cambridgeshire archaeology
archaeological field unit

CAM ARC Report Number 1023

Medieval and Roman remains at the old Parish Hall, High Street, Soham, Cambs

Archaeological Evaluation

Chris Thatcher BA

January 2009

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Site Code: SOH PIG 08
CHER Event Number: ECB 2898
Date of works: 9th – 14th April 2008
Grid Ref: TL 5942 7316

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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Land at The Old Parish Hall, High Street, Soham, Cambs			
Short description	An Archaeological Evaluation was conducted at the old Parish Hall, High Street, Soham (TL 5942 7316) during April 2008, prior to the redevelopment of the site for residential accommodation. A total of four trenches were excavated, which revealed two areas of preservation on the site. The first lay to the northeast of the development area, in the northern part of Trench 1, where evidence for Roman pitting was recorded. The second lay towards the southwest of the development area, within Trench 3, where Medieval settlement features, including a boundary ditch, several pits and a metalled surface were recorded. Cartographic evidence suggests that there was a building present on the site in 1656 and this, in conjunction with the archaeological features recorded in Trench 3, implies that the Hall overlies the site of a building and its associated yards and boundaries. A large portion of the area encompassed by Trenches 1 and 2 was revealed to have been severely truncated by Post-Medieval quarrying, probably for clunch, and as a result no earlier remains are thought to have survived within the eastern part of the site. However, it is expected that further archaeological remains will be preserved beneath the footprint of the existing parish hall as the quarry pitting evident to the east did not extend into this area and the base of the concrete slab upon which the hall was constructed, lay above the level of the archaeological remains.			
Project dates	Start	09-04-08	End	14-04-08
Previous work	None		Future work	yes
Associated project reference codes	SOH PIG 08 ECB 2898			
Type of project	Evaluation			
Site status	none			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Public building			
Planned development	Residential			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	Quarry pits, ditches, pits			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	Medieval Pottery, CBM, Tile Roman pottery Animal Bone			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Soham	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	High Street, Soham, CB7 5HE			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	0.2 ha			
National grid reference	TL 5942 7316			
Height OD	Min OD	7.61	Max OD	8.18
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Kasia Gdaniec			
Project design originator	James Drummond Murray			
Director/supervisor	Chris Thatcher			
Project manager	James Drummond Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Amber Homes			
ARCHIVES	**Location and accession number**		**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)**	
Physical	CAM ARC		Pottery, animal bone, tile, brick	
Paper	CAM ARC		Site records, written and drawn, evaluation report	
Digital	CAM ARC		Digital photos, report, illustrations, database	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Medieval and Roman remains at the old Parish Hall, High Street, Soham, Cambs			
Author(s)	Chris Thatcher			
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Summary

An Archaeological Evaluation was conducted at the old Parish Hall, High Street, Soham (TL 5942 7316) by CAM ARC between 9th and 14th April 2008, on behalf of Amber Homes, prior to the redevelopment of the site for residential accommodation.

The development comprised a 0.2ha parcel of land and CAM ARC was commissioned to mechanically excavate 5 trenches (total area 65m). In the event it proved impossible to excavate the fifth trench, sited as it was within the building, as a result of a concrete foundation slab, which it was deemed unsafe to break at this stage.

The remaining four trenches were excavated and revealed two areas of preservation on the site. The first lay to the northeast of the development area, in the northern part of Trench 1, where evidence for Roman pitting was recorded.

The second lay towards the southwest of the development area, within Trench 3, where Medieval settlement features were recorded. These included a boundary ditch, aligned perpendicular to the High Street, and several pits and a metalled surface lying within what appeared to be the plot defined by this boundary. Cartographic evidence suggests that there was a building present on the site in 1656 and this, in conjunction with the archaeological features recorded in Trench 3, implies that the Hall overlies the site of a building and its associated yards and boundaries.

A large portion of the area encompassed by Trenches 1 and 2 was revealed to have been severely truncated by Post-Medieval quarrying, probably for clunch, and as a result no earlier remains are thought to have survived within the eastern part of the site. However, it is expected that further archaeological remains will be preserved beneath the footprint of the existing parish hall as the quarry pitting evident to the east did not extend into this area and the base of the concrete slab upon which the hall was constructed, lay above the level of the archaeological remains.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec 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 Lower Chalk (British Geological Survey 1981) at between 8.18m OD and 7.61m OD, well above the medieval fen edge. The development area is situated in the centre of the village, opposite St. Andrew's Church and close to the junction of White Hart Lane and the High Street. The ground slopes gently away to the east, with a drop of approximately 0.5m recorded, this is not necessarily a reflection of the natural topography and may be the result of landscaping during the construction of the Parish Hall.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

A number of prehistoric finds have been made in Soham, these include prehistoric features uncovered during work at St Andrews House (ECB15776 – Atkins 2004) and unlocated Neolithic finds (HER 07087) and unlocated Mesolithic axes (HER07098).

Further prehistoric and Roman features were discovered at Ten Bells Lane (Atkins 2004) and Fordham Road (Murray and Hounsell 2001).

Whilst evidence spanning the Prehistoric to Roman period is recorded throughout Soham, the development area had the greatest potential for revealing Saxon and Medieval remains, situated as it was, close to the core of the settlement, whose origins lie in the Early Saxon period. According to Reaney, the place name is derived from the Old English *Soegan Hamm* or 'swampy' settlement or enclosure (Reaney 1943). Further, 12th century, documentary sources refer to the foundation in the 7th century AD of a monastery by St Felix, first bishop of the East

Angles, who was buried in Soham. The monastery was destroyed during the Danish invasions of East Anglia (late 9th century) along with many other religious foundations in the area, never to be re-established (Salzman 1948). This monastery was reputed to be on or close to the development site.

Furthermore numerous human remains have been found in the vicinity, from three cemetery sites in particular. Burials were discovered in the church graveyard (TL 5998 7239) where grave goods and stray finds included brooches, several beads and spearheads (Fox 1923). At 9 WhiteHart Lane, skeletons and residual Roman pottery were observed (HER 06971), whilst at 11 White Hart Lane, Saxon remains were observed (ECB1905 – Robinson 1995). A number of burials were also recovered in the Victorian period and are recorded on the 1886 OS map. It is thought the monastery cemetery lies in this area. Further to the south, at the Soham/Fordham Waterworks, lay another cemetery where excavations conducted in the 1930s (Lethbridge 1933) located some 23 furnished inhumations (and 2 cremations assigned to the 6th-7th century.

The manor of Soham was given to Ely Abbey shortly after the re-foundation of the latter in the 10th century (Conybeare 1887). The exact location of the monastery is unknown, although it is possible that the Parish church of St Andrew's (late 12th century) was founded on the site of its Saxon predecessor. The sub-circular pattern of roads around the centre of the village may suggest a religious precinct (Oosthuizen 2000).

Evidence for occupation during the Saxo-Norman period has emerged through recent excavations. At Nos. 9-13 Pratt Street an archaeological evaluation revealed shallow gullies, a posthole and a large pit containing 11th or 12th century Thetford Ware (Hatton and Last 1994). Evaluation trenches at the rear of No. 38 Station Road produced evidence of ditches dating from the 10th to 12th centuries (Heawood 1997). An evaluation conducted at Soham County Infant's School revealed several ditches containing 10th to 13th century assemblages, predominantly St Neots and Thetford type ware (Bray 1991).

The remains from the Infant's School (and from High Street/Clay Street) represent a major phase of development and prosperity that is attested by the construction of St Andrew's Church in the late 12th century (Hatton & Last 1997). Soham is also thought to have held an unchartered market before the 12th century (Ridout 2000).

