

Archaeological Investigation and Assessment of Land at 124 Watling Street, Bexley Heath



NGR: 550190 175004

Site Code: BEX/EV/16

(Planning Application: 14/02401/P)

SWAT Archaeology

The Office, School Farm Oast

Graveney Road Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP

Email: info@swatarchaeology.co.uk

Tel.: 01795 532548 and 07885 700112

© SWAT Archaeology 2016 all rights reserved

Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates.....	3
1. Summary.....	4
2. Introduction.....	4
3. Site Description and Topography.....	4
4. Planning Background.....	5
5. Archaeological and Historical Background.....	5
6. Aims and Objectives.....	6
7. Methodology.....	7
8. Monitoring.....	7
9. Results.....	7
10. Discussion.....	8
11. Finds.....	8
12. Conclusion.....	8
13. Acknowledgements.....	8
14. References.....	9
15. OASIS Summary Form.....	13

List of Figures:

Figure 1 – Location of site

Figure 2 – Site location in detail

Figure 3- Trench location

Figure 4- Plan and sections

List of Plates:

Plate 1 – Looking north on site

Plate 2 – Looking west

Plate 3 – Drain installation

Plate 4 – Drain installation

Plate 5 – Looking west at scarp

Plate 6 – Looking SW at Trench 2

Plate 7 – Looking E Trench 2

Plate 8 – Section Trench 2

Plate 9 – Trench 1 looking S

Plate 10 – Trench 1 looking SW

Plate 11 – Trench 1 demolition layer

Plate 12 – Trench 1 demolition layer

Archaeological Investigation and Assessment of Land at 124 Watling Street, Bexley Heath

NGR: TQ 550190 175004

Site Code: BEX-EV-16

1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological investigation and assessment of land at 124 Watling Street, in the London Borough of Bexley. A Planning Application (14/02401/P) to demolish the existing building and the erection of three storey building comprising a total of 5 two bedroom, 4 one bedroom flats, bicycle and bin storage and provision of a landscaped communal amenity area was submitted to the London Borough of Croydon, whereby the 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 (SWAT Archaeology) and in discussion with Mark Stevenson Archaeology Advisor (South London). The results of the two evaluation trenches and a Watching Brief on the ongoing demolition of fencing and excavation for drainage works revealed that no archaeological features were present. The natural geology of sand and clay was reached at an average depth of 0.45-0.55m below the modern ground surface.

The Archaeological Investigation and Assessment has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Archaeological Specification.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Moss Homes Ltd to carry out an archaeological investigation and assessment at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2015) and in discussion with the Archaeological Advisor (South London). The evaluation was carried out from the 2nd-3rd February 2016.

3. Site Description and Topography

The development site is situated on the north side of Watling Street and to the south of Martens Grove Park. The site is generally flat at about 40.00m aOD.

The underlying geology is mapped as Seaford Chalk Formation. The Superficial Geology is recorded just to the west as Boyne Hill Gravel Member- sand and gravel but no superficial geology is recorded

for the site. The geology revealed on site was light orange brown sand with lenses of clay (BGS 2015).

4. Planning Background

The London Borough of Bexley gave planning permission (14/02401/P) for development of land for a residential development and associated infrastructure.

On the advice of the Mark Stevenson Archaeological Advisor (South London) a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent:

Reason	Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF.
Condition	<p>A) No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority in writing and a report on that evaluation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.</p> <p>B) No development other than demolition to existing ground level shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority in writing has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.</p> <p>C) Under Parts A and B, the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall implement a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.</p> <p>D) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (A), and the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.</p>
Informative	Written schemes of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified archaeological practice in accordance with English Heritage Greater London Archaeology guidelines. They must be approved by the planning authority before any on-site development related activity occurs.
Reason	Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF.

