Archaeological Evaluation of Land at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HX

Site Code: LBGC-EV-23

NGR Site Centre: 588227 135773

Planning Application Number: 19/01201/AS

Report for;

The Merit Group

13/08/2023

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SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by The Merit Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent. The works have been carried out as part of a planning condition which required an archaeological evaluation in order to further characterise the potential archaeological impact from any proposed development.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in evaluating the proposed development site for the possibility of archaeological remains. Despite the archaeological potential of the surrounding area no archaeological finds or defined archaeological features were present within any of the three trenches excavated. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by The Merit Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden in Kent (Figure 1).

1.1.2 A planning application (PAN: 19/01201/AS) for the erection of three detached houses was submitted to Ashford Borough Council (ABC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of KCC, requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

1.1.3 The following conditions were attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of;

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 following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording 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, and that due regard is given (Ed.) to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains.*

(19/01201/AS, Condition 13, 3rd April 2020)

1.1.4 The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches measuring approximately 20m in length and up to 2m in width. Site obstructions meant that some trenches required relocation to avoid extant ponds and a high-pressure gas main. The location and length of each trench is described below in Section 5.3.

1.1.5 The archaeological works were carried out over the course of two days in August 2023 (see Table 1 below). The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2023), prior to commencement of works.

1.2 Timetable

1.2.1 A timetable for the archaeological programme of works, to date, is provided below:

Task	***Dates***	***Personnel/Company***
Submission of the Written Scheme of Investigation	29th June 2023	**SWAT Archaeology**
Archaeological Evaluation – Fieldwork	7th – 8th August 2023	**SWAT Archaeology** David Britchfield BA MCIfA
Archaeological Evaluation Report	This document	**SWAT Archaeology** David Britchfield BA MCIfA

Table 1 Timetable for the archaeological programme of works

1.3 Site Description and Topography

1.3.1 The site is centred on NGR 588227 135773 within the London Beach Golf Club grounds and measured approximately 12,320sq.m in area (Figure 1); formerly the pitch and putt course. The golf club is located north of the town of Tenterden and south of the village called London Beach and west of the hamlet of St Michaels in the County of Kent (Figure 1).

1.3.2 At the time of the evaluation the site was enclosed by temporary fencing being formally a public car park. A high-pressure gas main cable is located within the site, orientated NE-SW diagonally through the centre (Figure 2).

1.3.3 Ground levels ranged between a height of approximately 51.5m and 54.6m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the site is located on Weald Clay Formation – Mudstone, sedimentary bedrock formed between 133.9 and 126.3 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. No superficial deposits are recorded.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report has been produced to provide initial information regarding the results of the archaeological evaluation. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The proposed development area is located close to several archaeological sites which are identified on the KCCHER database. To the south is located the Church of St Michael (TQ 83 NE 127) and to the east Beechwood Farm (MKE 82779). The Rother Valley Railway is located to the east and the track crossing the railway as shown on the 1907 Ordnance Survey map is still in existence and is the access road to the new development.

2.1.2 In a consultation with the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council the following response was provided:

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential associated with Roman and later activity. There is a roman road known to the north and there is some potential for Roman activity to extend into the application site. There are also indications of post medieval and later activity with quarrying and the Tenterden to Headcorn branch line which seems to have run just to the east of the club house. One of the ponds is identifiable as a quarry on the 1st Ed OS map.

The preservation of the Tenterden to Headcorn branch line is to be encouraged and its alignment should be conserved where possible. In view of the earlier archaeological interest some level of formal archaeological observation and recording would be appropriate.

(Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer, Ref: 19/01201/AS, dated 25 September 2019)

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Aims

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (SWAT Archaeology 2023; 6.1-6.3) which stated that;

- *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 prehistoric, Roman, early medieval, and later archaeological activity.

