

Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Orchard House

London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT

Site Code: OHU-EV-24

NGR Site Centre: 583856 165401

Planning Application Number: 23/501613/Full



Report for;

Urban Curve Limited on behalf of

Mr Tom Rowe

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SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Urban Curve Limited on behalf of Mr. Tom Rowe to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT. 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 programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in evaluating the proposed development site for the possibility of archaeological remains. Despite the archaeological potential of the site no early archaeological finds or features were recorded within any of the trenches.

The archaeological evaluation has therefore fulfilled 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.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Urban Curve Limited on behalf of Mr. Tom Rowe to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation of land at Orchard House, London Rad, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT (Figure 1).

1.1.2 A planning application (PAN: 23/501613/FULL) for the erection of one (1 No.) three-bedroom detached dwelling, associated landscaping, creation of new vehicular access and parking. Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), who provide an advisory service to Swale Borough Council (SBC), requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

1.1.3 A Condition of archaeological works in the Schedule of Conditions was attached to the Planning Decision Notice, as follows:

20) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

On the basis of the present archaeological information, the Senior Archaeological Officer advising Swale District 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.

1.1.4 The methodology of the archaeological evaluation phase of the investigation is identified within the specification which is acceptance and adherence on the KCC Site Specific Specifications and in the KCC Evaluation Manual Part B.

1.1.5 The archaeological evaluation, which initially comprised the excavation of two trenches measuring up to 25m in length and 1.8m in width, was carried out over the course of one day in September 2024 (See Table 1 below). One trench (Trench 1: See Figure 2) was relocated a few metres to the northeast due to the presence of an active rabbit warren. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2024), 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	February 2024	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation – Fieldwork	4th of September 2024	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation Report	This document	SWAT Archaeology

Table 1 Timetable for the archaeological programme of works

1.3 Site Description and Topography

1.3.1 The site is centred on NGR 583856 165401 to the east of Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch and approximately 1km to the northwest of Newington. To the north the lies the Southeast London to Ramsgate railway line and to the south Watling Street A2 (Figure 1).

1.3.2 The proposed site being developed consists of a broadly rectangular area of garden, bounded by young trees and laid to lawn, of Orchard House; there is evidence of live rabbit warrens within this field, with the full boundary surrounded by a modern fence. The area available for evaluation trenching was within the centre of the site (Plate 1) in an open space measuring approximately 5,528sq.m in area.

1.3.3 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS:1:50,000) shows that the site is set on bedrock geology of Thanet Formation- Sand, Silt and Clay; Superficial deposits are recorded as Head- Clay and Silt. The Ordnance Datum (OD) heights of the site gently slopes from 28.71m OD in the southwest to 27.42m OD in the northeast.

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 (PDA) is located close to a number of archaeological sites which are identified on the KCCHER database. The archaeological WSI prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2024) provides a summary of the historical and archaeological background, provided herewith;

The KCCHER records show that there a number of archaeological sites located in the vicinity of the PDA which include Watling Street; a Roman road from Canterbury to London (MKE 85079) and 300m to the northeast lies a site of a 6" Naval battery (TQ 86 NW 273).

Historic mapping shows that in 1871 land at Orchard House was farmland and this was still the case in 1917.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The specific objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (SWAT Archaeology 2024: 6.1) as stated below:

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.

3.2 General Aims

- 3.2.1 The general aims (or purpose) of the evaluation, in compliance with the ClfA *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2023), were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains;

- To record the character, date, location, and preservation of any archaeological remains on Site; and
- To record the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological deposits or remain on site.

3.3 Specific Aims

3.3.1 The specific aims of the investigation were:

- To excavate two trenches within the site to expose the surface of any underlying archaeological horizon or the natural ground;
- To clean the base and representative sections of the trench and record it in both plan and representative section;
- To partially excavate any identified archaeological features so as to ascertain their extent, form, function and, where possible, date;
- To inform the need (or otherwise) for any future archaeological works on the site by means of an illustrated report.

