



# Land at Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AH

Archaeological evaluation report

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The archaeological programme was monitored by Casper Johnson Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.

## Summary

*Between 30 May and 1 June 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation of land at Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent DA13 0AH (NGR 564221 165804). The works were commissioned by Kent County Council as part of preparations for the construction of a new freestanding two-storey school building, new staff car park, new parent car park and drop off/pick up area, together with associated access, signage and landscaping works.*

*This report presents the results from an evaluation which comprised the machine excavation of eleven trenches conducted to assess the potential, character and extent of any buried archaeological resource. This report defines the extent and nature, so far established, of any significant archaeological assets within the proposed development area.*

*The investigations revealed the presence of ditches and a possible tree throw of probable prehistoric date. The features produced few artefacts, but the presence of burnt and worked flint would suggest the ditches formed at some point during the later prehistoric period (4,000–100 BC). A single sherd of pottery dated late Iron Age (c 100 BC to AD 100) was recovered from one ditch. Previous archaeological fieldwork in the area recorded a substantial middle to late Iron Age enclosure (600 BC to AD 100) lying adjacent, and to the north of, the proposed development area. It is considered likely that the archaeological features identified during this evaluation represent a continuation of this activity.*

*A series of field drains, also recorded, probably relate to post-medieval farming activity.*

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Between 30 May and 1 June 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) undertook an evaluation of land at Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent DA13 0AH (NGR 564221 165804; Figure 1). The works were commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) who are currently making preparations for development at Meopham School, comprising the erection of a new freestanding two-storey school building, new staff car park, new parent car park and drop off/pick up area, together with associated access, signage and landscaping works.
- 1.1.2 The local planning authority (LPA) is Gravesham Borough Council. The archaeological evaluation forms part of pre-planning works relating to a planning application (planning ref. 20220110) to the LPA and KCC (planning ref. KCC/GR/0014/2022). The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following consultation with the KCC Heritage Conservation Group (HCG).
- 1.1.3 In mitigation of the potential impact that the proposed works may have on the potential buried archaeological resource and in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), KCC commissioned this first phase of archaeological works. The archaeological works followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) compiled by CAT (2022a).
- 1.1.4 The purpose of the evaluation was to inform on the potential below ground archaeological resource surviving within the proposed development area (PDA) to enable the LPA to determine the planning application, and where appropriate, to formulate the scope of any further archaeological mitigation that may be required in line with existing national, strategic and local planning policy and guidance.
- 1.1.5 An evaluation may therefore result in the need for an agreed mitigation strategy and the implementation of further archaeological works with a further WSI potentially required to fulfil planning conditions.

### 1.2 Project development

- 1.2.1 Land at Meopham School, Meopham had previously been investigated in 2016 (CAT 2016; CAT 2017) in advance of the redevelopment of a new school building. The development encompassed the north-east boundary of the school grounds adjacent, and to the south of, Meopham Community Sports Centre, itself developed in 1975. The investigation comprised an archaeological evaluation followed by a strip, map and sample excavation that covered a total area of 6,722m<sup>2</sup>. It revealed evidence for Neolithic occupation, a substantial middle to late Iron Age settlement and Romano-British quarry works. A subsequent watching brief was maintained during the demolition of older school buildings within the present PDA.
- 1.2.2 Prior to the commissioning of an archaeological evaluation, a desk-based assessment of the PDA was undertaken (CAT 2022b), this concluded there was a high likelihood of prehistoric and/or Romano-British archaeology surviving below ground given the proximity of similarly dated features already identified.

- 1.2.3 The archaeological evaluation comprised eleven trenches measuring between 15m and 20m in length, set across the investigation area (Figure 1). The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in the WSI. This report sets out the results of the evaluation and will seek to define the extent and nature, so far established, of any significant archaeological resource within the PDA.

### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The PDA lies within Meopham school grounds, on the west side of the A227 that runs through the village of Meopham in north-west Kent. It is separated into two distinct areas; Area A is situated to the north of the site and was formerly the site of school buildings. It is bounded to the north by the new school building, to the west by playing fields and mobile classrooms and to the south by a car park and access, Area B is situated to the south of the site and is bounded to the north by buildings comprising Meopham Medical Centre and Meopham Library, to the south by a hedgerow and west by further playing fields.
- 1.3.2 Area A had been terraced prior to the construction of the former school buildings, resulting in a relatively flat area of land at a height of 133m Ordnance Datum (OD) at the east and 131.80m OD at the west. Following the demolition of the former school buildings, a layer of hardcore was deposited across this area which was subsequently laid to lawn. Area B formed part of an informal grass sports pitch that sloped gently down from a height of 133.79m OD at the south-east to a height of 132.39m OD at the north-west.
- 1.3.3 According to current data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2022), bedrock geology within the site is Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) here covered by Thanet Formation – Sand, and with Head deposits to the north-east. Clay-with-Flints overlies the chalk to the south. Investigations prior to redevelopment to the north of the PDA in 2016 (CAT 2017) revealed natural geology comprising Head deposits of sandy clay, with occasional flint gravel outcrops. A layer of colluvium, up to 0.2m thick, was also recorded.

## 2 Heritage setting

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical potential of the site is described in detail within the archaeological desk-based assessment (CAT 2022b) and set out within the WSI (CAT 2022a). The results are summarised below with reference to the online Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER online, maintained by the HCG) for an area of 500m from the centre of the PDA.

### 2.2 Designations

- 2.2.1 The PDA does not affect or impact upon any World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens. The PDA lies between two Conservation Areas (each designated in 1970); The Street, Meopham, located c 170m to the north-east, and Meopham Green, located c 290m to the south.



