

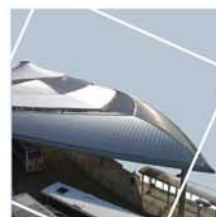
Report 1817



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
Land Opposite the Scole Inn, Scole,  
Norfolk**

ENF 124515



**Prepared for**  
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Location:	Land opposite the Scole Inn, Scole, Norfolk
District:	South Norfolk
Grid Ref.:	TM 1496 7886
HER No.:	ENF 124515
Client:	Cripps Developments Limited
Dates of Fieldwork:	27-30 April 2010

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted by NAU Archaeology on behalf of Cripps Developments Ltd in April 2010 ahead of an application for planning permission to build residential properties on the site. The four resulting trenches revealed several pits of possible prehistoric date as well as at least three pits dating to the 2nd century, all of which were sealed by a dark earth material. Additionally an accumulation of soils dating to the early to mid medieval period was identified in the north-eastern corner of the site along with the remnants of a small possible medieval or post medieval structure.*

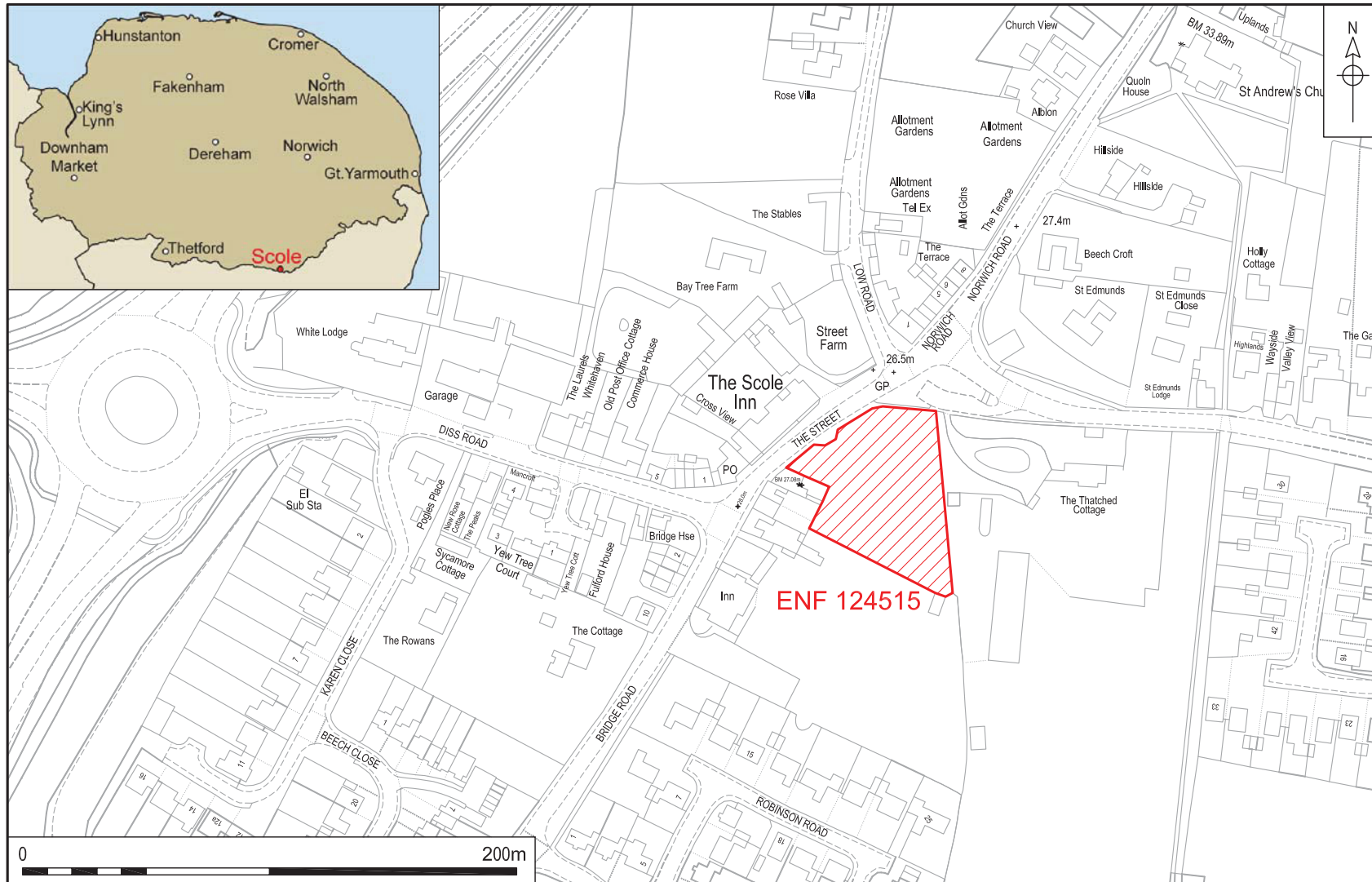
## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A proposal to construct eight new houses on Land opposite the Scole Inn in the South Norfolk village of Scole (Ref.2008/0074/F) prompted the South Norfolk District Council, acting on the advice of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA), to request a programme of archaeological works prior to submission of the formal application for planning permission. NAU Archaeology were commissioned by Cripps Developments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site in order to assess the likely impact upon any surviving archaeological deposits and therefore allow an informed decision to be made regarding possible mitigation strategies.

The initial evaluation design took the form of four trenches covering an area of 144m<sup>2</sup> (equivalent to a 5% sample of the development site of 2,880m<sup>2</sup>). However, due to constraints caused by the need to step the edges of the trench, to avoid services and to maintain access for local residents, the observable area was reduced in consultation with NLA to 108.9m<sup>2</sup>.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Ref. CNF41590, Ken Hamilton 3 April 2008). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref. BAU1817/DW). This work was funded by Cripps Development Ltd.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

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**

The site lies at a height of 26m OD to the south of The Street in the heart of Scole on the northern banks of the river Waveney which forms the natural border between Norfolk and Suffolk less than a quarter of a mile to the south. Currently the area of development lies within the garden of The Reading Room a private residence opposite the Scole Inn public house and forms a broadly level piece of scrub land formerly used as a nursery.

The geology of the area is known to be of Cretaceous Upper Chalk overlain by sands and gravels deposited during the Anglian glaciation with a sandy brown soil cover across much of the area (Goldberg et al date).

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The archaeological and historical background of Scole has been extensively researched in the course of previous archaeological work and historical study and hence is only summarised below. A comprehensive discussion is to be published shortly in *A Roman-British Settlement in the Waveney Valley: Excavations at Scole, 1993-4* by T. Ashwin (ed).

The following summary has been compiled with reference to NAU reports and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record.

### **Prehistoric**

Scole lies at the southern extent of a coaxial field system postulated to be of prehistoric (or Roman) date covering an area stretching beyond Pulham Market to the north, Harleston in the east and almost as far west as Shelfanger (HER 53075) (Williamson 1986).

Excavations to the south-west of the present development site near the River Waveney in the mid 1990s recorded Neolithic or Bronze Age activity in the form of a spread of burnt flints on the northern bank of the river as well as a possible late prehistoric enclosure (HER1007). Further evidence was encountered just south of the river with pottery dating from the Neolithic and flint implements recovered from both the Neolithic and Mesolithic periods. Additionally the remnants of a round house of uncertain date and a prehistoric field system were also encountered in this area.

An excavation carried out by NAU in 2005 at the Rectory on Norwich Road 300m north of the development site produced prehistoric flints that may date the ditch system in which they were found (HER41282). Elsewhere in the vicinity prehistoric evidence is confined to artefacts recovered as a result of two pieces of work; flint tools from extensive field walking surveys to the west prior to the construction of the A140 Scole to Dickleburgh road improvement scheme (HER29509) and a possible Mesolithic bone pin found during dredging of the Waveney where the previous route of the A140 crossed the river (HER15286).

## **Roman**

Scole lies along the route of the Pye Road, a north–south aligned route between key places in the region - Colchester (*Camulodunum*) and Caistor St Edmund (*Venta Icenorum*) – and was established probably in the 1st century by the Roman army. The present development site lies immediately to the east of The Street which becomes Norwich Road to the north and largely follows the same line as the Pye Road. The results of numerous major and minor excavations (HERs 1007, 1008, 34254 and 24818) particularly to the south and west have recovered significant evidence of domestic settlement with some industrial activity consistent with a small town developing at the crossing of the Waveney from the 1st century onwards with continuous occupation into the 4th century. Additionally the line of an east-west road has been traced which would have formed a junction with the Pye Road some 200m to the south of the Scole Inn. In the immediate vicinity of the current development Romano-British pottery and coinage have been retrieved from the adjacent garden and from the area surrounding the junction of The Street with Diss Road (HERs 7944 and 7942).

## **Saxon**

Despite the amount of archaeological investigation undertaken in Scole little evidence of Saxon occupation has been recovered; the indication being that, in common with other small Roman towns, occupation sharply declined or even ceased in the 5th century. Metal detecting to the south-east of the development site in the late 1980s recovered metalwork of both Early and Late Saxon date (HER 24354) and excavations in the area of Robinson Road 200m to the south recovered Early Saxon pottery (HER 1008). However it is not until the construction of St Andrew's Church (HER 7957) with its long and short work quoins typical of the later period and supported by documentary sources that firm evidence of re-occupation emerges.

## **Medieval**

Its location on the Pye Road, a major route, meant that during the medieval period Scole once again became a prosperous settlement and the medieval occupation area is known to have extend to the west (HER9866) and south (HER1007) of the current settlement. Despite having its origins in the Saxon period St Andrews church is of mostly 14th-century date prior to its 19th-century restoration.

## **Post medieval**

Scole contains numerous buildings of 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century date including the Scole Inn (HER15110) just across the road which is a particularly fine example of a 17th-century inn located on an important transport route. The tithe map of 1839 shows the land immediately to the north of the Reading Room as undeveloped and it appears to have remained so until the present day.