Evaluations in the town centre at St Andrew’s House (Casa Hatton 2000), Market Street (Cooper 2004a) and Clay Street (Atkins 2004) produced medieval (12th to 16th century) pits, ditches and posthole structures. A small evaluation at Ten Bell Lane produced one late medieval quarry pit and some undated ditches (Atkins 2004a) and

another at Brook Dam Lane recorded a single medieval pit and a post-medieval ditch (Cooper 2004).

However away from the core of the settlement evidence drops off. Nothing was found at Brewhouse Lane (ECB 2555 - Bradley-Lovekin 2007) and little at Lion Mills (Matthews 2007).

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 total of 65m of trenches be excavated in order to achieve a 5% sample of the development area. Five trenches were designated for excavation. These comprised a 24m x 1.8m trench towards the east of the site, a 3m x 3m trench close to the eastern limit of the Parish Hall, an 18m x 1.8m trench adjacent to the southern wall of the building, a 2m x 2m trench in the car park at the front of the property and a 1m x 1m test pit within the building itself (Fig. 1).

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 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.

The original strategy for investigation included the excavation of a 1m testpit within the parish hall itself and the floorboards were cut by the groundworks contractors in order to facilitate this. However, a 4'' concrete slab (Fig. 4) was uncovered below the floor. The plans for the building revealed that the foundations rested on top of this and it was deemed unsafe for the slab to be broken at this stage due to the structural uncertainty of the hall.

Two environmental samples were recovered from features on the site. The sampling was limited as a result of the level of Post Medieval quarrying and disturbance in the trenches.

Conditions on site were on the whole good with mainly dry weather and intervals of heavy rain. Ground water was encountered approximately 0.40m below the level of the natural geological deposits and prohibited the full excavation of several features.

5 Results

5.1 Deposit Model

Dark black brown topsoil composed of friable silty clay, with occasional grit and gravel inclusions, sealed the whole site in a layer recorded as between 0.1m & 0.25m thick.

This overlay subsoil which was not visible towards the east of the development area but was apparent in Trenches 3 and 4 in a layer that deepened towards the High Street to up to 0.65m in thickness. This was recorded as dark grey brown silt clay with occasional small stones and gravel inclusions.

The archaeological features recorded during the evaluation were cut into a mid grey yellow chalk marl. These natural geological deposits were observed at between 7.10mOD and 6.90mOD. A series of test pits were dug prior to the evaluation by PRP to establish the depths of deposits on site and their findings were broadly confirmed by the results of the evaluation. Table 1, below, provides the depths of soil down to the top of this layer.

Trench	Context No.	Topsoil	Context No.	Subsoil	Total depth to features
1	100	0.60m –1.00m	N/A	N/A	1.00m
2	204	0.60m	N/A	N/A	0.60m
3	300	0.41m	301	0.38m	0.79m
4	403	0.48m	404	0.65m	1.13m

Table 1:Depth of topsoil and subsoil across the site

5.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 24m long, and aligned north to south parallel to the eastern boundary of the site. The final 3.5m of the trench was excavated on an east to west alignment at its northern end. A number of archaeological features were recorded, mainly towards the north (Fig.2).

5.2.1 Pitting

Within the northernmost section of the trench an area of extensive, yet amorphous, pitting was recorded (Fig. 2). Two sections were excavated, the first of which revealed pits **110** and **114** to be truncated

by a possible Saxon ditch, recorded in this section as **108**. Several of the fills recorded in cut **114** (111, 112 & 113) were found to contain numerous sherds of Late Iron Age and Early to Mid Roman pottery and the fill of **110** (109) contained a sherd of 2nd – 3rd Century pottery (Wadeson App. 2). Pit **114** was not bottomed in its entirety as a result of groundwater encroaching into its base.

5.2.2 Post medieval Quarrying

The second section, dug 1.00m to the south of **114**, revealed pit **127**, which it was possible to bottom. No stratigraphic relationship was discernable between **114** & **127** but it seems likely that this latter feature was dated to a later phase of activity as a result of a number of sherds of Medieval and Post Medieval pottery recovered from fills 117 and 118 (Fletcher App. 3, Brooks App 4).

Pit **127** was steep sided with an apparently flat base, Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from fill 120. The nature of the fills within this feature were suggestive of deliberate backfilling rather than steady, naturally derived deposition and silting. Two types of fill were identified within this feature. The first were composed primarily of topsoil derived material (115, 117, 119, 122 & 124), the second of re-deposited natural (118, 120, 121 & 123).

In the southern part of Trench 1 an area of pitting that extended 11.5m from the southern limit of the trench was recorded (Fig. 2). This was characterised by a series of amorphous fills in plan and section (103, 105), some of which appeared to be areas of root disturbance and tree throws (**102**). Four sections were excavated through this area, which was found to contain numerous sherds of pot and fragments of modern metalwork and it was subsequently attributed to Post Medieval quarrying, possibly for clunch. The feature, although probably comprised of several different cuts representative of separate instances of quarrying, was assigned a single number (**104**) for the purposes of the evaluation due to the impracticality of fully excavating it. The latest feature of the sequence in this area was a Victorian drain that was revealed on a northwest to southeast alignment and would have cut through the fill of the quarry pit.

5.2.3 Saxon Ditch

The quarrying described above clearly truncated a ditch (**126**) on a north to south alignment that continued beyond the northern limit of the trench (Fig. 2). It was 1.15m in width and upto 0.30m deep with a slightly irregular profile. A single, mid orange brown, clay silt deposit was recorded filling the feature (125), which was found to contain a sherd of pre-conquest, St Neots ware (Fletcher App. 3).

This feature was also recorded (as **108**) truncating pit **114** to the north. The slightly irregular sides of the feature may possibly have been the

result of root action, suggesting that this feature marked a hedge-lined boundary.

5.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was originally to be a 3m square excavated close to the eastern wall of the parish hall (Fig. 2). This was extended slightly during machining to include a 3m x 1.8m strip on its northeastern corner that was excavated to investigate the large quantity of stone and building rubble uncovered within the trench.

5.3.1 Quarrying

A similar pattern to that recorded in Trench 1, of Post Medieval quarrying disturbance, was recorded throughout Trench 2 (Fig. 2). Of note, however, was the presence of a significant quantity of building rubble, including stone, tile and mortar fragments (202 & 203). It seems likely that some of this detritus came from a building recorded on the 1656 Map (Fig.5). In the southern part of the trench a layer of what appeared to be redeposited subsoil was recorded overlying these layers (200).

5.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 16.75m long, and aligned east to west. It was excavated between the southern property boundary and the parish hall (Fig. 3). The westernmost 2m of the trench was disturbed by the backfill of one of the test pits dug by PRP.

5.4.1 Post Medieval Quarrying

The area of quarrying recorded in Trenches 1 and 2 continued for 4.5m into the eastern part of trench 3 with a similar fill in evidence, that contained similar types of ceramic material, brick, clay pipe and tile (Fig. 3).

5.4.2 Ditch

A ditch was recorded that lay on a west southwest to east southeast alignment before turning 7m from the eastern edge of the trench and continuing beyond its northern limit (Fig. 3). Four sections were dug through this feature (**303**, **307**, **313**, **315**), which revealed it to at least 0.40m deep in places with a steep sided profile. The feature was not bottomed in places due to the encroachment of the water table, but several sherds of pottery were recovered that dated the upper fill of the feature (302, 306, 312, 314) to the Medieval period (Fletcher App. 3). The environmental samples from this feature were found to contain a single Spelt wheat glume base, which is typical of features dating to the Iron Age through to Roman periods (Fosberry, App. 5). It is therefore possible that the ditch had been open since this time and was backfilled at a much later date but at present it is impossible to drawn any firm conclusions as to the date of the feature.

5.4.3 Pits

A number of fairly small pits were recorded in the trench, two of which (**311** & **320**) were truncated by ditch **303**. No finds were recovered from the single fills of either of these (310 & 319).

