

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment  
In advance of Development of Land at  
Grafty Green Garden Centre,  
Maidstone, Kent

NGR: 586500 147900



Report for  
SQE Grafty Green Ltd

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# Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment In advance of Development of Land at Grafty Green Garden Centre, Maidstone, Kent

## 1 SUMMARY

1.1 SWAT Archaeology has been commissioned by SQE Grafty Green Ltd to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at the Grafty Green Garden Centre, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green, Maidstone in Kent. The proposed development area (PDA) is to comprise the demolition of the garden centre buildings and the replacement with commercial units and housing.

1.2 This Desk Based Assessment examines the wide variety of archaeological data held by Kent County Council and other sources. This data is reviewed and it is recommended in this case that an **Archaeological Watching Brief** is the preferred option and if necessary further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 The proposed development area (PDA) is located in open countryside and falls within a Special Landscape Area but does not fall in or adjacent to a Conservation Area, AONB or SSSI or SNCI.

The site extends to about 10 acres and consists of two very large greenhouses measuring 91m by 24m, an additional commercial building and paddock with planning consent for caravan storage. The site is located just south of the village of Grafty Green 10 miles east of Maidstone.

### 1.4 Cartographic Sources

Examination of cartographic sources shows that from the historic maps available for study the area of the PDA was essentially a rural location with fields carved out of a woodland landscape and the first domestic building appearing on the site in about 1908. The extensive garden nursery buildings first appear in the cartographic sources in 1969.

### **1.5 Archaeological investigations and finds**

*Monuments and finds in the vicinity include a Roman road to the south, a find spot of medieval pottery to the east (TQ 84 NE 11). A possible moat at Greatbaker Farm (TQ 84 NE), and a listed building to the north and west, and also a crash site of a 1940 Dornier Do 172-2 (TQ 84 NE 99).*

## **2. Introduction**

This report presents the findings of a provisional desk-based archaeological assessment of land at Grafty Green, Kent.

This provisional desk-based archaeological assessment is a consultation document prepared for the client which may be submitted as part of a planning proposal. It constitutes a pilot study assessing the potential for further research, either desk-based or in the field. Additional desk-based research and/or fieldwork may be requested by planning authorities or specified as conditions on any planning consent, although such a request should clearly demonstrate the benefits of future desk-based work rather than fieldwork, for example.

The objective of the desk-based research, agreed with the client and in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12, was to view readily available existing evidence in order to assess the extent and nature of any heritage assets with archaeological interest within the Proposed Development Area (PDA) and its setting, and thereby gauge the likelihood of heritage assets of archaeological interest being affected by development within the PDA.

Research has been undertaken to an appropriate level of detail in response to funding limitations which affect the affordable scope and provisional nature of the study, as well as the particular circumstances of the proposed development.

While no precise details of the proposed foundation works have been viewed in preparation of this report, a basic (interim) impact assessment of the likely effects of any proposed foundation trenching, service trenching or landscaping on the buried or extant archaeological resource is offered below.

Recommendations for appropriate mitigation of potential impacts on the buried and extant archaeological resource within the PDA have also been made.

## 2.1 POLICY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS

This report has been prepared in accordance with national and regional policy regarding heritage assets and with reference to research frameworks.

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

It is worth quoting from this planning document, in particular Policy 12: 12.8.

### 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

12.6. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

12.8. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological

interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

## Local Policy

### *Research Frameworks*

The national and regional policies should be considered in light of the non statutory heritage frameworks that inform them.

Recently English Heritage has issued detailed guidance on the *Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011). This guidance is based on principles and guidance already issued by English Heritage in the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010), and *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008). It provides a framework for assessing impacts based on the identification of individual asset's cultural significance and the relationship between that and its surroundings followed by assessment of the degree to which change in the surroundings affects significance.

*This Desk-Based Assessment therefore forms the initial stage of the archaeological investigation and is intended to inform and assist in decisions regarding archaeological mitigation for the proposed development and associated planning applications.*

## **2.2 The Proposed Development**

The proposed development will comprise of a planning application for demolition of part of the garden centre's horticultural buildings and the new build of housing and commercial development.

## **2.3 Project Constraints**

No project constraints were encountered during the data collection for this assessment.



## **2.4 Geology and Topography**

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) has been consulted and shows that the proposed development site (PDA) is situated within an area of Weald Clay Formation.

