

June 2008

CAM ARC Report Number 1034

Land to the rear of 1 The High Street, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge

Evaluation Report

Will Punchard BA

With contributions by Chris Faine BA MA MSc
and Paul Spoerry BTech Hons PhD MIFA

Site Code: CAM HIN 08
CHER Event Number: ECB 2920
Date of works: 21st/22nd May 2008
Grid Ref: TL 4860 5628

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CAM ARC OASIS Report Form

OASIS Number: cambridg1-43772

PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Land to the rear of 1 The High Street, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge.			
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the land to the rear of 1 The High Street, Cherry Hinton Cambridge, on behalf of Dudley Developments. Just over 6% of the development site was investigated by trial trenching. This revealed several layers representing medieval land reclamation, and modern land levelling. Also 3 small medieval pits were found indicating activity on the site close to the previous medieval street frontage. Prehistoric remains were present in the form of a previous land surface, which contained animal bone, Bronze Age flint flakes and one piece of disarticulated HSR.			
Project dates	Start	21 st May 2008	End	22 nd May 2008
Previous work	None		Future work	Yes
Associated project reference codes	CAM HIN 08 ECB 2920			
Type of project	Evaluation			
Site status	None			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Residential			
Planned development	Urban Residential			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	Buried Land Surface / Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age Buried Land Surface / Middle Medieval Pits / Unknown			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	None			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Cambridge	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	1 The High Street, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 9HY			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	575sq.m			
National grid reference	TL 4860 5628			
Height OD	Min OD	11.98	Max OD	12.94
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Andrew Thomas			
Project design originator	Richard Mortimer			
Director/supervisor	Will Punchard			
Project manager	Richard Mortimer			
Sponsor or funding body	Developer – Dudley Developments			
ARCHIVES	Location and accession number	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)		
Physical	CAMARC	Plans, Drawings, Site Records, Finds (Bone, Ceramic)		
Paper	CAMARC	Site Records, Maps, Correspondence		
Digital	CAMARC	Report, Finds data, Specialist Reports, Plans		
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Land to the rear of 1 The High Street Cherry Hinton: An Archaeological Evaluation			
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Date	29/05/2008			

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 21st and 22nd May 2008, at the land to the rear of 1 The High Street, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, on behalf of Dudley Developments. Just over 6% of the development site was investigated by trial trenching. This revealed several layers representing medieval land reclamation, and modern land levelling. Also three small possible medieval pits were found indicating activity on the site close to the previous medieval street frontage. Prehistoric remains were present in the form of a previous land surface, which contained animal bone, Early Bronze Age flint flakes and one piece of disarticulated human bone.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andrew Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application 08/0084/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990).

The 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 upper beds lower chalk, (British Geological Survey 1985, sheet 205), towards the southwestern edge of the Cherry Hinton peninsula. Immediately to the west of the site lies Cherry Hinton Hall and its associated grounds. To the southwest the ground rises sharply up to the war ditches monument (as outlined below), and Cherry Hinton High Street runs parallel to the east of the development area.

The site is centred around TL 4860 5628 and lies at 12 to 13m OD.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies immediately to the northeast of the Spring Head, a water source exploited since at least the Bronze Age and with a system of leats and streams constructed in the medieval and later periods.

An Early Bronze Age Barbed and Tanged arrowhead (CHER 04827) was found on the Netherhall Lower School site during the digging of Allotment Gardens, prior to the construction of the Lower School. Two disc or bell barrows (CHER 04964, 04965) were recorded during quarrying 150/200 yards from the War Ditch monument (CHER 04963a). Grooved ware and Beaker pottery was also recovered.

