Witham Archaeology

A Report to Husband and Carpenter acting on behalf of Shaw Associates

October 2014

38 – 40 HIGH STREET, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording and Trial Trench Evaluation

G Trimble

WA Report No.: 68 ♦ Event No.: ECB4275 ♦ OASIS ID: withamar1 - 193504

38-40 HIGH STREET, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Event Number: ECB4275
OASIS ID.:withamar1 - 193504
Planning Application No.: F/YR14/0412/F
NGR: TF 4169 9655

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation and Monitoring and Recording of Test Pits

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38-40 HIGH STREET, MARCH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

A programme of monitoring and recording followed by trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Witham Archaeology on the site of a proposed small-scale residential development at 38 – 40 High Street, March. The project was commissioned by Husband and Carter in response to a condition of planning permission imposed by Fenland District Council. The programme of monitoring and recording was carried out on 17th September, during ground investigations inside and adjacent to the Grade II listed building at No. 38. Trial trenching on land to the east was completed over the period 2nd to 7th October 2014.

The site is located with the historic core of March, on the east side of High Street. Previous trial trenching, on land to the northeast of the site and east of 36 High Street, had revealed undated features interpreted as plough scars, overlain by layers which were in turn post-dated by a 16th to mid 17th century ditch and a pit containing a cow skeleton associated with 17th to 18th century finds.

No 38 High Street is a Grade II listed building dating from the mid 19th century, while No. 36 (also Grade II listed) immediately to the north dates from the 18th century. Yet further to the north, Ye Olde Griffin Hotel is 16th century with late 18th and 19th century additions.

Five test pits were excavated as part of the programme of structural investigations carried out in the interior of No. 38. Undated sequences of deposits were recorded in the two easternmost pits, while modern backfill or make-up material was encountered in two pits excavated inside the original structure fronting onto the High Street. Excavations within a fifth pit were discontinued when modern services were revealed at relatively shallow depth.

Two evaluation trenches, one measuring 13.65m x 1.60m and another measuring 8.60m x 1.60m were excavated. The findings of the work suggest that the area of the proposed development is occupied by an extinct watercourse or a low lying area of boggy ground. It remains uncertain as to whether the depression is of natural or human made origin. A ditch containing potery of 15th to 16th century date- was cut into the base of the watercourse. At a time shortly post dating the ditch, an episode of clay dumping and importation of soils appears to represent an attempt to raise the ground level above the boggy ground. The development area is likely to have remained as gardens to the rear of properties fronting the High Street until rear extensions to these properties were built sometime in the mid 20th century.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring and recording of test pits and a programme of Trial Trench Evaluation undertaken by Witham Archaeology on the proposed site of a new housing development on land to the rear of 38-40 High Street, March. The project - commissioned by Mr Stephen Carpenter of Husband & Carpenter on behalf of Mr S. Hussein of Shaw Associates was carried out in response to a planning condition imposed by Fenland District Council. Fieldwork for the Trial Trench Evaluation was undertaken during the period 1st to 3rd, 7th and 9th October 2014 and the monitoring and recording of the test pits on the 17th September 2014..

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (FIGS. 1&2)

The town of March is located 23km east of Peterborough and 13km southwest of Wisbech in the administrative district of Fenland, Cambridgeshire. The site is located within the historic core of the town, on the east side of High Street approximately 150m south of the River Nene at NGR 541690 296550. The development land lies to the rear and east of buildings forming Nos 38-40 High Street. The site is bordered to the south by a footpath which the links the High Street with a housing estate to the east of the development site. Bordering the north side of the site is a car park associated with office premises which form No 36 High Street.

The geology of the area comprises mudstone of the Ampthill Clay Formation overlain by drift deposits of sand and gravel of The March Gravel Member. (British Geological Survey, 1:50 000, Sheet 155). The site is generally level at around 4m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

March is situated on a fen island, shared with Wimblington and Doddington (Hall 1987, 38).

Mesolithic (c. 10,000 – 4,000 BC) and Neolithic (c. 4,000 – 2,200 BC)
For several millennia following the end of the last glacial episode in *c*. 8000BC, sea level was considerably lower than at present and most of the Fenland Basin was a dry-land environment covered by deciduous forests. Sea levels began to rise during the later part of the Mesolithic period and peat started to form in the deep channels of the drainage system as a result of partial ponding and backing up. By the early Neolithic period, in the 4th millennium BC, the surface of the Fenland Basin had been raised considerably by peat development and the rivers had become sluggish. During the Neolithic, salt water inundated most of the Fenland Basin, leaving areas of high ground such as March as islands above the surface. It has been suggested that the fens lay within a lagoon created by a sand bar on the seaward side.

Two sites producing Mesolithic and Neolithic flint have been recorded at the fen edge on the west side of the March island. First identified in the 1920s, the sites are located on sandy gravels near Gaul Road, approximately 900m west of the current site. The sites lie to either side of a roddon (a former saltwater creek, now silted up) backing into a narrow waist that almost divides the March island in two (Hall 1987, 39). Recent fieldwork (Peachey 2009 and Mellor 2011) has confirmed the extents of late Mesolithic to earlier Neolithic activity. Middle Neolithic pottery was recovered, and a range of features were recorded, including post-holes, pits and a hearth indicative of occupation on the site.

Bronze Age (c. 2,600 – 700 BC)
There was a decline in marine flooding in the early third millennium BC accompanied by renewed peat formation around the fen edge and into the wash. A second phase of marine inundation commenced in the Bronze Age period, represented by the deposition of grey silty clays (known as the Upper Barroway Drove Beds), which built up the fen surface to an elevation around 1.5m above Ordnance Datum. A Middle to Late Bronze Age date (possibly in the few centuries around 1,000 BC) has been postulated for the second phase of marine flooding.

Three concentrations of Bronze Age material were identified on the March island by the Fenland Project, at Westry and Cherry Holt on the western edge and at Flaggrass to the north. Within the built up area, a Bronze Age pottery vessel and other sherds were found in *c*. 1860, just north of the railway station.

Iron Age (c. 800 BC – 43 AD
Freshwater flooding once again predominated during the Iron Age, and deposits of peat formed over the greater part of the Cambridgeshire Fens. On the fen-edge peat levels rose to an elevation of around 3.0m above Ordnance Datum, which is reflected in the distribution of Iron Age occupation sites at levels of 3.0m or above. A third phase of marine inundation occurred during the Iron Age, resulting in the deposition of silts (known as the Terrington Beds) around the seaward side of the Fen Basin, from Boston to Wisbech and King's Lynn. The surface of the silt lies at an elevation of around 3.0m above Ordnance Datum and now forms a ridge around the Wash. In the March area, marine influences were restricted to the area northeast of the island.

The Fenland Project identified two Early Iron Age sites on the March island, at Grandford on the northernmost tip of dry land, and at Flaggrass on the eastern side of the island. Settlement at Flaggrass continued into the Late Iron Age. Late Iron Age material was also recovered from a site located further to the west. A river located close to the Flaggrass sites may have provided a transport and communication link to Stonea island where extensive evidence Iron Age settlement has been identified (Hall 1987).

Excavations at Estover, northeast of the Assessment Area, identified a group of Bronze Age Beaker pottery from a pit, while an adjacent pit contained Bronze Age flints (James and Potter 1996).

Roman-British (c. 43 – 410)
Water levels fell during the Roman period and the raised areas of silt formed by the previous phase of marine inundation became habitable. The fen-edge around pre-Flandrian land surfaces including the March island lay at around the 2m contour; which is reflected by an absence of settlement sites at lower elevations.

The March island occupied an important position in the Roman transport and communication network, standing approximately at the half way point of a major route linking the East Midland and East Anglia. The route, crossing the fen between Peterborough and the March island, and then continuing across marine silts to Norfolk, might originally have involved the use of water transport, along straight-cut canals. Later in the Roman period, the canals appear to have failed because of marine flooding, leading to the formation of raised deposits of silt along their routes. Roads were subsequently laid along the tops of the 'banks', resulting in the feature now known as the 'Fen Causeway'.

