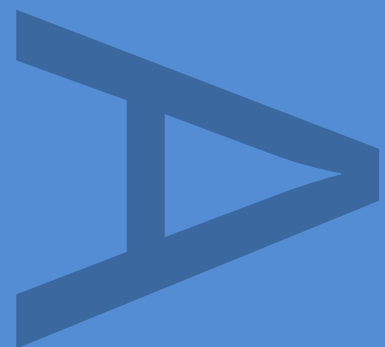


**VALLES AND WOODLANDS,
CROXTON, NORFOLK**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL
TRENCH EVALUATION**

JANAURY 2012



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY
R11157**

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation, Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk

Site Code: ENF128381

Central NGR TL 8741 8647

Report Number: 11157

Written and Researched by Alexander Pullen

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January 2012

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ABSTRACT

This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Croxton, Norfolk. The work was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of Bennett Homes to assess the archaeological implications of development of land known as Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk. The work comprised the excavation of two archaeological evaluation trenches measuring 25m (Trench 1) and 15m (Trench 2). In Trench 1 the remains of a flint cobble wall footing [12] was found aligned east-west near the northern perimeter of the site. The date of this wall is unknown. Although there is a possibility that this wall is medieval in date, it may well represent a later feature, possibly a garden wall associated with the Vicarage that is located immediately to the south of the site. Two small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil overlying the wall. Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features and had been subject to considerable tree root disturbance and modern garden activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Croxton, Norfolk. The work was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of Bennett Homes to assess the archaeological significance of development of land known as Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk in advance of a planning application. A specification for this evaluation was prepared by Paul Gajos of CgMs Consulting.
- 1.2 The site is located on the eastern side of The Street, towards the southern end of the village of Croxton, Norfolk. The underlying geology at the site is Lowestoft Formation sand and gravel. This is underlain by chalk bedrock. The development site covers approximately 0.861 hectares in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference TL 8741 8647.
- 1.3 Earthworks of possible medieval date and finds of Iron Age pottery have previously been recorded at the site. The form and function (and precise location) of the medieval earthworks is not known and substantial levelling of the site appears to have occurred prior to the present dwelling and outbuildings being constructed.
- 1.4 The work was carried out on the 23rd and 24th January 2012 and comprised the excavation and recording of two archaeological evaluation trenches measuring 25m (Trench 1) and 15m (Trench 2). The trenches were 1.8m wide.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The methodology followed during this evaluation is set out in detail in 'A Specification for an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation: Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk' (Gajos, P. 2012 pp 5-9).
- 2.2 The two trenches were set out by eye following the trench location plan in the Specification (Gajos 2012). The trenches were CAT scanned prior to excavation.
- 2.3 The ground reduction was carried out using a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the clean natural where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.
- 2.4 OD heights and trench locations were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 3.1 The natural [17] deposit in Trench 1 comprised sand and flint gravels. A sandy subsoil [16] overlay the natural. The natural was at an average height of 49.91m OD in Trench 1. Ground level was approximately 50.75m OD at the southern end of Trench 1 and sloped downhill to the north by approximately 1m over the extent of the trench.
- 3.2 Truncating the subsoil [16] was an east-west orientated 0.8m wide wall footing [12] formed of small flint cobbles. In between these cobbles was an unconsolidated sandy bedding material with small chalk or lime inclusions. The remains of this footing were shallow, being only 0.10m deep. No direct dating material for this wall was recovered. It did not contain any datable pot, brick or tile fragments, nor was there any CBM (e.g. originating from a wall collapse/destruction) found in the vicinity of this footing.
- 3.3 Overlying the wall in Trench 1 and lying above the subsoil [16] was a dark brown sandy-silt topsoil [15]. Two small to medium (20mm) medieval pottery fragments were recovered from the base of the topsoil [15] immediately above the wall footing [12]. One sherd is Thetford Ware dating to the 10th/11th century. The second sherd is a local coarseware, dating to between the 10th and 14th century (Berni Seddon, pers.com).
- 3.4 Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features. The natural [20] was found at a maximum depth of 1.18m below ground level (51.30m). Overlying this was a layer of dark brown agricultural/garden soil [18], the top of which formed the modern ground surface. No subsoil was apparent. The trench revealed considerable modern tree disturbance (rooting/throwing etc) at its northern end [14].

