

COOMBE END FARM HOUSE, GORING HEATH, OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA (field work & report)	
NGR: SU 6291 7295	Report No. 3944
District: South Oxfordshire	Site Code: AS 1372
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3944
Signed:	Date: July 2011

98-100 Fore Street, Hertford SG14 1AB

Unit 6, Brunel Business Court, Eastern Way,
Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AJ

Tel 01992 558170

Fax 01992 553359

e-mail info@ascontracts.co.uk

www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk

Registered Number: 4702122



This report is confidential to the client. Archaeological Solutions Ltd accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

CONTENTS

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY

- 1 *INTRODUCTION***
- 2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE***
- 3 *TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS***
- 4 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***
- 5 *METHODOLOGY***
- 6 *DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS***
- 7 *CONFIDENCE RATING***
- 8 *DEPOSIT MODEL***
- 9 *DISCUSSION***
- 10 *DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name		<i>Coombe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire</i>	
<p><i>In December 2010 and January 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Coombe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 6291 7295). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Michael Bolt in compliance with a requirement of the National Trust as a condition of a long term lease on the property. The monitoring was required during extensive works comprising a new biodigester unit with associated soakway and drainage trenches, a new water main and a new turning circle on the drive to the north of the house.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated on the margin of the Thames valley, at the head of the coombe on a level plateau. The farmhouse is Grade II listed and dates to the 17th century although it incorporates numerous later alterations and extensions. The site had a potential for Iron Age/Saxon archaeological remains as well as for medieval/post-medieval remains of the farm.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed undated remains of a road or a yard surface, made ground and a modern ditch.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)		<i>24/12/2010, 11/01, 21/01 and 25/01/2011</i>	
Previous work (Y/N/?)		<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)
P. number		<i>3944</i>	Site code
			<i>AS 1372</i>
Type of project		<i>Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>	
Site status		<i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	
Current land use		<i>Not occupied farmhouse</i>	
Planned development		<i>Adjusting the property for residential use</i>	
Main features (+dates)		<i>Remains of road/yard surface (?modern)</i>	
Significant finds (+dates)		<i>-</i>	
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish		<i>Oxfordshire</i>	<i>South Oxfordshire</i>
			<i>Goring Heath</i>
HER/ SMR for area		<i>Oxfordshire HER</i>	
Post code (if known)		<i>-</i>	
Area of site		<i>-</i>	
NGR		<i>SU 6291 7295</i>	
Height AOD (min/max)		<i>c. 140m AOD</i>	
Project creators			
Brief issued by		<i>National Trust</i>	
Project supervisor/s (PO)		<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>	
Funded by		<i>Mr Michael Bolt</i>	
Full title		<i>Coombe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>	
Authors		<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>	
Report no.		<i>3944</i>	
Date (of report)		<i>July 2011</i>	

COOMBE END FARM HOUSE, GORING HEATH, OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

In December 2010 and January 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Coombe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 6291 7295). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Michael Bolt in compliance with a requirement of the National Trust as a condition of a long term lease on the property. The monitoring was required during extensive works comprising a new biodigester unit with associated soakway and drainage trenches, a new water main and a new turning circle on the drive to the north of the house.

The site is situated on the margin of the Thames valley, at the head of the coombe on a level plateau. The farmhouse is Grade II listed and dates to the 17th century although it incorporates numerous later alterations and extensions. The site had a potential for Iron Age/Saxon archaeological remains as well as for medieval/post-medieval remains of the farm.

In the event the monitoring revealed undated remains of a road or a yard surface, made ground and a modern ditch.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2010 and January 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at Coombe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 6291 7295; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Michael Bolt in compliance with a requirement of the National Trust as a condition of a long term lease on the property. The monitoring was required during extensive works comprising a new biodigester unit with associated soakaways and drainage trenches, a new water main and a new turning circle on the drive to the north of the house.

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the National Trust Archaeologist (dated 21/06/2010), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by AS (dated 20/10/2010). The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008).