The results from this evaluation will be used to inform the London Borough of Bexley of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The application site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential, details of which have been sourced by the Greater London HER team at gher@english-heritage.org.uk

In the vicinity of the development site there has been found numerous remains including in Bexley High Street a peat bed exposed in an archaeological evaluation trench (MLO 8427) which contained a Anglo-Saxon spearhead. During the rebuilding of a shop adjacent to the supermarket in Bexley High Street medieval pottery was found beneath foundations (MLO 8444).

6. Aims and Objectives

According to the SWAT Archaeological Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to:

2.3 The principle objective of the Archaeological Evaluation following demolition of the building (but not its foundations) is to establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource across the area of the proposed development site.

2.4 To ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation.

2.5 To determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource if present.

2.6 The opportunity will also be taken during the course of the archaeological programme to place and assess any archaeology revealed within the context of other recent archaeological investigations in the immediate area and within the setting of the local landscape and topography

2.7 Should archaeological remains be found, further archaeological investigation may be required. This work will be covered by a separate specification and not form part of the present work.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Heritage Assets clarifies a developers responsibilities in paragraphs 12.8 and 14.1.

Paragraph 12.8 states:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Paragraph 14.1 states:

Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

The aims set out in the SWAT Specification (2015) for the site required a phased approach to the mitigation of the development site commencing with an evaluation and watching brief, with the results influencing the possibility of further work on the site such as further mitigation in the form of an excavation depending upon the amount and significance of any possible archaeological remains.

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising two trenches within the footprint of the proposed development. A 12.5 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to expose the natural geology and/or the archaeological horizon. 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 SWAT and ClfA standards and guidance. In addition a watching brief was conducted on fence removal and drainage works that ran concurrently with the archaeological evaluation.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial contact was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The evaluation has identified no archaeological features (Figures 3-4).

Trench 1

The plan is recorded in Figure 3 and Section Figure 4 (see also Plates 6-12). The trench lay on an SW-NE alignment and measured approximately 27m by 2m.

Undisturbed natural geology (**102**) was identified across the trench as sandy silty soil at the SW end of the trench, at a depth of approximately 0.24m below the present ground surface.

Cut into the natural geology for most of the length of the trench were the demolished remains of a brick-built concrete floored detached house.

Trench 2

The plan is recorded in Figure 3 and Section Figure 4 (see also Plates 6-8). The trench lay on an W-E alignment and measured approximately 26m by 2m.

Undisturbed natural geology **(202)** was identified across the trench as sandy silty soil throughout the trench, at a depth of approximately 0.64m below the present ground surface. Topsoil was about 60cm thick **(201)** with mid compaction, dark brown loam with abundant bush and tree roots (Fig. 4 sections). No archaeology was revealed or artefacts recovered.

Watching Brief

Whilst on site an opportunity was taken to monitor the ongoing drainage works and the removal of fencing (Plate 3-4) and to record a section through the exposed soils (Section 2, Figure 4). The section has recorded the strata from the topsoil **(301)** to the natural geology **(302)**. No archaeology was revealed or artefacts recovered.

10. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation and watching brief failed to reveal any archaeological features. The evaluation trenches was located in an area where there had been impact from modern housing and gardens and no archaeology was revealed in either of the two trenches.

11. Finds

No finds were recovered.

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches and the watching brief at the proposed development site revealed no archaeological features and no artefacts were retrieved.

The archaeological evaluation and watching brief has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of topsoil mixed with demolition rubble **(101)** sealing the subsoil **(102)**. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the planning condition and the Archaeological Specification.

13. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client, Moss Homes Ltd for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Mark Stevenson Archaeology Advisor (South London). Illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Cichy and the project was managed and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

14. References

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2014). *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

SWAT Archaeology (December 2015) *Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation and Assessment of land at 124 Watling Street, Bexley Heath*

OASIS and HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at 124 Watling Street, Bexley Heath, Bexley

SWAT Site Code: BEX/EV/16

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has planning permission for residential housing whereby the London Borough of Bexley requested that Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief which revealed no archaeology.

