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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**LAND SOUTH OF STATION RD, BLUNTISHAM,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

CHER No. ECB3616

Authors: Tom Janes MA (Fieldwork & report) Andy Peachey (Research)	
NGR: TL 35862 73323	Report No. 3867
District: Huntingdonshire	Site Code: AS 1423
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. P4422
Signed:	Date: July 2011

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## **CONTENTS**

### ***OASIS SUMMARY SHEET***

#### ***SUMMARY***

- 1 INTRODUCTION***
- 2 SITE DESCRIPTION***
- 3 METHOD OF WORK (DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT)***
- 4 THE EVIDENCE***
- 5 METHOD OF WORK (TRIAL TRENCHING)***
- 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS***
- 7 CONFIDENCE RATING***
- 8 DEPOSIT MODEL***
- 9 DISCUSSION***
- 10 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE***

#### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

#### ***BIBLIOGRAPHY***

- APPENDIX 1 HER DATA**
- APPENDIX 2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES**
- APPENDIX 3 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS**
- APPENDIX 4 SPECIALIST REPORTS**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Land South of Station Road, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire</i>		
<i>In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at land south of Station Road, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 35862 73323). The evaluation was a requirement of planning in advance of the construction of a traveller halting site (Huntingdonshire Planning Ref. 0900695FUL).</i>			
<i>The evaluation was targeted to examine cropmarks previously identified from aerial photography, and judged to be of archaeological potential. The cropmarks were interpreted as representing a number of sunken floored buildings of Saxon date, and half an arc of a ring ditch of probable Bronze Age date (Palmer, 2011).</i>			
<i>A ditch was identified during the evaluation, and finds recovered from its fills indicate a possible Middle Saxon date. The remaining crop marks were shown to represent recent quarrying activity, and were not archaeological.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>July 2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4422</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1423</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Agriculture</i>		
Planned development	<i>Traveller halting site</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Ditch of possible Middle Saxon date</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Middle Saxon pottery, and residual Neolithic</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>Huntingdonshire</i>	<i>Bluntisham</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridgeshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.8 ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 35862 73323</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>5.50m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Tom Janes</i>		
Funded by	<i>Messrs J &amp; B Ball</i>		
Full title	<i>Land South of Station Road, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
Authors	<i>Tom Janes</i>		
Report no.	<i>3867</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>July 2011</i>		

# LAND SOUTH OF STATION RD, BLUNTISHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at land south of Station Road, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 35862 73323). The evaluation was a requirement of planning in advance of the construction of a traveller site (Huntingdonshire Planning Ref. 0900695FUL).*

*The evaluation was targeted to examine cropmarks previously identified from aerial photography, and judged to be of archaeological potential. The cropmarks were interpreted as representing a number of sunken floor buildings of Saxon date, and half an arc of a ring ditch of probable Bronze Age date (Palmer, 2011).*

*A ditch was identified during the evaluation, and finds recovered from its fills indicate a possible Middle Saxon date. The remaining crop marks were shown to represent recent quarrying activity, and were not archaeological.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS), conducted an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at land south of Station Road, Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3586 7332; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was a requirement of planning in advance of the construction of a traveller site (Huntingdonshire Planning Ref. 0900695FUL).

1.2 The project was undertaken in compliance with a brief for an archaeological evaluation issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET), dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011). The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney, D, 2003, 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper* 14. The evaluation was also conducted according to the Institute of for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 A number of cropmarks had been previously identified from aerial photography, and were judged to be of archaeological potential. The brief required an evaluation of the site to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

1.4 An aerial photographic assessment was undertaken by Rog Palmer of Air Photo Services, and the trial trenches were targeted to investigate a variety of

cropmarks interpreted as representing sunken floor buildings of Saxon date, and half an arc of a ring ditch of probable Bronze Age date (Palmer, 2011).

### *Planning Policy Context*

1.5 PPS5 (2010) 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 SITE DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The evaluation site is located within the parish of Bluntisham, which lies within the district of Huntingdon, and within the county of Cambridgeshire. The district boundary with South Cambridgeshire lies 950m to the south-east and follows the course of the River Great Ouse. The evaluation site lies to the south of Station/Bluntisham Road, which runs between Bluntisham and Needingworth.

2.2 The eastern boundary of the site is bounded by a driveway, which runs perpendicular to the road, and provides access to the farm buildings adjacent to the north. A hedgerow forms the site's western boundary, while the southern boundary of the site is not demarcated and lies within a field. The site covers an area of approximately 0.6ha.

## **3 METHODOLOGY (DESK BASED RESEARCH)**

Information was sought from a variety of available sources in order to meet the objectives of the evaluation.

### **3.1 Archaeological databases**

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and find spots within Cambridgeshire comes from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CCC HER). Significant entries within a 1km radius of the site are listed in Appendix 1 and plotted in Fig.3. Where relevant, these sites and finds have been discussed in Section 4.2.

### **3.2 Historical and cartographic sources**

The principal sources for historical and cartographic documents were the Cambridgeshire Archives & Local Studies (CALS, County Hall, Cambridge) and the Huntingdonshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS, Huntingdon Library). Relevant cartographic sources are listed in Appendix 2 and reproduced in Figs. 4 - 8.

### **3.3 Secondary sources**

The principal sources of secondary material were the Cambridgeshire Archives & Local Studies (CALS, County Hall, Cambridge) and the Huntingdonshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS, Huntingdon Library), as well as AS's own in-house library. Unpublished sources regarding the assessment area, such as previous field evaluation reports and desk-based assessments, have also been consulted. All sources 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 published by the Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS 1978) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983).

## **4 THE EVIDENCE (DESK-BASED RESEARCH)**

### **4.1 Topography, Geology & Soils**

4.1.2 The site is situated within the flat fenlands of south-eastern Huntingdonshire and close to the boundary of South Cambridgeshire. The river Great Ouse lies 950m to the south-east of the site, whilst the site and its surrounding area incorporate a network of artificial drains leading off the river. Given its fenland location, the site has a relatively flat relief located at 5m AOD. The southern section of the site drops very gently towards the river Great Ouse to the south-east. To the immediate south of the site lie two large ponds, which form part of the sand and gravel quarrying.

4.1.2 The site lies on the cusp of two drift geologies, both of which are associated with the river Great Ouse located 950m to the south-east (Fig. 1). The northern section of the site lies on terrace gravels of the river, whilst the slightly lower-lying southern section of site comprises alluvium forming the edge of the floodplain of the river Great Ouse (BGS 1978).

### **4.2 Archaeological & Historical Background (Fig.3)**

#### *Prehistoric*

4.2.1 Early prehistoric finds are relatively limited within the Bluntisham area. Two Lower Palaeolithic handaxes were apparently found in an adjacent field to the east of the site (CHER 06686), while Palaeolithic flint tools (CHER 10823) were discovered in the spoil heaps of the ARC quarries 700m to the south. Their varied condition indicates that some of the flints were carried downstream in the river gravels. The surrounding fens in the vicinity of the site would have been relatively dry and densely forested during the Mesolithic period, although the channels of the river Great Ouse and its tributaries would have remained (Waller 1994). A Mesolithic flint scatter has been found on Ouse Farm near Over (French & Wait 1988).

4.2.2 In its natural habitat, the low-lying landscape of the Cambridgeshire peat fen, of which the site forms a part, would have been one of marshland traversed by large rivers and many smaller watercourses (Seale 1975, 7). The early Neolithic period witnessed the beginning of forest clearance in the south-central fens and there is evidence for cultivation in the forest clearings at this time (Waller 1994). By the end of the Neolithic period, the marine flooding, which deposited the 'fen clay' was encroaching into the river Great Ouse channel and peat growth in the fenland became extensive. Whilst a number of Neolithic flint implements were found at Bluntisham along the course of the dismantled railway and 1km to the north of the site (CHERs 01759 & 03626), the majority of Neolithic evidence has been found within the Barleycroft Farm area. Extensive previous archaeological work in the Barleycroft Farm area prior to and during gravel quarrying, has revealed evidence for occupation from the early Neolithic period onwards (CHER CB15515; Gdaniec 1992). A findspot of early Neolithic – late Bronze Age lithic implements were found in 1924 within the field to the east of the site (CHER 03619), whilst similar finds are known further to the east (CHERs 01699, 03623, 03630). Neolithic – Bronze Age remains comprising pits, postholes and a gully were revealed at Barleycroft Farm and 500m to the south of the site (CHER 08767; Wait 1988), along with an early Neolithic – late Bronze Age ring ditch, Bronze Age field system and possible Neolithic henge (CHERs 08767a, 08767b & 08767c; Evans & Pollard 1995).

