cambridgeshire archaeology
archaeological field unit

CAM ARC Report Number 966

Undated Remains to the Rear of 95 Glebe Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

An Evaluation Report

Mo Muldowney

August 2007

Cambridgeshire County Council
Environment & Community Services

Commissioned by Cound Webber Architects

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Undated Remains to the Rear of 95 Glebe Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

An Evaluation Report

Mo Muldowney BA PIFA

Site Code: CAM GLR 07
CHER Event Number: 2660
Date of works: 21st and 22nd August 2007
Grid Ref: TL 6714 6019

Status	Approved		
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CAM ARC OASIS Report Form **OASIS Number:**
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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	An Evaluation to the Rear of 95 Glebe Road, Cambridge			
Short description	This archaeological evaluation uncovered an undated ditch and two tree boles of possible Iron Age date. A second ditch may have pre-dated the Iron Age features, but was again undated. Other features included an undated pit, a possible posthole and beam slot arrangement and a geological/alluvial layer.			
Project dates	Start	21st August 2007	End	22nd August 2007
Previous work	None		Future work	No
Associated project reference codes	CAM GLR 07 ECB 2660			
Type of project	Evaluation			
Site status	None			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Private residential orchard/garden			
Planned development	Residential (urban)			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	Ditches – undated Pit – undated Tree boles – undated Geological deposit - undated			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	None			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Cambridge	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	95 Glebe Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 7TE			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.12 ha			
National grid reference	TL 6714 6019			
Height OD	Min OD	8.38	Max OD	9.58
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Andy Thomas			
Project design originator	James Drummond-Murray/Stephen Macaulay			
Director/supervisor	Mo Muldowney			
Project manager	Stephen Macaulay			
Sponsor or funding body	Cound Webber Architects			
ARCHIVES	**Location and accession number**		**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)**	
Physical	CAM ARC		Pottery, glass, site archive, photographs	
Paper	CAM ARC		Pro- forma sheets, reports, photocopies, maps, HER info	
Digital	CAM ARC		Report, illustrations, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Undated Remains to the Rear of 95 Glebe Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire			
Author(s)	Mo Muldowney			
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Summary

CAM ARC (formerly the Archaeological Field Unit) of Cambridgeshire County Council was commissioned by Cound Webber Architects to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching, on land to the rear of 95 Glebe Road, Cambridge. The work took place on 21st and 22nd August 2007.

The evaluation comprised a single, irregularly shaped trench covering 5% of the 0.12 ha development area. The trench contained ten features, two of which were of non-archaeological origin. The remaining eight features, despite containing no dating evidence, are thought to date to the Iron Age period (and/or earlier) and provide evidence for sparse occupation of the immediate area, already known to contain Iron Age (and Roman) remains.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application 06/1078/FUL), 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 by CAM ARC and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

The development area is situated on relatively flat ground to the south of Cambridge, at the rear of privately owned land and overlies West Melbury marly grey chalk (British Geological Survey 2002). It stands at a height of approximately 9.5m OD and is currently partially an orchard, bounded by mature hedges and trees. The ground itself was covered with long grass, a couple of upstanding tree stumps were also observed. A Summerhouse/Greenhouse was situated in the south-west corner of the development area, but not disturbed by the trench.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies in an area where widespread Iron Age and Roman remains have been discovered. Most notably, an evaluation at 90 Glebe Road, almost directly opposite the site, produced Middle Iron Age pottery from a small number of features including a pit and ditch as well as several undated features (Connor 2000). Extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement are also known in the vicinity of Addenbrookes hospital to the south-west (HER).

To the west of Hills Road, at the Perse School, various interventions over the years revealed the presence of a Roman road (HER 04819 - Walker 1910) and other chance finds of Roman material (HER 04735, 04824) as well as post-medieval activity (HER 11902 – Leith 1996).

