

**Archaeological Evaluation Report  
Land at Northern Access Road  
Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue  
Sittingbourne, Kent**

**NGR: 591800 166900  
(TQ 91800 66900)**

**Planning Ref: 15/504458/FULL**

**ASE Project No: 7882  
Site Code: KTP15  
ASE Report No: 2015448  
OASIS id: archaeol6-232245**



**By Tom Munnery**



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**Abstract**

*This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, between the 23rd and 24th November 2015. The work was commissioned by RPS Planning on behalf of DS Smith Paper in advance of the creation of a pond.*

*The investigation comprised a 30m length trench within which four deeper test pits were emplaced to a combined depth of 2m. No finds, deposits or features of archaeological interest were encountered.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by RPS Planning on behalf of DS Smith Paper to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, hereafter 'the site' (centred on NGR TQ 91800 61900; Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The site occupies industrial wasteland lying to the immediate north and east of the Kemsley Paper Mill, with open land to its east and bounded to the north by Barge Way.

### **1.2 Geology and Topography**

- 1.2.1 The solid geology consists of London Clay (BGS 2015). The drift geology comprises Holocene alluvium above Pleistocene terrace gravel (BGS 2015).

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 Planning permission has been granted for the development of: 'Formation of new rear access road and extension to trailer park to serve Kemsley Paper Mill and ancillary development including attenuation pond, security kiosk and weightbringers.'
- 1.3.2 An archaeological condition was required in relation to the development as follows:

'(9) Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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

### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation carried out on the site between the 23rd and the 24th November 2015.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 A Desk-Based Assessment (RPS 2012) contains a full background to the site. This was summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (RPS 2015) and utilised below.

### **2.2 Prehistoric and Roman**

2.2.1 The alluvial floodplain underlying much of the proposed Site has the potential to contain deposits of palaeo-environmental significance. The wider area saw extensive activity from early times, with remains of ritual, settlement and agricultural origin being recorded on the mainland and on Sheppey. At least part of the higher ground of the Kemsley Ridge is known to have been used for occupation activity during the prehistoric and Roman periods, while the alluvial floodplain would have been marshland and would have been exploited for a number of purposes, including salt making and pottery manufacture as well as hunting and fishing.

2.2.2 A Neolithic settlement is recorded at Grovehust, approximately a kilometre west of the proposed internal access road and trailer park (HER number TQ96NW6). A prehistoric log boat was found in 1924, apparently during river drainage on the southeast side of Milton Creek, while a greenstone celt found in the vicinity was apparently a separate find (HER number TQ96NW12). Remains dating from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, indicating some form of marshside settlement at Kemsley between the 2nd and 1st millennia BC were found during excavations at Kemsley Fields, approximately a kilometre to the southwest of the proposed internal access road and trailer park. Major activity on site dated from the middle Bronze Age to Late Bronze Age, with limited activity in the Iron Age and Roman periods (HER number TQ96NW1004).

2.2.3 Further evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement was found at Kemsley fields including Neolithic pottery and flint, late Bronze Age artifacts, as well as various finds from the Mid to Late Iron Age and Roman periods including a four-post structure, ditches, hearth and a possible cremation burial (HER number TQ96NW116). The area of prehistoric activity is extensive. Remains dating to the Neolithic and/ or Bronze Age were recorded during an archaeological evaluation to the north of Ridham Avenue, some 700 west of the proposed internal access road and trailer park. The remains comprised ditches gullies pits and postholes in an area approximately 300 metres in length (HER number TQ96NW96 & 97). On the slightly higher ground to the south, two intercutting features of mid to late Bronze Age date were revealed (HER number TQ96NW98). The remains were interpreted as being an extension of the known settlement activity to the south (TQ96NW99).

2.2.4 Salt making was a major activity locally in the later prehistoric and Roman periods and later. The remains of two salterns are located some 700 metres and 800 metres from the proposed internal access road and trailer park, and finds including briquetage, pottery, burnt flint and animal bone have been made (HER numbers TQ96NW1108 & TQ961110).

2.2.5 The wider area was heavily Romanised with the line of Roman Watling Street leading from London to the coast running rather less than 3 kilometres to the south of the proposed trailer park. Three ditches of Roman date were recorded during an archaeological evaluation to the north of Ridham Avenue, some 700 metres from the proposed internal access road and trailer park (HER number TQ96NW98).