## **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 Brief required that four trenches each measuring 20m x 1.8m be excavated in approved locations across the site initially using a tracked 360° hydraulic



excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Upon encountering archaeological horizons excavation was then to be carried out by hand.

With the exception of Trench 1 archaeological horizons were encountered at a depth of over 1.2m below the modern ground level and as a result, after consultation with the client and NLA, it was deemed undesirable to fully excavate the originally specified length of each trench as appropriate mitigation measures could be undertaken to avoid disturbing any archaeological deposits during the subsequent construction of any new buildings on the site. In addition, Trenches 1 and 3 could not be extended further to the south-west and north-east without disturbing a live sewage pipe running roughly north to south across the middle of the site. Furthermore, full excavation of Trench 2 would have blocked access for the current residence and so its length was shortened to maintain an operational route to the dwelling.

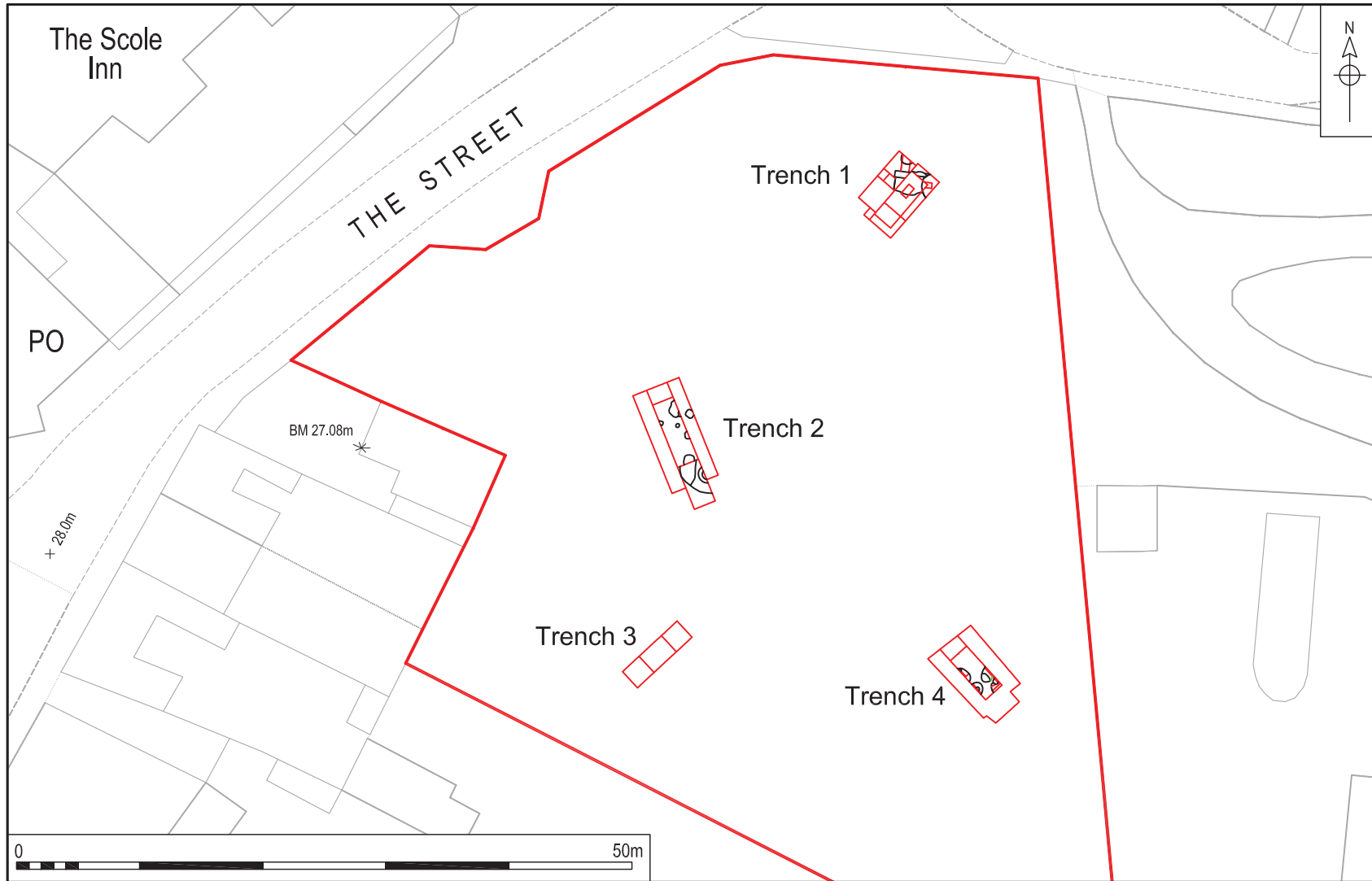
Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

Environmental samples were taken from deposits in Trenches 2 and 3.

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

Accurate Ordnance Survey datum heights across the site were established with the use of GPS equipment and surveying of all features relates to back to these known points. The average height towards the centre of the development area was 25.5m OD.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather.



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:500

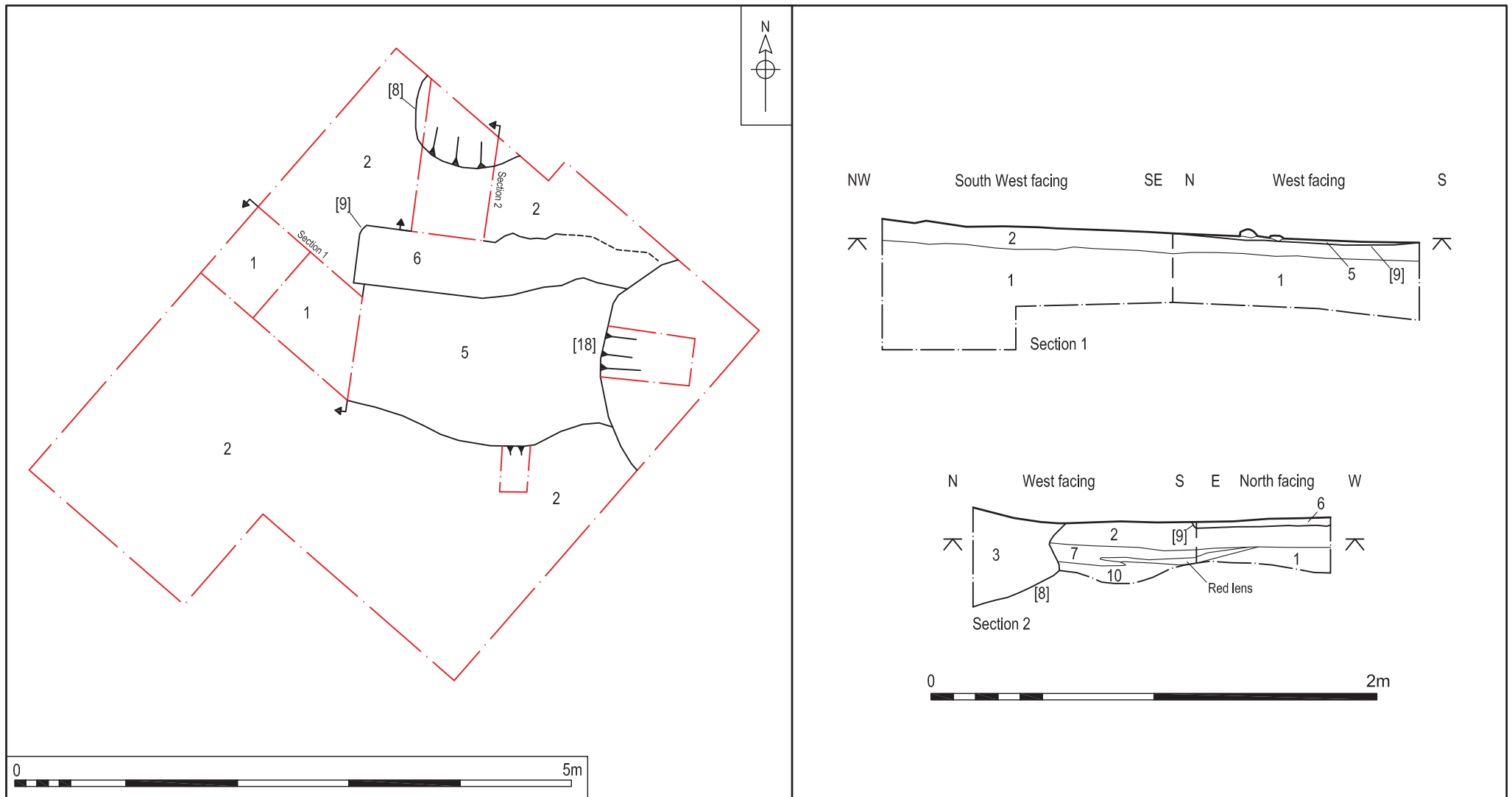


Figure 3. Trench 1, plan, scale 1:50. Sections at 1:25

## 5.0 RESULTS

### 5.1 Trench 1

Initially Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 0.46m to remove a dark grey brown clay silt topsoil (32) revealing a mid yellow brown clay silt beneath (2) (Fig. 3). Into this material a pit [8] was cut protruding some 0.5m from the north-eastern limit of the trench with an observed width of 1.2m (Plate 1). It was filled with a mid to dark grey brown clay silt (3) with numerous fragments of modern brick and slate throughout and reached a depth of 0.44m. Approximately 0.5m to the south-west a short section of what appeared to be a wall foundation formed of flint cobbles in a bed of crushed chalk (6) extended from the south east edge of the trench westwards for a length of 1.3m. It formed the northern boundary of a flint cobbled surface in a mid brown clay silt matrix (5) that continued to the south beyond the limits of the trench. Both the wall foundation and the floor sat within a shallow cut [9] extending no more than 0.04m in to deposit (2) below. A sondage excavated across the centre of the trench in order to characterise deposit (2) established its depth at 0.1m beyond which a mid yellow grey brown clay silt (1) continued for at least a further 0.5m before excavation became impractical (Fig. 3, Section 1). Pottery of 11th- to 14th-century date was recovered from both contexts (1) and (2). A second sondage excavated through pit [8] and deposit (2) in order to ascertain the depth of wall foundation (6) revealed a localised dump layer of yellow brown clay (7) directly beneath (2) and no more than 0.09m in depth. A thin lense of heat-reddened clay lay beneath this and overlay deposit (10) a mid yellow brown clay silt filling a hollow within deposit (1) beneath (Fig. 3 Section 2). These deposits did not continue any further north than pit [8] by which they were cut and extended south for a length of no more than 0.75m.



