



# Archaeological Evaluation of land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by the client to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX. Works were monitored by the senior archaeological officer Wendy Rogers at Kent County Council. The monitoring was carried out remotely by means of exchange of emails and photographs. Fieldwork commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> January and was completed by 10th January 2022. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted excavation of 3 trenches, which recorded a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising made ground and subsoil overlying natural geology.

### 1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 A planning application was granted on 21st August (21/00910/FULL) for the erection of 2No. 2 bed dwellings (Use C3) on the land to the rear of public house (Sui Generis), creation of vehicular access off Rectory Lane with associated hard and soft landscaping.

1.2.2 A Condition of archaeological works was attached to Planning Decision Notice and it was: *(12) Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:*

- *i archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority; and*
- *ii further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.*

**Reason:** *To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded. These details are required prior to the commencement of the development as they form an intrinsic part of the proposal, the approval of which cannot be disaggregated from the carrying out of the rest of the development.*

1.2.3 On the basis of the present archaeological information KCCHC advising Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recommended that the proposed development should be subject to a programme of archaeological works in order to clarify the archaeological elements within the site.

1.2.4 The evaluation works were undertaken in accordance with a written specification that was agreed in advance with the KCC Evaluation Manual Part B.

### 1.3 **Site description, Geology and Topography**

1.3.1 The application site is located in the centre of Cranbrook town. The site is rectangular shape in plan and is adjacent on the south side of Rectory Lane. The site was used for a car park/yard with gravel surface and is surrounded by houses with gardens. Site area is 403sq m. The NGR to centre of site is NGR 577606 136137 and the OD height is about 74.9m aOD.

1.3.2 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the site is set on bedrock geology of Tunbridge Well Sand Formation – sandstone and siltstone interbedded. Superficial Deposits are not recorded.

## 2 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is located close to a number of archaeological sites which have been highlighted below. The research area consisted of radius buffer of 500 metres from the site and comprises Historic Environmental Records showing Listed Building dated from High Medieval with majority being of Post Medieval period.

2.2 To the east is St Dunston's Church (TQ 73 NE 140) and in the vicinity of the PDA are any number of Listed Buildings including Ann Chambers Clothes (TQ 73 NE 288), VAD Hospital Vestry Hall (TQ 73 NE 350) and to the south The George Hotel (TQ 73 NE 346).

## 3 **METHODOLOGY**

### 3.1 **Introduction**

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2021) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

### 3.2 **Fieldwork**

3.2.1 A total of 3 evaluation trenches were excavated within the extents of the site. Due to limited space available on-site southern evaluation trench was divided into two.

3.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned by metal detector 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 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.
- 3.2.4 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with LPA and ClfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included 12 working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.
- 3.2.5 On completion, the trenches were made safe and left open in order to provide the opportunity for a curatorial monitoring visit. Backfilling was carried out once all recording, survey and monitoring had been completed.
- 3.2.6 Works were monitored by senior archaeological officer at Kent County Council, Wendy Rogers. The monitoring was carried out remotely by means of exchange of emails and photographs.

### 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.
- 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 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 as [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 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 The principle objective of the archaeological evaluation is 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 To 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.
- 4.4 The opportunity will also be taken during the course of the evaluation 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. In general the work is to ensure compliance with the archaeological requirements from the Senior Archaeologist at Kent County Council that an archaeological evaluation to take place as a post-planning requirement, and to publish the results either on line, or through OASIS and/or in a local journal.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction and Summary Results**

- 5.1.1 Archaeological evaluation of land at the White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX, has exposed no archaeological features, artefacts or deposits.
- 5.1.2 The revealed made ground material was modern and was placed in order to level the site and provide hard standing for the yard area. The date of the deposits was based on recovered modern bricks. Western extent of the site was found to be significantly lower than the rest. The horizon of undelaying natural appeared from the depth of 1.8m below existing ground level and along the edge where land dropped down a modern/Victorian drain was found.

