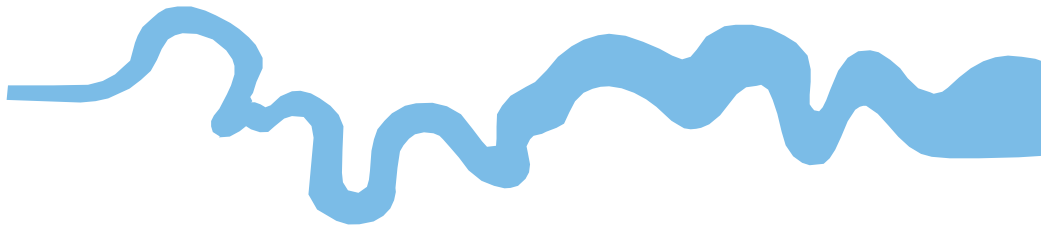


T V A S



SOUTH

**Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road,
Brenzett, Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: MRB 18/236

(TR 0015 2738)

**Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road,
Brenzett, Kent**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for BGN Developments Ltd**

Planning reference : Y19/0068/FH

by Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code MRB 18/236

September 2019

Summary

Site name: Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road, Brenzett, Kent

Grid reference: TR 0015 2738

Site activity: Evaluation

Planning reference: Y19/0068/FH

Date and duration of project: 5th - 6th September 2019

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MRB 18/236

Area of site: c. 0.17ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation at Rhee Wall Road, Brenzett, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development of the site. It seems likely that a large feature parallel to the present main road represents a backfilled medieval canal, known as the Rhee Wall. The existence of the canal is known from documentary sources dating from the 13th century and, whilst it is believed to have gone out of use during the 15th century, it would probably have survived as a feature in the landscape for centuries afterwards. Dating evidence comprised a late medieval or early post-medieval horseshoe from the upper fill of the feature.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 19.09.19 Steve Preston ✓ 19.09.19

Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road, Brenzett, Kent An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 18/236

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried at Rhee Wall Road, Brenzett, Kent (TR 0015 2738) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the Ms Julie Warden of Pump House Designs Ltd, Pump House Yard, The Green, Sedlescombe, TN33 0QA, on behalf of BGN Developments Ltd.

Planning permission (Y19/0068/FH) has been granted by Folkestone and Hythe District Council to develop the site for housing. The consent is subject to a standard condition (21) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks on the site. This was to take the form, initially, of a field evaluation in order to determine the site's archaeological potential and to inform a mitigation strategy if required.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the District Council's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer who advises the District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis between 5th and 6th September 2019, and the site code is MRB 18/236. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton, and will be deposited with a suitable repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west side of Rhee Wall Road, about 200m north-west of the historic core of Brenzett, Kent, and is centred on NGR TR 0015 2738 (Figs 1 and 2). The site is generally quite flat and lies at a height of approximately 3m above Ordnance Datum. However, the adjacent road is about 0.40m higher than the site, and the possible reasons for this will be discussed below. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Marine Clay, with Marine Sand just to the north (BGS 1974), and this was confirmed in some of the evaluation trenches as a light brownish yellow clay.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on Walland Marsh, part of an extensive area of reclaimed marshland which, along with Romney Marsh proper and Denge Marsh, make up the Romney Marsh. This marsh was formed as a result of complex coastal geomorphological processes, which have resulted in a sequence of geological deposits with palaeoenvironmental interest. The Rhee Wall, which is depicted on maps immediately north-east of the site, may have originated in the 13th century, when a canal was cut between New Romney and Appledore. Although the canal fell into disuse in the 15th century, its raised banks continue to provide an overland route across the marsh, and its line is still followed by the modern road (B2080) in this area. The reclaimed marshland provided fertile agricultural land, and between the 14th and 17th centuries the area was renowned for its sheep pasture. Historic maps depict a former corn mill just to the north-west of the site. There are a number of anti-tank obstacles, sometimes referred to as 'pimples' or 'dragon's teeth', in the northern part of the site. These were built during the Second World War in advance of an expected invasion of south-east England by the German army.

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 the 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; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits from the medieval period are present.

Six trenches were to be dug, each measuring 15m in length and 1.80m in width. The trenches were positioned to target those parts of the site which would be most affected by the new houses. The trenches were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

The trenching exercise specifically excluded the northernmost part of the site where the Second World War tank obstacles are located. These tank obstacles are to remain *in-situ* once the new houses are constructed.

