
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**10-12 HIGH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING AND RECORDING**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA	
NGR: TQ 0625 9460	Report No. 3466
District: Three Rivers	Site Code: AS 1142
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3020
Signed:	Date: January 2010

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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 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE**
- 2 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD SUMMARY SHEET**

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire		
<p><i>In November and December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at 10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TQ 0625 9460). The monitoring was commissioned by Matthew Homes Ltd and was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed new two-storey, two-and-half-storey and three-storey buildings comprising 24 flats with associated access, landscaping and parking.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located within historic core of Rickmansworth, on the western side of the High Street. It represents potential for medieval and post-medieval finds. In 19th century the site was occupied by a malthouse.</i></p> <p><i>The monitoring revealed the remains of three 19th / 20th century walls. Two of the walls may have been related to a 19th century malthouse.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	13 th , 19 th , 30 th November, 3 rd , 16 th December 2009		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	3020	Site code	AS 1142
Type of project	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Former commercial premises and showroom, now demolished		
Planned development	New residential dwellings		
Main features (+dates)	Remains of three 19 th / 20 th C walls		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	Three Rivers	Rickmansworth
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshire HER		
Post code (if known)	WD3 1ER		
Area of site	c. 530 m ²		
NGR	TQ 0625 9460		
Height AOD (max/ min)	c. 50/48m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	HCC HEU		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Zbigniew Pozorski		
Funded by	Matthew Homes Ltd.		
Full title	10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording		
Authors	Pozorski, Z.		
Report no.	3466		
Date (of report)	Jan 2010		

10-12 HIGH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

In November and December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at 10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TQ 0625 9460). The monitoring was commissioned by Matthew Homes Ltd and was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed new two-storey, two-and-half-storey and three-storey buildings comprising 24 flats with associated access, landscaping and parking.

The site is located within the historic core of Rickmansworth, on the western side of the High Street. It has a potential for medieval and post-medieval finds in particular. In the 19th century the site was occupied by a malthouse.

The monitoring revealed the remains of three 19th / 20th century walls. Two of the walls may have been related to the 19th century malthouse.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November and December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological monitoring and recording at 10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TQ 0625 9460; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Matthew Homes Ltd in compliance with a planning condition required by the local planning authority (Three Rivers DC Planning Ref. 07/0554 and 07/0555). The monitoring was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed new two-storey, two-and-half-storey and three-storey buildings comprising 24 flats with associated access, landscaping and parking.

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken according to a brief issued by Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 20/07/2007), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 19/05/2008). The monitoring conformed to Institute for 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; and
- to secure the production, analysis, conservation and deposition of the project archive.

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 Rickmansworth is a small town located on an area of hilly ground between the rivers Chess and Colne in south-west Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The historic part of the town is bounded to the north, south and west by the A404 and to the east by the river Chess. The Colne flows south of the A404 along with the Grand Union Canal and a series of associated lakes. To the west of the historic town is a large area of suburban housing laid out on sloping ground up to the M25 motorway. Rickmansworth is separated only by small patches of open land from the nearby hamlet of Batchworth to the south and the larger settlements of Croxley Green to the east and Chorleywood to the west, on the opposite side of the M25. The town is linked to the London Underground on the Metropolitan Line.

2.2 The historic core of Rickmansworth is centred on High Street and Church Street. At the far eastern end of the town High Street turns northwards before being crossed by the railway and terminating at a junction with the A404. The site under consideration is located on the western side of this last section of High Street a short distance south of the railway bridge. It comprises a rectangular plot of land now empty due to recent demolition