Plate 1. Pit [8] in Trench 1; 1m scale

At this stage the trench was widened at the same depth 2.25m to the south-east revealing both wall [6] and floor surface (5) continuing east for a further 1.5m before being cut by another modern pit [18] located in the eastern corner of the expanded trench (Plate 2, Fig. 3). Interestingly the floor surface did not continue further south but was still contained within the continuation of cut [9]. Deposit (2) however extended across the entire southern and western extent of the trench. Pit [18] was only partially visible within the limits of the trench but must have had a diameter in excess of 1.4m. It was filled with a mid to dark grey brown clay silt (19) containing fragments of modern brick and demolition debris consistent with that seen in pit [8]. It had a depth of 0.2m with moderately sloping concave sides, although the base may not have been reached.



Plate 2. Wall foundation and flint floor surface in Trench 1 after widening; 1m scale

A machine was again employed to further reduce the levels across the centre of the trench in order to establish either the depth of archaeological deposits or until natural sands were obtained. At a depth of 1.58m and without encountering further archaeological features it was considered that the safe limit of excavation had been reached without further stepping to the trench edges. A sondage 0.5m x 0.6m was then excavated by hand at the base of the trench to a depth of 0.55m (Plate 3, Fig. 4).

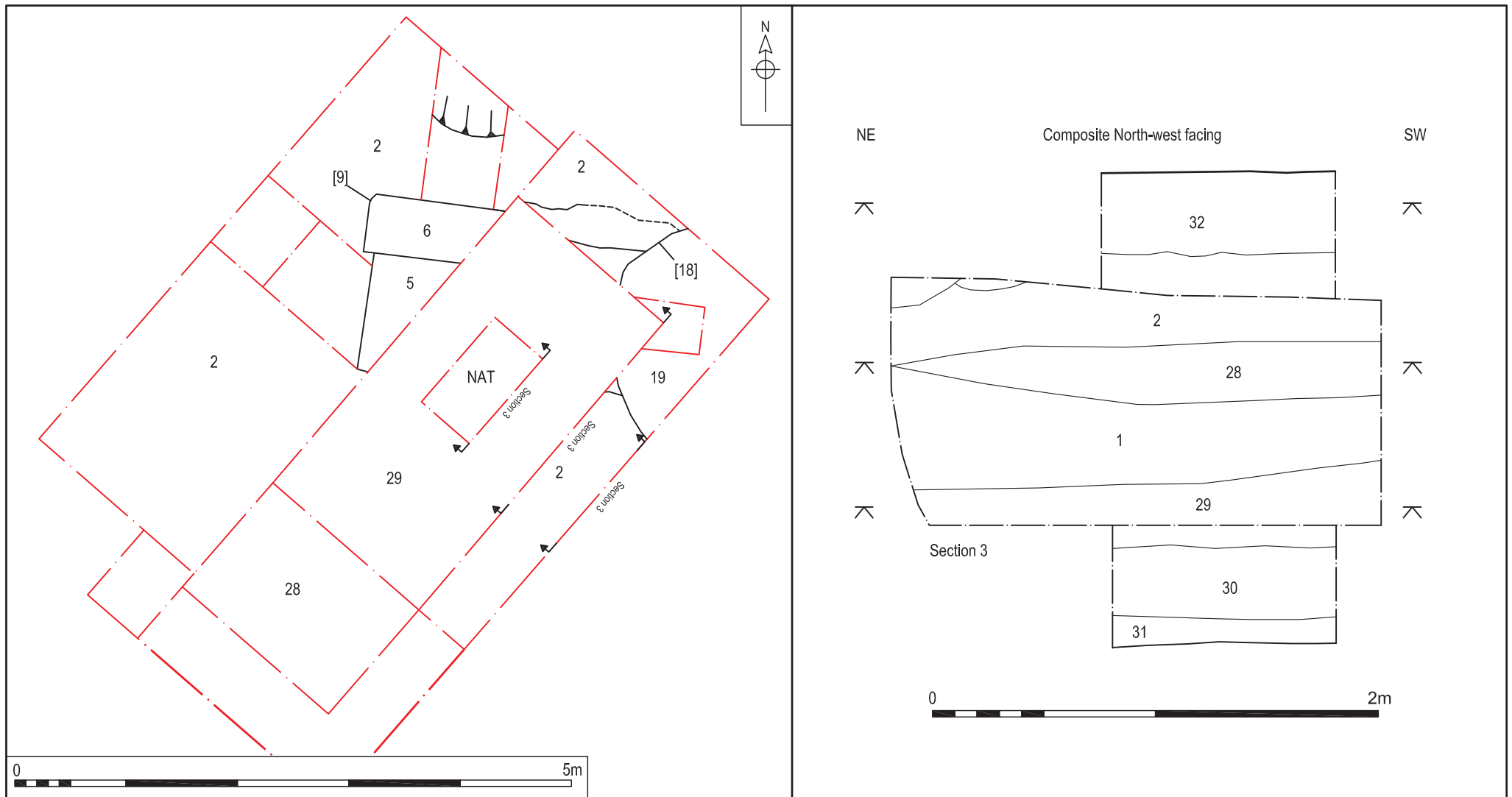


Figure 4. Trench 1, plan after stepping, scale 1:50. Section at 1:25

The result of these additional excavations revealed that deposit (1) as previously identified to the north-west continued beneath deposit (2) as a layer across the trench with a maximum depth of 0.56m thinning slightly to the south-west. However here a patchy mid brown yellow silty sand (28) 0.26m in depth lay between deposits (1) and (2). It extended the full width of the 1.8m sondage but was not identified in either of the previous sondages to the north and north-west and could be seen as thinning to the north



Plate 3. North-west facing section of Trench 1 after stepping; 1m scale

Beneath deposit (1) lay a firm mid brown grey clay silt layer (29) which again covered the full width and length of the sondage. It had a depth of 0.28m and returned two sherds of local unglazed pottery dating from the 11th -14th centuries. Below, a rim fragment from a 2nd-century Samian dish was recovered from deposit (30) a mid yellow brown clay silt of a grittier texture than that above. This extended to a depth of 0.30m and overlay deposit (31) a mid grey silty sand with abundant flints that sat directly above what appeared to be natural orangey yellow sands (Fig 4, Section 3).