The War Ditches monument is/was located to the southwest of the proposed development site. Identified first during quarrying in 1893 and partially excavated between 1893-1903 (ECB601) by Crawley and Tebbutt and later by Prof. T McKenny Hughes. It was subsequently excavated by TC Lethbridge in 1939 (ECB617) and again between 1949-51 (ECB603). The War Ditches was clearly an important Iron

Age settlement site and is significant in the understanding of Iron Age Cambridgeshire and the tribal boundaries of the southern fen edge, notably its location between the territories of the Catuvelunai and Trinovantes. However, it is unclear whether the monument was of Iron Age or earlier origins. The site is known to have been occupied in the 3rd century BC and it may have been destroyed (with possible evidence for a massacre) in the mid 1st century BC. Excavations at the site have uncovered earthwork defensive banks and ditches, pits, postholes for wooden structures, skeletons, stone, bone, ivory and horn objects as well as pottery.

A Roman settlement was recorded on the War Ditches site (CHER 04963b) dating to the 1st-2nd centuries AD. This included at least two buildings, a palisade and ditches, a well, pottery kiln and pits. In addition inhumation burials were also recorded. 'Celtic fields' are also recorded 500 yards to the southeast (CHER 04830). Roman pottery and a skeleton were also found to the west of War Ditches (CHER 05126, 05126a) during quarrying.

A 6th/7th century Saxon cemetery (CHER 04965a) was also excavated at the War ditches site, these were secondary inhumations within the Bronze Age barrows and contained a range of grave goods including spears, knives, Fe and Cu alloy objects, bone comb, pottery and a crystal ball mounted on bronze.

While the early Ordnance survey maps show no structures the site the area immediately to the north was occupied by a Smithy until relatively recent times.

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 minimum of 5% of the development area (575 sq m) be subjected to trial trenching. Two trenches totalling 38 sq m (6.6%) were placed within the building footprint with a view to placing a third, small, 2m² test pit at the front of the building. However a planning condition on this area of land, due to its proximity to some trees, meant this test pit could not be excavated.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.5m 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.

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.

Soil samples were taken from two contexts in order to assess their environmental potential. Both samples have been processed and the results are presented in Appendix 5

Site conditions were excellent throughout the excavation. Access to the site was clear and safe and the weather was dry and sunny for the most part.

5 Results

Two trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. Trench 1 ran east to west parallel to the existing building and was 15m x 1.52m wide and excavated by machine to a maximum depth of 1.32m. Trench 2 ran north to south and was 10m x 1.52m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 1.43m (Fig. 1).

Context 1 was assigned to the topsoil across the site, a mid-dark brown, sandy clay silt. This soil may have been imported onto the site around the time of the construction of the current building, 1948.

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 revealed several archaeological features and evidence of previous ground-raising (Fig. 2).

Below the topsoil layer (**1**) was a pale brown subsoil, layer **2**. This was present across the whole site, and was up to 0.50m thick. It consisted of a clayey silty soil, with occasional chalk and flint gravel inclusions. The datable finds from this layer were medieval (1150 – 1350), and fragments of possible Late Saxon Lava Quern were found towards the base of the layer.

The only feature cut into this layer was **15=4**, a steep sided pit measuring 1.50m wide and 0.72m deep. It had one fill (**14=3**), a dark grey brown clay silt with chalky flecks. One piece of early medieval pottery (1050 – 1225) was recovered from the section of the pit and is likely to be residual and not indicative of the date of the pit. A 10L sample of the soil was taken for analysis (sample 1).

Pit 7 was close to the intersection with Trench 2 at the western end of Trench 1. It was circular, 0.60m wide and 0.06m deep, and contained one piece of mineralised bone. The feature was sealed by layer 2.

Pit 7 had been cut into layer 5, which was up to 0.35m thick and consisted of a pale brown silt, possibly a weathered natural chalk layer. This layer contained the earliest evidence of activity on the site. All features truncated this layer and it lay above the natural chalk bedrock. Finds from this layer were sparse with just two pieces of struck flint (Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age) and 0.60kg of bone recovered.

5.2 Trench 2 – Results

Trench 2 contained two small pits and similar evidence for ground-raising (Fig. 2).

