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ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
INVESTIGATIONS AT  
FLATTS LANE, NORMANBY,  
REDCAR AND CLEVELAND

prepared for

Miller Homes

Project No.: 1305

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Client Miller Homes

Location Land west of Flatts Lane, Normanby, Middlesbrough TS6 0SR

District Redcar and Cleveland

Planning Ref R/2016/0326/OOM; APP/V0728/W/16/3158336; R/2019/0443/RMM

Grid Ref NGR 454687 516753

**FLATTS LANE, NORMANBY**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS**  
**FINAL REPORT**

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FLATTS LANE, NORMANBY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS  
FINAL REPORT

*Summary*

*This report presents the results of archaeological investigations in advance of residential development on land at Flatts Lane, Normanby, Redcar and Cleveland (NGR 454687 516753) (Fig. 1). It has been prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) for Miller Homes.*

*Environment Agency LiDAR data (NAA 2016) suggested that a small area of potentially medieval ridge and furrow may lie within woodland in the south-east corner of the development site on the route of a proposed access track. An archaeological watching brief across this area revealed that all evidence of these early field systems had been removed by post-medieval activity, particularly the installation of a modern access route.*

*A targeted excavation over the alignment at the historic site uncovered a well-preserved stone trackway underneath the existing public footpath, interpreted as a pony track or 'trod'. An initial ditched pathway had been superseded by an un-ditched cutting filled with compacted, angular stone setts and defined by parallel rows of large kerb stones. At a later date, the route of the trackway had been formalised by ditches containing the existing flanking hedgelines. No dating evidence was retrieved from the excavation of the trackway, but the evidence of an initial ditched phase and extensive rutting seen on the stones and kerbs in situ indicates that it was in use over a substantial period and could potentially have its origins in the medieval period.*

*The existing footpath and alignment of Flatts Lane is to be preserved as a bridleway within the development and, therefore, further damage to the historic trackway has been avoided.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This document presents the results of archaeological investigations in advance of residential development on land at Flatts Lane, Normanby, Redcar and Cleveland (NGR 454687 516753) (Fig. 1). It has been prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) for Miller Homes.

1.2 Outline planning permission (Ref R/2016/0326/OOM; APP/V0728/W/16/3158336) was granted by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for residential development of up to 400 dwellings with associated access, infrastructure, open space and landscaping. Condition 21 of the planning permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (NAA 2019). An application for approval of Reserved Matters (Ref R/2019/0443/RMM) was approved by the Council on 3 October 2019 for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 400 dwellings.

## **2.0 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

### **Location**

2.1 The development site is situated to the south of the A174 Parkway, between the suburbs of Ormesby and Normanby, south of Middlesbrough, and centred at NGR 454687 516753 (Fig. 1). It is an irregular-shaped parcel of land and covers approximately 23ha bounded by a C-class road known as Flatts Lane to the east and by mature woodland to the south and west

### **Geology and soils**

2.2 The solid geology comprises Jurassic mudstone of the Redcar Mudstone Formation overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian Diamicton till (BGS 2019). Surface soils comprise slowly permeable clayey and loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

### **Topography and land use**

2.3 The area of development comprises undeveloped agricultural land, with two mature woodland blocks known as High Cow Howl and The Stripe, crossed by a public footpath that follows the line of a former track or roadway (also) known as Flatts Lane.

2.4 The topography of the site gently increases in elevation from approximately 62m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the northern boundary to 90m aOD in the south.

### **3.0 SUMMARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 A detailed account of the site's archaeological and historical background is provided in a desk-based assessment (NAA 2016). It is not intended to repeat this information in full here; a brief summary relevant to the area of development follows.

#### **Early medieval**

3.2 The place name 'Normanby' derives from the Old Norse 'Norðman', meaning a 'northman' or Norwegian and the Old Norse 'by', meaning a farmstead or a village. 'Ormesby' derives from an Old Norse personal name 'Ormr' and the Old Norse 'by' (Ekwall 1960, 343 and 351). Given the early place-name origin for Ormesby and Normanby, and the position of the site near these two settlements, it is probable that the development area historically was situated within the agricultural hinterland of these pre-Conquest manorial estates/settlements.

