

T V A S



SOUTH

**Land to the rear of Parapet House,
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: PML17/104

(TQ 8962 5220)

**Land to the rear of Parapet House,
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Palace Estates**

by Odile Rouard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code
PML 17/104

August 2017

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 8962 5220

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25th -28th July 2017

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Odile Rouard

Site code: PML 17/104

Area of site: c. 0.27ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation to the south of Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the new housing development. The area appears to have been relatively undisturbed in the past and several archaeological features were recorded. These are likely to represent a medieval ditch and a post-medieval fence line. It is considered therefore that the site has some archaeological potential.

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

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Land to the rear of Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent An Archaeological Evaluation

by Odile Rouard

Report 17/104

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out to the rear of Parapet Lane, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent (TQ 8962 5220) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tony Stanbury of Palace Estates, Unit B, Rose Court, 89 Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 4BS.

Planning permission (15/50593/FULL) has been gained from Maidstone Borough Council for the construction of three new houses on the site, along with associated garages, access and landscaping works. The permission is subject to a standard planning condition (12) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which requires that an archaeological field evaluation be carried out prior to the commencement of groundworks.

This is 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 of Kent County Council, who advises Maidstone Borough Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Odile Rouard and Virginia Fuentes between 25th and 28th July 2017, and the site code is PML 17/104. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton, and will be deposited with Maidstone Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the rear of Parapet House, Maidstone Road, close to the historic core of Lenham, and is centred on NGR TQ 8962 5220 (Figs 1 and 2). It consists of a roughly rectangular field of around 0.5 ha which had previously been covered by scrub and trees, and is accessed via a track leading from Maidstone Road. Whilst some of the scrub had been cleared prior to the evaluation commencing, the trees had been left standing. The site generally slopes slightly down towards the north-east and, as a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varies from about 125m in the south-west corner to about 123m close to the north-eastern site entrance. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology largely consists of Lower Chalk, with Head Deposits being present in some areas of the site (BGS 2017). The natural geology encountered in the evaluation trenches consisted of light orange brown sandy clay with flint gravel and/or chalk inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site largely stems from its position close to the historic core of Lenham, which has late 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 the village. Recent archaeological work immediately to the east of the site revealed two Middle Bronze Age pits, a possible Late Saxon gully, and pottery dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods (Wallis 2016; Vieira and Wallis 2017). The Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) contains several entries for discoveries slightly further afield. A cluster of Roman features, including pits and ditches, were recorded to the north-east of the site, during an archaeological investigation at the Lenham Community Centre. Three Saxon inhumations with grave goods were discovered in 1946 close to the junction of High Street and Maidstone Road, to the east of the present site, and a large clay lined Saxon pit was recently recorded to the north-east. The village also contains numerous Listed Buildings.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of proposed development.

Specific aims of the 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 archaeological deposits dating from the Bronze Age period are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Late Saxon period are present.

Eight trenches were to be dug, each measuring 20m in length and 1.60m in width, which represents a *c.* 5% sample of development area. The trenches were largely positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the redevelopment. They were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, and all spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above.

Results

The eight trenches were dug as close as possible to their original planned positions, although some had to be moved or shortened due to site logistics (Fig. 2). The area available for trenching had been significantly reduced

(to about 0.27ha) due to the presence of a reptile fence which ran around the site, and the trenches were positioned to avoid the roots of several mature trees. All the trenches were 1.60m wide, and measured between 11.20m and 25m in length, and were between 0.38m and 0.85m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, widths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was orientated approximately SW-NE, and was 25m long and up to 0.40m deep. The natural geology in the trench was observed beneath 0.15m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 2

This trench was 18m long and up to 0.38m deep, and was orientated SWW-NNE. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.16m of topsoil (50) and 0.20m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 3 (Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was 15.30m long and up to 0.41m deep, and was orientated approximately SE-NW. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.15m of topsoil (50) and 0.22m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was 20m long and up to 0.45m deep, and was orientated approximately WSW-ENE. The natural geology was observed below 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.21m of subsoil (51). One ditch was identified (4), between 7m and 8m from the south-west end of the trench. A slot was excavated through this feature by hand, and it was seen to be 0.98m wide and 0.29m deep. This feature had a single fill of mid greyish brown sandy clay with flint inclusions (55) which contained several sherds of medieval pottery, along with fragments of iron, slag and burnt flint. It is likely that this is the same ditch as that recorded in Trenches 5 (2) and 8 (1).