The PDA itself is located just south of the village of Grafty Green. The average OD height of the PDA is 55.00mAOD.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Desk-Based Assessment was commissioned by SQE Grafty Green Ltd in order to supplement a planning application for the development of land at Grafty Green, Maidstone in Kent.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

#### *4.1.1 Archaeological databases*

A search of the Historic Environment Records (HER; Plate 6) as well as a list of reports of archaeological investigations not yet included in the HER was commissioned from Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group. The HER and reports search covers important areas around the PDA (centred NGR 586500 147900). These records (25 in total) have been assessed in terms of their particular relevance to the PDA and only significant evidence (6 records) is cited in this report. HER records can be viewed on-line. Further (on-line) HER's (National Monuments Records, the National Heritage List for England) were also consulted in comparison. A pilot survey of readily available aerial photographic evidence (generally on-line or within the HER) and satellite imagery (on-line) has also been carried out.

Only photographs, images or results showing significant features or topographical developments are reproduced.

No relevant geophysical surveys are known.

The Archaeology Data Service Online Catalogue (ADS) and was also used. The Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (PAS) was also used as an additional source as the information contained within is not always transferred to the local HER.

#### *4.1.2 Historical documents*

Historical documents, such as charters, registers, wills and deeds etc were not relevant to this specific study. However, historic maps were consulted.

#### *4.1.3 Cartographic and pictorial documents*

It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable, and a survey of published and unpublished maps (including geology and contour survey) has been undertaken. A full list of maps consulted is provided in the list of sources at the end of the report. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced in this report. Aerial photographs and satellite imagery have also supplemented this study.

All results of analyses are presented in synthesis and in order of chronology.

Research was also carried out using resources offered by the Internet and Ordnance Survey Historical mapping (Plates 1-2 & Figures 1-6).

#### *4.1.4 Aerial photographs*

The study of the collection of aerial photographs by Google Earth was consulted (Plates 3-5).

#### *4.1.5 Geotechnical information*

To date, no known geotechnical investigations have been carried out at the site.

#### *4.1.6 Secondary and statutory resources*

Secondary and statutory sources, such as regional and periodic archaeological studies, landscape studies; dissertations, research frameworks and Websites are considered appropriate to this type of study and have been included within this assessment where necessary.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

Prehistoric	Palaeolithic	c. 500,000 BC – c.10,000 BC
	Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC – c. 4,300 BC
	Neolithic	c. 4,300 BC – c. 2,300 BC
	Bronze Age	c. 2,300 BC – c. 600 BC
	Iron Age	c. 600 BC – c. AD 43
Romano-British		AD 43 – c. AD 410
Anglo-Saxon		AD 410 – AD 1066
Medieval		AD 1066 – AD 1485
Post-medieval		AD 1485 – AD 1900
Modern		AD 1901 – present day

**Table 1 Classification of Archaeological Periods**

5.1.1 The archaeological record for Grafty Green is sparse which may reflect the lack of archaeology in the area or more likely that very little modern development has taken place with its associated archaeological investigations.

*The following section of the assessment will focus on the archaeological and historical development of this area, placing it within a local context. Each period classification will provide a brief introduction to the wider landscape. Time scales for archaeological periods represented in the report are listed above in Table 1.*

### 5.3 Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings Historic Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas

There are no Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or Historic Parks and Gardens in the vicinity of the PDA. There are two listed buildings outside the view zone of the PDA. To the west is Mansion House Farmhouse 1800-1825 (TQ 84 NE 56), to the

north Yew Tree Cottage 1500-1599 (TQ 84 NE 50) neither of which will be impacted on by the proposed development.

### **5.3 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age)**

The Palaeolithic represents the earliest phases of human activity in the British Isles, up to the end of the last Ice Age. Evidence of prehistoric settlement within the county of Kent can be dated back to the Palaeolithic period and can be found around the River Gravels of the Thames and the Greater Stour.

The Mesolithic period reflects a society of hunter-gatherers active after the last Ice Age. The Kent HER has no record of archaeological evidence from these periods within the assessment area.

The Neolithic period, the beginning of a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and animal husbandry is not represented within the assessment area.

The Bronze Age, a period of large migrations from the continent and more complex social developments on a domestic, industrial and ceremonial level is not represented in the assessment area.

