

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Kemsing Vicarage,
Kemsing, Kent**

An archaeological evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code MCK11/80

(TQ 5555 5877)

Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for the Diocese of Rochester**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeMCK11/80

November 2011

Summary

Site name: Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 5555 5877 (Church Hall site) and TQ 5563 5869 (Vicarage site)

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th – 21st October 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MCK 11/80

Area of site: c. 2750 sq m (Church Hall site) and 900 sq m (Vicarage site)

Summary of results: Several late Roman features were found close to the existing church hall, which suggest the presence of an occupation site in the area. One ditch may have remained open into the 5th century AD. In contrast, the only archaeological feature recorded in the existing vicarage garden was a small 17th-century pit.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Sevenoaks Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 11.11.11 Steve Preston✓ 08.11.11

Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 11/80

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at two small sites in the centre of Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent. Two evaluation trenches were excavated close to the existing church hall (TQ 5555 5877), whilst a further four trenches were dug in the garden of the present vicarage (TQ 5563 5869) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Robert Wickham of Howard Sharp and Partners, 125 High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1UT, on behalf of the Diocese of Rochester.

Planning consent is to be sought from Sevenoaks District Council to construct a new vicarage and church hall to the west of the parish church, following demolition of the existing church hall. The associated car park and access road to the new buildings are described as being ‘no dig’ areas, where very little excavation will take place. Consent will also be sought to build four new houses in the present vicarage garden, along with a detached garage.

As a consequence of the possibility of the presence of archaeological deposits which could be damaged or destroyed during construction on the two sites a field evaluation has been requested. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the District Council’s policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Officer with Kent County Council, who act as advisers to the District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell and Sean Wallis on the 20th and 21st October 2011, and the site code is MCK 11/80. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Sevenoaks Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Kemsing lies just north-east of Sevenoaks. The evaluation covered two separate plots of land (Fig. 1). Both sites are located within the historic core of Kemsing, and are separated by a small housing development and part of the churchyard (Fig. 2). The existing church hall is situated within a small grassy field to the west of the parish church. The field is relatively flat, although there is a gentle slope down towards the south-west. As a result of

this slope, the height of the field above Ordnance Datum varies between about 101m and 103m. The present vicarage is located at the eastern end of Kemsing High Street, and the trenches were excavated in the northern part of the garden. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Lower Chalk, and this was confirmed in all the evaluation trenches (BGS 1993).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in correspondence from Mr Adam Single, formerly of Kent County Council Heritage Group. In summary, the settlement is documented in late Saxon times (Williams and Martin 2002), and the church was also established during this period. It is not known if any earlier phases of the burial ground extended as far as the church hall site. It is suggested that the 17th-century Grade II Listed Building to the west, known as The Keep, overlies an earlier motte and bailey castle, although direct evidence of this has so far proved elusive. In general, the topographic setting of the village (on a spring line) is one which typically attracted prehistoric, Roman and Saxon occupation. The historic village is centred on a well, dedicated to St Edith, the illegitimate daughter of King Edgar, who was supposedly born in Kemsing in AD 961. The Anglo-Saxon place name Kemsing is first mentioned in AD 822 (Mills 1998).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to a full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits of Saxon, medieval or post-medieval occupation are present; and
- to determine if elements of the church graveyard from Saxon to early post-medieval times are present.

It was originally proposed to dig two 10m long trenches either side of the church hall, with a further four trenches in the vicarage garden, varying in length from 5m to 7.5m. A seventh proposed trench, to the west of Mary Burrows Gardens had to be abandoned due to access issues. All the trenches were to be 1.6m wide, and

excavated by a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation was to be taken down to the top of the natural geology or the top of the relevant archaeological level. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

Due to site logistics, some of the trenches were moved slightly from their original planned positions (Figs 3 and 4). The trenches varied in length from 5m to 10.2m, and were between 0.58m and 1.09m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A catalogue of features excavated forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 5 and 6, Pls 1 and 2)

This trench was orientated approximately NE-SW, and was 10.20m long and up to 0.58m deep. Turf and topsoil (50), up to 0.17m thick, was removed to reveal a subsoil deposit of light greyish brown clayey silt (51). The subsoil layer was about 0.20m thick, and lay directly above the natural chalk. Two linear features (2 and 3) were recorded within the western end of the trench, along with two possible pits (5 and 6) (Fig. 5). Gully 3 had a single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (54). The feature had a flattish base, and was 0.15m deep and up to 0.68m wide. Three small sherds of late Roman pottery were recovered from the gully. Ditch 2 was approximately parallel to gully 3. It was up to 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. Its single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (53) contained animal bone, along with thirty-four sherds of late Roman pottery. A small number of slag fragments and fired clay fragments were also found within this feature. The ditch appeared to truncate the western side of a small pit (6), which was fully excavated. The pit had originally been 0.52m long and at least 0.18m wide. It had a single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (58), up to 0.20m thick, which contained several fragments of animal bone and a small sherd of late Roman pottery. A similar sized pit (5) was partially exposed between 4.25m and 4.75m, and was 0.13m deep. Animal bone fragments were recovered from its fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (57), along with a single sherd of late Roman pottery.