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The study area occupied a prominent location on the top of the hill overlooking the village which lay to the north. It is worth noting that no obvious traces of any earthworks or landscaping were observed within the development area although the site had apparently been levelled prior to the construction of bungalows on the western part of the site. It was clear however, that the northern and eastern sides of the hill had been terraced at some time and this terracing did encroach on the limits of the development area at these locations. It is unclear whether this terracing was undertaken for house construction on adjacent plots of land or was in fact the basis for the earthworks referenced in the HER files.
- 4.2 In Trench 1 the remains of a flint cobble wall footing [12] was present, aligned east-west and located near to the northern perimeter of the site. The date of this feature is unknown. Although there is a possibility that this wall is medieval, it may well represent a later feature, possibly a garden wall associated with the 19th century vicarage which was located immediately to the south of the site. A number of outbuildings associated with the vicarage and now in a ruinous state were also of flint cobble and mortar construction. Furthermore, the wall did appear to share a parallel alignment with the vicarage and could perhaps have been positioned to frame the view from the vicarage garden looking down onto the Church and village to the north.
- 4.3 Two small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil overlying the wall. One sherd is Thetford Ware dating to the 10th/11th century. The second sherd is a local coarseware, dating to between the 10th and 14th century (Berni Seddon, pers.com). This demonstrates at least some medieval presence on the site.

- 4.4 Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features and displayed evidence of considerable tree root disturbance and modern garden activity [14], [18].
- 4.5 The two trenches (40m in total) evaluated during this work clearly provide a somewhat limited insight in terms of ground coverage over the development site as a whole. The archaeological potential of the eastern part of the proposed site (accepting the undated wall [12]) based on the results of these 2 evaluation trenches, does not seem great. The potential of the western side of the site towards 'The Street' is undetermined. A map regression exercise might help date the wall footing [12] uncovered in Trench 1 and could perhaps shed further light on the terracing observed adjacent to the development area.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 PCA would like to thank Paul Gajos of CgMs Consulting for commissioning this evaluation and James Albone of NLA who monitored the fieldwork. Thanks to Josephine Brown for preparing the figures and Berni Seddon for examining the Medieval pottery.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Cut	Type	Comments
1	-	-	Trench 1
2	-	-	Trench 2
11	12	Fill	Fill of wall footing (date unknown)
12	12	Cut	Cut of wall footing
13	14	Fill	Fill of tree disturbance/modern feature
14	14	Cut	Cut of tree disturbance/modern feature
15	-	Layer	Topsoil (Trench 1)
16	-	Layer	Subsoil (Trench 1)
17	-	Layer	Natural sandy gravel (Trench 1)
18	-	Layer	Topsoil (Trench 2)
19	-	Layer	Void – no subsoil present (Trench 2)
20	-	Layer	Natural sandy gravel (Trench 2)

APPENDIX 2: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Trench 1 view northwest



Remains of wall footing [12] View west



Detail of [12] looking west



View north to the medieval church at Croxton



View south towards the vicarage



Current buildings occupying the site looking west



Trench 2 being excavated – view north



View north to the medieval church tower at Croxton



Northern part of the site view north beyond dilapidated sheds



Trench 2 View north to [14] modern disturbance



Modern ground disturbance [14] in section of trench 2



APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

5.2 OASIS ID: preconst1-118187

Project details

Project name	Archaeological trial trench evaluation: Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk
Short description of the project	The work was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of Bennett Homes to assess the archaeological implications of development of land known as Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk. The work comprised the excavation of two archaeological evaluation trenches measuring 25m (trench 1) and 15m (trench 2). In trench 1 the remains of a flint cobble wall footing [12] was found running east-west near the northern perimeter of the site. The date of this feature is unknown. Although there is a possibility that this wall is medieval in date, it may well represent a later feature, e.g. a garden wall associated with the Vicarage located immediately to the south of the site. Three small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil overlying the wall. Trench 2 contained no archaeological finds or features and displayed evidence of considerable tree root disturbance and modern garden activity.
Project dates	Start: 23-01-2012 End: 24-01-2012
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF128381 - Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Monument type	WALL Uncertain
Significant Finds	POT Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Housing estate

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
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Position in the planning process	Pre-application
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Project location

