Report 2688

nps group

nau archaeology

Archaeological Evaluation on land adjacent to Wissington British Sugar Factory, Wissington, Norfolk

ENF 126372

Prepared for
Golder Associates (UK) Ltd
Golder House
Tadcaster Enterprise Park
Station Road
Tadcaster
North Yorkshire
LS24 9JF

Andy Phelps BA

May 2011

www.nps.co.uk

PROJECT CHECKLIST		
Project Manager	Nigel Page	
Draft Completed	Andy Phelps	16/05/2011
Graphics 1 Completed	David Dobson	16/05/2011
Review Completed	Jayne Bown	17/05/2011
Client Comments	Golder Associates	18/05/2011
Graphics 2 Completed	David Dobson	23/05/2011
Edit Completed	Jayne Bown	23/05/2011
Signed Off	David Whitmore	24/05/2011
Client Comments	Golder Associates	25/05/2011
Revisions Completed	Jayne Bown	27/05/2011
Signed Off	David Whitmore	27/05/2011
Issue 3		

NAU Archaeology
Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150 F 01603 756190 E jayne.bown@nps.co.uk www.nau.org.uk

Contents

Figures

Plates

A photograph is shown in the individual description table for each trench in Section 5.0 Results

Location:	Wissington
District:	Methwold
Grid Ref.:	TL 6606 9736
HER No.:	ENF 126372
OASIS Ref.:	101314
Client:	Golder Associates (UK) Ltd
Dates of Fieldwork:	28 March–21 April 2011

Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was conducted for Golder Associates (UK) Ltd on behalf of British Sugar ahead of development of part of the site as a Bio-energy plant.

Little evidence of human activity was present at the site from periods prior to the post medieval at which point the cutting of dykes and drains allowed the fens to be drained and the land to be farmed. Even so, post-medieval features are few and far between and, where present, are likely to be associated with agricultural practice during this period.

The site however does have potential to contribute to understanding the wider landscape and environment of this area of the fen edge during the early prehistoric period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Between March and April of 2011 NAU Archaeology were commissioned by Golder Associates (UK) Ltd on behalf of British Sugar to undertake an archaeological evaluation of three areas to the south, west and south-east of the British Sugar Factory at Wissington in West Norfolk within the Wissey Embayment. The fieldwork initially comprised twenty 30m by 1.8m trenches across an area of some 14.5ha proposed by British Sugar for the development of a Bio-energy plant. Three of these original trenches were then extended to encompass a slightly larger area. Thereafter an additional eight trenches were excavated in response to an alteration of the proposed development area.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Norfolk County Council (Ref: PP/C/2/2010/2020) and a specification compiled by Golder Associates (UK) Ltd which included a brief issued by Ken Hamilton of Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF43023). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2688/NP).

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

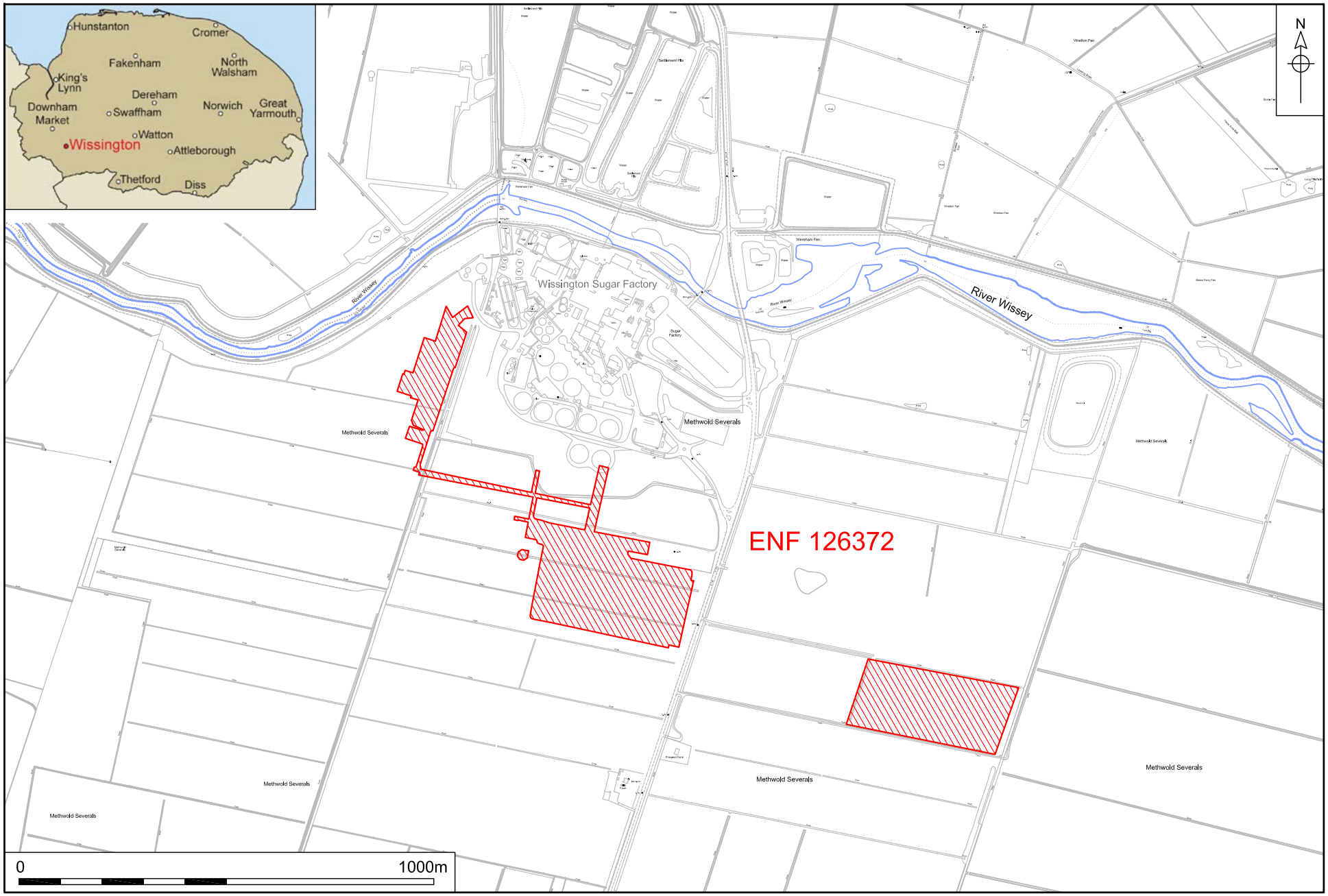


Figure 1. Site location

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

by Dr F. Green

Solid Geology

The geology of East Anglia is predominantly Jurassic and Cretaceous in age. Most of these deposits were laid down in a shallow marine sea and would have originally formed horizontal bands but the down warping of the southern North Sea has resulted in the tipping of the layers of sediments. Glacial action has modified these sedimentary sequences and eroded the softer Jurassic clays to the west to create the fenland basin. As a consequence the surface geology forms apparent bands with the oldest Jurassic deposits to the west and the youngest part of the Cretaceous sequence (the chalk) to the east.

The sequence, west to east (Fig. 2), comprises Jurassic; Kimmeridge clay, followed by Cretaceous: Lower Greensand (Sandringham sands), Gault, Carstone and Chalk (from Waller 1994).

As a result of glacial and fluvial action islands of sand and sandstone protrude from the floor of the embayment, for example Stubbs Hill and Decoy Hill 3-4km to the south of the beet factory. There is also an area of higher ground immediately to the south and east of the beet factory (within 200-500m) although the geology is not described it is likely to be sand/gravel of an earlier river terrace. Silvester (1991, Fig. 35) illustrates this as an area of higher ground in the Mesolithic which stood proud of the surrounding marshes during the Late Neolithic- Early Bronze Age (Silvester 1991) (Fig. 3). The central trial trenching area adjacent to the road extends over this area of higher ground.

The Wissington sugar beet factory lies to the north of an area known as the Wissey embayment. The Wissey embayment was probably formed by glacial modification of the Sandringham sands, Carstone and Gault escarpment creating an extension of fenland basin to the east (Fig. 4).

The solid geology in the vicinity of Wissington is the Cretaceous Gault clay. The Gault is a variable deposit but is described as a dark grey stiff clay which shows some variability in lithology from one area to another. It contains fossils of bivalves, ammonites, lamellibranchs, and gastropods together with belemnites (Chatwin, 1961). During the present fieldwork belemnites were found in the silty clay below the peat in the central area of the area of investigation verifying the presence of Gault clay.

Quaternary Geology

Glacial sands and gravels and probably some areas of till were deposited on the chalk upland surrounding the Wissey embayment and on the higher ground on islands such as Hilgay. Sands and gravels are also likely on the floor of the basin. In the immediate vicinity of this site there are no mapped glacial deposits, but small patches of sands and gravels may be of this date although they are more likely to be alluvial deposits, possibly terrace sediments from the early River Wissey.

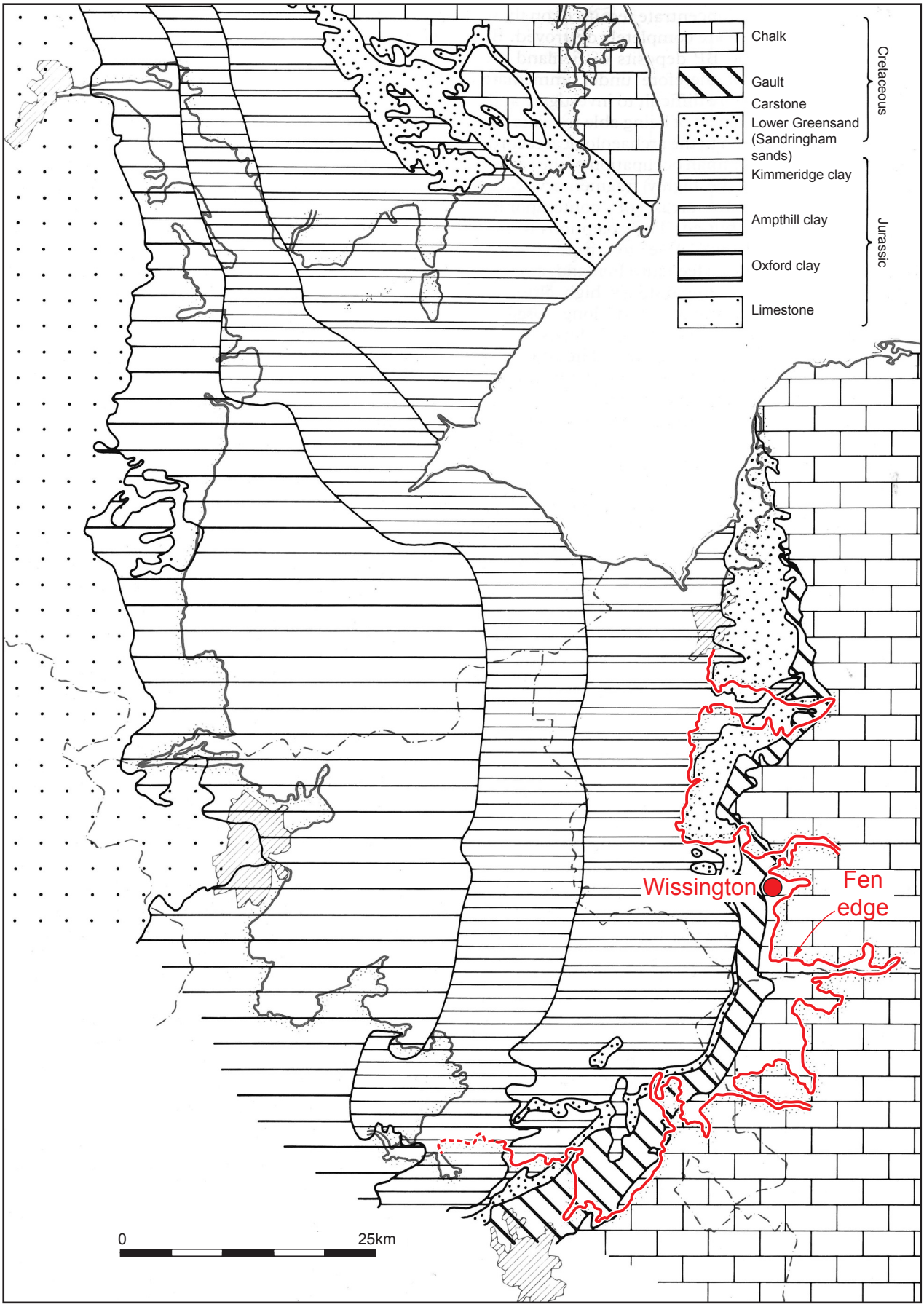


Figure 2. The pre-Quaternary geology of Fenland (simplified).
(from Waller, 1994, fig.2.1)

Holocene

The Wissington beet factory lies within the Wissey embayment and any archaeological work is enormously assisted by the presence of a major synthesis of archaeological survey (mostly fieldwalking), borehole data, palaeoenvironmental data and aerial photography by Silvester (1991). The area of the beet factory is covered in the Methwold and Northwold section (p.58-69) and in a series of invaluable landscape interpretation maps which have been produced in the synthesis and discussion. Much of the following draws on this work and that of a major environmental synthesis of fenland (Waller, 1994).

Mesolithic and Early Neolithic

Borehole data (mostly for the soil survey and geological survey) and the presence of roddons observed in aerial photography reveal the presence of a south-west to north-east oriented large palaeochannel immediately to the south of the Wissington sugar beet factory (within 500m). It is notable that the position and number of boreholes used to reconstruct the position of this channel are not indicated on the maps in Silvester (1991) and it is possible additional borehole data commissioned for this present development at the beet works may provide an interesting addition to the existing data. The position of this palaeochannel is illustrated in Figure 3 (taken from Silvester 1991, Fig. 36). The channel would have contained the precursor of the River Wissey which now flows to the west through the Hilgay gap and is now located to the north on the northern boundary of the sugar beet factory (Silvester 1991). Silvester describes how it is only near the sugar beet factory that the former course of the River Wissey is clearly observed in a deep channel and that to the south near Stubb's Hill the channel has been masked by the Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age Fen Clay infilling and overspilling the earlier palaeochannel (Fig. 3). It is likely that the river shifted its position to its present course sometime during the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (Silvester, 1991). The early River Wissey would have locally been the dominant feature of the landscape during the Mesolithic to the late Neolithic and significantly the evaluation trenches of the present archaeological survey are either on the western slopes of the former River Wissey or actually within it.

