# An Archaeological Evaluation at 59, St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent

NGR 573974 167914

Planning Ref: ME/93/0169

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ASE Project Number 2993 Report Number: 2008038

Site Code SMR07

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#### **Abstract**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 59 St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent. The work was undertaken between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August 2007 on behalf of C.J.Harrison and Associates. Three trenches totalling 35.5m were excavated.

The underlying natural subsoil, a homogenous chalk, was encountered at a maximum height of 40.78m OD in the south of the site (Trench Two), falling away to 36.91m OD in the north (Trench Three) and 39.73m OD in the west (Trench One).

The earliest datable activity on the site was of 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date and comprised a single sherd of pottery (Trench Two).

The earliest identifiable activity on the site was comprised of a narrow but deep ditch on a northeast-southwest orientation and located toward the east of the site (Trench Two).

There had been successive episodes of levelling and terracing within the development area with material being deposited to a depth of 1.25m in the west (TrenchOne) rising to 0.65m in the east (Trench Two). Rather than the natural subsoil having been excavated in the south it had been buried.

The results of the fieldwork were notable in failing to produce any human remains despite the presence of burials to the south and northeast of the site. However, this is not considered here to indicate an absence of inhumations from the proposed development area.

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by C.J. Harrison and Associates to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at 59 St Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent.
- 1.2 The site is located to the east side of St Margaret's Street in an overgrown garden area to the south of number 59 (see Figure 1).
- 1.3 Planning permission has been granted for the erection of a single detached dwelling on the site by Medway Council (Planning Reference: ME/93/0169). Due to the archaeological potential of the site, the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council advised Medway Council that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken on the site prior to development.
- **1.4** A specification for this fieldwork was produced by the Heritage Conservation Group, KCC. The current document presents the results of the archaeological evaluation of 59 St Margaret's Street.
- 1.5 The general aim of the archaeological evaluation was to assess the location, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains.
- **1.6** David Fallon and Gemma Driver carried out the fieldwork from 24<sup>th</sup> July to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007. Jon Sygrave and Louise Rayner (post-excavation) managed the project.

#### 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological and Historical background was detailed in the Heritage Conservation Group's Specification for Archaeological Trial Trenching and is summarised here with due acknowledgement.

2.1 The site lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential with Anglo-Saxon burials to the north east and the south. Those burials to the south were discovered during development work in 1979 and were excavated by D.E. Williams and P.R. Payne. Their work discovered one further inhumation in addition to the two previously removed from 61 St. Margaret's Street. All of the burials were situated in an earlier, shallow cutting the date of which is unknown. One of the graves (Grave 3) was partially excavated as it crossed the property boundary into 59 St. Margaret's Street. This grave also had a fragment of Roman pottery placed in it (D.E. Williams and P.R. Payne (Williams & Payne 1979.).

2.2 The First Edition Ordnance Survey shows a post mill on the site (see Figure 6). The mill consisted of a central post around which the structure would have rotated. The mill was bought and demolished in 1880.

#### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Three trial trenches (Trenches One to Three) were excavated (see Figure 2). These trenches were located to best assess the impact of the proposed development upon any archaeology present. Trench One measured 8.0m in length by 1.5m wide, Trench Two 17.50m in length by 1.5m wide and Trench Three 10.00m in length by 1.5m wide.
- **3.2** Other than minor alterations in length to compensate for constraints imposed by the location of protected trees the trenches conformed to the original trench layout.
- 3.3 The trial trenches were excavated, under constant archaeological supervision, by a 5 tonne mini-excavator using a smooth edged 1.5m wide grading bucket.
- 3.4 The topsoil was reduced to the top of the underlying geology or to the archaeological horizon; whichever was the higher. The level revealed thus was spot cleaned to define further any archaeological features. Selected sections from the walls of the trenches were also cleaned manually to define and record their stratigraphy.
- 3.5 Any archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the KCC specification using pro-forma context record sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn at 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections. The colours of the deposits were established by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour Chart.
- 3.6 A photographic record was kept of the archaeological deposits and features. This will form part of the site archive. The site archive is being held at Archaeology South East's head offices, Portslade, as a temporary measure and will, in due course, be offered to a suitable local museum.

