Archaeological Evaluation of Land north of Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel, West St, Bluetown, Sheerness, Kent

NGR: 591100 174956 Site Code: FOUNT/EV/16 (Planning Application: SW/14/0092)



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NGR: 591100 174956

Site Code: FOUNT-EV-16

1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of the Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel, West St, Bluetown, Sheerness in Kent. A Planning Application (SW/14/0092) to develop this site for 6 two bed flats was submitted to Swale Borough Council, 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 (KCC Specification A dated August 2015 and Part B) and in discussion with the Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. The results of the two evaluation trenches revealed that late 18th- early 19th century terraced housing foundations and floors were present within both trenches. The material culture, however, dates from the mid 20th century. A rapid map analysis indicates these tenement buildings were demolished between 1940 (Plate 1) and 1956 (Figure 14) with the two remaining tenements demolished between 1956 and 1961 (Figures 14, 15).

The specific aims of the archaeological work were to determine: 'the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of the proposed development ground works and how they could be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report' (KCC 2015).

The Archaeological Report shows in some detail that extensive remains of the tenements have survived in remarkably good condition and the proposed development will have a major impact on the remains of these demolished buildings.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr Andy Goble to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2015) and in discussion with the Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 5th to 23rd February 2016.

3. Site Description and Topography

The proposed development site is situated on open ground in West Street adjacent to the former Royal Fountain Hotel. To the west is the boundary wall of the former Royal Naval Dockyard of Sheerness. The overall area of development is about 347 sq metres. The site is generally flat at about 1.60m to 1.90m OD.

The underlying geology is mapped as Bedrock Geology of London Clay Formation- Clay & Silt. The Superficial Deposits are of Alluvium- Clay, Silty, Peaty, Sandy (BGS 2015).

4. Planning Background

Swale Borough Council gave planning permission (SW/14/0092) for development of land north of Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel for 6 two bed flats.

On the advice of the Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer (KCC) a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent:

(3) Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC Heritage and Swale Borough Council 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 with known archaeology. To the west a Roman bronze ring was found in 1964 (TQ 97 NW 13). There are any number of listed buildings and port facilities in the vicinity whilst adjacent to the development site the former Royal Fountain Hotel is a Grade II listed building (TQ 97 SW 1134) and the adjacent outbuilding is also listed (TQ 97 SW 1138). In the same street as the development site at 3-4 West Street the former site of a Grade II listed building is designated an archaeological site (TQ 97 NW 1083).

6. Aims and Objectives

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

'6. Specific Aims of the Archaeological Work:

To determine the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of proposed development groundwork and how they would be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report. The Archaeological contractor should note that remains of the tenements and material associated with their occupation are of archaeological interest' (KCC August 2015).

The aims set out in the KCC Specification (2015) for the site required a phased approach to the mitigation of the development site commencing with an evaluation, with the results influencing the possibility of further work on the site such as further mitigation in the form of a watching brief or 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 3.5 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 additional archaeological work was carried out with hand tools. 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, SWAT and CIFA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring took place during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The evaluation has identified numerous archaeological features of walls, floors and paths within the two trenches (Figures 5, 6).

Evaluation results

Trench 1

The plan is recorded in Figure 5 and sections in Figures 7, 8, 9 (see also Plates 2-6). The trench lay on a north-east south-west alignment and measured 9.6m by 1.7m. Demolition deposits were identified across the site **(103, 104, 108, 112)** approximately 0.32m (1.32mOD) below the present ground surface at 1.64m OD at the NE end of the trench.

The evaluation trench also revealed well preserved structural brick walls of the demolished terraced housing **[109, 110]** comprising three courses of frogged red brick 0.21m x 0.11m x 0.07m in size and laid in a Flemish bond set in a off-white sandy lime mortar.

Inside the walls a concrete floor [111] was exposed at 0.86m OD- see sections 2 & 3.

Parallel and adjacent to the structural brick walls but on the outside of the building was a 'crazy paving' path **[102]** constructed with broken concrete slabs 0.7m wide.

To the NE a live electric cable was exposed in the demolition rubble of **(104)** and running parallel was another footpath constructed of slabs of York stone about 0.6-0.7m wide **[105]** framed by a un-mortared brick gulley **[106]** and a un-mortared curb **[107]**.

Three sections were recorded in Trench 1.

Section 1 was the trench section (Figure 7) which records the crazy paving path [102] set against a wall [109] of three courses set in a Flemish bond. To the SW dump materials (113) of firmly compacted black loam with moderate brick fragments, mortar, timber fragments, can, wire, nails and plastic and dated by the excavator to after 1950. Above this, a layer a compacted hardcore (114) interpreted by the excavator as the surface of a car park. Cut into this context was a dump of moderately compacted yellow sand (115).

To the NE of the wall and above the 'crazy' paving path **[102]** was covered by numerous dumps of material all 20th century according to the excavator. Sealing this dumped material was a layer of compacted black loam **(101)** with inclusions of electric cables, wire, scrap metal, glass, plastic, bricks.

Section 2 (trench 1A) was located in the return of walls **[109, 110]**. The fill of Room 1.1 **(112)** was moderately compacted hardcore mixed with black loam and occasional fragments of modern glass, pottery, wood, wire, and nails (Figure 7 and Plate 6). With the removal of context **(112)** a smooth concrete floor was revealed **(111)** at 0.86m OD.

