

# HERITAGE NETWORK



## **Land at DUNSTAN STREET Ely, Cambs.**

(HN437)

### *Archaeological Assessment Report*



# THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

*Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation*

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land at  
DUNSTAN STREET  
Ely, Cambs.

HN437

## *Archaeological Assessment Report*

*Prepared on behalf of E J Gifford (Construction) Ltd*

by

Geoff Saunders, BA

Report no. 217

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*The cover photo shows a general view of the site during excavation, taken from the west*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Mark Winter, Geoff Saunders, Karin Semmelmann and Tom Burns under the supervision of Chris Turner. The pottery assessment was carried out by Paul Blinkhorn and the remaining artefact assemblages were assessed by Helen Ashworth. The illustrations were prepared by Mark Winter and Geoff Saunders, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to E J Gifford (Construction) Ltd; and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Cambs. County Council for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Land at Dunstan Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire		
<b>County:</b>	Cambridgeshire	<b>District:</b>	East Cambridgeshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Ely	<b>Parish:</b>	Ely
<b>Planning reference:</b>	02/01007/FUL	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 5313 8087
<b>Client name and address:</b>	E J Gifford, 16b High Street, Landbeach, Cambridge, CB4 4DT		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	New Housing	<b>Present land use:</b>	Scrub land
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	390m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	275m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	N/a	<b>Other reference:</b>	HN410
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Type of work:</b>	Evaluation	<b>Curating Museum:</b>	Cambs. C. C.
<b>Start of work</b>	19/08/2003	<b>Finish of work</b>	29/08/2003
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	N/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	IA, Saxon/EM, PM
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	Evaluation Report, Heritage Network, Report No. 201		

**Synopsis:** In response to an archaeological condition on the planning permission for new housing on land at Dunstan Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developers to carry out an archaeological excavation on the site.

Previous excavation on adjacent sites to the north, west and south had revealed extensive archaeological remains from both the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon periods. The previous evaluation and present excavation of this site revealed a network of probable boundary or drainage ditches dating to the Iron Age, and two ditches of Anglo-Saxon/early Medieval date. These confirm the general pattern of activity in the area with the finds assemblages suggesting that the site lies outside the main areas of occupation at those periods.

## 1. Introduction

7.2 This report has been prepared on behalf of *E J Gifford (Construction) Ltd* as the assessment stage of an archaeological excavation carried out in advance of building development on land at Dunstan Street, Ely, Cambs. The archaeological work has followed the provisions set out in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated July 2003 (Hillelson 2003).

7.3 The site is located towards the north-west margin of the Isle of Ely, approximately 1.3km north-west of Ely Cathedral (centred on NGR TL 5313 8087). The development proposes the construction of six new dwellings in two blocks, with car parking and access to the front and gardens to the rear.

7.4 The planning permission for the development (ref. 02/01007/FUL) controlled by the East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC), had been granted subject to a condition (Condition 11) requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning. Under that condition, an evaluation was carried out by the Heritage Network in June 2003 in accordance with a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* prepared by the *County Archaeology Office (CAO)* of Cambridgeshire County Council, acting as advisers to ECDC (ref. AT 19/02/03). The evaluation demonstrated the survival on the site of features dating to the Saxon period.

7.5 On the basis of the evaluation report, the County Archaeology Office advised that archaeological excavation of those areas directly affected by the approved construction works should be carried out in advance of the start of the development programme, in order to preserve by record any remains which would inevitably be destroyed by the works.

7.6 The aim of the project has been to identify, investigate and record all archaeological features and deposits on the site prior to the start of the development programme. The current document presents, and reviews the scope of the data recovered, and assesses its quality, character and significance. In accordance with the requirements set out in English Heritage's document, *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP2, 1991), this is intended to allow the planning authority to consider its potential and the nature of any future programme of analysis, leading to publication.

## 2. General Background

### *TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY*

7.7 The site is located on the northwest margin of the Isle of Ely at approximately 7.30mOD.

7.8 The underlying geology of the area consists of kimmeridge clay over which calcareous humic gley soils of the Peacock unit have developed (Soil Survey of Eastern England, Sheet 4).

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND*

7.9 Archaeological investigations carried out prior to the housing development adjacent to the site revealed evidence of Iron Age and Saxon settlement (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2000). The report indicated that features associated with the Iron Age and Saxon settlements might run into the present site from the north and the west. In particular a large Iron Age ditch appeared to run into the northwest corner of the site on a north to south alignment and a smaller middle Saxon ditch appeared to run into the same corner on an east to west alignment.

7.10 Although the site lies outside the core of the Medieval settlement at Ely, extensive Saxon and Medieval remains have been excavated on land to the south and the west (Mortimer et al. 2002).

7.11 The southern third of the site was excavated in advance of a sewerage pipeline in 1995 and revealed no archaeological features or deposits (Gibson, 1995).

7.12 An evaluation of the site was undertaken by the Heritage Network in July 2003 and demonstrated that ditches dating to the Saxon and early Medieval periods survived on the site (Saunders, 2003).

### 3. Methods Statement

#### *EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY*

7.13 The present site was investigated in two stages (Fig.2).

- Area 1 focused on the footprints of the proposed houses, and the associated services, and measured approximately 260m<sup>2</sup>.
- Area 2 was located so as to investigate a possible junction between two linear features and measured approximately 15m<sup>2</sup>.

7.14 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, in consultation with the County Archaeology Office (CAO) of Cambridgeshire County Council.

7.15 The overburden was removed, under close archaeological supervision, by a JCB-type excavator machine fitted with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. Machine excavation ceased once the presence of an archaeological horizon had been established. Spoil was scanned for unstratified artefacts.

7.16 All identified features were systematically investigated and recorded using appropriate *pro-forma* record sheets, hand drawn scaled plans, and photographs. The site was surveyed using an electronic theodolite, and the data introduced into CAD software to produce an overall site plan.

#### *POST-EXCAVATION*

7.17 Following current professional practice, the post-excavation stage of the present project has been divided between Archive and Assessment, and Post-Excavation Analysis and Publication.

##### *Archive*

7.18 The site archive, comprising of the excavation records and materials recovered, have been quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. A Harris Matrix has been compiled, together with an overall site summary, and a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

7.19 The archive will be prepared in accordance with UKIC guidelines for deposition with the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record.

##### *Artefacts*

7.20 Where appropriate, bulk finds such as pottery and ceramic building material have been carefully washed in clean water to remove the soil, and quantified. All pottery has been marked with the site code and context number.

##### *Ecofacts*

**7.21** The ecofacts recovered from the present site consist of animal bone and snail shell. These have been cleaned and quantified as bulk artefacts.

**7.22** A total of ten bulk samples of at least 20 litres each were taken from the site (including both evaluation and excavation stages). The sampled contexts were securely dated and were considered to have potential to provide information about contemporary local environmental conditions, as well as human social and economic indicators.

**7.23** The samples have been washed in a flotation tank using a 500 micron mesh. The resulting flots and residues have been allowed to dry before being examined using a hand lens to consider their potential for further study.

## 4. Collected Data

### QUANTIFICATION

#### Documentary Archive

7.24 The documentary archive incorporates the written, drawn and photographic records from the fieldwork on the present site. The various elements of the documentary archive are quantified in Table 1, below:

Record Type			Items
Contexts	Area 1	34	36
	Area 2	2	
Bulk soil sample sheets			7
Level record sheets			2
Site survey sheets			5
Field Drawings	A2 sheets	2	3
	Sketches	1	
Photographs	Colour Slide		14
	Monochrome negatives		29

#### Material Archive

7.25 The material archive incorporates the artefacts, faunal remains and environmental samples collected during the fieldwork on the present site, including both stratified and unstratified material. The various elements of the material archive are quantified in Table 2, below:

Type	Number	Weight (g)
Pottery	44	223
CBM	1	5
Animal Bone	112	1096
Charcoal	5	3
Flint	1	25
Daub	7	9
Stone	5	120
Shell	10	25
Samples	7	c.140 litres



**STRATIGRAPHY AND SITE PHASING****Context Types**

7.26 A total of 36 contexts were recorded from 9 features investigated during the present project. Area 1 accounted for 94% of all recorded contexts the remaining 6% were recorded in Area 2. The distribution of contexts by Area is demonstrated in Table 3 below:

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Area 1</b>	<b>Area 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
Post Holes	2	-	2
Ditches	4	1	5
Pits	1	-	1
Natural Features	2	-	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	9	1	10

**Context Groups**

7.27 Four context groups were identified during post-excavation analysis. The first three represent the grouping of multiple sections across the same feature, and the fourth unites two modern postholes. The groups are shown in Table 4, below:

<b>Group Number</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Phase</b>
013	Ditch	Area 1	Iron Age
014	Ditch	Area 1	Iron Age
031	Ditch	Areas 1 and 2	Iron Age
032	Posthole group	Area 1	Modern

**Phasing**

7.28 The preliminary dating of artefacts collected within the defined features from the present site has allowed two broad phases of activity to be defined. The first phase is represented by ditch groups [13], [14] and [31] dating to the Iron Age, and the second by a ditch [103] investigated in the evaluation stage of the project.

**SITE NARRATIVE**

7.29 The low density of features revealed during the current investigation suggest that the present sites lies outside the centre of activity during the Saxon period. The dearth of later features suggests that the site has remained largely undisturbed until the modern housing developments that now surround the site on all sides. The presence of many land drains crossing the site indicate its probable use as farmland up until the latter part of the twentieth century.

7.30 The features identified comprise postholes, pits, linear features and natural anomalies.

### *Discrete features*

7.31 Three discrete features were investigated during the course of the excavation.

7.32 Feature [025] appeared to be an elongated sub-rectangular pit with moderately steep slightly concave sides and a rounded base. It was aligned approximately north-west to south-east and measured 1.58m long by 0.82m wide and 0.33m deep. A single fill, context (026) was recorded

7.32.1 Fill (026) comprised a firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/3), very slightly silty clay with occasional small chalk inclusions. It contained animal bone but no datable artefacts.

7.32.2 The original purpose of the pit is uncertain but the lack of artefacts within its fill suggest a use other than for the disposal of rubbish. The lack of datable artefacts within the fill means that it is not possible to say whether the pit is contemporary with the surrounding Iron Age ditch system or not.

7.33 Posthole group [032] consisted of two postholes, [033] and [035]. Posthole [033] was excavated during the evaluation stage of work on the site, posthole [035] was recorded but remained unexcavated. The excavated posthole hole had vertical straight sides with a piece of greensand stone in the base and measured approximately 0.25m in diameter and 0.18m in depth. A single fill, context (034) was recorded.

7.33.1 Fill (034) comprised a loose, black (5Y 2.5/1), clayey silt with very occasional small rounded stones. The fill contained a single fragment of modern brick.

7.33.2 The nature of the features suggests that they are modern and probably represent the remains of a fence line.

### *Linears*

7.34 Four linear features were investigated during the course of the excavation. These included a series of three possible boundary or drainage ditches running across the western half of Area 1 (ditch groups [013], [014], and [031]), and a probable boundary ditch which terminates close to the southeast corner of Area 1 (ditch [016]).

### *Ditch group 013*

7.35 Feature [013] ran on a north – south alignment along the western boundary of Area 1. Two sections were excavated across the feature, one at the point where three of the ditches form a junction [017] and one further to the south [001]. The exposed area of the feature measured approximately 9.90m in length, 1.35m in width and 0.63m deep.

