

Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

Site Code: LON-EV-17

NGR: NGR Site Centre: 589574 163848

Planning Application Number: 15/505404/FULL



Report for Mr Geoff West

22/01/2018

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Mr Geoff West to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in July 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC Archaeology 2017) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and/or brick rubble and subsoil overlying the natural geology of chalk (Trench 1) and backfilled quarry or pit (Trench 2). Despite the potential for archaeological remains and relatively good preservation conditions, no archaeological features were recorded

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Mr Geoff West to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at 91 London Road, Sittingbourne in Kent (**Figure 1**). A planning application (SW/15/505404/FULL) was approved by Swale Borough Council (SBC) for a new dwelling on condition that a programme of archaeological work is undertaken.

1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to SBC, requested that the programme of works comprising an archaeological evaluation followed by appropriate mitigation measures, if considered necessary. This recommendation was subsequently added as a Condition to the planning approval, which stated that;

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written 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. These details are required prior to the commencement of the development as they form an intrinsic part of the proposal, the approval of which cannot be separated from the carrying out of the rest of the development.

(SW/15/589574 163848/FULL, Condition 3. 18th August 2016)

1.1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in July 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by KCC Archaeology (2017), prior to commencement of works by Simon Mason, the Principal Archaeological Officer, at KCCHC. A copy of the Specification is provided in **Appendix 2**.

1.2 Site Description and Topography

1.2.1 The site is centred on NGR 6589574 163848 and located south of the London Road on the west side of Sittingbourne and to the rear of 91 London Road which faces on to Lydbrook Close, a

residential side street that accessed the former quarry and haulage yard there. The site was occupied by a number of small garages, a portacabin and concrete parking.

- 1.2.2 According to the British Geological Society (BGS), the site lies on Bedrock Geology of Seaford Chalk Formation- Chalk. The Superficial Deposits are not recorded. Ground levels are approximately 22m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by KCC Archaeology (2017).

- 2.1.2 In consultation with KCC, the Principal Archaeological Officer stated that;

'Given the prominent location and especially close to the main London to Canterbury Roman road there is a very high potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date to be present on the site. This location has high archaeological potential due to the presence of the Roman road corridor and specifically the findings of two Anglo-Saxon graves located in the area of the quarrying to the south. A Roman walled cemetery has also been found to the west.'

(Reference: Comments for WSI for Planning Application 15/502738/FULL, dated 04/08/15)

2.2 Overview (SWAT Archaeology 2017)

- 2.2.1 The potential of this area has been assessed in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains and there is a very high potential for archaeological remains to be found.

- 2.2.2 Two early medieval graves were found in March, 1882, near Chalkwell next to Sittingbourne, and about 100m south west of the proposed development site and the KCC HER entry states:

'150 yards south-west of the London Road and 120 yards south-west from where the two Roman graves were found in Dec. 1879, (see TQ 86 SE 19). The burials lay north - south, heads to the north, and contained two fluted amber glass vessels of the tumbler type, a bronze bucket handle and a bronze girdle clasp. (1) (TQ 89466377). Early medieval burials 1869-1882. Two glass cups in the British Museum. The chalk-pit in which these graves were found went of out use in the early years of this century and it has been used as a Haulage Contractors Depot since about 1939. The pit face in the vicinity of the grave at TQ 89466377 is overgrown and mutilated by buildings. No information was gained locally to resolve the discrepancies in date of finds.

And about 150m to south-west:

'Inhumation burials, Chalkwell, Sittingbourne. 1882 Two early medieval graves were found c.150 yards south west of Watling Street and 120 yards from Roman burials (TQ 86 SE 19), on lowish ground. In the first grave were two dark amber-coloured fluted glasses, one on each side of the head, and a bronze handle of a bucket near them; in the second grave was a bronze buckle. The glasses are in the British Museum. Two pouch-bottles - body with corrugations: pointed base - from Chalkwell are in the British Museum. Accession nos. 83.12-13.580,581. Probably 7th century.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Specific Aims (KCC 2017)

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the KCC Specification (Appendix 2). These were to;

'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.

In particular the evaluation aims to assess the potential of the area to contain remains associated with the road corridor and the nearby burial sites of Roman and Anglo-Saxon date.

The evaluation seeks to determine the potential for earlier archaeological remains on the site and how they may be affected by development or may have been affected by previous development.

(KCC 2017: 6)

3.2 General Aims

3.2.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (KCC 2017) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CifA 2014).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of two evaluation trenches were proposed within the extents of the Site (Figure 1).

