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**LAND AT GOSLING HALL, LITTLE LAVER, ONGAR,  
ESSEX CM5 0JH  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski (Fieldwork & Report) Peter Thompson (Archaeological Background)	
NGR: TL 5455 0945	Report No: 4304
District: Epping Forest	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin MIfA	Project No: P5233
Signed:	Date: April 2013

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*Historic building recording and appraisals*  
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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Land at Gosling Hall, Little Laver, Ongar, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In April 2013 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Gosling Hall, Little Laver, Ongar, Essex CM5 0JH (TL 5455 0945). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Keith Hart and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Epping Forest District Council, as advised by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM), attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new house with a footprint of 203 sq ft and a garage (Planning Ref. EPF/2013/12).</i></p> <p><i>The site comprises the existing dwelling, yard and outbuildings of Gosling Hall, including a Grade II listed barn of late 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date (HER 33047), set in a large plot on the western side of Little Laver road. It lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the historic farmyard of Gosling Hall, adjacent to a late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century barn. The site lies to the south of the medieval parish church at Little Laver, adjacent to a medieval moated site.</i></p> <p><i>Cropmarks to the south and west of the site relate to early field boundaries (HER17811 &amp; 19277). Excavations in the field to the south west of the site recovered evidence of potential Roman settlement including human remains and artefacts, along with Iron Age, medieval and 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds (HER 4116-7). Medieval moated sites lie close by to the north (Little Laver Lodge – HER4112) and east (Envilles Farm – HER 4146)</i></p> <p><i>In the event a modern pit, F1003, was recorded in Trench 1.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>April 2013</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P5233</i>	Site code	
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>In close proximity to a Grade II Listed barn</i>		
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>New house and garage</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern pit</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>None</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Epping Forest</i>	<i>Little Laver</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CM5 0JH</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.200sq ft</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5455 0945</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>Approximately 76-79m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council HEM Team (Laura Belton)</i>		
Project Supervisor	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Keith Hart</i>		
Full title	<i>Land at Gosling Hall, Little Laver, Ongar, Essex. An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z., and Thompson, P.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4304</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>April 2013</i>		

**LAND AT GOSLING HALL, LITTLE LAVER,  
ONGAR, ESSEX  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY**

*In April 2013 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Gosling Hall, Little Laver, Ongar, Essex CM5 0JH (TL 5455 0945). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Keith Hart and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Epping Forest District Council, as advised by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM), attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new house with a footprint of 203 sq ft and a garage (Planning Ref. EPF/2013/12).*

*The site comprises the existing dwelling, yard and outbuildings of Gosling Hall, including a Grade II listed barn of late 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date (HER 33047), set in a large plot on the western side of Little Laver road. It lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the historic farmyard of Gosling Hall, adjacent to a late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century barn. The site lies to the south of the medieval parish church at Little Laver, adjacent to a medieval moated site.*

*Cropmarks to the south and west of the site relate to early field boundaries (HER17811 & 19277). Excavations in the field to the south west of the site recovered evidence of potential Roman settlement including human remains and artefacts, along with Iron Age, medieval and 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds (HER 4116-7). Medieval moated sites lie close by to the north (Little Laver Lodge – HER4112) and east (Envilles Farm – HER 4146)*

*In the event a modern pit, F1003, was recorded in Trench 1.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In April 2013 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Gosling Hall, Little Laver, Ongar, Essex CM5 0JH (TL 5455 0945; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Keith Hart and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Epping Forest District Council, as advised by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM), attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new house with a footprint of 203 sq ft and a garage (Planning Ref. EPF/2013/12).

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM) (Laura Belton dated 02/2013), and a written scheme of investigation

prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 22/03/2013). The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney (2003) 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*, and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The aims of the evaluation were to investigate the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. The specific research aims were to characterise any further evidence of Iron Age/Roman activity as recorded adjacent to the site, and to characterise any evidence of medieval activity associated with the historic core of Little Laver, or any predecessor to Gosling Hall.

