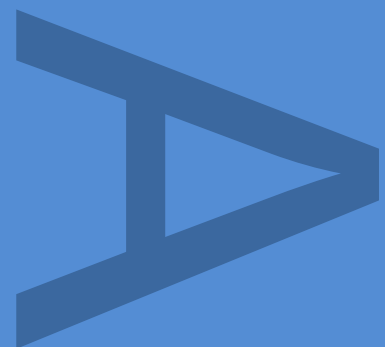


**Land at Land at 21 to 35 Great
North Road, Eaton Socon,
Cambridgeshire:**

**An Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation**

May 2015

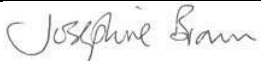
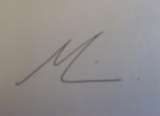


LAND AT LAND AT 21 TO 35 GREAT NORTH ROAD,
EATON SOCON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
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	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Matthew Lees		May 2015
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		May 2015
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		May 2015
Project Manager Sign-off:	Mark Hinman		May 2015

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
The Granary
Rectory Farm
Brewery Road
Pampisford
Cambridgeshire
CB22 3EN

Land at 21 to 35 Great North Road, Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire:

An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: Huntingdonshire District Council

Planning Reference: 1401634FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 1691 5809

HER Number: ECB4416

Site Code: CGNE15

Report No. R12081

Written and researched by: Matthew Lees
Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project Manager: Mark Hinman

Commissioning Client: Lidl UK GmbH

Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Central Office
The Granary, Rectory Farm
Brewery Road, Pampisford
Cambridgeshire
CB22 3EN

Tel: 01223 845522

E-mail: mhinman@pre-construct.com

Website: www.pre-construct.com

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of a seven trench (80.5m) archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on Land at 21 to 35 Great North Road, Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire P E19 8EN, centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 1691 5809) from the 21st to the 23rd of April 2015. The work was commissioned by Lidl UK GmbH in advance of the construction of the 0.666 Hectare (ha) proposed development for a new LIDL supermarket, with associated warehousing and carpark. The aim of the work was to characterise 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.

The evaluation identified evidence for Late Roman (late 3rd to 4th century) settlement activity in the form of pits and ritual activity in the form of placed structured finds deposition as well as multiple different alignments of field boundaries or enclosures. Late Saxon to medieval (9th-12th century) pottery was recovered from a single pit towards the southern half of the site while the later component of the site was represented by post-medieval (18th-19th century) activity in the form of pits, postholes and ditches as well as a brick built sub-rectangular wall foundation likely to from the foundation of a roadside cottage.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at 21 to 35 Great North Road, Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire, PE19 8EN, centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 1691 5809) from the 21st to the 23rd of April 2015 (Figure 1, Plate 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by Lidl UK GmbH in advance of the construction of the 0.666 Hectare (ha) proposed development for a new LIDL supermarket, with attached warehousing, bakery and storage within a single building, as well as a 78 space car park with attendant access and landscaping (Planning ref 1401634FUL). The evaluation was conducted in response to an archaeological brief written by Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCCHET, Stewart 2015).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne & Mark Hinman of PCA (Morgan Shelbourne & Hinman 2015) and monitored by Gemma Stewart (CCCHET).
- 1.4 The broad aim of the evaluation was to identify, excavate and record 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.
- 1.5 Further aims of the evaluation were to provide sufficient information to enable the formulation of a suitable management/investigation strategy for the site's heritage assets, in light of the current development proposals and to provide a predictive model of the archaeological remains present and likely to be present on the site and include an appraisal of their significance.
- 1.6 Seven trial trenches totalling 80.5m were excavated and recorded during the evaluation.

- 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 at the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Stores.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

- 2.1.1 The underlying bedrock geology of the site comprised Oxford Clay Formation (Mudstone), a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 156 to 165 million years ago in the Jurassic Period (British Geological Survey).
- 2.1.2 Superficial deposits across the west of the site were identified as river terrace deposits of sand and gravel.
- 2.1.3 Topsoil deposits (100) were identified as dark grey sandy silt with flint, gravel and modern material inclusions. Subsoil deposits (101) were identified as mid-brown silty clay.
- 2.1.4 The natural geological horizon (102) was identified as a mixture of sandy gravel and sandy, gravelly clay during the evaluation. These deposits are likely the river terrace deposits of the Great River Ouse to the east of the site.

2.2 Topography

- 2.2.1 The site is located on the southern edge of the Cambridgeshire village of Eaton Socon, within the parish of St Neots (Figure 1).
- 2.2.2 The site was located on Great North Road, immediately to the north of the A428 and adjacent to the A1. Industrial, retail and hotel units were located to the west, north and east of the site.
- 2.2.3 The site comprises a former car garage and show room in the southern half of the site and four house plots with associated open space and car parking to in the northern part of the site 0.666 ha (Plate 1).
- 2.2.4 The site is broadly flat, located at between 17.5m and 19.5m Over Datum (OD). This information is taken from survey undertaken during the evaluation.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The archaeological background has been taken from the WSI for the evaluation (Morgan-Shelbourne & Hinman 2015) and the Brief (Stewart 2014) both of which utilised the data resulting from a 1km radius Historic Environment Record (HER) search of the 'study area' or site.
- 3.1.2 The proposed development area is located at the southern end of the historic Cambridgeshire village of Eaton Socon, in the parish of St Neots.
- 3.1.3 The development site lies within a multi-period landscape in an area of high archaeological potential.
- 3.1.4 Archaeological investigations undertaken to the immediate north and west of the site have revealed extensive evidence for Neolithic activity (HER 00369), as well as Roman activity (HER 11778, MCB 16504, MCB18207, ECB3052). Evidence for Saxon settlement (HER: MCB16504, ECB1965, ECB2719) has also been identified in the area.
- 3.1.5 In addition, investigations to the south-east have revealed further evidence of Neolithic and Romano-British occupation (MCB16709, MCB16710).

3.2 Mesolithic and Neolithic

- 3.2.1 A dense scatter of Mesolithic flints (HER 00373) was discovered to the north-east of the site, on the bank of the River Great Ouse. This assemblage included blades, flakes cores and an anvil.
- 3.2.2 A Neolithic Hearth (HER 00369) was revealed to the north of the site, at Little End. This contained burnt and fire affected stones, potsherds and flint flacks.

3.3 Roman

- 3.3.1 A possible Roman villa (HER 04253) is visible as a cropmark to the north-east of the site, on the north bank of the River Great Ouse at Barford Road, Eynesbury. This is adjacent to another villa site to the north-east (MCB 12803).

- 3.3.2 Roman field systems are present in close proximity to the site (HER 11778) as well as a potential metalled Roman road near 'The Bell' public house located nearby to the site area, to the north.
- 3.3.3 The Roman site of Priors Gate (Gibson 2005) was directly to the north of the site (MCB 16504). Boundary ditches, enclosures, roads and possible graves were identified through geophysical survey and subsequent archaeological evaluation and excavation. The site comprised large number of ditches, forming field systems, rind gullies, enclosures and a droveway. Settlement evidence was represented by refuse pits, a possible hearth and the quantity of pottery and animal bone. Evidence for industry was represented by pits thought to be a shallow watering holes and tanning/dying pit. Other features included a large number of quarry pits, as well as two possible grave cuts. This site clearly demonstrated evidence for settlement activity.
- 3.3.4 The Alpha park excavations (Figure 3, Foundations Archaeology 2007) located to the south-west of the site, were carried out in 2007 (MCB18207). The excavations identified Roman field boundaries, enclosures and pit that yielded animal bone and pottery dated from the 1st century to the 4th century. This activity was identified as rural and agricultural in nature.
- 3.3.5 The Bell Public House evaluation immediately to the north of the site (Fairbairn 2008, ECB3052) identified evidence of Romano-British activity.

3.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 3.4.1 As part of a multi-period site, investigations to the immediate west of the proposed development site at Alpha Park revealed significant evidence of archaeological features relating to Saxon settlement (MCB18207). An initial evaluation in 2001 recorded the presence of a pit, interpreted as a Saxon sunken feature building (SFB) and further investigation in 2007 confirmed the presence of more contemporary remains including a large pit with associated postholes, representing another sunken feature building (Foundations Archaeology 2007). The occurrence of the SFB, and another possible SFB at the western side of the site suggested that there was a high probability of evidence of Saxon settlement activity continuing to the north

and/or east of Alpha Park, potentially continuing into the proposed development area.

3.4.2 The Castle Hills complex (HER 00374) is located to the north of the study site, on a gravel terrace on the western bank of the River Great Ouse. Castle Hills is a Norman ringwork castle, possibly established by Geoffrey de Mandeville during his war with King Steven during the anarchy of the 1140's.

3.4.3 The castle ringwork overlies part of the late Saxon village and medieval village which was deserted, at least in part, to make way for the stronghold. This included at least 40 Anglo-Saxon burials being uncovered in the north ward, some of which were overlain by dressed stone and rubble debris that may have related to a church that serviced the village, as well as two substantial domestic buildings that were excavated in 1962. The ringwork was used subsequently as the site of a windmill. The full extent of the settlement is not known but it has been estimated that it extended at least 100m to the west of the outer ditch of the castle. Study of the pottery assemblage, which included St Neots ware, shows that the settlement began as a village as early as the 9th century, prospered in the 11th century and continued after the Conquest of 1066 before being abandoned in the mid-12th century.

3.4.4 St Mary's Church, originally founded in the 14th century (HER 00371) is present to the north of the study site, although it was gutted by fire in 1930 before being partially rebuilt by Sir Albert Richardson.

3.5 Post-Medieval to Modern

3.5.1 Sue Jarrett has extensively written about the development of the hamlet of Little End, where the site is located, in the 2002 Eaton Community Association publication 'Little End: The Life of a Hamlet in Eaton Socon Parish'. This details the development of the site and the area to the immediate north and south from 1799 to 2002. The following information has been taken largely verbatim but also summarised from this (Jarrett 2002).

3.5.2 The Enclosure act at the end of the 18th century in Eaton Socon turned once open fields into individual plots of land along the western edge of the Great

North Road. Ten structures were recorded at Little End at the time of Enclosure.

- 3.5.3 Significant changes occurred in Little End up to 1841. The hamlet, still on the west side of the Great North Road, had grown considerably and in the 1841 Census 131 people were recorded in 24 households (Jarrett 2002).
- 3.5.4 In the 1830's the St Neots Brewery bought more land and rebuilt the Bell Pub on a new site (Jarrett 2002). Although a new building was built in the 1930's and subsequently demolished in the early 21st century, this new site was at the northernmost end of the hamlet and the pub remained on that site ever since.
- 3.5.5 All the Brewery land and buildings in the hamlet were sold in 1840 (including the old Bell Pub). The older Bell Public House was now a farmhouse (Jarrett 2002).
- 3.5.6 The hamlet continued to grow during the mid-19th century. In the 1861 Census 142 people were recorded in 30 households (Jarrett 2002).
- 3.5.7 On the west side of the Great North Road the development continued with the population centred between the two public houses. From the 1860's the hamlet of Little End slowly declined. In the 1901 Census only 45 people were recorded in 12 houses (Jarrett 2002).
- 3.5.8 Throughout this period Bell Farm expanded. All the agricultural workers houses between the two pubs were demolished and by 1881 only three of the older houses still remained and can be seen on the 1880's OS Map. However, by 1891 these too had gone (Jarrett 2002).
- 3.5.9 From 1900 onwards the decline of this hamlet continued. The homes, public houses and farms were owned by just five people by 1910. The 1830's Bell Public House and its associated stables and other farm buildings were demolished in the 1930's and replaced with a newer Public House further back from the road frontage. A row of three terraced houses standing alongside the road were replaced by the two semi-detached houses

currently standing today. One more house was built in the 1930's – 25 Great North Road (Jarrett 2002).

3.5.10 By the 1950's the Great North Road was widened and straightened. Three homes were demolished and the road levelled. By 1960 there were only nine dwellings left in the hamlet (Jarrett 2002).

3.5.11 Following the demolition of the Bell Public House, the evaluation immediately to the north of the site in advance of construction of a KFC and Costa coffee (Fairbairn 2008, ECB3052) revealed that the site and area to the north seemed to have been turned over to agricultural activity until the late 18th Century with pottery suggesting a possible building on or near the site in the late 18th century. This corresponds with the narrative of Little End from the act of Enclosure throughout the post-medieval period.

3.5.12 The Alpha park excavations (Figure 3, Foundations Archaeology 2007) located to the south-west of the site were carried out in 2007 (MCB18207). As well as the Roman archaeology identified during excavations an extensive system of post-medieval land division in the form of ditches and postholes were identified.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General

4.1.1 Seven 1.8m wide trenches totalling 80.5m were investigated across the site (Figure 2 & 3).

4.2 Machining and Site Planning

4.2.1 Each trench was excavated using and 14 tonne wheeled mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. The overlying topsoil (100), modern (108) and subsoil (101) deposits were excavated in spits down to the archaeological horizon or the natural geological horizon (102), whichever came first.

