

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

**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent**

An archaeological excavation

By Teresa Vieira and Sean Wallis

URC16/137
(TQ 8969 5213)

**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent**

**An Archaeological Excavation
for Akehurst Homes Ltd**

by Teresa Vieira and Sean Wallis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code URC 16/137

Summary

Site name: United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 8969 5213

Planning reference: 14/502152/FULL

Site activity: Excavation

Date and duration of project: 21st–27th September 2016

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Teresa Vieira

Site code: URC 16/137

Area of site: *c.* 0.93 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological fieldwork at Maidstone Road, Lenham, revealed a modest number of features dating from several periods. Two pits were of Middle Bronze Age date and a gully provided very mixed dating evidence but might date from the 10th or 11th century AD. Other features were all of post-medieval or modern date. A few sherds of Late Iron Age or Roman pottery were also recovered.

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by Teresa Vieira and Sean Wallis
with contributions by Luke Barber, Steve Ford, Lizzi Lewins and Richard Tabor

Report 16/137b

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on land to the south of Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent (TQ 8969 5213) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James Lench of Akehurst Homes Ltd, 22 Claremont Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5DD.

Planning permission (14/502152/FULL) had been gained from Maidstone Borough Council to demolish the existing structures on the site, and redevelop the area for housing. The consent was subject to a standard planning condition (19) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of both an archaeological field evaluation, to be carried out prior to groundworks, and safeguarding measures (preservation *in situ* of important archaeological remains, or investigation and recording (preservation by record) of less significant remains). The field evaluation was carried out in July 2016, and, as archaeological features were recorded in the southern part of the site, including a late Saxon gully (Wallis 2016), a further phase of work was requested to target the features recorded during the evaluation. This report is concerned with that follow-up excavation, which was carried out in September 2016, though the evaluation findings are incorporated.

This was in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Wendy Rogers, the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer, who advises Maidstone Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken between the 21st and 27th September 2016, and the site code is URC 16/137. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Maidstone Museum in due course.

Topography and Geology

The site is located close to the historic core of Lenham, and is centred on NGR TQ 8969 5213 (Figs 1 and 2). Until very recently the part of the site nearest to Maidstone Road was occupied by the United Reform Church, which was built in the early 1950s. The rest of the site was largely covered by grass and trees, although there were a few small buildings in the south-east and western areas. All these buildings, including the church, were demolished prior to the field evaluation which took place in July 2016. The site generally slopes down towards the north-east, although

there was a clear difference in height between the areas on either side of the property boundary which runs across the middle of the site, on an approximate NW-SE alignment (Fig. 2). The evaluation trenches suggested that the area to the north of this boundary had been truncated in the past, whilst the area to the south was relatively undisturbed. The height above Ordnance Datum therefore varied across the site, from 124m in the south-west corner, to 119m close to Maidstone Road. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology largely consists of Lower Chalk, with Head Deposits being present in the south-west part of the site (BGS 1976). However, although some patches of chalk were recorded in the northern part of the site during the evaluation, the natural geology generally consisted of overlying deposits of mid orange brown silty clay with flint gravel and /or chalk inclusions (Head).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site largely stemmed from its position close to the historic core of Lenham, which has Saxon origins and developed into a medieval market village mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). The Pilgrim's Way passes along a downland ridge to the north of Lenham, and this was probably a routeway from prehistoric times onwards. Details of previous archaeological discoveries in the village were gleaned from a search of the Kent County Historic Environment Record (HER). A cluster of Roman features, including pits and ditches, were recorded to the north-east of the site, during an archaeological investigation at Lenham Community Centre. Three Saxon inhumation burials, with grave goods, were discovered near the junction of the High Street and Maidstone Road, to the east of the present site, in 1946. Recent archaeological work in the village uncovered a large clay-lined Saxon pit, to the north-east of the site.

An archaeological evaluation took place on the site in July 2016, which revealed that parts of the site had been disturbed or truncated in late post-medieval times. However, the southern part of the site did not appear to have been truncated in the past, and a probable late Saxon gully was identified in this area, along with several post-medieval features (Wallis 2016).

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the project was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and features within the area around the late Saxon gully which had been identified during the earlier trial trench evaluation. A core excavation area of *c.* 900 sq m was agreed with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer, although there was a caveat that this could be extended if significant archaeological features were discovered close to the edges of this initial area.

The Excavation

The excavation area was stripped down to the top of the underlying natural geology, which necessitated the removal of between 0.42m and 0.50m of topsoil (50) and subsoil deposits (51). The area was stripped by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision, and eventually measured 1082 sq m in size.

A number of archaeological features, including pits, post-holes, ditches and gullies, were recorded in the excavation area, and the majority of these were sampled by hand. Some of these had previously been identified during the evaluation. During a site visit by the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer it was agreed that a number of features, which were clearly post-medieval or modern in date, did not need to be excavated. However, these features were planned and, where possible, finds were taken from their surface.

Phase 1: Middle Bronze Age

A shallow pit (14) was investigated in the north-east corner of the excavation area. It was roughly oval in shape, but quite irregular (Pl. 1), and was originally interpreted as being a tree-bole. However, over 240 sherds of middle Bronze Age pottery (Pl. 2) were recovered from its fill of mid greyish brown silty clay (69), along with one struck flint and two small fragments of burnt flint. The feature was up to 2.50m long, 1.60m wide, but only 0.13m deep.

Sub-circular pit (17), 1.50m in diameter, was recorded in the south-east part of the excavation area (Pl. 3). The feature was up to 0.16m deep, and had a single fill of light greyish brown silty clay, with moderate flint gravel inclusions (73). Six pieces of struck flint were recovered from this deposit, along with over seventy sherds of middle Iron Age pottery. The pit also contained seven residual pottery sherds, dating from the middle Bronze Age, and a tiny (25) fragment of very abraded ceramic material that might be brick but must be intrusive if not mis-identified.

Phase 2: Late Saxon

Gully 1000 had previously been identified during the evaluation, when several sherds of late Saxon pottery were found in the slot (3) excavated through it. The feature was exposed in plan during the excavation, aligned approximately SSW-NNE, with a terminus at its southern end. The gully was up to 0.65m wide and 0.24m deep, and extended north-eastwards from the terminus for approximately 23m, before petering out before the northern edge of the excavation area. Four slots were excavated through the feature by hand (15, 16, 35 and 36), in addition to the one (3) from the evaluation (Pls 4–6). Each of these slots produced further finds from its uniform single fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt, unfortunately of very mixed dates: from north to south, slot 36 contained a single struck

flint, a tiny crumb of Middle Bronze Age pottery and two sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery; slot 35 contained 6 sherds of pottery, 2 probably Middle Iron Age and four late Iron Age; slot 15 had a very small sherd of late Iron Age or early Roman pottery, and two tiny fragments (2g) of what is possibly peg tile; and terminal 16 also contained a small sherd of late Iron Age or early Roman pottery. The dating of the feature must therefore be regarded as tentative, especially as it is essentially parallel to ditch 1001 (below) and had a similar fill. The identification of the peg tile is very uncertain, and it is very worn, so if this is either misidentified or intrusive, the late Saxon pottery probably dates the gully, but the suspicion remains that this pottery, like the earlier sherds, may be residual and the gully is of broadly similar date to ditch 1001.

Phase 3: Early Post-Medieval

Ditch 1001 extended for about 26m between the southern and eastern edges of the excavation area. It had been identified during the earlier evaluation, when two slots (1 and 4) had been excavated through it. Fragments of animal bone and post-medieval tile had been found within the ditch during the evaluation, and a further tile fragment was recovered from a slot dug during the excavation (22), along with a small residual sherd of medieval pottery, and several pieces of animal bone. The ditch was up to 1.32m wide and 0.46m deep, with a single fill of mid greyish brown clayey silt (78) (Pl. 7).

