



GREEN LANE, GARSTANG, LANCASHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

August 2006

Persimmon Homes Ltd

Issue No: 2006-07/548

OAN Job No: L9622

NGR: SD 4927 4700

Planning Application No:
02/99/0429

Document Title: GREEN LANE, GARSTANG, LANCASHIRE

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: Persimmon Homes Ltd

Issue Number: 2006-07/548

OA Job Number: L9622

National Grid Reference: SD 4927 4700

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SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North in early December 2005 at Green Lane, Garstang, Lancashire (SD 4927 4700). Persimmon Homes Ltd propose to develop the site, which lies within an area of recognised archaeological potential, into residential dwellings. Following a request for an archaeological watching brief by Lancashire County Archaeology Service, Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned to undertake the works during any excavation activity along the access road to the site.

In the event, through circumstances beyond the control of Oxford Archaeology North, most of the groundworks were completed in the absence of an archaeological presence, and those that were conducted under archaeological observation yielded nothing of any archaeological significance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (O A North) would like to thank Persimmon Homes Ltd for commissioning and supporting the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Andy Lane and Andy Bates, and David Tonks wrote the report. The drawings were compiled by Mark Tidmarsh. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 A planning application was submitted to Lancashire County Council (Planning Application reference 02/99/0429) by Persimmon Homes Ltd, for residential development at Green Lane, Garstang, Lancashire (SD 4927 4470, Fig 1). Conditional permission was granted with a requirement for an archaeological investigation to be carried out in the form of a watching brief during any excavations exceeding 0.15m in the area of the access road to the site.
- 1.1.2 Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) issued a specification for the watching brief (*Appendix 1*) and OA North was commissioned by Persimmon Homes Ltd to undertake the work in December 2005. The results from the watching brief are presented here in the form of a short report.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT BRIEF

- 2.1.1 Circumstances beyond the control of OA North dictated that the project brief was not followed in full (*Section 4.1*), but such work as was carried out was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.2.1 It was the intent of the programme of field observation to record accurately the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features exposed during specified groundworks associated with the development. This work would have comprised observation during the topsoil strip and overburden-stripping activities associated with the improvement works along the proposed access road to the site.
- 2.2.2 The recording comprised a full description of the site on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the County Record Office in Preston.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The development area is situated between Green Lane East and Shrogg's Wood, Garstang (SD 4927 4700). The area is situated within the North Lancashire Plain (Countryside Commission 1998, 87) which extends southwards from Morecambe Bay in the north to the outskirts of Liverpool in the south (Fig 1).
- 3.1.2 Although Permo-Triassic red mudstones, siltstones and sandstones ('New Red Sandstone') constitute much of the floor of the Lancashire lowlands, the solid rock geology rarely emerges from beneath its thick covering of glacial and post-glacial deposits, which is dominated by clay soils (*op cit*). The soils are classified as 'urban' (Ordnance Survey 1983) and otherwise remain unsurveyed.

3.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** this historical and archaeological background is intended only as a general overview of the known archaeology and history of the area but specific references are made to the immediate area where relevant.
- 3.2.2 **Prehistoric:** the prehistory of Lancashire is largely non-monumental in character, and is predominantly represented by finds of lithic and metal artefacts, made by chance or during systematic surveys (Middleton *et al* 1995, 17). Scatters of lithic material recovered from ploughsoil constitute the commonest evidence for activity during the period. Palaeolithic finds from Lancashire are limited, but the Mesolithic is better represented, with large numbers of upland sites, and an increasing body of lowland sites, particularly adjacent to wet mire, alluvial, and coastal deposits (Cowell 1996, 30). During the Neolithic, the distribution of artefacts suggests that settlement was concentrated in the lowlands, mainly around the coasts and in river valleys; in particular the early farming communities seem to have sought out gravel in a landscape predominantly covered with boulder clay (Middleton 1996, 40).
- 3.2.3 The great increase in the variety and geographical spread of finds dating to the Bronze Age probably indicates a more extensive use of the landscape (*op cit*, 54). Finds of metalwork are concentrated in the lowlands, particularly in the wetlands, although this may reflect depositional practices, rather than the location of settlements (*op cit*, 45). Conversely, finds of axe hammers and other perforated stone implements, which are relatively common in north Lancashire, tend to be found in 'dry land' locations, evenly spread across the landscape. In addition, there is a considerable body of evidence for Bronze Age burial monuments, dating to the period 2500-1600BC; many lie in upland areas, although they were formerly much more common in the lowlands, farming activity probably having removed a large number (*op cit*, 49). However, despite the wider distribution of finds, it has been argued that, on

clay soils away from the coast, the landscape continued to support thick mixed woodland (*op cit*, 54).

