

Archaeological Evaluation on land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Sheppey, Kent

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June 2007

**Land Adjacent to 100 Scocles Road,
Minster,
Isle of Sheppey
Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: 595354 172377

Site Code: MIS-EV-06

**Report for
Malro Homes Limited
(House Builder & Developer)**

SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY

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Archaeological Excavations on Land Adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

NGR: 595354 172377
Site Code: MIS-EV-06

SUMMARY

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, between 24 November and 5 December 2006. A planning application (PAN: SW/98/1063) for eight 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 August 2006) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.

Evaluation trenches on land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey revealed the presence of ditches representative of possible field systems tentatively dated to the 13th century. Archaeological horizons were shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.4m below the existing ground level, with two 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 field drains.

INTRODUCTION

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Malro Homes Limited 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

Minster is located approximately 6.5km east of Sheerness and 9.5km northwest of Sittingbourne, adjacent to the northern extent of the Isle of Sheppey. The proposed development site is situated approximately 500m to the south of the town's historic core (NGR: 595354 172377), adjacent to the western side of Scocles Road (Fig. 1). The site is relatively flat, with a slight decline to the south, at a height of approximately 10-12.0m A.O.D, (Above Ordnance Datum).and is c.0.42ha in extent. Prior to the evaluation the site was in an abandoned state, being partially used for storage.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

A planning application (PAN: SW/98/1063) for eight 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. Plot 8 of the proposed development had been constructed prior to the archaeological evaluation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The application site lies on rising ground between the former Swale marshlands and the high ground occupied by Minster. Archaeological investigations on residential development to the west have found a range of archaeological remains demonstrating that this area was exploited by prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval peoples. A Saxon fire pit has been found close to the present site (KCCHC 2006:2.1).

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). This would include any possible truncation of archaeological deposits carried out during the construction of Plot 8.

Additional aims were to:

- iii) 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
- iv) 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 20th November 2006, with the excavation of eight trenches each measuring 1.50m in width and approximately 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 recording purposes; these are used in the report (in **bold**). Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, **100+**, Trench 2, **200+** etc.)

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 overlying a buried soil and the natural London Clay. The topsoil/overburden (**100, 200, 300** etc.) consisted of friable dark grey black slightly silty clay overlying a buried subsoil/ploughsoil (**101, 201, 301** etc.) comprising mid brown grey silty clay. A clear line of horizon gave way to natural London Clay (**102, 202, 302** etc.) where mechanical excavation ceased and careful examination and investigation for truncating features was carried out. Natural undulations within the upper surface of the natural London

Clay were evident in three trenches (see below) primarily identified by a colluvial fill (**203**, **603**, **703**) comprising mid brown grey silty clay with occasional rounded and abraded stones. The thickness of the overburden varied, with the average depth of the natural geology being located c.0.6m below the existing ground level. Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches.

Archaeologically sterile trenches

Despite the archaeological potential of the proposed development site, specific trenches proved to be archaeologically sterile. These included; trenches **1**, **3**, **4** and **5**.

Trench 2

(18.5 x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 4

Trench 2 was located within the northern 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 Nos.1 and 2.

Five anomalies were originally identified within this trench, three of which proved to be modern drains with the remaining representing naturally filled undulations (**203**). The single 'feature' appeared to represent an east-west aligned ditch or gully [**204**], possessing an average exposed width of 0.60m, with a surviving depth of 0.22m. Clear, relatively sharp (c.50°) sides gave way to a flat base that underlay the single fill comprising mid yellow/brown grey slightly silty clay with chalk, charcoal and CBM inclusions (**205**). Pottery identified within the upper interface of this fill included domestic wares dating to the 13th century (Appendix 2).

Gully [**204**] was sealed by the buried soil (**201**), cutting into the natural London Clay (**202**) at a depth of 0.31m (11.49m AOD) below the existing ground level.

Trench 6

(19.5 x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 4

Located within the southern extent of the development area and aligned north-south, Trench 6 measured 22m in length and was positioned in order to target archaeological deposits located within the area of proposed plot Nos. 1 and 2.

Considerable variations in the natural geology occurred within Trench 6, including colluvium-filled undulations (**603**) and areas with frequent natural flint deposits (**606**). The single 'feature' within the eastern most extent of the trench appeared to represent another ditch or gully [**604**] possessing an average exposed width of 0.82m, with a surviving depth of 0.11m. Clear, gradually sloping (c.30°) sides gave way to a flat base that underlay the single fill comprising mid grey/brown grey silty clay with chalk and stone inclusions (**605**).

