Archaeological Evaluation on Land adjacent to 188A Milton Road, Swanscombe, Kent

Site Code: SWAN -EV-19

NGR Site Centre 560147 174459

Planning Application Number: DA/15/01790/FUL

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent and to the rear of 188A Milton Road, Swanscombe in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by Dr Paul Wilkinson, SWAT Archaeology.

The fieldwork was carried out in March 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 2019) submitted to the Client prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of one trench, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at 188A Milton Road, Swanscombe in Kent (**Figure 1**).The land has planning permission (DA/15/01790/FUL) for the erection of a detached 3 bedroom house with associated parking.

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 Dartford Borough Council (DBC), requested that the programme of archaeological works comprising an archaeological evaluation should take place.

1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in March 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2018), prior to commencement of works.

1.1 4 Site Description and Topography

The site is situated just south of the main railway from London to the south-east with stations at Swanscombe, Knockholt and Northfleet.

The town of Swanscombe is situated to the east of the site and to the west of Ebbsfleet International Station. The NGR to the centre of the site is NGR 560147 174459 (Figure 1).

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA is set on Bedrock Geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation. Superficial deposits are Boyn Hill Gravel sand and gravel, with possible lenses of silt, clay or peat. Poorly sorted, stratified gravel and locally tabular cross-bedded sand beds. Gravel assemblage is characterised by abundant angular flint (77-81%), sparse rounded flint (5-10%), sparse vein quartz (4-7%), sparse quartzite (1.5-5%), sparse Greensand Chert (2.5-4%) and less than 1% of other types [Generic description].

The geology revealed on site was brown/orange gravel overlaying brown/orange silty sandy clay (Plates 1-6). The PDA is set at an average height of 31.00m AOD.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

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 this report.

Barnfield Pit (TQ 67 SW 34) located about 350m to the west of the PDA (Proposed Development Area). Swanscombe is one of Europe's most important Palaeolithic sites. It is located on a fluvial terrace deposit above the south side of the Thames, originally known as the Swanscombe 100-ft terrace but now formally named the Boyn Hill/Orsett Heath Formation.

The terrace deposits comprise silts, sands and gravels of fluvial origin relating to the former Middle Pleistocene course of the Thames, laid down in the Hoxnian interglacial between 450,000 and 350,000 BP, late Marine Isotope Stage 12 to early MI Stage 10.

These deposits are of international archaeological significance. First recognised as containing artefacts and faunal remains in the late 19th century, they have been demonstrated through a long history of subsequent investigations, to be exceptionally rich in flint tools from Palaeolithic occupation. They also contain rich fossil faunal remains of contemporary animals (such as lion, rhino, extinct straight-tusked elephant, bear and many others), including those of archaic Homo Sapiens (Swanscombe Man), as well as other palaeoenvironmental evidence.

Although Pleistocene deposits and their contained Palaeolithic remains are now lost in most of the main footprint of the quarry, important deposits are preserved in the southern part of the quarry and in the natural deposits further south.

The Swanscombe Skull-site NNR (TQ 598 743) is located within Barnfield Pit, Swanscombe. Here, a fossil human skull was recovered from one horizon [The Upper Middle Gravel], with three separate refitting parts of the same skull being found on three separate occasions, in 1935, 1936 and 1955.There are three main phases of deposits at Barnfield Pit. The lowest phase consists of gravels and silts/sands [the "Lower Loam"] with a Clactonian lithic industry (cores, flakes and flake-tools) dating to early in the Hoxnian interglacial.

This phase includes undisturbed Clactonian occupation surfaces within, and at the top of, the Lower Loam, as well as animal bones and other paleo-environmental remains such as molluscs and ostracods. The middle phase consists of gravels and sandy gravels. These contain a rich

Acheulian lithic industry and numerous fossil animal remains, with numerous fresh condition handaxes and debitage from their manufacture attesting to occupation on the spot.

The skull pieces were found within the phase II deposits, at the base of the Upper Middle Gravel. The highest group of deposits is attributed to phase III, and mostly comprises clayey silt/sand - the "Upper Loam" - capped by a thin solifluction gravel. Contrary to general presumption, artefacts are scarce or absent in the Upper Loam, although numerous reworked artefacts have been found on its surface and within the Upper Gravel.

