

# Archaeological Evaluation on Land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford, Kent

Site Code: MAB -EV-19

NGR Site Centre 601800 142400

Planning Application Number: 18/00938/AS



SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road

Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

info@swatarchaeology.co.uk [www.swatarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatarchaeology.co.uk)

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## **Summary**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.*

*The fieldwork was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology July 2019) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of six trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising very little topsoil overlaying a mix of earth deposits and hardcore overlying natural geology of yellow sand in some areas and yellow clayey sand in other areas with no archaeological features.*



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford in Kent (**Fig. 2**).

1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to Ashford Borough Council, requested that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken to satisfy the recommended condition (6) of the planning permission 18/00938/AS.

1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology (08/07/2019), prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer at KCCHC.

#### **1.1 4 Site Description and Topography**

The application site is situated in the urban area of Ashford on Mabledon Avenue, a residential street of C20th housing development, including two storey housing and bungalows. The adjoining properties to either side of East Stour Court are semi-detached bungalows. Properties to the rear are mostly two storey with rear gardens that back onto the application site.

The NGR reference point is NGR 601800 142400.

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA is set on Bedrock Geology of Hythe Formation- Sandstone. The PDA is set at an average height of 38m-40.00m AOD.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by SWAT Archaeology (July 2019).

#### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.2 Specific Aims (SWAT 2019)**

2.2.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (SWAT 2018) were to:

2.2.2 *6.1 The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation is to establish or otherwise the presence of any potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development. The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for archaeological activity and in particular the earlier history of the PDA and also any other Prehistoric, Roman and later archaeological activity which is as yet unknown.*

### **2.3 General Aims**

2.3.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
- 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;
- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2019 and KCC Manual of Specifications 'B') and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CifA 2017).

### **3.2 Fieldwork**

3.2.1 A total of six evaluation trenches were excavated across the Site (Figures 2).

3.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable natural or archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

3.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were 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. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CifA standards and

guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

### **3.3 Recording**

3.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights. These are retained in the site project archive.

3.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the site project archive.

3.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 A total of six evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

### **4.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence**

4.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising very little topsoil sealing a mix of earth and hardcore overlaying the natural geology of pale grey clayey sand (Plates 1-7).

4.2.2 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figures 1-2 provide a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-7 include selected site photographs.

### **4.3 Overview**

4.3.1 The six trenches were located across the site to ensure full coverage of potential archaeological remains.

## **5 FINDS**

6.1 No finds of any archaeological merit were recovered from the archaeological evaluation.

## **6 Discussion**

### **6.1 Archaeological Narrative**

6.1.1 No archaeological features were exposed in any of the six trenches.

### **6.2 Conclusions**

6.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Development proposals are not likely to impact on archaeological remains.

6.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work show that the proposed development is not likely to impact on any archaeological remains.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

### **7.1 General**

7.1.1 The site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics and will be retained by SWAT Archaeology until a Kent museum archive procedure is in place.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

8.1.1 SWAT would like to thank the developer for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendt Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

8.1.2 Bartek Cichy supervised the archaeological evaluation and survey and illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA produced the report.

## **9 REFERENCES**

ADS 2013. Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and guidance: for field evaluation*.

SMA 1993. Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections, Society of Museum Archaeologists

SMA 1995. Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive, Society of Museum Archaeologists

SWAT Archaeology, 2019. Site Specific Requirements: Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford, Kent

## Appendix 1. Trench Table

<b>Trench 1</b>	Dimensions: 24.3m x 1.8m Depth: 0.5m Trench alignment: NW-SE Ground level at NW end: 39.95m OD Ground level at SE end: 40.2m OD 2 test pits excavated: Depth of SE test pit: 1.5m Depth of NW test pit: 0.9m		
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
101	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
102	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, mottled brown clay, sand and silt including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural. Context is an infill of deep cut or multiple intersecting cuts overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-1.5+
103	natural	Yellow sand	1+