Country	England
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Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND THETFORD Croxton
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Study area	0.84 Hectares
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Site coordinates	TL 8741 8647 52.4435612823 0.757791620982 52 26 36 N 000 45 28 E Point
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Height OD / Depth	Min: 49.80m Max: 50.75m
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Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
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Project brief originator	Norfolk County Council
--------------------------	------------------------

Project design originator	Mark Hinman
---------------------------	-------------

Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
--------------------------	-------------

Project supervisor	Alexander Pullen
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Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
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Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
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Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
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Digital Archive recipient	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
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Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Photograph'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation: Valles and Woodlands, Croxton, Norfolk
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pullen, A G
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	PCA
Place of issue or publication	Brockley
Description	A4 Grey Literature Report

Entered by	Alexander Pullen (apullen@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	25 January 2012

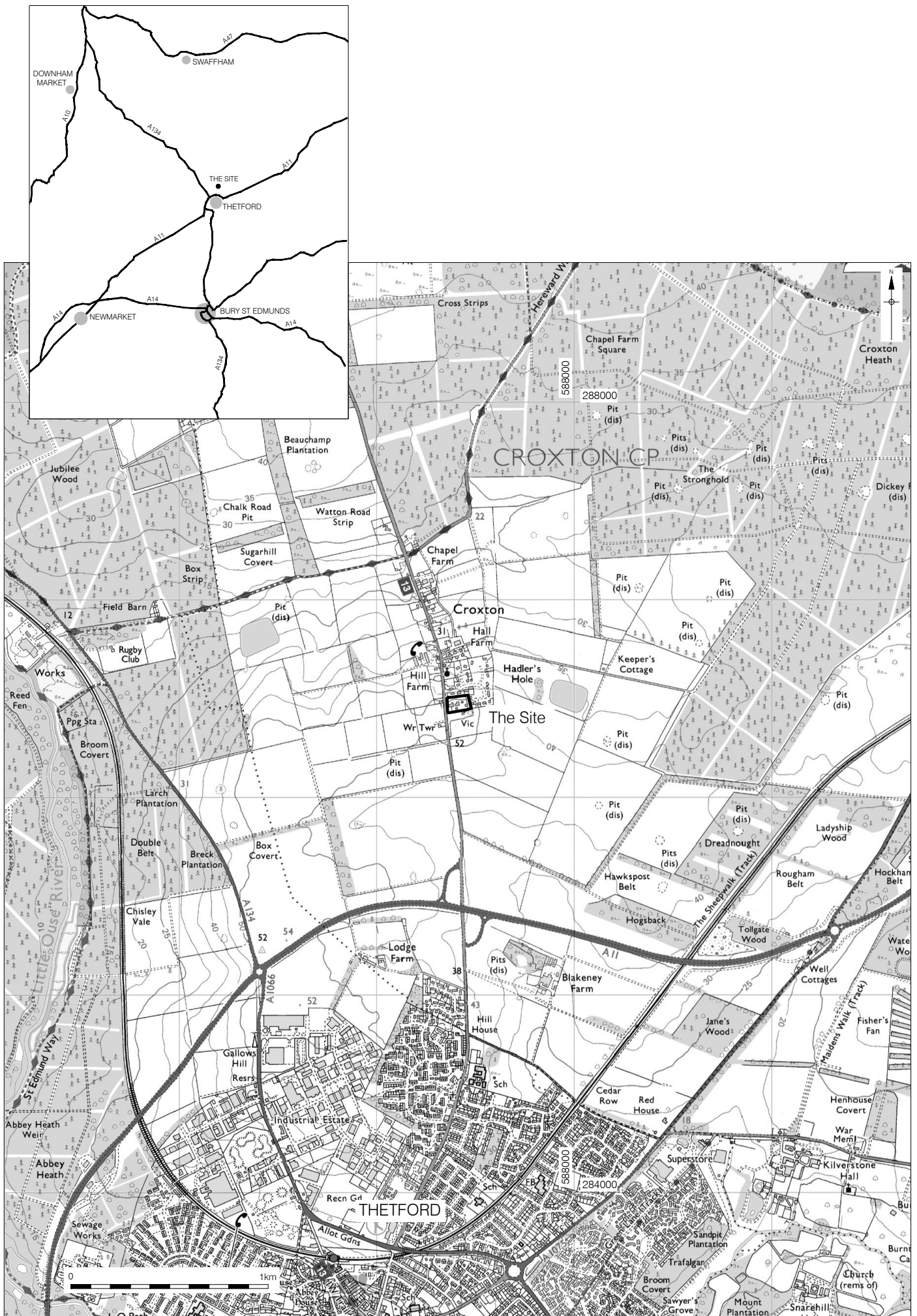


Figure 1
Site location
1:25,000 at A4

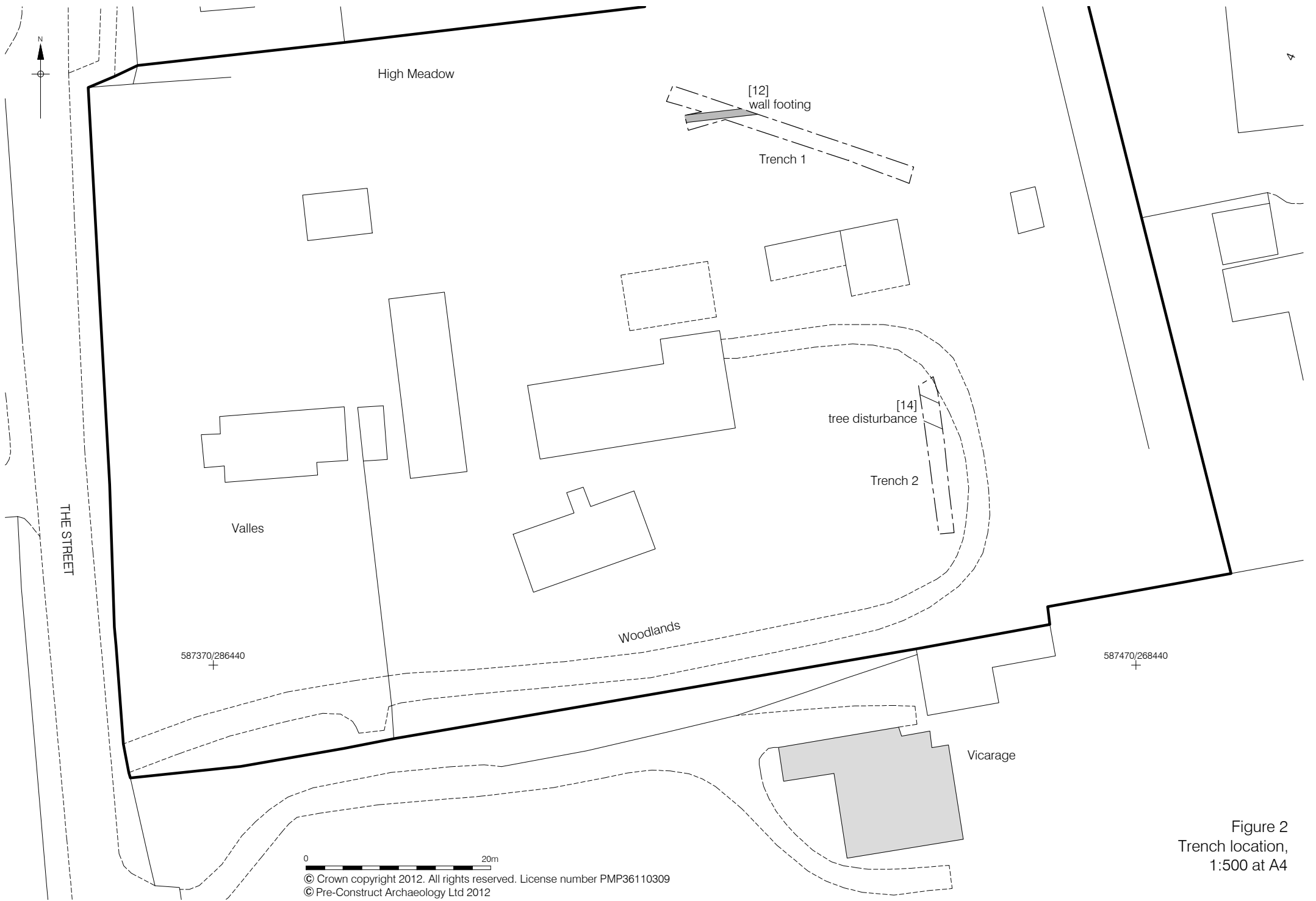


Figure 2
Trench location,
1:500 at A4

PCA

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