1.3 The objectives of the project were:

- to ensure the monitoring of all works affecting the historic fabric of the building with subsequent recording of any exposed fabric through both drawn and photographic survey alongside description and analysis;
- to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the groundworks likely to affect buried archaeological remains, with the adequate recording of any significant archaeological remains thereby revealed;
- to secure the analysis, interpretation, publication (if required), long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.
- to ensure that any new information discovered during this investigation is reflected in the reinterpretation of the historic development of the building with reference to earlier archaeological surveys, particularly Matthews (1989) and Guy (1989).

This report provides for the archaeological monitoring and recording of the groundworks on the site. An historic building report has been completed (Prosser et al 2011)

Planning policy context

1.4 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Coombe End Farm is located c. 3.5km to the south-east of the town of Goring and c. 3km north of Pangbourne, Oxfordshire. The River Thames is located 1km to the south-west of the site. Coombe End Farm comprises a large Grade II Listed farmhouse (currently not suitable for habitation), cottages and outbuildings, a walled garden and a pond. Modern farm buildings are located to the east.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies at the 140m contour on land overlooking the valley of the river Thames to the south-west, at the head of the coombe on a level plateau. Land rises to c. 160m AOD to the north-east where Cray's Pond is located.

3.2 The solid geology of the environs is upper Cretaceous chalk, of the White Chalk Subgroup (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils on the site are those of the Hornbeam 1 association, described as deep fine and coarse loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging with some very flinty sandy and loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). To the west and south of the area, within the Thames valley, are soils of Upton 1 association described as shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Coombe End Farm House is a 17th century and later structure, listed Grade II, at Goring Heath on the Thames terrace. The brief notes that the structure is a brick farmhouse with a tiled roof originally associated with a group of farm building to the east, with a large walled garden to the south and a pond to the east. The house is believed to date from the 17th century, but has been altered in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, including a 1904 extension in the Arts and Crafts Style by CR Ashbee. The house and 213 acres was acquired by the National Trust in the 1930s.

4.2 The history of the property is detailed by Guy (1989) and Matthews (1989), the latter also including an archaeological survey of the area. A 1697 documentary reference refers to the farm, and a 'Combende' is recorded in 1537. Thirteen sites were recorded during the 1989 survey, including 4 listed buildings, and a number of sites deemed as of local importance, and also a large bank and ditch forming the north-western corner of the property boundary, of unknown but possibly Iron Age/Saxon date.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The principal elements monitored were mechanically-excavated trenches for a new water main and drainage, biodigester unit and soakway (Fig. 3). The construction of the new driveway involved no excavation and therefore was not monitored.

5.2 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for

archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 Trench 1 - Trench for a new water main to the north of the house.

<i>Central part of the trench. Sample section 1, facing W (DP 4)</i>		
<i>0.00 = 140.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark, brownish grey, soft, sandy silt
0.10 – 0.40m	L1001	Brownish grey, loose, sandy silt with frequent gravel.
0.40m+	L1002	Natural light to mid yellow, compact, clay with occasional flint gravel.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

6.2 Trench 2 - Two trenches for a new biodigester unit to the west of the property.

<i>S trench. Sample Section 2, facing NW (DP 6)</i>		
<i>0.00 = 139.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18 – 0.32m	L1003	Grey, loose, coarse flint gravel
0.32 2.20m+	L1004	Greyish brown, loose, sandy silt with moderate flint gravel and occasional CBM.
0.50m+	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Description: Remains of a possible road or a yard surface (L1003) were revealed within both trenches for a new biodigester unit. A substantial deposit of made ground (L1004) was also recorded.

L1003 (0.20m thick) was a layer of a grey, loose, coarse flint gravel. It was present directly below the topsoil and above Made Ground L1004.

Within the southern trench for a new biodigester unit, an accumulation of greyish brown, loose, sandy silt with moderate flint gravel and occasional CBM (L1004) was present. It was 2.20m+ thick and was located above the natural south-western slope of that part of the site. L1004 may have been made ground providing a level area or plateau.