Section 3 was located on the opposite side of the test pit and exposed the same stratification.

Trench 2

The plan is recorded in Figure 6 and sections Figures 7, 8, 9 (see also Plates 7-17). The trench lay on a north-east south-west alignment and measured 10.2m by 2.5m to 4.5m.

Demolition deposits were identified across the site (203, 205, 208, 209, 211, 213, 214, 224, 225, 226, 227, 230) approximately 0.12m (1.80mOD) below the present ground surface at 1.92m OD at the NE end of the trench.

The evaluation trench also revealed well preserved structural brick walls of the demolished terraced housing **[204, 206, 207,215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220]** comprising three courses of red brick Flemish bond set in a off-white sandy lime mortar. In addition internal brick laid floors were also exposed **[210, 212]** laid in a stretcher pattern. Sections also revealed more of the internal features including the cellar base of a fireplace **[219]** and cobbled surfaces **[229]**.

Six sections were recorded in Trench 2.

Section 4 was located in a test pit (TR 2A) on the south side of Room 3.5 (Figure 6 and Plate 12) and was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.92m at 0.81m OD. Revealed was the natural (202) marsh clay in mid blue grey colour at 0.81m OD. Above this was a layer of broken bricks about 0.38m thick (221) overlaid by a band of mortared course gravel levelled off as a bedding foundation [222] for five courses of red brick set in a header course and bonded with grey white gritty mortar [216] and overlaid by a layer of tarmac (201A) again overlaid by a topsoil (201). Of interest is a band of concrete (223) adhering to the bonded brick courses and interpreted by the excavator as the remains of a concrete floor.

Section 5 was located in the same test pit but is the west face and revealed 13 courses of red brick 0.21m x 0.11m x 0.07m in size and laid in a tight English bond set in a off-white sandy lime mortar.

Section 6 was located in the centre of Room 3.2 (Figure 9. Plates 8, 9) and was the SE face of test pit TR. 2B. The excavation revealed a brick floor **[210]**, stretcher laid at 0.80m OD. Above the brick floor was a fill of demolition **(224)** comprising moderately

compacted bricks, tiles, concrete about 0.17m thick. Overlaying this demolition layer was three layers of additional demolition material **(225, 226, 209)**.

Sections 7, 8, 9 are located in test pit TR 2C in Room 2.1 (Figures 6, 9 and Plates 14-17).

The area of Section 7 was excavated by hand to a depth of about 0.65m at about 1.05m OD. Part of the surviving cobbled floor (Plate 16 and Figure 9). Above the cobbled floor **[229]** five courses of a brick wall **(204)** with Flemish headers every fourth course, stretchers every second course typical of a English garden bond but with headers every fourth course.

The area of Section 8 (Plate 15 and Figure 8) was excavated by hand to a depth of about 0.70m at about 1.10m OD. Revealed was a cobbled floor in a matrix of firmly compacted black clay [229]. A small sondage through the cobbled floor exposed two layers, the lowest (231) was similar to the layer immediately above (230) which was a compacted layer of clay stained black with coal dust, small specks of coal and coke. Above the cobbled floor [229] a deposit of black loam with abundant brick fragments (227) and deposit (205) above was a compacted mass of brick demolition material-broken bricks, concrete fragments.

The area of Section 9 was also excavated by hand to a depth of about 0.64m at about 1.16m OD and revealed nine courses of laid bricks **[208]** in a header and stretcher pattern (Figure 9 and Plate 17).

10. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to the Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel in Bluetown, Sheerness has revealed substantial well-preserved remains of terraced housing dating back to at least 1866 (Figure 10). These tenements encapsulate the early development of Bluetown and could, if excavated give a better understanding of the lives of the dockyard workers of that time. However, as these properties were in daily use to the 1950's the material culture found in this investigation are no earlier than the 20th century.

11. Finds

Pottery finds are still being assessed by the pottery specialist and the report is expected in two weeks. But initial inspection shows no pottery earlier than about 1920.

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site revealed numerous archaeological features dating back to the 1860's. The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. 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, Andy Goble for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. 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.

Paul Wilkinson 15/03/2016

14. References

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

KCC Heritage (August 2015) Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation of land north of Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel, West Street, Bluetown, Sheerness