As in Trench 1, below the topsoil two separate layers were revealed. Layer 8 was equivalent to layer 2 and layer 9 equivalent to layer 5. Finds from both layers in this trench were consistent with those in Trench 1. Layer 8 produced medieval pottery (1150 – 1350) including one almost complete Ely Ware Type C Jug (1150 – 1450) (see Plate 1). Layer 9 again produced more bone and also a single human left femur from an individual no younger than 20 years of age.

Pit 11 was at the southern end of Trench 2 and measured 0.29m wide and 0.15m deep. The fill (10) was a pale brown silt, similar to layer 9 and the pit was only recorded in section. It contained one piece of medieval pottery (1150 – 1350).

Pit 13 lay slightly to the north of 11 at the southern end of Trench 2 and was 0.62m wide and 0.23m deep. The fill (12) was a pale light brown silt, similar to that in pit 13 and was also only seen in section. It contained no finds.

Layer 16 was sealed below layer 8 and was up to 0.29m thick. It only appeared half way along Trench 2 and deepened gradually to the north. There was no evidence for it in Trench 1 and it could not be seen in the southern end of the section of Trench 2. It was a dark brown organic silty clay. Due to its organic content 40L of the soil was taken for environmental processing (sample 2).

6 Discussion

The evaluation yielded few negative archaeological features, suggesting a fairly low density of activity on the site, however as the results show, a lack of features does not necessarily correlate with a lack of activity.

The earliest archaeological activity on the site appears to be a layer of weathered natural chalk (**5=9**). It is possible that this represents a previous land surface. A few discarded flint flakes dating to Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period were found, alongside some animal bone and one piece of human bone. The proximity of the site to the natural spring and brook might suggest that it would have seen persistent but low level activity over a long time span. However, the evaluation did not reveal any intrusive features that could be assigned to this early phase.

The next recordable phase of activity on the site was represented by a series of small, shallow pits, cutting into layer **5=9**. Three pits were revealed but only one produced any dating evidence, a single sherd of medieval (1150 – 1350) Ely ware.

All of the pits were sealed by layer **2=8** and therefore must be earlier in date. It is difficult to establish a function for these pits due to the lack of artefactual remains and their small size. Their proximity to the previous medieval street frontage could indicate they were perhaps postholes for some sort of structure, or they could originally have been much larger features and have been truncated by flooding or scouring from the nearby spring.

The main periods of activity on this site appear to come from two separate phases of ground-raising. The proximity of the site to a natural spring and brook would imply that the land would have been intermittently very wet. It would appear that layer **2=8** represents a phase of medieval ground reclamation and levelling. Finds from this layer were predominantly of the 12th to 14th centuries. However as they come from a levelling layer they do not necessarily represent activity taking place on the actual site and could have been brought in with the soil required to raise the ground level.

Layer **8** seals a previous turf line (**16**) which clearly shows the previous ground level before the ground-raising took place. No finds were recovered from this layer but the medieval levelling layer sealed it and it must therefore represent the early medieval ground surface.

The final phase of activity on the site comes from a modern levelling/topsoil layer. This was imported onto the site in 1948 when the current building was constructed (Mr. Singh, Pers Comm.) and contained mid 19th century pottery.

7 Conclusions

The site would have been the focus for a considerable amount of activity due to its location next to a natural spring. This would have attracted people and cattle in order to make use of its fresh water

supply at all periods of history. However, the collecting of water is not an activity that necessarily leaves much of a mark on the land itself.

The earliest evidence of activity dates to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and does not suggest that the area was directly occupied at this period, though it would almost certainly have been used for various activities. The flint waste flakes display evidence of human activity and two pieces of butchered cattle humerii were also recovered. The discovery of human remains was unexpected though not unusual for the area. Nearby excavations at the War Ditches site (CHER 04965a and 04965b) revealed inhumation burials from the Roman through to Saxon period. The remains on this site consisted solely of one left femur from a young adult and to find just this bone with no visible cut or grave is relatively unusual.