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 4)

Trench 5 was 16.10m long and up to 0.85m deep, and was orientated approximately SW-NE. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.38m of topsoil (50) and 0.32m of subsoil (51). Ditch 2 was recorded between 3m and 4m from the south end of the trench. A slot was excavated through this feature by hand, and it was revealed to be up to 0.67m wide and 0.30m deep. A small copper-alloy off-cut was recovered from its single fill of mid greyish brown sandy clay with flint inclusions (53). It is likely that this is the same ditch as that recorded in Trenches 4 (4) and 8 (1).

Trench 6

This trench was 11.20m long and up to 0.70m deep, and was orientated E-W. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.30m of topsoil (50), and 0.32m of subsoil (51). No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 5 and 6)

Trench 7 was 15.70m long and up to 0.44m deep, and was orientated approximately SSW-NNE. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.18m of topsoil (50) and 0.22m of subsoil (51). A row of six post-medieval postholes was noted along most of the trench, which are likely to represent an old fence line. One of these postholes (3) was excavated and recorded in detail. It had a single fill of mid greyish brown silty clay (54) which contained fragments of brick, tile and clay tobacco pipe.

Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 7 and 8)

This trench was 24.40m long and up to 0.50m deep, and was orientated approximately WSW-ENE. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.19m of topsoil (50) and 0.23m of subsoil (51). Three post-medieval postholes were observed at the western end of the trench but were not recorded in detail as they continued the fence line noted in trench 7. A ditch (1) was identified at the eastern end of the trench between 23m and 25m. A hand dug slot through the feature revealed that it was up to 0.65m wide and 0.27m deep. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from its fill of mid grey brown sandy clay (52), along with a small fragment of iron nail. It is likely that this ditch is the same as that recorded in Trenches 4 (4) and 5 (2).

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

The archaeological evaluation recovered just 10 small sherds of medieval pottery, weighing 36g, from two contexts. (Appendix 3). Although the sherds are small they only show moderate signs of abrasion suggesting they have not been subjected to repeated reworking. All can be provisionally placed within a mid 12th to mid 13th century date range. The pottery assemblage is small and of types well known in the area.

Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

The only ceramic building material recovered from the site came from post-hole 3 (54). There is one piece of brick (66g), an edge fragment tempered with moderate/abundant fine quartz with moderate medium/coarse quartz grains. The piece is quite well formed and medium fired and is likely to be of the mid-17th to 18th centuries. The two pieces of peg tile from the same deposit (54g) are from 12mm thick well formed and fired

tiles tempered with moderate/common calcareous pepping to 0.25mm. They are in keeping with the date of the brick. These finds have not been retained.

Clay Pipe by Luke Barber

Post-hole 3 (54) produced a fresh 27mm long stem fragment with a bore diameter of 2.4mm (2g). A date in the first half of the 18th century is likely for this pipe. This find has not been retained.

Metalwork by Luke Barber

Three contexts produced metalwork. Two produced ironwork, both of which are ceramically dated to the medieval period. There is nothing in the metalwork to be at odds with this date, indeed all the ironwork has notably heavy corrosion products though this does not obscure the objects' form. Ditch 1 (52) contained a 4g fragment from a general-purpose nail and ditch 4 (55) produced three fragments (21g) from a 27mm wide iron binding strip with at least one fixing hole surviving. The latter is likely to be from furniture, a bucket or a door. Ditch 2 (53) produced a heavily patinated copper alloy tapering sheet off-cut measuring *c.* 75mm long (it had been bent/buckled), 1.1mm thick and with a maximum width of 10mm (6g). Although not associated with any datable material the patination suggests the piece may be medieval.

