

**GRAVELLY LANE
BRAUGHING
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

MAY 2012

**GRAVELLY LANE
BRAUGHING
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Prepared By:	Phillippa Sparrow & Trevor Ennis
Position: Supervisor	Date:
Checked By: Adrian Scruby	Adrian Scruby
Position: Project Manager	Date:

Document Ref.:	2315 Rep
Report Issue Date:	May 2012
Circulation:	RPS Planning & Development Hertfordshire CC Historic Environment Unit Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record

As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report. Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the

Field Archaeology Unit
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

© **Field Archaeology Unit**, Essex County Council, c/o County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1QH

CONTENTS

	Page No.
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 BACKGROUND	3
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
4.0 METHOD	6
5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS	7
6.0 THE FINDS	10
7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	13
8.0 DISCUSSION	15
9.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	18

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 FIELDWORK DATA

APPENDIX 2 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

APPENDIX 3 CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

APPENDIX 4 HER SUMMARY

FIGURES

Fig. 1 Site location

Fig. 2 Excavation plan

Fig. 3 Plots 9 & 14

Fig. 4 Sections 1 - 9

PLATES

Cover photo: General view of excavation works

Plate 1: Ditch 1, looking east

Plate 2: Ditch 12 (over-cut to south), looking west

Plate 3: Ditch 31, looking north-west

Plate 4: Gully 6 looking west

Plate 5: Gully 4 looking west-north-west

Plate 6: Pit 15

Plate 7: Eastern excavation area looking north (remnants of trench 7 in foreground)

Plate 8: Plots 1 -3 and ground reduction at front of site

Plate 9: Plots 1 – 6 and further ground reduction

Plate 10: Plot 9 under excavation

Plate 11: Plot 12 under excavation

Plate 12: Plot 16 under investigation
Plate 13: Early Medieval Ware Cooking-Pot
Plate 14: Early Medieval Ware bowl
Plate 15: 'South Hertfordshire Greyware' vessel

**GRAVELLY LANE
BRAUGHING
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Client: RPS Planning & Development

NGR: TL 39400 25430

Site Code: BGL 10

HER Request No.: 231/10

OASIS No.: 105584

Dates of Fieldwork: 18/10/10 – 26/10/10 (Strip, map and record) and 17/01/11 – 31/05/11 (Monitoring)

SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken for RPS Planning & Development, on behalf of Galliford Try, in advance of residential development on land at Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Hertfordshire, comprising a strip, map and record exercise within the footprint of a new access/ spine road for the development and archaeological monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches for the new houses.

The site is located on the north-western edge of the village of Braughing, to the west of the River Quin, in the Green End area of the civil parish, and comprises a rectangular grass meadow sloping from west to east.

A limited amount of evidence for prehistoric activity has been identified in the wider area surrounding the site including five possibly Bronze Age ring ditches identified through aerial photography. During the Iron Age a large settlement developed c. 1.5km to the south of the site that shifted during the Roman period to the Wickham Hill area, focusing around Ermine Street. Settlement shifted again, to the north-east, during the post-Roman period, to its current location. Braughing became an administrative unit and an ecclesiastical deanery with an Anglo-Saxon charter dated c.830 indicating the presence of a minster church, suggesting that the town was of considerable importance to the local region. By the 13th century Braughing was a relatively wealthy settlement on a par with Hertford and Welwyn, although it is probable that a considerable proportion of the population lived in dispersed farmsteads. It is thought that the town started to decline during the late medieval period due to the rising fortunes of Puckeridge to the south.

A previous archaeological evaluation, undertaken in 2008, revealed three large ditches and a smaller gully as well as three sub-rectangular features, possibly representing pits or ditch termini. Three pottery sherds of Iron Age and Roman date were recovered from two of the ditches.

As a consequence of the above discoveries a programme of further archaeological work was required by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit in order to ensure the preservation by record of those remains threatened by the development. The mitigation works revealed that the earliest activity on site is represented by pieces of worked flint mostly found as a residual element in later features. The majority of the worked flints appear to date to the Neolithic period and indicate flint knapping taking place in the vicinity i.e. on the lower valley slope west of the River Quin. There is no evidence of contemporary settlement and it is possible that the flint working was of a transitory nature, perhaps exploiting near-by sources of suitable flint.

Three sherds of Late Iron Age/Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation and a further sherd of Roman pottery from the excavation; however, the small quantity of pottery and lack of any features clearly attributable to these periods suggests that the site is peripheral to the main areas of settlement at this time.

A series of broadly contemporary early Medieval ditches and gullies, dating to the 12th/ 13th century and forming a series of enclosures or paddocks were investigated, with two quite substantial west to east running ditches possibly forming a funnel-shaped track or driveway used to move livestock down onto richer pastures in the valley bottom. Smaller gullies, in at least one instance cutting across the larger ditches at right-angles, suggest that some form of sub-division occurred, most likely dividing the field up into smaller paddocks or closes, after the west – east orientated ditches had gone out of use.

No evidence to suggest that the site lies within the putative Minster precinct was encountered, although the relatively large quantity of Early Medieval Ware, including cooking pots suggests that some form of domestic activity was taking place nearby, perhaps in an immediately adjacent plot to the site, with domestic rubbish/ waste then being dumped into the open ditches. Given the steep gradient of the slope it is unlikely to have been suitable for anything other than agricultural activities and, with the exception of a few scattered/ isolated pits, no structural features or other evidence to suggest the presence of buildings was noted.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological investigation undertaken in advance of residential development on land at Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 39400 25430) for RPS Planning & Development on behalf of Galliford Try. The fieldwork was undertaken in response to a condition placed on planning consent (3/09/1370/FP) by East Herts District Council, following specialist advice from the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU), given in line with Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (DoE 1990 - now replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5). The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation produced by RPS Planning & Development (RPS 2010) and was monitored by the HCC HEU on behalf of the local planning authority and RPS Planning & Development on behalf of Galliford Try.

The investigation consisted of a strip, map and record exercise in the eastern half of the site, within the footprint of the new access roadway, followed by a separate programme of archaeological monitoring during the construction phase of the project. The work was undertaken to further investigate a number of archaeological features revealed during an earlier trench-based evaluation of the site (Kaye 2008).

Bound and digital copies of this report will be supplied to Galliford Try, RPS Planning & Development (including a copy for the Local Planning Authority), HCC HEU and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER). A digital copy of the report will be uploaded on the online access to the index of archaeological investigations (www.oasis.ac.uk). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Hertford Museum. A summary of the results will be submitted for publication in the annual fieldwork round-up in Hertfordshire Archaeology & History.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography (Fig. 1)

The site is located at the north-western edge of the village of Braughing, in the Green End area of the civil parish (NGR TL 39400 25430), to the west of the River Quin. The site is bounded to the west by the old London Road (B 1368) and by Gravelly Lane to the north. The eastern and southern sides of the site are flanked by residential properties.

The site consists of a rectangular grass meadow containing two small copses and with numerous small trees and shrubs, particularly close to its western and northern borders. The site slopes from west to east with a fall of some 10m (approx. 86m to 76m OD).

The surface geology consists of Lowestoft Formation Diamicton – chalky till with outwash clays, silts, sands and gravels.

2.2 History and Archaeology (Fig. 1)

The following archaeological and historical background is based on information contained in a desk-based assessment for the development area produced by Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) in 2007 (ASC 2007), a subsequent evaluation report (ASC 2008) and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER).

A limited amount of prehistoric evidence has been recovered and identified in the wider area surrounding the site. Flints and pottery were found 300m to the north-west of the site (ASC 2007, 11) and five possibly Bronze Age ring ditches have been identified through aerial photography. Three are located on higher ground overlooking the River Rib, to the west of the site (HHER 2341, 2364, 7569), one is situated on higher ground c. 1.2km to the east (HHER 4719) and one is situated immediately to the north-west of the site (HHER 2971). An enclosure has also been identified adjacent to the ring ditch closest to the site (HHER 2437).

During the Iron Age a large settlement, *oppidum*, developed at Braughing, c. 1.5km to the south of the site (e.g. HHER 0110). Braughing is thought to have been one of the most important trading settlements in southern England during the last quarter of the first century BC, with Verlamio(n) (pre-Roman St Albans) perhaps contributing to the decline of Braughing at the end of the century. It is clear that by AD10 a decline of imports to Braughing coincided with the rise of Colchester as a major centre.

During the Roman period, settlement at Braughing continued at Wickham Hill (ASC 2007), c. 1.5km to the south-south-west of the site, around Ermine Street. The settlement was of considerable size and imported large quantities of fine ceramics from the Continent. A possible Roman road is thought to run through the centre of Braughing, toward Great Chesterford (HHER 4672), around 300m east of the site.

