

Archaeological Watching Brief of Land at
Monkton Court Farm, Monkton Street,
Monkton, Kent

NGR 627764 165122
Site Code: MCF/WB/11
Planning Application: TH/11/0751



Report for G. W. Finn & Sons

SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY

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SUMMARY

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief of land at Monkton Court Farm, Monkton, Kent. A planning application (TH/11/0751) for the construction of a small solar array park at Monkton Court Farm whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the construction work on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with consultations with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, KCC. The archaeological investigation consisted of monitoring of the excavation of trenches for electric cabling linking the ends of solar panel arrays and the main cable run between the site and the main electric grid. A scan of the excavated spoil from the ground-works with a metal detector was also done. The programme of archaeological works revealed no archaeology. The Archaeological Watching Brief has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives set by the Senior Heritage Officer in an Archaeological Specification dated 2nd November 2011.

INTRODUCTION

Swale and Thanos Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Mr Nick Rooke of G. W. Finn & Sons to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with consultation with the Senior Archaeological Heritage Officer, KCC, and the written archaeological specification. The watching brief was carried out between the 14th and 20th November 2011.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located on the Isle of Thanet in the fringe of an arable field to the south west of Monkton Court Farm which lies at the western end of the village of Monkton. The site centre is at NGR: 627764 165122.

PLANNING

The site has planning permission for the Solar Array from Thanet District Council. The planning reference is TH/11/0751 whereby the Senior Heritage Officer requested that an archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to monitor specific ground works associated with the solar array.

The following Condition was attached to the planning permission.

1.3 No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is in an area of considerable archaeological potential relating to known discoveries close-by. Thanet is generally rich in archaeological remains and this site lies within an area of particular archaeological interest. An Anglo-Saxon spearhead was found less than 50m north-west (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 78*), which may indicate the existence of a nearby cemetery dating to this period, although there are no details about how the find was discovered. The church of St Mary Magdalene, dating to the late 12th century, is to the north east of the site, and medieval pottery is recorded to the north west (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 101*). Known Bronze Age remains in the vicinity include pottery, found to the north east (*HER NO: TR 26 NE125*) and a bronze hoard, found to the north (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 79*). Iron Age and Roman remains include four Iron Age coins, found to the south east (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 156*), Romano-British pottery, found to the south east (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 107*), and a Roman coin of Constantine, found to the south west (*HER NO: TR 26 NE 98*).

Further information on the potential of this area is provided in the County Historic Environment Record held in the Heritage Conservation, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX (telephone 01622 221536)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The County Archaeologist has advised that the watching brief should be targeted at three aspects:

1. The stripping of ground deposits (topsoil and subsoil) to create a foundation base for an inverter housing. These excavations should be carried out with a flat bladed bucket under the direction of the supervising archaeologist and in a manner that would allow any archaeology present to be properly exposed, identified and investigated before subsequent disturbance by construction.

2. The archaeologist should then record and investigate any archaeology visible before stripping to full construction depth is completed.
3. Monitoring of the excavation of the trench for electric cabling linking the ends of the solar panel arrays and main cable run between the site and the main electric grid.
4. The archaeological contractor is to compile a full account of the ground deposits encountered during the works. The objective of such recording is to assist in further understanding of the potential impact of the works.

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the ground works.

Trenching was carried out on 14th to 20th November 2011, with the excavation of one trench for the cable runs measuring 0.65m in width and about 30m in length. Trench location was to an agreed plan carried out by the solar array contractors.

The trench was scanned for finds during and after excavation. Excavation was carried out using an 8 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket for the cable runs and removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The trench was subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal any exposed features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features would have been excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

Unfortunately no archaeology was revealed in the cable run or solar array area.

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC Archaeological Specification (2011).

MONITORING

No site visits by the Heritage Officer (KCC) were carried out.

RESULTS

The first activity on site was by the piling of the solar array galvanised steel uprights by the ground contractors followed closely by the excavation of the cable run. Work started on this phase of development whilst SWAT Archaeology was present on site.

The Archaeological Watching Brief continued for the rest of the groundwork's but no archaeology was revealed. Geology revealed was constant across the site and comprised topsoil- a grey brown sandy clay loam of about 35cm thick overlaying a darker grey brown sandy stiff clay with numerous chalk fragments presumably from the natural strata of chalk which was revealed at a depth of 0.55m. A metal detector survey was carried out but the ferrous and non-ferrous material recovered was modern and mostly fastenings discarded by the solar array contractors.

