
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**THE OLD FORGE AND
FORMER NEWMAN'S GARAGE,
CROMER, HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA (Fieldwork & Report)	
NGR: TL 2976 2836	Report No. 3424
District: East Hertfordshire	Site Code: AS 1232
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3002
Signed:	Date: October 2009

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name		<i>The Old Forge and Former Newman's Garage, Cromer, Hertfordshire</i>	
<p><i>In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at The Old Forge and Former Newman's Garage, Cromer, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2976 2836). The programme was commissioned by Nutwood Developments Ltd, and was undertaken as part of a planning condition on approval of erection of two new dwellings.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 30 which relates to the medieval settlement of Cromer. During 19th and 20th century the site was a location of blacksmithing, iron founding and engineering activity.</i></p> <p><i>The programme revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)		<i>23rd and 28th September, 29th October 2009</i>	
Previous work (Y/N/?)		Y	Future work (Y/N/?)
P. number		3002	Site code
			AS 1232
Type of project		<i>Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>	
Site status		<i>Within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 30</i>	
Current land use		<i>Backyard</i>	
Planned development		<i>New residential dwellings</i>	
Main features (+dates)		-	
Significant finds (+dates)		-	
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish		<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>East Hertfordshire</i>
			<i>Ardeley</i>
HER/ SMR for area		<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>	
Post code (if known)		<i>SG2 7QA</i>	
Area of site		<i>c. 1400m²</i>	
NGR		<i>TL 2976 2836</i>	
Height AOD (max/ min)		<i>96 – 98m AOD</i>	
Project creators			
Brief issued by		<i>HCC HEU</i>	
Project supervisor/s (PO)		<i>Zbigniew Pozorski, Andrew Newton</i>	
Funded by		<i>Nutwood Developments Ltd</i>	
Full title		<i>The Old Forge and Former Newman's Garage, Cromer, Hertfordshire; Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>	
Authors		<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>	
Report no.		<i>3424</i>	
Date (of report)		<i>November 2009</i>	

THE OLD FORGE AND FORMER NEWMAN'S GARAGE, CROMER, HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at The Old Forge and Former Newman's Garage, Cromer, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2976 2836). The programme was commissioned by Nutwood Developments Ltd, and was undertaken as part of a planning condition on approval of erection of two new dwellings.

The site is located within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 30 which relates to the medieval settlement of Cromer. During 19th and 20th century the site was a location of blacksmithing, iron founding and engineering activity.

The programme revealed no archaeological features or finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at The Old Forge and Former Newman's Garage, Cromer, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2976 2836; Fig. 1-2). The programme was commissioned by Mr Rupert Price of Nutwood Developments Ltd, as part of a planning condition required by the local planning authority (Thanet DC Planning Ref. F/TH/08/0013). The work was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed two new dwellings.

1.2 The programme was undertaken according to a brief issued by Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 15/10/2007) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 22/10/2009) and approved by HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The project objectives of the archaeological monitoring and recording were:

- to ensure the archaeological excavation and 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;

- to secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the appropriate publication of project results, if required;
- to secure the analysis, long-term conservation and storage of the project archive.

The specific project objective was to record any features, fittings or equipment relating to former industrial use of the site and to place those findings in the context of the site as a whole.

Planning policy context

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG16 (1990) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology. It states that there should always be a presumption in favour of preserving nationally important archaeological remains in situ. However, when there is no overriding case for preservation, developers are required to fund opportunities for the recording and, where necessary, the excavation of the site. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Cromer is a hamlet within East Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It forms a small linear settlement on the north-east to south-west aligned White Hill B1037 road, c. 4km to the north-east of the large town of Stevenage, and c. 3km to the west of the smaller town of Buntingford.

