

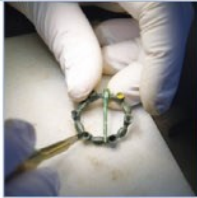
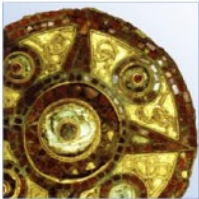
The Fastrack Route at Ingress Abbey, Greenhithe, Kent

A Historic Building Record of the Boundary Wall

National Grid Reference: TQ 5895 7484

Project: 7712

2008



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

The Fastrack Route at Ingress Abbey, Greenhithe, Kent. A Historic Building Record of the Boundary Wall

On Behalf of:	Crest Nicholson Greenhithe Waterfront London Road Dartford Kent DA9 9EH
National Grid Reference (NGR):	TQ 5895 7484
AOC Project No:	7712
Prepared by:	Les Capon
Illustration by:	Jon Moller
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Author: Les Capon	Date: April 2008
Approved by:	Date:
Draft/Final Report Stage:	Date:

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Unit 7
St Margarets Business Centre
Moor Mead Road
Twickenham
TW1 1JS

Tel. 020 8843 7380
Fax. 020 8892 0549
e-mail. london@aocarchaeology.com



www.aocarchaeology.com

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Non-Technical Summary

A programme of Historic Building Recording was carried out on a section of the Boundary Wall of Ingress Abbey in advance of demolition and rebuilding to accommodate the route of 'Fastrack'; a bus route into the Ingress Abbey development. The boundary wall was made of stone, flint and panels of wrought iron railings. The wall has been demolished and each major stone numbered to enable rebuilding once the Fastrack route is complete.

This report provides a study of a short section of the western boundary wall, which is likely to be of early to mid-19th century date.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document presents the results of a Historic Building Record of a section of the boundary wall at Ingress Abbey, London Road, Greenhithe, Kent. The fabric of the wall and its possible chronology are described, and there is a discussion of the wall in relation to the development of Ingress Park.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The site lies on the west side of Ingress Park, where the Avenue turns off London Road and leads down towards the waterfront at Greenhithe. It presents a varied aspect, with sections of flintwork, stonework and decorative gothic railings. The wall is located at NGR TQ 5895 7484 and forms part of the western boundary to Ingress Abbey. The historic western entrance to the parkland lies immediately south of the section of the boundary wall. The principal surviving features on the site are listed Grade II and date from the mid 18th to mid 19th centuries.

1.3 Fastrack Route

1.3.1 The Fastrack route extends eastwards from Greenhithe Train Station across The Avenue and into Ingress Park. The Everards Link section (Greenhithe Train Station to The Avenue) was managed by Kent County Council Highways. Crest Nicholson are covering the scheme from The Avenue, including a cut and cover tunnel, to the present termination point of Fastrack, past the Cave of the Seven Heads.

1.4 Planning Background

1.4.1 The local planning authority is Kent County Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Wendy Rogers of Kent County Council (KCC).

1.4.2 Planning permission was applied for, for two sections of the Fastrack route: that from the Greenhithe station to The Avenue (DA/06/temp/0042 & DA/06/01226) and that from the Avenue to the Cave of the Seven Heads within the parkland (DA/98/00664 & DA/06/01226, DA/06/01274, DA/06/01256 & DA/06/01235). The recording has taken place in during dismantling of a section of the boundary wall in advance of its rebuilding to enable the Fastrack route to enter Ingress Park.

1.4.3 The first stage in the planning process was creation of a specification for the work, which was provided by Kent County Council. This detailed the requirements for recording and monitoring.

1.4.4 The Boundary Wall was listed Grade II in 1982. This text is taken from the English Heritage National Monuments Record, ©2007.

Wall, gate piers and railings to Ingress Abbey fronting London Road and turning into The Avenue TQ 57 SE 4/100 II GV 2. Early to mid C19. Coursed stone rubble wall about 5 ft in height with stone coping. At the junction with The Avenue there are 6 square stone gate piers with pyramidal caps separated by cast iron railings of Gothic form with embattled tops and trefoil and quatrefoil patterns. The wall along The Avenue has 2 similar gate piers separated by a length of cast iron railings, a section of stone wall about 20 ft in length and finally a section of wall of knapped flints about 6 ft high.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 The Building Record was made during the removal of the wall stone by stone, to enable a record of its materials and method of construction to be made. The groundworkers involved in its removal

numbered the principal stones so that the wall can be rebuilt after the Fastrack route is established. A drawn and photographic record was made during dismantling of the wall, with three site visits.