#### *Planning policy context*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF 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. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings and scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE** Figs.1 & 2

2.1 Little Laver lies approximately 9km east of Harlow. The site comprises the existing dwelling, yard and outbuildings of Gosling Hall, including a Grade II listed barn of late 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date (HER 33047), set in a large plot on the western side of Little Laver road.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

3.1 The site is located between approximately 76-79m AOD with a small stream 250m to the north which curves southwards running to the west of the site. The local soils are chalky till of the Hanslope association comprising slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. The underlying geology is the London Clay formation.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the historic farmyard of Gosling Hall, adjacent to a late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century barn which is Grade II listed (CHER 33047). The site lies 140m to the south of the medieval parish church of St Mary at Little Laver (CHER 33042). The church dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century with 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations and is Grade II\* listed. Immediately to the east of the church is the manor house of Little Laver Grange, which is also Grade II\* listed containing architectural features dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (CHER 4113). The manor house appears to be surrounded by a moat thought to date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century or possibly earlier (CHER 4112). Three other listed buildings are located just to the south and east of the church comprising two Grade II listed late medieval/early post-medieval barns (CHER33045, 33046), and a 19<sup>th</sup> century bake house (CHER 33044).

4.2 Cropmarks of old field boundaries shown on the First Edition 6 inch OS map are located in the field immediately to the west of the land plot enclosing Gosling Hall (CHER 548 092). Cropmarks of linear features and old field boundaries with a centre point of TL 548 092 are present at Coachman's Cottages 350m south of the site (CHER 17811). An excavation centred on 400m south-west of the site identified a Roman occupation site comprising a ditch and a layer of dark earth. The numerous finds included pottery, animal bone, an Antonine coin and other metal work, oyster shell, glass slag and a fragment of human skull (CHER 4114). Evidence for earlier occupation was also recovered in the form of 17 Iron Age sherds (CHER 4115) while a sherd each of medieval and 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery were also present (CHER 4116, 4117).

4.3 Another possible medieval homestead moat is located 470m south-west of Gosling Hall (CHER 4235), with the site of a post-medieval windmill abutting its west side (CHER 4118). Enville Farm and moated site is located 550m east of Gosling Hall; the farm is 19<sup>th</sup> century but the moat is thought to be medieval (CHER 4147, 15449, 4146). A large area to the west of Enville Wood and Little Wood centred on TL 551 092 contain cropmarks including a ring ditch and linear ditch (CHER 19246). The course of a Roman Road is located 830m to the east which runs north-east from Black Cat Cottage (CHER 4207).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The brief required a minimum 10% sample of the new house and garage to be investigated by trial trenching, with a further 2% held in reserve to further characterise any revealed remains. A single trench of 10m x 1.6m was excavated within the footprint of the proposed new house and a second trench of 5m x 1.6m was excavated within the footprint of the new garage. The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 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 checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

### Trench 1 (Figs. 2-4)

<i>Sample section 1A:</i> <i>North east end, south-east facing</i> <i>0.00m = 78.41m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark brownish grey, friable, sandy silt
0.14 – 0.37m	L1001	Made Ground. Dark grey, friable, clayey silt with frequent chalk nodules, CBM and flint.
0.37m +	L1002	Natural. Light – mid yellow and grey, compact, clay with frequent chalk nodules

<i>Sample section 1B:</i> <i>South-west end, south-east facing</i> <i>0.00m = 78.32m AOD</i>		
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0.00 – 0.31m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.33m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 1 contained Pit F1003 which was modern. The trench also contained a modern drain and a modern soakaway.*

Pit F1003 was circular in plan (0.91m x 0.77m x 0.39m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1004, was a dark greenish yellow, compact, silty clay. It contained modern (willow pattern) pottery.

## **Trench 2** (Figs. 2-4)

<i>Sample section 2A: Central, north facing 0.00m = 78.53m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.17m	L1005	Levelling layer of former yard/drive. Dark orange, loose, sand with frequent stones, CBM and flint.
0.17 – 0.44m	L1006	Made Ground. Dark grey, compact, clayey silt with frequent modern CBM.
0.44m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds. A small modern disturbance was present.*

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

7.1 Some modern disturbance was present in both trenches but it is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or finds.

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 In Trench 1 uppermost was Topsoil L1000, a dark brownish grey, friable, sandy silt (0.14 – 0.31m thick). At the north east end of the trench it overlay Made Ground L1001 (c.23m thick). L1000 and L1002 overlay the Natural, a light – mid yellow and grey, compact, caly with frequent chalk nodules (0.37m below the present day ground surface).

