
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**PROPOSED DETACHED DWELLING, ROBIN HOOD PH,
63 HIGH STREET, WALKERN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

HER Enquiry No: 91/12

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TL 28935 26207	Report No: 4308
District: East Herts	Site Code: AS 1582
Approved: Claire Halpin MfA	Project No: 5210
Signed:	Date: 29 April 2013

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CONTENTS

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

- 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)**
- 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE**
- 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET**

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Proposed detached dwelling, Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In March and April 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at land rear of Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 28937 26207). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Geoffrey Smith of Explorer Properties Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single detached dwelling.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within the historic core of the village of Walkern, within Area of Archaeological Significance 29, as identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later historic core of the village, which has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds with the exception of two modern drains.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>25-26/03 and 08/04/2013</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>5210</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1582</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Monitoring & Recording</i>		
Site status	<i>Within Area of Archaeological Significance 29</i>		
Current land use	<i>Rear garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>New residential dwelling</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Two modern drains</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>East Herts</i>	<i>Walkern</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>SG2 7NT</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 900m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 28937 26207</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>82.40/85.30m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>HCC HEU</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Explorer Properties Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Proposed new detached dwelling, Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Monitoring & Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4308</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>29 April 2013</i>		

PROPOSED NEW DETACHED DWELLING, ROBIN HOOD PH, 63 HIGH STREET, WALKERN, HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

SUMMARY

In March and April 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at land rear of Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 28937 26207). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Geoffrey Smith of Explorer Properties Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single detached dwelling.

The site lies within the historic core of the village of Walkern, within Area of Archaeological Significance 29, as identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later historic core of the village, which has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains

In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds with the exception of two modern drains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March and April 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at land rear of Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 28937 26207; Figs. 1 & 2). The plot is to be known as 4 Totts Lane. The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Geoffrey Smith of Explorer Properties Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single detached dwelling (East Herts District Council Planning Ref. 3/11/0316/FP).

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance to a brief issued by Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 07/02/2013), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 14/02/2013), 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), and 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 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, 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

2.1 No. 65 High Street is located within the village of Walkern, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The village is situated approximately c. 2km west of Stevenage. The site lies along the eastern frontage of the High Street (B1037), which runs through the village. It lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance No 29, as identified on the EHDC Local Plan, which encompasses the medieval extent of the settlement of Walkern. The site also lies within Walkern's Conservation Area (CA), with the late Saxon parish church of St Mary located to the east.

2.2 The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land running east-south-eastwards from the eastern frontage of the High Street (Fig. 2). The High Street forms its western boundary whilst Totts Lane forms the northern boundary and residential gardens associated with Nos. 65 and 67 High Street limit the site to the south. To the immediate east of the site lies another property off Totts Lane.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies at approximately 83m AOD, on a moderate slope with easterly exposition within the valley of the River Beane, which flows north to southwards through the village of Walkern. The Walkern area is located on a bed of plateau drift (variable gravelly clays), with localised deposits of gravel and alluvium occur close to the River Beane (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils of the area comprise those of the Hornbeam 2 association, which are described as deep fine loamy clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, suitable for cereals and grassland rotation (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). An evaluation revealed a uniform deposit model across the site, comprising a dark greyish brown silty clay topsoil 0.22 to 0.36m in depth overlying a mid reddish brown clay natural drift geology (Williamson *et al* 2007). A subsequent watching brief revealed a very similar stratigraphy with the natural drift geology at c. 0.50m below existing ground level (Pozorski 2009).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 There is little evidence for prehistoric settlement in the area surrounding Walkern. Metal-detector finds comprise five Bronze Age tools (HER 11537), including an axe head, located c.400m to the south-west of the site. The regional pattern of prehistoric settlement sees little exploitation of the heavier claylands until the Bronze Age (Hunter 1999). However, the virtual absence of material remains in the vicinity of the site has led to suggestions that agricultural activity did not begin in earnest until the mid 1st millennium BC (Going & Hunn 1999).