Trench 2 (Figs 5 and 6; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was 10.1m long and orientated approximately N-S. Most of the trench was excavated to a depth of about 0.75m, but a test pit was dug at the southern end, to a depth of 1.09m, to verify the presence of natural

geology. The stratigraphy generally consisted of 0.40m of turf and topsoil (50) above a subsoil layer (51), which was up to 0.43m thick. This lay directly above the natural chalk geology. Re-deposited chalk and soil was noted in some parts of the trench, which is likely to be associated with the construction of the adjacent church hall. The terminus of a probable ditch (1) was noted between 4.1m and 5.3m from the south end of the trench, and a slot was excavated through it (Fig. 5). The feature was 0.75m wide and up to 0.12m deep, with steepish sides and a flat base. Animal bone fragments were retrieved from its single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (52), along with 2 sherds of late Roman pottery.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned approximately N-S, and was excavated in part of the vicarage garden which had formerly been a vegetable patch. The trench was 5m long and up to 0.92m deep. The topsoil (50) in this area was quite deep (0.50m), reflecting the fact that it had been dug over in the recent past. Approximately 0.30m of subsoil (51) was observed immediately beneath the topsoil, and several pieces of medieval or post-medieval tile were recovered from this layer, presumably indicating a dump of building material. The subsoil lay directly above the natural chalk, and no archaeological features were present in the trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 7.5m long and 0.63m deep, and aligned approximately NW-SE. Up to 0.32m of turf and topsoil (50) was removed to reveal a layer of subsoil (51), which was about 0.25m thick. This lay directly above the natural chalk geology. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in this trench.

Trench 5

This trench was orientated approximately N-S and was 6.5m long and 0.82m deep. Turf and topsoil (50), up to 0.42m thick, was removed to reveal the subsoil horizon (51). This layer was approximately 0.25m thick, and lay directly above the natural chalk geology. Apart from two clearly modern post-holes, no features were observed.

Trench 6 (Figs 5 and 6)

This trench was 6m long and 0.58m deep, and aligned approximately NW-SE. The trench was shifted slightly from its original intended position, due to the presence of a concrete base. Up to 0.30m of turf and topsoil (50) was removed to reveal a subsoil layer (51), which was 0.28m thick, and lay directly above the natural chalk geology. A pipe trench was recorded along the eastern side of the trench, and a possible pit (4) was partially exposed against the western edge of the trench, between 2.1m and 2.6m (Fig. 5). This feature was at least 0.35m long and 0.45m wide, with steep sides and a flat base. The pit had a single fill of mid brownish grey clayey silt (56) which contained a small sherd of 17th-century pottery, along with fragments of brick or tile, and a human tooth.

Finds

Pottery by Malcolm Lyne

The site yielded 42 sherds (393g) of pottery from six contexts, all of which was Late Roman or immediately post-Roman in date with the exception of a single glazed 17th-century sherd from the fill (56) of Pit 4 in Trench 4 (Appendix 3). All of the assemblages were quantified by numbers of sherds and their weights per fabric. These fabrics were identified using a x8 magnification lens with inbuilt metric graticule in order to determine the natures, forms, frequencies and sizes of added filler inclusions and were, for the most part, classified using the fabric codes formulated by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (Macpherson-Grant *et al.* 1995). One exception is the possible sub-Roman fabric SR1, where no such coding previously existed. None of the assemblages are large enough for any further quantification by Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) based on rim sherds.

The Assemblages

By far the largest and most significant pottery assemblage is that from Ditch 2 in Trench 2 (context 53). The 34 sherds in the assemblage include eight abraded fragments in Late Roman Grog-tempered ware fabric LR1.1 (*c.*270–420), one from a jar in Harrold Shell-tempered fabric LR3 in similar condition (*c.*350–420), four sherds from C49 and C51 bowls in Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat fabric LR10 (*c.*240–420), one from an M22 *mortarium* in Oxfordshire Whiteware fabric LR22 (*c.*300–420), three fresh sherds in Alice Holt Greyware fabric LR5 from a type 6A.8 dish (*c.*330–420) (Lyne and Jeffries 1979) and a jar, and three from a rilled jar in Overwey/Portchester D fabric LR6 (*c.*330–420). A fragment from a closed form in Much Hadham Oxidized ware LR13 (*c.*250–420) and seven in miscellaneous none-attributable greywares are also present, as are six fresh sherds from a shallow, carbon-soaked, handmade dish in a silty fabric SR1 with sparse chopped grass filler. The fragments from this dish are the freshest in the assemblage and in a fabric not dissimilar to Early Saxon ones with similar filler of *c.*450–650 date: The form does, however, have more in common with Late Roman straight-sided dishes than the few recorded somewhat deeper open forms of Early Saxon date. A late 4th- to 5th-century date can be inferred for this important assemblage, which appears to have continued to accumulate into the sub-Roman period.

