

# 15 High Street, Orford, Suffolk; Archaeological Watching Brief Report

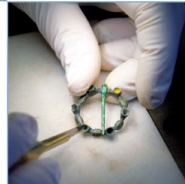
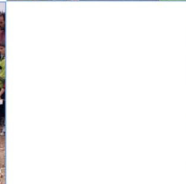
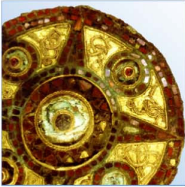
Planning Application Number: C/08/0857

National Grid Reference Number: TM 4235 5012

Site Code: ORF 122

AOC Project No: 30591

Date: April 2010



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

## 15 High Street, Orford, Suffolk: Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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**National Grid Reference (NGR):** TM 4235 5012

**AOC Project No:** 30591

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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**Draft/Final Report Stage:** Draft      **Date:** April 2010

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## Non-Technical Summary

*In March 2010, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of John Crane at 15 High Street, Orford, Suffolk (NGR: TM 4235 5012).*

*The watching brief was undertaken during the ground reduction of the development area which covered an area of 10m x 8m. The natural horizon was recorded on site at a height of 10.20m OD decreasing to 9.94m in the southwest. Cutting into the natural deposits was a large post-medieval boundary ditch and later domestic waste pits and associated postholes. Find recovered from the features indicated a likely 20<sup>th</sup> century date. Structural remains on site included a brick-lined soakaway or well, and the brick and flint foundations of a previous structure that had previously occupied the site. The site was overlaid by subsoil and topsoil recorded at a height of 10.90mOD.*

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The site is located within Orford town centre, adjacent to the High Street (Figures 1 & 2). It is irregularly shaped and covers an area of approximately 87 square metres. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 4235 5012, bound by Rectory Road to the north, the High Street to the west and south, by residential properties fronting onto the High Street to the south-east, and residential properties fronting onto Rectory Road to the east.
- 1.2 The main body of works comprised the demolition of the fire station currently occupying the site and the construction of a single residential unit. The main focus of the watching brief was on the excavation of the strip foundations for the new building.

## 2. Planning Background

- 2.1 The local planning authority is Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC). Archaeological advice to the Council is provided by Keith Wade of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Services (SCCAS).
- 2.2 The site lies within the regionally important medieval town of Orford as defined by County Sites and Monuments Record. The site also lies within the Suffolk Heritage Coast. The site does not lie within an Archaeological Priority Zone and no Scheduled Ancient Monuments lie within the development area.
- 2.3 Planning permission to undertake the proposed development was granted under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 1990) and the recommendations of the archaeological advisor, an archaeological investigation was carried out to inform the planning decision about an appropriate mitigation strategy, in relation to the destruction of the potential archaeological resource.
- 2.4 The work was undertaken as part of Planning Application No. C/08/0857. The application was granted subject to conditions. Condition 10 states:

*"No development shall take place within the area of the application site, until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall have been submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing."*

*"Reason: To ensure the proper recording of archaeological artefacts. "*

- 2.5 AOC Archaeology Group Ltd were commissioned by John Crane to carry out the Archaeological Watching Brief in accordance with the brief and specification issued by SCCAS (SCCAS 2009). A Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2010) was prepared prior to commencement of the Watching Brief and approved by Keith Wade.

## 3 Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The site lies upon solid geology of Norwich and Coralline Crag formations (BGS 1979) overlain by river terrace sands and gravels (AOC 2004).
- 3.2 The site is generally flat and lies at approximately 5.00m AOD.

## 4 Archaeological and Historical Background

### Prehistoric (Before c.AD 43)

- 4.1 Very little evidence of prehistoric activity has been found in the Orford area. A single Mesolithic flint flake was recovered 300m west of the site and a perforated flint battleaxe dating to the Neolithic or Bronze Age was found 2km south of the site.

### Roman (c.AD 43 – 410)

- 4.2 Only low level Roman activity has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. A silver coin of Theodosius I (c. AD 379-395) was found 150m south-west of the site and a further three Roman coins were discovered in the grounds of Castle House, 400m west of the site. A single cremation of Roman date was excavated 1km south-west of the site. The most significant discovery in the Orford area was a hoard of 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century coins found approximately 2km east of the site.

### Early Medieval (c.AD 410 – 1066)

- 4.3 Prior to the Norman Conquest the area of Orford was part of the manor of Sudbourne. In AD 960 King Edgar gave Manor of Sudbourne to Bishop Æthelwold in return for the Bishop's translation of the Rule of St Benedict into English, the Bishop then granted the manor to the Benedictine monastery at Ely. No evidence of early medieval activity has been found in the vicinity of the site.