A little further north, on the west side of Hills Road, a two phase evaluation at Homerton College produced multi-period remains, including prehistoric, Roman and medieval ditches as well as a Roman enclosure (HER 11958) (Alexander 1997, Webb and Dickens 2006).

A Roman cremation (HER 04820) and undated inhumation (HER 07972) have also been found close to Hills Road.

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 a 5% sample of the development area should be examined and that a total of 40m of trenching should be excavated.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 7.5 ton JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

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.

Only two environmental samples were taken due to a lack of suitable material and because of the poor preservation qualities of the underlying chalk geology.

Over the course of the evaluation, site conditions were reasonable, despite persistent drizzle and occasionally heavy showers. Ground water may have therefore been a little higher than average for the summer and was encountered at a depth of approximately 2.5m below the ground surface (in the machine excavated sondage) and at approximately 2m in the hand-excavated features. Machine excavation of the trenches was hampered only slightly by the presence of mature fruit trees. The main north-west to south-east part of the trench was shortened at the south-east to ensure a safe distance was maintained from the hedge boundary. The metres lost were regained by putting a short, approximately north to south aligned extension on to the north-east side of the main trench (Fig. 2).

5 Results

The results of the evaluation are presented below in chronological order and include a description of the natural geology and soils.

Table 1 shows the variation in trench depth with corresponding Ordnance Datum heights, including the OD height at the base of the sondage.

Level Location	Depth (m)	Height (m OD)
South-east end of trench, top	0.47	9.49
South-east end of trench, base		9.02
South end of trench, top	0.33	9.58
South end of trench, base		9.25
North-west end of trench, top	0.47	9.70
North-west end of trench, base		9.23
North-east end of trench, top	0.63	9.42
North-east end of trench, base		8.79
Base of sondage (north-east)	-	8.38

Table 1: Trench depths with corresponding Ordnance Datum heights

A total of nine features were identified plus a deposit of probable geological origin (Fig. 3). Individual fill descriptions are included below (Appendix 1) unless of particular interest.

5.1 Geological Deposits

The natural drift stratum (33) comprised clay rich chalk and varied in colour from pale yellowish white to pale greyish white with occasional flint nodules. It was overlain by geological layer 22 and truncated by all other features. The upper surface of 33 was encountered at approximately 9.20m OD and was more than 0.12m thick.

Geological layer 22 (Fig. 4, s.3) was thick pale brownish grey silty clay and identified towards the east end of the trench (Fig. 3). It appeared to have a sinuous or meandering edge with oblique sides. No finds were recovered, although a fragment of animal bone was observed (and crushed) during cleaning. A machine sondage was excavated through this layer in the north-east corner of the trench to establish it thickness (0.32m).

The mid brown silty clay subsoil (2) (Fig. 4, s.1 and s.3) overlay all features (except pit **14**, see below) and was between 0.25m and 0.4m thick. Unusually for a subsoil deposit, very few inclusions were observed and no finds were recovered.

The final deposit in this sequence was the topsoil (1) (Fig. 4, s.1 and s.3), dark brown silty clay, with occasional flint gravels. It varied in thickness from 0.22m to 0.35m. Like the subsoil, the topsoil contained very few inclusions and only three artefacts were recovered, comprising two sherds of earthenware pot and a fragment of brown glass (Appendix 2).

5.2 Possible Early Prehistoric Features

Ditch **20** (Fig. 4, s. 4) truncated the west edge of layer 22 and was aligned north-east to south-west (Fig. 3). It was approximately 3.7m wide by 0.32m deep, with a steep-sided, flat-based profile and contained three fills (23 – 25). Small round depressions (less than 0.3m in diameter) were observed in the base of the ditch, which are reminiscent of water-eroded potholes; if this is the case, it is possible that the ditch may have been a conduit or channel. An environmental sample was taken (sample 2) to establish the presence (or otherwise) of any plant remains. No finds were recovered, but given the pale, leached colour of the fills, it is possible that the ditch was prehistoric in origin.