3.4 General Objectives

3.4.1 The objectives of the investigation were:

- To undertake the archaeological evaluation to provide further information prior to the construction of the proposed development;
- To undertake work in accordance with national and local best practices and guidelines;
- To archaeologically record any deposits, features or structures of significance);
- To analyse any remains with reference to the existing documentary evidence for historical development and land use;
- To produce a written account to include summary, site description, deposit descriptions, deposit levels (relative to Ordnance Datum) and conclusions;
- To disseminate the findings of the work in an illustrated report, integrating the findings of the archaeological evaluation to produce as comprehensive a record as possible; and
- Provide an ordered archive.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT Archaeology 2024) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (ClfA 2023).

4.2 Fieldwork

- 4.2.1 A total of two evaluation trenches were excavated, as shown on Figure 2, and Plate 1. 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 ClfA 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 OD 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+).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 All trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision. Trenches were positioned in order to cover as many areas of the site as possible as set out in the WSI (Plate 1).
- 5.1.2 The site, as shown on Figure 2 provides the trench layout with Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrating the results for each individual archaeological evaluation trench; Plates 1-6 consist of photographs of features and selected trenches that have been provided to supplement the text.
- 5.1.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence and contextual information for all trenches, with the location of Representative Sections provided on each Trench plan.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

- 5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the site comprising topsoil and subsoil which overlay the natural geological drift deposits. The natural geology consisted of pale, yellow orange silt clay with occasional angular and rounded flint.

5.3 Archaeological Narrative

Trench 1 (Figure 3, Plates 3-4)

- 5.3.1 Towards the western extent of the site (Figure 2), Trench 1 was excavated on an E-W alignment and measured approximately 25m in length, 1.8m in width with a maximum depth of 0.32m (Figure 3). Natural geological deposits (103) were recorded at levels ranging from 27.95m OD and 28.27m OD, below subsoil (102) and topsoil (101). Trench 1 was repositioned slightly further to the southeast in order to avoid a live rabbit warren.
- 5.3.2 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 1.

Trench 2 (Figure 4, Plates 5-6)

- 5.3.3 Trench 2 was located within the northeastern central area of the site (Figure 2), east of Trench 1, on an E-W alignment and measured 25m in length, 1.8m in width and had a depth of 0.32m (Figure 4).

- 5.3.4 With an average depth of 0.32m natural geological horizons (203) were recorded at a level of approximately 27.78m OD, sealed below subsoil (202) and the overlying topsoil (201). No archaeological finds or features were recorded within Trench 2.

6 FINDS

6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 No archaeological finds were recorded during the evaluation works.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The archaeological investigation on Land at Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT has investigated the extents of the proposed development area using two trenches, measuring 25m in length and 1.8m in width. The natural geology was encountered within all trenches at an average depth of approximately 0.29m and 0.32m below the existing ground surface, directly underlying modern sequences of topsoil and subsoil.

7.2 Archaeological Narrative

- 7.2.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site no early archaeological finds or features were recorded within any of the trenches. The recording of natural clay directly below topsoil and subsoil, would certainly suggest that preservation conditions are excellent, particularly for earlier archaeological periods.

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 area available for evaluation measured 5,528sq.m with the evaluation sample size being 0.18%.
- 7.3.2 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 Urban Curve Limited on behalf of Mr. Tom Rowe for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council, for his 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) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Orchard House, London Rad, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT*

Websites

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: <https://www.archaeologists.net/>

British Geological Society (BGS): <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

Kent County Council Historic Environment Record: <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/>

11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Table 2 Stratigraphic Sequence Trench 1

