## Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

Site Code MA/WB/15



Report for Chartway Group Ltd Date of report 22/10/2015

#### **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

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Plate 1. Aerial Photograph of site (Google 2015)

Plate 2. View of drainage works

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## Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

## Planning No. MA/14/0096

Date of report: 22/10/2015



Plate 1. Aerial view of site (red circle) showing the site prior to development.

(Google Earth 20/04/2015: Eye altitude 210m).

## 1.0 Summary

1.1. Between 25th and 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological supervision during mechanical excavation of modern deposits overlaying natural geology and subsequent sample excavation of exposed features on the land proposed for new building development at Fairmeadow, adjacent to the Corpus Christi, Maidstone, Kent.

Mechanical removal of deposits was carried out in spits employing a 14ton machine equipped with a 1.4m-wide toothless bucket in accordance to the mitigation strategy requested by the Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council in advance to the planning application MA/14/0096.

The strip revealed orange sand-clay geology across the site which was truncated by a large pit in its central part and by two linear cuts in its eastern part. All features were infilled by a greenish hue mixture indicating a modern cess element within. An undertaken sample excavation exposed machine-dug hollow backfilled with modern slate aggregate capped by friable silt-clay of a greenish hue, plausibly re-deposited natural.

Two north-south aligned contiguous linear features exposed in the part to the east were also subjected to sample excavation and preservation by record. A slot excavated through exposed straight vertical sides and both infills produced modern potsherds, tiles and bricks. The western part of exposed area revealed sand and gravel geology truncated by a shallow cut with uneven base and almost vertical sides. Its basal deposit contained moderate fragments of very solid mortar and infrequent small ragstone flecks suggesting that larger blocks were accommodated here comprising wall foundations later entirely robbed-out down to the underlying natural geology.

The investigation within the extent of the site did not reveal any archaeological features or cultural material which predates Early Modern Period (Figure 1).

For details of the areas watched see the Interim Reports produced by the onsite archaeologist for all areas, and all areas were signed off on receipt of the these reports by Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeologist KCC.

Subsequently drainage connection was made on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 (Plate 1) in made up ground adjacent to the site boundary on the south side.

- 1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the owners Chartway Group Ltd.
- 1.3. An archaeological monitoring was carried out across the site and the features revealed were modern, for a detailed report on these phases of work see the Interim Reports in Appendix 1.
- 1.4. The archaeological monitoring was to uncover any signs of archaeological activity. In particular, any evidence of archaeological activity associated with the adjacent Corpus Christi Hall.
- 1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is MA/14/0096.
- 1.6. Although the archaeological potential has been highlighted by KCC Heritage Conservation the archaeological monitoring revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

### 2.0 Introduction

## 2.1 Planning Background

Planning application MA/14/0096 was submitted to the Local Planning Authority Maidstone Borough Council (LPA). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of the LPA requested that an archaeological Investigation be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the development work. The following condition (AR1) was attached to the planning consent:

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.

### 3.0 Schedule of Visits

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Peter Cichy, Steve Price of SWAT Archaeology) and supervised the Archaeological Monitoring from 25<sup>th</sup> March to 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

## 4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were:

"The objectives of the archaeological investigation are to observe, excavate and record archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area and ensure suitable specialist observation close to sensitive archaeological site. There is potential for Roman, medieval and later remains, especially associated with the construction and use of Corpus Christi Hall.

4.2. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the Archaeological Monitoring took place.

## 4.3. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

## 5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background

- 5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey map is Bedrock geology of Lower Greensand with Alluvium to the west. Archaeological evaluation of the adjacent site by SWAT Archaeology observed possible terracing and truncation within the site.
- 5.2. The application site is located within the centre of the county town of Maidstone with the River Medway c.70m to the west. The site is centered at NGR 575822 155774. It is bounded to the west by Fairmeadow, to the north by Earl Street and Corpus Christi Hall and to the south by properties fronting Medway Street.
- 5.3. The site lies within an area of known archaeological potential associated with important Roman cremation activity in the vicinity and is adjacent to the medieval hall of Corpus Christi.

## 6.0 Methodology

- 6.1. The Archaeological Monitoring was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by KCC and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 2008).
- 6.2. The works comprised the observation of all excavations, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.
- 6.3. The Archaeological Monitoring was carried out in one phase from 25<sup>th</sup> March to 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 with a subsequent visit on 12<sup>th</sup> May to observe the drains connection (Plate 1).

- 6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothless bucket necessary to remove the overburden (Interim Reports Appendix 1).
- 6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of experienced archaeologists (Peter Cichy, Steve Price and for drains Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA).
- 6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.
- 6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be 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.
- 6.8. The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and methodology discussed with the Senior Archaeological Officer KCC.

#### 7.0 Results

#### 7.1 General

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site was the gravelly clay overlaid by demolition strata of made ground. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved.

#### 8.0 Finds

No finds were retrieved.

#### 9.0 Discussion

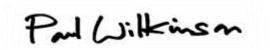
The development site is in an area of archaeological potential. No archaeology was revealed on the development site.

#### 10.0 Conclusion

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the KCC Archaeological Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

## 11.0 Acknowledgments

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Chartway Group Ltd for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and Interim Reports by Peter Cichy and the overarching report written by Paul Wilkinson.



Dr Paul Wilkinson, BA (Hons), PhD., FRSA., MCIfA.

## References

HER data (KCC 2015)

IFA (1994 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

KCC Archaeological Specification (2015)

Wilkinson P. Archaeological Evaluation at Corpus Christi Hall (2002)

## **Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

Site Name: Development of land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** MA/WB/15

Site Address: As above

#### **Summary:**

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a residential development of 21 apartments whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that Archaeological Monitoring be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of areas of strip which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

**District/Unitary:** Maidstone Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 575822 155774

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Monitoring

**Date of recording:** March-April 2015

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

**Geology:** Underlying geology is Lower Greensand

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2015) Archaeological Monitoring of Land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

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

See above

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

**Date:** 22/10/2015

## Plates



Plate 2. Drainage being installed (in made up ground)



## An interim report on land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

(adjacent to Corpus Christi)

## March 2015

NGR: 575822/155774 (centered)

Site code: MA-15

Planning Application Number: MA/14/0096

P. Cichy for SWAT Archaeology

## SWAT. Archaeology

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company School Farm Oast, Graveney Road Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112 www.swatarchaeology.co.uk



Abstract

Project background

Results of the investigation

**Figures** 

**Plates** 

### Abstract

Between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological supervision during mechanical excavation of modern deposits overlaying natural geology and subsequent sample excavation of exposed features on the land proposed for new building development at Fairmeadow, adjacent to the Corpus Christi, Maidstone, Kent.

Mechanical removal of deposits was carried out in spits employing 14t machine equipped with 1.4m-wide toothless bucket in accordance to the mitigation strategy requested by the Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council in advance to the planning application MA/14/0096.

The revealed orange sand-clay geology was truncated by a large pit in its central part and by two linear cuts in its eastern part. All features were infilled by greenish hue mixture indicating cess element within. An undertaken sample excavation exposed machine-dug hollow backfilled with modern slate aggregate capped by friable silt-clay of a greenish hue, plausibly redeposited natural.

Two north-south aligned contiguous linear features exposed in the part to the east were also subjected to sample excavation and preservation by record. Slot excavated through exposed straight vertical sides and both infills produced modern potsherds, tiles and bricks.

The western part of exposed area revealed sand and gravel geology truncated by shallow cut with uneven base and almost vertical sides. Its basal deposit contained moderate fragments of very solid mortar and infrequent small ragstone flecks suggesting that larger blocks were accommodated here comprising wall foundations later entirely robbed-out down to the underlying natural geology.

The investigation within this area did not revealed any valuable archaeological features or cultural material which predates Early Modern Period, thus the excavations were finished for the time being.

## **Location (Fig.1)**

The site is located within the centre of the county town of Maidstone with the River Medway c.70m to the west. The site is centred at NGR 575822/155774. It is bounded to the west by Fairmeadow, to the north by Earl Street and Corpus Christi Hall and to the south by properties fronting Medway Street.

## Geology

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey the site lies on Lower Greensand with Alluvium. The exposed portion of the site revealed natural geology of pale orange and orange fine-sand-clay to the east and light-grey or grey coarse sand with gravel to the west.

## Results of investigation

The area subjected to the archaeological investigation comprised nearly 150sq metres and exposed natural geology of a orange fine sand-clay (CN 03) and grey-light-grey coarse sand with gravel (CN 21) were moderately truncated by various linear and amorphous intrusions. The most of discolorations were obvious modern trench-cuts and posts containing demolition debris, iron bars and rotten wood.

A couple of features (CNs 6 and 9) contained a fill of greenish hue strongly suggesting a cess element, one (partially exposed) rectilinear cut to the west (CN 13) was infilled by fairly compacted brown-grey clay-silt with charcoal flecks and infrequent ragstone cobbles. These features were examined more closely in hand-excavated slots and subsequently recorded in plan and section.

A large north-west; south-east aligned sub-oval cut (CN 04) (Plate 2 Section Fig.4 s.1.1) had steep eastern side, vertical southern side and appears to be machine-dug. Its back-fill sequence comprised thin band of loosely compacted blue-grey deposit (CN 05) comprising burnt coke with slate aggregate and was capped by extensive top deposit of green friable silt-clay (CN 06). That was truncated from the top by small yellow-orange fine sand-clay (CN07) and mixture of coarse sand, gravel and green silt-clay recorded as (CN 08). This modern feature measured over 7 metres-long by 5.1 metres-wide with estimated depth of 1.2metres.

Two contiguous north-south aligned linear cuts (CNs 09 and 11) (Plate 3 Section Fig.4 s.1.2) were investigated in 0.45m-wide slot. Cut (CN 09) measured 1.05m-wide and was back-filled with context (CN 10) comprising green friable silt-clay with infrequent modern inclusions. Abutted from the west cut (CN 11) measured 0.95m-wide and was back-filled by deposit (CN 12) comprising coarse sand with gravel and green silt-clay.

Another feature although not fully exposed was revealed along the western side of exposed area. Rectilinear cut (CN 13) (Plate 4 Section Fig.4 s.1.3) had almost vertical eastern side and uneven base. Its back-fill sequence comprised two deposits (14 and 15). Basal deposit (CN 14) comprised pale-brown silt-clay with moderate mortar fragments and infrequent gravel inclusions and measured 0.26m in average thickness. That was concealed by (CN 15) comprising brown

clay-silt with infrequent lumps of light-grey very-hard mortar, almost certainly modern and capped on top by 0.5m-thick band (CN 16) of mid-brown clay-silt with infrequent gravel. That was truncated by modern post-hole (CN 17) back-filled by (CN 18) comprising dark-grey clay-silt with rubble and rotten post represented by (CN 19) and capped on top by (CN 20); a 0.38m-thick band of pink stone aggregate comprising very recent surface of former car-park.

## **Plates and Figures**



Plate 1. Showing exposed part of the site, the well feature visible in foreground. One metre scale in background, looking west.