- *The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and will commence with evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so, what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include further detailed archaeological excavation, or an archaeological watching brief during construction work or an engineering solution to any preservation in situ requirements.*

- *This specification sets out the requirements for trial trenching on the site and any further archaeological work, such as detailed excavation work or a watching brief, would need to be subject to further specifications.*

3.1.2 The general aims (or purpose) of the evaluation, in compliance with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a), are therefore to:

- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and

- inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation are to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;

- establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;

- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and

- make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT Archaeology 2023) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of three trenches were excavated (Figure 2). Excavation was carried out using a 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.

4.2.2 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.

4.2.3 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.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 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 and drone photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

4.3.3 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 (101), whilst the cut of the feature is shown as [101]. 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.).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 All trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision. Trenches were positioned to cover as many areas of the site as possible as set out in the WSI (Plate 1 and Plate 2). Relocation and re-orientation of the trenches was required when on site obstacles were present (details presented in individual trench description below).

5.1.2 The site, as shown on Figure 2, provides the trench layout with Figure 3 illustrating the results for each individual archaeological evaluation trench. Plates 1-10 consist of photographs of features and selected trenches that have been provided to supplement the text. Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence and contextual information for all trenches.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across most of the site comprising topsoil sealing subsoil, which overlay the natural clay. Variation occurred within Trench 1 where the natural geology and subsoil was overlain by imported made ground, presumably upcast from the adjacent gas main. Further details for individual trenches are provided below.

5.2.2 Removal of the topsoil and subsoil was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket until clean natural geology was observed.

5.3 Archaeological Narrative

Trench 1 (Figure 3, Plates 3-6)

5.3.1 Trench 1 was located within the eastern extent of the site, directly west of the eastern boundary of the site (Figure 2) and was excavated on a broadly NE-SW alignment. The trench was relocated further towards the southeastern corner of the site in to maintain a safe working distance from a high-pressure gas main (Figure 2).

5.3.2 This trench measured 24.4m in length, 1.8m in width and had a maximum depth of 0.71m (Figure 3). Natural geological deposits (103) were recorded at levels between 51.21m aOD and 54.28m aOD. Within the centre of the trench a large area of made-up redeposited clay (104) was present

sealing the subsoil (102) (Plates 5-6). It is assumed that this was either deliberate landscaping associated with the former pitch and putt facility or upcast from excavations associated with the adjacent gas main.

5.3.3 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 1.

Trench 2 (Figure 3, Plates 7 and 8)

5.3.4 Within the central area of the site (Figure 2), Trench 2 was excavated on a NE-SW alignment and measured approximately 18m in length, 1.8m in width with a maximum depth of 0.43m (Figure 3). Natural geological deposits (203) were recorded at a level ranging between 48.75m aOD and 51.21m aOD.

5.3.5 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 2.

Trench 3 (Figure 3, Plates 9 and 10)

5.3.6 Within the western extent of the site (Figure 2), Trench 3 was excavated on a NE-SW alignment and measured approximately 19.05m in length, 1.8m in width with a maximum depth of 0.26m (Figure 3).

5.3.7 Natural geological deposits (303) were recorded at a level ranging between 45.89m aOD and 46.96m aOD. The natural was truncated by a modern electricity cable which was left intact and undisturbed.

5.3.8 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 3.

6 FINDS

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 No archaeological finds were retrieved during this evaluation.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The archaeological investigation on land at London Beach Golf Club, Tenterden, Kent has investigated the extents of the proposed development area using three trenches, measuring between 18m and 24.4m in length and up to 1.8m in width. The natural geology was encountered within all trenches at an average depth of approximately 0.34m below the existing

ground surface, directly underlying topsoil and subsoil. Truncation of the upper geological surface was investigated and recorded within Trench 3.

7.2 Archaeological Narrative

7.2.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site no archaeological finds or features were recorded within any of the trenches.

7.2.2 The recording of an intact subsoil within each trench does however suggest that preservation conditions may be favourable within the local area, although modern truncation is evident through the presence of services, excavated ponds, and landscaping associated with the present-day golf course. Historic mapping provided by the HCC HER does suggest that the site has been left undisturbed since at least 1871, although the 4th Edition OS mapping (1929 – 1952) was not available on the website at the time of producing this report.

