



SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Report Number: 1224

February 2019



SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Project No.	P1263	Museum Acc.	-
Planning Ref.	16/01181/OUT	OASIS	britanni1-339146
Approved By:		Date	February 2019



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Abstract

On 25th February 2019 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at School Lane, Pymoor, Downham, Cambridgeshire ahead of the proposed erection of three detached dwellings. The evaluation was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened available area.

The site had a low - moderate potential for finds and features from the early prehistoric period. There is a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the post-medieval and modern periods. There was a low potential for all remaining periods.

Despite the potential for archaeological features, particularly from the medieval and post-medieval periods, none were identified during the evaluation.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 25th February 2019 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at School Lane, Pymoor, Downham, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL 4960 8637) on behalf of Dale Parsons ahead of the proposed erection of three detached dwellings.

The evaluation was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) (Stewart. G. 25th September 2018) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened available area.

Two trenches measuring 25.00m x 1.80m were located over the new building footprints and were excavated using a 360o tracked, mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.



2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION (Fig. 1)

The site is located to the west of Straight Furlong, opposite the junction with Pymoor Lane in the south of the village of Pymoor. Residential properties are located north, east and south of the site.

2.1 *Site Geology*

The natural bedrock geology is described as Ampthill Clay Formation – Mudstone, a Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 157 to 164 million years ago in the Jurassic Period when the local environment was previously dominated by shallow seas (BGS, 2019).

The superficial deposits are described as Oady Member Diamicton – a grey, weathering brown sand, gravel clay and silt with frequent chalk and flint fragments formed during the Anglian Stage some 478,000 to 424,000 years ago (BGS, 2019).



3.0 PLANNING POLICIES

The archaeological investigation is to be carried out on the recommendation of the local planning authority, following guidance laid down by the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLD 2018). The relevant local development framework is the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (S 6.16.4; 2015).

3.1 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, DCLG July 2018)*

The NPPF recognises that 'heritage assets' are an irreplaceable resource and planning authorities should conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance when considering development. It requires developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. The key areas for consideration are:

- The significance of the heritage asset and its setting in relation to the proposed development;
- The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance;
- Significance (of the heritage asset) can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction, or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification;
- Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred;
- Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

3.2 *East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 6.16.4 (2015)*

The local plan for East Cambridgeshire deals with the development on archaeological sites in section 6.16.4, this states the following:

Where permission for development is granted that would harm assets of archaeological interest, a programme of conservation appropriate to their significance should be undertaken. Their in-situ preservation is preferred, but where this is not feasible, provision should be made for a programme of archaeological excavation, recording and public presentation (where appropriate) to take place before development commences. The analysis, reporting and publication of the evidence should take place thereafter. This will be secured by a planning condition, the discharge of which will be agreed in conjunction with the County Council Historic Environment Team. All works will be guided by national planning policy, government advice and that issued by English Heritage.



4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 2)

The following archaeological background draws on the Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER) (1km search centred on the site), English Heritage PastScape (www.pastscape.org.uk), and the Archaeological Data Service (www.ads.ahds.ac.uk) (ADS) (Fig. 2).

4.1 Prehistoric

Mesolithic and Bronze Age records are reported to the south east of the site.

Early Mesolithic to Bronze age finds were found approximately 500m to the south east (MCB23961) which included a wide range of material from the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age. A total of 465 items were recovered from the site. The scatter consisted of waste blades, scrapers, cores, lead arrowheads, blades, microliths and one sherd of pottery. Further Bronze Age activity was noted at Frith Head Drove another 150m to the south east where a Bronze Age Rapier was recovered (07130). Finally a c. 35m circumference ring ditch has been identified 800m south east of the site and dated to the Bronze Age.