## 2.3 Archaeological background

### *Prehistoric (c 500,000 BP – c AD 43)*

- 2.3.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential primarily associated with Iron Age and early Romano-British activity. Evidence for both earlier and later periods is relatively sparse although earlier prehistoric activity (a Mesolithic site represented by flint implements) is recorded in the general area, approximately 300m to the north-west. However, the nature of this find is not described (HER TQ66 NW48). For the later prehistoric period, an Iron Age coin is reported from the general area, 220m to the north-west of the site (HER MKE67378). Also of significance are prehistoric pits or post-holes investigated in 1897 in pasture at the rear of the vicarage (HER TQ66 NW8), approximately 200m north of the site. These features appear to have contained 'sarsen stones' along with burning and 'pre-Roman' pottery, a description which might imply a Neolithic or Bronze Age rather than Iron Age date, as has been previously assumed.
- 2.3.2 Archaeological investigations at Meopham School, carried out by CAT in 2016 identified a single pit containing worked flints provisionally dated to the Neolithic period (HER TQ66 NW143; CAT 2017). Further pits were also identified and may date to a similar period, although none contained dateable evidence (*ibid*).
- 2.3.3 The Meopham School excavation revealed later prehistoric features that comprised boundary ditches, pits, and a curvilinear enclosure (HER TQ66 NW137; *ibid*). The enclosure ditch measured up to 2m wide and 1.1m deep with a wide entrance located to the south-west. The fills of the ditch contained a large assemblage of early to middle Iron Age (600–100 BC) pottery, burnt and worked flint. It encompassed further occupation activity within the site and to the north-east represented by post-holes and pits. A later re-cut of the ditch during the late Iron Age (c 100 BC) was identified, suggesting continued occupation up until the Roman period.
- 2.3.4 The settlement included evidence of deliberate abandonment prior to the beginning of the Roman period with the enclosure ditch backfilled and a child inhumation inserted into it (HER TQ66 NW144).
- 2.3.5 Further late Iron Age or early Romano-British archaeological remains are reported close to the site, or within 250m of its northern limits. In 1975, three ditches cut into the subsoil were recorded during building work 150m north-east of the site. These features produced a range of pottery dated to the late Iron Age and early Roman period (HER TQ66 NW45). An area of burning also showed that some shallow features survived on the surface of the clay subsoil. In 1988, excavation immediately to the north revealed another large early Roman ditch running east to west (Mynott 1988). In 1993, an Iron Age enclosure with associated pits and structural features of more than one period, was investigated prior to the construction of the Tennis and Fitness Centre (Philp 2002), located 80m north of the PDA. Later Roman occupation has not been identified in the area.

### *Roman (c AD 43– 400)*

- 2.3.6 Roman material was also identified during former archaeological investigations at the Meopham School site. This activity focused on a large sub-circular quarry that may have been deliberately situated to block the entrance of the earlier settlement (CAT 2017).

*Medieval to post-medieval (c AD 400–1540)*

- 2.3.7 No Anglo-Saxon archaeological remains are reported within the site or within a 500m radius, although the place name and documentary references suggest that settlement of this date could exist in the area.
- 2.3.8 No later medieval archaeological remains are reported within the site. However, a fourteenth-century coin hoard was found 280m to the east (HER TQ66 NW43).

*Post medieval (c AD 1540–1900)*

- 2.3.9 No post-medieval archaeological sites are identified within or near the PDA, but several standing structures are recorded within a 500m radius and some features recorded on early maps are significant. Notable buildings within the area comprise Elizabeth House, a seventeenth-century building used as a workhouse in the eighteenth century and situated 275m to the north-east, on the opposite side of the Wrotham Road (HER TQ66 NW70). Close by is an early farmhouse (also called Elizabeth House), with three smaller buildings surviving from a larger dispersed post-medieval farm dating from 1600 (HER MKE84236). Dorrington Cottage, formerly Well Cottage, and the present Well House, are of similar date and lie close by to the north (HER TQ66 NW102; TQ66 NW83). On the west side of Wrotham Road and 230m from the site is the George Inn, dating from the mid seventeenth century with later additions (HER TQ66 NW80). Church Cottages are also of seventeenth century date, lying 450m to the north opposite the church (HER TQ66 NW104). In addition, two farms with early origins are situated on the west side of the Wrotham Road; Clements Reach Farm, lying 250m north-west of the site, and Lomers Farm, a similar distance to the south (HER MKE84176; MKE84178). The former is of courtyard plan and of post-medieval origin with an adjacent outfarm on the north-west; Lomers Farm is similarly of post-medieval to early nineteenth-century date. The existence of a limekiln west of Clements Roach Farm and of a brickfield and clay pit to the north are noteworthy as minor industrial sites serving the post-medieval settlement. There are also a number of Second World War installations in the vicinity.
- 2.3.10 Early historic maps of the PDA depict Meopham as a small settlement situated north of Pitfield Green and set either side of the north–south road running between Wrotham to the south and Gravesend to the north. The main settlement is shown as sited north of the PDA, with the church set to the east of the road, and other buildings (farmsteads) to the west. The 1797 Ordnance Survey (OS) drawing shows the PDA as occupying the southern half of a large, irregular field set between three farmsteads to the south-west of the main settlement. Meopham itself is shown clustered principally around the road junctions to the south of the church (mainly the eastern road), with buildings also shown north-east of the church. Late nineteenth-century OS maps show the PDA as located within a large field on the west side of Wrotham Road, to the north-east of Lomers Farm. The field is later sub-divided as shown on the 1896 and 1937 OS maps.
- 2.3.11 Aerial photographs from the 1940s and 1960s show no significant changes, other than increased development within the Meopham area, mainly to the east of the school.
- 2.3.12 The fields were then developed into a school site before the 1990s. No changes are noted until the 2018 satellite image which shows development to the immediate north of the PDA (for the new school building) and demolition of school buildings within the PDA between 2018 and 2020.