The site is included in the Southern Rivers survey and was visited for the KTG MES. A more detailed survey of surviving deposits then took place in 2003.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Specific Aims (SWAT 2018)

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (SWAT 2018) were to:

3.1.2 *'The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation is to establish or otherwise the presence of any potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development. The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for archaeological activity and in particular the adjacent Roman remains and later archaeological activity.*

3.1.3 *The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and will commence with a geophysical survey and evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include further detailed archaeological excavation, or an archaeological watching brief during construction work or an engineering solution to any preservation in situ requirements'.*

(SWAT Archaeology 2018: 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 (SWAT 2018 and KCC Manual of Specifications 'B') and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2017).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of one area evaluation trench was excavated to the rear of the PDA (Figure 1).

4.2.2 The trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360º mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable natural of archaeological horizon, 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. These are retained in the site project archive.

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 site 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 one area evaluation trench was 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 area comprising a mix of topsoil sealing an intact subsoil of yellow orange gravel overlaying sandy clayey silt. The deposits were closely inspected for lithic remains but none were found.

5.2.2 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for the trench and the sondage. Figure 1 provides a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-6 include selected site photographs.

5.3 Overview

5.3.1 The large trench was located across the site to the rear of the new build detached house to ensure full coverage of potential archaeological remains.

6 FINDS

6.1 No finds of any archaeological merit were recovered from the archaeological evaluation area.

7 Discussion

7.1 Archaeological Narrative

7.1.1 The location is in a locality that can be expected to produce Palaeolithic remains and so the reduction of 600mm to the rear of the new build detached house was closely scrutinised but no lithic remains were identified and no archaeological features were recorded in any of the areas of the trench.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Future development proposals are not likely to impact on archaeological remains to the rear of the new build detached house.

7.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of an area of land intended for development.

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 the developer for commissioning the project.

9.1.2 Paul Wilkinson MCIfA supervised the archaeological evaluation and illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. Paul Wilkinson MCIfA produced the text for this report.

10 REFERENCES

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

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2009, Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and guidance: for field evaluation.*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*.

Appendix 1: Trench Tables

Trench 1	Dimensions: 7.00m x 8.00m Depth: 0.600m Trench alignment: N-S N-end Ground Level: 31.20m aOD, SSE-end Ground Level: 31.10m aOD		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil	Topsoil layer	0.00-0.12
102	Mid orange brown gravel and sand	Subsoil	0.12-60
103	Yellow brown sandy clay	Natural	0.60-

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land adjacent to 188A Milton Road, Swanscombe, Kent

SWAT Site Code: SWAN/EV/19

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a detached house whereby Dartford Borough Council requested that Archaeological works be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed no archaeology.

District/Unitary: Dartford Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 560147 174459

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: March 2019

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Boyn Hill Gravel

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2019) Archaeological Evaluation of Land adjacent to 188A Milton Road, Swanscombe, Kent

