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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**DARMERS, MIDDLE STREET, NAZEING, ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA	
NGR: TL 4025 0556	Report No: 3949
District: Epping Forest	Site Code: NAZD 11
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4574
Signed:	Date: October 2011

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Darmers, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological investigation at Darmers, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex (NGR TL 4025 0556). The investigation was commissioned by Mr George Ford of Pelham Structures in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of an existing single storey annexe and replacement with a new single storey annexe over a basemented swimming pool.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located to the south-east of Lower Nazeing and north-west of Bumbles Green, Essex. It is occupied by Grade II listed Hall House dating to 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the site strip of the proposed annexe footprint revealed a modern (20<sup>th</sup> century) pit.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>18/10/2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4574</i>	Site code	<i>NAZD 11</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Investigation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Single storey house annexe</i>		
Planned development	<i>New replacement single storey annexe</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern pit</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Epping Forest</i>	<i>Nazeing</i>
HER/ EHER for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>EN9 2LW</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 150m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 4025 0556</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 49m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>ECC HEM</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Andrew Newton, Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Pelham Structures</i>		
Full title	<i>Darmers, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex. Archaeological Investigation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3949</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2011</i>		

# DARMERS, MIDDLE STREET, NAZEING, ESSEX

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

### **SUMMARY**

*In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological investigation at Darmers, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex (NGR TL 4025 0556). The investigation was commissioned by Pelham Structures in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of an existing single-storey annexe and replacement with a new single-storey annexe over a basemented swimming pool.*

*The site is located to the south-east of Lower Nazeing and north-west of Bumbles Green, Essex. It is occupied by Grade II listed Hall House dating to 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.*

*In the event the monitoring of the site strip of the footprint of the proposed annexe revealed a modern (20<sup>th</sup> century) pit only.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological investigation at Darmers, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex (NGR TL 4025 0556; Figs. 1 & 2). The investigation was commissioned by Mr George Ford of Pelham Structures in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of an existing single-storey annexe and replacement with a new single-storey annexe over a basemented swimming pool (Epping Forest District Council Planning Ref. PL/EPF/0841/11).

1.2 The investigation was undertaken in accordance to a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM; dated 21/09/2011), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 22/09/2011), and approved by ECC HEM. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal research aim of the project was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains threatened by the proposed

development, and to excavate and report on these remains. ECC HEM required the footprint of the proposed new annexe to be stripped of overburden under archaeological supervision, with any features revealed to be subject to recording, planning and excavation.

### *Planning policy context*

1.4 Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5; 2010) 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 lies on the north side of Middle Street, to the south-east of Lower Nazeing and north-west of Bumbles Green, Essex (Fig. 1). It is occupied by the residential dwelling of Darmers and a large rear garden surrounded by trees. Darmers is a late medieval (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century) Grade II listed Hall House.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 The site lies at c. 49m AOD on land rising immediately to the north of the existing house. The solid geology of the environs is clay of Eocene Thames Group (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils on the site are those of the Hamble 2 association, described as deep stoneless well drained silty soils of the Aeolian silty drift (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Prehistoric*

4.1 The earliest evidence for human activity has been gathered from dispersed sites, but allows a general view of the area to be appreciated, and suggests that the Lea valley has been settled and

exploited since the early prehistoric period. Recent research of sediments and pollen deposits allows a reconstruction of earlier environments, suggesting a regeneration of primary forest cover of birch and willow in the immediate aftermath of the last Ice Age. This was followed during the warming of the climate by grasses, sedges and herbs, through a pine and hazel sequence in which a permanent human presence appears, before the final development of a lime and deciduous woodland environment. The long Palaeolithic sequences of the previous interstadials are represented by occasional discoveries of worked flint in the Lea valley. Given the enormous time-scales involved and the fact that most flint tools are redeposited with the gravels, little worthwhile information can be gleaned, and discoveries are confined almost exclusively to particular geological conditions and secondary gravel deposits. The Palaeolithic finds recovered in the closest distance of the site were two handaxes found from pits in the floodplain of the Lea, at Meadgate, c. 1.4km north-west of the site. The objects were found in an area of Alluvium geology.