2.2 The site is located on the south-east side of the B1037 road and occupies an L-shaped plot of land comprising an area of c. 1400m² (Fig. 2). The Old Forge lies close to the south-west boundary of the site on a north-west/south-east alignment; the north-west end of the building fronting onto the White Hill Road. Until recently a group of buildings stood in the north-east section of the site and were the premises of Newman's Garage, a former vehicle repair garage. These buildings had been demolished prior to the new development.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies at a height of 96 – 98m AOD on a gently sloping relief, which falls away slightly to the south-west. The site is situated on a solid geology of Upper Chalk. The soils of the area of the Hanslope Association which are derived from a drift geology of chalky till. Hanslope soils are categorised as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils (SSEW 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 30 as designated in the Local Plan, which relates to the medieval settlement of Cromer. The HER database reveals that the area surrounding the site has some degree of potential for archaeological remains of the prehistoric, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and later periods, yet no known sites or finds directly concern the site itself (Appendix 1). The neighbouring settlement of Ardeley, located 1.7km to the south-east, for instance developed from the Saxon 'Ardeleage' and contains the 13th century church of St Lawrence.

4.2 The settlement of Cromer was not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and was first documented as 'Crowmere' meaning 'pond with crows' in 1191 (HER 4437). In the medieval period Cromer Hall developed as a sub-manor of Ardeley from 'assart' land reclaimed from Ardeley Manor (Page 1912). It had a medieval mill built in the 12th century by Richard of Stapleford (Hopkins 1986) although the present mill (HER 5822), dates to the late 17th century and is notable for being the only surviving post mill to survive in the county. There are several other medieval and post-medieval buildings in the hamlet, including Cromer Farmhouse which is Grade II* listed, having originated as a medieval open hall house, and the post-medieval farmhouse at Lime Tree Farm which is situated immediately to the south of the assessment site, to name just two.

4.3 The earliest evidence for blacksmithing at Cromer (1841) refers to the adjacent plot to the site which was later involved in blacksmithing activity itself. The blacksmithing, iron founding and engineering at Cromer was connected with the Boorman family descending from the hamlet iron founder was Mr W. A. Boorman. The site was a location of that activity to at least 1937. In more recent times the site was occupied by Newman Motors, a business providing a motor repair and general engineering service, and another company called Atlantech Medical.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, 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 necessary. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The principal elements monitored were mechanically excavated foundation trenches for new dwellings, ground reductions for a new drive and access to the houses and a single main service trench in western part of the site.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 No archaeological features or finds were identified. Deposits located within area of monitoring were recorded in sample sections shown below.

6.2 Plot 1 (Fig. 2, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 4): NE foundation trench, SW facing</i> <i>0.00 = 96.78m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. Blackish grey, soft sandy silt.
0.10 – 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. Greyish brown, soft clayey silt.
0.54m +	L1002	Natural mid yellow and grey, compact clay.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 5): NW foundation trench, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 96.82m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1003	CBM and stone rubble with a light grey sandy silt.
0.28 – 0.84m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.84m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

6.2 Plot 2 (Fig. 2, DP 6)

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 7): NW foundation trench, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 97.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.10 – 0.60m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.60m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 8): SE foundation trench, NW facing</i> <i>0.00 = 96.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18 – 0.57m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.57m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

6.3 Service trench (Fig. 2, DP 9)

<i>Sample section 5 (DP 9): service trench, E facing</i> <i>0.00 = 96.62m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1004	Blackish grey, firm sandy silt.

0.11m +	L1005	Mid greyish brown, gritty silt with CBM.
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7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the program of archaeological monitoring and recording.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The deposits encountered at the site were laid in simple sequence. The site was commonly overlain by topsoil (L1000), a blackish grey, soft sandy silt and it measured 0.10 – 0.15m in thickness. It was present throughout the site except areas where it was stripped prior to development and replaced with layer of rubble L1003. The topsoil overlay subsoil L1001, a greyish brown, soft clayey silt. It measured 0.30 – 0.50m in thickness. In western part of the site those deposits were replaced by layers containing modern building materials (L1004 and L1005).

8.2 Natural geology deposit was present at c. 0.60m below existing and comprised of mid yellow, in lower parts grey, compact clay.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, in particular for medieval and post-medieval periods, no archaeological features or finds were located within the area of monitoring.

9.2 The site represents very limited potential for future successive archaeological investigation; however, as located within medieval settlement of Cromer, it may contain some unveiled evidence.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the Hertford 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Rupert Price of Nutwood Developments Ltd for commissioning and funding this project.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge Ms. Alison Tinniswood of HCC HEU and Ms. Isobel Thompson at the Hertfordshire HER.

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APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE (HER)

HER No.	NGR TL	Description
Prehistoric (to AD 43)		
6191	297 285	Quantity of 15 Mesolithic worked flints including burins, scrapers, points, blades and flakes; some with retouch were found in a vegetable plot near Cromer Hall
10943	2981 2856	A small flint assemblage of primary and secondary flakes, including several blades and some soft hammer struck pieces suggests that tool production of Mesolithic or Neolithic date occurred in the vicinity of Chequers
11236	2990 2850	Finds of coins and artefacts dating to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods indicate settlement, possibly a farmstead at Cromerfield Common
13025	29000 28500	A gold stater and a probable silver disc, engraved with what appears to be the figure was found with a metal detector at Walnut Tree Farm
Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)		
4688	3000 2893	Supposed line of Roman road from Baldock to Braughing and known as Viatores' road 22
9352	2950 2890	Evidence of Roman occupation, but no further information received
Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 – 1066)		
11468	3050 2870	An Anglo-Saxon spearhead found about 1981 near Cromer windmill, and identified as probable Swanton C2 type of 5 th -7 th century date
11822	3015 2922	The placename Swamstey Common derives from Old English 'cwealm' (death, slaughter, pestilence) and 'stow', place; and likely indicates a place of execution
12981	29175 28430	A probable early Anglo-Saxon inhumation was disturbed by the farmer at Walnut Tree Farm and was accompanied by a knife and whetstone dated to the 6 th -7 th centuries AD
Medieval (AD 1150 - 1500)		
1811	293 290	Supposed shrunken village at Luffenhall as indicated by 20 households recorded by the Domesday Book, although there is no visible evidence
4437	297 283	Medieval settlement of Cromer was first documented as 'Crowmere,' meaning 'pond with crows', in 1191
11929	2975 2845	Cromer Hall was assarted from Ardeley Manor during the 13 th century, yet the present building was constructed with timber and plaster on a brick base and dates to the late 16 th - early 17 th century
13118	30000 29160	Various finds of reused carved stone have been made in and around Luffenhall and are apparently from the medieval building of St Paul's Chapel, which existed as early as 1181 onwards
Post-medieval (1500 - 1750)		

5822	3045 2864	Cromer Windmill comprises a post mill in good condition with ogee shaped roof, all clad in white painted boarding, which was probably built in late 18 th or early 19 th century
6285	2970 2820	Square dovecote, now used as a garage. Located at Cromer Farm
11083	3016 2762	The probable planned farm at Bury Grange comprises two barns with a mixture of weather-boarding and corrugated iron, possibly on brick sills
11926	2978 2846	Cromer Hall stables are weatherboarded with a steep roof with a style of construction that suggests the stables date to the late 17 th century
12921	29710 28230	Cromer Farm consists of two timber farm buildings, comprising a timber framed granary on a substantial brick sill, and a stable, cowshed and pigsty
12922	29790 28320	The barn at Lime Tree Farm was built of a mixture of timber boarding, framing and corrugated iron
12923	29890 27570	Timber framed shelter now partially covered in corrugated iron sheeting and located behind Bury Grange
12936	29846 28584	Chequers comprises a weather-boarded barn on a sill, which is gable ended with a corrugated iron roof
12937	29330 28726	Manor Farm on Luffenhall Street comprises three timber framed buildings

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The Old Forge and Forge cottage.
View ESE from White Hill Road.



DP 2. Area of plot 1. View W.



DP 3. Plot 1, the groundworks. View SW.



