

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

## ELLIOT ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER NO. ECB 3894

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NGR: TL 4045 9715	Report No: 4207
District: Fenland	Site Code: AS 1544
Approved: C Halpin MfA	Project No: 5087
Signed:	Date: November 2012

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<b>OASIS SUMMARY SHEET</b>			
Project name	<i>Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
<p><i>In November 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire (TL 4045 9715). The evaluation was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development and ancillary works.</i></p> <p><i>The majority of features identified during the evaluation were present on the western side of the site (Trs. 1- 4). These features, principally pits and ditches, were post-medieval or early modern. The ditches broadly aligned N/S (F1003 (Tr.1), F1028 (Tr.2), F1020 (Tr.7) and F1030 (Tr.11)) correlate with the boundary ditches recorded on the early maps. Discrete Early Bronze Age features (a pit and post holes) were recorded along the length of Trench 5, and an Early Bronze Age pottery sherd was found in Ditch F1010 (Tr.1). Two residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) pottery sherds were found in Ditch F1020 (Tr.7) and Ditch F1028 (Tr.2).</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>November 2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>No</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>4871</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1544</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Vacant</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Pit, post holes</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Early Bronze Age pottery, two residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> C) sherds; residual medieval (14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> C) brick fragment</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>Fenland</i>	<i>March</i>
HER for area	<i>Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.1.25ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 4045 9715</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.2.6m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Crestel Partnerships</i>		
Full title	<i>Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Lichtenstein, L. and Thompson, P.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4207</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>November 2012</i>		

## **ELLIOT ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

### **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

*In November 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire (TL 4045 9715). The evaluation was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development and ancillary works.*

*The site is situated on the western edge of March, on the edge of the former fenland 'island' occupied by March. It lies at c.2.6m AOD on tidal flat deposits. The site occupies an area of c.1.25ha, on the southern side of Elliot Road and north of West End, which fronts the Old Course of the river Nene. It was formerly piggeries and open land, with a number of open drainage ditches traversing the site from north to south.*

*The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, as shown by its location on the former fen edge, which would have been attractive to early occupation and exploitation. Prehistoric activity in the area is evidenced by finds of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER 05210, 08455).*

*Documentary sources suggest that the site was used for grazing livestock in medieval and post-medieval times. The historic maps shows two buildings on the west side of the site, and two buildings bordering the east side, all of which are now gone.*

*The majority of features identified during the evaluation were present on the western side of the site (Trs. 1- 4). These features, principally pits and ditches, were post-medieval or early modern. The ditches broadly aligned N/S (F1003 (Tr.1), F1028 (Tr.2), F1020 (Tr.7) and F1030 (Tr.11)) correlate with the boundary ditches recorded on the early maps (Figs.3 and 4). Discrete Early Bronze Age features (a pit and post holes) were recorded along the length of Trench 5, and an Early Bronze Age pottery sherd was found in Ditch F1010 (Tr.1). Two residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) pottery sherds were found in Ditch F1020 (Tr.7) and Ditch F1028 (Tr.2).*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In November 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Elliot Road, March, Cambridgeshire (TL 4045 9715; Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development and ancillary works. It was required by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic

Environment Team, as advisors to the Local Planning Authority, as a requirement of planning permission.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) (23 October dated 2012), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 30 October 2012) and approved by CCC HET. The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney (2003) 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*, and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine, as far as was possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In addition it was hoped to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

#### *Planning policy context*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF 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. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 – 2)**

2.1 March is a large town and parish situated within the largely flat, low-lying Cambridgeshire fenland. The town is approximately 20km east of Peterborough, 10km north of Chatteris and 12km south of Wisbech. March is predominantly surrounded by the fens, with major field drainage and irrigation systems in place. There are few other settlements in the immediate area, apart from dispersed farms.

2.2 The site is an irregular shaped block of land of 1.25ha located to the northwest of the town's medieval core. It is situated between Elliot Road to the north, the buildings of Elliot Lodge to the east, Fisherman's Drive to the west, with buildings and gardens to the south with the River Nene beyond. It largely comprises waste ground covered in a dense mixture of grass, trees and bushes which is cut by large north-south running open drains.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 March is located on an 'island' rising above the Cambridgeshire fenland which was formed from Pleistocene Tills overlying Kimmeridge Clay. The site lies at approximately 2.6m AOD on tidal flat deposits just to the north of river Nene.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Prehistoric <500,000 BC – AD 43*

4.1 The site is located on the fen edge which was a location favourable to prehistoric occupation. A Palaeolithic handaxe (CHER 870031) and two other unprovenanced contemporary handaxes have been found in the general area. A Mesolithic flint scatter was identified some 250m south of the site, across the Nene (CHER 8455). A larger Mesolithic scatter was recovered 450-500m to the south comprising 336 blades and flakes, 68 cores, 8 gravels and 27 other flints (CHER 5210). A probable Neolithic stone shaft-hole axe was also found around 500m south-west of the site (CHER 5904). Bronze Age flint scatters and barrow monuments are known along the fringes of the Cambridgeshire fens and on the gravel fen islands, suggesting settlement along the fen edges at this time (Hogan and Hallybone 2007). At the Northern Council Offices, in the north of March, excavations have revealed a number of features dating between the late Bronze Age and middle Iron Age (CHER CB15266).

### *Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)*

4.2 March is located just to the south of the Fen Causeway, a Roman Road running between Denver in Norfolk, to near Peterborough, and Roman settlements have been found in the area at a time when the fen became quite



extensively exploited. Several Romano-British sites have been identified in the local area including a salt production site at Cedar's Close to the north (ECB 1394 and 2605), and occupation evidence south of the Nene comprising a stone platform and gravel track, coins, pottery and oyster shell (CHER 05927).

#### *Anglo-Saxon (AD 411 – 1065)*

4.3 The town probably has its origins as a ford over the old river Nene on the Ely to Wisbech road and the name *Merche* or *mearc* means place by the boundary. The only find of Anglo-Saxon date was a cruciform brooch from a back garden 1 km to the south (CHER 03781a). Circa AD1000 March was given to the monastery of Ely by Oswy and Ceolfleda when their son Aelfwin was admitted as a monk.

#### *Medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)*

4.4 In 1086 the Berewick of March contained 12 villeins each with 12 acres of land as part of Doddington manor. The Abbot of Bury St Edmunds also held 16 acres, land for half a plough, 3 bordars and woodland for 4 pigs. The Abbot of Ely held the soke (jurisdiction). The medieval town is thought to have been mainly located around the church at Town End. During the medieval period the river Nene was diverted through March to improve drainage and the village became a port, medieval occupation evidence has been identified on either side of the river. An evaluation at Grays Lane revealed a medieval roadside drainage ditch which went out of use by the 16<sup>th</sup> century (CHER CB15693), and two more late medieval or post-medieval ditches representing drains and/or boundaries were found further north (CHER MCB15694).

#### *Post-medieval to modern (AD 1540+)*

4.5 During the reign of Elizabeth I the town was a minor port. The 1639-40 ship money tax rate of £35 and 5 shillings indicates that March was bigger than Doddington, but smaller than Downham and Littleport. During the English Civil War, March was held by Parliament and a sconce remains of the fortifications, 1 km to the south, which is designated a Scheduled Monument (CHER 01997). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, overpopulation led to overstocking of the commons and in 1661 the lord of the manor agreed with his 165 March tenants to set aside c.4,500 acres as common and cow pasture. This area included Town End and Burrow Moor and so may also have included the site. Between May and September each tenant was allowed to graze 2 horses and either 4 cows or 16 sheep, and double that amount for the rest of the year. In 1670 a market with two annual fairs was granted. The market lapsed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and did not take off again until c.1898. March saw growth in the town with the arrival of the railway in 1847 (Thompson 2010).

4.6 The closest HER point to the site is a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, not listed, at 119 West End Road, some 50m or so to the south (CHER MCB17817). Some



undated features were identified during an archaeological evaluation at Yarrows Close some 250m to the north-east, although a residual piece of prehistoric flint was recovered (MCB18086).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Eleven trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were approved by CCC HET.

5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a 180° back acting mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide 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.

## 6 RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 7)

<i>Sample section: north end, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.79m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.39m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark, greyish black, cohesive, sandy silt with sparse flint nodules
0.39 – 0.64m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid yellowish brown, cohesive, sandy clayey silt with sparse flint nodules.
0.64m+	L1002	Natural. Mid, brownish orange, sandy clay with sparse flint nodules and pebbles.

<i>Sample section: south end, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.88m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 – 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.42m+	L1002	Natural. As above.

*Description: Trench 1 contained Ditches F1003 and F1010. F1003 was re-cut (F1006). Two pits, F1008 and F1012, were also recorded. All the features were post-medieval/early modern (late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century) except Ditch F1010 which contained an Early Bronze Age sherd.*

Ditch F1003 was a broadly linear (33m+ x 1.43m x 0.56m), orientated NNW/SSE. It had moderately steep sides and a flattish base. It contained two fills. The

basal fill, L1004, was a dark brown, firm sandy clay. It contained post-medieval/early modern (late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (110g), CBM (8473g), animal bone (6g). The upper fill, L1005, was a dark brown grey, friable, sandy clay. It contained post-medieval/early modern (late 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (814g), CBM (1150g) and animal bone (95g)

F1006 was a re-cut of Ditch F1003 but narrower. It was linear in plan (33m+ x 0.80 x 0.25m), orientated NNW/SSE. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1007, a mid orange yellow, firm, clay with occasional flints. It contained early modern (19<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (44g) and CBM (336g). F1006 was cut by Pit F1008.

Pit F1008 was oval in plan (0.84m x 0.34 x 0.10m). It had shallow sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1009, a mid orange yellow, firm, clay with occasional flints. It contained no finds. Pit F1008 cut post-medieval/early modern Ditch F1003.

Ditch F1010 was linear, slightly curving (1.6m+ x 1m x 0.30m), orientated NE/SW. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1011, was a dark brown grey, firm, clay. It contained Early Bronze Age pottery (1g).

Pit F1012 was oval in plan (1m x 0.60 x 0.17m). It had moderately sloping sides and an irregular flattish base. Its fill, L1013, a mid grey brown, moderately firm, clay with moderate small – medium sized sub angular flints. It contained post-medieval/early modern (18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (10g) and animal bone (1724g).

## Trench 2 (Figs. 2 & 7)

<i>Sample section: E/W length, south facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.96m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.22 – 0.33m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.33m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

<i>Sample section: N/S length, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.85m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.22 – 0.30m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.30m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 2 contained post-medieval Ditch F1028. It contained a residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) pottery sherd. Modern walls, pits and post holes were recorded in plan.*

Ditch F1028 was linear (1.6m+ x 1.30m x 0.40m), orientated N/S. It had irregular sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1029, was a mid grey brown, firm, silty clay. It contained a residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) pottery sherd (44g) and post-medieval CBM (2193g). The feature also contained a medieval (14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) brick fragment.

### Trench 3 (Fig. 23)

<i>Sample section: east end, north facing</i> 0.00 = 2.92m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.27 – 0.40m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.40m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1 with moderate flint nodules.

*Description: Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds. Modern pipes traversed the trench.*

### Trench 4 (Figs. 2 & 7)

<i>Sample section: north end, east facing</i> 0.00 = 2.76m AOD		
0.00 – 0.23m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.23 – 0.40m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.40m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 4 contained post-medieval Pit F1026. A modern pit and tree hollow were recorded in plan..*

Pit F1026 was oval in plan (0.80m x 0.66 x 0.22m). It had gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1027, was a mid grey brown, friable, sandy clay with occasional small – medium sub angular flints. It contained post-medieval (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (40g)

### Trench 5 (Figs. 2 & 8)

<i>Sample section: north end, west facing</i> 0.00 = 2.75m AOD		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.35 – 0.52m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.52m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

<i>Sample section: south end, west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.71m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.21 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.43m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 5 contained three post holes (F1014, F1018 and F1024) and Pit F1016. Modern services traversed the trench.*

Post Hole F1014 was oval in plan (0.35m x 0.29 x 0.17m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1015, a dark grey brown, moderately firm, sandy clay with occasional small – medium sized sub rounded flints. It contained Early Bronze Age pottery (40g) and animal bone (38g).

Pit F1016 was oval in plan (0.40m x 0.13 x 0.11m). It had gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1017, was a mid orange grey, firm, clay with occasional sub rounded flints. It contained Early Bronze Age pottery (57g).

Post Hole F1018 was subcircular in plan (0.30m x 0.25 x 0.12m). It had steep almost vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1019, was a mid orange grey, firm, silty clay with moderate sub angular flints and stones. It contained Early Bronze Age pottery (13g), animal bone (1g) and burnt flint (17g).

Post Hole F1024 was oval in plan (0.30m x 0.24 x 0.12m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1025, was a dark grey brown, firm, sandy clay with occasional sub angular flints. It contained no finds.

### **Trench 6 (Fig. 2)**

<i>Sample section: middle, east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.85m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.27 – 0.52m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.52m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 6 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

### **Trench 7 (Figs. 2 & 8)**

<i>Sample section: east end, south facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.78m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.14 – 0.41m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.41m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 7 contained post-medieval Ditch F1020, and a modern ditch recorded in plan.*

Ditch F1020 was linear (1.75m+ x 1.60m x 0.60m), orientated N/S. It had moderate - steep sides and a flattish base. It contained three fills. The basal fill, L1021, was a grey, firm, silty clay with occasional small flint and gravel. It contained no finds. The middle fill, L1022, was a dark greyish brown, firm, sandy clay. It contained no finds. The upper fill, L1023, was a greyish brown, firm, sandy clay with occasional flint. It contained post-medieval (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century) pottery (202g), CBM (52g), animal bone (35g), clay pipe stem fragments (34g) and a sixpence (3g)

**Trench 8 (Fig. 2)**

<i>Sample section: north end, south facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.82m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.18 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.43m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 8 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 9 (Fig. 2)**

<i>Sample section: middle, south facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.55m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.17m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.17 – 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.42m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 9 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 10 (Fig. 2)**

<i>Sample section: north end, west facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 2.59m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.18 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.43m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 10 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## Trench 11 (Figs. 2 & 8)

<i>Sample section: north end, south facing</i> <i>0.00 = 2.33m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.33m	L1000	Topsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.33 – 0.46m	L1001	Subsoil. As above Tr.1.
0.46m+	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 11 contained post-medieval Ditch F1030.*

Ditch F1030 was linear (1.6m+ x 5m x 1.20m), orientated NNE/SSW. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained five fills:

L1035 Upper	Dark grey, loose, sandy silt	17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> C pottery (203g)
L1034	Light yellowish grey, compact, clayey silt with sparse chalk and pebbles	
L1033	Dark yellowish brown, compact, silty clay with sparse chalk and occasional flint nodules	
L1032	Mid brownish grey, loose, sandy silty clay with occasional small – medium sub rounded flints	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> century pottery (27g), CBM (230g)
L1031 Basal	Dark greyish black, loose, silty sand with occasional gravel	17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> century pottery (42g)

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds present. