

Archaeological Evaluation at 87 London Road,  
Sittingbourne, Kent

LRS-EV-14

NGR 589677 163827



**Date of Report 01/04/2014**

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road,

Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

[info@swatarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@swatarchaeology.co.uk)

## Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates.....	3
Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Site Description and Topography.....	5
Planning Background.....	5
Archaeological and Historical Background.....	5
Aims and Objectives.....	5
Methodology.....	6
Monitoring.....	6
Results.....	6
Finds.....	8
Discussion.....	8
Conclusion.....	9
Acknowledgements.....	9
References.....	9
Appendix 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	10
Appendix 2 – Figures.....	11
Appendix 3 – Photos.....	18
Appendix 4 – Photographic Survey.....	

## List of Figures

Fig. 1 Plan of site and trench layout, 1:500@ A4

Fig.2 Trenches 1 & 3, 1:100@ A4

Fig.3 Sections 1:20@ A4

## List of Plates

Pl.1 Aerial view of the site

Pl. 2. Smock windmill with circular base.

Pl. 3 Trench 1 - General shot looking southeast

Pl. 4 Trench 2 - General shot looking west-southwest

Pl. 5 Trench 3 - General shot looking northwest

Pl. 6 Trench 1 – Section of [005] looking southeast

Pl. 7 Trench 1 and burnt house, looking southeast

Pl. 8 Trench 3, linear [007], looking north-east

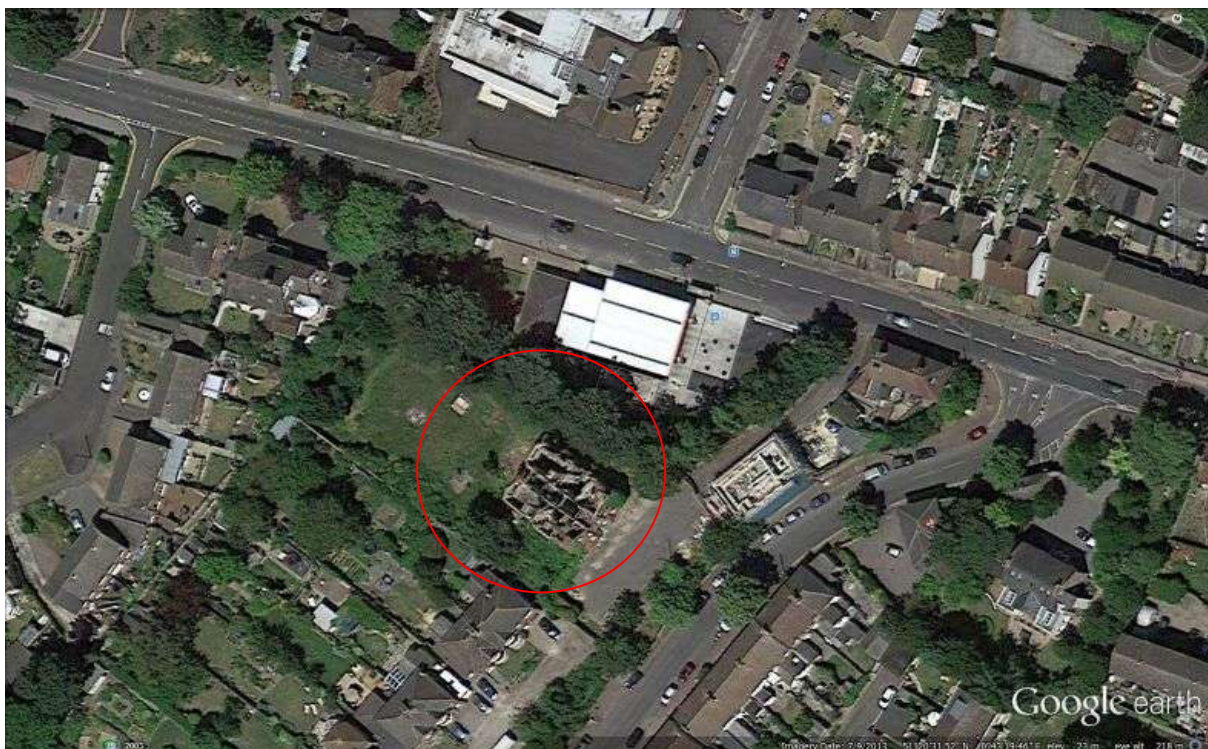


Plate 1. Aerial view of site

# Archaeological Evaluation at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

NGR 589677 163827

Site Code: LRS-EV-14

## **SUMMARY**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 87 London Road, Sittingbourne (Fig. 1). No planning application has been submitted at the time of writing this report for the proposed development of a block of 30 flats with an annex link and landscaped garden on the site of the fire gutted house. The results of this evaluation are intended to inform a future planning application to be made to Swale Borough Council, and Kent County Council has requested that an archaeological evaluation 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 2014) and in discussion with the Senior Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was focused on the impact the development may have on known archaeological remains associated with a 19<sup>th</sup> century smock mill (Plate 2) that was situated under the southern corner of the house. The archaeological evaluation consisted of three trenches which encountered limited archaeological features. The archaeological evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by PMMR Ltd of 70 King George Road, Walderslade, Chatham ME5 0PS to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Senior Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2014.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site is located to the south of London Road, west of Sittingbourne town centre on a prominent rise overlooking a petrol station to the north (Plate 1), and is accessed by a narrow drive off of London Road. The relatively level plot is generally rectangular, measuring 75m x 30m, and the ground level may have been truncated for the construction of the Victorian house and associated garden. To the east of the site lies Borden Lane, to the south are a number of large semidetached houses accessed by a private road, and to the west is Lydbrook Close (Fig. 1).

