

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD
LAND EAST OF NORWICH ROAD, CROMER,
NORFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Tom Janes MA (Fieldwork & report) Peter Thompson (Desk Based Assessment)	
NGR: TG 22569 40491	Report No. 3953
District: North Norfolk	Site Code: ENF 127900
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. P4028
Signed:	Date: November 2011

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land east of Norwich Road, Cromer, Norfolk</i>		
<i>In November 2011 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) on land east of Norwich Road, Cromer, Norfolk (NGR TG 22569 40491). The evaluation was required prior to the determination of planning approval for the construction of a new residential development (North Norfolk Planning Ref. PF/10/1453).</i>			
<i>An initial geophysical survey revealed anomalies of interest, including linear and discrete features possibly representing ditches and pits. The HER information for the area identifies sites of prehistoric, Roman and Romano-British activity in the vicinity.</i>			
<i>In the event no archaeological finds or features were present. The geophysical anomalies were demonstrated to be natural features, and no features corresponding to the cropmarks were present.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>November 2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4028</i>	Site code	<i>ENF 127900</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Fallow agricultural</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Norfolk</i>	<i>North Norfolk</i>	<i>Cromer</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Historic Environment Service HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>1.66ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TG 22569 40491</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>67/65m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Tom Janes</i>		
Funded by	<i>Hopkins Homes</i>		
Full title	<i>Land East Of Norwich Road, Cromer: An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
Authors	<i>Janes, T. Thompson, P.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3953</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>November 2011</i>		

LAND EAST OF NORWICH ROAD, CROMER, NORFOLK

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In November 2011 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) on land east of Norwich Road, Cromer, Norfolk (NGR TG 22569 40491). The evaluation was required prior to the determination of planning approval for the construction of a new residential development (North Norfolk Planning Ref. PF/10/1453).

An initial geophysical survey revealed anomalies of interest, including linear and discrete features possibly representing ditches and pits. The HER information for the area identifies sites of prehistoric, Roman and Romano-British activity in the vicinity.

In the event no archaeological finds or features were present. The geophysical anomalies were demonstrated to be natural features, and no features corresponding to the cropmarks were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) on land east of Norwich Road, Cromer, Norfolk (NGR TG 22569 40491; Figs.1-2). The evaluation was required prior to the determination of planning approval for the construction of a new residential development (North Norfolk Planning Ref. PF/10/1453). It was commissioned by Bidwells on behalf of Hopkins Homes.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in response to a brief issued by Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service (NCC HES, 24th February 2011) and a specification prepared by AS (16th March 2011), and approved by NCC HES. It adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney, D, 2003, 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*. It was also conducted according to the Institute of for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of archaeological features and finds. The principal aims of the project were to investigate the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, as well as targeting 'blank' areas of the site.

Planning Policy Context

1.4 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 (Figs. 1 – 2)

2.1 Cromer lies on the Norfolk coast approximately 35km north of Norwich. The site lies at the south end of Cromer immediately east of Norwich Road which borders its north-west side. The south-west side of the site is abutted by the Cromer to Norwich railway, and the east side follows the course of a disused railway line. The northern edge is defined by The Avenue which leads onto Norwich Road.

2.2 The site slopes gently from the north-eastern corner and has been recently used for arable farming, although it was fallow at the time of the evaluation.

3 METHODOLOGY (Desk-based Research)

3.1 Archaeological databases

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) was consulted in order to identify any local archaeological finds or remains in the area that might be affected by the development. Those sites of relevance are described below (4.2).

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Topography, geology and soils (Fig. 1)

4.1.1 The site is located at approximately 65-67m AOD in undulating countryside, although there is a general trend of the land sloping down towards the sea some 2km to the north. The local soils are of the Norwich 4 series comprising typical brown sands which are deep and well drained. The underlying geology consists of Upper Cretaceous Chalk.

4.2 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 Away from the site potentially some of the earliest archaeological evidence comes from a Neolithic axe head located 550m west of the site (NHER 6470), and two possible Bronze Age ring ditches identified as cropmarks from aerial photography located between 500 and 670m west of the site (NHER 39112, 3867). An early Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead was recovered from 170m north of the site (NHER 47488).

