



CAM ARC Report Number 995

Primrose Lane Hospital, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire:

An Archaeological Evaluation

Thomas Lyons

January 2008

CAM ARC Report Number 995

**Primrose Lane Hospital,
Huntingdon, Cambridge:**

An Archaeological Evaluation

Thomas Lyons BA

With Contributions by Carole Fletcher BA AIFA

Site Code: HUN PLH 06

CHER Event Number: ECB 2336

Date of works: December 2007

Grid Ref: TL 2430 7207

Status	Approved		
Author	Thomas Lyons		
Checked By	James Drummond-Murray		
Authorised By	James Drummond-Murray		

Editor: James Drummond-Murray BA PG (Dip)
MIFA

Illustrator: Gillian Greer BSC (Hons) MAAIS

CAM ARC OASIS Report Form

OASIS Number: cambridg1_35764

PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Primrose Lane Hospital, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation			
Short description	50m of evaluation trenches in the car park and grounds of disused NHS buildings.			
Project dates	Start	11/12/2007	End	13/12/07
Previous work	None		Future work	unkown
Associated project reference codes	HUN PLH 06 ECB 2336			
Type of project	Evaluation			
Site status	None			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Disused Hospital			
Planned development	Housing			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)				
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)				
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Huntingdon	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Huntingdon Health Authority, Primrose Lane, Huntingdon. PE29 1WG			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.43ha			
National grid reference	TL 2430 7207			
Height OD	Min OD	11.3m	Max OD	13m
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Andy Thomas			
Project design originator	James Drummond-Murray			
Director/supervisor	Thomas Lyons			
Project manager	James Drummond-Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Januarys			
ARCHIVES				
	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical	Cambs. County Store		Pottery, animal bone	
Paper	Cambs. County Store		Plans and sections	
Digital	CAM ARC		Digital photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Primrose Lane Hospital, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation			
Author(s)	Thomas Lyons			
Report number	995			
Series title and volume				
Page numbers	11			
Date	January 2008			

Summary

Between the 11th and the 13th of December 2007 CAM ARC carried out an archaeological evaluation at the hospital site, Primrose Lane, Huntingdon. Approximately 50m of trenches were opened between the existing buildings and in areas without buried services. Some small archaeological features were encountered in Trench 4 containing small, abraded Medieval pottery. Otherwise the evaluation revealed no evidence for archaeology. Prior to the building of the hospital the sloping land had been levelled; trench sections showed truncation and scarping on the west side of the site and several layers of made ground on the east side.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Geology and Topography	1
3	Archaeological and Historical Background	1
4	Methodology	3
5	Results	4
6	Discussion	5
7	Conclusions	6
	Acknowledgements	7
	Bibliography	7
	List of Figures	
	Figure 1: Location Plan	10
	Figure 2: Trench Plans	11
	Figure 3: Section Drawings	12
	List of Appendices	
	Appendix 1: Post Roman Pottery, By Carole Fletcher	8

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, 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 site overlies 1st terrace river gravels (British Geological Survey 1993).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies just to the north-east of the historic core of Huntingdon, but is likely to lie in the precinct of St Mary's Priory (HER 02648), which is thought to lie under the cemetery adjacent to the site. The main focus of the evaluation is likely to be establishing whether any remains associated with the Priory survive on site.

The corner of the St. Mary's Priory Precinct is thought to be to the south-west at the current junction with Ambury Road and Brookside (town centre ring road). Recent excavations carried out by CAM ARC have revealed possible evidence for the Priory Precinct boundary and conceivably some associated buildings within (Gilmour, forthcoming).

There is a Scheduled Ancient monument within the search area of the site, a Civil War battery (SM 27166 – HER 02547) at Claytons Way to the north-east but this will be unaffected by the redevelopment.

Palaeolithic and Neolithic flint implements (01690 & 01912) have been found to the south of the site, within the historic core.

A Roman coin was found to the east of the site, close to the river (02696) and Roman pottery and tile (02625, 02733 & 00869) has come from sites south of Nursery Road and within the historic core. Saxon pottery and pits have also been found (02606 & 13020).

Extensive Saxon and medieval remains have been found, particularly from the large number of evaluations and excavations (summarised below) within the limits of the medieval settlement.

The Motte and Bailey castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM24417) and lies just over 1km to the south of the site, with a medieval cemetery (13021) just to the northeast of the castle on Orchard Lane.