4.3 Post-medieval and Modern

The main settlement of Pymoor developed in this period with an increase in the number of dwellings represented by the number of buildings located in the village core dating to this period. The closest associated record (ECB23325) from to the site also dates from this period and relates to the site of a blacksmiths workshop illustrated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map dated to 1885. Further records nearby also relate to the site of Denmark Farm (MCB23326), Knife and Steel beer house (MCB23324) and the site of a Mission School Room (23328),

4.4 Archaeological Potential

Given the above, there was a **low - moderate** potential for finds and features from the early prehistoric period. There was a **moderate** potential for remains on the site relating to the post-medieval and modern periods. There was a **low** potential for all remaining periods.



5.0 PROJECT AIMS

The CHET brief states that the evaluation should aim to determine, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied (Stewart, G. Brief, Section 3.1).

Both the WSI, fieldwork and resulting report/archiving will be undertaken in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, 2014.

Two trenches measuring 25.00m x 1.80m were to be excavated to achieve these aims (Fig.3).

All aspects of the trial trenching will be undertaken in accordance with the *CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, 2014* and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England, 2003*.



6.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Research objectives for the project are in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24 (Medlycott, 2011).

Particular study of the following should occur:

- presence/absence of palaeosols and old land surface soils/deposits,
- the character of deposits and their contents within negative features
- palaeochannels
- site formation processes generally.

An assessment of the environmental potential of the site through examination of suitable deposits must also be arranged with a suitably qualified specialist. Attention should be paid:

- to the retrieval of charred plant macrofossils and land molluscs from former dry-land palaeosols and cut features, and to soil pollen analysis;
- to the retrieval of plant macrofossils, insect, molluscs and pollen from waterlogged deposits located.
- provision for the absolute dating of critical contacts should be made: *eg* the basal contacts of peats over former dryland surfaces; distinct land use or landmark change in urban contexts

The evaluation should also carefully consider the retrieval, characterisation and dating (including absolute dating) of artefact, burial or economic evidence to assist in the characterisation of the site's evidence and in the development of future mitigation strategies.



7.0 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

The CHET brief required a programme of linear trial trenching in advance of the construction of the houses and associated works. The trenching will comprise two 25.00m x 1.80m trenches.

A 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket will be used to machine down to the first archaeological horizon, thereafter all excavation work was undertaken by hand (Fig. 3).

The archaeology will be recorded using pro-forma record sheets, drawn plans and section drawings and appropriate photographs will also be taken.



8.0 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS (Fig. 4)

A professional metal detector was used to scan the trenches locations prior and post excavation along with the spoil heaps. Only demonstrably modern finds were recovered and therefore was not retained.

Bucket sampling was undertaken at the end of each trench where 90L of each layer was hand sieved. Only demonstrably modern finds were recovered and therefore was not retained.

8.1 Trench 1 (Fig.4)

Trench 1 was located in the north east end of the site. It was orientated northeast to southwest and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m in sample section 1. The trench contained no archaeological features.

Plough soil **1000** was present to a depth of 0.33m. This overlay natural geology **1001**.

8.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

Trench 2 was located at the south western end of site, was orientated northwest to southeast and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.37m in sample section 1. The trench contained no archaeological features.

Plough soil **1000** was present to a depth of 0.35m. This overlay natural geology **1001**.



9.0 DEPOSIT MODEL (Fig. 4)

The deposit model was consistent across the site.

At the top of the stratigraphic sequence was Plough soil **1000**, which was present to a depth 0.35m in sample section 1. This comprised dark grey black, loose silty clay. This layer represents the current agricultural plough soil across the field.

Natural superficial geology **1002**, comprising light grey brown, very compact silty clay was present below Plough soil **1000**.



10.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The site had a low - moderate potential for finds and features from the early prehistoric period. There is a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the post-medieval and modern periods. There was a low potential for all remaining periods.

The evaluation did not encounter any archaeological features within the trenches. A modern plough soil was encountered across the site. No sub soil was present. The lack of archaeological remains could be explained by the relative recent date that the land was turn over to agriculture after been reclaimed from the fen land in the post medieval period.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological features, particularly from the medieval and post-medieval periods, none were identified during the evaluation.



11.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The final archive will be deposited following the acquisition of the transfer of title. The deposition will be made with the Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (CCC HET). The digital archive will be stored with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).



