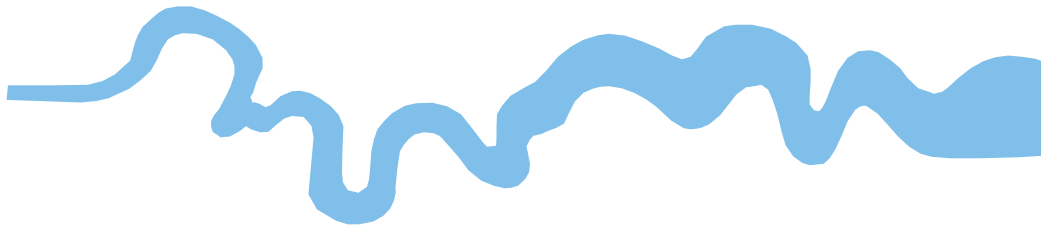


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

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

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Sean Wallis**

**Site Code: SPML17/104**

**(TQ 8962 5220)**

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

**An Archaeological Excavation  
for Palace Estates**

by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code  
PML 17/104

**December 2017**

## Summary

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

**Grid reference:** TQ 8962 5220

**Site activity:** Excavation

**Date and duration of project:** 16th October 2017

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** PML 17/104

**Area of site:** c. 400 sq m

**Summary of results:** The archaeological excavation 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 medieval ditch that was identified during the evaluation was confirmed to be a single feature, and two further slots were excavated through it by hand, producing a small amount of additional pottery providing a 12th- to 13th-century date. No other features were identified in the excavation area and other finds were meagre.

**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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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.12.17 Steve Preston ✓ 21.12.17
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# Land to the rear of Parapet House, Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent An Archaeological Excavation

by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis

**Report 17/104b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out to the rear of Parapet House, 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 (15/505937/FULL) had 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 was subject to a standard planning condition (12) relating to archaeology and the historic environment. 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.

A field evaluation (trial trenching) was carried out in July 2017, to a specification approved by Ms Wendy Rogers of Kent County Council, who advises Maidstone Borough Council on archaeological matters. A ditch was recorded in three of the evaluation trenches, which contained pottery dating from the medieval period. The only other features observed during the evaluation were a line of post-medieval post-holes.

This report covers the follow-up work which was requested by Ms Wendy Rogers based on the results of the evaluation. The excavation was undertaken by Sean Wallis between 12th and 16th October 2017, and the site code is PML 17/104. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton, and will be deposited at 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 which had previously been covered by scrub and trees, and is accessed via a track leading from Maidstone Road. The scrub and trees had been cleared prior to the excavation commencing, although a large part of the site was still inaccessible due to a reptile fence. The site generally slopes slightly down towards the north-east, but the excavation area was fairly flat and lay at a height of approximately 124m above Ordnance Datum. 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 1976). The natural geology encountered in the excavation 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, and this was probably a route from prehistoric times onwards. 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, was 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.

## **The Evaluation**

Eight evaluation trenches, measuring between 15.30m and 25m, were excavated on the site in July 2017. A ditch was identified in three of the trenches, and three slots (1, 2 and 4) were excavated through it. The ditch produced a small assemblage of finds, including some sherds of medieval pottery. A line of post-holes was observed in one of the evaluation trenches. One of these post-holes was sampled by hand 3 (54), and was shown to contain post-medieval clay tobacco pipe, brick and tile (Rouard 2017).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aim of the project was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and features around the possible medieval ditch discovered during the evaluation.

## **The Excavation**

The excavation area some 35m by 11–12m was stripped by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision, down to the top of the underlying natural geology (pls 1 and 2), which necessitated the removal of between 0.40m and 0.55m of topsoil (50) and subsoil (51) deposits. The only archaeological feature recorded in the excavation area was the medieval ditch that had previously been identified during the evaluation.

