

**Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation of Land at Crown Quay,  
Sittingbourne, Kent**

Site Code: CQL/EX/17

NGR Site Centre: 90862 64058

Planning Application Number: 16/507877/FULL



Report for Redrow Homes

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# Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation of Land at Crown Quay, Sittingbourne, Kent

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Redrow Homes to carry out an archaeological excavation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2017) and in discussion with the Principal Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The excavation was carried out between the 5<sup>th</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

1.2.1 Development proposals for this site comprise the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of 405 market and affordable houses (16/507877/FULL). On the basis of present archaeological information, the Archaeological Officer for Swale Borough Council recommended that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological work in order to clarify the historical and archaeological elements within the site. The results can then guide appropriate mitigation measures for the future development.

1.2.2 An initial archaeological evaluation was carried out by SWAT Archaeology (2017b). Results from the evaluation led to the requirement of a further stage of excavation works, which are detailed in this report.

### **1.3 Site Description and Topography**

1.3.1 The proposed development site is a large brownfield site on the northern edge of Sittingbourne town centre. The site is vacant and has been reduced to slab level. Its northern boundary is an important frontage to Milton Creek whilst its southern boundary adjoins Eurolink Way. The Sittingbourne Retail Park and Eurolink Industrial Estate border the site to the west and east. The OS location is NGR 90862 64058 and is approximately 10.68 hectares in extent (Figure 1).

1.3.2 On the basis of current information from BGS, the site lies on Bedrock Geology of Seaford Chalk Formation. The site has been subject to extensive brick earth extraction and geotechnical

investigations undertaken on the site as recently as June 2015 show that Made Ground was encountered in almost all of the exploratory holes. Ground levels are 12m aOD on the south western corner of the site to 4m aOD on the north. The site had been subject to extensive brickearth extraction and geotechnical investigations undertaken on the site in June 2015 showed that Made Ground was encountered in almost all of the exploratory holes.

- 1.3.3 The Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) comprised of 2 areas. Area 1 (including the site Access Road) and Area 2 were excavated as part of the initial phase of groundworks. Area 1 covered an approximate area of 4250m<sup>2</sup> and Area 2 covered c. 1700m<sup>2</sup>.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KCCHER) has provided details of any previous investigations and discoveries. The potential of this area has been gauged in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains. A high-status Bronze Age burial or metal workers hoard was recovered within the site in 1824.

- 2.1.2 Roman burials are recorded close to the site at TQ 913 640 (HER EWX 6567).

- 2.1.3 A 7th century Anglo Saxon cemetery, with two clusters of burials were also recorded just to the west of the site in 1824-1826 (TQ 96 SW 27).

- 2.1.4 Further information on the above is provided in the Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Archaeological Impact Assessment (CgMS 2016).

### **2.2 Archaeological Evaluation (SWAT Archaeology 2017)**

- 2.2.1 The most recent archaeological work in the area undertaken by SWAT Archaeology involved an evaluation on the site (CQL-EV-17) in May 2017. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site that comprised of the recent demolition of the brickworks, the survival (in two small areas) of early brickworks and the exposure, within the central area, of the natural brickearth and bedrock chalk due to large scale truncation and landscaping of the sites' topography. The evaluation also revealed that extensive truncation or land in-filling had taken place across the site, especially to the north, nearest Milton Creek, where extensive deposits of material suggest that the foreshore was reclaimed during the Victorian period, probably to facilitate the expansion of the brickworks.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 General Aims**

3.1.1 According to the SWAT Archaeology Specification, the aims of the archaeological work include:

- Assessing the likely impact of the proposed development on the archaeological remains using the results of earlier fieldwork.
- Assessing the impact of past development on the site's archaeological potential.
- Excavating archaeological remains that are threatened by development.

3.1.2 The principle objectives of the archaeological excavation were to:

- Establish the presence or absence of any archaeological resource which may be affected by the proposed development.
- Ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface (within safe parameters), and if possible, the character, date and quality of any buried archaeological remains and their possible relationship to archaeological features revealed by the earlier fieldwork.
- Determine the state of preservation and the importance of the archaeological resource within the wider confines of Canterbury's archaeology.
- Ensure preservation by record of the archaeological resource.