4.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon and/or natural geology, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

4.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were 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. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CifA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.

4.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

4.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in **Appendix 1**. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of two evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising topsoil/rubble (101, 201) sealing re-deposited layers which overlay the natural chalk geology in Trench 1 whilst Trench 2 seems to be the backfill of a Victorian pit or quarry.

5.2.2 The topsoil generally consisted of mid grey brown silty clay mixed with rubble, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones, topped in places with grass, overlying the re-deposited layers which consisted of light to mid orange brown silt clay with brick fragments and tar pieces. Natural geology comprised chalk in Trench 1.

5.2.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figures 1-2 provide a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-6 include selected site photographs.

5.3 Overview

5.3.1 No important archaeological features or finds were recorded within any of the two trenches.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

Despite the lack of archaeological features, pottery was retrieved from the backfill of a pit or quarry (204) in Trench 2. Mostly mid-late nineteenth century and typical of many Victorian and Modern-period deposits – fragments of mid nineteenth century table and bedroom wares - pale blue, standard deeper blue, black or green transfer-printed plates, basins or ewers, a few fragments of the latter type just plain white with mould-decorated rims, few pieces of pantry and kitchen Staffordshire/Derby Yellow Ware and a fragment of a James Keiller, Dundee, marmalade pot.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Archaeological Narrative

7.1.1 Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains no important archaeological features were recorded within the two trenches.

- 7.1.2 The presence of the natural chalk in Trench 1 would suggest that preservation levels are relatively high and that if archaeological remains were present in Trench 1 then they would have suffered minimal disturbance.
- 7.1.3 Despite the absence of archaeological features, finds were present in the re-deposited infill of pit/quarry in Trench 2, with 18 sherds of pottery.

7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Development proposals are unlikely to impact on archaeological remains. Further archaeological mitigation, should it be necessary, will need to be determined in consultation with the Kent County Council and local planning authority.
- 7.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Principal Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CifA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 9.1.1 SWAT would like to thank Geoff West for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for his advice and assistance.
- 9.1.2 Paul Wilkinson supervised the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. David Britchfield (MCIfA) produced the draft text for this report which was edited by Dr. Paul Wilkinson (MCIfA).

10 REFERENCES

ADS 2013. Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

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English Heritage 2002. Environmental Archaeology; a guide to theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, Swindon, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines

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11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1 Dimensions: 15m x 1.9m Ground Level: 22.14m aOD			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
101	Mid yellow brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.40
102	Thin band of roadstone fragments, tar pieces and rounded gravel	Re-deposited	0.40-0.58
103	Light orange brown silty clay with numerous small fragments of brick, flint and charcoal	Re-deposited	0.58-0.87
104	Chalk	Natural	0.87+

Trench 2 Dimensions: 10m x 1.9m Ground Level: 22.05m aOD			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
201	Mid grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.35
202	Thin band of crushed chalk and ash	Re-deposited	0.35-0.40
203	Re-deposited grey brown subsoil mixed with coal fragments and ash	Re-deposited	0.40-0.70
204	Pit or quarry infill, brick dust and fragments with numerous pot sherds	Re-deposited	0.70+

12 APPENDIX 2 – KCC HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

SWAT Site Code: LON-EV-17

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Mr Goff West to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in July 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC 2017) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising re-deposited material overlying natural geology of chalk in Trench 1 and re-deposited layers and pit or quarry infills in Trench 2.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 589574 163848

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: July 2017

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

Geology: Chalk

Title and author of accompanying report: SWAT Archaeology (2017) Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, 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: 23/01/2018

SITE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Specification for an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent

1. Summary:

1.1 This specification sets out the requirements for an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for the development of a new dwelling house and garage and a replacement garage on land at the rear of 91 London Road, Sittingbourne in Kent. The results of the evaluation are intended to inform any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the proposals.

2. Site Location & Description:

2.1 The site is located to the south of London Road at the very rear of no 91 and on on Lydbrook Close, a residential side road that accessed the former quarry and haulage yard there. The site is presently occupied by a number of small garages, a portacabin outbuilding and concrete parking. Proposed garage and parking also falls in the rear garden of no 91. The National Grid Reference is NGR 589574 163848.

3. Planning Background & Nature of Development:

3.1 The proposed development comprises the demolition of the present garages and removal of portacabin and trees followed by the construction of a two bedroom dwelling and garages.

