

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Swan Street, West Malling, Kent.**

Planning Ref: N/A

(NGR 56857 15502 to 56857 14802).

**Project no.2996
Site code WMS 07**

**ASE Report No:2008094
OASIS ID: archaeol6-44359**

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June 2008

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Summary

From the 6th June 2007 to 1st August 2007, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a sewage Pipeline at Swan Street, West Malling, Kent. No archaeological features were encountered, although a very small assemblage of 19th century pottery was recovered.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London) was commissioned by Holleran Mouchel Parkman Joint Venture to maintain an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a Sewage Pipeline at Swan Street West Malling Kent (NGR 56857 15502 to 56857 14802) (Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.2** Swan Street lies in the parish of West Malling, to the South of the railway. The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey consists of Folkestone Beds (sand) north of the railway, with Sandgate Beds (silty clay and fullers earth) and Head Brickearth occurring to the south of the railway line (Sheet 287).
- 1.3** Although the construction of sewage pipeline is a Permitted Development, (under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995), the Archaeological Officers of Kent County Council (KCC) were consulted in order to establish whether any archaeological remains that might be affected by the scheme were recorded in the immediate area, in line with the Best Practise approach adhered to on such schemes. In light of the presence of the Scheduled Monument of St Mary's Abbey (SM No. 23019) it was deemed appropriate to maintain an archaeological watching brief during the initial topsoil strip and subsequent trench excavation.
- 1.4** Because of the short period of notice, KCC were not able to produce a specification for the works in time for the start of the project. However, all archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with stand KCC watching brief requirements and the *Standards and Guidance: watching brief* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 1.5** The watching brief was carried out from the 6th June 2007 to 1st August 2007 by Greg Priestley-Bell (Senior Archaeologist), Deon Whittaker (Archaeologist), Alice Thorne (Archaeologist) and Robert Beck (Archaeologist).

2.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1** The application site lies to the east of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, St Mary's Abbey (SAM No. 23019), a Benedictine abbey north and east of Water Lane. The following text is an abridged version of English Heritage's Record of the scheduled monument.

"The monument includes the known extent of the Benedictine Abbey of St Mary's situated in the town of West Malling. Much of the medieval abbey, which survives as upstanding masonry, has been incorporated into the post-Dissolution buildings which have been reused by, and purposely built for, the modern nunnery which began at the end of the 19th century. The upstanding medieval remains include the 14th-century gatehouse and chapel positioned on the north side of the precinct, the Norman tower, the 13th-century arcade of the south cloisters, the south wall and south transept of the church and various other upstanding remains of the east range comprising parts of the chapter house and dorter undercroft. These are situated in the northern part of the precinct which, when founded, covered an area of 4.8ha. In the southern part of the precinct is a medieval tithe barn converted in 1936-7 for use as a chapel.

To the west of the main claustral complex lies the site of the 15th-century guest house. This is believed to have had an associated outer court of which no above-ground remains survive. Further buildings to the south include what are believed to be an infirmary or abbess's apartments, which survive as buried foundations. A stream runs from south to north through the precinct and feeds a fishpond to the south of the guest house.

The nunnery was founded c.1090 by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester. Two earlier dates for the foundation of an abbey at Malling have been put forward, 688 and 944, the latter by King Edmund, but neither has been proved. The land is known to have been in the possession of the Bishop of Rochester in 945 but was then lost to the Church and recovered by Lanfranc in 1076. The church was dedicated in 1106 but in 1190 the abbey and nearly all the town buildings were burnt down after which extensive rebuilding was undertaken. Dissolved in 1538 and granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the abbey later became the property of the Crown. In 1620 it was granted to John Rayney whose son sold it to the Honeywood family. During the 18th century the surviving ruins of the abbey were incorporated into a new house built mainly on the site of the south range.

Partial excavation of the abbey was undertaken in the 1930s and in 1962 prior to the construction of the new church. The excavations at the east end of the medieval church showed that it had been square-ended, not apsidal as had previously been thought, with a rectangular chapel projecting from the centre of the east wall.

All the medieval masonry is listed Grade I and the 18th-century cascade and the abbey barn are listed Grade II.

Malling Abbey survives comparatively well and, despite damage caused by partial demolition and rebuilding, substantial sections of the medieval masonry are still upstanding. Partial excavation has shown that the

foundations and layout of the other conventual buildings survive below ground level as buried features, with the site containing archaeological remains and environmental information relating to the construction and use of the abbey as well as the economy and way of life peculiar to a Benedictine nunnery.”

- 2.2** The HER within a 1km radius of the site are tabulated in Appendix 1 and indicated that the wider area has been attractive to prehistoric, Roman and later communities.