A medieval moated site (01055) is located on Riverside Road, though no traces of the moat remain.

An evaluation at St Clements Passage revealed medieval quarry and rubbish pits (CB14595, Roberts 1999).

More pits, ditches and other features were revealed on St Germain Street along with possible Saxon evidence (CB15040, RPS 1999).

Industrial activity came from 112 High Street as well as an intense phase of pitting with phases dating from the late Saxon to 14th century (CB15332/3/4, Richmond 1996).

A medieval/post-medieval tanning pit was recorded at Chequers Court (CB15649, Gdaniec 2003).

Medieval buildings forming part of the suburban settlement were uncovered on the north side of Brookside, to the west of the site, indicating that the medieval settlement may extend north of Nursery road, though this may form the southern limit of the Priory precinct (CB15658, Cooper & Spoerry 1998).

An evaluation on Hartford Road revealed evidence for 11-13th century occupation followed by later medieval agriculture (CB15695, Wills 2003). Another evaluation on the same street uncovered structural and other evidence (CB11908, Connor 1996).

A multi-period site on land to the rear of Princes Street uncovered evidence from the Roman to post-medieval periods (CB16324, Clarke 2004).

The excavation of an underground car park at Marshalls Garage showed occupation from Saxon to post-medieval times (11907, Welsh 1994).

The evaluation at the Former Model Laundry (to the south of the site near the river) had a small assemblage of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, Roman and Saxon water management, followed by domestic medieval activity (CB17084, Clarke 2005).

Anti-tank defences (CB15227) lie at the foot of Primrose Lane c 200m to the south-east of the site.

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.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a rubber tracked 7.5 tonne excavator using a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket.

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.

Five trenches were opened totalling approximately 50m and were located using GPS. The existing buildings on site and the service plan provided meant that the areas suitable for trenching were very small. Because of this the coverage of the evaluation across the site was much reduced.

A CAT scanner was used prior to the excavation of all trenches to check for buried services.

No environmental samples were taken.

5 Results

The trenches were machined to a depth of between 1.55m and 1m. Where topsoil was present it was no more than 0.2m deep. Trenches 4 and 5 were cut through tarmac and paving slabs, respectively.

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was machined to a depth of 1.55m, and was approximately 2m by 2m. It was located in the south-east corner of the development area. At the base of the trench was a very compact sandy silt which is presumed to be a deposit of made ground (context 7, section 1). A 0.5m deep sondage was excavated through this which reached a sandy gravel deposit (8, section 1). This was almost certainly natural geology, or if not then close to it. Above 007 were several layers of make-up material. No archaeology was encountered. The depth of the trench and the relatively small size of the machine made further excavation difficult.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was machined to a depth of 1.2m and was 9.5m long. It was located at the south end of the development area. At the base of the trench was deposit 8. No archaeology was encountered. At the east end of the trench natural clay was found 0.05m beneath the base. The remainder of the trench section was a series of make up deposits. Deposit 10 was a dark brown silty clay with small inclusions of coal and brick. Near the centre of the trench and visible in the north facing section was feature **012**. This was filled with loose bricks and rubble. It was cut from high up the section and very modern.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was machined to a variable depth but was 1m at its deepest. It was 10.5m long and was located at the south end of the development area. Along the length of the trench concrete was present across parts of the base, which also continued beneath the north facing baulk. At the west end it was only 0.2m beneath the ground. This prevented further excavation as the machine was unable to remove it. Above the concrete and beneath the modern subsoil were three layers (0.6m) of made ground.

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.84m and was located on the west side of the development area beneath tarmac. It was T-shaped and 25m in total length. Natural geology was reached at the base of the trench and was a mixed clay gravel. Significant truncation occurred in this part of the development area with up to 0.6m of made ground disturbing the original soil sequence. Contexts

35 and 23 were make up layers which truncated the original subsoil, 36 (section 6).

Three archaeological features were identified as well as four natural features. Feature **33**, a probable ditch, was 1m long, 0.6m wide and 0.35m deep. Feature **31** was 1m wide and 0.1m deep. Its edges were diffuse and it contained animal bone and two small and abraded sherds of 11th or 12th Century pottery. Feature **29** was 0.75m wide and 0.06m deep. Its edges were diffuse and it contained two small and abraded sherds of 11th or 12th Century pottery. The fill of these features was a homogenous mid-dark brown silty clay with few gravel inclusions.

The western end of the east-west aligned part of Trench 4 contained four natural features within slightly disturbed and less clean natural. These were shallow, irregular and filled with redeposited natural gravely clay (34). The deepest feature was 0.15m deep. Along the north-south part of Trench 4 was a cut for a modern drainpipe. This was revealed 0.35m beneath the machined level.

5.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was machined to a depth of 1.1m and was located in the north-east corner of the development area beneath paving slabs. It was approximately 2m x 2m. Natural geology was reached at the base of the trench and was a brown clay. The soil sequence was intact with a subsoil and topsoil visible in section (section 9) above the natural. Above topsoil 26 was 0.4m of made ground (25). This consisted of pale broken rubble and sand on to which paving slabs had been laid.

6 Discussion

Trenches 1 and 2 and revealed evidence for a raised ground level. Original soil sequences had not survived and several layers of redeposited made ground were present. This was apparent as the allotments to the east were noticeably lower in height. Trench 3 consisted of several layers of made ground above large amounts of concrete; it is likely that any archaeological deposits would have been removed or damaged by any such truncation. Trench 4 showed evidence for the west side of the site having been scarped in order to level the site as a whole. Beneath the tarmac there was up to 0.5m of modern rubble and make up material (sections 6 & 7). Trench 5 was the only trench which had an intact soil sequence (section 9); modern make up and paving slabs had been laid directly on to topsoil.

All pottery from the site came from Trench 4 where five sherds were recovered. These were all small sherds and probably represent a scattered and abraded domestic assemblage which was damaged by

ploughing or other post-depositional activity. Two sherds were Early Medieval Micaceous Sandy ware, two were Huntingdonshire Early Medieval type ware and the fifth was St. Neots ware. These ceramic types date from the 11th and 12th Centuries. Further and more accurate analysis was prevented by the small sizes of the sherds and the absence of any diagnostic rims or bases.

7 Conclusions

This evaluation found no archaeological evidence relating to St Mary's Priory, thought to be immediately to the northwest. Some archaeological features were revealed in Trench 4 but they were insubstantial and not conclusively dated. Levels of preservation were good with only Trench 3 at the south end of the site showing evidence for large scale truncation. The southernmost of the three existing buildings on site is 20th Century; the foundations for which are likely to truncate deeper than those of the two Victorian buildings in the northern part of the development area.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Januarys who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray. Carole Fletcher wrote the report on the pottery assemblage and Paul Spoerry provided useful information on St. Mary's Priory. Tom Eley assisted with the fieldwork.

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

Bibliography

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------|---|
| Clarke, R. | 2004 | Bronze Age, Roman, Late Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval Remains in Huntingdon Town Centre, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. CCC Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 724 |
| Clarke, R. | 2005 | A Multi Period Site at the Former Huntingdon Model Laundry, Ouse Walk, Huntingdon. CCC Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 828 |
| Connor, A. | 1996 | Early Medieval Structural Remains at 12 Hartford Road, Huntingdon: An Archaeological Evaluation. CCC Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 122 |
| Cooper, S. & Spoerry, P. | 1998 | Roman and Medieval Deposits at The Views, Huntingdon. CCC Archaeological Field Unit Report No.A134 |
| Gdaniec, K. | 2003 | Recording at 4 Chequers Court, Huntingdon. Unpublished Report. |
| Richmond, A. | 1996 | Assessment Report on Archaeological Work at 112 High Street, Huntingdon. Tempus Reparatum Unpublished Report |
| Roberts, J. | 1999 | Medieval Quarrying and Post-medieval Rubbish at St Clements Passage, Huntingdon. CCC Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 162 |

Appendix 1: Post Roman Pottery

by Carole Fletcher BA AIFA

The excavation at Primrose Lane, Huntingdon produced a small pottery assemblage of 6 sherds, weighing 23 grams from 3 contexts.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the following text are:

Early Med Essex Micaceous Sandy ware	EMEMS
Huntingdonshire Early medieval type ware	HUNEMW
St Neots ware	NEOT

The small number of sherds present, detailed below, date to the 11th-12th century and represent the scattered abraded remains from a domestic assemblage that has been subject to ploughing or other post depositional disturbance. The fabrics present are commonly found in Huntingdon assemblages of this date.