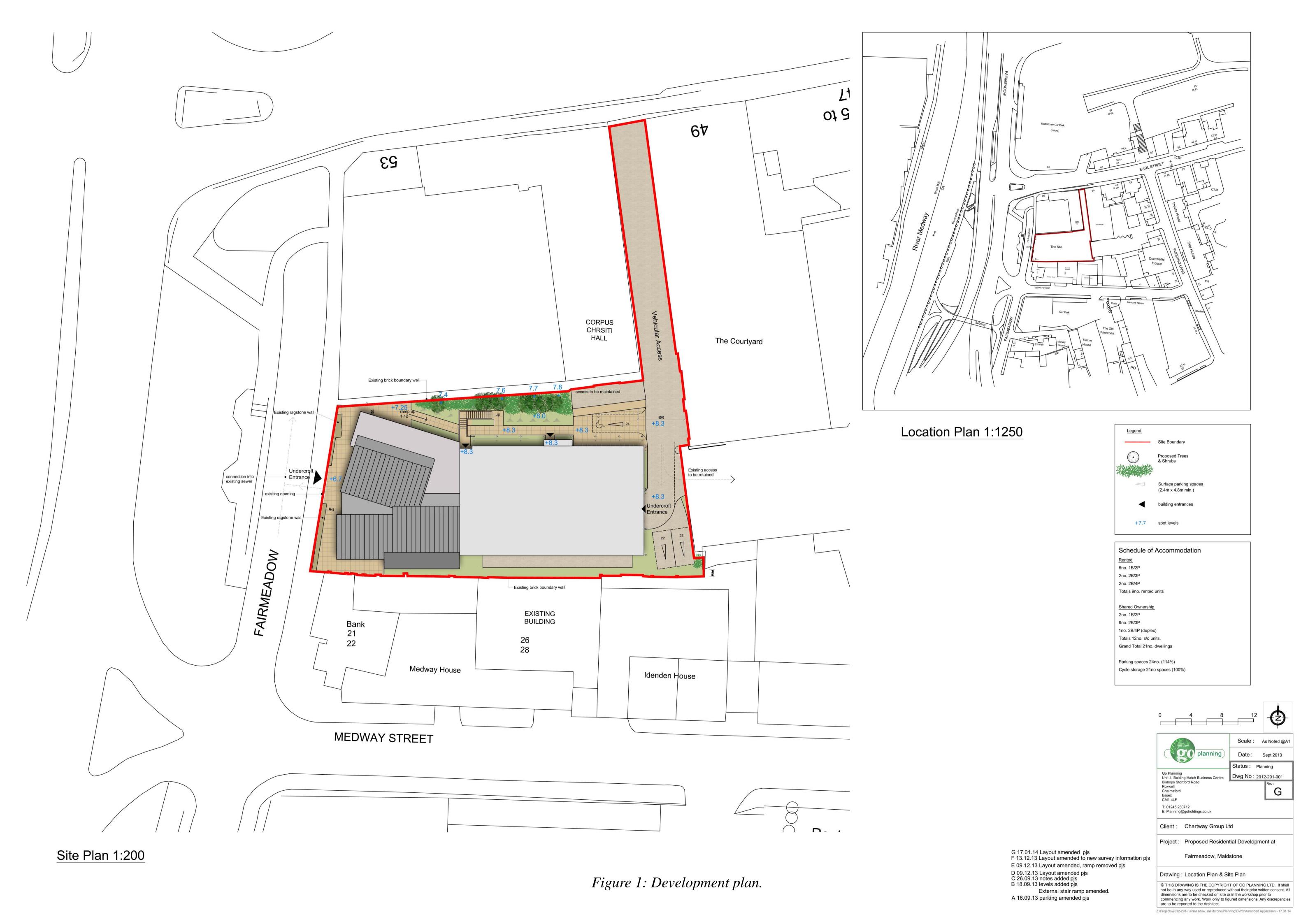
Plate 2. Showing large rubbish pit 04. Looking north, one metre scale.



Plate 3. Showing linear trenches 9 and 11. Looking south, one metre scale



Plate 4. Showing section through rectilinear cut 13, modern post-hole 17 visible to the left. One and half metre scales.



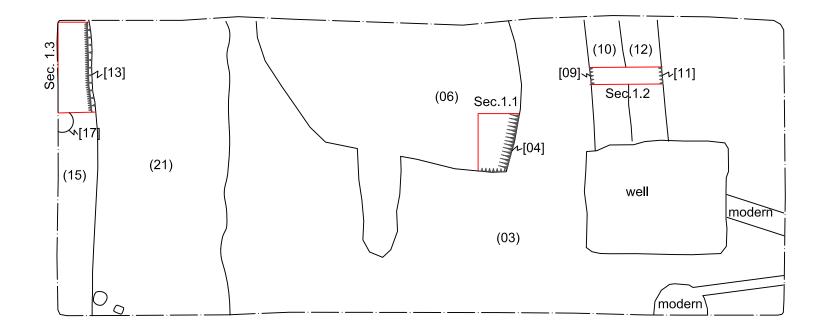




Figure 2: Features plan

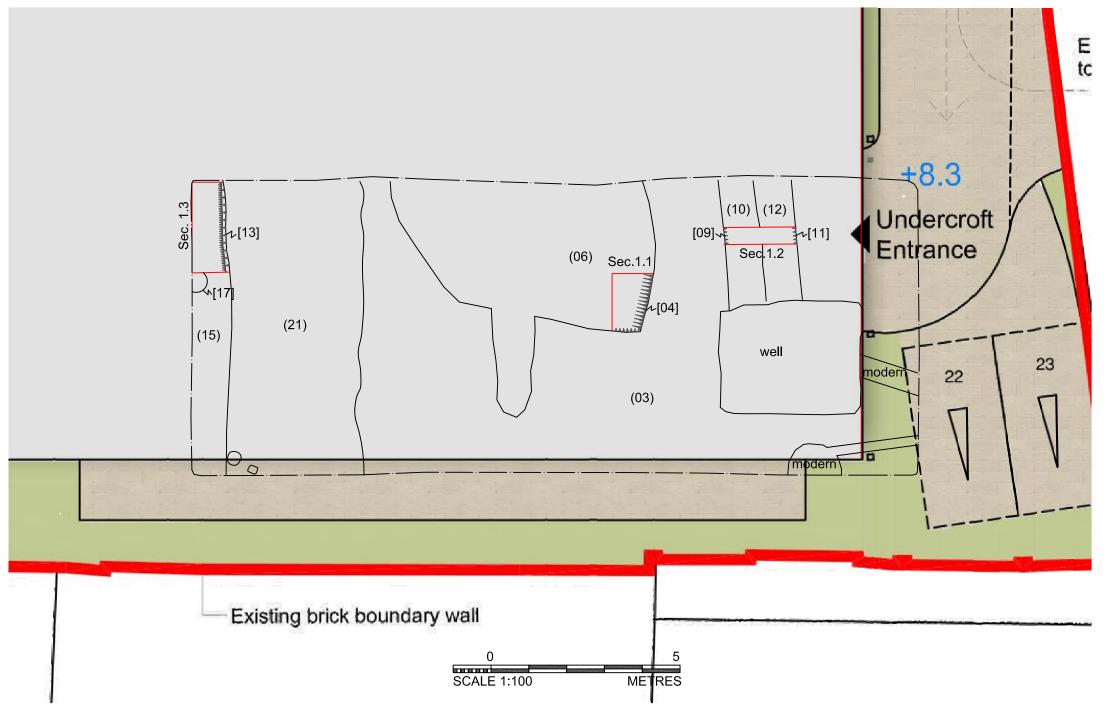
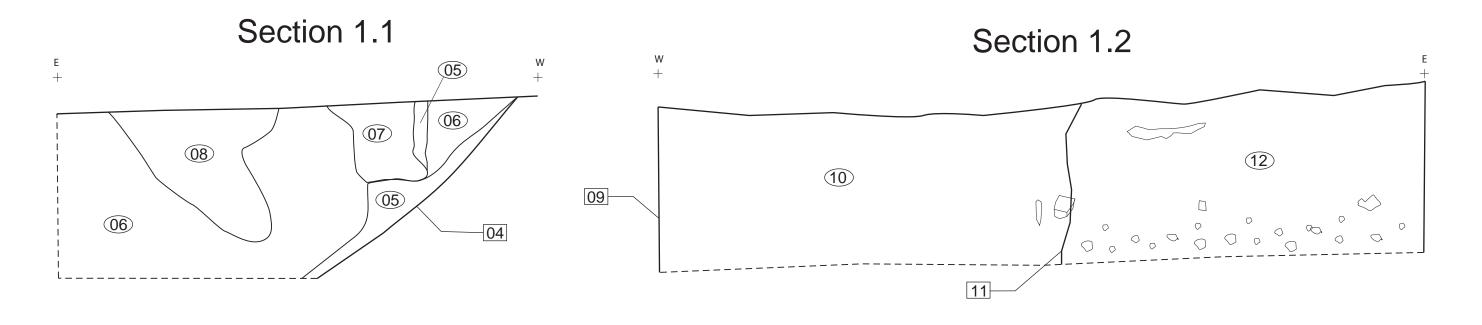


Figure 3: Features plan in developement context.



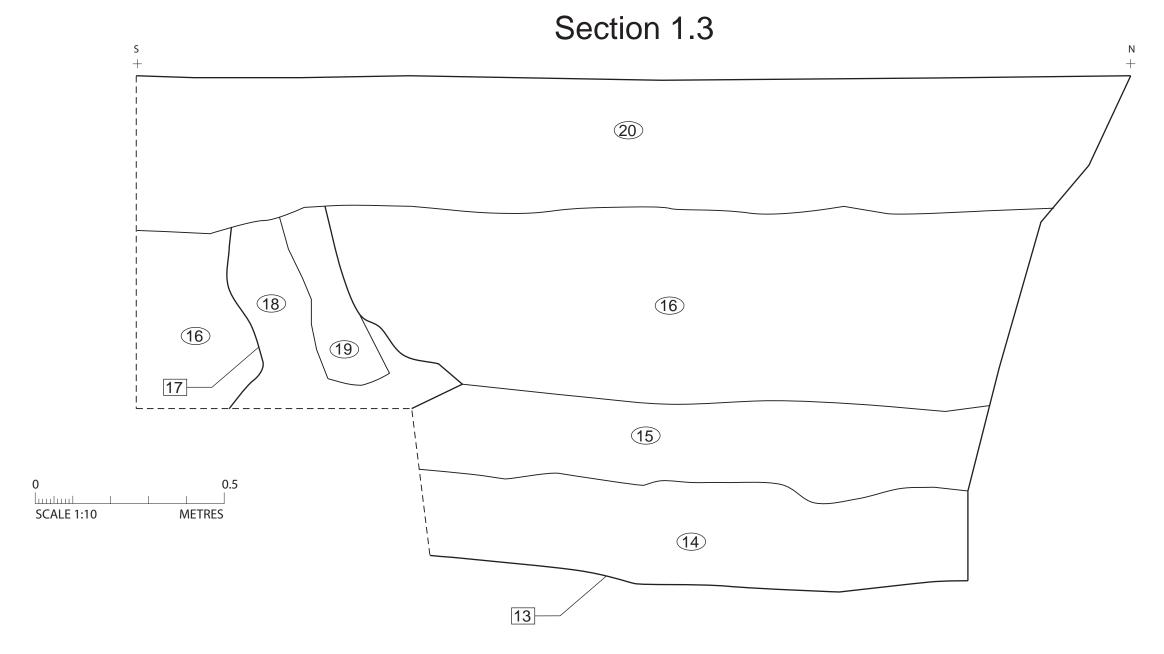


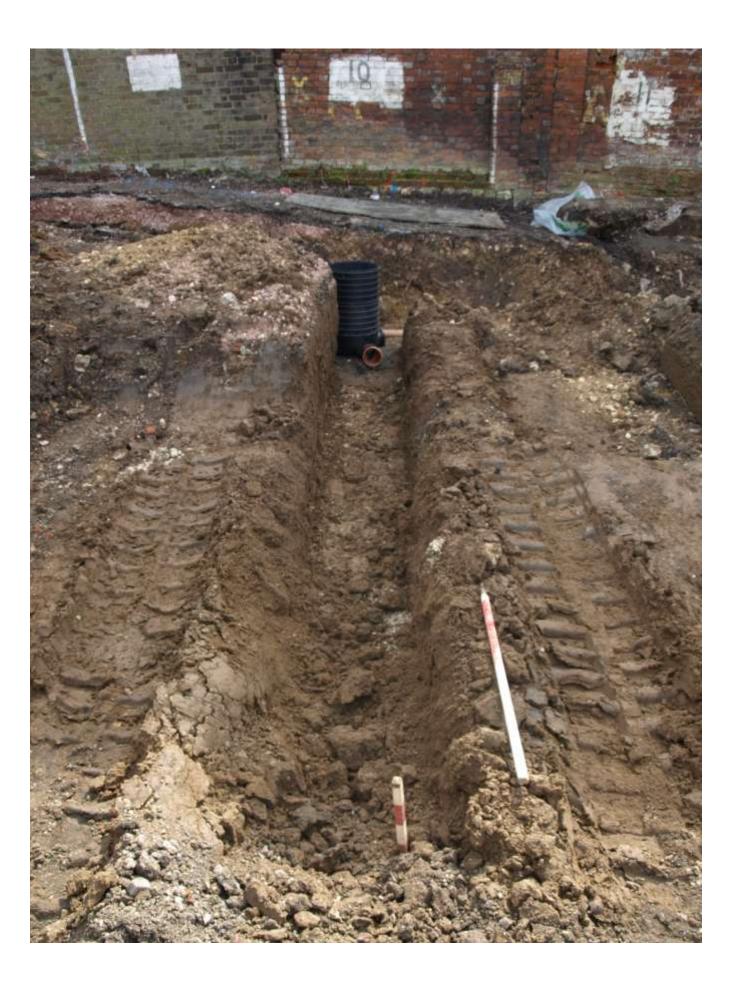
Figure 4: Sections, scale 1:10.

## 1.0.2.

The excavated trench (N-S aligned) for the drain pipe not revealed anything of archaeological interest only coarse sand-gravel natural emerged at the maximum depth of 0.32m (within exposed area)

The previously excavated W-E trench was further extended to the west and exposed large modern intrusion back-filled with re-deposited sand-gravel natural.







