

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
In advance of Development at the former
Birchwood Primary School Site,
Russett Way, Swanley, Kent

NGR: 55080.0mE 16950.0mN



Report for
Town and County Housing Group and Kier Homes Ltd

06/11/2013

SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Plates</i>	<i>iii</i>
1. SUMMARY.....	4
2. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.1 Planning Background	5
2.2 The Proposed Development	6
2.3 Projects Constraints	6
2.4 Geology and Topography.....	6
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
3.1 Introduction	7
3.2 Desktop Study – Institute For Archaeologists (revised 2011)	7
4. METHODOLOGY	8
4.1 Desk-Based Assessment.....	8
4.1.1 Archaeological databases	8
4.1.2 Historical documents	8
4.1.3 Cartographic and pictorial documents	8
4.1.4 Aerial photographs	8
4.1.5 Geotechnical information	8
4.1.6 Secondary and statutory resources	9
5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT	9
5.1 Introduction	9
5.2 Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas	10
5.3 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age	10
5.4 Iron Age.....	10
5.5 Romano-British	11
5.6 Anglo-Saxon	11
5.7 Medieval	11
5.8 Post-Medieval	11
5.9 Modern	11
5.10 Undated	11
5.11 Cartographic Sources and Map Regression	11
5.12 Aerial Photographs	11

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL	12
6.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age	12
6.4 Anglo-Saxon	12
6.5 Medieval	12
6.6 Post-Medieval	12
7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT	12
7.1 Existing Impacts	12
7.2 Proposed Impacts	12
8. MITIGATION	13
9. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	13
9.1 Archive	13
9.2 Reliability/limitations of sources	13
9.3 Copyright.....	13
10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14
11. REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
Appendix 1 – Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites.....	15
Appendix 2 Proposed development of the Site	26

List of Figures

Fig.1	O.S. map (1805-19)
Fig.2	O.S. map (1855)
Fig.3	O.S. map (1871)
Fig.4	O.S. map (1898)
Fig. 5	O.S. map (1920)
Fig. 6	HER data (KCC copyright)

List of Plates

Plate 1.	Google Earth showing location of site
Plate 2.	Google Earth showing site
Plate 3.	View of Russett Way
Plate 4.	View of north boundary of the site

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment in Advance of Development at the former Birchwood Primary School site, Russett Way, Swanley, Kent

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1 SUMMARY

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) has been commissioned to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of the proposed development of 65 residential dwellings at the former Birchwood Primary School site, Russell Way, Swanley, Kent as part of the planning application by Town and County Housing Group and Kier Homes Ltd.

This Desk Based Assessment examines the wide variety of archaeological data held by Kent County Council and other sources. This data is reviewed and it is recommended in this case that further archaeological assessment will be required in the form of an Archaeological Watching Brief during the initial groundworks of the development.

A Design and Access Statement was prepared by PRP Architects and this document sets out the architectural proposals for the regeneration of the former school and grounds in a sustainable manner both environmentally and economically.

The proposals for a housing development of this redundant semi-brown field site will provide for an innovative enterprise, which would provide for the immediate delivery of new affordable and market housing within an enhanced local environment.

The proposals seek to re-develop the site in a responsible and sensitive manner to both respects the existing landscape whilst ensuring that the proposed development lessens the sites visual impact.

The site is located east of Russett Way and situated on the site of the former Birchwood Primary School. Swanley town centre is about 1.5 miles to the south-south east. The site itself is about 59mOD.

1.1 History of the site

The Ordnance Survey map of 1805-19 (Figure 1) shows open fields in the area of the Proposed Development Area (PDA). The lane to the north of the site- Leyden Hatch Lane is well established and the name of the area encapsulated in 'Birchwood Corner' just to the west of the PDA. The B2173 London Road which is south of the PDA is shown. Of interest is the wood located to the south-west of the PDA which is named 'Kiln Wood' which may suggest that pottery kilns were located here.

The OS 1855 (Figure 2) shows the site in some detail and are open fields bounded by hedgerows.

The OS 1871 the OS map (Figure 3) shows little change, with Kiln Wood still named.

The 1898 OS map (Figure 4) shows the coming of the railway which runs south of the PDA. Kiln Wood is no longer named.