Results

The six trenches were dug close to their original planned positions (Fig. 3). All the trenches were 1.80m wide, and measured between 14.10m and 15.70m in length, and between 0.40m and 0.59m in depth. A complete list of the trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

At the time of the evaluation the ground was very dry and, as a result, had a tendency to break up in large chunks during the machining. It became apparent early on that there was a distinct difference between the part of the site closest to the main road (to the east) and the western side of the site. In the area closest to the road, a deposit of sterile mid greyish brown clay (52) was revealed beneath the topsoil (50) and subsoil (51) horizons, whereas a light brownish yellow clay was recorded along the western side, which was interpreted as representing the natural clay geology. Following an on-site discussion with the Kent County Council Archaeologist (Mr Ben Found), it seemed the most likely explanation was that deposit 52 represented the backfilled medieval canal, and that this feature runs parallel to the road, within the boundary of the site. The line of this large, backfilled, feature (1) can be clearly seen on the trench plan (Fig. 3). Although a test pit was excavated through feature 1 in trench 3, no further excavation took place.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was orientated W-E, and was 15.20m long and up to 0.59m deep. At the western end of the trench the natural geology was encountered beneath 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.22m of subsoil (51). However, along most of the length of the trench the topsoil and subsoil horizons were removed to reveal a deposit of mid greyish brown clay (52), which was interpreted as representing the fill of the backfilled medieval canal (1). The edge of this feature was planned, and is shown on Fig. 3. No archaeological finds were recovered from the trench.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was orientated NW-SE, and was 15.10m long and up to 0.56m deep. The mid greyish brown clay deposit (52), which probably represents the backfilled medieval canal (1) was encountered along the entire length of the trench, beneath 0.26m of topsoil (50) and 0.15m of subsoil (51). The natural clay geology was not exposed, and no archaeological finds were recovered from the trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 3, 4 and 5; Pls 1 and 4)

This trench was orientated N-S, and was 15.30m long and up to 0.53m deep. At the southern end of the trench the natural clay geology was encountered beneath 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.22m of subsoil (51). Along most of the length of the trench removal of topsoil and subsoil horizons revealed a deposit of mid greyish brown clay (52), which was interpreted as representing the fill of the backfilled medieval canal (1) (Fig. 3). A test pit was excavated at the northern end of the trench (Fig. 5), which showed that deposit 52 was approximately 1.50m

thick in this part of the site. A late medieval or post-medieval horseshoe was recovered from the upper part of the deposit. Despite its thickness, the deposit was quite homogeneous and sterile in nature, suggesting an episode of deliberate backfilling. Although it was difficult to see in section, mainly due to the fact that the ground was so dry, the cut for the canal (1) was identified in the test pit.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was orientated approximately N-S, and was 15.70m long and up to 0.47m deep. At the southern end of the trench the natural clay geology was encountered beneath 0.23m of topsoil (50) and 0.13m of subsoil (51). However, along most of the length of the trench the topsoil and subsoil horizons were removed to reveal the same deposit of mid greyish brown clay (52), the fill of the backfilled medieval canal (1) (Fig. 3). No archaeological finds were recovered from the trench.

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

This trench was orientated approximately NW-SE, and was 14.10m long and up to 0.40m deep. The natural clay geology was encountered beneath 0.20m of topsoil (50) and 0.12m of subsoil (51). No archaeological features were recorded in the trench, and no finds were recovered.

Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was orientated approximately W-E, and was 15.40m long and up to 0.45m deep. The mid greyish brown clay deposit (52), which probably represents the backfilled medieval canal (1) was encountered along the entire length of the trench, beneath 0.22m of topsoil (50) and 0.12m of subsoil (51). The natural clay geology was not exposed, and no archaeological finds were recovered from the trench.

Finds

The topsoil (50) contained a fair amount of modern material (plastic, metal, brick, etc), which was retained on site. In contrast the subsoil layer beneath (51) was very sterile in nature and did not produce any archaeological finds.

Horseshoe by Danielle Milbank

A horseshoe was recovered from the very top of the infilled feature in trench 3. It was 120mm long and 126mm wide with thickened calkins and with 2 nails present. It is likely to be of 14th-16th century date or possibly later (Shopland 2005, 205)

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Rhee Wall Road, Brenzett, successfully investigated those parts of the site which will be most affected by the proposed development. It seems likely that a large feature observed running parallel to the present main road represents a backfilled medieval canal. The existence of the canal is known from documentary sources dating from the 13th century and, whilst it is believed to have gone out of use during the 15th century, it would probably have survived as a feature in the landscape for centuries afterwards. Indeed, it has long been thought that the present main road (B2080) runs in an elevated position along one of the canal's former banks.