### Medieval (c.AD 1066 – 1485)

- 4.4 The Domesday Book does not mention Orford by name as it was still part of the manor of Sudbourne. The first documentary evidence of Orford is dated to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, and mentions a market and a causeway (thought to be modern Quay Road) (Orford Museum 2010).
- 4.5 Orford had borough status from at least 1256 (Orford Museum 2010), by this time the town was becoming an important port. The spit of land known as "the Ness" formed a natural sheltered harbour ideal for fishing and trade. The importing of wine and export of wool was the main source of prosperity throughout the medieval period.
- 4.6 Orford Castle, 450m south-west of the site, was built by Henry II between 1165 and 1173 to control the local area and keep the powerful Bigod family in check; they had revolted in the reign of King Stephen. The keep of the castle remains intact but the circular ditch and curtain wall which surrounded it no longer exist (Pastscape 2010). In 1336 the castle was sold by the crown to the Earl of Suffolk, it remained in private hands until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The revenue from the castle in addition to the coastal trade increased the town's prosperity.
- 4.7 The Church of St Bartholomew, 150m south-west of the site, was built at about the same time as the castle; it was enlarged in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and has since been substantially rebuilt. An Augustinian Priory was founded in 1295 and lay 100m south of the site; much of the priory was destroyed during the Dissolution.
- 4.8 In the later medieval period the natural harbour at Orford began to silt up and trade gradually diminished leaving many of Orford's inhabitants poverty stricken. This led in part to the foundation of the Hospital of St John the Baptist in 1390. The hospital focused on the poor of the town but was closed around 1500. A second hospital, The Leper Hospital of St Leonard lay 500m south of the site;

it was founded in 1267 and was run as a charitable organisation until 1603 by the owners of the Sudbourne Estate (Orford Museum 2010).

### **Post-Medieval (c.AD 1485 - Modern)**

- 4.9 Orford continued to decline in the Tudor period with continental wars, piracy and the continued narrowing of the river channel all contributing factors. The town was granted a new charter in 1579 which stated that the town was in a state of “ruin and decay” (Orford Museum 2010). Over the next 100 years trade in Orford continued to diminish resulting in the chaotic situation where, between 1693 and 1701 Orford had two mayors and governing bodies each claiming authority over the town.
- 4.10 During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Orford became more dependent upon the Sudbourne Estate, the principal employers of the district. A “Martello Tower” was built on “the Ness” in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (National Trust 2010)
- 4.11 The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw Orford Ness become a military site; in 1915 the land was purchased for the Royal Flying Corps to experiment with aircraft machine guns. By 1921 it had become a bombing range, a purpose which it retained until after the Second World War. Ballistic missiles and atomic weapons were also developed on the site. From 1936 it became a radar station and continued to be used as a Royal Observer Corps monitoring post until it was decommissioned. It is now owned by the national trust (National Trust 2010). The BBC broadcasts the BBC World Service from a station on Orford Ness.

## **5 Aims of the Investigation**

- 5.1 The aims of the Watching Brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
  - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
  - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
  - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
  - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
  - To enable Keith Wade archaeology advisor to Suffolk Coastal District Council to make an informed decision on the status of the condition, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
  - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.
- 5.2 The specific objectives of the investigation were to:
- Determine the presence of any remains associated with the medieval settlement of Orford.
  - Assess the degree and extent of truncation of earlier deposits by phases of modern activity.
- 5.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.



## 6 Strategy

- 6.1 A unique site code (ORF 122) was obtained for the project from the Sites and Monuments Record Officer, Suffolk Archaeological Service prior to work commencing on site.
- 6.2 The watching brief was monitored by Keith Wade, of the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service, on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Andy Leonard for AOC Archaeology. The on-site archaeological supervision was carried out by Geoff Morley, Project Supervisor.

## 7 Methodology

- 7.1 An experienced archaeologist was present to observe all groundworks, positioned outside the working area of the mechanical excavator, in the normal working arrangement. When access an area was required the machine would cease operations and if necessary relocate to ensure safe access while the Supervisor entered the excavation area to carry out close inspection or record limited sections.
- 7.2 Archaeological recording, where not precluded by Health & Safety considerations, consisted of:
- Limited hand cleaning of archaeological sections and surfaces sufficient to establish the stratigraphic sequence exposed.
  - The collection of dating evidence from *in-situ* deposits and spoil scans.
  - A scaled photographic recording of representative exposed sections and surfaces, along with sufficient photographs to establish the setting and scale of the groundworks.
- 7.3 Records were produced using pro forma watching brief record sheets and by the single context planning method and were compatible with those published by the Museum of London (MoL 1994).
- 7.4 A record of the full sequence of all archaeological deposits as revealed in the watching brief was made. Plans and sections of features were drawn at an appropriate scale 1:10 or 1:20, with sections drawn at 1:20.
- 7.5 Staff present on site wore the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 7.6 The Watching Brief was carried out during ground reduction across the full area of the site, measuring a distance of 10m by 8m.

