

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe
Tenterden, Kent**

NGR: 589370 130000

ASE Project No: 171199

Site Code: TEN17

ASE Report No: 2018057

OASIS id: archaeol6-309191





By Giles Dawkes

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the National Trust during the laying of a new internet cable and was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent between 22nd January and 1st February 2018.

The watching brief did not identify any archaeological deposits. The groundworks were shallow and did not reach the underlying geological natural. A few finds, recovered from the topsoil, may potentially derive from the occupation of the house and/or area and are of limited interest.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by the National Trust (NT) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive works on the installation of an internet cable to Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent (centred on NGR 589370 130000; Figure 1.)

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 Smallhythe Place, shown on the front cover, is a 16th century house located to the south of Tenterden. According to the British Geological Survey of the area, the site's underlying geology is Wadhurst Clay Formation – mudstone, with possible superficial deposits of tidal flat deposits – sand.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 The general aim of the archaeological work was to monitor any intrusive ground works to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected by the works were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

Specific Aim

- 1.3.2 Because of the close proximity to a Grade II* Listed Building and because several of the excavations undertaken in the vicinity have revealed a medieval shipyard, it was deemed possible that archaeological remains belonging to the medieval and/or post-medieval period might be present.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological work on the site. The monitoring was undertaken on the 22nd, 23rd and 31st January, and the 1st February 2018.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The information below is largely paraphrased from a previous archaeological watching brief report produced in 2017 (ASE 2017).
- 2.2 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by Kent County Council records no prehistoric or Roman entries within two kilometres of Smallhythe Place. This serves to highlight the once inherent marginality of the area, located at a point where the heavily indented coastline butted the Wealden forests of South East England. Indeed, it is likely that for much of the prehistoric period, the area now occupied by the arable prairies of Romney and Walland Marsh existed as a fluctuating system of wetlands situated behind a shingle barrier.
- 2.3 Contrastingly, Smallhythe has long been known as an important medieval shipyard, both building and repairing warships and merchant craft during the 15th and early 16th centuries. Low lying earthworks in Elfwick Field to the west of Smallhythe Road have long been interpreted as slipways, where ships could be constructed, launched and/or repaired. Furthermore, in Forstal Field, cartographic and textual evidence indicates that the south-east corner was once used as a wharf.
- 2.4 Smallhythe originally existed as a small settlement, established by the mid-13th century, and maritime activity is known to have taken place there since the early 14th century. A major factor in its rise was the diversion of the main course of the Rother round the north of Oxney after the Knelle Dam was constructed to the west of the Isle in c.1330. Smallhythe Place itself was constructed in the early 16th century, when Smallhythe was still a relatively wealthy trading centre. It is a long timber-framed, continuously-jettied house, with much of its wooden framing externally exposed. In the years since its construction it has functioned as an administrative building, farmhouse, private house, and most recently a museum. It is a Grade II* Listed Building.
- 2.5 Several recent programmes of archaeological work have been undertaken at Smallhythe. In 1998 Time Team carried out a programme of geophysical survey, and associated excavations in both Elfwick Field and Forstal Field. The former area revealed a possible lime or brick kiln, whilst the latter produced clinker built ships' timbers, situated beneath post-medieval disturbance. Both sites provided significant amounts of shipbuilding debris, such as iron clenched nails and roves. A watching brief undertaken during improvements made to the barn, revealed late medieval pottery, large ships' nails, and brick. Most recently an Archaeological and Historic Landscape Survey was commissioned by the National Trust, and includes a comprehensive analysis and review of Smallhythe Place both in archaeological and historic terms.
- 2.6 A recent archaeological watching brief on the removal of reeds and silt from the lower pond at Smallhythe Place did not recover any finds or identify any deposits or features (ASE 2017).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 A watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the installation of an internet cable. The trench was 0.35m wide and hand-excavated along the road verge, across the road and into the garden of Smallhythe Place (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 All excavations were examined for the presence of archaeological features or deposits and all spoil was visually scanned for the presence of artefacts.
- 3.1.3 All encountered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards using ASE standard record sheets. A full photographic record of the area was kept and forms part of the site archive.
- 3.1.4 ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2018) were adhered to.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

- 3.2.1 There were no fieldwork constraints.

