
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**EDWARDS BUILDBASE, STATION ROAD/LAND NORTH
OF LEVANTE, ST JOHN'S CHASE, MARCH,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER NO. ECB 3505

Authors: Tim Schofield (Field work & report) Peter Thompson MA BA (Desk-based assessment)	
NGR: TL 4194 9723	Report No: 3717
District: East Cambridgeshire	Site Code: AS 1376
Approved:	Project No: 4199
Signed:	Date: Jan 2011

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Edwards Buildbase, Station Road/Land North of Levante, St John's Chase, March, Cambridgeshire</i>		
<i>In January 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Edwards Buildbase, Station Road/Land north of Levante, St John's Chase, March, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 4194 9723). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a development comprising 14 dwellings (F/YR09/0723/O & F/YR09/0728/O).</i>			
<i>The site is located in an area of archaeological potential within the north-eastern part of March, on the end of the former fen 'island'. Prehistoric and Roman remains are known from this part of the March 'island'. Two parallel undated ditches (Tr. 2 F1006 & F1012) and a ?post-medieval ditch (Tr. 1 F1008) were recorded in Trenches 1 & 2, on the western side of the site. The ditches were all broadly aligned E/W and Ditches F1006 and F1012 were parallel. The likely represent drainage ditches. A fragment of a clay pipe stem was contained in Tr. 1 F1008. Based on the archaeology known locally the site had a potential for prehistoric and Roman remains. In the event two undated ditches and a ?post-medieval ditch was recorded.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>17-19 Jan 2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4199</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1376</i>
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>14 dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Three ditches</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>none</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>East Cambridge</i>	<i>March</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.300 m2</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 4194 9723</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>3m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Kasia Gdaniec, Cambridgeshire County Council</i>		
Project supervisor(PO)	<i>Tim Schofield</i>		
Funded by	<i>Linkway Builders Limited</i>		
Full title	<i>Edwards Buildbase, Station Road/Land North of Levante, St John's Chase, March, Cambridgeshire. An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Schofield, T. & Thompson P</i>		
Report no.	<i>3717</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>Jan 2011</i>		

EDWARDS BUILDBASE, STATION ROAD/LAND NORTH OF LEVANTE, ST JOHN'S CHASE, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In January 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Edwards Buildbase, Station Road/Land north of Levante, St John's Chase, March, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 4194 9723). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a development that comprises 14 dwellings (F/YR09/0723/O & F/YR09/0728/O).

Residual prehistoric flint tools and flakes have been recovered at Cedar Close 150m to the north-east (CB 15717). Features dating between the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age were excavated at Northern Office 550m to the north-west (CHER CB15266 & ECB 928), and undated pits and ditches were located at Creek Road 400m to the north-east (CHER 15633 & ECB 1321). At Cedar Close, a Roman salt production site was excavated. An extinct palaeochannel, salt ovens, briquetage and an ash layer were among the finds recovered (MCB15717). Roman remains including a stone platform, track, and coins were also found 600m to the south at Middle Level Yard (CHER 05927). The map regression exercise indicates that the site was used as allotments and that the current land plot was created between 1911 and 1925.

Two parallel undated ditches (Tr. 2 F1006 & F1012) and a ?post-medieval ditch (Tr. 1 F1008) were recorded in Trenches 1 & 2, on the western side of the site. The ditches were all broadly aligned E/W and Ditches F1006 and F1012 were parallel. The likely represent drainage ditches. A fragment of a clay pipe stem was contained in Tr. 1 F1008.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Edwards Buildbase, Station Road/Land north of Levante, St John's Chase, March, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 4194 9723). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for a development comprising 14 dwellings (F/YR09/0723/O & F/YR09/0728/O).

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HET) (Kasia Gdaniec) and dated 23/11/2010, and a specification compiled by AS (dated 8th December 2010), and approved by HET. The project followed the procedures outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (revised 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

(revised 2008). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal objectives of the evaluation was to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened was studied, and attention was given to sites and remains of all periods. The evaluation also sought to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

Planning policy context

1.4 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs.1 & 2)

2.1 March is a Fenland town in north-east Cambridgeshire located on the River Nene in the Isle of Ely some 23 km east of Peterborough. The site is in the north-eastern part of the town in a residential area and outside the historic medieval core. It comprises two rectangular plots of land between Station Road (west) and St John's Chase (east), which are slightly offset but joined at their north-eastern and south-western corners respectively (Fig. 2). The site was formerly a builders merchants, and the buildings have been demolished to slab level, leaving the site predominantly concrete-covered.

3 METHODOLOGY (Desk-based assessment)

Information was sought from a variety of available sources in order to meet the objectives of the desk-based assessment.

3.1 Archaeological databases

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and spot finds within Cambridgeshire comes from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). In order to provide a representative sample, the HER database was searched for all known entries within an approximate 500m radius of the site. Entries within an approximate 500m radius of the site are listed (Appendix 1) and plotted below (Figure 3). Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Section 4.2. Significant HER entries from beyond the 500m radius have also been discussed where relevant.

