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LAND AT MILL ROAD, WIMBISH, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Thomas Muir (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 589 352	Report No: 4769
District: Uttlesford	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin MIfA	Project No: 5888
Signed:	Date: 26 January 2015

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	Land at Mill Road, Wimbish, Essex		
<p><i>In January 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Mill Road, Wimbish, Essex CB10 2XD (NGR TL 589 352). It is proposed to construct a new affordable and open market residential development 11 properties. The evaluation was carried out in compliance with an anticipated planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (Planning Ref. UTT/14/1688/FUL).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This relates to the presence of a former corn mill immediately adjacent to the site (EHER 251). The mill is depicted on historic cartographic sources at least as far back as the 1777 Chapman and Andre map. The site also retains a potential for medieval settlement to have been present around the mill, as has been found elsewhere in Uttlesford and Essex generally. One such example at Stansted airport dated back to the 13th century. The area surrounding Wimbish has also been identified as having a high potential for archaeological remains in the Historic Characterisation Document for Uttlesford.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	January 2015		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	5888	Site code	
Type of project	Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	None		
Current land use	Open fields		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	None		
Significant finds (+dates)	None		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Essex	Uttlesford	Wimbish
HER/ SMR for area	Essex Historic Environment Record		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site	c. 5000m ²		
NGR	TL 589 352		
Height AOD (min/max)	c. 10m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Essex County Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Thomas Muir		
Funded by	Hastoe Housing Association		
Full title	Land at Mill Road, Wimbish, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Muir, T.		
Report no.			
Date (of report)	January 2015		

LAND AT MILL ROAD, WIMBISH, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In January 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Mill Road, Wimbish, Essex CB10 2XD (NGR TL 589 352). It is proposed to construct a new affordable and open market residential development 11 properties. The evaluation was carried out in compliance with an anticipated planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (Planning Ref. UTT/14/1688/FUL).

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This relates to the presence of a former corn mill immediately adjacent to the site (EHER 251). The mill is depicted on historic cartographic sources at least as far back as the 1777 Chapman and Andre map. The site also retains a potential for medieval settlement to have been present around the mill, as has been found elsewhere in Uttlesford and Essex generally. One such example at Stansted airport dated back to the 13th century. The area surrounding Wimbish has also been identified as having a high potential for archaeological remains in the Historic Characterisation Document for Uttlesford.

In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Mill Road, Wimbish, Essex CB10 2XD (NGR TL 589 352; Figs. 1 - 2) on behalf of Hastoe Housing Association. It is proposed to construct a new affordable and open market residential development 11 properties. The evaluation was carried out in compliance with an anticipated planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (Planning Ref. UTT/14/1688/FUL).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance to a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation at Land at Mill Road, Wimbish*, dated 23rd July 2014) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 30th July 2014), and approved by ECC HEA. 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 evaluation were to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition significance and quality of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

1.4 The project aims were in particular to identify any evidence of medieval settlement associated with the mill, and other medieval or earlier deposits

Planning policy context

1.5 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.

1.6 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 comprises some c.5340m² of land in the hamlet of Tye Green, in Wimbish, Essex, c.5.1km south-east of Saffron Walden, and c.17km north-east of Bishop's Stortford. Access to the site is given by Mill Road, which travels from the hamlet of Howlett, south-east of the site, to Radwinter north-east of the site. The M11 travels north/south c.8km west of the site, whilst the A120 travels east/west c.14km south of the site.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is located at approximately 10m AOD in largely flat terrain, interrupted by the shallow depressions of small brooks and streams. The River Pant, c.1.2km north of the site, flows generally south-east, before it becomes the River Blackwater, c.12km south-east of the site.

3.2 The solid geology of the site comprises Upper Chalk, at the northern extent of the London basin, which is overlain by soils of the Hanslope association, comprising slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The earliest archaeological evidence within the vicinity of the site dates to the Romano-British period, with a findspot c.550m north-west of the site yielding Roman coins and pottery (HER 18563). Whilst there is no physical evidence within the immediate vicinity of the site relating to the Anglo-Saxon period, the Domesday survey illustrates that a sizeable settlement was present at Wimbish by AD 1086, consisting of approximately 82 households and a value of 8 hides.