works. Behind the site is the Cloisters, a mid-20th century housing development, while on the opposite, eastern side of the High Street is St. Joan of Arc School.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 Rickmansworth sits on a solid plateau and river terrace drift (sands gravels and clays), which is overlain by soil of the Marlow association, well-drained fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils (SSEW 1983). This type of soil is prone to slight seasonal waterlogging. Peat and alluvium deposits are present on land closer to the river Colne to the south. The underlying geology of the site comprises head Upper Chalk (BGS Sheet 274). The land at the site slopes gently downwards to the east.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 There is evidence that the area now occupied by the town of Rickmansworth and its surrounding countryside has been inhabited by people since the later Palaeolithic period ((10,000 B.C.) (Munby 1977)). Mesolithic (8,000 – 4,000 B.C.) and Neolithic (4,500 – 2,500 B.C.) flint tools have been retrieved in the parish although finds have tended to occur outside the town rather than within the present urban area itself (Seddon 1999). A HAT evaluation at Town Wharf in 1995 (Zeeprat 1995) revealed struck and burnt flints. There have been fewer archaeological finds dating from the Iron Age (700 B.C. – 100 B.C.) but extensive evidence of occupation reappears later from around A.D. 40 – A.D. 70. There are numerous examples of Roman estates in the countryside surrounding the town, although again none have been discovered within the present urban area. There has been speculation that the lower parts of the town near the rivers may have been too marshy for cultivation by Roman farmers.

Romano-British

4.2 The Colne and Chess valleys were seemingly relatively well populated in the Romano-British period, with a number of villa estates, industrial sites and other settlements. However, only sparse Roman remains are recorded close to the assessment site and none have been discovered within the present urban area. There has been speculation that the lower parts of the town near the rivers may have been too marshy for cultivation by Roman farmers.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

4.3 Although it is thought that King Offa granted the manor of Rickmansworth to the abbey of St Albans in the 8th century A.D., the earliest reliable proof of the town's existence comes from the Domesday Book of

1086. This described “Prichemareworde” as a manor with 45 inhabitants having rights of fishing, common and pasture. The settlement also had a water mill, 20 ploughs and pannage for 1,200 pigs. However, little is known about the medieval form of the settlement, though it likely to have been focussed on the High Street/Church Street and church. The town was recorded as *Rykemersworye*, *Rykesmaresworth* and as *Rickmersworth* in the 13th century and as Rickmansworth by the 16th century (Page 1908).

4.4 The manor and church of Rickmansworth both came under the ownership of the abbey of St. Albans, an arrangement confirmed by Pope Honorius III in 1219 and continued until the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in the 1530s. During the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 the people of Rickmansworth played an active role by extracting a charter of liberties by force from the abbot. This extended the inhabitants’ rights to fish and make use of common land while also giving them greater freedom to sell land should they wish to do so (Page 1908).

Post-medieval and modern

4.5 Rickmansworth was chartered in 1542, under the reign of Henry VIII, at around which time a large timber-framed market-house was constructed in the High Street. The town was granted a licence to have a market on Saturdays and an annual fair at the feast of the Assumption. This market building was demolished in 1805, and a new one was built nearby three years later. However, the railway encouraged trade in nearby Watford as opposed to Rickmansworth, the market closing as a result of various factors, stiff competition being the main cause. This market house was pulled down in 1868, on the site of which the present day Town Hall was built (Page 1908, 372).

4.6 A silk mill appeared in the High Street towards the end of the 18th or early 19th century (Munby 1977). It was described in 1808 as having been recently built (Page 1908, 373). Printing and paper-making were also important local industries, as well as brewing, straw plaiting and later, materials manufacturing. In 19th century the site may still have been partially occupied by a malthouse (HER) as this part of Rickmansworth contained a number of medieval maltings.

4.7 The transport network proved to be the key to growth in the area. Located on the route of two 18th century turnpike roads (Hatfield to Reading Trust and Pinner Trust), Rickmansworth contained a number of coaching inns. The Grand Junction Canal was opened in 1796 and a number of small branches dug to serve businesses in the town. The canal was used for gravel removal from the large pits (now lakes) nearby and also served the Rickmansworth Gas Company and breweries in the 19th century. The first railway arrived in 1862, linking Watford Junction and Church Street. This spurred development of a goods yard and terraced housing around the station, which closed in 1952-4. The Metropolitan Line arrived in 1887, and is still present.