3.2 Historical and cartographic sources

The principal source for these types of evidence was the Cambridge Record Office (CRO). Relevant documents are listed in Appendix 3 and reproduced in Figures 4 to 6

3.3 Secondary sources

The principal sources of secondary material were the CHER as well as AS's own reference library. All sources, including websites, are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Geological/geotechnical information

A description of the superficial and solid geology of the local and surrounding area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site. This information was drawn from appropriate maps based on the work of the British Geological Survey.

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Topography, geology and soils (Fig. 1)

4.1.1 March is located on a long island of Ampthill Clay which rises several metres above the former fen and straddles deposits of March Gravels and Till. The site, at approximately 3m AOD, lies towards the edge of the former island.

4.2 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 3)

Prehistoric (c. 700,000 BC – AD 43)

4.2.1 The earliest significant, albeit sparse, evidence for human occupation on March Island dates to the Mesolithic. Flint scatters have been found at Hundred Road, to the north of the railway line, and at Gaul Road to the south of the river. Evidence for the Neolithic is likewise fairly sparse and includes further flint scatters at Gaul Road. An undated pit was found at Norwood Road, north of March railway station, which contained struck flint and animal bone (CHER

CB18159). Residual flint tools and knapping flakes dating from the Late Neolithic, or possibly later, were found at Cedar's Close to the north-east (CHER CB15717).

4.2.2 At the end of the Neolithic much of the fen was covered by a marine inundation, and for the succeeding Bronze Age there is an increase in archaeological remains including several Bronze Age sites identified to the north (CHER 07936a, 07936b, 05924, MCB16673, MCB16674 & MCB18212). An evaluation at the Northern Offices, approximately 550m to the north-west of the site, found undated features including a double post-hole, parallel ditches, and ditched enclosures, that are probably prehistoric (ECB 280). Excavations here also identified Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age ditches representing enclosures and a driveway, whilst a crouched burial was also present (CHER ECB 928 & CB15266). At Creek Road approximately 400m to the north-east undated prehistoric ditches and pits were excavated (CHER 15633 & ECB1321), and Late Iron Age enclosures have been identified at Estover Road approximately 750m to the north (CHER 07936a). An Iron Age bowl was found some 250m south-west of the site (CHER 05922).

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

4.2.3 The Iron Age evidence generally appears to reflect the later Roman sites, and at Estover Road Roman enclosures, field systems, a trackway and a crouched burial overly the Iron Age remains (CHER 07936). To their west, along Norwood Road, were more Roman field systems (CHER MCB16160), and Roman features were also identified at the Northern Offices (CHER CB15267). To the north of these lies a Roman Road, the Fen Causeway, running between Peterborough and Downham Market (Schofield & Thompson 2010). At Cedar Close, approximately 150m to the north-east, evidence was found for Roman salt production along an extinct palaeochannel which included pits, ditches, post-holes, salt ovens, briquetage and an ash layer (MCB15717). Roman remains were also found at Middle Level Yard, south of the River Nene, comprising a stone platform, a trackway, coins, pottery and oyster shell (CHER 05927).

Anglo-Saxon (AD 411 – 1065)

4.2.4 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity is rare in much of the fens and no sites or finds are known within 500m of the site. A Saxon brooch was found in the south-eastern part of the town (CHER 3781).

Medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)

4.2.5 March is first recorded as *Merche* in the 1086 Domesday Survey when the settlement was focused around the 12th century church of St Wendreda at the Town End (CHER 6013). A 13th century grave stone was discovered to the north of the church (CHER 5923). Probably in Late Saxon times a large-scale engineering project was carried out to divert the River Nene through March to improve drainage. By the 13th century March was a thriving port with markets on either side of the canalised river (Weston &

Williams 2005). At Gray's Lane, some 500m to the south-west a road side ditch was excavated which was shown to have gone out of use by the 16th century (CHER CB15693).

Post-medieval (AD 1540 – 1900)

4.2.6 In the post-medieval period the focus of settlement moved to around the bridge crossing the Nene, and from c.1700 March grew rapidly to eclipse its neighbours by the early 20th century, aided by the arrival of the railway in 1847 (Schofield & Thompson 2010 and Weston & Williams 2005). Several post-medieval and modern religious buildings are located in proximity to the site (Fig. 3). The nearest is the Station Road Cemetery Lodge and Chapel which are Grade II listed (CHER MCB16841 & MCB16844). A former Methodist Chapel is located just to the north of the site (CHER MCB16834). An undated ditch and the remains of a 19th century toilet were excavated approximately 120m to the east (CHER ECB 3379).

4.3 The site

OS maps of the Development Site

4.3.1 The 1886 first edition 1:2500 OS map (Fig. 4) shows the site in a large irregular five-sided field plot with the south-east corner fenced off. A second double boundary, possibly a hedge, runs across most of the middle of the plot and approximately follows the course of the southern boundary of the assessment site. The 1:1250 OS map of 1900/11 shows the area containing the site comprises allotments with a group of three terraced buildings fronting St John's Road to the north (Fig. 5). The 1925 OS map at 1:2500 scale (Fig. 6) shows that the plot for the current site has now been created. There are still no buildings in the development area, but one has appeared immediately to the north fronting St John's Road, and the creation of St John's Chase to the east is almost complete.

