

**An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief on
Land at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks.**

(NGR 553205 154538)

By

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Project No. 1888

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief and evaluation were conducted from 2004 to 2007 at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent. No finds or features earlier than late post - medieval were identified. One late post - medieval pit containing pottery, clay pipe and peg tile was identified during a watching brief on groundwork for the construction of a new building, and a late post- medieval to modern garden wall was uncovered during the evaluation.

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SMR Summary Sheet
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, have been commissioned by Timothy Ball on behalf of Jon Hughes Design Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation and watching brief in advance of redevelopment of land at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent (NGR 553205 154538) (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** The site is located to the east of Sevenoaks High Street and 70m south of Akehurst Lane. The total site area measures around 0.62ha. (Fig 2).
- 1.3** A new house has been constructed within the grounds of the existing Garden House. The Heritage Conservation Unit of Kent County Council (KCC) advised Sevenoaks District Council that a condition should be attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work. An archaeological watching brief was required to fulfil the planning consent (SE/04/00782).
- 1.4** In addition, the Garden House itself is due for demolition, and a single replacement building is to be constructed at the site. Due to the archaeological potential of the site, the Heritage Conservation Unit of Kent County Council (KCC) advised Sevenoaks district Council that a condition should be attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work. The following condition was placed on the consent for application SE/ 06/03256:
- No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of*
- i. archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
 - ii. following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*
- 1.5** A Specification outlining the requirements was prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group at KCC. A watching brief was undertaken during groundwork associated with the construction of the new building to the north of the Garden House to fulfil consent SE/04/00782.
- 1.6** A second specification prepared by the Heritage Conservation Group at KCC required a programme of evaluation through Trial Trenching to fulfil consent SE/ 06/03256.

- 1.7 The topography of the garden is largely flat. The British Geological Survey map Sheet 287 (Sevenoaks) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) confirms that the site lies on the Folkestone Beds.
- 1.8 The watching brief was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni during June 2004 and May 2005. The evaluation was undertaken by Alice Thorne and David Atkin on the 19th and 20th of April 2007. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Sevenoaks is situated on a well drained slope at the base of the North Downs in the Holmesdale vale. The High Street runs along a slight ridge of high ground formed by an elongated tongue of the Folkestone beds. The Garden House is situated to the east of the High Street at around 155m OD overlooking the medieval and post - medieval deer park of Knole Park.
- 2.2 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. It lies adjacent to the Urban Archaeological Zone 2 designation, covering the historic core of the town. Sevenoaks itself is known to be of Medieval date but little archaeological data exists for the town or its environs (Kent Historic Towns Survey, 2003, 1).
- 2.3 A late fourth century Roman coin is recorded as being found 75m north of the site (Kent SMR no TQ 55 SW 6)
- 2.4 Recent evaluation work 140m west at a small site on Rockdale Road revealed medieval pottery in a linear ditch feature, interpreted as a property boundary (Riccoboni, 2004).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to contribute to knowledge of Sevenoaks through the identification and record of any buried archaeological remains exposed as a result of the groundwork.
- 3.2 The watching brief comprised monitoring of ground reduction in advance of construction of an aviary in 2004 and monitoring ground reduction and footing trenches in advance of construction of the new property to the rear of the Garden House in 2005 (Fig. 3).
- 3.3 The objective of the evaluation was to establish whether there are any archaeological deposits present at the site which may be affected by the proposed development and to assess the potential for the geology on

site to harbour early prehistoric cultural material or environmental remains.