Context	No. Sherds	Weight (kg)	Fabric	Context Date
28	2	0.014	EMEMS	11th-Mid 12th century
32	1	0.005	NEOT	11th-Mid 12th century
	1	0.002	HUNEMW	
34	1	0.002	HUNEMW	11th-12th century

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Illustrated Section	S.14
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	118

Sections

Limit of Excavation	
Cut	
Cut-Conjectured	
Deposit Horizon	
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Top Surface/Top of Natural	
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	
Cut Number	118
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^
Inclusions	

Convention key



© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 2007

Figure 1 Location of trenches 1-5 with the development area outlined (red)

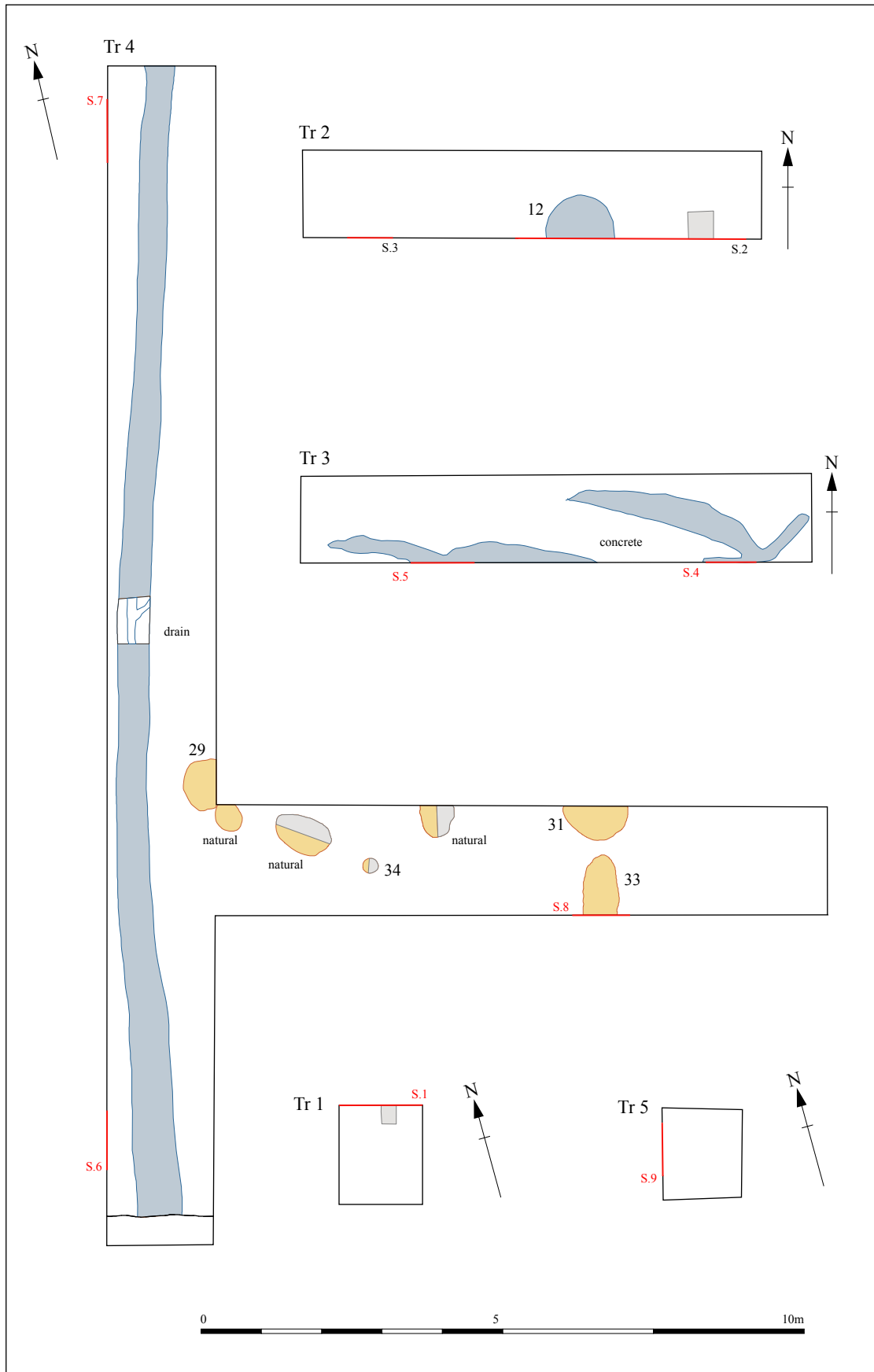


Figure 2: Trench Plans

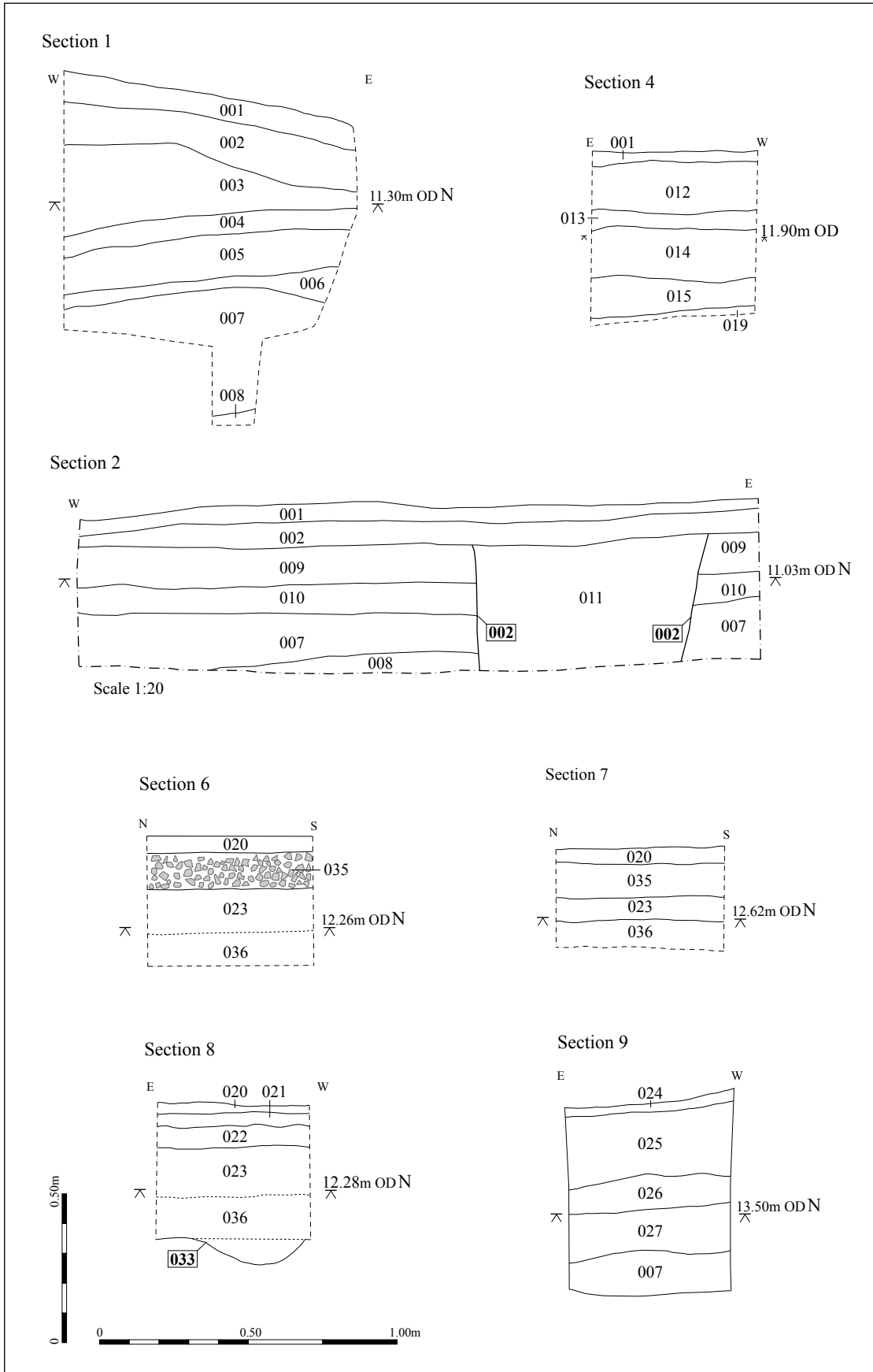


Figure 3: Section Drawings



CAM ARC,
Cambridgeshire County Council,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridgeshire,
CB3 8SQ

General Enquiries: 01954-204191
Fax: 01954-273376

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology>