
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**HOME CLOSE FARM, NORTH CRAY ROAD,
BEXLEY, DA5 2NH**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP & RECORD

Authors:	Kate Higgs BA (Desk-based assessment) Adam Dyson (Fieldwork and report) Lisa Smith (Fieldwork)
NGR: TQ 4928 7245	Report No: 3855
Borough: Bexley	Site Code: HOM 11
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4265
Signed:	Date: June 2011

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Archaeological Solutions Ltd, 98-100 Fore Street, Hertford, SG14 1AB.
Tel: 01992 558170 Fax: 01992 553359 E-mail: info@ascontracts.co.uk
Web: www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk
Registered Number: 4702122

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OASIS SUMMARY

Project name	<i>Home Close Farm, North Cray Road, Bexley, DA5 3NH</i>		
<p><i>In June 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological strip, map and record investigation at Home Close Farm, North Cray Road, Bexley, Greater London. Archaeological monitoring was carried out during all groundworks associated with the construction of a new two storey side extension. Monitored groundworks included the excavation of trial holes at the proposed locations of piled concrete foundations; and the more general ground reduction across the footprint of the extension. The archaeological investigation was advised by the English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (EH GLAAS).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within an area of archaeological potential; prehistoric, roman and medieval archaeology is known from the area.</i></p> <p><i>The investigation did not reveal any archaeological remains. This was due to the groundworks not exceeding the depth of the modern topsoil, and the small size of the trial holes.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	15 th and 24 th June 2011		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	4265	Site code	HOM 11
Type of project	Archaeological strip, map & record		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Garden		
Planned development	Two-storey side extension		
Main features (+dates)	None		
Significant finds (+dates)	None		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Greater London	Bexley	Bexley
HER/ SMR for area	GLHER		
Post code (if known)	DA5 2NH		
Area of site	c. 200 m ²		
NGR	TQ 4928 7245		
Height AOD	c. 38m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	EH GLAAS		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Adam Dyson, Lisa Smith		
Funded by	Mrs Horgan		
Full title	<i>Home Close Farm, North Cray Road, Bexley, DA5 3NH: archaeological strip, map & record</i>		
Authors	<i>Higgs, K. Dyson, A. Smith, L</i>		
Report no.	3855		
Date (of report)	June 2011		

HOME CLOSE FARM, NORTH CRAY ROAD, BEXLEY, DA5 2NH ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP & RECORD

SUMMARY

In June 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological strip, map and record investigation at Home Close Farm, North Cray Road, Bexley, Greater London. Archaeological monitoring was carried out during all groundworks associated with the construction of a new two-storey side extension. Monitored groundworks included the excavation of trial holes at the proposed locations of piled concrete foundations, and the more general ground reduction across the footprint of the extension. The archaeological investigation undertaken as advised by the English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (EH GLAAS).

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential; prehistoric, Roman and medieval archaeology is known from the area.

The monitoring did not reveal any archaeological remains. This was due to the groundworks not exceeding the depth of the modern topsoil, and also the small size of the trial holes.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted a programme of archaeological strip, map and record of land at Home Close Farm, North Cray Road, Bexley (LB Hounslow; NGR TQ 20237 78498; Figs. 1 & 2). The archaeological strip, map and record exercise was carried out during the groundworks associated with the construction of a proposed two-storey side extension to Home Close Farm. It was undertaken in response to a planning condition on approval for the extension (Bexley Planning Ref. 09/00305/F), as advised by English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (EH GLAAS; Archaeological Advisors to LB Bexley).

1.2 The archaeological strip, map and record exercise was undertaken according to a specification (written scheme of investigation) prepared by AS (dated February 8th 2011), approved by EH GLAAS. It was carried out according to the English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service's (EH GLAAS) *Archaeological Guidance Papers* (AGPs, revised 1998), in particular *Archaeological Guidance Paper No 3; Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London* and *No 5; Evaluations*. The project was also conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (revised 2008).

Planning context

1.3 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 The site of Home Close Farm is situated between North Cray and Bexley, both of which lie within the London Borough of Bexley and approximately 10km to the east-south-east of the City of London (Fig. 1). The south-eastern extent of Bexley village lies 1km to the north of the site, whilst the village of North Cray is located 600m to the south-west. The site is set back 200m from the eastern frontage of the A223 or North Cray Road, which runs between Bexley and Sidcup. Despite its location within Greater London, the immediate surroundings of the site have retained their predominantly rural character. The site is surrounded by undeveloped agricultural land associated with Home Close Farm and Mount Mascall Farm 120m to the north, whilst to the east lies the extensive Joyden's Wood. The site comprises Home Close Farmhouse and a range of other residential/agricultural buildings.