## **2.3 Medieval**

2.3.1 There is relatively little physical evidence for an Anglo-Saxon presence in the area, although several local place names appear in early records. The place name Milton first appears in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle in 893. Its derivation indicates that it was the meeting place for the Hundred of Milton and it would have been located at its centre (Wallenberg: 254). The adjacent parish of Tonge is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and probably derives from its topographical location on a projection of land (Wallenberg: 265).

2.3.2 The place name Kemsley seems to be post Norman Conquest in origin (Wallenberg: 255), while Sittingbourne first appears in 1200 (Wallenberg 264). A possible Anglo Saxon site of unknown type is recorded as being located some 200 metres south of the southern end of the proposed internal access road and trailer park. The source is antiquarian and the site type and location uncertain, although it may be based on place name evidence (HER number TQ96NW13).

2.3.3 There is documentary evidence for oyster beds in the area being exploited from the end of the 12th century onwards. The oyster grounds probably included Milton Creek and a stretch of the Swale (HER number TQ96NW1007).

2.3.4 A moated site, Castle Rough, is located some 500 metres south of the proposed trailer park. The site is located below the 5 metre contour and comprises a rectangular earthwork island surrounded on four sides by a moat. Excavations during the early 1970s indicated that the site was constructed during the 13th or 14th century.

2.3.5 Numerous earlier artefacts were recovered dating from the Mesolithic and Roman periods. These were interpreted by the excavators as having been brought in with material from elsewhere. It is not entirely clear from the available material whether material was imported from some distance or whether the dumped material represents upcast from the moat (HER number TQ96NW10, SAM Kent 115).

2.3.6 The parish church of the Holy Trinity, Milton church is flint-faced with Stone Quoins. The roof is of the 14th century, while the south porch is of the 15th century. The church was subject to restoration during the 1880s. The building is listed at grade I and is located some 1.5 kilometres southwest of the proposed trailer park.

## **2.4 Post-medieval and Modern**

- 2.4.1 There are numerous remains of timber structures and vessels recorded along the foreshore. The vast majority of these are probably post medieval in origin and when recognisable this seems to be the case, although some remains may be earlier. The proposed internal access road and trailer park itself appears to be located in an area used for agricultural purposes until the 19th century, although nearby fields were used for brick making and other industries.
- 2.4.2 Little Murston Farmhouse, located some 1.4 kilometres southwest of the proposed internal access road and trailer park is a farmhouse of the 18th century or earlier. It is of two storeys in brown brick, now partly pebble-dashed. The building has a hipped tiled roof with one chimney stack. The building is listed at Grade II. The earliest detailed map of the area is probably William Barlow's Map of the hundreds of Milton and Teynham of 1800, published in Halstead's Topographical Survey of Kent, shows the wider area as being divided into three zones, which seem to represent water, marshland and dry land. The settlement of Milton with its parish church is located within the latter, while the proposed internal access road and trailer park and Castle Rough are located in the marsh.
- 2.4.3 William Mudge's Map of 1801 shows Milton as being a rather larger settlement than Sittingbourne. Castle Rough is shown with a drain into Milton Creek. The Site is shown as enclosed fields. The Milton Next Sittingbourne Tithe Map of 1838 shows the Site and much of the surrounding area as being owned by William Marshall. The area was being used for pasture, with parcels occasionally being recorded as 'pasture and water'. Castle Rough is shown and is recorded as being recorded as 'wood' at that time. The first edition six inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map of 1869 shows the proposed internal access road and trailer park as being in fields. The proposed internal access road and trailer park is indicated as being within Kemsley Down and Kemsley Marshes. The proposed internal access road and trailer park is divided into two by a field boundary dividing Kemsley Marshes from Kemsley Down. A brick field is marked immediately south of New Milton. In the wider area a large duck decoy (HER number TQ96NW62) is marked some 700 metres to the northwest of the northern end of the Site.
- 2.4.4 The OS six inch edition of 1898 shows a number of brick works established in the area, including buildings constructed on the brick field marked on the OS edition of 1869. Along the shore line, saltings and a disused oyster pond are marked. By the time of the OS edition of 1909, the brickworks were disused and the Grovehurst Dock had been dug (HER number TQ96NW1003). A tramway is shown running roughly east to west to the south of Grovehurst Dock.
- 2.4.5 A narrow gauge mineral railway, the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway was laid by the Bowater Paper Company in 1906 to connect their mills at Sittingbourne and Kemsley with their dock on the Swale (HER number TQ96NW22). When Grovehurst Dock became too small a larger facility was constructed at Ridham and the railway extended in 1919. The post First World War shortage of wood pulp and an increased demand for



