

**36A FOREHILL, ELY
CAMBRIGESHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	36A, Forehill, Ely, Cambridgeshire		
<p>In February 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 36A Forehill, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5439 8020). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two shop units and three one-bedroom flats (CCC CAPCA 08/01033/FUL).</p> <p>The site lies within the medieval historic core of Ely within the boundary of the medieval Benedictine monastery and is 250m from the cathedral (CHER 07322). Excavations carried out along Forehill found remains of 13th century tenement buildings (Sutcliffe 2009, 20-1 & CHER MCB17330 & 11311). Late Saxon and medieval remains have been excavated at The Paddocks 80m to the south-west (CHER 10170). Medieval remains were also excavated 80m to the south at The Old Tesco site (CHER CB15424A), and 150m to the south in Ship Lane, to the rear of Broad Street (MCB 17660).</p> <p>Two layers of garden soil were present within the trench and contained post-medieval (17th to 18th century) pottery; both represent former backyard soils of No.32 Forehill. Below the subsoil and cut into the fen island deposits was an undated gully.</p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	February 2 nd 2011.		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	P4164	Site code	AS1384.
Type of project	An archaeological evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Yard and car park for hairdressing salon.		
Planned development	Two shop units and three one-bedroom flats.		
Main features (+dates)	Undated gully.		
Significant finds(+dates)	None		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Cambridgeshire	East Cambridge	Ely
HER/ SMR for area	Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	c.100m2		
NGR	TL 5439 8020		
Height AOD (max/ min)	9m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Dan McConnell (CAPCA) Cambridgeshire County Council		
Project Officer	Tim Schofield		
Funded by	Mr Steve Johnson		
Full title	36A, Forehill, Ely, Cambridgeshire. An archaeological evaluation		
Authors	Schofield, T., & Thompson, P.		
Report no.	3729		
Date (of report)	February 2011		

36A FOREHILL, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In February 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 36A Forehill, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5439 8020). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two shop units and three one-bedroom flats (CCC CAPCA 08/01033/FUL).

The site lies within the historic Saxon and medieval core of Ely within the boundary of the medieval Benedictine monastery, and is some 250m from the cathedral (CHER 07322). Excavations carried out along Forehill found remains of 13th century tenement buildings (Sutcliffe 2009, 20-1 & CHER MCB17330 & 11311). Late Saxon and medieval remains have been excavated at The Paddocks 80m to the south-west (CHER 10170). Medieval remains were also excavated 80m to the south, at The Old Tesco site (CHER CB15424A), and 150m to the south in Ship Lane, to the rear of Broad Street, in an area known to have been a focus of medieval industry (MCB 17660).

Two layers of soil were present within the trench and contained post-medieval (17th – 18th century) pottery; both represent former backyard soils of No.32 Forehill. Below the subsoil and cut into the fen island deposits was an undated gully.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 36A Forehill, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5439 8020; Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for construction of two shop units and three one-bedroom flats (CCC CAPCA 08/01033/FUL).

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice, Cambridgeshire County Council (CAPCA) (Dan McConnell) and dated 20/11/2009, and a specification compiled by AS (dated 19/11/2010), and approved by CCC.

1.3 The site lies within the north-east bounds of the Benedictine monastery and cathedral and is within 100m of other remains of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date. The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. The evaluation also aimed to identify any areas of previous ground disturbance on the site

Planning policy

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 The historic cathedral city of Ely is located in East Cambridgeshire and lies approximately 28km north of Cambridge to which it is linked by the A10(T). The site is in the south-east sector of the modern city close to the cathedral and is well within the Saxon and medieval core. The site comprises a narrow strip in a residential area on Forehill approximately 250m east of the cathedral. The strip contains buildings at the north end, fronting Forehill, whilst the rear (south) is a concreted car parking area which is accessed by a lane leading off Broad Street.

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 a 250m radius of the site. Entries within an approximate 250m radius of the site mentioned in the text are plotted below (Fig. 3). Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Section 4.2. Significant HER entries from beyond the 250 m 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 2 and reproduced in Figs. 4 to 7

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

4.1.1 Ely is situated on an 'island' of higher ground rising to 25m above the surrounding fen. The latter was prone to periodic flooding. The site is located at 16.6m AOD with the River Great Ouse 250m to the south-west. The urbanisation of Ely means that a soil survey has not been carried out but soils in the vicinity are chiefly of the Hanslope Series comprising chalky till with slowly permeable calcareous and non-calcareous clayey soils (Sutcliffe 2009). The underlying bedrock is thick and impermeable Kimmeridge clay deposited during the Jurassic period some 150 million years ago. In the highest parts of the city the Kimmeridge Clay is capped by water bearing Lower Greensand deposited around 70 million years ago (McConnell et al 2006).

4.2 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 3)

Prehistoric (c. 700,000 BC – AD 43)

4.2.1 There is a dearth of evidence for the early prehistoric periods. By the Neolithic period the fen edge comprised sedge and alder carr with periodic inundations depositing peat and silt, whilst the higher ground remained partially wooded. Occupation on Ely Island is indicated mainly from flint scatters. At Bray's Lane 200m to north-east of the site (CHER 10475), and marks from use of a primitive plough were found along with evidence of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age settlement including pits, ditches and a round house (McConnell 2006, 7).

4.2.2 The Bronze Age is better represented in the archaeological record.

Approximately 500m to the north, Early Bronze Age burials associated with Beaker pottery have been found (CHER 07245), and a battleaxe of Woodhenge type was recovered from Spring Lane (CHER 08043). Bronze Age flints were also excavated at Bray's Lane (CHER 10475A), along with part of a succeeding Iron Age field system (CHER 10475B). An Iron Age or Early Roman ditch was excavated at Walsingham House in the cathedral precinct (CHER MCB16909), and Iron Age pottery has also been recovered from near that locality (CHER CB 15021).