The National Grid Reference is NGR 589677 163827

According to the British Geological Survey the site lies on Chalk bedrock, but a layer of drift geology in the form of mid-reddish brown friable sandy silty clay covered the chalk. The trenches were machined to the top of this drift geology, and a sondage was cut at the southeast end of Trench 3 to test the depth of this deposit.

## **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

At present there is no planning consent for the construction of a block of 30 flats with an annex link and landscaped garden. This evaluation is intended to help inform a future planning application to Swale Borough Council.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **AIMS and OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) is:

- To determine the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of proposed development groundwork and how they would be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report.
- To assess the potential impact of the development proposals upon the remains of the former windmill although this is likely to be located very close to the present house and therefore the scope of works possible prior to demolition is limited by health and safety considerations.

- To determine the potential for earlier archaeological remains on the site and how they may be affected by development.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Trial trenching was carried out on 13th March 2014 with the excavation of three trenches. Trench location was agreed prior to the evaluation between KCC and SWAT. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural **(003)**, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Trench 1 measured 20m long and 2m wide. Trench 2 measured 15m long and 1.8m wide, and Trench 3 measured 15m long and 1.8m wide. The trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned, but the only feature initially exposed was in Trench1, a 1.75m wide curvilinear **[005]** filled with chalk rubble and medium to large ‘fresh’ angular flints **(004)**. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification issued by KCC. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance.

## **MONITORING**

Due to the lack of extensive archaeological remains, curatorial monitoring was not carried out during the course of the evaluation, but email contact was maintained throughout the fieldwork. A site visit by the Senior Archaeological Officer KCC followed on from the evaluation when further on-site work was discussed.

## **RESULTS**

The natural chalk bedrock **(006)** was only exposed in a sondage in Trench 3 at a depth of 0.59 below the present ground surface (Plate 5). All the trenches contained areas where the degraded upper layer of chalk was seen to erupt through the natural drift deposit **(003)** which was composed of mid-reddish brown friable sandy silty clay with fine sands and

occasional small to large sub-rounded and angular flints. Sealing this natural deposit was a subsoil or possible plough soil **(002)** of mid yellow brown friable sandy silty clay with fine sand, rare chalk flecks, small to medium sub-rounded and angular flints, carbon and coke and peg tile fragments. Above the subsoil was a humic topsoil **(001)** of dark brown grey friable sandy silty clay with fine sand and inclusions of the same type and quantity as the subsoil.

#### **Trench 1 – (20m x 2m x < 0.58m)**

Trench 1 was located in close proximity to the south-western side of the fire gutted house, with only 2.4m distance between the trench and the bay window (Plate 3). This trench, aligned northwest – southeast, was located within the possible vicinity of the smock windmill, and excavation revealed what may have been the foundations for the circular footings of the mill. The feature **[005]** measured 2.20m in length and 1.70m wide. Due to the trench's close proximity to the structurally unstable shell of the burned out house, the feature was only partially excavated to a depth of 0.40m (or 0.80m below the present ground surface), but one fragment of brick was found at the base of the eastern edge of the cut. The fill **(004)** consisted entirely of what appears to have been freshly quarried chalk and associated medium to large flint nodules, and was virtually sterile of inclusions except for the one small sherd of brick. Feature **[005]** cut the natural drift geology **(003)** and was sealed by subsoil **(002)** which was up to 0.22m thick in this trench. Topsoil **(001)** sealing the subsoil measured up to 0.32m thick. This area of the site was badly overgrown with brambles and shrubs, and the trench was heavily disturbed by roots.

#### **Trench 2 – (15m x 1.70m x <0.45m)**

Trench 2 was located on the lawn to the rear of the property and aligned roughly east-northeast – west-southwest (Plate 4). No features were seen in this trench. The subsoil **(002)** measured up to 0.24m thick and the topsoil **(001)** measured 0.30m thick.

#### **Trench 3 – (15m x 1.70m x <0.59m)**

Trench was located at the far end of the rear garden and was aligned northwest – southeast (plate 5). One feature was exposed during the evaluation, and a sondage was cut at the southeast end of the trench to test the geology and identify the upper strata of the chalk

bedrock. The northeast – southwest aligned ditch **[007]** was 2.27m long, 0.50m wide and up to 0.12m deep with sharp breaks of slope, sides angled at approximately 55° and a concave base. The fill **(006)** of the ditch was composed of mid greyish brown firm clay silt with common small to medium flint nodules, rare small tabular flints and rare small flint pebbles. Finds in this context consisted of rare small struck flints and common sherds of flint tempered pottery dating from the Mid to Late Mid Bronze Age.. Also seen in Trench 3 at the extreme northwest end of the trench was a medium sized, up to 0.06m diameter, lump of daub or kiln material, although no apparent cut for a feature was visible. The depth of the drift geology **(003)** which overlay the chalk bedrock was up to 0.13m thick in the sondage and was covered by the subsoil **(002)** which was up to 0.23m thick. The topsoil **(001)** was approximately 0.23m thick.

## **FINDS**

Two features, **[005]** in Trench 1 and **[007]** in Trench 3, were exposed during the evaluation. Within the fill of **[005]** only one small fragment of brick was found. The ditch **[007]** in Trench 3 produced quite a large amount of prehistoric pottery in what was a relatively shallow, truncated feature. Struck flints were also found in this context, and both artefact types were ‘fresh’ and sealed within the deposit. The prehistoric pottery has been assessed by Nigel MacPherson-Grant and found to be 24 sherds (weight: 218gms) of mostly coarsely flint-tempered pottery of Mid Bronze>Mid-Late Bronze Age transition date, c.1500-1100 BC. Sherds were small-medium-sized, a few with heavy unifacial wear but most only moderately worn. All coarseware sherds including 1 jar base fragment and rim sherds from 1-2 small tub-like vessels.

