



**Archaeological Evaluation and  
Assessment of Land at the Duke of  
Kent site, Staple Street, Faversham,  
Kent**  
*September 2011*

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Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land  
at the Duke of Kent site, Staple Street,  
Faversham, Kent



NGR 604661 162712  
Site Code: DofK-EV-11  
(Planning Application SW/11/0982)

Report for  
Dunster House Ltd

**SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY**

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# **Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at the Duke of Kent site, Staplestreet Road, Faversham, Kent**

NGR 604661 162712  
Site Code: DofK-EV-11

## **SUMMARY**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation and assessment of land formally the Duke of Kent public house on the of corner of Thanet Way and Staplestreet in Hernhill Parish near Faversham in Kent. A planning application (SW/11/0982) for the construction of Industrial units A1 and A2 with associated parking was submitted to Swale Borough Council whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment 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 2011) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was focused on Phase 1 of the construction works which is the build of Unit A1 (Plate 4).*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of six trenches which encountered no archaeological features. The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Dunster House Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation and assessment at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2011) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The development is situated on the site of a demolished public house, the Duke of Kent. Formally a 1930's brick-built building, it was demolished in 2009 to prevent vandalism. The site itself, some 1.3ha in area sits on the corner of the Thanet Way, the dual carriageway that traditionally conveyed day-trippers from London to Margate and the golden sands of Thanet. To the north-east the site is bordered by Staplestreet, an ancient track that leads west to Faversham and the village of Hernhill to the east.

According to the British Geological Survey the site lies on the boundary between the Woolwich Beds and the Thanet Beds/Bullhead Beds, although cappings of Head Brickearth are recorded close by. The site averages 25.50aOD.

## **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Planning consent (SW/10/0493) for the erection of two blocks of industrial buildings with associated access and parking was approved by Swale Borough Council (SBC). Swale

Borough Council requested that an archaeological evaluation and assessment be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The Local Planning Authority (SBC) placed the following condition on the planning consent:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or the developer, or successor(s) in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with 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 representative 4% sample of the impact area with six trenches (Fig. 1) designed to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The development site lies within an area of archaeological potential, mainly from the Roman period. The closest to the site is a 1930 find spot of Roman pottery (TR 06 SW 10) c.170m to the north-east during road construction. To the south-west at Brenley Corner, about 600m from the development site where Jenkins in 1960 excavated at least three Romano-British temples and associated structures, unfortunately no report was written. Likewise there is no report from Brian Philp who watched the 1970 re-build of the Thanet Way. Potential Roman buildings were identified by field walking as part of the Swale Survey at Nash Court some 300m south-east of the development site (TR 05 NW 017).

In 2000 the writer undertook an archaeological survey of Swale and the sites within 1km to the development are:

**Site Code: 224 SMR TR 06 SW 008**

**Goodnestone/Faversham**

NGR: 0459 6159. Date of Visit: 1998

Type of Cultivation/Crop: Grass/meadow

Site Type: Find spot

Find spots: 1

Period: Roman

Source: Field-walking

Aspect of Slope: Flat

Altitude of Field (metres): 5

Finds Categories: Roman pottery (11) and Iron-Age (4) 84

Sherds of Roman pottery (11) found in rabbit and mole holes around the defunct spring just to the north of Goodnestone church. It would seem the spring was the centre of settlement from at least the Roman period to modern times.

**Site Code: 225 SMR TR 05 NW 005**

**Brenley Corner, Faversham**

NGR: 0412 6024

Date of Visit: 1998

Type of Cultivation/Crop: Arable

Site Type: Earthworks

Find spots: -

Period: Roman?

Source: Field-walking

Aspect of Slope: Level

Altitude of Field (metres): 25

Finds Categories: -

Three long linear earthworks (lynchetts) running north from Watling Street and west of Brenley Corner. There are at least three 700 metres apart and joining with the "Lower Road", 1000 metres away from the Roman Watling Street.

The most pronounced and easterly lynchet is east of Holmstall Lane, the next (to the west) runs from Watling Street to Ewell Farm, a known Roman site, and the last runs from Watling Street to Chambers Crossing, and on to Clapgate Spring.