4.8 In 2008 the site was subject to a programme of historic building recording and building monitoring and recording both carried out by AS (Williams & Prosser 2008, and Williams 2009), prior to, and during, demolition of the former structures on the site. The surveys indicated that the buildings occupying the site were of 19th and 20th century date. The possible remains of a 19th century malting may have been located in the southern part of the site.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring 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 *proforma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. 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 and service (drainage) trenches for the new development.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 Deposits located within the site were recorded in sample sections (Fig.5)

<i>NW corner of the site, N foundation trench. Sample section 1, S facing.</i>		
<i>0.00 = 49.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1006	Reddish grey, loose, sandy silt with CBM rubble.
0.40 – 0.80m	L1001	Light brown, compact, sandy silt.
0.80 – 1.45m	L1002	?Alluvium. Light brown, compact, clayey silt.
1.45m+	L1003	Natural brownish and grey, loose, gravel.

<i>NW corner of the site, W foundation trench. Sample section 2, E facing.</i>		
<i>0.00 = 49.85m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. Greyish black, soft, sandy silt.
0.25 – 1.00m	L1001	Sandy silt. As above.
1.00m+	L1002	?Alluvium. As above.

<i>N/central part of the site, E/W foundation trench. Sample section 3, N facing.</i>		
<i>0.00 = 48.90m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.75m	L1006	Sandy silt with CBM rubble. As above.
0.75 – 1.50m	L1001	Sandy silt. As above.
1.50m+	L1002	?Alluvium. As above.

6.2 The monitoring revealed the remains of three brick walls.

M1007 was located in the north-eastern corner of the site and was visible in the sections of the foundation trench on the eastern side of the site (Dwelling 17; Fig.5). The wall was in poor condition and comprised irregular blocks of red bricks bonded with light grey mortar located within Foundation Cut F1004. The cut was a linear feature (1.50+ x 0.50 x 0.75m) aligned east/west. On western section of the new foundation trench the remains of the wall were only visible as L1005, a black and grey silt with ash and CBM rubble.

Wall M1008 was located in the south-eastern corner of the site (Dwelling 1; Fig.5) and was aligned east/west. It was linear (3.50+ x 0.45 x 0.65m; DP 9, 10), constructed of red bricks (0.22 x 0.105 x 0.08m) within a light grey mortar. The wall was truncated throughout during excavation of the foundation trenches. No foundation cut for the wall was identified.

M1010 was located in the southern sector of the site c. 13m from its southern edge. It was a wall, aligned E/W, and it was much damaged. It was constructed of red bricks (0.22 x 0.105 x 0.08m) bonded with a yellowish grey mortar and it measured c. 0.60 x 0.35m. The wall was located below a layer of brown silt and rubble, L1001, c. 0.40m below ground level. A layer of brick rubble, L1009, was located on the northern and southern sides of the wall being probably derived from the wall. It was present below L1006 at depth c. 0.40m and was 0.40 – 0.60m thick.

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 overlain by L1006, a layer derived from the recent demolition works. It comprised a reddish grey, loose, sandy silt with CBM rubble (0.50 – 0.70m thick). The topsoil, L1000, survived only in NW corner of the site. It was greyish black, soft, sandy silt (c.0.25m thick). Below L1000 and L1006, was a layer of light brown, compact sandy silt, L1001 (0.75 – 1m thick).

8.2 The natural geology was present at c. 1.00 – 1.40m below existing. L1002 was a light brown, compact clayey silt, possibly an alluvial deposit. At depth c.1.30 – 1.50m below ground level and below L1002, a grey / brown gravel was present, L1003.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, especially dating to the medieval and post-medieval periods, the recorded features comprised the remains of three walls.

9.2 The site, in particular its northern sector, contained significant quantities of made ground with construction and demolition materials. Archaeological remains, if present, may have been removed.

9.3 The remains of walls revealed in southern part of the site (M1008 and M1010) may have been a part of 19th century malting depicted on the 1898 OS Map (Fig.3).

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the Three Rivers 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 Matthew Homes Ltd for commissioning and funding this project, and in particular Mr Malcolm Davies and Ricky Bland for their assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

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**APPENDIX 1
CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE**

RECORDS	NUMBER
Brief	Y
Specification	Y
Registers	Y
Context Sheets	13
Site Drawings A1	
Site Drawings A3	
Site Drawings A4	1
Site Photographs B/W	
Site Photographs Colour Slide	
Site Photographs Digital	22