With the return of temperate conditions following the last glaciation, woodland established across the floor of the fenland basin, including the Wissey embayment. Initially the woodland was dominated by pine followed by mixed woodland where lime was important. Significant palaeoenvironmental work (principally pollen and diatom analysis together with C14 dating) has been carried out in the fenland basin with major works by Godwin in the 1930s and 1940s and summarised in a later synthesis (Godwin 1978). Sites close to the present site are indicated on Figure 3 in blue.

There is little evidence of an Early Mesolithic fen peat in the Wissey embayment away from the river valleys therefore it is thought that woodland rather than fenland extended over the lower part of the embayment as well as the uplands during the Mesolithic reflecting its relatively well drained and dry nature (Healy 1996).

In general peat formation in the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic was restricted to the river valleys (Silvester 1991), for example Mesolithic peat commenced growth at 8610 +/- 160 BP (Q-588) in the channel of the River Ouse at Peacocks Farm south

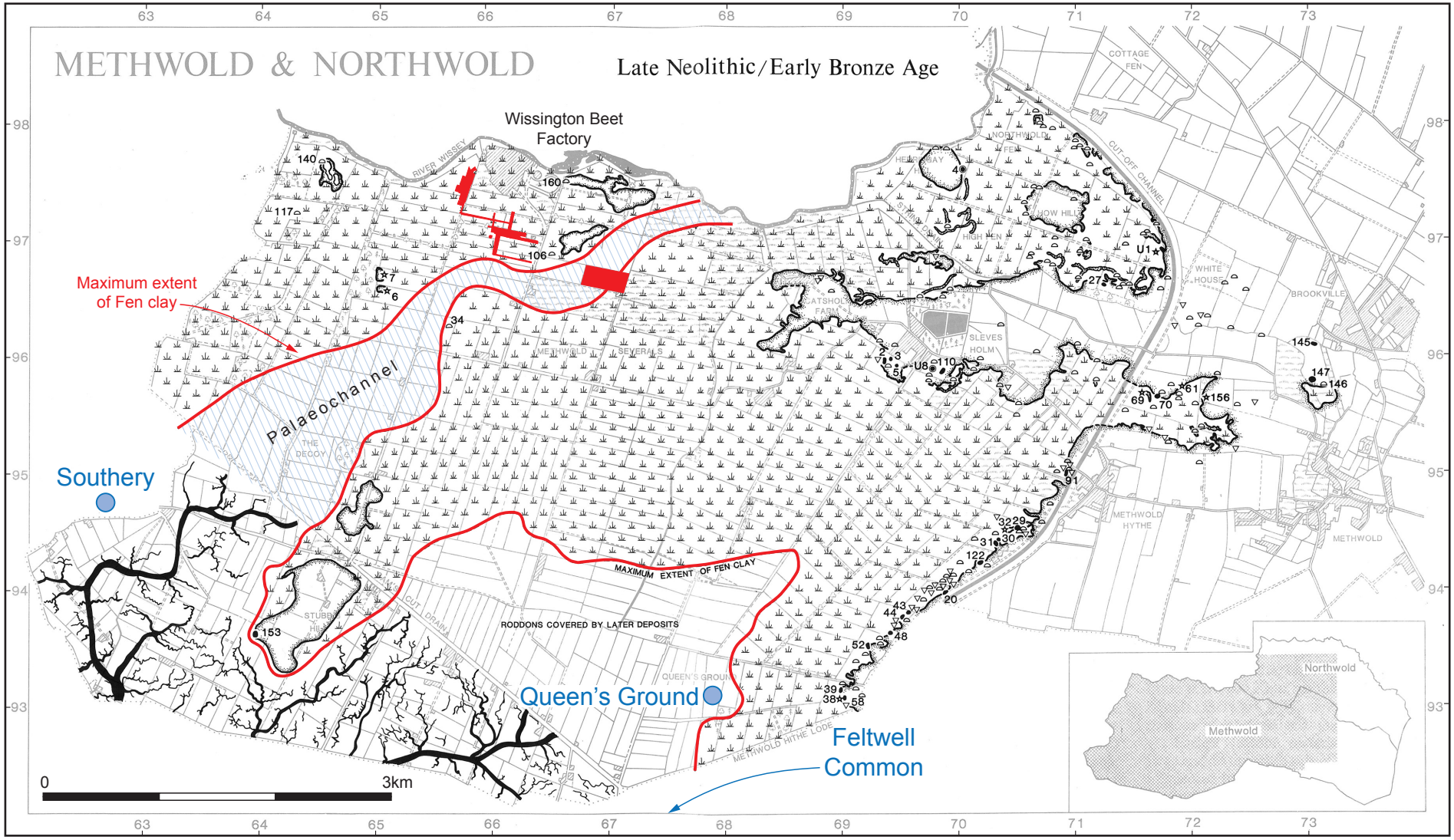


Figure 3. Location of palaeoenvironmental records (pollen and C14).
(from Silvester, 1991, fig.36)

of Wissington. Another peat deposit recorded at Queens Ground, Methwold (Godwin 1940) is likely to have developed due to the presence of local springs. A borehole to west of Catsholm (R. Burton pers. comm. in Silvester 1991 p 62) contains over 1m depth of lower peat (Mesolithic) within the former Wissey channel. A concentration of Mesolithic lithic material was found on the Catsholm ridge approx 2km to the south and east of the present area of investigation on an area which would have overlooked an earlier channel of the river (Silvester 1991 p. 62).

During this evaluation there was an opportunity to record sediments in a trial trench within the palaeochannel of the early River Wissey (Trench 6). Peat and sediment samples were collected in monolith and sample buckets for environmental analysis. It was noted that a trace of a lower peat, equivalent to the Mesolithic peat, was observed in this part of the palaeochannel. Radiocarbon dating of the sequence should be able to confirm the Mesolithic date of these deposits. The 'bog oaks' (a name given to all trees eroding out of the peat) observed in some of the trenches were unusually large trees (some of which were oak, others a yet unidentified hardwood) and would have been rare in the Neolithic, such large trees already having been utilised in the Mesolithic (Maisie Taylor pers. comm.). It is possible some of these trees may be Mesolithic.

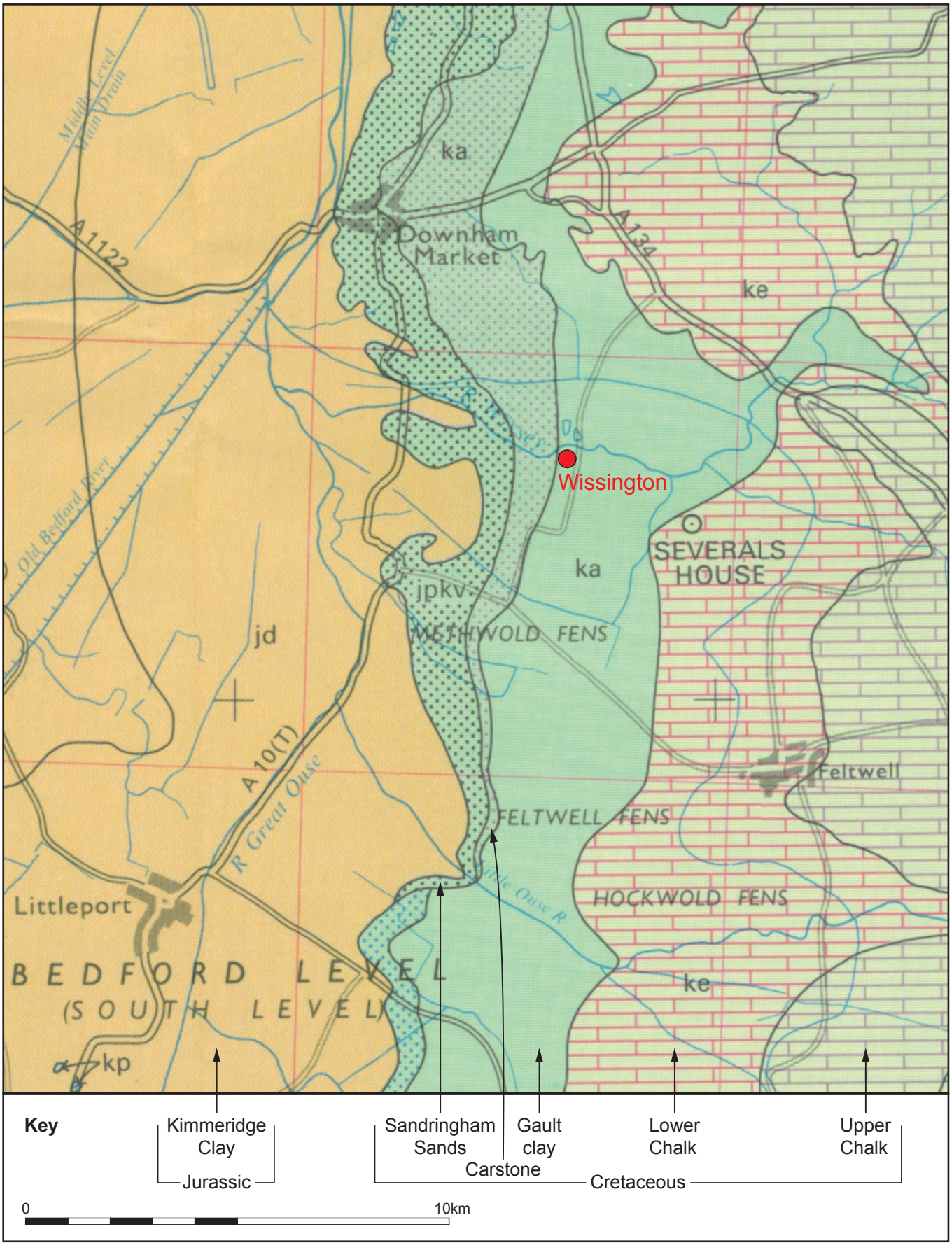
A grey slightly micaceous loamy soil was recorded in patches below the peat in several of the trenches close to the road. This soil may represent the Mesolithic to Early Neolithic land surface on the higher ground away from the palaeochannel (possibly on the sands and gravels of former river terrace) and has the potential to contain datable prehistoric artefacts. These locations close to a major river are the most likely to be occupied by Mesolithic peoples. Its absence in other locations may be either as a consequence of ploughing or potentially being lost in later fluvial activity from a flooding River Wissey.

Marine conditions and the associated raised water table inland started to affect the Wissey embayment during the Early Neolithic and with this there was an increase in peat development, but still largely confined to the main river channels (M. Waller pers. comm. in Silvester 1991). There was a gradual expansion of marine and fen environments inland which is well illustrated at Feltwell Common (Waller 1988) *c.*10km to the south-east of Wissington. At Feltwell a lime and then oak forest became an alder carr by 4490=/- BP (Q-2550: 3400-3040 cal BC) giving way to reed swamp by 4225 +/- 75BP (Q-2549:2920-2700cal. BP).

Late Neolithic Early–Mid Bronze Age

In general during the Later Neolithic 3,000-2200 Cal BC the marine transgression continued in the fenland basin and, on the margins, peat growth extended and covered what is now called the skirtland (the upland limit of peat growth and where much of it is now lost due to drainage and agriculture). This process of peat expansion onto the skirtland continued with various hiatuses until the 17th-century drainage of the Fens. The trenches closest to the Wissington beet factory are located within this skirtland where the peat is very thin (Silvester 1991 Fig. 4, p 4). In some of the trial trenches it was observed that modern ploughing had brought blocks of clay up into the peat as the plough hit the top of the underlying clay.

During the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age the areas of higher ground adjacent to the beet factory, and described in the solid geology section above, stood above



Licence No CO6/046-CSL

Figure 4. Map of the geology in the vicinity of Wissington

the surrounding marsh and fenland where peat was developing; perhaps looking out over the still open channel of the early River Wissey as indicated by the presence of pot boiler sites MTW106 and MTW160 of probable Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age date and above the peat (Silvester 1991).

Although the sea level history of the fenland basin is complex with several marine trangressions in different geographic areas, it is during the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age that the sea reached its maximum inland limit. This marine transgression deposited the Fen Clay (Godwin and Clifford 1938) also known as 'buttery clay' and by the British Geological survey as the Barroway Drove beds (Gallois 1988). The Fen Clay is variable both in lithology and date but most commonly it is soft, blue-grey fine clay.

The effect of the Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age marine transgression in this part of the Wissey embayment was to deposit Fen Clay in the valleys and push waterlogged conditions landwards, resulting in the development of fen and marshland and resultant peat. The known and extrapolated extent of the Fen Clay is shown in Healy (1996 Fig. 2) and Silvester (1991 Fig 36) and is reproduced in this report in Figure 3 which shows Fen Clay confined to the limits of the palaeochannel. Fen Clay in this area is at its maximum inland deposition with the initiation of local deposition of Fen Clay at Feltwell being recorded as 4135+/- 70 BP (Q2548) (Waller 1994).

The sea level remained high for perhaps three hundred years in this part of the fenland basin (Silvester 1991) and was followed by a sea level regression in the Early Bronze Age leaving roddons (areas of silt and sand in earlier creeks and channels) in the former salt marshes and peat covered earlier marine sediments.

