



**CAM ARC Report Number 932**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
at The Whitehouse, 66 Hay  
Street, Steeple Morden,  
Cambridgeshire**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation**

Helen Stocks

Site Code: STE HAS 06

CHER Event Number: 2472

Date of works: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007

Grid Ref: TL 2871 4293

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**CAM ARC OASIS Report Form**
**OASIS Number: CAMBRIDG1-23692**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>				
Project name	Evaluation at The Whitehouse, 66 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire			
Short description	Two trenches totalling 70m in length which uncovered one undated NE – SW ditch and one undated posthole.			
Project dates	Start	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2007	End	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2007
Previous work	N/A		Future work	
Associated project reference codes	STE HAS 06, ECB 2472			
Type of project	Evaluation			
Site status	Closed			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Derelict Nursing home, Gardens, Unused			
Planned development	The demolition of an existing building and the construction of a new residential development comprising 19 dwellings with attendant access road and services. Western strip of site to be added to gardens of neighbouring properties			
Monument types / period (list all that apply and use <a href="#">thesaurus of monument types</a> )	None			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply and use <a href="#">MDA object thesaurus</a> )	none			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Steeple Morden	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire HER			
Site address (including postcode)	The Whitehouse, 66 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire, SG8 0PE			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	2250 sq.m			
National grid reference	Easting (6 figure)	2871	Northing (6 figure)	4293
Height OD	Max OD	43.28	Min OD	45.48
<b>PROJECT ORIGINATORS</b>				
Organisation	Cambridgeshire County Council, CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	CAPCA			
Project design originator	Aileen Connor			
Director/supervisor	Helen Stocks / Daniel Hounsell			
Project manager	Aileen Connor			
Sponsor or funding body	ARJ Construction Ltd			
<b>ARCHIVES</b>				
	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical				
Paper				
Digital				
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>				
Full title	An Archaeological Evaluation at The Whitehouse, 66 Hay Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire			
Report number	932			
Series title and volume				
Page numbers				
Author(s)	Helen Stocks			
Date	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2007			

## **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation has been undertaken on land adjacent to The Whitehouse, 66 Hay Street, Steeple Morden (TL 2871 4293). One trench 40 metres in length was excavated to the north-west of the proposed development, revealing no archaeological deposits. A further trench 30 metres in length was excavated to the south of the development area which revealed one undated drainage ditch and one undated posthole.

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# Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation	Limit of Excavation
Cut	Deposit - Conjectured
Cut-Conjectured	Natural Features
Deposit Horizon	Sondages/Machine Strip
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	Intrusion/Truncation
Intrusion/Truncation	Illustrated Section  S.14
Top Surface/Top of Natural	Archaeological Deposit
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	Excavated Slot
Cut Number	Modern Deposit
Deposit Number 117	Cut Number
Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45m}{\wedge}$ OD	
Inclusions	

## **1 Introduction**

CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit) has conducted an archaeological evaluation on 0.225ha of land adjacent to The Whitehouse, 66 Hay Street, Steeple Modern, Cambridgeshire (TL 2871 4293).

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/0902/06/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit).

The 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 and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held at CAM ARC offices and will be deposited with the appropriate county store in due course.

## **2 Geology and Topography**

Steeple Morden is located in southwestern Cambridgeshire close to the Hertfordshire border, 8km northwest of Royston. The land is gently rolling terrain cut by small streams flowing into the River Cam or Rhee, the site itself is located within the centre of Steeple Morden village, approximately 400m to the east of the Whitehouse is the Cheney Water which flows north.

The site is at a height of approximately 49m OD and lies on the Lower Beds (known as Chalk Marl) of the Cretaceous Lower Chalk ridge of south Cambridgeshire (British Geological Survey, 1976). The nearest Bench Mark is located on 72 Hay street at a height of 42.61m OD.

## **3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **3.1 Historical background**

The village of Steeple Morden is recorded in the 1066 doomsday survey as having 42 peasants and 12 servi. The population rose until it reached a peak in the early 17th century declining again when in 1660 it was recorded as having approximately 195 adults living within the

village, the population increased again when it reached 1018 adults in 1871. By the early 20th century the population had stabilised and averaged 640.

By the 13th century the village had built up along a north to south axis past the church with the street to the north known as Hay Street. Hay Street comprised of c. 30 houses north of the church and c. 40 houses south of the church. By 1800 Cheyney Street had developed east of the church with up to 10 houses. (Wright 1982).