(SWAT Archaeology 2017)

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation for the site at Crown Quay Lane was submitted by SWAT Archaeology and passed by the Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. Within the Scheme a methodology was agreed upon which stated that the archaeological excavation would be undertaken in two phases, and the SMS would involve the investigation of two areas where there was potential for surviving industrial archaeological remains. Phase 1 consisted of the mechanical removal of the overlying demolition deposits followed by the cleaning and planning of all exposed archaeological features, deposits and structures at the uppermost horizon. Phase 2 comprised the implementation of the excavation strategy, including exploratory trenching, after consultation with the Heritage Officer and in agreement with Redrow Homes.

4.1.2 The SMS on the site comprised of two isolated areas. Area 1 was situated on a raised plateau, situated toward the southwest corner of the site at 7.19m aOD. Area 2 was situated within a

reduced part of the site to the east at 4.13m aOD. Area 1 incorporated evaluation trenches 2 and 21. Area 2 incorporated trenches 15 and 17.

#### *Phase 1*

- 4.1.3 As per the Written Scheme of Investigation, Phase One commenced with the machine removal of the demolition deposits of Area 1, followed by Area 2. The Access Road within Area 1 was removed last (to facilitate the groundworks).

#### *Phase 2*

- 4.1.4 The principle aim of the Phase Two excavation strategy was the preservation by record of all buried archaeological remains located within the two areas, especially in the case of brick kilns.

## **4.2 Monitoring**

- 4.2.1 Curatorial monitoring was available during the course of the excavation.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 The following narrative was based on the preliminary excavation archive of the SMS of two distinct areas within the development site at Crown Quay Lane. Area 1 was located toward the southwest corner of the site and it measured approximately 4250m<sup>2</sup>. Area 2 was located towards the northeast corner of the site and measured approximately 1700m<sup>2</sup>. The spot dating of the material recovered from this site has been fully completed and plans of the site have been included (Figs 2, 3, 4 and 5) showing feature location and their relationship with features and buildings.

- 5.1.2 Based on the completed excavation archive and material spot dating, the majority of the features can be grouped into two broad phases; Victorian/Edwardian and Modern.

### **5.2 Victorian/Edwardian (Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5)**

- 5.2.1 The Victorian/Edwardian phase at Crown Quay Lane was represented by a series of yellow stock brick walls in Area 1 and a surviving group of brick clamps in Area 2.

- 5.2.2 The walls within Area 1 represented a group of permanent industrial buildings and internal divisions that were later demolished during the modern phase (Plates 1 – 3).

- 5.2.3 Wall [1011] was aligned NW-SE and was observed for a length of +35m. It was bonded with grey mortar containing charcoal and a single brick's width of 22cm. The southeast section was obscured by a large deposit of redeposited industrial waste material (1010).
- 5.2.4 Wall [1012] was also aligned NW-SE and was parallel to wall [1011]. It was also bonded with grey mortar containing charcoal and a single brick's width of 22cm. It also had a length of +35m.
- 5.2.5 Wall [1013] (Plate 4) was situated southwest of wall [1012] and was exposed during the expansion of Trench 21. It had been grubbed out and sealed underneath redeposited industrial materials (1008). Aligned NE-SW the wall was set at 090° to wall [1012]. It was observed for a length of +12m and had a width of 1m.
- 5.2.6 Wall [1014] was located within the extreme southeast corner of the area. It had also been grubbed out and sealed underneath redeposited industrial materials (1009). Also aligned NE-SW, it was observed for a length of +3.50m and had a width of 0.75m.
- 5.2.7 The surviving brick clamps within Area 2 were arranged in NE-SW rows and set in to concave depressions within a large, continuous floor surface (2027). Each clamp was represented by at least two (sometimes three) successive phases of construction and demolition, represented by deliberately placed thin layers of material, creating individual platforms, that with each successive firing sometimes merged to form a single horizon. Their 'footprints' were roughly ovoid in plan and were mostly aligned NW-SE. The 'bedding layer' of each, during each phase of clamp construction, comprised of very compacted coarse greensand on which was placed a smaller deposit of very compacted flint gravel, which became discoloured red during firing. Encompassing several of the clamp 'footprints' was a deposit of black burnt material, which may represent the rakings of the spent fuel, after completion of the firing process.
- 5.2.8 Clamp One (BC.1) (Figs. 2, 4 and 5) was situated within the NW corner of the area and was aligned NW-SE. It had been severely truncated by the construction and subsequent demolition of the 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The 'footprint' measured 12m x +6m and occurred at 4.33m aOD. An exploratory machine cut trench revealed that the base of the depression within which the clamp was formed had a depth of 0.93m and occurred at 3.46m aOD. Exposed on the surface was a spread of very compact burnt, red flint (2000) which lay on top of a layer of very compact coarse greensand (2001).
- 5.2.9 Clamp Two (BC.2) (Figs. 2 and 4. Plates 5 and 6) was situated less than 2m south of clamp one. It was also aligned NW-SE. The 'footprint' measured 12m x 7m and occurred at 4.36m aOD. Exposed on the surface was a spread of very compact burnt, red flint (2003) which sat on a layer of very