4.2.2 Exposed archaeological features and deposits were cleaned as necessary to define them using hand tools.

4.2.3 Metal-detecting was carried out on all stripped deposits throughout the evaluation process and all archaeological features and spoil heaps were surveyed by metal-detector as they were encountered.

4.2.4 Limits of all excavation areas, pre-excavation and post-excavation plans of archaeological features and heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) were recorded using a Leica 1200 Global positioning System (GPS) rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.

4.2.5 Upon completion of the evaluation all seven trenches were backfilled and reinstated (Plate 10).

4.3 Recording Methodology

4.3.1 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).

4.3.2 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.

- 4.3.3 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 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]. These conventions are continued throughout the report.
- 4.3.4 Drawn records are in the form of survey plans, drawn plans and section drawings of all archaeological features at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) while all individual deposits and cuts were recorded as written records on PCA Pro-forma context sheets.
- 4.3.5 Linear features were investigated by means of slots excavated across their width, positioned to avoid areas of intercutting/disturbance in order to provide uncontaminated finds assemblages. If stratigraphic relationships between features were not visible in plan, slots were positioned to determine inter-feature relationships.
- 4.3.6 Discrete features such as pits and postholes were 50% excavated.
- 4.3.7 Certain features were left unexcavated or only partially excavated either where it was felt that the features were difficult to determine form and size or where the modernity of the features based on the height they were cut from or the modern inclusions of the deposits.
- 4.3.8 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits.
- 4.3.9 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (ClfA 2014; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).

4.3.10 Where appropriate, environmental samples of between (usually 40 Litres) were taken from well dated Roman features to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described and analysed and to recover any macro-fossil evidence from the deposits. Samples were taken from the fills of features where organic materials may be preserved, such as pits and ditches. A total of three samples were taken during the evaluation.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated. This includes information on depths of overlying deposits, lengths of trenches and heights over datum of the natural geological horizon. Topsoil, modern deposits and subsoil measurements represent the thickness of the deposit while the natural geological horizon is a measurement from the top of the topsoil to the base of the trench and therefore should equal the overlying deposits combined.
- 5.1.2 Features and deposits are described from west to east or south to north depending on the alignment of the trench. Where stratigraphic relationships exist between features they are discussed from the earliest feature to the latest feature. Archaeological features and deposits were sealed by the modern deposits (108) or the subsoil (101), unless otherwise stated.
- 5.1.3 Parts of the site were heavily truncated by modern construction deposits that obscured the natural geological horizon in parts of the site. This was due to live services such as drains and cables currently still in use.
- 5.1.4 The evaluation identified evidence for Late Roman (late 3rd to 4th century) settlement activity in the form of pits and ritual activity in the form of placed structured finds deposition as well as multiple different alignments of field boundaries or enclosures. Late Saxon to medieval (9th-12th century) pottery was recovered from a single pit towards the southern half of the site while the later component of the site was represented by post-medieval (18th-19th century) activity in the form of pits, postholes and ditches as well as a brick built sub-rectangular wall foundation likely to from the foundation of a roadside cottage.

5.2 Trench 1 (Figures 2 & 4, Plates 2-4)

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 contained the north-east to south-west aligned Ditch [107] which was truncated by pit [107].
- 5.2.2 Ditch [107] (Figure 4, Plates 2-4) was north-east to south-west aligned,

located towards the south-eastern end of the trench and was curvilinear with sharply sloping sides and a concave base, measuring between 0.4m and 0.6m wide and up to 0.32m deep. It had a single deliberately deposited fill (107) of dark grey sandy silt with moderate flint and gravel inclusions that contained eleven sherds (223g) of 4th century pottery (Anderson, section 6.1), a single large fragment (419g) of Roman ceramic brick (Anderson pers comm) and a Late Roman copper alloy crenelated bracelet (SF1, Beveridge, Section 6.3). Most significantly, the ditch contained a structured deposition of animal bone comprising a layered assemblage of a pair of cattle tibia, two cattle-size thoracic vertebrae, an adult dog skull (laid upside down i.e. teeth uppermost) and finally a cattle skull. The cattle bones have been identified as comprising at least two individuals. This same deposit also provided two cattle-size ribs, a cattle horncore, a pig loose incisor and part of a sheep tibia (Rielly, section 6.4). Ditch [107] was truncated by Pit [105].

5.2.3 Ditch [107] is significant in that not only represents a continuation of the field boundaries or enclosures of the site to the west (Figure 3, Foundations 2007) but it also demonstrates evidence for deliberate 'placed' or 'structured' deposition of animal bone, metalwork and pottery in the Late Roman period of the site suggesting a possible non-functional 'ritual' component to the site. It should not be discounted that this ditch may represent a feature of more significance than a field boundary or enclosure, it may represent a smaller ring ditch or gully or the location of a structure. This is all highly speculative at this stage of work however and would require further investigation.

5.2.4 Pit [105] (Figure 4, Plates 2-3) was located at the south-eastern end of the trench and was sub-circular with near vertical sides and a flat base, measuring 0.64m wide and 0.2m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (104) of mid-brown sandy silt clay with occasional gravel inclusions that contained three sherds (66g) of 9th to 12th century St-Neots-type ware pottery (Sudds, section 6.2) and three large fragments (3495g) of post-medieval brick (Anderson pers Comm). Pit [105] truncated Ditch [107].

5.2.5 The primary function of Pit [105] is not immediately apparent although it had clearly been used as a rubbish pit in at least a secondary function. While Pit

[105] is dated to the post-medieval period based on the bricks within (104), the 9th to 12th century pottery demonstrates a Saxon or medieval component to the site. The presence of the pottery evidences some form of activity on or around the site during the Late Saxon or early medieval periods.

TRENCH 1	Figures 2 & 4	Plates 2-4	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 9m	Level of Natural(m OD): 18.35m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)	
		SE End	NW End
Modern (Thickness)	(108)	0.3m	0.15m
Subsoil (Thickness)	(101)	0.3m	-
Natural (Depth)	(102)	0.6m+	-
Summary			
Trench 1 was located towards the south-west of the site. Trench 1 was only machined to the natural geological horizon in the south-east of the trench due to modern construction deposits obscuring the north-west of the trench.			
Trench 1 contained two archaeological features. The north-east to south-west aligned Ditch [107] which was truncated by pit [107].			

(Subsequently (T)= Thickness (D)= Depth)

5.3 Trench 2 (Figure 2 & 4, Plate 10)

5.3.1 Trench 2 contained two probable quarry pits [139] and [141].

5.3.2 Pit [139] (Figure 4) was located at the south-western end of the trench and was sub-circular with vertical sides and a flat base, measuring over 1.4m wide and 0.36m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (140) of dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions that contained no finds. Pit [139] was truncated by Pit [141] to the south-west.

5.3.3 Pit [141] (Figure 4) was located at the south-western end of the trench and was sub-circular with vertical sides and a flat base, measuring over 1.4m wide and 0.5m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (140) of dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent gravel inclusions that contained

no finds. Pit [141] truncated Pit [139] to the north-east.

5.3.4 While a date for the two pits in Trench 2 is currently unknown, there is strong evidence that both pits were excavated for gravel extraction. The natural geological horizon was identified as loose sandy pea gravel and gravel, likely part of the river terrace. These deposits would have been desirable as a raw material to the inhabitants of the area to the west of the Great River Ouse and would have likely been quarried in most periods. Therefore although these pits are undated they are still significant in demonstrating some of the activity to the south of Eaton Socon. Further excavation of these or other similar pits may produce evidence for dating.

TRENCH 2	Figures 2 & 4		Plates: 10	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 8m	Level of Natural(m OD): 18.16m-18.23m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)		
		SW End	NE End	
Modern (T)	(108)	0.47m	0.95m	
Subsoil (T)	(101)	0.43m	-	
Natural (D)	(102)	0.9m+	-	
Summary				
Trench 2 was located towards the south-east of the site. Trench 1 was only machined to the natural geological horizon in the south-west of the trench due to modern construction deposits and services obscuring the north-east of the trench.				
Trench 2 contained two archaeological features, two probable quarry pits [139] and [141].				

5.4 Trench 3 (Figure 2 & 5, Plate 5)

5.4.1 Trench 3 contained east to west aligned Ditches [110] and [114] and north-west to south-east aligned Ditch [112].

5.4.2 Ditch [110] (Figure 5) was east to west aligned, located towards the southern end of the trench and was linear with sharply sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 0.6m wide and 0.16m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (109) of mid-grey clayey silt with moderate gravel inclusions that contained no finds.

5.4.3 Ditch [114] (Figure 5, Plate 5) was east to west aligned, located towards the

centre of the trench and was linear with sharply sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 0.42m wide and 0.2m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (111) of dark brownish grey sandy silt with moderate flint and gravel inclusions that contained seven sherds (234g) of 4th century pottery (Anderson, section 6.1), five fragments of cattle and cattle sized bone (Rielly, section 6.4). Interestingly the Nene Valley colour-coated castor box in Ditch [114] revealed evidence for a least three post-firing perforations on the shoulder of the vessel. While this may be indicative of modification for secondary use, the holes are very roughly done and are perhaps more suggestive of the 'ritual' killing of the vessel. This possible ritual feature of the pottery in Ditch [114] coincides with the structured deposition within Ditch [107] and adds to the idea of a non-functional or ritual type of activity on the site.

5.4.4 Ditch [112] (Figure 5) was north-west to south-east aligned, located towards the northern end of the trench and was linear with sharply sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 0.42m wide and 0.2m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (111) of mid-grey clayey silt with moderate gravel inclusions that contained no finds. The north-west to south-east alignment of Ditch [112] respects the north-east to south-west alignment of Ditch [120] in Trench 6 to the north. It may be that these two ditches either form an enclosure or are components of the same system of field boundaries.

5.4.5 While Ditches [110] and [112] contained no finds, they can be tentatively ascribed a Roman date. This is based on the similar morphology and alignment to Late Roman Ditch [114]. These ditches most likely represent a continuation of the Roman land division of boundaries and enclosures identified on the Alpha Park site (Figure 3, Foundations 2007) to the south-west and the Bell Inn site to the north (Fairbairn 2008).

TRENCH 3	Figure 2 & 5		Plate 5	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 12m	Level of Natural(m OD): 17.82m-17.87m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)		
		SW End	NE End	
Topsoil (T)	(100)	0.35m	0.38m	

Subsoil (T)	(101)	0.2m	0.4m
Natural (D)	(102)	0.55m+	0.78m+
Summary			
<p>Trench 3 was located towards the north-west of the site. Trench 3 was only machined to a length of 12m. The trench plan stipulated a length of 25m but due to access issues and ambiguous current land ownership it was extended further north and left short.</p> <p>Trench 3 contained three archaeological features. The east to west aligned Ditches [110] and [114] and one north-west to south-west aligned Ditch [112].</p>			

5.5 Trench 4 (Figure 2 & 5)

5.5.1 Trench 4 was heavily truncated by modern disturbance and construction deposits and while the natural geological horizon was reached in places, no archaeological activity was identified.

TRENCH 4	Figure 2 & 5		
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 15.5m	Level of Natural(m OD): 18.03m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)	
		SE End	NW End
Modern (T)	(108)	0.77m	0.95m
Subsoil (T)	(101)	0.25m	-
Natural (D)	(102)	1.02	0.95
Summary			
<p>Trench 4 was located towards the centre of the site.</p> <p>Trench 4 contained no archaeological deposits.</p>			

5.6 Trench 5 (Figure 2 & 6, Plate 6)

5.6.1 Trench 5 contained Posthole [116] and Posthole [118].

5.6.2 Pit [116] (Figure 6, Plate 6) was located at the north-western end of the trench and was sub-circular with sharply sloping sides and a concave base, measuring 0.36m wide and 0.2m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (115) of dark grey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained one sherd (8g) of 18th to 19th century pottery (Sudds, section 6.1, and a single fragment of cat mandible (Rielly, section 6.4).

5.6.3 Pit [118] (Figure 6, Plate 6) was located at the north-western end of the trench and was sub-circular with sharply sloping sides and a concave base, measuring over 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (117) of mid-grey silt sand with frequent gravel inclusions that contained post-medieval to modern glass and brick and a (complete cast) copper alloy tack or nail that may be Roman but more likely of a later date based on the context (SF2, Beveridge, Section 6.3).

5.6.4 Posthole [116] and Pit [118] represent clear evidence for post-medieval activity to the south of Structure 103 in Trench 7. While this activity is undefined in its function it is clear that the site is occupied in the post-medieval period.

TRENCH 5	Figures 2 & 6	Plate 6	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 8.5m	Level of Natural(m OD): 18.89m	
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)	
		SW End	NE End
Topsoil (T)	(100)	0.64m	0.47m
Subsoil (T)	(101)	0.22m	0.18m
Natural (D)	(102)	0.86m+	0.65m+
Summary			
Trench 5 was located towards the centre of the site. Trench 5 was rotated from its original axis of north-west to south-east due to issues of access.			
Trench 5 contained Posthole [116] and Posthole [118].			

5.7 Trench 6 (Figure 2 & 7, Plate 7 & 8)

5.7.1 Trench 6 contained a major north to south aligned boundary, the north-east to south-west aligned Ditch [120], Pits [136] and [132] and posthole [134]. Trench 6 also demonstrated evidence for modern disturbance.

