



CAM ARC Report Number 1018

A120 – Coggeshall To Whiteshill Farm Water Mains Renewal

Watching Brief Report

Jonathan House

May 2008

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Watching Brief Report

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Site Code: XEX COG 07

Date of works: 8th October 2007

Grid Ref: TL 8219 2274 – TL 8360 2244

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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Detailed Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation of the A120-Coggeshall-Whiteshill Farm Stane Street Water Mains Renewal.			
Short description	The site runs alongside the Roman Road Stane street, although some hints of earlier activity, represented with residual Early Neolithic and Iron Age finds. Roman finds from the site span from the 1 st to 4 th centuries indicating the roads use in the period. The road itself appears to have remained in use, with people using it for passage, also living and working by it. With evidence for Medieval activity, and evidence for domestic and agricultural Post Medieval land use.			
Project dates	Start	8/10/07	End	7/11/07
Previous work	None		Future work	No
Associated project reference codes	CGWH07			
Type of project	Evaluation, Metal Detectors, Sample trenches, Documentary search.			
Site status	None			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Agriculture, Crops			
Planned development	Replacement of water main.			
Monument types / period (list all that apply and use thesaurus of monument types)	Farmstead / Post Medieval Extractive Pits / Medieval Field Boundaries / Roman			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply and use MDA object thesaurus)	Blades / Neolithic			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Essex	Parish	Coggeshall	
HER for region	Essex			
Site address (including postcode)	Coggeshall Road, Coggeshall, Essex. CO6 1NZ			
Study area (sq.m or ha)				
National grid reference	Site runs from one to other, long pipeline	NGR: TL 8219 2274		NGR: TL 8360 2244
Height OD	Max OD		Min OD	
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	Cambridgeshire County Council, CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Vanessa Clarke			
Project design originator	James Drummond Murray			
Director/supervisor	Jonathan House			
Project manager	James Drummond Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Anglia Water			
ARCHIVES	Location and accession number		Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)	
Physical			Pottery, A. Bone, Ceramic, Misc.	
Paper			Context sheets, plans, sections, photos	
Digital			Spread sheets, photos, drawings, text.	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Detailed Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation of the A120-Coggeshall-Whiteshill Farm Stane Street Water Mains Renewal.			
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Summary

The site runs alongside Roman Stane Street, although there are some hints of earlier activity, represented by residual Early Neolithic and Iron Age finds.

Roman finds from the site span from the 1st to 4th centuries indicating the road's use in the period. The road itself appears to have remained in use, with people also living and working next to it. There is also evidence for medieval activity, as well as domestic and agricultural post medieval land use.

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1 Introduction

This detailed archaeological monitoring and excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Vanessa Clarke of the Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team of the Historic Environment Branch, Essex County Council, supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly the Archaeological Field Unit).

The objective of this watching brief 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, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

The site archive is currently held by CAM ARC and will be deposited with Braintree Museum in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

The site runs from NGR: TL 8219 2274 to NGR: TL 8360 2244. The site overlies glacial till, which over the course of the trench saw great variation, including clay, mixtures of clay, sands and gravels. The trench ran parallel to the A120 over undulating ground that has downward slope to the south to a small river channel.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The pipeline lies on the south side of the A120, which here follows the route of Stane Street, the Roman road that runs between St Albans (*Verulamium*) and Colchester (*Camulodunum*) (EHER 6503).

A magnetometer survey, field walking and test pitting at the eastern end of the route indicated that a Late Iron Age/Roman industrial site was present in the area (EHER 17903).

A Roman cremation cemetery is located in Crow Barn and Garden Fields, also at the eastern end of the route (EHER 8647). This was originally revealed during gravel digging in the 19th century. Metal detecting in the field has also uncovered coins, brooches and a votive statue of Minerva (EHER 18265).

Cropmark evidence has suggested the presence of ring ditches, trackways, enclosures and former field boundaries in the area around the line of the proposed pipeline (EHER 14182, 17216, 17178, 8796).