paper. Frank Lloyd, the owner of the Sittingbourne paper mill therefore expanded the operation and built a new paper mill at Kemsley. Construction began in 1923 and the mill was in operation in 1924. The mill was coal powered and featured an aerial ropeway from Ridham Dock, which brought in logs for grinding. Kemsley village was constructed for the paper mill workers. Of the planned 750 houses, 188 had been completed by the summer of 1927 (Bellingham 1996, 67-69). The 1938 edition of the OS shows these buildings.

- 2.4.6 This mill was supplied from Ridham Dock by the earlier tramway. The tramway expanded after the opening of Lloyd's Kemsley Mill in 1924 and from Sittingbourne to the south acted as a passenger railway, bringing workers to and from the mill. The line was taken over by Bowater's in 1948 and operated until 1968. The maintenance depot is situated at the original end of the line, Kemsley Down. In 1969 the railway was handed over to the Locomotive Club of Great Britain's Light Railway Section which became the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway. The southern half of the railway, south of the proposed internal access road and trailer park, continues in use as a preserved railway, while the OS edition of 1979 indicates that the railway to the north of the had been removed, presumably replaced by the perimeter road around the paper mill which appeared on maps in 1966.
- 2.4.7 An aerial photograph taken in 1945 shows the paper mill with conical mounds of material to its north. The proposed internal access road and trailer park appears to remain as fields. The OS edition of 1950 indicates a similar disposition. The OS edition of 1966 shows the current internal access road although the trailer park is not marked. The trailer park first appears on the OS edition of 1999 when it is represented by two roads running perpendicular to the existing access road.

## **2.5 Project Aims and Objectives**

### General Objective

- 2.5.1 The general objective of the trial trenching evaluation is to assess the presence or absence and significance of any archaeology at locations within the site commensurate with the new pond. The archaeological investigation sought to understand the context of the findings in relationship to the wider settlement pattern, landscape, economy and environment.

### Specific Aims

- 2.5.2 Is there evidence for alluvium at the base of the 2m deep trench and if so does the potentially impacted level have potential to contain significant palaeo-environmental information?
- 2.5.3 Can the possible late prehistoric date of the upper alluvium be inferred by presence by artefacts or deposits or structures set within it?
- 2.5.4 Is there any evidence features or structures of Roman or later date cut into the surface of the alluvium that might be affected by pond construction?

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The excavation of one trench was proposed to evaluate the southern area of the site (RPS 2015). The full length of the trench was excavated to c.1m depth, however, due to water egress, it was necessary to excavate the lower levels, to the pond formation depth of 2m, within a series of four smaller test pits along its length (Figure 2) as agreed with RPS.
- 3.1.2 The trench and test pits were scanned prior to excavation with a cable avoidance tool. Excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision in spits of no more than 0.10m to the depth of 2.00m.
- 3.1.3 All deposits were recorded using standard ASE context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection only. A comprehensive photographic record taken.
- 3.1.4 The trench and test pits were located and planned using GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

#### 3.2 Archive

- 3.2.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at a suitable local repository in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	4
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	100
Context register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	1

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box )	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m	Height m AOD
[1/001]	Layer	Topsoil	-	- 0.38-0.5	0	2.92-3.02
[1/002]	Layer	Made Ground	-	- 0.34-0.8	0	2.52-2.58-
[1/003]	Layer	Alluvium	-	- -		2.12-2.19
[1/004]	Layer	Made Ground	-	- 0.34-0.3	8	2.35-2.42

Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was cut to approximately 1m for its length prior to the insertion of for elongated test pits; TP1, TP2, TP3 and TP4 in to its base. A total combined length of 14m was cut to the full 2m depth of the proposed pond.
- 4.1.2 Test pits 1 and 2 had stratigraphy of 0.40m topsoil [1/001] above 0.75-0.80m of made ground including depositions of clinker. Made ground [1/002] was recorded above sterile (non-organic) mid-grey silt-clay alluvium [1/003], the base of which was not encountered.
- 4.1.3 Test pits 3 and 4 had the same similar stratigraphy to Test pits 1 and 2, but with an additional layer of 0.34-0.38m made ground [1/004] composed of wood chippings which sat between [1/002] and [1/003], reducing the thickness of [1/002].
- 4.1.3 No finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered during the evaluation.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence**

5.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence comprised topsoil, made ground, and the natural alluvium. The alluvium was encountered at heights between 2.12m and 2.19m OD.

5.1.2 No archaeological finds, deposits or features were encountered.

5.1.3 The methodology was effective in determining the extent of any archaeological activity on site.

### **5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts**

5.2.1 The extent to which previous activity on site has had an effect on any potential archaeology is unclear. No evidence of an original topsoil or subsoil was encountered, suggesting it might have been cleared prior to the creation of the made ground. However, no prehistoric remains were encountered in the alluvial deposits.

### **5.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period**

5.3.1 No archaeological remains or artefacts were encountered across the site.

### **5.4 Potential impact on archaeological remains**

5.4.1 The proposed pond is to be excavated to a depth of 2.00m from the existing ground level. On the basis of the evaluation this work is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on archaeological remains.

### **5.5 Consideration of research aims**

5.5.1 The evaluation has revealed no evidence of archaeological activity.

### **5.6 Conclusions**

5.6.1 No finds, deposits or features of archaeological interest were encountered during the course of this evaluation.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**HER Summary**

<b>HER enquiry no.</b>					
<b>Site code</b>	KTP15				
<b>Project code</b>	7882				
<b>Planning reference</b>	15/504458/FULL				
<b>Site address</b>	Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent				
<b>District/Borough</b>	Swale, Sittingbourne				
<b>NGR (12 figures)</b>	591800 166900				
<b>Geology</b>	Alluvial over terrace gravels over London Clay				
<b>Fieldwork type</b>	Eval				
<b>Date of fieldwork</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> to 24 November 2015				
<b>Sponsor/client</b>	RPS Planning				
<b>Project manager</b>	Jon Sygrave				
<b>Project supervisor</b>	Tom Munnery				
<b>Period summary</b>	None				
<b>Project summary (100 word max)</b>	An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent NGR 5 91800 166900, between the 23rd and 24th November 2015. Four test pits were excavated. No find s or featu res of archaeological interest were encountered.				
<b>Museum/Accession No.</b>					

**OASIS Form**

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-232245**

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Evaluation at Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent

Short description of the project This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent NGR 591800 166900, between the 23rd and 24th November 2015. The work was commissioned by RPS Planning on behalf of DS Smith Paper in advance of the creation of a pond. Four test pits were excavated. No finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Project dates Start: 23-11-2015 End: 24-11-2015

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 7882 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes KTP15 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT SWALE SITTINGBOURNE Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent

Postcode ME10 2FB

Study area 0 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 91800 66900 51.368154477652 0.755742716403 51 22 05 N 000 45 20 E Point

