
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

BEAR ASH, BEAR LANE, WARGRAVE, BERKSHIRE

**CONTROLLED ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOIL STRIPPING/INVESTIGATION**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA	
NGR: SU 8074 7920	Report No: 3933
District: Wokingham	Site Code: AS 1263
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4560
Signed:	Date: October 2011

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire</i>		
<p><i>In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological investigation by controlled soil stripping and recording on land at Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920). The investigation was commissioned by Mr Paul Harris and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the extension of an existing fixed level lake, to include a new connection into an overflow attenuation pond where water levels will be allowed to fluctuate naturally.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within a rural location off Bear Lane c. 1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch. It lies in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising a possible medieval moat. The site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of proposals to extend the dwelling of Bear Ash in 2009 (Pozorski 2009). It revealed no archaeological features. A geophysical survey was carried out to determine the extent and significance of sub-surface features (Stratascan 2011). No probable archaeological features or anomalies were recorded. An area of anomalies to the north west of the proposed lake extension and a linear anomaly to the north east were identified. The soil stripping recorded four modern linear ditches.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>06-11/10/2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4560</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1263</i>
Type of project	<i>Controlled Archaeological Soil Stripping/Investigation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Meads</i>		
Planned development	<i>Extension to existing lake</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>4 modern ditches</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Berkshire</i>	<i>Wokingham</i>	<i>Ruscombe</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Berkshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>RG10 9XR</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.4ha</i>		
NGR	<i>SU 8074 7920</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>68-70m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Advice from Berkshire Archaeology</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr P Harris</i>		
Full title	<i>Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire. Controlled Archaeological Soil Stripping/Investigation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3933</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2011</i>		

BEAR ASH, BEAR LANE, WARGRAVE, BERKSHIRE

CONTROLLED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOIL STRIPPING/INVESTIGATION

SUMMARY

In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological investigation by controlled soil stripping and recording on land at Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920). The investigation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the extension of an existing fixed level lake, to include a new connection into an overflow attenuation pond where water levels will be allowed to fluctuate naturally.

The site lies within a rural location off Bear Lane c. 1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch. It lies in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising a possible medieval moat. The site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by AS in advance of proposals to extend the dwelling of Bear Ash in 2009 (Pozorski 2009). It revealed no archaeological features. A geophysical survey was recently carried out to determine the extent and significance of sub-surface features (Stratascan 2011). No probable archaeological features or anomalies were recorded, though an area of anomalies to the north west of the proposed lake extension and a linear anomaly to the north east were identified. The soil stripping recorded four modern linear ditches.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological investigation by controlled soil stripping and recording on land at Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920; Figs. 1 & 2). The investigation was commissioned by Balston & Company Ltd on behalf of Mr Paul Harris, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the extension of an existing fixed level lake to include a new connection into an overflow attenuation pond, where water levels will be allowed to fluctuate naturally (Wokingham Borough Council Planning Ref. F/2011/1455). An archaeological evaluation (Pozorski 2009) and geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011) were carried out as part of the condition.

1.2 The investigation was undertaken in accordance with an advice from Berkshire Archaeology (BA; advisors to Wokingham Borough Council) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated

05/10/2011) and approved by BA. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (revised 2008), and the requirements of the Berkshire Archaeology document *General Standards for Fieldwork Projects*.

1.3 The investigation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine or confirm the presence/absence and general nature of the remains present
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains and the effect of the development proposals on them
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present; and
- To assess the status of the remains as regards economy, social activity and place in the generic contemporary landscape.

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 within a rural location off Bear Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire. It is located c. 1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch, c. 2km east of Wargrave and c. 10km north-east of Reading town centre.

2.2 The site comprises a large detached residential property set in mature landscaped grounds. It is situated to the west of Bear Lane which links Hare Hatch and Bowsey Hill. The house is surrounded by gardens to the south and west, and to the north-west farm buildings are located. The area of the proposed lake extension currently contains an existing lake and grassland to the south of the house.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is located on the southern side of Bowsey Hill, on ground sloping towards the south. The area of investigation is situated at a height of 68 – 70m AOD. The natural slope is levelled to the immediate south of the house, currently part of the gardens. The majority of the site to the south is occupied by meads and an artificial lake.