2.2 The site is located at c. 38m AOD on a relatively varied relief with the surrounding land sloping down to the north and north-west (Fig. 1). The River Cray flows on a roughly south-west to north-eastern alignment 450m to the north-west of the site. Bexley lies within the London Basin, which covers London and majority of south-eastern England (BGS 1978). The solid geology of the basin consists of Eocene London Clay overlain by gravels of the Blackheath Beds, whilst river alluvium deposits are known in proximity to the River Cray (Wessex Archaeology 2008). The soils of the Bexley area remain unsurveyed given that they lie within an urban area (SSEW 1983), and the area has not been subject to extensive previous archaeological investigation.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Prehistoric & Romano-British

3.1.1 The prehistory of Greater London is well-documented and the London Borough of Bexley includes substantial concentrations of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic finds, primarily on the chalk and alluvium geology close to the River Cray or other tributaries. However, the only recorded prehistoric findspot recorded in proximity to the site comprises six flint artefacts of Mesolithic date found 220m to the south-west of the site (GLHER MLO8433). The wider Bexley area has revealed more substantial remains including a late Mesolithic/early Neolithic hearth found in Bexley village (Bishop 2003, 255 – 271), and a number of Neolithic finds recorded to the north at Crayford (MoLAS 2000). The Bronze and Iron Ages are poorly represented in the Bexley area, although a mid to late Iron Age was uncovered in the 1930s in the Crayford area (*ibid.*).

3.1.2 Archaeological evidence for the Romano-British period is virtually absent in the vicinity of the site. Much of the Romano-British evidence from the London Borough of Bexley is focussed around the River Cray and Watling Street. The present day line of the A207 London Road, which runs west-north-west to east-south-eastwards 2.8km to the north of the site, follows the course of the main Watling Street Roman road from London to Dover (Weinreb & Hibbert, 1983, 850). There are no recorded Romano-British findspots recorded in the area surrounding the site.

3.2 Anglo-Saxon & medieval

3.2.1 Although it is likely that *Londinium* was occupied after the Roman abandonment, evidence suggests that Anglo-Saxon settlement did not become prominent until the 7th century. There is very little evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation in area of the site, and no recorded findspots, and the main focus of Saxon activity in the area appears to have been Crayford situated where Watling Street crossed the River Cray 4km to the north-east of the site (Wessex Archaeology 2008). The manor of Bexley is listed in the Domesday Book as *Bix* and mentions a church and three watermills in the area (Williams & Martin 2002).

3.2.2 The 11th century Domesday Book also reveals that the small settlement of North Cray was given to Bishop Odo (c.1030 – 1097), the half brother of William the Conqueror, along with Ruxley, which lies 2.3km to the south-west of the site. In the 12th century, both Ruxley and North Cray came into the possession of the Rokesle family (Ideal Homes website), whilst St. Mary's church in Bexley is also 12th century in date (Weinreb & Hibbert, 1983, 64). The only recorded medieval findspot recorded in proximity to the site comprises a rectangular possible outhouse building found on North Cray Road and 500m to the west-south-west of the site, which has been dated to c. 1250 – 1300 (GLHER MLO23327).

3.3 Post-medieval & later

3.3.1 In the post-medieval period, the settlement of North Cray developed as a private estate for the wealthy keen to escape the bustle of London. By the early 18th century the area was dominated by large houses such as North Cray Place, Loring Hall and Vale Mascal, any of which fronted onto the River Cray (Ideal Homes website). Significant development of Bexley occurred in the mid 19th century following the construction of South East Railway's Dartford loop and Bexley railway station in 1866, with further urban sprawl dating from the 20th century and post World War II period in particular. The post-medieval period is represented in the immediate area of the site by the Jacobean house of Mount Mascal (GLHER MLO14782), a jettied crown post roof structure dated c. 1575 found during the construction of North Cray Road (GLHER MLO10837) and a post box along North Cray Road (GLHER MLO66847).