During fieldwork it was difficult to distinguish between the Fen Clay and the underlying Cretaceous Gault clay. The 'Fen Clay' was almost certainly identified in Trench 3 to a depth of approximately -3m. On the valley sides trial trenching revealed a blue-grey silty clay underlying the peat that was in places stony and full of phragmites roots and could not be distinguished from that described as 'Fen Clay' in the palaeochannel. None of reconstruction maps show the Fen Clay extending as far north as Wissington. Illustrations in Waller (1994) show the Fen Clay as being restricted to the old Wissey channel. Therefore, existing data indicates the clay underlying the sediments of the valley sides is Gault Clay. It may however, be an unmapped thin overspill of the later Fen Clay from the adjacent palaeochannel which masks the underlying Gault clay. It is possible such an overflow may have occurred as the existing channel became blocked with Fen Clay, as suggested was the fate of the course of the early Wissey by Silvester, (1991 p.82) just prior to abandoning its channel and the river taking up its new course to the north of the beet factory. Microfossil analyses of the clay will confirm if any Fen Clay is present in the valley side deposits. It is likely any Fen Clay in this area was likely to have been deposited in brackish and weakly brackish conditions (Waller, 1994).

It was notable, during the trial trenching that the upper deposits of the clay of the valley sides contained a moderate proportion of sub-angular flints including burnt flints. The presence of pot boilers (probably of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date) at MTW 106 and MTW160 just to the north and east of the trenches containing burnt flint may reinforce the suggestion that the clays contained sediments that were being reworked by the floodwaters of the early Wissey at a

time of higher water table as a result of marine transgression during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. There were also pockets of sand recorded in these trenches which overlay the clay which are part of a complex alluvial sequence where remnants of earlier terraces are reworked and flood deposits from the River Wissey deposit and may remobilise earlier deposits.

It is important to note that there would have been a loss of dry areas in the Bronze Age and there would have been a greater pressure on the higher marginal land for any agriculture and occupation (Silvester 1991).

Later Bronze Age

There is little evidence of prehistoric activity at this time. The sea had receded and allowed peat growth over the Fen Clay.

Iron Age and Roman

The fen edge is reoccupied during the Iron Age. The area of Wissington, including all the previous higher land which had protruded above was now enveloped in peat. A further marine transgression in the later Iron Age deposited a marine silt (the Terrington beds) across a wide area but silt deposition does not extend into the Wissey embayment. It is possible that a widespread aquatic mollusc layer identified in several trenches may correspond to this Late Iron Age increase in water table as the sea encroaches to the west.

Saxon and Medieval

The fen continued to grow during this period with populations retreating to higher ground. It was not until the 17th-century large scale drainage that peat stopped expanding.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following section has been compiled, with permission, from information on the archaeological and historic resource of the area produced in the Tender Specification for the project prepared by Golder Associates (UK) Ltd (2011) with entries listed in period order.

Prehistoric

Bronze Age palstave and socketed axe (TL 655 985)
West Dereham Fen: looped palstave with shield and stem decoration and socketed axe, Breton type. Bronze Age metalwork recorded in Norwich Castle Museum, 1966.

Possible round house site (TL 6615 9883)
A hut site 8.2m in diameter is marked at this location on a map held by Norwich Castle Museum. Mr R Wilde the farmer, states that the dark soil ring was revealed by plough *c.*1960. At an unspecified date, this feature was excavated and found to be a ditch 46cm wide and 76cm deep with no entrance. There is now no surface evidence of the ring, which produced no finds from the interior or surround according to Mr Wilde.

Late Neolithic polished flint axehead, MNF56744 (TL 67404 98715)
Casual find of a Late Neolithic polished flint axe during agricultural operations in the 1960s.

Bronze Age bronze axe, NMR 377848 (TL 672 981)
Haft-flanged axe with plain shield decoration from Wretton Fen. Bronze Age metalwork recorded in Norwich Castle Museum 1966.

Burnt flints from north of Wood MNF23377 (TL 6424 9769)
Prehistoric burnt flints were recovered here during the Fenland Survey but were not completely recorded in the Fenland Survey archive.

Occupation site two fields north-east of Broad Corner, MNF23370 (TL 6430 9724)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a sparse spread of prehistoric burnt and worked flints on a low island. These are indicative of prehistoric occupation.

Burnt flints from two fields south-east of draining pump, MNF23376 (TL 644 978)
Prehistoric burnt flints were recovered here during the Fenland Survey but were not completely recorded in the Fenland Survey archive.

Occupation site and undated ring ditches in field north-west of Long Belt, south-west of River, MNF24095 (TL 6460 9758)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints. A concentration of prehistoric burnt flints has also been recorded. This is indicative of occupation. Cropmarks on aerial photographs appear to show three undated ring ditches. The function of these is unclear.

Burnt flints from east of Long Belt, MNF23378 (L 6468 9725)
Prehistoric burnt flints were recovered here during the Fenland Survey but were not completely recorded in the Fenland Survey archive.

Bronze Age axe hammer, MNF24550 (TL 6538 9723)
A Bronze Age stone axe hammer with grooved decoration on the top and sides was found before 1988. There is some confusion as to whether this object was found at this location, or in Hilgay parish, 5km to the west. The person recorded by Kings Lynne Museum as discovering this object in 1989 was contacted to clarify this matter, but he could not recall finding the object.

Bronze Age inhumations at Methwold Severalls, MNF2542, NMR 377820 (TL 6505 9685)
Six skeletons, including two adult women, an adult man, two juveniles aged approximately seven and eleven, and an infant and two children, were excavated by Frank Curtis in 1968, after a human femur had been unearthed during ploughing the previous year. A quadrangular sectioned copper alloy awl was also recovered from close to one of the skeletons. Palynological evidence indicates that the skeletons lay in peat formed after fen woodland had given way to wetter conditions. Radiocarbon dates for the skeletons range from 3580 (+/-80) BP to 3670 (+/-80) BP, placing them in the Early Bronze Age. Full exhumation details have also not been published, but the findings of the late F. Curtis and Miss B. Green show there was no burial pit, structure or mound associated with the disarticulated remains. Note: The Norfolk HER locates these burials over 100m to the south of this location. The location adopted here is that given by the NMR, the original excavation report, and Healey 1996.

Bronze Age inhumations at Methwold Severalls, MNF2542 (TL 6510 9684)
In 1971, three skeletons were discovered *c.*45m to the east of the 1968 finds (AR48). Two flint scrapers were found with the skeletons, which were buried in

peat c.0.60m deep. Radiocarbon dates for the skeletons range from 3600 (+/-80) BP to 3760 (+/-80) BP, placing them in the Early Bronze Age.

Early Neolithic occupation site, MNF20346 (TL 650 966)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints. A sparse spread of pieces of Neolithic and Beaker period pot was found. An augur survey found that it is likely that evidence of occupation is still covered by peat. The site represents Neolithic settlement close to the forerunner of the River Wissey. A skeleton may also come from the site.

Leaf shaped arrowhead, scraper, & flakes, NMR 377930 (TL 649 265)
A leaf shaped arrowhead, a scraper and several flakes have been found in an area of low sand swell over several years by Mr G H Waterfall, who retains them.

Early and Late Neolithic occupation sites, MNF20347 (TL 6506 9655)
A Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead was found before 1978. Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of Early and Late Neolithic worked flints. A sparse spread of pieces of Neolithic period pot was found. An auger survey found that it is likely that evidence of occupation is still covered by peat. The site represents Neolithic settlement close to the forerunner of the River Wissey.

Neolithic axehead, MNF2529, NMR 377839 (TL 6530 9651)
Part of a Neolithic rhyolite stone axehead was found 780m south-west of the study area around 1967.

Worked and burnt flints west of Wissington Factory, MNF23380 (TL 6581 9768)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a few prehistoric worked flints and one prehistoric burnt flint on a small island of sandy loam just emerging from the peat.

Worked and burnt flints, MNF21143 (TL 6558 9626)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a sparse but even scatter of prehistoric worked and burnt flints.

Mesolithic to Early Neolithic burnt and worked flints, MNF21141 (TL 6571 9643)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of worked and burnt Mesolithic to Early Neolithic flints with one small burnt flint concentration.

Mesolithic worked and burnt flints, MNF21142 (TL 6576 9654)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered odd Mesolithic worked and burnt flints on a sand hill.

Occupation site, MNF24497 (TL 6660 9750)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a concentration of prehistoric burnt flints indicative of prehistoric occupation.

Mesolithic stone macehead, MNF13460, NMR 377868 (TL 6662 9726)
A Mesolithic stone macehead, with hour-glass perforation, was found on the field surface by Mr G H Waterfall in around 1966.

Worked flints from east of Five Mile House, MNF24384 (TL 6683 9733)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints.

Bronze Age battle-axe, NMR 377815 (TL 665 965)
Bronze Age battle-axe with rounded butt from Methwold Severals. The incised decoration appears to be faked. Held by Norwich Museum.

Possible occupation site, MNF23219 (TL 6682 9696)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints and recorded a concentration of prehistoric burnt flints that may be indicative of a prehistoric occupation site. These were recorded as being concentrated in the vicinity of an island of clayey loam which lay towards the southwest corner of the field. The HER entry records the site as extending across the whole field. Three further burnt flints were also recovered during the site walkover in Jan 2011, which was undertaken in the south-eastern corner of the same field.

Worked flints from south of River Wissey, MNF24385 (TL 6725 9736)
Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints.

Bronze Age palstave & bracelet, MNF2535/MNF2535, NMR 377811 (TL 675 975)
Unlooped palstave with trident decoration and hole through base of hafting slot and a circular bracelet with incised decoration, both probably from Methwold, River Wissey (ex. Clouston Collection. The localities of items from this collection are dubious).

Neolithic pottery finds (alleged site of), NMR 377823 (TL 670 958)
Neolithic pottery found over a six year period, from wide area around TL 670958 (information from King's Lynn Museum). Possible grid reference error. Mr J. Wortley has no knowledge of Neolithic pottery finds from this vicinity, and states his collections of pottery have almost entirely been found in the Methwold Common and Feltwell Common areas.

Prehistoric finds, MNF2545 (TL 6829 9619)
A Bronze Age copper alloy spearhead was found in 1859. Fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey recovered a scatter of prehistoric worked flints including a Late Bronze Age or Neolithic arrowhead and one piece of prehistoric pot. Two small concentrations of worked flint were recorded.

Roman

Roman farmstead, MNF4455 (TL 6405 9805)
Earthworks and parchmarks of a Roman farmstead settlement can be seen on aerial photographs. Survey of these features as part of the Fenland Survey identified two enclosures, two raised platforms and two small ditched circles. These are the remains of a small farmstead and associated fields. The platforms are probably the site of buildings. The ditched circles may be raised haystacks with an external ditch to aid drainage. Pieces of late 3rd and 4th century AD Roman pottery were found in molehills on the site during the survey. It is very unusual for this type of farmstead to survive as earthworks.

Medieval

?Medieval palaeochannel, AP6 (TL6701 9689)
A possible silted up palaeochannel is visible as a pale soilmark and cropmarks on several air photos. The channel is narrow, sinuous and aligned near east to west. This feature has been identified by the Fenland Survey as a stream or slade that was active in the Saxon and Medieval periods.

Post-medieval

Wereham Fen House (site of farmstead) (TL 6647 9917)
A building was depicted at this location on the 1818 Enclosure Map, adjacent to the trackway known as Fen Drove. This is named as 'Wereham Fen Ho.' on the OS Old Series map of 1824 This is depicted on all OS mapping until 1966, and subsequently it is named as College Farm on the 1977 and 1985 mapping. This farm had disappeared by the time of the 2010 mapping.

Beckhill Farm (site of) (TL 6690 9910)
Nothing had been depicted at this location on the 1818 Enclosure Map, or on the OS Old Series map of 1824. The OS map of 1885 depicts Beckhill Farm at this location, and this is depicted on all subsequent mapping up to and including 1966. By 1977, this farm was no longer extant, and all of the minor field drainage ditches adjacent to the farm had been removed to create one large prairie field.

Route of Wissington Railway (TL 6521 9382)
Wissington Railway was opened in 1905 and at first was a horse-drawn line to an ammonia factory on the site of a sugar beet factory. It closed in 1917 after flooding, but was reopened in 1924. Throughout its life various branches were opened and closed, including Shrub Hill, which had a junction to the site of Shrubhill Tramway, (NHER 18827). Other stations include White Dyke, Little Ouse, Jacob's Farm, Anchor Drove, and Southery Sedge Fen. Also part of this is the Common Dyke branch on Methwold Severals which was originally the Feltwell and Southery Farmers Supply Co. Railway (begun in 1925). The line closed north of Wissington in 1957, and entirely in 1965.

Clay Pit (site of) (TL 6735 9885)
A clay pit is depicted on the OS maps of 1885 and 1890, and subsequently the mapping from 1905-1966 depicts this disturbed area as having been colonised by a mixture of wood and brushwood vegetation. By 1977, this was no longer depicted, and had evidently been levelled during agricultural improvements to the surrounding farmland.

Farmstead (site of) (TL 64650 98475)
An 'L-shaped' building with a small enclosure appended (presumably a yard or garden) is depicted on the 1885 OS map. This probable farmhouse or homestead is set within a square enclosure which is surrounded on three sides by screening plantations, and is located adjacent to the angle between two adjacent trackways which meet here; Honey Drove and Straight Drove. The OS map of 1928 depicts the building with only one range, and the building had disappeared completely by 1977-78.

Farmhouse (site of) (TL 6568 9860)
A 'T-shaped' building is depicted on the 1855 OS map, and this had been extended with an additional range to the west by 1928. By 1958 a range had also been added to the eastern side of the building, and by 1977-78 a number of other buildings had been built adjacent to this, and it is named as 'Cornerways Farm'. By 1985 the original farmhouse had been demolished, but the remaining farm complex is still extant today.

Drainage pump (site of) (TL 6612 5899)
A small building is depicted straddling a drain on the OS map of 1855, and this is named 'Drainage Pump' on all of the mapping from 1905-66. By 1977/78, this had

been destroyed by the excavation of settlement pits associated with the Wissington Sugar Factory to the south.

Field boundary/drainage ditch (TL6641 9849)
A post-medieval field boundary is visible as a cropmark on recent air photos. It appears to be extant on historic air photos and is depicted on the Wereham Tithe map of 1840.