Romano-British

4.2 There appears to have been fairly intensive exploitation of the area during the Romano-British period, with remains at Stanbro Common, Walkern (HER 9354), Robins Hall and Great Collens Wood confirming a pattern of farm-holdings along the Beane valley (Going & Hunn 1999). Early Roman activity was identified on the land to the north of the Yew Tree PH close by to the north (Pozorski 2009), with a large isolated pit containing pottery sherds of mid to late 1st century date and building materials (HER 16240). Excavations at Boxfield Farm further westwards revealed part of a Romano-British field system, a small 2nd century cremation, a coin hoard, a corn drier and a series

of ponds (Going & Hunn 1999). There is further evidence of Roman activity at Walkern with a cinerary urn (HER 1529) and a large oval pit containing late Iron Age grog-tempered and early Roman sherds, fired clay, and animal bone found at The Yew Tree public house site 50m to the north (Williamson *et al* 2007; HER 16240). Given the virtual absence of prehistoric activity in the area contrasting with the significant Roman presence, many of the undated cropmarks of linear ditches and enclosures (HER 11223) may well date to this period.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

4.3 The manor of Walkern or *Walchra* (HER 2656) is first mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 with a priest, suggesting that the church was in existence since Saxon times (Morris 1976). Walkern's wooden church was replaced by its flint and clunch descendant between 1042 and 1066 (HER 2909) and the extant church of St Mary's comprises a Grade I listed structure with 11th century nave, early 12th century south aisle and later additions. The place-name probably derives from the Old English *wealc-ærn*, or a house for washing cloth, suggesting the presence of an early fulling mill on the River Beane (Gover *et al* 1970, 141). Despite the village of Walkern dating to the medieval period (HER 2656), no further medieval remains are recorded in proximity of the site other than a possible moat at Finches End (HER 6400).

Post-medieval and later

4.4 The post-medieval history of Walkern sees the gradual expansion and development of the village (Page 1912). Post-medieval and later standing buildings are recorded in proximity to the site (Appendix 1 below), as well as former farm complexes and agricultural structures (HERs 4842, 13358 & 13363). No. 98 High Street (HER 10804), c.100m south from the site, is a Grade II listed building dating from the early 1700s, and an archaeological evaluation at land to the rear located former boundaries dating to the post-medieval period. The High Street has also revealed evidence for a late 19th or early 20th century cess pit (HER 16241) and early 20th century allotments within medieval glebe land (HER 13719). Later industrial activity is attested by the erection of a maltings (HER 5401) and a brewery (HER 5450) forming part of the Victoria Works built along the High Street in c. 1790.

4.5 The Robin Hood PH is grade II listed and described as late 17th or early 18th century in date. Historic building recording conducted by AS in advance of and during the conversion of the building to residential use in 2012 confirmed this date (Collins *et al* 2012).

4.6 Extensive previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken by AS at The Yew Tree public house on the High Street and only 50m to the north of the site. The evaluation revealed post-medieval and later north-east to south-west aligned drainage gullies cut into the natural drift geology, indicating that the site has probably always been used for agricultural purposes (Williamson *et al* 2007).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The principal element monitored was mechanically-excavated foundation trenches for the new house and associated ground reduction within the house footprint (Fig. 3).

5.2 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of the groundworks, 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.4

Deposits located within area of monitoring were recorded in sample sections shown below.

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 3)</i> <i>South foundation trench, west end, facing north-north-east</i> <i>0.00 = 83.45m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.24m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid greyish brown, soft to firm, sandy silt.
0.24m+	L1001	Subsoil. Mid yellowish brown, firm, sandy silt with gravel

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 4-5)</i> <i>West foundation trench, facing west-north-west</i> <i>0.00 = 83.35m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.08m	L1002	Yard Surface. Dark grey, compacted, tarmac and gravel.
0.08 – 0.32m	L1003	Made Ground. Yellow, loose, sand with mid brown, firm, sandy silt.
0.32 – 0.76m	L1004	Mid brown, firm, sandy silt.
0.76m+	L1005	Natural. Mid yellow, compact, clay