KCC Specification Manual Part B

KCC HER data 2016

15. Appendix 1

Royal Fountain Mews Evaluation context table Trench 1

101	Topsoil - moderately compacted black loam with abundant rubbish (electric
	cables, wires, scrap metal, cans, glass, plastic, bricks)
102	Pavement - heavily cracked tarmac
103	Layer / demolition - well compacted hardcore with black loam
104	Layer / dump (after 1950) - moderately compacted hardcore with abundant
	black loam
105	Footpath/ pavement consist of flat paving blocks, 0.7metre wide denoted from
	the south by gully dry brick build like a stretcher bond pattern (106) and from
	the north by curb edge one brick course laid flat without bond (107)
106	Dry brick build gully rainwater conveyor consisted of three course brick laid flat
	on their side appear in plan like a stretcher bond but any bonding material was
	used here.
107	Dry brick build one course brick laid along the edge of footpath (105) as a curb
108	Levelling/Dump deposit comprises dark loam with crushed hardcore, remains of
	coal, sand and mortar
109	Wall - Flemish bond - 3 courses exposed to the floor level
110	Wall - Flemish bond - 3 courses exposed to the floor level
111	Floor - concrete
112	Layer/ Fill of Room 1.1 - moderately compacted hardcore mixed with black loam
	and occ. glass, pottery, wood fragments, roof tiles, iron bars, wires and nails
	contained concentrations of pottery, concentration of glass wine bottles some
	still wreck of wine.
113	Layer / dump (after 1950) - firmly compacted black loam with moderate brick
	fragments, mortar, occ. timber fragments, cans, wires, nails, plastic
114	Layer / car park surface - compacted hardcore
115	Layer / dump - moderately compacted, yellow sand
116	Layer / erosion of (103) - moderately compacted black loam with abundant brick
	fragments and mortar

117	Layer / dump - moderately compacted, yellow sand
118	Layer / dump - well compacted brick fragments
119	Layer / dump - loose masonry stones, some bricks sealed by soft black loam

Royal Fountain Mews Evaluation context table Trench 2

201	Top soil - mid compaction, loam with abundant
	roots and rubbish
201A	Tarmac – car park
202	Natural - marsh clay in mid bluish grey colour
203	Levelling/ Back-fill deposit consisted of crushed hardcore, remains of coal,
	ferrous building objects, lead pipes and old electric cables
204	Wall - 5 courses exposed - Flemish headers every 4th course, stretchers every
	2nd course headers every 4th course.(like English garden bond but with Flemish
	headers every 4th course)
205	Layer / levelling - machine compacted hardcore
206	Wall - 9 courses exposed - top 3 courses and 8th and 9th course in Flemish
	headers aligned every second course, headers alternate 1/3 brick length left on
	successive course. Courses 4-6 in Flemish bond with 3/4 brick, 7th course have
	stretchers only.
207	Brick wall English bond
208	Back-fill compressed hardcore dump comprises crushed building material, coal
	flecks, infrequent tarmac, sand and dark loam
209	Layer / levelling - compacted hardcore
210	Floor - brick in stretcher pattern
211	Back-fill compressed hardcore dump comprises crushed building material, coal
	flecks, infrequent tarmac, sand and dark loam
212	Floor - brick in stretcher pattern
213	Levelling layer comprises dark loam with crushed building material, tarmac and

	various small ferrous objects
214	Back-fill compressed hardcore dump comprises crushed building material, coal
	flecks, infrequent tarmac, sand and dark loam
215	Wall – brick pattern correspond to English bond
216	Wall - 6 courses in header bond
217	Brick wall English bond
218	Internal brick wall English bond denoting small compartment inside room 3.2
219	Internal brick wall English bond denoting small compartment inside room 3.2
220	Wall - 13 courses in English bond
221	Layer / building construction - foundations bedding bricks and large brick
	fragments
222	Layer / building construction - wall bedding - coarse gravel with mortar
223	Concrete remains along one course brick possibly indicate non-existing floor
224	Layer / demolition - moderately compacted hardcore (roof tiles, bricks,
	concrete) with black loam
225	Layer/levelling – compacted hardcore with mid brown sand
226	Layer /levelling – compacted bricks with black loam
227	Layer/levelling – firmly compacted black loam with abundant brick fragments,
	small concrete lumps, carbon flecks (include: burnt and unburnt coal, coke and
	anthracite, infrequent ferrous objects (nails, bars, plates, joints) rotten timber
	planks, electric wires
228	void
229	Layer/ pavement dry pebble surface comprising fist-size round and sub-oval
	stones embedded in dark very compacted silty-clay. These has been laid after
	2 nd World War
230	Layer/ dump – moderately compacted mixture of demolition rubble with dark
	loam, clay, burnt and unburnt coal, coke, anthracite – these inclusions were
	noted as a small flecks and very small dusty particles
231	Layer/ dump – the same as (230) with grit and dark clay

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land north of Royal Fountain Mews/Hotel. West Street, Bluetown, Sheerness SWAT Site Code: FOUNT/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 Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) 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 which revealed archaeological remains of c.1860 tenement housing District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council Period(s): 19th century NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 591100 174956 Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation Date of recording: Feb 2016 Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology) Geology: Underlying geology is Boyne Hill Gravels Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2016) Archaeological Evaluation of Land north of Royal Fountai Mews/Hotel, West Street, Bluetown, Sheerness

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) Archaeology found from the 1860's

