



**CAM ARC Report Number 904**

## **Medieval Settlement in Brook Street, Soham, Cambridgeshire**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation**

Glenn Bailey

September 2006

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## **An Archaeological Evaluation**

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## Summary

During September 2006 six trenches totalling approximately 50m were excavated within a development comprising of No. 78 Brook Street, and its adjacent plot.

Three phases of buildings, dated by pottery, were recorded from this archaeological excavation. The initial phase was dated to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> to mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, a second phase to the mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century and a third to the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century to present phase.

The remains were found to consist of street-front quarrying behind which was a ditch running parallel to the road, separating the quarry and roadside from the domestic activity behind.

Historic maps state quarries on the other side of the road were for clunch extraction, which may be the reason for those encountered on this site. Alternatively the chalk may have been extracted for use in lime production.

Whilst the pattern of postholes and pits (most noticeable in Trenches 3 and 4) does not produce definitive building outlines, it does show that successive dwellings were erected within the same broad footprint. This can be attributed to an established division of land use for the plot. The extraction of minerals from the front of the property has determined, to quite a high degree, the location of buildings within the plot. The dating of pottery from features on the site indicates continuity in the exploitation of the site from the high medieval period through to the present day for mineral extraction and relatively low status dwellings for people and stock.

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# Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation	Limit of Excavation
Cut	Deposit - Conjectured
Cut-Conjectured	Natural Features
Deposit Horizon	Sondages/Machine Strip
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	Intrusion/Truncation
Intrusion/Truncation	Illustrated Section <span style="color: red; font-size: small;">S.14</span>
Top Surface/Top of Natural	Archaeological Deposit
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	Archaeological Feature
Natural Deposit	Excavated Slot
Cut Number	Root Disturbance
Deposit Number 117	Brick
Ordnance Datum $\overline{18.45\text{m OD}}$	Cut Number <b>118</b>
Inclusions	

## **1 Introduction**

During September 2006, the AFU carried out an archaeological evaluation on the site of the plot of 78-82 Brook Street, Soham, Cambridgeshire.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdanic of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/0247/06/O), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

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 CCC AFU and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

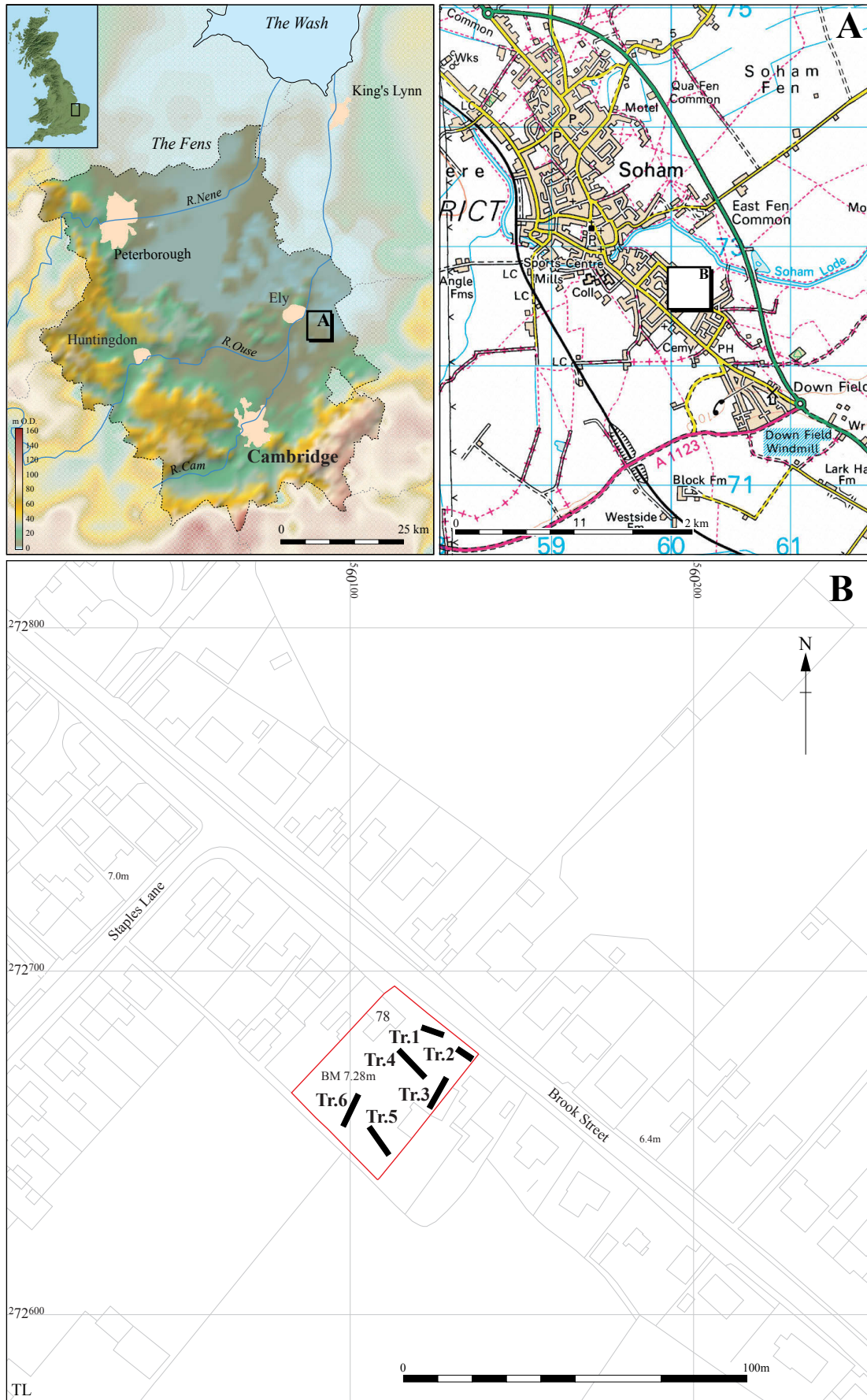
## **2 Geology and Topography**

Soham is a large village lying approximately 8km southeast of Ely and is situated on an irregular peninsular of Bedford Lower Chalk overlain by 1<sup>st</sup> Terrace sand and gravels. Soham Lode runs parallel to Brook Street some 350m to the northeast. The site lies at approximately 7.00m OD, well above the medieval fen edge.

