

**Archaeological Evaluation at  
Castle Street, Queenborough,  
Isle of Sheppey, Kent  
*April 2007***

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**Castle Street, Queenborough  
Isle of Sheppey  
Kent**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**NGR: 591230 172260**

**Site Code: CSQ06**

**Report for  
Mr Killick**

**By  
David Britchfield  
April 2007**

**On behalf of;**

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Fig. 4 Sections

Fig. 5 Sections

*Cover map* shows the general location of the site in 1801. Of interest is the lack of development around Queenborough at this time.



## **Archaeological Excavations at Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent**

**NGR: 591230 172260**  
**Site Code: CKQ06**

### **SUMMARY**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, between 24 November and 5 December 2006. A planning application (PAN: SW/06/0014) for two detached houses, along with associated access, car parking and services at the above site was submitted to Swale Borough Council (SBC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Swale Borough Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2006) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.*

*Evaluation trenches to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey revealed the presence of ditches representative of possible field systems tentatively dated to the medieval period. Archaeological horizons were shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level, with all four of the evaluation trenches indicating the presence of surviving archaeological features and finds. Truncation of archaeological horizons was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact postholes and animal burials.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr Killick 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 (KCC 2006) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. Initial phases of the evaluation were carried out between November and December 2006.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

Queenborough is located approximately 3km south of Sheerness and 8km north of Sittingbourne, on the western extent of the Isle of Sheppey. The proposed development site is situated approximately 30m to the east of Castle Street (NGR: 591230 172282), adjacent to the western side of the existing railway line that connects Sheerness Docks to the mainland (Fig. 1). The site is relatively flat at a height of approximately 5-6.0m A.O.D, (Above Ordnance Datum). is c.0.2ha in extent. Prior to the evaluation the site was in an

abandoned state, being partially used for dumping and storage.

## **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

A planning application (PAN: SW/06/0014) for two detached houses, along with associated access, car parking and services at the above site was submitted to Swale Borough Council (SBC). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Swale Borough Council, requested that an *Archaeological Evaluation* be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

**AR1** *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.*

Requirements for the archaeological evaluation comprised trial trenching targeting a minimum of 5% of the impact area, with trenches designed to establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCCHC and SBC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Queenborough is situated adjacent to the confluence of the River Medway and The Swale and would have been a port of international importance in the medieval period. Rapid expansion of the town took place following construction of Queenborough Castle in 1365 as Edward III relocated the wool staple from Sandwich in an attempt to increase population. Prior to this, Berseford (1967:459) makes reference to at least two houses being built within this area, although an evaluation carried out by Channel 4's Time Team in 2005 (see below) found no traces of earlier settlement within the extents of the Scheduled Monument.

The Kent County Council Sites & Monuments Record holds details of 35 sites within a 1km radius of the proposed development area. Notable features in the vicinity include the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Queenborough Castle (SMR No. TQ 97 SW 1), Queenborough Station (SMR No. TQ 97 SW 50), Homestead Mote (SMR No. TQ 97 SW 2) and the town quay (SMR No. TQ 97 SW 1078). The medieval borough of Queenborough is recorded as SMR No. TQ 97 SW 4 and the 14<sup>th</sup> century Holy Trinity Church as SMR No. TQ 97 SW 3.

Excavations carried out by Channel 4's Time Team at Queenborough Castle during the



summer of 2005 revealed the presence of *insitu* walls and floors, with intact medieval surfaces less than 0.5m (c. 6.7m AOD) below the existing ground levels. Excavations suggested that the main gate would have faced towards the west, within an existing adjacent car park, placing the development site on the northern flanks of the curtain wall and moat.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out with the Archaeological Specification (2006) was to:

- i) establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The excavation is thus to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site (2006:3.1)
- ii) establish the extent to which previous development on the site has affected archaeological deposits (2006:3.2)

Particular issues that should be addressed by the evaluation include:

- Is there any evidence of prehistoric/Romano-British activity on the site?
- Is there any further evidence of medieval activity within the area? How does this relate to previous findings within the surrounding area, such as major structures, walling, flood deposits etc.? Does the activity inform further on the location and character of settlement of this period in the area? (2006:3.3)

Additional aims were to:

- iv) gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact development will have upon them
- v) enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development

### **METHODOLOGY**

Trial trenching commenced on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006, with the excavation of four trenches each measuring 1.50m in width and between 10-20m in length (see below). Trench locations were agreed prior to the excavation between KCCHC and SWAT. 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, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. 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 the specification.