The metalwork assemblage consists of badly preserved object fragments and waste material which does not hold any potential for further analysis and has not been retained.

Metallurgical Remains by Luke Barber

Ditch 4 (55) produced two pieces (18g) of undiagnostic iron slag that are suspected of deriving from medieval smithing activity. The slag assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and has not been retained.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

One small fragment of burnt flint, weighing 6g, was recovered from the fill of ditch 4 (55) in trench 4. It had not been worked.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed housing development. The area appears to have been relatively undisturbed in the past and several archaeological features were recorded. These are likely to represent a medieval ditch and a post-medieval fence line. It is considered that the site has some archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1976, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 288, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept of Communities and Local Government, London
- Vieira, T and Wallis, S, 2017, 'United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent - an archaeological excavation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **16/137b**, Brighton
- Wallis, S, 2016, 'United Reform Church, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent - an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **16/137**, Brighton

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25.0	1.60	0.40	0-0.15m topsoil (50); 0.15-0.35m subsoil (51); 0.35-0.40m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions). [Pl. 1]
2	18.0	1.60	0.38	0-0.16m topsoil (50); 0.16-0.36m subsoil (51); 0.36-0.38m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions).
3	15.30	1.60	0.41	0-0.15m topsoil (50); 0.15-0.37m subsoil (51); 0.37-0.41m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions). [Pl. 2]
4	20.0	1.60	0.45	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.41m subsoil (51); 0.41-0.45m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions and chalk patches). Ditch 4. [Pl. 3]
5	16.10	1.60	0.85	0-0.38m topsoil (50); 0.38-0.80m subsoil (51); 0.80-0.85m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions). Ditch 2. [Pl. 4]
6	11.20	1.60	0.70	0-0.30m topsoil (50); 0.30-0.62m subsoil (51); 0.62-0.70m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions).
7	15.70	1.60	0.44	0-0.18m topsoil (50); 0.18-0.40m subsoil (51); 0.40-0.44m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions). Posthole 3. [Pls 5, 6]
8	24.40	1.60	0.50	0-0.19m topsoil (50); 0.19-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42-0.50m+ natural geology (Light orange-brown sandy clay with flint gravel inclusions). Ditch 1. [Pls 7, 8]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

