

Archaeological Evaluation of Land between 29 and 31 High Street, Minster, Thanet, Kent



NGR: 631047 164546

Site Code: MHS-EV-14

(Planning Application: F/TH/13/0628)

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1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land between 29 and 31 High Street, Minster in Thanet. A Planning Application (F/TH/13/0628) for a new dwelling was submitted to Thanet District Council (TDC), whereby the Council 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 Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The results of the excavation of the single evaluation trench revealed a number of archaeological features present within the trench, with some pits containing Medieval pottery. The natural geology of Thanet Beds was reached at a depth of 0.75m below the modern ground surface. The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr Steven Bedingfield 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 Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out on the 19th and 20th of May 2014.

3. Site Description and Topography

The development site was located west of Minster High Street on a relatively level triangular strip of land measuring approximately 36m long and 9m wide at the entrance to the west, narrowing to 6.43m wide at the eastern end of the plot. Sited roughly 14m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), the site was bounded by the semi-detached property and rear garden of Number 29 to the south and the derelict brick industrial building at Number 31 to the north. To the east of the plot was the large rear garden to Number 21 which backs onto meadows associated with Minster Abbey. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS) the site sits on Thanet Beds overlain by Head deposits.

4. Planning Background

Thanet District Council granted planning permission for the development (Planning Reference F/TH/13/0628) consisting of the construction of a new 2 storey detached dwelling and the formation of vehicular access for one off street parking space. On the advice of the Archaeological Officer for Thanet District Council, a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent:

(Condition 3) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Ground: To ensure that the archaeological history of the site is recorded in accordance with the paragraphs 128 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC and TDC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

In 2011 the author conducted an archaeological Watching Brief on land at the neighbouring property at No. 31 for Trust for Thanet Archaeology (TfTA). Below is an excerpt from the report's summary of the archaeological and historical background of the area.

Minster is a village on the southern side of the Isle of Thanet, located on a south facing slope overlooking the Monkton and Minster Marshes and the River Stour on the northern edge of the former Wantsum Channel. The village lies at the junction of two early routes, now the B2047 and B2048, 8km west of Ramsgate, 8km north of Sandwich and 17.7km north-east of Canterbury. The name Minster is derived from the term 'mynster', a monasterium or monastery built by the first Abbess Domneva (Ermenburga) in 670 AD, near the site of the present parish church of St. Mary the Virgin. The pre Conquest Nunnery (Historic Environment Record: HER TR36 SW115 and Scheduled Monument 1016850) was moved to a nearby location in 741AD due to overcrowding and in 840AD the nunnery was reportedly attacked by Viking raiders with the nuns massacred and the building burnt to the ground. In 1027 King Canute bequeathed the derelict site to the Benedictine monks of St. Augustine's Abbey who built the monastic grange included on the HER under the same listing as the Nunnery. In 2002 an archaeological evaluation by Trust for Thanet Archaeology uncovered a possible 13th c ditch in the vicinity of St. Mildred's Priory (HER TR36 SW120). The development site lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential relating to both the Medieval Abbey and the Roman villa (HER TR36 SW67) discovered at Abbey Farm to the east of the village.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) lists only sites of post Medieval date within the immediate vicinity of the development. These include a sand pit (TR 36 SW 112) within an area referred to as The Elms, at the northern boundary of Abbey Green. There are also listed properties along the High Street including Old Oak Cottage (TR 36 SW 163), a 16th-17th century timber framed house, possibly with a Medieval cellar; 42 High Street (TR 36 SW 149) an early 18th century property; 14/16/18 High Street (TR 36 SW 144), an 18th -19th century Grade II terrace and Hawthorne Lodge (TR 39 SW 145) a 19th century dwelling.

The Watching Brief at No. 31 exposed a possible Early Medieval hearth or fired clay surface and fragments of Anglo Saxon pottery in the overlying ploughsoil within the footings of the new development (HER TR36 SW 283).

6. Aims and Objectives

According the Condition 3 of the planning application for the development, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that “the archaeological history of the site is recorded in accordance with paragraphs 128 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework”. In actuality, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Heritage Assets spans paragraphs 128 to 141 inclusive, and therefore Condition 3 as stated in the planning consent appears to address only paragraphs 128 and 141.

Paragraph 128 states:

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.

Paragraph 141 states:

Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

The aims set out in the Specification for the site required a phased approach to the mitigation of the development site commencing with an evaluation, with the results influencing the possibility of further work on the site such as further mitigation in the form of a watching brief or excavation depending upon the amount and significance of any possible archaeological remains.