- 3.2.4 Artefactual evidence declines sharply after *c* 1400BC, and the development of blanket peat in the uplands and raised mires in the lowlands suggests that this may have been indicative of a genuine abandonment of some parts of the landscape (*op cit*, 55). Evidence for the Iron Age in lowland Lancashire is notoriously scarce, indeed very little is known about the nature of material culture and settlement in Northern England in general (Cunliffe 1991, 101). In part, this is regarded as being a product of poor site visibility, with Iron Age pottery being relatively fragile, the boulder clay soils which cover the region not favouring aerial photographic or geophysical prospection, and the predominance of pastoral farming meaning that finds have less chance of being uncovered by ploughing (Middleton *et al* 1995, 19). The contrast of limited artefactual evidence with substantial evidence for prolonged clearance in pollen diagrams suggests the number of known archaeological sites of the period grossly under-represents actual settlement activity, and that many sites remain to be detected (*ibid*).
- 3.2.5 **Romano-British:** a Roman presence in the region is clearly attested by the forts of Kirkham and Ribchester, to the south-west and south-east of the study area respectively, by the extensive first to third century site at Walton-le-Dale, some 20km to the south, which appeared to be involved in part with the manufacture and distribution of goods (Gibbons *et al* forthcoming); and by the fort at Lancaster, 17km to the north (Shotter 1997). Fieldwork undertaken by Nateby and District Historical Society in 1995/6 suggests that the line of a former Roman road may have passed directly through the Green Lane site (LCAS 2005, *Appendix 1*). However, a watching brief in 2001 immediately to the south failed to identify any deposits that could be interpreted as being associated with a Roman road. The exact alignment of the road remains unknown and may have been damaged or destroyed by previous land-use (*ibid*).
- 3.2.6 **Early Medieval:** evidence for early medieval activity is limited throughout northern Lancashire; few artefacts of the period have been recovered, and there is almost no archaeological evidence for settlement. However, logic suggests that the rural settlements of the Roman period either continued or declined gradually, and by the end of the period, considerable densities of Scandinavian place names imply that a large number of settlements existed, either newly founded, or renamed (Newman 1996, 103). The site area lies within one such cluster of names, which follows the low land flanking the Wyre, and includes Catterall and Garstang; indeed, it has been suggested that Garstang itself represented the meeting place for the Scandinavian community in the Fylde (Kenyon 1991, 134-5). The Viking burial at Claughton (concisely summarised by Edwards 1969) gives further evidence to the level of Norse involvement in the area, There are no known sites of Early medieval date within the Green Lane area.
- 3.2.7 **Medieval:** the majority of the larger settlements in the vicinity have recorded origins of at least medieval date. At the time of the Norman conquest the majority of the lands in of the area were held as part of the Lordships of Earl Tostig (Farrer and Brownbill 1912), before being split into smaller territories.

Before the Conquest the parish of Garstang comprised three manors, Garstang, Catterall and Claughton (*op cit*, 7, 291). There are references to all of these settlements, as well as several others, as early as the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (*op cit*) demonstrating that the majority of the modern settlement pattern was established by at least this time. There is little archaeological evidence for the medieval period in rural Lancashire, however, and detailed study has yet to begin (Newman 1996). The majority of the land around Garstang became part of William de Lancaster's estate in the thirteenth century, who granted a large part of it to Cockersands abbey in 1246 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). A market charter was granted for Garstang in 1310, which may have led to the separation between Garstang and Garstang Churchtown (*ibid*). The fourteenth century was not generally a particularly prosperous time, however; the great Scottish raid of 1322 undoubtedly would have made great use of the main road through Garstang, and the area was ravaged by the plague in around 1359 (Tetlow 2001).

