

2021

REPORT FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT STONE ACRE, COPT HILL ROAD, IGHTHAM, SEVENOAKS, KENT TN15 9DT



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Stone Acre, Copt Hill Road, Ightham,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 9DT

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report reference: DAS 0021-21

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Planning Reference: TM21/01606/RD

NGR: TQ 5858 5570

DAS Site Code: SAI21-WB



Report prepared for Tom James (Client)

By Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd Company, No 12320658

Report Number DAS 0021-21



Contents

1.0	SUMMARY	1.0
2.0	INTRODUCTION	2.0
3.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	3.0
4.0	METHODOLOGY	4.0
5.0	RESULTS	5.0
6.0	FINDS	6.0
7.0	INTERPRETATION	7.0
8.0	CONCLUSION	8.0
9.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9.0
10.0	REFERENCES	10.0
11.0	APPENDIX A – SITE IMAGES	11.0

List of Figs

- Fig 1 - 1:250000 Site Location of SAI21-WB
- Fig 2 – 1:25000 Site Location of SAI21-WB
- Fig 3 – 1:2500 Nearby Heritage Assets for SAI21-WB
- Fig 4 – 1:300 SAI21-WB Site Plan
- Fig 5 – 1:350 SAI21-WB Final Trench Plan
- Fig 6 – 1:350 SAI21-WB Final Section Locations
- Fig 7 – 1:10 Section 1 Looking East
- Fig 8 – Section 1 Looking West
- Fig 9 – 1:10 Section 2 Looking West
- Fig 10 – Looking West at Section 2
- Fig 11 – 1:30 Plan of Linear Ditch 1004/1006
- Fig 12 – 1:350 Plan of Linear Ditch 1004/1006 Overlaying 1871 OS Map
- Fig 13 - 1:10 Section 3 Looking West
- Fig 14 – Looking West at Section 3
- Fig 15 – 1:20 Section 4 Looking East
- Fig 16 – Looking East at Section 4
- Fig 17 – 1:20 Section 5 Looking West
- Fig 18 – Looking West at Section 5
- Fig 19 – 1:1000 SAI21-WB Groundworks Overlaying 1940s Aerial Map
- Fig 20 – SAI21-WB Stratigraphic Sequence





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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. An archaeological watching brief reporting on groundworks carried out at Stone Acre, Copt Hill Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 9DT.
- 1.2. No significant archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. However, some drainage features were located, and a small ditch, containing no datable material or artefacts, thought to be a water run-off associated with the topographical slope of the land's past use, perhaps in an agricultural or farmstead setting.

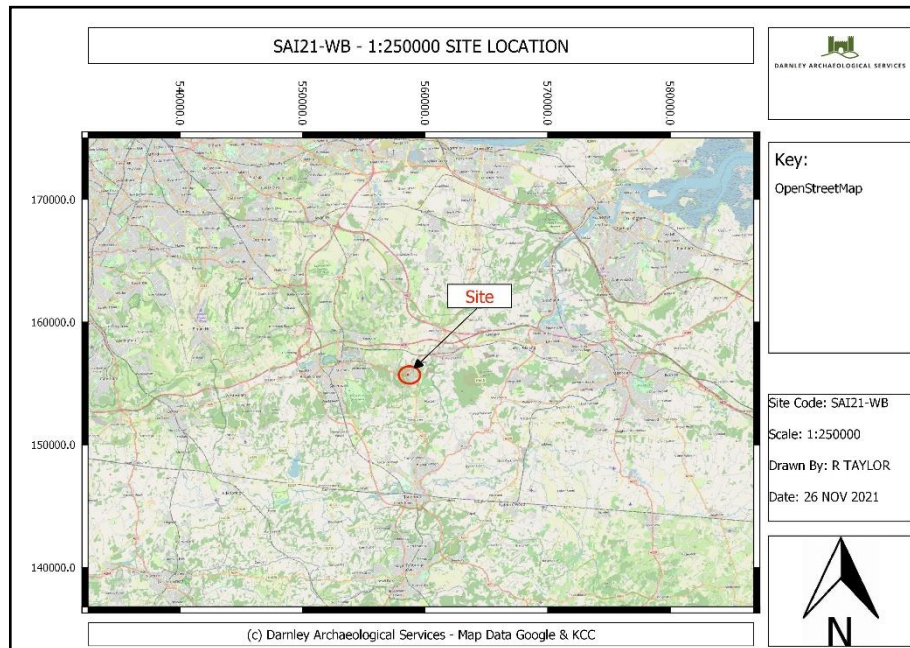
2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. An archaeological Watching Brief has been carried out on behalf of Tom James (client) on land at Stone Acre, Copt Hill Road, Ightham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 9DT. The Watching Brief aimed to record the presence of any potential archaeological resource present on the site. The site has planning permission to demolish an existing dwelling and garage and the erection of a new dwelling (see Tonbridge & Malling District Council Application Reference TM/21/01606/RD).
- 2.2. The site is approximately 500m² and centred on TQ 5858 5570. The site lies 1.5km northeast of the village of Stone Street, 1.3km north of the village of Ivy Hatch, 2.2km west of the village of Basted and 2.5km due south of the M26 motorway.
- 2.3. No archaeology is considered at risk by the proposed development.
- 2.4. The Watching Brief consisted of one large rectangular trench for the dwelling and two smaller rectangular soakaway pits. The Watching Brief aimed to record the presence of any potential archaeological resource present on the site. This work followed the Kent County Council's methodologies and guidelines in *Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16), *Planning Policy Guidance on Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15). It was carried out following the *Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (2014).



3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The site is located 1.5km northeast of the village of Stone Street, 1.3km north of the village of Ivy Hatch, 2.2km west of the village of Basted and 2.5km due south of the M26 motorway (Figs 1 & 2).



(Fig 1 – 1:250000 SAI21-WB Site Location)

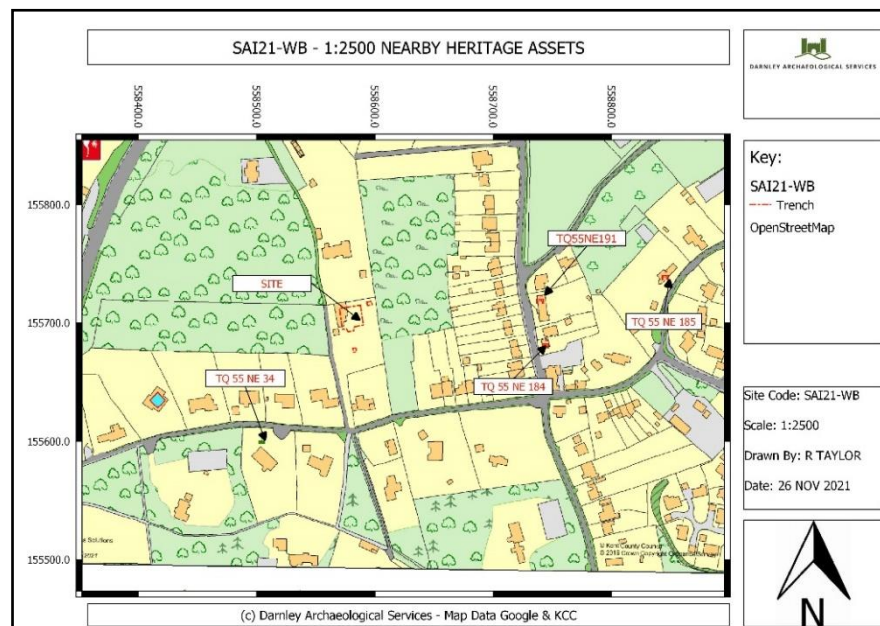


(Fig 2 – 1:25000 SAI21-WB Site Location)



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- 3.2. The site is on top of the Folkstone Formation; a sedimentary sandstone formed approximately 101 to 126 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period¹.
- 3.3. The site is relatively level at a consistent 133m(+/-2m) AOD within the site boundary.
- 3.4. There are no known previous archaeological disturbances or excavations on the site.
- 3.5. The archaeological watching brief aimed to undertake observation work to determine the presence of potential archaeological remains that may survive on the site. Under guidance from the Local Authority, the watching brief aimed to:
- Determine the nature and character of any archaeological remains.
- 3.6. There were no constraints on the archaeological monitoring.
- 3.7. The site lies near the west of Oldbury Hill, a Scheduled Monument (TQ 55 NE32) containing a large Iron Age multivallate hillfort and Palaeolithic rock shelters; south of the Oldbury conservation area, and west of the Igtham conservation area, dominated by the village, which dates from the Anglo-Saxon period and presently populated by several medieval and post-medieval buildings. A detailed study of the Kent Historic Environment Record database was also undertaken to assist the watching brief (Fig 3). The following provides nearby entries on the HER with a brief description within a 250m radius assessment area:²



(Fig 3 – 1:2500 SAI21-WB Nearby Heritage Assets)

¹ <https://mappapps.bgs.ac.uk>

² <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>



Post Medieval - the assessment area demonstrates heritage assets associated with farming and agriculture around the established village of Ightham.

TQ 55 NE 191	Listed Building (II) 1071961: THE OLD COTTAGE AND THE WORKHOUSE. Poorhouse with cottage attached at right end. Formerly the poorhouse of Ightham village. Dated 1753. Coursed rubble stone with red and blue brick quoins, band and dressings. Plain tiled roof with rear off-right stacks to centre and left. Two storeys; 3 windows on the first floor, six on the ground floor, casements, diamond lattice to centre and right. Gabled C19 porch to the right with boarded door. Early C19 cottage at right end. Coursed and galletted rubble stone with red and blue brick quoins, band and dressings. Brick cornice to the plain tiled roof, hipped to the right, half-hipped to the left, and a rear stack. Two storeys; 2 windows, casements, on the ground floor in segment-headed surrounds. Central entrance with segment-headed surround and boarded door.
TQ 55 NE 184	Listed Building (II) 1362408: HARROW COTTAGE. Cottage. Early C19. Coursed and galletted rubble stone with red brick quoins and dressings. Plain tiled hipped roof with central ridge stack. Two storeys; irregular fenestration of 2 casements on the first floor and three on the ground floor. A half-glazed door at extreme left. All openings on the ground floor with segment-headed surrounds. It is included for group value.

Medieval - the assessment area demonstrates heritage assets associated with farming and agriculture around the established medieval village of Ightham.

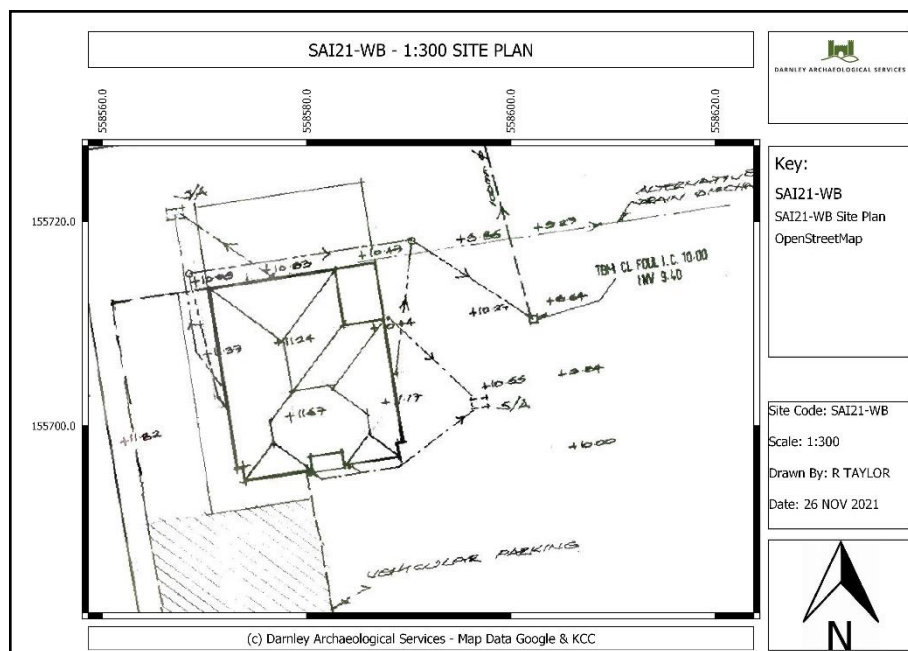
TQ 55 NE 185	Listed Building (II) 1071974: LANGLEYS. Farmhouse. C16 framed house, much altered. Red brick underbuilt ground floor, exposed timber-frame with plaster-infilling and same curving back to right above, rendered to the left above. Plain tiled roof, half-hipped to the right with gabled dormers to the left. Jettied first floor on right-hand return front. Two storeys; 2 windows, irregular mixture of old-sized casements. Entrance at rear. 1982 one-bay 2-storey hipped roofed extension to the left.
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Neolithic - the assessment area demonstrates artefacts indicative of Neolithic settlement.

TQ 55 NE 34	Numerous neolithic implements. Not identified in the late Sir Edward Harrison's Collection held in Maidstone Museum store.
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4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. All work was undertaken following the methods set out within the WSI³, according to best practice as set out by ClfA.
- 4.2. The archaeological watching brief work comprised one large rectangular trench for the new-build and two smaller rectangular soakaway pits. All groundworks were observed to evaluate their potential for archaeological remains.
- 4.3. Given the site's proximity to Oldbury Hill Scheduled Monument, Oldbury conservation area and Ightham conservation area, all of which contain the possibility of multi-period archaeology, the probability of locating buried archaeology or associated artefacts was considered **low-medium**.
- 4.4. The Watching Brief aimed to:
 - **Ensure that the planned excavations are observed and that features of archaeological interest are correctly examined and recorded, as per planning application TM21/01606/RD**
- 4.5. The objectives of this development project are to:
 - **View & record excavation of groundworks for the new building(s) & drains.**
- 4.6. Excavation areas were set out according to Fig 4. Locations were recorded using GNSS.



(Fig 4 – 1:300 SAI21-WB Site Plan)



Excavation

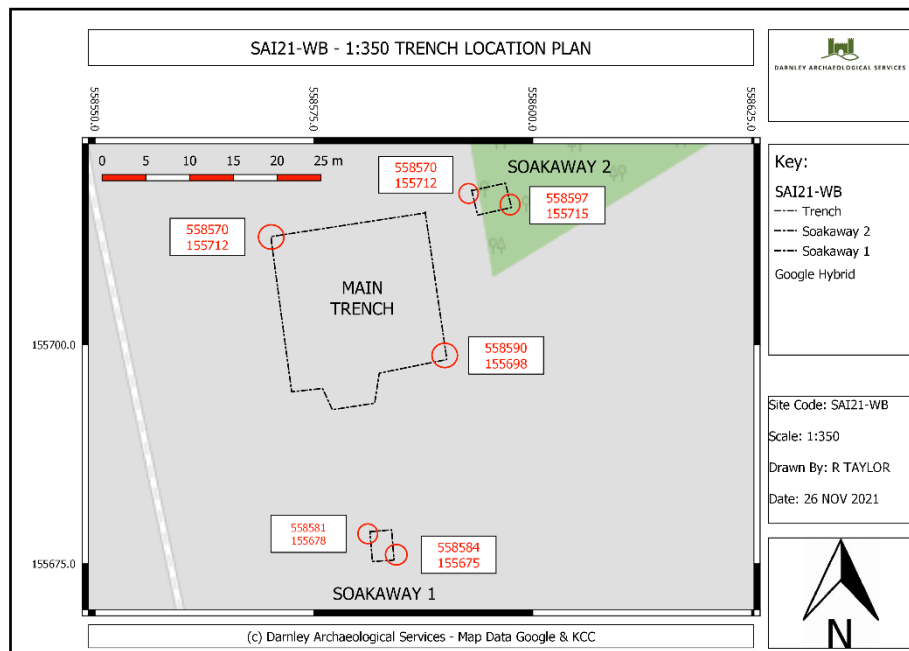
- 4.7. All groundworks were excavated using a machine and bucket. However, any contexts or features of archaeological interest were further excavated by hand by the archaeologist present.





5. RESULTS

- 5.1. The observations comprised a series of groundwork trenches for a new building and drainage. One large trench for the building itself and two large soakaways were machined. The site area is approximately 500m² and presented a better understanding of the below-ground stratigraphy, along with drainage features and a ditch, containing no datable material or artefacts, thought to be a water run-off associated with the topographical slope of the land's past use, perhaps in an agricultural or farmstead setting.



(Fig 5 – 1:350 SAI21-WB Final Trench Plan)

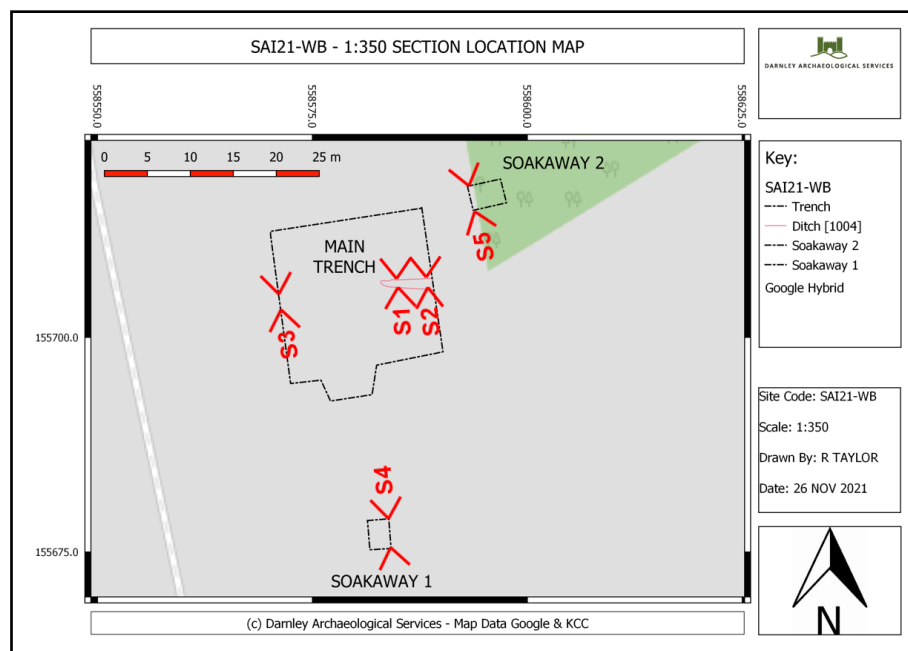
- 5.2. The archaeological feature encountered was a ditch containing no datable material or artefacts, thought to be a water run-off associated with the topographical slope of the land's past use, perhaps in a post-medieval agricultural or farmstead setting.
- 5.3. A total of 3 phases associated with the site were established during the excavation:
- Phase 1 = Modern
 - Phase 2 = Post-Medieval
 - Phase 3 = Geological
- 5.4. No significant archaeological remains were discovered. The final plan of the completed groundworks is shown in Fig 5.
- 5.5. During the excavation, a total of eight contexts over three phases were investigated and recorded (Table 1):



Context List (SAI21-WB)				
Context No.	Trench	Type	Description	Phase
1001	All	Layer	Dark brown sandy topsoil	1
1002	All	Layer	Soft mid-brown sandy clay subsoil	2
1003	All	Layer	Loose orange/brown sandy silt – superficial geology	3
1004	All	Cut	Linear ditch terminus	2
1005	All	Fill	Loose grey/yellow silty sand – occasional ironstone pieces; fill of 1004	2
1006	All	Cut	Linear ditch – extension of 1004	2
1007	All	Fill	Loose grey/yellow silty sand – occasional ironstone pieces; fill of 1004	2
1008	All	Layer	Loose grey/yellow silty sand – occasional ironstone pieces	3

(Table 1 – SAI21-WB Context List)

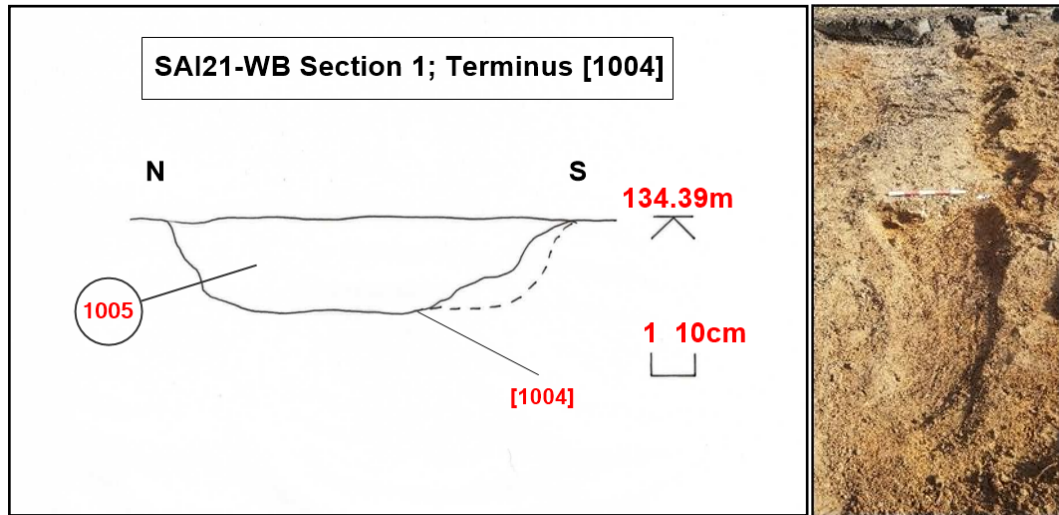
5.6. Sections 1-5 are mapped in Fig 6.



(Fig 6 – 1:350 SAI21-WB Final Section Plan)

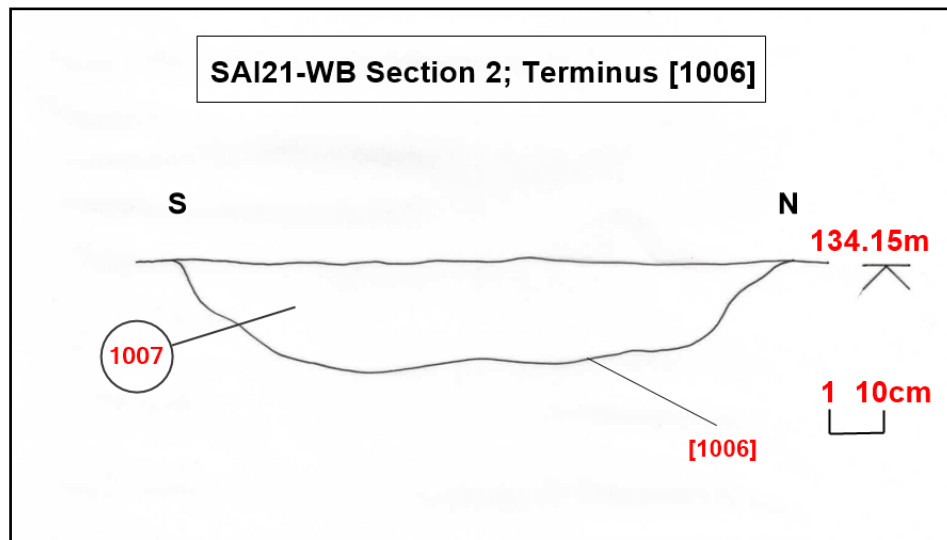


- 5.7. Section 1 shows (Figs 7 & 8) the removal of 0.1m of 1001, a dark brown sandy topsoil, and 1021, 0.3m of soft mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. The remaining linear ditch cut/terminus [1004] 0.8m wide, 0.2m deep and filled by 1005, a loose grey/yellow silty sand.



(Fig 7 – Section 1 Looking East & Fig 8 – Looking East at Section 1)

- 5.8. Section 2 shows (Figs 9 & 10) the removal of 0.1m of 1001, a dark brown sandy topsoil, and 1021, 0.3m of soft mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. The remaining linear ditch cut [1006] 1.0m wide, up to 0.2m deep and filled by 1007, a loose grey/yellow silty sand containing occasional ironstone pieces.

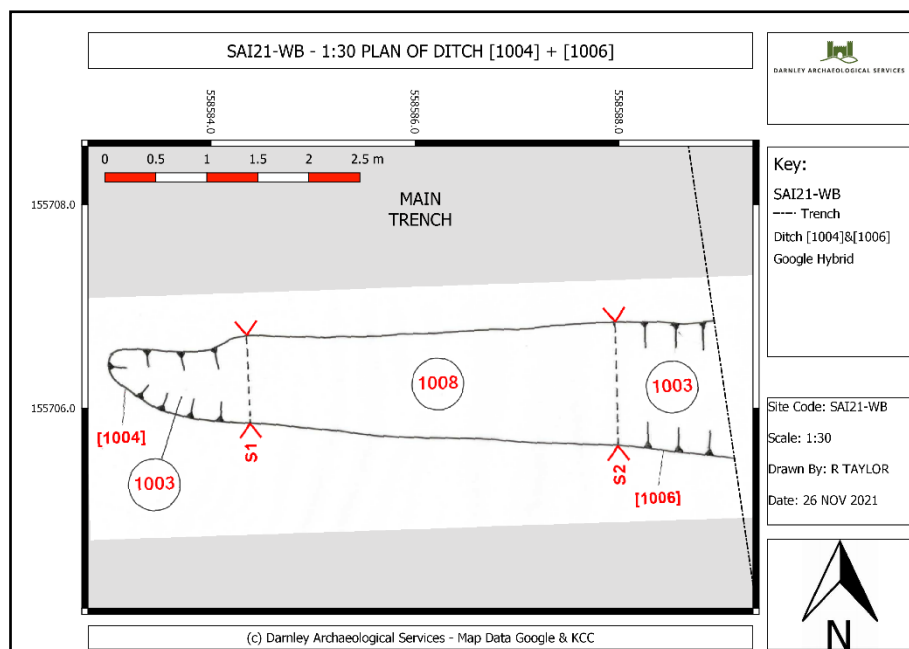


(Fig 9 – 1:10 Section 2 Looking West)



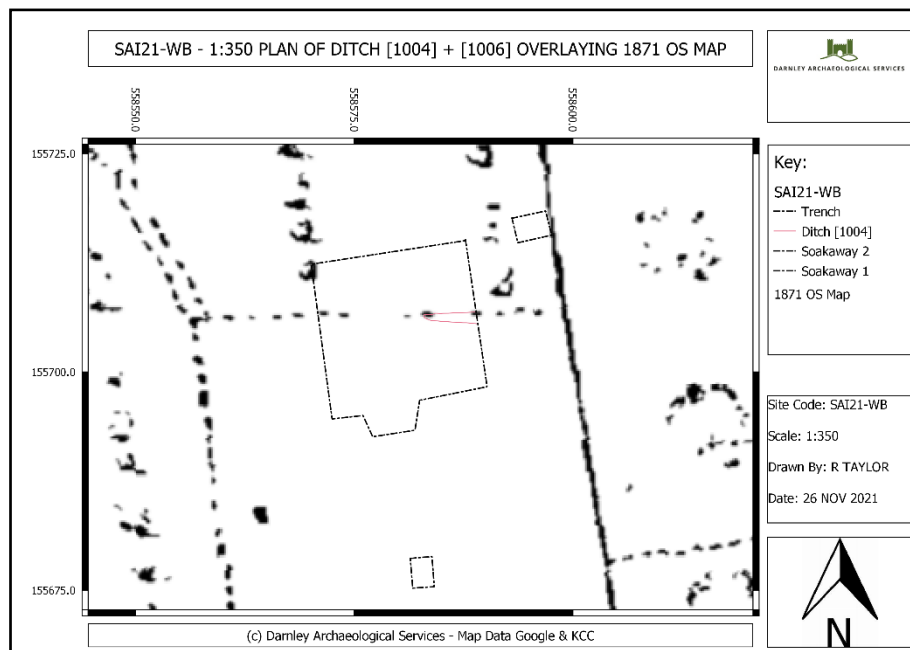
(Fig 10 – Looking West at Section 2)

5.9. Fig 11 shows both 1004 and 1006 in plan. 1008 is further fill that sits between Section 1 and Section 2. Either side of the ditch and its associated fills is 1003, a loose orange/brown sandy silt, believed to be superficial geology.



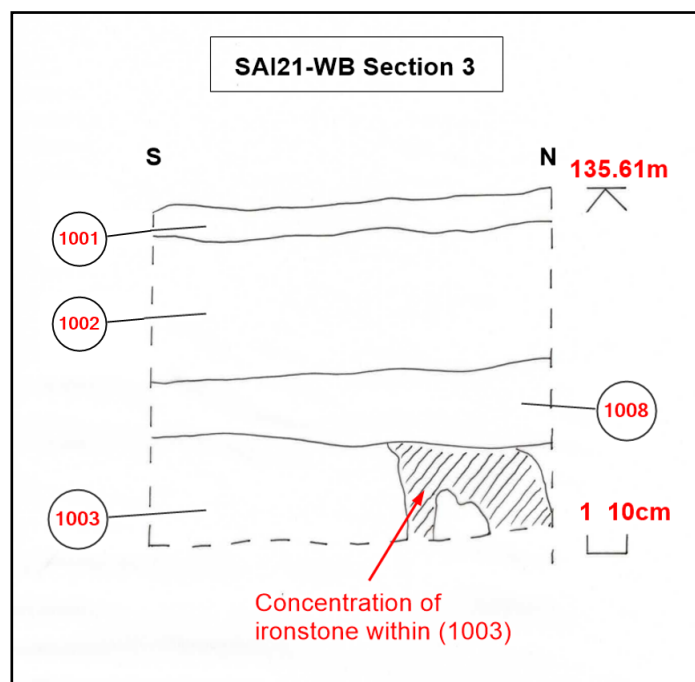
(Fig 11 – 1:30 Plan of Linear Ditch 1004/1006)

5.10. Further investigation of historic maps suggests that 1004/1006 is, in fact, a small element of a more significant field boundary evident on the 1871 OS map. Terminus 1004 may have been manufactured by the excavation process, particularly as the land slopes from west to east. Alternatively, it may be a genuine terminus to the field boundary, though viewing the OS map, it is difficult to tell.



(Fig 12 – 1:350 Plan of Linear Ditch 1004/1006 overlaying 1871 OS Map)

5.11. Section 3 illustrates 0.1m of 1001, a dark brown sandy topsoil. 1001 sits above 1002, a soft mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. 1002 sits above 1008, a band of loose grey/yellow silty sand up to 0.2m in depth and 1.0m wide. Although a representative section of the east-facing side of the main trench, Section 3 likely shows a continuation of the field boundary (1004/1006) continuing west, as seen in Fig 12. Below 1008 is 1003, a loose orange/brown sandy silt of undetermined depth, believed to be the superficial geology.

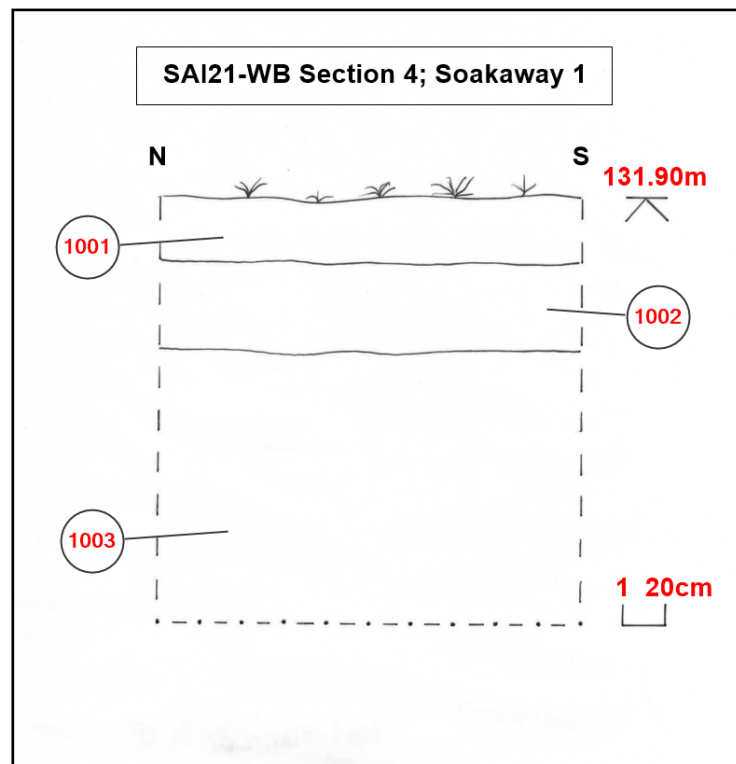


(Fig 13 – Section 3 looking West)



(Fig 14 – Looking West at Section 4)

5.12. Section 4 illustrates Soakaway 1, a rectangular pit approximately 2.0m x 2.5m x 2.0m depth, situated 20.0m south of the main trench area. 0.2m of 1001, a dark brown sandy topsoil sits above 0.4m of 1002, a soft, mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. 1002 sits above 1003, an undetermined depth of loose orange/brown sandy silt, thought to be the superficial geology.

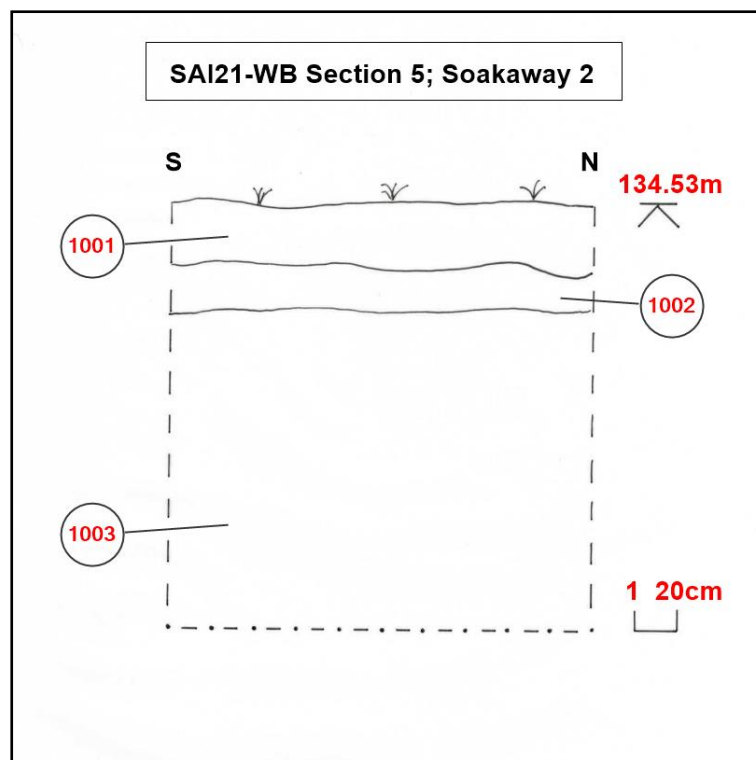


(Fig 15 – 1:20 Section 4 Looking East)



(Fig 16 – Looking East at Section 4)

- 5.13. Section 5 illustrates Soakaway 2, a rectangular pit approximately 2.0m x 2.5m x 2.0m depth, situated 5.0m east of the main trench area. 0.2m of 1001, a dark brown sandy topsoil sits above 0.2m of 1002, a soft, mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. 1002 sits above 1003, an undetermined depth of loose orange/brown sandy silt, thought to be the superficial geology.



(Fig 17 – 1:20 Section 5 Looking West)



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(Fig 18 – Looking West at Section 5)

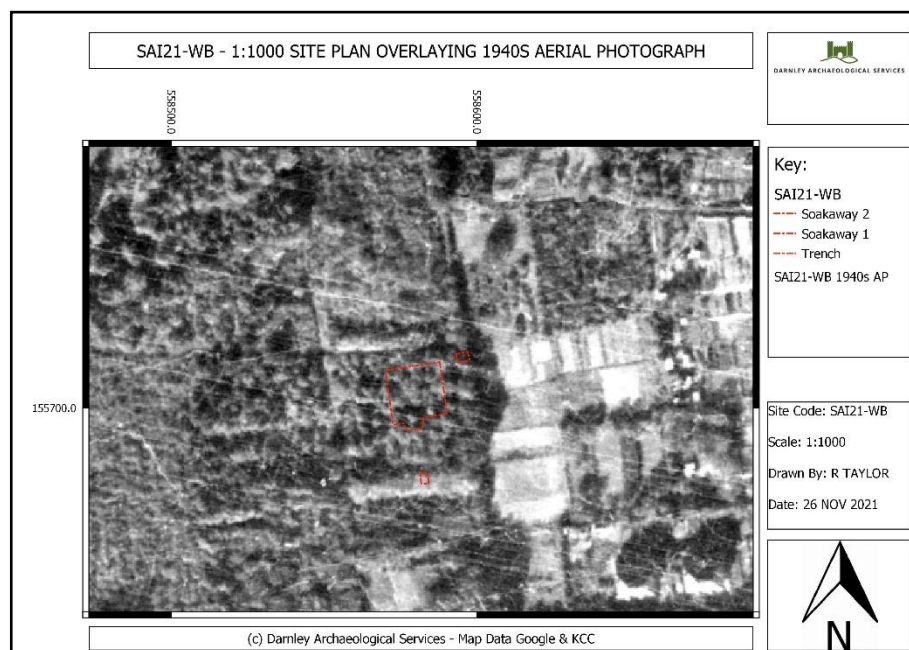


6. FINDS

6.1. No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief.

7. INTERPRETATION

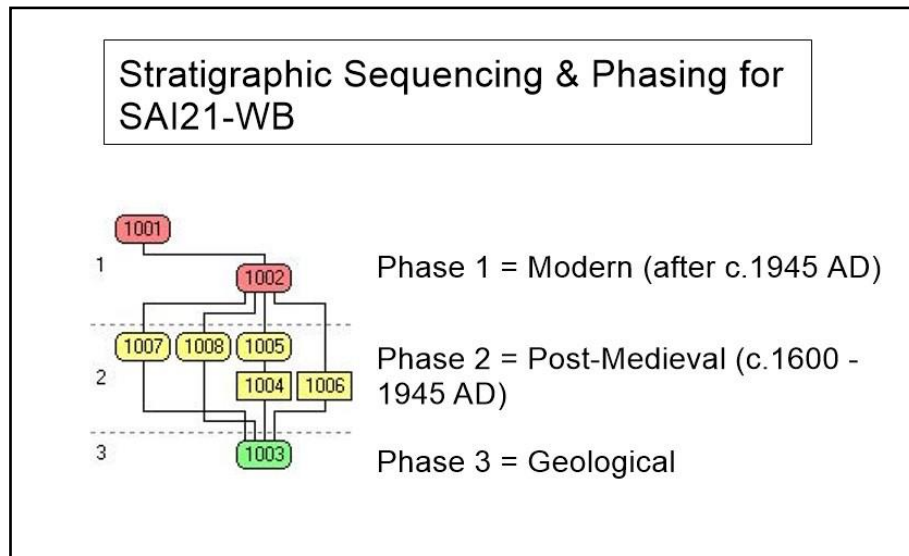
7.1. The results of the watching brief revealed phasing and a stratigraphic sequence for the site's past from Post Medieval period to the present day, suggesting its potential use in an agricultural or farmstead setting, as suggested by Fig 12. Fig 19 reinforces this theory, showing the area as wooded or an orchard adjacent to farming or allotments during the 1940s.



(Fig 19 – 1:1000 SAI21-WB Groundworks Overlaying 1940s Aerial Map)

7.2. No evidence of Iron Age activity or archaeology associated with the multivallate hillfort nor artefacts related to the area's Paleolithic past were evident. No activity or settlement for Saxon or Medieval periods pertaining to Oldbury or Ightham were evident.

7.3. The following stratigraphic sequence summarizes the phasing of the site:



(Fig 20 – SAI21-WB Stratigraphic Sequence)

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1. The watching brief has fulfilled the KCC Watching Brief Specification aims and objectives and the Written Scheme of Investigation. The groundworks demonstrated a stratigraphic sequence (Fig 20), confirming the site is situated in a farmstead/agricultural setting. No significant archaeological features were observed, and the site's archaeological significance is considered low and recorded accordingly.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1. Sincere thanks are extended to the client and groundworks crew for permission to access the site and their patience during the archaeological process.

10. REFERENCES

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www.bgs.ac.uk

<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>





11. APPENDIX A – SITE IMAGES

Image	Description
	<p>11.1</p> <p>Looking west across the main trench area at the removal of 1001 and 1002</p>
	<p>11.2</p> <p>Looking west across the main trench area at the removal of 1003</p>
	<p>11.3</p> <p>Looking northeast at drainage trench to the southwest of the main trench</p>
	<p>11.4</p> <p>Looking northwest at Soakaway 1 under machine excavation</p>