3.2 The solid geology of the environs is Palaeocene clay with some silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils on the site are those of the Windsor association described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils. Those are also some fine loamy over clayey and fine silty over clayey soils and, locally on slopes, clayey soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 There are no prehistoric finds known close to the site. The substantial collection of Lower Palaeolithic handaxes and other tools was gathered at various locations in Ruscombe and Twyford, c. 2.5-3km south-east of the site. A Mesolithic flint blade was recovered at Knowl Hill, c. 1km to the east. A possible Neolithic mortuary is located c. 3km to the south-west. A Neolithic polished axe was found in Twyford, c. 3km south-east of the site. A Bronze Age round barrow was situated at LittleWick Green, c. 3km to the north-east of the site. In 1957 a Bronze Age sword was dredged from the River Thames c. 2.3km to the west of the site. Bronze Age pottery was recovered to the east of Ruscombe, c. 2km south of Bear Ash. An Iron Age gold stater was found between Waltham St Lawrence and Shurlock Row c.4km south-east. Iron Age pottery was found at Warner's Clay Pit, Knowl Hill c.1km east of the site indicating the presence of settlement which continued into the Roman period.

Romano-British

4.2 The area in vicinity of the site contains numerous archaeological remains of Romano-British activity. A basilica villa or an aisled building was found in 1930s at Cunhurst Farm, Knowl Hill c.1.2km west of the site, dated to the 1st-2nd century AD. Another Roman aisled building was found in Knowl Hill at Tanhurst Farm, c.300m east-south of the site. Possible Roman lead weights were found by a metal detectorist c.650m south-west of the site. Roman pottery was recovered from hearths and pits located at Warner's Clay Pit, Knowl Hill, c.1km east of the site and from a garden in Hare Hatch, c.1.3km to the south. An almost complete Roman (1st century AD) pot was found at Wargrave, c.2km to the south-west. Numerous Roman coins are known from Ruscombe. During the construction of a railway in 1837 in Shottesbrooke, at the Waycock field, c.2.25km to the south-east of the site, an inhumation cemetery was recorded, containing 30 skeletons, including one burial in a lead coffin. Also a Roman well was located 1km further to the south.

Saxon

4.3 Known remains of the Saxon period are limited to finds recovered to the west of the site. A Late Saxon spearhead was found at Wargrave, c.1.75km of the site. Another Late Saxon (9th-10th century AD) spearhead was dredged from the River Thames 2.3km to the west.

Medieval

4.4 The site is located in the vicinity of the medieval settlement of Wargrave documented in Domesday as a royal manor. It was granted to the bishops of Winchester in 1199, who owned it until the 16th century. The town was granted borough status in the 13th. Subsequent documentation refers to Wargrave as a rural settlement, also industries such as tanning, malting and brick and tile making are mentioned.

4.5 The site lies in a short distance from a moated site located some 150m to the south-east, which is a Scheduled as an Ancient Monument, and may date from the medieval period. It is a rectangular moat with two east/west causeways. It was thought possible that ancillary remains associated with the site may extend into the current area of proposed development. The moat may have been an original home of the A'Bear family, recorded in the parish as early as 1318. They were also known by the Norman name De La Bere (Ford 1996).

Post-medieval & modern

4.6 From the 18th century the area attracted the aristocracy whose presence is reflected in the number of large houses built on the slopes overlooking the rivers or on the banks of the Thames. The house to the east of the moat was built in 1784. The A'Bear family owned the property until 1895.

