

**WILLIAM BARTLETT & SON,
GRAFTON STREET, HIGH WYCOMBE,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING AND RECORDING
(GEOTECHNICAL PITS)**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA (Fieldwork & Report)	
NGR: SU 8491 9370	Report No. 3600
District: Wycombe	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 2920
Signed:	Date: August 2010

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>William Bartlett & Son, Grafton Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire</i>		
<p><i>In July 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during geotechnical test pitting on land at William Bartlett & Son Furniture Factory, Grafton Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 8491 9370). The monitoring was commissioned by Leadbitter, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of a new residential development on the site.</i></p> <p><i>The site had been previously extensively developed as a furniture factory in the early 20th century, but retained a potential for archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date, and a potential for important palaeoenvironmental information closer to the river Wye.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>28th July 2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>
P. number	<i>2920</i>	Site code	
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Former factory complex</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Buckinghamshire</i>	<i>Wycombe</i>	<i>High Wycombe</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Buckinghamshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 1.74 hectares</i>		
NGR	<i>SU 8491 9370</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.79m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Leadbitter</i>		
Full title	<i>William Bartlett & Son, Grafton Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3600</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>August 2010</i>		

WILLIAM BARTLETT & SON, GRAFTON STREET, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

SUMMARY

In July 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during geotechnical test pitting on land at William Bartlett & Son Furniture Factory, Grafton Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 8491 9370). The monitoring was commissioned by Leadbitter, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of a new residential development on the site.

The site had been previously extensively developed as a furniture factory in the early 20th century, but retained a potential for archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date, and a potential for important palaeoenvironmental information closer to the river Wye.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

In July 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during geotechnical test pitting on land at the for William Bartlett & Son furniture factory, Grafton Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 8491 9370; Figs. 1-2). The monitoring was commissioned by Leadbitter, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of a new residential development on the site. It was required by the local planning authority (Wycombe District Council Planning Ref. 07/06366/FUL). The monitoring was carried out during geotechnical test pitting carried out by LBH Wembley.

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance to a model brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS), a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 18/12/2009), and approved by BCAS. A programme of historic building recording is also being carried out by AS, according to a site-specific brief issued by BCAS (dated 19/07/201), the results of which will be presented as a separate report. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2008).

1.3 The project aimed to identify and record any archaeological remains revealed by the geotechnical test pitting, with particular regard to:

- The identification and recording of any significant archaeological remains, in particular the potential for palaeoenvironmental evidence associated with the course of the adjacent river Wye, and identification of any evidence associated with the adjacent medieval and possibly Saxon route of Fryers Lane.

Planning policy context

1.4 The works were undertaken in conjunction with the relevant planning policies, which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage. PPG 16 (1990), the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology, and PPG 15 (1994), 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), have been replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5, 2010), which applies to the historic environment.

1.5 PPS 5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement 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. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The William Bartlett & Son site is situated in the valley of the river Wye, 1.6km west-north-west of High Wycombe's town centre in the area known as Desborough. The site fronts on to Grafton Street, and is demarcated to the south-west by Fryer's Lane and partially to the south-east by Desborough Park Road. The majority of the site is bound by the meandering course of the river Wye, which flows eastwards in an arc around the northern edge of the site. For much of its course, the river Wye runs on an approximately north-west to south-east alignment through the settlement of High Wycombe, and a number of small tributaries branch off to the immediate north of the site.

2.2 The site itself is roughly semi-circular in shape and comprises an area of approximately 1.74 hectares, occupied by the former workshops, factory buildings and other associated structures such as storage sheds and timber-drying kilns, which were formerly used as a furniture manufactory. It is

surrounded by a mixture of industrial properties immediately to the south, Desborough Recreation Ground to the north-west and mixed residential and industrial properties to the north-east.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The solid geology beneath the area of High Wycombe comprises Upper Cretaceous chalk, although areas immediately adjacent to the River Wye, including the site, are situated upon middle chalk concentrated within the Wye Valley. The floodplain of the River Wye is also overlain by alluvial soils and flint gravels and peat deposits have been noted on the southern side of the River Wye.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The detailed historical/archaeological background to the site is presented in the previous historic building assessment report (Collins *et al* 2007), and summarised here.

4.2 The site comprises former factory buildings, several of which survive from the original early 20th century William Bartlett and Sons Ltd furniture factory, which played an important role in the town's 20th century furniture industry. The brief notes the distinct surviving architectural features present on the factory site, including the boiler room with a Lancashire boiler and the remains of an associated chimney. The chimney was still present during the 2007 survey but has now largely collapsed. Other elements on the site include buildings with distinct 20th century characteristics, but these have been subject to large-scale alteration, and one building is fire-damaged.

