



**Method Statement for Archaeological
Works for Bam Nuttall Ltd.
NeatsCourt/Phase I, Sheppey
*December 2008***

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT
AN ADDENDUM TO THE APPROVED ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT DESIGN
SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EASTERN ACCESS ROAD

Neatscourt Phase 1 Queenborough & Rushenden Regeneration
NQR-EX-08

Planning Reference: SW/06/1468 & SW/07/01

Report No.: 2008/023/DB/17

Prepared By:	Submitted To:	Organisation:	Date:
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	Adam Single (Archaeological Officer)	Kent County Council	24/02/09



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHOD STATEMENT – AN ADDENDUM TO THE CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT DESIGN ASSOCIATED WITH SERVICE TRENCHES WITHIN THE PROPOSED EASTERN
ACCESS ROAD**

Planning Application Reference: SW/06/1468 & SW/07/01

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This method statement has been produced in order to further supplement an Archaeological Project Design (Oxford Archaeology 2007) associated with the proposed 2008/9 eastern access road at Queenborough and Rushenden Neatscourt, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.
- 1.2 This method statement should be read in conjunction with the approved method statement (OA 2007), which forms an approved contractual document associated with archaeological conditions attached to planning consent(s).
- 1.3 This method statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted method statement (BAM Nuttalls 2009), detailing proposals for foul and surface water drainage works for the eastern access road.
- 1.4 The current document addresses issues raised by Kent County Council (KCC), on behalf of Swale Borough Council, associated with the archaeological impact caused during proposed works at the above mentioned site. Particular attention is therefore given to ;
- The archaeological impact caused during the excavation of service trenches within Plot 1B.1
 - The archaeological impact caused during the excavation of service trenches within Plot 1B.2
- 1.5 This method statement has been produced on behalf of Edmund Nuttall Limited (Principal Contractor) and will be submitted directly to Mr Mark Williams (Agent) for distribution.

2 Archaeological Background

2.1 Archaeological Evaluation (A249)

2.1.1 Archaeological investigation to the immediate north of the Plot 1B.1 within the present A249 provided evidence for the presence of Iron Age and Beaker (transitional late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age). Archaeological deposits and features comprising field systems and enclosures were recorded at an elevation of c.3.1m AOD).

2.2 Archaeological Evaluation (Oxford Archaeology 2007)

2.2.1 The archaeological evaluation within the proposed impact area (see BAM Nuttalls' drawings 3811/C/T521 Rev 04 & 3811/C/525 Rev 05), as carried out by Oxford Archaeology, focuses attention to Trenches 10, 11, 21, 22 and 23.

2.2.2 Trench 10 contained two post holes and a linear ditch, most likely associated with archaeological features revealed during the construction of the adjacent A249, at a level of approximately 2.8m AOD).

2.2.3 Trench 11, located within Plot 1B.1, exposed archaeological remains at a depth of approximately 0.4m below the existing ground level (c.2m AOD). Emphasis was placed on the truncation of deposits caused during the construction of the adjacent A249 stating that deposits were 'substantially disturbed near the surface' (2007: 5.4.3). As a result, the features could not be 'defined within the limits of the evaluation trench' (2007: 2.4.3), appearing 'to be no more than shallow depressions in the London Clay containing accumulated artefacts reworked from the adjacent Iron Age and Roman enclosures' (2007: 5.4.3). The ground surface elevation attributed to Trench 11 measured between 3.06m AOD and 3.21m AOD meaning that the surviving upper archaeological horizon was at approximately 2.6m AOD to 2.8m AOD.

2.2.4 Unfortunately very little recording for Trenches 21-23 was incorporated within the evaluation report. That said, Trench 21 has been labelled on plan as archaeologically sterile, while Trenches 22 and 23 contained Roman pottery find spots. Trench 22 exposed natural clay at a depth of 0.3m (c. 1.73m AOD), while Trench 21 recorded the presence of modern features at a depth of 0.2m (c 2m AOD), a buried topsoil horizon (presumably

modern) at a depth of 0.30m (1.9m AOD) and natural clay at a depth 0.6m (c.1.7m AOD). Trench 23 recorded alluvial deposits, although no levels have been provided.

2.3 Geoarchaeological Test Pit Assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2007b)

- 2.3.1 The geoarchaeological test pit assessment within the proposed impact area, also carried out by Oxford Archaeology, draws attention to Test Pits 23 and 27.
- 2.3.2 Test Pit 23 was located within the present site compound and recorded an upper alluvial deposit at c. 3m AOD overlying an organic (peaty) horizon at c.2.3m AOD. Roman find spot(s) were retrieved from the upper alluvial deposit and are considered (at this stage) as residual. Natural weathered bedrock was recorded at c.2.4m AOD.
- 2.3.3 Test Pit 27 was located within the present site compound and recorded an upper alluvial deposit at c.2.2m AOD overlying weathered natural bedrock at c.1.6-1.7m AOD.