7. Methodology

The Specification called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising one 10m x 1.80m trench within the footprint of the proposed building. Due to the limited space of the plot and the amount of soil removed, the trench had to be significantly narrowed to 0.90m wide. Despite the reduction of the trench width, a significant amount of archaeological activity was uncovered within the trench. A 1.5 tonne 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil **(100)** and subsoil **(101)** to expose the natural geology **(102)** and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. 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 SWAT and IFA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring was kept informed during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The trench was excavated during the evaluation with a common stratigraphic sequence being identified. The natural geology of Thanet beds **(102)** was approximately 0.75m below the modern ground surface and consisted of very pale orange brown sandy clay silt. All features cut this context. Above this geological context was a substantial subsoil/ploughsoil layer **(101)** measuring approximately 0.52m thick of loose pale grey brown sandy clay silt with occasional chalk flecks and rare oyster, mussel and snail shells, carbon flecks, ceramic flecks, pottery sherds and small rounded flint pebbles. Covering the subsoil was topsoil **(100)** up to 0.25m thick composed of loose dark brown grey sandy clay silt with occasional chalk flecks, small coke fragments, pottery and brick fragments, carbon flecks, oyster shell and small to medium rounded flints.

The 10m long trench was aligned east/west and spanned roughly the length of the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Excavation of the trench started at the west end of the plot at a width of 1.80m, but it soon became apparent that there was not enough room in the narrow plot to house the amount of spoil produced without impacting upon the neighbouring properties. Therefore the trench was narrowed to 0.90m for the remaining 7.75m length of the intervention.

At the extreme west end of the trench, below the subsoil/ploughsoil was a loose pale green brown sandy silt layer **(107)** measuring approximately 1.85m long, 1.50m wide and up to 0.24m thick. This layer was seen to partially cover pits **[106]** and **[109]**. A slot was cut through this layer to expose the two pits below which both cut the natural geology. Pit **[106]** was excavated to a depth of 0.32m (not

fully excavated) and was at least 0.75m long and 0.65m wide. Roughly circular in plan, this pit was filled by **(105)**, a loose mid-brown grey sandy clay silt with rare chalk flecks, oyster shell and five pottery sherds dating c.1500-1550AD. North of this pit and within the same intervention slot was a rectangular flat-bottomed feature **[109]** with a sharp break of slope of approximately 80°. This pit measured at least 1.06m long, 0.50m wide and 0.35m deep and was filled by **(108)**, a loose mid-brown grey with pale brown mottles sandy clay silt containing rare oyster shells, animal bone and chalk and carbon flecks. One other feature **[104]** was sampled, but due to the depth of the pit, was not fully excavated. At the eastern end of the evaluation trench rectangular pit **[104]** was excavated to a depth of 0.49m and measured 1.62m long and at least 0.75m wide. This vertical sided pit was filled by **(103)** a mid-grey brown sandy clay silt with rare chalk and carbon flecks, oyster and snail shells, animal bone, 1 pottery sherd dating from c.1075-1150AD and occasional large flint nodules and large sandstone fragments. The large flints and sandstone fragments had the appearance of building material suggesting the removal of a wall somewhere in the vicinity of the pit. The shape of this feature in plan and the near vertical sides suggest a cess pit, but the deposit within the cut, at least in the upper half meter, did not produce the material usually found in cess pits. It could be that this upper deposit was a capping layer to seal the pit when it went out of use, but this was not evident in the evaluation.

Other features were identified within the evaluation trench but were not sampled, although pottery embedded from within the fill of oval pit **(110)/[111]** suggests a Medieval date. The fragments were retained for further analysis and spot dating and are four sherds dating from c.1300-1350AD. This oval pit measured 0.93m long and at least 0.55m wide. Another possibly rectangular feature and two associated post holes were observed. Pit **[113]** measured at least 1.75m long and at least 0.82m wide. Along the north eastern edge of this pit were two post holes **(114)/[115]** and **(116)/[117]**. Post hole **[115]** had a diameter 0.27m wide, and post hole **[117]** had a diameter 0.23m wide.

10. Finds

Artefacts retrieved from this evaluation have been processed and the pottery spot-dated. A small, principally Medieval, assemblage consisting of 21 sherds weighing 129gms was recovered during this evaluation. Two highly worn earlier sherds – 1 of probable Mid, less certainly, Late Roman date and another of probable later C7 AD Saxon date – were also recovered, both from *Context 105*, and both definitely residual in-context. The remainder of the ceramic is all post-Saxon with a chronological spread of pottery representing a degree of activity during the late eleventh-early twelfth century, a marked increase – at least as recovered - during the late twelfth-mid thirteenth century, followed by a thin trickle spread throughout the period c.1250-1500 AD. There is no Post-Medieval or Late Post-Medieval ceramic and the remaining sherd should represent Modern-period gardening activity.