**Site Code: 226 SMR TR 05 NW 017**

**Nash Court/Faversham**

NGR: 0517 5985

Date of Visit: 1997

Type of Cultivation/Crop: Wheat

Site Type: Find spot

Find spots: Numerous

Period: Roman

Source: Field-walking

Aspect of Slope: South-east

Altitude of Field (metres): 5-10

Finds Categories: R.B.C. and Roman pottery

Numerous Roman building ceramics (17), including *tegula* and *imbrex* indicate the site of a Roman building or buildings on the west bank above the spring.

The farm manager said he knew of a Roman villa on the land and he had observed over the years crop marks where the Roman material was located.

A note in the Faversham Institute Journal of 1870 says that Roman buildings were known on this site.

Roman pottery (13) dated to 2nd to 4th centuries.

**Site Code: 227 SMR TR 06 SW 010**

**Fairbrook Farm/Faversham**

NGR: 0512 6064

Date of Visit: 1997

Type of Cultivation/Crop: Wheat

Site Type: Find spot

Find spots: Numerous

Period: Roman 85

Source: Field-walking

Aspect of Slope: South-east

Altitude of Field (metres): 5-10

Finds Categories: R.B.C. Roman pottery

Numerous Roman building materials – (43) *tegula*, *imbrex*, flue-tiles indicate a site of a Roman building on the west bank above the Fairbrook spring. Roman pottery sherds (23) indicate occupation from the late 2nd century to the 4th.

Some Iron-Age sherds (7) also found.

**Site Code**

**Site Code: 239**

**Ewell Farm, Faversham**

NGR: 0358 6083

Date of Visit: March 1996

Type of Cultivation/Crop: Orchards/courtyards

Site Type: Buildings

Find spots: Numerous

Period: Roman

Source: Field-walking

Aspect of Slope: South-east

Altitude of Field (metres): 15

Finds Categories: R.B.C., pottery sherds

Numerous Roman building ceramics were retrieved from orchards on the south-east slope above Ewell Farm. On close inspection it became apparent that recently (1970) concrete hard standing had been laid over a number of Roman buildings that were grouped around Ewell spring. The site manager said that large Roman foundations had been uncovered by a JCB, including a gateway and road leading east. His instructions were to cover it up quickly. Roman pottery retrieved by PW dates from 2nd to late 3rd centuries. It is worth noting that Roman temples and structures were found some 500 metres south from Ewell Farm when the M2 Brenley Corner was built in the 1970s.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2011) was:

- Assessing the likely archaeological impact of the proposed development including drainage, access and car parking works
- Assessing the impact of past development on the site's archaeological potential including from ploughing, landscaping and modern road development
- Establishing the degree of Iron Age and Romano-British activity on the site.
- Establishing the degree of earlier prehistoric activity on the site given its topographic position
- Establishing the degree of medieval and post-medieval activity on the site and its relationship with the Fairbrook Estate
- Contributing to the environmental and landscape history of the area

### **METHODOLOGY**

Trial trenching was carried out on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011 with the excavation of six trenches. Trench location was agreed prior to the excavation between KCC and SWAT. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon (**003**), or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. All trenches measured about 20m in length and 1.6m wide except for Trench 5 which measured 30m long. Particular care was taken to place trenches within the footprint of the proposed building A1 and associated parking (Fig. 1). The trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned, and a number of linear features were exposed which on investigation proved to be modern. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance.



## MONITORING

Curatorial monitoring was carried out during the course of the evaluation.

## RESULTS

Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5 were covered with a thin layer of tarmac **(001)** overlaying crushed brick **(002)** up to 0.24m thick, trenches 4, 6 had topsoil **(004)** about 0.35m thick, and in all trenches these overlaid the undisturbed natural deposit, a fine sandy silt of pale to mid leached brown clay silt akin to Head Brickearth with common, moderately sorted small to medium flints **(003)**. **The** archaeological horizon was the interface between the topsoil **(004)** and the undisturbed natural deposit **(003)**, as the strata was identified by a number of worked flints, pottery sherds and the occasional 'pot-boiler'.

### Trench 1

(20m x 1.6m x 0.20m)

Trench 1 was placed across the south-west corner of the site. The trench was positioned northwest/southeast and was machined to a depth of 0.81m apart from the southern end where a test pit to a depth of 1.20m was machined to clarify the geology on site, where the upper natural deposit **(003)** was exposed. There was 0.11m of concrete overlaying 0.07m of tarmac which overlaid 0.24m of crushed brick **(002)**, and another layer 0.09m of tarmac overlaying 0.26m of degraded topsoil **(004)**. Under which was the natural deposit **(003)**. No archaeological features were seen, but post-Medieval roof tile and pottery were found laying on the interface of 004 and 003. On advice from the KCC Senior Archaeologist and before back-filling the trench was re-machined 0.25m deeper with no further results.