#### *Northern section*

- At this point the ditch measured 1.35m wide and 0.55m deep, the west side of the ditch was steep and slightly convex. The east side was shallower and contained one step, the base of the ditch was flat. At this point the ditch contained two fills, (018) and (019).
- The primary fill (018) measured 0.85m wide and 0.22m deep. It comprised a firm, dark olive grey (5Y 3/2), slightly silty clay with occasional small to medium sub-rounded stones and patches of redeposited natural clay. The fill also had occasional to moderate inclusions of charcoal flecks. The fill contained pottery sherds dating to the Iron Age, and animal bone fragments.
- The secondary fill (019) measured 1.35m wide and 0.33m deep. It comprised a firm, olive grey (5Y 4/2) with reddish brown mottling, slightly silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional small stones. The fill contained twelve pottery sherds dating to the Iron Age, and animal bone fragments. The fill also contained three small sherds of pottery dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, as this is the upper fill of the feature it is likely that these sherds are intrusive, probably the result of bioturbation.

#### *Southern section*

- At this point the ditch measured 1.28m wide and 0.63m deep, the west side of the ditch was steep and straight. The east side was also steep and contained one step, the base of the ditch was v-shaped. The ditch at this point contained three fills, (002), (003), and (004).
- The primary fill (002) measured 0.43m wide and 0.20m deep. It comprised a malleable, light olive brown, silty clay with occasional small to medium stone inclusions. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.
- The secondary fill (003) measured 0.74m wide and 0.16m deep. It comprised a friable, dark greyish brown (2.5Y 4/2), clayey silt with occasional small stones. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.
- The tertiary and final fill (004) measured 1.28m wide and 0.26m deep. It comprised a firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/3), silty clay with occasional small stones. The fill contained two sherds of pottery dating to the Iron Age.

7.36 The function of the ditch is not certain, however the small artefact assemblage along with the abraded nature of the pottery sherds recovered from it, suggests that the feature lies away from the centre of the settlement. Taking this into account it is probable that the ditch forms part of a boundary of

either the settlement itself or of the surrounding field systems. This feature has been cut through ditch [014] which runs parallel to the east, this would appear to indicate that the earlier ditch had ceased to fulfil its function and needed to be re-established.

#### *Ditch group 014*

7.37 Feature [014] ran on a north - south alignment across Area 1 parallel to the east of ditch [013]. Two sections were excavated across the feature, one at the point where three of the ditches meet forming a junction [020], the other further to the south [005]. The exposed area of the feature measured approximately 9.90m in length, 0.85m wide, and 0.40m deep. The ditch had been cut by feature [013] which ran parallel to the west, meaning the original full width of the ditch is unclear.

#### *Northern section*

- At this point the ditch measured 0.55m wide and 0.40m deep, only the east side of the feature survived, this was moderately steep and slightly concave. The base of the ditch was slightly u-shaped. The ditch at this point contained two fills, (021), and (022).
- The primary fill (021) measured 0.50m wide and 0.17m deep. It comprised a compact, olive (5Y 5/4), gravel in a silty sand matrix with moderate small angular stones and very occasional charcoal flecks. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.
- The secondary fill (022) measured 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep. It comprised a firm, olive grey (5Y 4/2), silty clay with occasional small pebbles and charcoal flecks. The fill contained three pottery sherds dating to the Iron Age.

#### *Southern section*

- At this point the ditch measured 0.84m wide and 0.34m deep, only the east side of the feature survived, this was moderately steep, straight at the top and becoming convex towards the base. The base of the ditch was flat. The ditch at this point contained a single fill (006).
- The single fill (006) comprised a firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/4), silty clay with occasional small stones. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.

7.38 The function of the ditch is not clear, however the small nature of the finds assemblage recovered from it suggests that it is located away from the centre of the settlement. Taking this into account it is possible that the ditch forms part of a boundary of either the settlement itself or the surrounding field system. The feature has been cut by a larger ditch [013] which runs parallel to the west.

*Ditch group 031*

7.39 Feature [031] ran on a northwest – southeast alignment across Areas 1 and 2. Three sections were excavated across the feature, one at the point where three of the ditches meet forming a junction [023], one further to the southeast [010], and one close to the southern boundary of Area 1 [007]. In Area 2 the feature was recorded as [029] but not excavated as it was not under threat from the development and would be preserved *in situ*. The exposed area of the ditch measured approximately 23.10m long, 1.2m wide and 0.50m deep.

*Northwest section*

- At this point the ditch measured 0.90m wide and 0.40m deep, with moderately steep concave sides and a slightly u-shaped base. The ditch at this point contains a single fill (024).
- The single fill (024) comprised a firm, olive grey (5Y 4/2) with olive mottling, silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional small pebbles. The fill contained a single small sherd of pottery dating to the Iron Age, and fragments of daub.

*Mid section*

- At this point the ditch measured 0.85m wide and 0.31m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. The ditch at this point contained a single fill (009).
- The single fill (009) comprised a firm, dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3), slightly silty clay with moderate small fragments of charcoal and very occasional small stones and flecks of chalk. The fill contained a single small pottery sherd dating to the Iron Age, animal bone fragments and snail shells.

*Southeast section*

- At this point the ditch measured 0.96m wide and 0.50m deep, with steep, straight sides and a slightly rounded base. The upper part of the ditch had been cut by a land drain. The ditch at this point contained a single fill (008).
- The single fill (008) comprised a firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/3), silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and charcoal flecks. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.

*Area 2*

- At this point the ditch measured 1.20m wide. As the ditch at this point remained unexcavated only one fill (030) was visible.
- The fill (030) comprised a firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/3), silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and charcoal flecks. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.

**7.40** The function of the ditch is unclear, the small finds assemblage suggests it lies outside the area of the settlement. Taking this into account it seems likely that the ditch is part of a boundary of the field system surrounding the settlement, alternatively it could represent a drainage ditch for the surrounding land.

#### *Linear 016*

**7.41** Linear feature [016] ran on a northeast – southwest alignment and terminated in the southeast corner of Area 1. The exposed area of the feature measured 2.30m long, 0.56m wide, and 0.12m deep. A single section was excavated across the terminus of the feature revealing steep, straight sides and an irregular flat base.

**7.41.1** It contained a single fill, context (015), which comprised a firm, yellowish brown (10YR 5/4), sandy clay with occasional chalk flecks and very occasional charcoal flecks. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.

**7.41.2** The shallow nature of the feature indicates that only the very base survives, the lack of artefacts suggests the feature forms part of an outlying field boundary or drainage ditch.

#### *Natural features*

**7.42** Two natural features were investigated during the present phase of work on the site. Both of these were located in the western half of Area 1 and appeared to be small pits [012] and [028].

**7.43** Feature [012] appeared to be a small elongated pit aligned northeast – southwest which measured 1.93m long, 0.60m wide and 0.12m deep. The feature had shallow sides and a very uneven base.

**7.43.1** The single fill, context (011), comprised a loose, olive brown (2.5Y 4/3), sandy silty clay with occasional patches of chalk and large greensand stone inclusions. The fill contained a single small pottery sherd dating to the late Saxon period, and animal bone fragments.

**7.43.2** The shallow nature and very uneven base of the feature suggests it is natural in origin. The presence of artefacts in the fill of the feature appears to suggest that the feature is small pit of which only the base survives, however the assemblage is very small and could be there as a result of natural processes such as animal and root activity.

**7.44** Feature [028] appeared to be a small sub-round pit which measured 0.74m long, 0.59m wide and 0.27m deep. The feature had steep, irregular sides and an irregular uneven base.

**7.44.1** The single fill, context (027), comprised a loose, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), sandy silt with very frequent stone inclusions. The fill contained no archaeological artefacts.

**7.44.2** The irregular sides and uneven base of the feature suggests it is natural in origin. The amount of stone inclusions in the fill suggests that it is possible the feature is the result of a very localised outcrop of stone.

## 5. Artefact and Ecofact Assemblages

### CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

<i>Table 6</i>																	
Context	Pottery		CBM		An.bone		Flint		Daub		Stone		Shell		Charcoal		Comments
	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	
004	15	2			105	17			3	2					1	1	Iron Age
009	1	1			4	3	2	1					7	2	2	4	Iron Age?
011	2	1			15	4											Late
018	79	8			440	43			2	1			5	2			Iron Age
019	51	15			230	20	1	1	3	3			11	3			Iron Age
022	10	3			2	2											Iron Age?
024	1	1							1	1			2	3			Iron Age?
026					5	6											
Area 1 I/S	58	2	5	1	250	13	25	1			120	5					
Area 2 I/S					45	4											
Total	217	33	5	1	109	112	25	1	9	7	120	5	25	10	3	5	

### POTTERY

#### *Paul Blinkhorn*

**5.1** This assessment is of the combined assemblage from both the excavation and the evaluation phases of work. The pottery assemblage comprised 46 sherds with a total weight of 338g. Sherds of Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval type were all noted, indicating that there was activity at the site contemporary with the archaeological remains noted at the nearby West Fen Road site.

#### *Iron Age*

**7.45** All the Iron Age pottery was in the same fabric:

Sparse to moderate sub-rounded quartz up to 1mm, most less than 0.5mm. Very sparse calcareous material up to 1mm, rare angular red flint up to 2mm. 33 sherds, 220g.

**7.46** There were no feature sherds other than two small rim fragments, both with upright forms. The material is undateable other than to within the broad Iron Age period.



**Roman**

7.47 Two small (8g) and very abraded sherds of grey sandy ware of indeterminate type were noted. Both were redeposited in a later feature.

**Post-Roman**

7.48 A range of Anglo-Saxon and medieval and later wares were noted:

*Ipswich Ware, AD725-850* (Blinkhorn forthcoming). Slow-wheel made ware, manufactured exclusively in the eponymous Suffolk wic. There are two main fabric types, although individual vessels which do not conform to these groups also occur:

- GROUP 1: Hard and slightly sandy to the touch, with visible small quartz grains and some shreds of mica. Frequent fairly well-sorted angular to sub-angular grains of quartz, generally measuring below 0.3 mm in size but with some larger grains, including a number which are polycrystalline in appearance.
- GROUP 2: Like the sherds in Group 1, they are hard, sandy and mostly dark grey in colour. Their most prominent feature is a scatter of large quartz grains (up to c 2.5mm) which either bulge or protrude through the surfaces of the vessel, giving rise to the term "pimply" Ipswich ware (Hurst 1976). This characteristic makes them quite rough to the touch. However, some sherds have the same groundmass but lack the larger quartz grains which are characteristic of this group, and chemical analysis suggests that they are made from the same clay.

7.49 Both the sherds from this site (total weight = 65g) are Group 2 fabrics.

*Thetford-type Ware* (Rogerson and Dallas 1984), c AD 900-1150. Wheel-thrown grey sandy ware, mainly jars, but bowls, pitchers and other vessels known. A number of East Anglian production centres known, but most of the material in Cambridgeshire is likely to originate from the eponymous Norfolk town. 3 sherds, 6g.

*Ely Ware*: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century. Sandy calcareous ware, glazed and unglazed. Typical range of medieval vessel forms. 5 sherds, 38g.

*Midland Blackware* c. AD1550-1700. Black-glazed earthenware, similar to Cistercian ware, (Brears 1969) although usually thicker-walled (c. 4mm) and slightly coarser fabric with more quartz. 1 sherd, 1g.

7.50 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 6. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

**Table 6:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	IA		RB		Ipswich		Thetford		Ely		Mid Black		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
<b>HN437</b>													
U/S Area 1					1	48			1	10			U/S
4	2	15											IA
9	1	1											IA??

