

## **Archaeological Desk-based Study on land at the former Shepherd Neame Depot, Belvedere Road, Faversham, Kent.**

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*Front cover:* This is a section of an OS map drawn in 1909 and shows the industrial development in the area of Belvedere Road in Faversham (Development Site highlighted in red).

# 1 Site Background

In February 2007, the Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Development Engineering Solutions Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation on the Shepherd Neame site in Belvedere Road, Faversham, Kent

The site is bounded to the south-west by a Seeboard sub-station, to the south-east by the rear gardens of properties fronting on to Abbey Street. To the north-east by residential development and to the north-west by Belvedere Road.

It is centred on National Grid Reference 601747161743.

The site is located about 750m to the north of Faversham town centre. Faversham Creek runs parallel to the site and is located about 50m to the north-west.

The site is approximately 120m by 40m, some 4800 sq m. The site is reasonably level from the north (0000m OD) to the south (0000 OD).

A site walk-over in late Feb 2007 whilst demolition works were being undertaken suggest that most of the site has had modern development on it which may impact on the buried archaeology

Important archaeological sites of the Roman, medieval and post-medieval period lie in the near vicinity, as do structures relating to the development of the post-medieval port industry. The development area is therefore one of considerable archaeological sensitivity.



Proposed development plan for Belvedere Road in Faversham.

## 2)Historic background

### i) Geology

The British Geological Survey (Sheet 273, 1974) shows the Quaternary geology as Head Brickearth overlying Tertiary sands of the Thanet Beds over Upper Chalk. However, almost immediately to the west and north are Holocene alluvial clays and silts, thought to have accumulated in Faversham Creek and the adjacent low-lying land in relatively recent times (pers. comm. Arthur Percival- Faversham Society).

One of the factors in the evolution of Faversham Creek has been the fluctuating level of the land in relation to sea. Sea level changes in the last 12,000 years are especially eventful. 12,000 years ago, at the end of the glaciation period, sea level was about 60m below present levels and the North Sea basin was dry land out to the Dogger Bank (Deroy, 1980:134-48).

The silting up of an upstream landing place at Stonebridge may explain the establishment of the medieval port of Thorne (see Leland 1543, VIII, 68) at some distance downstream of Faversham, although smaller boats were still able reach Faversham. Reconstructions of the pre-medieval coastline suggest that the coast in this area lay considerably landward of the position that it occupies at present. Philp (1968, Plan 1, viii) shows the Belvedere Road site to overlook an extensive area of intertidal marshland enclosed to the south-west and north-east by higher-lying ground. It is likely that this marshland represents what was once a small bay into which the creek flowed but which subsequently filled with silt. It is also likely that, because of the same process, the lower part of the creek was considerably wider than at present and that its eastern bank was therefore much closer to the prospective development site.

Geo-environmental site investigation at the Belvedere Road site in November 2002 by Ground Solutions Group Ltd indicate that the geology was Alluvium over Head Brickearth (drift geology) which in turn overlies the solid geological boundary between the Thanet Beds and the Upper Chalk strata. However only two boreholes identified the full geological profile with most of the site comprising a variable thickness of Made Ground materials (0.7m and 2.5m thick) overlying Alluvial soils, which in turn were underlain by Head Brickearth.

### ii) Prehistory

There are numerous reports of prehistoric finds in the Faversham area, (for example, a Neolithic axe described in *Achaeologia Cantiana* LXXXVIII 1986, 242), but many of these reports are short in detail, particularly in relation to location, and there is little evidence for earlier prehistoric occupation although it would be surprising if this did not take place. Giroud and Donne (1876, 110) state that:

‘There have been found in Faversham and its immediate neighbourhood, Celtic javelin heads of white cilex and bronze, and yellow flint celts, which tend to show that the place was visited, at least, in remote times.’

Similarly:

‘Evidence of prehistoric occupation is provided by numerous Neolithic flint implements found in local gravel pits.’ (Cadman and Percival 1978, 3).

A mesolithic flint flake (SMR No TR 06 SW 71) is recorded just north of the proposed development site.

The evidence for later prehistoric settlement is very much stronger. The excavations of 1964 - 1965 (Philp 1968, 65-66) revealed the eastern part of a Late Iron Age ditched enclosure north-east of the prospective development site. The enclosure was sub-rectangular in form and appears to have had an entrance at its eastern end. A date-range of c. 50 BC – c. AD 50 derived from the pottery within the ditch fills suggests that the ditches had silted up by the mid to late first century. Sections of ditch exposed about 20m to the east probably relate to a Late Iron Age field system associated with the enclosure. Given the relatively large quantities of domestic rubbish within the enclosure ditches, the enclosure may be assumed to represent the surviving remains of a much-truncated Late Iron Age farmstead, which appears, during the Roman period, to have been replaced by a villa (see Part 3iii below).

### **iii) Romano-British**

Many place-name specialists and etymologists have postulated a Latin origin for the name 'Faversham', with, for example, Horsley (1921, 19-20) and Glover (1982, 72) identifying the 'Faver' element as derived from the Latin *faber*, meaning 'smith'. However, as described below, there is a significant quantity of more tangible evidence for occupation activity in Faversham and its environs during the Roman period.

The large-scale excavations that took place east of the prospective development site between 1964-1965 exposed the remains of a Roman villa (Philp 1968). The villa appears to have superseded the Late Iron Age enclosure discussed above, being built in c. AD 70 – 100, and it probably remaining in use until c. AD 300 or a little later. Structural analysis identified four principle structural phases (Philp 1968, 71) and suggest that it virtually doubled in size between c. AD 100 – 150, with a wing being added soon after. Although the villa's foundations had been badly truncated, and no intact floors survived, the common presence of redeposited tesserae in five colours and fragments of painted plaster suggest that it was a building of relatively high status.

It is possible, given that Faversham Creek was wider during the Roman period, that waterside structures such as wharfing, revetments, sheds or similar lay just upstream to the proposed development site.

