
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**PROPOSED NEW DWELLINGS,
THE RED HOUSE, 84 HIGH STREET, BUNTINGFORD,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL 'STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE' INVESTIGATION

HER request No. 208/13

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TL 36119 29765	Report No: 4531
District: East Herts	Site Code: AS 1650
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4586
Signed:	Date: 19 March 2014

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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 BUILDING LISTING***
- 2 *CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE***
- 3 *HER SUMMARY SHEET***

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Proposed new dwellings. The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire</i>		
<i>In December 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological 'strip, map & sample' investigation on land at The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 36119 29765). The project was commissioned in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of three new dwellings.</i>			
<i>The site is situated on the east side of High Street, in the centre of Buntingford. It is located within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 45, which identifies an area of historic medieval and post-medieval core of Buntingford. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i>			
<i>In the event the monitoring revealed a modern wall, a pit and a ditch.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>2-4/12/2013</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4586</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1650</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological 'Strip, Map & Sample' Investigation</i>		
Site status	<i>Within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 45</i>		
Current land use	<i>Side and rear yard of the house</i>		
Planned development	<i>New dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern wall, pit and ditch</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>East Herts</i>	<i>Buntingford</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>SG9 9AJ</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 200m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 36119 29765</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 96.50m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Requirement of HCC HEU</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Kamil Orzechowski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr A Pickup</i>		
Full title	<i>Proposed new dwellings. The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire: Archaeological 'Strip, Map & Sample' Investigation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4531</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2014</i>		

PROPOSED NEW DWELLINGS, THE RED HOUSE, 84 HIGH STREET, BUNTINGFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL 'STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE' INVESTIGATION

SUMMARY

In December 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological 'strip, map & sample' investigation on land at The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 36119 29765). The project was commissioned in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of three new dwellings.

The site is situated on the east side of High Street, in the centre of Buntingford. It is located within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 45, which identifies an area of historic medieval and post-medieval core of Buntingford. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

In the event the monitoring revealed 19th century wall, a pit and a possible ditch.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological 'strip, map & sample' investigation on land at The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 36119 29765; Figs. 1 & 2). The project was commissioned by Donald Purkiss & Associates LLP on behalf of Mr A Pickup in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of three new dwellings (East Herts District Council Planning Ref. 3/13/0881/FP).

1.2 The investigation was undertaken in accordance to requirement of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 28/10/2013), and approved by HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (revised 2008)*, *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 were:

- Archaeological investigation by a programme of 'strip, map & sample' of the area of the proposed new dwellings, with the investigation and recording of any archaeology thereby revealed;

- The archaeological monitoring of all other groundworks associated with the scheme likely to have an impact on any remains;
- The analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site in appropriate conditions;
- The provision of an adequately detailed project report that would place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas and through cartographic, documentary and other research;
- The full analysis and interpretation of the site archive in order to promote local and regional research, and the appropriate dissemination and publication of the project results.

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 The site lies within the town of Buntingford, which lies within the district of East Hertfordshire and the county of Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The Red House lies on the eastern frontage of Buntingford High Street opposite the junction with

Norfolk Road. The building is flanked to the north by a terrace of modest cottages, whilst the south section of the site is characterised by a large tarmac-surfaced car park which covers the former garden. Modern housing encroaches to the rear and is likely to have been built on the former rear plot of the house. The High Street retains much of its historic character, with the Red House standing as an important and locally dominant element. The site also lies within Area of Archaeological Significance 45, as designated on the EHDC Local Plan.

2.2 The Red House building is Grade II listed, noted in the historic building description as constructed in approximately 1710 with an extension in like style to the north of around 1900 (Appendix 1). A local blue plaque commemorates the occupation of the building by Claud Lovat Fraser (1890 – 1921), a celebrated theatre designer whose parents owned the house in the late 19th century. The site is roughly rectangular in plan and covers an area of approximately 620m² (Fig. 2). It is dominated by the structure of The Red House, which stands in the site's western corner. The remainder of the site comprises a large tarmac-surfaced car park, which was the area of the proposed 3 new dwellings.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies within Buntingford town centre and along the eastern frontage of its High Street. It is situated at a height of c.98m AOD, with the surrounding relief sloping downwards to the east. The site overlooks the River Rib, which flows north-north-west to south-south-eastwards through Buntingford and 220m to the east of the site. The Buntingford area is located upon a solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Clay, overlain by a drift geology of chalky till (BGS 1978). Soils of the area comprise those of the Melford Association, which are described as deep, well drained fine loamy or coarse loamy over clayey and fine loamy soils (SSEW, 1983).

