

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
The Box House, St. Edith's Road
Kemsing, Kent**

NGR 555436 158677

**Sevenoaks District Council Planning References:
SE/09/02213/LBCDEM & SE/09/02212/FUL)**

**Planning Inspectorate Appeal References:
APP/G2245/E/10/2123784 & APP/G2245/A/10/2123781)**

**Project No: 4589
Site Code: BOX 11**

**ASE Report No: 2012018
OASIS ID: archaeol6-117796**

By Simon Stevens BA MIFA

**With contributions by
Luke Barber and Sarah Porteus**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Keith Roberts to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The Box House, St. Edith's Road, Kemsing, Kent.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks at the site, which included the mechanical excavation of a service trench, of strip footings and for a swimming pool. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Keith Roberts to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The Box House, St. Edith's Road, Kemsing, Kent (NGR 555436 158677; Figure 1).

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Box House is situated in the centre of the village of Kemsing, on the southern side of High Street/West End at the junction with St. Edith's Road, opposite St. Edith's Well at a height of c.95mAOD. The development site is bounded to the south and east by gardens of properties fronting onto St. Edith's Lane, and to the north and west by the gardens of properties fronting onto West End.

1.2.2 According to current data from the British Geological Survey the underlying bedrock is West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation and Zig Zag Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated) There is no recorded superficial geology at the site (BGS 2011).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a pool house, garage and associated access was initially refused by Sevenoaks District Council (planning refs. SE/09/02213/LBCDEM and SE/09/02212/FUL.), but was granted on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate (appeal refs. APP/G2245/E/10/2123784 and APP/G2245/A/10/2123781). Following consultation between Sevenoaks District Council and the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council (Sevenoaks District Council's advisers on archaeological issues), a condition was attached to the original (and retained in the appeal judgement) requiring that:

'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 the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.'

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.'

1.3.2 A specification for the work was duly produced by the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council (HCGKCC 2010). This document outlined the methodologies to be used during monitoring at the site, and in subsequent reporting of the results.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The objectives and aims given in the Specification (HCGKCC 2010) were

'to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks.'

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report provides results of the archaeological monitoring of groundworks at the site carried out during late December 2010 and early January 2012. The on-site work was undertaken by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist) and by Cat Douglas (Assistant Archaeologist). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and by Jim Stevenson (Post-Excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Kent County Council Historical Environment Record (HER) was consulted. There are 39 entries within a 1km radius of the site; the majority are listed buildings in the historic centre of Kemsing. The following are considered some of the more significant entries, or those in the immediate area of the current site:

HER Number	Description
TQ 55 NE 7	Church of St. Mary, Kemsing. Early Norman (possibly Late Saxon) in origin. Later additions
TQ 55 NE 8	Motte – called <i>Castle Bank</i> on opposite side of West End. Origins obscure. Now site of C17th cottage
TQ 55 NE 10	St. Edith's Well. Medieval well connected by folklore to St. Edith (961-984) daughter of King Edgar
TQ 55 NE 16	Findspot of Neolithic polished flint axe. Now in Maidstone Museum
TQ 55 NE 64	Medieval Ridge and Furrow cultivation. Considered to be dubious and more likely drainage works
TQ 55 NW 16	Skeletal remains discovered to west of church in 1880, Accompanied so presumed to be Anglo-Saxon
TQ 55 NW 39	Milestone at junction of Shorehill Lane and Pilgrims Way. Post-medieval.
TQ 55 NE 94	Stone-built garden wall of Box House dates from C18 th . Grade II listed.
TQ 55 NE 134	The Box House is a Grade II listed building. Though to date to the C16 th century with later additions

Table 1: Summary of HER data

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Mechanical and manual excavations the foundations of the new structure, the swimming pool and for associated services were monitored. All sections were examined for the presence of archaeological features, and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts.
- 3.2 All encountered deposits, features and finds were recorded to accepted professional standards using standard Archaeology South-East context record forms. Deposit colours were recorded by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.2 A full photographic record of the work was kept and will form part of the site archive. The site archive is currently held by Archaeology South-East at the offices in Portslade. The site is within Sevenoaks Museum's collecting area but unfortunately they are at present unable to receive the archive due to lack of storage space. The archive consists of the following material:

Number of Contexts	8
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Bulk Samples	-
Photograph	5 digital
Bulk finds	1 box
Registered finds	-
Environmental flots/residue	-

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figure 2)

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Deposit Thickness
001	Deposit	Topsoil	690mm
002	Deposit	Redeposited Chalk	200mm
003	Deposit	Tarmac	110mm
004	Deposit	Make up/levelling	310mm
005	Deposit	Made Ground	410mm
006	Deposit	'Natural' Chalk	-
007	Deposit	Topsoil	150mm
008	Deposit	'Natural' Chalk	-