Eleven pits or post-holes were recorded across the excavation area, which contained finds dating from the early post-medieval period (summarized in Table 1). It was agreed with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer that some of these features did not have to be excavated. No obvious pattern of post-holes was observed, although it is possible that post-holes 29 and 31 could represent a fence line parallel to ditch 1001. Pit 33 was an articulated cow burial, and 124 fragments of bone, weighing over 4kg, were recovered from the feature.

TABLE 1: Summary of early post-medieval pits/post-holes

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comments / Dating Evidence</i>
8	94	0.35	0.35	0.09	Post-hole	Tile.
10	65	0.52	0.52	0.11	Post-hole	Tile.
11	66	0.72	0.50	0.11	Pit	Pottery.
12	67	0.93	0.75	0.16	Pit	Cut by stake-hole 13. Brick, tile and iron.
19	75	0.30	0.30	0.08	Post-hole	Tile.
23	79, 80	1.09	0.92	0.26	Pit	Pottery.
24	81	0.95	0.88	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Pottery.
29	86	0.50	0.48	N/A	Post-hole	Not excavated. Ceramic building material.
31	88	0.47	0.41	N/A	Post-hole	Not excavated. Iron.
33	90	2.12	0.75	0.10	Pit	Animal burial. Pottery and iron.
34	91	0.92	0.88	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Ceramic building material.

Phase 4: Late Post-Medieval, Modern and Undated

Eight pits or post-holes, dating from either the late post-medieval or modern period, were recorded in the excavation area (summarized in Table 2). One of these (2) had previously been investigated during the evaluation. Following a discussion with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer, it was agreed that some of the features which were clearly quite recent did not have to be excavated. However, finds were recovered from the surface of some of the unexcavated features. Two excavated post-holes (9 and 20) contained no datable finds.

TABLE 2: Summary of late post-medieval/later pits/post-holes

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Comments / Dating Evidence</i>
2	55, 56	1.12	1.00	0.28	Pit	Recorded in evaluation. Pottery, tile and clay pipe.
9	95	0.35	0.35	0.06	Post-hole	Undated.
18	74	0.25	0.25	0.14	Post-hole	Brick.
20	76	0.38	0.38	0.11	Post-hole	Undated.
21	77	1.05	0.92	0.16	Pit	Pottery and glass.
25	82	0.30	0.28	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Pottery and ceramic building material.
26	83	1.10	0.90	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Ceramic building material.
27	84	0.83	0.76	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Ceramic building material.
30	87	0.36	0.30	N/A	Post-hole	Not excavated. Wood.
32	89	1.00	0.87	N/A	Pit	Not excavated. Ceramic building material and glass.

Finds

Prehistoric Pottery by Richard Tabor

The prehistoric pottery assemblage comprised a total of 332 sherds weighing 2455.5g and 47 crumbs weighing 62g. The weights, fabrics and vessel parts of all sherds were recorded. The assemblage appeared to derive from three episodes, earlier Middle Bronze Age, Middle Iron Age and Late Iron Age. Based on fabrics and form a minimum of three vessels belong to the first phase, seven to the second phase and two to the third phase.

The sherds were allocated to fabric groups based on the surface treatments, material, size and sorting of the principal inclusions. The rim and base sherds were recorded in accordance with guidelines for the recording and analysis of prehistoric pottery (PCRG 2010).

Fabrics

Mixtures of grog and flint predominated although flint also occurred as the exclusive macroscopically visible inclusion or with relatively small amounts of quartz. There is little overlapping of the fabrics of sherds from cuts 14 and 17 in which pottery was most prolific, although they have components of grog and flint in common. The main distinction between the two lies in the inclusion of quartz / sand in sherds from pit 17. Of various explanations for the discrepancy the most likely may be differences in the periods of production or differences in the types of vessels being produced, although it should be noted that both pits included fine and coarse sherds.

Grog and flint mixtures

mG1 (Fine/medium) Slightly soapy buff pale pink, sparsely micaceous fabric with buff pale pink surfaces including common medium (<1.5mm) and rarely coarse (<3mm) sub-angular and rounded sparse grog.

GF1 (Fine/medium) Slightly soapy grey fabric with buff reddish brown surfaces including moderate medium sub-angular burnt flint (<2mm) and sparse grog (<2mm).

GF2 (Coarse) Friable grey fabric with buff pink surfaces including moderate medium (<2mm) and rare coarse sub-angular burnt flint (<5mm) and sparse, often iron-rich, grog (<2mm).

GF3 (Coarse) Friable grey fabric with buff pink surfaces including moderate medium (<2mm) and rare coarse sub-angular burnt flint (<4mm) and sparse grog (<4mm).

F1 (Fine/medium) Friable grey fabric with buff yellow surfaces including common moderately well-sorted fine (<1mm) and rarely medium (<2mm) sub-angular burnt flint.

qF1 (Medium) Hard grey fabric with buff pink to grey exterior and grey interior surfaces including common moderately well-sorted fine/medium flint (<1.5mm) and sparse rounded quartz (<2mm).

qF2 (Coarse) Moderately hard grey fabric with buff pink to grey exterior and grey interior surfaces including moderate to patchily common poorly-sorted coarse flint (<4mm) and sparse rounded quartz (<1mm).

Table 3. Distribution of grog and flint mixtures by cut and deposit

Fabric		mG1		GF1		GF2		GF3		F1		qF1		qF2		Sub total I	
Cut	Dep	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)
14	69					174	1170	1	1	67	821					242	1992
17	73			20	80			3	22			7	49	7	28	37	179
35	92	3	2													3	2
36	93															-	-
Totals		3	2	20	80	174	1170	4	23	67	821	7	49	7	28		

In Sussex grog is generally associated with vessel forms of the first half of the 2nd millennium BC but flint was predominant in Deverel-Rimbury assemblages throughout central southern and south eastern England (Seager Thomas 2008, 27-31). This might imply that the material from cut 14 dates to the overlapping of Early and Middle Bronze Age traditions.

In addition to the tabulated material cut 14 produced a single sherd weighing 1g in GF3 which is likely either to be intrusive or a misidentification of a GF2 sherd due to its small size. It is highly probable that all the F1 and GF2 sherds are exclusive to two vessels. The sherds in qF2 are typical of earlier Bronze Age pottery and are presumably residual elements in what may be either a Middle Bronze Age or Middle to Late Iron Age assemblage in cut 17.

In east Hampshire grog was re-introduced during the Middle Iron Age and three very small, thin-walled, sherds from cut 35 have may be Iron Age or even Roman (Brown 1987, 208, 212; Brown 2000, 86-7).

Quartz / sand and flint mixtures

FQ1 (Medium) Hard grey fabric with grey buff pink exterior and grey interior surfaces including abundant fine rounded quartz (<1mm) and moderate sub-angular burnt flint (<3mm).

SF1 (Medium) Moderately hard grey sandy fabric with grey surfaces including sparse fine (<1.5mm) sub-angular burnt flint.

SF2 (Coarse) Moderately hard grey sandy fabric with rusty red exterior and grey interior surfaces including common fine (<1mm) to coarse (<5mm) angular burnt flint.

SiF1 (Fine) Soapy grey silty fabric with buff grey surfaces including sparse to moderate poorly-sorted fine angular flint(<1mm).

SiF2 (Medium) Friable grey silty fabric with grey surfaces including sparse to moderate poorly-sorted medium angular flint (<2mm).