The OS map of 1920 shows that there is still no development in the area of the PDA (Figure 5).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

It is worth quoting from this long awaited planning document, in particular Policy 12:

12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

2.2 *This Desk-Based Assessment therefore forms the initial stage of the archaeological investigation and is intended to inform and assist in decisions regarding archaeological mitigation for the proposed development and associated planning applications.*

2.3 The Proposed Development

The proposed development will comprise of the erection of housing and construction of vehicular access, associated car parking and landscaping with existing school buildings to be demolished.

2.4 Project Constraints

No project constraints were encountered during the data collection for this assessment.

2.5 Geology and Topography

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) indicates the underlying surface is anticipated to be Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation, however there may be deposits of Thanet Formation- Sand (BGS 1:50,000 digital). The site averages 59.00aOD.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

The Desk-Based Assessment was commissioned by Kier Homes Ltd in order to supplement a planning application for the development of the site at the former Birchwood Primary School site, Russett Way, Swanley in Kent

3.2 Desktop Study – Institute For Archaeologists (revised 2011)

This desktop study has been produced in line with archaeological standards, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologist (revised 2011). A desktop, or desk-based assessment, is defined as being:

“a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets and, in England, the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate”. (2011)

The purpose of a desk-based assessment is to gain an understanding of the historic environment resource in order to formulate as required:

- 1. an assessment of the potential for heritage assets to survive within the area of study*
- 2. an assessment of the significance of the known or predicted heritage assets considering, in England, their archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interests*
- 3. strategies for further evaluation whether or not intrusive, where the nature, extent or significance of the resource is not sufficiently well defined*
- 4. an assessment of the impact of proposed development or other land use changes on the significance of the heritage assets and their settings*
- 5. strategies to conserve the significance of heritage assets, and their settings*

6. design strategies to ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and local place-shaping

7. proposals for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research, whether undertaken in response to a threat or not.

IFA (2011)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk-Based Assessment

4.1.1 Archaeological databases

The local Historic Environment Record (HER) held at Kent County Council provides an accurate insight into catalogued sites and finds within both the proposed development area and the surrounding environs of Russett Way.

The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) and was also used. The search was carried out within a 1000m radius of the proposed development site (29/10/13).

A listing of the relevant HER data is included in Appendix 1. The Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was also used as an additional source as the information contained within is not always transferred to the local HER.

4.1.2 Historical documents

Historical documents, such as charters, registers, wills and deeds etc were not relevant to this specific study.

4.1.3 Cartographic and pictorial documents

A limited map regression exercise was undertaken during this assessment. Research was carried out using resources offered by Kent County Council, the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping.

4.1.4 Aerial photographs

The study of the collection of aerial photographs held by Google Earth was undertaken (Plate 1).

4.1.5 Geotechnical information

To date, no known geotechnical investigations have been carried out at the site.

4.1.6 Secondary and statutory resources

Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological studies, landscape studies; dissertations, research frameworks and Websites are considered appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment where necessary.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

Prehistoric	Palaeolithic	c. 500,000 BC – c.10,000 BC
	Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC – c. 4,300 BC
	Neolithic	c. 4,300 BC – c. 2,300 BC
	Bronze Age	c. 2,300 BC – c. 600 BC
	Iron Age	c. 600 BC – c. AD 43
Romano-British		AD 43 – c. AD 410
Anglo-Saxon		AD 410 – AD 1066
Medieval		AD 1066 – AD 1485
Post-medieval		AD 1485 – AD 1900
Modern		AD 1901 – present day

Table 1 Classification of Archaeological Periods

The Archaeological record within the area around Russett Way, Swanley is diverse and comprises possible activity dating from one of the earliest human period in Britain (the Neolithic) through to the post-medieval period. The geographic and topographic location of the site is within a landscape that has been the focus of trade, travel and communication since the Palaeolithic.

This section of the assessment will focus on the archaeological and historical development of this area, placing it within a local context. Each period classification will provide a brief introduction to the wider landscape (1km radius centered on the PDA), followed by a full record of archaeological sites, monuments and records within the site's immediate vicinity. Time scales for archaeological periods represented in the report are listed on the previous page in **Table 1**.

5.2 Scheduled Monuments; Listed Buildings; Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas

No scheduled monuments; Listed Buildings; Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas are recorded within the confines of the proposed development area (PDA).

5.3 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age)

The Palaeolithic represents the earliest phases of human activity in the British Isles, up to the end of the last Ice Age. Palaeolithic dated material occurs in north and east Kent, especially along the Medway and Stour Valleys. The Palaeolithic presence within the assessment area is confirmed by a Palaeolithic handaxe (TQ 57 SW 76) found in 1956 on the surface of a field at Hextable Horticultural Institute about 700m north east of the PDA.