## 3 Aims and objectives

### 3.1 Objectives

- 3.1.1 The principal objective of the evaluation as set out within the approved WSI was to establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits, their depth and extent. Such remains could include structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts.
- 3.1.2 As such the general objectives were to determine where possible:
- the nature and level of natural geology
  - The earliest deposits identified
  - The latest deposits identified
  - The extent, depth and character of the archaeological resource
  - The extent of modern disturbance

### 3.2 Site specific objectives

- 3.2.1 The site-specific objectives were compiled with reference to the South-Eastern Research Framework (SERF), and from previous archaeological knowledge of the site. These would seek to:
- understand the nature, character, date and extent of any archaeological remains that can be associated with Iron Age settlement within the site or late Iron Age/early Roman funerary activity, as identified during the 2016 archaeological works to the immediate north of the PDA;
  - clarify previous impacts of the development of the school on the potential archaeological resource, particularly any remains of Iron Age and early Roman date;
  - place and assess any archaeological remains revealed within the context of other recent investigations in the immediate area and within the setting of the local landscape and topography.

## 4 Evaluation methodology

### 4.1 Archaeological excavation and recording

- 4.1.1 The archaeological site investigation works were conducted in accordance with parts A and B of the approved WSI (CAT 2022a), and to professional standards as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (2020). CAT is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
- 4.1.2 The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation by machine of eleven trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development (Figure 1). The trenches measured between 20 and 15m in length and 1.5m wide. Slight alterations to the original lengths and

orientation of some of the trenches were made due to onsite constraints. These were not detrimental to the overall results of the evaluation.

- 4.1.3 Mechanical excavation was limited to the removal of overburden to expose the uppermost archaeological deposits or the natural geological surface, whichever was the higher. Ground reduction was undertaken using an 8-tonne 360° tracked mechanical back-acting excavator with a flat-bladed grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All undifferentiated overburden was removed in spits of c 100mm thickness.
- 4.1.4 Following the mechanical clearance of overburden, excavation of archaeological features was undertaken by hand. All features and deposits were excavated stratigraphically and by phase in accordance with Part B of the WSI.
- 4.1.5 Care was taken not to damage archaeological deposits or structures by unnecessary excavation. In general, the underlying geological deposits were not reduced but identified and recorded in terms of extent and depth below ground level (BGL), also expressed as height above the Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 4.1.6 Survey was undertaken using a differential GNSS Leica Viva GS08 using Leica Smart Net data via live internet feed with a positional accuracy of less than 20mm (3D). The mapped features were located in real time to the Ordnance Survey grid.
- 4.1.7 All archaeological contexts were recorded individually on *pro forma* Trench record sheets. A photographic record in digital format was kept. Where necessary plans and sections were drawn at appropriate scale on polyester-based drawing film.
- 4.1.8 A limited environmental sampling programme was undertaken where suitable deposits were identified. Soil sampling was conducted under the guidance of a qualified environmental archaeologist and in accordance with Historic England guidelines (HE 2011).

## 4.2 Health, Safety and Welfare

- 4.2.1 Health, Safety and Welfare followed the CAT's Company Policy and Procedural Manual for Health, Safety and Welfare (2021).
- 4.2.2 Site investigation works were conducted in accordance with a project specific Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) (CAT 2022c). The PDA was located within a fenced and secure area that ensured no unauthorised access to the excavations.
- 4.2.3 All CAT operatives hold valid CSCS safety cards. CAT is a member of Constructionline and is AcclaimSSIP accredited.
- 4.2.4 All necessary precautions to the satisfaction of the Statutory or other Service Authorities and the landowner concerned were taken to avoid interference with or damage to their services, and to comply with any applicable Codes of Practice. Prior to excavation all trench locations were scanned using a CAT scanner. No functioning services were uncovered during the investigation.

## 4.3 Project archive and data processing

- 4.3.1 Site reporting and archiving was undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined in Parts A and B of the specification.

- 4.3.2 The project archive has been prepared in accordance with Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation (Historic England 2008) and Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (AAF 2011).
- 4.3.3 All fieldwork records have been collated, checked for consistency and a full digital copy made. A digitised plan of the archaeological resource has been compiled using AutoCAD 2022. Photographic records have been catalogued and cross-referenced with trench records.
- 4.3.4 All retained artefacts recovered during the project have been processed, catalogued and packaged in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation Guidelines (UKIC 1990).
- 4.3.5 An OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations) record has been created for this project (<http://oasis.ac.uk/form/formctl.cfm?oid=canterbu3-507376>). The OASIS record will be updated following any further mitigation work and will be submitted to the Kent Historic Environment Record. This will include a digital .pdf version of the full archive report/s.
- 4.3.6 The results from this work are held within the site archive under project code EV MSM 22, archive number: 4829. The archive is presently stored at Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 92a Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2LU.

## 5 Archaeological results

(Figures 2 & 3)

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The evaluation results are presented within Trench tables (Appendix 1). Context data is expressed as thickness of deposit/feature and depth below ground level (BGL) in metres.
- 5.1.2 The evaluation identified a total of thirteen archaeological features (Table 1) that cut the underlying geological horizon. Seven archaeological interventions were excavated representing a 50% sample of the archaeological resource. A summary of the evaluation results is given below by provisional date.

Feature type	Quantity
Ditch	9
Field drain	3
Tree throw?	1

Table 1. Summary of archaeological features

### 5.2 Geology

- 5.2.1 The upper geological sequence within the northern half of the PDA (Area A) comprised a light yellowish brown compact sandy clay Head deposit (102, 202, 302, 402 and 502). The geological surface had been truncated by modern activities and lay at approximately 0.3m below the present ground level at a height of 131.5m to 131.6m OD at the west and 132.72m OD at the east.

5.2.2 The geological sequence in the southern half of the PDA (Area B) was more variable. Isolated outcrops of chalk (616, 905 and 1004) were identified in Trenches 6, 9 and 10. These outcrops were generally less than 3 to 4m across. Sealing these deposits was dark brown clay with flint (614, 703, 804, 902 and 1003) identified in Trenches 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Finally, deposits of yellow brown compact sandy clay Head (615, 702, 803, 1002 and 1102) were identified in Trenches 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. The geological surface lay between 0.6m and 0.3m below the present ground level, at a height of 133.20m OD at the south-east and 131.89m OD at the north-west.

