

Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal, Kent

Site Code: RING -EV-19

NGR Site Centre 571593 165878

Planning Application Number: MC/19/0461



SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in August 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 three trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology 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 Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal in Kent (**Figure 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 Medway Council, requested that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken to satisfy the recommended condition (6) of the planning permission MC/19/0461.

1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in August 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology (01/07/2019), prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Ben Found Senior Archaeological Officer at KCCHC.

1.1 4 Site Description and Topography

The application site is located just south of the River Medway and to the north of Wouldham Road. The M2 motorway is to the east and Wouldham village to the south. The proposed development is for a new build hay barn and internal access road and located south of the existing farm buildings. The NGR reference point is NGR 571593 165878.

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA is set on Bedrock Geology of New Pit Chalk Formation- Chalk. Superficial deposits are of Head- Clay and Slit. The PDA is set at an average height of 6.00m 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 (January 2019) The potential of this area has been assessed in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains and there has been identified

the cropmark of a possible ring ditch adjacent on the south to the proposed development (TQ 76 NW 844) and c.600m to the south west another ring ditch (TQ 76 NW 842).

In addition Ben Found Senior Archaeological Officer KCC has noted in his response to Medway Council that:

As you note the site does not currently fall within an archaeological notification area, but these are now somewhat outdated and we are currently going through a countywide programme to update these.

Your conservation officer is right to highlight the archaeological potential of the site. The farm itself, whilst modernised and extended, is historic and includes a GII listed eighteenth century farmhouse and associated aisled barn (also listed GII). Other farm buildings appear on the Rochester Tithe Map, some of which appear to survive at the site.

There are also several sites of archaeological interest recorded in the immediate vicinity. These include the crop-mark of a ring-ditch, probably representing the plough-flattened remains of a Prehistoric burial mound immediately south of the proposed barn. We became aware of this monument following examination of recent satellite imagery and it was not known at the time that our notification areas were last revised. Other features in the area include crop-marks of enclosures and other features to the south-east, whilst a coin of Iron Age date has been found to the north-east. Finally, I note that the brickearth and head deposits above the east bank of the Medway have been identified as having the potential to contain Palaeolithic artefacts and/or faunal (or other) paleo-environmental remains.

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 and Roman activity.*

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 three evaluation trenches were excavated across the Site (Figures 1, 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 three 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 topsoil sealing an intact subsoil of orange sandy clayey (Plates 1-4).

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 1-4 include selected site photographs.

4.3 Overview

4.3.1 The three 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 three 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 Ben Found Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for his advice and assistance.
- 8.1.2 Bartek Cichy supervised the archaeological evaluation and survey and illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. Paul Wilkinson MCIfA produced the text for this 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)

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SWAT Archaeology, 2019. Site Specific Requirements: Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal, Kent

Compiled by: SWAT Archaeology (PW) and dated 29th August 2019

Appendix 1. Trench Table

Trench 1 Dimensions: 25m x 1.8m Depth: 0.4m Trench alignment: NW-SE Ground level at SE end: 7.29m OD Ground level at NW end: 6.92m OD			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil	Mid compaction, black, clayey loam with moderate sub angular flint(<50mm), brick fragments, frequent roots	0.00-0.12
102	Topsoil	Firm compaction, dark brown, clayey loam with occ. sub angular flint(<50mm)	0.12-0.29
103	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction, mid orange brown clayey loam with occ. flint (average size: 30mm)	0.29-0.59
104	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction, light orange brown clayey loam with very occ. flint (<20mm)	0.59-0.82
105	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction, mid orange brown clayey loam with very occ. flint (<10mm)	0.82-1.02
106	Subsoil Head	Compacted flint gravel, subangular flints (<50mm)	1.02-1.12
107	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction, mid orange brown sandy clay	1.12-1.2+

Trench 2 Dimensions: 25m x 1.8m Depth: 0.25m Trench alignment: NW-SE Ground level at SE end: 6.92m OD Ground level at NW end: 6.25m OD			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
201	Topsoil	Mid compaction, black, clayey loam with moderate sub angular flint(<50mm), brick fragments, frequent roots	0.00-0.1
202	Topsoil	Firm compaction, dark brown, clayey loam with occ. sub angular flint(<50mm)	0.1-0.2
203	Subsoil Head	Compacted flint gravel, mostly sub angular and occ. round flints(average size 50mm, occ. larger under 100mm) Firm compaction, mid orange brown sandy clay	0.2+

