

**The Forge, Balcombe Road, Pound Hill, Crawley,
West Sussex**

(TQ 29789 36754)

By

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Project No. 2122

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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by James Nayler of JNA Architects, on behalf of Atrium Park Developments Ltd., to undertake archaeological works at The Forge, Balcombe Road, Crawley, West Sussex. The work was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of three new residential dwellings (Planning ref: CR/2005/0103/FUL) between the 18th and 21st July 2005. The concrete floor of the forge was removed under the supervision of a member of ASE staff and archaeological features revealed, recorded and planned. Three trial trenches were then excavated across and adjacent to the site of the forge and any archaeological features observed recorded.

Several archaeological features were recorded on the site, the most notable of which was the original extent of forge, the footings of the original hearth and a series of post holes probably associated with the original roof of the forge.

The underlying natural sandy clay strata was observed at c 95.71m OD.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit, was commissioned by James Nayler of JNA Architects, on behalf of Atrium Park Developments Ltd., to undertake archaeological works at The Forge, Balcombe Road, Crawley, West Sussex (NGR TQ 29789 36754) hereafter referred to as 'the site' (Fig. 1). The work was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of three new residential dwellings (*Planning ref: CR/2005/0103/FUL*) between the 18th and 21st July 2005.

The site is bounded by Balcombe Road to the west a council owned property to the north and residential properties to the south and east. The modern ground surface across the site was recorded at c. 95.60m OD. Natural sandy clay ground was observed at c. 95.70m OD.

A Method Statement was prepared by ASE (Darryl Palmer), with reference to a scoping document prepared by West Sussex County Council (John Mills), and submitted to WSCC for approval before work at the site commenced. The method statement was prepared according to the *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) Version 2b in West Sussex*.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Sygrave (Field Officer), Sophie Hunter, Mark Leatherbarrow (Archaeologists) and Ron Martin (Industrial Archaeologist) between the 18th to 21st July 2005. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Senior Project Manager).

1.1 Planning Background

An application for planning permission for the demolition of an existing cottage and outbuildings and the construction of 1 x 3 bedroom detached dwelling and 2 x 4 bedroom detached dwellings was submitted to Crawley Borough Council (Planning ref. CR/2005/0103/FUL). However, in view of the archaeological sensitivity of the development site, the West Sussex County Archaeologist (in his capacity as advisor on archaeological planning matters to the local planning authority), recommended that an archaeological planning condition be attached to this planning consent, requiring a programme of archaeological work.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological work was to record, before its destruction by development, buried archaeological information complementary to the standing building survey carried out by Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society (Martin 2004) through recording any:

- extension to the brick floor visible in the north of the forge

- seating for a dismantled second hearth or buried wall footings
- other evidence of alterations to the forge or of an earlier pre-1827 structure on the site.
- The presence of earlier archaeological features/deposits not associated with the forge.

2 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development included the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the construction of 1 x 3 bed detached house and 2 x 4 bed detached houses. The proposed development was deemed to be likely to result in damage to or destruction of archaeological remains of the Forge, by the West Sussex County Archaeologist. Condition 6 (Archaeological Investigation) of the planning consent CR/2005/0103/FUL was therefore imposed by the local planning authority in order to ensure that a record be made of the remains of the forge before their destruction.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The British Geological Survey Map Sheet 302 (Horsham) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50 000 Scale) indicates the site lies on the upper Tunbridge Sand deposits.

The site was occupied by an L-shaped former forge building. The shorter arm, aligned N-S, was constructed of sandstone rubble and constituted the original forge, which, together with the adjacent house (Forge Lodge), was built in 1827 by John Alcorn. There are indications from historical mapping that the southern end of this structure may have extended further to the south towards Forge Lodge. The structure contained two blacksmith's hearths, of which one survives above ground. The location of the second was believed to be beneath a later concrete floor. At some point after 1916, an E-W aligned extension was added to the western side of the original building. There are suggestions that the forge may have been preceded by an earlier building. If so, this is unlikely to have been of any great age, as the site lay within open fields until the existing Balcombe Road was put through after 1809.

