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134 CROMWELL ROAD, WHITSTABLE, KENT

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TR 11096 66539	Report No: 5173
District: Canterbury City	Site Code: AS 1835
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 6553
Signed:	Date: 26 July 2016

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CONTENTS

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY

- 1 *INTRODUCTION***
- 2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE***
- 3 *TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS***
- 4 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***
- 5 *METHODOLOGY***
- 6 *DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS***
- 7 *CONFIDENCE RATING***
- 8 *DEPOSIT MODEL***
- 9 *DISCUSSION***
- 10 *DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

- 1 *CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE***

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	134 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent		
<p><i>In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at 134 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (NGR TR 11096 66539). The evaluation was commissioned by Landminster Construction Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission to demolish the former Royal Mail sorting office and Chaucer House storage unit and erect a new mixed use building comprising 22 flats and A1 commercial and associated storage space.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located in Whitstable town centre close to the harbour and High Street. It lies in an area where very little archaeological investigations have taken place and the archaeological evidence is scarce. The site had a potential for medieval remains and also some potential for evidence of prehistoric activity as the latter is known from wider area in this part of Kent.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site appeared to have been subject to extensive modern development, in particular in relation to construction of the existing sorting office. The latter activity resulted in only modern 20th century deposits and structures being present on the site.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	18 – 22/07/2016		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	6553	Site code	AS 1835
Type of project	An Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Former Royal Mail sorting office		
Planned development	Residential (22 flats) and commercial (retail unit)		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Kent	Canterbury City	Whitstable
HER/ SMR for area	Kent HER		
Post code (if known)	CT5 2AA		
Area of site	c.2000m ²		
NGR	TR 11096 66539		
Height AOD (min/max)	2.60/3.10m		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Canterbury City Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Zbigniew Pozorski		
Funded by	Landminster Construction Ltd		
Full title	134 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Pozorski, Z.		
Report no.	5173		
Date (of report)	July 2016		

134 CROMWELL ROAD, WHITSTABLE, KENT

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at 134 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (NGR TR 11096 66539). The evaluation was commissioned by Landminster Construction Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission to demolish the former Royal Mail sorting office and Chaucer House storage unit and erect a new mixed use building comprising 22 flats and A1 commercial and associated storage space.

The site is located in Whitstable town centre close to the harbour and High Street. It lies in an area where very little archaeological investigations have taken place and the archaeological evidence is scarce. The site had a potential for medieval remains and also some potential for evidence of prehistoric activity as the latter is known from wider area in this part of Kent.

In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds. The site appeared to have been subject to extensive modern development, in particular in relation to construction of the sorting office. The latter activity resulted in only modern 20th century deposits and structures being present on the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at 134 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (NGR TR 11096 66539; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Landminster Construction Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission to demolish the former Royal Mail sorting office and Chaucer House storage unit and erect a new mixed use building comprising 22 flats and A1 commercial and associated storage space (Canterbury City Council Planning Approval Ref. CA/15/01414/FUL).

1.2 The condition reads:

Prior to the commencement of development, the following components of a scheme for the archaeological evaluation of the site, to be undertaken for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of any buried archaeological features and deposits and to assess the importance of the same, shall each be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

a) A written scheme of investigation, to be submitted a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.

b) A report summarising the results of the investigations, to be produced on the completion of fieldwork, in accordance with the requirements set out in the written scheme of investigation.

c) Any further mitigation measures considered necessary as a result of the archaeological investigations, to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

d) If necessary, a programme of post-excavation assessment, analysis, publication and conservation.

Fieldwork, including further mitigation works and post-excavation work shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and programme timings unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local authority, and the local authority shall be notified in writing a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of any fieldwork

1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance to requirements of the Canterbury City Council Archaeological Officer (CCC) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 26/02/2016, revised 07/03/2016 and 05/04/2016) and approved by CCC. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014), and the Kent County Council *Manual of Specifications Part B- Evaluation Requirements*.

1.4 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development under Condition 9 of planning consent CA/15/01414/FUL.

Planning policy context

1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.6 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Whitstable is a seaside town on the north coast of Kent in south-east England, 8 kilometres north of Canterbury and 3 kilometres west of Herne Bay. The site is on the west side of Cromwell Road c.300m south of Whitstable Harbour. The High Street is c.300m to the west and the site lies adjacent west to Westmeads recreation ground.

2.2 The site is a rectangular plot of c.2000m² and comprising two parts. The larger one adjacent to Cromwell Road and with access from Wheatley Road to the north is occupied by the former Royal Mail sorting office building and its yard. The smaller part of the site to the north is occupied by Chaucer House storage unit (also disused) and a rear yard to the east.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is situated on relatively flat land at c.3m AOD rising gently towards the south and south-east. The land falls to the north extending to the coast c.300m from the site.

3.2 The solid geology of the area is Thames Group clay with occasional patches of fine or coarse flint gravel, below slowly permeable clayey soils subject to waterlogging (British Geological Survey 1978).