Its specific aims were:

- To ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site.
- To assess the existing impacts on buried remains at the site and estimate the likely future impact on buried remains from the proposed residential development
- to contribute to the environmental knowledge of the area

- 3.4** The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trial trenches in 2007. These measured 15m by 1.8m, and were excavated by a tracked digger, with a flat blade ditching bucket.
- 3.5** The trenches were positioned to the south and southwest of the site. Some on site constraints necessitated the adjustment of two of the trenches, following advance agreement with the County Archaeologist. Trench two was shifted 6 meters to the west to avoid a bore hole rig. Trench 3 was initially intended to be located immediately to the south of the Garden House. However, it was found to be situated in a busy drive way used by builders and contractors at site, and was also positioned over the location of two manholes. This trench was therefore moved to the south west, onto the lawn and into a position as close as practicable to the house itself (Fig. 2).
- 3.6** The trenches were CAT scanned prior to excavation.
- 3.7** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.
- 3.8** A full photographic record of the work was kept (black and white prints, colour slides and digital images) and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable local museum.
- 3.9** An overall site plan was maintained at a scale of 1:500, the trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and sections were drawn at 1:10. The site was levelled with respect to OD, and located on to the 1:25000 map of the area.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The Watching Brief (Fig. 3)

4.2 No archaeological finds or features were revealed during monitoring of ground reduction in advance of the aviary in 2004. During groundwork in 2005 however, a circular feature was noted cut into the underlying natural during the excavation of a basement within the footprint of the new build **[104]** (Fig. 3). This feature had a diameter of 1.50m and a maximum depth of 300mm. It had concave sides and a flat base. It was filled by a mid greyish brown silty clay containing coal flecks, charcoal fragments and fragments of iron (**105**). This fill of this pit contained pottery, clay, pipe stems and peg tile dating to the 18th – 19th century.

4.3 The Evaluation (Fig.2)

4.4 Trench 1

4.5 Trench 1 was located to the west of the site, behind No. 50 the High Street. It was orientated NW-SE. As no archaeological deposits were encountered the trench was excavated down to the surface of the natural geology. Two modern services were encountered in this trench, requiring that the central portion was left raised.

4.6 The stratigraphic sequence in trench 1 was as follows:

(1/001) - A maximum 580mm thick garden soil deposit, including a 200mm thick turf layer. This composed a friable dark greyish- brown loam, which contained occasional fragments of modern brick and occasional fragments of Kentish rag stone.

(1/002) - The garden soil lay directly above the compact mid orangish-brown to greyish- brown clayey silt of the Folkestone Beds. The geology in this area contained frequent outcrops of fragments and blocks of Kentish rag stone.

4.7 Located 2m from the north-western extent of the trench a NNW- SSE orientated linear structure was revealed at 155.09m OD **[1/004]** (Fig.4). This was cut into the natural ground (1/002) and abutted by, and partially sealed by the garden soil (1/002). The structure had a maximum height of 580 mm, but had been truncated to the north west, where only 50 mm of the height survived. **[1/003]** comprised a 300mm wide wall footing,. Consisting of blocks of irregular Kentish rag stone and fragments of late post – medieval to modern brick **[1/005]** contained within a mid yellowish brown friable lime mortar.

4.8 **1/003** and **1/004** are thought to represent the remains of a garden wall. It runs roughly parallel to the western property fence, and the course of the High Street. It may possibly represent a garden feature or a property boundary relating to the back of No 50 the High Street.

4.9 Trench 2

4.10 Trench 2 was located to the south of the Garden House, and was orientated roughly W-E. As no archaeological deposits were encountered the trench was excavated down to the surface of the natural geology.

4.11 The stratigraphic sequence in trench 2 was as follows:

(2/001) - A 180mm thick friable dark greyish- brown loam turf deposit which contained occasional fragments of modern brick, tile and tar.

(2/002) - A 380mm thick garden soil layer. This composed a friable dark greyish- brown loam, which contained occasional fragments of modern brick, tile and tar or clinker and occasional fragments of Kentish rag stone.

(2/003) - The garden soil lay directly above the compact mid orangish-brown to greyish- brown clayey silt of the Folkestone Beds. The geology in this area contained frequent outcrops of Kentish rag stone, variable in size from small gravels to large blocks.

