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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**TANNIS COURT HOUSE, ASPENDEN, BUNTINGFORD  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

HER Ref. No. 295/12

Authors: Gareth Barlow	
NGR: TL 33750 28135	Report No. 4023
District: East Herts	Site Code: AS1475
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 4744
Signed:	Date: February 2012

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## **CONTENTS**

### ***OASIS SUMMARY SHEET***

#### ***SUMMARY***

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

#### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

#### ***BIBLIOGRAPHY***

#### ***APPENDICES***

**1 CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE**

**2 HER SUMMARY SHEET**

## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire.</i>		
Project description (250 words)	<p><i>In February 2012 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, (NGR TL 33750 28135). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for a new single-storey side extension to Tannis Court House (Planning Ref. 3/11/1348/FP).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies in Area of Archaeological Significance No.39, as identified on the local plan. This area includes the probable site of the manor of Tannis and Berkesden, the remains of a possible medieval moat and fish ponds, and the possible site of a church associated with the manor. However, no remains of this date were revealed within the reduced area, and the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>		
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>21<sup>st</sup> &amp; 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>P4744</i>	Site code	<i>AS1475</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Monitoring</i>		
Site status	<i>Area of archaeological significance No.39.</i>		
Current land use	<i>Private garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential extension</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern made ground.</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>East Herts</i>	<i>Aspenden</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>SG9 9PW</i>		
Area of site	<i>-</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 33750 28135</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.124.00m</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>HCC HEU</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Papworth Trust Home Solutions</i>		
Full title	<i>Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Hertfordshire.</i>		
Authors	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Report no.	<i>4023</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>February 2012</i>		

# TANNIS COURT HOUSE, ASPENDEN, BUNTINGFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

### **SUMMARY**

*In February 2012 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, (NGR TL 33750 28135). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for a new single-storey side extension to Tannis Court House (Planning Ref. 3/11/1348/FP).*

*The site lies in Area of Archaeological Significance No.39, as identified on the local plan. This area includes the probable site of the manor of Tannis and Berkesden, the remains of a possible medieval moat and fish ponds, and the possible site of a church associated with the manor. However, no archaeological features or finds were revealed during the monitoring.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In February 2012 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, (NGR TL 33750 28135). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for a new single-storey side extension to Tannis Court House (Planning Ref. 3/11/1348/FP).

1.2 The monitoring was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU) (Alison Tinniswood, dated 11/10/11), and a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) compiled by AS (dated 09/02/12), and approved by HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The objectives of the project of archaeological monitoring and recording were:

- to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;

- to secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme; and
- to secure the analysis, interpretation, publication (if required), long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.

### *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 (Fig. 1-2)**

2.1 The site lies in a rural location at Aspenden, and comprises the existing buildings of Tannis Court House. It is proposed to add a single storey side extension to the property.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 A Neolithic flint spear head and scraper have been found to the south of Tannis Court (MHT 4709; TL 3380 2794 & MHT 4710; TL 337 279). Cropmarks of two ring ditches possibly indicating Bronze Age round barrows are located to the north-east (MHT 10712; TL 3463 2848). The route of the Roman road between Baldock and Braughing is located 1.3km to the south-west which was used as a highway until c.1600. Substantial amounts of Roman tile and pottery were ploughed up some 900m north-west of the site (MHT 11569; TL 3283 2849).

3.2 The Tannis name at Tannis Court is associated with the family of Lucas Taney, documented in 1230, and Peter de Thaney, documented in 1294 (MHT4212; TL 337 281). The manor of Tannis was held in 1424 with the manor of Wakeley until the latter was sold in 1577. Both the Tannis medieval manor site

and Berkedon (described below) are on higher ground along a watershed. They appear to represent high medieval occupation of marginal land which then retracted in the 14<sup>th</sup> century leaving 'deserted medieval villages' (DMVs), although the evidence is mainly documentary. The water-filled south-east arm of a possible large moat may indicate the remains of a moated homestead at Tannis Court (MHT 1962; TL 3368 2809). The other arms have been destroyed by later building, while two probable fishponds are located to the north. The site of a demolished medieval church is recorded 100 - 200m to the north of Tannis Court (MHT 1961; TL 33662 28279).

