GROUNDWORKS ARCHAEOLOGY

Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording, On Land Adjacent to Saracen House Washway Road Saracens Head Spalding Lincolnshire

Prepared for Kirk Homes

National Grid Reference: TF 34305 26869
Planning Reference: H23-1087-20
Site Code SHS21

March 2021

Version 1

Non-technical Summary

Planning consent has been granted (reference: H23-1087-20) for the "Erection of 3 Bungalows" adjacent to Saracen House, Washway Road, Saracens Head, Spalding. The outline application (H23-0980-17) contained a condition requiring the implementation of a scheme of archaeological mitigation comprising an archaeological watching brief.

On completion of the field work a report will be produced detailing the results of the archaeological investigation consisting of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.

1. Site location and description

1.1 The proposed development site currently comprises a portion of an open arable field fronting onto Washway Road to the south-east of Saracens Head near Spalding Lincolnshire. The plot of land is sub rectangular and lies immediately to the east of Saracen House; it is bounded to the north by Washway Road and to the east and south by open arable field. It is centred on NGR TF 34305 26869 (figure 1).

1.2 Topographically, the site is situated in a flat, low-lying area of the Lincolnshire fens at a height of approximately 3m AOD. The bedrock geology comprises the West Walton Formation, a mudstone and siltstone sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 157 to 164 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. These sedimentary rocks are shallow-marine in origin. They are detrital, ranging from coarse to fine-grained (locally with some carbonate content) forming interbedded sequences.

1.3 Superficial deposits are recorded as Tidal Flat Deposits, clay and silt superficial deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. These sedimentary deposits are shallow-marine in origin. They are detrital, generally coarse-grained forming beaches and bars in a coastal setting.

2. Planning background

2.1 Planning consent has been granted (reference: H23-1087-20) for the “Erection of 3 Bungalows" adjacent to Saracen House, Washway Road, Saracens Head, Spalding. The outline application (H23-0980-17) contained a condition requiring the implementation of a scheme of archaeological mitigation.

2.2 Condition 8 states that “No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme should include the following and should be in accordance with the archaeological brief supplied by the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment advisor on behalf of the Local Planning Authority:”

1. An assessment of significance and proposed mitigation strategy (i.e. preservation by record, preservation in situ or a mix of these elements).
2. A methodology and timetable of site investigation and recording.
3. Provision for site analysis
4. Provision for publication and dissemination of analysis and records.
5. Provision for archive deposition.
6. Nomination of a competent person/organisation to undertake the work.

7. The scheme to be in accordance with the Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook. The archaeological site work shall only be undertaken in accordance with the approved written scheme.

Reason: "To ensure the preparation and implementation of an appropriate scheme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with national guidance contained in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012. This issue is integral to the development and therefore full details need to be finalised prior to the commencement of works."

2.3 Condition 10 states that "A copy of the final report required in connection with Condition 8 above shall be submitted within three months of the work being carried out to the Local Planning Authority and the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record. The material and paper archive required as part of the written scheme of investigation shall be deposited with an appropriate archive in accordance with guidelines published in The Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook.

Reason: "To ensure satisfactory arrangements are made for the recording of possible archaeological remains in accordance with national guidance contained in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012."

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 A search was made of the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record, secondary sources including journal articles were also consulted in the production of the historical and archaeological background.

Prehistoric

3.2 There is evidence of human settlement near the Fens from the Mesolithic onwards. The evidence suggests that Mesolithic settlement was focussed along the fen edges and on the low islands within the fens, to take advantage of the hunting and fishing opportunities of the wetlands. This is evidenced by the identification of the internationally important sites such as Flag Fen and Must Farm. No Prehistoric finds or features are recorded within the study area; this is likely due to the peaking of water levels in the Iron Age which would have buried earlier Bronze Age and Neolithic activity under thick alluvium which may be several meters thick.

Roman

3.3 During the Roman period the water levels dropped allowing settlement of the new silt soils deposited near the coast. It is known that sea defences were constructed in the Roman period. Roman pottery has been recovered from Holbeach at a depth of approximately 1m below present ground level from within tidal silts (Hallam 1970) which indicates the area was subjected

to several tidal incursions. It is likely that the site would have been on marginal land throughout the Roman period and although probably exploited is unlikely to have been attractive for permanent settlement. With a rise in sea level in the 5th century much of the reclaimed land was abandoned.