5.7.2 Pit [136] (Figure 7, Plate 8) was located at the western end of the trench and was sub-circular with sharply sloping sides and a concave base, measuring over 0.62m wide and 0.42m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (135) of mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel and charcoal inclusions that contained four sherds (35g) of mid-3rd to 4th century

AD pottery (Anderson, section 6.1), and a single cattle and single sheep/goat (Rielly, section 6.4). Pit [136] was truncated by Posthole [134]. Pit [136] was largely obscured by the limit of excavation of the trench but the make-up of (135) and the finds within demonstrate that the deposit has been deliberately backfilled suggesting at least a secondary use of the pit as a rubbish pit.

- 5.7.3 Posthole [134] (Figure 7, Plate 8) was located at the western end of the trench and was circular with sharply sloping sides and a flat base, measuring over 0.42m wide and 0.28m deep. It had a single deliberately backfilled deposit (133) of dark blackish grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal and gravel inclusions that contained one sherd (2g) of 19th century pottery (Sudds, section 6.2). Posthole [134] truncated Pit [134]. The posthole itself indicates evidence for structures on the site although as it is a single structural feature it is difficult to determine whether it is part of a building or fencelike or other such structure. It is possible this posthole relates to the large quantity of post-medieval to modern posthole alignments identified on the Alpha Park site (Foundations 2007) to the south-west and west.
- 5.7.4 The pit and posthole identified at the western end of Trench 6 evidence settlement activity in the Late Roman period and the post-medieval in the north-western corner of the site.
- 5.7.5 Ditch [120] (Figure 7) was north-east to south-west aligned, located towards the western end of the trench and was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.46m wide and 0.22m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (119) of mid-brownish grey clayey silt with moderate gravel inclusions that contained one fragment of cattle sized bone (Rielly, section 6.4). Ditch [120] is undated but may tentatively be ascribed to the Roman period at this stage. The north-east to south-west alignment of Ditch [120] respects the north-west to south-east alignment of Ditch [112] in Trench 3 to the south. It may be that these two ditches either form an enclosure or are components of the same system of field boundaries.
- 5.7.6 Ditch [122] (Figure 7) was north to south aligned, located towards the centre of the trench and was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave

- base measuring over 0.46m wide and 0.21m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (121) of mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained no finds. Ditch [122] was truncated by Ditch [124].
- 5.7.7 Ditch [126] (Figure 7) was north to south aligned, located towards the centre of the trench and was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.74m wide and 0.36m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (125) of light brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained no finds. Ditch [126] was truncated by Ditches [128] and [124].
- 5.7.8 Ditch [130] (Figure 7) was north to south aligned, located towards the centre of the trench and was linear with moderately sloping sides and a concave base measuring over 0.46m wide and 0.21m deep. It had a single naturally accumulated fill (129) of light brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained no finds. Ditch [130] was truncated by Ditch [128].
- 5.7.9 Ditch [124] (Figure 7) was north to south aligned, located towards the centre of the trench and was linear with near vertical sides and a flat base measuring 0.62m wide and 0.24m deep. It had a single deliberately deposited fill (123) of dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained seven sherds (44g) of 18th to 19th century pottery (Sudds, section 6.2) and four fragments (9g) of clay pipe stem. Ditch [124] truncated Ditches [122] and [126].
- 5.7.10 Ditch [128] (Figure 7) was north to south aligned, located towards the centre of the trench and was linear with sharply sloping sides and a concave base measuring 0.6m wide and 0.24m deep. It had a single deliberately deposited fill (127) of mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions that contained no finds. Ditch [124] truncated Ditches [126] and [130].
- 5.7.11 The major boundary (Figure 7, Plate 7) located towards the centre of the trench was comprised of several phases of ditch. The earliest four ditches are likely to have been Roman, despite there being no dateable finds within the fills of the ditches. It appears to be a reinstated north to south boundary of a number of phases. It has been tentatively dated on its respective north to

south alignment that likely is related to the east to west aligned ditches within Trench 3 to the south-west. These ditches are also sealed by the subsoil while the majority of the other later post-medieval features appeared to truncate the subsoil during machining. The latest component of this boundary was clearly post-medieval and cut from quite high up in the sequence. It is clear that although adjacent it is much later in date to the other ditches.

5.7.12 Pit [132] (Figure 7) was located at the eastern end of the trench and was sub-circular with imperceptible sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 0.8m wide and 0.33m deep. It had a single fill (131) of dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional gravel and charcoal inclusions that contained no finds.

TRENCH 6		Figure 2 & 7		Plate 7 & 8	
Trench Alignment: E-W		Length: 19m		Level of Natural(m OD): 17.66m-17.8m	
Deposit		Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)		
			W End	E End	
Topsoil (T)		(100)	0.48m	0.45m	
Subsoil (T)		(101)	0.42m	0.2m	
Natural (D)		(102)	0.9m+	0.65m+	
Summary					
Trench 6 was located towards the north-west of the site.					
Trench 6 contained nine archaeological features. A major north-to south aligned boundary, the north-east to south-west aligned Ditch [120], Pits [136] and [132] and posthole [134]. Trench 6 also demonstrated evidence for modern disturbance.					

5.8 Trench 7 (Figure 2 & 7, Plate 9)

5.8.1 Trench 7 contained a single post-medieval sub-rectangular brick constructed wall foundation (Figure 2 & 7).

5.8.2 Structure 103 (Figure 7, Plate 9), was a sub rectangular post-medieval brick structure that was constructed through the subsoil at the south-eastern end of Trench 7. This structure may represent the remains of the post-medieval cottages that used to front onto the Great North Road into Eaton Socon

(Jarrett 2002; 6) that are known to have been demolished in the early 20th century in advance of the construction of the current houses on the site (Sketch map of Little End in 1881).

TRENCH 7	Figure 2 & 7		Plate 9	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 8.5m	Level of Natural(m OD): 17.74m-17.83m		
Deposit	Context No.	Average Thickness/Depth (m)		
		E End	NW End	
Topsoil (T)	(100)	0.3m	0.45m	
Subsoil (T)	(101)	-	0.23m	
Natural (D)	(102)	-	0.68m+	
<p>Summary</p> <p>Trench 7 was located towards the north-east of the site.</p> <p>Trench 7 contained a single post-medieval sub-rectangular brick constructed wall foundation.</p>				

6 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Roman Pottery

By Katie Anderson

Introduction

6.1.1 The evaluation yielded a small assemblage of Roman pottery totalling 22 sherds, weighing 492g and representing 0.94 EVEs (estimated vessel equivalent). All of the pottery was examined and recorded in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Perrin 2011) and using the standard terminology and codes advocated by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (Symonds 2002).

Assemblage Composition

6.1.2 The pottery comprised medium and large sherds, reflected in the relatively high mean weight of 22.36g, all of which dates to the Late Roman period, with an assemblage date range of AD300-400. Several different fabrics were identified, with Nene Valley colour-coated sherds and local shell-tempered wares the most frequently occurring.

Fabric	No.	Wt(g)
Colour-coat unsourced	1	30
Hadham reduced ware	1	18
Imitation black-burnished ware	3	29
Nene Valley colour-coat	8	254
Nene Valley greyware	1	29
Shell-tempered ware	8	132
TOTAL	22	492

Table 1: Roman Pottery by Fabric

6.1.3 Roman pottery was recovered from three features. Ditch [107] contained 11 sherds weighing 223g from fill (106). This included six shell-tempered sherds from three different jars, a sherd from a Nene Valley colour-coated imitation Dr38 bowl, dating to the 4th century AD. A further seven sherds weighing 234g were collected from Ditch [114], fill (113). These refitting sherds all derived from a Nene Valley colour-coated castor box, with

rouletted decoration, which dates to the 4th century AD. Interestingly, evidence for a least three post-firing perforations were noted on the shoulder of the vessel. While this may be indicative of modification for secondary use, the holes are very roughly done and are perhaps more suggestive of the 'ritual' killing of the vessel.

- 6.1.4 Finally Pit [136]/(135) contained four sherds weighing 35g, comprising a shell-tempered beaded, flanged bowl sherd, a further body sherd from a shell-tempered ware and two small sherds from an imitation black-burnished ware vessel.

Context	No.	Wt(g)	Spotdate
106	11	223	AD300-400
113	7	234	AD300-400
135	4	35	AD240-400

Table 2: Roman Pottery by Context

Discussion

- 6.1.5 Overall, the small size of the assemblage limits any significant discussion on the nature of Roman activity. That said, the pottery provides evidence of Late Roman activity, with material acquired from several sources. Perhaps the most interesting element of this assemblage is the partially complete Nene Valley colour-coated castor box, with three post-firing perforations.

6.2 Saxon, Medieval & Post-Medieval Pottery By Berni Sudds

- 6.2.1 A small assemblage of pottery dating to the Late Iron-Age/Roman, Late Saxon and post-medieval period was recovered during the evaluation amounting to 14 sherds, weighing 440g. The pottery from site has been provisionally identified and catalogued by sherd count and weight by context in Table 4. The fabrics were examined under x20 magnification and recorded using a system of mnemonic codes expanded below in Table 3. The Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics was followed for recording and the forms were identified in accordance with the Medieval Pottery Research Group's guide to the classification of forms (MPRG 1998, 2001).

Fabric Code	Common Name	Date Range	
MISC SAND	Miscellaneous sand, sandstone and iron oxide tempered ware	Late Iron Age	Early Roman?
NEOT	St Neots-type ware	850	1150
GRE	Glazed red earthenware	1580	1900
PMR	Post-medieval redware	1700	1900
ESW	English stoneware	1700	1900
CONP	Continental porcelain	1710	1900
PEAR BW	Pearlware with underglaze blue painted decoration	1770	1840
TPW	Transfer-printed ware	1780	1900
TPW3	Transfer-printed ware (black)	1810	1900
YELL	Yellow ware	1820	1900

Table 3: The Pottery Types

6.2.2 The St-Neots-type ware from (104) represents the earliest stratified material, potentially dating from as early as the mid-9th century, although occurring more frequently from the 10th century. A Miscellaneous sand-tempered thickened rim from a large thick-walled jar recovered from (123) is likely to represent a residual find, provisionally dated to the Late Iron-Age or Roman period. The vessel has a grey core and oxidised surfaces and is decorated with horizontal cordons, one of which is incised with short vertical lines.

6.2.3 The remainder of the assemblage is of post-medieval date, the majority dated to the 19th century. Of interest is the recovery of a Transfer-printed ware nursery plate with part of a rhyme or saying. With the exception of the residual jar sherd, which requires further identification, the small assemblage can be well-paralleled in the locality and broader region.

Context	Fabric code	Form code	Sherd count	Weight	Date range	Spot date
100	GRE	Large storage jar rim, clubbed.	1	177	1580 – 1900	1700 – 1900
104	NEOT	Jar base	2	62	850 – 1150	850 - 1150
	NEOT		1	4	850 – 1150	
115	BONE		Plate rim	1	8	1794 – 1900
123	MISC SAND	Jar rim	1	143	LIA – Roman?	1820 – 1900
	ESW	Bottle, body sherd	1	7	1700 – 1900	
	PEAR BW	Plate rim, shell-edged	1	3	1770 - 1840	
	TPW3	Nursery ware plate with word 'TOES' surviving. Black-transfer-print	1	2	1810 - 1900	
	TPW	Trees	1	3	1780 - 1900	
	CONP	Saucer	1	2	1710 – 1900	
	YELL		2	27	1820 - 1900	
133	PMR	Flowerpot?	1	2	1800 – 1900	1800 – 1900

Table 4: Distribution and Dating

6.3 Roman Metalwork

By Ruth Beveridge

6.3.1 Two objects of copper alloy were recovered during the evaluation and are catalogued below.

SF1, (106) [107]

6.3.2 Two pieces of a copper alloy bracelet, one large, one small, were recovered from (106), the fill of Ditch [107].

6.3.3 Its condition is fair with some corrosion, there are traces of what may be gilding on the flat sides of the bracelet. The front of the bracelet is decorated with crenellations; between each crenellation are sets of pointed tothing, three in each set. The crenellations vary slightly in size and are worn. At one end of the smaller piece of bracelet it splays slightly where a fastening joint may have been. The back of the bracelet is undecorated. It is rectangular in section. This type of bracelet dates from the late third century to fourth century (Crummy, 1983, pp 37). Similar examples have been found in Colchester, (Crummy, 1983, pp41, Fig.43, No. 1659) and Baldock (Stead and Rigby, 1986, pp126, Fig. 52, No. 170).

SF2, (117) [118]

6.3.4 A complete cast copper alloy tack or nail was recovered from fill (117) of pit [118]. The head is flat and ovoid in shape. The shaft is square in section and tapers to a tip that is damaged. The shaft is curved/bent from use. Similar types of tacks were used for furnishings in both Roman and later periods. Compare to Crummy (1983), pp115, Fig. 117, No.3057 and Margeson (1993), pp83, Fig.48, No. 534.