## **Medieval**

### Linear feature (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 3 and 4)

One ditch (1000) was identified within the excavation area, and it was clearly the same feature that was recorded during the evaluation (1, 2 and 4). It was aligned approximately south-east to north-west and roughly parallel to Maidstone Road, some 57m south of it. Two additional slots (5 and 6) were dug through this ditch during the excavation and their fills (56 and 57) of mid-reddish brown clayey silt yielded several pottery sherds, as well as burnt flint, shell and a metal object. This ditch was dated broadly to the medieval period and probably represents a field boundary.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Luke Barber*

The archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation recovered just 22 small sherds of pottery, weighing 90g, from six contexts (Appendix 2). Apart from three post-medieval sherds from the subsoil (51), all the pottery came from ditch 1000.

Although the sherds from slots 1 (52) and 4 (55) are small they only show moderate signs of abrasion suggesting they have not been subjected to repeated reworking. The remaining medieval pottery all consists of heavily abraded tiny fragments, particularly from the ditch surface. All of the medieval pottery can be placed within a mid 12th- to mid 13th-century date range.

The post-medieval pottery consists of the fine sanded earthenware from the subsoil (51) (all conjoining pieces) that is quite fresh but can only be placed in a general 1550-1750 date range.

The pottery assemblage is small and of types well known in the area.

### *Metalwork* by Luke Barber

Three contexts produced metalwork during the evaluation. There is nothing in the metalwork to be at odds with the ceramic date for these contexts in the medieval period, indeed all the ironwork has notably heavy corrosion products. Ditch slot 1 (52) contained a 4g fragment from a general-purpose nail, and slot 4 (55) produced three fragments (21g) from a 27mm wide iron binding strip with at least one fixing hole surviving, likely to be from furniture, a bucket or a door. Ditch slot 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 excavation produced just a single further item of metal: a shouldered double-ended tapering copper alloy awl from ditch slot 5 (56). The piece, which is broken on one end and somewhat bent, currently measures 107mm long and has a circular cross-section. At the narrowest end the diameter is just 0.9mm, but this gradually increases over a length of 20mm until it merges into a 45mm long shoulder (a thickened area to aid grip that attains a maximum diameter of 5.4mm). The awl then tapers down to a constant diameter of 2.6mm for the remainder of the surviving section. The form of this awl can be closely matched with a mid 13th-century example from York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002, No. 11506) though all have a diamond-shaped cross-section. However, circular cross-sectioned awls are known of from Norwich (Margeson 1993, No. 1482).

The metalwork assemblage mainly consists of badly preserved object fragments and waste material. The copper alloy awl is the only piece of note but is an isolated find that on its own suggests little beyond the possibility of leather-working in the vicinity.

### *The Metallurgical Remains* by Luke Barber

Ditch slot 4 (55) produced two pieces (18g) of undiagnostic iron slag that are suspected of deriving from medieval smithing.

### *Clay Tobacco 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.

### *Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber*

The only CBM recovered from the site came from the subsoil (51) and post-hole 3 (54). There is only 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 this 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. The material from the subsoil (51) consists of two further spalls from roof tiles with calcareous pepping, both of which are heavily worn.

### *Macrobotanical plant material and charcoal by Jo Pine*

Two samples were processed from features investigated during the excavation (ditch slot 5 and 6, fills 56 and 57). The samples were wet-sieved to 0.25mm and air dried, and the resultant flots examined under a low-power binocular microscope at a magnification of x10. No cereal or charred seeds were present. Both samples contained a small amount of charcoal which was of such a small size that it could not be identified to species.

### *Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis*

One small fragment of unworked burnt flint, weighing 6g, was recovered from the fill of ditch slot 4 (55).

### *Geological Material by Luke Barber*

The subsoil (51) produced a somewhat worn sphere of iron pyrites (68g), originally derived from the local chalk. The piece shows no signs of human modification. Ditch slot 5 (56) produced two pellets of ferruginous siltstone (8g), also of natural local origin.

### *Shell by Lizzi Lewins*

Three oyster shells (*Ostrea edulis*), weighing a total of 42g were recovered from the ditch fills (56 and 57). The length ranged from 53–61mm, the width from 60–64mm.



## Conclusion

The archaeological excavation 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 medieval ditch that was identified during the evaluation was revealed again, and two further slots were excavated through it by hand. No other features were identified in the excavation area.