4.2 Throughout the medieval period it seems the parish was largely agricultural with a dispersed settlement pattern of small hamlets and farmsteads. Numerous historic field boundaries are today evinced by historic cartographic sources and cropmarks outlining the irregular arable field patterns which originated during the medieval period (HERs 46383, 46399, 46400, 46401, 46418, 47932, & 47967). The post-medieval period saw a continuation of Wimbish as a dispersed parish, largely agricultural in character, although a large number of timber framed farmhouses were constructed within the vicinity of the site during the 16th-18th centuries (HERs 36945, 36946, 36947, 36948, 36949, 36950, 36951, 36952, 36958, 36959, 36967, 36968, 36969, 36972, 36976). Additionally, a smock mill was constructed on land adjacent to the site during this period, and is depicted on maps as early as Chapman and Andre's 1777 map of Essex.

4.3 In the modern period the Second World War saw the construction of RAF Debden in the south-western corner of Wimbish parish, which was constructed between 1935 and 1937. The site is now occupied by Carver Army Barracks, although the disused runways are still present.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The brief required trial trenches to be excavated across the footprint of the proposed new development, which extends to some 0.6ha. A 5% sample was required. Six trenches each 30m x 1.6m were excavated.

5.2 The subsoil was mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 1A 0.00 = 9.84m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, compact, sandy silt.
0.28 – 0.33m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid yellowish brown, sandy silt with sparse chalk flecks
0.33m+	L1002	Natural. Pale yellowish brown, silty clay with moderate small chalk fragments.

Sample section 1B 0.00 = 9.84m AOD		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.29m+	L1002	Natural. As above.

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 2A 0.00 = 9.96m AOD		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.29 – 0.37m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.37m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Sample section 2B 0.00 = 9.82m AOD		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.36 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.43m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 3A 0.00 = 9.95m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.27 – 0.40m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.40m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Sample section 3B 0.00 = 9.84m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.26 – 0.38m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.38m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 4A 0.00 = 9.98m AOD		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.35 – 0.41m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.41m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Sample section 4B 0.00 = 10.01m AOD		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.35 – 0.47m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.47m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 4 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Sample section 5A 0.00 = 9.96m AOD		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.36 – 0.47m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.47m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 5B</i> <i>0.00 = 9.82m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.29 – 0.35m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.35m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 5 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 6A</i> <i>0.00 = 10.29m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.23m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.23 – 0.38m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.38m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 6B</i> <i>0.00 = 10.18m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.32 – 0.36m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.36m+	L1002	Natural. As Above Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 6 contained no archaeological features or finds.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Topsoil L1000 was uppermost and comprised a mid grey brown, compact, clayey silt (0.26 – 0.35m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a mid yellowish brown, clayey silt with sparse chalk flecks (0.05 – 0.10m thick).

8.2 The natural geology, L1002, was a pale yellowish brown, silty clay with moderate small chalk fragments (0.29 -0.47m below the present day ground surface).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). This relates to the presence of a former corn mill immediately adjacent to the site (EHER 251). The mill is depicted on historic cartographic sources at least as

far back as the 1777 Chapman and Andre map. The site also retains a potential for medieval settlement to have been present around the mill, as has been found elsewhere in Uttlesford and Essex generally. One such example at Stansted airport dated back to the 13th century. The area surrounding Wimbish has also been identified as having a high potential for archaeological remains in the Historic Characterisation Document for Uttlesford.

9.2 In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum in accordance with their requirements. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Hastoe Housing Association for funding the works (in particular Ms Ulrika Maccariello for assistance) and Parsons + Whittlely Ltd for their assistance (in particular Ms Janice Parsons).

