

Land adjacent to Blackman House, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury

Archaeological watching brief on geotechnical work

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Abstract

On 29 March 2016 an archaeological watching brief was conducted by upon geotechnical/contamination site investigation on land adjoining Blackman House, 6a St Peter's Lane, Canterbury CT1 2BP (NGR 61477 15808) in relation to its redevelopment (Planning Consents CA//14/00550 and CA//15/01445). The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Importance and proposals for any further groundworks, including piled foundations, should be notified to the relevant body.

Quaternary gravels were encountered around 5.96m OD, a little lower than previously found just to the north-east. What may have been natural alluvial deposition or deliberate dumping here in the Roman period was overlain by clearly dumped deposits, levelling the area up to around 6.78-6.98m. This was sealed by 0.06-0.10m of clay floor or bedding, upon which lay a fragment of previously scorched Roman tile. These deposits extend the area of known Roman building(s) previously identified in adjoining sites. Demolition deposits overlay the tile in WSB3 and clay in WSB1 and were overlain in turn by a light metalling or tread. 1.0-1.2m of cultivated loams then built up, interrupted by at least one pit containing brick fragments. A levelling deposit overlay these in WSB1 and WSB2: a large, mortared flint in the former may have been from an in situ garden(?) feature or have been part of the levelling. Modern topsoils and recent construction spillage completed the sequence.

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1 General

1.1 Introduction (Fig 1)

On 29 March 2016 a geotechnical/contamination site investigation (SI) was undertaken on land adjoining the north-east side of Blackman House, 6a St Peter's Lane, Canterbury CT1 2BP (NGR 61477 15808). This was in relation to its redevelopment from a former passageway, connecting the lane with the Marlowe Theatre, to residential accommodation (Planning Consents CA//14/00550 and CA//15/01445). The SI was undertaken by Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy (SEC) on behalf of the developer, Mr Andrew Kerin. The site lies within Canterbury's Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI), for which Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) is the designated investigating body and the writer therefore maintained a watching brief on the work on behalf of SEC and Mr Kerin. An archaeological desk-based assessment for the site (Mosely & Pratt 2014), drawing partly upon deposit modelling based on borehole and test-pit data from two adjoining sites, had been submitted for the earlier application.

1.2 Fieldwork

Following manual excavation of 1.2m deep, 0.3m diameter starter pits at each position, three shallow boreholes (BH1-BH3, here relabelled WSB1-WSB3), taking windowless samples and conducting standard penetration tests (SPT), were sunk along the rear half of the site using a tracked hydraulic rig. The pits and the cores (which were split on site) were logged in accordance with CAT's generic written scheme of investigation for such work (Pratt 2012).

1.3 Data processing and report structure

On completion of fieldwork, the detailed archaeological field logs from the watching brief were transcribed into the same CAT borehole/test-pit database as the adjoining site and general interpretative colour codes were added for each new entry. This database was used to generate standardised logs for the new positions (Appendix 1) and to draft pseudo-sections along two nominal transect lines (Figs 2-3, TX1P and TX3A), to which interpretative background colours and other annotation, based upon those used in the DBA, were added manually. Each context was assigned to a stratigraphic group (Appendix 2) and to a general 'phase' (A-D), actually representing degrees of probable archaeological potential. A general summary of the stratigraphic sequence was also prepared (2.1-2.4).

1.4 Scope

This document focusses solely on the results of the watching brief on geotechnical work and does not seek to duplicate information contained in the archaeological desk-based assessment except insofar as new data has been added to, and thus extended, the deposit modelling therein. The current report should not be used for the identification of contamination, nor for its lack: the geotechnical report should be consulted instead. As the site lies within the AAI, proposals for any further groundworks should be notified to CAT and, if piled foundations are intended rather than the raft to which current application documentation refers, to the Archaeological Officer of Canterbury City Council.

1.5 Archive

A site archive will be prepared in accordance with Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991, MAP2). The archive will conform to *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990), *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992) and the *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections: guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (The Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993). The archive will, at least initially, be held by CAT.

