



Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E school, High Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AY

Archaeological Watching Brief report

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Project Contributors

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Project Officer:	R Lane
Field Work:	R Lane
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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by KIER construction on behalf of their client Kent County Council.

The archaeological programme was monitored by the Heritage Conservation Group (HCG), Kent County Council (KCC).

Summary

Between November 2021 and February 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook monitoring of development at Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY (NGR 610778 166468). The works were commissioned by KIER Construction on behalf of Kent County Council as part of preparations for the construction of a new single storey extension and the erection of a new, free standing canteen and kitchen building and associated drainage.

This report presents the results from an intermittent archaeological watching brief which comprised four separate visits to observe the excavation of new foundation trenches and drainage. The report defines the extent and nature, of any significant archaeological assets identified.

The watching brief recorded the geology and a buried soil horizon cut by at least five post-medieval refuse pits related to properties that fronted onto the High Street.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Between November 2021 and February 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) undertook monitoring of development at Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY (NGR 610778 166468). The works were commissioned by KIER Construction on behalf of Kent County Council as part of preparations for the construction of a new single storey extension and the erection of a new, free standing canteen and kitchen building and associated drainage.
- 1.1.2 The local planning authority (LPA) under the *Town and Country Planning Acts* is Canterbury City Council. However, as a school the site came under the purview of Kent County Council (KCC) who under those acts and in accordance with the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)*, granted permission (Planning Reference CA/21/1429) for the development on 22 September 2021.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was maintained throughout a programme of ground excavation. It was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (CAT 2021b) approved by the KCC's Heritage Conservation Group (HCG). This report sets out the results of the watching brief and will seek to define the extent and nature of the archaeological resource encountered.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The PDA is situated within Whitstable (Figure 1); it lies to the east side of the High Street, and to the north-east of St Alphege Church. The ground is currently occupied by buildings belonging to Whitstable Endowed School. The PDA is formed of two areas - the westernmost area (labelled in Fig 1 as 'New Building') is currently used as a garden space containing a potting shed and planting beds, subdivided by trellises; while the easternmost area (labelled on Fig 1 as 'Extension') forms the north-western part of the main school building and an area of outside space to its immediate north. The PDAs are bounded to the west and north by the school boundary with residences beyond (off the High Street and Gladstone Road, respectively); and to the east and south by school-buildings and a parking area. The area lies at a height of approximately 4m OD.
- 1.2.2 Bedrock geology within the PDA is shown as London Clay Formation (clay and silt), overlain by superficial deposits of Alluvium (clay, silt, sand and peat) to the north-east side (BGS on-line).

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 2021a). 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 within Whitstable Town Conservation Area designated on 05.03.1991.

2.3 Archaeological background

Prehistoric (c 500,000BP – c AD 43)

- 2.3.1 No archaeological remains from this period are reported within the PDA or within a 500m radius of the PDA.

- 2.3.2 The PDA lies within Palaeolithic Character Areas (PCA) 20 and 24, defined as Swale estuarine/alluvial marshes, being Estuarine alluvium around the Swale and Isle of Sheppey and The Blean plateau, respectively. There are three stray surface finds of handaxes, all from the shoreline, but none of them are associated with any Pleistocene provenance.

Roman (c 43 – c AD 400)

- 2.3.3 No Romano-British archaeological remains are reported within the PDA or within a 500m radius of the PDA.

Anglo-Saxon (c AD 450–1066)

- 2.3.4 The only find recorded from this period is a Merovingian gold tremissis, reported to have been found near Whitstable Cricket pitch, c 500m south-south-east of the PDA (HER Number: TR 16 NW 210). However, Whitstable must have been in existence prior to the Norman Conquest given its size in Domesday Book (see below) and the Anglo-Saxon origin of its name, hwīt-stapol, meaning a white post (KEPN on-line, sv Whitstable).