3.4 The site

3.4.1 Relatively little is known about the site and no historic documents concerning Home Close Farm could be found in either the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) or the Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre (BLSAC). None of the standing buildings within the Home Close Farm complex are listed, yet three separate structures are recorded by the GLHER database as being on the London Borough of Bexley Locally Listed Buildings Database and thus of being of local interest. The farmhouse at Home Close Farm is described as a 19th century house forming the southern side of a cobbled courtyard, with a three bay plan and two storeys (GLHER MLO100681). It was added to the Bexley local list on the basis that it a good local example of a 19th century detached house and includes design qualities and building materials typical of the local area.

3.4.2 To the south of the Home Close Farm complex lie 19th - 20th century timber framed and weather boarded farm outbuildings, which are also recorded on the Bexley Locally Listed Buildings Database (GLHER MLO100953). Two further outbuildings to the north-east of the farm complex were probably associated originally with Mount Mascal Farm further to the north (GLHER MLO100682). The local listing for the latter two outbuildings reveals that a former open cart shed dated to 1824 was adapted before 1947 for residential use. The neighbouring coach house is of similar proportions and probably similar date, and both were added to the local list as they have considerable historic interest as part of the Mount Mascal estate.

3.4.3 Historic cartographic sources confirm that Home Close Farm formed part of the Mount Mascal estate until at least the mid 20th century. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 reveals that Home Close Farm was labelled only as part of Mount Mascal and presumably comprised its home farm (Fig. 3). The complex of five local listed structures known to lie within Home Close Farm was extant by the late 19th century. The 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, which

dates to 1938, also describes the site as part of the wider Mount Mascal (Fig. 4). The name Home Close Farm is thus thought to be modern in date and was in use by 1950 when a proposed new drive from North Cray Road to "Home Close Farm" was planned (BLSAC Ref. LASC/DC/4/3/544). In 1973 Home Close Farm was also the subject of alterations to existing farm building to form a private residence (BLSAC Ref. LABX/DC/4/1/6661).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The archaeological investigation comprised the observation of all intrusive activity associated with the ground works, inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using pro forma recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for archaeological finds.

4.2 The monitoring and recording specifically encompassed the observation of six trial holes excavated at the proposed locations of piled concrete foundations, and shallow ground reduction across the footprint of the extension (c.0.30m deep). The development used piled concrete foundations due to the presence of a large tree immediately adjacent to the proposed site. The trial holes were dug to investigate the proposed locations of the piles in order to ensure no large roots were creating an obstruction. The presence of this tree also led to the requirement for all excavation being by hand.

5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS Fig. 5

5.1 Site visit 14th June 2011

The site was visited on the above date for the observation of trial holes excavated at the proposed locations of piled concrete foundations. These were excavated by hand in order to investigate the locations to ensure that large tree roots would not be disturbed. Six trial holes were excavated to depths ranging from 0.24m to 0.56m. The excavation did not exceed the depth of the current topsoil or the heavily disturbed deposits associated with the extensive rooting from the adjacent tree.

5.2 Site visit 24th June 2011

The site was visited on the above date for the monitoring of ground reduction across the footprint of the proposed extension. The excavation was carried out

by hand, to a maximum depth of 0.30m. Two sample sections were recorded of the stratigraphy, the results of which are tabulated below.

Sample Section 1 DP2

<i>South side, north facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.34m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m+	L1000	Topsoil. Dark grey brown, moderately compact, sandy silt.

Sample Section 2 DP3

<i>North side, north facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.46m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.16m+	L1000	Topsoil. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

6.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of a archaeological features or finds within the confines of the groundworks.

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 The uppermost layer was Topsoil L1000, a dark grey brown, moderately, compact sandy silt (0.30m+ thick). It contained a small quantity of modern CBM rubble, which together with the general topography of the site, suggests that it had suffered some disturbance from general garden landscaping. This topsoil deposit was the lowest deposit encountered during the investigation.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Due to the site's location within an area of archaeological potential, the investigation had the potential to identify evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval archaeology. However, due to the groundworks comprising piled concrete foundations and a shallow concrete slab, excavation did not reach a depth at which archaeological remains, if present, would be revealed.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site at London Archaeological Archive and Resource Centre (LAARC). The archive will

be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Mrs Horgan of Home Close Farm for funding the works. AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the building contractor Solid Oak and Mr Mark Mountjoy of Dircon Ltd.

AS also gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Ms. Krysia Truscoe of the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER).

AS would also like to thank Mr Mark Stevenson of English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for his assistance and advice.