A detailed written and drawn record of the forge, including elevation drawings and a ground plan, has recently been published (R.G. Martin, 'Balcombe Road Forge, Crawley', *Sussex Industrial History* 34 (2004)). This recording project was concerned with those elements of the site visible above and at ground level. No opportunity arose to investigate sub-surface deposits. Thus, the potential remains for archaeological deposits to survive on the site, which may complement and add to the standing building record.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

As was stated in the Method Statement (Palmer, 2005) the concrete floor of the forge was removed under the supervision of a member of ASE staff and archaeological features revealed, recorded and planned. Three trial trenches measuring 13m by 1.8m (Trench 1) 12m by 1.8m (Trench 2) and 8m by 1.8m (Trench 3) (see Fig. 2) were then excavated across and adjacent to the site of the forge and any archaeological features observed recorded. Trench 2 was moved, with agreement of WSCC, 7m to the east because the western extent of the forge had not been demolished. During a site inspection by John Mills (WSCC) Archaeology South-East was asked to use some of the contingency plan outlined in the Method Statement (Palmer, 2005) to widen Trench 3 by c. 6m².

The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist in order to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.

All ground works were planned in relation to known positions along the site boundaries.

All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the Method Statement (Palmer 2005).

A full photographic record (black and white, colour slide and digital) of the work was kept as appropriate and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. All finds are the property of the landowner, but will be donated to a suitable museum.

Archaeological deposits were levelled in relation to a nearby datum.

5 RESULTS

The site is presented as a single area rather than three separate trenches so features that cross trench boundaries can be discussed at the same time.

5.1 Stratigraphy (figures 3 and 4)

The underlying natural sediment, a pale yellowish brown sandy clay [39] was observed only within cut features at c. 95.71m OD across the site. Sealing [39] a mid brownish grey sandy clay [10] was recorded across the site at between 95.78m OD in the west and 96.33m OD in the east. Sandy clay [10] is either the weathered top of [39] or a sub soil deposit.

To the west of the north south original forge within the footprint of the post-1916 extension a dark grey compact metallised surface [9] was recorded at 95.78m OD that sealed [10]. The surface appeared to be constructed of waste hearth material and was 0.1m thick.

The sandstone block footings [7] of the original north south forge building were recorded at c. 96.06m OD. The footings measured 0.47m wide by 0.3m deep and covered an area of 4.96m east west by 9.80m north south. The north south extent of the footings was 1.8m greater to the south than the standing building survey describes (Martin 2005 and Fig. 5) and suggests that the building was shortened.

To the south of the original forge footings the sandstone block footing [40] for the north wall of the contemporary forge cottage was recorded at 96.50m OD. The footing measured 0.72m wide by 5.32m and was parallel to the southern wall of the original forge building, the footing was not excavated. Along the southern side of the cottage's footing a brick footing [41] was recorded and further to the south another parallel brick footing [38]. These brick footings are believed to be for beams to support a raised wooden floor.

Against the southern wall of the original forge building a set of footings for a probable hearth [35] was recorded at 96.05m OD. The footings measured 0.26m wide by 0.1m deep, covered an area of 1.1m by 1.3m and were just to the east from the centre of the building.

The south wall of footings [7] and hearth [35] were both truncated by robber cut [36] recorded at 96.06m OD and measuring 4.6m by 0.7m by 0.28m deep. The robber cut [36] was filled with a yellowish brown clayey silt [37].

To the west of the centre of the original forge building a series of postholes were recorded running north to south (Fig. 3). Posthole [15] measured 0.77m by 0.5m by 0.48m deep and was filled by [16], a dark grey friable deposit with slag and brick fragments. Posthole [17] measured 0.77m by 0.38m by 0.1m deep and was filled by [18], a dark grey friable deposit with slag and brick fragments. Posthole [23] measured 0.85m by 0.64m by 0.41m deep and was filled by [24], a dark grey friable deposit with slag, brick fragments. Posthole

[20] measured 0.54m by 0.38m by 0.42m and was filled by [19], a dark grey silty sand, which contained fe slag. Posthole [20] truncated postholes [30] and [28], which were filled respectively by [29] and [27], both mid yellowish brown sandy silts. Posthole [32] measured 0.62m by 0.52m by 0.3m deep. It is believed that after the post was removed from [32] the posthole was backfilled with bricks mixed with a dark grey friable fill [31] to become the support for an anvil associated with the last phase of hearth in the north of the original forge building. Elongated cut [22] measured 1.4m by 0.43m by 0.38m deep and was filled by mid yellowish brown sandy clay [21]. Cut [22] was located just to the north of posthole [30] and may represent a robber cut to remove a post. The cuts were sealed by the late 20th floor of the forge building and recorded at c. 96.00m OD. The postholes are thought to represent the supports for an earlier roof as the roof recorded during the standing building survey had not been shortened, as the building had, and therefore must not have been original. It is probable that the original forge building was open fronted to the west and this may explain why the postholes are slightly off centre to the west.