The other pottery assemblages are much smaller and include a flake in Overwey/Portchester D fabric LR6 (*c.*330–420) from the fill of Pit 6 in Trench 6, two fragments from an everted-rim jar in Late Roman Grog-tempered ware and one from a necked jar of uncertain form in Alice Holt Greyware from Gully 3 in Trench 3 and one fragment in Late Roman grog-tempered ware from Pit 5 in Trench 5.

Fabrics

Roman

R7. Miscellaneous greywares
LR1.1. Late Roman Grog-tempered ware
LR3. Harrold Shell-tempered ware
LR5. Alice Holt greyware
LR6 Overwey/Portchester D fabric
LR10 Oxfordshire Red Colour-coat
LR13 Much Hadham Oxidized ware
LR22 Oxfordshire Whiteware

?Sub-Roman

SR1. Handmade carbon-soaked fabric with profuse silt and sparse chopped grass inclusions.

Post-Medieval

PM1. Pink earthenware with internal ginger glaze

Animal Bone by Felicity Howell

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from four contexts during this evaluation. A total of 88 fragments were present for analysis, weighing 406g (Appendix 4). The bones were in good to fair condition, although there was a high degree of fragmentation. The fragments had been broken post depositionally with the exception of three fresh fractures to indeterminate long bones two elements recovered from ditch 2 (53) and another from pit 6 (58). No burning, gnawing, butchery marks or pathology was observed.

Teeth were the most well preserved skeletal elements that allowed identification. Using this evidence the minimum number of individuals (MNI) represented in this assemblage was determined to be three: one sheep/goat and two pigs. The sheep/goat was represented by a molar fragment recovered from pit 6 (58), 2 maxillary molar fragments, one mandibular molar and one right metatarsal from ditch slot 2 (53). A few fragments of pig teeth and maxilla were retrieved from pit 5(57), while a pig mandible with *in situ* teeth and a canine fragment were identified from ditch slot 1 (52). Fragments of pig left ulna, radius and humerus, as well as 2 right mandibular canines were found in ditch 2 (53), taking the minimum number of pigs represented up to two individuals.

Human Bone by Felicity Howell

A single adult human maxillary canine was recovered from pit 4 (56). The tooth is in poor condition with a substantial amount of the enamel eroded.

Ceramic Building Material by Sean Wallis

Two very small fragments of tile, weighing 21g, found in ditch 2 (53), are presumably Roman in date. Two pieces of post-medieval tile, weighing 28g, were recovered from pit 4 (56) in trench 6. The subsoil layer (51) in trench 3 appeared to contain a small dump of broken tile, some of which could be medieval in date. One of these was clearly a roof tile, due to the presence of a peg hole, and a small sample of this material was retained.

Slag by Steve Crabb

Several small fragments of slag, weighing 12g, were recovered from late Roman or sub-Roman ditch 2 (53) in trench 1. The fragments appear to be fuel ash slag, non-diagnostic of any particular pyrotechnological method, but indicative of relatively high temperatures. As a result, they could represent anything from cooking to smelting.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

Three small fragments of burnt flint, weighing 11g, were found within gully 1 (52) in trench 2. Pottery from this feature indicates that the feature is Roman in date.

Shell by Sean Wallis

Two small pieces of oyster (*ostrea edulis*) shell, weighing 2g, were recovered from the fill of ditch 1 (52) in trench 2. This was a staple part of the Roman diet.

Conclusion

The evaluation successfully investigated those parts of the two areas which will be most affected by the proposed development. Several late Roman features were recorded in the northern area, to the west of the parish church, indicating occupation in late 4th or early 5th century. The presence of what might be sub-Roman pottery accompanied by latest Roman pottery potentially adds to the significance of the site, especially if the potter was making a Roman form in a Saxon fabric at a time when Roman pottery was still in use. The small assemblage of pottery is drawn from a number of different sources but the finds are otherwise typical for a small farmstead. No clear evidence of structures was observed. As the Roman features were seen on either side of the existing church

hall, it seems likely that further deposits may be present within the field. In contrast, the only archaeological feature discovered in the vicarage garden was a pit dating from the 17th century (or later), and this area is therefore considered to have little archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.20	1.60	0.58	0-0.17m turf and topsoil (50); 0.17-0.37m subsoil (51); 0.37m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology). Ditch 2, gully 3, and pits 5 and 6. [Pls 1 and 2]
2	10.10	1.60	1.09 (test pit)	0-0.40m turf and topsoil (50); 0.40-0.83m subsoil (51); 0.83m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology). Ditch 1. [Pls 3 and 4]
3	5.00	1.60	0.92	0-0.51m topsoil (50); 0.51-0.80m subsoil (51); 0.80m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology).
4	7.50	1.60	0.63	0-0.32m turf and topsoil (50); 0.32-0.58m subsoil (51); 0.58m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology).
5	6.50	1.60	0.82	0-0.42m turf and topsoil (50); 0.42-0.64m subsoil (51); 0.64m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology).
6	6.00	1.60	0.60	0-0.30m turf and topsoil (50); 0.30-0.58m subsoil (51); 0.58m+ light greyish white chalk (natural geology). Pit 4.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill(s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	52	Ditch	Late Roman	Pottery
1	2	53	Ditch	Late Roman	Pottery
1	3	54	Gully	Late Roman	Pottery
6	4	56	Pit	17th century	Pottery
1	5	57	Pit	Late Roman	Pottery
1	6	58	Pit	Late Roman	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogue

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Date-range (AD)</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>Wt(g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
2	1	52	R7	Jars	270–400	2	17	
2	2	53	R7	Closed form		7	38	
			LR1.1	Jars	270–420	8	45	Abraded
			LR3	Jar	350–420	1	4	Abraded
			LR5	Jar	270–420			Fresh
				Convex-sided dish	330–420	3	35	Fresh
			LR6	Rilled jar	330–420+	3	16	Fresh
			LR10	C49 bowl	240–400+			
				C51 bowl	240–400+	4	32	
			LR13	Closed form	250–400+	1	4	
			LR22	M22 <i>mortarium</i>	300–400+	1	34	
			SR1	Dish	420–450+	6	144	Fresh all 1 dish
			<i>Fired clay</i>			2	12	
2	3	54	LR1.1	Everted rim jar	270–420	2	7	Fresh
			LR5	Everted rim jar	270–420	1	7	Fresh
6	4	56	PM1	Open form	1600–1700	1	4	Fresh
			<i>Tile</i>		<i>post medieval</i>	1	4	
2	5	57	LR1	Jar	270–420	1	4	
2	6	58	LR6	Jar	330–420	1	2	Fresh.

APPENDIX 4: Animal bone catalogue

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Pig</i>	<i>Sheep/goat</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
1	5	57	6	22	3		3
1	6	58	4	21		1	3
1	2	53	55	289	5	3	47
2	1	52	23	74	2		21
		Total	88	406			

APPENDIX 5: Summary

Kent County Council SMR summary form

Site Name: Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent

Site address: Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent

Summary: A field evaluation was carried out in Kemsing, in advance of a new vicarage, church hall, and housing development. Six trenches were excavated. Several features (linears and pits) dating from the late Roman period were recorded close to the existing church hall, just to the west of the parish church. The only archaeological feature recorded in the existing vicarage garden was a small 17th century pit.

District/Unitary: Sevenoaks

Parish: Kemsing

Periods: Late Roman and 17th century

NGR: TQ 5555 5877 and TQ 5563 5869

Type of archaeological work: Field Evaluation

Date of Recording: 20th – 21st October 2011

Unit undertaking recording: Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Geology: Lower Chalk

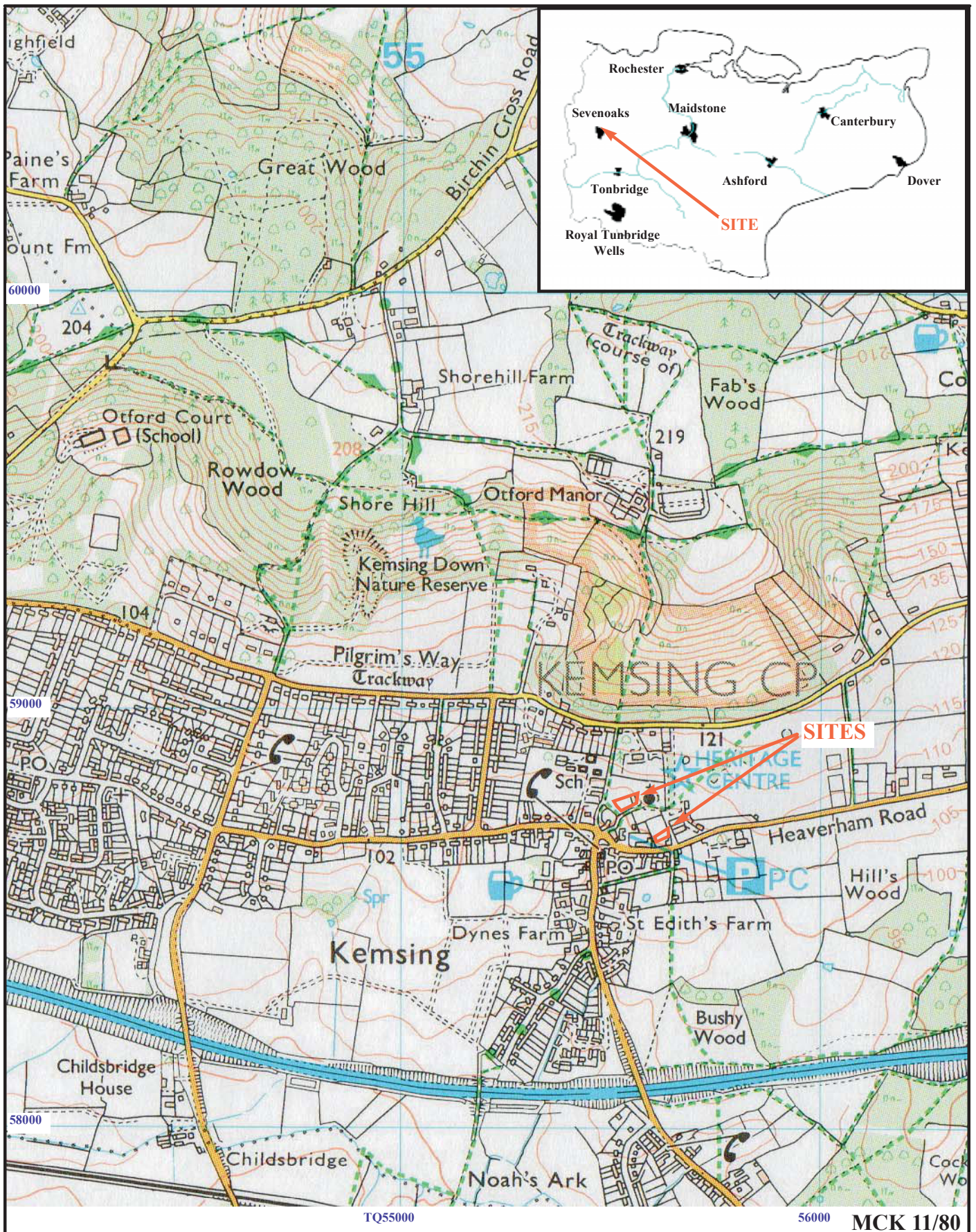
Title and author of report: Mr Sean Wallis, Project Manager