A third pit (**309**) was recorded that continued under the northern baulk of the trench. This was found to contain a relatively large number of animal bones in its dark grey brown, silty clay fill (308). At the base of the feature a concentration of cobbles and small stones were revealed that appeared to be derived from a layer, interpreted as a metalled surface (316), recorded in the centre of the trench that abutted ditch cut **307**. The profile of **309** was very shallow and given the apparent continuation of 316 along the base of the feature it is possible that it actually represented a depression in the ground rather than an actual cut feature. Layer 316, recorded at 7.05mOD, became increasingly diffuse at its edges but appeared to continue beyond the trenches northern limit (Fig. 3).

5.5 Trench 4

Trench 4 was a 2m square excavated at the front of the property close to the high street (Fig. 4). A layer of tarmac, which was cut by the contractors prior to the excavation of the trench by machine, sealed this part of the site.

The deposits recorded in this trench were significantly deeper than elsewhere on site, which meant that the trench filled with ground water soon after excavation. However, it was possible to plan the base of the trench, which appeared to show a linear feature, aligned roughly parallel with the High St on its western side and a dark spread on the eastern side that may have comprised further quarrying (Fig. 4).

6 Discussion

The evaluation revealed two concentrations of archaeological features within the development area. In Trench 3 a possible boundary ditch, several pits and a metalled surface were preserved, whilst towards the north of Trench 1 evidence for Roman activity, and a potential Saxon boundary, were recorded.

6.1 Roman Remains

An area of *in situ* archaeological remains comprised of pits **114** and **110** was located to the north east of the site within Trench 1. The full profile of **114** was not uncovered as it extended beyond the limit of the trench and groundwater prevented the feature from being bottomed. Late Iron Age and Early to mid Roman Pottery (Wadeson App. 2) were recovered from its fills (111, 112, 113), the sherds exhibited little evidence of weathering, suggesting that they had not been subject to post depositional mixing and that they were not in fact residual material that had been redeposited as a result of later Medieval disturbance. The evidence presented above suggests that this feature was dated to the Early to Mid Roman period.

114 contained exclusively Roman pottery, in fact the assemblage of Roman pottery (Wadeson App. 2) recovered from the evaluation was overwhelmingly derived from this part of the site, which supports the inference that the fills for this feature represented *in situ* deposits.

This feature was truncated by pit **110**, this feature was not visible in plan but contained a single fill from which a sherd of mid Roman pottery was recovered. The stratigraphic sequence within Trench 1 whereby pit **110** was cut by ditch **108**, which contained a sherd from a St Neots ware jar dated to AD850-1150, and which was in turn cut by pit **104** (the Post Medieval pitting), suggests that this phase of activity took place prior to any other activity elsewhere within Trench 1.

6.2 Medieval Remains

The results from Trench 3 demonstrated that *in situ* archaeological remains were preserved towards the high street. The course of ditch **303** (Fig. 3) extended towards the Parish Hall and it seems very likely that further archaeological remains will be preserved in that part of the site.

It is possible that the ditch formed a property boundary for the building recorded on the 1656 map (Fig. 5) and furthermore that the remnant of metalled surface (**316**) and pits (**309**, **311** & **320**) comprised settlement features associated with the structure.

There is a high probability that further settlement evidence will be preserved beneath the Parish Hall as the entire structure was built on

a 4" concrete slab, the base of which has been extrapolated as lying between 0.20m and 0.40m above the level of the surviving archaeological deposits (Fig. 3 & Fig. 4).

In Trench 4 a significant depth of deposits was recorded with little evidence of modern truncation or disturbance. This suggests that any further remains to the north of the trench, for instance the structural remains posited above, might be expected to have been preserved in this vicinity.

It appears that the quarrying was confined to the eastern part of the site and it may be of significance that the limit of the quarrying lies just short of the eastern extent of ditch **303**. This may indicate that such activity was ongoing during the life of the structure and therefore limited to the plot of land behind any property boundaries fronting the High Street.

6.3 Post Medieval Quarrying

Within Trench 1, Trench 2 and the eastern part of Trench 3 an area of quite extensive Post Medieval disturbance was recorded.

In addition to the extensive area of pitting recorded as **104** in Trench 1 pit **127** was also found to contain a mixture of Medieval and Post Medieval pottery sherds recovered from 117 & 118. Several sherds of Roman and Late Iron Age pottery were also recovered from this feature (Wadeson App. 2). Given the close proximity of **127** to **114** it may well be that these represented residual material; unlike in pit **114** where the Roman and Iron age material was found in isolation.

The sides of pit **127** were steep but irregular and the feature was filled with numerous mixed deposits (115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123 & 124), which were comprised of topsoil derived material and redeposited natural. The primary fills of pit **127**, (122, 123 & 124) were composed of fairly course clay and topsoil and did not appear to be the result of natural silting, which would have indicated that the pit had stood open for a period of time. These two factors suggest that the pit was not open for any length of time and was backfilled soon after being excavated.

Post Medieval disturbance was recorded throughout Trench 2 (Fig. 2), with layers 202 & 203 containing a significant quantity of building rubble, including stone, tile and mortar fragments and sherds of 17th – 19th Century pottery (Brooks, App. 4).

This was interpreted as evidence of quarrying that had resulted in a significant level of truncation, which in all likelihood would have destroyed any archaeological remains within its limits. The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, for instance, there have been numerous inhumations recorded around the site and so it was to

be expected that evidence for human burial might be uncovered during the course of the evaluation but in this part of the site at least no evidence for human activity prior to the quarrying had survived.

It is estimated that anything between 30-50% of the development area had been subject to quarrying. This truncation appeared to be confined to the east and south of the development area.

7 Conclusions

The evaluation revealed two areas of preservation on the site. The first lay to the northeast of the development area, in the northern part of Trench 1, where evidence for Roman activity, and a possible Saxon ditch was recorded.

The second lay towards the southwest of the development area, within Trench 3, where Medieval settlement features were recorded. The alignment of the features in Trench 3, taken in conjunction with the evidence from the 1656 Map, suggests that the Hall overlies the site of a building and its associated yards and boundaries.

It is expected that any further archaeological remains will be preserved beneath the footprint of the existing parish hall as the quarry pitting evident to the east did not extend into this area and the base of the concrete slab upon which the hall was constructed, lay above the level of the archaeological remains.

Whilst the eastern part of the site is deemed to have low potential for the survival of archaeological remains, the western part of the site has good potential for the preservation of further archaeological evidence.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Amber Homes who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. The evaluation was carried out by Chris Thatcher with the assistance of Pete Boardman and Jessica Djohari, the illustrations were produced by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin.