## 5.2 Trench Narratives

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3, Plates) was placed in southern part of the site in east-west alignment and measured 9 metres in length by 1.8metre in width and 1metre in depth. It exposed natural geology at its base, context (105) comprising mid yellowish brown silty clay. Excavated material was a sequence of made ground material (101, 106, 102, 103, 107 and 108). Top layer (106) was 0.1metres thick comprising of tarmac patches sealed with black gravelly loam with frequent modern building material. Context was overlying 0.43metres thick layer of grey gravel (101) with occasional brick fragment. The gravel was placed on top of geotextile membrane. Underneath the membrane 0.2metres thick layer (102) was located and was cut by modern cut filled with hardcore (104). Layer (102) was firm, black silty clay with occ. brick fragments. Underneath layer (102) there was 0.32metres thick layer (103) of grey mottled mid yellowish brown silty clay with occasional brick. The material is mainly re deposited natural. Context (102) was sealing small layer (107) located on the east side of context (104). Layer (107) was grey mottled silty clay with frequent gravel.
- 5.2.2 Trench 2 (Figure 3) was placed in south-western part of the site in north-east, south-west alignment and measured 4metre in length by 1.8metre in width and 1.9metre in depth. Trench has exposed edge of vast cut cutting natural geology context (205) comprising mid orangey brown silty clay. Excavated material was a sequence of made ground (201) fill material (202 and 203). Made ground layer was 0.31metres thick comprising of gravel and hardcore mixed with top soil. Top fill (202) was dark brown clayey silt with occ. brick fragments and lenses of crushed brick. Lower fill (203) was mid grey silty clay with occasional brick fragment. Context was getting brighter downwards. Both contexts (202 and 203) were filling cut [204] and were extending outside of the cut where they were forming horizontal layers. Cut [204] had its eastern edge exposed, steep side and base wasn't reached. It's unknown if the cut [204] was deliberate recent cut related to development or if it's an edge of older or natural feature like water stream or pond that would be connected with the moat to the north west. Anyhow the bricks recovered from trench base were modern indicating that feature was filled in second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.2.3 Trench 3 (Figure 3) was placed in northern extent of the site in east-west alignment and measured 9 metres in length by 1.8metre in width and 0.8metre in depth. It exposed natural geology at its base, context (305) comprising light yellowish brown silty clay. Excavated material was a sequence of made ground material (301, 302, 303 and 304). Top

layer (301) was 0.22metres thick comprising of tarmac patches sealed with black gravelly loam with frequent modern building material. Located underneath the latter there was 0.2metres thick layer (302) of light grey mixed gravel. Located underneath the latter there was 0.2metres thick layer (303) of black loam with occasional brick fragment. Located underneath the latter there was 0.1metres thick trample layer (304) of black mottled light yellowish brown loam with occasional brick fragment overlying natural (305). A modern/ Victorian steep-sided linear was exposed in the middle part of this trench. Feature [306] was found in NW-SE alignment fairly parallel to the site boundaries. Sample excavated section revealed uniform backfill (307) comprising mid-grey clay-silt with Victorian potsherds and modern sewage pipe fragments. Feature measured 1.1metre in width and 0.23metre in depth.

## **6 FINDS**

- 6.1 Victorian/ modern potsherds and red ceramic pipe fragments were found in Trench 3. Modern brick fragments were noted within all levelling deposits across the site. No earlier finds has been recovered during the course of evaluation.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIAL**

- 7.1 No samples had been taken during the course of evaluation.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and exposed common stratigraphic sequence comprising made ground concealing natural geology.
- 8.2 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts have been exposed.
- 8.3 Evaluation has exposed buried edge/slope in roughly NW-SE alignment where the total measured difference in elevation to natural horizon was 1.1metre. Adjacently in the same alignment a modern/ Victorian linear was exposed. Plausibly feature acted as a drain or boundary separating descending slope to the south-west.
- 8.4 Subsequently carried out historic map regression was inconclusive in terms of establishing any significant historic boundary and feature appears to be a part of two-staged levelling



that was carried out during 20th century and was associated with partial demolition and or conversion of adjacent buildings.