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1** The site was bisected by a railway embankment. The two parts of the site both consisted of grassland. South of the embankment, the ground slopes gently to the north. North of the embankment, the ground slopes to the south.
- 3.2** An easement 12m wide was cut, by a 360 degree excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. This easement strip removed the turf / topsoil and exposed the underlying subsoil.
- 3.3** The pipe trench, 1.5m wide and up to 2.45m, was then excavated in the centre of this easement. 450mm diameter concrete pipes were then laid on a bed of gravel at the base of the trench. More gravel was then added to cover the pipes, the necessary warning tape was laid and the trench was backfilled. The excavations for several new manholes were also monitored.
- 3.4** A continuous watching brief was maintained throughout the majority of the excavation of both the easement and of the trenches. Owing to a breakdown in communication due to a change in personnel, the trench between MH05 and MH04 was not monitored. Archaeological monitoring included an inspection of the excavated topsoil and other deposits in order to identify concentrations of artefacts or ecofacts, and an examination of exposed surfaces and sections for archaeological remains.
- 3.4** All remains identified were recorded to accepted professional standards and in accordance with *Standards and Guidance: watching brief* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Full details of the techniques used are contained within the archive.

4.0 Results (Fig.2)

4.1 List of recorded contexts in easement strip and pipe trench

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth
001	Deposit	Topsoil	Entire length of easement	15m	0.30m
002	Deposit	Subsoil	Entire length of easement	15m	0.30-0.50m
003	Deposit	Natural sandy silt	Entire length of easement	-	>1.00m
004	Deposit	Natural Sand	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	1.1m
005	Deposit	Topsoil	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	0.30m
006	Deposit	Subsoil	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	0.50m
007	Deposit	Natural Sand	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.1.00m
008	Deposit	Wealden Sandstone	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	0.80m
009	Deposit	Sand	c.2m (MH excavations)	c.2m (MH excavations)	0.75m (exposed)

4.2 Summary

4.2.1 Easement Strip

The machine strip for the easement revealed the following stratigraphic sequence:

A mid greyish brown very fine sandy silt topsoil, [001], up to 0.30m in thickness. Underlying this was a mid orange brown very fine sandy silt, [002]. The easement strip did not remove the subsoil, [002].

No archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the monitoring of the easement strip. A small amount of finds were recovered from the topsoil, [001].

The machining depth was not sufficient to expose the surface of the natural substrate, therefore, only relatively recent remains cut through the topsoil / subsoil would have been detectable.

4.2.2 Pipe Trench Excavations

The pipe trench excavation, located in the centre of the easement strip removed the subsoil, context [002] which was revealed to be 0.30-0.50m thick. Underlying this was a mid orange brown very fine sandy silt, [003], with a thickness in excess of 3m (natural substrate).

Wealden sandstone, [008], was encountered at a depth of 2m, underlying context, [003], to the north of the MH01 for a distance of 12m. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

4.2.3 Manhole Excavations

Manhole MH05 provides the typical sequence exposed in these excavations which were >3.00m in depth. This sequence was:

0.75m (exposed) thickness of light grey green sand, [009], underlying the solid Wealden Sandstone, [008], 0.80m thick. Overlying this was a light orange yellow medium sand, with many inclusions of Wealden sandstone, [007] and [004], c1m thick. Overlying this was, [006], a mid brown sandy silt, subsoil (0.50m thick), underlying mid grey sandy silt topsoil, [005].

No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

5.0 The Finds

5.1 By Elke Raemen

A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief. Finds are all unstratified, as summarised in Table 1.

Context	pot	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Shell	Wt (g)	Flint	Wt (g)	FCF	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)
001	3	4.2	4	32	2	<2	1	12	2	22	2	8	3	78

Table 1. Quantification of the finds assemblage from the watching brief at Swan Street, West Malling.