Table 4. Distribution of quartz / sand and flint mixtures by cut and deposit

Fabric		FQ1		SF1		SF2		SiF1		SiF2		Sub total	
Cut	Dep	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)
14	69											-	-
17	73			1	8	31	225	8	28	2	5	42	266
35	92	1	4	3	5							4	9
36	93	2	6	1	1							3	7
Totals		3	10	5	14	31	225	8	28	2	5		

Flint persisted into the Middle and later Iron Age in Hampshire although sandy fabrics became more common (Brown 1987, 208, 212; Brown 2000, 86-7). In a review of Bronze Age pottery in Sussex, Seager Thomas first noted the addition of sand in Post Deverel-Rimbury pottery (Seager Thomas 2008, 41) although it was favoured for fine Middle Bronze Age pottery at sites in the Thames Valley area. The assemblage from cut 17 lacks Poole Harbour fabrics which were a marked presence in central southern British assemblages by the end of the 1st century BC so a Middle bronze Age date cannot be excluded.

Vessel forms

Despite the substantial amount of material from cuts 14 and 17 there were few feature sherds. They included base and base angle sherds in both fabrics F1 and GF2. The greater part of the latter base was reconstructable, the outer angle of which was 10° from vertical, with a radius of 75mm. The F1 base had a similar diameter but a wider angle at 20° from vertical. Three small incurved, simple rounded rim sherds were all from the vessel in GF2 which was probably of simple ovoid form. Vessels in this form featured throughout the Bronze Age but the fabric is suggestive of a date no later than the middle of the second millennium BC.

A single rim and base angle were amongst 20 sherds from a single vessel in the fine fabric, GF1 from cut 17. The upright rim had a rounded taper and was set on an inturned upper wall giving a slight neck. The outer base angle was at 20° from vertical above a slight ridge below which it straightened to form a foot. A second rounded rim in fabric SiF1 was inturned. Such rims can occur on Middle Bronze globular or ovoid vessels but they are also common on earlier Middle Iron age shouldered jars. Both vessels were thin-walled with respective thicknesses of

6mm and 5mm. A base angle in the coarse fabric, SF1, had a radius of 85mm and rose at an angle of 20° from vertical. There were no feature sherds from cuts 35 and 36.

Summary

The fabrics and firing of pottery in cut 14 is sufficient for it to be attributed to the Middle Bronze Age with confidence, despite the very limited number of sherds with diagnostic forms. The dearth of diagnostic sherds is more acute in the case of cut 17 as the evidence based on the fabrics is inconclusive and either Middle Bronze Age or Middle Iron Age dates are possible. The fabrics sherds from cuts 35 and 36 are imply a later Iron Age *terminus post quem*.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

Seven struck flints were recovered from the excavation phase of the project. These comprised four flakes, two spalls (pieces less than 20mm x 20mm) and a fragment of a nodule that appears to have shattered when one small flake was removed. Five of the pieces (all from pit 17) may have originated from the same nodule and knapping episode.

Two struck flints were also recovered from the evaluation phase of the project. A flake (broken) was recovered from the subsoil of trench 6 and another flake from ditch 6 (60).

The flints are not closely datable and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze age date can be suggested.

Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery by Luke Barber

The two stages of archaeological work recovered just 36 sherds of post-prehistoric pottery, weighing 251g, from 16 contexts. Although the assemblage is small it has a notably wide chronological range. The material is listed in Appendix 3.

The earliest (Roman) sherds from the site were recovered from contexts 71 and 72, both in gully 1000. Both are tiny and notably abraded featureless bodysherds that preclude dating with confidence, particularly considering the potential on the site for residual material. That from 71 is the most problematic as a later date cannot be ruled out. The sherd from 72 is more typical of the period. Both pieces could represent a background manuring scatter.

The other sherds from gully 1000 (context 57) are best placed in a 10th- to 11th- century date bracket. Although small they do not show excessive signs of abrasion. The coarser of the fabrics is very similar to Late Saxon LS1 sandy wares from Canterbury but the current sherds are not particularly diagnostic and further pieces would be needed to confirm this date.

The single residual sherd of shelly ware has a quite well developed rim suggesting a later 12th- to early 13th-century date, but it is clearly residual in 51 as the other sherds are of early/mid 13th- to early 14th- century date. The oxidised sandy ware sherd from 78 is heavily abraded and likely to derive from manuring scatter.

The HFSE sherd from context 63, although residual, represents Late Medieval activity between the 15th to mid 16th centuries but is an isolated piece.

There is a slight upturn in pottery quantities from the mid 17th century onwards. The HFE sherds from 61, 79, 80 and 90 is likely to span the 17th to mid 18th century, though a slightly earlier date cannot be ruled out. The early glazed red earthenwares are likely to be of similar date.

The remaining sherds relate to Late Post-medieval activity, the majority belonging to the mid/late 19th or early 20th centuries. However, the small group from context 77 appears to belong to the first half of the 19th century.

Although a wide date range is present, all periods are only represented by negligible numbers of pieces, often heavily abraded. As such the majority can be viewed as background scatter, incorporated into features accidentally. The assemblages of the different periods are too small to draw conclusions about supply or functionality.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

Burnt, unworked flint was represented by just two small fragments from Bronze Age pit 14. Flints can be burnt by any number of deliberate or accidental processes; the possibility that some was deliberately burnt for inclusion in pottery temper (as used in the pottery in the same pit) cannot be ruled out, but there is no positive evidence for this here.

The Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

A relatively small assemblage of brick and tile was recovered during the archaeological work, most of it from the evaluation. The material was in mixed condition, but on the whole the trend of the collected sample appears to be of medium size with moderate to heavy abrasion. The additional material from the excavation is negligible and often composed of tiny scraps, which are not large enough to allow reliable dating on either fabric or form/finish. The assemblage is summarized in Appendix 4, Tables A4.1 (fabrics) and A4.2 (quantification).

The ceramic building material assemblage shows some variation in fabrics but only the T3a examples from 59 and 89 are definitely of later medieval date (though they are residual in these deposit). Peg tiles dominate the assemblage and a good proportion of these are in one of two chalk-peppered fabrics (T2). It is clear that these derive from a local workshop but the dating is currently a little ambiguous. Calcareous flecked roof tile is very common in East Sussex in the area around Winchelsea and Rye where it dominates 15th- to 16th- century assemblages. However, more recent work has discovered some calcareous peppered peg tiles in the same area that are clearly of

18th- to 19th- century date. Distinguishing the earlier and later types has had to rely on finish rather than fabric alone. Recent excavations in Lenham have recovered the coarser calcareous type (ie T2a) associated with 15th-century pottery though the associated pottery was never present in 'secure' quantities. However, this association would suggest a similar Late Medieval start to these types as has been noted in East Sussex. How long this type continued in Lenham is still uncertain, but a fining down and improvement in finish suggests at least throughout the majority of the 18th century. Although these fabrics are associated with later pottery at the current site it is clear that there is a significant quantity of residual and/or re-used brick and tile in the assemblage. Certainly the bricks from context 64 are of 17th- to 18th- century form rather than the 19th- century date suggested by the associated ceramics.

The excavation assemblage, although providing a few additional fabrics, is almost totally composed of amorphous small pieces of probable early post-medieval date but dating with certainty is almost impossible. In addition, the small size of the pieces means that most could easily be intrusive or residual – certainly virtually all are notably abraded. Overall the assemblage appears to represent a background scatter of surprisingly light density considering the relatively close proximity of houses fronting the main thoroughfares through Lenham.