In 1874, under the title 'Roman Remains discovered in and near Faversham' it was reported that:

'The most important discoveries are those made in King's Field by the Late Mr. Gibbs from 1846-1869 ... [King's Field is shown on the Jacob's map of 1774 to lie approximately 200m south-east of the villa in an area where the railway would be built in 1855]. Among the relics were 4 statuettes of bronze, red clay, and porcelain; an ornamental jug of bronze; 9 paterae of Samian ware, a lamp of clay; 35 vessels (or portions of vessels) of clay; 8 glass bottles, 4 glass basins; 3 white metal mirrors; a knife, a boss or plate with Medusa's head in bold relief; and 24 coins, ranging from Vespasian to Gratian.' (Godfrey-Faucett 1874, lxxi-lxxii).

In the same piece we read the following in relation to a large area to the south of the abbey and west of King's Field:

'On both sides of Preston Street [which runs south to Watling Street from a point about 100m south-west of the abbey] and along its whole length, urns, oyster shells, and coins have been dug up. A coin of Nero in perfect preservation was found, in 1850, behind Mendfield's Almshouses [in Pease's Lane, now called South Road, see Wyard 1936, 59].

It is also stated that:

‘Beneath the churchyard at Faversham are foundation walls of Roman buildings on the north side of the nave and south side of the chancel, and urns and coins were found in 1794, when the western campanile was taken down. A Roman altar and many Roman bricks were discovered in the church when the central tower was pulled down in 1755.’

Jacob states that in 1770 30 Roman urns containing ashes and burnt bones were discovered in a regular order, six in a row alongside the road from Brent to Faversham about 600 metres from the proposed development site. Some of the urns were covered with tiles (SMR No TR 06 SW 71).

Most, if not all of the materials listed above, particularly those from King’s Field, derived from a Romano-British cemetery, much of which was destroyed during the construction of the railway. It is reported that the workmen removed many of the more valuable artefacts (Roach Smith 1858, 42-49). It may also be assumed from the large quantity and high quality of the grave goods that many of the inhabitants of Roman Faversham were wealthy, possibly members of a ruling elite.

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#### **iv) Anglo-Saxon**

A possible Latin origin for the name ‘Faversham’ has been mentioned above, but the name continues to attract controversy amongst place-name specialists, largely because of the bewildering variety of form that the name took during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods:

‘The etymology of ‘Faversham’ has been a field for discussion. It is found in twelve different ways. In Saxon times it was called Fafresham and Fafresfeld, in the record of Domesday, Favrashant; in the Records of the Corporation, uniformly, Faversham’ (Giraud and Donne 1876, 14).

Referred to as ‘the King’s little town of Fefres-ham’ in a charter of 811 (the King being Coenwulf of Mercia), it occurs as Febresham in 858 (Horsley 1921, 19) and in 839 is referred to by Athelwulf, king of the West Saxons and Kent as a ‘villa in Faverisham’ (Hasted 1798, Vol. V., 333). It also appears as ‘Faversham in 1086, as Faveresham in 1154 and as Feverham in 1610 (Glover 1982, 72). Faversham is mentioned on several occasions in the Anglo-Saxon charters, usually in relation to property grants, including the grant by Aethelberht, King of Kent, of a salhouse to his Thane, Wallaf. It was probably a town of some note by 903, in which year King Aethelstan held a Witanagemot (Great Council) in Faversham (Giraud and Donne 1876, 11).

As is the case for the Roman-period, the level of importance of the town during the Anglo-Saxon period is perhaps best indicated by the richness of the Anglo-Saxon burials, which also occur in King’s Field, possibly pointing to a (rare) degree of cultural continuity spanning the two periods:

‘A large Cemetery; including the Roman Burying ground, extended through the King’ Field across Preston Street, and amongst the Saxon interments have been discovered an unusual number of long double-edged swords, which must have been restricted to cavalry, and denote their owners to have been Knights of Thanes; at all events, persons of rank. Spears, javelins, knives, umboes of shields, personal ornaments of great richness and beauty denoting that the ladies who owned them were of the highest rank, have also been found there, and an important collection of them, made by the late Mr. William Gibb, is now preserved in the South Kensington Museum, and has been catalogued and described by Mr. C. Roach Smith (Giraud and Donne 1876, 11, see also Roach Smith 1858, 42-49). N. B. Much of this collection is now held in storage in the British Museum and some is on permanent display at Liverpool Museum.

Evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation activity of a more humble kind at Faversham is represented by an Anglo-Saxon loom weight, ‘found at a depth of 12 feet’ on the site of the central Post Office during its construction in 1954 (‘Archaeological Notes from Maidstone Museum’, Arch. Cant. LXIX, 1954, 208-209).

## v) Medieval

The extensive excavations of 1964 – 1965 undertaken by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit exposed the area of the abbey. The abbey complex is presently thought to centre on National Grid Reference TR 0182 6172.

The excavations exposed the remains of ‘one of the great abbeys of the realm’ (Kent County Council 2004). The church was ‘a vast structure - 361ft. in length and nearly 80ft. in width ...’ with a ‘correspondingly large cloister and attached buildings including a Chapter House, Frater, Dorter, Cellar and West Range’ (ibid). Structural analysis indicated that both the church and the claustral buildings were eventually reduced in size, with a large cemetery covering part of the site of the original structures. Other discoveries included carved stonework, coloured window glass (some of the earliest of its type found), lead, several coins and floor tiles, the latter forming a typologically important series with a date-range spanning the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.

King Steven granted the manor of Faversham to the Cluniac monastic order in 1147, at which time or a little after the abbey was built (Tefler 1965, 215). It was founded as a free and independent institution dedicated to St. Saviour (as was Canterbury Cathedral before it became Christ Church). King Steven’s wife, Matilda, was buried at the abbey on her death in 1152, followed by his son, Eustace, in 1153 and the king himself was buried there in 1154 (The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, trans. D. Whitelock 1965, 202). Just before its dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII, Leland (c. 1543, Vol. VIII, 68) describes it as ‘a great monastery of Blake monks’, by which time it was termed a Benedictine rather than a Cluniac order. There are many reports of the abbey’s poverty (it was often insolvent) and it appears to have been held in generally low esteem by the townsfolk of Faversham (see, for example, Hasted 1798, Vol. V., 330).