- 8.5 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results of this work show that the proposed development won't be having any impact on buried archaeological resource.

## **9 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL AND SIGNIFICANCE**

- 9.1 Based on results of archaeological evaluation further archaeological potential is considered to be very low and no further work is proposed to take place on this site.

## **10 IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

- 10.1 Due to lack of archaeological remains the proposed development won't have any impact.

## **11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

11.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank to the client for commissioning the project and thanks are extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council for her support and assistance during the fieldwork.

11.2 On behalf of the client project was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson, MCIFA and fieldwork was carried out by Peter Cichy. The report and illustrations were prepared by Bartosz Cichy.

## **12 ARCHIVE**

12.1 General

12.2 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CifA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

12.3 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. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a Kent Museum.

## **APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM**

**Site Name:** Land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX.

**SWAT Site Code:** WHC-EV-22

**Site Address:** As above

**Summary:** *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by The Client to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted excavation of 3 trenches, which recorded a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising modern made ground overlying natural geology.*

*No archaeological cuts or deposits were revealed. A modern linear in NW-SE alignment was exposed.*

***Further mitigation is not required***

**District/Unitary:** Tunbridge Wells Borough Council & Kent County Council

**Period(s):** modern/ Victorian

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 626733 156696

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** January 2022

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

**Geology:** Head Deposit

**Title and author of accompanying report:** SWAT Archaeology (B. Cichy 2022) Archaeological Evaluation of land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX.

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

**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

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

*SWAT Archaeology, 2021, Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation of land at White Horse Inn, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EX.*

