

Archaeological Monitoring at St James Church of England Primary Academy, High St, Isle of Grain, Rochester, Kent

NGR: 588834 176716

Site Code STJ/WB/14



Report for Chris Browne Builders

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Archaeological Monitoring at St James Church of England Primary Academy, High St, Isle of Grain, Rochester, Kent

Date of report: 03/11/2014



Plate 1. Aerial view of site (red circle) showing the site prior to development.

(Google Earth 7/9/2013: Eye altitude 609m).

1.0 Summary

1.1. From August 12th-15th 2014 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a new extension to the existing school comprising a rear extension, classroom, office and linking corridor at St James Church of England Primary Academy (Fig. 1 & Plate 1).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the owners and instructions received from Chris Browne Builders.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the machine digging and levelling (Plate 2). The archaeological work was undertaken in one phase.

Phase 1: Foundations dug. Any services trenches were to connect to the existing services of the adjacent school.

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of archaeological activity. In addition any archaeological below ground impact.

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is MC/13/0544.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was medium the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning application MC/13/0544 was submitted to the Medway Council. Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Medway Council (KCC) requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the archaeological interest in the site in accordance with Policy BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site and monitored the excavation works from 12th-15th August 2014.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were to:

“Contribute to knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the ground works. Particular attention will be paid to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits”.

4.2. The ground works were to demolish an existing portable mobile classroom and excavate foundation trenches (Plate 2).

4.3. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site monitoring took place.

4.4. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey map is Bedrock geology of London Clay Formation- Clay & Silt (BSG website 1: 50,000). The geology revealed on site was silty clay & sand.

5.2. The application site consisted of an area adjacent to the St James Church of England Primary Academy. The site itself is generally level at a height of about 11m aOD.

5.3. The coastal fort as shown on Plate 3 to the east of the development site is an early 20th century - Second World War electric searchlight emplacement for coast artillery located on the coast of the Isle of Grain. This building was in existence by 1911 and may have served guns mounted on Grain Tower, Wing Battery and Grain Battery. It may have continued in use until around 1940, with the installation of a Twin 6-pounder gun on Grain Tower, which had its own dedicated searchlight. It is of the standard pattern, built in concrete and comprising a rectangular room with flat roof and apsidal end for the light cells. A small room is added to the west side. The building was surveyed by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England between March and April of 1998.

5.4. The prehistoric landscape shown with some clarity on Plate 2 shows field systems and a double ringed ditch- probably a round barrow (red arrow).

6.0 Methodology

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by KCC and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 2008).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out in one phase according to the needs of the building contractors from 12th-15th August 2014.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket necessary to remove the topsoil and cut the foundation trenches (Plate 2).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.8. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and generic methodology discussed with Archaeological Officers, KCC.

7.0 Results

7.1 General

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site sandy silty clay overlaid by topsoil. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology (Plate 2).

8.0 Finds

No buried archaeological features were located in the Archaeological Monitoring phase and no finds were retrieved.

9.0 Discussion

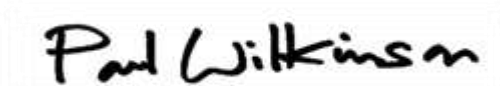
The development site is in an area of archaeological potential. The archaeological team were somewhat disappointed that no archaeology was revealed on the development site.

10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

11.0 Acknowledgments

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Chris Browne Builders for commissioning the project.



Dr Paul Wilkinson, FRSA., MIfA

References

HER data (KCC 2013)

IFA (1994 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

SWAT Archaeological Watching Brief

Appendix 1

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Development site at St James Church of England Primary Academy, High Street, Isle of Grain, Rochester, Kent

SWAT Site Code: STJ/WB/14

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a new school classroom whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that Archaeological Monitoring be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site visits which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

District/Unitary: MDC

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 588834 176716

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Monitoring

Date of recording: August 2014

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)

Geology: Underlying geology is London Clay Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2014) Archaeological Monitoring at St James Church of England Academy, Isle of Grain, Rochester, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