## Acknowledgements

The excavation was funded by Palace Estates, with the fieldwork being monitored by Mrs Wendy Rogers, the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer. Illustrations were produced by the authors.

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## APPENDIX 1: Feature details

Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence / comments
1	52	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery. Recorded in evaluation.
2	53	Ditch	Medieval	Metalwork. Recorded in evaluation.
3	54	Post-hole	Post-medieval	CBM, clay pipe. Recorded in evaluation.
4	55	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery. Recorded in evaluation.
5	56	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery, Metalwork.
6	57	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery.

## APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Pottery

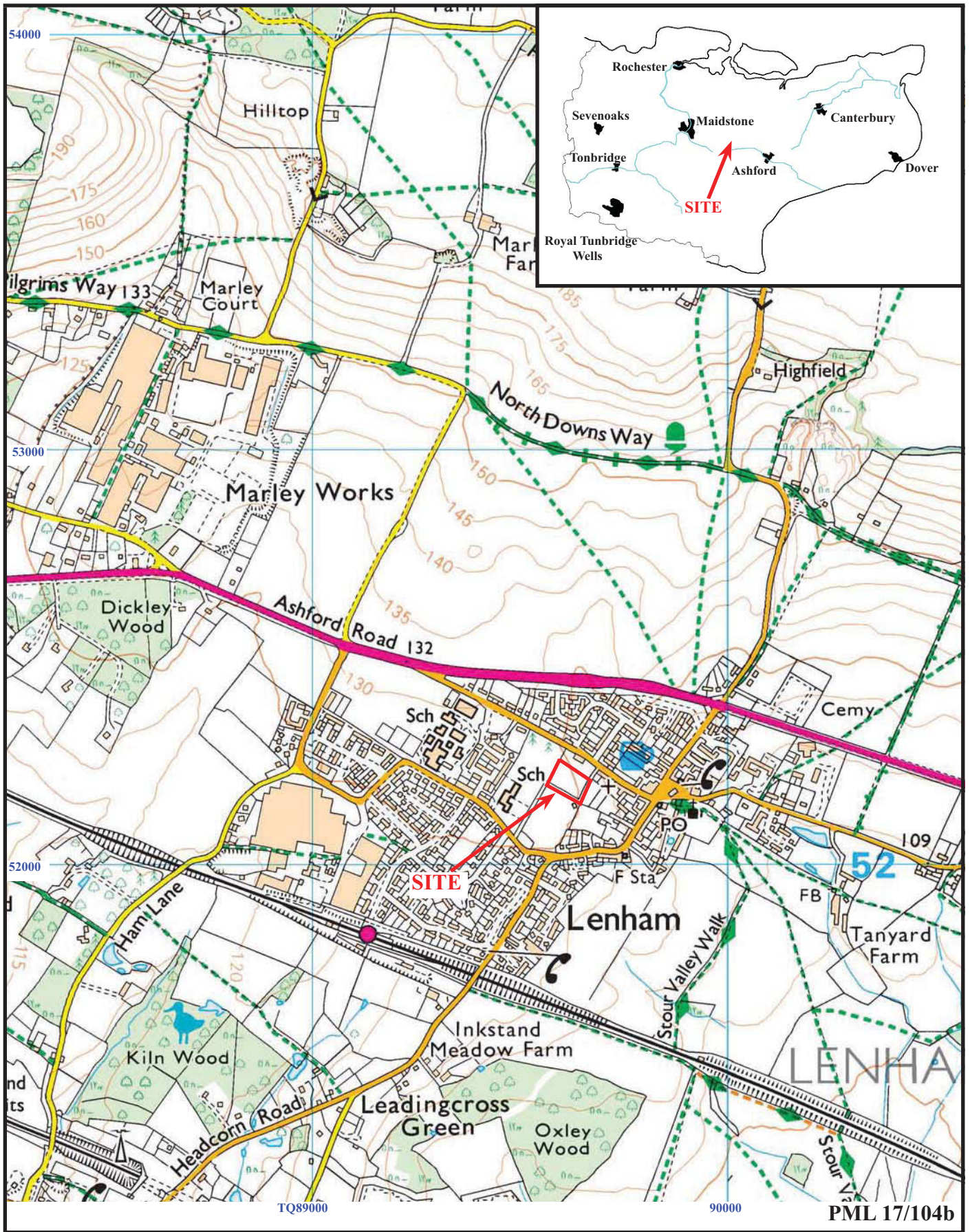
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	51	Glazed red fine sandy earthenware (early)	EPM	3	32	Uncertain form x1 (green glazed internal patches).
2	52	Sandy-shelly ware (some coarse quartz)	EM	2	8	Cooking pot x1 (quite fresh)
4	55	Sandy-shelly ware (some coarse quartz)	EM	6	8	Uncertain form x2 (oxidized and reduced vessels)
4	55	Sandy-shelly ware (fine/medium quartz)	EM/HM	2	20	Cooking pots x2 (oxidized and reduced vessels), 1 with rolled over down-turned rim
5	56	Sandy-shelly ware (fine/medium quartz)	EM/HM	1	1	Uncertain form x1. Worn scrap
6	57	Sandy-shelly ware (fine/medium quartz)	EM/HM	4	14	Cooking pot x2 (reduced and oxidized. Externally sooted.
	Ditch surface between 5 & 6	Sandy-shelly ware (fine/medium quartz)	EM/HM	1	2	Uncertain form x1 (bitone). Worn
	Ditch surface between 5 & 6	Medium sandy ware	EM/HM	3	4	Uncertain form x1 (reduced). Worn
	Ditch surface between 5 & 6	Fine/medium sandy ware	HM	1	1	Uncertain form x1 (oxidised). Worn