2 Results (Figs 2-3)

2.1 Phase A: deposits of geoarchaeological potential

The top of natural sandy gravels (G10013) was encountered around 5.96m OD in WSB3 and probably lay at or a little below 5.65m OD in WSB1. These levels are about 0.4-0.7m lower than the gravels previously encountered in the south-western end of the Marlowe Centre site and may indicate an embayment in, or end of, the island of higher ground they once represented. The gravels presumably pertain to the First (*ie* lowest and latest) Stour River Terrace and are thus of late Quaternary date.

2.3 Phase B: deposits of high archaeological potential

Loamy to sandy clays (G10541) either developed alluvially or was deliberately dumped in the area of lower ground formed by the drop in the natural gravels: tile and other flecking points towards a Roman date for this. G10541 was overlain by more clays (G10529), including greater or lesser amounts of Roman demolition debris, that certainly represented intentional levelling up to around 6.78-6.98m OD. This was sealed by 0.06-0.10m of compact yellow brown loamy clay (G10528) which probably represented a clay floor or bedding for a tiled one. These deposits extend the area of known Roman building(s) previously identified in the adjoining Marlowe Theatre and former Marlowe Centre sites. In WSB3 the auger punched through a scorched Roman tile (10527) which, already burnt, may have been reused as part of a floor or have been part of the overlying demolition deposits (G10526). What may have been a light metalling and tread in WSB3 and a thicker tread in WSB1 (G10525) may have been formed during demolition work or represent a later (potentially sub-Roman or Anglo-Saxon) phase of occupation, although no corresponding deposits were identified in WSB2.

2.4 Phase C: deposits probably of no or low archaeological potential

About 1.0-1.2m of more or less clayey loams (G10022) developed or were deposited over the Phase B material. They appeared mostly to be cultivated garden soils although interrupted, in WSB2, by a loam with mortar and brick fragments (G10504) which probably represented the fill of an early modern pit or similar feature. In WSB1 these loams were capped by what was probably a levelling deposit (G10511) with much mortar and peg-tile and a large, mortar encrusted flint. This last was probably demolition material but possibly an *in situ* garden(?) feature. An oyster-rich clay loam in WBS2 probably represented the same levelling.

2.4 *Phase D: deposits of no archaeological potential*

Cultivated modern topsoils (G10510) overlay loams G10022 and levelling G10511 and, in WSB3, were capped by sand and poured cement lenses, clearly waste from the recent construction work on the former Marlowe Centre site. Together, these groups formed the modern ground level at around 8.9m OD.

References

- Mosely, H., and Pratt, S., 2014, 'Land Adjacent to Blackman House, St. Peter's Lane, Canterbury: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment', unpublished CAT Client Report 2014/73 (<<http://planningdocs.canterbury.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00713592.pdf>>, accessed 31/04/2016).
- Pratt, S., 2012, 'Generic archaeological method statement for boreholing', unpublished CAT document.

Appendix 1: borehole logs

A1.1 Conventions

In the following log, estimated National Grid References, depths (below contemporary ground level) and elevations (above Ordnance Datum) are given in metres. U80, U90 and U100 refer to windowless-sampling cores of the indicated nominal diameter (in mm), alphabetic suffixes denote where successive lengths of the same diameter were taken. Manually excavated deposits are marked as 'Dug'. Soil descriptions use the following frequency and size codes for inclusions: V = Very, R = Rare, C = Common, A = Abundant, S = Small (<10mm in every dimension), M = Medium, L = Large (>100mm in any dimension).

A1.2 WSB1 (NGR 614766.25E 158078.95N)

