

FOREHEAD FARM, ALDINGTON, KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

NGR: TR 07503 36771



**ASE Project No: 170300
ASE Report No: 2017157
Site Code: FOF17**

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April 2017

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
at Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent**



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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent on the 17th of March 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by OLM Ltd as part of excavations to replace a boiler within the 18th century and later Grade II listed house. A single small trench was monitored, revealing foundations interpreted as the possible remains of an 18th century bread oven; the geological substrate was not observed.

CONTENTS

- 1.0** Introduction
- 2.0** Archaeological Background
- 3.0** Archaeological Methodology
- 4.0** Results
- 5.0** Discussion

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Listing Description

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

TABLES

- Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive
- Table 2: List of recorded contexts

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Ground floor plan of the house, showing trench location
- Figure 3: 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, 1871
- Figure 4: Plan of the excavations, in the context of the historic house
- Figure 5: Site photos #1
- Figure 6: Site photos #2

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology, was commissioned by OLM Ltd to undertake a watching brief as part of the replacement of a faulty boiler at Forehead Farm, Church Lane, Aldington, Kent TN25 7EH (NGR TR 07503 36771; Figures 1 & 2).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The watching brief took place within the northern outshot of the 18th century farmhouse, which lies in open agricultural landscape of the Kentish Weald, within the parish of Aldington, at c. 58m above Ordnance Datum. The site is bounded to the east by Church Lane, to the north by an adjoining property, and by arable land and to the west and south.

1.2.2 According to the current data from the British Geological Survey (BGS 2015) the site lies at the interface between underlying natural solid geology comprises the Weald Clay Formation of mudstone – sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 125 to 134 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period – bordering a zone of Hythe Formation Wealden Greensand.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 The aim of the work was to ascertain the nature, extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains truncated by the excavation works associated with the replacement boiler.

1.3.2 The primary objective was to further our knowledge of the date and development of the 18th century house within which the excavation works are located.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report provides field observations made during the watching brief, which took place on March 17th 2017. The watching brief was undertaken by Michael Shapland, and managed by Ron Humphrey.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Forehead Farm has been identified as an historic farmstead of the dispersed plan type, of post-medieval date (Kent HER no. MKE88376). The house was listed at Grade II on 10th August 1988 (List Entry Number 1362779), and described as a two-storey farmhouse of ragstone and red brick dating to c. 1700, with a catslide outshut to the rear (Appendix 1). Listing descriptions must not be treated as comprehensive schedules of those elements which are legally protected as, no matter what the grade, the legislative cover not only relates to both the interior and exterior, but also extends to any building within the curtilage which predates July 1st 1948.
- 2.1.2 The house has not been subjected to any previous known archaeological or historical investigations, despite a major campaign of expansion there in 2006, so the following is gleaned from observations undertaken on-site.

2.2 Forehead Farmhouse

- 2.2.1 Forehead Farmhouse was originally a two-storey dwelling orientated north-east/south-west (henceforth simplified to east/west), with chimney stacks in its two end walls (Figures 2-5). Entry was from the south via a central doorway, which entered onto a narrow passageway with a room to either side. The western room is likely to have been the kitchen, due to the greater size of its fireplace, which retains an early lintel bearing apotropaic marks of a type often associated with entrances (doorways, windows or fireplaces) through which malign spirits could enter (Easton & Harris 1999). The ceiling retains its original central girder, although its joists were not visible. The eastern ground-floor room would presumably have been a parlour; the entranceway would have carried onto a stair (no longer extant) which ascended to a pair of bedrooms at first floor level. A blocked window adjacent to the chimney-stack in the eastern gable-end suggests that the rather cramped attic space was used for ad-hoc storage or accommodation, although the roof was not accessed during the site visit.
- 2.2.2 Although the house has been ascribed a c. 1700 date in its listing description (Appendix 1), this is probably too early for the visible fabric. The character of the brickwork to the front elevations, the use of a floor girder with framed-in joists, together with the relatively modest scale of the two end-wall chimney-stacks suggest a date within the second half of the 18th century. The timber-framed nature of the rear wall means the house is unlikely to have been built after c. 1800. Further analysis of the house, particularly the roof structure, would help to further refine this date.
- 2.2.3 A single-storey lean-to outshut was added to the house prior to its depiction on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1871 (Figure 3). It is of similar ragstone rubble construction as the chimney-stack which it abuts, and has side-alternate brick quoins of apparent early/mid-19th century type. The mapping also shows narrow walled enclosures to the front and western elevations of the house, and a solid projection against the chimney-stack on its east wall, which was demolished in the early part of the 20th century, leaving a small fragment as a buttress. From its location, this can be speculated as a bread oven.
- 2.2.4 The front elevation of the house is of red brick, laid in English bond with plentiful decorative burnt headers, with a blocking above the central porch for a previous