Context	IA		RB		Ipswich		Thetford		Ely		Mid Black		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
11							1	2					LSAX??
18	8	79											IA
19	12	45					2	4	1	2			IA
22	3	10											IA??
24	1	1											IA??
<b>HN410</b>													
104			2	8	1	17							MS
110	6	69											IA
202									1	15			12thC?
204									2	11	1	1	M16thC?
Total	33	220	2	8	2	65	3	6	5	38	1	1	

### Assessment

**5.2** Most of the pottery in this assemblage comprises small, plain bodysherds, with the only two feature sherds being the Iron Age rim fragments noted above. Generally, the range of ware types is the same as that noted at the nearby West Fen Road excavations (Blinkhorn in print), with the Iron Age, Ipswich, and Thetford wares suggesting that there was outlying activity in the area of these excavations. The medieval pottery seems to derive mainly from plough furrows, and seems likely to be the result of manuring rather than domestic occupation at the site.

**7.51** No more work is proposed on the pottery at this stage, but if further work is carried out at the site, this group of pottery should be integrated with any future assemblages.

### CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

**7.52** A single small unstratified fragment of Post-Medieval CBM weighing 5g was recovered during the course of this project.

**7.53** No further work is proposed on this object.

### CHARCOAL

**7.54** Five small fragments of charcoal, weighing 3g, were recovered from two Iron Age features. The small size of this assemblage means that no useful information can be gleaned from this material.

**7.55** No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

### FLINT

**7.56** A single piece of flint, weighing 25g, was recovered unstratified from Area 1. The flint has evidence of retouch along one side and was probably used as a scraper.

7.57 No further work is proposed on this object.

### ***DAUB***

7.58 A total of seven fragments of daub, weighing 9g, were recovered from four stratified contexts. The fragments are small, abraded, and undiagnostic.

7.59 The presence of daub in contexts dated to the Iron Age suggests at least one structure in the vicinity of the site existed at this time.

7.60 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

### ***STONE***

7.61 A total of five fragments of stone, weighing 120g, were recovered from one unstratified context. The stone is an oolitic limestone of Stamford type and shows signs of possibly being exposed to heat. Due to the stone being recovered from an unstratified context no useful information can be gleaned from its presence.

7.62 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

### ***ANIMAL BONE***

7.63 The animal bone was examined macroscopically. The assemblage consisted of 112 bone fragments, weighing 1096g, from 7 stratified contexts and 2 unstratified contexts. The assemblage is fair in condition and fragmentary in nature. Bone fragments from Iron Age contexts make up 75.89% of the assemblage by number and 71.26% by weight.

7.64 Species represented are Bovine, sheep/goat, and pig. In addition a single canine tooth was recovered from pit fill (026). The majority of the assemblage is comprised of fragments of long bone shafts, butchery marks are clearly present on most of these. A fragment of unfused epiphyses indicates the presence of some young animals in the assemblage.

7.65 The range of species and bones present are indicative of a domestic assemblage as opposed to an industrial one.

7.66 It is recommended that this assemblage is examined by a specialist for more detailed information on the age and species of the animals being exploited.

### ***SHELL***

7.67 A total of ten fragments of shell, weighing 26g, were recovered from four stratified contexts. The assemblage is made up of five fragments of fossilized shell and five intact snail shells.

7.68 No useful information can be cleaned from the fossilized shells and as such no further work is proposed on them.

**7.69** The snail shells are of common type and, taking into account the small size of the assemblage, no further work is proposed.

***BULK ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES***

**7.70** A total of seven bulk environmental samples were collected during the current phase of work and three during the evaluation phase.

**7.71** The majority of these were collected from securely dated ditch fills, and were considered to have the potential to yield small animal bones and bone fragments, mollusc shells, charred seeds, and microscopic industrial residues.

**7.72** The samples were processed in a flotation tank and both flots and residues were examined macroscopically. Small quantities of snail shell, bone, and charcoal fragments were observed in six of the samples, indicating that they have a very limited potential for yielding further useful data about the site.

**7.73** Two of the sampled contexts (019) and (003), which are fills from ditch group [013], contained moderate quantities of snail shell, bone, and charcoal suggesting a greater potential for yielding further useful data about the site. Although ditch group [013] has been dated to the Iron Age, context (019) included residual material of medieval date suggesting a high risk that this context had been contaminated by later activity on the site. The confidence rating for any data derived from these contexts must, therefore, be considered to be low.

**7.74** A magnet was passed over the flots and residues to test for the presence of hammerscale and small iron fragments. The results were negative for all the samples.

**7.75** On the basis of these findings, no further work is proposed on this material.

## 6. Further Research

### **RESEARCH AIMS**

**7.76** The original research aims of the project, as defined in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated July 2003, were:

- to establish the date range of the site;
- to establish the nature and layout of its structures and occupation areas;
- to establish the relationship of the site to any pre-Saxon land and property boundaries;
- to recover evidence which demonstrates the site's economic and social status.

**7.77** The assessment of the results of the fieldwork demonstrates that the information collected is adequate to meet the research aims. The results can be summarised as follows.

**7.77.1** The pottery evidence suggests that the earliest occupation on or in the vicinity of this site began during the Iron Age. The presence of Romano-British pottery from ditch fill (104) (excavated in the evaluation phase), although redeposited in a later feature, suggests that activity in the area may have continued into the Roman period. The Anglo-Saxon wares found during both the evaluation and excavation phases demonstrate activity on the site during this period. The Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery recovered are likely to result from manuring and suggest that after the decline of Anglo-Saxon activity the site reverted to farmland.

**7.77.2** No direct evidence of structures or occupation areas dating to either the Iron Age or the Anglo-Saxon period was revealed during the work on the site. The majority of features revealed were ditches, which may represent boundaries or drainage ditches, suggesting that the site lies outside of the main settlement areas during these periods. Two postholes were revealed but these were modern in date and probably represent a fence line.

**7.77.3** The majority of the features revealed on the current site date to the Iron Age. Only two features could be assigned to the Anglo-Saxon period: ditch [103] from the evaluation phase, and (?)pit [012]. Ditch [103] was shallower than the Iron Age ditches and was not aligned with them, suggesting that the function of the Anglo-Saxon ditch may have been different from that of the Iron Age ditches. There was no evidence of a direct relationship between the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon features on the site.

**7.77.4** The small size of the finds assemblage from the site appears to reflect its location on the edge of the main settlement areas during the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon periods. No clear social or economic indicators could be established from the assemblage, although the range of pottery ware types from both periods is generally the same as that recovered from the adjacent site (see above) suggesting a similar status for the present site.

**UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN**

**7.78** The data collected from the present site provides only limited additional information on the occupation of this area of Ely during the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon period. The data demonstrates that activity during both of these periods extends onto the site, but confirms that such activity is peripheral to the main foci of settlement.

**7.79** An assessment of the various classes of data has indicated that further work would be desirable on the animal bones in order to clarify the age and species of animals exploited. In addition it is suggested that any further research on the pottery assemblage from the adjacent site should note the assemblage from the current site.

**7.80** It is considered that the information yielded from the additional work outlined above, when combined with the data gathered during the work on the adjacent site, would give a more complete picture of the nature of the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon settlements at Ely and their development.

**PUBLICATION**

**7.81** The present site provides a useful footnote to the results of the investigations carried out on the adjacent site. It is proposed that a short report on the results of the excavation should be provided to the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*.

**Provisional Synopsis**

Section	Content	Words	Pages
Introduction	Project background	500	0.5
	Site location, geology and topography	200	0.2
Results	Features and deposits, by period	1000	1
Artefacts	By type	250	0.25
Ecofacts	By type	250	0.25
Discussion	The present project	500	0.5
	The project in the context of previous work	250	0.25
Bibliography		250	0.25
Total words:		3200	3.5
Illustrations	Site location plan		0.5
	Phase plan		1
	Sections		0.5
Tables	Artefact x 1		0.25
	Ecofact x 1		0.25
Total Pages:			6

**ARCHIVE**

7.82 The documentary and material archive is currently held by The Heritage Network Ltd at its premises at 12 Royston Road, Baldock (from 1 February 2004 at 11 Furnston Court, Icknield Way, Letchworth).

7.83 In its final form, the archive will conform to UKIC guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage. All post-excavation documentation will be filed, ordered, and indexed as part of the research archive.

7.84 The documentary and material archive will be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council.

#### ***TASK LIST TO PUBLICATION AND ARCHIVE DEPOSITION***

<b>Task</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Undertaken by</b>	<b>Days</b>
1	Animal bone research and report	Eden Hutchins	1
2	Additional background research	Karin Semmelmann, Heritage Network	1
3	Compile publication text	Helen Ashworth, Heritage Network	1
4	Prepare publication plans / sections	Karin Semmelmann, Heritage Network	1
5	Editing	David Hillelson, Heritage Network	0.5
6	Submission to PCAS	David Hillelson, Heritage Network	0.25
7	Final archive	Helen Ashworth, Heritage Network	1
8	Archive deposition	Helen Ashworth, Heritage Network	0.25

6

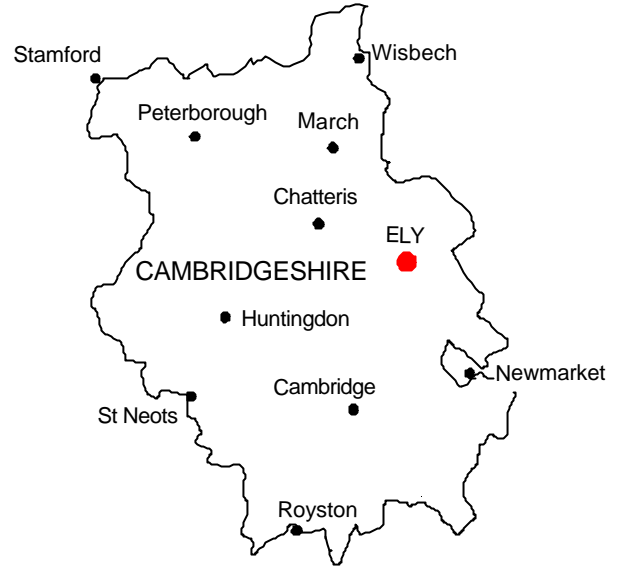
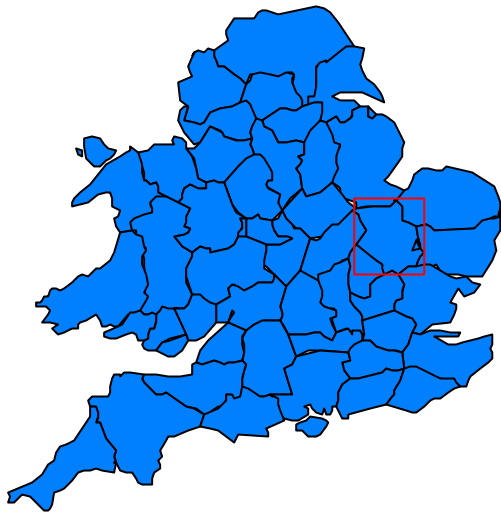
## 7. Bibliography

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## 8. Illustrations

Figure 1 .....	Site Location
Figure 2 .....	Site Layout
Figure 3 .....	Site Phasing
Figure 4 .....	Section Drawings
Figure 5 .....	Feature Plans
Figure 6 .....	Site Matrix