Depth (m)	Elevation (m OD)	Con- text	(Group) Description & interpretation	Sample type
0.00-0.30	8.90-8.60	10510	(G10510) Fairly loose brownish grey fine loam, RSM flint. ?Cultivated modern topsoil.	Dug
0.30-0.40	8.60-8.50	10511	(G10511) Single large flint with fairly compact pale yellow grey sandy mortar adhering, AL flint. ?Demolition material or ?wall/ foundation along south-east side of borehole.	
0.30-0.50	8.60-8.40	10512	(G10511) Fairly compact grey brown clayey loam, CS mortar, CSRM peg-tile. ?Demolition levelling.	
0.50-1.20	8.40-7.70	10513	(G10522) Fairly loose fairly pale grey fine loam. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.	
1.20-1.45	7.70-7.45		Void.	Dug
1.45-1.60	7.45-7.30	10514	(G10522) Fairly loose fairly pale grey fine loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.	U100A
1.60-1.75	7.30-7.15	10515	(G10525) Dark brownish grey clayey loam, RS flint, RS mortar. Old ground ?surface/tread.	
1.75-1.94	7.15-6.96	10516	(G10526) Fairly compact brownish grey clayey loam with yellow brown loamy clay mottle, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. ?Demolition/abandonment/levelling.	
1.94-2.04	6.96-6.86	10517	(G10527) Compact yellow brown loamy clay, RS flint, RS mortar, RS charcoal. ?Floor bedding.	
2.04-2.20	6.86-6.70	10518	(G10529) Fairly compact pale yellowish grey clay loam, RS mortar, RS charcoal. Levelling.	U100A
2.20-2.93	6.70-5.97		Void.	U100B
2.93-3.10	5.97-5.80	10519	(G10541) Fairly loose yellow grey slightly gritty sandy clay, RS tile. Remix/levelling.	
3.10-3.25	5.80-5.65	10530	(G10541) Fairly compact greyish yellow slightly sandy clay, RM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. Levelling (redeposited)	

			brickearth) or natural ?alluvial clay.	U100B
3.25-3.80	5.65-5.10		Void.	U80
3.80-4.20	5.10-4.70	10531	(G10013) Compact greyish yellow sandy gravel, ASM flint. Fluvial gravel.	U80

A1.3 WSB2 (NGR 614769.50E 158075.90N)

Depth (m)	Elevation (m OD)	Con- text	(Group) Description & interpretation	Sample type
0.00-0.40	8.90-8.50	10500	(G10510) Fairly loose greyish brown fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RS tile. ?Cultivated modern topsoil.	Dug
0.40-0.74	8.50-8.16	10501	(G10510) Fairly loose brownish grey fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RS tile. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.	
0.74-1.00	8.16-7.90	10502	(G10511) Compact fairly pale slightly greyish brown clay loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RSM peg-tile, RML bone, CSRM oyster. ?Levelling.	
1.00-1.20	7.90-7.70	10503	(G10022) Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.	Dug
1.20-1.40	7.70-7.50		Void.	U100
1.40-1.71	7.50-7.19	10504	(G10504) Fairly compact grey slightly brownish grey clayey loam, RSM flint, CS mortar, RSM brick, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface/levelling.	
1.71-1.80	7.19-7.10	10505	(G10022) Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RS flint, RS mortar, RSM peg-tile, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface (void due to slippage).	
1.80-1.95	7.10-6.95		Void.	
1.95-2.00	6.95-6.90	10506	(G10522) Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface (void due to slippage).	
2.00-2.05	6.90-6.85	10507	(G10527) Fairly compact fairly pale brown loamy clay with fine grey mottle, RS mortar, RSM Roman tile, CS charcoal. ?Tread/floor/bedding.	
2.05-2.12	6.85-6.78	10508	(G10527) Compact slightly orangey yellow brown loamy clay, RS flint, RS charcoal. Bedding/levelling.	
2.12-2.20	6.78-6.70	10509	(G10529) Fairly compact pale greyish brown clay loam, RSM flint, RS chalk, CS mortar, CS charcoal. ?Levelling, with ?demolition material; no recovery below 2.2m BGL.	U100

A1.4 WSB3 (NGR 614763.15E 158080.75N)