## **DISCUSSION**

The evaluation at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent has revealed limited archaeology. The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site of consisting of the local geology of chalk **(008)** covered by a layer of drift geology of sandy silty clay **(003)** which in turn was sealed by a layer of subsoil **(002)** under topsoil **(001)**. One feature, a wide curvilinear chalk-filled cut **[005]**, may have been associated with the smock mill located in this area and recorded on the OS first edition map. Unfortunately



health and safety issues due to the trench's location close to the burned out shell of the house allowed for only a cursory investigation of the feature by excavation, with the feature not fully excavated. One brick sherd was found well sealed in the feature, and as mentioned previously, no earlier artefacts in any of the trenches were found during the evaluation. Feature [005] may continue under the house, though there is a good chance that part of the feature could have been destroyed during the construction of the house. Looking at the development plan for the block of flats, there is a chance that the half of the feature that survives at present may be destroyed during construction of the new build, and therefore archaeological mitigation may be an option if there is a desire to record the feature more fully. The ditch found in Trench 3 in the back garden produced a sizable amount of prehistoric, Mid to Mid-Late Bronze Age, pottery in the small area sampled, suggesting there could be more ditches making up a field system. The site of the prehistoric ditch is in an area on the development plan that encompasses the garden and therefore may not be directly impacted upon.

## **CONCLUSION**

The evaluation at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne has assessed the archaeological potential of the land and revealed one feature that may be associated with the smock mill in Trench 1 located south of the fire gutted house and a prehistoric ditch in Trench 3 located in the back garden. The results of this report should aid Swale Borough Council in their decision as to the future planning application at this property and possible archaeological mitigation in regards to the smock windmill and development of the rear garden.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank PMMR Ltd 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 which was undertaken by Julie Martin and Mark Denyer. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for Digitise This. The project was managed and report written by Paul Wilkinson.

## **REFERENCES**

*<http://www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk/lettersIndex.htm>*

<b>Kent County Council HER summary form</b>		
<b>Site Address:</b> 87 London Road, Sittingbourne		
<b>Summary:</b> A three trench evaluation prior to planning application revealed a 1.70m wide curvilinear/circular feature which may be associated with the 19 <sup>th</sup> c smock mill. In addition a linear dated to the Mid to Mid Late Bronze Age.		
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Swale	<b>Parish:</b> Sittingbourne	
<b>Period(s):</b> Bronze Age and Post Medieval		
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> 5896 1638 (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)		
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b>		
<b>Evaluation:</b> X	Watching Brief	Field Walking
Documentary study	Building recording	Earthwork survey
Excavation:	Geophysical Survey	Field Survey
Geoarchaeological investigation		
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 13/02/2014		
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> SWAT Archaeology		
<b>Geology:</b> Solid: Seaford Chalk Formation <b>Superficial:</b> Sandy silty clay drift with occasional flint		
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> Wilkinson. P, 'An Archaeological Evaluation at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent'		
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b> One feature, possibly associated with the smock windmill visible on the 1 <sup>st</sup> ed OS map, was found in a trench directly south of the fire-gutted house. One fragment of brick was found in the chalk fill of the feature. Another feature, a linear dating from thr Bronze Age. <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>		
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> SWAT School Farm Oast, Graveney Rd., Faversham		
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> Paul Wilkinson	<b>Date:</b> 01/04/2014	