DP 4. Plot 1, NE foundation trench. Sample section. View NE.



DP 5. Plot 1, NW foundation trench. Sample section. View NW.



DP 6. Plot 2. View N.



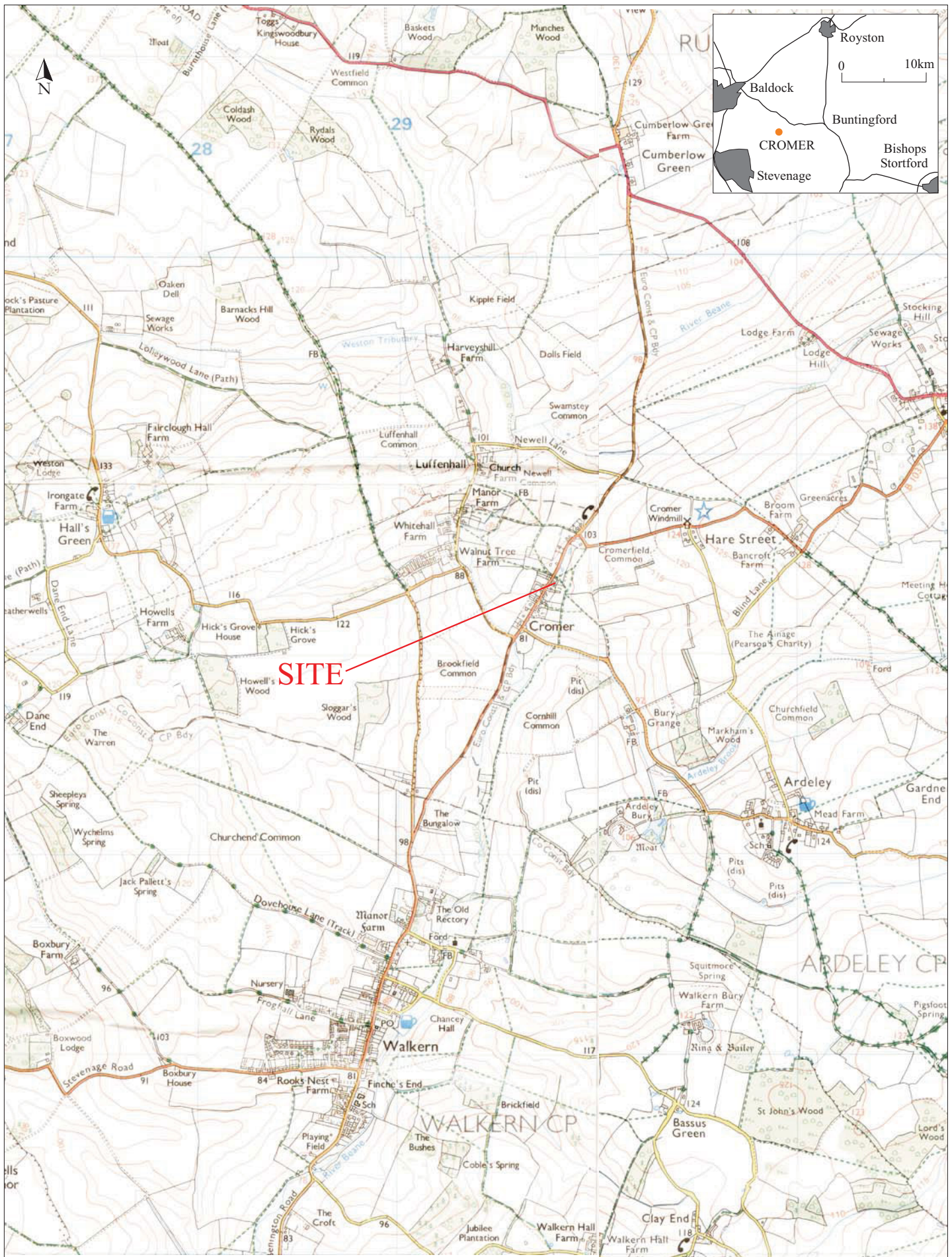
DP 7. Plot 2, NW foundation trench. Sample section. View NW.