Trench 3 Dimensions: 25m x 1.8m Depth: 0.25m Trench alignment: NE-SW Ground level at NE end: 6.65m OD Ground level at SW end: 6.71m OD			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
301	Topsoil	Mid compaction, black, clayey loam with moderate sub angular flint(<50mm), brick fragments, frequent roots	0.00-0.1
302	Topsoil	Firm compaction, dark brown, clayey loam with occ. sub angular flint(<50mm)	0.1-0.26
303	Subsoil Head	Compacted flint gravel, mostly sub angular and occ. round flints(average size 50mm, occ. larger less than 100mm) Firm compaction, mid orange brown sandy clay	0.23-0.67
304	Subsoil Head	Compacted coarse gravel made of subangular and angular flints (average size 50mm, occ. larger less than 100mm), flint and chalk pebbles(10mm)	0.67-0.77
305	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction, pale yellowish brown coarse sand with freq. chalk pebble(<5mm) and moderate sub angular and angular flints(<60mm)	0.7-0.9+
306	Subsoil Head	Firm compaction mid orange brown sandy loam wit freq. flints average size 50mm, occ. larger less than 100mm). Context at the same level that 303	0.23-1.15

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal, Kent

SWAT Site Code: RING/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 construction of a new hay barn, hardstanding and internal

access road whereby Medway 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: Medway Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 571593 165878

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: 14th-15th August 2019

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Chalk Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2019) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal, 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

