



Land at Rosary House, Aerodrome Road, Bekesbourne, Kent. CT4 5EX

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

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SUMMARY

This desk-based assessment of land at Rosary House, Aerodrome Road, Bekesbourne, Kent, CT4 5EX (TR 20129 55558; Fig 1), was commissioned of Canterbury Archaeological Trust in June 2021 in view of proposed development of the site.

The report constitutes a rapid appraisal focused on the Historic Environment Record, map regression, satellite and aerial photography, and existing site records analyses, with provisional historical contextualisation. It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable/significant in terms of results. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced.

On the basis of this circumstantial evidence, archaeological remains might be extant within the proposed development area and could be disturbed or destroyed through development groundworks. A more detailed impact assessment might be carried out once a frozen design and proposed depths and dimensions for development groundworks have been established and made available for consideration.

An archaeological evaluation of the area prior to development is recommended in any case, however, since this will provide actual rather than circumstantial evidence as to the presence/absence/significance of archaeological remains, on which to base further mitigation strategies if necessary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents a provisional desk-based assessment constituting rapid archaeological appraisal of land at Rosary House, Aerodrome Road, Bekesbourne, Kent CT4 5EX (TR 20129 55558; Fig 1); it was commissioned of Canterbury Archaeological Trust in June 2021 in view of proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 The research undertaken, verbally agreed with the client and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019), has taken account of readily available evidence in order to assess the extent and nature of any extant heritage assets and archaeological evidence within and near the Proposed Development Area (PDA), and thereby gauge the likelihood of heritage assets being affected by development within the PDA.
- 1.3 The report includes analysis and interpretation of the Historic Environment Record (HER), map regression, aerial and satellite photographs, and any existing site records analyses, with provisional historical contextualisation. It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable/significant in terms of results. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced.
- 1.4 Additional desk-based research and/or fieldwork may be requested by planning authorities or specified as conditions on any planning consent, although any request for further desk-based work should clearly demonstrate the benefits of such an approach as opposed to field evaluation, for example.
- 1.5 A more detailed impact assessment could be carried out once a frozen design and strategy of development groundworks have been made available for consideration, but this may not add to or change the recommendations herein.

2. POLICY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with national and local policy regarding heritage assets and with reference to research frameworks.

National policy

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a series of core planning principles designed to underpin plan-making and decision-taking within the planning system. Paragraph 184 (NPPF 2019, 54) states that heritage assets are:

“an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”

- 2.3 By definition, the historic environment includes all surviving physical remains of past human activity. Heritage assets include extant structures and features, sites, places, and landscapes. Furthermore, the historic landscape encompasses visible, buried, or submerged remains, which includes the buried archaeological resource.

2.4 When determining planning applications, the following paragraphs are pertinent:

“189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

191. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

198. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

199. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

200. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those

elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

201. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

202. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.”

Local policy

2.5 Applying the same general principles on a local scale, the relevant Canterbury District Local Plan (CCC 2017) policies are HE1 (Historic Environment and Heritage Assets), HE4–5 (Listed Buildings), HE6 (Conservation Areas), HE8 Heritage Assets in Conservation Areas), and HE11 (Archaeology).

Research frameworks

2.6 The national and local policy outlined above should be considered in light of the non-statutory heritage frameworks that inform them. While the regional South East Research Framework for the historic environment is still in preparation, initial outputs are available (SERF on-line) and have been considered in preparing this report, in order to take current research agendas into account.

3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 The PDA is situated off Aerodrome Road in the village of Bekesbourne. The ground is an irregular area currently occupied by Rosary House and The Haven, detached residential properties set in gardens with minor ancillary structures in the southern part of the PDA, and by a grassed area in the northern part. It is bounded on all sides by residential properties within gardens, except to the north-east, where it is bounded by the East Kent Railway line, and to the south-west where it is bounded by Aerodrome Road (Fig 1). The area lies at a height of 43–47m OD, rising to the south-west.

3.2 Bedrock geology within the PDA is shown as Margate Chalk Member, with no overlying superficial deposits recorded (BGS on-line).

4. DESIGNATIONS

4.1 The PDA does not affect or impact on any World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens. Historic Landscape Characterisation has been checked on-line.

4.2 The PDA lies *c* 150m south-east of Bekesbourne Conservation Area (Designation Date: 21/06/1994).

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

5.1 An HER search (Figs 2–7) was ordered from the Local Authority, as well as a list of reports of archaeological investigations not yet included in the HER. The HER and reports search covers a radius of 500m around the NGR TR 20129 55558. These records have been assessed in terms of their particular relevance to the PDA and only significant evidence is cited in this report.

5.2 General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable/significant in terms of results, and a survey of published and unpublished maps (including geology and contour survey) has been undertaken.

5.3 No pertinent geophysical surveys were available. Only photographs, images or results showing significant features or topographical developments are reproduced, the findings incorporated with map regression, documentary evidence and archaeological sections of the report as appropriate, and fully referenced.

5.4 All results of analyses are presented below in synthesis and in order of chronology.

Prehistoric (c 500,000 BP – AD 43)

5.5 The PDA falls within the area classified by the Stour Basin Palaeolithic Project as Palaeolithic Character Area (PCA) 9 (Fig 6), defined as ‘South bank of Nailbourne/Little Stour, fluvial terrace remnants and slopewash deposits.’ Although no artefact findspots are known from this deposit, sands rich in molluscan fauna are recorded in an old quarry section north-west of Preston Street (Cuming 2015, Appendix 5, 13).

5.6 There is evidence of a fragmentary rectilinear enclosure beside a modern track south-east of Linces Cottages, 490m north-east of the PDA, which is likely to be prehistoric in date (HER Number: TR 25 NW 82 - MKE602).

