

Name: Paul Crame. **Course Module:** MA Archaeological Practice -HPAR7003: Archaeological Project Design and Delivery. **Tutors:** Nigel Nayling and Martin Locock. **Date:** 15/05/2022 **Word Count:** 2026

Using a project design, preferably from a completed project with which you have had direct involvement, critically assess the extent to which the design successfully delivered a contextualised research design, appropriate methodology, effective project management and communication within and beyond the project team, and a suitable outcome in terms of publication and archive.

A planning application was made in October 2020 to Canterbury City Council under the planning application number (CA/17/02907) by Bellway Homes Ltd to develop land for 450 houses and facilities on a site south of the city Canterbury in the region of Herne Bay, Greenhill Road, Kent. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the development has taken longer than usual to progress through the planning process. The land comprising of approximately 22 ha centred at grid reference TR16001 66336, has been in continuous use as agricultural land with a scattering of farmsteads as far back as map progression can identify from the 1769 Andrews, Dury & Herbert Map of Kent (Andrews *et al.* 1769). The underlying geology of the land is a mixture of heavy London Clay to the West of the site and smaller proportions of lighter Brick Earth to the East (British Geological Survey, 2022). The developer commissioned a heritage consultancy firm called RPS to conduct the initial desk-based assessment to evaluate the potential of archaeology in the designated area; this was a requirement stipulated by policies HE11 and HE12 of the Canterbury District local plan 2017 (Canterbury City Council, 2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021). In essence, planning consent for the development could only go forward with an appropriate level of evaluation, exploration, and possible excavation of the in-situ archaeology on the site, with the objective of assessment, analysis, publication, and conservation of the recovered heritage.

The following assignment will examine how effective the project management and communication within and beyond the project team has progressed from the initial desk-based assessment by the heritage consultant (RPS, 2021), and the subsequent tender for the exploration work to Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) in producing the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in March of 2021 (Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2021) and the 25 days evaluation project in November 2021, outcomes published in the January 2022 project report (Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2022). I have been working as a field operative on this site from the beginning of the excavation in February 2022, which has enabled some additional incite of the project's para-data. The entire excavation is due to be finished by the end of May 2022.

The first critical point regarding the overall outcome of the November evaluation project is a conflict of interests between the developer, agent, and the archaeology contractor. It has been made clear from discussions with the PCA project management team and senior archaeologists conducting evaluation work that the developer Bellway Homes is not interested in the archaeology of this site and has subsequently used a commissioning agent to mitigate what they see as an obstacle to the housebuilding timetable delayed by the pandemic. Subsequently, there has been significant pressure to evaluate the underlying archaeology as quickly as possible to keep within the developer's rescheduled timetable.

Part of the problem with the November evaluation project was the data utilised in the initial project start-up stage to produce the PCA written scheme of investigation. Limited information was communicated from the desk-based assessment, not being comprehensive in its conclusion of late

Iron Age/early Roman archaeology on the site, only indicating a moderate potential which could have been impacted from intensive ploughing and unclear evidence that the land might have been partly developed in the early 20th Century. However, this does not match up with subsequent road maps of the area post-1906 (Appendix.1).

The guidelines set out by CIFA (CIFA, 2014) on desk-based assessments do, however, stipulate making an initial assessment based upon the available written records and minimal fieldwork visits, which the agent duly undertook. The sources that were consulted within the initial desk-based assessment were, however, weighted towards using Kents HER data, which is limited in terms of the immediate localised area (1.5 km radius), in addition to systemic problems of fragmentation, interoperability, and accessibility of using HER data within England (Illsley, 2019). The bibliographic sources listed do indicate some review with both published and unpublished grey literature from the locality, but no emphasis was used to contextualise the potential of late Iron Age / early Roman archaeology. Perhaps disturbingly, the desk-based assessment also omits two key grey literature reports that indicate significant clusters of late Iron Age / early Roman archaeology discovered in developments constructed post-1990s, namely the nearby Thanet Way project (A2290) to the immediate south of the site (Parfitt. *et al*, 2016) and Herne Bay High School to the north-east (Hounsell. *et al*, 2001). It should also be noted that the site is located 4 km south of the city of Canterbury and less than 2 km north/east from Reculver Roman Fort on the Kent coast. The desk-based assessment was overly conservative in perspective, which had a negative re-percussive effect on the subsequent evaluation project regarding the limited allocation of human, material, and time resources.