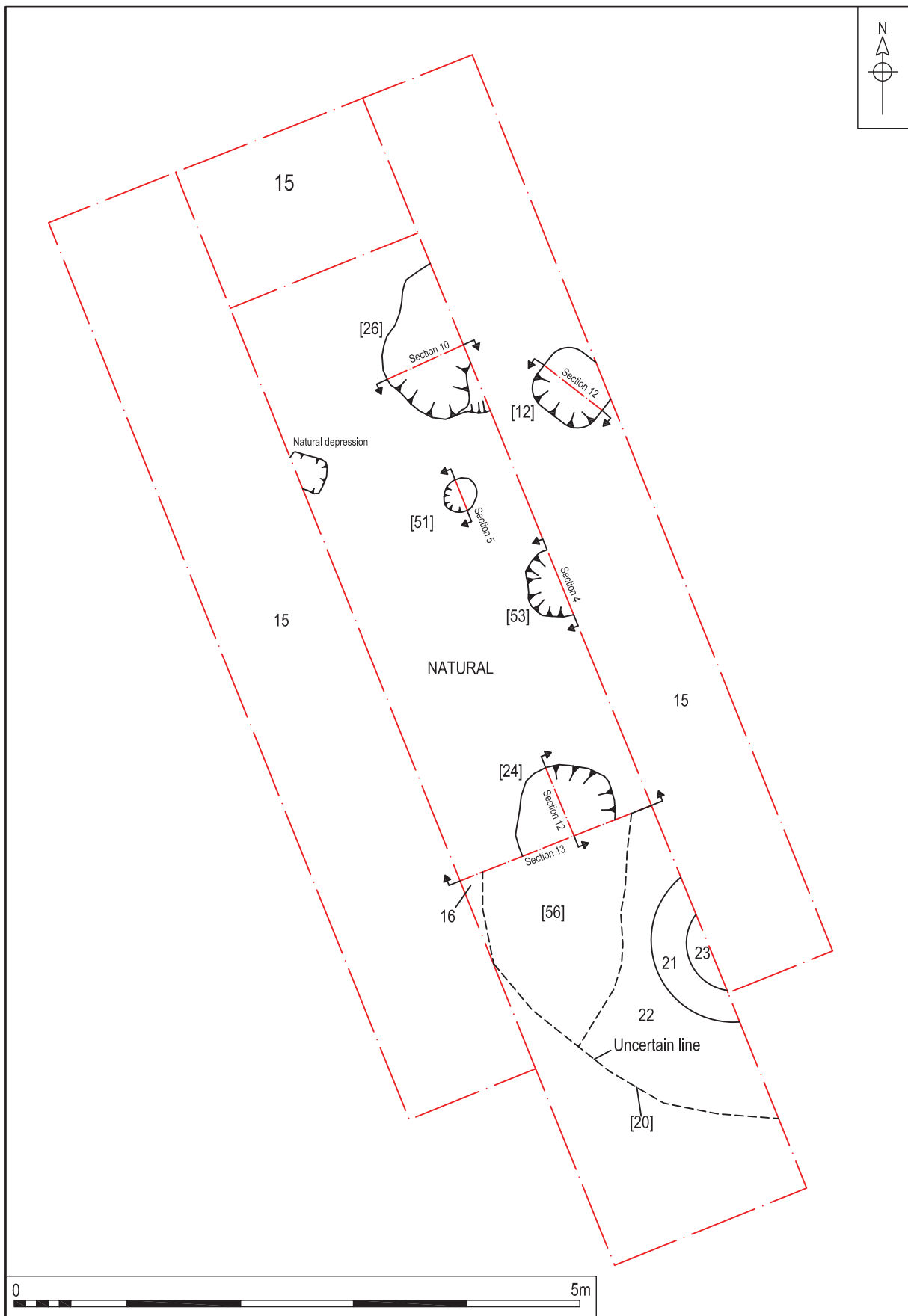


Figure 5. Trench 2, plan, scale 1:50



## 5.2 Trench 2

The adapted design of Trench 2 gave it an overall length of just over 10m and a width of 4m (Fig 5). Initial stripping of topsoil (14) and subsoil (15) was undertaken to a depth of 0.40m upon which a portion of a post medieval red brick-lined well [21] with a diameter of 1.25m was identified at the southern end. Only the western half of the well was visible protruding from the eastern section, the remainder being sealed by the subsoil above. A cut [20] had been made for the well almost 3m in diameter through a dark blackish brown silty sand (16) and the surrounding cut had then been backfilled first with deposit (22) a light brownish yellow heavy clay containing fragments of post medieval brick and then with (56) a slightly darker very similar deposit (Fig 6 Section 13). Avoiding the southern end of the trench which had clearly been heavily disturbed by the construction of the well further machine excavation was then undertaken to a depth of 1.24m where upon the sides of the trench were stepped to the base of the topsoil revealing a rectangular feature [12] cutting subsoil (15). This feature measured 0.65m in length, 0.60m wide and with a depth of just 0.05m was filled with (14) a mid to dark grey brown sandy clay silt. Although it contained no dating evidence it was almost certainly of post medieval or later date given its stratigraphic position (Fig. 5, Plate 4).



Plate 4. Trench 2 facing south, 1m scale

At a depth of 1.24m across the centre of the trench it was possible to ascertain that deposit (15) had a maximum depth of 0.55m and overlay (16) which itself had a depth 0.36m (Fig. 6 Section 4). From this dark earth deposit which spread across the entire base of the trench pottery dating from the 2nd -3rd centuries was retrieved as well as several fragments of fired clay and animal bone (Plate 5). A number of features were identified beneath this deposit all of which cut the natural sands. The first of these (starting at the northern end of the trench) was an oval pit or post hole [26] aligned slightly north to south, 1.1m in length and 0.45m deep (Plate 6). It contained two fills, a silty sand upper fill (27) of a very dark blackish brown colour and 0.13m in depth and a very dark brown silty sand (55) filling the base of the cut (Fig. 6 Section 10). Although no finds were recovered from the lower fill, deposit (27) above it returned numerous sherds of Roman pottery dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries as well as animal bone, fired clay and re-deposited metal working debris perhaps related to smithing activities. Immediately to the south a small sub rounded feature [51] 0.31m in diameter and 0.24m deep narrowed from shelved sides sharply to a concave base reminiscent of the shape of a stake hole (Plate 5). It was filled with deposit (52) a mid grey brown silty sand that contained no dating evidence (Fig. 6 Section 5). Feature (53) located toward the centre of the trench was only partially visible against the eastern section under which the remainder disappeared (Plate 5). It measured 0.57m wide, 0.3m in length and may have been either the terminus of a ditch or western half of a pit. Its steep sides and concave base contributed to an excavated depth of 0.48m while its mid grey brown silty sand fill (54) contained a single piece of mid 1st- to mid 2nd-century pottery imported from central Gaul. At the southern end of the trench and again obscured by the southern limits of excavation, a small sub rounded pit or post hole [24] was recorded with a length of 0.8m and width in excess of 0.6m (Fig. 5 Section 12, Plate 7). It had steep sides with a depth of 0.27m and contained a single mid brown sand fill (25) from which a sherd of 2nd-century Samian pottery was collected.



Plate 5. Trench 2, showing features [51] and [53] beneath dark earth deposit (16); 1m scale



Plate 6. Trench 2, pit [26]; 1m scale



Plate 7. Trench 2 pit [24]; 1m scale

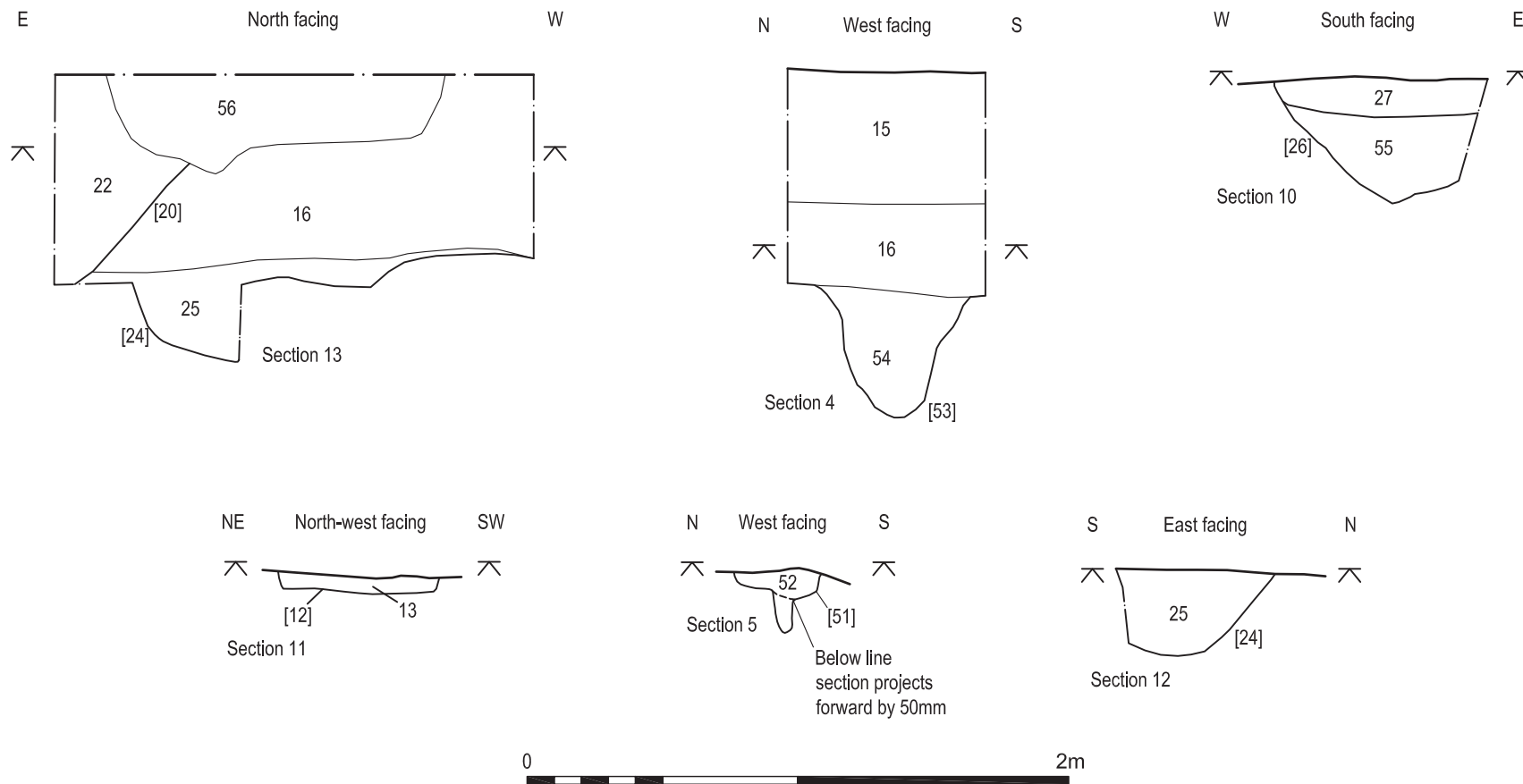


Figure 6. Trench 2, sections, scale 1:25

### 5.3 Trench 3:

Trench 3 was reduced in length at its south-eastern end due to the presence of waste services lying across the centre of the development area (see Trench 1 above) and this resulted in a trench 6.1m long and 1.8m wide (Fig. 7). Machine excavation revealed topsoil to a depth of 0.53m straight onto light yellow clean fine sands and gravels that appeared to be natural in origin. The unusual height of this 'natural' deposit in comparison with the other three trenches suggested that it was perhaps re-deposited and therefore a further 0.5m was excavated by machine at the centre of the trench with an additional 0.5m by hand (Plate 8). Despite this however no firm conclusions could be drawn with the most likely explanations being a significant but localised rise in the underlying glacial geology; alternatively the material could be associated with the excavation of the waste services known to run across the site.