## Figures

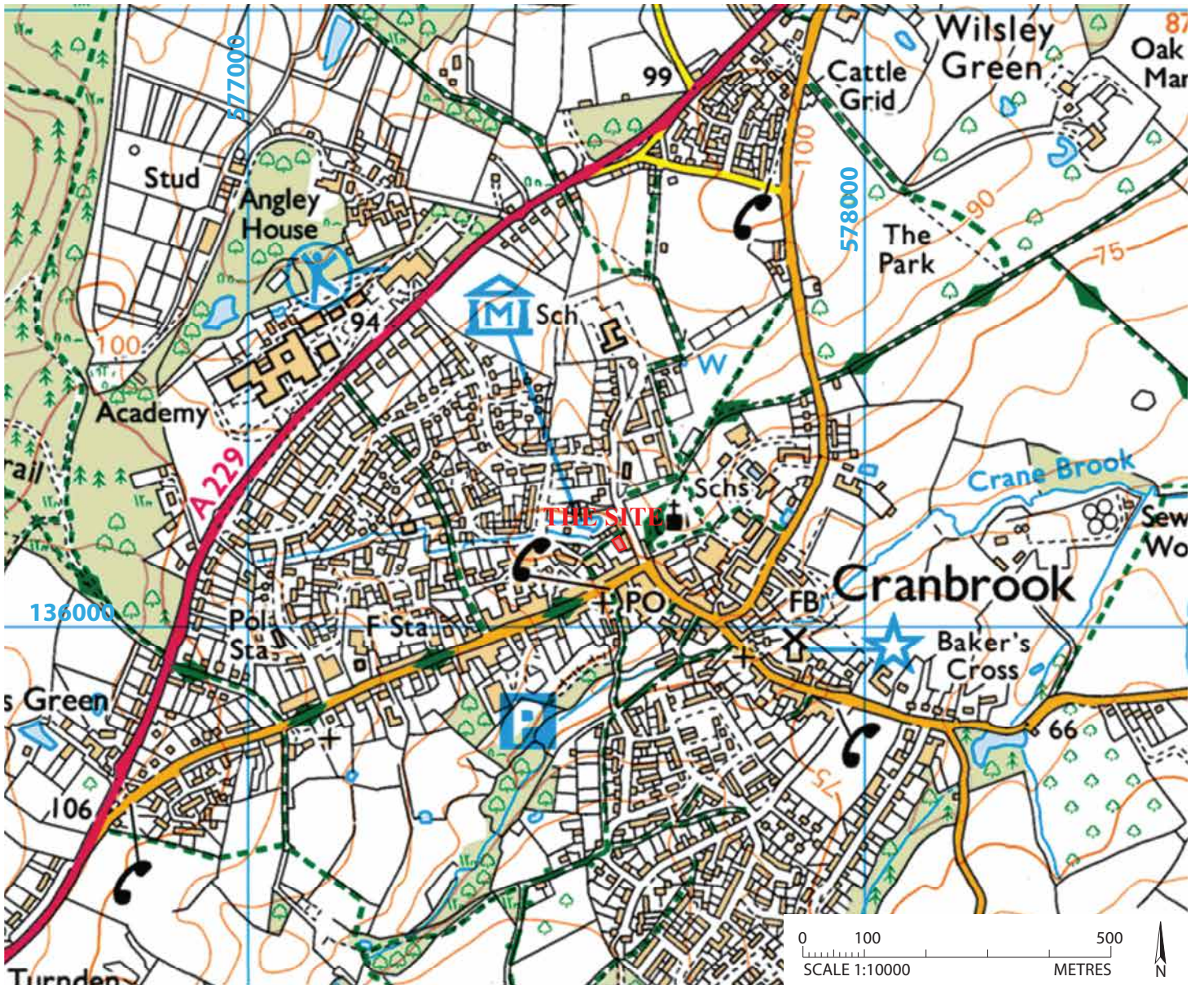
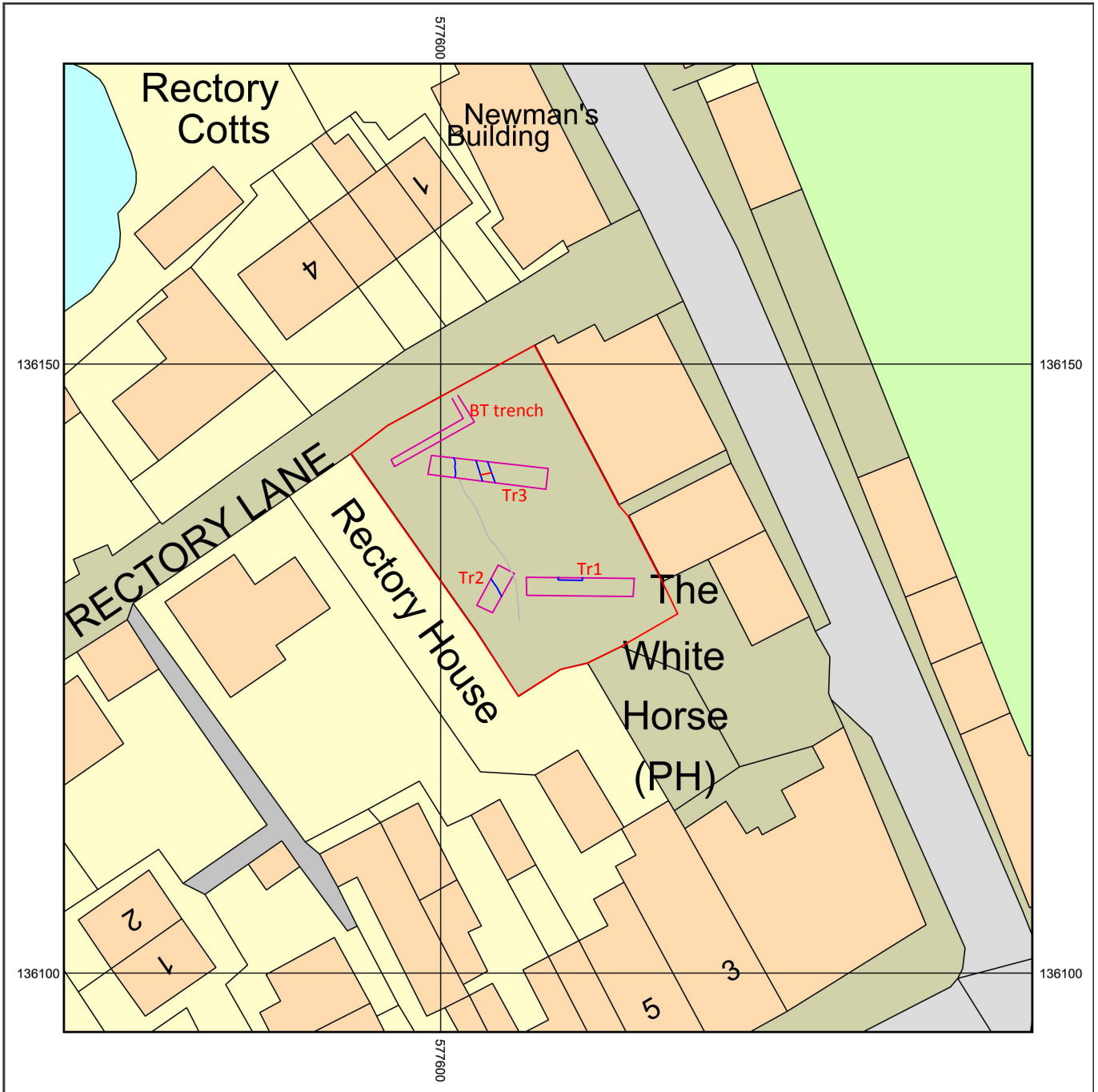