Romano-British (c AD 43–450)

5.7 No Romano-British archaeological remains are reported within the PDA or within a 500m radius of the PDA.

Anglo-Saxon (c AD 450–1066)

5.8 In 1936 an inhumation burial with grave goods was discovered in the back garden of ‘Homestead’, near Bekesbourne Aerodrome, 120m west-south-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 25 NW 31 - MKE597). In 1955–58, Frank Jenkins excavated an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery (HER Number: TR 15 NE 1 - MKE4491), centred *c* 150m west-south-west of the PDA, of which the 1936 inhumation burial was clearly an outlier. This cemetery contained at least thirty-eight graves with a date from the second half of the seventh century to the beginning of the eighth suggested. Three fragments from a hanging bowl and a large open-work disc were also found in the vicinity, during the building of huts for the aerodrome *c* 1914–18. The ornamentation of these fragments suggests a date from the mid seventh century at earliest.

Medieval (c AD 1066–1540)

- 5.9 Bekesbourne is recorded as a settlement in Domesday Book, in the hundred of Bridge, with a recorded population of 45 households in 1086, and with a mill, and church. (Domesday on-line, *sv* Bekesbourne). However, no medieval archaeological remains are reported within the PDA or within a 500m radius of it.. The PDA in this period lay to the east of the settlement, and about 600m from the church, with the settlement more likely to have been situated to the west of the church, closer to the Little Stour.

Post-medieval (c AD 1540–1900)

- 5.10 Edward Hasted in his *History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, vol 9 (1800, 266–276) describes the parish of ‘Bekesborne’ as follows.

... lying great part of it pleasantly among small inclosures, and sheltered with trees and woodlands, especially in the western part of it, and stretching eastward up to the high downy country. It is but small, being about a mile and an half in length, and not more than half a mile broad. The village, with the church, is situated in the valley among the meadows, on the bank of the Lesser Stour river, which runs through the parish, and abounds with good trout. There are but five houses in it, viz. the parsonage; the seat to which the Hales's removed when Howlets fell down, and from that time resided in; it was in queen Elizabeth's reign sold to archbishop Parker, who gave it to his son to reside in, as being near his palace here, and John Parker, esq. sold it to Fogge, whence it passed by sale to the Hales's, it now belongs to Mr. Baugh; the vicarage; the remains of the archbishop's palace; and Cobham-court; the latter situated on a rise close to the church. Further on, towards Littleborne, in the vale facing the downs, is the scite of Old Howlets; at a small distance above which, on the high ground, Mr. Baugh has built a seat for his residence, commanding a beautiful view of the neighbouring country and the sea, with Ramsgate cliffs beyond it. It stands among a beautiful scenery of park grounds, of hill and dale, well cloathed with trees and adjoining woodland, having the river running in the vale beneath. The soil is mostly fertile near the valley, and very kindly for hops, of which there are several plantations.

- 5.11 The Andrews, Dury and Herbert map of 1769 (Fig 8) shows ‘Beakesbourne or Beaksborn’ as a small settlement close to the Little Stour, to the north-east of ‘Patrickborne’. The map shows the wider area dominated by the larger houses and estates mentioned by Hasted at ‘Befrons’ to the south-west and ‘Howlet Pallace’ to the north-west. Also visible are the ‘pallace in ruins’, a sixteenth-century brick building, once one of the archbishop’s palaces, but fallen into disrepair by this period. The area of the PDA, however, is in open land to the north-east of ‘Beakesborne Church’, beyond two more isolated sets of buildings (arguably Cobham Court and Chalk Pit Farm) with what appears to be the eponymous chalk pit north-east of the latter. The 1797 Ordnance Survey (OS) drawing (Fig 9) shows the area in more detail. Although the pit/quarry is not shown, the nearest isolated farm to the south-west is labelled ‘Chalk Farm’ [later, Chalkpit Farm, described in the HER as a regular courtyard U-plan farmstead with detached elements (HER Number: MKE86421], 440m west-south-west of the PDA). Also visible is a path or track linking the road on which Chalk Farm is found to the main road north, which passes to the west side of the PDA. Although incorrectly labelling the settlement as ‘Bishopsbourn’, the 1799 OS drawing (Fig 10) does show the field system immediately south of the PDA, which defines its southern boundary, as well as what might be the

chalk quarry on the opposite side of the road to Chalk Farm. The Mudge map of 1801 (Fig 11) adds little to our knowledge of the area, though it does show the topography of the landscape, with the PDA on the edge of downland that slopes down to the north towards the river valley and the road/track running north past the west side of the PDA towards more isolated farms (Upper /Lower Garrington Farm). When the 1877 First Edition OS map (Fig 12) was produced, a number of changes had occurred in the immediate vicinity of the PDA: Primarily, the railway had been built to its immediate north-east (the East Kent Railway; HER Number: TQ 85 SE 300 - MKE440); the way to Upper and Lower Garrington Farm, by way of Linces Wood, that ran just to the west of the PDA had dwindled to little more than a track; the main road north-east from Bekesbourne now lay to the north-west of the Church, running past Howletts towards Littlebourne; the railway station also lay in this direction, leaving the PDA as an outlying triangle of land between the old track and the railway. The map does show the chalk quarry east of Chalk Farm in a small wood, with another area of woodland shown to the west of the PDA, both of which seem to be new growth. No changes are shown on the 1898 Second Edition map (Fig 13).

