# Archaeological Evaluation on Land at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth, Kent DA4 9AT

NGR Site Centre 556376 169446

Planning Application Number: 19/02065/FUL

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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***Summary***

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by Wendy Rogers, Kent County Council Archaeological Officer.*

*The fieldwork was carried out in September 2024 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 28.08.2024) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising brick and concrete rubble overlying natural gravel in orange brown clay matrix.*
*In addition, an excavation of an area of land (SMS area) on the footprint of the demolished fire station was also undertaken and no archaeology revealed.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth in Kent (Figures 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 Sevenoaks District Council, requested that a programme of archaeological works comprising an archaeological evaluation be undertaken to satisfy one of the proposed planning conditions of the planning application 19/02065/FUL.

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in September 2024 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology, prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Wendy Rogers Archaeological Officer at KCCHC.

### 1.2 Site Description and Topography

The application site is situated in the centre of the village of Horton Kirby. The NGR to the centre of the site is NGR 556376 169446. The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the application site is set on a Bedrock Geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation- Chalk. Superficial Deposits are recorded as Head- Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.

The site has planning permission for redevelopment of the former Horton Kirby Fire Station to construct a two-storey building with additional accommodation in the roof space (Sevenoaks District Council. Application number 19/02065/FUL).

A condition of archaeological works is attached to the planning permission:

> *5) No development shall take place until the applicant has secured and had implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.*
>
> *To investigate and record archaeological features as supported by Policy EN4 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.*

### 1.3 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 WSI Specification produced by SWAT Archaeology and these included a KCCHER search which

shows that about 125m NNW is the historic Horton Kirby Paper Mill (TQ 56 NE 110). About 135m NNW environmental retrieved in 2007 from a borehole indicated that the area changed from a river environment to a land environment in the Late Mesolithic period with unusually early evidence of cereal production (TQ 56 NE 107).

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 1.4 Specific Aims (SWAT 2024)

The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (SWAT 2024) were to:

*(4.1) The objectives of the archaeological evaluation are 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.*

### 1.5 General Aims

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.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 28th August 2024 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).

### 2.2 Fieldwork

A total of two evaluation trench was excavated across the Site and an area of strip, map and sample (Figures 1-3. Plates 1-3).

The trenches were initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360º 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.

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.

### 2.3 Recording

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.

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.

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.).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction

A total of two evaluation trenches and an area of SMS were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

*Trench 1*

Trench 1 was placed in NE-SW alignment and measured 21m by 1.15m. It was excavated through overburden 101 to the depth of 0.30m at SW end of the trench that was increasing to the depth of

0.95m at opposite end. At the base of trench natural 103 was exposed. 101 - overburden comprising mainly hardcore (Brick and concrete), and bands of burnt black and dark red coarse sand, redeposited natural flint gravel, modern rubbish metal plastic. Depth max 0.55m. - Natural gravel in orangey brown clayey loam matrix. Gravel is flint amorphous nodules, some broken with light yellowish grey patiné, size less than 150mm. Natural was less gravelly on east end of the trench.

*Trench 2*

Trench 2 was placed in NNW-SSE alignment and measured 18m by 1.15m. It was excavated through overburden 201 to the depth of 0.8m at NW end of the trench 0.45m. At the base of trench natural 202 was exposed and no archaeology.

*SMS Area*

SMS area was placed in NE-SW alignment and measured 9m by 12m. It was excavated through overburden 301 to the depth of 0.55m within NE extent of the trench that was decreasing to the depth of 0.27m at SW end. At the base of trench natural 302 was exposed truncated by corner of robbed out foundations. No archaeology was exposed.

### 3.2 Overview

The trenches were located across the footprint of the proposed development to ensure full coverage of potential archaeological remains.

## 4 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the archaeological evaluation or SMS area.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation was to establish presence of any potential archaeological features. The archaeological investigation exposed no archaeology with the trench exposing layers of modern deposits overlaying the natural geology.