The 'dry-land' section of the route crossing March island extends between major Roman settlements at Grandford on the west side and Flaggrass on the east, *c*. 2km north of the current site. The presence of Iron Age settlement at Flaggrass probably determined the route of the Roman canal and road, which might otherwise have proceeded in a straight line from Grandford to Norfolk. An extensive complex of cropmarks of Romano-British field systems north and east of Flaggrass is visible on aerial photographs. A number of Roman salt-making sites have been identified in the vicinity of Flaggrass, and recent fieldwork has revealed evidence of salt-making at Cedar Close (MCB15717; ECB1394), *c*. 900m northeast of the current site. Residues from salt-making were also located in a trial trench excavated at 14 Market Place (ECB3646), 100m north of the current site (Crawley 2011). The remains on the latter site were contained in deposits filling a probable palaeochannel. There was no associated pottery but an early Roman date was postulated on the basis of evidence from Cedar Close. Salterns were generally located close to the fen edge and near to salt-water creeks.

Roman pottery (MCB7203) has been found at the Army and Navy store *c*. 100m northwest of the current site, and at Middle Level Yard (MCB7209) 500m to northwest.

Saxon (c. 410 – 1066)
Peat levels rose in the Saxon period due to disruption to the natural drainage system arising from the accumulation of marine silts on the seaward side of the Wash. Artificial banks were erected as defences against both salt and freshwater flooding. It was probably during the late Saxon period that the course of the Nene was diverted across the centre of the March island as part of scheme to improve drainage of the silt fen. The river was diverted from its original course passing to the north of the March island, to follow the narrow 'waist' formed by deep indentations at Bageney on the east side of the island and Gaul Road/Peas Hill on the west. The river passes around 100m to the north of the current site.

Medieval

During the Medieval period, all of the March island formed a single parish centred on Doddington (Hall 1987, 46). Settlement in March would probably have been centred on the area around St Wendreda's church in the southern part of the town and a port or *hithe* was probably established at the river crossing, contributing to the rise in prominence of March relative to Doddington.

At 14 Market Place (see above) peat appears to have formed in the area in the 12th – 14th centuries. Here top height of the peat was recorded at around 2.25m aOD)

Post Medieval to Modern

By the 16th century, March was established as a minor port, and the town continued to expand throughout the post medieval period.

During the civil war, the town was the site of an important fieldwork, located *c*. 850m south of the current site. This is the March Sconce, which is believed to have erected during the period 1642-5, survives as a low, rectangular platform with triangular bastions extending from the two eastern corners and a surrounding ditch. The site is a Scheduled Monument (List Entry Number 1015200).

Post medieval remains were recorded during trial trenching to the northeast of the current site, on land to the east of No. 36 High Street (CHER Event No. ECB3826; MCB19684). The earliest features, cutting natural in the westernmost of two trenches, were a series of linear features interpreted as plough scores. The features were aligned north to south. They were sealed by a layer of mid brownish grey sandy silt, which was in turn sealed by dark greyish brown sandy silt 0.18m thick. Both deposits extended into the adjacent trench to the east. The deposits were cut in Trench 1 by a ditch aligned at right angles to the High Street, containing pottery dated as 16th to mid-17th century. The top of the feature was located at around 0.52m below existing ground level. Further to east was pit containing a cattle skeleton, together with late 17th to late 18th century pottery. There were no other features in Trench 2. A single fragment of abraded Early Roman pot was recovered from the trench. Trench 1, located nearest to the High Street, revealed Natural at around 0.8m below existing ground level (Phillips 2012). At 14 Market Place (see above) there appears to have been a phase of consolidation in the 16th to 17th century in the form of an orange clay dumped over peaty/organic to consolidate the waterlogged area.

Ye Olde Griffin Hotel (Grade II Listed; List Entry Number 1216063) to the north of the site is a 16th century building with late 18th and 19th century additions. The 16th century building is a single range plan to the High Street. The late 18th and 19th century wings added to form an H plan. Internally, the 16th century clasped side purlin roof with carpentered rafters of heavy, closely set scantling remains substantially intact.

At 36 High Street immediately north of the site (Grade II Listed, List Entry Number 1287721) is a house of *c.* 1790 with later additions to the rear. Built in Gault Brick with tumbled gable ends. Lloyds Bank at No 34. (Grade II Listed; List Entry Number 1287807) is a late 18th century or early 19th Century house in Gault brick. At the development frontage No 38 (Grade II Listed; List Entry Number 1216219) is itself a house of the mid 19th century in Gault Brick.

MCB14867 – St Peter's Church (MCB 14867) located approximately 70m to the south of the proposed development is of 19th century date.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project, as set out in a Witham Archaeology specification for evaluation by trial trenching of 28th April 2013 and a subsequent specification for a watching brief produced on 2nd May, were to:

- *provide information on the presence/absence, nature, date and quality of survival of archaeological deposits and remains which might be contained within the site, at the depth of proposed construction disturbance, and to assess the importance of such remains in terms of their local, regional and national context.*
- *assess the possible scale of development impact on any remains and provide information which might influence development design so that impact on any remains can be avoided or minimised.*
- *provide information that will allow the local planning authority to reconcile development proposals with their policy for preserving archaeological remains and make an informed and reasoned decision on a planning application.*
- *provide site specific archaeological information which (if necessary) would allow for the design and integration of timing and funding of any further archaeological work (or other mitigating strategy) which might be required in advance of or during any subsequent development programme.*

- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum and from which the potential for further study and academic research could be assessed.*
- *provide information for accession to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER).*
- *Allow the preservation by record of any surviving archaeological deposits and artefacts exposed by the development groundwork within the constraints imposed by the contractor's working methods, programme and development design.*
- *Produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum together with a client report.*
- *Provide information for accession to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record.*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

Monitoring and Recording

Monitoring and recording was carried out on a continuous basis over a single day. All test pits were excavated with a small tracked excavator using a 500mm wide bucket.

Trial Trenching

The proposed development site was assessed through the excavation of two evaluation trenches (Trenches 1&2, Fig. 3). The trenches were located as close to the footprint areas of the proposed houses as reasonably possible. A 0.20m thick concrete slab which formed the floor surface of the now demolished buildings occupied the entire area of both building footprints. Removal of the concrete by a hydraulic excavator fitted with a breaker was considered to constitute a threat to the standing brick wall which forms the northern property boundary of the development area. The perceived threat was due to the vibration which would have been caused by the hydraulic breaker. Therefore the trenches were placed alongside the concrete pad. Trench 1 partly overlies the footprint of the eastern building footprint. The position of the trenches (Fig. 3) was agreed with the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council in advance of fieldwork.

Topsoil and other recent deposits were removed by means of a mechanical excavator fitted with a *c*. 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The base of the resulting trench was cleaned by hand and photographed. Features of potential archaeological origin were then investigated by hand excavation to determine character, extent and date.

A general plan of the trench was produced at scale 1:20 and sections were drawn at scale 1:10. The photographic record, including general views of the area and views of specific features as excavated, was compiled in 35mm monochrome and digital colour. Context descriptions were made on *pro forma* recording sheets. The position of the trenches was located by reference to fixed reference points on the neighbouring existing house and boundaries.

6.0 RESULTS (see Figs. 4 - 7, Plates 4-15)

Monitoring and Recording of Test Pits (Fig 8)

Test Pit 1
Test Pit 1 was located was located within the modern extension at the rear of No. 38, at the northeast corner of the 'Chilli Hut' takeaway. Modern service pipes were exposed at shallow depth in the pit, causing excavations to be discontinued at a maximum depth of around 0.70m below existing floor level. The pit was not recorded in detail, as most of excavated material was clearly of relatively recent origin.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was located on the north side of the building, in a room formerly containing toilets for the club. The earliest deposit identified was a layer of mortar and/or crushed stone (005) at around 1.60m below existing ground level. Owing to safety considerations, the deposit could not be examined in detail.

Layer (005) was sealed by a sequence of silty sands (004), (003) and (002), all undated. Above (002), a layer of crushed mortar and sand and mortar (001) appeared to form a bedding layer for the existing tile floor.

The wall foundation (006), including a steeped course at the base, extended to a depth of around 1.35m below existing floor level.

Test Pit 3
Test Pit 3, excavated to a depth of around 1m, was located against the west wall of No.38. Mixed deposits identical to (013) in Test Pit 4 extended the full depth of the pit and beyond the limits of excavation to the south, east and north. The deposit was obviously late and probably forms part of makeup material extending throughout much of the west side of the building beneath existing floor level. Earlier deposits survived in the east facing elevation/section (Fig. 8, Section 2).