6.3 Trench 3 - Trenches for new drainage pipes to the south and east of the house.

<i>Sample Section 3, S foundation trench, E part, facing N (DP 11)</i> <i>0.00 = 139.60m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.14 – 0.46m	L1005	Subsoil. Light grey, compact, sandy clay
0.46m+	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample Section 4, W foundation trench, central part, facing E (DP 12)</i> <i>0.00 = 137.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18 – 0.34m	L1005	Subsoil. Light grey, compact, sandy clay
0.34m+	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample Section 5, E trench, N part, facing W (DP 15)</i> <i>0.00 = c. 140.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1006	Concrete floor.
0.06 – 0.17m	L1007	Modern made ground. Dark grey, loose, clayey silt.
0.17m+	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample Section 6, E trench, central part, facing W (DP 16)</i> <i>0.00 = 140.00m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1007	Made ground. As above.
0.06 – 0.45m+	L1009	Fill of F1008. Mid to dark grey, friable, clayey silt.

Description: Ditch F1008 was revealed in the central part of the eastern trench.

F1008 was a linear feature (L1.50m+ x W0.90m x D0.40m+) present within the central part of the eastern drainage trench (DP 16) and aligned north-west/south-east. It had nearly vertical sides. It contained a single fill, L1009, a mid to dark grey, friable, clayey silt. No finds were present. The ditch was likely a modern drainage or other service trench for the house.

6.4 Trench 4 - Trench for drainage to the north of the house and to the west of Trench 1.

<i>Sample Section 7</i> <i>0.00 = 140.33m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1000	Topsoil. As Section 1
0.10 – 0.34m	L1001	Brownish grey, loose, sandy silt with frequent gravel.
0.34m+	L1002	Natural light to mid yellow, compact, clay with occasional flint gravel.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

<i>Sample Section 8</i> <i>0.00 = 139.85m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. As Section 1.
0.10 – 0.41m	L1001	Brownish grey, loose, sandy silt with frequent gravel.
0.41m+	L1002	Natural light to mid yellow, compact, clay with occasional flint gravel.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a dark, brownish grey, soft, sandy silt (0.10 – 0.20m thick). Within the area to the south of the house it overlay Subsoil L1005, a light grey, compact, sandy clay (0.10 – 0.30m thick). The remaining area around the house was characterised by the presence of fairly modern deposits of made ground (0.10 – 0.35m thick).

8.2 The natural clay, L1002, was present at 0.20 – 0.40m below existing ground level and comprised a light to mid yellow, compact, clay with occasional flint gravel.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Iron Age, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeology.

9.2 In the event the monitoring revealed the remains of what could be a road or a yard surface (L1003). The surface is undated although it appeared to be modern. The topsoil directly overlay the possible road or yard surface. Little evidence of previous truncation appeared to have taken place except in the south-eastern part of the site where a significant accumulation of made ground was present. The made ground likely provided an additional level area for the plateau on which the farm is situated. No residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site with the National Trust. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Michael Bolt for his co-operation and funding of the project.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Gary Marshall of National Trust.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey (BGS), 1978, *Legend for the 1:625,000 Geological map of the United Kingdom (solid geology)*: London. Mansfield

English Heritage (London Region), 1998, *Archaeological Guidance Paper No 3; Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London*

Guy, G., 1989, *The National Trust Vernacular Buildings Survey, Coombe End Farmhouse*. National Trust.

Institute of Field Archaeologists (now Institute for Archaeologists), 1994 (revised 2008), *Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief*. IfA Reading.

Matthews, W. L., 1989, *The National Trust Survey, Coombe End Farm*. National Trust.

Prosser, I., Smith, L., & Higgs, K. *Combe End Farm House, Goring Heath, Oxfordshire. Historic Building Recording*. AS Report No. 3875

Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW), 1983, *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*. SSEW, Harpenden.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Coombe End Farm House. View NE.



DP 2. Area to the north of the house. View SE.



DP 3. Water main trench to the north of the house. View NNE.



DP 4. Water main trench to the north of the house. Sample section. View W.



DP 5. Two trenches for a biodigester unit. View NE.



DP 6. S trench for a biodigester unit. View NW.



DP 7. S trench for a biodigester unit. View E.



