

# Archaeological Evaluation at St Nicholas Court, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent

NGR: 625960 166865



Planning application F/TH/13/0597 & TH/13/0598LBC

## **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road

Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

[info@swatarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@swatarchaeology.co.uk) [www.swatarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.swatarchaeology.co.uk)

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# Archaeological Evaluation at St Nicholas Court, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent

Date of report: 12/04/15



**Plate 1. Aerial view showing the site prior to development.**

**(GoogleEarth 7/9/2013, eye alt 97m).**

## **1.0 Summary**

1.1. From 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015 Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Evaluation in advance of ground works for a swimming pool complex in the garden area located to the south of the main house at St Nicholas Court (Figure 9).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the owners.

1.3. The archaeological work was undertaken in one phase of a 15m x 15m single evaluation trench in the area of the proposed swimming pool (Plate 7).

1.4. The Archaeological Evaluation was to examine for evidence of:

- Formal garden, horticultural as well as ornamental, pathways, drainage, planting beds, greenhouses etc
- Evidence for medieval formal planting, landscaping, structures
- Evidence for activity from the prehistoric period onwards

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is F/TH/13/0597 & TH/13/05981LBC.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential was highlighted in the KCC Specification (August 2014) the Archaeological Evaluation revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

## **2.0 Introduction**

### **2.1 Planning Background**

Planning application F/TH/13/0597 & TH/13/05981LBC was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Canterbury City Council who requested that a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable be undertaken in order to record any archaeological remains uncovered prior to the development work. The following two conditions (1 & 2) were attached to the planning consent:

*No development shall take place until the applicant or the developer or their successors in title has made arrangements for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written 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.*

*And,*

*(2) No development shall take place until details of foundation designs and any other proposals involving below ground excavation have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason: To ensure that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains.*

### **3.0 Schedule of Visits**

Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA from SWAT Archaeology supervised the excavation on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 28th March 2015.

### **4.0 Aims and Objectives**

4.1. The reason for the excavation were to examine:

- Evidence for formal garden, horticultural as well as ornamental, pathways, drainage, planting beds, greenhouses etc
- Evidence for medieval formal planting, landscaping, structures
- Evidence for activity from the prehistoric period onwards

4.2. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site archaeological evaluation took place.

4.3. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the archaeological excavation exercise.

### **5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background**

5.1 The KCC HER archive shows that there are extensive crop marks in the surrounding fields including several ring ditches (TR 26 NE 174, TR 26 NE 26 & 27).

Archaeological work associated with the improvements to the A299 and the erection of agricultural buildings at the farm has revealed early Iron Age pottery, a Roman amphora (probably associated with a cremation burial), Roman pottery sherds, human skeletal remains and ditches and pits which may all suggest that a Romano-British settlement site existed in the vicinity.

A WWII pillbox once stood in the field to the west, part of a line to the west of St Nicholas. Trenching associated with this line could be in the field.

5.2 HER entries include:

TR 26 NE 27. Crop marks of several ring ditches have been reported near St. Nicholas Court Farm. They are possibly the remains of Bronze Age barrows.

TR 26 NE 68. Three ring ditch crop mark features and a linear feature have also been identified near to St Nicholas at Wade.

TR 26 NE 112 Cropmark of a ring ditch with an internal feature.

TR 26 NE 162. A Mid Iron Age occupation site and an early Roman wall were found during work in advance of road development.

TR 26 NE 202. The remains of a Romano – British settlement were found at St Nicholas Court Farm. The possible site of a Roman villa. (TSMR Site 0304-1).

TR26 NE 240. A World War 11 pillbox formally located near Potten Street.

The proposed development site is located to the west of St Nicholas Court Farm and centered NGR 625960 166865. The site is on high ground overlooking the relict Wantsum Channel to the west and adjacent to a solar farm immediately to the east (SWAT Archaeology 20110. The proposed development area is a garden south of the main house with the farm bounded to the north by the Thanet Way (A299), to the east by Potton Street, and to the south by open farm land. The British Geological Survey (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home>) shows the site as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation with Superficial Deposits of Head Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel. The geology revealed on site (Plates 4-7) was a medium to dark brown sandy silty clay.

### 5.3 Recent Archaeological Events

In September 2011 SWAT Archaeology conducted an Archaeological Watching Brief on the adjacent field to the east in advance of the construction of a ‘solar farm’ to the north of the area of the proposed development of a swimming pool.

In Trench 1 a cremation group of Roman pots had been disturbed by the machine which had been fitted with a toothed ditching bucket.

The cremation group had been so disturbed that one vessel and its contents (Cremation 2) were on the spoil heap and the other (Cremation 1) had about 70% of its pot truncated. The remains of the two pots were collected and excavation of the remainder of the surviving pot were photographed and drawn prior to removal.

The pottery was analysed by the pottery specialist and Cremation 1 is dated to between c.50-75 AD and Cremation 2 to between c.75-100 AD.

Subsequently 20 worked flints were retrieved from trench runs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in a reasonably tight distribution pattern. The lithic specialist reports that:

“This assemblage comprised twenty pieces of worked flint, with most contexts producing only a single example. One round ‘thumbnail’ scraper of likely Beaker Period/Early Bronze Age date was recovered from Trench 1. [101], but patination suggests it is likely to be residual in that context. Most of the other flintwork was unpatinated, as expected in areas of brickearth geology, but showed damage from the processes of natural abrasion, ploughing and perhaps trampling”.

This suggests that any finds not derived from modern ploughsoil contexts had seen a degree of exposure prior to incorporation within their context, or perhaps derived from former

ploughsoil contexts. Thumbnail scraper aside, many of the other tools and flakes were simple, expedient or sometimes crude pieces which would not be out of place in broadly Bronze Age/Later Bronze Age (or later) assemblages. One small utilised flake from Trench 1 [102] and a knife from Trench 5 [501] could be of Mesolithic/Earlier Neolithic or Neolithic date, but a later date cannot be discounted" (SWAT Archaeology 2011).

## **6.0 Methodology**

6.1. The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with the KCC Archaeological Specification, and it also complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (IfA: 1994, revised Oct 2008).

6.2. The works comprised the excavation of a 15m x 15m evaluation trench, the inspection of any revealed subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds (Fig. 9).

6.3. The evaluation was carried out in one phase.

6.4. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist from SWAT Archaeology.

6.5. Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.6. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.7. The archaeological excavation was carried out in accordance with current IfA Standards and Guidance, (IfA: 2008), and the methodology itemised in the Archaeological Evaluation Specification produced by KCC Heritage (2015).

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 General**

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The topsoil (101) was found to be about 55cm thick across the area of the evaluation trench and revealed the subsoil (102) a yellow brown clay (Plate 4). Soil samples were taken from the topsoil at 20cm 'spits' and retained for processing if thought applicable.

## **8.0 Finds**

No buried archaeological features were located in the excavation phase and no finds were retrieved from the topsoil.

## **9.0 Discussion**

The phases of works on the site included watching the strip of the turf and then the excavation of the topsoil to the subsoil interface. No features were revealed cutting into the subsoil and no artefacts retrieved from the topsoil (Plates 4-7).

A regressive map exercise was undertaken to see if a historic formal garden could be identified. The 1760 Andrews Dury map is of such a small scale that identification of a walled formal garden is not possible as is indeed the 1798 OSSD map (Figure 10). The OS map of 1873 shows a walled rectangular area running down slope south-west and planted with trees, grass, but no formal beds or garden structures (Figure 1).

The OS map of 1898 shows the same area but with no trees as does the 1907 map (Figures 1-2), and the 1939, 1969-70, and the 1993 map (Figures 2-6).

Google Earth aerial photographs of 1960 show the area of the proposed swimming pool to be grass whilst the 1970 photograph shows grass and a gravel path as does the 2013 photograph (Plates 1-3).

## **10.0 Conclusion**

The Archaeological Evaluation has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

## **11.0 Acknowledgments**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Jim Pace for commissioning the works and Wendy Rogers KCC for her specification and research on the site.

Dr Paul Wilkinson, MCIfA

## **References**

HER data (KCC 2015)

IFA (1994 & 2008) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations

KCC (2015) Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at St Nicholas Court, St Nicholas at Wade



## APPENDIX 1

## KCC HER summary form

<b>Site Name:</b> St Nicholas Court	
<b>Site Address:</b> St Nicholas at Wade, Kent	
<b>Summary:</b> An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out in March 2015 on the above site. No archaeological remains were revealed.	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Thanet	<b>Parish:</b> St Nicholas at Wade
<b>Period(s):</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> 625960 166865 <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)</b>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> Archaeological Evaluation	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 23-28 March 2015	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Geology:</b> Clay	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> Archaeological Evaluation at St Nicholas Court, St Nicholas at Wade, Kent P. Wilkinson	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> SWAT Archaeology	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> P Wilkinson	<b>Date:</b> 12/04/2015

## Plates



Plate 2. Google Earth 1960 (above) and 2007 (below)





**Plate 4. Excavation (Looking north-east )**



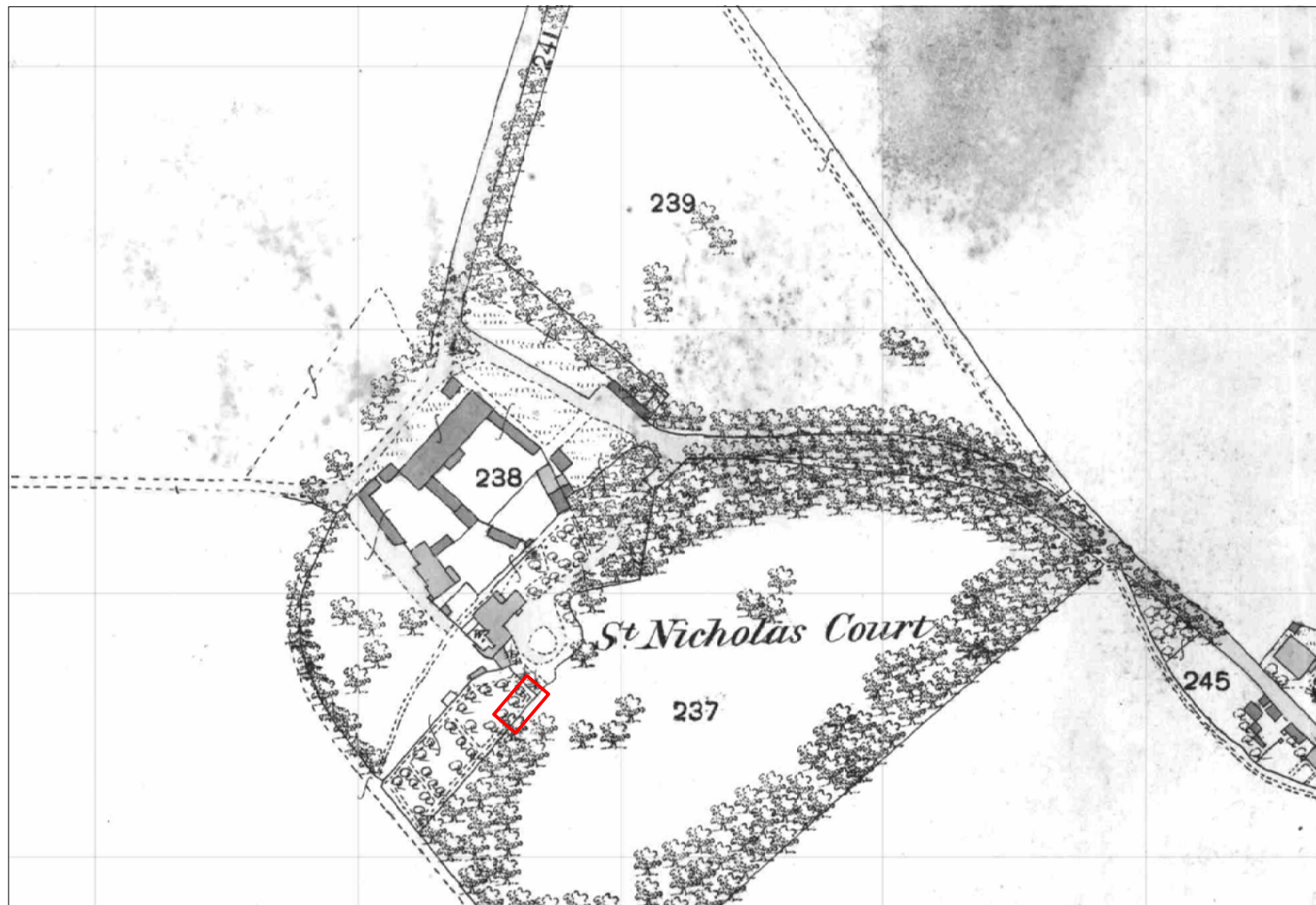
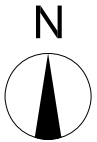
**Plate 5. Excavation (looking south-east)**



Plate 6, 7. Section (looking east) and view of excavation trench (looking south)



625747.0mE  
167145.0mN



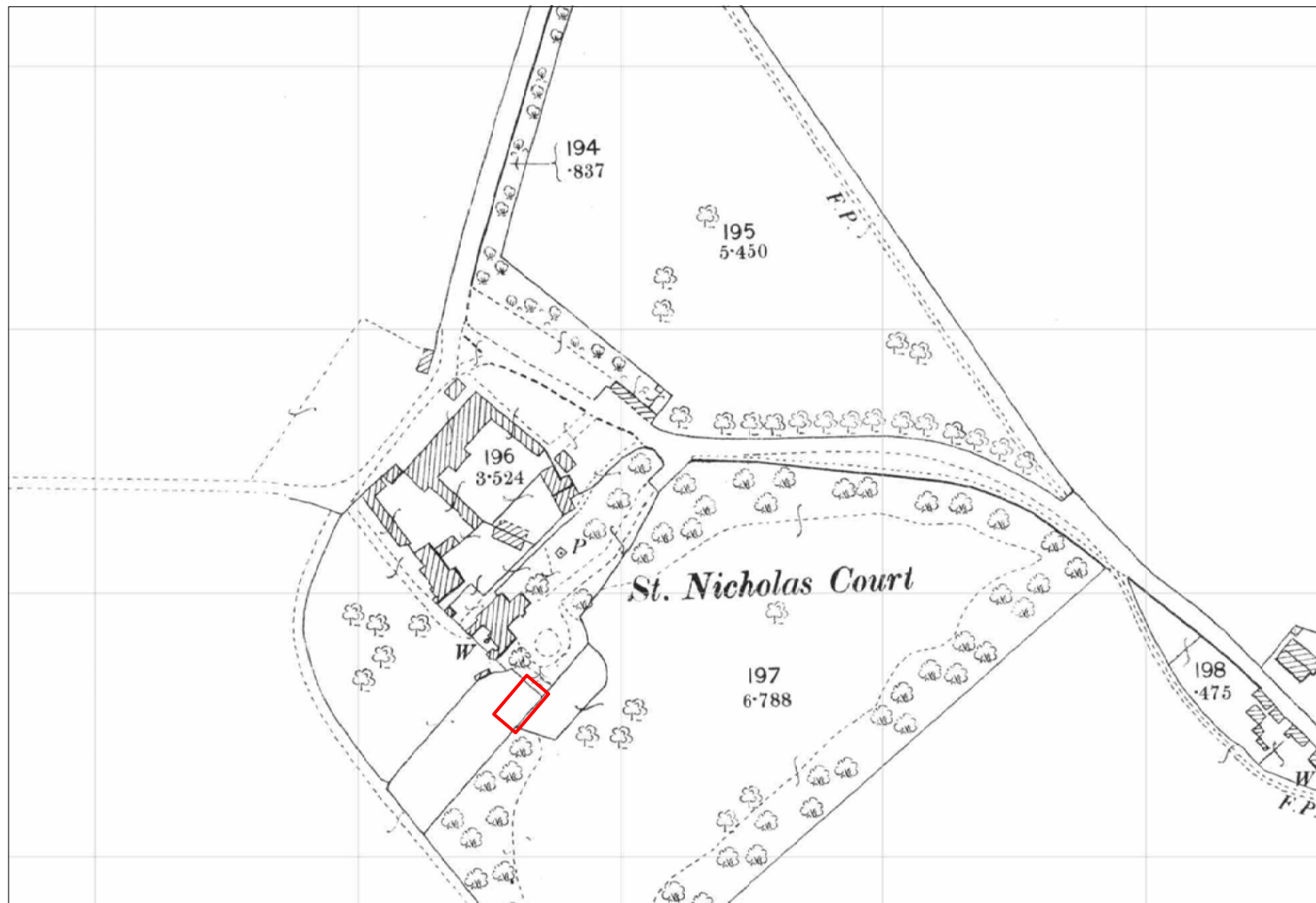
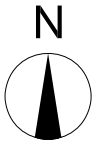
1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN



Figure 1: Historic mapping 1873

625747.0mE  
167145.0mN



1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN

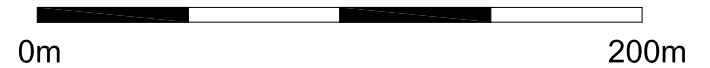
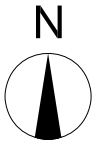


Figure 2: Historic mapping 1898

625747.0mE  
167145.0mN



1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN

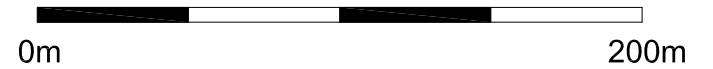
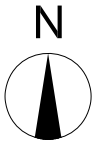


Figure 3: Historic mapping 1907

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167145.0mN



1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN

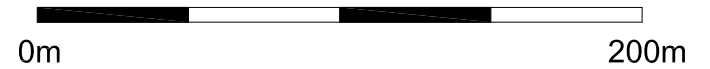
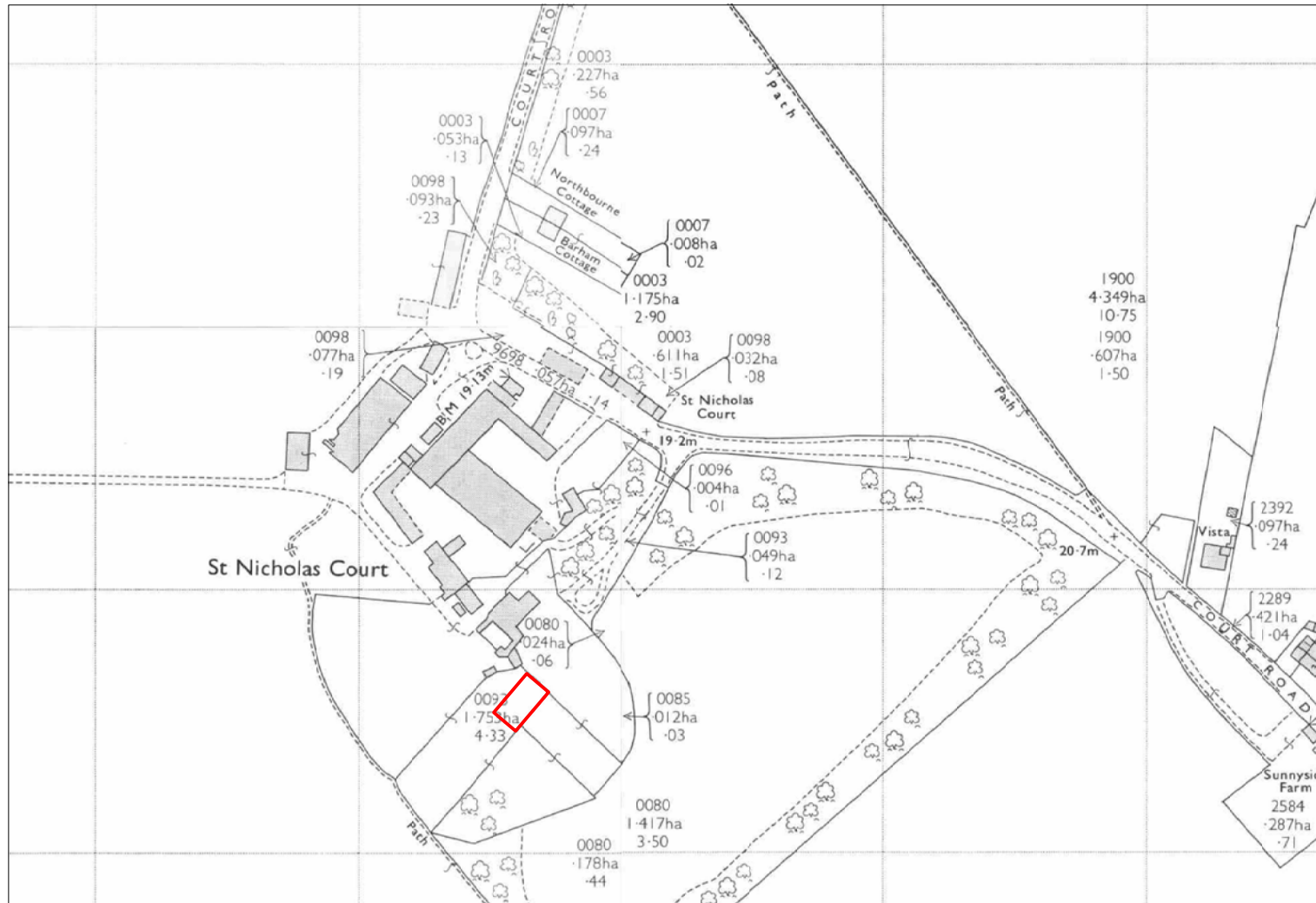
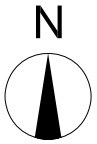


Figure 4: Historic mapping 1939



625747.0mE  
167145.0mN



1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN

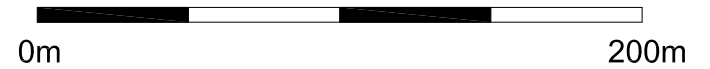
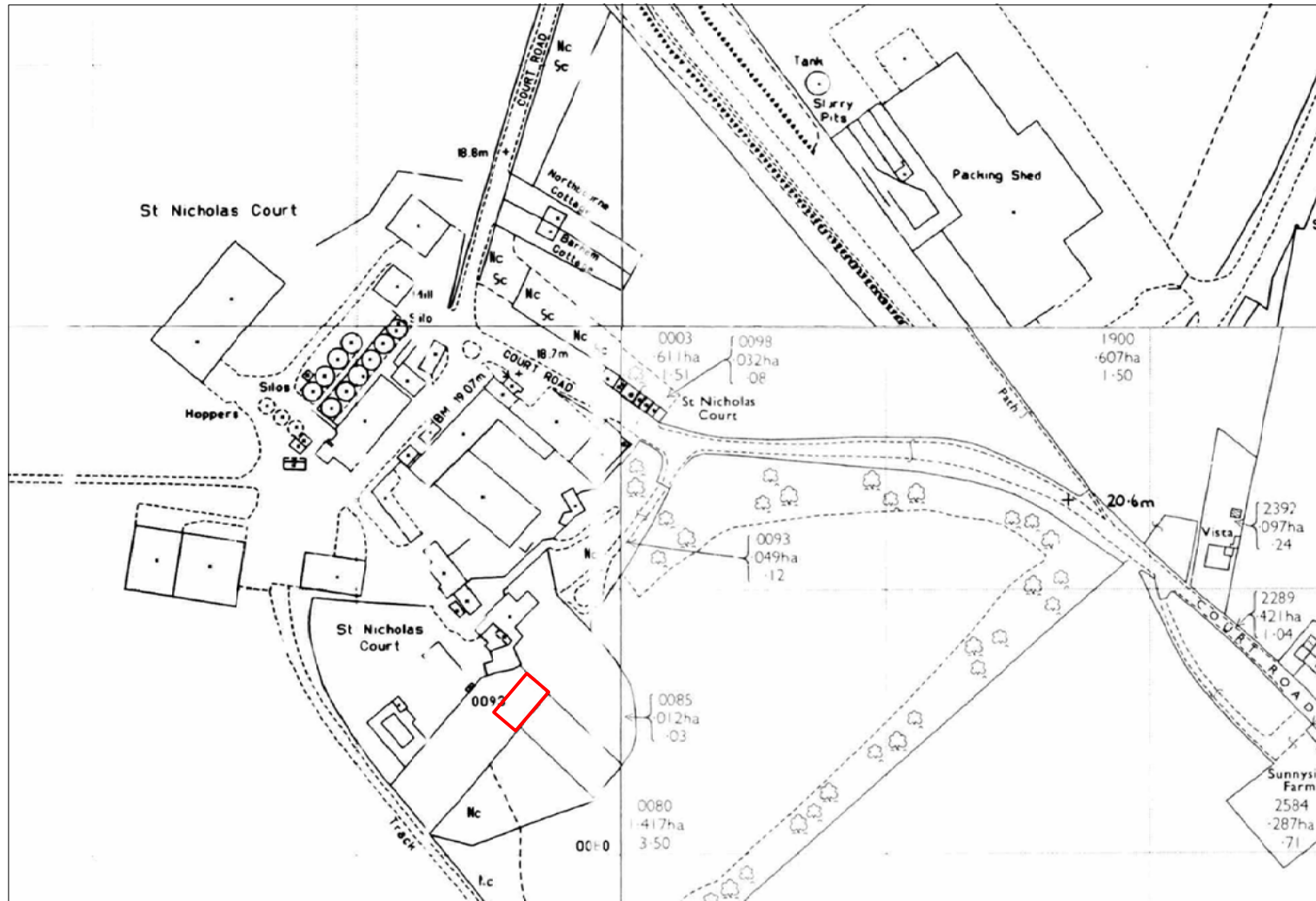
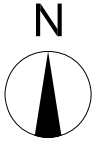


Figure 5: Historic mapping 1969-1970

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167145.0mN



1:2500@A4

626287.0mE  
166760.0mN

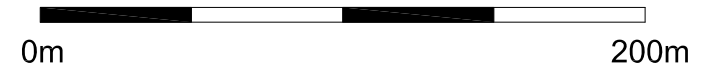
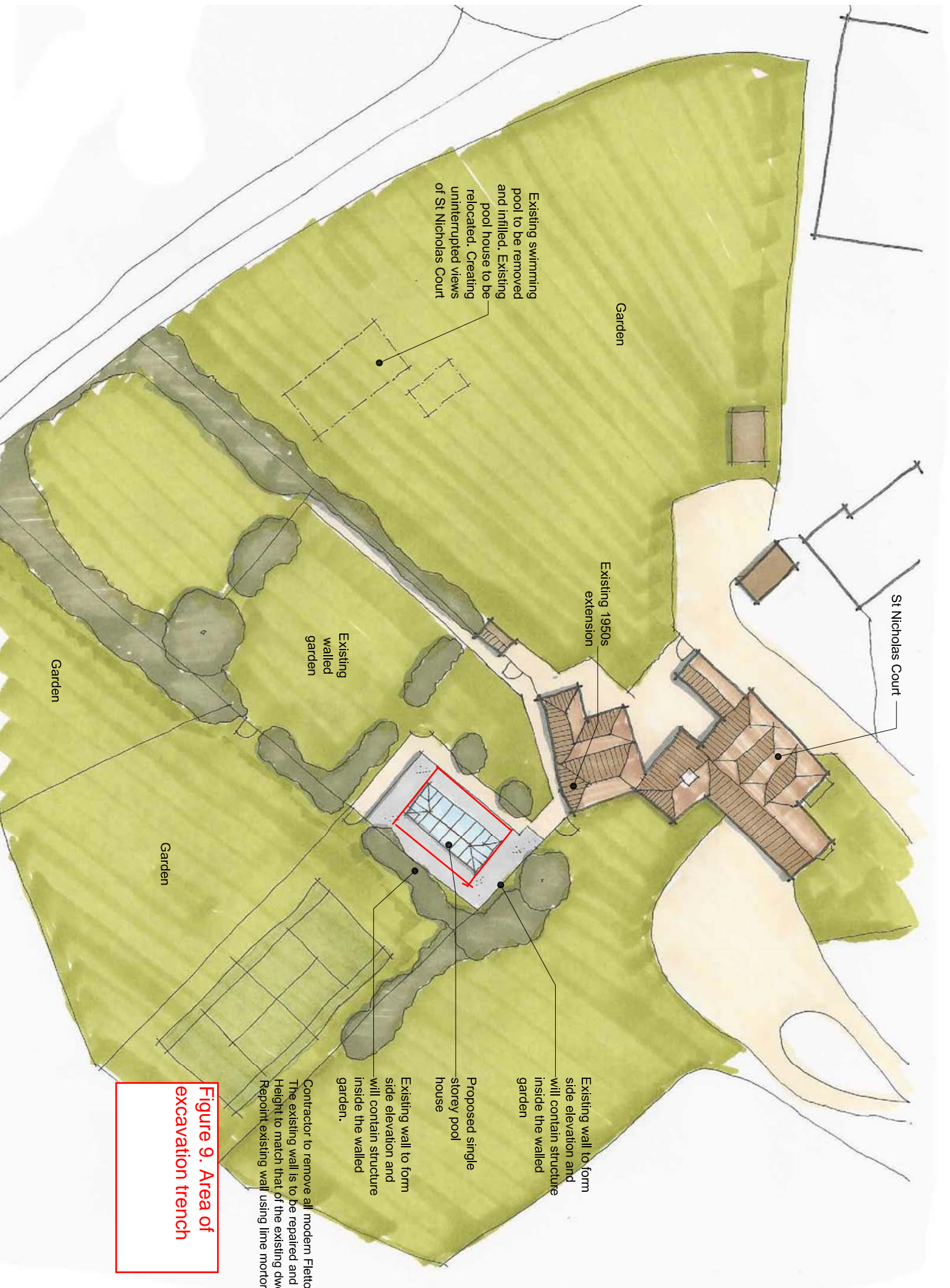
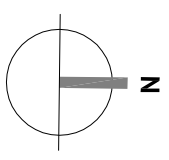
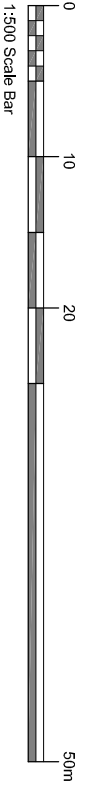


Figure 6: Historic mapping 1992-1993



**Figure 9. Area of excavation trench**



**Proposed Site Plan**  
Scale 1:500@A3

Rev A	25/8/13	Glazed link removed						
Rev.No:	Date:	Contents:						
			<b>Project:</b> St Nicholas Court, Court Road, St Nicholas at Wade. <b>Drawing Description:</b> Proposed Site Plan			<b>OS 10 Architectural &amp; Planning</b> Hoath Farm Bekesbourne Lane Canterbury, Kent CT3 4AB Tel: 01227 457523 www.os10.co.uk		
			Scale: 1:500@A3	Date: July 2013	Drawn by: LCS	Drawing No: 94 / 02		
						Checked by:		

A historical map showing a rural landscape. The left side is filled with green-tinted rectangular plots, likely agricultural fields. A large, irregularly shaped area in the center is shaded in a light tan or brown color. This central area is bounded by a dashed line and contains a small circular feature. To the right, a road or path winds through the landscape, leading to a cluster of buildings and more fields. The text 'Bellisle' is written in a cursive font on the left side of the central area, and 'S' Nicholas Court' is written in a similar font in the center of the shaded area. The overall style is that of an old, hand-drawn map with some color washes.

*Bellisle*

*S' Nicholas  
Court*

SENI