

Fulston Manor Area 2.8 Sittingbourne, Kent

Archaeological Watching Brief





**FULSTON MANOR AREA 2.8
SITTINGBOURNE, KENT**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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**FULSTON MANOR AREA 2.8
SITTINGBOURNE, KENT****Archaeological Watching Brief****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Ward Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during part of a programme of construction on the Ward Homes area of the overall development at Fulston Manor, an area to the south-east of Sittingbourne. The watching brief area comprised a segment of land measuring approximately 0.5 ha in extent within the larger 22.1 ha site.

Wessex Archaeology had previously undertaken archaeological evaluation across the wider development area, which uncovered a medieval farmstead to the north west of the present watching brief area and prehistoric features to the north and west. The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor groundworks to see if the archaeological features noted previously formed part of a more complex series of structures extending into the watching brief area.

The watching brief was carried out across three phases of work over a period of several weeks. No archaeological remains were recorded in the excavated areas during any phase of works.

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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Peter Ralph of Ward Homes Ltd (the Client). Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Carl Davies and Stuart Coulter of Ward homes for their assistance and cooperation, and also to thank Adam Singler of Kent County Council.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology (London) by Lawrence Pontin. The fieldwork was undertaken by Cornelius Barton, who also compiled this report with illustrations by Kitty Brandon.

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Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Document

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Ward Homes Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land within the Phase 2.8 area of the approved development at Fulston Manor, Sittingbourne (the Site) (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report refers to the watching brief undertaken during construction on the Site between 11th September and 13th November 2006.

1.2 Site Description

1.2.1 The overall Site of Fulston Manor is approximately rectangular in shape and some 22.1 ha in extent. It is bounded to the north by a School, to the east by a minor road leading south to Highsted, to the west by a modern housing development and to the south by the disused Highsted chalk quarry pit. The Phase 2.8 area is located on the eastern side of the Site (**Figure 1**) and is centred on National Grid Ref 590900, 162400.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Detailed Planning Consent has been given for residential housing within the Site. The Site lies directly adjacent to two areas of High Archaeological Priority as defined within the Swale Borough Local Plan. Accordingly, conditions attached to the consent require that a scheme of archaeological works be prepared and implemented with the approval of the Heritage Conservation Department of Kent County Council (HCD), archaeological planning advisors to Swale District Council.

1.3.2 Previous evaluation of the overall Site has been undertaken in phases. The Phase 3 area (containing the now Phase 2.8) undertaken by Wessex Archaeology demonstrated that the majority of this area did not possess any significant archaeological remains apart from a localised area of ditches dated to the prehistoric period (Wessex Archaeology 2005a).

1.3.3 Construction of Phase 2.8 is currently underway. This involves the creation of roads, drainage and house plots. Due to the high level of overburden on the Site, being in excess of 1m, most of these works were not considered to have any undue impact on the levels of previously noted archaeology, as noted in the previous evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2005a). It was therefore agreed with HCD to only undertake a watching brief as mitigation for the groundworks for the house plots (**Figure 1**).

2 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Geology

- 2.1.1 The 1:50,000 Geological Survey map shows the Site's solid geology is the Upper Chalk formation of the Cretaceous period. This material is overlain by brickearth, windblown clay containing appreciable amounts of sand and silt, the latter having been exploited in the 19th century for brickmaking purposes and more recently for cement manufacturing.
- 2.1.2 The sequence of deposits recorded during the evaluation was fairly consistent across the Site. The sequence comprised topsoil between 0.23m and 0.35m thick, consisting of a dark greyish brown clayey silt to silty clay loam with frequent small angular chalk and flint inclusions. This overlaid soliflucted chalk and flint bedrock, reddish brown clay with flint and silty clay brickearth patches (Wessex Archaeology 2005a).
- 2.1.3 Land use on the Site prior to the watching brief consisted of redundant agricultural land.