Plate 8. Trench 3; 1m scale

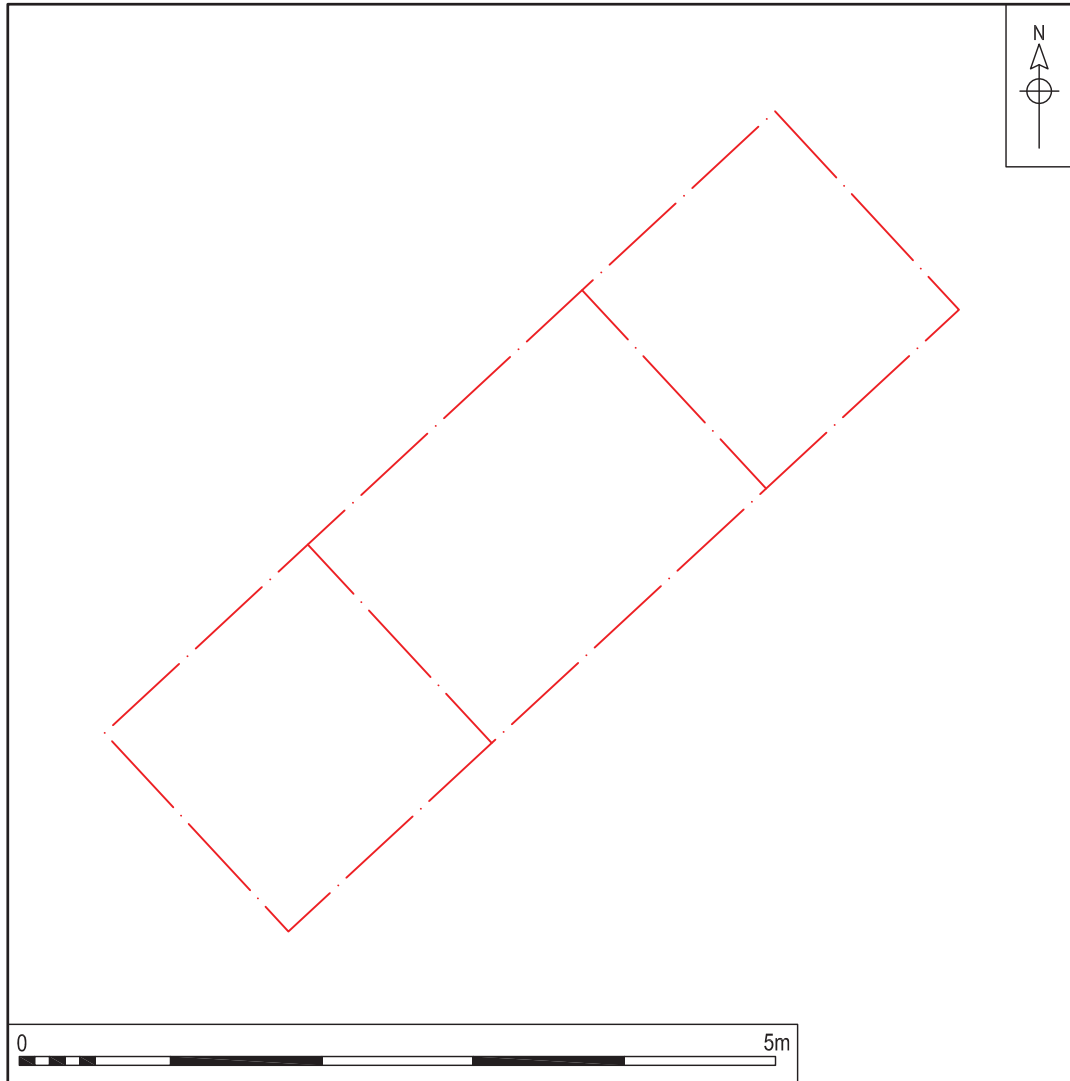


Figure 7. Trench 3, plan, scale 1:50

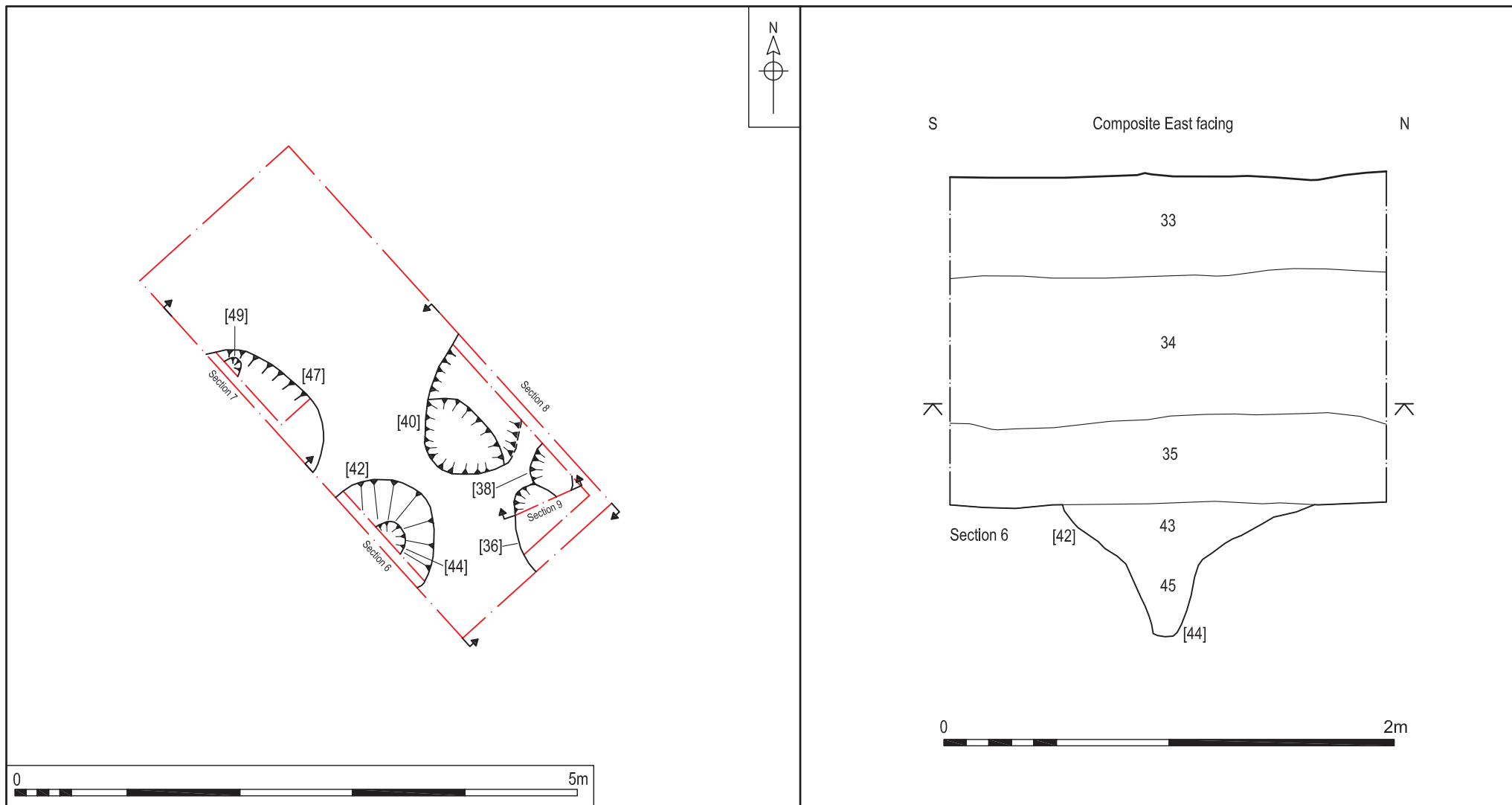


Figure 8. Trench 4, plan, scale 1:50. Section at 1:25

**5.4 Trench 4:**

Trench 4 had a length of 4.3m and width of 1.8m and was positioned on a north-west south-east alignment towards the southernmost corner of the development area. Initial machine excavation reduced the trench to 1.2m where upon the sides were stepped and a further 0.3m excavated to reveal several features cut into the natural sands (Fig. 8, Plate 9).



Plate 9. Trench 4; 1m scale



Plate 10. Trench 4, post pit [47]; 1m scale



The first of these features, [47], lay against the western section of the trench and was situated approximately 0.9m from the northern end of the trench (Plate 10). It had an observed length of 0.42m a width of 1.4m and a maximum depth of 0.1m with a flat base and sloping sides (Fig 9, Section 7). It was filled with an orangey brown silty sand (48) through which a sub circular post hole [49] had been cut at the northern end. This post hole was inclined slightly on a north-south alignment with a length of 0.3m and a width of 0.2m and reached a depth of 0.12m where its sloped sides formed a concave base. It was filled with deposit (50) a dark brown silty sand that contained no dating evidence (Fig 9, Section 7). Overlying deposit (48) to the south was a localised lense of re-deposited clay till material (46) no more than 0.08m thick and brownish orange in colour with chalk flecks throughout. It had a length of 0.9m and a width of 0.4m.

Within 0.3m to the south of feature [47] was post pit [42], 1.1m wide and more than 0.6m long (Fig. 8, Plate 11). At its base a steep sided circular post hole (44) was half sectioned to reveal a diameter of 0.3m and a depth of 0.32m giving an overall depth for the post pit of 0.6m. Post hole (44) and post pit (42) were both filled with firm black silty sand materials (45) and (43) respectively which may actually have been a single deposit. A single struck flint was recovered from deposit (43).



Plate 11. Trench 4, post pit [42]; 1m scale

A second probable post pit [40], sub circular in plan with sloped sides and a flat base was recorded immediately to the east (Plate 12). It had a width of 0.9m and a length of 0.8m but was partially obscured by the limits of excavation to the east. Its depth of 0.35m was similar to that of post pit (42) but it did not contain a post hole at its base. From its only fill, a pale orange brown clay sand (41), three struck flints were recovered. At its southern end deposit (41) was cut by [38] a sub circular post-hole with a concave base and sloping sides (Plate 12). It was 0.45m wide to the south and 0.3m long to the east, although it continued beyond the section edge so its ultimate size cannot be determined (Fig 9, Section 8). It was filled with a mid brown silty sand (39) from which no dating evidence was retrieved.



