



Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Land at East Court
Farm, Gravesend,
Kent DA12 2NL



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Non-Technical Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group, on behalf of Havenwood Escapes Ltd, to inform the proposed development comprising the creation of a glamping site.

The assessment has confirmed that the Site contains no designated archaeological heritage assets such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields. The Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) records 363 archaeological entries within a 1km radius of the Site (the 'study area'), including monument, findspot, farmstead and listed building entries.

One KHER entry is partly located across the south-east corner of the Site, which relates to a former field boundary. Although the exact date of this feature is uncertain, its earliest hypothesised date is recorded as Early Neolithic.

There are two ANAs within the Site boundary, relating to medium Palaeolithic potential and an area of multi-period archaeological potential, settlement, funerary and industrial activity.

The KHER holds clear evidence for considerable prehistoric activity within the study area, primarily dating to the later prehistoric periods - the Bronze Age and Iron Age. These mainly comprise earthworks and isolated findspots. There is also clear evidence of Roman activity in the study area, with a gravel extraction site immediately east of the Site revealing a settlement with evidence of pottery production and burials. A large quantity of Roman finds have been recovered from the study area. From at least the 18th century the Site formed part of East Court Farm, with the extant farmhouse south/west of the Site a grade II listed building.

Based on existing information the assessment has indicated that there is a high potential for archaeological remains to be present within the Site. If such remains are identified it is likely that they will relate to the later prehistoric, Roman, post-medieval and modern periods. The Site is considered to have a medium potential for early medieval and medieval remains.

The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be discussed and agreed with the Historic Environment Team at Kent County Council.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1** This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by James Danter ACIfA and Rebecca Mansfield ACIfA of HCUK Group on behalf of Havenwood Escapes Ltd. The proposed development comprises the creation of a glamping site with the construction of several overnight accommodation pods with barrel saunas and associated services, hardstanding, parking, pathways and landscaping, including an area of new woodland planting.
- 1.2** The site in question is known as Land at East Court Farm, Gravesend, Kent DA 12 2NL (Figures 1 & 2), occupying an area of c.0.91ha and centred at NGR TQ 68564 72982. It is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.
- 1.3** By way of introduction, the Site is formed of scrubland and part of an adjacent paddock, which is currently grazed by llamas, and is bounded by Lower Higham Road to the north, a field off Church Lane to the west and further woodland to the east. Its southern boundary borders East Court Farm, a grade II listed building (NHLE 1089045), sometimes referred to as East Court Manor.
- 1.4** The Gravesham Borough Council Planning Portal shows several previous applications associated with barn at East Court Farm, south/west of the Site boundary. These include conversion of redundant farm buildings into residential units (Ref. 20040447), conversion of the historic threshing barn (Ref. 20151207), conversion of a barn into residential use (Ref. 20170821), and the erection of a two storey extension to connect the main dwelling by a glazed link which was permitted in 2021 (Ref. 20210846). Permission has also been granted for a padel court and 8 bay parking barn with upper storey accommodation at the farmstead, with these structures also located outside the Site boundary.
- 1.5** The purpose of this assessment is to determine and assess the archaeological potential of the Site and to assess the significance of any relevant heritage assets identified. The report is informed by site inspection, historical information, and by data relating to heritage assets. It seeks to provide sufficient information to allow an informed understanding of the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of those assets, and to consider the need for solutions (e.g. design, engineering) where necessary. The report will not address designated or non-

designated built heritage, which will be discussed in a separate report, a Heritage Impact Assessment.¹

- 1.6** This report considers heritage assets of archaeological interest, including finds/findspots of artefactual and ecofactual material (e.g. stone tools, bone), and locations, features or objects referenced from historic documents. Where appropriate, it refers to archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including sub-surface archaeological remains of features, buildings and structures.
- 1.7** This assessment has been prepared in accordance with Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment² published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). It takes into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)³ and other local planning policy and guidance where relevant.⁴
- 1.8** This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of digital data held by the Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) together with documentary research. It incorporates a map regression indicating the impact of change over time.
- 1.9** This data has been collected for an area comprising a 1km radius of the Site boundary, which is referred to as the 'study area'. This radius has been selected on the basis of professional judgment as being sufficient to determine the archaeological potential of the Site, taking into account its location, topography, and character.

Geology and Topography

- 1.10** The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying solid geology across the Site as being Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation – chalk (Figure 3). This sedimentary bedrock was formed between 93.9 and 72.1 million years ago during the Cretaceous period when this part of Britain was covered by warm chalk seas.⁵ The solid geology is overlain by superficial deposits, with the eastern part of the Site comprising River Terrace Deposits, 1 – sand and gravel, formed between 2.588 million years ago and the

¹ HCUK Group 2025

² CIfA 2020

³ NPPF 2025

⁴ Gravesham Borough Council 2014

⁵ <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/> [25.04.2025]

present during the Quaternary period (Figure 4). The western part of the Site comprises Taplow Gravel Member – sand and gravel, formed between 362 and 126 thousand years ago.

- 1.11** The geology of the wider area comprises outcrops of Thanet Sand Formation. Around 200m north of the Site, the influence of the River Thames, c.1.5km north of the Site, is demarcated by deposits of alluvium comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel.
- 1.12** The soils of the Site are classified as being within the Soilscape 7 class, which are described as 'freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils'.⁶
- 1.13** The Site occupies a total area of c.0.91ha.
- 1.14** The Site slopes down northwards slightly, from c.9m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the south-east part of the Site, to c.5.8m aOD at the north-east part of the Site.

Site Visit

- 1.15** A site visit/walkover was undertaken on 27th March 2025 by Liz Vinson, Director of HCUK Group. The weather was dry and bright, with good visibility.
- 1.16** The Site comprises scrubland across the northern and eastern parts of the Site. The central west part of the Site comprises part of an adjacent paddock, which is currently grazed by llamas. The Site is bounded by Lower Higham Road to the north, a field off Church Lane to the west and further woodland to the east. Its southern boundary borders East Court Farm sometimes referred to as East Court Manor.
- 1.17** The Site is accessed via an access road from Church Lane, which provides access to the barns at East Court Farm. The proposed access into the Site splits from this existing access road, crossing the field currently grazed by llamas, which covers the central west part of the Site.

⁶ <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilsca.pes/> [25.04.2025]

- 1.18** The southern part of the Site comprises an area of hardstanding, with a car parking area south of the padel court (outside the Site boundary) and an area currently used for storage.
- 1.19** The eastern and northern parts of the Site comprise scrubland, with some parts dense and inaccessible.