8.2 In Trench 2 uppermost was Levelling Layer L1005 (0.17m thick) which overlay Modern Made Ground L1006 (0.27m thick). The latter, L1006, overlay the Natural (0.44m below the present day ground surface).

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site comprises the existing dwelling, yard and outbuildings of Gosling Hall, including a Grade II listed barn of late 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century date (HER 33047), set in a large plot on the western side of Little Laver road. It lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the historic farmyard of Gosling Hall, adjacent to a late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century barn. The site lies to the south of the medieval parish church at Little Laver, adjacent to a medieval moated site within an area that has revealed cropmark evidence of early activity and Iron Age and Roman material.

9.2 Cropmarks to the east and west of the site relate to early field boundaries (HER17811 & 19277). Excavations in the field to the south west of the site have also revealed a range of archaeological features including human remains, potential settlement evidence and artefacts of Roman date, along with finds of Iron Age and 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds (HER 4116-7). Medieval moated sites lie close by to the north (Little Laver Lodge – HER4112) and east (Envilles Farm – HER 4146)

9.3 In the event a modern pit, F1003, was recorded in Trench 1.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Epping 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.

## **11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Mr Keith Hart for commissioning this evaluation and for his assistance.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Ms Laura Belton and Ms Maria Medlycott of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team, and to Ms Maria Medlycott for providing the HER information.

## **12 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

British Geological Survey 1991 *East Anglia Sheet 52°N-00° 1:250,000 Series Quaternary Geology*. Ordnance Survey, Southampton

Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper no. 14

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2008) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*

## APPENDIX 1      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

### **P5233, Gosling Hall, Essex**

Concordance of finds by  
feature

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date	CBM (g)
1001				Made Ground	Post-medieval	2097

## APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORT

### **The Ceramic Building Materials**

*Andrew Peachey*

A single complete brick (2097g) was recovered from Made Ground L1001). The brick has dimensions of 210x100x50mm with a flat base and fairly regular arrises and faces, characteristic of red bricks manufactured in the late 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Gosling Hall house, Little Laver, Essex. Looking north-west.



DP 2. The barn. Looking north-north-east.



DP 3. Trench 1. Looking south-south-east.



DP 4. Trench 1. Looking north-east.



DP 5. Trench 1, north-east end. Sample section 1A. Looking north-west.



DP 6. Trench 1, south-west end. Sample section 1B. Looking north-west.



DP 7. Trench 1, Pit F1003. Looking south-west.



DP 8. Trench 2. Looking west.



DP 9. Trench 2. Looking east-north-east.

