Archaeological Excavation on Land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent

NGR: 614875 158375

Site Code: Garth/EX/18

(Planning Application: CA/17/01429)

SWAT Archaeology

The Office, School Farm Oast

Graveney Road Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP

Email: info@swatarchaeology.co.uk

Tel.: 01795 532548 and 07885 700112

Contents

Plate 1. Aerial photograph of site (9/4/2017) Google Earth

Archaeological Excavation on Land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent

NGR: 614875 158375

Site Code: GARTH-EX-18

1. Summary

Sterling Architecture are about to start on the development of land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent. A planning application for the proposed development has been approved (Application No.CA/16/01429).

In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource and in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF 2018 and Condition 3 of the planning consent Sterling Architecture commissioned SWAT Archaeology to carry out a programme of archaeological investigations across part of the proposed development site. These archaeological works have been inspected and signed off by Rosanne Cummings the Canterbury City Council Archaeological Officer.

2. Introduction

2.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by the landowners 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 (SWAT 2018) and in discussion with Rosanne Cummings, CCC Archaeological Officer. The evaluation trenching consisted of five trenches which a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising concrete and subsoil overlying natural geology of dark silty clay. In Trench 1 the surface of Roman foundations was revealed. In addition a Roman cobbled surface was identified in Trench 3. The other three trenches revealed no archaeology.

2.2 Subsequently with the finding of archaeological features a programme of additional archaeological work was requested by Canterbury City Council and a strip, map and sample

of a specified area agreed. A WSI specification for this proposed additional work was produced and accepted by Canterbury City Council (SWAT 2018).

3. Site Description and Topography

The site is centred on NGR 614875 158375, and is located in the city of Canterbury, a district of the county of Kent in the South East of England. It lies north of the River Stour in an area of urban development within a Conservation Area. The plot forms approximately one third of an acre of hard standing that provides a parking area. It is bounded to the south by a branch of the Great Stour, to the north by St Stephens Road (B2248), to the west by the Registration of marriages and civil partnerships and to the east by residential development. The site covers an area of approximately 1.2ha.

3.1 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the geology on site is Bedrock Geology of Seaford Chalk Formation- Chalk. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 56 to 59 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Superficial Deposits are Alluvium- Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The archaeological evaluation by SWAT Archaeology (SWAT 2017) revealed a relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence across the majority of the site comprising a concrete surface sealing an intact subsoil which consisted of light to mid grey to brown silty clay overlaid by made up ground with numerous brick and concrete fragments and topped by a concrete slab

4. Planning Background

Canterbury City Council gave planning permission (CA/16/01429) for development of land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury in Kent.
On the advice of Rosanne Cummings, Archaeological Heritage Officer (CCC) a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent. The planning permission has the following Archaeological Condition (3):

> *No development shall take place until, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of:*

(i) archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and

(ii) following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation, post-excavation assessment, analysis, publication or conservation in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

***REASON:** To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with policies HE11 and HE12 of the Canterbury District Local Plan Publication 2017 and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

The results from the initial archaeological evaluation were used to inform CCC Archaeology and Heritage and Canterbury City Council of the findings of archaeological features and a programme of additional strip, map and sample of a specified area was requested. A WSI specification for this proposed work was produced and accepted by Canterbury City Council (SWAT 2018).

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

5.1 The Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KCCHER) The Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KCCHER) has provided details of any previous investigations and discoveries. The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is located outside the Canterbury city walls on the north side of the city. An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment was produced by SWAT Archaeology which contains the archaeological and historical data for this site (SWAT 2016).

5.2 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to carry out an archaeological evaluation on a site (centred on NGR 614875 158375) located between the Stour River and St Stephens Road.

5.3 The work was undertaken in November 2017 as a response to an archaeological condition attached to Planning Application CA//16/01429, which proposes the construction of a three storey building containing 12 two bedroom apartments.

5.4 The evaluation was carried out to determine the possible impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains on the development site and was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company, September 2017) submitted to and approved by the Archaeological Officer of Canterbury City Council.

5.5 The evaluation consisted of the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of five evaluation trenches, of which two (Trenches 1 and 3) exposed significant archaeological features at depths of 1.20m below the present ground surface. Despite the relative absence of archaeological features in the majority of trenches, some finds were present below the subsoil layer, with one large fragment and some smaller fragments of tile positively dating from the Romano-British period. The presence of these finds and associated archaeological features provides an indication that archaeological activity is present within part of the surrounding area.