APPENDIX 2 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire
County: Hertfordshire	District: Three rivers
Village/Town: Rickmansworth	Parish: Rickmansworth
Planning application reference:	07/0554 and 07/0555
Client name/address/tel:	Matthew Homes Ltd / 45-47 High Street, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 5AW / tel. 01707655550
Nature of application:	Construction on residential buildings with 24 flats
Present land use:	Former commercial premises and showroom, now demolished
Size of application area: 530m ²	Size of area investigated 530m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TQ 0625 9460
Site Code:	AS 1142
Site director/Organization:	AS
Type of work:	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording
Date of work:	13 th , 19 th , 30 th November, 3 rd , 16 th December 2009
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Three Rivers Museum
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: Modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports:	Williams, M., Prosser, L., 2008, <i>12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire: Historic Building Recording</i> . AS Report No. 3093 Williams, M., 2009, <i>10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire: Building Monitoring and Recording</i> . AS Report No. 3191
Summary of fieldwork results:	<i>In November and December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at 10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire (NGR TQ 0625 9460). The monitoring was commissioned by Matthew Homes Ltd and was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed new two-storey, two-and-half-storey and three-storey buildings comprising 24 flats with associated access, landscaping and parking. The site is located within historic core of Rickmansworth, on the western side of the High Street. It represents potential for medieval and post-medieval finds. In 19th century the site was occupied by a malthouse. The monitoring revealed remains of three 19th / 20th century walls. Two of the walls may have been related to 19th century malthouse</i>
Author of summary: Zbigniew Pozorski	Date of Summary: January 2010

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. 10-12 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. View NNW.



DP 2. NW corner of the site. View NNW.



DP 3. NW corner of the site, N trench. Sample section. View N.



DP 4. NW corner of the site, W trench. Sample section. View W.



DP 5. NE corner of the site. View NNE.



DP 6. NE corner of the site, S trench. View S.



DP 7. Central/E part of the site. View NNE.



DP 8. Central/E part of the site. View SE.



DP 9. SE corner of the site. View E.



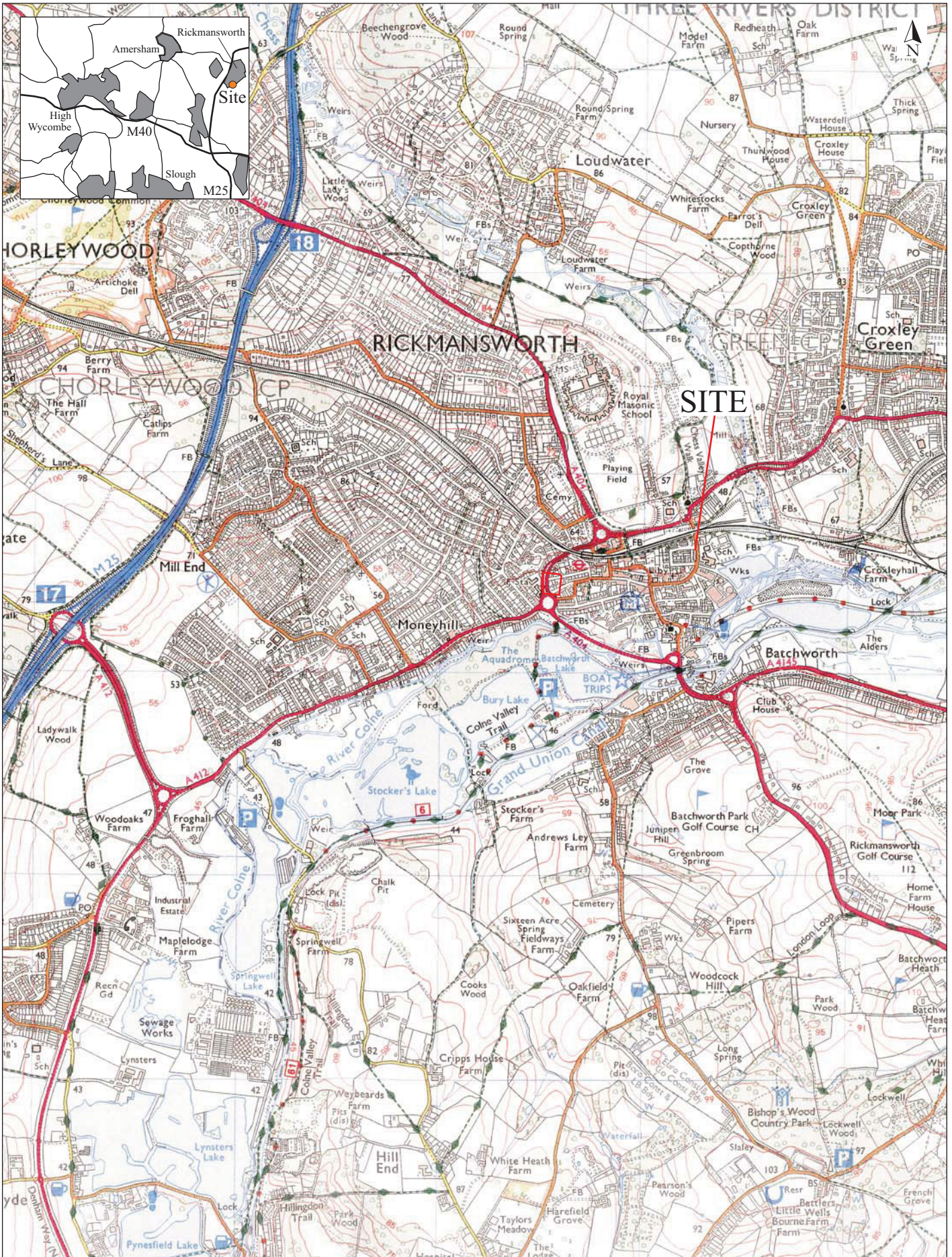
DP 10. SE corner of the site, M1008. View E.



