

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT:
LAND NORTH OF STRAND CLOSE, MEOPHAM, KENT

Planning Reference: Pre-application
NGR: TQ 6432 6706
AAL Site Code: MESC 25



Report prepared for Frankham Group

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number AAL2025119

August 2025



Allenarchaeology



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Document Control

Element:	Name:	Date:
Report prepared by:	Sarah Cottam and Peter Cox MCIfA	22/08/2025
Illustrations prepared by:	Sarah Cottam	22/08/2025
Report edited by:	Louise Clempson MSc (Hons)	26/08/2025
Report reviewed by:	Chris Clay BA MA (Hons)	28/08/2025
Version no:	1.0	29/08/2025

Executive Summary

- Frankham Group commissioned Allen Archaeology Limited to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment at land north of Strand Close, Meopham, Kent, prior to the submission of a planning application for residential development.
- Data was gathered from a range of primary and secondary sources, including the Kent Historic Environment Record, historic maps, online resources and a site visit.
- The study area contains some very limited evidence for Palaeolithic activity but lies close to a wider area containing nationally important occupation and artefact evidence for the period, which has been subject to extensive survey. The study area itself has not been investigated in that level of detail and no *in situ* occupation deposits have been identified within it or within the study area. There are no records of later prehistoric activity within the study area. Overall, there is a negligible potential for prehistoric activity.
- The only evidence for activity of Romano-British date currently recorded in the study area was identified close to the Church of St John the Baptist in Meopham, c.870m south of the proposed development site. There is limited activity in the wider area but the potential for the presence of finds and features of this date within the proposed development site is considered negligible.
- Meopham was established during the early medieval period and there is documentary evidence recording some of its landholdings and the church during that time. The settlement is believed to have developed around the Church of St John the Baptist. There is considered to be a low potential for the presence of early medieval deposits or features within the site and any which were present will have been severely truncated, or removed, by modern development.
- There is a small number of medieval structures within the study area. The focus of settlement is believed to have been around the Church of St John the Baptist, with a likelihood of isolated farmsteads being established around that time. There is currently no evidence of activity of this date within the proposed development site or its immediate environs, concluding a negligible potential for activity.
- Historic mapping shows no development within the proposed development site until the mid to late 20th century. The site lies within farmland prior to that and was associated with Evenden Farm, a historic farmstead to the northeast. There is a moderate potential for finds or features relating to former agriculture to be present within the proposed development site, which is likely to be of very low local significance.
- The closest Listed Building to the proposed development site is Evenden Farmhouse, less than 200m to the north. There is no intervisibility between the two. The Hook Green Conservation Area covers much of the historic settlement core of Hook Green (including Evenden Farmhouse) and there is a further six Listed Buildings within its boundary. Due to a lack of intervisibility the proposed development will have no adverse effect on the setting or significance of these assets.
- The Street, Meopham Conservation Area, the two Listed Buildings within it and a further five Listed Buildings lie in the wider study area. Due to a lack of intervisibility the proposed development will have no adverse effect on the setting or significance of these assets.
- There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or World Heritage Sites within the study area.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Frankham Group commissioned Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment to evaluate the archaeological and heritage potential of land north of Strand Close, Meopham, Kent, in advance of the submission of a planning application for residential development with parking and associated infrastructure.
- 1.2 The document has been completed with reference to current national guidelines, as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*' (CIfA 2020), and the Historic England documents '*The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning*' (Historic England 2017) and '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (Historic England 2015).

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located in Strand Close, Meopham, in the administrative district of Gravesham Borough Council. It is situated c.6km south of Gravesend and 11km west of Chatham. The site is approximately 0.09 hectares and presently occupied by garages and parking for adjacent dwellings. The site is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TQ 6432 6706 and lies c.101m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed during the Cretaceous period. No superficial deposits are recorded (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared to inform a planning application that will be submitted in due course for the demolition of existing garage blocks and the construction of residential units on the former garage sites. This is the first stage of archaeological investigation, intended to provide detailed information that will allow the planning authority to make an informed decision as to whether further archaeological investigations will be required prior to or following the determination of a planning application for the proposed development.

National Planning Policy

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012, the most recent update was in February 2025 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2025). The relevant sections of the NPPF concerning archaeological and cultural heritage assets, are Paragraphs 202 – 221 which is 'Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. Paragraph 207 has special relevance concerning the responsibilities of planning applicants:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have

been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation’.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.3 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government launched the planning practice web-based resource (<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>) in 2014 (last updated 14th February 2024) accompanied by a ministerial statement which confirmed that a number of previous planning practice guidance documents were cancelled. This also introduced the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which comprised a full and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the NPPF.
- 3.4 The relevant category within the PPG is ‘Historic Environment’ this was published on 10th April 2014 and last updated 23rd July 2019. This has a discrete section on the subject of ‘Why is ‘significance’ important in decision-making?’ which states that the consideration of ‘significance’ in decision taking is important and states: *‘Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals’* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019, Paragraph 007).
- 3.5 In terms of assessment of substantial harm, the PPG confirms that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the individual decision taker having regard to the individual circumstances, and it goes on to state: *‘In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting’* (ibid, Paragraph 018).

The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)

- 3.6 This document sets out guidance on managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes. It provides detailed advice intended to assist Government policy (Historic England 2017).
- 3.7 Historic England state that *‘While consideration of setting is necessarily a matter of informed judgment, the aim of the guidance is to assist effective and timely decision making by ensuring it takes place within a clear framework and is as transparent and consistent as possible.’*
- 3.8 The document defines setting as *‘The surrounding in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’*
- 3.9 A development can potentially affect the setting of the heritage assets within its vicinity. The setting of a heritage asset is the surrounding in which it is experienced (not necessarily

everything it is intervisible with). Furthermore, Historic England state that ‘development affecting the setting of a heritage asset is a direct environmental effect in terms of EIA definitions and may constitute a significant effect.’

Local Planning Policy

- 3.10 The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014 (Gravesham Borough Council 2014).
- 3.11 The relevant policy of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy concerning archaeological and cultural heritage assets is CS20:

Policy CS20 Heritage and the Historic Environment

‘The Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Securing viable, sustainable and appropriate futures for such assets at risk will need to be reconciled with the sensitivity to change that many present.

Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough’s heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

These include:

- *Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting;*
- *The Borough’s urban and rural conservation areas; and*
- *Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough’s maritime, military, industrial and transport history.*

When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset’s conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

4.0 Methodology

Data Collection

- 4.1 A full range of primary and secondary archaeological and historical sources were consulted in the preparation of this document. The sources consulted were as follows:

- Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) – a database of archaeological sites, finds and buildings. A search of this resource was undertaken for a study area extending 1km from the centre of the site.
- National Heritage List for England – The Historic England database contains information on all designated assets including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Parks and Gardens, battlefields and more. A search of this resource was undertaken for a study area extending 1km

from the centre of the site. Important relevant sites that may fall out of the study area have also been identified. (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>)

- Allen Archaeology's own reference library – secondary sources pertaining to the archaeology and history of the region.
- The English Rivers Palaeolithic Project (TERPS) – A database of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic findspots in England, detailing location, geology, circumstances of discovery, numbers and types of artefacts and their current location, current nature of site, and bibliographic sources (Mephram 2009). Originally listed by John Wymer on index cards.
- Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Lithic Artefact (PaMELA) database – A database comprising findspots, from the Lower Palaeolithic to the Iron Age. It is predominantly derived from museum collections and based on Jacobi's card index (Jacobi 2014).
- The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) – a database of finds made and reported by the public (www.finds.org)
- Research Frameworks – The need for research frameworks for the historic environment was highlighted in 1996. Frameworks for many areas and specialisms have now been developed across the UK, with more in production. Some of the earlier Frameworks are already being reviewed and updated. The relevant frameworks for the proposed development site are the South East Research Framework (SERF) and The Greater Thames Estuary Historic Environment Research Framework (GTEHERF) (<https://researchframeworks.org/grtha>)
- Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation
- Heritage Gateway Website – searchable online resource allowing access to the National Monuments Record (NMR) and Archaeology Data Service (ADS), online national databases of archaeological sites and artefacts. Also includes information pertaining to Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, as well as data from the Defence of Britain project, which has mapped surviving monuments relating to 20th century military sites. A search was conducted of these resources to identify any significant buildings, sites or findspots not covered by the KHER search, and to highlight other major sites within a wider study area.
- A site visit was carried out on 17th August 2025 to assess the present situation of the development area, to identify any areas where the potential archaeological resource may be particularly well preserved or damaged by recent development, and to observe the site in its landscape context.