## **3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **3.1 Prehistoric**

The fen-edge around Soham and the Snail Valley has a long history of human activity. Sites and find spots in the immediate vicinity include Mesolithic and Neolithic remains recorded to the northwest of Broad Hill, where a large quantity of worked flints, including axes, knives and scrapers, were recovered (Hall 1996). To the north and northeast of the village the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) records Neolithic artefacts at MCB8560, 12952, 12953 and 14568 and



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



a Late Bronze Age brooch at MCB12953. An evaluation in the town centre at St Andrew's House produced a single Bronze Age ditch (Casa Hatton 2000).

Evidence of later prehistoric, Iron Age, activity in and around Soham is relatively scarce. A site was located on the hilltop at Henney, on the periphery of Stuntney (Hall 1996). Iron Age features were found to the southwest of the development area, on Clay Lane and may represent an enclosure (Nichol 2002) and a large evaluation at the Fordham Road allotments produced settlement remains dating to the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (Connor 2001). Further remains were recorded in Soham itself at St Andrew's House (Atkins 2004).

### **3.2 Roman**

Coins of Roman date have been found to the north (MCB8554), in the vicinity of an undated ring ditch (MCB8561). Human skeletal remains of possible Roman date have been found in the area of White Hart Lane (MCB8413). The evaluation at Fordham Road allotments, the closest archaeological evaluation to the subject site, also produced significant Romano-British settlement remains alongside those of the Late Iron Age (Connor 2001).

### **3.3 Anglo-Saxon & Medieval**

Funerary remains attest early Saxon occupation at Soham from three cemeteries. Burials were discovered in the church graveyard (TL 5998 7239) where grave goods and stray finds included brooches, several beads and spearheads (Fox 1923). Another cemetery was located at the Soham/Fordham Waterworks some 1200m to the southeast of the subject site, during excavations conducted in the 1930s (Lethbridge 1933). Some 23 furnished inhumations (and 2 cremations) were identified and assigned to the 6th-7th century. Further Anglo-Saxon human skeletal remains (MCB 13882) were uncovered in the rear garden of a house located on White Hart Lane. Evidence suggested that they were not *in situ*, and may have originally belonged to the same cemetery as the burials from the church graveyard (Robinson 1995).

Present day Soham is Early Saxon in origin. 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). As yet there has been no definite archaeological evidence for Middle Saxon activity in Soham, though a single sherd of Ipswich ware was recovered during excavations at St Andrew's House (Atkins 2004).

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).

## **4 Methodology**

The location of the trenches was adjusted so as to accommodate a large tree that will be retained, as well as to avoid any potential services (identified by the author using a hand held CAT scanner).

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Trench 1

Located along the northwest side of the development area, running parallel to from the present road front (Brook Street) at a distance of approximately 5m. The trench was 6.40m long, 1.55m wide and excavated up to a maximum depth of 1.46m below the present ground surface.

This trench contained a large cut feature, deemed to be a quarry, the longest exposed side of which ran paralleled to the road. The extent of this feature was shown to be in excess of 5.75m NW/SE, 1.20m NE/SW and over 1.46m deep.

Two segments were excavated through the quarry, **50** and **11**. Segment **11** (S.14), located at the southeastern end of the trench, was excavated to a depth of 1.46m in an attempt to reveal the base of the quarry. Segment **50** (S.13) was taken towards the northwest end of the trench where the edge of the feature turned in a regular curve leading into the northernmost baulk.

The stratigraphic sequence in segment **11** was essentially the same in as that found in **50**. The exposed sides of both **50** and **11** were nearly vertical from where they start to cut through the chalk bedrock.

Although the base of the feature was not exposed in either of these segments, some of the extensive stratigraphy was exposed and recorded. Underlying the topsoil (01) was a silty layer (02) containing modern building material that extended well beyond the quarry's limits.

Below this were two further clayey silt deposits (03 and 04) that were the latest in the sequence of the feature's fills to be exposed. A relatively thin deposit (05) composed of fairly sterile re-deposited chalk existed below them. This deposit *may* define the spoil resultant from the excavation of ditch **13** although the *observed* stratigraphic relationship (from this segment alone) between the two features confounds this possibility. Other segments taken through the quarry (S.3 and S.14) indicate that the ditch truncates the quarry fills. A silt deposit (06) was the next in the sequence, followed by one of gravel and sand (07). This deposit was by far the most voluminous of those exposed (up to 0.46m thick) in this segment. Below this was deposit 08, a mix of silt, sand and gravel which overlay a further re-deposited chalk fill (09). Deposit 09 was recorded as reaching 1.38m below the present ground level, but judging by the steepness of its lower horizon, would have gone deeper. The likelihood that this, rather than deposit

