



**REPORT FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT  
24 WEST STREET, WROTHAM, SEVENOAKS, KENT TN15 7AS**



24 West Street, Wrotham, Sevenoaks  
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Report reference: BAL23-048

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**Planning Reference: 22/01265/FL**

**NGR: TQ 6091 5917**

**BAL Site Code: WSW22B-WB**



**Report prepared for Mr and Mrs Shepherd (Client)**

**By Brook Archaeology Limited, Company No 14397861**

**Report Number BAL23-048**



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### Document Control

Component:	Name:	Date:
Report prepared by:	Fred Birkbeck	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Illustrations prepared by:	Brook Archaeology Limited	
Report edited by:	Tracy Griffin	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Report reviewed by:	n/a	
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## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. An archaeological Watching Brief reporting on the findings of the groundworks has been carried out at 24 West Street, Wrotham, as part of the planning application 22/01265/FL filed with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.
- 1.2. No significant archaeological features were identified during the excavation. The trenches excavated for the footings revealed two distinct layers, topsoil and subsoil which sealed the chalk geology. The stratigraphy was consistent throughout the extent of the excavations except where modern utility pipes had been installed directly against the rear of the current extension.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. An archaeological Watching Brief has been carried out on behalf of Mr and Mrs Shepherd on land at 24 West Street, Wrotham. The Watching Brief aimed to record the presence of any potential archaeological resource present on the site. The site has planning permission 22/01265/FL to install a proposed part ground floor side/rear extension.
- 2.2. The site is approximately 50m<sup>2</sup> and is located in the county of Kent in the village and civil parish of Wrotham centred on TQ 6091 5917. The village lies within the Local Planning Authority (LPA) of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council 1.6km north of Borough Green, 8 km east of Sevenoaks and lies between the M20 and M26 motorways. The development site is not a listed building or located within a Conservation Area. However, it is adjacent to Wrotham Conservation Area (north/south).
- 2.3. No archaeology was considered at risk by the proposed development. However, there was a consideration that there may be burials present on the site associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery nearby.
- 2.4. The development consisted of machine-dug linear trenched foundations as the groundworks for the construction of a rear extension. The foundations were to be dug to a maximum depth of 1m or until the chalk geology was reached, whichever came first. The width of the trenches was 600mm dictated by the availability of an appropriate flat-bladed grading bucket. The Watching Brief aimed to record the presence of any potential archaeological resource present on the site. This work followed the Kent County Council's methodologies and guidelines in *Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16), *Planning Policy Guidance on Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15). It was carried out following the *Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (2014).
- 2.5. This report represents the results of this Watching Brief. The work was commissioned by Mandy Shepherd and carried out on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. The site is located 1.6km north of Borough Green, 8 km east of Sevenoaks and lies between the M20 and M26 motorways (Figs 1 & 2).