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 6)</i> <i>North foundation trench, west end, facing south-west-south</i> <i>0.00 = 83.05m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.07m	L1002	Yard Surface. As above.
0.07 – 0.43m	L1003	Made Ground. As above.
0.43 – 0.69m	L1004	As above.
0.69m+	L1005	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 7)</i> <i>West/central foundation trench, south end, facing east-south-east</i> <i>0.00 = 83.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1011	Light to mid yellow, compact, coarse sand.
0.14 – 0.52m	L1012	Made Ground. Light yellow, loose, sand with bid brown, friable, silt with pockets of charcoal and burnt materials.
0.52m+	L1013	Subsoil. Mid brown, firm, sandy silt.

<i>Sample section 5 (DP 10)</i> <i>North foundation trench, east part, facing south-south-west</i> <i>0.00 = 82.95m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.43m+	L1005	Natural clay. As above.

No archaeological features or finds were identified during the monitoring with the exception of two, linear, modern brick drains (M1006 and M1009).

M1009 (DP 5) was present along the southern boundary of the site. Only its northern side was exposed as a single brick wall (2.40m+ 0.12m) with an arch-like ceiling only partially preserved. The bricks (0.220m x 0.115m x 0.055m) were dark red and bonded with yellow mortar. The drain was over 1m wide.

M1006 was present in central part of the site (DP 4). It measured 10m+ x 1.20m+ x 1.30m, and was constructed of pale yellow bricks bonded with creamy mortar.

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 site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a mid greyish brown, soft to firm, sandy silt (0.15 – 0.30m thick). Within parts of the site where the ground was not disturbed by modern activity it overlay Subsoil L1001, a mid yellowish brown, firm, sandy silt with gravel (0.10 – 0.25m thick). A similar subsoil, L1013, was also present above natural clay. The centre of the site contained deposits of made ground below the topsoil and above the natural.

8.2 The natural clay, L1005, was present at 0.37 – 1.10m below existing ground level and comprised a light to mid yellow, compact, clay with occasional flints and localised lenses of dark yellow gravel with frequent flints.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeology. Such remains have been found in the vicinity of the site which is located within the core of historic village.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed with an exception of two modern drains probably associated with the former Robin Hood PH. The central part of the site had suffered some modern disturbance. The intact areas contained no archaeological remains and no residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Geoffrey Smith of Explorer Properties Ltd for commissioning the project.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

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APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

The following sites are those that lie within a 500m radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER).

HER	NGR TL	Description
Bronze Age		
11537	2850 2620	Group of five fragmented tools, including an axe-head, found by detector in the fields bordering Walkern to the west.
Prehistoric Undated		
17583	2880 2623	Possible prehistoric ditch, behind 98-100 High Street. Contained prehistoric flints.
Romano-British		
1529	288 258	An almost complete cinerary urn, and the neck and handle of a large glass decanter, found on the site of the School at Walkern in 1925.
16240	28950 26278	A large oval pit found during monitoring of groundworks and containing late Iron Age grog-tempered and early Roman sherds, fired clay, and animal bone
Anglo-Saxon		
2909	2928 2657	St Mary's comprises a Grade I listed Anglo-Saxon church with 11 th century nave, early 12 th century south aisle and later additions
Medieval		
2656	291 265	Domesday Book has an entry for the manorial estate of 'Walchra' and the village of Walkern is thought to date to the medieval period
6400	2878 2620	Supposed moat at Finches End
Post-medieval		
4842	2895 2650	Grade II* listed dovehouse at Manor Farm dates to c. 1700
5401	2874 2579	Former malting on the High Street form part of the Victoria or Walkern brewery
5450	2874 2575	The Victoria Works comprise a former brewery of yellow brick with red brick edged buttresses and window heads
10804	2885 2622	98 High Street is a Grade II listed building dating from the early 1700s from behind which an evaluation uncovered post-medieval boundaries and an unusual foundation deposit
11163	2920 2651	Bridgefoot Farm is a 15 th century open hall house, with post-medieval farm buildings
11164	28920 26550	Manor Farm is a most-medieval farmstead with good brick farmhouse built c.1700 but with earlier origins
11609	2860 2600	Evaluation north and south of Moors Ley found no archaeological features, but a post-hole, small pit, and a shallow elliptical feature, all undated, were excavated in the area south of the road
13358	29077 26662	Site of College Farm, which was a post-medieval farmstead burnt down in early 20 th century, with surviving 18 th century granary.