4 Methodology

4.1 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out in two stages, commencing with a topsoil strip with subsequent excavation recording of all encountered archaeological remains. A second strip was agreed with Pat Connell (Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team of the Historic Environment Branch, Essex County Council), focusing as close as possible to the course of the proposed pipeline. The agreed second stage was the removal of sub-soils in a narrower trench along the course of the proposed pipeline, due to the position of the existing pipeline certain areas along the trench were left to avoid damaging the pipeline. Where excavation was unimpeded all underlying archaeological remains were recorded in accordance with the original brief.

The trench measuring approximately 1500m, was divided into four smaller areas, using both natural topography and existing field boundaries, these areas ran from West to East (Areas 1-3) with a smaller area (Area 4) at the very Western end of the pipeline. This trench had its topsoil removed and two test pits cut through the underlying sub-soils (see section 7). The sub-soils were considered by Pat Connell to be of sufficient depth to protect any underlying archaeological remains, no further work was undertaken in this trench aside from mapping.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a 360 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 that were obviously modern. There was unfortunately some illegal metal detecting (see below).

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.

Environmental samples were taken from targeted archaeological features and processed and investigated.

4.2 Site Conditions

The weather was generally dry and sunny, with occasional rainy days. leading to mostly dry ground conditions, and archaeological investigation was not seriously affected. There were some unpleasant factors associated with a roadside lay by, which included defecation within trenches and constant activity of a sexual nature, with its related waste seen in and around trenches. Archaeological work was largely unaffected aside from politely asking people to leave the site when observed.

The site also was subject to 'night hawking' (illegal metal detecting) this was seen in all four trenches and a map of the metal detectorists holes has been produced. It was evident that some finds of value had been retrieved as modern or worthless items were discarded beside the hole, and some of these holes had no visible metal objects in the vicinity. Within one of the holes, the staining of the soil by a copper alloy object could be seen.

5 Results

5.1. Flint Assemblage

A total of 5 stuck flints were recovered during the excavation. The assemblage comprises two blades and three pieces of debitage, the blades being late Mesolithic / Early Neolithic. The debitage from subsoil 134 is of the same period as the blades, with the last two from 154 and 161 (upper fills of two later features), being Bronze Age. (Barry Bishop pers. comm.) The blades are of different design, the one from context 158 has been abraded and seen considerable surface damage, being found in a later ditch (**160**) in trench 3, the other blade having been found in the sub soil (104).

5.2. Roman

At no point along the trench was the Roman road observed. The only Roman feature identified was at the eastern end of Trench 3 and was a ditch (**162**) containing coarse wares of the 1st to 4th centuries, the ditch was running northwest to southeast and had one fill (161).

5.3 Medieval

Evidence for medieval land use consisted of a ditch (**160**), seen slightly to the west of the middle of Trench 3 running almost north, south. A possible furrow (**139**) also contained a single 13th to 14th century sherd, however this may just be a residual find.

A large quarry pit (**168**), seen at the Eastern end of the trench also contained pottery of 13th to 14th century date.

5.4 Post Medieval

Areas 1,2,3 all contained evidence for post-medieval activity, all of which appeared to respect the road. It is very likely that most of this can be associated with the existing buildings on the opposite side of the road. These remains for the most part were not investigated fully due to their low archaeological significance.

Trench 1 contained one of the more interesting post medieval features, although its exact function is unknown; feature **101**, near the middle of the trench, was 1.95m wide, at least 2.4m long, and had a depth of 0.10m, with roof tiles tightly placed on end within it.

Post-medieval remains in Trench 2 were most frequent in the middle of the trench opposite Stockstreet Farm, on a rise in the land. Evidence of demolition and some elements of surviving brick walls were observed. A backfilled well was also seen (**109**).

In Trench 3 the post medieval activity was concentrated in the western half of the trench. At the very western end of the trench was seen a large cut, (**174**) approximately 34m wide within the trench. This contained demolition material (134, 136, and 137). Cutting into the middle of this feature was what appeared to be another well (**148**), with a brick backfill. Further to the east, within the western half of the trench, were additional ground workings (**172**); this feature contained a line of set bricks, and other hints of structural remains.

5.5 Undated Features / Non-secure Dated Features

The following features are those with limited or no dating evidence. A circular feature (**121**) characterised by relatively large quantities of charcoal was seen in the Eastern end of Trench 1. This was not likely to be the site of a bonfire but the material had instead been redeposited. This material lay within a linear feature (**171**) that was running east to west that could be seen in most of the eastern half of Trench 1. A second linear feature (**127**) was observed at the western

end of Trench 1 and was on a similar alignment to **171**. There was what appeared to be the site of a bonfire (**102**) roughly 60m from the western end of trench 1; this appeared to be at the same archaeological horizon as feature **101**.

At the western end of Trench 2 was a small pit (**129**), beneath the subsoil but undated.

Just to the west of ditch **160**, in Trench 3 two linear features were seen (**141** and **143**), which both shared the same north to south alignment, likely to have been associated with the nearby post medieval activity.

At the eastern end of Trench 3 an undated ditch (**163**) was recorded, running east to west. Its relationship with feature **168** could not be seen. A very large feature (**155**) was recorded near the middle of Trench 3. It contained both Roman and Iron Age pottery, although this may have been residual. The feature was about 10m wide and 1m in depth.

6 Discussion

6.1 Trench 1

The dated features in this trench relate to Post Medieval activity, probably associated with agriculture. Feature **101** appeared to be some sort of hearth although due to the lack of burning evidence it would have to be un-used. Another possibility is that it was a threshing floor, for the process of loosening the grains of corn from the stalks. Threshing floors generally have a hard surface, and have some sort of exposure to the wind, the surface has to be relatively smooth so the corn can be collected. The site of the bonfire in this trench (**102**), is probably contemporaneous with tile surface as they were both sealed by the topsoil, and stratigraphically above the sub-soil (**122**).

The remaining features were sealed by the sub-soil (**122**). The linear features observed in Trench 1, were difficult to interpret even with excavation. It is possible that they simply represent changes in the geology or are the result of ridge and furrow. Feature **127** should be regarded in the same way, however this feature most resembles a ditch cut. The dimensions and alignments of the two features is enough to prove they are not separately the continuation of the same feature, however they may be related. The patch of burning (**121**), may have been a small pit with the remains of a bonfire thrown in or, may have just been thrown into the top of linear feature **171**.

6.2 Trench 2

The water pipeline ran down the middle of the majority of Trench 2, and so a large proportion of the trench could therefore not be excavated below the sub-soil to limit the potential damage to the pipe. The post-medieval activity seen in Trench 2 is most likely a result of agricultural activity, and the farm worker's residence. The well (**109**) probably served these structures and activity, and undoubtedly relates to the still standing farm structures across the road. The reduction in the size of the agricultural activity in the vicinity is probably a result of the introduction of modern farming methods. The two ditches (**131** and **133**) are almost certainly field boundaries, and although below the sub-soil are undated.

6.3 Trench 3

As with trench 2 this trench contained much evidence for post-medieval activity, including demolished structures and another well (**148**) again these may indicate the presence of farm workers dwellings.

The large pit features (**155**) and (**168**), due to their size and the stony gravel geology they had been dug into, may have been the result of quarrying. An explanation for this quarrying could be the result of gravel extraction for the maintenance and repair of Stane Street. Stane Street is likely to have seen continuous use since its construction in the Roman period, during its long and constant use, maintenance and repair would have been essential.

6.4 Trench 4

No features were observed in this trench and the depth of the subsoils was sufficient to limit impact to any possible archaeological remains. Subsoil depths can be seen in Section 7(Fig. 4)

7 Conclusions

Residual finds evidence suggests some limited, Early Neolithic and Iron Age activity within the area, although no features were identified.

Previous investigation focused at the eastern end of the site, showed Roman activity, and this was supported in the excavation. Although the feature observed appears to have been a boundary ditch, the finds, in particular from (162), suggest habitation in relative close proximity. The probable quarries (155) and (168), may have been associated with medieval road repair, I would expect further similar examples along the alignment of the road. Feature 160 appears to represent a medieval field boundary, with its alignment and position suggesting smaller field plots, than the later larger fields. The remainder of the archaeological features were attributed to post-medieval activity.

These remains appeared to respect the road and to relate to existing structures on the opposite side of the road. This is best seen with the remains in Trench 2, which contained was evidence for out buildings, which may have been part of a larger farm complex. Certainly all the evidence would point to agricultural use, and some associated domestic activity.

The site followed the alignment of the modern road (A120), which in turn also follows the course of the Roman road (Stane Street). The road itself appears to have remained in use, with people living and working by it.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Anglian Water who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond Murray.

The brief for archaeological works was agreed by Pat Connell , who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

Bibliography

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Davies, H., 2002, *Roads in Roman Britain*, Tempus Publishing Ltd, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

Appendix 1:

Context Tables:

Trench 1

Context	Cut	Trench	Category	Feature Type	Length	Width	Depth
100	101	1	fill	pit	0	1.95	0.1
101	0	1	cut	pit		1.95	0.1
102	0	1	cut	hearth		1.14	0.09
103	102	1	fill	hearth		1.14	0.09
104	0	1	layer	sub soil			0.6
120	120	1	fill	pit	0		0.15
121	0	1	cut	pit	0		0.15
122	0	1	layer	subsoil	0		
123	171	1	fill	linear	0	0.98	0.11
124	0	1	layer	clay band/subsoil	0		
125	0	1	natural	natural	0		
126	127	1	fill	linear/ furrow	0.5	0.75	0.25
127	0	1	cut	linear	0.5	0.75	0.24
140	0	1,2,3,4	layer	topsoil	0		
170	0	1,2,3,4	layer	natural	0		
171	0	1	cut	linear	0.5	0.98	0.11

Trench 2

Context	Cut	Trench	Category	Feature Type	Length	Width	Depth
105	0	2	cut	stake hole		0.17	0.13
107	109	2	fill	well	2.6	1.5	0.85
108	109	2	fill/ lining	well	2.6	2.6	
109	0	2	cut	well	0	2.6	
110	111	2	fill	midden deposit	0		0.1
111	0	2	cut	midden	0		0.1
112	0	2	layer	demolition spread	0		
113	114	2	fill	post hole	0.3	0.45	0.5
114	0	2	cut	post hole	0.3	0.45	0.5
128	129	2	fill	pit	0.8	0.5	0.28
129	0	2	cut	pit	0.8	0.5	0.25
130	131	2	fill	linear	0.6		0.3
131	0	2	cut	linear	0.6		0.3
132	133	2	fill	ditch	0.5	0.7	0.25
133	0	2	cut	ditch	0.5	0.7	0.25
138	0	2	layer	subsoil	0		0.4
169	0	2	layer	subsoil	0		0.55

Trench 3









Context	Cut	Trench	Category	Feature Type	Length	Width	Depth
134	0	3	layer	subsoil	0		
135	0	3	layer	demolition layer	0		0.3
136	0	3	layer	construction	0		0.5
137	0	3	layer	construction	0		0.2
139	141	3	fill	furrow	0.5	0.7	0.2
141	0	3	cut	furrow	0.5	0.7	0.2
142	143	3	fill	furrow	0.4	0.8	0.3
143	0	3	cut	furrow	0.4	0.8	0.3
144	145	3	fill	pit	0.9		0.18
146	0	3	layer	demolition/subsoil	0		0.5
147	148	3	fill	well	0	1.5	
148	0	3	probable cut	well	0	1.5	
149	0	3	layer	demolition	0		0.3
150	0	3	natural	natural	0		
151	152	3	fill	pit	0	1.6	
152	0	3	cut	pit	0	1.6	
153	0	3	layer	demolition spread/subsoil	0		0.15
154	155	3	fill	pit	2	9.8	0.65
155	0	3	cut	pit	2	9.8	1
156	155	3	fill	pit	2	8.4	0.4
157	155	3	fill	pit	2	8.35	0.35
158	160	3	fill	ditch	0	0.48	0.2
159	160	3	fill	ditch	0	2.7	0.3
160	0	3	cut	ditch	0.8	5	0.5
161	162	3	fill	ditch	0	1.4	0.26
162	0	3	cut	ditch	0	1.4	0.26
163	0	3	cut	ditch	0	0.95	0.26
164	163	3	fill	ditch	0	0.95	0.26
165	168	3	fill	pit	10.5		0.7
166	168	3	lens	pit	0	4.75	0.1
167	168	3	fill	pit	0	9	0.1
168	0	3	cut	pit	0	10.5	0.9

Trench 4



Context	Cut	Trench	Category	Feature Type	Length	Width	Depth
115	0	4	layer	top soil (Trench 4)	0		0.2
116	0	4	layer	subsoil			0.3
117	0	4	layer	subsoil	0		0.3
118	0	4	layer	subsoil	0		0.2
119	0	4	lens	subsoil	0		0.04

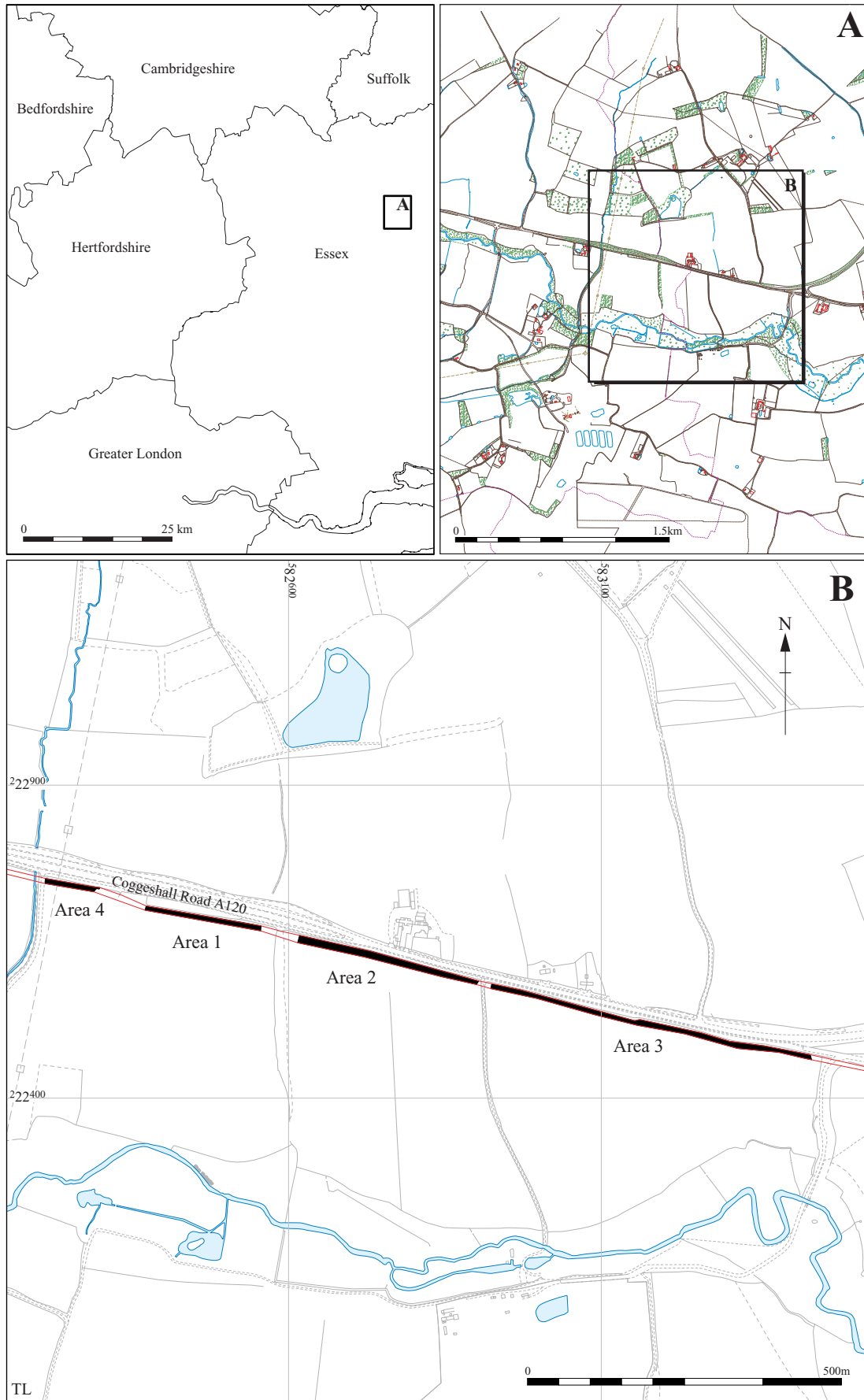
Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation		
Deposit - Conjectured		
Sondages/Machine Strip		
Intrusion/Truncation		
Illustrated Section	S.14	
Cut Number	118	Deposit Number 117
Archaeological Deposit		Brick 
Excavated Slot		Spread 
Tiles		Burning 
Ridge and Furrow		Clay Lining 

