

**15 DARR'S LANE, NORTHCHURCH, BERKHAMSTED,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: SP 97189 08767	Report No. 3697
District: Dacorum	Site Code: AS 1365
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 4155
Signed:	Date: December 2010

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
<p><i>In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No. 15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 97189 08767). The evaluation was commissioned by EJ Waterhouse and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings with associated parking/garages.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated in the Bulbourne valley, to the SW of the centre of Berkhamsted. It lies c.150 to the south of the Roman Akeman Street, now Berkhamsted High Street. The site had a potential for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	1 st December 2010		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	4155	Site code	AS 1365
Type of project	An Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Single bungalow with gardens		
Planned development	Demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings with associated parking/garages		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	Dacorum	Northchurch
HER/ SMR for area	Hertfordshire HER		
Post code (if known)	HP4 3RH		
Area of site	c. 1180 m ²		
NGR	SP 97189 08767		
Height AOD (min/max)	123.30/125.50m		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	HCC HEU		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Zbigniew Pozorski		
Funded by	EJ Waterhouse		
Full title	15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Pozorski, Z.		
Report no.	3697		
Date (of report)	December 2010		

15 DARR'S LANE, NORTHCHURCH, BERKHAMSTED, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No. 15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 97189 08767). The evaluation was commissioned by EJ Waterhouse, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings with associated parking/garages.

The site is situated in the Bulbourne valley, to the SW of the centre of Berkhamsted. It lies c.150 to the south of the Roman Akeman Street, now Berkhamsted High Street. The site had a potential for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No. 15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 97189 08767; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Rob Waterhouse of EJ Waterhouse, and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings with associated parking/garages (Dacorum Borough Council Planning Ref. 4/00176/06/FUL).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with an advice from Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 30/03/2005) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 04/11/2010) and approved by HCC HEU. The evaluation conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In particular, it aimed to establish the presence or absence of any remains relating to the Bronze Age/early Iron Age and Roman occupation of the area.

Planning policy context

1.4 PPS5 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 site is located within Northchurch, approximately 2km to the north-west of the town centre of Berkhamsted. It lies on the eastern side of Darr's Lane, at the corner of Seymour Road. The High Street is c. 150m to the north and is known to represent the route of the Roman road of Akeman Street. The site currently comprises a single bungalow surrounded by gardens. It is bounded by neighbouring properties and gardens to the south-west and south-east (Figs. 1-2).

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is located on the southern slope of the Bulbourne Valley at height of 123.30-125.50m AOD. The River Bulbourne flows c. 300m to the north-east. The land rapidly rises in a south-westerly direction to a height of c.175m AOD approximately 500m from the site.

3.2 Geologically the area is characterised by flinty and chalky silty clays over chalk bedrock of the Upper Cretaceous White Chalk Subgroup, with occasional gravel deposits (British Geological Survey 1978). The soils in the vicinity of the site are those of the Charity 2 association comprising well-drained flinty fine silty soils, while the surrounding area has soils of Batcombe Association (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 A desk-based assessment has been prepared (Grassam 2005) providing detailed background for the site.

In summary:

Despite the heavy soils in the area, sites associated with prehistoric occupation were identified during archaeological investigations along the line of the Berkhamsted By-Pass (A41). In addition the remains of Grim's Ditch, now thought to be a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age stock or demarcation line, have been identified c. 500m to the south of the assessment site. By the late Iron Age, an important iron working industry was established in Northchurch.

The route of the Roman Road of Akeman Street lies c.150m to the north-east. Evidence for occupation adjacent to the road is attested by the presence of a villa to the north of assessment site, and a possible shrine c. 30m to the north-east. To date, Roman activity has not been identified to the south of the road; however this may be due to the lack of an archaeological investigation. The Roman settlement of Cow Roast is located approximately 2km to the north. Akeman Street continued to provide the focus of the settlement in the post-Roman period, and occupation in Northchurch by the later Saxon period is attested by the presence of Saxon fabric in St Mary's Church. Few archaeological remains associated with the medieval and early post-medieval period have been identified in Northchurch.