13359	29118 26301	The pound is shown as a square walled enclosure, in the centre of a green which is now the wide junction of Winters Lane with Totts Lane.
13360	2881 2613	Site of 19 th century chapel, and surviving graveyard along Froghall Lane.
13361	29042 26576	Independent Chapel on the High Street dates to 1811 and is Grade II Listed.
13362	28960 26230	A 'Methodist Chapel (Wesleyan)' is marked behind the High Street, facing what is now Totts Lane.
13363	28850 25952	Site of post-medieval Finches Farm, but only the house survives.
13364	28687 25875	Rooks Nest is a 17 th century farmhouse replacing an earlier house.
13365	29290 26505	Cambridge Cottages are shown running down the east side of the lane now called Bockings, from Church End.
13719	28955 26280	Ancient glebe land along the High Street divided into allotments in early 20 th century.
15837	28725 25843	Rooks Nest Farm was largely replaced in the 19 th and later 20 th centuries, and demolished in 2006.
16241	28920 26315	Late 19 th or early 20 th century cess pit on the High Street frontage.
17582	2886 2619	Fairview Cottage, 102 High Street. 17 th century or earlier timber-framed house. LB 159700.
17716	2889 2622	Robin Hood public house, 63 High Street, Walkern. The Robin Hood is a timber-framed house built in the late 17th or early 18th century. It is two storeys high and three bays wide, facing west onto the High Street, with central door and end chimneys. The front ground floor has canted bay windows either side of the door, with weatherboarding. At the back is an outshot, and two rear wings added later.
Undated		
461	2892 2642	A puddingstone quern found in a rockery outside the White Lion in 1955
11223	2853 2612	Cropmark of a curvilinear enclosure or macula to the south of Froghall Lane

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	Y
Specification	Y
Registers	4 (Context, Digital Photo, Drawing, Drawing Sheet)
Context Sheets	15
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	4
Site photographs b/w	0
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	26

APPENDIX 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Proposed new detached dwelling, Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire
County: Herts	District: East Herts
Village/Town:	Parish: Walkern
Planning application reference:	East Herts Planning Ref. 3/11/0316/FP
Client name/address/tel:	Mr Geoffrey Smith
Nature of application:	Construction of a single dwelling
Present land use:	Garden
Size of application area: c. 900m ²	Size of area investigated c. 300m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 28937 26207
Site Code:	AS 1582
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Archaeological Monitoring & Recording
Date of work:	25-26/03 and 08/04/2013
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Stevenage
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: 20 th century
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	Collins, T, Stoakley, M & Henry, K, 2012, Robin Hood Public House, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire SG2 7NT, Historic Building Monitoring and Recording, AS unpublished report No 4128

<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p>	<p><i>In March and April 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at land rear of Robin Hood PH, 63 High Street, Walkern, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 28937 26207). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Geoffrey Smith of Explorer Properties Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a single detached dwelling.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within the historic core of the village of Walkern, within Area of Archaeological Significance 29, as identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later historic core of the village, which has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds with the exception of two modern drains.</i></p>
<p>Author of summary: Z Pozorski</p>	<p>Date of Summary: 29 April 2013</p>

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Western part of the site. Looking west.



DP 2. Foundation trenches in the western part of the site. Looking north-east.



DP 3. Sample section 1. Looking south-south-west.



DP 4. Sample section 2, Drain M1006. Looking east.



DP 5. Sample section 2, Drain 1009. Looking east.



DP 6. Sample section 3. Looking north-north-east.



DP 7. Sample section 4. Looking west-north-west.



DP 8. Excavation of trenches in the eastern part of the site. Looking east.



