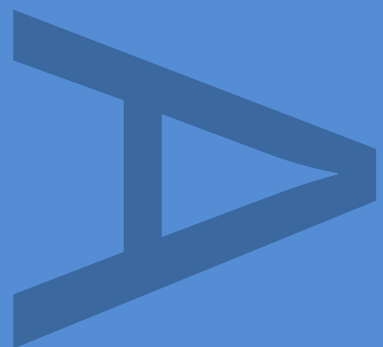


**Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton
Road, Ipswich, Suffolk:
Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation**




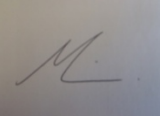
January 2015

AREA T, RAVENSWOOD, NACTON ROAD,
IPSWICH, SUFFOLK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
Project Number	K3813
Report Number	R11945

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Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk:

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: Ipswich Borough Council

Planning Reference: P/14/00564/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TM 1896 4131

Site Code: IPS756

Report No. R11945

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January 2015

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk (centred on NGR TM 1896 4131) between the 7th and 8th January 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to the development of the site. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The evaluation found a series of ditches, located mainly in the north and west of the site. Apart from a single residual struck flint, these contained no finds. However, based on the results of other excavations in Ravenswood, some of them may be later prehistoric (Middle Bronze Age onwards), Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval or post-medieval in date. The possibility of a later prehistoric date for at least some of the ditches is supported by the recovery of a sherd of prehistoric pottery from a ditch identified during a previous phase of trial trenching on the site. Another of the ditches matches the position and alignment of a field boundary shown on late-19th- and early-20th-century Ordnance Survey maps, so is of relatively recent origin. As the ditches are all likely to be outfield field boundaries, located away from contemporary settlement areas, the absence of associated cultural material is unsurprising.

A charcoal-filled pit was present in Trench 7, towards the south-east of the site. This contained no finds, but identical pits have been identified at numerous excavated sites across the Suffolk coast and heaths and frequently return Early to Middle Saxon radiocarbon dates (c. 5th-9th century AD). Many of the ditches were visible at a high stratigraphic level, immediately below the modern topsoil. This probably reflects the heathland character of the local landscape, the non-intensive nature of historic land-use and the consequent absence of significant disturbance to archaeological levels from agricultural processes such as ploughing.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TM 1896 4131) from the 7th to 8th January 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to the redevelopment of the site (Planning Reference P/14/00564/FUL).
- 1.3 Previous phases of trial trenching have been carried out in the area by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Meredith 2000; Bales, Good and Meredith 2006). Several of the SCCAS trenches are within or partially within the site (Trenches 28, 29, 48, 49, 50 and 51) (Figure 2).
- 1.4 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Chris Clarke of CgMs Consulting Ltd (Clarke 2014) in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Dr Matthew Brudenell (Brudenell 2014) of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (SCCAS/ CT).
- 1.5 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.6 Eight trial trenches were excavated and recorded. Trenches 1-7 measured c. 30m by 2m; Trench 8 had to be shortened to 13m due to the presence of large mounds of spoil on the southern part of the site. Extensions were added to the sides of Trenches 5 and 6 in order to further investigate potential archaeological features (Figure 2).
- 1.7 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The site archive

will be deposited with Suffolk County Council.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The underlying geology of the site consists of the Red Crag Formation sand, overlain by superficial glacial sand and gravel deposits of the Lowestoft Formation (British Geological Survey; Website 1).

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 The site lies on relatively level ground at a height of c. 37 metres above Ordnance Datum (henceforth m OD).

2.2.2 Previous archaeological evaluation trenching within the site boundary recorded the drift geology of the site to be sand and gravel, overlain by between 0.40m and 0.50m of subsoil and topsoil deposits (Meredith 2000; Bales et al. 2006).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The following information is drawn from the WSI (Clarke 2014) and a number of reports detailing archaeological investigations within the site boundary and in close proximity to the site (Meredith 2000, Bales et al. 2006; Clover 2013; Stump 2013; Woolhouse 2014a).

3.2 Prehistoric and Roman

3.2.1 In 2000, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service undertook large-scale evaluation trenching in the area of the former Ipswich Airport (IPS 399). Evaluation Trenches 48-51 (Figure 2) associated with this phase of investigation are recorded as being located within the area of the current site. The only dated feature was an east- to west-orientated ditch [0396] identified in Trench 51, which contained a single sherd of prehistoric pottery and several fragments of burnt clay. Several undated features, consisting of a pit, gully, ditch and tree throw, were found in Trenches 49, 50 and 52 (Meredith 2000). Unfortunately, later archaeological investigations in the Ravenswood area have thrown doubt on the recorded locations of some of the SCCAS trenches.

3.2.2 Another phase of evaluation had been undertaken by SCCAS in 1999 (IPS 420), with Trenches 28 and 29 partially extending into the northern area of the site (Figure 2). An undated shallow ditch and gully were recorded in Trench 28, while an undated curvilinear gully was identified in Trench 29 (Bales et al. 2006). A review of later archaeological investigations undertaken in the area indicates that these features could potentially be prehistoric in date.

3.2.3 The remains of a small Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement with rectilinear and circular post built-structures were located 1km to the north-west of the site (IPS386; Bales et al. 2006). Bronze Age ploughed-out burial mounds, c. 0.75km to the east of the site, indicate the location of a cemetery possibly serving the adjacent community (IPS027, 031, 039, 416, 417; Bales et al. 2006; Stump 2013).

3.2.4 The area to the north-east of the site is less well understood, but it seems

likely that it was used as fields in this period. This is borne out by the discovery of Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age pits, postholes and ditches within excavation area IPS 406, providing evidence for animal husbandry and probably periodic occupation (Bales et al. 2006).

- 3.2.5 To the north-east of the site, a sherd of Early Bronze Age 'Beaker' pottery was found within excavation area IPS 404 in 2000. Another pit containing Beaker pottery was found during a watching brief approximately where Ravenswood Avenue meets the roundabout (IPS 293). A pit containing Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age Grooved Ware pottery was recorded at Gainsborough Sports and Community Centre (Stump 2013). Two further Early Bronze Age pits are recorded in Suffolk Historic Environment Record c. 1.2km to the east of the site (HER MSF1487 and MSF19294).
- 3.2.6 At site IPS 715, a ditch was recorded which had also been observed during excavation IPS 404. This ditch can be very tentatively dated to the Middle Bronze Age (1500-1200BC). At Gainsborough Sports and Community Centre, two phases of Middle to Late Bronze Age field systems were recorded, as well as two phases of 1st-century AD field systems (Stump 2013).
- 3.2.7 Excavation near Nacton Road (IPS 719), approximately 800m to the north-east of the site, recorded a series of prehistoric features. The earliest feature identified was a pit containing Beaker pottery dated to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, with a number of adjacent pits potentially contemporary. A system of four prehistoric field boundary ditches, probably dating to the Middle Bronze Age, was also recorded, suggesting that this area was utilised as fields in this period. Another phase of agricultural land-use was represented by a driveway at right angles to Nacton Road and probably dating to the Late Iron Age or Roman period (Clover 2013).
- 3.2.8 More recent excavations (IPS 725), located c. 700m to the east of the site, encountered a range of features similar in date. A possible Early Bronze burial incorporating Beaker pottery and a flint knife was excavated, although no trace of human bone survived. The burial was closely surrounded on

three sides by a broadly rectilinear arrangement of natural channels, possibly resulting from roots of trees and other vegetation disturbing the natural geology around the edges of a small barrow mound which has subsequently been ploughed-away. Later land-use was represented by successive field boundary and enclosure ditches. Radiocarbon-dating of charcoal from one ditch, which formed part of a rectilinear enclosure, returned a date of 57-214 cal. AD: the early to mid-Roman period. Based on morphology and shared alignments with field boundaries excavated at other sites in the vicinity, the other ditches are likely to be later Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman in date. They formed part of a wider multi-period agricultural landscape which has been revealed at other sites on the south-eastern outskirts of Ipswich (Woolhouse 2014).

- 3.2.9 A group of rectilinear cropmarks, visible on aerial photographs, are located c. 1km to the south-east of the site (HER MSF2282). They are located to the south of the Nacton Road barrow cemetery and are aligned north to south and east to west. They may represent Iron Age, Roman, or, feasibly, Bronze Age field systems and enclosures.
- 3.2.10 Evidence of a complex system of field boundary ditches located to the east and south-east of the site was first recorded during the large-scale evaluation of the former Ipswich Airport (IPS399). Further small-scale excavations, as well as investigations of the airport's perimeter, revealed field systems and droveways which had developed by the end of the Late Iron Age and continued in use throughout the Roman period (Bales et al. 2006).