Mid greyish brown silt (012) was revealed at the base of the pit. It was overlain in Section 2 by a fragment of limestone masonry 0.32m high (010), which, with an overlying stone (009), possibly represented the remains of an earlier structure, or part of the foundations of the existing building. The stone was abutted by a sandy silt deposit (011).

A course of bricks set on edge and abutting the large fragment of limestone (009) clearly formed part of the foundations of the existing building. The edge-set course was overlain by foundations comprising four courses of brick (008) 0.25m high. A recess above (008) was filled with modern rubble (007) equating to (013) in Pit 3.

Test Pit 4
Test Pit 4 was located against the north wall of No. 38, close to the northwest corner of the building. Light to mid yellowish brown sandy clay (015) was located across the base of the trench. It was overlain by a large fragment of stone (017), situated beneath the stepped out brick foundations of the wall (016). Modern rubble (013), incorporating a band of charcoal (014) extended throughout the area beneath the floor. Above (013) bricks had been placed below a north-south timber supporting the floor.

Test Pit 5
Test Pit 5 was located within a corridor forming part of modern extensions on the east side of the building, on the south (external) side of an earlier extension.

The earliest deposit was a mid greyish brown sandy clay (020). It was sealed by brownish grey sand and silt (019) and a layer of gravel mixed with irregular limestone fragments (018) extending to beneath the existing concrete surface.

The wall foundation (021) was around 0.90m high in total, comprising a stepped out course at the base, a central, angled section (possibly several small steps) and an upper section flush with the face of the wall.

Trial Trenching

Trench 1 (Figs. 4 & 6, Plates 4 & 5)

Trench 1 was located within the western part of the proposed area of developent. It measured 13.65m in length and 1.6m in width and was orientated SW-to-NE. The trench was excavated to a depth averaging around 1.35m at which level archaeological deposits were encountered. Deposits below the depth of the excavated surface were further explored by the excavation of a sondage located in the east part of the trench (Fig. 4)

At the base of the sondage at a level around 1.70m below existing ground level was a natural geological deposit of light yellowish brown silty clay (114) (Fig. 6 Section 4). It contained occasional angular stones

which measured up to 0.30m in diameter. Immediately above the natural clay (114) was a layer of mid bluish grey clayey silt (113) which measured 0.17m in thickness. Clay layer (113) was sealed by a dark grey, organic rich clayey silt (112) which measured 0.13m thickness. It contained frequent small decayed wood lumps. Layers (112) and (113) appear to be water lain deposits which have probably accumulated within a slow running or brackish channel. The uppermost deposit (113) had a 'peaty' texture and was o rich in organic material suggesting that it was formed in stagnant or boggy ground.

A sequence of interleaved, redeposited clayey layers (109), (110) and (111) (Fig. 6 Sections 2&4). sealed (113) and probably represent an episode of reclamation and an attempt to raise the ground level above the boggy ground. The earliest of the dumped layers is represented by (111) which consisted of a stiff light yellowish brown clay which contained occasional limestone fragments up to 0.20m in diameter. This was sealed by (110) which comprised a malleable but crumbly light reddish brown sandy clay which measured 0.10m in maximum depth. The uppermost of the dumped deposits consisted of a soft mid brownish clayey silt (109). Two fragments of brick were with a date range between the 14th and 16th centuries were recovered from the layer in addition to three sherds of 12th-14th century pottery. Taken together the dumped deposits measured around 0.30m in thickness and were present throughout the area of the trench.

Following the episode of reclamation a soil layer represented by deposit (108) was formed. It consisted of moderately compacted mid to dark grey silty sand which contained occasional angular fragments of limestone measuring up to 0.20m in diameter. The deposit varied in depth between a minimum of 0.10m and a maximum of 0.30m. Deposit (107) which seals (108) represents a further episode of ground make up and is formed of a widespread dump of mixed light reddish brown and mid grey sandy silt. It contained frequent lenses of sand and gravel and measured an average of 0.15m in depth. Sealing (107) was a layer of mid to dark brownish grey sandy silt (106) which represents a deposit of imported garden soil. It measured an average of 0.25m in thickness. A single sherd of pottery dated to between the 16th and 18th century was recovered from this deposit.

Above the garden soil (106) was a thick make up layer (105) composed of dumped, mixed and striated lenses of interleaved sand and gravel and dark grey sandy silts. The deposit included frequent brick, tile and mortar fragments which were mainly restricted to the uppermost parts of the layer. It measured 0.25m in average thickness. The make up material (105) was truncated by a deep machine excavated trench [115] which contained a ceramic drain pipe (117). The drain was orientated east-to-west and recorded in plan (Fig. 4).

Sealing dumped make up (105) was a levelling deposit (104) for tarmac layer (103). The levelling material consisted of loose orange and light brown coarse sand and gravel of a uniform thickness of 0.12m. This was sealed by tarmac layer (103) which was 30mm thick.

Above the tarmac (103) was layer of hardcore (102) for the concrete pad (101). The hardcore deposit was comprised of a roughly equal mixture of loose mid brown silty sand and brick and mortar fragments. It measured 0.10m in thickness. The concrete pad (101) measured 0.17m in thickness and served as the floor surface for the now demolished structures which once stood immediately north of the Evaluation Trench.

Located at the east end of the Trench was the rectangular machine excavated cut for a geotechnical test pit [118]. It only partially fell within the limits of the Evaluation trench and measured 1.30m in length and 0.50m in width.

Trench 2 (Figs. 5 & 7, Plates 6-8)

Trench 2 was located to the east of the development area and orientated north-to-south. It measured 8.70m in length and 1.6m in width. The trench was excavated to a depth averaging 1.25m. Two archaeological features including Ditch [211] and a small pit [218] were recorded. A section excavated through the ditch fills was continued westward across the line of the evaluation trench in order to explore a sequence of underlying waterlain silts (Fig. 7, Section 3).

Geological deposits of light yellowish brown silty clay which contained occasional angular stones measuring up to 0.30m in diameter (200) were encountered at around 1.71m below existing ground level. This deposit is the same as deposit (114) recorded in Trench 1but was recorded at slightly lower level

(1.98m OD) which represents a difference of 0.23m. Waterlain deposits above the clay (200) were also mirrored in Trench 1. Layer (201) was formed of a mid bluish grey clayey silt which measured 0.15m in thickness and is the same layer as (113) recorded in Trench 1. A mid reddish brown, organic rich clayey silt (202) which sealed (201) was very similar in texture to layer (112) in Trench 1 but differed slightly in colour. It measured 0.07m in depth. The top of layer (201) was located c. 0.30m below the level of the top of (112) in Trench 1. Situated immediately above (202) was a 0.08m thick layer of light grey sandy clay (203).

Layer (203) was truncated by Ditch [211]. The ditch was oriented on a north-to-south alignment along the length of the Evaluation Trench. Only the west side of the ditch fell within the confines of the evaluation trench. The area of the ditch exposed within the area of excavation measured 1.37m in width and continued along the entire length of the trench (8.70m). Due to health and safety restrictions owing to the depth of the trench (1.25m), the ditch was not excavated to its full depth. However, it was excavated to a depth of 0.60m (1.85m below the present ground surface). The upper reaches of the cut displayed a gradually sloped side which became steeper with depth. The earliest recorded fill was deposit (212) which was slumped against the side of the cut. It consisted of mid greyish green gravelly sand and varied in width between 0.25m in width at the lower portion and 0.10m to the top of the cut. Four sherds of pottery with a date range between the 11th and 16th century were recovered from the fill. Two fragments of brick, also from (212), were datable to between the 14th and 16th centuries. Fill deposit (212) was sealed by a mid to dark reddish brown, organic rich clayey silt (213) which was very similar in characteristics to deposit (201). Deposit (213) had a maximum width of 0.22m where measured at the base of the section. It narrowed to the top where a width of 0.08m was recorded. Above fill deposit (213) was a thin deposit of mid bluish grey clay (214) which measured an average of just 0.04m in thickness. Fill deposit (215) was located immediately above (214). It measured 0.67m in width, in 0.14m depth and consisted of mid to dark reddish brown organic rich clayey silt which was identical in character to the earlier fill deposit (213).