Dimensions: 25.00m x 1.8m Maximum Depth: 0.29m Ground Level: 28.76m OD – 28.24m OD				
Context	Section	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(101)	RS 1/1	Topsoil	Mid grey fine sandy silt topped with grass with rare, rounded stone (<0.005m)	0.00-0.17
(102)	RS 1/1	Subsoil	Pale grey, brown sandy silt, occasional small, rounded stones (<0.01m)	0.17-0.29
(103)	RS 1/1	Natural	Pale yellow orange silt clay with occasional angular and rounded flint	0.29+

Table 3 Stratigraphic Sequence Trench 2

Dimensions: 25m x 1.8m Maximum Depth: 0.32m Ground Level: 28.42OD – 28.71m OD				
Context	Section	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(201)	RS 2/1	Topsoil	Mid grey fine sandy silt topped with grass with rare, rounded stone (<0.005m)	0.00-0.21
(202)	RS 2/1	Subsoil	Pale grey, brown sandy silt, occasional small, rounded stones (<0.01m)	0.21-0.32
(203)	RS 2/1	Natural	Pale yellow orange silt clay with occasional angular and rounded flint	0.32+

Site Name: Land at Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT

SWAT Site Code: OHU-EV-24

Site Address: As above

Summary. *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Urban Curve Limited on behalf of Mr. Tom Rowe to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land at Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT. 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 programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council.*

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in evaluating the proposed development site for the possibility of archaeological remains. Despite the archaeological potential of the site no early archaeological finds or features were recorded within any of the trenches.

The archaeological evaluation has therefore fulfilled 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 Principal Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council and Kent County Council

Period(s): NA

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 583856 165401

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: September 2024

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

Geology: Bedrock geology of Thanet Formation- Sand, Silt and Clay; Superficial deposits are recorded as Head- Clay and Silt.

Title and author of accompanying report: D Britchfield (2024) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Orchard House, London Road, Upchurch, Kent ME8 8PT. SWAT Archaeology Ref. OHU-EV-2024

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 16/09/2024

PLATES



Plate 1 Aerial view of the development area (A2 road to the right of the image)