Summary of results by period: Several features (linears and pits) dating from the late Roman period were recorded close to the existing church hall, just to the west of the parish church. The only archaeological feature recorded in the existing vicarage garden was a small 17th century pit.

Location of archive and finds: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading RG1 5NR and will be deposited at Sevenoaks Museum in due course.

Contact at Unit: Mr Sean Wallis

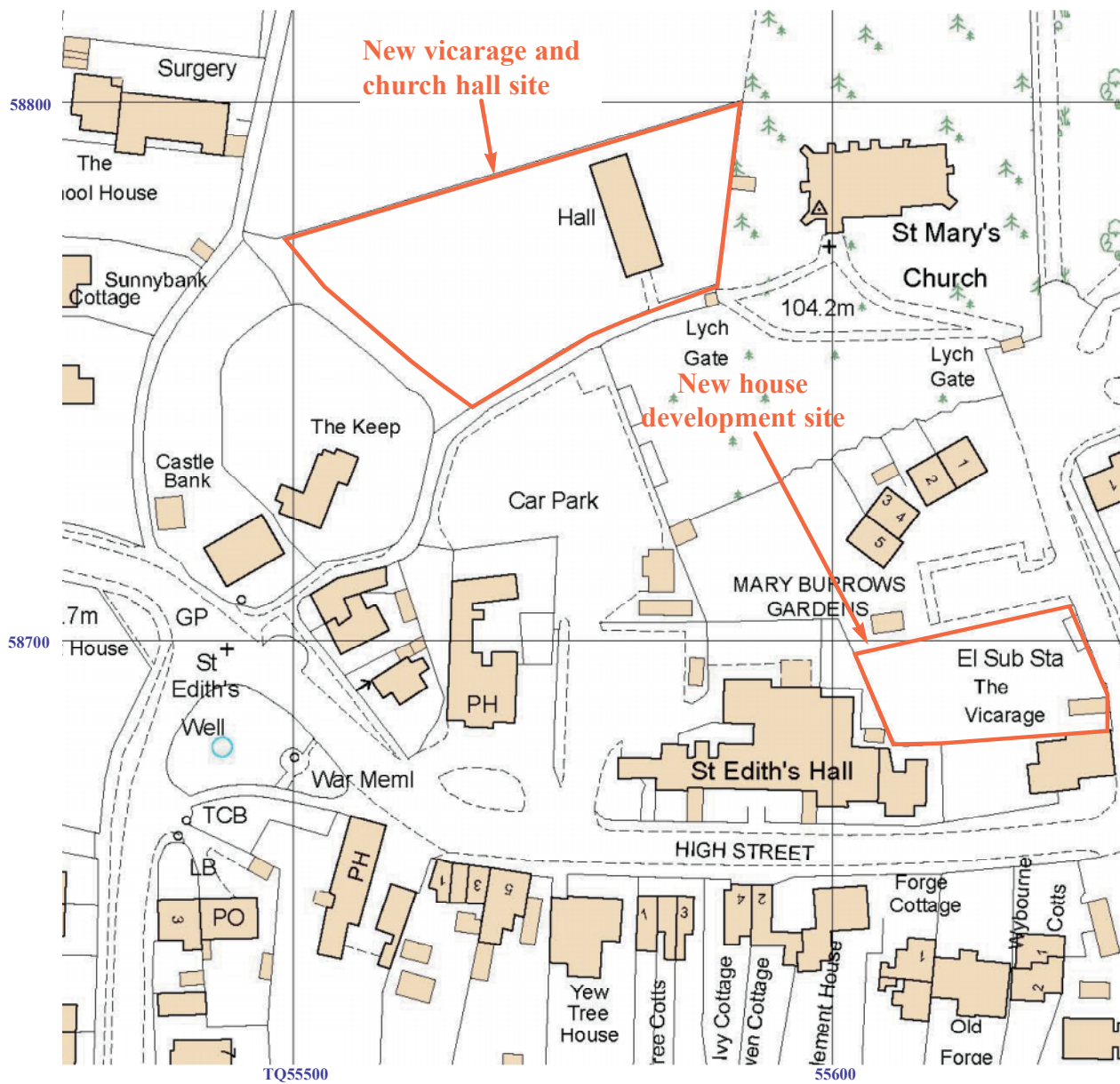
Date: 9th November 2011



**Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of sites within Kemsing and Kent.

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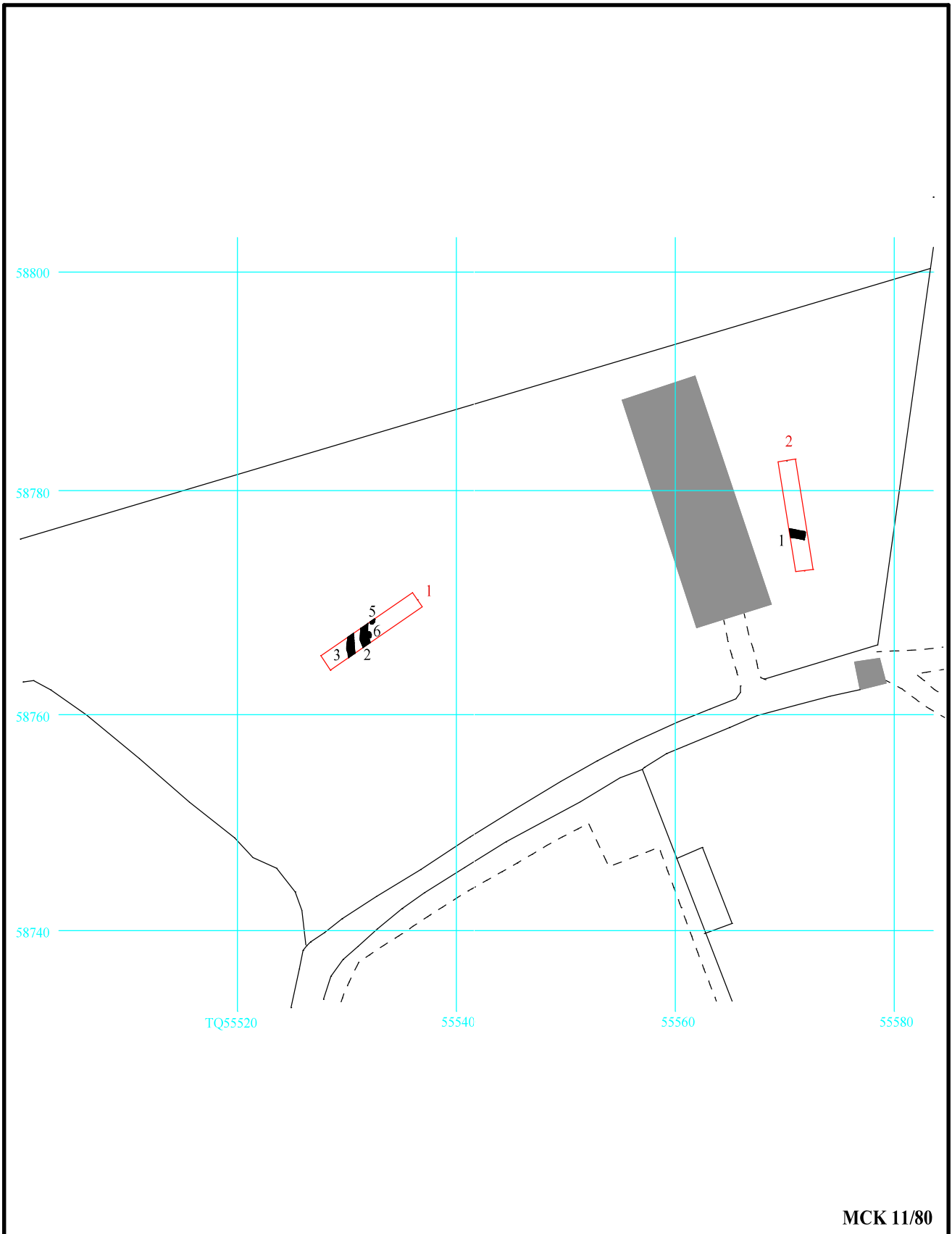


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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of sites within Kemsing.