The canal was constructed partly to flush out the harbour at New Romney, but also provided a route for commercial vessels. Its construction would have required a high level of expenditure and labour.

Based on the results of the trenching, it is fair to conclude that the main road actually runs along the eastern bank of the canal. There is no trace of the western bank in the vicinity of the site, and indeed the western boundary of the site consists of a modern drainage ditch. It is therefore possible that this part of the canal may have been deliberately backfilled with material from the former western bank, so that the area could revert to being farmland. The only find from the fill was a horseshoe from close to the surface, which could easily have been pressed into the fill from above long after the canal had passed out of use.

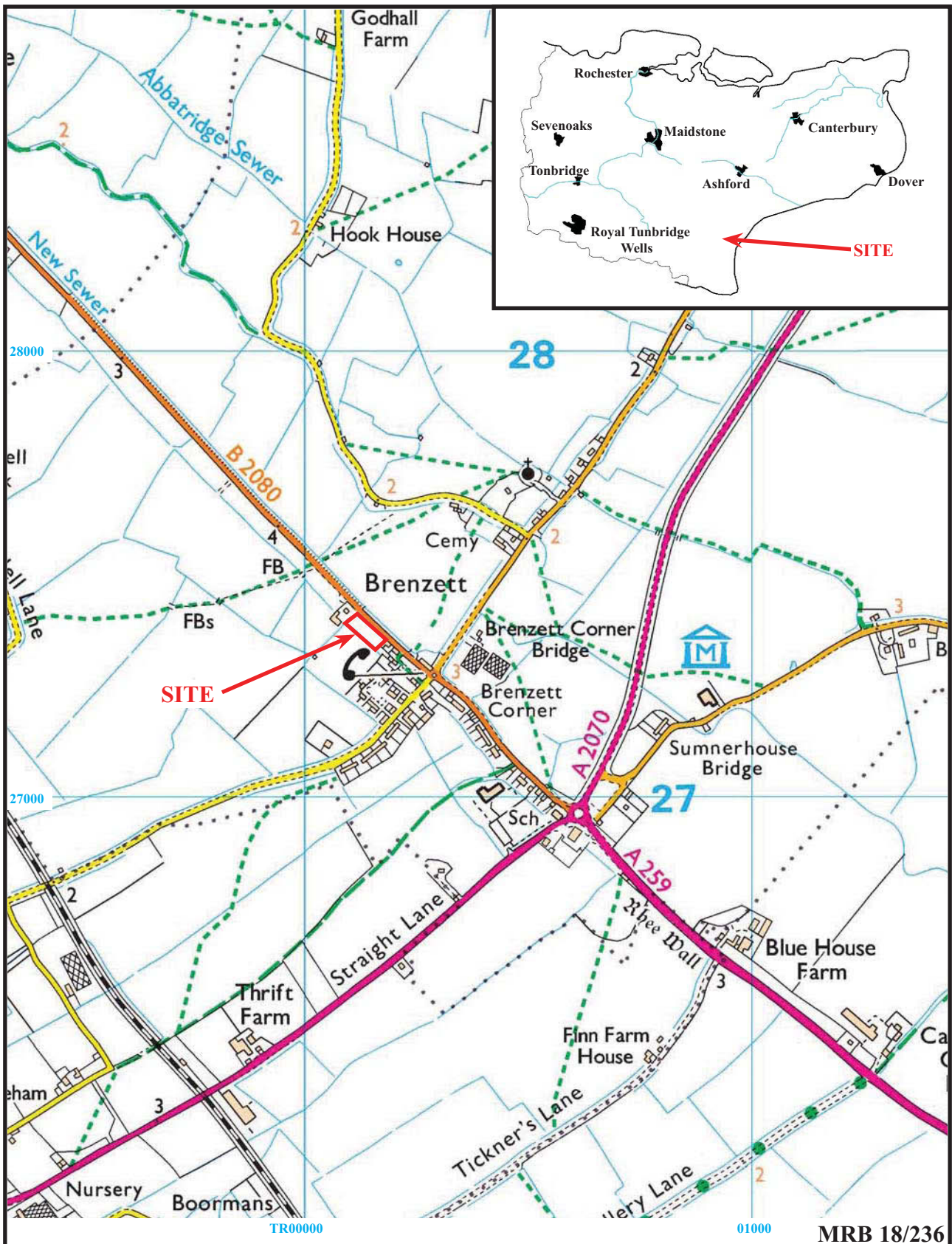
The trenching revealed no other features of archaeological interest.