Documentary evidence tells us very little about its structural development. Tefler (1965, 5) states that, despite its poverty, the penultimate abbot, Walter Gore, built a guesthouse and lay chapel, but in 1538 the last abbot, John Caslock, signed a letter of surrender and a seemingly slow process of demolition began (see Philp 1968, 6). It is thought that later in the reign of Henry VIII stone was shipped across the Channel from the abbey to strengthen Calais’ defences (Knapp and Jones 1949, 150), a fate that also befell St. Augustine’s Abbey in Canterbury. However, although highly schematic, Philip Symonsson’s map, compiled between 1592 and 1598, appears to show a substantial number of buildings on the site.

## vi) Post-medieval

Faversham is of great interest to students of the early post-medieval chemical industry, because it was one of the earliest sites of gunpowder production (see, for example, Percival and Salmon 1967; Croker et al 1999, Allen, Cotterill and Pike 2001, 93-112). Gunpowder production is first attested to some time before 1573, when a Thomas Gyll is referred to in a muster roll as a gunpowder maker (Croker et al 1999, 36). This reference confirms the assertion that ‘this dreadful composition GUN-POWDER’ was made in Faversham during the reign of Elizabeth I ‘if not before her time’ (Jacob 1774, 94).

It is probable that this early phase of gunpowder manufacture in Faversham was based on the extraction of sulphur from copperas stone, and that the industry was established in Faversham because of its proximity to the Whitstable and Queenborough copperas stone beds. Following this, the town remained a centre for munitions production until well into the twentieth century (see Percival and Salmon 1967 for a detailed narrative).

### 3) Maps



*Fig 2. Flood Mill. The development Site is in the area indicated by the red arrow. Stockwell is shown at the tip of the arrow but without a lane.. It is one of a number of freshwater springs itemised in the Wardmote Book of 1570. All have now dried up apart from one which is now tapped to supply the water to the Shepherd Neame Breweries.*

The earliest map to be consulted, (Fig. 2) a pictorial map some 25 feet long that shows the full extent of the port of Faversham from the North Foreland, just beyond Margate to the upper tidal reach of Faversham creek, and probably dates from c.1520.

However, it may be one of the coastal maps drawn in 1539-40 on the instructions of Henry VIII.

Henry VIII needed maps to show the defences of the Realm in case there was war with France. The Faversham map shows a defensive boom of (possible) boats across the Swale, no doubt to deny the enemy access to the newly established Royal Dockyard at Chatham.

Of particular interest is the left-hand end (west) section of the map that shows the tidal headwaters of Faversham Creek straddled by Flood Mill which is known to have existed from the time of the Domesday Book. The mill wheel is shown to be fixed to a massive stone wall and the mill building seems to be elevated above the tidal stream.

The artist has drawn what could be interpreted as eddies and broken water flowing through possible sluices under the building. Immediately above the building is a dry (but muddy) mill race stream used to regulate the height of water upstream of Flood Mill. The island thus formed seems to have some sort of defensive pallsading on what was possibly part of the earlier Anglo-Saxon settlement. The map has now transferred from the British Museum to the British Library (B.M. Cotton Charter XIII 12)

To the left and downstream is painted the Town Storehouse and Town Quay. Leland writing in 1549 wrote that ships of 20 tons could berth at Faversham Town Quay, but larger ships would need to use the quay at Thorne, just over 2km downstream from the Town Quay.

The Town Storehouse is shown as a larger building than most and again, as the Thorne Quay storehouse, chimneless. The Town Quay is shown as a large timber construction, possibly built with bolts to hold the structure together, and topped with a timber copping. Adjacent, and leading up to Gunpowder Wharf or Quay is a large palisaded area, which may link up with the palisading shown on Gunpowder Wharf. Pallisading was a secure way to protect an area of land. The term 'pale' is





Fig 3. The Development site shown in 1782, undeveloped and with no Belvedere or Stockwell Lane.

derived from it, and denotes an area of trading – the term ‘beyond the pale’ indicates activity outside of accepted behaviour or tradition. The map indicates there are no buildings in the vicinity of the Development Site.

Hasted’s 1782 map of Faversham (Fig 3) shows very little development in the vicinity of the Development Site, however, Hasted was renowned as having had continuous problems with the accuracy of his maps: “So amazingly incorrect that I scarce see how it can be rectified” (Dr Boteler of Eastry, 1780).