sundial or date-stone (Figure 5). The visible side (eastern) elevation is principally of ragstone, whilst the rear wall of the front range was of timber-framed construction. Although the visible timbers had all been re-set, hampering their interpretation, there is evidence for a possible window-opening to what would have been the first-floor stair landing. This said, the relatively poor quality studwork here may indicate that this was originally an internal partition rather than an external wall, and that the present early/mid-19th century rear outshut had a predecessor which was original to the construction of the house.

- 2.2.5 The house was extended to the west in 1987, and again to the north and west in 2006, to reach its present extent (Ashford District Council, planning refs 87/00863/AS & 04/01300/AS; Figure 5).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The groundworks comprised the hand excavation of a square pit measuring c. 1.0m square and dug to 0.5m below the level of the floor. This work was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. All sections were examined for archaeological deposits and all spoil was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts. All work was carried out in accordance with the Kent County Council standard specification for watching briefs (KCC 2007) and with the relevant Standard and Guidance documents of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a; 2014b).

3.1.2 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets. Vertical sections were taken across features where necessary and a comprehensive photographic record maintained throughout the work.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at an appropriate local museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 1 & 2).

Context sheets	5
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	16
Context register	1
Drawing register	-
Watching brief forms	1
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 A single trench c. 1m square was monitored during the watching brief, to a depth of 0.5m. It lay at the south-east corner of the house's 19th century rear outshut, bounded to the east by the eastern wall of that outshut, to the south by the rear wall of the house's historic front range, and to the north and west by modern partition walls (Figure 4). The footing of the western wall was revealed within the trench as [101].

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness m
100	Layer	Modern slab	Trench	Trench	0.25
101	Masonry	Modern footing	Trench	Trench	0.40
102	Layer	C18th made ground	Trench	Trench	0.25
103	Masonry	C18th footing	Trench	Trench	0.25
104	Layer	Ground surface	Trench	Trench	Unknown

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.2 Below the modern floor slab [100] was a 0.25m thick layer [102] of dark brown silt with frequent charcoal and mortar inclusions, which contained limited amounts of 18th century pottery, together with animal bone, brick fragments and slag, some of which may be redeposited. This appeared to be contemporary with an L-shaped foundation of broken brick and ragstone rubble [103], contained within a matrix of thick, hard lime mortar, 0.35m wide and 0.25m high, which ran from the eastern wall of the front range, and turned to run parallel with the rear wall of the front range, c. 1.0m distant from it (Figures 4 & 6). It contained bricks which are characteristic of the 18th century or later. Below this wall was a hard surface of firm greenish-grey silty clay with frequent masonry rubble inclusions [104]. This was not excavated, and natural ground was not encountered.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The excavation took place at a key location in the historic house, immediately against the rear wall of the mid/late 18th century front range, and within the later outshut of probably mid-19th century date. Despite its limited nature, the excavation was valuable in revealing a predecessor structure underlying the outshut, comprising a set of foundations, of 18th century date, which extended only c. 1.0m away from the front range of the house. The stratigraphic relationship between these foundations and either the front range or the later outshut was not revealed, since both have been rebuilt in this location; nevertheless, the foundations are likely to be contemporary with the construction of the house.
- 5.2 The proximity of these foundations to the house precludes their interpretation as an earlier outshut, since it would have been absurdly small. They are both too late and too slender to represent the footings of a previous house on the site, and they are unlikely to have been the foundations of an outdoor WC, which would not have been located abutting the main body of the house at this date.
- 5.3 The clue to interpreting these remains may be its proximity to the probable stack of the former kitchen. The 1871 map of the site (Figure 3) shows a small structure abutting the eastern side of this stack, speculated above as a bread oven, which has since been demolished. The excavated remains may therefore represent the footings for a previous bread oven, although the limited nature of the excavation makes it impossible to be sure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Matthew Crook (Ashford Borough Council) for his advice on the scope of work, Paul Clements (OLM Ltd) for commissioning the work, Rob Foster (Frontline Properties) for his assistance on site and Mr & Mrs Tenant for permitting access to assess the date and development of their house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- CIfA 2014a *Standards and guidance. Archaeological field evaluation*
- CIfA 2014b *Standards and guidance. Archaeological watching brief*
- Easton, T. & Harris, R., 1999. 'Ritual marks on historic timber', *Weald & Downland Open Air Museum* (newsletter), Spring 1999, 22-30.
- Kent County Council, 2007 *Standard Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief/evaluation/excavation*. Maidstone.