DP 9. Foundation trenches in the eastern part of the site. Looking west-south-west.

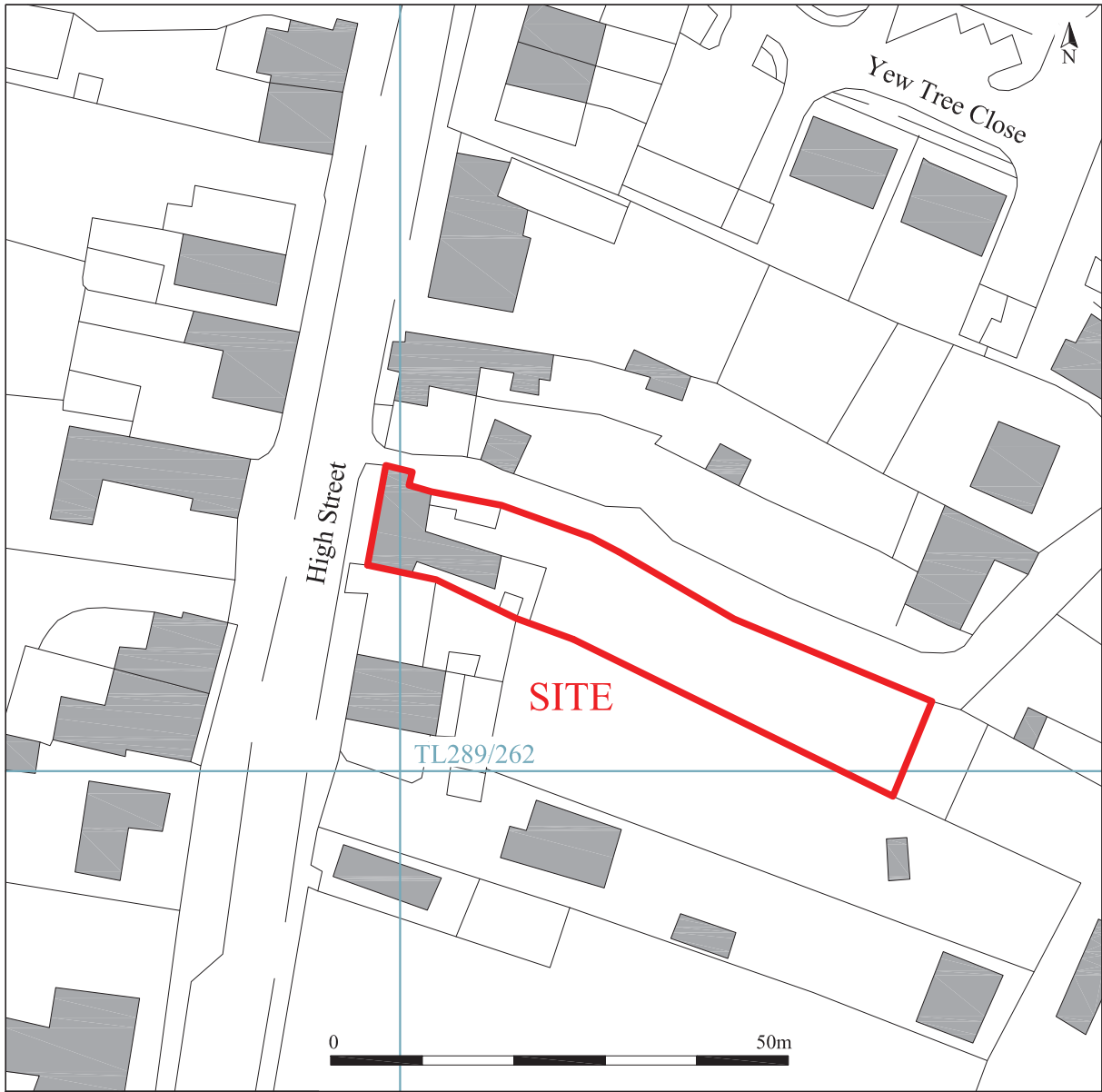


DP 10. Sample section 5. Looking north-north-east.