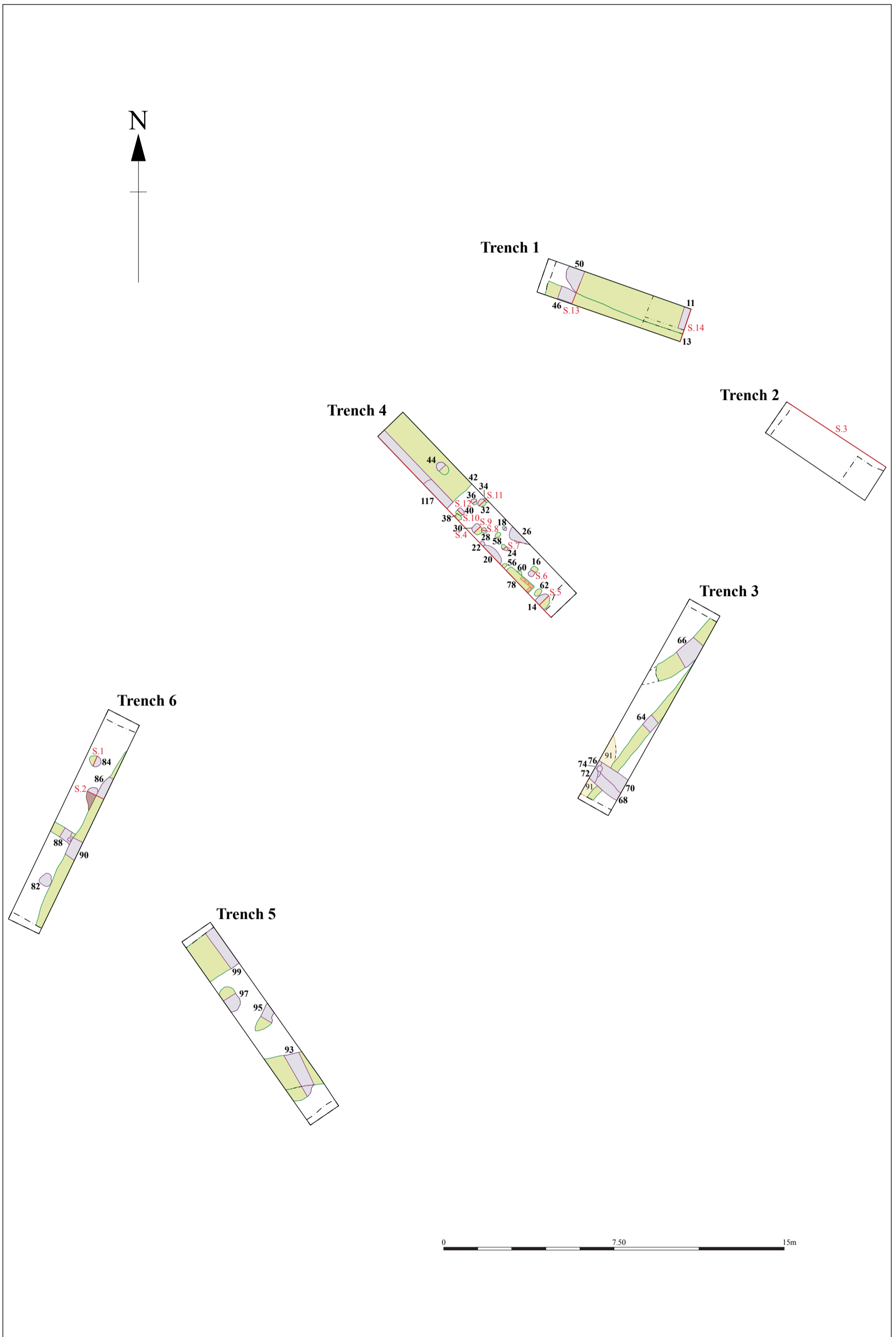


Figure 2: Trench plans

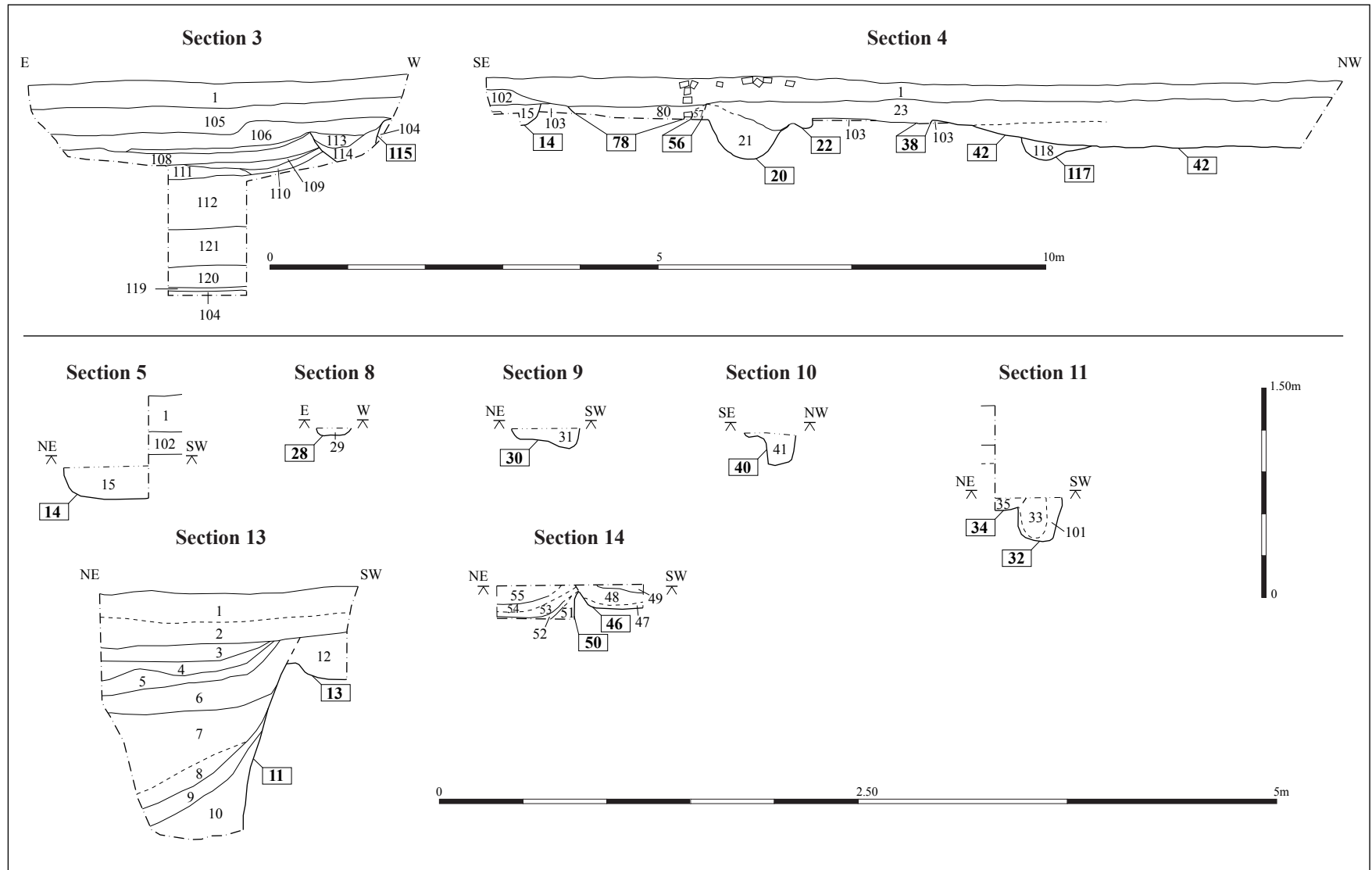


Figure 3: Section drawings

05, was spoil from the excavation of ditch **13**, is greater as there is no conflict with the (questionable) recorded stratigraphic sequence. The final deposit to be exposed in this segment was 10, a sandy silt that abutted the steep southern side of **11** for 0.57m and can be presumed to extend still further down. Deposit 10 can be seen to in all probability equate with 112 in S.3 from segment **116**. Extrapolating from this, one could expect the base of the quarry in this segment to be a further 1.2m below the limit of excavation.