3.2 The present development proposals will place the proposed dwelling on the footprint of the garages, portacabin and the parking while the new garage to no 91 falls in the rear garden area.

3.3 KCC Heritage Conservation has advised Swale Borough Council that a condition for a programme of archaeological works be attached to the consent for the development 15/505404/FULL. Permission was provided on 18th August 2016 and a condition attached:

(3) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and 2

3.4 Further consideration by the KCC archaeologist has confirmed that the first step of the programme of archaeological works should take the form of an archaeological evaluation through trial trenching. The results of the evaluation are intended to provide information with respect to the potential impacts of the development on archaeology. The results of the work will inform any further mitigation measures that may be needed to be addressed prior to or during development works at the site.

4. Geological & Topographical Background:

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Chalk bedrock.

5. Archaeological & Historical Background Potential

5.1 Given the prominent location and especially close to the main London to Canterbury Roman road there is a very high potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date to be present on the site. This location has high archaeological potential due to the presence of the Roman road corridor and specifically the findings of two Anglo-Saxon graves located in the area of the quarrying to the south. A Roman walled cemetery has also been found to the west.

6. Specific Aims of the Archaeological Work:

6.1 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.

6.2 In particular the evaluation aims to assess the potential of the area to contain remains associated with the road corridor and the nearby burial sites of Roman and Anglo-Saxon date.

6.3 The evaluation seeks to determine the potential for earlier archaeological remains on the site and how they may be affected by development or may have been affected by previous development.

7. Methodology:

7.1 The archaeological contractor will excavate 2 mechanical trenches each measuring 1.8m or 2m wide and 10m in length as indicated on the attached plan.

☒ **Trench 1** - 10m long, aligned southwest to northeast and sitting within the footprint of the proposed new house. This may need to be await demolition of the garages and removal of the portacabin although as indicated could be placed with only removal of the portacabin.

☒ **Trench 2** – 10m long aligned west to east and to be located in the area of the new garage and drive in the rear garden of 91 London Road.

7.2 It is accepted that there may be site constraints that limit the location of trenches but the evaluation should seek to address the indicated trench layout as much as possible. Amendments should be agreed with the County Archaeologist to ensure that the objectives of the work are being adequately addressed.

7.3 A contingency of 5m of trenching or test pits should be allowed for in the event that trenches need extending or additional testing of projected features is required.

8. Site Recording:

8.1 See Part B. A full record of the stratigraphy of each trench should be kept and overburden deposits and modern features recorded accurately to enable future mitigation design as appropriate.

9. Site Reporting and Archiving:

9.1 A copy of the report will be sent to the Sittingbourne Heritage Museum and the Historical Research Group of Sittingbourne.

9.2 The report should be in accordance with the part B generic requirements but must include a detailed analysis of the archaeological deposits on the site and how they may potentially be impacted by development as proposed. The significance of the archaeology should be fully assessed and set out with reference to national criteria for assessing significance of archaeological remains.

10. Monitoring:

10.1 Regular monitoring visits by the County Archaeologist will be arranged by the Archaeological Contractor.

11. General:

11.1 All work should be carried out in accordance with the general requirements for evaluation set out in Part B of this specification and in accordance with the attached figure illustrating the proposed trench layout.



Plate 1. Trench 1 (looking SSW)



Plate 2. Trench 1 (Section)



Plate 3. Trench 1 (looking NNE)



Plate 4. Trench 2 (looking SW)



Plate 5. Trench 2 (looking SW)



Plate 6. Trench 2 (looking west)

