



KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

**Kent Archaeological Projects
2 Windmill Court
Borstal Hill
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4QH**

**The results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trench prior to
development on land at The Old Parsonage, Butchers Lane, Shorne,
Gravesend, Kent DA12 3EB**

**Planning Reference 20220080
NGR TQ 69029 70972 (centred)
July 2023**

**Tim Allen
for
Kent Archaeological Projects
2 Windmill Court
Borstal Hill
Whitstable, Kent CT5 4QH**

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1) Introduction

On the 21st January 2023 Kent Archaeological Projects (KAP) was commissioned by Rosie Hill of Faithdown PLC (The Oaks, Revenge Road, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent ME5 8LF), acting on behalf of Mr Davis South of The Old Parsonage, Butchery Lane, Shorne, Gravesend DA12 3EB to undertake and an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to and approximately 75m southwest of St Peter and St Paul Church and adjacent to the graveyard attached to that church (**Plates 1 & 2, Figures 1 & 2**). The work took place prior to the construction of an agricultural barn with yard, retaining wall and associated excavation works in order to discharge Condition 6 of planning consent 20220080 granted by Gravesham Borough Council, which condition required that:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of:

- i. Archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- ii. Following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: *To ensure appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of any development proposals and the subsequent mitigation of adverse impacts through preservation in situ or by record*

The evaluation site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 69029 70972 in previously open grazing land located some 150m east of Mill Hill road on the southwest edge of the village of Shorne (**Figures 1 & 2 Plates 1 & 2**). The evaluation, which took place on the 29th June 2023, was conducted by Tim Allen of KAP according to the terms and requirements of a Written Scheme of Investigation (Kent Archaeological Projects January 2023) submitted to and approved by the Heritage Conservation Group of Kent County Council acting on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council.

The evaluation took the form of the mechanical excavation of two test trenches according to the terms of a standard Part B specification for evaluations.

2) Summary of results

No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were exposed in the evaluation trenches. The development site can therefore be judged to have no significant archaeological potential, with the proposed development present no threat to any such remains.

3) Background

i) Geology and landscape

The bedrock geology of the area consists of Cretaceous Upper Chalk, described as:

'the best exposed rock in Kent ... inland exposures, both in chalk pits and road cuttings are too numerous to mention individually, but the extensive chalk pits of the Medway ... and near Gravesend should be noted' (McRae and Burnham 1973, 16). The Tertiary geology of the area consists of sparse, localised deposits of London Clay, which 'caps many of the small hills around Gravesend' (ibid. 18). The Quaternary geology of the area consists of 'Head', which is considered to be highly variable in origin (see, for example Catt et al 1987, 141-147). The appropriate Geological Memoir (Dines et al 1952, 162) proposes two different schemes, one describing three different types of Head, the other four (see Allen. P. 2004, 4). According to the latter, Head occurs on the north Kent chalklands as 'simple Head' occupying valley bottoms, as Head Gravel, as a coombe deposit and as Head Brickearth (see Dines 1927, 12-26; Dines, Holmes and Robbie 1977, 162).

Shorne and its surrounds lie in the West Kent Downs, with this part described in the *Landscape Assessment of Kent* (Kent County Council 2004) as follows:

'The south-facing, chalk scarp between the Medway and the Darent provides a strong visual boundary, dividing the Kemsing Vale from the deep, dry valleys and wooded plateau of the West Kent Downs. This sense of separation is increased by the extensive tracts of ecologically valuable deciduous woodlands along the top of the scarp. Woodland is very significant in this landscape, providing an important backdrop for the rolling landform, the network of small country lanes, the scattered

settlements and the extensive valley pastures. In the east, around Luddesdown, the fields are contained by thick walls of woodland, and strips of remnant coppice, or shaws, occur frequently along the steeper valley sides. Hidden away among the trees are several medieval buildings, such as Luddesdown Court, constructed from the local Kentish ragstone, while the villages of Vigo and West Kingsdown are set deep in the woodlands themselves. The clay-with-flints soil on the plateau and ridge tops is reflected in the pasture and woodland dominating these areas; in the valleys, the extent of the finer silt soils is reflected by the predominance of arable cultivation. The downland becomes increasingly open in the north, where the intimate character of the scarp top gives way to a large-scale landscape of intensively farmed, rolling valleys and large blocks of deciduous woodland. West of Rochester, the mature woodlands and historic parkland of Cobham Hall are severed from the deciduous coppice woodlands of Shorne Wood Country Park by the busy A2 trunk road and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).'

ii) Archaeological and historical background

The name Shorne derives from the Saxon word “Scora” meaning a steep slope, this for the most part aptly describing ‘the situation of Shorne Parish as it hugs the slope of the hill lying halfway between the town of Gravesend and the City of Rochester upon Medway on the North Downs, Kent.’ (Allen, undated, 2). Hasted (1797, 442) provides earlier variants of the place name: ‘Northward from Cobham lies Shorne, called in the Textus Rossensis, Scorene, and in other antient records, Sores and Schorne.’

The Heritage Management summary of the archaeological work undertaken on the Randall Manor site (Kent County Council 2022, 10) is as follows:

The site is known to have been used by people for many thousands of years. A series of worked flint scatters on Randall Heath and the Burnett have been dated to as early as the Mesolithic period (between 12,000 and 6,000 years ago). Additional worked flints have been identified across the park, particularly where the natural gravel beds are present. The Medieval site of Randall Manor, nestled in a valley, was the home of Sir Henry de Cobham, Sheriff of Kent in 1314. Only the foundations remain, which archaeologists excavated over ten years from 2006 to 2015, with the help of local volunteers. The buildings date from the 13th century and survived up until the late

16th century. The site has now been recorded and reburied to protect the feature. The banks of a very old road can still be seen nearby, known as a hollow-way, which may be even older than the Manor. It was described as "an ancient waie" in 1614. A recent LiDAR survey (2011) covering the Park has shown that many of the banks around the Manor site may have formed part of the medieval fieldscape that surrounded the Manor. On Randall Heath, a feature previously identified as a Bronze Age barrow, has through excavation been shown to be a medieval windmill mound and later a prospect mound.

Apart from the discoveries made in The Kent County Council Historic Environment Record shows eleven archaeological and other heritage sites within a radius of 500m of the development site. These comprise a spread of Mesolithic flintwork (TQ 67 SE14) made up of Thames picks, scrapers, flakes and cores Chapel Farm (TQ 67 SE 51), a post-modern farmhouse, the find-spot (TQ 67 SE9) of a bronze coin of Tasciovanus, lynchet banks (TQ 67 SE 247) in Randal Wood, a probable medieval trackway (TQ 67 SE 247), also in Randall Wood, a dry pond and an adjacent short section of bank (TQ 67 SE 248), similarly in Randall Wood, Shorne School, (TQ 67 SE 214), which was also a Second World War Battle Head Quarters and a Second World War spigot mortar emplacement (TQ SE 214) at Shorne Hill.

The proposed development site lies approximately 75m south-west of St Peter and St Paul Church. The church, which is a Grade II* listed building (list entry number 1083891), is described as follows:

Main construction periods 1100 to 1873, Church (Saxon, Norman, 13th, 14th and 15th C. work). The church at Shorne was formerly dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, but now only to St Peter. The original church was doubtless small: a nave 40 feet long perhaps, and a chancel circa 20 feet. A double-splayed clerestory window in the north wall of the nave has been described as a Saxon window of the 10th-11th centuries by many authorities. A north aisle was added in Norman times and later, perhaps in the 13th century, the nave and chancel were extended and chapels added to the north and south of the chancel. The south aisle was added late in the 13th century and the west tower and north porch in the 15th century. There is strong evidence to suggest that Shorne was a minster in a secondary wave of minster creation in the 8th to mid-10th centuries.

The present writer was been unable to find any evidence, strong or otherwise, that 'Shorne was a minster in a secondary wave of minster creation in the 8th to mid-10th centuries' and no sources for this assertion are referenced. Neither the church nor the village are mentioned in Domesday, the church first being mentioned in 1132, when Henry 1 granted the church of Shorne, 'with the tithes of corn and lambs, and with the chapel of Cobham appendant, to the Monastery of St Saviour of Bermondsey.' (Allen, A. F, undated, 2). The view that the church at Shorne was a minster as described above may derive from the proposition that, in Kent '... around 400 churches, organised as minsters and dependant churches, had been established by the time of the Norman Conquest' (Carder, 2004, 31). However, given its absence in Domesday and earlier documents, the church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Shorne is probably better understood as a 'secondary mother-church' (Sweetinburgh, 2004, 41) rather than part of a secondary wave of minster creation in the 8th to mid-10th centuries.

That issue aside, the church is almost certainly Anglo-Saxon in origin because the 'north wall of the nave ... contains an Anglo-Saxon double-splayed clerestory window high up above the arcade'. It is further proposed that 'The original church would have consisted only of a nave and short chancel. A Romanesque style arch in the north nave wall is probably Anglo-Saxon and may have been inserted to give access to a porch or porticus (See History – Shorne: St. Peter and St. Paul @ www.achuchnearyou)

The remains of a medieval chapel dedicated to St. Katherine lie next to Malthouse Lane, some 400m north of the development site. They were described as follows in 1898:

On the right hand of the road leading up to Shorne Street, and opposite Mr. Maplesden's house, stands an antient and fair chapel, or oratory; which, with some additional building, is now used as a Malt house, and a small tenement erected against the east end of it inhabited by the Maltman. I was informed by an antient and creditable person there that in digging the foundation of the new building, or lean to, a stone coffin and many human bones were disturbed. On the north side is a small orchard which probably was the cemetery to it. This edifice has not been mentioned by any writer, nor have I been able hitherto to meet with anything relative to its foundation and endowment. It is likely to have been raised by some of the eminent proprietors of the manors of Shorne and Eoundall, but this is merely conjectural. (Arnold 1898, 78-85)

4) Results

The evaluation trenching exposed undisturbed natural clay deposits in the form of mid, slightly orange-tinged brown clay with outcrops of light grey fine clay, the former almost certainly being an oxidised example of the later. Both were identified as Tertiary London Clay, which ‘caps many of the small hills around Gravesend’ (see Part 3i above). A localised spread of small-aggregate gravel exposed in the west end of Trench 1 and the north end of Trench 2 was almost certainly an example of the Quaternary Head deposits which commonly overlie London Clay.

No disturbance in the geological deposit sequence was exposed during the evaluation (see **Plates 1 & 2**), indicating that no archaeologically significant settlement or occupation activity sufficient to leave any evidence has occurred on the site.

5) Conclusions

The proposed development will have no negative archaeological impact

6) References

- Allen, A. F., undated, *History of Shorne Church*, Shorne History Group
- Arnold, G. M., 1898, ‘The Ruined Chapel of St Katherine at Shorne, Kent’, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol XXIII, 78-85.
- Carder, D., 2004, ‘Anglo-Saxon Churches’ in *An Historical Atlas of Kent* (eds. T. Lawson and D. Killingray)
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- Kent County Council, 2004, *Landscape Assessment of Kent*
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Sweetinburgh, S., 2004, 'Territorial Organisation of the Church' in *An Historical Atlas of Kent* (eds. T. Lawson and D. Killingray)

7) Plans and plates

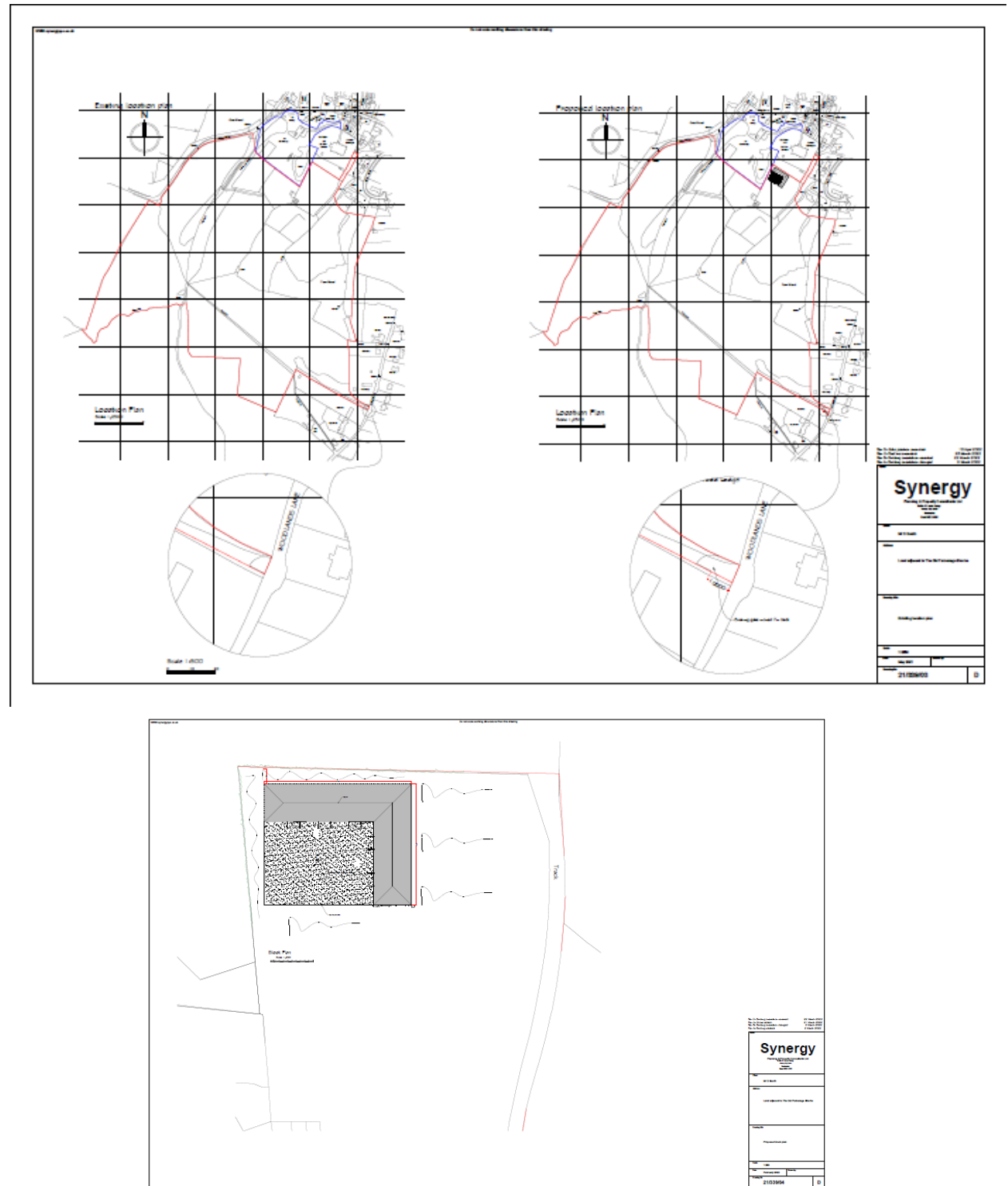


Figure 1 (above), site location and **Figure 2** (below), the development block plan