7.3 Conclusions

7.3.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and has assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 General

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

8.1.2 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 and A4 graphics. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a Kent Museum.

9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

9.1.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank The Merit Group for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

9.1.2 David Britchfield BA (Hons) MCIfA carried out the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Ravelin Archaeological Services. David Britchfield produced the draft text for this report. The Project Manager for the project was Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA, FRSA of SWAT Archaeology.

10 REFERENCES

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SWAT Archaeology (2023) Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HX

11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1	**Dimensions:** 17.07m x 1.8m **Depth:** 0.69m **Ground Level:** 34.76m OD – 34.88m OD		
Context	**Interpretation**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
(101)	Layer	TOPSOIL – Light grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone, topped with grass	0.00-0.15
(102)	Layer	SUBSOIL – Light orange brown sandy silt colluvium with occasional charcoal and friable fragments of fired clay	0.47-0.62
(103)	Layer	NATURAL - Stiff brown orange clay with patches of light orange silt	0.62-0.69+
(104)	Modern	Redeposited light of orange brown mottled clay	0.15-0.47

Trench 2	**Dimensions:** 18m x 1.8m **Depth:** 0.43m **Ground Level:** 34.50m OD – 34.88m OD		
Context	**Interpretation**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
(201)	Layer	TOPSOIL – Light grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone, topped with grass	0.00-0.21
(202)	Layer	SUBSOIL – Light orange brown sandy silt colluvium with occasional charcoal and friable fragments of fired clay	0.21-0.37
(203)	Layer	NATUIRAL - Stiff brown orange clay with patches of light orange silt	0.37-0.43+

Trench 3	**Dimensions:** 19.1m x 1.8m **Depth:** 0.26m **Ground Level:** 34.73m OD – 35.28m OD		
Context	**Interpretation**	**Description**	**Depth (m)**
(301)	Layer	TOPSOIL – Light grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone, topped with grass	0.00-0.08
(302)	Layer	SUBSOIL – Light orange brown sandy silt colluvium with occasional charcoal and friable fragments of fired clay	0.08-0.21
(303)	Layer	Stiff brown orange clay with patches of light orange silt	0.21-0.26+

12 APPENDIX 2 – HER FORM

Site Name: Land at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent

SWAT Site Code: LBGC-EV-23

Site Address: As above

Summary. *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by The Merit Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent. The works have been carried out as part of a planning condition which required an archaeological evaluation in order to further characterise the potential archaeological impact from any proposed development.*

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District/Unitary: Ashford Borough Council & Kent County Council

Period(s): NA

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 588227 135773

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: August 2023

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

Geology: Wealden Clay Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: D Britchfield (2023) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent. SWAT Archaeology Ref. LBGC-EV-2023

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 13/08/2023

PLATES

Plate 1 Aerial view of the site, facing west

Plate 2 Aerial view of the three trenches excavated within the site (note: safety fencing providing protective for the existing gas main)