Overall, the post-Saxon component is unremarkable and consists principally of sherds from used and broken Canterbury-made cooking-pots and several jugs. One of the latter is from a reduce-fired jug with a thick olive-green jug glaze over faint traces of incised decoration, the combination of manufacturing trends typical of some late twelfth to early thirteenth Canterbury jugs.

For the daub – one dark-fired and heavily worn element, again from *Context 105* – may derive from the probable seventh century AD activity. The remainder should all be post-Saxon, the less worn elements particularly probably being derived from the main recovered phase of activity between c.1175-1250 AD. The few tile fragments date to the later thirteenth-early sixteenth century AD and, overall, there *appears* to be no further activity until the earlier twentieth century. Other artefacts recovered are itemised in the pottery report in Appendix 1.

11. Discussion

The evaluation trench at the proposed development site revealed a number of archaeological features in the way of pits and post holes. Pottery retrieved from some of these features suggested a Medieval date. Even with the reduction of the width of the trench due to the logistics of the site, 5 pits and 2 post holes were exposed within a relatively small area leading to the conclusion that the site has the potential for more archaeology appearing within the footprint of the proposed dwelling.

12. Conclusion

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 comprised of topsoil **(100)** sealing the subsoil **(101)** which overlay the natural geology of Thanet beds **(102)**. To the west of the trench, a layer **(107)** was found to partially cover two pits. Three of the five pits were sampled via excavation, and two of those produced pottery. One pit **[113]** that was not excavated had pottery embedded into the upper part of the fill. All features were planned in relation to the trench, and the excavated pits were drawn in section at a scale of 1:10. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the planning condition and the Archaeological Specification.

13. Further notes

Within the garden of No. 21 were two structures of note. A cast iron water pump, now disused, was located in the rear garden (Plate 10). At the rear of the property was a small detached brick building which according to the father of the client, was used as a prison cell sometime in the 19th century

(Plates 6). Etched in the panes of window glass are various names and dates and other graffiti, possibly of prisoners housed in the cell (Plates 7-9).

14. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client, Mr Steve Bedingfield for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for Digitise This. The fieldwork was supervised by Julie Martin, and the project was managed by Dr Paul Wilkinson.

Julie Martin

23/06/14

15. References

Bedingfield, M. (2014), *pers comm*.

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PLATES



Plate 1 – Google Earth aerial view of development site (outlined in yellow).



Plate 2 – Location shot of trench, looking northeast.



Plate 3 – Pit [104], looking north, 1m scale.



Plate 4 – Pits [106] and [109], looking north-northwest, 1m scale.



Plate 5 – Pit [113] and post hole [115], looking northeast, 1m scale



Plate 6 – Location shot of 'prison cell', looking southwest.