The evaluation project design by PCA, covered by the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) does not indicate a re-interpretation of the findings from the RPS desk-based assessment. Subsequent geophysical data gathered in the later part of 2021 did discover a significant anomaly in the middle of the site, which warranted further investigation as a potential Late Iron Age / Early Roman structure of unknown purpose. This could also be partly discerned from the 1946 aerial photography of the land (Appendix 2). Nevertheless, the WSI did not factor in the potential risk for a greater volume of resources needed to complete the November evaluation project, as the current project manager has opined that geophysical evidence cannot always be relied upon for the identification of anomalies due to the degradation of geophysical data from background noise (Schmidt. *et al*, 2020). However, Section 1.8 of the WSI indicates that the works undertaken in the WSI are in accordance with MoRPHE guidelines 2015 and CIFA, therefore it could be conversely argued that the risk they would find more archaeological features should have been factored into the evaluation project design from the beginning. This does not appear to be the case and can perhaps be attributed to several factors, such as downward pressure from the agent to accept an essential evaluation in the quickest timeframe. However, perhaps more critically, PCA is an archaeological contractor that undertakes most of its work in central London's riverine environment and is less professionally familiar with projects in East Kent. If a local archaeological contractor such as Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT, 2022) had been involved in the project design, then maybe there could have been a comprehensive understanding of the problematic geological conditions of the localised clay formation and, more importantly, a detailed understanding of the local archaeology and grey literature. CAT has been digging and publishing in the locality for more than forty years.

The PCA WSI is an imprecise template that ticks all the boxes regarding any general archaeological evaluation in terms of sampling strategy or recording of finds. However, it lacks any authentic detail of purpose, which is extremely important as this is a significant endeavour in terms of both human and material resources over a sustained period. Section 4 of the WSI does not give any indication of

the regional research framework (SERF, 2022) or a thematic research framework; instead, it just gives a generalised set of bullet points with no specific research questions relating to what we know of the early Roman British period and what we would hope to discover from the evaluation. To a certain extent, yes, it can be argued that a WSI is for an initial exploration of a specified land area, and it would be challenging to develop extensive research questions. However, the published January 2022 post exploration report (Section 10 to 11) continues to use only these most basic research questions from the WSI. It does not seek to contextualise or build upon significant findings into the bigger picture of regional or thematic frameworks. There is no justification for the subsequent 2022 excavation. This could have been because the evaluation was an enormous amount of work, with a rushed post evaluation report actioned by only one senior archaeologist. From subsequent discussions with the archaeologist, it was relayed that he did not expect to find much archaeology as it was a rural site, and when the archaeology was revealed, it was an intensive amount of work to record all the archaeology in the small, allocated period. Although the evaluation work was completed on time, the project design almost failed as the project manager did not factor in this risk during the WSI, based on RPS data collection.

The current excavation is still uncovering more evidence of large structures not identified from either the geophysics or the sampled 127 exploration trenches. The current thinking is that the Greenhill Herne Bay site is an early Roman settlement with multiple large buildings of occupation located near one of the first points of entry for the Roman invasion of Britain and could perhaps have been the first significant point of contact between late iron age Britons and Romans. However, the evaluation results, which has gathered significant data on recovered potsherds and cremations, never really explored the important broader connotations of these findings into any of the research frameworks, synthesising our existing knowledge base of early Romano British contact. However, this could be because, after the evaluation, PCA realised that this is an important site that could produce a published monograph post-excavation, which will emphasise contextualised background research.

In terms of reporting and publication, the PCA project team did make reasonable allowances for communicating the results between the archaeological consultants, County archaeologists, and Local Planning authorities to produce a specified evaluation report structure in the required timeframe. The appendix of the evaluation report also details both OASIS and the Kent Historic Environmental Records, allowing generous descriptions of the work undertaken in the 2021 evaluation work (Appendix 3). Initial archiving of the recovered evaluation material and drawing, photographed, digital and written records will be held at PCAs headquarters in Brockley South London and then re-distributed to Canterbury Museums & Galleries under the project code KGRH21.

Communication across project teams has been the most significant problem in project design. At the beginning of the project, the initial drivers were never really developed beyond the initial desk-based assessment. This was perhaps motivated by the agent's commercial objectives, using the local HER's limited resources and not taking a panoramic view of available literature in the regional area. However, the author of the WSI project design should have used the desk-based assessment in conjunction with independent research to inform the design process of the evaluation project; instead of assuming that there might be a moderate chance of uncovering some Roman archaeology as indicated in the RPS report. The independent geophysics report should have flagged the risk that a more aggressive sampling methodology was needed over a sustained period and used more than one archaeologist to conduct the fieldwork. This is evident as, initially, 104 trial trenches were planned, but this had to be increased to 127 trial trenches during the evaluation due to the volume of unexpected finds from the British Roman period.

There is a systemic problem in managing commercial archaeology projects, which needs to be re-balanced in future planning legislation to offer the best protection for our heritage. Land developers are using agents to mitigate the risks; as a result, smaller localised commercial archaeology units that have a better understanding of the lay of the land become out bided in the tendering process by larger national contractors with more financial resources, yet fewer resources in localised knowledge. This has been the problem with the current excavation post-February 2022, as more topsoil has been removed from the site; we are discovering a threefold volume in Archeoloelgy and, unfortunately, have a disappearing three-month window to record and rescue the heritage before it is lost. There is a significant due diligence problem with using agents to mitigate risk and not inviting archaeologists into the evaluation process who have an intimate knowledge of a localised area. Until planning legislation can rebalance these differences, most project designs in the heritage sector will have a failing bias from the start, favouring the polluter at the expense of our shared heritage.