References

- BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet **305/306**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
Shopland, N, 2005, *Archaeological finds: a guide to identification*, Stroud

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

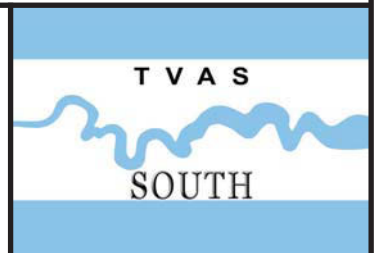
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	15.20	1.80	0.59	West: 0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42m+ natural geology (light brownish yellow clay). East: 0-0.21m topsoil (50); 0.21-0.43m subsoil (51); 0.43m+ mid greyish brown clay (52). Ditch 1.
2	15.10	1.80	0.56	0-0.26m topsoil (50); 0.26-0.41m subsoil (51); 0.41m+ mid greyish brown clay (52). Ditch 1.
3	15.30	1.80	0.53 1.95 (test pit)	South: 0-0.28m topsoil (50); 0.28-0.40m subsoil (51); 0.40m+ natural geology (light brownish yellow clay). North: 0-0.28m topsoil (50); 0.28-0.42m subsoil (51); 0.42-1.85m mid greyish brown clay (52); 1.85m+ natural geology (light brownish yellow clay). Ditch 1. [Pls 1 and 4]
4	15.70	1.80	0.47	South: 0-0.23m topsoil (50); 0.23-0.36m subsoil (51); 0.36m+ natural geology (light brownish yellow clay). North: 0-0.22m topsoil (50); 0.22-0.38m subsoil (51); 0.38m+ mid greyish brown clay (52). Ditch 1.
5	14.10	1.80	0.40	0-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.32m subsoil (51); 0.32m+ natural geology (light brownish yellow clay). [Pl. 2]
6	15.40	1.80	0.45	0-0.22m topsoil (50); 0.22-0.34m subsoil (51); 0.34m+ mid greyish brown clay (52). Ditch 1. [Pl. 3]