A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are recorded (**100**). The cut of the feature is shown [**100**]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recoding purposes; these are used in the report (in **bold**).

## **MONITORING**

Curatorial monitoring was carried out during the course of the evaluation by KCCHC at which time methodologies and preliminary results were discussed.

## **RESULTS**

A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil/overburden (**001**) overlying the natural London Clay (**002**). The topsoil/overburden consisted of friable dark brown silt sand clay with frequent to moderate inclusions of sub-rounded – angular flints. A clear line of horizon gave way to natural clay where mechanical excavation ceased and careful examination and investigation for truncating features was carried out. The depth of the overlying layer varied, with the average depth of the natural geology being located c.0.5m below the existing ground level. Appendix 2 provides a stratigraphic sequence for all trenches, including levels AOD

### **Trench 1**

(20 x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 4

Trench 1 was located within the north-western extent of the site (Pls. 2 & 3). Aligned approximately northwest-southeast, this trench was positioned to identify and confirm the impact caused during development of proposed plot No.1. Four anomalies were originally identified within this trench, two of which proved to be modern [**010**] [**012**] with the third representing a former tree-bowl. The single 'feature' appeared to represent an east-west aligned ditch or gully [**014**], possessing an average exposed width of 0.88m, with a surviving depth of 0.18m. Clear, relatively sharp (c.50°) sides gave way to a flat base that underlay the single fill comprising mid orange grey silt clay, with occasional gravel (**013**). Pottery identified within the upper interface of this fill included domestic wares dating to the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Gully [**014**] was sealed by the topsoil (**001**), cutting into the natural London Clay (**002**) at a depth of 0.52m (4.61m AOD) below the existing ground level.



## **Trench 2**

(22 x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 4

Located within the northern most extent of the development area and aligned north-south, Trench 2 measured 22m in length and was positioned in order to target archaeological deposits located within the area of proposed Plot No. 2. Two features were recorded within this trench, a modern cut [008] possessing similar characteristics to feature [010] recorded in Trench 1, and a ditch [016] situated within the centre of the trench and aligned southwest-northeast. This bowl-shaped feature measured 0.65m in width with a maximum depth of 0.13m. The single fill (015) consisted of firm orange-brown silt clay with occasional gravel (<0.05m dia) inclusions and contained one fragment of shell-tempered ware provisionally (may be residual) dating the ditch between c.1175-1200 and 1225 AD.

Ditch [016] was sealed by the topsoil (001), cutting into the natural London Clay (002) at a depth of 0.50m (4.59m AOD) below the existing ground level. The feature was overcut on the SSE edge in order to confirm its true extent.

## **Trench 3**

(15m x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 5

Aligned east-west, Trench 3 was positioned in order to determine the extent of archaeological impact within the proposed access and parking areas of the future development. The trench revealed the presence of a single ditch [006], aligned northeast-southwest measuring 1.22m in width, with a depth of 0.24m. The single fill (005) comprised mid orange grey silt clay, with occasional gravel similar to (013) recorded in Trench 1. A single fragment of 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery was retrieved from this fill (c.1100/1125-1175 AD).

Ditch [006] was sealed by the topsoil (001), cutting into the natural London Clay (002) at a depth of 0.47m (4.99m AOD) below the existing ground level.

## **Trench 4**

(10m x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 5

The smallest of the evaluation trenches due to site access issues, Trench 4 was orientated NNW-SSE, located in order to evaluate the southern extent of the site. A single ditch was present, situated within the centre of the trench. Orientated ENE-WSW, the cut [004] measured 1.90m in width, with a maximum depth of 0.42m. The single fill (003) comprised firm mid orange grey silt sand, with occasional inclusions of rounded stone and gravel, contained one fragment of 'Ipswich-type intermediate 'pimply' ware' (see Appendix 2), dating between c.750-850 AD and one fragment of PM redware (c.1775/1800 AD+).