3.3 Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval

- 3.3.1 The evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation within approximately 1km of the site is confined to a small number of unstratified scatters of pottery and metalwork. Several field boundary ditches of Anglo-Saxon date have also been found within the area of the former Ipswich Airport, to the south-west of the site, and within Nacton Quarry (SCCAS 2005), to the south. Further afield, at Gainsborough Sports and Community Centre, a trackway dating to the Middle Saxon period was revealed during an evaluation and excavation

- (Stump 2013). In Ipswich Airport, evaluation trenches dug c. 500m to the south-west of the site (IPS 390) found a focus of Anglo-Saxon settlement near to the springs in Braziers Wood. Saxon and medieval remains were also found in the excavations at Ancient Meadows, to the north.
- 3.3.2 Approximately 500m to the south of the site lies the site of Alnesbourn Priory, a small Augustinian monastic house probably founded in the 13th century as a satellite of Woodbridge Priory. It was annexed by the monks of Woodbridge at some point in the 15th century and was 'ruinous' by 1514 (Victoria County History 2, 111-12).
- 3.3.3 All known medieval remains within the study area concentrate along its edges and comprise unstratified scatters of pottery fragments and metalwork, as well as a number of postholes, pits and enclosure ditches excavated within the boundaries of the former Ipswich Airport (Bales et al. 2006). The features are likely to be associated with Clapgate Lane, a meandering north to south route linking medieval Ipswich and its suburbs with Alnesbourn Priory and probably other settlements along the northern bank of the River Orwell (Bales et al. 2006).
- 3.3.4 A number of small charcoal-filled pits with evidence of in-situ burning were found during the Nacton Road excavations (IPS 719) and are thought likely to have had some industrial purpose. Several of these pits have been radiocarbon-dated to the Middle Saxon period and it is likely that the remainder are contemporary, or perhaps carried on into the medieval period. Small amounts of possible hammerscale within their fills suggests that the charcoal may be have been burnt for the purposes of iron smelting or smithing.
- 3.3.5 Pits of a similar character and date were found during recent excavations further to the south and radiocarbon-dated to the Early Anglo-Saxon period (5th-7th century). No metalworking residues were found in any of the soil samples, suggesting that the pits may have had some other purpose (Woolhouse 2014).

3.4 Post-Medieval and Modern

- 3.4.1 A review of the historic Ordnance Survey map sequence for the area indicates that prior to the early 20th century, the site was located within agricultural land.
- 3.4.2 In 1929, 147 acres (59 ha) of Ravens Wood was purchased by Ipswich Corporation with the intention of creating a municipal airport for Ipswich, with construction starting in the following year. The advent of World War II saw the airport facilities requisitioned by the government and allocated to Bomber Command (Clover 2013). Tunbridge Hall, to the north of the study site, was built in c. 1830 (HER 06604), and White Cottages were built in the early 19th century (HER 06588). Neither is listed as being of special architectural or historical importance.
- 3.4.3 Analysis of aerial photographs taken in 1944 and 1946 identified a number of World War II anti-invasion defences visible as structures and earthworks. The defences consisted of stretches of barbed wire which ran around the southern side of the airfield. Within the barbed wire, a number of hexagonal pillboxes were located. Two of the pillboxes were surrounded by a complex system of slit trenches. Numerous other trenches and gun pits were located around the edges of the airfield, as were a number of Nissen huts and other buildings of unknown function (Clover 2013).
- 3.4.4 The location of the site is likely to lie in close proximity to the former Ipswich Airport runway.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of eight linear trial trenches, located across the site to provide a representative sample of the development area. Trenches were positioned to avoid a spine road and services that had already been put in place.
- 4.1.2 In practice, Trench 8 had to be shortened to 13m due to presence of a large mound of spoil in the southern part of the site. All other trenches were fully-excavated in their proposed locations. Small extensions were excavated on the north sides of Trenches 5 and 6 in order to investigate the full extent of potential archaeological features (Figure 2).
- 4.1.3 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 21-ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Although some of the ditches could be seen in section just below the modern topsoil, they were not clearly visible in plan at this level during machining. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and sand-hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside each trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.
- 4.1.4 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector as they were encountered/ created.
- 4.1.5 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).
- 4.1.6 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover

sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.

- 4.1.7 Discrete features, such as pits, were at least 50% excavated and, where considered appropriate, 100% excavated.
- 4.1.8 Linear features, such as ditches, were excavated by means of 1m slots across their width, amounting to at least 25% of each feature.
- 4.1.9 Bulk soil samples between 20 and 40 litres in volume were taken as appropriate from excavated features. The aim of the sampling was to recover plant macrofossil assemblages which might provide information about the past environment and economy of the site, as well as to recover small objects (e.g. metalworking residues, flint micro-debitage) which are not readily retrievable by hand-collection. The soil samples have been submitted to Val Fryer for processing and analysis.
- 4.1.10 A charcoal sample for potential radiocarbon dating was taken from a charcoal-filled pit ([31]) in Trench 7. This was excavated and removed by trowel and immediately wrapped in aluminium foil in order to avoid contact with any organic material which might contaminate the sample and render dating unsafe.

4.2 Recording Methodology

- 4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 4.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50).
- 4.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009).

Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.

- 4.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits and black and white film photographs were taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor.
- 4.2.5 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (IfA 2001; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction (Figure 2)

5.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated. Features and deposits identified within the trenches are described from west to east.

5.1.2 The evaluation identified a series of seven undated ditches in the north and west of the site (Trenches 1-5) and a charcoal-filled pit in Trench 7, towards the south-east of the site. The only find was a single struck flint from a ditch (Slot [16]) in Trench 3.

5.2 Trench 1

TRENCH 1	Figure 3	Plate 1	
Trench Alignment: SW-NE	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.4-36.87m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		SW End	NE End
Topsoil	(9)	0.21m	0.30m
Subsoil	(10)	0.21m	0.21m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.42m+	0.51m+
Summary			
Trench 1 was located in the north of the site. It contained an undated ditch [25].			
The base of SCCAS Evaluation Trench 49 was identified in the south-west of the trench.			

5.2.1 Ditch [25] crossed the middle of Trench 1 on a north-west to south-east alignment. It was linear in plan with fairly steep concave sides and a flattish base (0.73m wide x 0.19m deep). It had a single fill (24) of pale grey-brown silty sand with common flint inclusions, which contained no finds. The ditch was on the same alignment as Ditches [0390] and [0396] in SCCAS Trenches 50 and 51, respectively (Figure 2).

5.3 Trench 2

TRENCH 2	Figure 4		
Trench Alignment: W-E	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.12-36.25m	

Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		W End	E End
Topsoil	(9)	0.31m	0.10m
Subsoil	(10)	0.15m	0.36m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.46m+	0.46m+
Summary			
Trench 2 was located in the north-west of the site. It contained two undated ditches ([32] and [28]).			

5.3.1 Ditch [32] crossed Trench 2 on a north-north-east to south-south-west alignment. It was linear in plan, although somewhat irregular, with gradually-sloping sides and an uneven base (1.0m wide x 0.10m deep). It had a single fill (33) of grey-brown sandy silt which contained no finds.

5.3.2 Ditch [28] crossed Trench 2 around 7.5m east of Ditch [32], on a parallel north-north-east to south-south-west alignment. It was linear in plan with steeply-sloping rounded sides and a flat base (1.5m wide x 0.50m deep). It had a single fill (29) of mid brown silty sand, which contained no finds. Ditch [28] was cut through the subsoil.

5.4 Trench 3

TRENCH 3	Figure 5	Plate 2	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.4--36.5m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		NW End	SE End
Topsoil	(9)	0.17m	0.30m
Subsoil	(10)	0.23m	0.24m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.40m+	0.54m+
Summary			
Trench 3 was located in the central western part of the site. It contained two ditches ([14] and [16]). Ditch [16] contained a struck flint.			
There was no sign of SCCAS Evaluation Trench 50 in its recorded position crossing the south-east end of the trench.			

5.4.1 Ditch [14] crossed Trench 3 on a north-east to south-west alignment. It was linear in plan with gently-sloping rounded sides and a concave base (0.7m wide x 0.15m deep) (Plate 3). It had a single fill (15) of orangey-grey silty sand, which contained no finds.

5.4.2 Ditch [16] crossed Trench 3 on a north-east to south-west alignment, 8m south-east of, and parallel to, Ditch [14]. It was linear in plan, with steep rounded sides and a flat base (1.2m wide x 0.4m deep). It had a single fill (17) of mid orangey-brown silty sand, which contained a piece of struck flint. Ditch [16] could clearly be seen cutting through the subsoil (Plate 2).

5.5 Trench 4

TRENCH 4	Figure 2	Plate 4	
Trench Alignment: SW-NE	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.62-36.43m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		SW End	NE End
Topsoil	(9)	0.26m	0.09m
Subsoil	(10)	0.14m	0.31m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.40m+	0.40m+
Summary			
Trench 4 was located in the east of the site. It contained no archaeological features. There was no sign of any continuation of west-north-west- to east-south-east-aligned Ditch [0390] from SCCAS Trench 50.			

5.6 Trench 5

TRENCH 5	Figure 6	Plate 6	
Trench Alignment: W-E	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.75-36.64m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		W End	E End
Topsoil	(9)	0.28m	0.30m
Subsoil	(10)	0.27m	0.21m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.55m+	0.51m+
Summary			
Trench 5 was located in the central western part of the site. It contained two undated ditches ([13] and [19]) and two natural features ([21] and [27]).			

- 5.6.1 Feature [21] was located at the west end of Trench 5. An extension was excavated on the north side of the trench to reveal the full extent of the feature. It was roughly oval in plan with moderately-sloping concave sides and a rounded base (2.0m long x 1.5m wide x 0.2m deep). It had a single fill (20) of mid reddish-brown silty sand with occasional flints, which contained no finds. It is probably a tree hollow or geological feature. It was sealed by the subsoil.
- 5.6.2 Ditch [13] crossed Trench 5 on a north-east to south-west alignment. It was linear in plan with fairly steep rounded sides and a flattish base (2.3m wide x 0.55m deep) (Plate 5). It had a single fill (12) of mid reddish-brown silty sand with occasional flint inclusions, which contained no finds. The ditch was cut through the subsoil.
- 5.6.3 Ditch [19] crossed Trench 5 on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment. It was linear in plan with steep rounded sides and a narrow rounded base (0.82m wide x 0.60m deep). It had a single fill (18) of mid reddish-brown silty sand with occasional flints, which contained no finds. The ditch was cut through the subsoil.
- 5.6.4 Feature [27] was located in the central part of Trench 5. An extension was excavated on the north side of the trench to reveal the full extent of the feature. The feature was roughly oval in plan with moderately-sloping rounded sides and a concave base (2.0m long x 1.4m wide x 0.3m deep). It had a single fill (26) of mid reddish-brown silty sand with occasional flints, which contained no finds. It is probably a tree hollow or geological feature. The feature was sealed by the subsoil.