Plate 12. Trench 4, features [36], [38] and [40]; 1m scale

Adjacent to [38] a slightly larger post hole [36] was located against the southern edge of the trench (Plate 12). It too continued beyond the section edge but had an observed width of 0.5m and length of 0.6m. Its only fill (37) reached a depth of 0.15m and but had no demonstrable relationship with post hole [38] despite their proximity (Fig. 9, Section 9). Three pieces of worked flint were collected from context (37) including a small piece from a flake. Sealing all of these features was a greyish black silty sand dark earth (35) which varied between 0.2m and 0.25m in thickness and which covered the entire trench (Fig. 8, Section 6; Fig. 9, Sections 7 and 8). It contained several pieces of Roman pottery of possible mid 2nd-century date as well as a Neolithic or Bronze Age scraper.

A thick layer of mid brown silty sand (34) 0.8m in depth lay directly beneath topsoil (33) and overlay deposit (35); it was reminiscent of colluvium in appearance (Plate 13).



Plate 13. Trench 4, dark earth material (35) with (34) above

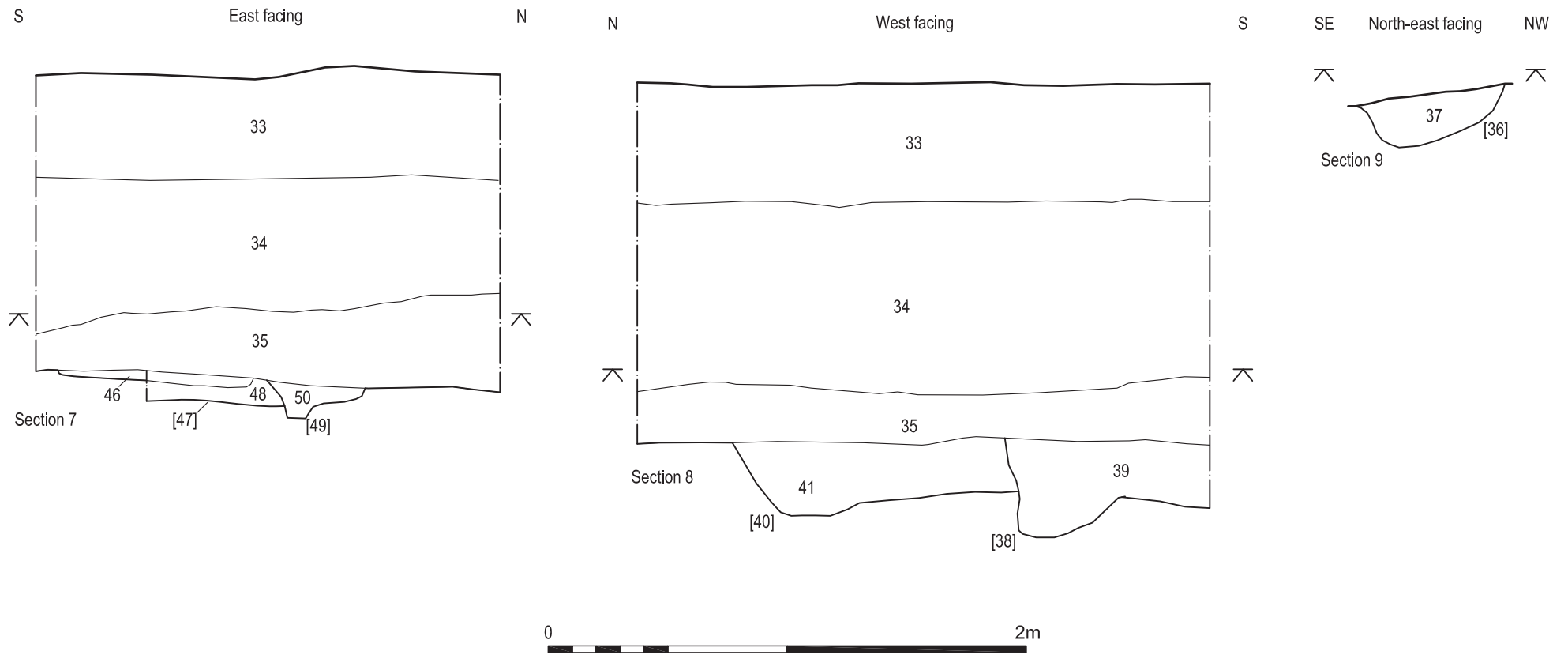


Figure 9. Trench 4, sections. Scale 1:25

## 6.0 THE FINDS

### 6.1 The Pottery

by Sarah Percival

#### 6.1.1 *Roman* (identified by Alice Lyons)

A total of nineteen Romano-British sherds weighing 162g were recovered from seven excavated contexts (Appendix 3). The small assemblage contains a range of locally produced vessels alongside imported finewares from central Gaul.

The coarsewares include rims from five jars in micaceous sandy greyware typical of the kilns at Wattisfield, Suffolk (Maynard *et. al.* 1936). A mid 2nd-century greyware 'dog dish' or shallow bowl with visible clay relic inclusions is similar to examples found during Rogerson's 1973 excavations in Scole (Rogerson 1977, fig.80, 153) and was again probably produced at Wattisfield. A single sherd from a micaceous sandy oxidised ware flagon was also found.

The three sherds from central Gaulish Samian vessels (Tomber and Dore 1998) comprise two dr37 bowls and a dr18-31 platter or dish (Tyers 1996). A more unusual find is a single sherd from a mid 1st- to mid 2nd-century Terra Rubra bowl with gold mica dusting also from production sites in central Gaul (Tomber and Dore 1998, 12).

The assemblage was recovered from a range of features in Trenches 1, 2 and 4. A single sherd of Samian pottery came from layer (30) in Trench 1. Trench 2 produced a greyware sherd from unstratified surface collection as well as a total of nine sherds from pits [24] and [26] and the gold mica dusted Terra Rubra sherd from posthole [53]. A single sherd was also found in deposit (11). A further six sherds were collected from the dark earth layer (35) in Trench 4.

The assemblage is mid Roman, with most vessels dating to around the mid 2nd century. Little 3rd century or later pottery was recovered. The pottery compares well with the large Romano-British assemblage found during previous excavations in Scole (Rogerson 1977) and with that from the Scole Bypass excavations with the composition, source of supply and date of the assemblage being very similar to the pottery from the small town excavated on the line of the bypass in the 1990s (A Lyons *pers. comm.*). At all three sites the assemblages were dominated by coarseware pottery from local production centres such as Wattisfield with small quantities of fineware imported from central Gaul.

#### 6.1.2 *Medieval*

Medieval pottery was found in layers (1), (2), (4) and (29) from Trench 1 (Appendix 3). The assemblage comprises sixteen sherds weighing 241g mostly of unsourced local medieval unglazed coarseware including several sherds from a large jug with thumbled strap handle. A single sherd of Ely coarseware was also found.

The assemblage can be broadly dated to the 11th to 14th centuries and represents redeposited domestic debris.

### **6.1.3 Post Medieval**

Three small post medieval sherds weighing 4g were found in the fill of post medieval pit [12], Trench 2 (Appendix 3). The assemblage includes one sherd of 16th- to 18th-century glazed red earthenware, one sherd of Raeran Aachen stoneware which dates to the late 15th to 16th centuries and a sherd of late 18th to 20th century Iron-glazed black ware.

## **6.2 Fired Clay**

Small quantities of fired clay were recovered from the dark earth layers in Trenches 2 and 4 (context 16 and 35) and from the fill of pit [26] also in Trench 2. The fired clay from (16) and (27) is poorly mixed and is made of silt-rich clay with common large sub-angular chalk inclusions. The pieces have one smoothed surface and one rough surface typical of clay lining or daub suggesting that they may have originated from a structure such as an oven. A large abraded sub rounded lump of dense sandy fired clay with sparse flint and quartz inclusions came from the dark earth layer in Trench 4 (35).

## **6.3 Ceramic Building Material**

A large fragment of medieval to post medieval peg tile weighing 108g in red sandy fabric with small quartz inclusions was found in subsoil in Trench 2. The tile has a sanded base and a square-shaped peg hole. The peg-hole was located near to the edge of the tile indicating that the tile had originally had two holes. A small highly abraded piece of brick in silty cream to red fabric came from Roman pit [24]. The fragment is not closely datable.

## **6.4 Flint**

by Sarah Bates

### **6.4.1 The assemblage**

Nine pieces of struck or shattered flint were recovered from the site (Appendix 4). They include two quite small irregular fragments that have probably been struck [37] and a jagged shatter piece [41]. There are also two flakes, one a small irregular broad piece with cortex at its platform [41], and the other a small fragment from a flake [37]. A small chip-like piece is also present [41].

A neat blade [11] was found. It is relatively large and broad and has regular parallel dorsal scars. It was probably struck from a fairly large blade core. Its platform appears slightly battered but does not have the abrasion typical of carefully prepared types. There is, however, a slight lip to the platform edge that suggests the piece could have been struck by soft hammer.

A quite small longish flake has retouch of its distal end and, more slightly, of its cortical left side to form an end/side scraper [35]. Another irregular fragment [43] with thin grey cortex has slight retouch of parts of one edge

### **6.4.2 Flint by context**

The shatter piece, small flake and chip were all found in post-hole [40] and the retouched fragment came from post-hole [42]. Neither of these features contained

any other finds and the flint might possibly suggest a prehistoric date for them although it is undiagnostic and not closely dateable.

The regular blade is likely to date to the earlier Neolithic period but was found in an unstratified context alongside Roman and other, later, material. The scraper is most likely to be of later Neolithic or Bronze Age date but was also found in a deposit [35] that contained finds of Roman date. It has a glossy or slightly abraded appearance.

Two possibly struck fragments and part of a flake were found with a small piece of animal bone in post-hole [36].

### **6.4.3 Conclusions**

The flint represents activity in the vicinity of the site during the prehistoric period. It probably dates to more than one period with the blade likely to be of earlier date than the rest of the material which is more irregular in nature. Most of the flint was found residually with later finds but it is possible that some of the excavated post-holes could be of prehistoric date.