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Richard Havis of Essex County Council

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
Trench 1 looking north-west



2
Trench 2 looking south-west



3
Trench 3 looking south-west



4
Trench 4 looking south-east



5
Trench 5 looking north-east



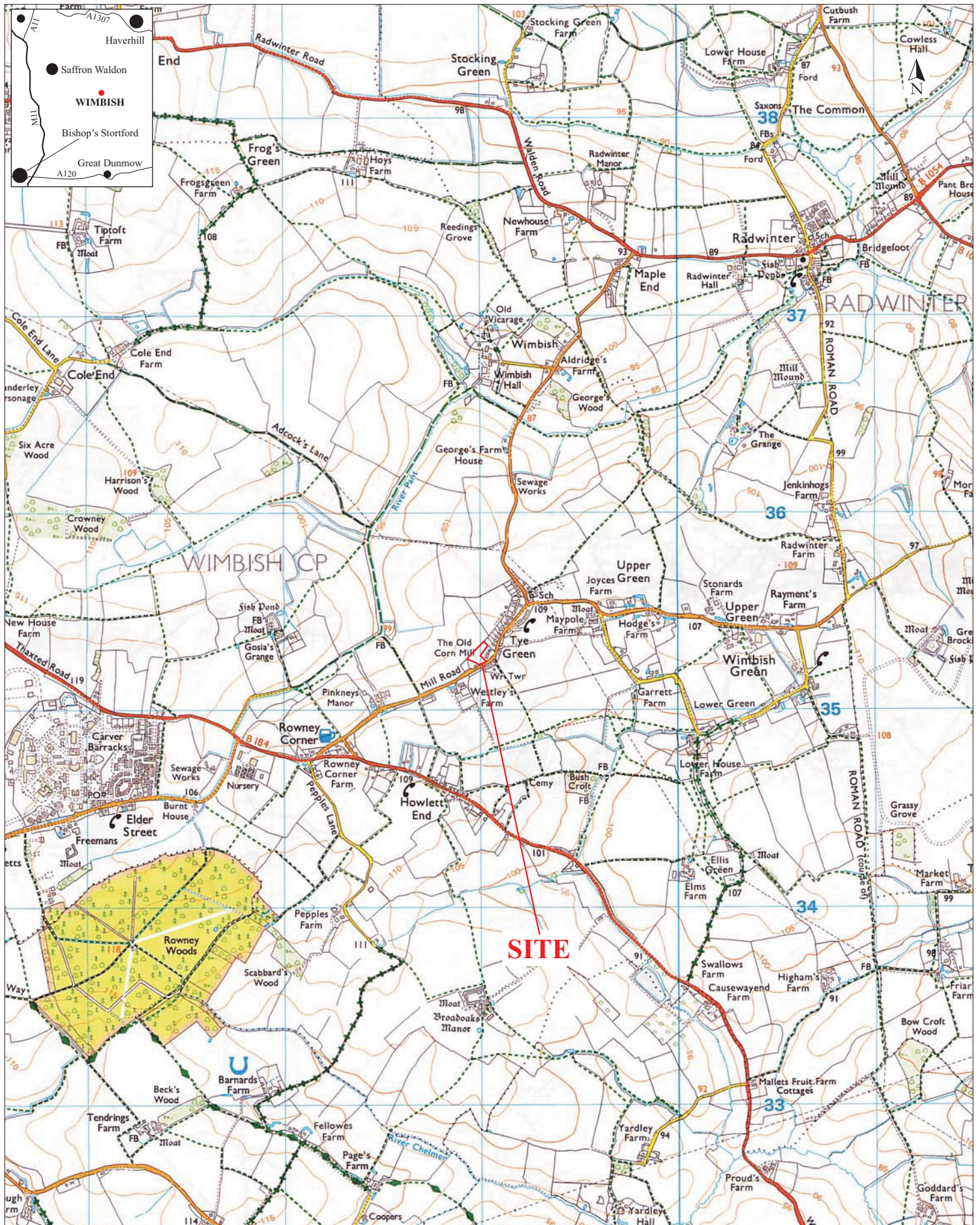
6