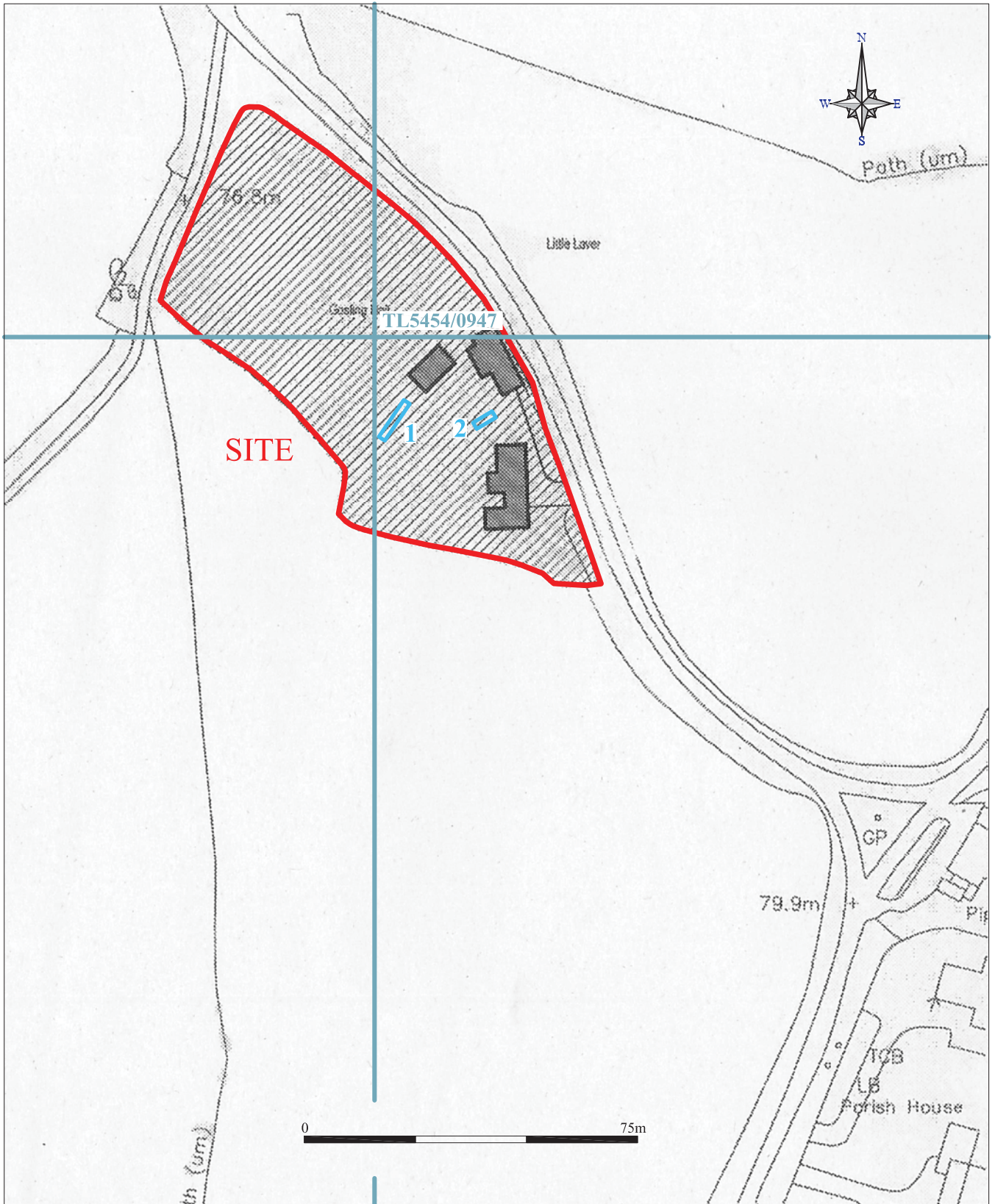


DP 10. Trench 2, central part. Sample section 2A. Looking south-south-east.