## 8 Results (Figure 3 & 4)

- 8.1 The natural horizon, in the form of loose yellowish brown sand (111), was observed across the full extent of the watching brief area. It was recorded at its highest at 10.20m OD, decreasing to 9.94m OD in the southwest corner of site.
- 8.2 Cutting into the natural horizon was a curvilinear ditch [115]. The ditch ran from the eastern baulk, continuing east-west for approximately 7m before returning south into the southern limit of excavation. The ditch measured 1.60m wide x 0.40m deep, with a gentle concave profile and was recorded at a height of 9.97mOD. The ditch was filled by (114), a loose brownish grey silty sa<sup>nd</sup>, which contained occasional fragments of pottery, animal bone, glass, metal and ceramic building

- material (CBM) dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The size and character of the feature suggests it may be a late post-medieval boundary ditch.
- 8.3 Six pits similar in fill and size were excavated cutting into the natural horizon (111) or the earlier ditch [115]. The pits were recorded as [103], [106], [108], [110], [113] and [137], and measured 1.12m x 0.90m x 0.36m, 1.00m x 0.85m x 0.30m, 1.50m x 1.00m x 0.85m, 1.75m x 1.75m x 0.55m, 0.56m x 0.52m x NFE and 0.86m x 0.50m x 0.50m respectively. The pits were recorded at an average height of 1.31mOD. The features were generally sub-rectangular in shape with flat bases except for [113] which was irregularly shaped. All six pits were filled by a loose dark black and grey ashy sand, (102), (105), (107), (109), (112) and (136), with inclusions of iron, green tinted glass and animal bone. A fragment of pottery recovered from (102) was identified as a fragment of white glazed earthenware and dates to between 1740 and 1900. Complete Bovril jars were also recovered from (102) which indicated a 19<sup>th</sup> century date. A complete bottle was recovered from pit [108]. The bottle was 185mm high (7¼") with a shallow recessed front panel which would have held a label. The base has 8A (bottle size marker) embossed on it. The pits have been interpreted as being late post-medieval or modern waste pits.
- 8.4 Pit [117] was recorded cutting into earlier pit [110]. The pit was sub-oval and measured 0.98m in diameter and 0.15m deep. The pit was filled by (116), a mid grey brown silty sand with inclusions of wood and metal. A similarly filled pit was [122], a sub-rectangular pit measuring 0.85m x 0.60m, filled with (121), a mid grey brown silty sand with inclusions of CBM and wood. Both pits are likely to relate to post-medieval waste disposal.
- 8.5 Three small pits or postholes were recorded on east of the site, [124], [126] and [133]. They measured 0.37m x 0.37m, 0.32m x 0.29m and 0.26m x 0.28m respectively. The features were recorded at a height of 9.94mOD. The pits were filled with (123), (125) and (132), a dark to mid grey brown silty sand with inclusions of CBM, mortar fragments, stone and brick. If the features were postholes then their layout could suggest a structure. The features remained unexcavated and preserved *in situ*, as they were not under threat from the development.
- 8.6 A brick-lined soakaway or well was recorded on site as [120]. The cut was circular and measured 2.30m x 0.32m+ deep. The brick lining [119] was mortared together by grey white yellow gritty sand. The bricks measured 150mm x 80mm x 70mm. Between the cut edge and the bricks, was backfill deposit (134), recorded as a 0.50m wide deposit of brown grey silty sand. The centre of the structure was backfilled with (118), a mixture of brick and mortar rubble. The structure was recorded at a height of 9.94mOD.
- 8.7 Located within the north-western corner of the site was [131] a shallow cut measuring 3.80m x 2.50m, filled by (130), a mid brown grey silty sand. The deposit contained inclusions of coal fragments, mortar and flints. This shallow disturbed layer may represent a horizontally truncated feature or a small deposit of made ground.
- 8.8 Three structural walls [127], [128] and [129] were recorded on site located at the northern and eastern limits of the area. The walls measured 10m x 0.30m deep, 2.35m x 0.55m deep and 0.30m x 0.45m deep. The walls were composed of either flint or red brick and form the remains of the foundation to a previous post-medieval or modern structure.
- 8.9 Associated with the walls was deposit (104) a layer or dump of loose rounded flints which may have formed a path or garden feature. The deposit was 2.0m x 1.50m x 0.40m deep.

- 8.10 Overlying [128] was layer (135), a 0.30m thick deposit of loose mid brown grey silty sand with rubble inclusions. The layer which measured 2.08m wide (only visible in section) and has been interpreted as a demolition layer.
- 8.11 Overlying the excavation area was (101), a 0.20m thick deposit of mid yellow silty sand, interpreted as subsoil and (100) a 0.65m thick deposit of imported topsoil.

## 9 Finds

- 9.1 A small assemblage of finds were recovered from the site, these included sherds of pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), glass, animal bone, ironwork and ceramic tobacco pipe (CTP). The pottery sherds all date to between 1740 and 1900+. The sherds included examples of glazed creamware sherd, white glazed earthenware and a piece of flowerpot. The four pieces of glass represent bottle fragments whilst the animal bone is restricted to either chicken or cattle.

## 10 Conclusions

- 10.1 The aims of the watching brief were to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site. The excavations revealed a post-medieval boundary ditch and numerous features of the same period related to localise waste disposal. In total, eight pits and three small pits or postholes were identified. Also recorded on site was a large brick lined well or soakaway which would have supported the local population either for either the draining or retention of water.
- 10.2 Wall foundations were also recorded on site in the form of brick and flint structures. These are likely to relate to a post-medieval – modern structure which previously occupied the site.
- 10.3 As the excavation on site were limited in depth, the majority of the features recorded on site will be preserved *in situ* at heights of between 10.11 and 9.94mOD

## 11 Further Work and Publication

- 11.1 A short summary of the results of the watching brief will be submitted to the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, and grey literature added to the online ADS OASIS project (Appendix C).
- 11.2 If future work is carried out exterior to the area exposed during this phase of work, then there is a potential for further archaeological features to be revealed.