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

4.2.3 During the Roman period there was more intensive occupation of the fenland due to a reduction in the episodes of flooding, and initially small-scale colonisation took place followed by intensification through greater centralised authority. Roman pottery has been recovered from the cathedral precinct approximately 250m to the south-west (CHER CB15021 and 10170B), and an iron spear or sword of Roman date was found in the river adjacent to Ely (CHER CB15662). Several high status objects are also recorded from Ely including bronze statues and an inscribed lamp (CHER 07243, 07309 & 07183), but their precise locations are not recorded. Evidence of Roman activity including pottery and a possible stake was found at The Old Tesco site some 80m from the site (CHER MCB 15424).

Anglo-Saxon (AD 411 – 1065)

4.2.4 In the post-Roman and Saxon periods the sea level rose by at least 2m, and Ely became an important focus for settlement in the 6th and 7th centuries (Sutcliffe 2009, 15). The surrounding area was probably the territory of a tribe or polity called the Gwyre recorded by Bede in the early 8th century. The monastery at Ely was founded in AD 673 by Ethelreda, daughter of Anna king of the East Angles, who became first abbess over a community of 40-50 monks and nuns. Circa 870 the monastery was sacked by the Danes and it was not until one hundred years later that it was re-founded by King Edgar of Wessex as a Benedictine House for monks. It was probably at this time that it was granted Liberty of the Isle of Ely status with its own jurisdiction (Blakeman 1990, 14). Recent excavations indicate Middle Saxon occupation in the city was extensive stretching 2km from West Fen to the Great Ouse and was served by the inhumation cemetery at High Barns Housing Estate (CHER 02074). Middle Saxon occupation sites, including property boundaries, have been excavated at sites such as Jewson's Yard, Broad Street, the cathedral precinct (CHER 07322/CB15021) and at Bray's Lane (CHER 10475B). Late Saxon sites have been identified at St Mary's Lodge, Chapel Street, Chief's Street and West Street. Saxo-Norman pottery and animal bone were found at The Paddocks on the sloping ground east of the cathedral (CHER 10170).

Medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)

4.2.5 The Domesday Survey of 1086 shows that Ely had some 40 villagers, 28 cottagers and 20 slaves and the community practised mixed arable farming, animal husbandry, fishing and viniculture (Sutcliffe 2009, 16). The

current buildings of the Scheduled Ely Abbey and Cathedral of the Holy Trinity were built between 1083 and 1350, with subsequent repairs and modifications (CHER 07322 and SAM 68). It was in 1109 that the town was raised to the rank of bishopric and the abbey church awarded cathedral status. The isolated location also served as a base for the politically disaffected as seen by Hereward the Wake's rebellion in 1070-71. Despite William the Conqueror building a motte and bailey castle there it continued to serve as a rebel base during insurrections in 1139, 1143, 1216 and 1267.

4.2.6 The wealth generated by the ecclesiastical establishment gave prosperity to the city in the medieval period. Trading links were established with other great religious houses such as Bury St Edmunds and ports including Kings Lynn and Yarmouth, whilst much of the wealth also derived from the surrounding fen. In the 12th or 13th centuries the river was diverted bringing it closer to the city and drainage schemes were undertaken on the fenland. By the 13th century Ely had trebled in size and excavation has indicated a shifting pattern of settlement. In the 13th century it was mainly located in the area between the cathedral and river wharves, with the marketplace to the north of the abbey precinct. In the 14th century the urban core had moved to the area immediately north of the cathedral (McConnell 2006, 10).

4.2.7 Sites containing medieval to post-medieval archaeological sequences have been excavated at Forehill and Lisle Lane (CHER 11858), Broad Street (CHER 11950), and north of Market Place (CHER 11924). Excavations carried out along Forehill found 13th century tenement buildings (Sutcliffe 2009, 20-1 & CHER MCB17330), and late medieval pottery and quarrying pits later re-used as rubbish pits have also been excavated (CHER 11311). Two more sites close by are The Old Tesco site approximately 80m to the south where finds datable between the 12th and 13th centuries were made (CHER CB15424A). The second is in Ship Lane, to the rear of Broad Street, approximately 150m to the south, where finds dated between the Late Saxon and 14th centuries include a ditch and pits in an area known to be a focus of medieval industry (MCB 17660). Despite the arrival of plague and other natural disasters, in the 15th century Ely had 520 households of which 262 were tenants of the Bishop and 195 of the Prior (McConnell 2006, 11).

Post-medieval (AD 1540 – 1900)

4.2.8 Archaeological remains dating to the early and late post-medieval periods including pits and soil horizons were found at The Hoist, The Vinefields some 80m to the north (MCB17367). Nineteenth century buildings and soil layers were found at 2 Forehill (CHER 11311B) whilst most medieval sites listed above contained overlying post-medieval remains.

4.3 The site

OS maps of the Development Site

The 1851 map of Ely (Fig. 4) provides good detail of the urban street and

shows little change over that period. The 1885 OS map (Fig. 5) shows that a large building is located on the southern end of the site and is present on the 1900/11 and 1927 OS maps (Fig. 6 & 7). The building has now gone and been replaced by the car parking area and the access road to the car park to the south.

5 METHODOLOGY (TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION)

5.1 A trench (7.00 x 2.00m) was mechanically-excavated using a 0.75ton 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Modern surfaces, garden soils and a subsoil were removed by machine (DP2), thereafter all further investigation was undertaken by hand.