The settlement of Braughing shifted north-east during the post-Roman period, to its current location (ASC 2007). The name possibly derives from the Anglo-Saxon for 'people of Br(e)ahha' (Ibid.). It became an administrative unit – Braughing Hundred – and an

ecclesiastical deanery (Ibid.). An Anglo-Saxon charter dated c.830, and Aethelgifu's will of c. 990, indicate the presence of a minster church at Braughing, thereby suggesting that the town was of considerable importance to the local region (ASC 2007). The precinct for the minster has been postulated as being defined by The Street to the east and Malting Lane to the south. Its western border is the old London Road with Pentlows Farm included within its northern side (ASC 2007). It therefore had the potential to run through the development area.

By the 13th century Braughing was a relatively wealthy settlement on par with Hertford and Welwyn (ASC 2007). It is probable that a considerable proportion of the population lived in dispersed farmsteads (Ibid.). It is thought that the town started to decline during the late medieval period due to the rising fortunes of Puckeridge to the south (Ibid.). A moat at Braughing Bury, to the east of the site, is thought to have originated during the medieval period (HHER 15394), thereby indicating activity in close proximity to the site during this period. The present property dates to at least the early 16th century (HHER 12248).

Many of the extant buildings in Braughing were constructed during the 17th century, despite the rise of nearby towns such as Standon and Puckeridge (ASC 2007). It is thought that the layout of Braughing developed into that which is present today during this period. The site itself is located within Area of Archaeological Significance 60.

2.3 Previous fieldwork (Fig. 2)

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ASC in 2008 (ASC 2008). 12 trenches were excavated and archaeological remains were present in four, concentrated in the south-eastern quarter of the site. Three large linear features and a smaller linear were found as well as three sub-rectangular features, possibly representing pits or ditch termini. Three pottery sherds of Iron Age and Roman date were recovered from two of the ditches.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The general aim of the investigation was to establish the character, date and function of any archaeological features within areas of development and to link these results to existing Resource Assessments and Research Agenda (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 3 & 8 respectively).

3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the investigation were to:

- “Establish whether the archaeological ditches located within the evaluation represent the boundaries of Late Iron Age/Roman agricultural fields beyond settlement foci, or were elements of settlement compounds and if so to determine the nature of settlement within, if possible from the archaeological remains.”
- “Establish whether the development site lies within the precinct of an early Saxon Minster church known from documentary sources to have been located at Braughing (although the evaluation results provide no evidence for this possibility).”

4.0 METHOD

The site was investigated by a targeted strip, map and record exercise in the south-eastern quadrant of the site, within the footprint of the proposed access road, totalling just over 1000 square metres (Fig. 1). The removal of topsoil, subsoil and colluvium was conducted under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a flat bladed bucket. All identifiable archaeological deposits within the road footprint were investigated and recorded by hand.

During the machining it became clear that the positions of the former evaluation trenches, visible as scars in the stripped surface, varied from the evaluation report plan. The actual trench positions were plotted, and in combination with linear feature alignments were found to be located approximately 2-3m further north and 3-5m further east than originally thought.

The excavation was followed up by archaeological monitoring and recording of groundworks associated with the construction of 17 new houses.

All work was carried out in accordance with IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Strip, Map and Record (Fig. 2)

The overburden removed from the footprint of the proposed access road consisted of topsoil, on average 0.4m and 0.45m thick, overlaying a thick mid orange-brown slightly sandy silty clay colluvial deposit which varied in thickness from 0.4m in the west of the site to a maximum thickness of 1.2m in the east (Plate 7). Beneath the colluvium were a few greyer brown patches of silty clay which may have developed within shallow depressions. The underlying natural consisted of brown silty clay and gravel.

A small number of linear features were identified along with two pits. Two ditches (1/31/42 and 12/25/27/38) and three gullies (4, 6 and 10) were aligned east-south-east to west-north-west, running downslope towards the River Quin, perpendicular to the B1368 Station Road to the west, with two other intersecting gullies (17 & 21/23) running south-south-west to north-north-east across the slope. The only firmly dated feature, ditch 1/31/42, contained early medieval pottery. A background scatter of prehistoric worked flint was also present. Full context details are presented in Appendix 1.

The large medieval ditch (1/31/42) was aligned west-north-west/ east-south-east and ran for over 57m through the centre of the excavated area. The ditch was sampled in two segments (contexts 1 & 31) and part excavated in a third (context 42) to check the relationship with an inter-connecting gully. The ditch varied in width from 2.5m in the west (1 – Fig. 4, Section 1) to 1.8m in the east (31 & 42) and was 0.90m deep (Plates 1 & 3). Seventy six sherds of early medieval pottery were recovered from the two fills (2 & 3) in the western segment (1) and a fragment of possible medieval tile from the upper most (34) of the three fills (32, 33 & 34) in the eastern segment (31). In addition, both of these segments also contained residual prehistoric worked flint.

Ditch 12/25/27/38, running west to east, also ran downslope towards the Quin, roughly parallel to Ditch 1/31/42 (Plate 2). Ditch segment 12 was considerably shallower than segments 25 and 27 and the ditch appeared rather narrower towards its western end. This can be explained by two reasons: a large amount of tree rooting was present in the colluvium and topsoil above the ditch in this area indicating that the top of the ditch had been truncated by root action, and secondly, this part of the ditch was located closer to the top of the slope and therefore would have undergone a higher degree of erosion through surface run-off while it was in use. The ditch had an uncertain relationship, due to the similarity of fill, with an intersecting south-south-west/ north-north-east orientated gully 21/ 23 (Fig. 4, Section 4), which is further described below.

Several previously unrecorded gullies were identified (6, 10, 17 and 21/23). Gully 6 did not extend a considerable distance beyond the baulk as it was not found in trench 7, though it was aligned along the same axis as the other ditches and gullies. Gully 6 cut the northern edge of gully 10 and followed its course (Fig. 4, Section 5 & Plate 4). A further two gullies (17 – see Fig. 4, Section 2 and 21/23 - see Fig. 4, Sections 3 and 4) were aligned north-east to south-west, interconnecting with ditches 1/ 31/ 42 and 12/ 25/ 27. Excavation suggested that gully 21/23 and ditches 1/31 and 12/25/27 were backfilled at broadly the same time, based upon the similarity/ uniformity of their fills; therefore the various ditches and gullies (except for gullies 6 and 10) are probably largely contemporary and likely to represent a system of enclosures or paddocks on the western side of the Quin Valley. Gullies 17 and 21/23 may have formed a very small enclosure within the larger enclosed areas or may represent a sub-division/ reorganisation undertaken after the larger ditches had silted-up.

Located at the southern end of the strip-map area, Gully 4, seen also in evaluation trenches 10 and 12, was 0.72m wide by 0.18m deep and contained a single dark grey-brown silty clay fill (5 - Fig. 4, Section 6 & Plate 5). This may represent the southern limit of the enclosure system; however, as no excavation was conducted further south this cannot be confirmed.

Two pits were excavated. Pit 15 was a large oval feature orientated north-east to south-west and contained one flint flake (Fig. 4, Section 7 & Plate 6). Pit 40 was cut into the top fill of ditch 27 and contained no finds within its light brown-grey fill. A high presence of organic material within the fill (41) might indicate that this feature was a tree bole. A large ditch-like feature (609) originally investigated in evaluation trench 6 and initially identified as a possible north-south orientated ditch was shown to be a large pit once the surrounding area had been stripped and it is likely that the other features seen in trench 6 are of a similar nature.

Several natural depressions were present across the site, one of which contained a quantity of 11th-12th century pottery (20). Layer 37 and deposit 35 comprised very similar natural silt. Layer 37 contained one very small sherd of medieval coarseware. A large patch of silty clay (44) overlay the south-eastern end of gullies 6 and 10, containing a post-medieval horse shoe and ceramic tile.

5.2 Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (Fig. 1 & 3)

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken on the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new houses and on associated groundworks (e.g. ground reduction at the front of site – plate 8). As a consequence of revisions to both the original site layout and the dwelling types to be constructed the plot numbering system was altered to comprise plots 1, 3, 5, 7 to

9 and 10 to 17, omitting plots 2 and 4. A number of disturbances of natural (tree root) origin were apparent across the site and particularly in the plots closest to its western edge. The only archaeological features identified were two undated pits and a ditch which had been identified in previous phases of fieldwork. In addition, a small number of unstratified worked flints were recovered.

The footing trenches were generally 0.60m wide and varied in depth from 0.9m to 1.6m. Natural brown clay and gravel was exposed in the base of all of the footing trenches with colluvial deposits exposed in section varying from 0.40m to 1.2m in thickness. The depth of colluvium towards the base of the slope meant that the base of the foundation trenches rested on top of the natural boulder clay, with only colluvium exposed in the trench sections. The identified archaeological features are described below.

Ground Reduction & new access road

Monitoring was undertaken during the reduction of ground levels at the front of the plot, alongside the frontage onto the B1368, and during the formation of a new access road into the site. No archaeological finds or features were noted including any evidence for the western end of gully 4, which was predicted to extend into this area but had potentially been truncated or eroded away by previous activity or natural processes.

Plots 1-3 & 5-6

Two pieces of Sandstone and two fragments of medieval/post-medieval roof tile were recovered from the colluvium in plots 5-6. No other remains were noted including any evidence for an east-west running ditch seen in evaluation trenches 10 and 12 (Plates 8 & 9).

Plots 7, 8 and 9

One cut feature (45) measuring 1.25m x 0.55m was identified in the western footing of plot 9. The feature was only visible in the eastern side of the foundation trench (Fig. 3 & Fig 4, Section 9) and was probably the remains of a pit or tree-bole (Plate 10). No finds were recovered from its single brownish yellow silty clay fill. No archaeological finds or features were noted in plots 7 or 8.

Plots 10, 11 and 12

A handful of unstratified worked flints were recovered from the topsoil/subsoil in plot 11. No archaeological finds or features were noted in plots 10 and 12 (Plate 11).

Plots 13-14

A pit was identified and excavated in the base of a footing trench in the middle of plots 13-14. The pit (47) was 1.98m long by 0.46m deep (Fig 3 & Fig 4, Section 8) and contained two charcoal-flecked fills (48 and 49). The lower fill (48) comprised a dark brown/orange gravelly clayey sand and the upper fill (49) as light grey and orange sandy silt, neither contained any dating evidence.

The southern end of the plot was crossed by east/west ditch 12/25/27 previously recorded in both the evaluation and excavation phases of the project. As this ditch had been thoroughly investigated no further work was undertaken during monitoring other than noting its location (Fig. 3).

Plots 15-16

No archaeological remains were noted in either plot, suggesting that a ditch seen in evaluation trench 12 terminates or turns before reaching plot 16 as it was also not detected in evaluation trench 7, which partially bisected plots 15 and 16 (Plate 12).

Plot 17

Although a number of archaeological features were noted within the footprint of plot 17 during the evaluation phase, the depth of colluvium across this part of the site, located towards the base of the slope, meant that the base of the foundation trenches rested on top of the natural boulder clay, with only colluvium exposed in the sections. Consequently any features present in this area will have been preserved in situ underneath the new dwelling.

6.0 THE FINDS by Alan J Jacobs

6.1 Introduction

A total of 119 fragments of pottery, brick, tile and worked flint, weighing a total of 2235 grams, was recovered from ten stratified contexts. All of the material has been sorted into context and recorded by count and weight. The finds are described below and tabulated in Appendix 2.

6.2 Roman pottery

All fabrics are defined by the Essex County Council Type Series (Going 1987) with additions from the Stansted excavations (Wallace et al 2004, 285-312), unless otherwise stated.

The only Roman pottery recovered consisted of two probably residual conjoining sherds of Sandy Grey ware weighing 30 grams (GRS, fabric 47) that were recovered from the fill (context 30) of a ditch (context 27). This consisted of small a jar with a hooked and beaded rim (G19.1/1) and was highly micaceous, with rilled shoulder decoration dating to the late 1st to early 2nd century. Given the extensive Roman settlement known in the Braughing area it is not surprising that Roman material, albeit most likely residual, is present in later features in this area.

6.3 Medieval and later pottery by Helen Walker

A total of eighty-five sherds weighing 873g were recovered from five contexts and has been recorded onto Essex County Council's EFASYS database. Most pottery comes from ditch 1 (fills 2 and 3). Here, diagnostic material comprises a semi-complete Early Medieval Ware cooking-pot with a thickened everted rim, sherds of which occur in both fills (Plate 13); and part of a bowl in the same ware showing incised wavy line decoration around the rim (Plate 14). In lower fill 2, are body sherds in a grey-firing medieval coarse ware fabric, which can be assigned to the South Hertfordshire Greyware tradition (Plate 15). This type of pottery was made at several production sites throughout Hertfordshire and Middlesex from the late 12th to perhaps the early 14th century (Turner-Rugg 1988, 17). These sherds, all from the same vessel, are decorated with rows of pricked combing and are paralleled by an example from a consumer site at Whomerley Wood, Stevenage (Turner-Rugg 1993, fig.10.82), which lies about 15km to the west of Braughing.

The sherds of South Hertfordshire Greyware from the ditch have a coarse fabric and the vessel is coil-built rather than wheel-thrown, suggesting a late 12th to early 13th century date. The Early Medieval Ware cooking-pot and bowl fragment could be of this date or may be earlier, perhaps 12th century. All the material from the ditch is unabraded, and the presence of joining sherds and a semi-complete vessel indicates that the pottery is unlikely to be residual.

Layers 20 and 37 and gully 21 (filled by 22) produced further sherds of South Hertfordshire Greyware, albeit in small quantities. The only featured sherd is a flat-topped everted cooking-pot rim with a slack profile from gully 21. All these examples have a coarse fabric indicating an early date and could be contemporary with the pottery from ditch 1.

Both excavated cooking-pots are relatively small, with diameters of 180mm and show evidence of heating. That from ditch 1 shows sooting on the sides and on the inside of the

base and that from gully 21 shows sooting around the shoulder and under the rim, consistent with being placed in or next to the hearth. All finds have been retained.

6.4 Other Finds

A total of five fragments of Medieval or Post medieval tile weighing 232 grams were recovered from three contexts (34, 45 and U/S). These consisted entirely of abraded undiagnostic fragments that could not be more closely dated. Other finds included five small pieces of stone weighing 342 grams. Two were fragments of unstratified burnt sandstone, these were recovered alongside three fragments of Oolitic limestone (context 3), which appear to be a fragments of a roof tile. A single fragment of Iron Slag was recovered (context 2), the concave shape would indicate that this is a fragment of a hearth base. Finally, two iron objects were identified, one a post medieval or modern horseshoe (context 45), the other a nail (context 22) of similar date.

6.5 Worked Flint by Hazel Martingell

A total of 20 worked flints weighing 366 grams were recovered during excavation from four stratified and one unstratified context. The stratified material consisted of a retouched and micro-denticulated flake (30B), a micro-denticulated fragment (9A), a waste block and 11 flakes. The retouch on flake 30B has been applied to the ventral surface; the micro-denticulate edge is worn smooth. This retouched flake and the 3 flakes (context 30, C, D & E) are made of very similar flint and may all have been knapped from the same nodule.

The unstratified material consisted of a primary flake (U/SA), a core (U/SB), two retouched flake scrapers (U/SC&D), a worked flint flake (U/SE) and a post medieval gun flint (U/SF). The retouch on flake U/SC has been applied to the ventral surface, as has that of the better made flake U/SD. The gun flint U/SF, has a distinct rectilinear and wedge shaped form, these date to the 17th to 19th century.

Ventral retouch is associated with Neolithic and Late Prehistoric flint knapping technology. It is therefore possible that the majority of the flints are Neolithic or later in date and although they are redistributed in later features it is probable they were knapped in the area of ditch 27. The presence of the nearby River Quin is a likely reason for the Neolithic habitation.

6.6 Conclusion

The flint assemblage recovered from the site while residual in later features does indicates Neolithic and later prehistoric activity in the area, no doubt related to the nearby River Quin, while a single feature (ditch 27) contained two sherds of presumably residual Roman pottery.

The presence of early medieval pottery is significant in this area (see above), indicating 12th to 13th century domestic activity either on, or more likely given the lack of evidence for structural features or rubbish pitting, in close proximity to the site. The later, Post-Medieval, material probably represents material imported onto the site via agricultural/manuring activity.

Further work is not required on any of the Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval finds, although all should be retained. The post-medieval and modern material could be discarded at the archiving stage.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT by Val Fryer

7.1 Introduction and method statement

Excavations at Gravelly Lane, Braughing, undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit, recorded a limited number of features of possible Roman and early medieval (twelfth century) date. Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from fills within ditches [1]/[31] (samples 1, 6 and 7) and [27] (samples 2, 3 and 5) and from feature [40], and a total of seven were submitted for assessment.

The samples were processed by manual water flotation/washover and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). All plant remains were charred. Modern fibrous roots and seeds were present throughout.

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and sorted when dry. Artefacts/ecofacts were retained for further specialist analysis.

7.2 Results

Cereal grains, chaff and weed seeds are recorded within four of the samples studied, although with the exception of sample 1, all occur as single specimens within an assemblage. Preservation is generally quite poor, with most of the grains being severely puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures.

Oat (*Avena* sp.), barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are recorded (all within the assemblages from ditch [1]/[31]), with wheat and oats being predominant. Although chaff is comparatively rare, bread wheat (*T. aestivum/compactum*) type rachis nodes are also recorded along with a single oat floret base with what appears to be a straight basal abscission scar. The latter almost certainly indicates that some, if not all of the oat grains within sample 1 are of the cultivated variety *A. sativa*. A single large legume (Fabaceae) of probable pea/bean type is also recorded within the assemblage from sample 1. A wheat spikelet base recovered from sample 5 is the only cereal remain recorded from the fills within ditch [27].