Plate 3 Trench 1, viewed from the east

Plate 4 Trench 1, viewed from the west

Plate 5 Trench 1, redeposited clay (104) forming embankment

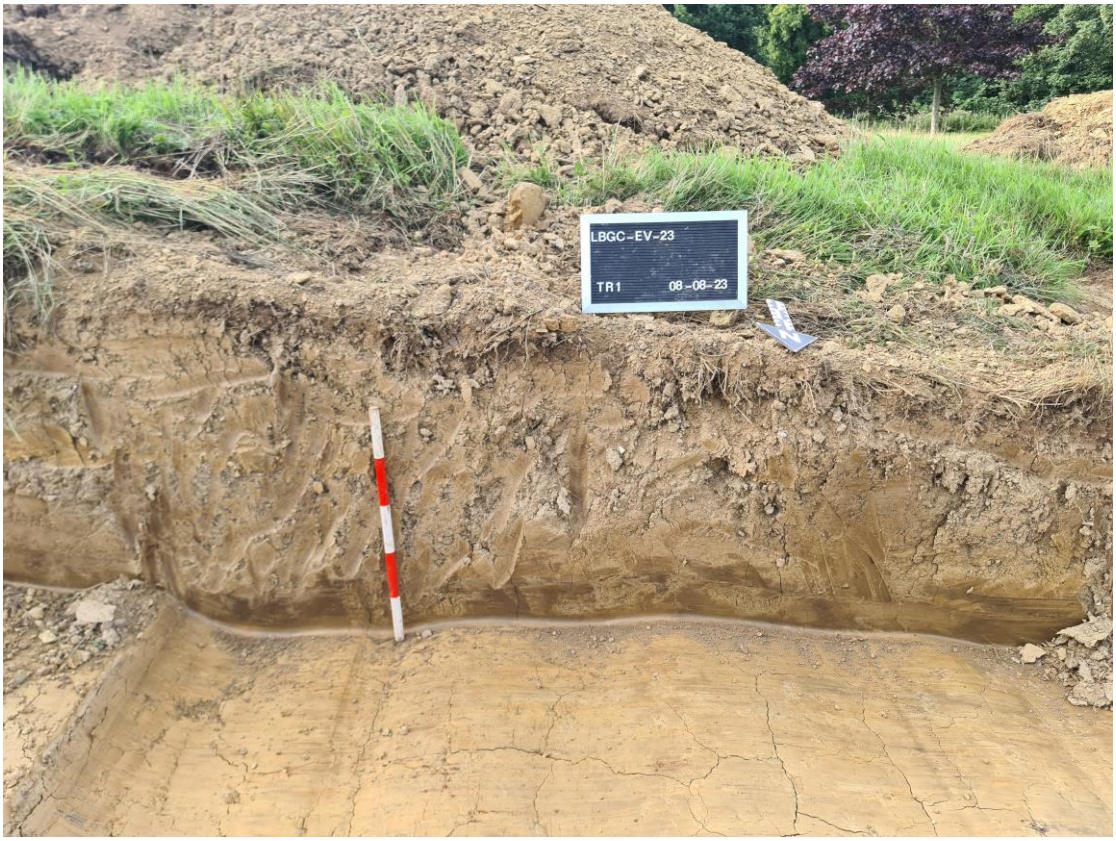


Plate 6 Trench 1 Representative Section through the imported clay bank