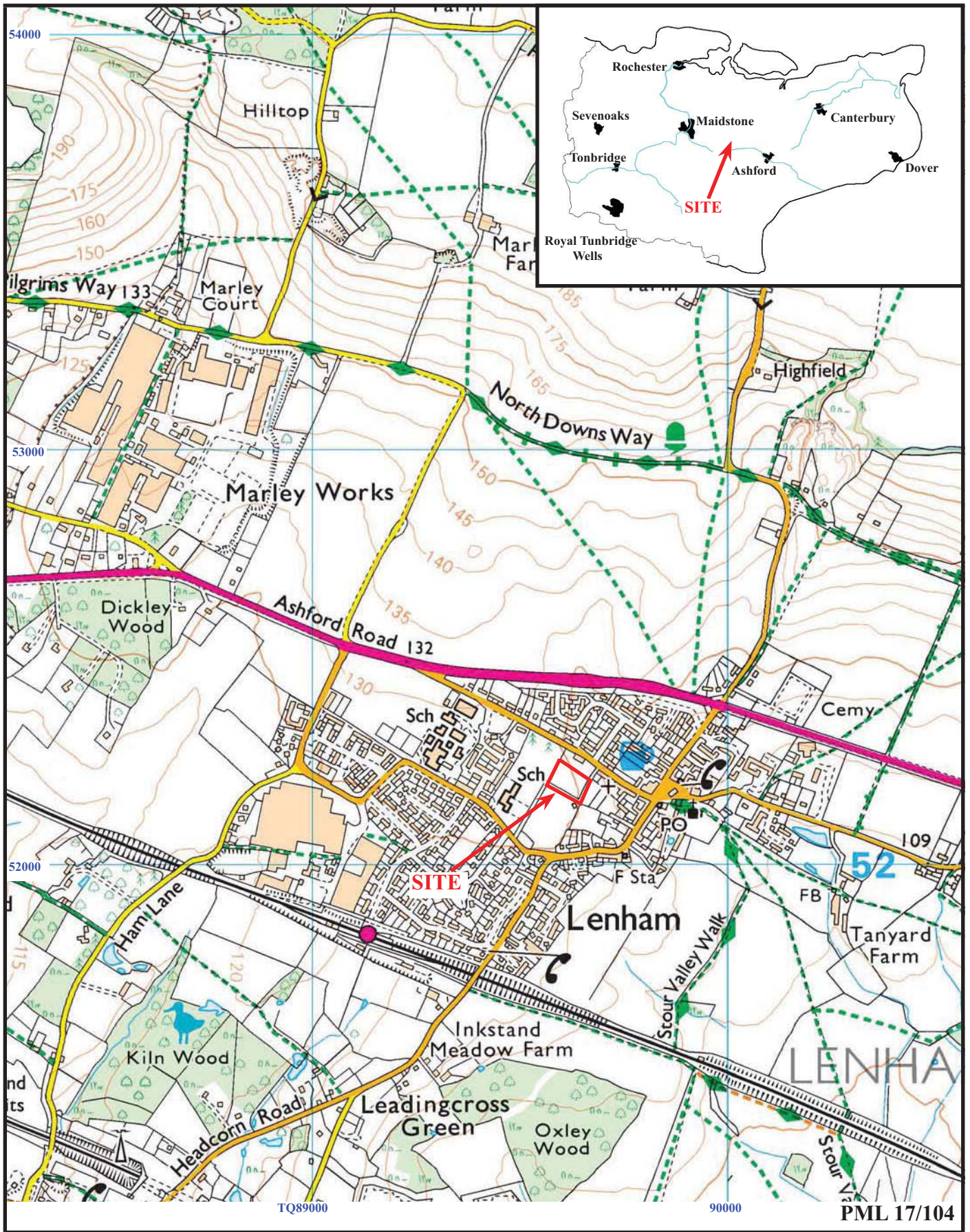
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
8	1	52	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery.
5	2	53	Ditch	Medieval	Metalwork, stratigraphy.
7	3	54	Posthole	Post-medieval	Brick, tile, clay pipe.
4	4	55	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery.

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of Pottery

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
		52	Sandy-shelly ware (some coarse quartz)	EM	2	8	Cooking pot x1 (quite fresh)
		55	Sandy-shelly ware (some coarse quartz)	EM	6	8	Uncertain form x2 (oxidized and reduced vessels)
		55	Sandy-shelly ware (fine/medium quartz)	EM/HM	2	20	Cooking pots x2 (oxidized and reduced vessels). X1 with rolled over down-turned rim

EM – Early Medieval c. 1050-1200/25

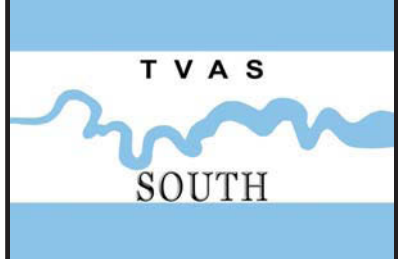
HM - High Medieval c. 1200/25-1350/75.