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(all consulted 16th March 2011)

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<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

Historical Directories website;
<http://www.historicaldirectories.org>

Ideal Homes website;
<http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/bexley/assets/histories/north-cray>

APPENDIX 1

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE (GLHER)

The following sites are those that lie within the assessment area (c. 500m radius of the site). The table has been compiled from data held by the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER). The locations of the sites are shown in Fig. 3. Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Section 3.

GLHER	NGR TQ	Description
<i>Prehistoric (to AD 43)</i>		
MLO8433	491 723	Six flint artefacts of Mesolithic date comprising blades, flakes and a core rejuvenator
<i>Medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)</i>		
MLO23327	4881 7229	Rectangular possible outhouse building c. 1250 – 1300 with flint pebble footings and pottery found on North Cray Road
<i>Post-medieval & Later (AD 1540 – present)</i>		
MLO14782	4925 7252	Mount Mascal was a large Jacobean house built or rebuilt in the early 1600s by a member of the Cooke family of Lesnes, which stood until 1957 on the hillside overlooking North Cray Rd
MLO66847	4930 7280	Post-medieval post box on North Cray Road
MLO10837	4881 722	North Cray Road was the site of a jettied crown post roof structure comprising 4 bays and built c.1575 that was re erected at Weald and Downland Museum
MLO100953	49305 72409	To the south of Home Close Farm on the North Cray Road are 19 th 20 th century timber framed and weatherboarded farm outbuildings
MLO100681	4931 7245	A 19th century house is located at Home Close Farm, and forms the southern side of a cobbled courtyard
MLO100682	4930 7247	Two outbuildings, probably associated originally with Mount Mascal, now linked with Home Close Farm

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
General view of the site. Looking north east.