- 5.2** Three pieces of pottery were recovered, all dating to the 19th century and including probable Nottingham stoneware, glazed red earthenware and English stoneware. The topsoil also contained a green glass wine bottle fragment of 18th to 19th century date, as well as a cylindrical amber bottle fragment and a clear glass window fragment, both dating to the second half of the 19th to the 20th century.
- 5.3** The ceramic building material (CBM) consists of three hard fired sparse fine sand-tempered roof tile fragments, dating to the second half of the 18th to 19th century.
- 5.4** Other finds include a single piece of Welsh slate, Wealden sandstone and two pieces of undiagnostic oyster shell. A single piece of white patinated Downland flint, consisting of a hard hammered waste flake, was recovered as well, in addition to two fragments of fire cracked flint.
- 5.5** Because of the small size and late date of the assemblage, as well as the fact that it is unstratified, it is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis. No further work is required and it is recommended to discard the finds.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1** The watching brief on the easement strip, pipe trench and manhole excavations did not reveal any archaeological features or ancient artefacts despite constant archaeological supervision.
- 6.2** The level to which the easement was stripped (top of subsoil) was unlikely to have been deep enough to expose any buried archaeological remains. There is, therefore, the possibility that features or deposits were present but remained undetected. However, the minimal amount of unstratified artefacts recovered and the lack of any features exposed in section during the cutting of the pipe trench perhaps suggests that there are not substantive remains in the vicinity.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	WMS 07					
Identification Name and Address	Swan Street, West Malling, Kent					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent County Council and Tonbridge & Malling District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR TQ6857 5502 to TQ6857 4802					
Geology	Folkestone Beds (sand) north of the railway, with Sandgate Beds (silty clay and fullers earth) and Head Brickearth occurring to the south of the railway line.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2996					
Project Type`	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. From the 6 th June 2007 to 1 st August 2007	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Holleran Mouchel Parkman Joint Venture					
Project Manager(s)	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Greg Priestley-Bell, Deon Whittaker, Alice Thorne, Robert Beck					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
<p>Summary</p> <p>From the 6th June 2007 to 1st August 2007, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a sewage Pipeline at Swan Street West Malling Kent. No archaeological features were encountered.</p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-44359

Project details

Project name	Swan St, West Malling, Kent
Short description of the project	From the 6th June 2007 to 1st August 2007, Archaeology South-East maintained a watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a sewage Pipeline at Swan Street, West Malling, Kent. No archaeological features were encountered, although a very small assemblage of 19th century pottery was recovered.
Project dates	Start: 06-06-2007 End: 01-08-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WMS07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING WEST MALLING Swan St West Malling Kent
Site coordinates	TQ 568570 155020 50.9170530030 0.231753543861 50 55 01 N 000 13 54 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Kent County Council

Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Rob Beck

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Entered by Jim Stevenson (jim.stevenson@tiscali.co.uk)

Entered on 23 June 2008

APPENDIX 1: HER DATA

HER No.	NGR (TQ)	Description	Period
TQ 65 NE 3	67595708	St Leonard's Tower. Defensive tower of Norman date, previously part of a chapel	EM
TQ 65 NE 4	68095687	An RB cremation (130- 150 AD) was uncovered in 1934 in the garden of a house called 'Rathsan'.	RB
TQ 65 NE 6	67345719	Site of palaeolithic find	Pr
TQ 65 NE 7	67695716	Roman cremation burials found A.D. 1892 between the carriage entrance to Malling House and St. Leonard's Tower	R
TQ 65 NE 8	67905754	St. Mary's Church, Early Norman Church, partly rebuilt 18thc	EM/M/PM
TQ 65 NE 9	68205762	St Mary's Abbey founded c1090	EM/M/PM
TQ 65 NE 18	68945893	St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Leybourne. 11thc Church with 13- 15thc additions (restored 1874)	EM/M/PM
TQ 65 NE 19	68855891	Leybourne Castle. Norman but it is generally of Henry III	EM/M/PM/Mo
TQ 65 NE 20	6858	A Roman copper coin of Constantius II	R
TQ 65 NE 23	67805677 67845656	A "hoard" of one plus Gallo-Belgic C (Atrebates) and six plus Gallo- Belgic E (Morini) gold staters	IA
TQ 65 NE 25	696594	IA pot found in Lunsford Lane, Larkfield	IA
TQ 65 NE 29	67625713	Malling Place 1560 altered and enlarged	M/PM
TQ 65 NE 33	69475773	Clare House, 18thc House and grounds	PM
TQ 65 NE 34	673570	Site of palaeolithic finds	Pr
TQ 65 NE 40/ 45-55	68265770	The remains of the Abbey church & buildings	EM/M
TQ 65 NE 44	6858	An incomplete circular lead seal-die, 13th century in date	M
TQ 65 NE 57	69575731	148-154 Mill Street, Late C15 or early C16 housing. Listed Building.	M
TQ 65 NE 58	68035782	Medieval town of West Malling	M
TQ 65 NE 61	68515984	Small area of ridge & furrow adjacent to M20 nr	M