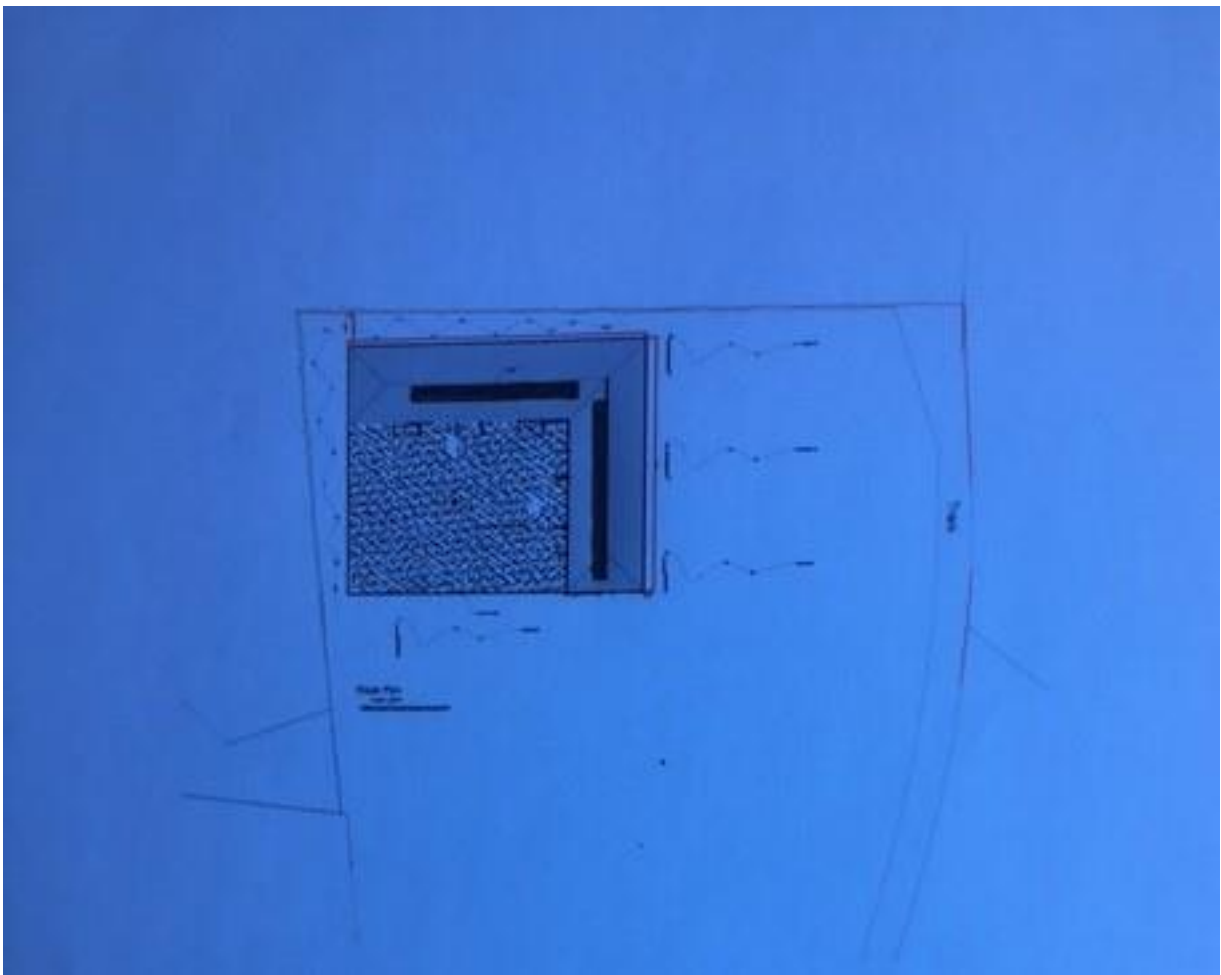


Figure 3. Proposed location of the evaluation trenches (each trench 20m x 1.8m)



Plate 1. The development site looking west following the removal of turf



Plate 2. The site prior to the commencement of the evaluation (looking west)



Plate 3. Trench 1 looking east (1.4m scale)



Plate 4. Trench 2 looking north (north sign incorrectly positioned), 1.4m scale

8) KCC HER Summary Form

Site Name: The Old Parsonage, Butchers Lane, Shorne, Gravesend, Kent DA12 3EB	
Site Address: As above	
Summary: No other significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were observed.	
District/Unitary: Gravesham	Parish: Shorne
Period(s): N/A	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): TQ 69029 70972 (centred) (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Evaluation	
Date of Recording: 29 th June 2023	
Unit undertaking recording: Kent Archaeological Projects	
Geology: London Clay under Head and over Chalk	
Title and author of accompanying report: <i>The results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trench prior to development on land at The Old Parsonage, Butchers Lane, Shorne, Gravesend, Kent DA12 3EB</i> , Tim Allen	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) The evaluation exposed no archaeologically significant archaeological remains. The proposed development can therefore be consider to be of no negative archaeological impact	
Location of archive/finds: KAP Office	
Contact at Unit: Tim Allen	Date: 30/06/2023