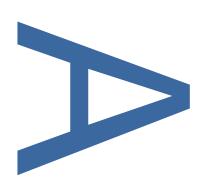


Land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3FY



An Archaeological Evaluation



Planning reference APP/V2255/W/17/3170533

Local planning authority Swale Borough Council

PCA report no. R13854 Site Code KSWS19

PCA project no K6273 Date October 19

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

www.pre-construct.com

Project Information					
Site name	Land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3FY				
Project type	An Archaeological Evaluation				
Site address	Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3FY				
NGR	TQ 74560 63860				
Local planning authority	Swale Borough Council				
Planning reference	APP/V2255/W/17/3170533				
Commissioning client	RPS Consulting Limited				
Project dates	11-12/09/2019				
Archive site code	KSWS19				

PCA Information									
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Project Manager approval:	Zbigniew Pozorski					















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1 ABSTRACT

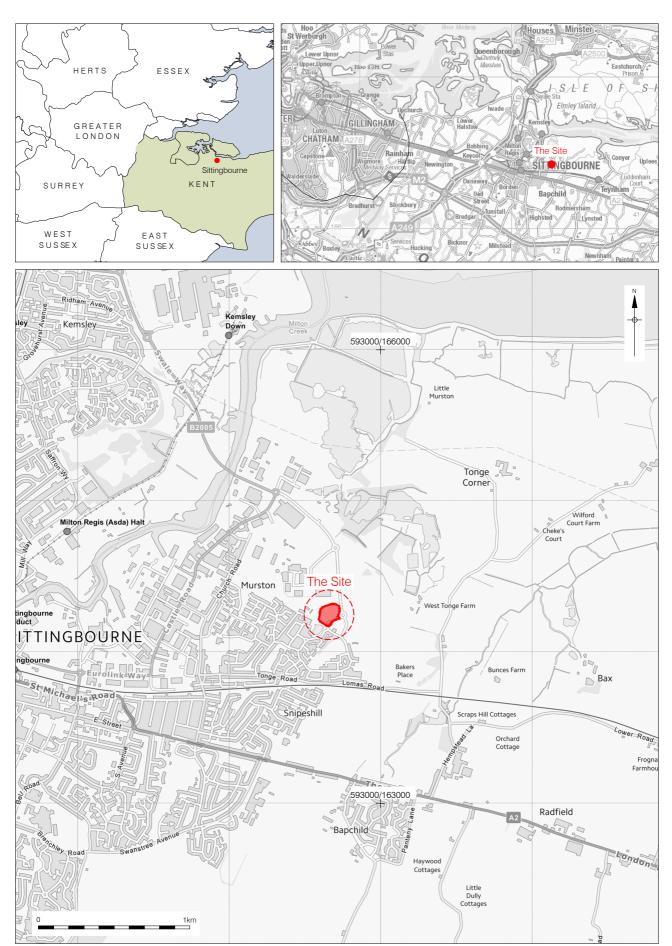
- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology at land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent. The site is located to the east-north-east of Sittingbourne and is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 92665 64259.
- 1.2 The fieldwork was carried out between the 11th and 12th of September 2019. Two evaluation trenches and three geoarchaeological test pits within the trenches were excavated.
- 1.3 The earliest layer encountered in the sequence was the natural geology of Head Gravel consisting of layered beds of sand and gravel with frequent flint nodule inclusions. It was recorded at its highest in Trench 2 at 6.55m OD and at its lowest in Trench 1 at 5.79m OD, showing a fall of ground from west to east.
- 1.4 The natural geology had been cut by two shallow gullies or ditches whose fills did not contain archaeological finds so remain undated.
- 1.5 The site had been quarried for brickearth in the 19th and 20th centuries which had resulted in the horizontal truncation to the site, followed by the redeposition of made ground. Three modern linear features were also identified, one of which was a drain. The edge of the former brickearth quarry was found at the east end of Trench 1.