Ditch [004] was sealed by the topsoil (001), cutting into the natural London Clay (002) at a depth of 0.49m(4.96m AOD) below the existing ground level.

## **FINDS**

See Appendix 2.

## **DISCUSSION**

The archaeological evaluation to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough has demonstrated the presence of archaeological activity in the form of field systems, tentatively dated between the 8<sup>th</sup> century and 18<sup>th</sup> century, within the extents of the proposed development area.

The natural geology was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.5m below the existing ground surface (4.59-4.99m AOD), directly underlying the topsoil. Cartographic regression suggests that the site has been relatively undisturbed throughout the past 150 years, confirmed during the evaluation as any modern truncation was limited to the occasional post hole and animal burial. No evidence for a buried soil or subsoil was recognised within the excavated trenches.

The two ditches within Trenches 2 and 3 respectively, have been provisionally attributed to the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. Although possessing similar properties and fills, the alignments of these features would suggest that they are not contemporary, although it needs to be stated at this point that determining the exact alignment of linear features is somewhat limited within narrow evaluation trenches. The third ditch within Trench 4 is again on a completely different alignment although bears similar properties to those above. The 'provisional' dating of these investigated features has proved to be somewhat difficult, primarily due to the absence of archaeological finds within secure deposits, but also associated with the 'residual' characteristics from those fabrics retrieved (see Macpherson-Grant; Appendix 2). As a result caution should be exercised when attempted to attribute fixed dates to the four features identified on site. That said, the alignments of all features within the development area differ, possibly suggesting variable dates, With no known modern activity being recorded with the site extents (with the possible exception of construction associated with the adjacent housing terrace) it is plausible to suggest that earlier activity has occurred and should that activity be associated with the early ceramic assemblage identified on site, then settlement pre-dating the construction of Queenborough castle will be extant within the extents of the proposed development site.

## **CONCLUSION**

The evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Archaeological horizons have been shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level, with all four of the evaluation trenches indicating the



presence of surviving archaeological features and finds. Truncation of archaeological horizons was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact post holes and animal burials. Suggestions as to the definition of potential archaeological features have been offered above, although it must be stated that only after further excavation of these areas can more positive conclusions be drawn.

Full development proposals are at present time unknown<sup>1</sup>. In the event, however, that finished ground levels remain constant, the depth of foundations trenches, services, access and car parking are likely to require the excavation of material exceeding 0.50m in depth. In the absence of ground raising, proposed impacts to archaeological deposits throughout the southern and central extents of the site are therefore deemed as moderate. Little impact is suggested within the northern extent of the site as these will be left for garden areas. That said, the potential indirect impact caused during the construction process should also be taken into consideration.

**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 Archaeological Officer (KCCHC) of any further archaeological mitigations measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT would like to thank Mr Killick for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Heritage and Conservation (Kent County Council) for their advice and assistance. Paul Wilkinson and James Madden carried out archaeological fieldwork, illustrations were produced by James Madden. This report was edited and collated by Paul Wilkinson.

David Britchfield  
April 2007

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<sup>1</sup> Up to date proposals can be viewed at: <http://www.ukplanning.com>



## REFERENCES

Barson. S, Clarke. J, Fanklin. G, & Smith. J (2006) *Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent: Historic Area Appraisal*. English Heritage Research Department Report Series No. 39/2006. ISSN 1749-8775

IFA (1999) *Standards and Guidance for Field Archaeological Evaluations*

Kent County Council (2005) *Queenborough Historical Town Survey: Archaeological Assessment Document*

Kent County Council (2006) *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation in Advance of the Construction of a New Residential Development at Land to the Rear of Castle Street, Queenborough*. Kent Heritage & Conservation

Wessex Archaeology (2006) *Queenborough Castle, Isle of Sheppey, Kent: Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results*. Ref: 59470.01 Time Team.

## CONTENTS OF SITE ARCHIVE

Correspondence:

Photographs: ~~24XXX~~ colour prints, SWAT film nos. 06/~~235-25xxx~~, including those used in this report[s2]

Photocopies of Ordnance Survey and other maps:

Drawings: One A3 permatrace site drawing, comprising trench plans and associated sections.

Finds: 1 box (as per KCC guidance)

Context Register including: Context Register (1), Drawings Register (1), Photographic Register (1), Levels Sheets (1), Environmental Samples Register (x) and Context Sheets (17)

## APPENDIX 1 - Context Summary

Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Site Code: CKQ06

Context No.	Description
(001)	<b>Topsoil.</b> Friable dark brown silty sand clay with moderate inclusions of sub-angular and rounded flints.
(002)	<b>Natural.</b> Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay. More waterlogged within the lower northern areas of the site.
(003)	Mid orange grey silt sand, with occasional clay inclusions, rounded stones and gravel. <b>Fill of ditch [004]</b> containing pottery dated to the 8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> centuries.
[004]	Cut of ditch
(005)	Mid orange grey silt sand, with occasional clay inclusions, rounded stones and gravel. <b>Fill of ditch [006]</b> containing pottery dated to the 12 <sup>th</sup> century.
[006]	Cut of shallow ditch
(007)	Fill of <b>[008]</b>
[008]	Modern cut
(009)	Fill of <b>[010]</b>
[010]	Modern cut
(011)	Fill of <b>[012]</b> . Chalk block
[012]	Modern cut
(013)	Fill of <b>[014]</b> containing modern pottery
[014]	Small drainage ditch cutting subsoil <b>(002)</b>
(015)	Fill of <b>[016]</b> comprising mid brown grey silt clay with occasional pebble inclusions containing a single fragment of shell-tempered ware provisionally dated to L12 <sup>th</sup> -E13 <sup>th</sup> century.
[016]	Cut of shallow ditch

## APPENDIX 2 - Ceramic Assessment

Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Site Code: CKQ06

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### DATING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE DUAL-PERIOD POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE FROM :

CASTLE ROW, QUEENSBOROUGH, SHEPPEY 2006 (CKQ. EV. 06)

#### *A. Primary quantification :*

Overall sherd count : 4 sherds

Overall sherd weight : 64gms

#### *B. Period Codes employed :*

MLS = Mid-Late Saxon

EM = Early Medieval

LPM = Late Post-Medieval

#### *C. Context dating :*

**CONTEXT : Trench 2 15/16**

**Sherd : 1 (weight : 2gms)**

1 sherd EM/M N.Kent shell-tempered ware (c.1175-1200/1225 AD)

**Likely context date : If not residual, c.1175-1225 AD**

**Comment :** Sherd is small and worn and shell content leached out – should be residual

**CONTEXT : Trench 3 (05)**

**Sherd : 1 (weight : 4gms)**

1 sherd EM N.Kent shell-tempered ware (c.1100/1125-1175 AD)

**Likely context date : If not residual, c.1125-1175 AD**

**Comment :** Sherd is heavily worn, with severe unifacial abrasion and shell content leached out.

**CONTEXT : Trench 4 (03)**

**Sherds : 2 (weight : 58gms)**



1 sherd MLS Ipswich-type intermediate 'pimply' ware (c.750-850 AD; **CHECK**)

1 sherd Late Post-Medieval S.Yorks/Midlands redware (c.1775/1800 AD+)

**Likely context date : Late Post-Medieval -Modern**

**Comment :** The probable Mid-Late Saxon Ipswich Ware sherd is heavily worn and residual.

***D. Assessment :***

A small, multi-period, post-Roman assemblage. Their mostly heavily worn condition implies a considerable degree of exposure and movement and all the pre-Late Post-Medieval sherds may be re-deposited. The virtually unworn LPM sherd is likely to be the only element that stems from *in situ* activity. These sherds are useful in terms of dating activity in the general area but, other than the probable Ipswich sherd, have little intrinsic value. A considerable quantity of Mid-Late Saxon Ipswich Ware has been recovered from the excavations in and around Minster Abbey but to date, in this analyst's awareness, few if any finds of this ware have been recovered from other parts of Sheppey.