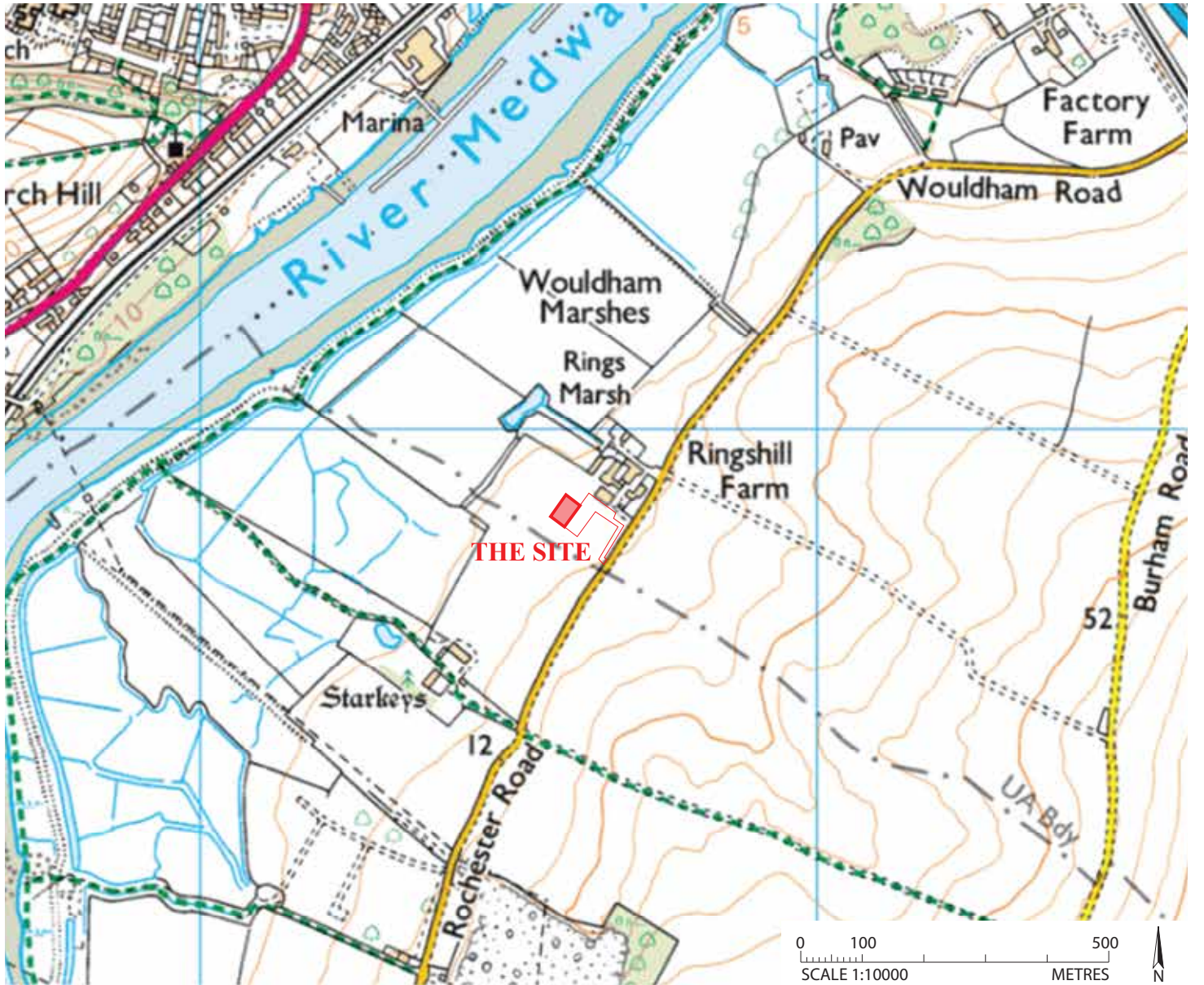
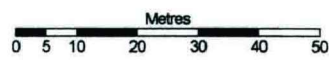
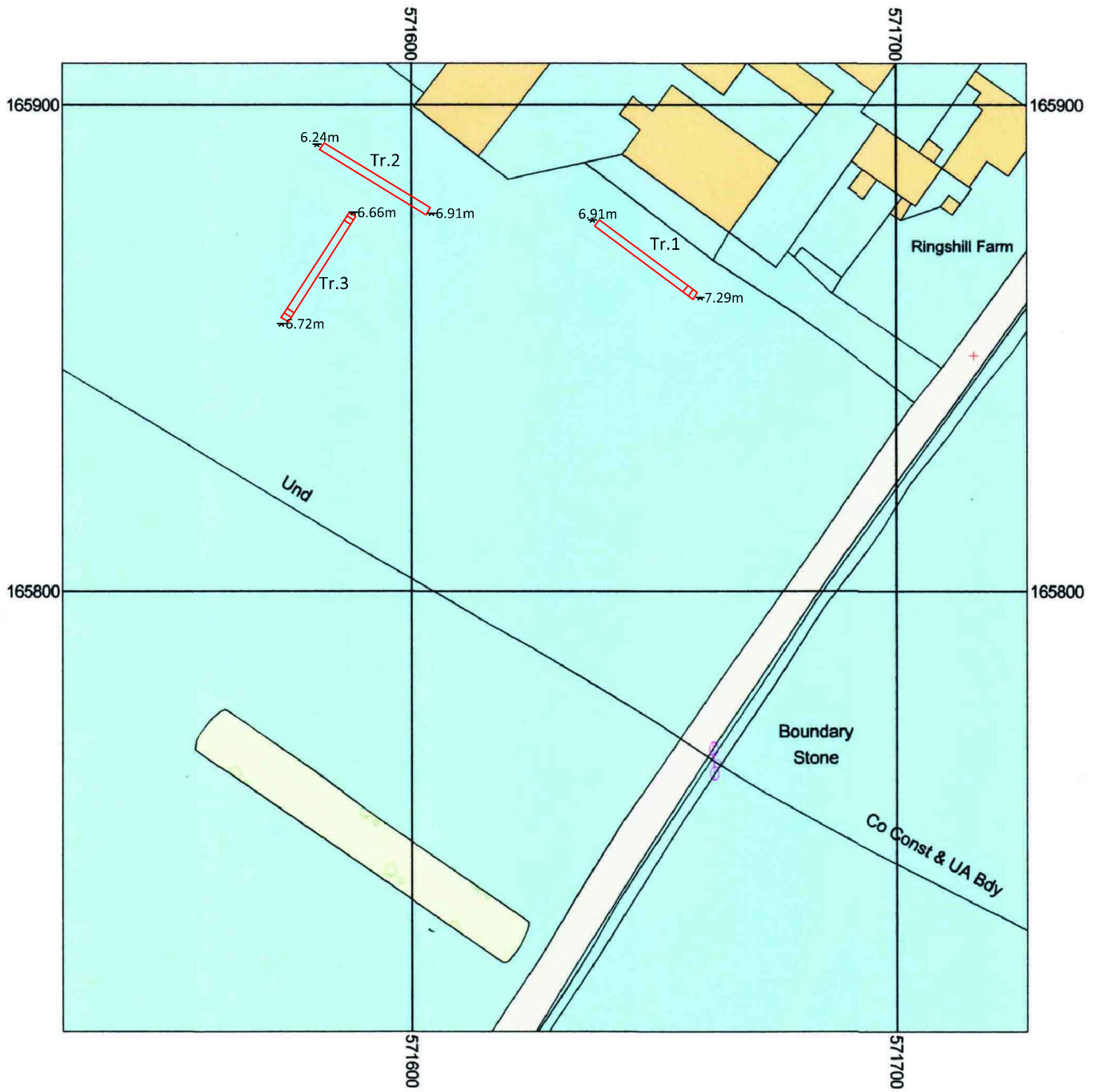