Pit **8** (Fig. 4, s.2) lay at the extreme north-west end of the trench and was an irregular sub-oval shape in plan (Fig. 3). It was at least 0.86m long by 0.4m wide and 0.18m deep. It had a slightly uneven, but flat base and a wide, U-shape profile. One fill (9) was observed. No finds were recovered.

Posthole **21** was situated on the west edge of ditch **20** (Fig. 3) and was sub-rounded in plan, with a shallow, concave profile. It was 0.32m in diameter by 0.08m deep and contained a single fill (26). No finds were recovered.

5.3 Possible Iron Age Features

Ditch **3** (Fig. 4, s. 1) was located in the westernmost section of the trench (Fig. 3) and aligned approximately east to west. It was 1.6m wide by 0.4m deep and had an uneven profile (which varied along its excavated length). Four fills were identified (4 – 7), which varied from pale grey to very dark grey in colour from which no finds were recovered. A sample (1) was taken from fill 6 because of its very dark colour and potential high humic content. No finds were recovered.

Posthole **18** lay 6.5m from the south-east end of the trench (Fig. 3). It was circular in plan and 0.3m in diameter by 0.07m deep. One very dark grey fill (19) was observed, from which no finds were recovered. The posthole appeared to overlie a potential beam slot (**32**), a roughly rectangular feature (distorted due to a machine created slope in the ground) measuring *c.* 1m long by 0.3m wide. It was not excavated, but observed to have been at least 0.07m deep with one fill (31), dark orange to grey silty clay. Due to the inclement weather conditions at the time of recording, the function of this feature remains uncertain.

The final features of possible Iron Age date comprise two tree boles (**10** and **27**), which lay 15m apart (Fig. 3) on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment. Tree bole **10** was located 4.5m from the north-west end of the trench and **27** was 5m from the south-east end.

They were between 1.3m and 1.96m long and at least 0.8m wide by no more than 0.45m deep and each contained three fills. These formed a similar sequence to that within ditch **3** and were therefore likely to be contemporary. Again, no finds were recovered.

5.4 Modern Feature

A single modern intrusion (pit **14**) was identified 10m from the south-east end of the trench (Fig. 3). It truncated the subsoil deposit (2) and was 1.1m wide by 0.4m deep with an asymmetrical, u-shape profile. Three fills (15 – 17) were identified, as was a distinct thin (0.01m) lens of coal (between primary fill 15 and mid fill 16). No additional dating evidence was recovered.

6 Discussion

This evaluation has identified eight archaeological features, one modern pit and a large, irregular deposit of probable geological origin.

The archaeological features appear to be of broadly prehistoric date, despite an almost complete lack of dateable material. The earliest feature was probably ditch **20**, which had very pale (leached) fills, characteristic of prehistoric features. Pit **8** maybe of similar date, for the same reasons.

Although again undated, ditch **3** was probably Iron Age in date due to its irregular shape and asymmetrical profile and due to its proximity (less than 200m) to the middle Iron Age remains at 90 Glebe Road, to the south (Connor 2006). Tree boles **10** and **27** are likely to be contemporary with the ditch, as they had very similar fill sequences. The presence of these trees suggests that the ditch was a boundary and were themselves markers on that boundary.

Postholes **21** and **18** and possible beam slot **32** constitute evidence for at least one structure in this area, but its date is unknown because of a lack of dating evidence and no stratification.

It is not known when the geological layer (22) was deposited, but it probably occurred as a result of fluvial action, such as during a flood or as a result of erosion. The remaining deposit is that which settled in naturally formed depressions or hollows.

A series of plough scars running in an approximately north to south direction was seen across the trench and demonstrates that some agricultural activity took place in this area. It can de dated to no later than the early 20th century, when this south area of Cambridge was beginning to be developed. Further to this, is the almost complete absence of artefacts within the subsoil and, more specifically, the

topsoil. The only recovered fragments comprised modern terracotta plant pots and brown bottle glass, which could have been deposited as recently as last week. This striking lack of material, strongly suggests that little or no activity took place in this area from as early as the Iron Age to the early 20th century, when 95 Glebe Road was constructed.

7 Conclusions

A relatively large number of features and/or deposits were encountered during this evaluation, which is perhaps unsurprising given the potential for archaeological remains (see section 3). Although undated, the features were located within an area of known prehistoric, in particular, Iron Age remains, such as at 90 Glebe Road (Connor 2000) and the Iron Age site at New Addenbrooke, Long Road (Cra'ster 1969) and are as such likely to be of similar date.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Cound Webber Architects who commissioned the work and Mrs Cook, the landowner, who funded the archaeological, kindly provided refreshments and the use of her facilities. Additional thanks go to Louise Bush for last-minute survey, Lucy Offord for excavation assistance and to Séverine Bézie for producing the illustrations.

The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay.

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

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Cut	Category	Type	Fine component	Coarse component
1		layer	topsoil	silty clay	5% flint, gravel-sized
2		layer	sub soil	silty clay	
3	3	cut	ditch		
4	3	fill	ditch	chalky clay	
5	3	fill	ditch	silty/chalky clay	
6	3	fill	ditch	silty clay	
7	3	fill	ditch	silty clay	
8	8	cut	pit		
9	8	fill	pit	silty clay	rare chalk, rounded and frequent; rare, small roots
10		cut	tree bole		
11	10	fill	tree bole	chalky clay	Frequent snail shell, variable and common, very small chalk flecks, rounded; rare root presence
12	10	fill	tree bole	silty clay	Frequent snail shell, variable and common, very small chalk flecks, rounded; rare root presence
13	10	fill	tree bole	silty clay	Frequent snail shell, variable and common, very small chalk flecks, rounded; rare root presence
14	14	cut	pit		
15	14	cut	pit	silty clay	charcoal flecks, rare
16	14	fill	pit	silty clay	rare charcoal/coal an clay patches, very rare flint
17	14	fill	pit	silty clay	rare coal, rare tiny flint fragments
18	18	cut	post hole		
19	18	fill	post hole	silty clay	
20	20	cut	ditch		
21	21	cut	post hole		
22		fill	geological or alluvial deposit	clay	Very small chalk and flint, some animal bone (crushed by spade)
23	20	fill	ditch	silty clay	Frequent small smail shells, frequent rounded flint
24	20	fill	ditch	silty clay	
25	20	fill	ditch	clayey chalk	
26	21	fill	post hole	silty clay	
27	27	cut	tree bole		
28	27	fill	tree bole	silty clay	patches of yellow clay
29	27	fill	tree bole	silty clay	
30	27	fill	tree bole	silty clay	patches of yellow clay
31	32	fill	beamslot	silty clay	
32	32	cut	beamslot		
33		layer	natural	clay chalk	flint nodules, occasional medium, sub-rounded

Appendix 2: Environmental Remains

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and methods

Two bulk samples were taken from undated ditch fills, contexts 6 and 23, within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Ten litres of each sample was processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification.

2 Results

The samples were devoid of any charred plant remains. Four twigs preserved by waterlogging were recovered from sample 1, context 6. Small snail shells were abundant in both samples.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

These samples do not aid interpretation or dating of the features and no further work is required.