Against the southern wall of the original forge building a compact dark grey floor surface [33] was recorded 96.06m OD. The surface seemed to be made of hearth debris and measured 4.2m by 1.3m by 0.1m deep.

Within the northern extent of the original forge building, brick-on-edge floor [6] was recorded at 96.13m OD (Fig. 4). The brick floor abutted footing [7] and measured 2.72m by 4.28m by 0.15m deep. The floor was truncated by several recent cuts that had been filled with concrete patches, notably the base of the most recent hearth just to the south of the floor. Abutting the floor from the east was a recent concrete and brick footing [2].

To the south of brick floor [6] brick floor [5] was recorded at 96.14m OD. The brick floor was laid with the bricks flat, rather than on end as with floor [6], and measured 1.55m by 1.1m by 0.1m deep. The floor had been truncated and the remaining area surrounded the wall flue on the original forge buildings east wall, described during the standing building survey (Martin 2005). The floor was sealed by a dark grey deposit [4], which was probably fire debris associated with the flue/fire.

To the southern end of the original forge building brick footing [26] was recorded at a height of 16.05m OD. The footing measured 0.5m wide by 4.1m and was not excavated. The brick footing marks the shortening of the building by 1.8m to the north, presumably to allow vehicular access between the original forge building and the forge cottage.

5.2 The Finds

The majority of the finds from the site consisted of slag and iron working waste associated with the forge, a small number of 19th to 20th century pottery sherds were also collected but as these artefacts gave no additional

information regarding date or function on the site they have been discarded.

One piece of soft hammer struck snapped blade was recovered from the top of the natural deposits and probably dates from the Mesolithic to early Neolithic.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological works on the site added to our understanding of The Forge by showing its original extent, the position of one of the original hearths and the location of postholes probably associated with the original roof and the building's probable open front to the west.

Apart from the presence of a single piece of worked flint no other earlier archaeological features or deposits were recorded at the site.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to James Nayler of JNA Architects for commissioning the archaeological work on behalf of Atrium Park Developments Ltd and especially Mr Chaudry, thanks also to Mr Zab for providing all required assistance throughout the archaeological works.

8 REFERENCES

Martin, Ron 2005 *Balcombe Road Forge, Crawley*

Mills, John 2005 *Scoping for Archaeological Works*

Palmer, Darryl 2005 *Method Statement for Archaeological Works ASE Unpub.*

9 SMR SUMMARY FORM

Site Code	FBC 05					
Identification Name and Address	The Forge Crawley					
County, District &/or Borough	West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 29789 36754					
Geology	The British Geological Survey Map Sheet 302 (Horsham) Solid and Drift Edition (1:50 000 Scale) indicates the site lies on the upper Tunbridge Sand deposits.					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2122					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 18 ^h to 21 st July 2005	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Atrium Ltd					
Project Manager	Darryl Palmer					
Project Supervisor	Jon Sygrave					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South East was commissioned by James Nayler of JNA Architects, on behalf of Atrium Park Developments Ltd., to undertake a archaeological works at The Forge, Balcombe Road, Crawley, West Sussex. The work was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of three new residential dwellings (Planning ref: CR/2005/0103/FUL) between the 18th and 21st July 2005. The concrete floor of the forge was removed under the supervision of a member of ASE staff and archaeological features revealed, recorded and planned. Three trial trenches were then excavated across and adjacent to the site of the forge and any archaeological features observed recorded.</i></p> <p><i>Several archaeological features were recorded on the site, the most notable of which was the original extent of forge, the footings of the original hearth and a series of postholes probably associated with the original roof of the forge.</i></p> <p><i>The underlying natural sandy clay strata was observed at c 95.71m OD.</i></p>						