DP 11. S part of the site, foundation trench. View SSW.

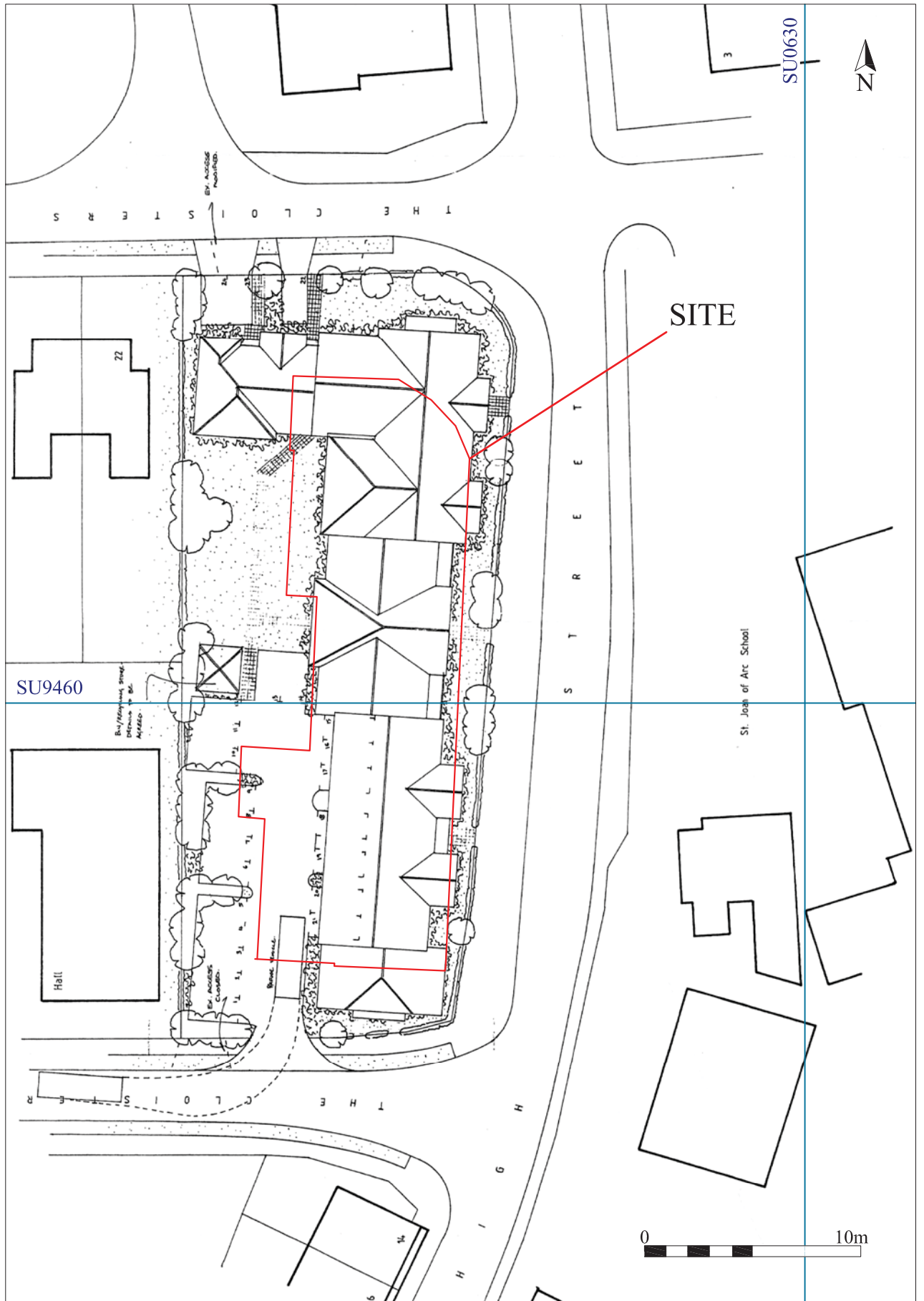


DP 12. S part of the site, foundation trench. View N.