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson **Date:** 15/03/2016

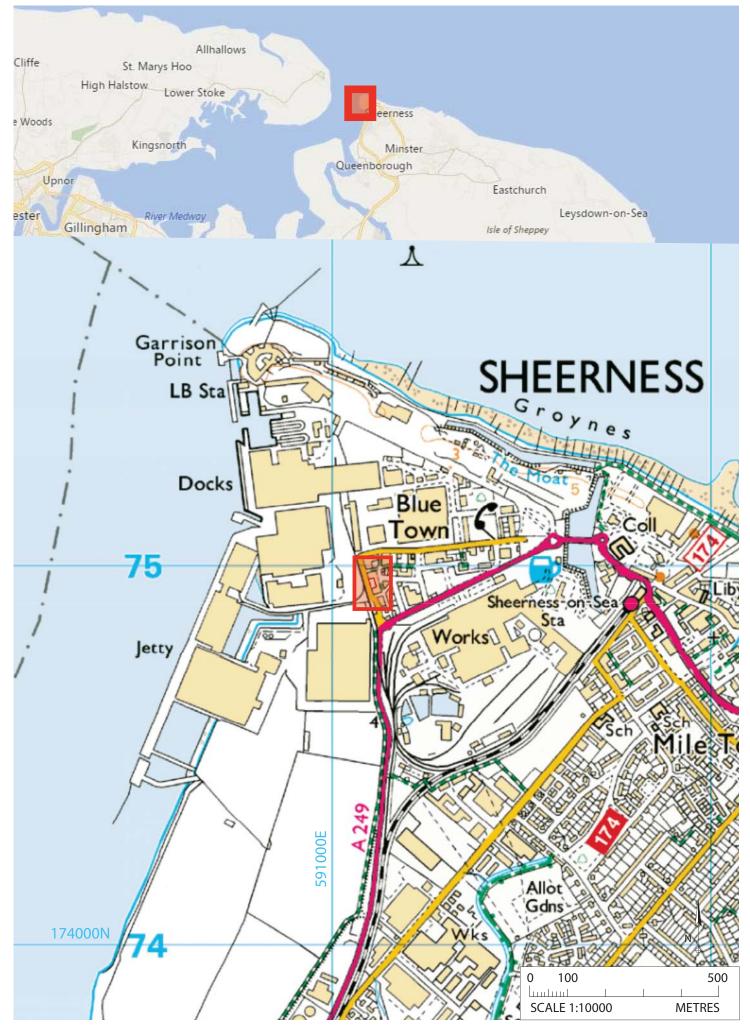


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000