12.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Britannia Archaeology would like to thank Mr Dale Parsons for commissioning and funding the project.

We would also like to thank Gemma Stewart of CCC HET for all her help and advice throughout the project.

The site was excavated by Martin Brook and Matthew Selfe of Britannia Archaeology Ltd.



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- English Heritage PastScape www.pastscape.org.uk
- Archaeological Data Service (ADS) www.ads.ahds.ac.uk
- English Heritage National List for England
www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england
- DEFRA Magic <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic>



APPENDIX 1 – DEPOSIT TABLES

TRENCH 1

Trench No	Orientation	Height AOD	Shot ID
1	NE-SW	1.98m	1
Sample Section No	Location	Facing	
1	NE end, SE side	NW	
Context No	Depth	Deposit Description	
1000	0.00-0.35m	Plough Soil: Dark Grey Black, Loose, Silty Clay.	
1001	0.35m +	Natural Superficial Geology: Light grey brown, Very Compact Silty Clay.	

TRENCH 2

Trench No	Orientation	Height AOD	Shot ID
2	NW-SE	1.90m	3
Sample Section No	Location	Facing	
2	SE end, SW side	NE	
Context No	Depth	Deposit Description	
1000	0.00-0.33m	Plough Soil: Dark Grey Black, Loose, Silty Clay.	
1001	0.33m +	Natural Superficial Geology: Light grey brown, Very Compact Silty Clay.	



APPENDIX – 2 OASIS SHEET

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: britanni1-339146

Project details

Project name	SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Short description of the project	On 25th February 2019 Britannia Archaeology Ltd (BA) undertook a trial trench evaluation at School Lane, Pymoor, Downham, Cambridgeshire ahead of the proposed erection of three detached dwellings. The evaluation was undertaken in response to a design brief issued by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) which required a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened available area. The site had a low - moderate potential for finds and features from the early prehistoric period. There is a moderate potential for remains on the site relating to the post-medieval and modern periods. There was a low potential for all remaining periods. Despite the potential for archaeological features, particularly from the medieval and post-medieval periods, none were identified during the evaluation.
Project dates	Start: 25-01-2019 End: 25-01-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5804 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England



Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DOWNHAM SCHOOL LANE,
PYMOOR, DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Postcode CB6 2EU
Study area 1602 Square metres
Site coordinates TL 549600 286375 51.934177691403 0.254282761031 51 56 03 N 000 15 15 E
Point
Height OD / Min: 0m Max: 0m
Depth

Project creators

Name of Organisation Britannia Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator Dan McConnell
Project director/manager Dan McConnell
Project supervisor Dan McConnell
Type of sponsor/funding body developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Dale Parsons

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Cambridge HER
Digital Archive ID ECB5804
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text", "GIS"
Paper Archive recipient Cambridge HER
Paper Archive ID ECB5804
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title School Lane, Pymoor, Downham, Cambridgeshire
Author(s)/Editor(s) M. Brook