Modern (c AD 1900–2000)

5.12 The 1908 Third Edition OS map (Fig 14) shows no changes from the First Edition with regards to the immediate surrounds of the PDA. However, by the time the 1950 edition was published (Fig 15) this hitherto outlying area of land had been developed as a residential area, arguably due to the presence of the nearby Bekesbourne aerodrome, centred 600m south-east of the PDA, that had been established during the First World War (HER Number: TR 25 NW 494 - MKE98). This included the construction of an aircraft hangar, built 1917–18, 160m south of the PDA (HER Number: TR 25 NW 149 - MKE16) and a 'Belfast' hangar (demolished in 1997), 180m south-south-east of the PDA (HER Number: TR 34 SW 2421 - MKE1). The 1950 map shows a newly improved road (Aerodrome Road) serving the locale, with residences either side, and the PDA partially occupied by a detached residence (The Haven) to the north, and an ancillary building to its south, with the remainder of land in the PDA shown as gardens. This is better shown on a 1940s aerial photograph (Fig 16), where the PDA can be seen as mostly divided into smaller garden units, with part of The Haven and an access path from Aerodrome Road in the south-western part. The 1960s image (Fig 17) shows little change, save for a small ancillary building on the eastern side of the PDA, but an increase of residences around the PDA is evidence. By the 1990s, a new building (Rosary House) had been built in the PDA, to the immediate south-east of The Haven. Over the next few decades, we see another, small, structure built in the eastern part of the PDA (Figs 20–23) but, aside from some variance in vegetation, no further changes occur within the PDA from the '90s to the present day.

5.13 Other features from this period in the vicinity include a Second World War roadblock at the bridge over the railway on the track out to Garrington Farm, Bekesbourne, 190m north-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 15 NE 842 - MKE426); and a Second World War anti-tank tetrahedron visible on 1946 aerial photographs south of the railway, 220m west-north-west of the PDA (HER Number: TR 15 NE 1861 - MKE11).

6. INTERIM IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Archaeological assessment

- 6.1 The PCA 9 deposits recorded in the area (Fig 6), classified as ‘South bank of Nailbourne/Little Stour, fluvial terrace remnants and slopewash deposits’, have a moderate likelihood of producing Palaeolithic remains, with the importance of such potential finds rated high, given the potential to recover artefactual and faunal remains together, ‘especially to south of Wickhambreaux where Chalk bedrock is close to surface’ (Cuming 2015, Appendix 5, 13).
- 6.2 Existing evidence is insufficient to judge the likelihood of other prehistoric or Romano-British archaeology surviving within the PDA. The proximity of the nearby Anglo-Saxon cemetery suggests a potential for Anglo-Saxon archaeology to be found intact within the PDA, which would be of regional research significance.
- 6.3 Likewise, evidence is insufficient to judge the likelihood of medieval or post-medieval archaeology surviving in the PDA, but map regression suggests the PDA was open, undeveloped land from at least the mid to late eighteenth century onwards until the present residences were built in the early 1900s.

Existing impacts

- 6.4 Previous impacts to the PDA might be associated with groundworks from the construction of the twentieth-century buildings and any associated services, but this is unlikely to have completely removed earlier archaeological remains.

Potential impacts

- 6.5 There is a chance that extant archaeological features, artefacts or ecofacts may be disturbed or destroyed by groundworks within the PDA. The destruction of preserved archaeology without proper record risks a major negative impact on the historic environment.

Mitigation recommended.

- 6.6 A more detailed impact assessment could be carried out once a frozen design and proposed depths and dimensions for development groundworks have been established and made available for consideration. However, an archaeological evaluation of the area prior to development is recommended in any case, in liaison with the Local Authority Archaeologist. This will provide actual rather than circumstantial evidence as to the presence/absence/significance of archaeological remains, on which to base further mitigation strategies if necessary.

SOURCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (INCLUDING WEB RESOURCES):

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NPPF 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf).

SERF on-line, *South East Research Framework*, East Sussex, Kent, Surrey and West Sussex County Councils with Historic England (<http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/south-east-research-framework>).



Fig 1. Location of the PDA.