4.12 One feature was observed in this trench at 155.46 m OD. It comprised a sub-oval feature, approximately 500mm in diameter and up to 100mm in depth with an undulating and irregular profile **[2/004]** (Fig. 4). Upon excavation this feature was found to be filled by the garden soil **(2/002)** and shown to be an area of rooting disturbance.

4.13 No other finds of features were identified in this trench. However a compact layer of orangish brown clay containing very frequent small angular sandstone fragments and pieces of modern brick and clinker/tar was located approximately 6.5 metres from the easternmost extent of the trench. This underlay the garden soil and was situated directly above the natural ground. It had a maximum width of 1.80m and a maximum depth of 80mm, and is thought to represent the remains of a garden path.

4.14 Trench 3

- 4.15** Trench 3 was shifted to the south-west of the Garden House, and was orientated approximately SW-NE. No archaeological deposits were encountered and the trench was excavated down to the surface of the natural geology where possible. Several modern services were encountered in this trench, requiring that it was left high in several areas.
- 4.16** The stratigraphic sequence in trench 3 was as follows:
- (3/001)** - A 100mm thick friable dark greyish- brown loam turf deposit which contained occasional fragments of modern brick, tile and tar.
- (3/002)** - A 300mm thick garden soil layer. This comprised a friable dark greyish- brown loam, which contained occasional fragments of modern brick and frequent fragments of Kentish rag stone.
- (3/003)** -The garden soil lay directly above the compact mid orangish-brown to greyish- brown clayey silt of the Folkestone Beds. The geology in this area contained frequent outcrops of Kentish rag stone, variable in size from small gravels to large blocks.
- 4.17** No archaeological finds or features were identified in this trench.

Table 1: Levels information

Trench	Height in meters (OD)
T1. NW end, top of trench	155.64
T1. NW end, base of trench	154.98
T1. SE end, top of trench	155.84
T1. SE end, base of trench	155.23
T2. W end, top of trench	156.23
T2. W end, base of trench	155.68
T2. E end, top of trench	155.94
T2. E end, base of trench	155.53
T3. NE end, top of trench	155.87
T3. NE end, base of trench	155.45
T3. SW end, top of trench	156.11
T3. SW end, base of trench	155.41

5.0 FINDS by Luke Barber

- 5.1** The archaeological work recovered a small assemblage of finds, all from Context 105. Five sherds (14g) of pottery were recovered. These

consisted of a little 18th- century (London stoneware and Creamware) as well as early 19th- century material (glazed redwares [x2] and transfer-printed ware). The nine clay pipe stem fragments (30g) are of a similar 18th- to early 19th- century date.

- 5.2** Some 12 fragments (370g) of late post - medieval peg tile were recovered together with three pieces of coal (4g), two small pieces of window glass (1g), four iron nails (28g) and an iron garden fork (1,848g).
- 5.3** The current finds assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** The site is set some way back from Sevenoaks High Street, and despite the potential for recovering archaeological remains relating to the development of the town, no finds or features earlier than late post - medieval in date were revealed during the programme of archaeological work.
- 6.2** A late post - medieval pit was revealed during the watching brief on ground reduction for the new building in 2005. This fill of this pit contained artefacts dating to the 18th – 19th century, and is likely to represent a domestic rubbish pit.
- 6.3** A late post - medieval to modern garden wall footing was identified within Trench 1 during the evaluation in 2007. This feature runs roughly parallel to the line of the High Street, and is thought to represent either a garden feature, or possibly a property boundary relating to the rear of 50 the High Street.
- 6.4** The evaluation has also shown that a layer of garden soil directly overlies the natural Folkestone beds. Very little evidence of ground disturbance was encountered on site, other than that relating to modern services. However, more substantial disturbance is likely to be present within the footprint of the Garden House itself. The process of demolition of the current property and construction of the replacement building is likely to further impact upon any potential buried remains.