### 5.3 Later prehistoric (4,000–100 BC)

5.3.1 A ditch and potential tree throw were present within Trench 1 in the north-west corner of Area A. Both features were truncated by the landscaping associated with the former school buildings. The north-east to south-west aligned ditch (106) measured 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile. It contained a single fill with charcoal, burnt flint, worked flint and pottery dated late Iron Age. An irregular tree throw (108), measuring 1.7m by 0.75m and 0.04m deep, did not produce any dateable artefacts.

5.3.2 Two ditches (1105 and 706) and a potential ditch terminal (904) were identified on the eastern side of Area B, within Trenches 7, 9 and 11. Ditch 706 was aligned north-west to south-east, whilst ditches 904 and 1105 appear to be roughly north to south aligned. It is not clear how these ditch sections relate. Overall, the ditches were up to 0.7m wide and 0.4m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile, each containing a similar fill with rare charcoal inclusions and no dateable material.

5.3.3 On the western side of Area B, four linear sections (609, 611, 807 and 809) recorded within Trenches 6 and 8 represent two adjacent ditches aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. The eastern linear (609 and 809) measured approximately 1m wide and 0.4m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile. The western linear (611 and 807) measured approximately 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep with a steep sided V-shaped profile. Overall, the ditches contained a similar fill containing occasional charcoal and, rare burnt and worked flint. Ditch 611 differed in character, with a series of three fills comprising primary silting (613) sealed by a deposit containing worked flint and a possible cattle mandible (610), which was in turn sealed by the overall deposit observed within the other ditch sections (612).

### 5.4 Post-medieval (AD 1550–1900)

5.4.1 Three probable field drains (603, 605 and 607) cut the geological horizon within Trench 6. Each was approximately 0.3m wide and 0.3m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile. They contained a similar fill with very frequent sub-angular flint.

### 5.5 Modern (AD 1900–present)

5.5.1 As noted, Area A was truncated by recent landscaping. Other activity associated with the former school was represented by robbed-out concrete footings and associated service runs observed in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. These were not individually recorded during this investigation. A further modern feature, likely representing a test-pit, was recorded in Trench 7.

## 6 Finds

### 6.1 Quantification and provisional dating

6.1.1 The finds assemblage comprised eight bulk find (BF) records, totalling 13 individual objects with a combined weight of 886g (Table 2).

Material	Context	Amount	Weight (g)	Spot-date	Description
Animal bone	610	1	215		Cattle? mandible
Burnt flint	806	2	189		
Burnt flint	104	2	212		
Pottery	104	1	3	LIA - 1st BC - mid 1st AD	
Worked flint	806	3	77	Neolithic to BA	one flake, one blade-like flake and one borer
Worked flint	104	1	20	Neolithic to BA	flake
Worked flint	610	3	165	Neolithic to BA	one core 2 flakes
Burnt flint	610	1	5		

Table 2. The finds assemblage

6.1.2 A total of seven worked flint artefacts were recovered from ditches 807, 104 and 611 that dated to the later prehistoric period. A single sherd of pottery was dated to the late Iron Age period and recovered from ditch 106.

## 7 Environmental

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Two bulk environmental samples (BS/GBA samples *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) from deposits noted to contain snails were examined.

### 7.2 Methods

7.2.1 Both samples had volumes of 10 litres. They were soaked overnight in water containing washing soda (sodium carbonate) before carrying out wet-sieving with flotation for recovery of biological material, broadly following the methods of Kenward *et al.* (1980). Flots were collected on 0.3mm mesh, and heavy residues on nested 2mm and 1mm sieves. All fractions were air-dried.

7.2.2 The dried residue fractions >2mm have been sorted in their entirety for biological remains and artefacts. Materials recovered were recorded semi-quantitatively on a four-point scale as follows: occasional +, moderately frequent ++, frequent +++, abundant +++. The fine residue fractions (>1mm) have not been systematically examined at this stage. The dried flots were briefly scanned under a low power stereoscopic microscope (x10) and abundance of remains was also recorded semi-quantitatively.

## 7.3 Results

7.3.1 Terrestrial snails were abundant in both the sample residues and flots (see Table 3). Other biological material consisted of traces of charcoal and in one sample (context 610) there were tiny traces of large mammal bone, micromammal skull and tooth fragments, and a frog jaw. No artefacts were noted.

Context	Sample	Description of deposit	Litre washed	>2mm Residue (kg)	Contents residue [additional material recovered from the >1mm residue in square brackets]	>2mm recovered >1mm in square brackets]	Flot (ml)	Contents flot/washover
610	<3>	Deposit rich in snail shell	10	0.17	Terrestrial snail shells and fragments ++ (added to flot); tiny trace mammal bone; micromammal incisor tooth and skull fragment; frog jaw fragment +		70	Terrestrial snail shells and fragments ++++; trace charcoal
613	<4>	Deposit rich in snail shell	10	0.15	Terrestrial snail shells and fragments ++ (added to flot)		60	Terrestrial snail shells and fragments ++++; trace charcoal

*Table 3. Remains recovered from the bulk environmental samples  
(Some materials have been recorded semi-quantitatively as follows: + present, ++ moderately frequent, +++ frequent, ++++ abundant)*

7.3.2 The snails were not examined exhaustively but they appear to be dominated by taxa typical of relatively moist (but not marshy), probably well-vegetated and somewhat shaded conditions in the vicinity of the feature (e.g. *Carychium tridentatum*, *Discus rotundatus*, *Cepaea*, *Helicigona lapicida*). Clausiliidae species are associated chiefly with wooded and otherwise shaded habitats. Snails from relatively dry places such as relatively short-turfed grassland were present in smaller numbers (e.g. *Helicella itala*, *Vallonia excentrica*, *Pupilla muscorum*). Given the lower numbers they may reflect local conditions further away from the feature.