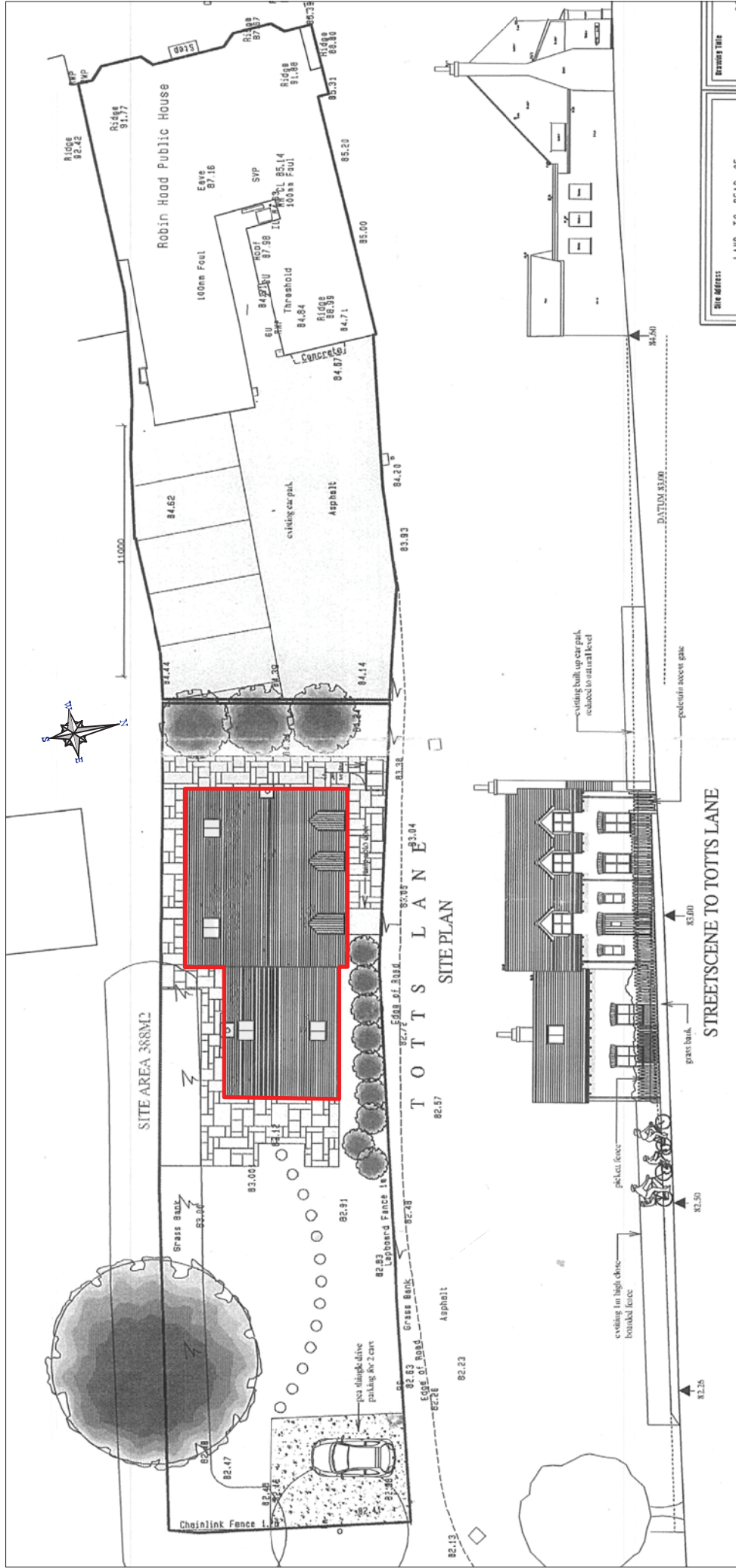
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Fig. 1 Site location
 Scale 1 : 25,000



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:750 at A4



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Fig. 3 Location of footings

Scale 1:250 at A4