Discussion

6.3.5 The date of the crenelated bracelet correlates well with the date of the pottery from the same context. This type of Roman bracelet is predominantly of a later date; in the Baldock report Stead comments that they were not found in layers earlier than the fourth century (Stead, 1986, pp125). The copper alloy tack however, is of a type that is used from the Roman period onwards.

6.4 Faunal Remains

By Kevin Rielly

Introduction

- 6.4.1 Features with fills dated to the Late Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods revealed a small quantity of animal bones recovered by hand during excavation.

Methodology

- 6.4.2 The bone was recorded to species/taxonomic category where possible and to size class in the case of unidentifiable bones such as ribs, fragments of longbone shaft and the majority of vertebra fragments. Recording follows the established techniques whereby details of the element, species, bone portion, state of fusion, wear of the dentition, anatomical measurements and taphonomic including natural and anthropogenic modifications to the bone were registered. A concerted effort was undertaken to refit as many bones as possible, noting the actual number of fragments prior to refitting.

Description of faunal assemblage

- 6.4.3 The hand recovered collection was taken from six features and amounted to 28 bones, reducing to 22 after refitting. All of these bones are in very good condition with very little surface damage and with only limited fragmentation (most damage occurring during excavation). The site collection was provided by five out of the seven trenches, with the majority from Trenches 1, 3 and 6 with 12, 5 and 4 bones (refitted) respectively. Most of the bones were taken from dated deposits (Table 5) with the exception of single cattle-size fragments from two ditches [120] (a cervical vertebra) and [128] (a longbone shaft piece) in Trench 6.
- 6.4.4 19 out of the 22 bones making up this assemblage were derived from Late Roman fills, principally from (106) within curvilinear ditch (107] and (113) in East-West ditch [114]. The latter provided a near complete cattle mandible from a fully adult individual and, in contrast a tibia from a young calf, probably a neonate, no doubt representing an infant mortality and therefore evidence for local production. There were also three cattle-size ribs.

Date:	LR			LR All	PM	UD		UD All
Trench:	1	3	6		5	6		
Parent Context:	106	113	135		115	119	127	
Species								
Cattle	5	2	1	8				
Cattle-size	4	3		7		1	1	2
Sheep/Goat	1			1				
Pig	1			1				
Sheep-size			1	1				
Dog	1			1				
Cat					1			
Grand Total	12	5	2	19	1	1	1	2

Table 5: Species Distribution

(By date, trench and parent context using total fragment counts following refitting)

6.4.5 The collection from ditch [107] can best be described as a ‘structured’ deposit (Plate 4) comprising a layered assemblage with a pair of cattle tibia, two cattle-size thoracic vertebrae, a dog skull (laid upside down i.e. teeth uppermost) and finally a cattle skull (the right way up). The latter is limited to the right/posterior quadrant of the skull, from the orbit to the horncore and the foramen magnum. While it is conceivable that certain parts of this site were not retrieved, it is highly unlikely that the anterior part, with the teeth, could have been misplaced during excavation. It follows that only a part of this skull was originally deposited. The other cattle or cattle-size bones in this collection were taken from at least two individuals. Notably the tibiae were unfused at the proximal end and fused at the distal suggesting an age between 2.5 and 3.5 years (ages of fusion after Schmid 1972, 75) which approximately corresponds to the young adult age applicable to the cattle horncore (following Armitage 1982, 42). Both of the cattle-size vertebrae are unfused but one is clearly larger than the other, perhaps indicative of a larger or older individual, while the smaller bone is less well preserved. This combined evidence would certainly suggest that they represent different animals. The horncore fits into the Short Horned category (length between 96 and 150mm) as described by Armitage and Clutton-Brock (1976), this

forming a major if not the predominant 'type' of horncore seen at Late Roman sites (as for example demonstrated at contemporary sites in London, see Rielly in prep). The dog skull is clearly from an adult individual from a medium-sized animal.

- 6.4.6 This same deposit also provided two cattle-size ribs, a cattle horncore, a pig loose incisor and part of a sheep tibia. None of these are shown in Plate 4. It could be assumed that a portion of these additional bones, perhaps the ribs, may be associated with the 'structured' deposit. The horncore is undoubtedly from a different animal, clearly adult (7 to 10 years after Armitage 1982, 42) and also from the right side of the skull. However there are similarities – both are Short Horn 'types' and both can be identified as castrate (following Armitage and Clutton-Brock 1976, 332 and Armitage 1982, 43-44).
- 6.4.7 The later collection, from the post-medieval fill (115) of posthole [116] consisted of a single cat bone, the cheek teeth part of a mandible from an adult animal.

Conclusions

- 6.4.8 This evaluation has provided faunal evidence from Late Roman and post-medieval occupation levels, with a clear emphasis on the former. The most significant aspect of the Roman collection is clearly the use of faunal waste for 'ritual' purposes as demonstrated by the concentrated juxtaposition of cattle and dog bones in ditch [107] in Trench 1. Other bones were found close by which may or may not be associated with this rather unusual deposit.
- 6.4.9 The inclusion of various 'structured' deposits is well known from Roman sites in Britain and was the subject of a major work by Morris (2008). Working with collections from Southern England and in particular from Greyhound Yard, Dorchester and Owlesbury, these essentially dated to the later Roman period, he discovered that the majority of such deposits (ABGs or Associated Bone Groups), with the exception of dog, tend to be partial rather than complete. In addition most of the cattle examples included vertebrae and/or ribs, although various combinations of hind limbs were relatively common. In

addition, if partial, skulls formed a notable portion of the dog ABGs. Multiple species ABGs were less common but these invariably comprised a single species and if more than one species was present they tended to include complete rather than partial skeletons. Any comparative research will obviously need to be extensive, with inclusion of local data if available. However, on the basis of the described evidence it does appear that the structured/ABG collection at this site is rather unusual.

6.5 Plant Macrofossils

By Val Fryer

Introduction and Method Statement

- 6.5.1 Samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossils assemblages were taken from fills within Ditches [114] (sample 100) and [107] (sample 101) and from Pit [136] (sample 102) and all three were submitted for assessment.
- 6.5.2 The samples (or sub-samples thereof) were processed using manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 7. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). All plant remains were charred. Modern roots and seeds were also recorded.
- 6.5.3 The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and will be sorted when dry. Any artefacts/ecofacts will be retained for further specialist analysis.

Results

- 6.5.4 Cereal grains/chaff and seeds of common segetal weeds are present at a low density within all three assemblages. Preservation is generally quite poor, with many of the grains being both severely puffed and distorted (probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures) and very fragmented.
- 6.5.5 Barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded, with

wheat occurring most frequently. Of the wheat grains, at least one specimen appears to be of an elongated 'drop' form typical of spelt (*T. spelta*), and sample 102 includes a single spelt glume base.

6.5.6 Weed seeds are exceedingly scarce and all are very poorly preserved. Taxa noted include brome (*Bromus* sp.) and other indeterminate large grasses (*Poaceae*). Sample 101 also includes a single piece of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are present throughout along with small pieces of indeterminate charred root or stem.

6.5.7 Small pieces of black porous and tarry material are present throughout, being especially common within the assemblage from Pit [136]. Whilst some are possible residues of the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures, others are distinctly hard and brittle, and it is considered most likely that these are bi-products of the combustion of coal, small pieces of which are also present within all three samples. Other remains are scarce, but do include fragments of bone, small mammal/amphibian bones and a globule of vitreous material.

Conclusions

6.5.8 In summary, the recovered assemblages are very small (<0.1 litres in volume) and plant macrofossils are relatively scarce. Those which are recorded are, perhaps, most likely to be derived from scattered refuse, much of which was probably accidentally incorporated within the feature fills. As the assemblages are so sparse, it is impossible to state with any degree of certainty how significant the material may be. However, the composition of the assemblages and the preservation of the material may indicate that some remains are derived from either late stage cereal processing or grains which were accidentally burnt during culinary preparation.

7 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The archaeological activity identified across the site at Eaton Socon was Roman, Late Saxon to medieval and post-medieval.

7.2 Undated Quarrying

7.2.1 The gravel quarrying identified in Trench 2 was undated with no finds recovered from either pit. The natural geological horizon in Trench 2 was identified as loose sandy pea gravel and gravel, part of the river terrace (Section 2.1.2). These deposits would have been desirable as a raw material to the inhabitants of the area to the west of the Great River Ouse and would have likely been quarried in from the Roman period onwards. Therefore although these pits are currently undated they are still significant in demonstrating some of the activity to the south of Eaton Socon.

7.3 The 4th Century AD

7.3.1 Evidence for Settlement in the Late Roman period comprised a pit and ditches. The evidence for a more unusual 'ritual' activity on the site comprised the placed deposition of finds and a 'ritually' killed ceramic vessel in two ditches.

7.3.2 The site is immediately adjacent to the Roman activity identified to the south-west during the Alpha Park excavations (Figure 3, Foundations 2007). The excavations at Priors Gate (Gibson 2005) to the North identified Roman activity and suggested a possible core of this to the south. The site to the south of Priors Gate was the Bell Public House evaluation (Fairbairn 2008) and produced evidence for further 1st to 4th century Roman settlement and agricultural activity so it may be that the current site is part of the continuation to the south of Priors Gate and the Bell Public House site. The site is also located in close proximity to the archaeological excavation at Eynesbury (Ellis 2004) to the east on the other side of the river.

Settlement and Land Division

7.3.3 The evidence for settlement at Eaton Socon during the Late Roman period is clear.

7.3.4 Pit [136] located at the western end of Trench 6 evidences activity in the

Late Roman period. While this pit has an unclear primary function it has been used as a rubbish pit at least as a secondary function.

- 7.3.5 The pottery and animal within Pit [136] and Ditches [107] and [114] and the animal bone found in Ditches [112] and [120] clearly demonstrates Late Roman activity on the site. While some of these deposits clearly have a more unusual formation as a 'ritual' purpose, the existence of pottery and animal bone assemblages in the Late Roman features gives an indication of the occupation of the site.
- 7.3.6 The multiple different alignments identified during the evaluation demonstrate a continuation of the land division of field boundaries and enclosures identified to the south-west at Alpha Park (Foundation 2007) and to the north during the Bell Public House evaluation (Fairbairn 2008) and Priors Gate excavations (Gibson 2005). Ditch [107] in Trench 1 and Ditch [114] in Trench 3 were the only dated ditches, the shape, size, fill character and alignments of many of the other ditches suggest they are also Late Roman.
- 7.3.7 These ditches likely form field boundaries and enclosure, for example Ditch [112] in the northern end of Trench 3 and Ditch [120] in Trench 6 are on respective alignments and may form an enclosure while the early components of the major north to south aligned boundary in Trench 6 and the east to west aligned ditches in Trench 3 may form part of the same system of field boundaries.

Ritual Placement and Deliberate Deposition

- 7.3.8 While often overstated in the archaeological record, there is clear and credible evidence for 'ritual' deposition on the site during the Late Roman period. The 4th century pottery identified within the Ditch [114], Trench 3 shows possible evidence for 'ritual' killing in the form of post-firing perforations on the shoulder of the vessel. While this may be evidence of modification and secondary use of the vessel, the deliberate placed location of the pottery within the backfill of a field boundary does suggest a more unusual, non-functional aspect to the deposition.

- 7.3.9 Further, and more convincing, evidence for a 'ritual' element to the site was found within Ditch [107] in Trench 1. The deliberately placed finds within the fill of the ditch comprising a structured deposition of animal bone comprising a layered assemblage of a pair of cattle tibia, two cattle-size thoracic vertebrae, an adult dog skull (laid upside down i.e. teeth uppermost) and finally a cattle skull. The animal bone was deposited alongside pottery and a crenelated 4th century bracelet. This clearly demonstrates a deliberate deposition of specific items in a 'designed' fashion (Plate 4). These finds have not just been dumped ad-hoc into a ditch. They have been selected and placed in a specific way for a specific reason.
- 7.3.10 Whether the features used for deposition were chosen for a specific reason remains unclear. At this stage it is assumed the deposition was post-dis-use of the ditches primary function as field boundaries or enclosures rather than the features themselves being used in a ritual function as a primary use. It is likely that the ritual should be seen in an informal rural rite of finds deposition rather than the features themselves being part of the formal act of ritual.
- 7.3.11 A precedent for ritual activity in the landscape is present on the other side of the river to the east. The archaeological excavation at Eynesbury (Ellis 2004) revealed the remains of a ritual ceremonial and funerary complex dating from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, as well as evidence for Romano-British land-use. While this site is predominantly prehistoric the Roman enclosures on the site are known to respect and reference the Neolithic monuments on the site.

7.4 Late Saxon-Medieval Activity

- 7.4.1 The sherds of St-Neots-type ware recovered from (104) in Pit [105] demonstrate that there is Late Saxon or medieval activity on or around the site. While this single pit contained bricks which are of a later date therefore dating the pit as post-medieval, it does demonstrate that settlement activity was being carried on or around the site in the 9th to 12th century.

7.5 Post-Medieval Activity

- 7.5.1 The post-medieval activity on the site comprised pits and postholes, such as

those found in Trench 5, some of which appears to be similar activity to the 18th century agriculture identified on the Bell Public House evaluation to the north (Fairbairn 2008) and the Alpha Park excavations to the south-west (Foundations 2007).