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.



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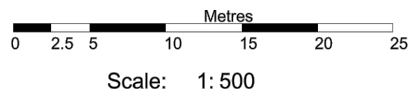


Figure 2: Trench location

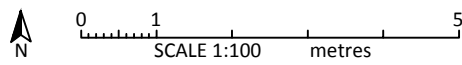
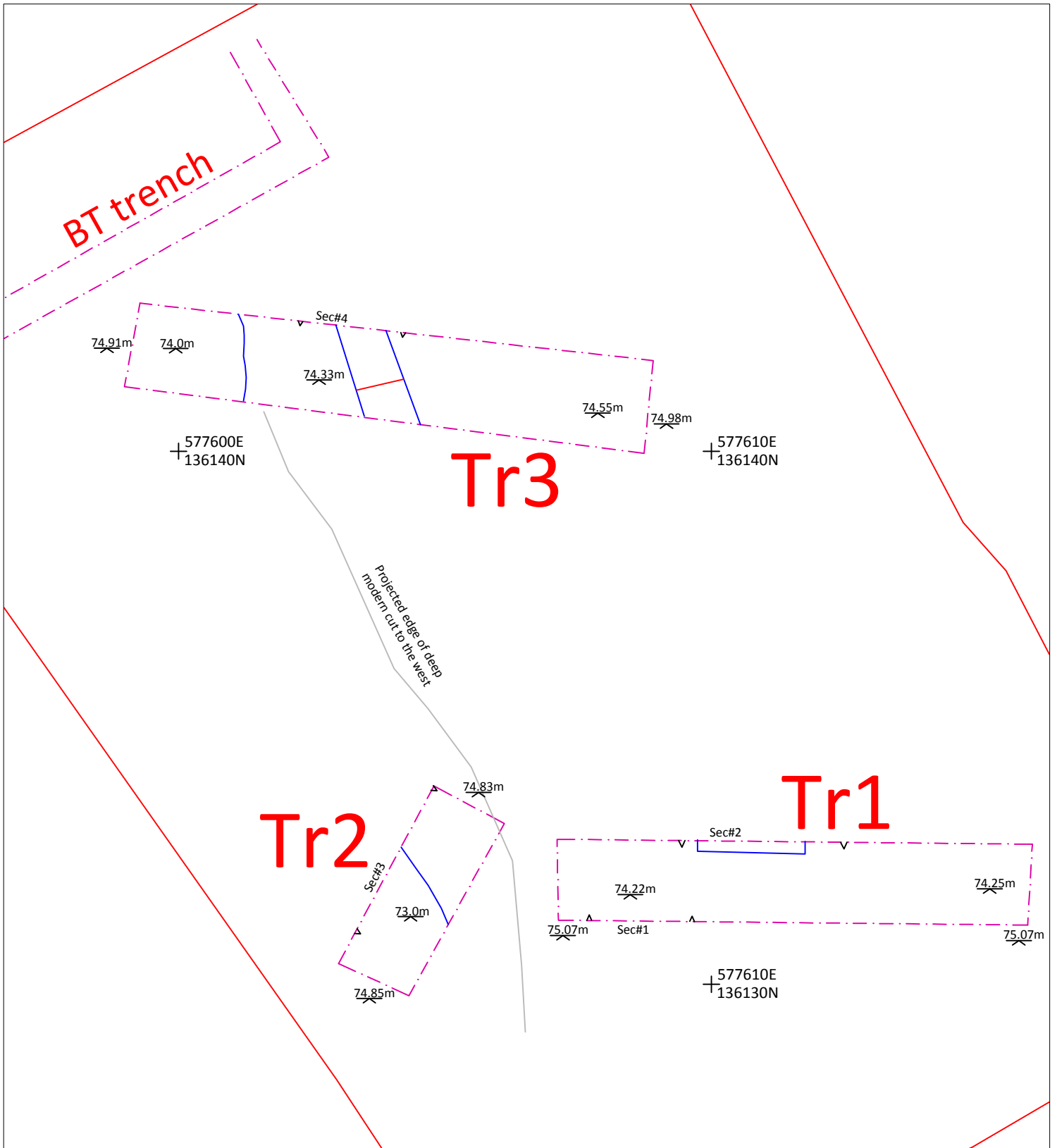