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.



Scale: 1:1250

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**Ringshill Farm
Wouldham
Rochester
ME1 3TP**

Figure 2: Trench location in relation to OS map

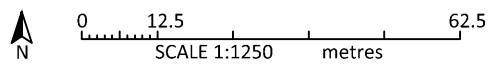
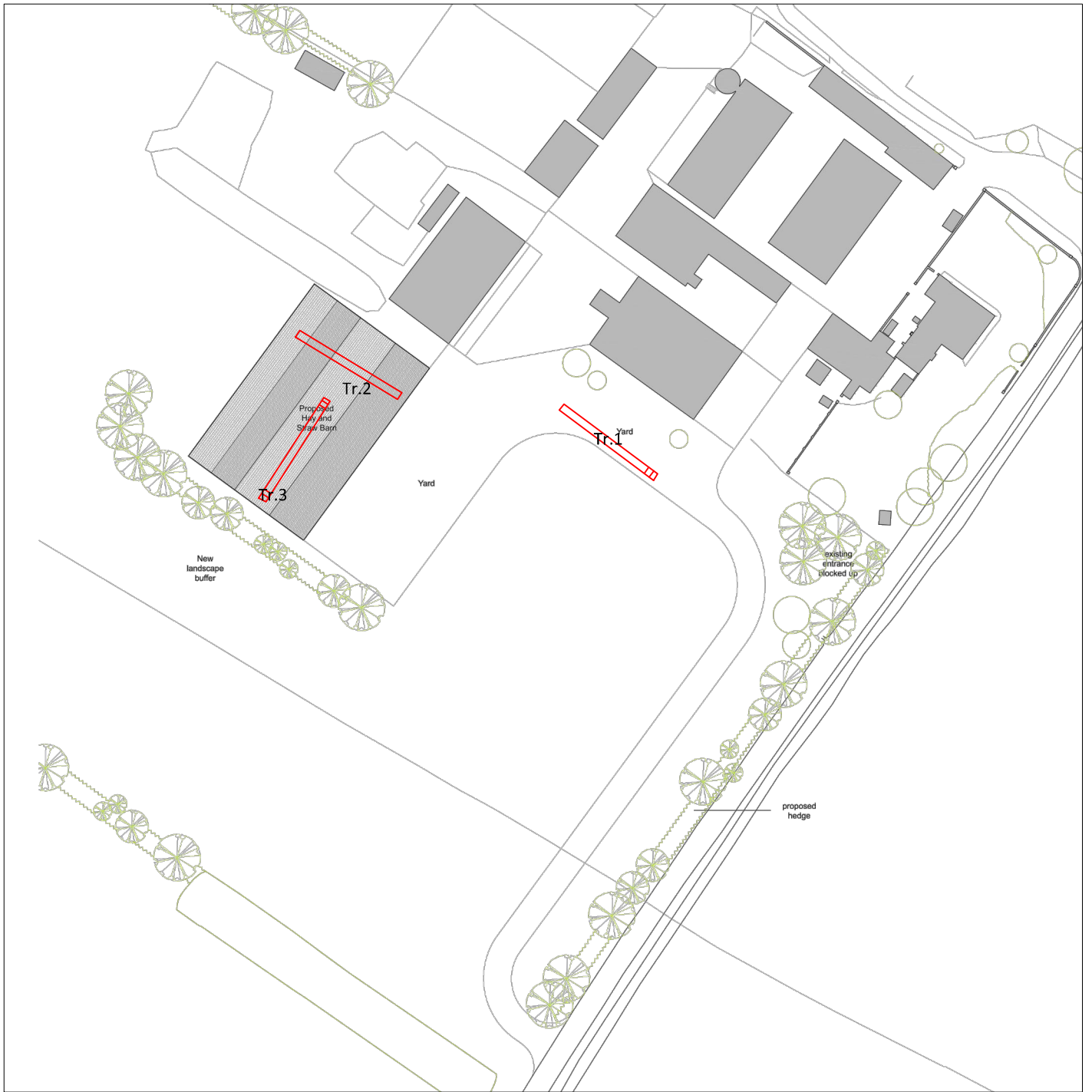