The Mesolithic period reflects a society of hunter-gatherers active after the last Ice Age. The Kent HER has no record of archaeological evidence from this period within the assessment area.

The Neolithic period, the beginning of a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry is not represented within the assessment area.

The Bronze Age, a period of large migrations from the continent and more complex social developments on a domestic, industrial and ceremonial level are not represented in the assessment area. However, immediately adjacent to the development site two ring ditches which may belong the Bronze Age were identified on Google Earth (TQ 56 NW 258)

5.4 Iron Age

The Iron Age is, by definition a period of established rural farming communities with extensive field systems and large 'urban' centres (the Iron Age 'Tribal capital' or *civitas* of the Cantiaci, the tribe occupying the area that is now Kent, was at Bigbury then moved to Canterbury). The Kent HER records one Middle Iron Age copper alloy coin found (MKE 57953) just north of the PDA.

5.5 Romano-British

The Romano-British period is the term given to the Romanised culture of Britain under the rule of the Roman Empire, following the Claudian invasion in AD 43, Britain then formed part of the Roman Empire for nearly 400 years.

The predominant feature of the Roman infrastructure within Kent is arguably the extensive network of Roman roads connecting administrative centres: the towns to military posts and rural settlements (villas, farmsteads and temples) increasing the flow of trade, goods, communications and troops. Canterbury or *Durovernum Cantiacorum* was a major town of the Roman province of Britannia and the regional capital. The assessment area includes no records from this period.

5.6 Anglo-Saxon

The Anglo-Saxon period is not represented in the assessment area

5.7 Medieval

The medieval period is not represented within the assessment area.

5.8 Post-Medieval

The Post Medieval period within the assessment area is represented by the three listed buildings in the vicinity of the assessment area. Hextable House (TQ 56 NW 95) are the ruins of a 17th century house. The gate piers, wall and railings are also listed (TQ 57 SW 1019), as is The Old Farmhouse is listed (TQ 57 SW 1018).

5.9 Modern

Modern development within the assessment area has been limited to domestic housing, farming and light industry– all being partly responsible for the present landscape.

5.10 Undated

There is no Kent HER undated records that fall within the assessment area.

5.11 Cartographic Sources and Map Regression

A limited map regression exercise carried out on the proposed development area has shown that the site was undeveloped up until the early 19th century. Five detailed maps of the area dating from 1805 up to 1920 show the area to be farmland until the building of the school in the 20th century.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

6.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

There is one record that reflects prehistoric activity within the search area. The potential for finding remains that date prior to the Iron Age within the confines of the proposed development is therefore considered **low**.

6.2 Iron Age

The potential for finding remains dating to the Iron Age within the confines of the PDA is considered **low**.

6.3 Romano-British

The lack of presence of Romano-British archaeology in the research area suggests that the potential is therefore to be considered as **low**.

6.4 Anglo-Saxon

Anglo-Saxon archaeology within the assessment area has not been represented. The potential for finding remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon period on the development site is considered as **low**.

6.5 Medieval

The potential for finding remains dating to the medieval period is considered as **low**.

6.6 Post-Medieval

The potential for finding remains dating to the post-medieval period is therefore considered as **low**.

7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Existing Impacts

The search area is for the most part, subject to farming and the potential impact on buried archaeological deposits will have been due to agricultural activities. But the proposed development site has had many school buildings, tennis courts, playing fields built on it. Therefore, the previous impacts are considered **moderate**.

7.2 Proposed Impacts

At the time of preparing this archaeological assessment, the extent of the proposed development was for the build of residential units, access roads, landscaping and car parking. Extensive impact is to be expected within the development area once

construction begins. The excavation of footings and the installation of services will be the main cause of this impact and it is therefore considered as **moderate-high**.

8 MITIGATION

The purpose of this archaeological desk-based assessment was to provide an assessment of the contextual archaeological record, in order to determine the potential survival of archaeological deposits that maybe impacted upon during any proposed construction works.

The assessment has generally shown that the area to be developed is within an area of **low** archaeological potential.

However, it is recommended in this case that further archaeological assessment will be required and that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out in the vicinity of the adjacent ring ditches (TQ 56 NW 258). This will provide an additional assessment of the nature; depth and level of survival of any archaeological deposits present within the extents of the site and used further inform further mitigation if necessary.