### **5.4 Iron Age**

The Iron Age is, by definition a period of established rural farming communities with extensive field systems and large 'urban' centres and hillforts. That there was an Iron Age presence at Canterbury there is no doubt. However, no monuments or find spots are to found in the assessment area.

### **5.5 Romano-British**

The Romano-British period is the term given to the Romanised culture of Britain under the rule of the Roman Empire, following the Claudian invasion in AD 43, Britain then formed part of the Roman Empire for nearly 400 years.

The Roman road passes the PDA to the south at about 1km. There are no Roman finds within the Assessment Area.

### **5.6 Anglo-Saxon**

The Anglo-Saxon period is not represented in the Assessment Area.

## **5.7 Medieval**

The medieval period is represented within the assessment area by the finding in 1963 of medieval pottery sherds some 800m to the south east of the PDA (TQ 84 NE 11). The circumstances of the find are not known.

## **5.8 Post-Medieval**

The Post Medieval period within the assessment area is represented by listed building in the Assessment Area.

## **5.9 Modern**

Modern archaeology within the assessment area has been limited to remains from the Second World War. To the east of the PDA is the 1940 crash site of a German Dornier Do 172-2 in which three crew members were killed and one injured (TQ 84 NE 99).

## **5.10 Cartographic Sources and Map Regression**

It has been considered beyond the means of this project to pursue detailed questions requiring an in-depth study of primary documentary and cartographic sources. General historical context for archaeological findings is provided where applicable, and a survey of published and unpublished maps (including geology and contour survey) has been undertaken. A full list of maps consulted is provided in the list of sources at the end of the report. Only maps showing significant topographical developments are reproduced in this report. Aerial photographs and satellite imagery may also supplement this study. All results of analyses are presented in synthesis and in order of chronology.

A limited map regression exercise on large scale Ordnance Survey maps (Figs. 1-6) has been carried out on the proposed development area. In addition earlier historical maps have been viewed and have shown that the site as open fields (Plates 1 & 2).

The 1798 maps of Andrews & Dury (Plate 1) show that Grafty Green was named Grafly Green and Everitt noted that 'Watch Oak' located in the vicinity of the PDA could be the location of a spring that fed the stream to the nearby watermill named Barham Mill (Everitt pers comm 2000).

Margaret Gelling notes that the name Grafty Green is derived from 'graefe' Old English for 'thicket', 'brushwood' and the 'y' from 'clearing' which is picked up in the second word of the name 'green' (Gelling 1993: 192).

This scenario of woodland being cleared for pasture and eventually fields can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1869 which shows fields of pasture cut out of the woodland but leaving around the edges narrow woodland strips of mature trees called 'shaws'. These thick shaws of mature deciduous trees which separate intensively grazed fields are still a feature of the High Weald and were here at Grafty Green in 1869 (Figure 1).

By 1897 the shaws are beginning to disappear (Figure 2) and the OS map of 1908 shows more clearance and the field boundaries beginning to be established (Figure 3). The OS map of 1939 show a small dwelling has been built in the north east corner of the PDA (Figure 4).

By 1970 the site has been developed with two large greenhouses, ancillary buildings and access roads (Figure 5).

By 1972 an additional large greenhouse has been added to the complex (Figure 00) and there is little change by 1993 (Figure 6).

### **5.11 Aerial Photographs**

The National Monuments Records were consulted during the writing of this report and Google Earth provided a 1960, 1990 and 2013 location aerial photograph of the PDA (Plates 3-5). Of interest is the 1960 aerial photograph (AP) which shows the farming regime to be hay although the photograph is supposed to have been taken on 1<sup>st</sup> January! The 1990 AP shows the garden centre complex as does the 2013 AP.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

### **6.1 Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age**

The potential for finding remains that date prior to the Iron Age within the confines of the proposed development is therefore considered **low**.

### **6.2 Iron Age**

The potential for finding remains dating to the Iron Age within the confines of the development site is also considered **low**.

### **6.3 Romano-British**

The potential for Romano-British archaeology is considered to be **low**.

### **6.4 Anglo-Saxon**

The potential for finding remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon period on the development site are considered as **low**.

### **6.5 Medieval**

The potential for finding remains dating to the medieval period are considered as **low**.