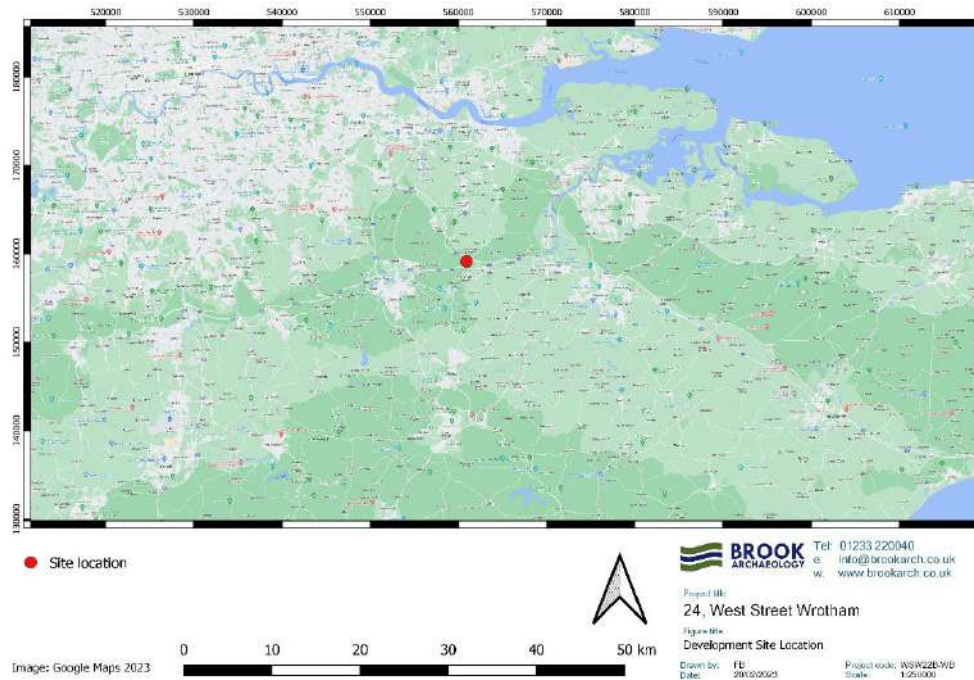


Fig 1 – 1:250000 WSW22B-WB Site Location



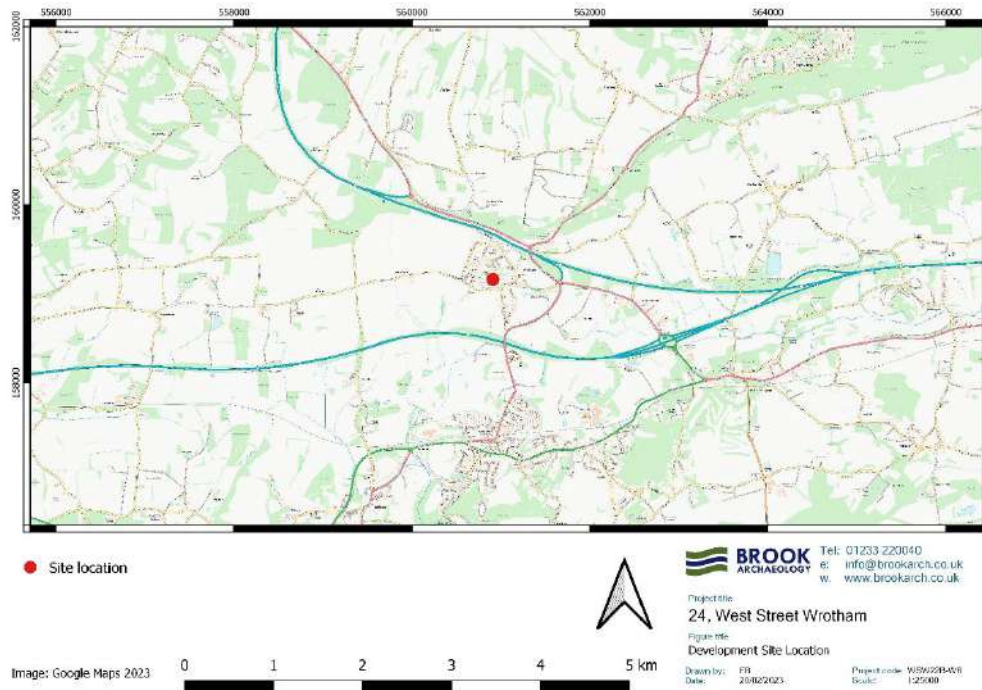


Fig 2 – 1:25000 WSW22B-WB Site Location

- 3.2. The site sits atop West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation bedrock. No superficial geology is recorded for the area.
- 3.3. The site is relatively level, with the site boundary at a consistent 128m (+/- 1m) aOD.
- 3.4. There are no known archaeological disturbances on site because of previous archaeological excavations or groundworks.
- 3.5. The archaeological Watching Brief aimed to undertake observation work of trenched foundations for the rear extension to understand the stratigraphic make-up of the ground better and for the presence of potential archaeological remains.
- 3.6. Under guidance from the Local Authority, the Watching Brief aimed to:
  - Ensure that the planned excavations/groundworks at the site are observed and that features of archaeological interest are correctly examined and recorded, as per planning application 22/01265/FL.
- 3.7. There were no constraints on the archaeological monitoring.