The cartographic evidence indicates that by the 19th century the site lay in the north-west corner of a meadow. Darr's Lane is visible, although it is not labelled until the early 20th century when residential properties were constructed in the field in which the site is located. The site was occupied by a single property encircled by a garden from at least 1937.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were approved by HCC HEU. The alignment of Trench 1 had to be slightly modified due to the presence of temporary cabins in this area.

5.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were 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

Trench 1 (Fig. 2, DP 4-5)

<i>Sample Section 1 (DP 6): NE end, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 124.40 AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. Greyish mid brown, friable and soft, sandy silt.
0.29 – 0.56m	L1001	Light to mid brown, friable, clayey silt with gravel.
0.56m +	L1002	Natural brownish dark yellow, compact, clay with frequent loose flint and gravel.

<i>Sample Section 2 (DP 7): SW end, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 124.75m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.29 – 0.52m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.52m +	L1002	Natural clay with gravel. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2, DP 8-10)

<i>Sample Section 3 (DP 11): NE end, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 124.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.50m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.50 – 0.86m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.86m +	L1002	Natural clay with gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample Section 4 (DP 12): SW end, NW facing</i> <i>0.00 = 125.20m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.45m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.46 – 0.90m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.90m +	L1002	Natural clay with gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

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 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a greyish mid brown, friable and soft, sandy silt (0.25 – 0.50m thick). It overlay Subsoil L1001, a light to mid grey, friable, clayey silt with gravel (0.20 – 0.45m thick).

8.2 The natural clay, L1002, was present at 0.50 – 0.90m below existing ground level and comprised a brownish dark yellow, compact, clay with frequent flint and gravel. The quantity gravel was greater within Trench 1.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British archaeology. Prehistoric remains relate to Grim's Ditch and Iron Age working industry known from Northchurch. The site is located just c.150m south of the Roman Akeman Street and c.2km south of Cow Roast, the Roman settlement.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. Little evidence of previous truncation of the site appeared to have taken place, and no residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Dacorum Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank EJ Waterhouse for funding the project, in particular Mr Rob Waterhouse for his assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Kate Batt of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

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Grassam, A., 2005, *15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. AS unpublished report No. 1766

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APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

The following sites are those that lie within a 1km radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER).

SMR No	NGR SP	Description
Prehistoric		
2022	970 083	Cropmark of Grim's Ditch, dated in this case to the Late Iron Age.
2023	9763 0796	Grim's ditch, Shootersway, visible as a short length at the northern boundary of the playing field of Thomas Bourne School.
11480	9640 0830	9 possible Late Iron Age structures identified during excavations at Pea Lane prior to the construction of the A41 Bypass. 56 struck flints, possibly dating to the Neolithic or Bronze Age were recovered and 95 sherds were found dating from the Early Bronze Age to Roman periods.
Roman (AD 42-410)		
182	9727 0930	Remains of a Roman building, possibly a shrine, located 30m NE of villa (HER 1859) at Springwood Estate. 80 coins from AD244-380 were found in the building
448	9726 0926	Roman coin hoard comprising of 27 coins, deposited in c.270 AD, found in room 2 of villa (HER 1859).
1334	9674 0940	Roman hypocaust and occupation material found at Dudswell Rise in c.1953.
1859	9726 0926	Site of Roman villa. Evidence for some 1 st cent AD occupation and the first phase of the villa was built in mid 2 nd century, although it was abandoned in c. 170 AD. It was reoccupied and rebuilt sometime after 339 AD.
4853	97 08	A Romano-British bronze 'trumpet' brooch dated to the 2 nd century AD.
4860	9660 0950	Evidence of Roman occupation, observed in 1977 during the digging of foundation trenches for housing estate. Finds dated from the 1 st through to the late 3 rd century.
11776	9722 0899	Observation of footings for a new house on the site revealed three features. The largest contained Roman pottery, brick, tile and iron.
Anglo Saxon (6th to 10th century)		
4447	9744 0883	St Mary's Church, Northchurch. The south and part of the west wall are of Saxon date.
9317	9741 0877	Manorial site, Northchurch.
Medieval (11th to 15th century)		
10119	9723 0823	Earthworks of ridge and furrow in field north of Grims Ditch, adjacent to Bell Lane, dated to the medieval and post-medieval period.
Post-medieval (16th century to present)		
5230	9750 0898	Road bridge over Grand Union Canal.
5507	966 096	Wall box, Wall of Baswick House.
7086	97480 09030	Pumping House, Grand Union Canal.
7190	968 096	Site of milepost, Dudswell Bridge, set up in 1893, although a replica post was erected in 1993.
7192	9750 0900	Canal lock and cottage, Grand Union Canal.