***E. Recommendations :***

1. None of this small assemblage is sufficiently important to warrant publication of a pottery report.
2. Proper analysis of this assemblage should be held-over until an in-depth synthetic study of archaeological finds from Sheppey, or the Sheerness area, can be made

Analyst : N.Macpherson-Grant (12.3.2007)

## APPENDIX 3 – Kent County Council SMR Summary Form

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Land to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough</i>		<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> CSQ06
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>Land to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent</i>		
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, between 24 November and 5 December 2006. A planning application (PAN: SW/06/0014) for two detached houses, along with associated access, car parking and services at the above site was submitted to Swale Borough Council (SBC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Swale Borough Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2006) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i>		
<i>Evaluation trenches to the rear of Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey revealed the presence of ditches representative of possible field systems tentatively dated to the medieval period. Archaeological horizons were shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level, with all four of the evaluation trenches indicating the presence of surviving archaeological features and finds. Truncation of archaeological horizons was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact postholes and animal burials.</i>		
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Swale</i>	<b>Parish:</b> <i>Queenborough</i>	
<b>Period(s):</b> <b>Tentative:</b> <i>Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 750-850), Early Medieval (c. AD 1100/1125-1175) and Post-Medieval (c. AD 1775/1800+)</i>		
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)</b>		
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Evaluation</i>		
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>24 November and 5 December 2006</i>		
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>		
<b>Geology:</b> <i>London Clay</i>		
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Britchfield, D (2007) Castle Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey. Kent: Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i>  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>		
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>		
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>12<sup>th</sup> April 2007</i>	