### **3.2 Archaeological Background**

Archaeological fieldwork in Steeple Morden has so far focused on the village core to the south of the subject site. Investigations at 15-17 Hay Street (Grant and Wilkins 2002; Rudge 2002/2004), and at the primary school (Kenney 2001), have revealed the presence of a large number of features of archaeological interest, including ditches and enclosures of Romano-British date. The work at 15-17 Hay Street (Grant and Wilkins 2002) revealed the presence of archaeological features sealed beneath 0.5-0.6m of topsoil and mature subsoil. These features were dated to the Romano-British period and included ditches and narrow curvilinear features together with pits and postholes indicative of occupation of the site during this period. Further investigations (Rudge 2002/2004) revealed a large ditch dated to the Romano-British period containing significant amounts of pottery. Investigations in the playground of the primary school produced similar evidence for occupation sealed beneath approximately 0.50m of overburden. The features encountered were ditches (one running north-northeast to south-southeast and the other on an east to west alignment) and would appear, at least in one instance, to be continuations of features found at 15 and 17 Hay Street. Investigation at no.1 Cheyney Street revealed the presence of a large undated pond or quarry pit together with a posthole and a late medieval ditch terminus (Fletcher 2004).

## **4 Methodology**

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

The Brief required that 5% of the proposed development area should be sampled.

Two trenches were mechanically excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a tracked JCB-type excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches totalled 70m in length, equivalent to 5% of the proposed development area.



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

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CAM ARC's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

The site conditions during the excavation were fair with some rain and poor light. The land had several trees in the vicinity of the proposed trenching area. None were present in the excavated area itself, though their rooting systems were evident within the topsoil and subsoil.

## **5 Results**

### **5.1 Trench One**

Trench one was excavated to the north-west of the development area on a north to south alignment running roughly parallel with Hay Street (fig. 1). The trench measured 40 metres in length by 1.6m wide. Natural pale grey chalky clay was reached at a depth of 0.4m. No archaeological deposits were visible. Overlying the natural was a 0.15m thick layer of mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil above which was a 0.15m thick layer of mid greyish brown silty clay topsoil with occasional modern brick inclusions. The topsoil and subsoil were heavily disturbed by the presence of tree roots throughout.

A layer (1.7m long, 0.12m thick) of yellow hardcore gravel with occasional modern brick inclusions was located at the northern end of the trench. At the southern end of the trench another layer (1.8m wide, 7.5m long, 0.2m thick) of yellow hardcore was identified. A deposit (1.35m by 1.8m) of modern bricks and concrete cut into the natural was located eleven metres from the northern end of the trench, sealed by the topsoil.

### **5.2 Trench Two**

Trench two (30m long by 1.6m wide) was located on a north-west to south-east alignment to the south of the proposed development area (fig. 1). Natural pale grey chalky clay was reached at a depth of 0.4m. Overlying the natural was a 0.15m thick layer of mid brownish grey silty clay subsoil, above which was a 0.15m thick layer of mid greyish brown silty clay topsoil with occasional modern brick inclusions. The topsoil

and subsoil were heavily disturbed by the presence of tree roots throughout. Two archaeological features were sealed below the subsoil.

Ditch **5** was on a north-east to south-west orientation (fig. 2). It was 0.6m wide, and only 0.05m deep, possibly due to truncation. The ditch had concave sides and a flat base with a wide U shape profile. The fill of the ditch (4) was a mid brownish grey chalky clay containing no finds.

Posthole **7** (fig. 2) was 0.45m long by 0.35m wide and 0.25m deep. It was oval in shape, with near vertical sides and a concave base, giving an overall U shaped profile. The fill of the posthole (6) was a dark greyish brown chalky clay containing no finds.

## **5 Discussion**

The evaluation has provided evidence for very limited archaeological activity of unknown date. The single ditch (**5**) may have functioned as a drain following the natural slope of the land that probably silted up naturally. The single posthole (**7**) implies the presence of a structure, possibly a fence.

The limited number of archaeological features coupled with the lack of dating evidence shows that this site was not a focus for past activity. The Romano-British activity found elsewhere in Steeple Morden does not appear to extend into this site. Although the development area is close to a major medieval street (Hay Street) it is likely that it would have been given over to gardens or agricultural land, activities which leave little trace in the archaeological record.

## **7 Conclusions**

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area. These objectives have been met, showing that there is likely to be only limited archaeological evidence surviving on this site and the potential for dating it is poor.

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank ARJ Construction who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. Thank you to David Holt who provided access and was our liaison between ARJ construction. The project was managed by Aileen Connor. Thank you to Daniel Hounsell who provided assistance and advice during the excavation.