The only other identified feature within this trench was a shallow linear ditch (**12, 46**) running parallel to the present road immediately to the southwest of the quarry (**50, 11**). The regularity of the ditch's alignment to that of the quarry – abutting the quarry edge for over 5m suggests it was cut to following this line and therefore post-dating it. The fills of this ditch were more clearly defined in segment **46**; basal deposit 47, a dark grey chalky clay occupying the lower 5cm of the ditch overlain by 48, a dark clayey chalk deposit occupy the greater part of the exposed ditch cut, and finally 49, a dark grey clay filling the final 10cm of the central part of the ditch. This last deposit contained coke fragments and may be associated with the extensive deposit 23 found in trench 3.

## **5.2 Trench 2**

Located at the easternmost corner of the site approximately 5m from the Brook Street road, at c.45 degrees to the line of Brook Street. The trench was 4.88m long, 1.55m wide and excavated up to a maximum depth of 1.40m below the present ground surface.

A massive feature occupied virtually the entire length and width of this trench. A second, very much smaller feature was picked up towards the extreme southern edge of the trench.

The larger of the two features, **116**, shared many of the characteristics of the quarry noted in trench one (**115**). The stratigraphic sequence comprised clays, re-deposited chalk and sand deposits. The lowest deposit exposed during initial machining, 112, was slightly silty sand, similar to deposit **10** (in cut **11** in trench 1) in soil composition, depth and position in the stratigraphical sequence and thus probably the same stratigraphic unit. Where the deposits here were subtly different from those in **11**, this can be attributed to their distance from the edge of the quarry where, in the case of trench 2, a greater impact from weathering had occurred. Further excavation of this feature allowed for three earlier deposits to be investigated. The full thickness of 112 was realised (0.68m). Below this a 0.50m thick dark, sandy silt deposit (121), that bore similarity to 112, was revealed. The underlying deposit, 120, was 0.26m thick and consisted of degrade chalk thoroughly mixed with weathered clay. The primary deposit (119) formed from degraded chalk was the last deposit exposed before the true base of the quarry was encountered.

The smaller feature, **115**, located at the far west of the trench and only recorded in section. Most likely a ditch truncated during machining, the alignment and dimensions of ditch **13** in trench 1 corresponded well enough for it to be considered a continuation of the same ditch. The two fills of **115** comprised a re-deposited primary chalk fill (114) occupying the greatest part of the apparent extent of the cut, and a secondary fill (113) of grey clay occupying the upper, eastern quarter of the feature.

### **5.3 Trench 3**

Trench 3 was positioned so as to identify any archaeological features that occurred along the eastern side of the site. It measured 9.50m long, 1.55m wide and was excavated up to a maximum of 1.12m below the level of the present ground surface.

This easternmost part of the site had stables on it in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and most likely before then. Photographic evidence shows that haystacks also occupied a large part of the site.

No direct evidence for the stables was observed in terms of structural elements at either ground level or during the excavation. What did perhaps indicate their presence was corrosive material, as would come from the stabling of horses, evident through the increased breakdown of soils, and the underlying chalk bedrock in this location.

The northern end of the trench had a shallow ditch that curved gently into the northeast baulk from a west-south-westerly direction. This ditch, **66**, measured 3.5m or 4.2m long, 0.82m wide and up to 0.10m deep. The discrepancy in length is due to the ephemeral nature of the southernmost part of the ditch. The terminus, if that is what it was, of the ditch was so shallow that it gave no clue to any further extent. The condition of the natural chalk was such that patchy staining diffused the edges markedly.

A service trench (**64**) was identified as running southwest to northeast for most of the trench's length. A section was taken through this to confirm its extent and depth (7.50m long, 0.26m deep and 0.11m deep).

At the southern end of the trench an amorphous feature revealed itself, through the cutting of a sondage, to be two shallow, possibly linear features, **68** and **70**, two pits **72** and **76** and a posthole **74**.

**68** was in excess of 1.30m long, at least 0.50m wide and 0.43m deep. **70** measured 1.64m long, at least 0.64m wide and 0.40m deep. The full extent of these features was not revealed and their undifferentiated fills (mid greyish brown chalky silt) suggest they were infilled during the same event.

Pit **72**, apparent on the trench baulk and southern sondage face, was at least 0.60m long, over 0.30m wide and 0.55m deep. Pit **76**, abutting **72**, was less exposed (0.35m by 0.28m by 0.33m deep) but shared the characteristics seen in the former. Between these two pits a small posthole (0.26m by 0.24m by 0.33m deep) was excavated. **74** was a neat sub-rectangular posthole aligned to the eastern edge of the two pits.

#### **5.4 Trench 4**

This trench was positioned close to the centre of the development area, parallel to the route of Brook Street. The trench measured 10.50m long, 1.55m wide and was excavated up to a depth of 1.08m below the present ground surface. It was the most archaeologically active in terms of number of features and the features exposed were also more varied than those within the other six trenches.

Almost all of the pits and postholes within this trench were cut into the degraded chalk natural (103) which defined the "B" horizon.

Of those features sixteen were postholes, one of which was evidently modern and will be omitted from further discussion here. The remainder can be categorised as illustrating a range in both plan and profile from a rounded "stake-hole" type to a more square-cut type. The vast majority of postholes were small and rounded and three were square in plan as well as profile.

The squarer postholes all had a physical association with one of the rounded postholes. Unfortunately the relationships were generally uncertain due to the very similar match in fill types (mid grey chalky clay) and depth of the relationship between fills.

Deposits within all the postholes were very similar in composition: mid grey chalky clay. The exceptions to this were deposits 101 and 57 in postholes **32** and **56** respectively.

Deposit 101, within posthole **32** was a post packing consisting of slightly clayey chalk. Deposit 118 within posthole **117** was in a feature that seemed by its fill and firmness to be of natural derivation. This contrasts with the shape of the feature, which was quite square in plan. This may be incidental but the feature will be considered as archaeological for this report.

Other than the postholes the trench contained three pits **14**, **20** and **26**, a structure **78** and another, undefined feature **42**.

Pit **14** measured 0.60m NW/SE and more than 0.60m NE/SW, where it extended into the trench baulk. The profile was concave with steep sides, a gradual break of slope to a concave base. In the trench baulk



the SE side of the pit showed a break of slope that may indicate a further relationship. Unfortunately the trench edge prevented any more investigation into the nature of this.