5.7 Trench 6

TRENCH 6		Figure 2	
Trench Alignment: W-E		Length: 36m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.64-36.77m
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		W End	E End
Topsoil	(9)	0.37m	0.30m

Subsoil	(10)	0.18m	0.20m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.55m+	0.50m+
Summary			
<p>Trench 6 was located in the central part of the site. It contained no archaeological features. The position of SCCAS Evaluation Trench 51 was identified at the east end of the trench.</p> <p>Trench 6 veered off from its correct alignment at its east end due to the mechanical excavator sinking in waterlogged ground.</p>			

5.8 Trench 7

TRENCH 7	Figure 7		
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 30m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.69-36.82m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)	
		NW End	SE End
Topsoil	(9)	0.35m	0.16m
Subsoil	(10)	0.20m	0.30m
Natural Sand	(11)	0.55m+	0.46m+
Summary			
<p>Trench 7 was located towards the south-east edge of the site. It contained an undated tree hollow and a charcoal-filled pit [31]. Based on radiocarbon-dating carried out on identical burnt pits at several other sites in the immediate area, it is likely to date to the Anglo-Saxon period.</p> <p>The base of SCCAS Evaluation Trench 51 was identified at the north-west end of the trench.</p>			

- 5.8.1 Burnt Pit [31] was located at the south-east end of Trench 7 (Plate 7). It appeared to be circular in plan, with fairly steep, straight sides and a flat base (0.6m+ x 0.68m wide x 0.12m deep). It contained a single fill (30) of dark grey/ black silty sand with abundant charcoal inclusions. No finds were present. Based on radiocarbon-dating of identical burnt pits found at other excavated sites in the immediate area, this feature is likely to be Anglo-Saxon in date. The pit appeared to be sealed by the subsoil.

5.9 Trench 8

TRENCH 8	Figure 2		Plate 8	
Trench Alignment: W-E	Length: 13m	Level of Natural (m OD): 36.98-37.0m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Depth (m)		
		W End	E End	
Topsoil	(9)	0.20m	0.13m	
Subsoil	(10)	0.10m	0.35m	
Natural Sand	(11)	0.30m+	0.48m+	
<p>Summary</p> <p>Trench 8 was located in the south of the site. Only 13m of the proposed length could be excavated owing to the presence of a large mound of spoil arising from previous groundworks. No archaeological features were present.</p> <p>The overburden was notably shallow at the west end of the trench, suggesting previous ground disturbance associated with the creation of this spoilheap.</p>				

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 The evaluation identified a series of undated ditches, focused in the north and west of the site (Trenches 1-5). A single charcoal-filled pit was present in Trench 7, towards the south-east of the site. The only find from the evaluation was a piece of struck flint in Ditch Slot [16] (Trench 3).
- 6.1.2 In some cases, the ditches identified in different trenches are likely to be continuations of the same features: Ditches [13] (Trench 5), [16] (Trench 3) and [28] (Trench 2) are probably a single ditch, aligned broadly south-south-west to north-north-east. Ditches [14] (Trench 3) and [32] (Trench 2) are probably parts of a second ditch on the same alignment. It is potentially significant that only the eastern ditch (Slots [13], [16] and [28]) could be seen cutting through the subsoil, while the western ditch ([Slots [14] and [32]) did not appear to be present at such a high stratigraphic level. Therefore, despite their similar alignment, the ditches may be of different dates.
- 6.1.3 Ditch [25] (Trench 1) was orientated perpendicular to these two boundaries, extending west-north-west to east-south-east across the north of the site. It did not appear to cut the subsoil, so it may be related to the western of the south-south-west to north-north-east-aligned ditches ([14]=[32]). The alignment of Ditch [25] is parallel to Ditches [0390] (Trench 50) and [0396] (Trench 51) from the SCCAS evaluation. Together, these three parallel west-north-west- to east-south-east-aligned ditches, and perpendicular Ditch [14]=[32], potentially form parts of the same rectilinear field system. Ditch [0396] contained a small sherd of prehistoric pottery; there were also two struck flint flakes in the topsoil in SCCAS Trench 51 (see below; Meredith 2000, 16, 22, appendix 3a). It should be noted that Ditch [0390] was not picked up in Trench 4, which casts doubt on its projected alignment.
- 6.1.4 The north-north-west to south-south-east alignment of Ditch [19] (Trench 5) is at odds with the other identified ditches; this ditch cut the subsoil, possibly indicating a comparatively recent date. Comparison of the identified ditches with historic maps of the area suggests that Ditch [19] is actually relatively

modern. A field boundary in the same position and on the same alignment is shown on Ordnance Survey maps from 1881-2 (1st Edition), up until 1928, after which the former farmland was taken into the new Ipswich Airfield.

6.2 Dating and Interpretation of the Ditches (Figure 8)

- 6.2.1 The piece of struck flint from Ditch Slot [16] is likely to be of Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date and is probably residual in view of the extreme scarcity of evidence for ditched field systems anywhere in the British Isles before the Middle Bronze Age. Nevertheless, the sherd of prehistoric pottery recovered from Ditch [0396] in SCCAS Trench 51 adds some weight to a Bronze or Iron Age date for at least some of the Area T ditches, particularly as several of the other ditches seem to form a coherent field system with Ditch [0396].
- 6.2.2 The absence of any other finds in the ditches indicates that they are all 'outfield' field boundaries located well away from contemporary settlement areas.
- 6.2.3 Systems of similar, generally narrow and shallow, field boundary ditches have been excavated across the Ravenswood area. Where datable material has been present, the ditches have been found to belong to a range of different time periods, beginning in the Bronze Age, and continuing through the Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. However, as with the ditches in the Area T trial trenches, finds tend to be extremely scarce in field boundary ditches, particularly prehistoric ones, even when, as at Alnesbourn Crescent, they are subject to 50-100% excavation (Woolhouse 2014a). Similarly extensive sampling of systems of Middle to Late Bronze Age field ditches at Felixstowe Academy and Main Road, Martlesham also failed to yield more than a few small fragments of later prehistoric pottery (Woolhouse 2013; 2014b).
- 6.2.4 Given this scarcity of dating evidence, one possible approach to dating is to extrapolate the ditch alignments over longer distances and look for spatial associations/ correspondences in alignment with field boundaries at other excavated sites. Applying this method to the Area T ditches (Figure 8), the

parallel ditches extending broadly south-south-west to north-north-east through Trenches 2, 3 and 5 ([14]=[32] and [13]=[16]=[28]) seem to share their orientation with the possible Bronze Age ditches recorded at Sites IPS 406 and 719, to the east, and with Late Iron Age ditches at IPS 405 and Alnesbourn Crescent (although the latter were dated conjecturally on stratigraphic and spatial grounds only). This apparent correspondence with boundary alignments of two different periods might fit with the stratigraphic evidence (i.e. their relationship with the subsoil) that the ditches in Area T are of different dates. By contrast, the west-north-west to east-south-east alignment of Ditch [25] (Trench 1), and Ditches [0390] and [0396] from the SCCAS evaluation, does not match particularly well with any of the other previously-recorded ditch alignments in the vicinity. As these three ditches are perpendicular to ditches which share alignments with Bronze and Iron Age boundaries recorded at the other sites, and one of them also contained a sherd of prehistoric pottery, they may also be of later prehistoric (i.e. Bronze or Iron Age) date.

6.2.5 There is also an apparent correspondence between Ditch [19] (Trench 5) and the north-north-west to south-south-east alignment of the Late Bronze Age ditches at Ipswich Academy, 500m to the north (Figure 8). However, in view of its correlation with a field boundary shown on late-19th- and early-20th-century maps, this is purely coincidental. It also highlights one of the pitfalls of using shared alignments as an indicator of common date: that is, that boundary systems laid out in the same landscape at widely varying dates may nevertheless share the same broad axes because they reference the same natural landscape features, or, indeed, because later boundaries referenced earlier ones which were still visible.

6.2.6 While shared alignments might be indicative of similar date, it is by no means conclusive evidence. Extrapolating boundary alignments between widely-spaced archaeological excavations only works if the field systems were originally laid out with grid-like regularity over large tracts of the landscape. Although this might have been the case during the early to middle part of the Romano-British period, and may also have been common

in the Bronze Age (cf. Yates 2007, 134), it is by no means certain that a ditch recorded in one small archaeological intervention continues on the same alignment, without changing course, over hundreds of metres. In reality, for much of prehistory and history, the parcelling-up of agricultural land and laying-out of field boundaries has probably been far more sensitive to conditions on the ground, including, for example, changes in soil quality, drainage, and micro-topographical variations, and results in something far less regular than a uniform 'grid' rigidly adhering to the same axes over large distances irrespective of the subtleties of the local landscape. Therefore, using spatial associations with ditches at other sites in Ravenswood to assign dates to those identified in Area T is tentative at best.

6.2.7 Nevertheless, some of the field systems in the Ravenswood area are undoubtedly of Bronze Age date (e.g. Ipswich Academy; Stump 2013) and the same may be true of some of the ditches on the current site. Until recently, there were almost no known Bronze Age field systems in northern East Anglia (Yates 2007, 80; Medlycott 2011, 20-21), so the identification, recording, dating and characterisation of field systems of this period, in particular, is a regional research priority. In addition, the large-scale evaluation and targeted excavation of fairly large areas of the former Ipswich Airfield, and the identification of different phases of field system spanning across a number of different sites, offers an opportunity to understand how land-use and landscape organisation in this part of the Suffolk coast and heaths changed and developed from the Bronze Age to the modern period.