Depth (m)	Elevation (m OD)	Con- text	(Group) Description & interpretation	Sample type
0.00-0.13	8.90-8.77	10520	(G10520) Compact poured cement and sand, RM brick. Recent	Dug

			construction levelling/waste/ surface.	
0.13-0.40	8.77-8.50	10521	(G10510) Fairly loose grey fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RSM tile, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated ?modern topsoil.	
0.40-1.20	8.50-7.70	10522	(G10022) Fairly compact brownish grey fairly fine loam. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.	Dug U100
1.20-1.26	7.70-7.64		Void.	
1.26-1.61	7.64-7.29	10523	(G10022) Fairly compact slightly brownish grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface, void due largely to slippage.	
1.61-1.64	7.29-7.26	10524	(G10525) Fairly compact grey slightly silty loam, RM flint. ?Tread.	
1.64-1.73	7.26-7.17	10525	(G10525) Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RSM mortar, RSM Roman tile, RS charcoal, RM white- painted crushed-tile mortar. Light metalling or ?demolition tread.	
1.73-1.81	7.17-7.09	10526	(G10526) Compact yellow brown loamy clay with grey loam mottle, RS oyster, CS charcoal. Levelling with ?demolition material.	
1.81-1.86	7.09-7.04	10527	(G10527) Fairly compact fairly pale grey clay silt, AM scorched Roman tile (shattered by auger), RM ?intrusive ?modern clear square bottle glass. Demolition or floor using previously scorched tile, disturbed by auger.	
1.86-1.92	7.04-6.98	10528	(G10527) Compact yellow brown loamy clay, no sign of scorching at top, RS charcoal. Floor/bedding.	
1.92-2.10	6.98-6.80	10529	(G10529) Fairly compact pale greyish brown slightly silty sandy clay, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. Levelling.	
2.10-2.24	6.80-6.66	10540	(G10529) Compact yellow brown loamy clay, RSM flint, RS charcoal. Floor/bedding or ?disturbed natural ?alluvial clay.	U100
2.24-2.55	6.66-6.35		Void.	U90
2.55-2.94	6.35-5.96	10541	(G10541) Compact yellow brown loamy clay, slightly sandy towards top, fining down. Levelling (redeposited brickearth) or natural ?alluvial clay.	
2.94-3.20	5.96-5.70	10542	(G10013) Compact slightly greyish yellow brown sandy gravel, ASM flint. Fluvial gravel.	U90
3.20-3.95	5.70-4.95		Void.	U80
3.95-4.20	4.95-4.70	10543	(G10013) Compact slightly greyish yellow brown sandy gravel, ASM flint, RM ?Tertiary pebble. Fluvial gravel.	U80

Appendix 2: group descriptions

A2.1 Conventions

Soil descriptions use the following frequency and size codes for inclusions: V = Very, R = Rare, C = Common, A = Abundant, S = Small (<10mm in every dimension), M = Medium, L = Large (>100mm in any dimension). Each overall group description and considered interpretation is followed by the initial description and field interpretation of its constituent context(s). Only boreholes and contexts (deposits) on the current site are listed.

A2.2 Group G10013

Phase A

Clean sandy gravels. Previously identified in Marlowe Theatre and Marlowe Centre sites. Fluvial (presumably First Stour Terrace) gravels.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB3

Contexts: 10531, 10542, 10543

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10531 Compact greyish yellow sandy gravel, ASM flint. Fluvial gravel.

WSB3 10542 Compact slightly greyish yellow brown sandy gravel, ASM flint. Fluvial gravel.

WSB3 10543 Compact slightly greyish yellow brown sandy gravel, ASM flint, RM ?Tertiary pebble. Fluvial gravel.

A2.3 Group G10022

Phase C

Banded loams. Probably represents multiple phases of cultivation, possibly with occasional levellings, paths, pits *etc.* Previously identified in Marlowe Theatre and Marlowe Centre sites.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB2, WSB3

Contexts: 10503, 10505, 10506, 10513, 10514 10522, 10523

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10513 Fairly loose fairly pale grey fine loam. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.

WSB1 10514 Fairly loose fairly pale grey fine loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.

WSB2 10503 Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.

WSB2 10505 Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RS flint, RS mortar, RSM peg-tile, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface (void due to slippage).

WSB2 10506 Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface (void due to slippage).

WSB3 10522 Fairly compact brownish grey fairly fine loam. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.

WSB3 10523 Fairly compact slightly brownish grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS

tile, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface, void due largely to slippage.