Trench location was designated to give a good coverage of an area to be impacted on by the proposed development.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work show that the proposed development will impact on Roman archaeological remains.

## 7 ARCHIVE

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

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

SWAT would like to thank the developer for commissioning the project. Thank's are also extended to Wendy Rogers Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson MCIfA supervised the archaeological evaluation and survey and illustrations were produced by P. Britchfield. Paul Wilkinson MCIfA edited the text for this report.

Compiled by: SWAT Archaeology (PW). The Office, School Farm Oast, Faversham, Kent and dated 1st October 2024.

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

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SWAT Archaeology. Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land North at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth, Kent DAA 9AT

## Appendix 1: Trench Tables

| **Trench 1** | Dimensions: 21m x 1.15m Depth: 1.08m Trench alignment: NNW-SSE<br>Ground level at NNW end: 22.56m OD Ground level at SSE end: 22.54m OD | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Interpretation | Description | Depth (cm)(bgl) |
| 101 | Top layer – demolition deposit | Concrete fragments, tarmac and subsoil mix | 0-0.18 |
| 102 | Modern deposits | Burnt dark earth charcoal mix | 0.18-32 |
| 103 | Natural deposits | Natural sandy silty clay | 0.32-0.95cm |

| **Trench 2** | Dimensions: 18m x 1.15m Depth: 1.07m Trench alignment: NNW-SSE<br>Ground level at NNW end: 22.54m OD Ground level at SSE end: 22.51m OD | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Interpretation | Description | Depth (cm)(bgl) |
| 201 | Top layer – demolition deposit | Concrete fragments, tarmac and subsoil mix | 0-0.18 |
| 202 | Modern deposits | Burnt dark earth charcoal mix | 0.18-32 |
| 203 | Modern deposits | Natural sandy silty clay | 0.32-0.95cm |

| **SMS Area** | Dimensions: 9 x 12m x 1.15m Depth: 1.07m Trench Area alignment: NNW-SSE<br>Ground level at NNW end: 22.54m OD Ground level at SSE end: 22.51m OD | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Interpretation | Description | Depth (cm)(bgl) |
| 301 | Top layer – demolition deposit | Concrete fragments, tarmac and subsoil mix | 0-0.18 |
| 302 | Modern deposits | Burnt dark earth charcoal mix | 0.18-32 |
| 303 | Modern deposits | Natural sandy silty clay | 0.32-0.95cm |

**Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

**Site Name:** Land at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** HOR/EV/2024

**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 permission (19/02065/FUL) whereby Sevenoaks District 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 archaeology.

**District/Unitary:** Sevenoaks District Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 556376 169446

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** September 2024

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

**Geology:** Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2024) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at the former Horton Kirby Fire Station, New Road, South Darenth, Kent

**Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)**

Layer of dark soil but with no recognised archaeology

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

**Contact at Unit:** Dr Paul Wilkinson

PLATES

Plate 1. View of Trench 1 (looking North)