7.5.2 Evidence for post-medieval land division was seen in the latest phase of the north to south aligned boundary in Trench 6, Ditch [124]. This represents the remains of some of the shifting property boundaries identified in the Little End historic report (Jarrett 2002).

7.5.3 The brick foundations identified in Trench 7 are clearly of a later post-medieval date. These foundations are likely to represent one of the buildings seen on the Historic maps and identified in the Little End Historic account report (Jarrett 2002). Further definition of this building and any other buildings along the frontage of the Great North Road should be a priority should any further excavation proceed.

7.6 Environmental Considerations

7.6.1 The environmental information recovered during the evaluation demonstrates poor preservation yet likely indicates that the assemblages were derived from scattered refuse and late stage cereal processing. The poor preservation of the environmental remains on the site indicates further sampling will be necessary should further excavation be conducted.

7.7 Preservation of Archaeology

7.7.1 The archaeology across the site was relatively well preserved. That said, the concrete foundations, drains and modern disturbance relating to the car sales garage on the southern part of the site have clearly truncated parts of the site, however, where the archaeological or natural geological horizon have not been impacted on the archaeology is preserved remarkably well. This can be seen by the structures deposits of finds in Trench 1 and the quarry pits in Trench 2.

7.7.2 The north of the site also has standing buildings but of an earlier date. While the footprints of these buildings are likely to have had an effect on the preservation of the archaeology, the majority of the site is largely unharmed

by late post-medieval and modern truncation.

7.8 Conclusions

- 7.8.1 The evaluation has identified three periods of activity at Eaton Socon, Late Roman activity was identified across the site, Late Saxon activity was identified towards the southern part of the site while post-medieval archaeology was mostly concentrated towards the northern half of the site. Undated quarrying activity was also identified towards the south-east corner of the site in Trench 2.
- 7.8.2 The Late Roman activity predominantly 4th century and comprised settlement activity in the form of pits alongside evidence for a more unusual 'ritual' activity on the site in the form of the placed structured deposition of finds and possible 'ritually' killed ceramic vessel in ditches.
- 7.8.3 Roman land division was identified in the form of field boundary ditches and possible enclosures on multiple alignments.
- 7.8.4 While evidence for Late Saxon or medieval activity is confined to St Neots type ware pottery recovered from a pit that also contained later dated bricks the pottery does at least demonstrate activity from the 9th to 12th centuries on or around the site.
- 7.8.5 Evidence for post-medieval activity was comprehensive in the form of pits, postholes and ditches as well as the brick foundations fronting onto the Great North Road in Trench 7. Further post-medieval brick and tile were yielded and not recovered from the topsoil and subsoil throughout the evaluation.
- 7.8.6 The evaluation has identified that there is clear evidence for fairly substantial settlement and other activity on the site in the Late Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. This evidence represents a significant addition to our understanding of the archaeological potential of the site, extending on the evidence gained in prior sites to the north, west and south.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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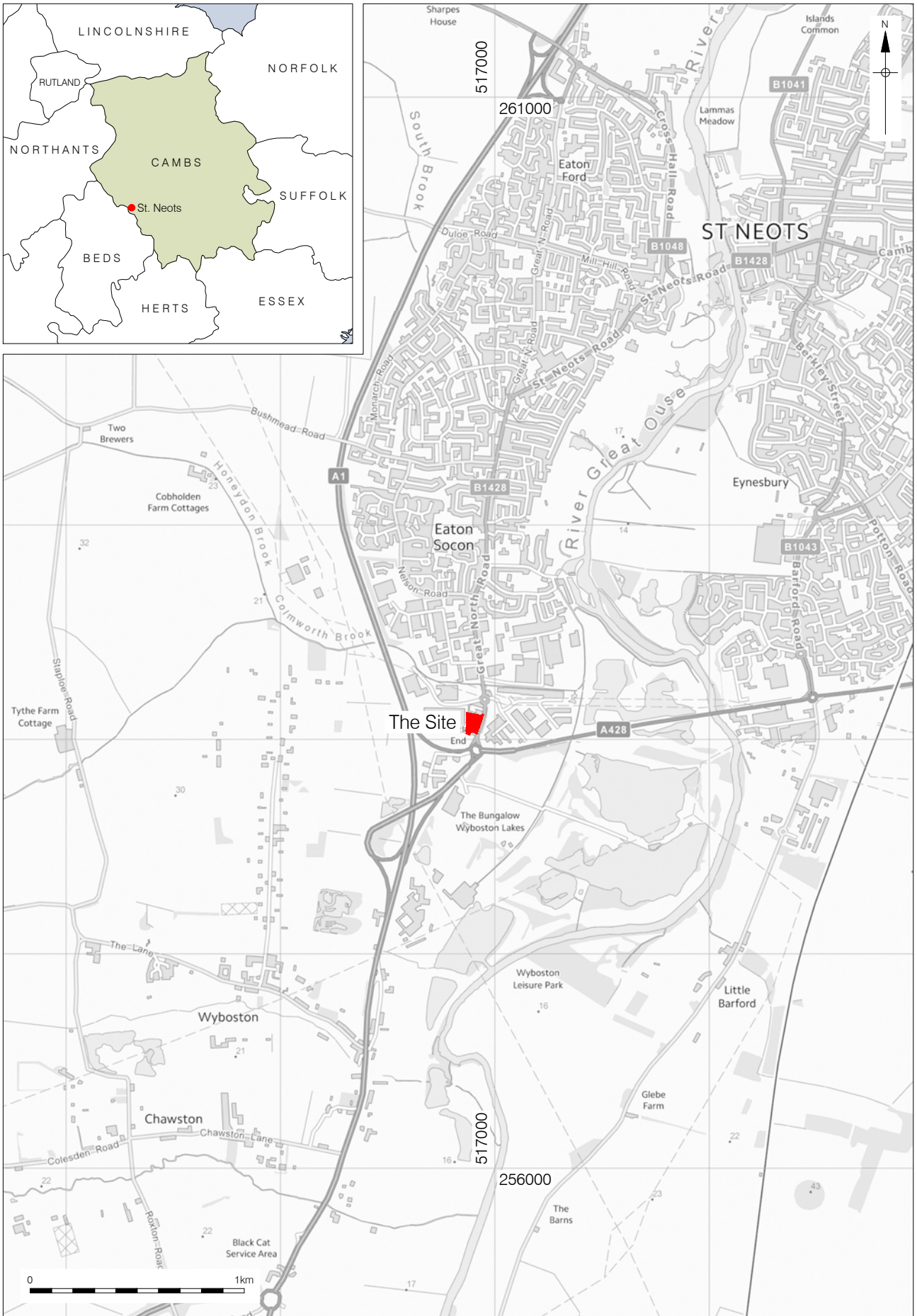
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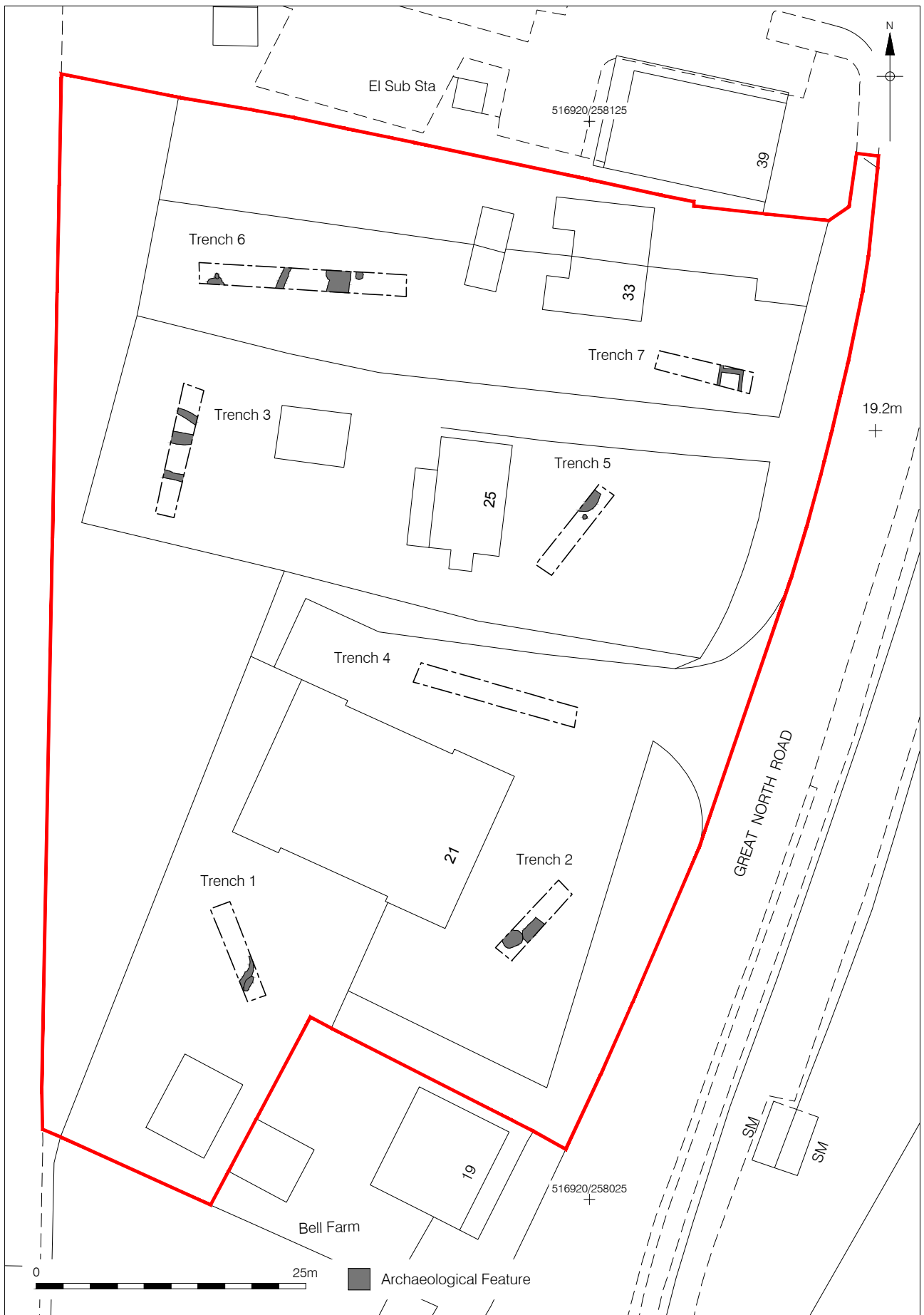


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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000; 1:25,000 at A4



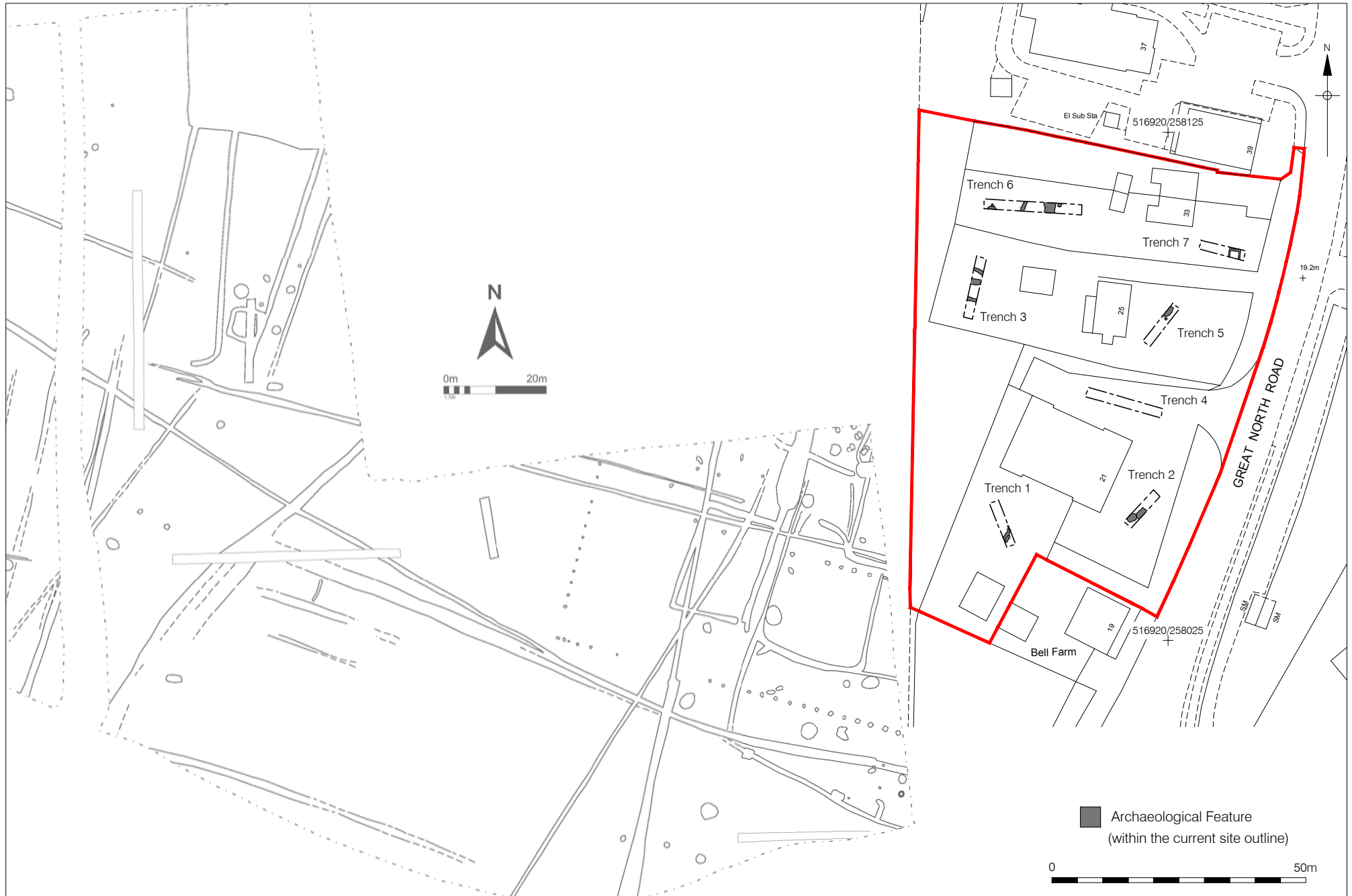
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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500 at A4