- 3.8. The site is located on the southern side of West Street in the village of Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent. The site is adjacent to the conservation area of Wrotham and runs parallel 380m south of the Pilgrims Way. A detailed study of the Kent Historic Environment Record database was undertaken to assist the written scheme of investigation (Fig 3). The following provides nearby entries on the HER with a brief description within a 100m radius assessment area:<sup>1</sup>

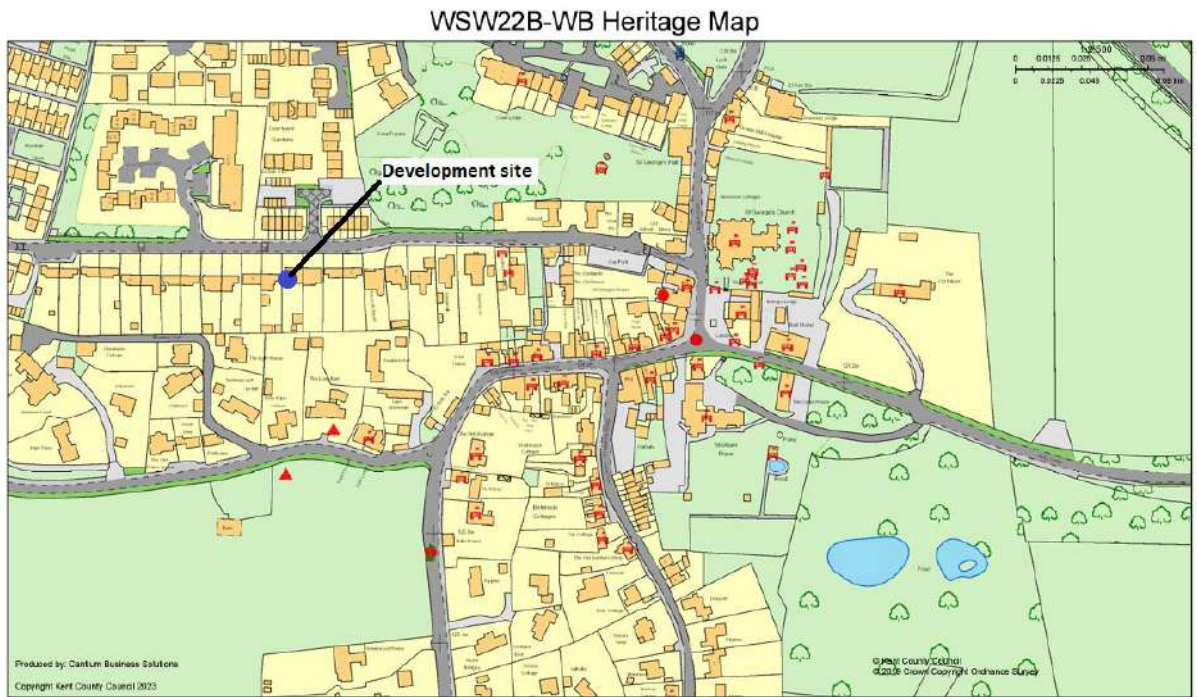


Fig 3 – 1:1500 WSW22B-WB-Nearby Heritage Assets

**Medieval/Post-Medieval** - the assessment area demonstrates several Medieval and Post-Medieval assets associated with the establishment of the village. The Medieval assets include the Church of St George and Palace. The Post-Medieval assets are connected to the establishment and growth of the village around the two significant assets and the Pilgrim's Way which passes east – west 380m north of the site.

HER REF	TYPE	PERIOD	DISTANCE	DESCRIPTION
TQ 65 NW 148	Building	Post-Medieval	c.275m ENE	Green Hill House
TQ 65 NW 227	Building	Medieval	c.330m ENE	Medieval Wall
TQ 65 NW 252	Building	Medieval	c.365m E	The Old Palace – Archbishops Palace
TQ 65 NW 30	Building	Medieval	c.260m E	Church of St George
TQ 65 NW 225	Building	Post-Medieval	c.300m ESE	The Bull Hotel