FINDS

No finds were retrieved

CONCLUSION

The archaeological Watching Brief has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil **(01)** overlying subsoil **(02)** sealing Head Chalk **(03)**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWAT would like to thank G. W Finn & Sons for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Senior Heritage Officer, Kent County Council for his advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson supervised the fieldwork, assisted in the field by Mike Robson on metal detector. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for Digitise This.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MIfA

December 2011



Plate 1. Cable run trench to the main grid hook-up (looking north)

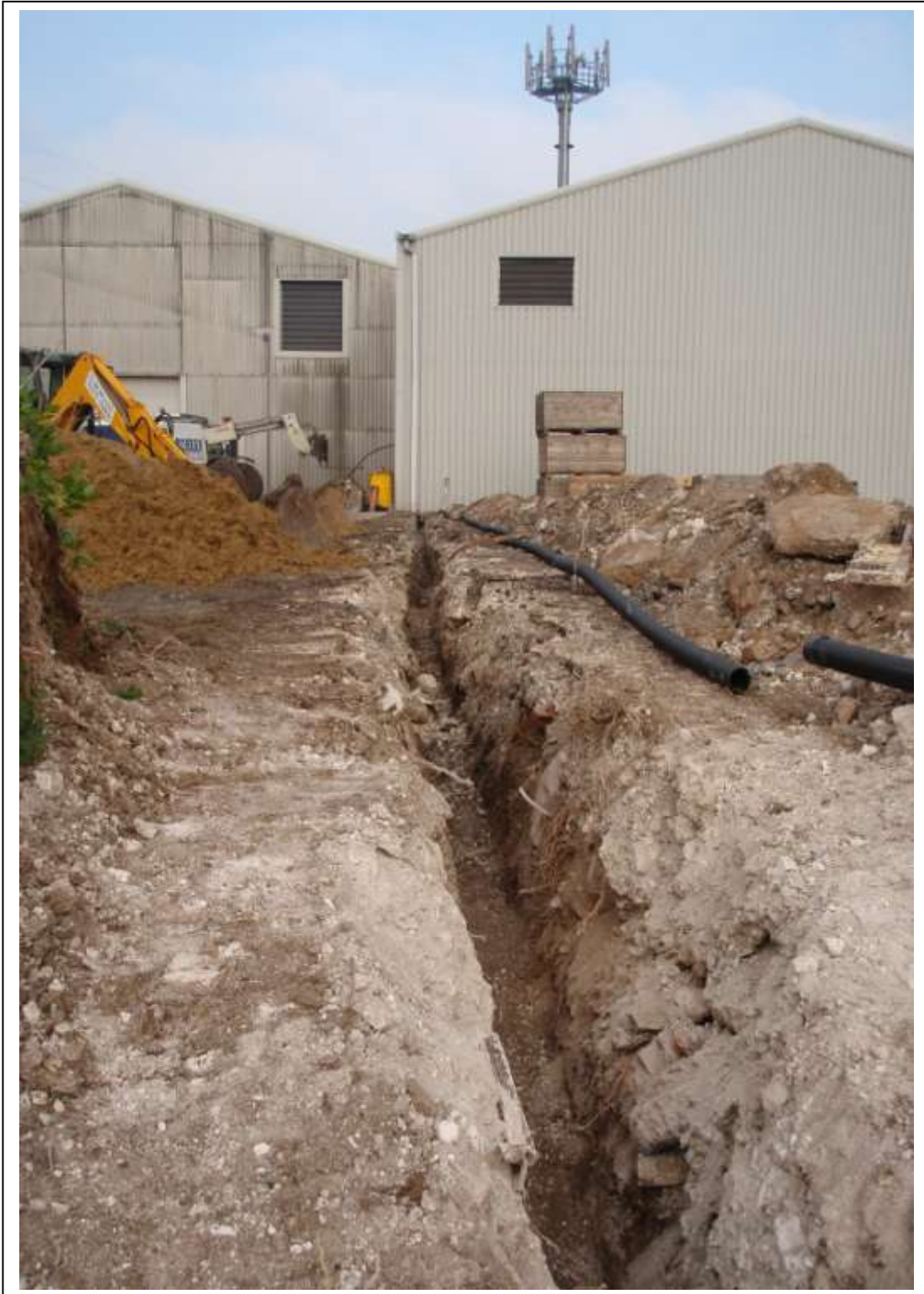


Plate 2. Main cable run

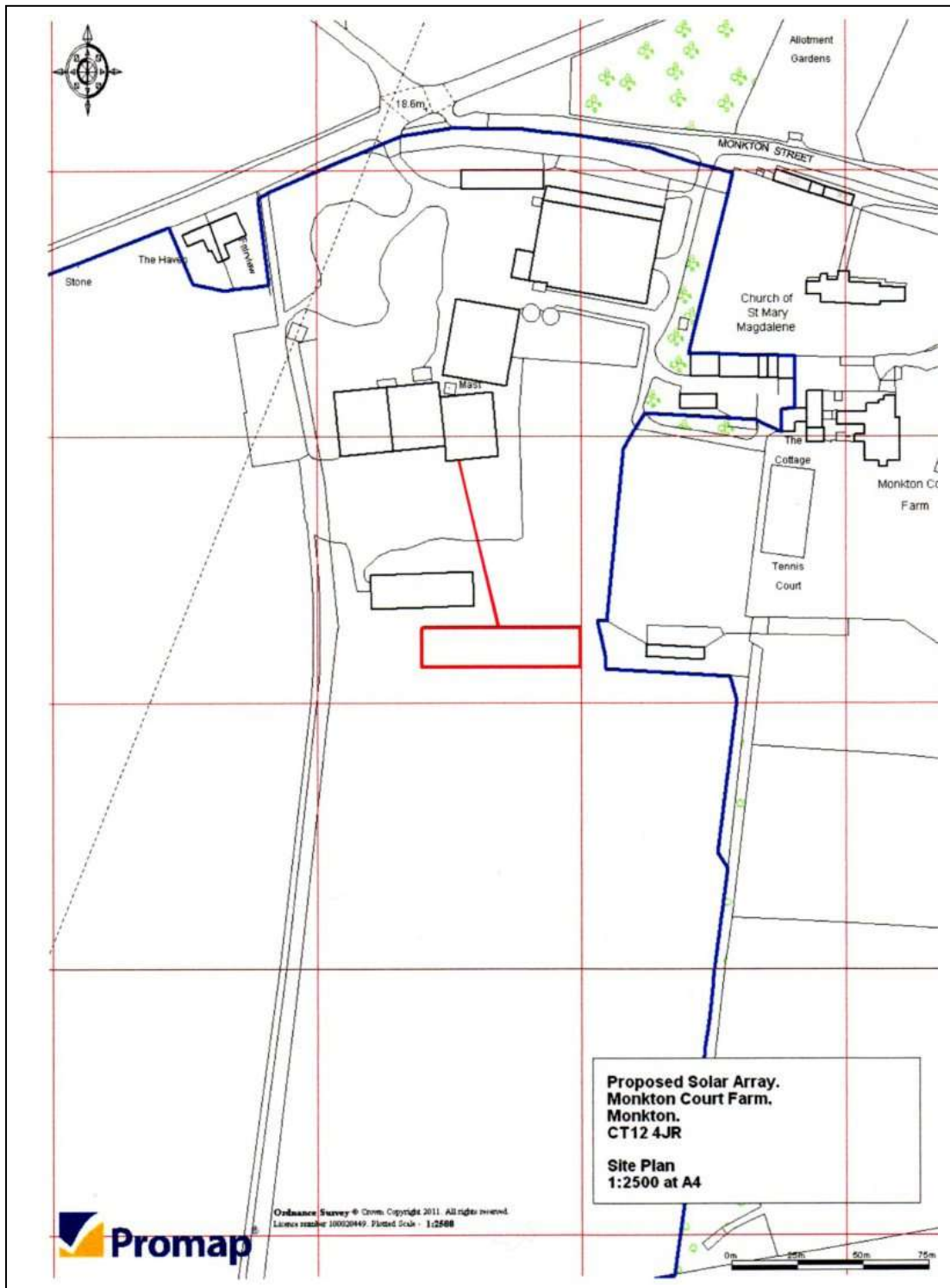


Figure 1. Location Plan (Area watched is outlined in red)

APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form

| | |
|---|--|
| Site Name: <i>Monkton Court Farm site,</i> SWAT Site Code: <i>MCF/W/11</i> | |
| Site Address: <i>Monkton Court Farm, Monkton, Kent</i> | |
| Summary: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Monkton Court Farm. A planning application for the construction of a new solar array at the above site was submitted to Thanet District Council (TDC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Thanet District Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2011) and in discussion with the Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Watching Brief consisted of watching one trench which encountered no archaeological features.</i> | |
| District/Unitary: <i>Thanet</i> | Parish: <i>Monkton</i> |
| Period(s): Tentative: | |
| NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs): <i>NGR 627764 165122</i> | |
| Type of archaeological work (delete) <i>Watching Brief</i> | |
| Date of Recording: <i>November 2011</i> | |
| Unit undertaking recording: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i> | |
| Geology: <i>Upper Chalk</i> | |
| Title and author of accompanying report: <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Watching Brief at Monkton Court Farm, Monkton, Thanet, Kent</i> | |
| Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p> | |
| Location of archive/finds: <i>SWAT</i> | |
| Contact at Unit: <i>Paul Wilkinson</i> | Date: <i>27th Dec 2011</i> |