4.2.2 Cropmarks of possible parallel ditches are situated 330m south-west of the site, although they may not be archaeological (NHER 39113). Further cropmarks of two possible enclosures and a pit are 660m to the south-west (NHER 38677), and more undated enclosures lie 850m to the west (NHER 39117). Further possible ditches of unknown date were identified 670m to the north (NHER 39176).

4.2.3 Aerial photography has also identified cropmarks of a possible Romano-British farmstead and enclosure and potential field systems 800-850m to the south-east (NHER 13063, 38807, 38808). A Roman coin was recovered from 660m to the north-east (NHER 6454). A piece of medieval horse harness was found 500m to the north-east (NHER 17556). Metal detecting in the area identified finds from not closely recorded locations but likely to be within 500m of the site. Among them was a Middle Bronze Age axe and chisel, a Late Bronze Age chisel, Roman coins and medieval and post-medieval coins and metal work (NHER 35444, 35450, 35451).

4.2.4 A large number of WWII structures, mainly related to defense against invasion, are located to the north of the site. These include NHER 38917, 38918, 38919, 39101, 38923, with the closest approximately 330m of the site. The East Norfolk railway runs past the site (NHER 13586). A branch of the former Norfolk and Suffolk joint railway also runs within 300-350m north of the site (NHER 13585). The closest listed building is Pine Tree Farmhouse which is approximately 160m south-west of the site and is a much modified 17th century house (NHER 47486).

4.3 Cartographic information

4.3.1 The first edition OS map shows the site between the Norwich Road and the East Norfolk railway line which opened in 1874 (Fig. 3). The Norfolk and Suffolk line has not yet been built. Skinner's Farm, to the south-west of the site, is in close proximity to Pine Tree Farmhouse and may be the same building. The 1946 aerial photograph shows the site is the same plan as today and its immediate environs are virtually unchanged (Fig. 4).

4.4 Previous Investigation

4.4.1 In 2010 Stratascan conducted a geophysical survey on the site using a gradiometer which identified features of possible archaeological origin (NHER 55317, Fig. 2b, Smalley 2010). These are broken down into eight groups or categories:

1. amorphous anomalies that are probably not archaeological
2. curvilinear anomalies (red blobs)
3. a rectilinear feature indicating a small enclosure

4. discrete anomalies which may represent pits (brown dots)
5. a linear feature running parallel with the dismantled railway possibly representing a field boundary (orange line)
6. parallel sets of linear anomalies probably representing ploughing (green lines)
7. magnetic disturbance around the perimeter (purple criss-cross hachuring) caused by ferrous fencing which may hide discreet archaeological features
8. bipolar anomalies indicative of buried metal objects (pink dots).

5 METHODOLOGY (Trial trenching)

5.1 The brief required a 2% sample of the 1.66ha site to be subject to trenching, targeting the anomalies identified during the geophysical survey (Smalley 2010). Eight trial trenches 1.8m wide and totalling 230m in length were excavated (Fig.2).

5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a tracked mechanical 360° 14-tonne excavator fitted with a 1.80m toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was examined for finds.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3, DP1)

<i>Sample Section 1: At S end, W facing</i> <i>0.00 = 66.25m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark brown loose sandy silt with occasional angular and sub-angular flint stones.
0.22 – 0.34m	L1001	Subsoil. Light brown loose sandy silt with moderate angular and sub-angular flint stones.
0.34m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. Brownish-orange compact sandy gravelly clay with large areas of flint gravel and stones.

Description: Trench 1 was located to investigate a single geophysical anomaly. A discrete positive anomaly had been interpreted as a possible cut feature of archaeological origin. Excavation revealed the discrete anomaly to represent a concentration of flint stones and gravel within the underlying Natural Geology. No archaeological finds or features were present.