9 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Archive

Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this desk-based assessment will be submitted to Kent County Council (Heritage) within 6 months of completion.

9.2 Reliability/limitations of sources

The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held at Kent County Council, and therefore considered as being reliable.

9.3 Copyright

Swale & Thames Survey Company and the author shall retain full copyright on the commissioned report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights are reserved, excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to Kier Homes Ltd (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Paul Wilkinson PhD., MifA., FRSA.

November 2013

11 REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA (revised 2011) STANDARD AND GUIDANCE for historic environment desk-based assessment.

National Planning Policy Statement 2010: Planning for the Historic Environment. TSO (The Stationery Office)

National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Data provided by HER KCC Heritage

Appendix 1 – Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

Period	Type	Kent HER Reference	Description
Prehistoric	Findspot	TQ 57 SW 76	“Palaeolithic hand axe found in 1956 on the surface of a field at Hextable Horticulture Institute”
Prehistoric	Monument	TQ 56 NW 258	“Cropmarks of two ring ditches seen on Google Earth 2007 and 2009”
Iron Age	Findspot	MKE 57953	“Copper alloy coin retrieved by metal detecting”
Post-medieval	Monument	TQ 56 NW 95	“Ruins of a 17th century house (called Hextable House)”

Figures



Figure 1. Section of OS map 1805-19