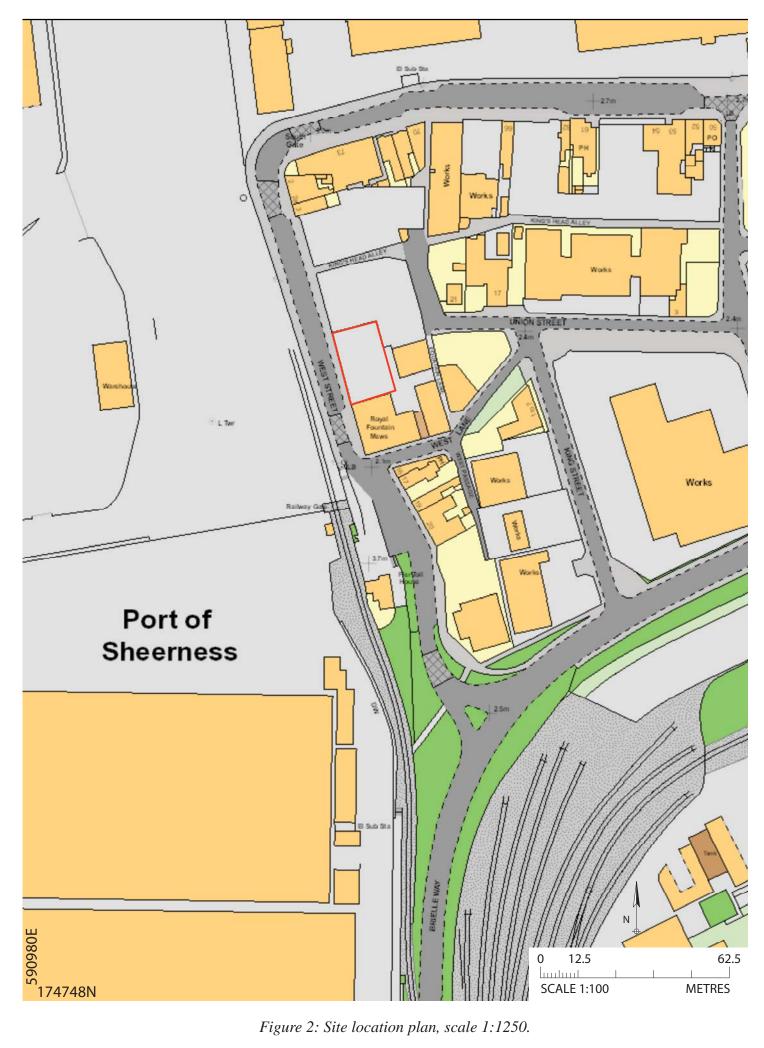
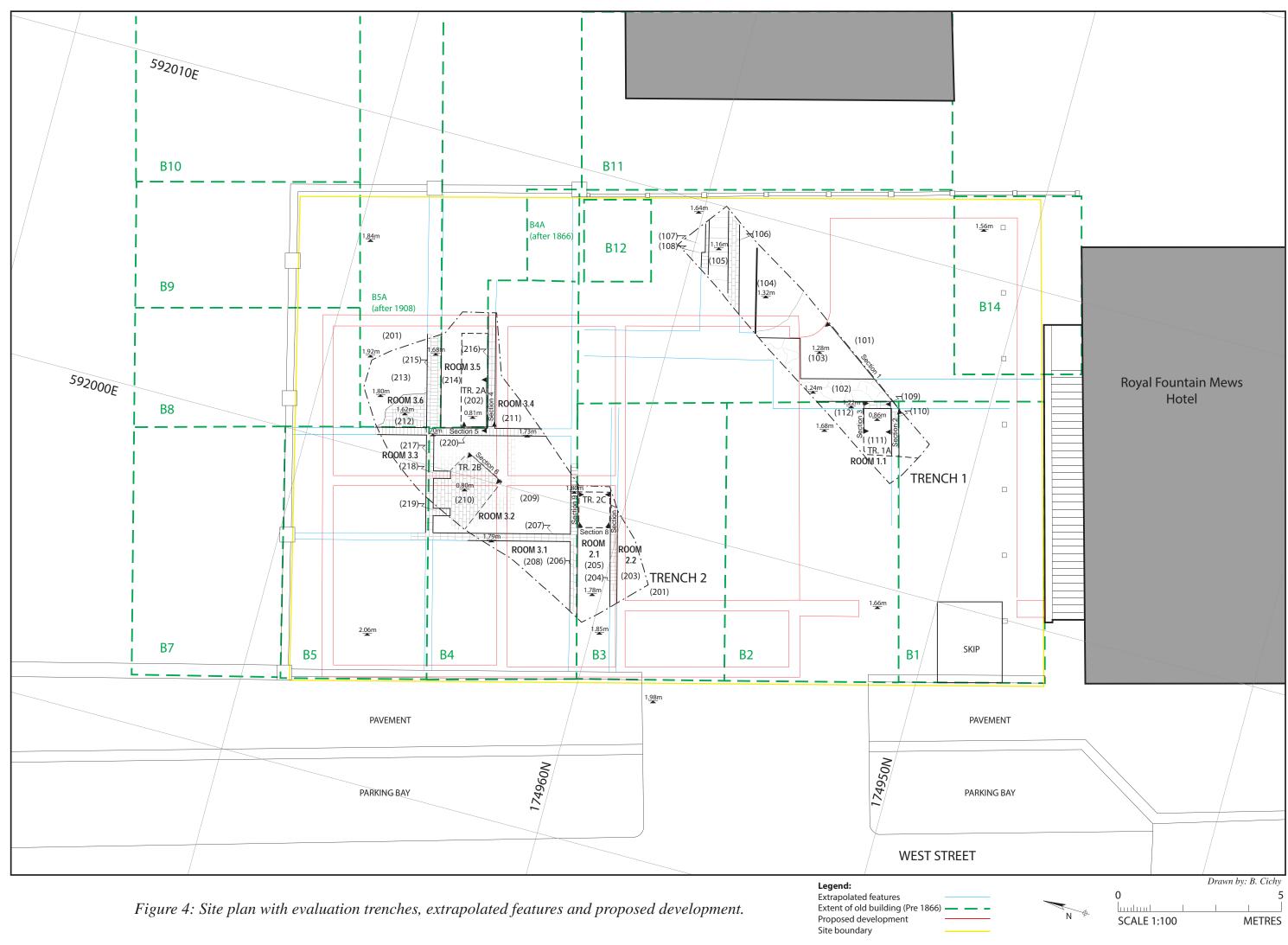
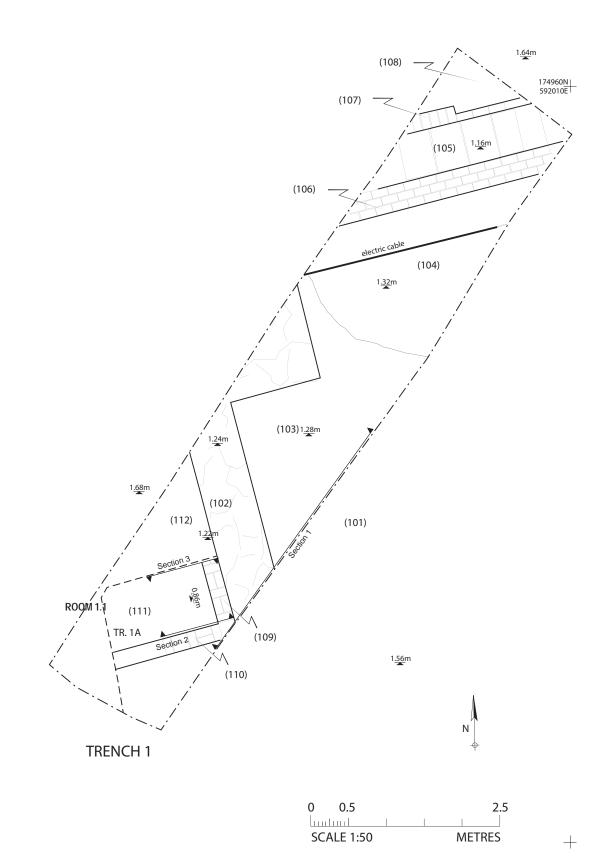


Figure 2: Site location plan, scale 1:1250.