### Periods:

EM: Early Medieval, *c.* 1050–1225

HM: High Medieval, *c.* 1220–1375

EPM: Early Post-medieval (16th/17th century)

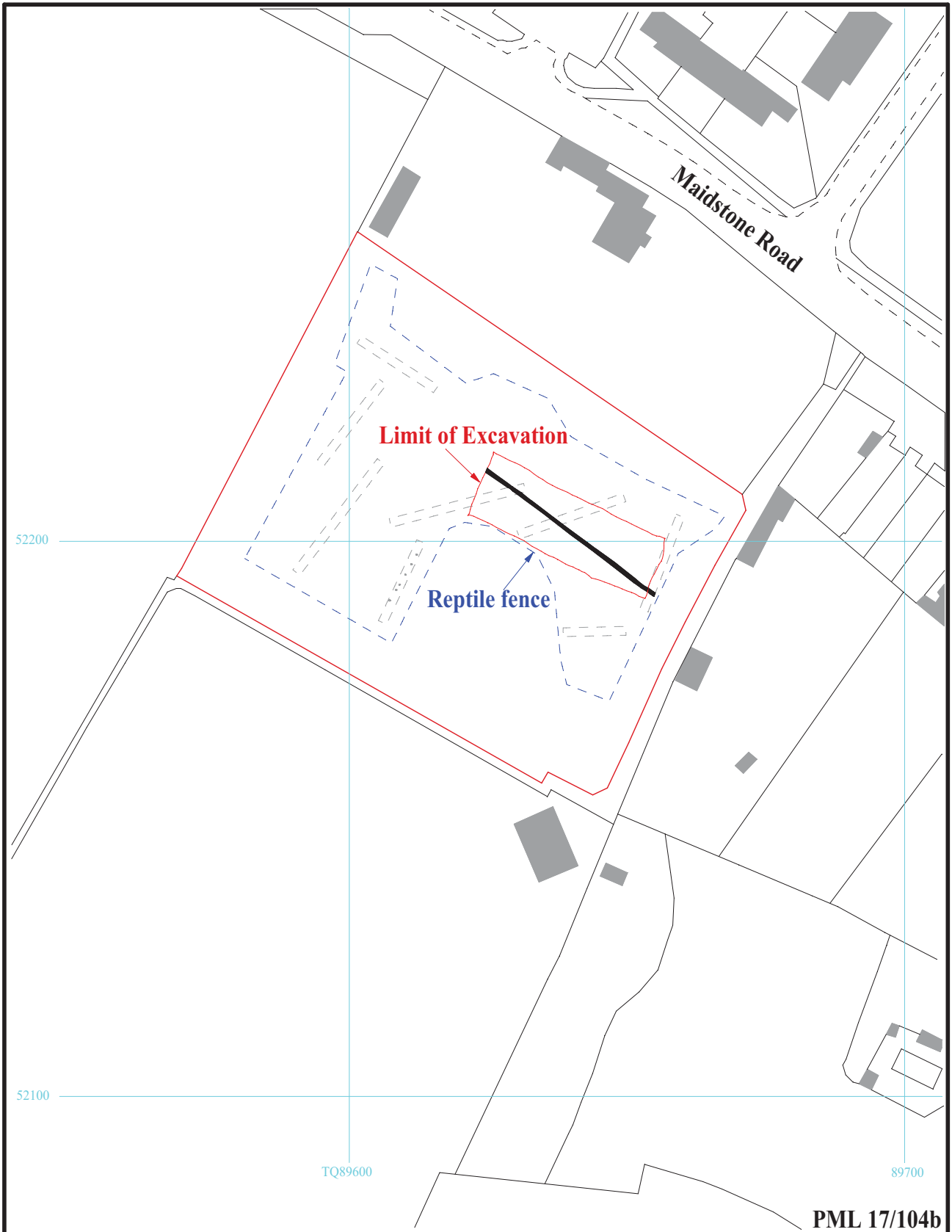


**Land to the rear of Parapet House,  
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent, 2017  
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lenham and Kent.

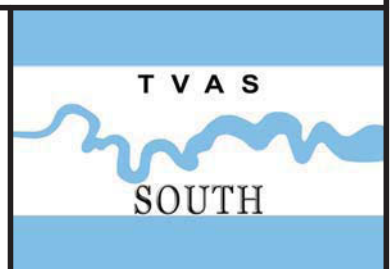