## **APPENDIX 4 – Figures**



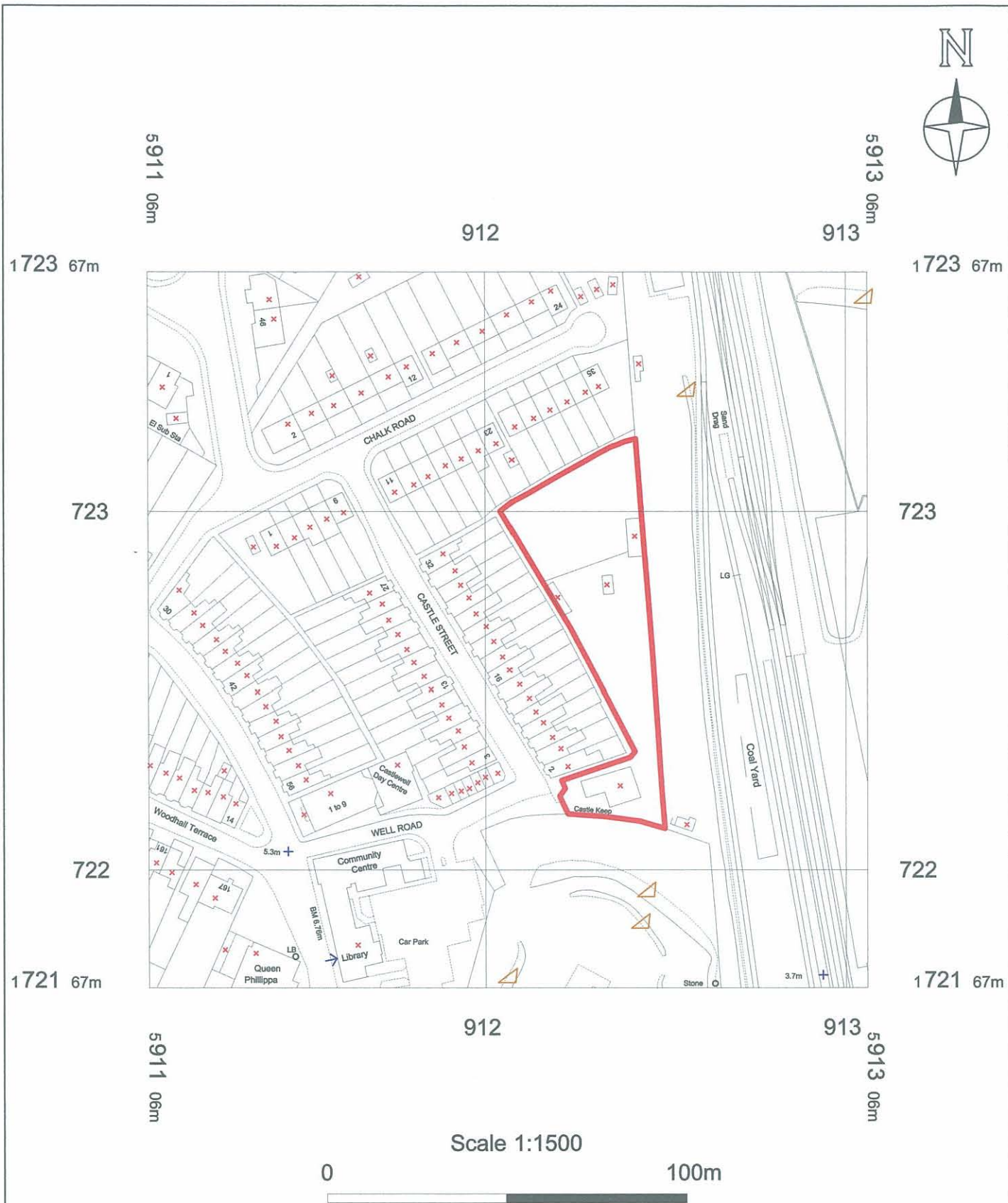


Figure 1: Location of site of proposed development within Queensborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent (NGR: 591230mE, 172260mN)



Figure 2: Location of test trenches within site of proposed development; Scale 1:500

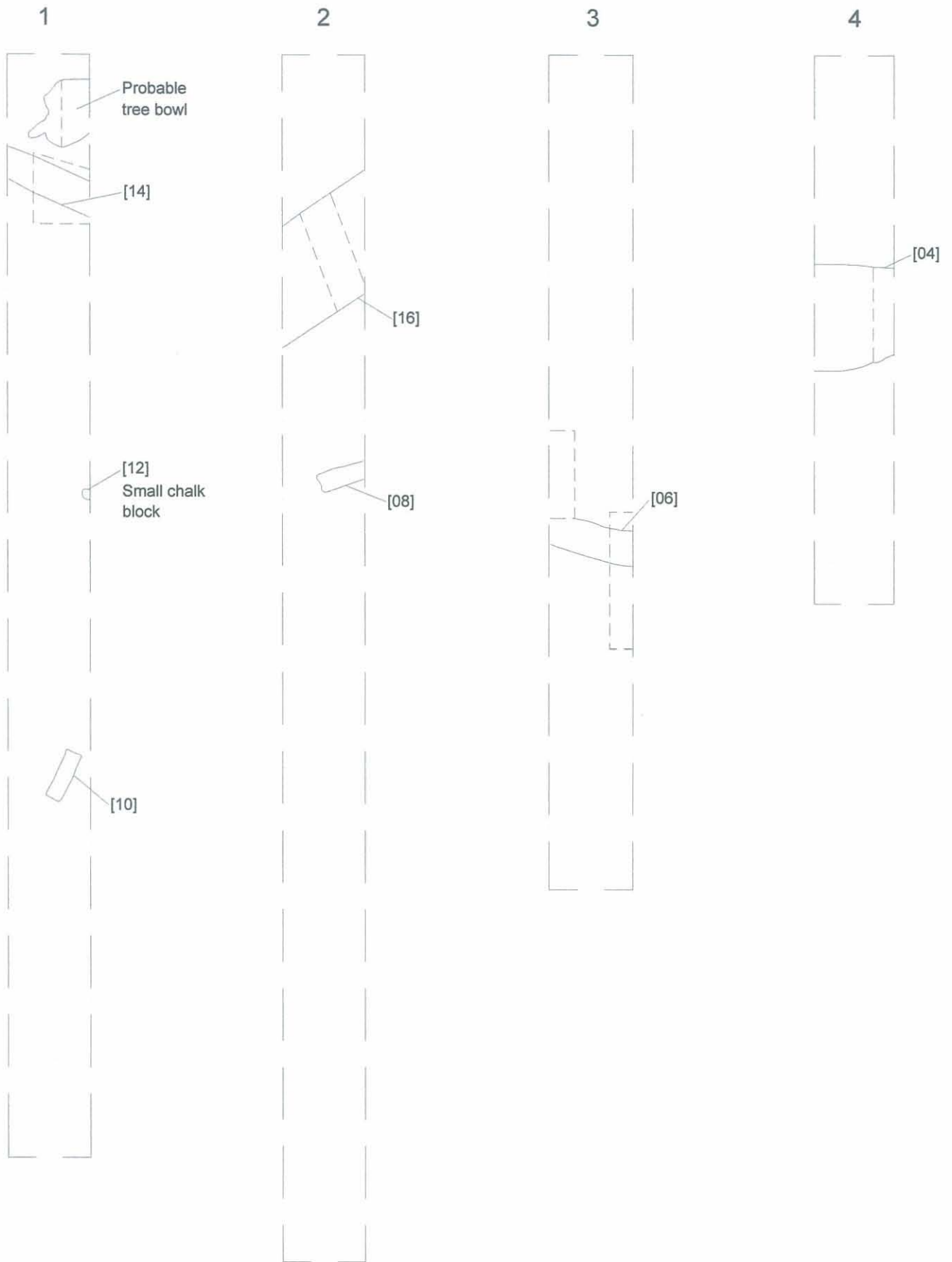
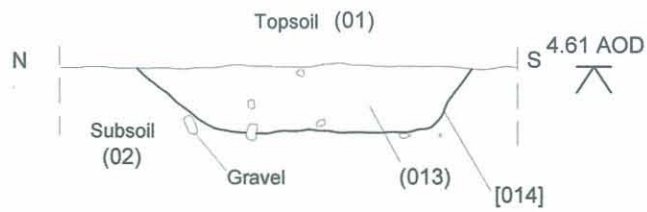


