



# Westbere Water Treatment Works Canterbury, Kent

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Island Road  
Westbere  
Canterbury  
CT3 4JD

County Kent  
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## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Clancy Group Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the installation of a proposed storm tank in the. The works consisted of the supervised excavation of two trenches located at Westbere Water Treatment Works (WTW), Island Road, Westbere, Canterbury (centred on NGR 619963 161201).

Despite the potential for possible prehistoric features and the remains associated with a post-medieval field system, no archaeological finds, features, or deposits appeared during the monitored works. The stratigraphy encountered provided evidence for earlier ground disturbance works reaching the natural geology and thus suggesting the possibility that had any archaeological signature been present it may have been eradicated during earlier development. It is noted, however, that due to the limited scope of the works undertaken, the survival of archaeological remains across the remainder of the area is unknown.

## Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank The Clancy Group Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, in particular Cat Tame. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Principal Archaeological Officer, who monitored the project for Kent County Council.



# Westbere Water Treatment Works Canterbury, Kent

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Clancy Group Ltd ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks related to the construction of a storm tank. The monitored works covered 15.84 square meters, centred on NGR 619963 161201, at Westbere Water Treatment Works (WTW), Island Road, Westbere, Canterbury, CT3 4JD (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2023). The Principal Archaeological Officer approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken on the 4th and 7th August 2023.

#### 1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

#### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The watching brief was located on the eastern edge of the village of Westbere, 5 km north-east of Canterbury, Kent. The WTW is bound by the Ashford to Ramsgate railway line to the south, beyond which lies Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve. Marshland and farmland lie to the north and west and RSPCA Canterbury and District to the east.

1.3.2 Existing ground levels are recorded as 9 m above Ordnance Datum.

1.3.3 The bedrock geology is Thanet Formation - sand, silt and clay. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 59.2 and 56 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. Overlain by a superficial deposit of Head - clay and silt. Sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period (British Geological Survey 2023).

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed during the compilation of the WSI for the project (Wessex Archaeology 2023). A summary of the assessment within a 1 km radius of the site is presented below, with relevant entry numbers for the Kent Historical Environment Record (KHER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.



## 2.2 Archaeological and historical context

### *Prehistoric*

- 2.2.1 Many Palaeolithic handaxes and associated debitage and flakes have been encountered within the study area. The HER records the discovery of Palaeolithic handaxes at a number of locations within the study area (800 m north-west, KHER: TR 16 SE 249 and TR 16 SE 250).
- 2.2.2 A Bronze Age copper alloy socketed axehead is recorded 700m north from the WTW (KHER: MKE94707). Further evidence of the Bronze Age within the study area is suggested by the discovery of a cremation in an inverted collared urn with a flint knife, in a gravel pit 300 m west from the WTW (KHER: TR 16 SE 15).
- 2.2.3 Canterbury Archaeological Trust carried out an evaluation, followed by strip, map and sample excavation 400 m north-east of the WTW (KHER: TR 26 SW 205). Two enclosures were found, the first enclosure was over 50m wide with ditches 3-4m wide and 1.2m deep. The second enclosure was laid out over the first and recut part of the alignment though with an extension to the north. A number of ditches and post holes were found, potentially relating to occupation within the enclosure. Pottery was of Iron Age date with some early Roman material.
- 2.2.4 Archaeology South-East conducted an archaeological evaluation at Spires Academy, 500 m north of the WTW. Eighteen, thirty-metre-long trial trenches were excavated with trenches 2-5, 8, 14 and 15 revealing various archaeological features. Dating material was ephemeral but most features seem to be prehistoric or Roman (KHER: TR 16 SE 271).

### *Romano-British*

- 2.2.5 During the Roman period, the study area is thought to have occupied agricultural land to the northeast of the Roman town at Canterbury. The WTW lies in close proximity of the line of the Roman road from Canterbury to Upstreet, and the numerous funerary monuments from the period.
- 2.2.6 The study area is crossed by numerous Roman roads, including from Canterbury to the port and shore fort at Richborough (KHER: TR 16 SE 206), Sturry to Reculver (KHER TR 26 NW 203) and Canterbury to Upstreet for access to the Isle of Thanet (KHER: TR 16 SE 206). Typical archaeological features associated with Roman roads can include evidence for settlement and occupation, roadside ditches and associated land division, together with quarry pits, burials and chance losses.
- 2.2.7 Evidence of Roman funerary activity is presented by the discovery of cremation urns on Summer Hill 500 m west of the Study Site (KHER:TR 16 SE 62).

