

Land at Taringa, Church Lane, Seasalter, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4BU


Archaeological evaluation

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Andrew Macintosh
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Canterbury Archaeological Trust Limited

92a Broad Street · Canterbury · Kent · CT1 2LU
Tel +44 (0)1227 462062 · Fax +44 (0)1227 784724 · email: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk
www.canterburytrust.co.uk



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Summary

Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook a programme of archaeological work on land at Taringa, Church Lane, Seasalter, CT5 4BU (NGR 609267 164616), on May 5 and 6 2016. The work was conducted in response to a planning application for the erection of four residential dwellings arranged around a central courtyard including the provision of vehicular parking, landscaping and garden sheds (planning ref: CA/15/00560/FUL). The programme comprised the excavation of four evaluation trenches (trenches 1-4).

The evaluation identified the underlying geology of London Clay between 0.11 and 0.38m below the existing ground surface (between +11.82m and +12.71m OD), falling gradually south to north. In trenches 3 and 4 occasional marine shell fragments and abraded chalk fragments formed a thin interface between the natural geology and a layer of clay disturbed by bioturbation.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered within the evaluation trenches.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 A programme of archaeological work was undertaken by Canterbury Archaeological Trust on land at Taringa, Church Lane, Seasalter, CT5 4BU commissioned by David John Developments in response to the proposed erection of four residential dwellings arranged around a central courtyard including the provision of vehicular parking, landscaping and garden sheds.
- 1.1.2 A planning application (ref: CA/15/00560/FUL) was submitted to Canterbury City Council as the Local Planning Authority and was approved on 06/11/15, to which Canterbury City Council attached the following archaeological condition (13):

Prior to the commencement of development, the following components of a scheme for the archaeological evaluation of the site, to be undertaken for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of any buried archaeological features and deposits and to assess the importance of the same, shall each be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

- a) A written scheme of investigation, to be submitted a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.*
- b) A report summarising the results of the investigations, to be produced on the completion of fieldwork, in accordance with the requirements set out in the written scheme of investigation.*
- c) Any further mitigation measures considered necessary as a result of the archaeological investigations, 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 by the Local Planning Authority.*
- d) If necessary, a programme of post-excavation assessment, analysis, publication and conservation.*

Fieldwork, including further mitigation works and post-excavation work shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and programme timings unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local authority, and the local authority shall be notified in writing a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of any fieldwork.

REASON: Pursuant to Articles 35 (1) and (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015, the local planning authority is satisfied that the requirements of this condition (including the timing of compliance) are so fundamental to the development permitted that, if not imposed, it would have been necessary to refuse permission for the development. This is because, at the time of granting permission, full archaeological details were not yet available but this information is necessary to ensure the development complies with Canterbury District Local Plan 2006 Policy BE15 and Draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2014 Policy HE11 and otherwise to protect the environment of the site and its locality.

- 1.1.3 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was submitted by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (dated April 2016) and approved by the City Council Archaeological Officer. The WSI indicated the excavation of four evaluation trenches each 20m long, located within the PDA.
- 1.1.4 The recommended archaeological works were undertaken by Andrew Macintosh, senior archaeologist, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, on 5 and 6 May 2016.
- 1.1.5 Canterbury Archaeological Trust is a registered organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and conforms to their by-laws, standards and policy statements.

1.2 Location and geology

- 1.2.1 The PDA is situated on a former garden associated with the property Taringa, on the southern side of Church Lane (NGR 609267 164616 centred). The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay

formation (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 digital map, accessed 19 April 2016). The PDA stands at an elevation of approximately 12m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