The site displays a fairly low level of activity in the prehistoric through to Roman periods, which could indicate that the land was wet and prone to seasonal flooding. This would partly explain the need in the medieval period to raise the ground level in order to reclaim the land and make it usable. Through the 12th – 13th centuries there was a growth in population and consequently an increase in the need for land, industry and food production. The ground-raising seen here would have been undertaken partly in order to canalise the water coming from the spring; this would not only provide more dry land as mentioned above, but also enable the water to be controlled and channelled to nearby mills, ponds and industrial works. On the land adjacent to this site at the north there was a smithy; this, for instance, would have required a constant water source for its everyday running.

Overall, the site, despite containing few archaeological features, displays a long chronological history of land use. From early prehistoric activity through to the medieval ground-raising in order to reclaim the land and canalise the stream.

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

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Sean Dudley at Dudley Developments who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. Thanks also to Graeme Clarke who helped excavate and record the site, Richard Mortimer who edited the report and Séverine Bézie for creating the illustrations.

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

Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1985

Geological Maps of England and Wales, Drift Edition, Sheet 205

Appendix 1: Context summary

Context	Same as	Cut	Trench	Category	Feature Type	Function	Length	Width	Depth	Colour	Fine component	Coarse component	Compaction	Shape	Side	Base	Profile
1		01		layer		TOPSOIL	0		0.4	Mid grey brown	sandy clayey silt	occ gravel	soft friable				
28		01		layer		Subsoil	0		0.5	Pale Brown	Clayey Silt	Occ chalk gravel and flint gravel	loose - mod				
3		41		fill	post hole	disuse	0.75	0.75	0.12	pale - light grey brown	clayey silt	occ chalk and flint gravel	firm				
4		01		cut	post hole	structure	0.75	0.75	0.12					circular	steep	flat	wide flat based u
59		01		layer		Subsoil	0			very pale brown	chalky silt	rare flint gravel	soft				
6		71		fill	post hole	disuse	0.6	0.6	0.06	Light pale brown	silt	rare flint gravel	loose				
7		01		cut	post hole	structure	0.6	0.6	0.06					circular	gentle	flat	truncated u shape
82		02		layer		subsoil	0			Pale Brown	Silt	Occ chalk and flint gravel	loose - mod				
95		02		layer		subsoil	0			very pale brown	chalky silt	rare flint gravel	soft				
10		112		fill	pit	disuse			0.15	pale brown	silt	rare chalk gravel	firm				
11		02		cut	pit	unknown	0		0.15					circular	steep	flat	u shaped
12		1312		fill	post hole	disuse	0	0.62	0.23	pale light brown	silt	occ chalk grit	firm				
13		02		cut	post hole	structure	0	0.62	0.23					circular	gradual	concave	u shaped
14		151		fill	pit	disuse	0			dark grey brown	clayey silt	chalk gravel	firm				
15		01		cut	pit	unknown	0	1.5	0.6					?	steep	concave	u shaped
16		02		layer	buried soil	Turf Line	0			dark brown	silty clay	rare gravel	firm				

Appendix 2: Pottery Assessment

by Paul Spoerry

Context 1: Date – Late 19th Century

1 x EMESMIC , Early Medieval Essex micaceous ware (1050-1225)
 2 x Bone china (19th Cent)
 1 x Transfer printed Bowl/Plate (19th Cent)

Context 2: Date – 1250 – 1350

1 x GRIM, Base of Grimstow jug – 1250-1500
 2 x DNEOT bowl, Developed St. Neots type ware bowl – 1100-1200
 1 x SHW, Shellyware – 1150-1350
 1 x Poss Roman Base sherd

Context 8: Date 1150 – 1250

1 x MSW, Medium Sandy Ware Jug Base
 1 x EMESMIC, Early Medieval Essex micaceous ware – rims of jug or spouted pitcher 1125-1225
 6 x DNEOT, Developed St. Neots ware bowl rim (rounded profile) 1100-1200
 7 x EMESMIC Early Medieval Essex Micaceous ware, assorted North Essex micaceous and sandy ware mostly type 13 1050-1225
 41 x MEL, Medieval Ely Ware – almost complete vessel Jug type C, small shouldered jug 1150-1450