Other finds by Luke Barber

Metalwork

Context 54 in the evaluation produced a 1g fragment from a heavily corroded farrier's nail. The nail, which measured in excess of 22mm long, has a narrow domed head but is of uncertain date. The excavation recovered a further five pieces of heavily corroded iron, four of which consist of nails or fragments thereof in contexts 67 (2g), 72 (4g), 88 (20g) and 90 (2g). Three are of general-purpose types, with circular low domed heads (the 52mm long example from 90 being the only complete example). The 113mm long nail from 88 has a narrow rectangular head for a flush fit into timber. None of the nails are closely datable but are most likely of the early post-medieval period.

Glass

Just two shards of glass were recovered from the site. The earliest consists of a 2g fragment from a dark green wine bottle with heavy all over gold surface corrosion and flaking (context 77). A later 17th- to mid 18th- century date is suspected. The other piece, from a green cylindrical wine bottle is in far better condition and is likely to be of mid 18th- to 19th- century date (context 89, 16g).

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Context 55 produced a slightly worn stem fragment of 1750-1900 type pipe (4g).

The Geological Material

The majority of the stone recovered is of local origin and likely to occur naturally on the site. Context 71 produced four weathered pieces from an iron pyrite spherical nodule (14g), three pieces of ferruginous Tertiary sandstone (16g) and a piece of ferruginous fissure fill from a solution hollow in the chalk (12g). Two further pieces of fissure fill (94g) were recovered from context 73 and a 2g ferruginous Tertiary sandstone piece from context 60 in the evaluation.

The only non-local stone from the site consists of a 42g fragment from a Welsh roofing slate (context 64), probably of mid/late 19th-century date, from context 60, and three small burnt fragments of shale from 72 (4g). The latter may well be coal shale, inadvertently imported with coal during the post-medieval period.

Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins

A small assemblage of animal bone (124 fragments) weighing a total of 4041g was recovered from just two features during the course of the investigation (Appendix 5). Although fragmentary, the bone was in fair condition, with little surface abrasion or erosion noted. The bone was classified according to size (large mammal - cattle, horse) and where possible to species level. Texts by Hillson (1992) and Schmid (1972) were used to confirm identification.

Ditch 22 (78) contained four fragments of large mammal long bone, three of which were re-fitted and bore possible evidence for slicing. A left distal radius from a sheep/goat had been sliced across the shaft.

Pit 33 (90) contained the largest assemblage of bone, of which 59 fragments were classified as large mammal and consisted of a fragment of pelvis, a partial axis, 42 fragments of rib, 4 lumbar vertebrae, 5 thoracic vertebrae with 2 associated fragments of neural spine and 6 unidentified vertebrae fragments. The pelvis fragment bore two cutmarks one of which was 58mm long and 3mm wide and presented as a deep gouge to the bone, the second was not measured as it ran into an area of fragmentation but was less than 1mm wide. The fragment of axis had been chopped diagonally across the vertebrae. 4 fragments of cattle bone were also identified from this feature and consisted of 3 re-fitted fragments of right scapula and a left partial proximal tibia.

It is possible that some butchery was taking place on site given the range of marks recorded on the bones and is indicative of small scale domestic consumption.

Macrobotanical plant material and charcoal by Jo Pine

Six samples were processed from the site. The samples were wet sieved to 0.25mm and the flots air dried and examined under a low-power binocular microscope at magnifications between x10 and x40. No charred plant macrofossils or even charcoal were present in the samples.

Conclusion

The archaeological excavation has revealed a range of features of various dates spanning the Middle Bronze Age to Post-medieval periods.

The Middle Bronze Age is represented by two pits, and occasional sherds of pottery redeposited in later features. These appear to be the first evidence of prehistoric settlement of these periods in the immediate area, other than an occasional stray pottery sherd (eg one from Chilston Park, well to the south: OAU 1997a), but beyond their presence this unfortunately provides little indication of the nature of that occupation. Apparently earlier (Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age) features have been recorded not far to the north-west at Swadelands School, but dating evidence for these is slender (Dyson and Higgs 2010). Similar later Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation evidence has, however, been recorded slightly further afield, as at Chapel Hill, well to the south-east of the present site along with Late Iron Age cremation burials (OAU 1997b; 1999; Hayden 2000).

Later Iron Age or Roman pottery from this site was all in later features and probably indicates no more than the manuring of arable land in these periods, but again implies settlement nearby.

One gully has been tentatively dated to the late Saxon period, but the dating evidence is equivocal. Even if gully 1000 is later, however, the presence of the late Saxon pottery does suggest some occupation of this period on the site or very nearby, corresponding to the existence of the village by the time of Domesday Book.

More certainly dated are the range of early and late post-medieval features, which again unfortunately reveal little information on the nature of the use of the site in these recent centuries. Although the pits and post-holes form no coherent building plan, the presence of peg tile in so many features does imply a building nearby, and ditch 1001 was presumably a property boundary.

Acknowledgements

The excavation was funded by Akehurst Homes Ltd, with the fieldwork being monitored by Ms Wendy Rogers, the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer. The excavation team consisted of Teresa Vieira and Jim Webster. Illustrations were produced by the authors.

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APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of Features

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Comments / Dating Evidence</i>
1	54	1001	Ditch	Early post-medieval	Tile and iron. Recorded in evaluation.
2	55, 56		Pit	Late post-medieval	Pottery, tile and clay pipe. Recorded in evaluation
3	57	1000	Gully	Late Saxon	Pottery. Recorded in evaluation.
4	58	1001	Ditch	Early post-medieval	Tile. Recorded in evaluation.
5	59		Pit	Late post-medieval	Pottery. Recorded in evaluation.
6	60		Ditch	Prehistoric ?	Struck Flint. Recorded in evaluation.
7	61, 62, 63		Large pit	Post-medieval	Pottery, brick and tile. Recorded in evaluation.
8	94		Post-hole	Early post-medieval	Tile.
9	95		Post-hole	Undated	
10	65		Post-hole	Early post-medieval	Tile.
11	66		Pit	Early post-medieval	Pottery.
12	67		Pit	Early post-medieval	Brick, tile and iron.
13	68		Stake-hole	Modern	Wood.
14	69		Pit	Middle Bronze Age	Pottery.
15	71	1000	Gully	Late Saxon	Stratigraphy.
16	72	1000	Gully	Late Saxon	Stratigraphy.
17	73		Pit	Middle Bronze Age	Pottery, flint
18	74		Post-hole	Late post-medieval	Brick.
19	75		Post-hole	Early post-medieval	Tile.
20	76		Post-hole	Undated	
21	77		Pit	Late post-medieval	Pottery and glass.
22	78	1001	Ditch	Early post-medieval	Tile and stratigraphy.
23	79, 80		Pit	Early post-medieval	Pottery.
24	81		Pit	Early post-medieval	Pottery. Not excavated.
25	82		Pit	Modern	Pottery and ceramic building material. Not excavated.
26	83		Pit	Late post-medieval	Ceramic building material. Not excavated.
27	84		Pit	Late post-medieval	Ceramic building material. Not excavated.
29	86		Post-hole	Early post-medieval	Ceramic building material. Not excavated.
30	87		Post-hole	Modern	Wood. Not excavated.
31	88		Post-hole	Early post-medieval	Iron. Not excavated.
32	89		Pit	Late post-medieval	Ceramic building material and glass. Not excavated.
33	90		Pit	Early post-medieval	Pottery and iron.
34	91		Pit	Early post-medieval	Ceramic building material. Not excavated.
35	92	1000	Gully	Late Saxon	Stratigraphy.
36	93	1000	Gully	Late Saxon	Stratigraphy.