APPENDIX 2 – Plates



Plate 2. Typical smock windmill with polygon base



Plate 3 Trench 1 - General shot looking southeast



Plate 4 Trench 2 - General shot looking west-southwest



Plate 5 Trench 3 - General shot looking northwest



Plate 6 Trench 1 – Section of [005] looking southeast, 2m scale

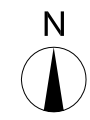


Plate 7 – Trench 1, looking south south-east

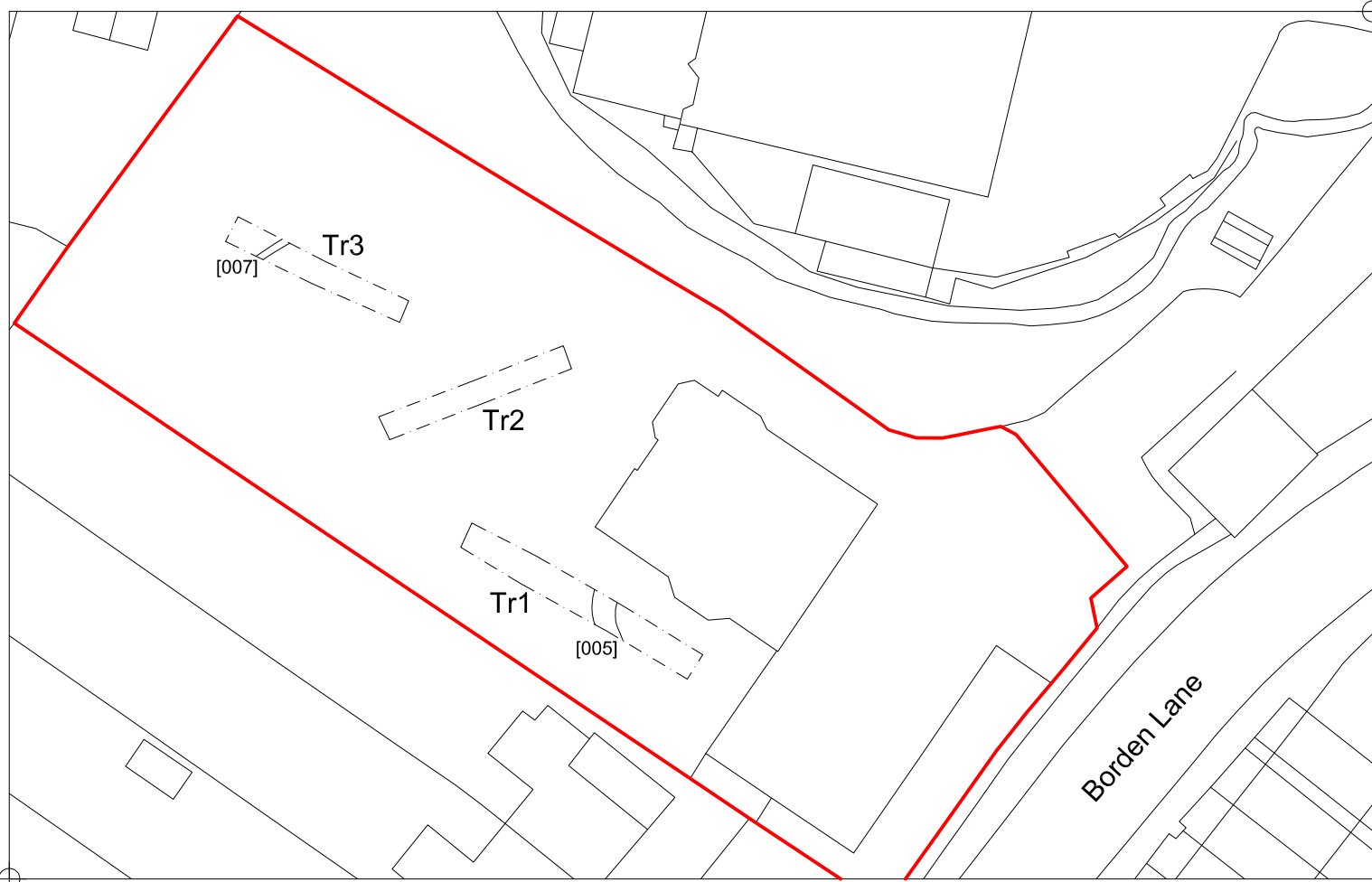




Plate 8 – Trench 3, Linear [007] looking northeast, 0.50m scale



589724.140mE  
163864.618mN



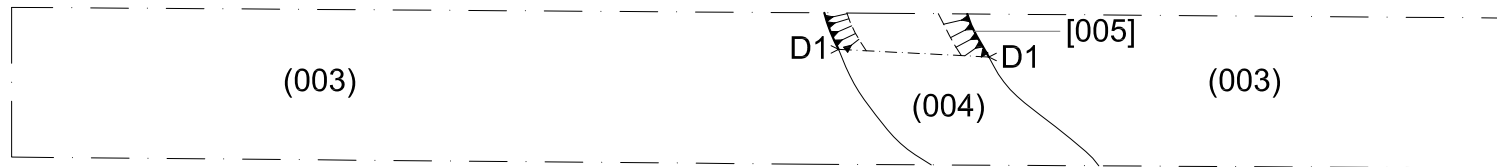
589624.351mE  
163801.122mN

1:500@A4

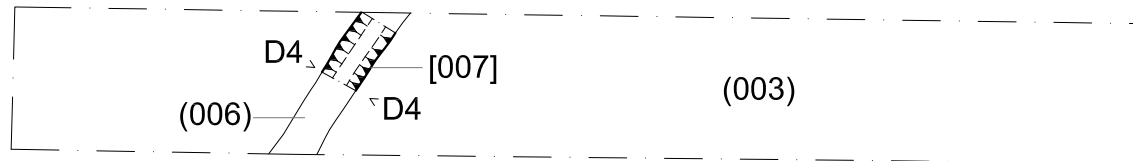


Figure 1: Location of archaeological trenches within site

Trench 1



Trench 3

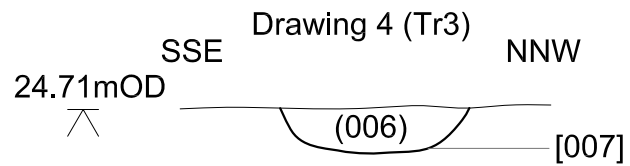
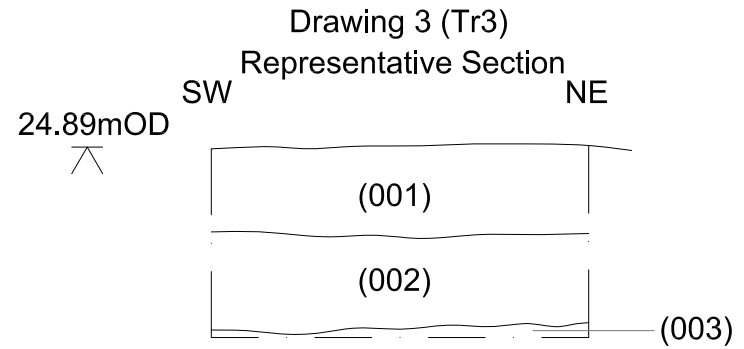
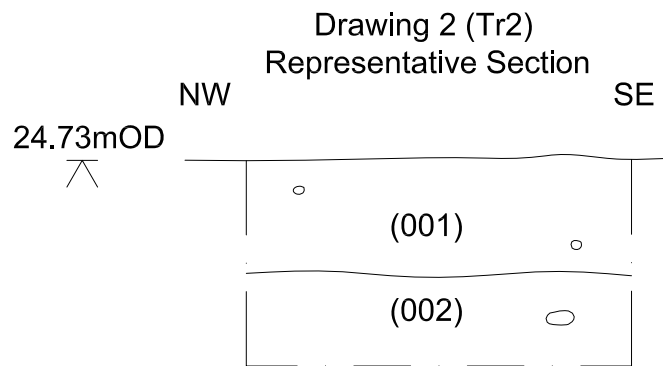
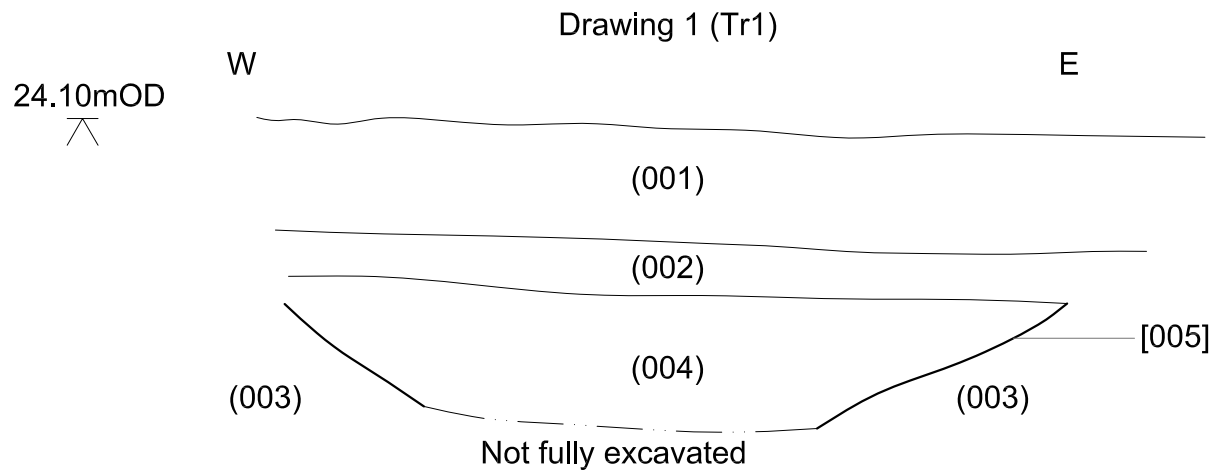


1:100@A4

0m

10m

Figure 2: Trenches



1:20@A4



Figure 3: Sections

## APPENDIX 4.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following the requirement from KCC Heritage of pre-planning advice for an archaeological investigation and building recording prior to a planning application for the demolition of the fire-damaged residential house located on land at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent SWAT Archaeology conducted an archaeological evaluation and building recording in March 2014.

1.2 The building recording was carried out on 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in accordance with a Level 1 survey as detailed in the English Heritage publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (2006) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2008). This is essentially a visual record. English Heritage guidelines suggest that written information should be the minimum to identify the building's location, age, type, materials, use and when and whom compiled the report.

General photographs of the exterior as well as any specific architectural or historic features (both internal and external) should be taken.

**1.3 In summary the work consists of a basic descriptive report accompanied by digital photographs.**

### 2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 The development site

The site is located to the south of London Road, west of Sittingbourne town centre on a prominent rise overlooking a petrol station to the north, and is accessed by a narrow drive off of London Road. The relatively level plot is generally rectangular, measuring 75m x 30m, and the ground level may have been truncated for the construction of the Victorian house and associated garden. To the east of the site lies Borden Lane, to the south are a number of large semi-detached houses accessed by a private road, and to the west is Lydbrook Close. The National Grid Reference is NGR 589677 163827