3.3 Soils on the site are those of the Windsor Association (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). These soils are described as slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils. Some such soils are fine loamy over clayey and fine silty over clayey soils and, locally on slopes, clayey soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The Kent HER has been consulted in order to provide the archaeological background to the site.

4.2 No evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity has been recorded within a 500m radius of the site. An early medieval stirrup was recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme on Wheatley Road, close to the north-east corner of the site (HER MKE57189). The site appears to have been set in the rural hinterland to the east of Whitstable throughout the post-medieval period, with Freakins Windmill, a smock mill c.400m to the south of the site (HER TR16NW96).

4.3 The majority of the historic buildings in the area are associated with the core of Whitstable c.4-500m to the west, along High Street, Oxford Street, Harbour Street and Middle Wall. The earliest buildings comprise the early 17th century 115 High Street and late 17th century Tudor Restaurant, Harbour Street (HER TR16NW1118 & TR16NW1168), but c.65 listed buildings in the town's centre have origins in the mid 18th to 19th centuries, predominantly the early 19th century. The Faversham and Ramsgate Harbour Railway was built in 1861-63, with the line passing c.150m to the south of the site (HER TR26NW212), and Whitstable and Tankerton Station located c.150m to the south-east (HER TR16NW98).

4.4 The specific research aim of the evaluation was to characterise the archaeology in this part of Whitstable. Very little archaeological work has been carried out in this part of North Kent at Whitstable and Herne Bay, so the absence of recorded evidence does not indicate the absence of an archaeological potential. There is a wider record of extensive prehistoric land use (particularly in the later Bronze Age) within areas that were previously thought to have had a low archaeological potential.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Three trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). Initially five trenches were proposed but Trenches 2 and 5 were not excavated, in agreement with the CCC Archaeological Officer, due to limited access and evident modern truncation of the area. Trenches 1 and 3 measured 15 x 2m and Trench 4 measured 13 x 1.80m.

5.2 Tarmac and concrete surface, topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 (Fig. 2, DP 1-2)

<i>Sample section 1A (DP 3): north end, west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.63m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Modern yard surface. Light grey reinforced concrete.
0.21 – 0.33m	L1001	Concrete.
0.33 – 0.44m	L1002	Modern made ground. Mid brownish yellow, loose, silty sand with CBM fragments.
0.44m +	L1003	Natural dark brownish yellow and dark greyish blue, compact, clay.

<i>Sample section 1B (DP 4): south end, east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.60m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.13m	L1004	Modern yard surface. Tarmac.
0.13 – 0.38m	L1001	Concrete. As above.
0.38 – 0.51m	L1002	Modern made ground. As above.
0.51m +	L1003	Natural clay. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was not excavated for practical reasons

Trench 3 (Fig. 2, DP 5-6)

<i>Sample section 3A (DP 7): north end, west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.97m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	M1005	Modern curb stones.
0.28 – 0.81m	M1006	Modern brick wall (site boundary).
0.81m +	M1007	Concrete foundation.

<i>Sample section 3B (DP 8): south end, east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.66m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1000	Tarmac. As above, Trench 1.
0.11 – 0.37m	L1001	Concrete. As above, Trench 1.
0.37 – 0.59m	L1008	Made ground. Mid to dark yellowish brown, friable, clayey and sandy silt.
0.59m +	L1003	Natural clay. As above, Trench 1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2, DP 9-10)

<i>Sample section 4A (DP 11): north end, west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.98m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1009	Topsoil. Mid brownish grey, loose, silty sand with occasional small stones and CBM fragments.
0.25 – 0.35m	L1010	Concrete.
0.35 – 0.54m	L1011	Made ground. Mid brownish grey, friable, silty sand with occasional CBM fragments.
0.54m +	L1003	Natural clay. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 4B (DP 12): south end, east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.99m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1009	Topsoil. As above, S.S. 4A.
0.18 – 0.35m	M1012	Modern concrete foundation.
0.35m +	L1003	Natural clay. As above, Trench 1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was not excavated for practical reasons

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The former sorting office yard where Trenches 1 and 3 were located was overlain by modern tarmac and concrete (0.30 – 0.40m thick in total). Below was modern made ground (0.10 – 0.20m thick) and the made ground was present above natural clay. To the rear of Chaucer House (Trench 4) topsoil (0.15 – 0.25m thick) was present above concrete and made ground (0.20 – 0.30m thick in total).

8.2 The natural clay, L1003, was present at 0.35 – 0.60m below existing ground level and comprised a dark brownish yellow and dark greyish blue, compact, clay.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for prehistoric and medieval archaeology although it is located in the area where

very few archaeological investigations have taken place and the archaeological evidence is scarce. Fairly extensive prehistoric activity is known from wider area in this part of Kent.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. Modern development of the site probably included levelling the ground and no earlier deposits survived above natural clay. Trench 4 contained the remains of a modern 20th century structure in form of a concrete foundation.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Canterbury Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Landminster Construction Ltd for funding the project and for their assistance (in particular Mr Steve Freeman), and also Metropolitan Development Consultancy for their assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Rosanne Cummings, the Canterbury City Council Archaeological Officer.