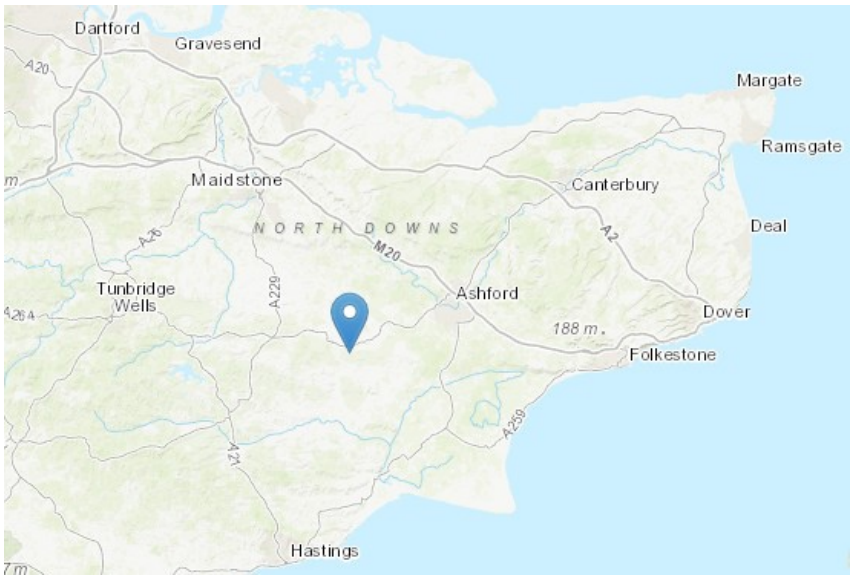
Plate 7 Trench 2, viewed from the north

Plate 8 Trench 2, viewed from the south

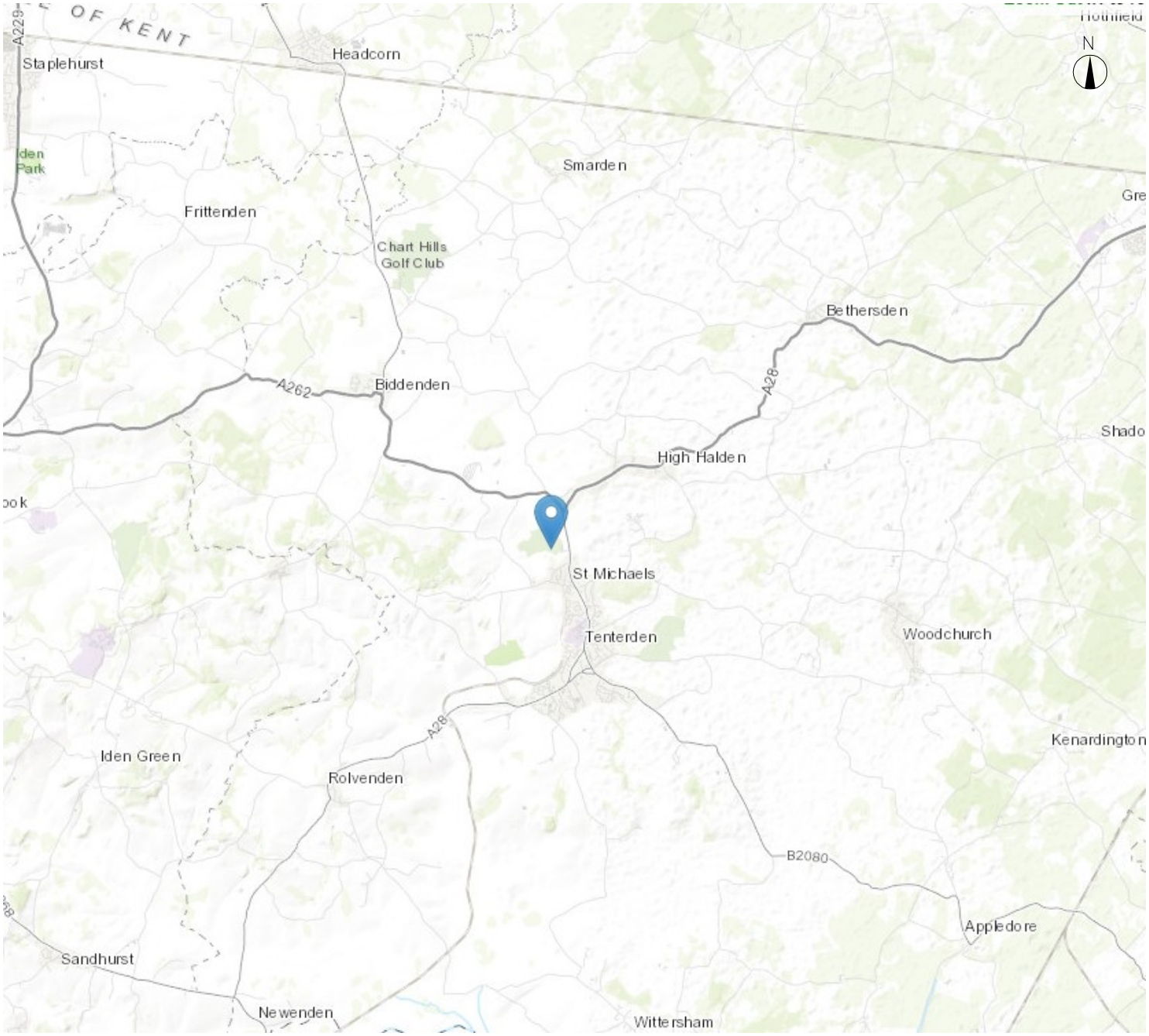
Plate 9 Trench 3, viewed from the north

Plate 10 Tench 3, viewed from the south

Map of UK (NTS)