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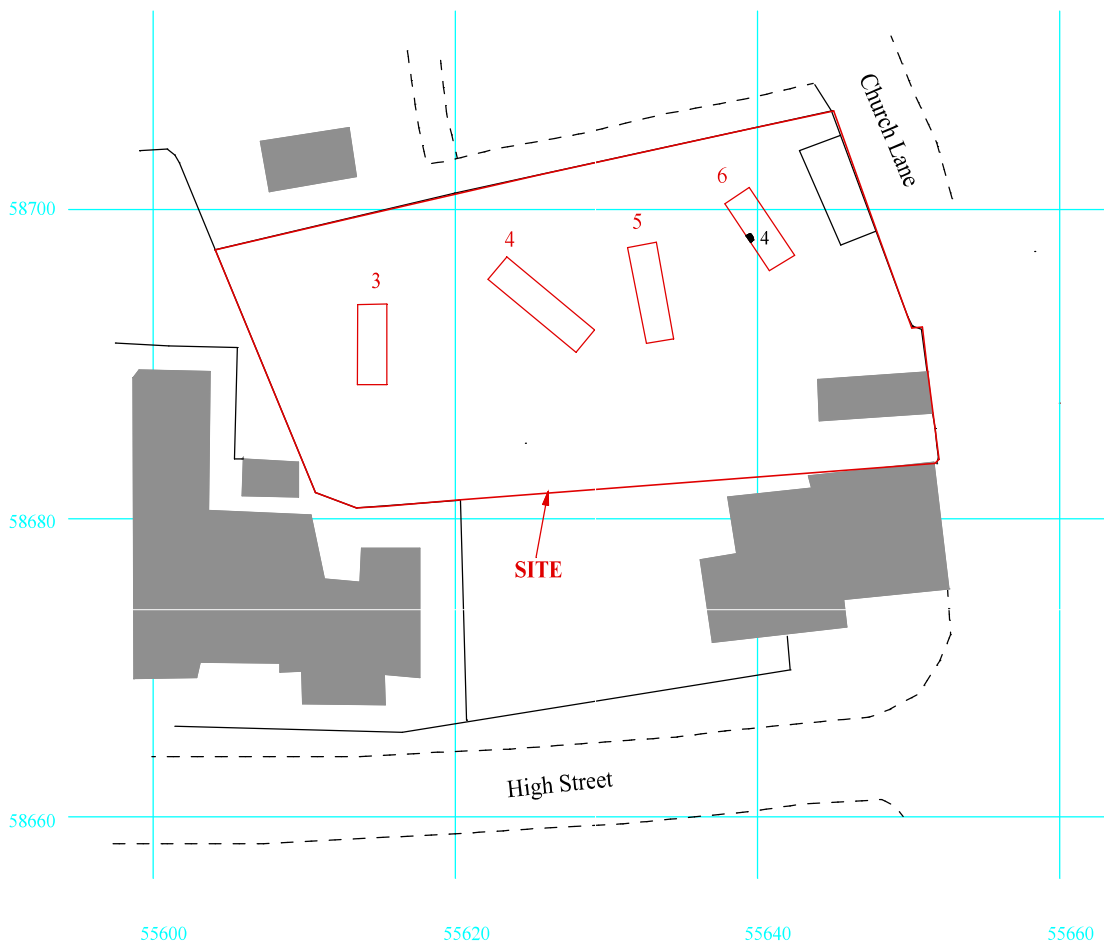


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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of trenches 1 and 2.



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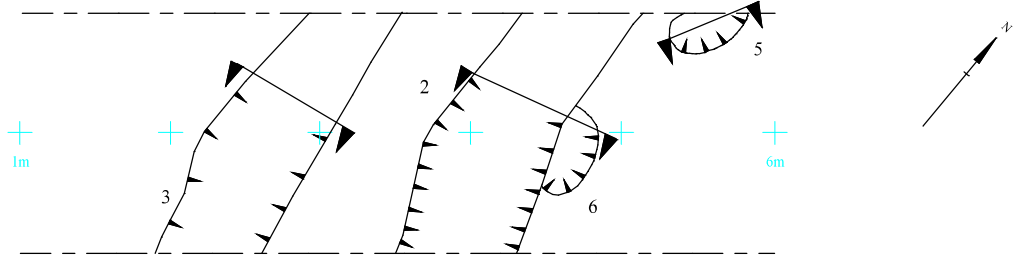
**Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Location of trenches 3 to 6.