Figure 3: Trench location in relation to development

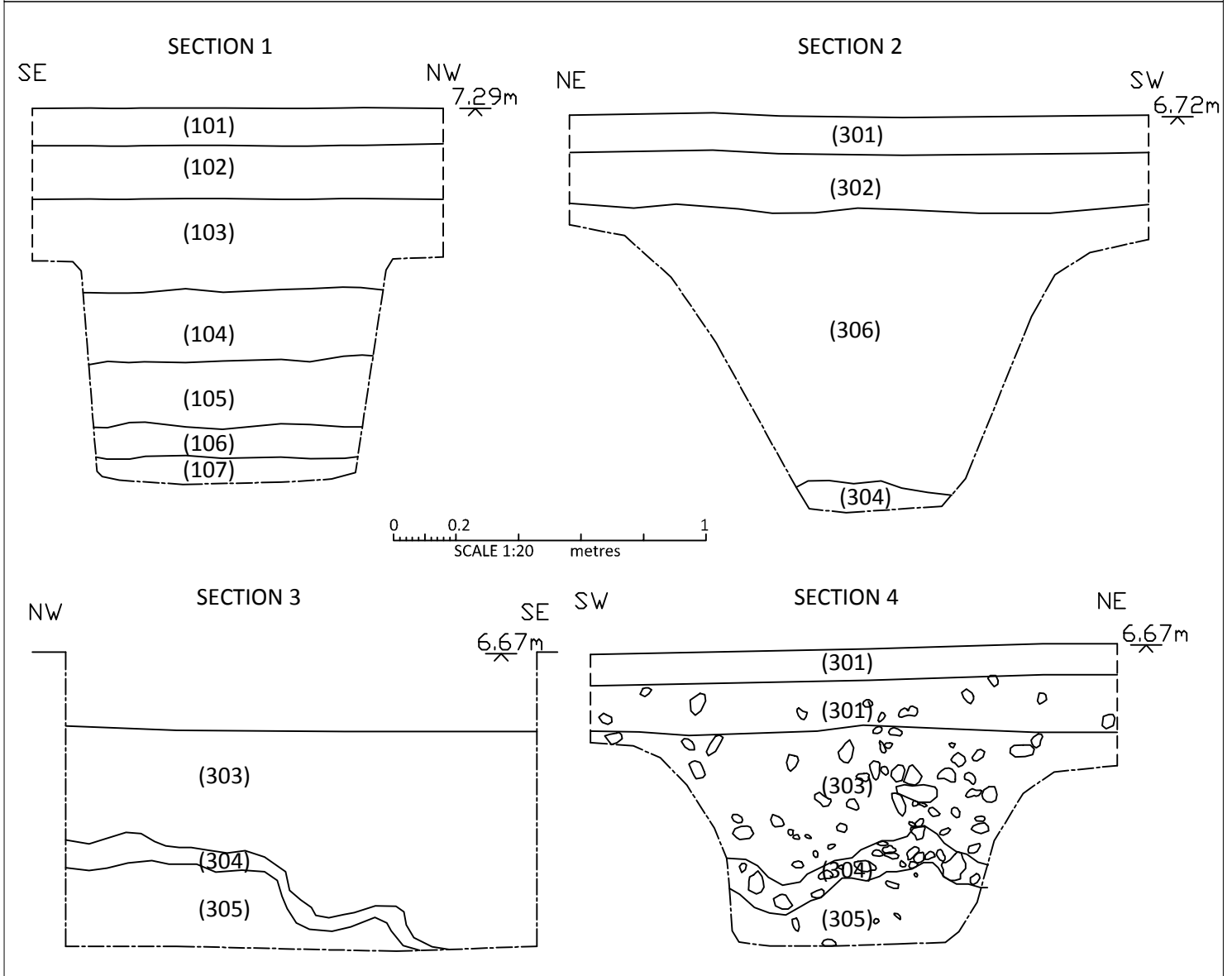
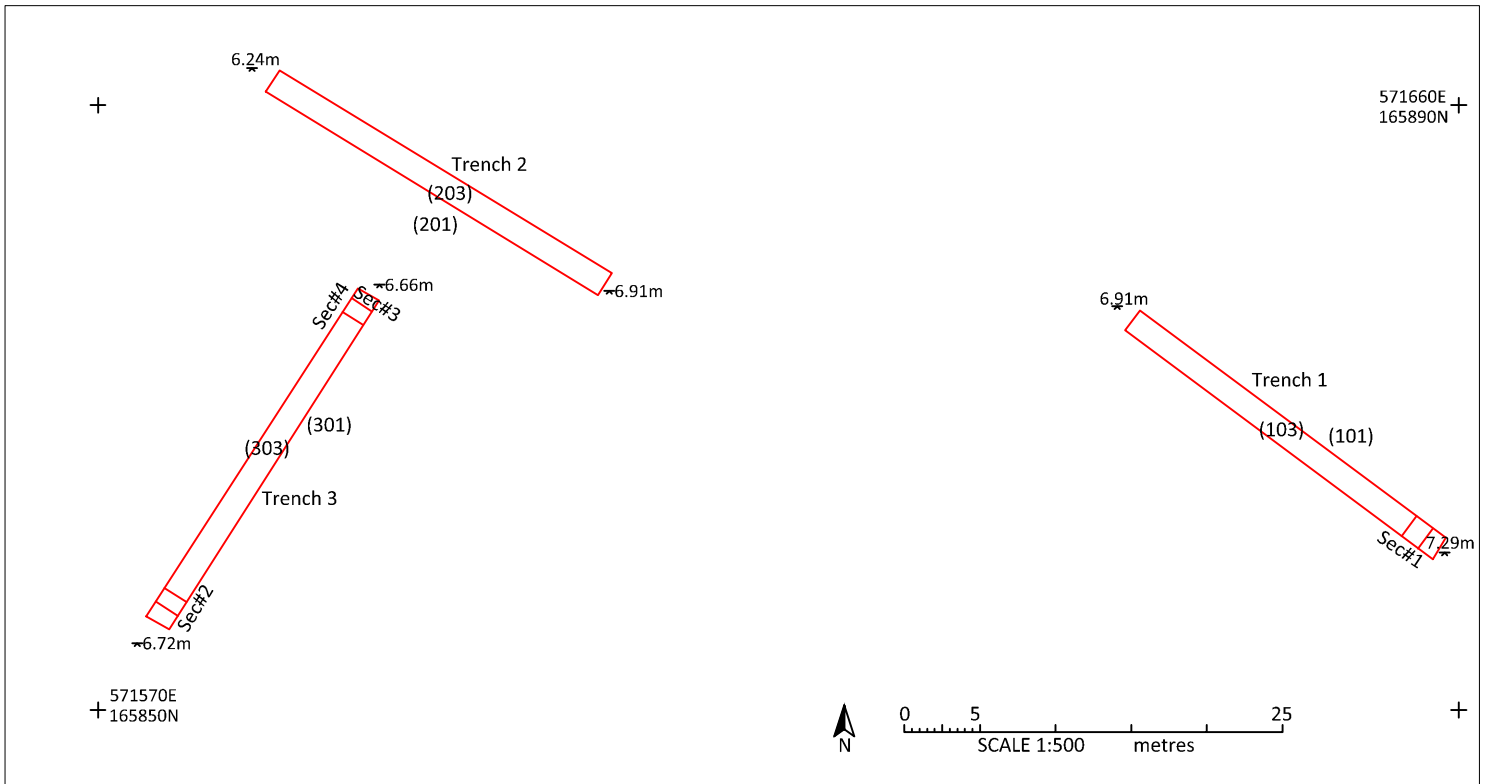


Figure 4: Trench plan and sections

Plates



Plate 1: Looking north-west at the site from SE end of Trench 1



Plate 2: Looking south-west at section of test pit located at SE end of trench 1



Plate 3: Looking north-west at Trench 2



Plate 4: Looking east at trench 3



Plate 5: Looking north-west at section of test pit located in NE end of trench 3



Plate 6: Looking north-east at section of test pit located in NE end of trench 3



Plate 7: Looking south-east at section of test pit located in SW end of trench 3