compact coarse greensand (2004). This in turn lay on a spread of burnt black material (2005) that extended eastwards.

- 5.2.10 Clamp Three (BC.3) (Figs. 2 and 4. Plate 6) was exposed during the evaluation (Trench 17) and was also aligned NW-SE. The SMS revealed that there were three phases of clamp construction, visible on the surface. Each phase migrated, subtly in a NE direction. The latest clamp was less than a metre south of clamp two and measured 5m x +3m and comprised of a layer of very compact coarse greensand (2006) at 4.54m aOD. This context lay on top of a second phase of clamp, that measured 10m x 3m and comprised of a large spread of very compact, burnt, red flint (2007), which in turn sealed a large spread of very compact coarse greensand (2008). The earliest phase, represented by a spread of very compact burnt, red flint (2009) measured 10m x +2m and occurred at 4.24m aOD. Butting up against, and along the southern edge of (2009) was a deposit of burnt black material (2010).
- 5.2.11 Clamp Four (BC.4) (Figs. 2, 4 and 5. Plates 7 and 8) was situated 7m east of clamp three. The exposed spread of very compact burnt, red flint (2011) of the clamp was aligned NE-SW, measured 6m x 3m and occurred at 4.22m aOD. The 'bedding layer' of very compact coarse greensand (2013) merged with that of clamp five. An exploratory machine cut trench revealed that the base of the depression within which the clamp was formed had a depth of 0.53m and occurred at 3.69m aOD.
- 5.2.12 Clamp Five (BC.5) (Figs. 2, 4 and 5. Plate 8) was situated 5m NE of clamp four, was aligned NW-SE and measured 6m x 5m. The northern section of the clamp had been truncated by the construction and subsequent demolition of the 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The exposed surface of the clamp comprised of a layer of very compact burnt, red flint (2012) that occurred at 4.31m aOD. This sat on a large spread of very compact coarse greensand (2013) that merged with clamp four. An exploratory machine cut trench revealed that the base of the depression within which the clamp was formed had a depth of 0.68m and occurred at 3.63m aOD.
- 5.2.13 Clamp Six (BC.6) (Figs. 2 and 4. Plates 8 and 9) was the best preserved example of the group, although the north section of the footprint was truncated by a wall from one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century factory buildings. The SMS revealed that there were three phases of clamp construction, visible on the surface at 4.22m aOD. Each phase migrated, subtly in a northerly direction. The latest clamp measured +10m x 7m and comprised of a layer of very compact burnt, red flint (2014) that lay on top of a very compact layer of coarse greensand (2015). This context lay on top of a second phase of clamp, that measured +2m x 4m and comprised of a large spread of very compacted, burnt, red flint (2016), which in turn sealed a large spread of very compacted coarse greensand (2017). The earliest phase, represented by another spread of very compact coarse greensand (2018) measured

+1m x 5m and occurred at 4.08m aOD. Butting up against, and along the eastern edge of (2014) and (2015) was a deposit of burnt black material (2019) that also sealed the secondary and primary clamp phases.