A2.4 Group G10504

Phase C

Clayey loam with mortar and brick fragments.

Probably early modern levelling or pit fill within G10022.

Borehole: WSB2

Context: 10504

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB2 10504 Fairly compact grey slightly brownish grey clayey loam, RSM flint, CS mortar, RSM brick, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface/levelling.

A2.5 Group G10510

Phase D

More or less superficial, generally fine loams. Modern cultivated topsoil, possibly imported.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB2, WSB3

Contexts: 10500, 10501, 10510, 10521

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10510 Fairly loose brownish grey fine loam, RSM flint. ?Cultivated modern topsoil.

WSB2 10500 Fairly loose greyish brown fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RS tile. ?Cultivated modern topsoil.

WSB2 10501 Fairly loose brownish grey fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RS tile. ?Cultivated old ground ?surface.

WSB3 10521 Fairly loose grey fairly fine loam, RSM flint, RSM tile, RS oyster, RS charcoal. ?Cultivated ?modern topsoil.

A2.6 Group G10511

Phase C

Single large flint, bearing sandy mortar, on south-west side of WSB1 starter pit, flanked and underlain by clayey loam with much mortar and peg-tile. An oyster-rich clay loam, with less tile and mortar, in WSB2 may represent the same or a similar activity. Probably early modern levelling/pit fill(s), although it is possible that the flint formed part of a wall/foundation orthogonal to St Peter's Lane.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB2

Contexts: 10502, 10511, 10512

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10511 Single large flint with fairly compact pale yellow grey sandy mortar adhering, AL flint. ?Demolition material or ?wall/foundation along south-east side of borehole.

WSB1 10512 Fairly compact grey brown clayey loam, CS mortar, CSRM peg-tile. ?Demolition levelling.

WSB2 10502 Compact fairly pale slightly greyish brown clay loam, RSM flint, RS mortar, RSM peg-tile, RML bone, CSRM oyster. ?Levelling.

A2.7 Group G10520

Phase D

Poured cement and sand. Recent construction spillage/levelling.

Borehole: WSB3

Context: 10520

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB3 10520 Compact poured cement and sand, RM brick. Recent construction levelling/waste/surface.

A2.10 Group G10525

Phase B

Possible light metalling, including Roman painted crushed-tile mortar, overlain by more extensive ?trodden deposit(s). ?Demolition ?working surface.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB3

Contexts: 10515, 10524, 10525

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10515 Dark brownish grey clayey loam, RS flint, RS mortar. Old ground ?surface/tread.

WSB3 10524 Fairly compact grey slightly silty loam, RM flint. ?Tread.

WSB3 10525 Fairly compact grey clayey loam, RSM flint, RSM mortar, RSM Roman tile, RS charcoal, RM white-painted crushed-tile mortar. Light metalling or ?demolition tread.

A2.10 Group G10526

Phase B

Mottled clay loams with some mortar *etc.* Probably abandonment/collapse/demolition deposits.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB3

Contexts: 10516, 10526

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10516 Fairly compact brownish grey clayey loam with yellow brown loamy clay mottle, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. ?Demolition/abandonment/levelling.

WSB3 10526 Compact yellow brown loamy clay with grey loam mottle, RS oyster, CS charcoal. Levelling with ?demolition material.

A2.11 Group G10527

Phase B

Generally compact yellow brown loamy clays overlain by heavily scorched Roman tile in WSB3 (though with no sign of scorching beneath). Clay floor or bedding for tile floor.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB2, WSB3

Contexts: 10507, 10508, 10517, 10527, 10528

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10517 Compact yellow brown loamy clay, RS flint, RS mortar, RS charcoal. ?Floor

- bedding.
- WSB2 10507 Fairly compact fairly pale brown loamy clay with fine grey mottle, RS mortar, RSM Roman tile, CS charcoal. ?Tread/floor/bedding.
- WSB2 10508 Compact slightly orangey yellow brown loamy clay, RS flint, RS charcoal. Bedding/levelling.
- WSB3 10527 Fairly compact fairly pale grey clay silt, AM scorched Roman tile (shattered by auger), RM ?intrusive ?modern clear square bottle glass. Demolition or floor using previously scorched tile, disturbed by auger.
- WSB3 10528 Compact yellow brown loamy clay, no sign of scorching at top, RS charcoal. Floor/bedding.

A2.12 Group G10529

Phase B

Yellow brown to pale greyish brown clays and clay loams with charcoal and sometimes tile and mortar flecking. Intentional levelling deposit(s), including some demolition debris.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB2, WSB3

Contexts: 10509, 10518, 10519, 10529, 10540

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10518 Fairly compact pale yellowish grey clay loam, RS mortar, RS charcoal. Levelling.

WSB1 10519 Fairly loose yellow grey slightly gritty sandy clay, RS tile. Remix/levelling.

WSB2 10509 Fairly compact pale greyish brown clay loam, RSM flint, RS chalk, CS mortar, CS charcoal. ?Levelling, with ?demolition material; no recovery below 2.2m BGL.

WSB3 10529 Fairly compact pale greyish brown slightly silty sandy clay, RSM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. Levelling.

WSB3 10540 Compact yellow brown loamy clay, RSM flint, RS charcoal. Floor/bedding or ?disturbed natural ?alluvial clay.

A2.13 Group G10541

Phase B

Greyish yellow to yellow brown loamy to sandy clays, with rare mortar, tile and charcoal flecking in WBS3 but not in WSB1. Intentional levelling and/or natural ?alluvia.

Boreholes: WSB1, WSB3

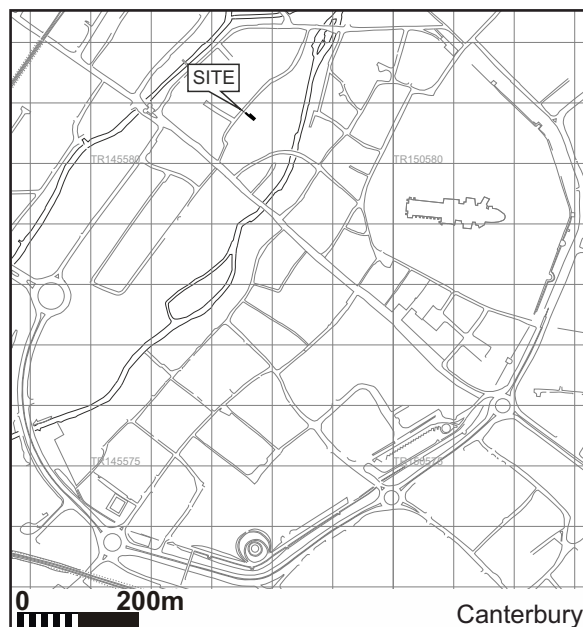
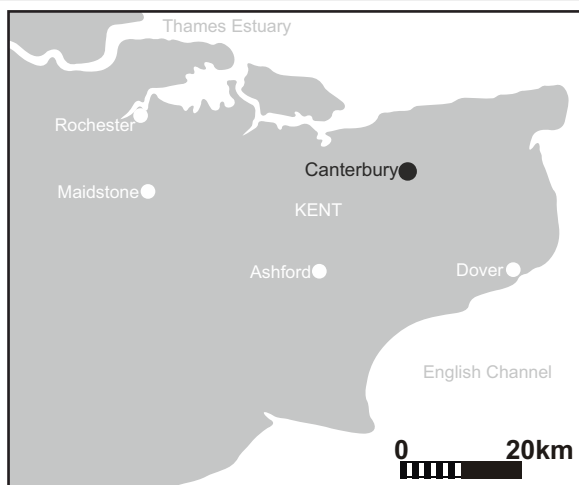
Contexts: 10530, 10541

Details:

CATref Con Description & initial interpretation

WSB1 10530 Fairly compact greyish yellow slightly sandy clay, RM flint, RS mortar, RS tile, RS charcoal. Levelling (redeposited brickearth) or natural ?alluvial clay.

WSB3 10541 Compact yellow brown loamy clay, slightly sandy towards top, fining down. Levelling (redeposited brickearth) or natural ?alluvial clay.