9289	9797 0847	Edgeworth House, dated to the 16 th century. Grade II* listed.
9301	9742 0877	Church Houses, or Church Almshouses, High Street. 15 th or 16 th century timber-framed building. Grade II* listed.
9316	9741 0880	Site of the village stocks.
10778	981 086	Chalk pit, Northbridge Road.
12050	9733 0881	Probable post-medieval boundary ditch containing a single sherd of 16-18 th century pot.
Undated		
2530	964 085	Earthworks of 3 square ditched earthworks in line on an earthwork platform. Site was being bulldozed when visited and is now presumed destroyed.

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	4 (Context, Drawing, Photo, Digital Photo)
Context Sheets	3
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	0
Site drawings A4	1
Site photographs b/w	6
Site photographs colour slides	6
Digital Photographs	21

APPENDIX 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire
County: Herts	District: Dacorum
Village/Town:	Parish: Northchurch
Planning application reference:	Dacorum Borough Planning Ref. 4/00176/06/FUL
Client name/address/tel:	EJ Waterhouse
Nature of application:	Demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings
Present land use:	Single bungalow with gardens
Size of application area: c.1200m ²	Size of area investigated 96m ²
NGR (8 figures):	SP 97189 08767
Site Code:	AS 1365
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Trial trench evaluation
Date of work:	01/12/2010
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Dacorum
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	Grassam, A., 2005, <i>15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment</i> . AS unpublished report No. 1766
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p>In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No. 15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 97189 08767). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Rob Waterhouse and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of three dwellings with associated parking/garages.</p> <p>The site is situated in the Bulbourne valley, to the SW of the centre of Berkhamsted. It lies c. 150 to the south of the Roman Akeman Street, now Berkhamsted High Street. The site had a potential for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains.</p> <p>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</p>
Author of summary: Z Pozorski	Date of Summary: December 2010

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. 15 Darr's Lane, Northchurch, Berkhamsted. View NE from Darr's Lane.



DP 2. The site. View NW.



DP 3. NW part of the site with Trench 1. View NNW.



DP 4. Trench 1. View WSW.



DP 5. Trench 1. View NE.



DP 6. Trench 1, NE end. Sample section. View NW.



DP 7. Trench 1, SW end. Sample section. View NW.



DP 8. SE part of the site with Trench 2. View WSW.



DP 9. Trench 2. View NNE.