5.2 Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* record sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. The trenches and features were recorded accurately using a Leica 805 Total Station. Soil heaps were scanned for finds and metal detected using a C.Scope CS1220R.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 DP1, 2, 3

<i>Sample Section 1; north-west side, south-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 8.79m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Concrete and Tarmac Car Park. Light white grey and dark black, compact concrete and Tarmac.
0.06 – 0.45m	L1001	Made Ground. Mid orange brown, loose, hardcore rubble and sand. Levelling layer for associated car park surface.
0.45 – 0.62m	L1002	Garden Soil. Dark black brown, compact clay silt.
0.62 – 0.92m	L1003	Garden Soil. Mid grey brown, compact clay silt.
0.92 – 1.28m	L1004	Subsoil. Mid orange brown, compact silt.
0.45m+	L1005	Natural Drift Geology. Mid yellow orange, friable sand and silt with patches of gravel.

Description: Trench 1 contained a gully (F1006). The feature was cut the fen island Natural Drift Geology (L1005). Two garden soils (L1002 and L2003) associated with No.32 Forehill were present.

Gully F1006 (DP3) was linear in plan (2.04 x 0.54 x 0.08m) orientated NW/SW. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1007, was mid orange brown, friable sandy silt. One crumb of pottery, too small to date, was present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The deposit model was consistent throughout the trench (DP2). Uppermost was Concrete and Tarmac Surface L1000. It comprised a light white grey and dark black, compact concrete and Tarmac surface (maximum depth 0.06m).

8.2 Below Concrete and Tarmac Surface L1000 was the associated Made Ground, Levelling Layer L1001 comprising mid orange brown, loose hardcore rubble and sand levelling layer which was 0.39m thick. It contained a residual sherd of post-medieval pottery.

8.3 Garden Soil L1002 was present below L1001. It comprised a dark brown, compact clay silt (0.17m thick). A post-medieval pottery sherd (9g) and clay pipe stem (21g) was present. A second garden soil (L1003) was beneath L1002. It comprised a mid grey brown compact clay silt (0.30m thick). Four sherds of post-medieval pottery (73g) and clay pipe stem fragments (87g) were present. Below L1003 was Subsoil L1004. It comprised mid orange brown compact silt (0.36m thick). Four post-medieval pottery sherds (326g), CBM (155g), animal bone (102g), oyster shell (41g) and clay pipe stem fragments (42g) were present.

8.4 At the base of the stratigraphic sequence was Natural Drift Geology L1005. It comprised mid yellow orange, friable sand and silt with patches of gravel.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site lies within the medieval historic core of Ely within the boundary of the medieval Benedictine monastery and only 250m from the cathedral. Previous excavations carried out along Forehill found the remains of 13th century tenement buildings, and late Saxon and medieval remains at The Paddocks 80m to the south-west. Medieval remains were also excavated 80m to the south at The Old Tesco site and 150m to the south in Ship Lane, to the rear of Broad Street, in an area known to have been a focus of medieval industry.

9.2 Despite the potential for Saxon and medieval remains only an undated gully (F1006) was present in the trial trench. The gully appeared to have been cut into the fen island deposits (L1005) to drain the land towards the south-west.

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Ltd would like to thank Mr Steve Johnson for his co-operation and funding of the evaluation, and for his kind assistance.

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

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr Daniel McConnell of Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice

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McConnell, D., Williamson, I., and Woolhouse, T. 2006 *25 Broad Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Archaeological Solutions unpublished report no. 1991

Sutcliffe, T. 2009 *Proposed Supermarket, Lisle Lane, Ely, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Impact Assessment*. Archaeological Solutions unpublished report no. 3251

APPENDIX 1 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
1851	Map of Ely (C85/1380-1430 pt)	-	CRO
1885	First edition OS (XXVI.14)	1:2,500	CRO
1900/11	OS (XXVI.14)	1:1250	CRO
1927	OS (XXVI.14)	1:2,500	CRO

Appendix 2 FINDS CONCORDANCE

AS 1384: 36A Forehill, Ely, Cambs Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
	1001	Made Ground	Late 17th - 18th century.	(1) 176g			
	1002	Garden Soil	Late 17th - 18th century.	(1) 9g			C.Pipe 21g
	1003	Garden Soil	Late 17th - 18th century.	(4) 73g			C.Pipe 87g
	1004	Subsoil	Late 17th - 18th century.	(4) 326g	155	102	Shell 41g C.Pipe 42g

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

DP1



Post-excavation shot, Trench 1,
looking north-east.

DP2



Sample section, Trench 1,
looking north-west.

DP3

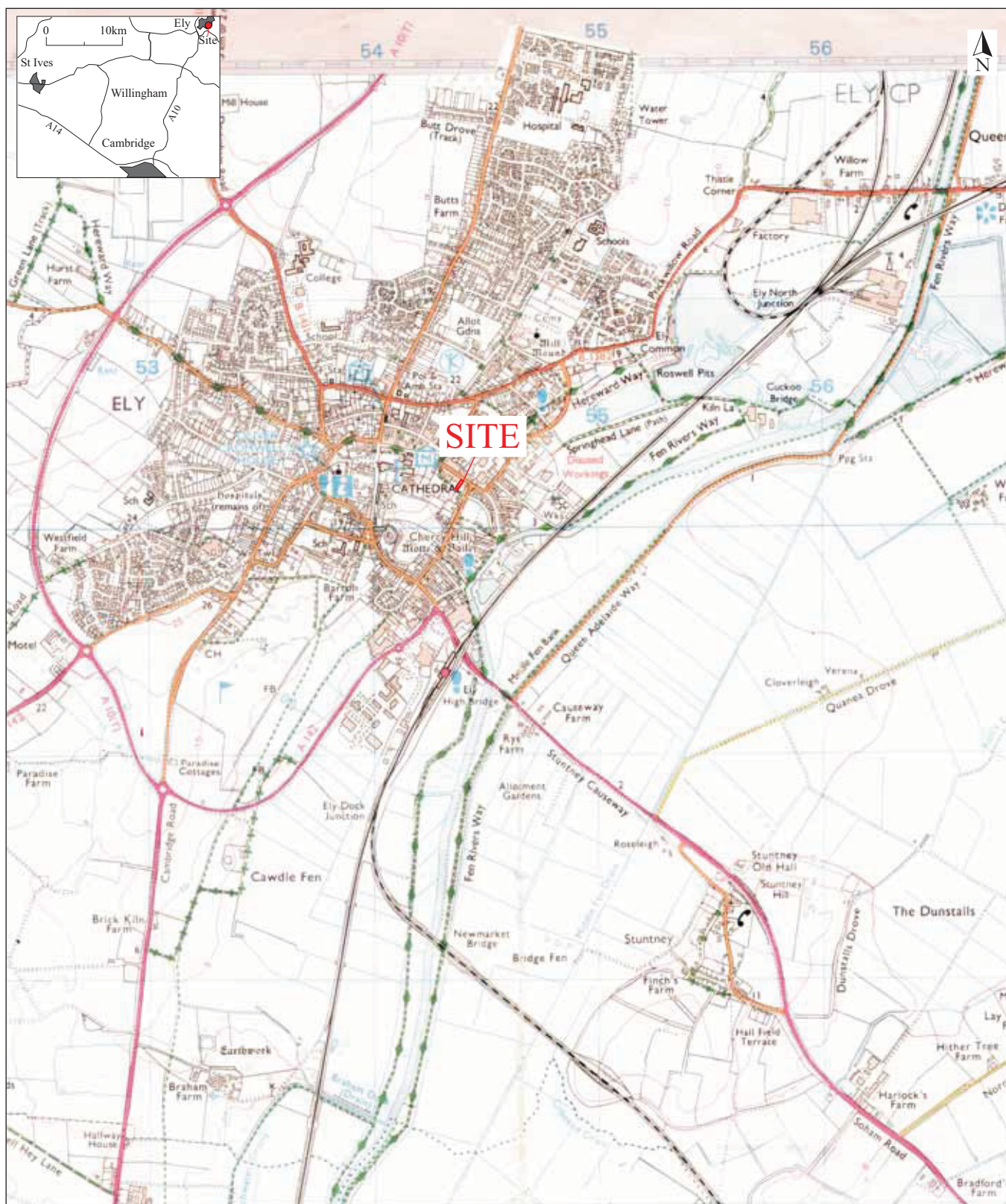


Post-excavation shot, Gully
F1006, looking south-east.

DP4

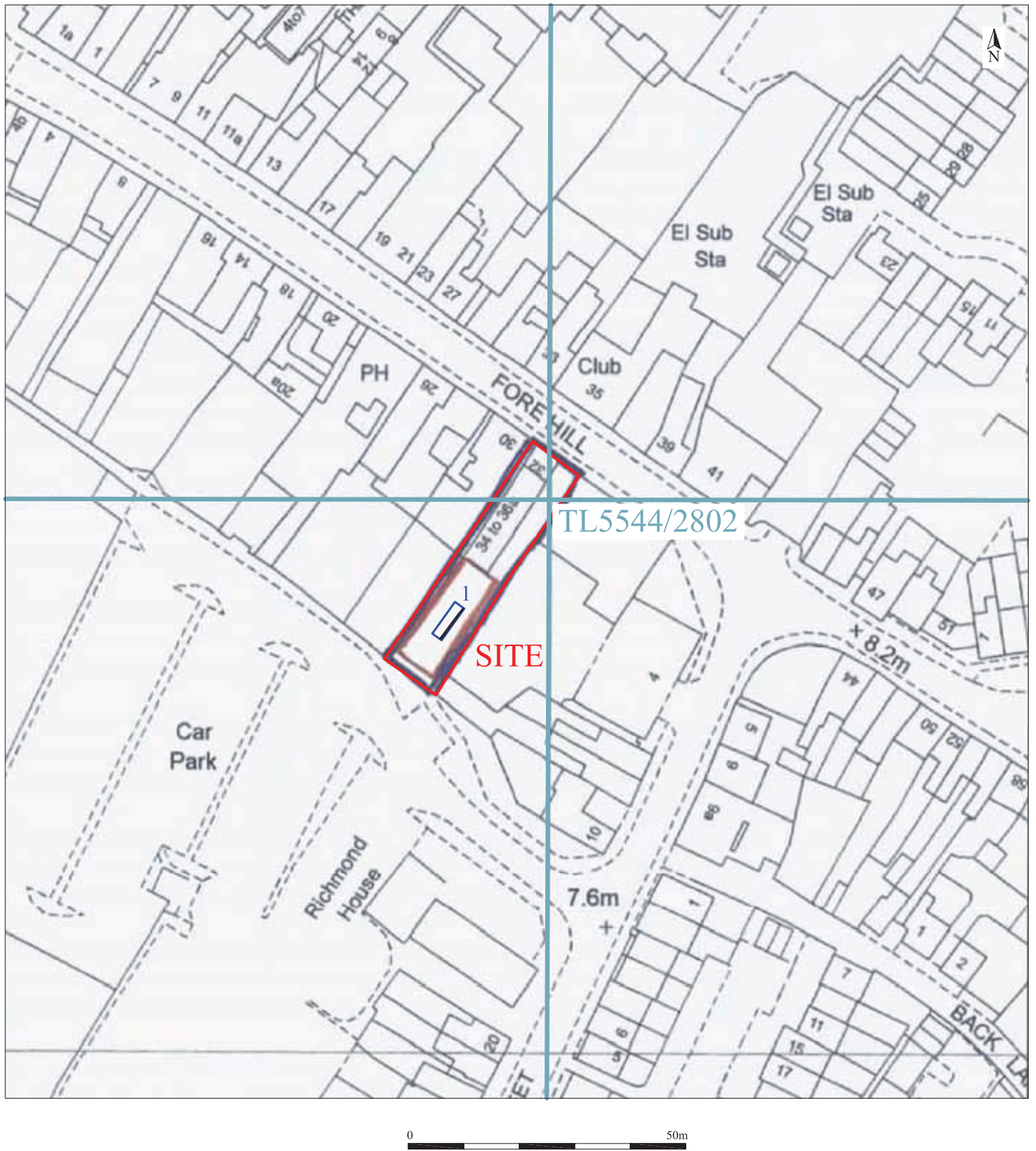


General site shot, Trench 1,
looking south-west.



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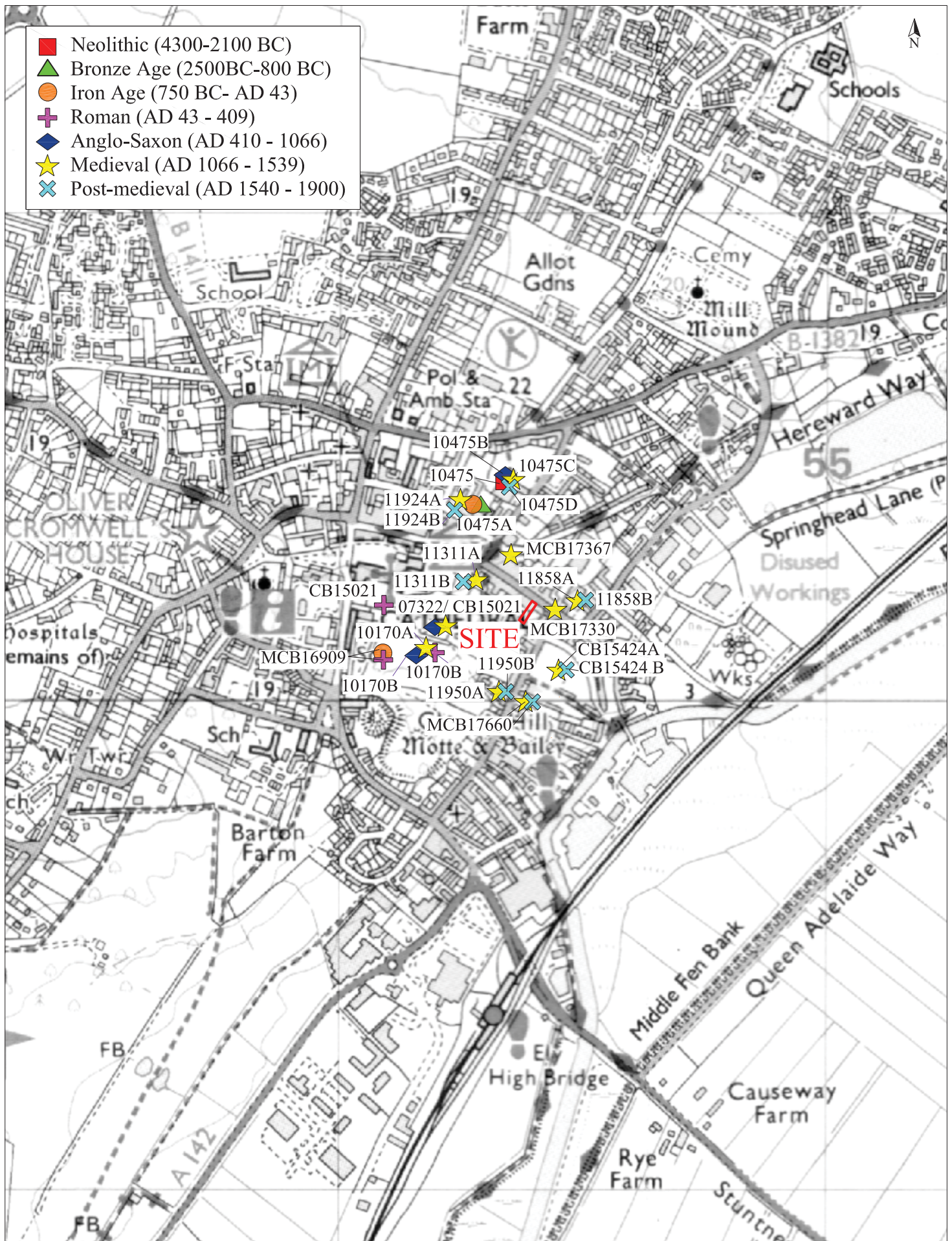
Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