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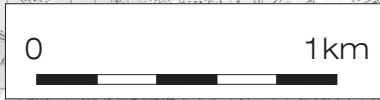
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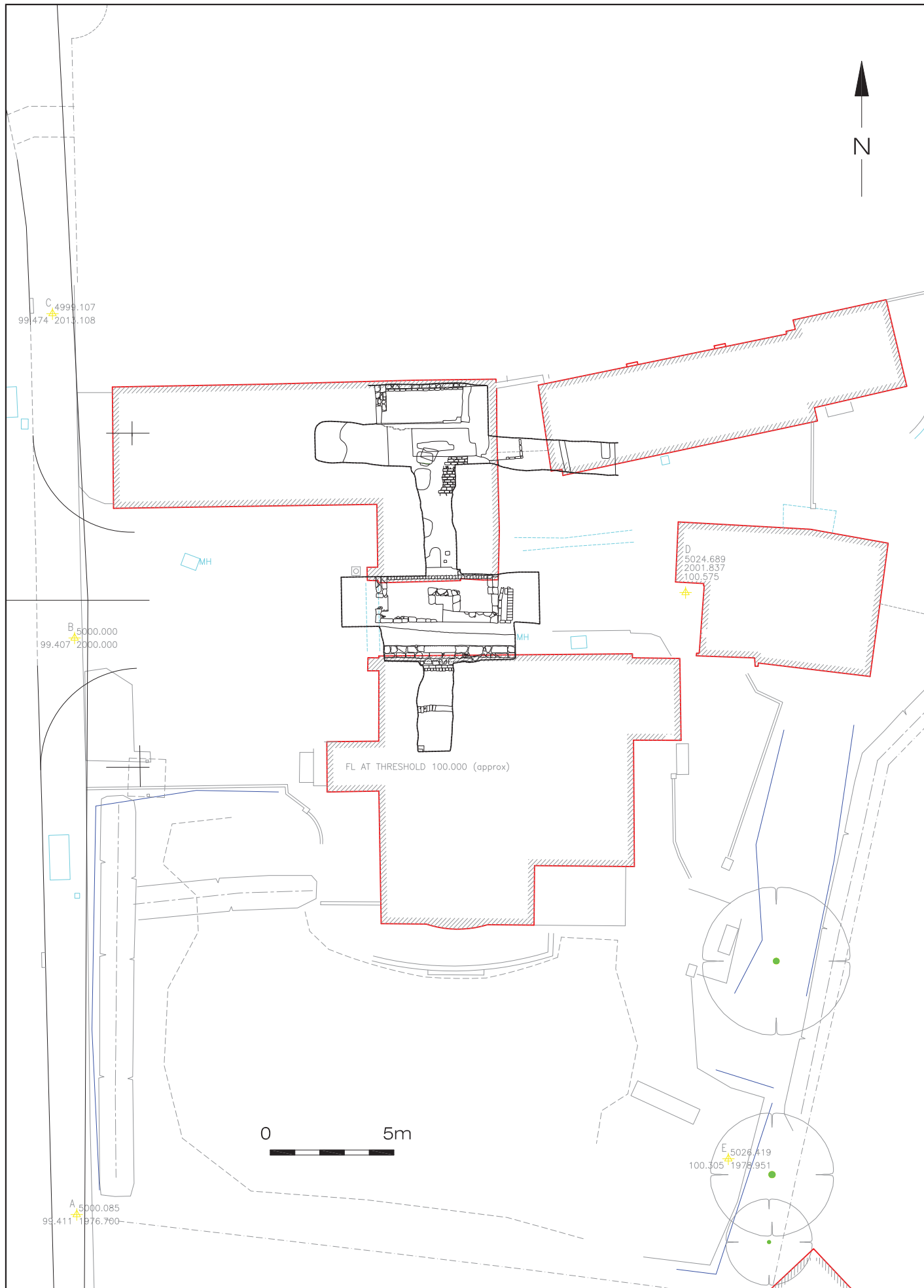
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