See above

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 03/11/2013

Plates



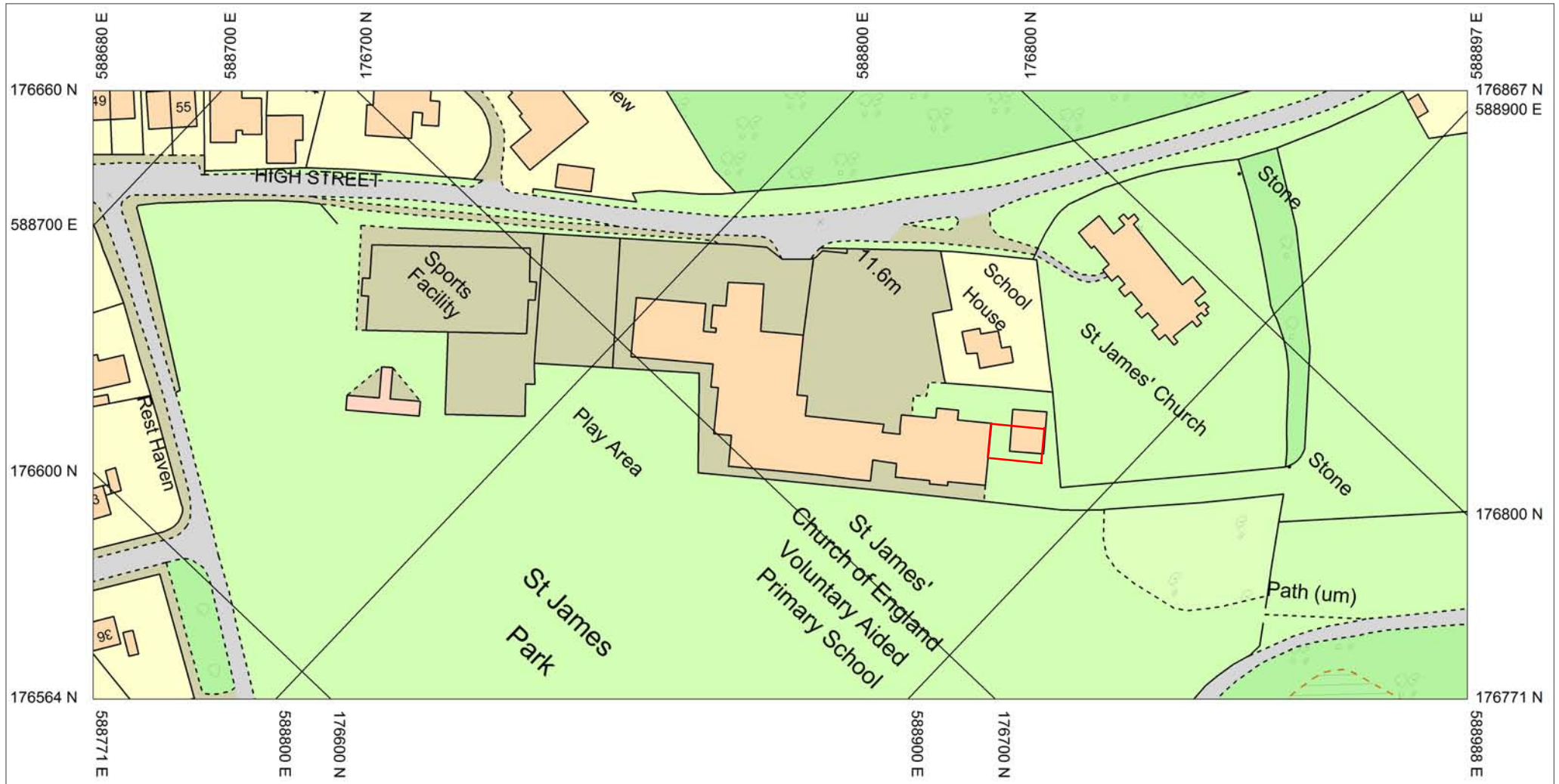
Plate 2. The site showing cutting of foundation trenches (facing north-west)



Plate 3. Google Earth 1960- showing adjacent fort and topography of site



Plate 4. Google Earth 1990- showing prehistoric features to the south of the school



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The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.