References

Kent Historic Towns Survey: Sevenoaks. Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, September 2003

Riccoboni, P., 2004. An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at the rear of 63-65 High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent. ASE Report 1785

Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks in Kent. Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, February 2007.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	GHS07					
Identification Name and Address	The Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Sevenoaks					
OS Grid Refs.	NG 553205 154538					
Geology	Folkestone Beds					
Arch. South-East Project Number	1888					
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. 19 – 20 April 2007	Excav.	WB. 29-30 June 2004 23 + 31 May 2005	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Jon Hughes Design Ltd					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Alice Thorne, Paul Riccoboni					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief and evaluation were conducted from 2004 to 2007 at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent. No finds or features earlier than late post - medieval were identified. One post - medieval pit containing pottery, clay pipe and peg tile was identified during a watching brief on groundwork for the construction of a new building, and a late post- medieval to modern garden wall was uncovered during the evaluation.</p>						

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

Printable version

OASIS ID: archaeol6-26725

Project details

Project name The Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief and evaluation were conducted from 2004 to 2007 at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent. No finds or features earlier than Late Post - Medieval were identified. One Post - Medieval pit containing pottery, clay pipe and peg tile was identified during a watching brief on groundwork for the construction of a new building, and a late Post- Medieval to Modern garden wall was uncovered during the evaluation.

Project dates Start: 19-04-2004 End: 20-04-2007

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 1888 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes GHS07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

Monument type GARDEN WALL Modern

Significant Finds POT Post Medieval

Significant Finds CLAY PIPE Post Medieval

Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS SEVENOAKS The Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks
Postcode	XXXXXXXX
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 553205 154538 50.9170366315 0.209889223773 50 55 01 N 000 12 35 E Point
Height OD	Min: 154.00m Max: 156.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council
Project director/manager	Neil Griffin
Project supervisor	Paul Riccoboni
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client

Name of sponsor/funding body	Jon Hughes Architects
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Ceramics','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Diary','Drawing','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey '
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief on Land at the Garden House, High Street, Sevenoaks.
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Other bibliographic details	1888
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Description	Grey Literature