3.2 Buntingford has been subject to extensive previous archaeological investigation. The site itself has been subject to an historic building appraisal (Prosser & Smith 2011) and historic building monitoring and recording (Prosser & Smith 2013). The site also formed the majority of a plot of land between No. 82 and 84 High Street, which was subject to an archaeological evaluation in 2007 (Saunders 2007; HER EHT1184; Fig. 3).

3.3 The 2007 evaluation consisted of two trenches. Only Trench 1 was within the site; Trench 2 lay to the site's north-east and to the rear of No. 86 High Street (Saunders 2007). The stratigraphy in Trench 1 consisted of a layer of modern tarmac over a layer of levelling sand. Beneath this was a layer of CBM rubble over a layer of yellowish brown mixed sand and gravel aggregate. The latter sealed a thin layer of chalk over a layer of firm, greyish brown, silty clay. Beneath this lay the natural geology of yellowish brown sandy clay and flint. The trench contained two ditches, a posthole, one pit and an early to mid 19th century wall footing (Fig. 3). The posthole contained a small sherd of early Roman pottery. The fill of the pit yielded two sherds of late medieval – early post-medieval pottery and two fragments of post-medieval tile.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within Area of Archaeological Significance 45 designated on the EHDC Local Plan. There is evidence of early human activity in the Buntingford area dating from the Neolithic period onwards, although no such finds are recorded in the vicinity of the site. The town of Buntingford lies at the point at which Ermine Street, which is now the course of the High Street, forded the River Rib. Bronze Age and Iron Age finds from the surrounding area attest to pre-Roman occupation (Seddon 1999). The site lies along the eastern frontage of Roman Ermine Street. As noted previously, Trench 1 of the evaluation conducted within the site revealed a posthole, which yielded a single sherd of early Roman pottery (Saunders 2007; HER 13744). An evaluation behind No. 59 High Street to the south along revealed a pit containing a fragment of Roman tile and two worn rim sherds of late 1st-early 2nd century pottery (HER 18140).

4.2 The Buntingford *Extensive urban Survey* (Seddon 1999) suggests that the name '*Buntingford*' is derived from an Anglo-Saxon personal name '*Bunta*' and means the '*ford of the people of Bunta*' (Gover et al. 1970). However, there is no further evidence for the presence of a settlement at Buntingford in the Saxon period and it was not listed in Domesday Book of 1086 (Morris 1976). Buntingford is only documented from the 13th century onwards, but became a notable market town from the 14th century (HER 23). Buntingford developed as a medieval settlement on the Great North Road. The site lies to the immediate north of the known extent of Buntingford's medieval settlement, although a surviving burgage plot boundary is recorded along the site's southern extent (Seddon 1999). The area surrounding the site contains a large number of extant standing buildings dating from the medieval, post-medieval and early modern periods, many of which are listed buildings.

The site

4.3 The southern boundary of the site may preserve the line of a medieval property boundary or burgage plot. A trial trench evaluation of the site in 2007 revealed post-medieval archaeological remains, with part of a substantial building shown on 19th century maps but demolished by 1898, ditches and pits (HN 2007). Residual pottery sherds of Roman, late medieval and later date recovered at time are indicative of earlier occupation in the vicinity.

4.4 Two projects focused on the Red House building were conducted by AS. In summary, a historic building appraisal carried out in 2011 (Prosser & Smith 2011) found that:

While externally the building preserved much of its original Queen Anne character intact, the interior had been remodelled repeatedly, with the loss of much original historic fabric (including features noted in the 1980s list description). The staircase is probably the principal survivor, while other features may lie beneath applied modern surfaces. The rear range, noted on the listing as of c.1900

probably conceals a much older core, contemporary with the original frontage, with later Victorian additions.

A 2013 historic building recording (Prosser & Smith 2013) carried out during the house conversion works revealed that:

The principal rooms occupying the historic core of the building preserved a good quantity of 18th century panelling most prominent in GF02 (principal ground floor room), where decorative touches survive. Elsewhere panelling is visible surrounding the fireplaces all of which have been lost apart from a 19th century cast-iron example in one of the attic rooms.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The principal elements under investigation were the mechanically-excavated foundation trenches for a new dwellings and ground reduction comprising the removal top overburden and hardstanding (Fig. 2), within the former car park area.