### **6.6 Post-Medieval and Modern**

Evidence for post-medieval activity does not exist and modern occupation on the site is abundant. The potential for finding remains dating to the modern period are considered as **high**.

## **7 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **7.1 Existing Impacts**

The search area is for the most part, has been subject to garden centre activity. The existing impact on the PDA is likely to be **high**.

## **7.2 Proposed Impacts**

At the time of preparing this archaeological assessment, the extent of the proposed development was the demolition of some of the existing garden centre buildings and the new build of housing and business units. Extensive impact is to be expected within the development area once construction begins. The excavation of footings and the installation of services will be the main cause of this impact and it is therefore considered as **high**.

## **8 MITIGATION**

The purpose of this archaeological desk-based assessment was to provide an assessment of the contextual archaeological record, in order to determine the potential survival of archaeological deposits that maybe impacted upon during any proposed construction works.

This desk-based assessment has identified a very low potential for below ground archaeology within the proposed development area (PDA).

Groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the site could result in a negative impact upon this resource if it exists.

In line with National Planning Policy to assess the archaeological resource, an Archaeological Watching Brief secured by a condition on any planning permission is the suggested methodology of assessment of potential archaeological remains.

## **9 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **9.1 Archive**

Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, two copies of this desk-based assessment will be submitted to Kent County Council (Heritage) within 6 months of completion.

### **9.2 Reliability/limitations of sources**

The sources that were used in this assessment were, in general, of high quality. The majority of the information provided herewith has been gained from either



published texts or archaeological 'grey' literature held at Kent County Council, and therefore considered as being reliable.

### **9.3 Copyright**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) and the author shall retain full copyright on the commissioned report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights are reserved, excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to SQE Grafty Green Ltd (and representatives) for the use of this document in all matters directly relating to the project.