<sup>1</sup> <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>



TQ 65 NW 74	Building	Post-Medieval	c.250m ESE	Stable building 10 yards north of Wrotham Palace
TQ 65 NW 132	Building	Post-Medieval	c.300m ESE	Stable building 80 yards north-east of Wrotham Palace
TQ 65 NW 204	Building	Post-Medieval	c.300 SE	Dovecote 30 yards south-east of Wrotham Palace
TQ 65 NW 182	Building	Post-Medieval	c.270m SE	Wrotham Palace
TQ 65 NW 151	Building	Medieval	c.225m SW	Bank House
TQ 65 NW 179	Building	Medieval	c.235m E	Three Post Boys Public House
TQ 65 NW 211	Monument	Modern	c.220m E	Nodal Point
TQ 65 NW 150	Building	Post-Medieval	c.195m ENE	Donkey Wheelhouse 7- yards to the south of Court Lodge
TQ 65 NW 255	Building	Post-Medieval	c.180m NE	Court Lodge
TQ 65 NW 218	Building	Post-Medieval	c.205m ESE	House immediately west of the Wrotham Shop
TQ 65 NW 133	Building	Post-Medieval	c.210m ESE	Sandstone Cottage
TQ 65 NW 207	Building	Medieval	c.190m ESE	The Weavers and Shop Premises to right
TQ 65 NW 242	Building	Medieval	c.155m ESE	George and Dragon Public House
TQ 65 NW 217	Building	Post-Medieval	c.145m ESE	1 – 3 High Street
TQ 65 NW 230	Building	Post-Medieval	c.139m NE	West House
TQ 65 NW 216	Building	Post-Medieval	c.160m SE	Post Office
TQ 65 NW 246	Building	Medieval	c.155m SE	The Old Vicarage
TQ 65 NW 245	Building	Post-Medieval	c.165m SE	Stable 15 yards to the north of The Elms
TQ 65 NW 253	Building	Post-Medieval	c.185m SE	The Elms
TQ 65 NW 35	Monument	Early Medieval	c.185m SSE	Jutish Burials/Iron Spearhead/Bronze Ring and Buckle
TQ 65 NW 245	Building	Post-Medieval	c.110m SSE	Town House and East Lodge

Table 1 – WSW22B-WB Gazetteer of Nearby Heritage Assets

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. All work was undertaken following the methods set out within the WSI<sup>2</sup>, according to best practice as set out by ClfA and was agreed upon with the client, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Kent County Council before the excavation.
- 4.2. The archaeological watching brief work comprised a connected series of linear foundation trenches excavated as part of the groundworks for the new build, which were observed to

<sup>2</sup> Birkbeck & Taylor., 2022, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 24 West Street, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7AS* (Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd)

understand the stratigraphic make-up of the ground better and evaluate the presence of potential archaeological remains.

4.3. Balancing the PDS's location within the historic village of Wrotham, considered a probable Early Medieval settlement with a Bishop's Palace and significant Medieval settlement, alongside the 2014 discovery of Anglo-Saxon burials nearby, the chance of finding buried archaeological remains was considered **medium** in the WSI.

4.4. The Watching Brief aimed to:

- **Ensure that the planned excavations/groundworks at the site are observed and that features of archaeological interest are correctly examined and recorded, as per planning application 22/01265/FL.**

4.5. The objectives of this development project are to:

- **View and record the excavations/groundworks for the proposed extension to the property.**

4.6. Excavation areas were set out according to the plans (Fig 4).



Fig 4 – 1:250 WSW22B-WB Site Location

## Excavation

4.7. All groundworks were excavated using a machine excavator with flat-bladed bucket. An archaeologist used hand tools to investigate any subsequent archaeological contexts.

## 5. RESULTS

5.1. The observations comprised a series of groundworks monitored to understand the stratigraphic make-up and the presence of potential archaeological remains during the excavations. The site area is approximately 50m<sup>2</sup>, of which 13m<sup>2</sup> was excavated as connected linear trenches. The site presented no significant archaeology, no artefacts and stratigraphy compatible with the site's use (domestic/agricultural) past was confirmed. An improved understanding of the below-ground stratigraphy was realised and understood as undisturbed topsoil and subsoil over chalk geology.

5.2. No archaeological remains were discovered. The final plan of the completed groundworks is shown in Fig 5 and Fig 6.

5.3. During the excavation of the trenched foundations, a total of 3 contexts over 3 phases were investigated and recorded (Table 2):

5.4. Part of the site had previously been laid to patio, which had been removed prior to the archaeologist arriving on site, exposing the topsoil layer.

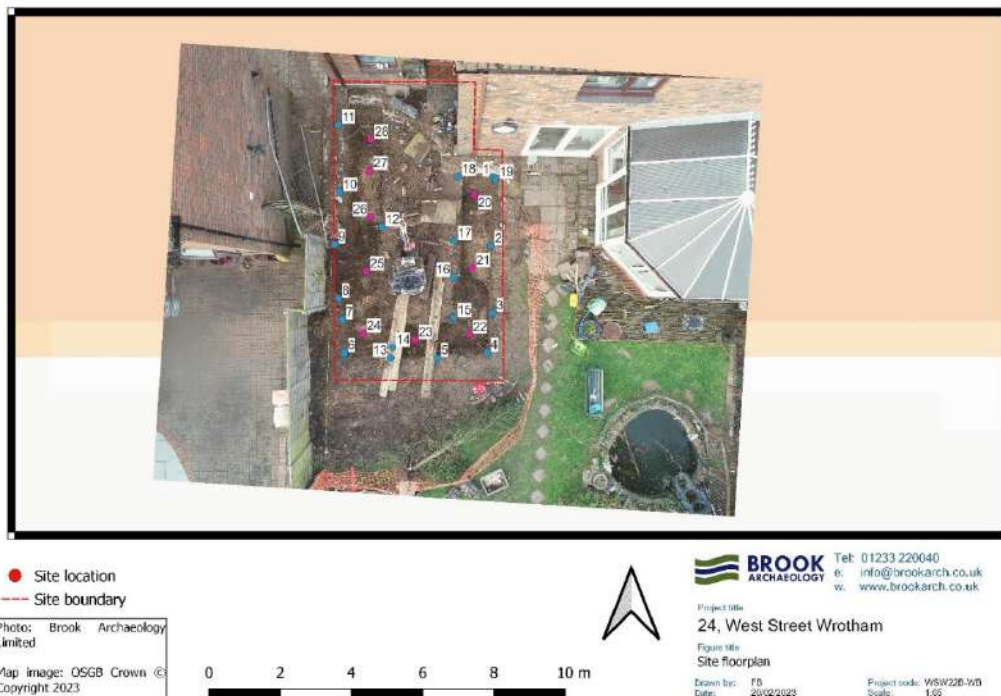


Fig 5 – 1:50 WSW22B-WB Trench Locations with GNSS Point IDs



Point ID	Northing	Easting	Elevation	Code
1	159166	560914.4	127.798	Trench
2	159164.1	560914.4	127.79	Trench
3	159162.2	560914.4	127.734	Trench
4	159161.1	560914.3	127.667	Trench
5	159161	560912.9	127.745	Trench
6	159161.1	560910.3	127.622	Trench
7	159162	560910.2	127.516	Trench
8	159162.6	560910.1	127.485	Trench
9	159164.2	560910	127.912	Trench
10	159165.6	560910.1	128.411	Trench
11	159167.5	560910.1	128.651	Trench
12	159164.6	560911.6	127.998	Trench
13	159161	560911.6	128.442	Trench
14	159161.3	560911.6	126.965	Trench
15	159162.1	560913.3	127.696	Trench
16	159163.2	560913.3	127.663	Trench
17	159164.3	560913.3	127.725	Trench
18	159166.1	560913.4	127.781	Trench
19	159166	560914.5	127.865	Trench
20	159165.5	560913.9	126.947	Base
21	159163.5	560913.8	126.969	Base
22	159161.6	560913.8	126.874	Base
23	159161.5	560912.2	126.862	Base
24	159161.7	560910.8	126.844	Base
25	159163.4	560910.9	126.99	Base
26	159164.9	560911	126.766	Base
27	159166.2	560911	126.988	Base
28	159167.1	560911	126.995	Base