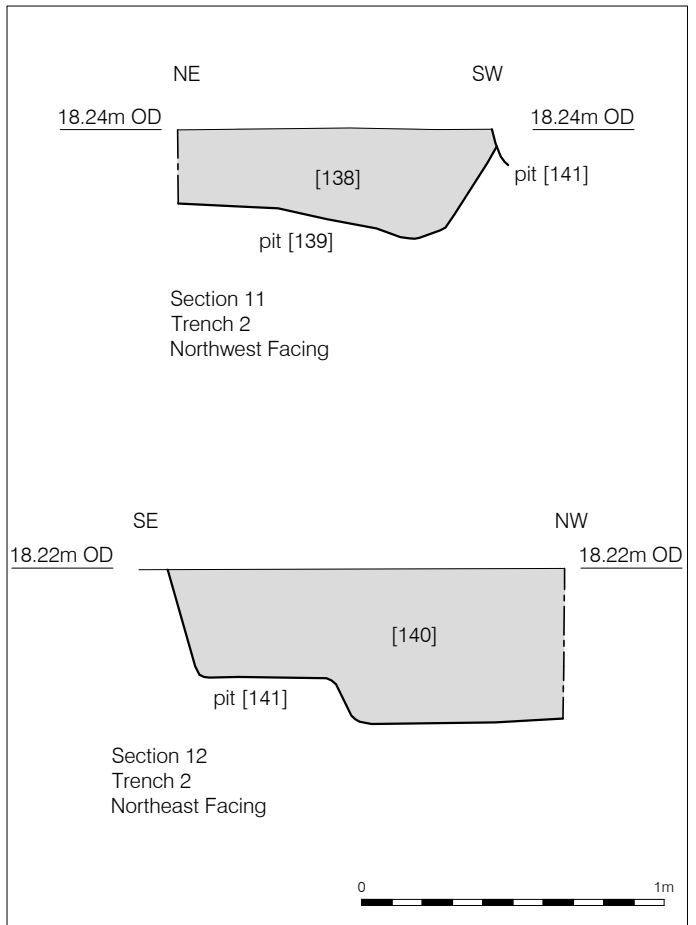
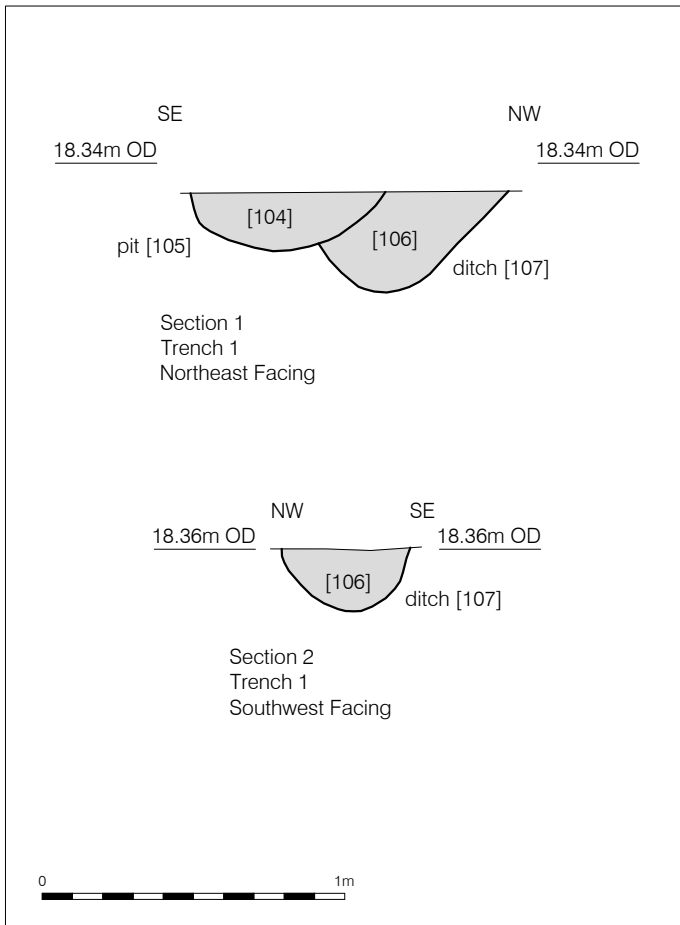
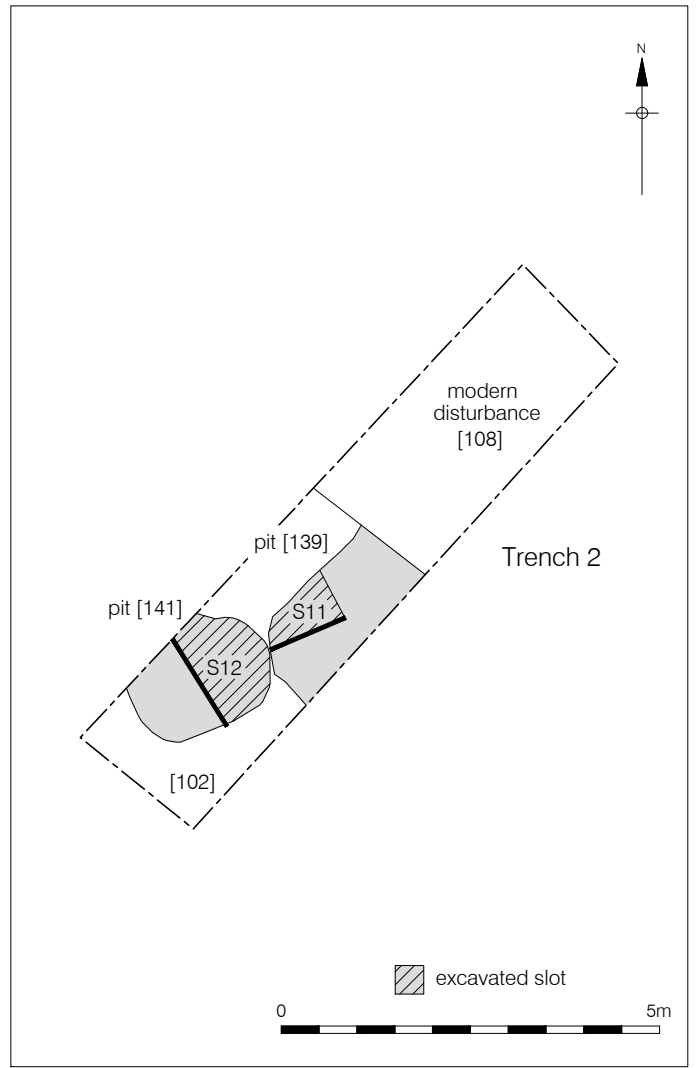
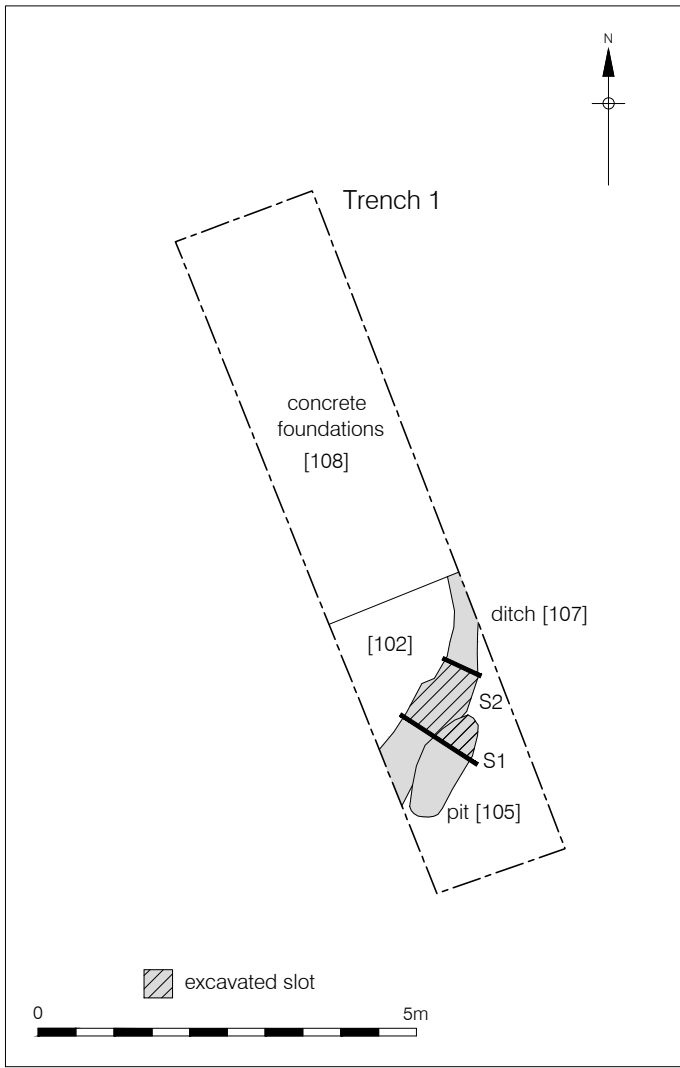