- 3.2.8 The following centuries saw a gradual recovery, and in 1490 Greenhalgh Castle and deer park were created. The Earl of Derby fortified an existing property after having threats made against his life following the end of the War of the Roses (Collinson 1993, 20). Other sites of possibly late medieval date within the study area include several wayside crosses around Garstang used as marker points and during funeral processions (Taylor 1902). The Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536-1540 essentially marks the beginning of the end of the medieval period, most of the land within the survey area reverted to the crown, and the market at Garstang closed for almost 50 years (Tetlow 2001).
- 3.2.9 **Post-medieval:** the development of settlements on the Lancashire Plain is, as a whole, a relatively recent occurrence and coincides largely with the drainage of the mosses in the nineteenth century. This is evident in early maps of the area which demonstrate the shrinkage of the wetland areas between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries. The Lancaster Canal was opened in 1797 and ran between Preston and Tewitfield. The canal was used to transport coal, slate, timber food, and limestone and later offered a passenger service between Preston and Kendal (Wyre Borough Council n.d.).
- 3.2.10 The majority of the area in general remained very rural in character during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with most of the settlements remaining small. Agriculture dominated the local economy and there were a number of isolated farmsteads in the general area. A plan to construct a railway from Knott End through the Over-Wyre area to Garstang and connect it to the London and North West Railway Company's line at Garstang and Catterall station was mooted in the early 1860s. It was promoted by local landowners, principally Wilson France, the Squire of Rawcliffe, who saw the proposed line as a means of improving access to the area, and was completed in stages from the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth (Sobee 1997, 135-138).

4. RESULTS

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** owing to a communication failure, no groundworks were undertaken in the presence of an archaeological monitor and no comment can be made about those works. However, a small proportion of the works were available for inspection after excavation, the results for which are set out below.
- 4.1.2 The inspected works comprised a single manhole and a short length (1.7m) of pipe trench outside Mill Crest House on Green Lane East (Fig 2), which had been partially shored. The manhole measured 3.0m x 3.0m x 1.98m and the observed stratigraphy comprised 25m tarmacadam over 1.48m mid reddish-brown sandy-clay till with c1% stone inclusions (Plate 1). There were no features observed nor finds recovered.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 Although located within a general area of recognised archaeological potential, no finds nor archaeological horizons were observed during the programme of works. This is principally due to the limited area of the development subjected to the watching brief.

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APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF

**Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at
Green Lane, Garstang
Grid reference**

Planning Permission ref, no. (02/99/0429)

Prepared on behalf of Wyre Borough Council for Mr Mark Winterbottom,
Persimmon Homes

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission (02/99/0429) has been granted for residential development at Green Lane, Garstang. It is a condition of the planning approval that the applicants undertake a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation.

1.2 This specification has been prepared by the Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS).

2. Archaeological Interest

2.1 Fieldwork undertaken by Nateby and District Historical Society in 1995/6 suggests that the line of a former Roman road may have passed through this site and the one to the south to a fording point across the River Wyre.

2.2 A watching brief on the site immediately to the south by Earthworks Archaeology in 2001 did however fail to encounter any archaeological deposits that could be interpreted as being associated with the Roman road. It should be noted that the exact alignment of this road remains unknown and it may have been damaged or destroyed by previous land-use on both of the sites.

3. General Considerations

3.1 Prior to the commencement of *any work*, the archaeological contractor should confirm in writing adherence to this specification, or state (with reasons) any proposals to vary the specification. Should the contractor wish to vary the specification, then written confirmation of the agreement of the LCAS to any variations is required prior to work commencing. The archaeologist carrying out the watching brief should be appropriately qualified and experienced. Any technical queries arising from the specification detailed below should be addressed to the LCAS *without delay*.

4. Fieldwork Methodology

3.1 An archaeologist should be present on site during the excavation of any area below a depth of 0.15m. (approximately six inches) in the area of the proposed access road into the site. The archaeologist should view the area as it is being dug and any trench sections after excavation has been completed.

An appropriate machine using a toothless ditching bucket should be used. Where archaeology is judged to be present, the excavated area should be rapidly cleaned and the need for further work assessed. Where appropriate, any features and finds should then be quickly hand excavated, sampled and recorded, within the confines of the excavated trench.