#### 4.0 RESULTS

#### 4. 1 Stratigraphic Sequence

The evaluation revealed a typical stratigraphic sequence of natural subsoil, comprising chalk, underneath successive layers of levelling/made ground deposits to a depth between 1.25m (Trench One) and 0.65m (Trench Two) beneath topsoil. The topsoil had a typical thickness of 0.20m.

#### **4. 2** The Relationship of Archaeological Features to the Natural Subsoil

The natural chalk subsoil was clean and clearly observable in all of the three trial trenches. Therefore, the negative features ([1/006] in Trench One and [2/006] in Trench Two) were easily definable. The one positive feature ([2/010] in Trench Two) was substantial and immediately beneath the topsoil.

All features were discrete.

#### 4.3 Trench One

#### **4.3.1** Trench Summary

The earliest deposit was a natural subsoil, comprising chalk [1/003], encountered at a maximum height of 39.81m OD at the southern end of the trench falling away gradually through the trench to 39.73m OD to the north. The next deposit above this was a layer of mixed clay, [1/005]. A large ditch, 1/006 was seen to cut through [1/005]. The ditch [1/006] was sealed by a layer of upcast, [1/002]. Finally a layer of topsoil, [1/001] overlay the trench.

#### **4.3.2** Archaeological Contexts

There was one layer, [1/002], two deposits, [1/003] and [1/004], and one negative feature, [1/006], of archaeological interest in Trench One.

#### Cut [1/006]

This linear was aligned northwest–southeast and ran across the northern end of the trench. The depth of the feature prevented a full excavation of its base. Therefore, the complete dimensions of this feature were unobservable. However, enough was visible to conclude that it had a regular 'U'-shaped profile with regular slightly concave sides. Two fills were identified: (1/008) a soft clay silt basal fill containing moderate amounts of fragmentary brick and (1/007) a soft light brown clay silt also containing occasional fragments of brick. Although most of this feature remained unexcavated the regularity of its cut suggests that it was a linear feature, probably a ditch. This feature did not continue into Trench Two five metres to the east.

## Context [1/001]

A soft dark black humic layer representing the topsoil, this context was disturbed greatly by rooting; reflecting the overgrowth on the area of development.

#### Context [1/002]

An indurated layer of redeposited natural chalk subsoil [1/002] represents the final episode of levelling of this terrace.

#### Context [1/005]

A firm clay chalk deposit this context was a layer of redeposited natural. The initial episode of terracing this context was probably comprised of upcast from excavations immediately to the south of Trench One.

#### 4.4 TRENCH TWO

#### **4.4.1** Trench Summary

The earliest deposit, the natural subsoil, [2/005] was encountered at a maximum height of 40.78m OD at the southern end of the trench falling away gradually through the trench to 39.80m OD at the north. Next successive layers of made ground were observed as were a northeast-southwest aligned ditch and a rectangular brick built foundation. Levelling deposits sealed the ditch [2/006]. The construction of [2/010] cut through the levelling deposits and finally a layer of topsoil [2/001] overlay the trench.

#### 4.4.2 Archaeological Contexts:

There were three layers, [2/001], [2/004] and [2/008], one deposit, [2/003], which has been determined to be the same as [2/002], and two features, [2/006] and [2/012], of archaeological interest in Trench Two.

#### Cut [2/006

This linear was aligned northeast–southwest, was12.50m long by 1.00m wide by 0.88m deep and ran diagonally across the trench. A sufficient segment of this ditch was visible to allow two slots to be dug across it (see Figure 3). It had an irregular 'U'-shaped profile with regular flat, steep sides breaking into a rectangular base. One fill was identified: [2/007] a loose mid red brown sand silt (see Figure 4A). This fill was very similar to deposit [2/008]. However there was no evidence to suggest that [2/006] was cut through this deposit at a higher level.

#### Foundation [2/012]

This feature was comprised of three elements: a rectangular construction cut [2/012], a black clay silt levelling deposit [2/011] and a brick built English bond rectangular feature [2/010] with chalk rubble, flint pebble and mortar infilling [2/013]. It cut through levelling deposit, [2/003], into the upper deposits of [2/006] and may represent an attempt to bridge this feature as part of the foundation for a larger structure.

#### Context [2/001]

A soft dark black humic layer representing the topsoil, this context was disturbed greatly by rooting; reflecting the overgrowth on the area of development.

#### Context [2/002] = [2/003]

An indurated layer of redeposited natural chalk subsoil 2/002 represents the final episode of levelling of this terrace. Ceramic Building Material

(CBM) was recovered from this context and was datable broadly to the 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A possible cut [2/009] was visible in this context (see Figure 4C). However, there was insufficient evidence to make a definitive conclusion.

#### Context [2/004]

A firm clay chalk deposit this context was a layer of redeposited natural. The initial episode of terracing this context was probably comprised of upcast from excavations immediately to the south of Trench Two. CBM was recovered from this context and was dated broadly to the 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. A base sherd of pottery datable to the 15<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> centuries was also recovered from this context.

#### Context [2/008]

A loose mid red brown sand with frequent gravel and large flint pebbles [2/008] was a layer of redeposited natural that was only seen in Trench Two.

#### 4.5 TRENCH THREE

#### 4.5.1 Trench Summary

After the stripping of the topsoil from Trench Three no further archaeological work was undertaken in this trench due to a 14.70m deep well at its centre, which was deemed to be a safety hazard. However, a 2.00m long sondage was machine excavated at its western end to a depth of 1.70m. The purpose of this sondage was to establish the depth at which undisturbed natural subsoil began. A mixed deposit of clay chalk, [3/002], overlaid the natural subsoil, chalk, [3/004]. The well, [3/001], cut through [3/003] and was overlain by topsoil [3/003].

#### **4.5.2** Archaeological Contexts:

There were two layers [3/003] and [3/004], one deposit [3/002] and one feature of archaeological interest [3/001] in Trench Three.

#### Well [3/001]

A circular flint built well, 14.70m deep.

#### Deposit [3/002]

This was an indurated, mixed layer of redeposited clay and natural subsoil.

#### Layer [3/004]

A soft dark black humic layer representing the topsoil, this context was disturbed greatly by rooting; reflecting the overgrowth on the area of development.

- **5.0 THE FINDS** by Trista Clifford and Lucy Allott
- **5.1** A small collection of finds was recovered from the evaluation at St Margrets Street, Rochester, quantified in Table 1 below.

Context	Pot	weight (g)	СВМ	weight (g)	Bone	weight (g)	Shell	weight (g)	Flint	weight (g)
2/002			3	76						
2/004	1	16	3	142						
2/007					1	24	1	10	4	46

Table 1: Quantification of finds.

- 5.2 A single base sherd from a jug or similar flat based vessel was recovered from context [2/004]. The fabric is well fired, abundant fine sand-tempered redware, probably dating to the 15- 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.3 Six pieces of CBM were recovered, weighing 218g. Context [2/002] contained two fragments from a low fired red brick with occasional poorly sorted calcareous inclusions up to 5mm. A well fired peg tile fragment with a round nail hole was also recovered. The fabric is marbled yellow and red clays with frequent circular voids less than 1mm.
- 5.4 Three CBM fragments were recovered from context [2/004]. Two are from a peg tile with a circular nail hole. The fabric is well fired fine sand-tempered with frequent angular voids. The third is less well fired with abundant medium- fine sand tempering and occasional quartz sand grains up to 3mm.
- 5.5 The CBM assemblage dates to the 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> century but cannot be dated closely.
- **5.6** Context [2/007] contained the upper valve from an Common oyster, *Ostrea edulis*. No signs of parasitic infection are present. An undiagnostic cattle sized long bone fragment was also recovered.
- 5.7 Two undiagnostic broken flint flakes were recovered from context [2/007]. On one of these the surfaces are heavily patinated however several natural breaks with less heavy patination are also evident on the dorsal surface and edges. The other flake is relatively fresh with no evidence of secondary working.
- **5.8** The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further work.