Figure 3: Trench plan



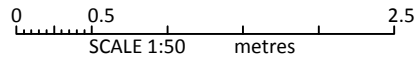
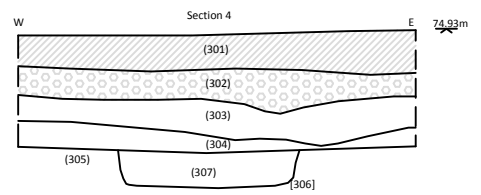
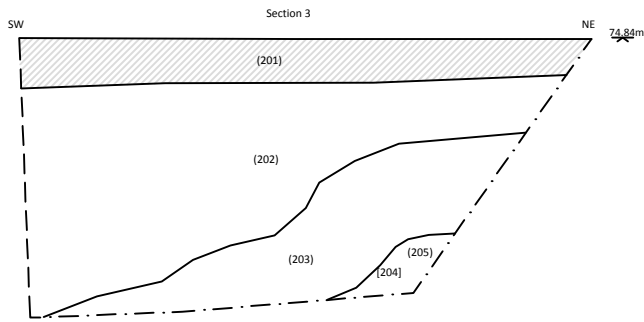
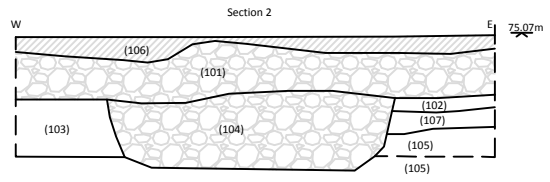
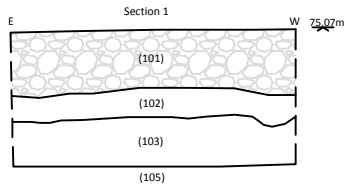


Figure 4: Sections



Figure 5: Extract from 1870 OS map (Kent Sheet LXX; Surveyed: 1870, Published: 1874). Showing garden within PDA.