Gully [604] was sealed by the buried soil (601), cutting into the natural London Clay (602) at a depth of 0.32m (10.59m AOD) below the existing ground level. Pottery identified within the colluvium (603) included domestic wares dating to the 3rd century, although is probably residual (Appendix 2).

Trench 7

(21.5m x 1.5m) Figs 3 and 5

Located within the southern extent of the development area and aligned northeast-southwest, Trench 7 measured 21.5m in length and was positioned in order to further target archaeological deposits located within the area of proposed plot Nos. 1 and 2. Nine anomalies were originally identified within this trench, three of which proved to be modern drains with the remaining representing naturally filled undulations (703) and areas with frequent natural flint deposits (704).

Natural deposits [702] were sealed by the buried soil (701) at a depth of 0.31m below the existing ground level. Pottery identified within the colluvium (703) included domestic wares dating to the 13th century (Appendix 2).

FINDS

See Appendix 2.

DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, has demonstrated the presence of archaeological activity in the form of field systems, tentatively dated to the 13th century, within the extents of the proposed development area.

The natural geology was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.4m below the existing ground surface (10-11.0m AOD), directly underlying a buried subsoil/ploughsoil. 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 land drain.

The ditch within Trench 2 [204] has been provisionally attributed to the 13th century, although the abraded condition of the ceramic would suggest that this is residual. The ditch within Trench 6 [604] contained no finds. It needs to be stated at this point that determining the exact alignment of linear features is somewhat limited within narrow evaluation trenches. 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 features identified on 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 0.4m below the existing ground level, with three 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 land drains. 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.

Future development proposals include high impact foundations, services, access and landscaping that will require the excavation of material exceeding 0.40m in depth. In the absence of ground raising, proposed impacts to archaeological deposits throughout the extent of the site are therefore deemed as moderate. Little impact is suggested within the eastern extents 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. Of particular note would be the relatively high water table. Problems with flooding and submerging plant was encountered during the evaluation suggesting that if further work is required consideration should be given to indirect impacts.

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 Malro Homes Limited for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Heritage and Conservation (Kent County Council) for their advice and assistance. Paul Wilkinson, Geoff Morley and James Madden carried out archaeological fieldwork, illustrations were produced by James Madden. This report was edited and collated by Paul Wilkinson.

David Britchfield

June 2007

REFERENCES

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

Kent County Council (2006) *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation in Advance of the Construction of a New Residential Development at Land Adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Sheppey, Kent*. Heritage & Conservation

CONTENTS OF SITE ARCHIVE

Correspondence:

Photographs: 29 colour slides, and 18 B/W-, including those used in this report

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 (28)

APPENDIX 1 - Context Summary

100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Site Code: MIS-EV-06

	Context No.	Description
Trench 1	(100)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(101)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(102)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
Trench 2	(200)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(201)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(202)	Colluvium. Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional rounded and abraded stones
	(203)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
	[204]	Cut of ditch/gully.
	(205)	Fill of [204] comprising mid yellow/brown grey slightly silty clay with chalk, charcoal and CBM inclusions
Trench 3	(300)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(301)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(302)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
Tren	(400)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.

	Context No.	Description
	(401)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(402)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
Trench 5	(500)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(501)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(502)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
Trench 6	(600)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(601)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(602)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
	(603)	Colluvium. Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional rounded and abraded stones
	[604]	Cut of ditch/gully.
	(605)	Fill of [604] comprising moderately compacted mid grey brown silty clay with occasional flint and charcoal inclusions.
Trench 7	(700)	Topsoil. Friable dark grey black slightly silty clay with moderate inclusions of brick/tile and occasional chalk, flint and charcoal.
	(701)	Buried Subsoil/Ploughsoil. Moderately firm mid brown grey silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal inclusions.
	(702)	Natural. Mixture of clean orange, brown London Clay with occasionally white deposits of sand and gravel and underlying balls of natural grey blue clay.
	(703)	Colluvium. Mid brown grey silty clay with occasional rounded and abraded stones.

APPENDIX 2 - Ceramic Assessment

100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Site Code: MIS-EV-06

DATI SCOCLES ROAD, MINSTER, SHEPPEY 2006 (MS.EV.06)

A. Primary quantification :

Overall sherd count : 6 sherds

Overall sherd weight : 26gms

B. Period Codes employed :

M/LR = Mid-Late Roman

EM/M = Early Medieval-Medieval transition

Med = Medieval

C. Context dating :

CONTEXT : Trench 1 (100)

Sherd : 1 (weight : >1gm)

1 sherd Med N.Kent shell-tempered ware (c.1200/1225-1250 AD)

Likely context date : c.1225-1250 AD

Comment : Though small and the shell tempering leached away, the sherd is only slightly worn and unlikely to be severely residual in its context. Using Canterbury data, the sherd's firing colours suggest production closer to the end of its currency around c.1225 AD or shortly after.