Weed seeds only occur within the assemblage from sample 1. All are of common segetal weeds, namely stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), which would have grown in abundance on the local clay soils, small legumes (Fabaceae), large seeded grasses (Poaceae) and dock (*Rumex* sp.). A possible fragment of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell was recovered from sample 6 and sample 1 contained a single poorly preserved seed fragment of what might be apple/pear (*Malus/Pyrus* sp.) type. Charcoal/charred wood fragments are present throughout, although rarely at a high density.

Whilst some of the fragments of black porous and tarry material may be residues of the combustion of organic remains (including cereal grains) at very high temperatures, others are very hard and brittle and are, perhaps, most likely to be bi-products of the combustion of coal, small pieces of which are also present within four of the assemblages studied. Other remains are scarce, although the assemblages from samples 4 and 7 both contain small quantities of burnt or fired clay.

7.3 Conclusions and recommendations for further work

In summary, of the seven assemblages studied, only one, from sample 1, is of potential interest, and even here, the material is from a secondary context. The assemblage is grain dominant, possibly indicating that it is derived from either hearth refuse, where the grains were accidentally burnt during culinary preparation, or from agricultural detritus i.e. processing waste or the sweepings from a grain store. The latter is, perhaps, more probable as although oats may have been toasted and eaten whole during the medieval period, wheat was more commonly ground into flour. The remaining assemblages are too sparse to be accurately interpreted, although the low density of charcoal and other anthropogenic residues within ditch [27] may indicate that this feature was peripheral to any focus of either domestic or agricultural activity.

.Although the assemblage from sample 1 does contain a sufficient density of material for quantification (i.e. 100+ specimens), further analysis of a single sample in isolation would add little to the overall interpretation of the site or its component features. Therefore, no further analysis of these assemblages is recommended. However, a summary of this assessment should be included within any publication of data from this site.

8.0 DISCUSSION

8.1 Prehistoric

The earliest activity on site is represented by the recovery of pieces of worked flint mostly found as a residual element in later features. Pit 15 is the only feature for which a prehistoric date can be suggested as it contained no later finds, producing just a single flint flake. However, based upon such scant dating evidence this attribution must be regarded as potentially unreliable. The majority of the worked flints appear to date to the Neolithic period and indicate flint knapping taking place in the vicinity i.e. on the lower valley slope west of the River Quin. There is no evidence of contemporary settlement and it is possible that the flint working was of a transitory nature, perhaps exploiting near-by sources of suitable flint.

8.2 Late Iron Age/Roman

Three sherds of Late Iron Age/Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation and a further sherd of Roman pottery from the excavation. All appears to be residual with three-quarters of it certainly contained within later features. Given the intensity of occupation and activity in the Braughing area at the end of the Iron Age and in the Roman period the recovery of a few sherds of pottery is not surprising. The small quantity suggests that the site is peripheral to the main areas of settlement at this time.

8.3 Saxon

No archaeological remains of Saxon date were identified in any of the fieldwork.

8.4 Medieval

Ditch 1/31 is the only firmly dated feature with pottery evidence suggesting that its western half was infilled at the end of the 12th century or early in the 13th. The recovery of a single piece of ceramic tile from the more eastern segment (31) could point to some later disturbance or might suggest that the eastern end of the ditch was not in-filled until later in the medieval period.

The ditches and gullies recorded during the archaeological works appear to be broadly contemporary and form a series of enclosures or paddocks, with ditches 1/ 31 and 12/ 25/ 27, with their distinctive tapering/ funnel shape perhaps indicate a track or droveway used to move livestock down onto richer pastures in the valley bottom, while also acting as drainage ditches channelling water downslope. The smaller gullies suggest that some form of subdivision occurred, most likely dividing the field up into smaller paddocks or closes, with gully 21/ 23 suggesting that this may have happened after ditches 1/ 31 and 12/ 25/ 27 had gone out of use as it is difficult to see how the small parcel of land left between ditches 1/ 31, 12/ 25/ 27 and gully 21/ 23 would have been particularly productive or of much use.

No evidence to suggest that the site lies within the putative Minster precinct was encountered, although the relatively large quantity of Early Medieval Ware, including cooking pots suggests that some form of domestic activity was taking place nearby, perhaps in an immediately adjacent plot to the site, with domestic rubbish/ waste then being dumped into the open ditches. Given the steep gradient of the slope it is unlikely to have been suitable for anything other than agricultural activities and, with the exception of a few scattered/ isolated pits, no structural features or other evidence to suggest the presence of buildings was noted. This can be caveated somewhat in that the bulk of the archaeological investigation took place to the rear of what would have been the street frontage; however, it is clear from a visual inspection that the area immediately alongside the road has been extensively modified in the past, with quite a steep drop in level from the road into the site and evidence for roadside quarrying. There is also clear evidence of soil erosion from the front of the site, with a considerable thickness (in excess of 1m) of colluvium having accumulated towards/ at the base of the slope and these factors would collectively suggest that any settlement evidence alongside the road is likely to have been lost.

9.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The investigation has successfully established the character date and function of the archaeological remains within the development area. However, given the relative paucity of dated archaeological features it is not possible to link the results of the investigation with any of the regional research frameworks objectives in a meaningful way.

One objective of the investigation was to establish whether the ditches identified in the evaluation trenches were field boundaries or the borders of areas of settlement activity. The lack of settlement evidence from within the development area suggests that the former is more likely. The linear features all run downhill towards, and at right angles to, the River

Quin and are all most probably land divisions associated with medieval agricultural activity. However, the recovery of a good quantity of unabraded early medieval pottery from the western end, nearest the road, of one of the ditches does hint at nearby settlement activity.

A second objective was to establish whether the development site lies within the postulated precinct of an early Saxon Minster church known from documentary sources to have been located at Braughing. No finds of Saxon date were found to substantiate this though it should be noted that the development area is located some way away and on the opposite side of the river from the present day church. It is however feasible that the early medieval field boundaries represent divisions set up once the postulated precinct has gone out of use.

Although the results of the investigation have little scope to contribute to the Regional Research Framework agendas in a significant way, the work has successively achieved the preservation by record of those remains threatened by the development and shed new light on the extent of the medieval settlement at Braughing. It has also highlighted the potential for further prehistoric remains to be present on the slopes of the Quin valley.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was directed by Trevor Ennis and Phillippa Sparrow, assisted by Preston Boyles, Natalia Hunt, Susanne Rose, Henry Springett and Andrew Lewsey. Alan Jacobs, Helen Walker and Hazel Martingell (independent consultant) reported on the finds, plans and illustrations were prepared by Andrew Lewsey and the project was managed by Adrian Scruby. Robert Masefield (RPS Planning & Development) prepared the Written Scheme of Investigation and monitored the work on behalf of Galliford Try. Alison Tinniswood (HCC HEU) monitored the works on behalf of the local planning authority, East Hertfordshire District Council.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archaeological Services & Consultancy 2007 *Desk Based Assessment: Pound Close, Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Hertfordshire.* Unpublished report
- Archaeological Services & Consultancy 2007 *Archaeological Evaluation: Pound Close, Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Hertfordshire.* Unpublished report
- Bedwin, O. 1996 *The Archaeology of Essex, Proceedings of the Writtle Conference,* Essex County Council Planning, Chelmsford
- Brown N. and Glazebrook J. (eds) 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy,* E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. **8**
- Glazebrook, J. (ed.) 1997 *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1, resource assessment,* E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. **3**
- Going, C.J. 1987, The Mansio and Other Sites in the South-eastern Sector of Caesaromagus: the Roman pottery, Chelmsford Archaeology. Trust Rep. 3.2, Council. Brit. Archaeology. Res. Rep. 62
- Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England,* E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Pap. **14**
- HCC CHEU 2010 *Design Brief for Archaeological Investigation at Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Herts*
- Institute for Archaeologists 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (revised)*
- RPS 2010 *Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Herts: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation Stage.* RPS Planning & Development
- Stace, C. 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles.* Second edition. Cambridge University Press
- Turner-Rugg, A. 1988 'Medieval pottery production in Hertfordshire', *Hertfordshire's Past* No.25, 17-21
- Turner-Rugg, A. 1993 'Medieval pottery in Hertfordshire: a gazetteer of the principal collections', *Hertfordshire Archaeology* **11**, 30-53
- Wallace, C. 2004, "The Roman Pottery" in Excavations at Stansted Airport: The prehistoric and Romano-British, E. Anglian Archaeol. 107

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

All dimensions are given in metres.