## **6.5 Metalworking Debris**

Eight pieces of metalworking debris weighing 206g were recovered from five contexts, all in Trench 2. A small droplet of lead came from unstratified surface cleaning and a further larger lump of undiagnostic slag came from post medieval layer (13). The remainder of the assemblage came from the fills of pit [26]. These comprised four highly vitrified pieces of smithing slag and a piece of vitrified clay lining, perhaps from a smithing hearth. The small quantities of material recovered indicate that the assemblage is redeposited. The metalworking debris is not closely dateable.

## **6.6 Clay Tobacco Pipe**

Two pieces of post medieval clay tobacco pipe stem were recovered, one from unstratified surface collection the other from the fill of post medieval pit [12].

## **6.7 Lava**

A total of five small and highly abraded scraps of lava weighing 12g were recovered from mid brown clay silt layer (30) Trench 1. The lava is not closely dateable but is likely to be residual from Romano-British occupation in the area.

## **6.8 Animal Bone**

by Julie Curl

### **6.8.1 Methodology**

The assessment was carried out following a modified version of guidelines by English Heritage (Davis, 1992). All of the bone was examined to determine range of species and elements present. A note was also made of butchering and any indications of skinning, hornworking and other modifications. When possible a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were noted for each context. All information was recorded directly into Excel for quantification and assessment. A basic catalogue is included

in the written report and the full assessment database is available in the digital archive.

### **6.8.2 *The assemblage; provenance and preservation***

A total of 0.283kg of faunal remains, consisting of twenty-four pieces, was recovered from evaluation excavations at Scole (Appendix 5). Bone was produced from five contexts, with most remains yielded from pit and posthole fills, with some remains from a dark earth layer and subsoil. Much of the assemblage is thought to be of Roman date (or possibly earlier), with the subsoil finds dated as post-medieval, although these may be re-deposited.

The bone is generally in good condition, although fragmentary from butchering. No gnawing or invertebrate damage was seen on any of the bone, suggesting the remains were disposed of and buried rapidly and not readily available for scavengers.

### **6.8.3 *Species range, butchering and other observations***

Two species were identified in this assemblage: cattle and pig, both of which are likely to be from domestic stock, although the porcine remains may be of wild boar. The fragmentary nature of much of the assemblage means most bone can be identified no further than 'mammal', although this could be identified as large mammal (cattle/equid) and medium mammal (sheep/goat/pig).

Most of the bone had been butchered. The juvenile pig bone had been chopped and cut and the cattle scapulae had been chopped and fine cuts were seen along the spine of the blades where meat had been removed.

No pathologies were observed on any of the remains in this assemblage.

### **6.8.4 *Conclusions***

Although this is a small assemblage, it has produced evidence for species, food remains and butchering practices and is evidence of butchering and food waste. Any further excavation at this site has the potential to yield further evidence.

## **7.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **7.1 Plant Macrofossils**

by Val Fryer

#### **7.1.1 *Introduction and method statement***

Whole earth samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from deposits in Trenches 2 and 3, with particular emphasis upon the dark earth layer occurring in both of these trenches, and from two fills within pit [26]. A total of six samples were submitted for assessment.

The samples were processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern fibrous and woody roots were present throughout.



The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and will be sorted when dry. Any artefacts/ecofacts will be retained for further specialist analysis.

### **7.1.2 Results**

Cereal grains/chaff were present at varying densities within all but sample 4. Preservation was generally quite poor, with many of the grains being very severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures. Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains were noted, and the assemblage from Sample 1 (from deposit [46]) contained a very high density of spelt wheat (*T. spelta*) glume bases. Detached sprouts from germinated grains and a single wheat grain with an attached sprout were also recorded within the same assemblage. Charcoal/charred wood fragments were present throughout, but other remains were scarce; seeds of brome (*Bromus* sp.), a common cereal crop contaminant, were noted within the assemblages from samples 1 and 2 and a possible fragment of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell was recovered from sample 3. Although some of the fragments of black porous and tarry material were probably derived from the combustion of organic remains (including cereal grains) at very high temperatures, other pieces were very hard and brittle and were almost certainly residues from the burning of coal, fragments of which were noted within all but sample 6. Possible small pieces of mineralised faecal material were recorded from samples 1, 5 and 6.

### **7.1.3 Conclusions and recommendations for further work**

In summary, the assemblage from Sample 1 is almost certainly derived from a small deposit of charred cereal processing and/or storage waste. However, the condition of the material is such that it would appear to have been burnt at a very high temperature, possibly on more than one occasion. Similar contemporary assemblages have been noted at a number of other sites where it would appear that processing waste was being used as a fuel for a range of agricultural, domestic or light industrial processes including cereal drying, domestic baking and pottery production. Similar material is probably also present within the assemblages from Samples 2, 5 and 6, although at such a low density that it is, perhaps, most likely to be derived from scattered refuse, which was accidentally incorporated within the deposits and pit fills.

Although small, these assemblages clearly illustrate that reasonably well-preserved plant remains, which may be indicative of very specific activities, are present within the archaeological horizon at Scole. In addition to this, Scole, and the area immediately surrounding the town, are of particular significance to the understanding of Roman settlement within this area of south Norfolk. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that if any further interventions are planned within this vicinity, additional plant macrofossil samples of approximately 20 – 40 litres in volume should be taken from all features recorded during excavation.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The stepping of the trench sides and the limitations imposed by avoiding services significantly reduced the area of archaeologically sensitive deposits exposed. However despite this and with reference to previous archaeological work nearby it

is possible to suggest three or four broad phases of occupation on or close to the development site.

The first phase is prehistoric and the evidence for this is centred upon the three relatively shallow pits at the southern end of Trench 3. The numerous pieces of struck flint retrieved from such a limited sample area may suggest that these features are of prehistoric date; a view that is supported by the complete absence of pottery of a later date, especially Roman which might otherwise be expected. Previous NAU excavations to the north of the present site (HER 41282) found similar evidence for prehistoric activity however there as here the possibility that the flints have been re-deposited cannot be ruled out and on balance, given the broad date range of the flints that were recovered it is most likely that their presence is residual and they are not from primary contexts.

The evidence gathered from the Romano-British period (the second phase) is largely in keeping with what is known from Scole from previous excavations i.e. domestic activity represented by the presence of local greywares and remains of butchered livestock; evidence which is then sealed by dark-earth deposits. There are also indications of metal-working taking place nearby but it is not possible to say more given the nature of the evidence produced from these evaluation trenches. The pottery recovered from the three datable features sealed beneath the dark earth material within Trench 2 indicates a likely 2nd-century date for this phase. These three features are most likely to be rubbish pits (mainly based on the evidence provided from the analysis of the faunal remains) which were utilised for disposal of unwanted materials. It is not unusual to find these pits located towards the rear of a property as maybe the case here - if a road does indeed lie to the west. No other features could be confirmed as Roman in date but Trenches 1, 2, and 4 contained a layer that can be interpreted as a dark earth. In Trench 1 this material appeared to be much lighter in colour than that in Trench 2 and especially Trench 4. The pottery collected from the dark earth deposits is of 2nd-century date. This dark earth deposit has been noted on numerous excavated Roman urban settlement sites across the country as well as at several locations in Scole. Its formation has long been the subject of debate and indeed there may be several explanations, however given its absence in Trench 1 and evident concentration in Trench 4 it must, at least here, be a localised phenomenon.

The third phase of activity is confined to the deposits within Trench 1 which lie immediately above the dark earth layer and give a firm if somewhat broad date range of 11th-14th century. Although no features could be confidently assigned to this period the possible wall foundation and flint floor which could be seen to cut the uppermost of these deposits may plausibly date from anytime after this. If these remains are evidence of a structure (which they appear to be) it does not appear to have been a large one.

The final broad phase of activity belongs to the post medieval and modern period and, unusually has caused little disturbance to the earlier deposits. The exceptions being the construction of the brick-lined well within Trench 2 and the excavation of the pipe trench for the waste services running across the site.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

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## Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Notes
1	Deposit			Mid yellow brown clay silt	Post-Roman	Trench 1
2	Deposit			Mid grey brown clay silt	Post-medieval	Trench 1
3	Deposit		8	Building demolition debris	Modern	Trench 1
4	Deposit			Clay rich deposit	Post-medieval	Trench 1
5	Deposit		9	Build demolition debris / hard core with flint	Post-medieval	Trench 1
6	Masonry		9	Wall footing	Unknown	Trench 1
7	Deposit			A dump of clay including a reddened lens. Localised only.	Post-medieval	Trench 1
8	Cut	Pit		Irregular pit	Modern	Trench 1
9	Cut	Foundation trench		Wall foundation trench	Post-medieval	Trench 1
10	Deposit			Mid yellow brown clay	Post-medieval	Trench 1
11	Deposit			Unstratified	Unstratified	Trench 2
12	Cut	Pit		Square pit	Post-medieval	Trench 2
13	Deposit		12	Mid to dark grey brown sandy clay silt	Post-medieval	Trench 2
14	Deposit			Topsoil	Unknown	Trench 2
15	Deposit			Subsoil	Post-medieval	Trench 2
16	Deposit			Dark layer underlying subsoil	Roman	Trench 2
17	Void			Void	Void	Void
18	Cut	Pit		Sub round pit	Modern	Trench 1
19	Deposit		18	Mid grey brown clay silt	Modern	Trench 1
20	Cut	Well		Un-bottomed shaft	Post-medieval	Trench 2
21	Masonry		20	Brick lining of well [20]	Post-medieval	Trench 2
22	Deposit			Light brown to yellow clay backfill around well [20]	Post-medieval	Trench 2
23	Deposit		20	Dark grey brown fine sandy silt backfill of well [20]	Post-medieval	Trench 2
24	Cut	Pit		Small oval pit	Roman	Trench 2
25	Deposit		24	mid to dark brown sand	Roman	Trench 2
26	Cut	Pit		Medium sized oval pit	Roman	Trench 2
27	Deposit		26	Very dark blackish brown silty sand. Upper fill of [26]	Roman	Trench 2
28	Deposit			Mid brown yellow silty sand spread in southern half of the trench	Unknown	Trench 1
29	Deposit			Mid grey brown clay silt layer	Roman	Trench 1
30	Deposit			Mid grey brown clay silt layer	Roman	Trench 1
31	Deposit			Mid grey brown clay silt layer	Unknown	Trench 1
32	Deposit			Topsoil	Unknown	Trench 1