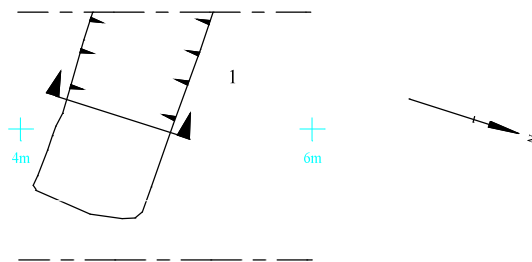


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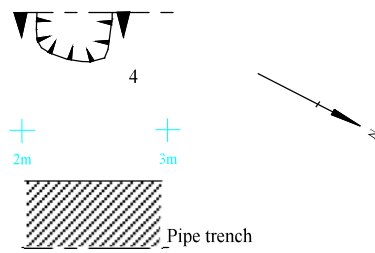
Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench 6

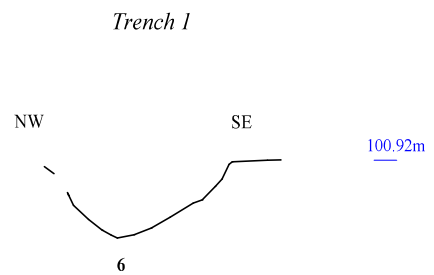
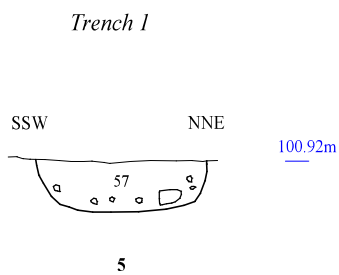
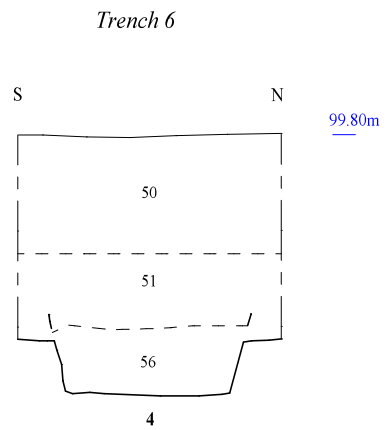
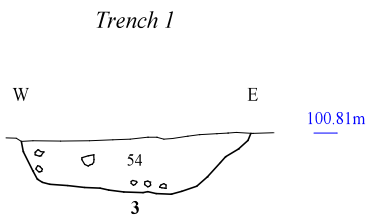
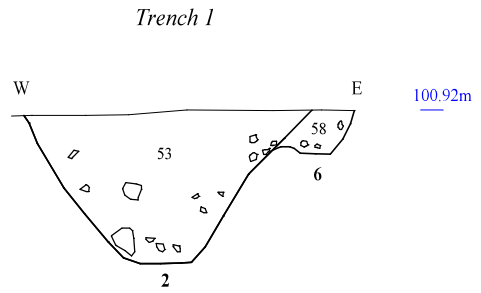
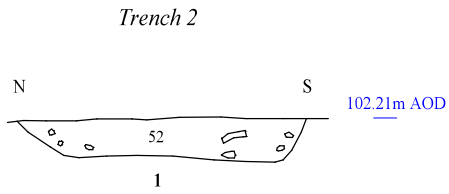


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**Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Plans of trenches





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**Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing,
Kent, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 6. Sections





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north . Scales 2m, 1m (horizontal)and 0.5m (vertical).

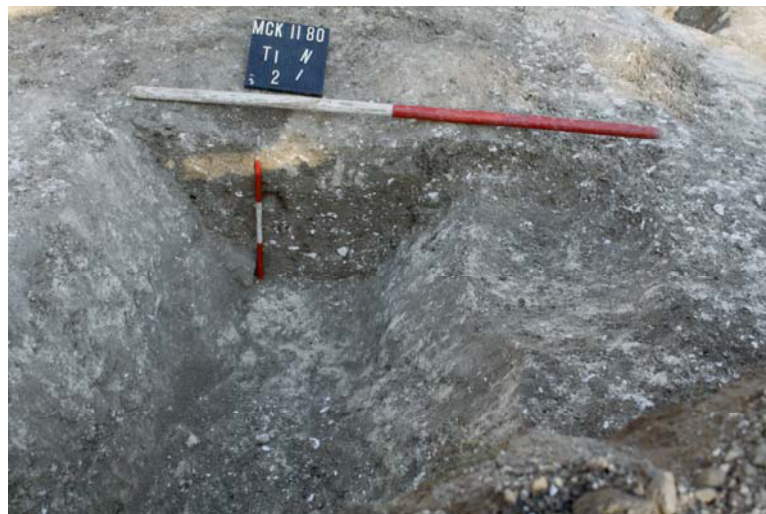


Plate 2. Ditch 2, looking north-west. Horizontal scale 1m, vertical 0.5m

MCK11/101

Kemsing Vicarage, Kemsing, Kent, 2011
Archaeological evaluation

Plates 1 and 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



Plate 3. Trench 2, looking south-west. Scales 2m, 1m (horizontal) and 0.5m (vertical).



Plate 4. Ditch 1, looking east. Horizontal scale 1m, vertical 0.5m

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Plates 3 and 4.

THAMES VALLEY
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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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