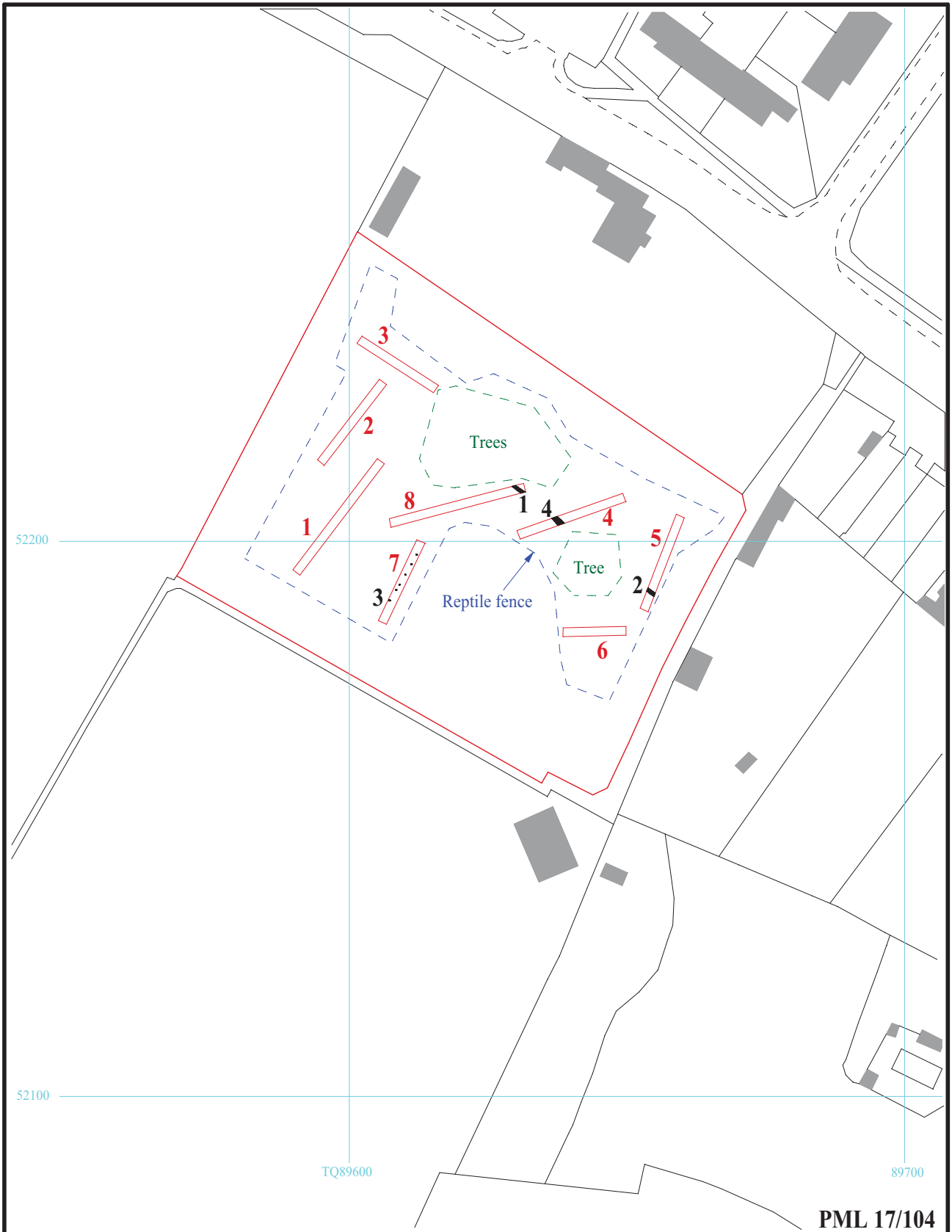


**Land to the rear of Parapet House,
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lenham and Kent.

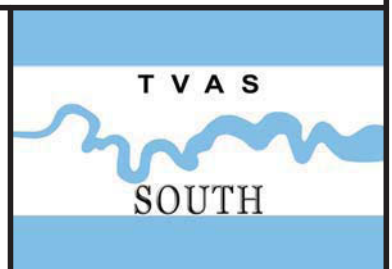
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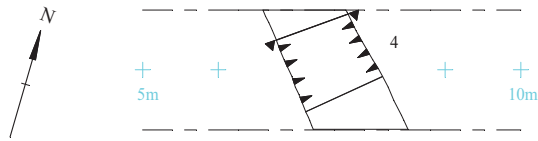