Early Medieval

3.4 In the early Christian period of Anglo-Saxon England, a number of Christians sought the isolation that could be found in the wilderness of the Fens. Later classified as saints, often with close royal links, they include Guthlac, Etheldreda, Pega, and Wendreda. Hermitages on the islands became centres of communities which later developed as monasteries with massive estates. Monastic life was disrupted by Danish (Anglo-Saxon) raids and centuries of settlement from the 6th century but was revived in the mid-10th century monastic revival. In the 11th century, the whole area was incorporated into a united Anglo-Saxon England. The Fens remained a place of refuge and intrigue. It was here that Alfred Aetheling was brought to be murdered and here where Hereward the Wake based his insurgency against Norman England.

3.5 The British Geological Survey data suggests that the Saxon shoreline ran close to the A17 to the south and east of the site. Although there are no HER references to Early-medieval sites in the study area it is thought that a number of minor sea banks had been created by 850AD (Hallam 1965, 7). A substantial amount of early documentary material relates to the reclamation of the land from sea and fen. The nearest sea-bank that can be traced with confidence, *Saltnaygate* follows the line of the modern Washway Road which runs immediately north of the site and is believed to pre-date the Domesday Survey (Hallam 1954, 17). However, earlier sea-banks are suggested including a possible bank following the line of Low Lane.

Medieval

3.6 Fenland monastic houses include the so-called *Fen Five* (Ely Cathedral Priory, Thorney Abbey, Croyland Abbey, Ramsey Abbey and Peterborough Abbey) as well as Spalding Priory. As major landowners, the monasteries played a significant part in the early efforts at drainage of the Fens and a number of their linear sea banks survive to the present day., Leases of land by Crowland Abbey involved the service and repair of sea-banks as part of the tenancy in the early 13th century.

3.7 Saracens Head stood on the sea bank of the wide estuary of the river Welland where travellers and drovers would wait for a guide and suitable tidal conditions to cross the estuary to Fosdike. The hamlet evolved to serve these travellers.

3.8 In the Medieval period the area around the wash developed into a major salt production area with a number of salterns known in the vicinity of the site. Extensive mounds of salt production waste were established at Saracens Head (at the mouth of the Whaplode river). There were salt-pans between Gosberton and Sutterton, against the bank of the Bicker haven and at Holbeach Hurn. Saracens Head was originally known as Saltney meaning island of salt. The name is said to derive from a mound originally up to 3m high which stood on the seaward side of the Roman bank. The mound comprised of pure salt with occasional layers of peat ash. This relic of the salt manufacturing industry derived from the industrial process. The process of making salt was to channel the sea water into a series of pits or pans and there let it remain until all the silt settled at the bottom. The clean water was then taken out and boiled in coppers. These were heated by peat or by reeds (a local fuel source). When the brine was boiled the water evaporated. Leaving the salt in the coppers. The resultant salt was mounded for storage which over time led to the creation of the salt mound. The 13th century saw a combination of wet seasons which caused flooding and the salt works were affected by abnormally high tides.

3.9 Within the study area the Lincolnshire HER records a natural sand hill (MLI20015) which was modified for use as a small saltern 786m north-west of the site with further evidence of salt manufacture (MLI20349) scattered along the sea bank to the west. Remains of salterns have also been identified closer to site with (MLI203376) only 254m north-west. A watching brief (ELI1971) undertaken 277m north-north-west of the site revealed pottery dating from the 11th-14th century while another watching brief (ELI2701) identified an undated ditch and burnt clay thought to be part of a furnace lining associated with salt manufacture.

Post-medieval

3.10 The Post-medieval period witnessed continued efforts to reclaim the fen and the area developed into an agricultural landscape. The hamlet of Saracens Head also developed in tandem with Holbeach Clough into the settlements we see today which still primarily serve the agricultural economy.

4. Aims and objectives of the project

4.1 The aims of the project are the archaeological monitoring of all excavation and ground reduction activity during the groundworks phase of the project.

4.2 The objectives of the project are:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

4.3 For the purposes of this project, archaeologically significant remains and contexts are defined as remains and contexts relating to pre 19th century human use of the area.

5. Methodology

5.1 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. Upon completion of the fieldwork, the online OASIS form will be completed. Once any reports have become public documents following their incorporation into the HER, they will be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service website.

5.2 The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the groundworks phase of development and will cover all ground reduction, foundation excavation and service excavation within the development site.

5.3 All work will be carried out according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs,* 2014).

5.4 A risk assessment will be prepared for the site and all work will be undertaken following statutory health and safety requirements and legislation in operation at the time of the fieldwork.

5.5 Stripped areas and trench sections will be continually observed to identify any archaeological features and/or deposits which may be exposed. Where significant features are encountered then a wider investigation may be necessary.