<b>Trench 2</b>	Dimensions: 26m x 1.8m Depth: 0.5m Trench alignment: NE-SW Ground level at NE end: 40.6m OD Ground level at SE end: 39.82m OD 2 test pits excavated: Depth of SW test pit: 0.7m Depth of NE test pit: 1.2m		
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
201	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over and new top soil is forming. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
202	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, mottled brown clay, sand and silt including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural. Context is an infill of deep cut overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-1.2
203	natural	Yellow clayey sand with blotches of grey clay and reddish sand	0.2+

<b>Trench 3</b>	Dimensions: 21.3m x 1.8m Depth: 0.5m Trench alignment: NNW-SSE Ground level at NNW end: 39.76m OD Ground level at SSE end: 39.65m OD 1 test pit excavated: Depth of test pit: 1.55m		
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)

301	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over and new top soil is forming. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
302	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, mottled brown and grey clay, sand and silt including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural. Context is an infill of deep cut overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-1.5+

<b>Trench 4</b> Dimensions: 25.3m x 1.8m Depth: 0.5m-0.9m Trench alignment: NE-SW Ground level at NE end: 39.84m OD Ground level at SW end: 39.02m OD			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
401	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over and new top soil is forming. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
402	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, mottled brown clay, sand and silt including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural. Context is an infill of deep cut overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-0.9+
403	natural	Mid orangish brown clayey silt. Context was severely disturbed by modern irregular cuts.	0.5+

<b>Trench 5</b> Dimensions: 13m x 1.8m Depth: 0.4m Trench alignment: NW-SE Ground level at NW end: 38.67m OD Ground level at SE end: 38.85m OD 1 test pit excavated: Depth of test pit: 1.3m			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
501	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over and new top soil is forming. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
502	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, black silty clay, including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural. Context is an infill of deep cut overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-0.9
503	natural	Pale bluish gray with yellow spots, clayey sand	0.1+
504	Electric cable	Big electric cable, probably dead.	0.4

<b>Trench 6</b> Dimensions: 24.1m x 1.8m Depth: 0.35m Trench alignment: N-S Ground level at N end: 39.1m OD Ground level at S end: 38.94m OD 1 test pit excavated: Depth of test pit: 0.75m			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
601	Top soil	Site was stripped of topsoil prior trenching although some patches were left over and new top soil is forming. Mid compaction, dark brown loam.	0-0.1
602	Modern demolition deposits	Mix of earth deposits and hardcore. Firm compaction, dark brown silty clay, including freq. brick fragments, concrete, plastic, metal etc. and lenses of re deposited natural and other earth. Context is an infill of deep cut overlaying the whole site at different depths. Context was formed as a result of building demolition including foundations and underground services. No structural remains survived.	0-0.75+

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

**Site Name:** Land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** MAB/EV/19

**Site Address:** As above

### **Summary:**

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has a planning application for the demolition of existing sheltered housing scheme and replacement with over 50s sheltered housing whereby Ashford Borough Council requested that archaeological works be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed no meaningful archaeology.

**District/Unitary:** Ashford Borough Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 601800 142400

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** October 2019

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

**Geology:** Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Hythe Formation- Sandstone

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2019) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue, Ashford, Kent