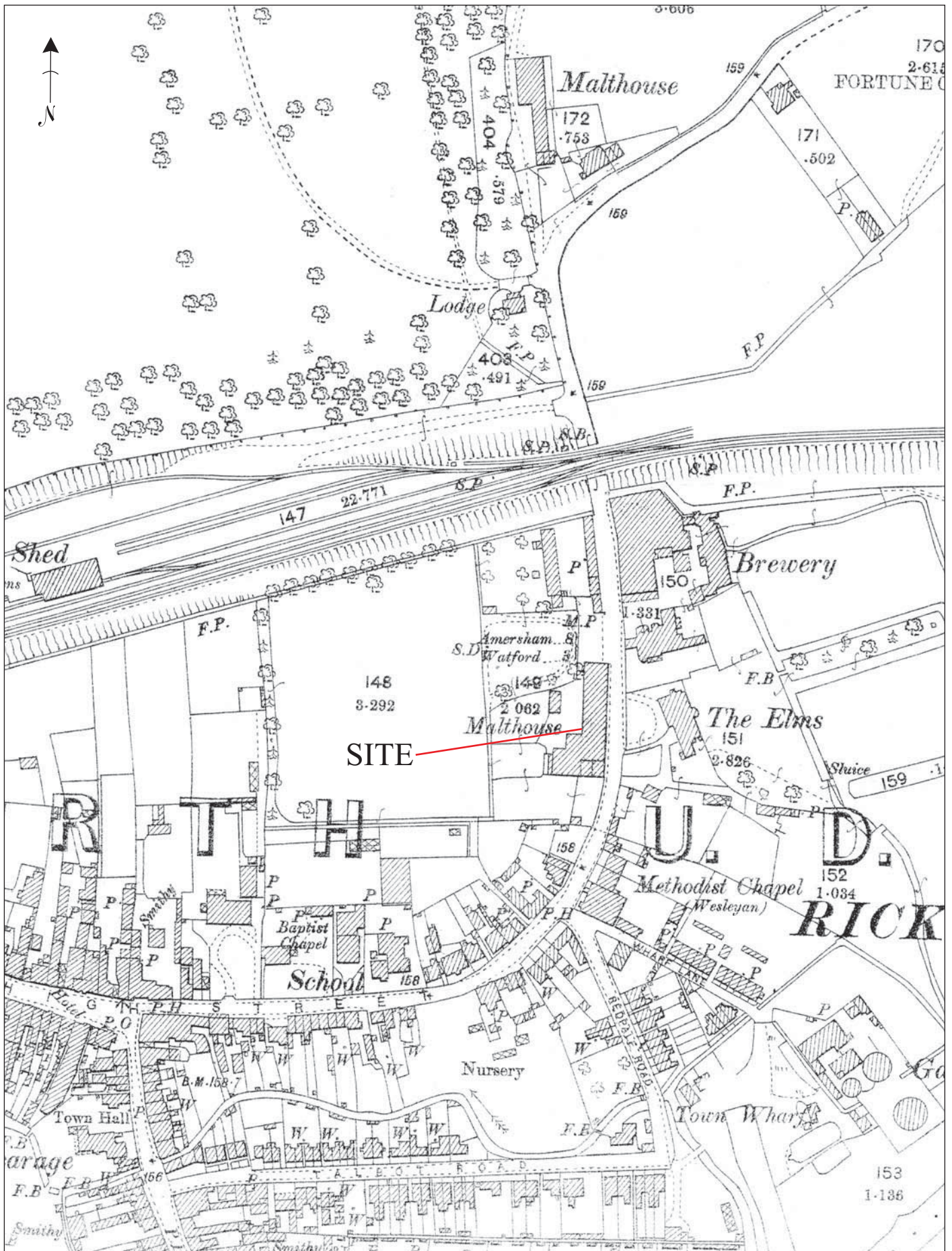


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1: 25,000 at A4

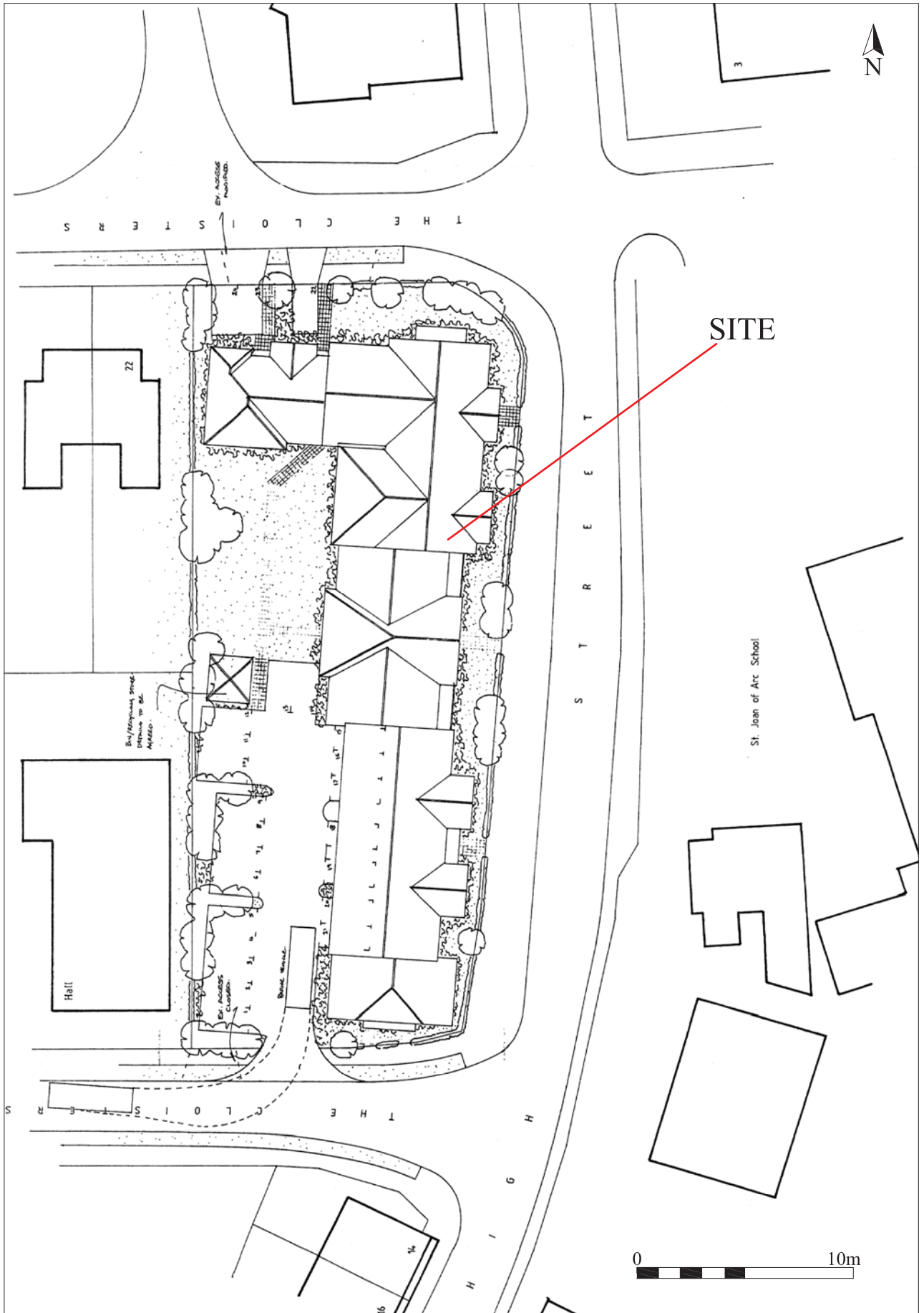