## 12 Archive Deposition

- 12.1 The archive will be prepared in accordance with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service guidelines as well as national standards (UKIC 1990, Brown & AAF 2007). On submission and approval of this report, AOC will discuss arrangements for the archive to be deposited with the Orford Museum Service with the developer/landowner.

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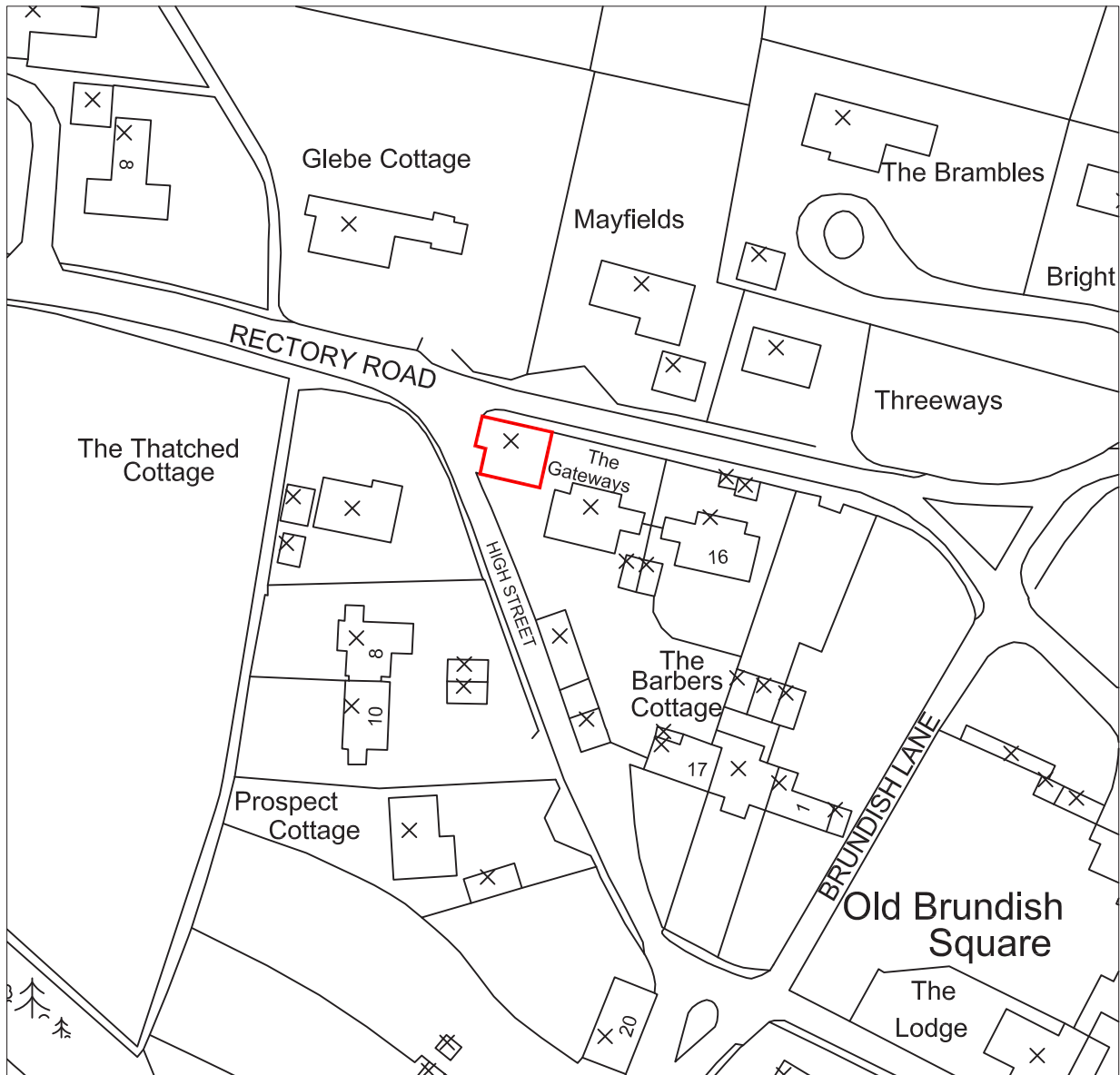




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**Figure 1: Site Location**



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Figure 2: Detailed Site Location Plan