DP 8. Plot 2, SE foundation trench. Sample section. View SE.



DP 9. Service trench. Sample section 5. View W.

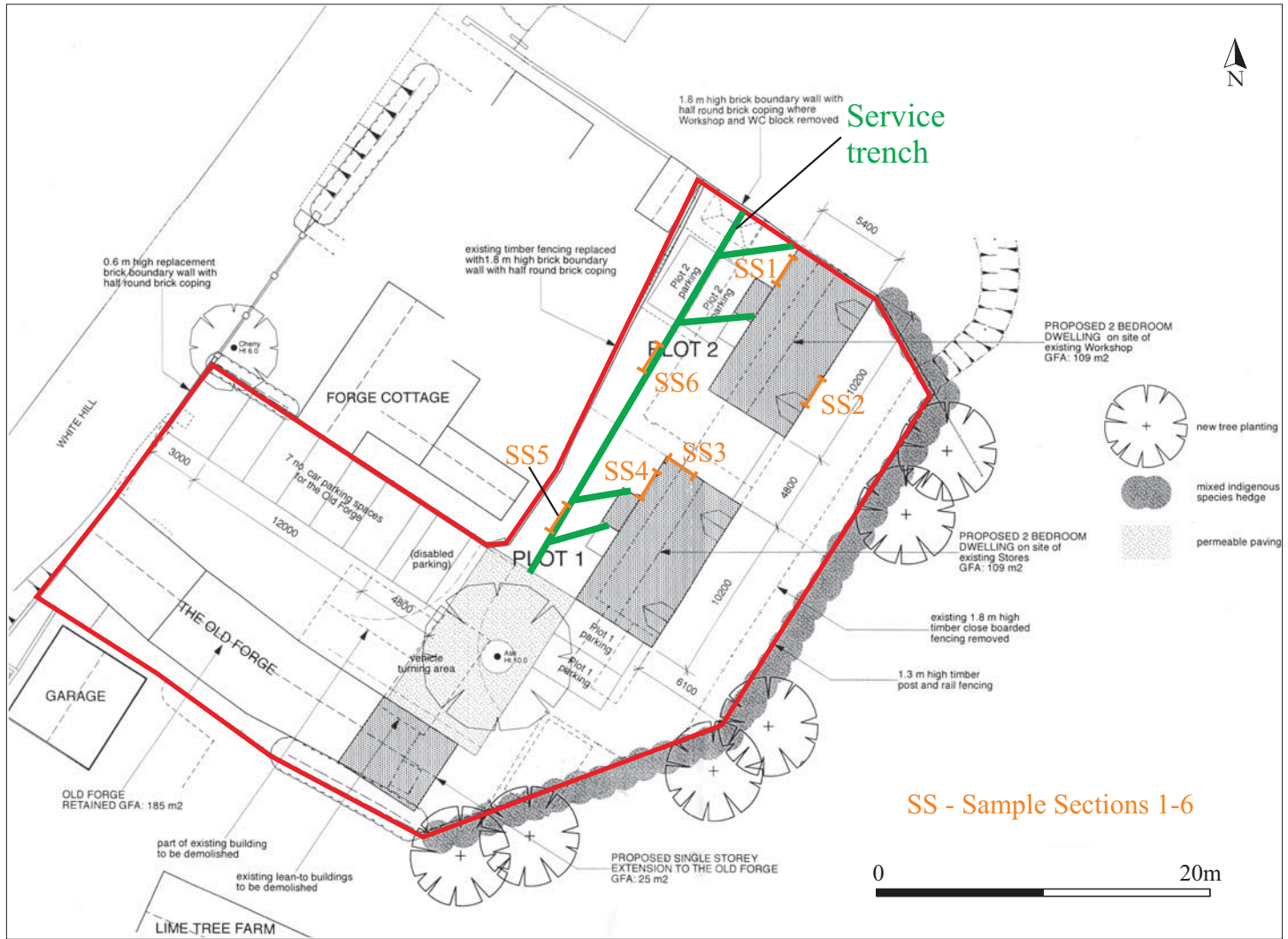


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



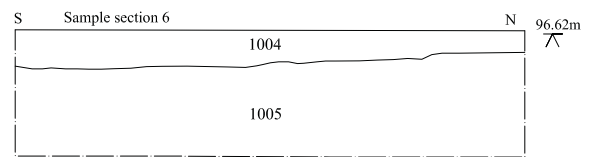
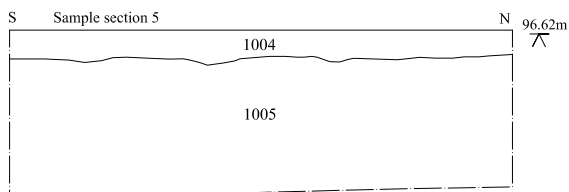
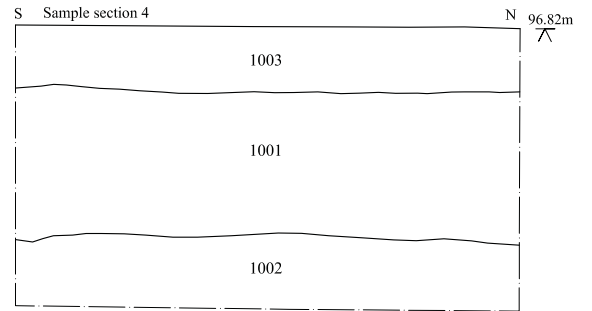
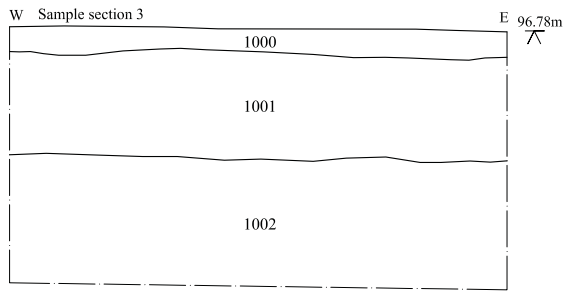