DP 8. S trench for a biodigester unit. Sample section. View SE.



DP 9. Drainage trench to the south of the house. View E.



DP 10. Drainage trench to the south of the house. View N.



DP 11. Drainage trench to the south of the house, E part. Sample section. View S.



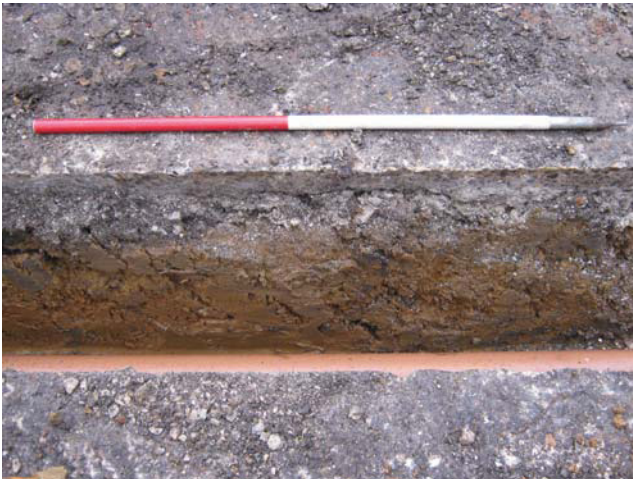
DP 12. Drainage trench to the south of the house, N part. Sample section. View E.



DP 13. Drainage trench to the east of the house. View SSW.



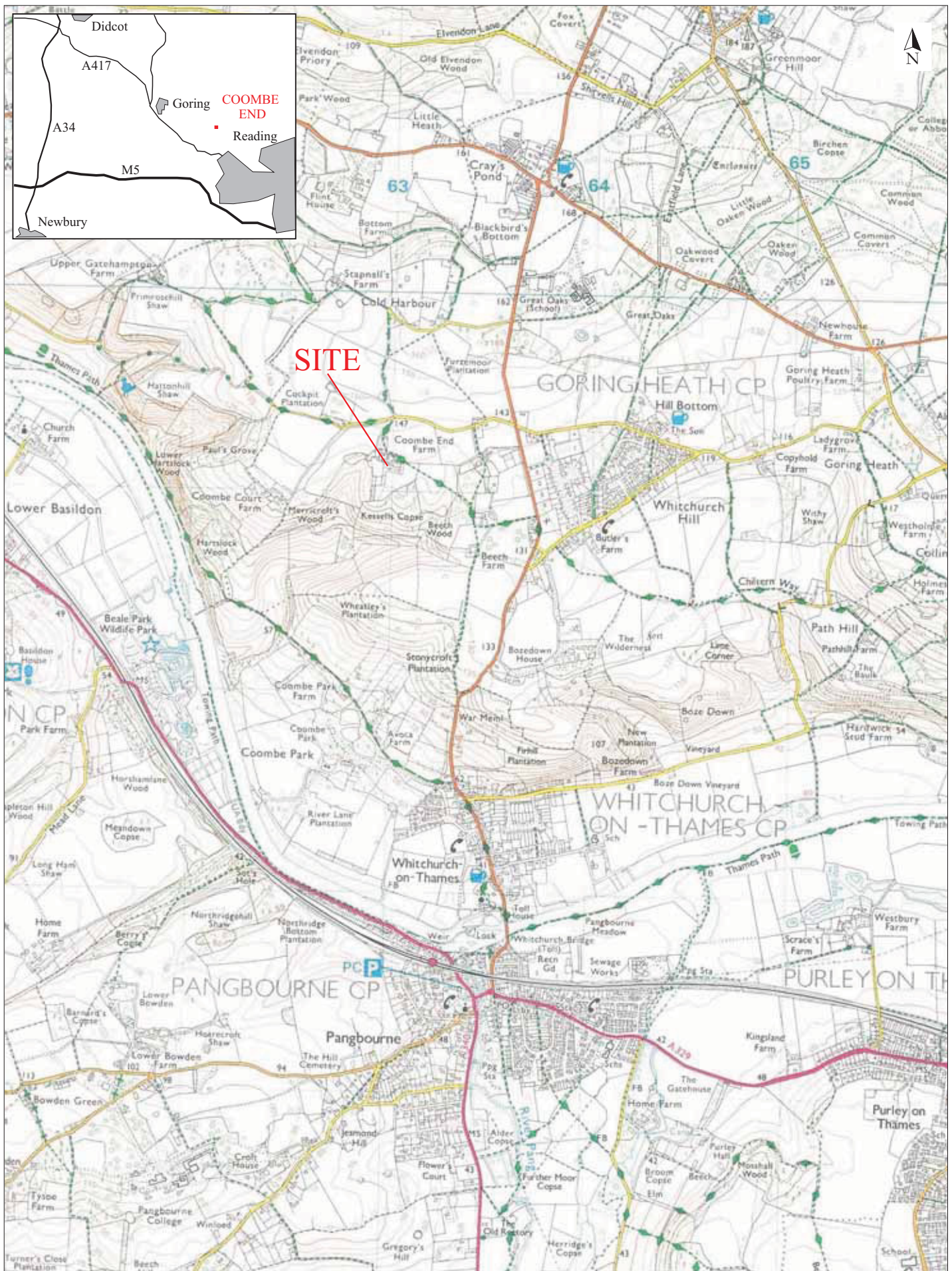
DP 14. Drainage trench to the east of the house. View NNE.