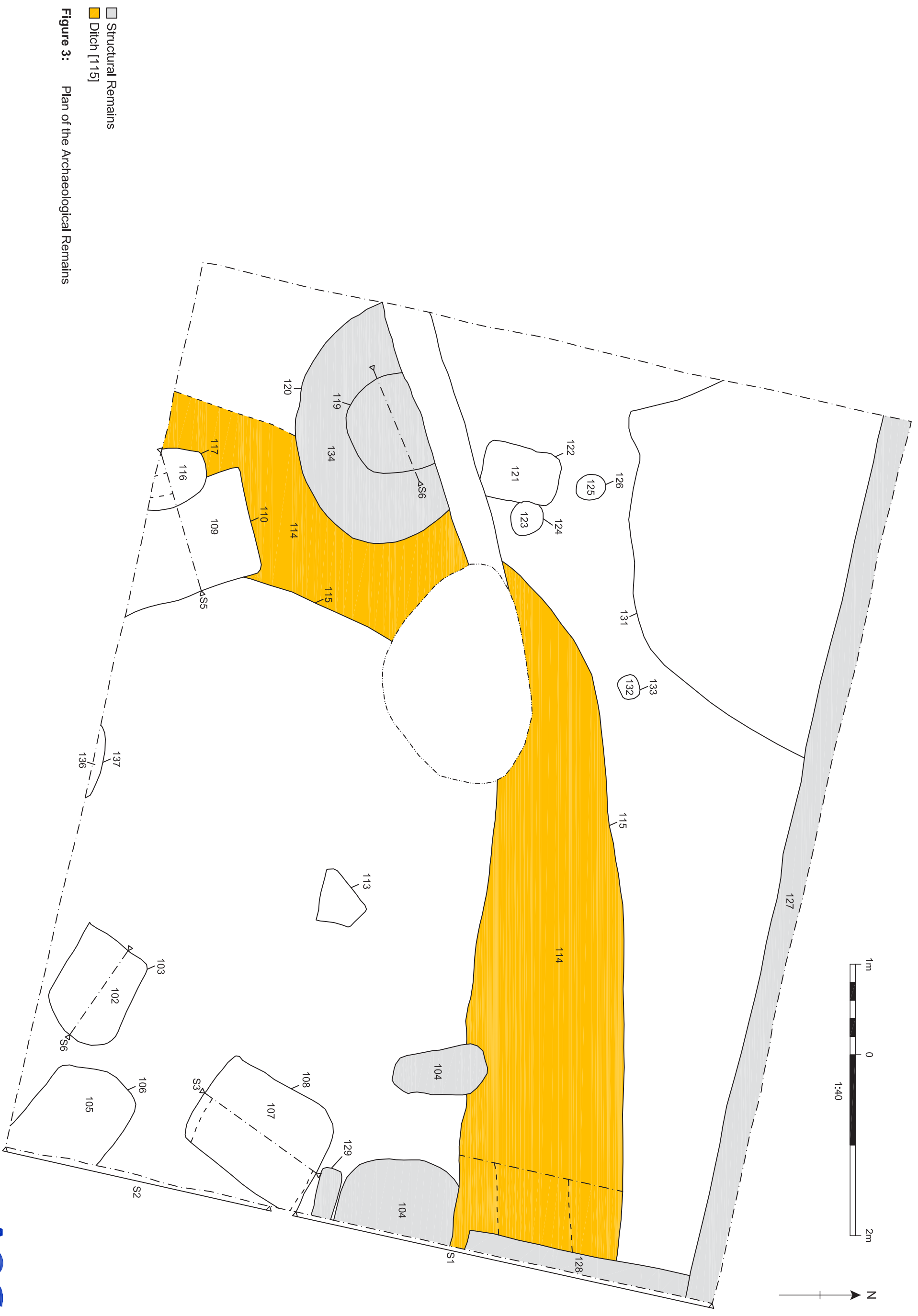
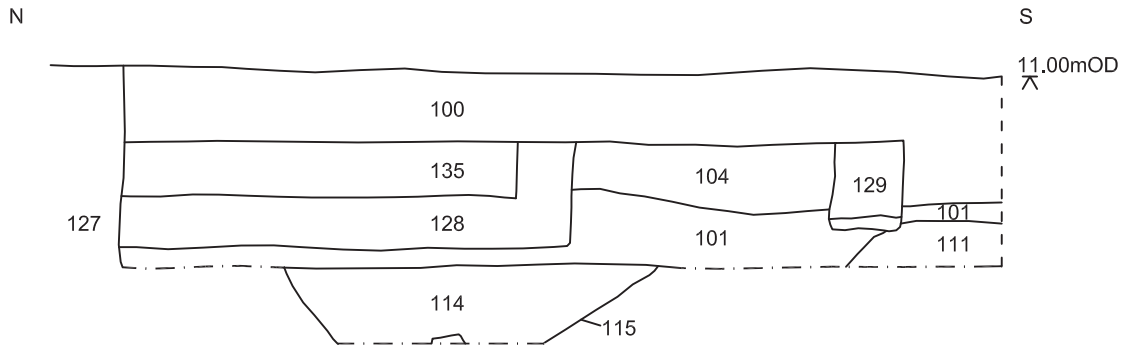


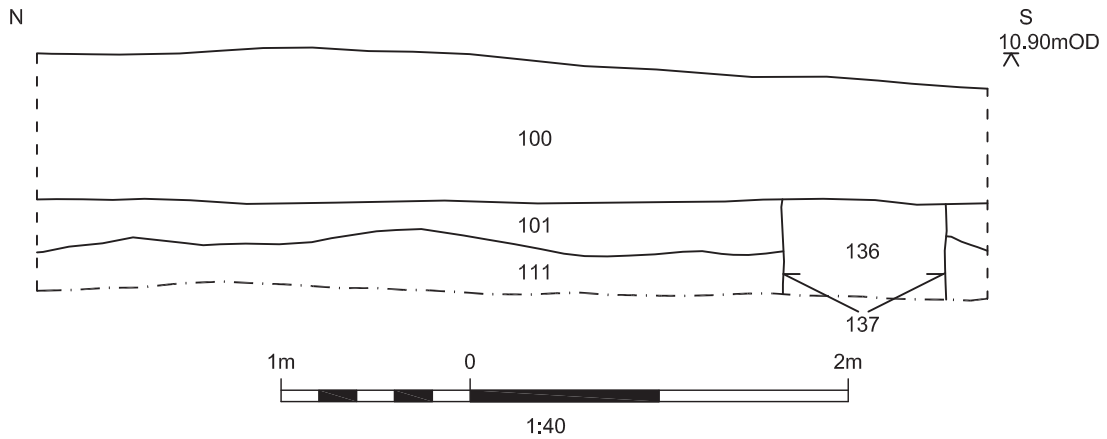
Figure 3: Plan of the Archaeological Remains

- Structural Remains
- Ditch [115]

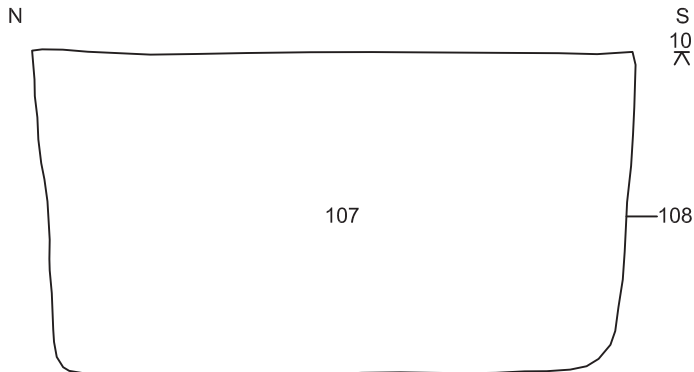
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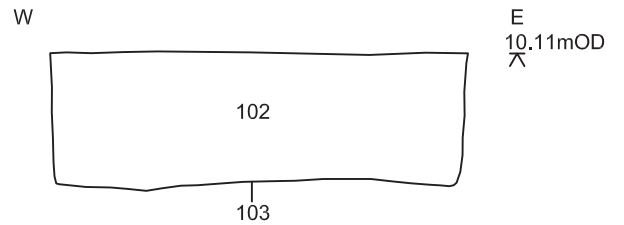
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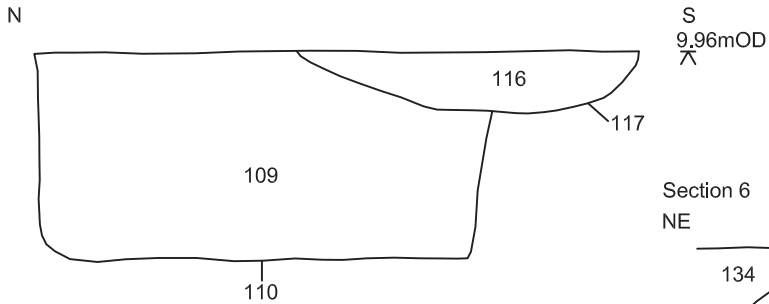
Section 3