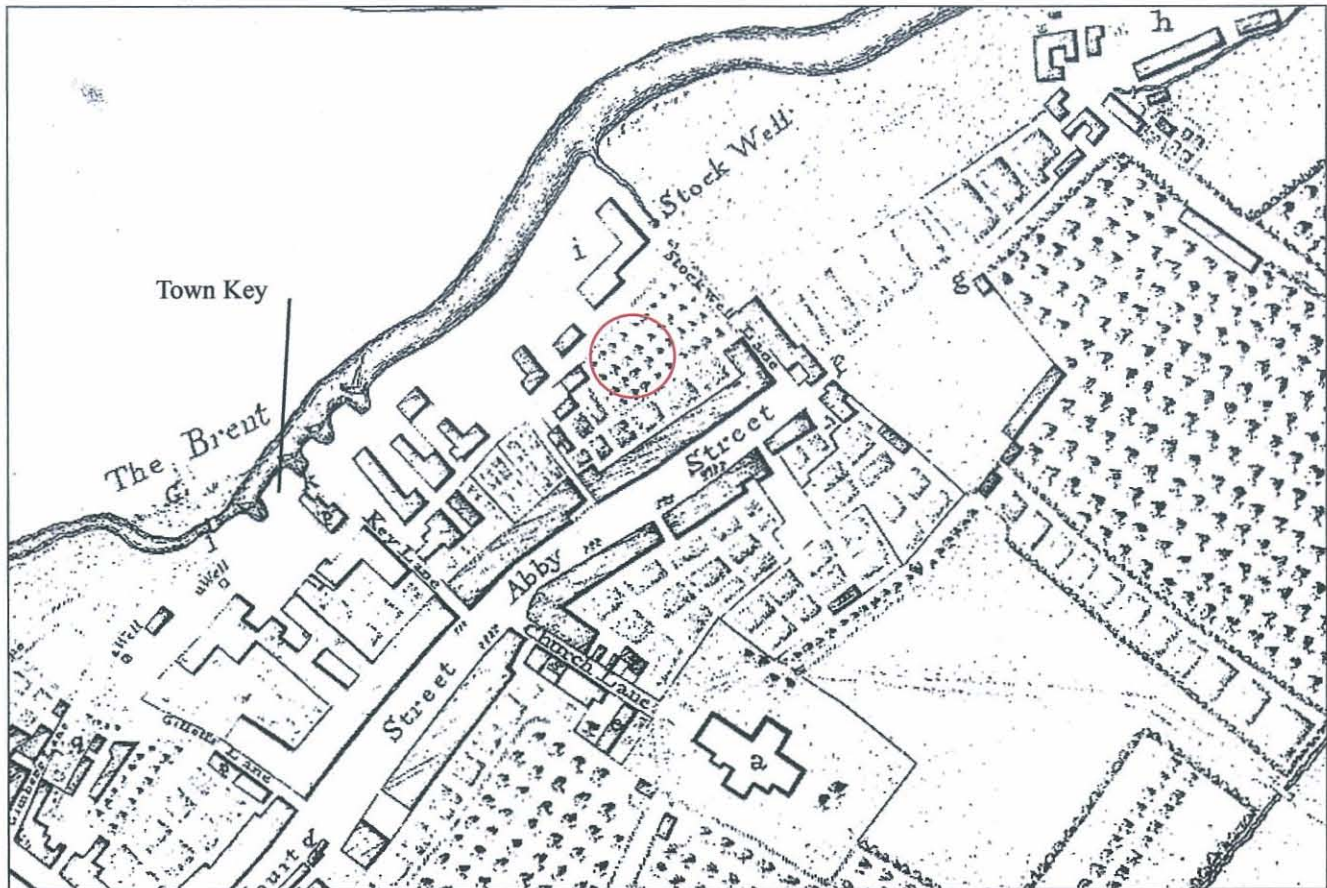
Edward Jacob’s original map of Faversham (Fig 4) was originally painted in colour and has been dated c.1745 by computing the correct year from the magnetic variation shown on the map’s compass

Found in a back room of Faversham Town Hall by the writer the map has been cleaned and re-stretched and is today hanging in the Mayor’s Parlour. The map shows a pre-industrial age Faversham bounded to the south by Watling Street, to the west by the stream called Fishbourne (now Faversham Creek) and to the east by a grass path running at right angles from Watling Street in a straight line to Thorne Key, the medieval port of Faversham.

Of considerable interest are the various port facilities, the warehouses, and the extent of the gunpowder works (the Home Works), including Gunpowder Quay, mills and Waterways (Fig 4).



Fig 4. Jacob’s map of c.1774. Area of the Development Site highlighted. The line of Belvedere Road is now established as is Stockwell Lane.



*Fig 5. Jacob's map of c.1774. The Development Site is highlighted in red, and shown to be orchard in 1774.*

The five quays of Faversham – Ordnance Wharf, Town Key, Wool Key, King's Head Key and Standard Key can all be located on the engraved map (below) published by Edward Jacob in 1774. It was engraved by Hilton of Canterbury, who used the coloured map of c.1745 as reference.

The Town key shown by Jacob is to the west of Key Lane. It has four docks that were used by lighters owned by the town – it was a feature of the port that most bulk cargoes – gunpowder, coal and brick- needed to be transhipped from larger ships anchored at Hollow Shore as the lack of water at high tide and the narrowness of the store sluice and Powder Monkey Bay prevented ships of any draught coming upstream. The Wool Key is upstream, but adjacent to the King's Head Key which Jacob has marked on his map with a (i). Standard Key is marked on Jacob's map with a (H). Standard Key, unlike the other quays has regular wharfage along its frontage.

Jacobs map is important in our understanding of the creeks wharves; it shows the full extent of the embryonic gunpowder works, canals, mills and other buildings, but more importantly it shows that no development has taken place on the Development Site. (Fig 4, 5).

In the mid 18th century, there was no quay or buildings shown on Jacobs map on the Development Site, it is shown to be orchards.

In 1787 General William Ray started the first Ordnance Survey of Kent. By 1788 a small party led by Lieutenant Mudge of the Royal Artillery started the trigonometrical survey of Kent at a scale of six inches to one mile. Unfortunately this party was relocated to the Channel Islands, then Isle of Wight and later into Sussex.

The surveyors did not return to Kent until 1795 and re-started the survey at three inches to the mile. By 1799 Mudge was able to report that 'The great map of Kent is finished and about to be published'.

The finished full-colour drawing of north Kent (Fig 6) is the only surviving product of the survey and can be found in the British Library (BL:OS,112).



*Fig 6. Royal Engineers (O S) map of c.1799. The Development Site is highlighted in red and indicates that the site is as yet still not developed.*

The Faversham sheet (Fig 6) is beautifully coloured, green for pasture and brown for arable land, blue for water features, red for towns and villages and ochre for main roads, all colouring conventions that were to be used internationally up to the late 18th century.

This OS Surveyors drawing of c.1799 shows that the Development Site is no longer orchard but is now used for market gardens.

In 1841 a map (Fig. 7) was produced by T Thurston of Ashford showing “the present and intended new navigation between the town of Faversham and the east Swale” (CKS Thurston map 1841). It shows in great detail the proposed canal from Faversham to Hollow Shore; even small navigation buoys are illustrated. The purpose of the map was to plan in the proposed route of the new canal and highlight what port facilities would be affected.



*Fig 7. The 1841 Thurston map.*

Buildings are now shown on the far south bank, the mill race downstream of the lower mills has been filled in and the mill race of Bennetts Mills has been reduced in width.

The area of the Development Site has still not been developed but the group of building shown adjacent on the south-west boundary are shown on the OS map (Fig. 6) of 1799.