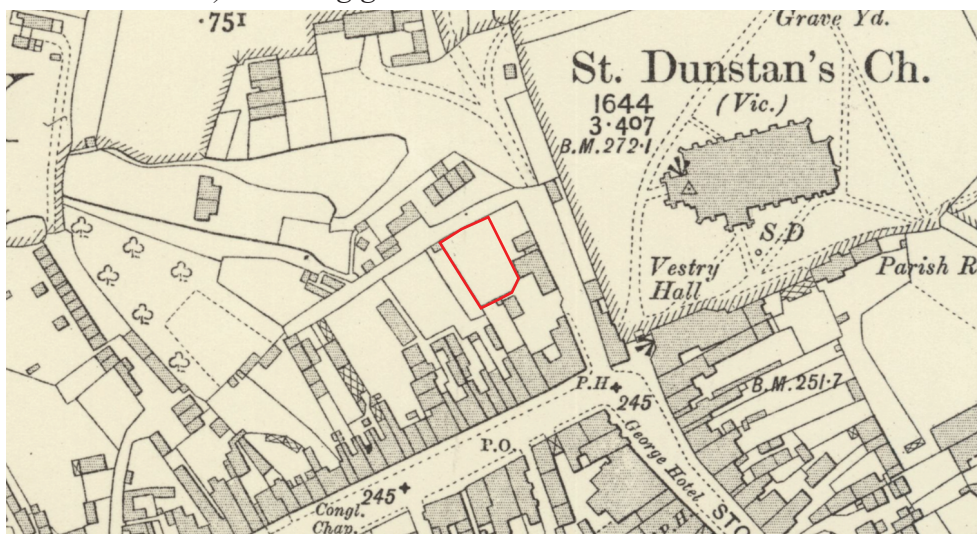


Figure 6: Extract from 1907 OS map (Kent LXX.7, Series: Ordnance Survey, 25 inch to the mile, Revised: 1907, Published: 1908).

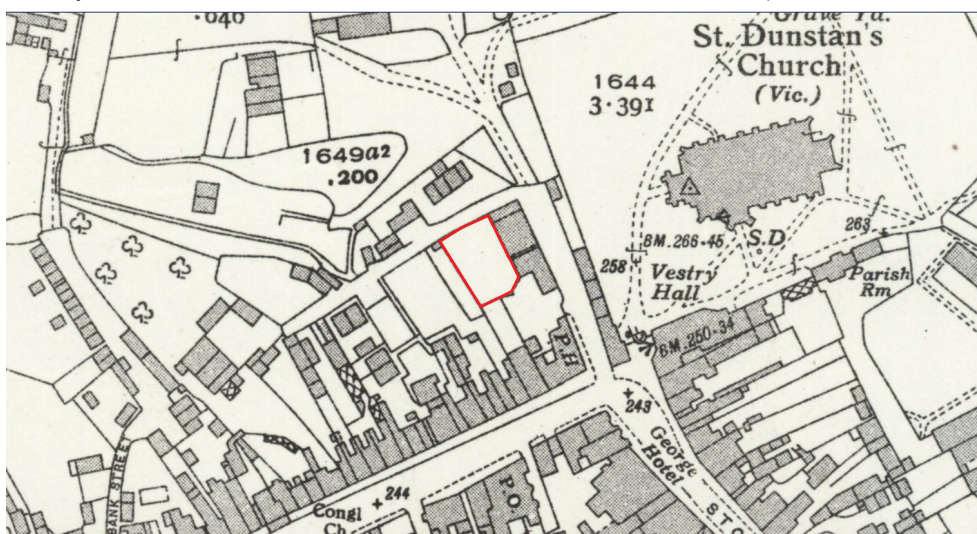


Figure 7: Extract from 1907 OS map (Kent LXX.7, Series: Ordnance Survey, 25 inch to the mile, Revised: 1936 to 1937, Published: 1938). Showing new building on neighbouring site to the east replacing smaller building.



*Figure 8: Aerial map 2020. The building next door to the east has been rebuilt between 1960 and 1990. Previous building had almost the same footprint but the roof was gabled that can be seen on 1940 and 1960 aerial photographs.*

**Plates**



*Plate 1: Looking north-west at the site*



*Plate 2: Looking south-east at trench 1; 2metre scale rod at the base of the trench.*



*Plate 3: Looking south west at trench 2; 2metres scale rod*



*Plate 4: Looking north east at trench 3; 2metres scale rod at the base of the trench*



*Plate 5: Showing evaluated modern linear revealed in Trench 3. Looking south with one and two metre scales.*