Plate 7 – Graffiti-etched glass in 'prison' window

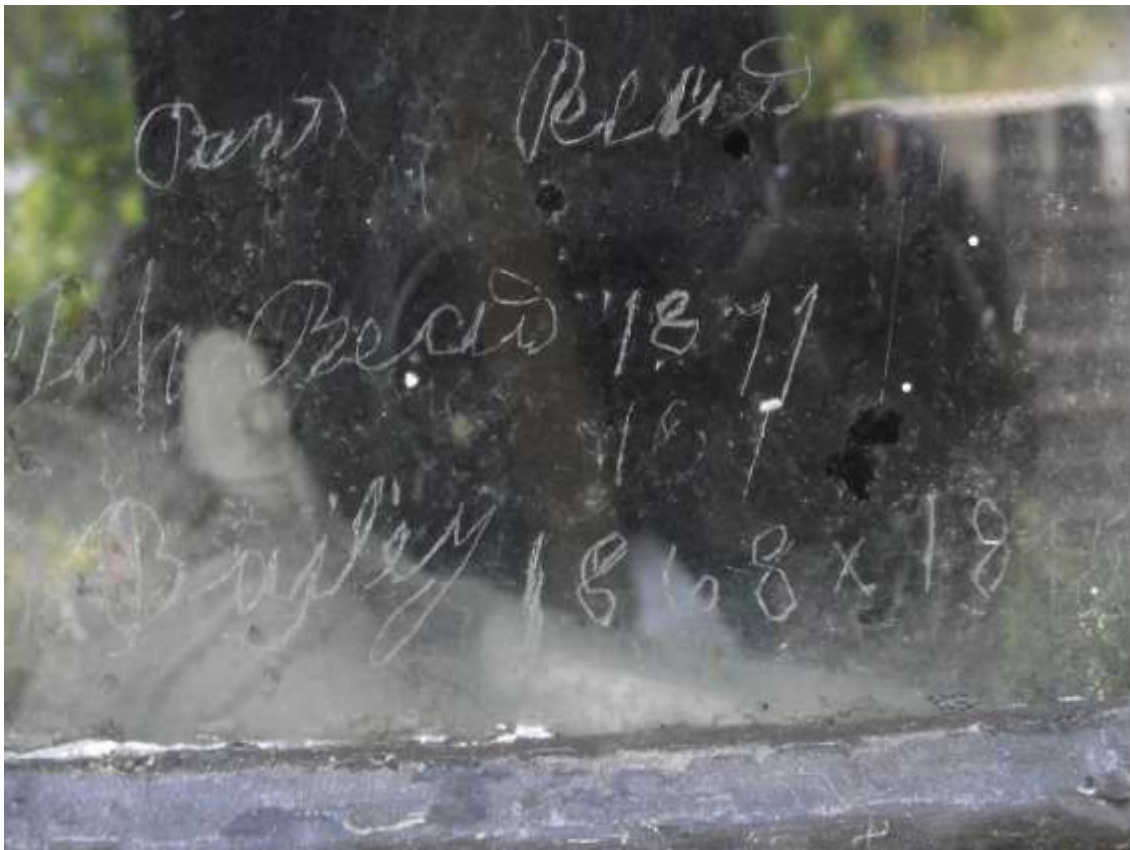


Plate 8 – Graffiti-etched glass in 'prison' window



Plate 9 – Graffiti-etched glass in ‘prison’ window



Plate 10 – Disused water pump, looking northwest

Kent County Council HER summary form	
Site Address: Land between 29 and 31 High Street, Minster, Thanet, Kent	
Summary: A one trench evaluation on land between Nos. 29 and 31 exposed 5 pits and 2 postholes at approximately 0.75m below the modern ground surface.	
District/Unitary: Thanet	Parish: Minster
Period(s): Medieval, post Medieval	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): 631047/164546 (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Evaluation: One trench	
Date of Recording: 28/05/2014	
Unit undertaking recording: SWAT Archaeology	
Geology: Thanet beds overlain by Head deposits	
Title and author of accompanying report: Martin, J., 2014. <i>Archaeological Evaluation of land between 29 and 31 High Street, Minster, Thanet.</i>	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) Five pits and two post holes exposed within trench. Three pits were half sectioned and Medieval pottery was retrieved. One pit, possibly a cess pit with vertical sides, but due to depth, not fully excavated. Excavated to depth of 0.49m. <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds: School Farm Oast, Graveney Rd., Faversham	
Contact at Unit: P. Wilkinson	Date: 23/06/14

Appendix 1

THE DATING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE FROM:

MINSTER HIGH STREET, THANET, EVALUATION 2014 (MHS-EV-14)

ASSESSMENT

A small, principally Medieval, assemblage consisting of 21 sherds weighing 129gms was recovered during this evaluation. Two highly worn earlier sherds – 1 of probable Mid, less certainly, Late Roman date and another of probable later C7 AD Saxon date – were also recovered, both from *Context 105*, and both definitely residual in-context. The remainder of the ceramic is all post-Saxon with a chronological spread of pottery representing a degree of activity during the late eleventh-early twelfth century, a marked increase – at least as recovered - during the late twelfth-mid thirteenth century, followed by a thin trickle spread throughout the period c.1250-1500 AD. There is no Post-Medieval or Late Post-Medieval ceramic and the remaining sherd should represent Modern-period gardening activity.

Overall, the post-Saxon component is unremarkable and consists principally of sherds from used and broken Canterbury-made cooking-pots and several jugs. One of the latter is from a reduce-fired jug with a thick olive-green jug glaze over faint traces of incised decoration, the combination of manufacturing trends typical of some late twelfth to early thirteenth Canterbury jugs.

For the daub – one dark-fired and heavily worn element, again from *Context 105* – may derive from the probable seventh century AD activity. The remainder should all be post-Saxon, the less worn elements particularly probably being derived from the main recovered phase of activity between c.1175-1250 AD. The few tile fragments date to the later thirteenth-early sixteenth century AD and, overall, there *appears* to be no further activity until the earlier twentieth century.