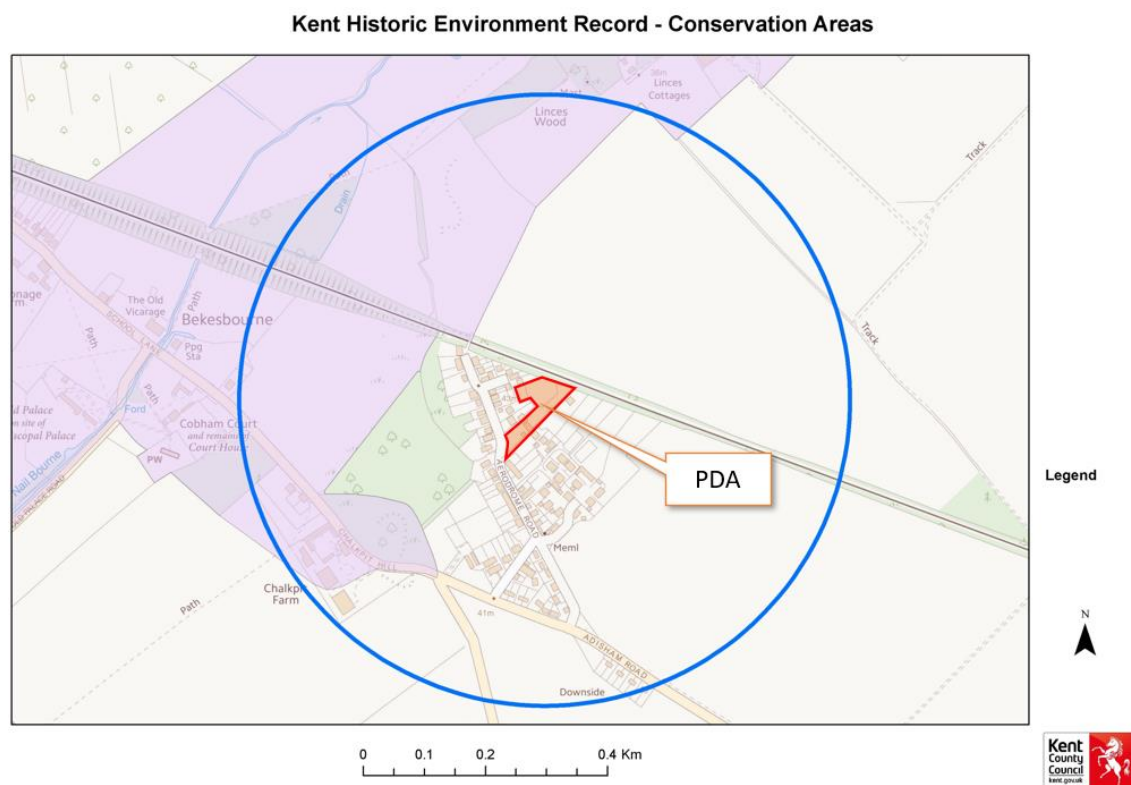


Fig 2. HER search of 500m radius from TR 20129 55558, showing results for Conservation Areas.

Kent Historic Environment Record - Historic Landscape Character

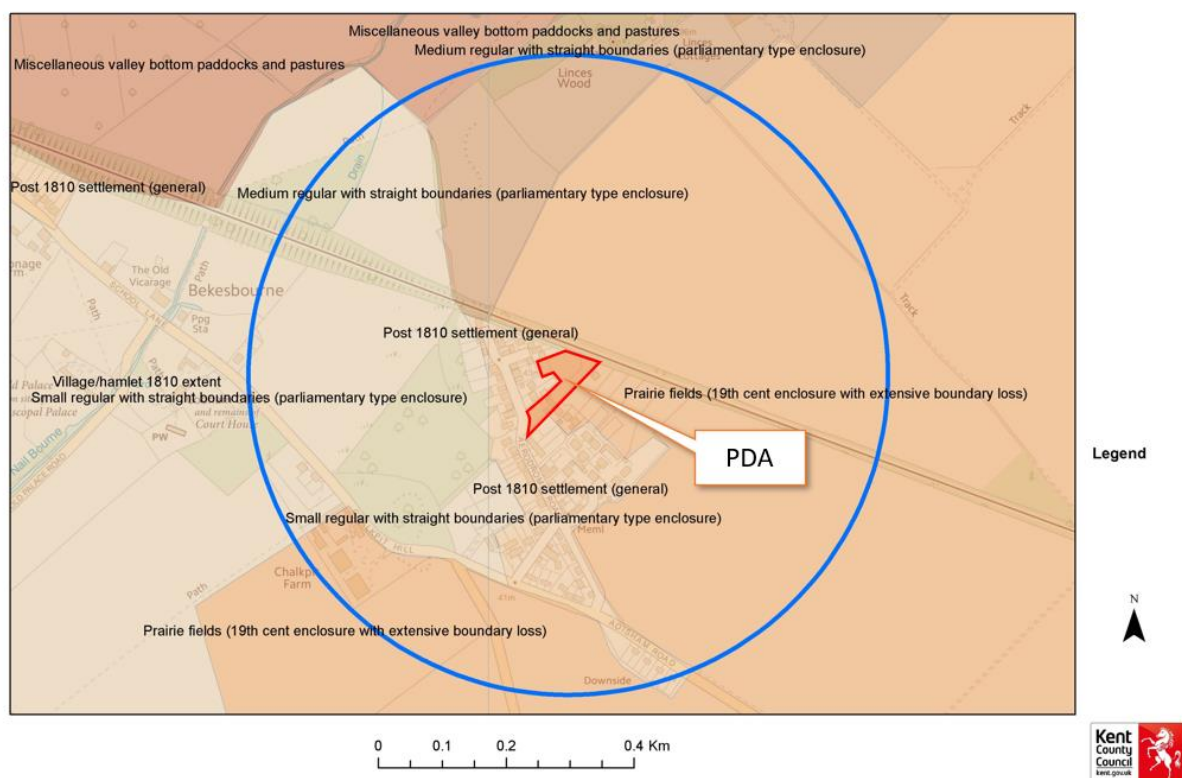


Fig 3. HER search of 500m radius from TR 20129 55558, showing results for Historic Landscape Character.