- 4.1 Five visits were made to the site by ASE personnel to monitor mechanical excavations for the laying of services, the mechanical excavation of strip footings, and to record the results of the mechanical excavations for the swimming pool. No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded during the monitoring of the groundworks at the site.
- 4.2 Excavations for a service trench ran from close to the existing structures at the site south-westwards towards a man-hole cover in the garden. The trench was 600mm in width and a maximum of 820mm in depth. Much of the trench was excavated through a flower bed, where the simple stratigraphic sequence consisted of a humic mid-brown silty clay topsoil, context [001], which directly overlay a lens of redeposited chalk, context [002]. This in turn overlay another layer of humic topsoil, context [007], which was slightly lighter in colour than context [001]. This overlay the 'natural' weathered chalk, context [006].
- 4.3 Excavations close to the standing buildings (for the service trench, building foots and for the swimming pool) revealed a different sequence. The uppermost layer was the tarmac of the existing hardstanding, context [2/003], which overlay a deposit of brick rubble, context [004]. This in turn overlay a deposit of mixed made ground containing garden soil and brick and chalk rubble, context [005]. There was a lens of redeposited chalk rubble at the below this, context [006], which directly overlay the 'natural' weathered chalk, context [008].

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small collection of finds was recovered during the watching brief.

Context	Pottery	wt (g)	CBM	wt (g)	Bone	wt (g)	CTP	wt (g)
u/s	14	950	3	36	1	4	1	4

Table 3: Quantification of finds

5.2 The Post-Roman Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The watching brief recovered a small assemblage of post-medieval pottery from the site. All was recovered from unstratified deposits. Despite this, sherd sizes are generally large with little sign of abrasion suggesting the material has not been subjected to any significant reworking.

5.2.3 The earliest sherd is from a Staffordshire press-moulded buff earthenware dish with combed slip (40g). Although this is undoubtedly an 18th- century vessel it may still have been in use during the 19th century. The remaining pottery can be placed within a c. 1830 to 1900 date range. There is a mix of kitchen and tablewares typical of a domestic assemblage of the lower classes. Kitchen vessels include an unglazed earthenware flowerpot with simple rim (18g), a Sunderland-type slipware bowl (16g) and a complete English stoneware blacking bottle (724g) measuring 186mm tall with 58mm diameter rim and 80mm diameter base. The tablewares include blue transfer-printed wares (42g: a plate decorated with floral design and a serving dish with willow pattern) a refined white earthenware plate/bowl with blue sponged stencil design (18g: a cheaper form of decoration) and three plain refined white earthenware plates (6/98g). The latter are more typical of the later part of the 19th century.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.3.1 A total of three fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from the work, all the fragments were unstratified and of post-medieval date. The fragments have been examined with the aid of a x10 magnifying glass. One fragment was in a coarse red fabric with abundant medium sized quartz inclusions of probable 19th century date and the other two fragments were of a fine orange fabric with sparse fine iron rich inclusions with very fine even sanded surfaces of probable 19th to 20th century date. The assemblage holds no potential for further research and has been discarded.

5.4 The Clay Tobacco Pipe by Luke Barber

5.4.1 A single fresh mid- 18th to 19th century stem fragment was recovered from unstratified deposits.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded during the monitoring of the groundworks at the site. Clearly the deposits encountered close to the standing buildings were indicative of disturbance resulting from previous groundworks in the area adjacent to the buildings.
- 6.2 There appeared less truncation in the area of flowerbeds to the south and south-west of the buildings, but no archaeological features or deposits were encountered in the service trench, and no early material was recovered from the overburden, suggesting that no significant archaeological deposits survived in the vicinity.
- 6.3 The finds assemblage recovered during the watching brief contained no artefacts of particular note or great antiquity, and is indicative of periodic deposition of domestic refuse from the nearby buildings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS 2011. British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer, accessed 19.01.2012 http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

HCGKCC 2010. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Box House, St. Edith's Road in Kemsing near Sevenoaks*. Unpub. document

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Mr and Mrs Roberts for commissioning the work the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council for their guidance throughout the project.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	BOX11					
Identification Name and Address	Box House, Kemsing					
County, District &/or Borough	Sevenoaks District, Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	555436 158677					
Geology	Chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4589					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. Dec. 2011 – Jan. 2012	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Mr and Mrs Keith Roberts					
Project Manager	Any Leonard/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Simon Stevens					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Keith Roberts to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The Box House, St. Edith's Road, Kemsing, Kent.</i></p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks at the site, which included the mechanical excavation of a service trench, of strip footings and for a swimming pool. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-117796

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at The Box House, St. Edith's Road, Kemsing, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks at the site, which included the mechanical excavation of a service trench, of strip footings and for a swimming pool. No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. A small assemblage of post-medieval material was recovered from the overburden
Project dates	Start: 12-12-2011 End: 11-01-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	4589 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BOX11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS KEMSING The Box House
Postcode	TN15 6PT
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 55436 58677 51.3054227779 0.230157397771 51 18 19 N 000 13 48 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 90.00m Max: 100.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Heritage Conservation Kent County Council
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard/Jim Stevenson
Project supervisor	Simon Stevens
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Mr and Mrs Keith Roberts

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Unknown
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Physical Archive notes	Sevenoaks Museum currently not accepting archives.
Digital Archive recipient	Unknown
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Digital Archive notes	Sevenoaks Museum currently not accepting archives
Paper Archive recipient	Unknown
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Miscellaneous Material','Report','Unpublished Text'
Paper Archive notes	Sevenoaks Museum currently not accepting archives

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report - The Box House, St.