4.7 Other evidence noted on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record includes surface finds from the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey to the south of the site, and fishpond associated with the moat some 200m to the south of the site, and two post-medieval listed buildings, to the north-west and east-north-east of the site

Previous Investigations

4.8 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by AS in advance of proposals to extend the dwelling of Bear Ash in 2009 (Pozorski 2009). It revealed no archaeological features. Topsoil and subsoil overlay the natural solid geology, a mid yellow with reddish and grey, compact clay with some sandy lenses, some 0.60m below existing.

4.9 A geophysical survey was carried out to determine the extent and significance of sub-surface features (Stratascan 2011). No probable archaeological features or anomalies were recorded, though an area of anomalies to the north west of the proposed lake extension and a linear anomaly to the north east were identified.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The principal area of investigation comprised the land to the north and north-west of existing lake (Fig. 2). Three rectangular areas were subject to soil stripping, as advised by Berkshire Archaeology and were situated within the proposed northern extension to the lake and included the locations of possible anomalies detected by the geophysical survey. The areas were excavated using a mechanical 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Area 1 measured 20m x 15m, Area 2: 35m x 20m and Area 3: 30m x 15m.

5.2 Topsoil and subsoil were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. 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 finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Area 1 (Fig. 2, DP 1)

Two ditches were revealed within Area 1.

Ditch F2003 (DP 4-5) was orientated north/south and measured 20m+ x 2m x 0.50m. It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L2004, was a light brown, compact, clayey silt. Traces of timber were present in several locations along the western edge of the feature. It contained modern CBM and modern glass.

Ditch F2005 (DP 6-7) was parallel to F2003 and was located just to the east. It measured 8.50m+ x 1.30m x 0.50m and had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L2006, was a light yellowish brown, compact, sandy silt. It contained modern CBM and modern metal fragments.

Area 2 (Fig. 2, DP 2)

Ditch F2007 (DP 8-10) was orientated WNW/ESE and was 38m+ long. Within Segment A it measured 1.85m x 0.32m and within Segment B: 1.53m x 0.36m. It had gently to moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L2008, was a light brown, compact, clayey silt and it contained modern CBM and clay pipe fragments. F2007 was recorded in Area 3 (F2009).

Area 3 (Fig. 2, DP 3)

Ditch F2009 (=F2007; DP 11-12) was orientated WNW/ESE and measured 12m+ x 1.37m x 0.22m. It had gently sloping sides and a slightly concave base. Its fill, L2010, was a light brown, compact, clayey silt with occasional chalk. At the base of the feature was a fragment of burnt wood (0.34 x 0.08m). CBM was recovered from the feature.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was overlain by Topsoil L2000, a mid to dark greyish brown, soft loam (0.15 – 0.40m thick). Below L2000 was Subsoil L2001, a light brownish yellow, compact, silty sand (0.10 – 0.20m thick). Below L2001, the natural clay, L2002, was a light yellow, compact, clay with occasional lenses of sand. Within Area 3 it included occasional chalk. It was present 0.30-0.50m below the present ground level.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for medieval and post-medieval archaeology associated with the moated site to the immediate east of Bear Ash. It also had a potential for Romano-British remains.

9.2 In the event four modern ditches were revealed. Ditches F2003 and F2005 (Area 1) may have been associated with the existing lake and pond, located nearby to the north-west; however this suggestion is tentative. F2003 may also have been related to Ditch F2007 located within Area 2. F2007 was a continuation of Ditch 2009 (Area 3), a boundary ditch.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Paul Harris for funding the works, and Ms Marie-Louise Aguis of Balston & Company Ltd for her kind assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input, advice and assistance of Ms Mary Neale of Berkshire Archaeology.

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APPENDIX 1 FINDS CONCORDANCE

AS 1263, P4560: Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire

Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Segment	Description	Spot Date	CBM (g)	Other
2003	2004		Ditch Fill	Post-medieval	82	Glass (4) 108g
2005	2006		Ditch Fill	Post-medieval	68	
2007	2008	A	Ditch Fill	Post-medieval	31	
		B	Ditch Fill	Post-medieval	120	
2009	2010		Ditch Fill	Post-medieval	452	

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORT

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

Watching brief excavations recovered a total of nine fragments (753g) of highly abraded post-medieval CBM. The CBM was manufactured in an orange-red, medium sand-tempered fabric and included fragments of brick (dimensions unclear) contained in Ditch F2009 (L2010), field drain in Ditch F2005 (L2006), peg tile in Ditches F2003 (L2004) and F2007 (L2008 Seg.B). The CBM could have been produced from the 17th to early 20th centuries.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire. Area 1. Looking south-east.