4.2 Excavated soil should be searched as practicable for finds. The presence and nature of 19th and 20th century material should be noted (quantified and summarily described) but finds of this date need not be retained for processing. Finds judged to be 18th-century in date or earlier should be retained.

4.3 The actual areas of ground disturbance, and any features of possible archaeological concern noted within these areas, should be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, scale drawings (including height above O.D.) and written description sufficient to permit the preparation of a report on the site.

4.4 The intention of the archaeological watching brief is not to unduly delay the work of other contractors on site. This work should not, therefore prejudice the progress of the main or subsidiary contractor's work, except by prior agreement and on-site co-operation.

4.5 The archaeologist on site will naturally operate with due regard for Health and Safety regulations. In this case, where archaeological work is carried out at the same time as the work of other contractors, regard should also be taken of any reasonable additional constraints that these contractors may impose. This work may require the preparation of a Risk Assessment of the site, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Regulations. **The LCAS and its officers cannot be held responsible for any accidents that may occur to outside contractors engaged to undertake this survey while attempting to conform to this specification.**

5. Unexpectedly Significant or Complex Discoveries

5.1 Should there be, in the professional judgement of the archaeologist on site, unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries made that warrant more detailed recording than possible within the terms of this specification, then the archaeological contractor is to urgently contact the LCAS with the relevant information to enable the matter to be resolved with the developer.

5.2 Any human remains that are discovered must initially be left in-situ, covered and protected. If removal is necessary, this must comply with the Home Office and The Church of England's *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England* (2005) where relevant and any local environmental health regulations.

5.3 The terms of the Treasure Act, 1996 must be followed with regard to any finds, which might fall within its purview. Any such finds must be removed

to a safe place and reported to the local coroner as required by the procedures laid down in the "Code of Practice". Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures must be taken to protect the finds from theft.

6. Monitoring

6.1 The recording exercise will be monitored as necessary and practicable by the LCAS Advisory Service in its role as 'curator' of the county's archaeology. The LCAS should receive **as much notice as possible in writing** (and certainly not less than one week) of the intention to start the watching brief. **A copy of the archaeological contractor's risk assessment of the site should accompany the notification.**

7. Post-Excavation/Post-Recording Work and Report Preparation

7.1 On completion of the fieldwork, any samples shall be processed and all finds shall be cleaned, identified, assessed, dated (if possible), marked (if appropriate) and properly packed and stored in accordance with the requirements of national guidelines. A fully indexed field archive shall be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and fully labelled photographs. Labelling should be in indelible ink on the *back* of the print and should include film and frame number; date recorded and photographer's name; name and address of site; national grid reference. Photographic prints should be mounted in appropriate archivally-stable sleeves. **A quantified index to the field archive should form an appendix to the report.** The original archive is to accompany the deposition of any finds, providing the landowner agrees to the deposition of finds in a publicly accessible archive (see Section 8.1 below).

7.2 A report should be produced to provide background information, a summary of the works carried out, a description and separate interpretation of any features and finds identified. Details of the report's style and format are to be determined by the archaeological contractor, but it should include a full bibliography, a quantified index to the site archive and as an appendix, a copy of this specification. The report illustrations should include, as a minimum, a location map at a reasonable scale plus any drawings and photographs.

7.3 If nothing of archaeological interest is identified during the course of the watching brief, then a summary report will be adequate, as long as sufficient details are supplied for SMR purposes. Illustrations would not be required, although it would be anticipated that black and white prints would form part of the archival record. A summary record should include: (1) details of the commissioning body; (2) the nature of the development and resultant ground disturbance; (3) the approximate position of any ground disturbance viewed with relation to adjacent existing fixed points; (4) the date(s) of fieldwork; (5) name(s) of fieldworker(s); (6) written observations on the nature and depth of deposits observed (this may include annotated sketch sections); (7) the conditions under which they were observed (for example, details of weather conditions, ease of access and views, attitude of other organisations *etc.*); (8)

a quantified index to the field archive; (9) details of the archives present location and intended deposition and (10) a copy of this specification.

7.4 The report should be produced within three weeks of completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed with the LCAS. Copies of the report should be supplied to the client and the Lancashire SMR. The report will become publicly accessible once deposited with the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record.