The form and texture of the fill deposits, particularly the 'peaty' fills (213) and (215) suggest that the ditch contained standing or very slow moving water. However, fill deposits (216) and (217) which overlie (215) appear to represent an episode of deliberate infilling of the ditch. Fill deposit (216) consisted of a thick, dumped deposit of mid yellow/orange stiff clay which contained a frequent quantity of gravel and small stones. It measured 0.89m in width and had a depth of 0.32m. Above (216) was fill deposit (217) which was comprised of ash rich, grey silty sand with a recorded width of 0.26m and a depth of 0.05m. Four sherds of pottery and six fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) with a date range between the 15th and 18th centuries were recovered from fill deposit (217). The central section of a Rhenish lava millstone or quern, adapted for reuse for another purpose was also found.

The uppermost fill deposit was (205) recorded in Section 1 (Fig. 7). This layer was present in plan throughout the central and northern areas of the trench (Fig. 5) but was machined away to the southern extent. The deposit consisted of mixed mid orange and greyish blue clay which contained frequent quantities of flint and stones up to 0.05m in diameter. It measured 0.22m in thickness. The deposit also included patches of mid to dark grey silty sand. Fill deposit (205) represents a final infilling of the ditch with imported clay and soil.

A possible small pit [218] recorded in section (Section 1, Fig. 7) truncated the dumped clay (205). It remains possible that the 'pit' merely represents an isolated larger dump of sandy silt within dumped fill deposit (205). The 'cut' measured 0.65m in width, 0.21m in depth and displayed a bowl shaped, concave profile. It was filled by a single deposit of mid grey sandy silt (219). Two sherds of pottery and four pieces of ceramic building material with a date range between the 15th and 18th centuries were recovered from the fill.

Overlying the possible Pit [218] was a considerable depth of garden soil (206). It measured 0.60m in maximum depth and was present throughout the area of the trench. It consisted of mid to dark grey sandy silt which contained a frequent quantity of gravel.

Sealing the garden soil (206) was make up layer (207) which was comprised of interleaved lenses of gravelly dark grey sand and clean orange and yellow gravel. It measured 0.42m in thickness. Located immediately above the make up deposit (207) was tarmac (208) which measured 0.04m in thickness. Above the tarmac was a layer of hardcore (209) comprised of a mixture of gravel, dark grey silty sand

and brick and tile fragments. The hardcore was sealed by concrete pad (210) which measured 0.18m in thickness.

7.0 THE FINDS

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001). The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005), which can also be used to record material from surrounding counties. A total of 29 sherds from 10 vessels, weighing 1257 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below. The pottery ranges in date from the Early Medieval to the Post Medieval period.

Condition

The pottery is in a fairly fresh condition, with some large pieces recorded. There are no abraded sherds. Fragments from two vessels are sooted and one also has a heat affected internal surface with an internal fuel ash slag deposit. The piece with the slagging, a fragment of Early Medieval Handmade ware from dump deposit (109), may have been used as a crucible or exposed to very high heat during an industrial process, either before or after deposition.

Results

Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Tr	Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Sub Fab	Form	Part	Description	Date	NoS	NoV	W(g)
1	106	MP	Midlands Purple ware		Jar	BS	Streaked fabric; as Ticknall	16th-18th	1	1	13
1	109	EMHM	Early Medieval Handmade ware		Jar	BS	Sooted; Internal fuel ash slag deposit	12th-13th	1	1	16
1	109	ELY	Ely ware		Jar	Base; BS	Thumb pressed base; sooted exterior	L12th-M14th	2	1	113
2	212	THETT	Thetford Type ware		Jar or Bowl	BS		11th-M12th	1	1	18
2	212	BOU	Bourne 'D' ware	Smooth+ Ca	Large Jar or Cistern	BSS	Joining sherds; fresh break	15th-16th	3	1	255
2	217	BOU	Bourne 'D' ware		?	BS		15th-M17th	1	1	11
2	217	STMO	Staffs' Mottled ware		Small closed	BS		L17th-18th	1	1	10
2	217	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware		Jug or Jar	Base; BS		16th-M17th	2	1	92
2	217	PGE	Pale Glazed E'Ware		Closed	Base	Fine Cu glaze	17th	1	1	230
2	219	BOU	Bourne 'D' ware		Large Jar or Cistern	BSS		15th-16th	16	1	499
								Total	**29**	**10**	**1257**

Provenance

Pottery was recovered from garden soil (106) and dump layer (109) in Trench 1. From within Trench 2, fills (212) and (217) in ditch [211] and (219) in pit [218] also gave material.

Range

There is a range of Medieval and Post Medieval pottery types. Fresh pieces from a jar in Ely ware came from dump layer [109].

Ditch [211] produced two vessels in Bourne 'D' ware (BOU) as well as piece in Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE), Pale Glazed Earthenware (PGE) and Staffordshire mottled ware (STMO). These are all common types of the 16th and 17th centuries. The STMO is the latest ceramic type here, with production of this fabric not beginning until around 1670. Not all of Post Medieval material is contemporary though, with the BOU potters having ceased production of this type well before 1650. A smashed vessel from pit [218] is probably of 15th to 16th century date.

Potential

There is limited potential for further work. The pottery should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

Summary

A dump layer (109) within Trench 1 produced Medieval pottery, including one Early Medieval piece with evidence of industrial activity, perhaps metal working. Ditch [211] and pit [218] gave domestic ceramics likely to be of 16-17th century date.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group (2002). A total of 14 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 1407 grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Fragments were counted and weighed within each context. The ceramic building material was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the ceramic building material is included in Table 2 below.

Condition

The condition of the ceramic building material is mixed but generally fairly fragmentary. Two pieces are classed as abraded. A brick from (109) has a sooted base and may have been used, or reused in a kiln, oven or furnace. Pieces from (217) in ditch [211] have a metallic residue adhered, perhaps from burial with an iron object in the ground or from contact with industrial or metal working waste; one of these pieces is also heat affected.

Results

Table 2, Ceramic Building Material Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Fabric	Description	Date	NoF	W(g)
109	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; fine sandy; mica	Crudely formed; stone impression in base; sooted base; early handmade; fairly soft	14th-16th	2	256
212	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; fine sandy; mica	Salt surface; struck upper; 600mm thick/deep; highly fired	15th-18th	2	579
217	CBM	Ceramic Building Material	Oxidised; calcareous	Abraded		2	61
217	PNR	Peg, Nib or Ridge tile	Gault	Flat roofer; Post Med	16th-18th	2	82
217	CBM	Ceramic Building Material	Oxidised; fine sandy	Metallic residue over break		1	16
217	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; fine sandy	Heat affected base with metallic residue adhered; handmade		1	93
219	CBM	Ceramic Building Material	Oxidised; fine sandy; mica	Shapeless; surfaceless; abraded		1	77
219	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; fine sandy; Ca	Sooted; crude		1	28
219	BRK	Brick	Oxidised; fine sandy; Mica	Crudely shaped	15th-18th	1	62
219	PNR	Peg, Nib or Ridge tile	Oxidised; medium sandy; Ca	Highly fired;14mm thick; flat roofer	15th-18th	1	153
					Total	**14**	**1407**

Provenance

A single fragment was recovered from dump deposit (109) in Trench 1. Several pieces came from fills (217) in ditch [211] and (219) in pit [218], both of which were in Trench 2.

Range

There are seven fragments from a range of handmade bricks, all of which are formed in a fine sandy oxidised fabric. Most of these are crudely formed Post Medieval types, although it is not possible to be more specific on dating. Two pieces from (109) in Trench 1 are from a brick in a slightly different and softer fabric – this maybe an early type of later Medieval date. Pieces of Post Medieval flat roofing tile were also recovered from ditch [211] and pit [219].

Potential

There is no potential for further work. The ceramic building material should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

Summary

A total of 14 pieces of ceramic building material were recovered during the evaluation. The bulk of these items are of Post Medieval date, with the assemblage including brick and roofing tile. There is no material of Early Modern date.

FAUNAL REMAINS

By Paul Cope-Faulkner

Introduction

A total of 5 (111g) fragments of animal bone were recovered from stratified contexts.