Context 10

1 x MEL, Medieval Ely ware 1150-1350

Context 14

2 x EMESMIC, Early Medieval Essex Micaceous ware 1050-1225

Appendix 3: Finds Summary: The CBM, Fired Clay, Lava Quern and Flint

by Will Punchard

Context	Quantity	Weight	Dimensions	Artefact	Description	Date
1	1		55mm x 100mm	Hand made Brick (incomplete)	Well made Arises	1750-1850
2	28	0.473kg		Neidermending Lava quern		Late Saxon – Early med (950 – 1300)
2	1			Roman Box Flue Tile	Groove/scoring	3 rd – 4 th Century
5	2			Flint flake	No re-touching	Late Neolithic – Early Bronze Age (2500 – 1500BC)
8	1			Fired clay	Possible structure, kiln?/oven?/ building? Well-baked appearance. One Wattle hole present	
8	1			Roman Tegula (fragment)	Well made	3 rd – 4 th Century

Appendix 4: Faunal Remains

by Chris Faine

The extremely small assemblage consists of only 8 identifiable fragments with three unidentifiable pieces. Context **5** contained the right tibia from a horse around 2 years of age along with portions of butchered cattle radius and pig ulna. Context **6** contained a single horse 1st phalanx. A right cattle metacarpal (possibly from a steer) was recovered from context **8**. Two butchered cattle humeri were recovered from context **9**.

As mentioned above this is an extremely small assemblage and therefore no further work is required.

References

Davis, S.J.M. 1992. *A rapid method of recording information about mammal bones from archaeological sites*. London: English Heritage AML Report 19/92.

Human Skeletal remains

In addition to the faunal remains a single left human femur was recovered from context **9** from an individual no younger than 20 years of age.

References

Brickley, M & McKinley, J. I. Eds. 2004 *Guidelines to the standards for recording human remains*. IFA Paper No. 7.

Appendix 5: Environmental Assessment

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

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

Ten litres of each sample 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 and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 1.

2 Results

The results are recorded on Table 1.

Preservation is by charring and is generally poor. Occasional abraded charred cereal grains are present in both samples. A single barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain was identified. The other grains are probably wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains.

Sample Number	Context Number	Context type	Flot contents	Residue Contents
1	3	Pit	Charred grain, grass seed	No finds
2	16	Buried soil	Charred grain	No finds

Table 1: Environmental Samples from CAM HIN 08

3 Discussion











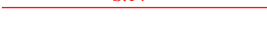



The samples were poor in terms of identifiable material. The charred plant remains consist of cereal grains that were all poorly preserved, either because of taphonomic factors or because they had been charred at a high temperature.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations













In conclusion, the samples showed only a low abundance of charred material that is not considered worthy of further analysis.

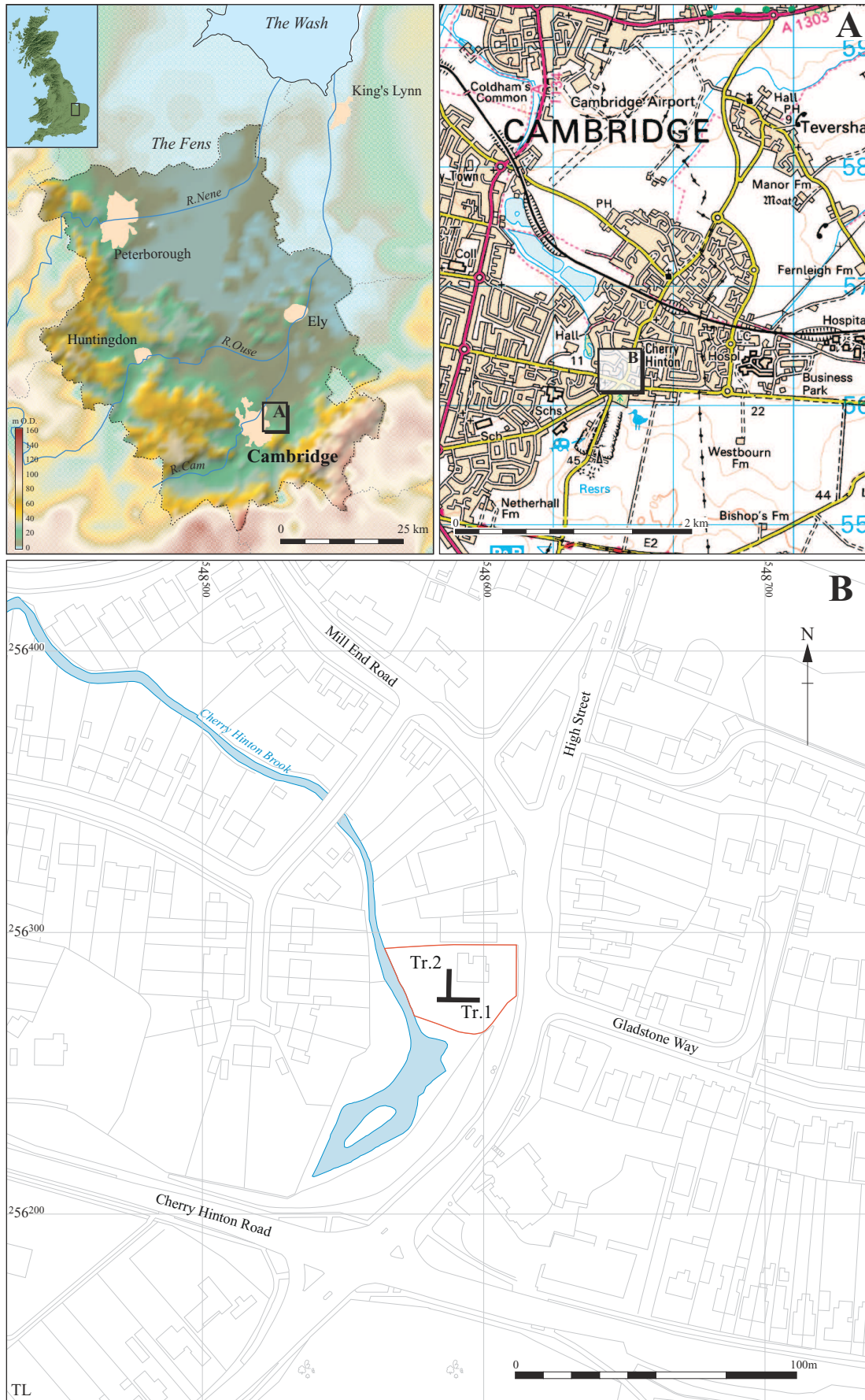
Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation	
Evaluation Trench	
Deposit - Conjectured	
Natural Features	
Sondages/Machine Strip	
Test Pit	
Intrusion/Truncation	
Undercut	
Cut	
Illustrated Section	
Archaeological Feature	
Excavated Slot	
Cut Number	
Spot Find	

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	
Natural Deposit	
Cut Number	
Ordnance Datum	
18.45m OD	
Deposit Number	117
Clunch	



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

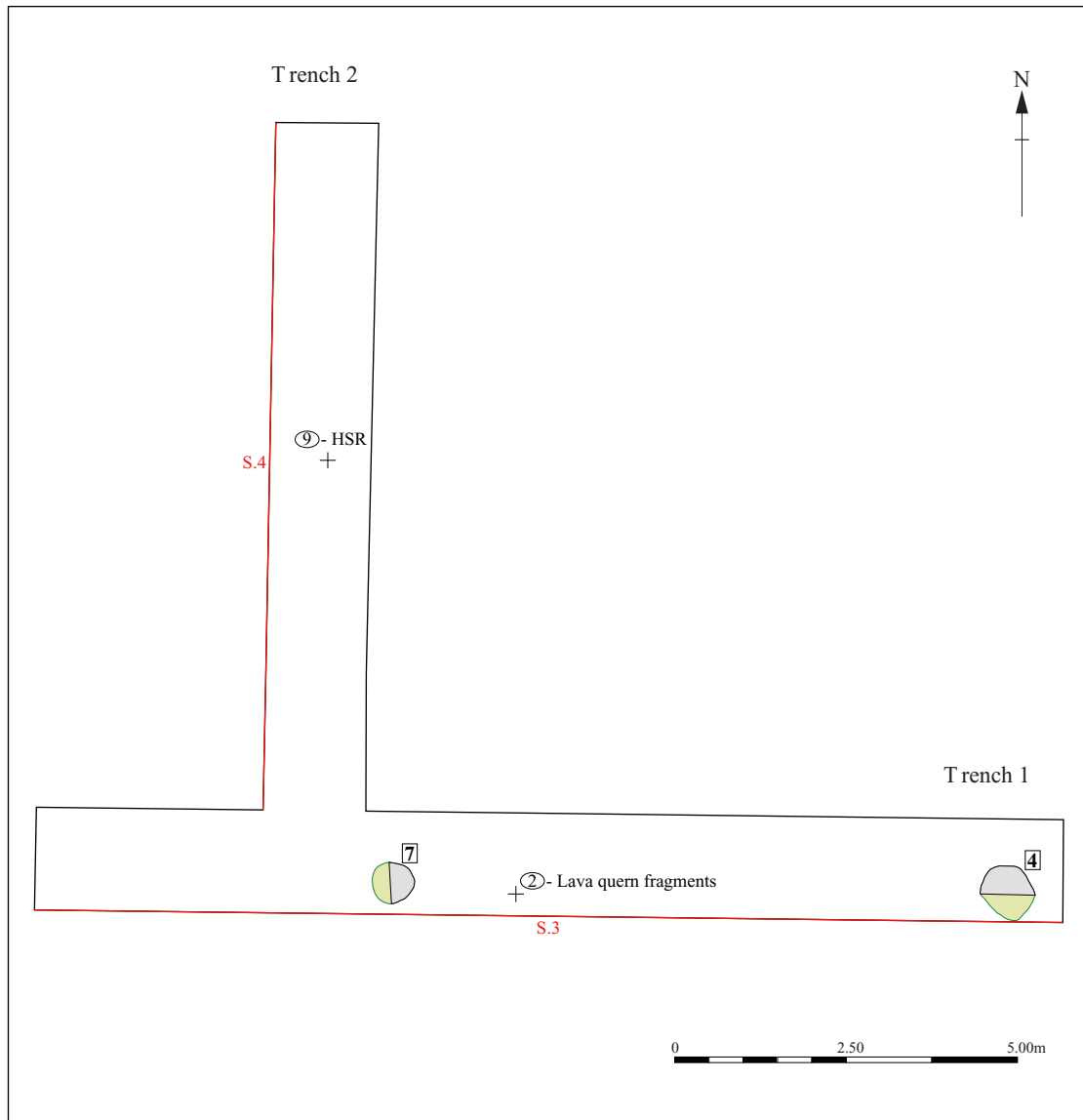


Figure 2: Trench plans

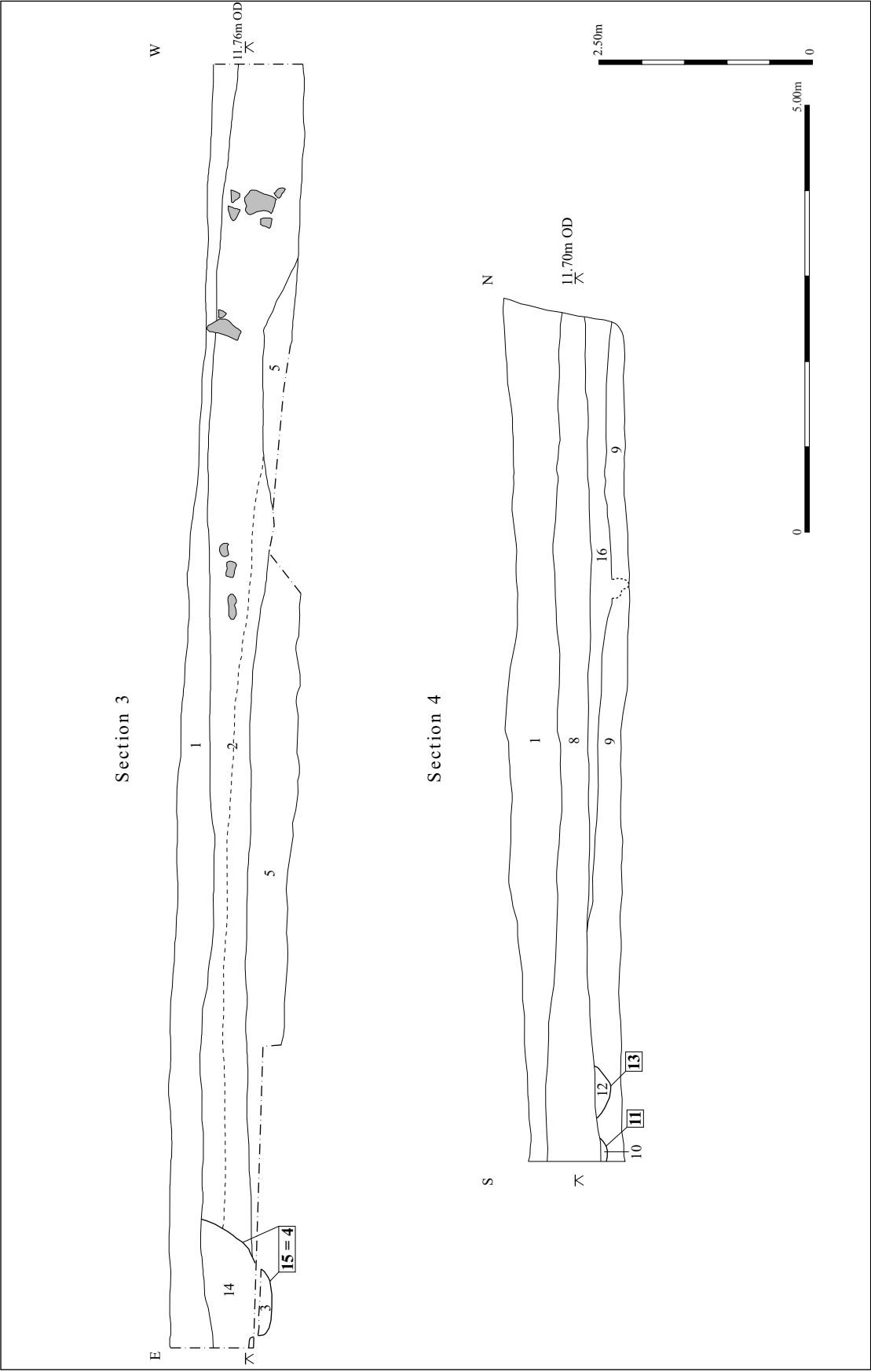


Figure 3: Section drawings



Plate1: Trench 1 Section Western end



Plate 2: Trench 2 Section Northern end



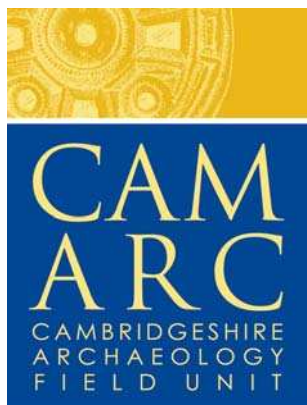
Plate3: Trench 1 post excavation



Plate 4: Trench 2 post excavation



Plate 5: Medieval Ely ware type C jug



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