1.3 Archaeological potential and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological potential was based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded in the HER. The site is located within an area of known archaeological potential.
- 1.3.2 In 1998 archaeological fieldwork conducted to the north-east of the PDA revealed evidence for settlement of the area during the late Bronze Age / early Iron Age period (Allen & Willson 1999). Further excavations undertaken during 2001 along Church Lane, just 200m east of the PDA, recorded finds of residual Iron Age pottery (Boden 2001) and, discoveries of Iron Age and Roman pottery are also recorded 200m north-west of the PDA at the junction of Faversham Road and Ladysmith Grove (HER No. TR 06 SE 30). In 1862, just north of the PDA in the churchyard of St Alphege, a Roman key was discovered (HER NO. TR 06 SE 2).
- 1.3.3 The Anglo-Saxon town of Seasalter is mentioned in two eighth-century charters. The precise location of the settlement, named for its salt working, is unknown. Part of the settlement has been eroded by the sea, however it is possible that the borough was situated closer to the Church of St Alphege (HER No. TR 06 SE 13). Significant quantities of Anglo-Saxon pottery were recovered during excavation in Church Lane (Boden 2001), and a number of Anglo-Norman silver coins are recorded from the area (HER Nos. TR 06 NE 32, TR 06 NE 33, TR 06 NE 34 & TR 06 NE 35).
- 1.3.4 The Grade II listed St Alphege Church lies just 100m north of the PDA. Largely dating to the twelfth century, there is some suggestion that the door in the south porch is Anglo-Saxon in date. In the 1840s, the nave of the church was pulled down and the chancel was made into a burial chapel (HER Nos. TR 06 SE 1 & TR 06 SE 1125).
- 1.3.5 North-east of the PDA the 2001 excavations also revealed a large track or hollow way on a north-east to south-west alignment. Possibly dating from the Anglo-Saxon period, pottery evidence suggests that this feature was in use into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Boden 2001). To the west of the PDA, evidence of possible ridge and furrow suggests that some of the area was arable around this time (HER No. TR 06 SE 28) and a medieval sea defence situated on land adjoining Faversham Road and Ladysmith Grove was also recorded (HER No. TR 06 SE 29). Documentary evidence shows that the borough of Seasalter was taxed during the fourteenth century (HER No. TR 06 SE 13).
- 1.3.6 To the west of the PDA, several quarry pits and salt mound remains of unknown date are recorded (HER Nos. TR 06 SE 1026, TR 06 SE 1027 & TR 06 SE 1036). Sites of post-medieval farmsteads are also recorded in the area (HER Nos. MKE86087, MKE86088, MKE86089 & MKE86123).
- 1.3.7 Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Canterbury & District Historic Environment Record and the County Historic Environment Record.

2 Project aims and methodology

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation work was to determine whether any significant archaeological remains survived on site. Assessment of the results would provide guidance on what mitigation measures would be appropriate. Such measures may, for example, include preservation in situ and/or further detailed archaeological excavation prior to development and/or an archaeological watching brief during construction work.
- 2.1.2 The evaluation was thus to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The methodology for the archaeological works was set out in the Specification for archaeological evaluation (CAT 2015).
- 2.2.2 The proposed evaluation trench layout was slightly altered to the proposed WSI layout due to onsite constraints encountered on the day of excavation, including a potential buried service.
- 2.2.3 In addition the evaluation trench lengths were modified to accommodate the physical constraints of the PDA. Four trenches totalling approximately 65m in length were cut representing a c.6.3% sample of the site area.
- 2.2.4 Topsoil and modern overburden were removed by machine using a flat-bladed ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil was separated and stored alongside each trench for reinstatement.
- 2.2.5 The exposed surfaces were hand-cleaned to assess presence of archaeological features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 Identified contexts were recorded using *pro forma* record sheets. A full photographic record of all archaeological works was maintained. Each trench was planned at a scale of 1:50. All sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.
- 2.2.7 Archaeological survey data was located to the Ordnance Survey (reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL100021009). A temporary Ordnance Survey benchmark was located towards the north of the site on an existing drain cover (+12.13m OD).
- 2.2.8 On-site health and safety followed a written method statement and risk assessment in accordance with the Canterbury Archaeological Trust's *Health and Safety Policy* (2010).

2.3 Archive methodology

- 2.3.1 Following completion of the fieldwork a project archive was prepared in accordance with Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991, 30–31). The project archive conforms to the *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).
- 2.3.2 A few sherds of residual medieval pottery were recovered from the evaluation (trenches 1, 3 and 4). They will be retained by Canterbury Archaeological Trust.
- 2.3.3 No environmental samples were taken from the evaluation.
- 2.3.4 The project archive is presently held in the offices of Canterbury Archaeological Trust (92a Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU).

2.4 Assessment methodology

- 2.4.1 Post-excavation assessment was carried out immediately following documentation of the site archive.
- 2.4.2 The assessment has been prepared in accordance with Canterbury Archaeological Trust's *Guide to post-excavation methodology* (2010) and follows national guidelines in accordance with the principles of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MORPHE Project Managers' Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

3 Fieldwork results

3.1 Trench 1 (figures 1 and 2, plates 3 and 4)

- 3.1.1 Trench 1 was located toward the north-east of the PDA aligned north-west to south-east and was approximately 15m long by 1.8m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.23m and 0.41m below the existing ground level.
- 3.1.2 Underlying geology was encountered across the extent of the trench base, comprising a mid-orange brown compact clay (103) the top of which was encountered at a depth of 0.36m (+11.82m OD) below the existing ground surface.
- 3.1.3 A field drain cut into the natural clay aligned east to west was traceable across the base of the trench.
- 3.1.4 Sealing the underlying geology was a layer of pale to mid orange and grey brown clay (102) 0.07-0.12m thick with inclusions of rare small to medium rounded pebbles and one sherd of residual medieval pottery.
- 3.1.5 Above layer 102 was a mid to dark greyish brown fairly compact silt clay topsoil (101) 0.04-0.07m thick.
- 3.1.6 The uppermost layer was formed of decayed organic material (104) between 0.06 and 0.09m thick.
- 3.1.7 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in trench 1.