Medieval (c AD 1066–1540)

- 2.3.5 Domesday Book records Whitstable (recorded here as 'Nortone') as a very large settlement of about 41.5 households with 7 salt-houses and 2 churches (Domesday on-line, sv Whitstable). The Salt-houses reveal that the settlement was involved in salt-production utilising the foreshore. The probability is that this settlement lay to the north of the PDA, nearer the current harbour (c 500m north).

- 2.3.6 Possible medieval buildings and workshops have been uncovered at Terry's Lane, 290m north-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 16 NW 114) and there is evidence of a medieval occupation site at Browning's Yard, 335m north-west of the PDA, evaluated by Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 1995. Here, a layer of domestic refuse and pottery sherds suggested one period of occupation upon this site from at least the sixteenth century, with three beams slots suggesting a timber-framed building was also present (HER Number: TR 16 NW 102).

Post-medieval (c AD 1540–1900)

- 2.3.7 The Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of 1769 shows this part of Whitstable as a small settlement along a single street, named 'Whitstable Street', to the north-west of Whitstable proper, which is shown located further inland. Whitstable Street is shown running parallel to the coast, north-south, with the majority of its buildings on the east side of the street and gardens to their rear; the PDA lies behind these plots. By the time the 1797 Ordnance Survey

(OS) drawing was created, the settlement had expanded, and residences are shown occupying both sides of the street and extending north and south of their previous limit. The PDA remains in undeveloped fields to the east of the High Street, characterised in the HER as an area of post-1810 settlement.

- 2.3.8 Hasted (1799, 505–517), records Whitstable (then also known as Whitstaple) as:

The next parish eastward from Seasalter, the whole of it being within the hundred of Whitstaple, excepting the small borough of Harwich, which the hundred of Westgate claims over.

Though not an unpleasant situation, it has till of late been considered as an unhealthy one, owing partly to the dampness arising from the salt marshes on the southwest side of the street, and partly to the general badness of the water thereabouts, though these objections have been since in a great measure remedied, for a few years ago the marshes were drained, and thrown into arable land...

...The street is very populous, and the inhabitants of it thriving, though of an inferior condition in life, and coarse trades, consisting mostly of those employed in the fishery and oyster dredging, the coal trade, the passage-hoys to and from London, and in the shops which supply the whole of them with the necessaries of life, and above all, the illicit trade of smuggling, though that has been within these few years much more than at present.

- 2.3.9 The 1876 (First Edition) OS map shows a great deal of development from Hasted's time. Importantly, the Endowed School now appears within the PDA, with an open area to its north-east and lawns or gardens to its front (south-west); it is approached from the High Street via a narrow lane that runs on the north-side of St Alphege Church, which, like the school, was built back from the High Street (the church dates from 1840). The general growth in the town is shown by the appearance of a second road parallel to the High Street to its west, with residential properties built along it. In this period, however, the school building is in an isolated location, surrounded by gardens. The second edition OS map of the late 1800s shows the gradual ingress of residential properties around the school – a terrace of houses has now been built to the north, off Gladstone Road, and three small properties lie to the south. Within the PDA an ancillary school building had been built by this time in the north-eastern side of the yard.

- 2.3.10 Post-medieval activity within the vicinity of the PDA includes metallised surfaces and a well associated with properties fronting the High Street. Foundations representing remnants of a nineteenth- or early twentieth-century structures (HER Number: TR 15 NW 2402). Buildings and rubbish pits on Horsebridge Road, Whitstable, 310m north-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 16 NW 111). Occupation at the Browning's Yard, 335m north-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 16 NW 102). The remains of the former sea wall 345m north-west of the PDA, built in 1583 by cutting a trench and piling the spoil up to create both a ditch and a bank on the seaward side (HER Number: TR 16 NW 110).

Modern (c AD 1900–2000)

- 2.3.11 By the early twentieth century the school, now extended to the north-east, lay surrounded on all sides by residential properties, with new houses along the newly built Regent Street to the east of the PDA and King Edward Street to the south.

