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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**WICKEN HOUSE, WICKEN BONHUNT,**

**ESSEX**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

Authors: Antony Mustchin (Fieldwork) Kamil Orzechowski (Report) Peter Thompson (Research)	
NGR: TL 500 334	Report No: 4774
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: WTWH14
Approved: Claire Halpin MifA	Project No: P5941
Signed:	Date: 28 January 2015

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex (TL 500 334). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of stables and an access road (Planning Ref. UTT/0818/14/HHF), based on the advice of Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM).</i></p> <p><i>The church of St Margaret dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (EHER 36849), and to the south of the site are earthwork remains of tofts from the shrunken medieval village (EHER 3970). Remains of a possible medieval tenement comprising two floor surfaces and pits have been recorded 50m south of Wicken House (EHER 6742). Wicken House was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and is Grade II listed (EHER 36854).</i></p> <p><i>In the event no archaeological features or finds were present.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>September 2013</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>P5941</i>	Site code	<i>WTWH14</i>
Type of project	<i>An archaeological monitoring &amp; recording</i>		
Site status			
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>Construction of a new access and stable block</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>None</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Wicken Bonhunt</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site			
NGR	<i>TL 500 334</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>Approximately 75m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council</i>		
Project Supervisor	<i>Antony Mustchin</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr and Ms Matheron</i>		
Full title	<i>Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex, An Archaeological Monitoring &amp; Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Orzechowski, K and Thompson, P.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4774</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>January 2015</i>		

**WICKEN HOUSE, WICKEN BONHUNT, ESSEX**  
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**

**SUMMARY**

*In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex (TL 500 334). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of stables and an access road (Planning Ref. UTT/0818/14/HHF), based on the advice of Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM).*

*The church of St Margaret dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (EHER 36849), and to the south of the site are earthwork remains of tofts from the shrunken medieval village (EHER 3970). Remains of a possible medieval tenement comprising two floor surfaces and pits have been recorded 50m south of Wicken House (EHER 6742). Wicken House was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and is Grade II listed (EHER 36854).*

*In the event no archaeological features or finds were present.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex (TL 500 334; Figs.1 - 2). The monitoring was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of stables and an access road (Planning Ref. UTT/0818/14/HHF), based on the advice of Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM).

1.2 The monitoring was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM) (Richard Havis dated 08/08/2014), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 26/08/2014). 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 Watching Brief* (revised 2008).

1.3 ECC HEA required archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated with the development that had the potential to impact on potential archaeological horizons (topsoil strip for the new stables and new access). The

specific aims of the project were to identify any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity within the area of proposed development, and to record the stratigraphic sequence of deposits affected by the development

### *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 Wicken Bonhunt is located 6.2km south-west of Saffron Walden, and 1.2km west of the M11. The small village lies mainly along the B1038, with Wicken House on the north side of the road to which it is connected by a curving driveway. It is a large detached house set in grounds comprising lawns and trees, with a car parking area to the rear (north).

## **3 TOPOGRAPHICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 The village is located at approximately 75m AOD, in the Wicken Water Valley, with the stream, which runs parallel to the B1038, flowing 110m to the

south. The local soils are of the Hanslope Association described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. There are also some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. These overlie drift geology of chalky till, which in turn are above solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk.

3.2 An archaeological evaluation carried out approximately 430m to the north-east revealed post structures, roundhouses and enclosure ditches, some dating to the Iron Age and others undated (EHER 45231). The Iron Age finds/features included a cremation, a ring ditch and pits. Three ring ditches, with no gaps in their circuits measuring 24m, 36m and 30m in diameter respectively, are recorded on a prominent clay ridge, approximately 530m to the north-east of Wicken House (EHER 371). The area was fieldwalked in 1975 but there was no trace of the ditches on the ground and no finds were noted (EHER 371). An archaeological evaluation approximately 670m to the south-east revealed a rectilinear enclosure of late Iron Age to Romano-British date (EHER 19436).