APPENDIX 1: BUILDING LIST DESCRIPTION

Name: FOREHEAD FARMHOUSE

List entry Number: 1362779

Location: FOREHEAD FARMHOUSE, CHURCH LANE

County	District	District Type	Parish
Kent	Ashford	District Authority	Aldington

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 10-Aug-1988

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

TR 03 NE ALDINGTON CHURCH LANE (west side) 4/22 Forehead Farmhouse GV II House. Circa 1700. Ragstone, with red brick and gables, with plain tiled roof. Two storeys on plinth, with dogtooth cornice to roof with stacks to left and to right. Regular fenestration of 2 tripartite wooden casements on each floor with central boarded door in gabled C20 porch. Catslide outshot to rear with large C20 flat roofed dormer. Included for group value with Oak House.

Selected Sources:

National Grid Reference: TR 07503 36771

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: archaeo16-280662

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent
Short description of the project	This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent on the 17th of March 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by OLM Ltd as part of excavations to replace a boiler within the 18th century and later Grade II listed house. A single small trench was monitored, revealing foundations interpreted as the possible remains of a bread oven; the geological substrate was not observed.
Project dates	Start: 01-03-2017 End: 30-03-2017
Any associated project reference codes	170300 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	FOF17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	FARMHOUSE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FOUNDATIONS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	REFUSE Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Listed Building Consent
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT ASHFORD ALDINGTON Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent
Postcode	TN25 7EH
Study area	1 Square metres
Site coordinates	TR 07503 36771 51.092028731751 0.963599464534 51 05 31 N 000 57 48 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 57m Max: 58m
Project creators	

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Ron Humphrey
Project supervisor	Michael Shapland
Type of sponsor/funding body	Contractor
Name of sponsor/funding body	OLM Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Physical Archive ID	FOF17
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Digital Archive ID	FOF17
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Ashford Museum
Paper Archive ID	FOF17
Paper Media available	"Context sheet"
Entered by	Ron Humphrey (r.humphrey@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	27 April 2017

OASIS:

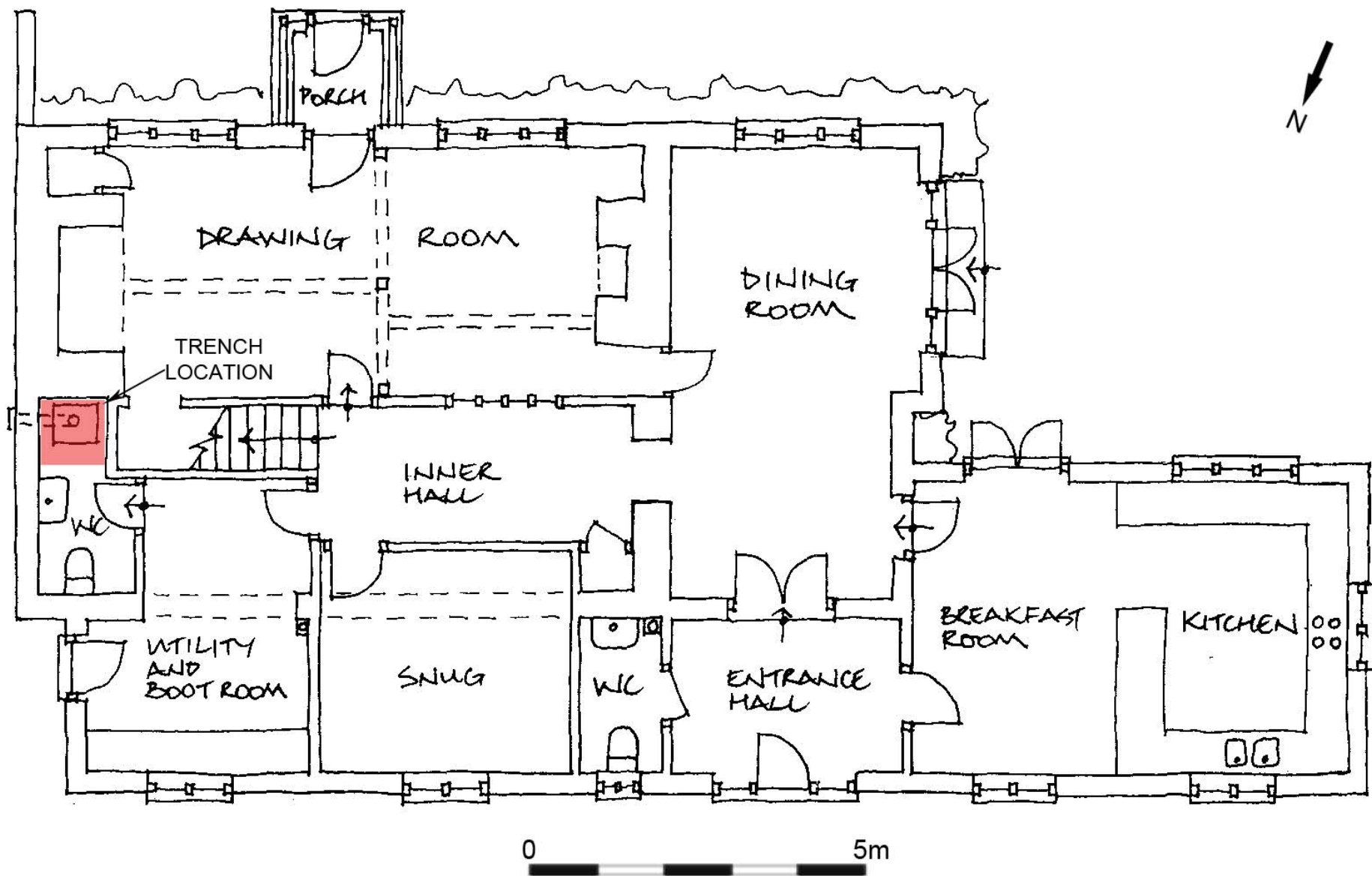
Please e-mail oasis@historicengland.org.uk for OASIS help and advice
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Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012
Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