Plate 2 Aerial view of the excavated trenches



Plate 3 Trench 1, viewed from the west



Plate 4 Trench 1, viewed from the east

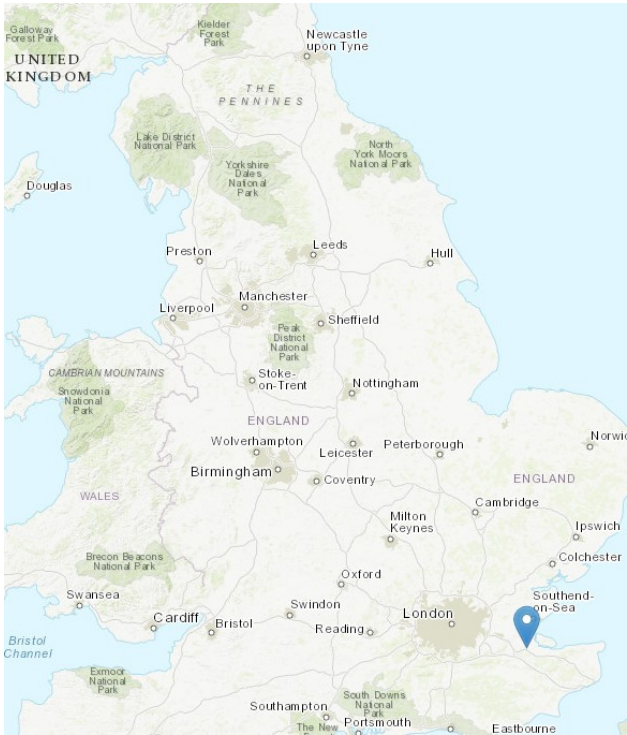


Plate 5 Trench 2, viewed from the southwest

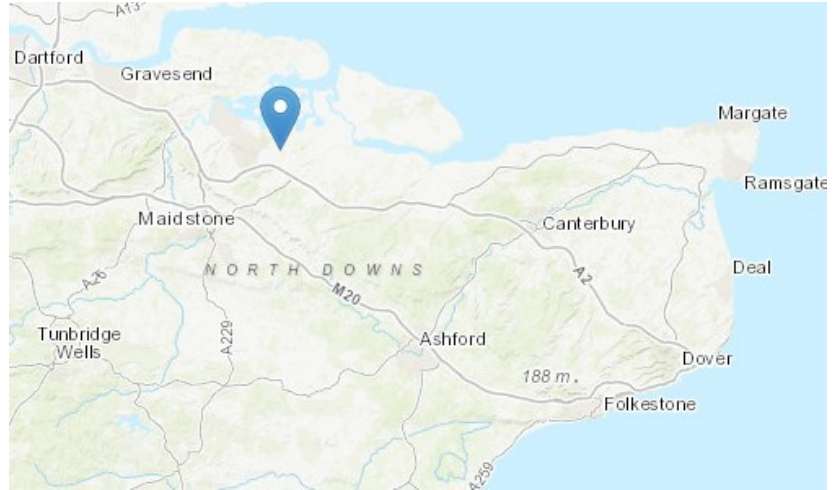


Plate 6 Trench 2, viewed from the southeast

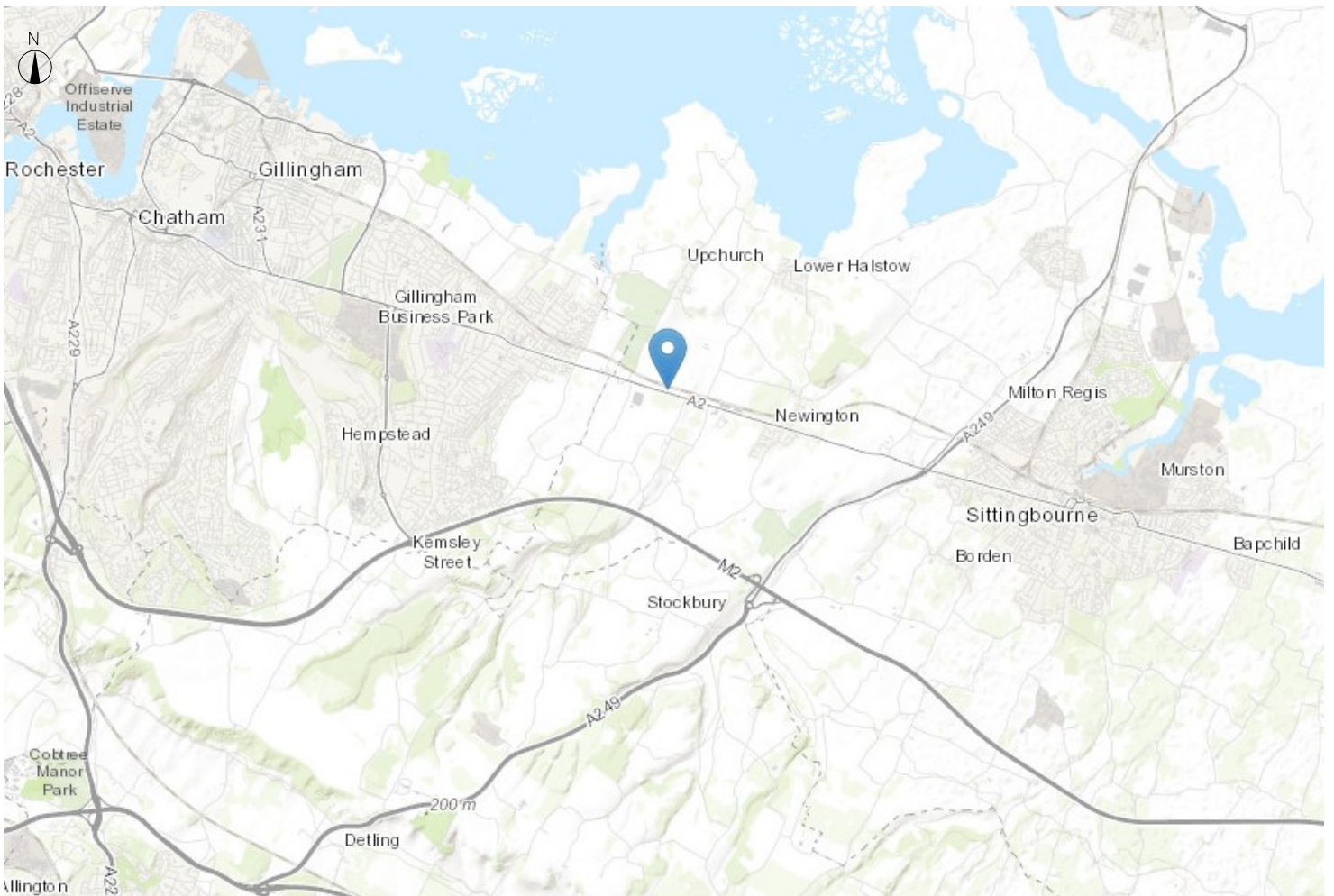
FIGURES



Map of UK (NTS)



Map of Kent (NTS)