Methodology

The faunal remains were laid out in context order and reference made to published catalogues (e.g. Schmid 1972; Hillson 2003). All the animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, element and side. Also fusion data, butchery marks, gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted when present. Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they were substantially complete and could accurately be identified. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as micro (mouse size), small (rabbit size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size).

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996), Grade 0 being the best preserved bone and Grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable.

Provenance

The bone was recovered from the fill (219) of pit (218).

Condition

The overall condition of the remains was good to moderate, averaging at grades 2-3 on the Lyman Criteria (1996).

Results

Table 3, Fragments Identified to Taxa

Cxt	Taxon	Element	Side	Number	W (g)	Comments
219	cattle	molar	-	2	7	
	large mammal	ribs	-	3	104	2 join

Summary

As a small assemblage, falling below the minimum threshold of *c*. 300 bones required for meaningful analysis, it requires little comment. The ribs are relatively large which may suggest they were from post-medieval improved livestock.

CLAY PIPE

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

Analysis of the clay pipes followed the guidance published by Davey (1981) and the material is detailed in the accompanying table.

Condition

The clay pipe is in good condition, though a little abraded.

Results

Table 4, Clay Pipes

Context no.	Bore diameter /64"					NoF	W(g)	Comments	Date
	8	7	6	5	4				
219				2		2	4	stems only	18th century

Provenance

The clay pipes were recovered from a pit fill (219). They are probably local products, perhaps made in March itself.

Range

Two stems were recovered, both of probable 18th century date.

Potential

Other than providing dating evidence the clay pipes are of limited potential and significance.

OTHER FINDS

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

A single item weighing 1873g was recovered.

Condition

The other find is in good condition, though the iron component is very corroded.

Results

Table 5, Other Materials

Cxt	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
217	stone, iron, lead	lava quern, cut down and reused, c. 0.18m diameter, c. 35mm thick	1	1873	post-medieval

Provenance

The other find was recovered from a ditch fill (217). It is made from lava from the Rhineland.

Range

The other find is made from a central section of a Rhenish lava millstone or quern, but reused for another purpose. It has quarter dress patterning, the furrows, which are very narrow incisions, and lands arranged in a repeating pattern of 8 harps. It is closely comparable to a millstone, as would be used for example in a wind- or water-mill, but the furrows are too small. It is hence more probably a hand quern, though copying a large millstone in its pattern.

Through the centre of the stone is an L-shaped iron spindle, set in lead. One end of this spindle projects slightly from the underside of the stone but is much more prominent and turns through a right-angle and crosses half the radius of the flat dressed face of the quern. This L-shape appears to be the original form and not due to later bending. Although the stone was probably cut down from a larger piece, parts of the circumference of the stone are worn. This, together with the form of the spindle, which would have prevented either face being used for grinding, suggests that the quern was re-used, with its edge functioning as the grinding surface, in the manner of a horse mill or cider quern, though operated by hand rather than in a horse-driven engine. It is probably post-medieval in date.

Potential

The other find is of moderate potential and provides an example of reused and adapted materials.

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table 6 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 6, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
106	16th-18th century	based on 1 pot
109	L12th-M14th century	
212	15th-16th century	
217	L17th-18th century	
219	18th century	

ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
TR	Trench
W (g)	Weight (grams)

8.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Both evaluation trenches fell within an area occupied by an extinct watercourse or an area of low lying waterlogged ground which was infilled in the early post-medieval period. Although dating evidence is sparse and relies on just three sherds of pottery and two pieces of brick, recovered from dumped clay deposit (109) in Trench 1, the episode of reclamation probably dates to around the 15th century. At about this time the channel/inlet was deliberately infilled and the ground subsequently raised to the level of the surrounding area.

The function of ditch [211] in Trench 2 which truncates the base of the channel may have served to drain the low lying and boggy area. Pottery and CBM recovered from the earliest recorded fill of the ditch suggests that it was open at a time around the 15th or 16th centuries. It may have served to drain the boggy ground in some way. An archaeological investigation 100m north of the current site (Crawley, 2011) also identified an extinct water channel still open in the medieval period. Activity in the form of a ditched feature and a pit dating to the 16th to 18th centuries was recorded during archaeological evaluation work on land to the rear of the adjacent property immediately to the north of the current site. Thus the accumulated evidence derived from the limited number of archaeological interventions within the immediate locality would suggest that this area of the town was dominated by a system of stream channels. The date of these channels is not known but if the example recorded at the site to the north was associated with salt making it must have been active during the Roman-British period. At this site and at the proposed development described here, the channels or areas of waterlogged were at least extant during the medieval period. Perhaps the channels are linked with a period of down cutting towards the areas of lower ground adjacent to the inlet which extended into the east side of the island at Bageney. Infilling of the channels appears to have been undertaken in the early post-medieval period followed by settlement of the area.

The monitoring and recording undertaken during the excavation of the test pits revealed only recent deposits predominantly associated with 19th or 20th century construction at the site.

9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Mr Stephen Carpenter of Husband & Carpenter and and Mr Andy Thomas of the Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council for their assistance in ensuring a successful outcome to the project.

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11.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 Project Information

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: F/YR14/0412/F

FIELD OFFICER: G Trimble

NGR: SP 476 978

CIVIL PARISH: March

HER EVENT NO.: ECB4275

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 1st – 3rd, 7th and 9th October 2014

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Trial Trench Evaluation

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Mr Stephen Carpenter of Husband & Carpenter on behalf of Mr S. Hussein of Shaw Associates

10.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, Unit 6, Sleaford Station Business Centre, Station Road, Sleaford, NG34 7RG

FINAL LOCATION: The Archaeology Store, Cambridgeshire County Council

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.:-

ACCESSION DATE:

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	19
Plans at Scale 1:50	2
Section Drawings at Scale 1:20	4
Colour Digital Photographs	20
Monochrome Photographs	20
Set of Site Notes	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.

COLOUR PLATES

Plate 1. View of site facing east.

Plate 2. View of site facing southwest.

Plate 3. View of site facing east.

Plate 4. Trench 1 facing west. Scales 2 x 1m.

Plate 5. Trench 1 detail showing location of drawn section (Fig.6) facing north. Scales 1 x 1m, 1x2m & 1x0.30m

Plate 6. Trench 2 facing northwest. Scales 2 x 1m.

Plate 7. Trench 2 detail showing location of drawn section (Fig. 7) facing west. Scales 1 x 2m & 1x0.30m

Plate 8. Trench 2. Section through Ditch [211] facing south. Scales 1 x1m & 1x0.30m