Kent Historic Environment Record - Events

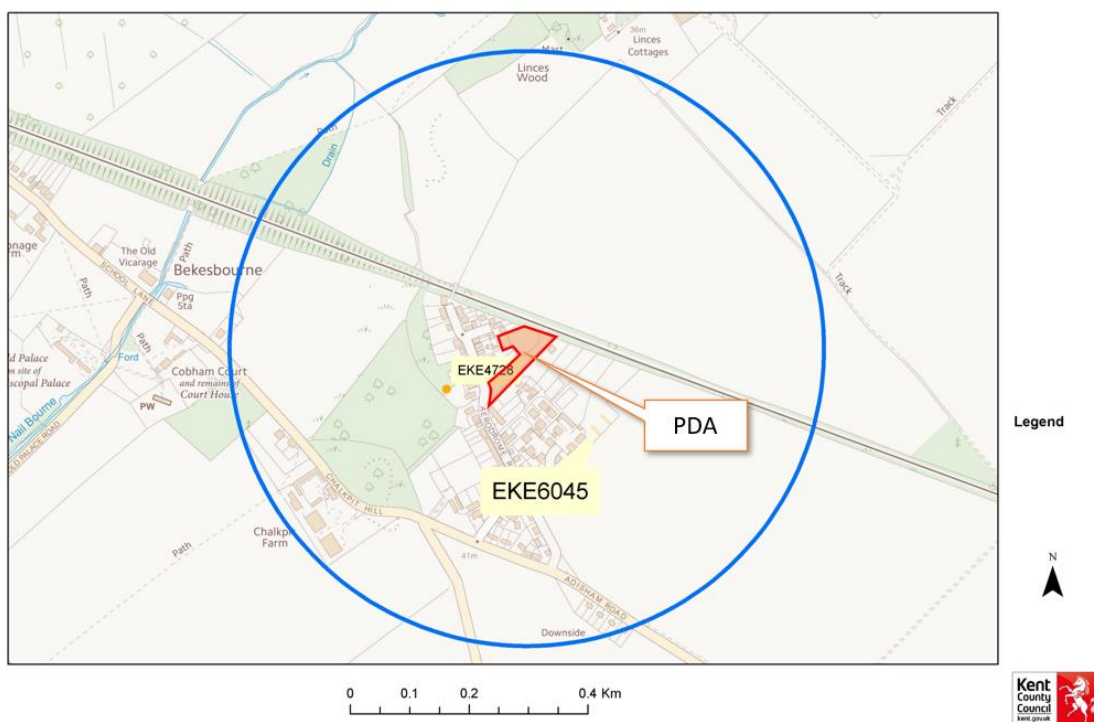


Fig 4. HER search of 500m radius from the PDA (centred) showing results for Events.

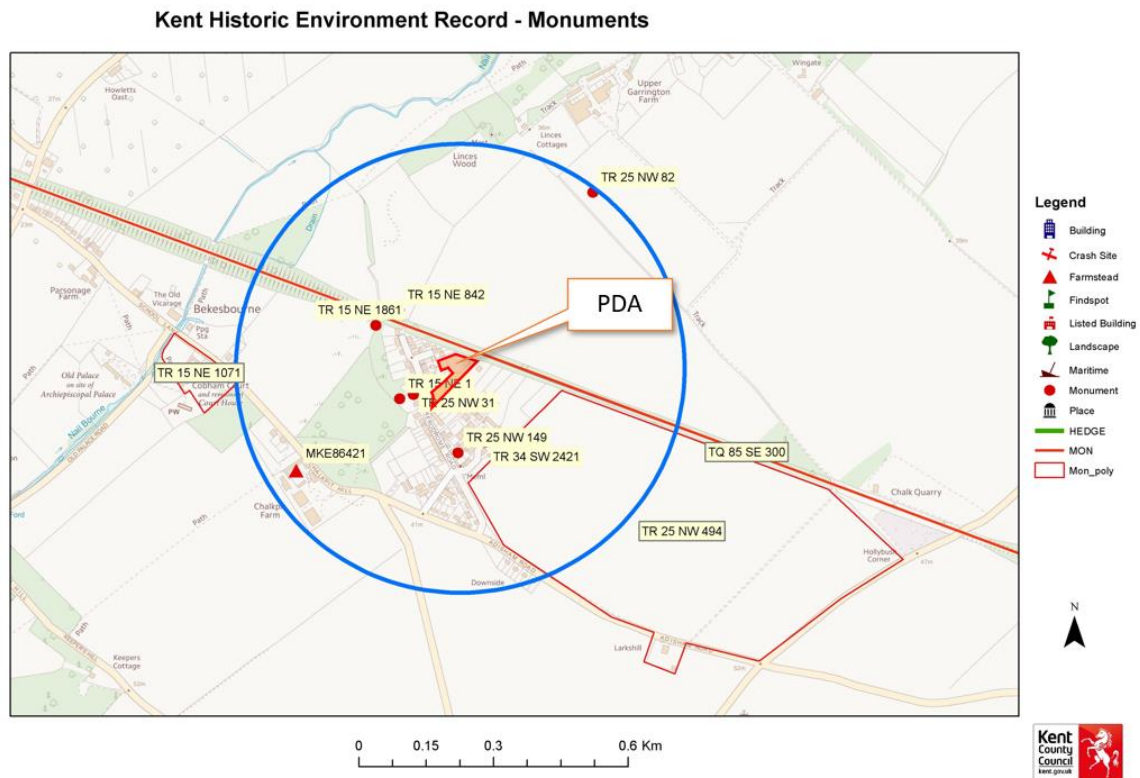


Fig 5. HER search of 500m radius from TR 20129 55558, showing results for Monuments.