5.2 The archaeological investigation comprised the observation of all 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

Deposits present within investigated area were recorded in sample sections presented below:

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 3)</i> <i>South foundation trench, facing south-west</i> <i>0.00 = 96.66m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.13m	L1000	Modern overburden. Mid yellowish brown, friable, sandy silt with frequent CBM and concrete fragments.
0.13 – 0.53m	L1001	Made ground. Dark yellowish brown, firm, sandy silt with frequent CBM fragments and occasional small stones.
0.53 – 0.61m	L1002	Yellowish white, compact, chalk.
0.61 – 0.98m	L1003	Dark brownish grey, firm, silty clay with occasional CBM fragments and flints.
0.98m+	L1004	Natural dark brown, compact, clay with moderate to frequent flints and stones.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 4)</i> <i>West foundation trench, facing north-east</i> <i>0.00 = 96.85m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.05m	L1013	Modern pavement slab of grey concrete.
0.05 – 0.30m	L1005	Modern grey concrete rubble.
0.30 – 1.10m	M1006	Foundation of a brick wall.
1.10 – 1.15m	L1007	Yellowish white, loose, lime mortar with sandy gravel.
1.15m+	L1004	Natural clay. As above.

Description: Three features were recorded: a brick wall (M1006), a possible ditch (F1009) and a pit (F1011).

M1006 (DP 4) was a wall present along the High Street and revealed in the section of a foundation trench. It was at least 12.50m long and 0.80m deep and it was constructed of mid red coloured bricks (0.225 x 0.110 x 0.060m). It was laid in Flemish bond with a rough finish and bonded by smooth, lime mortar. The wall lay on thin layer of mortar, L1007, within the construction cut and it was present c.0.30m below existing ground level and was overlain by a layer of concrete, L1005.

Ditch F1009 was a linear feature (5.00+ x 0.80 x 0.53m; DP 5) parallel to the High Street and Wall M1006, and aligned north-east/south-west. It had vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1010, was a mid greyish brown, friable, sandy silt with some small flints and chalk chunks. Two sherds of modern pottery (19th – 20th century) were contained within the fill.

Pit F1011 was recorded in section (2.50 x 0.60+ x 1.75m; DP 6). It had near vertical sides and a concave base. It was located at c.0.50m below the existing ground level and overlain by Made Ground L1001. Its fill, L1012, was a mid brownish grey and yellow, friable, sand with frequent CBM fragments. It contained modern (19th – 20th century) pottery and CBM.

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 investigation.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by modern deposits of either concrete layers or made ground (0.30– 0.50m thick in total). Below were layers of modern made ground of earlier. The natural clay, L1004, was present at c.1m below existing and consisted of a dark brown, compact, clay with moderate to frequent flints and stones.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains. It is situated on the east side of High Street, in the centre of Buntingford and within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 45, which identifies the area of historic medieval and post-medieval core of Buntingford. A trial trench evaluation of the site identified post-medieval remains.

9.2 In the event the investigation revealed modern features (19th – 20th century). Wall M1006 parallel to the street may have been a remnant of a building which stood between Nos. 82 and 84 or a site boundary wall. No earlier features or residual finds were found. The area of the groundworks seemed to have been significantly affected by early modern development.

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 A Pickup for funding the works and Mr Gideon Brimmer of Donald Purkiss Associates LLP for assistance.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Aliosn Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU), and that of Dr Isobel Thompson at the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Prosser, L. & Smith, L. 2013 *The Red House, 84, High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire. Historic Building Monitoring and Recording*. Archaeological Solutions unpublished report No. 4377

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Web resources

www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk

www.british-history.ac.uk

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.historicaldirectories.org/hd/index.asp

APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC BUILDING LISTING

Details

TL 3629 BUNTINGFORD HIGH STREET (east side)

7/32 No 84 (formerly listed as the Red House) and No 86 (North End Cottage)
(formerly 19.10.51 listed as No 86 (Red Cottage)) 22.2.69

GV II

2 houses. Circa 1710, matching N extension (No 86) probably c1900. Red brick with blue headers, projecting wooden eaves cornice and steep old red tile hipped roof. A tall, 2 storeys cellar and attics, formerly symmetrical Queen Anne style house 5 windows long with a narrow one-window matching extension at N end (No 86). Single-pile, end chimneys, central entrance plan, with later additions at rear and N end. Front now has 4 box dormers on roof slope, a bold modillioned cornice extended over N part, flush-box sash windows, with 6/6 panes and red rubbed brick arches, floor band and chamfered plinth extended over N part, main doorcase with elaborately carved foliate trusses with cut-back hood, half-glazed door, and fanlight. Door to N end up 2 steps. 6-panel flush-beaded door with deep moulded flat hood on shaped brackets. Interior altered but good cornice and corner fireplace in SW room on Ground floor.