Trench 2 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: 1m from E end, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 66.23m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.40 – 0.46m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1

0.46m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1
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Description: Trench 2 was located in order to investigate two discrete positive anomalies. Both anomalies had been interpreted as possible pits. No archaeological features were present in Trench 2; a small patch of gravel within the Natural Geology corresponded to the location of the western anomaly.

Trench 3 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: E end, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 66.21m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.18 – 0.30m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.30m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 3 was located to investigate two positive linear anomalies interpreted as being of possible archaeological origin. No archaeological features were present in Trench 3; two areas of gravel and stone within the Natural Geology were identified that corresponded to the location of each anomaly.

Trench 4 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: 2m from NE end, NW facing</i> <i>0.00 = 66.25m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.18 – 0.28m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.28m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 4 was located to investigate two positive anomalies. The latter were interpreted as cut features of possible archaeological origin. No archaeological finds or features, and no geological or natural features corresponding to the anomalies, were present.

Trench 5 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: S end, E facing</i> <i>0.00 = 66.29m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.22 – 0.28m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.28m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 5 was located in order to investigate two positive discrete anomalies. The latter were interpreted as cut features of possible archaeological origin. No archaeological finds or features, and no geological or natural features corresponding to the anomalies, were present.

Trench 6 (Figs. 2 & 3, DP 2)

<i>Sample Section 1: 1m from W end, S facing</i>		
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0.00 = 66.28m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.26m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 6 was located to investigate two discrete positive anomalies, interpreted as possible pits. Two features were present which corresponded with the location of these anomalies. On investigation they were shown to be non-archaeological. No other archaeological finds or features were present.

Trench 7 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: 1m from SW end, SE facing</i>		
0.00 = 66.33m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.26 – 0.34m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.34m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 7 was located to investigate a curvilinear positive anomaly, a discrete positive anomaly and a linear cropmark. A large area of sand and gravel within the underlying Natural Geology was identified which corresponded to the location of the discrete anomaly. No archaeological finds or features, and no geological or natural features corresponding to the remaining anomalies, were present.

Trench 8 (Figs. 2 & 3, DP 3)

<i>Sample Section 1: S W end, SE facing</i>		
0.00 = 66.35m AOD		
0.00 – 0.24m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.24m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 1

Description: Trench 8 was located to investigate two rectilinear positive anomalies, and two discrete positive anomalies and a linear cropmark. Features were identified which corresponded to the locations of these anomalies. However on excavation they were shown to non-archaeological. No archaeological finds or features were present. Modern plough scars were noted at the northern end of the trench.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or the recovery of finds during the evaluation.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Topsoil L1000, was a dark brown loose sandy silt with occasional angular and sub-angular flint stones. It overlay subsoil L1001, a light brown loose sandy silt with moderate angular and sub-angular flint stones.

8.2 The natural drift geology, L1002, was broadly uniform over most of the site, comprising a brownish-orange compact sandy gravelly clay with large areas of flint gravel and stones. The areas of flint gravel and stones were more prevalent towards the northern end of the site

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The geophysical survey had revealed anomalies of interest, including linear and discrete features believed to represent ditches and pits. The HER information for the area identifies prehistoric, Roman and Romano-British activity in the vicinity. The evaluation had the potential for prehistoric and later activity.

9.2 In the event, no archaeological finds or features were present. The geophysical anomalies were shown to be natural features, and no features corresponding to the cropmarks were present.

10 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Norwich Castle Museum. 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

AS would like to thank Hopkins Homes for funding the project and their agents, Bidwells, for commissioning the works (in particular Mr Ray Houghton for his assistance).

AS also gratefully acknowledges the input and advice of Dr Ken Hamilton Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

AS would also like to acknowledge the Norfolk HER for providing information.