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of struck flint

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Feature Type</i>	<i>Flints</i>
6			Subsoil	Broken flake
	6	60	Ditch	Broken flake
	14	69	Ditch	Broken flake
	17	73	Ditch	2 Intact flakes; 2 Spalls; tested nodule
	36	93	Ditch	Intact flake

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Post-prehistoric pottery

(LIA/RB – Late Iron Age to Roman c. 50BC to 410AD; LS – Late Saxon c. 850-1050; EM – c. 1050-1200/25; HM - High Medieval c. 1200/25-1350/75; LM – Late Medieval c. 1350/75-1525/50; EPM – Early Post-Medieval c. 1525/50-1750; LPM - Late Post-Medieval c. 1750-1900+).

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	51	Shelly ware (rare quartz)	EM	1	8	Cooking pot x1 (worn). Developed (expanded) rim. Late C12th – early 13th
	51	Fine/medium quartz	HM	2	22	Cooking pots x2 (squared club rim)
	51	Fine quartz	HM	1	8	Jug x1 (oxidised. external spots of clear glaze)
2	55	Glazed Red Earthenware (late)	LPM	1	6	Uncertain form (all over clear glaze)
3	57	Abundant medium quartz (reduced)	LS	2	10	Cooking pot x1 (incised lines)
3	57	Sparse fine & medium quartz (reduced)	LS	4	18	Uncertain form x1
5	59	Unglazed earthenware	LPM	1	4f	Flower pot x1
5	59	English stoneware	LPM	2	7	Bottle x1 (grey. Bristol glaze)
7	61	Hard-fired earthenware	EPM	1	20	Uncertain form (clear glaze spots externally). Oxidised
7	63	Hard-fired Sandy Earthenware	LM/EPM	1	8	Uncertain form x1. Oxidised
7	63	Blue transfer-printed whiteware	LPM	1	2	Plate x1 (pale floral). Late
7	63	Refined whiteware	LPM	2	12	Plate x1 (blue rim edge); uncertain form x1
11	66	Glazed red earthenware (early)	EPM	2	2	Uncertain form x2 (clear glaze internally). Worn
15	71	Reduced fine sandy ware	LIA/RB?	1	1	Uncertain form x1. Possibly later
16	72	Grog-tempered ware	LIA/RB	1	1	Uncertain form x1 (reduced)
21	77	Unglazed earthenware	LPM	1	10	Flower pot x1
21	77	English stoneware	LPM	1	3	Bottle x1 (iron wash, salt glaze)
21	77	Pearlware	LPM	1	2	Plate x1 (late blue shell-edge decoration)
21	77	Yellow ware	LPM	1	1	Uncertain form x1
22	78	Fine/medium quartz	HM	1	4	Uncertain form x1
23	79	Hard-fired earthenware	EPM	1	8	Uncertain form x1 (reduced)
23	79	Glazed red earthenware (early)	EPM	1	10	Uncertain form x1 (clear glaze internally)
23	80	Hard-fired earthenware	EPM	1	10	Uncertain form x1 (conjoin with [79])
23	80	Glazed red earthenware (early)	EPM	1	12	Uncertain form x1 (clear glaze internally)
24	81	Glazed red earthenware (early)	EPM	1	44	Chamber pot x1 (green glaze internally)
25	82	Unglazed earthenware	LPM	1	8	Flower pot x1
25	82	Refined whiteware	LPM	1	6	Plate x1 (fluted)
33	90	Hard-fired earthenware	EPM	1	4	Uncertain form x1 (reduced)

APPENDIX 4: Ceramic Building Material

Table A4.1: Fabrics

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Likely date (century AD)</i>
B1a	Abundant fine 'sugary' quartz, common iron oxides to 1mm	well formed, low/medium fired	16th – early 18th
B2a	Moderate fine/medium quartz, sparse iron oxides to 2mm	well formed, medium/well fired	17th – 18th
B3a	Abundant fine quartz, common iron oxides to 2mm and marl streaks	medium fired	17th – 18 th ?
T1a	Sparse fine quartz, moderate iron oxides and marl to 3mm	well formed, medium fired	Mid 16th – mid 18th
T2a	Sparse fine quartz, common voids/chalk to 1mm	well formed, medium fired	Mid 15th – 17th
T2b	As T2a but with only sparse chalk and rare/sparse medium quartz	crudely formed but medium/well fired	17th – 18th
T3a	Sparse/moderate fine/medium quartz (ill-sorted)	crudely formed but well fired	15th – 16th
T4a	Fine silty fabric with occasional iron oxides to 1mm	well formed and fired	Mid 16th – 18th
T5a	Fine/silty pale buff fabric with moderate iron oxides to 0.5mm	well formed and fired	Mid 16th – mid 18th
T6a	Sparse fine quartz, sparse/moderate iron oxides to 0.5mm	well formed and fired	18th – 19th
D1a	Moderate fine quartz, sparse chalk to 2mm, rare organics/grass	all amorphous	Undatable

TABLE A4.2 Catalogue

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
-	51	Peg tile	T1a	1	8	12mm thick. Worn
1	54	Peg tile	T2a	1	24	11mm thick
2	55	Peg tile	T2a	2	24	11mm thick
2	55	Brick	B1a	1	18	Amorphous
2	55	Daub	D1a	3	80	Amorphous
4	58	Peg tile	T1a	1	48	11mm thick. Worn
4	58	Daub	D1a	1	48	11mm thick. Worn
5	59	Peg tile	T3a	1	48	10mm thick. Square peg holes
7	61	Peg tile	T2a	2	194	11-12mm thick
7	63	Peg tile	T2a	4	200	11-12mm thick
7	63	Peg tile	T2b	2	246	10-12mm thick
	64	Peg tile	T2b	1	108	13mm thick
	64	Brick	B2a	3	1480	54, 58 and 62mm thick
10	65	Peg tile?	T4a	1	2	Amorphous
11	66	Peg tile?	T2a	2	3	Amorphous
11	66	Peg tile?	T2b	2	24	13mm thick
11	66	Peg tile	T4a	3	8	Amorphous
11	66	B. clay	-	1	2	Buff silty with reduced core. Amorphous
12	67	Brick	B3a	2	20	Amorphous
12	67	Peg tile	T4a	3	12	Amorphous
12	67	Peg tile?	T5a	1	2	Amorphous
15	71	Peg tile?	T5a	2	2	Very worn
17	73	Brick	B2a	1	2	Amorphous
18	74	Brick	B2a	1	22	Well formed
19	75	Peg tile	T4a	1	2	Amorphous
21	77	Brick	B2a	1	8	Amorphous
21	77	Peg tile	T2b	1	20	Amorphous
21	77	Peg tile?	T4a	7	12	Amorphous
21	77	Peg tile	T6a	1	12	10mm thick
22	78	Peg tile	T4a	1	3	Amorphous
23	79	Peg tile	T2b	1	2	Amorphous
23	79	Peg tile	T4a	2	3	Amorphous
23	79	Peg tile	T6a	1	8	Amorphous
24	81	Brick	B1a	1	168	Amorphous
24	81	Peg tile	T5a	1	8	Amorphous
26	83	Brick	B1a	1	14	Amorphous
27	84	Brick	B1a	1	18	Amorphous
27	84	Peg tile	T4a	1	2	Amorphous
29	86	Peg tile	T4a	1	4	Amorphous
32	89	Peg tile	T3a	1	2	Amorphous
32	89	Peg tile?	T4a	1	1	Amorphous
33	90	Peg tile	T4a	4	72	10mm thick
34	91	Peg tile	T4a	3	8	Amorphous
8	94	Peg tile	T4a	2	8	Amorphous

APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of Animal bone

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No. Frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Sheep/ Goat</i>	<i>Large Mammal</i>	<i>Unid</i>	<i>Notes</i>
22	78	Ditch	18	72	-	1	4	13	Slicing
33	90	Pit	106	3969	4	-	59	43	Cutmarks, chopping
Total			124	4041					

Kent County Council SMR summary form

Site Name: United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent
Site address: United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent

Summary: The archaeological fieldwork revealed a modest number of features dating from several periods. A single very shallow pit contained a large quantity of Middle Bronze Age pottery, while a second shallow pit contained a moderate quantity of Middle Iron Age pottery. One gully provided very mixed dating evidence but might date from the 10th or 11th century AD. Other features were all post-medieval or modern.