## 7.4 Conclusions

7.4.1 The snails have some potential to provide environmental data, but samples from a single feature would only be indicative of conditions in its immediate vicinity.

# 8 Archaeological interpretation, development impact and conclusion

## 8.1 Archaeological interpretation

8.1.1 A complex geological horizon was encountered within Area B that comprised an outcrop of chalk with associated Clay-with-Flints. In places this was overlain by a deposit of silty sandy clay, probably Head, that was also predominant within Area A. The uppermost surface of the geological deposits was truncated in Area A but lay at approximately 0.3m beneath the present ground surface. In Area B, the geological surface undulated across the area at between 0.3m and 0.6m beneath the present ground level.



8.1.2 One ditch and possible tree throw were identified at the northern limit of Area A. Within Area B a series of ditches were identified, including two adjacent possibly associated ditches. Artefactual material, particularly dateable pottery, was scoured across the site. However, later prehistoric activity is evidenced by the recovery of burnt and worked flint. A single sherd of pottery dated late Iron Age (c 100 BC – AD 100) was recovered from the fill of ditch 106. Given the proximity of the PDA to the position of the known Iron Age activity identified in former archaeological works, it is possible that these new discoveries represent a continuation of this activity to the south.

8.1.3 Features of post-medieval and modern date were also recorded. These are deemed to be of low significance.

## 8.2 Development impact

8.2.1 The proposed development comprises a freestanding two-storey school building and a new staff car park to be located within Area A. A parent car park and drop off/pick up area will be constructed in Area B. Associated access, signage and landscaping works all form part of the development (Figure 1).

8.2.2 Impacts to be associated with the construction include remedial groundworks such as levelling of ground surfaces and removal of any hardstanding. New buildings and landscaping (including car parking) on the site will include excavation for foundations, insertion of services, excavation of soak-aways, and excavation of tree pits.

8.2.3 Excavation for the construction of building foundations such as ground beams, floor slabs and raft foundations have the potential to impact on the existing archaeological resource which lies at a minimum depth of 0.3m below the present ground surface in both areas A and B.

8.2.4 Other construction related activities such as piling, drainage and service trenches would also impact on the relatively shallow archaeological resource.

## 8.3 Conclusion

8.3.1 The evaluation confirmed the presence of archaeological features within areas A and B. Despite truncation in Area A, it has been shown that archaeological features survive in this area. These discoveries complement the results from previous investigation just to the north of the PDA, providing potential evidence to the south of, and beyond the limits of the Iron Age enclosure. These findings will contribute in a determination of the scope of further archaeological mitigation, if required.

8.3.2 There is a high potential for further below ground archaeological remains relating to the prehistoric period to survive across the PDA. The proposed development would, therefore, have an impact upon the known and/or unknown archaeological resource.

## 8.4 Confidence rating

8.4.1 The evaluation was sufficiently resourced and conducted under good weather conditions.

8.4.2 The evaluation is considered to have satisfactorily determined the presence/absence of the archaeological resource within the investigated area of the PDA.

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Appendix 1 Evaluation trench tables

<b>Trench:</b>	1	<b>Plates:</b>	4	<b>Figure:</b>	2
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 131.92m OD to SE 132.06m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Geological horizon cut by two prehistoric? features. Natural truncated by modern features (recorded in plan only)				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
100	Imported topsoil	Dark greyish brown, moderately compacted, sandy silt	0.1	---	Modern
101	Imported levelling	Light yellow brown, compacted, sandy clay with frequent small, rounded flint and occasional CBM fragments	0.1–0.22	0.1	Modern
102	Geology	Mottled light-yellow brown compacted sandy clay	---	0.3	Superficial deposit
103	Imported hardcore	Grey compacted sandy silty clay with frequent brick and tile CBM and plastic	0.1–0.18	0.2	Modern
104	Fill of 106	Grey-brown compact sandy clay with occasional rounded flint, rare burnt flint, and single sherd of pottery	0.15	0.3	Prehistoric
105	Fill of 106	Mottled light yellow-grey-brown, moderate, sandy clay with occasional flint pebbles	0.06	0.45	Prehistoric
106	Ditch	E–W aligned, 0.8m wide and 0.21m deep with a U-shaped profile and gradual sloping sides	0.21	0.3	Prehistoric
107	Fill of 108	Light grey-brown, moderate, sandy clay with frequent charcoal flecks	0.04	0.3	Prehistoric
108	Tree throw?	Irregular oval 1.7m by 0.75m and 0.04m deep with irregular sloped sides	0.04	0.3	Prehistoric

<b>Trench:</b>	2	<b>Plates:</b>	5	<b>Figure:</b>	2
<b>Length (m):</b>	15	<b>Orientation:</b>	NE–SW	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NE 131.83m OD to SW 131.82m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural truncated by modern features (recorded in plan only)				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
200	Imported topsoil	Dark greyish brown, moderately compacted, sandy silt	0.1	---	Modern
201	Imported levelling	Light yellow brown, compacted, sandy clay with frequent small, rounded flint and occasional CBM fragments	0.1–0.22	0.1	Modern
202	Geology	Mottled light-yellow brown compacted sandy clay	---	0.3	Superficial deposit
203	Imported hardcore	Grey compacted sandy silty clay with frequent brick and tile CBM and plastic	0.1–0.18	0.2	Modern

<b>Trench:</b>	3	<b>Plates:</b>	6	<b>Figure:</b>	2
<b>Length (m):</b>	17.5	<b>Orientation:</b>	NE–SW	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NE 131.90m OD to SW 131.81m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural truncated by modern features (recorded in plan only)				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
300	Imported topsoil	Dark greyish brown, moderately compacted, sandy silt	0.12–0.14	---	Modern
301	Imported levelling	Light grey-brown, compacted, sandy clay with frequent small, rounded flint and occasional CBM fragments	0.18–0.22	0.1	Modern
302	Geology	Mottled light-yellow-red-brown compacted sandy clay	---	0.3	Superficial deposit
303	Imported hardcore	Grey compacted sandy silty clay with frequent brick and tile CBM, plastic and metal	0.1–0.18	0.2	Modern