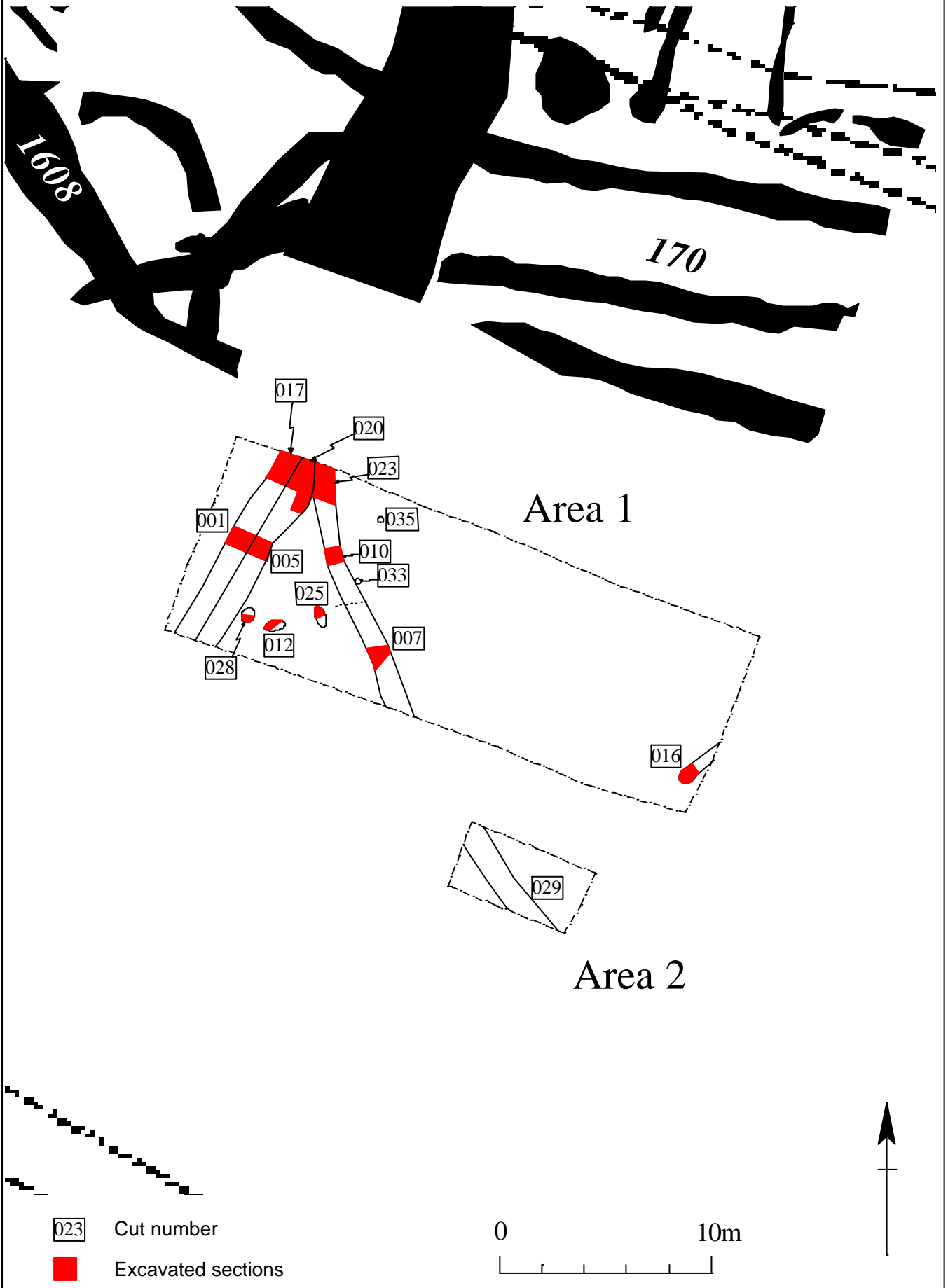


Site location plan

Scale 1:1250

(Reproduced from OS mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence No. AL100014861)

Figure 1

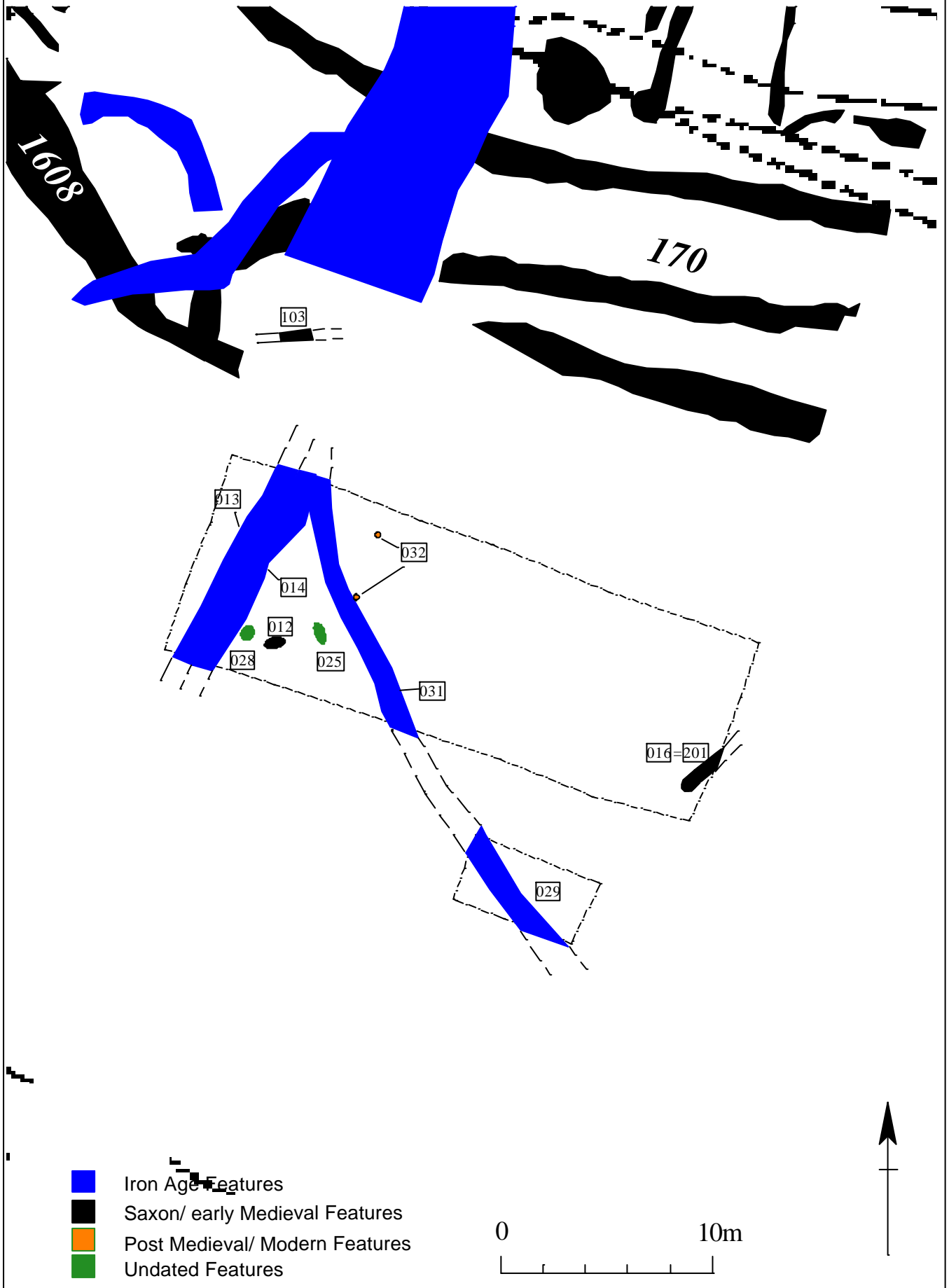


Site Layout

Base plan courtesy of Northampton Archaeology

Scale 1:250

Figure 2



- Iron Age Features
- Saxon/ early Medieval Features
- Post Medieval/ Modern Features
- Undated Features

0 10m

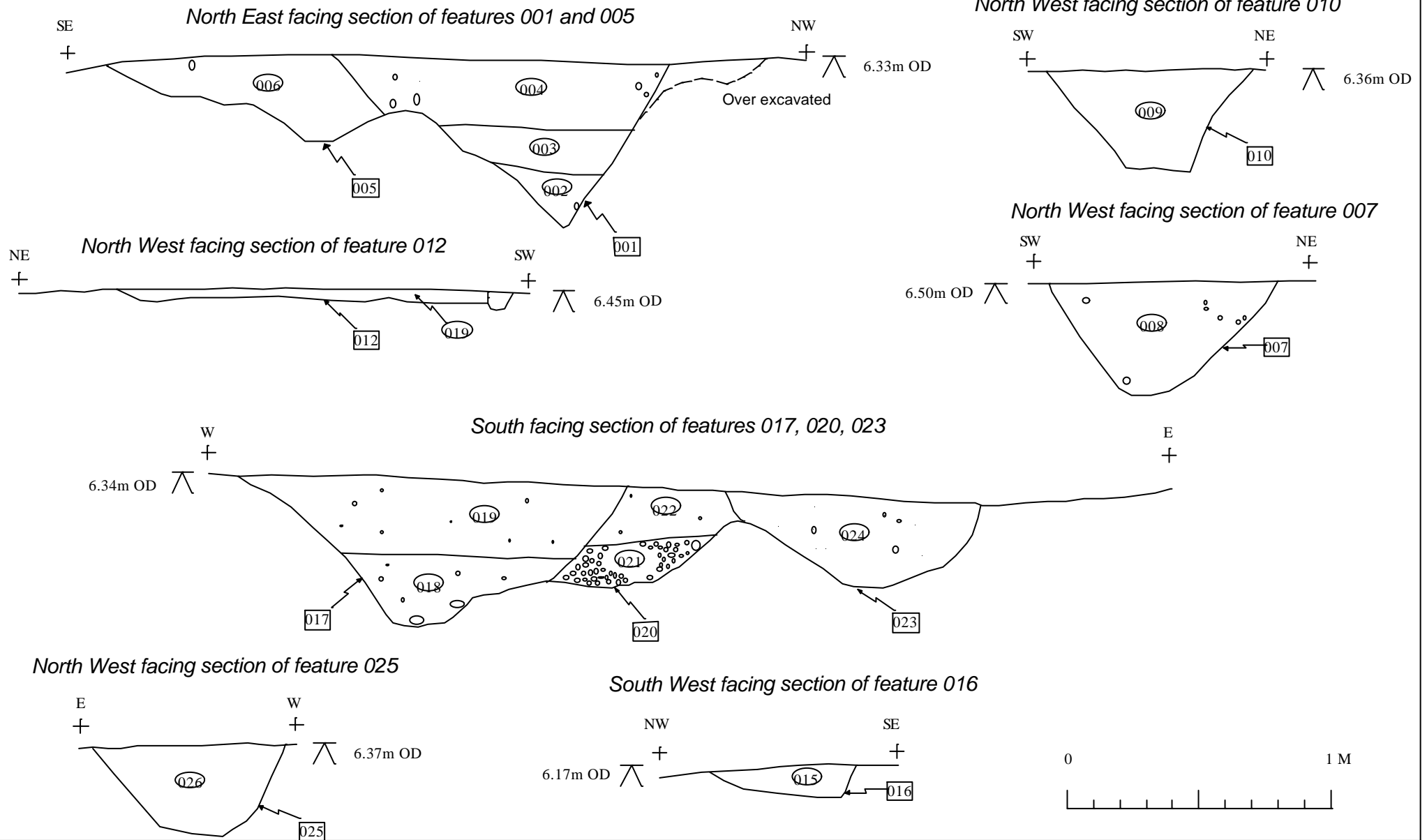


Site Layout

Base plan courtesy of Northampton Archaeology

Scale 1:250

Figure 3

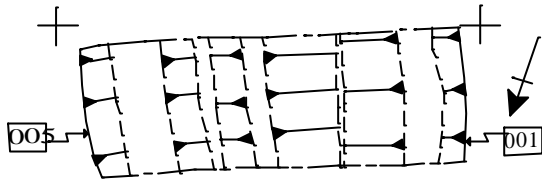


Section Drawings

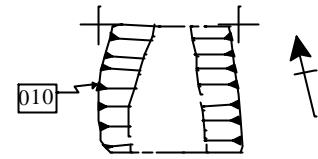
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Figure 4