- 1.5.2 The section of wall examined measured 23.26m, and was composed of various materials including faced flint, regular stone blocks and gothic railings atop a low plinth. Within the parkland, the ground had been made up following the walls construction.

1.6 Topography and Geology

- 1.6.1 The highest part of the site lies on a chalk ridge which is the course of London road. The site slopes sharply down to the river, the result of quarrying since at least the medieval period. The Avenue, along which the boundary wall runs, drops steeply down towards the waterfront, and may be also located on a slope created by quarrying activity. The chalk is capped with terrace gravels, in turn overlain by Tertiary deposits.

2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.1 Ingress Abbey Development

- 2.1.1 The site of Ingress Park has revealed a sequence of archaeological and historical activity from the Palaeolithic to the present day. The focus of this report is on the boundary wall of Ingress Abbey, thus the background is dominated by the relation of the wall to development within the parkland in the post-medieval period.
- 2.1.2 The earliest detailed illustration of the grounds at Ingress is a print by Badeslade (1720), dating to the ownership by Jonathan Smith between 1698 and 1737, who was Sheriff of Kent from 1721. A six-bay house set in a formal arrangement of walled gardens, parterres and avenues is shown. This may show the whole of the grounds, but no boundary wall is depicted.
- 2.1.3 In 1748, the house was conveyed to Viscount Duncannon, who became Earl of Bessborough in 1758. The impact on the landscape during the twelve years of Bessborough's ownership is not entirely clear from the documentary sources, but it is likely that some of the follies in the grounds were initiated by him, particularly the Cave of the Seven Heads, the south tunnel, and the Flint Cave (the grotto).
- 2.1.4 By 1763, Lancelot (Capability) Brown was involved with the estate, and undertook works to the value of £1000 in two campaigns. These works involved the landscaping of the parkland to the northeast of the estate, approaches to the house through the grounds, and the sloping of the ground around the house itself. The Lodge at the entrance off London Road on the Avenue appears to have been present by 1798, and this may suggest that the Boundary Wall was also established by this date.
- 2.1.5 The boundary wall may be multi-period: along London Road, a large stretch of the wall is formed of plain squared limestone blocks with flat coping. Along the Avenue is a section of wall which is formed of coursed flint. Flint is used in many of the 18th century decorative caves, so it is possible that the flint work is of similar date. There are also sections of gothic railings, which are most likely mid-19th century, dating to the Gothic Revival. The standing Abbey building was finished in 1833, and has Gothic elements, so it is possible that the use of the railings around the western entrance is contemporary with the works for the final Abbey building.
- 2.1.6 Changes to the site continued throughout the 19th century, with the construction of a model farm and additions to the garden elements of the parkland. The 20th century saw the falling into disuse of the parkland, when a naval training college and the Empire Paper Mills were established.

3 Building Record, The Boundary Wall

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The section of the wall due for removal and reconstruction measured over 23m, and bounds part of Ingress Park on its western boundary with The Avenue. There are three distinct building methods, and it is tempting to ascribe different dates to each. However, it seems likely that the requirements for a boundary wall to the park may mean that there are various rebuilds, repairs and making good.
- 3.1.2 The Avenue drops away towards the Thames as it runs north from London Road. The wall follows this slope, and its foundation courses are neither obscured nor undermined by the current topography. This indicates that the 21st century local topography has altered little since the wall was founded.

3.2 Flint Section

- 3.2.1 The most northern part of the wall to be dismantled was a section 3.62m long and 0.30m wide constructed of faced flint with rubble behind, facing northwest. The wall at this point is 1.41m high. The flint is evenly coursed, the size of stones no more than 0.15m across, in courses 0.12m thick. The longest flint is 0.18m deep, and the whole face is bonded with coarse lime mortar which contains specks of CBM, charcoal and grit. Behind the facing is loosely packed roughly coursed flint rubble. It is very weakly cemented, and the lack of any structure suggests that the wall at this point lies within a cut into the edge of the parkland. Removal of the wall revealed a vertical edge cut through a layer of yellowish brown sandy silt that was 0.80m deep.
- 3.2.2 The park side of the wall was constructed of faced flint above the level of the cut into the parkland soil. Modern accumulation and topsoil against the inner face is up to 0.40m deep. Thus, in the area of the flint section, the interior ground level of the park is 1.20m above street level, probably evidence of limited landscaping. The wall has a modern layer of concrete embedded with angular flints as a capping layer. The flint section of the wall terminates at a stone pier with neoclassical elements.