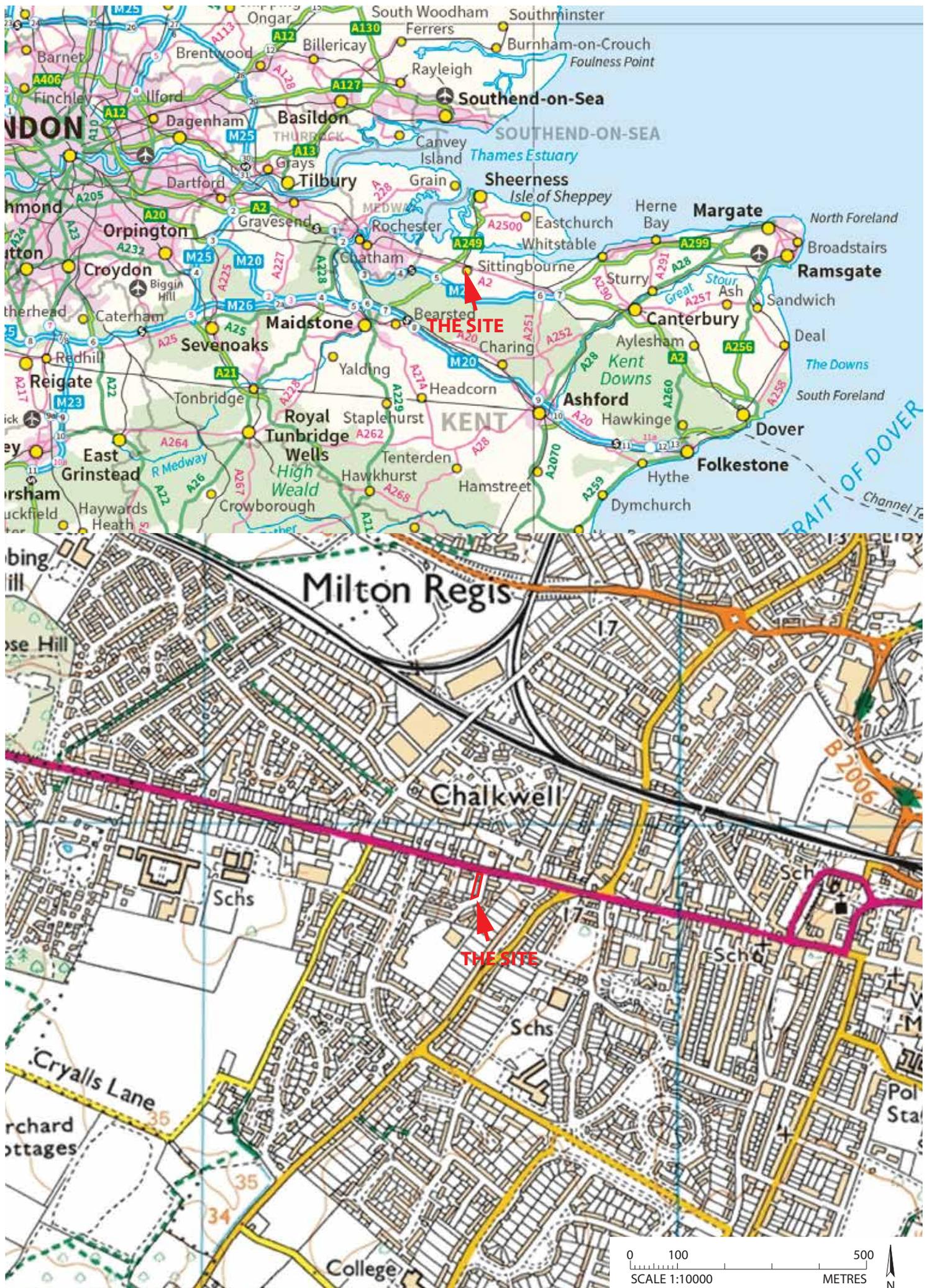


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.



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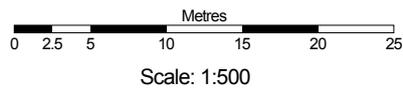


