1/010), occupying the northern portion of the trench. This deposit also contained occasional small fragments of pottery and decorative glass ware, which were identified as being of 19th century origin. This context was thought to form a buried topsoil or garden soil horizon, and observed at a similar level to that of (1/011). The soft orangey brown clay (1/009), deposited directly above (1/010), appears to deliberately seal this context with the purpose of raising the ground within this area of the property. This layer is limited to the northern end of the trench, and identified as being 42.79m AOD. The extent of context (1/008), a soft dark brown silty clay, was similar to that of (1/009) and formed the current garden topsoil. This contained small fragments of modern glass and CBM.
- 6.4 Topsoil layer (1/008) had been truncated at two points within the trench. The first truncation was apparent in the western portion of the trench where a 0.25m thick concrete ground slab had been built [1/007], and (1/006). At the southern end of the trench the truncation was more substantial as the concrete foundations for a modern garage had been built, [1/005] and (1/004). During the construction of the garage a previously existing tarmac surface (1/003), present at the southern end of the trench, had been buried to allow the ground level to be raised for the construction of the garage. The deposit used to elevate the ground was a highly mixed silty clay material, containing a moderate quantity of CBM fragments (1/002). This was sealed by concrete flooring (1/001).

- 43.30-43.20m (1/001). Concrete garage floor.
- 43.30-42.54m (1/002). Made ground. Soft, grayish brown, silty clay.
- 42.82-42.47m (1/003). Previous tarmac surface.
- 43.30-42.72m (1/004). Garage foundation.
- 43.30-42.72m [1/005]. Cut for garage foundation.
- 42.95-42.69m (1/006). Garden slab.
- 42.95-42.69m [1/007]. Cut for garden slab.
- 42.95-42.68m (1/008). Top-soil. Sift, dark brown, silty clay.
- 42.68-42.28m (1/009). Re-deposited clay. Soft, orangy brown.
- 42.28-L.O.E (1/010). Buried garden soil. Soft, mid to dark brown, silty clay.
- 42.66-L.O.E (1/011). Sub-soil. Firm, light brown, clayey silt.

For more information on contexts see Appendix A.

7 FINDS

- 7.1 A small quantity of finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief consisting of pottery, glass and animal bone fragments, in addition to clay pipe stems. Due to their small size only an approximate date could be attributed to the fragments, indicating that they were of 19th century origin. None of these finds were retained.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIAL

- 8.1 During the course of the watching brief it was determined that none of the recorded deposits contained potential for environmental analysis.

9 INTERPRETATION

- 9.1 During the course of the works on site the nature and extent of the archaeological potential was observed, in addition to the associated disturbance of this potential. The foundation trenching revealed that the intrusion into the archaeological sequence penetrated to a depth recognised to contain soil horizons dating to the late post-medieval period. These deposits were interpreted as relating to topsoil accumulation and ground consolidation activities. The deposits recorded as being situated above this late post-medieval accumulation were identified as representing modern garden landscaping and the construction of an adjacent parking garage. The foundation trench did not penetrate to a depth where natural undisturbed sub-soil was revealed.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 With regard to the general aim of the watching brief, i.e. to mitigate by record the development on potential archaeological deposits, despite the noted potential, no significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded.
- 10.2 The groundworks undertaken to excavate the foundation trench for the two storey house extension exposed soil horizons dating to the late post-medieval period. This sequence represents an uninterrupted series of deposits from this period, with the only substantial modern intrusion originating from the construction of a modern parking garage, and deposition of associated made ground deposits. It is apparent that the intrusion of the modern garage, in combination with the foundation trenching, have not impacted on any potential archaeological deposits.
- 10.3 No archaeologically significant deposits, finds or features were identified during the building programme at 29 Barton Road.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The watching brief revealed that of the deposits observed at 29 Barton Road, none were identified as possessing great archaeological potential. The sequence recorded indicates that the watching brief area was previously subject to events of post-medieval topsoil accumulation and ground consolidation activities. Due to the limited nature of the groundwork a full sequence of deposits down to undisturbed natural sub-soil was not observed, so the potential for more significant archaeological deposits at a lower level is still present. It is therefore recommended that further archaeological work is only necessary if any proposed future groundworks are anticipated to penetrate deeper than the currently established sequence of deposits.

12 PUBLICATION

- 12.1 Due to the limited nature of the project, publication is to be limited to a summary in the Kent Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).

13 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 13.1 The archive, consisting of paper records and digital photographs, will be deposited with Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage. (1998) *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork* 3.

Institute of Field Archaeologists. (1994) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

Kent County Council. (2005) *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at 29 Barton Road in Maidstone During the Erection of a Two Storey Side Extension*.

Fig.1 Site Location

Fig.2 Detailed Site Location

Fig.3 Trench Location

Fig.4 South & East Facing Section of Trench 1

APPENDIX A CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1/001	Concrete garage floor	4.2m	Trench	0.1m
1/002	Made ground	4.2m	Trench	0.76m
1/003	Previous tarmac surfacing	1.6m	Trench	0.2m
1/004	Garage foundation	0.24m	Trench	0.52m
1/005	Foundation cut	0.24m	Trench	0.52m
1/006	Garden Slab	0.8m	Trench	0.26m
1/007	Cut for Slab	0.8m	Trench	0.26m
1/008	Top-soil	2.8m	1.36m	0.27m
1/009	Re-deposited clay	2.8m	1.8m	0.4m
1/010	Buried garden soil	4.2m	2.8m	N.F.E
1/011	Sub-soil	3.5m	Trench	N.F.E

APPENDIX B OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-11279

Project details

Project name	29 Barton Road, Maidstone
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the 18th October 2005, at 29 Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent. The watching brief consisted of monitoring the machine excavation of the foundation trench for a two storey extension to the existing property. Over the course of the works a sequence of deposits dating from the late post-medieval were revealed. The lower portion of the sequence represented late post-medieval topsoil accumulation and ground consolidation. The deposits above this represent modern garden landscaping and construction of an adjacent garage. Of the deposits observed, none were deemed to possess any significant archaeological value.</p>
Project dates	Start: 18-10-2005 End: 18-10-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MNEMG:2005.60 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	7389 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	GARDEN LANDSCAPING Post Medieval
Monument type	PARKING GARAGE Modern
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT MAIDSTONE MAIDSTONE 29 Barton Road, Maidstone
Postcode	ME15 7BX
Study area	320.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 76524 54900 Point

Project creators

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

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery
Digital Archive ID	MNEMG:2005.60
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive	Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery

recipient

Paper Archive ID MNEMG:2005.60

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet', 'Drawing', 'Matrices', 'Notebook - Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Author(s)/Editor(s) Clarke, C.

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