- 5.2.14 The SMS of the area also revealed that the burnt black material (2019) was part of linear system of segments of burnt black deposits (2020) – (2026) that formed the outer, eastern, southern and western edges of the brick clamp area (Figs. 4 and 5).

### **5.3 Modern (Figures 2 and 3)**

- 5.3.1 The modern phase at Crown Quay Lane was evident throughout the development site. Within the two SMS areas, the modern phase was predominantly represented by building debris filling the course of several walls that had been removed during the demolition of the industrial complex in 2010.

- 5.3.2 Walls [1001], [1002], [1003] and [1004] within Area 1, formed the footprint of at least one large-scale building aligned NE-SW. Part of this building had been divided into four NW-SE aligned rooms, formed by three concrete beams [1005], [1006] and [1007]. The floors within the building had been removed in 2010, and this exposed a series of redeposited industrial materials (1008), (1009) and (1010), laid down to consolidate the ground level prior to the construction of the modern building.

- 5.3.3 The modern phase within Area 2 was also observed as a series of walls, removed and backfilled with demolition debris in 2010. The footings of another building along the northeast LOE truncated Brick Clamp 6, confirming that the brick clamps pre-dated the construction of the modern buildings within the industrial complex

## **6 FINDS**

### **6.1 Overview**

- 6.1.1 No additional finds were retrieved during the excavations.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

### **7.1 Statement of Potential**

- 7.1.1 The archaeological excavations at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent have demonstrated the presence of Victorian through to Modern activities, related to the brick making industry on the Site. In light of the severe truncation of the site through a mixed process of landscaping and subsequent

phases of demolition, re-building and further demolition of the industrial buildings on site, it is recommended that no further archaeological investigation is required.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

8.1.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Redrow Homes and for commissioning and funding the project. Special thanks are also extended to AR Demolition and Simon Mason of KCC for all their help and support during the fieldwork stage. The Illustrations were produced by Digitise This. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Holmes and Dan Worsley. The report written by Simon Holmes. The project was managed by Simon Holmes and Dr Paul Wilkinson and the report edited by Dr Paul Wilkinson.

## **9 REFERENCES**

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SWAT Archaeology, 2018a, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation

SWAT Archaeology, 2018b, Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Crown Quay, Sittingbourne, Kent. SWAT Archaeology.