District/Unitary: Maidstone **Parish:** Lenham

Periods: Middle Bronze Age, Late Iron Age/Roman, Late Saxon, early Post-Medieval, late Post-medieval

NGR: TQ 8969 5213

Type of archaeological work: Excavation

Date of Recording: 21st–27th September 2016

Unit undertaking recording: Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Geology: Lower Chalk

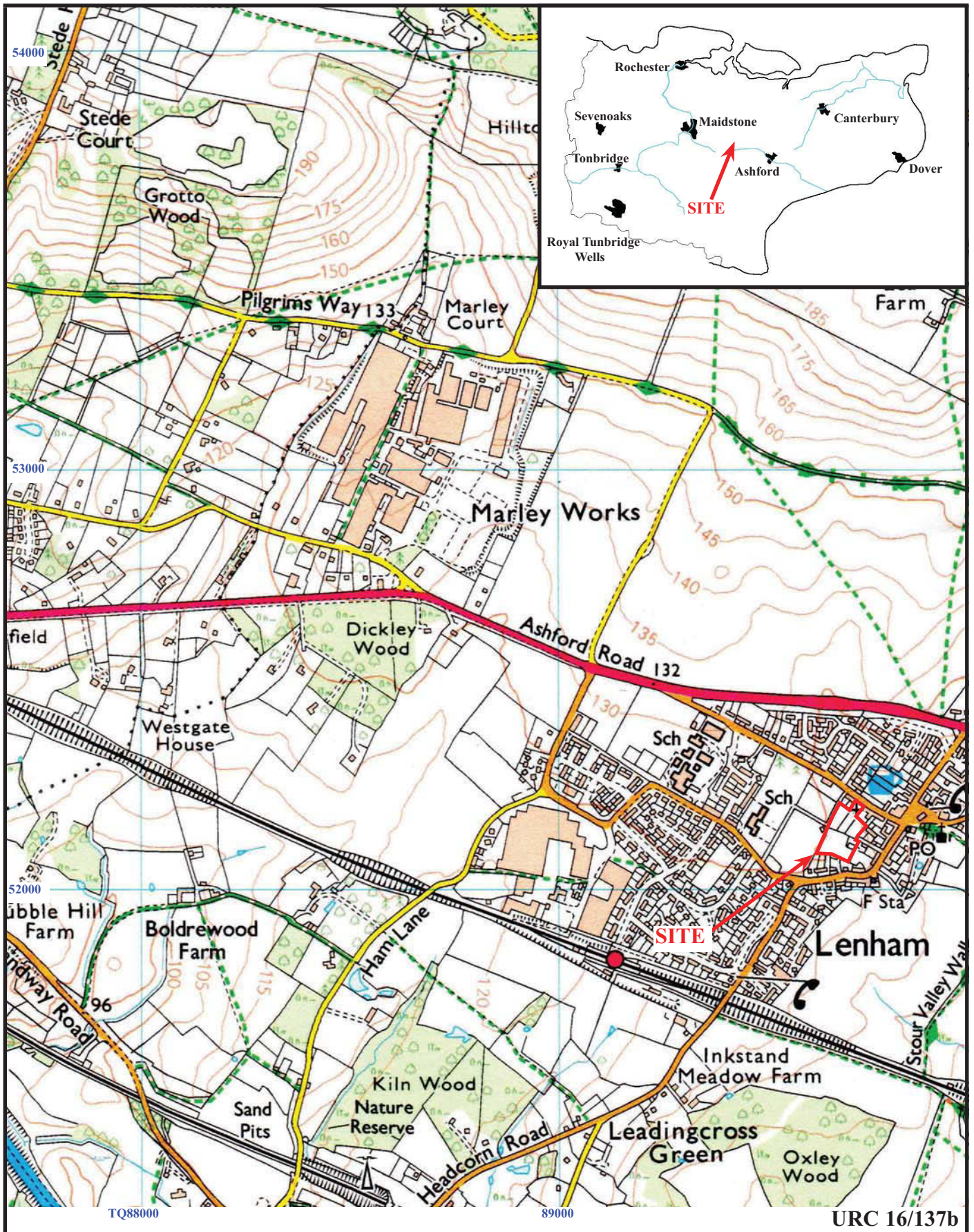
Title and author of report: United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent: An Archaeological Excavation by Teresa Vieira and Sean Wallis

Summary of results by period (*from bottom up*): Middle Bronze Age pits;; residual late Iron Age/Roman pottery; possibly late Saxon (or later) gully; post-medieval ditch, pits and post holes.

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 Maidstone Museum in due course.

Contact at Unit: Sean Wallis

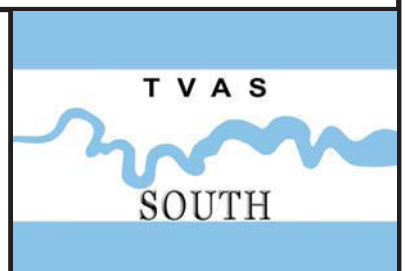
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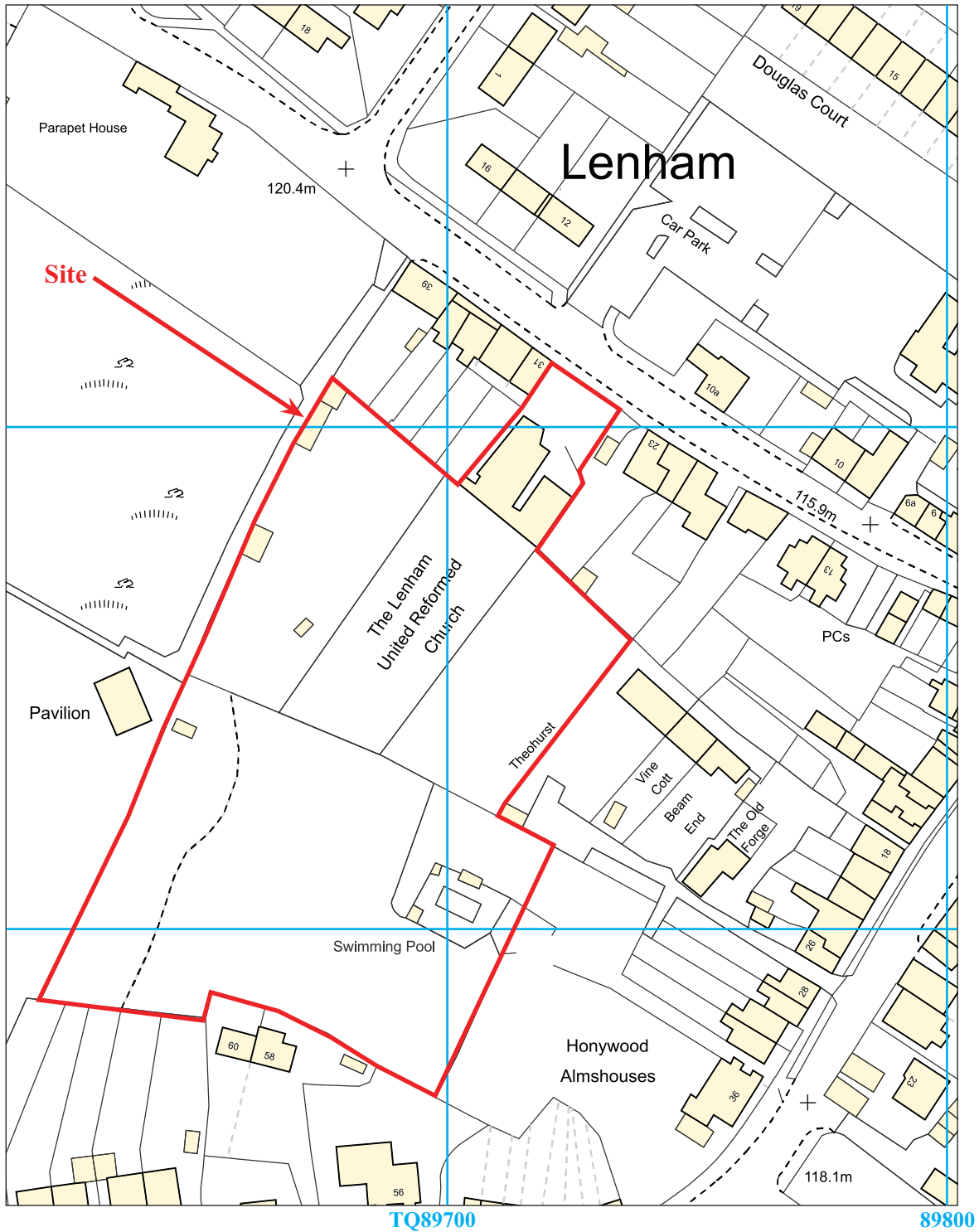