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

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Appendix 1: Context list

Context	Trench Number	Type	Function
100	1	Topsoil	deposit
101	1	Fill of Tree throw	Natural deposit
102	1	Cut of Treethrow	Natural feature
103	1	Fill of Quarrying	Quarrying
104	1	Cut of Quarrying	Quarrying
105	1	Quarrying Backfill	Quarrying
107	1	Fill of ditch	Ditch
108	1	Cut of ditch	Ditch
109	1	Upper Fill of Quarrying	Quarrying
110	1	Shallow pit cut	Pit
111	1	Tertiary Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
112	1	Penultimate Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
113	1	Primary Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
114	1	Cut of Quarry pit	Quarrying
115	1	Fill of shallow pit	Pit
116	1	Shallow pit cut	Pit
117	1	Tertiary Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
118	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
119	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
120	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
121	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
122	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
123	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
124	1	Quarry pit fill	Quarrying
125	1	Shallow ditch fill	Ditch
126	1	Medieval Ditch Cut	Ditch
127	1	Quarry pit cut	Quarrying
200	2	Quarrying Backfill	Quarrying
201	2	Quarrying Backfill	Quarrying
202	2	Quarrying Backfill	Quarrying
203	2	Quarrying Backfill	Quarrying
204	2	Topsoil	deposit
205	2	Natural	deposit
300	3	Topsoil	deposit
301	3	Subsoil	deposit
302	3	Tertiary Ditch fill	Ditch
303	3	Cut of boundary ditch	Ditch
304	3	Occupation spread	Layer
305	3	Cut of shallow pit	Pit
306	3	Fill of boundary ditch	Ditch
307	3	Cut of boundary ditch	Ditch
308	3	Pit fill	Pit
309	3	Pit cut	Pit
310	3	Fill of pit/posthole	Pit
311	3	Cut of pit/posthole	Pit
312	3	Tertiary Ditch fill	Ditch
313	3	Cut of boundary ditch	Ditch
314	3	Tertiary Ditch fill	Ditch
315	3	Cut of boundary ditch	Ditch
316	3	Metalling layer	Layer
317	3	Quarry pit cut	Pit
318	3	Fill of quarry pit	Pit
319	3	Fill of pit	Pit
320	3	Cut of pit	Pit
321	3	Natural	Geological deposit
400	4	Tarmac	Modern deposit
401	4	Bedding layer	Modern deposit
402	4	Modern Make up	Modern deposit
403	4	Topsoil	deposit
404	4	Natural	deposit

Appendix 2: Iron Age and Romano - British Pottery

By Stephen Wadeson

1 Introduction

A total of 49 sherds, weighing 0.564kg, of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery were recovered from 10 contexts in Trench 1 during the archaeological evaluation at the Old Parish Hall, High Street Soham, Cambridgeshire, (SOH PIG 08). A single sherd of possible Saxon date was also identified in what is predominantly a Romano-British assemblage. No further sherds from these periods were recovered from any of the other trenches excavated.

The Iron Age assemblage is made up of fragmentary, abraded sherds, with an average weight of only *c*. 9g. The majority of the Romano British pottery is also heavily abraded with an average sherd weight of *c*. 12g. The poor condition of some of the pottery is an indication of high levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as ploughing or middening) suggesting the pottery was not found within its primary site of deposition.

Period	Quantity (sherd count)	Weight (kg)	Weight (%)
Iron Age	11	0.099	17.5
Roman	37	0.438	77.7
Saxon	1	0.027	4.8
Total	**49**	**0.564**	**100.0**

Table 1: Quantity and weight of pottery by period (in chronological order)

2 Methodology

The assemblage was examined in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Webster 1976; Darling 2004; Willis 2004). The total assemblage was studied and a preliminary catalogue was prepared. The sherds were examined using a magnifying lens (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types present. The fabric codes are descriptive and abbreviated by the main letters of the title (Sandy grey ware = SGW) vessel form was also recorded. The sherds were counted and weighed to the nearest whole gram and decoration and abrasion were also noted.

The site archive is currently held by Oxford Archaeology East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

3 The Assemblage

3.1 Iron Age

Excavations produced a total of twelve small, abraded sherds of pottery, (0.099kg) dating to the Late Pre Roman Iron Age period (LPRIA). Seven of these sherds are undiagnostic fragments of shell-tempered wares possibly produced in the Nene Valley. In addition a further undiagnostic sherd of shell-tempered pottery was recovered, this sherd may also be LPRIA however there is a possibility it may be of Saxon date but is as yet to be confirmed. Of the remaining four sherds, two are sandy reduced wares while two more sherds are flint tempered sandy coarse wares.

Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from so few sherds these small, heavily abraded fragments represent an earlier phase of occupation on, or close to, the area of excavation.

3.2 Romano-British

Of the remaining assemblage 37 sherds, 0.438kg are of Romano-British date. The majority of these, 34 sherds, 0.423kg are coarse ware pottery from local domestic sources, with the remaining sherds made up of fine wares.

Fabric	Code	Vessel Types	Qty.	Weight (kg)	EVE	Weight (%)
Oxford Red Colour Coat	OXRCC		1	0.009	0.00	02.05
South Gaulish Samian	SAMSG	Plate	2	0.006	0.06	01.37
Sandy Grey Ware	SGW	MM Jar	7	0.085	0.36	19.41
Grey Ware (Mica Dusted)	GW (Mica)		1	0.017	0.00	03.88
Horningsea Type Grey Ware	HOR GW		22	0.311	0.00	71.00
Black slipped red Ware	GTW		3	0.008	0.00	01.83
Colchester White Ware?	COL WH	Poppy Headed Beaker	1	0.002	0.00	00.46
Total			**37**	**0.438**	**0.42**	**100.00**

Table 2: Romano-British pottery quantified by fabric.

The 37 coarse ware sherds represent 96% by weight of the total Romano-British assemblage. The majority of these are typical of locally produced coarse wares of the late 1st to 3rd century. Sandy grey wares are the most commonly utilised of these fabrics making up 94.3% (by weight) of the assemblage and are dominated by Horningsea type grey wares which themselves count for 71% by weight of the total assemblage.

The fine ware pottery includes two small sherds of South Gaulish samian from a Dr. 18 plate, (Webster 1996, 32). Dated to the mid to late 1st century these sherds were recovered from pit fill (111) and

show almost no signs of abrasion suggesting the sherds were deposited soon after the vessel was broken and suffered little post depositional working.

Only one other fine ware sherd was recovered and was from the topsoil of Trench 1, consisting of a partial, burnt foot ring from a Oxford red colour coat vessel (Tomber and Dore 1998, 176) dating from the 3rd to early 5th century.

4 Discussion

This is a small predominantly Romano-British assemblage with a small element of residual LPRIA pottery. Comprised mainly of undiagnostic coarse wares and Roman fine wares it is typical of a late Roman utilitarian domestic assemblage in this area (Evans 2003, 105).

The pottery assemblage spans a wide chronological period from the LPRIA to the early 5th century and suggests continuous activity in the area over a long period of time. The bulk of the assemblage however dates from the mid 2nd century.

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The Pottery Catalogue

Key: C=Century, E=Early, M=Mid, L=Late.
R=Rim, U=Undecorated body sherd, D=Decorated body sherd, B=Base.

Context	Fabric	Des.	Form	Qty.	Weight (g)	Decoration	Spot date	Context date	Comments
100	OXRCC	F		1	9		C3-EC5	TOPSOIL	TOPSOIL, BURNT
	HORNINGSEA TYPE GREY WARE	U		3	30		C2-C3		TOPSOIL
	STW	U		1	27		ESAX?		TOPSOIL
101	FLINT TEMP. SANDY COARSE WARE	U		2	10		LPRIA	C1	RESIDUAL
	SGW (MICA)	B		1	7		C1		RESIDUAL
103	SGW	U	WMJAR	1	19	DÉCOR. CORDON	E-MC2	E-MC2	
	SRW	U		1	12		LPRIA		
107	STW	U		2	22		LPRIA	C2	RESIDUAL, EARLY NENE VALLEY?
	HORNINGSEA TYPE GREY WARE	U		7	119	BURNISHED	C2-C3		RESIDUAL, HARD FIRED
	SGW	R	HS MMJAR	2	15		C2		RESIDUAL, CROSS FIT WITH 112 & 115
109	HORNINGSEA TYPE GREY WARE	U		1	16		C2-C3	C2-C3	
111	SAMSG	UB	PLATE, DR.18	2	6		M-LC1	M-LC1	ALMOST LIKE NEW
									RESIDUAL
	STW	U		4	42		LPRIA		
	HORNINGSEA TYPE GREY WARE	U		1	6		C2-C3		
112	HORNINGSEA TYPE GREY WARE	U		10	140	BURNISHED LINEAR BANDS	C2-C3	E-MC2	
									CROSS FIT WITH 107 & 115
	SGW	R	HS MMJAR	1	14		C2		SILVER MICA TEMP, GOLD MICA ON EXTERIOR SURFACE
	MICA DUSTED GW	U		1	17	GOLD MICA	EC1		
113	STW	U		1	6	INCISED DECOR	LPRIA	C2	RESIDUAL
	SGW	U		1	12	LINEAR COMBING	C2		BURNT ON OUTSIDE AND ON THE BREAK.
115	SGW	R	HS MMJAR	1	18		C2	MC2	CROSS FIT WITH 107 & 112
	COLCHESTER WW?	U	POPPY HEADED BEAKER	1	2	WHITE SLIP, BARBOTINE DOTS	MC2		
	BLACK SLIPPED RED WARE	U		3	8		C2-C4		
120	SRW	U		1	7		LPRIA	LPRIA	RESIDUAL

Appendix 3: Medieval Pottery

By Carole Fletcher

1 Summary

The evaluation at Old Parish Hall, High Street Soham, Cambridgeshire, (SOH PIG 08) produced a small medieval pottery assemblage of 12 sherds, weighing 0.174kg, including unstratified material, from seven contexts. Pottery was recovered from ditches and quarry pit fills from three trenches. The majority of the pottery recovered is mid 13th to mid 14th century in date. A small number of contexts produced late Saxon or early medieval pottery including a STAM jug sherd and a rim sherd from a NEOT jar. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded and the average sherd from individual contexts is small at 9g.

2 Methodology

The basic guidance in the Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2) has been adhered to (English Heritage 1991). In addition the Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations (Blake and Davey, 1983), A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms (MPRG, 1998) and Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG, 2001) act as a standard.

Dating was carried out using Oxford Archaeology East's in-house system based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been spot dated on a context-by-context basis.

The pottery and archive are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

3 The Assemblage

The assemblage covers the late Saxon, early medieval and medieval periods and these can be summarised on a trench by trench basis discussing only those which produced pottery.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the following text and dating table are:

BRILL	Brill-Boarstall
DNEOT	Developed St Neots ware
EAR	Easr Anglian Redwares
MEL/MELT	Medieval Ely /Medieval Ely type ware
NEOT	St Neots ware

3.1 Trench 1

A sherd from a NEOT jar is the earliest material present, the small diameter of the rim (100mm) suggests a pre-conquest date for the vessel, this was the only post Roman sherds recovered from ditch **126**. Four MEL/MELT sherds were also recovered from Trench 1, from a possible tree bowl or tree throw pit and from the quarry backfills. The quarry **127** also produced a sherd of EAR suggesting that the feature dates to the 15th century or later.

3.2 Trench 3

Pottery was recovered from three contexts in this trench, all were recorded in ditch fills. Ditch **303** produced a large unabraded sherd from a glazed BRILL jug dating to the 13th or 14th century, this would have been used to store or serve weak beer or wine. Ditch **307**, described as a boundary ditch, produced a single sherd of MELT, this sherd also dates to the 13th-14th century. Slightly sooted this sherd is probably from a jar that was used as a cook pot. The earliest pottery in this trench was recovered from ditch **313,** an unabraded body sherd from a STAM glazed jug or pitcher which retained traces of the strap handle where it was attached to the body of the vessel. This sherd may date to the late Saxon or early medieval period (10th to mid 12th century).

3.3 Trench 4

Two medieval sherds were recovered from Trench 4, both from context 404. The earliest pottery is a base sherd from a EMWT jar dating to the 11th-12th century, however this may be a residual sherd as it a shred from a Medieval MELT jar was also found suggesting the context is perhaps early 14th century in date

4 Discussion

The assemblage is small and few features have more than one context containing pottery, and it is difficult to draw conclusions about the nature of this assemblage. Dating has however indicated late Saxon, early medieval and medieval activity on the site, unfortunately the material was recovered from ditches and quarry fills and may have been redeposited, it may not therefore accurately date the features from which it was recovered. However the presence of this material is important in indicating activity on or close to the site from the 10th century onwards.

No further work is required on the assemblage, unless further excavation is undertaken at which point it should be assessed alongside any new material recovered.

Bibliography

Blake, H and Davey, P.	1983	Guidelines for the Processing and Publications of Medieval Pottery from Excavations. Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings_Occasional_Paper 5
English Heritage	1991	MAP2
Medieval Pottery Research Group	1998	A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms. Medieval Pottery Research Group, Occasional Paper I

Dating

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Number of Sherds	Weight in Kg	Date Range for Context
101	MEL		2	0.021	1150-1350
117	MELT		1	0.006	1200-1350
118	EAR	Bowl	1	0.013	1400-1500
	MELT	Jar	2	0.006	
	NEOT	Jar	1	0.01	850-1150
302	BRILL	Jug	1	0.071	1200-1400
306	MELT	Jar	1	0.006	1200-1350
314	STAM	Jug	1	0.018	900-1150
404	EMWT	Jar	1	0.012	1200-1250
	MELT	Jar	1	0.011	

Appendix 4: Post-medieval Pottery

By Alasdair Brooks BA, MA, DPhil

1 Introduction

A total of 38 sherds of 17th-20th century pottery were recovered from 6 contexts in trenches 1, 2, and 3 during the archaeological evaluation at the Old Parish Hall, High Street Soham, Cambridgeshire, (SOH PIG 08). A single sherd of possible Saxon date was also identified in what is predominantly a Romano-British assemblage. No further sherds from these periods were recovered from any of the other trenches excavated.

The Iron Age assemblage is made up of fragmentary, abraded sherds, with an average weight of only *c*. 9g. The majority of the Romano British pottery is also heavily abraded with an average sherd weight of *c*. 12g. The poor condition of some of the pottery is an indication of high levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as ploughing or middening) suggesting the pottery was not found within its primary site of deposition.

2 Methodology

In the absence of a widely-accepted set of standard guidelines for the analysis of post-medieval (particularly later post-medieval) pottery in Britain, the ceramic terminology and dating criteria used in this report were, except where noted, taken from the author's own book on the identification of later post-medieval ceramics (Brooks 2005); these follow the generally accepted international guidelines for the analysis of these materials. A particular point of difference with earlier periods is that later post-medieval materials are rarely recorded by weight; ware type names are also usually written out rather than being described by coded abbreviations.

This assessment only features an initial guide to context dating, and therefore intentionally does not contain minimum vessel counts or other more in-depth quantification and analysis techniques. Dates often refer to the traditional most common period of production rather than definitive start and end dates; the transition from creamware and pearlware to whiteware from c.1820-c.1830, for example, is a gradual process rather than a sudden shift from older types to the newer type.

The site archive is currently held by Oxford Archaeology East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

5 The Assemblage

The assemblage mostly consists of 17th- and 18th-century ceramics, though the topsoil from context 100 contains 19th- and 20th-century ceramics.

Context 100

This topsoil context contains mixed materials, some of them potentially 20th-century. Included are a fragment modern industrial porcelaineous ware (late 19th century onwards), a fragment of possible white granite (1840-1880), two whiteware sherds (1820+, but these examples almost certainly mid-century or later), a single fragment of creamware (1760-1820), and three sherds of miscellaneous post-medieval redware.

Context 202

This context is listed as quarrying backfill, with the architectural contents of that backfill interpreted as associated with a building recorded on a 1656 map. If so, then the single fragment of later post-medieval flowerpot (post-1800) is either intrusive, or indicates that the area of quarrying activity was only filled in the 19th century.