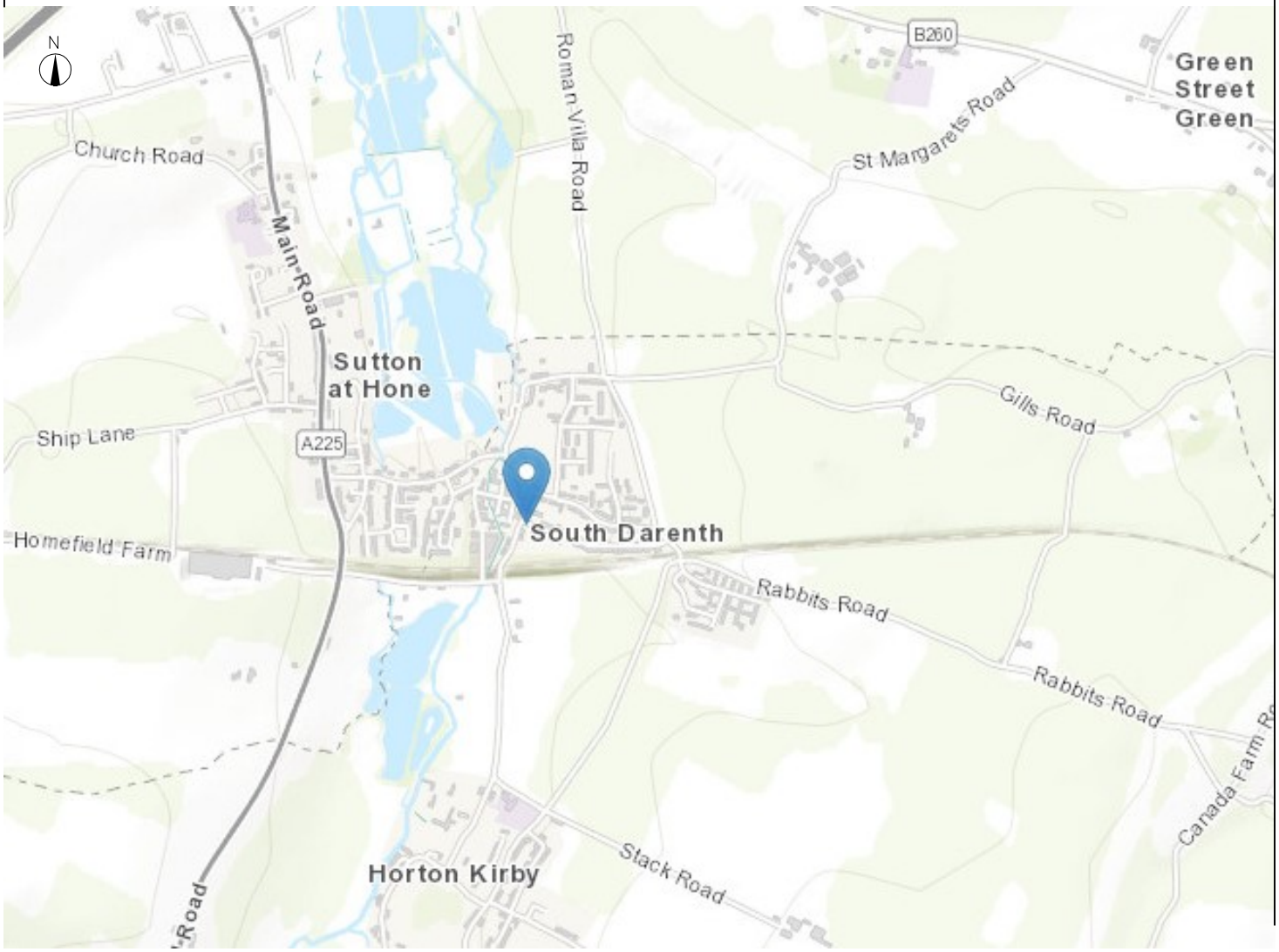
Plate 2. View of Trench 2 (looking NNW)

Plate 3. View of Trench 2 (looking North)

Plate4. View of SMS area (looking NNE)


Map of UK (NTS)


Map of Mid Kent (NTS)