## **10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Paul Wilkinson PhD., MCifA., FRSA.

17/04/2015

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Plates



Plate 1. Andrew & Dury map of 1769



Plate 2. Hasted map of 1798





Plate 3. Google Eath 1960



Plate 4. Google Earth 1990



Plate 5. Google Earth 2013

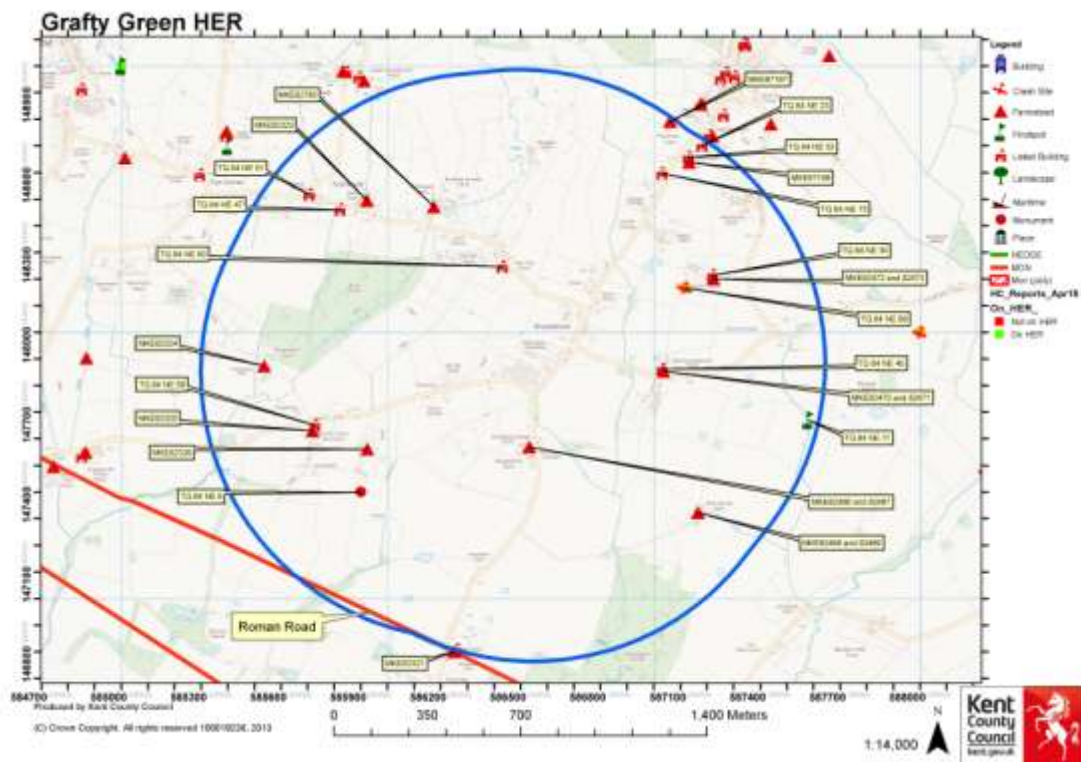
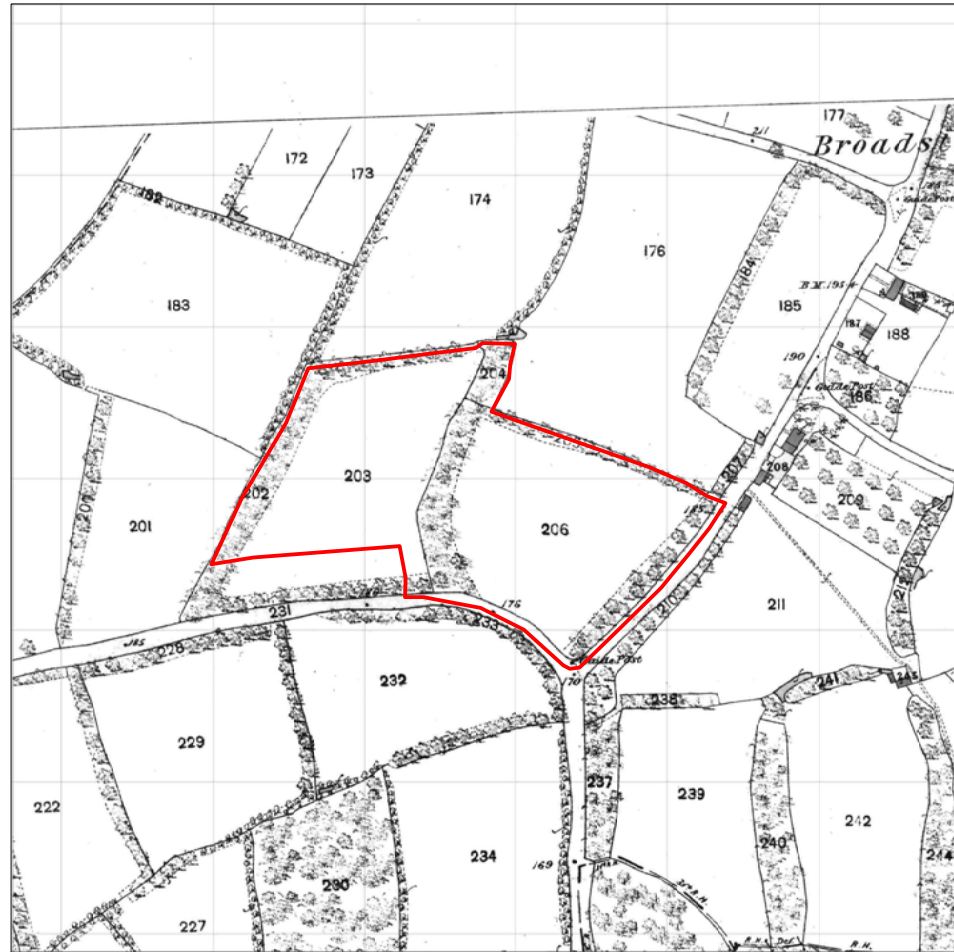
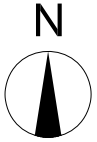