Contexts 109, 117, 203, 308

These contexts were all interpreted as quarry fill. They mostly contain post-medieval redware from the 17th and 18th centuries, though they also include a single fragment of slip-decorated redware (where the glaze has almost entirely flaked off the vessel), three fragments of 17th- or 18th-century tinglaze (most likely 18th-century), one of them from a fairly substantial vessel, and one fragment of a possible coarse Jackfield-type mug base (c.1740-1800). As a whole, these assemblages appear to pre-date the introduction of mass-produced refined whitebodied earthenwares (creamware, pearlware, etc.) in the second half of the 18th century, and are entirely consistent with quarrying backfill. The most likely period of deposition for the backfill activity is c.1650 to c.1750, with the possible Jackfield-type fragment indicating deposition near the end of that period for context 308.

6 Discussion

The post-medieval contexts almost entirely consist of quarrying backfill with little in the way of diagnostic materials. The only exception is the trench 1 topsoil (**100**), which contains items which date as recently as the 20th century. Given the small size of the assemblage, and the nature of depositional activity that generated the assemblage, no further analysis is recommended unless further excavation takes place at the site.

Bibliography

Brooks, A.M 2005 An Archaeological Guide to British Ceramics in Australia, 1788-1901. The Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, and the La Trobe University Archaeology Program.

Quantification table

Context	Ware type	Decoration	Date	Sherds
100	modern porcelaineous ware	undecorated	late19th-20th	1
	white granite (?)	undecorated	1840+	1
	whiteware	undecorated	1820+	2
	creamware	undecorated	1760-1820	1
	post-medieval redware		1600+	3
	flowerpot		1800+	2
109	post-medieval redware		1600+	1
117	post-medieval redware		1600+	9
	slip-decorated redware		1600+	1
	tinglaze	undecorated	1600-1800	1
202	flowerpot		1800+	1
203	tinglaze	monochrome painted	1600-1800	1
		undecorated	1600-1800	1
318	post-medieval redware		1600+	11
	Jackfield-type		1740-1800	1
	tinglaze	moulded	1600-1800	1

Appendix 5: Environmental Assessment

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Two bulk samples were taken from sections excavated through ditch **313** 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. Both came from the single fills of sections **307** & **315** (306 & 314 respectively).

The samples were soaked in a solution of Decon 90 for two days prior to processing in order to break down the heavy clay.

Ten litres of each sample were 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. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification.

2 Results

Preservation is by charring and is generally poor. Both samples contain fragments of animal bones, pottery and mussel shells. Charred plant remains include cereal grains, occasional weed seeds and sparse charcoal fragments. Sample 2 contains a single *Triticum spelta* (Spelt) glume base.

3 Discussion

The plant remains recovered from this small assemblage are dominated by crop plants along with other dietary refuse in the form of mussel shells and animal bones. The ditch was provisionally dated as Roman by the excavator and this is substantiated by the presence of Spelt wheat, which is typically grown in the Iron Age through to Roman periods.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

From the two samples examined it appears that there is good potential for further archaeobotanical study. If further excavations are planned for this area, it is recommended that a schedule for environmental sampling should be appended to the updated project design. By extensive sampling the nature of cereal waste and weed assemblages should provide an indication of whether these cereals were locally grown or imported.

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation

Deposit - Conjectured

Sondages/Machine Strip

Intrusion/Truncation

Illustrated Section S.14

Cut Number 118

Deposit Number 117

Archaeological Deposit

Quarry

Excavated Slot

Natural Features

Modern Deposit

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

Stones

Animal Bone

Chalk

Pot

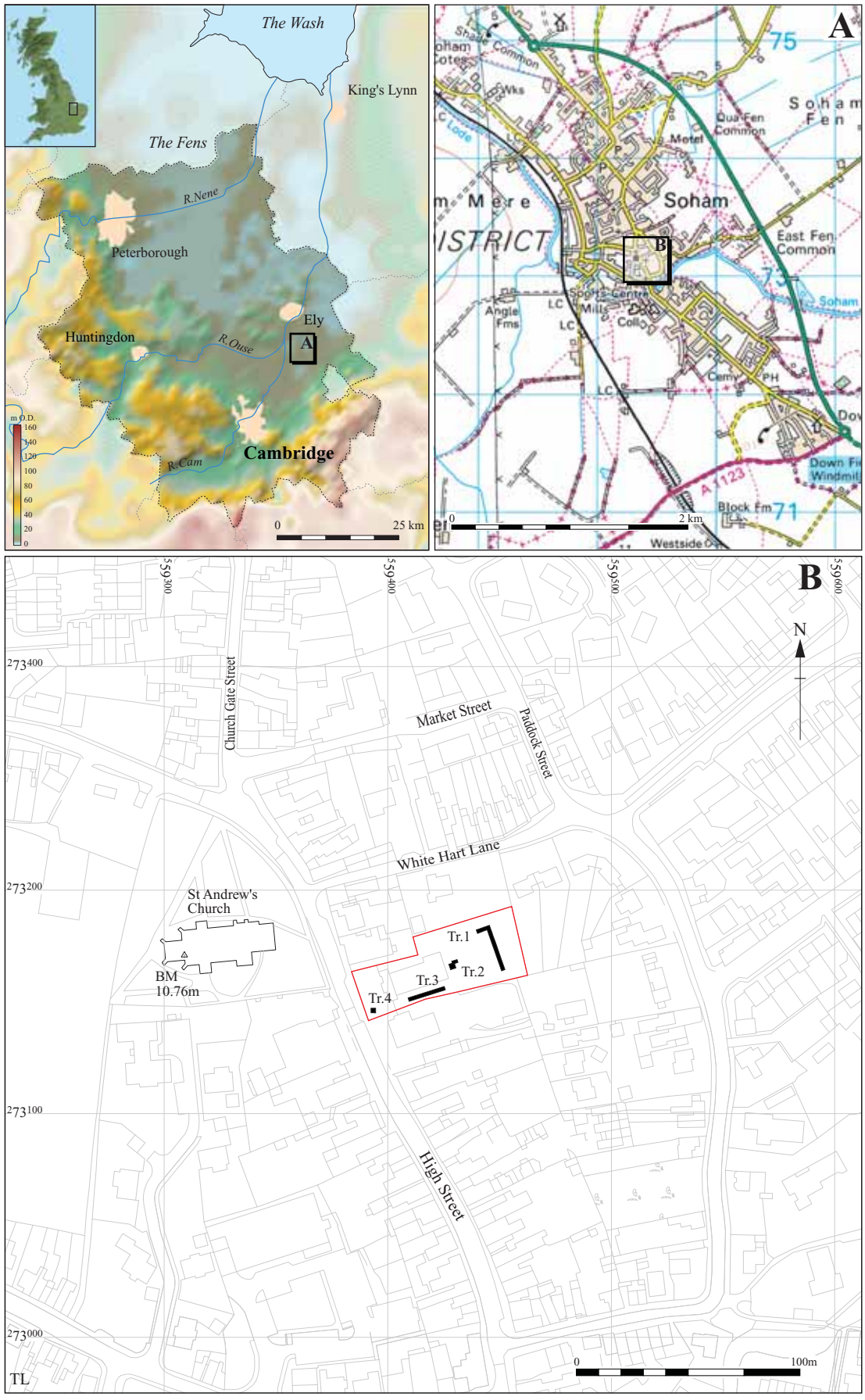

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Figure 1 Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