#### **Medieval**

3.3 A stone 'trod' or packhorse track, which may be of medieval date, is recorded on a section of Flatts Lane (the public footpath) near Great West Plantation, south of the development. This indicated the possibility of an early origin for the section of Flatts Lane within the site boundary.

3.4 Environment Agency LiDAR data (NAA 2016) suggest that a small area of ridge and furrow may lie within woodland in the south-east corner of the development site. These medieval agricultural remains are of local importance and contribute to an understanding of the medieval open-field system associated with the village.

#### **Post-medieval to modern**

3.5 Agricultural use of the area persisted throughout the post-medieval period. The common fields in Normanby were enclosed in 1790 (British History Online n-d.) and the immediate area of the development remained in agricultural use until ironstone mining operations began in the 1860s.

3.6 The "Tithe apportionment and map for the township of Normanby, 1839" shows that the development area coincides with 10 former parcels of land. Many of the field boundaries shown have subsequently been removed or lost. Initially, this appears to have been caused by the establishment of the woodland plantations by 1857. In the 20th century, boundaries were lost as a result of amalgamation of fields and the impact of the dual carriageway construction and housing to the north. However, the current

boundaries associated with the course of Flatts Lane, and the south-western perimeter boundary, still reflect those of 1847.

#### **4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

4.1 The aim of the archaeological investigations was to identify the presence and location of archaeological remains within the area of development, and sample, excavate and record any such remains to achieve their 'preservation by record'. The objectives of the investigations were to:

- establish the presence, nature, extent, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains within the area of development;
- provide a detailed record of any such archaeological remains;
- recover and assess any associated structural, artefactual and environmental evidence;
- undertake a programme of investigation that met with national and regional standards (Historic England 2015a; ClfA 2014b; 2014c; 2014d); and
- prepare an illustrated report on the results of the archaeological investigations to be deposited with the Redcar and Cleveland HER and the Historic England Archive.

#### **5.0 METHODOLOGY**

##### **Site investigation and recording**

5.1 The development had the potential to disturb unrecorded archaeological remains so archaeological investigations were required to limit any potential loss of heritage significance. This comprised a small excavation, measuring 11m by 6.5m, across the historic route of Flatts Lane, and a watching brief of ground disturbance to an area of medieval or later ridge and furrow. The areas subjected to archaeological investigation were situated in the eastern part of the development site and are shown on Figure 2.

5.2 In the areas of investigation, topsoil, subsoil and other modern overburden were removed by mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, operating under archaeological supervision. Where structures, features, deposits or finds of archaeological interest were exposed, mechanical excavation ceased to allow the investigating archaeologist to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. Once archaeological excavations were complete, the monitoring archaeologist allowed mechanical operations to recommence.

- 5.3 A full record (written, graphic and photographic, as appropriate) was made for all archaeological works, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate plans and section drawings were drawn at 1:20 and 1:10 scale as appropriate.
- 5.4 The location of any archaeological features, together with the edges of the excavated areas, were recorded in relation to readily identifiable and permanent features on the ground.
- 5.5 A photographic record of all contexts was taken in digital format and included a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. The digital photographs will be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) for long-term archive storage.
- 5.6 No finds or environmental samples were recovered during the archaeological works.



*Plate 1: Excavation of the access track showing modern makeup of the track overlying the natural clay.*

## 6.0 RESULTS

### Watching brief – access track (Fig. 2; Plate 1)

- 6.1 The widening of the existing access track through High Cow Howl Plantation comprised the removal of the modern track (brick and concrete rubble, gravel and patches of tarmac), along with a 1m- to 1.2m-wide strip along either verge. The deposit along the verges comprised a thin layer (c.0.2m) of topsoil (01) directly overlying natural boulder clay (03). This soil layer was criss-crossed by large roots from nearby mature trees.
- 6.2 The archaeological monitoring showed that any remains of medieval ridge and furrow, and any other possible archaeological features, had been removed when the access track was constructed, or it had been destroyed by heavy root disturbance.



*Plate 2: Packhorse track 04, looking south-west along the existing footpath.*

### Excavation – Flatts Lane footpath (Fig. 3)

- 6.3 After the removal of hedgerow trees and shrubs, an area of 11m by 6.5m across Flatts Lane footpath was stripped of vegetation, topsoil and modern footpath gravel.