4.3 The historic building appraisal revealed a complex of several surviving buildings dating to the original construction of the factory in 1901 together with later additions to the 1980s, though all have been subject to extensive modernisation and modification, to reflect the adaptation of the company, increased mechanisation and improved standards.

4.4 The site otherwise has perhaps a limited archaeological potential, given its later development, but it lies in proximity to Desborough Castle c. 470m to the south-west. The site has a mainly low potential for archaeological remains, although there is a moderate potential for Iron Age, Romano-British, medieval, post-medieval and early modern remains. Areas of possible archaeological survival could be the northern section of the site beside the River Wye and the site's south-western corner, which fronts onto the medieval and possibly Anglo-Saxon route of Fryers Lane. The area closer to the river also has a potential for palaeoenvironmental remains associated with any peat deposits that are present.

4.5 The Solent Thames Research Frameworks for Buckinghamshire note the importance of increasing the record of post-medieval buildings within the

county. The historic interest of the site stems from its role in the important furniture industry within the town during this period.

4.6 The Saxon, medieval and post-medieval resource assessment documents for the Solent Thames region all note the potential for further research into rural settlement, its origin, form and growth/decline, as well as issues of material culture, social organisation and further research into manorial sites.

4.7 The factory buildings are not listed, and are not located within a Conservation Area. The entire site, however, is recorded on the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record as an Archaeological Notification Area (HER 0845000000).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all geotechnical test pits excavated by LBH Wembley as part of the current site investigation, 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

<i>Test Pit 1 (DP 4): N side, S facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.40m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.45m	L1000	Made ground. Light grey, friable, silty sand with occasional CBM fragments.
0.45 – 0.60m	L1001	Black, compact, clayey silt with charcoal.
0.60m +	L1002	Natural light grey, loose, gravel with yellow clay.

<i>Test Pit 2 (DP 5): E side, W facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.35m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1003	Modern surface. Light grey, compact, concrete.
0.30 – 0.60m	L1004	Concrete rubble.
0.60 – 0.95m	L1001	Black, compact, clayey silt with charcoal.
0.95m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

<i>Test Pit 3 (DP 6): S side, N facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.12m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1005	Modern surface. Dark bluish grey, compact, tarmac.
0.30 – 0.60m	L1006	Stone and CBM rubble.

0.60 – 0.95m	L1007	Made ground. Dark grey, friable, silty sand with CBM fragments.
0.95m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 4 (DP 7): E side, W facing

0.00 = 75.30m AOD

0.00 – 0.35m	L1008	Modern made ground. Light grey, loose, silty sand.
0.35 – 0.65m	L1007	Made ground. As above, Pit 3.
0.65m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 5 (DP 8): W side, E facing

0.00 = 75.42m AOD

0.00 – 0.20m	L1009	Topsoil. Dark blackish grey, soft, sandy silt.
0.20 – 0.50m	L1007	Made ground. As above, Pit 3.
0.50m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 6 (DP 9): S side, N facing

0.00 = 75.48m AOD

0.00 – 0.15m	L1010	Modern made ground. Light grey, loose, silty sand and CBM rubble.
0.15 – 0.65m	L1011	CBM rubble.
0.65 – 0.78m	L1007	Dark blackish grey, compact, clayey sit.
0.78m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 7 (DP 10): S side, N facing

0.00 = 75.70m AOD

0.00 – 0.15m	L1003	Concrete surface. As above, Pit 2.
0.15 – 0.62m	L1012	Made ground. Dark grey, compact, clayey silt with CBM fragments.
0.62m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 8 (DP 11): W side, E facing

0.00 = 75.43m AOD

0.00 – 0.11m	L1003	Concrete surface. As above, Pit 2.
0.11 – 0.50m	L1004	Concrete rubble. As above, Pit 2.
0.50 – 0.80m	L1007	Dark blackish grey, compact, clayey sit.
0.80m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 9 (DP 12): E side, W facing

0.00 = 75.45m AOD

0.00 – 0.25m	L1013	Modern made ground. Light grey, loose, silty sand.
0.25 – 0.75m	L1014	Reddish grey CBM rubble with brown, loose, siltu sand.
0.75 – 0.88m	L1015	Greenish yellow, compact, clay.
0.88 – 0.98m	L1016	Black, compact, clayey silt with organic material.
0.98m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

Test Pit 10 (DP 13): S side, N facing

0.00 = 76.10m AOD

0.00 – 0.10m	L1017	Modern concrete surface.
0.10 – 0.55m	L1018	Reddish grey CBM rubble with brown, loose, siltu sand.