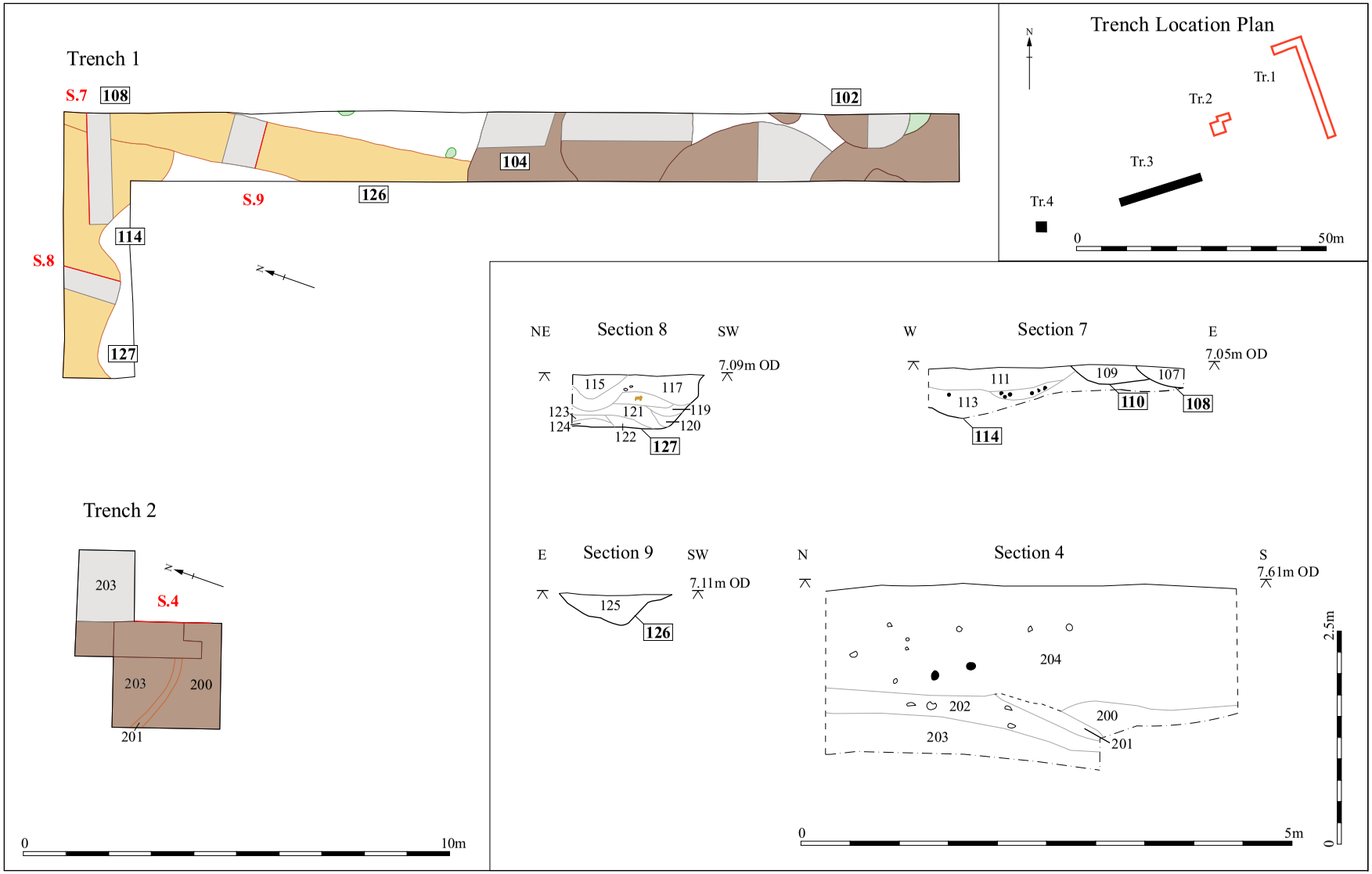


Figure 2: Trench Plans and Sections

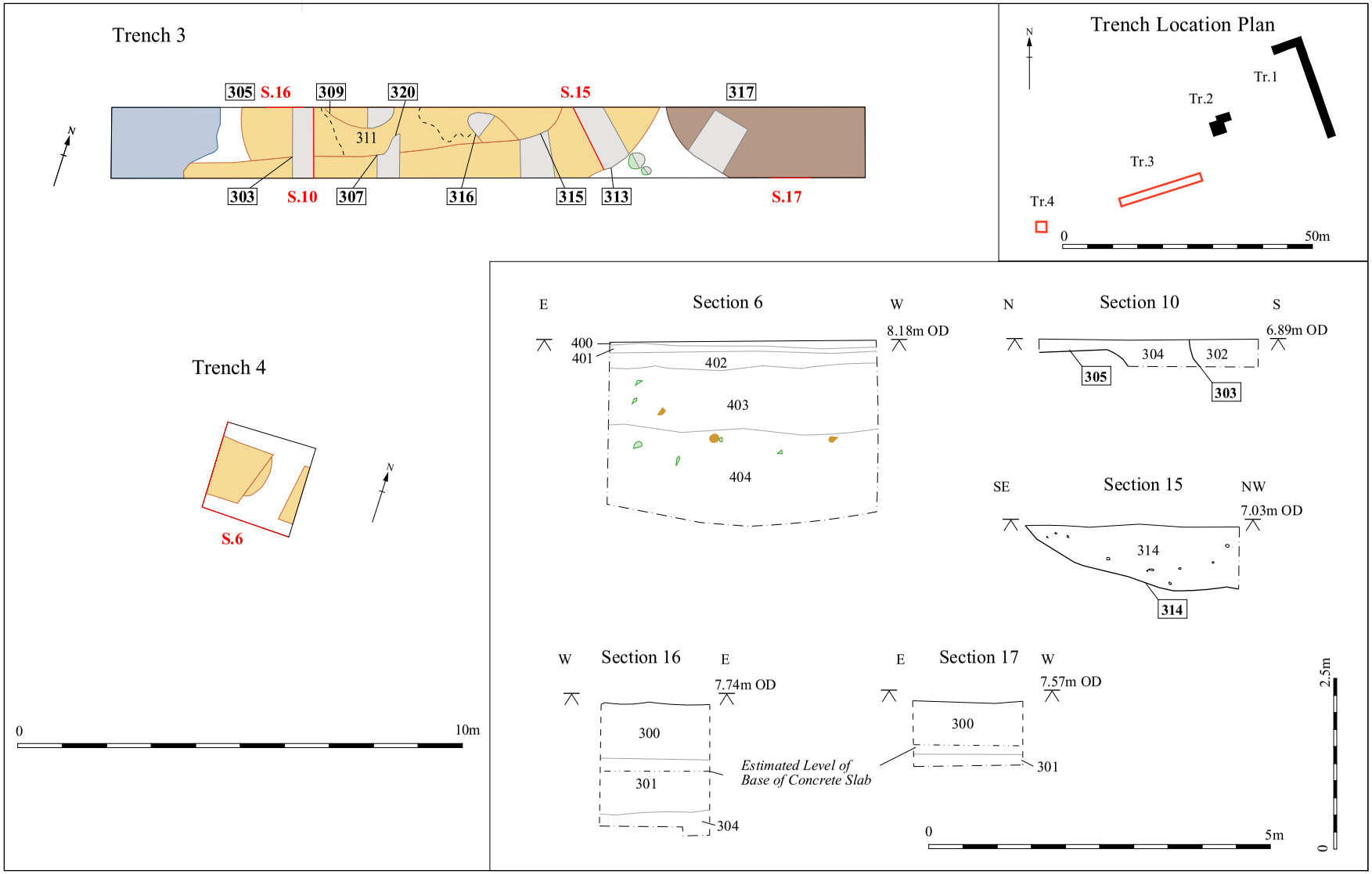


Figure 3: Trench Plans and Sections

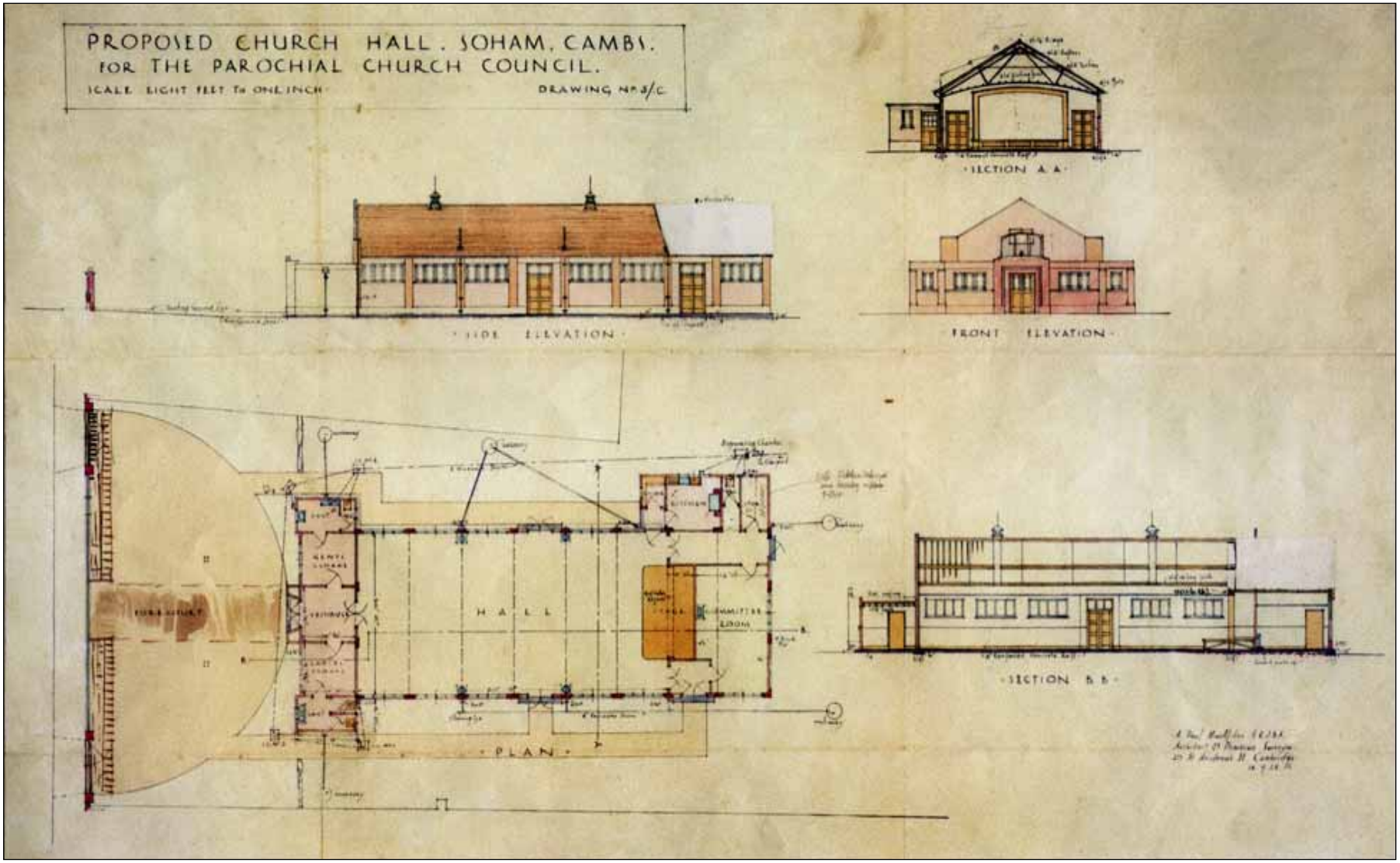


Figure 4: Original plans and elevations of the Parish Hall (1928)