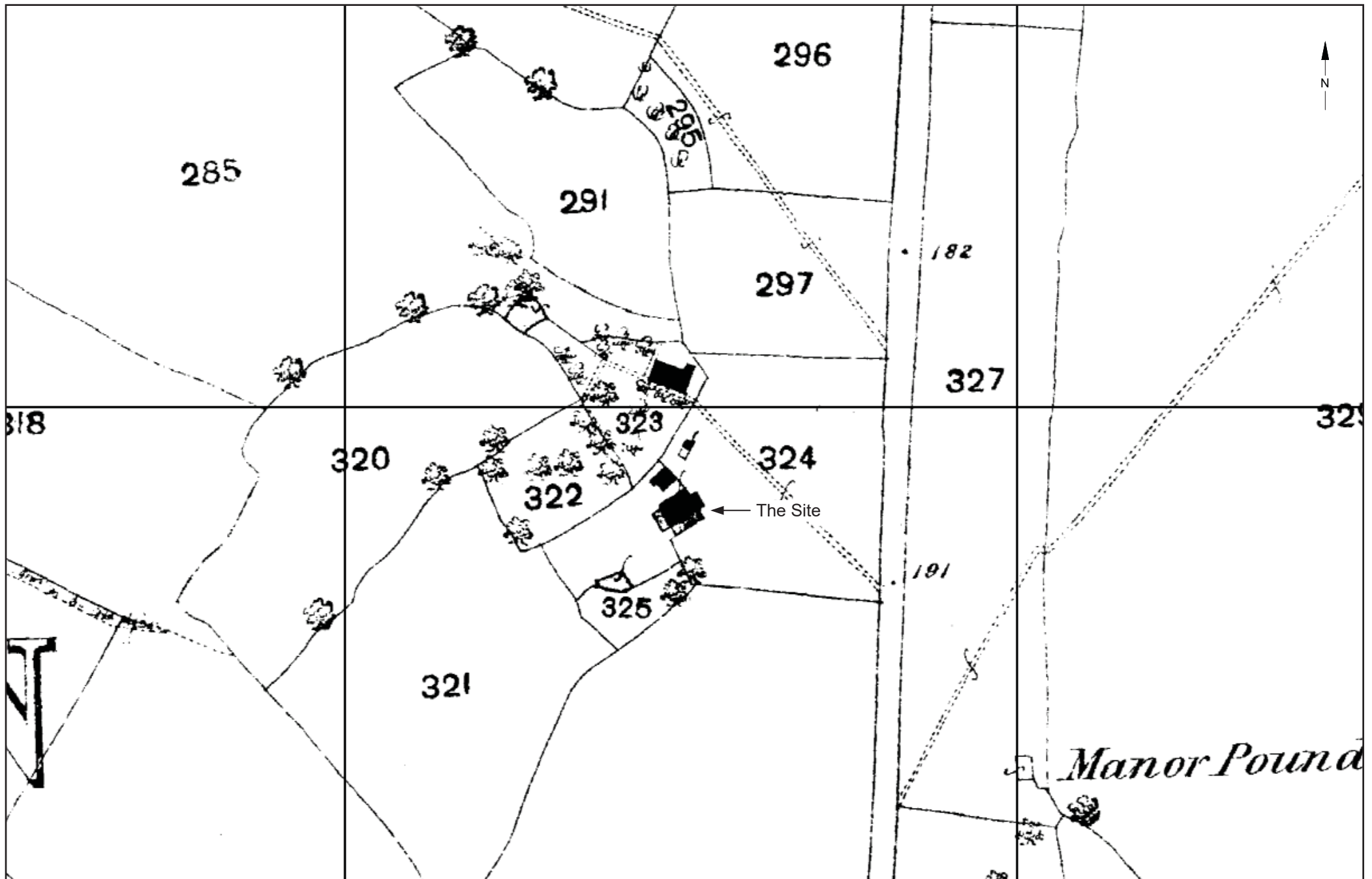
APPENDIX 3: HER SUMMARY FORM

HER enquiry no.					
Site code	FOF 17				
Project code	170300				
Planning reference	N/A				
Site address	Forehead Farm, Church Lane, Aldington, Kent TN25 7EH				
District/Borough	Ashford				
NGR (12 figures)	607503 136771				
Geology	Weald Clay Formation				
Fieldwork type	Eval	Excav	WB	HBR	Survey Other
Date of fieldwork	17/03/2017				
Sponsor/client	Frontline Properties				
Project manager	Ron Humphrey				
Project supervisor	Michael Shapland				
Period summary	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	Other
Project summary (100 word max)	This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Archaeology South-East at Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent on the 17 th of March 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by OLM Ltd as part of excavations to replace a boiler within the 18 th century and later Grade II listed house. A single small trench was monitored, revealing foundations interpreted as the possible remains of an 18 th century bread oven; the geological substrate was not observed.				
Museum/Accession No.					