5.6 Trench 1 was approximately 17m in length, 1m in width and 1.2m in depth. The trench had an alignment approximately north north-east to south south-west. From a depth of 0 – 0.4m was a solid compacted surface (101) which consisted of mainly modern rubble, such as concrete, mixed brick and tarmac. Beyond 0.4m to a depth of 1.2m was dark grey very silty clay (102). At a depth of 1.2m were the remnants of a compacted Roman surface with a sharp vertical edge [103]. The compacted surface consisted of various small and medium sub-angular/angular flints. A Roman tile fragment was recovered from the compacted surface.

5.7 Trench 2 was approximately 11m in length, 1m in width and 1.2m in depth. The trench had an alignment approximately north north-west to south south-east.From a depth of 0 –

0.55m was a solid compacted surface which consisted of mainly modern rubble, such as concrete, mixed brick and tarmac (202). Beyond 0.55m toT a depth of 1.2m was dark grey very silty clay (203).

5.8 Trench 3 was approximately 17m in length, 1m in width and 1.2m in depth. The trench had an alignment approximately north north-west to south south-east.From a depth of 0 – 0.52m was a solid compacted surface which consisted of mainly modern rubble, such as concrete, mixed brick and tarmac (301). Beyond 0.52m to a depth of 1.2m was dark grey very silty clay (302). At the base of the trench was the remnant of a compacted surface consisting of angular/sub-angular flints but only a single relatively disturbed layer survived. Some fragments of Roman brick were recovered from the fill (304).

5.9 Trench 4 was approximately 17m in length, 1m in width and 1.2m in depth. The trench had an alignment approximately north north-west to south south-east.From a depth of 0 – 0.5m was a solid compacted surface which consisted of mainly modern rubble, such as concrete, mixed brick and tarmac (401). Beyond 0.5m to a depth of 1.2m was dark grey very silty clay (402). No archaeological evidence was discovered.

5.10 Trench 5 was approximately 14m in length, 1m in width and 1.2m in depth. The trench had an alignment approximately west south-west to east north-east. From a depth of 0 – 0.6m was a solid compacted surface which consisted of mainly modern rubble, such as concrete, mixed brick and tarmac (501). Beyond 0.6m to a depth of 1.2m was dark grey very silty clay (502). No archaeological evidence was discovered.

5.11 Overview

Archaeological features were recorded in two trenches, Trench 1 and 3. Trench 1 exposed a horizontal flint and mortar surface with some inclusions of Roman tile whilst Trench 3 exposed at its southern end the same horizontal flint and mortar surface, again with Roman brick and tile inclusions.

6. Aims and Objectives

According the SWAT Archaeological Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that:

The primary objective of the archaeological excavation is to excavate and record the archaeological remains revealed in the archaeological evaluation as these remains are in considerable risk from damage or destruction by the proposed development and these remains will then be preserved by record (SWAT 2018).

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification called for two phases of work. Phase One to comprise the removal of recent modern deposits, but excluding foundations followed by cleaning and planning and assessment of all exposed archaeological features and deposits. This assessment will include a strategy for excavation that will be agreed with the client and the Canterbury City Council Archaeological Officer. Phase Two shall consist of the implementation of this strategy and excavation of the exposed archaeological features as determined by the assessment. 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. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with CCC, SWAT and CIfA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

9.1 The excavation consisted of the monitored mechanical excavation of an irregular sub-rectangular riverside area measuring approximately 10m north-south and 20m east-west (Figure 1). The work took place in order to further investigate the results of an evaluation by test trench that had identified structural remains provisionally associated with fragments of Roman-period tile (*tegula*).

9.2 The monitored excavation exposed very compact river gravel (Context Recording Number 2) at a uniform depth of 1.45m below the present ground surface (measuring down from the top of an extensive 0.17m-thick poured concrete floor (no CRN attributed). The river gravel consisted of large and medium-sized water-rounded and extremely closely bedded flint clasts. Three pieces of a *tegula* in a hard, orange-to-red fabric with slight sand tempering and occasional very small fragmented flint inclusions were recovered from flat and highly compact exposed surface of the gravel.

9.3 The original size of the complete tile, which had tapered knife-trimmed flanges, would have been 400mm x 300mm, with a thickness of up to 25mm thick. One piece had a finger-wiped semi-circle on the lower edge, the semi-circle drawn with two fingers held together. Also recovered from the gravel surface were three fresh sherds of medieval pottery derived from two vessels (total weight 51gms) of a type known as Canterbury Tyler Hill Sandy Ware, which has a date-range of *c*. AD 1275 – *c*. 1300/1350. Both the Roman tile fragments and the medieval potsherds can be considered to have been washed down river prior the canalisation of the river in this area.