District/Unitary: London Borough of Bexley

Period(s): n/a

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 550190 175004

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief

Date of recording: Feb 2016

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Seaford Chalk Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2016) Archaeological Investigation and Assessment of Land at 124 Watling Street Bexley Heath, Bexley

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) No archaeology found

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 29/02/2016

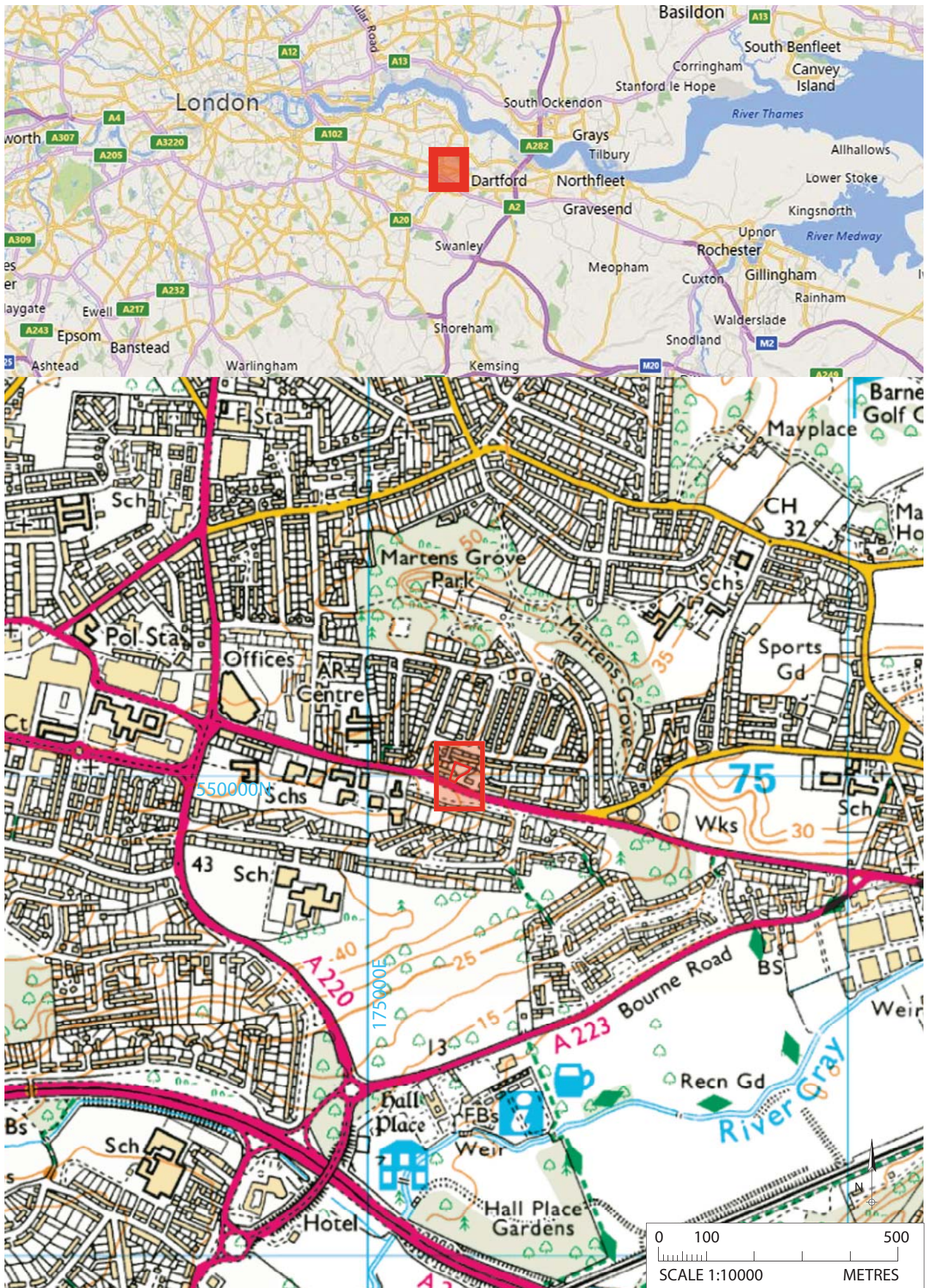


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000

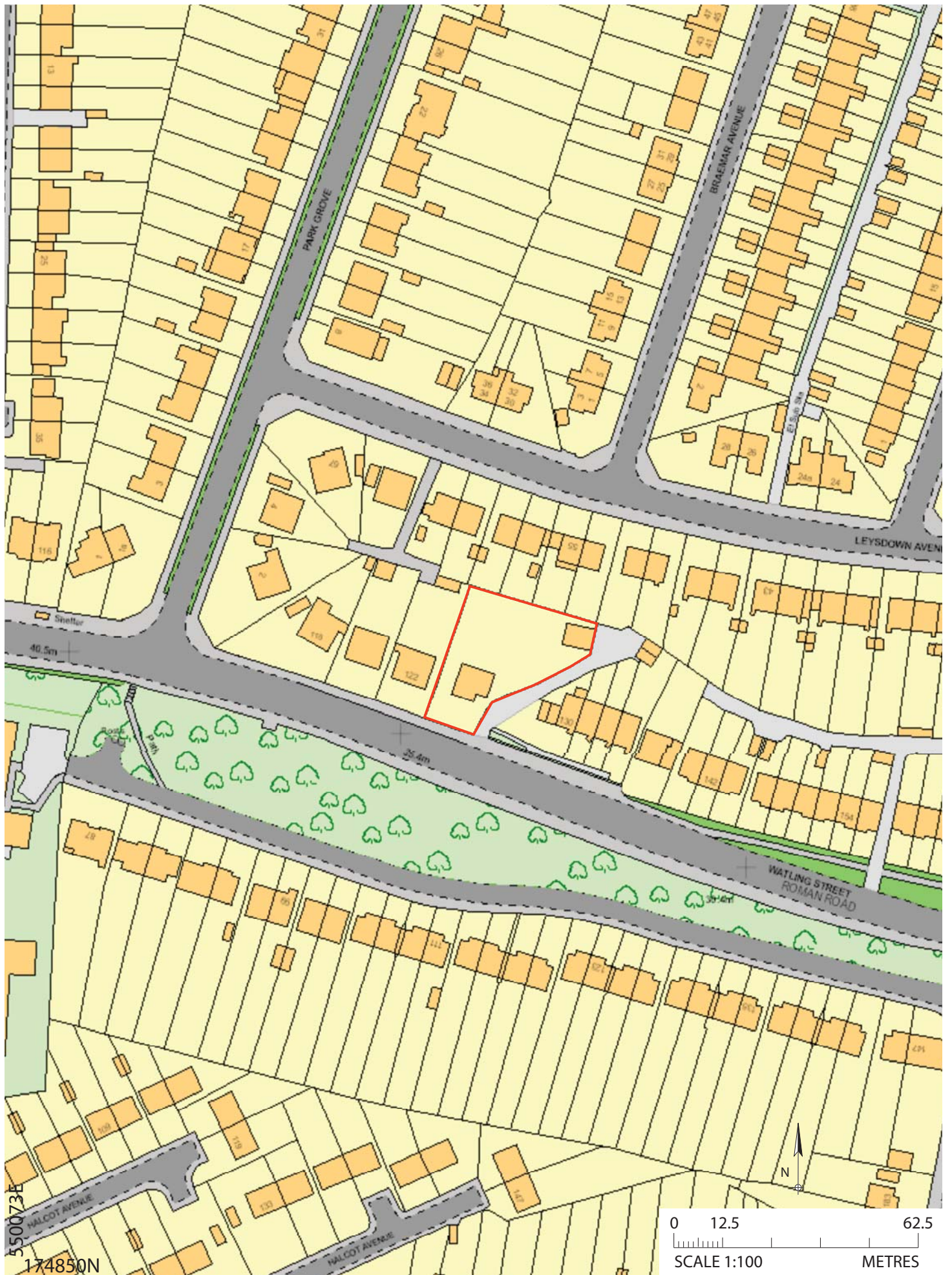
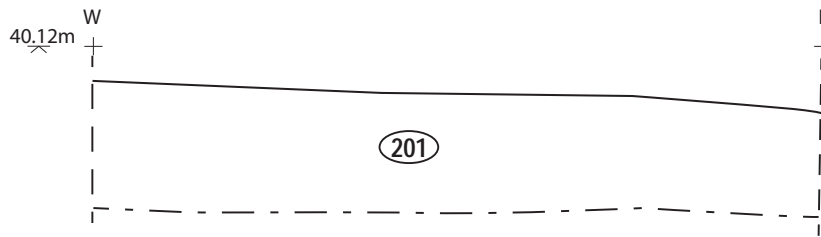