Surveying work was undertaken by Taleyna Fletcher and Alex Howe and thanks to Crane Begg for producing the illustrations.

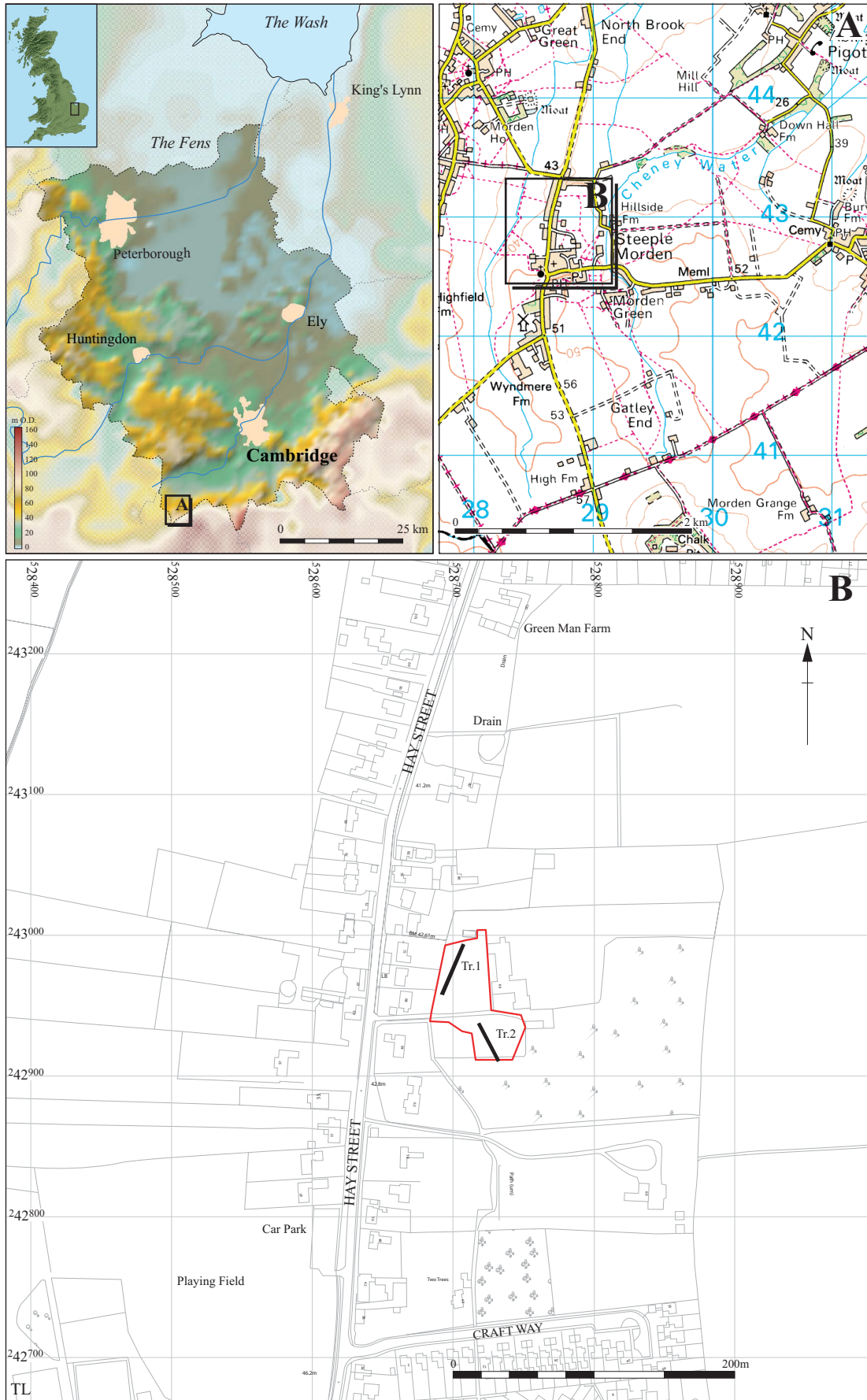
The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, and Andy Thomas visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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**Appendix 1: Context Summary**

Context Number	Type	Description
01	Layer – Topsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Occasional brick inclusions
02	Layer – Subsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay.
03	Layer – Natural	Mid grey chalky clay
04	Fill of <b>5</b>	Mid dark greyish brown chalky clay
05	Cut of Ditch	Linear, concave sides, flat base, wide u shape profile. Orientation NW-SE
06	Fill of <b>7</b>	Dark brownish grey chalky clay
07	Cut of posthole	Oval, near vertical sides, concave base, u shape profile