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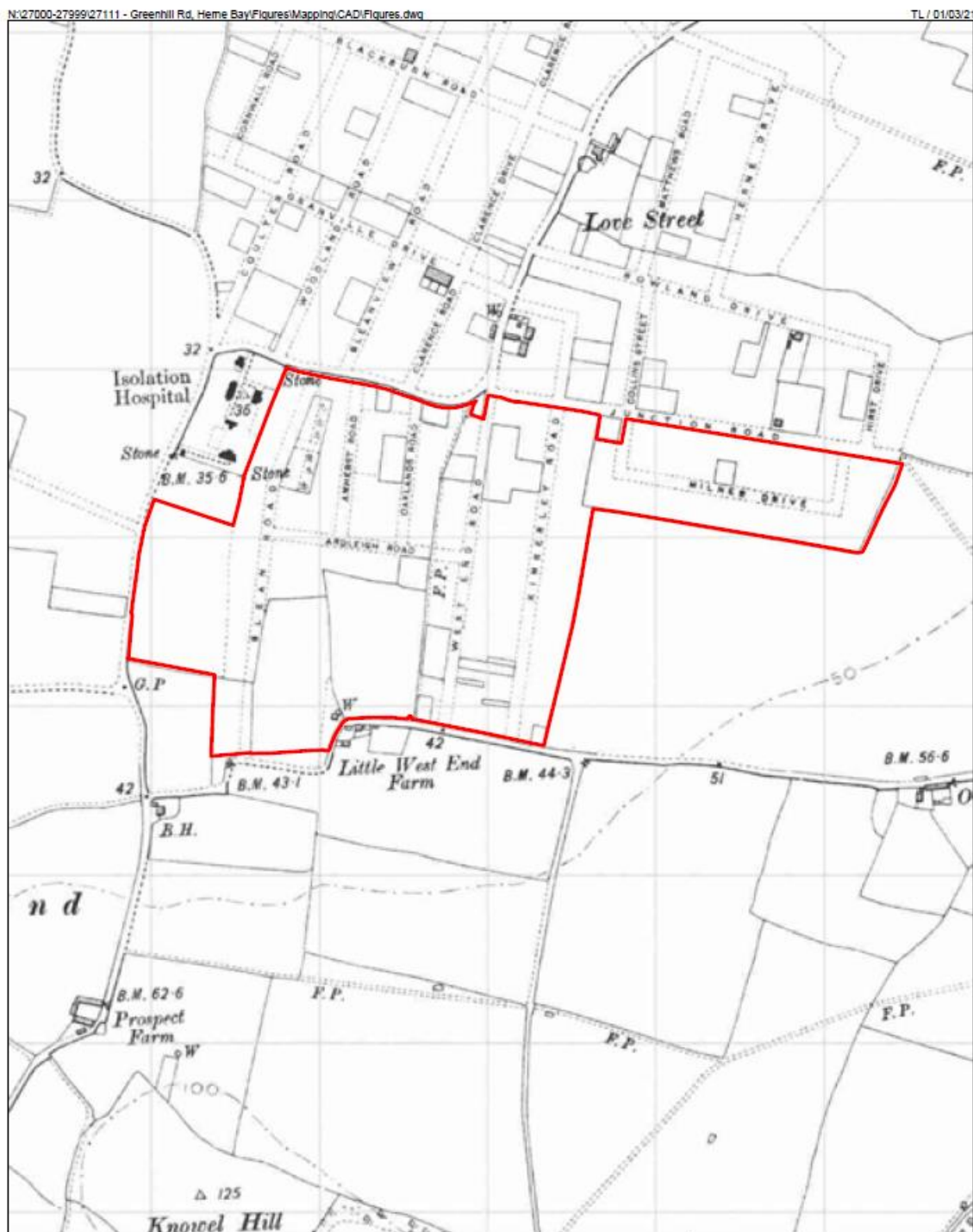
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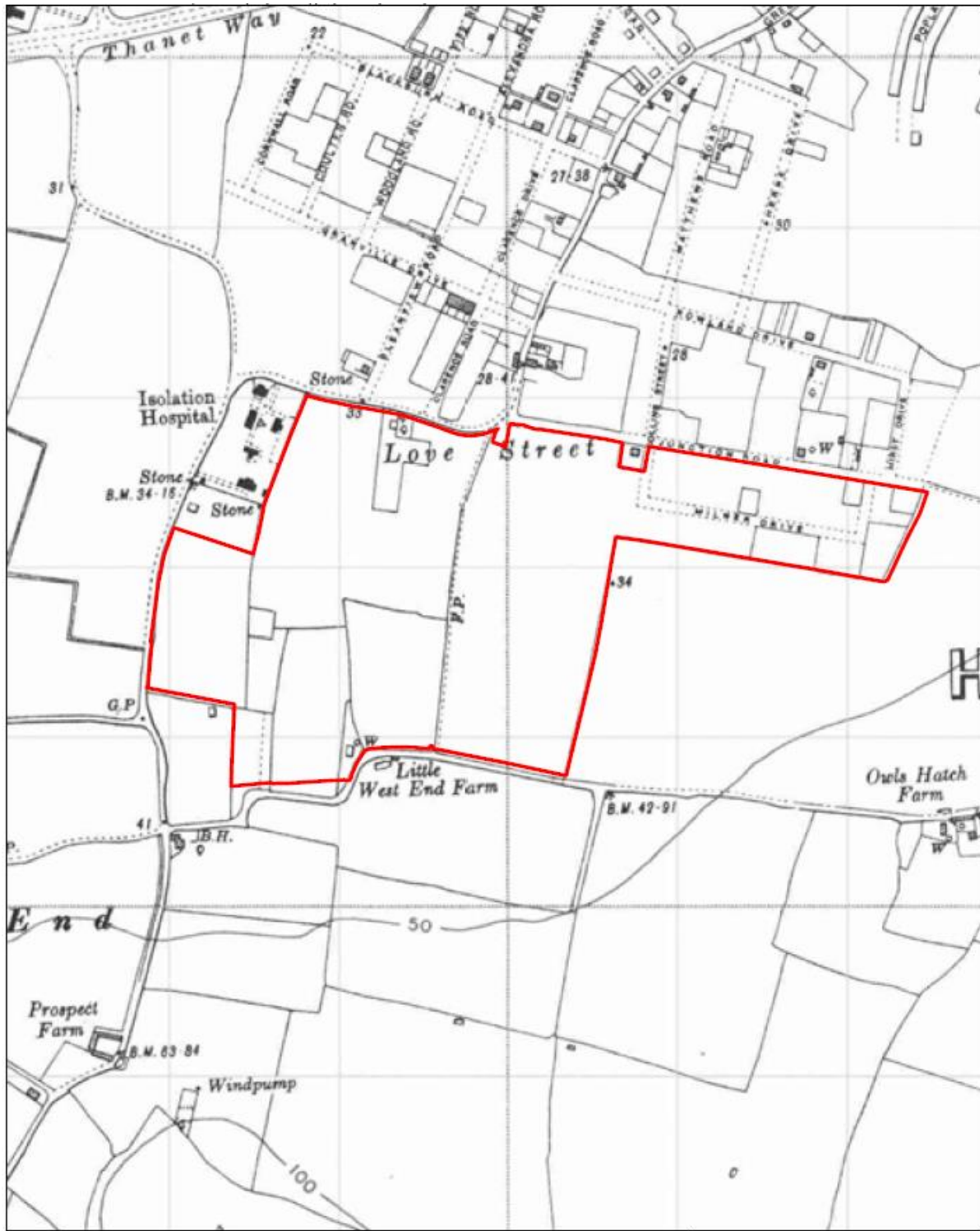
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Appendices:

Appendix 1:



- 1906 Ordinance Survey map showed the planned works on the site.



- 1938 Ordinance Survey map gives no indication that the development went ahead.

Appendix 2:



- 1946 Aerial Photography of the site shows the outline of a structure in the area where the 2021 geophysics picked up the anomaly.

Appendix 3: OASIS and the Kent Historic Environmental Records.

23 APPENDIX 10: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID (UID): preconst1-503893

Project Name: Land South Of Greenhill Road, Heme Bay, Kent CT6 7RS: An Archaeological Evaluation

Activity type: Evaluation

Project Identifier(s): K7306

Planning Id: CA/17/02907

Reason for Investigation: Planning: Post determination

Organisation Responsible for work: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project Dates: 01-Nov-2021 - 03-Dec-2021

HER: Kent HER Project Methodology: Trial trench evaluation of one hundred and four trenches, each measuring 30m by 1.8m spread across the site. The number of trenches was increased by three additional trenches in the north part of the site.

Project Results: The natural deposits across the site displayed a variation consisting of clay and silt, generally present across the northern half of the site, and a more clayey deposit across the southern half. This variation concurred with the British Geological Survey mapping, which illustrated silty clay deposits in the northern area. The natural topography displayed a gentle fall from south (c.12.48m OD) to north (c.10.0m OD). The evaluation revealed presence of archaeological horizons within a wide dating range from the pre-Roman to post medieval periods. The evaluation of the site revealed a significant number of well-preserved and varied prehistoric and Roman features concentrated in four areas. Despite the limited scope of excavations, the features still provided a significant assemblage of artefacts which enabled the dating and basic interpretation of the findings. The pre-Roman features that were concentrated in the northwest of the site and alongside the eastern site boundary probably represented an evolving field system with possible evidence for domestic activity / small-scale settlement. Roman activity was clustered predominantly in the central northern parts of the site. A series of linear cuts probably represented a single large or several smaller buildings providing evidence for a large scale Early Roman settlement including a domestic cemetery, and field systems. Sparse evidence for the medieval and post-medieval activity was encountered on site. This was in the form of field boundary ditches indicating the agricultural character of land use during those periods which extended to the modern day. Comparatively few features were recorded in the south part of the site, and it is likely that the more-clayey, worse-draining geology in this area explains this. No features were found in the southwest of the site. Across the site the natural deposits and archaeological features were sealed by a layer of topsoil. No subsoil was apparent.