Project creators

Name of Archaeology South-East

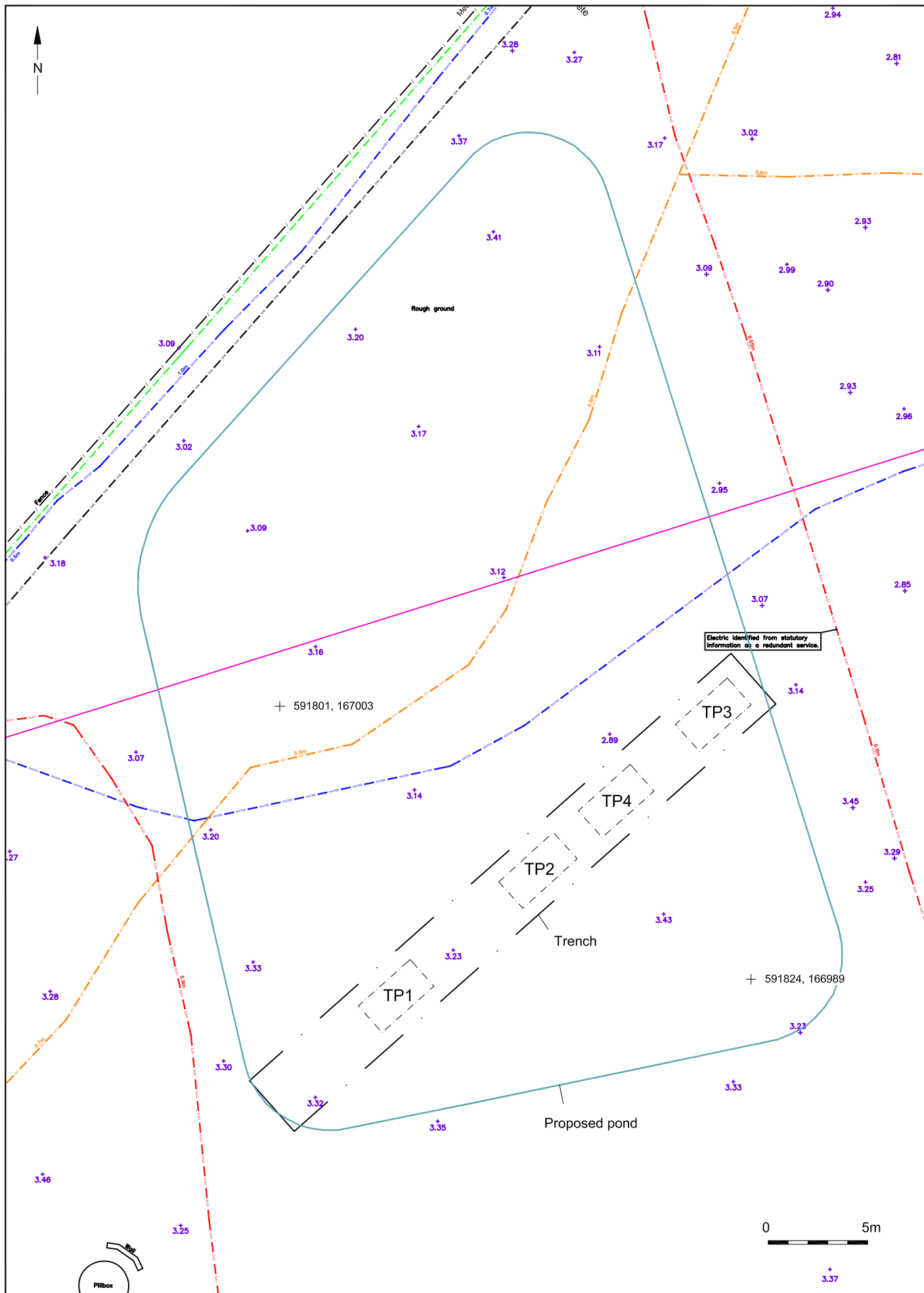
Organisation	
Project brief originator	RPS Consulting
Project design originator	RPS Consulting
Project director/manager	Jon Sygrave
Project supervisor	Tom Munnery
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Land at Northern Access Road, Kemsley Paper Mill, Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Munnery, T.
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Kent HER
Entered by	Tom Munnery (t.munnery@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	30 November 2015