Plate 1: Flint area of wall, with stone pier

3.3 Limestone blocks

- 3.3.1 The section of the boundary wall immediately southwest of the flint area is built of squared blocks of limestone with a stone pier at each end. The piers and blockwork wall appear to be contemporary,

built in a single episode. This part of the boundary wall is set within a cut, like the flint section. At the base of the cut, and against the inside edge of it is a layer of roughly coursed, loose flint rubble. This was seen to be a continuation of the rubble core of the flint wall, and suggests that this section of stone blocks and the associated piers are a rebuild of the boundary wall, although no dating evidence was forthcoming.

- 3.3.2 Two piers mark the limits of the stone wall; each built using the same method. The plinths of the piers are formed of two pieces of limestone, one set on edge, the other flat. The edge-set block provides a face in front of the loose rubble behind, and the flat slab forms a base for the shaft of the piers. The shafts of the piers are made of pairs of blocks up to 0.34m tall and 0.11m wide. Each course is rotated by 90°, ensuring structural stability. The piers are also steadied by the use of square-bodied iron ties which span the courses. The piers are also bonded with very fine white mortar. The capitals of the piers are wider than the shaft, flaring with an ogee curve on the underside with a low pyramidal top.
- 3.3.3 The body of the stone wall is formed of a base course 0.12m high, followed by three courses each 0.22m high that face the wall atop its flint rubble 'core'. The four upper courses are faced on both sides, showing that the ground level on the inside face of the wall was historically higher than that at the side of The Avenue. The bonding material is the same type of fine mortar used for the body of the wall. The wall is topped with coping with a central ridge, and each piece is slightly curved to fit with the curve of the wall. Each coping stone is 0.93m long.



Plate 2: Stone section of wall

3.4 Gothic Railings

- 3.4.1 The area which features railings spans 7.37m. This part of the wall is distinctly different: there is no evidence for loosely coursed flint; rather the lowest part of the wall is formed of large narrow limestone blocks set on edge. The blocks have a rectangular profile of 0.16m by 0.42m and are present in three different lengths: 0.92m, 0.97m and 1.12m. These blocks are set in a narrow cut into the parkland soils. The railings are supported by posts which are set in holes drilled into the base blocks. The railing area is bound to the north by a pier shared with the stone section and to the south by a third pier. Against the piers are extra stones with ogee moulding which smoothly reduces the width of the wall from 0.53m at the piers to 0.16m of the base. There seems to be few supports for the railings, the base blocks are not set very firmly. Possibly, the weight of the railings and being bolted together added to structural strength.
- 3.4.2 The railings themselves are cast iron, with a Gothic design. The simple description from the listing is hard to better: *'iron railings of Gothic form with embattled tops and trefoil and quatrefoil patterns'*.

The railings had been removed prior to the recording action, and laid flat, protected with boards. The posts were cut, leaving the base within the foundations.

3.5 Parkland soils

- 3.5.1 Two deposits were observed within the parkland, behind the boundary wall. The lowest of these was yellowish brown sandy silt that contained no finds, gravel and chalk fragments were the only inclusions. It may be naturally occurring drift geology or subsoil, but was only seen in limited stretches, so it could not be proved whether this was made ground. However, the drop in the topography along The Avenue is not exactly mirrored inside: the ground is level at the precise location of this part of the boundary wall, so it does suggest that the deposits seen behind the wall are a levelling layer, probably made ground, prior to the wall being constructed. It was observed that the facing courses of the walls respected the upper level of this deposit.
- 3.5.2 The second layer was dark brown sandy silt, and was topsoil. This probably included modern accumulation and minor landscaping. It post-dates the wall construction since it overlies the facing blocks on the inside part of the wall.

4 Conclusions and Interpretation

- 4.1.1 The western wall of Ingress Abbey along The Avenue shows at least two, possibly three phases of construction. The ground along the perimeter of the parkland was levelled and a cut made to add the wall foundations. The evidence from the Watching Brief indicates that the flint section of the wall is the earliest part. This is proved by the existence of loosely compacted flint rubble behind the stone wall identical to that behind the flint area. The flint facing appeared contemporary with the loose rubble behind, so on this evidence, the boundary wall to Ingress Park along The Avenue may have been all flint. The major use of flint in the parkland is for follies such as the grotto further along the western approach to the Abbey, so it is possible that the flint part of the wall is of 18th century date.
- 4.1.2 Since the stone section of the wall overlies the remains of the flint wall, it is assumed that this is a later repair or rebuild of the wall. Without dating evidence, it is impossible to give a date for the stone element, but it is thought to be no later than mid 19th century. It may actually be contemporary with the Gothic-railed section. However, the construction method and materials for the Gothic railing support are so different from the stone section, that they are unlikely to be contemporary. The date of the railings is suggested in the listing as early to mid 19th century, so they may be contemporary with the rebuilding of the Abbey in 1833, or could be later, relating to modifications to the grounds made during the later 19th century.