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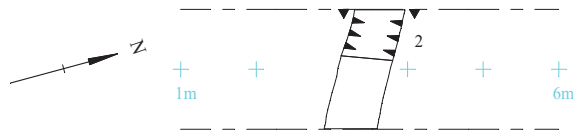
Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing evaluation trenches..



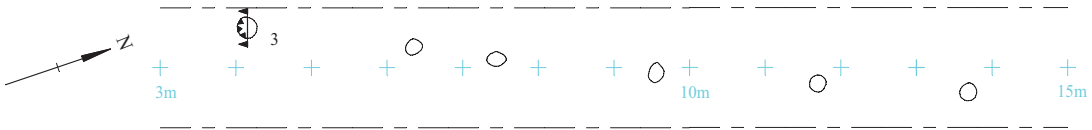
Trench 4



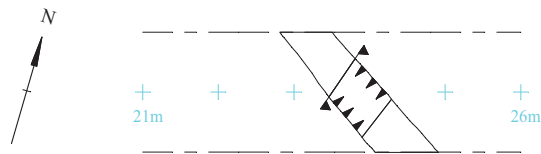
Trench 5



Trench 7

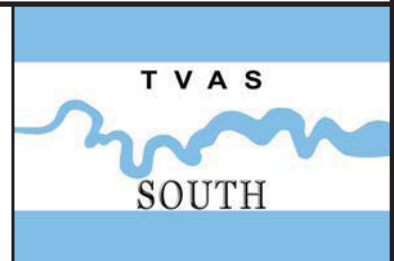


Trench 8

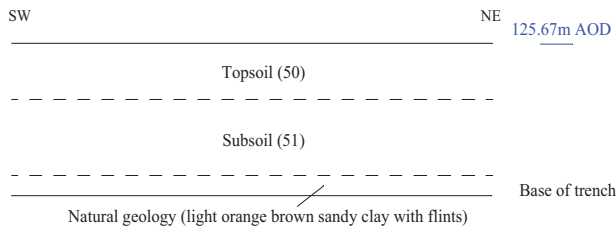


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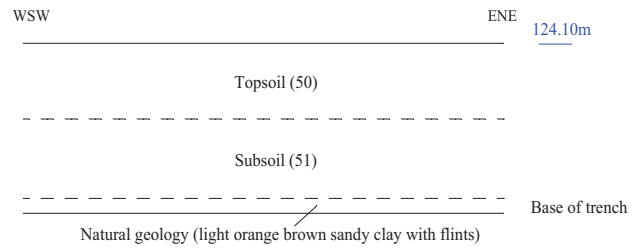
Figure 3. Plan of trenches 4, 5, 7 and 8.