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**Land to the rear of Parapet House  
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent 2017  
Archeological Excavation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing excavation area.



52240

52220

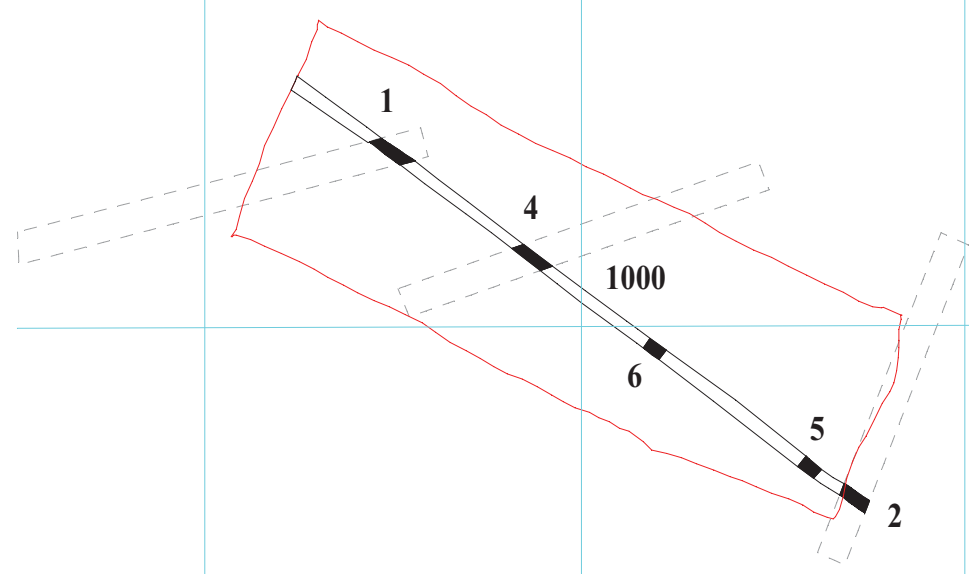
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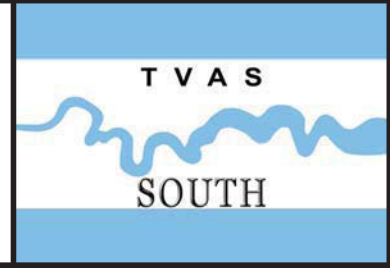