3.2 Trench 2 (figures 1 and 3, plates 5 and 6)

- 3.2.1 Trench 2 was situated toward the north-west area of the PDA aligned north-west to south-east and was approximately 12.60m long by 1.8m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.32m and 0.53m below existing ground level.
- 3.2.2 The natural subsoil(203) was encountered at a depth of 0.11m (+11.84m OD) below the existing ground surface and comprised a mid-orange brown compact clay with inclusions of rare chalk flecks.
- 3.2.3 Sealing layer 203 was a mid-orange and greyish brown compact clay (202) 0.15m to 0.24m thick with inclusions of rare rounded small to medium flints and one sherd of residual medieval pottery.
- 3.2.4 Above layer 202 was a layer of mid to dark greyish brown fairly compact silt clay topsoil (201) 0.10 to 0.24m thick with inclusions of occasional sub-angular flints.

3.3 Trench 3 (figures 1 and 4, plates 7 and 8)

- 3.3.1 Trench 3 was situated toward the south-west area of the PDA aligned north-west to south-east and was approximately 13.10m long by 1.8m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.30m and 0.60m below existing ground level.
- 3.3.2 The natural subsoil(303) was encountered at a depth of 0.22m (+12.03m OD) below the existing ground surface and comprised a mid-orange brown compact clay with inclusions of rare chalk flecks.
- 3.3.3 Sealing layer 303 was a pale brown compact clay mixed with grey brown compact clay (302) 0.12 to 0.32m thick. Rare coal lumps and occasional marine shell were recovered from the upper surface of the deposit.
- 3.3.4 Above layer 302 was a layer of mid to dark greyish brown fairly compact silt clay topsoil (301) between 0.07 and 0.10m thick.

3.4 Trench 4 (figure 1 and 5, plates 9 and 10)

- 3.4.1 Trench 4 was situated toward the south-east area of the PDA aligned north-west to south-east and was approximately 17m long by 1.8m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.35m and 0.60m below existing ground level.
- 3.4.2 The natural subsoil (403) was encountered at a depth of 0.38m (+12.71m OD) below the existing ground surface comprised a mid-orange brown compact clay with inclusions of rare chalk flecks and occasional marine shell recovered from the deposits upper surface.
- 3.4.3 Sealing layer 403 was a was a mid-orange and greyish brown compact clay (402) between 0.25m and 0.28m thick with inclusions of rare rounded small to medium flints, two sherds of medieval pottery and one sherd of glazed nineteenth-century pottery.
- 3.4.4 Above layer 402 was a layer of mid to dark greyish brown fairly compact silt clay topsoil (401) 0.10 to 0.23m thick with inclusions of occasional sub-angular flints.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Interpretation

- 4.1.1 Within the evaluated area, layers 103, 203, 303 and 403 are consistent with the underlying geology, recorded as London Clay. The underlying natural rises gradually to the south within the PDA. Deposits 303 and 403 appear to have been disturbed by bioturbation probably as a result of the area having been left somewhat overgrown for several years and, perhaps earlier, by ploughing.
- 4.1.2 Sealing the London Clay, layers 102, 202, 302 and 402 have been interpreted as a subsoil, all the layers show evidence of disturbance by bioturbation. A few sherds of medieval pottery recovered from 102, 302 and 402 are almost certainly residual.
- 4.1.3 In trenches 3 and 4 marine shell fragments and abraded chalk fragments formed a thin interface between the natural geology (303 and 403) and layers 302 and 402. The presence of shell and chalk suggest that the land has been subjected to marling, a process whereby the calcium carbonate or lime in the chalk and shell help break up the heavy clay soil and to a lesser extent raise the soil PH value.
- 4.1.4 Layers 101, 201, 301, 401 have been interpreted as overlying topsoil, whilst 404 the uppermost layer represents a deposit of organic, humic soil probably formed of decayed leaves and branches.