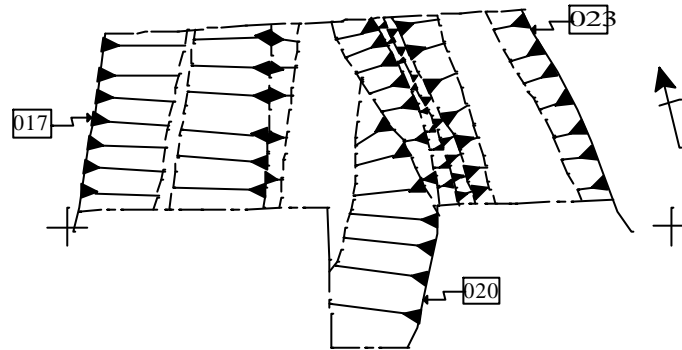
Plan of features 001 and 005



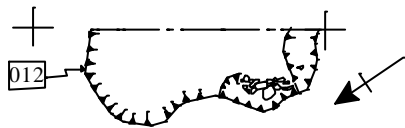
Plan of feature 010



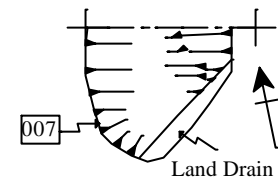
Plan of features 017, 020, 023



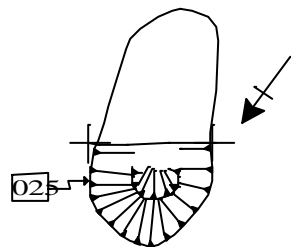
Plan of feature 012



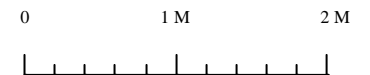
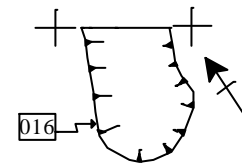
Plan of feature 007

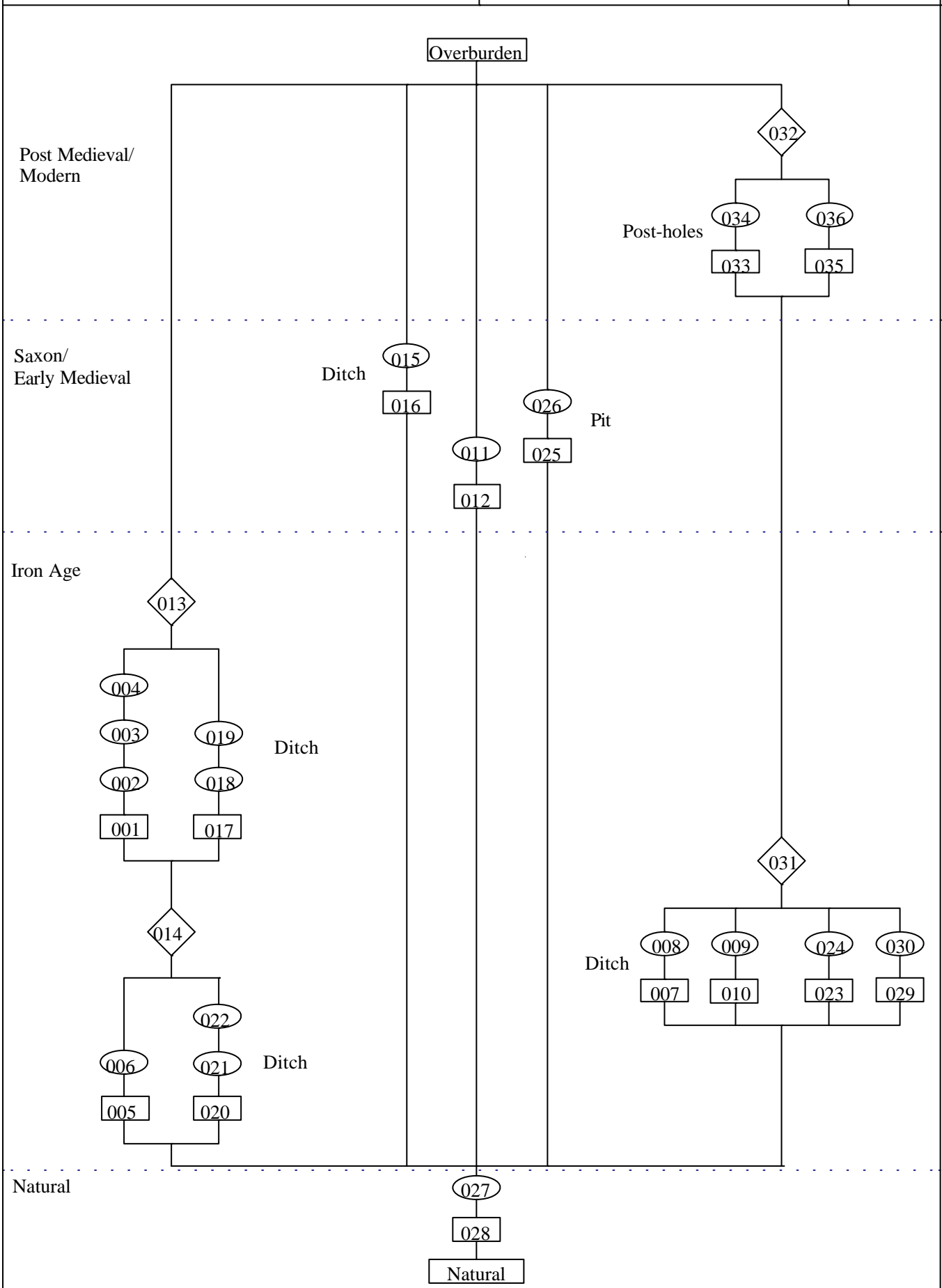


Plan of feature 025



Plan of feature 016





Site Matrix

Not To Scale

Figure 6

# ***Archaeological Excavations at DUNSTAN STREET, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE***

*Helen Ashworth*

*with contributions by Paul Blinkhorn and Eden Hutchins*

## **SUMMARY**

*The proposed development of a small plot of land at Dunstan Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire, provided further opportunity for investigations in an archaeologically rich area on the north-western edge of the Isle of Ely. Previous excavations on sites to the north, west and south had revealed extensive archaeological remains from both the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon periods. Trial trenching, followed by open area excavation of the present site, revealed a network of probable boundary or drainage ditches dating to the Iron Age, and two ditches of Anglo-Saxon/early medieval date. These confirm the general pattern of activity in the area, with the finds assemblages suggesting that the site lay outside the main area of occupation at those periods.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Project Background***

The site is located 1.3km north-west of Ely Cathedral, towards the north-western margin of the Isle of Ely, centred on NGR TL 5313 8087 (see Figure 1) It lies at approximately 7.30m AOD. The underlying geology of the area consists of Kimmeridge clay, over which humic gley soils of the Peacock unit have developed (Soil Survey of Eastern England, Sheet 4).

Archaeological investigations, carried out prior to housing development adjacent to the present site, revealed evidence of Iron Age and Saxon settlement (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2000). The report indicated that features associated with the Iron Age and Saxon settlements might run into the present site from the north and west. In particular a large Iron Age ditch, feature [1005], appeared to run into the north-west corner on a north – south alignment and a smaller middle Saxon ditch, feature [1608], appeared to run into the same corner on an east – west alignment (see Figure 3).

Two stages of archaeological fieldwork were undertaken by the Heritage Network on the site of a proposed new housing development at Dunstan Street, Ely, during July and August 2003. The development proposed the construction of six new dwellings in two blocks, with car parking and access to the front, and gardens to the rear. The archaeological work was undertaken on behalf of E.J.Gifford (Construction) Ltd, in response to a condition on the planning consent for the development, granted by East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Stage 1 consisted of the excavation of two trial trenches across the footprints of the proposed new houses. This was followed by Stage 2, which consisted of open area excavation in two blocks (see Figure 2). Area 1 focused on the footprints of the proposed houses and associated services and measured 260m<sup>2</sup>. Area 2 was positioned to investigate a possible junction between two linear features and measured approximately 15m<sup>2</sup>.

## ***FEATURES***

The investigations on the present site revealed four main phases of activity, dating to the Iron Age, Saxon early medieval and modern periods. A small number of artefacts of prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval date were also recovered from the site, which indicate activity in the vicinity, but no features were identified that could be assigned to these periods.

### ***Iron Age***

Three linear features, ditch groups [013], [014] and [031], have been dated to this period. Two of the ditches, [013] and [014] ran parallel with the western boundary of the site, forming a junction with ditch [031] in the north-western corner of Area 1 (see Figure 3).

The latest feature, ditch [013], lay on the western side. The exposed area measured approximately 9.90m in length, 1.35m in width and 0.63m in depth. Two sections were excavated across this feature, one at the point where the three ditches formed a junction, the other approximately 3m to the south. At the northern end, the section revealed two fills (018) and (019), which both contained Iron Age pottery. The secondary fill (019) also contained three sherds of intrusive medieval pottery, probably the result of bioturbation. Three fills were recorded in the southern section. Pottery of Iron Age date was recovered from the tertiary fill (004).

Ditch [031] truncated ditch [014] on its western side. The exposed area of this feature measured approximately 23.10m in length, 1.20m in width and 0.50m in depth. It ran parallel to [013] and [014] for approximately 2m to the south of the northern baulk to Area 1, before turning to run on a north-west to south-east alignment (see Figure 3). A single fragment of pottery, of probable Iron Age date, was recovered from the fill of the middle section, cut [010]. This feature was also recorded, but not excavated, running diagonally across Area 2.

The earliest feature was ditch [014], which lay to the east of, and was cut by, ditch [013]. The exposed area of this feature measured approximately 9.90m in length, 0.85m in width and 0.40m in depth. At the northern end of Area 1, both sides of this feature had been truncated, but beyond the junction with [031] the eastern side survived. Two sections were excavated across it. The northern section contained two fills, and pottery of Iron Age date was collected from the secondary fill (022). A single fill, which contained no archaeological artefacts, was recorded in the southern section.

Although the function of these linears is not certain, the small artefact assemblage, and the abraded nature of the pottery recovered from their fills, suggests that they lay some distance from the centre of occupation.



### ***Romano-British***

The only evidence for Roman activity in the vicinity consisted of two residual, abraded and undiagnostic pottery sherds. These were retrieved from the fill of Saxon ditch [103], in the north-western corner of the site, during the evaluation.

### ***Saxon***

Part of a narrow ditch, cut [103], was observed during Stage 1. It was located in the north-western corner of the site and crossed the northern end of Trench 1 on an east to west alignment (see Figure 3). Pottery recovered from its fill, context (104), has been dated to the middle Saxon period.

### ***Medieval***

A short length of shallow ditch, cut [016]/[201] was observed during stages 1 and 2 to the south-east of ditch [103] (see Figure 3). This feature ran on a different alignment to the Iron Age and Saxon linears, running from the north-east to south-west, suggesting that it belonged to a different period. It was exposed for a length of 2.30m and terminated in the south-eastern corner of Area 1. A single sherd of Ely ware, possibly dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, was recovered from the fill of this feature.

Only the very base of this feature had survived, and the lack of artefacts indicates that it may have formed part of an outlying field boundary or drainage ditch.

### ***Post-medieval/ Modern***

A number of land drains were observed crossing the site. These were not excavated, but their presence indicates that the site was used for agriculture until the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from the land drains, the only features that could be assigned to this period were two postholes, group [032], which were recorded approximately 3.0m apart and in a line running north-east to south-west.

## ***ARTEFACTS***

### ***THE POTTERY***

*Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 46 sherds with a total weight of 338g. Sherds of Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval type were all noted, indicating that there was activity at the site contemporary with the archaeological remains noted at the nearby West Fen Road site.

### ***Iron Age***

All the Iron Age pottery was in the same fabric:

*Sparse to moderate sub-rounded quartz up to 1mm, most less than 0.5mm. Very sparse calcareous material up to 1mm, rare angular red flint up to 2mm. 33 sherds, 220g.*

There were no feature sherds, other than two small rim fragments, both with upright forms. The material is undateable other than to within the broad Iron Age period.

## **Roman**

Two small (8g) and much abraded sherds of grey sandy ware of indeterminate type were noted. Both were redeposited in a later feature.

## **Post-Roman**

A range of Anglo-Saxon and medieval and later wares were noted:

Ipswich Ware, AD725-850 (Blinkhorn forthcoming). Slow-wheel made ware, manufactured exclusively in the eponymous Suffolk wic. There are two main fabric types, although individual vessels which do not conform to these groups also occur:

- **GROUP 1:** Hard and slightly sandy to the touch, with visible small quartz grains and some shreds of mica. Frequent fairly well-sorted angular to sub-angular grains of quartz, generally measuring below 0.3 mm in size but with some larger grains, including a number which are polycrystalline in appearance.
- **GROUP 2:** Like the sherds in Group 1, they are hard, sandy and mostly dark grey in colour. Their most prominent feature is a scatter of large quartz grains (up to c 2.5mm) which either bulge or protrude through the surfaces of the vessel, giving rise to the term "pimply" Ipswich ware (Hurst 1976). This characteristic makes them quite rough to the touch. However, some sherds have the same groundmass but lack the larger quartz grains which are characteristic of this group, and chemical analysis suggests that they are made from the same clay.

All the sherds from this site (total weight = 65g) are Group 2 fabrics.

Thetford-type Ware c AD 900-1150 (Rogerson and Dallas 1984). Wheel-thrown grey sandy ware, mainly jars, but bowls, pitchers and other vessels known. A number of East Anglian production centres known, but most of the material in Cambridgeshire is likely to originate from the eponymous Norfolk town. 3 sherds, 6g.

Ely Ware, 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century. Sandy calcareous ware, glazed and unglazed. Typical range of medieval vessel forms. 5 sherds, 38g.

Midland Blackware c. AD1550-1700. Black-glazed earthenware, similar to Cistercian ware, (Brears 1969) although usually thicker-walled (c. 4mm) and slightly coarser fabric with more quartz. 1 sherd, 1g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Context	IA		RB		Ipswich		Thetford		Ely		Mid Black		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
<i>Stage 1</i>													
U/S Area 1					1	48			1	10			U/S
4	2	15											IA

Context	IA		RB		Ipswich		Thetford		Ely		Mid Black		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
9	1	1											IA??
11							1	2					LSAX??
18	8	79											IA
19	12	45					2	4	1	2			13thC?
22	3	10											IA??
24	1	1											IA??
<i>Stage 2</i>													
104			2	8	1	17							MS
110	6	69											IA
202									1	15			12thC?
204									2	11	1	1	M16thC?
Total	33	220	2	8	2	65	3	6	5	38	1	1	

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

### ***Discussion***

Most of the pottery in this assemblage comprises small, plain bodysherds, with the only two feature sherds being the Iron Age rim fragments noted above. Generally, the range of ware types is the same as that noted at the nearby West Fen Road excavations (Blinkhorn, in print), with the Iron Age and Ipswich and Thetford wares suggesting that there was outlying activity in the area of these excavations. The medieval pottery seems to derive mainly from plough furrows, and seems likely to be the result of manuring rather than domestic occupation at the site.

### ***Worked Flint***

A single piece of unstratified flint, of probable Bronze Age date, was recovered from Area 1. The flint has evidence of retouch along one side and may have been used as a scraper.

### ***Ceramic Building Material***

Fragments of post-medieval and modern brick and tile were recovered during both stages of fieldwork. The bulk of this material was unstratified and is likely to have been imported on to the site as part of the manuring process when it was open farmland.

### ***Daub***

Small, undiagnostic fragments were recovered from the fills of both the Iron Age and Saxon linear features. Although their presence indicates the possibility of wattle and daub structures in the vicinity, the fragmentary nature of this assemblage suggests that they are likely to be intrusive. At least two pieces were recovered from the fills of an animal burrow during Stage 1.

## ***ECOFACTS***

### ***Bulk Environmental Samples***

Ten bulk environmental samples were collected during both stages of archaeological fieldwork, three during Stage 1 and seven during Stage 2. The majority of these was

taken from securely dated ditch fills, and was considered to have the potential to yield small animal bones and bone fragments, mollusc shells, charred seeds and microscopic industrial residues.

The samples were processed in a flotation tank and both flots and residues were examined macroscopically. Small quantities of snail shell, bone, and charcoal fragments were observed in six of the samples, indicating that they have a very limited potential for yielding further useful data about the site.

Two of the sampled contexts, (019) and (003), which are fills from ditch group [013], contained moderate quantities of snail shell, bone, and charcoal suggesting a greater potential for yielding further useful data about the site. Although ditch group [013] has been dated to the Iron Age, context (019) included residual material of medieval date suggesting a high risk that this context had been contaminated by later activity on the site. The confidence rating for any data derived from these contexts must, therefore, be considered to be low.

A magnet was passed over the flots and residues to test for the presence of hammerscale and small iron fragments. The results were negative for all the samples.

## ***THE FAUNAL REMAINS***

*Eden Hutchins*

### ***Introduction***

This site contained nine contexts where animal bone was present. No other bones were submitted for analysis. One context was unphased. Four items came from unstratified deposits.

### ***Results***

Only the common agricultural species were present (Cattle, Sheep/Goat, Horse, Deer and Dog) (see Appendix 1).

### ***Condition of remains***

The assemblage was in a poor condition. Many of the larger remains had suffered from dog chewing, and other pre-depositional damage.

### ***Relative Abundance***

As a rough guide to the relative abundance of each animal by phase, the minimum number of individuals (MNI) for each species is summarised in the table below.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Cattle</b>	<b>Sheep/ Goat</b>	<b>Horse</b>	<b>Deer</b>	<b>Dog</b>
Iron Age	1	1	1	1	1
Saxon			1		

***Table 2. Faunal Remains MNI.***

## ***Discussion***

Of the identifiable remains, all are representative of a typical mixed agricultural economy (as per Davis, 1987), supplemented by hunting. The remains were almost certainly deposited as rubbish. The fragmentary remains from pit [25] would be indicative of rubbish disposal as a primary function. The remains from the two fills (18) and (19) of ditch [13] are all fairly large (cattle, deer and horse), and may well have all been present as rubbish on the surface for some time, before falling accidentally into the ditch. The remains from the southern section of ditch [13] are those of sheep or goat. Considering the dog gnawing, these too may have fallen in by accident.

## **THE MOLLUSCAN REMAINS**

*Eden Hutchins*

### ***Introduction***

Four contexts contained land snail remains. Three contexts contained oyster remains.

Species	009	018	019	024	106
<i>Cepea hortensis</i>	1	2	2		1
<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	1		1	1	

***Table 3: Number of Mollusc remains***

### ***Discussion***

A small amount of mollusc material was recovered, all by hand. *Cepea* is a very common species, often found in damp garden herbage, but common on all alkaline soils. *Ostrea* is the common edible oyster, indicative of the site's trading links with the coast, some 90km from Ely. The presence of oyster shells would also be indicative of a rubbish deposit.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present site lies immediately south-east of an area extensively excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology and approximately 150m to the north of excavations conducted by the Cambridge Archaeology Unit (see Figure 3). Two main periods of occupation, dating to the Iron Age and the Middle Saxon period, were identified on both these sites. This pattern was repeated on the site at Dunstan Street.

### ***Iron Age***

Although no direct evidence for structures dating to this period was identified during the present fieldwork, three Iron Age features were identified. These were concentrated on the western side of the site and consisted of probable boundary ditches, groups [013], [014] and [031].

Ditches [013] and [014] appear to represent the southwestern continuation of a concentric outer enclosure ditch, context [1005], identified in the adjacent site by Northamptonshire Archaeology. Artefactual evidence indicates that this feature was originally dug in the

Middle Iron Age (3<sup>rd</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC). Early Roman pottery was recovered from its upper fill, suggesting that, unlike the other Iron Age features on the site, it remained open for some considerable time (A.Mudd, pers com).

There is some discrepancy between the feature excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology and the possible continuation identified on the present site. The width of the ditch to the north is considerably greater, measuring approximately 7m, whilst to the south it measures 2.60m wide. This is possibly partly the result of the number of plough furrows in the vicinity, which may well have caused spreading in the upper fills (A.Mudd, pers com). Also, no recuts were identified in this feature to the north, whilst to the south the ditch had been recut at least once. A Saxon ditch, context [103], was recorded in Trench 1, crossing part of the area likely to have been occupied by the earlier ditch. Iron Age features were not recorded at the northern end of the same trench, suggesting either that there may have been an entrance to the concentric enclosure between the two sites, or that they represent two separate features.

The animal bone recovered from the fills of groups [013] and [014] suggests a mixed agricultural economy, with some evidence for hunting. Many of the bones also appear to have been gnawed by dogs, possibly used for hunting.

A further ditch, group [031] was recorded running southeast from the main boundary. This possibly represents a further small extension adjacent to the east of the main enclosure. This pattern was also present in the site to the south, where a smaller extension was recorded on the eastern side of a larger enclosure. Very little in the way of finds was recovered from the fills of this feature.

### ***Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval***

Very little activity appears to have taken place on the present site, or its immediate vicinity, between the Middle Iron Age and the Middle Saxon period. Excavations to the north and west revealed a series of ditched enclosures and pits (A.Mudd, pers com). These may represent a series of possible yards and associated structures running northeast to southwest (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2000, Fig.7). This pattern appears to have continued towards the south, with a number of ditched enclosures identified, running on an approximate east – west alignment. No clear structures were identified on either site, but lines of postholes and gullies may mark the presence of buildings.

The limited evidence from the present site suggests that this area may have lain within one of these enclosures. Two shallow gullies, cuts [016] and [103], and a group of three pits, cuts [012], [028] and [025], have been dated to this period. The finds recovered from two of the pits suggest that they were used for rubbish disposal and possibly lay to the rear of one of the enclosed properties. The evidence from the adjacent site suggests that pits were located in the corners and along the edges of the enclosures (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2000). The northern gully, cut [103], was recorded during the evaluation. It ran on an approximate east – west alignment and may represent the continuation of gully [762], recorded to the east (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2000, Fig.6). This possibly marked a boundary between two adjacent properties.