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F1

f2

F3

Appendices

Appendix A, Photographic Register

Image No.	Description	View	Digital	Colour	B/W
1	Foundation course for railings	E	Y		
2	Stone block section of wall	NE	Y		
3	Stone block section of wall	E	Y		
4	Pier and flint wall	NE	Y		
5	Pier and flint wall	NE	Y		
6	Rubble fill behind flint face	E	Y		
7	Construction detail of pier	SW	Y		
8	Construction detail of pier	SW	Y		
9	Flint wall construction	S	Y		
10	Stone part	S	Y		
11	Foundation course for railings	S	Y		
12	Foundation course for railings	S	Y		
13	Foundation course for railings	S	Y		
14	Modern capping of flint wall	-	Y		
15	Capstones, collected	-	Y		
16	Pier stones collected	-	Y		
17	Pier stones with iron fixings	-	Y		
18	Pier stones with iron fixings	-	Y		
19	Overview, visit 2	NE	Y		
20	Overview, visit 2	NE	Y		
21	Pier stones	-	Y		
22	Numbered pier stones	-	Y		
23	Foundation course	-	Y		
24	Loose flint rubble	E	Y		
25	Loose flint rubble	E	Y		
26	Flint rubble detail	S	Y		
27	Flint rubble detail	S	Y		
28	Flint rubble and section	SW	Y		
29	Stored masonry	-	Y		
30	Stored masonry	-	Y		
31	Cut for wall	S	Y		
32	Cut for wall	SE	Y		
33	Cut for wall	E	Y		
34	Stored masonry	-	Y		
35	Overview	NE	Y		
36	Overview	NE	Y		

Appendix B, OASIS Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-52480

Project details

Project name	Fastrack Route at Ingress Abbey, Kent
Short description of the project	A programme of Historic Building Recording was carried out on a section of the Boundary Wall of Ingress Abbey in advance of demolition and rebuilding to accommodate the route of 'Fastrack'; a bus route into the Ingress Abbey development. The boundary wall was made of stone, flint and panels of wrought iron railings. The wall has been demolished and each major stone numbered to enable rebuilding once the Fastrack route is complete.
Project dates	Start: 11-06-2007 End: 29-06-2007
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any project codes	associated reference 7712 - Contracting Unit No.
Any project codes	associated reference ABE 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods techniques	& 'Measured Survey','Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT DARTFORD SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE Fast Track Route, Ingress Park, Greenhithe
Study area	0.02 Kilometres

THE FASTRACK ROUTE AT INGRESS ABBEY, GREENHITHE, KENT.
A HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD OF THE BOUNDARY WALL

Site coordinates TQ 5895 7484 51.4496822676 0.287764881854 51 26 58 N 000 17 15 E Point

Project creators

Name of AOC Archaeology
Organisation

Project brief Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
originator

Project design AOC Archaeology
originator

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Les Capon

Type of Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Crest Nicholson
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive Dartford Museum
recipient

Digital Contents 'Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Media 'Images raster / digital photography'
available

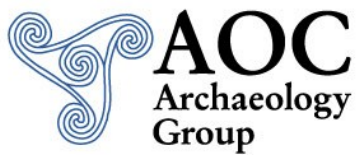
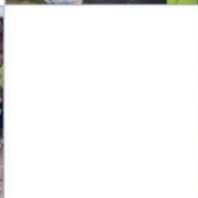
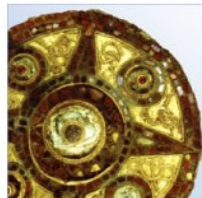
Paper Archive Dartford Museum
recipient

Paper Contents 'none'

Paper Media 'Photograph','Plan','Section'
available

Entered by Ian Hogg (ian.hogg@aocarchaeology.com)

Entered on 8 December 2008



AOC Archaeology Group, Unit 7, St Margarets Business Centre, Moor Mead Road, Twickenham TW1 1JS
tel: 020 8843 7380 | fax: 020 8892 0549 | e-mail: london@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com