Keywords:

Subject/Period: Boundary Ditch: LATE IRON AGE

FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

Subject/Period: Drainage Ditch: ROMAN

FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

Subject/Period: Rubbish Pit: IRON AGE

FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

Subject/Period: Rubbish Pit: ROMAN

FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

Subject/Period: Post Hole: ROMAN

FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

Archive:

Physical Archive, Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with
Canterbury Museums & Galleries

Reports in OASIS:

Mazurkiewicz, T., (2022). *Land South Of Greenhill Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7RS:
An Archaeological Evaluation*. London: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. R14817

Land South of Greenhill Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7RS: An Archaeological Evaluation
 ©Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, January 2022

Site Name: LAND SOUTH OF GREENHILL ROAD, HERNE BAY	
Site Address: LAND SOUTH OF GREENHILL ROAD, HERNE BAY, KENT CT6 7RS	
Summary: An archaeological evaluation undertaken by a Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited team under supervision of Tomasz Mazurkiewicz, between 1st of November and 3rd of December 2021. The evaluation consisted of excavation of one hundred twenty-seven evaluation trenches. The natural deposits across the site displayed a variation consisting of clay and silt, generally present across the northern half of the site, and a more clayey deposit across the southern half. This variation concurred with the British Geological Survey mapping, which illustrated silty clay deposits in the northern area. The natural topography displayed a gentle fall from south (c.12.48m OD) to north (c.10.0m OD). The evaluation revealed presence of archaeological horizons within a wide dating range from the pre-Roman to post medieval periods. The evaluation of the site revealed a significant number of well-preserved and varied prehistoric and Roman features concentrated in four areas. Despite the limited scope of excavations, the features still provided a significant assemblage of artefacts which enabled the dating and basic interpretation of the findings. The pre-Roman features that were concentrated in the northwest of the site and alongside the eastern site boundary probably represented an evolving field system with possible evidence for domestic activity / small-scale settlement. Roman activity was clustered predominantly in the central northern parts of the site. A series of linear cuts probably represented a single large or several smaller buildings providing evidence for a large scale Early Roman settlement including a domestic cemetery, and field systems. Sparse evidence for the medieval and post-medieval activity was encountered on site. This was in the form of field boundary ditches indicating the agricultural character of land use during those periods which extended to the modern day. Comparatively few features were recorded in the south part of the site, and it is likely that the more-clayey, worse-draining geology in this area explains this. No features were found in the southwest of the site. Across the site the natural deposits and archaeological features were sealed by a layer of topsoil. No subsoil was apparent.	
District/Unitary: Canterbury City Council	Parish: Unparished
Period(s): Natural (Phase 1) Pre- Romano-British (Phase 2), including Meso-EBA, LNeo-IA, BA-IA, IA, IA-RB Early Romano-British (Phase 3)	

Romano-British (Phase 4)
Medieval (Phase 5)
Post-Medieval (Phase 6)
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): 616001,166336
Type of archaeological work (delete) Evaluation

Land South of Greenhill Road, Heme Bay, Kent CT6 7RS: An Archaeological Evaluation
 ©Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, January 2022