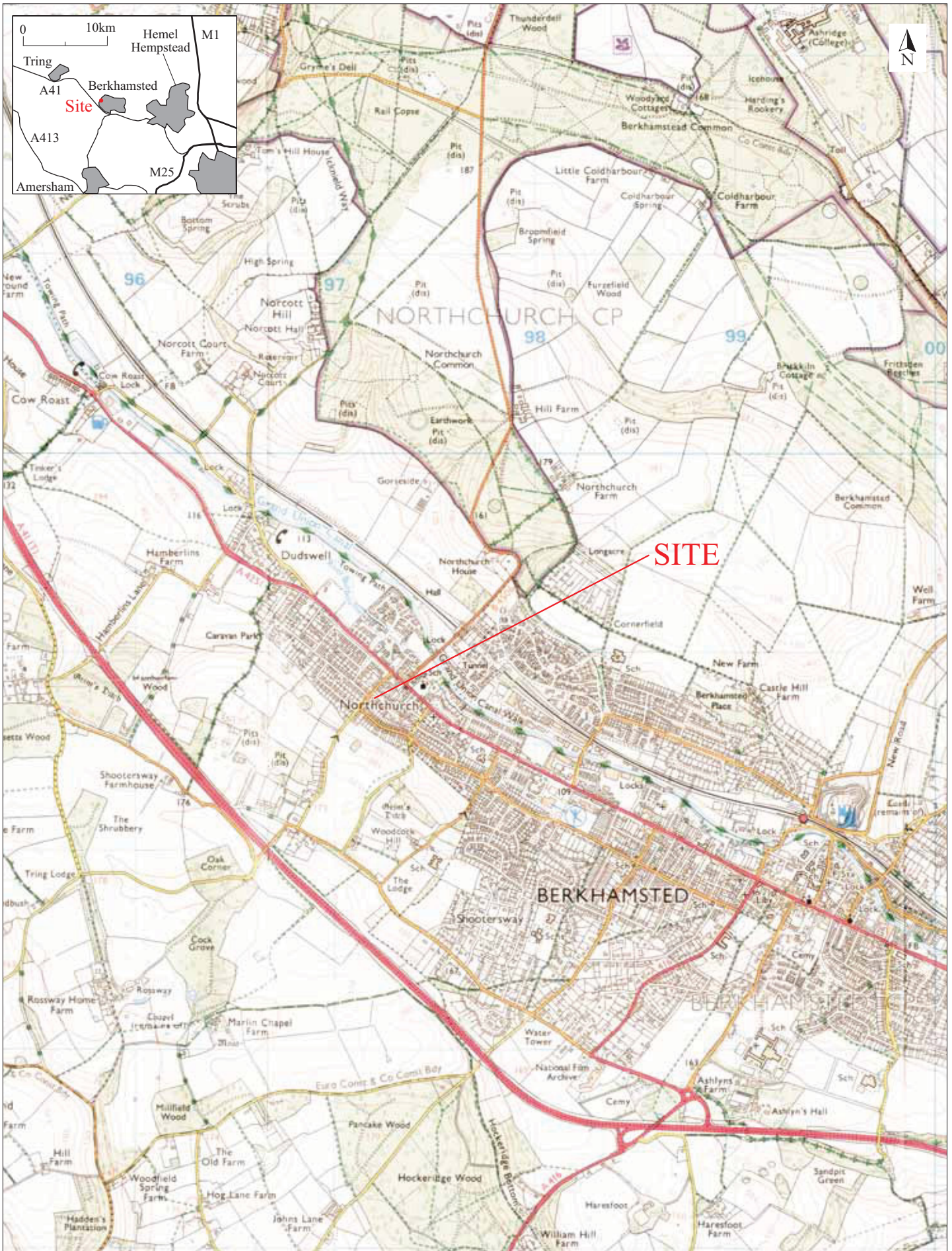
DP 10. Trench 2. View SW.



DP 11. Trench 2, NE end. Sample section. View NW.