5 METHODOLOGY (Trial trenching)

5.1 Four trenches, two measuring 30m in length and 1.6m in width (Trenches 1 & 4), and two measuring 10-15m in length and 1.6m in width (Trenches 2 & 3) were excavated (Fig. 2), representing a 5% sample of the site.

5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated under the close supervision of an archaeologist; thereafter all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as necessary.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 Figs. 2 & 7

<i>Sample Section 1</i> <i>W end, S facing</i> <i>0.00m = 3.46m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.16m	L1000	Concrete surface.
0.16 – 0.33m	L1001	Sand layer for concrete
0.33 – 0.77m	L1002	Made Ground. Levelling layer
0.77 – 0.86m	L1003	Dark grey brown ash layer
0.86 – 1.12m	L1004	Buried topsoil. Dark greyish brown silty clay
1.12m+	L1005	Natural drift geology. Light grey silty clay

<i>Sample Section 2</i> <i>E end, S facing</i> <i>0.00m = 3.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1000	Concrete surface.
0.11 – 0.32m	L1001	Sand layer for concrete
0.32 – 1.08m	L1002	Made Ground. Levelling layer
1.08 – 1.25m	L1010	Dark greyish brown compact clayey silt.
1.25m+	L1005	Natural drift geology. Light grey silty clay

Description: Ditch F1008 was recorded in Trench 1. It contained a clay pipe stem fragment.

F1008 was a shallow ditch (1.80m+ x 1.00m x 0.08m), orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill (L1009) was a dark brown silty clay. It contained a clay pipe stem fragment, and was cut by a modern building foundation.

Trench 2 Figs. 2 & 7

<i>Sample Section 3</i> <i>W end, S facing</i> <i>0.00m = 2.92m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.09m	L1000	Concrete. As above Tr.1
0.09 – 0.11m	L1001	Sand. As above Tr.1
0.11 – 0.50m	L1002	Made Ground. As above Tr.1.
0.50 – 0.96m	L1010	Clayey silt. As above Tr.1.
0.96m+	L1005	Natural. As above Tr.1

Description: A tree hollow and parallel Ditches F1006 and F1012 were recorded in Trench 2. No finds were present.

Ditch F1006 (1.80m+ x 0.45m x 0.11m) was shallow and orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1007) was a mid grey brown clayey silt. It contained no finds. It was parallel to Ditch F1012.

Ditch F1012 (1.80m+ x 0.59m x 0.11m) was again shallow, and orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fills (L1013) was a dark blue grey clayey silt. It contained no finds.

Trench 3 Figs. 2 & 7

<i>Sample Section 4</i> <i>N end, W facing</i> <i>0.00m = 2.46m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.09m	L1000	Concrete. As above Tr.1.
0.09 – 0.21m	L1001	Sand. As above Tr.1.
0.21 – 0.85m	L1011	Made Ground. Dark brown sandy clay with occasional CBM
0.85m+	L1005	Natural drift geology. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 4 Figs. 2 & 7

<i>Sample Section 5</i> <i>N end, W facing</i> <i>0.00m = 2.36m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Concrete. As above Tr.1
0.15 – 0.21m	L1001	Sand. As above Tr.1
0.21 – 0.76m	L1011	Made Ground. As above Tr.3
0.76m+	L1005	Natural drift geology. As above Tr.1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds during the archaeological investigation.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Modern deposits of Concrete (L1000), sand (L1001), Made Ground (L1002 & L1011) and Ash (L1003) occurred in all four trenches (0.50 – 0.86m deep). Below the modern deposits a buried topsoil (Tr.1 L1004) and clayey silt (Trs. 1 & 2 L1010) were recorded. These deposits overlay the natural drift geology, a light grey silty clay (0.76 (Tr.4) – 1.25m (Tr. 1) below the present day ground surface.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 A summary of the recorded archaeology is tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Spot Date
1	1008	Ditch	?Post medieval
2	1006	Ditch	Undated
	1012	Ditch	Undated

9.2 The site is located in an area of archaeological potential within the north-eastern part of March, on the edge of the former fen 'island'. Prehistoric and Roman remains are known from this part of the March 'island'.

9.3 Two parallel undated ditches (Tr. 2 F1006 & F1012) and a ?post-medieval ditch (Tr. 1 F1008) were recorded in Trenches 1 & 2, on the western side of the site. The ditches were all broadly aligned E/W and Ditches F1006 and F1012 were parallel. The likely represent drainage ditches. A fragment of a clay pipe stem was contained in Tr. 1 F1008.

9.4 Based on the archaeology known locally the site had a potential for prehistoric and Roman remains. In the event two undated ditches and a ?post-medieval ditch was recorded.

10 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site at the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Linkway Builders Limited for funding the archaeological evaluation, and Mr GH Taylor for his kind assistance with the project.

Thanks are due to Hazel White, Assistant Archaeologist at Cambridge HER and the staff at Cambridge Record Office, Shire Hall.

AS is also grateful for the input and advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team, in particular Ms Kasia Gdaniec.