Section 4



Section 5



Section 6

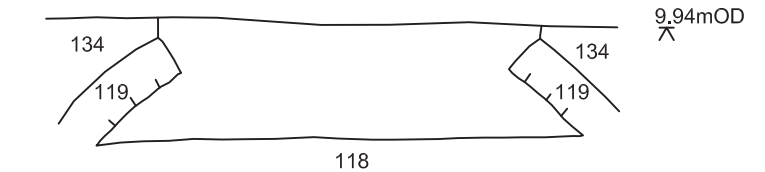


Figure 4: Sections through the Archaeological Remains





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## Appendices

## Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
100	Topsoil	10.00m	8.00m	0.65m
101	Subsoil	10.00m	8.00m	0.20m
102	Fill of 103	1.12m	0.90m	0.36m
103	Cut of Pit	1.12m	0.90m	0.36m
104	Flinty Layer	2.00m	1.50m	0.40m
105	Fill of 106	1.00m+	0.85m	0.30m
106	Cut of Pit	1.00m+	0.85m	0.30m
107	Fill of 108	1.50m	1.00m	0.85m
108	Cut of Pit	1.50m	1.00m	0.85m
109	Fill of 110	1.75m	1.75m	0.55m
110	Cut of Pit	1.75m	1.75m	0.55m
111	Natural	10.00m	8.00m	NFE
112	Fill of 113	0.56m	0.52m	NFE
113	Cut of Pit	0.56m	0.52m	NFE
114	Fill of 115	7.00m+	1.60m	0.40m+
115	Cut of Ditch	7.00m+	1.60m	0.40m+
116	Fill of 117	0.98m	0.98m	0.15m
117	Cut of Pit	0.98m	0.98m	0.15m
118	Fill of 120	1.25m	1.25m	0.32m+
119	Soakaway	1.25m	1.25m	0.32m+
120	Cut for Soakaway	1.25m	1.25m	0.32m+
121	Fill of 122	0.85m	0.60m	NFE
122	Cut of Pit	0.85m	0.60m	NFE
123	Fill of 124	0.37m	0.37m	NFE
124	Cut of Posthole	0.37m	0.37m	NFE
125	Fill of 126	0.32m	0.29m	NFE
126	Cut of Posthole	0.32m	0.29m	NFE
127	Brick Wall	10.00m+	0.30m	1.00m+
128	Wall and Floor	2.55m+	1.40m+	0.55m
129	Fill of 031	0.55m	0.30m	0.45m
130	Fill of 131	3.80m	2.50m	NFE
131	Possible Hollow	3.80m	2.50m	NFE
132	Fill of 133	0.28m	0.26m	NFE
133	Cut of Posthole	0.28m	0.26m	NFE
134	Fill of 120	2.30m	2.30m	NFE
135	Made Ground	2.08m	1.40m+	0.30m
136	Fill of 137	0.86m	0.50m+	0.50m+
137	Cut of Pit	0.86m	0.50m+	0.50m+

## Appendix B – Finds Assessment

### An Assessment of the finds from 15 High Street, Orford

By Paul Fitz  
AOC Archaeology

#### Summary

A small assemblage of mixed finds from the post-medieval period were recovered from an archaeological watching brief at the old fire station site in Orford, Suffolk and are summarised below.

#### Pottery

Three sherds were recovered from three contexts; subsoil (101), pit fill (102) and ditch fill (114). One glazed creamware sherd (114), one white glazed earthenware (102) and one flowerpot piece, (101). All the sherds will date between 1740 and 1900+

#### Ceramic building material

Context (114) produced four pieces of building material. One brick (without any complete dimensions), two pieces of roofing pan tile and an unidentified fired fragment. The CBM fragments remain undated however they are likely to be of post-medieval date.

#### Glass

Four pieces of vessel glass was collected from three contexts. Small green tinted pieces from (101) and (102) and a complete clear glass linctus(?) bottle from (107). The bottle is 185mm high (7¼") with a shallow recessed front panel which would have held a label. The base has 8A (bottle size marker) embossed on it.

#### Animal Bone

Seven pieces of animal bone were recovered from three contexts; three fragments from (101), two of which are possibly chicken, two large cattle or horse pieces from (102) and a large rib and a small limb bone which has been chopped at one end from (107).

#### Ironwork

A small band of iron was retrieved from context (107). narrower at one end it about 2mm thick it may have been a course blade from a hand tool .

#### Ceramic Tobacco Pipe

Only one undiagnostic stem was recovered from context (107).

#### Comments/Recommendations

As a whole the finds show that the contexts they were retrieved from appear to be from the 19<sup>th</sup> century or later, indeed the complete bottle is in good condition and likely to be late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The finds will be packed according to Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service guidelines.

## Appendix C – OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: aocarcha1-65877**

### Project details

Project name 15, High Street, Orford

Short description of the project In March 2010, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of John Crane at 15 High Street, Orford, Suffolk (NGR: TM 4235 5012). The watching brief was undertaken during the ground reduction of the development area which covered an area of 10m x 8m. The natural horizon was recorded on site at a height of 10.20m OD decreasing to 9.94m in the southwest. Cutting into the natural deposits was a large post-medieval boundary ditch and later domestic waste pits and associated postholes. Find recovered from the features indicated a likely 20th century date of 1900's. Structural remains on site included a brick-lined soakaway or well, and the brick and flint foundations of a previous structure that had previously occupied the site. The site was overlaid by subsoil and topsoil recorded at a height of 10.90mOD.

Project dates Start: 16-03-2010 End: 17-03-2010

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes ORF 122 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 30591 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Heritage Coast

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type WASTE PITS Post Medieval

Significant Finds CERAMICS Post Medieval

Significant Finds GLASS Modern

Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval

Significant Finds CBM Post Medieval

Significant Finds CTP Modern

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

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### Project location

Country England

Site location SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL ORFORD 15 High Street, Orford

Postcode IP12 2BQ

Study area 87.50 Square metres

Site coordinates TM 4235 5012 52.0956422674 1.538651465250 52 05 44 N 001 32 19 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 9.94m Max: 10.20m

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### Project creators

Name of AOC Archaeology  
Organisation

Project brief Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service  
originator

Project design AOC Archaeology  
originator

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Geoff Morley

Type of Developer sponsor/funding body

Name of John Crane sponsor/funding body

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### Project archives

Physical Archive Orford Museum recipient

Physical Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal'