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2014, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. IfA, Reading

Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW), 1983, *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*. SSEW, Harpenden

APPENDIX 1 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	4 (Context, Drawing, Photo, Digital Photo)
Context Sheets	13
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	1
Site drawings A4	0
Site photographs b/w	0
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	14

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Trench 1. Looking south-west.



DP 2. Trench 1. Looking north.



DP 3. Trench 1, north end. Sample section 1A. Looking east.



DP 4. Trench 1, south end. Sample section 1B. Looking west.



DP 5. Trench 3. Looking north-north-east.



DP 6. Trench 3. Looking south.



DP 7. Trench 3, north end. Sample section 3A. Looking east.



DP 8. Trench 3, south end. Sample section 3B. Looking west.



DP 9. Trench 4. Looking north-west.



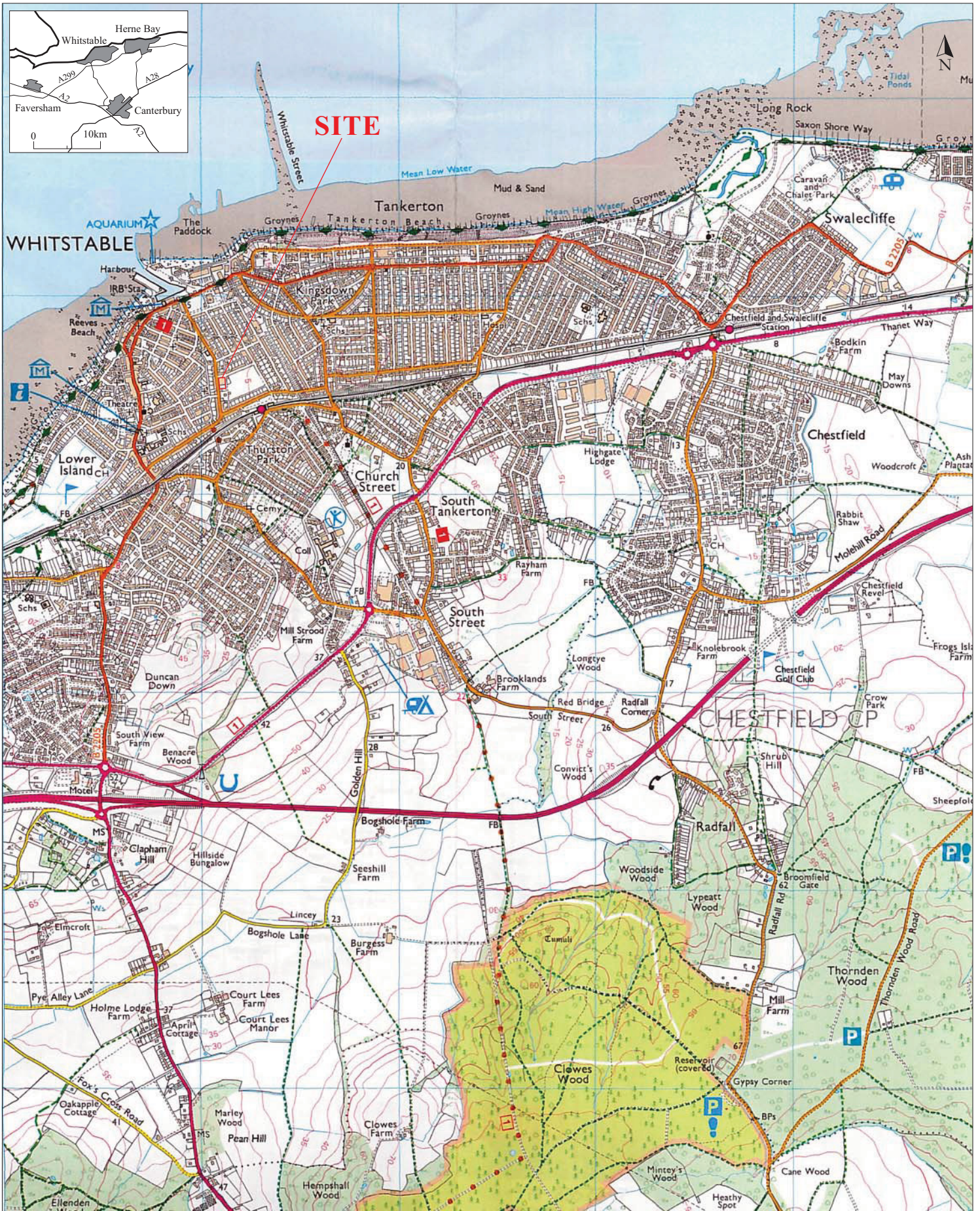
DP 10. Trench 4. Looking south.



DP 11. Trench 4, north end. Sample section 4A. Looking east.



DP 12. Trench 4, south end. Sample section 4B. Looking west.



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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (P6553)



Blue trenches unexcavated

0 25m

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Fig. 2 Trench location plan

Scale 1:500 at A4

Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (P6553)



Blue trenches unexcavated



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Fig. 3 Proposed development
 Scale - As scale bar
 Cromwell Road, Whitstable, Kent (P6553)