Courtesy of National Library of Scotland

Figure 1 Site Location Plan

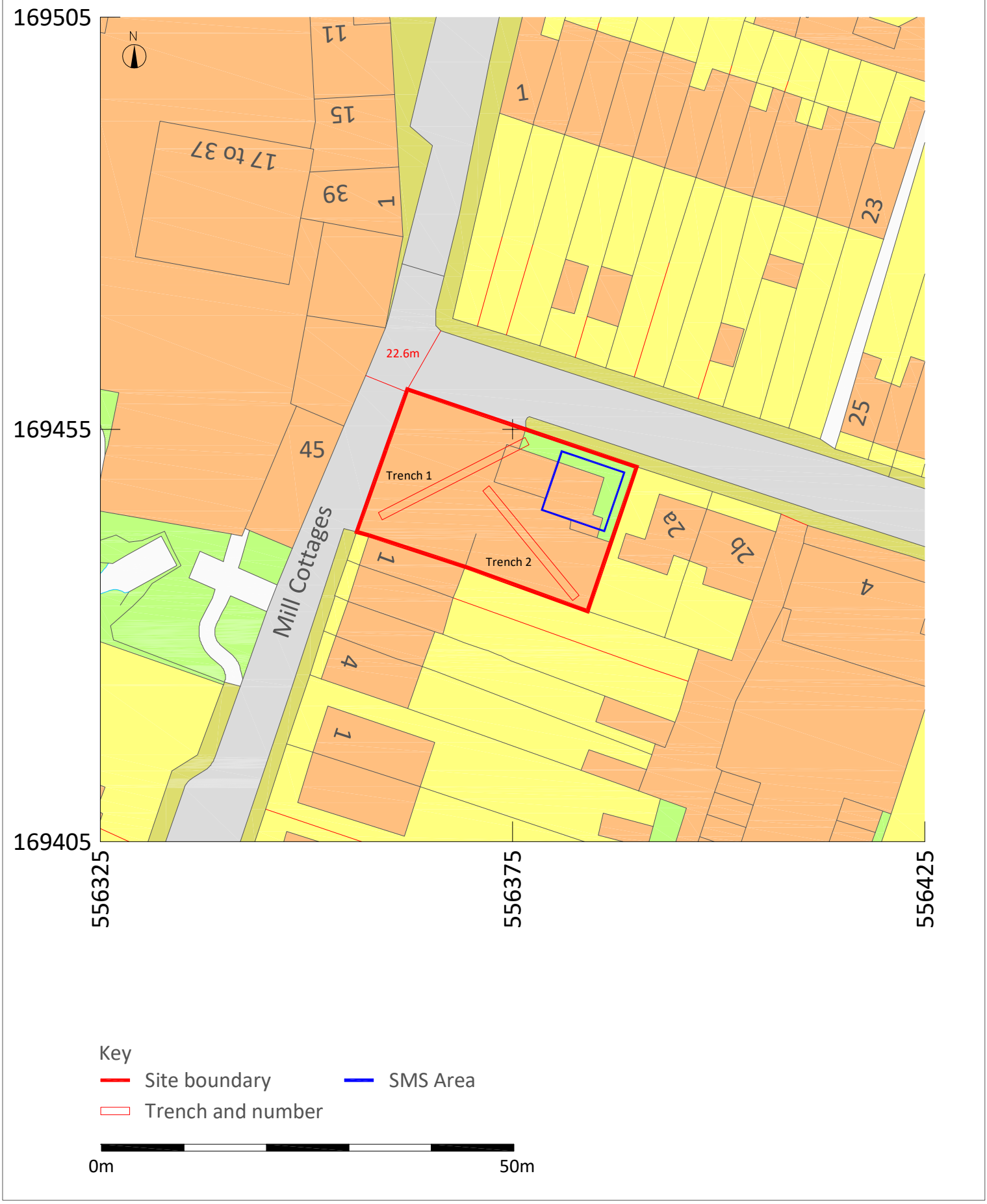
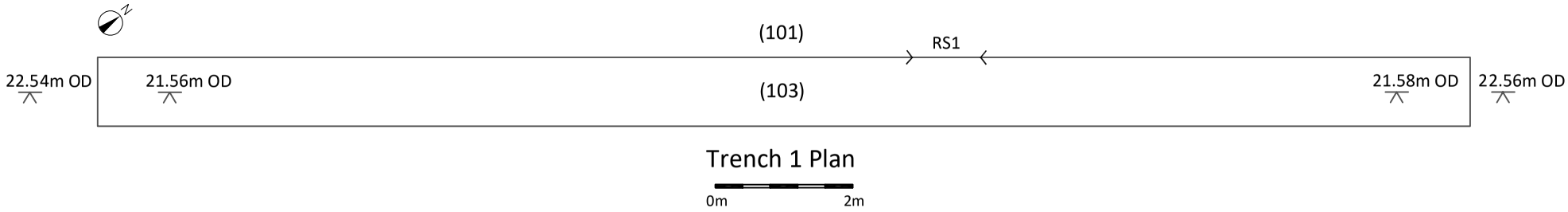
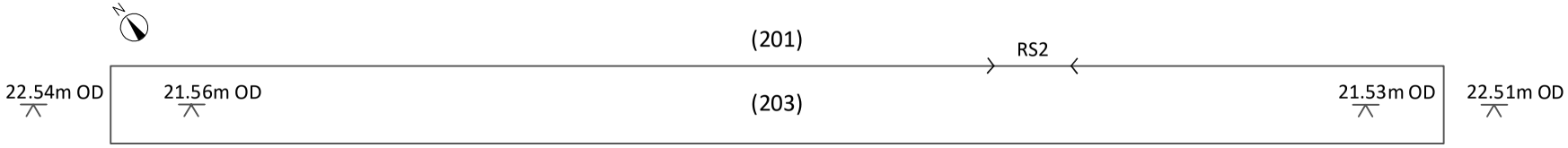