The terminal to a narrow linear feature, cut [016]/[201], was recorded on the eastern edge of Area 1 (see Figure 3). This was aligned northeast – southwest, a markedly different alignment to any other feature on the site, or on the adjacent site. A sherd of Ely ware, of 12<sup>th</sup> century date, was recovered from its fill, suggesting that it may date to the early medieval period.

### ***Conclusions***

The small finds assemblage recovered from the Iron Age ditches indicates that this area lay on the periphery of the settlement at this period. Excavations to the north, the west and the south indicate that occupation was focused to the west of the present site. Part of the eastern boundary ditch to the large enclosure, recorded during the excavations to the north and west of the study area, was identified on the present site. This appears to have changed in nature between the two sites, indicating the presence of a possible eastern entrance into the larger enclosure. Part of the boundary to a possible smaller eastern extension, perhaps representing either a field or a stock-pen, was also recorded.

There appears to have been a hiatus in occupation on the site between the Middle Iron Age and the Middle Saxon period. Two abraded sherds of Romano-British grey ware were recovered from the fill of Saxon gully [103], indicating some low-level activity in the vicinity. Sherds of early Roman pottery were recovered from the upper fill of ditch [1005] on the Northamptonshire Archaeology site, suggesting that the feature was not finally fully backfilled until that period (A.Mudd, pers. com.).

Evidence of slight activity dating to the Saxon period was recovered from the present site. It is indicative of a continuation of the band of enclosed properties identified in the West Fen Road sites, to the north, west, and south (Northamptonshire Archaeology, 2000; Mortimer et al, 2002).

### ***APPENDIX 1 The Faunal Remains***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Part</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Side</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Modification</b>
0	Humerus	Cattle	Right	Shaft	Tr. 1 U/S	Gnawed
0	Tibia	Cattle	Right	Shaft	Tr. 1 U/S	
0	Vertebra	Medium		Whole	Tr. 1 U/S	
0	Frag	Indet.			U/S Area 1	
0	Metapodial	Cattle		Shaft	U/S Area 2	Fragmentary
0	Tibia	Cattle	Left	Shaft	U/S Area 1	Gnawed
0	Tibia	Sheep/Goat	Right	Distal	U/S Area 1	
0	Frag	Indet.			Tr. 1 U/S	
4	Vertebra	Indet.			Fragment	
4	Frag	Indet.				
4	Scapula	Sheep/Goat	Right	Distal		Gnawed
4	Skull	Indet.			Fragment	
4	Tibia	Sheep/Goat	Right	Shaft		
9	Frag	Indet.				
10	Humerus	Sheep/Goat	Right	Distal		
11	Frag	Indet.				

11	Tooth	Horse			M1/2	
18	Metatarsal	Horse	Left	Proximal		
18	Tibia	Dog	Right	Shaft		
18	Metatarsal	Cattle	Right	Proximal		Gnawed, split
18	Humerus	Cattle	Right	Shaft		Radial cuts,
18	Fragments	Indet.				
19	Humerus	Cattle	Left	Shaft		Gnawed
19	Tibia	Deer	Right	Shaft	Fragment	
19	Fragments	Indet.				
22	Fragments	Indet.				
26	Tusk	Pig				
26	Fragments	Indet.				
106	Rib	Large			Fragment	
106	Fragments	Indet.				

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***ILLUSTRATIONS***

Figure 1 .....Site location  
Figure 2 .....Site layout and principal features  
Figure 3 ..... Site phasing and adjacent features  
Figure 4 .....Feature sections  
Figure 5 ..... Feature plans