# An interim report on land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

(adjacent to Corpus Christi)

**April 2015** 

NGR: 575822/155774 (centered)

Site code: MA-15

Planning Application Number: MA/14/0096

P. Cichy for SWAT Archaeology

## SWAT. Archaeology

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company School Farm Oast, Graveney Road Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112 www.swatarchaeology.co.uk



Abstract

Project background

Results of the investigation 1<sup>st</sup> April updated results

**Figures** 

1<sup>st</sup> April updated **site plan Figure 5** 

**Plates** 

5-8

### Abstract

Between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological supervision during mechanical excavation of modern deposits overlaying natural geology and subsequent sample excavation of exposed features on the land proposed for new building development at Fairmeadow, adjacent to the Corpus Christi, Maidstone, Kent.

Mechanical removal of deposits was carried out in spits employing 14t machine equipped with 1.4m-wide toothless bucket in accordance to the mitigation strategy requested by the Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council in advance to the planning application MA/14/0096.

An exposed Areas 1, 2 and 3 were planned, then digitised and combined into one consistent site plan in AutoCAD. See **Fig. 5.** Ordnance Datum heights were captured using standard laser level device mounted on tripod, however the obtained values have to be re-calculated and augmented with site TBMs. It has to be mentioned that higher formation level 6.25m aOD was nearly achieved (6.21m) in hand-excavated slot (Fig.4 sec.1.3) against edge of cut 13. Consequently on the top of context (CN 21) adjacent to the trench (sect.1.4) measured OD height was 6.61m and level measured on top of context (CN 15) inside the former building corner (Area 3, to the west) before wall 25 was 6.58m a OD.

The revealed orange sand-clay geology was truncated by a large pit in its central part and by two linear cuts in its eastern part. All features were infilled by greenish hue mixture indicating cess element within. An undertaken sample excavation exposed machine-dug hollow backfilled with modern slate aggregate capped by friable silt-clay of a greenish hue, plausibly redeposited natural. Both modern features were noted also in exposed Area 2 to the north.

Two north-south aligned contiguous linear features exposed in the part to the east were also subjected to sample excavation and preservation by record. Slot excavated through exposed straight vertical sides and both infills produced modern potsherds, tiles and bricks. The continuity of these cuts was confirmed within subsequently stripped Area 2 to the north, both features goes beyond L.O.E. towards the Corpus Christi Church. (listed, Grade II)

The western part of exposed area revealed sand and gravel geology truncated by shallow cut with uneven base and almost vertical sides. Its basal deposit contained moderate fragments of very solid mortar and infrequent small ragstone flecks suggesting that larger blocks were accommodated here comprising wall foundations later entirely robbed-out down to the underlying natural geology.

Subsequently exposed Area 3 to the west (**Fig.5**) provided evidence for ultimate extend of this cut denoted from the north and from the west by two fairly perpendicular features which plausibly forming a corner of a former building. From the north the limit is denoted by Early Modern iron water pipe capped on top by 0.2-0.3m-thick granulate bonded with concrete. Feature had three drain-connectors for former building to convey excess of rainwater away.

From the west cut is denoted by shallow, mostly robbed out brick wall build on crude concrete foundation. The conspicuous interpretation points to some sort of cellar or basement, but it is also possible that revealed cut is in fact a step in natural geology or terrace which was

levelled off prior to the erection of the building. The cultural material retrieved during machining comprises time-span (provisionally) between late 19<sup>th</sup> cent and Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

An excavated six-metre long trench (**Plan Fig.5**, **Section Fig. 6 sec.1.4**) in east-west alignment was more consensus with levelling rather than buried sunken-structure. Scheduled on Friday the second of April excavations of drainage trenches will allow to drawn a full cross-section through to record a full profile of deposits denoted by pipe and wall

Exempt former building remains although dated to the Early Modern Period archaeological investigation within the site so far did not revealed any valuable archaeological features or cultural material which predates Early Modern Period, thus the excavations were finished for the time being.

## **Location (Fig.1)**

The site is located within the centre of the county town of Maidstone with the River Medway c.70m to the west. The site is centred at NGR 575822/155774. It is bounded to the west by Fairmeadow, to the north by Earl Street and Corpus Christi Hall and to the south by properties fronting Medway Street.

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Another feature although not fully exposed was revealed along the western side of exposed area. Rectilinear cut (CN 13) (Plate 4 Section Fig.4 s.1.3) had almost vertical eastern side and uneven base. Its back-fill sequence comprised two deposits (14 and 15). Basal deposit (CN 14) comprised pale-brown silt-clay with moderate mortar fragments and infrequent gravel inclusions and measured 0.26m in average thickness. That was concealed by (CN 15) comprising brown

clay-silt with infrequent lumps of light-grey very-hard mortar, almost certainly modern and capped on top by 0.5m-thick band (CN 16) of mid-brown clay-silt with infrequent gravel. That was truncated by modern post-hole (CN 17) back-filled by (CN 18) comprising dark-grey clay-silt with rubble and rotten post represented by (CN 19) and capped on top by (CN 20); a 0.38m-thick band of pink stone aggregate comprising very recent surface of former car-park.

## 01 April 2015 (Plan Fig. 5, Sections Fig. 6 s.1.4, Plates 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Large rubbish Pit 22 (Plate 5) was exposed in northern part of the site. Shallow machine scoop revealed that its back-fill (CN 23) consisted of broken glass, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century beer bottles, crushed hardcore, tiles, well corroded fragments of corrugated sheet and small fragments of asbestos.

An east-west aligned linear formation (CN 24) plausibly originated as a back-fill of a trench which was dug in order to accommodate drainage or water pipe subsequently capped on top by 0.2-0.3m-thick layer of permeable concrete made of porous granulate aggregate.

A north-south aligned brick-wall 25 or its remnants comprised mostly red bricks (measured example 220x100x70mm) with infrequent yellow and over-fired ones. These were bonded by soft sandy mortar of coarse texture which easily breaks in hand. The measured width of brick layer was 0.26m and there were erected on top of shallow (0.2m-thick) concrete foundation which measured in width was less than 0.4m-wide. The wall continues southwards to the existing wall, however it has to be mentioned that in relation to that the estimated angle of investigated wall to the existing one was less than 90 deg. Thus they were not entirely perpendicular. (Plate 6)

## **Conclusions**

The section interface in excavated trench along the southern limit of exposed area showing reduced natural (CN 21) to the east at measured level 6.62m aOD and that is fairly equal with 5.58m a OD measured on top of context (CN 15) just before Wall 25 thus at the present stage of investigation the evidence is conclusive for levelling of a step or terrace which plausibly is an artificial terracing rather than natural purely geological formation.

Scheduled excavation of another north-south aligned trench on the following day should provide additional clues of its origins and expose its base thus comprise comprehensive sequence of recorded deposits and it will impose or dismiss the conditional requirement for excavating whole Cut 13 to the reduced formation level at 5.575m a OD.

## **Plates and Figures**



Plate 1. Showing exposed part of the site, the well feature visible in foreground. One metre scale in background, looking west.



Plate 2. Showing large rubbish pit 04. Looking north, one metre scale.



Plate 3. Showing linear trenches 9 and 11. Looking south, one metre scale



Plate 4. Showing section through rectilinear cut 13, modern post-hole 17 visible to the left. One and half metre scales.



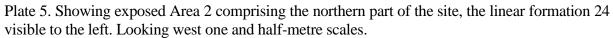




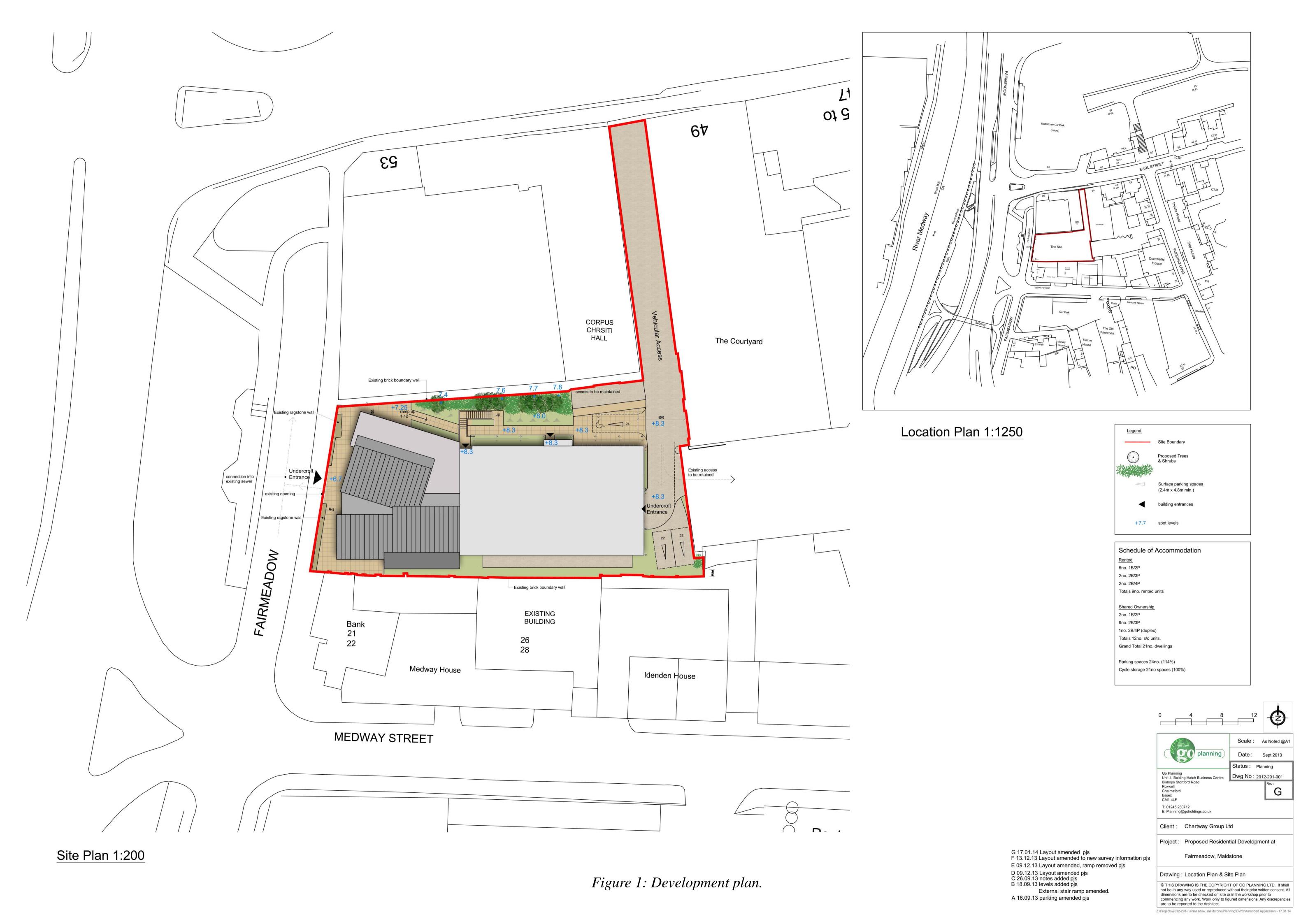
Plate 6. Showing northern part of the site, looking east. The large rubbish Pit 22 visible in foreground. One and half metre scales.



Plate 7. Showing the exposed Area 3 overlapping Area 1. The cut 13 denoted by wall and drain visible in background against existing wall (looking south, one and half metre scales)



Plate 8. Overlook view on 6m-long section 1.4. Looking south-east, one metre scale.