4.2 Mesolithic communities, which date from c. 6500 BC were itinerant, and likewise most finds of the period occur as scattered flint tools discarded during seasonal hunting. However, both the Lea and Stort valleys have produced several important Mesolithic flint knapping sites associated with alluvial deposits including Rikof's Pit, Broxbourne, c. 3km west of the site (Warren et al. 1934); Dobb's Weir (Jacobi in Wymer 1977), Rye Meads (EHER 6660), Roydon Road (EHER 4022) and Nazeing (Murray 2000).

4.3 It is only with the appearance of more settled Neolithic communities after c. 4500BC that meaningful archaeological sites appear, though these remain scarce with the flints recovered at Rye Meads (EHER 6660) being the only known example. It is probable that a prehistoric pit containing struck flints discovered at during Phase I evaluation at St Margarets Farm (Trevvarthen 1998)(EHER 9715) relates to this period.

4.4 Regional studies indicate a marked increase in the exploitation of the landscape during the Bronze Age (c. 2000 BC – 700 BC) for pastoral and arable cultivation (Hunter 1999). Within the immediate area, there are few signs of occupation, though to the west, air reconnaissance and interpretation has revealed the presence of a circular enclosure (EHER 1449) and a bronze spearhead was recovered from the river Lea (EHER 607). Excavated Bronze and Iron Age occupation is known from Foxholes Farm at Hertford (Partridge 1989) to the north-west as well as Halfhide Lane and Canada Field to the west where Late Bronze Age and Iron Age metalworking was found (Murray 2000).

4.5 The Iron Age remains a poorly understood and under-represented period of prehistory at a national level, and there is little evidence of this period locally. However, an Iron Age and Romano-

British occupation site consisting of enclosure ditches has been excavated c. 2km to the north-west. The earliest ditches contained Belgic materials. Some Iron Age 'A' sherds have been found in Nazeing, c. 2km to the east of the site. Only c. 150m to the west of the site, a late Iron Age gold stater of Cunobeline was found in 1925 (HER 3423). It is now in Colchester Museum. A purported Iron Age valley floor settlement at Fishers Green, to the east of Cheshunt, where postholes found in 1954 have been suggested as signifying the presence of a lake village of this date (ref. in Murray 2000).

### *Romano-British*

4.6 During the four centuries of Roman occupation, the landscape, social environment and infrastructure developed considerably, and material culture becomes more visible in the archaeological record with the use of coinage, pottery, buildings of masonry and other durable materials. The main road known as *Ermine Street* that linked London, Lincolnshire and York ran north-south c. 3km to the west of the development site.

4.7 Few fragments of Roman brick, a thatchweight, some amphorae and flagon sherds, and bronze with traces of silvering and gilding were found at Nazeingbury estate (EHER 3414). An Iron Age and Romano-British enclosure site, c. 2km to the north-west, contained also pits, two possible ponds and three wells. Finds included a silver hairpin and a brooch. A pottery was dating to later 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. A Romano-British red-deer antler implement (in the form of a two-pronged rake) was found in 1956. It lay partially buried in mud which had recently been dredged from the River Lea, to the south of Dobb's Weir Lock, c. 2.2 km north-north-west of the site. In addition, cremation urns were also discovered to the north-west at Hoddesdon (EHER 4413).

### *Anglo-Saxon*

4.8 The importance of the area during the Saxon period was highlighted by the discovery of a Saxon cemetery c. 1.5km to the north-west, in 1934 and 1975-6 (HER 3427), associated with two timber post-hole buildings that have been interpreted as churches. Those structures have been dated to 7th to 9th century, possibly indicating the site of a nunnery and it is thought to be the site of a minster. There were 2 phases of cemetery, the second clustering around the post-hole building termed 'church 2', which lay south of the building termed 'church 1'. Grass-tempered pottery suggests a founding date in the 7th century, and the absence of shelly-ware suggests that the site had been abandoned before AD 850 (HER 3428, 3429 and 3440). There were two calibrated radiocarbon dates, of 560-720 and 760-920 AD. The site is now in an area of boating lakes. It also hold some evidence of Roman and Iron Age occupation as the

finds comprised also Belgic and Roman pottery sherds as residual material in Saxon graves.