CONTEXT : Trench 2 (203)

Sherd : 1 (weight : 3gms)

1 sherd Med Canterbury sandy ware (c.1225-1250/1275 AD)

Likely context date : If not residual, c.1250-1275 AD

Comment : The sherd is moderately worn and may be fairly residual in its context

CONTEXT : Trench 2 (203)

Sherd : 1 (weight : 5gms)

1 sherd Med ? Essex Mill Green Coarseware (c.1250-1275/1300 AD : **CHECK**)

Likely context date : If not residual, c.1250-1275 AD

Comment : The sherd is from an underglaze cream-slipped jug with traces of green-flecked glaze over. The firing colour suggests a date closer to mid-century trends than later.

CONTEXT; Trench 2 (203)

Sherd : 1 (weight : 3gms)

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

Likely context date : If not residual, c.1200-1225 AD

Comment : Sherd is slightly worn and shell content leached.

CONTEXT : Trench 6 (603)

Sherd : 1 (weight : 9gms)

1 sherd M/LR Nene Valley colour-coated ware (c.150/250-350 AD prob)

Likely context date : ? Residual in a Medieval or later context

Comment : The sherd is fairly heavily worn with burring of one edge (static and partially exposed to weathering) with partial loss of its slip and pitting of its surfaces.

CONTEXT : Trench 7 (703)

Sherd : 1 (weight : 6gms)

1 sherd Med Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1225-1250/1275 AD)

Likely context date : If not residual, c.1250-1275 AD

Comment : The sherd is moderately worn and should be fairly residual in its context

D. Assessment :

A small dual period assemblage containing mostly small and variably worn sherds. Two periods are represented :

Mid-Late Roman :

One moderate-sized sherd from a Nene Valley colour-coated flagon was recovered from *Context 603*. It is heavily worn and probably re-deposited. Previous finds of Early-Late Roman pottery have been made from the Minster hill zone, mostly on its western, Sheerness, side with only relatively small quantities from the hill-top itself, the latter only becoming a focus of occupation with the later seventh century foundation of the Abbey.

Medieval :

None of the material representing this phase indicates derivation from *in situ* contemporary contexts. However, their mostly only moderate degree of wear does indicate derivation from nearby occupation. The latter is entirely confined to the thirteenth-century AD, with an activity emphasis around mid-century. Small-scale excavation by the Sheppey Archaeological Society, the Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Belfast University, both within and outside the former minster's precinct boundary, indicate that Minster expanded considerably as a

village, from the late twelfth or earlier thirteenth century onwards. Foundations and pottery of this date have definitely been recorded along the northern and eastern sides of the boundary. Contemporary occupation below the abbey, on its southern side, is assumed but likely. The present sherds should represent part of this same expansion process though, as far as this site is concerned, the occupation may have been relatively short-lived.

E. Recommendations :

1. Other than –the importance of the site itself in charting, and the sherds in dating, the evolution of Minster itself, none of this small assemblage is sufficiently important intrinsically to warrant publication of a pottery report.

2. Proper analysis of this assemblage should be held-over until an in-depth synthetic study of Minster's archaeological finds can be made

Analyst : N.Macpherson-Grant (12.3.2007)

APPENDIX 3 – Kent County Council SMR Summary Form

Site Name: <i>Land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster Road, Isle of Sheppey</i>	
SWAT Site Code: <i>MIS-EV-06</i>	
Site Address: <i>Land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster Road, Isle of Sheppey</i>	
Summary: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, between 24 November and 5 December 2006. A planning application (PAN: SW/98/1063) for eight 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 August 2006) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i>	
<i>Evaluation trenches on land adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey revealed the presence of ditches representative of possible field systems tentatively dated to the 13th century. Archaeological horizons were shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.4m below the existing ground level, with two 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 field drains.</i>	
District/Unitary: <i>Swale</i>	Parish: <i>Minster</i>
Period(s): Tentative: <i>Early Medieval (c. AD 1100/1125-1175)</i>	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): <i>NGR: 595354 172377</i> (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) <i>Evaluation</i>	
Date of Recording: <i>24 November 2006</i>	
Unit undertaking recording: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
Geology: <i>London Clay</i>	
Title and author of accompanying report: <i>Britchfield, D (2007) Land Adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey. Kent: Archaeological Evaluation</i>	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds: <i>SWAT</i>	
Contact at Unit: <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	Date: <i>5th June 2007</i>