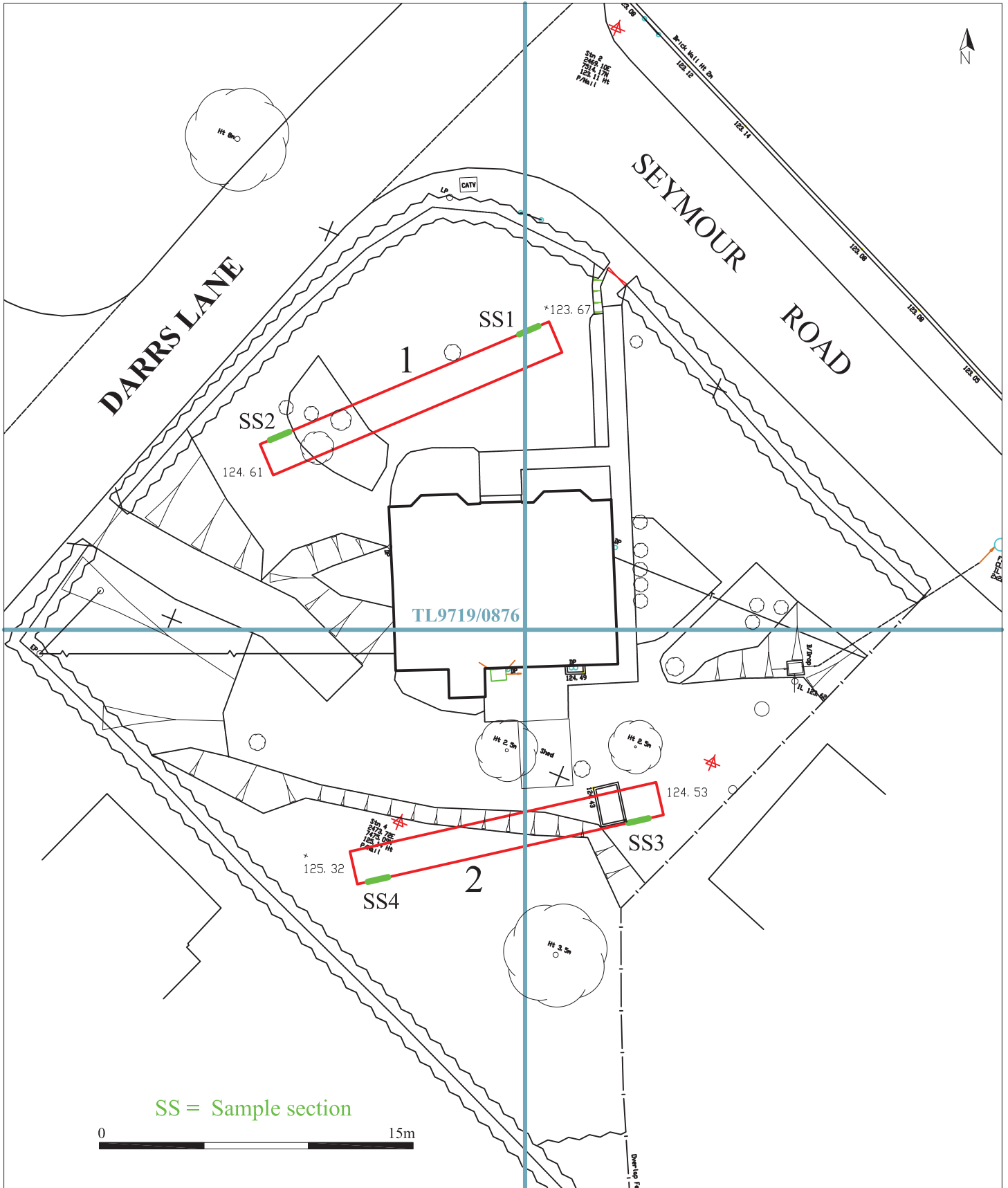


DP 12. Trench 2, SW end. Sample section. View SE.

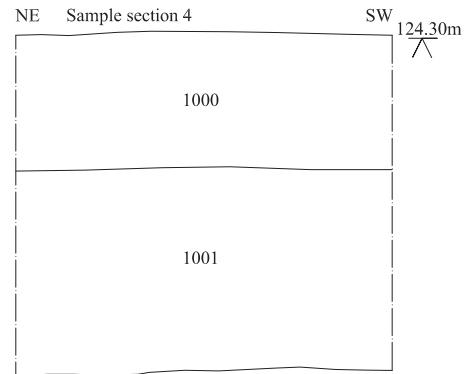
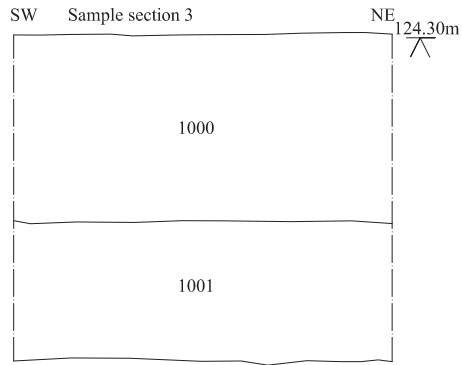
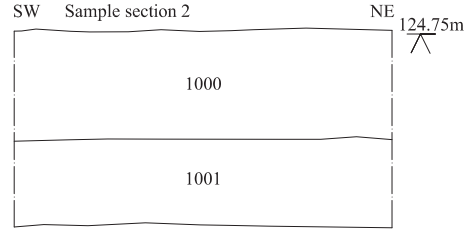
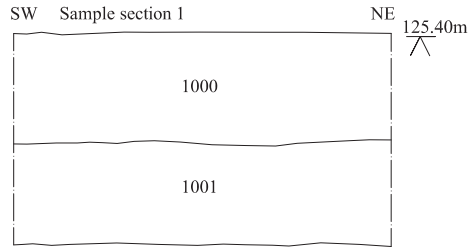


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:250 at A4



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Fig. 3 Sections
Scale 1:20 at A4