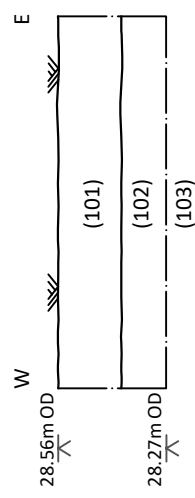


Courtesy of National Library of Scotland

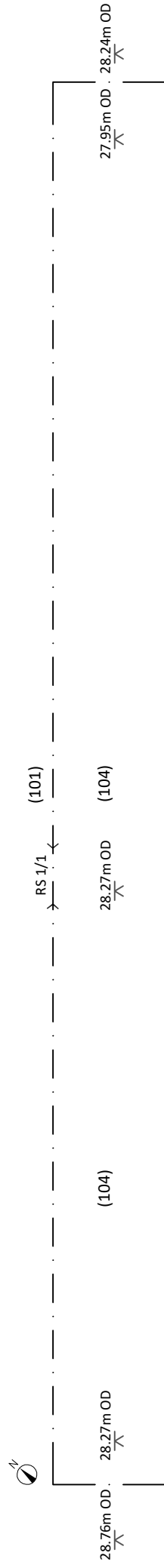
Figure 1 Site Location Plan



Figure 2 Site Plan



Representative Section (RS1/1)

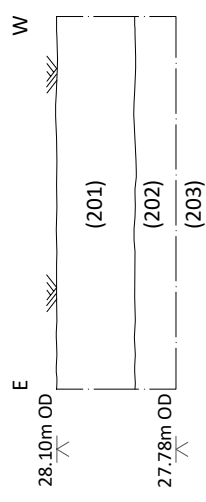


Trench 1 Plan

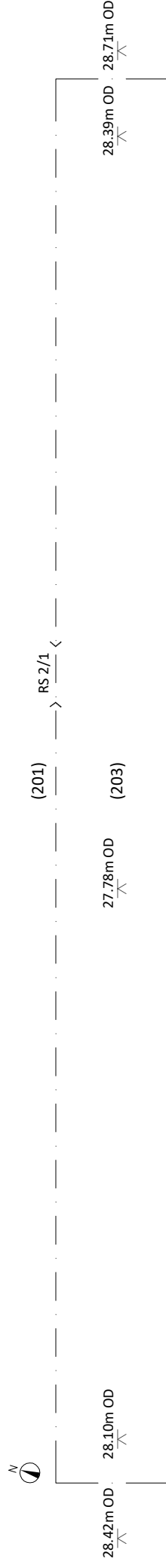


Trench 1 Plan





Representative Section (RS2/1)



Trench 2 Plan



Trench 2 Plan