<b>Trench:</b>	4	<b>Plates:</b>	7	<b>Figure:</b>	2
<b>Length (m):</b>	15	<b>Orientation:</b>	NE–SW	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NE 133.03m OD to SW 133.09m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural truncated by modern features (recorded in plan only)				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
400	Imported topsoil	Dark greyish brown, moderately compacted, sandy silt	0.2	---	Modern
401	Imported hardcore	Grey compacted sandy silty clay with frequent brick and tile CBM, plastic and metal	0.1–0.2	0.2	Modern
402	Geology	Mottled light-yellow-red-brown compacted sandy clay	---	0.3	Superficial deposit

<b>Trench:</b>	5	<b>Plates:</b>	8	<b>Figure:</b>	2
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 133.03m OD to SE 133.04m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural truncated by modern features (recorded in plan only)				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
500	Imported topsoil	Dark greyish brown, moderately compacted, sandy silt	0.1	---	Modern
501	Imported hardcore	Grey compacted sandy silty clay with frequent brick and tile CBM, plastic and metal	0.1	0.1	Modern
502	Geology	Mottled light-yellow-red-brown compacted sandy clay	---	0.2	Superficial deposit

<b>Trench:</b>	6	<b>Plates:</b>	9–10	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 132.60m OD to SE 133.10m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Varied natural cut by two prehistoric features and three post-medieval features				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
600	Topsoil and turf	Dark greyish brown, moderate, sandy silt with occasional sub-angular flint	0.2	---	Modern
601	Subsoil	Grey-brown, moderate, sandy silty clay	0.3	0.2	Post-Roman
602	Fill of 603	Grey-brown, moderate, silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint	0.3	0.5	Post-medieval
603	Field drain	N–S aligned, 0.35m wide and 0.3m deep with a moderate sided U-shaped profile	0.3	0.5	Post-medieval
604	Fill of 605	Dark grey, moderate, silty clay with common small to medium sub-angular flints	0.3	0.5	Post-medieval
605	Field drain	NE–SW aligned, 0.3m wide and 0.24m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile	0.24	0.5	Post-medieval
606	Fill of 607	Dark grey, moderate, silty clay with common medium sub-angular flints (not excavated)	---	0.5	Post-medieval
607	Field drain	NE–SW aligned, 0.3m wide (not excavated)	---	0.5	Post-medieval
608	Fill of 609	Dark grey, moderate, clay silt (partially observed in section - not excavated)	0.3+	0.5	Prehistoric
609	Ditch	NNE–SSW aligned, 1.2m wide and 0.3+m deep with steep sides (not excavated)	0.3+	0.5	Prehistoric
610	Fill of 611	Brown-grey, moderate, clay sandy silt with common chalk, rare animal bone, rare worked? Flint, burnt flint, charcoal. Sample 3.	0.4	0.7	Prehistoric
611	Ditch	NNE–SSW aligned, 1.6m wide and 0.8m deep with steep V-shaped sides and a flat base 0.3m wide	0.8	0.5	Prehistoric

612	Fill of 611	Dark grey, moderate, clay silt with chalk and charcoal (observed in section only)	0.2	0.5	Prehistoric
613	Basal fill of 611	Light grey-brown, moderate, clay silt with common weathered chalk, occasional small worked? flint, charcoal, snails. Sample 4.	0.2	0.5	Prehistoric
614	Geology	Dark brown, compact, clay with medium to large sub-angular flint	0.2	0.5	Bedrock
615	Geology	Light brown, moderate, sandy clay	---	0.5	Superficial deposit
616	Geology	Chalk with occasional sub-angular flint	---	0.5	Bedrock

<b>Trench:</b>	7	<b>Plates:</b>	11	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NE–SW	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NE 133.72m OD to SW 133.06m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Varied natural cut by a single prehistoric? feature				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
700	Topsoil	Light grey-brown, moderate, sandy silty clay	0.1–0.2	---	Modern
701	Sub-soil	Yellow-brown moderate silty clay	0.25	0.1–0.2	Post-Roman
702	Geology	Mottled light-yellow brown moderate sandy clay with occasional small flint	---	0.3–0.4	Superficial deposit
703	Geology	Dark brown compacted clay with frequent large flint and chalk	---	0.3–0.4	Bedrock
704	Geology	Light yellow brown silty sandy clay with occasional small, rounded flint	---	0.3–0.4	Superficial deposit
705	Fill of 106	Light grey-brown, compact, sandy silty clay with occasional manganese	0.35	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric?
706	Ditch	NW–SE aligned, 0.65m wide and 0.35m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile	0.35	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric?



<b>Trench:</b>	8	<b>Plates:</b>	12	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NE–SW	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NE 132.88m OD to SW 132.60m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Varied natural cut by three prehistoric features				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
800	Topsoil	Grey-brown, moderate, sandy silt	0.2	---	Modern
801	Sub-soil	Brown-grey, moderate, clay sandy silt with occasional small sub-angular flint	0.22	0.2	Post-Roman
802	Nat/sub-soil Interface	Brown-red grey, moderate, silty sandy clay	0.05–0.1	0.4	Geological
803	Geology	Red-brown, compact, sandy clay	---	0.4–0.5	Bedrock
804	Geology	Red-brown, compact, clay with flint	---	0.3–0.4	Bedrock
805	Geology	Light grey-brown, moderate, sandy clay	---	0.3–0.4	Superficial deposit
806	Fill of 807	Mottled grey and light grey-brown, moderate, silty sandy clay with occasional small to medium sub-angular flint, occasional charcoal flecks, rare worked? flint, large burnt flint and a single very small fragment of pottery	0.6	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric
807	Ditch	NNE–SSW aligned, 1.6m wide (machine truncated in trench) and 0.6m deep with steep V-shaped sides and a flat base 0.3m wide	0.6	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric
808	Fill of 809	Grey, compact, sandy clay with occasional small sub-angular flints	0.2	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric?
809	Ditch	N–S aligned, 1m wide and 0.2m deep with shallow sides and a rounded base	0.2	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric?
810	Fill of 811	Dark grey, moderate, sandy silt with occasional small flint (not excavated)	---	0.3–0.4	Prehistoric?
811	Feature	Uncertain feature (not excavated)	---	0.3.–0.4	Prehistoric?