5.6 Section drawings at a scale of 1:10 will be made of any archaeological features identified in the course of the groundworks, including representative sections of trenches at appropriate intervals. These will be related to a site plan drawing at an appropriate scale which may also record archaeological features and/or deposits identified. Any significant archaeological features in plan will also be recorded at a scale of 1:20.

5.7 Written descriptions detailing the nature of archaeological features and/or deposits encountered will be compiled on pro-forma context record sheets.

5.8 Archaeological features will be surveyed via RTK corrected GNSS survey.

5.9 Where practicable, the contractor will scan the spoil from the developer's groundworks for objects relating to human exploitation of the area and will record their existence or will recover them.

5.10 Any and all artefacts found during the monitoring and thought to come under the provisions of the *Treasure Act* (1996), will be removed from the site to a secure location, and will be promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office and the Finds Liaison Officer.

5.11 Throughout the monitoring a digital photographic record will be compiled. This will comprise an overview of the site prior to work starting, and during, as well as after completion of the work, and will include any excavated features, sections and other relevant details that aid interpretation.

5.12 Should human remains be encountered, they will be left in situ, and will only be excavated if absolutely necessary. Proper respect will be accorded to these remains, which will be cleaned to allow positive identification. Should removal be required, the appropriate Ministry of Justice Licence will be obtained prior to the removal of the remains. In addition, any remains will be reported to the local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate. Any excavation of human remains will require an addendum to the WSI.

5.13 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled according to the individual context from which they were recovered for later washing and further analysis. All relevant finds will be ordered into an archive with appropriate conservation and analysis e.g. X radiography for appropriate items. Most modern material will not be retained, although notes will be made of the appropriate context. An appropriate sample of materials such as ceramic building materials will be made. Appropriate provision will be made for the application of scientific dating techniques such as radiocarbon, dendrochronology, archaeomagnetic, OSL and thermoluminescence. The advice of the Historic England Regional Scientific Advisor will be sought in advance of the application of these techniques.

5.14 Environmental sampling will be undertaken (where appropriate) of the fills of relevant archaeological features and/or significant archaeological deposits as well as to allow the characterisation of soil profiles, plant remains, molluscs, faunal remains and pollen sequences. Where deposits are dry, bulk samples for the recovery of charred plant remains, small bones and finds, will be taken from sealed and datable features such as pits, ditches, hearths and floors. Each context will normally be sampled. The size of the sample is expected to be in the range of 40-60 litres per context or 100% of smaller contexts. Samples will not be taken from the intersection

of features. Where deposits are wet, waterlogged or peaty, monoliths will be taken along cleaned vertical surfaces for the retrieval of pollen, diatoms, ostracods and foraminifera. For wet, waterlogged or peaty deposits, bulk samples of 20 litres will be taken from visible layers or spits for the retrieval of plant macro-remains and insects. Environmental samples from dry deposits will normally be processed by flotation following the excavation fieldwork and the residues will be sorted to retrieve small bones, small finds and charcoal that have not floated. The samples will be extracted and recorded in accordance with Environmental Archaeology (Historic England) and in consultation with the appointed specialist and Historic England).

6. Post-fieldwork methodology

6.1 On the completion of the fieldwork, all of the written, drawn and photographic records produced during the project will be checked, ordered, labelled (where appropriate) and catalogued to compile a distinctive site archive. A stratagraphical matrix of the archaeological features and/or deposits present on the site will be compiled.

6.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked and packaged according to the individual context from which they were recovered. They will also be ordered into (and form part of) the site archive. An assessment of significant finds will be made in light of general site information. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and/or conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at The Collection, Lincoln, and in consultation with the relevant curator.

6.3 Provision will be made for the post-excavation processing and analysis of environmental samples taken (if any) during the course of the on-site fieldwork.

6.4 The site archive will be examined to enable the determination of various phases of activity on the site (if appropriate).

6.5 Relevant finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

7. Monitoring arrangements

7.1 Provision will be made for the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team (on behalf of South Holland District Council, the Local Planning Authority) to monitor the works during the fieldwork stage and any other aspect of the archaeological project as required including the post-fieldwork analysis and report preparation stages of the project.

7.2 A minimum notice period of fourteen days will be given to the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team of the start date of works on the site.

7.3 All aspects of the archaeological programme will be undertaken in accordance with this project specification.

7.4 Any variation to the project programme in terms of works or recording on or off site will be fully discussed and agreed with the planning archaeologist.

7.5 Should the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment team require any additional investigation which is beyond the scope of this document, then the cost and duration of these supplementary works will be negotiated between the client and the contractor.

7.6 Arrangements will be made for the representative of the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team for access to the site to undertake monitoring visits, and such visits will be accounted for in the final report preparation.