Context	Fill	Dimensions	Feature Description	Fill Description	Relationship	Equivalent evaluation feature no.	Finds	Spot date
Ditch 1	2	20m+ x 2.8m x 0.9m	E-W ditch (down slope). Gradual break of slope, gradual becoming steep sides, fairly sharp break of slope to concave base. Some root disturbance.	Dark yellow orange brown silty clay. Occ small stones.	Same as Ditch 31.	1210	Pot	Early medieval 12th century.
	3			Dark grey brown silty clay. Occ. Stones.			Pot	
Gully 4	5	1.2m+ x 0.72m x 0.18m	E-W gully. Gradual break of slope, concave sides and gradually sloping to concave base.	Dark greyish brown silty clay with occ flint pebbles.		1004 & 1203	Flint flake	-
Gully 6	7	1m+ x 1.2m x 0.25m	E-W gully. Gradually sloping sides with concave – flat base.	Dark grey brown silty clay. Common small flints. Charcoal and infrequent burnt clay.	Cut 10.	-	-	-
Pit 8	9		NO CONTEXT SHEETS FOR THIS					
Natural Disturbance 10	11		Probable natural disturbance. Gradually sloping sides and concave base.	Dark grey gravel and silty clay. Infrequent charcoal.	Cut by 6	-	-	-
Ditch 12	13	1.1m+ x 1.07m x 0.4	E-W ditch. Convex gradually sloping sides and concave base.	Dark yellow grey silty clay. Occ pebbles. Firm.	Same as Ditches 25 and 27.	701	-	-
	14			Dark grey brown silty clay. Occ pebbles. Firm				

Pit 15	16	1.23m x 1.13m x 0.54m	Large circular/oval pit. NE-SW. Concave moderately sloped sides and flat base.	Dark grey brown silty clay. Occ pebbles. Firm.		-	Flint flake.	-
Gully 17	18	0.72m x 0.6m x 0.29m	NE-SW linear feature. Irregular sides – e-steep, w-gradual. Flattish base.	Yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small stones. Plastic.		-	-	-
	19			Pale orange-brown silty clay with occ. Small stones. Plastic.	-	-	-	
Layer 20		1.10m x 1.2m x 0.2m		Orange brown slightly silty clay. Plastic. Layer containing pot.		-	Pot	11th -12th century
Gully 21	22	0.89m+ x 0.67m x 0.28m	NNE-SSW gully. Steep sides and flat base.	Dark orange brown silty clay – dense plastic. Frequent small gravel, occ flint nodules.	Same as gully 23. Contemporary with Ditch 12=25=27.	-	Nail	Post-med – modern
Gully 23	24	0.21m x 0.27m x 0.19m	N-S gully terminus. Steep sides, concave base.	Yellowish brown silty clay, plastic. Occ charcoal.	Same as gully 21. Contemporary with Ditch 25 = 27.	-	-	-
Ditch 25	26	20m+ x 1.6m x 0.6m	E-W aligned ditch.	Yellowish brown silty clay, plastic. Occ charcoal	Same as ditches 12 and 27. Contemporary with gully 23	701	-	-

Ditch 27	28	1.1m+ x 1.52m x 0.65m	E-W aligned ditch. Fairly steep regular sides. Concave base.	Mid orange brown slightly sandy silty clay with frequent manganese, occ small flints and rare charcoal. Firm.	Contemporary with Gully 23. Same as ditches 12 and 25.	701	-	
	29			Mid brown grey slightly sandy silty clay occ charcoal and occ flints. Firm.			-	
	30			Mid orange grey sandy silty clay with occ charcoal and occ flints. Firm.			Pot and flint.	Roman.
Ditch 31	32	1.2m+ x 1.8m x 0.9m	E-W aligned linear. Steep sides and concave base.	Dark reddish brown silty clay with occ pebbles. Firm.	Same as ditch 1.	1210	-	-
	33			Dark red-grey sandy clay with rare pebbles. Compact.				
	34			Dark grey brown silty clay with occ pebbles and compact.				
Depression 36	35	0.31m+ x 0.38m+ x 0.11m	Natural silty patch. Very irregular slopes up in a sinuous fashion to the north-west.	Pale grey clayey silt. Loose.		-	-	-

Layer 37		0.09m deep.	Natural irregular layer, linking up with 36. One small sherd of pot on surface.	Brownish yellow clayey silt. Soft.	-	-	-	Medieval coarseware
Ditch 38	39	1.25m+ x 0.85m x 0.3m+	E-W ditch steep sides. Base not reached.	Brownish grey yellow silty clay occ stones and infrequent charcoal. Soft.	Cut by 40. Same as 25=27.	701	-	-
40	41		Irregular in plan. Moderately sloping sides with concave base.	Brownish grey clayey silt. With infrequent stones and flecks of charcoal. Soft.	Cuts Ditch 27 top fill.	-	-	-
42	43		Relationship segment through ditch 31 and gully 21. One fill.	Mid orange brown sandy silty clay with freq pebbles and occ charcoal. Loose.	Contemporary relationship between Ditch 31 and gully 21.	1210	-	-
	44		Natural depression.	Dark orange brown silty clay. Soft. Occ pebbles.	Cut gully 6	-		Post-med - modern pit
45	46	1.25m x 0.55m	Pit/Tree bole in eastern footing of plot 9.					
47	48	1.98m x 0.46m	Pit in Plot 13 - 14	Dark orange-brown gravely clay				
	49			Light orange-grey sandy silt				

APPENDIX 2: FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

Context	Feature	Count	Wt (g)	Description	Date
U/S	Plots 5-6	2	20	Sandstone, fragments (Discard)	
		2	140	Medieval/post medieval, tile fragments, sandy oxidised fabric 15mm thick. (Discard)	13th to 18th century
U/S	Plot 11	1	70	Worked flint, Primary flake, debitage (A).	Neolithic or later?
		1	110	Worked flint, core (B).	Neolithic or later?
		1	16	Worked flint flake, scraper, secondary flake, retouch on right ventral edge (C).	Neolithic or later?
		1	14	Worked flint, flake, scraper retouch on right ventral edge (D).	Neolithic or later?
		1	2	Worked flint, flake debitage (E).	Neolithic or later?
		1	8	Worked flint, gun flint (F).	Post medieval
2	1	5	70	Early medieval ware, sherds from sagging base, patches of sooting externally and on inside of base, same vessel in fill 3, unabraded	11th to 12th century
		1	24	Early medieval ware, bowl fragment with thickened everted rim and rounded sides, incised wavy line decoration around rim, unabraded	12th century
		2	7	Early medieval ware, misc. unfeatured sherds	11th to 12th century
		11	97	Medieval coarse ware, body sherds all from the same vessel, showing rows of prick-combed decoration, grey-firing, coarse fabric, not wheel-thrown, unabraded	Late 12th early 13th century
		1	40	Worked Flint, waste block	Neolithic or later?
		1	6	Worked Flint, flake, secondary	Neolithic or later?
		1	96	Iron Slag, fragment of hearth base, high iron content.	
3	1	57	601	Early medieval ware, sherds from rim, sides and base of cooking pot, several joining sherds, thickened everted rim, some sooting on sides, and on inside of base, unabraded	11th to 12th century
		3	322	Oolitic Limestone, fragment of tile?	
5	4	1	10	Worked Flint, flake, secondary, irregular due to flint inclusions.	Neolithic or later?
9	8	1	8	Worked Flint, micro-denticulate fragment, tertiary (A).	Neolithic or later?
20	Layer	6	17	Medieval coarse ware, joining body sherds in coarse fabric showing grey surfaces and a thick oxidised core, borderline early medieval ware.	Later 12th to early 13th century
22	21	1	52	Medieval coarse ware, cooking pot fragment with flat-topped everted rim and slack profile, coarse grey-firing fabric, fire-blackened under rim and around shoulder, some abrasion.	Later 12th to early 13th century
		1	10	Iron, corroded object most likely a nail.	
30	27	2	30	Roman pottery, Sandy Grey ware (GRS, fabric 47) in the form of a jar with a hooked and beaded rim (G19.1/1), highly micaceous and riled shoulder decoration, 180mm diameter, 8% eve.	1st to early 2nd century
		1	18	Worked Flint, retouched and micro-denticulated flake. Retouched on ventral surface along left lateral edge, secondary (A).	Neolithic or later?
		3	16	Worked Flint, flakes, secondary (C, D and E).	Neolithic or later?
		2	4	Worked Flint, trimming flakes, secondary.	Neolithic or later?
		2	36	Worked Flint, flake fragments (1 tertiary, 1 secondary).	Neolithic or later?

Context	Feature	Count	Wt (g)	Description	Date
34	31	2	8	Worked Flint, flake fragments, tertiary.	Neolithic or later?
		1	34	Medieval/post medieval, tile fragment, sandy oxidised fabric 17mm thick.	13th to 18th century
37	Layer	2	5	Medieval coarse ware, joining body sherds in coarse grey-firing fabric with oxidised outer margin.	Later 12th to early 13th century
45	44	1	48	Medieval/post medieval, tile fragment, sandy oxidised fabric 14mm thick (Discard).	13th to 18th century
		1	296	Iron, horseshoe, post medieval or modern, much corroded and worn on front (Discard).	17th to 20th century
Total		119	2235		

APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Herts

SITE CODE: BGL 10

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Written Scheme of Investigation (RPS Group)

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Desk Based Assessment (ASC Ltd)
- 2.2 Archaeological Evaluation Report (ASC Ltd)
- 2.3 Client Report
- 2.4 Finds Reports

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (1 to 49)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 A4 plan/section sheet
- 3.6 Environmental Sample Register
- 3.7 Sample sheets
- 3.8 Photographic Registers
- 3.9 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital prints + images on disk)
- 3.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

Large plan/section sheets

Finds

The retained finds occupy less than one box.

APPENDIX 4: HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Herts	
Parishes: Braughing	District: East Hertfordshire
NGR: TL 39400 25430	Site Code: BGL 10
Type of Work: Archaeological Investigation	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 18/10/10 - 26/10/10 and 17/01/11 - 31/05/11	Size of Area Investigated: 1.05 ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Hertford Museum	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	HER Request No.: 231/10
Final Report: HAH note	Oasis No.: 105584
Periods Represented: Post-medieval, modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>A programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken in advance of residential development on land at Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Hertfordshire, comprising a strip, map and record exercise with the footprint of a new access/ spine road for the development, and archaeological monitoring on the excavation of foundation trenches for the new houses.</p> <p>The site is located at the north-western edge of the village of Braughing, in the Green End area of the civil parish, to the west of the River Quin, comprising a rectangular grass meadow sloping from west to east.</p> <p>A limited amount of evidence for prehistoric activity has been identified in the wider area surrounding the site including five possibly Bronze Age ring ditches identified through aerial photography. During the Iron Age a large settlement developed c. 1.5km to the south of the site that shifted during the Roman period to the Wickham Hill area, focusing around Ermine Street. Settlement shifted again, to the north-east, during the post-Roman period, to its current location. Braughing became an administrative unit and an ecclesiastical deanery with an Anglo-Saxon charter dated c.830 indicating the presence of a minster church, suggesting that the town was of considerable importance to the local region. By the 13th century Braughing was a relatively wealthy settlement on a par with Hertford and Welwyn, although it is probable that a considerable proportion of the population lived in dispersed farmsteads. It is thought that the town started to decline during the late medieval period due to the rising fortunes of Puckeridge to the south.</p> <p>A previous archaeological evaluation, undertaken in 2008, revealed three large ditches and a smaller gully as well as three sub-rectangular features, possibly representing pits or ditch termini. Three pottery sherds of Iron Age and Roman date were recovered from two of the ditches.</p> <p>As a consequence of the above discoveries a programme of further archaeological was requested in order to ensure the preservation by record of those remains threatened by the development. The mitigation works revealed that the earliest activity on site is represented by pieces of worked flint mostly found as a residual element in later features. The majority of the worked flints appear to date to the Neolithic period and indicate flint knapping taking place in the vicinity i.e. on the lower valley slope west of the River Quin. There is no evidence of contemporary settlement and it is possible that the flint working was of a transitory nature, perhaps exploiting near-by sources of suitable flint.</p>	

Site name/Address: Gravelly Lane, Braughing, Herts

Three sherds of Late Iron Age/Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation and a further sherd of Roman pottery from the excavation; however, the small quantity of pottery and lack of any features clearly attributable to these periods suggests that the site is peripheral to the main areas of settlement.

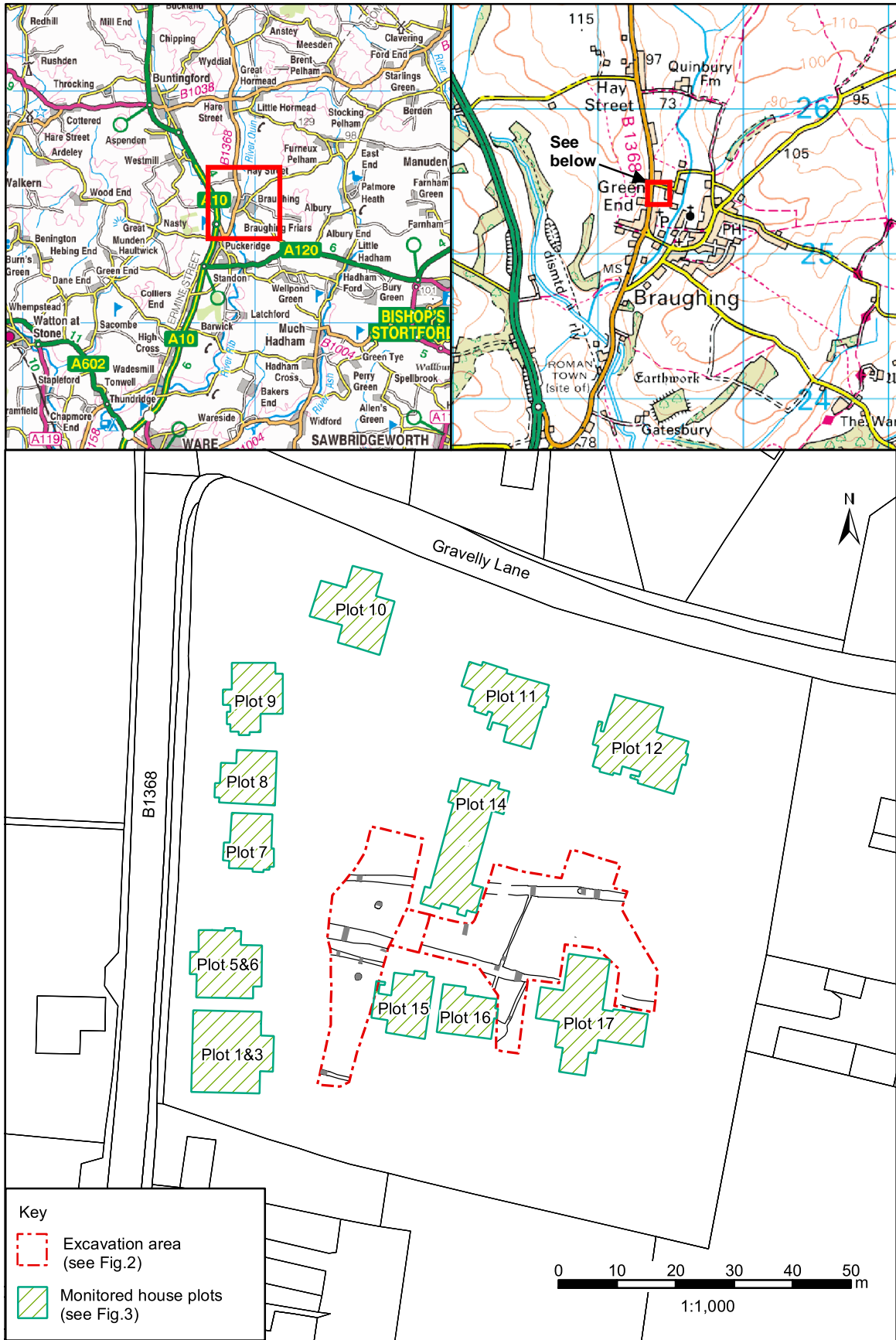
A series of broadly contemporary early Medieval ditches and gullies, dating to the 12th/ 13th century and forming a series of enclosures or paddocks were investigated, with two west to east running quite substantial ditches possibly forming a funnel-shaped track or driveway used to move livestock down onto richer pastures in the valley bottom. Smaller gullies, in at least one instance cutting across the larger ditches at right-angles, suggest that some form of sub-division occurred, most likely dividing the field up into smaller paddocks or closes, after the west – east orientated ditches had gone out of use

No evidence to suggest that the site lies within the putative Minster precinct was encountered, although the relatively large quantity of Early Medieval Ware, including cooking pots suggests that some form of domestic activity was taking place nearby, perhaps in an immediately adjacent plot to the site, with domestic rubbish/ waste then being dumped into the open ditches. Given the steep gradient of the slope it is unlikely to have been suitable for anything other than agricultural activities and, with the exception of a few scattered/ isolated pits, no structural features or other evidence to suggest the presence of buildings was noted.

Previous Summaries/Reports:-

Author of Summary: T. Ennis

Date of Summary: August 2011



Mapping reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. Crown copyright. Licence no.LA100019602.

