

**LAND OFF PARROCK STREET**

**GRAVESEND**

**KENT**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



**Essex County Council**

**FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT**

**December 2006**

**LAND OFF PARROCK STREET  
GRAVESEND  
KENT**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

|                           |            |
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|                   |   |

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.*

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**LAND OFF PARROCK STREET  
GRAVESEND, KENT**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Client:** Barratt Eastern Counties

**NGR:** TQ 6485 7395, TQ 6485 7370 and TQ 6495 7370

**Planning Application Reference:** GR/03/315

**Site Code:** GRPS 05

**ECC FAU Project Number:** 1508

**OASIS Index Number:** essexcou1-20738

**Dates of Fieldwork:** 14/6/5, 16/6/5, 9/8/5, 5/4/6 and 13/4/6

**SUMMARY**

*Groundworks associated with housing construction on three separate sites (A, B and C) along Windmill Street and Parrock Street in Gravesend were monitored for the presence of archaeological deposits, features and finds by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Barratt Eastern Counties. The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with an Archaeological Brief and a Written Scheme of Investigation, and was monitored by Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group.*

*The watching brief of the groundworks has found extensive modern disturbance and remnants of Victorian cellars, but no pre-19th-century deposits, features or finds. A layer of subsoil in the north half of site A is possibly archaeological, although its age and significance remain unknown.*



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report contains the results of an archaeological watching brief, undertaken in advance of residential development across three separate sites along Parrock Street and Windmill Street in Gravesend, Kent. The watching brief was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Barratt Eastern Counties. It observed groundworks and took place in accordance with an Archaeological Brief, as issued by Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (KCC HCG 2005; ECC FAU 2005).

Copies of this report are supplied to Barratt Eastern Counties, the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group, Gravesham Borough Council and Kent Archaeological Society. A copy of the report will form part of the OASIS online record (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

## **2.0 THE SITE**

### **2.1 Location and description**

The development lies south of Gravesend town centre and comprises three separate sites (Fig.1, A, B and C):

- A. Corner of Parrock Street and Lord Street (TQ 6485 7395), 1850m<sup>2</sup>
- B. Off Windmill Street/Clarence Row (TQ 6485 7370), 1216m<sup>2</sup>
- C. Corner of Parrock Street and Home Mead Close (TQ 6495 7370), 960m<sup>2</sup>

Site A was formerly a multi-storey car park, site B a two-level car park, and site C trees and grass. Terraced housing, modern apartment blocks, and shops and offices surround all three sites.

### **2.2 Geology**

The underlying geology is brickearth and chalk.

### **2.3 Archaeological background**

A desk-based assessment preceded the archaeological monitoring and concluded that sites A, B and C had low archaeological potential (ECC FAU 2002). A list of the

HER sites within 500m of the development area can be found in the assessment report.

Gravesend has served as a small port and market centre since at least the medieval period. Archaeological investigations have discovered Roman settlement remains south of the waterfront (TQ67SW 81), and medieval and post-medieval pits and finds beneath the town centre (TQ67SW 131).

Victorian terraced housing with cellars and basements formerly occupied sites A, B and C. In the 1970s, a multi-storey car park and a small open area of tarmac replaced all but five of the houses in site A. The five houses that were left in situ were sited in the northern part of the development area. The demolition of the houses in site B occurred between 1966 and 1973. In their place was built a private two-storey car park, which was cut in to a natural slope to a maximum depth of 2.5m. Between 1962 and 1973, site C was cleared of its houses, and then landscaped and planted with grass and trees. Anecdote has it that it was hit by a bomb during the Second World War.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the watching brief were to contribute to knowledge of the Gravesham area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of the groundworks. Particular attention was to be paid to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits (KCC HCG 2005).

### **4.0 METHOD**

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IFA 1999), and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officer's *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). The ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The ECC FAU uses its own recording system to record all uncovered archaeological deposits and features (ECC FAU 2006). The minimum sample sizes are 50% for self-contained features (e.g. pits and post-holes), and 10% for linear features (e.g. ditches and gullies). Plans are drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10. Digital photographs and monochrome and colour prints are taken of significant features and of work in progress. Each context is recorded on individual pro-forma sheets.