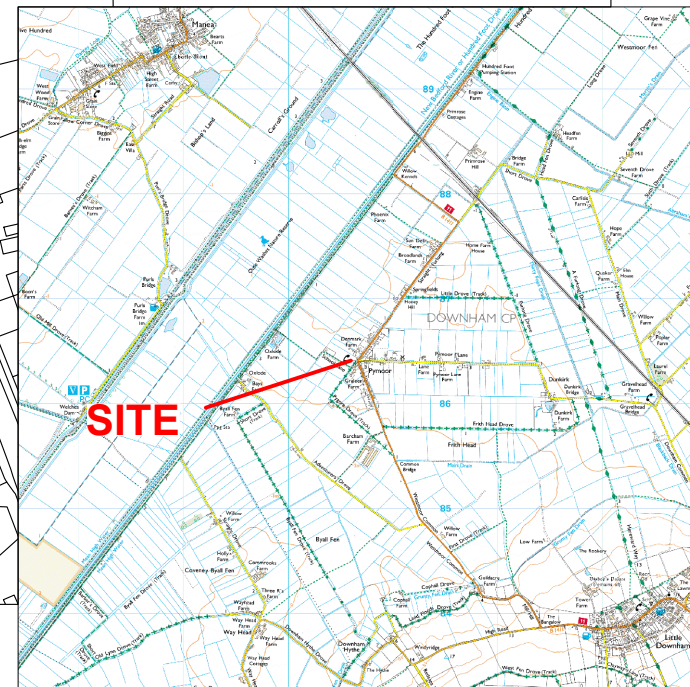
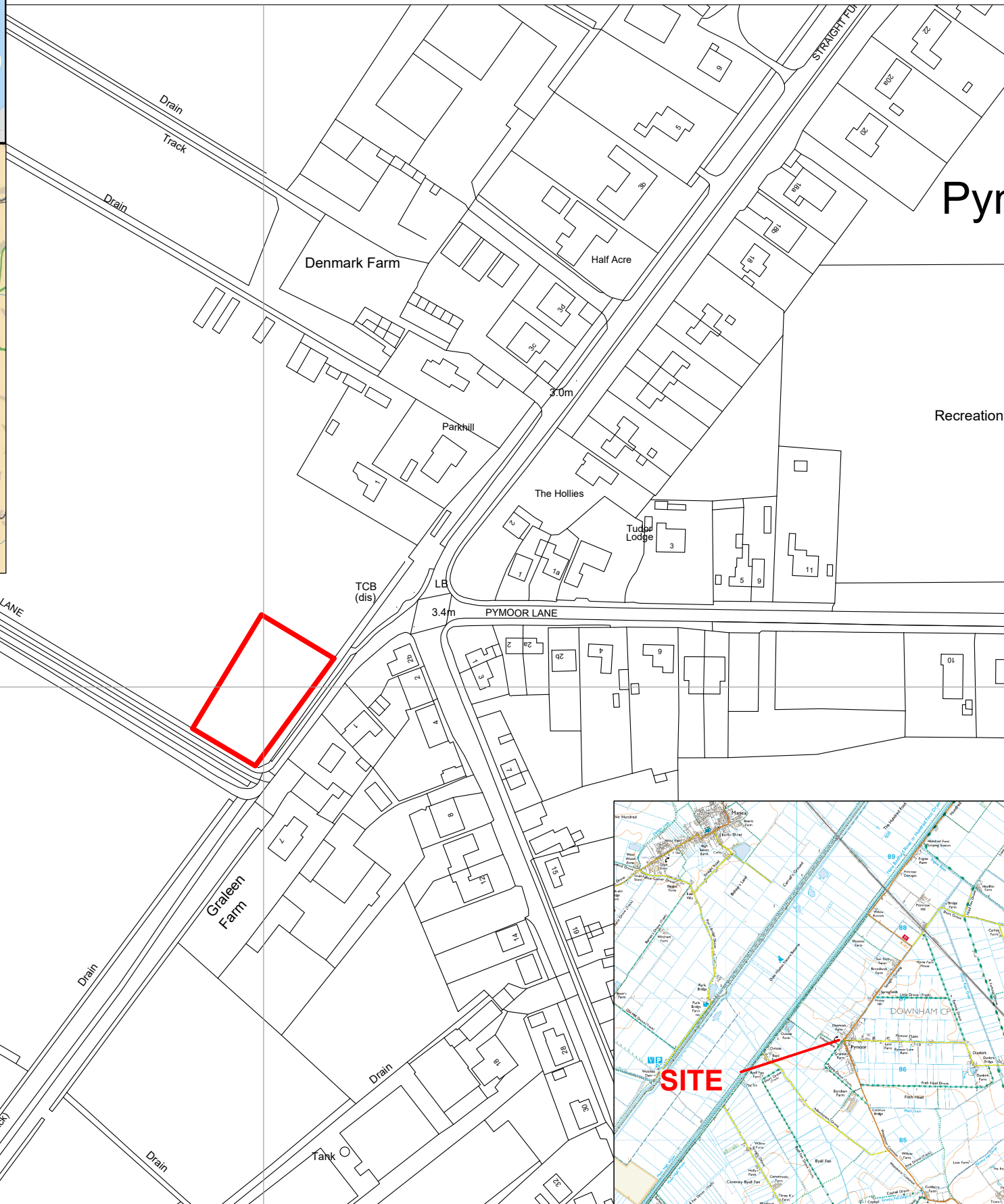