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Figure 1 Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

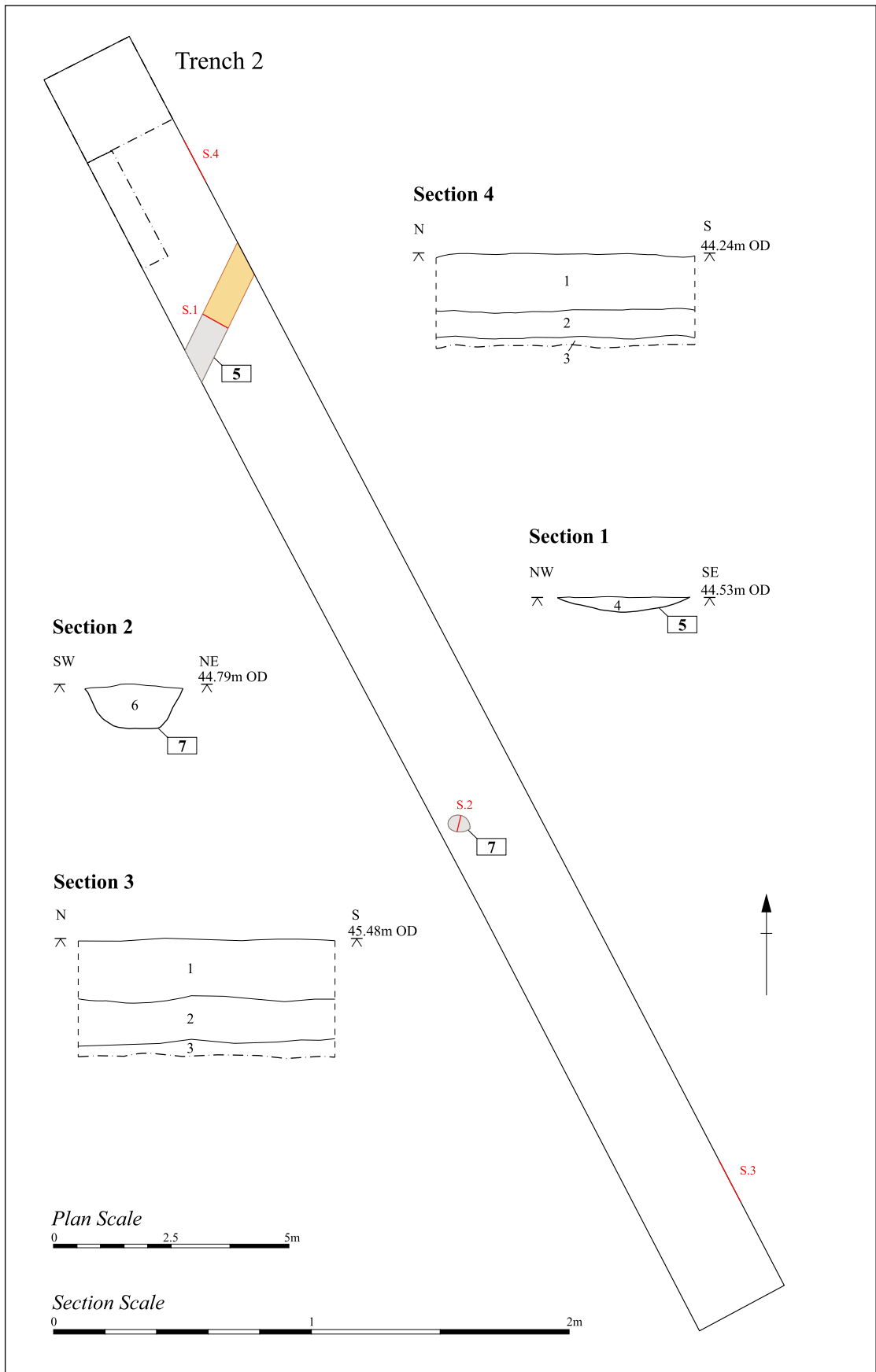
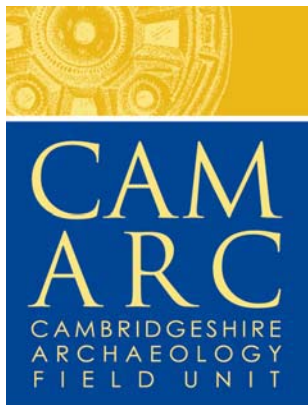


Figure 2: Trench 2, plan and sections



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