Land adj Blackman House, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury

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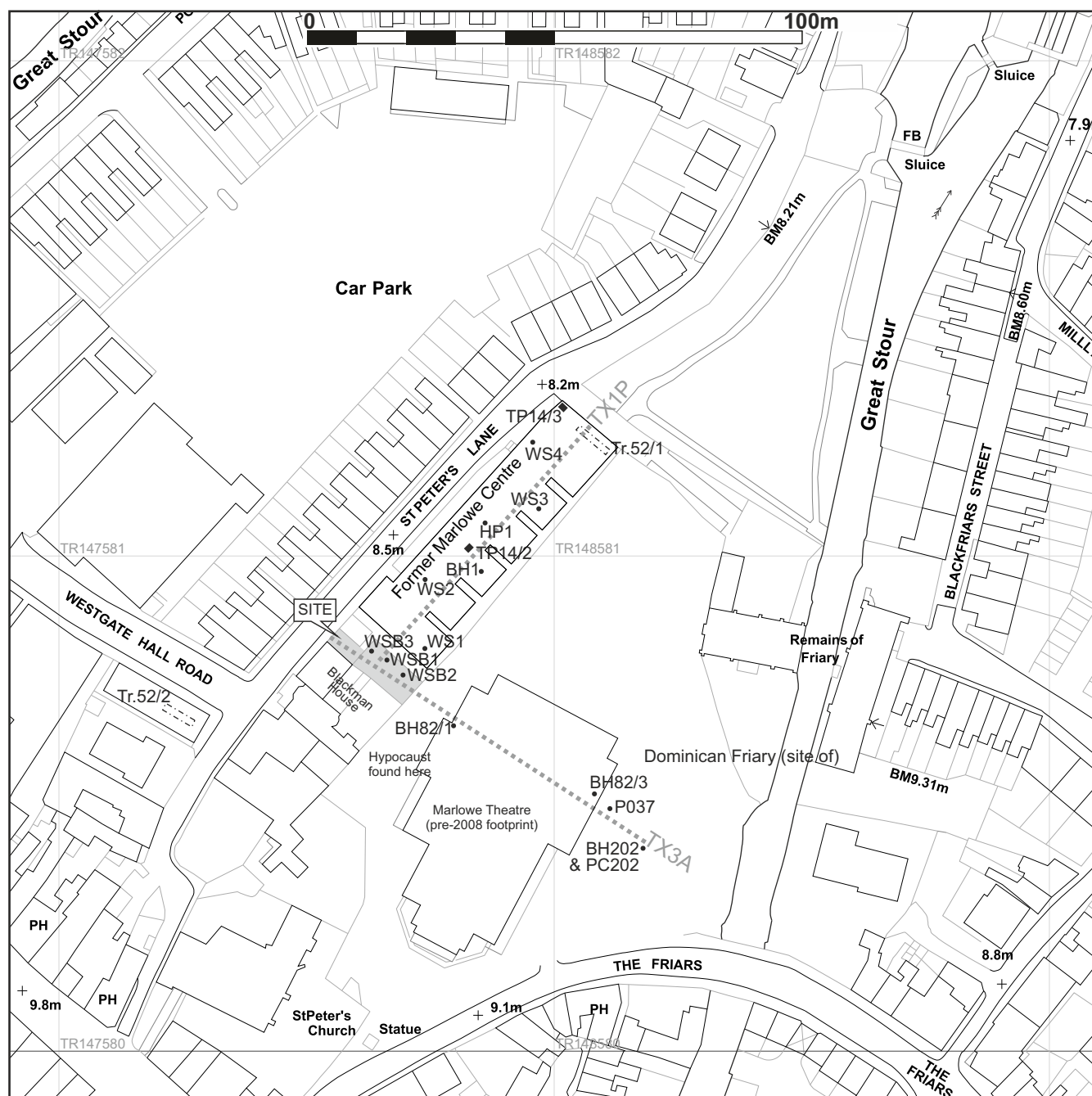


Fig 1 Location maps (1:1,250,000, 1:12,500 and 1:1,250).