4.2 Each archaeological and historic site, Listed Building, Scheduled Monument, Registered Park and Garden and Registered Battlefield identified in the study area has been allocated a 'Site' number and assigned to a specific period according to the definitions outlined on

the Historic England Periods List (Periods-List-HE-FISH-WP.pdf). These sites are described in the Archaeological and Historical Background section (See Section 5.0 below). All measurements referred to in this section are measured from the proposed development site outline to the edge of the polygon/line in question or to the Site number if a polygon is not present. Labels for site numbers are moved slightly to make them visible where multiple entries are clustered in a small area. Further details are provided for each site in Appendix 1, and where applicable the sites are depicted on Figure 3.

5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 5.1 The Southern Rivers Palaeolithic Project was commissioned by English Heritage in 1991 to undertake a detailed survey and analysis of the Lower Palaeolithic archaeology of the country south of the River Thames (later extended to cover the whole country). This detailed report identified areas of likely human activity during and after periods of glaciation and the extent and type of this activity, examining bio-stratigraphically diagnostic mammalian and/or molluscan faunal assemblages alongside archaeological artefacts. The proposed development site lies on the edge of an area defined by the project as the North Downs (from Farnham to Dover): River Darent region. The chalk downlands were suitable for occupation during interglacial periods and are prolific in Palaeolithic artefactual and faunal evidence (Wymer 1999).
- 5.2 There are two locations within the study area at which Lower Palaeolithic artefacts have been recorded by the KHER (Sites 1 and 2) and another (Site 3) which has been recorded by TERPS. All three sites are described as a findspot of eight flint hand axes found in the Meopham vicinity with no further information recorded. Despite there being up to 1300m between these three locations, it is considered likely that they all refer to the same findspot, as all detail that they were listed in the 1990s Southern Rivers Project.
- 5.3 There are no further finds of prehistoric date recorded within the study area. A search of the PaMELA database recorded a small group of probable Mesolithic flint artefacts found south of The Street in Meopham, c.1060m south of the proposed development site.
- 5.4 A number of sites of Roman date have been identified in the Gravesend area including settlement, religious complexes and villas; many of which were discovered as part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) archaeological investigations during the late 1990s. Watling Street (now largely the route of the A2, c.3.5km to the north of the proposed development site) was the principal road between Dover and London and a major thoroughfare at the time. The CTRL works identified mainly agricultural use of the land to the south of Gravesend (Bull 2006) in the form of boundaries and trackways.
- 5.5 There are currently two sites of Roman date recorded within the study area. An excavation undertaken by Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit in 1988 identified a settlement near St John the Baptist's Church (Site 4), c.850m to the south of the proposed development site. A coin of Constantine I, probably minted in London, was found by a metal detectorist to the east of the site (Site 5). No contextual information was noted in association with this.
- 5.6 According to a history of Meopham written in 1930 by C.H.Golding-Bird, there is a number of documentary sources (written between AD788 and AD961) which mention Meopham. Athelstan's charter of AD939 describes estate boundaries there, in a grant of lands to Eadwulf, but of particular value is the will of Byrhtic, a local lord, dating to around AD955-995. The will describes lands to be bequeathed and also indicates the existence of a church.

The KHER has recorded the early medieval settlement as being close to the present church (Site 6) which may have been built on the site of the earlier Saxon church. A secondary source has recorded the settlement as 'a group of Saxon wooden buildings' but it is unclear if archaeological evidence of this has yet been identified. A lead gaming piece (Site 7) found on farmland to the southeast of the proposed development site is the only artefact of early medieval date recorded within the study area.

- 5.7 The proposed development site lies in Hook Green, one of a number of small rural hamlets within the large ancient parish of Meopham. It is clear that Meopham was a well-established village during the early-medieval period. By the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, it had a recorded population of 113 households, putting it in the top 20% of settlements recorded at the time, by size. It also had 30 ploughlands, meadows and woodlands and the church is also recorded. The village was named *Mepeha* and lay within the Tollingtrough hundred (Open Domesday). There is currently no evidence that Hook Green was in existence at the time of the Domesday survey, although some of the households recorded in it under Meopham could have been outliers from the main settlement.
- 5.8 Again, there is little recorded archaeological evidence for the location, layout and size of the medieval settlement of Meopham. The present church of St John the Baptist (Site 8) now stands in a somewhat isolated position between Meopham and Hook Green and is a Grade I Listed Building. It was built around 1320 and required some rebuilding in 1326 following damage caused by an earthquake. No medieval settlement has yet been recorded in its immediate vicinity.
- 5.9 The Old Forge (Site 9) stands c.225m to the north of the proposed development site and contains internal evidence for a late 14th century hall house. It is a Grade II Listed Building. There is a ruined building adjoining Nurstead Court (Site 10), c.850m to the north of the proposed development site which is believed to have medieval origins. No contemporaneous features have been recorded in association with it. A single medieval copper alloy circular mount (Site 11) has been found by a metal detectorist in agricultural land c.920m southeast of the proposed development site.
- 5.10 In his history of the county, Hasted described the parish as *'rather a bye out of the way place, lying among the hills, and no well frequented thoroughfare through it....the soils in it are various, much of it is poor and chalky, but in the vallies it is heavy tillage land'* (Hasted, 1797).
- 5.11 The Ordnance Survey drawing of 1797 (Figure 4) shows the proposed development site lying fully within, and at the southern boundary of a large field. No structures or features of historic interest are shown within it. The very small settlement of Hook (*Hoo*) Green, which lay to the north of the proposed development site at that time, is shown with the green clearly defined and the road layout through the hamlet much as it is today.
- 5.12 The 1841 Meopham Tithe Map (Figure 5) and apportionment show that the proposed development site formed part of Evenden Farm (Site 12). The farm is shown, although unlabelled, on the 1797 map (Figure 4) when it comprised a group of three buildings set back from the Meopham Road. Evenden Farmhouse (Site 13) is a timber framed farmhouse of 17th century date and a Grade II Listed Building. An outfarm (Site 14), possibly associated with Evenden Farm is shown on historic maps to the west of the development area. By 1838, there were additional outbuildings shown in the complex and the apportionment shows the farmstead and surrounding land, including the proposed development area, was owned by

Thomas Alchin, a member of a local family with numerous memorials within Meopham church (www.kentarchaeology.org). The proposed development site lies within a plot named Barn Field which was occupied by Richard Goodwin and in arable use at the time. Neither the 1869 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6-inch map (Figure 6) nor the 1898 2nd Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7) show any changes within the proposed development site.

- 5.13 During the post-medieval period the study area remained very rural. There is a number of farmsteads or outfarms within it, most which have been identified or recorded by the Kent Farmsteads and Landscape Project. This project was undertaken in conjunction with English Heritage to redress the imbalance in the number of unlisted historic farmsteads that were recorded by the HER and to identify their character and condition. The project has highlighted the number of farmsteads, outfarms and other agricultural buildings which have been partially or fully lost or have ceased to be farms.
- 5.14 Hook Green Farm historic farmstead (Site 15) lies at the heart of Hook Green, close to the green. It has been significantly altered from its original form but its farmhouse (Site 16) is a 16th century timber-framed house with a 19th century villa added. There is also a largely demolished oast house (Site 17) on the farm. An unnamed farmstead (Site 18) is recorded opposite Hook Green Farm but only the (unlisted) farmhouse now remains. To the northeast of the hamlet there are two adjacent farms; Nevill House (Site 19) and its Grade II Listed 16th century farmhouse (Site 20) and an outfarm north of Waterditch (Site 21). Norwood Farm (Site 22) is also an historic farmstead with only the farmhouse (Site 23) surviving, which is a Grade II Listed Building. Melliker Farm lies to the west of the proposed development site and comprises the historic farmstead (Site 24) and its Grade II Listed 18th century farmhouse (Site 25). Two outfarms (Sites 26 and 27), both now completely demolished, stood south of The Lances, between Hook Green and Meopham. Clements Reach Farm (Site 28) and a now demolished outfarm (Site 29) are recorded at the southern extent of the study area to the west of Meopham.
- 5.15 Camer Farm, a partially complete farmstead (Site 30) lies towards the eastern extent of the study area and was associated with Camer House (Site 31), an 18th century country house, a probable granary (Site 32) and the Bailiff's House (Site 33), all Grade II Listed Buildings. An outfarm (Site 34) is close to the site and was probably also associated with it.
- 5.16 Camer House forms part of a large estate which includes Camer Park (Site 35), a landscaped country park laid out in the 18th century. Some of the original trees survive and some re-planting of lost elements has been undertaken since it became a public park in 1971. The KHER defines its boundary, but historic mapping suggests it originally covered a larger area.
- 5.17 In 1858, the Chatham to Faversham section of the East Kent Railway (Site 36) opened, linking the town with London Victoria by rail. The line runs across the northern part of the study area and remains in use. Meopham Station (Site 37) opened in 1861, north of Hook Green. The original station building is extant, although it was replaced as a working station by an adjacent prefabricated structure and has since been converted.
- 5.18 There are three further post-medieval structures within Hook Green. Mulberry House (Site 38), The White House (Site 39) and Waterditch (Site 40) form part of the historic core of the settlement and are Grade II Listed Buildings. Church Cottages (Site 41), a timber framed building in Meopham, is also a Grade II Listed Building. At the south end of Hook Green, in an area which was once entirely separate from it, there is the former National School (Site

42) and a milestone (Site 43), neither of which are listed but both of which are considered to be of historic interest.

- 5.19 Across the study area, there are four records within KHER which refer to findspots, none of which lie within the proposed development site. These comprise a copper alloy crotal bell (Site 44), copper alloy token (Site 45), a copper alloy medallion (Site 46) and a silver coin (Site 47). All these have been found by metal detectorists and reported to the PAS.
- 5.20 There are five sites of modern date recorded within the KHER. A George VI pillar box (Site 48) stands outside a parade of shops alongside Wrotham Road at the southern end of Hook Green.
- 5.21 With the scale of industry along the Thames and the relative proximity of the parish to the river, the docks, the Port of London and the City of London, the need for defence was paramount as the industries would always be a target of any enemy action. There are two sites within the study area related to the Defence of Britain during the Second World War. A barrage balloon site (Site 49) was positioned in an orchard c.180m to the northwest of the proposed development site. No trace of this now exists. An emergency mortuary (Site 50) was established in the stables of the Railway Tavern at the north end of Hook Green and formed part of a network of civil defence arrangements to handle the storage of bodies following an air raid. The stables were decommissioned for this use at the end of the war but remain extant. A Cold War telephone bunker (Site 51) was set up in the basement of the telephone exchange in Hook Green to provide a protected room and rest room for operatives to ensure the continuation of telephone services in the event of disruption due to enemy action.
- 5.22 The 1966 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 8) shows that the large plot within which the proposed development site lies had been subdivided and an orchard planted in the eastern extent. The modern expansion of Hook Green has also begun by this time with ribbon development along the Wrotham Road (the A227) and into the fields on both sides of the road to the south of the proposed development site. A new Roman Catholic church (Site 52) was built along Wrotham Road in 1964 and formed part of the expansion of the settlement and the infrastructure it needed in the post-war period.
- 5.23 There is one further site recorded by the KHER which comprises a sarsen stone (Site 53) which is incorporated into the wall of the Church of St John the Baptist in Meopham. There is no indication that it is of any significance and it is of an uncertain date.
- 5.24 The Hook Green, Meopham Conservation Area lies c.85m to the northeast of the proposed development site. The area was originally designated an area of special historic and architectural interest by Gravesham Borough Council in June 1970. The boundary was significantly amended in February 1990 and now encompasses parts of the historic streets of Wrotham Road, Melliker Lane, Norwood Lane and modern Pine Rise and includes the village green, known to have been in place since at least the 16th century and from which the hamlet derives part of its name. The post-First World War buildings which form around half of those within the Conservation Area are not considered to be of historic interest and have been excluded from the consideration of the character of the settlement in the Conservation Area Appraisal (Gravesham Borough Council 2016a). Those which are considered to contribute to the character of the asset comprise the functional farm buildings (most now in residential use) and workers' cottages associated with them alongside the grander houses which also line the edges of the village green and the street frontages. Together these buildings represent a varied, largely traditional vernacular

utilising local materials alongside more fashionable elements (such as stucco) representative of the fashions of their time. The asset has been subdivided into three character areas to reflect the variety within the settlement. There are seven Listed Buildings (Sites 9, 13, 16, 20, 38, 39 and 40) within the Conservation Area boundary.

- 5.25 The Street, Meopham Conservation Area lies c.580m to the south of the proposed development site. The area was originally designated an area of special historic and architectural interest by Gravesham Borough Council in January 1970. In 1999, a draft conservation area statement was prepared, which included a small boundary extension. The area now encompasses part of the historic streets of Wrotham Road, Shipley Hills Road and The Street. The siting of, and relationships between, the church and Manor House were the primary aspects of the early village. The asset contains a variety of early post-medieval and later buildings which contribute to its character which the Conservation Area Appraisal (Gravesham Borough Council, 2016b) describes as that of small-scale development concealed behind hedges and/or trees or within woodland and therefore views within or through the asset are dominated by nature. The agricultural landscape within which the asset sits is considered to contribute to that character.
- 5.26 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation was undertaken to categorise the landscape types within the county. The proposed development site has been described as 'Post 1810 settlement'.
- 5.27 LiDAR imagery was examined but due to the nature of the current land use of the site (and that at the time of the surveys) no information of interest was noted.
- 5.28 The proposed development site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) as defined by Gravesham Borough Council. The area has been identified as having a 'medium Palaeolithic potential' and being an 'area of multi-period background potential'.

6.0 Site Visit

- 6.1 The site was visited by Sarah Cottam on Sunday 17th August 2025. Selected photographic images taken during the site visit are reproduced below and their locations indicated on Figure 2.
- 6.2 The proposed development site comprises two rows of single storey garages (numbering 15 on the north side and 12 on the south) with an access area between them (Plate 1). A modern house and low boundary wall forms the west boundary of the site. The only access to the garages is currently from the east end, off The Russets. The site slopes gently up from east to west and the garages, in blocks of three, rise with the slope. The tarmac and concrete access area also slopes inwards from north to south, presumably for drainage. The garages themselves comprise brick built, single storey, flat-roofed structures, each with a metal up and over garage door. All are of standard form for this type of structure and in original condition, although all appeared to be disused at the time of the visit. The garages have no architectural or historic interest.



Plate 1: View across the proposed development site, looking west

- 6.3 No previously unrecorded features of historic interest were noted during the visit. The ground conditions were not conducive to the identification of earthworks, sub surface features or surface artefact identification.

7.0 Assessment of Significance and Impact

- 7.1 The assessment of significance and impacts has been undertaken in accordance with 'Conservation Principles' (Historic England 2008), the Historic England Good Practice Advice 3 'Setting of Heritage Assets' (Historic England 2017) and Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance' (Historic England 2019). The assessment methodology and criteria for understanding the significance of heritage values is described below, taken from Statements of Heritage Significance (*ibid*):

- Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

- Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

- Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from

their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Listed Buildings

- 7.2 There are fourteen Listed Buildings within the study area. Selected views of these assets taken during the site visit are reproduced below and their locations indicated on Figure 2.
- 7.3 The closest of these Listed Buildings to the site is Evenden Farmhouse (Historic England (HE) Reference 1096354, Site 13, Plate 2), a 17th century timber framed farmhouse which was once the heart of the farm in which the proposed development site lies and with which it had historic associations. The asset has architectural and historic interest and is a Grade II Listed Building. The farmhouse is a diminutive structure on Wrotham Road and is now surrounded by both 19th and largely 20th century residential development. Its original rural setting has been lost as have its functional relationships with adjacent agricultural buildings (now converted for residential use) although as a group their original relationships can still be understood to some extent. The asset principally derives significance from its architectural and historic interest and its setting makes a low contribution to this. The asset has no designed views or intended intervisibility with other contemporaneous assets.



Plate 2: View of Evenden Farmhouse and into the Hook Green Conservation Area, looking northwest

- 7.4 The proposed development would comprise a two and three storey residential development located within the centre of the proposed development site. Due to topography, surrounding residential development and mature trees there could be no intervisibility with the proposed development site. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on the setting or significance of Evenden Farmhouse.
- 7.5 The Old Forge (HE reference 1367140, Site 9), Hook Green Farmhouse (HE Reference 1350238, Site 16), Nevill House (HE Reference 1096350, Site 20), Mulberry House (HE Reference 1039911, Site 38), The White House (HE Reference 1096349, Site 39) and Waterditch (HE Reference 1039914, Site 40) form part of the historic hamlet of Hook Green and represent the historic importance of the green, the agricultural origins of the settlement and the variety of its architecture. All these assets principally derive significance

from their architectural and historic interest. None appear to have designed views or intended intervisibility and there is no intervisibility with the proposed development site. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on their setting or significance.

- 7.6 The Church of St John the Baptist (HE Reference 1039866, Site 8), a Grade I Listed Building and Church Cottages (HE Reference 1054716, Site 41), a Grade II Listed Building lie between Hook Green and Meopham proper. The church stands within its churchyard and alongside Wrotham Road in an otherwise relatively open rural landscape. Although it has a fine tower, due to topography and the mature trees both around the churchyard and across the landscape, there are few long-range views of the asset and it is not visible from Meopham or Hook Green. Its setting is considered to be an intimate one, comprising its churchyard and its spiritual or functional relationships with the community it serves. Church Cottages stand almost opposite the church and its setting comprises its roadside location and proximity to the church. The asset has no designed views or intended intervisibility. These assets principally derive significance from their architectural and historic interest, with the church also having communal and aesthetic interest. Neither asset has intervisibility with the proposed development site. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on their setting or significance.
- 7.7 Camer House (HE Reference 1052357, Site 31), the Granary (HE Reference 1350234, Site 32) and the Bailiff's House (HE Reference 1052333, Site 33) form a group of assets associated with the estate and parkland on the east side of Meopham. These assets derive significance from their architectural and historic interest and are all Grade II Listed Buildings. Their settings comprise their functional relationships with each other and their location within the bounds of the estate. While the house could be considered to have designed views across its parkland, the proposed development site will not interrupt those views. None of these assets have intervisibility with the proposed development site and therefore the proposed development will have no adverse effect on their setting or significance.
- 7.8 Norwood Farmhouse (HE Reference 1039912, Site 23), of 17th century date and Melliker Farmhouse (HE Reference 1039907, Site 25), of 18th century date, both comprise elements of isolated farmsteads. They derive significance from their architectural and historic interest and are Grade II Listed Buildings. Neither of the farms are now in agricultural use and their associated agricultural buildings, with which they once had functional relationships, are now converted for domestic use. These relationships have now been lost but as individual groups their original relationships can still be understood to some extent. The assets have no designed views or intended intervisibility with other contemporaneous assets and there is no intervisibility with the proposed development site. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on the setting or significance of these assets.

Other Designated assets

- 7.9 The Hook Green, Meopham Conservation Area lies 85m to the northeast of the proposed development site at the nearest and covers the core of the historic rural hamlet. While this area now includes a large amount of modern infill and residential development into the rural landscape on all sides, the Conservation Area appraisal confirms that the contribution made by these modern houses to the character of the asset is, at best, neutral. The village green, and the historic houses and former farmsteads around it represent Hook Green's earliest layout and can still be experienced (Plates 3 and 4). The Evenden Farm group of farmhouse and agricultural buildings is noted as a positive feature within the asset.



Plate 3: View across the green within Hook Green Conservation Area, with historic buildings behind the trees on the left and Wrotham Road on the right, looking north



Plate 4: View along Wrotham Road through Hook Green Conservation Area showing the mature trees which contribute to its character, looking north

- 7.10 The proposed development site is not visible in any views of the Listed farmhouse nor in views of the group as a whole. The Conservation Area appraisal highlights a series of important views which contribute to the character of the asset and some which are detrimental to its character. The proposed development site is not visible in any of these views. There is vegetation screening on the east side of the proposed development site (Plate 5), but glimpsed views of the upper level of the proposed new buildings within views of the asset may be possible from Wrotham Road. These views exclude the majority of the asset and it is not considered that they are views in which the significance of the asset can

be experienced. The proposed development will have no effect on the character of the asset, nor will it affect any of its historic or architectural interest. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on the significance of the Hook Green Conservation Area.



Plate 5: View along the Russets with the entrance to the proposed development site on the left (red arrow), looking north

- 7.11 The Street, Meopham Conservation Area lies 580m to the south of the proposed development site at the nearest and covers the area around the Church of St John the Baptist (Site 8). Its character is primarily derived from visually dominant woodland, trees and hedges which line the street, property boundaries and extend into the rural landscape beyond. The church, Church Cottages (Site 41), Meopham Court and the Old Vicarage contribute to this area's character. Due to topography, distance and the presence of mature trees and vegetation, there are no views which include both the asset and the proposed development site. The proposed development will have no effect on the character of the asset, nor will it affect any of its historic or architectural interest. The proposed development will therefore have no adverse effect on the significance of the Hook Green Conservation Area.
- 7.12 There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the study area.
- 7.13 There are no designated assets within the proposed development site.

Non-designated assets and Archaeology

- 7.14 There are no recorded non-designated assets within the proposed development site and none have been identified during this assessment.
- 7.15 The proposed development site is within an area deemed to be of archaeological potential by Gravesham Borough Council. The Historic Environment Officer at Kent County Council has defined the dataset as: *'These Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA) are intended as a method of informing Local Planning Authorities as to when they need to consult Kent County Council on planning applications with a potential archaeological impact. They are*

only relevant for archaeological potential (including the archaeological potential of built structures), and do not indicate the other potential impacts on the built heritage, the settings of monuments or buildings, or historic landscapes.’ The ANA which encompasses the proposed development site has been deemed as such due to a medium Palaeolithic potential and a multi period background potential.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposed development site lies within an area which, until the post-war period, was very rural in character. Historic maps show that the site itself was part of a field belonging to Evenden Farm. There is no evidence that there were agricultural buildings or features of note on the site during the later post-medieval period. Residential development on the agricultural land has separated it from the historic farmstead and those associations cannot now be experienced. The proposed development site is now part of the modern development and the buildings on it hold no historic interest.
- 8.2 Although Palaeolithic handaxes have been found in the area, their location, and the depth and circumstances of the find are unclear. The importance of the Lower Thames deposits in the area is acknowledged and has been extensively researched to the north and west around Northfleet. Much of the evidence in that area came from detailed investigations undertaken during large-scale infrastructure projects. Although Hook Green has significantly expanded over the last 70 years, investigations of that type were not undertaken in the area. The proposed development site and the wider area has been deemed an ANA particularly for its moderate Palaeolithic potential, as well as other general archaeological interest. While there is some potential for deposits of this date to be present in the wider area, it is considered that, given the small scale of the proposed development and the likely depth of the groundworks, the overall potential for the presence of, or disturbance of, Palaeolithic artefacts or landscape remains within the proposed development site is very low. There are no records of other prehistoric finds or features within the study area and it is considered that there is a negligible potential for the presence of features or deposits of prehistoric date within the proposed development site.
- 8.3 Roman activity is limited to a small settlement area towards the south edge of the study area, and a single coin find, suggesting a negligible potential.
- 8.4 The principal archaeological and historic interest within the study area is the early-medieval establishment of the settlement at Hook Green and Meopham. This is largely understood through documentary sources and there have been few archaeological investigations but the layout of the settlement during the medieval and early post-medieval period is largely understood through the street layouts focussing on the historic greens. The proposed development site lies to the south of the historic core of Hook Green and some distance north of Meopham proper, in an area which is likely to have been part of the open fields around the small settlements from at least the medieval period until the mid-20th century. It is considered therefore that there is a negligible potential for the presence of previously unrecorded features of early medieval, medieval or post-medieval date, other than those associated with agricultural activity, which would be of limited local interest.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Frankham Group for this commission.

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1841 Meopham Tithe Map - <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/maps/>

1869 Ordnance Survey 1st edition map – National Library of Scotland

1898 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map – National Library of Scotland

1966 Ordnance Survey map – National Library of Scotland

Appendix 1: List of KHER Entries within a 1km study area

Site No.	HER No.	Grade & Listing No.	Easting	Northing	Description	Date
1	TQ 56 SE 106		564473	167506	Eight Lower Palaeolithic handaxes, listed in the 1990s Southern Rivers Project.	Prehistoric
2	TQ 66 NW 62		564600	166174	Several surface finds comprising Palaeolithic handaxes found in the C19 and listed in the 1990s Southern Rivers Project.	Prehistoric
3	TERPS 27053		564501	167000	Eight flint handaxes listed in the 1990s Southern Rivers Project.	Prehistoric
4	TQ 66 NW 146		564407	166197	Romano-British site discovered near Meopham parish church in 1988.	Roman
5	MKE120881		564995	167261	Romano-British coin of Constantine I dating to c.AD 320. Found by metal detector.	Roman
6	TQ 66 NW 56		564601	166300	Settlement of Meopham described as “a group of Saxon wooden buildings” in secondary documentary sources. Also noted in the 1086 Domesday Survey as <i>Mepeham</i> .	Early medieval
7	MKE110610		564852	166541	Possible gaming piece of cast lead, pyramidal in form with hollow back face and moulded decoration on the front face. Found by metal detector.	Early medieval
8	TQ 66 NW 1	I/1039866	564490	166241	St John the Baptist’s Church, Wrotham Road. Main construction periods 1320 to 1899.	Medieval
9	TQ 66 NW 59	II/1367140	564307	167297	Old Ford Cottage. Main construction periods 1367 to 1983.	Medieval
10	TQ 66 NW 44		564000	167999	Derelict building adjoining Nurstend Court. Possibly medieval in origin.	Medieval
11	MKE110609		565006	166423	Copper alloy circular mount depicting a griffin in relief on a pelleted field. Dated C12/C13. Found by metal detector.	Medieval
12	MKE88660		564377	167176	Evenden Farm. Loose courtyard plan farmstead.	Post-medieval
13	TQ 66 NW 81	II/ 1096354	564377	167196	Evenden Farmhouse. Main construction periods 1600 to 1899.	Post-medieval
14	MKE88839		564049	167090	Outfarm southwest of Hook Green, comprising a field barn with no associated yard.	Post-medieval
15	MKE84227		564192	167336	Farmstead, Hook Green. Loose courtyard in plan.	Post-medieval
16	TQ 66 NW 67	II/1350238	564240	167345	Hook Green Farmhouse. Main construction periods 1500 to 1899.	Post-medieval
17	TQ 66 NW 173		564177	167320	Oast house at Hook Green farm. Visible on OS maps.	Post-medieval

Site No.	HER No.	Grade & Listing No.	Easting	Northing	Description	Date
18	MKE84234		564178	167392	Unnamed farmstead in Hook Green. Loose courtyard in plan.	Post-medieval
19	MKE84232		564257	167598	Nevill House. Regular multi-yard farmstead.	Post-medieval
20	TQ 66 NW 85	II/1096350	564271	167583	Nevill House. c1840.	Post-medieval
21	MKE84233		564212	167615	Outfarm north of Waterditch, comprising a field barn with no associated yard.	Post-medieval
22	MKE84228		564568	167563	Norwood Farm. Loose courtyard plan farmstead.	Post-medieval
23	TQ 66 NW 105	II/ 1039912	564577	167535	Norwood Farmhouse. C17.	Post-medieval
24	MKE 84174		563743	167119	Melliker Farm. Regular U-plan courtyard farmstead.	Post-medieval
25	TQ 66 NW 99	II/ 1039907	563760	167110	Melliker Farmhouse. C18.	Post-medieval
26	MKE 84226		564271	166730	Outfarm southwest of The Lances. Consists of a loose cluster of three buildings.	Post-medieval
27	MKE88576		564359	166672	Outfarm southwest of The Lances, comprising a field barn with no associated yard.	Post-medieval
28	MKE84176		564156	166103	Clements Reach Farm. Full regular courtyard plan farmstead.	Post-medieval
29	MKE84177		564103	166158	Outfarm northwest of Clements Reach, comprising a field barn with no associated yard.	Post-medieval
30	MKE84309		565104	167127	Camer Farm. Regular multi-yard courtyard plan farmstead.	Post-medieval
31	TQ 66 NE 126	II/1052357	565169	167091	Camer House. C17 minor stately home. Main construction periods 1600 to 1799. Commissioned during WWII for recuperation of war casualties.	Post-medieval
32	TQ 66 NE 127	II/ 1350234	565124	167083	Granary, west of Camer House. Early C19.	Post-medieval
33	TQ 66 NE 133	II/ 1052333	565044	167081	Baliffs House. C18.	Post-medieval
34	MKE84310		565215	167247	Outfarm northeast of Camer farm. Regular L-plan range farmstead.	Post-medieval
35	TQ 66 NE 201		565129	166943	Camer Park. Country Park, laid out in C18. Became a public park from 1971.	Post-medieval
36	TQ 85 SE 300		564365	167902	Chatham and Dover Railway. Also known as the Chatham Line.	Post-medieval
37	TQ 66 NW 58		564081	167893	Meopham Station.	Post-medieval
38	TQ 66 NW 97	II/1039911	564190	167407	Mulberry House. C16.	Post-medieval
39	TQ 66 NW 86	II/1096349	564206	167453	The White House. Circa 1840	Post-medieval
40	TQ 66 NW 96	II/ 1039914	564210	167593	Waterditch. Main construction periods 1500 to 1899.	Post-medieval

Site No.	HER No.	Grade & Listing No.	Easting	Northing	Description	Date
41	TQ 66 NW 104	II/ 1054716	564400	166268	Church Cottages. C17.	Post-medieval
42	TQ 66 NW 141		564314	166640	Site of the National School, Longfield Road. Shown as the National School on 1862-1875 Ordnance Survey map and as School on 1897 – 1952 maps.	Post-medieval
43	TQ 66 NW 122		564385	166625	Milestone, Wrotham Road.	Post-medieval
44	MKE75672		563970	167829	Copper-alloy crotal bell. C17. Found by metal detector.	Post-medieval
45	MKE67488		564100	167700	Copper-alloy half penny token. C17. Found by metal detector.	Post-medieval
46	MKE120868		564683	167485	Copper-alloy medallion. C18. Found by metal detector.	Post-medieval
47	MKE110567		564924	166551	Silver coin. Venetian soldino minted in Venice between 1501 and 521. Found by metal detector.	Post-medieval
48	TQ 66 NW 126		564400	166711	George VI pillar box, Meopham School. Dates from 1938 to 1950.	Modern
49	TQ 66 NW 114		564181	167180	Hook Green WWII balloon barrage site. No longer present.	Modern
50	TQ 66 NW 110		564135	167806	Railway Tavern WWII emergency mortuary, Wrotham Road. Situated in the detached stables at the back of the Railway Tavern. Formed part of the civil defence arrangements to handle storage of bodies following air raids. Stables still survive.	Modern
51	TQ 66 NW 118		564551	166911	Green Lane Cold War telephone exchange bunker. Probable Cold War telephone bunker in the basement of the telephone exchange. Provided for operatives to ensure the continuation of emergency telephone services in the event of the disruption of normal services as a result of war.	Modern
52	TQ 66 NW 11		564413	166963	St Paul's Roman Catholic church, Wrotham Road. Built and opened in 1964.	Modern
53	TQ 66 NW 42		564454	166240	Sarsen stone incorporated into the fabric of St John the Baptist Church.	Uncertain

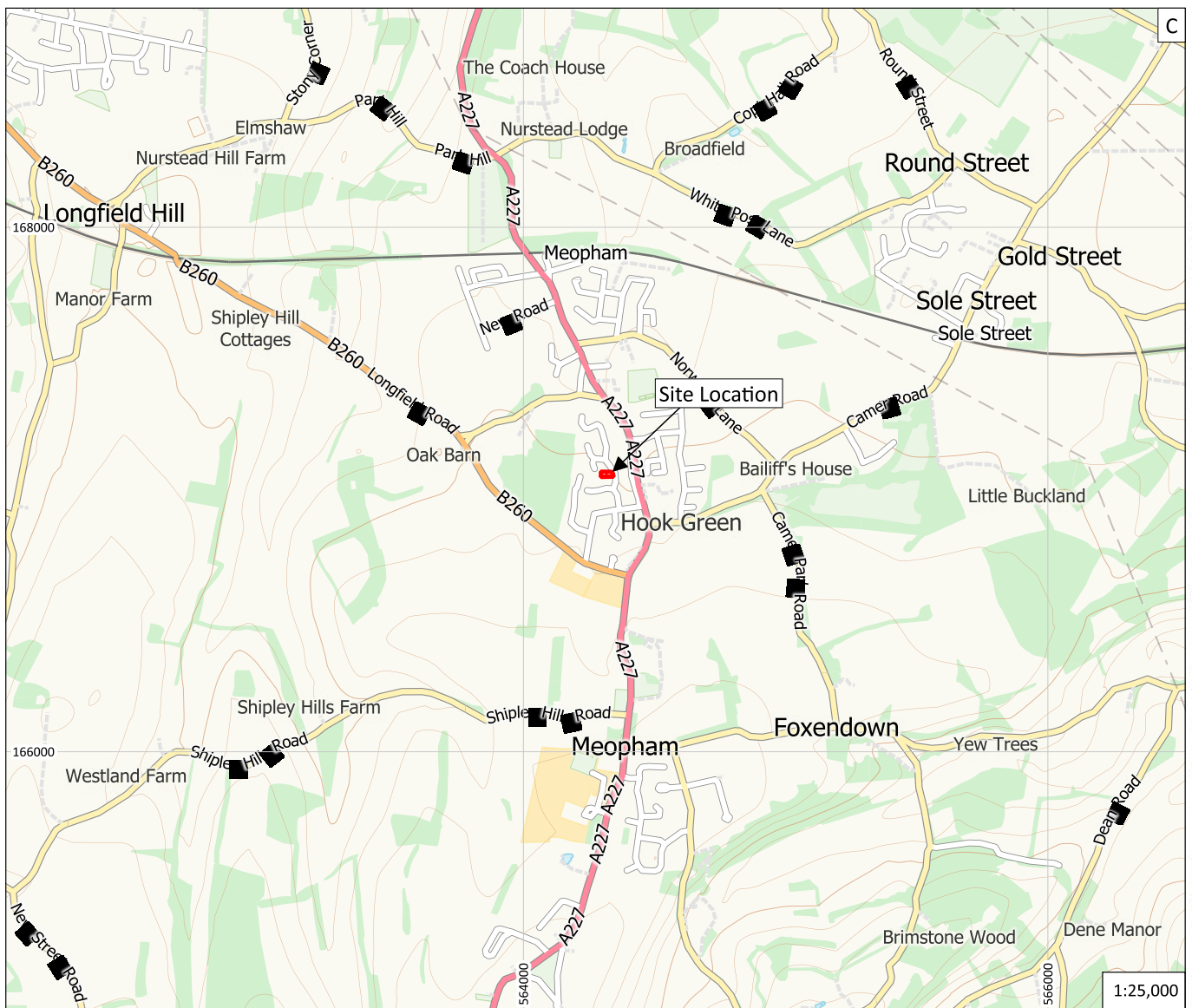
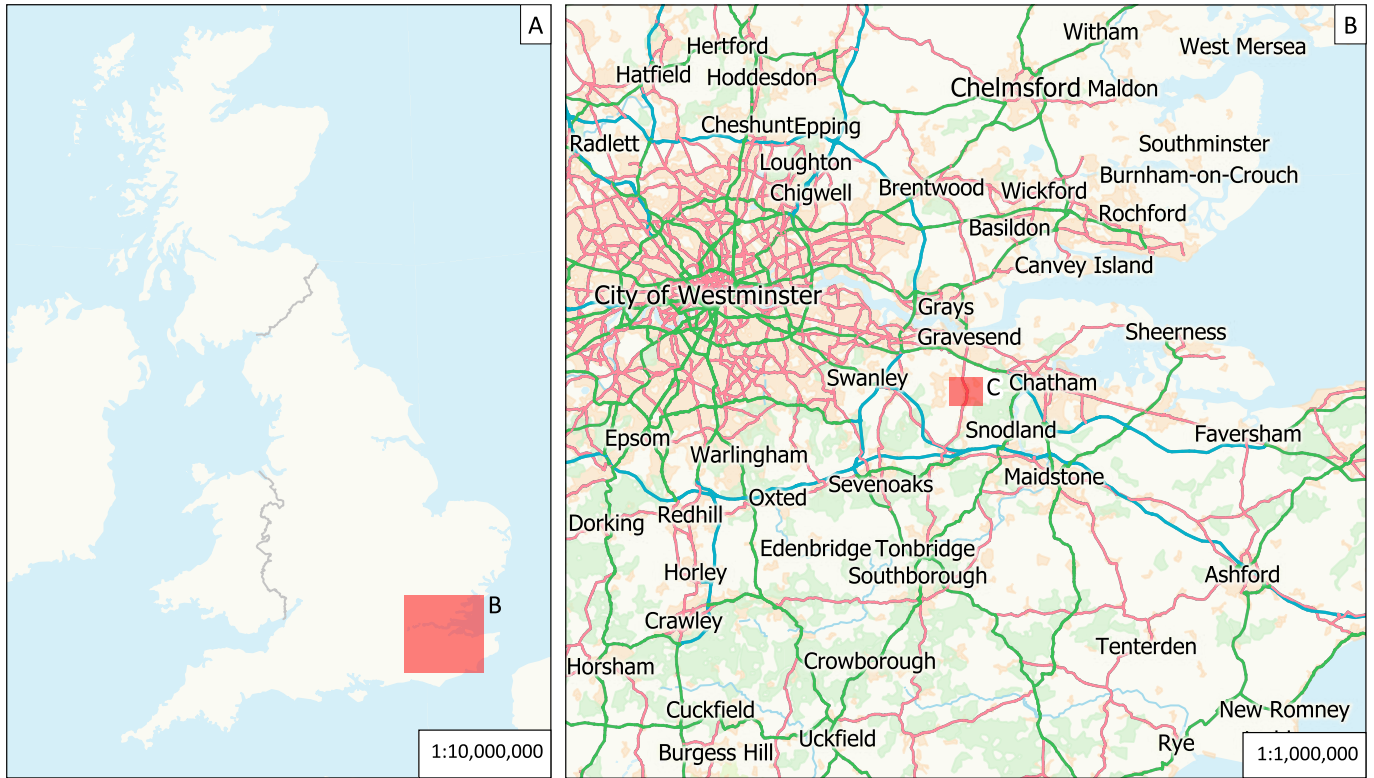