3 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development comprising the excavation of service trenches associated with foul and surface water drainage.
- 3.2 The proposed excavations for foul drainage are detailed on drawing 3811/C/T525 Rev 05 and consist of the excavation of trenches c.0.9m in width to a depth reaching between 2.15m AOD and -0.267m AOD (MH 20) within Plot 1B.1. No foul drainage is proposed for Plot 1B.2.
- 3.3 The proposed excavations for surface drainage are detailed on drawing 3811/C/T521 Rev 04 and consist of the excavation of trenches c.0.9m in width to a depth reaching between 2.183m AOD and 1.469m AOD (MH 8) within Plot 1B.1 and between 2.356m AOD and 1.104m AOD (MH 7) within Plot 1B.2.

4 Programme of works

- 4.1 Excavation detailed above is due to start in the week commencing 23/02/09.
- 4.2 Concerns expressed by KCC, in accordance with the accepted project design, produced by Oxford Archaeology, have meant that additional mitigation (as suggested within this report) is required. A meeting is to be held between BAM Nuttalls, KCC and SWAT

Archaeology on the morning of 24/02/09 in order to discuss this current method statement. It is therefore hoped that excavations will commence no later than 25/02/09.

5 Archaeological Impact

- 5.1 Assessment of the available archaeological and geoarchaeological literature, along with method statements produced by BAM Nuttalls has shown that the proposed development associated with the construction of foul and surface water drainage within Plots 1B.1 and 1B.2 may have an impact on surviving archaeological deposits.
- 5.2 Surface drainage within Plot 1B.1 will have an estimated impact to at least 1.469 AOD suggesting that archaeological deposits may be present and possibly compromised. Archaeological mitigation within the original project design within this area allowed for a Strip, Map and Sample strategy due to archaeological deposits recorded both on the site and within the immediate surrounds.
- 5.3 Surface drainage within Plot 1B.2 will have an estimated impact to at least 1.104 AOD suggesting that archaeological deposits may be present and possibly compromised. Archaeological mitigation within the original project design made provision for the removal of upper topsoil horizons followed by the preservation insitu of lower archaeological horizons sealed by overlying alluvial inundation. Archaeological deposits recorded at this level comprise (suggested) residual Roman ceramics deposited during the erosion of higher occupation levels within the west (the current IM Group car park area) and east (Plot 1C). That said, clear evidence for the presence of an organic peat layer exists within the limits of the current site compound at a level of approximately 2.3m AOD. While this is not directly evidence for past occupation, it does suggest that an encroachment of flood and marsh deposits onto higher and drier land does exist within the surrounding area. Such evidence would point towards a shoreline – an interface between lower lying marsh alluvium and upper (drier) occupation levels.
- 5.4 Foul drainage within Plot 1B.1 will have an estimated impact to at least -0.267m AOD suggesting that archaeological deposits may be present and possibly compromised. Archaeological mitigation within the original project design within this area allowed for a

Strip, Map and Sample strategy due to archaeological deposits recorded both on the site and within the immediate surrounds.

- 5.5 Foul drainage within Plot 1B.2 is not proposed.