DP 2. Area 2. Looking south-west.



DP 3. Area 3. Looking south.



DP 4. Area 1, Ditch F2003. Looking north-west.



DP 5. Area 1, Ditch F2003. Looking north-west.



DP 6. Area 1, Ditch F2005. Looking north-west.



DP 7. Area 1, Ditch F2005. Looking north-west.



DP 8. Area 2, Ditch F2007A. Looking west.



DP 9. Area 2, Ditch F2007B. Looking west.



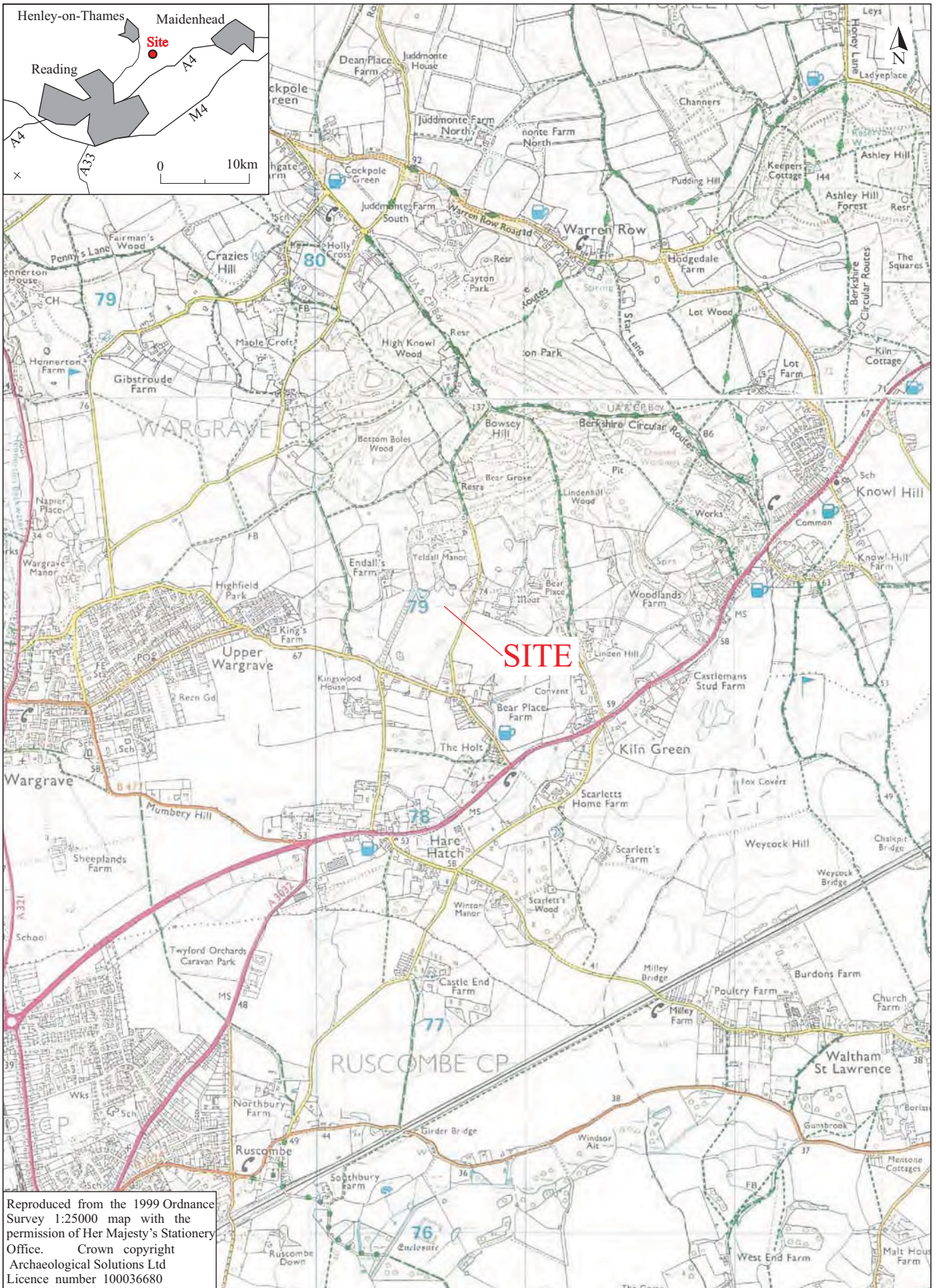
DP 10. Area 2, Ditch F2007. Looking west.