Figure 4
Trenches 1 & 2: Plans and Sections
Plans: 1:100; Sections: 1:25 at A4

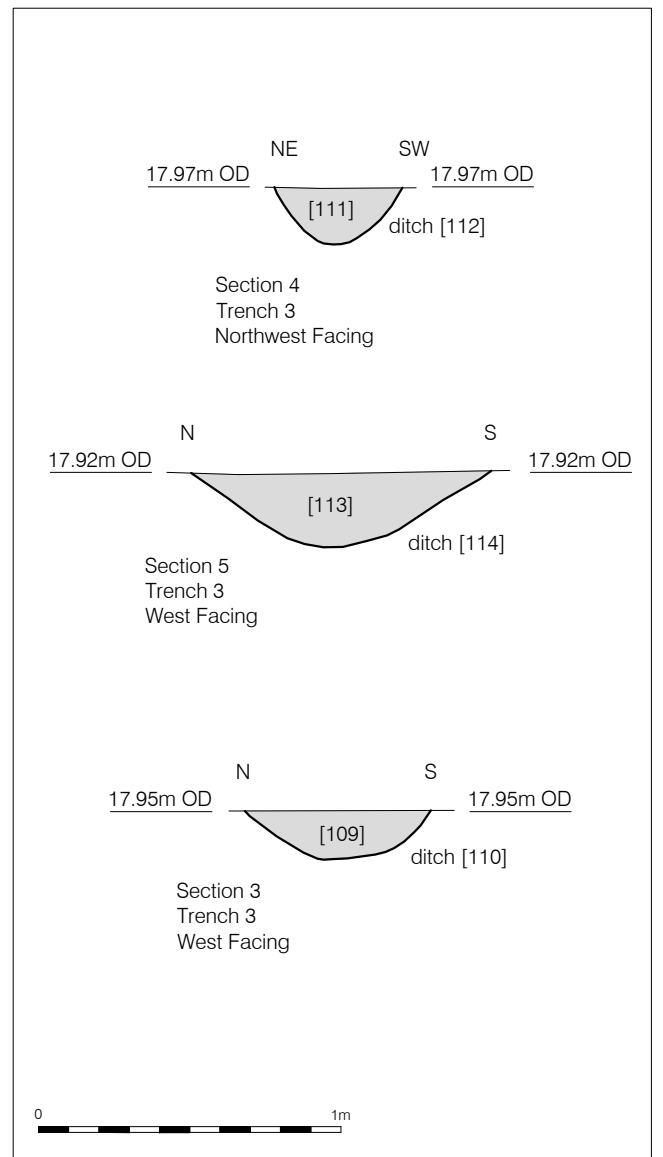
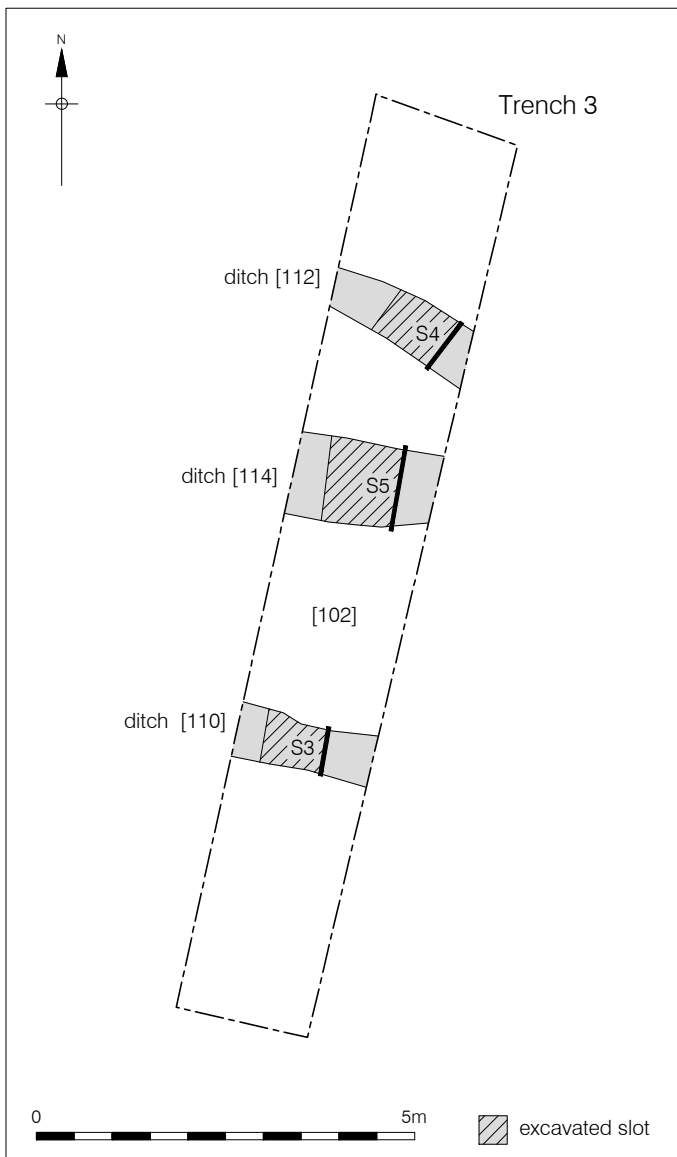
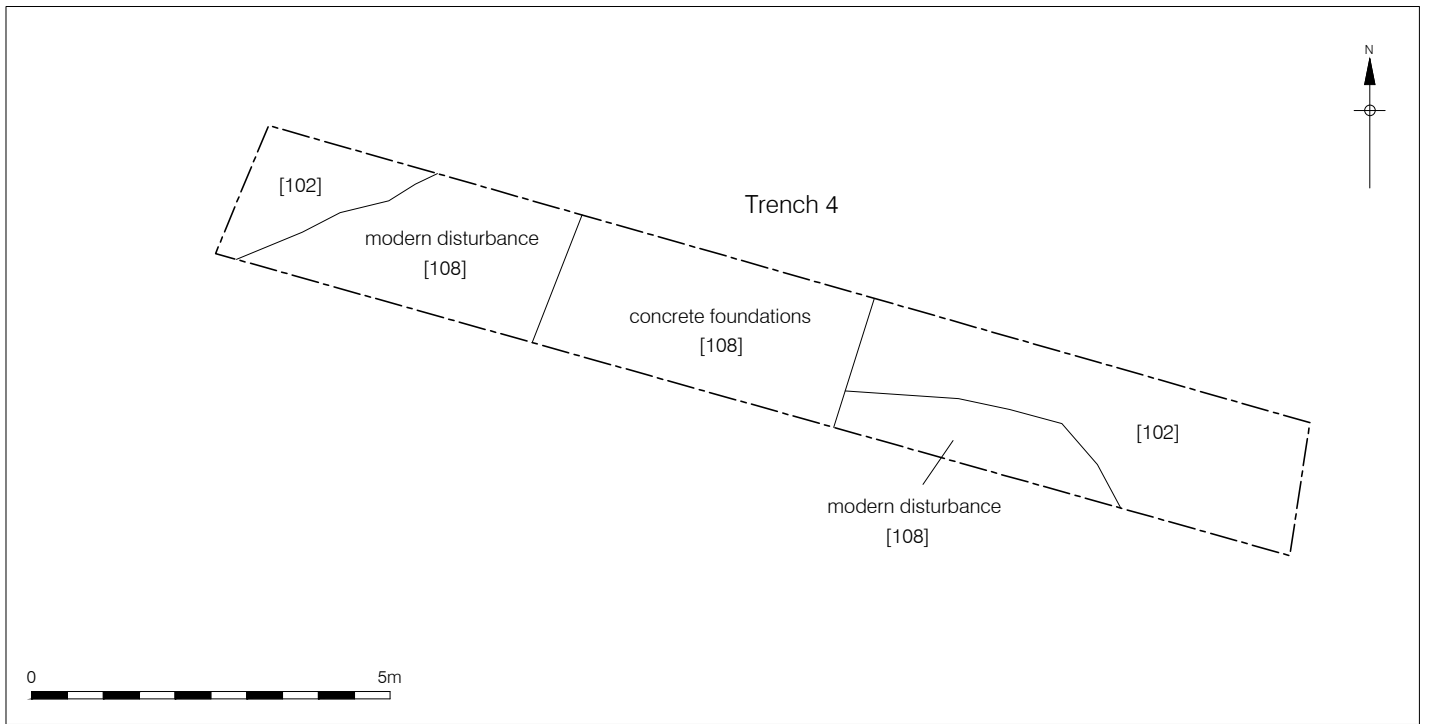
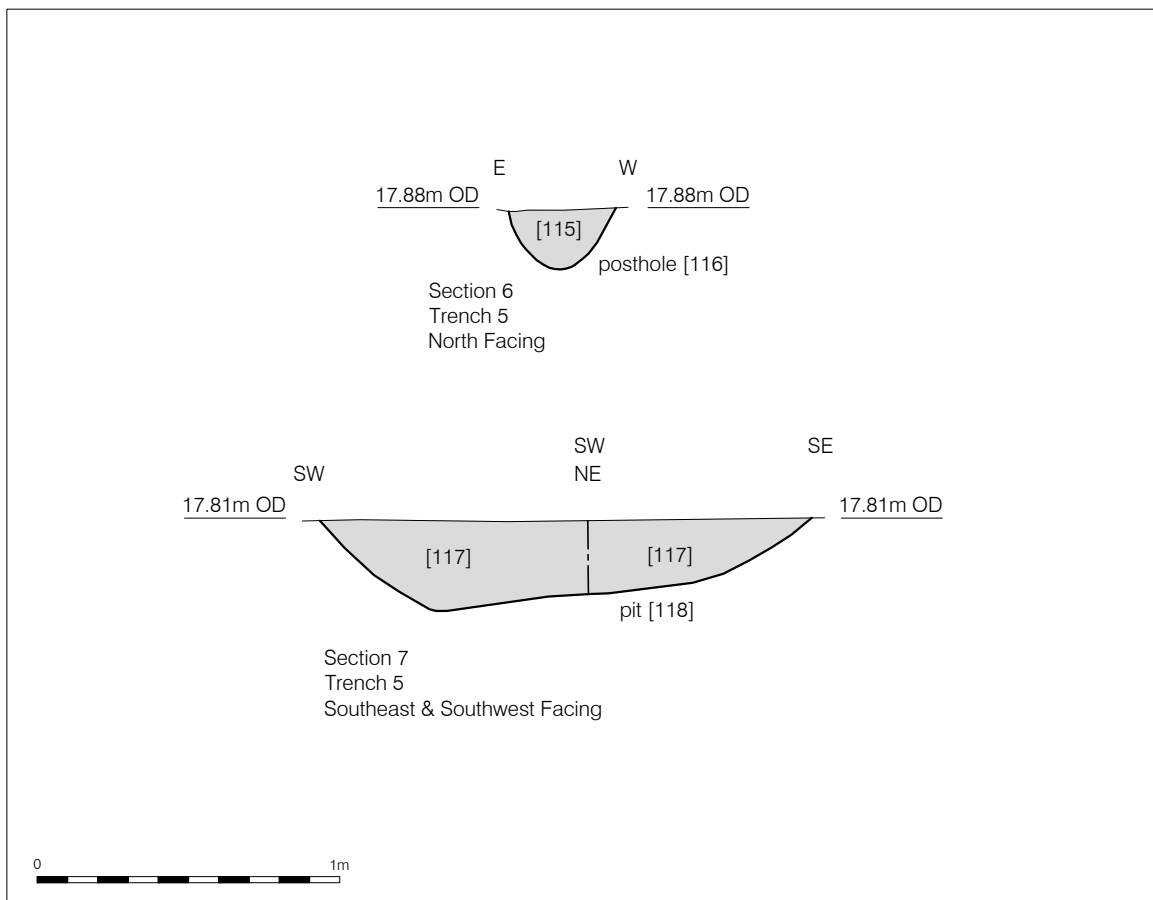
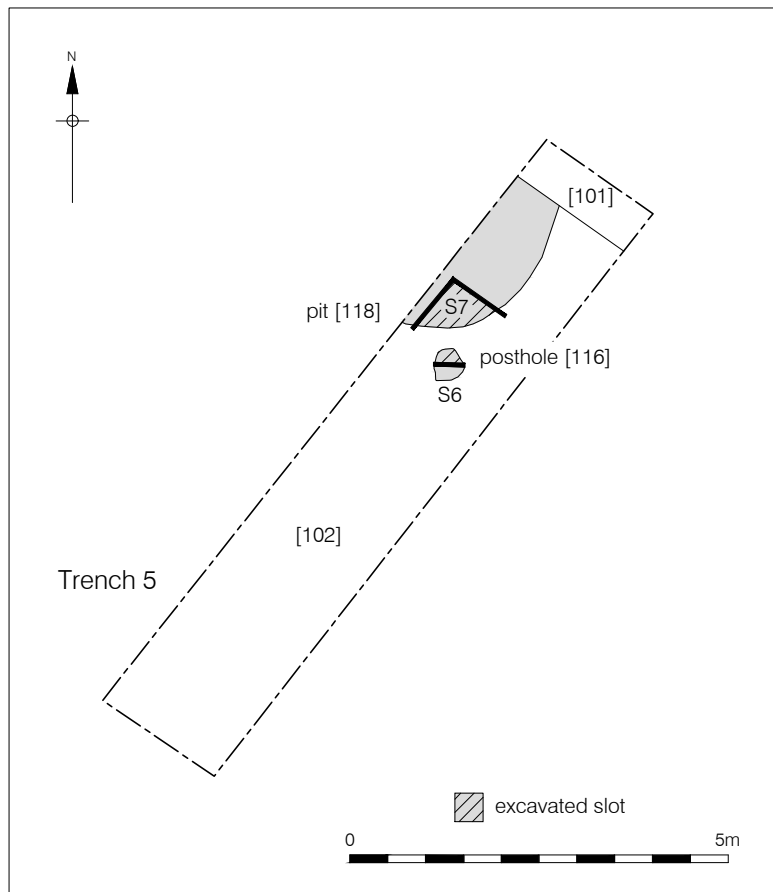