APPENDIX: CONTEXT-BASED POTTERY QUANTIFICATION AND DATING CATALOGUE

Period codes employed:

MR	= Mid Roman
LR	= Late Roman
EMS	= Early-Mid Saxon
EM	= Early Medieval
M	= Medieval
LM	= Late Medieval
MOD	= Modern

Context dating:

Context: 101 - 11 sherds (weight: 14gms)

7 M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1200/1225-1250 AD emphasis; **6 same vessels**)

1 M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1225-1250/1275 AD emphasis)

1 M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1275/1300-1350 AD emphasis)

1 LM Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1375-1400/1425 AD emphasis)

1 MOD red earthenware – flower-pot type (c.1875 AD-plus; **intrusive**)

and:

1 fragment M roof-tile (weight: 11gms) – fairly small, worn, part one edge remnant, sandy Canterbury Tyler Hill fabric, LC13-C14 AD

1 fragment wall daub (weight: 14gms) – fairly small, slightly worn, faced, fine buff fabric

1 flake flint (weight: 2gms) – small, semi-cortical, wall knapping waste.

1 fragment bone (weight : >1gm) – small, fish

1 fragment coal shale (weight: 1 gm) – small, worn

Comment: The early-mid C13 AD sherds are all fairly small-moderate-sized, and include 6 from the same cooking-pot and 1 slightly later-dated jug sherd with decayed glaze. None of

these are seriously worn – but some are chipped and a few have slight edge-wear. The two later C14 AD and LM fragments are small but near-fresh. Either the earlier C13 AD fragments have been disturbed collectively out of their original discard context but not received serious subsequent damage **or** the few post LC13 AD elements are intrusive.

Likely date: Uncertain – but if not residual c.1250-1275 AD

Context: 103 - 1 sherd (weight: 6gms)

1 EM Canterbury sandy ware (c.1050-1150 AD range)

and:

1 fragment LM roof-tile (weight: 3gms (- small, fairly worn, hard-fired Canterbury Tyler Hill fabric, LC15-EC16 AD

4 fragments wall daub (weight: 40gms) – 3 small, moderately worn (1 with wattle impression), 1 fairly small, slightly worn with wattle impressions, fine brown-buff fabric

1 fragment stone (weight: 51gms) – fairly small, fine-grained sandy siltstone, laminar fracture planes

2 oyster valves (weight: 20gms) – small, complete

Comment : Single small bodysherd, sooted exterior, cooking-pot, slightly chipped but otherwise near-fresh – *may* be derived from an undisturbed contemporary deposit (the LM tile fragment could be intrusive)

Likely date : If not residual – c.1075-1150 AD

Context: 105 - 5 sherds (weight : 61gms)

1 ? MR-LR Roman amphora – coarse red sandy ware with calcareous inclusions (broadly C3-C4 AD; **CHECK**)

1 **possible** EMS organic-tempered with sparse coarse sand (c.650-700/725 AD emphasis)

1 EM-M Canterbury sandy ware (c.1150/1175-1225 AD probable emphasis)

1 M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1200-1225/1250 AD emphasis)

1 LM Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1375/1400-1450 AD emphasis)

1 LM Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1475-1500/1525 AD emphasis)

and :

1 iron nail (weight : 7gms) – fairly small, head broken, tip missing, cut, corroded

1 fragment EM-M roof-tile/hearth tile (weight : 20gms) – fairly small, worn (rounding edges),

pale brown fine slightly sandy silty fabric, c.1175/1200-1250 AD emphasis

1 fragment M roof-tile (weight : 13gms) – small, moderately worn, part one edge remnant, hard sandy Canterbury Tyler Hill fabric, C14-EC15 AD range

1 fragment wall daub/clay lump (weight : 13gms) – small, fairly worn sub-rounded, dark grey-brown fabric

2 fragments **stone** (weight : 6gms) – small, thinly laminar, fine-grained sandy/siltstone.

Comment : The first entry is a moderate-fairly large sherd from the rim and neck of a thick-walled vessel. It's very highly worn condition supports the likelihood of a Roman date but both the source and the Mid-Late Roman attribution **needs to be confirmed**. The **possible** Saxon sherd is small, rather light and corky and over-fired but the organic content is definite and it appears to be from the rounded base of a fairly large vessel. It is equally worn and – in relation to the fresher condition of the later material together with its fabric suggests that a later C7 AD attribution is likely. The LC12-EC13 AD sherds are fairly small and slightly worn, the LM elements small but near-fresh.