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APPENDIX 1 HER INFORMATION

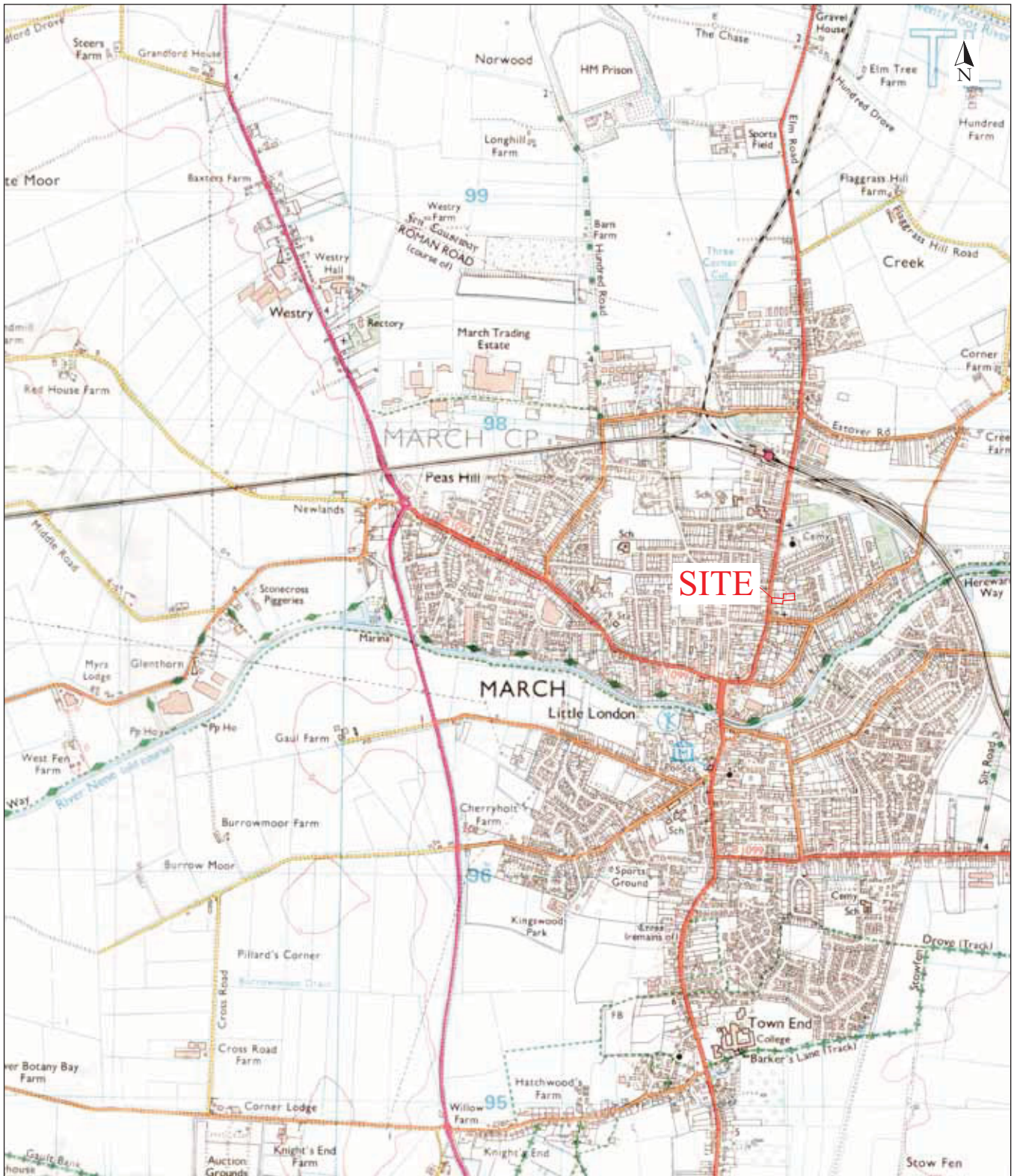
CHER Number	National Grid Reference (TL)	Name/Details
Prehistoric 500,000 – AD 43		
ECB280	41546 97693	An evaluation at Northern Office found undated features including a double post-hole, parallel ditches, and ditched enclosures that are probably prehistoric. 19 th - 20 th century ditch also present
Iron Age 700 BC – AD 43		
05922	418 971	Bowl found in 1938
Roman 43-410		
05927	421 968	Roman remains at Middle Level Yard: stone platform, track, coins, pottery. oyster shell
CB15717	42167 97304	Roman salt production site, Cedar Close. Pits, ditches, post-holes, layer of ash and briquetage and a Roman pot sherd. Two distinct episodes were identified. Residual Late Neolithic flint tools also present
MCB16791	4202 9682	Roman 2 nd century coin from Nene Parade
Medieval 410-1066		
CB15693	41607 96828	Roadside ditch, Gray's Lane. Out of use by 16 th century
Post-medieval 1539-1900		
11891	418 967	Lime Kiln
12168	419 975	Saint John's Church Rectory gardens
CB14866	4196 8756	Saint John's Church built 1872. Listed Building 401780
MCB16833	41922 97650	Congregational Chapel, Station Road 1836
MCB16834	41904 97253	Former Methodist Chapel, Station Road 1848
MCB16841	41987 97489	Cemetery Chapel and Mortuary, Station Road built 1867-8
MCB16844	41923 97467	Gates, piers and walls at cemetery, Station Road 1867-8. Listed Building 401725
MCB16845	42032 97492	Civic Cemetery, Station Road 1867
MCB19217	4207 9716	Undated ditch and 19 th century toilet comprising a brick lined sump
Modern 1900+		
CB14929	4194 9717	Church of Our Lady and St Peter, St John's Road (Roman Catholic 1912)
MCB16620	4168 9686	Coronation Monument to George V 1910. Listed Building 401385
Multi-period		
ECB 928	41571 97718	Excavation at Northern County Offices found a series of features ranging from Late Bronze Age through to medieval
Undated		
ECB 1321	42250 97554	An evaluation at Creek Road found undated ditches and pits

APPENDIX 2 LISTED BUILDINGS

Listing Number	National Grid Reference (TL)	Name and Date
401385	41681 96865	Coronation Fountain, 1911 (Grade II)
401386	41658 96867	The Chequers Public House, early 19 th century (Grade II)
401720	42237 97071	91 Nene Parade, early 19 th century (Grade II)
401724	41931 97474	Cemetery Lodge, Station Road, 1867-6 (Grade II)
401725	41923 97467	Gates, piers and wall at entrance to cemetery, Station Road, 1867-8 (Grade II)
401779	41987 97485	Cemetery Chapel and Mortuary, Station Road. 1867-8 (Grade II)
401780	41965 97556	Church of St John, Station Road, 1872 (Grade II)

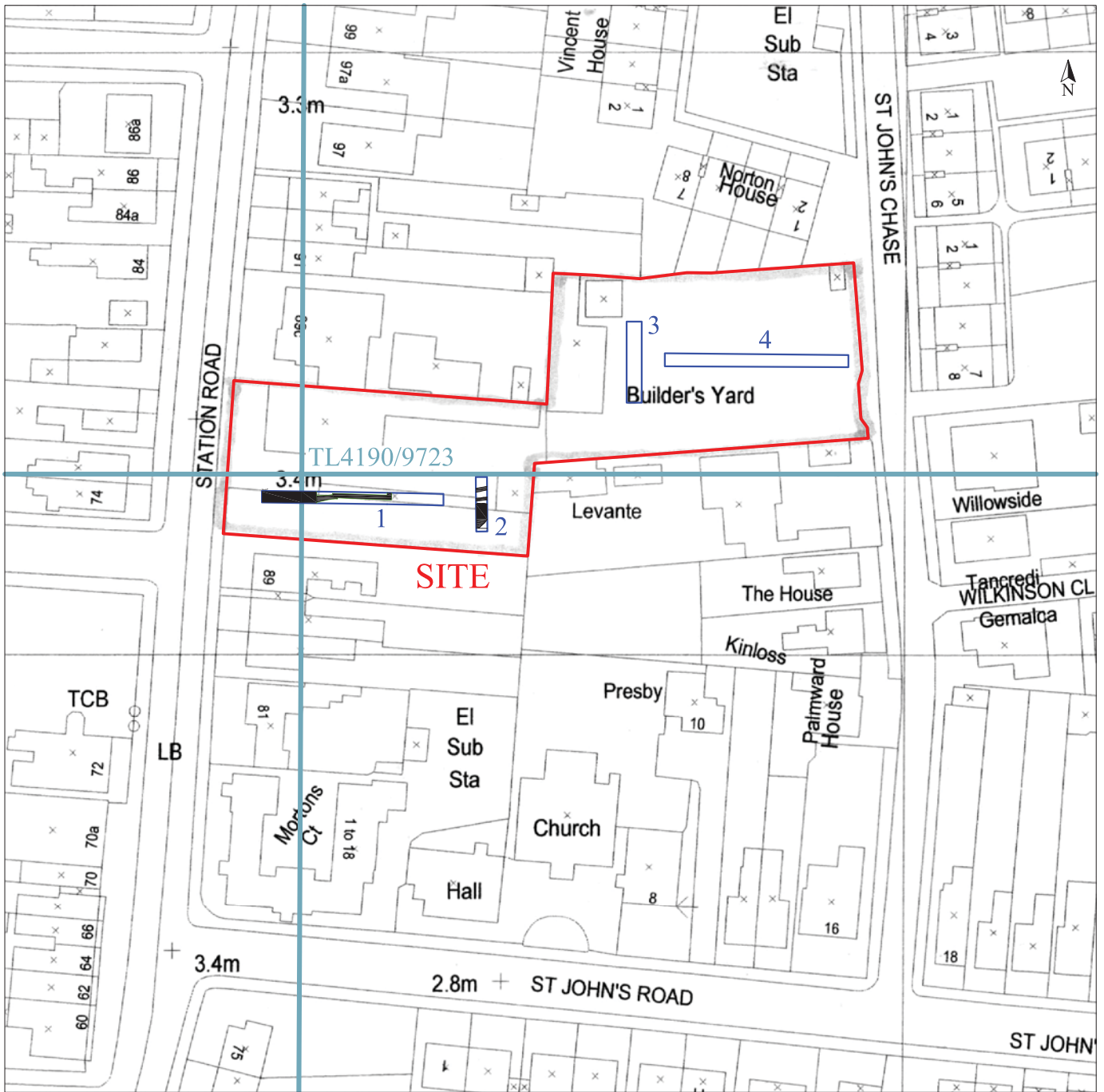
APPENDIX 3 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Date	Map	Scale	Source
modern	Site location	1:25,000	OS Explorer
modern	Detailed site location	1:1250	Client
modern	HER information	1:10,000	Archaeological Solutions
1886	First edition OS (XVI.1)	1:2,500	CRO
1900/11	OS (XVI.1)	1:1250	CRO
1925	OS (XVI.1)	1:2,500	CRO