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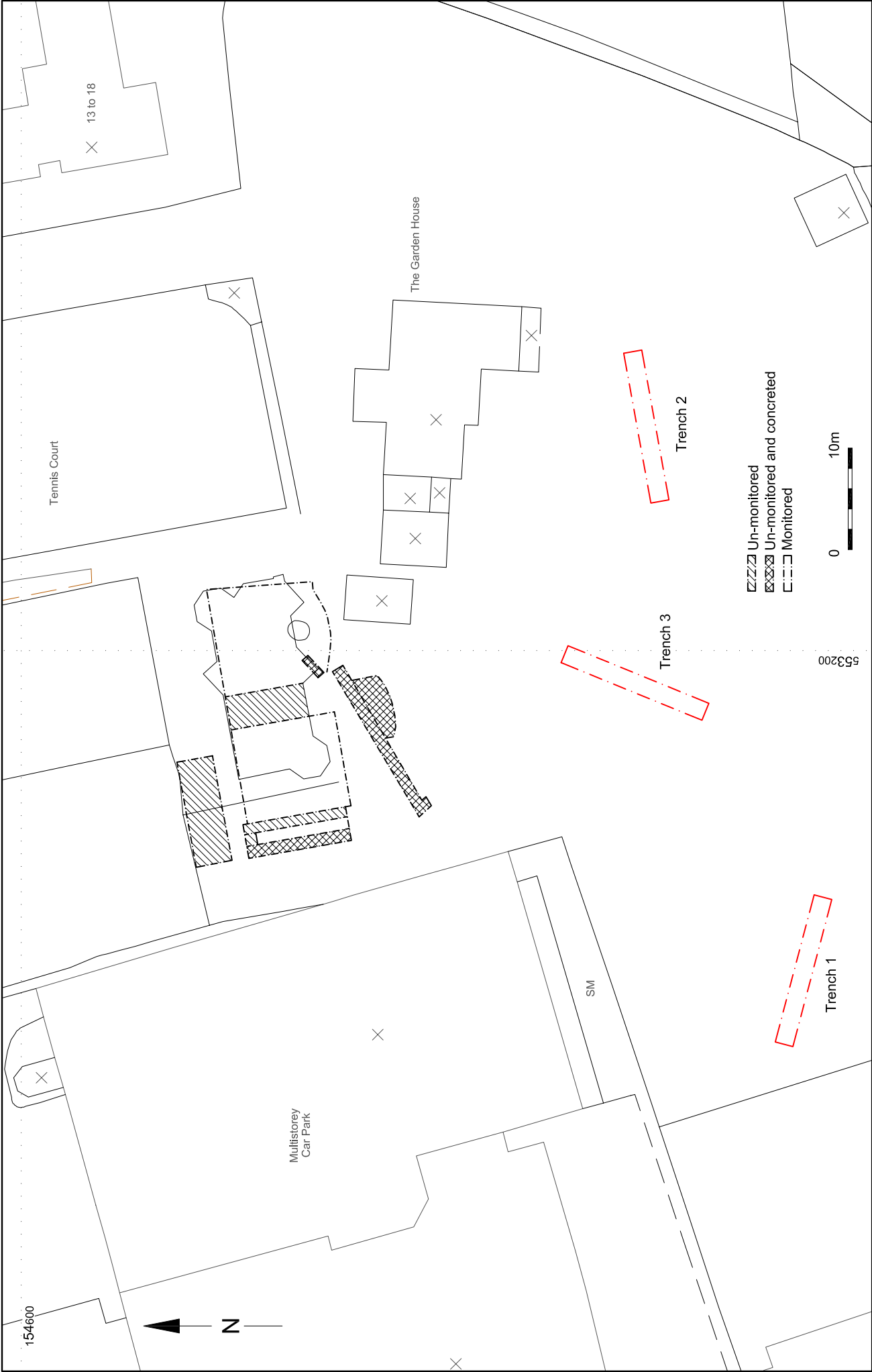
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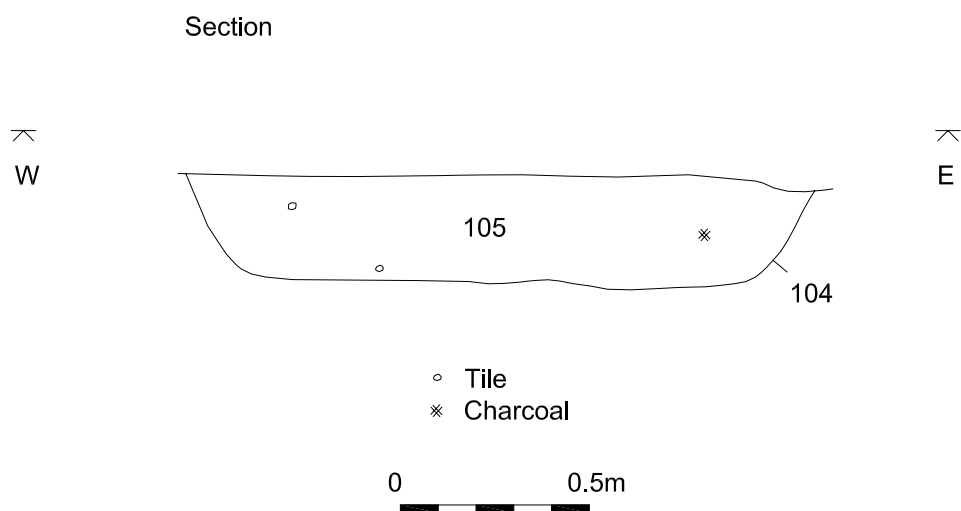
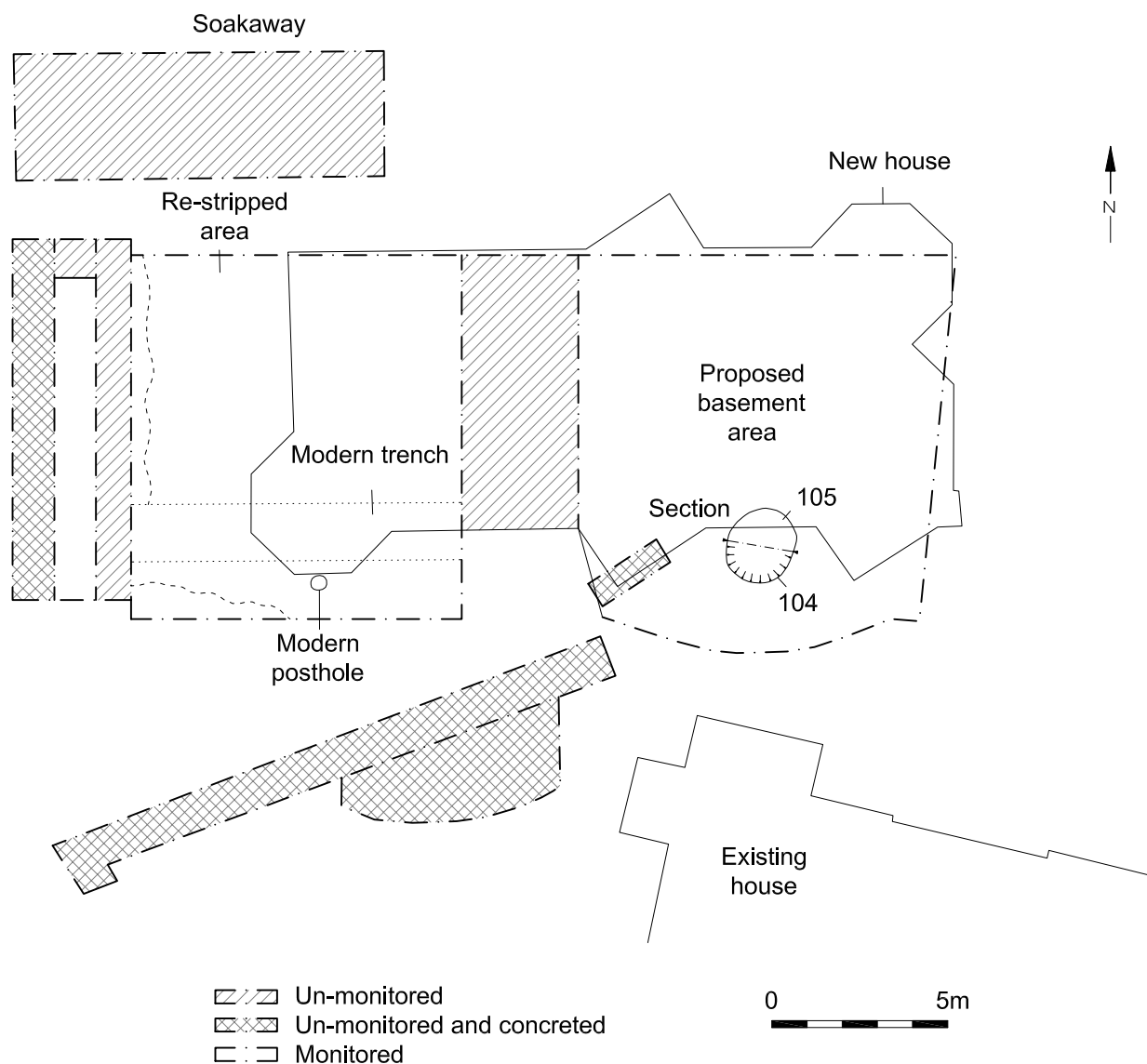
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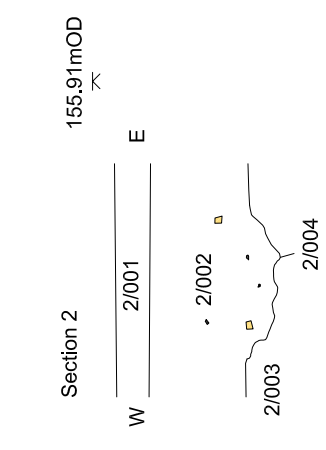
