SVS21-EV, SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL, NORTH STREET, SUTTON VALENCE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, TQ 8110 4929





Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd 08 March 2021



SUTTON VALANCE SCHOOL, NORTH STREET, SUTTON VALENCE, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME17 3HL

NGR: TQ 8110 4929

Archaeological Evaluation Report

R. Taylor

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Report prepared for Sutton Valance School (Client)

By Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd Company, No 12320658

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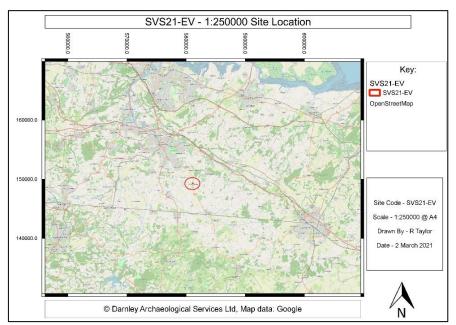
1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. An archaeological evaluation consisting of one trench has been carried out at the site of Sutton Valance School Annex, North Street, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3HL.
- 1.2. The archaeological evaluation undertaken by Darnley Archaeological Services followed an unfinished evaluation at the site, previously undertaken by a different archaeological contractor.
- 1.3. The archaeological feature identified during the archaeological work was a circular pit sealed by subsoils. The pit is cut into natural bedrock and survives as a feature at depths of c.1.0m (106.75m AOD) below the current ground level.
- 1.4. The pit contained a concentration of animal bone (from a single species) and considered a likely continuation of the Romano-British activity, possibly associated with a known nearby Romano-British cemetery.
- 1.5. The archaeological feature will only be at risk by the proposed development if associated groundworks, including the excavation of foundation and service trenches impact the archaeological resource. This can be satisfactorily mitigated through an agreed archaeological condition for a watching brief.

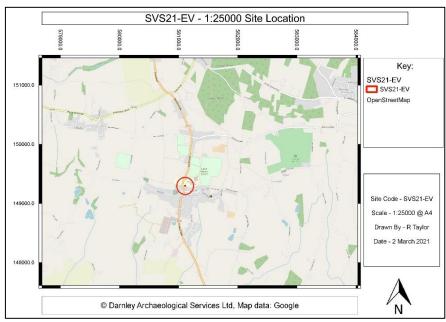


2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Archaeological investigations have been carried out on behalf of Sutton Valence School on land to the east of North Street, toward the school grounds' southeast corner. The evaluation aimed to obtain information on the potential archaeological resource present on the site. The site has planning permission for the erection of a single-storey extension to provide an additional common room.
- 2.2. The site of some 88.5 metres squared is centred on TQ 8110 4929 and lies to the east of North Road, Sutton Valence (see Figures 1 & 2).



(Figure 1 - 1:250000 SVS21-EV Site Location)



(Figure 2 - 1:25000 SVS21-EV Site Location)



- 2.3. The archaeological investigation consisted of excavating a single trial trench to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains on the proposed site. This work followed the Kent County Council's methodologies and the guidelines laid down 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).
- 2.4. This report presents the key results of this evaluation work. The work was commissioned by Sutton Valance School and carried out by Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd over one day in February 2021.



3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The archaeological investigations aimed to undertake evaluation work to determine the significance and importance of potential archaeological remains that may survive on the proposed site.
- 3.2. The evaluation aimed to establish the date, phasing, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of any such remains and to investigate their potential for any previously unknown archaeological activity within site. These may represent a potential constraint on the construction work associated with the development.
- 3.3. Under guidance from the Local Authority, two aims were identified for this second attempt at the evaluation work. These aims were to:
 - 3.3.1. Determine the nature and character of any archaeological remains.
 - 3.3.2. Identify the profile of the natural deposits across the site.
- 3.4. The evaluation work results will help determine the appropriate level of archaeological recording work during any archaeological watching brief implemented at the construction stage.