Although Parliament passed the Railway Act in 1824 authorising the use of steam locomotives and Thomas Telford had proposed digging a ship canal from Hollow Shore to the town of Faversham it was not until 1840 that the Mayor of Faversham called a meeting to resolve the difficulties of access to Ordnance Wharf. By then some 62% of all cargoes were unloaded into lighters and unloaded at the various quays.

The cost to dig a canal and straighten the creek up as

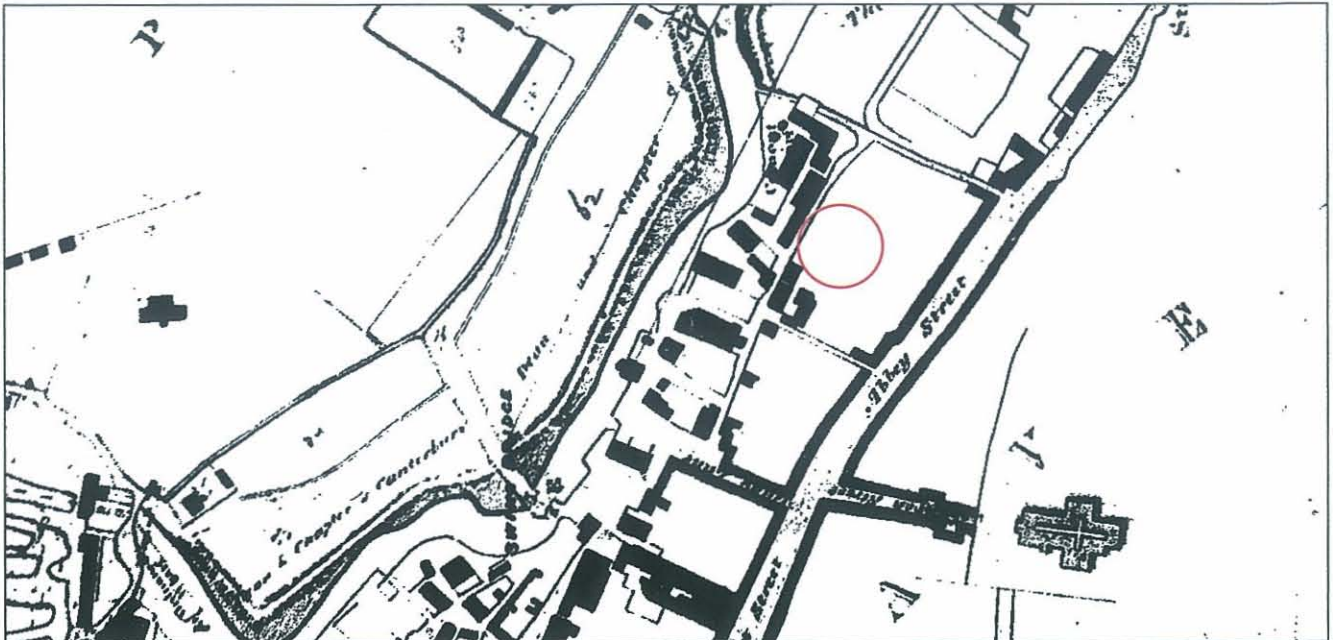


Fig 9. The 1831 Thurston map. The area of the Development Site is highlighted in red and is not as yet developed.

far as Ordnance Wharf was £5,593. 2s 5d.

On 18th June 1842 the Faversham Navigation Act received its Royal Assent. The Act allowed the scheme to cost up to £16,000 and would permit a Spring Tide depth of 8 feet at Ordnance Wharf. By 1867 the Development site had come out of market garden use. Brickearth was being extracted from two large pits and the manufacture of bricks was taking place in the adjacent kilns (OS 1867 Series Kent 34.10). On the north-west boundary two sets of two storage containers were built most likely for the adjacent Cement Works which had its own quay.

By 1897 the number of clay pits had increased to four and the adjacent Cement Works had expanded. In 1909 (below-Fig. 10) the Development Site was bounded by a fully developed Bevedere Road and Stockwell Lane had been cut off from its now dried up spring.