Plate 6. KCC HER data

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148250.0mN



586950.0mE  
147550.0mN

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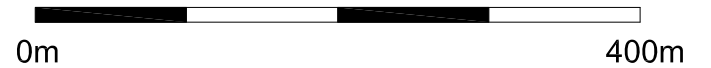
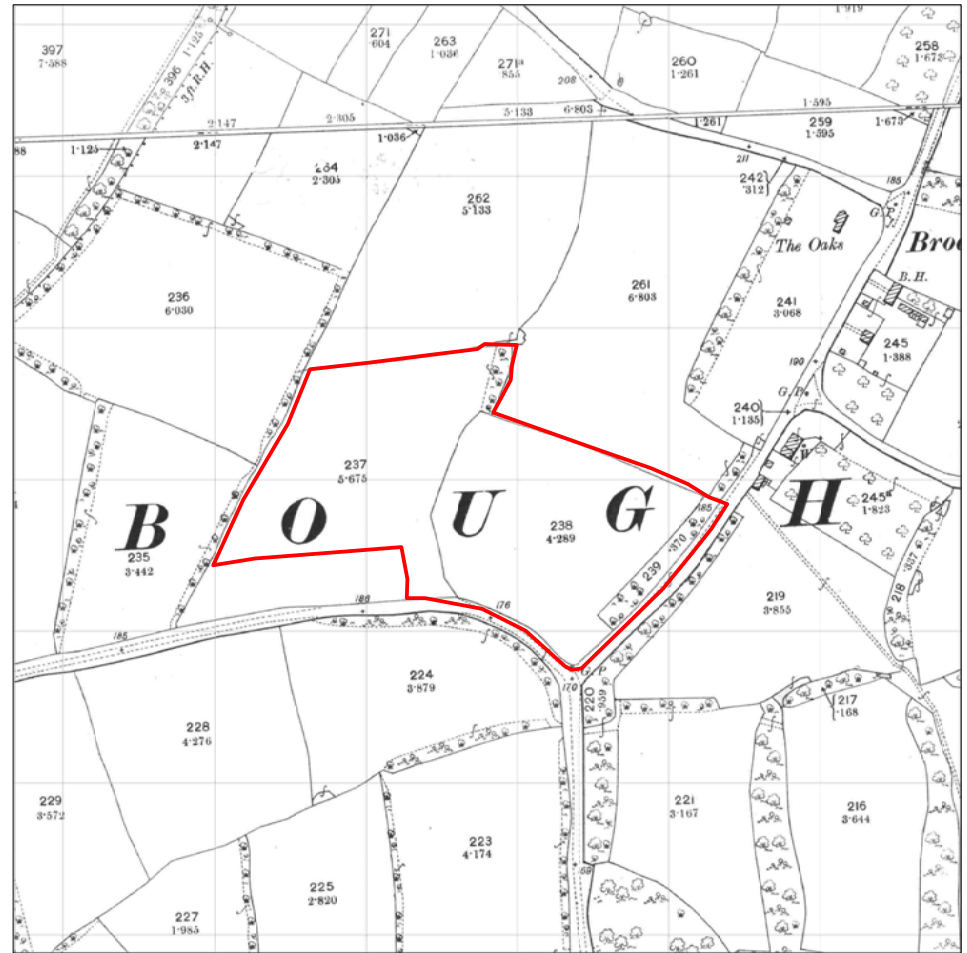
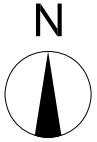