Field boundary/drainage ditch and pit (TL6648 9836)
A perpendicular arrangement of ditches and a possible pit are visible as cropmarks on air photos. Some of these features appear to be associated with former boundary around the Settlement Pits and are visible as earthworks on historic air photos.

Bank or ditch (TL6648 9836)
A pale linear soilmark is visible on air photos. It appears to be cut by one of the extant field drains. It may be a levelled bank or a silted up ditch of post-medieval date.

Field boundary/drainage ditch (TL6655 9810)
A series of post-medieval field boundaries in the form of drainage ditches is visible as a cropmark on air photos. At least one of these was partially extant in the late 1940s. Some of these features appear to correspond with field boundaries marked on an 1818 map.

Field Barn (site of) (TL 6655 9845)
A building is depicted on the 1840 Wereham Tithe Map, described in the Apportionment as 'Barn'. This appears to have been re-built by 1885, as the OS map of that year shows two adjacent buildings connected to a small paddock at the same location, but on a different alignment to previously. This layout remained unchanged on all subsequent OS mapping until 1977, by which time one of the two buildings was no longer extant. The remaining building survived until at least 1985, but by 2010 this had also been demolished, although the paddock still remained.

Bank or ditch (TL6675 9838)
A pale linear soilmark is visible on air photos. It appears to be cut by one of the extant field drains. It may be a levelled bank or a silted up ditch of post-medieval date.

Gullies or furrows (TL6685 9842)
A series of straight parallel gullies are visible as earthworks on historic air photos. These may be traces of post-medieval ridge and furrow or trenches dug for planting trees (the area was sparsely wooded at that time).

Clay pit (site of) (TL 6722 9864)
A clay pit is depicted on the OS maps of 1885 and 1890, and subsequently the mapping from 1905-1966 depicts this disturbed area as having been colonised by a mixture of wood and brushwood vegetation. By 1952/53, this was no longer depicted, and had evidently been levelled during agricultural improvements to the surrounding farmland.

Post-medieval drainage mill (site of), MNF16059 (TL 6719 9846)
A drainage mill was marked at this location on the 1836 Ordnance Survey map.

Gravel pit or pond (TL6668 9811)
A post-medieval gravel pit or pond is visible as an earthwork on air photos.

Gravel pit or pond (TL6680 9796)
A post-medieval gravel pit or pond is visible as an earthwork on air photos.

Drainage mill (site of), MNF16060 (TL 6711 9826)
This is the site of a post-medieval drainage mill marked on a map of 1836.

Gravel pit or pond (TL6695 9798)
A post-medieval gravel pit or pond is visible as an earthwork on air photos.

?Homestead and garden (site of) (TL 6738 9817)
A small enclosure containing three small buildings, a pond and a well is depicted on the OS map of 1885, adjacent to the trackway named Coppaldock Drove. By 1905 one of the buildings had disappeared, but another had been constructed, along with a small walled enclosure to the north. These all survived until at least 1966, but by 1977 most of these features had disappeared and the area had been colonised by woodland; only the well remained, and this was still depicted on the OS map of 2010.

?Homestead and garden (site of) (TL 6783 9830
A small rectangular enclosure containing a small building, possibly a barn or small homestead, and a well, is depicted on the OS map of 1885. This is depicted in a similar fashion on all subsequent mapping until 1977-78, when the building was still depicted, but the enclosure walls were no longer extant. By 2010, the building had disappeared, but the well was still depicted.

Stoke Fen House Farmstead (site of) (TL 6800 9815)
Nothing had been depicted at this location on the 1818 Enclosure Map, but two buildings within a small square enclosure were depicted on the OS Old Series map of c.1824-36. This is named as Stoke Fen Farm on the 1886 and subsequent mapping up until and including 1966, but had disappeared before the production of the 1977/78 map.

River Wissey Navigation, NMR 1341721 (TL 6420 9800 -TL 6798 9727)
Improvements were planned for the Wissey, a tributary of the Great Ouse, as early as 1438, but it is unknown whether anything was actually done. The river was certainly navigable without locks at a later date for ten miles from its confluence with the Ouse, up to Stoke Ferry, and this remains the limit of navigation for pleasure craft.

Drainage pump (site of) (TL 6430 9724)
A building is depicted at this location adjacent to a drainage channel on the map of the fens dating to 1684. This is on the opposite side of the river to a similarly depicted building which is also adjacent to a drainage channel ('King's Dike'), known to have been a wind-powered drainage mill. It seems likely, therefore that this was a similar building.

Drainage mill and pumping station (site of), MNF4467 (TL 6428 9792)
A wind powered drainage mill is marked at this site on the Ordnance Survey 1 inch map made in 1836. This was replaced in 1849 by Wood Hall Estate Pumping Station. This large steam engine had two boilers. It was sold off in 1878 to Major

Stocks and was then known as Stocks's engine. In 1907 the station was converted to a vertical steam engine. This engine was replaced in 1940 by a Ruston diesel. This diesel was abandoned in 1974.

Homestead and garden or field barn (site of) (TL 644 974)
The 1885 OS map depicts a small building comprising one range with a small paddock appended. The 1905 OS map depicts the building within a larger enclosure, but neither is extant on the 1953 OS map.

Severals Mill wind pump (site of), MNF45663 (TL 65061 97607)
Site of wind pump draining Methwold Severals. The pump was constructed in 1773.

Field boundary or drainage ditch (TL 6521 9747)
An infilled post-medieval field boundary in the form of a drainage ditch is visible as a pale soilmark on air photos.

Drain (TL 6530 9727)
A modern drain is visible as a slight earthwork on air photos that were taken when the land was waterlogged. It may follow the course of the 12 Foot Drain depicted on some historic maps, but is more likely to be a drain at this location which was partially depicted on the OS map of 1885, and extended southwards by 1953.

The 12 Foot Drain (course of) (TL 6543 9752 to TL 6470 9615)
This drainage channel is depicted on the map of the fens of 1684, and named as the '12 foot Draine'. The Methwold parish map of 1699 names it the 'Twelve Foot Dike'. Faden's map of 1797 describes it as the 'Old 12 Foot Drain', and also depicts the 'New 12 Foot Drain' to the east of this, which is still extant today. By the time that the OS Old Series map published in 1824, the Old 12 Foot Drain was no longer extant. Haywood's Survey of the Fens in 1634 references the drain thus: 'The King hath another severall ffen adioynining more west [of the Halffendike], by the Twelve Foot Draine west; Stoke River north; Southmore, and the Newe River south'.

Marl or gravel pits (TL6555 9775)
A cluster of post-medieval marl or gravel pits are visible as earthworks on air photos on the northern bank of the River Wissey. These features are depicted on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map, and survive as ponds today.

Field boundary/drainage ditch (TL6475 9805)
A field boundary or drainage ditch of possible post-medieval date is visible as a cropmark on air photos.

Drainage pump, MNF2556 (TL 6566 9780)
A 19th-century drainage pump, initially powered by a beam steam engine, which in 1927 ran for seven weeks non-stop. The machinery was replaced in the 1940s with a new pump powered by a lorry engine. Today, the site is understood to be derelict.

Fertiliser factory (site of) (TL 6586 9782)
A fertiliser factory was constructed in c.1905 by farmer Arthur Keeble, which produced ammonia by heating peat, and reacted this with sulphuric acid to produce ammonium sulphate. The business went into receivership in 1906, but continued to operate until 1914. The factory building is visible on Google Earth satellite imagery from 1999, but has since been demolished.

Pumping station (site of), MNF45680 (TL 66036 97937)
A pumping station existed here in the post-medieval period. It had a beam engine installed in 1849 and was still in existence by 1936. Sadly, no trace of this building survives into modernity.

Steam operated drainage pump (site of), MNF2559 (TL 659 978)
This steam operated drainage pump was worked by a single boiler. If required, the boiler of the nearby ammonia factory (now a sugar beet factory) would also be used for drainage. Unfortunately this system was not reliable and flooding resulted from a reluctance by the factory owner to use his engine for drainage. The steam engine was replaced by a portable steam engine in 1924 driving a centrifugal pump, and this existed until 1938. Destroyed or rendered inaccessible by extension of sugar factory.

Drainage ditches/field boundaries (TL 660 970)
A number of north to south oriented drainage ditches were cut at some point between 1906-53, and were infilled between 1966-78.

?Homestead and garden (site of) (TL 6630 9703)
Two buildings are depicted on the 1953 OS map, one of which is situated within a walled enclosure, possibly representing a garden surrounding a homestead or farmhouse. By 1977-78, a smaller building had been constructed adjacent to this, but this was no longer depicted on the 1985 map. All of the buildings had been demolished by 1999 (Google Earth satellite imagery).

Five Mile House farm (site of) (TL 6640 9750)
A number of farm buildings named 'Five Mile House' are depicted on the 1885 OS map, to the west of the location of the farm with the same name that had been depicted on the earlier mapping (see AR70). The farm buildings were depicted on all subsequent mapping up until 1985 inclusive, but had been destroyed as a result of the expansion of the sugar factory by 1999 (Google Earth satellite imagery).

Sluice House/Five Mile House (site of) (TL 6650 9755)
The map of the fens of 1684 depicts a break in the river flood defence banks at the point where the 'Half Fenn Dike' joins the Wissey. The Methwold parish map of 1699 depicts a building named 'The Sluice House' at this location, and a group of buildings named as 'Five Mile House' is depicted on Faden's map of 1797, the OS Old Series map, Bryant's Map of 1826 and the Methwold Tithe Map of 1840. On the 1885 OS map, a new farm complex named Five Mile House was depicted to the west (AR69), and only one of the buildings associated with the earlier complex remained. This was still depicted on the 1906 OS map, but was no longer extant by 1953.

Post-medieval ditch (TL6670 9752)
A ditch of probable post-medieval date is visible as a cropmark across a small area of faster ripening crop.

Modern drains (TL6679 9747)
A series of modern parallel land drains are visible as cropmarks across a small area of faster ripening crop.

Pits (TL6663 9698)
A cluster of post-medieval marl pits is visible as earthworks on air photos. These features are depicted on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map.

?Field barn (site of) (TL 67050 29655)
An 'L-shaped' building, with a smaller adjacent building set within a small paddock is depicted on the 1953 OS map. This is likely to be a field barn, as it is some distance from the nearest road, and is depicted on the mapping dating to 1958 and 1966. The 1977-78 and 1985 maps show that the barn had fallen into disrepair, with only two walls still standing, and these were no longer depicted on the 2010 map.

Modern

Drains (TL6654 9804)
A series of modern land drains are visible as cropmarks on air photos.

Land drain (TL6708 9800)
A modern land drain is visible as earthworks and cropmark on air photos.

Undated

Pottery sherds (TL 6691 9903)
It is recorded that some undated pottery sherds were recovered from this area, south of Brickhill Farm.

Bulldog Bank (TL 6589 9862-TL 6590 9796)
A wide earthen bank marking the parish boundary between West Dereham and Wereham is marked on the Enclosure map of 1818, the OS Old Series map, and Bryant's map of 1826. The 1885 OS map depicts a wide earthen bank marking this boundary which is named as 'Bulldog Bank'. This is similarly depicted on the OS maps dating to 1890-92, 1905, and 1928, but by 1952-53 the southerly section of the bank had been removed. By 1977-78, the bank had been totally destroyed due to the excavation of settlement pits associated with the Wissington sugar factory.

Natural features and drains (TL 6455 9768)
A series of natural features in the form of shallow hollows (largest *c.*45m diameter) are visible as slight earthworks and cropmarks on air photos. Some photos show narrow ditches running out of the hollows, presumably in an attempt to drain them.

Site with no significant archaeological remains, MNF55209 (TL 64509 97427)
A geophysical survey was undertaken in 2007 but no anomalies interpreted as being definitely archaeological were identified during the survey, possibly due to low soil magnetic susceptibility. Although no archaeological features were detected by this survey, this may be due to pedology rather than a lack of archaeological features; no trace of known former field boundaries or field drains were detected, suggesting a low soil magnetic susceptibility. A subsequent evaluation in 2008 recorded a number of pits, ditches, and post-holes which were interpreted as being likely to be related to the post-medieval drainage and agricultural use of the site.

Rectilinear enclosure, MNF40960 (TL 6572 9646)
The Norfolk HER records cropmarks of an undated rectilinear enclosure which can be seen on an aerial photograph. As part of this assessment, this has now been reassessed as small rectilinear pit or hollow (*c.*17x12m) visible as a cropmark near

the centre of a silted up palaeochannel on air photos. This feature may be of archaeological origin.

Natural feature (TL6571 9637)
A narrow sinuous ribbon of lighter soils showing as pale soils and cropmarks is visible as a cropmark and a pale soilmark on air photos. This feature is located just south of the Survey Area and is aligned near north to south. This feature is described as a sandhill in the HER and prehistoric artefact scatters have been recovered from it.

Natural feature (TL6613 9685)
A pale diffuse soilmark against the dark peat on colour air photos. This is possibly the south-western edge of a feature that has been identified as glacial deposits that were exposed during the Mesolithic through to the Early Bronze Age, becoming exposed from beneath the peat.

Natural feature (TL6679 9749)
A small area of faster-ripening crops is visible on air photos; it may indicate a localised area of freer draining soils and/or slightly higher ground. An artefact scatter has been recovered by field walking at the western edge of this area. This area has been identified as a glacial deposit that was exposed during the Mesolithic through to the Early Bronze Age.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The initial brief required that 20 trenches, each 30m long and 1.8m wide to be excavated across the site as an agreed sample of the proposed development area. The results of these original trenches led to an agreement to extend three of these trenches to help better characterise the features encountered. Amendments to the proposed area of development then led to the excavation of an additional 8 trenches. The exact locations of all trenches were determined by Golder Associates in consultation with Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Fig. 5).