Table 2 – WSW22B-WB GNSS Point ID List

5.5. A total of 3 phases associated with the site were established during the excavation:

Phase 1 = Geological

Phase 2 = Subsoil

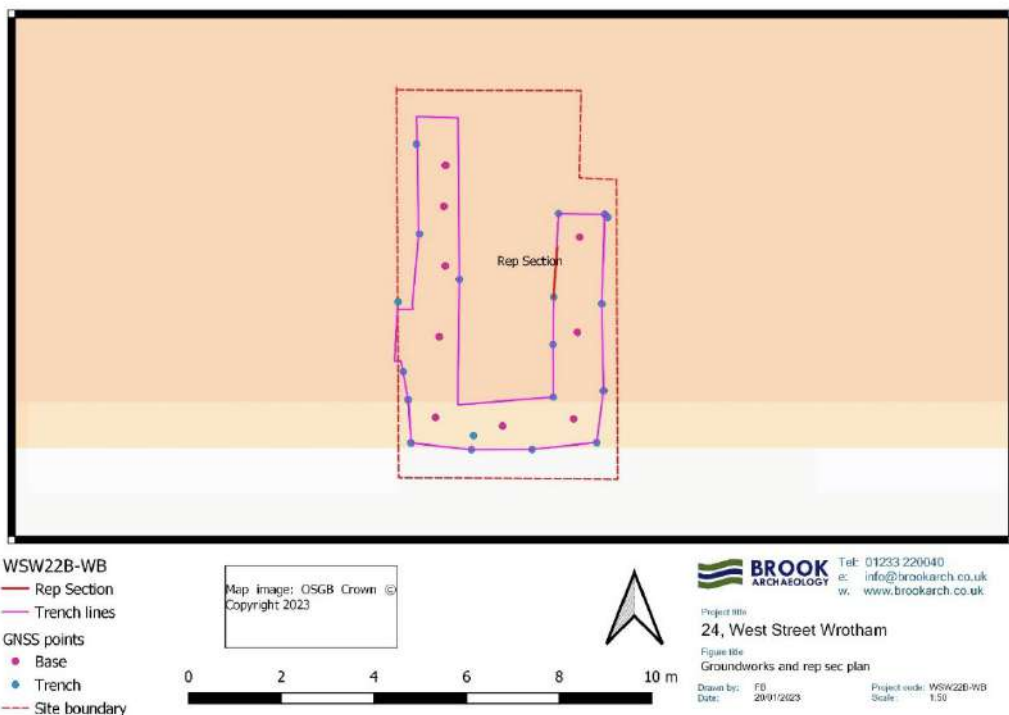
Phase 3 = Topsoil – pasture/modern landscaping



Context	Trench	Type	Description	Phase
1001	All	Layer	Topsoil – Loose, friable dark greyish brown clayey loam layer containing occasional flint and charcoal and small sub-angular stones Width = >1m, Thickness = 0.54m (north end)	3
1002	All	Layer	Subsoil – Loose, mid-brown silty clay layer containing occasional small flint and sub-angular and sub-spherical gravel inclusions Width = >1m, Thickness = 0.39m (south end)	2
1003	All	Layer	Natural chalk layer Width = >1m, Thickness = >0.3m	1

Table 3 – WSW22B-WB Context List

5.6. The groundworks comprised a single rectilinear trench to a depth of 1m or where natural geology was encountered, whichever came first. The groundworks revealed 3 contexts in total. A section is mapped in Fig 7.