7.5 Provision and agreement will be made for the appropriate academic publication of any results that are not to form part of any further work. A brief summary report of fieldwork, to appear in the Council for British Archaeology North West *Archaeology North West* should be produced, even when an excavation encountered no archaeological deposits. This should be sent to the editor of *Archaeology North West* in time for it to appear within a calendar year of the completion of fieldwork.

8. Deposition of Archive

8.1 Before commencing any fieldwork, the archaeological contractor must contact the relevant District museum archaeological curator in writing (copied to the LCAS) to determine the museum's requirements for the deposition of an excavation archive. In this case the contact is Edmund Southworth, Curator, Museum of Lancashire, Stanley Street, Preston, PR1 4YP; telephone 01772 534075, fax: 01772 534079.

8.2 It is the policy of the Museum of Lancashire to accept complete excavation archives, including primary site records and research archives and finds, from all excavations carried out in the County, which it serves.

8.3 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to endeavour to obtain consent of the landowner, in writing, to the deposition of finds with the Museum of Lancashire.

8.4 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to meet the Museum of Lancashire's requirements with regard to the preparation of fieldwork archives for deposition.

8.5 The museums officer named in 8.1 above should be notified in writing of the commencement of fieldwork at the same time as the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record.

9. Further Details

9.1 Any queries about the contents of the specification should be addressed to the Lancashire County Archaeology Service, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston PPR1 8RD Tel 01772 531734, fax 01772 533423

10. Valid period of specification

10.1 This specification will remain valid for up to one year from the date of issue. After that time it may need to be revised to take into account new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.

Lancashire County Archaeology Service
Douglas Moir
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October 2005

ILLUSTRATIONS

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Plate1: West-facing section of Manhole