Machine excavation was initially carried out with a 14 tonne 360º hydraulic excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision; however the final 8 trenches were excavated with a wheeled JCB-type excavator.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

Environmental samples were taken from several trenches, with bulk samples taken from Trenches 1, 6, 8, 15 and 17. Monolith columns were taken through deposits in Trenches 8 and 6 with Trench 6 also providing auger samples. Samples of wood were taken from bog timbers in Trenches 6 and 8.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

Known heights above sea level for each of the trenches were established using GPS equipment at the time of setting out their specific locations.

Site conditions were generally good, with the work taking place in unusually warm weather for the time of year.

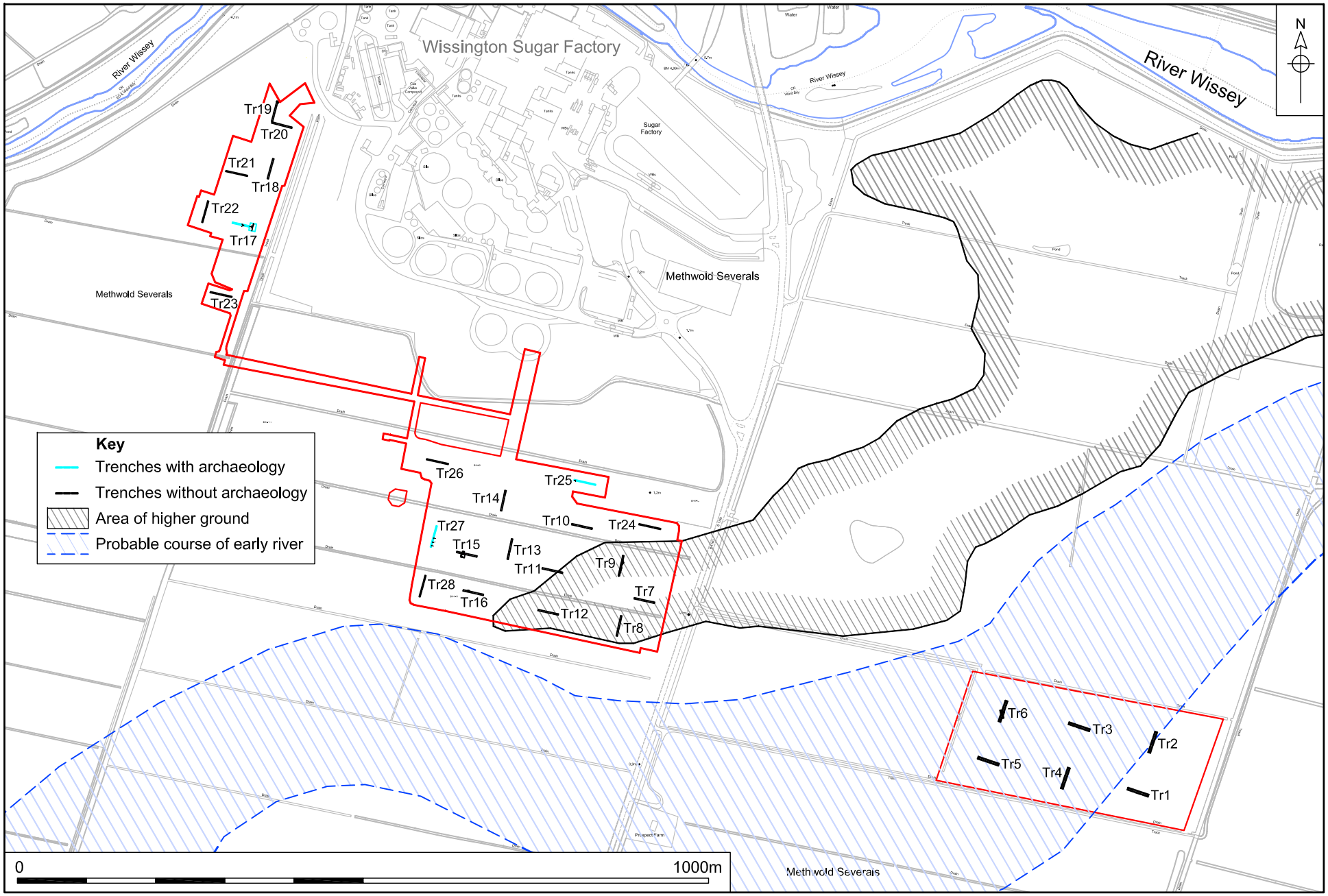


Figure 5. Location of Trenches, also showing the area of higher ground and probable course of an early river

5.0 RESULTS

Trench 1

Trench 1, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - west
East End	566999.528, 296622.028
West End	567027.925, 296612.391
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	1.40m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.865m OD
West End Top	-0.818m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR1/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.24m	0.00m-0.24m
TR1/02	Peat Layer	Dark slightly reddish brown fibrous peat	0.19m	0.24m-0.43m
TR1/03	Peat Layer	Reddish brown fibrous peat	0.07m	0.43m-0.50m
TR1/04	Layer	Dark grey brown peaty silt	0.54m	0.50m-1.04m
TR1/05	Layer	Dark brown peaty silt	0.12m	1.04m-1.16m
TR1/06	Layer	Reddish brown fibrous silty peat	0.17m	1.16m-1.33m
TR1/07	Layer	Bluish grey fine sands	0.29m+	1.33m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 2

Trench 2 , looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	567039.784, 296703.647
South End	567030.139, 296675.208
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	1.70m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.872m OD
South End Top	-0.809m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR2/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.27m	0.0m-0.27m
TR2/02	Peat Layer	Dark reddish brown fibrous peat	0.18m	0.27m-0.45m
TR2/03	Peat Layer	Fine dark grey silt	0.34m	0.45m-0.89m
TR2/04	Layer	Dark yellow brown silt	0.27m	0.89m-1.16m
TR2/05	Layer	Fine yellow brown silt	0.27m	1.16m-1.43m
TR2/06	Layer	Dark black brown peaty silt	0.28m	1.43m-1.71m
TR2/07	Layer	Bluish grey fine sands	0.06m+	1.71m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 3

Trench 3 , looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566914.452, 296716.688
West End	566942.883, 296707.043
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	1.30m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.913mOD
West End Top	-0.873m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR3/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.30m	0.00m-0.30m
TR3/02	Layer	Dark reddish brown fibrous peat	0.32m	0.30m-0.62m
TR3/03	Layer	Dark blackish brown fibrous silt	0.24m	0.62m-0.86m
TR3/04	Layer	Brownish grey fibrous silt	0.18m	0.86m-1.04m
TR3/05	Layer	Reddish brown silt	0.22m	1.04m-1.26m
TR3/06	Layer	Bluish grey fine silt clay (?Fen clay)	0.29+m	1.30m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 4

Trench 4 , looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566913.39, 296651.58
South End	566903.763, 296623.174
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	1.80m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.849m OD
South End Top	-0.8m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR4/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.35m	0.00m-0.35m
TR4/02	Layer	Dark blackish brown fibrous peat	0.57m	0.35m-0.92m
TR4/03	Layer	Dark yellow brown peaty silt	0.12m	0.92m-1.04m
TR4/04	Layer	Reddish yellow brown peaty silt	0.34m	1.04m-1.38m
TR4/05	Layer	Reddish yellow brown peaty silt	0.23m	1.38m-1.61m
TR4/06	Layer	Dark red brown organic silty peat	0.06m	1.61m-1.67m
TR4/07	Layer	Blue grey sands	0.16m+	1.67m-1.83m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits. It suffered from significant flooding however and required continual pumping to allow access.

Trench 5

Trench 5 , looking east

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566782.893, 296666.875
West End	566811.319, 296657.241
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	1.40m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.72 m OD
South End Top	-0.809m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR5/06	Layer	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.30m	0.00m-0.30m
TR5/01	Layer	Dark orange brown peat	0.39m	0.30m-0.69m
TR5/02	Layer	Dark brown orange peat	0.19m	0.69m-0.88m
TR5/03	Layer	Mid orangey brown peaty silt	0.26m	0.88m-1.17m
TR5/04	Layer	Mid orangey brown peat	0.20m	1.17m-1.37m
TR5/05	Layer	Pale blue grey silt clay with sand (?Fen clay)	0.12m	1.37m-1.49m

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 6

Trench 6 , looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566823.148, 296748.472
South End	566813.529, 296720.056
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.80m
Levels	
North End Top	-1.037 m OD
South End Top	-0.845 OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR6/01	Fill	Infill of hollowed out tree	0.20m	0.87m-1.07m
TR6/02	Layer	Bark of hollowed out tree	0.02m	1.08m-0.88m
TR6/03	Layer	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.27m	0.00m-0.27m
TR6/04	Layer	Dark grey brown fibrous woody peat	0.22m	0.24m-0.46m
TR6/05	Layer	Dark blackish brown peaty silt	0.55m	0.47m-1.02m
TR6/06	Layer	Rich reddish brown peaty silt	0.06m	0.98m-1.04m
TR6/07	Layer	Dark grey brown peaty silt	0.06m	1.04m-1.10m
TR6/08	Layer	Grey coarse sands	0.18m	1.00m-1.18m+
TR6/09	Layer	Black brown structure less peat	0.17m	0.58m-0.75m
TR6/10	Layer	Greyish brown humic material	0.09m	0.79m-0.70m
TR6/11	Layer	Dark black brown humic peat	0.25m	0.83m-1.08m
TR6/12	Layer	Dark brown humic peat	0.10m	1.18m-1.28m
TR6/13	Layer	Dark black brown slightly grey silt	0.20m	1.18m-1.38m
TR6/14	Layer	Dark grey soft silt	0.20m	1.38m-1.58m
TR6/15	Layer	Mid grey soft silt	0.25m	1.58m-1.83m
TR6/16	Layer	Dark grey sand	0.15m	1.83m-1.98m
TR6/17	Layer	Dark yellow grey running sands	0.80m	1.98m-2.78m
TR6/18	Layer	Dark grey silt	0.20m	2.78m-2.98m
TR6/19	Layer	Mid ginger brown silt	0.14m+	3.12m+
TR6/20	Layer	Mid brown grey silt	0.12m	0.93m-1.05m
TR6/21	Layer	Light grey silt	0.22m	1.05m

Trench 6
Discussion
Excavation of this trench revealed what appeared to be a hollowed out tree trunk lying diagonally NW-SE across the centre of the trench. After initial examination the trench was extended in order to define the limits of and characterise the feature. After the excavation of several slots through the feature it was concluded that it represented an unusual but wholly natural phenomena by which the heart wood and upper half of the tree rotted away to leave just the bark of the lower portions of the tree in situ. Trench 6 otherwise had no features or deposits of archaeological significance.

Trench 7

Trench 7, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566314.078, 296891.201
West End	566284.802, 296897.664
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.63m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.394m OD
West End Top	-0.419m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR7/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.42m	0.00m-0.42m
TR7/02	Layer	Mid grey peaty clay	0.05m	0.42m-0.47m
TR7/03	Layer	Pale grey clay (?Gault clay)	0.16m	0.47m-0.63m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 8

Trench 8, looking south

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566265.948, 296872.449
South End	566259.473, 296843.153
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.90m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.552 OD
South End Top	-0.709 m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR8/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.42m	0.00m-0.42m
TR8/02	Layer	Firm black peat	0.30m	0.42m-0.72m
TR8/03	Layer	Soft fibrous black peat	0.14m	0.72m-0.86m
TR8/04	Layer	Slightly purple, slightly sandy silt clay	0.04m	0.86m-0.90m
TR8/05	Layer	Yellow grey clay	0.24m+	0.64m-0.88m+
TR8/06	Layer	Fibrous mid brown peat lens	0.04m	0.48m-0.52m
TR8/07	Layer	Fresh water shelly marl	0.06m	0.46m-0.50m
TR8/08	Layer	Grey purple clay (?Gault clay)	0.16m	0.52m-0.68m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 9

Trench 9, looking south

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566268.965, 296959.469
South End	566262.506, 296930.194
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.35m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.123m OD
South End Top	-0.133m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR9/01	Linear	Narrow linear 1.5m+ long and 0.4m wide terminating to west with a flattish base	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/02	Fill	Very dark brown peat	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/03	Linear	Narrow linear 1.1m+ long and 0.4m wide terminating to west with a flat base	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/04	Fill	Very dark brown peat	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/05	Linear	Narrow linear 0.6m+ long and 0.3m wide terminating to west with a flat base	0.07m	0.40m-0.47m
TR9/06	Fill	Very dark brown peat	0.07m	0.40m-0.47m
TR9/07	Pit	Sub circular and 0.9m in diameter with a concave base	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/08	Fill	Very dark brown peat	0.10m	0.40m-0.50m
TR9/09	Topsoil	Very dark brown peat	0.30-0.40m	0.00m-0.40m

TR9/10	Natural	Pale grey clay with orangey grey sandy clay patches (?Gault clay)	-	0.40m+
Discussion				
Features [TR9/01], [TR9/03] and [TR9/05] appeared to be plough scars judging by their shape, alignment and fills which were indistinguishable from the topsoil above. Feature [TR09/07] may have been a shallow pit but with its irregular plan and limited depth it was more plausible to interpret it as a tree hole.				

Trench 10

Trench 10, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566223.742, 296998.401
West End	566194.44, 297004.884
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.57m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.124m OD
West End Top	-0.357 OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR10/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.35m	0.00m-0.35m
TR10/02	Layer	Mid brown fibrous woody layer	0.12m	0.35m-0.47m
TR10/03	Layer	Very dark grey clay	0.05m	0.47m-0.52m
TR10/04	Layer	Pale creamy grey clay (?Gault clay)	-	0.52m-0.57m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 11

Trench 11, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	TG 566180.943, 296934.646
West End	TG 566151.667, 296941.155
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0-.0.37m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.087 OD
West End Top	-0.216 OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR11/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.37m	0.00m-0.37m
TR11/02	Layer	Pale dirty grey yellow - beige, Natural clay (?Gault clay)	-	0.37m+

Discussion

This trench was moved 15m to the west and 5m to the south in order to avoid overhead power lines running north to south across the site. Excavation revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

Trench 12

Trench 12, looking east

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566174.908, 296874.195
West End	566145.608, 296880.657
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.40m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.39m OD
West End Top	-0.247m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR12/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.37m	0.00m-0.37m
TR12/02	Layer	Pale yellow sand, with patches of grey yellow sandy clay natural (?Gault clay)	-	0.37m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 13

Trench 13, looking south

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566108.061, 296983.567
South End	566101.594, 296954.278
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.50m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.69m OD
South End Top	-0.561m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR13/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.43m	0.00m-0.43m
TR13/02	Layer	Dark brown woody peat layer confined to central portion of the trench and lying beneath the topsoil	0.08m	0.43m-0.50m
TR13/03	Layer	Pale yellow grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	0.08m+	0.50m+
TR13/04	Layer	Dark grey brown clay peat lying beneath the localised area of woody peat and infilling natural undulations in the clay natural.	0.21m	0.50m-0.71m

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits. However a sondage was excavated through an area of localised woody peat towards the centre of the trench which established its natural origin.

Trench 14

Trench 14, looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	566098.573, 297053.68
South End	566092.114, 297024.376
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.42m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.637m OD
South End Top	-0.621m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR14/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.42m	0.00m-0.26m
TR14/02	Layer	Dark reddish black brown peat	0.17m	0.26m-0.42m
TR14/03	Layer	Grey blue clay, fine and sticky some organic staining (?Gault clay)	-	0.42m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits, however a sondage was excavated through an area of woody peat towards the centre of the trench in order to establish its natural origin.

Trench 15

Trench 15, looking north west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566057.135, 296958.253
West End	566027.852, 296964.682
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.50m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.642m OD
West End Top	-0.684m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR15/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.45m	0.00m-0.45m
TR15/02	Layer	Pale creamy grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	1.40m	0.45m-1.60m
TR15/03	Layer	Light blue grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	0.20m+	1.60m+
TR15/04	Layer	Dark brown peat deposit infilling hollows created by collapsed tree trunk	0.50m	0.45m-0.95m

Discussion

At the centre of the trench an area of what appeared to be *in-situ* timbers lying within a possible cut were investigated with the excavation of two sondages; however the results were inconclusive and no evidence could be found to suggest a man made origin. The trench was extended to the north by an area of 2.5m by 2m and to the south with a 5m squared area. Further excavations into these exposed areas established the apparent timbers to be of natural origin lying within an irregular depression in the clay natural probably formed by the pressures applied upon the collapsed tree by the weight of the peat above. The remainder of the trench was devoid of archaeological features or deposits however a sondage was excavated by machine prior to backfilling to establish the clay sequence and its nature.

Trench 16

Trench 16, looking east

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566066.447, 296902.622
West End	566037.149, 296909.1
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.30m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.548m OD
West End Top	-0.633m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR16/01	Tree hollow	Sub circular with an uneven base, 0.8m wide and 0.12m deep	-	0.27m–0.42m
TR16/02	Fill	Black peat	0.12m	0.27m–0.42m
TR16/03	Tree hollow	Sub round with an uneven base, 0.08m deep and 0.8m	-	0.27m-0.38m
TR16/04	Fill	Black peat	0.08m	0.27m-0.38m
TR16/05	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.27m	0.00m-0.27m
TR16/06	Natural	Creamy grey clay (?Gault clay)	-	0.27m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits however two possible features were excavated [TR16/01] and [TR16/03] which turned out to be tree hollows.

Trench 17

Trench 17, looking south-west

Figs 5 and 6	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	565732.491, 297434.742
West End	565703.197, 297441.224
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.60m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.709m OD
West End Top	-0.761m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR17/01	Pit	Rectangular with a sharp south western edge and concave northern edge. It measured approximately 1m square and had a maximum depth of 0.11m containing deposit TR17/02. At its base was post-hole TR17/03.	-	0.60m-0.71m
TR17/02	Fill	Homogeneous dark black brown peat	0.11m	0.60m-0.71m
TR17/03	Post-hole	Sub rounded post-hole, 0.47m in diameter and 0.42m deep. It sat at the base of pit TR17/01 and was filled by a similar fill to TR17/02 but contained larger quantities of degraded wood.	-	0.71m-1.13m+
TR17/04	Fill	Dark black brown peat with degraded wood fragments	0.42m	0.71m-1.13m+
TR17/05	Ditch	A shallow ditch aligned north west to south east with a broadly concave profile. It had a width of 0.70m and a maximum depth of 0.17m. It contained deposit TR17/06	-	0.60m-0.77m
TR17/06	Fill	Dark black brown peat filling ditch TR17/05	0.17m	0.60m-0.77m
TR17/07	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.32m	0.00m-0.32m
TR17/08	Layer	Mid brown fibrous woody peat layer, intermittently occurring across the trench	0.12m	0.32m-0.44m
TR17/09	Layer	Dark grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	0.03m+	0.60m+
TR17/10	Layer	Black woody peat	0.14m	0.45m -0.60m

Discussion

This trench contained a small rectangular pit with a single post-hole at the base. A shallow and relatively narrow ditch crossed the excavation to the west of this. As a result of uncovering these features a larger area was opened up at the eastern end of the trench measuring 10m by 12m in order to further evaluate the surrounding area. Two post-holes appeared to be present within this extended area, but after further examination they were dismissed as being non-archaeological. No further archaeologically significant deposits of features were identified.

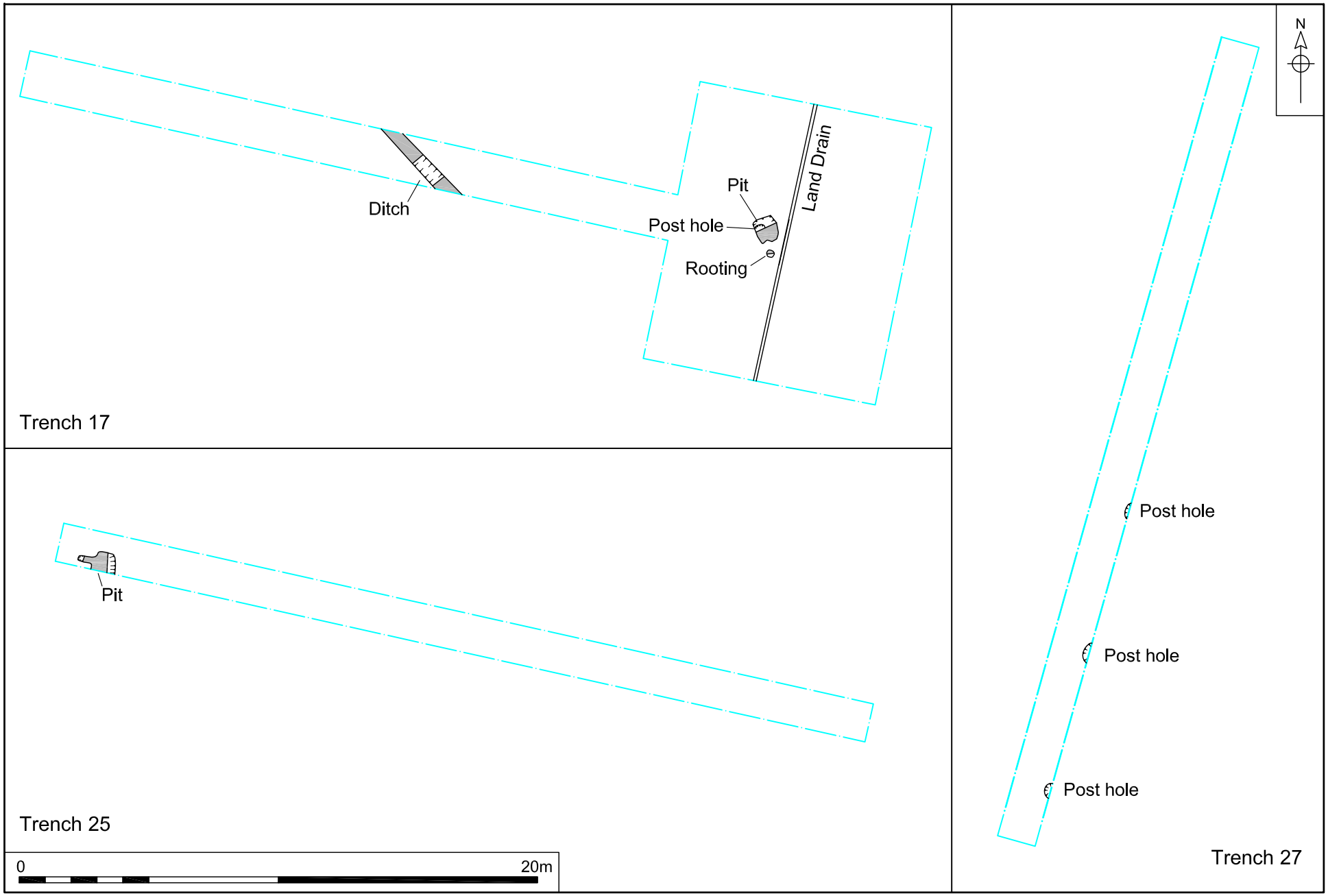


Figure 6. Plans of Trenches 17, 25 and 27

Trench 18

Trench 18, looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	565762.565, 297533.693
South End	565754.49, 297504.808
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.27m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.728m OD
South End Top	-0.706m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR18/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.17m	0.00m-0.17m
TR18/02	Layer	Dark black brown woody peat	0.12m	0.17m-0.29m
TR18/03	Layer	Bluish grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	-	0.27m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits however it contained several patches of woody peat lying within natural depressions in the underlying clay natural. These were investigated by the excavation of a sondage which established their natural origin.

Trench 19

Trench 19, looking north

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	565768.518, 297614.147
South End	565760.894, 297585.122
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.64m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.627m OD
South End Top	-0.7m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR19/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.34m	0.00m-0.34m
TR19/02	Layer	Dark grey brown silt, woody layer	0.12m	0.34m-0.46m
TR19/03	Layer	Dark purple brown silt	0.14m	0.46m-0.60m+
TR19/04	Layer	Brown grey natural clay (?Gault clay)	0.07m+	-
TR19/05	Cut	Tree hole, irregular in plan, 2.5m+ long and 1.25m+ wide with an irregular base 0.21m deep	-	0.64m–0.85m
TR19/06	Fill	Fill of tree hole	0.21m	0.64m–0.85m

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits. A tree hole was sectioned at the northern end to dismiss it as potential archaeology.

Trench 20

Trench 9, looking east

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	565789.254, 297578.607
West End	565760.236, 297586.239
Dimensions	
Length	30m
Width	1.80m
Average Depth	0.55m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.556m OD
West End Top	-0.713m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR20/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.27m	0.00m-0.27m
TR20/02	Layer	Dark grey brown silt, woody layer	0.19m	0.27m-0.46m
TR20/03	Layer	Dark purple brown silt	0.09m	0.46m-0.55m+
TR20/04	Layer	Brown grey natural clay (?Gault clay)	0.10m+	-

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 21

Trench 21, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	565725.109, 297508.975
West End	565695.805, 297515.449
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.61m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.595m OD
West End Top	-0.568 m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR21/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.35m	0.00m-0.35m
TR21/02	Layer	Black fibrous vegetation layer	0.12m	0.35m-0.47m
TR21/03	Layer	Creamy white sand natural	0.14m+	0.47m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 22

Trench 22, looking south

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	565667.698, 297470.533
South End	565659.624, 297441.642
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.49m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.506m OD
South End Top	-0.632m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR22/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.34m	0.00m-0.34m
TR22/02	Layer	Dark reddish brown peat	0.07m	0.34m-0.41m
TR22/03	Layer	Mid grey peat with clay and sand	0.08m	0.41m-0.49m+
TR22/04	Layer	Beige grey sands with yellow orange patches	0.05m+	0.49m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 23

Trench 23, looking east

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	565702.512, 297333.755
West End	565673.214, 297340.223
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.93m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.618m OD
West End Top	-0.924m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR23/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.30m	0.00m-0.30m
TR23/02	Layer	Orangey brown desiccated peat	0.17m	0.30m-0.47m
TR24/03	Layer	Very dark brown black fibrous peat	0.25m	0.47m-0.72m+
TR23/04	Layer	Dark brown fibrous peat	0.07m	0.72m–0.79m
TR23/05	Layer	Grey clay and sand	0.04m	0.79m-0.83m
TR23/06	Layer	Creamy white sand natural with yellow orange flecks	0.12m+	-

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 24

Trench 24, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566322.865, 296997.92
West End	566293.556, 297004.391
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.48m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.056m OD
West End Top	0.064m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR24/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.33m	0.00m-0.33m
TR24/02	Layer	Natural grey clay (?Gault clay)	0.07m+	0.41m+
TR24/03	Layer	Dark brownish red compressed peat	0.08m	0.33m-0.41m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 25

Trench 25, looking west

Figs 5 and 6	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566228.955, 297061.894
West End	566199.648, 297068.381
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.67m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.197m OD
West End Top	-0.39m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR25/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.50m	0.00m-0.50m
TR25/02	Layer	Dark brown peat and wood	0.17m	0.50m-0.67m
TR25/03	Layer	Blue grey clay (?Gault clay)	0.06m+	0.67m+
TR25/04	Pit	Irregular shaped pit located towards the western end of the trench, 1.85m long and 0.85m wide with uneven but generally concave sides reaching a depth of 0.21m	-	0.67m-0.86m
TR25/05	Fill	Black peat fill of irregular pit TR25/04	0.21m	0.67m-0.86m

Discussion

This trench contained a single pit of unknown date and function at the western end.