2.2 Topography

- 2.2.1 The general topography of the overall Site presents a gently undulating landscape lying at 30 metres above Ordnance Datum (a OD). Parts of the Site have been built up by the Client by means of made ground deposits.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Excavation

- 3.1.1 Previous archaeological investigations in advance of the wider development have revealed evidence of a medieval farmstead and related enclosures approximately 300m to the northwest of the Phase 2.8 area (Wessex Archaeology 2005b). These remains did not extend as far as the edge of the watching brief area.

3.2 Evaluation

- 3.2.1 The previous evaluation in the phase 3 area revealed limited evidence of possible prehistoric activity in the north-east corner of the watching brief area, in the form of three shallow ditches containing small fragments of Iron Age pottery. The alignment of two of the ditches suggested that they might possibly form the corner of a small enclosure. The trenches are illustrated in red on **Figure 2**, with the ditch sections indicated in solid black (Wessex Archaeology 2005a).

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the development the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains within a particular area of the Phase 2.8 part of the Site.

- 4.1.2 In particular, the watching brief was to determine whether or not the ditches described in 3.2.1, extended further into the watching brief area and joined to form part of a more complex structure or were associated with other archaeological features.

5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

5.1 Fieldwork

- 5.1.1 All watching brief work was conducted in accordance with a specification prepared by Wessex Archaeology and agreed with HCD prior to commencement of the watching brief and in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2001), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.
- 5.1.2 All archaeological deposits were recorded on Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording sheets. A photographic record was made by means of black and white prints, colour slides and digital images. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.1.3 Where no archaeological remains were present, the excavation was recorded using digital photography and measured sketch sections.
- 5.1.4 No further context numbers or descriptions were created further to those already noted within the earlier evaluation of the area.

5.2 Phases of Work

- 5.2.1 The work undertaken during this phase of construction consisted of three separate phases of excavation. These were as follows:
- *Drainage trenches*
 - *Roadway Stripping*
 - *Excavation of footings*
- 5.2.2 All phases of work were carried out by means of tracked 360° mechanical excavators under constant archaeological supervision.

5.3 Drainage Trenches

- 5.3.1 This phase of work involved the excavation of two trenches approximately 1.4m wide by 100m long by 1.8- 2.4m deep beneath present ground surface for the laying of deep drainage pipes. The location of the trenches is highlighted in dark blue on **Figure 2**, and a section of the trench is illustrated in **Plate 1**.

5.4 Roadway Stripping

- 5.4.1 This phase of works involved stripping remaining topsoil and subsoil to a depth of 0.10- 0.25m below present ground surface by means of a grading bucket. Stripping was observed in the area highlighted in green in **Figure 2**. Part of the stripped area is illustrated in **Plate 2**.

5.5 Excavation of Footings

- 5.5.1 This phase of work involved excavation of footing trenches 1- 1.9m wide with depths varying between 1.8 and 2.6m beneath present ground surface. The variation in depth was due to the variable nature of the underlying soil deposits. The buildings are highlighted in pale blue on **Figure 2**, and one of the footings is illustrated in **Plate 3**.

5.6 Finds Collection and Retention

- 5.6.1 All collected finds were to be treated in accordance with the principles and practises set out by the Medieval Pottery Research Group (2001) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Watching Briefs* (2001).

5.7 Environmental Sampling Strategy

- 5.7.1 A strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits was developed in consultation with Wessex Archaeology's environmental manager Dr Mike Allen and was set out in the Specification (Wessex Archaeology 2006).

5.8 The Archive

- 5.8.1 The archive, including site drawings and photographic records, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in London under the WA project code 63800. Following the conclusion of the project the archive will be prepared for deposition at a suitable museum in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990).