Figure 2: Site location plan, scale 1:1250.



Figure 3: Trench location plan, Watling Street 124, scale 1:500

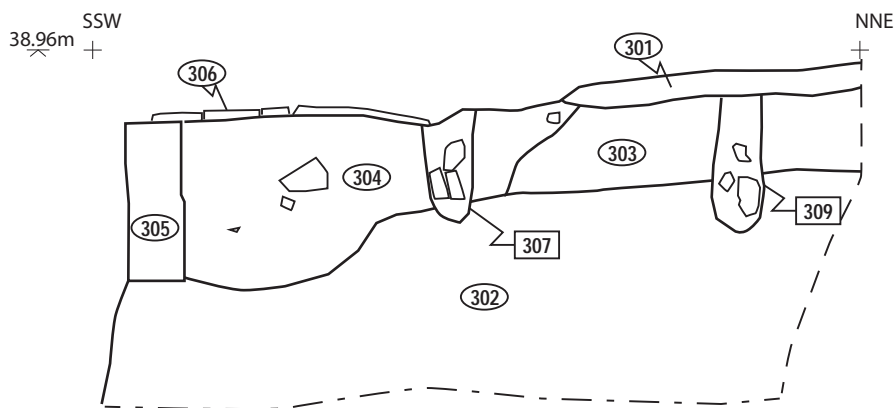
Section 1 of Trench 2



- (201) - Top soil - mid compaction, dark brown loam, abundant bush and tree roots.
- (202) - Natural geology, firm compaction, light orangish brown sand.



Section 2



- (301) - Top soil
- (302) - Natural geology, light orangish brown, sand with lenses of clay
- (303) - Colluvium - firm compaction, mid brown, loam with occ. small stones
- (304) - Modern deposit - Firm compaction, mid brown, loam with moderate stones, occ brick and concrete fragments
- (305) - Brick retaining wall
- (306) - Pavement
- [307] - Modern fence post hole
- (308) - Fill of [307]. Post pack consist of bricks and mid brown silty post pipe.
- [309] - Modern fence post hole
- (310) - Fill of [309]. Post pack consist of concrete cobbles and mid brown silty post pipe.

Figure 4: Sections, scale 1:20



Plate 1: Looking north at development site from Watling street.



Plate 2: Looking west at development site.



Plate 3: Looking east at trench for drain installation. Trench is cutting through build up terrace. Notice buried fence wall behind the ladder.



Plate 4: Looking north at trench with laid drain pipe.



Plate 5: Looking west at scarp exposed after demolition of retaining wall. Two postholes indicating the position of boundary fence are visible in section.



Plate 6: Looking south west at Trench 2



Plate 7: Looking east at Trench 2.



Plate 8: Looking north at section exposed in Trench 2.



Plate 9: Looking south at Trench 1.



Plate 10: Looking south west at Trench 1 and exposed foundations of demolished house.



Plate 11: Looking east at front left at foundations of demolished building. Front left corner wall and window bay are visible although with concrete platform to the left.



Plate 12: Looking south at the wall of demolished building with concrete platform on the right and concrete pavement slabs on the right side of the wall