Site visits were carried out in order to observe the undertaking of the groundworks. Sub-contractors of the developer undertook the groundworks and used tracked excavators with toothed buckets. Ground conditions were generally untidy and messy, and not conducive to archaeological investigation.

## **5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS**

### **5.1 Area A**

Large sections of area A had undergone deep and extensive ground clearance due to the presence of Japanese Knotweed. Approximately 0.6m of modern topsoil/overburden above 0.4m of light brown subsoil lay in those few parts of the site, which had not been severely truncated by the knotweed clearance, the Victorian basements and cellars, and the multi-storey car park foundations (Plates 2 and 3). The subsoil was possibly an archaeological deposit, but contained no finds to confirm this. Directly underneath the subsoil were natural deposits of brickearth and chalk. In the northern part of the site, along the Parrock Street frontage, were remnants of Victorian cellars (Plate 4). The cellars were built of frogged brick and were at least 1.8m deep. The site foreman reported that middens or rubbish pits were encountered during the grubbing out of the knotweed. Inside the pits/middens were 19th/20th-century finds, including oyster shell, animal bone and clay pipe.

The monitoring of this site identified no pre-19th-century features, finds or deposits.

### **5.2 Area B**

Site clearance across area B uncovered pieces of modern concrete, c. 4.5m below ground level, demonstrating deep and widespread disturbance. The other groundworks comprised a 0.3m wide trench, the excavation of two sumps, and piling. No pre-19th-century deposits, features or finds were encountered.



### **5.3 Area C**

The groundworks in area C comprised the removal of modern disturbance across the whole site to a depth of c. 0.6m. The underlying surface consisted of silt sand and gravel and modern building debris. No archaeological finds or features – if present - were exposed. The uncovered surface was subsequently sealed beneath 0.2m of sand and 0.4m of concrete chippings.

### **6.0 FINDS**

No pre 19th-century finds were discovered. Modern brick, tile, glass and pottery *etc*, were encountered, but were not retained.

### **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

There are no pre-19th-century archaeological remains in areas A and B, and it remains unlikely that there are significant archaeological deposits and features in area C. The subsoil layer in area A is possibly archaeological, although its date and significance remain unknown. If important archaeological remains were ever present in areas A, B and C, then they have probably been largely destroyed by Victorian basements and cellars and 20th-century buildings and landscaping.

### **8.0 ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The development work in areas A, B and C has had minimal impact on the archaeological resource of Gravesend. No further archaeological work is necessary.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit would like to thank Barratt Eastern Counties for their help and assistance. The watching brief was carried out by Mark Germany and Mathew Pocock. The work was monitored by David Britchfield of Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ECC FAU            2002    *Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend town centre, Kent. Preliminary archaeological desk-based assessment (Revision 0). Report No. **1047***
- ECC FAU            2006    *Site Recording Manual (Version 2)*
- Gurney, D.        2003    *Standards for field archaeology in the east of England. E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. **14***
- IFA                1999    *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Revised). Institute of Field Archaeologists*
- KCC HCG           2005    *Specification for an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with redevelopment at land off Parrock Street, Gravesend town centre, Kent. Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group*

## **APPENDIX 1: CONTENTS OF SITE ARCHIVE**

Contained in one A4 folder:

- 1 Copy of this report
- 1 Copy of the archaeological brief
- 1 Copy of the written scheme of investigation
- 5 Sheets of watching brief notes
- 10 Digital photographs
- 15 Black and white prints and negatives
- 18 Colour transparencies

There are no finds or site drawings.