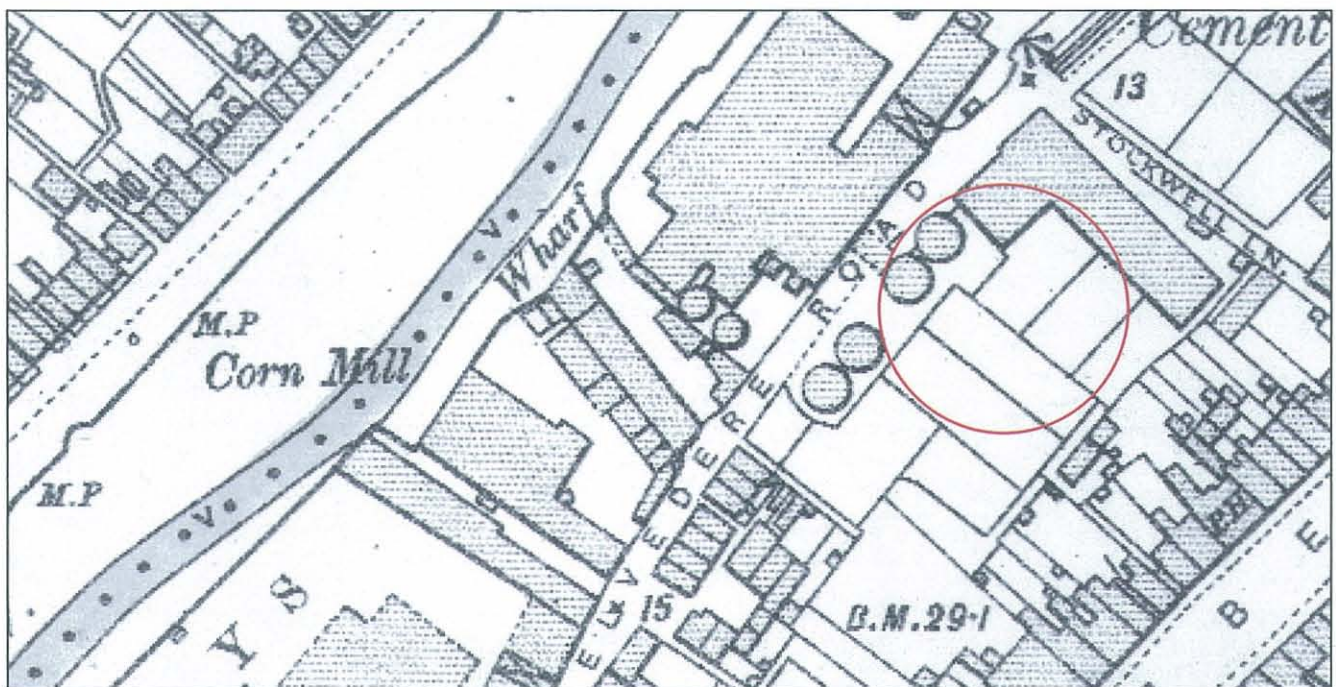


Fig 10. The 1909 OS map. The area of the Development Site is highlighted in red and has been utilised for brickearth extraction and subsequently backfilled.

## 4) Results of the desk based assessment

A wide variety of documents and maps were consulted in the desk based assessment and it is clear from this material that it is unlikely that buildings of any substance were constructed on the Development Site prior to the mid-19th century.

The maps show that the Development Site was orchard in the 18th century and market gardens in the early 19th century before being utilised for brickearth extraction and associated buildings in the mid-19th century.

A selection of maps (see Figs. 13-15) show the development of the site whilst the geo-environmental investigation shows (Fig. 12) that the strata encountered comprised Made Ground and Alluvial soils overlying Head Brickearth, Thanet Beds and Upper Chalk. Groundwater was found at about 1.3m below existing ground level.

The results of the investigation indicate that conventional shallow strip type foundations would not be feasible and a specialist piling contractor should review the investigation data (Ground Solutions Group, 2002: 1).

For further information please refer to the Geo-Environmental Investigation (November 2002) by the Ground Solutions Group.

The Historic OS map for 1867 (Fig. 13) shows three large clay pits for brickearth extraction in the south-west area of the Development Site, and a further four pits located in the north-east area of the Development Site. Kilns are also itemised for the manufacture of bricks.

The Historic OS map for 1897 (Fig. 14) indicates that a large kiln has been built in the north-west corner of the site with a large Cement Works established in the north-east corner of the Development Site.

The Historic OS map for 1907 (Fig. 15) shows the same developments.

Tim Allen, Paul Wilkinson. SWAT Archaeology

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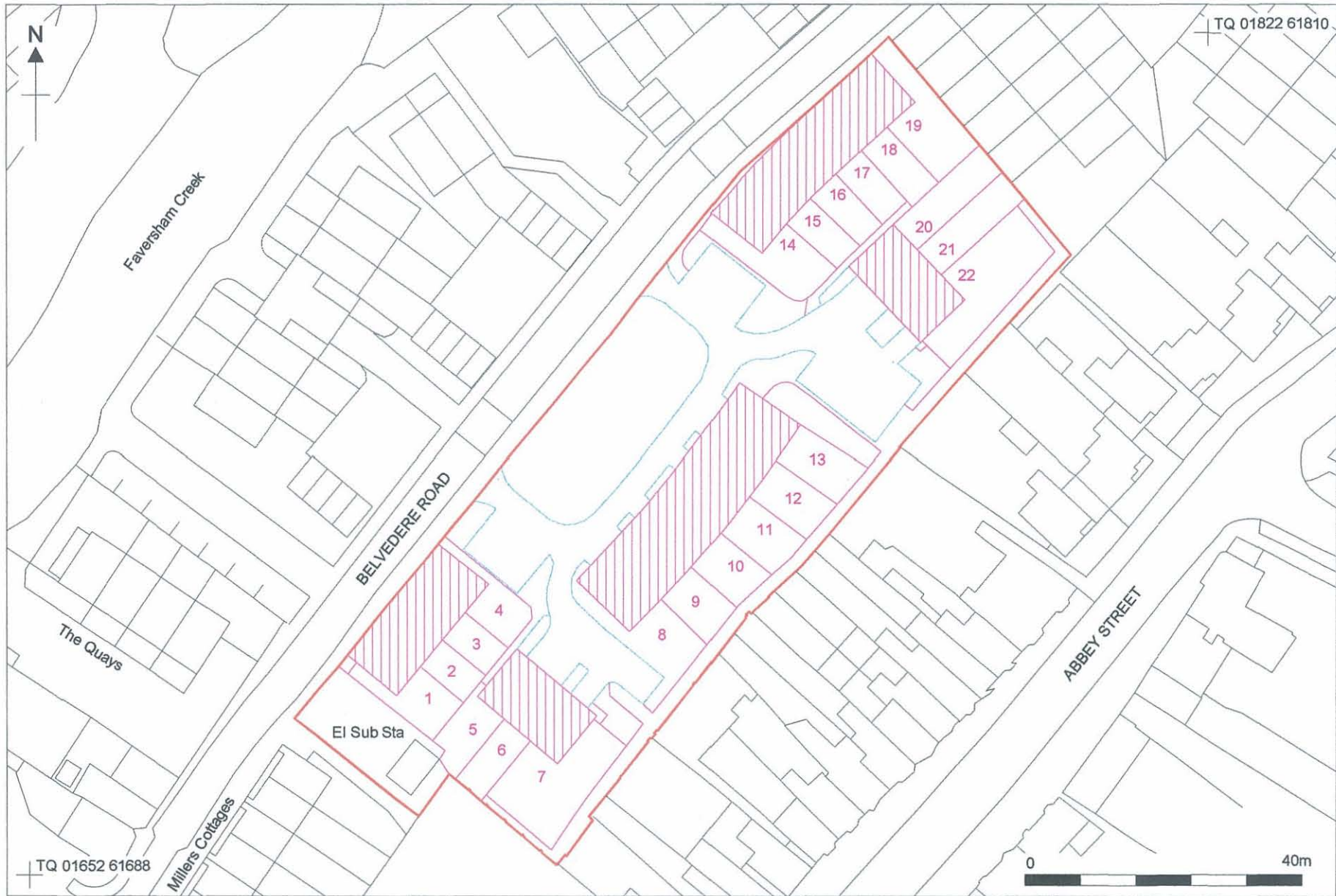


Figure 11. Development Plan. 1:800.