- 6.4 A stone trackway, likely a packhorse track, or trod (**04**), was encountered under c.0.4m of recent footpath gravel and built-up silt (Plate 2). The track ran from south-west to north-east along the northern edge of the hedgerow-lined footpath, was 1.3m wide and had been constructed using roughly squared limestone setts, each measuring a maximum of 0.2m by 0.15m. The limestone surface was bordered by a kerb constructed from roughly squared sandstone blocks, measuring up to 0.3m by 0.2m each.
- 6.5 The setts would once have formed a smooth surface but had been displaced by use and heavy rooting. Wear from cart traffic was evident in the form of wheel ruts. One particularly heavily rutted section had been repaired with compacted slag and clinker (**05**).
- 6.6 Kerbstones were missing from the south side of a section of the packhorse track located centrally within the area of investigation, leaving a gap c.2.5m wide. There was no evidence of the kerbstones having been deliberately removed or otherwise disturbed, although the track surface showed a greater degree of wear and rutting in this area. The spacing between the flanking hedgerows was wider in this particular section of Flatts Lane, and it may be that it had formed a junction between the packhorse track and a now lost path from the field to the south.
- 6.7 A slot was excavated by machine through the centre of the exposed stone trackway in order to discern its makeup (Fig. 3; Plate 3). The stone setts had been situated within a shallow cut with a flat base, 0.16m in depth and 1.2m wide (**06**), that had been cut through a 0.12m-thick subsoil horizon (**02**) and into the natural light-yellow clay (**03**). The cut had been infilled with a 0.05m-thick layer of fine sand (**07**) upon which the setts were laid. Running along the southern edge of the trackway was a 0.3m-wide ditch (**08**) that had a steep-sided profile and depth of 0.25m and was probably an original drainage ditch for the trackway which had silted up prior to the cutting of **06**. Ditch **08** contained a single, sterile, colluvial fill of reddish-brown silty clay (**09**). The northern edge of cut **06** had been truncated by the ditch for the hedgerow flanking the existing footpath, but it can be assumed that a ditch comparable to **08** would have originally run alongside the northern edge of the trackway.



*Plate 3: East-facing section through the packhorse track showing stone setts 04 placed within shallow cut 06 and also southern trackside ditch 08.*

## 7.0 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The archaeological monitoring and targeted excavation at Flatts Lane demonstrated that the area had been heavily disturbed by modern intervention and root disturbance from the surrounding woodland. The single surviving feature was the stone trackway or packhorse 'trod' found beneath the existing footpath at the north-east corner of the development area, mirroring the south-west-to-north-east alignment of the historic Flatts Lane. The relatively good preservation of this feature is no doubt owed to the continual usage of the routeway and the later consolidation of the footpath with a compacted gravel surface.
- 7.2 The trackway was truncated along its northern edge by the later hedgerow ditch that flanks the current footpath. It is probable that its northern edge would have also been defined by a counterpart of southern ditch 08 and that the route of the trackway was not flanked by hedgerows when constructed and itself demarcated the boundary between two parcels of agricultural land.



- 7.3 The earliest depiction of the route of Flatts Lane can be seen on the “Tithe apportionment map for the township of Normanby, 1839” and appears unchanged up to the present day. Only a single excavation has previously been undertaken across Flatts Lane and this was conducted across its north-to-south alignment in the vicinity of the Great West Plantation, to the south of the current development area. The excavation uncovered a section of stone trackway, interpreted as a packhorse ‘trod’, which was believed to date to the medieval period (Historic Environment Record no.1410).
- 7.4 No dating evidence was recovered from the current excavation of trackway **04** and without photographic evidence and documentation from the previous excavation of Flatts Lane, a visual comparison of the two sections to aid interpretation cannot be made.
- 7.5 Stratigraphically, ditch **08** cuts through the agricultural subsoil horizon **02** and is in turn cut along its northern edge by trackway cutting **06**. It is likely that ditch **08** relates to the earliest phase of trackway, forming the boundary between two fields. Over time, the ditches on either side of the trackway filled with colluvial silt and were not recut. It is probable that cutting **06** removed evidence of the original trackway bed, although the wear seen on many of the stone setts and kerbstones (**04**) indicates that these could have been reused and re-set in the later cutting, to be repaired subsequently with clinker and cinders (**05**), presumably in the 19th or early 20th century. The trackway cutting was then disturbed along its northern edge by the installation of the hedgerow; however, the northern kerbstones were in situ indicating that the stones of the trackway were probably still visible when this occurred and the alignment of the original trackway respected by the hedgeline.

