

Proposed new farmhouse and driveway, Toggam Farm, Newfen Gravel Drove, Lakenheath, Suffolk

NGR TL705848

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

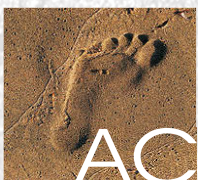
HER Site Code LKH 350

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On behalf of:
Greenheath Ltd

Document No: ACW501/3/0

Date: March 2013



AC archaeology

PROPOSED NEW FARMHOUSE AND DRIVEWAY, TOGGAM FARM, NEWFEN GRAVEL DROVE, LAKENHEATH, SUFFOLK (NGR: TL 705848)

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

HER SITE CODE: LKH 350

Summary

An archaeological evaluation for a proposed new farmhouse and associated driveway at Toggam Farm, Newfen Gravel Drove, Lakenheath, Suffolk (TL705848), was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd during February 2013. The trench evaluation comprised five trenches, one measuring 10m in length and positioned in the area of the proposed new farmhouse, the remainder measuring 5m and positioned along the route of the proposed driveway. The site lies on a gravel 'island' within reclaimed fenland; such areas have previously yielded significant prehistoric artefacts. The trench evaluation has revealed no evidence for archaeological activity or artefacts of pre-modern date across the proposed development. Two trenches revealed peat deposits which has enabled the northern extent of the 'island' to be more accurately defined.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation for a proposed new farmhouse and driveway at Toggam Farm, Newfen Gravel Drove, Lakenheath, Suffolk (NGR: TL705848). The location of the site is shown on Fig.1.
- 1.2** The work was carried out by AC archaeology Ltd during February 2013 on behalf of the applicants, Greenheath Ltd. Planning consent for the development was granted by Forest Heath District Council (Ref F/2012/0602/FUL) with conditions (nos. 3 and 4) requiring a programme of archaeological works be implemented before commencement of development in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Cox, 2012). The first stage of these works comprised evaluation, which was carried out in accordance with a project design (Cox, 2013) submitted to, and approved by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.
- 1.3** The site comprises approximately 1.76 hectares of grassland, scrub, trees and existing farm buildings. The topography comprises generally level ground and lies at around 2mOD, on a localised gravel island. The drift geology comprises alluvium overlying Cretaceous Chalk of the West Melbury Marly Chalk and Zig Zag Chalk Formation.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development area has been included in the study area of an Historic Environment Assessment for a proposed Photo Voltaic Power Array site to the south and west of the proposed farmhouse development (Cottam 2012). There are no recorded heritage assets within the current application area, but the surrounding area has provided evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British activity. The archaeological potential of the application area can be summarised as follows:

The application area is located on a small 'island' within the fens. Its slightly elevated position is likely to have made it attractive as a usable, dry area of land on which to settle and take advantage of the varied hunting and fishing opportunities afforded by the freshwater wetland environment throughout the prehistoric period, and later. Such areas are also known to have been selected as a focus for religious/ritual activities with votive offerings being deposited in the water. No prehistoric settlement features have been recorded within the study area but the location of Toggam Farm on an 'island', and the presence of a number of significant prehistoric artefacts in the immediate vicinity, suggests that there is high potential for further finds of this date within the area.

The area around Toggam Farm is rich in Late Iron Age and Romano-British sites and material. Of especial note are the Joist Fen coin hoard and the finds of Romano pots and a Republican denarius to the north of the proposed application area. The extensive settlement at Leylands Farm, Hockwold cum Wilton, includes a temple or shrine and of nationally important metal objects. The area as a whole is considered to be of archaeological interest and the potential for further discoveries within the proposed application area is considered to be high.

This area of the fens was reclaimed during the late 17th century when extensive agricultural lands were created. These lands would have been liable to flooding and the settlements remained on the higher ground. The historic maps illustrate that the reclamation of Stallode Fen was typical of the fenland reclamation throughout East Anglia with narrow fields within a network of drains. This agricultural land use within the proposed application area has not changed since this reclamation. It is therefore considered likely that there is a low potential for archaeological finds or deposits of post-medieval date.