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SSEW 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales: Soils of South East England (sheet 4)*. Harpenden, Rothamsted Experimental Station/Lawes Agricultural Trust

WEBSITES

www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk

www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Title	Date	Scale
Site Location	Modern	
Plan of archaeological trenches and geophysical survey anomalies	Modern	1:1,000
Detailed site location	Modern	1:1,000
1st edition OS map	c.1885	1:2,500
Aerial Photograph	1946	1:10,000

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



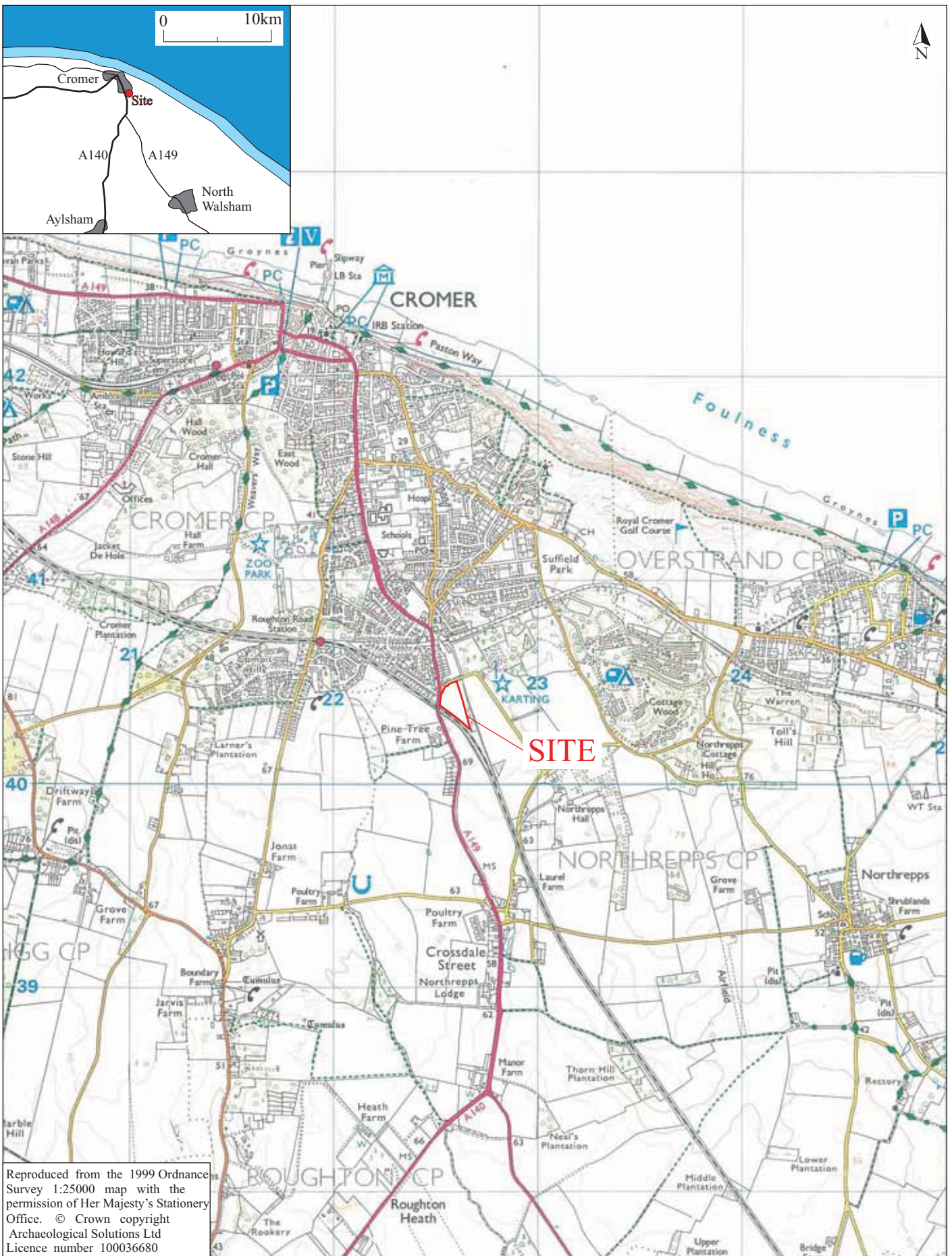
1
Trial Trench 1. Looking north



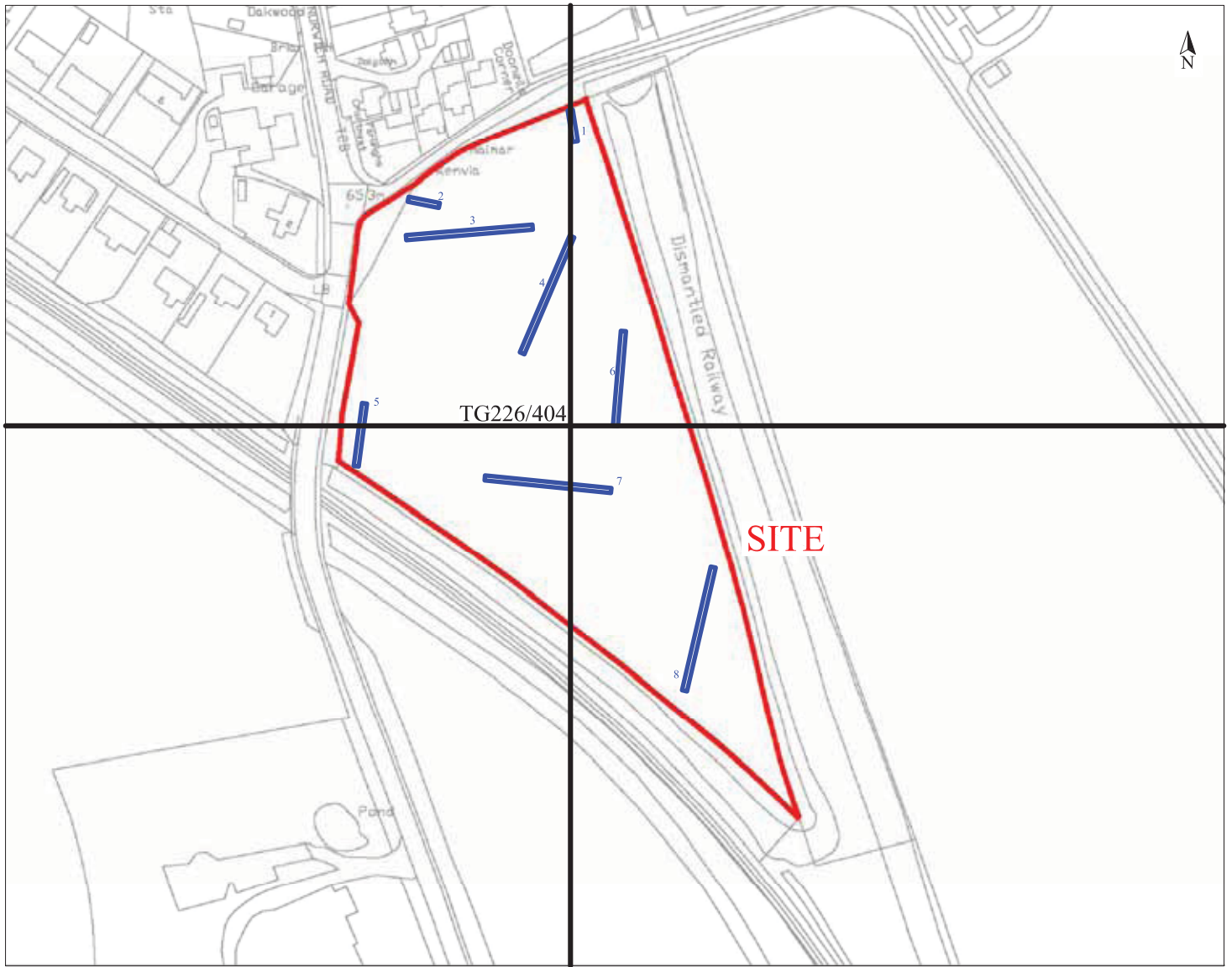
2
Trial Trench 6. Looking east



3
Trial Trench 8. Modern plough scars in foreground. Looking south

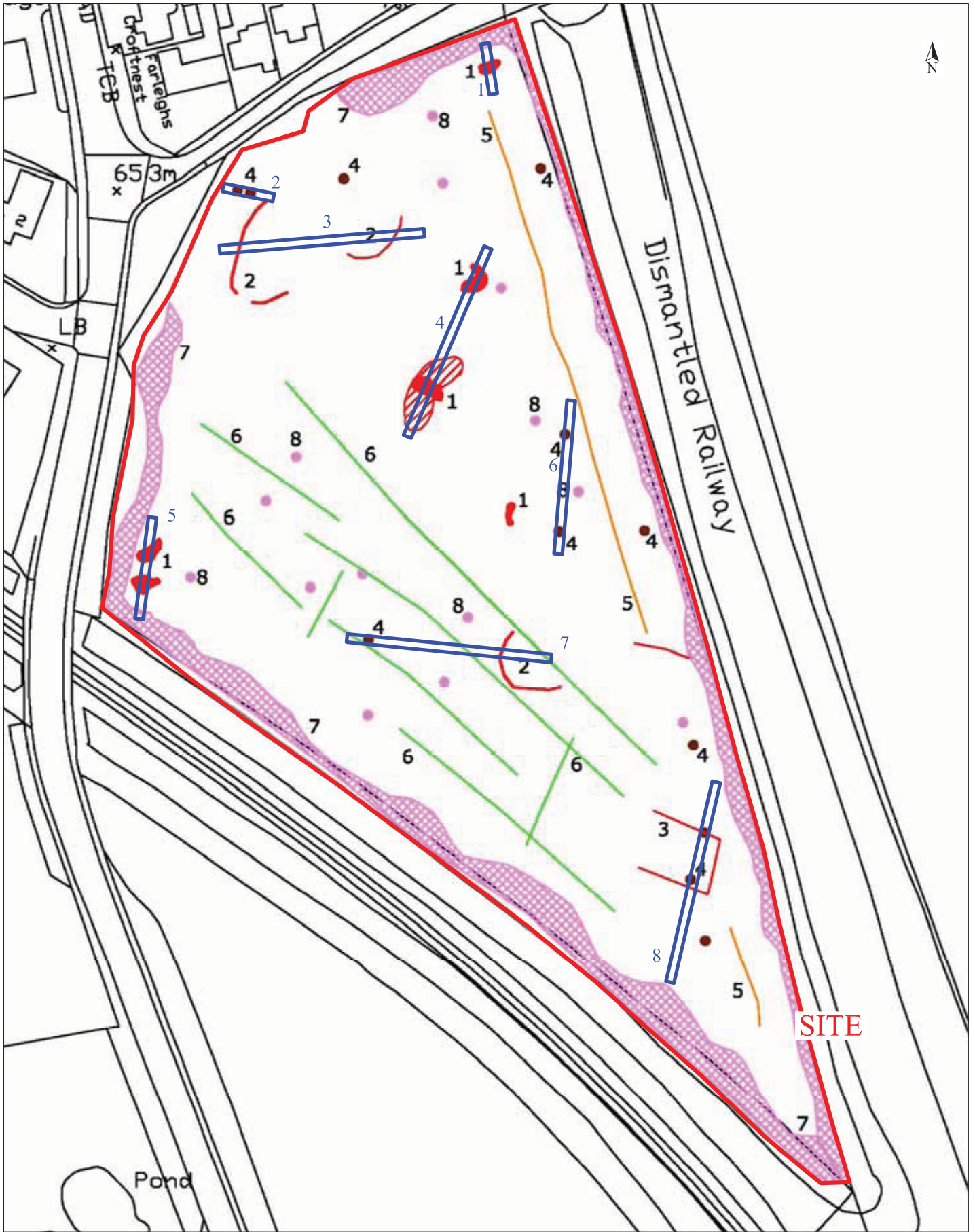


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 150m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:2000 at A4



0 50m

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Fig. 2b Plan of magnetometry anomalies and archaeological trenches

Scale 1:1000 at A4



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Fig. 3 1st edition OS map, c.1885
Not to scale



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Fig. 4 Aerial Photograph, 1946
Not to scale