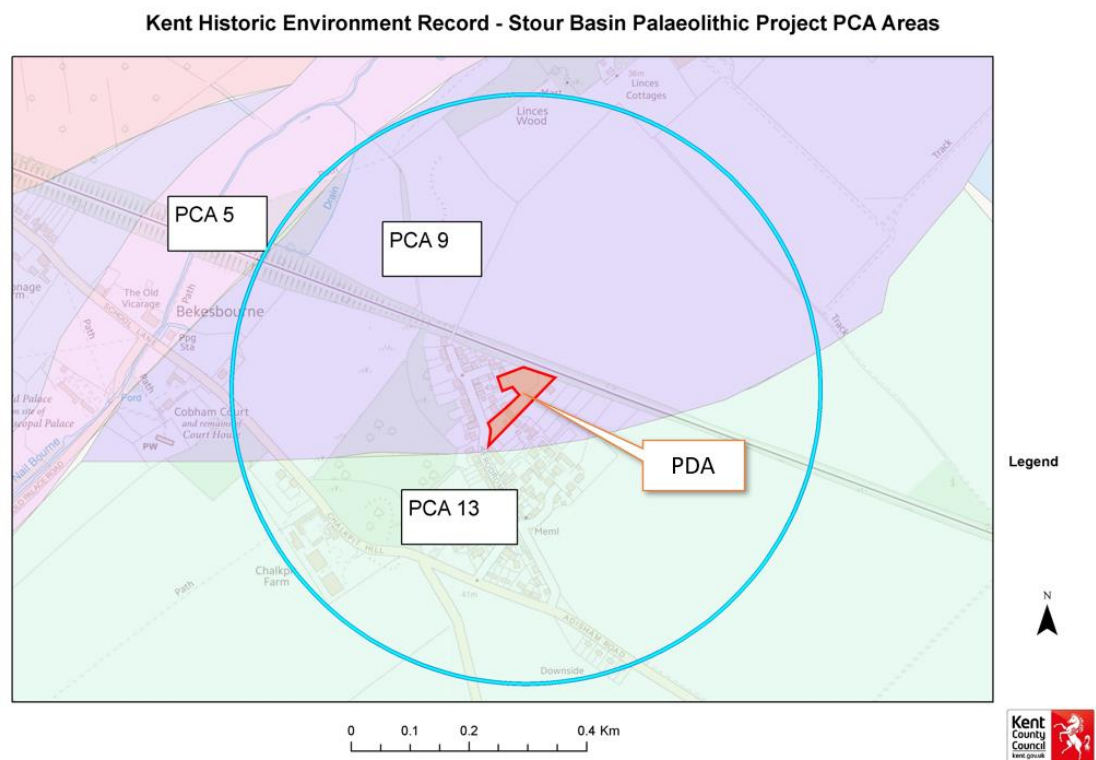


Fig 6. HER search of 500m radius from TR 20129 55558, showing results for Palaeolithic Character Areas.

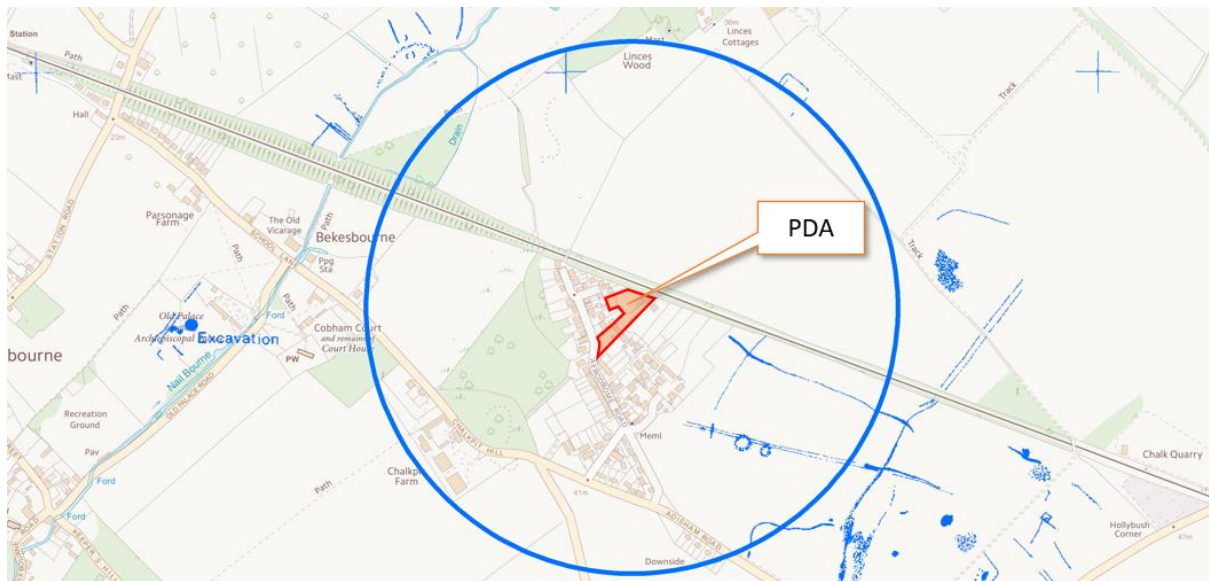


Fig 7. HER search of 500m radius from TR 20129 55558, showing results for cropmarks.



Fig 8. Extract from the 1769 Andrews, Dury and Herbert Map of Kent, showing the location of the PDA.



Fig 9. Extract from the OS drawing of 1797 (British Library Shelfmark: OSD 107) showing the location of the PDA.



Fig 10. Extract from the OS drawing of 1799 (British Library Shelfmark: OSD 107/109), showing the location of the PDA.



Fig 11. Extract from the 1801 Mudge Map, showing the location of the PDA.



Fig 12. Extract from the First Edition OS Map of Kent XLVII (includes Adisham, Aylesham, Goodnestone, Ickham), surveyed 1872 to 1873, published 1877, showing the location of the PDA.