### **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



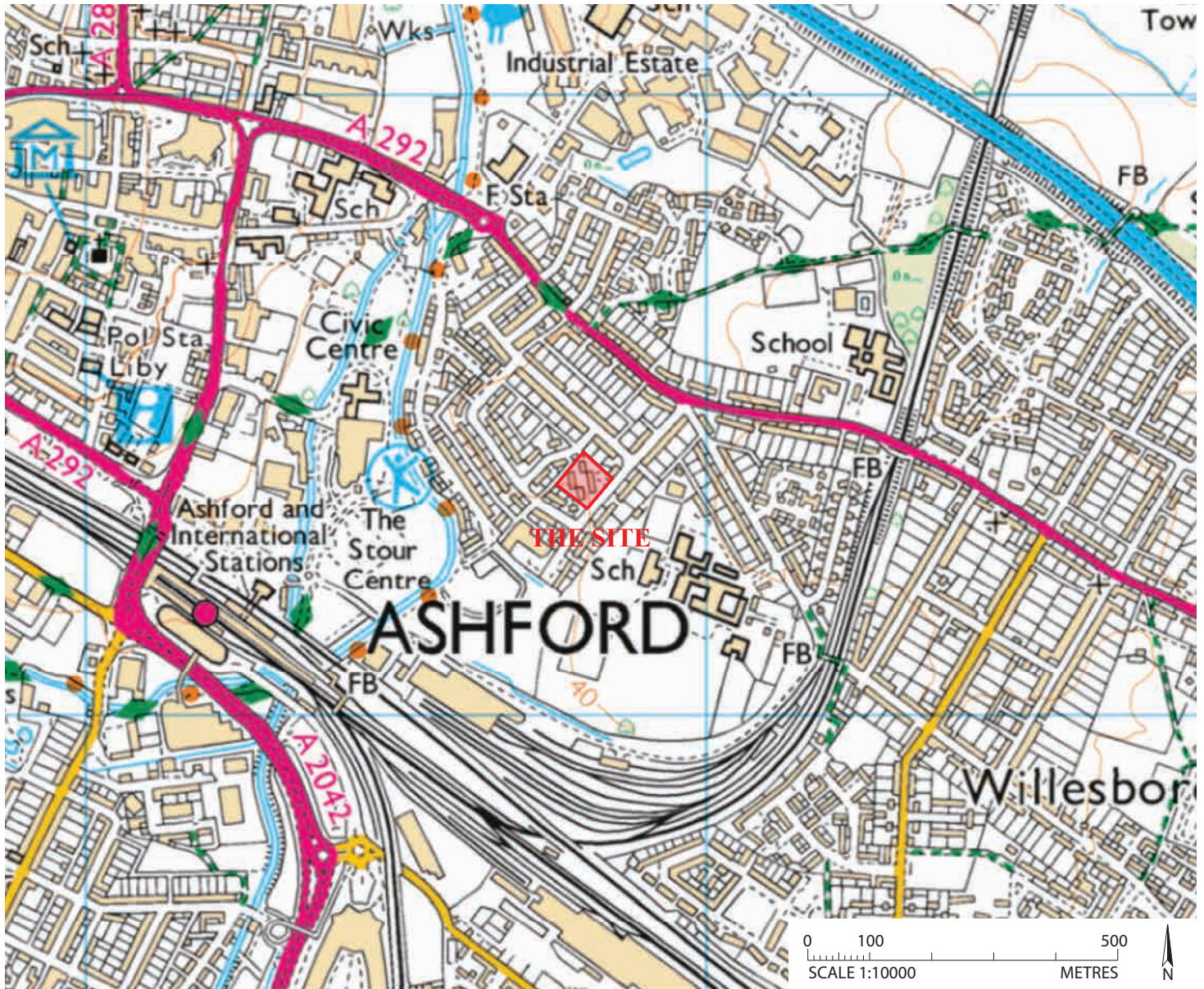
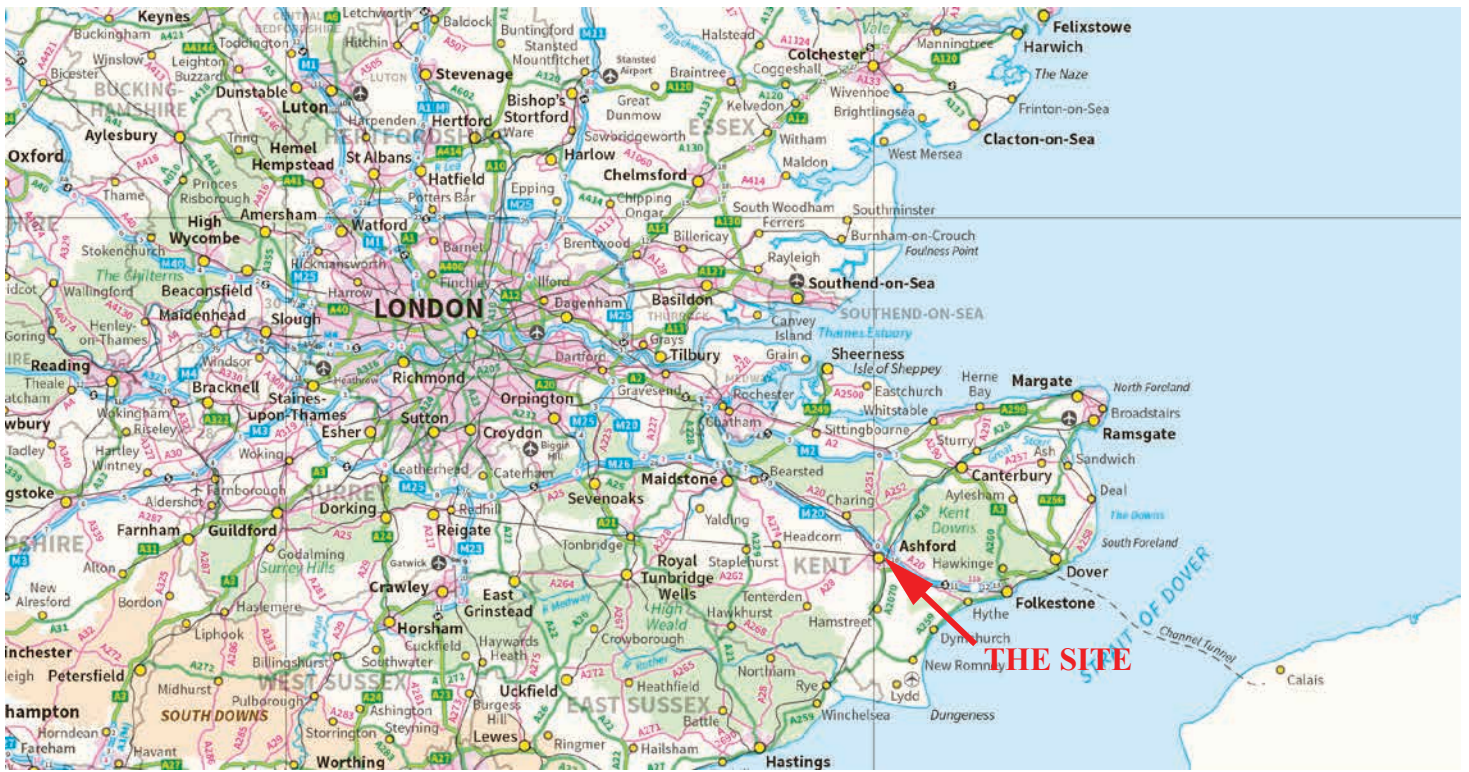