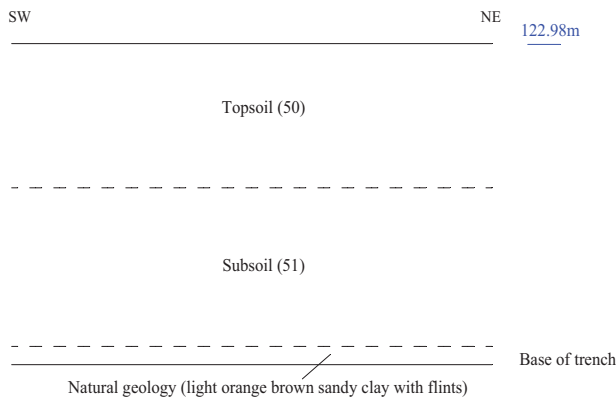
Trench 1



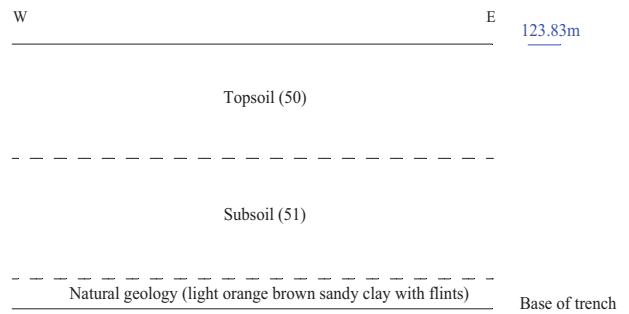
Trench 4



Trench 5



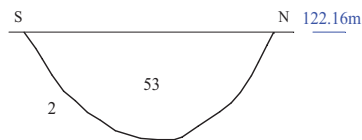
Trench 6



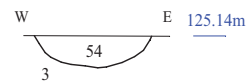
Trench 8



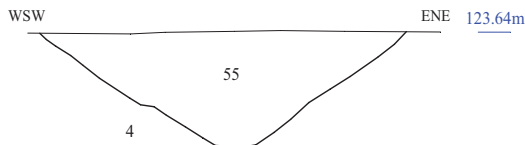
Trench 5



Trench 7



Trench 4



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**Land to the rear of Parapet House
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Figure 4. Sections.

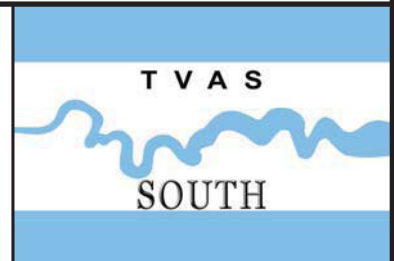




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North-east.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking South-east.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 3. Trench 4, ditch 4, looking North-west.
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.



Plate 4. Trench 5, ditch 2, looking North-west.
Scales: 1m and 0.30m.

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Plates 1 - 4.**





Plate 5. Trench 7, looking North-east.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 6. Trench 7, post-hole 3, looking North.
Scale: 0.30m.



Plate 7. Trench 8, looking East.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

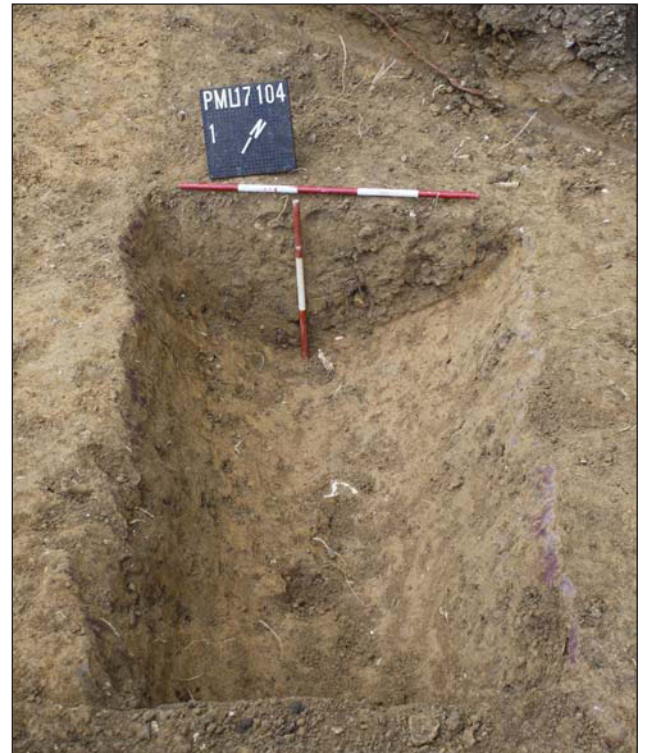


Plate 8. Trench 8, ditch 1, looking North-west.
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.

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Land to the rear of Parapet House,
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Plates 1 - 4.



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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