#### 6.0 DISCUSSION

**6.1** The Stratigraphic Sequence and the Archaeological Horizon

The stratigraphic sequence comprised of natural subsoil overlain by successive layers of mixed clay chalk overlain by topsoil. Substantial

terracing work had been undertaken on the site. This work involved the excavation of material from the north of the site and the dumping of the upcast onto the south of the site. The natural subsoil was buried rather than excavated at the north. There was some truncation of the ditch, [2/006], in Trench Two. However, it is likely that any features present on the remainder of the site survive intact.

The natural subsoil was clean. Any features cutting through it will be discerned clearly.

Should any further archaeological mitigation involving the mechanical stripping of the topsoil and the underlying deposits be required several points should be considered: That the archaeological horizon begins immediately beneath the topsoil. Features are cut into the underlying natural subsoil. The levelling deposits contain large areas of redeposited clean natural chalk.

#### **6.2** The Nature of the Archaeological Remains.

The northern area of the site around Trench Three (see Figure 2) was heavily truncated and not likely to have archaeological remains, except those cut to a great depth, surviving. However, the southern area around Trenches One and Two (see Figure 2) had a substantial amount of made ground and thus has a greater potential for undisturbed archaeological features.

There was no evidence of the 'gully' (D.E. Williams and P.R. Payne Arch. Cantiana, Vol. XCV, 1979.) in any of the trial trenches.

Archaeological features were identified in Trenches One, Two and Three. The well [3/001] in Trench Three was dry at the time of the evaluation. No further investigation of the well was undertaken for safety reasons. The brick feature [2/010] in Trench Two is considered to represent part of a foundation or a plinth for a post built windmill that is thought to have existed on this site (Mason, *pers. comm.*) The cartographic evidence would seem to support this, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of the area clearly showing a windmill on the site (Figure 6). The ditch [2/006] had no observable contemporary associations with any other features in Trench Two or elsewhere. The large 19<sup>th</sup> century ditch [1/006] in Trench One did not continue into Trench Two but it was aligned on the break of slope of the terrace. It had been back filled and then sealed by a levelling deposit [1/002].

The deposits and layers in Trenches One and Two revealed successive depositional episodes of material involved in the terracing activity within the development area (see Figures 4B and 4C). Context [2/009] represents the only evidence from the site that the terracing episodes involved a levelling of the area or a removal of unstable material before more suitable materials were deposited.

That there was continued activity within the development area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was evidenced by the large cut feature within Trench One and [2/010] in Trench Two. There was also evidence of earlier activity on the site represented by a ditch [2/006]. The restrictive nature of trial trenching prevented a more definitive categorization of [1/006], [2/006] and [2/010] being made.

#### **6.3** Summary

The evaluation revealed a moderate amount of archaeological remains in the south of the footprint of the proposed development (Trenches One and Two see Figure 3). There are the remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century structures and evidence for the alteration of the landscape. The expected inhumations did not occur. However, there is a possibility that a partially exposed concentration of large flint pebbles in the south east corner of Trench One (see Figure 3) which had been thought to be a naturally occurring phenomenon, as elsewhere on the site, may in fact have been the top of an inhumation (D.E. Williams pers. comm.). A more extensive excavation that includes the complete exposure of this deposit would be required to determine if these flints are the 'several large flints... overlying the body', (D.E. Williams and P.R. Payne 1979, 286) discovered during the previous work on this site. If there are inhumations within the development's footprint then it is likely they survive intact and undisturbed. Details of the proposed development are not currently available but it is understood that the development will involve an element of bulk ground reduction within the footprint of the proposed building. Such groundworks will have a significant impact upon those features discovered in Trenches One and Two (see Figure 5).

#### **REFERENCES**

Kent County Council 2007 Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at 59, St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent.

D.E. Williams and P.R. Payne, in Arch Cantiana vol. XCV, 1979. Three Burials from St. Margaret's Street, Rochester

#### KENT SMR SUMMARY FORM

Site Name: 59 St. Margatet's Street, Rochester,

Site Address:

59, St. Margaret's Street,

Rochester, Kent

#### **Summary:**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 59 St. Margaret's Street, Rochester. Three trenches totalling 35.50m were excavated. Evidence for post medieval activity was recorded in the form a foundation base, a well and a large ditch. A fragment of 15<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> Century pot was found in Trench 2. Fragments of 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century CBM were found in Trench 2. An undated ditch was found in Trench 2.

District/Unitary: Medway Parish: Rochester

# **Nature of Development:**

Residential development

#### Period(s):

Post-medieval, Undated.

NGR (centre of site: 8 figures): NGR 573974 167914

(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)

Type of archaeological work (delete) Evaluation

**Date of Recording:** 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2007.

Unit undertaking recording: Archaeology South-East

Geology: Chalk

#### Title and author of accompanying report:

An Archaeological Evaluation at 59 St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent.

By David Fallon

# Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

A fragment of 15<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> Century pot was found in Trench 2

Fragments of 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century CBM were found in Trench 2

A 19<sup>th</sup> Century brick built chalk rubble, flint pebble and mortar infilled foundation was found in Trench 2.

A post-medieval east-west ditch was found in Trench 1.

A post-medieval well was found in Trench 3.

An undated northeast-southwest ditch was found in Trench 2.

### Likelihood of surviving archaeological remains on-site:

Evidence shows post-medieval and earlier features survive on the site.

Location of archive/finds: Currently held at the offices of ASE

Contact at Unit: Jon Sygrave Date: 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007

#### OASIS ID: archaeol6-31698

# Project details

Project name 59 St. Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent

the project

Short description of An archaeological evaluation comprising three trenches totalling 35.50m. Evidence of post-medieval activity on the site was recorded in the form of a well in Trench 3, a brick/rubble foundation in Trench 2 and a ditch in Trench 1. A fragment of 15th - 16th century pot was recovered from Trench 2. Fragments of 16th - 18th century CBM were recovered from trench 2. The ealiest, undated, activity comprised a NE-SW ditch, Trench 2. Successive levelling episodes buried the natural subsoil at the south of the site. The results of the fieldwork were notable because they failed to produce any human remains despite the presence of Saxon burials to the south and NE. However, this wasn't considered to indicate an absence of inhumations from the development area.

Project dates Start: 24-08-2007 End: 26-08-2007

Previous/future

work

Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference

codes

ME/93/0169 - Planning Application No.

Any associated project reference

codes

SMR07 - Sitecode

Field evaluation Type of project

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Methods & techniques 'Targeted Trenches'

Development type Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

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

**Status** Complete

# **?** Project location

Site location KENT MEDWAY ROCHESTER 59 St. Margaret's Street,

Rochester, Kent

Postcode ME1 1

#### **Archaeology South East** 59 St Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent

Study area 639 Kilometres

NGR - TQ 002956 512303 Site coordinates

> LL - 51.2508937741 -0.5627336571 (decimal) LL - 51 15 03 N 000 33 45 W (degrees)

Point

Height OD Min: 36.91m Max: 40.78m

Status Complete

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator

Kent County Council

Project design originator

The Heritage Conservation Group Kent County Council

Project director/manager JON SYGRAVE

Project supervisor (other)

David Fallon

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Client

Name of sponsor/funding

body

C.J.Harrison and Associates

Status Complete

? Project archives

Physical Archive recipient

Local Museum

**Physical Contents** 

'Animal Bones', 'Ceramics', 'Worked stone/lithics'

Digital Archive recipient

Local Museum

**Digital Contents** 

'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media available

'Images raster / digital photography', 'Text'

Paper Archive recipient

Local Museum

**Paper Contents** 

'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media

'Context sheet','Map','Plan','Report','Section'

# **Archaeology South East** 59 St Margaret's Street, Rochester, Kent

#### available

Status	Complete	
?Project bibliography 1		
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)_1	
Title	An Archaeological Evbaluation at 59 St. Margaret's Street, Rochesrt, Kent	

Author(s)/Editor(s) David Fallon

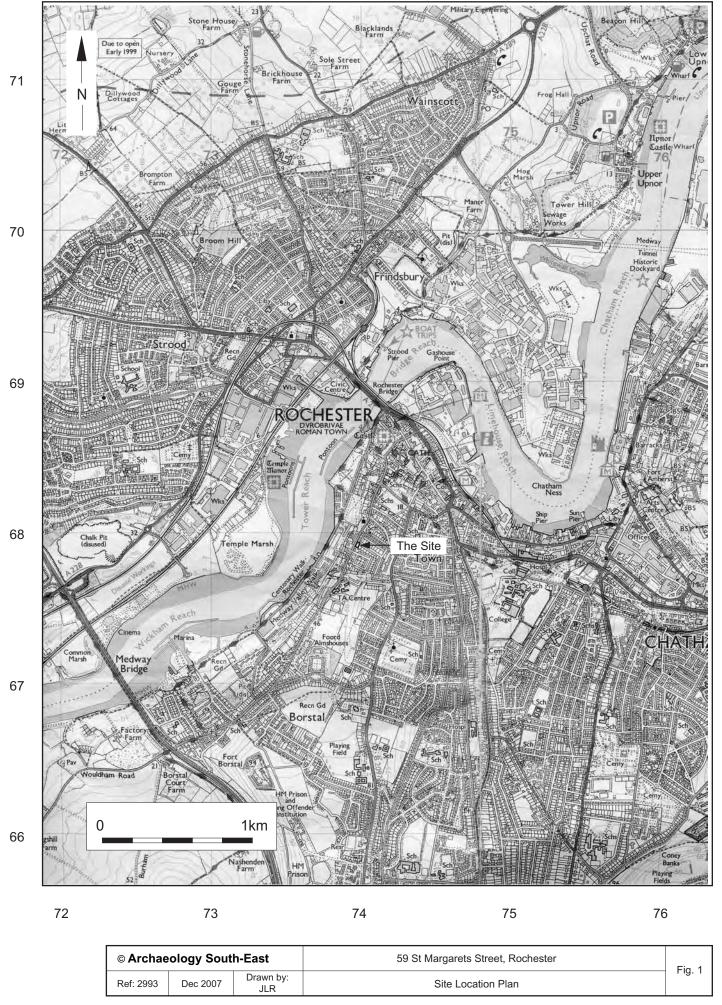
2007 Date

Archaeology South East Issuer or publisher

Place of issue or publication

Portslde, Sussex

Description A4 spiral bound, card cover, word processed





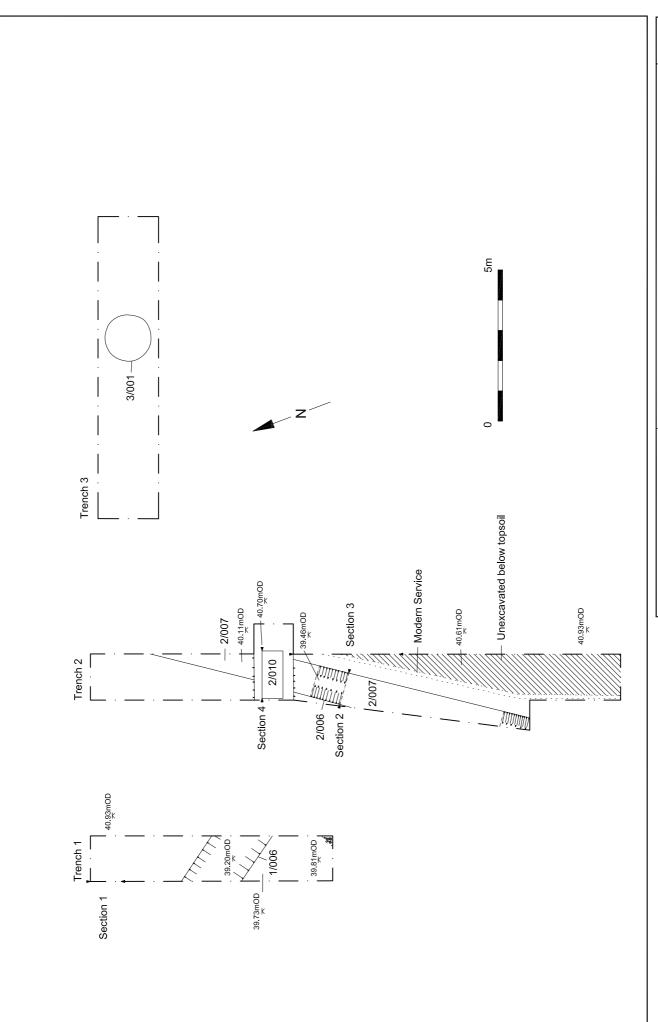


Fig. 3					
59 St Margarets Street, Rochester	Trench Plans				
th-East	Drawn by: JNC				
\rchaeology South-East	Dec 2007				
© Archae	Ref: 2993				

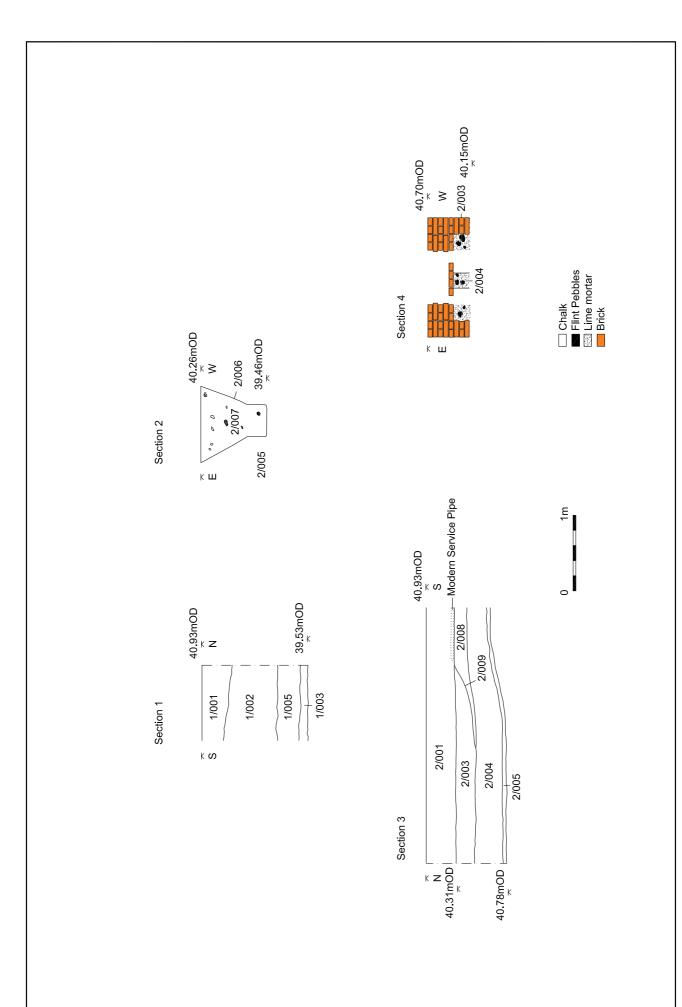
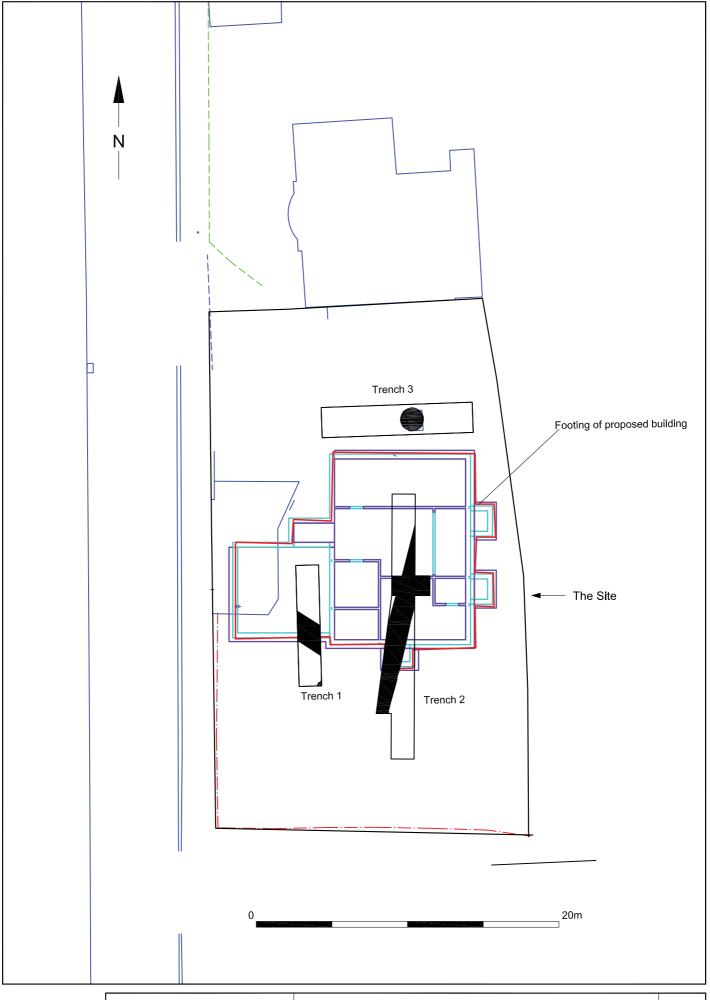
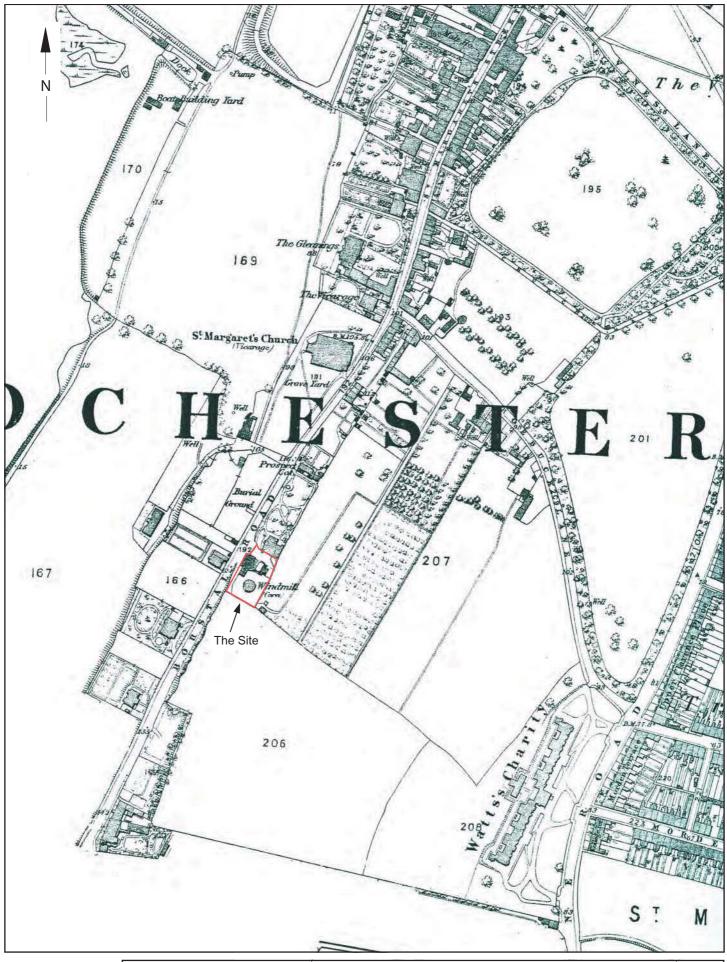


Fig.,			
59 St Margarets Street, Rochester	Sections		
h-East	Drawn by: JNC		
ology Sout	Dec 2007		
© Archae	Ref: 2993		



© Archaeology S	outh-East	59 St Margarets Street, Rochester		
Project Ref. 2993	Jan 2008	Recorded archaeological features in relation to proposed development	Fig. 5	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: SM	Necorded archaeological leatures in relation to proposed development		



© Archaeology So	outh-East	St Margarets Street, Rochester		
Project Ref: 2993 Report Ref:	April 2008 Drawn by: HLF	Extract from 1864 1st Edition showing windmill on the site	Fig. 6	



Plate 1: Trench 1, facing south



Plate 2: Trench 2, facing north



Plate 3: Trench 3, facing east



Plate 4: Trench 3, the well in plan



Plate 5: Trench 2, the plinth in plan facing west



Plate 6: Trench 2, the plinth in section