Trench 26

Trench 26, looking west

Fig. 5	
Location	
Orientation	East - West
East End	566015.649, 297091.928
West End	565986.357, 297098.391
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.66m
Levels	
East End Top	-0.356m OD
West End Top	-0.477m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR26/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.44m	0.00m-0.44m
TR26/02	Layer	Brown peat with wood	0.22m	0.44m-0.66m
TR26/03	Layer	Natural grey clay (?Gault clay)	0.03m+	0.66m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

Trench 27

Trench 27, looking north

Figs 5 and 6	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	565998.434, 297000.618
South End	565990.351, 296971.722
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.51m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.738m OD
South End Top	-0.682m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR27/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.45m	0.00m-0.45m
TR27/02	Layer	Natural pale grey blue clay (?Gault clay)	0.06m+	0.45m-0.51m
TR27/03	Post-hole	A circular post-hole only partially visible and protruding from the eastern limits of the trench 0.77m in visible diameter. It had a concave base and sides reaching a depth of 0.29m	-	0.45m-0.74m
TR27/04	Fill	Blackish brown peat with woody inclusions	0.29m	0.45m-0.74m
TR27/05	Post-hole	A circular post-hole only partially visible and protruding from the eastern limits of the trench 0.65m in visible diameter. It had a concave base and sides reaching a depth of just 0.15m	-	0.45m-0.60m
TR27/06	Fill	Blackish brown peat with woody inclusions	0.15m	0.45m-0.60m
TR27/07	Post-hole	A circular post-hole only partially visible and protruding from the eastern limits of the trench 0.50m in visible diameter. It had a concave base and sides reaching a depth of just 0.17m	-	0.45m-0.62m
TR27/08	Fill	Blackish brown peat with woody inclusions	0.17m	0.45m-0.62m

Discussion
This trench contained three post-holes, each only partially exposed along the eastern edge of the limit of excavation and upon a north south alignment arranged at intervals of approximately 5.5m. The post-holes were shallow but their regularity, number and arrangement strongly supported their interpretation as such. The fills were indistinguishable from the topsoil above and no dating was retrieved from any of the fills.

Trench 28

Trench 28, looking south

Fig. 2	
Location	
Orientation	North - South
North End	565982.244, 296928.761
South End	565974.15, 296899.867
Dimensions	
Length	32m
Width	1.50m
Average Depth	0.47m
Levels	
North End Top	-0.72m OD
South End Top	-0.608m OD

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Thickness	Depth BGL
TR28/01	Topsoil	Homogeneous dark black brown structureless peat	0.39m	0.00m-0.39m
TR28/02	Layer	Dark brown red peat and wood	0.08m	0.39m-0.47m
TR28/03	Layer	Pale blue grey clay natural (?Gault clay)	0.10m+	0.47m+

Discussion

This trench was devoid of archaeological features and deposits.

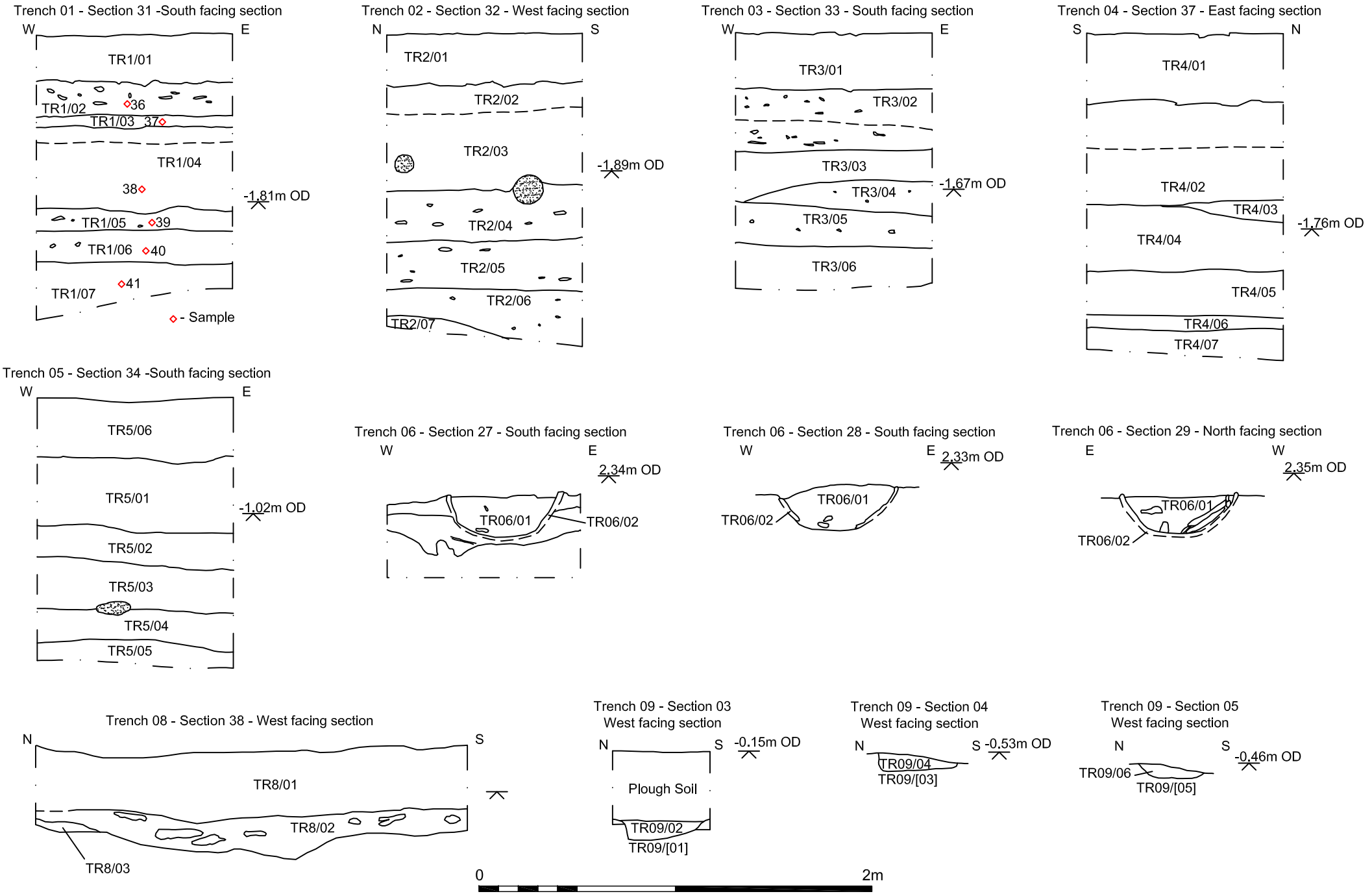


Figure 7. Sections of Trenches 1-6, 8 and 9

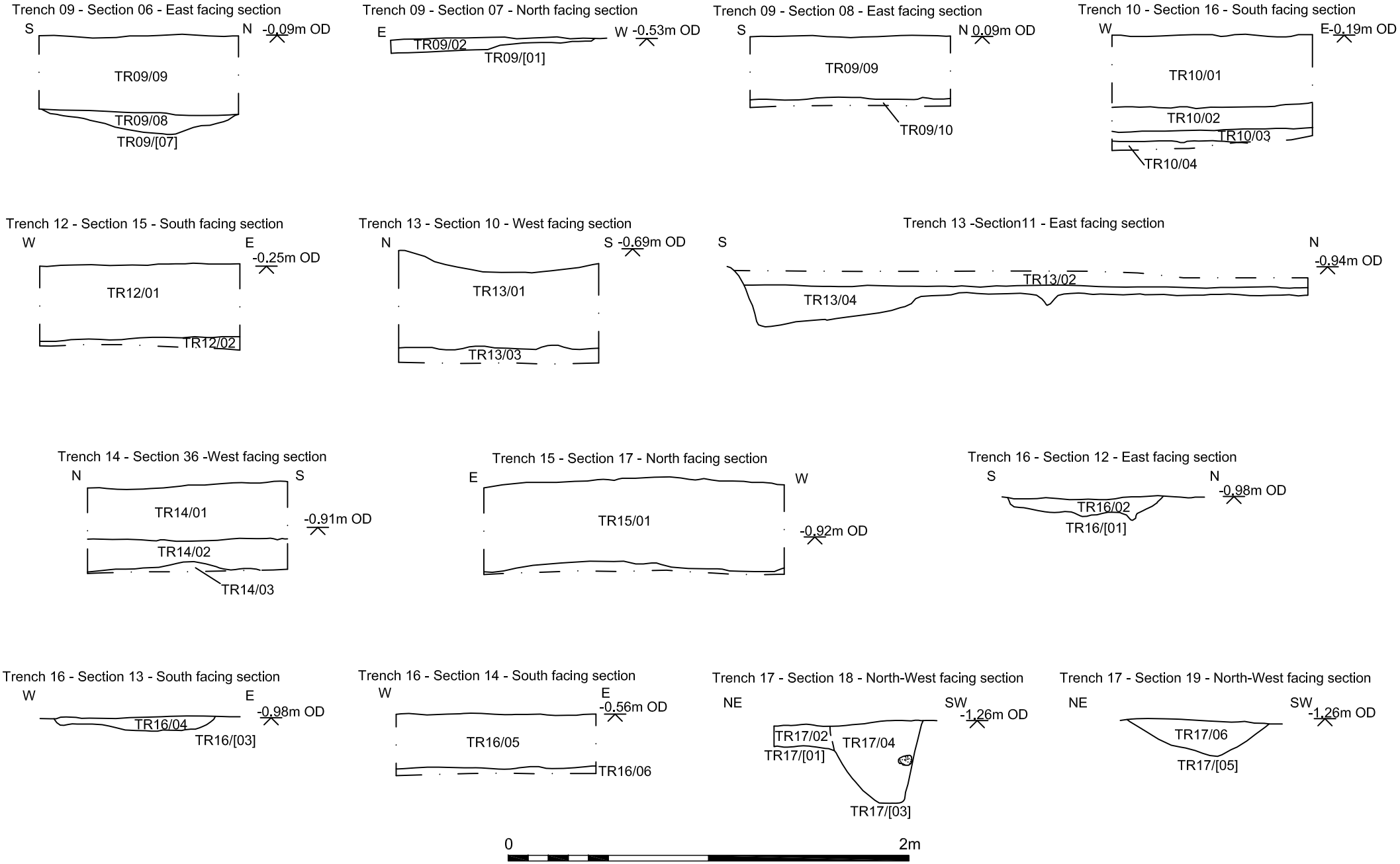


Figure 8. Sections of Trenches 9 (cont), 10, 12, 13 - 17

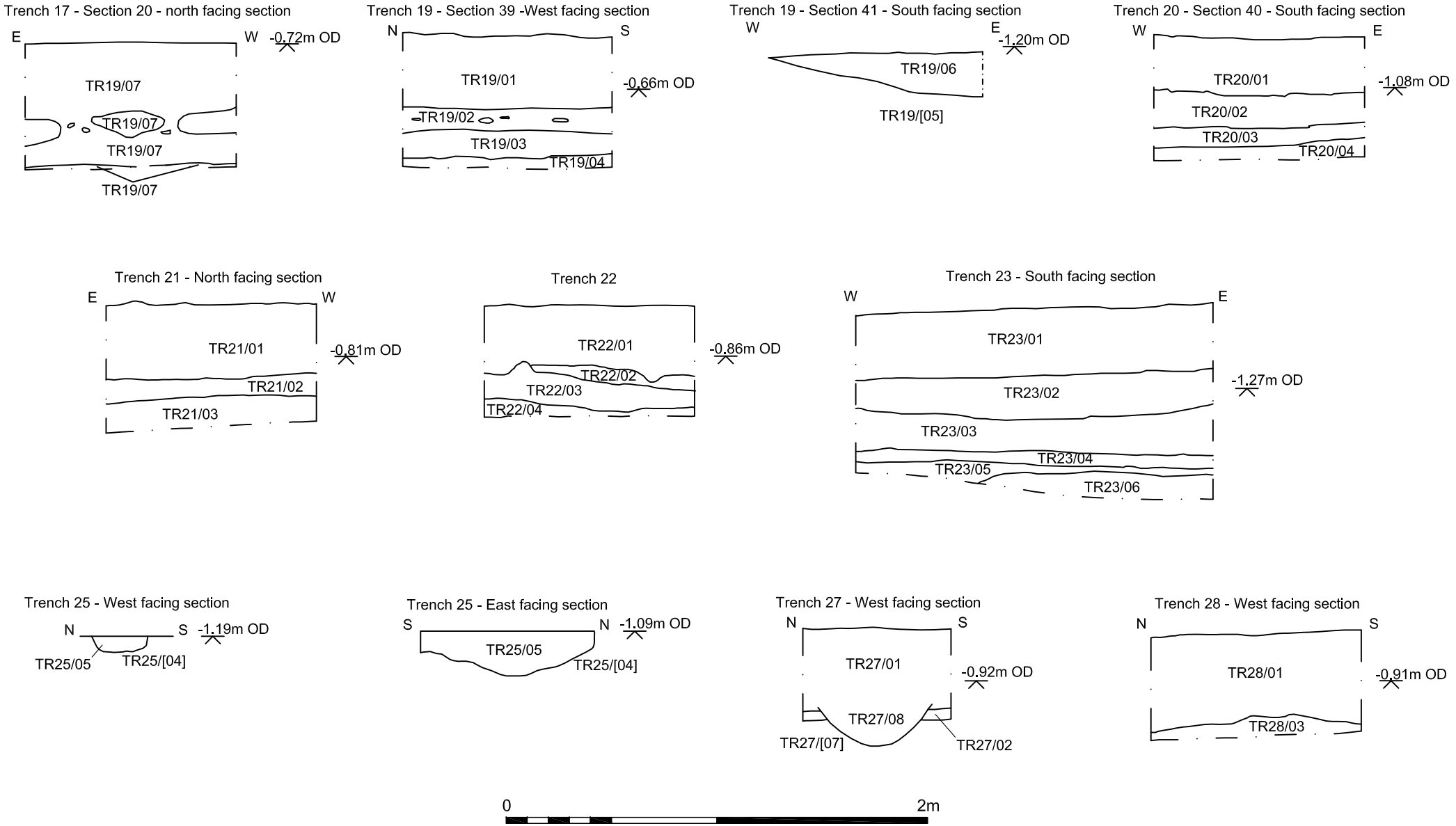


Figure 9. Sections of Trenches 17 (cont), 19 - 23, 25, 27 and 28

6.0 FINDS

6.1 Flint

A single struck flint with white grey cortex and retouch along one edge was recovered from surface collection in Trench 9. The flint is not closely datable within the later prehistoric period.