Date of Recording: 1st of November to 3rd of December 2021.
Unit undertaking recording: Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Geology: London Clay Formation (Clay, Silt & Sand) with an outcrop of superficial Head deposits, consisting of Clay and Silt, located in the north of the site
Title and author of accompanying report: 'Land South Of Greenhill Road, Heme Bay, Kent CT6 7RS: An Archaeological Evaluation' by Tomasz Mazurkiewicz, PCA
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <u>Phase 1: Natural</u> The natural geology at the site comprised clay and silt in the northern half of the site, becoming more clayey in the southern portion of the site. This variation was noticeable at ground level by the much wetter soil to the south of the site. The natural topography displayed a gentle fall from south (c.12.48m OD) to north (c.10.0m OD) over a distance of 500m. <u>Phase 2: Pre-Roman</u> Two main concentrations of prehistoric features were recorded within the site; the first one was observed in the northwest area running from Trench 2 to Trench 27, and the second located along the eastern boundary of the site stretching from Trench 82 in the NE corner down to Trench 95 and Trench 93 in the east. This phase encapsulates a number of features, classified as linears, pits and postholes. Finds implied that this phase is dominated by Iron Age activity, with material from 1000BC to 600BC included amongst frequent transitional Iron Age pottery. The features probably highlight Iron Age domestic activity, farm systems and agriculture, as have been found in the wider area - notably c750m to the northeast of the site (RPS 2021) and at Strode Farm, approximately 750m

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Aside from the two concentrations, isolated Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age features were scattered across the study area.

The finds assemblages have included limited material pre-dating the Iron Age, such as a flake from pit [475] in Trench 27 which is tentatively of Mesolithic or Neolithic derivation (Appendix 8).

Phases 3 (Early Roman) and 4 (Roman)

Two main concentrations of Roman features were identified, located broadly within the north part of the site. Most of the features seemed to be very well preserved and undamaged by the later agricultural activities.

The 1st century AD is well represented at the site, with numerous cut features attribute to this phase either by precise dating, association or similarity. Notable were two cremation burials exposed within Trench 86 (Plate 42) (Appendix 7), which infer the presence of a cremation cemetery, usually found in association with a building or settlement. Trench 15 revealed a linear cut [427] from which surface finds included Roman undiagnostic tile and combed box flue tile, and pottery dated AD40-100 (Appendix 3: Roman Pottery), along with some later post-medieval material (which may be intrusive, see para 9.6.2). Indeed the concentration of features at the centre north of the site imply that a building or buildings may well be present, as suggested by postholes and possible enclosures (such as was seen in Trench 84).

All the Roman archaeological contexts in the northwest part of the site were recorded in the area where anomalies were detected by the prior geomagnetic survey (Figure 3). This suggests that the rectangular structure represented a large-scale Roman settlement consisting of several smaller or one large building and an agricultural field system.

Recent work at Thanet Way approximately 250m to the east of the site has revealed a similar pattern of Roman activity, including a cremation burial found to the east of Herne Bay School (RPS 2021, 14)

Numerous features attributed to the Roman period from the 2nd century onwards were also found, as linears, pits and postholes. The remains may suggest a heavily worked farm settlement or homestead.

Phase 5: Medieval

Three linears were found which produced CBM or pottery dating to the 12th or 13th centuries. They are most likely agricultural features (field boundaries), with the finds deriving from domestic activity on or in the vicinity of the site. The pottery comprised of a local ware from a probable source (Tyler Hill) some 5 miles to the south of the site (Appendix 4).

Phase 6: Post-Medieval

Post-medieval activity comprised a small number of linears, pits and postholes.

The attribution of the post-medieval date to these features was often the result of find recovery from the base of the topsoil horizon, as the surface of the natural (and archaeological horizon) was revealed. It is likely that a number of the features which have been assigned to this phase may actually be earlier in date, but have been assigned to Phase 6 on the basis of finds from the interface at the base of the topsoil.

Features that can confidently be dated to the post-medieval phase are the result of agricultural activity.

Phase 7: Undated / Unknown

This phase refers to features which were either investigated but from which no datable material could be recovered or features that could not be assigned to a phase based on nearby, dated comparable features.

Location of archive/finds: Currently at PCA HQ, Brockley, London SE4 2PD

Contact at Unit: Chris Mayo

Date: 18/01/22