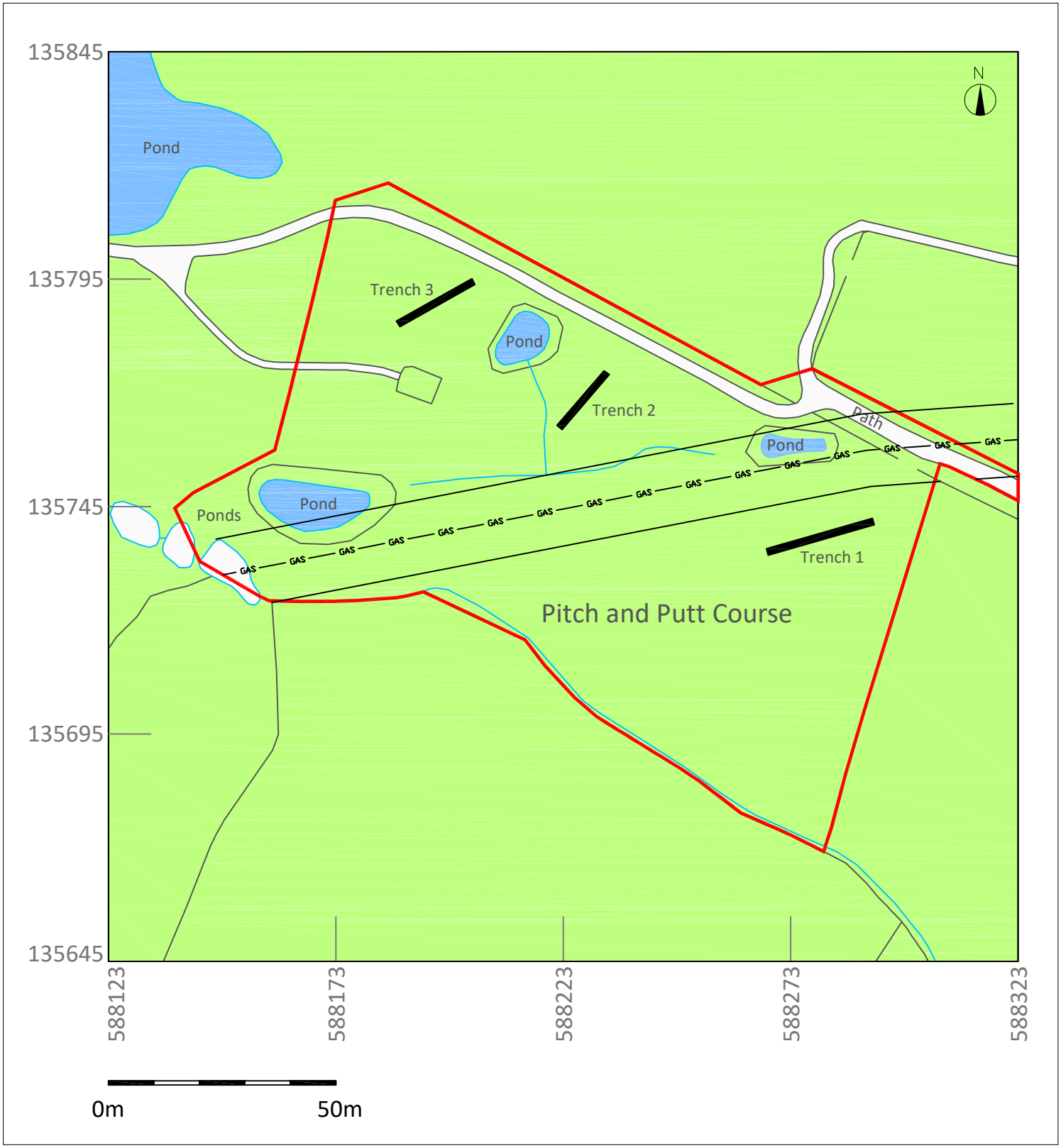


Map of Kent (NTS)



Map courtesy of National Library of Scotland (NTS)