Figure 2 Site Plan



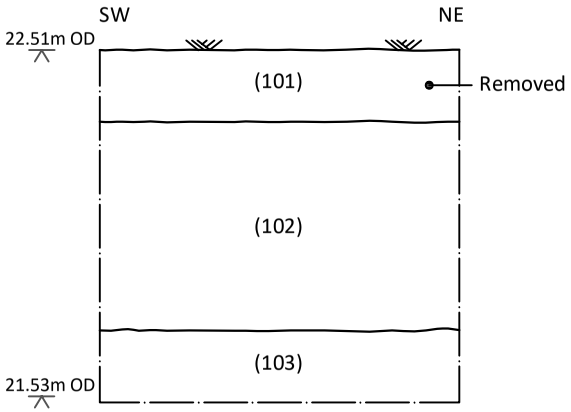

Trench 1 Plan

0m 2m



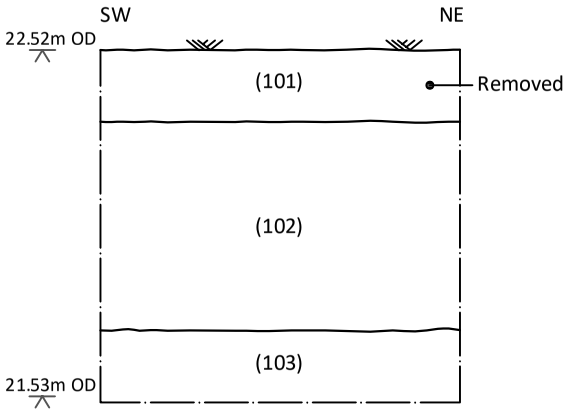

Trench 2 Plan

0m 2m




Representative Section (RS1)