4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The archaeological evaluation work comprised the excavation of a single trench.
- 4.2. The 2 per cent sampling strategy for the trenching work comprised the excavation of a single trench (see Figure 4) on the site. This trench was (presumably) opened by machine by the previous archaeological contractor; the topsoil and subsoils were removed and piled longitudinally alongside the trench until the first significant archaeological deposits, natural subsoils or natural bedrock were identified.
- 4.3. Exposed archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand, photographed and recorded by Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd according to CIfA guidelines. All layers, features and fills were given a unique number and described on proforma context sheets. These were drawn in plan and section. Heights for layers and features were recorded using GNSS.
- 4.4. Artefacts observed were retained from the identified features, deposits and spoil heaps.
- 4.5. The trench was presumed backfilled by the school on completion of the excavations.
- 4.6. Finds recovered from the evaluation trenches were bagged according to their stratigraphic context, washed and analysed. These were spot dated (were possible) and assessed by relevant specialists.
- 4.7. An individual site code has been assigned by Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd (SVS21-EV). This has been used on all the written material, drawings and finds bags. Upon completing the project, the site archive will be handed over to the client (Sutton Valence School).



5. GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1. The site's bedrock geology is the Hythe Formation Sandstone And [subequal/subordinate] Limestone, Interbedded.¹
- 5.2. The superficial geology of the site is described as Head clay, silt, sand and gravel.²
- 5.3. The site (centred on TQ 8110 4949) of 88.5 m² is located on the southeast of the Sutton Vallance School site, immediately behind and existing modern brick building. The site is located on the east side of North Street, 0.5km northwest of Sutton Valence Castle, 0.7km east of St Michael's church, 1.7km southeast of Chart Sutton and 0.75km due north of the junction between Forsham Lane and A274 Headcorn Road.
- 5.4. The ground on the site forms part of a large plateau that is approximately 108m AOD that drops off sharply south to approximately 101m AOD toward the surrounding properties.
- 5.5. The site currently comprises a small and secluded garden surrounded to the south and west by an existing brick building.

Sutton Valence School – Evaluation Report © Darnley Archaeological Services

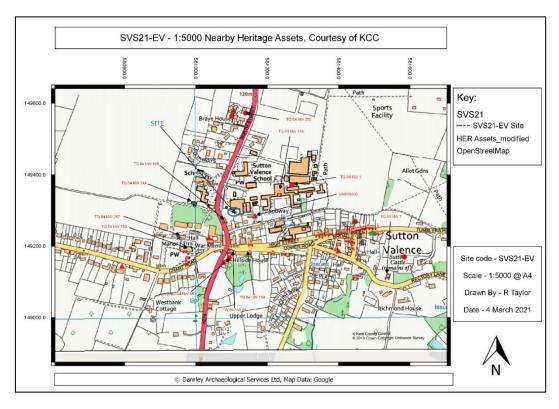
¹ www.bgs.ac.uk

² Ibid



6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 6.1. Iron Age and Roman artefacts have been found in the area. The Roman road from Maidstone to Ashford and Lympne passed through the village. In 1086 the village was recorded in the Domesday Book under the name of Sudtone (South Town, or Sutton), granted to Adam FitzHubert. He held it from Odo Bishop of Bayeux, the half-brother of William the Conqueror. Sudtone was then granted to the Count of Aumale, Baldwin of Bethune, who built a castle, the remains of its keep or tower can be seen on the east side of the village.³
- 6.2. The application site lies in the area of a Romano-British activity. A Roman walled cemetery was discovered in 1827 (Kent SMR No TQ 84 NW 1) within the school grounds. Whilst the precise location of the cemetery is unknown, associated remains may survive within the area of proposed groundworks. Therefore, KCC Archelogy has recommended a condition on archaeological field evaluation to ensure features of archaeological interest are correctly examined and recorded. A detailed study of the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) database was undertaken to assist the written scheme of investigation and subsequent archaeological analyses. The following provides nearby entries on the HER with a brief description:



(Figure 3 – 1:5000 SVS21-EV Nearby Heritage Assets, courtesy of KCC)

³ Wilson, D., *The history of Sutton Valence and its buildings, History's hand on Sutton Valence* (2010, Sutton Valence Parish Council).