Plate 9: Facade of No. 38 High Street, looking southeast

Plate 10: Pit 1, looking west

Plate 11: Pit 2, Section 1, looking east; 1m scale

Plate 12: Pit 2, wall foundations, looking north; 1m scale

Plate 13: Pit 3, Section/Elevation 2, looking west; 1m scale

Plate 14: Pit 4, Section 3, looking north; 1m scale

Plate 15: Pit 5, Section 4, looking west; 1m scale

APPENDIX A
CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	*Trench*	*Interpretation*	*Description*
101	T1	Concrete Slab	0.18m in depth forming floor area of now demolished buildings.
102	T1	Hardcore	Loose mid brown silty sand (50%) and brick and mortar rubble (50%).
103	T1	Tarmac	0.04m depth
104	T1	Levelling layer for tarmac	Orange and light brown coarse sand and gravel. Depth 0.14m
105	T1	Levelling/make up layer	Interleaving sand and gravel lenseswith striations of black soil. Depth 0.25m
106	T1	Garden soil	Moderately compacted mid to dark brownish grey sandy silt. Depth 0.25m average
107	T1	Make up layer	Light reddish brown and mid grey mix of sand, gravel and sandy silt
108	T1	Garden soil	Moderately compacted mid to dark grey silty sand. Depth varies between minimum of 0.10m to maximum of 0.28m
109	T1	Dumped layer	Soft mid brownish grey clayey silt. Depth 0.11m.
110	T1	Dumped layer	Moderately compacted light reddish brown sandy clay. Depth 0.10m
111	T1	Dumped layer	Stiff light yellowish brown redeposited clay. Depth 0.10m
112	T1	Layer – naturally deposited	Firm dark grey/black organic rich clayey silt. Depth 0.12m.
113	T1	Layer – naturally deposited	Moderately compacted mid bluish grey clayey silt. Depth 0.17m
114	T1	Natural	Moderately compacted light yellowish brown silty clay.
115	T1	Modern cut for drain	
116	T1	Fill of drain cut [115]	
117	T1	Ceramic drain pipe	
118	T1	Cut for geotechnical test pit	
200	T2	Natural	Moderately compacted light yellowish brown silty clay.
201	T2	Layer – naturally deposited	Moderately compacted mid bluish grey clayey silt. Depth 0.14m
202	T2	Layer – naturally deposited	Firm mid to dark reddish brown organic rich clayey silt. Depth 0.08m.
203	T2	Layer – naturally deposited	Light grey mixture of silt sand and clay. Depth 0.08m
204	T2	Dumped layer	Mid grey sandy silt. Depth 0.22m
205	T2	Dumped layer	Firm mixed layer of mid orange clay with greyish blue clay. Depth 0.22m
206	T2	Garden soil	Mid to dark grey silty sand. 0.50m average depth
207	T2	Dumped levelling/make up layer	Interleaving leaving lenses of very gravelly dark grey sandy silt and clean mid orange and yellow gravel. Depth 0.40m.
208	T2	Tarmac	Tarmac layer measuring 0.04m in depth.
209	T2	Hardcore	Loose mid brown silty sand (50%) and brick and mortar rubble (50%).
210	T2	Concrete Slab	0.18m in depth forming floor area of now demolished buildings.

211	T2	Cut of ditch	Not full y exposed in Trench. Excavated to 0.60m depth and 0.85m width. Orientated north to south.
212	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Mid greyish green gravelly sand. Depth 0.25 max.
213	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Mid to dark reddish brown organic rich clayey silt. Depth 0.10m
214	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Mid bluish grey clay. 0.04m depth.
215	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Mid to dark reddish brown organic rich clayey silt. Depth 0.14m
216	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Mid yellow/orange stiff clay containing frequent gravel. Depth 0.32m
217	T2	Fill deposit in Ditch [211]	Firm ash rich grey silty sand. Depth 0.05m
218	T2	Cut of Pit	Small pit measuring 0.62m in width and 0.22m in depth
219	T2	Fill of Pit [218]	Loosely compacted dark grey sandy silt

APPENDIX A
OASIS DETAILS

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

Printable version

OASIS ID: withamar1-193504

Project details

Project name	38-40 High St, March, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation recorded the presence of an area of low lying boggy ground. Dumping of clay in the Late medieval/early post medieval periods may represent an episode of land reclamation. A ditch dating to the early post-medieval period may represent an attempt to drain the land. Infill of soils in the early post medieval period raised the ground surface.
Project dates	Start: 01-10-2014 End: 09-10-2014
Type of project	Field evaluation

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE FENLAND MARCH 38-40 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire
Study area	950.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TF 4169 9655 53.4463570172 0.133715436637 53 26 46 N 000 08 01 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 1.97m Max: 2.23m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Witham Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Dale Trimble
Project director/manager	Dale Trimble
Project supervisor	Gary Trimble
Type of	Developer

sponsor/funding body	
Name of sponsor/funding body	Shaw Associates

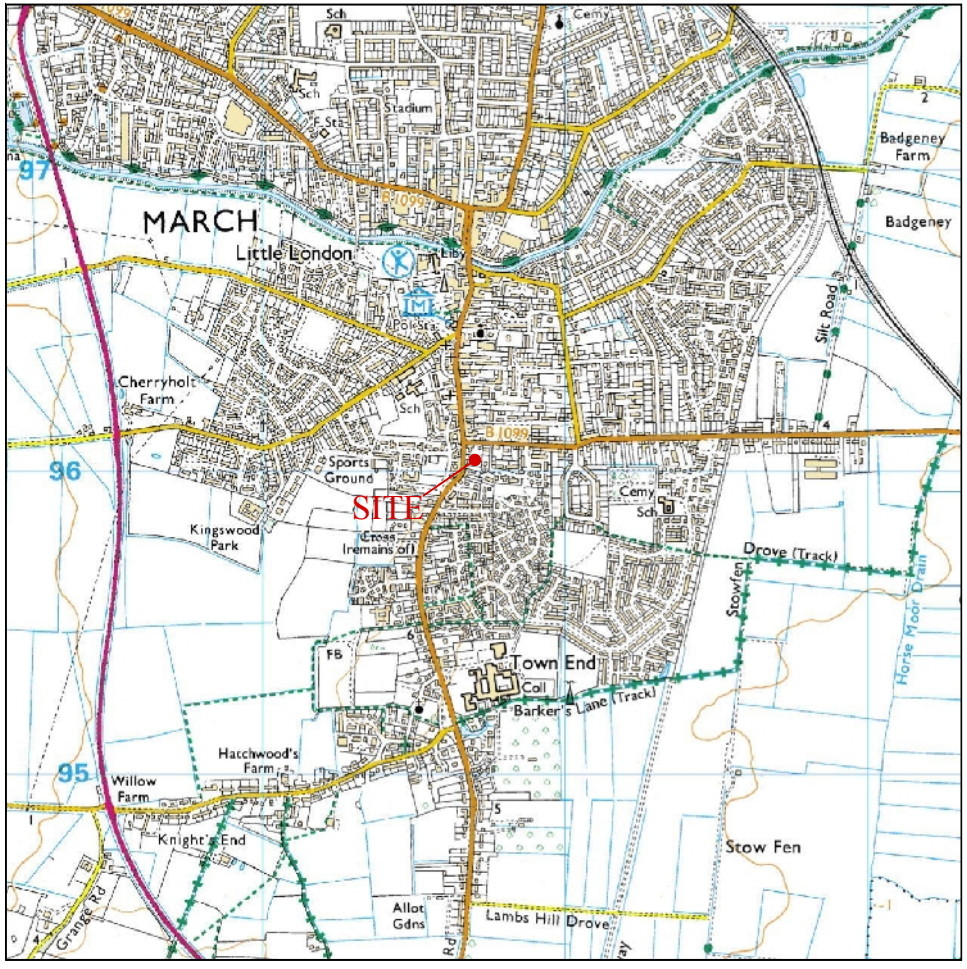
Project archives

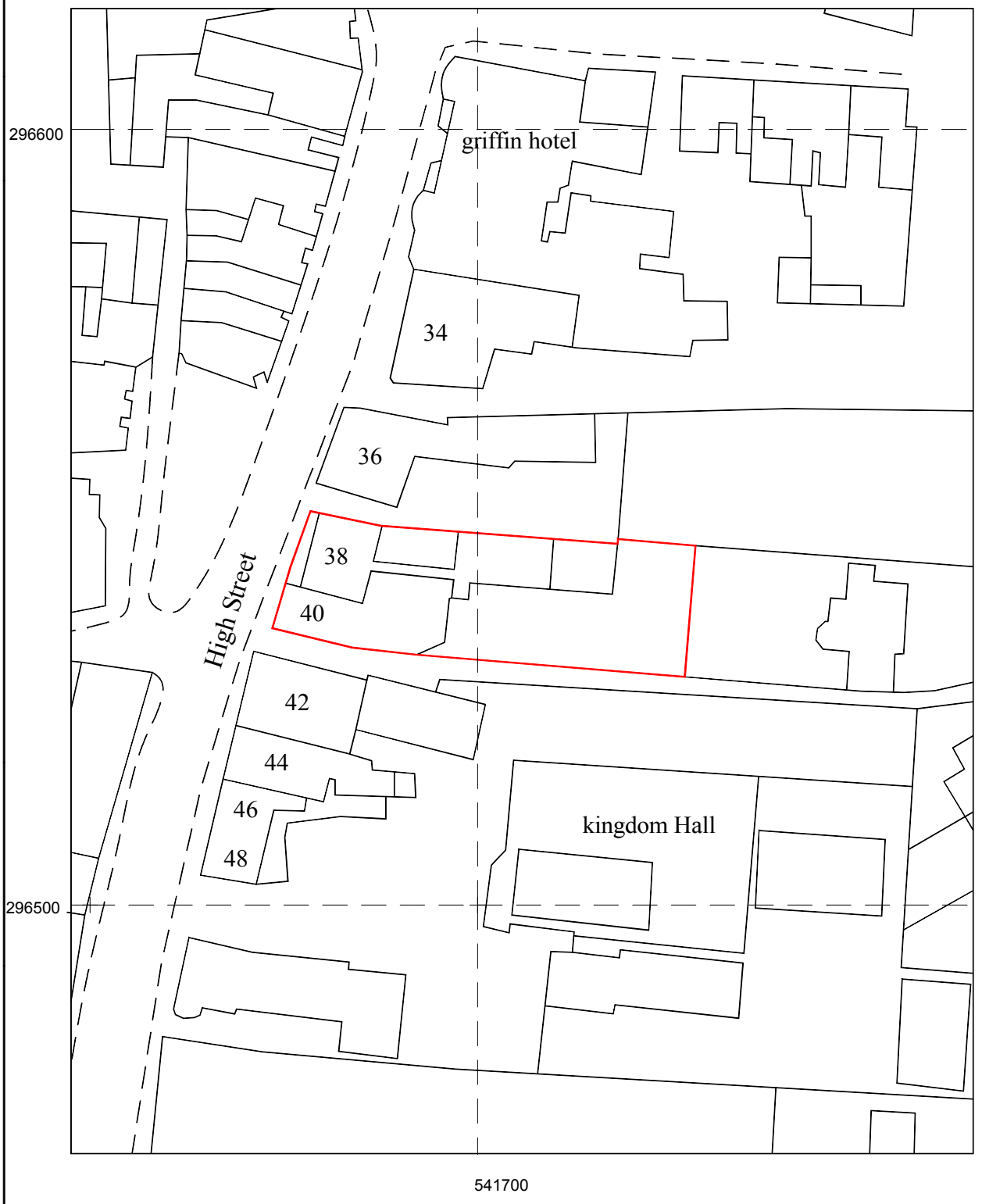
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Store
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Industrial"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Store
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Store
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Industrial"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