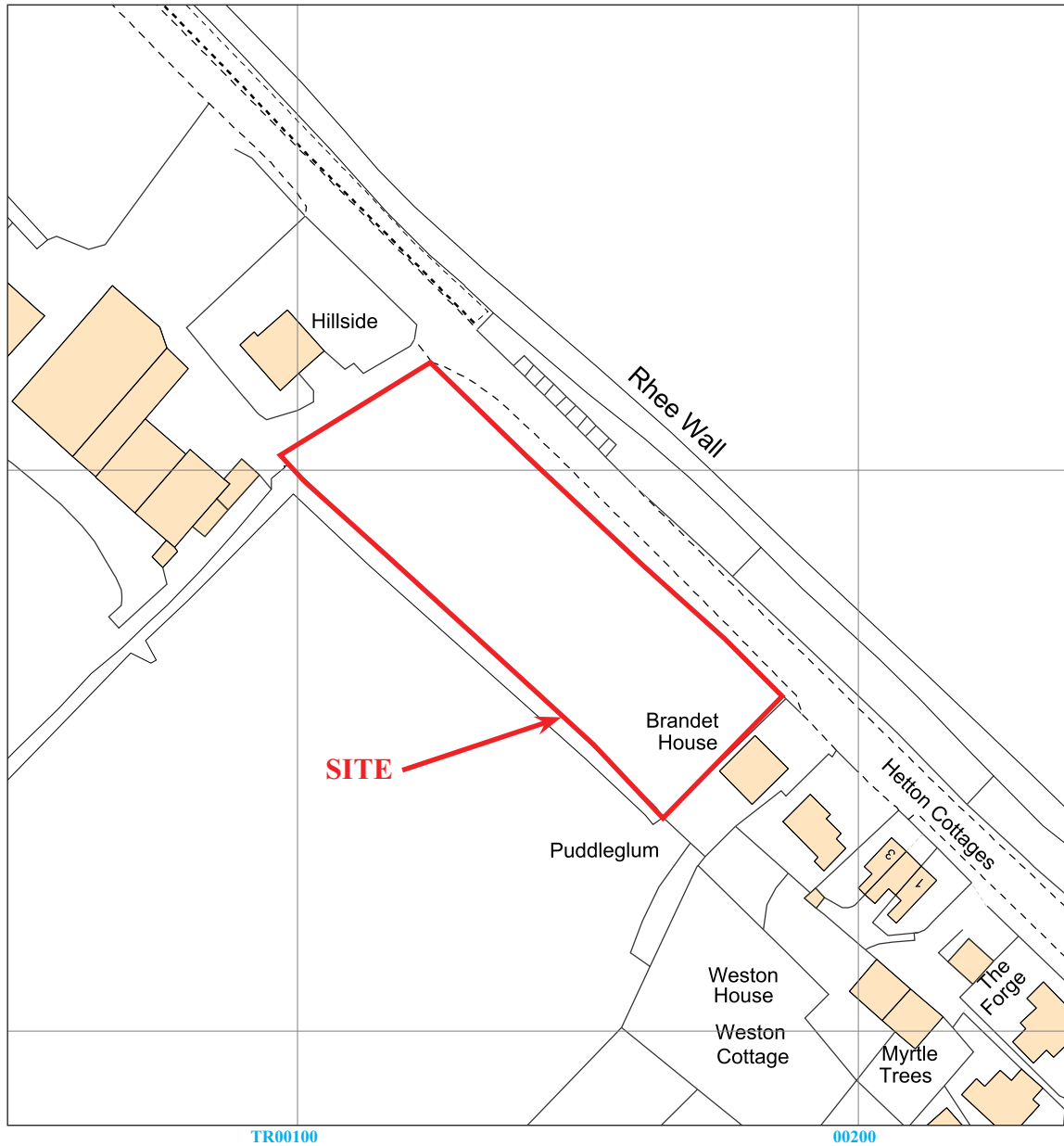


**Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road,
Brenzett, Kent, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Brenzett and Kent.

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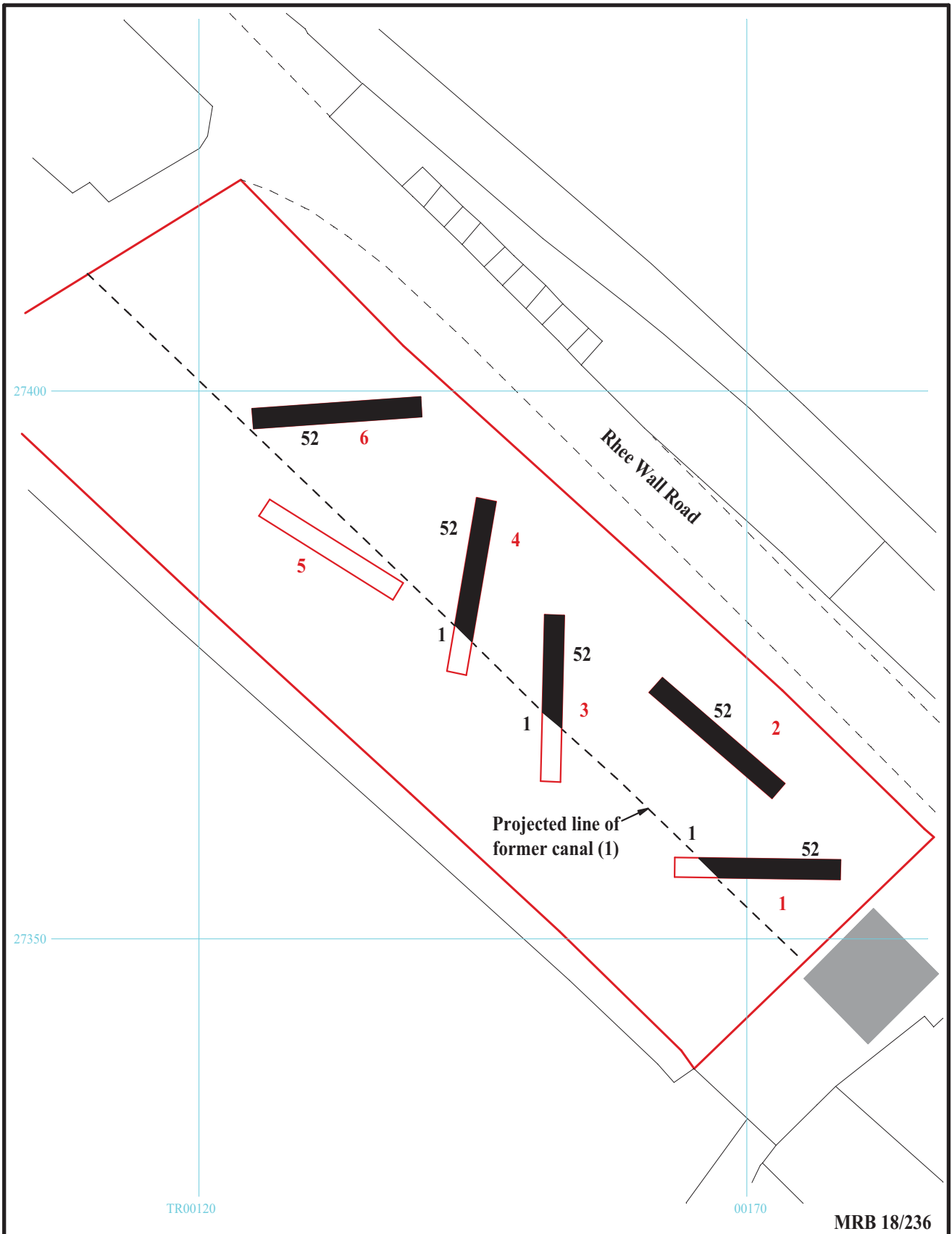