Figure 2: Trench location

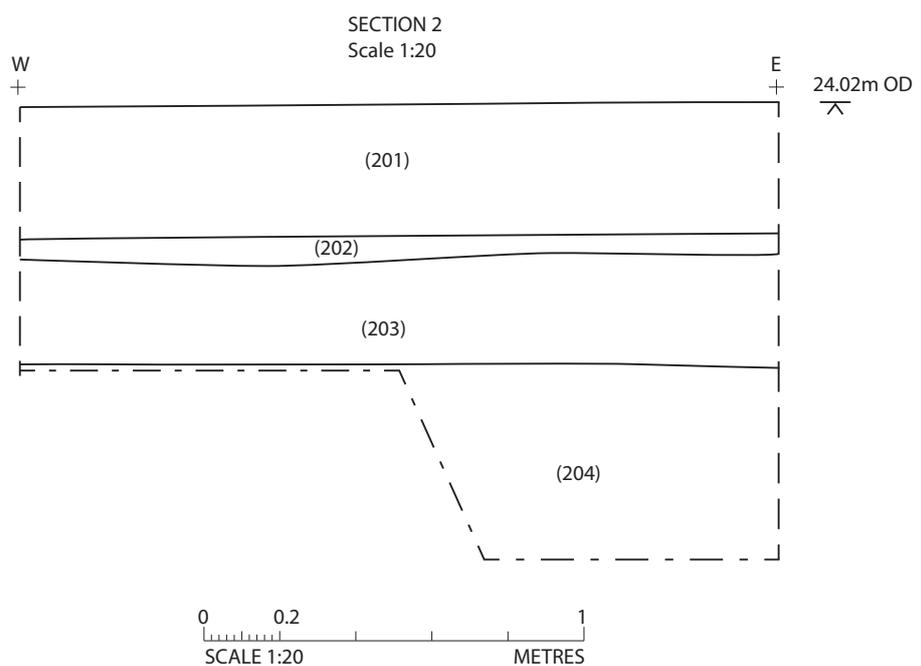
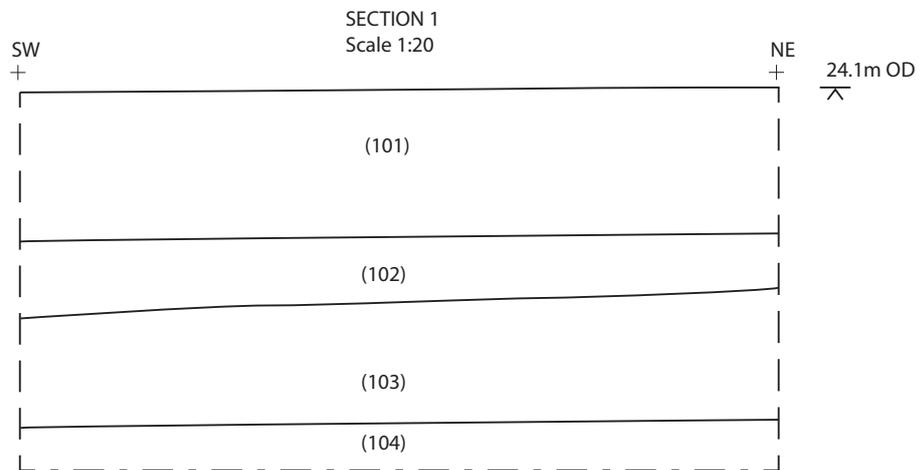
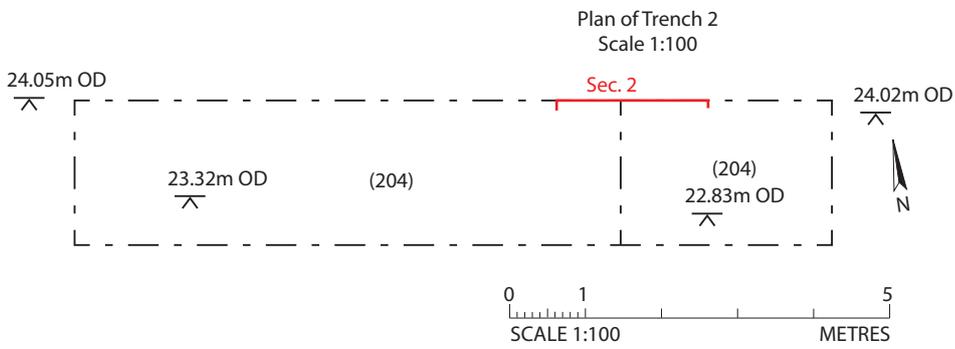
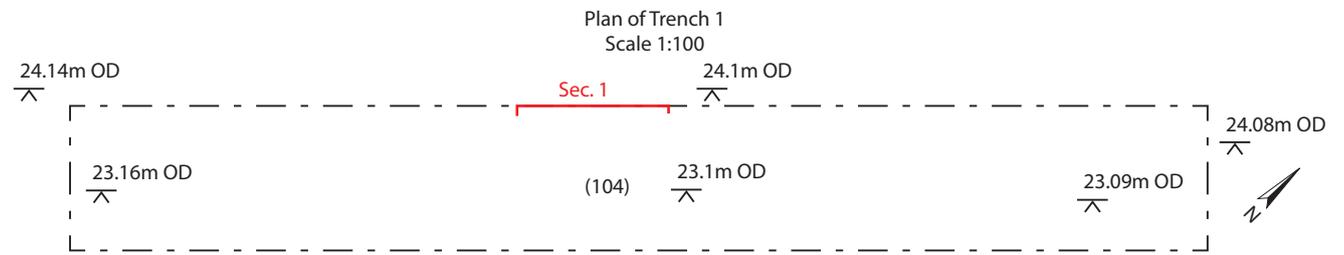


Figure 3: Trench plans and representative sections