3.3 The house currently standing at Tannis Court, now divided into two properties, dates from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century but is probably on or close to, the medieval site (MHT 17604; TL 33754 28122). In 1878 the house had orchards to the east and west, and ranges of farm buildings (MHT 17605) around a rectangular yard to the south. Beyond the orchard to the west was a walled kitchen garden, within the angle of the possible moat (MHT 1962). By 1898 most of the farm buildings had been demolished, and a new farmstead built south-west of the house taking up part of the area formerly occupied by the walled kitchen garden. Ranges of buildings stood around a new yard, which was divided into two compartments on either side of open-fronted sheds (which survived from the older layout), but only some of these buildings now survive (MHT 16680; TL 3418 2792).

3.4 Cropmarks of possible parallel ditches representing a trackway or boundary have been identified some 400m south-east of the site (MHT 16680; TL 3418 2792). The Cropmark of a sinuous double ditched trackway, aligned north-east to south-west, and therefore potentially running towards Tannis Court is located 1km to the south-west (MHT 2190).

3.5 A medieval manor of Berkesdon also existed in similar circumstances to the manor at Tannis Court (MHT4212). In 1066 it was held by Alward, one of Earl Harold's men, and after the Conquest it became part of the possessions of Count Eustace of Boulogne, and remained attached to the Honour of Boulogne. There is some confusion as to its location because the grid reference for Berkesdon manor is the same as Tannis manor (TL 337 281), but this may be because the manors of Tannis Court and Berkesdon were acquired by Henry Halfhide in 1577 and subsequently descended together. 'Berkeden' medieval village was also deserted c1400 and is given a centre point at Berkesdon Green, 750m south of the site (MHT 998; TL 339 273). Earthworks are present in this area most notably a rectangular mound 40 feet long and 2 feet high. Parts of the abandoned settlement, and the remains of a moat, are shown on later 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps. Cropmarks 150m to the east could represent a building in an enclosure. Pits and banks possibly denoting quarrying are also present, and 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century sherds of pottery have been recovered in the area. However, the 'remains of the settlement' shown on later 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps are of a working farmstead, with a substantial house, which succeeded the medieval settlement and stood

until the 20th century (MHT 17803), and the mound and other debris belong to these post-medieval buildings.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitoring and recording encompassed the groundworks associated with the ground reduction of the footprint of the extension to the existing building and its associated patio and access ramp.

4.2 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all ground works, inspection of subsoil, make-up layers, and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps for archaeological finds and the recording of soil profiles. Deposits were recorded by means of *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

#### 5 RESULTS

5.1 The groundworks observed comprised ground reduction across the footprint of the extension and its associated patio and access ramp. The reduction was undertaken using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.20m wide toothless ditching bucket. The ground was reduced to the level of the natural on the western side.

<i>Sample section 1.</i>		
<i>East facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 124.57m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown, organic clay silt with occasional small sub-angular flints and chalk flecks.
0.27 – 0.40m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid grey brown clay silt with moderate modern CBM fragments and occasional medium and large sub-angular flints.
0.40 – 0.50m	L1002	Modern made ground. Firm, mid orange sandy clay with frequent rounded gravel.
0.50 – 0.92m	L1003	Modern made ground. Firm, pale-mid brownish grey clay silt with occasional small mid orange sand lenses, occasional chalk flecks, and very occasional medium and large rounded chalk.
0.92m+	L1004	Natural deposits. Firm, pale yellow brown silty clay with moderate chalk flecks, occasional medium rounded chalk, and very occasional small angular flints.

<i>Sample section 2.</i>		
<i>South facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 124.46m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.20 – 0.33m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.33 – 70m+	L1003	Modern made ground. As above.
0.70m+	L1004	Natural deposits. As above.

<i>Sample section 3.</i>		
<i>West facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 124.m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.20 – 0.29m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.29+	L1004	Natural deposits. As above.

*Description: No archaeological finds or features were present.*

## **6 CONFIDENCE RATING**

6.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds during the archaeological monitoring.

## **7 DEPOSIT MODEL**

7.1 Topsoil L1000 was a firm, dark grey brown, organic clay silt with occasional small sub-angular flints and chalk flecks. It was present across the site varying in thickness from 0.27m in the west (Sample Section 1) to 0.20m in the east (Sample section 3).