3 Objectives

3.1 General

3.1.1 The general objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of the development and excavations in connection with the groundworks and the identification and clarification of nature and extent of historic activity of both the immediate and adjacent areas. More specific objectives was the identification of any evidence pertaining to the later medieval to post-medieval periods.

3.2 Site specific

3.2.1 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

4 Evaluation methodology

4.1 Archaeological excavation and recording

4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was conducted in accordance with the approved WSI (CAT 2021b), and to professional standards as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief* (2014 updated 2020). CAT is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

4.1.2 The archaeological watching brief covered the excavation of foundation footings for a new extension to an existing building, for a new single storey building and for associated new drainage works (Figure 1). The footings for the new single storey structure measured 0.6m wide and between 1.5 and 1.8m deep. A new soak-away drainage measured 0.6m wide and 1.1m deep.

4.1.3 During and post machine excavation the exposed surfaces were inspected and any archaeological structures or features revealed were recorded in plan and section where appropriate. Limited hand excavation was employed to further clarify the extent and nature of archaeological deposits as necessary.

4.1.4 No finds of human remains were encountered during the investigations. The exposed archaeological resource was of low significance and no further mitigation measures were warranted.

4.1.5 The location of archaeological features and deposits is indicated on the site plane (Figure 2) and tied to the Ordnance Survey grid of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

4.1.6 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

4.2 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 (2019).

4.2.2 Site investigation works were conducted in accordance with a project specific Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) (CAT 2021c). 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 Acclaim SSIP accredited.

4.3 Project archive and data processing

4.3.1 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).

4.3.2 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.

4.3.3 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).

4.3.4 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=canterbu3-507522>). The OASIS record will be submitted to the Kent Historic Environment Record. This will include a digital .pdf version of the full archive report/s.

4.3.5 The results from this work are held within the site archive under project code WESHSW WB 21, archive number: 4841. The archive is presently stored at Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 92a Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2LU.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The watching brief results are presented below, context data is presented in Appendix 1. No archaeological features or deposits were identified within the Footprint of the proposed extension construction. All features and deposits recorded were located within the footprint of the proposed detached building.

5.1.2 The watching brief identified a total of 5 archaeological features (Table 1) that truncated a buried deposit that overlay the upper geological horizon. A summary of the evaluation results is given below by provisional date.

Feature type	Number
Buried ground surface	2
Pit	5

Table 1. Summary of archaeological features

5.2 Geology

Figure 2; plates 1–5

- 5.2.1 The upper geological sequence across the PDA comprised green/yellow brown clay (115) that lay between 0.8m and 0.5m beneath the present ground level between 3.3m and 3.5m OD.

5.3 Post-medieval (AD 1550–1900)

- 5.3.1 The geological horizon was covered by a 0.25m thick deposit (114) of grey silty clay with occasional small CBM, oyster shell and mortar inclusions. This was truncated by at least five pits (105, 107, 109, 111, 113).
- 5.3.2 The pits varied in size between 1.5m and 0.5m in diameter and were located predominantly along the western edge of the PDA but also extending sporadically across the footprint of the new building. They contained a similar infill of dark grey loosely compacted clay silt gravel with common CBM (not kept), mortar dust, oyster shell (not kept), clay pipe, bricks and rare whiteware ceramic sherds.

5.4 Modern (AD 1900–2000)

- 5.4.1 The south-western edge of the PDA was crossed by nineteenth century foul service the construction cut (103) for which truncated the earlier pits. This contained a mixed fill with CBM, oyster shell, coal and metal inclusions.
- 5.4.2 The PDA was covered by an original ground surface comprised of a 0.2m thick deposit of dark grey clay silt topsoil (101).