6.3 Suggested Phasing (Figure 9)

6.3.1 Based on their apparent spatial relationships, i.e. that together they seem to form a coherent and regularly-spaced rectilinear field system, the recovery of prehistoric pottery from one ditch, and their shared alignments with Bronze Age ditches at IPS 406 and IPS 719, several of the ditches in Area T may be Bronze Age ([14]=[32], [25], [0390] and [0396]).

6.3.2 Based on its shared alignment with [14]=[32], which suggests that it references this ?Bronze Age ditch, but also taking into account its later stratigraphic position (cutting the subsoil) and its shared alignment with Late

Iron Age ditches at IPS 405 and IPS 725, Ditch [13]=[16]=[28] is tentatively assigned to the Late Iron Age.

6.3.3 Charcoal-filled Pit [32] and Pit [0452] from the SCCAS evaluations are most likely to be Anglo-Saxon, based on their identical character to securely-dated features at other sites in this area.

6.3.4 Ditch [19] is shown on late-19th- and early-20th-century maps from immediately before the construction of the airfield, so is likely to be post-medieval, although it should be noted that field boundaries first recorded on maps in the 19th century often had considerably earlier origins.

6.3.5 Feature [0398] from SCCAS Trench 51 was very irregular and was suggested by the excavators to be a 'possible ditch or tree line' (Meredith 2000, 16), highlighting the possibility of a natural origin. However, it does appear to match quite well with the alignments of previously-identified Roman field systems in the area.

6.4 ?Anglo-Saxon

6.4.1 The undated charcoal-filled pit in the south-east of Trench 7 is identical in form to numerous scattered 'burnt pits' recorded at Alnesbourn Crescent (IPS 725; Woolhouse 2014a), 650m to the south-east, Nacton Road (IPS 719; Clover 2013), 800m to the east, and Main Road, Martlesham (MRM 157; Woolhouse 2014b), 8km to the north-east. None of the pits at those sites contained finds despite, in most cases, 100% excavation.

6.4.2 Until a few years ago, such features were routinely dismissed in archaeological reports as being associated with 2nd World War airfield fog dispersal ('FIDO') systems, used to increase runway visibility for returning bombers (e.g. Meredith 2000, 3-4). Such systems involved pumping thousands of gallons of oil down pipes along either side of the runway and igniting it; the burnt pits were considered by the excavators (in many cases, the features were recorded in plan only and not excavated) to result from leaked burning oil. However, Ipswich is not recorded as one of the airfields where FIDO was ever installed (Website 2) and radiocarbon-dating of charcoal samples taken from the burnt pits at all three of the aforementioned

sites (approximately ten samples in total) has consistently returned dates in the Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon period (5th-9th centuries AD).

6.4.3 Several of the burnt pits at Nacton Road contained possible hammerscale from iron-smithing, suggesting a connection with metalworking in the hinterland of the Middle Saxon emporia at Ipswich (Clover 2013).

6.4.4 However, it should not automatically be assumed that all such features are Anglo-Saxon, as at least one similar pit at Ipswich Academy was recorded as being cut by a later Bronze Age ditch (Stump 2013, 40). In addition, an identical small, charcoal-filled pit located within a Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age field system at Felixstowe Academy contained burnt bone (too small to positively identify as either animal or human) and 18 fragments of Early Iron Age pottery, including six from a fine angular bowl similar to examples from Darmsden (Woolhouse 2013).

6.5 Preservation and Deposit Sequence

6.5.1 The subsurface deposits on the site are shallow, consisting of modern topsoil (0.09-0.37m deep) and subsoil between 0.10 and 0.36m thick. The subsoil is simply the weathered surface of the natural geology, disturbed by rooting, wind erosion and freeze-thaw processes. There was no discernible pattern to the differences in depth of the topsoil and subsoil across the site. Variations to the former are perhaps suggestive of some previous ground disturbance and machine movements associated with the construction of the spine road and services on the site. Variations in the latter may arise from the differential effects of weathering and biological processes from one patch of ground to the next. Where the overburden is deepest, the natural geological horizon is 0.55m below modern ground level.

6.5.2 Many of the ditches could be seen in section cutting the subsoil from just below the level of the modern topsoil, that is, at depths of 10-12cm below the modern ground surface at the east end of Trench 2, c. 17cm in the central part of Trench 3, and 13-22cm in the west and centre of Trench 5, respectively. The upper portions of the ditches were not clearly visible in plan during machining.

6.5.3 It is not certain that there is any difference in date between those ditches which can be seen cutting the subsoil and those which cannot. Where ditches do not obviously cut through the subsoil, this is perhaps just as likely to be a result of subsequent root disturbance to their upper levels.

6.6 SCCAS Evaluation Evidence (Figure 2)

6.6.1 SCCAS Evaluation Trench 51 was identified in its recorded location, extending through the ends of Trenches 6 and 7. SCCAS Trench 49 was also noted in Trench 1, approximately 1m north of its plotted position. SCCAS Trench 50 was not observed in Trench 3. However, the identification of Trenches 49 and 51 in or close to their recorded locations suggests that the recorded locations of the other SCCAS trenches on the site are also likely to be accurate. The following features were identified in the SCCAS trenches:

6.6.2 Trench 28 contained two shallow undated ditches, four possible tree hollows and a 'FIDO'. The possible natural features and presumed fog lifter were not excavated. Plans for Trenches 28 and 29 were not included in the available copy of the IPS 420 report (Bales et al. 2006).

6.6.3 Trench 29 contained two curving ditches, only one of which was excavated. No finds were recovered.

6.6.4 Trench 48 contained an unstratified flint flake but no archaeological features.

6.6.5 Trench 49 contained a large, undated pit [0386] with occasional charcoal in its fill, but no finds.

6.6.6 The central part of Trench 50 contained a shallow west-north-west- to east-south-east-aligned ditch [0390], and a probable tree hollow [0392].

6.6.7 Trench 51 contained a west-north-west- to east-south-east-aligned ditch [0396], which yielded a sherd of prehistoric pottery and several fragments of burnt clay. At the north-east end of the trench was a rather irregular possible ditch on a broadly similar alignment [0398], which contained no finds. Two struck flint flakes were present in the topsoil in this trench. These possible

prehistoric features fit the general character of the archaeological remains found in the current phase of trenching and lend some support to the suggested later prehistoric dating of at least some of the ditches. The central part of Trench 51 also contained a small charcoal-filled pit [0452], interpreted as an Airfield 'fog lifter' and therefore not excavated (Meredith 2000, 16).