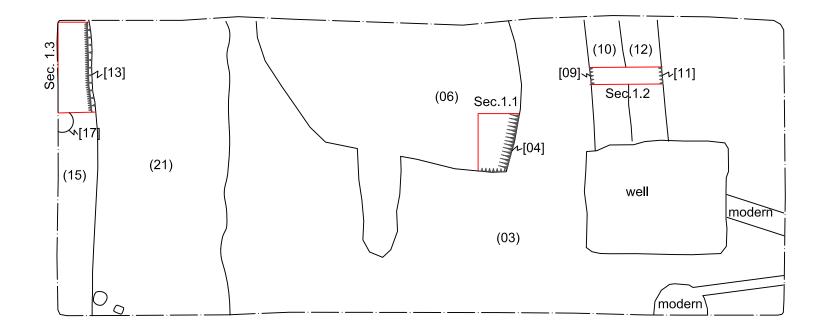




Figure 2: Features plan

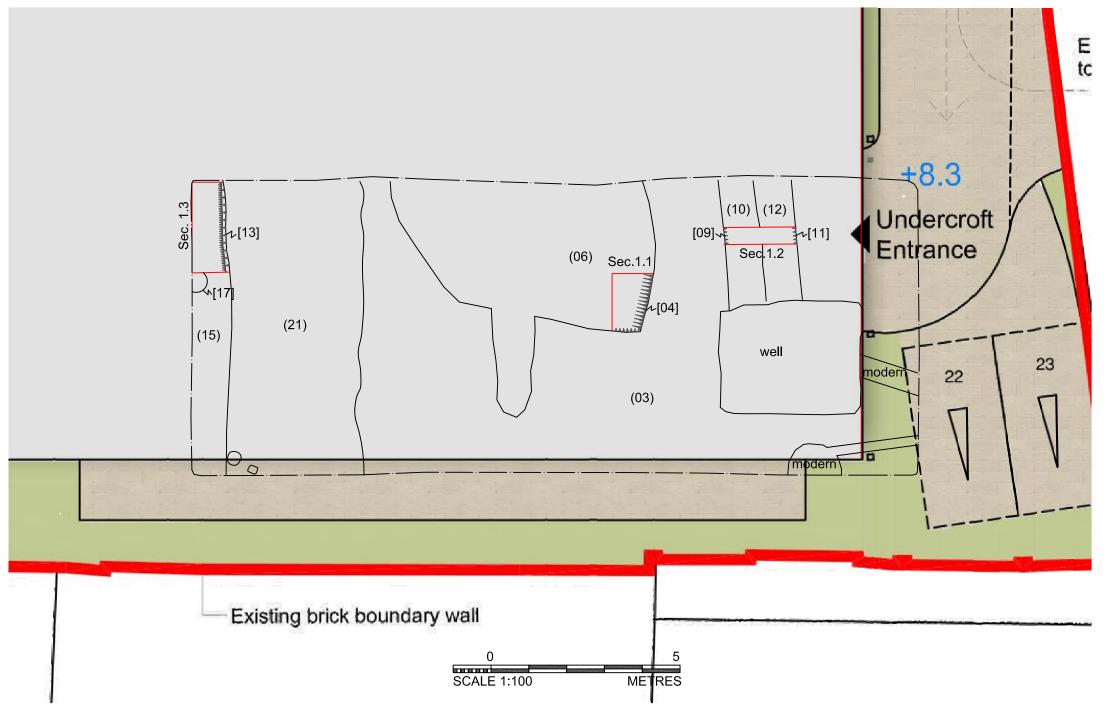
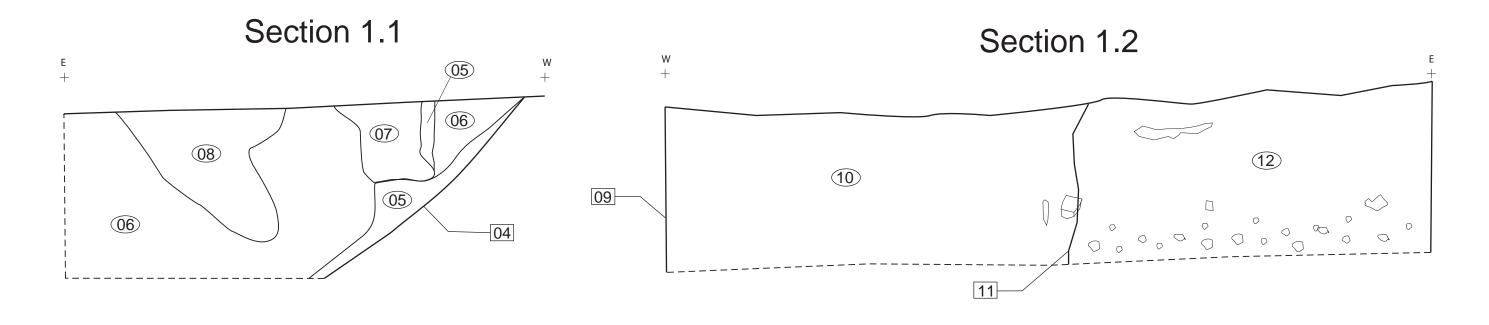


Figure 3: Features plan in developement context.



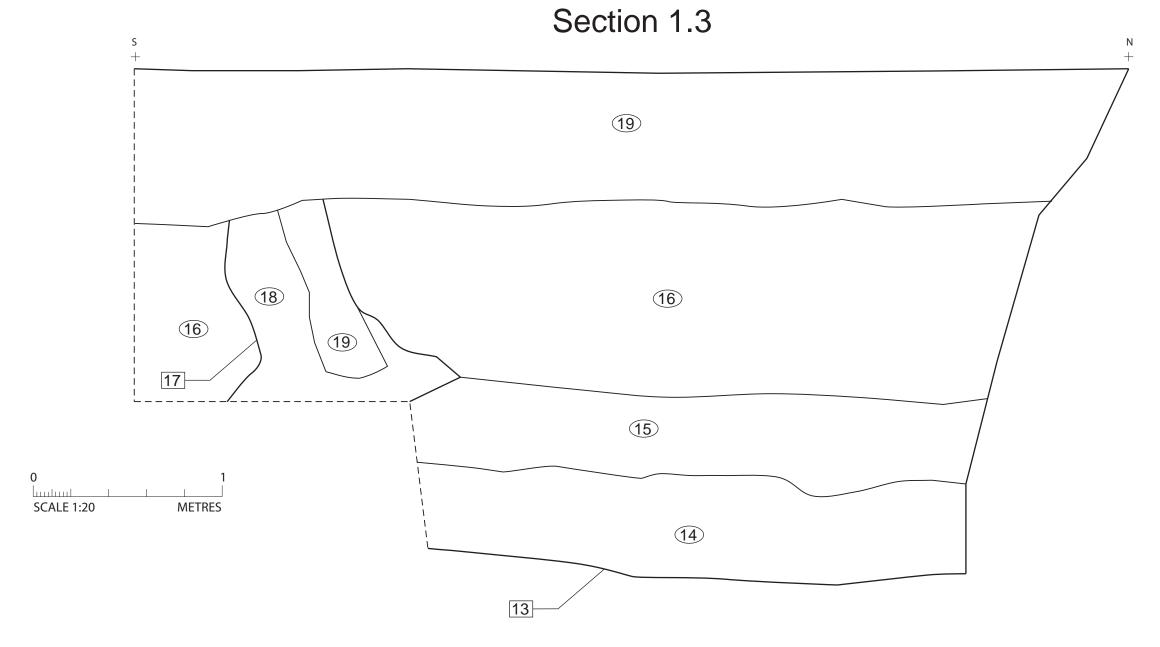
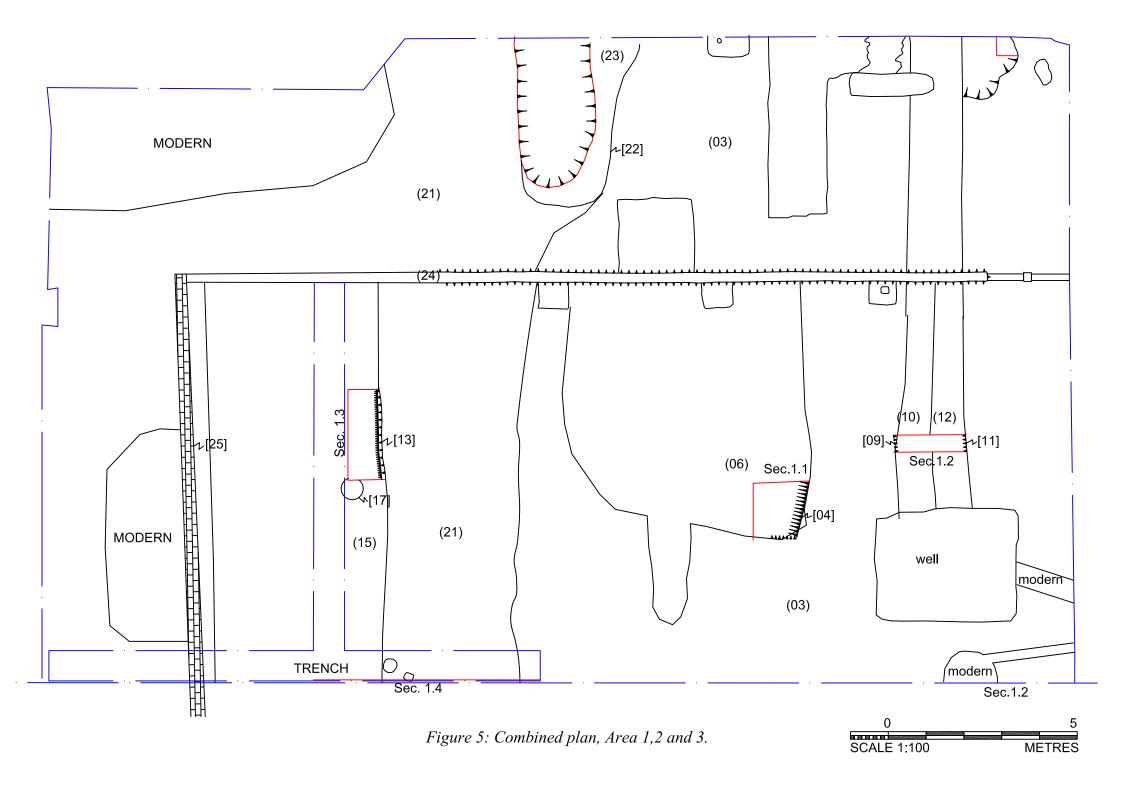


Figure 4: Sections, scale 1:10.



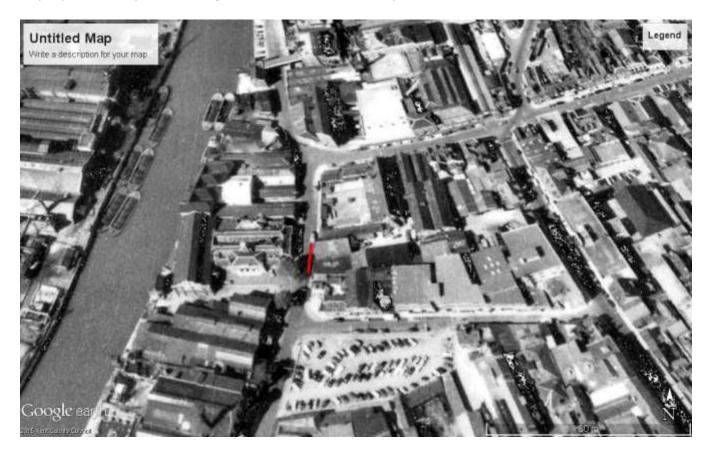
## 1.0.4.1 14-Apr-2015

Today we've started exposing the last bit to the west. It is going very slow, lots of concrete, they lifted two another bases of the vertical steel pillars.

Plausibly these were supporting a roofed structure (see attached 1960's aerial, site entrance highlighted in red.

Underneath the pillars is linear or curvilinear trench cut into the natural – and its back-fill comprises loose ragstone cobbles with soft sandy mortar. It is only small fragment exposed, but it may be something of our interest, finally (fingers crossed)

We've also exposed very solid modern build (concrete and brick) of something what looks like an access trench if you would like to repair the car from below – maybe it was a former small garage? Contractors will have to crush the concrete and remove it, then crush the reinforced concrete concealing hardcore deposits below, that will take some time but I think on Thursday lunch time the last area should be fully exposed. (and postulated ragstone wall foundations if they are real).





# An interim report on land at Fairmeadow, Maidstone, Kent

(adjacent to Corpus Christi)

**April 2015** 

(10Apr. V.1.0.4) Areas 1-4

NGR: 575822/155774 (centered)

Site code: MA-15

Planning Application Number: MA/14/0096

P. Cichy for SWAT Archaeology

## **SWAT.** Archaeology

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company School Farm Oast, Graveney Road Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112 www.swatarchaeology.co.uk



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Project background

Results of the investigation (Areas 1-4)

1<sup>st</sup> April updated results

10<sup>th</sup> April updated results

## **Figures**

1<sup>st</sup> April updated site plan Figure 5
10<sup>th</sup> April updated site plan

## **Plates**

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## Abstract

Between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 10th April 2015 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological supervision during mechanical excavation of modern deposits overlaying natural geology and subsequent sample excavation of exposed features on the land proposed for new building development at Fairmeadow, adjacent to the Corpus Christi, Maidstone, Kent.

Mechanical removal of deposits was carried out in spits employing 14t machine equipped with 1.4m-wide toothless bucket in accordance to the mitigation strategy requested by the Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council in advance to the planning application MA/14/0096.

An exposed Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 were planned, then digitised and combined into one consistent site plan in AutoCAD. See **Fig. 5.** Ordnance Datum heights were captured using standard laser level device mounted on tripod, however obtained values have to be re-calculated and augmented with site TBMs. It has to be mentioned that higher formation level 6.25m aOD was nearly achieved (6.21m) in hand-excavated slot (Fig.4 sec.1.3) against edge of cut 13. Consequently on the top of context (CN 21) adjacent to the trench (sect.1.4) measured OD height was 6.61m and level measured on top of context (CN 15) inside the former building corner (Area 3, to the west) before wall 25 was 6.58m a OD.

The revealed orange sand-clay geology was truncated by a large pit in its central part and by two linear cuts in its eastern part. All features were filled-in by greenish hue mixture indicating cess element within. An undertaken sample excavation exposed machine-dug hollow back-filled with modern slate aggregate capped by friable silt-clay of a greenish hue, plausibly re-deposited natural. Both modern features were noted also in exposed Area 2 to the north.