Fig.1. Site location

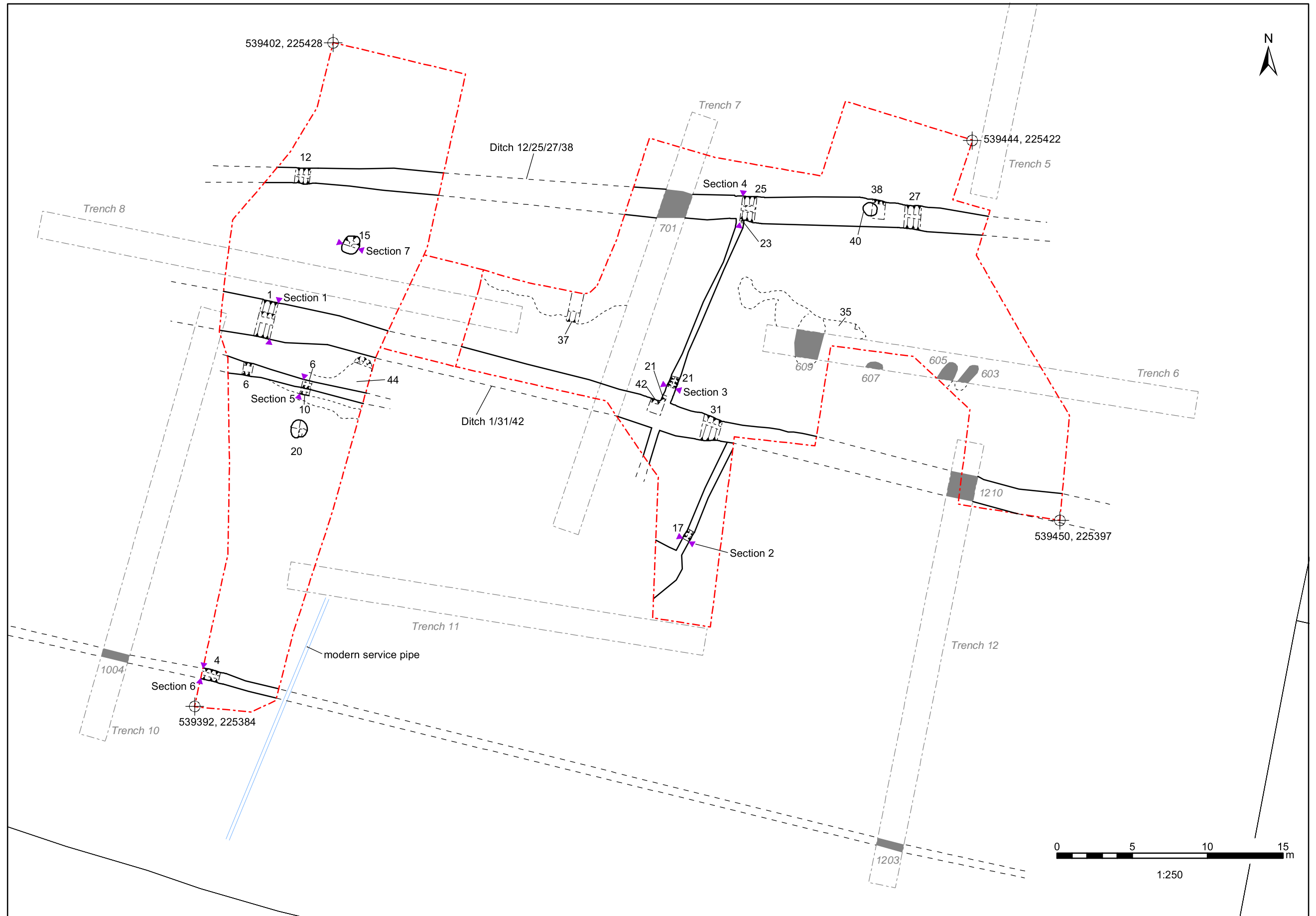


Fig.2. Excavation plan

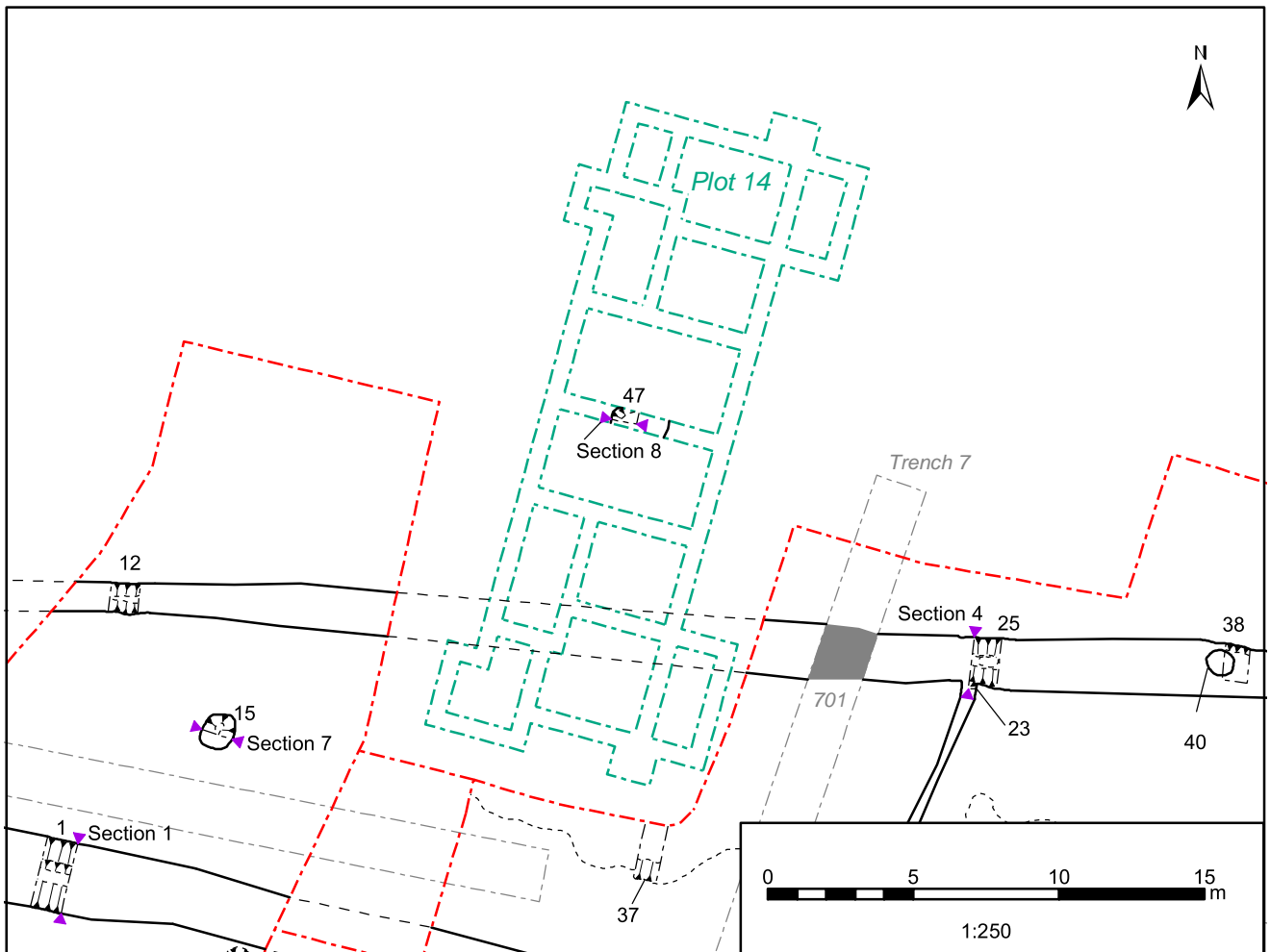
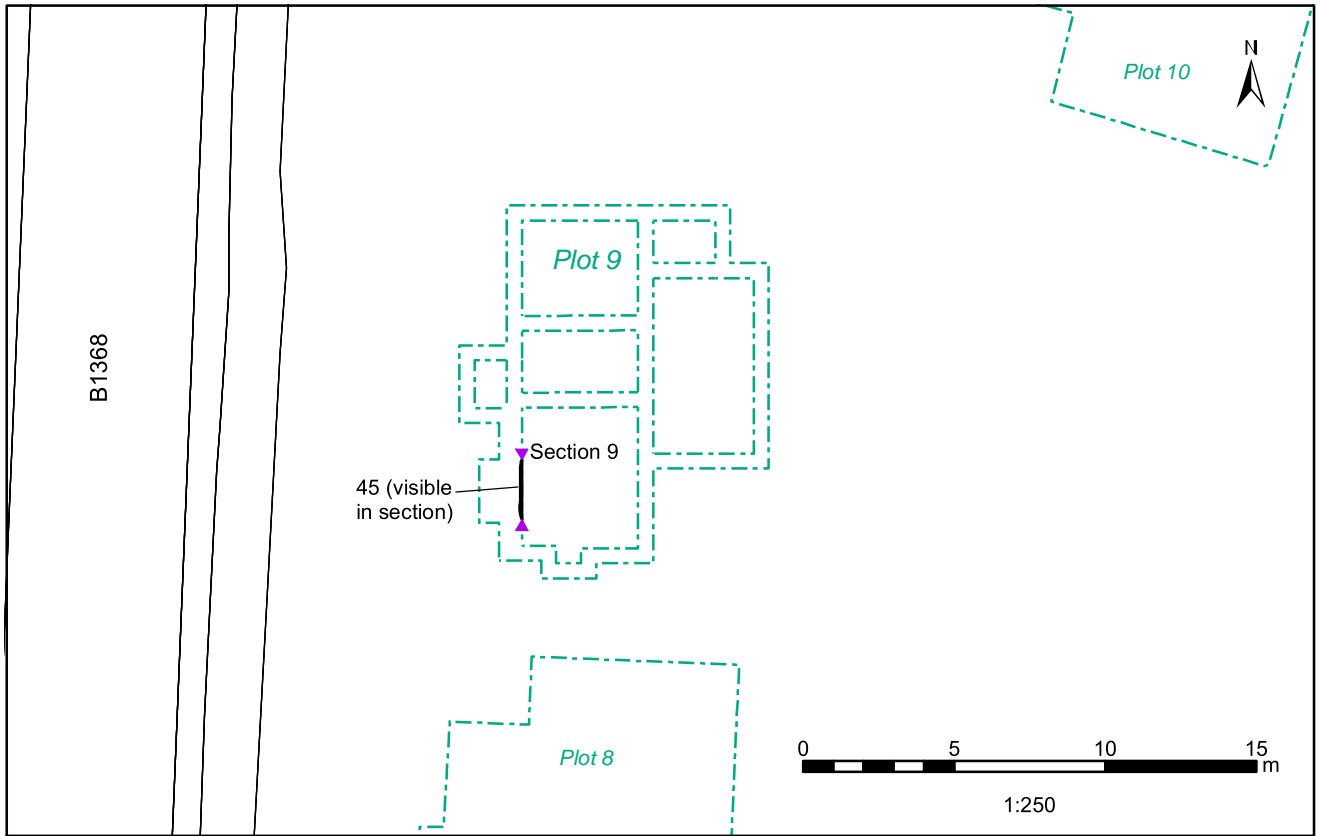