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The evaluation identified a series of undated ditches, mainly in the north and west of the site. The lack of finds indicates that they are likely to be outfield field boundaries, located away from contemporary settlement areas.
- 7.2 Similar ditches have been excavated across the Ravenswood area and dated, where finds or other evidence has been present, to the later prehistoric (Middle to Late Bronze Age), Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. A ditch identified on the current site during an earlier phase of trial trenching by SCCAS ([0396], Trench 51) contained a sherd of prehistoric pottery, lending some support to a suggested prehistoric date for at least some of the ditches, especially in view of their apparent spatial associations with it. At least one other ditch on the site is shown on late-19th- and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps, so is likely to be of comparatively recent origin.
- 7.3 As a relatively large area of the landscape in Ravenswood has now been sampled as part of the redevelopment of the former Ipswich Airfield, it is possible to tentatively extrapolate boundary alignments between the various excavated sites and to start to develop a picture of how the overall landscape may have looked at different times between the Bronze Age and the post-medieval period. The principal archaeological value of this site is that it constitutes another piece of this 'jigsaw'.
- 7.4 The tops of many of the ditches are present at a shallow depth below modern ground level, in some cases as little as 10cm below the surface. As such, they may be damaged even by shallow ground-works.
- 7.5 The presence of one or more of the charcoal-filled pits which are ubiquitous across this landscape offers another potential opportunity to retrieve finds or other information which might help to identify their function.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Chris Clarke of CgMs Consulting Ltd for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Dr Matthew Brudenell of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service for his advice and for monitoring the work. The project was managed for PCA by Taleyna Fletcher. The author would also like to thank the project team: Mary-Anne Slater, Dave Curry and Matthew Jones, for their hard work, and Adela Murray-Brown of PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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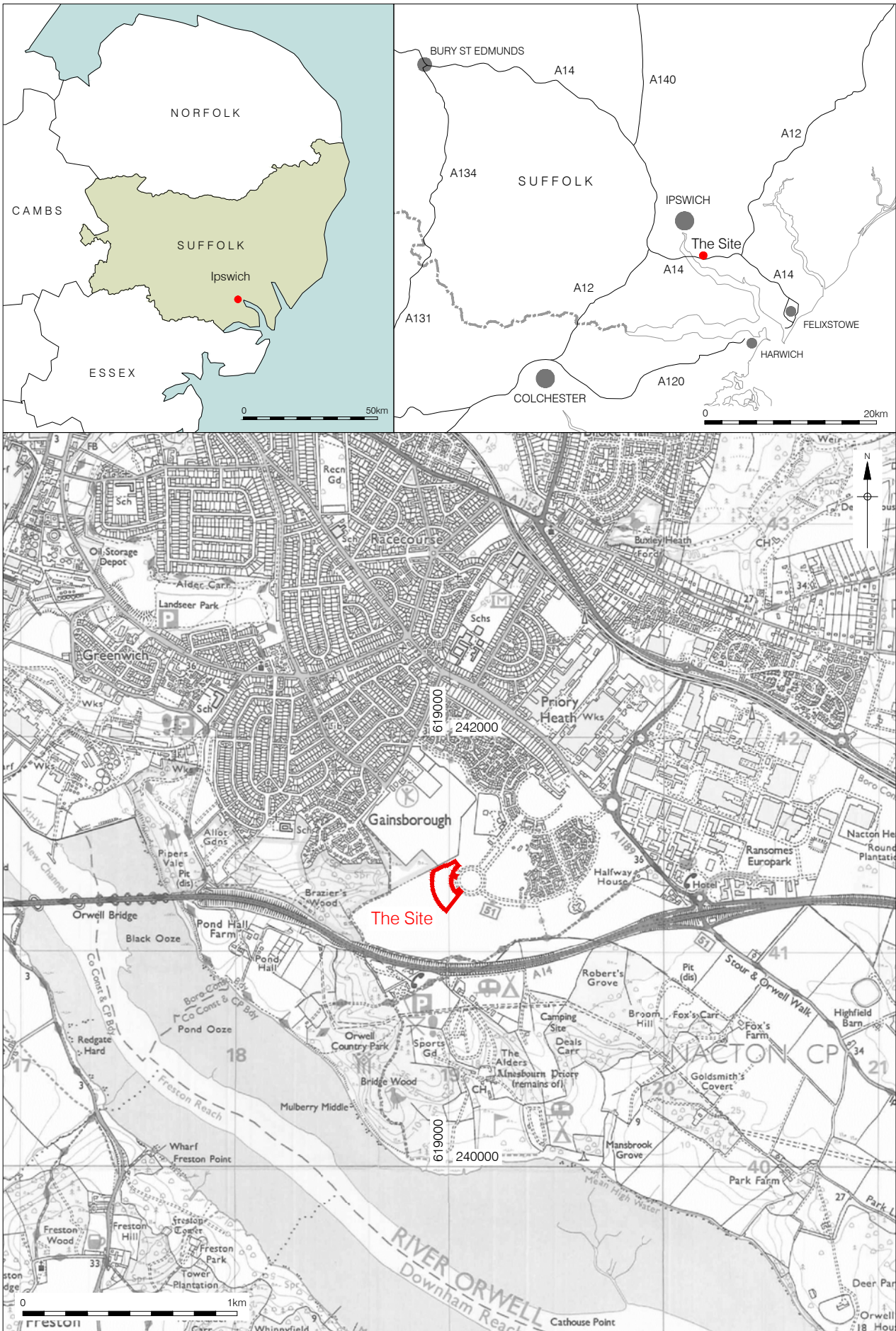
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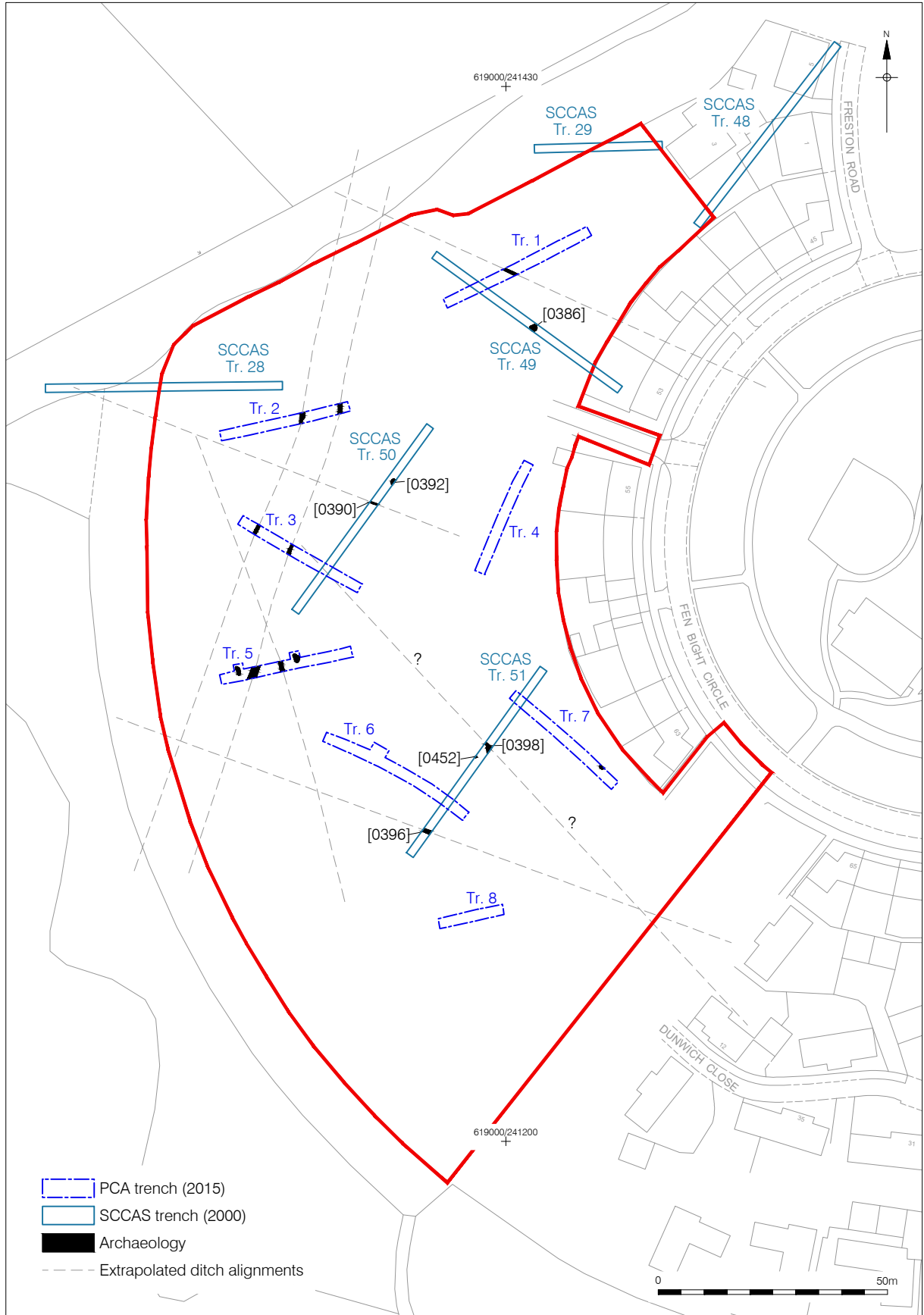
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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000; 625,000 & 25,000 at A4



Digital data supplied by the Client.
 © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2015
 13/01/2015 AMB

Figure 2
 Trench Plan
 1:1,250 at A4

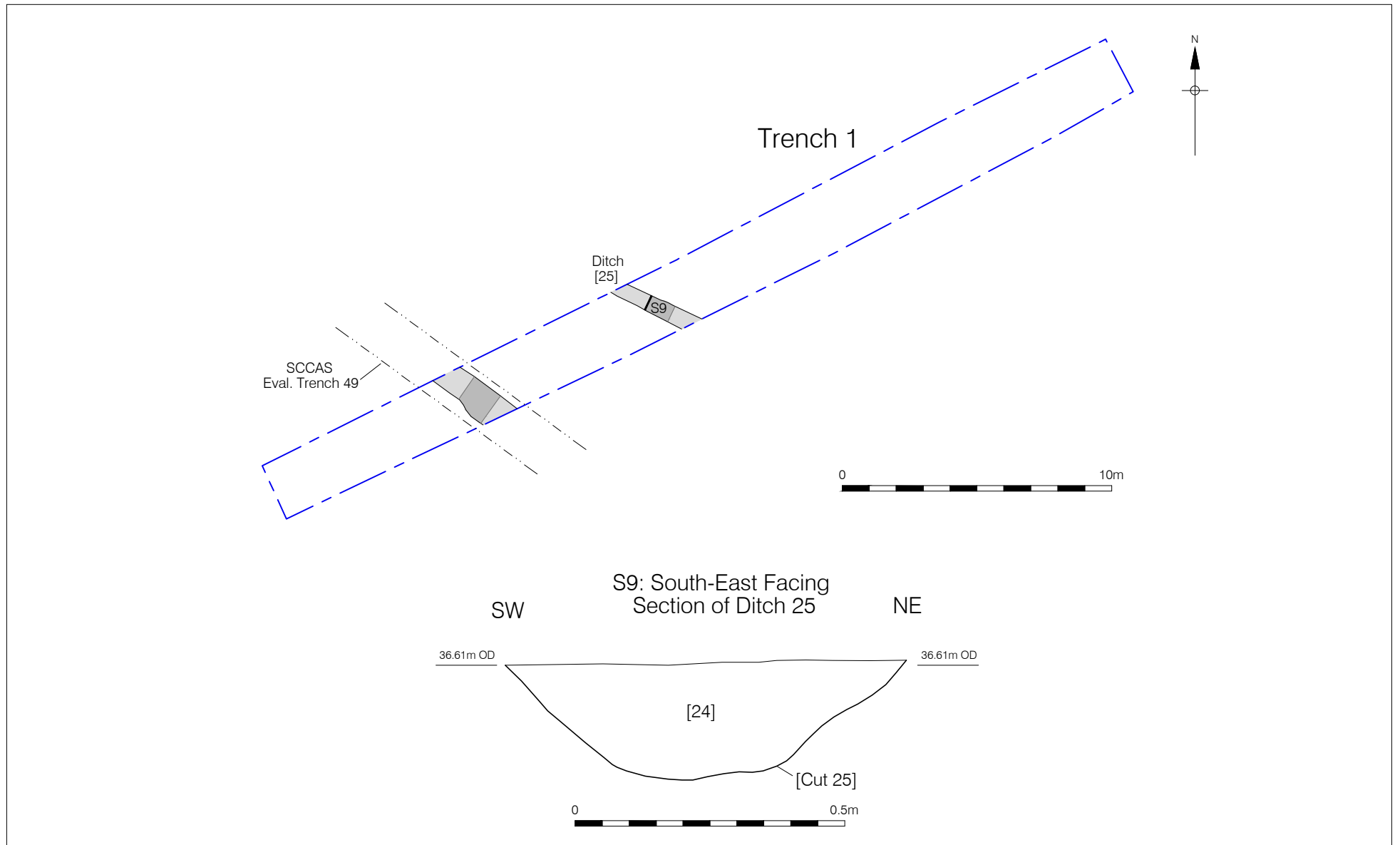


Figure 3
 Trench 1: Plan and Associated Sections
 Plan 1:200, Sections 1:10 at A4