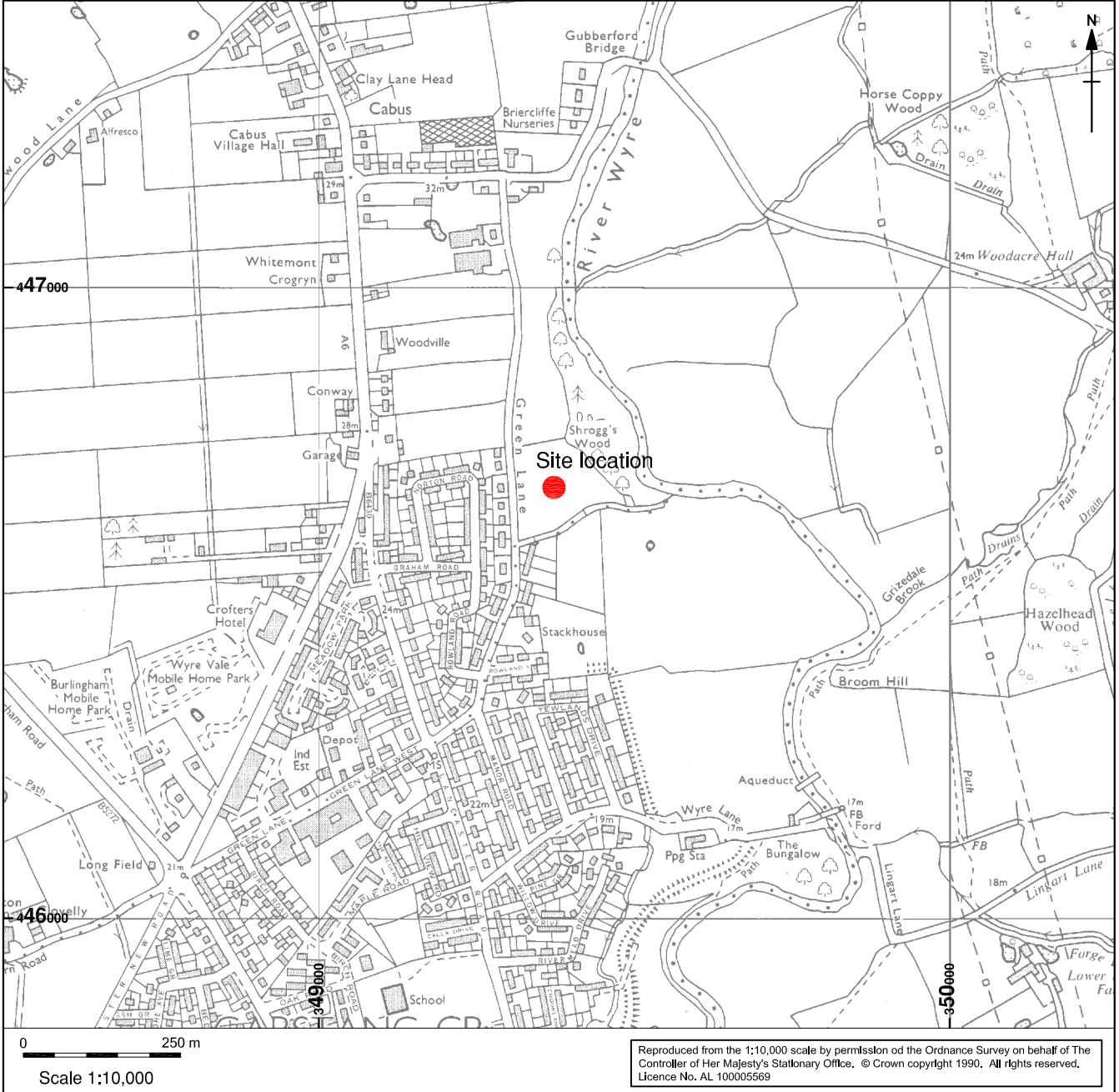
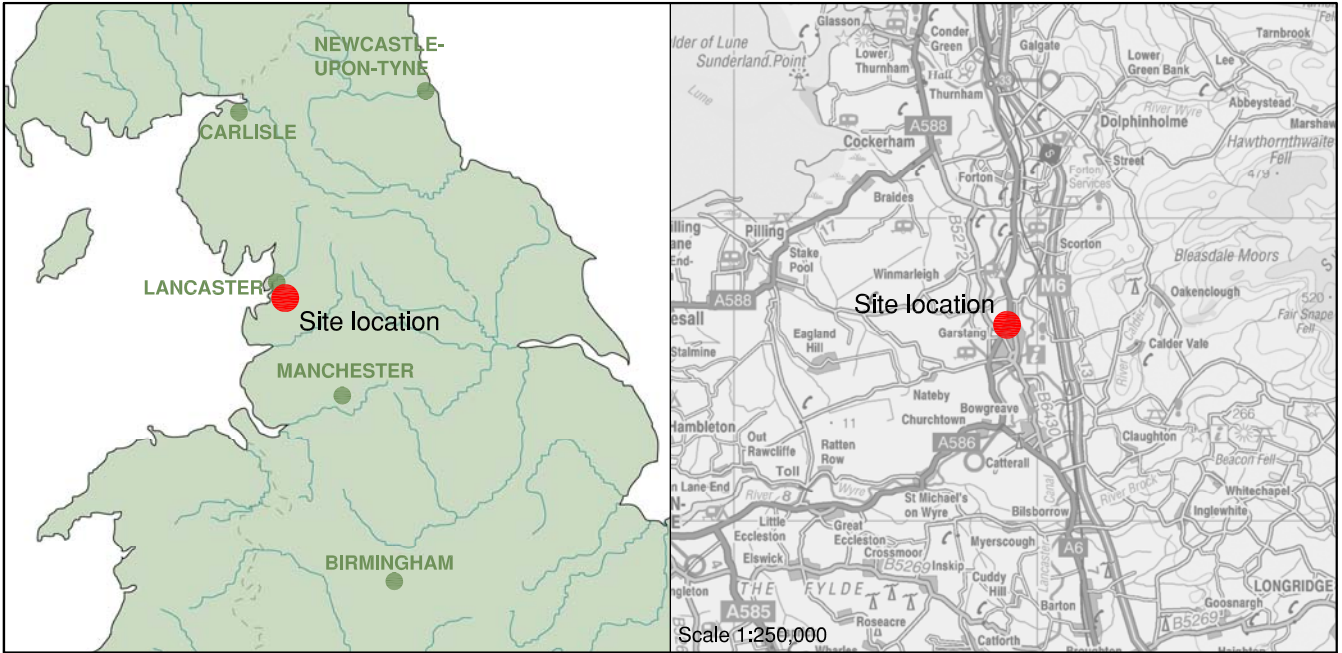