### *Anglo-Saxon*

- 2.2.8 An early 6th-7th century Anglo Saxon cemetery was discovered in 1931 during gravel digging 300 m north of the WTW (KHER: TR 16 SE 12). About 60-70 burials comprising cremations and inhumations, were recorded. Grave goods included a range of glass and pottery vessels, personal ornaments and weapons. A Roman bottle was also recovered. The cemetery appears to have been of three phases, early 6th century phase of Northern Europeans, perhaps Frisians, later 6th century Frankish influence, and a 7th century phase. Some of the finds are in Canterbury Museum. The cemetery was situated on the top and brow of a gentle south-east facing slope of a ridge, overlooking the River Stour. OD approx 33m. The Canterbury-Thanet roman road passes 150m to the north. The gravel pit is disused.



- 2.2.9 Archaeological excavations at Hoplands Farm 400 m north-east of the WTW recorded a relatively brief period of Early Anglo-Saxon occupation within the northern part of the excavation area along with a timber-lined well, located some distance to the south.

#### *Medieval*

- 2.2.10 Westbere is not mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Survey, Westbere is first mentioned in 1212. The landscape was likely rural and agricultural in nature during the medieval period.

#### *Post-medieval to modern (1500–present)*

- 2.2.11 Gravel and sand extraction was the predominant industry within the study area during the post-medieval period and more recent periods (TR 16 SE 84, TR 16 SE 85), (TR 16 SE 83, TR 16 SE 82, TR 16 SE 81 and TR 16 SE 80). In addition, evidence from the 17th and 18th centuries of agriculture, including numerous farmhouses, farmsteads, and also barns, granaries and stables, indicates the prevalence of arable farming within the landscape.
- 2.2.12 A walled structure visible sited adjacent to the railway line on early 1940s RAF vertical aerial photographs, 700 m west of the WTW (KHER: MWX43067). The structure is unroofed and C-shaped in plan, open on the northern side. It had apparently been removed by July 1945, as it is not visible on RAF vertical aerial photographs of this date [2]. Its function is unclear but it may be a wall sheltering a machine gun position, probably covering the railway line. A similar feature (KHER MWX43066) lies 70m to the west, also sited on the edge of the railway, and was presumably part of the same defensive scheme.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Aims**

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and as defined in the ClfA *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were to:

- allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

#### **3.2 Objectives**

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023), were to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);





- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

## 4 METHODS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

### 4.2 Fieldwork methods

#### *General*

4.2.1 The groundworks monitored during the archaeological watching brief consisted of the excavation of two trenches in association with the installation of the storm tank.

4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval.

#### *Recording*

4.2.4 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.2.5 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

### 4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).

### 4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 The Principal Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Principal Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council.



## **5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 The monitored works consisted of the mechanical excavation of two trenches in the development area. Trench 1 was orientated north-south and was traversed at the centre by Trench 2, which was excavated on an east-west alignment.

### **5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits**

5.2.1 Trench 1 was comprised of 0.3 m of turf (101) located above a dark greyish brown topsoil (102), which overlain a layer of silt sand (103) with remains of modern building waste indicative of a modern made ground deposit. Below (103) appeared a deposit (104) with the same soil composition as the geology, with ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions, which was described as disturbed or redeposited natural. The natural was a mid-brownish orange silty sand layer, located at 0.74 m below ground level. This was disturbed by a possible old compound layer (106) and cut by a previous service trench with an unknown depth (Figs 2 and 3).

5.2.2 The excavation of Trench 2 revealed a similar stratigraphical sequence to that in Trench 1. Underlying the turf (201), the area was covered by dark greyish brown topsoil (202) which sealed a modern made ground deposit (203) which contained inclusions of building waste consistent with debris observed within the old compound layer (106) within Trench 1. Beneath deposit 203, a layer of possible disturbed or redeposited natural (204), with occasional CBM inclusions was observed. This overlaid the natural (205) appearing a a silty sand located 0.68 m below ground level (Figs 4 and 5).

## **6 FINDS EVIDENCE**

6.1.1 No archaeological finds were recovered, or observed during the monitoring in any of the trenches.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

7.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the works.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 Summary and discussion.**

8.1.1 The archaeological monitoring carried out during the excavation of both trenches identified a paucity of archaeological remains, despite the potential of the development area which was surrounded by different sites related to human activity from prehistory to the 20th century.