APPENDIX 4 – Kent County Council Archaeological Specification

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION IN ADVANCE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND ADJACENT TO 100 SCOCLES ROAD, MINSTER, SHEPPEY, KENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This evaluation seeks to assess the archaeological potential of the land that is intended for development with the construction of 8 new dwellings, adjacent to 100 Scocles Road, Minster, Sheppey, Kent. This evaluation comprises the excavation of 7 trial trenches within the area of the proposed new development. The results of this work will be used to inform any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.
- 1.2 This initial evaluation follows the recommendations made by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council to Swale Borough Council in response to planning application SW/98/1063. The following condition was attached to the planning consent:

ARI *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.*

- 1.3 This is the first phase of the archaeological work addressing the above condition. Following the results of this it may be necessary to undertake further mitigation measures. A separate specification will be produced for any additional archaeological work required at the site.
- 1.4 The site is centred at NGR 595354 172377. It is approximately rectangular, situated on the west side of Scocles Road and is 95m long by 45m wide (4050 sqm in area).
- 1.5 The underlying geology of the site, according to the British Geological Survey 1:50000 consists of London Clay.

2. The Archaeological Potential

- 2.1 The application site lies on rising ground between the former Swale marshlands and the high ground occupied by Minster. Archaeological investigations on residential development to the west have found a range of archaeological remains demonstrating that this area was exploited by prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval peoples. A Saxon fire pit has been found close to the present site.
- 2.2 Further information on the above is provided in the County Sites and Monuments Record held in the Heritage Conservation Group, Strategic Planning Directorate, Kent County Council, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 The objective of the evaluation is to 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.
- 3.2 The evaluation is to establish the extent to which previous development on the site has affected

archaeological deposits.

4. Method

- 4.1 **Seven trenches, measuring 15m in length by 2m width**, are to be excavated using a flat bladed bucket located to provide a representative c.5% coverage of the site. The archaeological contractor is to agree the locations of trenches with the County Archaeologist in advance of the evaluation. Any further amendment to the trench design due to on site constraints must be agreed in advance with the County Archaeologist. Depending on the results of this initial trenching, further trenching, the amount of which would be agreed with the County Archaeologist and the developer, may be necessary to provide further information on areas identified as being of archaeological interest.
- 4.2 The excavation is to be taken down to the top of 'natural' or the top of any significant archaeological level, whichever is the higher. In the event of significant archaeological deposits being encountered the County Archaeologist is to be informed immediately. Some further limited excavation may be required to clarify the nature, character and date of the archaeological deposits but the primary objective is to establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits, their depth and extent.
- 4.3 Archaeological features should generally only be sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them. Full excavation of features should not be undertaken at this stage. Care should be taken not to damage archaeological deposits through excessive use of mechanical excavation.
- 4.4 The archaeological contractor will notify the County Archaeologist of their appointment, the start date and progress of work on site and arrange for monitoring visits to be undertaken.
- 4.5 Environmental samples will be taken as appropriate and according to a strategy to be agreed with the County Archaeologist.

5. Recording

- 5.1 All structures, deposits and finds are to be recorded according to accepted professional standards.
- 5.2 The site grid is to be accurately tied into the National Grid, preferably by theodolite, and located on to the 1:1250 or 1:2500 map of the area.
- 5.3 Plans indicating the location of the excavated trench and the location of all archaeological features encountered are to be drawn at an appropriate scale. An overall site plan is to be maintained at a scale of 1:100. Plans and sections are to be levelled with respect to OD.
- 5.4 All plans are to be accurately tied in to the site grid.
- 5.5 All plans and sections are to be drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled.
- 5.6 All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on context record sheets. A further more general record of the work comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology is to be maintained as appropriate.
- 5.7 A full black and white and colour (35mm transparency) photographic record of the work is to be kept. The photographic record is to be regarded as part of the site archive.
- 5.8 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the site are the property of the Landowner. They are to be suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, *Conservation Guidelines no.2* and on completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme the landowner will arrange for them to be deposited in a museum or similar repository agreed with the County Archaeologist and Swale Borough Council.

5.9 The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, is to be prepared in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. On completion of the project the Applicant will arrange for the archive to be deposited in a suitable museum or similar repository to be agreed with the County Archaeologist and Swale Borough Council.

6. Reporting

6.1 Within three weeks of completion of the evaluation fieldwork the archaeological contractor will produce a report, copies of which are to be provided to:

- the Developer
- the County Archaeologist
- the Local Planning Authority
- Sheppey Archaeological Society
- the project archive.

6.2 When submitting the report to the County Archaeologist the archaeological contractor should provide written confirmation that the report has been submitted to the above parties.