3.3 An archaeological monitoring of works centred on 50m to the south of Wicken House for a new house in the former walled garden, identified evidence of medieval settlement (EHER 6742). A scorched brickearth or clay layer and a trampled chalk layer were noted in builders' foundation trenches, possibly representing a medieval house site, although no wall alignments were discerned. Pits were seen in the northern part of the site, cut into the natural, but no finds were made apart from a few bones. "This part of Wicken Bonhunt is thought to be the site of a deserted or shrunken medieval village with finds of pottery dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and later". The pits are consistent with settlement in the area, and so it is possible there was once a tenement on the site. The boundaries of other tofts forming part of a shrunken medieval village are visible as earthworks to the south of the church and across the B1038 (EHER 3970). The Grade II\* listed Church of St Margaret dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and later, but was rebuilt in 1858-9 (EHER 36849).

3.4 Wicken Hall located 200m to the west of Wicken House is a Grade II listed timber-framed house (EHER 3928). Remains of a possible medieval moat are just to the north of Wicken Hall, though not listed by RCHM. The north and south arms survive while the east and west arms are obliterated. The south arm has been added to on its south side and turned into an ornamental lake. The 1975 OS does not consider this to be a moat but there are two adjacent unconnected waterfilled ponds. They are probably fish ponds contemporary with Wicken Hall and therefore date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (EHER 3927).

3.5 According to Pevsner, Wicken House (Old Rectory) was built on 1856 possibly by John Hanson Sperling. It is two-storey with attics, and constructed in red and gault brick complex plan form, with two parallel gabled blocks with a return 'cross wing' at the eastern end. There is a single storey gabled block and stair tower on the west (entrance) front. It contains numerous 'Elizabethan' style shaft stacks (clustered) (EHER 36854; [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)). An

archaeological evaluation carried out approximately 50m north-west of Wicken House proved negative (EHER 47915).

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The specification provided for archaeological monitoring of the groundworks associated the construction of a stable block and new access if it is to involve significant ground reduction, that have the potential to impact on potential archaeological horizons.

4.2 The monitoring comprised the observation of the mechanical topsoil stripping, the excavation of footings, the inspection and metal detection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Exposed sections were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using pro forma recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

#### 5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

<i>Sample Section 1</i> 0.00 = 75.14m AOD		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark brown, firm, sandy clay with occasional, small to medium, sub-angular to angular flint, frequent roots.
0.15 – 0.35m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid orangey brown, firm, sandy clay with occasional, medium to large, angular flint, frequent roots.
0.35m +	L1002	Natural. Light orangey brown, compact, clay with frequent chalk flecks and frequent, medium to large, sub-angular to angular flint, frequent roots.

<i>Sample Section 2</i> 0.00 = 75.23m AOD		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil. Same as above.

*Description: The soil stripping and excavation of the foundation trenches for the new stables were observed. The route of the access was greatly disturbed and reduced. No archaeological features or finds were present.*

## **6 CONFIDENCE RATING**

6.1 It is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or finds.

## **7 DEPOSIT MODEL**

7.1 The stratigraphy comprised Topsoil, L1000 (0.16m thick), a dark brown, firm, sandy clay, overlaying Subsoil, L1001, (0.2m thick) which was a mid orange brown, firm, sandy clay. Below was Natural, L1002, a light orange brown, compact, clay.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

8.1 The church of St Margaret dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (EHER 36849), and to the south are earthwork remains of tofts from the shrunken medieval village (EHER 3970). Remains of a possible medieval tenement comprising two floor surfaces and pits have been recorded 50m south of Wicken House (EHER 6742). Wicken House was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and is Grade II listed (EHER 36854).

8.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were present.

## **9 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE**

9.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Saffron Walden 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.

## **10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Mr and Ms Matheron for their co-operation and funding of the monitoring.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr. Richard Havis of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team

## **11 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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



## **12 WEB SITES**

[www.britishlistedbuildings](http://www.britishlistedbuildings) – Wicken Bonhunt

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
View of excavation area looking south-west



2  
View of excavation area looking north-east

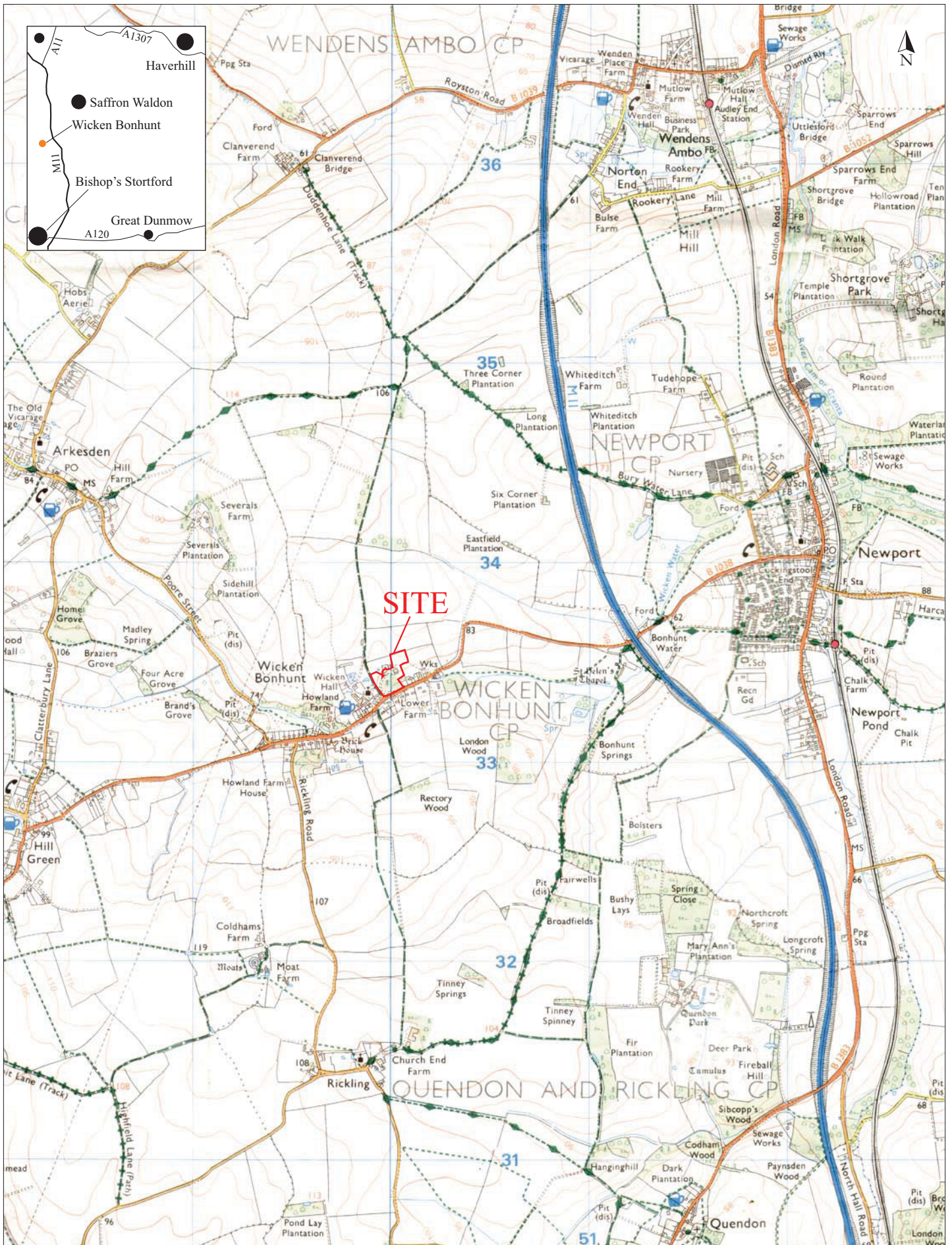


3  
Sample section 1 looking north-east



4  
Sample section 2 looking south-west

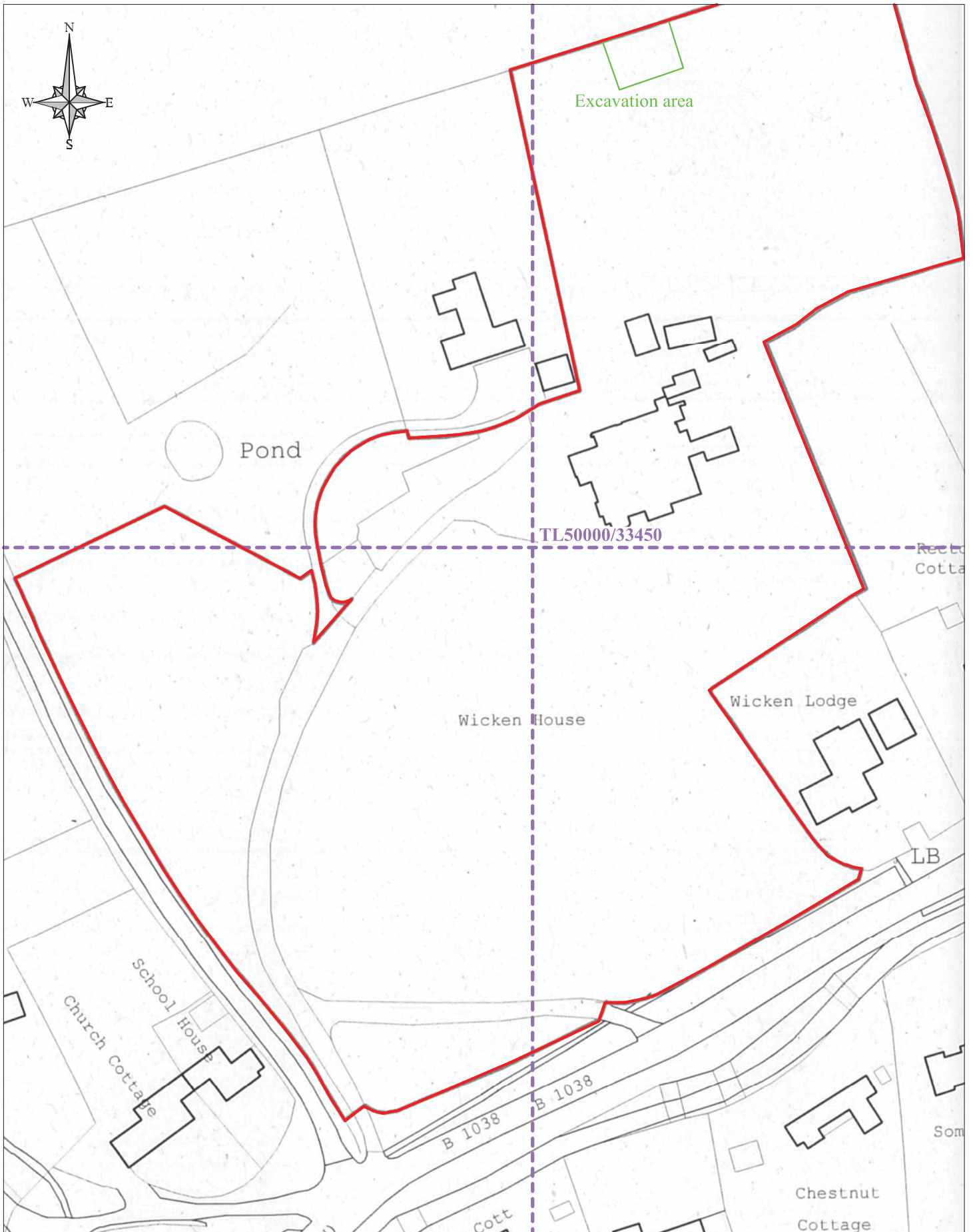




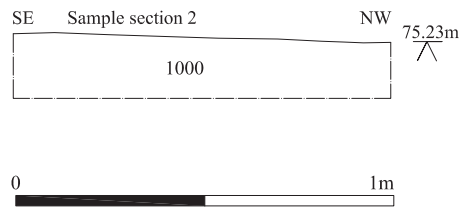
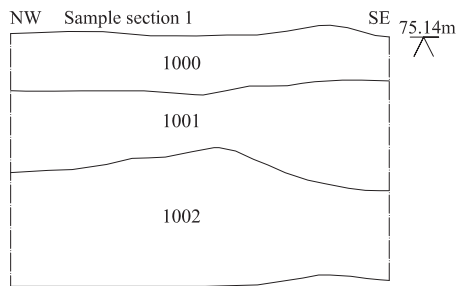
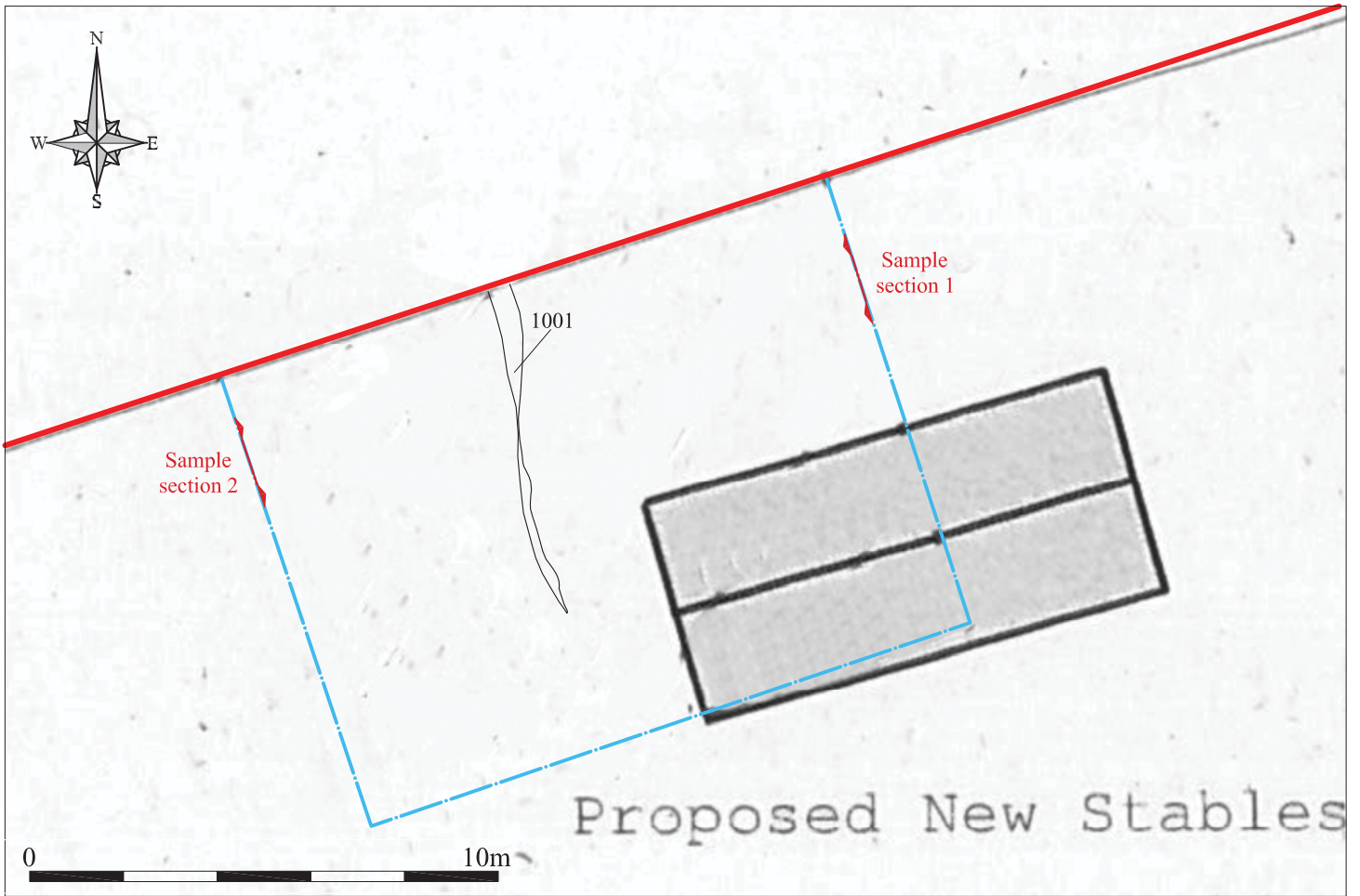
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4





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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:1000 at A4



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**Fig. 3** Sample sections and section location plan

Scale 1:150 and 1:20 at A4