9.4 The river gravel had been removed in the western part of the investigated area to create a rectangular pit-like structure (CRN 4) measuring 2.8m north-south and with a uniform depth of 0.57m (the western part of the structure extended for more than 4m, beyond the limit of excavation). The pit's basal fill (CRN 7) consisted of a 60mm-thick layer made up of the semi-degraded remains of grass, plant foliage and wood, the semi-degraded state of which was the result of the near anaerobic condition prevailing at that depth. The vegetal material was sealed under a 0.22m-thick deposit of dark grey-brown clay (CRN 6), which was in turn capped by a 0.15m-thick layer of grey-brown silt containing (and largely consisting of) very large amounts of Kent Peg roof tile fragments.

9.5 Apart from the fragments of roof tile, no other cultural materials were recovered from the pit fills, but the tile's circular fixing holes (for tapered wooden pegs) suggested that they were not of modern manufacture.

9.6 A thin (50mm) layer of mid grey-brown alluvial clay (CRN 3) overlay what appeared in plan to be a rectangular spread of roof tile fragments, the alluvial clay being effectively the slightly slumped lower part of a 1.01m-thick layer of grey-brown alluvial clay (CRN 1), which was undoubtedly of riverine origin and which extended across the whole of the investigated area. This was sealed by a sand, gravel and crushed brick rubble bedding layer for the previously described concrete surfacing that extended across the area of investigation.

10. Conclusion

The only potentially significant feature exposed during the investigation was the partly exposed rectangular pit described above. It is proposed that this feature represented what remains of a boathouse built over the termination of an access channel, via which boats could be brought into the house. Such an identification is not certain, but the accumulative evidence for it is provided by the pit's regular rectangular shape, by the mass of peg tile fragments within it and by its riverside location in what, before its use as a bus depot, had been a riverside garden. In any event, the structure is of probable late post medieval or, more precisely, of eighteenth or nineteenth-century date.

11. Recommendations

The proposed development can be judged to pose no threat to any significant archaeological remains and it is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation measures are required.

12. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Rosanne Cummings Archaeological Heritage Officer, Canterbury City Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Allen MCIfA and the report written by Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

Dr Paul Wilkinson 28/08/2018

13. References

Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists (CIfA), Rev (2017). *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field excavation*

SWAT Archaeology (2018) *Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Excavation on Land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent*

14. Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent
SWAT Site Code: GARTH/EX/18
Site Address: As above
Summary:
Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Excavation on the development site above. The site has planning permission for residential flats whereby Canterbury City Council Heritage and Conservation requested that Archaeological Evaluation followed by excavation be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.
The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed archaeology and followed up by a programme of focussed excavation.

District/Unitary: Canterbury City Council
Period(s):
NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 614875 158375
Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Excavation
Date of recording: May 2018
Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)
Geology: Underlying geology is an intact subsoil of silty clay.

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2018) Archaeological Excavation on Land at The Garth, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent

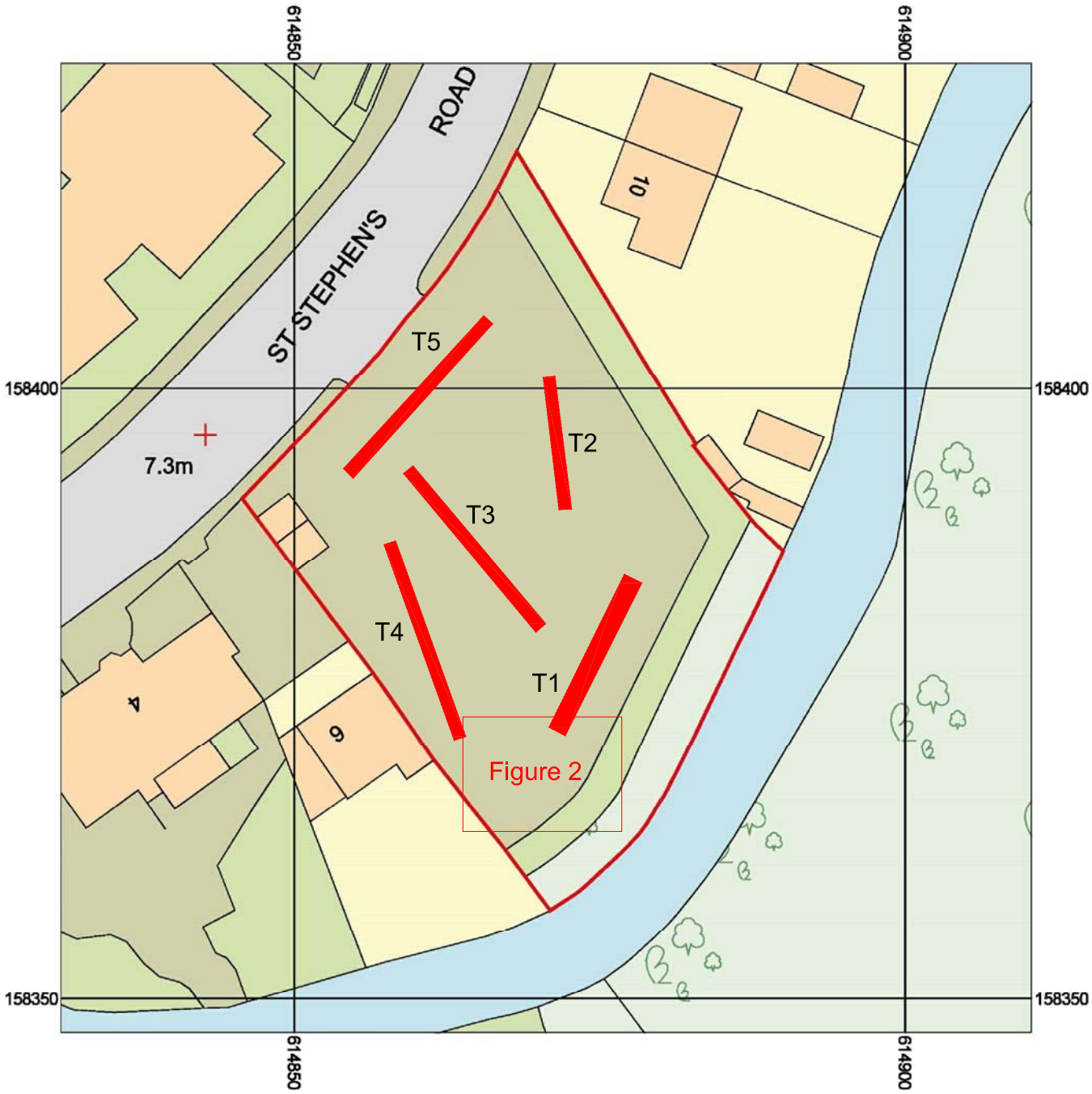
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)
Medieval archaeology found

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson
Date: 28/08/2018

Plate 2. The area of investigation looking southwest showing the rectangular pit, now flooded, extending into the west limit of excavation (one-metre scale)

Plate 3. The excavated feature (Pit 4), which flooded whilst being excavated, with examples of the Kent peg tile recovered from layer 5 (one-metre scale, looking east)