6.3 If the archaeological contractor is required, contractually, to only submit reports directly to the developer or their agent, the archaeological contractor must inform the County Archaeologist in writing that they have completed the report and whom it has been forwarded to. The archaeological contractor must ensure that the developer is made aware of the need to circulate the report as in 6.1 above.

6.4 *The archaeological contractor may determine the general style and format of the evaluation report but it must be completed in accordance with this specification. The report must provide sufficient information and assessment to enable the County Archaeologist and the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed decision regarding any further mitigation measures that may be required and to stand as a detailed report on the archaeological fieldwork for future research.*

6.5 Reports that do not provide sufficient information or that have not been compiled in accordance with the relevant sections of this specification will be returned to the archaeological contractor for revision and resubmission.

6.6 The report is to include as a minimum:

6.6.1 An **Abstract** summarising the scope and results of the archaeological evaluation.

6.6.2 An **Introduction** including:

- the location of the site including a National Grid Reference to 8 figures for the centre of the site;
- an account of the background and circumstances of the work;
- a description of the development proposals, planning history and planning reference together with the archaeological condition (where appropriate);
- the nature of potential impacts arising from the proposals;
- the scope and date of the fieldwork, the personnel involved and who commissioned it;

6.6.3 An account of the **Archaeological Background** of the development site including:

- geology, soils and topography;
- any known existing disturbances on the site;
- background archaeological potential of the site. This should include a summary of the known Sites and Monuments Record entries within a 500m radius of the boundaries of the site. The SMR entries should be quoted with their full KSMR identifier (e.g TR36NW 12);
- summary of any previous phases of archaeological investigation at the development site;
- any constraints on the fieldwork.

- 6.6.4 The **Methodology** employed during the evaluation must be detailed in the report. Simply referring to the methodology outlined in the specification is not acceptable. Any aims and objectives specified in the specification should be included as should any further objectives identified during the course of the evaluation. Constraints on the evaluation should also be described;
- 6.6.5 The report should include a quantification of the archive contents, their state and future location.
- 6.6.6 A trench by trench description of the **Results** of the evaluation field work. This description must include for each trench:
- the dimensions of the trench;
 - the nature and depth of overburden soils encountered;
 - description of all archaeological features and finds encountered in each trench, their dimensions, states of preservation and interpretation;
 - a description of the geological subsoil encountered in each trench;
 - the heights related to Ordnance Datum should be provided for each feature and deposit. Where the trench results are complex a table showing the dimensions and heights of features and deposits should be included for each trench.
 - For complex remains a Harris Matrix diagram should be provided
- 6.6.7 *The **Finds** recovered during the course of the evaluation should be described, quantified and assessed by artefact type within the evaluation report. The report should also provide an indication of the potential of each category of artefact for further analysis and research. For each category of artefact the report should describe the method of processing, any sub-sampling, conservation and assessment undertaken. Where appropriate local reference collections will be referred to for descriptive and analytical consistency. Any implications for future archive, conservation or discard of the artefacts should also be detailed.*
- 6.6.8 The report should include a table showing, per trench, the contexts, classes and quantity of artefacts recovered, together with their date and interpretation.
- 6.6.9 The evaluation report must include an assessment of the **Environmental** potential of the site. Details should be provided of any environmental sampling undertaken in connection with the fieldwork and the results of any processing and assessment of the samples. The report should describe the method of processing, any sub-sampling and assessment. Any potential for future analysis of the samples or environmental remains recovered from the evaluation should be described. Implications for future archive, conservation or discard of environmental samples or remains should be detailed.
- 6.6.10 The report should include, as appropriate, tables summarising environmental samples taken, together with the results of processing and assessment.
- 6.6.11 Any results from the application of archaeological scientific techniques e.g. specialist dating should be included in the evaluation report.
- 6.6.12 An **Interpretation** of the archaeology of the site, including its location, extent, date, condition, significance and importance. This should be a synthesis of the stratigraphic, finds and environmental results of the investigation and should include, even if no archaeology is identified as present on the site, description of areas of disturbance, non-archaeological deposits and changes in geological subsoil where appropriate.
- 6.6.13 A **Conclusion** which considers the potential effects of the development on the archaeological remains. This should summarise the archaeological results, describe how any archaeological potential identified relates to the development site and how the development proposals will affect that archaeology. The report should highlight any areas of increased sensitivity within the development site. Particular note should be made of any variations in the depth of overburden covering any archaeological deposits revealed.