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

No archaeology found

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

Contact at Unit: Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA

PLATES

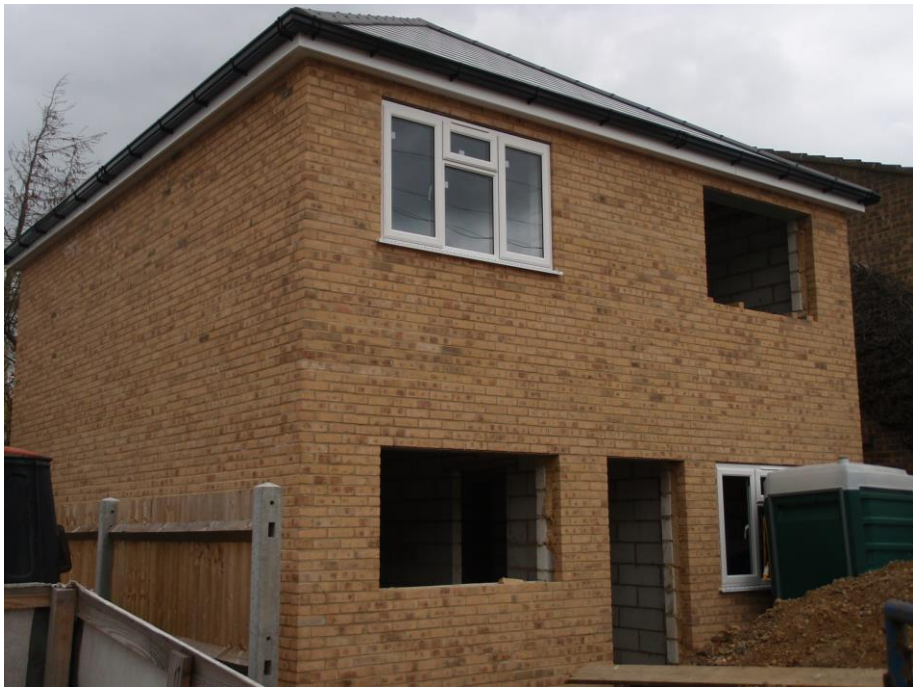


Plate 1. Adjacent development

Plate 2. Rear Garden (looking NW)

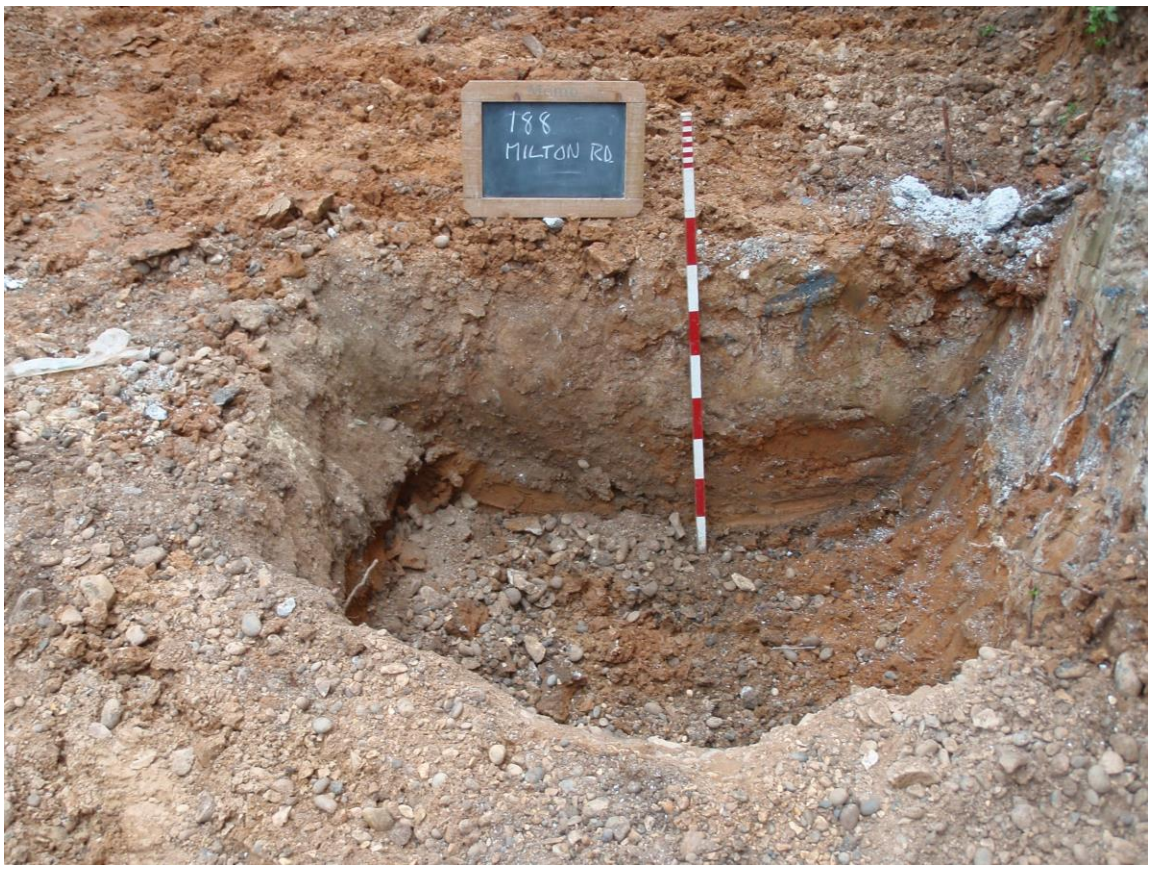


Plate 3. Sondage to natural geology

Plate 4. Location of sondage (looking NW)