Birling			
TQ 65 NE 66	69405655	The Barracks, Well St. E. Malling. Listed Building	M
TQ 65 NE 88	68035735	Ice house in Manor Park, West Malling	PM
TQ 65 NE 67-68	68725851	Leybourne Mill. Water powered corn mill & leats (disused)	PM
TQ 65 NE 69	68255778	Abbey Brewery. Late C19 brewery complex, converted to housing	PM
TQ 65 NE 70	68055778	65,67,69 high st. w. malling. Historic buildings	EM/M/PM
TQ 65 NE 71	67805756	Site of dumb clock row. Eight tenements of timber and weatherboarding two storeys built c1780	PM
TQ 65 NE 75	67795777	Maltings on the corner of West Street and King Street	PM
TQ 65 NE 80/90	68415900	Md sandy ware and poss bloomery slag found nr Leybourne Park	M
TQ 65 NE 87	68155801	'The Barn', 59-63 Town Hill timber framed barn and saw pit	PM
TQ 65 NE 91	68605850	Meso/Neolithic scraper	Pr
TQ 65 NE 93	67605625	<i>A rare surviving example of a Bofors Light Anti Aircraft gun tower built in the 1940,s for defence of W.</i> Malling airfield. One of only three examples recorded on airfields nationally.	Mo