4.2.3 The fenland water-table rose further in the early Bronze Age, extending beyond the river Great Ouse channel and flooding the fen basin north of Earith. An archaeological survey identified 190 ring ditches in the Ouse river valley (Field 1974), and further barrows have been located during the course of the Fenland Project (Waller 1994). A Bronze Age barrow, for example, lies within the field adjacent to the east of the site (CHER 07876), whilst three more scheduled examples lie 1.5km to the south-east (CHER 03727; SAM 33362). Barleycroft Farm is locally renown for its Bronze Age archaeology, which include a posthole complex indicative of a substantial longhouse set within a C-shaped compound (Evans & Knight 1996). Previous archaeological investigation at Barleycroft Farm has also revealed further archaeological features dating to the Bronze Age period and substantial evidence of early Bronze Age settlement (Gdaniec 1995). A Bronze Age enclosure and pits have been found at Bluntisham to the immediate south of the site (CHER 09182; *ibid.*), whilst Bronze Age linear features comprising possible trackways and ditches were discovered just within the site's southern boundary (CHER 09183). Archaeological excavations 850m to the south (CHER MCB17481) and 800m to the south-east of the site (CHER MCB17927) also form part of the Barleycroft Farm complex of Bronze Age



features. Additional finds within the area include a barbed and tanged arrowhead (CHER 03648a) and Beaker sherd (CHER 10196), both found in the eastern section of Barleycroft Farm.

4.2.4 Aerial photographic records reveal extensive cropmarks of Iron Age field systems and enclosures along the fen edge and the course of the valleys of the rivers Cam and Great Ouse. A number of trackways, although thought to date to the Iron Age and found to link the field systems and settlements, are also often discernible from the air. For example, two parallel ditches, thought to be part of an early Iron Age droveway, were excavated prior to gravel extraction at Barleycroft Farm 1km to the south of the site (CHER 08767d). The site itself also incorporates cropmarks of a probable Iron Age – Romano-British ditched enclosure and associated linear ditches (CHER CB14798; Evans & Pollard 1995). Previous archaeological work in the fenlands, including that at Barleycroft Farm, has revealed evidence that attests to the continuity of occupation between the Iron Age and Romano-British periods (CHER CB15514; Evans & Knight 1997).

#### *Romano-British*

4.2.5 Early attempts at drainage of the Bluntisham in the Iron Age - early Romano-British period is attested by the deposition of alluvium at Haddenham and the formation of Willingham Mere to the south-east (Waller 1994). Occupation during the Romano-British period appears to have moved to higher ground away from the lower-lying fens and the course of the river Great Ouse, such as the extensive cropmark site located upon a spur of higher gravel to the north of Willingham. Extensive Iron Age and Romano-British occupation of the fen-edge and river valleys has been demonstrated during the course of the excavation of cropmark sites in the surrounding area. The site of a possible Roman villa has been suggested on the basis of sherds of Roman pottery and tegula found 600m to the east of the site and within the Barleycroft Farm complex (CHER 03534). Further evidence for a Romano-British settlement to the east of the site (CHER 07874) includes a ditch containing Roman pottery sherds and coins (CHER 03648), as well as an L-shaped length of wall, two small ash-filled pits and a large undefined feature, which produced 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery (CHER 06687; Wait 1988). Artefactual evidence attesting to Romano-British settlement and a possible villa site at Barleycroft Farm includes Roman coins and pottery (CHERs 00949a & 03562), a Roman lamp (CHER 00948) and a Roman cinerary urn and coins (CHER 01549), whilst a Roman cremation and inhumation were found 700m to the east (CHER 00947).

#### *Anglo-Saxon*

4.2.6 Settlement within the fens once again moved to higher ground during the Anglo-Saxon period, and formed the origins of the modern villages such as Bluntisham, which occurs along the fen edge. Place-name evidence suggests that Bluntisham derived from '*the homestead of the man named Blunt*', whilst Earith



comprised a '*mud or gravel hithe or landing place*' (Mawer & Stenton 1926). Although Roman and late Roman settlement at Barleycroft Farm continued until the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, it was probably abandoned in the Anglo-Saxon period due to the rise in the local water table. The relatively scarce occupation of the area surrounding the site in the Anglo-Saxon period is confirmed by the small number of findspots, which consist only of finds of Saxon glass beads to the north of the site (CHERs 03661 & 03662).

### *Medieval*

4.2.7 The medieval landscape of the area surrounding the site comprised fenland, almost as far as the highlands of the Isle of Ely to the north (Hall 1996, 40). Localized drainage schemes of the peat fen were once again attempted in the medieval period, although the drained proportion of the then expanding fen remained small (Hedge & Howlett 1991). Bluntisham as a manor is first recorded in documentary sources in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when it was seized by Toli the Dane (Page 1932). The Domesday Survey reveals that Bluntisham formed part of the land of the Abbey of Ely and included a priest and a church as part of the soke of Somersham (Morris 1975). The settlement of Bluntisham grew in size during the medieval period, when it was known variously as '*Bluntesham*' and '*Blondesham*' (Page 1932).

### *Post-medieval*

4.2.8 Technological and administrative advances in the post-medieval period enabled the programme of drainage for virtually the entire peat fen (Hedge & Howlett 1991). As a result of the post-medieval drainage, the peat layer became thinner and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century was described as '*all waste and water*' (Darby 1983, 173). Cultivation of the peat fens was made more viable with the practice of burning the top layer of turf, known as '*paring and burning*' (Hedge & Howlett 1991). Large-scale artificial drainage of the peat fen did not begin until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Arable production grew in the early modern period and in the 1820s '*claying*' and '*gaulting*' was practiced to improve the quality and yield of the peat soil (*ibid.*).

4.2.9 Areas of post-medieval quarrying are also known to have taken place at Bluntisham. The fenland surrounding Bluntisham continued to be drained by the series of large rivers, such as the River Great Ouse, and the network of small artificial drainage channels throughout the early modern and modern periods.

## **4.3 Cartographic Sources**

### *4.3.1 Jeffrey's map of Huntingdon, 1768 (Fig.4)*

The earliest cartographic source to depict the site comprises Jeffrey's map of Huntingdon, which dates to 1768. Although comprising only a small-scale county view, the 1768 map reveals that the site lay within '*Bluntisham Fen*', which was situated to

the south of Bluntisham and along the northern floodplain of the 'Ouse River'. In 1768, the site also lay along the southern frontage of the road running between Bluntisham and Needingworth, and which demarcated the northern extent of the fen. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the site likely comprised undeveloped fen farmland, possibly forming part of Barleycroft Farm, although the origins and history of the farm remain unknown.

#### 4.3.2 Pre-enclosure land use map, c. 1814 (Fig.5)

The pre-enclosure land use map from prior to 1814 indicates that the undeveloped fenland of 'Bluntisham Fen' in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century was increasingly being exploited and developed by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1814, only the southern section of the site formed part of the fen pasture of 'Bluntisham West Fen'. The central and north-western sections of the site, however, had been utilised as lammas meadows and enclosures constituting 'Bluntisham Meadow', whilst the north-eastern section of the site had been incorporated into the arable open fields of 'Gull Field', with field furlongs running north to southwards off the road between Bluntisham and Needingworth. Local history sources reveal that the arable 'Gull Field' was previously known as 'Rush Field', but took its later name from the 'gulls' or water channels in the area (Page 1932).

#### 4.3.3 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1902 (Fig.6)

Given that the site lies in close proximity to the district boundary, Ordnance Survey maps depict the site across two sets of maps held separately by the Cambridgeshire Archives & Local Studies (CALS) and the Huntingdon Archives (HA). Although the 1<sup>st</sup> edition maps covering the site were not available, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1902 reveals that the site in 1902 formed part of agricultural land at Barleycroft Farm, presumably drained for agricultural purposes around the time of enclosure. The farmhouse and associated buildings at Barleycroft Farm lay 500 yards (c. 500m) to the east of the site. The site in 1902 consisted of part of a single large field, which continued to the north, south and west. Field boundaries, thought to comprise hedges and fen ditches, thus ran along the eastern edge of the site.

#### 4.3.4 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1927 (Fig.7)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1927 reveals a number of changes and development to the site and its surrounding area in the preceding 25 years. By 1927, the site continued to comprise agricultural land and consisted of the north-eastern quarter of a single field. The fields to the north of the site, previously part of the same field, had been developed as an orchard or possible fruit farm, as found throughout the fertile fens, which continued eastwards to Barleycroft Farm. The 1927 map also reveals that flint implements were found to the east of the site in AD 1924, with further associated finds located to the east beside the farmhouse of Barleycroft Farm, and to the north-east.