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Figure 2. Detailed site location.

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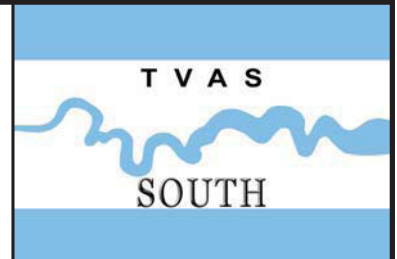


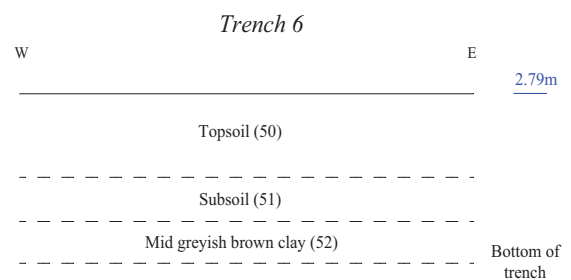
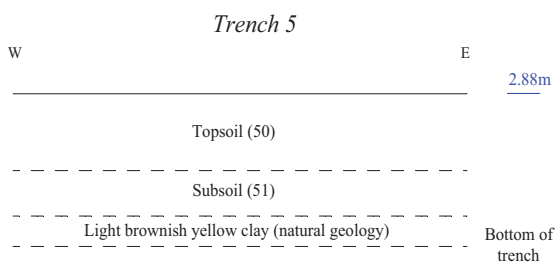
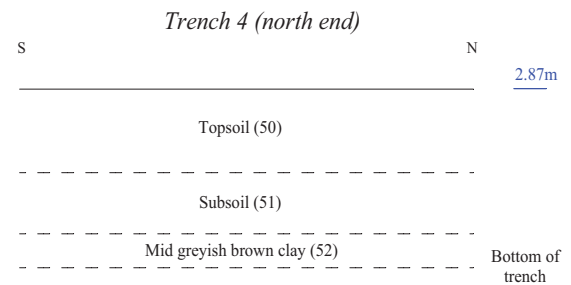
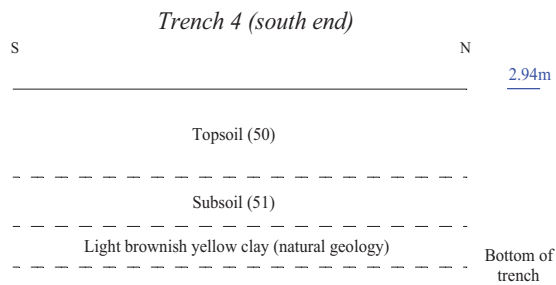
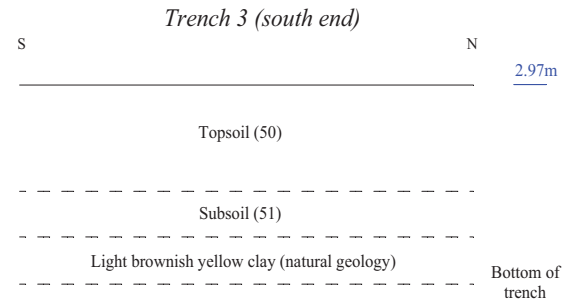
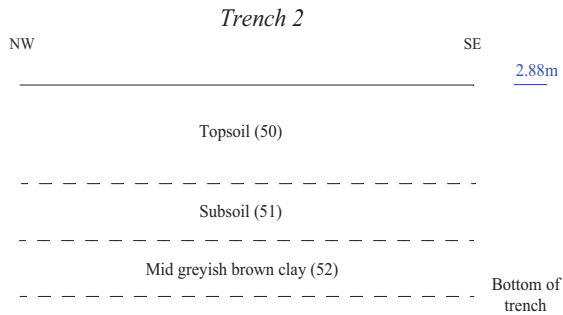
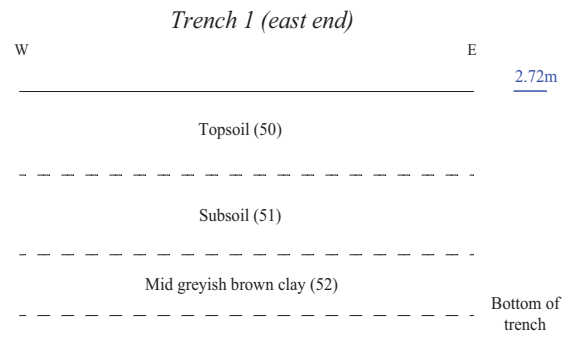
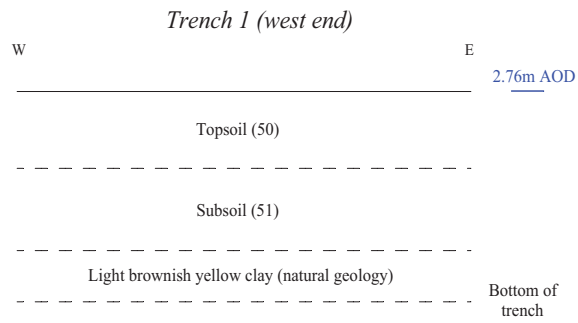
MRB 18/236