1:100 WSW22B-WB Groundworks and Rep Section Plan

Fig 6 –



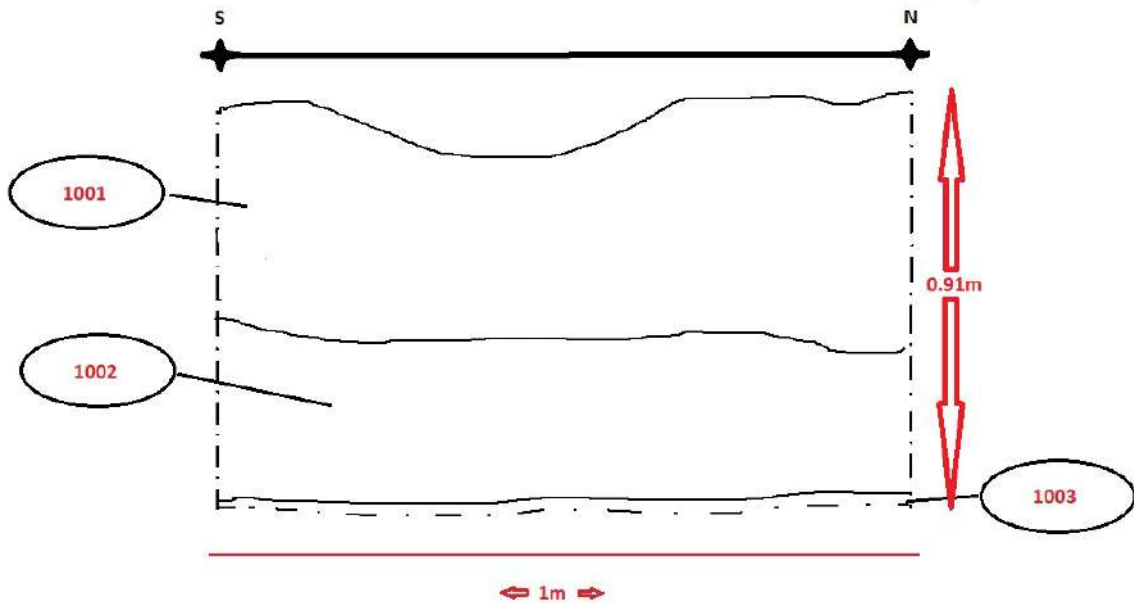


Fig 7 – WSW22B-WB East Facing Section of Foundation Trench

5.7. The representative section illustrates the 3 contexts in their stratigraphic sequence.

## 6. FINDS

6.1. There were no finds encountered.

## 7. INTERPRETATION

7.1. The results of the Watching Brief revealed no archaeological layers.

7.2. The groundworks provided an improved understanding of the below-ground make-up and stratigraphy, confirming that there has been no archaeological activity and no archaeological features present. The topsoil layer (1001) seals the subsoil layer (1002) which is the basal layer overlaying the natural chalk geology. The only intervention into the subsoil and topsoil layer is the modern soil pipe installed to the north of the eastern trench, the cut of which was indistinguishable in section due to its proximity to the rear of the existing wall.

7.3. The proximity to the conservation area having been considered, there is no evidence for past development at this site and no evidence that the Medieval/Post-Medieval village extended beyond the current boundaries of the conservation area. There was no evidence of burials in the trenches exposed leading to suggest that there is no evidence that Anglo-Saxon burials are present on this site.

- 7.4. On this basis, and considering the evidence the site presented no evidence of past settlement or activity which adds to the understanding of the settlement and past development of Wrotham.
- 7.5. The following stratigraphic sequence summarizes the phasing of the site:

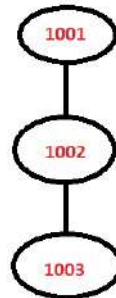


Fig 8 – WSW22B-WB Stratigraphic Sequence

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1. The Watching Brief has fulfilled the KCC Watching Brief Specification aims and objectives and the Written Scheme of Investigation. The groundworks demonstrated a stratigraphic sequence (Fig 8), confirming the site in a purely domestic/agricultural context. No archaeological features were observed, and the site's archaeological significance is considered low and recorded accordingly.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1. Sincere thanks are extended to the clients, Mr and Mrs Shepherd, and groundworks crew for permission to access the site and their patience during the archaeological process.



## 10. REFERENCES

Birkbeck, F. & Taylor, R., 2022, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 24 West Street, Wrotham, Sevenoaks Kent* (Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd)

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### Websites

[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>



**11. APPENDIX A – SITE IMAGES**






Image	Description
	<p><b>11.1</b></p> <p><b>East-facing representative section of the eastern return of the foundation trench</b></p>
	<p><b>11.2</b></p> <p><b>Eastern return of the foundation trench facing north</b></p>
	<p><b>11.3</b></p> <p><b>East-west return of the foundation trench facing west</b></p>



Image	Description
	<p><b>11.4</b> Western return of the foundation trench facing north</p>
	<p><b>11.5</b> Plan photograph of the foundation trenches</p>