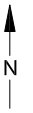


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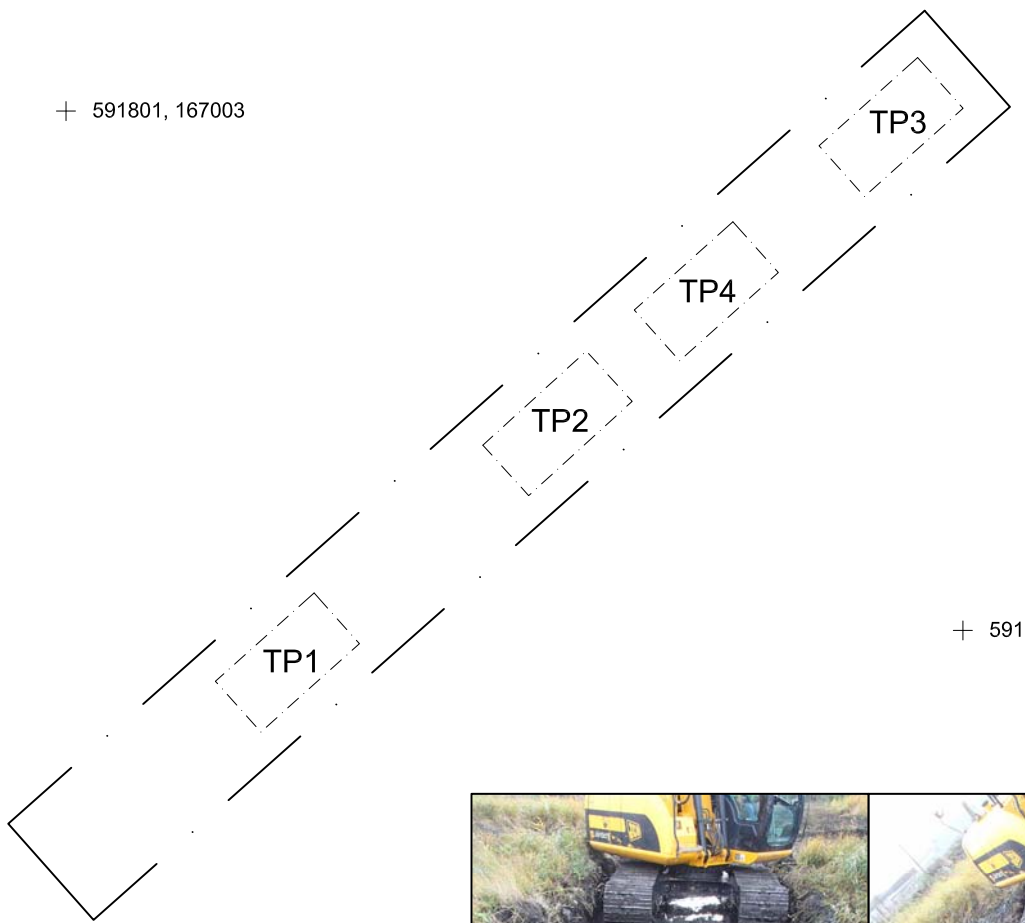
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Project Ref: 7882	Nov 2015	Site location	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: LG		



© Archaeology South-East		Kemsley Trailer Park, Swale District		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 7882	Nov 2015	Trench location		
Report Ref:	Drawn by: LG			



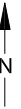
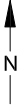
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© Archaeology South-East		Kemsley Trailer Park, Swale District		Fig. 3
Project Ref: 7882	Nov 2015	Trench plan and photos		
Report Ref:	Drawn by: LG			

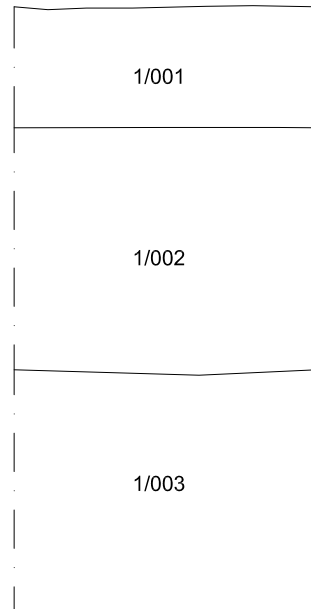


Test pit 1

SW

NE

3.07mOD  
⋈

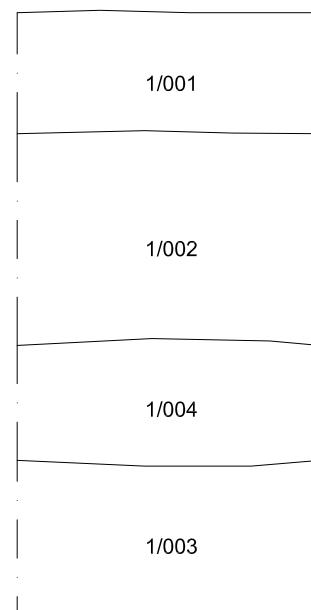


Test pit 3

SW

NE

2.93mOD  
⋈



0 0.5m  
▬

© Archaeology South-East		Kemsley Trailer Park, Swale District		Fig. 4
Project Ref: 7882	Nov 2015	Representative sections from test pits 1 and 3		
Report Ref:	Drawn by: LG			

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