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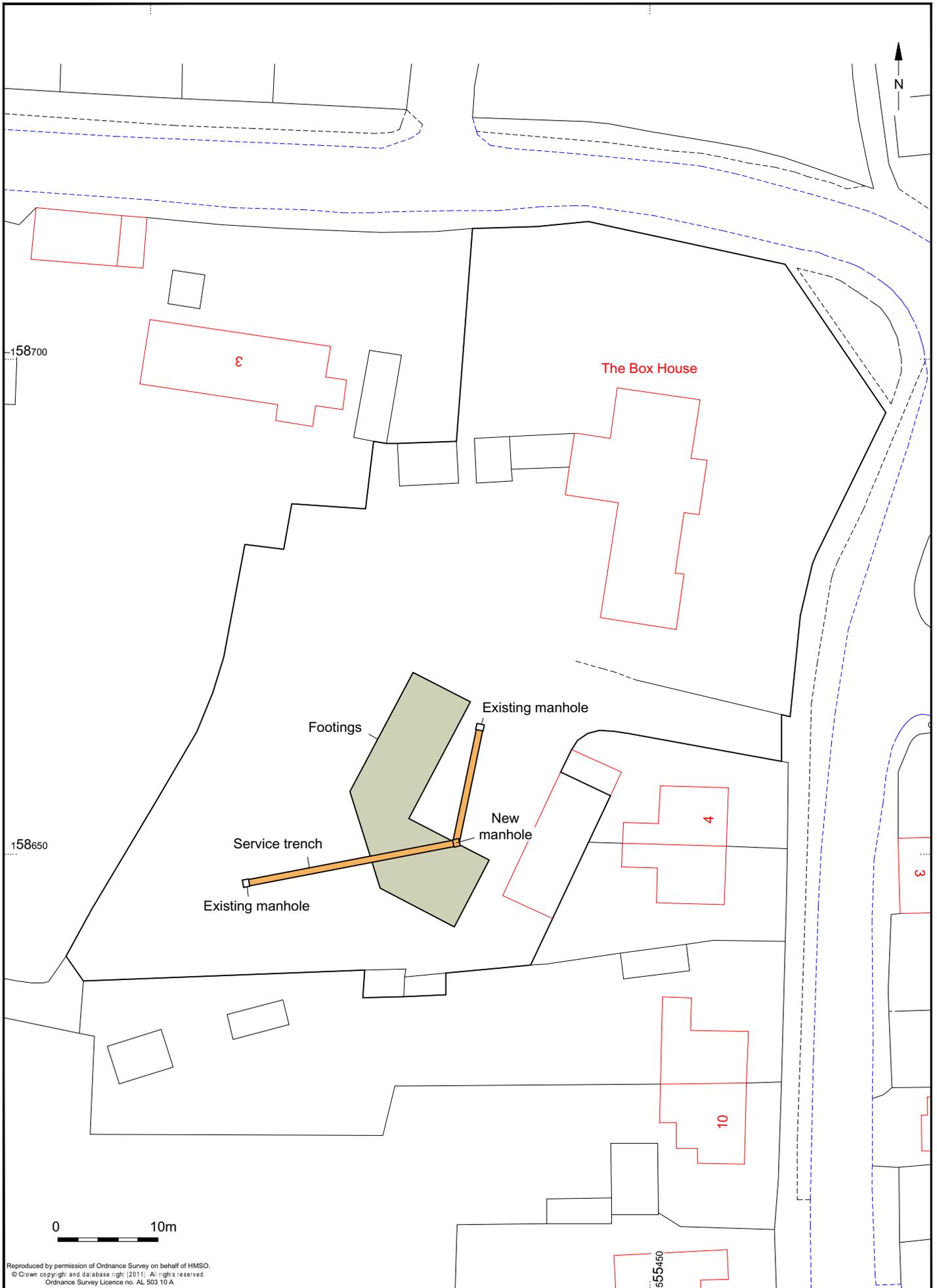
Description ASE Client Report. A4 format with cover logos.

Entered by Simon Stevens (simon.stevens@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 24 January 2012



© Archaeology South-East		The Box House, Kemsing		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 4589	Jan 2012	Site location		
Report Ref: 2012018	Drawn by: JLR			



© Archaeology South-East		The Box House, Kemsing	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 4589	Jan 2012	Monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2012018	Drawn by: JLR		

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