**APPENDIX 2: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SMR SUMMARY FORM (SITE A)**

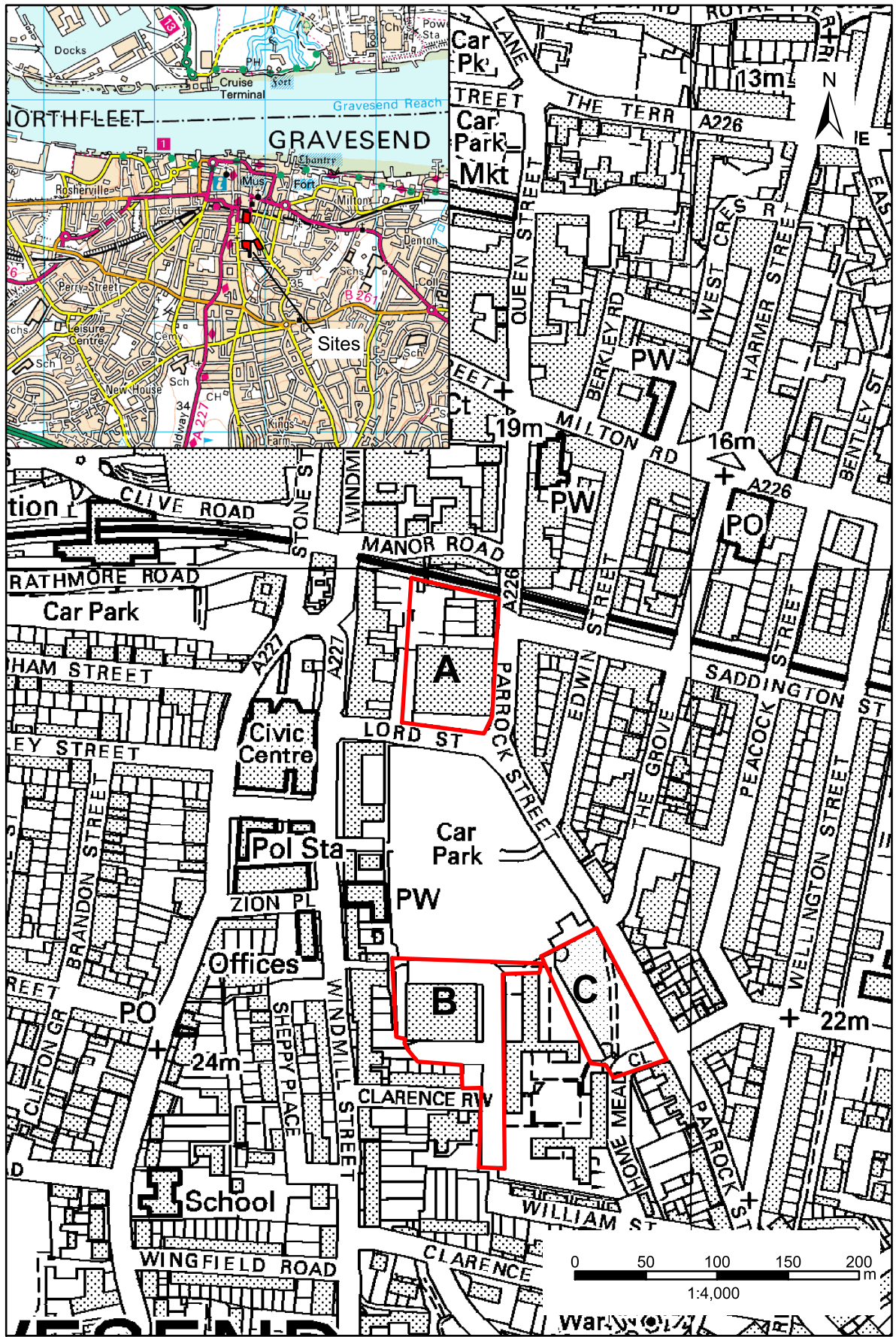
|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Site Name:</b> Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent  |                            |
| <b>Site Address:</b><br>Multi-storey car park on corner of Lord Street and Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent  |                            |
| <b>Summary:</b> Watching brief undertaken on groundworks associated with demolition of multi-storey car park and offices and construction of residential development (1850m <sup>2</sup> )  |                            |
| <b>District/Unitary:</b> Maidstone  | <b>Parish:</b> Gravesend   |
| <b>Period(s):</b> Modern  |                            |
| <b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> TQ 6485 7395<br><b>(NB if large or linear give multiple NGRs)</b>  |                            |
| <b>Type of archaeological work (delete):</b> Watching brief   |                            |
| <b>Date of recording:</b> 5/4/6 and 13/4/6  |                            |
| <b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Court, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3YQ  |                            |
| <b>Geology:</b> Brickearth on top of chalk  |                            |
| <b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b><br>Germany, M. 2006 <i>Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent. Archaeological watching brief.</i><br>Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex  |                            |
| <b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate):</b><br><br>The groundworks entailed demolition and removal of existing buildings, and deep and extensive clearance of ground infected with Japanese Knotweed. Modern middens/rubbish pits and the remnants of 19th-century basements and cellars were encountered along and to the rear of the Parrock Street frontage, but no pre-19th-century archaeological deposits, features or finds. A layer of light brown subsoil, 0.4m thick, was seen beneath 0.6m of modern overburden. The layer was possibly archaeological, but contained no finds to confirm it.<br><br><p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet) No</b></p> |                            |
| <b>Location of archive/finds:</b>   |                            |
| <b>Contact at Unit:</b> Mark Germany  | <b>Date:</b> December 2006 |