© Archaeology South-East		Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 170300	March 2017	Site location	
Report Ref: 2017157	Drawn by: MGS		





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Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent

Project Ref: 170300

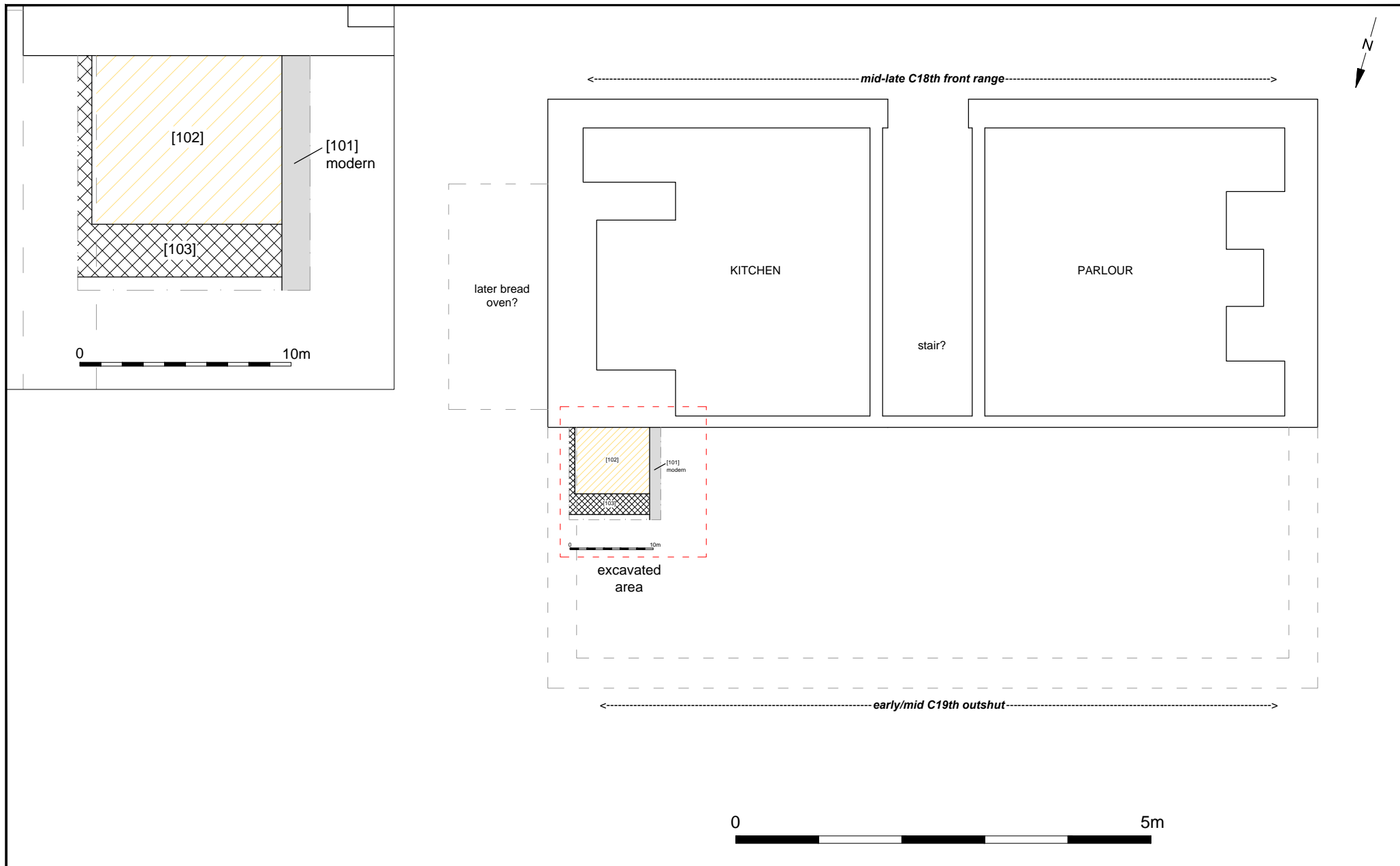
March 2017

Report Ref: 2017157

Drawn by: MGS

1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, 1871

Fig. 3





Front elevation of the house, looking north



Rear elevation of the house, showing the later outshut and modern extension.
View looking south-west

© Archaeology South-East		Forehead Farm, Aldington, Kent	Fig. 5
Project Ref: 170300	March 2017	Site photos	
Report Ref: 2017157	Drawn by: MGS		



The excavation area, showing the foundations of the suggested 18th century bread oven [103], looking south



The excavation area, showing layer [104] following the removal of the foundations [103].
View looking south

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