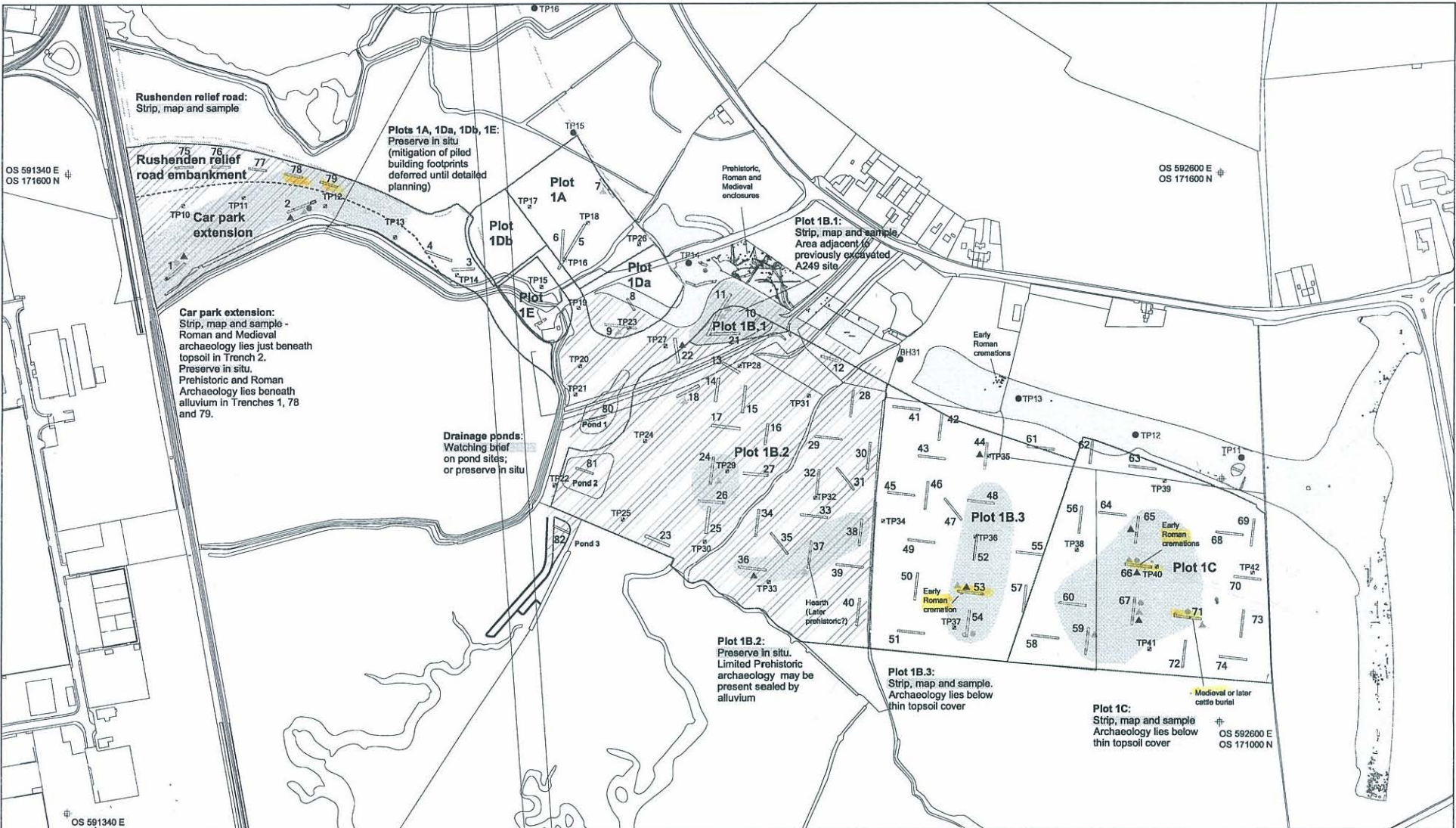
6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Consideration has therefore been given to both proposed foul and surface water drainage trenches within Plots 1B.1 and 1B.2.
- 6.2 The agreed archaeological mitigation strategy for Plot 1B.1 suggests a programme of archaeological works comprising Strip, Map and Sample methodologies as set out in the accepted Archaeological Project Design. This assessment would concur with that approach.
- 6.3 The agreed archaeological mitigation strategy for Plot 1B.2 suggests the examination and investigation of upper alluvial deposits along with the preservation insitu of lower intact archaeological horizons, as set out in the accepted Archaeological Project Design. That said, the Project Design allows for higher road formation and construction levels only and neglects to consider lower drainage and service infrastructure works.
- 6.4 Archaeological investigations within Plot 1B.2 have clearly shown that significant horizons exist, albeit due to natural formations rather than actual occupation. Evidence for the presence of an interface between the upper drier occupation and lower flood deposits clearly exists within the surrounding area confirming the presence of an early (prehistoric?) shoreline.
- 6.5 The current proposals comprise low impact trenches measuring no more than 1m in width. An aim of the excavation will be to maintain as much of the secure topsoil horizon as possible, due to localised flooding, whilst ensuring minimal damage to upper alluvial layers. For this reason, it is not intended to excavate an easement. The removal of a wide easement would expose the upper archaeological horizon which would then be compromised should it be necessary to run heavy plant across during construction of the pipeline. Topsoil will be removed from the trench alignment only and stock piled separately adjacent to the proposed trench(es), prior to backfilling following completion of the drains.

- 6.6 With that in mind, the opportunity to investigation the stratigraphic deposit model breaching the suggested shoreline within a narrow window will surely further compliment the archaeological results obtained to date.
- 6.7 It is therefore recommended that surface and foul water drainage trenches are constantly monitored and recorded in accordance with generic guidelines proposed within KCC archaeological watching brief specifications, with full provision to investigate and record any archaeological remains present. The archaeologically controlled strip of the topsoil and upper alluvial deposits within Plot 1B.2 will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist, with wetland experience, in order to allow for the possible event that structural or 'special' (i.e. timber deposits such as boats, fishtraps, platforms, trackways, kiddles etc) deposits are encountered. Should this be the case, the sensitive area(s) will be protected and a meeting with KCC will be organised in order to agree further works as necessary.
- 6.8 All archaeological fieldwork will be carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA guidelines and conform to methodologies set out by SWAT Archaeology, Oxford Archaeology and English Heritage.
- 6.9 **This document has further assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development, in accordance with KCC requirements. The suggestions herewith are solely the opinions of the author and will be used to aid and inform the Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.**

David Britchfield
For and on behalf of SWAT Archaeology
23/02/09

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Test pit location	Previous A249 borehole location	Medieval? oyster shell deposit
Test pit containing archaeology	Mitigation area boundary	Prehistoric pottery find spot
Trench with archaeology	Line of cable diversion	Roman pottery find spot
Trench without archaeology	Line of proposed embankment	Medieval pottery find spot
Archaeological feature	Area where features are below alluvium	Base map
Area of main archaeological potential		
Previous A249 excavations (CgMs)		

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N

0 100 m

Scale at A3 1:4000

**Queenborough and
Rushenden Neatscourt**

Drawing No.	OA1
Date printed	11 Dec 2007
Drawing title	

**Figure 2:
Archaeological
mitigation areas**

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