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2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent (Figure 1). The site is located within undeveloped land to the east-north-east of the town and is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 92665 64259.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted for the residential development on the site including construction of up to 33 dwellings (Swale Borough Council Ref. APP/V2255/W/17/3170533).
- 2.3 A cultural heritage desk-based assessment for the site had been prepared by CgMs Consulting (2016), now RPS Consulting. It identified the potential for the later prehistoric and Roman remains on the site; however, this potential was considered to be minimal or non-existent due to extensive brickearth quarrying in the 20th century, with an exception of the north-western part of the site which was not subject to the quarrying.
- 2.4 The evaluation took place over two days on the 11th and 12th September 2019. Two evaluation trenches and three geoarchaeological test pits were excavated within the area of archaeological potential (Figure 2).
- 2.5 The project was managed by Zbigniew Pozorski (PCA) and was commissioned by RPS Consulting Limited. The archaeological work was supervised by Wayne Perkins.
- 2.6 The archaeological investigation was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by PCA (2019) and approved by the Archaeological Advisor to Swale Borough Council.
- 2.7 All works were undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
 - Land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation (PCA 2019)
 - Generic Specification for Archaeological Evaluation, Kent County Council's (KCC)
 - Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) Historic England 2015
 - Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) 2014)
 - Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual, Taylor, J & Brown, G. 2009, updated 2018, PCA.
- 2.8 The site was allocated the unique site code KSWS19.

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Figure 2 Detailed Site and Trench Locations 1:1,250 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An outline consent on the proposal for residential development of the site has been granted on appeal for the construction of up to 33 dwellings, and open space; including associated access (vehicular/cycle/pedestrian), alterations to levels, surface water attenuation features (including swales), landscaping and related developments (Swale Borough Council Ref. APP/V2255/W/17/3170533).
- The archaeological condition (7) attached to the planning permission reads as follows:
 - 7) No demolition/development shall take place on areas not previously excavated for brickearth (as identified in green on the plan entitled "Figure 17" prepared by CgMs submitted on 18th November 2016 to accompany the document entitled Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment (CgMs Consulting)) until a Written Scheme of Investigation shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include:
 - i) the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;
 - ii) the programme for post investigation assessment;
 - iii) the provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;
 - iv) the provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
 - v) the provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
 - vi) the nomination of a competent person or persons/organization to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 3.3 Consultation by RPS Consulting with Kent County Council (KCC), Archaeological Advisers to Swale Borough Council, confirmed that the archaeological evaluation should be implemented.
- 3.4 The relevant Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; PCA 2019) has been prepared presenting the details of the methodology of the evaluation (archaeological trial trenching). The WSI has been approved by KCC ahead of the work commencing.

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4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS) of England and Wales, the local geology consists of Woolwich Beds Blackheath, Woolwich and Thanet Beds (Sands and Clays) that overlie Chalk at depth. Superficial deposits in the area consist of the Thanet Sands which are capped by a deposit of Head Gravel.
- 4.2 Works at East Hall Farm, to the west of the study site, revealed a sequence of Head Brickearth overlying Head Gravel, overlying Thanet Sands (Wenban-Smith 2004). In intact areas, the top of the Brickearth deposit was at least 1.5m below ground level.
- 4.3 Since the late 19th and early 20th century extensive areas to the north-east of Sittingbourne were worked for gravel and Brickearth, to supply the Brickworks at Murston, to the north-west of the site.
- 4.4 Investigation to the east of the study site (Haslam *et al* 2008), revealed extensive Brickearth extraction which had clearly removed the archaeological horizons, apart from one small area of Brickearth survival beneath East Hall Wood, *c.* 200m north of the study site.
- 4.5 The site lies on a level land and comprises made-up ground infilled after former brickearth quarrying during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The roundabout on Swale Way adjacent to the north-west of the study lies at *c*. 6.5m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The Swale Way and the roundabout were built on land which was raised up above the pre-existing ground (which had been previously excavated for Brickearth), so the land beneath the roundabout and road is recent made up ground rather than being intact Brickearth.
- The site is located to the north-east of Sittingbourne (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the north by grassland and an industrial estate comprising Eurolink IV, to the east by Swale Way, to the south-east by Great Easthall Way, to the south by a footpath and a balancing pond, to the west by a playground (Figure 2).