Figure 1 Site Location Plan



KEY

Site Boundary

Trenches

High pressure Gas Main

Figure 2 Site Plan

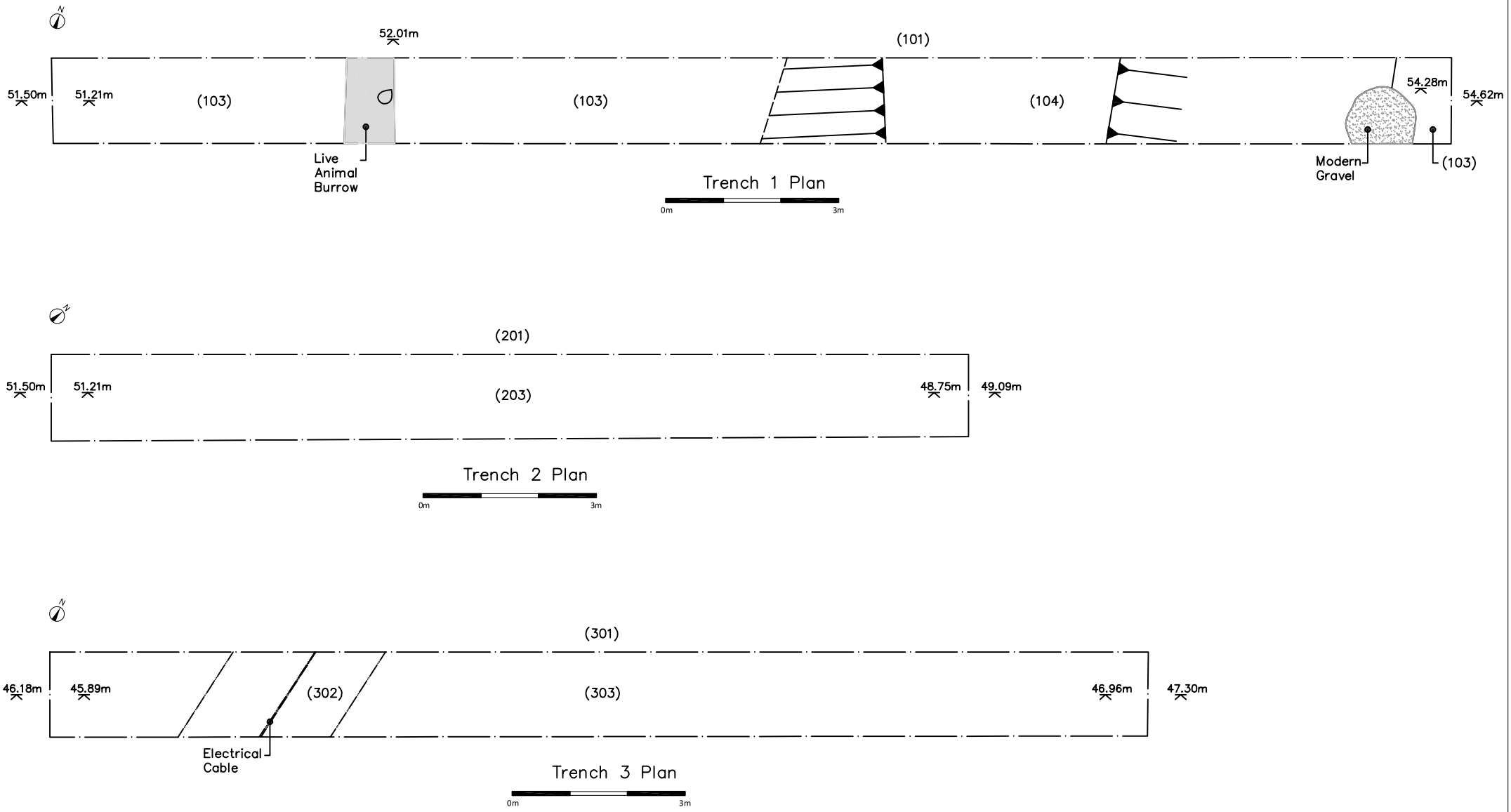


Figure 3 Trench Details