6 Finds

6.1 Quantification and provisional dating

- 6.1.1 Common building material (CBM) was noted but not recovered during the course of the investigation as the watching brief sought primarily to clarify dating of archaeological features.
- 6.1.2 A small-sized finds assemblage, comprising 3 bulk find (BF) records was recovered during the investigation, totalling 13 individual objects with a combined weight of 886g (Table 2).

Material	Context	Amount	Weight (g)	Spot-date	Description
Glazed whiteware	108	3	212	19 th century	Blue and white glazed stone china
Glazed whiteware	110	2	78	19 th century	Yellow white glazed stone china (water closet or basin)

Clay pipe	104	2	65	19 th century	Stem
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Table 2. The finds assemblage

- 6.1.3 A total of five sherds of glazed whiteware (stone china) were recovered from pits 109 and 111 and clay pipe stem fragments from pit 105 that dated to the nineteenth century.

7 Archaeological interpretation, development impact and conclusion

7.1 Archaeological interpretation

- 7.1.1 The geological horizon comprised London clay formation at a depth of between 0.5m and 0.8m beneath the original ground surface, approximately 3.5m OD. No alluvium was present and the variation in depth of the upper geological surface was likely a result of modern truncations to the original ground level.
- 7.1.2 A buried ground surface (114) contained common material related to building works within the area and likely dated to the late eighteenth to nineteenth century. The PDA lies at the rear of gardens for properties that fronted onto Whitstable High Street and at least five refuse pits (105, 107, 109, 111, 113) associated with occupation of these properties were identified across the site. The pits varied in size but contained similar material and likely dated to the nineteenth century.
- 7.1.3 A later service line (103) was identified likely associated with the building of the school in the late nineteenth century.

7.2 Conclusion

- 7.2.1 The watching brief identified and recorded archaeological features and deposits related to nineteenth century activity within the PDA associated with the rear gardens of properties that fronted onto Whitstable high street. The archaeological resource is well preserved and survives outside of the areas truncated by the new foundations and drainage arrangement. The recorded data will complement results from previous investigations within the wider area.

7.3 Confidence rating

- 7.3.1 The watching brief was sufficiently resourced and conducted under good weather conditions.
- 7.3.2 The watching brief is considered to have satisfactorily ascertained the nature, depth and character of the archaeological resource within the investigated area of the PDA.

References

- AAF 2011 Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum
- BGS on-line, Geology of Britain Viewer, British Geological Survey (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).
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- CAT 2021c, Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AY; Risk assessment and Method Statement for an Archaeological watching Brief, Unpublished CAT client report
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- Historic England 2008 Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation, Historic England
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- KHER on-line, Historic Environment Record, KCC (<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>).
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- UKIC 1990 Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation

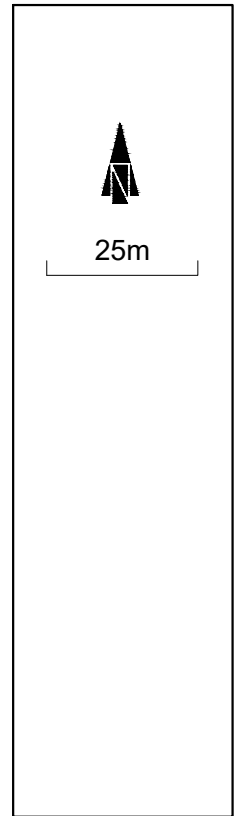
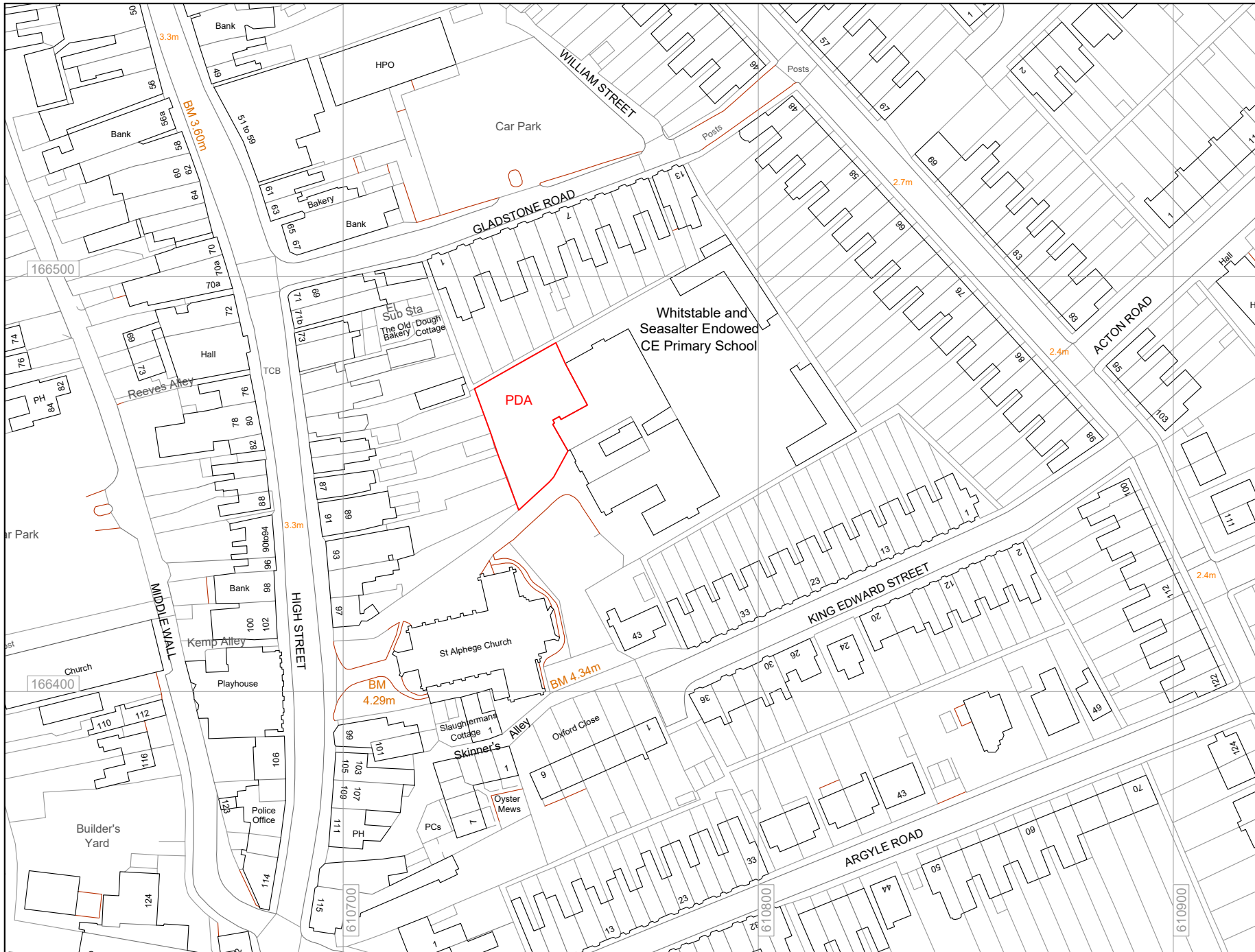
Appendix 1 Watching brief context data