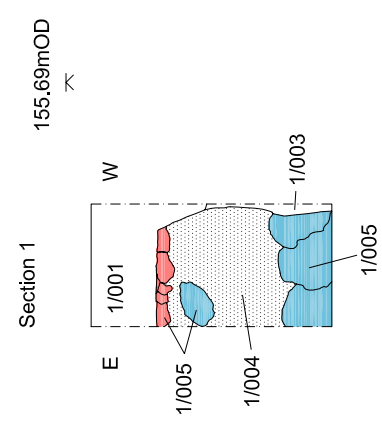
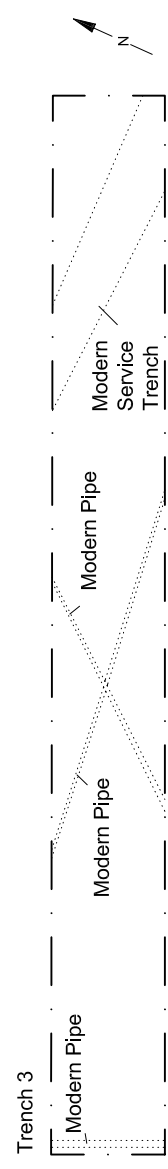
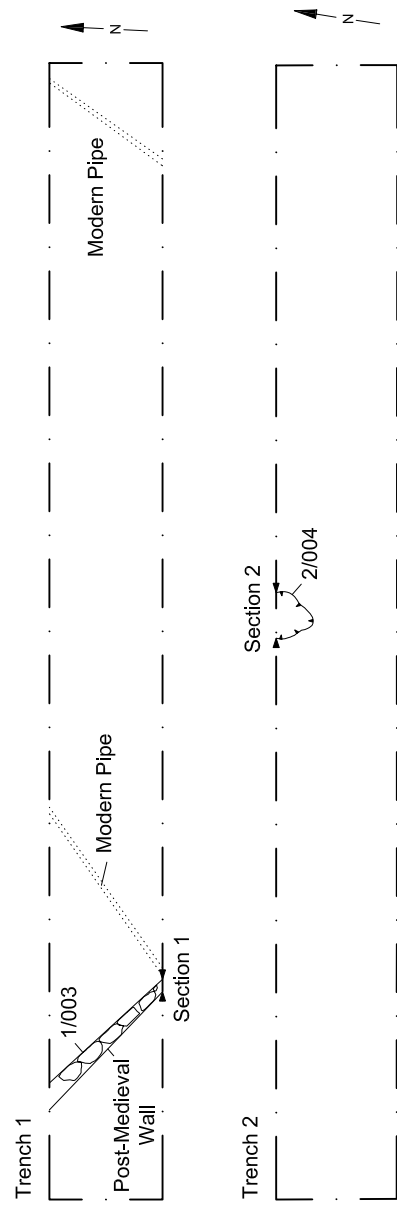
© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Garden House, Sevenoaks	Fig. 1
Ref: 1888	Aug 2005	Site Location Plan	

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© Archaeology South-East			Garden House, Sevenoaks	Fig. 2
Ref: 1888	May 2007	Drawn by: JNC		
Site Plan - Showing Location of Watching Brief and Trench Locations				





- Brick
- Kentish Ragstone
- Mortar
- Sandstone Blocks
- Clinker/Tar

© Archaeology South-East			Garden House, Sevenoaks	Fig. 4
Ref: 1888	April 2007	Drawn by: JNC		
			Trench and Section Plans	