7.7 The Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team shall be kept fully informed of any unexpected or unforeseen discoveries made during the course of the archaeological investigations.

8. Reporting Procedures

8.1 A report detailing the findings of the archaeological observation, investigation and recording exercise will be completed within three months after the finalisation of the fieldwork. Any delays will be related to the relevant authorities.

8.2 The report will consist of:

A title page, with project name and location, national grid reference, planning reference, site code, accession number, client name, author and date;

A contents page listing report sections, illustrations and appendices;

A non-technical summary of the results of the monitoring;

An introduction, site description and location;

Planning background to the project;

A section on the archaeological and historical background to the project;

A description of the methodology used in the project;

A section describing the results of the project;

A section on the discussion and results of the project including a consideration of the findings of the project within the local, regional and national context;

A consideration of the effectiveness of the project methodology and a confidence rating of the results;

Illustrations including plans and sections of all archaeological features;

Appendices comprising appropriate photographs of the site and of specific and significant archaeological features and representative sections, a list of contexts, any specialist reports on finds from the site and a photographic register.

9. Archive and Deposition

9.1 The documentation and records generated by the archaeological evaluation including all written records, drawings, photographic images and the project report will be sorted and ordered in the format acceptable to The Collection, Lincoln, and to the standards and requirements as laid out in their *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*.

9.2 The archive will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln.

9.3 A unique accession number will be obtained from The Collection for the site archive.

9.4 It is anticipated that the preparation of the project archive for deposition will take one working day.

9.5 It is anticipated that the project archive will be deposited with The Collection, Lincoln by September 2021.

10. Publication and dissemination

10.1 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the clients, the local curator (on behalf of the local planning authority), South Holland District Council and with the Lincolnshire Heritage Environment Record (including a digital copy in a .pdf format).

10.2 A note will be placed in 'Lincolnshire History and Archaeology' describing the results.

10.3 The deposition of the site archive will be in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook (LCC, 2017).

10.4 Should the results of the archaeological investigation merit it, a note will also be placed in appropriate national journals e.g. *Medieval Archaeology.*

11. Other factors (including contingency)

11.1 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

11.2 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation, additional financial resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.

11.3 Any additional financial contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team and the client.

12. Variations to the proposed scheme

12.1 Variations to the proposed scheme will only be made following written confirmation with the archaeological curator.

13. Resources

13.1 Post-excavation analysis will be undertaken by James Roberts and where available specialist analysis from:-

Paul Blinkhorn	Medieval and Post-medieval Ceramics
Andrew Peachy	Prehistoric and Roman ceramics
Dr lynne Bevan	Flint implements
Dr Mile Allen	Environmental
Laura Keal	Osteoarchaeology

13.2 Small finds requiring conservation will be conserved by the City and County Museum Laboratory, Lincoln.

13.3 Recognised specialists will be sought in the event that other data is retrieved in the course of the monitoring.

14. Copyright

14.1 Copyright will remain that of the author. Licence will be given to the client to present any reports, copyright of the author, to the planning authority in good faith of satisfactory settlement of account.

15. Ownership

15.1 It will be asked of the client, at the outset, that the ownership of any portable objects discovered in the course of the monitoring be donated along with the archive.

16. Insurance

16.1 Public indemnity of £2,000,000 with Towergate Insurance.

16.2 Groundworks Archaeology will not be liable to indemnify the applicant/owner/developer against any compensation or damages for or with respect to:

damage to crops / plants being on the Area or Areas of Work (save in so far as possession has not been given to the Archaeological Contractor)

the use or occupation of land (which has been provided by the owner/applicant) by the project or for the purposes of completing the project or interference whether temporary or permanent with any right of way light air or other easement or quasi easement which are the unavoidable result of the project in accordance with the Agreement

any other damage which is the unavoidable result of the project in accordance with the Agreement.

damage to buried services or utilities being on the Area or Areas of Work.

injuries or damage to persons or property resulting from any act or neglect or breach of statutory duty done or committed by the applicant or his agents, servants or their contractors (not being employed by Groundworks Archaeology) or in respect of any claims, demands proceedings, damages, costs, charges and expenses in respect thereof or in relation thereto.

17. General

17.1 The requirements of the WSI will be met in full where reasonably practicable. The scope of fieldwork detailed in the main part of the WSI is aimed at meeting the objectives of the project in a cost-effective manner.

17.2 Any significant variations to the proposed methodology will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological curator in advance of implementation.