### Trench 2

(20m x 1.6m x 0.52m)

Trench 2 ran north to south and was cut across the western edge of the site. It was machined to a depth of 0.52m, with **(001)** up to 0.10m thick. There was 0.25m of crushed brick **(002)**, overlaying 0.24m of degraded topsoil **(004)**. The natural deposit **(003)** was encountered at 0.49m, but no archaeological features were seen.

### Trench 3

(20m x 1.6m x 0.70m)

Trench 3 was situated on the western edge of the development site and was aligned northeast/southwest. It was machined to a depth of 0.70m, with the tarmac **(001)** up to 0.07m deep. There was 0.22m of crushed brick **(002)**, another layer of tarmac some 0.09m thick and degraded topsoil **(004)** overlaying the natural **(003)** deposit of sandy silt.

Apart from a modern pipe run no archaeological features were seen, but rare peg tile fragments, and worked lithics were exposed in the machined deposit **(004)**.

### Trench 4

(20m x 1.6m x 0.55m)

Trench 4 was located at the extreme north-west corner of the development site, and was aligned west/east. The trench was machined to a depth of 0.55m with a 0.35m thick deposit of topsoil **(004)** to the top of the natural sandy silt **(003)**. Rare peg tile fragments were seen in

the machined context **(004)**, but there were no archaeological features present.

#### **Trench 5**

(25m x 1.6m x 0.36m)

Trench 5 was positioned in the north-west corner of the development site and was aligned relatively west/east. The trench was machined to a depth of 0.36m with a 0.20m cover of tarmac **(001)** overlaying 0.10m of crushed brick **(002)**, which in turn overlaid the natural sandy silt **(003)**. No archaeological features were present.

#### **Trench 6**

(22m x 1.6m x 0.37m)

Trench 6 ran virtually north-east/south-west and was positioned in the centre of the development site. The trench was machined to a depth of 0.37m where the natural upper geology of sandy silt **(003)** was encountered. Topsoil **(004)** was 0.20m thick and well mixed with dumped stone, tile and brick. Whilst machining the centre of the trench we encountered a large dump of building material which may suggest backfill of a small quarry. No archaeological features were revealed.

#### **FINDS**

Eight residual struck flints were retrieved from the site, all dating to the early Bronze Age. The assemblage comprises 1 blade, 2 bladelets, 1 blade-like flake, 1 awl and 3 pieces of burnt unworked flints. The flint is all heavily edge-damaged and residual. The flake debitage may be of mixed date: flakes are of thick, broad, proportions typical of the Later Neolithic or Bronze Age, but the blades and bladelets are more typical of the Neolithic. The one retouched tool an awl - is not a chronological diagnostic form and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be proposed.

Hugo Anderson-Whymark

Six well-abraded unstratified sherds of pottery were retained (weight : 32gms)

2 sherds EM-M NE.Kent shell-tempered ware (c.1175-1200/1225 AD)

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

1 sherd M N or W.Kent fine sandy ware (cf. London Highly Decorated style, c.1225-1300 AD probably)

1 sherd M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1250-1275/1300 AD)

1 sherd M Canterbury Tyler Hill sandy ware (c.1250-1300/1350 AD probable emphasis)

Comment: Small-medium-sized sherds, largest is the latest element. All 4 earliest entries are moderately worn – particularly the non-local jug bodysherd – and if the latest element is not intrusive, should be residual in-context.

Nigel MacPherson-Grant

## **DISCUSSION**

The development site at the Duke of Kent produced little archaeology. Given its location on high ground overlooking the marshes one would have expected some archaeology. Especially seeing how rich in archaeology this area of Kent is. The lithics retrieved are what would be expected from most sites in Kent and are of little archaeological value, but will need to be registered on the HER. The medieval pottery, well-abraded, is what one would expect on fields under cultivation with household manure added on almost a daily basis. Unfortunately what is put into a field can be confused of what comes out of a field (a site), and is a perennial problem with field-walking analysis. On this occasion, given the proximity of the medieval road passing the site to the north (Staplestreet) it can be supposed that the Duke of Kent site was at one time medieval arable fields worked from one of the nearby medieval farms of Holmstall, Fairbrook, and Nash Court, two of which probably started life as Roman villa estate centres.

## **CONCLUSION**

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of tarmac **(001)** overlaying crushed brick **(002)**, occasionally buried topsoil **(004)** and the natural sandy silty clay akin to Brickearth **(003)**.

Limited archaeological activity was found during the evaluation which will inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site. The evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT would like to thank Andy Murphy of Dunster House Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Senior Heritage Officer, Kent County Council for his advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson supervised the fieldwork, assisted in the field by James Madden. Illustrations were produced by James Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

October 2011

## REFERENCES

### Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2010) *Specification for a Phase 1 Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at the Duke of Kent site, Thanet Way and Staplestreet in Hernhill near Faversham in Kent.*

Wilkinson C. *An Archaeological Investigation of a North Kent Landscape in the Early Medieval Centuries.* Unpublished M. A. 2009

Wilkinson P. *Swale Archaeological Survey.* 2000

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2008) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation.*

Kent County Council (KCC) (2010) *Kent County Council Monument Full Report* for site centred at 604661 162712

### Maps

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1871-1890)

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1897-1900)

Ordnance Survey 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (1907-1923)

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1929-1952)

### Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.krnt.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>



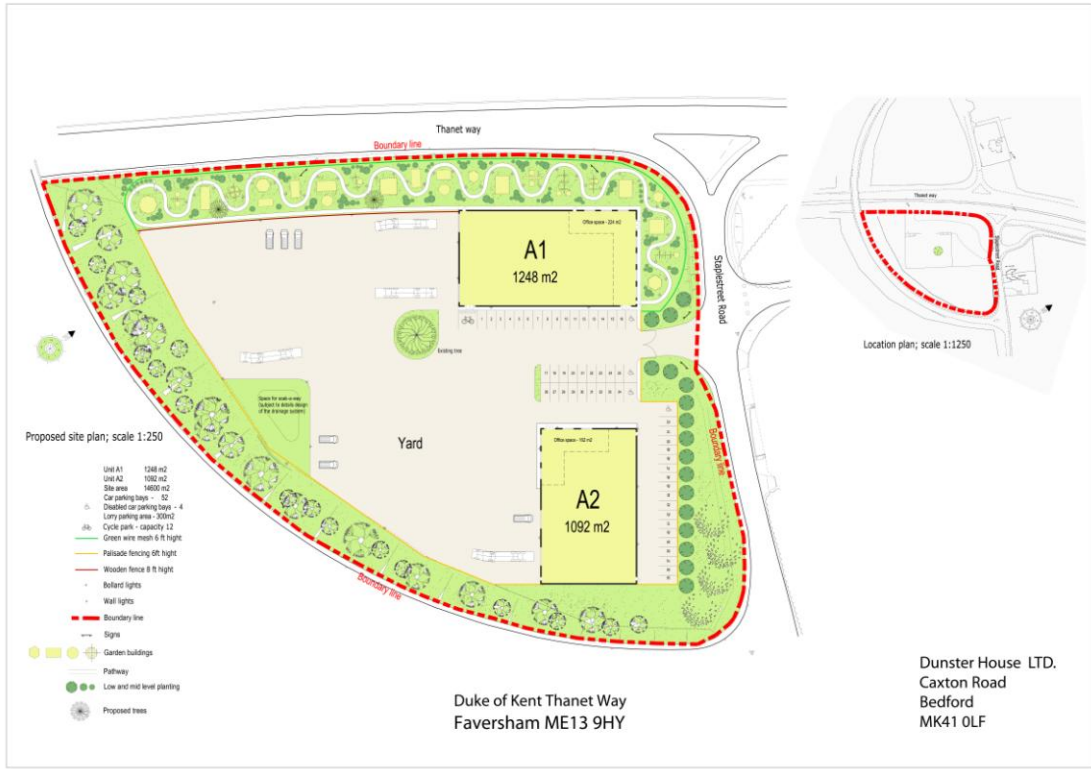
**Plate 1. View of site looking north-east, trench 4 is on the left**



**Plate 2. Trench 5 looking south-west, 1m scale**



Plate 3. Typical section- Trench 2 looking west, 1m scale



**Plate 4. Proposed development**



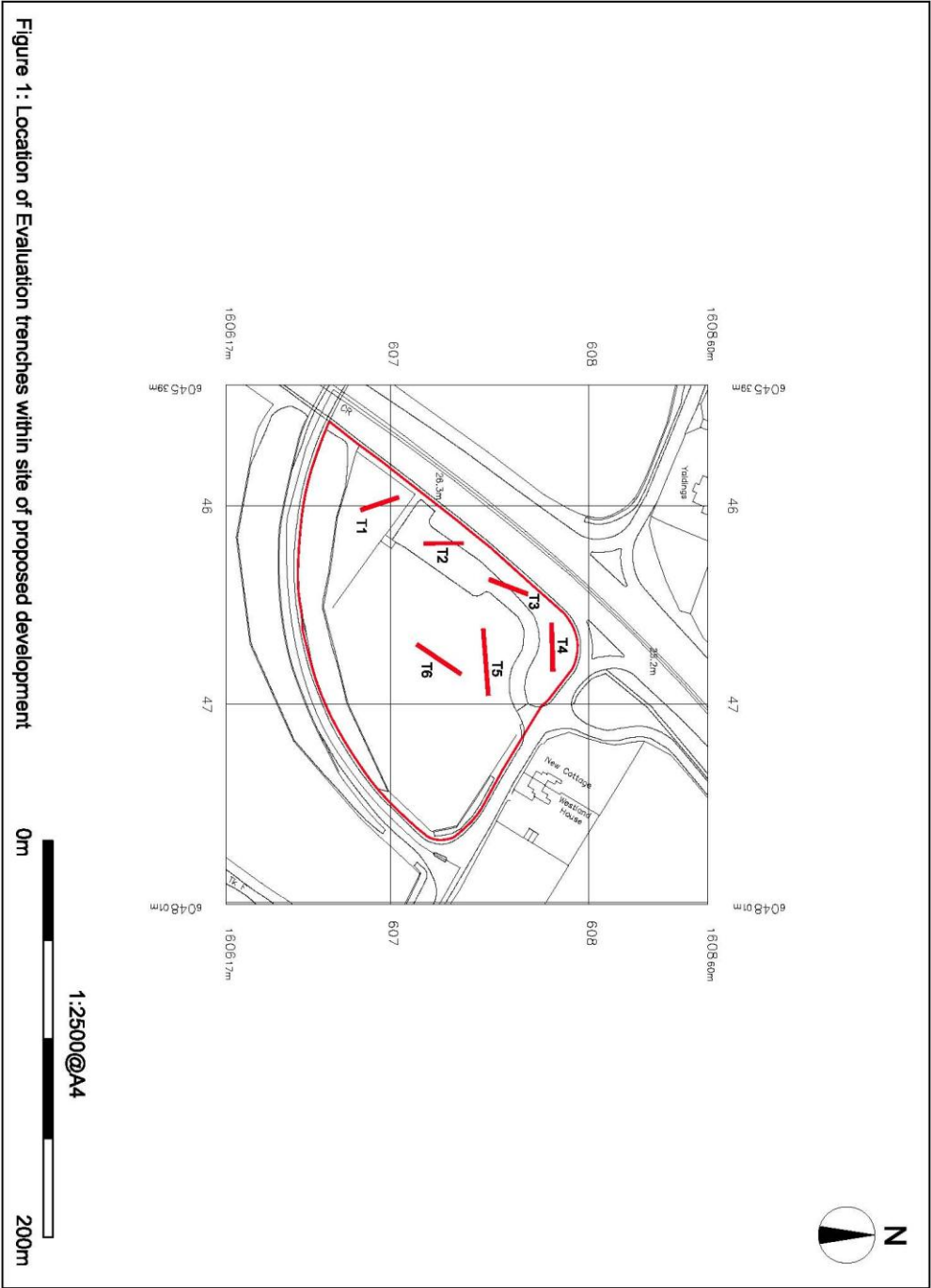


Figure 1: Location of Evaluation trenches within site of proposed development

## APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Duke of Kent site,</i> <b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>D of K/EV/11</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>Thanet Way and Staplestreet in Hernhill, Faversham, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Duke of Kent site. A planning application for the construction of a new industrial development, along with associated 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 2011) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of six trenches which encountered no archaeological features; some sherds of medieval pottery and worked lithics were retrieved.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Swale</i>	<b>Parish:</b> <i>Hernhill</i>
<b>Period(s):</b> <b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 604661 162712</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Evaluation</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>September 2011</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Head Brickearth</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Evaluation at the Duke of Kent site, Hernhill, Kent</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>11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011</i>