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		
Charcoal		



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Figure 2: Location of excavated areas (black) with pipeline easement highlighted in red

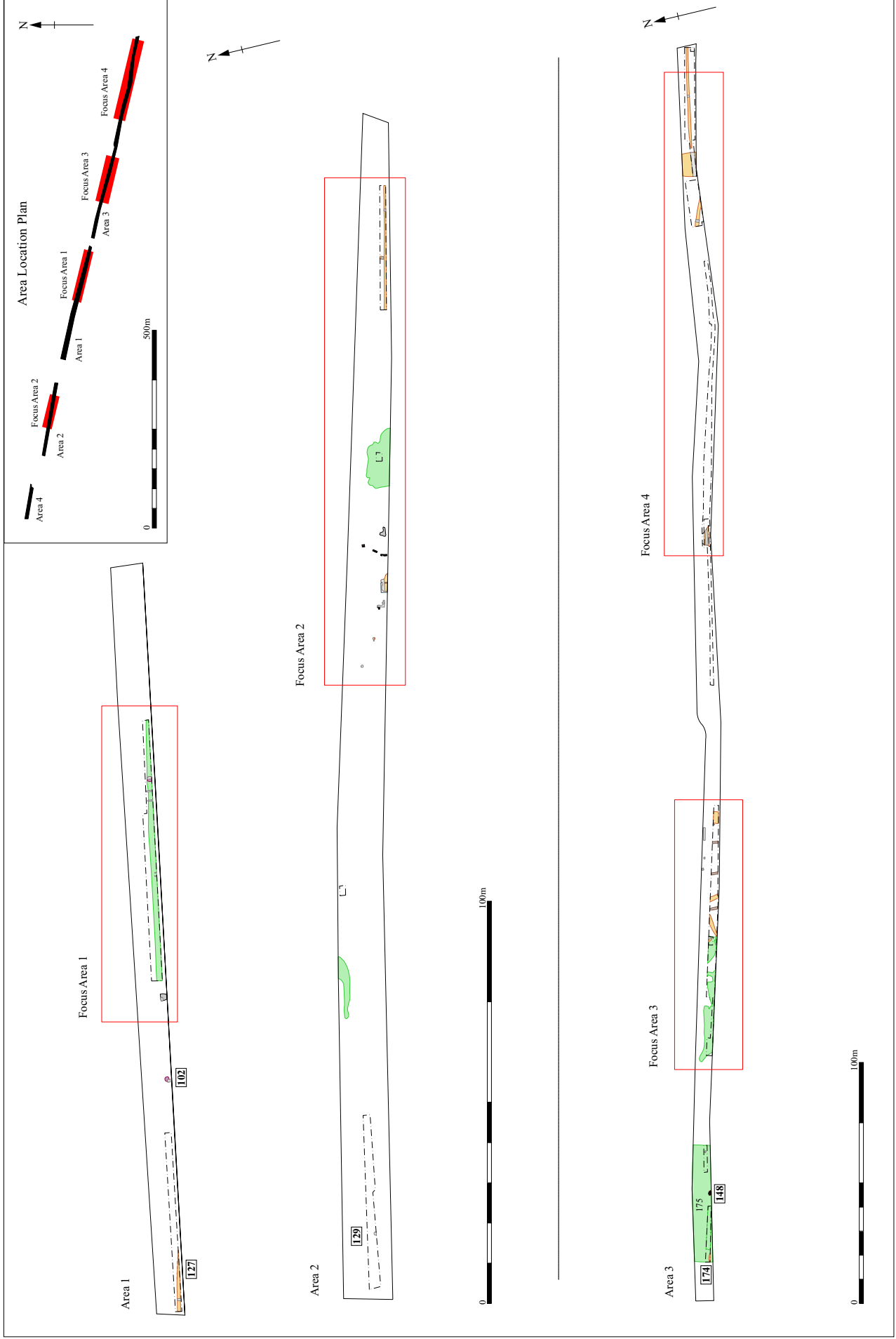


Figure 2: Plan of excavated areas showing focus areas highlighted in red

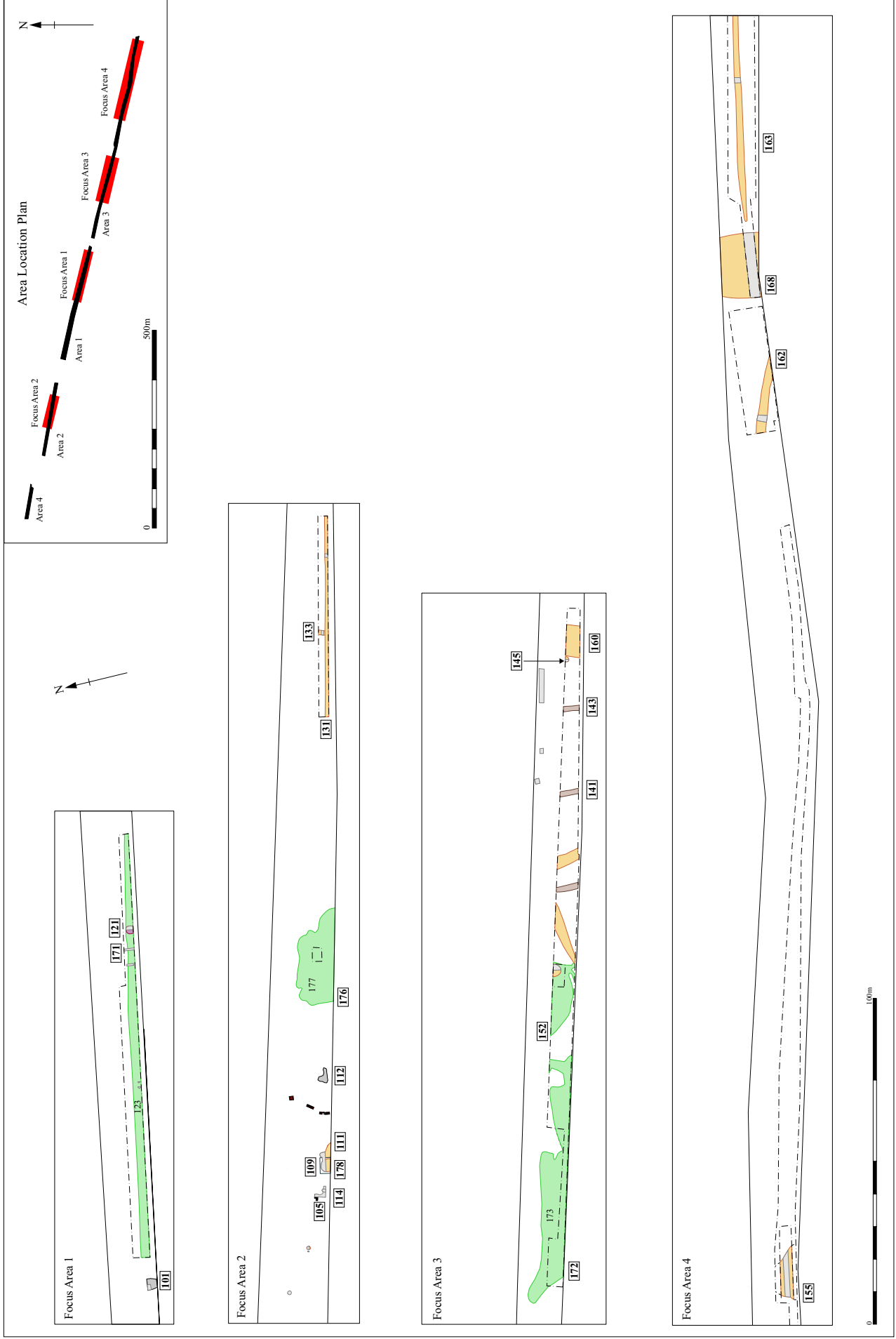


Figure 3: Plan of focus areas

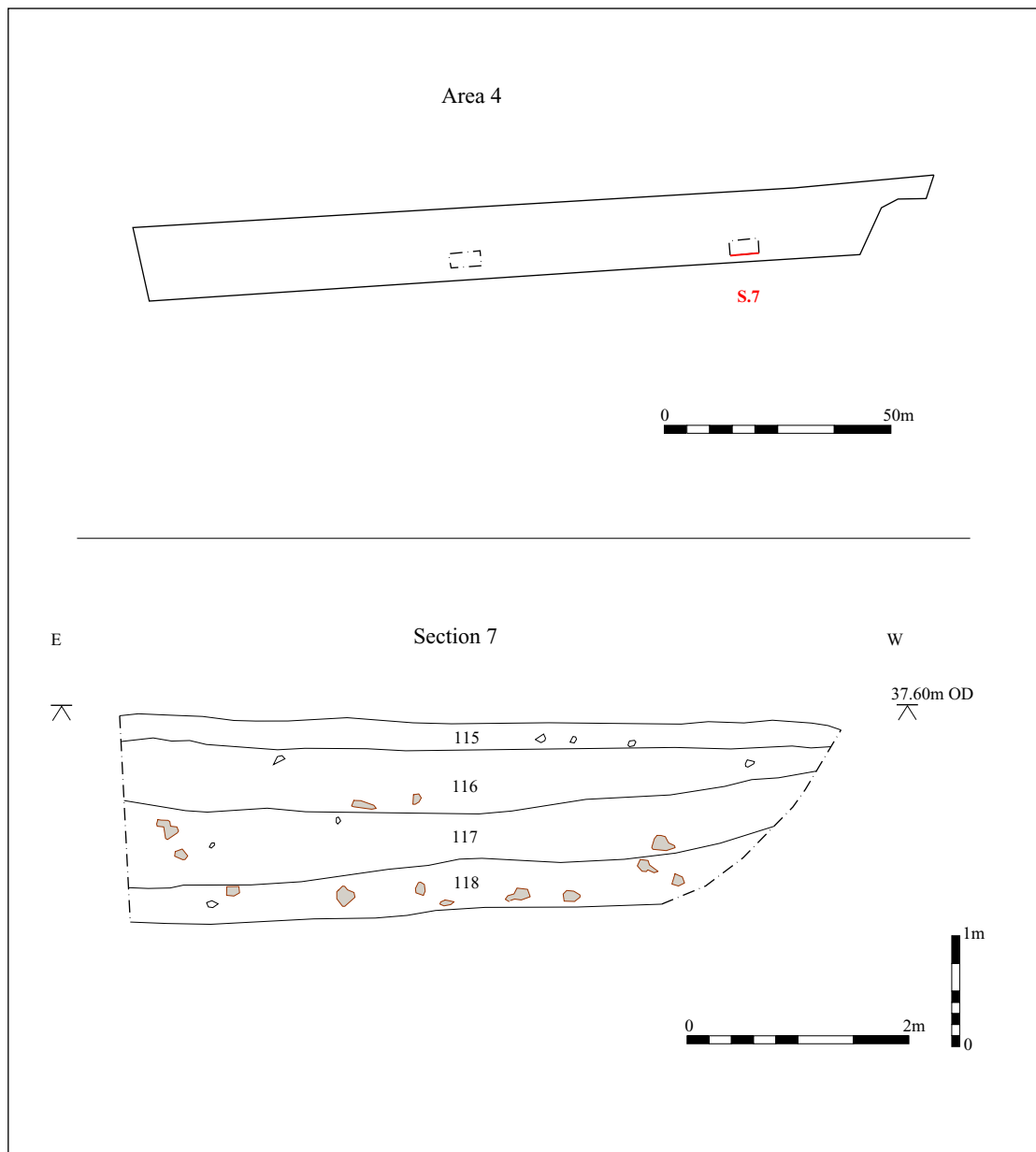
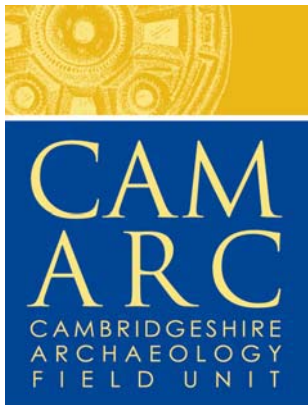


Figure 4: Section and location



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