Figure 3: Trench location plan, scale 1:500







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Figure 5: Plan of Trench 1

174950N 592000E ___592000E 174970N

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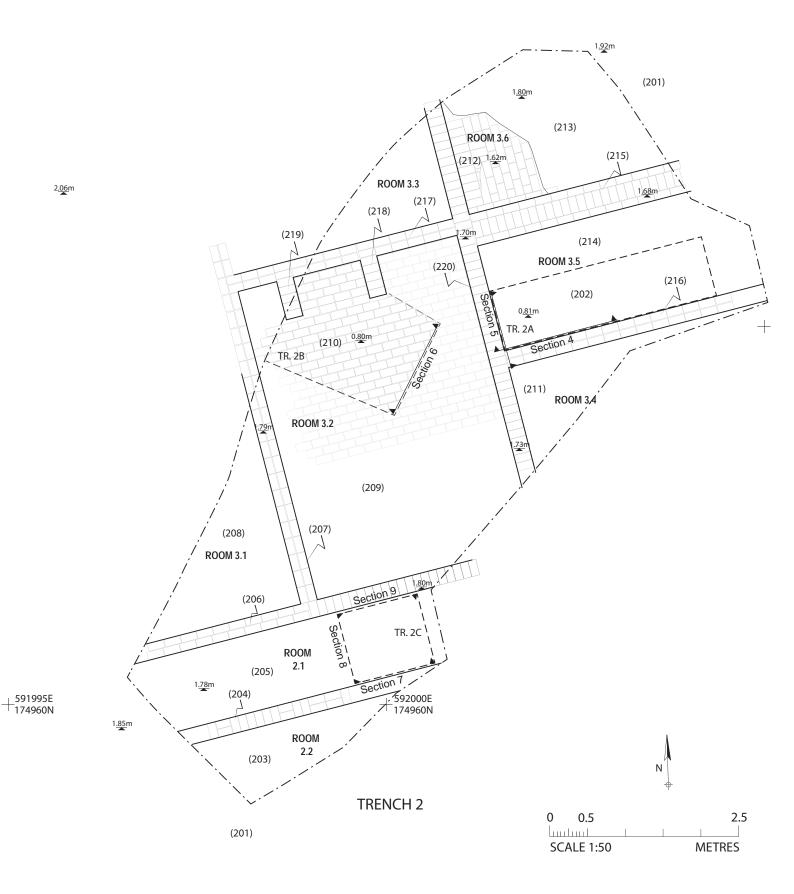
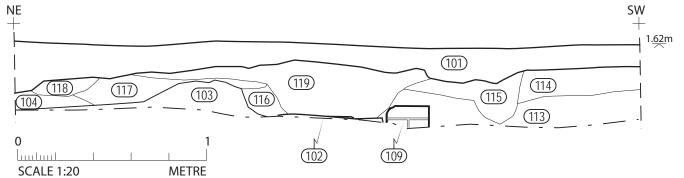


Figure 6: Plan of Trench 2

Section 1



(101) - Topsoil - moderately compacted black loam with abundant rubbish (electric cables, wires, scrap metal, cans, glass, plastic, bricks) and bush roots.

(102) - Pavement - heavily cracked tarmac

(103) - Layer / demolition - well compacted hardcore with black loam

(104) - Layer / dump (after 1950) - moderately compacted hardcore with abundant black loam

(109) - Wall - Flemish bond - 3 courses exposed to the floor level

(110) - Wall - Flemish bond - 3 courses exposed to the floor level

(111) - Floor - concrete

(112) - Layer/ Fill of Room 1.1 - moderately compacted hardcore mixed with black loam and occ. glass, pottery, wood fragments, roof tiles, iron bars, wires and nails contained concentrations of pottery, concentration of glass bottles and the smell of vine

(113) - Layer / dump (after 1950) - firmly compacted black loam with moderate brick fragments, mortar, occ. timber fragments, cans, wires, nails, plastic

(114) - Layer / car park surface - compacted hardcore

(115) - Layer / dump - moderately compacted, yellow sand

(116) - Layer / erosion of (103) - moderately compacted black loam with abundant brick fragments and mortar

(117) - Layer / dump - moderately compacted, yellow sand

(118) - Layer / dump - well compacted brick fragments

(119) - Layer / dump - loose masonry stones, some bricks sealed by soft black loam

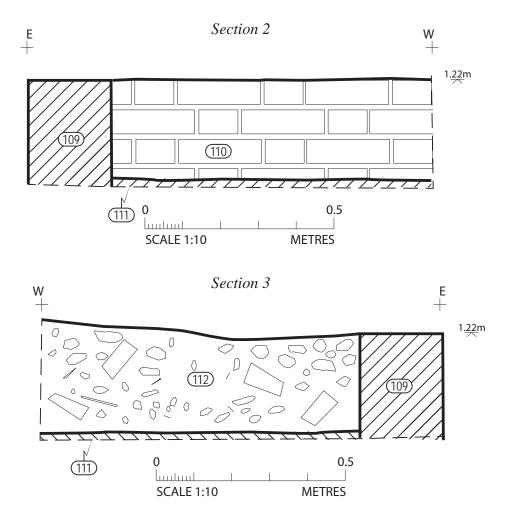
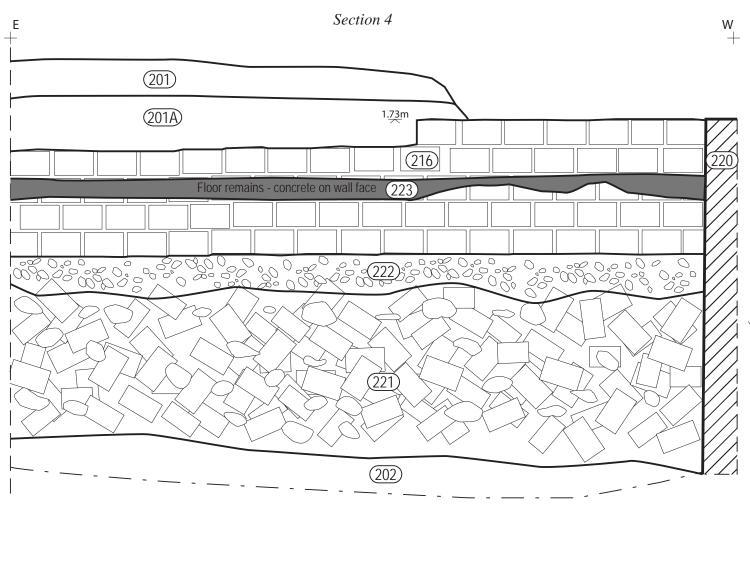