- 6.6.14 The evaluation report should assess the potential for preservation at the site to inform decisions about mitigation strategies. It will not include any recommendations on preservation measures or further work unless otherwise agreed with the County Archaeologist.
- 6.6.15 The evaluation report should include comments on the effectiveness of the methodology employed and the confidence of the results and interpretation.
- 6.6.16 Figures / illustrations – The report should include sufficient illustrations to support descriptions and interpretations within the report text. Figures are to be fully cross-referenced within the document text. As a minimum the evaluation report should include the following figures:
- a site location plan tied into the Ordnance Survey at 1:1250 or in the case of larger sites at 1:2500. The plan should also include at least two National Grid points and show the site boundary;
 - a trench location plan at 1:100 or 1:200 showing the layout of archaeological features, coloured by phases or period as related to the development site. The plan should show the location of all trenches. Where possible, projection of archaeological features outside of the trench areas should be included on the plan. This plan should also include two National grid points;
 - plans of the features revealed in each of the trenches at a larger scale e.g. 1:20 or 1:50; such plans are to also illustrate areas of disturbance, change in subsoil and location of sections; The location of significant finds and samples taken should also be indicated;
 - relevant section drawings and soil trench profiles as appropriate;
 - illustrations and/or photographs of significant finds should be included where appropriate.
- 6.6.17 All report illustrations must be fully captioned and scale drawings must include a bar scale.

7. General

- 7.1 The archaeological contractor is to allow the site records to be inspected and examined at any reasonable time, during or after the excavation, by the applicant / developer, the County Archaeologist or any designated representative of Swale Borough Council.
- 7.2 The following statutory provisions and codes of practice are to be adhered to where relevant:
- all statutory provisions and by-laws relating to the work in question, especially the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
 - the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct*
 - the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- 7.3 On completion of the evaluation, the archaeological contractor will prepare a consideration of the methodology used, including a confidence rating.
- 7.4 The archaeological contractor is to include with their report a completed copy of the Kent County Sites and Monuments Report Form (see Appendix 1)
- 7.5 The archaeological contractor is to provide the County Archaeologist with a representative selection of transparencies illustrating the archaeology of the site and the operations of the investigation. These will be deposited with the County SMR and will be used for presentations on aspects of the archaeology of Kent.

*Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council,
August 2006*

APPENDIX 6 – Plates

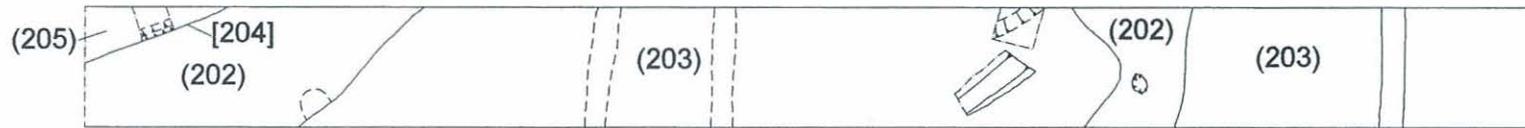


Figure 1: Location of site of proposed development within Minster, Isle of Sheppey, Kent (NGR: 595327mE, 172390mN)

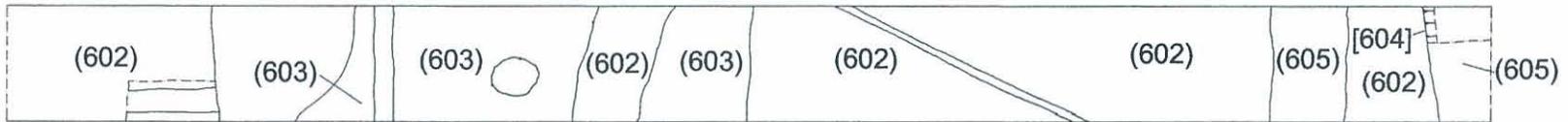


Figure 2: Location of test trenches within site of proposed development (NGR: 595327mE, 172390mN)

Trench 2



Trench 6



Trench 7

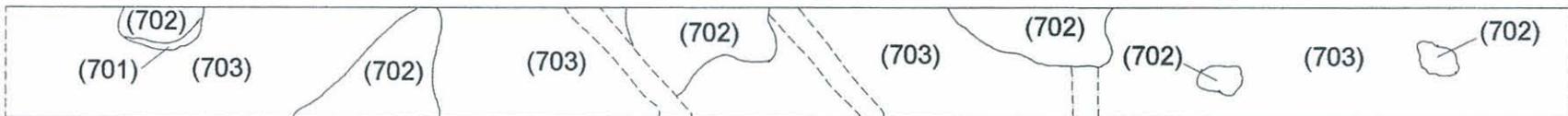
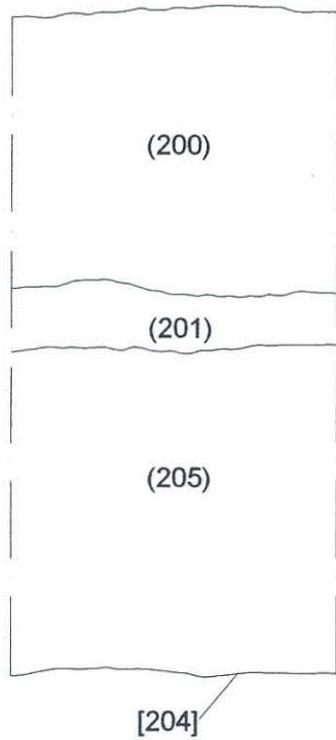


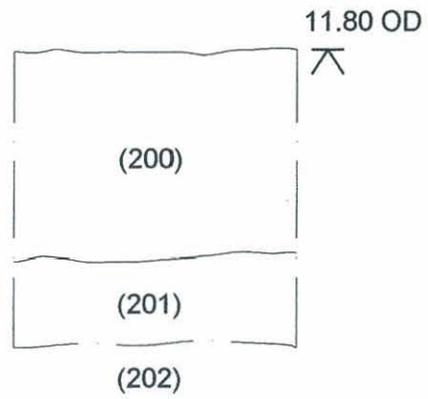
Figure 3: Trench Plans

Trench 2

Section A: North-East Facing



Section B: North-East Facing



Section C: South-East Facing

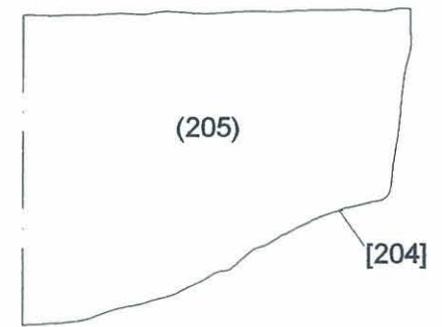


Figure 4: Sections

Trench 6

Section D: South-West Facing

Section E: North-East Facing

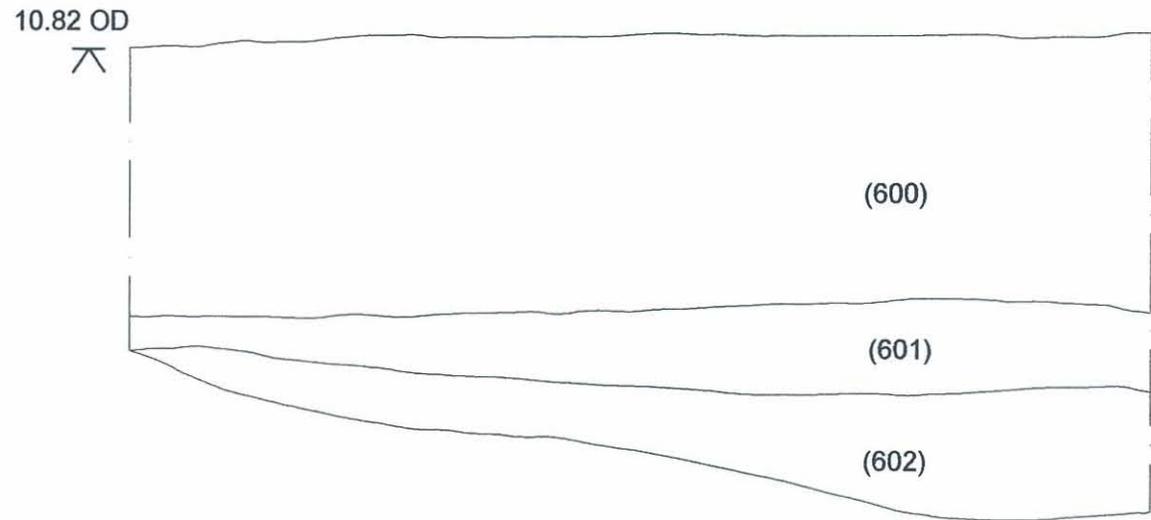
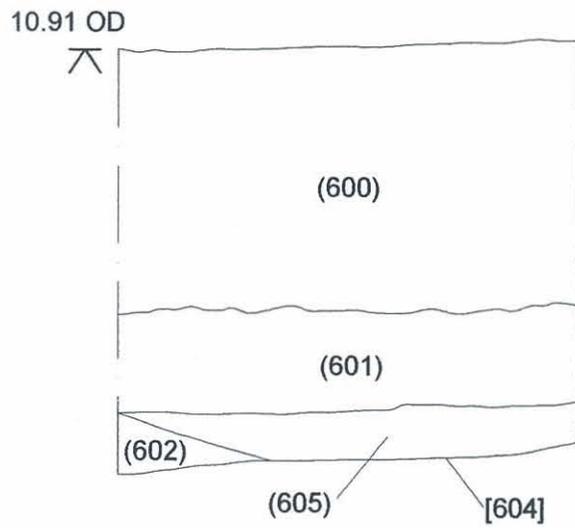
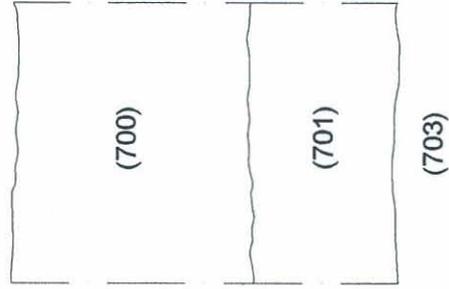