2.2 According to the British Geological Survey the site lies on Chalk bedrock, but a layer of drift geology in the form of mid-reddish brown friable sandy silty clay covered the chalk.

2.3 At present there is a planning proposal for the construction of a block of 30 flats with an annex link and landscaped garden. This building recording is intended to help inform any planning application to Swale Borough Council and to ensure a record of the building is preserved for future reference.

2.4 The house to be demolished has historic significance as remnants of a fine detached house dating from the 1890's.

### 3.0 PARAMETERS

3.1 The recording was restricted to the structures on site to be demolished; however some consideration was given to historical context.

3.2 The photographic survey was conducted using digital photography.

3.3 This work did not include any investigation of below ground archaeology. Such work was administered separately by SWAT Archaeology to a WSI prepared by KCC.

### 4.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1 A Level 1 recording has been requested in line with English Heritage published guidance, 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' (English Heritage -2006). A Level 1 recording is described as a 'descriptive record' to include inspection and description of the exterior and interior of the buildings. The report should establish identification of the building's location, age and type, and also some analysis of the building's development and use. This information should in the first instance be guided by external photographs of elevations and internal photographs of areas and significant features if appropriate.

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF SITE

5.1 SWAT Archaeology was commissioned by PMMR Ltd in March 2014 to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording and monitoring at the site at 87 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent.

5.2 The archive and documentary research was carried out using resources offered by the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping, and historical maps retained by English Heritage.

5.3 It is noteworthy that the seven available historical Ordnance Survey maps 1799-1975 show that urban development starts late in the area of London Road. The only feature shown on the proposed development site in 1799 is a windmill and ancillary building (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Development site as shown on the OS Surveyors Drawings of 1799

5.4 By 1867 the OS map shows a much better rendering of the windmill, now shown as a circular structure with attached porch/entrance to the north, access track and boundary wall (Figure 2).