⁴ https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public



6.3. Modern – the immediate area demonstrates heritage assets as part of the school and strategic defensive strategies for civil defence during World War 2:

TQ 84 NW 148	Listed Building (II) 1060872: SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL BLOCK ERECTED 1910-14 by Adams, Holden and Pearson. Red brick in English bond. South ends of wings stone on the ground floor, tilehung above. Plain tile roofs. Courtyard plan.
TQ 84 NW 244	WWII air-raid shelter, in the grounds of Sutton Valence primary school. Survey undertaken prior to conversion into a meeting room.
TQ 84 NW 267	The former National School for boys and girls in Sutton Valence is shown on the 1862-75 map. The building continued to be used as a school, as shown on the 1897-1900, 1907-23 and 1929-52 maps. It is shown as a Hall on the current O/S map and is used as Sutton Valence Pre-school.
TQ 84 NW 65	According to the CBA research report a possible experimental Royal Observer Corps post may have existed at Sutton Valence.

6.4. Post-medieval – the area demonstrates heritage assets as evidence for continued habitation within the village of Sutton Valence.

TQ 84 NW 106	Listed Building (II) 1344323: HEAVEN COTTAGE. House. C17 or
	earlier. Timber framed. Ground floor has painted brick infilling to
	broadly-spaced studding, first floor rendered. Plain tile roof. 2
	storeys on stone plinth. Continuous jetty on solid brackets,
	stopping short of left end, with plain applied fascia board.
	Continuous eaves supported by later brace at left end. Multiple
	brick ridge stack towards left end. Irregular fenestration of 3 small
	casements; single light to right of stack and two 2-light. Door to
	right gable end. Rear lean-to. Interior not inspected.
TQ 84 NW 120	Listed Building (II) 1051680: MANOR FARMHOUSE. Farmhouse.
	C17, or possibly earlier, with C19 facade. Timber framed, clad with
	coursed stone with irregular red brick patches round windows.
	Right end bay clad or built with red brick. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys
	on stone plinth. Roof hipped to left. Lower ridge towards right
	end, with main roof hipped down to it. Multiple brick ridge stack
	central to stone- faced section, corbelled, with fillet. 2 hipped
	dormers. Irregular fenestration of three C20 casements; one 3-
	light towards each end and central 2-light. Panelled door with 2
	top lights in chamfered rendered architrave under stack.
TQ 84 NW 163	Listed Building (II) 1052252: HILLSIDE HOUSE. House. C17 or
	earlier. Timber framed. Ground floor red brick. First floor tile-hung
	with banded plain and fishscale tiles. Plain tile roof. North
	elevation: 2 storeys, with semi-basement to rear. Roof hipped to
	right, returning with lower ridge. Central brick stack parallel to
	ridge. Irregular fenestration of two 4-light casements. Right return
	wing jettied to Headcorn Road on moulded bressumer, partly
	underbuilt. Hipped roof. Projecting rear stack. Ribbed door in C20
	porch up 5 steps towards centre of Headcorn Road elevation.
	Interior: not inspected but said to have C17 panelling and
	cartouche.



TQ 84 NW 198	Listed Building (II) 1372286: THE QUEENS HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE. Public house. C17, with mid-to-late C19 facade. Timber framed. Front elevation rendered brick or stone, left gable hung with plain and fishscale tiles. Plain tile roof. Lobby entry plan. 2 storeys and semi-basement on rendered plinth. Moulded string course. Brick stack with 2 fillets to left of centre. Irregular fenestration of 4 recessed 12-pane glazing- bar sashes. Half-glazed door under stack, with flat moulded hood on consoles, up 7 steps. Slightly recessed 2-storey rear wing to left with 2 stacks. Interior: only partly inspected. Exposed beams, those to central ground-floor room ovolo-moulded. Fireplace with stone jambs and pargetted overmantel.
MKE88609	Farmstead demolished. Group of three buildings, one possibly pigsties, one in the orchard and one partly open fronted

6.5. Medieval - the area demonstrates heritage assets as evidence for growing habitation within the village of Sutton Valence, based around the present High Street and the castle.

TQ 84 NW 150	Listed Building (II) 1060905: CHURCH OF ST MARY. St. Mary's
	Church [NAT] (1) Sutton Valence Church was rebuilt in 1828 on the
	site of the original 14th century edifice, only the lower part of the
	tower surviving from the original building.
TQ 84 NW 184	Listed Building (II) 1367117: APPIN MOR AND OLD PLACE. House,
	now house row. C15 or early C16 with late C16/early C17
	alterations, and alterations and extensions of c.1900 and c.1930.
	Timber framed. Ground floor of main range clad with chequered
	red and grey brick. Ground floor of left wing coursed galletted
	stone. Rest exposed close-studding with plaster infilling. 2 arch-
	braces to hall range. Plain tile roof. Main range of 3 timber-framed
	bays, probably a 2-bay hall with storeyed bay to left. Late
	C16/early C17 cross-wing to right end, projecting to rear. Cross
	wing added to left end c. 1930. Hall range 1½ storeys, wings 2
	storeys and attics. First floor of right wing formerly jettied on
	moulded bressumer, underbuilt with applied close-studding. Attic
	of each wing jettied on moulded and brattished bressumer and
	shaped brackets, with carved bargeboards and pendants.
TQ 84 NW 250	In 2011 Archaeology South-East carried out an evaluation and a
	strip, map and sample excavation at Haven Farm, Sutton Valence.
	Three stone quarries and a pit were dated to the medieval period.
TQ 84 NW 7	Scheduled Monument 1013537: TOWER KEEP CASTLE AT SUTTON
	VALENCE; Listed Building (II) 1186956: RUINS OF SUTTON CASTLE.
	Sutton Castle [NR] (1) Scheduled as Sutton Valence Castle. (2)
	Sutton Valence castle is situated on a spur of the Quarry Hills
	commanding the road from Maidstone to Rye and Old
	Winchelsea. It comprises a `keep', 36 ft. square externally
	approached on the N. side from a small fore-building, situated at
	the southern extremity of a bailey now levelled and with the ditch
	filled up. The bailey is now a hop garden and nothing is left save a
	crumbling wall on the western side. Excavation by Sutton Valence
	School in 1956 and 1957 produced pottery ranging from the 2nd
	· · · · · · ·



half of the 12th c. to late 13th c. In conjunction with the stratification it suggests that the keep was constructed from the middle to late 12th c. with a fore-building added shortly afterwards. About 1200 the fore-building was levelled and a new staircase replaced it. Later this was encased by walls which were probably not completed. The castle was abandoned at the end of the 13th c. apparently peacefully. (3) Sutton Castle, as described. The keep stands to about 7.0m. height. There are now no remains of the curtain wall on the W. side.

6.6. Roman – evidence for Romano-British activity based around a Roman walled cemetery discovered in 1827.

TQ 84 NW 1

Roman Burial Ground [R] (1) A Roman walled cemetery discovered in 1827 in the NW corner of a field called Bohaws, Bowhaws, or Bowhalls, on the top of the hill adjoining Sutton Valence on the north side. Information about it derives from C. T. Smythe who himself relied for his description entirely on the recollection of a workman. It apparently comprised (see Smythe's sketch-plan) a stone-walled D-shaped enclosure, some 60 ft x 15 ft with a smaller enclosure in its NW angle: within the large enclosure were - (a) approximately central, a vault or cist which had contained the principal burial accompanied by other glass and pottery vessels, including Samian and (b) over most of the western half, an arrangement in rows of nearly 100 large coarse cinerary urns, with ancillary vessels some of which were Samian. There was evidence of funeral pyres `near the wall on the N side' and a rubbish-filled well was found 150 ft to the south (Jessup says yards).

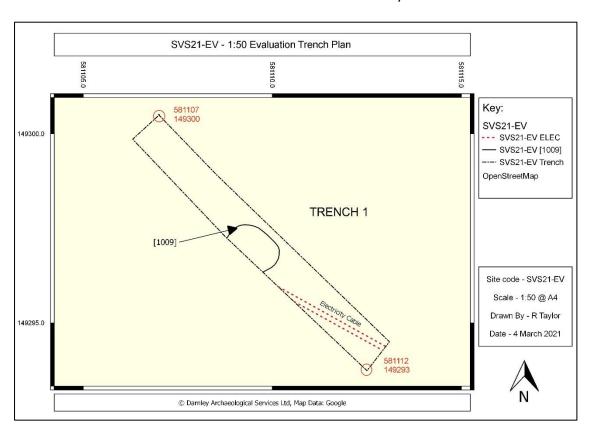


7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

7.1. This section presents the results of the trial trenching work carried out on the site. A collection of site images are presented in Appendix A; a collection of finds images are shown in Appendix B, and a context summary table for the trenching listing the category, dimensions and description of the individual contexts are presented in Appendix C. The locations of the trench plans and sections for the deposits and features identified are shown throughout this section of the report. Context numbers referred to in the text, on plan and section drawings are circled. Square brackets [x] denote cuts; round brackets or circles (x) denote layers, deposits and fills.

Summary of Results

7.2. A total of 10 contexts were recorded: 9 were allocated to layers and 1 to a cut feature.



(Figure 4-1:50 SVS21-EV Site Trench Plan)

- 7.3. The archaeological feature was identified at depths of c.1.0m (106.75m AOD) below the current ground level at the midpoint of Trench 1.
- 7.4. The pit feature identified during the archaeological work in Trench 1 is, given the depth of the cut, likely connected with either a) activity relating to the Romano-British walled cemetery (see TQ 84 NW 1) or, less likely, b) activity associated with the now-demolished farmstead (see MKE 88603).
- 7.5. The pit feature contained animal bone from a single species (bovine). It exhibited no butchery marks, suggesting the animal was probably not a food source.

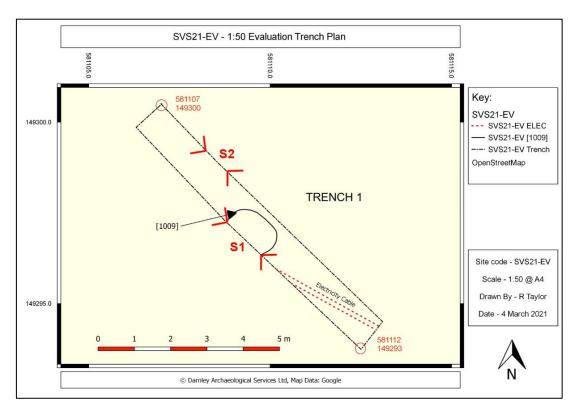


- 7.6. No grave cuts or human remains were identified on site.
- 7.7. The water table was not encountered in the trench.
- 7.8. The quality of artefactual material from the site was low, and consisted of animal bone, oyster shell and a few pieces of Kentish peg tile.
- 7.9. The natural subsoils were identified in the trench. These consisted of Head deposits at a relatively consistent height of 107.40m AOD throughout the trench, which sat atop the natural ragstone bedrock.

Trench Summary

Trench 1

7.10. A total of 10 contexts were allocated to deposits, a feature and the fill recorded in the trench. The one feature was a pit, thought to be Romano-British in date (see Figure 10).

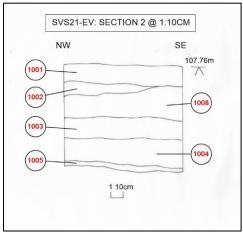


(Figure 5 – 1:50 SVS21-EV Site Trench Plan #2)

7.11. The removal of humic topsoil (1001) exposed, toward the north end of the trench, a thin band of crushed brick in a yellow sand matrix (1002), believed to be associated with recent (c.50 years) building activity (see Figures 6 & 7). Below (1002) lay (1003), a dark brown sandy clay subsoil. (1003) sits above (1008), a mid-brown silty clay. Beneath (1008) are occasional patches of (1006), an orange/brown silty clay; possible remnants of thin



occupation layer over (1004), the superficial geology of the site is described as Head - clay, silt, sand and gravel. (1004) sits above (1005), the natural bedrock composed of limestone (ragstone).

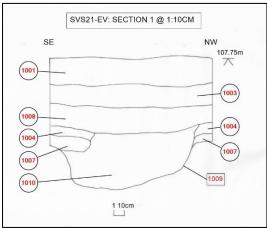


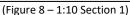


(Figure 6 - 1:10 Section 2)

(Figure 7 - Section 2 looking northeast)

- 7.12. Toward the trench's centre, the removal of humic topsoil (1001) exposed (1003), a dark brown sandy clay subsoil. (1003) sits above (1008), a mid-brown silty clay. Beneath (1008) are occasional patches of (1006), an orange/brown silty clay; possible remnants of thin occupation layer over (1004), the superficial geology of the site is described as Head clay, silt, sand and gravel. (1004) sits above (1007), compacted green sand that is possibly a result of long-term weathering of (1005,) the natural bedrock composed of limestone (ragstone), immediately below (1007).
- 7.13. Pit [1009] appears to cut through (1004) and (1007) and into the natural bedrock (1005). The observation that [1009] is sealed stratigraphically below contexts (1001), (1003) and (1008), comprising c.0.6m in depth, implies the pit is of significant age; hence the estimated Romano-British dating for [1009] in the absence of any confirmed artefactual dating evidence (see Figures 8, 9 & 11).

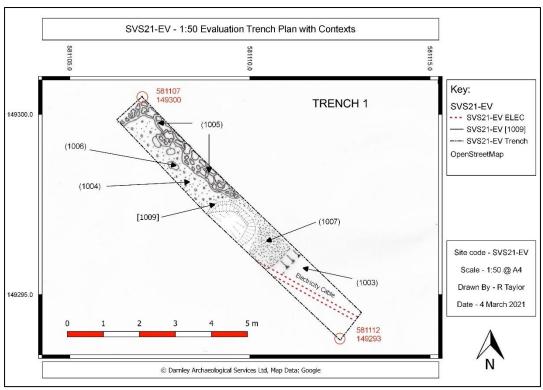




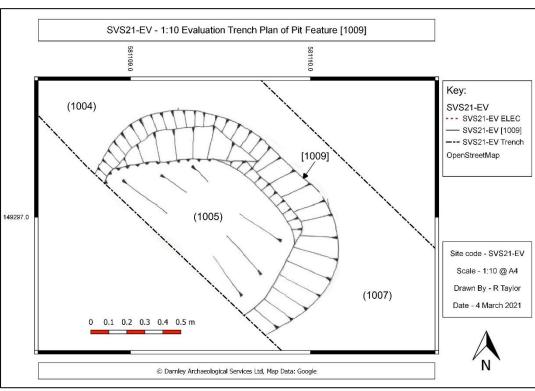


(Figure 9 – Section 1 looking southwest)





(Figure 10 - SVS21-EV 1:50 Trench Plan)



(Figure 11 - SVS21-EV 1:10 Plan of Pit Feature [1009])



Finds Summary

Bone

7.14. An assemblage of animal bone comprising 15 pieces was recovered from 1 context on the site.

Context	No of	Date range	Description
	pieces		
1010	1	Unknown	Partial juvenile bovine mandible
1010	1	Unknown	Partial juvenile bovine horn
1010	1	Unknown	Partial juvenile bovine atlas vertebrae
1010	1	Unknown	Fragment juvenile bovine rear metacarpal
1010	1	Unknown	Partial juvenile bovine tibia
1010	1	Unknown	Partial juvenile bovine ischium
1010	1	Unknown	Juvenile bovine molar
1010	8	Unknown	Fragments of juvenile bovine bones

Shell

7.15. One piece of oyster shell was recovered from (1006), indicating possible occupation or human activity.

Context	No of	Date range	Description
	pieces		
1006	1	Unknown	Small fragment of oyster shell

Ceramic Building Material

7.16. One piece of Kentish peg tile was recovered from (1001).

Context	No of	Date range	Description
	pieces		
1001	1	c.1900 AD	Fragment of Kentish peg roof tile



8. DISCUSSION

8.1. It is considered that the trial trench has identified a representative sample of the type, character, date and survival of archaeological features and deposits that exist on the site and the immediate vicinity. Generally, the standard sampling and excavation techniques of digging, recording and artefact collection were effective, with useful data obtained. However, it should be stressed that Darnley Archaeological Services Ltd was, in effect, rescuing a previously unfinished evaluation on the site to gain this data. Weather and ground conditions were good for hand excavation. It was felt that all relevant archaeological levels, features and deposits at risk by the proposed development were satisfactorily recognised.

Romano-British Evidence

8.2. The evidence on site is assigned a tentative Romano-British date. This was represented by the pit [1009] and fill [1010], which contained several animal bones characteristic of a single juvenile bovine in a silty, charcoal rich matrix. The depth of the pit in relation to the existing ground surface (c.0.6m), combined with the secure stratigraphic contexts above, implies the pit is of significant age. Given the nearby evidence for a Romano-British cemetery, the pit may be a ritual offering contemporary with the Roman period.



9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1. The archaeological investigations have identified an archaeological resource present on the site. The pit [1009] containing animal bone is likely associated with religious practices of the Roman-British period. The pit appears undisturbed by later activity and survives at a depth of c.1.0m (106.75m AOD) below the current ground level at the midpoint of Trench 1.
- 9.2. The planning authority's archaeological policy is to seek to preserve at least 95% of archaeological deposits underneath the new development. These archaeological features will only be at risk by the proposed development if associated groundworks, including the excavation of foundations and service trenches impact the archaeological resource. If impacted upon, the archaeological resource can be satisfactorily mitigated through the agreed archaeological condition for a watching brief.



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www.bgs.ac.uk

www.earth.google.co.uk

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



11. APPENDIX A – SITE IMAGES

Number & Description Image 11.1 Trench 1 looking southeast. 11.2 Trench 1 looking northwest.





11.3

Trench 1 looking in plan at Head deposits (1004) and ragstone bedrock (1005).



11.4

Trench 1 looking west a pit feature [1009].



11.5

Trench 1, looking north at pit [1009] – note how the feature is cut through ragstone bedrock at a near-vertical angle.



12. APPENDIX B - FINDS IMAGES

Image Number & Description 12.1 Part of juvenile bovine mandible from (1010). 12.2 Part of juvenile bovine atlas vertebra from (1010). 12.3 Part of juvenile bovine horn from (1010).



Number & Image **Description** 12.4 Part of a juvenile bovine tibia from (1010). 12.5 Juvenile bovine molar, displaying little wear to the enamel – an indication of young age from (1010). 12.6 Part of juvenile bovine ischium from (1010).



Number & Image Description 12.7 Part of juvenile bovine rear metacarpal from (1010). 12.8 Kentish peg tile from (1001). 12.9 Oyster shell fragment from (1006).



13. APPENDIX C – CONTEXT REGISTER

Context List (VH20-WB)			
Context	Trench	Туре	Description
No.			
1001	1	Layer	Humic topsoil
1002	1	Layer	Yellow sand & crushed brick.
1003	1	Layer	Dark brown sandy clay subsoil
1004	1	Layer	Yellow/brown silty clay with sand and gravel. Probably Head
			deposits clay, silt, sand and gravel.
1005	1	Layer	Bedrock – ragstone
1006	1	Layer	Orange/brown silty clay; possible remnants of thin occupation
			layer over 1004.
1007	1	Layer	Compacted green sand; possibly upper weather portion of 1005?
1008	1	Layer	Brown silty clay below (1003) and above (1006)
1009	1	Cut	Cut of pit. Cut into 1005.
1010	1	Fill	Fill of 1009 – crushed ragstone fragments in brown silty clay
			matrix; contains charcoal and numerous pieces of animal bone.