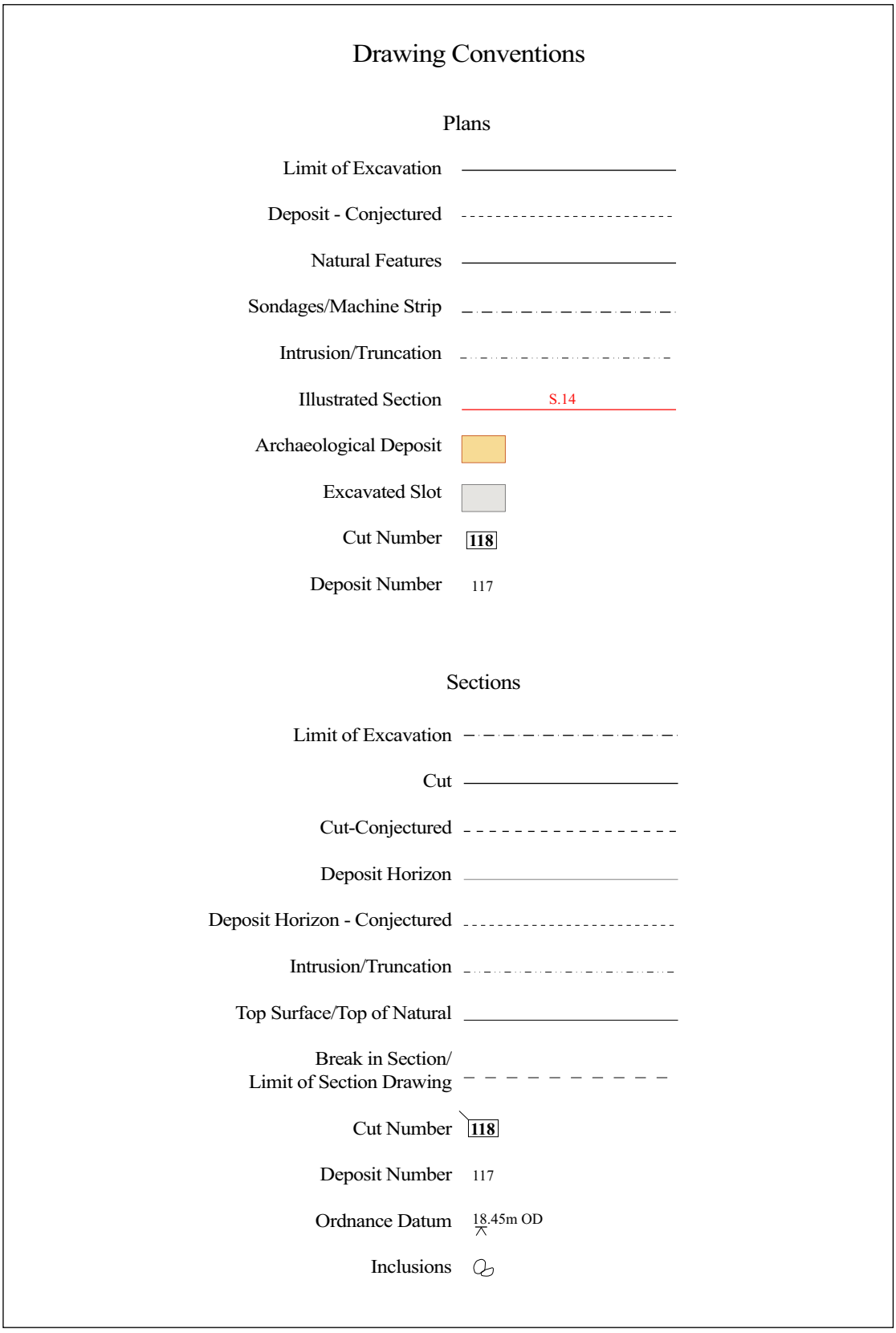


Figure 1: Convention keys

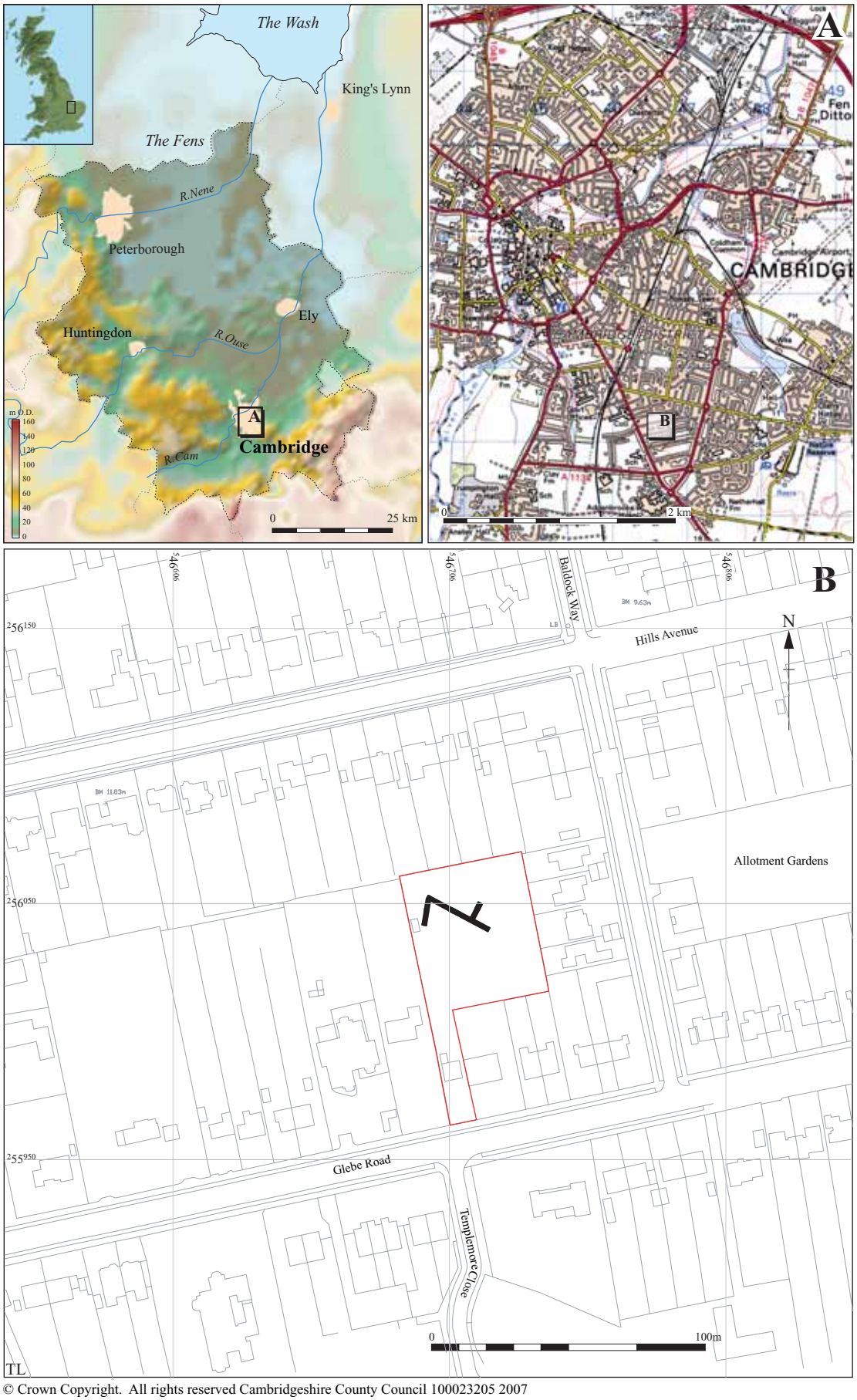


Figure 2: Location of trench with the development area outlined (red)

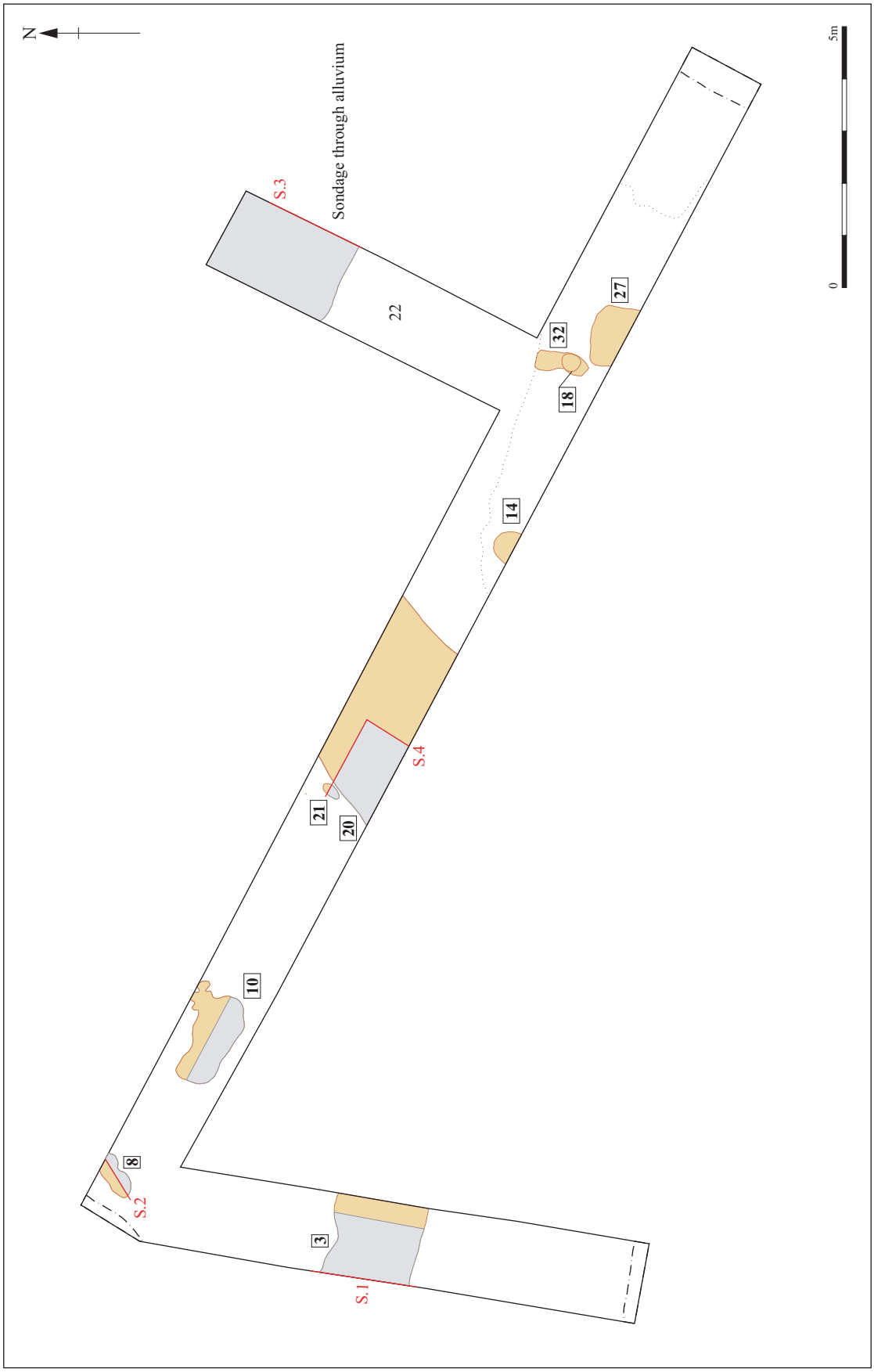


Figure 3: Plan of evaluation trench showing archaeological features

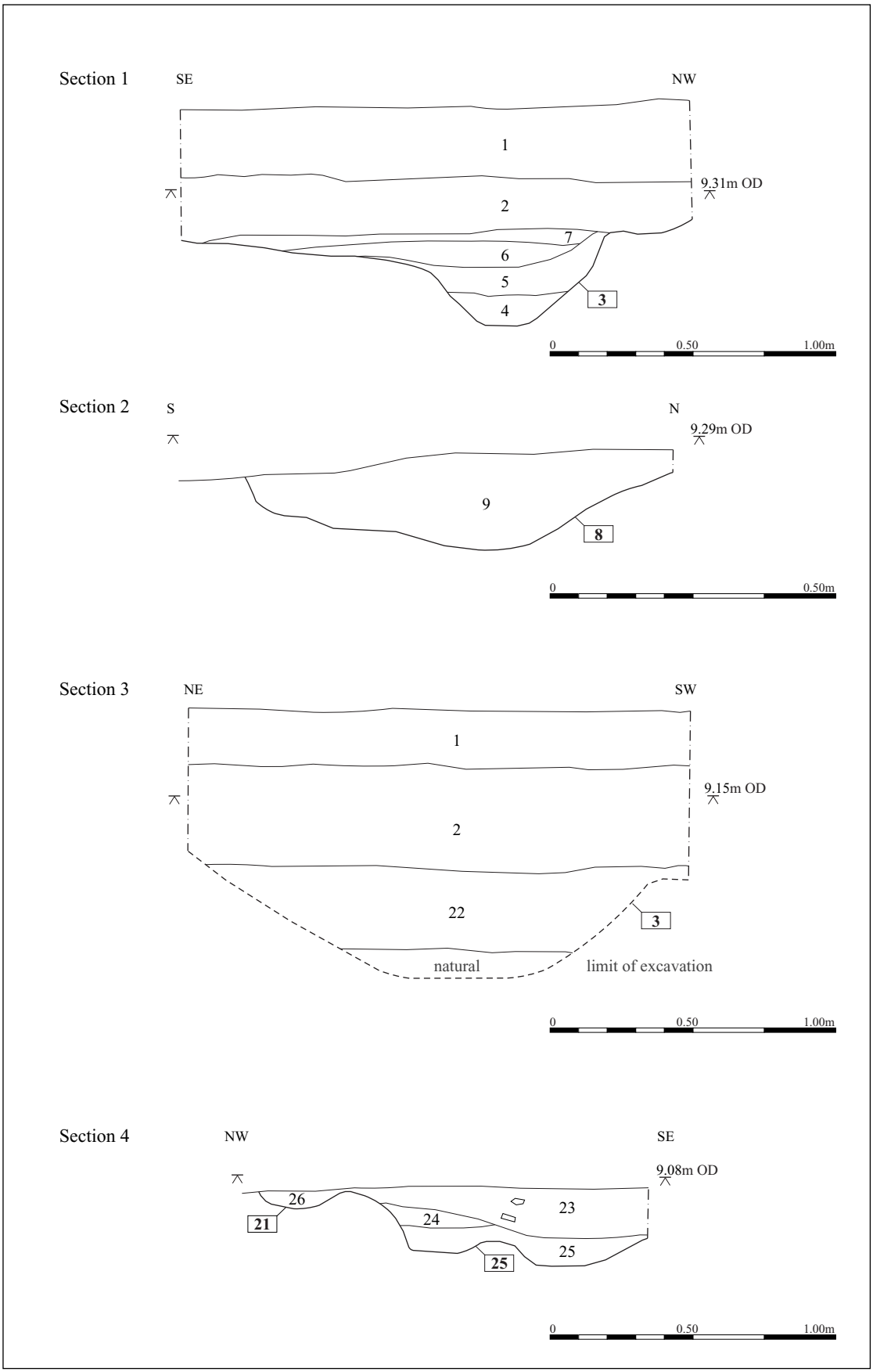
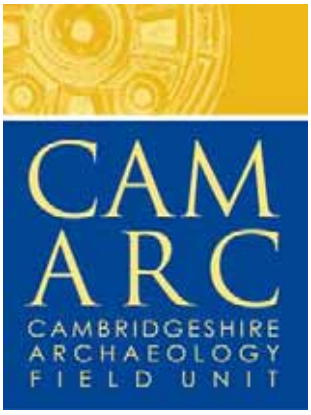


Figure 4: Sections 1-4



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