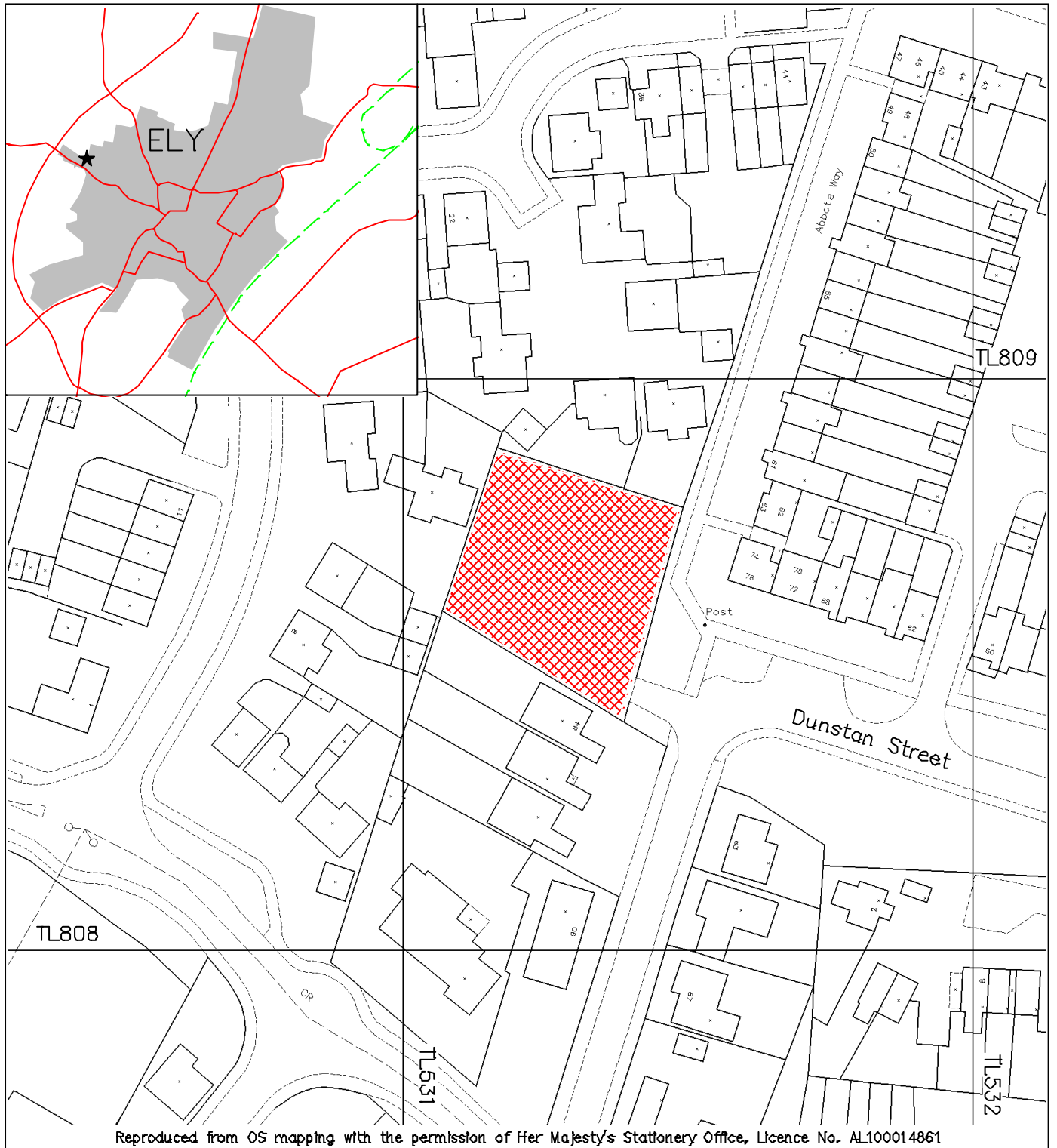


Figure 1: Site location

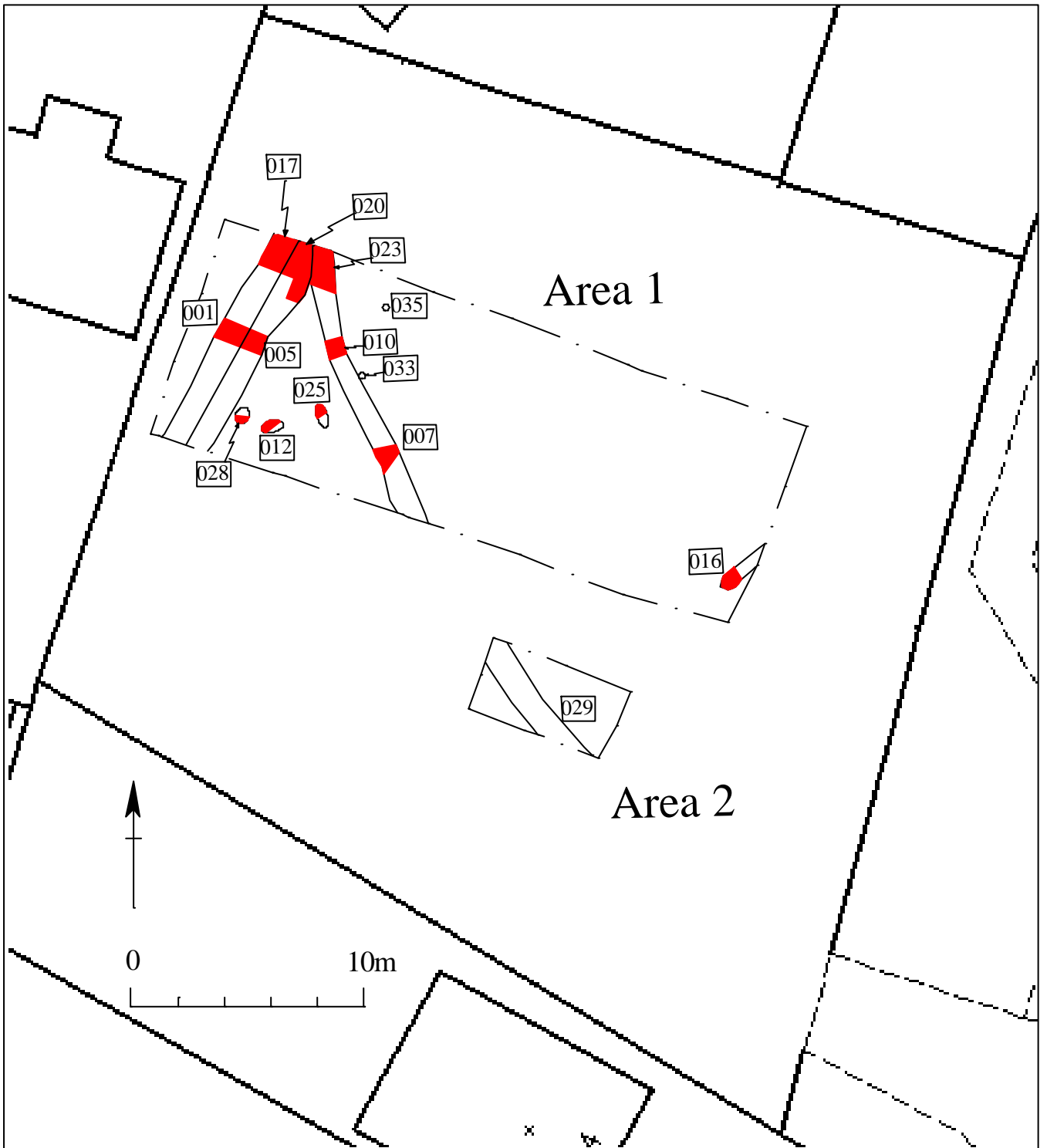


Figure 2: Site layout and principal features

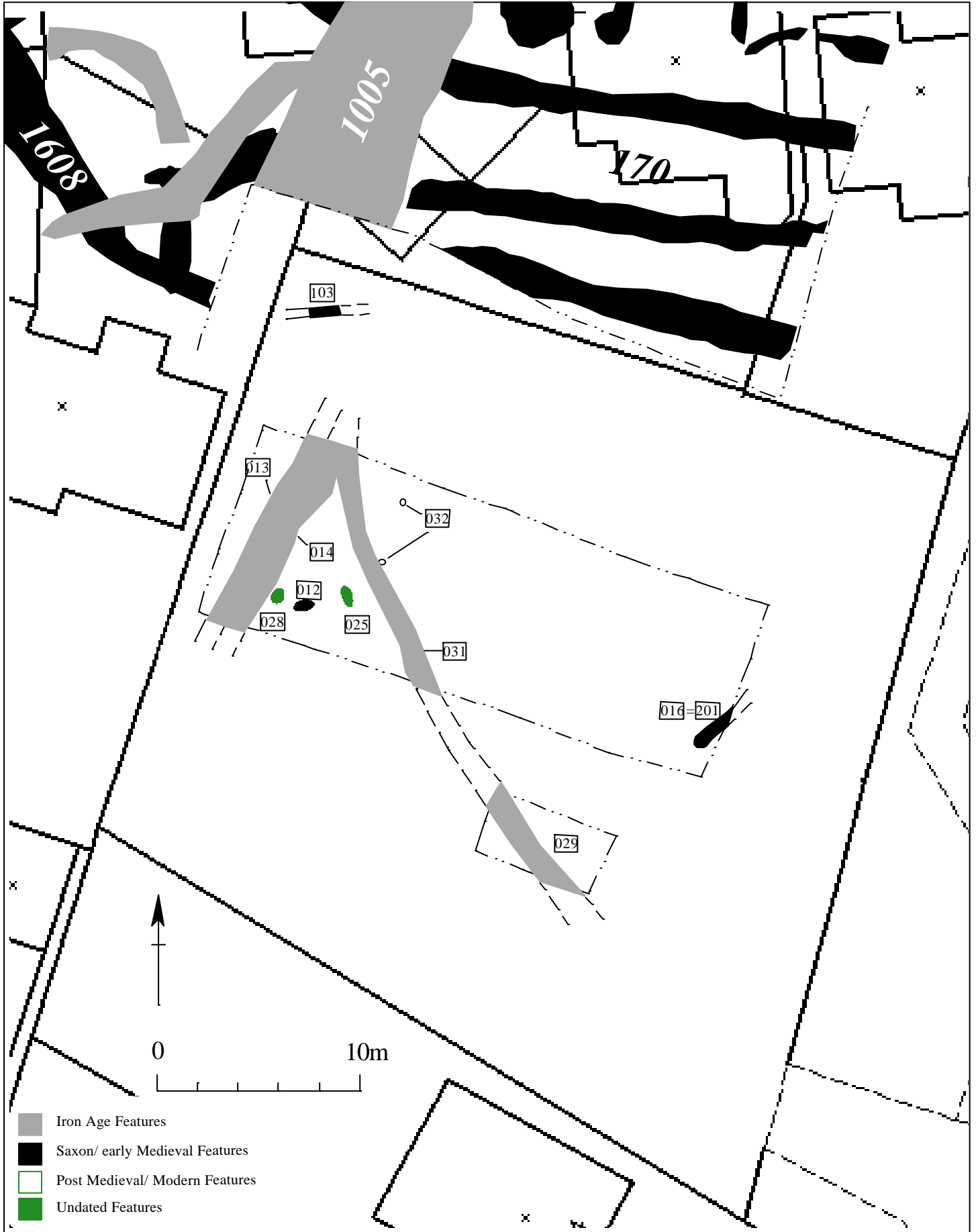


Figure 3: Site phasing and adjacent features

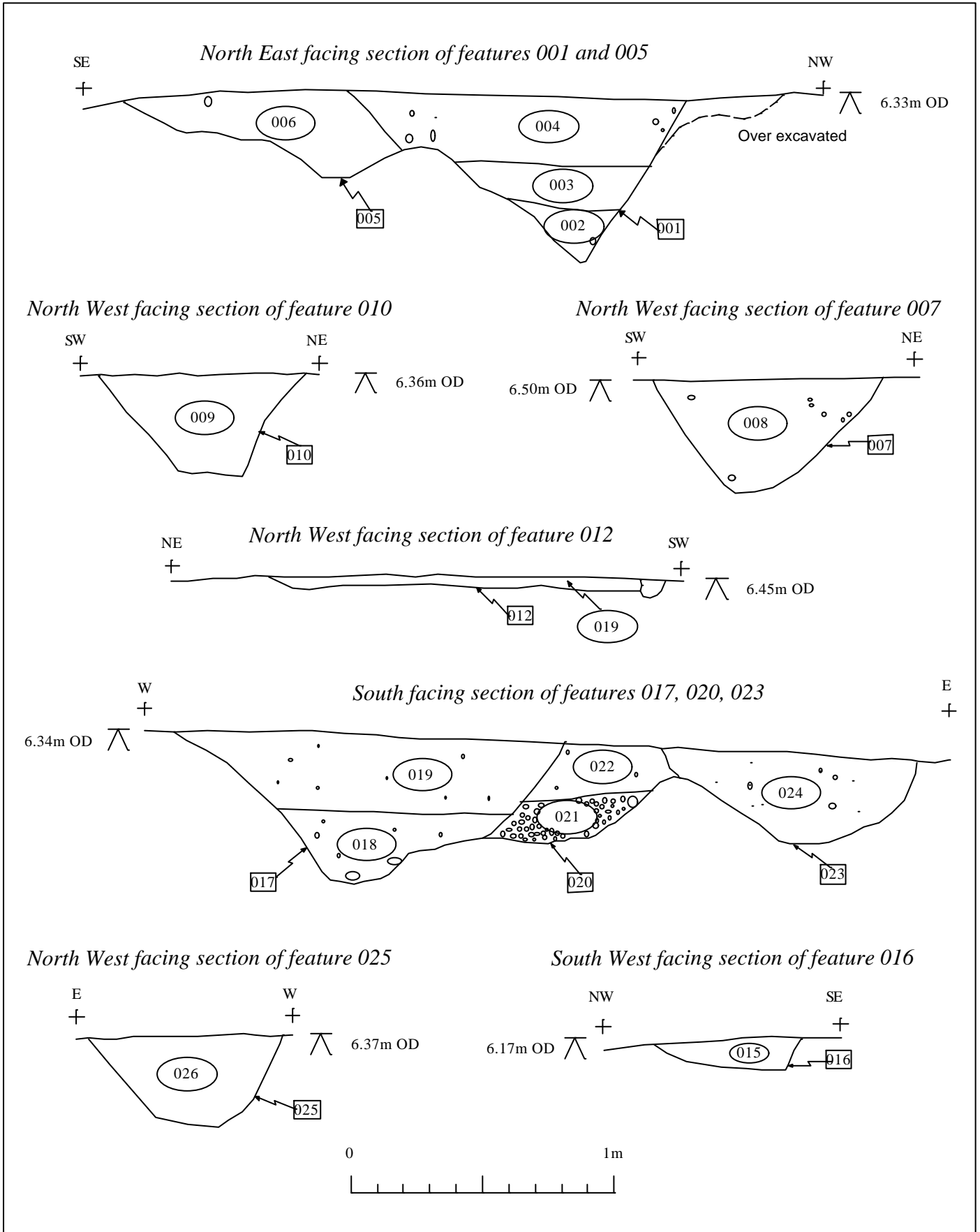


Figure 4: Feature sections

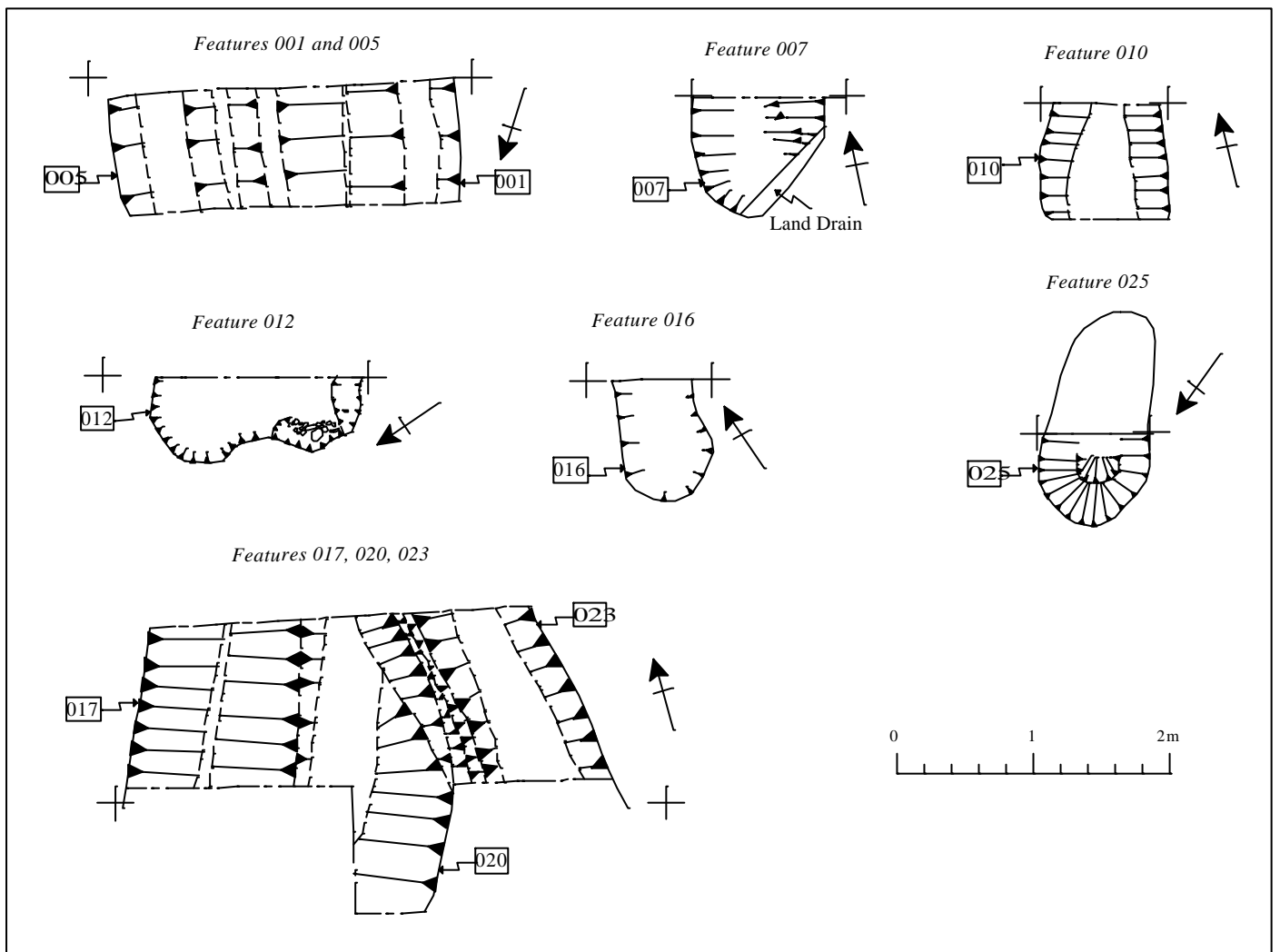


Figure 5: Feature plans