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5 ARCHAEOLGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 A cultural heritage desk-based assessment for the site was prepared by CgMs Consulting, now RPS (CgMs 2016), and it contains appropriate background for the site. In summary:
- Archaeological works at East Hall Farm to the west of the site revealed a network of ditches and gullies possibly representing a sequence of enclosures dating from the late Bronze Age through to the early Romano-British period. The works revealed multiphase agricultural landscape, largely dating to the middle to late Bronze Age. Within the middle to late Bronze Age fields were a series of four post structures, isolated pits containing deposits of pottery and two unurned human cremations. A ring ditch of possible early Bronze Age date was recorded at the northern end of the excavation. The ditches of a late Bronze Age field system were also identified.
- 5.3 The late Iron Age to early Roman features revealed during the archaeological evaluation at East Hall Farm, *c*. 250m south-east of the study site, indicate an enclosed farmstead within an agricultural landscape. A Roman lead coffin and other artefactual evidence were recovered, probably during Brickearth extraction in 1869 of Eleven Acre Field, Murston, *c*. 500m west of the study site. Further extraction in this area in 'about 1924' discovered a cemetery 'a few hundred yards north of Meres Court'. These discoveries may be associated with a settlement, perhaps a villa complex, suggested by the discovery of foundations, evidence of plastered walls and a tiled roof, found immediately west of Murston Sewage Works in 1930 and by occupation debris from trial trenching in advance of the Gypsy Camp in 1989, some 750m north of the northernmost part of the study site.
- A further focus of occupation is suggested *c*. 200m south-west of the study site where Brickearth digging in 1871 unearthed an extensive Roman cemetery and a third focus of settlement has been excavated at Eurolink III Plot L2, some 1km north-west of the study site.
- 5.5 The archaeological potential for all remaining past periods is considered to be low.
- 5.6 Brickearth quarrying during the late 19th and 20th centuries has removed archaeological deposits across the study site. Site levels were subsequently raised in the 20th century for the cultivation of Orchards. It is evident that the application site has been impacted by Brickearth extraction. This process will have truncated and completely destroyed any archaeological potential. The only area which was not subject to the quarrying is in the north-west part of the site (Figure 2).

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6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The evaluation followed methodology set up in the Written Scheme of Investigation for the project (PCA 2019).
- Two trenches were excavated measuring 20m x 1.80m (Figure 2). The maximum depth of the trenches was generally between 0.4-0.5m below ground level (BGL). One geoarchaeological test pit was also excavated in each of the trenches to maximum depth of 2.20m BGL. Trench positions and OS datums were established on site by PCA using a GPS-system.
- 6.3 All machine (and manual) excavation was conducted under archaeological supervision. A CAT scanner was used by PCA prior to the opening of any trench to identify and avoid live services.
- 6.4 Excavation was carried out by 8 tonne tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under a strict PCA's supervision, with spoil mounded at least 1m from the edges of the trenches. Machine excavation continued in spits of 100mm at a time until either significant archaeological strata or natural ground was exposed, whichever was encountered first.
- 6.5 Each trench was fully investigated and recorded, and features tested to ascertain their function, date and significance. All arisings form each trench were carefully inspected to ensure that any artefacts were recovered. The trenches and spoil heaps were scanned with a metal-detector at regular intervals to enable finds recovery.
- The trenches were backfilled by the PCA using the same type of machine as for opening the trenches, replacing the excavated arisings in the reverse order of excavation.
- Once excavation had been completed and the trenches cleaned, all deposits were then recorded on proforma context sheets. Trench plans were drawn at scales of 1:50 and 1:20 and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. A digital photographic record was also kept of all eight trenches.
- 6.8 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.
- 6.9 The recording systems adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in Kent, which is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in PCAs *Operations Manual 1* (Taylor and Brown 2009, updated 2018).
- 6.10 In this report all context numbers (cuts, layers and fills) are written in squared brackets [].
- 6.11 The complete archive produced during the evaluation, comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited with a local museum with site code KSWS19.

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7 PHASED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Natural Geology

Trench 1

7.1.1 The natural Head Gravel deposit was encountered at its highest in Trench 1 at 6.19m OD and at its lowest in the east of the trench at 5.79m OD (Plates 1 - 3). It was composed of a compacted, reddish-mid brown gravel with frequent flint nodule inclusions in a sandy matrix. Its depth was tested to up to 1.8m BGL in Test Pit 1 by way of a sondage.

Trench 2

7.1.2 The natural Head Gravel deposit was encountered at its highest in Trench 2 at 6.55m OD at the north end and at its lowest in the south of the trench at 6.26m OD. It was composed of a compacted, reddish-mid brown gravel with frequent flint nodule inclusions in a sandy matrix. It remained consistent throughout, with alternating layers of sand and gravel seen in the test pit section. It had been both horizontally truncated and cut by a number of modern pits and linear features (Figure 4, Section 2, Plate 3).