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Brenzett, Kent, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Site plan showing excavated trenches and archaeological features.

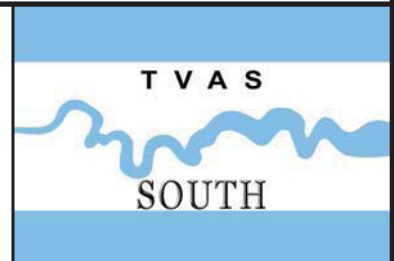




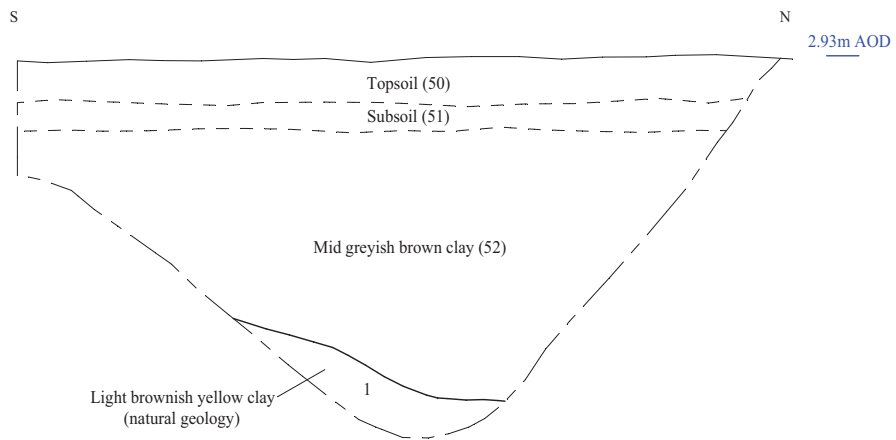
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Figure 4. Representative sections.



Trench 3 (test pit at north end)



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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 3, looking North.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.