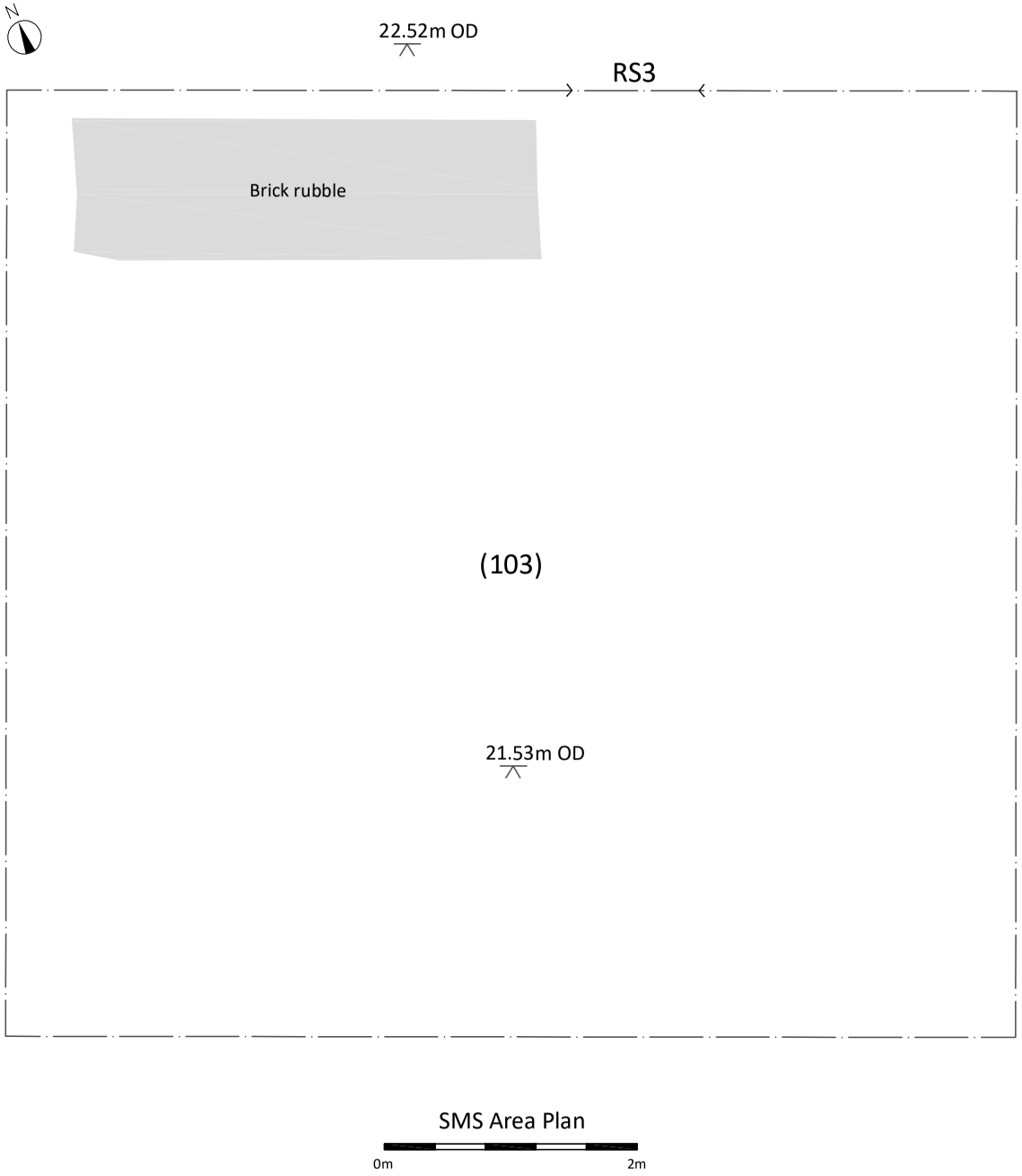
0m 1m




Representative Section (RS2)

0m 1m

Figure 3 Trenches 1 and 2 Details



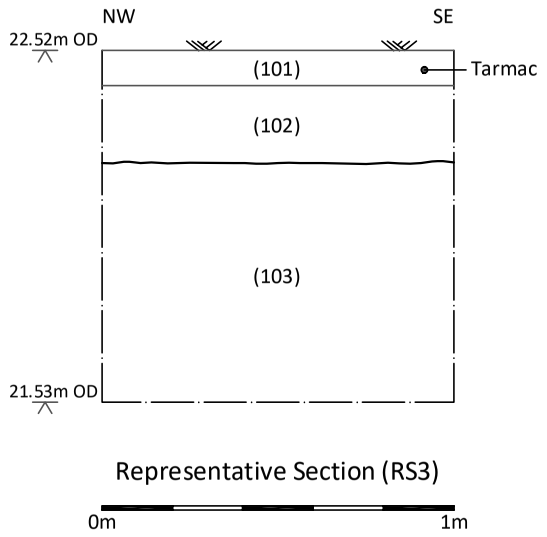




Figure 4 SMS Area Details