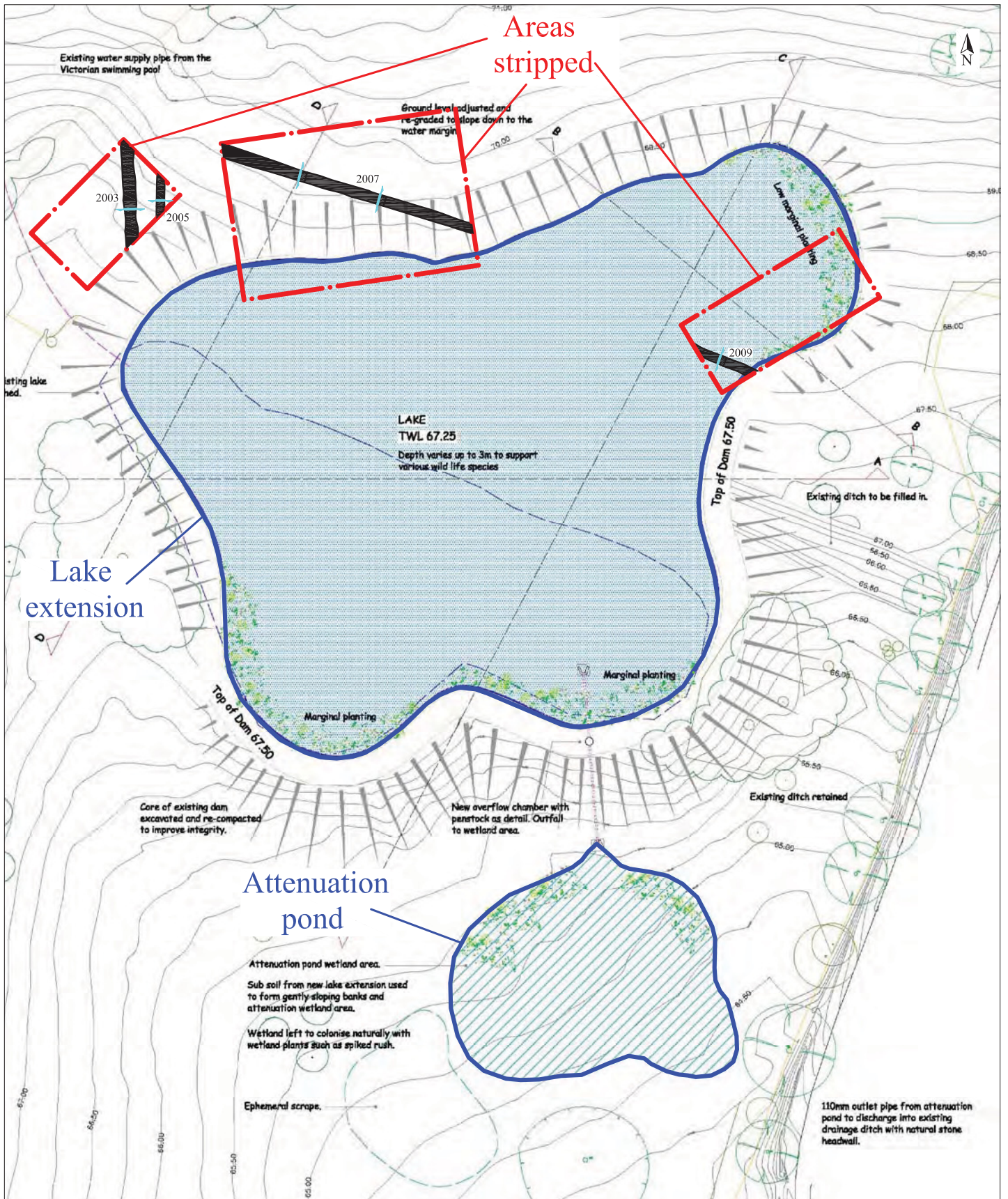
DP 11. Area 3, Ditch F2009. Looking west.