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red



Strand Close, Meopham, Kent
Site Code: MESC 25

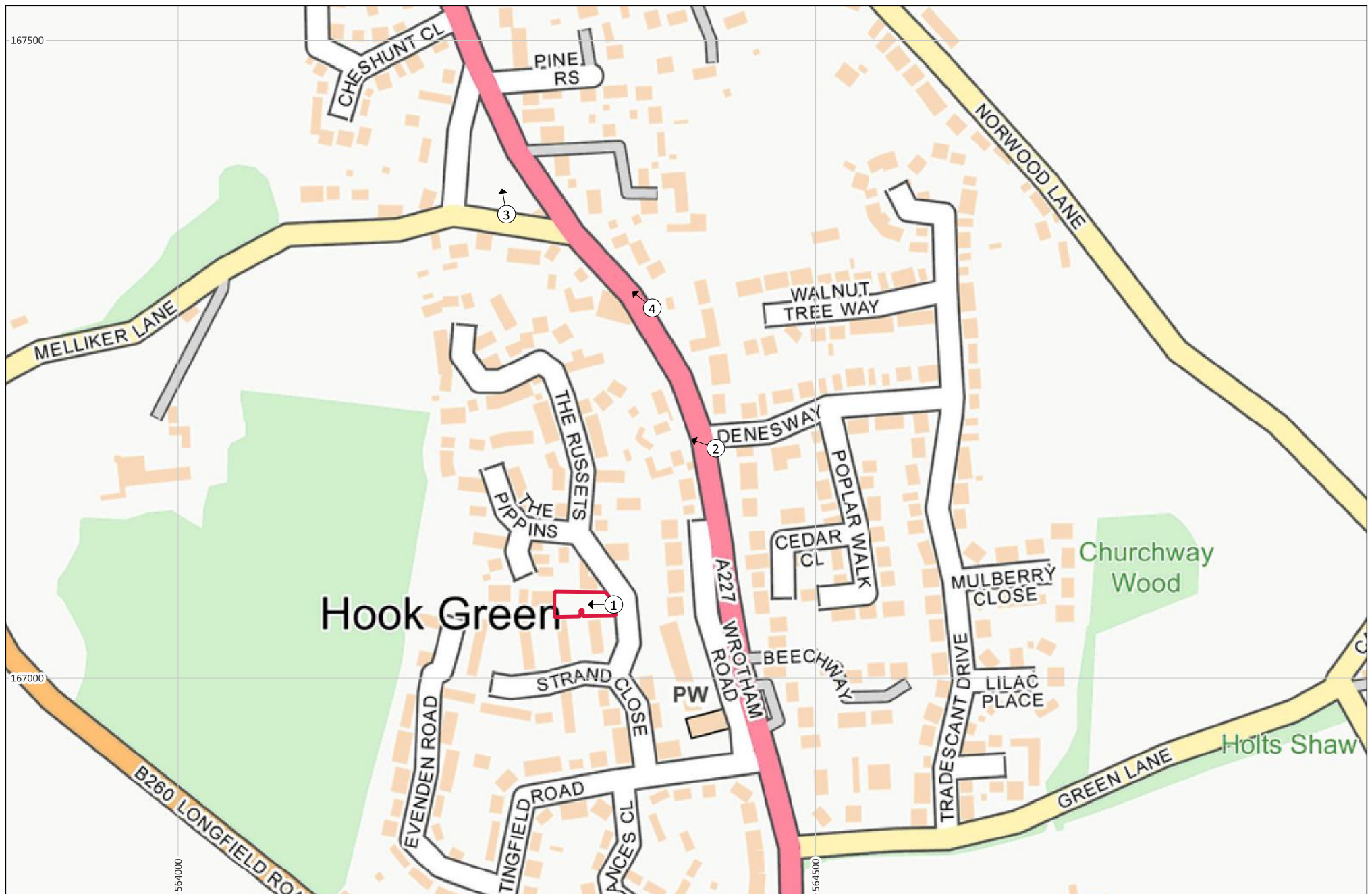
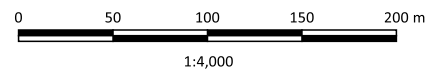


Figure 2: Location and direction of site visit photographs with site outlined in red