**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent, 2016
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lenham and Kent.

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URC 16/137b



**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent, 2016
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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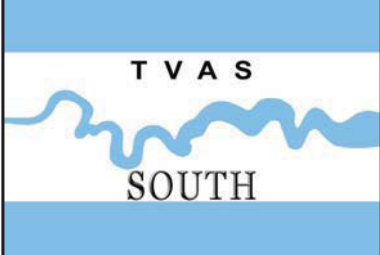


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Lenham, Kent, 2016
Archaeological Excavation**

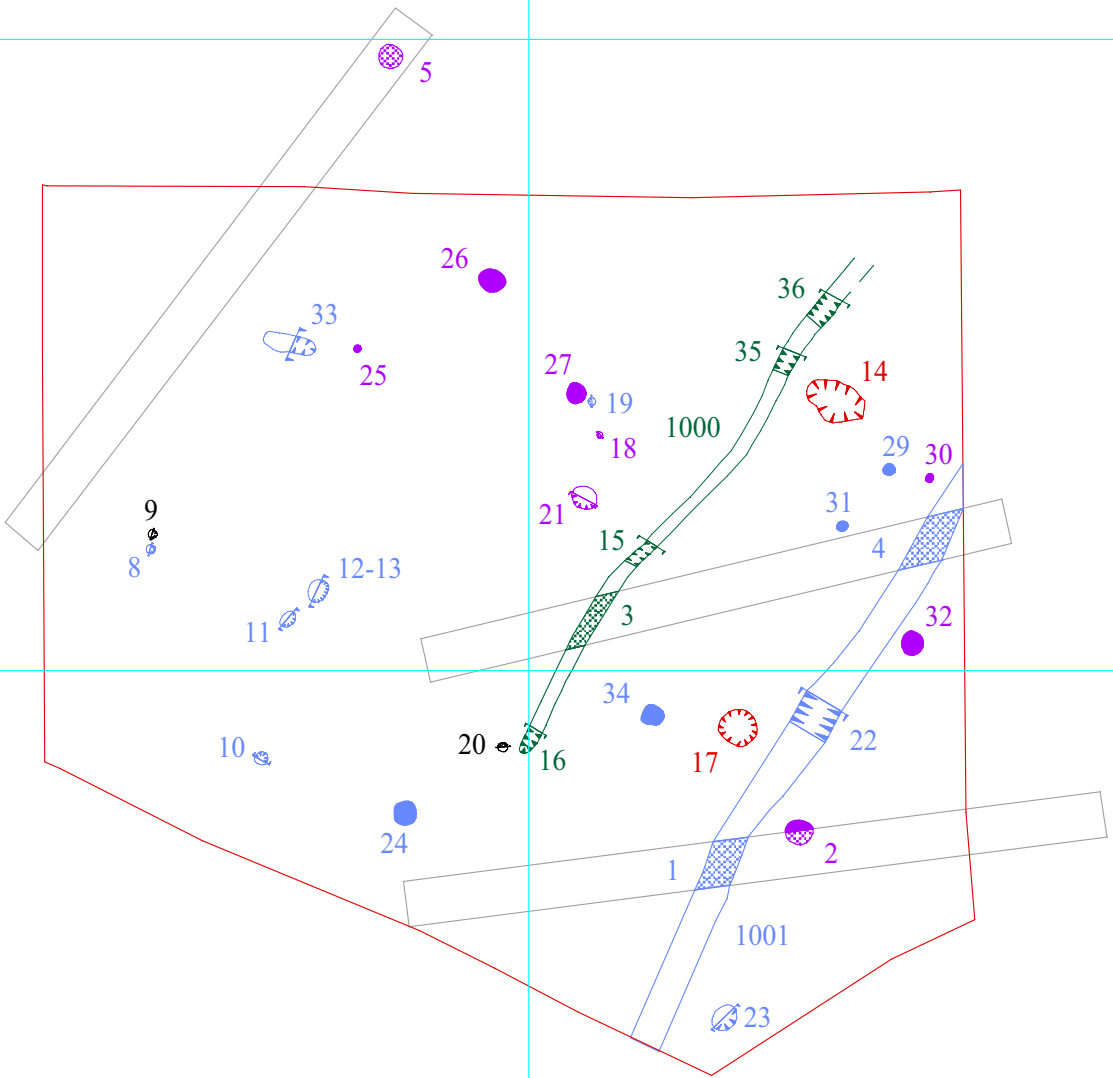
Figure 3. Detailed location of site, showing evaluation trenches and area for excavation.



52125

52100

TQ 89675



Middle Bronze Age
Late Saxon
Early post-medieval
Late post-medieval / modern
Undated