3.3 The Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The project archive is presently held at Archaeology South-East offices at Portslade, East Sussex, and will be deposited with the National Trust in due course. The contents of the project archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Photographs	5 digital images

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

- 3.3.2 A small assemblage of finds were recovered from the topsoil, no environmental samples were taken.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 The stratigraphy identified in the cable trench was dark grey subsoil [002] overlain by dark brown loamy topsoil [001] up to 0.4m thick. Finds of a single early post-medieval pottery sherd, a fragment of animal bone and two nails were recovered from the topsoil. In the road, only modern road make-up deposits were seen [003]. The natural geology was not encountered in the groundworks.

4.2 No archaeological deposits or features were identified.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
1	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	0.35m	0.20-0.40m
2	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	0.35m	+0.30m
3	Layer	Road make-up deposit	Trench	0.35m	+0.4m

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief and were washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context (Table 3). All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (ClfA 2018).

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	Iron	Weight (g)	Bone	Weight (g)
001	1	135	2	64	1	15
Total	1	135	2	64	1	15

Table 3: Finds quantification

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The archaeological work recovered a single sherd of post-Roman pottery from the site (context [001]). This consists of a large fresh sherd of local glazed red earthenware with very fine quartz tempering. The sherd, which is oxidised with an internal green glaze, comes from a jar with thickened lid-seated rim. Local earthenwares are notoriously difficult to date closely when in isolation, however, this vessel is suspected of falling between c. 1575 and 1700.

5.2.2 The pottery has no potential for further analysis but has been retained for the National Trust due to its association with the property.

5.3 The Ironwork by Trista Clifford

5.3.1 Two nails weighing a total of 64g were recovered from [001]: a general purpose nail with square section stem and faceted circular head (L=80mm) and a larger heavy duty nail with square section stem and square head (90mm). Both are complete and date broadly to between c1200-1850AD.

5.4 The Animal Bone by Emily Johnson

5.4.1 Just one animal bone, weighing 15g, was hand-collected from context [001]. The bone was identified as a well-preserved partial ovicaprid left scapula. The glenoid cavity was complete and fused, and approximately half of the blade was present. The bone showed no evidence of pathology, carcass processing activities or taphonomic agents.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified in the watching brief. The finds from the topsoil potentially derive from the occupation of the house and/or surrounding area and are of limited interest.
- 6.2 Whilst the general aim of the watching brief has been achieved, no findings that might address the specific aim set can be addressed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE, 2017 *Archaeological Watching Brief Report During the Removal of Roots and Silt from the Lower Pond Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent*, ASE Proj no: 170041, ASE Rep No 2017029

CIfA, 2018 *Standards and Guidance* <http://www.archaeologists.net/cifa>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank the National Trust for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Wendy Rogers, KCC Archaeologist for her guidance and monitoring. The watching brief was undertaken by Giles Dawkes and Jake Wilson. Neil Griffin managed the excavations, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	-				
Site code	TEN17				
Project code	171199				
Planning reference	-				
Site address	Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenderden, Kent				
District/Borough	Tenderden				
NGR (12 figures)	589370 130000				
Geology	Not seen				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	20/1/18-1/02/18				
Sponsor/client	National Trust				
Project manager	Neil Griffin				
Project supervisor	Giles Dawkes				
Period summary					
Project summary	<p>An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the National Trust during the laying of a new internet cable and was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenderden, Kent between 22nd January and 1st February 2018.</p> <p>The watching brief did not identify any archaeological deposits. The groundworks were shallow and did not reach the underlying geological natural. A few finds, recovered from the topsoil, may potentially derive from the occupation of the house and/or area and are of limited interest.</p>				
Museum/Accession No.	-				

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-309191

Project details

Project name Smallhythe Place

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the National Trust during the laying of a new internet cable and was carried out by Archaeology South-East at Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent between 22nd January and 1st February 2018.

The watching brief did not identify any archaeological deposits. The groundworks were shallow and did not reach the underlying geological natural. A few finds, recovered from the topsoil, may potentially derive from the occupation of the house and/or area and are of limited interest.

Project dates Start: 22-01-2018 End: 01-02-2018

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes TEN17 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 171199 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT ASHFORD TENTERDEN Smallhythe Place

Postcode TN30 7NG

Study area 0.01 Hectares

Site coordinates TR 89370 30000 50.995606156776 2.124647227002 50 59 44
N 002 07 28 E Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Height OD / Depth Min: 5m Max: 5m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project originator brief Kent County Council

Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Giles Dawkes

Type of sponsor/funding body National Trust

Project archives

Physical recipient Archive Local Museum

Digital recipient Archive Local Museum

Digital available Media "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper recipient Archive Local Museum