Archaeological Solutions Ltd

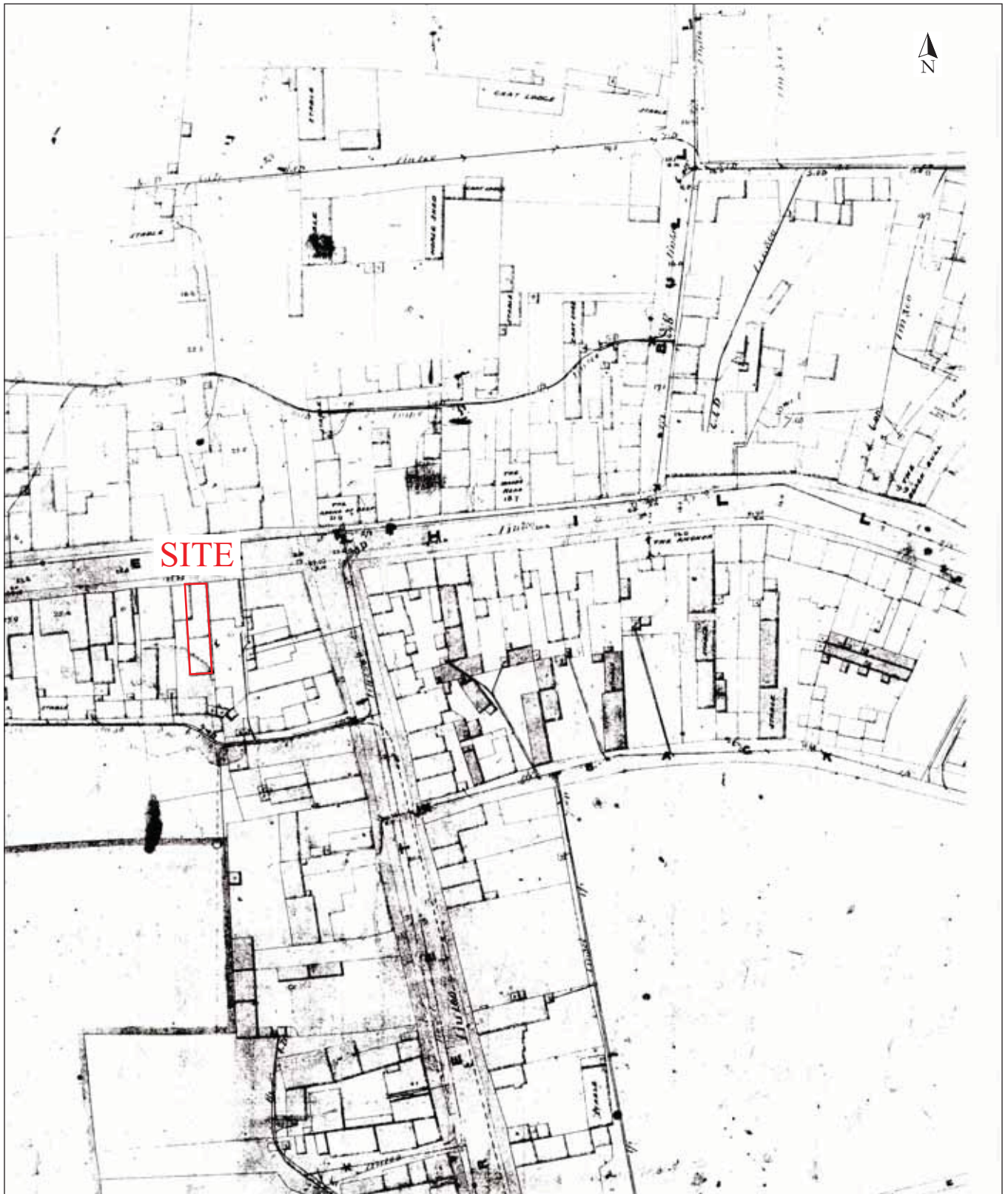
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:1000 at A4

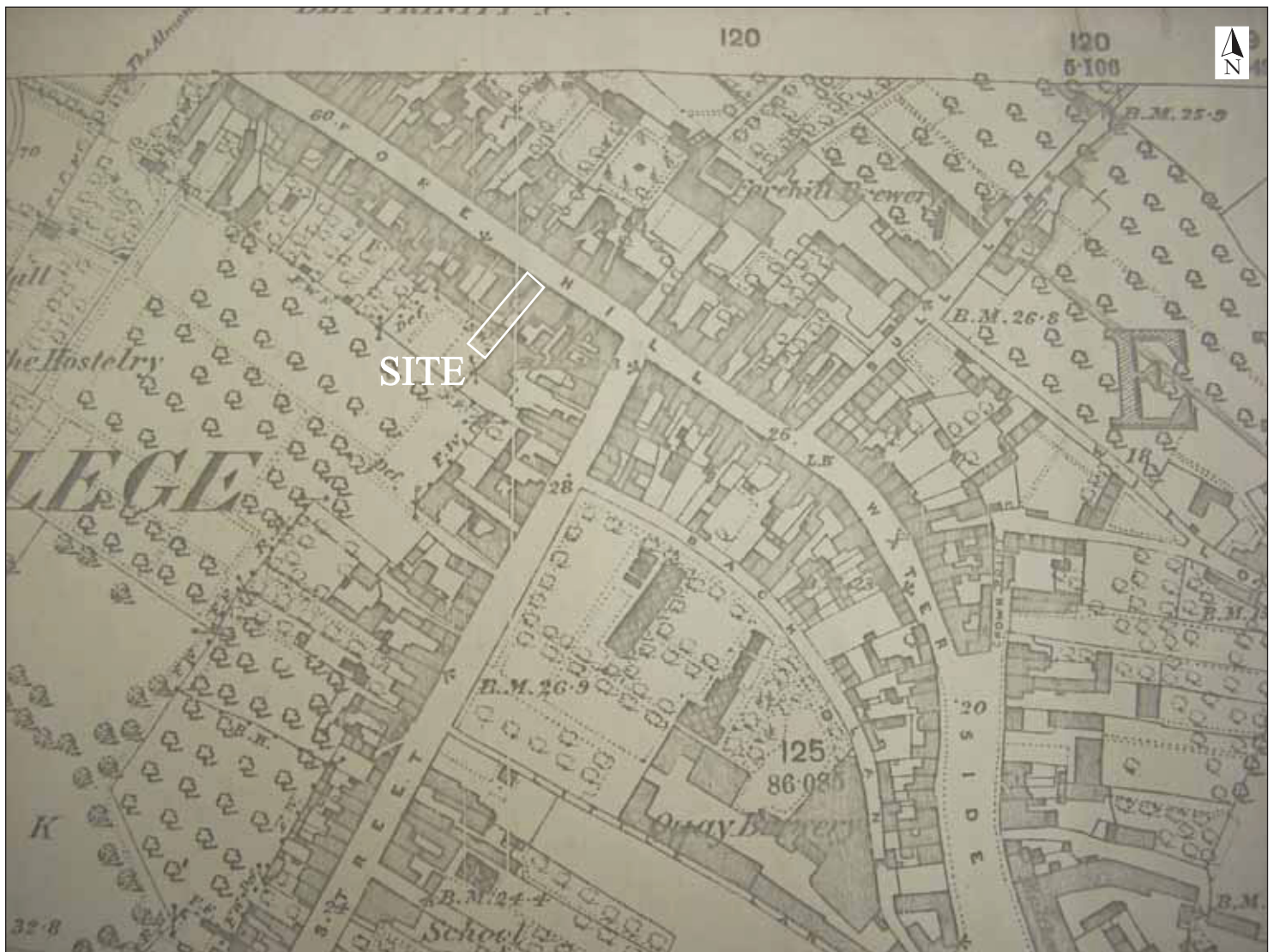


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Fig. 3 HER Data
 Scale 1:10,000 at A4