7.2 Phase 2: Undated

Trench 2

7.2.1 Two shallow gullies or ditches [5], [7], which were oriented north-west to south-east were uncovered in Trench 2. Excavation across the two features revealed them to possess gradual sides with rounded 'U'-shaped profiles, with a maximum depth of 0.28m. Their fills were a friable, brownish-orange sandy-clay (Plates 4 & 5). No archaeological finds or dating evidence were recovered from their fills leaving them undated.

7.3 Phase 3: Modern

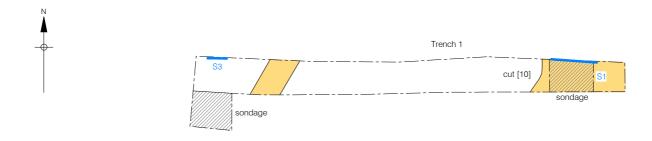
Trench 1

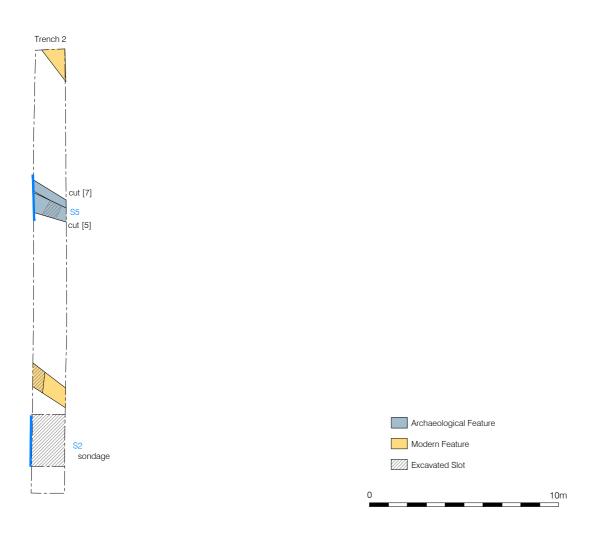
7.3.1 The trench contained two modern truncations. The first was a trench for a drain (oriented north-east to south-west) in the west part of the trench from which modern frogged brick and plastic was retrieved. The second, cut [10], was believed to be the foremost edge of the prior brickearth quarrying that had taken place on the site. It was clear that the quarried void had then been backfilled with fragmentary construction material and domestic waste (Plate 6).

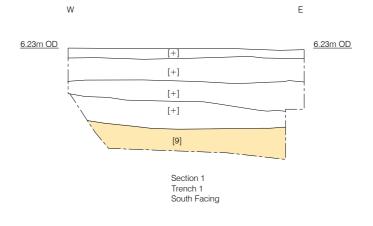
Trench 2

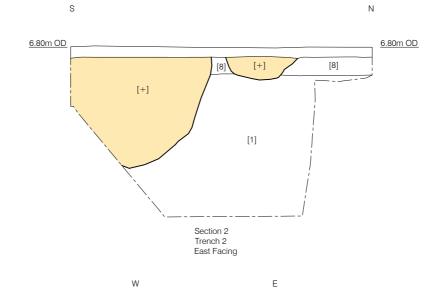
- 7.3.2 Trench 2 contained several modern truncations. At the north end an old ceramic waste pipe was uncovered and left *in situ*; machining continued southwards at a safe distance away to prevent potential flooding of the trench. At the south end a number of modern pits were observed (Figure 4: Section 2, Plate 7).
- 7.3.3 At the south end of the trench, a modern brick-built drain was investigated and found to be modern (Plate 8).

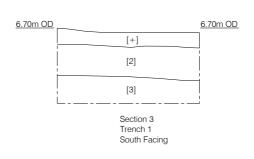
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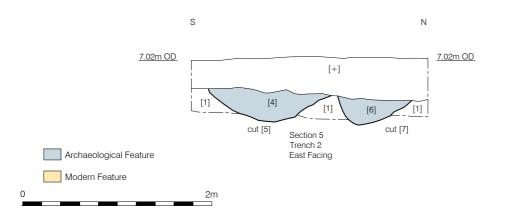




Plate 1: Trench 1, view to the east, scale 1m.

Modern linear in foreground.



Plate 2: Trench 2, view to the north, scale 1m.

Modern drain trench visible in foreground.



Plate 3: Trench 1, Test Pit 3, view to north-west, scale 1m.