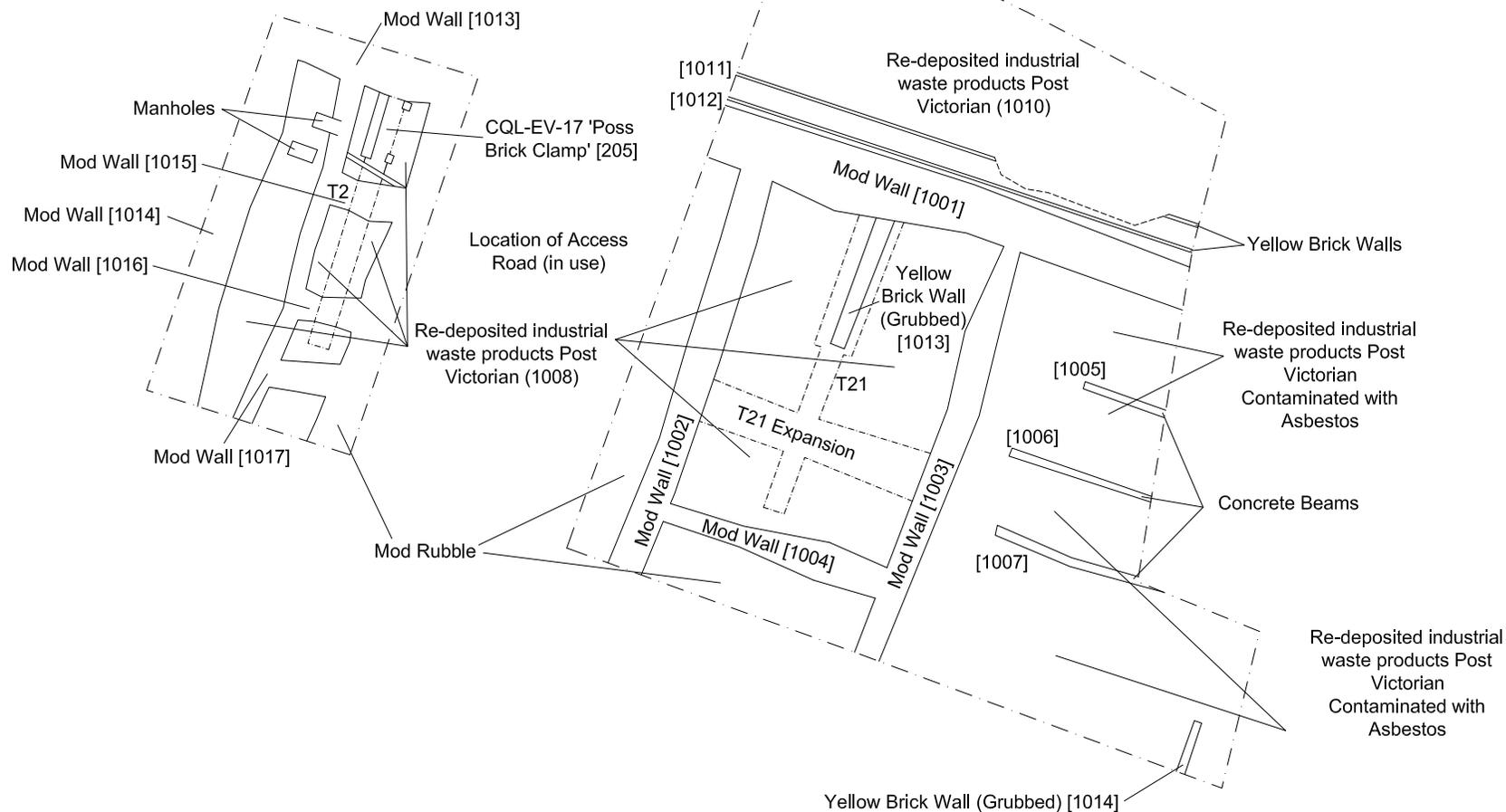
Kent County Council 'Exploring Kent's Past'

[www.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast)