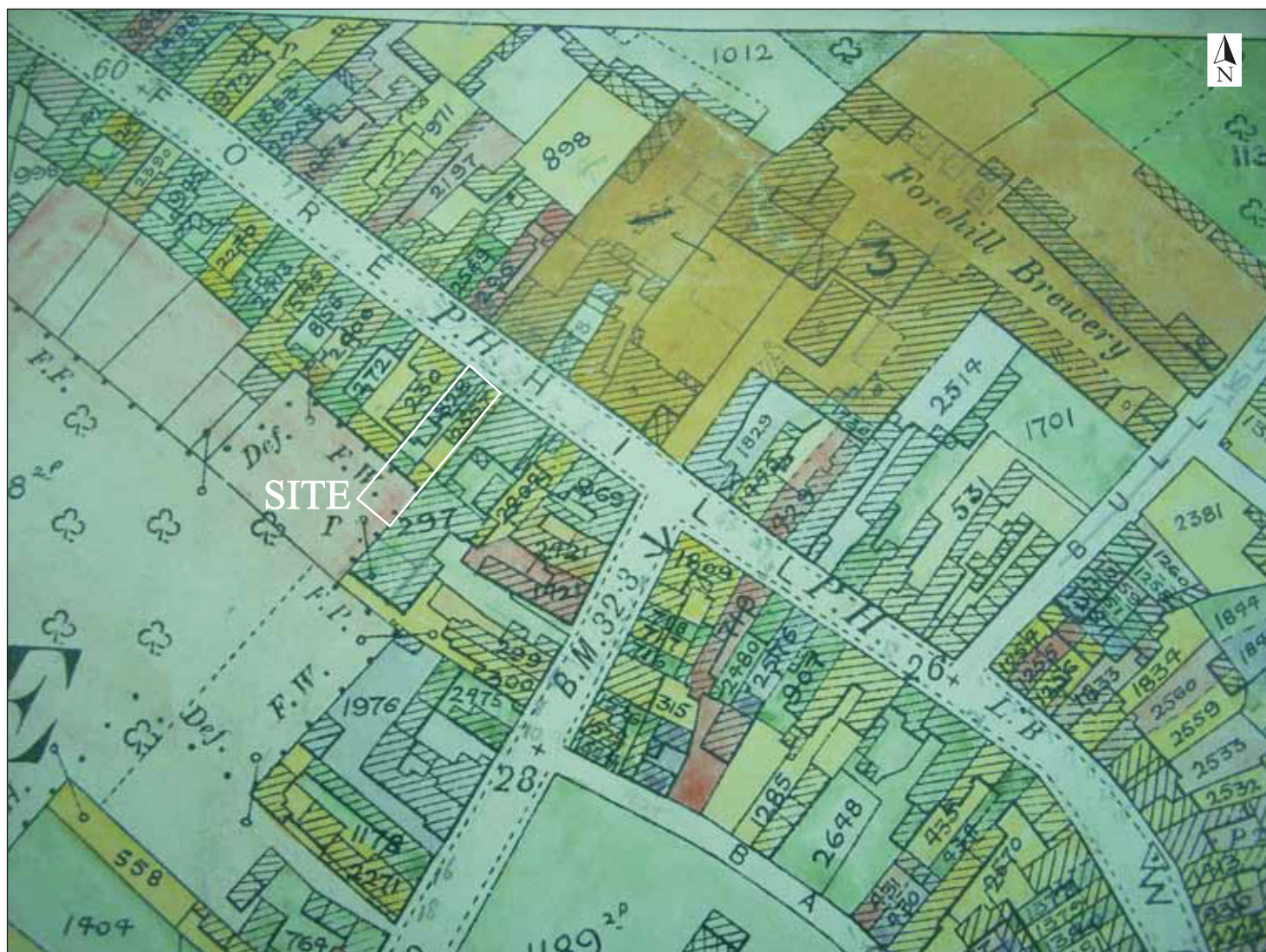


<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 4 1851 Map of Ely
Not to scale