A third test pit was opened to test the depth of natural as Test Pit 1 had been made into modern backfill. Here the Head Gravel can be seen descending to over 1.2m BGL.



Plate 4: Trench 2, view to the north-east, scale 1m.

Gullies [5] and [7]. Dotted black lines demarcate outer edge of cuts.



Plate 5: Trench 2, view to west, scale 1m.

Gullies [5] (to the left) and [7] to the right.



Plate 6: Trench 1, view to the north, scale 1m.

Test Pit 1 at east end of trench shows modern back-fill in quarry pit [10].



Plate 7: Trench 2, view to the west, scale 1m.

Test Pit 2 revealed several modern pits.



Plate 8: Trench 2, view to the north-west, scale 0.3m.

Modern land drain constructed from reclaimed bricks.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The results of the evaluation revealed thick deposits of Head Gravel in the north of the site whose presence probably led to the abandonment of the 19th/20th century brickearth quarry to expand in this direction. The drift geology was tested up to 2.2m BGL by a series of test pits which found that it exceeded that depth with little variation within the layer.
- 8.2 A pair of north-west to south-east oriented gullies were uncovered in Trench 2. The evaluation failed to recover any dateable material but, in all likelihood, the features were a modern truncation which had occurred during the period of quarrying on the site.
- 8.3 All features above the drift geology were either layers of modern made ground or consisted of several modern truncations caused by land drains, pit digging and water management trenches. The cut [10] at the east end of Trench 1 is believed to be the point of termination of the brickearth quarry as mining entered the unsuitable deposit of Head Gravel.
- 8.4 The evaluation provided adequate proof that the immediate area had suffered from widespread and sometimes profound truncation which has removed any archaeological potential that it may have once possessed.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Lorraine Mayo of RPS for commissioning the archaeological work.
- 9.2 We also offer our thanks to Simon Mason of Kent County Council for his input and advice and for monitoring the site.
- 9.3 The author would also like to thank: Zbigniew Pozorski for project managing and editing this report; Ray Murphy for the illustrations, Chris Jarrett for the pottery and glass assessments and Bruce Ferguson for his work on site.

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Websites:

www.bgs.ac.uk British Geological Survey

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11 APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT INDEX

			Fill							
Context	Type	Trench	of	Phase	Interpretation	Category	Width	Depth	Levels high	Levels low
1	Layer	1		KSWS19-PH1	Head gravel composed of a compacted, reddish-brown sand and gravel with frequent flint nodule inclusions	Natural			6.65	6.61
2	Layer	1		KSWS19-PH3	Made ground composed of re- deposited friable light brown silty clay	Make-up		0.22	6.56	6.53
3	Layer	1		KSWS19-PH1	Drift geology: Head gravel composed of a compacted, reddish- brown sand and gravel with frequent flint nodule inclusions	Natural			6.35	6.19
4	Fill	2	5	KSWS19-PH2	Fill of gully [5] composed of a friable brownish orange silty clay	Disuse	-		6.7	6.63
5	Cut	2		KSWS19-PH2	Shallow gully oriented north-west to south-east	Gully 0.8 0.3		6.7	6.35	
6	Fill	2	7	KSWS19-PH2	Fill of gully [7] composed of a friable brownish orange silty clay	Disuse 0.4 0.28		6.59	6.31	
7	Cut	2		KSWS19-PH2	A shallow gully oriented north-west to south east with gradual sides and a flattened 'U' profile	Gully	0.4	0.28	6.62	6.59
8	Layer	2		KSWS19-PH3	Made ground: re-deposited soil composed of a friable, greyish-mid-brown clayey silt	Make-up		0.13	6.46	6.46
9	Fill	1	10	KSWS19-PH3	Quarry pit backfilled with fragmentary construction materials and domestic waste	Backfill			5.47	5.39
10	Cut	1		KSWS19-PH3	Cut of former brickearth quarry on the edge of the Head Gravel deposit	Pit			5.47	

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12 APPENDIX 2 MATRIX

Swale Way, Sittingbourne							
Kent : Evaluation							
	Tr.1				Tr.2		
			+				
	8	Made ground		=	2	Made ground	
	9	Fill					
	10	Quarry					
PHASE 3: Modern							
19th/20th Century							
PHASE 2: Undated				4	Fill	6	Fill
				5	Gully	7	Gully
PHASE 1: Natural Drift Geology							
Head Gravel	1	Natural		=	3	Natural	

