

3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



November 2013

Client:

OA East Report No: 1540

OASIS No: oxfordarch_163158

NGR: TL 23043 16260

3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

By Jonathan House

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Report Date: October 2013

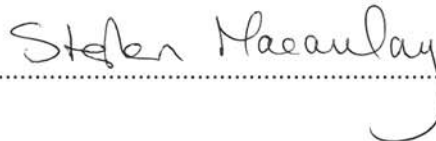
DRAFT

Report Number: 1540
Site Name: 3 Forge Lane, Welwyn
HER Event No: TBA
Date of Works: October 2013
Client Name: Netherdown
Client Ref: 15555
Planning Ref: N6/2013/0263/FP
Grid Ref: TL 23043 16260
Site Code: XHTFLW13
Finance Code: XHTFLW13
Receiving Body: Hertfordshire Museum Service

Accession No:

Prepared by: Jonathan House
Position: Supervisor
Date: 25/10/13

Checked by: Stephen Macaulay
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 25/10/13
Signed:



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Summary

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at 3, Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, Grid ref. TL 23043 16260. The watching brief took place on the 14/10/13.

The excavation of wall footings was observed, with the ground showing high levels of modern disturbance. The only finds recovered during the observations were of post-medieval date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at No. 3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (TL 23043 16260).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by the Historic Environment Unit, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Macaulay 2013). Work at 3, Forge lane Welwyn was carried out as part of planning application N6/2013/0263/FP.
- 1.1.3 The proposed development comprises the demolition of existing building and the construction of a building forming two properties.
- 1.1.4 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development area is situated the River Mimram and the town High Street, 30m west of the parish church St Mary's. The site lies on a low point within the town at 69.46AOD. The River Mimram runs through the town from the north-west, heading to Digswell to the south-east.
- 1.2.2 The Drift geology below the site is recorded by the British Geological Survey (online) as being sand and gravel. Superficial Deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The Solid geology below the Drift comprises Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) bedrock formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (BGS online).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 This archaeological and historical background is based on the *Welwyn Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report (2002)*. The Design Brief records that the site lies in an area of Welwyn which is recorded in the Local Plan as an Area of Archaeological Significance No. 7 (HCC 2012, section 2.1). This relates to a substantial Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and associated burial area at Welwyn as well as the later medieval settlement.
- 1.3.2 Evidence for early pre-historic activity has been found in the local area and the river valley, with finds from Palaeolithic, through to Bronze Age. The Bronze Age sees a marked increase in evidence for human activity in the vicinity of Welwyn. The Welwyn area sees evidence for almost continuous occupation from this period, with particularly significant remains during the Late Iron Age, and Roman period. The Iron Age activity is characterised as scattered farmsteads, with possible examples at, Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (SMR 9267), and the trace remains at Lockleys Roman villa site (SMR 1566).
- 1.3.3 The Roman settlement at Welwyn appears to coincide with the establishment of the Roman road (SMR 7310-11, 9604-5), and the associated river crossing point. As well as the settlement, two villa complexes are known, at Lockleys (SMR 1566) and Dicket

Mead (SMR 1913). Cemeteries of Iron Age and Roman date are also known from the area, with the Roman cemeteries situated in proximity to the course of the road.

- 1.3.4 The proposed development site lies 30m to the west of the present 12th century medieval parish church of St Mary The Virgin. It is probable that this church site has far older origins as four Middle Saxon burials, one of which has been carbon dated (C14) to the mid 7th century (MHT 10902), have been found in its grounds. Thompson has suggested that there may have been a Middle Saxon minster church here (*ibid*, 7). A settlement would presumably have revolved around this church and the manor of Welwyn, further to the south.
- 1.3.5 The site is located within the medieval core of the town, a number of listed buildings are found in close proximity to the site. The location of the site in context to the town layout might suggest the presence of medieval plots running through the development area.
- 1.3.6 A tanning yard was located immediately to the north-east of the development area, dating to the post medieval period.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Netherdown and Josh Roughan who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay who also edited the report. The project was monitored by Andy Instone, Hertfordshire County Planning Archaeologist. The fieldwork was carried out by the author. Illustrations were drawn by Dave Brown.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the groundworks.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360°-type excavator using a 0.5m wide toothed bucket.
- 2.2.2 The watching brief required the observation of wall footings, excavated sections and the base of the footing were inspected. Up-cast spoil from the excavated footings was also inspected for finds of archaeological significance.
- 2.2.3 No suitable deposits were identified for environmental analysis.
- 2.2.4 The site conditions and the weather did not inhibit the archaeological work.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Groundworks

- 3.1.1 Wall footings were excavated following the footprint of the proposed structure (Fig 2.), the depth of footings varied, a minimum depth of 1m was required, however close proximity of trees and the presence of roots necessitated greater depth, measuring up to 1.5m.
- 3.1.2 The resulting sections were inspected as well as the base of the footings trench, excavated material was inspected for significant finds. Instability of the deposits required rapid shoring of the trench edges to prevent collapse.
- 3.1.3 The deposits seen within the groundworks were consistent across the development area. Two distinct layers were defined, the uppermost layer (100) was a clearly modern demolition layer possibly a result of the recently demolished previous structure. The deposit measured 0.49m and was poorly sorted, containing a mixture of topsoil and modern demolition material. This deposit was seen to be overlying a further demolition layer (101), the second demolition layer encountered was well sorted and contained a high proportion of brick and tile, interspersed with finds of nineteenth century date. The deposit measured approximately 0.53m in depth, however a greater variation was seen with the deposit ranging from 0.6m to 0.45m in depth.
- 3.1.4 Occasional patches of a dark greyish brown, clayey silt deposit survived, possibly representing a former subsoil, however no dating material was recovered from this deposit. The deposit was inconsistent across the site through changes in the levels of truncation from the above layer. The maximum surviving depth of the deposit measured 0.1m however the majority of the area saw little or no survival of the deposit.
- 3.1.5 The remaining depth within the footings trench truncated into the natural gravels.

3.2 Finds Summary

- 3.2.1 Finds from the upper most layer were disregarded as obviously modern or residual. A sample of finds were recovered from layer (101) the retained finds included pottery sherds of Willow pattern as well as hand painted and print wares.
- 3.2.2 A single metal find was retained, an Iron shoe patten. The object was found in association with the pottery and is likely to be contemporary in date.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 The upper most layer across the site was a loose demolition material, mixed with topsoil. This deposit is likely to be a result of truncation and grubbing out the previous structure, leaving a mixed deposit of demolition and garden soil.
- 4.1.2 Layer (101) contained a high frequency of post medieval finds, the deposit appears to be made ground. The ground may have been raised due to the close proximity of the river, making the ground less prone to flooding.
- 4.1.3 Particular attention was observed in areas where the possible preserved subsoil survived, as these areas were thought to represent potential intact earlier deposits. The deposit is likely to represent the truncated partial remains of an earlier subsoil, the lack of finds or dating material makes the provenience of the remaining deposit unclear.

4.2 Conclusion

- 4.2.1 No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered, with no evidence for cut features pre-dating the post medieval period being seen within the excavated footings. The widespread levels of truncation and the lack of residual finds may suggest extensive soil movements, removing earlier deposits.

APPENDIX A. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: 3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Hatfield	
Village/Town: Welwyn	Parish: Welwyn	
Planning application reference: N6/2013/0263/FP		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Client name, address, and tel. no.: Netherdown, Contract House, 58 Bridge Road East, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 1JU. Tel. 01707 376255		
Nature of application: Residential housing		
Present land use: Residential Housing		
Size of application area: 230m2	Size of area investigated:	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL23043 16260		
Site code (if applicable): XHTFLW13		
Site director/Organization: Jonathan House / Oxford Archaeology East		
Type of work: Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 14/10/13	Finish: 14/10/13
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Hertfordshire Museums Service		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: Post Medieval	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A		
Summary of fieldwork results: The excavation of wall footings was observed, with the ground showing high levels of disturbance. The only finds recovered during the observations were of post medieval date.		
Author of summary: Jonathan House	Date of summary: 17/10/13	

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------|---|
| British Geological Survey. | 2013 | http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html
Accessed 18/10/13. |
| Macaulay, S. | 2013 | <i>Specification for Archaeological Investigation 3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire</i> Unpublished Report OA East. |
| Thompson, I. | 2002 | <i>Welwyn Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report</i> Hertfordshire. |

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Instone
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	Jonathan House