HER records within 1km of the site

Key –

Pr – Prehistoric

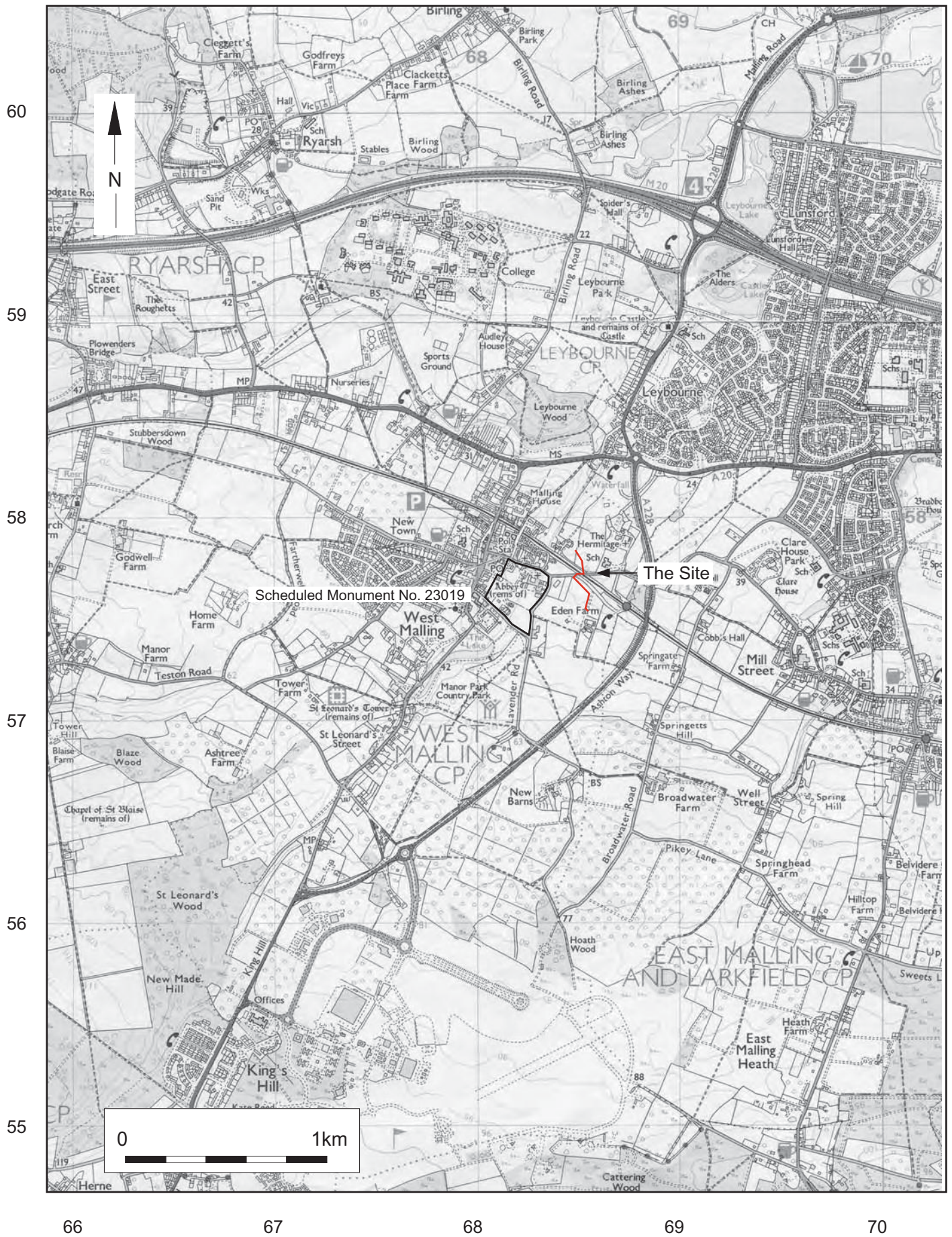
EM – Early Medieval

PM – Post Medieval

R – Roman

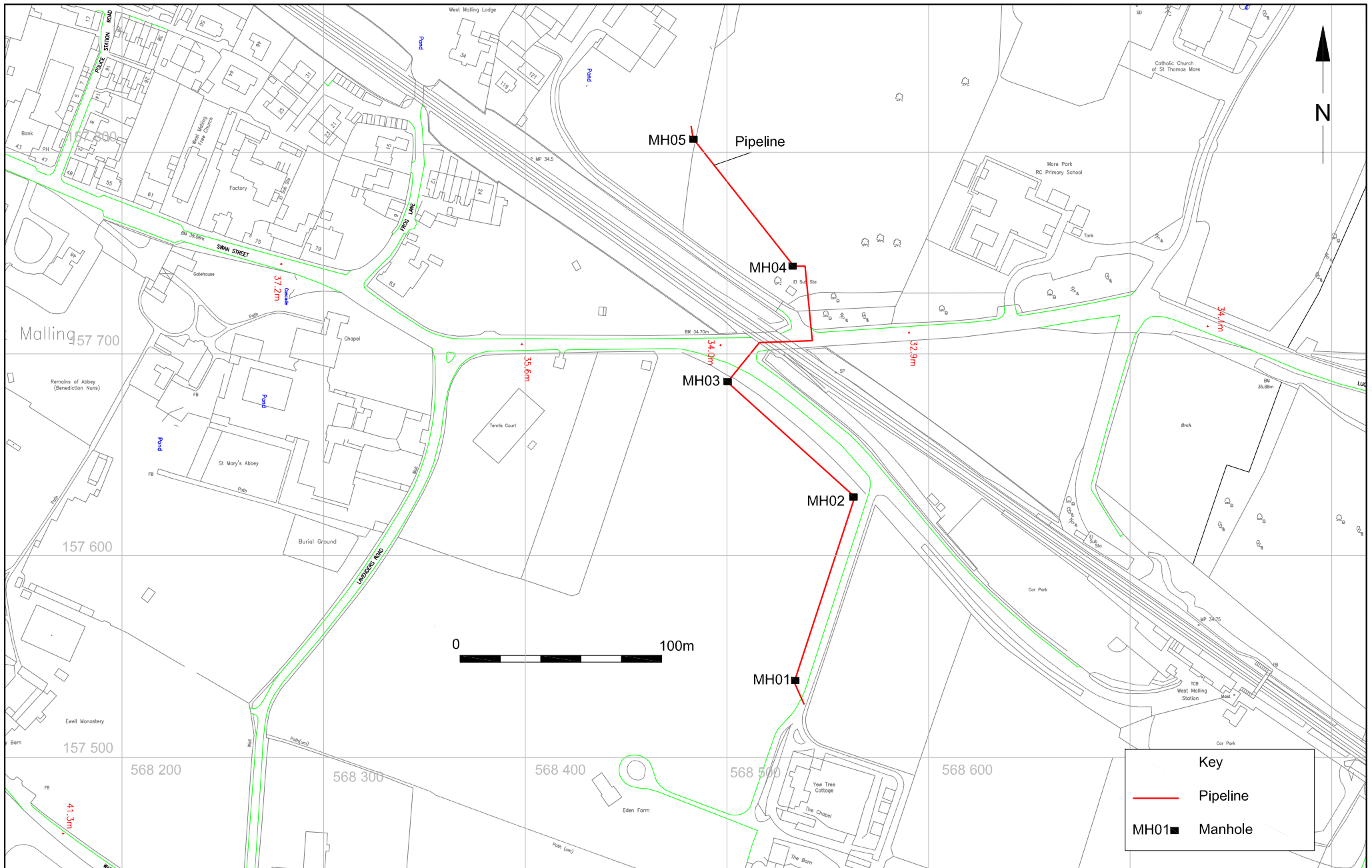
M – Medieval

Mo - Modern



© Archaeology South-East		Swan Street, West Malling	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 2996	June 2008	Site Location Plan	
Report Ref:	Drawn by: JLR		

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© Archaeology South-East		Swan Street, West Malling	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 2996	June 2008	Route of Sewer Pipeline	
Report Ref: -	Drawn by: SM		