Listing NGR: TL3611929765

National Grid Reference: TL 36119 29765

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	1 (Context, Photo, Digital Photo, Drawing, Drawing Sheet, Level)
Context Sheets	14
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	3
Site drawings A4	0
Site photographs b/w	4
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	20

APPENDIX 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire
County: Herts	District: East Herts
Village/Town:	Parish: Buntingford
Planning application reference:	East Herts District Council Planning Ref. 3/13/0881/FP
Client name/address/tel:	Mr A Pickup
Nature of application:	Construction of three new dwellings
Present land use:	Side and rear yard
Size of application area: c.200m ²	Size of area investigated 30m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 2478 1211
Site Code:	AS 1280
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Archaeological Monitoring & Recording
Date of work:	02-04/12/2013
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Hertford
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	<p>HN The Heritage Network Ltd, 2007, <i>Land between 82 – 84 High Street, Buntingford</i>, HN report No 666</p> <p>Prosser, L. & Smith, L., 2011, <i>The Red House, 84, High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire: Historic Building Appraisal</i>. AS report No 3936</p> <p>Prosser, L. & Smith, L., 2013, <i>The Red House, 84, High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire: Historic Building Monitoring and Recording</i>. AS report No 4377</p>
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p>In December 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological 'strip, map & sample' investigation on land at The Red House, 84 High Street, Buntingford, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 36119 29765). The project was commissioned in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of three new dwellings.</p> <p>The site is situated on the east side of High Street, in the centre of Buntingford. It is located within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 45, which identifies an area of historic medieval and post-medieval core of Buntingford. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</p> <p>In the event the monitoring revealed 19th century wall, pit and possible ditch.</p>
Author of summary: Z Pozorski	Date of Summary: March 2014

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The site. Looking south.



DP 2. The site. Looking north.



DP 3. South foundation trench. Sample section 1. Looking north-west.