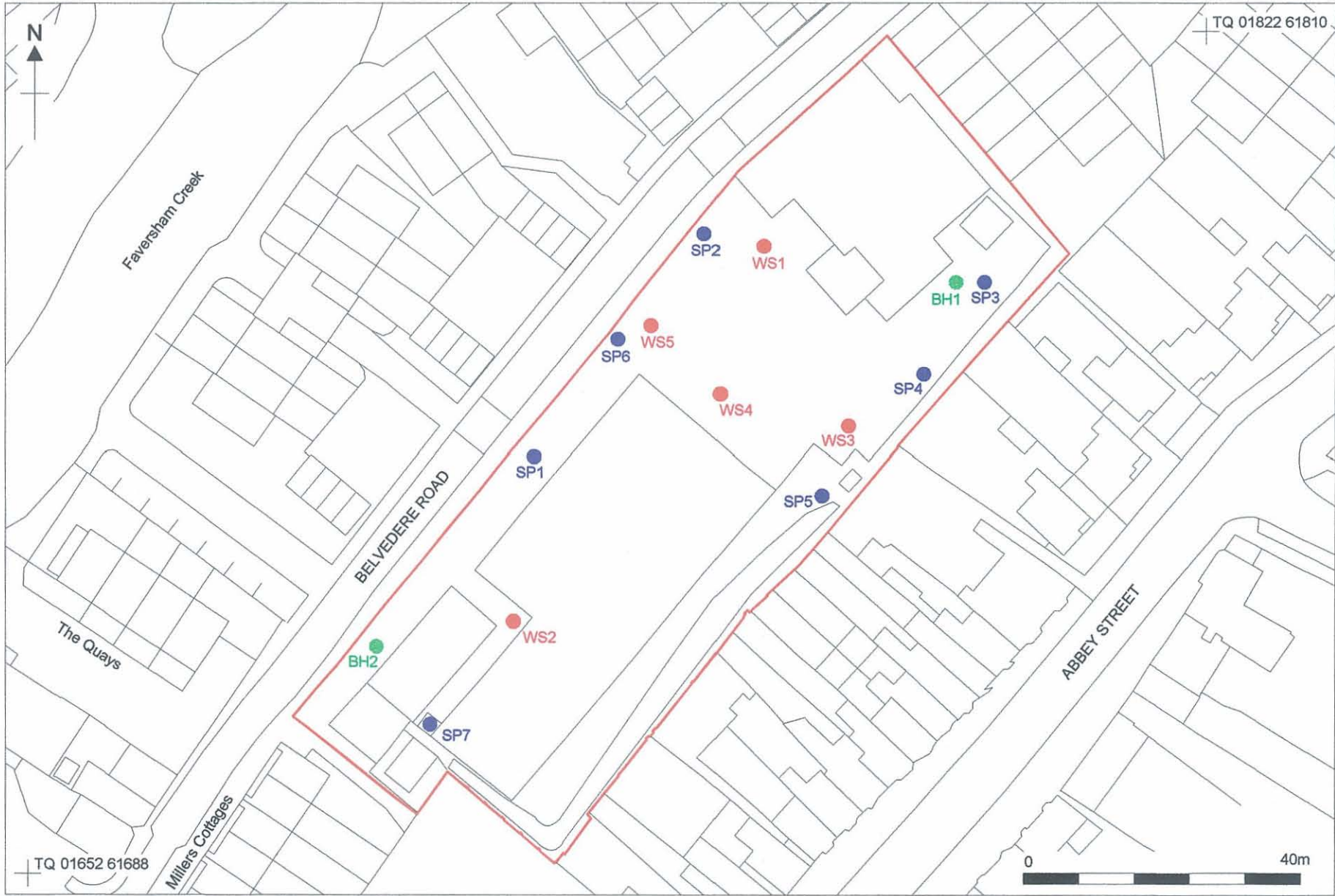


Figure 12. Bore Hole Locations. 1:800.