Likely date : If not intrusive/seriously residual – c.1500-1550 AD probably

Context: 110 - 4 sherds (weight : 48gms)

1 EM-M Canterbury sandy ware (c.1175-1200/1225 AD emphasis)

1 EM-M Canterbury sandy ware (c.1175/1200-1225 AD emphasis)

1 EM-M NE Kent shell-tempered moderately sandy ware (c.1175/1200-1225 AD emphasis)

1 M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1250-1300/1325 AD emphasis probably)

Comment : The first 3 c.1200 AD or early C13 AD elements are all fairly small, chipped and moderately worn. The latest element is moderate-sized, again chipped and rather worn.

Likely date : If not residual – c.1300-1350 AD

Analyst : N.Macpherson-Grant 22.6.2014

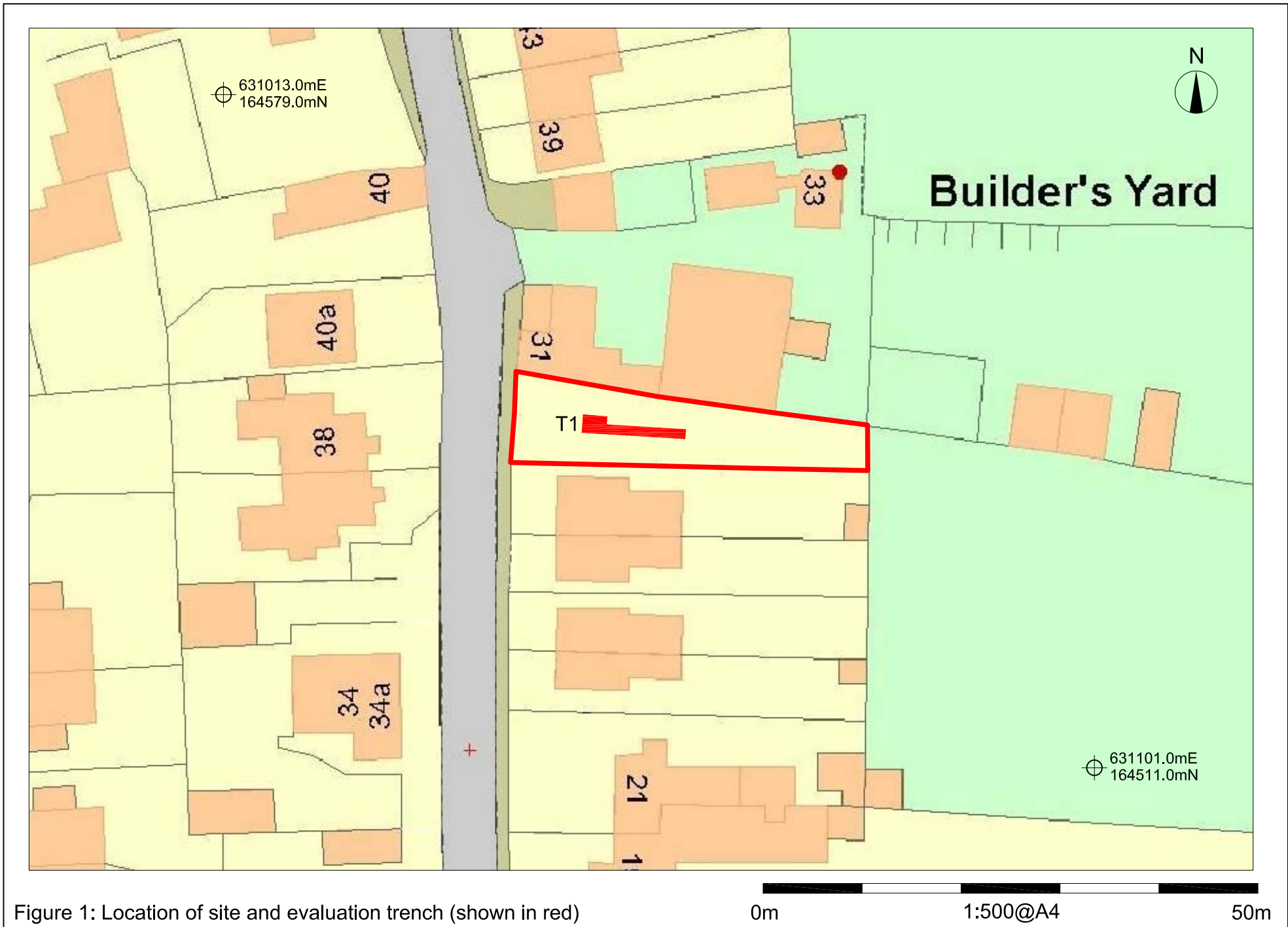


Figure 1: Location of site and evaluation trench (shown in red)