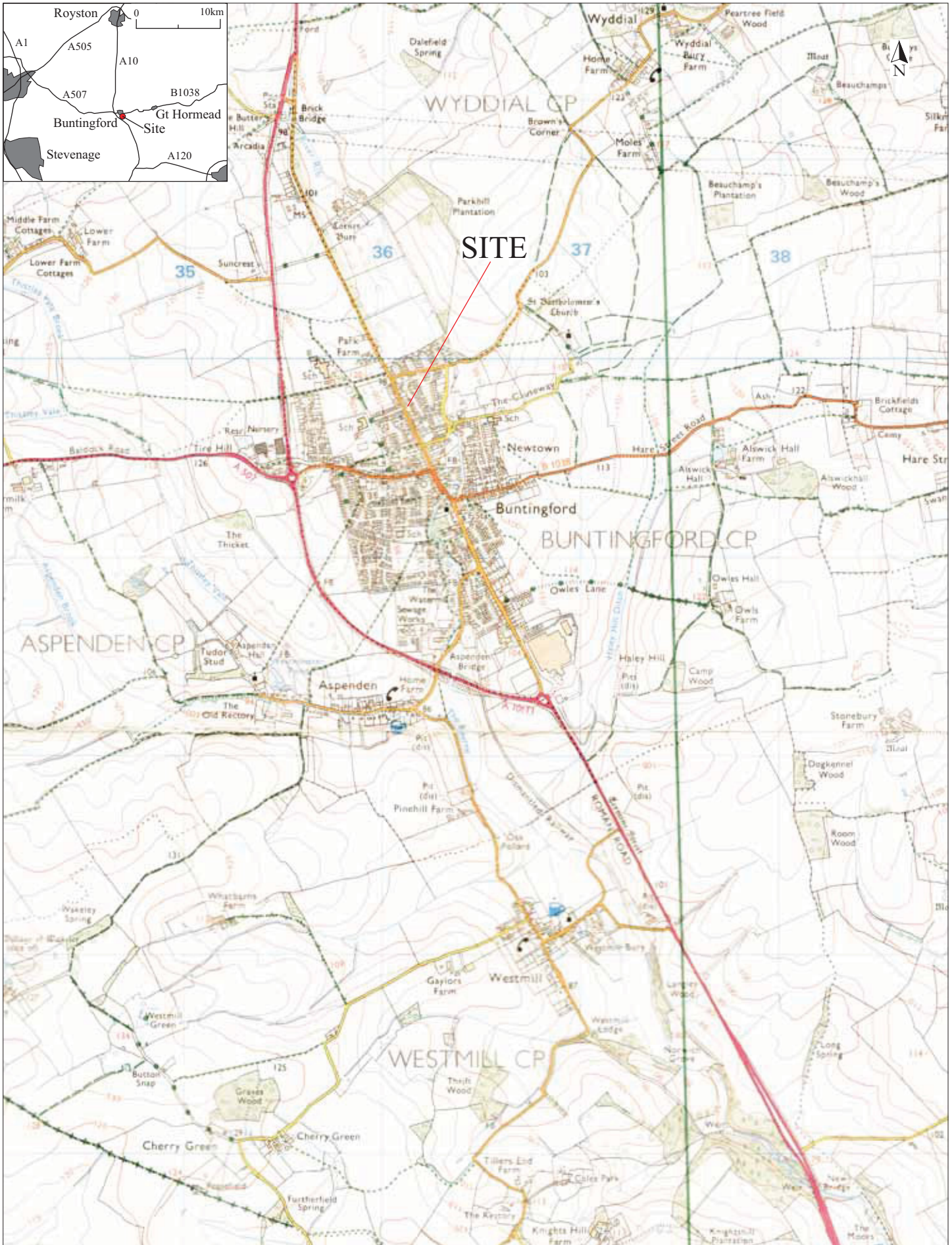
DP 4. West foundation trench. Sample section 2. Looking south-west.



DP 5. ?Ditch F1009. Looking north-west.