Two north-south aligned contiguous linear features exposed in the part to the east were also subjected to sample excavation and preservation by record. Slot excavated through exposed straight vertical sides and both in-fills produced modern potsherds, tiles and bricks. The continuity of these cuts was confirmed within subsequently stripped Area 2 to the north, both features goes beyond L.O.E. towards the Corpus Christi Church. (listed, Grade II)

The western part of exposed area revealed sand and gravel geology truncated by shallow cut with uneven base and almost vertical sides. Its basal deposit contained moderate fragments of very solid mortar and infrequent small ragstone flecks suggesting that larger blocks were accommodated here comprising wall foundations later entirely robbed-out down to the underlying natural geology.

Subsequently exposed Area 3 to the west (**Fig.5**) provided evidence for ultimate extend of this cut denoted from the north and from the west by two fairly perpendicular features which plausibly forming a corner of a former building. From the north the limit is denoted by Early Modern iron water pipe capped on top by 0.2-0.3m-thick granulate bonded with concrete. Feature had three drain-connectors for former building to convey excess of rainwater away.

From the west cut is denoted by shallow, mostly robbed out brick wall build on crude concrete foundation. The conspicuous interpretation points to some sort of cellar or basement, but it is also possible that revealed cut is in fact a step in natural geology or terrace which was

levelled off prior to the erection of the building. The cultural material retrieved during machining comprises time-span (provisionally) between late 19<sup>th</sup> cent and Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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The site is located within the centre of the county town of Maidstone with the River Medway c.70m to the west. The site is centred at NGR 575822/155774. It is bounded to the west by Fairmeadow, to the north by Earl Street and Corpus Christi Hall and to the south by properties fronting Medway Street.

## Geology

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey the site lies on Lower Greensand with Alluvium. The exposed portion of the site revealed natural geology of pale orange and orange fine-sand-clay to the east and light-grey or grey coarse sand with gravel to the west.

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The area subjected to the archaeological investigation comprised nearly 150sq metres and exposed natural geology of a orange fine sand-clay (CN 03) and grey-light-grey coarse sand with gravel (CN 21) were moderately truncated by various linear and amorphous intrusions. The most of discolorations were obvious modern trench-cuts and posts containing demolition debris, iron bars and rotten wood.

A couple of features (CNs 6 and 9) contained a fill of greenish hue strongly suggesting a cess element, one (partially exposed) rectilinear cut to the west (CN 13) was in-filled by fairly compacted brown-grey clay-silt with charcoal flecks and infrequent ragstone cobbles. These features were examined more closely in hand-excavated slots and subsequently recorded in plan and section.

A large north-west; south-east aligned sub-oval cut (CN 04) (Plate 2 Section Fig.4 s.1.1) had steep eastern side, vertical southern side and appears to be machine-dug. Its back-fill sequence comprised thin band of loosely compacted blue-grey deposit (CN 05) comprising burnt coke with slate aggregate and was capped by extensive top deposit of green friable silt-clay (CN 06). That was truncated from the top by small yellow-orange fine sand-clay (CN07) and mixture of coarse sand, gravel and green silt-clay recorded as (CN 08). This modern feature measured over 7 metres-long by 5.1 metres-wide with estimated depth of 1.2metres.

Two contiguous north-south aligned linear cuts (CNs 09 and 11) (Plate 3 Section Fig.4 s.1.2) were investigated in 0.45m-wide slot. Cut (CN 09) measured 1.05m-wide and was back-filled with context (CN 10) comprising green friable silt-clay with infrequent modern inclusions. Abutted from the west cut (CN 11) measured 0.95m-wide and was back-filled by deposit (CN 12) comprising coarse sand with gravel and green silt-clay.

Another feature although not fully exposed was revealed along the western side of exposed area. Rectilinear cut (CN 13) (Plate 4 Section Fig.4 s.1.3) had almost vertical eastern side and uneven base. Its back-fill sequence comprised two deposits (14 and 15). Basal deposit (CN 14) comprised pale-brown silt-clay with moderate mortar fragments and infrequent gravel inclusions and measured 0.26m in average thickness. That was concealed by (CN 15) comprising brown

clay-silt with infrequent lumps of light-grey very-hard mortar, almost certainly modern and capped on top by 0.5m-thick band (CN 16) of mid-brown clay-silt with infrequent gravel. That was truncated by modern post-hole (CN 17) back-filled by (CN 18) comprising dark-grey clay-silt with rubble and rotten post represented by (CN 19) and capped on top by (CN 20); a 0.38m-thick band of pink stone aggregate comprising very recent surface of former car-park.

## 01 April 2015

## (Plan Fig. 5, Sections Fig. 6 s.1.4, Plates 5, 6, 7 and 8)

Large rubbish Pit 22 (Plate 5) was exposed in northern part of the site. Shallow machine scoop revealed that its back-fill (CN 23) consisted of broken glass, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century beer bottles, crushed hardcore, tiles, well corroded fragments of corrugated sheet and small fragments of asbestos.

An east-west aligned linear formation (CN 24) plausibly originated as a back-fill of a trench which was dug in order to accommodate drainage or water pipe subsequently capped on top by 0.2-0.3m-thick layer of permeable concrete made of porous granulate aggregate.

A north-south aligned brick-wall CRN 25 or its remnants comprised mostly red bricks (measured example 220x100x70mm) with infrequent yellow and over-fired ones. These were bonded by soft sandy mortar of coarse texture which easily breaks in hand. This layer measured 0.26m-thick and was erected on top of shallow (0.2m-thick) concrete foundation. The wall continues southwards to the existing wall however it has to be mentioned that in relation to that the estimated angle of investigated wall to the existing one was less than 90 deg. Thus they were not entirely perpendicular. (Plate 6)

## 06 April 2015

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The two excavated trenches comprised 'T' shape in plan and revealed deposits sequence consisted of CRNs 15 and 16 overlaying sandy natural CRN 21. Representative sections have been drawn (see Fig 7). The section in east-west aligned trench (Fig.7.s.1.4) exposed slope profile and a step in natural underlying geology. Its concealing layers were certainly placed there for levelling purposes and both (CRNs 15 and 16) appears to be re-deposited natural (CRN 03). A north-south aligned section (Fig.7.s.1.5) was confirmative for continuity of deposits revealed in sections 1.3 and 1.4 and was evident that deposit (CRN 16) overlays natural (CRN 21) directly.

### 10 April 2015

## (**Plan Fig. 6, Plates 9-12**)

Another consequently stripped area to the west (**Plan.Fig.6**) (**Plates 9 and 10**) exposed orange-brown alluvial natural with rectilinear modern intrusions and a large concrete footing cut into it (**Plates 11 and 12**). The block measured in plan 1.06m by 1.07m and the depth of a hollow where was accommodated measured 0.6m in depth.

Additionally several modern intrusions were exposed and examined. All of these contained just fairly modern finds comprising broken glass, hardcore, steel beams fragments and de-installed parts of electrical installation of a former building.

### **Conclusions**

The section interface in excavated trench along the southern limit of exposed area showing reduced natural (CN 21) to the east at measured level 6.62m aOD and that is fairly equal with 6.58m a OD measured on top of context (CN 15) just before Wall 25 thus at the present stage of investigation the evidence is conclusive for levelling of a step or terrace which plausibly is an artificial terracing rather than natural purely geological formation.

Scheduled excavation of another north-south aligned trench on the following day should provide additional clues of its origins and expose its base thus comprise comprehensive sequence of recorded deposits and it will impose or dismiss the conditional requirement for excavating whole Cut 13 to the reduced formation level at 5.575m a OD.

A revealed deposits in excavated trench for plastic drain did not produced any archaeologically or historically valuable cultural material apart from infrequent modern finds like broken glass and brick fragments. (Fig.7 s.1.4 and 1.5)

Another exposed part of the site to the west (Area 4 Plan Fig.6) did not produced any archaeological assets at all. An exposed orange-brown natural of alluvial silt-fine-sand-clay appears to be representative for original archaeological horizon of natural outside the former building.

A Several modern cuts were exposed truncating natural and all contained construction and demolition debris associated with former building mostly with its demolition phase but some also with its erection and reparations. A large concrete footing and perpendicular modern cut seems to confirm association with former building in terms of alignment with its remains exposed in previously exposed parts to the east. (Plates 11-12)

Area 4 was plausibly a former drop-off point for coal deliveries (infrequent coal flecks have been noted examining intrusions) later subsequently converted into an internal yard or car park. Some infrequent ragstone cobbles have been noticed within removed demolition debris concealing natural in this area. This is indicative for that adjacent ragstone structures were robbed out and that building blocks were re-used within modern building.

## **Outstanding work**

There is still outstanding area to be exposed and planned to the west. Most of that is capped by steel-reinforced concrete so removal of that will certainly take several hours and it is anticipated to be undertaken on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup>. The another exposed portion of the site (Area 5) should be examined and planned by Wednesday (the 14<sup>th</sup>) morning prior to the site inspection which will be undertaken by Senior Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council.

# **Plates and Figures**



Plate 1. Showing exposed part of the site, the well feature visible in foreground. One metre scale in background, looking west.



Plate 2. Showing large rubbish pit 04. Looking north, one metre scale.



Plate 3. Showing linear trenches 9 and 11. Looking south, one metre scale



Plate 4. Showing section through rectilinear cut 13, modern post-hole 17 visible to the left. One and half metre scales.



Plate 5. Showing exposed Area 2 comprising the northern part of the site, the linear formation 24 visible to the left. Looking west one and half-metre scales.



Plate 6. Showing northern part of the site, looking east. The large rubbish Pit 22 visible in foreground. One and half metre scales.



Plate 7. Showing the exposed Area 3 overlapping Area 1. The cut 13 denoted by wall and drain visible in background against existing wall (looking south, one and half metre scales)



Plate 8. Overlook view on 6m-long section 1.4. Looking south-east, one metre scale.



Plate 9. Overlook onto freshly exposed Area 4. Looking north, one and half metre scales.



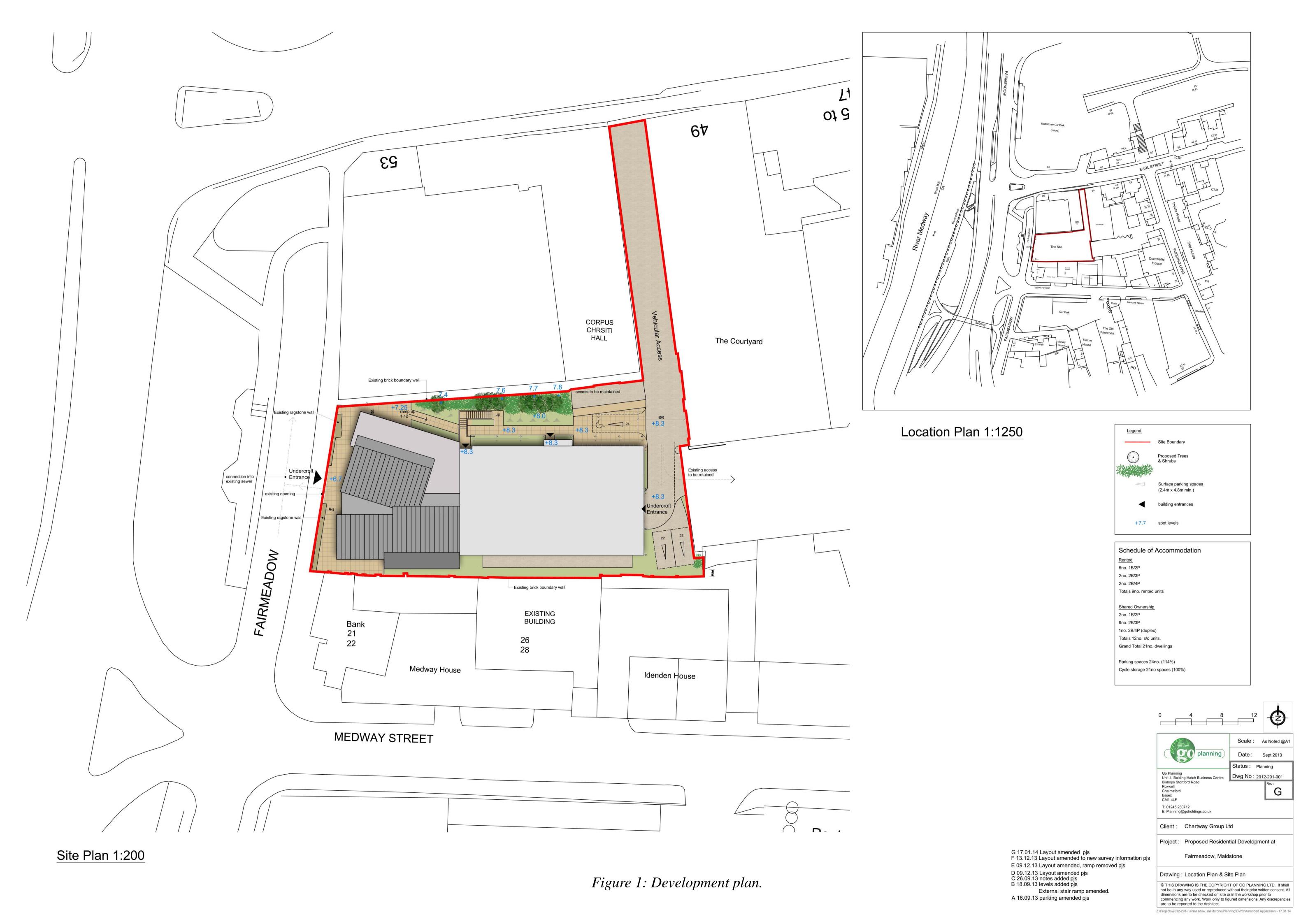
Plate 10. Overlook onto freshly exposed Area 4. Looking south, one and half metre scales.



Plate 11. Showing the ground beneath the concrete footings (after they've been removed). Looking east, one and half metre scales.



Plate 12. Showing the details of removed concrete footings. One and half metre scales.



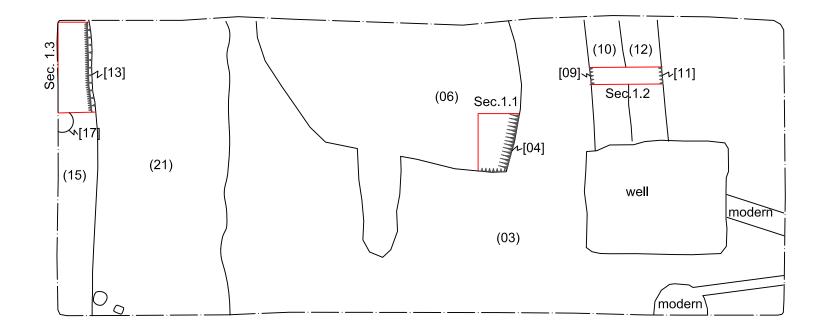




Figure 2: Features plan

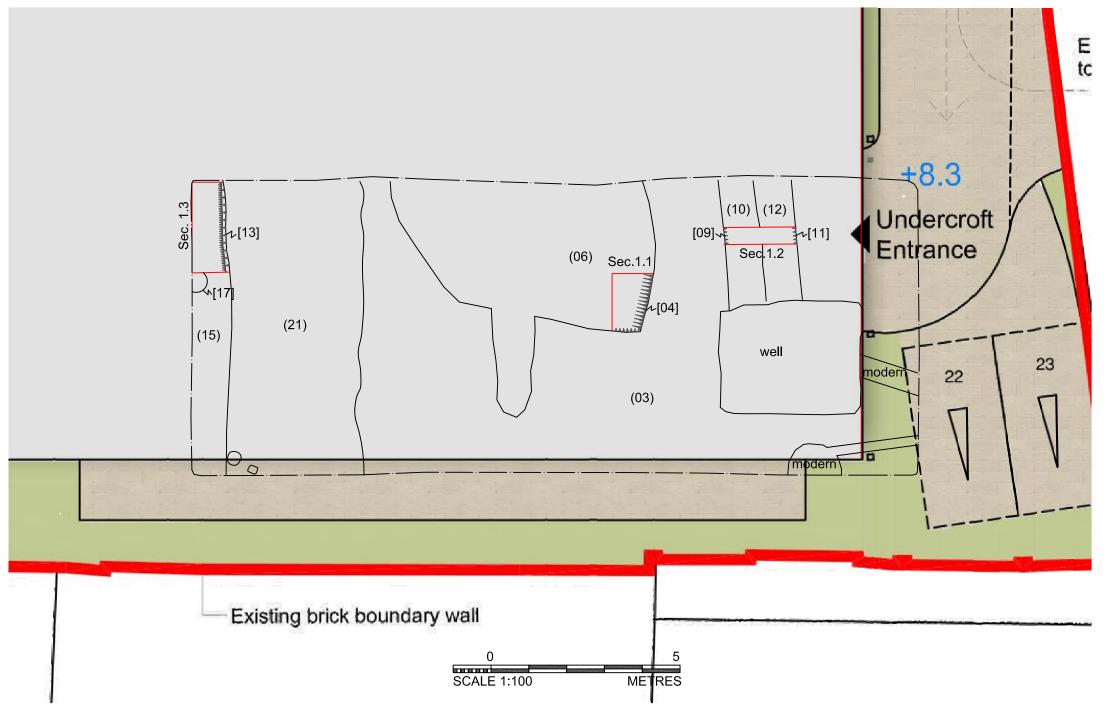
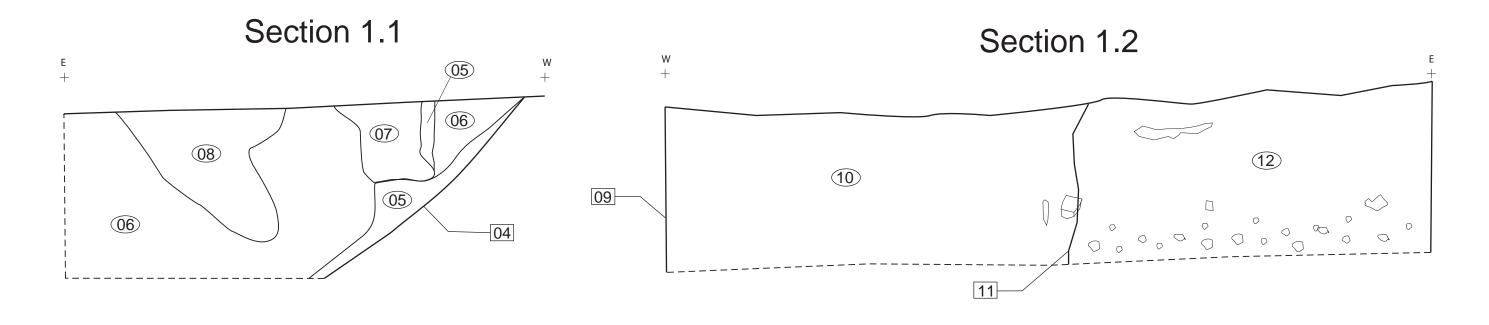


Figure 3: Features plan in developement context.



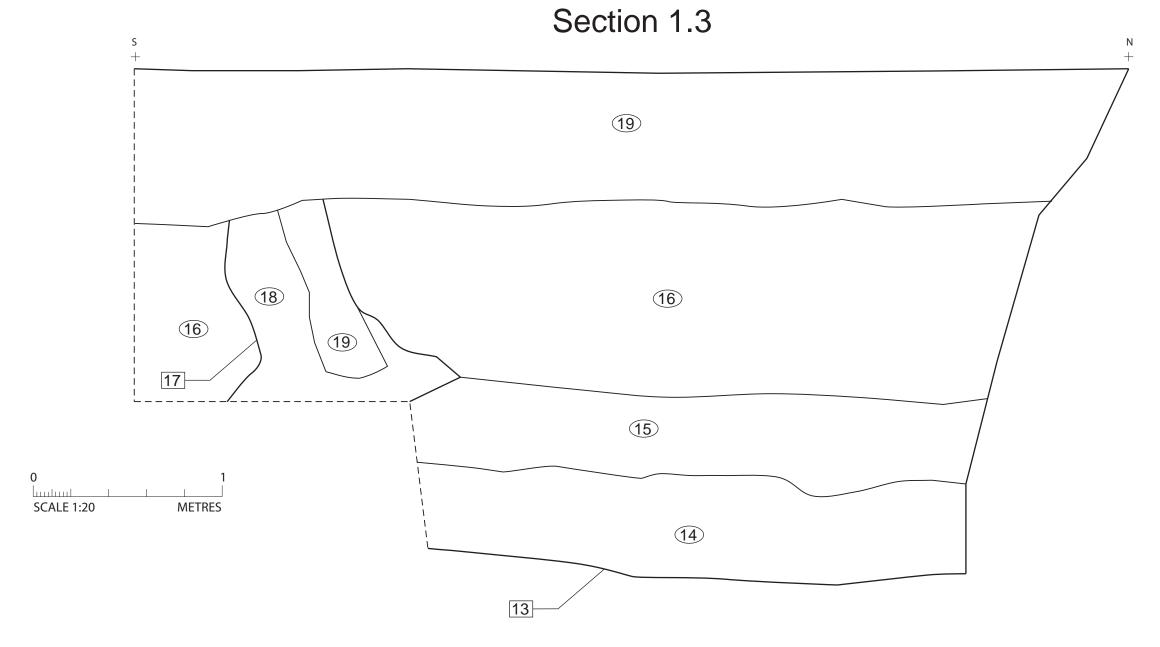
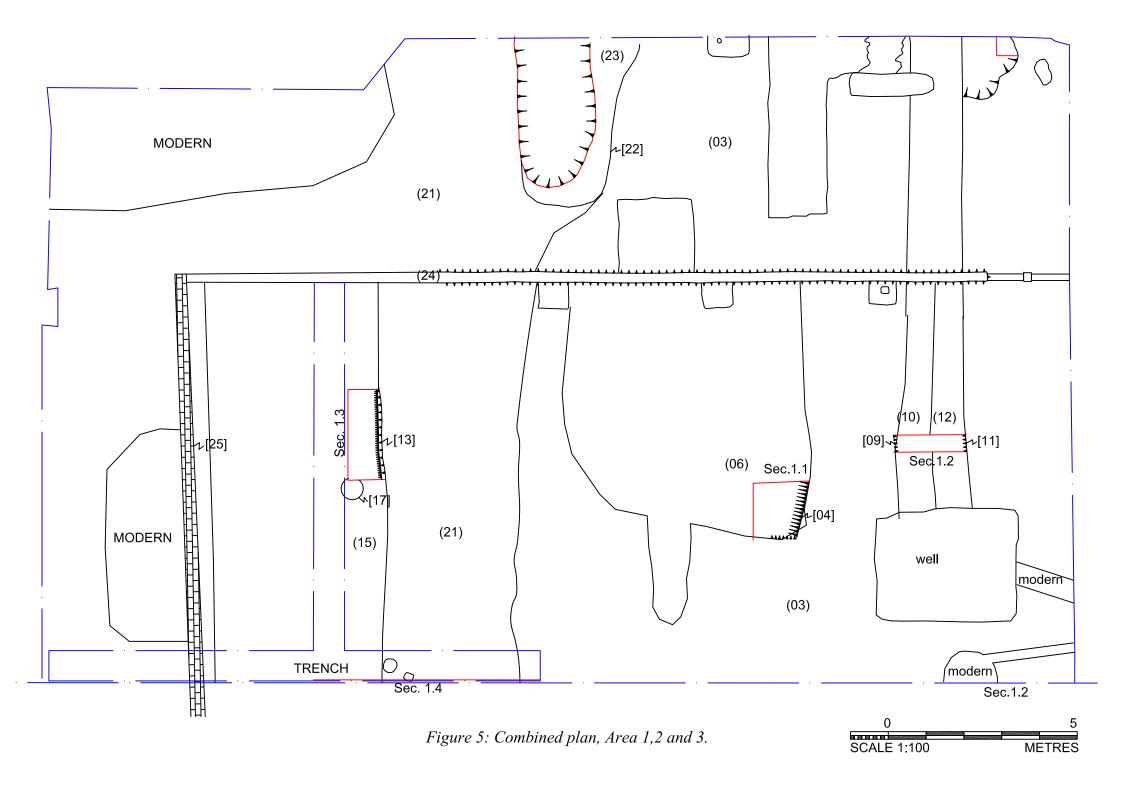
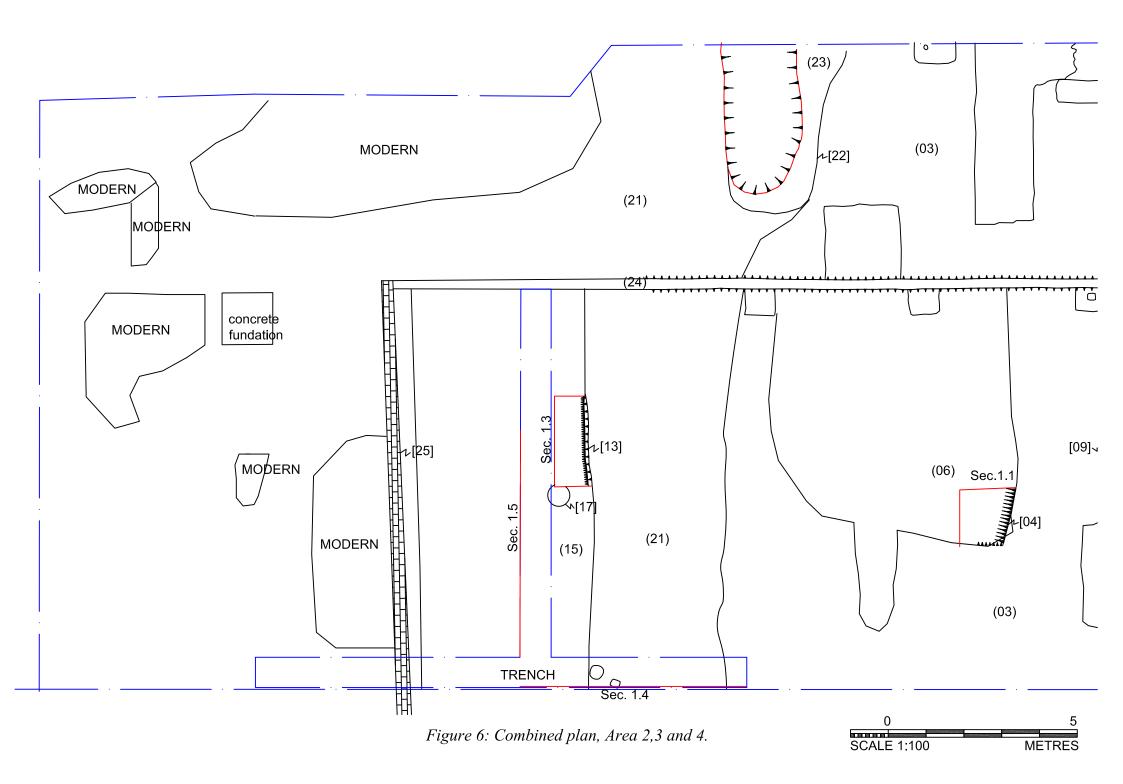
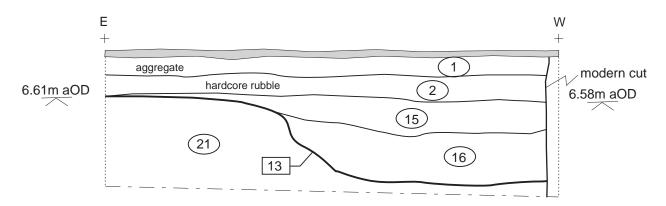