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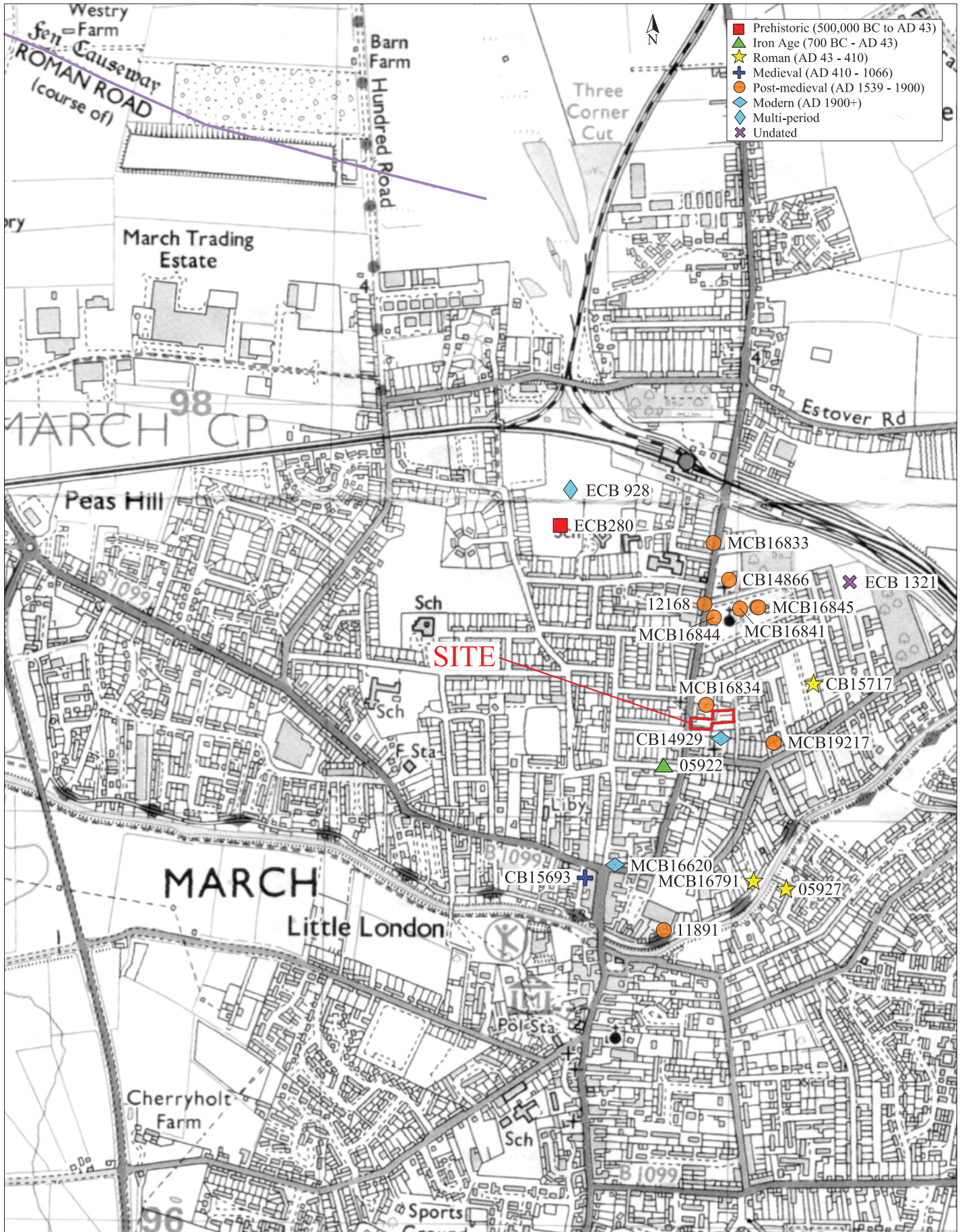
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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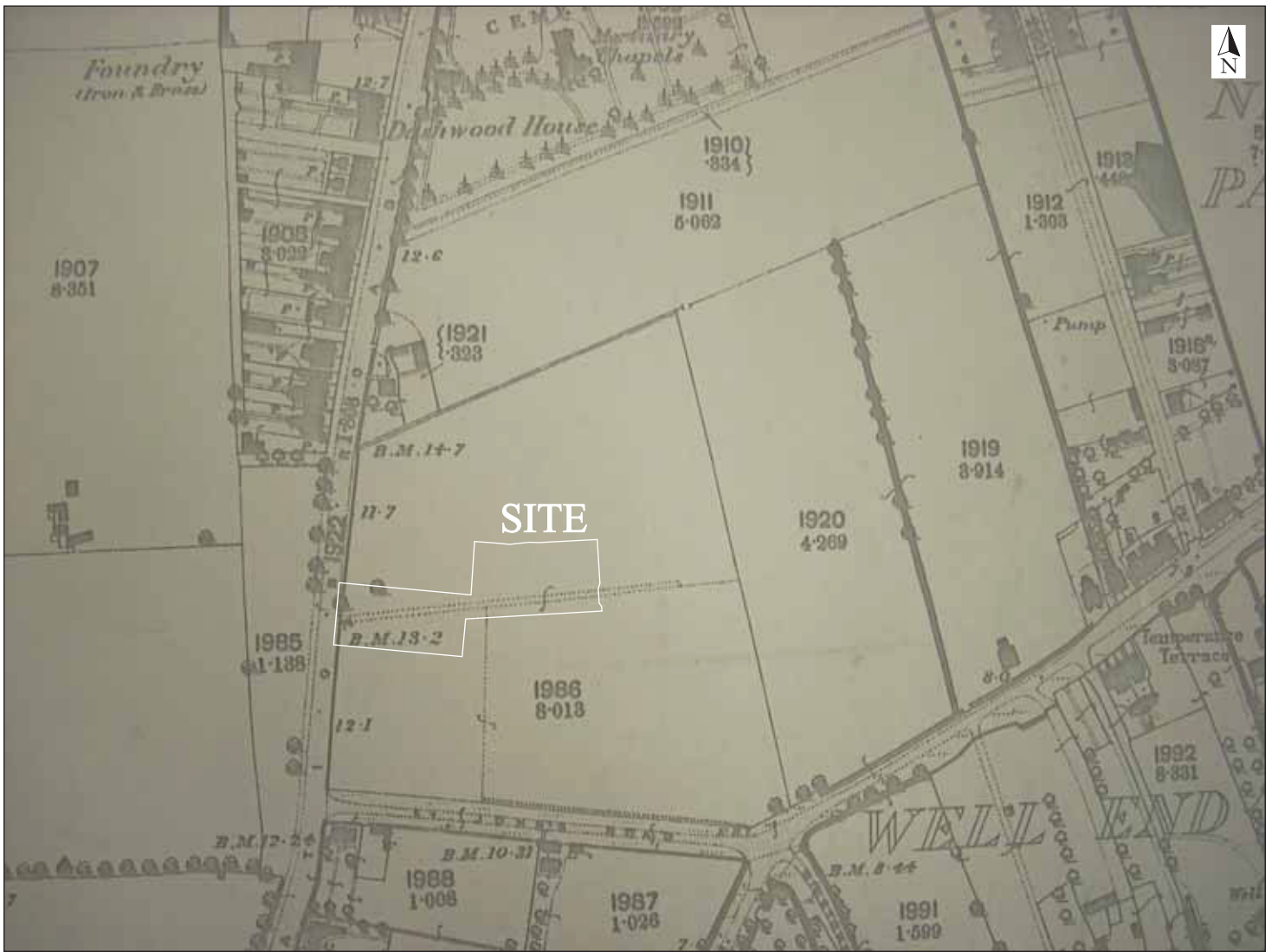