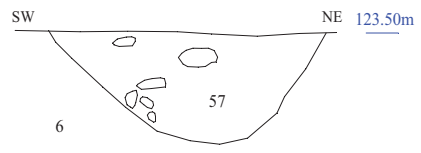
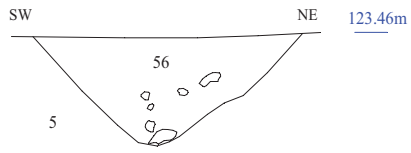
PML 17/104b



**Land to the rear of Parapet House  
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent 2017  
Archeological Excavation**

Figure 3. Detailed location of excavation area showing excavated slots.





PML 17/104b

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

Figure 4. Sections.

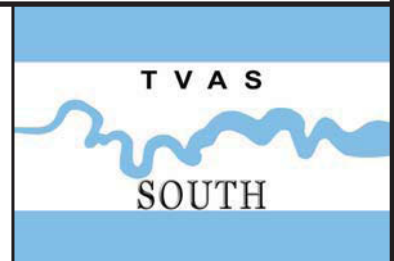




Plate 1. Excavation area, looking North-east.  
Scales: 2m and 1m.

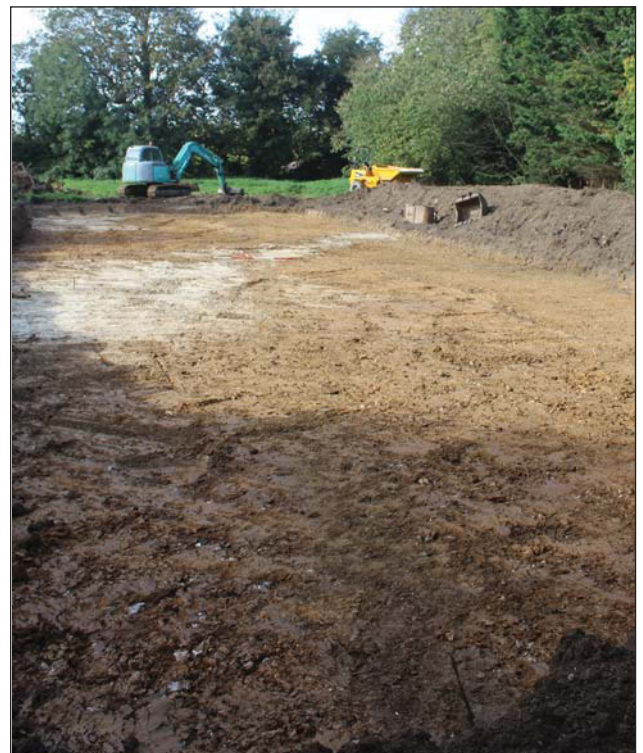


Plate 2. Excavation area, looking North-west.  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Ditch 5, looking North-west.  
Scales: 2m, 1m, 0.50m and 0.10m.



Plate 4. Ditch 6, looking North-west.  
Scales: 2m, 1m, 0.50m and 0.10m.

PML 17/104b

**Land to the rear of Parapet House,  
Maidstone Road, Lenham, Kent, 2017  
Archaeological Excavation  
Plates 1 - 4.**

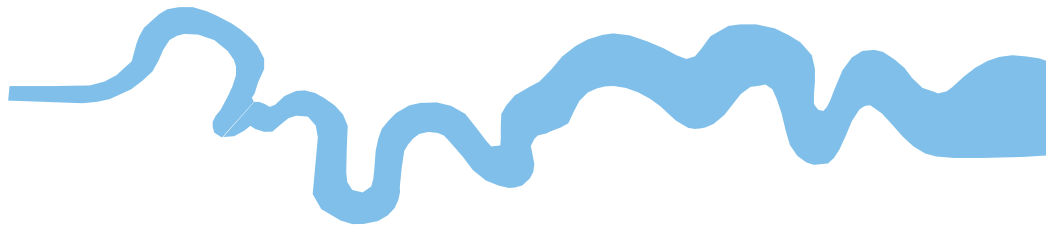




## TIME CHART

	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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