Photograph 1: View of the access road into the Site, looking SW



Photograph 2: View of the access road into the Site, looking W towards garden of the farmhouse



Photograph 3: View of the access road into the Site, looking SE towards the barns



Photograph 4: View of the proposed access route into the Site, looking NE



Photograph 5: View of the junction of access into the Site from existing access to the barns, looking E



Photograph 6: View of the paddock across the central west part of the Site, looking NE towards the Site



Photograph 7: View of the southern part of the Site, looking W towards the barns and farmhouse



Photograph 8: View of the southern part of the Site, looking W



Photograph 9: View of the southern part of the Site, looking S



Photograph 10: View along the eastern part of the Site, looking N



Photograph 11: View of the northern part of the Site, looking N

2. Methodology

Sources

2.1 In preparing this assessment we have compiled readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources, primarily:

- Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) data for known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots within 1km of the Site (i.e. the study area);
- Maps and documents held by online resources;
- British Geological Survey (BGS) information from <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>;
- Soil Survey of England and Wales;
- The National Heritage List for England (Historic England);
- Aerial photographs;
- LiDAR data; and
- Other relevant books, journals and grey literature reports that were identified in the course of the data collection.

2.2 The information gathered from the above sources has been verified and augmented as far as possible by site inspection by assessment and Site inspection, in order to arrive at conclusions on the significance of the various heritage assets and archaeological remains that have been identified during the course of this assessment.

Assessment

2.3 The assessment seeks to understand and define the significance of heritage assets identified from the sources above, taking into account the categories of special interest defined in the NPPF⁷, primarily archaeological interest, historic interest, architectural interest and artistic interest.

2.4 The importance of a heritage asset is the overall value assigned to it based on its heritage significance, reflecting its statutory designation or, in the case of undesignated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor (Table 1).

⁷ NPPF 2025

Table 1: Criteria for Assessing the Importance of Heritage Assets

Importance of the asset	Criteria
Very high	World Heritage Sites and other assets of equal international importance
High	Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, and undesignated heritage assets of equal importance
Medium	Conservation Areas, Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens, Grade II Listed Buildings, heritage assets on local lists and undesignated assets of equal importance
Low	Undesignated heritage assets of lesser importance

2.5 The assessment also considers change to the setting and significance of heritage assets, where appropriate.

Archaeological Potential

2.6 The report concludes with:

- an assessment of the archaeological potential of the Site;
- an assessment of the significance of any archaeological remains that may be present; and
- an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on heritage assets, both in terms of physical impact and (where relevant) change to setting.

3. Relevant Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025 as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The setting of the heritage asset can also contribute to its significance.

3.2 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF describes the approach to be taken towards non-designated heritage assets, as follows:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

3.3 Footnote 75 of the NPPF, which is attached to paragraph 213, states that "Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets." Further guidance on non-designated heritage assets is contained in National Planning Practice Guidance, as revised in July 2019, notably paragraph 040 which states that "Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence", and paragraph 041 which in full reads as follows:

"What are non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest and how important are they?"

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest:

(1) Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets (National Planning Policy Framework footnote 75). They are of 3 types:

those that have yet to be formally assessed for designation.

those that have been assessed as being nationally important and therefore, capable of designation, but which the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has exercised his/her discretion not to designate.

those that are incapable of being designated by virtue of being outside the scope of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 because of their physical nature.

*The reason why many nationally important monuments are not scheduled is set out in the document *Scheduled Monuments*, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Information on location and significance of such assets is found in the same way as for all heritage assets. Judging whether sites fall into this category may be assisted by reference to the criteria for scheduling monuments. Further information on scheduled monuments can be found on the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's website.*

(2) Other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest. By comparison this is a much larger category of lesser heritage significance, although still subject to the conservation objective. On occasion the understanding of a site may change following assessment and evaluation prior to a planning decision and move it from this category to the first.

Where an asset is thought to have archaeological interest, the potential knowledge which may be unlocked by investigation may be harmed even by minor disturbance, because the context in which archaeological evidence is found is crucial to furthering understanding.

Decision-making regarding such assets requires a proportionate response by local planning authorities. Where an initial assessment indicates that the site on which development is proposed includes or has potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, applicants should be required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. However, it is estimated that following the initial assessment of archaeological interest only a small proportion – around 3% – of all planning applications justify a requirement for detailed assessment."

3.4 Paragraph 214 of the NPPF also makes provision for the recording of heritage assets that are likely to be demolished or destroyed by development.

Relevant Local Policies

3.5 The following local policies are relevant to the historic environment and this assessment. The Gravesham Borough Council *Local Plan Core Strategy*, adopted in September 2014, sets out the planning framework for the area for the period of 2011 to 2028.⁸

⁸ Gravesham Borough Council 2014

Table 2: Local Policies

Local Plan	Relevant Policy
Gravesham Borough Council. (2014). <i>Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy</i>.	<i>Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment</i> <i>5.16.10 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.</i> <i>5.16.11 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.</i> <i>These include:</i> <i>• Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting;</i> <i>• The Borough's urban and rural conservation areas; and</i> <i>• Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough's maritime, military, industrial and transport history.</i> <i>5.16.12 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.</i>

4. Archaeological Background

Introduction

- 4.1** There are no designated archaeological assets, such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields, within the Site or wider 1km study area.
- 4.2** There are 363 archaeological monument, findspot, farmstead and listed building KHER entries within the 1km study area (Appendix 1, Table 6). Figure 6 shows the KHER data within the 1km study area, excluding findspots. Figure 7 shows the prehistoric findspots and Figure 8 shows Roman findspots recorded on the KHER within the study area. Figure 9 shows the early medieval, medieval, post-medieval and unknown date KHER entries within the study area.
- 4.3** One KHER entry is partly located across the south-east corner of the Site, which relates to a former field boundary (TQ 67 SE 1315). Although the exact date of this feature is uncertain, its earliest hypothesised date is recorded as Early Neolithic.
- 4.4** There are 34 previous archaeological investigations recorded on the KHER within the 1km study area (Appendix 1, Table 7). The distribution of these entries is depicted on Figure 15.
- 4.5** There are 46 Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) within the 1km study area. There are two ANAs within the Site boundary:
- Medium Palaeolithic potential; Area of multi period archaeological potential
 - Medium Palaeolithic potential; Area of multi period settlement, funerary and industrial activity.
- 4.6** East Court Farmhouse is a grade II listed, 18th century farmhouse which lies c.50m south-west of the Site boundary (TQ 67 SE 1120; NHLE 1089045).
- 4.7** Assessment of potential impacts to non-designated or designated heritage assets of the built environment, such as standing buildings, are outside the scope of this

archaeological assessment and will be discussed in a separate report.⁹ However the location of these assets have been included for completeness.

Timescales

4.8 Timescales used in this assessment:

Table 3: Timescales

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 12,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 12,000 – 4000 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4000 – 1800 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.1800 – 600 BC	
Iron Age –	c.600 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Early Medieval –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval –	1066 –1485	
Post-Medieval –	1485 – 1901	
Modern –	1901 – Present	

Prehistoric

4.9 There are 53 prehistoric KHER entries within the 1km study area, comprising findspot and monument records. One KHER entry is partly located across the south-east corner of the Site, which relates to a former field boundary (TQ 67 SE 1315). Although the exact date of this feature is uncertain, its earliest hypothesised date is recorded as Early Neolithic.

Palaeolithic

4.10 The earliest phase of the prehistoric to be represented is the Palaeolithic. This is considered the earliest known period human culture and evidence from this period often consists of lithic scatters, found within river gravels and terraces. In

⁹ HCUK Group 2025

approximately 46,000BC, during the Anglian Glaciation, there were major variations in climate which affected where people settled. During the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic (30,000-10,000 BC) Britain was still connected to Europe. There are no remains dating to the Palaeolithic within the study area or the Site.

Mesolithic

4.11 During the Mesolithic period the ice sheets had receded, temperatures and sea-levels were rising, and Britain was still connected to the continent by land bridge. The hunter-gatherers who utilised the area were highly mobile, and due to the changing conditions often only settled seasonally. Finds from this period tend to come in the form of stray finds within disturbed deposits, and *in situ* settlement sites are a rare find. A single flint lithic (MKE95490) was found c.420m to the east of the Site and which was given a broad date of Late Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age.

Neolithic

4.12 The Neolithic period is characterised by increasingly permanent settlements and subsequent woodland clearance around settlement sites. It was during this period that arable farming practices began and the utilisation of clay deposits to create pottery. The period is perhaps best defined by the large ceremonial funerary monuments which littered the landscape. The only definitive archaeological findspot dating to the Neolithic period relates to a leaf-shaped arrowhead (TQ 67 SE 335) c.765m to the north-east.

4.13 The KHER records the presence of a former field boundary (TQ 67 SE 1315) which extends from the south of the Site and into its south-eastern corner. Although the date of this feature is uncertain, its earliest hypothesised date is recorded as Early Neolithic. A further 13 features (TQ 67 SE 1296, TQ 67 SE 1297, TQ 67 SE 1298, TQ 67 SE 1299, TQ 67 SE 1300, TQ 67 SE 1301, TQ 67 SE 1303, TQ 67 SE 1304, TQ 67 SE 1305, TQ 67 SE 1306, TQ 67 SE 1307, TQ 67 SE 1309, TQ 67 SE 1311) are recorded on the KHER as potentially having their origins within the Neolithic period but with equally uncertain dates. These relate to a mixture of cropmarks such as ring ditches and linear field boundaries. Many of these features are likely of a later date.

Bronze Age

- 4.14** The Bronze Age is characterised by the use of metal and the subsequent development of tools and weapons as a result. The technological advances seen during this period were mainly due to an influx of new settlers from the continent. During the middle and late Bronze Age period great field systems were seen in the landscape and more permanent settlement were established.
- 4.15** The majority of records on the KHER from this period relate to either ring ditches which probably surrounded barrows, or findspots of metalwork. Cropmarks showing possible barrows (TQ 67 SE 87, TQ 67 SE 109, TQ 67 SE 108, TQ 67 SE 92, TQ 67 SE 82, TQ 67 SE 83, TQ 67 SE 66) are located c.380m to the east, c.480m to the east, c.485m to the east, c.805m to the south-west, c.845m to the east, c.940m to the north-east, and c.995m to the south of the Site, respectively.
- 4.16** Cropmarks have also identified two possible enclosed Bronze Age settlements. One (TQ 67 SE 91) is located c.580m to the south-west of the Site, and the other TQ 67 SE 84) is located c.780m to the east of the Site.
- 4.17** Three Bronze Age copper alloy findspots have also been identified within the study area. A spear head (MKE79617) was found c.445m to the south-east of the Site, a bucket (MKE95544) was found c.795m to the south of the Site, and an unidentified object (MKE95426) was found c.940m to the east of the Site.

Iron Age

- 4.18** The final prehistoric period, the Iron Age, sees more technological advancement with the use of iron to create weapons and tools. This period is also characterised by the large defensive hillforts, and evidence of ritual offerings of military equipment, suggest a shift in culture with an emphasis of the warrior aristocracy and the emergence of tribal territories. ¹⁰
- 4.19** Cropmarks show the remains of two enclosures dating to the Iron Age. One (TQ 67 SE 336) is located c.805m to the north-east of the Site and the other (TQ 67 SE 103) is located c.880m to the east of the Site.

¹⁰ <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/prehistory/> [24.04.2025]

- 4.20** The vast majority of Iron Age records on the KHER relate to unstratified findspots of Iron Age metalwork, particularly coins. One of these coins, the closest to the Site c.95m to the south-east, relates to a Greek coin (TQ 67 SE 201) dating to the 3rd century BC.
- 4.21** To the west of the Site (c.775m), a rubbish tip associated with a later Roman villa site (TQ 67 SE 15) contained sherds which dated to the Late Iron Age.

General Prehistoric

- 4.22** The potential for archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric period is considered to be high. The KHER records clear evidence for considerable prehistoric activity within the study area, primarily dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and mostly in the south and east of the study area. The potential significance of these remains is assessed as being of likely medium (regional) archaeological importance.

Roman

- 4.23** There are 212 Roman KHER entries within the 1km study area, comprising findspot and monument records. None of these records are located within the Site boundary.
- 4.24** The line of the Roman road known as Watling Street, from *Durovernum* (Canterbury) to *Londinium* (London), ran c.3.2km south of the Site. Evidence of a Roman posting station and important religious centre based on springs has been recorded c.6km west of the Site along Watling Street at *Vagniacis* (Springhead). A Roman settlement has also been recorded at Gravesend, c.3.8km north-west of the Site, where remains of structures and pottery dating from the mid-1st century AD to the 4th century AD was recovered.
- 4.25** During gravel extraction in the 1950s at Lower Shorne Field, immediately east of the Site, Roman remains were uncovered indicating the presence of a settlement (TQ 67 SE 8). A total of 10 kilns were reported, however, one was examined and found to be associated with mid-2nd century pottery. Several rubbish pits were identified in the north-east part of the site, containing mainly domestic rubbish. Nine graves were recorded, all orientated north to south, with no skeletal remains present but traces of wooden coffins were observed as well as pottery of 4th and early 5th century AD date. The evidence indicates that the site was occupied for a long period, with pottery production taking place from the 1st century AD to the

early 3rd century AD, after which the settlement continued on an agricultural basis with the burials of a later Roman date.

- 4.26** Further Roman evidence was recorded at Shorne, c.1km south-east of the Site, comprising Roman urns, fibulae and iron nails (TQ 67 SE 61).
- 4.27** A Roman burial containing 2nd century AD pottery was recorded in the 1950s at Lower Higham Road, c.700m west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 18).
- 4.28** Cropmarks of a possible Iron Age or Roman rectangular enclosure have been identified via aerial photographs c.1km south-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 77). No entrance or internal features have been identified and it has been interpreted as Roman.
- 4.29** Gas trenching c.720m south-west of the Site, revealed an extensive complex of ditches and/or rubbish pits associated with wall footings and Roman pottery (TQ 67 SE 34). Cropmarks of a possible Roman settlement were previously identified from aerial photographs, which indicated a number of phases of Roman development were present. Ditches cut through the settlement enclosure and a number of probable field boundaries forming a field system can be seen extending to the south, cut by a curving trackway but it is not clear if these are contemporary with the Roman site.
- 4.30** A Roman field system was recorded during an excavation at Queen's Farm, c.750m north-east of the Site (TQ 67 SE 337). Two ditches crossed the site with a number of small sections of ditch found at right angles to this alignment, suggesting a rectilinear field system. Material from the ditches dated from the late 1st to early 3rd century AD.
- 4.31** Earthwork remains have been identified c.800m north-east of the Site which could represent post-medieval to 20th century stock watering ponds or Roman salterns, an area for making salt (TQ 67 SE 301, TQ 67 SE 302, TQ 67 SE 1269).
- 4.32** The KHER contains 203 records relating to Roman findspots within the 1km study area, excluding those dating from the Iron Age to Roman period. Most of these finds have been recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, with the general findspot location provided by the KHER. There is a large cluster of these finds recorded c.770m south of the Site. The majority of the Roman finds are copper

alloy coins, ranging in date from the 1st to 5th centuries AD. Other finds include pottery, brooches, buckles and a cosmetic set.

- 4.33** The potential for Roman archaeology is considered to be high based on the Site location in an area of known Roman settlement activity. If encountered, Roman remains may relate to the adjacent site where evidence of pottery production, domestic occupation and burials were recorded, as well as isolated finds. The archaeological importance of any Roman finds and features encountered are likely to be of regional (medium) importance.

Early Medieval

- 4.34** There are 11 early medieval/Saxon KHER entries within the 1km study area, comprising findspot and monument records. None of these are within the Site itself.
- 4.35** A settlement at Chalk, just outside the 1km study area to the west, was recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086.¹¹ The place-name is thought to derive from the Old English *cealc* meaning chalk, lime, limestone.¹² As the settlement is recorded in the Domesday Book, it can be assumed that the settlement was in existence prior to the Norman Conquest.
- 4.36** An early medieval cemetery is recorded on the KHER, c.150m north-east of the Site (TQ 67 SE 99). No further details are available, however, one of the sources in the KHER entry is a 1848 publication of the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, indicating that the site was discovered in antiquity.
- 4.37** The other 10 early medieval KHER entries relate to findspots. A penny of Coenwulf was found at East Court Farm in 1984, with the findspot location c.160m south-east of the Site (TQ 67 SE 96).
- 4.38** Most of the early medieval finds have been recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, with the general findspot location provided by the KHER. The finds include, strap ends, mounts and a buckle, recorded c.500m south-east and c.735m south of the Site.

¹¹ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ6872/chalk/> [28.04.2025]

¹² Sweet 1897, 32

- 4.39** The potential for finds or features of early medieval date is considered to be medium. Although the Site is likely to have been located outside of the early medieval settlement of Chalk, probably in agricultural land associated with the settlement, a cemetery site is recorded in the vicinity of the Site and a number of early medieval finds have been recovered from the study area. The archaeological importance of remains of early medieval date is likely to be considered local (low), depending on the nature of the remains revealed.

Medieval

- 4.40** There are 29 KHER entries of medieval date within the 1km study area, including monuments, findspots and listed buildings, none of these are within the Site itself.
- 4.41** As noted above, Chalk is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a settlement in the hundred of Shamwell.¹³ It had a recorded population of 24 households, with seven ploughlands, 16 acres of meadow, one mill and one church. The church was rebuilt in the late 11th century, c.420m south-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 1103). This church, Church of St Mary, was altered in the 15th and 19th centuries and is a grade II* listed building.
- 4.42** A grade II listed hall house, known as Readers, is located c.835m west of the Site which comprised a timber-framed house of probably 15th or 16th century date (TQ 67 SE 1114).
- 4.43** An excavation at Queen's Farm, c.785m north-east of the Site, revealed evidence of the small farmstead established on the site in the medieval period (TQ 67 SE 338). Three structures were found, including remains of beam slots and post holes, with one building containing a central pit lined with chalk blocks and a sunken room. Another building contained two hearths and a chalk-lined well. An area of burning and a gravelled surface were recorded as well as several refuse pits, ditches and clay quarries. Pottery recovered from these features was dated to AD 1275-1350.
- 4.44** Cropmarks have been observed c.835m south-west of the Site which may represent a former field boundary (TQ 67 SE 1308). Aerial photographs show a ditch with

¹³ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ6872/chalk/> [28.04.2025]

faint traces of banks alongside it and a large pit. The cropmarks have been interpreted as being of medieval to post-medieval date.

- 4.45** A medieval armorial plaque was recovered in a field at East Court Farm in 1914, c.160m south-east of the Site (TQ 67 SE 95). It bears the arms of England, with red enamel and gilding. The plaque is thought to be of 13th or 14th century date.
- 4.46** Although not recorded on the KHER, there may have been a medieval manor in the vicinity of the Site, known as the manor of East Chalk.¹⁴ During the reign of Henry III the manor was in the possession of John de Burgo, before being passed to the monks of the priory in Bermondsey. Chalk had another manor, known as West Chalk or West Court, which was located c.1.5km west of the Site near the present-day village of Chalk.
- 4.47** The other medieval findspots recorded on the KHER within the 1km study area have mostly been recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, with the general findspot location provided by the KHER. These finds include harness pendants, coins, mounts, buckles, strap fittings, a thimble, a candlestick, a purse, a knife, a bell, a pin, and a jetton. As with the previous periods, the medieval finds are mainly recorded across the open fields to the south-east and south of the Site.
- 4.48** The potential for finds or features of medieval date is considered to be medium. As with the early medieval period, the Site is likely to have been located outside of the settlement of Chalk, probably in agricultural land associated with the settlement. Several medieval finds have been recovered from the vicinity of the Site, including one from the fields of East Court Farm. The archaeological importance of remains of medieval date is likely to be considered local (low), depending on the nature of the remains revealed.

Post-medieval & Modern

- 4.49** There are 39 post-medieval and modern KHER entries within the 1km study area, comprising findspot, monument, farmstead and listed building records. None of the entries are located within the Site boundary.

¹⁴ Hasted 1797

- 4.50** East Court Farmhouse, south/west of the Site boundary is an L-shaped 18th century farmhouse (TQ 67 SE 1120). The farmhouse is grade II listed (NHLE 1089045). The farm is recorded in English Heritage's Historic Farmsteads project as a regular U-shaped courtyard farmstead, with an oast detached from main yard (MKE84461).
- 4.51** Another farmstead records on the KHER is Filborough Farm, c.250m north-west of the Site, with its associated house, barn, granary and outfarm (TQ 67 SE 1112, TW 67 SE 1122, TQ 67 SE 53, MKE84463, MKE84464). The buildings are mainly thought to be of 18th century date and are grade II listed.
- 4.52** Several other farmsteads are recorded on the KHER within the 1km study area. Including a 19th century farmstead associated with the late medieval hall house known as Readers, c.860m west of the Site (MKE84363). Also of 19th century date is Queen's Farm (TQ 67 SE 293) and an outfarm south-west of Old King's Farm (MKE88513), both of which lie c.900m north-east of the Site.
- 4.53** An earthwork relating to a post-medieval water channel has been identified on aerial photographs c.520m north-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 1293). The redundant water channel is situated on the southern edge of Filborough Marshes. Another earthwork identified via aerial photographs relates to a former seal wall on Filborough Marshes, c.735m north-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 1310).
- 4.54** A probable post-medieval stock watering pond within Shornemead Marshes is recorded on the KHER c.975m north-east of the Site, identified from aerial photographs (TQ 67 SE 1267). The pond is a standard form seen at several locations in the marshes of the Hoo Peninsular.
- 4.55** The South Eastern Railway Company's North Kent Line was constructed from London to Gravesend, where it joined 7 miles of line operated by the Thames and Medway Canal Company, utilising the tunnels which had been built. The Thames and Medway canal was originally intended as a means of avoiding coastal attacks on shipping in the 1770s, however, the original scheme was abandoned, and revived in 1799. The canal was not a commercial success and the shareholders decided it would be more profitable to build a railway. The canal (TQ 67 SE 20) and railway line (TQ 57 SE 277) are recorded c.700m north of the Site and a swing bridge (TQ 67 SE 345) and a railway station (TQ 67 SE 342) are recorded c.900m north-west of the Site.

- 4.56** A firing range was established on East Court Marshes in 1862, c.800m north-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 1185). The firing range consisted of a succession of low earthen mound firing points, a target mound and markers' gallery. It continues in use as a Metropolitan Police training facility.
- 4.57** The KHER holds the records of 12 findspots of post-medieval date within a 1km radius of the Site. These findspots have been recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, with the general findspot location provided by the KHER, located to the east, south-east and south of the Site across the open fields. The finds include several coins and tokens as well as rings, a button and rowel spurs.
- 4.58** The modern KHER entries within the study area include a golf course c.690m west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 104), Gravesend Airport and aircraft factory 1km south-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 221), and several features relating to Second World War defences (TQ 67 SE 1214, TQ 67 SE 1148, TQ 67 SE 1160, TQ 67 SE 1161, TQ 67 SE 1258). One of the records related to a concrete road block buoys in the driveway to East Court Farm, c.62m south-west of the Site, likely to have originated as part of a road block not far from the farm (TQ 67 SE 1160).

Historic Map Regression

- 4.59** William Faden's Map of London and 25 Miles around (Figure 10), dating to 1788, shows the Site to the south of Lower Higham Road and to the east of Church Lane. No features are shown within the Site. A small collection of buildings is depicted immediately south of the Site, which relate to East Court Farm.
- 4.60** Willaims Faden's Map of Kent (Figure 10) dating to 1801, shows no features within the Site. The buildings forming East Court Farm are depicted south of the Site.
- 4.61** The Tithe Map of Chalk (Figure 11), dating to 1841, is the first map to show the Site in detail. The Site lies partially within two plots on the tithe map, 119 and 117. The Site boundary lies over the eastern extent of plots 117 and 119, with the proposed access route running west across plot 119. East Court Farms is depicted immediately south of the Site.
- 4.62** The accompanying tithe apportionment, dating to 24th February 1841 and altered on 16th March 1865, lists both plots as being owned by The Right Honorable John Stuart Earl of Darnley:

Table 4: Landholdings recorded on the Chalk Parish Tithe Apportionment

Plot Number	Landowner	Occupier	Name and Description of Lands and Premises	State of Cultivation
119	The Right Honorable John Stuart Earl of Darnley	William Brown	Hop Gardens	Arable and Hops
117	The Right Honorable John Stuart Earl Of Darnley	William Brown Junior	House, homestead, yards, and gardens	Pasture

4.63 The 1864 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 11) shows the Site predominantly within a large undeveloped field. A small area in the south-western extent of the Site lies within the gardens surrounding East Court Farm. Sparse hedgerows are shown along the eastern boundary of the Site. The large field which lies to the west of the Site, and through which the proposed access route runs, is depicted as an undeveloped field.

4.64 The 1897 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 12) shows that the majority of the Site now lies within an area laid out as an orchard. The southern extent of the Site lies adjacent to East Court Farm.

4.65 The 1909 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 12) shows the Site still predominantly laid out as orchard. A small area in the south-western corner of the Site lies within an area of new orchards. The very northern extent of the Site is marked as being part of a gravel pit which runs further east.

4.66 The 1933 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 13) shows no major changes within the Site, with the northern part of the Site used as a gravel pit and the eastern part of the Site used as an orchard. The field in which the access track runs is now marked as 'small holdings'.

- 4.67** The 1963 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 13) shows that by this time the gravel pit in the northern part of the Site had been infilled and the orchards are no longer depicted. The 1993 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 14) show minimal changes by this date.
- 4.68** The potential for archaeological remains dating to the post-medieval and modern period is considered to be high. If encountered, such remains are likely to relate to finds and features associated with agriculture and/or the development of East Court Farm. Any remains are likely to be of local (low) archaeological importance.

Unknown

- 4.69** There are 17 KHER entries of unknown date within the 1km study area, none of which are located within the Site boundary.
- 4.70** The undated entries include a possible round barrow visible in aerial photographs c.810m south-west of the Site (TQ 67 SE 385) and a possible ring ditch enclosure c. 610m east of the Site (TQ 67 SE 81). Several possible field systems and trackways of unknown date are recorded on the KHER within the 1km study area (TQ 67 SE 85, TQ 67 SE 88, TQ 67 SE 115, TQ 67 SE 116, TQ 67 SE 118, TQ 67 SE 118). Several undated finds have been recovered from the study area, including coins, a knife and a unidentified object.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.71** There have been no previous archaeological investigations on the Site itself.
- 4.72** The KHER holds 34 records for previous archaeological investigations having been carried out within the wider 1km study area (Figure 15).
- 4.73** These investigations include seven archaeological desk-based assessments, seven excavations, four field walking, two evaluations, four watching briefs, three geophysical surveys, two historic landscape characterisations, aerial photography mapping, a borehole survey, a building survey and a survey of mineral extractions sites. The results of these investigations are discussed in the appropriate sections above.

Aerial Photographs

- 4.74** Modern aerial photographs of the Site (Figure 14) show that the northern extent of the Site is covered in scrubland/woodland, with trees and hedging running along the eastern boundary of the Site. The central western part of the Site comprises part of an open field to the west of the scrubland/woodland. The southern extent of the Site is part of the farm yard.
- 4.75** Historic aerial photographs of the Site show that by 1940 the orchard had been cleared from the east part of the Site and the gravel pit in the northern part of the Site had been infilled.¹⁵ This aerial photograph shows the Site in a similar way to the 1963 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 13). The northern part of the Site appears to have some vegetation and the eastern boundary of the Site comprises trees/hedges.
- 4.76** Historic England holds three aerial photographs of the Site taken in the 1950s.¹⁶ These photographs show the Site in a similar way to the modern aerial photograph, with the northern part of the Site covered in scrubland/woodland and trees/hedges running along the eastern boundary of the Site.

LiDAR

- 4.77** LiDAR data (1m resolution from 2022, Figure 16) has been downloaded for the Site to enable interrogation through QGIS software using hillshade settings and variations of light angles and azimuth heights. Due to the trees and vegetation across the northern and eastern parts of the Site, no archaeological features could be identified on LiDAR data. A possible feature is visible in the south-east corner of the Site, although it is unclear what this feature could relate to.

Historic Landscape Character

- 4.78** There are two Historic Landscape Character types within the Site (Figure 17): *industrial complexes and factories* across the proposed access route, the central

¹⁵ Google Earth Pro

¹⁶ https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/raf_541_591_rs_4038
https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/raf_58_1779_f22_0275
https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/raf_58_1779_f22_0276

and northern parts of the Site, and *Prairie fields* (19th century enclosure with extensive boundary loss) across the southern part of the Site.

5. Impact Assessment

Proposed Development

- 5.1** The proposed development comprises the creation of a glamping site with the construction of several overnight accommodation pods with barrel saunas and associated services, hardstanding, parking, pathways and landscaping, including an area of new woodland planting (Appendix 2).

Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival

- 5.2** Archaeological remains can survive as earthworks and as below ground archaeological features, finds and layers. Part of the assessment process is to consider what factors may have affected archaeological survival. That is to say, what conditions would have enhanced the chances of survival and what conditions would have reduced the chances of survival.
- 5.3** The subject of archaeological preservation has been covered comprehensively elsewhere¹⁷, and it is a subject which is subject to ongoing review as our understanding grows. The following addresses some familiar scenarios for assessment reports such as this, to allow the reader an insight into some 'typical' scenarios.
- 5.4** In rural locations, below ground remains are likely to be sealed by a relatively thin series of layers. Typically a topsoil of c.100-200mm and a subsoil of 100-300mm. Therefore, they may be sealed by 200-500mm of deposits. There are variations to this including landscapes affected by colluvial or alluvial deposits. There are also Peat rich area where soil deposits can be significantly deeper. Earthworks are most common in areas not subject to modern, mechanised ploughing, although earthworks can be preserved in hedgerows, wooded areas and even as plough-reduced remnants within arable fields.
- 5.5** From at least the 18th century the Site formed part of East Court Farm, used as both pasture and arable cultivation by the mid-19th century. Pasture/grassland provides a relatively static condition for archaeological remains. Whilst areas which have undergone mechanised ploughing especially of deep rooting crops (e.g. sugar

¹⁷ Historic England 2016.

beet) have a higher probability of some truncation to below ground archaeological deposits.

5.6 The northern part of the Site was used for gravel extraction, from the early 20th century to the mid-20th century. This part of the Site is likely to have been heavily disturbed, with earlier potential archaeological remains removed wholesale.

5.7 The use of the eastern part of the Site as an orchard by the late 19th century, as indicated on historic mapping, is likely to have had some impact on potential buried archaeological remains. Historic England states that *'Whether or not tree cover would be beneficial or detrimental to archaeological evidence will depend upon both the nature of the archaeology, and its surrounding environment. In some cases, the trees will be of historic interest in their own right. However, tree planting, tree roots, forestry operations and events such as wind throw can damage archaeology'*.¹⁸

5.8 The Forest Research also provides advice on tree roots and archaeology:

'A tree's root distribution can be extensive and inevitably buried archaeological evidence located close to the soil surface can be at risk, depending on factors such as the type of evidence, soil, tree species, age, stand density and management. However, a common misconception regarding tree root structure is that their volume and distribution reflect that of the trunk and branches:

Instead, trees typically have relatively shallow but wide-spread root systems:

It is unusual for roots to penetrate to a depth greater than 2 m, with 80-90 % of the widespread rooting structure to be found within the top 0.6 m of the soil profile.

Although few roots extend beyond 1-1.5 m depth, archaeological evidence commonly occurs within this soil thickness, and where important remains are known to exist close to the soil surface, tree planting is not recommended'.¹⁹

¹⁸ Historic England 2023

¹⁹ Forest Research

Assessment of Significance

5.9 This assessment of significance has been guided by the National Planning Policy Framework, which define significance as:

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*²⁰

Furthermore it will be guided by Historic England's guidance *Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance*. This states:

*'heritage values that can be ascribed to a place' can be grouped into four values: Evidential, Historic (illustrative or associative), Aesthetic and Communal.*²¹

5.10 Based on the data supplied by the KHER, cartographic sources and documentary research, it is known that for much of the Site's history, it formed part of East Court Farm. If remains relating to the farm established from the 18th century are encountered, they are likely to be considered *associative* value.

5.11 The KHER holds clear evidence for considerable prehistoric activity within the study area, primarily dating to the later prehistoric periods, the Bronze Age and Iron Age. These mainly comprise earthworks and isolated findspots. If similar remains are encountered within the Site, they are likely to be considered *evidential* and *illustrative historical* value, as they would further expand the current known extent of activity in the area for these periods.

5.12 There is also clear evidence of Roman activity in the study area, with a gravel extraction site immediately east of the Site revealing a settlement with pottery production and burials. A large quantity of Roman finds have been recovered from the study area. If similar remains are encountered within the Site, they are likely to be considered *evidential* and *illustrative historical* value, as they would further expand the current known extent of activity in the area for the Roman period.

²⁰ NPPF 2025

²¹ Historic England 2008

- 5.13** From the early medieval period the Site is likely to have comprised agricultural land associated with the settlement of Chalk. The potential for previously unknown archaeological remains from the early medieval or medieval periods to survive within the proposed development area should not be discounted, and any such remains will have significance due to *evidential* value, as they would provide proof of earlier unknown human activity, and would possess *illustrative historical* value, as such remains would expand the current historical timeline of the area. The significance of such remains cannot be assessed without archaeological fieldwork.

Potential Effects

- 5.14** There is the potential for direct physical impacts to potential archaeological assets, if present, during the construction phases of the proposed development, as any ground moving activities associated with the proposed works would have the potential to expose, damage and destroy hitherto unknown archaeological remains.
- 5.15** Activities could include geotechnical investigations, topsoil stripping, ground reduction, construction of temporary compounds or access tracks, excavation for foundations, service trenches and landscaping, including the area of new woodland planting.
- 5.16** Excavations for new foundations including piling has the potential to disturb archaeological deposits at much lower levels.
- 5.17** The scope of any further archaeological works that would be required in advance or during the development of the Site, would need to be discussed and agreed with the nominated archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The proposed development comprises the creation of a glamping site with the construction of several overnight accommodation pods with barrel saunas and associated services, hardstanding, parking, pathways and landscaping, including an area of new woodland planting (Appendix 2).
- 6.2** Based on the information within the KHER, supplemented by historic mapping and documentary research, the Site is considered to have a high potential for prehistoric, Roman, post-medieval and modern remains, and a medium potential for early medieval and medieval remains.
- 6.3** The Site contains no designated archaeological sites, where there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ* and against development. There are two ANAs within the Site boundary, relating to medium Palaeolithic potential and an area of multi-period archaeological potential, settlement, funerary and industrial activity.
- 6.4** One KHER entry is partly located across the south-east corner of the Site, which relates to a former field boundary (TQ 67 SE 1315). Although the exact date of this feature is uncertain, its earliest hypothesised date is recorded as Early Neolithic.
- 6.5** The following table details the archaeological potential ascribed to the Site by period and an assessment of the likely archaeological importance of any remains of those periods should they survive.

Table 5: Assessed Archaeological Potential and Importance by period

Period	Archaeological Potential	Archaeological Importance
Prehistoric	High	Regional (medium)
Roman	High	Regional (medium)
Saxon/Early Medieval	Medium	Local (low)
Medieval	Medium	Local (low)
Post-medieval/Modern	High	Local (low)

- 6.6** On the basis of available evidence, it is considered that the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and the policies adopted by Gravesham Borough Council. The Site has been subject to desk based assessment and the archaeological potentials and importance have been assessed. The proposals do not impact on any designated archaeological sites.
- 6.7** The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be discussed and agreed with the nominated archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.

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1897 25-Inch County Series Ordnance Survey plan

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2024 Google Satellite Image

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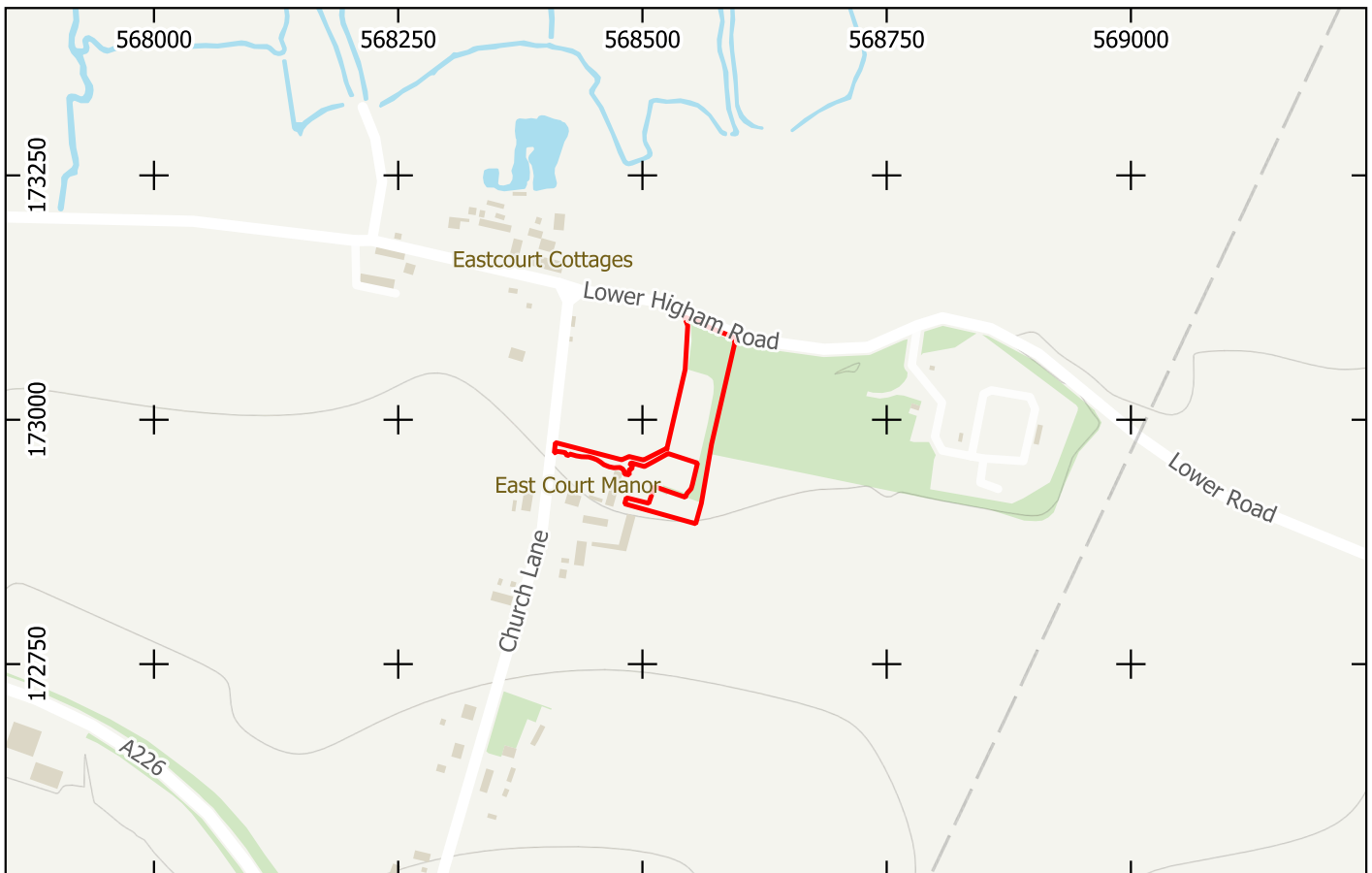
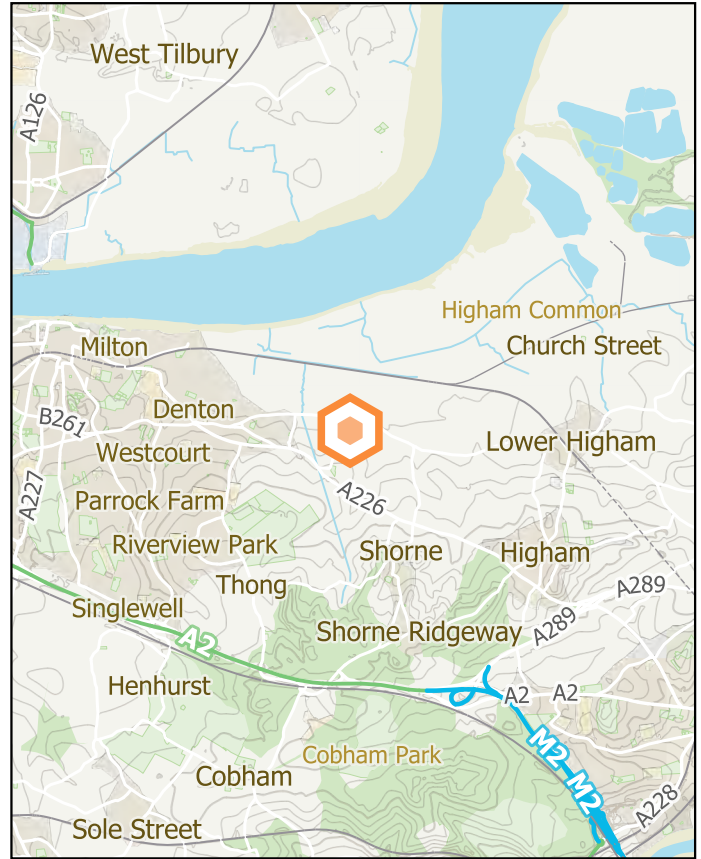
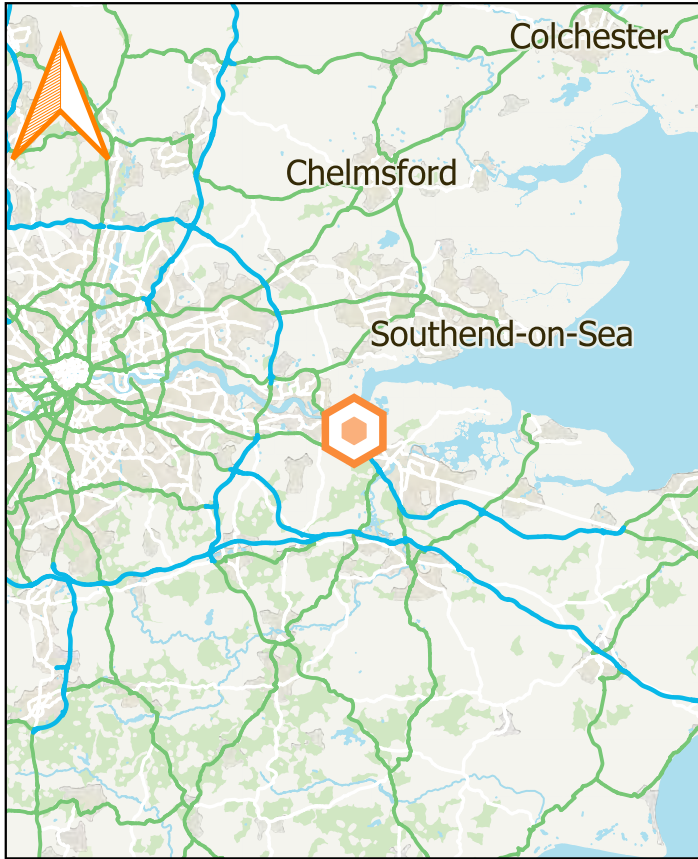
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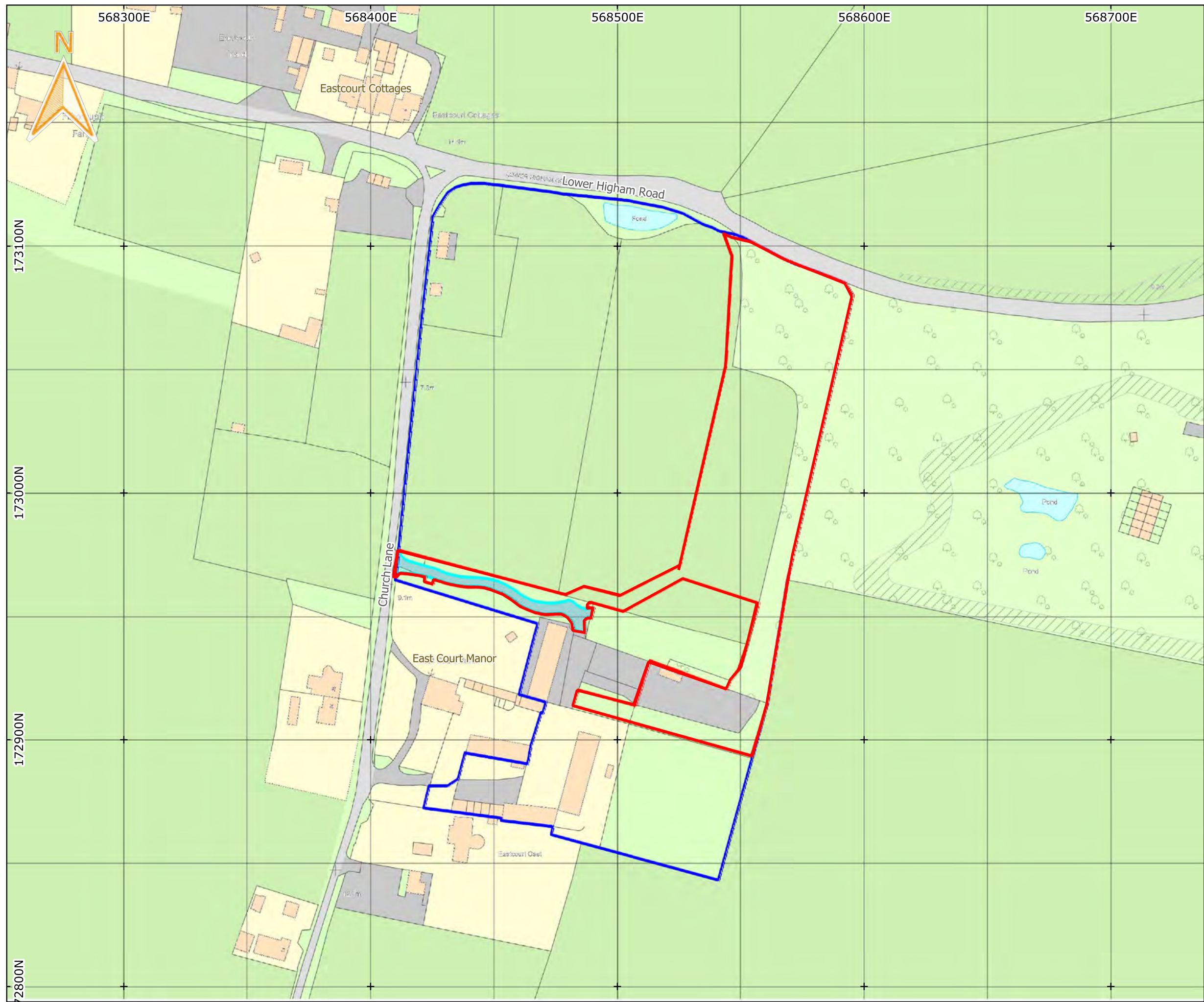
8. Figures



**East Court Farm,
Church Lane, Gravesend,
Kent DA12 2NZ**

Figure 1
Site Location Plan





Key:

Site Boundary

Blue area denotes land ownership

HCUK GROUP

**East Court Farm,
Church Lane, Gravesend,
Kent DA12 2NZ**

Figure 2

Detailed Location Plan
(provided by client)

Project No. 10310A | 13/5/2025 | Drawn By: JM