

INVICTA ARCHAEOLOGICAL



S E R V I C E S L T D

## **Archaeological Evaluation at Land North of Barton Road, St Nicolas at Wade**

**Planning reference: F/TH/23/0026**

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## SUMMARY

A trial trench archaeological evaluation took place on land at Barton Road, St Nicolas-at-Wade, Thanet, Kent. The evaluation was warranted due to the archaeological importance of the area.

The Evaluation revealed a consistent stratigraphic sequence across the site consisting of deep colluvium overlying the natural geology. No archaeological remains were encountered. The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and has assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING BACKGROUND

1.1 This scheme of works sets out details of a project specification by Invicta Archaeological Services Ltd for an archaeological field evaluation at Land North of Barton Road, St Nicolas at Wade, Kent, (centred at TR 25980 66325) at the request of the client.

1.2 Planning permission (23/0026) has been granted for the erection of 1No single storey 3-bed dwelling (self-build).

1.3 The local planning authority's planning officer has recommended that an archaeological field evaluation be carried out before invasive groundworks begin, to satisfy **Condition 04** which states.

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, have secured the implementation of (i) archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; (ii) following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further*

*archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.4 This document is a project specification confirming the nature and methodology of the field evaluation to be undertaken by the approved archaeological contractor. The trial trench evaluation detailed in the document will be the first phase of archaeological works. If significant archaeology is recovered further phases of archaeological works may be required, which include, but is not limited to, full excavation, post excavation, publication or a watching brief. If further archaeological works are required, this will need to be agreed and adhere to the specifications agreed with the Kent County Council Archaeological Officer in the first instance.

1.5 Due to the potential for remains of high archaeological importance on the site itself, a field evaluation is warranted to protect any archaeological deposits which may be damaged or lost by the proposed development.

## **2. GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY**

2.1 St Nicholas at Wade lies atop a ridgetop which falls away towards the marshes and River Wantsum. The surrounding area of St Nicholas is characterised as an undulating chalk farmland with ordnance benchmarks dropping from 21.519m (c.628m northeast of the site) to 3.811m (c.845m northwest of the site). The nearest OS level c.980m to the south is 8.331m.

2.2 The underlying bedrock for the PDA is Margate Chalk Member - Chalk. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 86.3 and 72.1 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. The southern area of the site has superficial deposits of Head, 1 - Clay and silt. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period (British Geological Survey, 2023).

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In the western part of the Isle of Thanet, St Nicholas-at-Wade is a small village located on a hill. The name comes from the Saint to whom the church is dedicated (St Nicholas, the patron Saint of sailors) and its proximity to the 'Wantsume', a channel which separated the Isle of Thanet from the mainland. The channel was so shallow that it could be crossed by 'wading', from the Anglo Saxon "wadan" and Latin "vado" ('to wade') or "Ad Vadum," ('wading place').
- 3.2 The Wantsume was at once over a mile wide and guarded at either side by the Roman forts of Reculver and Richborough. Remnants of the Roman shipbuilding sites have been uncovered between St Nicholas-at-Wade and the nearby village of Sarre. Over time, the Wantsume silted up and is now represented by two small rivers, the Wanstum and the Stour.
- 3.3 The landscape surrounding the site indicates occupation in the form of old field boundaries or small enclosures (HER: TR26NE292) c.59m to the west, rectilinear enclosures (HER: TR26NE1189) c. 268m northeast and c.350m southwest (HER: TR25636613) and field systems and possible driveway (HER: TR26NE1190) c.266m to the east.
- 3.4 A prehistoric mortuary landscape is also indicated through cropmarks of a double ditched concentric ring ditch c.188m to the west (HER: TR26NE96) and three ring ditches c.350m to the east (HER: TR26NE67; TR26NE27).
- 3.5 Medieval occupation is seen through the remains of a medieval pier or quay, c.300m to the west (HER: TR26NE145). Reportedly found at Down Barton Farm during construction work in the 1930s, this is now the site of a cow barn. A cemetery of unknown date was also reportedly discovered during work to dig post holes. No further information about this discovery is known. Down Barton Farm was reportedly the site of an ancient manor, but the current farmhouse appears to be early Georgian (HER: TR26NE145).
- 3.6 For the post medieval period, a chalk pit is located at Down Barton Farm, c.166m southwest (HER: TR26NE209). It is marked on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map and appears on the 2nd edition c.1896 as 'Old Chalk Pit'. The pit boundary is still visible on the 3rd and 4th edition

maps of c.1906-1940. The site also is marked on the present days Ordnance Survey map as 'disused pit' (TR 26 NE 209).

### **Aerial imaging**

3.7 The recently published Aerial Imaging Mapping Explorer by Historic England shows several cropmarks surrounding the site (Figure 4). A ring ditch can be seen c.208m to the northwest of the site with additional enclosures, which are mapped to c.106m from the site to the northwest.

3.8 OS mapping between 1885 and 1965 show the site as open and arable farmland. Google Earth imaging shows the site being enclosed between 2003 and 2007, with a rectangular area of disturbance evident on the 2007 imaging. The disturbance is c.53m by c.38m, which includes the short section of road to the southern boundary of the site, fronting the Down Barton Road. By 2007, a short section of hedge is added to the southern area of the site, parallel to the southern boundary, c. 19m from the road. No development is seen from 2007 to 2017, where two small outbuildings are situated directly north of the hedge.

3.9 Several planning applications have been submitted and granted for the adjoining properties of Gooseberry Farm adjacent to the north of the site and Huckleberry Farm adjacent to the east of the site. As development has taken place above ground, no archaeological work has been assigned and so the exact depth and character/extent of the cropmarks in the fields to the north and west have not yet been determined. It is possible that the area of the site investigated during the current evaluation is just south of the extent of the visible enclosure crop marking.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

4.1 A total of three evaluation trenches were placed across the area of proposed development (Figures 2, 3 and 5). Trenches were opened using a 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless bucket. Machine excavation was halted at 1.20m into the natural geology where no archaeological deposits or features were observed. The trenches were cleaned by hand and photographed.

4.2 A full photographic archive of the trenches was made in digital format. Deposits and cuts were recorded using IAS context sheets and trench recording sheets.

4.3 The evaluation was attended by Vince Burrows and Tegan Meaney on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

4.4 Curatorial monitoring was undertaken by KCC Archaeological Officer Simon Mason via email.

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 TRENCH 1 (Plates 1 and 2)**

5.1.1 Trench 1 was oriented NNW-NNE and measured 26m in length and a maximum depth of 1.17m.

5.1.2 The natural (102) was encountered at an average depth of 0.78m and consisted of medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles. The natural was capped by subsoil (102) consisting of medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps and frequent natural flint nodules.

5.1.3 A sondage was excavated in the eastern end of the trench to test the depth of the natural silt clay deposit. The natural clay was excavated to a depth of 1.17m, where excavation ceased due to the depth and saturation of ground conditions. The underlying natural chalk was not encountered.

5.1.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

### **5.2 TRENCH 2 (Plates 3 and 4)**

5.2.1 Trench 2 was oriented SSW-SSE and measured 17.80m in length and cut to a maximum depth of 0.83m.

5.2.2 A large tree bowl truncated the trench at its SSW end and consisted of a light grey compacted silty clay (203) [204] which cut through the subsoil (202). The tree had fallen in an SSW direction leaving the characteristic undercut bowl shape under the topsoil and into the natural.

5.2.3 The natural (202) was encountered at an average depth of 0.80m and consisted of medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles.

The natural was capped by subsoil (202) consisting of medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps and frequent natural flint nodules.

5.2.4 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

### **5.3 TRENCH 3 (Plates 5 and 6)**

5.3.1 Trench 3 was oriented NNE-SSW and measured 16m in length and cut to a maximum depth of 0.90m.

5.3.2 The natural (302) was encountered at an average depth of 0.86m and consisting of medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles. The natural was capped by subsoil (302) consisting of medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps and frequent natural flint nodules.

5.3.3 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

6.1 A consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded within the trenches, with subsoil capping the silty clay colluvium, which caps the underlying natural chalk bedrock. The sondage during the current evaluation, at a depth of 1.17m, did not encounter the natural chalk. The natural colluviums on the directly adjacent property during an excavation measured nearly 3m deep above the Margate natural chalk (*per comms*). Approximately 100m north of the evaluated site, the chalk rises to an average depth of 0.50m.

6.2 Approximately 80m north of the PDA lies a substantial number of prehistoric cropmarks including enclosures, field ditches pits and a double ringed Bronze Age barrow. These features do not seem to extend to the south into the evaluated area, with aerial imaging suggesting they may terminate c.78m to the northwest. The results from this work can aid and inform the County Archaeologist of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals of the site. Any further works on the PDA, specifically to the northern boundary would benefit from predevelopment investigation, to determine if the crop marking extends into this area.



## 7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

7.1 Invicta Archaeological Services Ltd (IAS) would like to thank the Client for the commissioning of the project and allowing access to the site. IAS would also like to thank KCC Archaeological Officer Simon Mason for his advice and guidance. Thanks are also extended to Jonathon Maddon (DigitiseThis) for the site survey and illustrations. The fieldwork was undertaken by Vince Burrows and Tegan Meaney. The report was written by Elissia Burrows (BA Hons, MSc, PhD Researcher) and Vince Burrows.

## REFERENCES

British Geological Survey (2023)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

English Heritage, 2002. *The Centre for Archaeological Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology*

Hasted, Edward (1800). *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*. Accessed via [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Historic England, 2002. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*

Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER)/Heritage Gateway

National Heritage List for England (NHLE)

National Library of Scotland – Ordnance Survey mapping

## APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXTS

<b>Trench 1</b>			
Dimensions: L: 25m W: 1.80m D: 1.14m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
100	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay with frequent chalk lump and frequent small natural flint nodules	0.36m
101	Subsoil	Medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps, frequent natural flint nodules	0.42m
102	Natural	Medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles	0.78m+
<b>Trench 2</b>			
Dimensions: L: 25m W: 1.80m D: 1m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
200	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay with frequent chalk lump and frequent small natural flint nodules	0.30m
201	Subsoil	Medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps, frequent natural flint nodules	0.50m
202	Natural	Medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles	0.80m+
203	Fill of tree throw	Compacted light grey silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and occasional natural flint nodule	0.30m- 0.80m+
204	Cut of tree throw	Irregular oval with concave steep sides. Aligned SSW	2m length
<b>Trench 3</b>			
Dimensions: L: 15m W: 1.80m D: 0.90m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
300	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay with frequent chalk lump and frequent small natural flint nodules	0.36m
301	Subsoil	Medium brown/grey silty clay with frequent small chalk lumps,	0.50m

		frequent natural flint nodules	
302	Natural	Medium orange/brown silty clay with occasional small natural flint nodules and water-rolled pebbles	0.86m+

**APPENDIX 2 - Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

**Site Name:** Land North of Barton Road.

**Site Code:** DBS-EV-23

**Site Address:** Barton Road, St Nicolas-at-Wade, Thanet, Kent.

**Summary:** Invicta Archaeological Services Ltd (IAS) carried out an Archaeological Evaluation on land at Barton Road prior to development. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

**District/Unitary:** Thanet District Council

**Period(s):** Negative

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures):** TR 25980-66325

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** December 2023

**Unit undertaking recording:** Invicta Archaeological Services Ltd (IAS)

**Geology:** Margate Chalk Formation with superficial deposits of Head Clay and Silt.

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Burrows, V (2023). Archaeological Evaluation at Barton Road, Thanet, Kent.

**Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate):**

No archaeological features or deposits encountered.

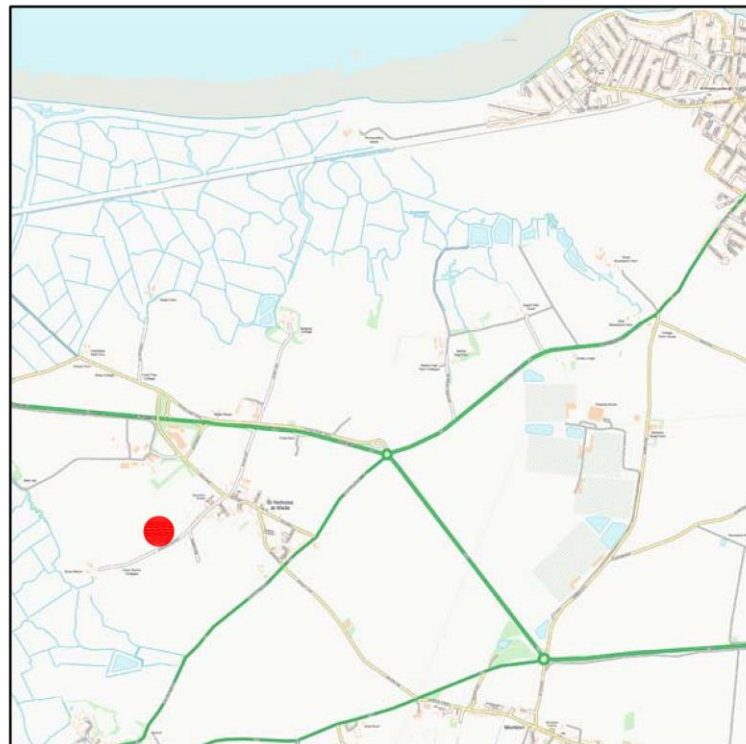
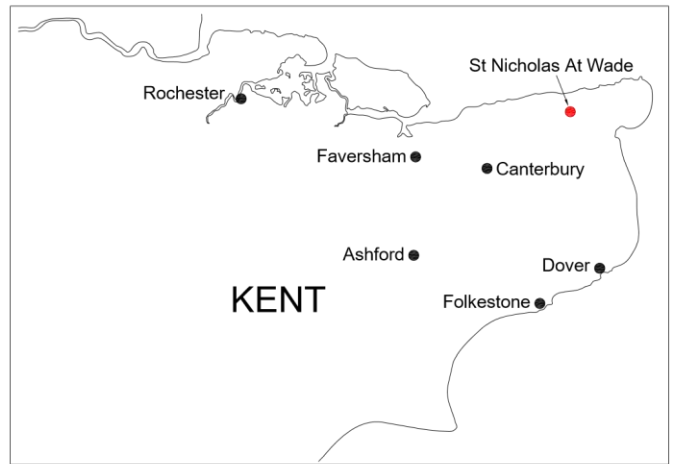
**Location of archive/finds:** IAS Archaeology, 258 Anzio Crescent, Burgoyne Heights, Guston, Near Dover, CT15 5LZ

**Contact at Unit:** Elissia Burrows

NOT TO SCALE



NOT TO SCALE



1:50000@A4



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

0m

5km

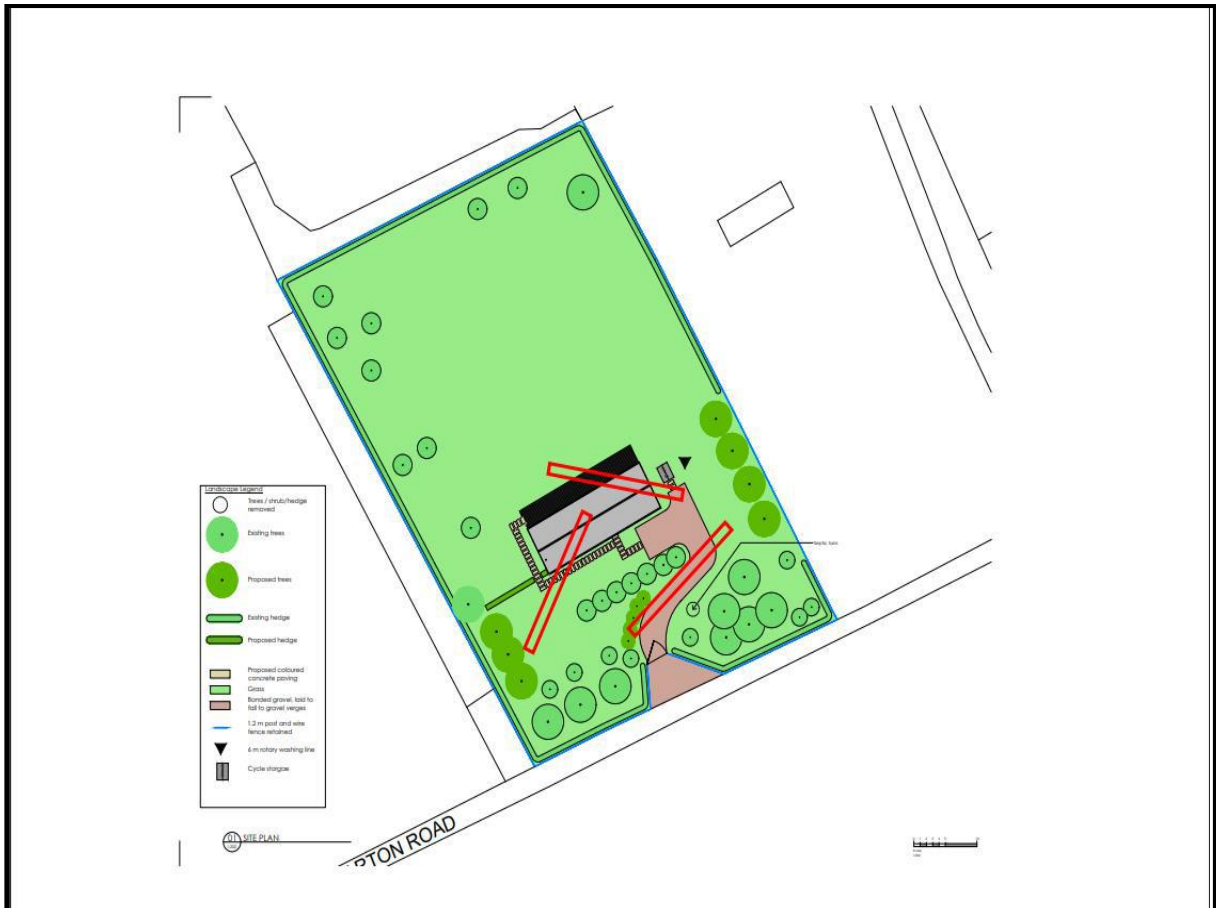


Figure 2 Trench positioning in relation to proposed development

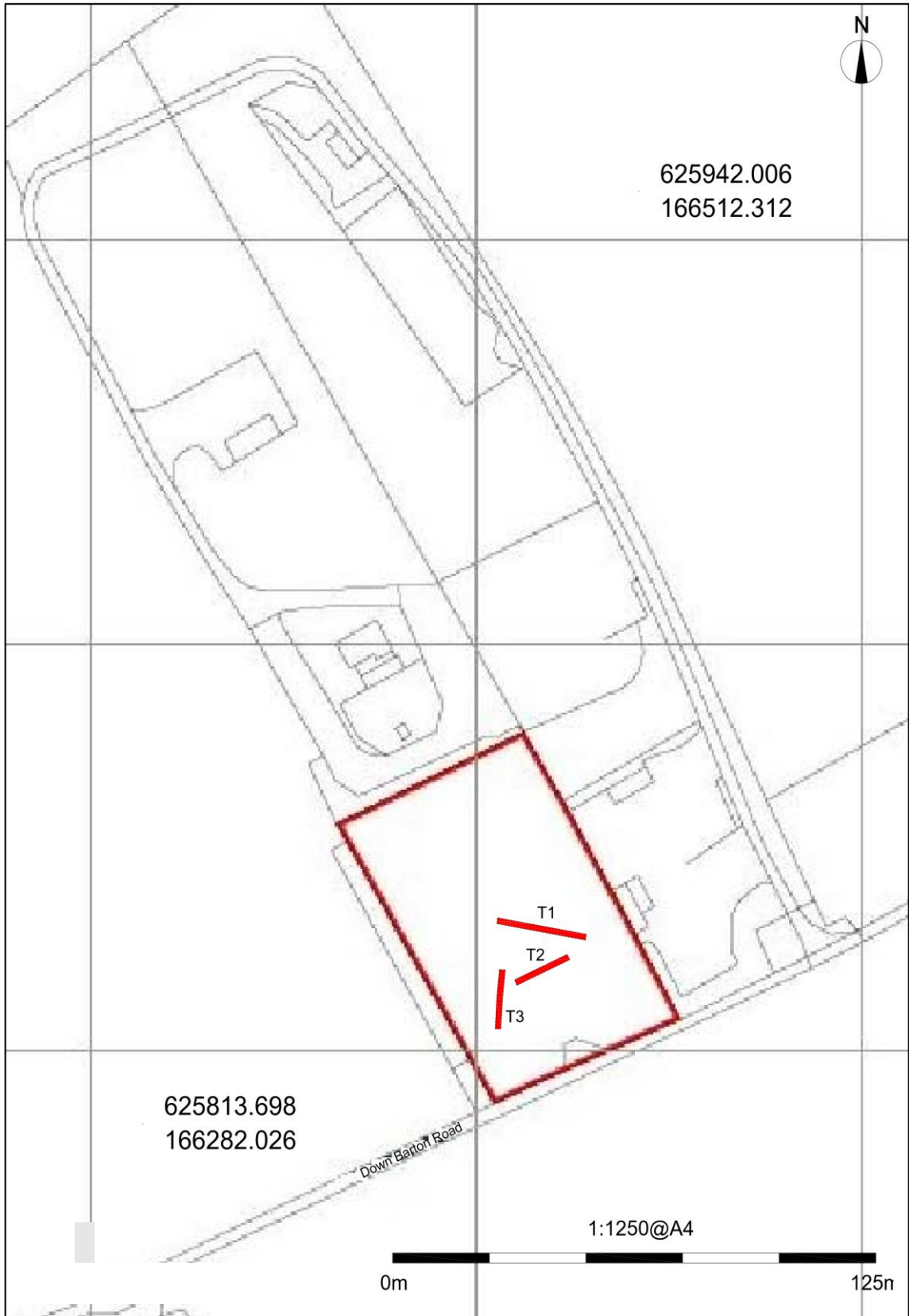


Figure 3 Trench block plan 1:1250

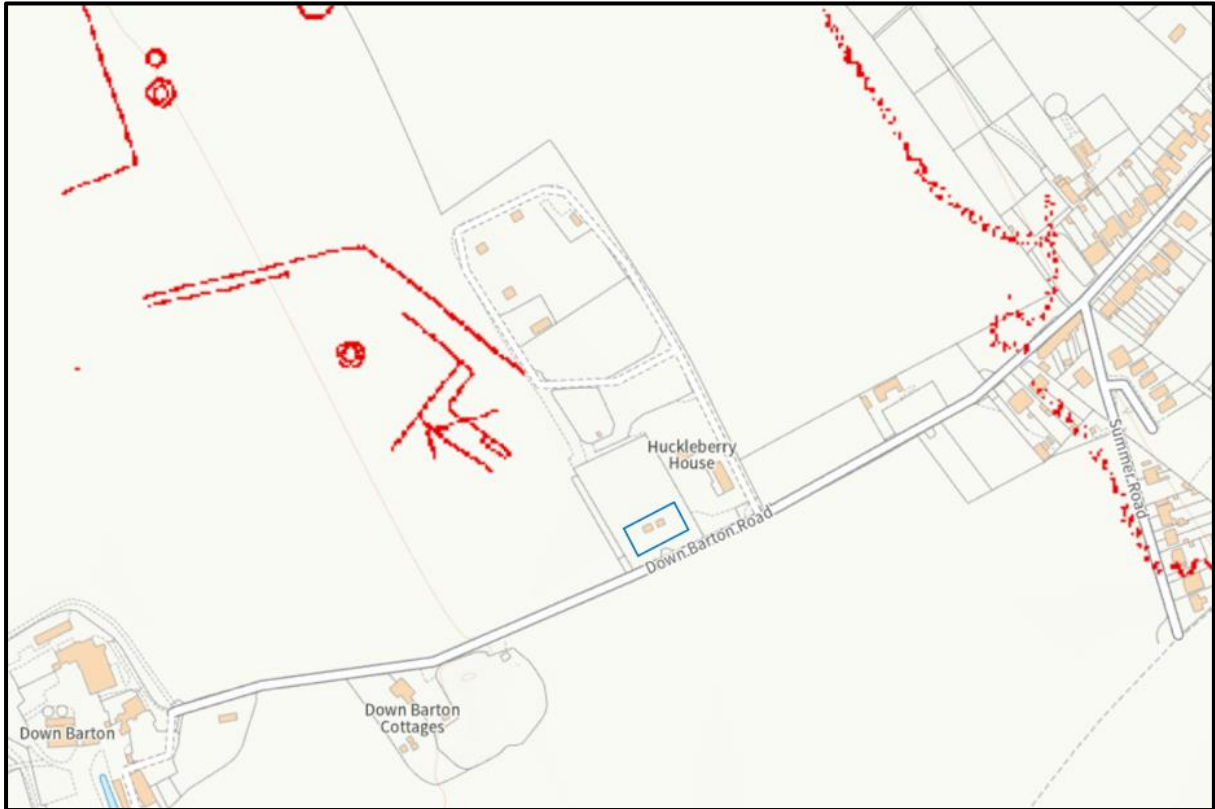
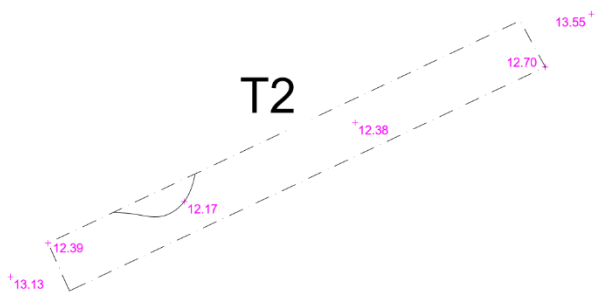
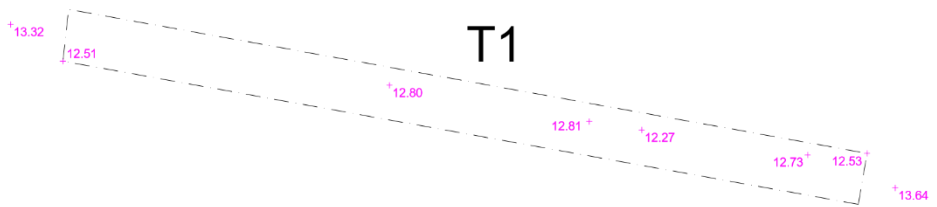


Figure 4 Evaluation area (blue square) in relation to crop marking data (Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer - Historic England)



+ 625901.102  
+ 166339.207



+ 625927.232  
+ 166301.015

1:200@A4



Figure 5 Trench plan 1:200





Figure 6 Google Earth imaging 2003. Site boundary in red



Figure 7 Google Earth imaging 2007. Site boundary in red



*Plate 1 Small sondage in Trench 1 showing depth of alluvium*



*Plate 2 Trench 1 plan with sondage facing west*



*Plate 3 Trench 2 plan facing east*



*Plate 4 Trench 3 plan facing north*



*Plate 5 Tree bowl within Trench 2, facing northwest*