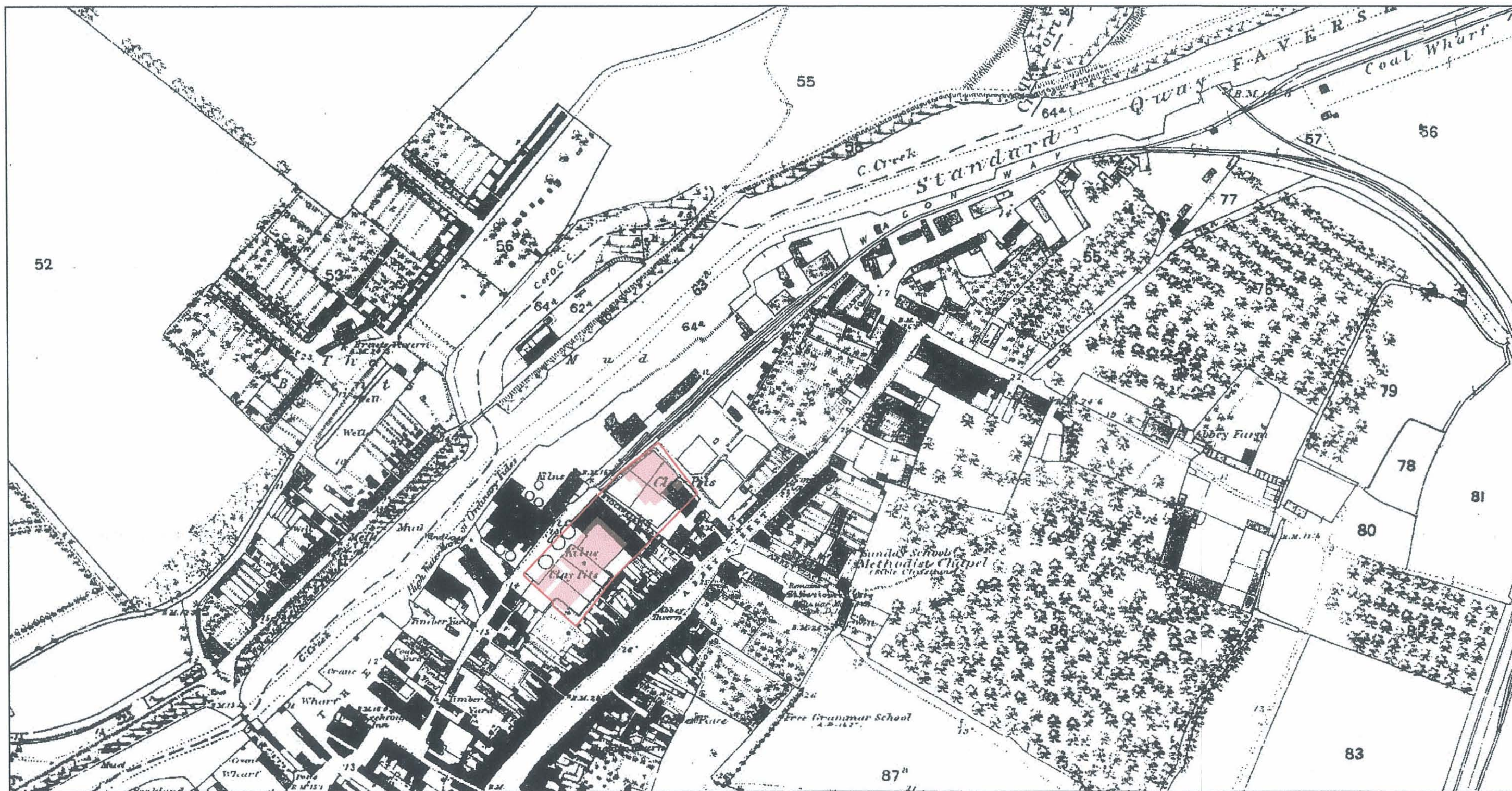


Figure 13. Ordnance Survey 25" First Edition map of Faversham. Sheet XXXIV.6.  
 Site outlined in red, existing buildings shaded.



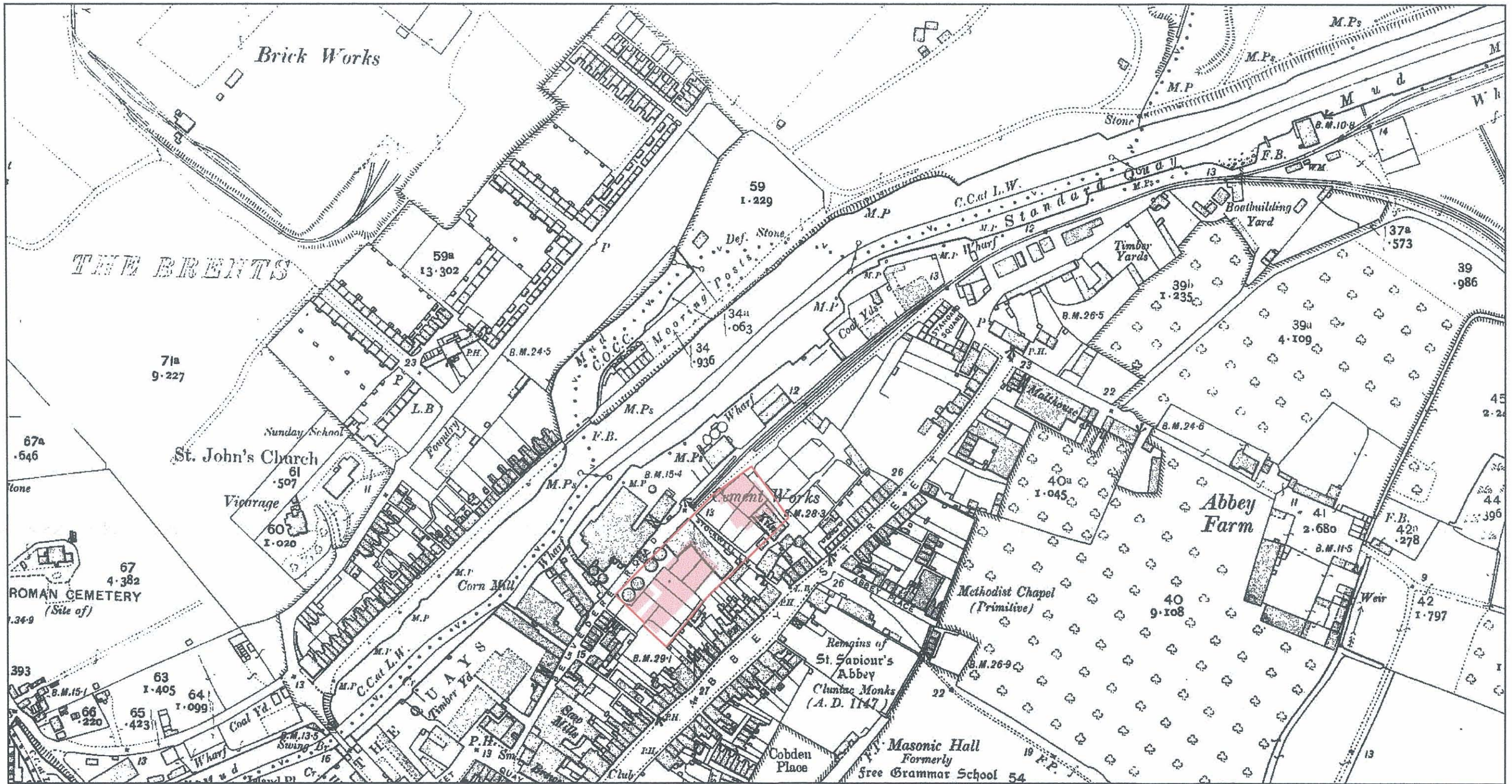


Figure 15. Ordnance Survey 25" Third Edition map of Faversham. Sheet XXXIV.6.  
 Site outlined in red, existing buildings shaded.