### *Medieval*

4.9 At the time of the Domesday Book one manor was held by Ranulf in demesne and included parts of Nazeing and Epping amounting to 4½ hides less 15 acres (Williams ed. 2003). Before 1066 this land was previously held by 2 freemen. This manor lay south of the brook and contained 54 acres of woodland, meadow and arable land and a mill site that suggests that part of it lay by the Lea. There is no mention of a manor house for this estate and little more is known of the extent as the manor was passed back to the crown on the death of Ranulf some time after 1097. Parts of this manor were subsequently granted to the Canons, greatly enlarging their estate

4.10 The medieval settlement of Nazeing was largely dispersed, a form that is common in Essex. The 'Upper Town', in the north of the parish, seems to have formed the main focus of the parish with houses and farms spread out along lanes near the church and common. This area included the church, vicarage, post office and some of the grander houses such as Ninnings (HER 33629) and Greenleaves (HER 33617) all built by the 1500's. There were also other small foci or hamlets within the parish along the main streets and spread along greens, as at Nazeing Long Green and Bumbles Green, that had been established by the 1300's. In the west of the parish, the 'Lower Town' area, there were scattered buildings around the crossroads where Nazeingbury manor house (HER 33632) was situated.

4.11 The earliest record of the manor house of Nazeingbury comes from the court rolls of 1270 in which there is a reference to a William del Biry or ate Bery. The proposed dwellings lie within a moated enclosure (HER 3422) that originally enclosed the medieval 'Upper Town' Manor, later known as Nazeingbury when it expanded to include much of the 'Lower Town' Manor (HER 45752).

4.12 Darmers is a late medieval (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century) Grade II listed Hall House (EHER 33630). It comprises a late 15<sup>th</sup> century open hall with crosswings. The first floor was inserted in 16<sup>th</sup> century, along with raised roof and later tower staircase. Most of the internal frame survives until today.

### *Post-medieval & modern*

4.13 At the time of the Dissolution Thomas Cromwell held the Manor of Nazeing on lease. In 1538 Anthony Denny, Privy Councillor to the King, took responsibility for the estates and duties of the lord of the manor. By the 1540s most of the former land belonging to the Church were acquired by Denny in the form of a lease. These lands included

Harolds Park, Nazeing Wood and Nazeing Grove that were enclosed with fencing by Denny. On his death his wife was passed the lease and it continued to be passed down the family until 1635 when it was leased outside the family. Eventually the Denny family began to split the estate up to sell. A large part of the estate was bought by Samuel Wake Jones in the 1660's and passed down through the Jones and Wake families to the present time along with the title of Lord of the Manor. An estate map of 1767 shows that the manor covered about 996 acres in the west and 55 acres, called the New Grounds, between Nazeingwood Common and Epping Long Green with some strips in Nazeing Mead. (ERO D/DHt P12, 1767) (O'Connor 2005). The present house at Nazeingbury (EHER 33632) incorporates part of a 16th/17th century roof, it was largely rebuilt in the 18th century with a hipped roof and central pediment. The Manor courts were held at the house until 1925. It is a Grade II listed building. The remains of a large moated site (EHER 3422) were obliterated in the 1960's.

4.14 In the 16th and 17th centuries a number of timber-framed houses were built, 21 listed buildings are recorded as dating to this period. Substantial houses and farmhouses such as Belchers (HER 33608) and Camps (HER 33615) indicate a level of prosperity for some of the residents. It was largely rebuilt in the 18th century and is timber framed and part brick clad with a red plain tile hipped roof and central pediment. Groups of cottages and houses were being built along the main streets, including Middle Street, Hoe Lane and Back Lane. Similarly both the Upper and Lower Town areas were expanding slowly. By the 1900's several large country houses were being built around the Upper Town area. Most of the present settlement is located at Lower Nazeing, where almost all development since the First World War has taken place (O'Connor 2005).

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1. The archaeological investigation comprised the supervision of the stripping of the overburden within the footprint of the proposed new annexe (Fig. 2), 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 Fig.3**

6.1 One archaeological feature was present within the investigated area. Pit F1005 (1.90 x 1.42 x 0.23m; DP 4) was an oval feature located in the east/central part of the site. It had gently sloping sides and flattish base. Its single fill, L1006, was a black, loose, clayey silt

with occasional CBM and wood fragments. The fill contained modern (20<sup>th</sup> century) CBM and glass.

6.2 Modern concrete foundations of the recently demolished annexe were present within the stripped area. On the western side these were accompanied by a remnant of the wall M1004 made of yellow bricks (0.21 x 0.10 x 0.06m).