6.2 Animal Bone

A total of 38 highly abraded scraps of animal bone weighing 72g were collected from feature [03], Trench 25. The bone is in very poor condition and is not identifiable to species.

7.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Palaeoenvironmental Overview

Although there is an obvious wealth of data in Silvester (1991) and Waller (1994) this location provides a hitherto unavailable opportunity to provide detail for this important fen edge location in the wider framework already established by Silvester (1991), and as more archaeological sites and artefacts are recovered particularly from the sandhills and river margins, a clearer understanding of this area can be reached.

The absence of archaeological artefacts at this site is not a surprise; it has been previously observed that, particularly in the Bronze Age, few finds away from areas of occupation are recovered in this landscape (Maisie Taylor pers. comm.). It is however a landscape that was utilised in prehistoric times and any detail about that landscape will aid the understanding of how prehistoric peoples may have interacted with their surroundings and the resources available to them.

This site provides an unprecedented opportunity to date and record vegetation history of sediments from within the palaeochannel of the Early Wissey.

There is a complex history to the sea level record in the fens, the lower Fen Clay was not all deposited simultaneously and this site provides an opportunity to date at least one sea level index point, the marine regression at the top of the clay and possibly the marine transgression at the base of the clay.

An opportunity to map the limit of the Fen Clay is also apparent. This deposit is likely only to be present within the palaeochannel at a depth below 1m but field evidence is ambiguous. It is possible that Trenches 1-6 were all located within the palaeochannel. Monoliths taken from within the palaeochannel itself and on its margins will provide an opportunity to use microfossils to distinguish between the Cretacous Gault clay and the Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age ‘Fen Clay’.

Two monolith samples, adjacent bulk (whole soil) samples and 20 samples of timber from individual trees will allow identification and interpretation of the pollen evidence, diatoms, plant macrofossils and wood present at the site along with radiocarbon dating (and perhaps new borehole evidence produced during the construction phase). This body of evidence can be used to produce refined

palaeogeographic maps of the area which could also include topographical reconstruction.

The results of the evaluation to date have provided a possible refinement of the palaeoenvironmental mapping of the area (especially Silvester (1991)) which could be further enhanced by more research.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Of the 28 trenches excavated only three contained features that can be described as being convincingly archaeological in nature.

The pit at the western end of Trench 25 cutting into the natural clay although irregular in plan had a fill of consistent dark brown peat quite distinct from many of the excavated features that were of natural origin and had well defined edges. The lack of any cultural material within it and the limits of the trench hinder any interpretation of its function while its similarity to the overlying peat prevents any confident stratigraphic sequencing.

The three north-south aligned post-holes recorded in Trench 27 are equally difficult to date from their stratigraphic sequence. The shallow nature of these features must either point to an undetected cut through the peat above, which would have been destroyed during ploughing, or else significant truncation prior to the growth of the peat. Their alignment with existing field boundaries however indicates on balance a probable post-medieval or later date and as such they are likely to denote the locations of fence posts.

In contrast, the narrow ditch encountered in Trench 17 is at odds with the alignment of the surrounding modern field boundaries and has no parallels to the south of the river on any maps from the 17th century onwards. Once again the uniformity of the peat above to the fill of the ditch precludes any stratigraphic phasing. However it is worthy of note that the small tree trunk or branch found at the base of this ditch (which can only have rolled in while the ditch was still open), might hint at a greater density of tree growth in the immediate environment than might have otherwise have been anticipated. A sample of the fill of this feature taken during the fieldwork and yet to be processed might shed light on the environmental conditions which may in turn hint at a possible date.

Of the remaining trenches a further five (Trenches 6, 9, 15, 16 and 19) produced features which upon examination were concluded to be of either natural or modern origin. Investigation of timber in Trench 6, which initially appeared to be a hollowed-out tree and hypothesised to be the remnants of a boat or a drain was established, after extending the trench, to be the remains of a tree exhibiting an unusual natural process of decay. Trench 15 also produced a large piece of timber initially thought to have been worked and lying within an apparent cut in the underlying clay. However this too was dismissed as a natural occurrence after further examination and extension of the trench. Samples of timbers recovered from this and other trenches were retained for analysis.

The greater depths of Trenches 1-6, which at first appeared to be at odds with the rest of the trenches to the west of the road, can be explained by reference to the posited earlier course of the River Wissey. It would appear that all of these trenches lie either within or upon the very margins of the earlier river channel. The sequence here is a complex one with a series of deposits lying beneath the peat

however at present the Fen Clay appears to have inundated the channel during a marine transgression. Deposits below this were not exposed in the trenches but an auger survey undertaken in Trench 6 revealed deposits that with further work have the potential to confirm the suggested sequence.

The results indicate that very little human activity that left any archaeological evidence took place within the site prior to the post medieval period when the cutting of dykes and drains allowed the Fens to be drained and the land to be farmed for the first time. Even so, post-medieval features are few and far between and where present are likely to be associated with agricultural practice during this period.

Despite the absence of archaeological remains, this fen edge site at Wissington has great potential to contribute to understanding the wider landscape and environment of this complex area during the later prehistoric period, particularly the environmental evidence.

Acknowledgements

Paul Wheelhouse and Antony Brown of Golder Associates are thanked for their continued assistance during the project and for permission to use the archaeological and historical background information from their report.

The author would like to thank his colleagues Andy Barnett, John Ames, Lilly Hodges and Stuart Calow for their sustained hard work on site along with Nigel Page who was Project Manager and provided immense support.

Fran Green is thanked for the insightful information that she brought to the palaeoenvironmental aspects of the project.

The finds were processed by Lucy Talbot and reported on by Sarah Percival.

The illustrations were prepared by David Dobson who also produced the report which was edited by Jayne Bown.

Bibliography

Chatwin, C.P.	1961	*British Regional Geology and East Anglia and adjoining areas* (4th edition) Her majesty's stationary office, London.
Department for Communities and Local Government	2010	*Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* TSO, London
Gallois, R.W.	1988	*Geology of the Country around Ely*, British Geological Survey, London
Godwin, H.	1940	Studies in the post-glacial history of British vegetation. Parts III and IV. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.* (13), 230, 239-304
Godwin, H.	1978	*Fenland: its Ancient Past and uncertain future*, Cambridge, University Press
Godwin, H. and Clarke, M.E.	1934	*A Bronze Age Spearhead found in Methwold Fen, Norfolk',* Proceeding of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia 7, 395-8
Godwin, H. and Clifford, M.H.	1938	'Studies on the post glacial history of British vegetation. I Origin and stratigraphy of Fenland deposits near Woodwalton, Hunts II Origin and stratigraphy of deposits in southern Fenland'. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, London.* B229. 323-406
Golder Associates (UK) Ltd	2011	*Appendix C, Gazetteer of Archaeological Remains* in Wissington British Sugar Factory, Tender Specification for Archaeological Trial Trenching, Golder Associates Report No. 09514540069.301 (not published)
Healy, F.	1996	The Fenland Project, Number 11, The Wissey Embayment: Evidence for pre-Iron Age Occupation. *East Anglian Archaeology* 78. pp194
Waller, M.	1994	The Fenland Project, Number 9: Flandrian Environmental Change in Fenland. *East Anglian Archaeology* 70. pp353

Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description
TR1/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR1/02	Peat			Fibrous peat
TR1/03	Peat			Fibrous peat
TR1/04	Layer			Peaty silt
TR1/05	Layer			Peaty silt
TR1/06	Layer			Fibrous silty peat
TR1/06	Layer			Fine sands
TR2/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR2/02	Peat			Fibrous peat
TR2/03	Peat			Fine silt
TR2/04	Layer			Silt
TR2/05	Layer			Fine silt
TR2/06	Layer			Peaty silt
TR2/07	Layer			Fine sand
TR3/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR3/02	Layer			Fibrous peat
TR3/03	Layer			Fibrous silt
TR3/04	Layer			Fibrous silt
TR3/05	Layer			Silt
TR3/06	Layer			Fine silt clay
TR4/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR4/02	Layer			Fibrous peat
TR4/03	Layer			Peaty silt
TR4/04	Layer			Peaty silt
TR4/05	Layer			Peaty silt
TR4/06	Layer			Organic silty peat
TR4/07	Layer			Sand
TR5/01	Layer			Peat
TR5/02	Layer			Peat
TR5/03	Layer			Peaty silt
TR5/04	Layer			Peat
TR5/05	Layer			Silt clay with sand
TR5/06	Layer			Structureless peat
TR6/01	Fill			Fill of hollowed-out tree
TR6/02	Layer			Tree bark
TR6/03	Layer			Structureless peat
TR6/04	Layer			Fibrous woody peat
TR6/05	Layer			Peaty silt
TR6/06	Layer			Peaty silt
TR6/07	Layer			Peaty silt

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description
TR6/08	Layer			Coarse sand
TR6/09	Layer			Structureless peat
TR6/10	Layer			Humic material
TR6/11	Layer			Humic peat
TR6/12	Layer			Humic peat
TR6/13	Layer			Silt
TR6/14	Layer			Silt
TR6/15	Layer			Silt
TR6/16	Layer			Sand
TR6/17	Layer			Running sands
TR6/18	Layer			Silt
TR6/19	Layer			Silt
TR6/20	Layer			Silt
TR6/21	Layer			Silt
TR7/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR7/02	Layer			Peaty clay
TR7/03	Layer			Clay
TR8/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR8/02	Layer			Firm peat
TR8/03	Layer			Soft fibrous peat
TR8/04	Layer			Slightly sandy silt clay
TR8/05	Layer			Clay
TR8/06	Layer			Peat lens
TR8/07	Layer			Fresh water shelly marl
TR8/08	Layer			Clay
TR9/01	Cut	Linear		Narrow, terminates to west
TR9/02	Fill		TR9/01	Peat
TR9/03	Cut	Linear		Narrow, terminates to west
TR9/04	Fill		TR9/03	Peat
TR9/05	Cut	Linear		Narrow, terminates to west
TR9/06	Fill		TR9/05	Peat
TR9/07	Cut	Pit		Sub-circular
TR9/08	Fill		TR9/08	Peat
TR9/09	Topsoil			Peat
TR9/10	Natural			Clay with sandy clay patches
TR10/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR10/02	Layer			Fibrous woody layer
TR10/03	Layer			Clay
TR10/04	Layer			Clay
TR11/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR11/02	Layer			Natural
TR12/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description
TR12/02	Layer			Sand with patches of natural sandy clay
TR13/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR13/02	Layer			Peat confined to central portion of trench
TR13/03	Layer			Natural clay
TR13/04	Layer			Clayey peat
TR14/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR14/02	Layer			Peat
TR14/03	Layer			Fine, sticky clay, some organic staining
TR15/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR15/02	Layer			Natural clay
TR15/03	Layer			Natural clay
TR15/04	Layer			Peat infilling hollows in tree trunk
TR16/01	Tree hollow			Sub circular feature
TR16/02	Fill		TR16/01	Peat
TR16/03	Tree hollow			Sub round feature
TR16/04	Fill		TR16/03	Peat
TR16/05	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR16/06	Natural			Clay
TR17/01	Cut	Pit		Rectangular
TR17/02	Fill		TR17/01	Peat
TR17/03	Cut	Post-hole		Sub-round
TR17/04	Fill		TR17/03	Peat with degraded wood fragments
TR17/05	Cut	Ditch		Shallow ditch
TR17/06	Fill		TR17/05	Peat
TR17/07	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR17/08	Layer			Intermittent fibrous woody peat
TR17/09	Layer			Natural clay
TR17/10	Layer			Peat
TR18/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR18/02	Layer			Woody peat
TR18/03	Layer			Natural clay
TR19/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR19/02	Layer			Silt with woody layer
TR19/03	Layer			Silt
TR19/04	Layer			Natural clay
TR19/05	Cut	Tree hole		Irregular shape
TR19/06	Fill		TR19/05	Tree hole fill
TR20/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR20/02	Layer			Silt with woody layer
TR20/03	Layer			Silt
TR20/04	Layer			Natural clay
TR21/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description
TR21/01	Layer			Fibrous vegetation layer
TR21/01	Layer			Natural sand
TR22/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR22/02	Layer			Peat
TR22/03	Layer			Peat with clay and sand
TR22/04	Layer			Sand
TR23/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR23/02	Layer			Desiccated peat
TR23/03	Layer			Fibrous peat
TR23/04	Layer			Fibrous peat
TR23/05	Layer			Clay and sand
TR23/06	Layer			Natural sand
TR24/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR24/02	Layer			Natural clay
TR24/03	Layer			Compressed peat
TR25/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR25/02	Layer			Peat and wood
TR25/03	Layer			Clay
TR25/04	Cut	Pit		Irregular shape
TR25/05	Fill		TR25/04	Peat
TR26/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR26/02	Layer			Peat with wood
TR26/03	Layer			Natural clay
TR27/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR27/02	Layer			Natural pale grey blue clay
TR27/03	Cut	Post-hole		Circular
TR27/04	Fill		TR27/03	Peat with woody inclusions
TR27/05	Cut	Post-hole		Circular post-hole
TR27/06	Fill		TR27/05	Peat with woody inclusions
TR27/07	Cut	Post-hole		Circular post-hole
TR27/08	Fill		TR27/07	Peat with woody inclusions
TR28/01	Topsoil			Structureless peat
TR28/02	Layer			Peat and wood
TR28/03	Layer			Natural clay

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Feature	Total
Uncertain	Linear feature	3
	Ditch	1
	Post-hole	4
	Pit	3
	Tree hole	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period
TR9/11	Flint – Struck	1	65g	Prehistoric
TR25/3	Animal Bone	38	72g	Unknown

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Prehistoric	Flint – Struck	1
Unknown	Animal Bone	38