6 RESULTS

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or related artefactual material were present in any of the excavated areas. The soil profile was broadly similar across the watching brief area, consisting of reddish-brown silty clay subsoil ranging between 0.60m-1.4m in depth overlying mixed glacial deposits of chalk and clay with flints. This is consistent with results from earlier phases of evaluation and excavation in the wider development area.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 The possible prehistoric ditches observed during the evaluation were not observed in this phase of work. This would indicate that either the level that the ditches were revealed at during the evaluation was not directly impacted upon by the construction work or that these ditches did not extend much further than originally plotted (**Figure 2**).
- 7.1.2 Consequently, Wessex Archaeology would conclude that it is very unlikely that further archaeological remains will be disturbed by this phase of development.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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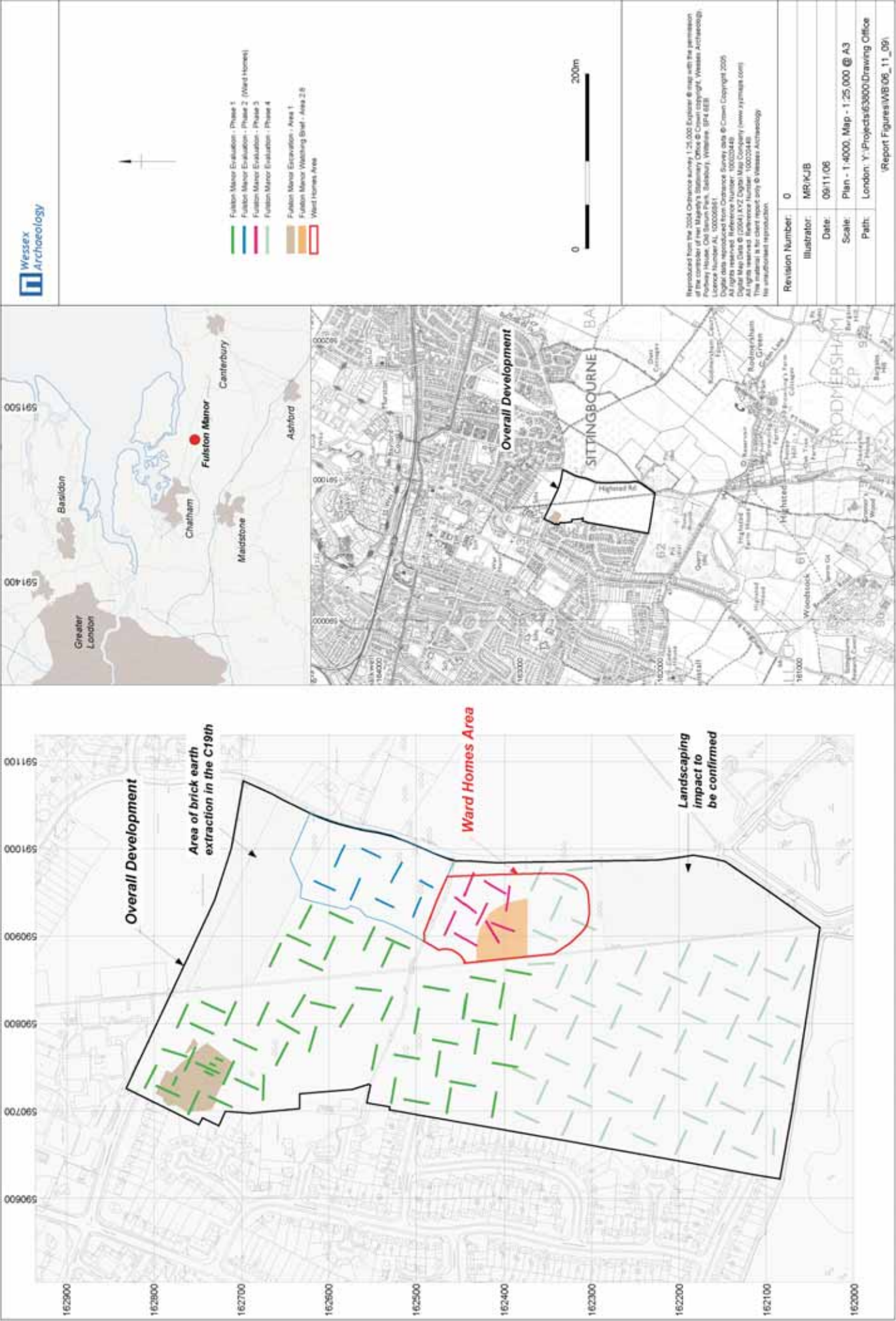
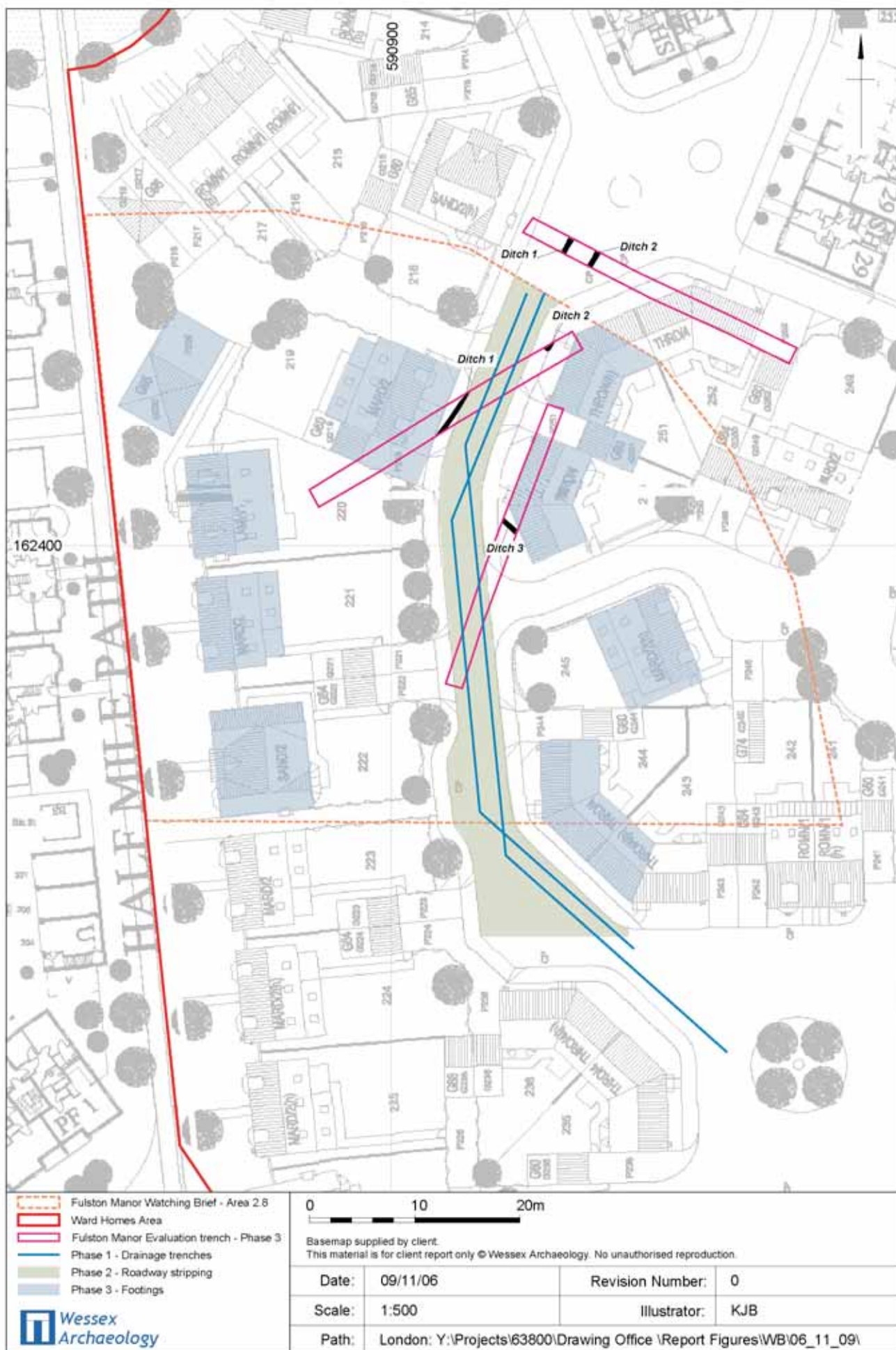


Figure 1

Site location plan



Phases 1-3 of construction

Figure 2



Plate 1. Phase 1 - Drainage trench from East



Plate 2. Phase 2 - Roadway stripping



Plate 3. Phase 3 - Footing excavations



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