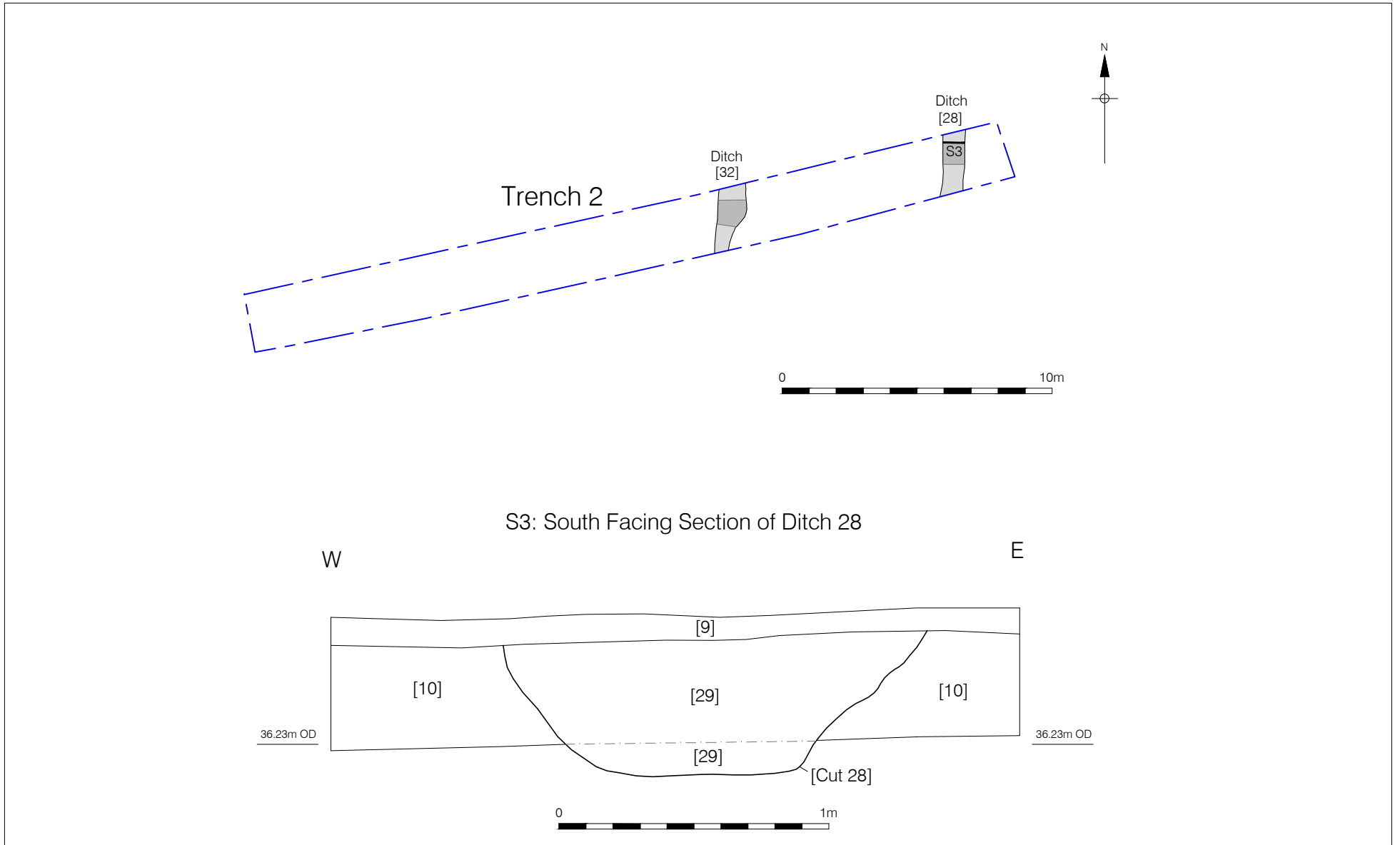


Figure 4
 Trench 2: Plan and Associated Section
 Plan 1:200, Section 1:20 at A4

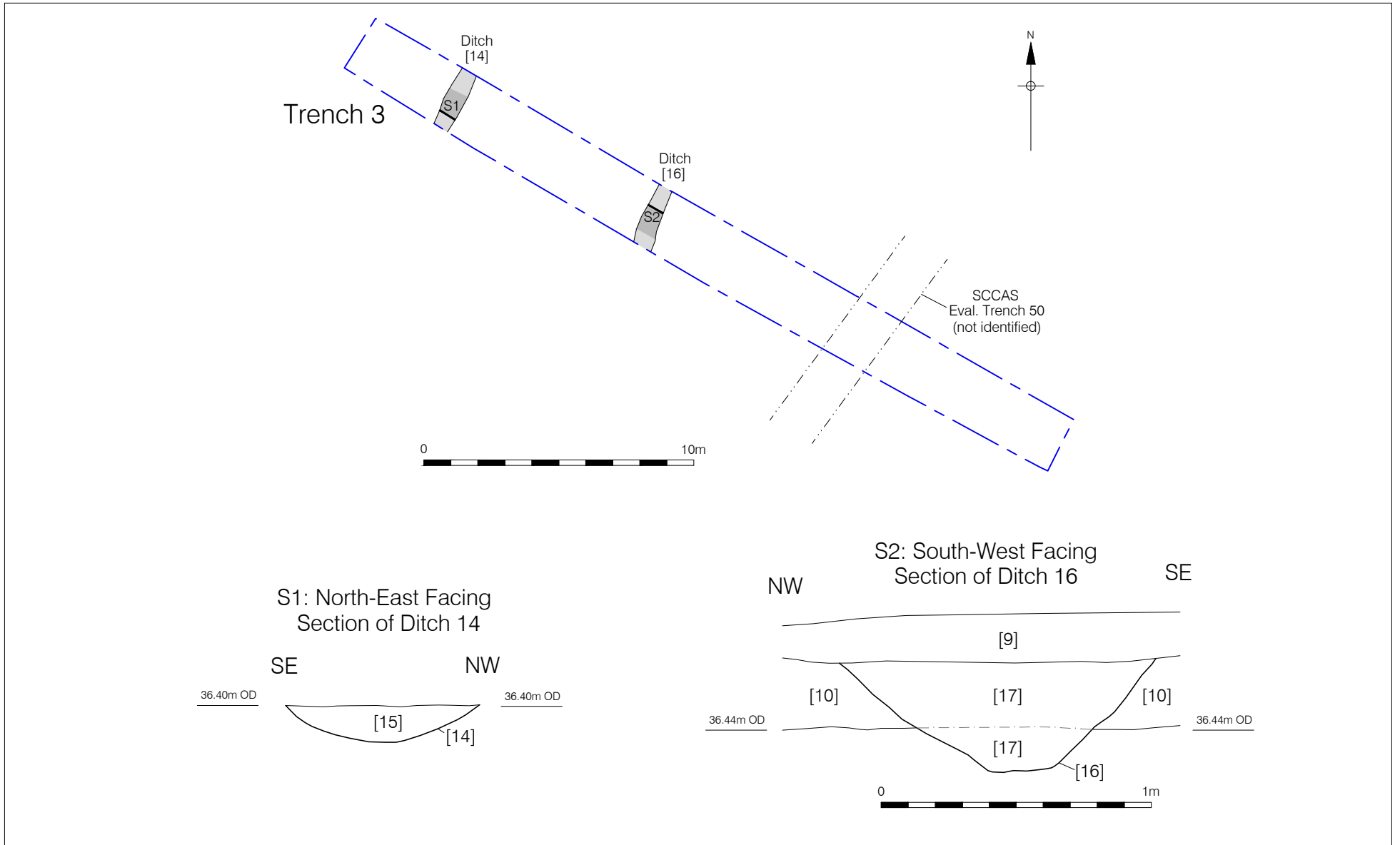


Figure 4
 Trench 2: Plan and Associated Section
 Plan 1:200, Sections 1:20 at A4

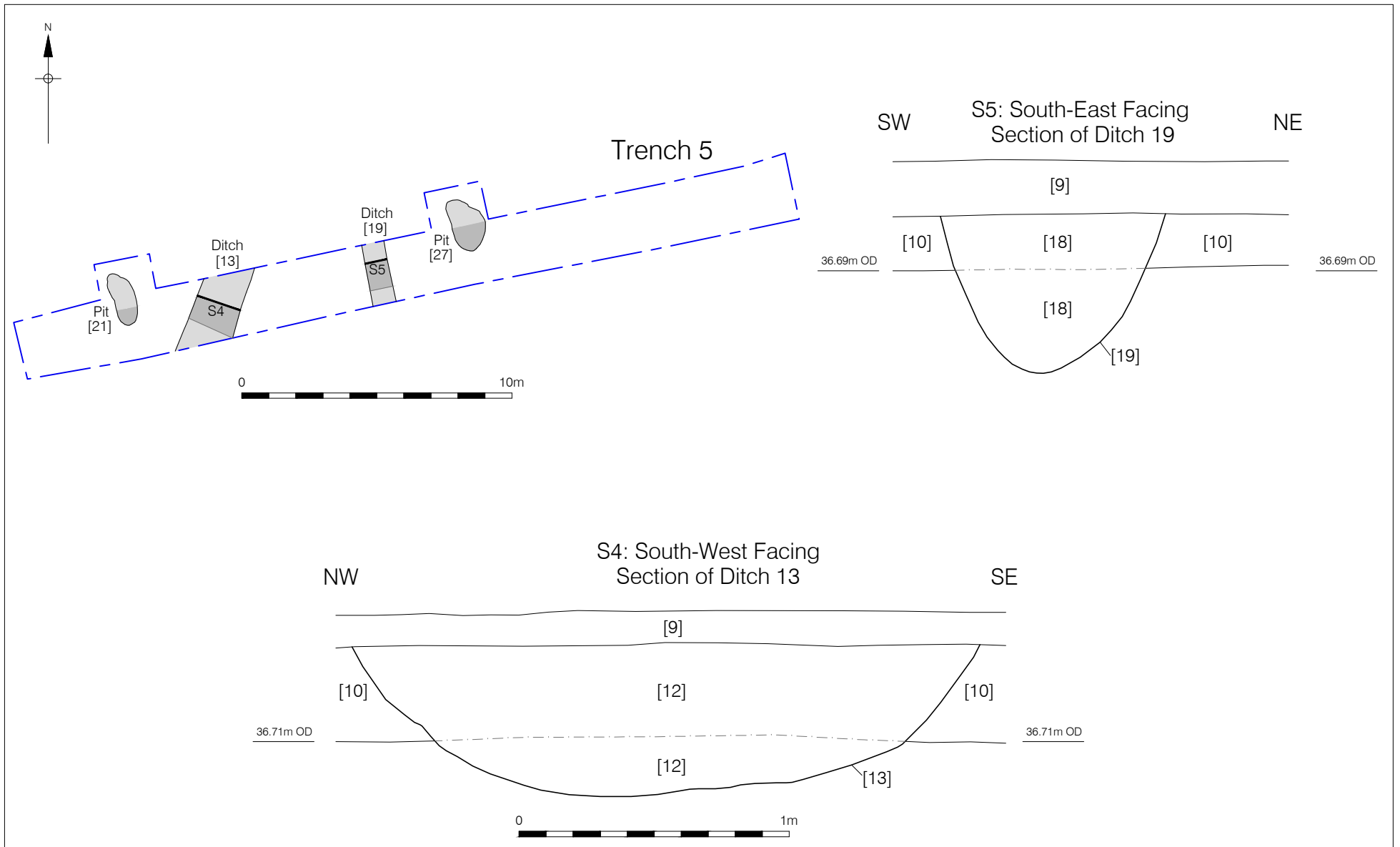


Figure 6
 Trench 5: Plan and Associated Sections
 Plan 1:200, Sections 1:20 at A4