0m

1:500@A4

50m

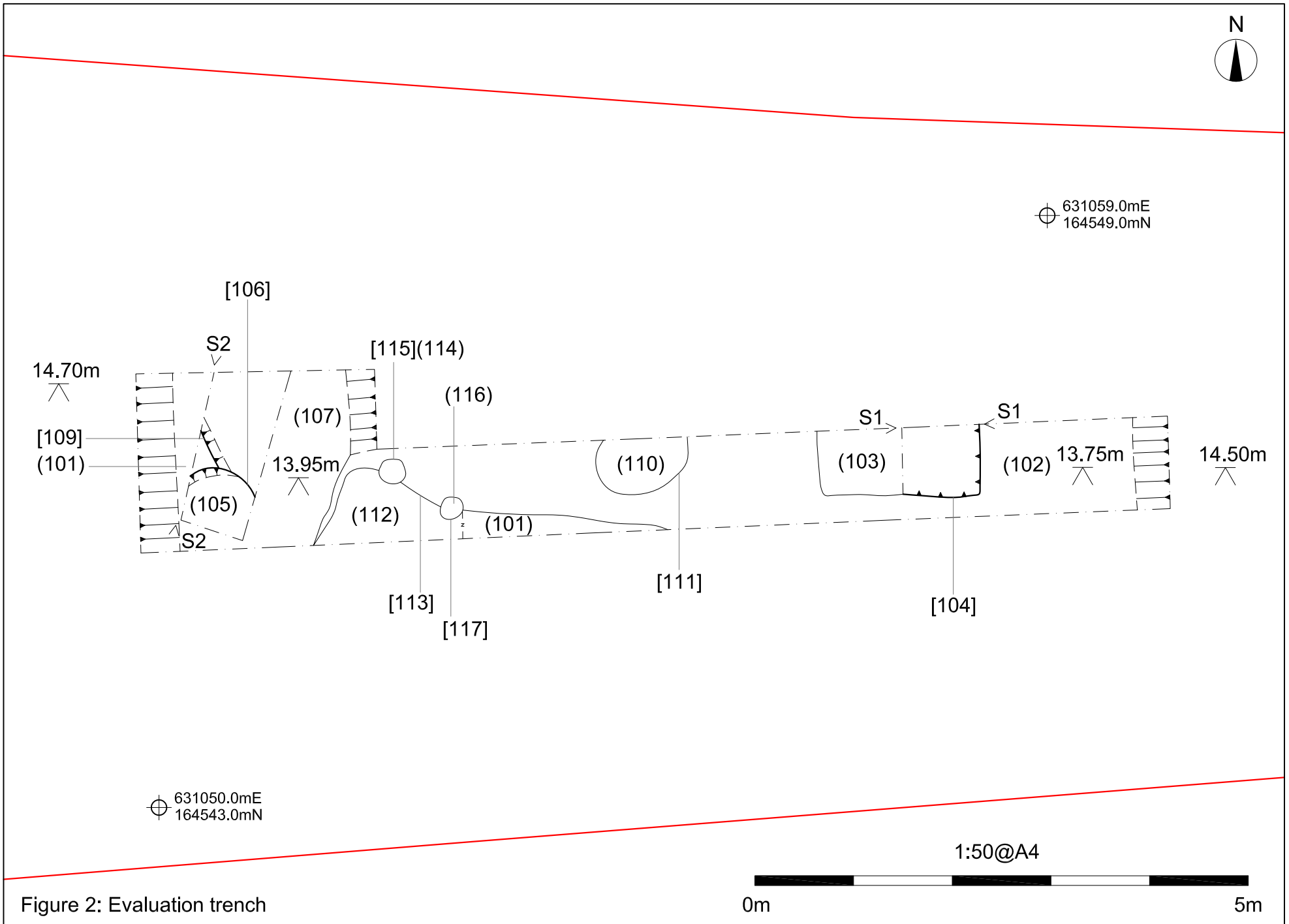
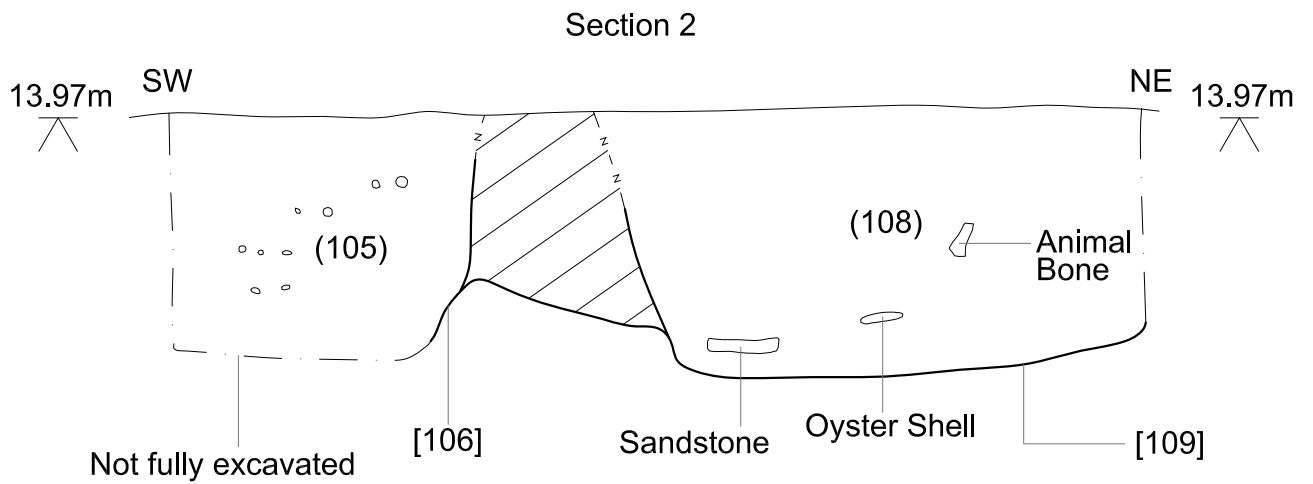
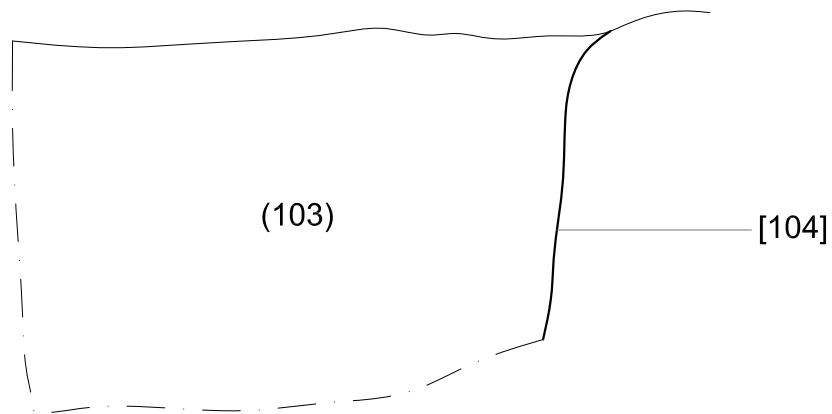