- 2.2 A subsequent geophysical survey of the photovoltaic site (GSB 2012) failed to identify any magnetic anomalies that may be of archaeological origin and which may run into the present application site.
- 2.3 A farm building at Toggam Farm is first shown on the 1854 Lakenheath Tithe Map, but lies to the west of the current application area. The present buildings on the site are not considered to be of historic interest.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The principal aims of the investigation were:

- To identify the presence or absence of archaeological deposits on the site that may be affected by development, and, if present, to assess their significance;
- To provide a detailed record of the site for future archaeological research.

3.2 The evaluation comprised five trenches. Trench 1, measuring 10 x 1.8m in plan, was positioned within the footprint of the proposed new farmhouse. The remaining trenches all measured 5m x 1.8m. The new access driveway had been partly constructed prior to the commencement of the evaluation, resulting in Trenches 3-5 being repositioned adjacent to the driveway. All the trenches were located using a hand held GPS. The driveway, as constructed, deviated from the original design shown on Fig. 2 however all trenches are accurately located.

3.3 All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil was removed by tracked mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.

3.4 All deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. 'Negative' trenches were recorded using trench records forms; 'positive' trenches were recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

3.5 The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW501.

4. RESULTS (Plates 1-3)

4.1 Trench 1 was positioned within the footprint of the proposed new farmhouse. Much of this area had been heavily rutted or disturbed by movement of farm machinery, resulting in little soil cover present. Trench 3 was positioned in an area containing relatively recent deep infilling of a former pond. Trenches 3 – 5 were all re-positioned close to the new access drive. All five trenches proved wholly negative of archaeological features or artefacts of pre-modern date. Natural subsoil (solid geology) was not revealed in either Trenches 2 or 3. The results of each trench are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of deposits in trenches

Trench	Depth below ground	Contexts	Description
1	0-150mm max 150mm+	Topsoil - context 100 Natural - context101	E-W aligned and positioned within south extent of footprint of proposed farmhouse. Topsoil composed of black sandy loam containing modern ceramic building materials, plastic and fragments of timber. Natural subsoil composed of yellow / light brown sand with sparse flint gravels.
2	0-300mm 300– 900mm+	Topsoil - context 200 Layer - context 201	E-W aligned and positioned within proposed access driveway and adjacent to existing barn. Topsoil composed of slightly mixed black/brown sandy loam. Deposit 201 composed of black sandy peat containing large root pieces and occasional gravels. This trench became rapidly waterlogged after a depth of 400mm.
3	0-1.3m+	Layer - context 300	E-W aligned and positioned immediately north of proposed access driveway. Layer 300 composed of mixed black/brown sandy/peaty loam containing much modern debris including concrete, plastic and polystyrene and representing deep infilling of former pond in this area of the site. This trench became rapidly waterlogged after a depth of 900mm.
4	0-250mm 250mm+	Topsoil - context 400 Natural - context401	NW-SE aligned and positioned immediately west of the proposed new access driveway. Topsoil composed of mid-dark brown sandy loam containing much root disturbance. Natural subsoil composed of yellow / light brown sand with sparse flint gravels.
5	0-250mm 250mm+	Topsoil - context 500 Natural - context 501	N-S aligned and positioned immediately east of the proposed new access driveway. Topsoil composed of mid-dark brown sandy loam containing much root disturbance. Natural subsoil composed of both yellow / light brown sand with sparse flint gravels and a thick band of white chalk marl.