DP 6. Pit F1011. Looking north-west.



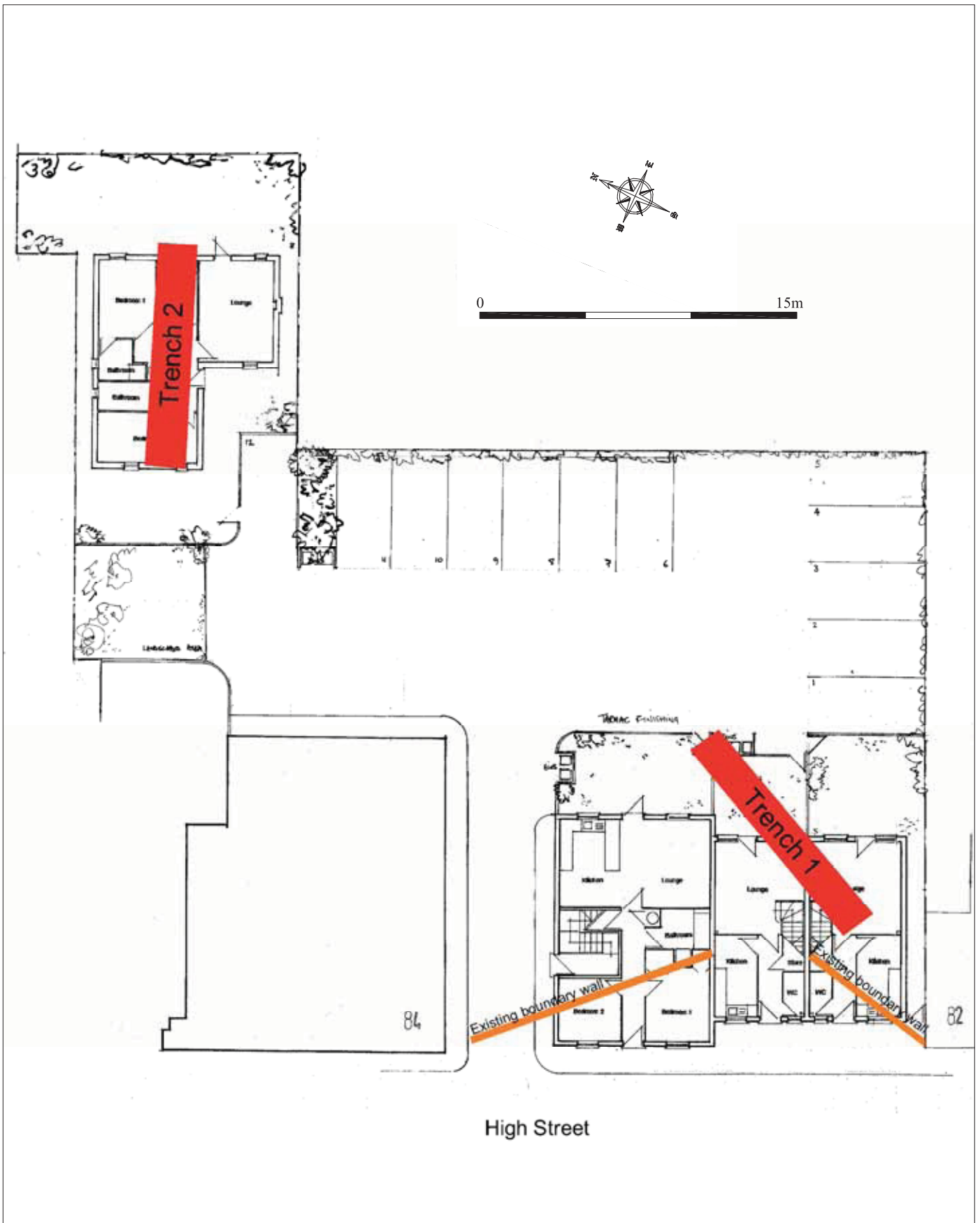
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