### APPENDIX 3: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SMR SUMMARY FORM (SITE B)

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Site Name:</b> Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent   |                            |
| <b>Site Address:</b> Two-storey car park, off Windmill Street/Clarence Row, Gravesend, Kent  |                            |
| <b>Summary:</b> Watching brief undertaken on groundworks associated with demolition of two-storey car park and construction of residential development (1216m <sup>2</sup> )   |                            |
| <b>District/Unitary:</b> Maidstone   | <b>Parish:</b> Gravesend   |
| <b>Period(s):</b> Modern   |                            |
| <b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> TQ 6485 7370<br><b>(NB if large or linear give multiple NGRs)</b>   |                            |
| <b>Type of archaeological work (delete):</b> Watching brief  |                            |
| <b>Date of recording:</b> 9/8/05   |                            |
| <b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Court, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3YQ   |                            |
| <b>Geology:</b> Brickearth on top of chalk   |                            |
| <b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b><br>Germany, M. 2006 <i>Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent. Archaeological watching brief.</i><br>Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex   |                            |
| <b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate):</b><br><br>The groundworks comprised the removal of 4.5m deep foundations, the excavation of two sumps and piling. It revealed modern disturbance, but no archaeological deposits, features or finds.<br><br><p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet) No</b></p> |                            |
| <b>Location of archive/finds:</b>  |                            |
| <b>Contact at Unit:</b> Mark Germany   | <b>Date:</b> December 2006 |

**APPENDIX 4: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SMR SUMMARY FORM (SITE C)**

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Site Name:</b> Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent  |                            |
| <b>Site Address:</b> Area of urban landscaping, corner of Parrock Street and Home Mead Close  |                            |
| <b>Summary:</b> Watching brief undertaken on groundworks associated with removal of urban landscaping and construction of residential development (960m <sup>2</sup> )  |                            |
| <b>District/Unitary:</b> Maidstone  | <b>Parish:</b> Gravesend   |
| <b>Period(s):</b> Modern  |                            |
| <b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> TQ 6495 7370<br><b>(NB if large or linear give multiple NGRs)</b>  |                            |
| <b>Type of archaeological work (delete):</b> Watching brief   |                            |
| <b>Date of recording:</b> 14/6/05, 16/6/05 and 9/8/05   |                            |
| <b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Court, Braintree, Essex, CM7 3YQ  |                            |
| <b>Geology:</b> Brickearth on top of chalk  |                            |
| <b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b><br>Germany, M. 2006 <i>Land off Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent. Archaeological watching brief.</i><br>Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, Fairfield Road, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex  |                            |
| <b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate):</b><br><br>The groundworks comprised the removal of 0.6m of modern overburden across the whole of the site. The overburden overlay other modern deposits, and the archaeological monitoring encountered no archaeological deposits, features or finds. If archaeological remains were present, then these were deeper than the depth of the groundworks.<br><br><p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet) No</b></p> |                            |
| <b>Location of archive/finds:</b>   |                            |
| <b>Contact at Unit:</b> Mark Germany  | <b>Date:</b> December 2006 |



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Fig.1. Location plan





Plate 1 Demolition and clearance of multi-storey car park in south half of site A



Plate 2 Stratigraphic sequence (overburden/subsoil/brickearth/chalk), north-east part of site A





Plate 3 Stratigraphic sequence (overburden/subsoil/brickearth/chalk), north-east part of site A



Plate 4 Victorian cellars along Parrock Street frontage, north-east corner of site A