17.3 Groundworks Archaeology attempts to foresee all possible site-specific problems and make allowances for these. However, there may on occasions be unusual circumstances which have not been included in the programme and costing, which will entail additional costs for the Planning Applicant/Developer. These can include: unavoidable delays due to bad weather, vandalism etc; trenches requiring shoring or stepping, ground contamination, unknown services, poor ground conditions, extensions to specified trenches or feature excavation sample sizes requested by the AAA, complex structures or objects, including those in waterlogged conditions, requiring specialist removal.

Bibliography

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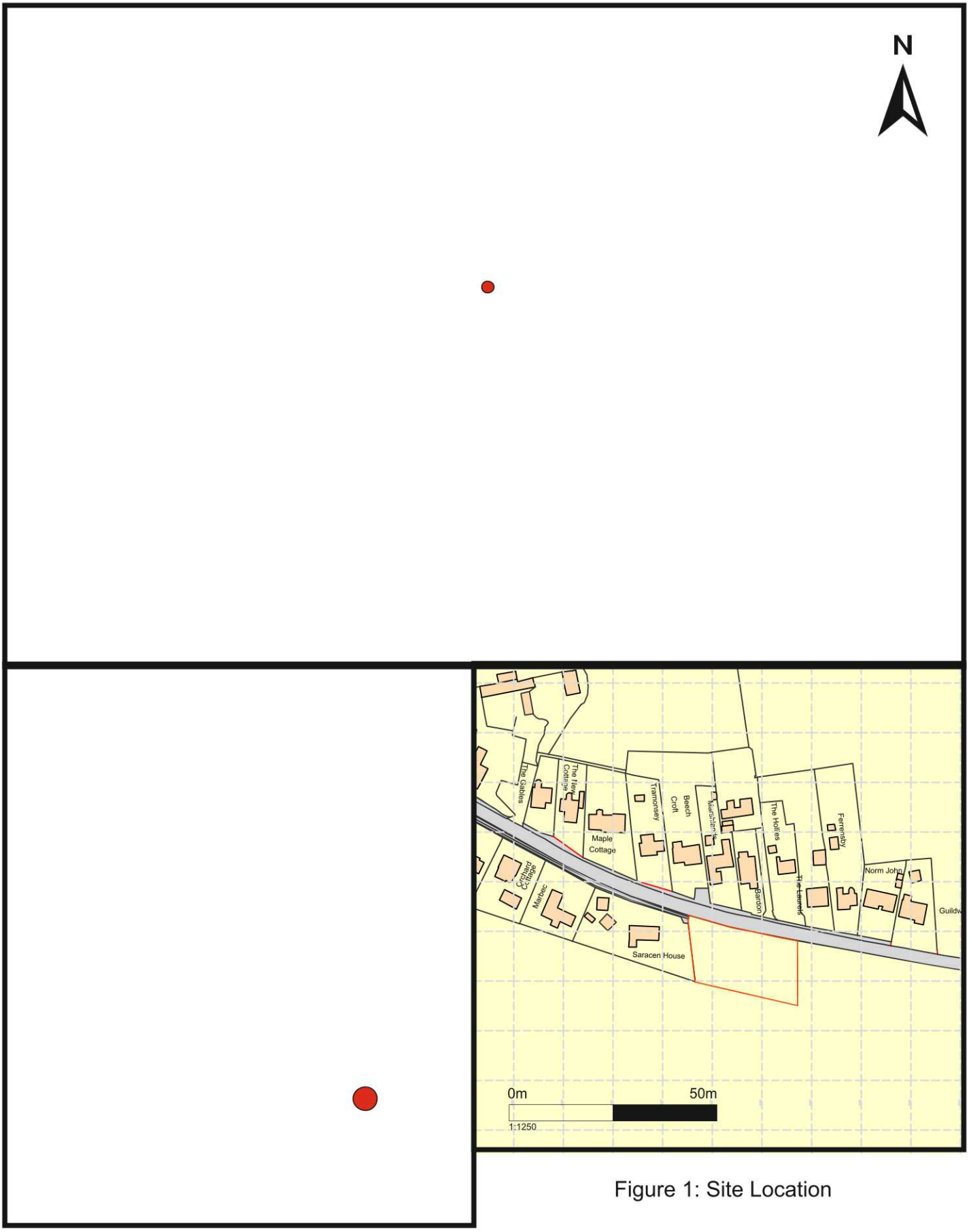


Figure 1: Site Location



Project.
Saracens Head,
Spalding
Residential Development

Drawing:
Site Block Plan

Issue:
PLANNING

Scale:
As shown at A3

Date:
11/2020

Drawing Number:
SH-010

Revision:
A

Jones Ltd

Figure 2: Proposed development plan