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale: 1: 250 at A4



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 Fig. 3 OS map, 1898
 Scale 25" to 1 mile at A4



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Fig. 4 Proposed development plan
 Scale: 1: 250 at A4

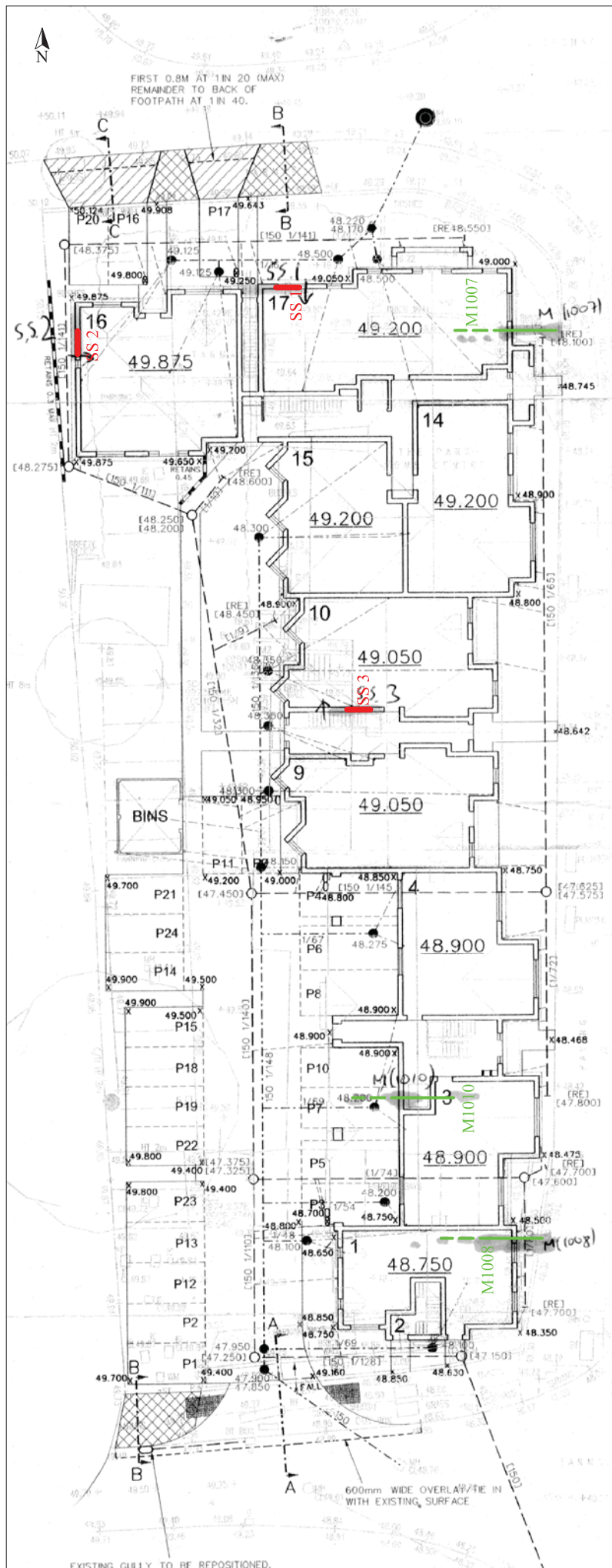


Fig. 5 Location of sample sections

Scale 1:500 at A4