5. DISCUSSION

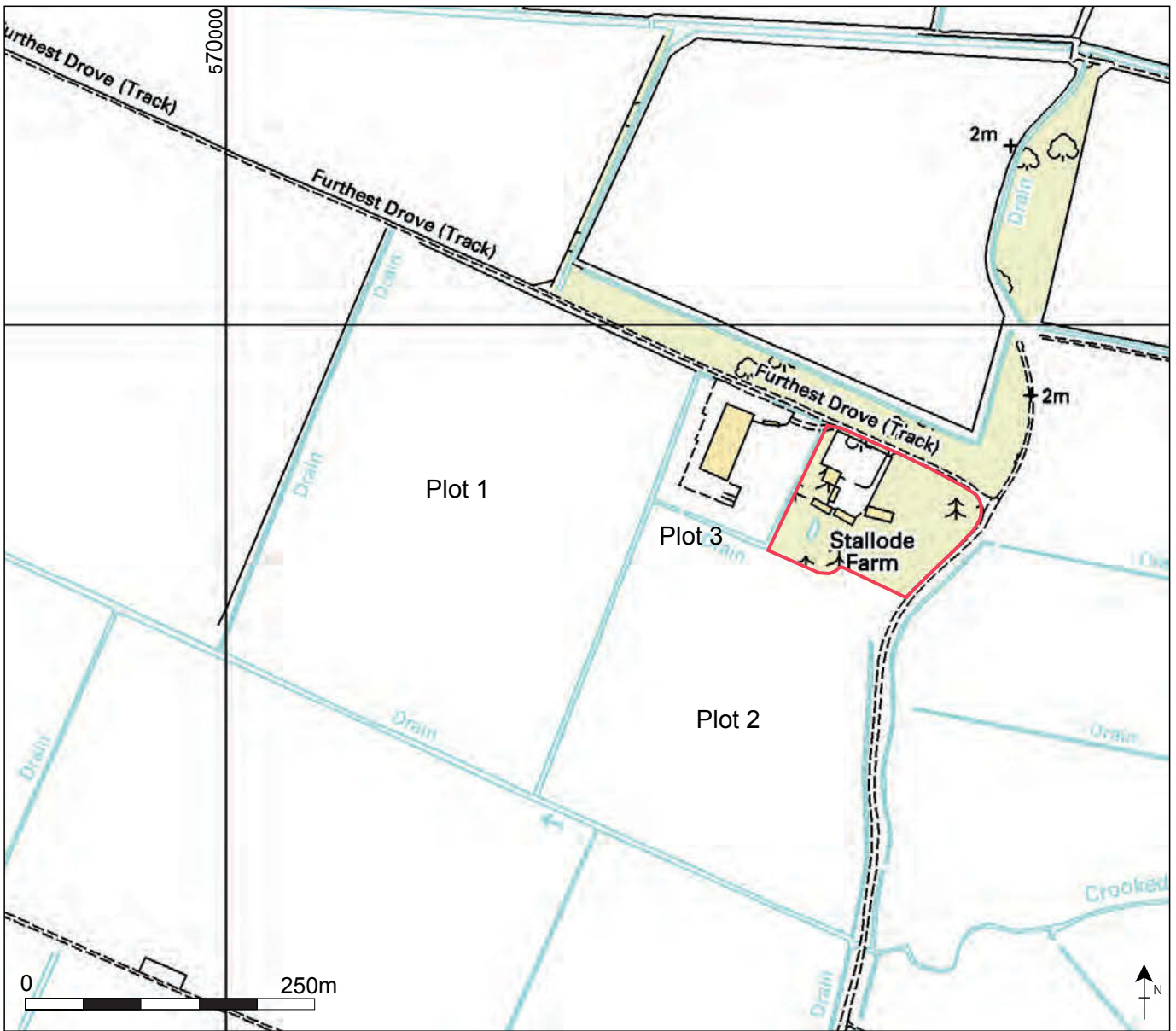
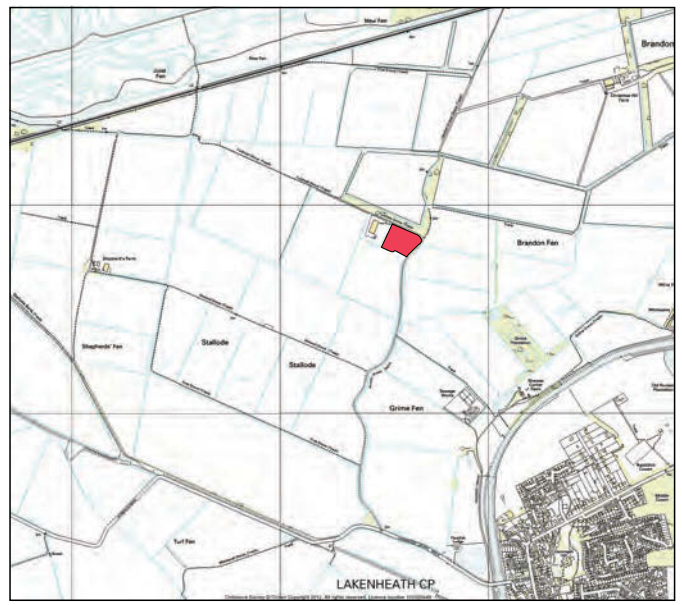
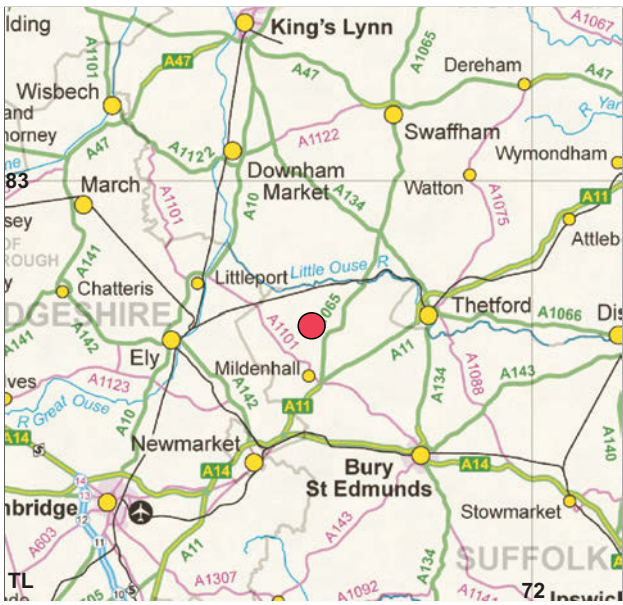
- 5.1** The trench evaluation has identified no evidence for archaeological activity on the site of the proposed new farmhouse or driveway. Although it cannot be demonstrated conclusively that no archaeological deposits are present within the development area, the general absence of deposits along with the paucity of pre-modern artefacts, makes this assumption likely.
- 5.2** The presence of peat deposits in Trenches 2 and 3 indicate that they lie beyond the northern edge of the gravel 'island' and within the reclaimed fenland. Trenches 1, 4 and 5 all lay on the 'island' on what was visibly slightly higher ground. The northern extent of the 'island' shown in the HER has been revised using the results of this evaluation and is shown on Fig. 3.
- 5.3** At a site meeting with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Officer, on February 14th 2013, to review the results it was agreed that no further archaeological works would be required on the site during development.