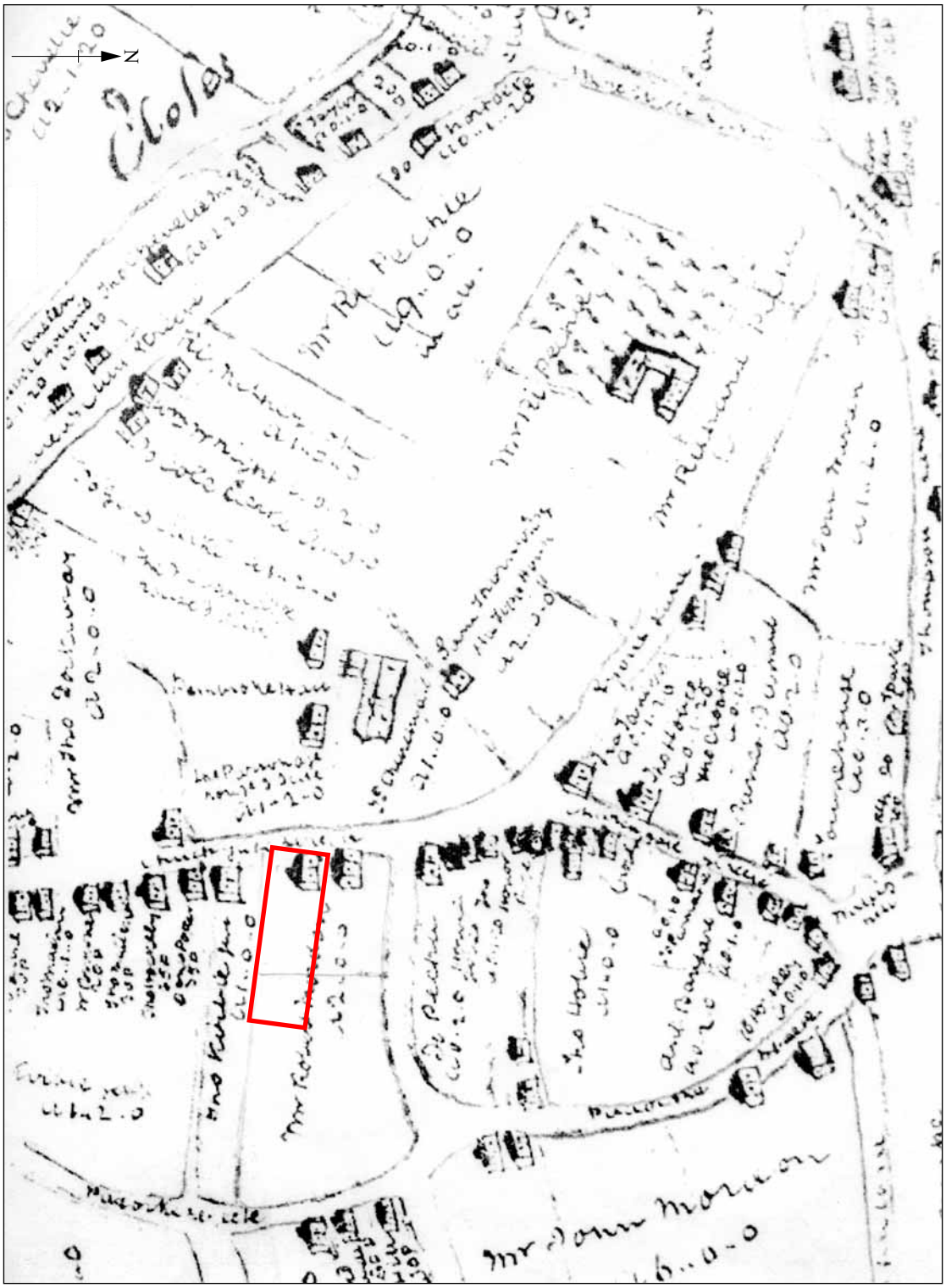
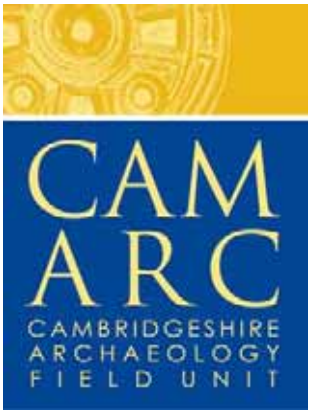


Figure 5: 1656 map showing building fronting the High Street in the development area (highlighted in red)



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