2
Sample Section 1. Looking south.



3
Sample Section 2. Looking north.



4
Post excavation view of site. Looking west.

7

8

9

10

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12

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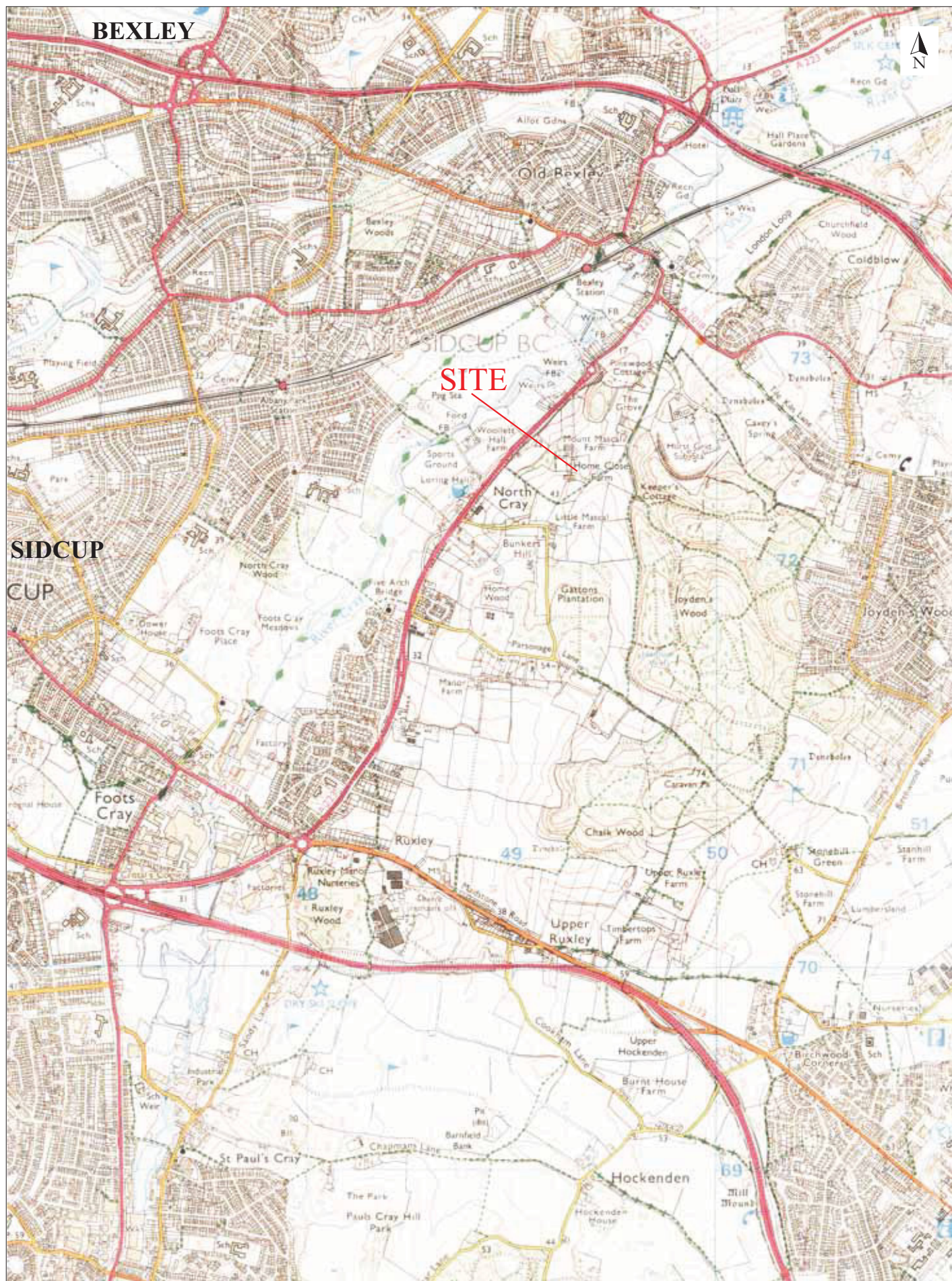
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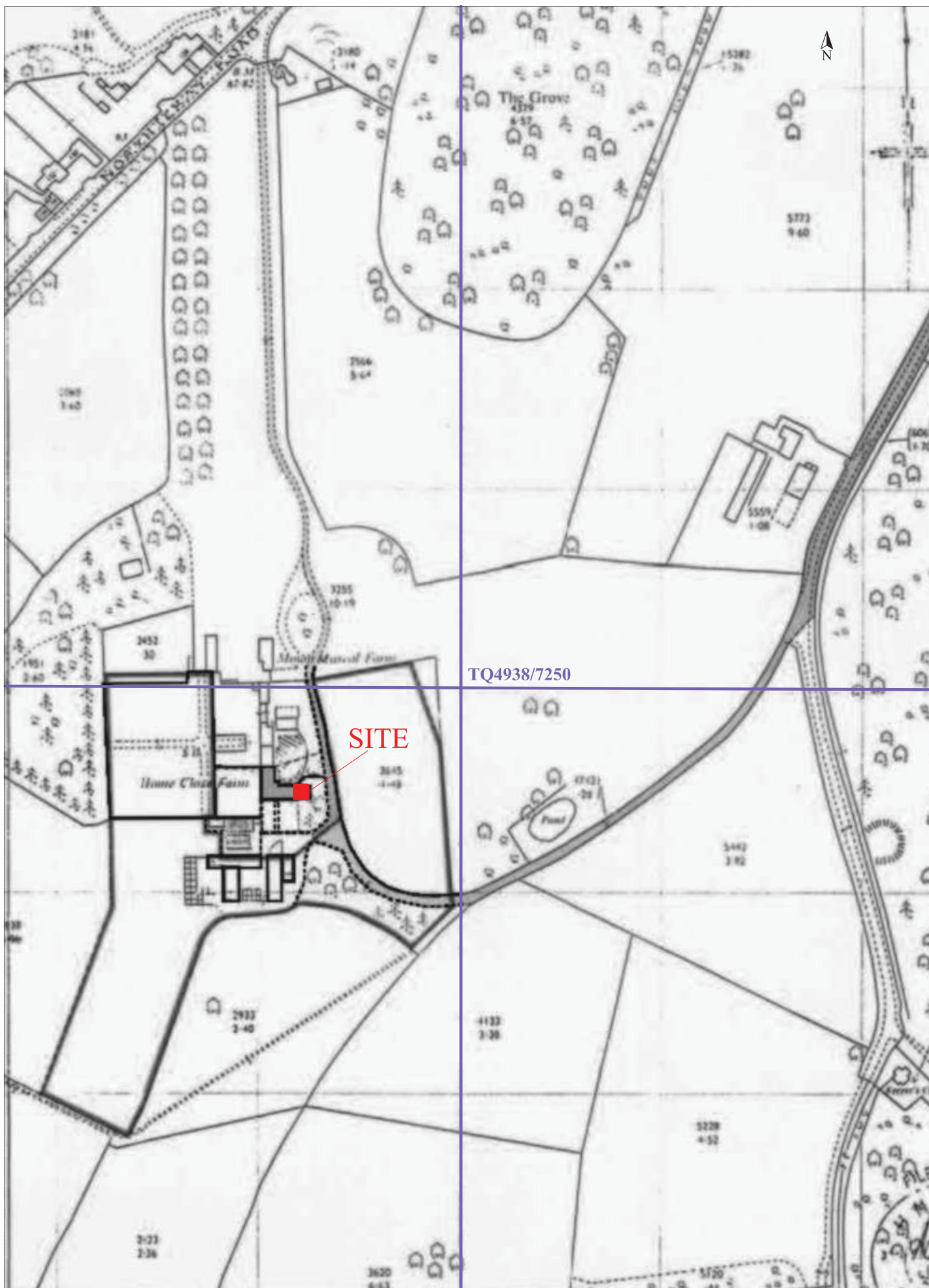
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12