8.1.2 However, the deposits identified during the watching brief, particularly the possible truncated or redeposited natural and made ground deposits, indicate that previous works undertaken in this area of the site reached such a depth as to have impacted upon any archaeological signature present. Thus, the lack of archaeological evidence may be due to previous groundworks erasing such a signature. Given the limited scope of the investigation it is important to note that the existence of archaeological remains has not been disproved across the entire area.



## 9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

### 9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The site falls within an area where there is currently no collecting museum. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive, but may institute a charge to the client for ongoing storage beyond a set period.

### 9.2 Preparation of the archive

#### *Physical archive*

- 9.2.1 The physical archive, which includes paper records will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; SMA 1995).

- 9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **site code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 file/document case of paper records

#### *Digital archive*

- 9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

#### *Documentary archive*

- 9.2.4 The physical archive currently includes paper records (site registers only). Born digital data include site records, finds and environmental data, photographs, survey data and reports. Physical and digital records will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; NPAAW 2017; SMA 1995).

### 9.3 Selection strategy

- 9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.

- 9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.



9.3.3 In this instance, given the relatively low level of finds recovery, the selection process has been deferred until after the fieldwork stage was completed. Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and external specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

#### *Documentary records*

9.3.5 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (written scheme of investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.

#### *Digital data*

9.3.6 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others not considered directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

9.3.7 Given the very limited results of the fieldwork, it is considered that the site conforms to the definition of a 'sterile project' (i.e., one that produces nothing of evidential value), according to the *Cifa Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (archaeological archives from sterile projects). It is therefore recommended that only selected digital data are deposited with ADS, an approach commensurate with the scale and significance of the project. Deposition will involve the uploading of the site report via OASIS only.

## **9.4 Security copy**

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

## **9.5 OASIS**

9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Principal Archaeological Officer of Kent County Council, on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