0.55 – 0.67m	L1019	White, compact, chalk.
0.67m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

<i>Test Pit 10 (DP 13): N side, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 75.40m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.70m	L1020	Made ground. Dark grey, loose, sandy silt.
0.70m +	L1002	Natural gravel. As above, Pit 1.

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 DISCUSSION

8.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, in particular for medieval remains, no archaeological features or finds were located within the geotechnical trial pits.

8.2 No peat deposits associated with the course of the river Wye were identified within the trial pits. Alluvial silts with a slight organic content were recorded in Test Pit 9. Although an environmental sample was taken, there was not sufficient environmental material derived from the flot to allow for further analysis.

9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

9.1 The archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr David Fisher of Leadbitter for funding the works and LB Wembley for this assistance (in particular Mr Chris Sonderman) for his co-operation and funding of the monitoring, and for his assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Eliza Alqassar of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Former furniture factory, Grafton Street, High Wycombe. SE buildings. View ESE.



DP 2. N part of the site. View NE.



DP 3. Excavation of test pit. View SE.



DP 4. Test Pit 1. View N.



DP 5. Test Pit 2. View E.



DP 6. Test Pit 3. View S.



DP 7. Test Pit 4. View E.



DP 8. Test Pit 5. View W.



DP 9. Test Pit 6. View S.



DP 10. Test Pit 7. View S.



DP 11. Test Pit 8. View W.



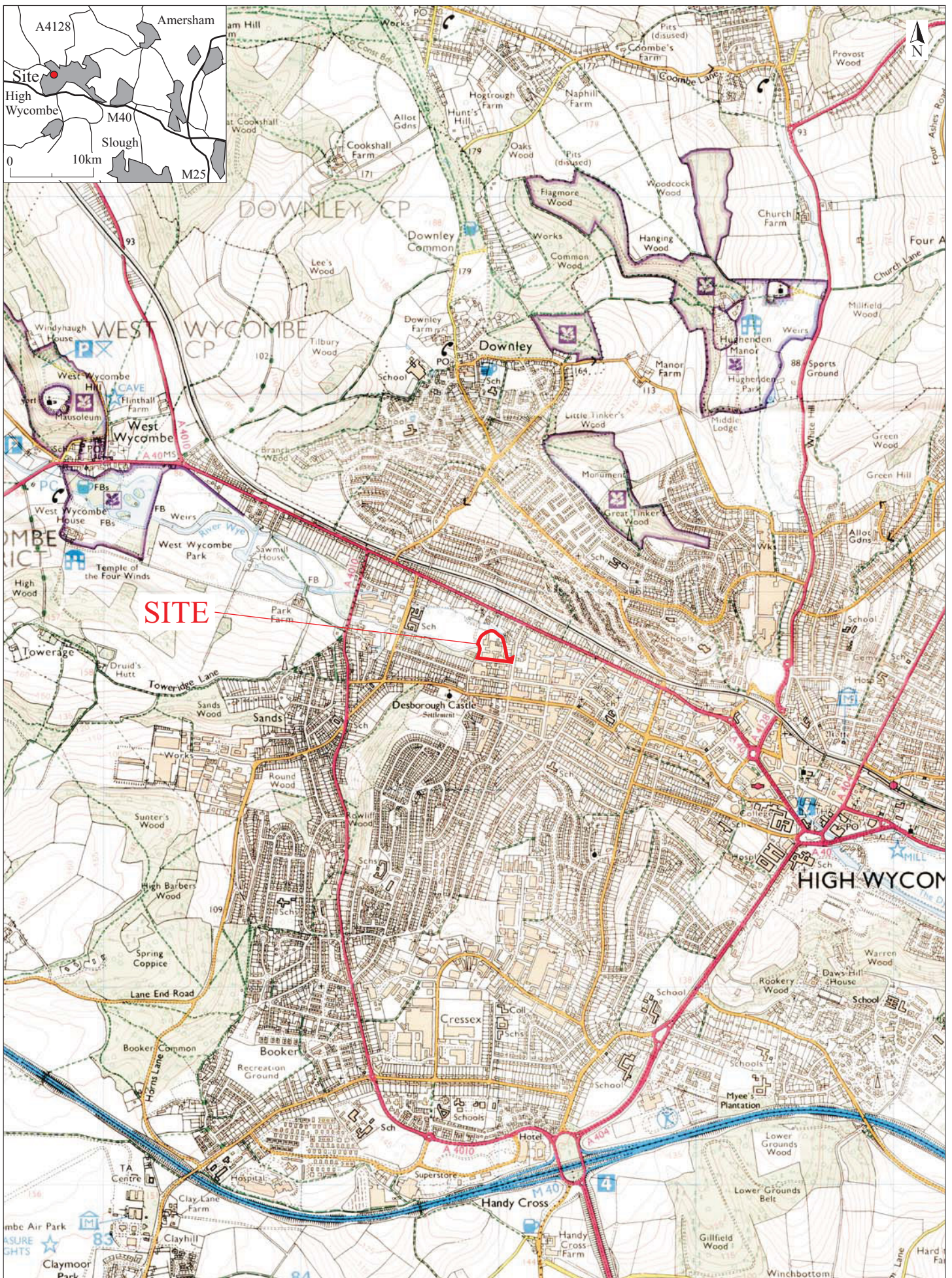
DP 12. Test Pit 9. View E.