Figure 4: Sections, scale 1:10.





Section.s.1.4 scale:1:50



Section.s.1.5 scale:1:50

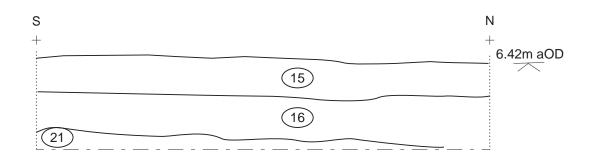




Figure 7: Sections 1.4 and 1.5



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(adjacent to Corpus Christi)

**April 2015** 

(20Apr. V.1.0.5) Areas 1-5

NGR: 575822/155774 (centered)

Site code: MA-15

Planning Application Number: MA/14/0096

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An exposed Area 5 to the west revealed natural comprising orange-brown natural sand-silt-clay truncated by several modern cuts comprising concrete footings, service trench and possible drain-containing trench (CRN 28) was back-filled with ragstone cobbles, sand and infrequent brick fragments and tiles (**Plate 16**).

A two perpendicular brick walls (CRNs 26 and 27) were exposed and comprised an 'L' shape corner which enclosed a 1.2m-deep modern service trench to the west of Wall 26 and concrete footing (**Plan.Fig.8**, **Plate 13 to the left**)

A large ragstone block retrieved from Area 2 has been preliminarily cleaned and photographed (**Plates 19 and 20**) and placed safely at the site's eastern limit awaiting collection.

## **Location (Fig.1)**

The site is located within the centre of the county town of Maidstone with the River Medway c.70m to the west. The site is centred at NGR 575822/155774. It is bounded to the west by Fairmeadow, to the north by Earl Street and Corpus Christi Hall and to the south by properties fronting Medway Street.

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## 01 April 2015

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## 06 April 2015

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## 10 April 2015

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The last portion of the site subjected to archaeological evaluation was Area 5 (**Plan. Fig.8**, **Plates 13 and 14**) located to the west. An exposed orange-brown natural surface was truncated by several modern cuts comprising concrete footings, service trench and possible drain-containing trench (CRN 28) was back-filled with ragstone cobbles, sand and infrequent brick fragments and tiles (**Plate 16**).

A two perpendicular brick walls (CRNs 26 and 27) were exposed and comprised an 'L' shape corner which enclosed a 1.2m-deep modern service trench to the west of Wall 26 and concrete footing (Plan.Fig.8, Plate 13 to the left)

A large ragstone block retrieved from Area 2 has been preliminarily cleaned and photographed (**Plates 19 and 20**) and placed safely at the site's eastern limit awaiting collection.

## **Outstanding work**

The small outstanding area between the site entrance and just exposed Area 5 to the west contains modern drain installations and concrete service trench at least 1.2m-deep, so any further exposition of the areas to the west and to the north seems to be pointless as the modern truncations are deeper than reduced formation level at 5.57m aOD.

The site work is therefore completed in terms of archaeological evaluation, however the final decision on that matter belongs to Archaeological Officer from Kent County Council and is anticipated that the final site meeting can be arranged on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup>. During the meeting any further requirements can be discussed directly on-site and completed Area consisted of Areas 1-5 formally signed-off in terms of buried archaeological remains.

# **Plates and Figures**



Plate 1. Showing exposed part of the site, the well feature visible in foreground. One metre scale in background, looking west.



Plate 2. Showing large rubbish pit 04. Looking north, one metre scale.



Plate 3. Showing linear trenches 9 and 11. Looking south, one metre scale



Plate 4. Showing section through rectilinear cut 13, modern post-hole 17 visible to the left. One and half metre scales.



Plate 5. Showing exposed Area 2 comprising the northern part of the site, the linear formation 24 visible to the left. Looking west one and half-metre scales.



Plate 6. Showing northern part of the site, looking east. The large rubbish Pit 22 visible in foreground. One and half metre scales.



Plate 7. Showing the exposed Area 3 overlapping Area 1. The cut 13 denoted by wall and drain visible in background against existing wall (looking south, one and half metre scales)



Plate 8. Overlook view on 6m-long section 1.4. Looking south-east, one metre scale.



Plate 9. Overlook onto freshly exposed Area 4. Looking north, one and half metre scales.



Plate 10. Overlook onto freshly exposed Area 4. Looking south, one and half metre scales.



Plate 11. Showing the ground beneath the concrete footings (after they've been removed). Looking east, one and half metre scales.



Plate 12. Showing the details of removed concrete footings. One and half metre scales.



Plate 13. Showing southern part of exposed Area 5. Looking south, one and half metre scales.



Plate 14. Showing exposed Area 5. Looking south, one and half metre scales. Trench 29 visible in foreground to the right and Trench 28 in background also to the right.



Plate 15. Showing details of Trench 29 back-fill. Half metre scale



Plate 16. Showing details of Trench 28 back-fill. Half metre scale.



Plate 17. Showing wall 27 which appears to be truncated by Trench 28. Looking south-west, half metre scale.



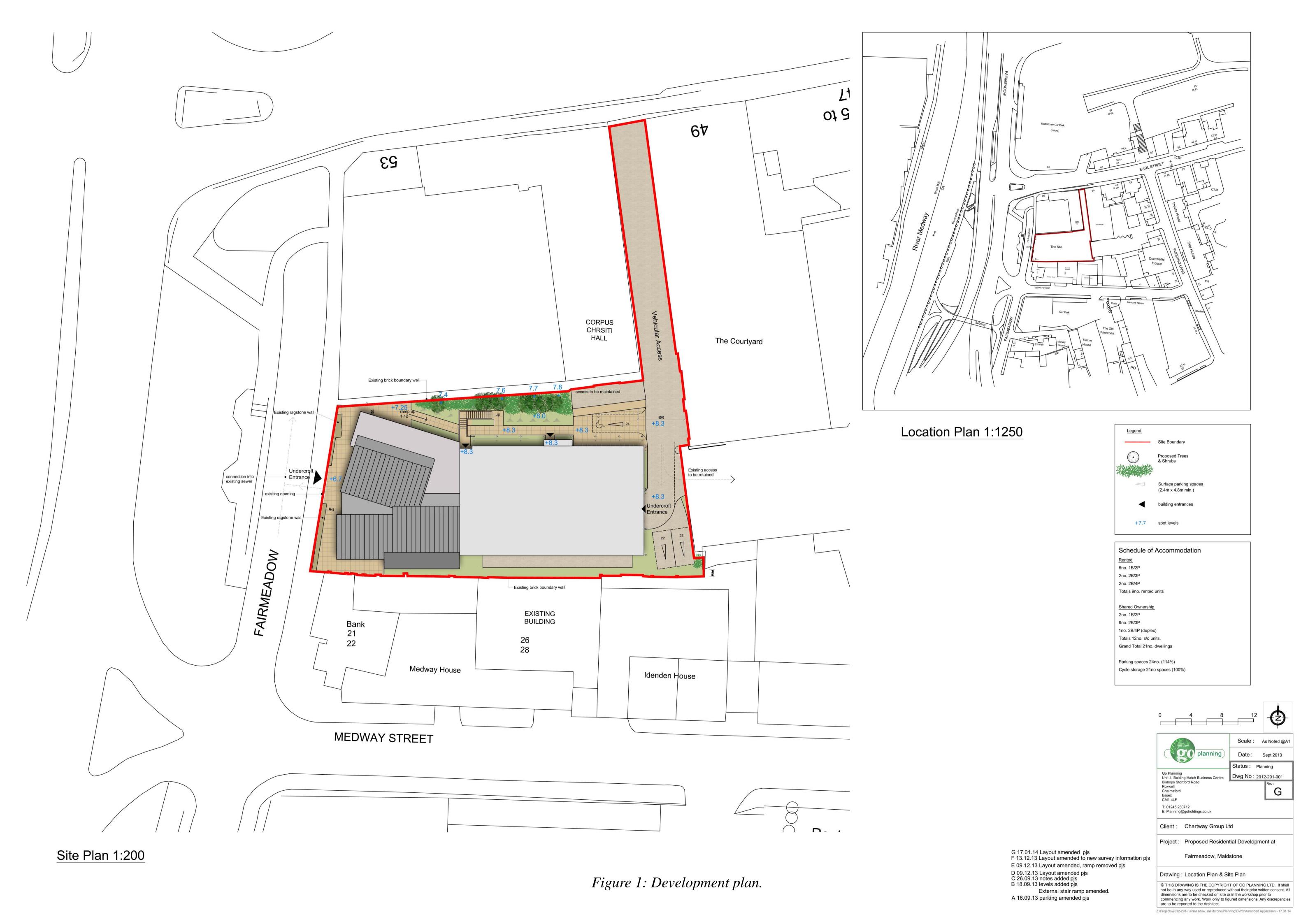
Plate 18. Showing modern deposit sequence underlying small not exposed area between western limit of Area 5 and site entrance from Fairmeadow Rd. One and half metre scales.