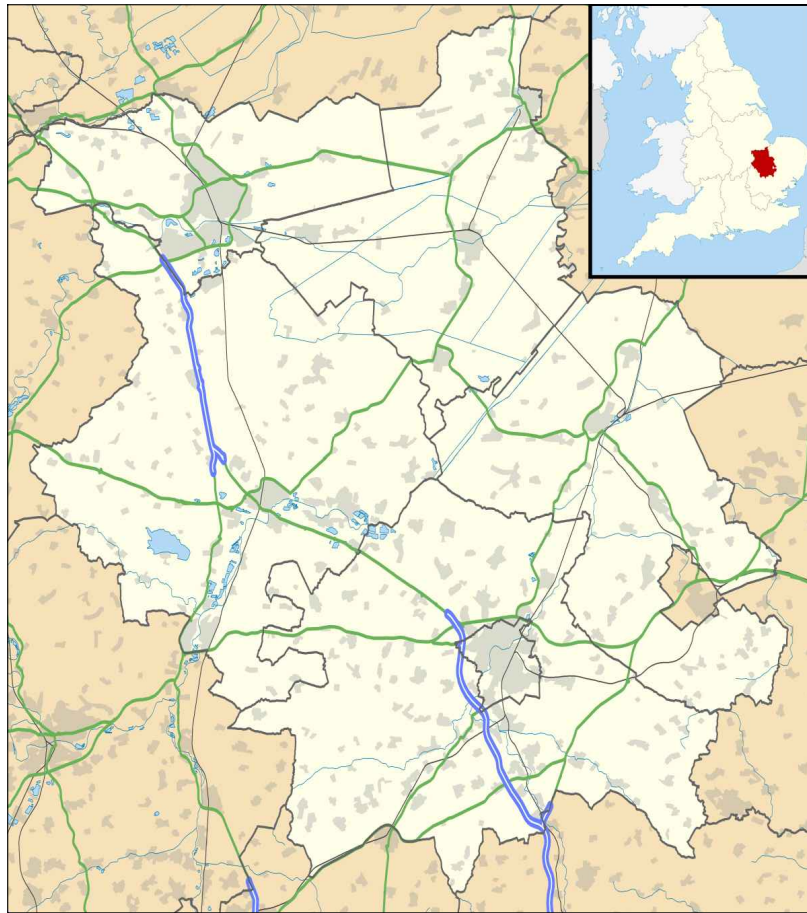
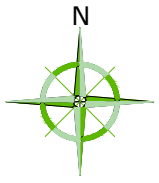