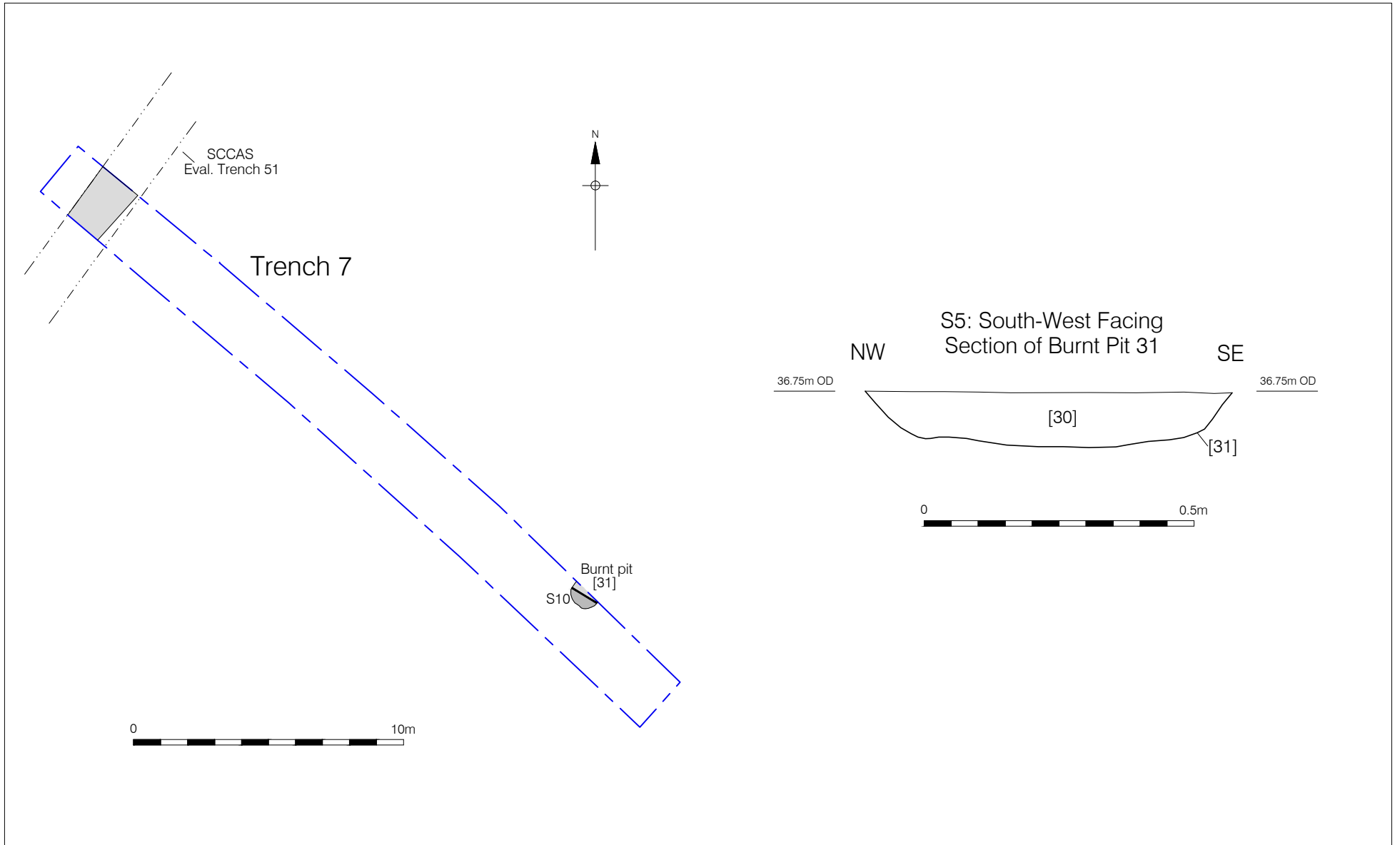


Figure 7
 Trench 7: Plan and Associated Section
 Plan 1:200, Section 1:10 at A4

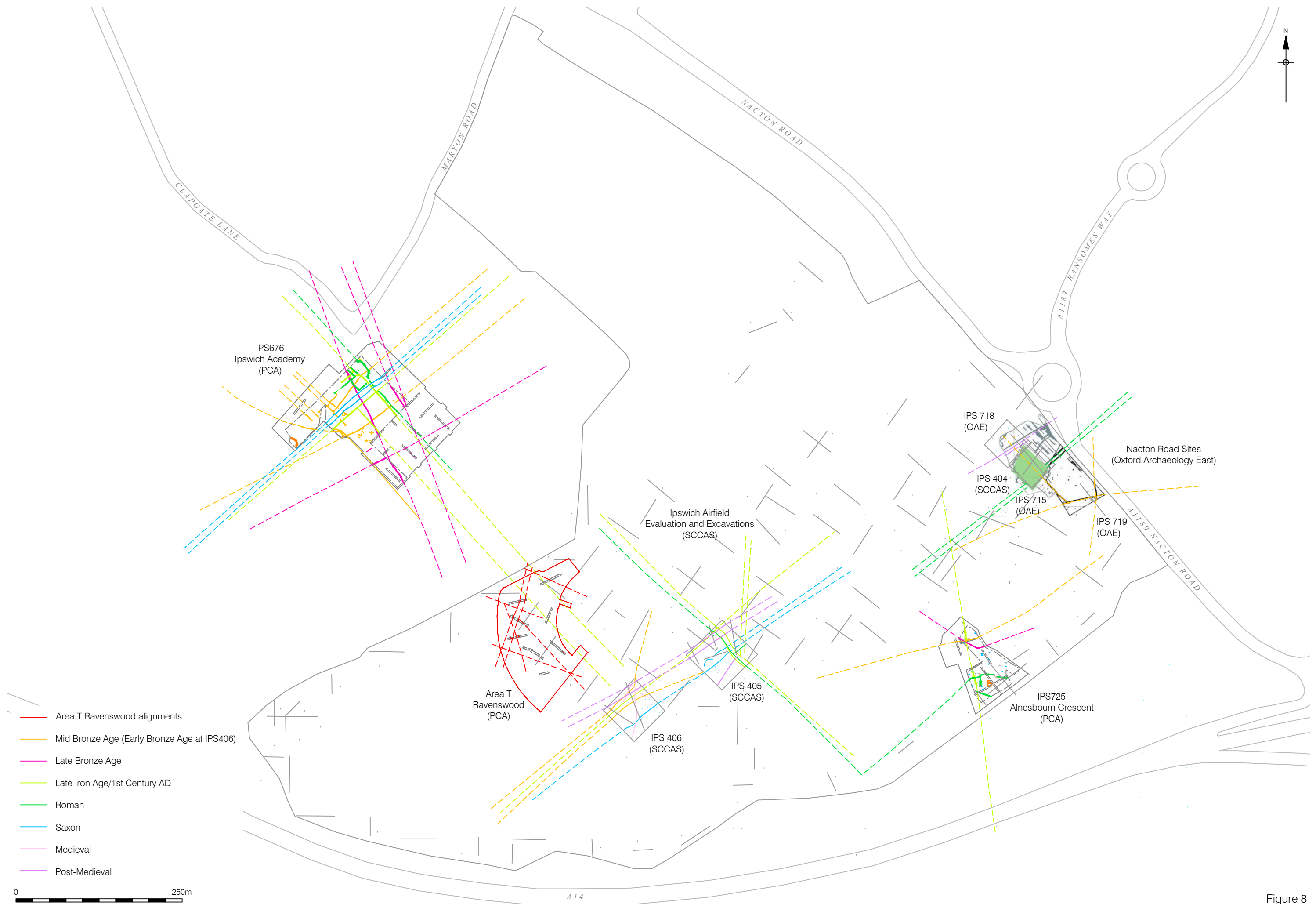
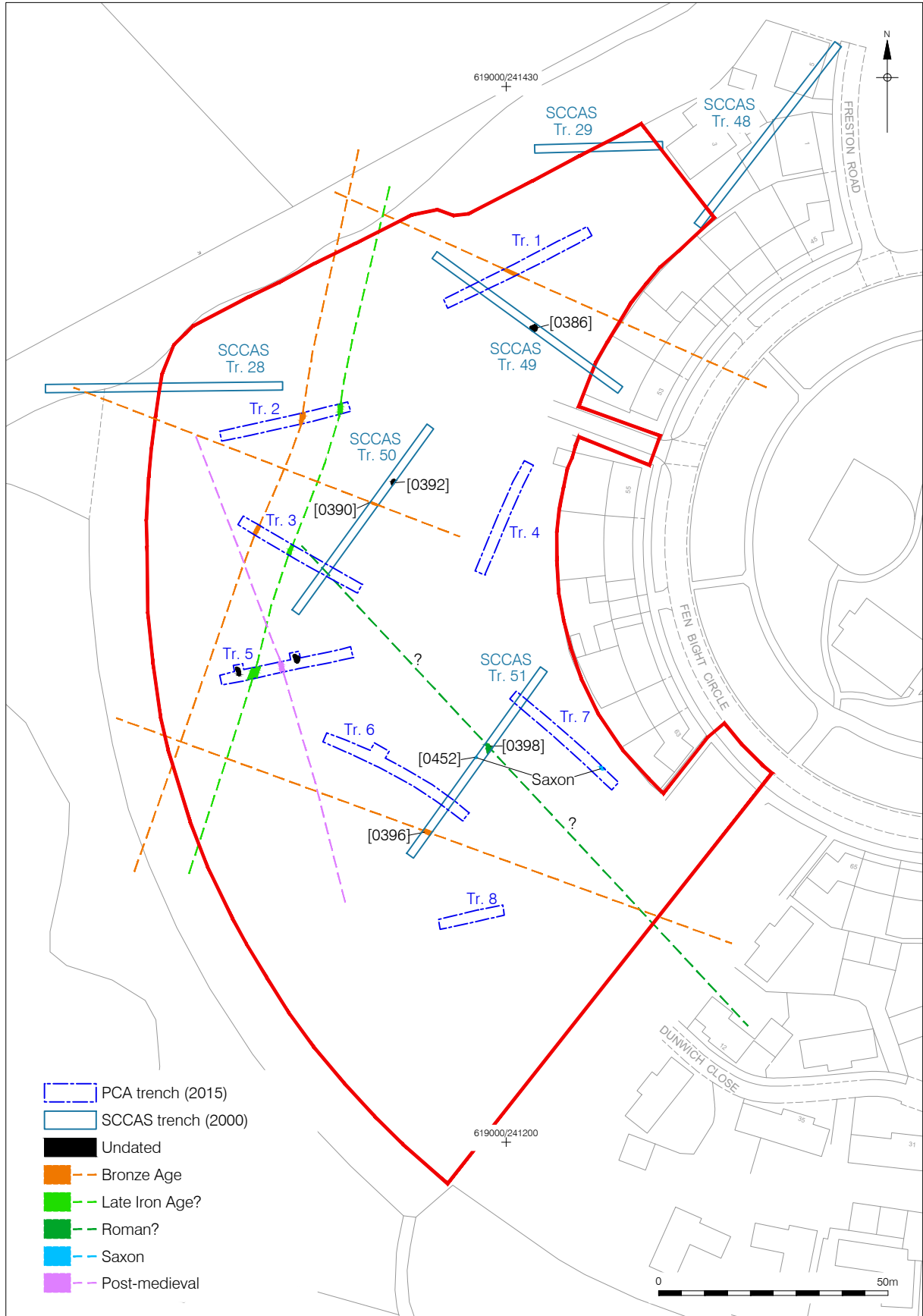


Figure 8
 Area T Ravenswood and Adjacent Sites with extrapolated ditch alignments
 1:5,000 at A3



Digital data supplied by the Client.
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 13/01/2015 AMB

Figure 9
 Suggested Phasing
 1:1,250 at A4

10 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1, view north-east



Plate 2: Ditch [16], Trench 3, view north-east



Plate 3: Ditch [14], Trench 3, view south-west



Plate 4: Trench 4, view south-west (no features)



Plate 5: Ditch [13], Trench 5, view north-east



Plate 6: Trench 5, view east



Plate 7: Pit [31], Trench 7, view north-east



Plate 8: Trench 8, view west (no features)

11 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context Number	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Period/ Comments
IPS756	1	1	1	Trench		
IPS756	2	2	2	Trench		
IPS756	3	3	3	Trench		
IPS756	4	4	4	Trench		
IPS756	5	5	5	Trench		
IPS756	6	6	6	Trench		
IPS756	7	7	7	Trench		
IPS756	8	8	8	Trench		
IPS756	9	0	0	Layer	Topsoil	
IPS756	10	0	0	Layer	Subsoil	
IPS756	11	0	0	Layer	Natural	
IPS756	12	13	5	Fill	Ditch	
IPS756	13	13	5	Cut	Ditch	
IPS756	14	14	3	Cut	Ditch	
IPS756	15	14	3	Fill	Ditch	
IPS756	16	16	3	Cut	Ditch	
IPS756	17	16	3	Fill	Ditch	
IPS756	18	19	5	Fill	Ditch	Post-Medieval
IPS756	19	19	5	Cut	Ditch	Post-Medieval
IPS756	20	21	5	Fill	Natural	
IPS756	21	21	5	Cut	Natural	
IPS756	22	23	1	Fill	Trench	SCCAS Tr. 49
IPS756	23	23	1	Cut	Trench	SCCAS Tr. 49
IPS756	24	25	1	Fill	Ditch	
IPS756	25	25	1	Cut	Ditch	
IPS756	26	27	5	Fill	Natural	
IPS756	27	27	5	Cut	Natural	
IPS756	28	28	2	Cut	Ditch	
IPS756	29	28	2	Fill	Ditch	
IPS756	30	31	7	Fill	Pit	Saxon?
IPS756	31	31	7	Cut	Pit	Saxon?
IPS756	32	32	2	Cut	Ditch	

Site Code	Context Number	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Period/ Comments
IPS756	33	32	2	Fill	Ditch	

12 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-199041

Project details

Project name Ravenswood, Ipswich, Area T Evaluation

Short description of the project An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk (centred on NGR TM 1896 4131) between the 7th and 8th January 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to the development of the site. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. The evaluation found a series of ditches, located mainly in the north and west of the site. These contained almost no finds. However, based on the results of other excavations in the Ravenswood area, some of them may be later prehistoric (Middle Bronze Age onwards), Iron Age, Roman and/ or Anglo-Saxon in date. As the ditches are outfield field boundaries, located away from settlement areas, the absence of associated cultural material is unsurprising. A charcoal-filled pit was present in Trench 7, towards the south-east of the site. This contained no finds, but identical pits have been