DP 13. Test Pit 10. View S.

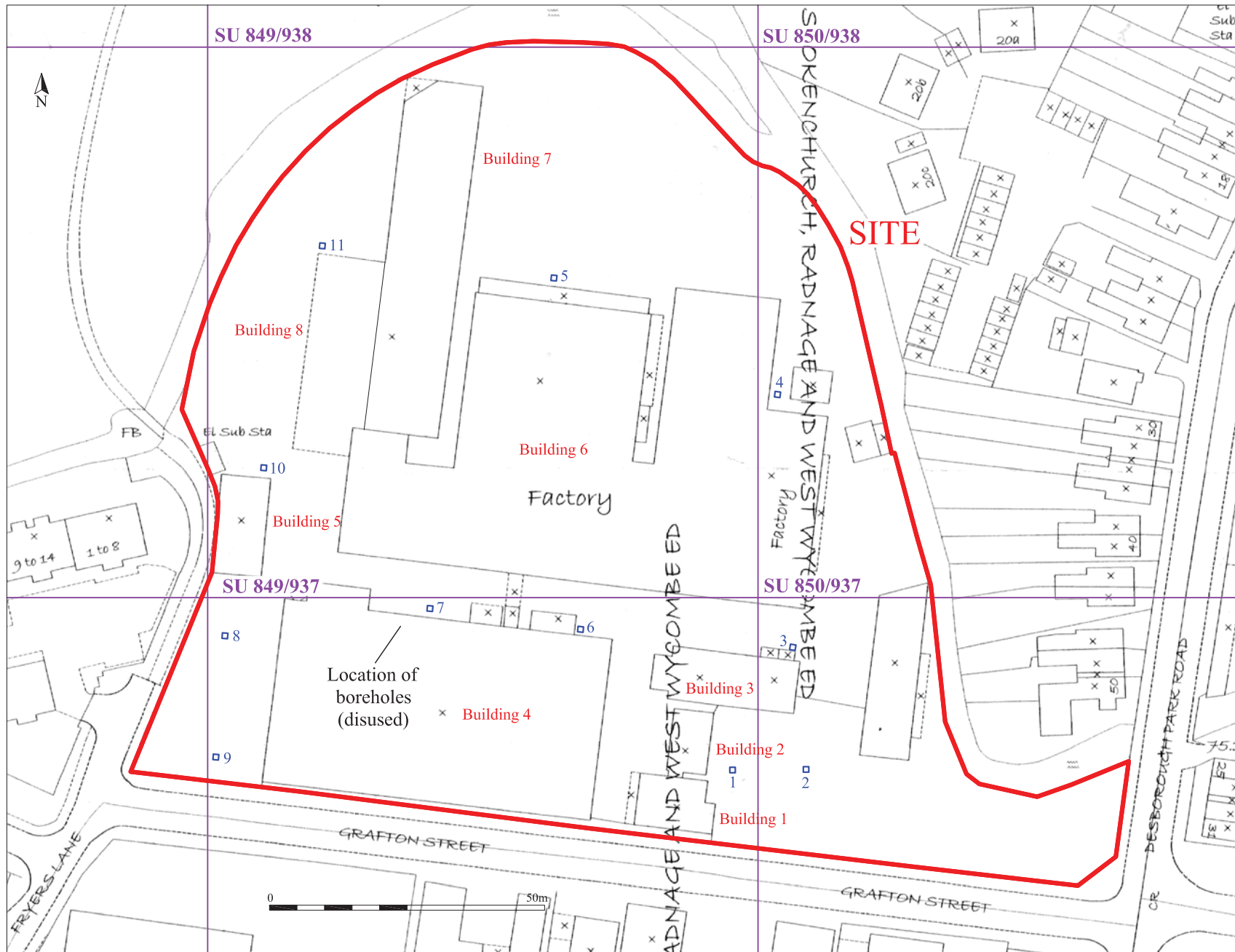


DP 14. Test Pit 11. View N.



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



▣ Geotechnical pit locations

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