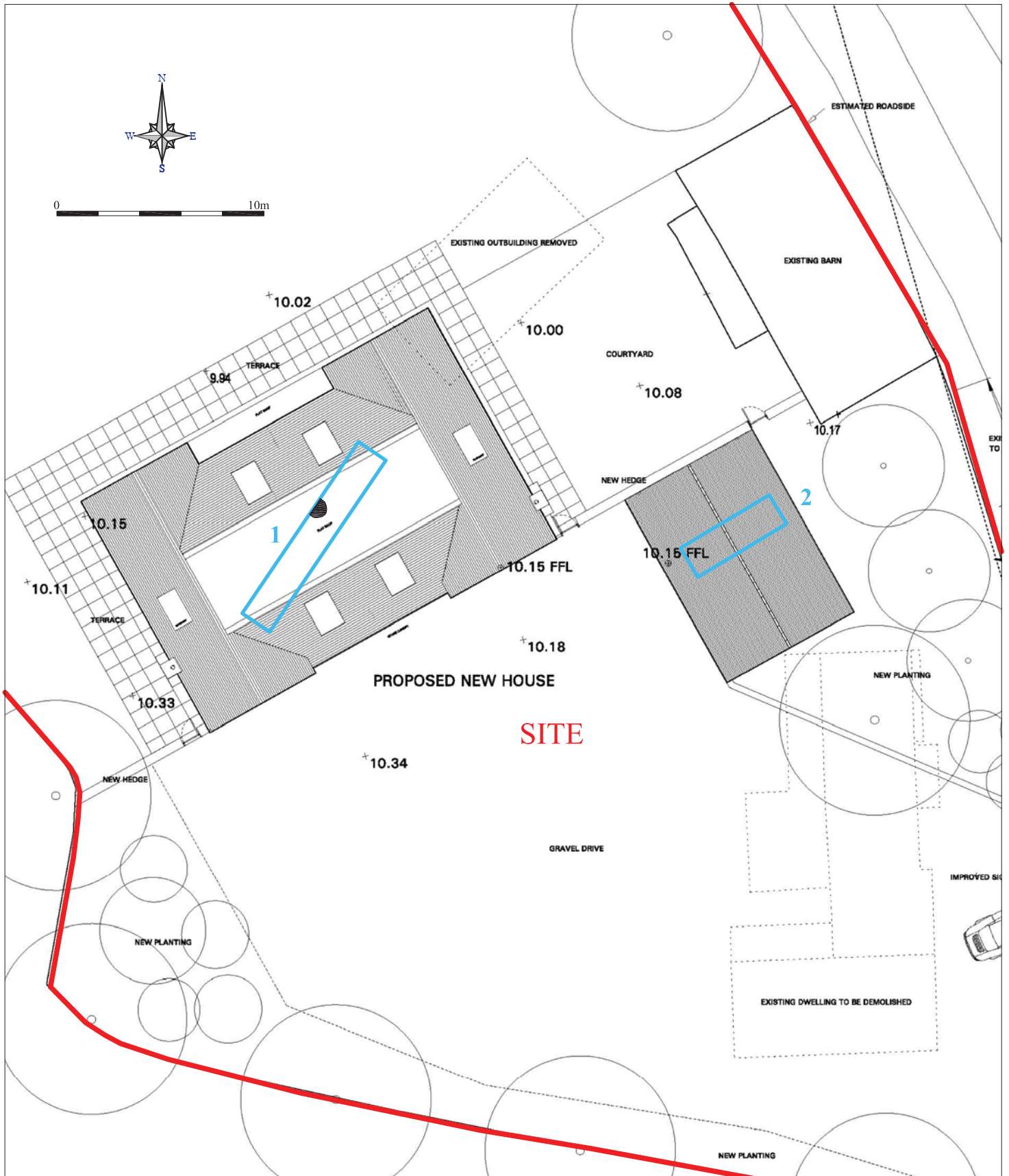
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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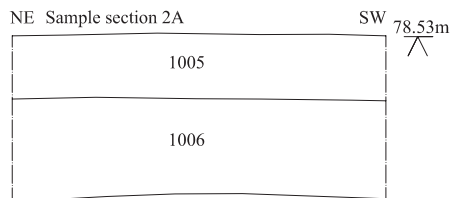
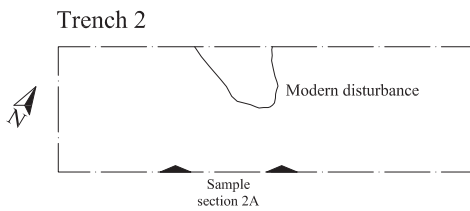
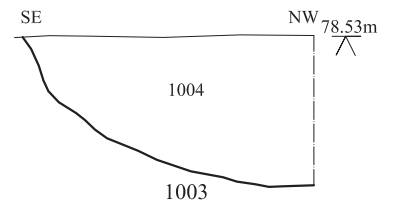
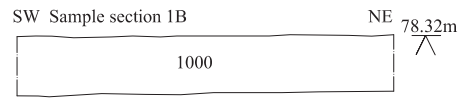
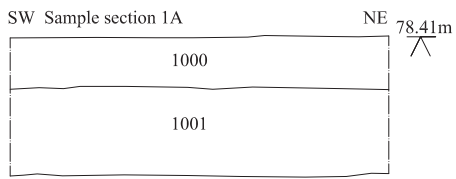
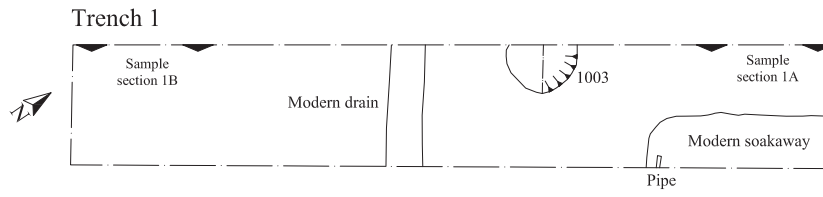
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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:1250 at A4



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**Fig. 3 Proposed development plan**  
Scale 1:250 at A4





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**Fig. 4 Trench plans and sections**

Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A4