Figure 5
Trenches 3 & 4: Plans and Sections
Plans: 1:100; Sections: 1:25 at A4



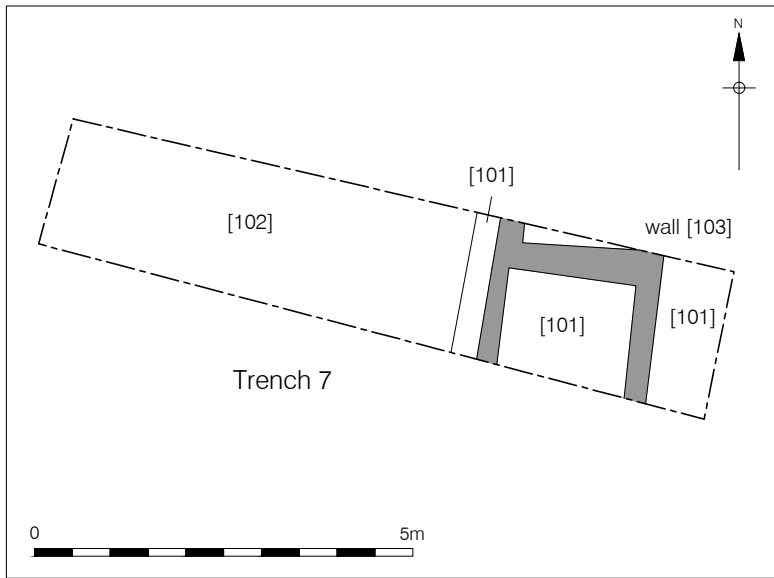
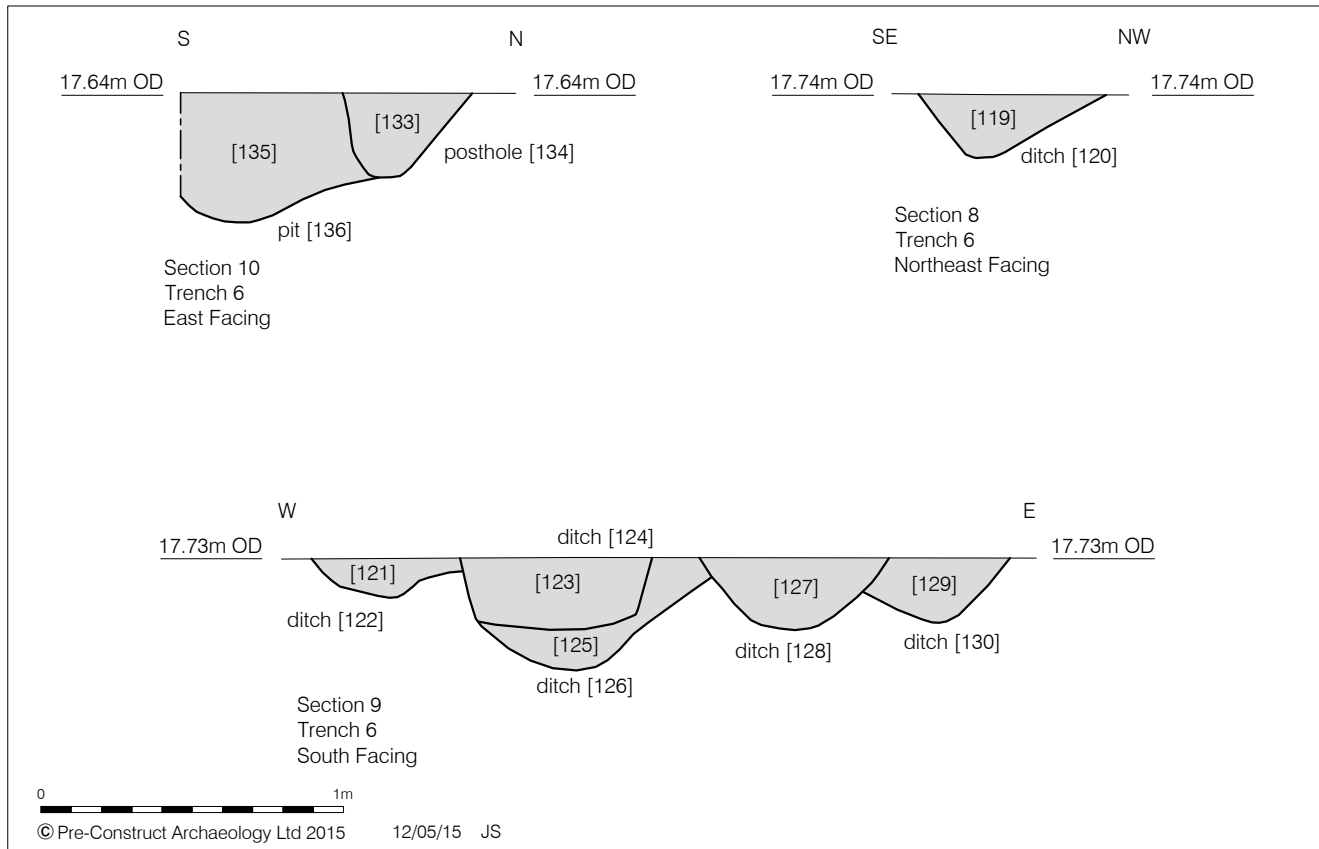
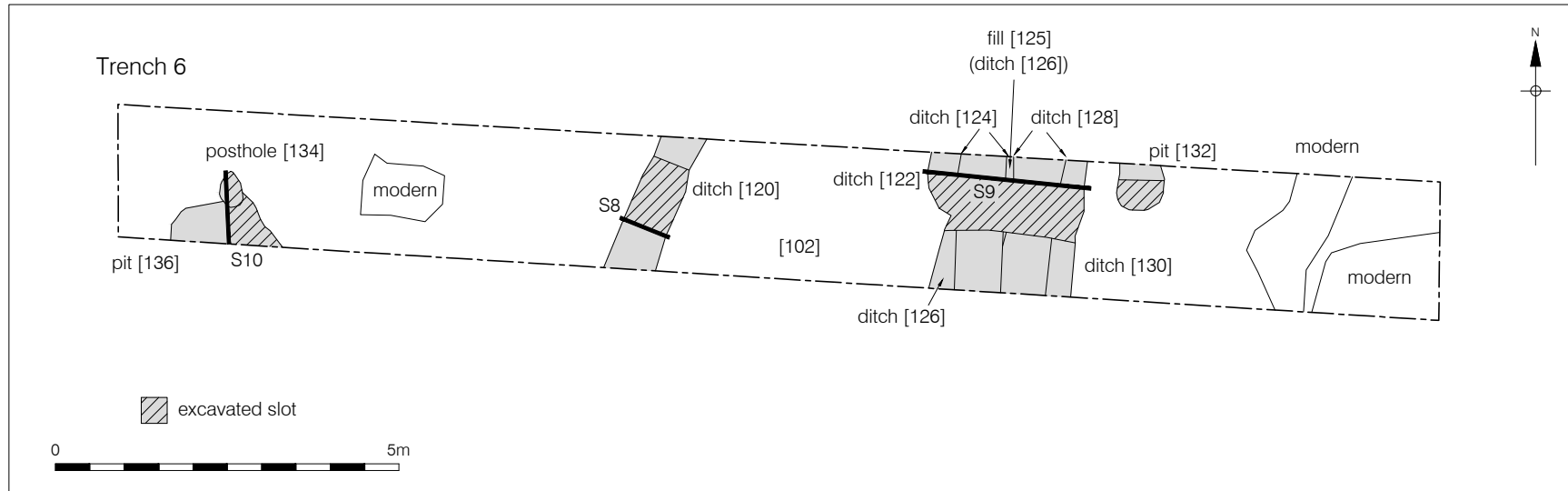


Figure 7
Trenches 6 & 7: Plans and Sections
Plans: 1:100; Sections: 1:25 at A4

APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: SW facing view across southern part of the site



Plate 2: Trench 1, NW facing view of Ditch [107] and Pit [105]



Plate 3: Trench 1, NE facing view of Ditch [107]



Plate 4: Trench 1, SE facing view of Sk.137 in Ditch [107]



Plate 5: Trench 3, E facing view of Ditch [114]



Plate 6: Trench 5, SW facing view of Posthole [116] and Pit [118]



Plate 7: Trench 6, N facing view of the restated boundary



Plate 8: Trench 6, W facing view of Posthole [136] and Pit [134]



Plate 9: Trench 7, S facing view of Structure 103



Plate 10: Trench 2, S facing view following reinstatement

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Interpretation	Trench
100	-	Layer	Natural	Topsoil	3, 5, 6, 7
101	-	Layer	Natural	Subsoil	1-7
102	-	Layer	Natural	Natural Geological Horizon	1-7
103	-	Structure	Structure	Brick Structure Foundations	7
104	105	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [105]	1
105	105	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	1
106	107	Fill	Ditch	Fill of curvilinear Ditch [107]	1
107	107	Cut	Ditch	Cut of curvilinear Ditch	1
108	-	Layer	Modern	Tarmac, Brickwork, Made Ground	1-4, 7
109	110	Fill	Ditch	Fill of east to west aligned Ditch [110]	3
110	110	Cut	Ditch	Cut east to west aligned Ditch	3
111	112	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north-west to south-east aligned Ditch [112]	3
112	112	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north-west to south-east aligned Ditch	3
113	114	Fill	Ditch	Fill of east to west aligned Ditch [114]	3
114	114	Cut	Ditch	Cut of east to west aligned Ditch	3
115	116	Fill	Posthole	Fill of Posthole [116]	5
116	116	Cut	Posthole	Cut of Posthole	5
117	118	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [118]	5
118	118	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	5
119	120	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north-east to south-west aligned ditch [120]	6
120	120	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
121	122	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north to south aligned ditch [122]	6
122	122	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
123	124	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north to south aligned ditch [124]	6
124	124	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
125	126	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north to south aligned ditch [126]	6
126	126	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
127	128	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north to south aligned ditch [128]	6
128	128	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
129	130	Fill	Ditch	Fill of north to south aligned ditch [130]	6
130	130	Cut	Ditch	Cut of north to south aligned ditch	6
131	132	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [132]	6
132	132	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	6
133	134	Fill	Posthole	Fill of Posthole [134]	6
134	134	Cut	Posthole	Cut of Posthole	6
135	136	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [136]	6
136	136	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	6

137	-	-	Skeleton	Animal Bones, within (106)	1
138	139	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [139]	2
139	139	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	2
140	140	Fill	Pit	Fill of Pit [141]	2
141	140	Cut	Pit	Cut of Pit	2

APPENDIX 3: ROMAN METALWORK CATALOGUE

SF	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	OBJECT DATE	WIDTH	LENGTH	EXTENT
1	106	Copper alloy	Bracelet	Two pieces of a crenellated and toothed bracelet.	Late 3rd to 4th century	3mm	145mm & 42mm	Incomplete
2	117	Copper alloy	Tack	Flat, ovoid shaped copper alloy tack with square section shaft.		7mm	20mm	Complete

Table 6: Roman Metalwork Catalogue

APPENDIX 4: PLANT MACROFOSSILS

Sample No.	100	101	102
Context No.	113	106	135
Feature No.	114	107	136
Feature type	Ditch	Ditch	Pit
Cereals			
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grain)			xcf
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	x	x	xcf
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume base)			x
Cereal indet. (grains)		xxfg	xfg
Herbs			
Apiaceae indet.		x	
<i>Bromus</i> sp.		x	
Large Poaceae indet.		x	x
Tree/shrub macrofossils			
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.		x	
Other plant macrofossils			
Charcoal <2mm	xx	x	x
Charcoal >2mm	x	xx	x
Charcoal >5mm		x	x
Charcoal >10mm		x	
Charred root/stem	x	x	x
Other remains			
Black porous 'cokey' material	x	x	xxx
Black tarry material		x	xx
Bone	xx	x	x
Small coal frags.	x	x	xxx
Small mammal/amphibian bones	x	x	x
Vitreous material		x	
Sample volume (litres)	14ss	15ss	12ss
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%	100%

Table 7: Plant Macrofossils Catalogue

Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens
 cf = compare fg = fragment ss = sub-sample

APPENDIX 5: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-209837

Project details

Project name Land at 21 to 35 Great North Road, Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Short description Seven trench evaluation in advance of construction of the project of retail units that identified Roman and post-medieval activity.

Project dates Start: 21-04-2015 End: 23-04-2015

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes ECB4416 - HER event no.

Any associated project reference codes CGNE15 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type DITCH Roman

Monument type PIT Roman

Monument type POSTHOLE Roman

Monument type DITCH Post Medieval

Monument type POSTHOLE Post Medieval

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

Monument type PIT Modern

Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Roman

Significant Finds POTTERY Roman

Significant Finds BRACELET Roman

Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval

Significant Finds ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval

Significant Finds BRICK Post Medieval

Methods & "Sample Trenches"
techniques

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)
planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE ST
NEOTS Land at 21 to 35 Great North Road, Eaton
Socon, Cambridgeshire

Postcode PE19 8EN

Study area 0.67 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 1691 5809 52.2082032513 -0.288850167796 52
12 29 N 000 17 19 W Point

Height OD / Min: 17.00m Max: 19.50m
Depth

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Organisation

Project brief CCC Historic Environment Team
originator

Project design Mark Hinman
originator

Project Mark Hinman
director/manager

Project supervisor Matthew Lees

Type of Private Developer
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive CCC County Archaeology Store
recipient

Physical Archive CGNE15
ID

Physical Contents "Animal
Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Glass","Metal"

Digital Archive CCC County Archaeology Store
recipient

Digital Archive ID CGNE15

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Images raster / digital photography","Survey"
available

Paper Archive CCC County Archaeology Store
recipient

Paper Archive ID CGNE15

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Plan","Section","Survey "
available

Project
bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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Entered by Matthew Lees (MLees@pre-construct.com)

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PCA

PCA SOUTH

UNIT 54
BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE
96 ENDWELL ROAD
BROCKLEY
LONDON SE4 2PD
TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091
FAX: 020 7639 9588
EMAIL: info@pre-construct.com

PCA NORTH

UNIT 19A
TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK
DURHAM DH6 5PG
TEL: 0191 377 1111
FAX: 0191 377 0101
EMAIL: info.north@pre-construct.com

PCA CENTRAL

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN
TEL: 01223 845 522
FAX: 01223 845 522
EMAIL: info.central@pre-construct.com

PCA WEST

BLOCK 4
CHILCOMB HOUSE
CHILCOMB LANE
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8RB
TEL: 01962 849 549
EMAIL: info.west@pre-construct.com

PCA MIDLANDS

17-19 KETTERING RD
LITTLE BOWDEN
MARKET HARBOROUGH
LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN
TEL: 01858 468 333
EMAIL: info.midlands@pre-construct.com