Context no.	Interpretation	Description	Max thickness (m)	Depth BGL (m)	Provisional date
101	Topsoil	Dark grey, moderately compacted, clay silt	0.2	---	Modern
102	Fill of 103	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional CBM, oyster shell, coal and metal	0.8	0.2	Nineteenth century
103	Service trench	NW–SE aligned linear cut uncertain width, 0.8m deep	0.8	0.2	Nineteenth century
104	Fill of 105	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM and coal	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval
105	Pit	Sub-circular pit 0.5m diameter and 0.4m deep, steep sides, uncertain base	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval
106	Fill of 107	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM and coal	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval
107	Pit	Sub-circular pit 1.2m diameter and 0.4m deep, steep sides, uncertain base	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval
108	Fill of 109	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM, coal and white/yellow glazed ceramic	1.2	0.2	Post-medieval
109	Pit	Sub-circular pit approximately 2m diameter and 1.2m deep, steep sides, uncertain base	1.2	0.2	Post-medieval
110	Fill of 111	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM, coal and blue/white glazed ceramic	1.8	0.2	Post-medieval
111	Pit	Sub-circular pit approximately 1.6m diameter and 1.8m deep, steep sides, uncertain base	1.8	0.2	Post-medieval
112	Fill of 113	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM and coal	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval
113	Pit	Sub-circular pit 0.5m diameter and 0.4m deep, steep sides, uncertain base	0.4	0.2	Post-medieval

Context no.	Interpretation	Description	Max thickness (m)	Depth BGL (m)	Provisional date
114	Deposit	Grey, moderately compact clay silt with occasional small flint gravel, CBM, oyster shell, mortar dust and coal	0.25	0.2	Post-medieval
115	Geology	Green, yellow-brown firm clay	---	0.45	Geological