Digital Archive Orford Museum recipient

Digital Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal'

Digital Media 'Images raster / digital photography','Images vector','Text' available

Paper Archive Orford Museum recipient

Paper Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Glass','Metal'

Paper Media 'Context sheet','Map','Matrices','Microfilm','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Unpublished Text' available

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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title 15 High Street, Orford

Author(s)/Editor(s) Edwards, C

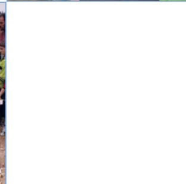
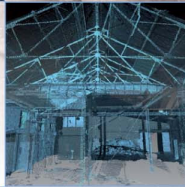
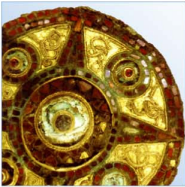
Date 2010

Issuer or AOC Archaeology  
publisher

Place of issue or London  
publication

Description A4 bound report with illustrations





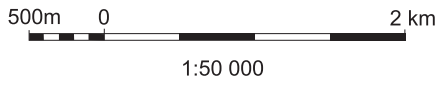
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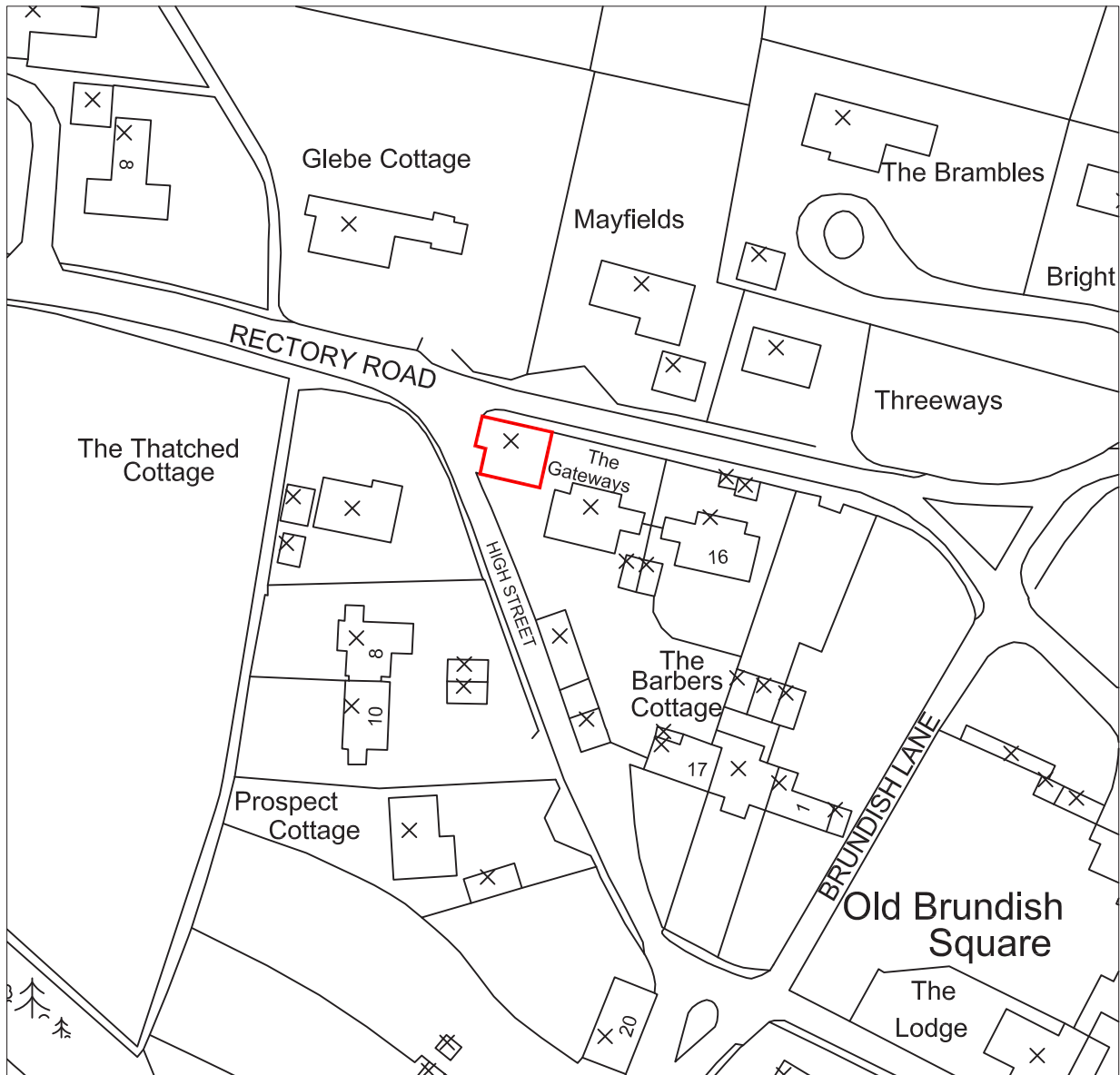




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**Figure 1: Site Location**



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Figure 2: Detailed Site Location Plan