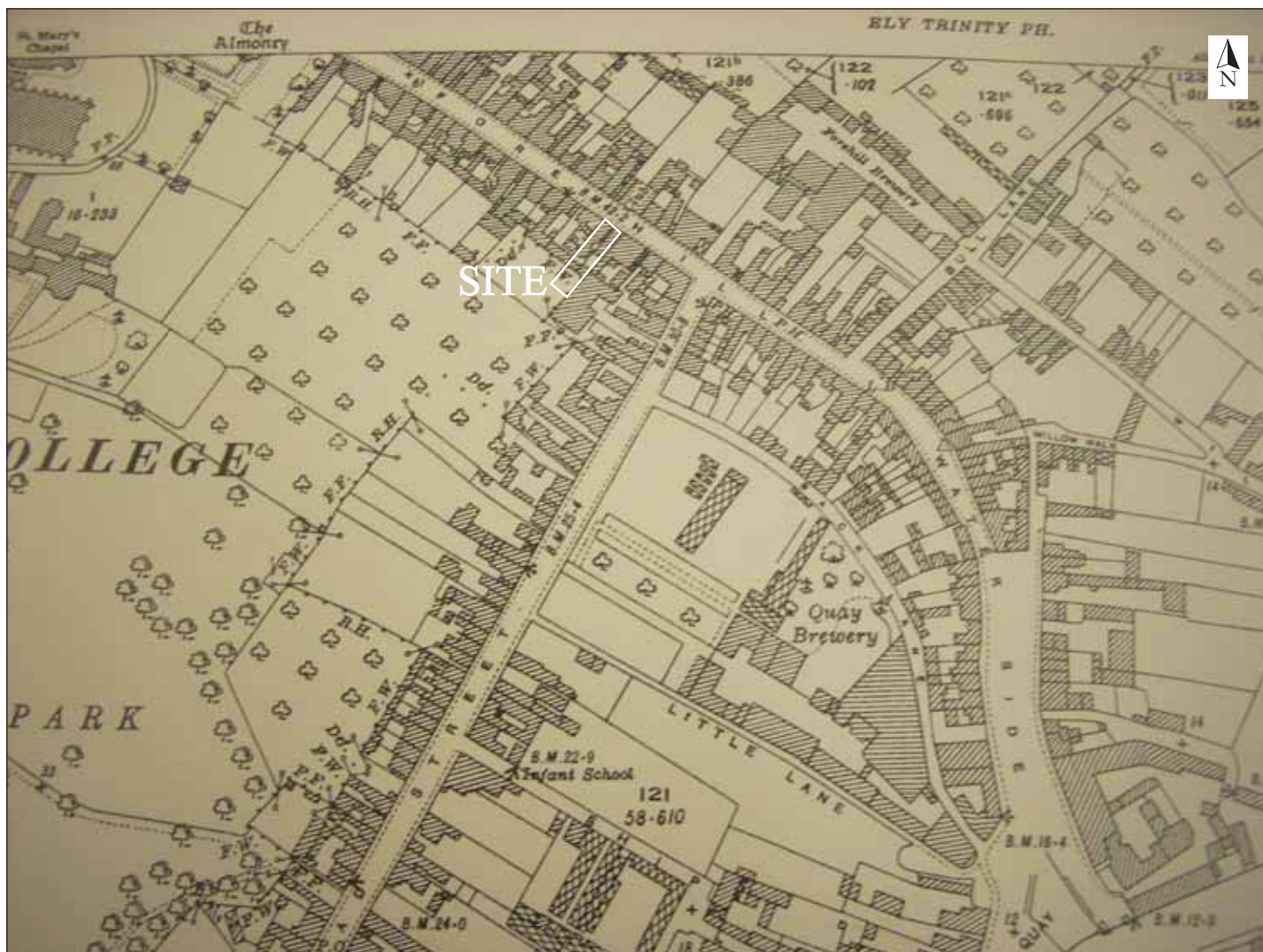
Reproduced from the 1885 Ordnance Survey 25' to 1 mile map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 5 First edition OS map 1885
Not to scale



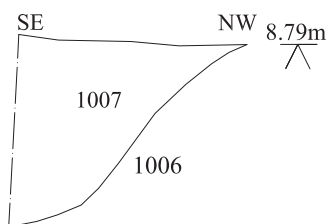
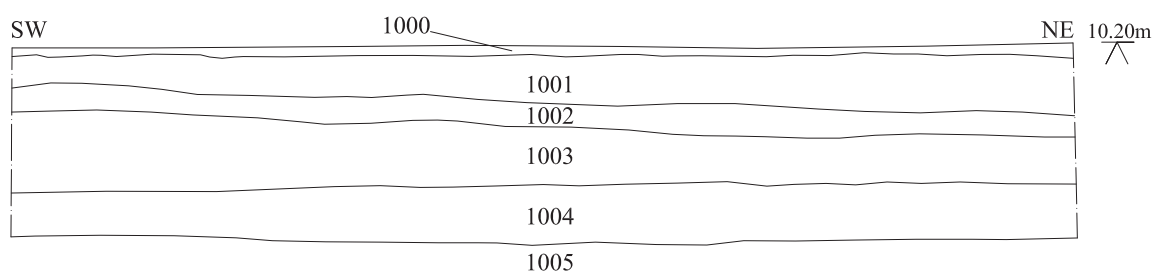
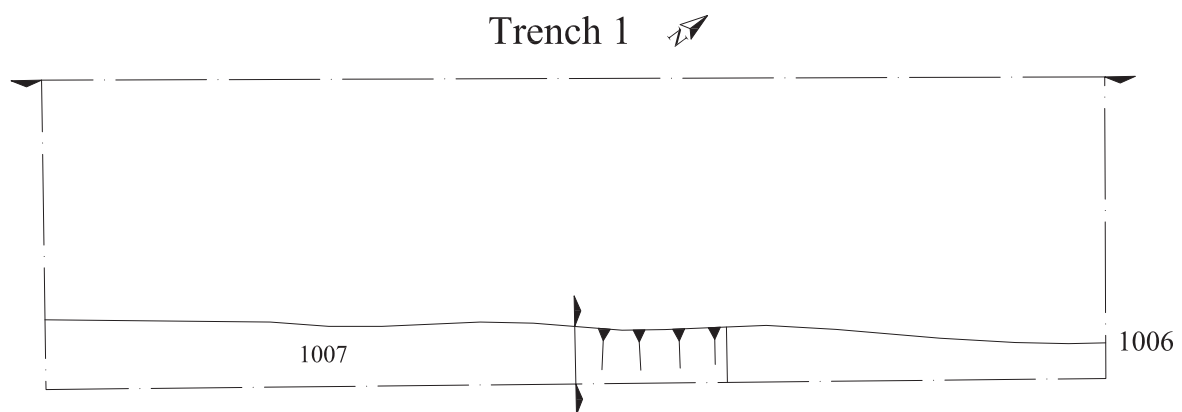
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Fig. 6 OS map 1900/11
Not to scale



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Fig. 7 OS map 1927
Not to scale



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Fig. 8 Trench plans and sections
Scale 1:100 and 1:50 at A4