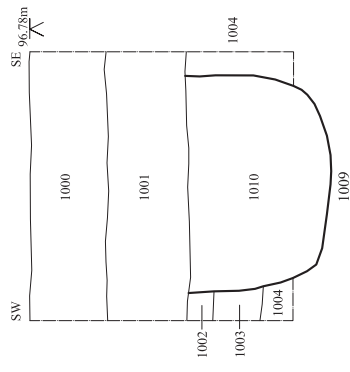
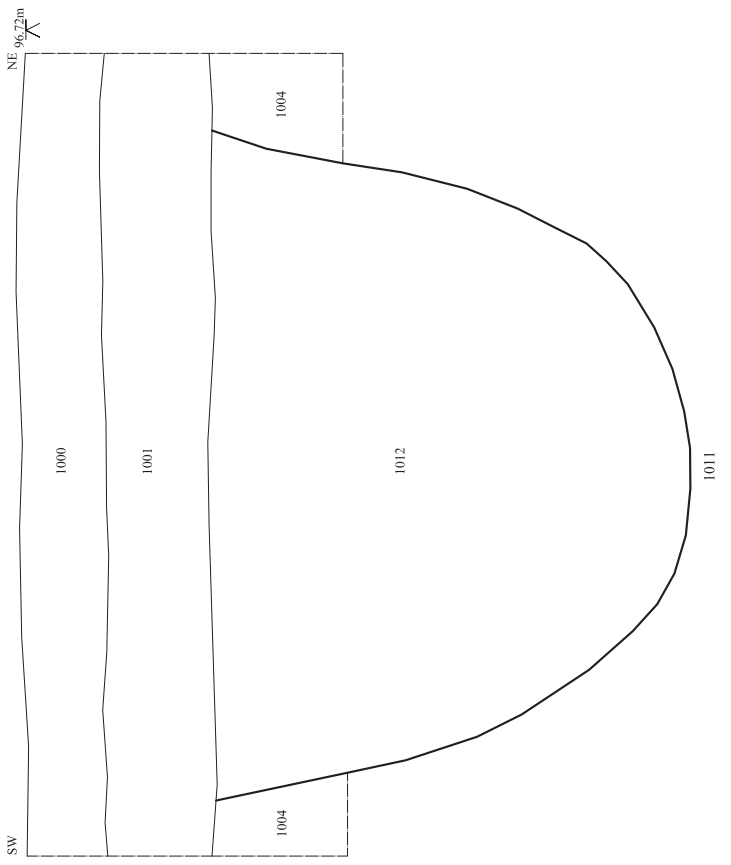
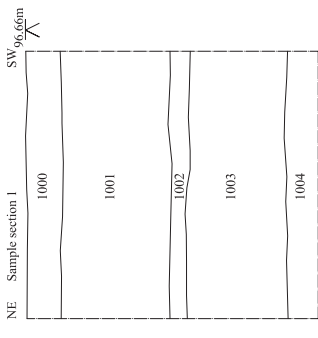
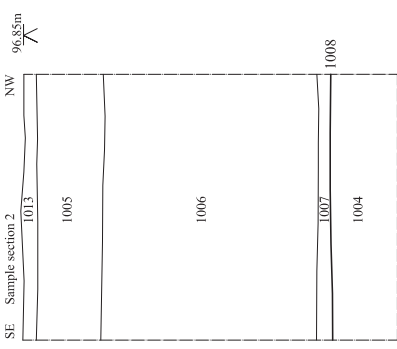
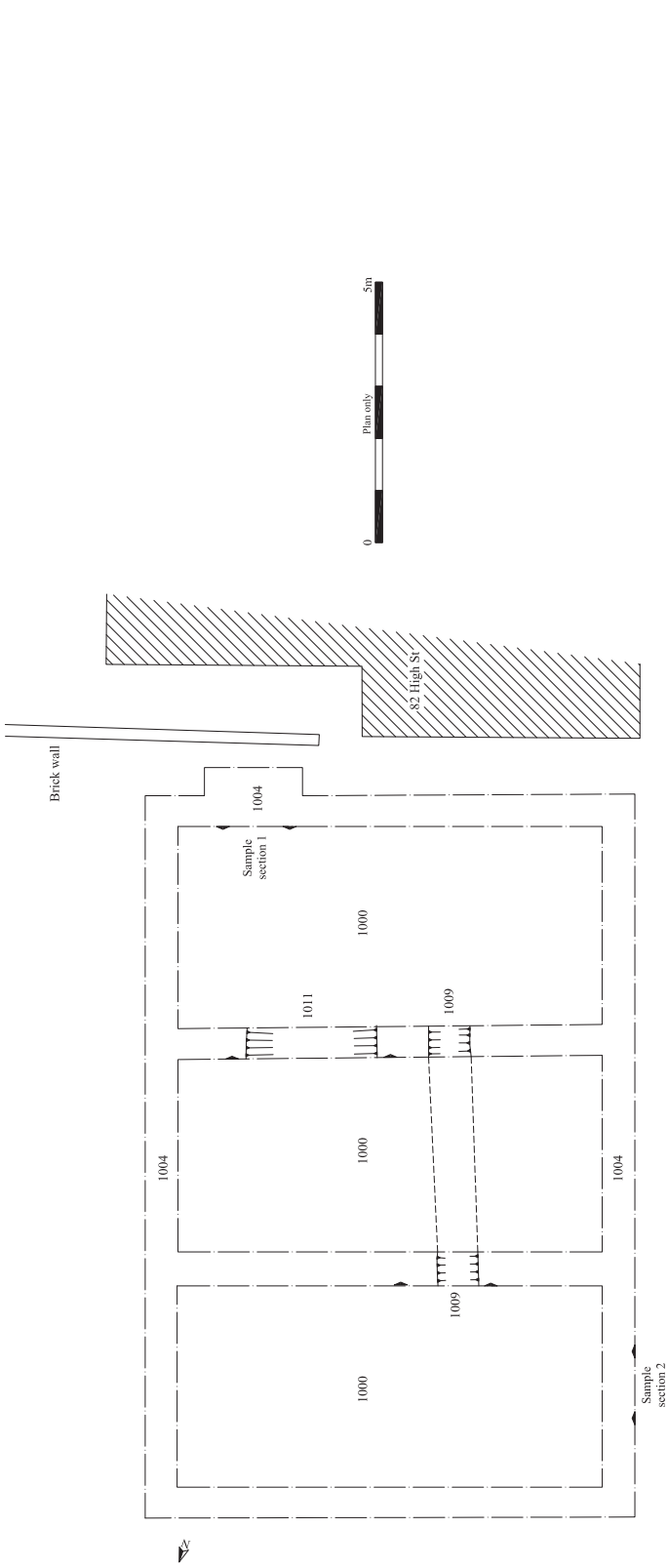


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:750 at A4



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Fig. 3 Previous work
 Scale 1:250 at A4



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Fig. 4 Plan and sections
 Scale Plan 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3