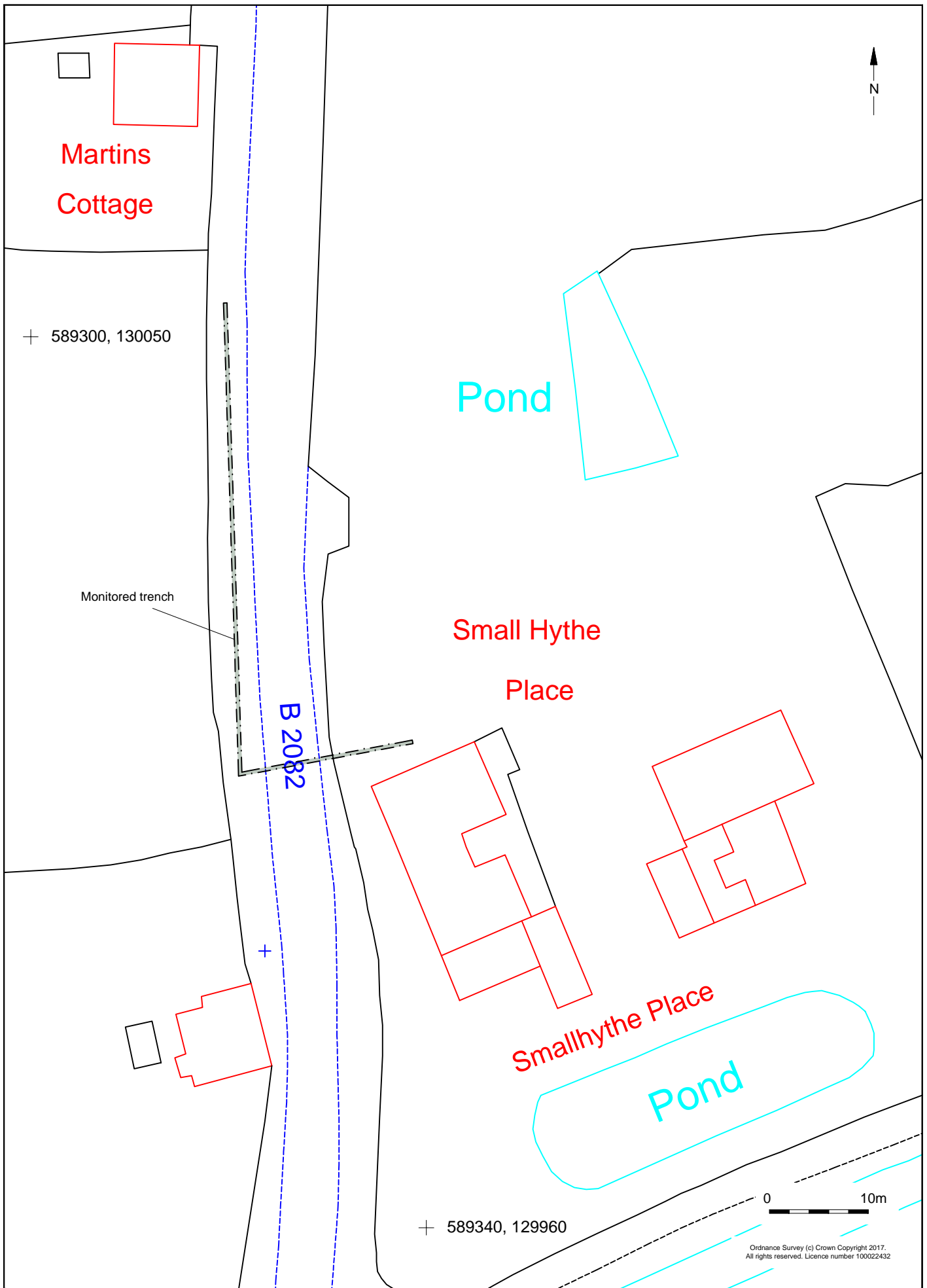
Paper available Media "Context sheet", "Report"

Entered by Giles Dawkes (giles.dawkes@ucl.ac.uk)

Entered on 14 February 2018



© Archaeology South-East		Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 171199	February 2018	Site location	
Report Ref: 2018057	Drawn by: JC		



© Archaeology South-East		Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 171199	February 2018	Location of monitored trench	
Report Ref: 2017029	Drawn by: JC		



Trench through road



Trench through garden adjacent to the house



Monitored trench

© Archaeology South-East		Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 171199	February 2018	Photograph of cable trench facing north	
Report Ref: 2017029	Drawn by: JC		

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