Trench 6 looking south-east



7
Sample section 1A looking north-east

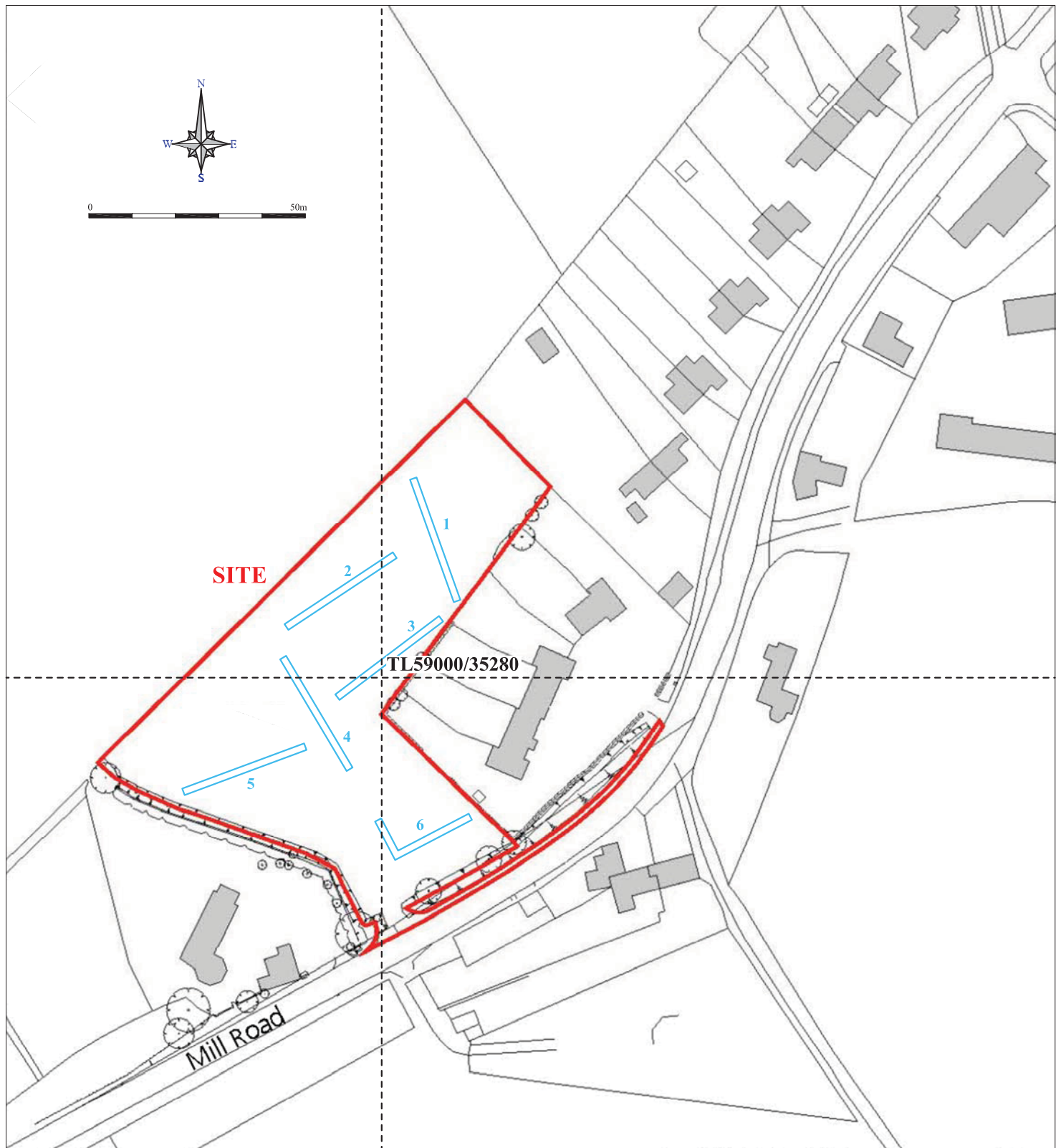


8
Sample section 6B looking south-west



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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 1:1250 at A4



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Fig. 3 Proposed development plan
 Scale 1:750 at A4