Strand Close, Meopham, Kent
Site Code: MESC 25

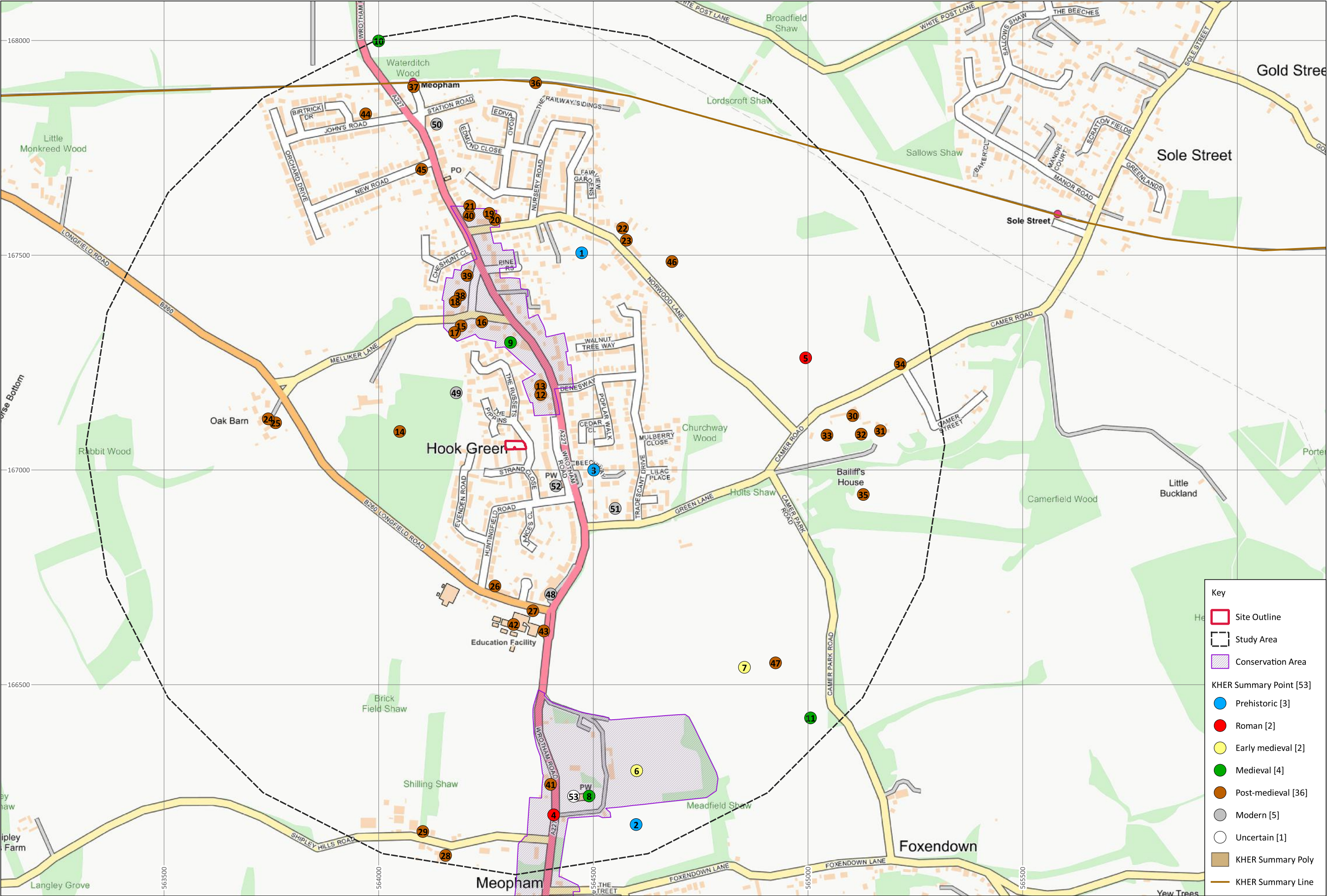


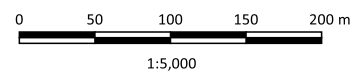
Figure 3: Extract of Kent HER search results with site outlined in red



Strand Close, Meopham, Kent
Site Code: MESC 25



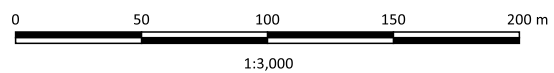
Figure 4: Extract of 1797 Ordnance Survey Drawing with site outlined in red (British Library OSD 121)



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Site Code: MESC 25



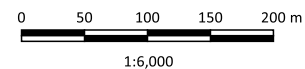
Figure 5: Extract of 1841 Meopham Tithe map with site outlined in red



Strand Close, Meopham, Kent
Site Code: MESC 25



Figure 6: Extract of 1869 Ordnance Survey map with site outlined in red



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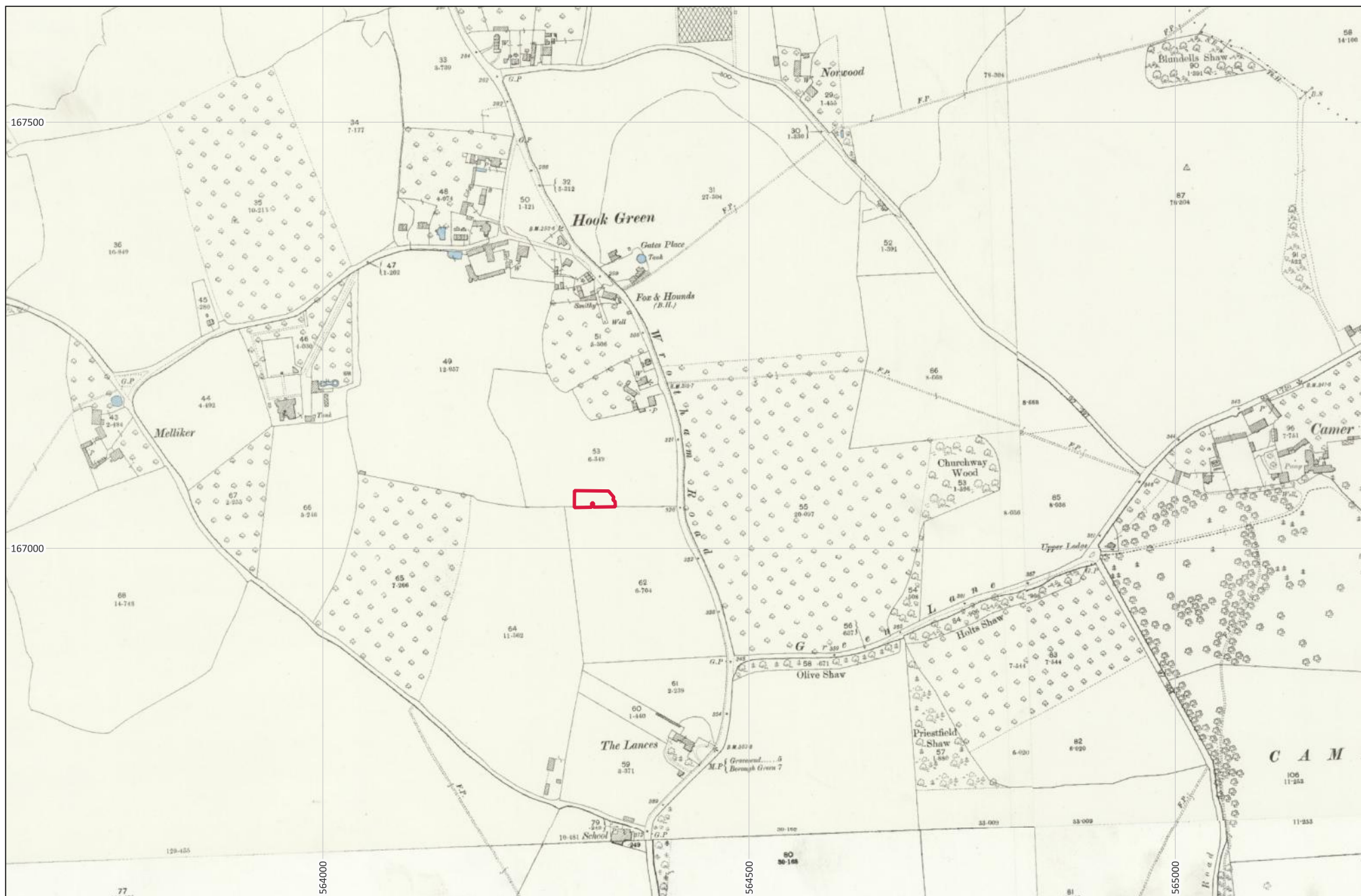
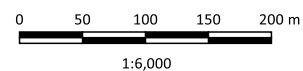


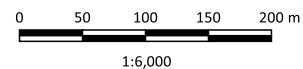
Figure 7: Extract of 1898 Ordnance Survey map with site outlined in red



Strand Close, Meopham, Kent
Site Code: MESC 25



Figure 8: Extract of 1966 Ordnance Survey map with site outlined in red



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Site Code: MESC 25



Allen Archaeology Limited
www.allenarchaeology.co.uk

Company Registered in England and Wales No: 6935529

Lincoln
Whisby Lodge
Hillcroft Business Park
Whisby Road
Lincoln
Lincolnshire
LN6 3QL

T: +44 (0) 1522 685356
E: info@allenarchaeology.co.uk

West
Arion Business Centre
Harriet House
118 High Street
Birmingham
B23 6BG
T: +44 (0) 800 610 2545
E: birmingham@allenarchaeology.co.uk

South
International House
Southampton International Business
Park
George Curl Way
Southampton
SO18 2RZ

T: +44 (0) 800 610 2555
E: southampton@allenarchaeology.co.uk

East
Wellington House
East Road
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
CB1 1BH
T: +44 (0) 800 610 2550
E: cambridge@allenarchaeology.co.uk

Northwest
Office 4
Barbury House,
8 Hardy Close,
Nelson Court Business Centre,
Preston,
PR2 2XP

T: +44 (0) 1772 963039
M: +44 (0) 7710 099052
E: northwest@allenarchaeology.co.uk