6.3 During the groundworks some deposits not disturbed by modern development were exposed along the eastern edge of the site. These are shown below in sample section.

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 5)</i> <i>East side of the excavation, central part, facing west</i> <i>0.00 = 49.23m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid brown, friable, sandy silt.
0.26 – 0.55m	L1001	Subsoil. Light yellowish brown, compact, silty sand.
0.55m+	L1002	Natural light to mid yellow, compact, clay.

## **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 majority of the site was overlain by modern overburden created during the demolition of the existing annexe and lifting of the floor slabs. Along the eastern side of the site the top deposit was Topsoil L1000, a mid brown, friable, sandy silt (0.20 – 0.28m thick).

8.2 Below the topsoil and also exposed within the southern part of the site, Subsoil L1001 was present. It comprised light yellowish brown, compact, silty sand and was 0.10 – 0.30m thick.

8.3 The natural clay, L1002, was present at 0.50 – 0.55m below existing ground level, where the topsoil and subsoil survived, or directly exposed within the footings of the former annexe, and comprised a light to mid yellow, compact, clay.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the medieval and post-medieval archaeology. Such remains could have been related to the late medieval house of Darmers and its ancillary features/buildings.

9.2 In the event the only archaeological feature present was the modern (20<sup>th</sup> century) pit. No indication of any other previous development of the site was identified with an exception of the modern construction of the former annexe.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

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

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr George Ford of Pelham Structures for commissioning the project.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Adam Garwood of Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch.

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Darners, Middle Street, Nazeing, Essex. Looking south.



DP 2. The area of proposed new extension to the house. Looking north-east-north.



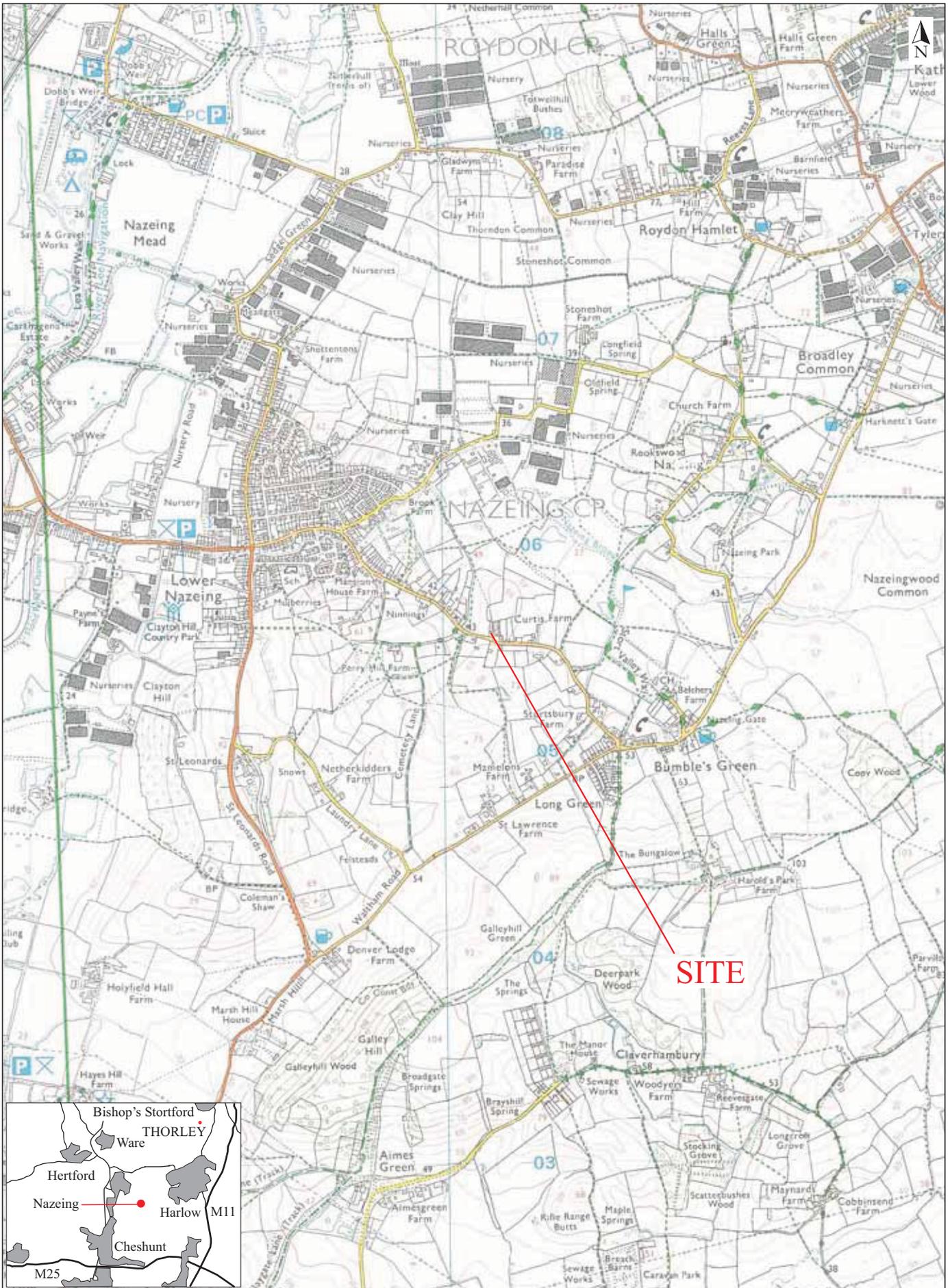
DP 3. The area of proposed new extension to the house. Looking south-west-south.