DP 15. Drainage trench to the east of the house, N part. Sample section View ESE.

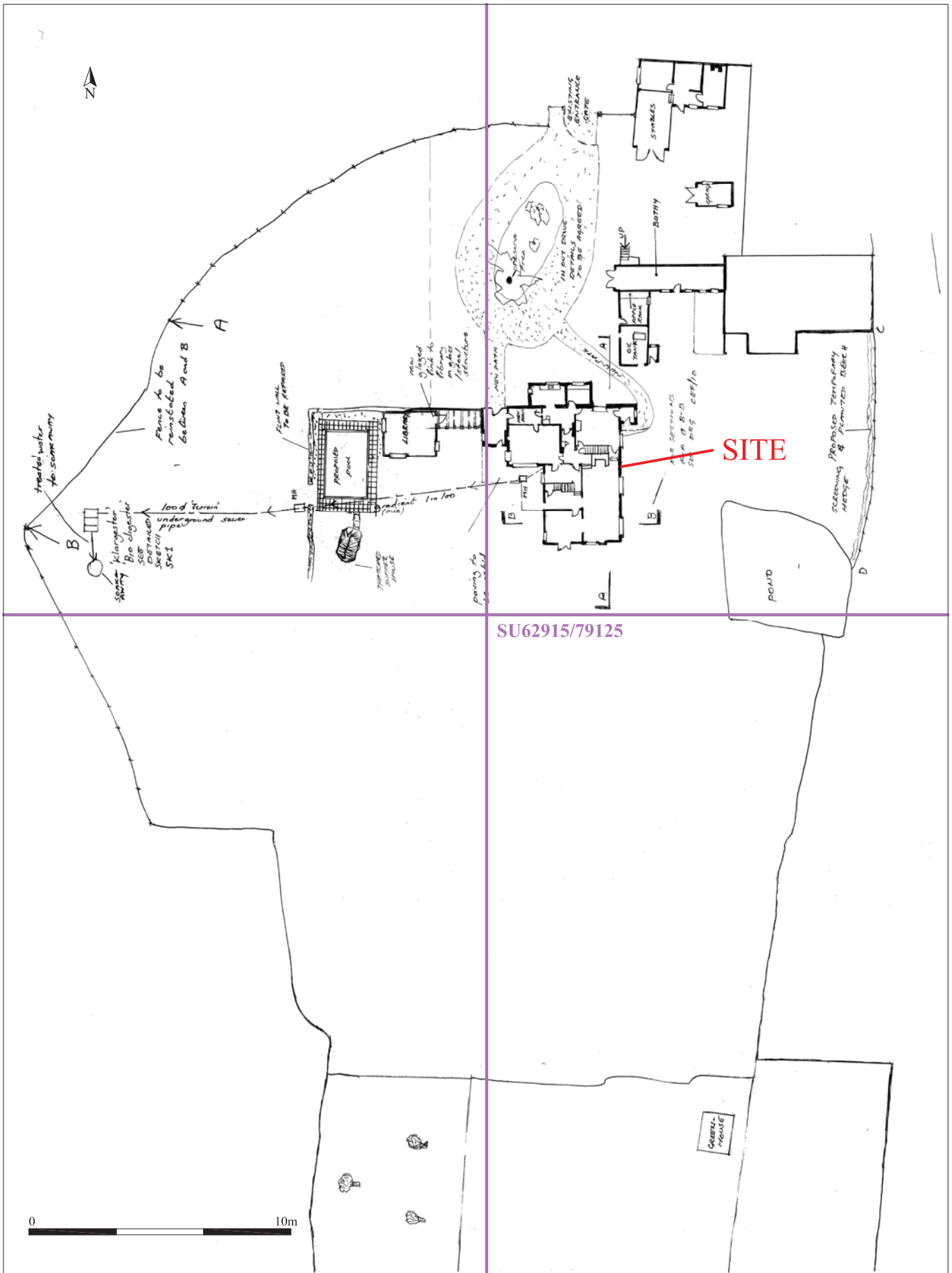


DP 16. Drainage trench to the east of the house, S part. Sample section View ESE.



Reproduced from the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

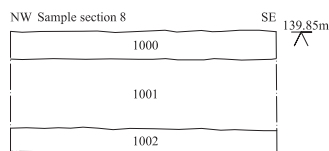
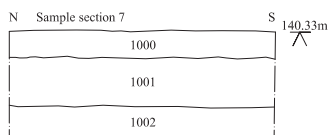
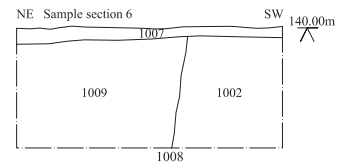
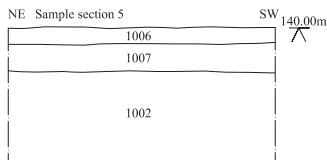
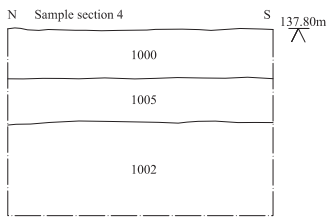
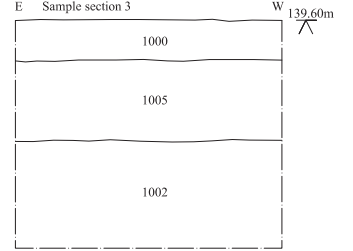
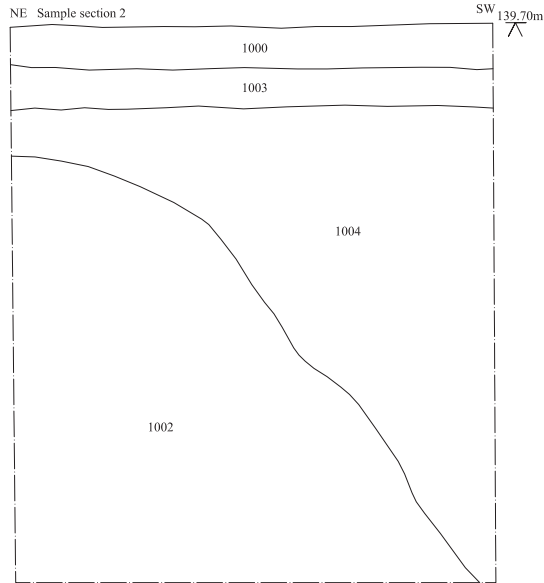
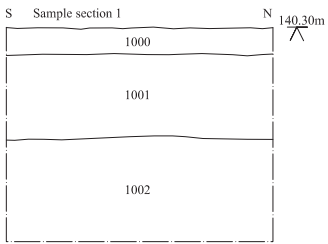
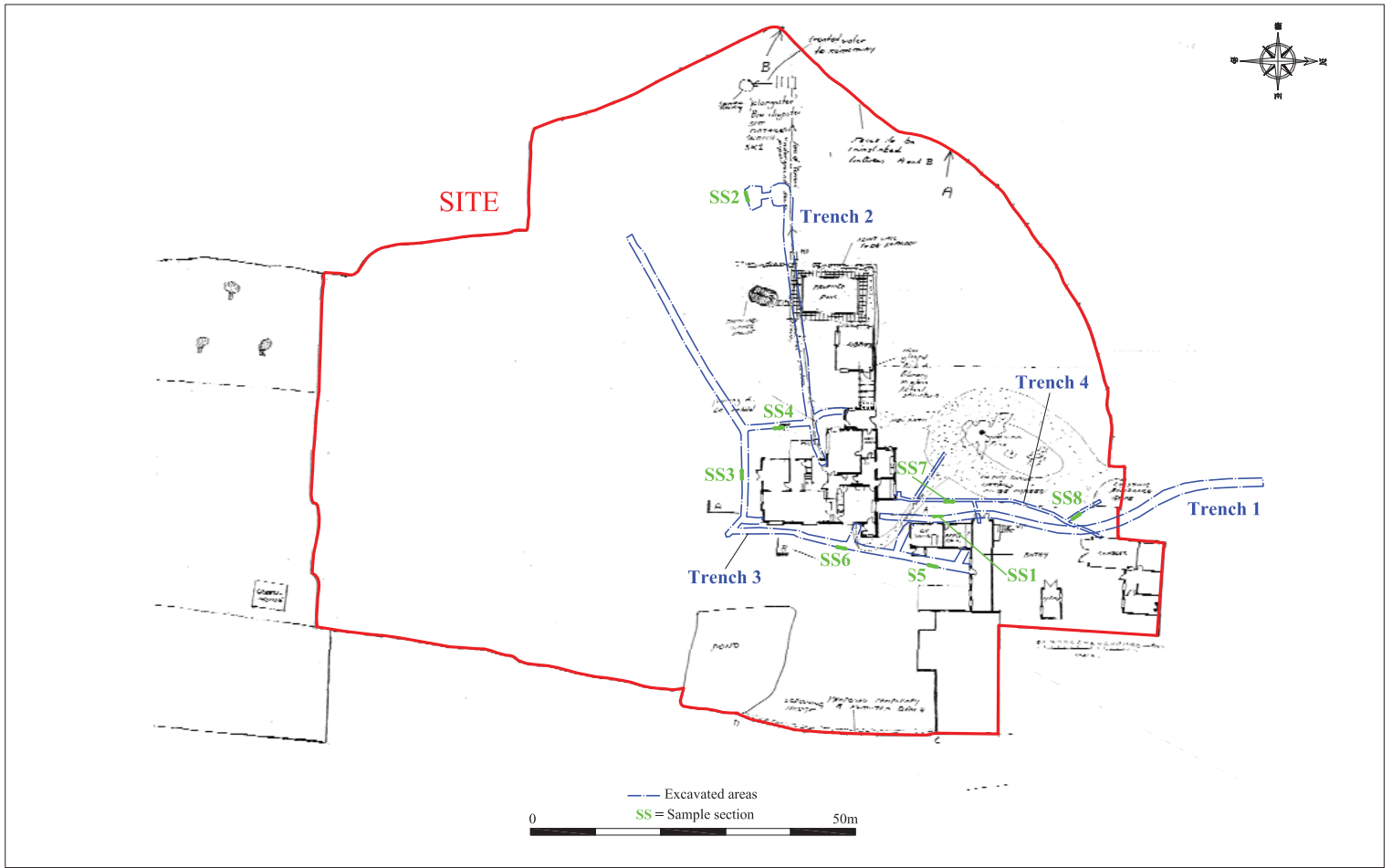


SU62915/79125

Archaeological Solutions Ltd

Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:600 at A4



Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 3 Sections and section location plan
 Scale 1:20 and 1:750 at A3