#### 4.3.5 4<sup>th</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1950 – 52 (Fig.8)

The final historic cartographic source to depict the site comprises the 1950 – 52 4<sup>th</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map. Despite the passage of 23 years, the final cartographic source reveals no noticeable change to the site in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the site appears to have remained as an undeveloped agricultural field with orchard/fruit farm land to the north. The boundaries of the site in 1950 – 52 remained unaltered. Despite the lack of development within the site, it is evident that the settlement of Bluntisham grew in the early modern period and had begun to expand south-westwards towards Barleycroft Farm.

## 5 METHOD OF WORK

5.1 Seven trial trenches 1.6m wide and totalling 240m in length were excavated within the proposed area of the new development (Fig. 2). Six of the trenches were targeted to investigate the results of the AP assessment (Trenches 2 – 7), and the remaining trench (Trench 1) was located in the ‘blank’ north-west corner of the site.

5.2 Topsoil and subsoil was removed under close archaeological supervision using a wheeled mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a 1.60m toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below. In addition, 1m<sup>2</sup> test pits were hand-excavated at the end of each trench in order to assess the artefact content of the topsoil and subsoil.

### Trench 1 (Figs. 1 & 2, DP1 & 2)

Sample Section: 25m from N end, W facing 0.00 = 6.11m AOD		
0.00 – 0.23m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark brown, moderately compact sandy silt with moderate small sub-angular flint gravel and occasional medium sub-angular flint.
0.23 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid brown compact sandy silt with frequent small sub-angular flint gravel and occasional medium sub-angular flint stones.

0.43m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. Mid orange-brown compact sandy gravel, becoming silty clay towards northern end.
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*Description:* Trench 1 was orientated north-south and was 40m long. It was located in the north-west corner of the site in order to evaluate an area devoid of cropmarks. Trench 1 revealed that the natural geology, L1002, changed towards to the north of the site. In the southern half of the site the natural geology was a compact flint gravel, towards the north it was a compact silty clay.

No archaeological features or finds were present, and Test Pit 1 yielded no features or finds.

## **Trench 2** (Figs. 1 & 2, DP3 & 4)

<i>Sample Section: 4.70m from E end, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 5.79m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.22 – 0.36m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.36m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. Mid orange-brown compact sandy gravel.

*Description:* Trench 2 was orientated east-west and was 40m long. It was located in the south-west corner of the site in order to evaluate two rectangular cropmarks interpreted in the AP assessment as possible sunken floor buildings (SFBs) of Saxon date. No features were present that corresponded to these cropmarks. However, the trench did expose an area of quarrying, also noted in the AP assessment, which had removed any archaeological features in this area.

Test Pit 2 yielded two sherds of medieval pottery, three sherds of early modern pottery and an iron nail, all from Subsoil L1001.

## **Trench 3** (Figs. 1 & 2, DP5 & 6)

<i>Sample Section: 11m from W end, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 5.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.15 – 0.20m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.20m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 2

*Description:* Trench 3 was orientated east-west and was 20m long. It was located in the approximate centre of the site in order to evaluate a cropmark interpreted as a possible ditch. No archaeological features or finds were present.

Test Pit 3 yielded a sherd of medieval pottery and a sherd of early modern pottery from Topsoil L1001.

#### **Trench 4** (Figs. 1 & 2, DP7 & 8)

<i>Sample Section: 7.5m from S end, W facing</i> <i>0.00 = 5.61m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.13m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.13 – 0.17m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.17m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. Mid orange-brown compact sandy gravel, becoming silty clay towards the northern end.

*Description:* Trench 4 was orientated north-south and was 40m long. It was located at the approximate centre of the site in order to evaluate a cropmark interpreted as representing two SFBs. No archaeological features or finds were present. A quarry pit was identified, corresponding to the location of the cropmark.

Test Pit 4 yielded two sherds of Roman pottery, an iron nail, and a piece of glass, all from Topsoil L1000.

#### **Trench 5** (Figs. 1, 2 & 9, DP9 & 10)

<i>Sample Section: 4m from W end, S facing</i> <i>0.00 = 6.04m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.21 – 0.45m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.45m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 2

*Description:* Trench 5 was orientated east-west and was 20m long. It was located in the south-east corner of the site in order to evaluate cropmarks interpreted as representing two SFBs. A gully/furrow, F1004, yielded early modern pottery. No archaeological features or finds were present.

Test Pit 5 yielded one sherd of post-medieval pottery, an iron nail and a piece of clay tobacco pipe, all from Subsoil L1001.

#### **Trench 6** (Figs. 1, 2 & 9, DP11 & 12)

<i>Sample Section: 2.5m from W end, N facing</i> <i>0.00 = 6.43m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.22 – 0.34m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.34m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. As Trench 2

**Description:** Trench 6 was orientated east-west and was 40m long. It was located on the south-eastern edge of the site in order to evaluate cropmarks interpreted as representing three SFBs, and one representing the northern arc of a potential enclosure ditch which extended southwards beyond the site limits (Fig. 3). A quarry pit was identified at the eastern end of the trench, corresponding to the location of one of the potential SFBs. The remaining two were not present. The ditch, F1008, was identified within the trench.

Test Pit 6 yielded one sherd of early modern pottery and an iron nail from Topsoil 1001, and two sherds of early modern pottery and a piece of glass from Subsoil 1001.

Ditch F1008 (7.5+ x 3.5m x 0.9m) was linear in plan, with sloping sides and a concave base. It was orientated broadly east-west within the trench. F1008 was truncated at its eastern end by a quarry pit; approximately 6m to the west F1008 curved to continue beyond the site limits to the south. Ditch F1008 had three fills, L1005, L1006 and L1007; these are tabulated below. Pottery sherds recovered from L1005 are Middle Saxon and Neolithic. A struck flint flake was also recovered from L1005.

Context	Description	Finds (count; weight)	Spot Date
L1005	Mid brown-grey compact silty sand with frequent flint gravel.	7 (54g)	Middle Saxon
L1006	Mid orange-brown compact silty sand with frequent gravel.	-	-
L1007	Mid brown-orange loose silty sand with frequent gravel.	-	-

## **Trench 7** (Figs. 1 & 2, DP13 & 14)

<i>Sample Section: 1.5m from N end, E facing</i> <i>0.00 = 5.67m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.22 – 0.36m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.36m +	L1002	Natural Drift Geology. Mid orange-brown compact sandy gravel, becoming silty clay towards northern end of TT.

**Description:** Trench 7 was orientated north-south and was 40m long. It was located along the eastern edge of the site in order to evaluate cropmarks interpreted as representing five SFBs. No archaeological features or finds were present. Two quarry



pits were identified, corresponding to the location of the three cropmarks towards the southern end of the trench.

Test Pit 7 yielded two sherds of early modern pottery and a piece of glass from Topsoil 1000, and an iron fragment from Subsoil 1001.

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

7.1 It is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or the recovery of finds during the evaluation.

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 Topsoil L1000, was a dark brown, moderately compact sandy silt with moderate small sub-angular flint gravel and occasional medium sub-angular flint stones. It overlay subsoil L1001, a mid-brown compact sandy silt with frequent small sub-angular flint gravel and occasional medium sub-angular flint stones. L1001 sealed all archaeological deposits identified on site.

8.2 Natural drift geology, L1002, was broadly uniform over most of the site, comprising a mid-orange-brown compact sandy gravel. Towards the northern end of the site (observed in Trenches 1, 4 and 7) the natural changed to a mid-brown, compact silty clay.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

### *Summary of the archaeology*

9.1 Archaeological features were recorded in two of the seven trenches. A gully/furrow, F1004, recorded in Trench 5 yielded early modern pottery.

9.2 The ditch, F1008, in Trench 6 had been previously identified as a cropmark forming the western half of a circular enclosure. The eastern half of the enclosure had been truncated by the construction of the road bordering the east side of the site. The northern arc of the enclosure was within the site boundaries, and it is this arc that was recorded in Trench 6.

9.3 The AP assessment ascribes a probable Bronze Age date to the enclosure ditch. However, two sherds of pottery recovered from the upper fill, L1005, indicate a possible Middle Saxon date. Four sherds of Neolithic pottery were also recovered from this layer, although these are probably residual (Appendix 4, Pottery Report). No features associated with the ditch were recorded within the trench.

9.4 Finds recovered from the test pits range in date from Roman to modern. An enclosure, visible as a cropmark, in the field to the east has been interpreted as Iron Age/Romano-British, and the Roman pottery is likely to be associated with this.

#### *Interpretation and research potential*

9.5 Anglo-Saxon archaeology was anticipated at this site; cropmarks thought to represent two SFBs were investigated. However, upon investigation no such features were identified but, nevertheless, a Saxon presence was identified. The recovery of Middle Saxon pottery from Ditch F1008 and the resultant tentative dating of this feature as Anglo-Saxon are of significance for the area. Although Bluntisham is considered to be a name with Anglo-Saxon origins, archaeological evidence for the period in the area is limited. The possibility that the enclosure of which F1008 formed part is Anglo-Saxon may indicate that the understanding of Saxon occupation in the Bluntisham area has to be revised. Medlycott and Brown (2008, 79) suggest that there is problem in identifying and locating Anglo-Saxon sites. In addition to altering the general picture of Saxon-period occupation in this part of Cambridgeshire and in the county as a whole, the identification of a Saxon enclosure at this location suggests that the site may make a contribution to a greater understanding of Saxon rural landscapes and settlements (see Medlycott and Brown, 80). As part of a possible Saxon enclosure, further investigation of F1008 may inform on subjects such as the development of field systems, the form and layout of farms and landscape reorganisation, all of which are identified as important research subjects, associated with the Anglo-Saxon rural landscape in the eastern region (Medlycott and Brown 2008, 80).

9.6 Neolithic activity is fairly well-represented in the area of the Station Road site, especially at the nearby Barleycroft Farm; the identification of residual Neolithic pottery in F1008 is, therefore, perhaps not unexpected. The identification of these artefacts adds to the general corpus of information regarding this period in the area. The recovery of Roman pottery from the topsoil (TP4) can also be ascribed to the relatively well-known Romano-British presence in the vicinity of the site. Although finds of this date are minimal they make a small contribution to what is known of Roman-period activity in the area.

9.7 The identification of quarry pits at the site may have been predicted. Post-medieval quarrying is known to have occurred in the Bluntisham area. Post-medieval and early modern finds from the topsoil, and F1004, dated to the early modern period may be associated with such activity.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at the 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.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AS would like to thank Mr Stuart Harrison of E & P Buildign Design for commissioning the works and for his assistance, and the client Messrs J and B Ball for their co-operation and their funding of the project, and for their assistance.

AS also gratefully acknowledges the input and advice of Mr Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

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## APPENDIX 1 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD DATA

The following sites are those that lie within a 1km radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Record (CCC HER).

CHER	NGR TL	Description
<b>Early prehistoric (until 4,300 BC)</b>		
06686	3673 7337	Prehistoric oval ring ditch visible on aerial photographs and revealed by soil stripping at Barleycroft Farm
07930	36 73	Two lower Palaeolithic handaxes found on a gravel sorting machine at Barleycroft Farm
10823	362 725	Palaeolithic implements recovered from the spoil heaps of ARC quarries at Bluntisham
<b>Neolithic (4,300 BC – 2,100)</b>		
01699	367 735	Neolithic flint implements comprising a scraper of grey flint and a

		point of black flint found at Barleycroft Farm
01759	362 743	Neolithic flint implements found at Bluntisham
03619	3615 7328	Early Neolithic – late Bronze Age lithic implements found at Bluntisham in 1924
03623	3671 7363	Early Neolithic – late Bronze Age flint tools found at Bluntisham in 1924
03626	359 741	Early Neolithic – late Bronze Age flint scraper found at Bluntisham
03630	367 735	Early Neolithic – late Bronze Age flint implements found at Bluntisham
08767	3599 7285	Neolithic – Bronze Age remains comprising pits, post holes and a gully revealed at Barleycroft Farm
08767a	3570 7230	Excavations at Barleycroft Farm revealed an early Neolithic – late Bronze Age ring ditch and Bronze Age field system
08767b	3570 7320	Excavations at Barleycroft Farm revealed a slightly ovoid ring ditch, which may originally have been a Neolithic henge
08767c	3570 7320	Excavations at Barleycroft Farm revealed a Neolithic ditch system
CB15515	3535 7246	Excavations at Barleycroft Farm revealed evidence for dispersed settlement in this area from the Neolithic – Romano-British periods
<b>Bronze Age (2,100 BC – 750)</b>		
03648a	366 736	Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead found at Bluntisham in 1960
SAM 33362	3707 7226	Three bowl barrows dating from the Bronze Age, which survive as substantial earthworks and are scheduled
03727	3707 7226	Three bowl barrows dating from the Bronze Age, which survive as substantial earthworks and are scheduled
07876	3623 7329	Bronze Age barrow at Bluntisham
09182	359 730	Bronze Age enclosure and pits found at Bluntisham
09183	361 730	Bronze Age linear features comprising possible trackways and ditches found at Bluntisham
10196	366 734	Bronze Age Beaker sherd found at Barleycroft Farm
CB15514	3535 7243	Excavations at Barleycroft Farm revealed a series of ditches relating to a Bronze Age field system
MCB17481	3586 7269	Late Bronze Age features revealed at Barleycroft Farm
MCB17927	3644 7277	Bronze Age and Iron Age features revealed at Barleycroft Farm
<b>Iron Age (750 BC – AD 43)</b>		
08767d	3570 7230	Two parallel ditches, thought to be part of an early Iron Age driveway, were excavated prior to gravel extraction at Barleycroft Farm
CB14798	3596 7335	Cropmarks of a probable Iron Age – Romano-British ditched enclosure and associated linear ditches to the west of Barleycroft Farm
<b>Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)</b>		
00947	3650 7336	Roman cremation and inhumation found at Barleycroft Farm
00949a	365 734	Roman coins and pottery found at Barleycroft Farm
00948	366 736	Roman lamp found at Barleycroft Farm
01549	3650 7336	Roman cinerary urn and coins found at Barleycroft Farm
03534	364 733	Sherds of Roman pottery and tegula indicative of a villa at Barleycroft Farm
03562	370 734	Roman pottery found at Barleycroft Farm
03648	366 736	Ditch containing Roman pottery sherds and coins found at Bluntisham



06687	367 734	Soil stripping at Barleycroft Farm revealed a number of features including an L-shaped length of wall, two small ash-filled pits and a large undefined features, which produced 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> century pottery
07874	3680 7358	Roman settlement indicated at Bluntisham
08335	367 736	Cropmark complex identified from aerial photographs from which Roman and early Saxon pottery sherds was recovered
<b>Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 – 1150)</b>		
03661	36 74	Saxon glass beads found in Bluntisham
03662	367 736	Saxon glass bead found in Bluntisham
<b>Modern (AD 1900 - present)</b>		
MCB18023	3537 7329	Replacement milestone along Station Road dating to 2002
<b>Undated</b>		
08332	366 723	Undated possible ring ditch or probable tractor mark at Bluntisham

## APPENDIX 2 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Date	Description	Fig. No.	Scale	Location
1768	Jeffrey's map of Huntingdon	5	-	CALS
c. 1814	Pre-enclosure land use map	6	As shown	Tebbutt 1941
1902	Cambridgeshire sheets XVIII.SE & SW; 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	7	6":1 mile	CALS
1927	Cambridgeshire sheets XVIII.SE & SW; 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	8	6":1 mile	CALS
1950 - 52	Cambridgeshire sheets XVIII.SE & SW; 4 <sup>th</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	9	6":1 mile	CALS
1996	Aerial photograph mapping	3	As shown	Cox 1996
1996	Recent archaeological work	4	As shown	Guttmann 1996
2001	Ordnance Survey Explorer series 225; site location	1 & 2	1:25,000	AS

### APPENDIX 3 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Context	Description	Area	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	Other
1000	Topsoil	TP 3	19 <sup>th</sup> +	(2) 4g	35	-
		TP 4	Roman	(2) 5g	21	Fe Bolt 46g Glass 25g
		TP 6	19 <sup>th</sup> +	(1) 2g	1	Fe Nail 6g
		TP 7	17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	(2) 11g	4	Glass 1g
1001	Subsoil	TP 2	19 <sup>th</sup> +	(5) 26g	-	Fe Nail 11g
		TP 5	17 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup>	(1) 7g	7	Fe Nail 4g CTP 5g
		TP 6	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> +	(2) 7g	4	Glass 2g
		TP 7			7	Fe Frag 5g
1003	Furrow fill	TT 5	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	(1) 5g	12	-
1005	Upper ditch fill	TT 6	6 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup>	(7) 54g	-	-

## APPENDIX 4 SPECIALIST REPORTS

### The Pottery

*Peter Thompson*

The evaluation recovered 24 sherds weighing a total of 110g; all can be described as moderately to heavily abraded. The pottery derives from multiple periods. The sherds are quantified by context in the table below.

Context	Description	Area	Quantification	Date	Comment
1000	Topsoil	TP 3	1x1g REFWE 1x3g MSW	19 <sup>th</sup> +	MSW: flat topped bowl rim
		TP 4	1x1g CGSA 1x3g GRS	Roman	-
		TP 6	1x2g TPW	19 <sup>th</sup> +	-
		TP 7	1x1g PMRE 1x6g PMBL 1x4g MGI	17 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	MGI: green glaze both surfaces
1001	Subsoil	TP 2	1x1g ENPO 2x16g PMRE 2x6g MSW	19 <sup>th</sup> +	-
		TP 5	1x7g PMBL	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	-
		TP 6	1x3g REFWE 1x3g PMRE	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> +	-
1003	Furrow	TT 5	1x4g PMBL	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	-
1005	Upper ditch fill	TT 6	3x26g MSax 4x23g Neo	6 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup>	MSax: 2x sandstone, 1x shell Neo: 2x flint (x1 incised deco), 2x shell (x1 hooked rim)

#### KEY:

Neo: Neolithic 4<sup>th</sup> to late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC

CGSA: Central Gaulish ware 2<sup>nd</sup> century

GRS: Roman grey ware mid-1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century

MSax: Middle Saxon 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century

MSW: Medieval sandy ware 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century

MGI: Medieval glazed ware late 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century

PMRE: Post-medieval red earthenware 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>

PMBL: Post medieval black glazed earthenware 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>

ENPO: English porcelain mid-18<sup>th</sup> century +

TPW: Transfer Printed ware late 18<sup>th</sup> century +

REFWE: Refined factory made white earthenware late 18<sup>th</sup> century +

Topsoil L1000 (TP 4) contained a residual sherd of 2<sup>nd</sup> century Central Gaulish Samian ware and a sherd of Roman grey ware. A sherd of late medieval glazed ware (TP 7) and a probable early medieval sandy ware flat topped rim from a small bowl (TP 3) were also recovered. The remaining four sherds range from post-medieval to modern in date.

Subsoil L1001 yielded two residual conjoining sherds of medieval sandy ware (TP 2) and five post-medieval to modern sherds.

Furrow fill L1003 (TT 5) contained a single sherd of early modern black glazed earthenware.

Ditch fill L1005 (TT 6) yielded seven coarse ware sherds in various fabrics. Four of the sherds are probably residual Neolithic; two small sherds contain very coarse unburnt flint temper possibly deriving from flint tool debitage. One of these sherds has faint internal incised lines indicative of Mildenhall ware. The remaining two sherds, one comprising a Neolithic-type hooked rim, contain profuse shell temper.

Two of the later sherds are over 1cm thick with fabrics of sand and sandstone (quartz clusters). These are probably Middle Saxon, a third sherd in mixed sand and calcareous fabric may be contemporary with them.

## **The Ceramic Building Materials**

*Andrew Peachey*

The evaluation recovered a total of 11 fragments (91g) of late post-medieval to early modern CBM, with a single fragment (5g) contained in Furrow F1004 (L1003) and the remainder distributed throughout Topsoil L1000 and Subsoil L1001. The CBM is entirely comprised of small, highly abraded fragments of peg tile that occur in an oxidised fabric with common calcareous inclusions (voids, <3mm). Post-medieval CBM in such a poor condition was probably re-distributed through manuring or other agricultural processes.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1  
Trench 1, looking north



DP 2  
Trench 1, sample section. Looking east



DP 3  
Trench 2, looking east



DP 4  
Trench 2, sample section. Looking north





DP 5  
Trench 3, looking east



DP 6  
Trench 3, sample section. Looking north.



DP 7  
Trench 4, looking north



DP 8  
Trench 4, sample section. Looking east



DP 9  
Trench 5, looking east



DP 10  
Trench 5, sample section. Looking north



DP 11  
Trench 6, looking east



DP 12  
Trench 6, Ditch F1008. Looking north

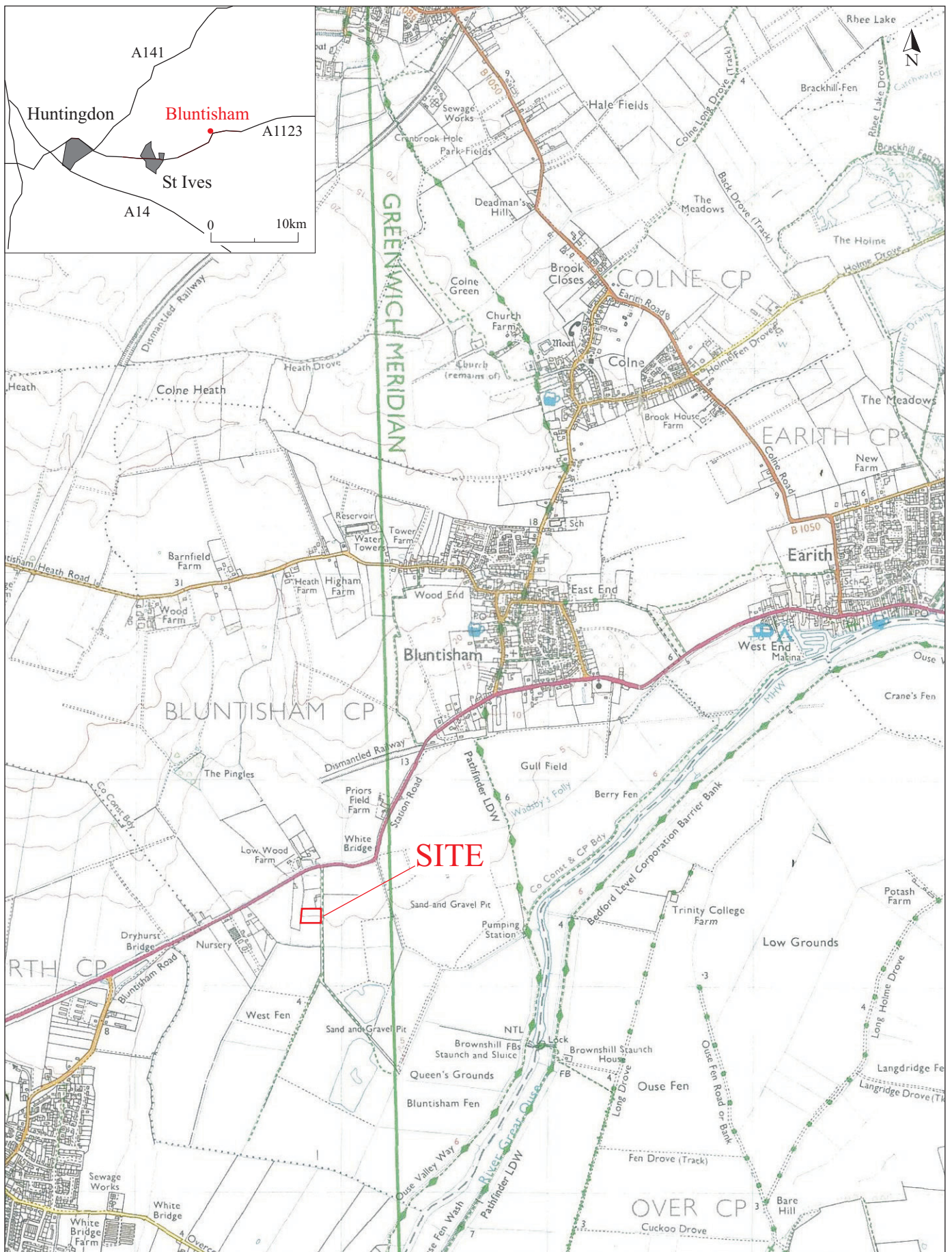




DP 13  
Trench 7, looking north



DP 14  
Trench 7, sample section. Looking west



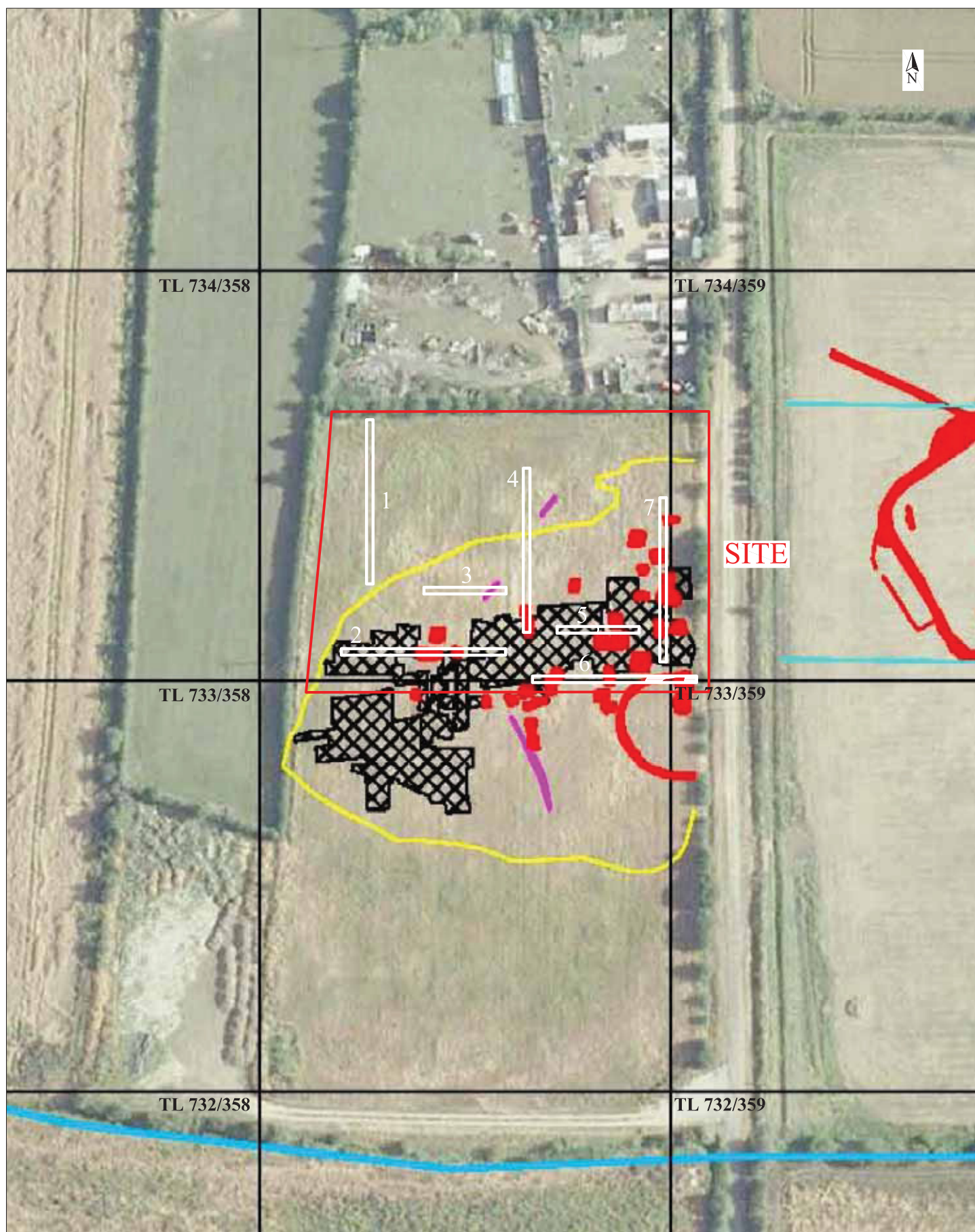
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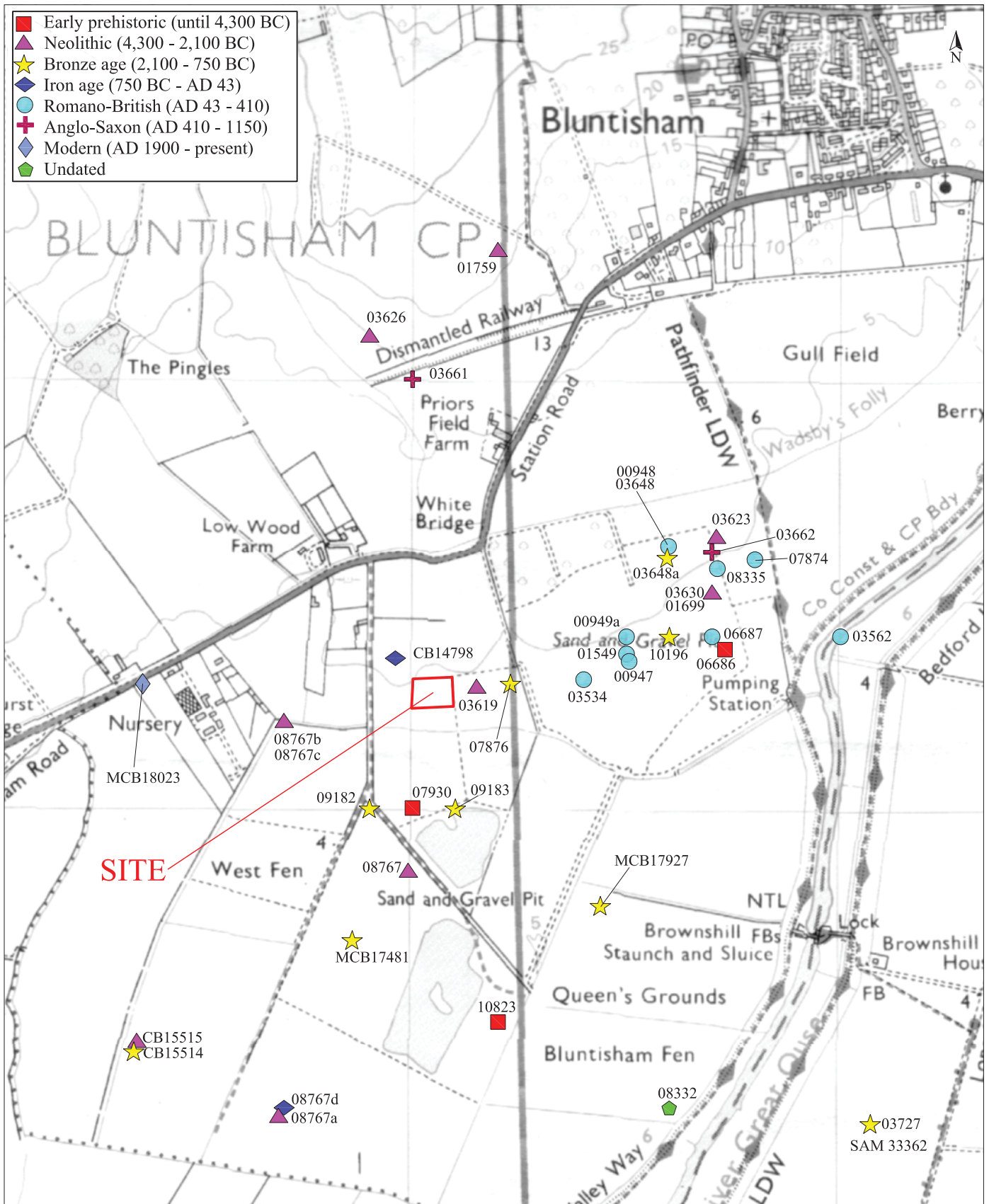
**Fig. 1 Site location plan**

Scale 1:25,000 at A4





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<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:1250 at A4



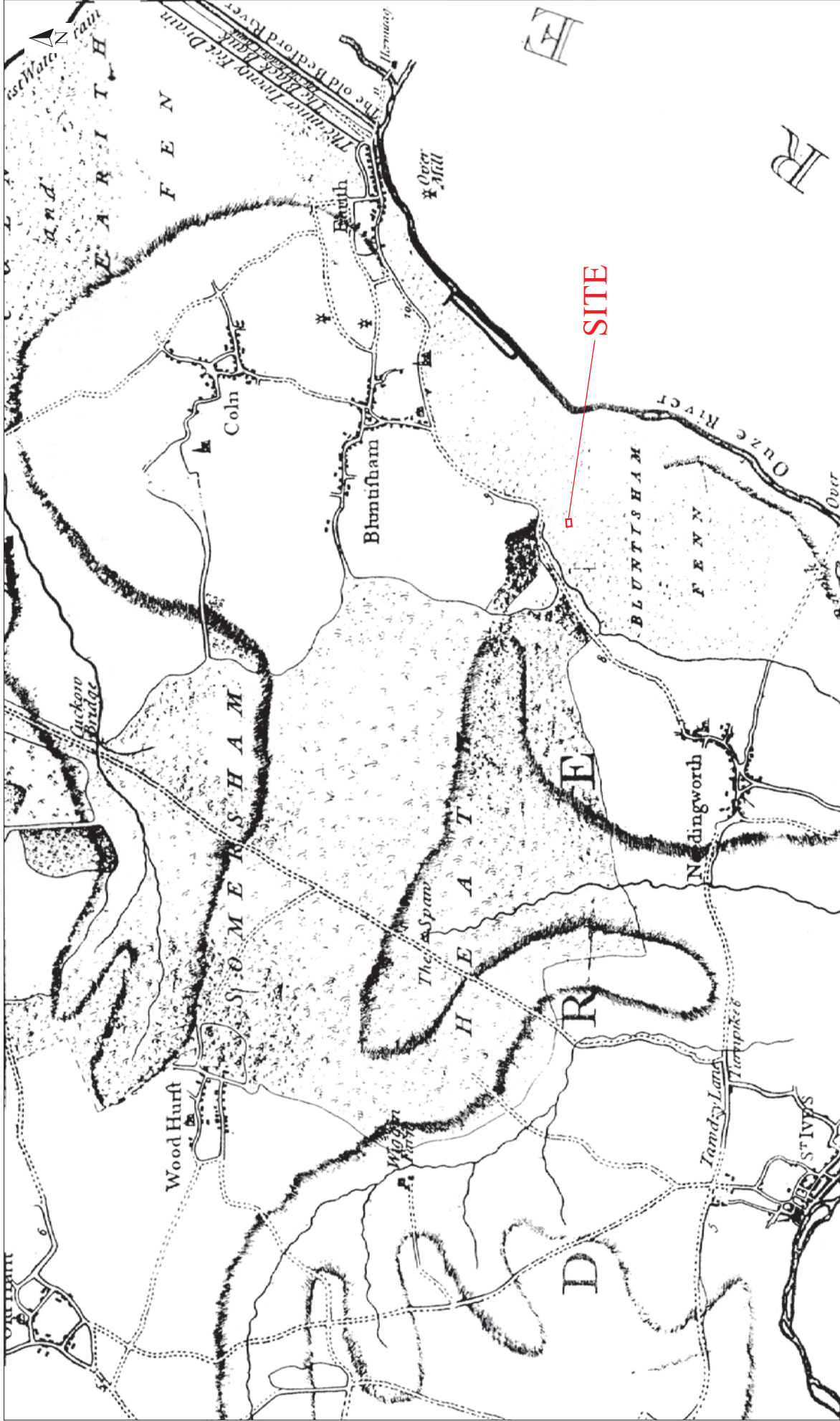
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**Fig. 3 HER Data**

Scale 1:12500 at A4

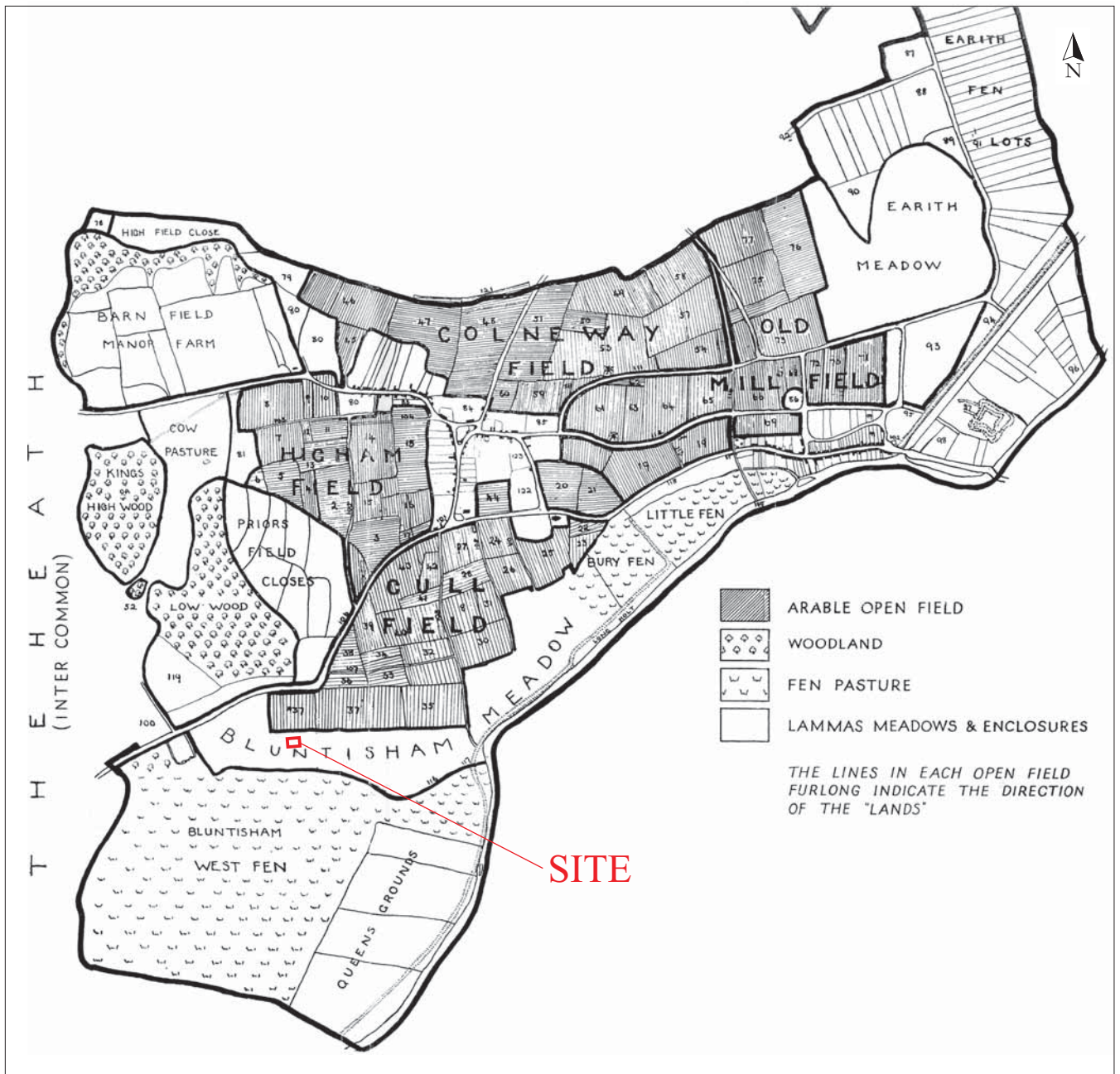




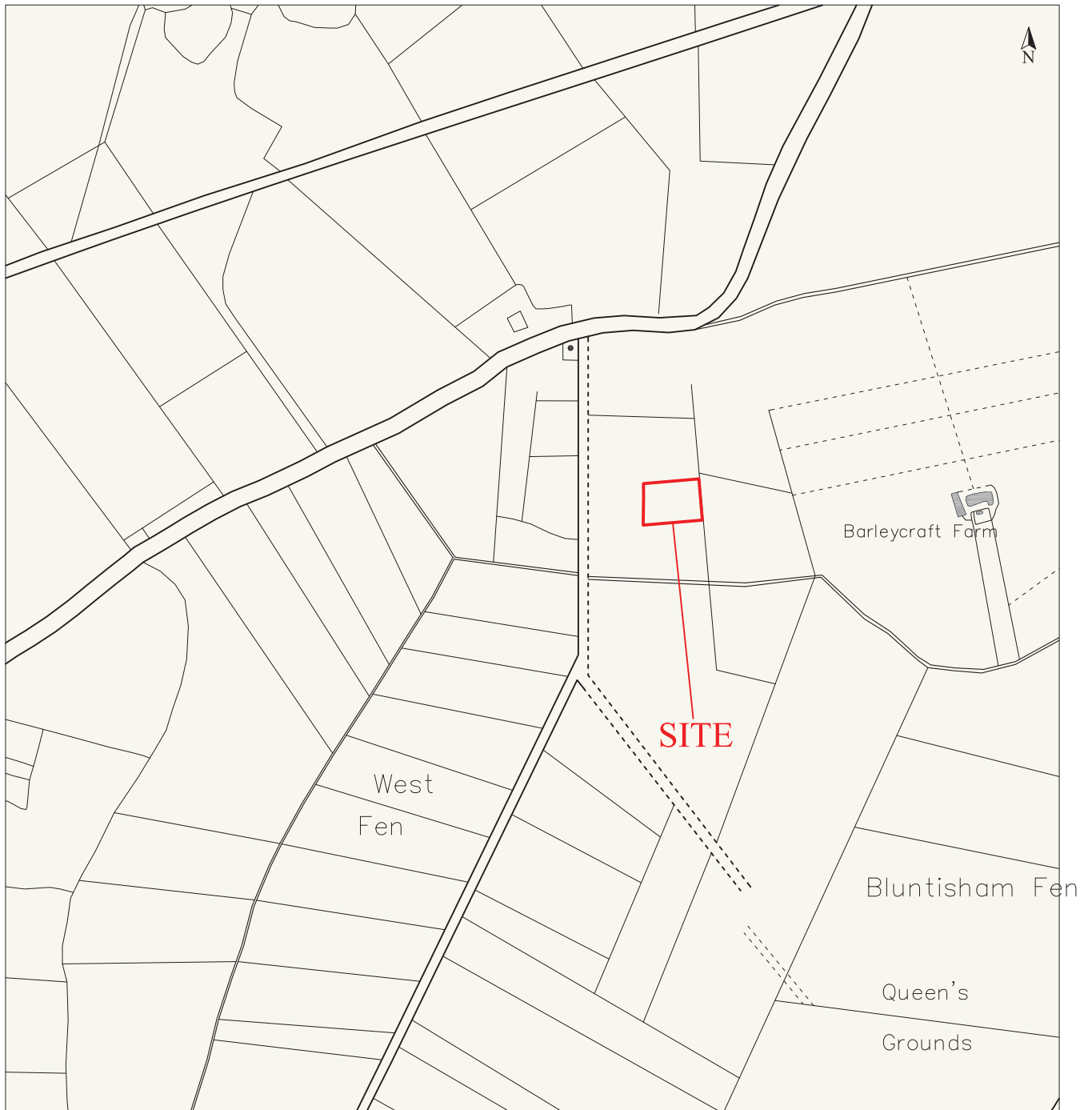
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Fig. 4 Jeffrey's map of Huntingdon, 1768

Not to scale



Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
 Fig. 5 Pre-enclosure land use map c. 1814  
 Not to scale



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Survey 6" to 1 mile map with the  
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**Fig. 6** Reproduced from the 2nd edition OS map, 1902

Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4



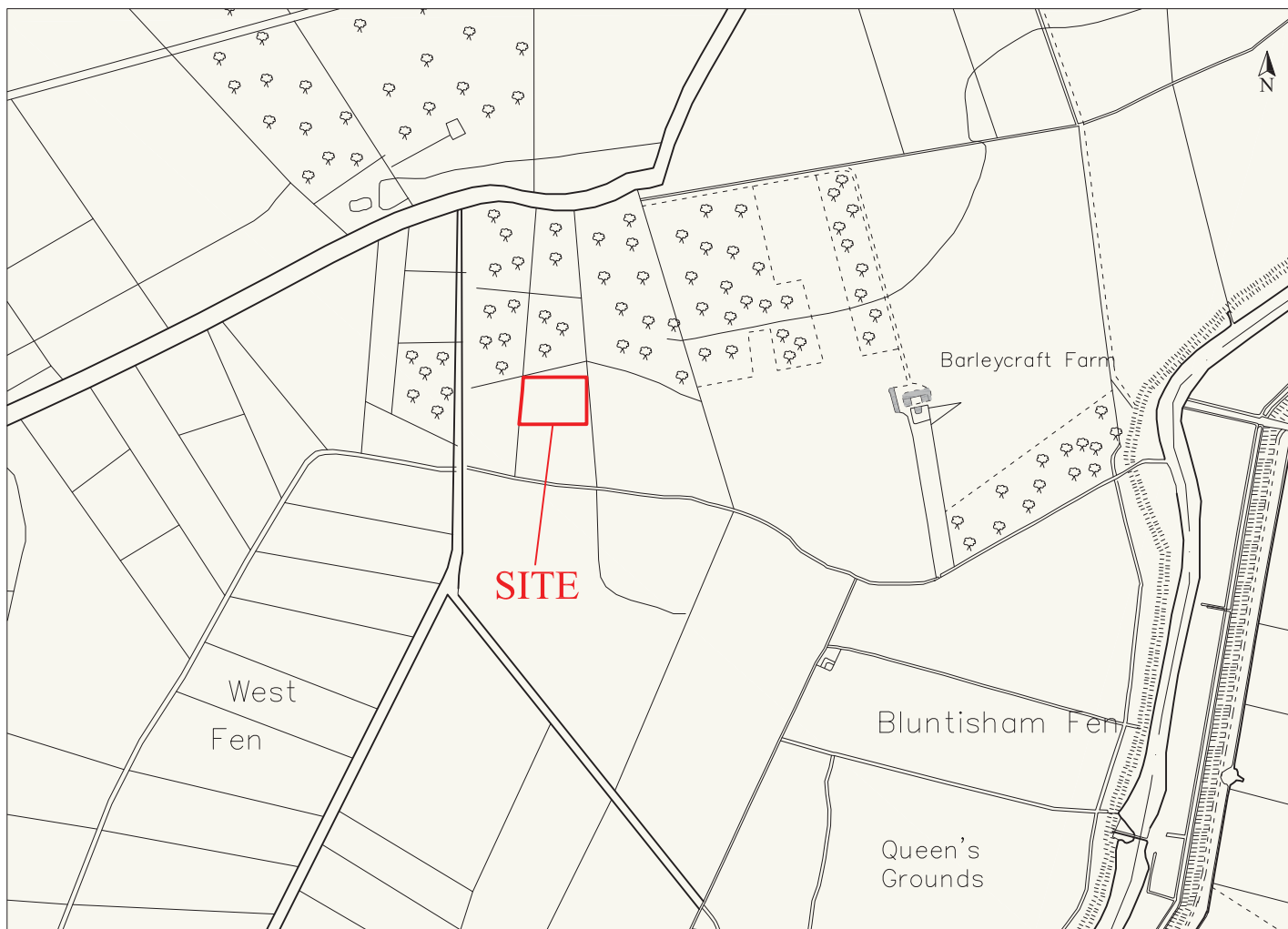
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**Fig. 7** Reproduced from the 3rd edition OS map, 1927

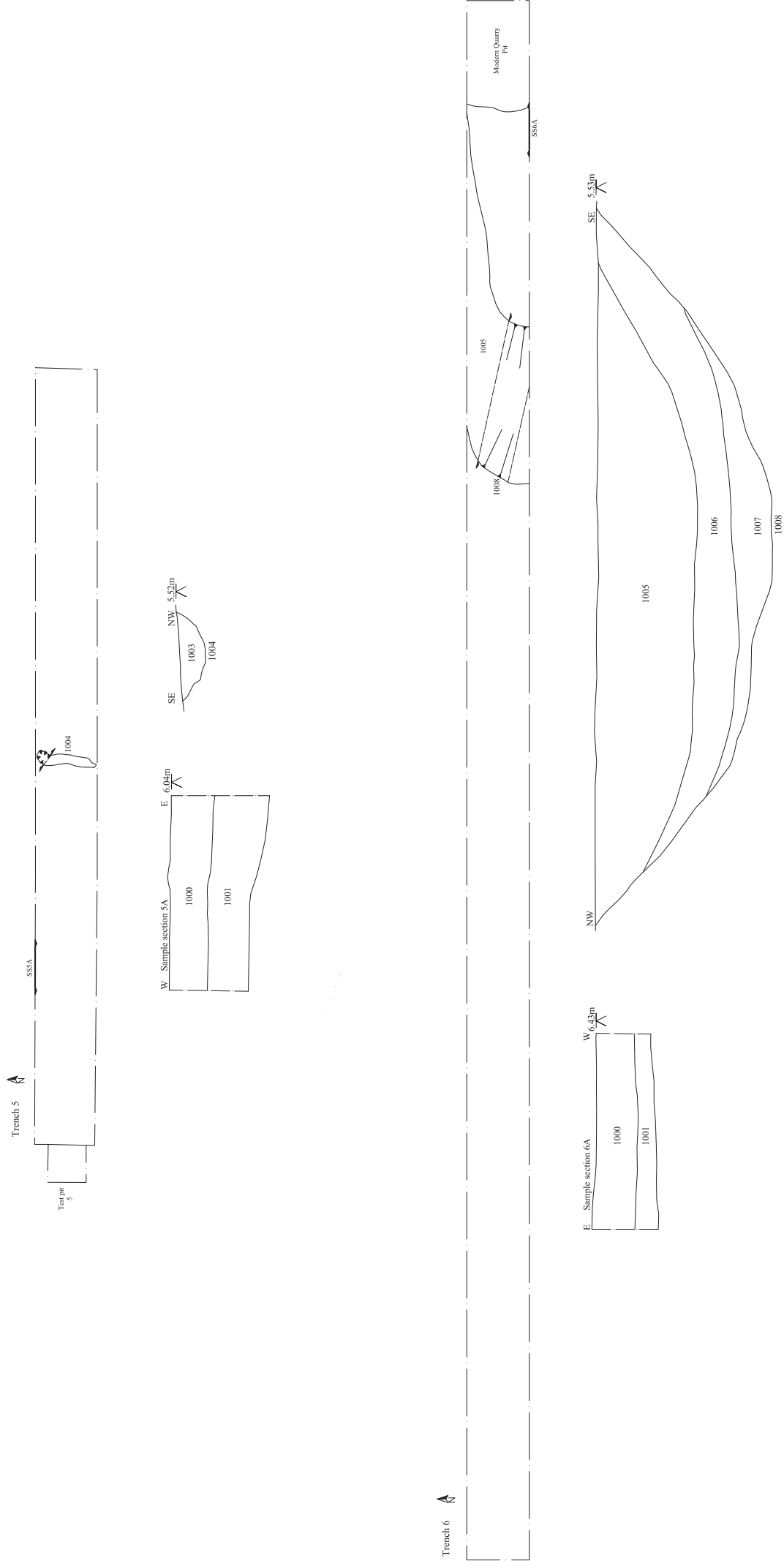
Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4





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<b>Fig. 8</b> Reproduced from the 4th edition OS map, 1950-52
Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4



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**Fig. 9 Trench plans and sections**

Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3