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

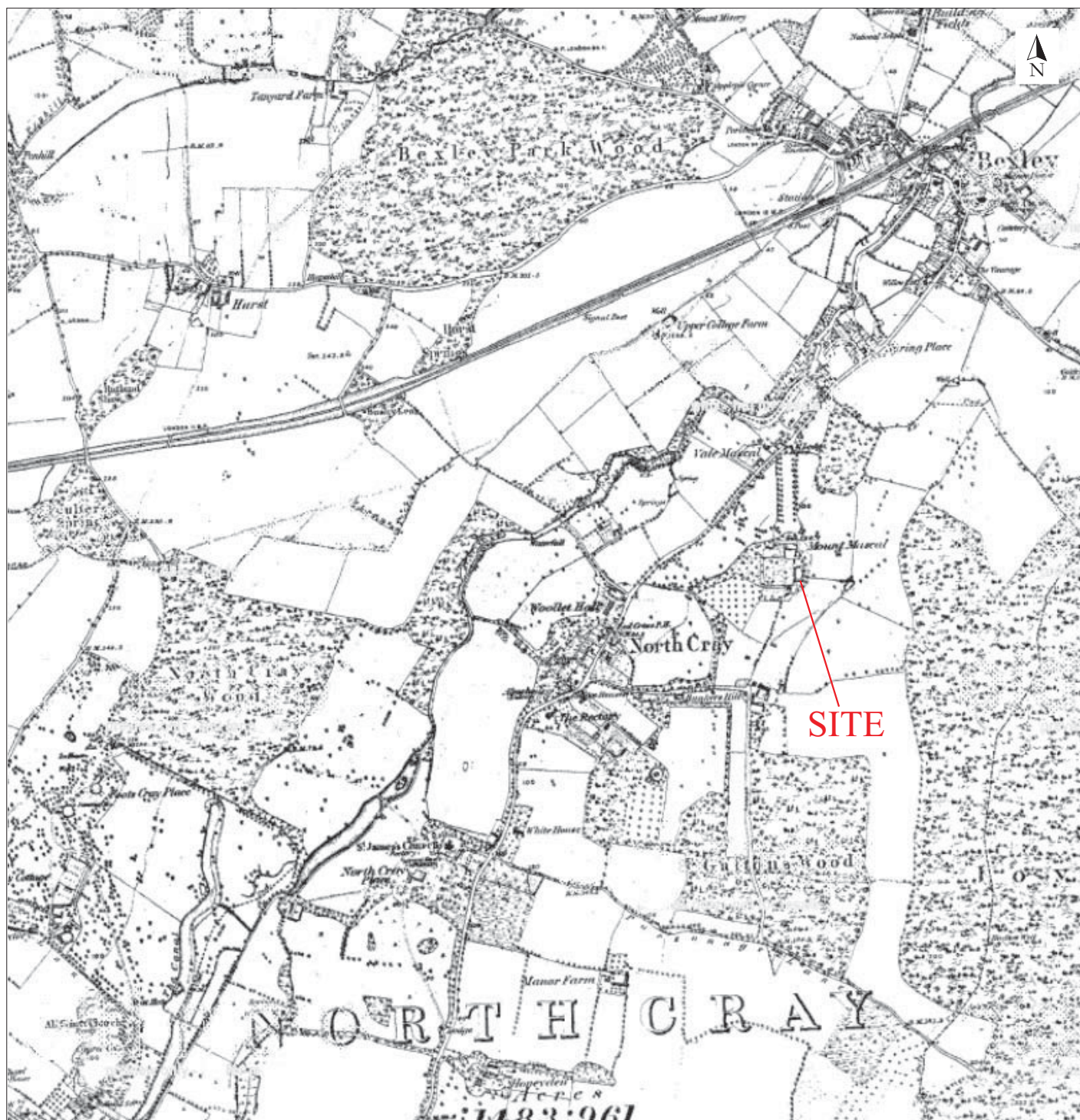


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:2500 at A4

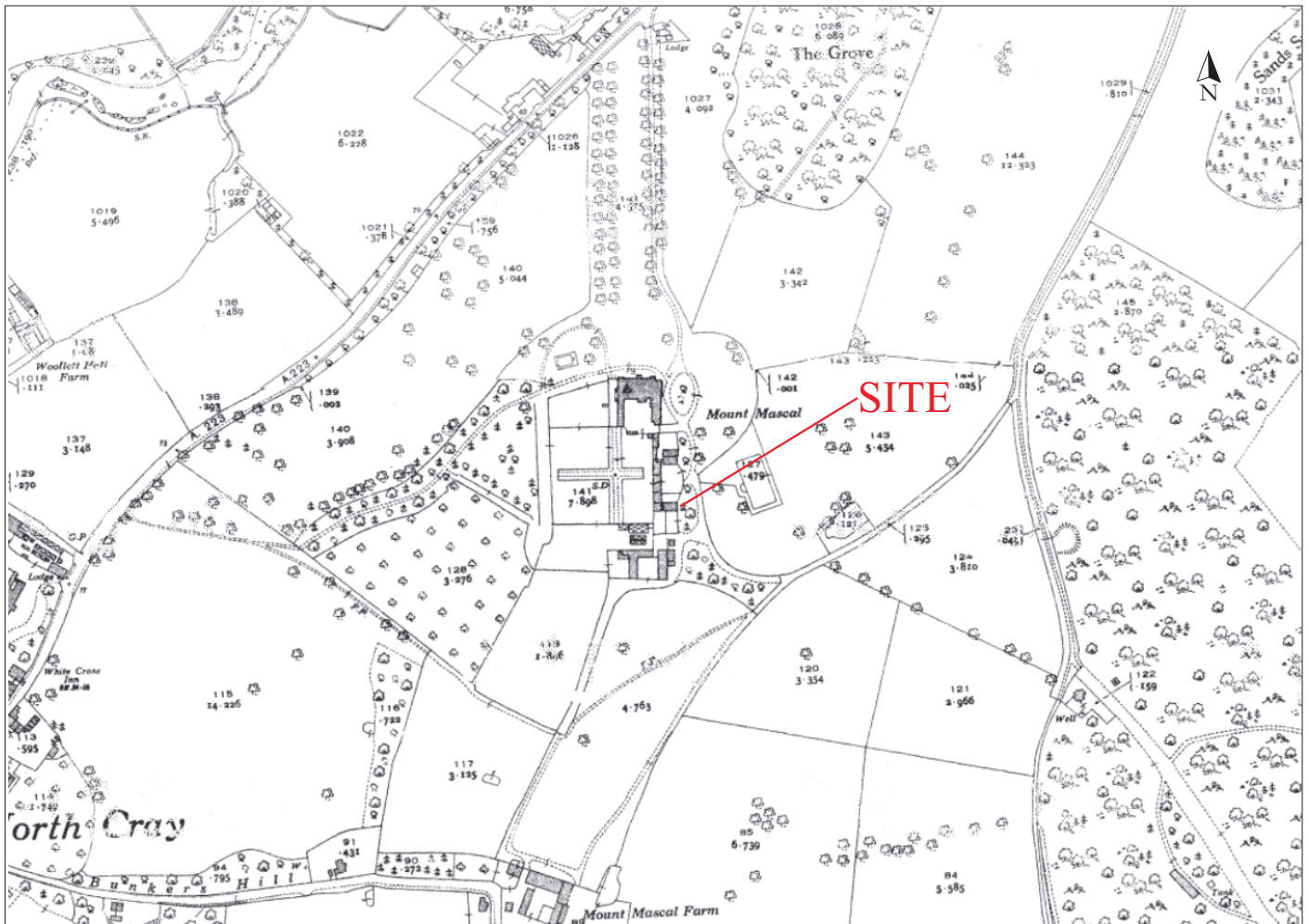


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Fig. 3 OS map, 1870

Not to scale



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Fig. 4 OS map, 1938
Not to scale