6. REFERENCES

Cottam, S., 2012 *'Land at Toggam Farm, Lakenheath, Suffolk (centred on TL70338475): Historic Environment Assessment.* Unpublished report by AC archaeology Ltd for Aardvark EM. Report No ACD501 /1/1. August 2012.

Cox, P. W., 2012 *'Toggam Farm, Newfen Gravel Drove, Lakenheath, Suffolk (NGR TL705848): Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological work.* Unpublished document, ref ACW501/1/0

Cox, P. W., 2013 *'Toggam Farm, Newfen Gravel Drove, Lakenheath, Suffolk (NGR TL705848): Project Design for archaeological evaluation by trial trenching.* Unpublished document, ref ACW501/2/0

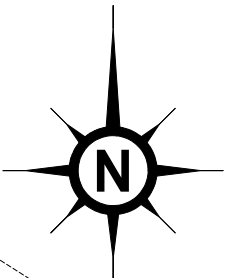
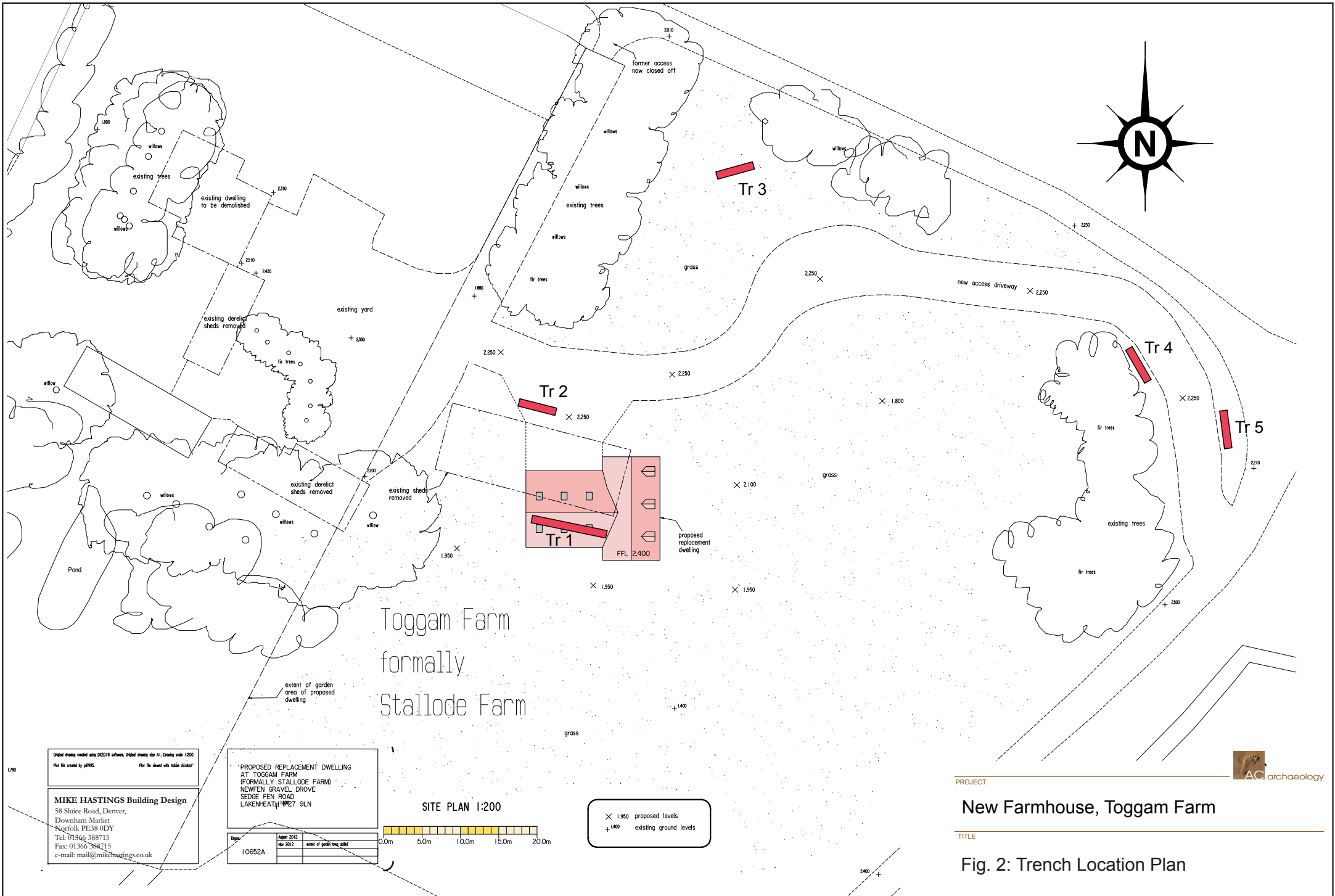


PROJECT

Toggam Farm, Lakenheath

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location



Toggam Farm
formally
Stallode Farm

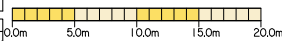
Original drawing created using AutoCAD 2010 software. Original drawing size A1. Drawing scale 1:200.
Plot file created by p4995. Plot file saved with Author Attributes.

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PROPOSED REPLACEMENT DWELLING
AT TOGGAM FARM
(FORMALLY STALLODE FARM)
NEWFEN GRAVEL DROVE
SEDFE FEN ROAD
LAKENHEATH NR 27 9LN