Pit **20** was similar to **14** in profile and probably in plan (as far as can be discerned) but considerably larger measuring 0.96m NW/SE and 0.30m NE/SW (again running into the baulk). The deposits filling **20**, **21** and **23** were quite different in extent. Whereas **21** was *almost exclusively* confined to the pits bounds, **23** extended for several metres beyond it to the north and west. **23** may represent a phase of deposition related to gardening and domestic waste disposal in a later period.

Sub-rectangular pit **26** was at least 1.06m long and 0.46m wide as both sides run into the trench baulk. The depth to which the feature was cut into the surrounding chalk was 0.06m. There was no indication of this feature extending beyond this level due to apparent heavy truncation.

Structure **78** was a demolished brick-built outside toilet (personal comment from the developer). Two of the brick courses (**79**) and the deposits within (**80**) were undisturbed and given separate numbers so as to readily distinguish them from that of the rest of the demolition that was overlying them.

The stratigraphic relationship and proximity of posthole **56** and structure **78** point towards the posthole being related to the structure i.e. as a post within a fence-line that would have lead to the "privy". The soil that fills **56** (**57**) was a mid greyish brown clay containing pottery sherds that confirm its date as being within one century of **78**. As very little else of this date was found in the trench one can reliably draw the conclusion that they did indeed temporally coexist.

Feature **42** extended from the northwestern end of the trench for 4.92m and into both trench baulks (more than 1.55m in length). The feature was exposed and excavated by means of a slot along the baulk section. This showed it was cut into the chalk natural, with a gently and consistently even sloping side down to a markedly flat base. There was no indication that the feature was cut from a much higher level as both the surviving cut and fill were below the horizon of the surrounding natural chalk.

Deposit **102**, exposed in section at the S/E extreme of the trench, was a mid greyish brown clay layer sealing posthole **14**. Although truncated by activities associated with structure **78**, either during the construction or demolition phase, enough does remain to show its position in the stratigraphy of the site.

### 5.5 Trench 5

This trench measured 9.30m long, 1.55m wide and up to 1.54m deep. The features exposed were diverse in type and spatially distinct, with one pit **97**, one ditch **93**, a possible quarry **99** and another feature **95**.

Pit **97** was oval 1.15m long, 0.60m+ wide (extrapolated to 0.80m) and 0.19m deep. From this pit a partial skeleton was recovered. The dentition and the stage of fusing of the epiphysis showed that it was from an immature pig. The deposit within this feature (98) was a firm chalky silt similar to that found in the majority of features on this site.

Ditch **93**, located towards the southern end of the trench, was in excess of 2.20m long (extending into both east and west trench baulks), 1.55m wide and 0.17m deep. The poorly defined edges were most notable on the southern side where the ditch's width extended to 2.10m. Ditch **93**'s alignment of east to west and its shape were most closely shared by ditch **66** in trench 3. The fill of **93**, **94**, was similar to possible subsoil 102 with the addition of partially degraded chalk fragments.

Feature **99** was excavated by means of hand-digging a slot along the trench baulk. The depth of this feature was 0.61m below trench base (equating to the upper chalk horizon) and 1.33m below the present ground surface. The side of this feature was very steep, falling 0.61m over a horizontal distance of some 0.15m, with a sharp break of slope to the flat base. The base continued at this level for the remaining 1.7m of the trench's northern end. The sole fill of this feature (100) was a homogenous mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones throughout.

**95** extended for 1.25m into the northern trench baulk with a maximum width of 0.55m. The shape in plan was irregular and ill defined, as were the sides and base. The soil within it (96) differed subtly from that of the other, clearly archaeological, features and no artefacts were recovered from it.

### 5.6 Trench 6

The four features within this trench were two pits, (**82** and **84**) and two shallow ditches (**88** and **90**)

The pits **82** (0.30m by 0.25m by 0.07m deep) and **84** (0.60m by 0.40m by 0.20m deep) were both small sub circular pits 5.5m apart and located close to the north side of ditch **90**. Pit **82** contained the articulated skeleton of an immature medium sized mammal (goat/sheep). The soil within it (81) was a dark greyish brown clayey silt indistinguishable from that of the surrounding topsoil. A mid brownish grey silt deposit 83 similar to 81 filled pit 84.

Ditch **88** (1.15m+ by 0.50m by 0.10m deep) was oriented NW to SE running perpendicular to the trench. The second ditch had two segments excavated through it (**86** and **90**) and measured 9.75m long, 0.50m wide and 0.15m deep. This ditch extended along the southern baulk for almost the full length of the trench, roughly parallel aligned to the plot boundary.

## **6 Discussion**

### **6.1 Trench 1**

The form of feature **50 / 11** with nearly vertical sides cutting into the chalk bedrock, suggests that this was indeed a chalk quarry pit. The alignment of the ditch (**13/46**) indicates that the quarry (**50/11**) may have still been, at least partially, open at the time of the cutting of the ditch. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1885 map of Soham shows that a substantial feature at the front of the property was present, very much reflecting the extent of the quarry exposed during the excavation.

The full depth of **11** was not reached but it can be reasonably concluded that it was of the same magnitude as that of **116** in Trench 1 (i.e. 2.70m below present ground level).

### **6.2 Trench 2**

The sequence of deposits found in **116** was very similar to that in **11** and the two have been interpreted as part of the same feature. The cut of ditch **116** was visible as having two different heights. The eastern side was lower by 0.18m than the western one. As this is the most exposed of the two sides and undoubtedly the cut of this ditch, it may be surmised that the western side had a different origin from that of the eastern side. Coupled with the evidence of the quarry in trench 1, this suggests that the southern side may well be that of the original cut of quarry **116**, that has been sometime later used as the ditch's edge. The fact that the ditch lies on the dwelling side of the plot and runs parallel to the road indicates that it may have been dug to forestall flooding, which until living memory was a significant problem along Brook Street. The site's location, 340m southeast of the present course of the river (Soham Lode), and on a very gentle slope (pers. obs.), reinforces the supposition that flooding was a very real problem in this part of the village.

The consistent thicknesses of the major deposits within quarry **116** perhaps show it to have been filled by large quantities of material at times when the "hole" was at least partially filled with water. This is because the fluidity that the presence of water would give the deposits would force them to create level horizons, even though they were

deposited from the sides. This normal “dry” filling action can be seen only at the extreme edges of the quarry in cut **11**.

The stratigraphy of **116** was far too similar that of **11** to have been purely incidental. This leads to the conclusion that they were part of the same quarry or phase of quarrying.

The other feature in this trench, **115** was clearly a continuation of **13/46** in Trench 1.

### **6.3 Trench 3**

The possible quarries, **68** and **70** were cut into the chalk, but to rather shallow depths (0.43m and 0.40m respectively), that casts some doubt over their function. This point could be justified if the quarrying was done for a small amount of work, say as a “mend”, to an existing building.

The proximity and the similarity of fills of posthole **74**, to pits **72** and **76**, indicates that it was in all probability associated with them during its active life. What that function was cannot be readily concluded due to the limits of the excavation and recovery of material related to it and the associated features.

The extent of pits **72** and **76** was not fully realised during excavation but they were similar to those in trench 4 in those factors that were evident: size, shape and fill.

The ditches, pits and possible postholes add little in terms of qualitative evidence for activities on the site. There was secure evidence for the period of use for the features within the site, but due to the restrictions of the evaluation the “full picture” of how these elements fit together and clarity on what some of the ambiguous features were was not revealed.

The information gained from the work does however complement the overall understanding of the layout of plots, buildings and other activities within the village.

### **6.4 Trench 4**

The proximity of the rounded postholes to the square may illustrate a real correlation in the construction of a building. The alignment of the postholes indicates some possible division within a building but the evidence is not explicit or extensive enough to draw any stronger conclusions than the habitation of the site during the high and late medieval period.

Where pit **20** has been truncated and filled by a later deposit (23) the continuity of this fill indicates that the relationship posthole **22** has is

incidental and unrelated to the function of pit **20**. As 23 extends from almost the same position as the brick wall of structure **78** ends and gradually becoming deeper it would indicate that the two coexisted, in all likelihood 23 post-dating **78**.

The pottery recovered from feature **42** established it had been filled in completely and seemingly exclusively during the late medieval period. The function of this feature was not clearly established during the excavation, although it may represent the base of a household.

Although only partially exposed, heavily truncated and containing no finds, deposit 102 may well be very relevant to the understanding of the activities on the site as it may represent an element of the post-medieval subsoil. The feature it seals, **14**, whilst having no pottery to indicate its date, is most likely associated with other verifiably medieval features on site.

## 6.5 Trench 5

The pig burial in pit **97** may relate to the other animal burial, a sheep in pit **82** that was uncovered in trench 6. As the skeletons were articulated and seemed not to have any special treatment or associated finds they may be simply disease related deaths (which is implied if these stock animals were not consumed).

Ditch **93** may represent the rear property boundary or perhaps a hedge line to control the movements of livestock.

**99** was initially thought to be the southern extent of feature **42** in trench 4. Upon excavation the depth to which this feature was cut differed markedly with that of **42** (0.35m as opposed to 0.61m respectively). The one exposed side of this feature was cut very steeply, again different from **42**'s shallow side. The similarities were only borne out by them both having particularly flat bases. The function of this feature is still unresolved to the author's satisfaction, but has been treated as a quarry *in lieu* of any more definitive evidence.

## 6.6 Trench 6

The two shallow ditches **88** and **86/90** were approximately at right angles to each other, intersecting halfway along the trench. Whilst it was not possible to ascertain the stratigraphic relationship between the two ditches from excavation the pottery recovered from the fill of ditch **88** predated that recovered from the intersecting area. This implies that they were unlikely to be, but not impossibly, contemporary with **88** being slightly earlier than **86/90**.

The alignment of **86/90** could indicate a subdivision of the plot boundary for No.78 Brook Street. As other such subdivisions are apparent on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1885 Map along this road; in all probability both ditches **88** and **86/90** could be related to a previous division of the plot.

## **7 Conclusions**

### **7.1 Quarrying**

Whilst the geological survey map indicates that there was no clunch in the village of Soham, the historic maps state quarries on the other side of the road were for clunch extraction.

Remnant of clunch yielding seams are in fact present along this stretch of the geological sequence so the presence of a small vestige as yet unidentified is not unlikely and could easily have been identified during localised chalk extraction. Alternatively, if there was no clunch there, the chalk may have been extracted for use in lime production.

Whichever is the case, a site with a comparable set of features was observed in the village of Isleham, some 5km to the east (Kenney 2004). The Isleham excavation showed a remarkably similar individual plot layout; street-front quarrying backed by a ditch running parallel to the road, defining the separation of dwellings and quarrying. The remains of the domestic buildings and their associated features were of a similar type too. The date range of the pottery recovered from both the Soham and Isleham site was also comparable.

It can perhaps be concluded that these sites were under the same cultural regime that required a similar exploitation of small domestic plots.

### **7.2 Domestic Occupation**

The overview of is that at least three phases, based on the pottery assessment, of buildings were recorded from this archaeological excavation.

The initial phase dated to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> to mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. These features were mostly pits within trench 3, to the eastern part of the site. Two ditches running approximately parallel to the street front, at the front and rear of the site were also within this phase.

A second phase from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century accounted for more pits and ditches, including some of the earlier elements of

potential quarry backfilling (in Trench 3). This small element of dateable material was spread remarkably evenly over the site within almost all trenches, the exception being Trench 2, which was almost exclusively occupied by a single, massive quarry. This indicates that most of the site was occupied, or at least in use during that two century period.

The mid 16<sup>th</sup> century to present phase comprises the majority of the periodic quarry backfilling episodes. Of the square postholes, two were dated to the earlier part of this period and perhaps indicate another phase of structure erection. Whilst the pattern of the postholes and pits does not give a secure outline for any of the buildings footprints, it was observed that they were erected within overlapping footprints. This indicates a continuation of the settings of the dwellings on the site even down to the present day.

The presence of at least two phases of buildings on the site may highlight where the quarried chalk was used. Although the building material used in the earlier structure cannot be established with any certainty, the second one was almost certainly built of this locally available material. This second building, identified from historic records, including photographs, as the dwelling of a Mrs. Sarah Pollard was present on site of No.78 Brook Street until it burnt down in 1910. A replacement brick-built house, erected approximately on the footprint of the earlier structure in 1911 was still standing at the time of excavation, although this itself is due to be taken down prior to redevelopment to provide more intensive modern dwellings. The Pollard residences, as well as the subsequent house, were rented out by the Bishop Laney Trust to provide decent housing for local residents, a measure necessary to alleviate the well-recorded dire poverty in the parish (Martin, D., 2000).