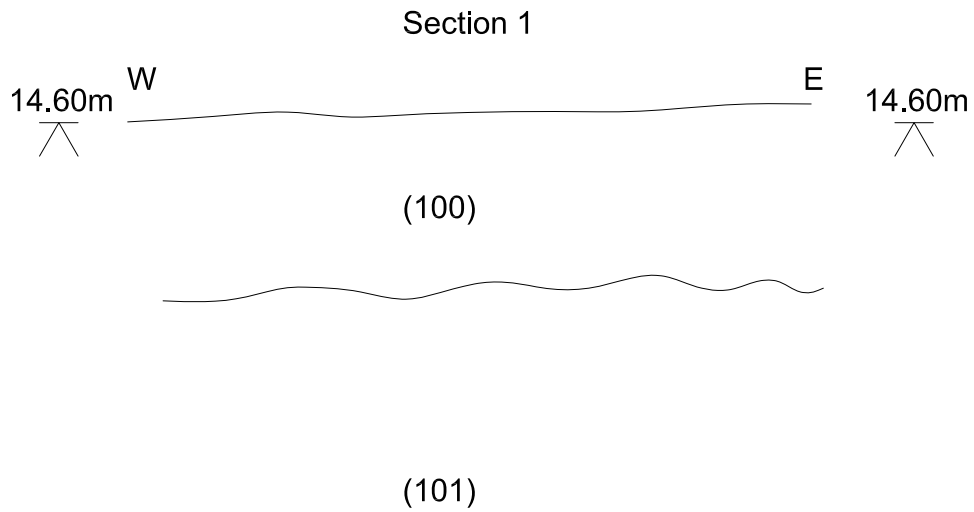


Figure 2: Evaluation trench



1:10@A4



Figure 3: Sections

0m

1m