Figure 7: Sections exposed in Trench 1



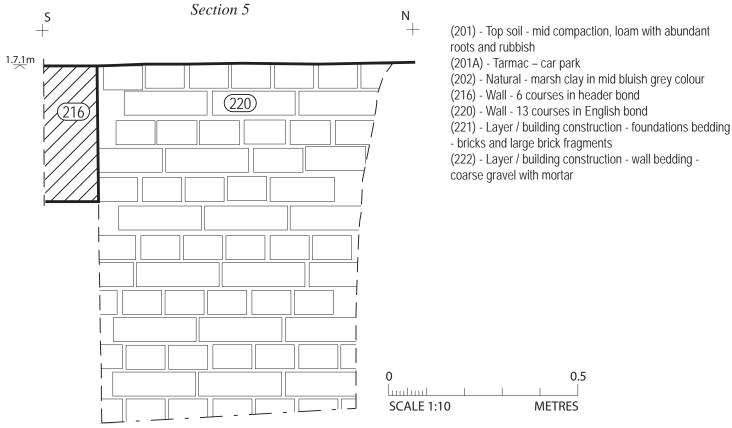
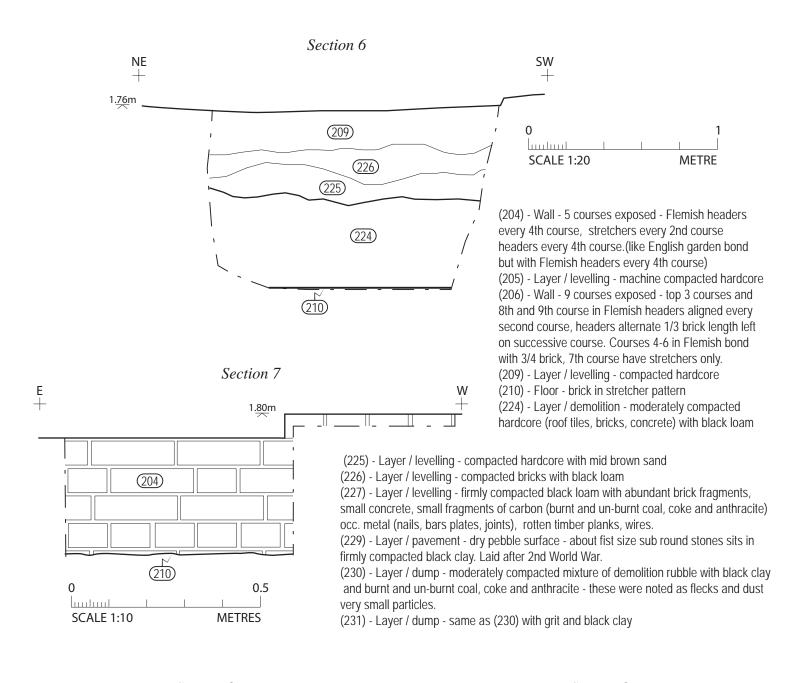