Entered by	Gary Trimble (gary.trimble@withamarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	26 October 2014

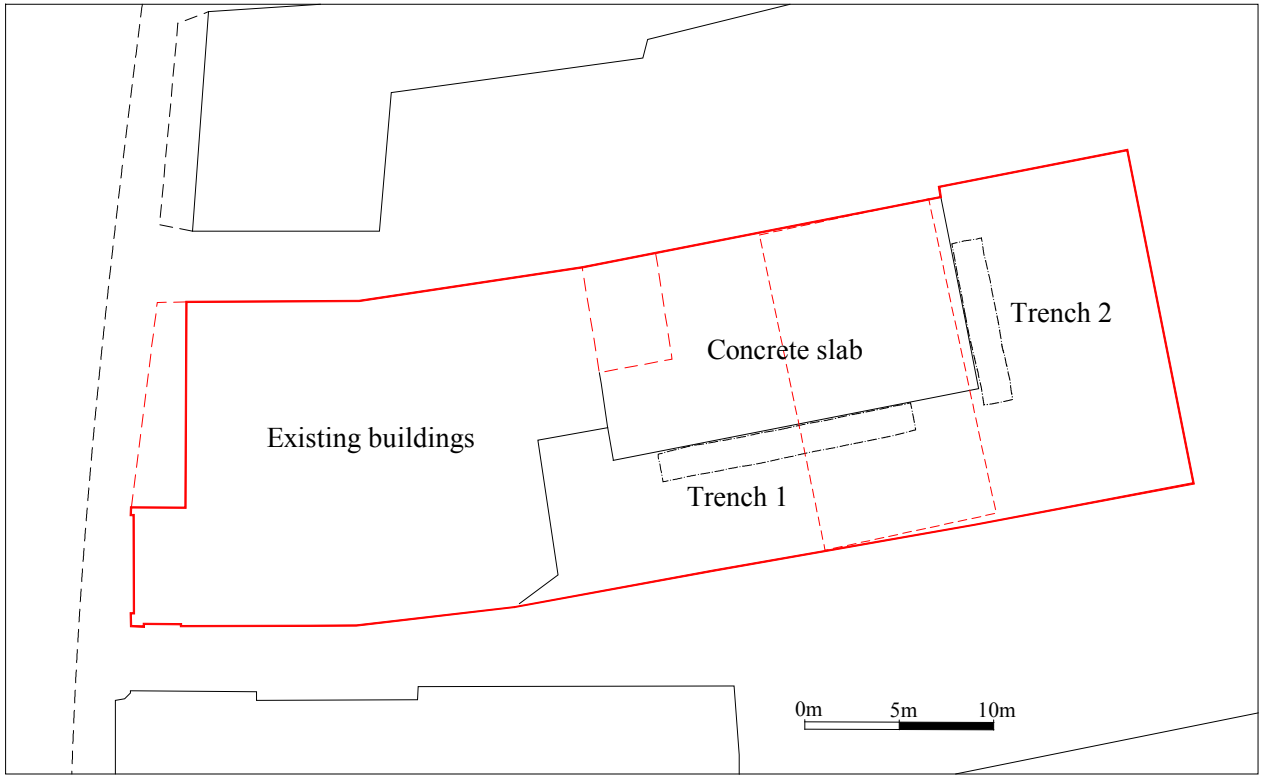
OASIS:

Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice





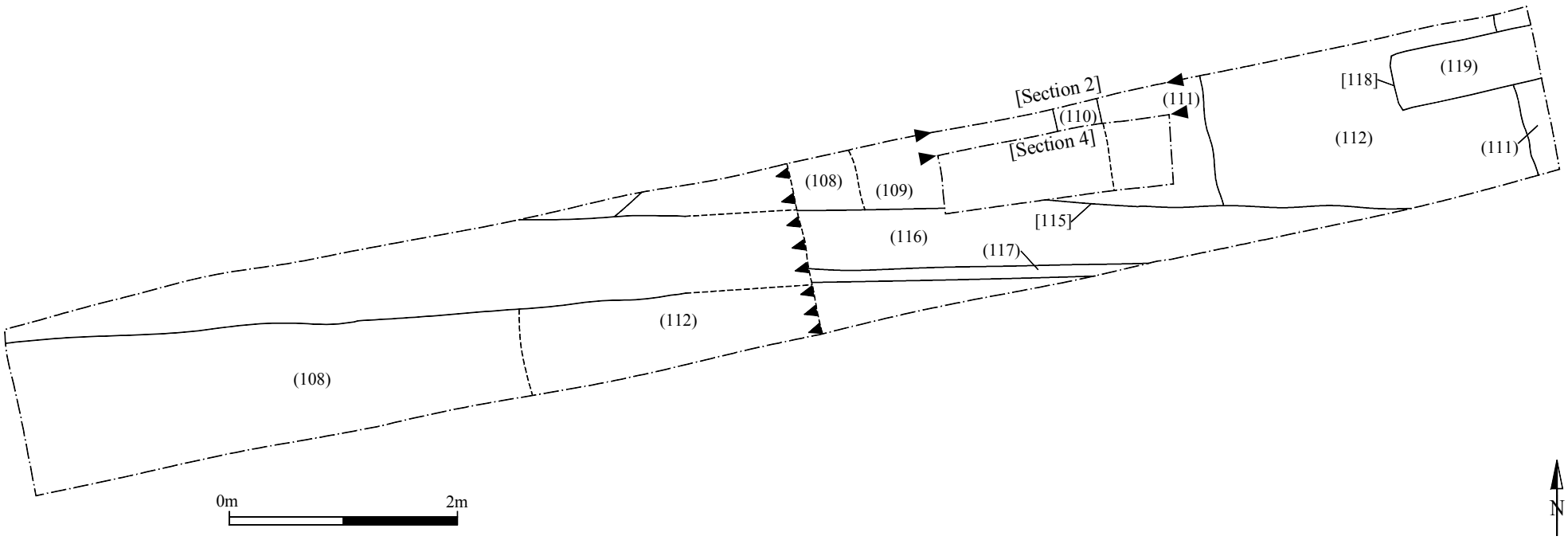
Witham Archaeology Site Location Plan Scale 1: 750 Fig. 2