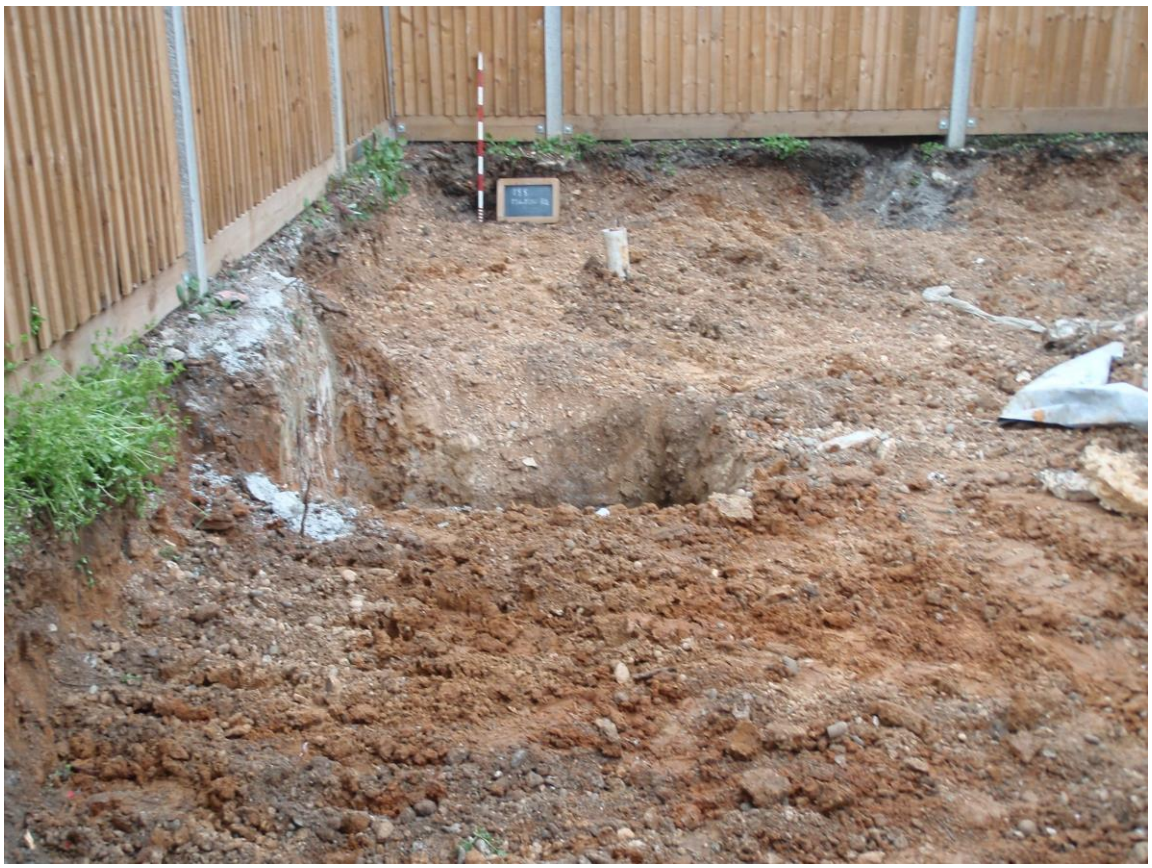


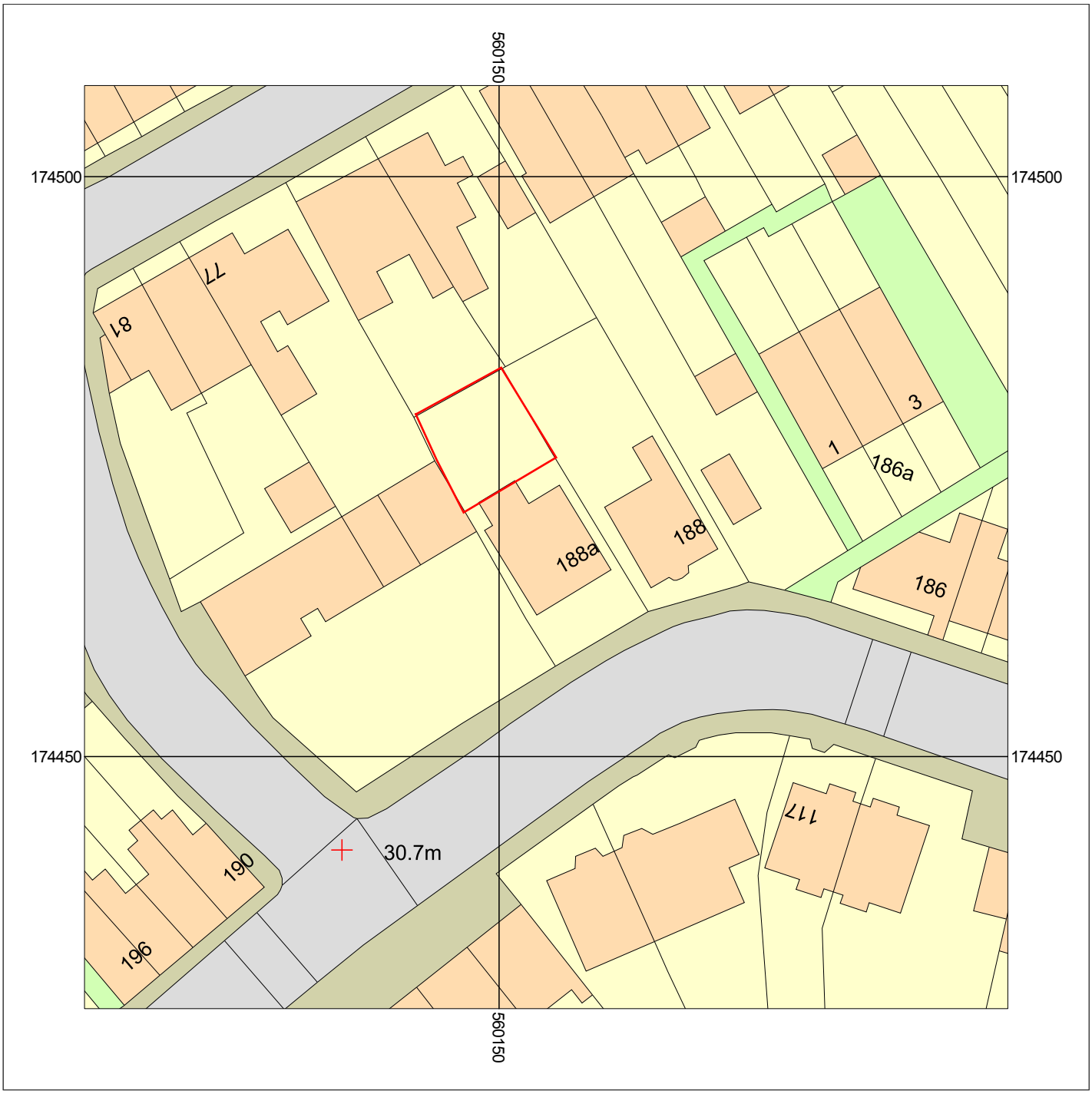
Plate 5. Extent of trench (looking NE)

Plate 6. Extent of trench (looking west)

NATIONAL MAP CENTRE

OS Plan Colour

Figure 1 showing area of investigation



Metres
0 2.5 5 10 15 20 25

Scale: 1:500

Map data

188a Milton Road
Swanscombe
DA10 0LX

Supplied by:	National Map Centre
License number:	100031961
Produced:	09/04/2019
Serial number:	2101910

Plot centre co-ordinates:	560154,174468
Download file:	swat_188amilton.zip
Project name:	swat_188amilton