Figure 8: Sections exposed in Trench 2A



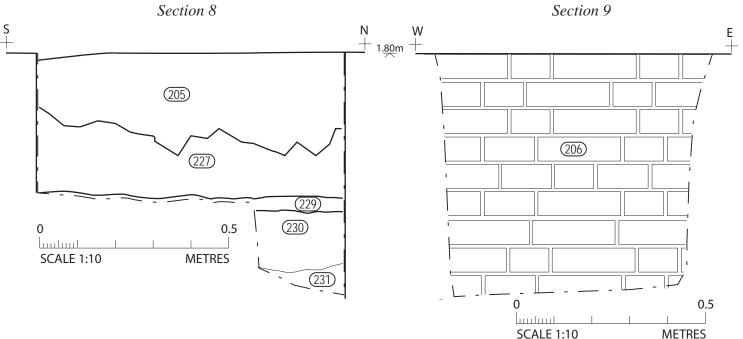


Figure 9: Sections exposed in Trench 2B and Trench 2C



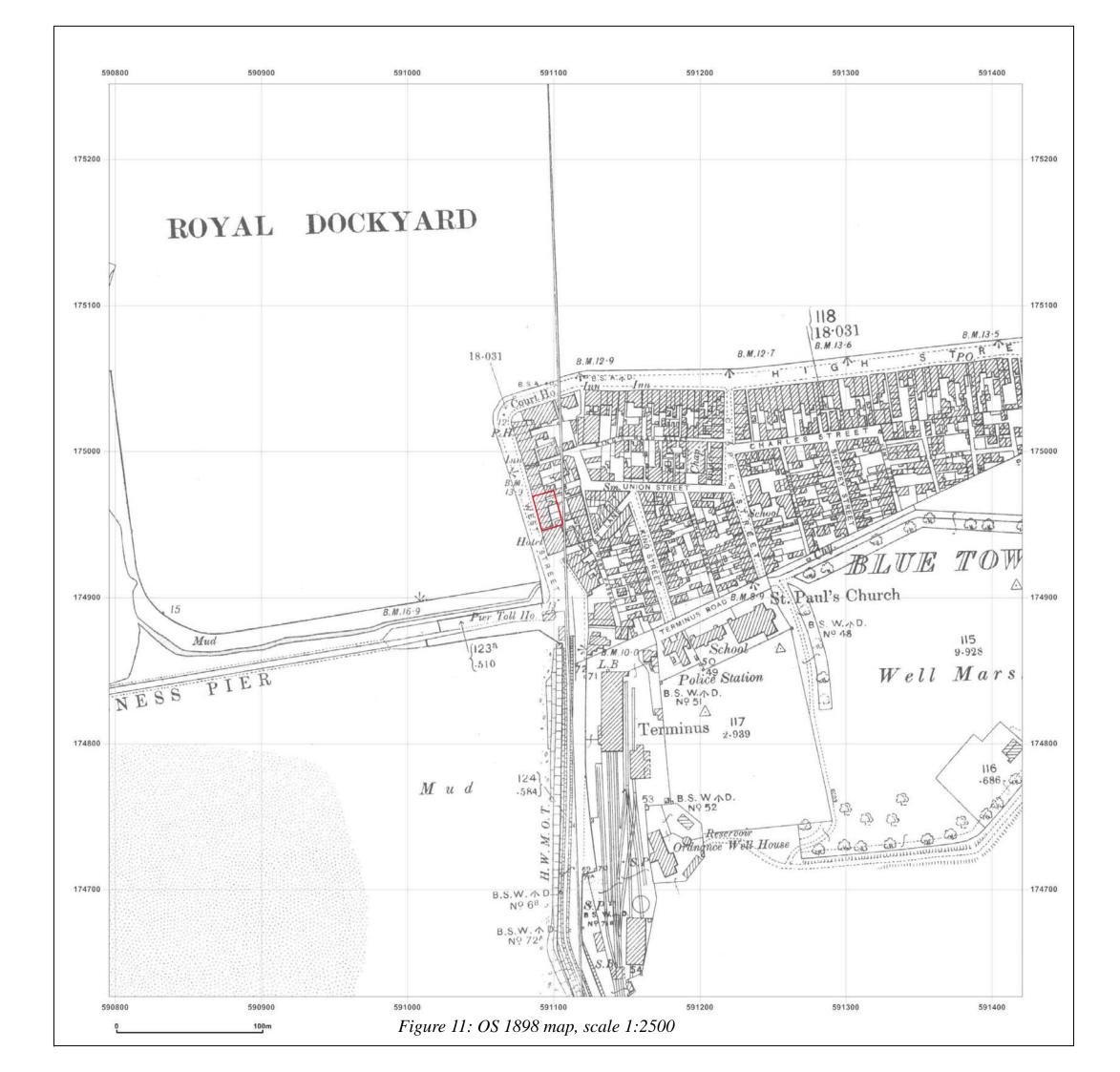




















Plate 1: Looking south east at development site from West street.



Plate 2: Looking north at the site. Evaluation Trench 1 is visible in the foreground and Trench 2 behind excavator.





Plate 3: Looking north east at Trench 1

Plate 4: Looking south west at Trench 1



Plate 5: Looking south east at Section 1 exposed in Trench 1.



Plate 6: Looking south east at the corner of the Room 1.1 exposed in Trench 1A



Plate 7: Looking south west at building remains exposed in Trench 2



Plate 8: Looking north at fireplace and brick floor in Room 3.2 exposed in trench 2B



Plate 9: Looking west at Section 6 through backfill of Room 3.2



Plate 10: Looking east at walls exposed in Trench 2. Wall (206) underneath the scales, wall (204) on the right and wall (207) on the left.



Plate 11: Looking west at brick floor (212) – Room 3.6 exposed in Trench 2



Plate 12: Looking south at Section 4 exposed in Trench 2A



Plate 13: Looking west at elevation of the wall (220) exposed in Trench 2A – Section 5



Plate 14: Looking east at pavement (229) exposed in Trench 2C and underlying backfill (230) of the demolished Room 2.1.



Plate 15: Looking west at Section 8 exposed in Trench 2C



Plate 16: Looking south at elevation of the wall, section 7 (204) exposed in Trench 2C



Plate 17: Looking north (Section 9) at elevation of the wall (206) exposed in Trench 2C