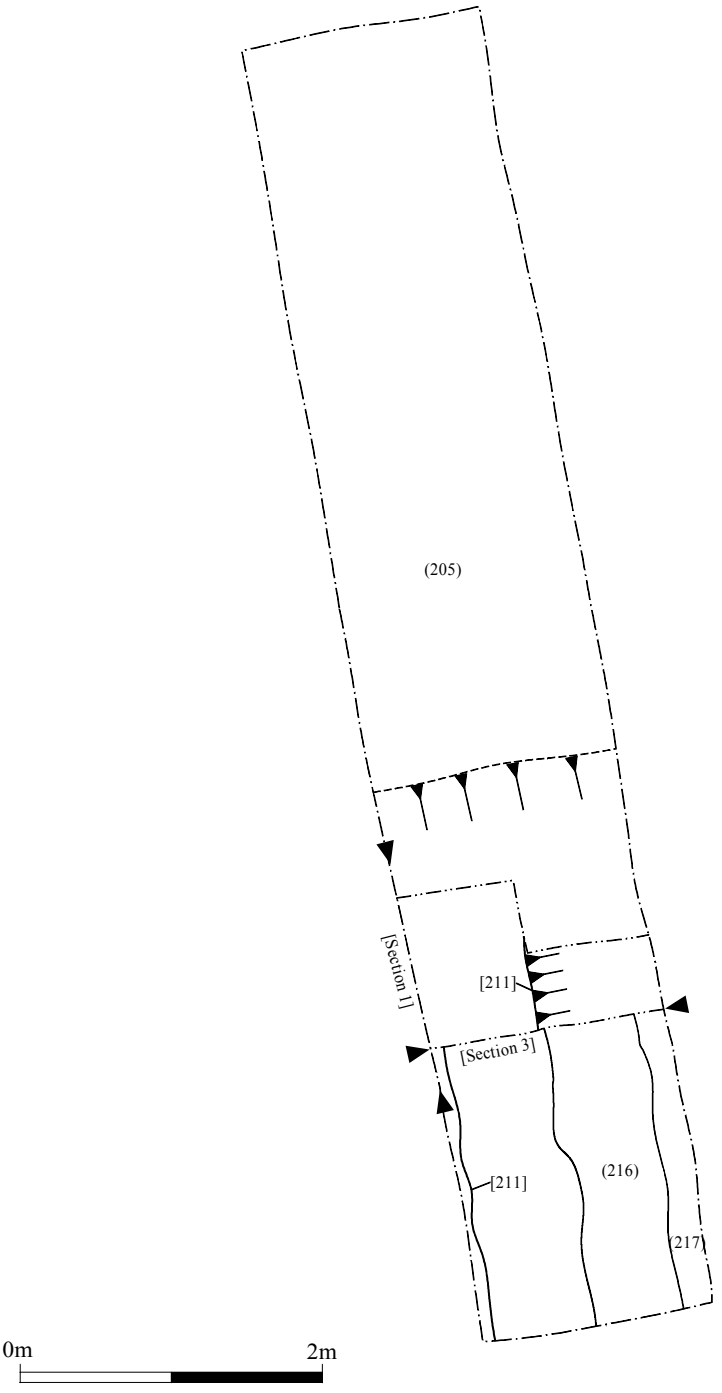
Trench Location Plan. Scale:1:400

Witham Archaeology

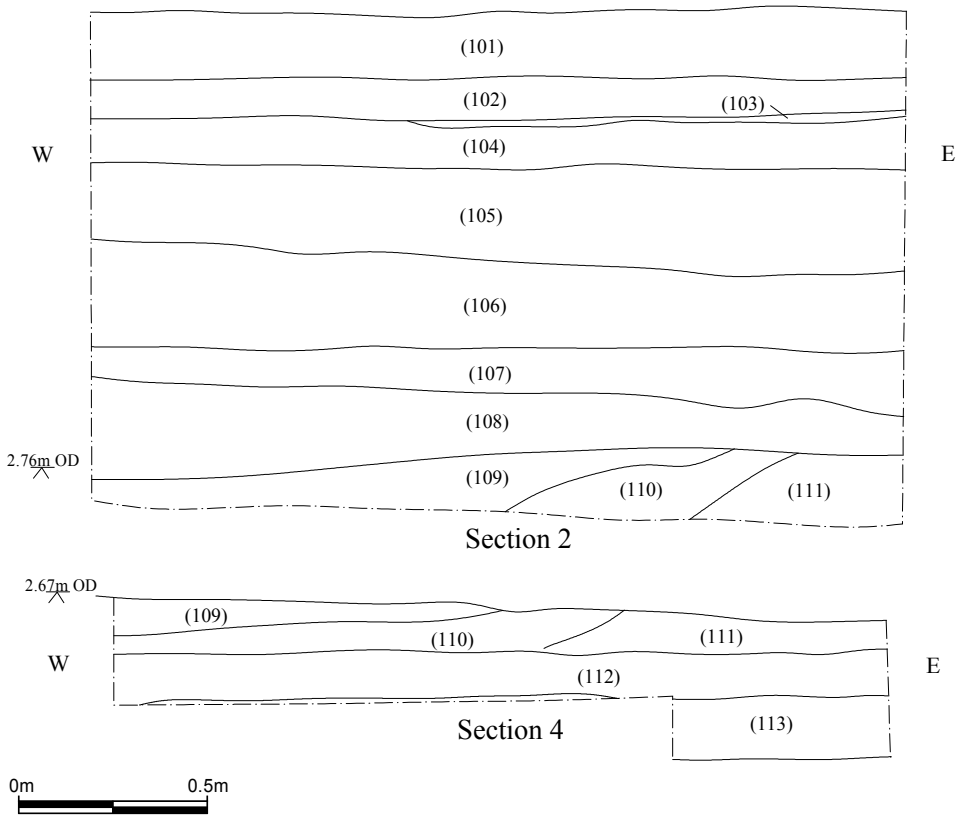
Fig. 3



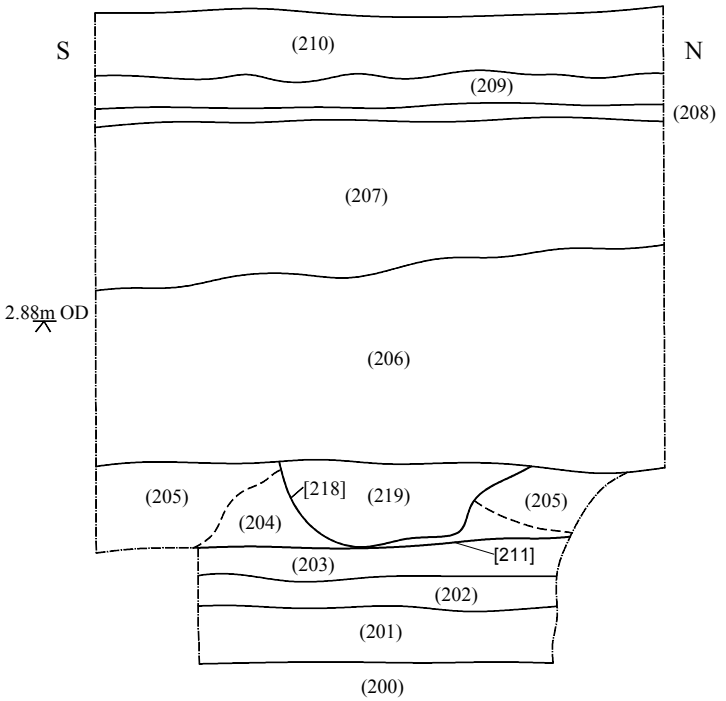
Plan of Trench 1. Scale. 1:50



Plan of Trench 2. Scale 1:50



Trench 1. Sections. Scale 1:20



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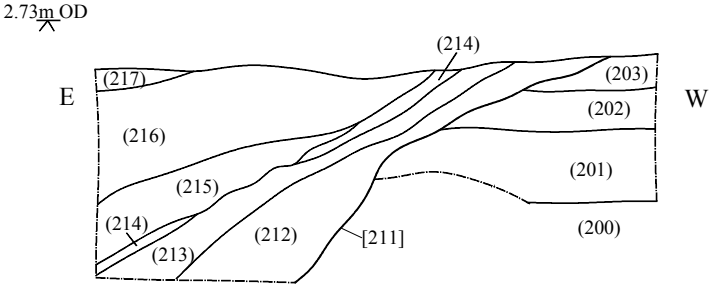

Section 3

Trench 2. Sections. Scale 1:20