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Hertfordshire Museums	OA East (Bar Hill)	
XHTFWL13	XHTFWL13	XHTFWL13

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordarch_163158		
Project Name	3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	14-10-2013	Finish	14-10-2013
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XHTFLW13	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
Development Type	Urban Residential

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
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<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

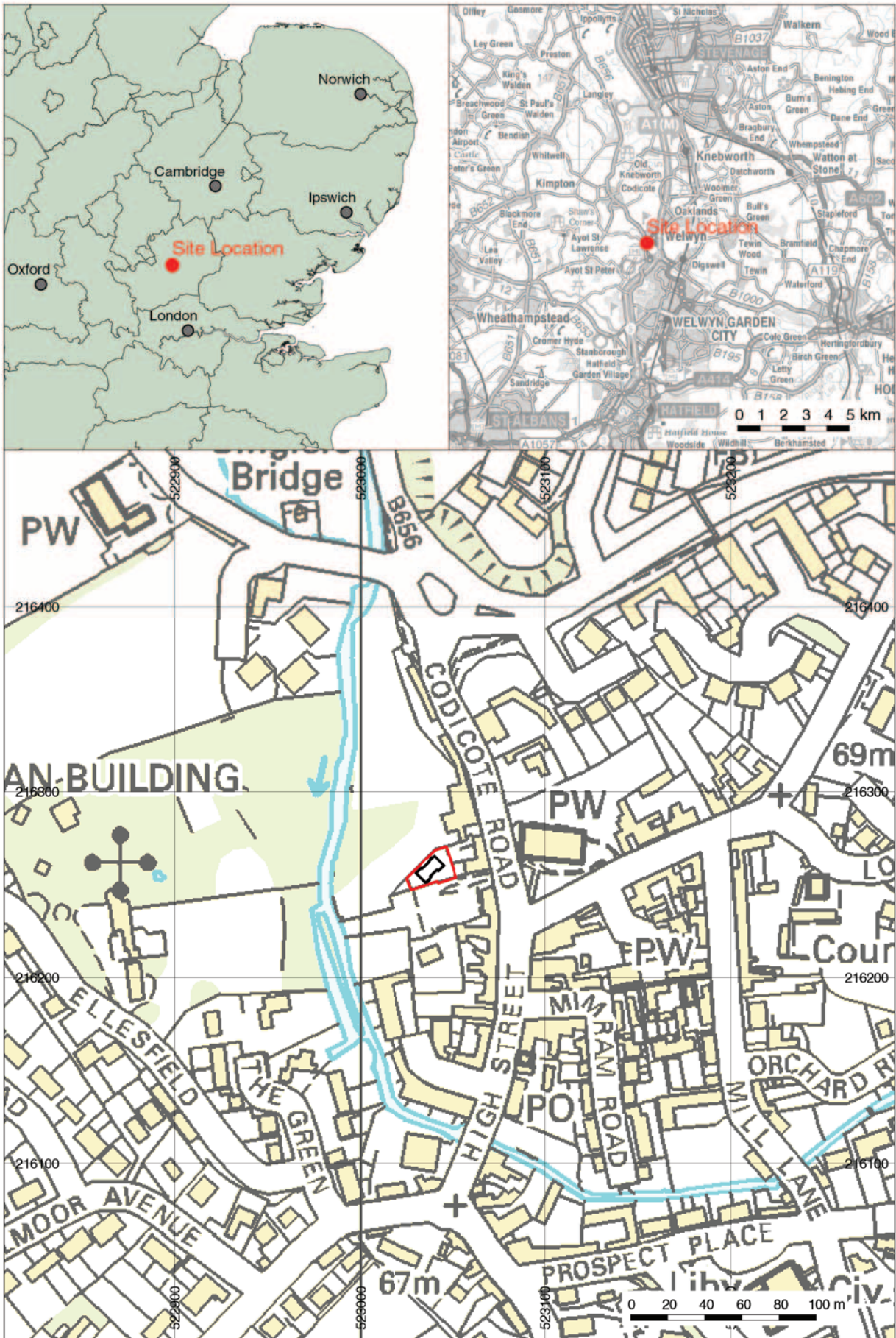
Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Midden	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Ceramic	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Midden	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Patten	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Heartfordshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Hatfield	3 Forge Lane, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9NA
Parish	Welwyn	
HER	Hertfordshire	
Study Area	230m2	National Grid Reference
		TL 23043 16260