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



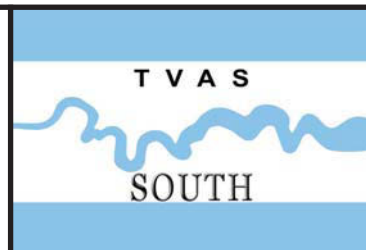
Plate 3. Trench 6, looking West.
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 4. Test pit in trench 3, looking West.
Scales: 2m and 1m.

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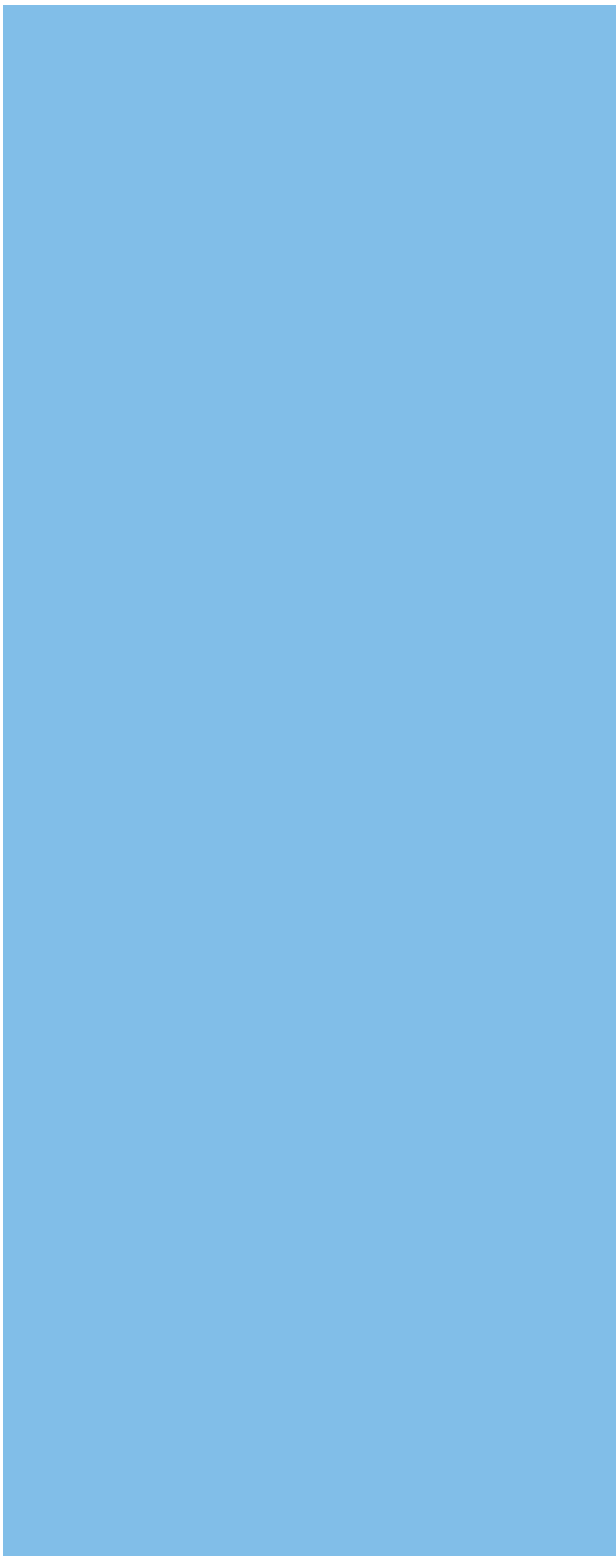
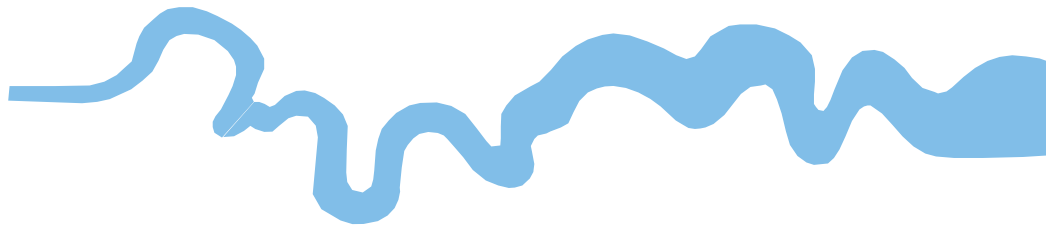
Land adjoining Millside, Rhee Wall Road,
Brenzett, Kent, 2019
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 to 4.



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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