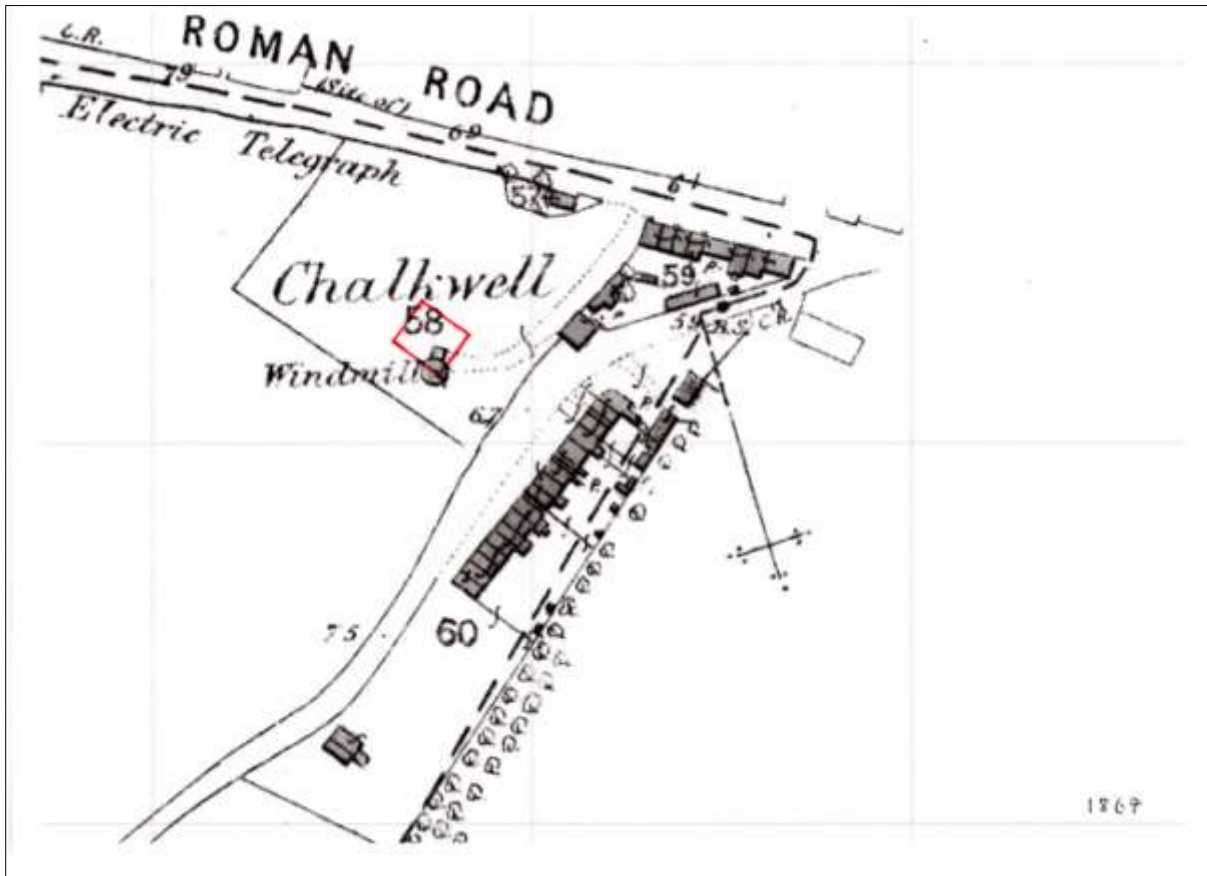


Figure 2. Proposed development site in 1867 overlaid with the 1897 footprint of the residential building.

5.5 By 1897 the windmill has been demolished and replaced by a substantial brick built detached residential dwelling with landscaping features including steps down to London Road, the Roman road from Dover, Richborough, Canterbury to London and beyond. A gravel drive sweeps round the house to the main entrance which is located on the west side of the building. A small coal store or stabling is situated in the south-west corner of the yard abutting to the earlier boundary wall shown on the 1867 OS map (Figure 3).





Figure 3. Proposed development site in 1897 with buildings to be demolished shaded green