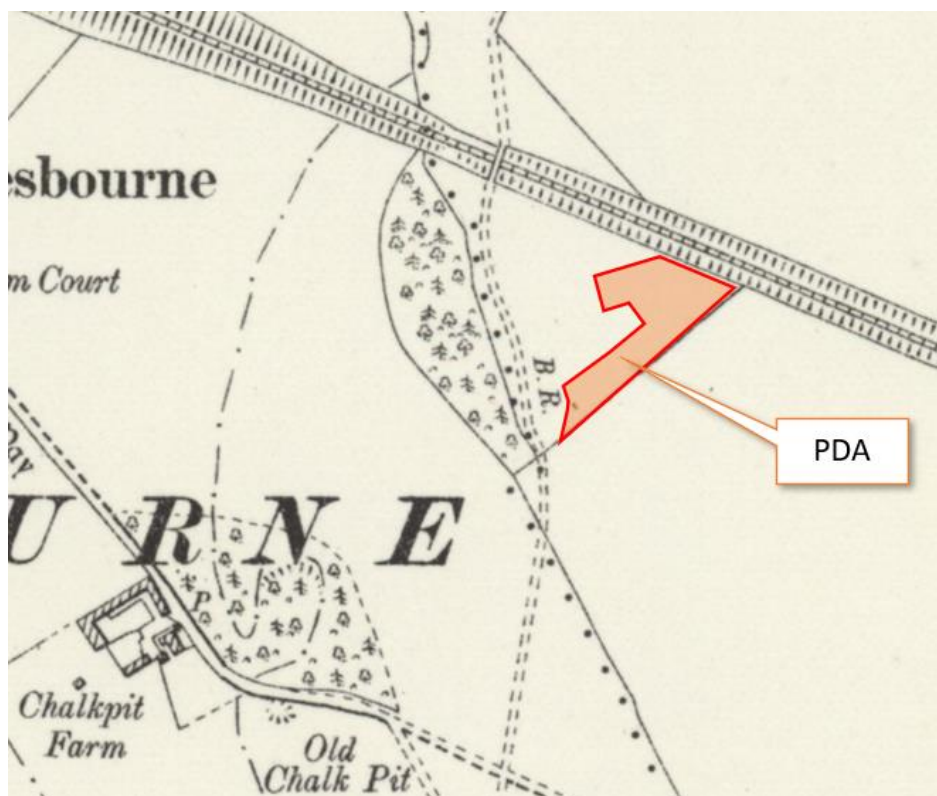


Fig 13. Extract from the Second Edition OS Map of Kent XLVII.SW (includes Adisham, Bekesbourne, Bishopsbourne, Ickham), revised 1895 to 1896, published 1898, showing the location of the PDA.

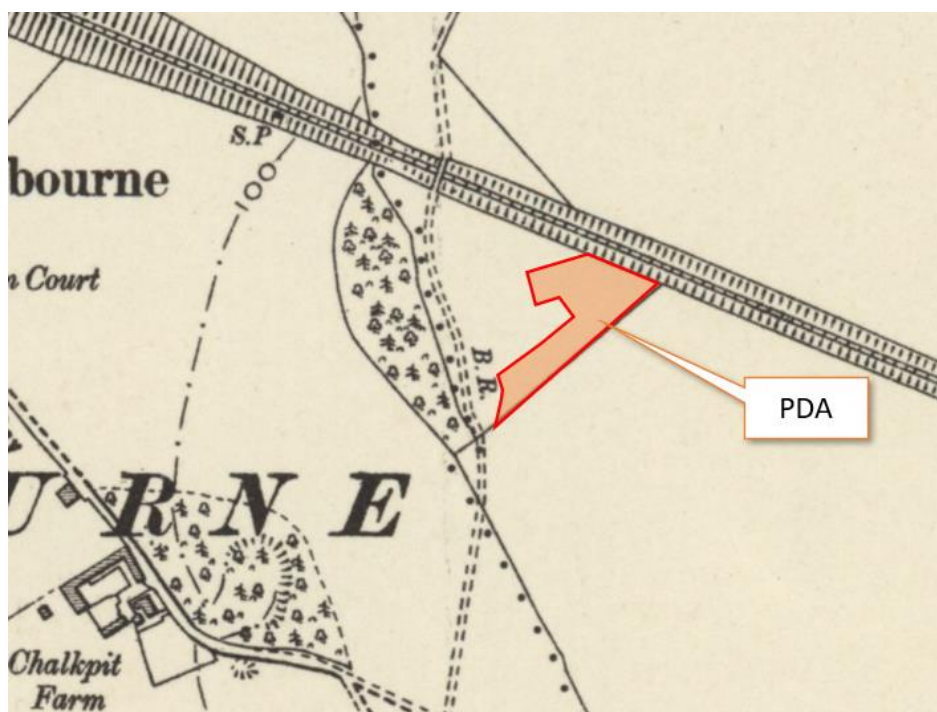


Fig 14. Extract from the Third Edition OS Map of Kent XLVII.SW (includes Adisham, Bekesbourne, Bishopsbourne, Ickham) revised 1906, published 1908, showing the location of the PDA.

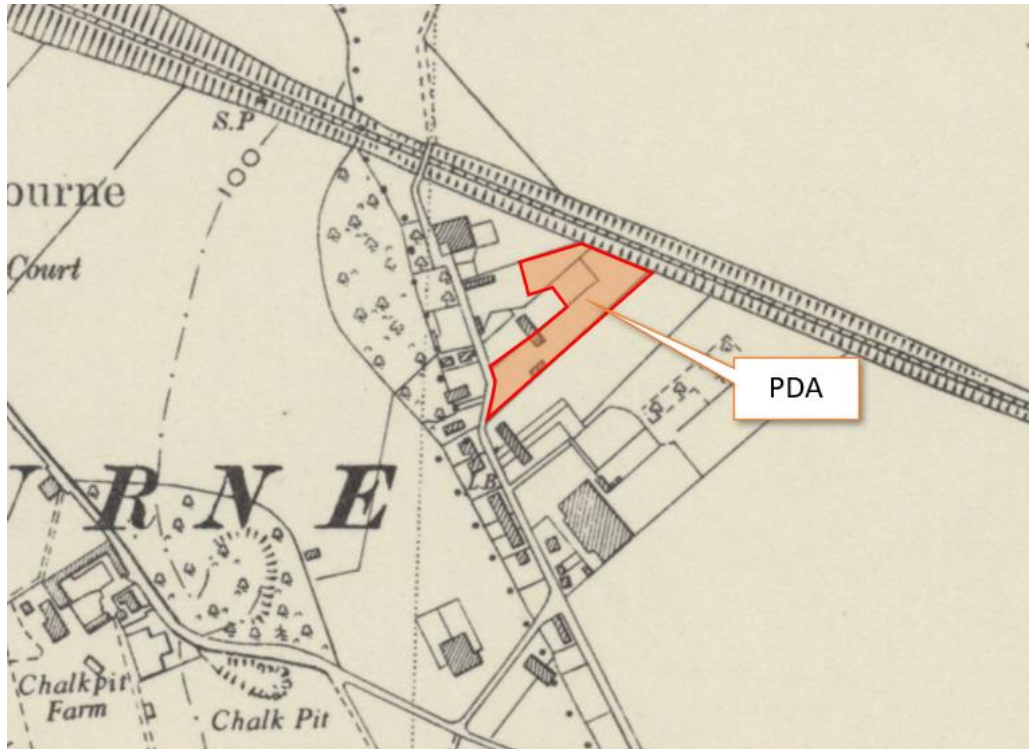


Fig 15. Extract from the OS Map of Kent XLVII.SW (includes Adisham, Bekesbourne, Bishopsbourne, Ickham), revised 1947, published c 1950, showing the location of the PDA.