Appendix 2 Kent County Council Sites and Monuments Record Form

Site Name: Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY	
Site Code: WESHWS WB 21	
Site Address: Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY	
District: Canterbury Parish: Whitstable	
<i>Between November 2021 and February 2022, Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) undertook monitoring of development at Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY (NGR 610778 166468). The works were commissioned by KIER Construction on behalf of Kent County Council as part of preparations for the construction of a new single storey extension and the erection of a new, free standing canteen and kitchen building and associated drainage.</i>	
Periods: Post-medieval	
National Grid Reference: 610778 166468 (centered)	
Type of Fieldwork: Watching Brief	
Date of Recording: February 2022	
Contractor: Canterbury Archaeological Trust 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2LU Tel: (01227) 462062 email: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk	
Title and Author of accompanying report: Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed C of E School, High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY Watching Brief report Report no. 2022/105 R Lane	
Summary of Field Results: <i>The geological horizon comprised London clay formation at a depth of between 0.5m and 0.8m beneath the original ground surface, approximately 3.5m OD. No alluvium was present and the variation in depth of the upper geological surface was likely a result of modern truncations to the original ground level.</i> <i>A buried ground surface contained material related to building works within the area and likely dated to the late eighteenth to nineteenth century. The PDA lies at the rear of gardens for properties that fronted onto Whitstable High Street and at least five refuse pits associated with occupation of these properties were identified across the site containing common CBM, oyster shell, coal and rare glazed ceramic. The pits varied in size but contained similar material and likely dated to the nineteenth century. A later service line was identified associated with the building of the school in the late nineteenth century.</i>	
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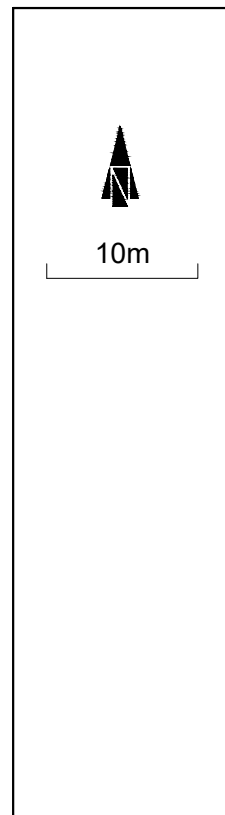
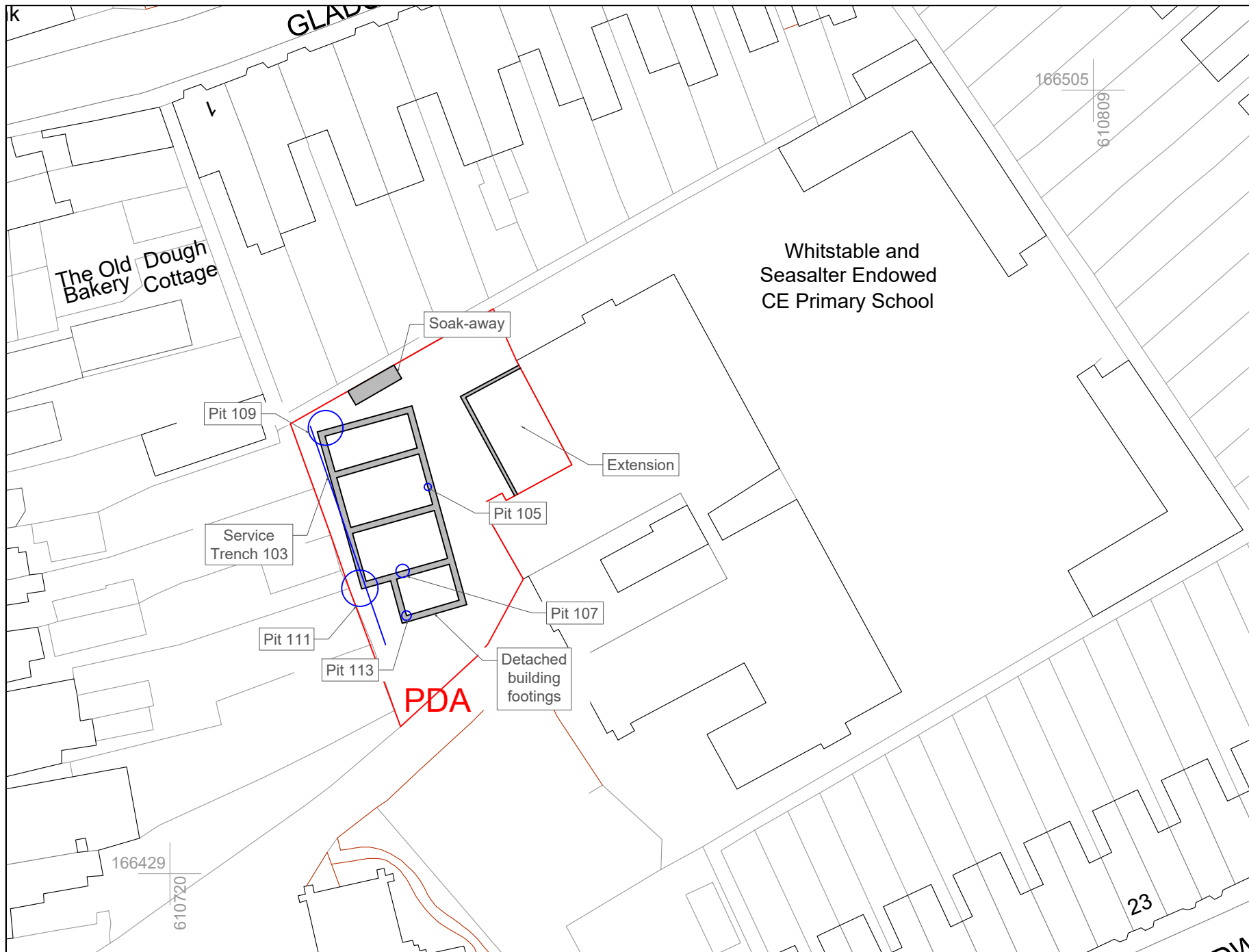

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Figure 1. Site location plan



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Figure 2. Footings and archaeological feature plan

Plates



Plate 1. Extension footings, looking south-west scale 1m



Plate 2. North-east facing section, showing service trench 103 looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 3. North-west facing section showing geology 115 overlain by deposit 114 looking west scale 1m



Plate 4. North-west facing section showing pit 109, looking south-east scale 1m



Plate 5. North-west facing section, showing pit 111, looking south-east, scale 1m