Figure 1: Site boundary on historic mapping from 1869

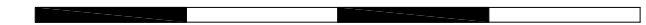


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148250.0mN



586950.0mE  
147550.0mN

1:5000@A4



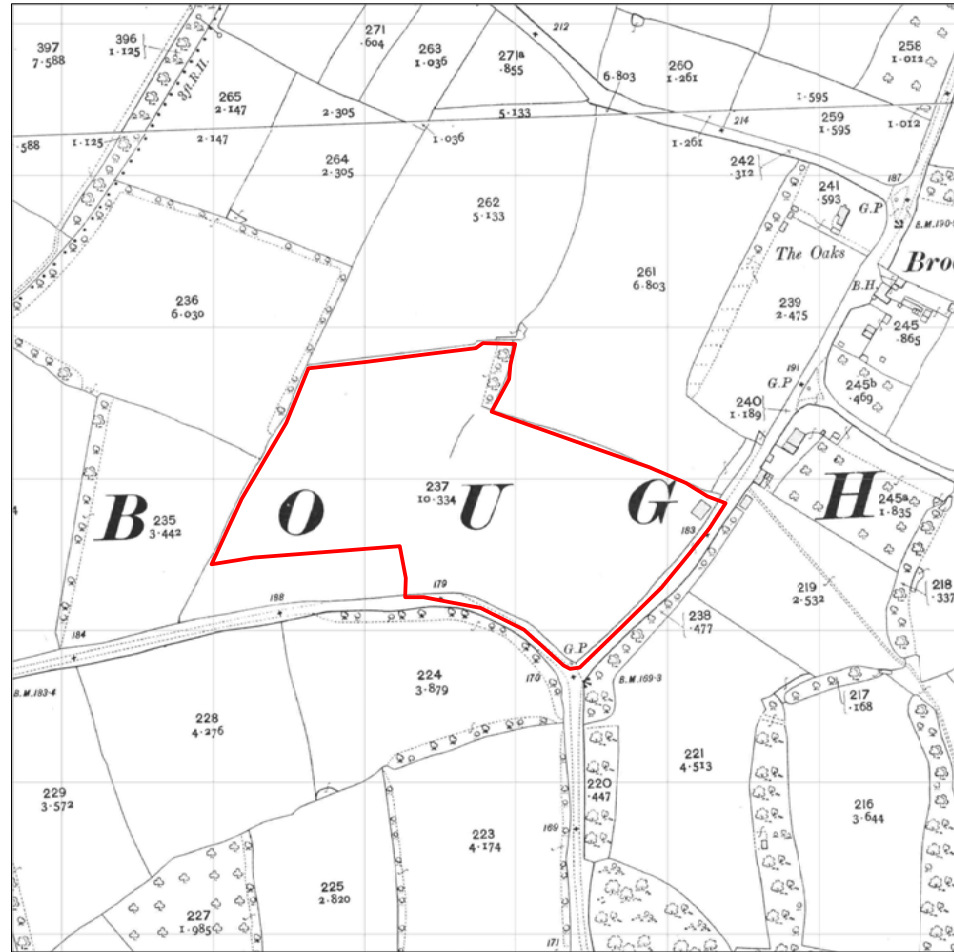
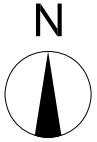
0m

400m

Figure 2: Site boundary on historic mapping from 1897



585950.0mE  
148250.0mN



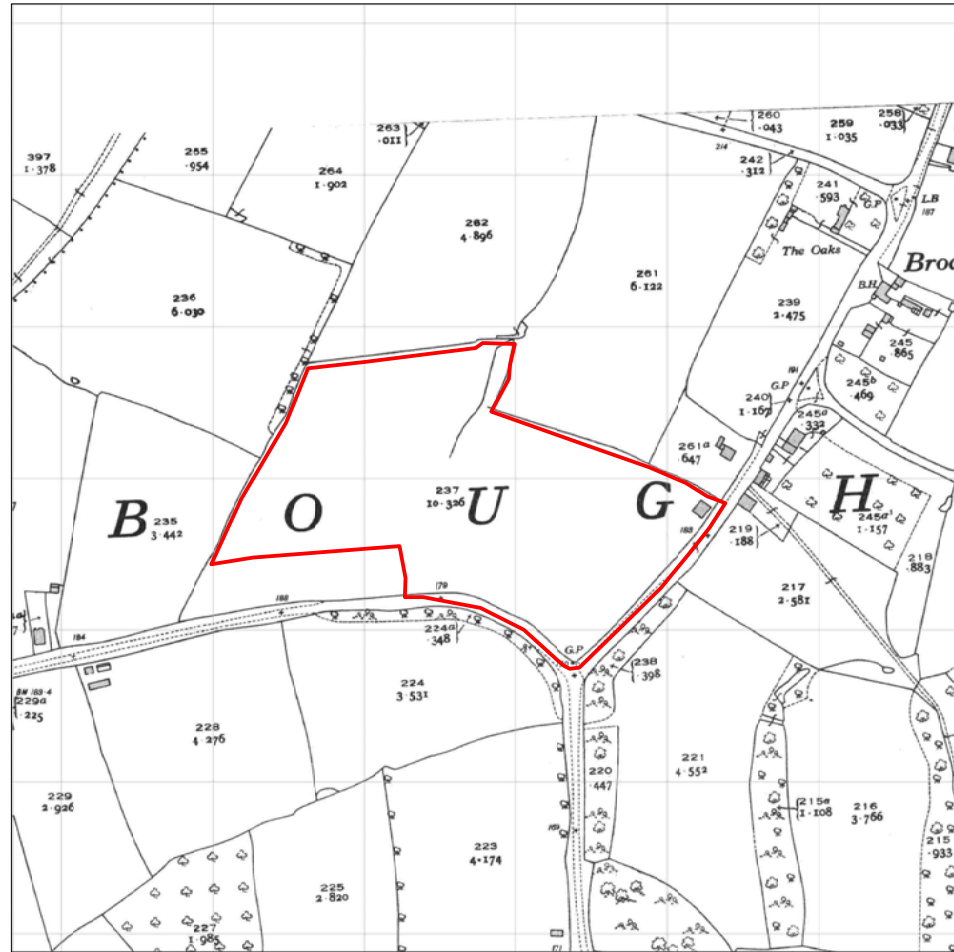
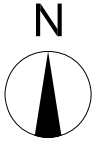
586950.0mE  
147550.0mN