Fig 16. Aerial photograph from the 1940s, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).

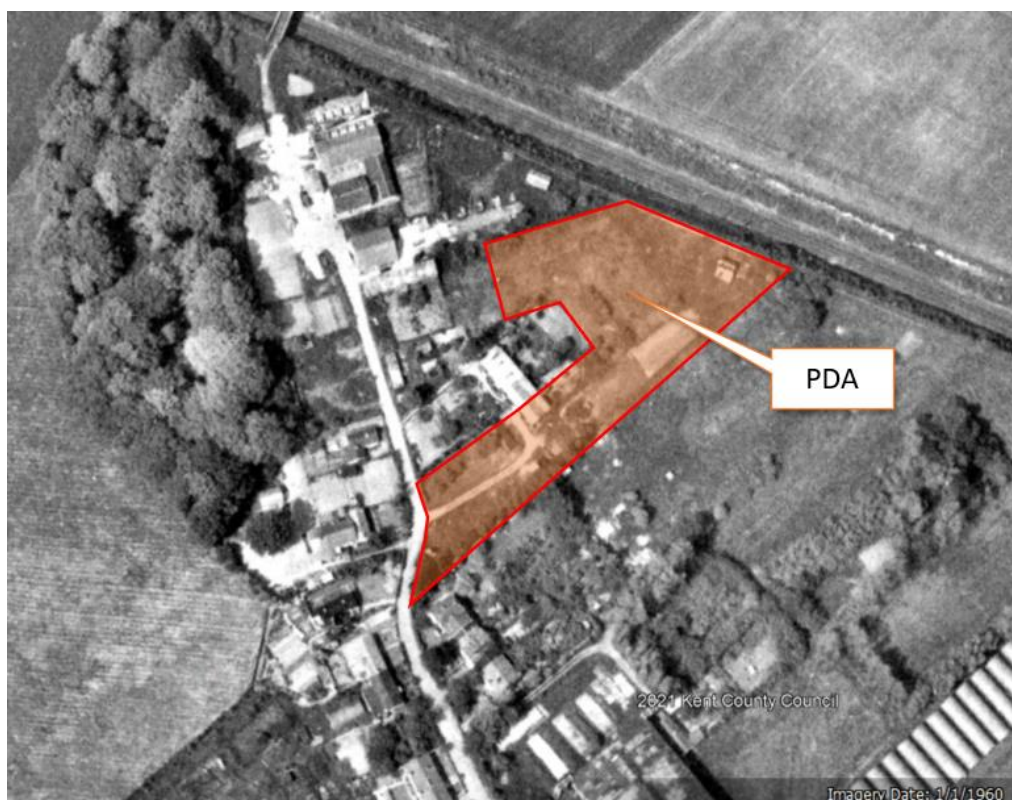


Fig 17. Aerial photograph from the 1960s, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).

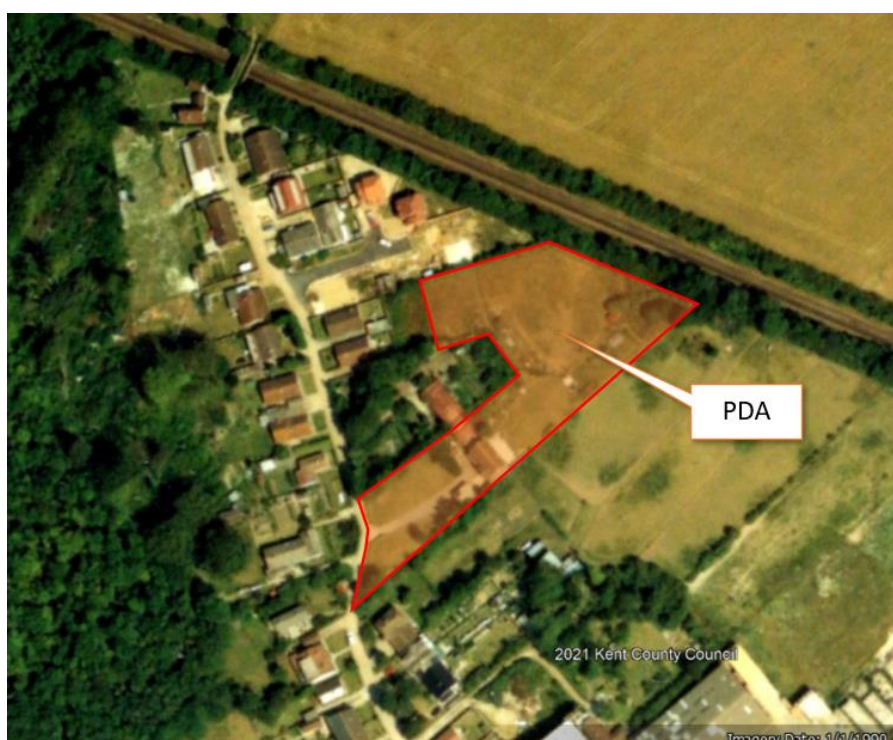


Fig 18. Aerial photograph from the 1990s, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).



Fig 19. Satellite image from 2003, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).



Fig 20. Satellite image from 2007, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).



Fig 21. Satellite image from 2013, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).



Fig 22. Satellite image from 2017, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).



Fig 23. Satellite image from 2019, showing the location of the PDA (source: Google Earth).