<b>Trench:</b>	9	<b>Plates:</b>	13–14	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 133.15m OD to SE 133.68m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural cut by a single prehistoric? feature				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
900	Topsoil	Light grey-brown, moderate, sandy silty clay	0.2	---	Modern
901	Sub-soil	Yellow-brown moderate silty clay	0.2	0.2	Post-Roman
902	Geology	Red-brown, compact, clay with occasional medium to large flint	---	0.4	Bedrock
903	Fill of 904	Grey-brown, moderate, sandy clay with large sub-angular flint	0.4	0.4	Prehistoric?
904	Ditch terminal	NE–SW aligned rounded terminal end, 0.6m wide and 0.4m deep with a steep sided U-shaped profile	0.4	0.4	Prehistoric?
905	Geology	Brown compact clay with frequent chalk and large flint	---	0.4	Bedrock

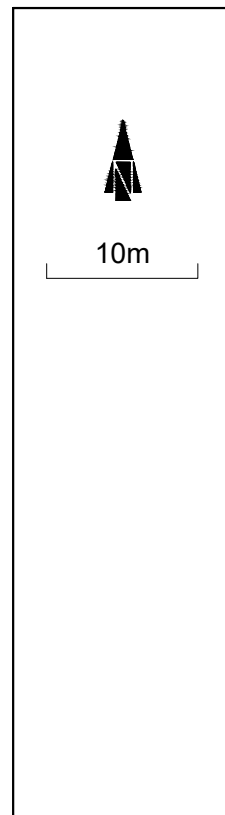
<b>Trench:</b>	10	<b>Plates:</b>	15	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	20	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 132.39m OD to SE 132.90m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Varied natural				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
1000	Topsoil	Grey-brown, moderate, sandy silty clay	0.3	---	Modern
1001	Sub-soil	Yellow-brown moderate silty clay	0.2	0.2	Post-Roman
1002	Geology	Red-brown, compact, clay with occasional medium to large flint	---	0.5	Bedrock
1003	Geology	Strong red brown sandy silty clay	---	0.5	Superficial deposit
1004	Geology	Brown clay/Chalk with occasional large sub-angular flint	---	0.5	Bedrock

<b>Trench:</b>	11	<b>Plates:</b>	16	<b>Figure:</b>	3
<b>Length (m):</b>	17	<b>Orientation:</b>	NW–SE	<b>Trench width (m):</b>	1.5
<b>Ground level:</b>	NW 133.34m OD to SE 133.79m OD				
<b>Description:</b>	Natural cut by a single prehistoric? feature				
<b>Context no.</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Max thickness (m)</b>	<b>Depth BGL (m)</b>	<b>Provisional date</b>
1100	Topsoil	Light grey-brown, moderate, sandy silty clay	0.2	---	Modern
1101	Sub-soil	Light yellow-grey brown moderate clay silt with occasional small flint and charcoal	0.2	0.2	Post-Roman
1102	Geology	Yellow brown, compact, sandy clay	---	0.4–0.6	Superficial deposit
1103	Nat/sub-soil Interface	Grey-brown, compact, silty clay with charcoal	0.2	0.4	Prehistoric?
1104	Fill of 1105	Grey, green-brown compact, silty clay with rare small charcoal, manganese, and small sub-angular flint	0.6	0.4	Prehistoric?
1105	Ditch	NE–SW aligned, 1.2m wide and 0.6m deep with steep sided U-shaped profile 0.2m wide at base	---	0.4	Prehistoric?

Appendix 2 Kent County Council Sites and Monuments Record Form

<b>Site Name:</b> Land at Meopham School, Meopham	
<b>Site Code:</b> EV MSM 222	
<b>Site Address:</b> Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0AH	
<b>District:</b> Gravesend <b>Parish:</b> Meopham	
<p><i>Between 30 May and 1 June 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) undertook an evaluation of land at Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent DA13 0AH. The works were commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) who are currently making preparations for development at Meopham School, comprising the erection of a new freestanding two-storey school building, new staff car park, new parent car park and drop off/pick up area, together with associated access, signage and landscaping works.</i></p>	
<b>Periods:</b> Prehistoric, Post-medieval	
<b>National Grid Reference:</b> 564221 165804 (centered)	
<b>Type of Fieldwork:</b> Evaluation	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 30 May 2022	
<b>Contractor:</b> Canterbury Archaeological Trust 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2LU Tel: (01227) 462062 email: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk	
<b>Title and Author of accompanying report:</b> Land at Meopham School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AH Evaluation report Report no. 2022/101 R Lane	
<b>Summary of Field Results:</b> <p><i>At the southern limit of the proposed development area (PDA) several ditches were noted on north-north-east to south-south-west alignment. The ditches varied in width and depth between 1.6 and 1m wide and 0.6 and 0.4m deep with V-shaped and U-shaped profile respectively. In addition, a ditch and possible tree throw were identified at the northern limit of the PDA. All the features contained limited artefactual remains but the presence of burnt flint as well as potential worked flint would indicate the ditches were formed at some point during the later prehistoric period (4,000–100BC). A single sherd of pottery dated late Iron Age (c 100 BC to AD 100) was recovered from one ditch. Previous archaeological fieldwork in the area recorded a substantial middle to late Iron Age enclosure (600 BC to AD 100) lying adjacent, and to the north of, the proposed development area. It is considered likely that the archaeological features identified during this evaluation represent a continuation of this activity.</i></p> <p><i>A series of field drains, also recorded, probably relate to post-medieval farming activity.</i></p>	
<b>Location of Archive:</b> CANTERBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST	
<b>Compiler:</b> Ross Lane	<b>Date:</b> June 2022