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Figure 1: Site location showing footings trench (black) in development area (red)

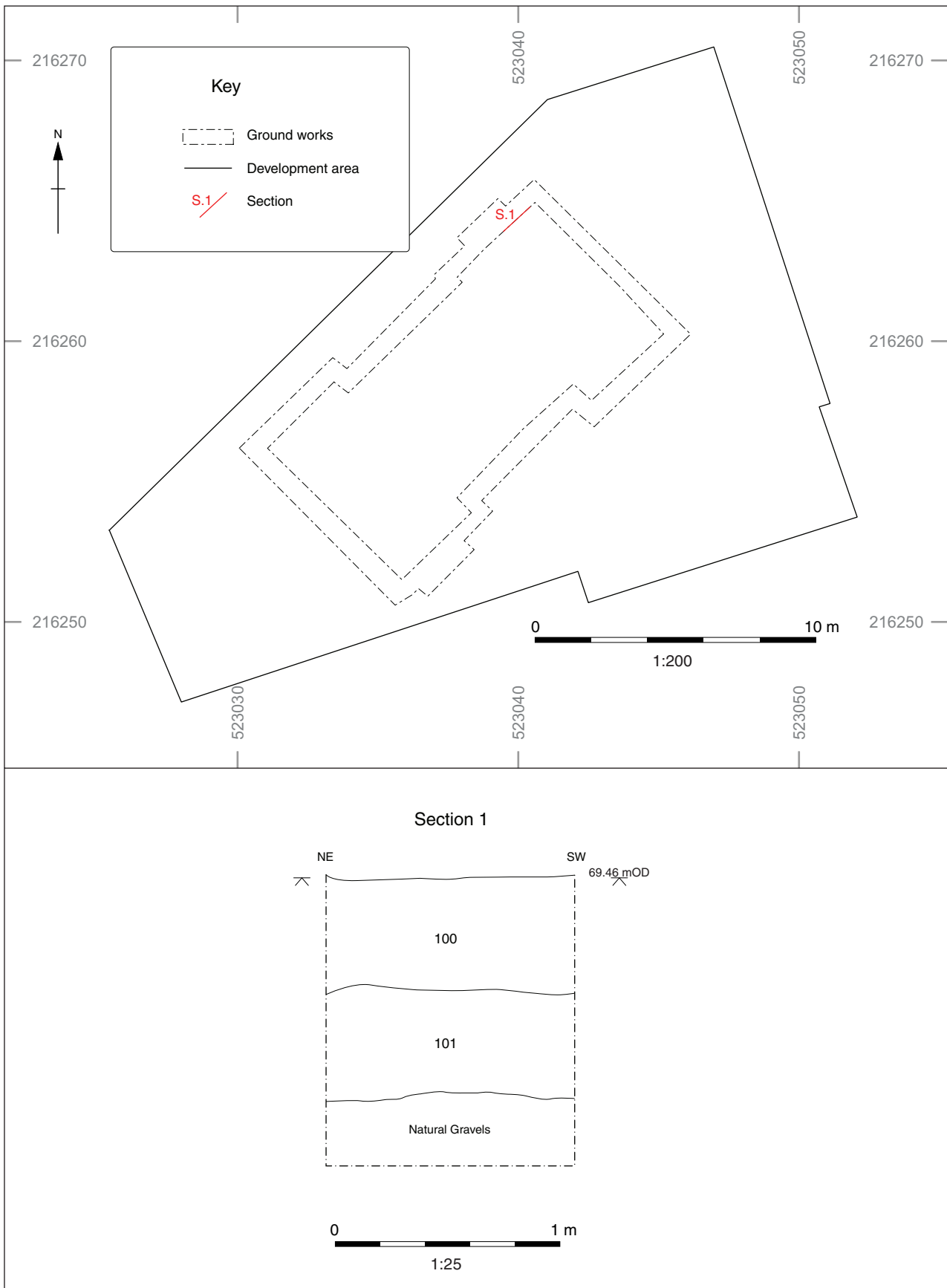


Figure 2: Plan of ground works and section of deposits



Plate 1: Excavated footings, shot taken from the south-west



Plate 2: House plot working shot, taken from the west



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