## **10 COPYRIGHT**

### **10.1 Archive and report copyright**

10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was

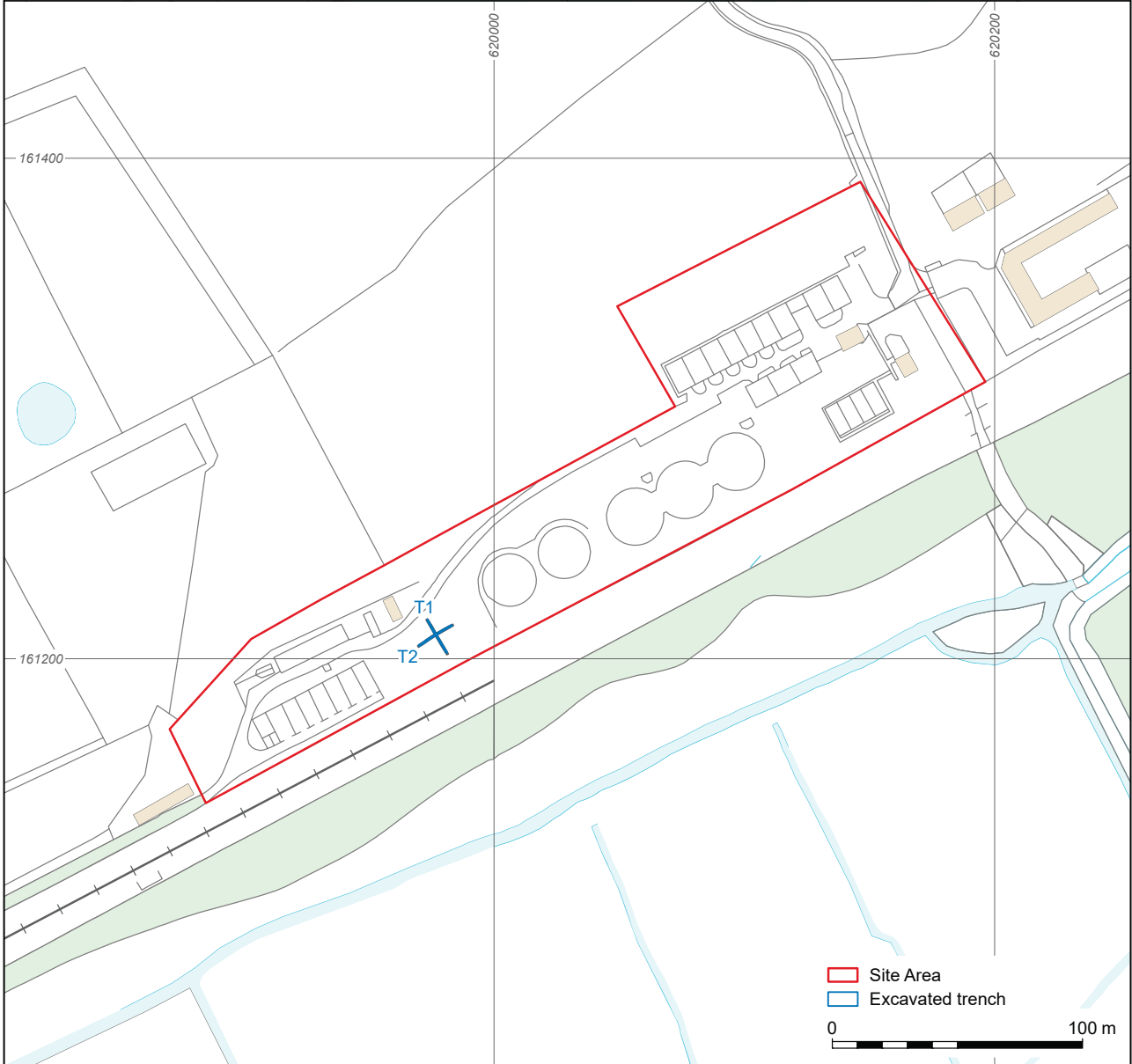


produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.

- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER), where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

## **10.2 Third party data copyright**

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Date: 10/11/2023

Created by: JD

Revision: 0

Scale: 1:2,500 at A4



Figure 1: Site plan with Trench 1 and Trench 2



Figure 2: South west facing section of Trench 1. 1 m scale



Figure 3: General shot of Trench 1. View from south east



Figure 4: South east facing section of Trench 2. 1m scale



Figure 5: General shot of Trench 2. View from north east







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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Trench summaries

Trench No 1		Length 10 m	Width 1.50 m	Depth 1.50 m
Easting 619977.1800		Northing 161208.9408		m OD 5.779
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL (m)
101		Topsoil	Turf	0.00–0.03
102		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt	0.03– 0.16/0.03– 0.2
103		Made ground	Mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with common small bits of modern building waste. In parts appears to have a distinct stony layer. Dump of material.	0.16–0.40
104		Disturbed/ Redeposited Natural	Mid brown orange silt sand with occasional CBM inclusions. Unsure if redeposited or natural that has been tracked over after previously being stripped.	0.40– 0.74/0.5– 1.14
105		Natural	Mid brown orange sand.	0.74–1.50+
106		Made ground	Light cream yellow silt sand. Very compact. Uncommon building waste. Replaces 103 about 1 / 4 to 2 / 3 up the trench from site boundary. Grey strip at the base at by the track. Possibly an old compound layer?	0.2–0.5

Trench No 2		Length 10 m	Width 1.50 m	Depth 0.90 m
Easting 619976.6938		Northing 161209.5415		m OD 6.295
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL (m)
201		Topsoil	Turf	0.00–0.03
202		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt	0.03–0.15
203		Made ground	Light cream yellow silt sand. Very compact. Uncommon building waste. Possibly an old compound layer?	0.15–0.45
204		disturbed/redep osited natural	Mid brown orange silt sand with occasional CBM inclusions. Unsure if redeposited or natural that has been tracked over after previously being stripped	0.45–0.68
205		Natural	Mid brown orange sand.	0.68+

# OASIS Summary for wessexar1-520531

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-520531
Project Name	Watching Brief at Westbere WTW, Canterbury, Kent
Sitename	Westbere WTW, Canterbury, Kent
Sitecode	284910
Project Identifier(s)	
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	04-Aug-2023 - 07-Aug-2023
Location	Westbere WTW, Canterbury, Kent NGR : TR 19963 61201 LL : 51.3073982045745, 1.154500266996438 12 Fig : 619963,161201
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Kent Local Authority District : Canterbury Parish : Westbere
Project Methodology	An archaeological monitoring and recording (also known as a watching brief) during all groundworks within the development site that have the potential to physically impact on buried archaeological remains. Principally such groundworks comprise the excavation of two trenches related with the construction of an storm tank.
Project Results	Despite the potential of the area, no archaeological deposits, features or finds were uncovered during the works.
Keywords	
Funder	Private or public corporation The Clancy Group Ltd
HER	Kent HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Bianca Williams-San Martin
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

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