School, Grain



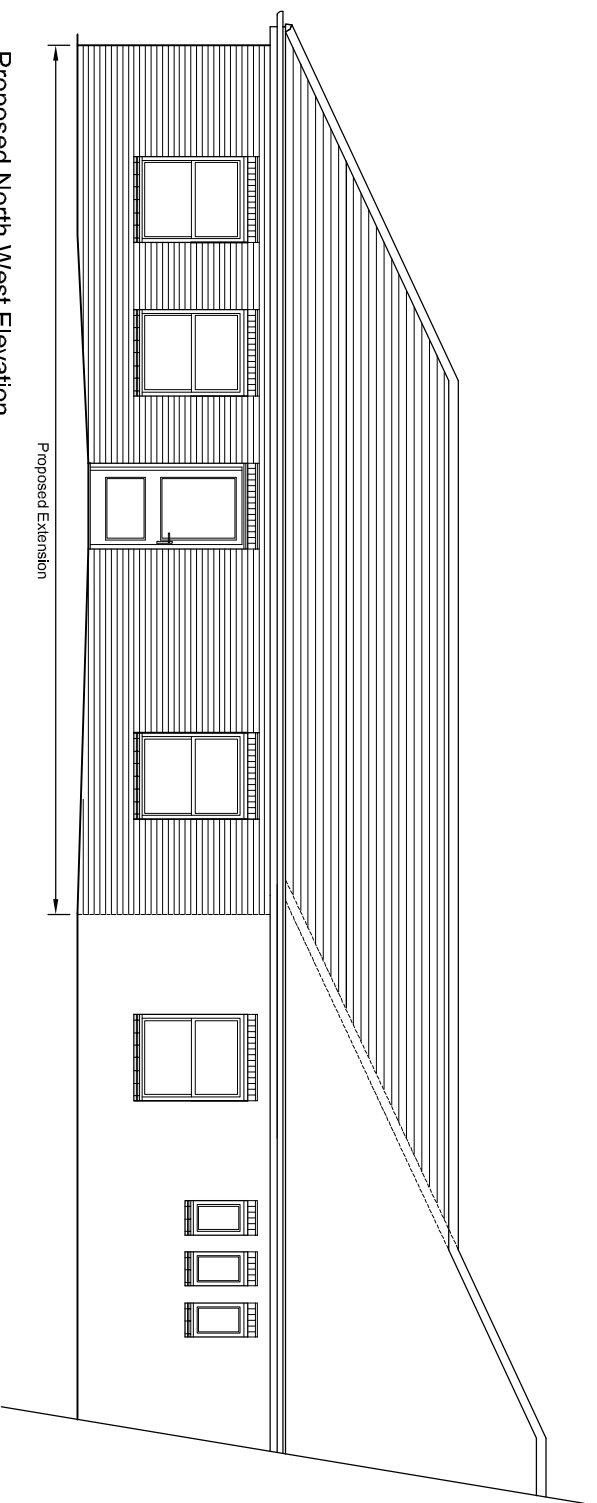
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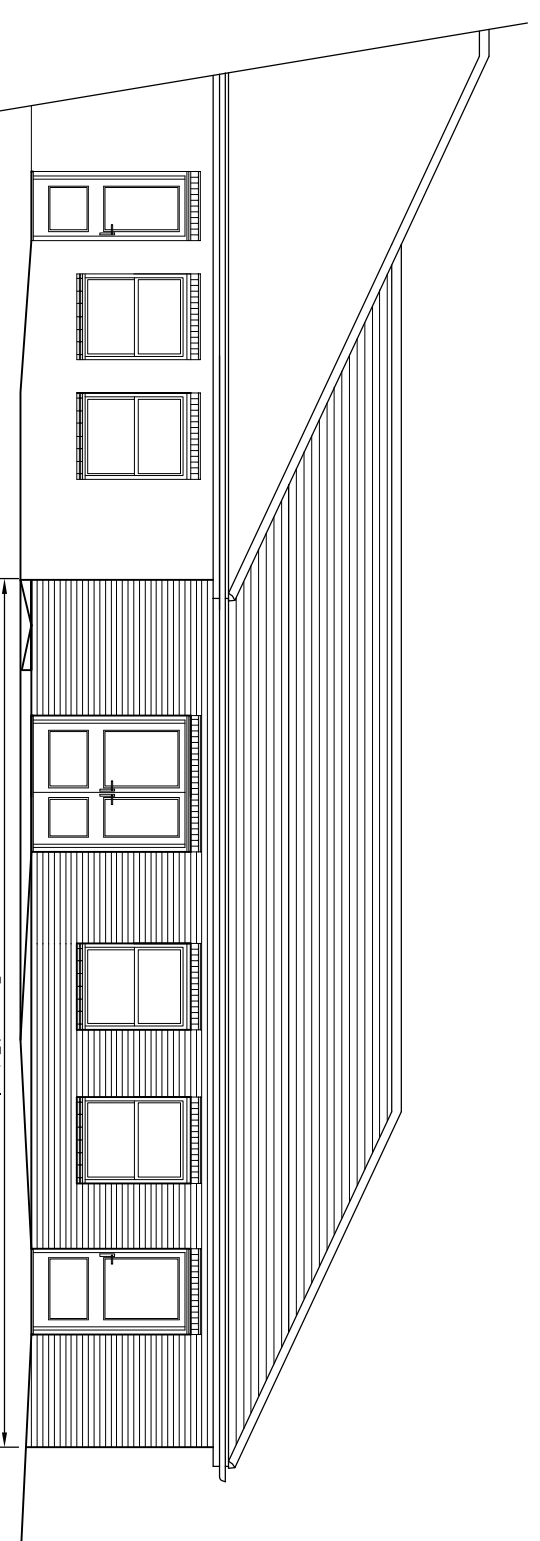
Serial number: 001155681