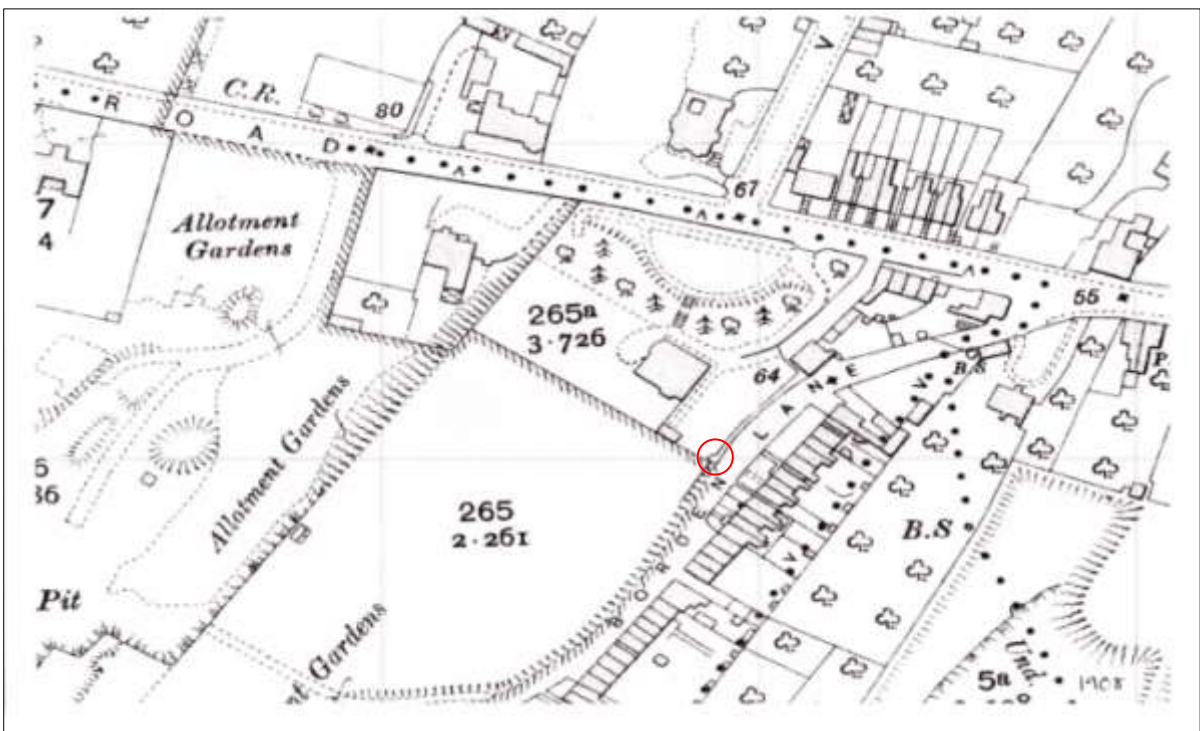


Figure 4. By 1908 a small feature (red circle) is shown in more detail than shown on Figure 3.



Figure 5. Circular feature of unknown function shown on the 1908 OS map

Modern development within the proposed development area has been limited to domestic housing. The site itself is dominated by one badly damaged building constructed about 1897 in the red brick late Victorian/Edwardian style.

This house, supposedly built for one of the daughters of the Peek Frenan dynasty is particularly splendid. The styles and structural forms of these late Victorian houses did not just appear overnight, and it should be seen as a continuation of those which were built in the last decades of the 19th century in the Kent area.

The greatest influence came from revivalist architects working in the 1880s and 90s, who, rather than just copying details directly from historic buildings,



Figure 4. View of the west front (looking north-east)

Took the spirit of old timber framed and brick manor and farm houses and created new forms, which reflected rather than mimicked them.

The Queen Anne style, with its upright buildings of fine red brick, Dutch gables and white framed windows, as well as the revival of vernacular forms with black and white timber, hanging wall tiles, weatherboarding and rough finish renders used to clad houses, which today are generally referred to as 'arts and crafts', were both popular. By the 1890s speculative builders were providing many of these details on the terraces and larger detached houses for the more fashion conscious middle classes. The Victorians also had a love for white painted woodwork with delicate fretwork and turned balusters featured on porches and balconies. Richly coloured patterned glass in the upper part of windows continued the cheerful theme with Art Nouveau designs of stylised foliage or pastoral scenes of Arcadian delights.

Behind these facades the structure of a building like 87 London Road (above Figure 4) had changed from those produced fifty years earlier.

Houses were taller with higher ceilings. Basements and cellars had fallen from favour and two storey rear extensions with bathrooms in the upper room on better class housing (an additional bedroom in others) provided a better working environment for servants (even a modest middle class family would expect to have a live-in maid). Large bay windows, the full height of the facade, were a prominent display designed to impress and lighten the interior.

Terraces were now stepped back from the pavement with a small front garden and brick wall proudly marking the limits of the property. Doorways could be recessed a couple of feet into the house or set under a porch, which ran the full length of the facade, with black and white, terracotta or beige ceramic tiles fitted on the step and along the hall within.



Figure 5. Front porch built of fine red sandstone in the Tudor style and located on the west front with two inset tile panels (2m scale).



Figure 6. West front (looking east) of the cross-wing house with porch which shows the Tudor influence on the chimney stack design and the main porch entrance. The roof structure which survives on the south wing shows a gabled roof with decorative barge board with common rafters steadied by collars. The two large three-light mullioned windows are constructed of red sandstone with modern replacement uPVC windows. Between the two mullioned windows a stone stringer course can be seen. The ground floor mullioned window has leaded fanlight windows with leaded glass scenes of rural industry. It seems most of these decorative leaded glass panel were removed when the uPVC windows were inserted and placed for safekeeping in the local museum (see Note 1).

The east wing is more splendid with a mullioned bay construction, again built of red sandstone.

The main entrance is situated in the centre of the building and provides a focus for ornament which is used throughout the building.



Figure 7. The main entrance is framed by a four-centred Tudor arch with carved spandrels in red sandstone leading to a framed fielded panelled door finished in black paint. To the left of the door an off-white stone fielded panel with two Tudor arched windows with later letter box. Two framed pictorial tiled inserts are to be seen on the porch walls left and right of the main door. Both have been vandalised by sprayed paint (2m scale).



Figure 8. Framed ceramic tiled pictorial insert.