Figure 5: Sections

Trench 7

Section F: West Facing



Section G: West Facing

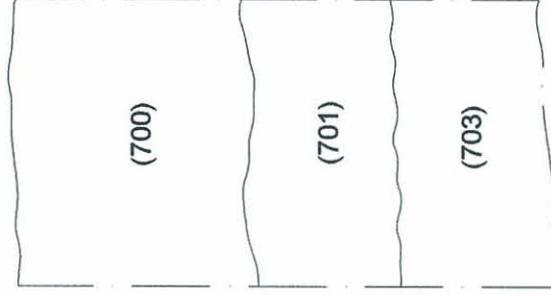


Figure 6: Sections



Plate 1. Trench 6, facing south, just excavated and about to fill with groundwater.

Plate 2. Trench 5 facing west showing the waterlogged conditions

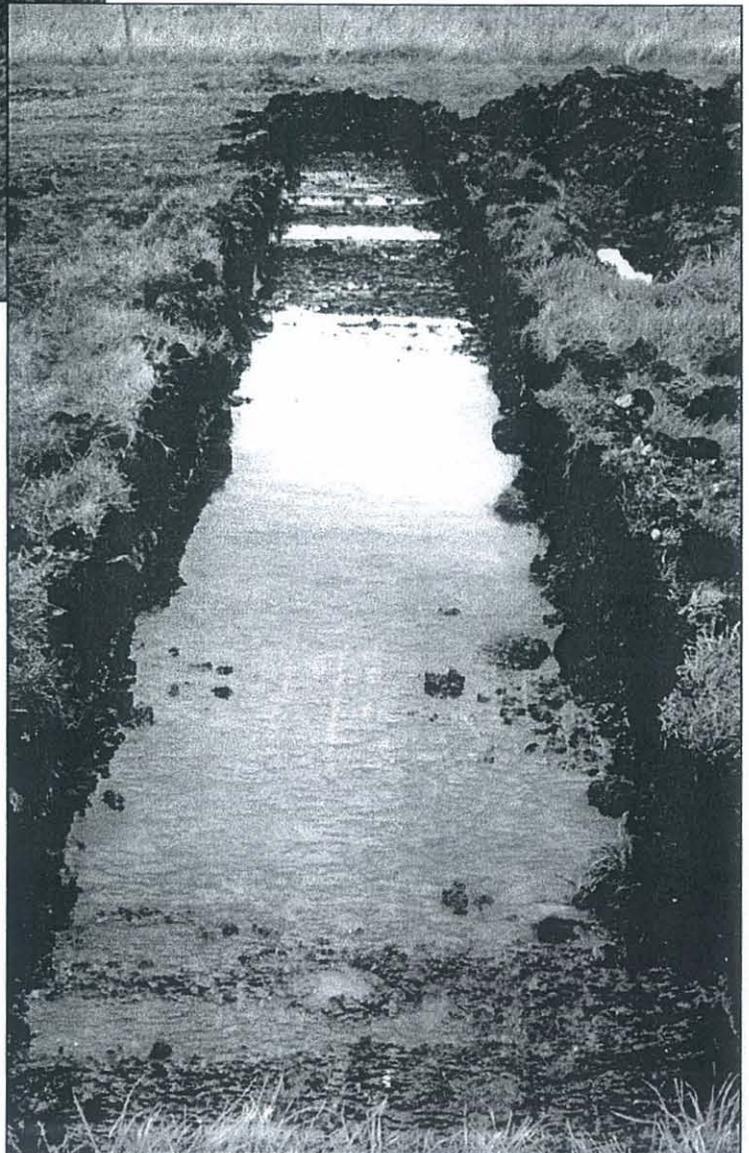




Plate 1. Trench 6, facing south, just excavated and about to fill with groundwater.

Plate 2. Trench 5 facing west showing the waterlogged conditions