identified at numerous excavated sites across the Suffolk coast and heaths and consistently return Early to Middle Saxon radiocarbon dates (c. 5th-9th century AD). Many of the ditches were visible at a high stratigraphic level, immediately below the modern topsoil. This probably reflects the heathland character of the local landscape, the non-intensive nature of historic land-use and the consequent absence of significant disturbance to archaeological levels from agricultural processes such as ploughing.

Project dates Start: 07-01-2015 End: 08-01-2015

Previous/future work Yes / Yes

Any associated project reference codes IPS 756 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference P/14/00564/FUL - Planning Application No.

codes

Any associated IPS 399 - Related HER No.
project reference
codes

Type of project Field evaluation
Site status None
Current Land use Grassland Heathland 1 - Heathland
Monument type DITCH Uncertain
Monument type PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds STRUCK FLINT Late Prehistoric
Methods & "Sample Trenches"
techniques
Development type Housing estate
Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England
Site location SUFFOLK IPSWICH IPSWICH Area T, Ravenswood, Nacton Road,
Ipswich
Postcode IP39UZ
Study area 0 Hectares
Site coordinates TM 1896 4131 52.0263638968 1.19208022632 52 01 34 N 001 11 31
E Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 36.12m Max: 37.00m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Organisation
Project brief Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Officer
originator
Project design CgMs Consulting
originator

Project director/manager Taleyna Fletcher

Project supervisor Tom Woolhouse

Type of Developer sponsor/funding body

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Suffolk County Council

Physical Archive ID IPS 756

Physical Contents "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County Council

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Digital Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey"

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Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County Council

Paper Archive ID IPS 756

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography

1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title Area T, Ravenswood, Ipswich, Suffolk: Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Woolhouse, T.

Other bibliographic Report No. R11945

details

Date 2015

Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology

Place of issue or Pampisford
publication

Description 50 page bound A4 typed report with 8 figures, 8 colour photos and
three appendices

Entered by Tom Woolhouse (twoolhouse@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 12 January 2015

OASIS:

Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice

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2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

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