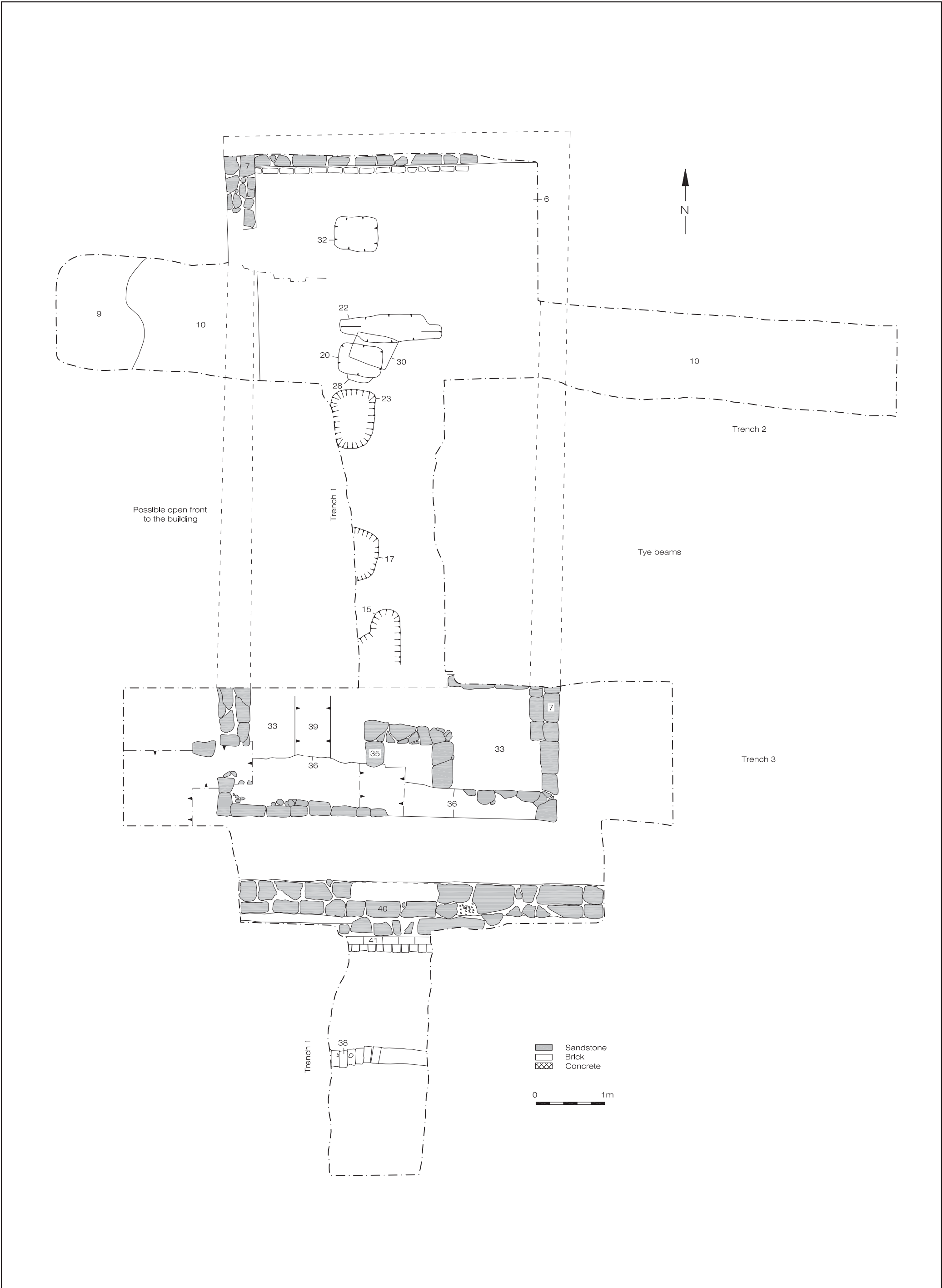
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© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		The Forge, Crawley	Fig. 1
Ref: 2122	Aug 2005	Site Location Plan	

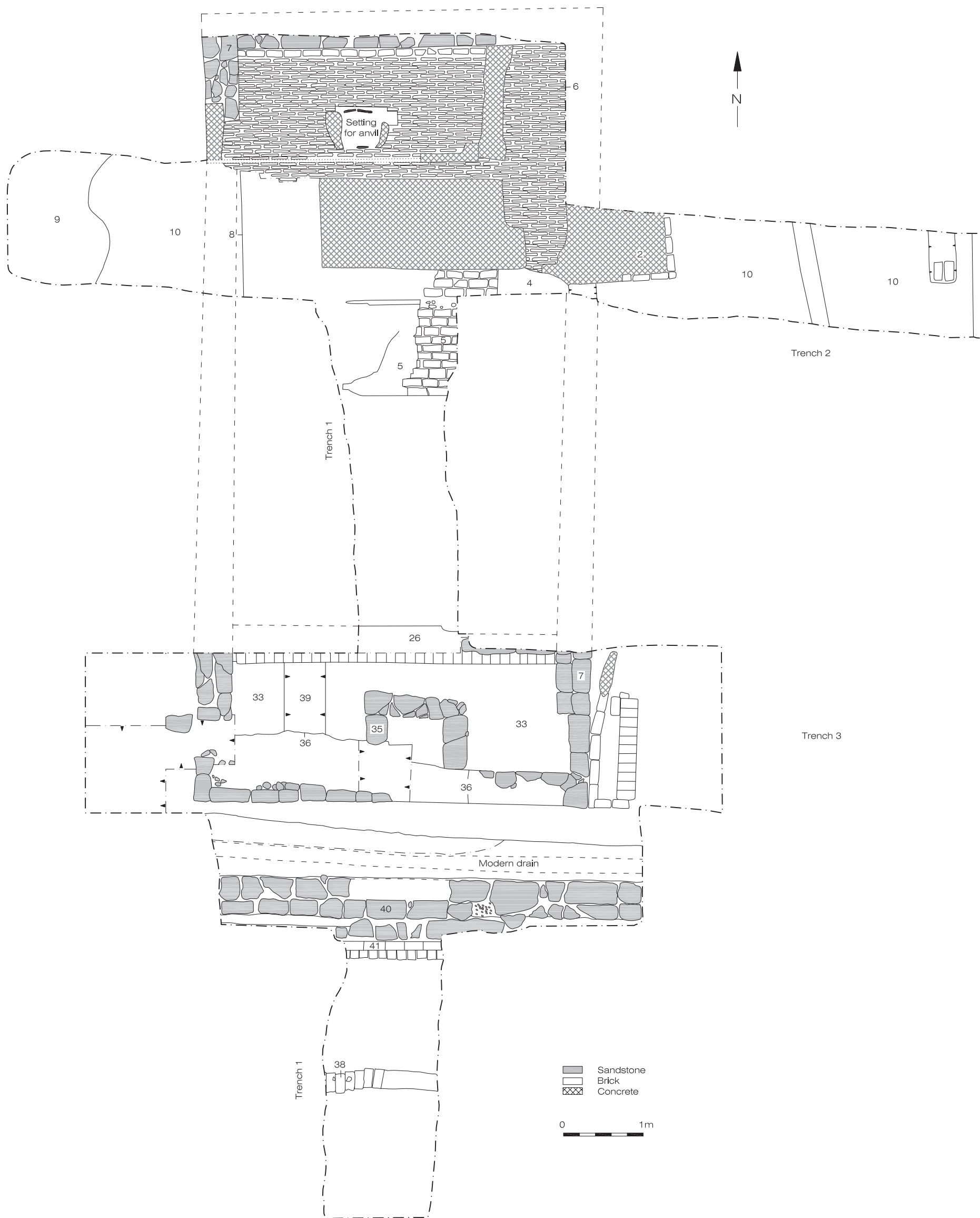
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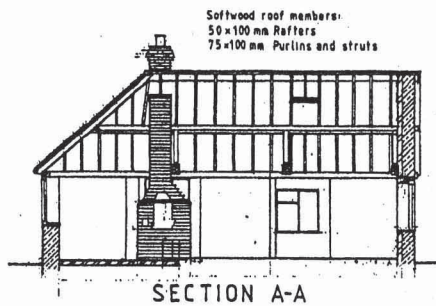


© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		The Forge, Crawley		Fig. 2
Ref: 2122	Aug 2005	Site Plan		

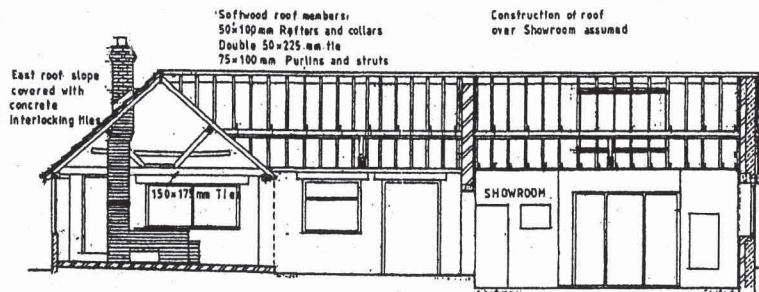


© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		The Forge, Crawley	Fig. 3
Ref: 2122	Aug 2005	Site plan showing early features	

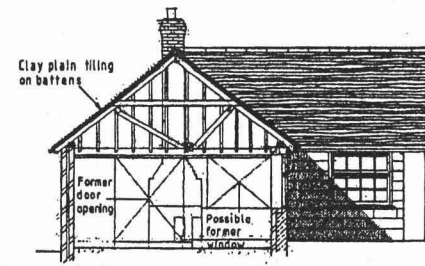




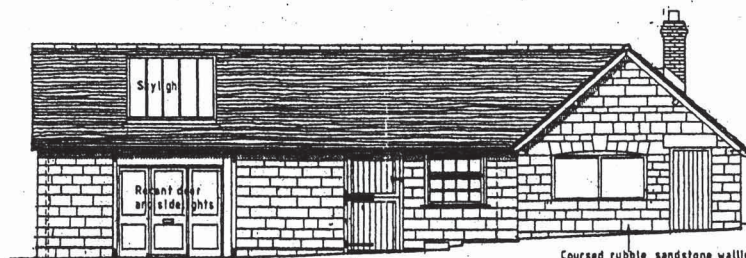
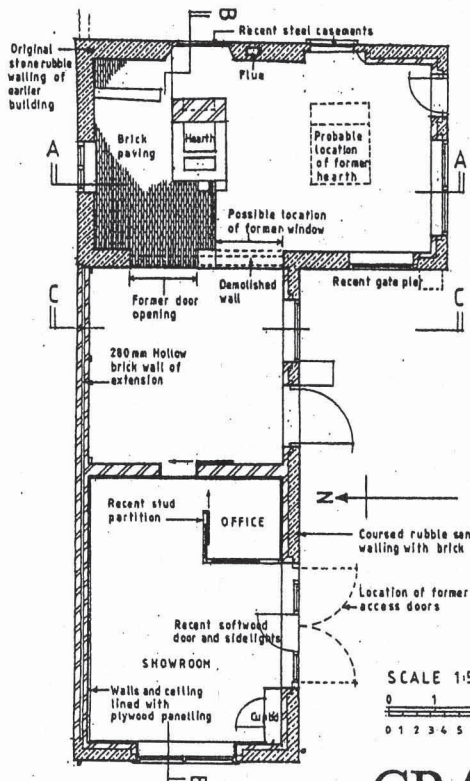
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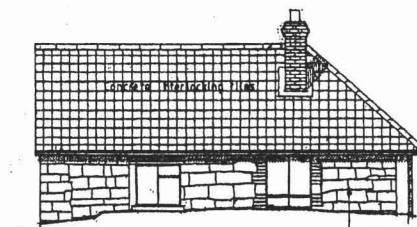
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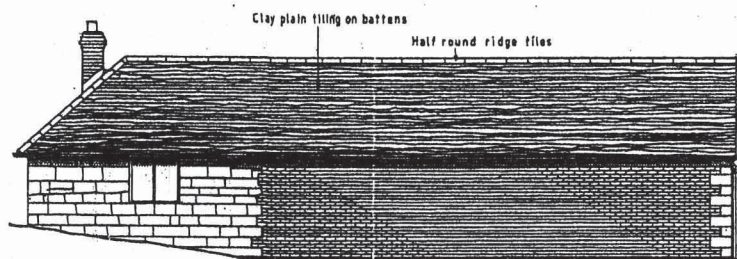
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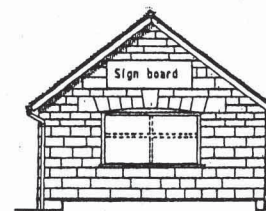
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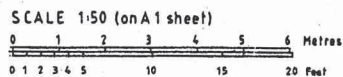
EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



CRAWLEY BALCOMBE ROAD FORGE

Drawn by © R.G.Martin
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