## **8.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION**

- 8.1 The full archive from the archaeological investigations, including paperwork, drawings, photographs, digital data and the finds assemblage, is to be deposited with Kirkleatham Old Hall Museum.

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### *Historic mapping*

Tithe apportionment and map for township of Normanby, 1839, REF IR 29/42/280, held by The National Archives, Kew.

Ordnance Survey 1857, six inches to one mile, Sheet 16

Ordnance Survey 1895, six inches to one mile, Sheet XVI.NE

Ordnance Survey 1919, six inches to one mile, Sheet XVI.NE

Ordnance Survey 1930, six inches to one mile, Sheet XVI.NE

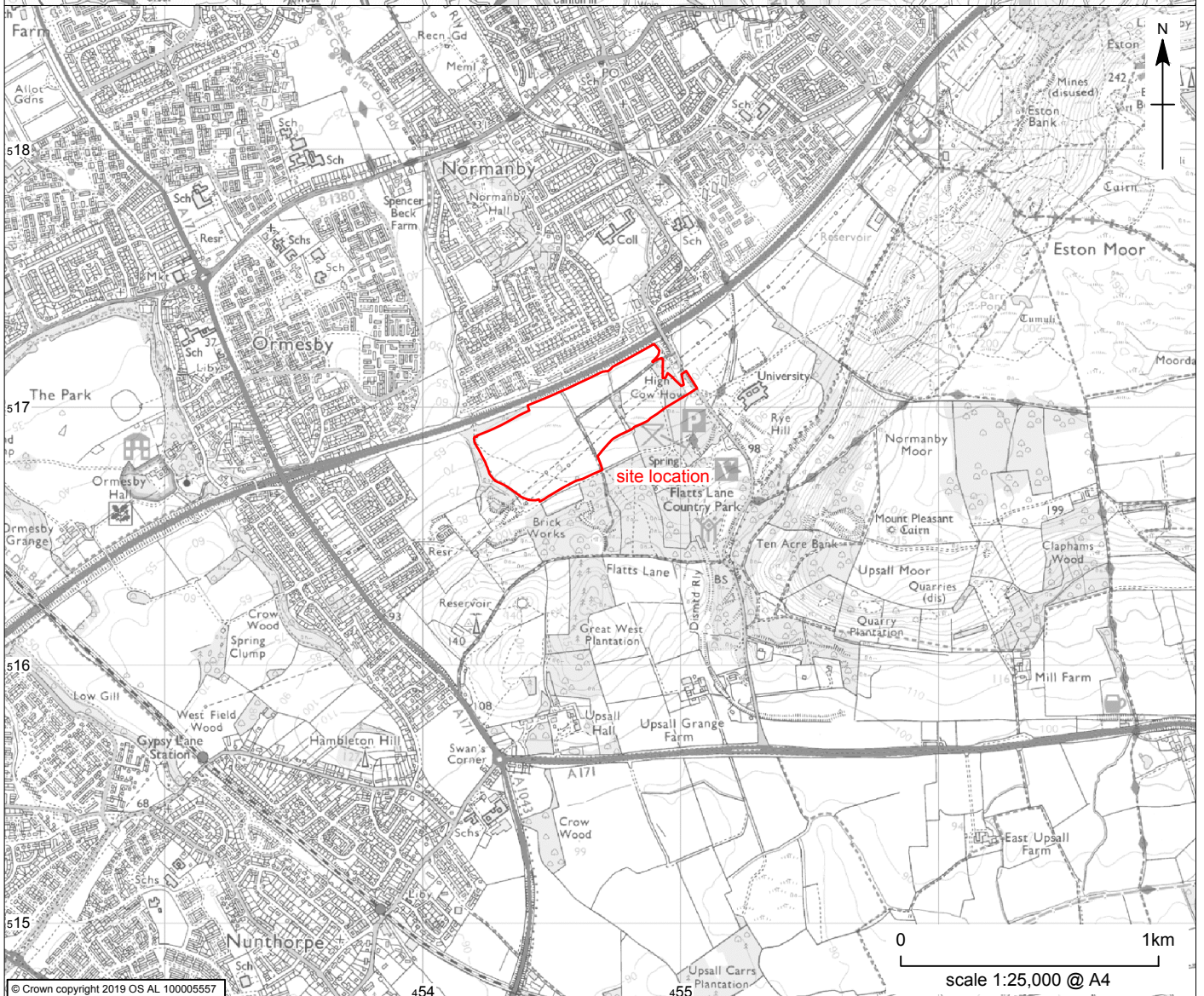
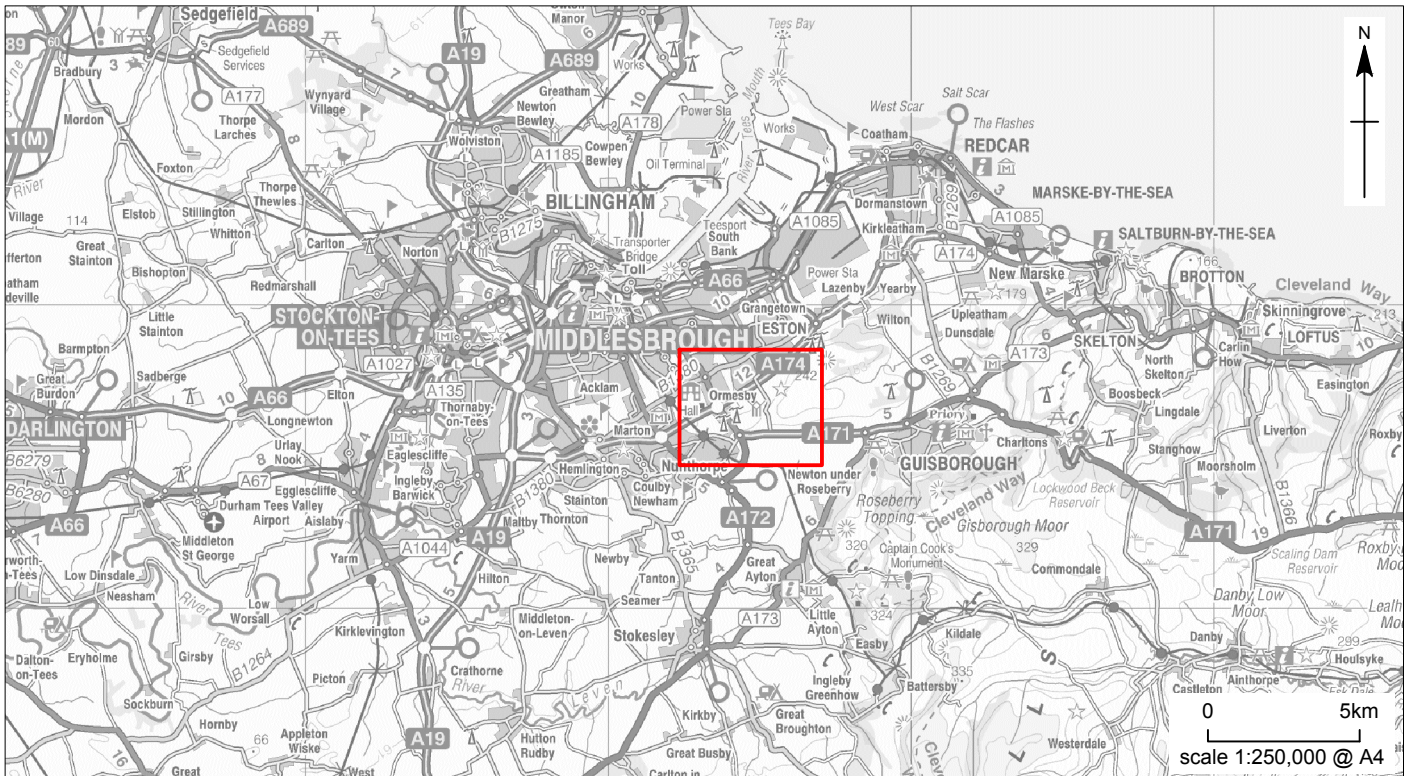
Ordnance Survey 1947, six inches to one mile, Sheet XVI.NE

*Online Resources*

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> (accessed on 18/06/2020)

<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> (accessed on 18/06/2020)