Fig.3. Plots 9 & 14

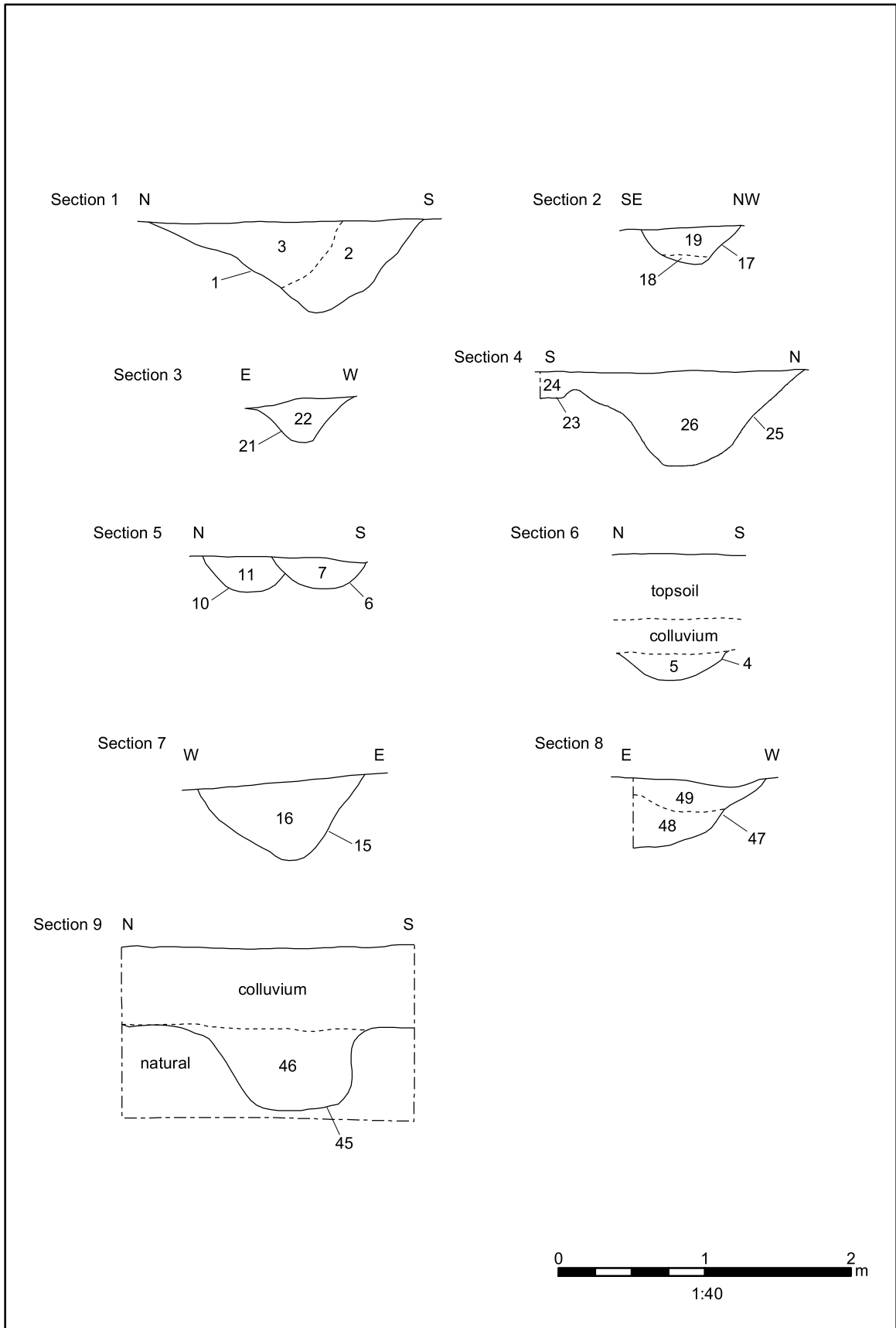


Fig.4. Sections 1 - 9

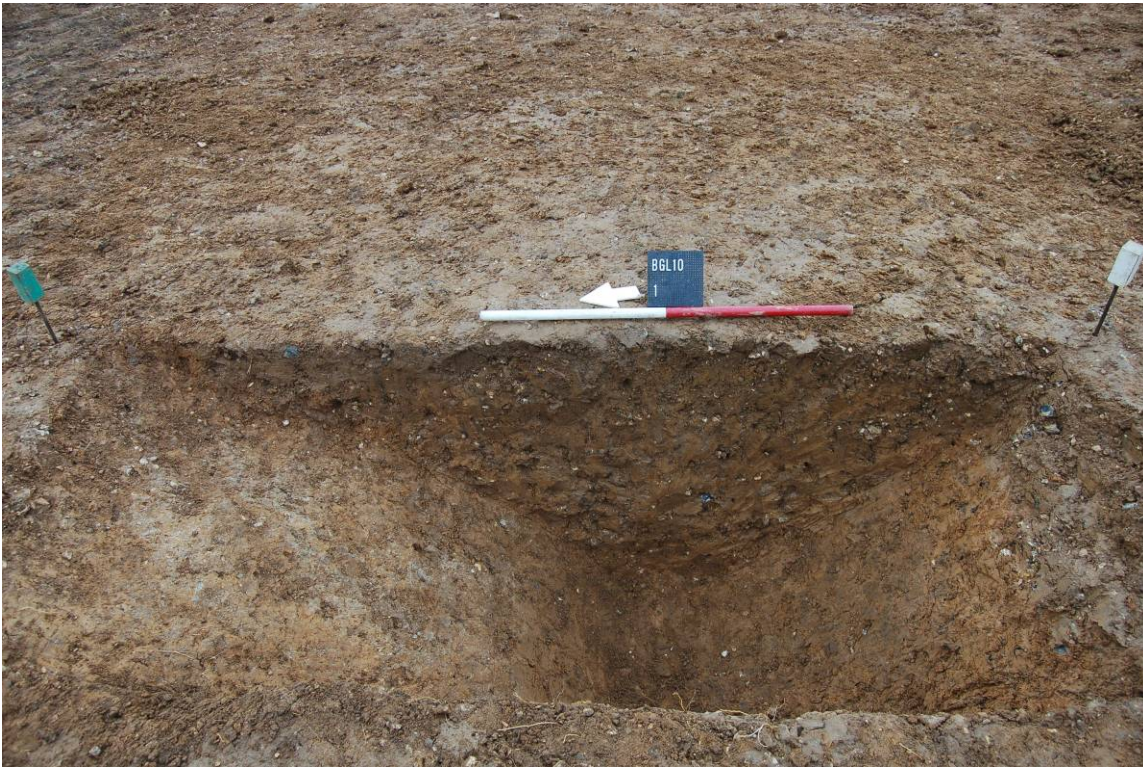


Plate 1: Ditch 1, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 2: Ditch 12 (over-cut to south), looking west (1m scale)



Plate 3: Ditch 31, looking north-west (2m scale)



Plate 4: Gully 6 looking west (1m scale)



Plate 5: Gully 4 looking west-north-west (1m scale)



Plate 6: Pit 15 (1m scale)



Plate 7: Eastern excavation area looking north (remnants of evaluation trench 7 in foreground)



Plate 8: Plots 1 -3 and ground reduction at front of site



Plate 9: Plots 1 – 6 and further ground reduction



Plate 10: Plot 9 under excavation



Plate 11: Plot 12 under excavation



Plate 12: Plot 16 under investigation



Plate 13: Early Medieval Ware Cooking-Pot Plate 14: Early Medieval Ware bowl



Plate 15: 'South Hertfordshire Greyware' vessel