Figure 1: Site Location

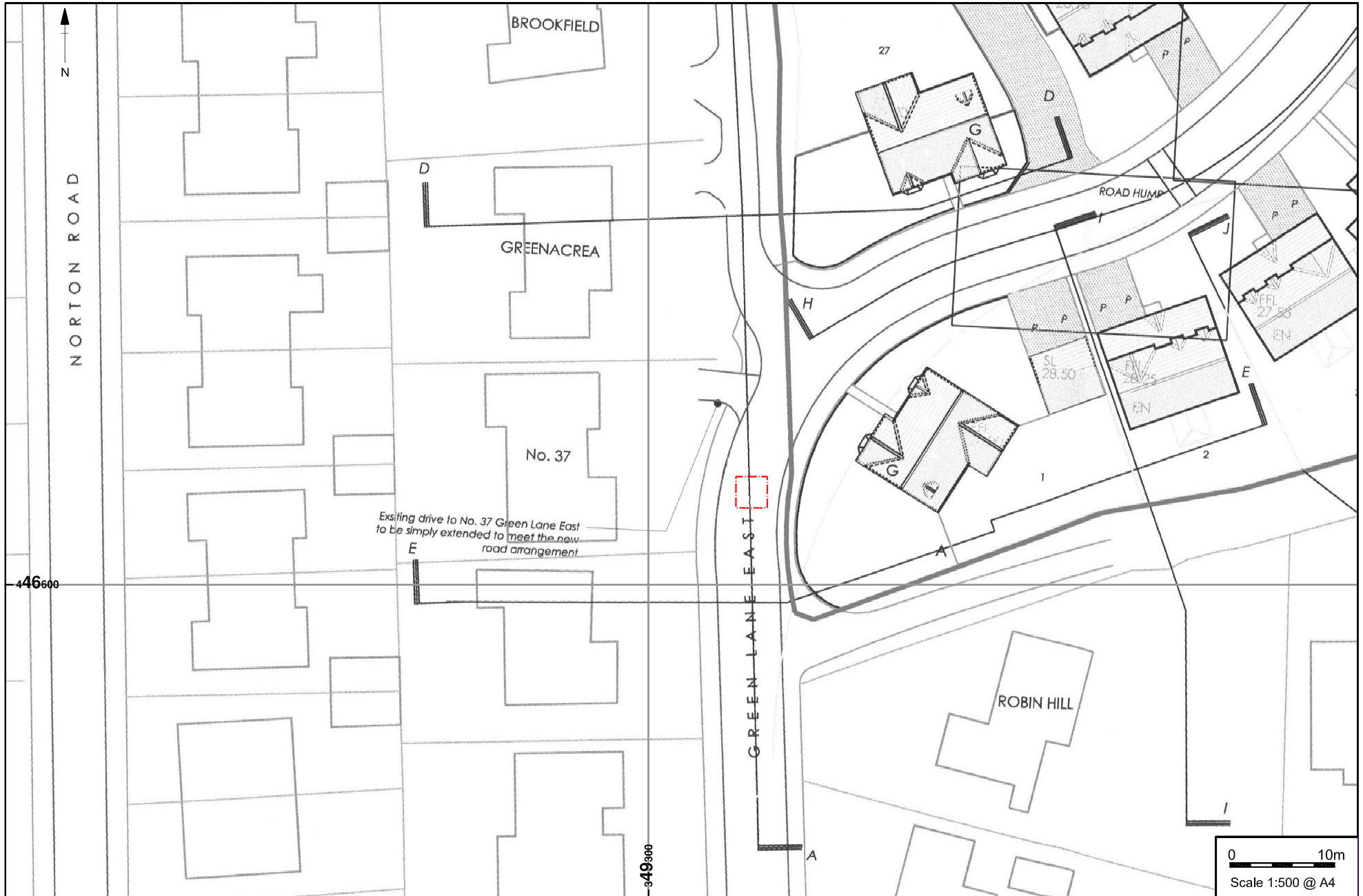


Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plate 1: West-facing section of manhole