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Notes
33	Deposit			Topsoil	Unknown	Trench 4
34	Deposit			Subsoil	Unknown	Trench 4
35	Deposit			Dark layer underlying subsoil	Roman	Trench 4
36	Cut	Posthole		Sub-circular posthole. One of pair.	Prehistoric	Trench 4
37	Deposit		36	Orange brown silty sandy	Prehistoric	Trench 4
38	Cut	Posthole		Sub-circular posthole. One of pair.	Prehistoric	Trench 4
39	Deposit		39	Mid brown silty sand	Prehistoric	Trench 4
40	Cut	Posthole		Sub circular post pit	Prehistoric	Trench 4
41	Deposit		41	Pale orange brown clay sand	Prehistoric	Trench 4
42	Cut	Post pit		Circular post pit	Roman	Trench 4
43	Deposit		42	Black silty sand	Roman	Trench 4
44	Cut	Posthole		Circular post pit contained posthole [42].	Roman	Trench 4
45	Deposit		44	Black silty sand	Roman	Trench 4
46	Deposit			Orange white redeposited clay	Unknown	Trench 4
47	Cut	Post pit		Sub-circular post pit. Contained posthole [49]	Unknown	Trench 4
48	Deposit		47	Orange brown silty sandy	Unknown	Trench 4
49	Cut	Posthole		Sub-circular posthole.	Unknown	Trench 4
50	Deposit		49	Orange brown silty sandy	Unknown	Trench 4
51	Cut	Posthole				Trench 2
52	Deposit		51			Trench 2
53	Cut	Posthole				Trench 2
54	Deposit		53			Trench 2
55	Deposit		26	Very dark brown silty sand. Lower fill of pit [26].	Roman	Trench 2
56	Deposit		20	Layer or fill of well [20].	Post-medieval	Trench 2

### Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Cut Type	Total
Prehistoric	Post-hole	3
Roman	Pit	2
	Post-hole	1
	Post pit	1
Post-medieval	Pit	1
	Foundation trench	1
	Well	1
Modern	Pit	2
Unknown	Post-hole	1
	Post pit	1

## Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
1	Pottery	5	117g	Medieval	C11th - c14th
2	Pottery	4	39g	Medieval	C11th - c14th
4	Pottery	5	74g	Medieval	C11th - c14th
11	Pottery	1	8g	Roman	LC1st - C4th
11	Fired clay	1	5g	Unknown	
11	Clay Pipe	1	4g	Post-medieval	
11	Flint – Struck	1	37g	Prehistoric	
13	Pottery	3	4g	Post-medieval	C17th
13	Metalworking Debris	1	45g	Unknown	
13	Clay Pipe	1	3g	Post-medieval	
15	Animal Bone	1	50g	Unknown	
15	Ceramic Building Material	1	108g	Post-medieval	Peg-tile
16	Pottery	1	3g	Roman	C2nd - C3rd
16	Animal Bone	2	26g	Unknown	
16	Fired Clay	3	74g	Unknown	
25	Pottery	1	4g	Roman	C2nd
25	Animal Bone	2	12g	Unknown	
25	Ceramic Building Material	1	4g	Unknown	Brick
27	Pottery	8	69g	Roman	C2nd - C3rd
27	Animal Bone	11	172g	Unknown	
27	Fired Clay	3	11g	Unknown	
27	Metalworking Debris	4	132g	Unknown	
29	Pottery	2	11g	Medieval	C11th - c14th
30	Pottery	1	9g	Roman	C2nd
30	Lava	5	12g	Unknown	
35	Pottery	6	63g	Roman	MC2nd
35	Flint – Struck	1	18g	Unknown	
35	Fired Clay	1	19g	Unknown	
37	Animal Bone	1	23g	Unknown	
37	Flint – Struck	3	64g	Prehistoric	

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
41	Flint – Struck	3	55g	Prehistoric	
43	Flint – Struck	1	29g	Prehistoric	
54	Pottery	1	6g	Roman	MC1st - MC2nd
55	Metalworking Debris	1	5g	Unknown	

## Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Prehistoric	Flint – Struck	8
Roman	Pottery	19
Medieval	Pottery	16
Post-medieval	Ceramic Building Material	1
	Clay Pipe	2
	Pottery	3
Unknown	Animal Bone	17
	Ceramic Building Material	1
	Fired Clay	8
	Flint – Struck	1
	Lava	5
	Metalworking Debris	6



### Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Fabric Code	Description	Form	Qty	Wt	Era	Spotdate	Comment
1	LMU	Local medieval unglazed	Bodysherd	Jug with strap handle	5	117	Medieval	C11th - C14th	
2	LMU	Local medieval unglazed	Bodysherd		4	39	Medieval	C11th - C14th	
4	LMU	Local medieval unglazed	Bodysherd		4	68	Medieval	C11th - C14th	
4	ELCW	Ely coarseware	Bodysherd		1	6	Medieval	C12th - C14th	
11	SGW	sandy Greyware	Bodysherd	Jar	1	8	Roman	LC1st - C4th	
13	GRE	Glazed red earthenware	Bodysherd		1	1	Post-medieval	C16th - C18th	
13	GSW3	Raeran/Aachen stoneware	Bodysherd		1	2	Post-medieval	LC15th - C16th	
13	IGBW	Iron-glazed blackware	Bodysherd		1	1	Post-medieval	LC18th - C20th	
16	MSOW	Micaceous sandy oxidised ware	Bodysherd	Flagon	1	3	Roman	C2nd - C3rd	
25	SAM	Samian	Bodysherd	Bowl DR37	1	4	Roman	C2nd	Worn. Central Gaulish import
27	SAM	Samian	Rim	Bowl DR37	1	12	Roman	C2nd	Central Gaulish import
27	MSGW	Micaceous sandy greyware	Rim	Jar	1	11	Roman	C2nd - C3rd	Wattisfield
27	MSGW	Micaceous sandy greyware	Rim	Jar	1	10	Roman	C2nd - C3rd	Wattisfield
27	MSGW	Micaceous sandy greyware	Base		1	10	Roman	C2nd - C3rd	Wattisfield

Context	Fabric	Fabric Code	Description	Form	Qty	Wt	Era	Spotdate	Comment
27	MSG W	Micaceous sandy greyware	Bodysherd		4	26	Roman	C2nd - C3rd	Wattisfield
29	LMU	Local medieval unglazed	Bodysherd		2	11	Medieval	C11th - C14th	
30	SAM	Samian	Rim	Platter or dish DR18 - 31	1	9	Roman	C2nd	Central Gaulish import
35	VGW	Visible clay relic Greyware	Rim	Dog dish	4	37	Roman	MC2nd	Wattisfield
35	MSG W	Micaceous sandy greyware	Base	Jar	1	8	Roman	LC1st - C4th	Wattisfield
35	MSG W	Micaceous sandy greyware	Base	Jar	1	18	Roman	LC1st - C4th	Wattisfield
54	CNG TR	Central Gaulish micaceous Terra Rubra	Bodysherd	Bowl	1	6	Roman	MC1st - MC2nd	Central Gaulish import. Gold mica dusted

#### Appendix 4: Flint

Context	Type	Quantity
11	blade	1
35	end/side scraper	1
37	struck fragment	2
37	flake	1
41	flake	1
41	chip	1
41	shatter	1
43	retouched fragment	1

## Appendix 5: Animal Bone

Context	Ctxt Qty	Wt (g)	Species	NISP	Age	MNI	Butchering	Comments
15	1	50	Pig	1	j	1	c, ch	dist. Rad, ch mid shaft
16	4	26	Cattle	1	1	1	ch	
16			Mammal	3				small fragments
25	2	12	Mammal	2				
27	16	172	Cattle	1	a	1	c, ch	ch and many knife cuts
27			Mammal	15			ch, c	
37	1	23	Mammal	1				

### Key:

NISP = **N**umber of **I**ndividual **S**pecies elements **P**resent.

Age = Estimate age based on fusion of bones and tooth wear; a = adult, j = juvenile.

MNI = **M**inimum **N**umber of **I**ndividuals

Butchering = c = cut, ch = chopped

## Appendix 6: Environmental Evidence

Sample No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Feature No.</b>					<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Feature type</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Pit</b>	<b>Pit</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>U/D</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>Cereals</b>						
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)	x	x				
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)			xcf			
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	x	xfg				x
(germinated grain)	x					
(spikelet bases)	x	x				
<i>T. spelta</i> L. (glume bases)	xxxx	x			x	x
Cereal indet. (grains)	xxx	x	x		x	
(detached sprouts)	x					
<b>Herbs</b>						
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	x	x				
<b>Tree/shrub macrofossils</b>						
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.			xcf			
<b>Other plant macrofossils</b>						
Charcoal <2mm	xx	x	x	x	xxx	xx
Charcoal >2mm	x	x		x	x	xx
Charred root/stem					x	
<b>Other remains</b>						
Black porous 'cokey' material	xx	xx	xx	xxx	xx	
Black tarry material	x	x	xx	xx	x	
Bone		x	x			x
Burnt/fired clay	x					
Faecal concretions	xcf				x	xcf
Small coal frags.	x	x	x	x	x	
Small mammal/amphibian bones			x		x	x
Vitrified material		x			x	
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key:** x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 11 – 50 specimens    xxx = 51 – 100 specimens    xxxx = 100+ specimens

cf = compare    fg = fragment    R = Roman    U/D = un-dated