DP 4. Pit F1005. Looking south.

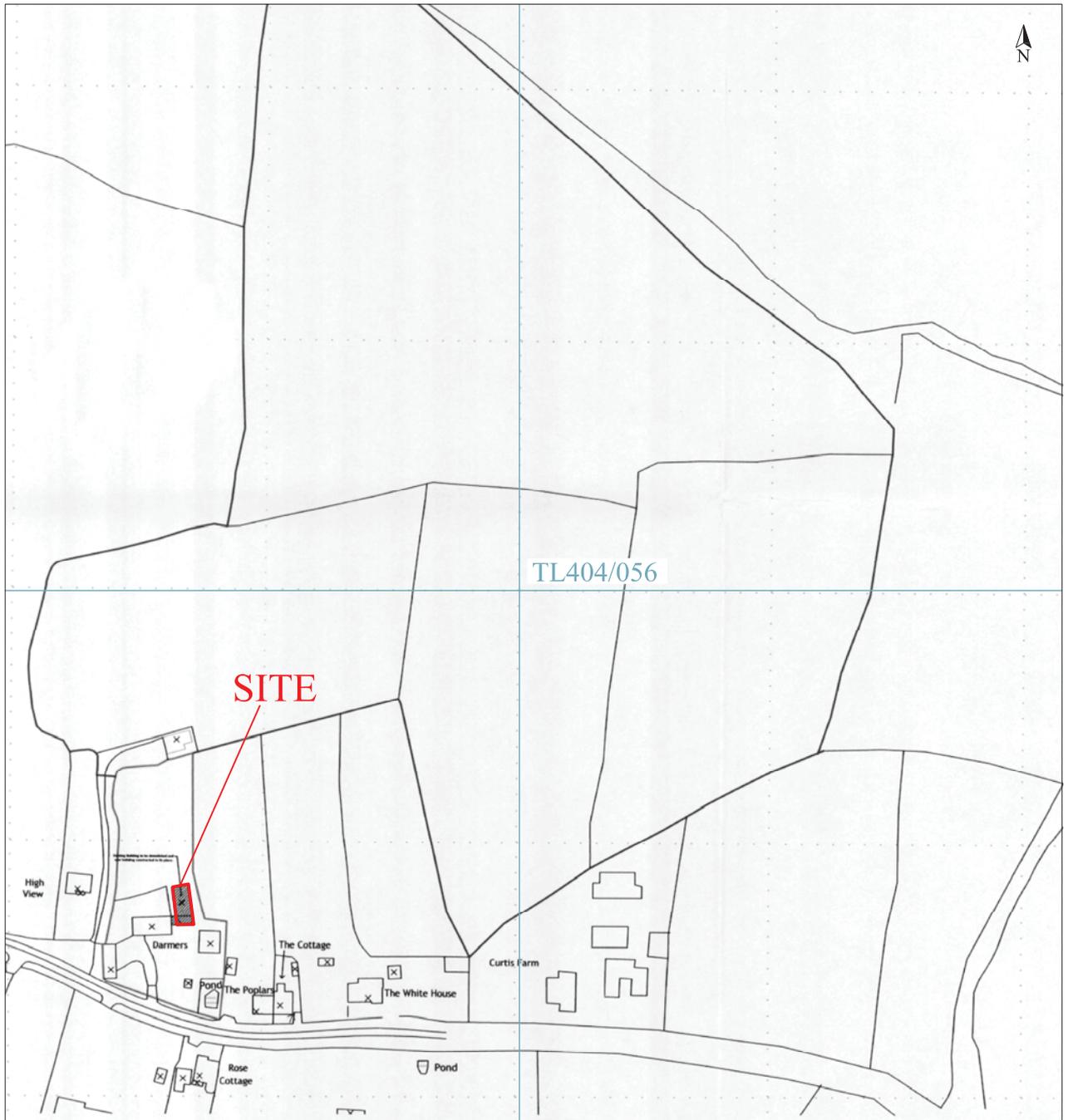


DP 5. Eastern side of the site. Sample section 1. Looking east.



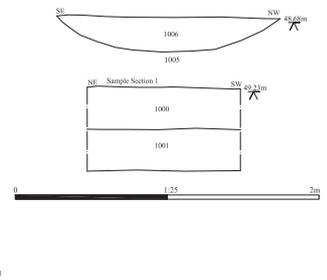
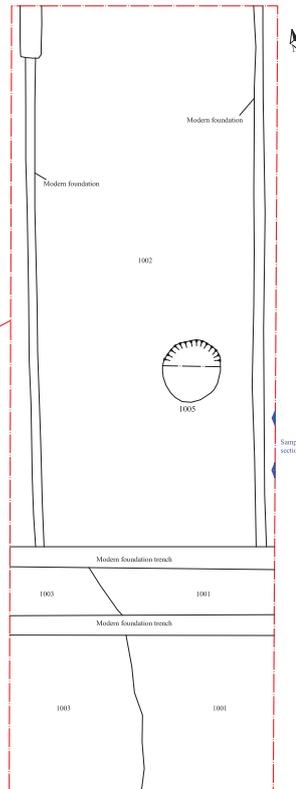
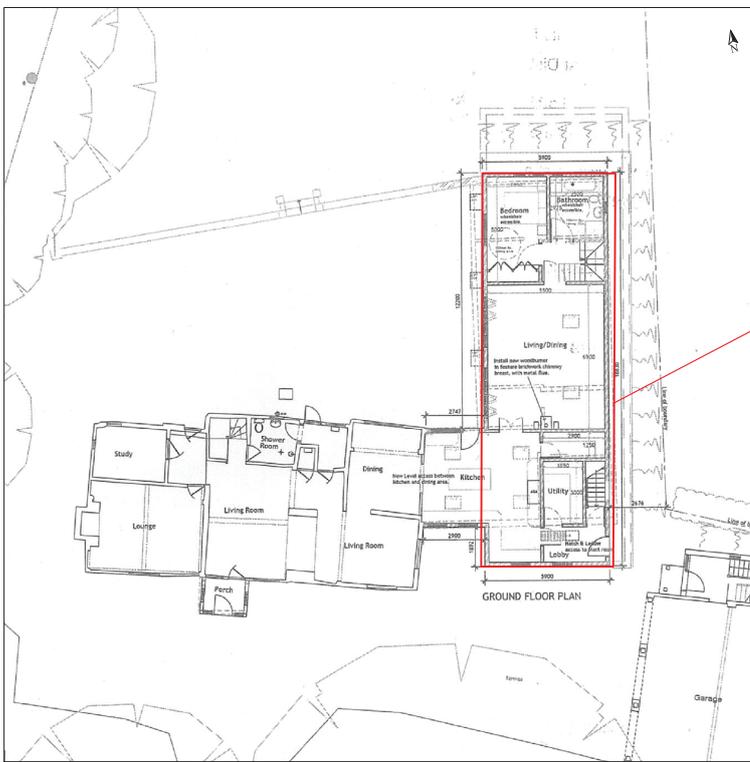
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 400m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan  
Scale 1:5000 at A4



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**Fig. 3 Area of watching brief & sections**  
 Scale plans at 1:200 & 1:100 & sections at 1:25 at A3