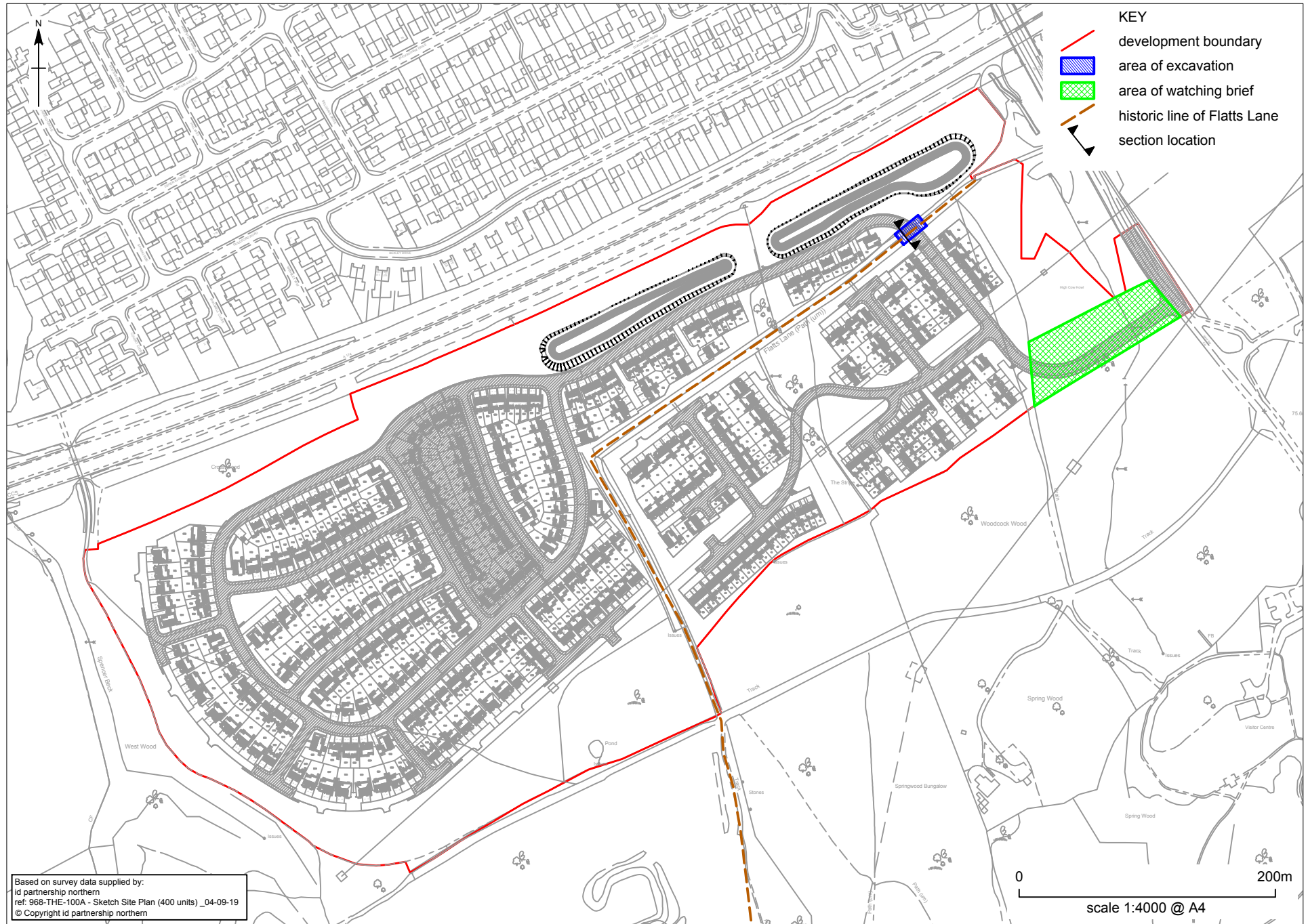


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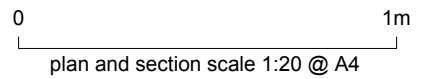
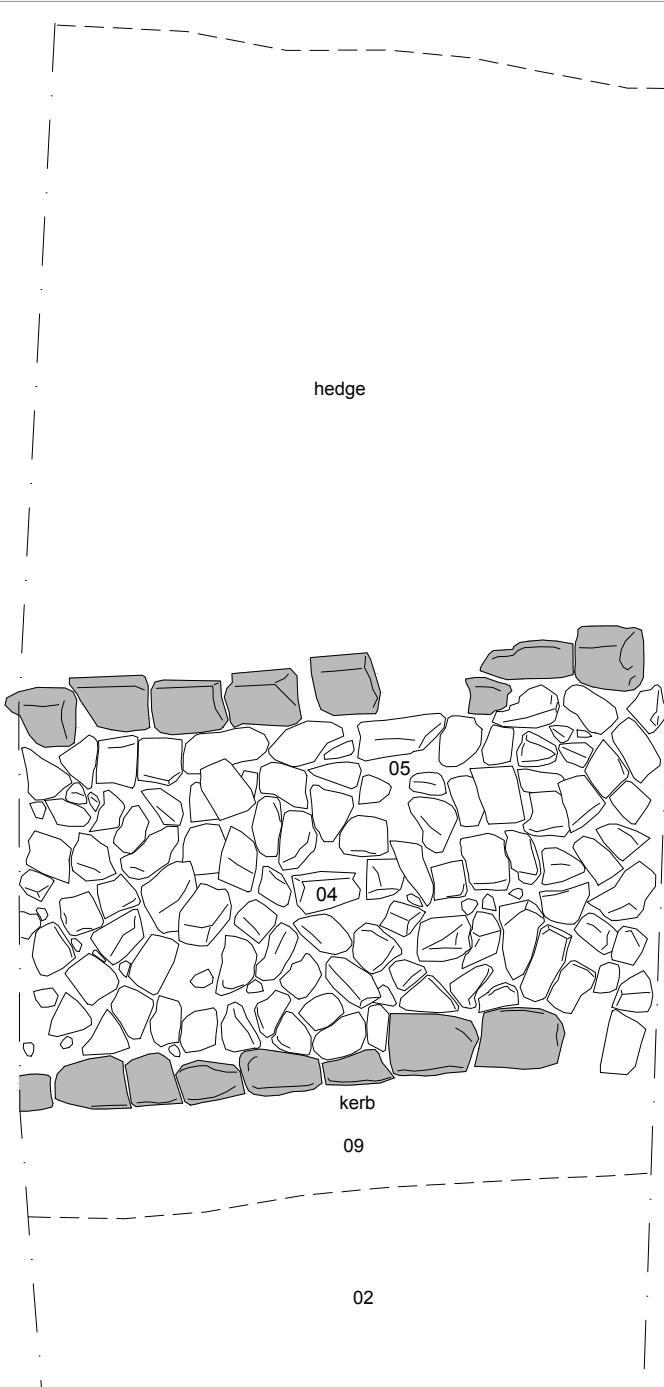
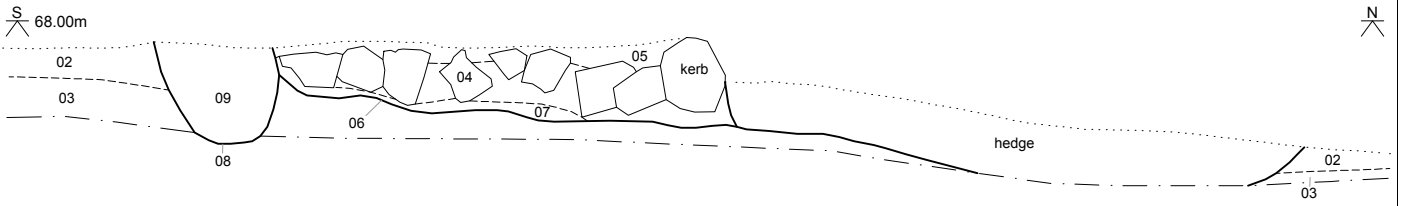
Land at Flatts Lane, Normanby: site location

Figure 1





East-facing section through packhorse track



APPENDIX A  
CONTEXT AND FINDS CATALOGUE

Context number	Description
01	Topsoil
02	Subsoil
03	Natural
04	Stone setts and kerbstones of packhorse track
05	Cinder overlay on <b>04</b>
06	Cut of packhorse track
07	Sand along base of cut <b>06</b>
08	Cut of southern trackside ditch
09	Fill of ditch <b>08</b>