Drawn:	August 2012	number of points being added
10652A	Nov 2012	

SITE PLAN 1:200



× 1,950 proposed levels
+ 1,400 existing ground levels

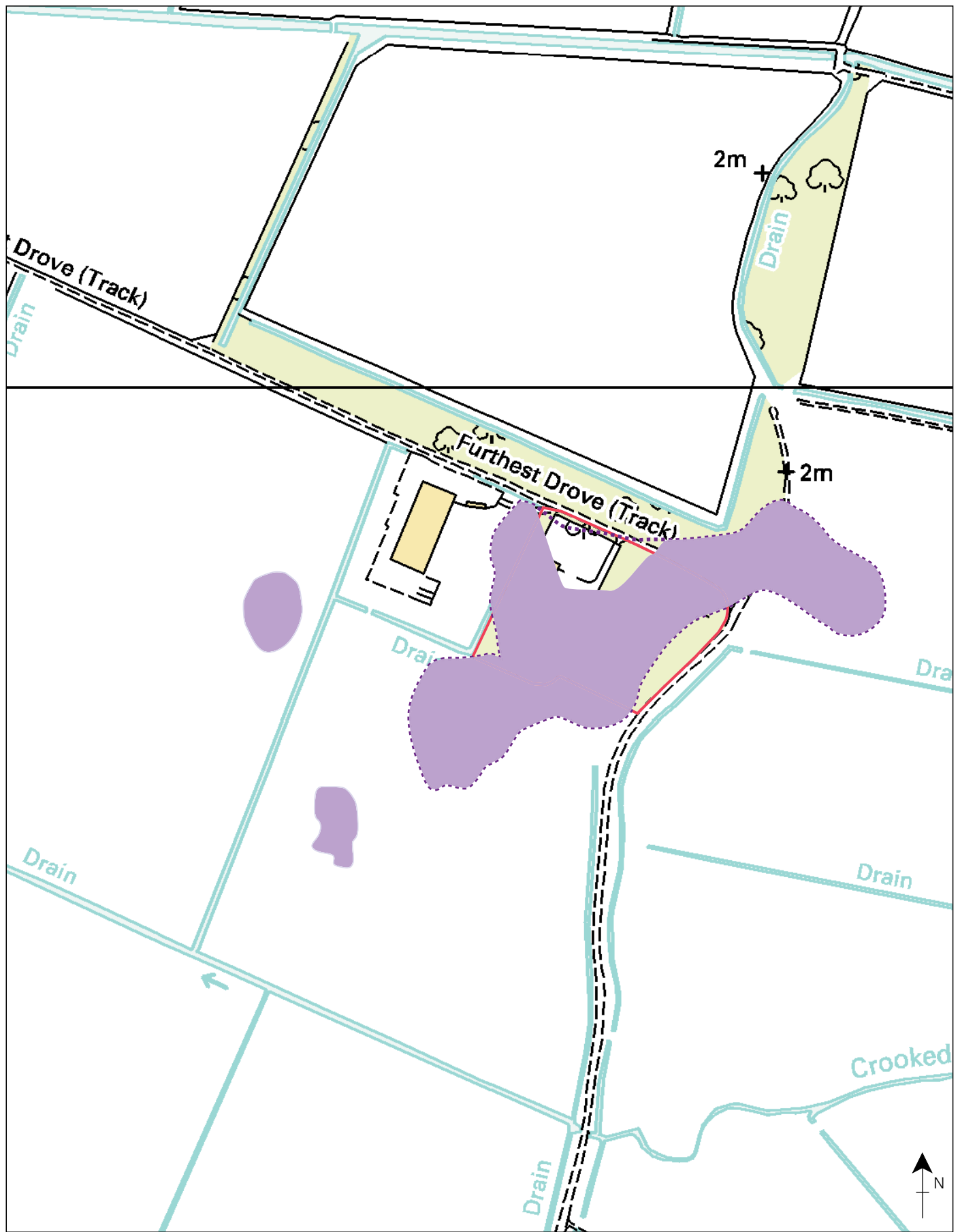
PROJECT

New Farmhouse, Toggam Farm

TITLE

Fig. 2: Trench Location Plan





Key

- Previous conjectural extent of gravel 'island'
- Revised extent of gravel 'island'



PROJECT

Toggam Farm, Lakenheath

TITLE

Fig. 3: Revised extent of gravel 'island'



Plate 1: View of Trench 1 from the east
(Scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 2: View of Trench 2 from the east
(Scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 3: View of Trench 5 from the east
(Scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 4: Panoramic view across the site from the north

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