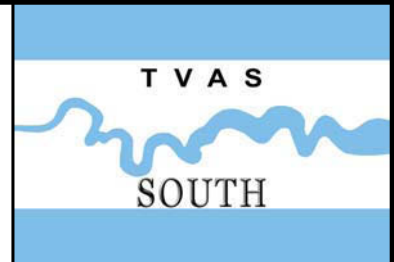
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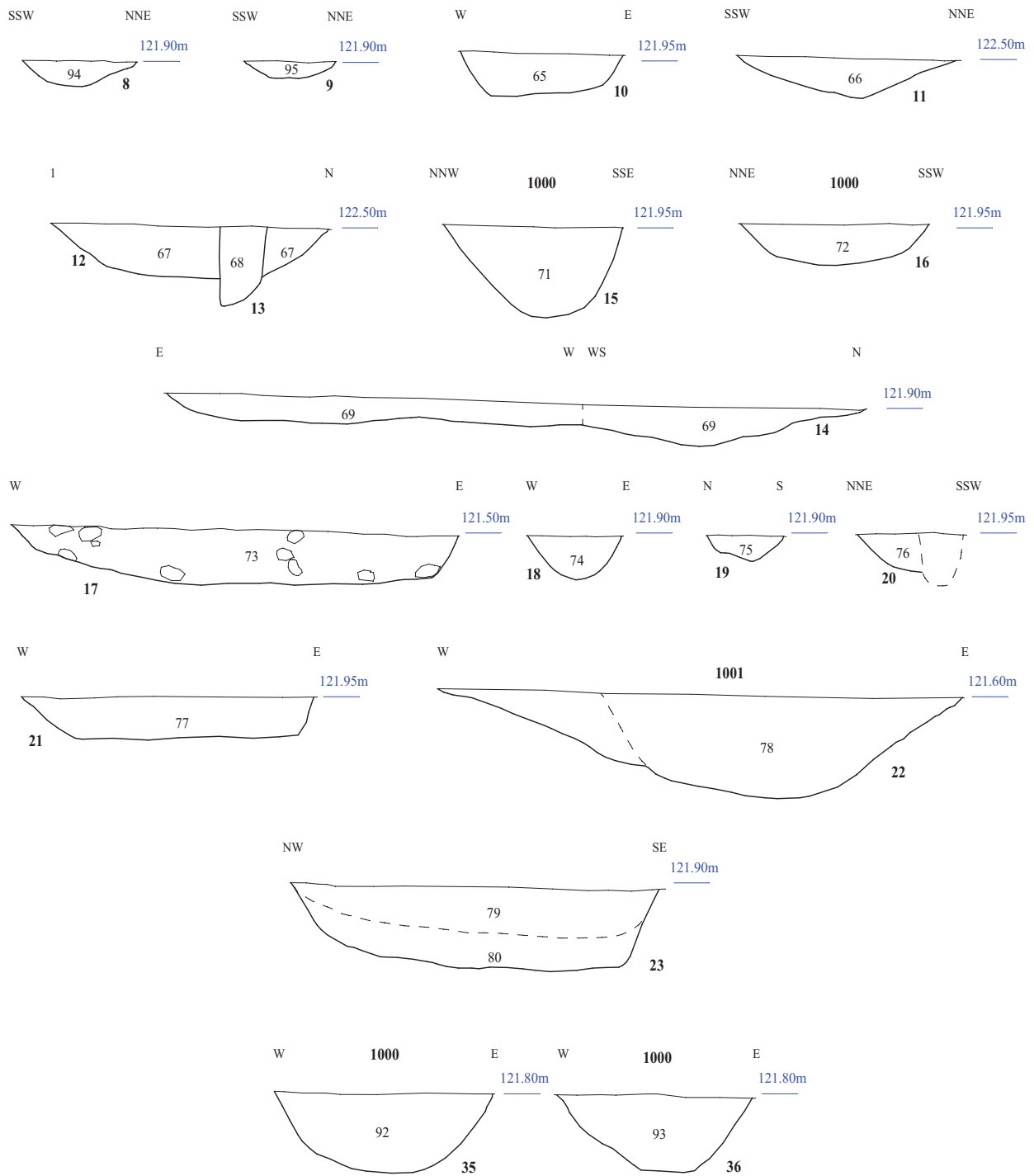


**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
 Lenham, Kent, 2016
 Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 4. Plan showing excavated feature by phase.

0 25m





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United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent, 2016
Archaeological Excavation

Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Middle Bronze Age pit 14, looking west.
Scales: 1m, 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Detail of pottery in pit 14, west to top.
Scale: 0.3m.



Plate 3. Middle Bronze Age pit 17, looking north.
Scales: 1m, and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Gully 1000, slot 15, looking south.
Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.

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**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
Lenham, Kent, 2016
Archaeological Excavation
Plates 1 - 4.**





Plate 5. Gully 1000, terminal 16, looking north.
Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.1m.



Plate 6. Gully 100, slot 35, looking north-east.
Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 7. Post-medieval ditch 1001, slot 22, looking north-east.
Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.3m

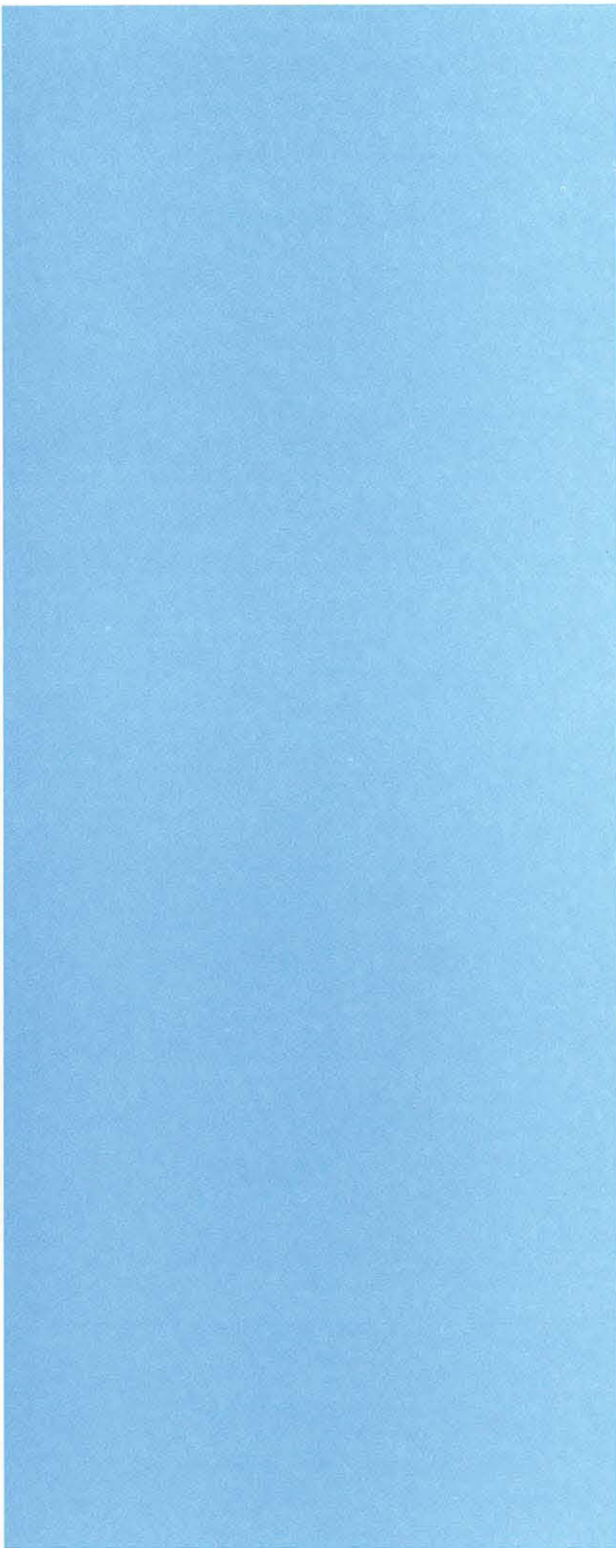
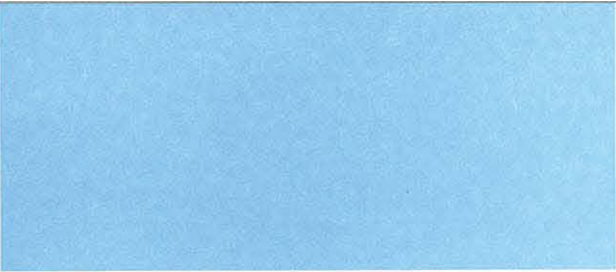
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**United Reform Church, Maidstone Road,
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Archaeological Excavation
Plates 5 - 7.**



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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