4.2 Potential

- 4.2.1 The archaeological work identified the underlying geology of London Clay at between 0.11m and 0.38 below the current ground surface, slightly higher towards the south of the PDA representing a slight slope towards Church Lane.
- 4.2.2 The findings demonstrated that within the PDA the ground has been subject to marling and disturbance by bioturbation. Ancient ploughing may have also generated the disturbed deposit (equivalent layers 102, 202, 302 and 402), immediately above the natural horizon. The few sherds of residual pottery are suggestive of medieval settlement activity in the locale, however no associated archaeological features were encountered.
- 4.2.3 Although the site is located only 130m south of the twelfth-century St Alphege Church and previous archaeological findings of prehistoric to medieval date have been made within the vicinity, the complete lack of any intrusive features and the relative paucity of artefactual material, either in disturbed subsoil layers or the topsoil, suggests that the site may be of little archaeological significance. The artefactual material recovered, may well have been imported onto the site during previous episodes of marling, which is suggested by the scatters of chalk and shell across the natural horizon in trenches 3 and 4.

References

Allen, T. & Willson, J. 1999 'Sunset Caravan Park and Church Lane East, Whitstable', Canterbury's Archaeology 1998 – 1999, 10-11

Boden, D.C. 2001 Archaeological evaluation of land known as Church Meadows, Church Lane, Seasalter, Kent, Canterbury Archaeological Trust unpublished client report 2001/42

CAT 2016, Specification for a programme of archaeological evaluation of land at Teringa, Church Lane, Seasalter, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4BU

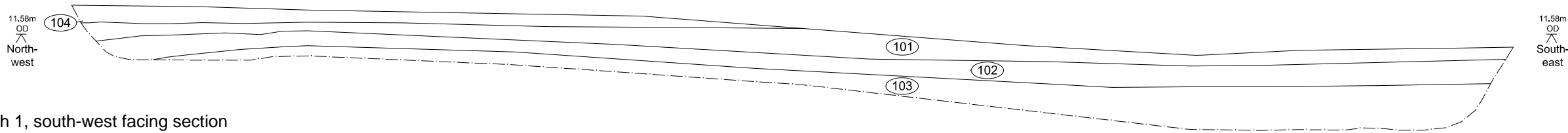


Figure 2: Trench 1, south-west facing section



Figure 3: Trench 2, north-east facing section

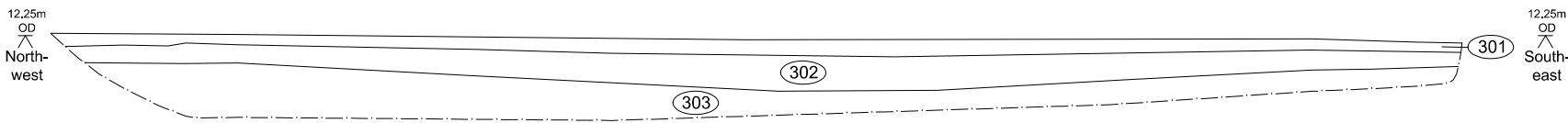


Figure 4: Trench 3, south-west facing section

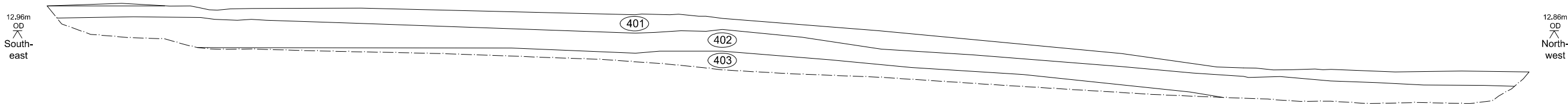


Figure 5: Trench 4, north-east facing section

Figures 2-5: Trench sections

CANTERBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD. <small>A REGISTERED CHARITY</small> <small>92a Broad Street, Canterbury</small> <small>Kent, CT1 2LU</small> <small>Tel 01227 462062 Fax 01227 784724</small> <small>Email admin@canterburytrust.co.uk</small>	PROJECT NAME	DRAWN BY	SCALE(S)
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Plate 1: Site location showing the PDA looking west



Plate 2: Site location showing PDA looking north



Plate 3: Trench 1 Overall shot of trench looking north-west. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Trench 1 Sample section looking north-east. Scale 0.5m



Plate 5: Overall shot of trench 2 looking north-west. Scale 1m



Plate 6: Trench 2 Sample section looking south-west. Scale 0.5m



Plate 7: Overall shot of trench 3 looking south-east. Scale 1m



Plate 8: Trench 3 Sample section looking north-east. Scale 0.5m



Plate 9: Overall shot of trench 4 looking north-west. Scale 1m



Plate 10: Trench 4 Sample section looking south-west. Scale 0.5m