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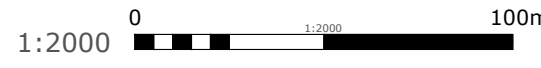
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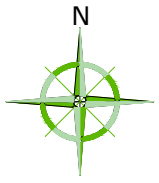




















 Site Boundary

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PROJECT:	SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM				
DESCRIPTION:	GENERAL LOCATION PLAN				
CLIENT:	DALE PARSONS				
BRITANNIA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD					
	UNIT 2 THE OLD WOOL WAREHOUSE ST ANDREWS STREET SOUTH BURY ST EDMUNDS SUFFOLK IP33 3PH				
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DATE:	JAN 2019	PLOT:	A3	VERSION:	1
AUTHOR:	DPM	FIGURE:		1	
APPROVED:	MB				



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-  HER Search Area
-  Grade I
-  Grade II*
-  Grade II
-  Archaeological Event
-  Undated Record
-  Multiperiod Record
-  Modern Record
-  Post-medieval Record
-  Medieval Record
-  Anglo Saxon Record
-  Roman Record
-  Iron Age Record
-  Bronze Age Record
-  Neolithic Record
-  Mesolithic Record
-  Palaeolithic Record
-  Site Boundary

NGR: 549600 286375 REF: P1263

PROJECT: SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM

DESCRIPTION: CHER DATA: MONUMENTS, EVENTS & LISTED BUILDINGS

CLIENT: DALE PARSONS

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UNIT 2
THE OLD WOOL WAREHOUSE
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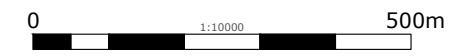
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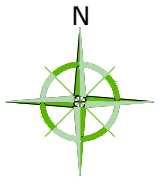
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FIGURE: 2



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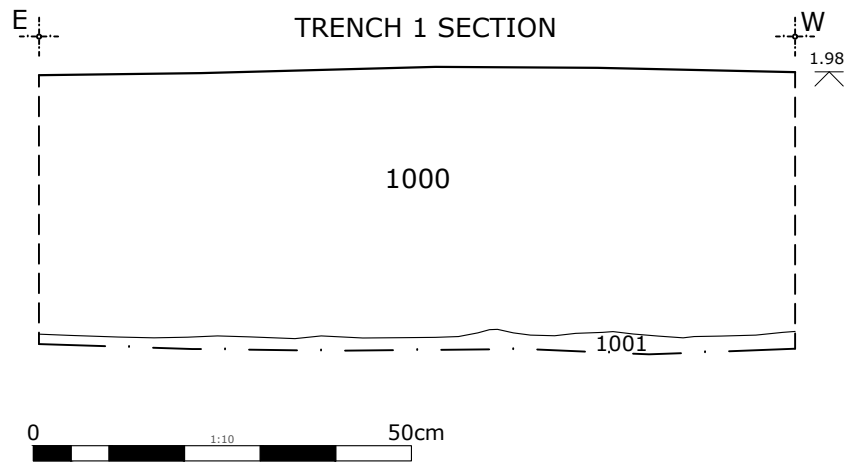
-  Trench
-  Site Boundary

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PROJECT:	SCHOOL LANE, PYMOOR, DOWNHAM		
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CLIENT:	DALE PARSONS		
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DP 2 - Sample Section - View NW



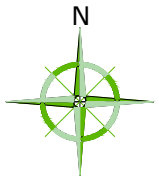
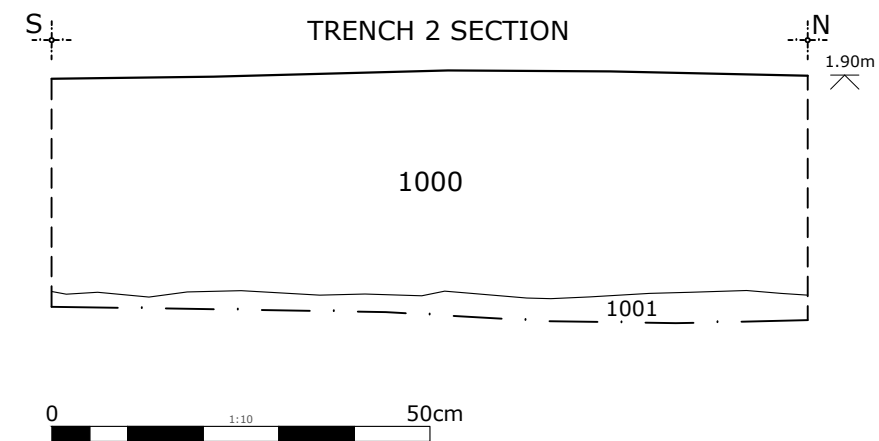
DP 1 - Trench 1 Post Excav - View NE



DP 3 - Trench 2 Post Excav - View NW



DP 2 - Sample Section - View NW



Site Boundary

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DESCRIPTION:	SECTIONS & PHOTOGRAPHS		
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