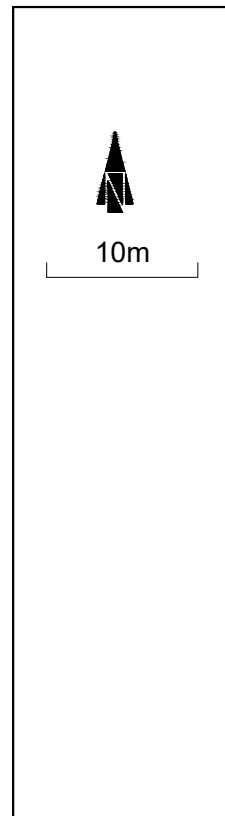
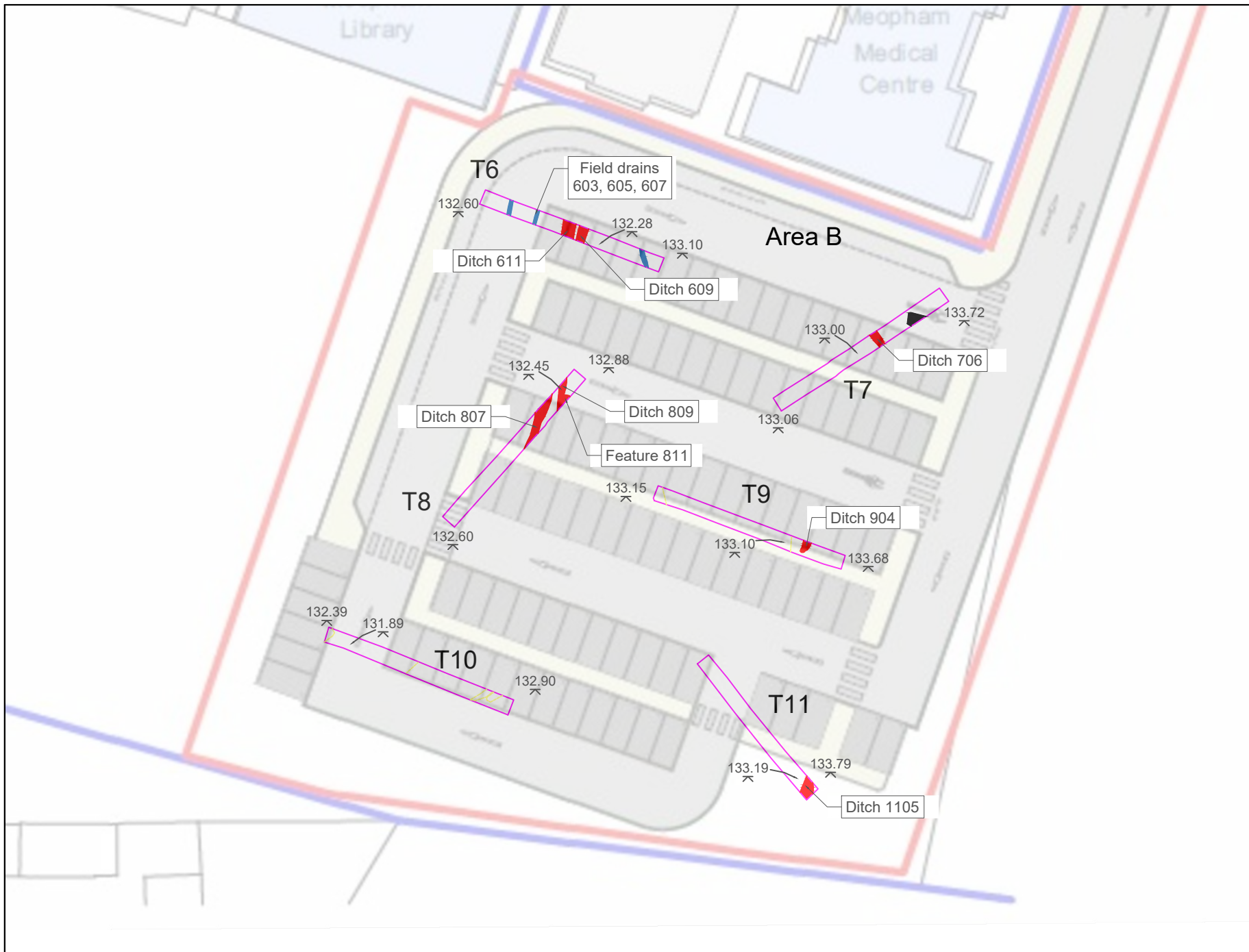
 <b>C.A.T.</b> Canterbury Archaeological Trust 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU t: 01227 462062 e: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk w: canterburytrust.co.uk	
<b>PROJECT</b> Land at Meopham School, Wrotham, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AH	
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Figure 2. Trench and archaeology plan, Area A



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Figure 3. Trench and archaeology plan, Area B

**Plates**



Plate 1. Pre-excitation, Area A east side, looking north-west



Plate 2. Pre-excitation, Area A west side, looking north-east





Plate 3. Pre-excitation, Area B, looking north-west



Plate 4. Trench 1 showing ditch 106, looking north-north-west, scale 1m



Plate 5. Trench 2, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 6. Trench 3, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 7. Trench 4 showing modern truncation, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 8. Trench 5, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 9. Trench 6, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 10. Trench 6 showing ditches 611 (left) and 609 (right), looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 11. Trench 7, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 12. Trench 8, showing ditches 809 and 807 and feature 811, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 13. Trench 9, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 14. Trench 9 showing ditch 904, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 15. Trench 10, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 16. Trench 11, south-east section showing ditch 1105, looking north-east, scale 1m