1:500@A4

0m 50m

Figure 1: Proposed Trench Layout

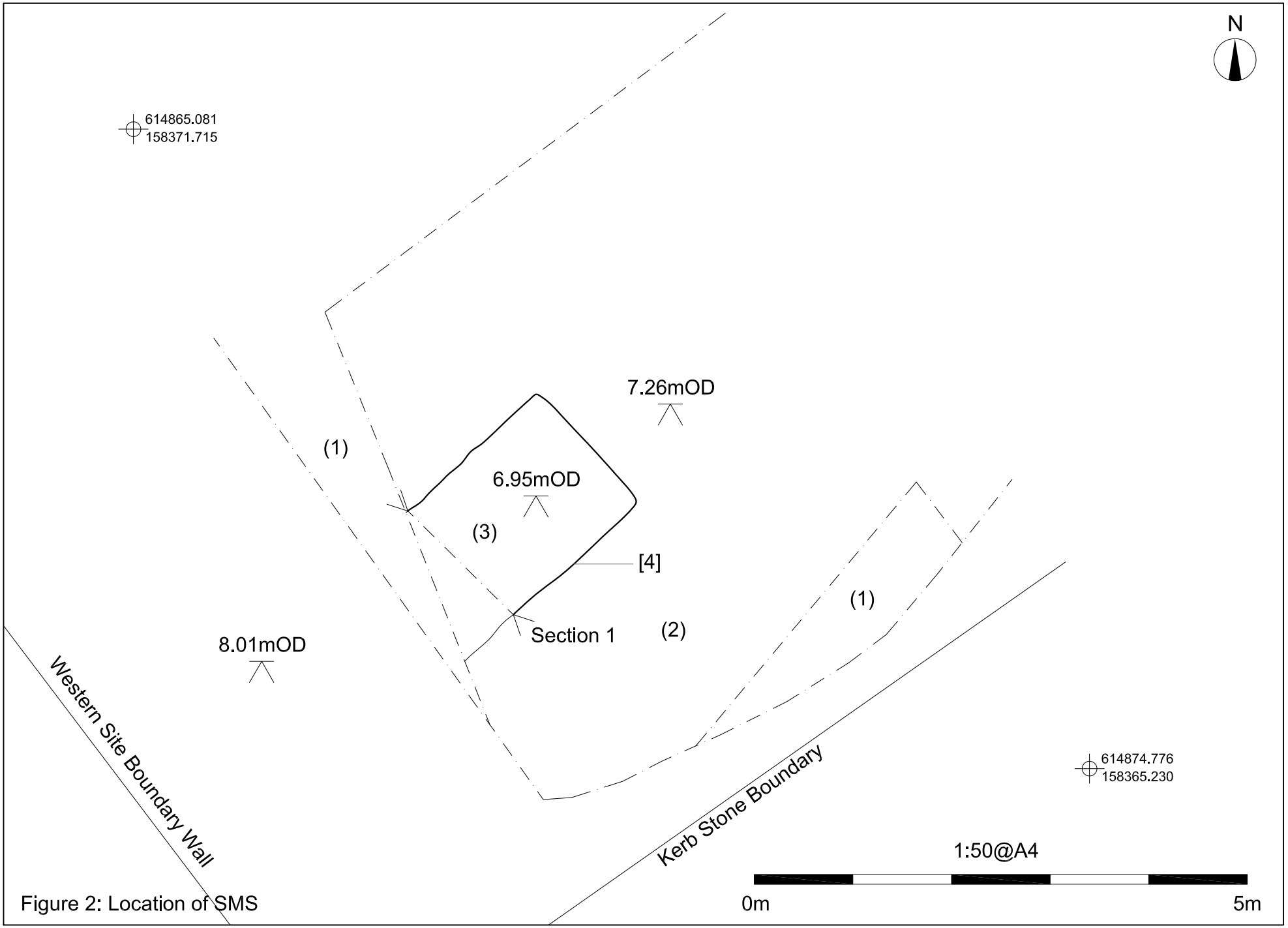
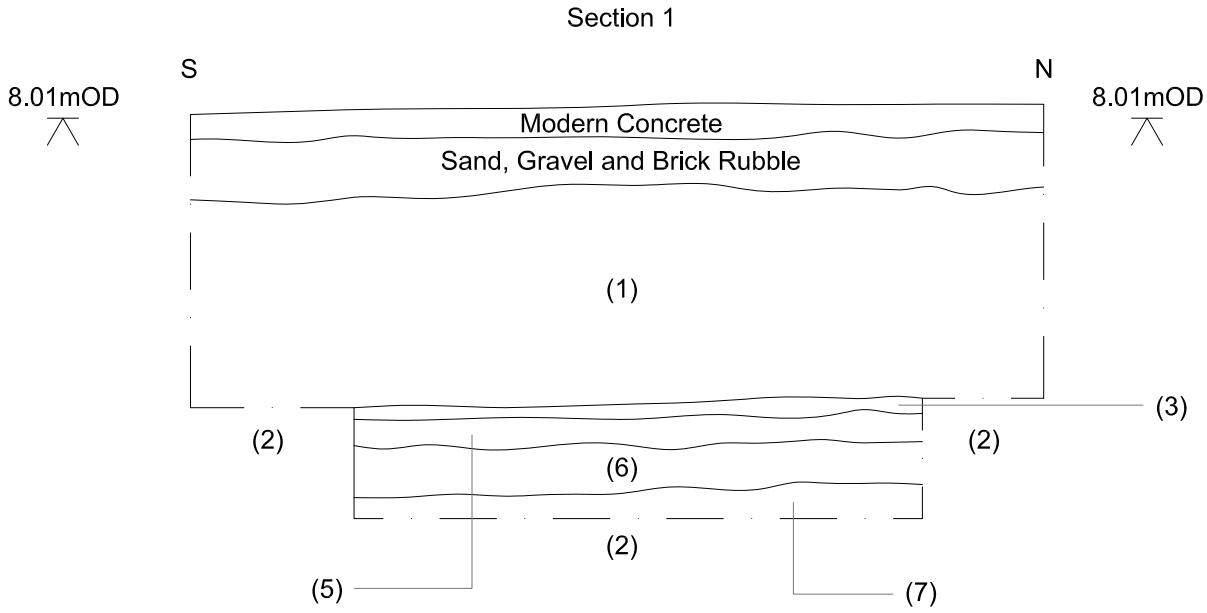


Figure 2: Location of SMS



1:20@A4

0m 2m

Figure 3: Section