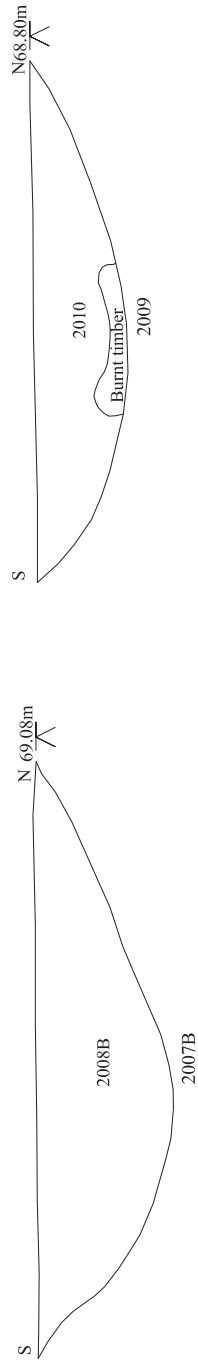
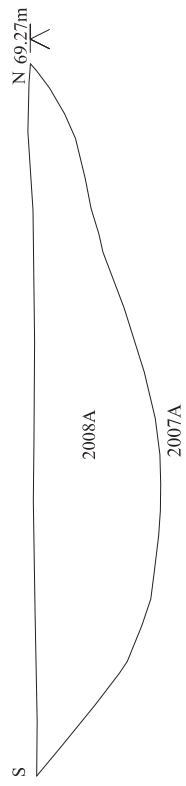
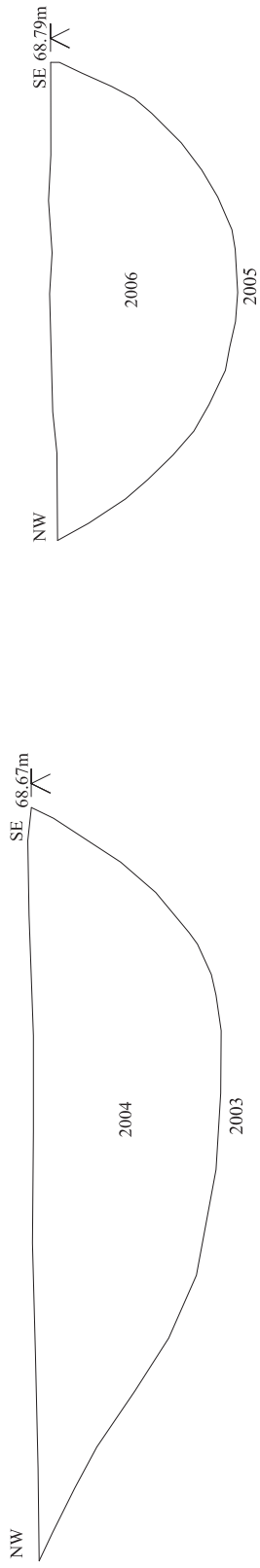
DP 12. Area 3, Ditch F2009. Looking west.



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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 1:1000 at A4



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Fig. 3 Sections
 Scale 1:20 at A4