1:5000@A4



Figure 3: Site boundary on historic mapping from 1908

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148250.0mN



586950.0mE  
147550.0mN

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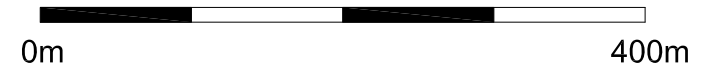
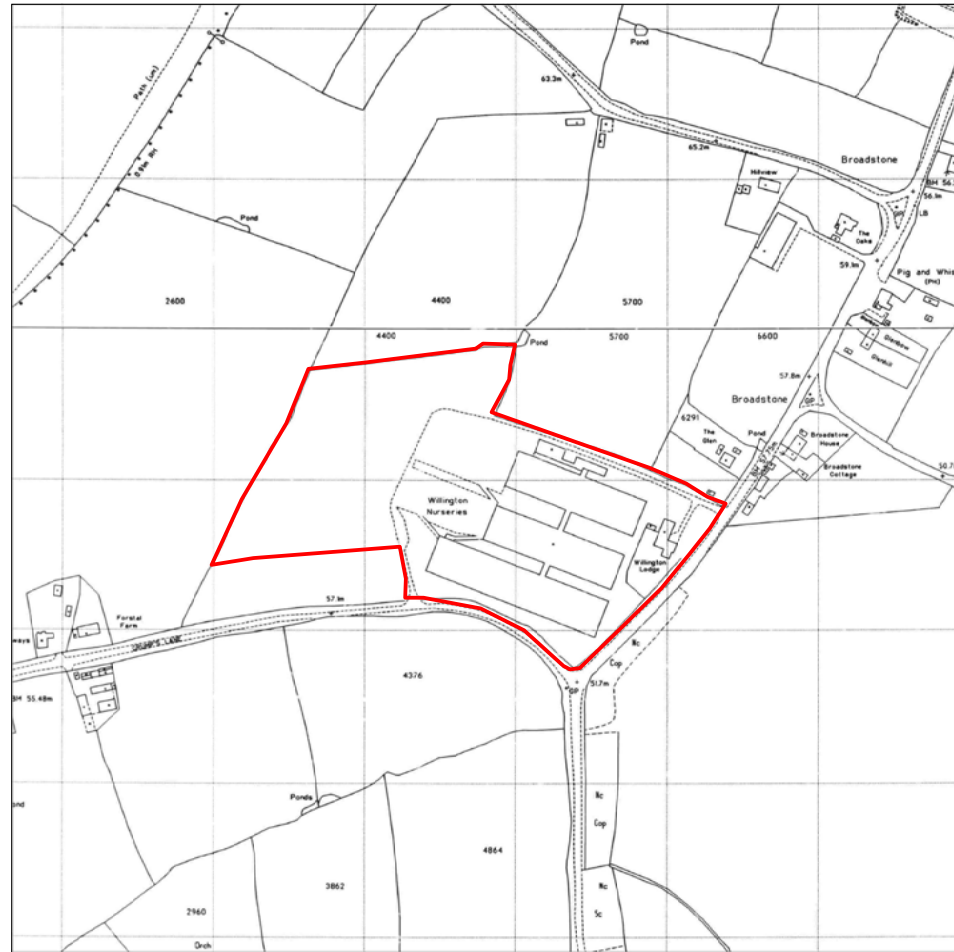
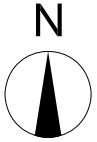


Figure 4: Site boundary on historic mapping from 1939



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148250.0mN



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147550.0mN

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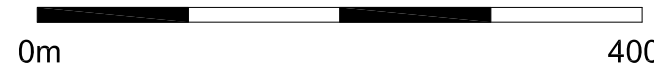


Figure 6: Site boundary on historic mapping from 1993