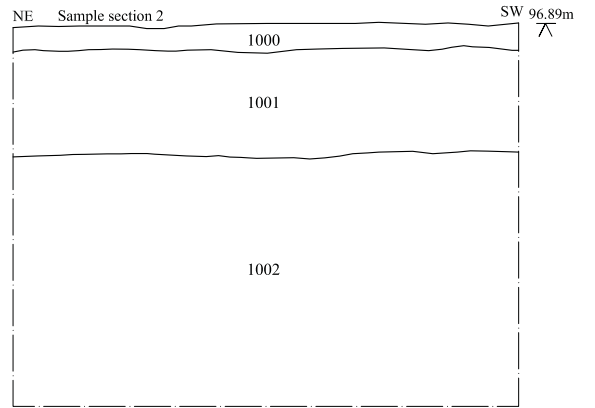
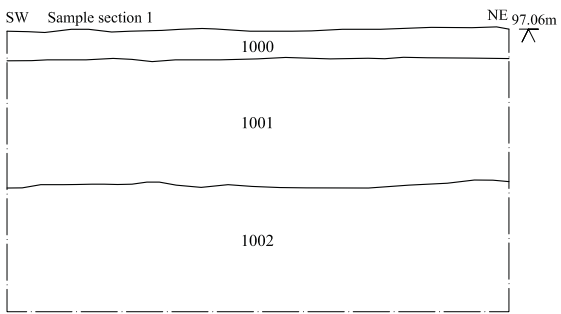
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Fig. 2 Detailed site location
 Scale 1 : 800 at A4



SS - Sample Sections 1-6

0 20m

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Fig. 3 Section location plan
 Scale 1:400 at A4



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Fig. 4 Sections
 Scale 1:30 at A4