Building remains and plot division indicate that this site has been used for mineral extraction and relatively low status dwellings for people and animals from the high medieval period up to the present day.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Appendix 1: Context Summary

By Glenn D. Bailey BSc.

Context No.	Cut No.	Type	Description	Trench
01	-	Layer	Topsoil	1-6
02	-	Layer	CBM/soil mix	1
03	11	Fill	Clayey silt	1
04	11	Fill	Clayey silt	1
05	11	Fill	Re-deposited chalk	1
06	11	Fill	Silt	1
07	11	Fill	Gravelly sand	1
08	11	Fill	Silt, sand and gravel	1
09	11	Fill	Re-deposited chalk	1
10	11	Fill	Sandy silt	1
11	-	Cut	Quarry pit	1
12	13	Fill	Dark grey clayey chalk	1
13	-	Cut	Ditch	1
14	-	Cut	Pit	4
15	14	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
16	-	Cut	Posthole	4
17	16	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
18	-	Cut	Posthole	4
19	18	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
20	-	Cut	Pit	4
21	20	Fill	Pale grey chalky clay	4
22	-	Cut	Posthole	4
23	22	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay	4
24	-	Cut	Posthole	4
25	24	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
26	-	Cut	Pit?	4
27	26	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4

28	-	Cut	Posthole	4
29	28	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
30	-	Cut	Posthole	4
31	30	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
32	-	Cut	Posthole	4
33	32	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
34	-	Cut	Posthole?	4
35	34	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
36	-	Cut	Posthole	4
37	36	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
38	-	Cut	Posthole	4
39	38	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay	4
40	-	Cut	Posthole	4
41	40	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
42	-	Cut	Unknown	4
43	42	Fill	Mid brown clayey silt	4
44	-	Cut	Posthole (modern)	4
45	44	Fill	Mid brownish grey silty clay	4
46	-	Cut	Ditch	1
47	46	Fill	Dark grey chalky clay	1
48	46	Fill	Dark grey clayey chalk	1
49	46	Fill	Dark grey clay	1
50	-	Cut	Quarry pit	1
51	50	Fill	Dark greyish brown chalky clay	1
52	50	Fill	Pale yellowish brown sandy silt	1
53	50	Fill	Pale yellowish grey silty sand	1

54	50	Fill	Mid brownish grey sandy silt	1
55	50	Fill	Mid brown chalky clay	1
56	-	Cut	Posthole	4
57	56	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay	4
58	-	Cut	Posthole	4
59	58	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
60	-	Cut	Posthole	4
61	60	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
62	-	Cut	Posthole	4
63	62	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	4
64	-	Cut	Modern service trench	3
65	64	Fill	-	3
66	-	Cut	Ditch	3
67	66	Fill	Mid orangey brown chalky clay	3
68	-	Cut	Quarry pit?	3
69	68	Fill	Mid greyish brown chalky silt	3
70	-	Cut	Quarry pit?	3
71	70	Fill	Mid greyish brown chalky silt	3
72	-	Cut	Quarry pit?	3
73	72	Fill	Mid greyish brown chalky silt	3
74	-	Cut	Posthole	3
75	74	Fill	Mid greyish brown chalky silt	3
76	-	Cut	Pit?	3
77	76	Fill	Mid greyish brown chalky silt	3
78	-	Cut	Construction	4
79	78	Structure	Brick privy?	4
80	78	Fill	Dark greyish brown and	4

			mid yellowish brown clayey silt	
81	82	Fill	Dark greyish brown clayey	6
82	-	Cut	Pit	6
83	84	Fill	Mid brownish grey silt	6
84	-	Cut	Posthole	6
85	86	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	6
86	-	Cut	Ditch	6
87	88	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	6
88	-	Cut	Ditch	6
89	90	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	6
90	-	Cut	Ditch	6
91	-	Layer	Re-deposited chalk	3
92	88 or 90	Fill	Mid greyish brown silty clay	6
93	-	Cut	Shallow ditch	5
94	93	Fill	Degraded chalk subsoil?	5
95	-	Cut	Root disturbance?	5
96	95	Fill	Pale brown silty clay	5
97	-	Cut	Small pit	5
98	97	Fill	Chalky silt	5
99	-	Cut	Quarry	5
100	99	Fill	Mid greyish brown clayey silt	5
101	32	Fill	Chalk packing	4
102	-	Layer	Subsoil?	4
103	-	Layer	Degraded chalk and clay	4
104	-	Layer	Chalk natural	2
105	-	Layer	Orangey brown sandy	2

			clay	
106	116	Fill	Mid grey chalky clay	2
107	116	Fill	Re-deposited chalk	2
108	116	Fill	Orangey brown silty clay	2
109	116	Fill	Orange sand	2
110	116	Fill	Pale grey chalky clay	2
111	116	Fill	Yellowish brown gritty sand	2
112	116	Fill	Yellowish brown slightly silty sand	2
113	115	Fill	Mid grey clay	2
114	115	Fill	Pale grey re-deposited chalk	2
115	-	Cut	Ditch	2
116	-	Cut	Quarry	2
117	-	Cut	Posthole	3
118	117	Fill	Pale grey slightly chalky clay	3
119	-	Layer	Degraded chalk natural	2
120	116	Fill	Re-deposited chalk and clay	2
121	116	Fill	Dark sandy silt	2
122	-	Layer	Subsoil	5

## Appendix 2: Finds summary For 78-82 Brook St, Soham (SOH BRS 06)

By Helen Fowler HND, BA.

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg	Comments
43	Slag		0.01	
43	Flint		0.01	
49	Flint		0.07	Burnt flint
8	Flint		0.08	
71	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.01	
73	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.09	
54	Ceramic	Ceramic Building Material	0.72	
49	Bone	Bone	0.29	
54	Bone	Bone	0.11	
71	Bone	Bone	0.38	
81	Bone	Bone	0.06	
65	Bone	Bone	0.04	
61	Bone	Bone	0.03	
19	Bone	Bone	0.01	
43	Bone	Bone	0.31	
98	Bone	Bone	0.33	
8	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
43	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
43	Ceramic	Vessel	0.25	
49	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04	
54	Ceramic	Vessel	0.09	
65	Ceramic	Vessel	0.03	
65	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	
73	Ceramic	Vessel	0.06	
98	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
89	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
92	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
91	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	
71	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
69	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg	Comments
57	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
41	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
33	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	
25	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	
21	Ceramic	Vessel	0.01	



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## Appendix 3: Pottery Assessment

By Paul Spoerry PhD, BTech (Hons), MIFA.

### 1 Introduction and Background

The evaluation at SOHBRS06 produced a small pottery assemblage of 54 sherds, weighing 0.608kg. Of the 121 contexts recorded, 17 contained pottery. The material from the topsoil and any unstratified material are included in these totals.

### 2 Methodology

#### .2.1 Fieldwork

The trenches were machine excavated with further excavation carried out by hand and selection made through standard sampling procedures on a feature by feature basis. There are not expected to be any inherent biases. Where bulk samples have been processed for environmental remains, there has been some recovery of pottery.

#### 2.2 Ceramic Analysis

The basic guidance in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) has been adhered to along with the MPRG documents (MPRG 1998 and 2001). *Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations* (Blake and Davey, 1983) acts as a standard.

Spot dating was carried out using the AFU's in-house system based on that used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types. New types have been given descriptive identifiers. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. Sherds warranting possible illustration been identified, as have possible cross-fits.

The AFU curates the pottery and archive until formal deposition of the site archive.

### 3 Results of Assessment

#### 3.1 Periods Represented

The pottery present by period is as follows;

Period	No. sherds
Prehistoric	0
Roman	0
Saxon	0
Medieval	25
Post-Medieval	29

The medieval pottery includes High medieval material (c. 1150-1350) and late medieval material (1350-1550). The only contexts dated to the former period are 08, 71, 73 and 92, with 21, 49, 57, 89, 91, and 98 assigned to the latter. The medieval material is mostly Ely-type ware fabrics, although the light 'buff' fabric of most of this material is not well-known in Ely itself, either suggesting a greater range of fabric variation in products from Ely itself, or implying the existence of another production site of generically Ely-type pottery.

The post-medieval pottery includes 16th century groups (as exemplified by Context 43) and a range of sherds from the following centuries up until the early modern period. The 16th century material is mostly in a Broad Street type Ely redware fabric.

The presence of very late medieval material alongside early post-medieval sherds, indicates a real 'transitional' presence on this site, with the 16th century well-represented.

### **3.2 Ceramic Types Represented**

Post-Roman Ceramic fabrics identified (on the spotdating table) were as follows;

Bone china	BCHIN
Bichrome redwares	BICR
Bourne D ware	BOND
Late medieval Ely type ware	LMELT
Essex medieval micaceous wares	ESMIC
Flowerpot	FLOWER
Medieval Ely type ware	MELT
Micaceous post-medieval redware	MICPMR
Post-medieval Ely redware	PMELR
Post-medieval Red ware	PMR
Transfer printed bone china wares	TRANS

### **3.3 Degree of Abrasion and Completeness**

Most of the pottery appears unabraded and is therefore perhaps in primary deposition.

### **3.4 Residuality/ Intrusiveness**

Little evidence of intrusiveness or residuality was identified.

## **4 Interpretation and Conclusions**

The assemblage is small, has no complete vessels, and full statistical analysis is not viable.

The assemblage is notable for having transitional material and showing a new Ely ware fabric type variant. Otherwise this is a standard assemblage of primarily domestic origin.

No preservation bias has been recognised and no long-term storage problems are likely.

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Context	Fabric	No. of Sherds	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Vessel Forms	rim/base/other	Comment
8	LMELT	1	1400	1550			LATE FABRIC
21	LMELT	1	1350	1550			BUFF SMOOTH
25	TRANS	2	1830	1950	Miscellaneous		
33	PMR	1	1600	1800			
41	BICR	1	1550	1700	Bowl		
43	PMELR	2	1500	1650	Bowl	R	FLANGED RIM IN CSE REDWARE
43	PMELR	1	1500	1650	Jug	H	STRAP W CENTRAL GROOVE
43	PMELR	5	1500	1650	Miscellaneous		BS MOST WITH INT GG FROM COOKING VESSELS
43	PMR	2	1600	1800	Bowl		BS INT G
43	BICR	3	1500	1650	Bowl		GG MOTTLED, POSS MICACEOUS ESSEX FABRIC
43	MICPMR	1	1500	1700			BS WITH MICA
43	BOND	1	1450	1650	Jug		BS
43	PMELR	1	1500	1650	Bowl	R	EXT THICK
49	MELT	6	1150	1350	Jar		SOOTED COOKPOTS, ALL BUFF FABRICS
54	BCHIN	4	1850	1950			
54	FLOWER	2	1700	1950			
54	PMR	1	1600	1800			
57	LMELT	1	1350	1500	Jar		L GREY SMOOTH FAB LIKE WICKEN POTS
65	PMELR	2	1500	1650	Jug	R	THIN RIM WITH A LITTLE CALC
65	PMELR	5	1500	1650			BS WITH CLEAR GLAZE
69	ESMIC	1	1150	1450			VSMOOTH BUFF W MICA
71	MELT	2	1150	1350			CSE, BUFF
73	MELT	7	1150	1350		R	ASSTD BS AND RIM IN BUFF FABRIC
89	LMELT	1	1350	1550		BASE	LIGHT BUFF AND SMOOTH
91	LMELT	1	1350	1550			BUFF BS
92	MELT	2	1150	1350			1 X BUFF 1 X MEL
98	LMELT	1	1350	1550	Bowl		INT GG BUFF FABRIC

*Pottery summary table*

## APPENDIX 4: ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL OF SAMPLES FROM SOH BRS 06

By Rachel Fosberry

### 1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

A single bulk sample was taken from an animal burial within trench 6 in 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 the sample was processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. 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

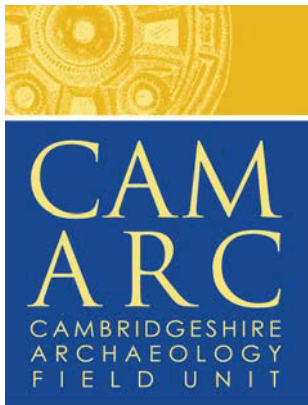
The results are recorded on Table 1.

Sample Number	Context Number	Cut Number	Context Type	Flotation contents	Residue contents
1	81	82	Grave fill	Charcoal only	Mammal bones, amphibian bones

Table 1: Environmental Samples from SOH BRS 06

### 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sample contains a few fragments of charcoal as evidence of burning along with several fragments (up to 2cm) of juvenile sheep bones (identified by Chris Faine). This sample does not provide any useful interpretative information and no further work is recommended.



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