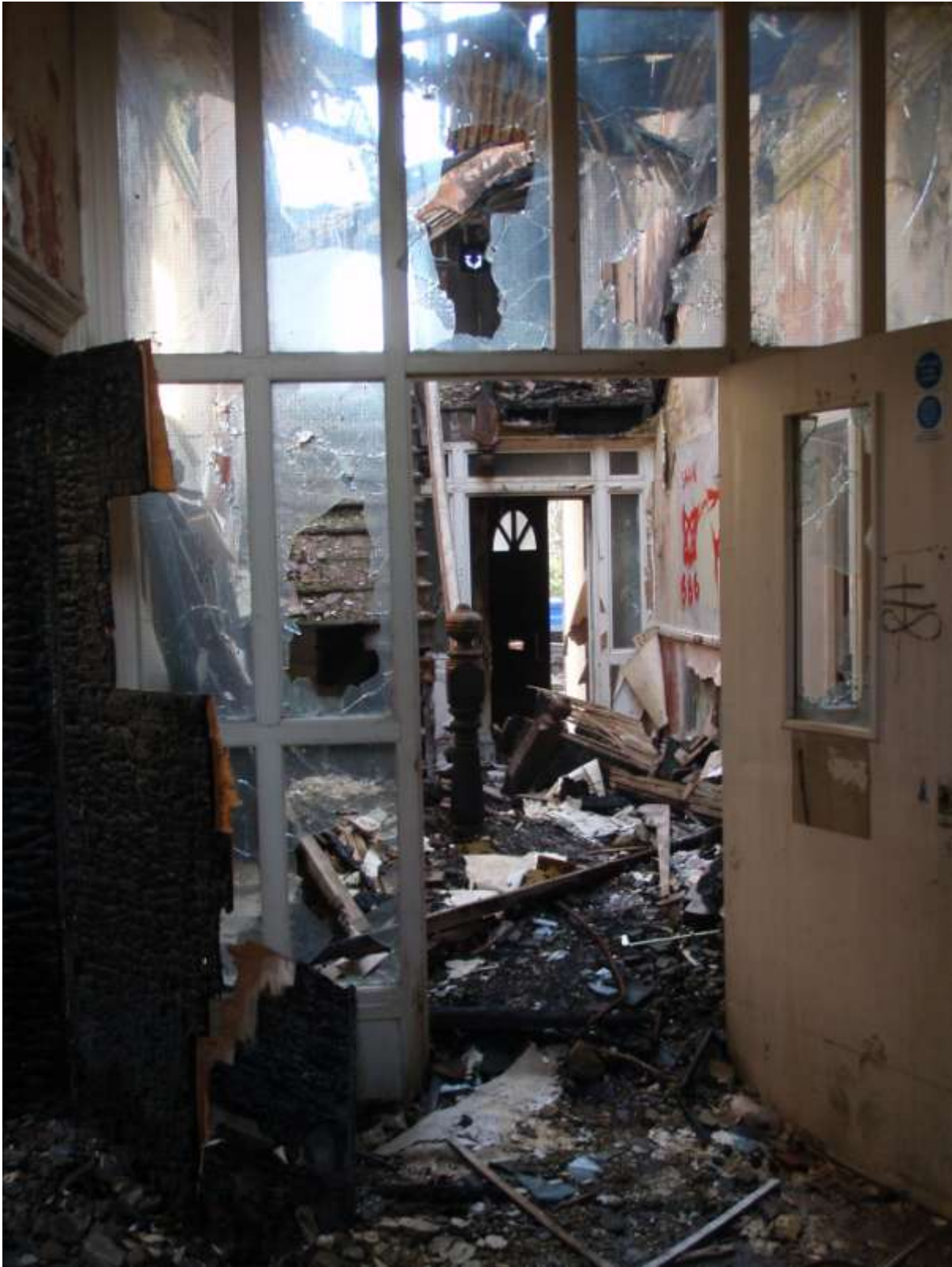


Figure 9. Interior of the hall looking east and showing modern glass partition with original mahogany staircase beyond.



*Figure 10, 11 Detail of decorative coving on ceiling of hallway, and below leaded fanlight*







Figures 12, 13 Rear of property (facing west) show both gables, windows with red sandstone sills and lintels. South side of the house, (below) showing mullioned bay construction. Scale in 50cm sections.





Figure 14. Showing north side of the house with timber-framed jettied upper storey in Elizabethan- style with three-light mullioned window. Infill panels are finished in off-white lime mortar. Below on the ground floor the windows are framed in red sandstone.



*Figure 15, 16. View of north and east sides (facing south-west)*





*Figure 17, 18. View of coal shed or stables, and (below) view of building butting up to earlier boundary wall of windmill (Scale 1m).*



## NOTE 1

<http://www.sittingbourne-museum.co.uk/lettersIndex.htm>

*This is an enquiry regarding the very sad fire recently at 87 London Road Sittingbourne.(Opposite the Conniston Hotel).*

*Myself and my friend (Mrs Sally Francis )worked for many years when it was a residential home for those with mental health problems and know a little history of the house but unsure if these stories were actually true?*

*We were always told that it was built as a wedding present by the makers of Peek Frean biscuits (for his daughter?) which is why the stained glass had special meanings on them?*

*Also we remember back in the early 1990's the windows had to be replaced and the original windows were given to the local musuem which we were hoping were yourselves?*

*We were also unsure if it had an original name possibly "Eversley"?*

*We sincerely hope you can help us with any information you may have as we would like to try and keep its memory alive.*

*Many thanks , Mrs Lucie Paton.*

## NOTE 2

*am writing to ask if you have any history available on a house in sittingbourne where i worked as a care worker for approx 18 years. this is 87 london rd, which has recently suffered a devastating fire and will probably have to be knocked down. however i am aware that the house was originally built by Peak Freans, a biscuit manufacturer and rumour has always existed that he built it for his daughter as a wedding present, however her fiance was killed on bluebell hill before the wedding and she never lived there. i beleive that some of the original stain glass windows were given to you when the windows were replaced, they depicted animals like ducks and owls, that were allegedly pictures that were on the peak freans biscuit boxes. i also think the house was originally called eversley or everslee, but i am unsure about the spelling, do you have any records of this name or a name associated with this property? My father in law lived in one of the cottages on the junction of london rd and borden lane and he remembers the house being owned by a Mr Bugay (again unsure of the spelling), my father in law beleives that Mr Bugey owned a chemical works that was on the site where Wickes is now situated. i would be interested if you are able to give any further information about this property, when it was built and if the rumours were true about Peak Freans, and especially a name associated with it, before the history for this glorious building is buried forever. thank you. Sally francis*