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.





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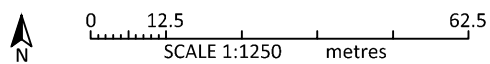


Figure 2: Trench location in relation to OS map



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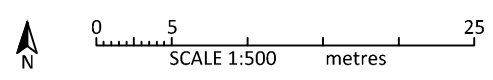
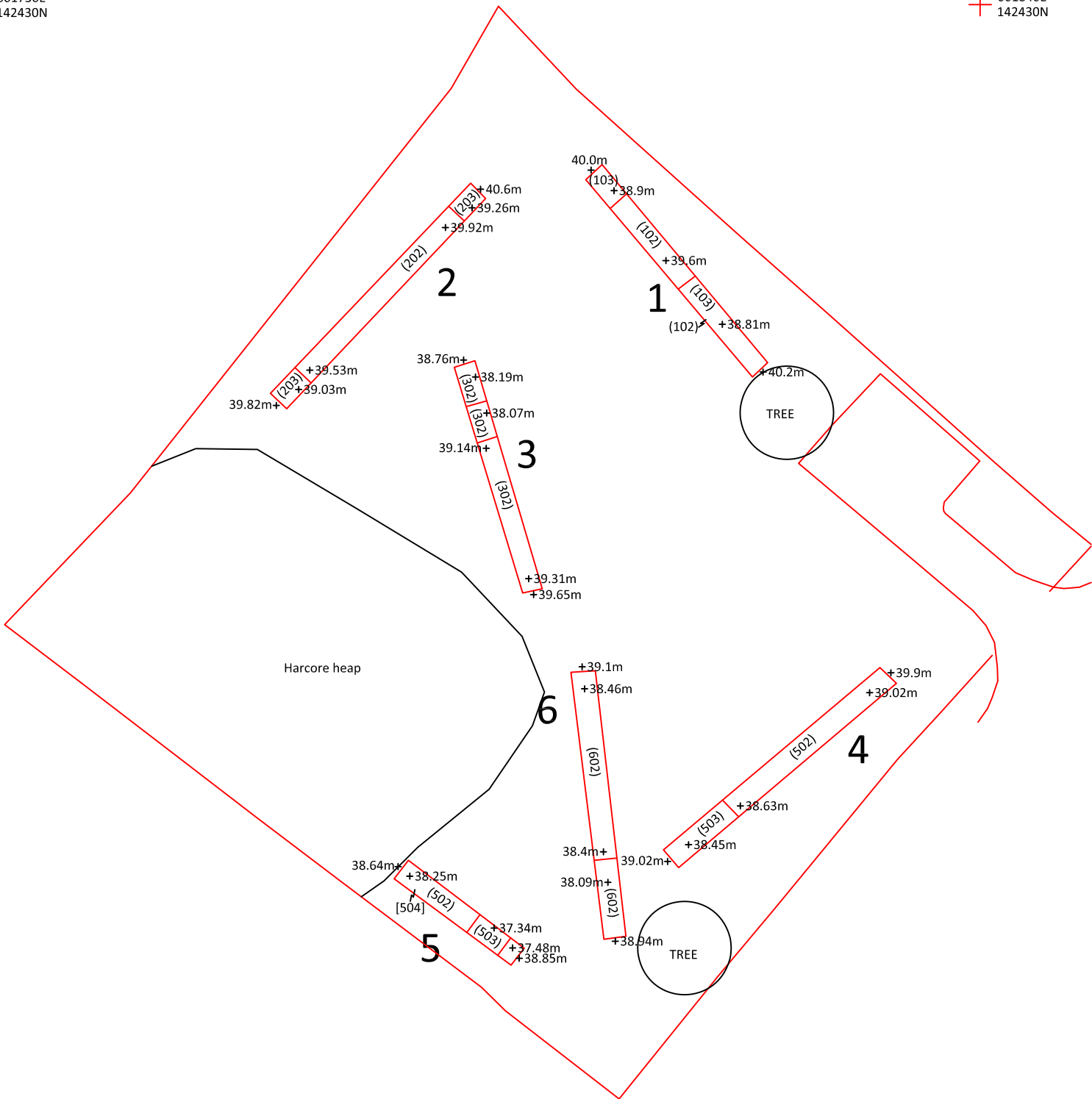