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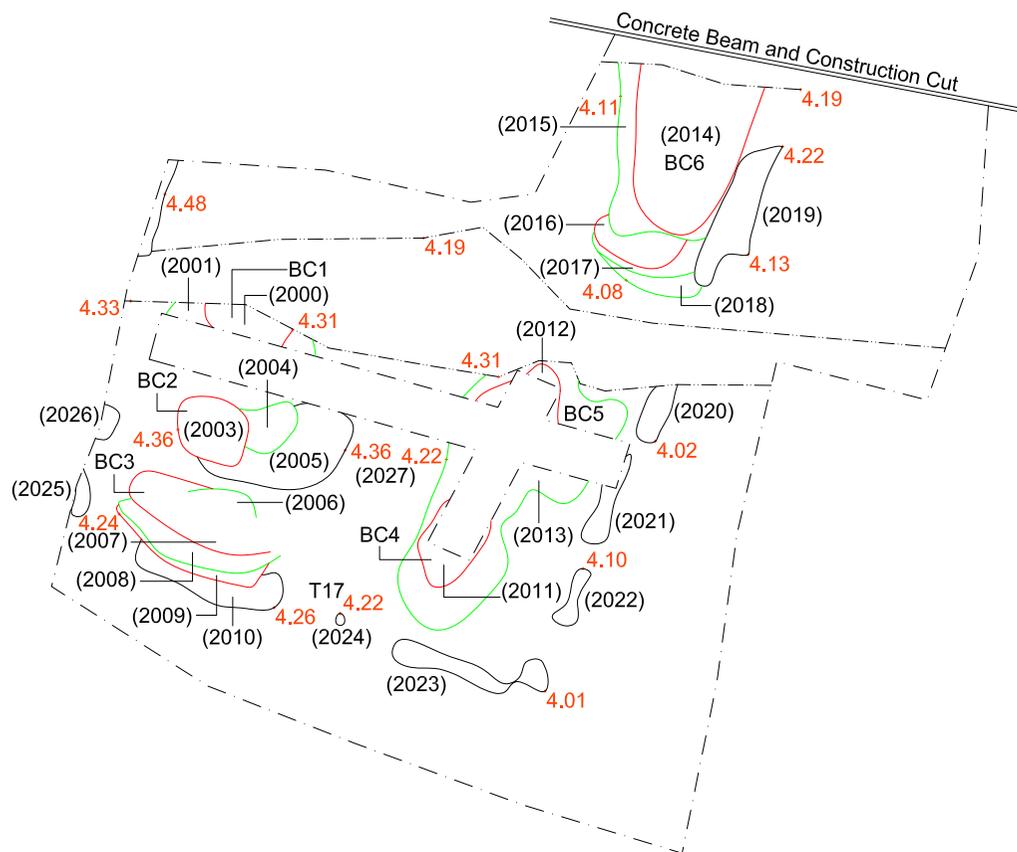
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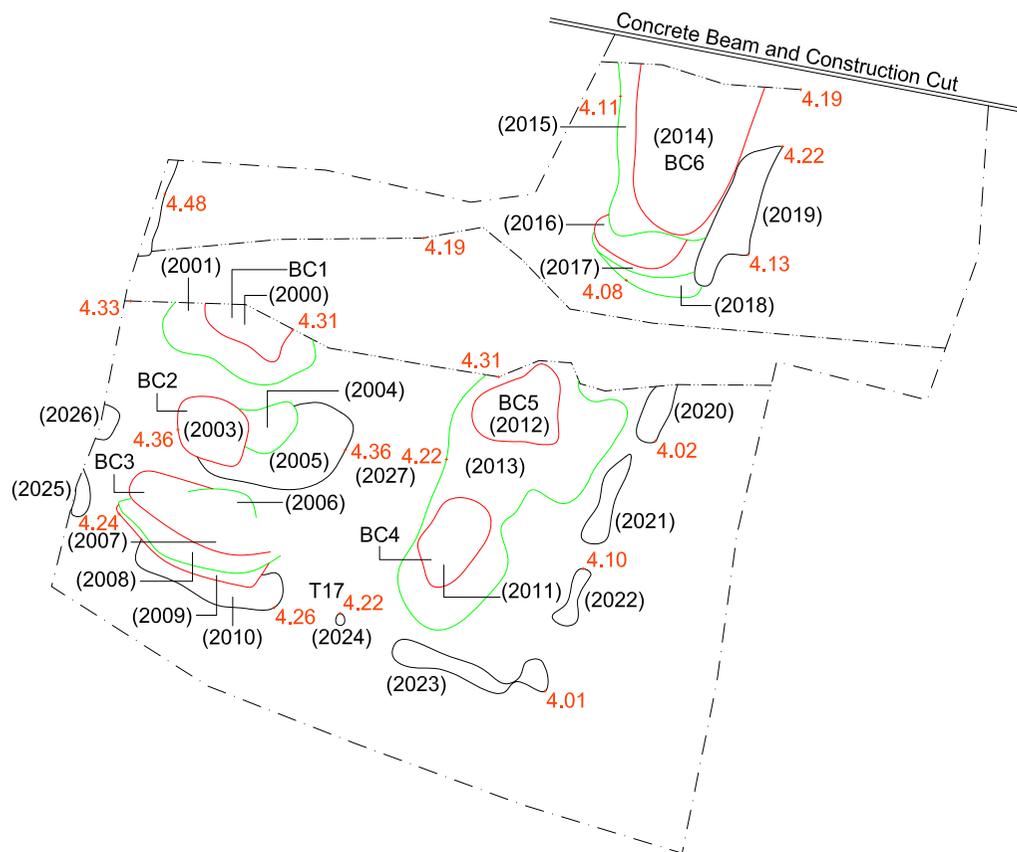
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Pl.1.Tr.2 Brick Clamp [202] Looking N (2)