Plot Centre Coordinates: 588834, 176716

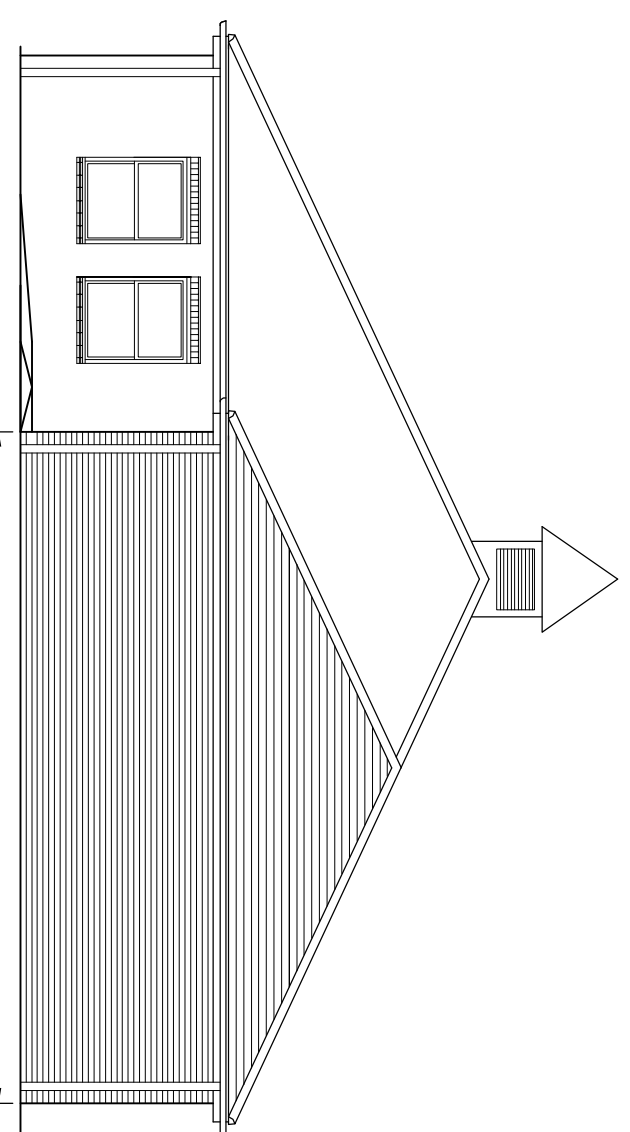
Figure 1
Licence 100039



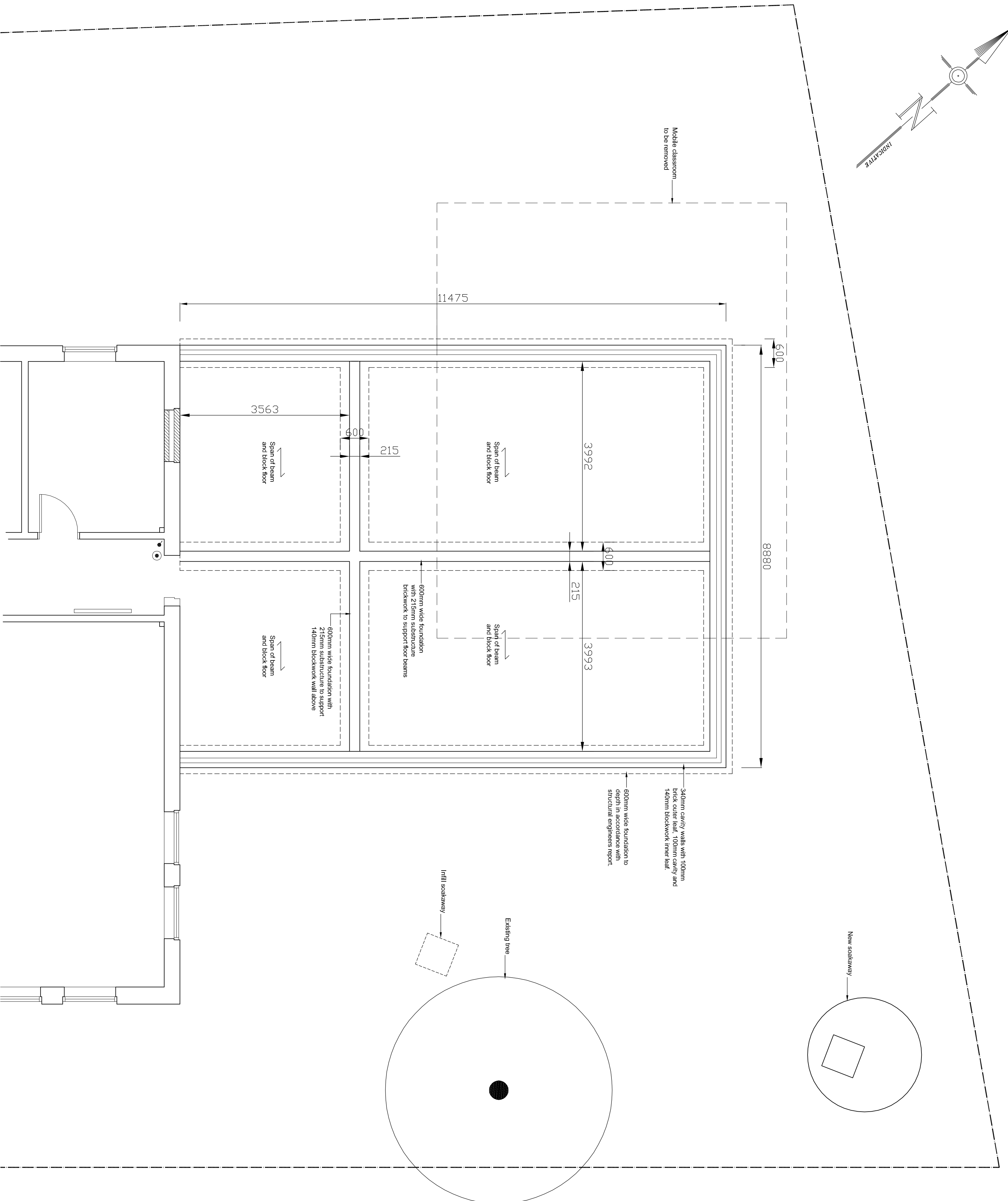
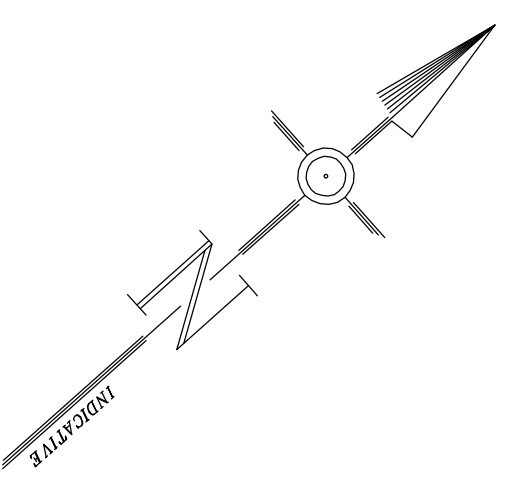
Proposed North West Elevation



Proposed South East Elevation



Proposed North East Elevation



PROPOSED FOUNDATION PLAN 1:50



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PROPOSED CLASSROOM EXTENSION
 ST. JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
 HIGH STREET
 ISLE OF GRAM
 ROCHESTER
 ME3 0BS

THE GOVERNORS OF ST. JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Scale	1:50/1:100	Date	AUG 2014	Drawn by	STJ/H/17301