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:1000 at A4



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Fig. 3 HER Data
 Scale 1:12,500 at A4



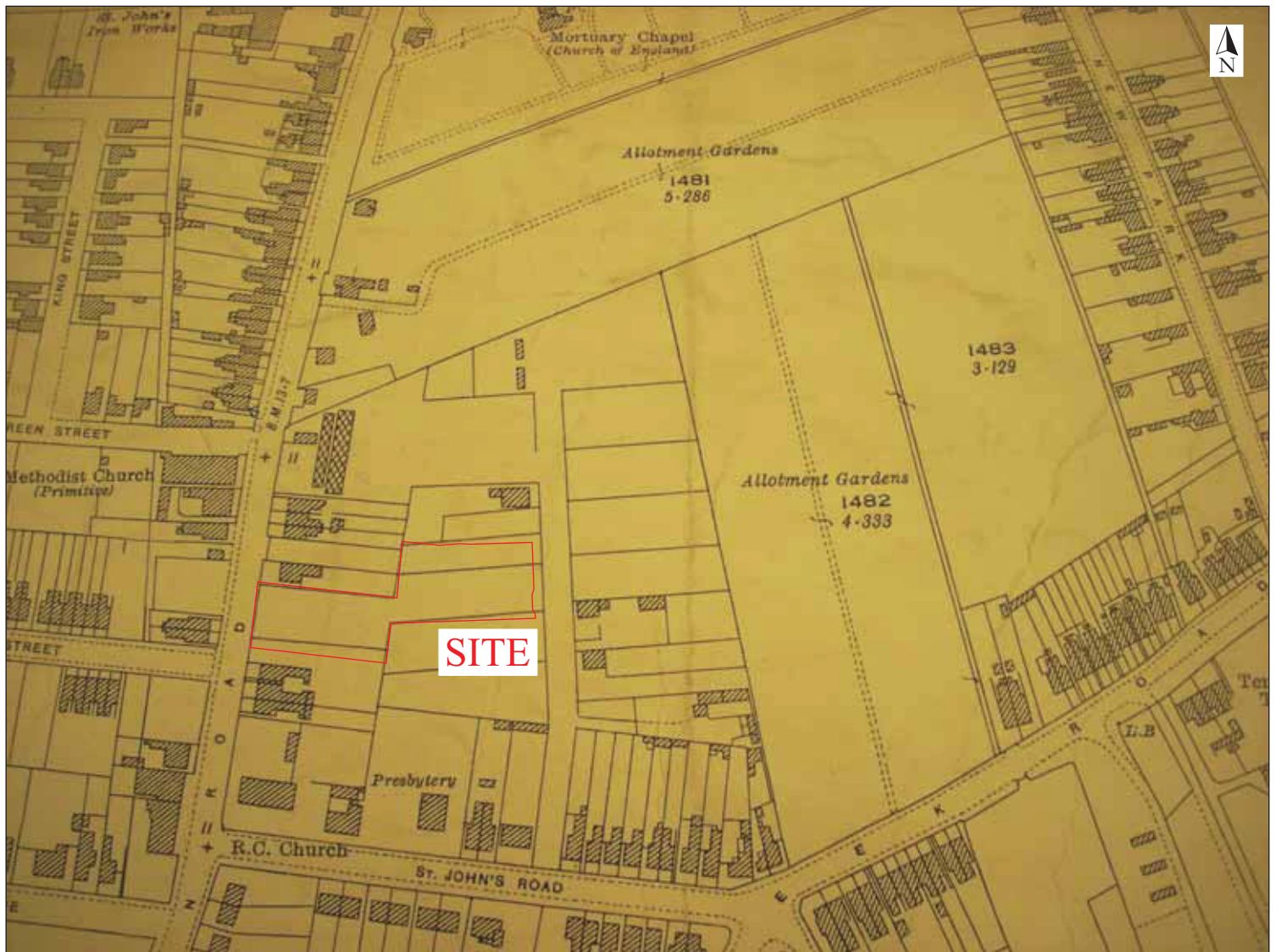
Reproduced from the 1886 Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 4 First edition OS map 1886
 Not to scale