Plate 19. Showing large ragstone block retrieved from natural surface in Area 2. Half metre scale



Plate 20. Showing large ragstone block retrieved from natural surface in Area 2. Reverse



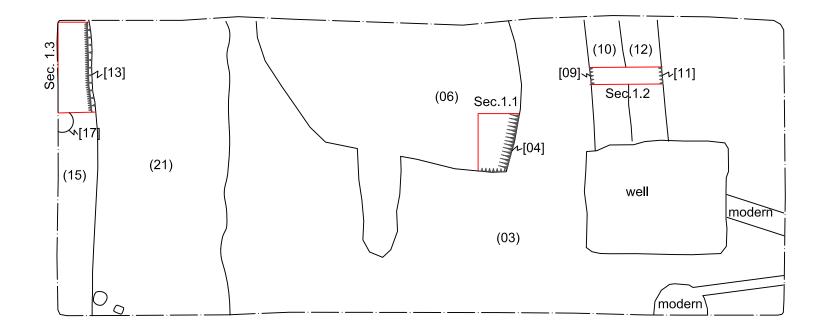




Figure 2: Features plan

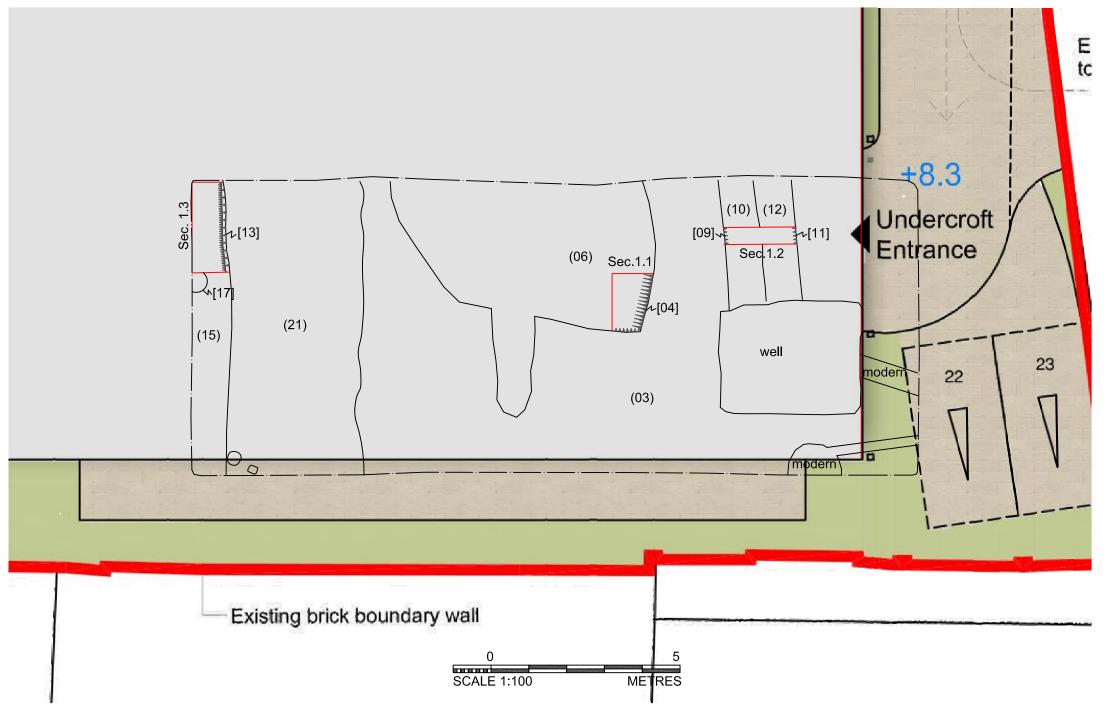
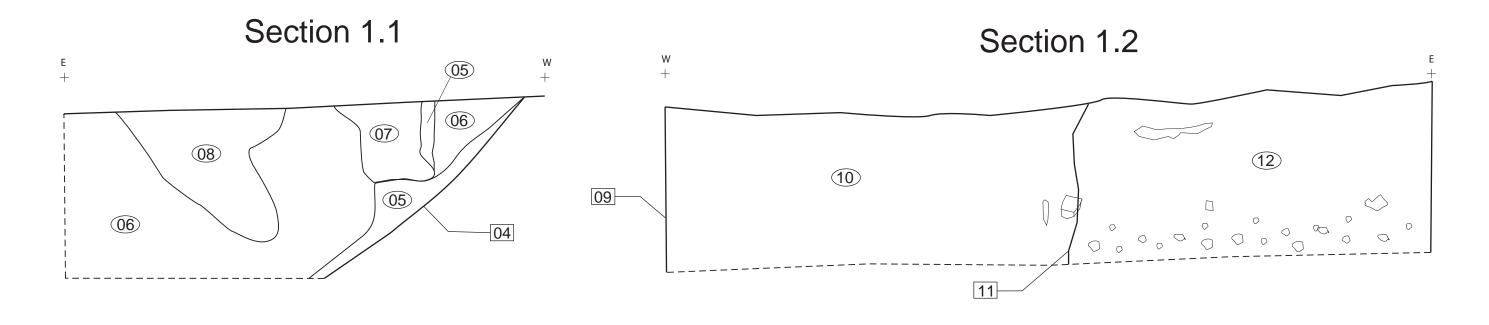


Figure 3: Features plan in developement context.



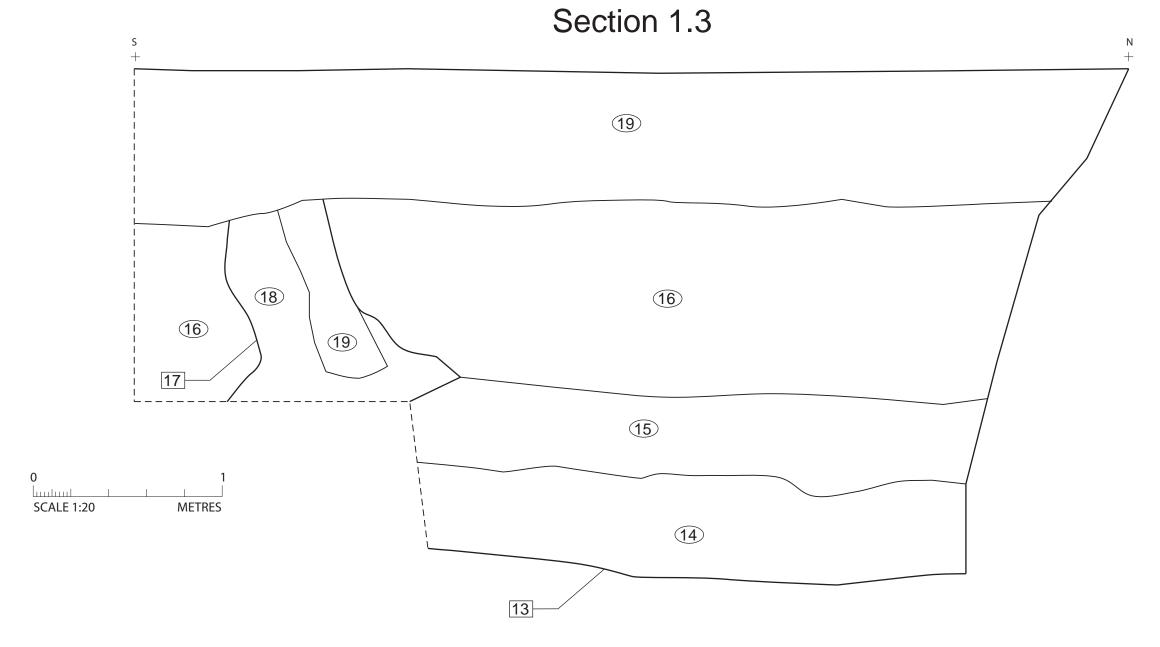
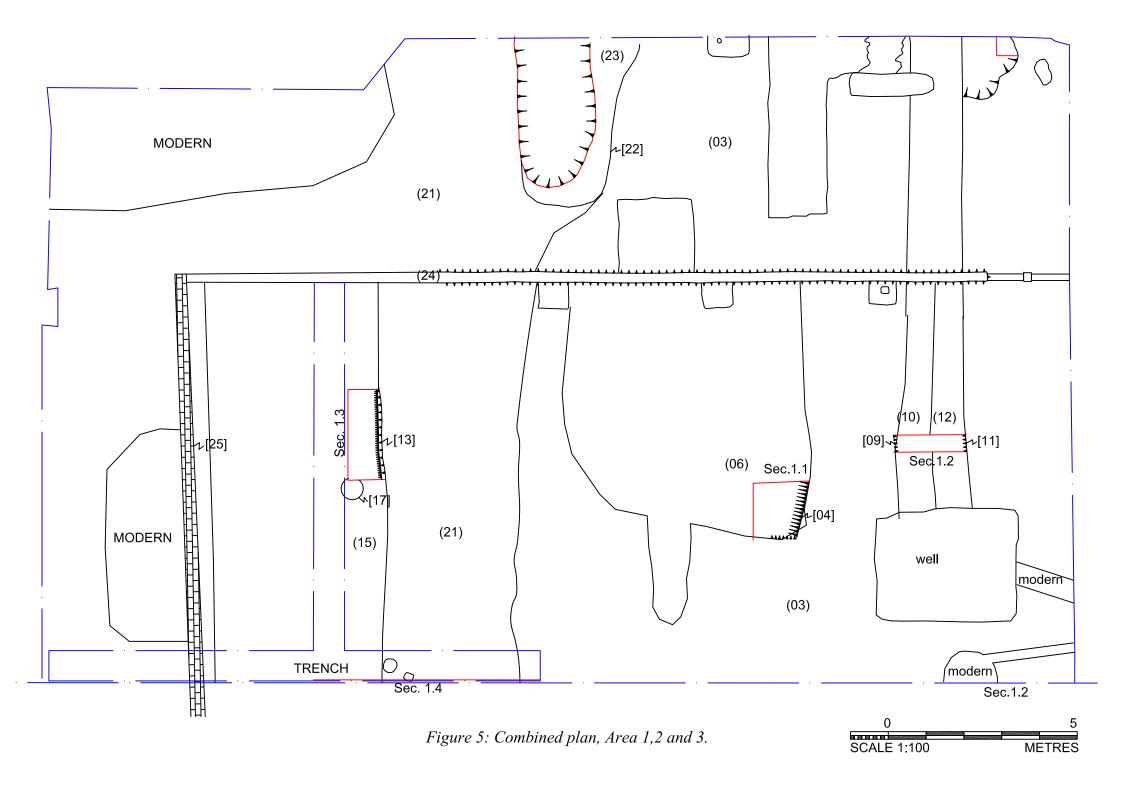
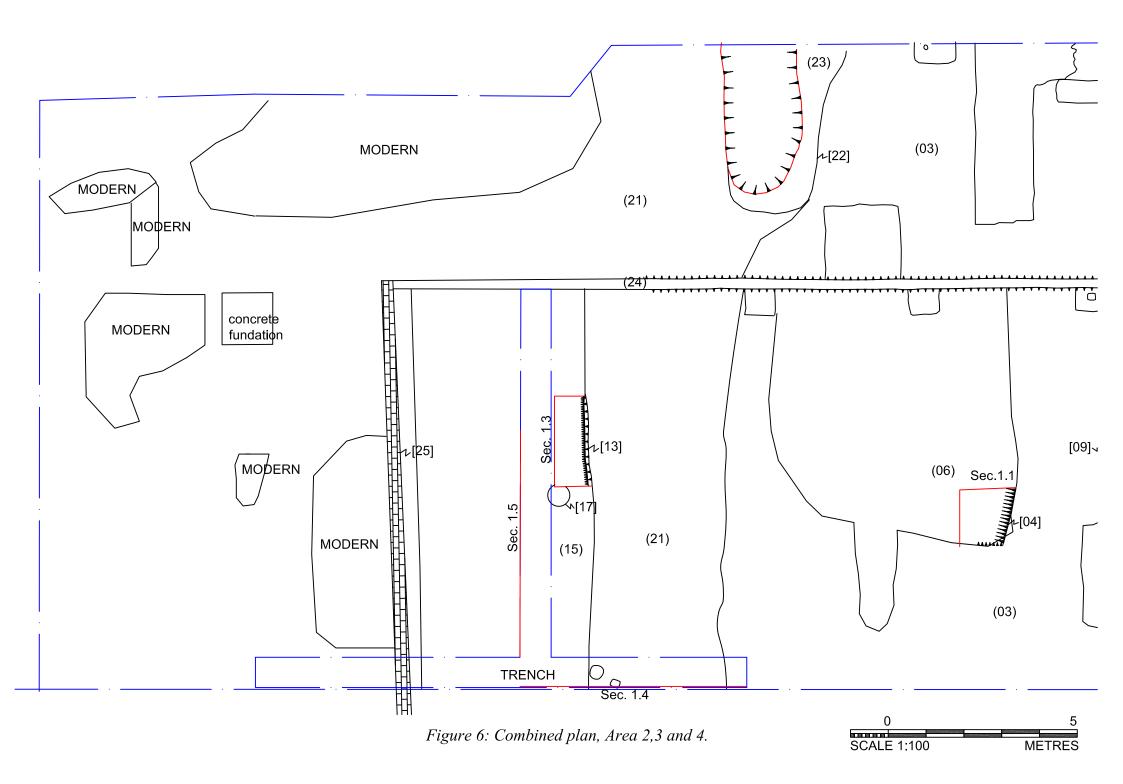
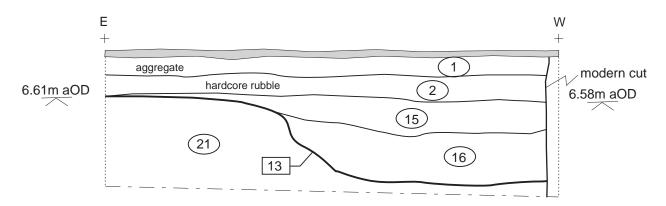


Figure 4: Sections, scale 1:10.





Section.s.1.4 scale:1:50



Section.s.1.5 scale:1:50

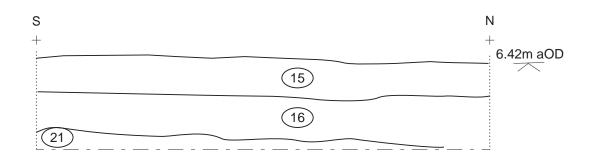




Figure 7: Sections 1.4 and 1.5