7.2 Beneath L1000 was Subsoil L1001, a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with moderate modern CBM fragments and occasional medium and large sub-angular flints. It was also present across the site, in a layer 0.13 – 0.09m thick.

7.3 In the eastern half of the reduced area Subsoil L1001 directly overlay the natural deposits (L1004). The latter were encountered, on this side, at a depth of 0.92m and consisted of a firm, pale yellow brown silty clay with moderate chalk flecks, occasional medium rounded chalk, and very occasional small angular flints.

7.4 In the western half of the trench the subsoil (L1001) overlay a layer of made ground (L1003; between 0.37m & 0.42m thick). L1003 comprised a firm, pale-mid brownish grey clay silt with occasional small mid orange sand lenses, occasional chalk flecks, and very occasional medium and large rounded chalk.



7.5 Also in the western half of the reduced area, extending from the western baulk by a maximum of 1.00m, below the subsoil (L1001) and above the made ground (L1003) was a 0.10m thick layer (L1002) of firm, mid orange sandy clay with frequent rounded gravel.

7.6 At the base of the sequence, in this half, the natural deposits (L1004) were encountered at depths of between 0.92m in the west and 0.70m in the east.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

8.1 The site lies in Area of Archaeological Significance No.39, as identified on the local plan. This area includes the probable site of the manor of Tannis and Berkesden, the remains of a possible medieval moat and fish ponds, and the possible site of a church associated with the manor. However, no archaeological features or finds were revealed during the monitoring.

8.2 The groundworks revealed natural deposits overlain by a subsoil and a topsoil in the eastern half of the reduced area. In the western half it would appear that the ground had been reduced by between 0.40m & 0.70m below the level of the natural, likely in connection with the construction or demolition of the 'substantial' outbuilding demolished sometime between 1923 and 1984. No evidence for the footings for this outbuilding were found, although, some demolition rubble was present in the subsoil (L1001) and made ground layer (L1003), consisting of shallow frogged, bright red, brick fragments, roofing slate fragments, and plastic fittings, for example, wall mounted light switches.

## **9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

9.1 The archive will be deposited with the Hertford Museum. The archive will be adequately catalogued, labelled and packaged for transfer and storage in accordance with the guidelines set out in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guideline No. 2* and other relevant reference documents. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Papworth Trust Home Solutions for their co-operation and funding of the monitoring (in particular Mr Robert Buss for his assistance). AS thanks Dr. Isobel Thompson for providing the HER information and for commenting on the site. AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Ms Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gurney, D. 2003, *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14/ALGAO

Institute for Archaeologists, 1994 (revised 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. IFA

## APPENDIX 1      CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

<b>Records</b>	<b>Number</b>
Brief	Y
Specification	Y
Registers	Context, Drawing, Photographic
Context Sheets	(1000) – (1004)
Site drawings A1	-
Site drawings A3	1
Site drawings A4	-
Site photographs b/w	Y
Site photographs colour slides	Y
Digital Photographs	Y

## APPENDIX 2 HER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site Name</b>	Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire	District: E Herts
<b>Village/Town:</b> Aspenden	<b>Parish:</b> Aspenden
<b>Planning application reference:</b>	Planning Ref. 3/11/1348/FP
<b>Client name/address/tel:</b>	Papworth Trust Home Solutions
<b>Nature of application:</b>	Residential extension
<b>Present land use:</b>	Garden
<b>Size of application area:</b> c. 80m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated</b> c. 80m <sup>2</sup>
<b>NGR (8 figures):</b>	TL 3370 2814
<b>Site Code:</b>	AS 1475
<b>Site director/Organization:</b>	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
<b>Type of work:</b>	Archaeological monitoring and recording
<b>Date of work:</b>	21 & 22 February 2012
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b>	Hertford
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	<b>Periods represented:</b> -
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports:</b> -	-
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>	<p><i>In February 2012 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Tannis Court House, Aspenden, Buntingford, Hertfordshire, (NGR TL 33750 28135). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for a new single-storey side extension to Tannis Court House (Planning Ref. 3/11/1348/FP).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies in Area of Archaeological Significance No.39, as identified on the local plan. This area includes the probable site of the manor of Tannis and Berkesden, the remains of a possible medieval moat and fish ponds, and the possible site of a church associated with the manor. However, no remains of this date were revealed within the reduced area, and the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>
<b>Author of summary:</b> Gareth Barlow	<b>Date of Summary:</b> February 2012