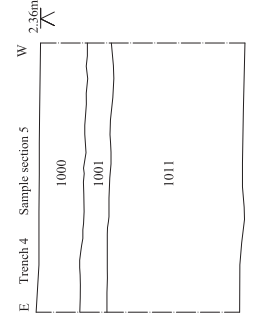
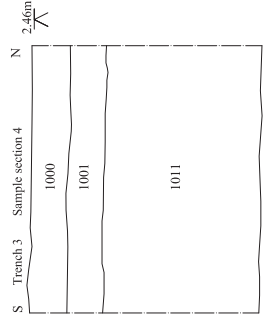
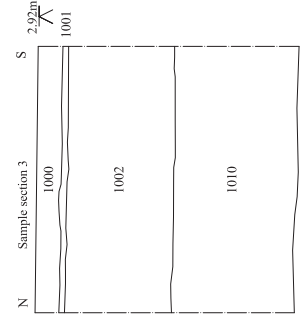
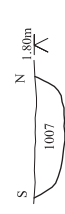
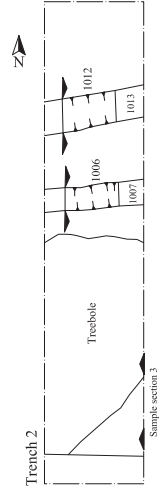
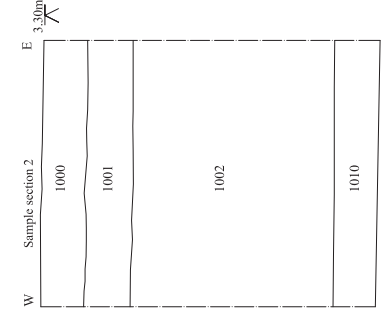
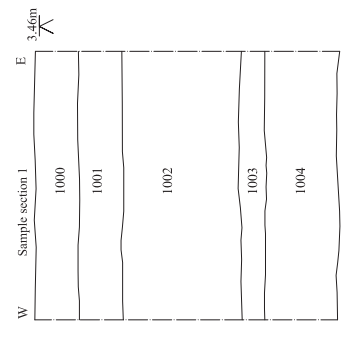
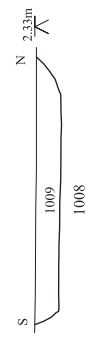
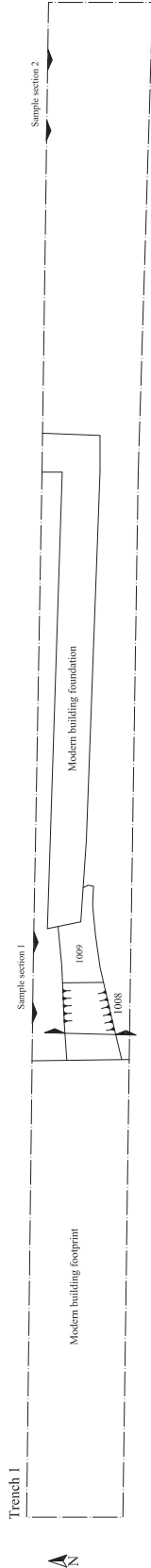
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 Fig. 5 OS map 1900/11
 Not to scale



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Fig. 6 OS map 1925
Not to scale



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Fig. 7 Plans and sections

Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3