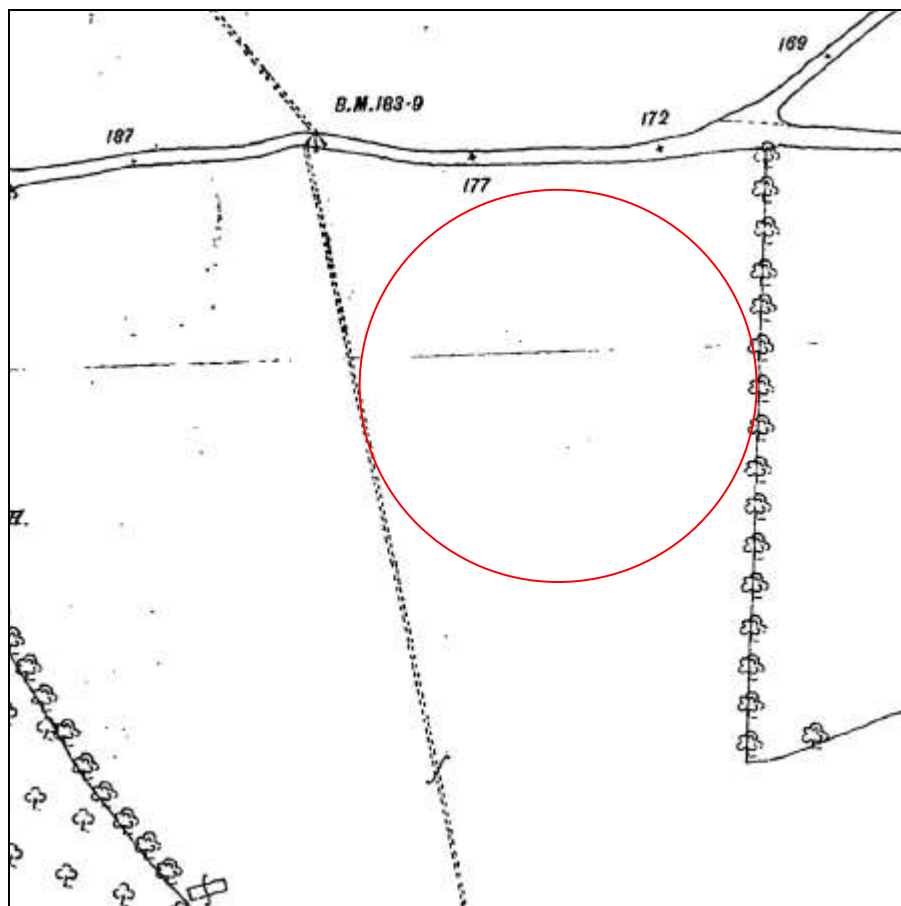


Figure 2. OS map of 1855

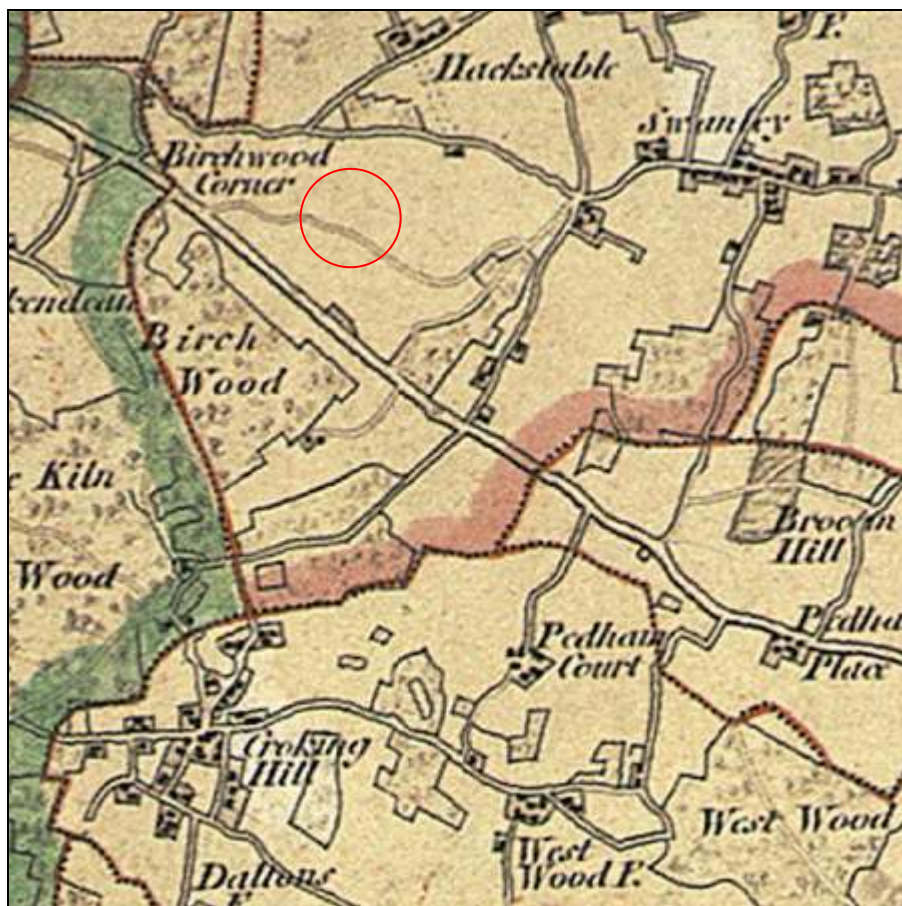


Figure 3. OS 1871 map

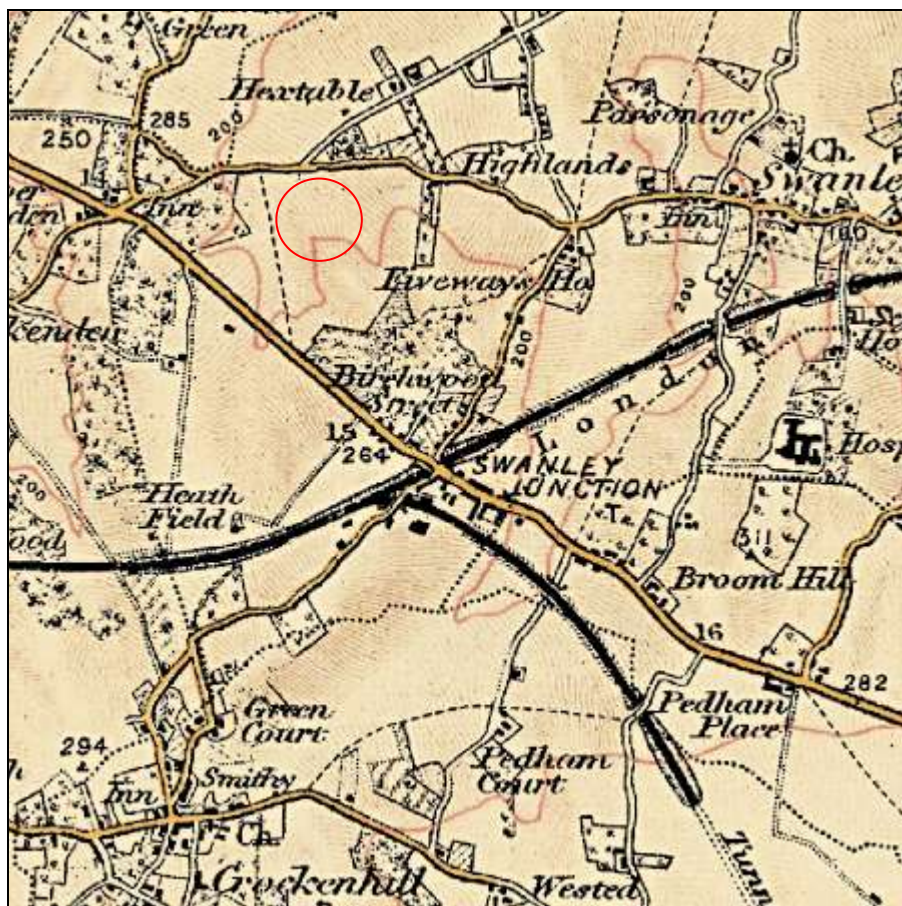


Figure 4. OS map of 1898

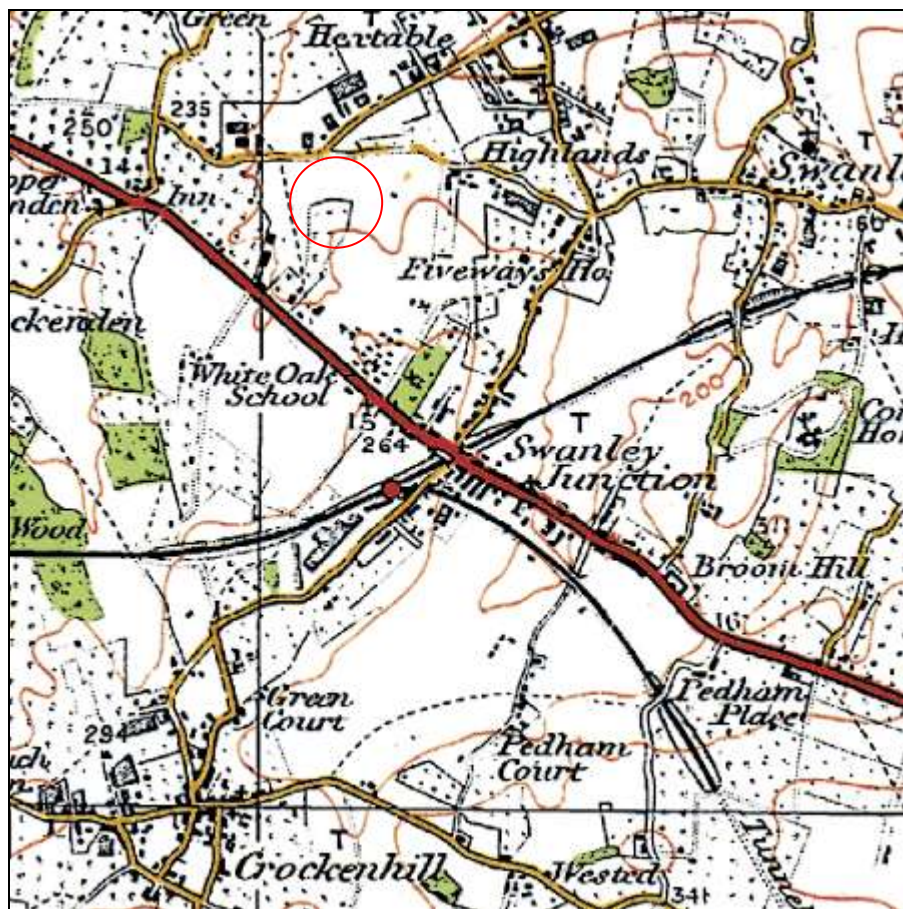


Figure 5. OS map of 1920

Plates



Plate 1. The Google Earth view (2013) of the site (eye alt 516m)



Plate 2. The site- the former Birchwood Primary School (Google Earth 2013)



Plate 3. Russett Way (looking north)



Plate 4. The north boundary of the site (looking south east)

Key

Sale House Types	
10x	A Arleigh
7x	E Eversden
4x	K Kelmarsh
4x	V Victoria
Affordable House Types	
39x	A2BB 2B4P Bungalow
1x	A2BBv 2B4P Bungalow variation



Russett Way Swanley

title	Site Layout Plan	drawn	JB/ELC
		checked	IBB
		scale	1:500@A1
drawing no	AA2606-1300	date	Oct 2013