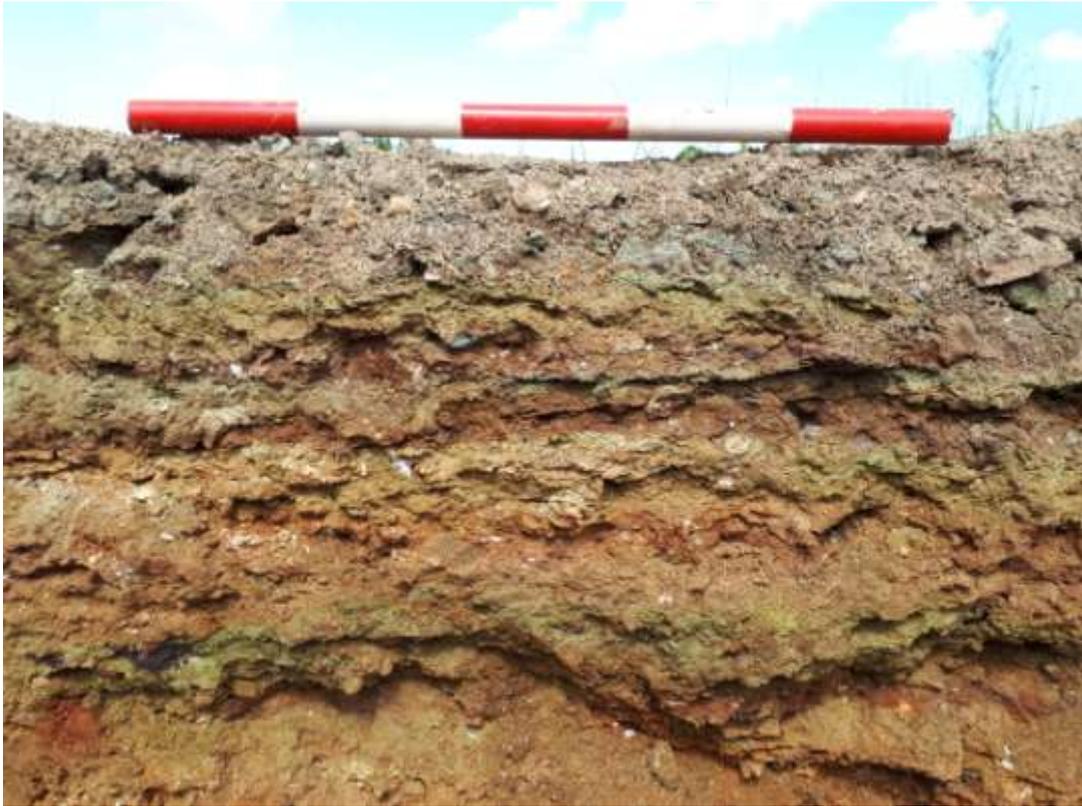
Pl.2. Tr.10 Culvert [1001]



Pl.3. Tr.15 SW Facing Section (2)



Pl.4. Tr.17 SW Facing Section (2)



Pl.5. Tr.17 SW Facing Section. Detail



Pl.6. Tr.24 Wall [2407]



Pl.7. Ocarina



Pl.8. Ocarina



Pl.9. Tr.28 Culvert [2804]



Pl.10. Tr.28 Culvert [2804] N Facing Section



Pl.11. Tr.29 S Facing Sample Section



Pl.12. Tr.36 NE Facing Section



Pl.14. Brass Tag



Pl.15. Tr.43 Road Surface [4309]



Pl.16. Tr.49 S Facing Sample Section



Pl.17. Porcelain Makers' Mark



Pl.18. Makers' Seal



Pl.19. Tr.54 Culvert [5411]



Pl.20. Tr.54 Culvert [5412]