Figure 3: Trench plan in relation to OS map

601750E  
142430N

601840E  
142430N



601750E  
142330N

601840E  
142430N

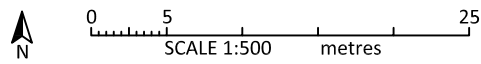


Figure 4: Trench plan



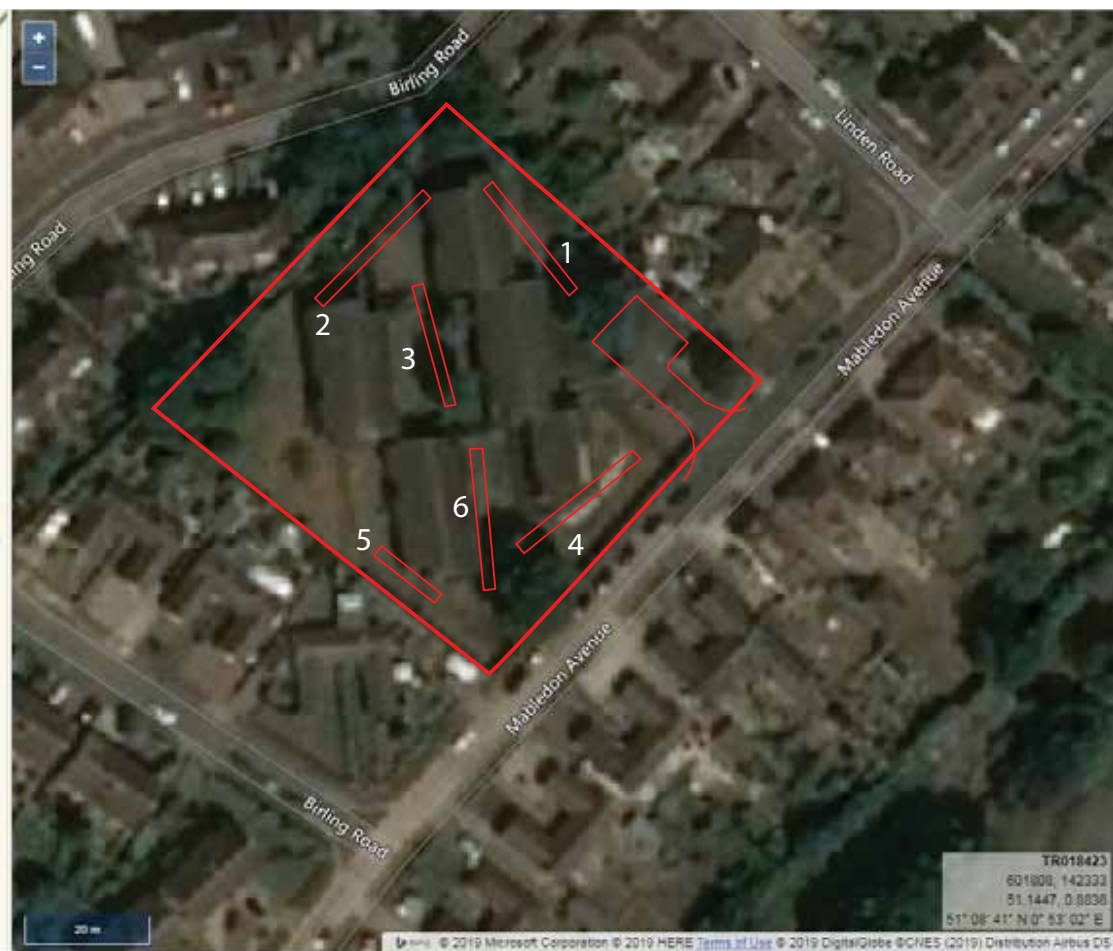
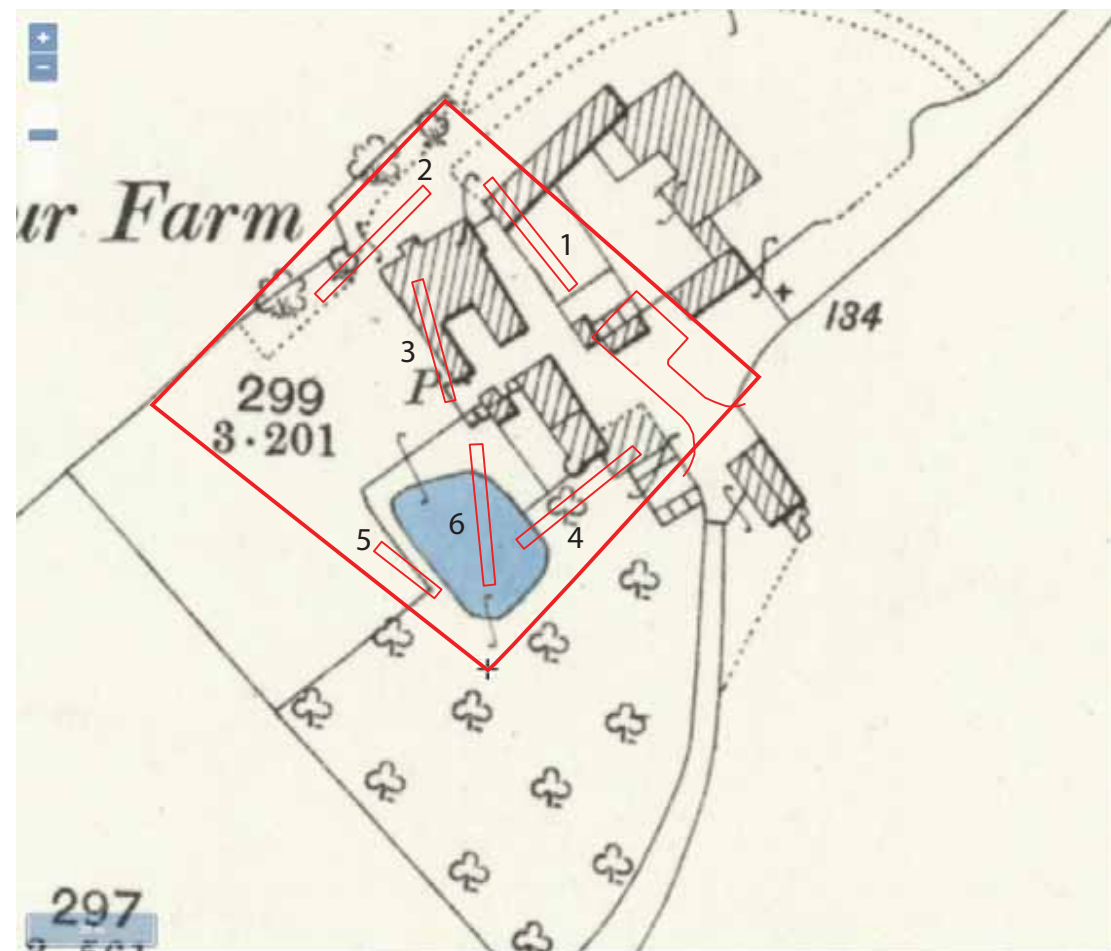