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

1



*Front of Tannis Court House. Looking northwest.*

2



*Rear of Tannis Court House. Looking west.*

3



*Work commencing to rear of Tannis Court House. Looking west.*

4



*Sample section 1. Looking west.*

5

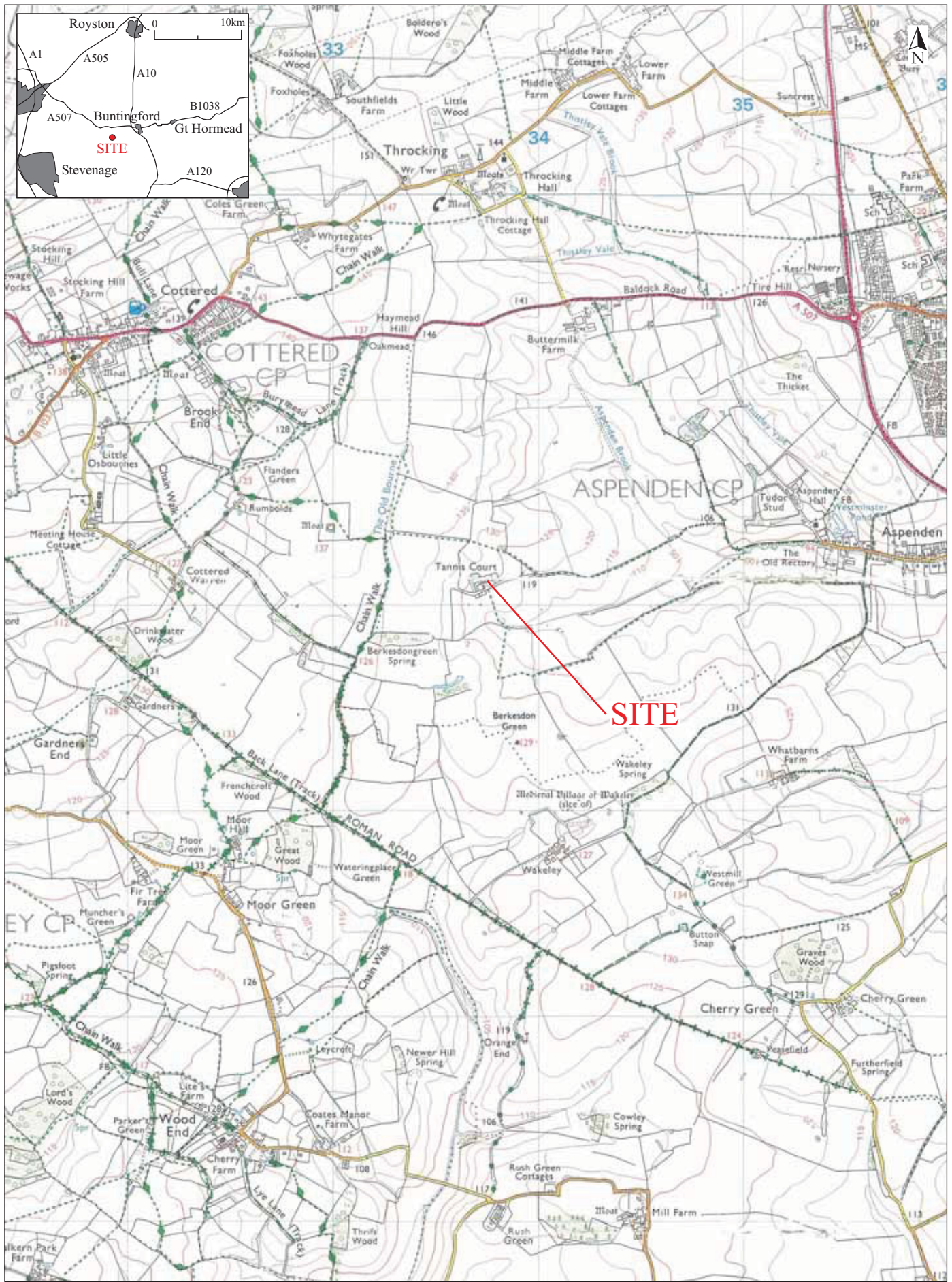


*Sample section 2. Looking north.*

6

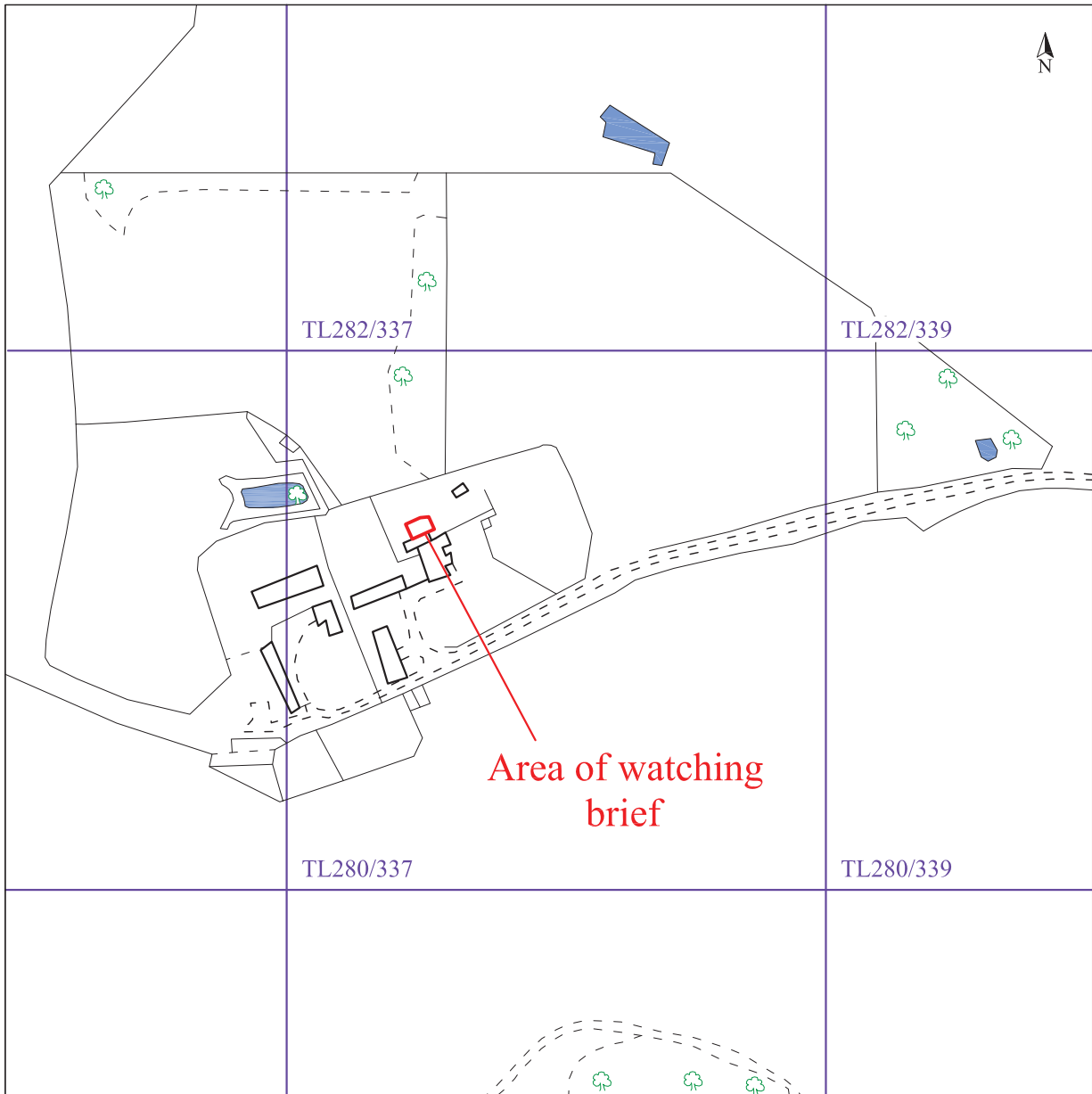


*Post excavation view of extension footprint. Looking east.*



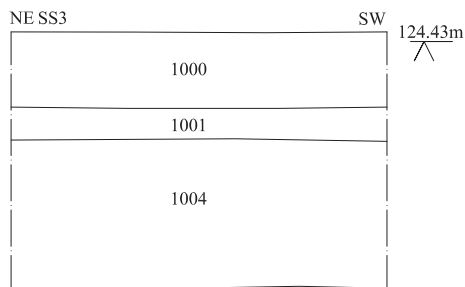
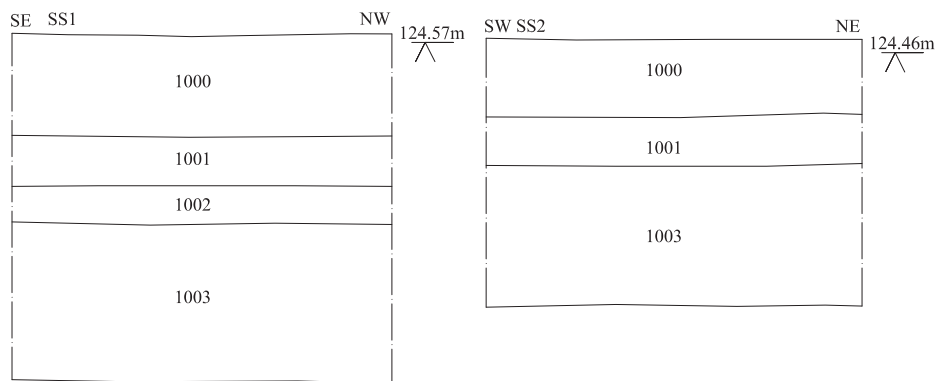