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13 APPENDIX 3 FINDS ASSESSMENTS

The Pottery

By Chris Jarrett

A single sherd (48g) of pottery was collected by hand from the archaeological work and was found in context [8]. The sherd of pottery consists of the base of a cylindrical 'coffee' mug made in coloured-glazed refined whiteware, dated from c.1800. The vessel has an internal and external 'Prussian' blue glaze and the underside of the base has a moulded mark consisting of 'C Made in C England.' in relief. The letters C C possibly relate to the initials of an unidentified pottery company, white the term 'Made in England' dates more so to after 1891, although the vessel is most likely to date to the end of the 20th century.

The pottery has no significance and the only potential of the find is to date the context it was found in. There are no recommendations for further on the pottery.

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The Glass

By Chris Jarrett

Two fragments (391g) of glass were collected by hand from the archaeological work and were found in two contexts. Both fragments are moulded. Context [8] produced the base of a dark bright green ginger beer bottle embossed 'BATEY LONDON' around the base, while the convex base has the name 'BATEY' embossed twice in a cross formation (309g). William Batey established a mineral water and ginger beer factory on Kingsland Road, Hackney around 1853. In 1881 the business was bought by Richard James Alabaster, who established Bateys as a limited company in 1887 and continued as a limited company until sold to Charrington & Co Ltd in 1952 (The National Archives). The bottle is most likely to date to the end of the 19th-early 20th century. The second vessel is an intact clear ink bottle with a rounded rim, short neck, corrugated shoulder, cylindrical wall and rounded splayed base. The underside of the base is embossed with a '5' and a '2' within a hexagon. The vessel has a weight of 82g, a height of 60m and rim and base diameters of 30mm and 50mm respectively and the item dates to the late 19th-early 20th century.

The glass is of no significance as it occurs in a small quantity with little meaning. The only potential of the glass is to date the contexts it was found in. There are no recommendations for further work on the glass, which as it has been fully recorded can be discarded.

Reference

The National Archives, n.d. Batey & Co Ltd Records & Estate of R.J. Alabaster. https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/f4daea4f-d957-4d3a-a1af-ea1479b84543. Accessed 16th September 2019.

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14 APPENDIX 4 OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1: 368220

Project details

Project name Land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent

Short description of the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology at land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne, Kent at National Grid Reference TQ 92665 64259. The fieldwork was carried out between the 11th and 12th of September 2019. Two evaluation trenches and three geoarchaeological test pits within the trenches were excavated. The earliest layer in the sequence was the natural geology of Head Gravel consisting of layered beds of sand and gravel containing frequent flint nodule inclusions. It was recorded at its highest in Trench 2 at 6.55m OD and at its lowest in Trench 1 at 5.79m OD, showing a fall of ground from west to east. The natural geology had been cut by two shallow gullies or ditches whose fills did not contain archaeological finds so remained undated. The site had been quarried for brickearth in the 19th and 20th centuries which had resulted in the horizontal truncation to the site,

the 19th and 20th centuries which had resulted in the horizontal truncation to the site, followed by the redeposition of made ground. Three modern linear features were also identified, one of which was a drain. The edge of the former brickearth quarrying was found at the east end of Trench 1 where the geology had changed from brickearth to

Head Gravel.

Project dates Start: 11-09-2019 End: 12-09-2019

Previous/future No / No

work

Any associated KSWS19 - Sitecode

project reference codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land

Other 13 - Waste ground

use

Monument type GULLY Uncertain

Monument type GULLY Uncertain

Significant

CERAMIC Modern

Finds

Significant

GLASS Modern

Finds

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT SWALE SITTINGBOURNE Land at Swale Way, Sittingbourne

Postcode ME10 3FY

Site TQ 92665 64259 51.344138533375 0.766724893655 51 20 38 N 000 46 00 E Point

coordinates

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Height OD /

Depth

Min: 5.79m Max: 6.55m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief

originator

RPS Group

originator

Project design Zbigniew Pozorski

Project

director/manag

Zbigniew Pozorski

Project

supervisor

Wayne Perkins

Project archives

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Physical Contents

"Ceramics","Glass"

Digital Archive recipient

Sittingbourne Heritage Museum

Digital Media available

"Database", "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

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Paper Media

"Context

available

sheet","Correspondence","Diary","Drawing","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","

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