Figure 5: Trench location in relation to OS map - first edition and aerial photograph of recently demolished buildings





Figure 6: The site during evaluation phase (7/10/2019)





**Plate 1: Looking W at the site from E corner**



**Plate 2: Looking E at trench 1. Exposed 1.5m of modern deposit of hardcore/earth mix still not bottomed. The scale is placed on the small patch of natural. At the end of the trench natural was exposed at depth of 0.8m**





**Plate 3: Looking SSE at the site from N corner**



**Plate 4: Looking E at trench 2 (E end). Natural exposed at 1.2m, here visible patch on the right side and the bottom of the scale**





Plate 5: Looking NW at W end of trench 2. Natural exposed at depth 0.2m rising to 0.4m on opposite section face



Plate 6: Looking west at 1.5m deep test pit in trench 3 through modern hardcore/clay deposit. No natural exposed within the trench





**Plate 7: Some natural exposed at SW end of Trench 4 visible here in the foreground. Natural is surrounded by modern earthy deposits. Above the scale hardcore was exposed and excavated to depth of 0.8m although not bottomed**



**Plate 8: Looking NW at trench 5 with natural bluish sand truncated by modern cut.**





**Plate 9: Looking north at trench 6 excavated to depth of 0.7m revealing the same modern deposits that were exposed in trench 3.**