Figure 3: Trench Plans; Scale 1:100



Trench 1  
West Facing



Trench 2  
South-South-West Facing

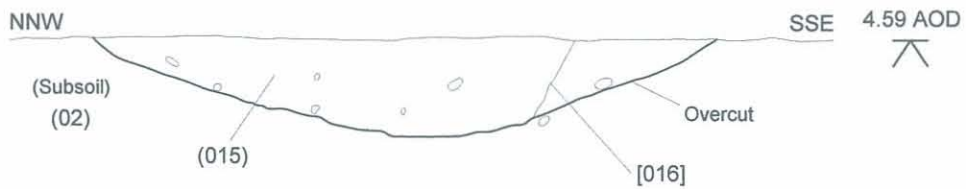


Figure 4: Sections: Scale 1:100



**Trench 3**  
South-West Facing



**Trench 4**  
West Facing

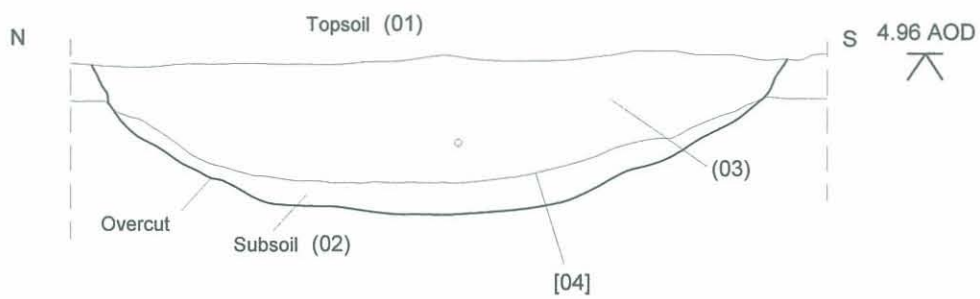


Figure 5: Sections; Scale 1:100