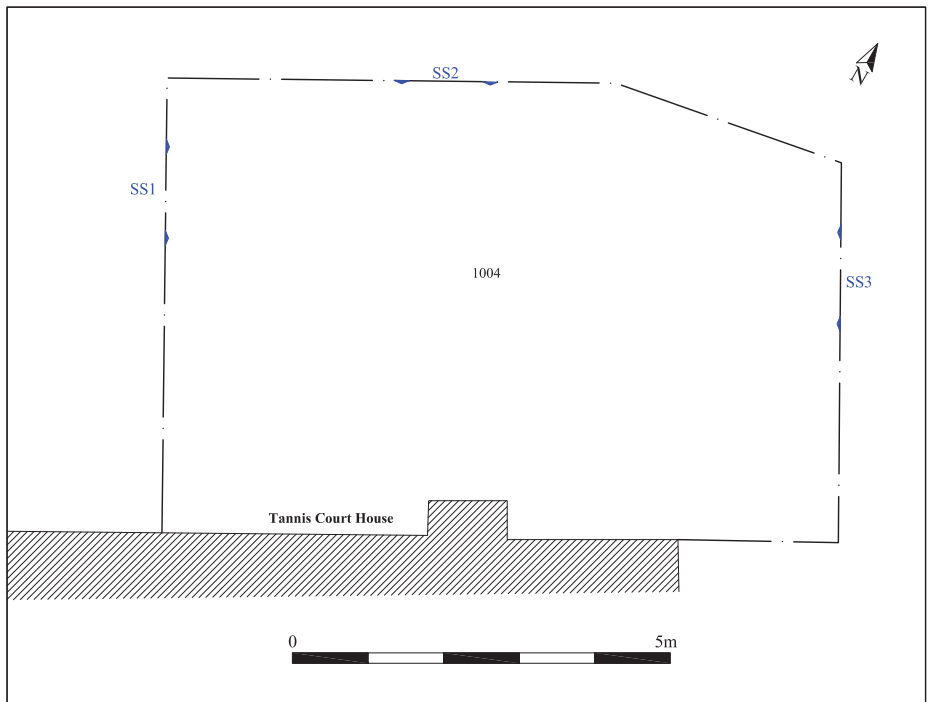
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:2500 at A4



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**Fig. 3 Area of watching brief & sample sections**

Scale plan at 1:100 & sections at 1:20 at A4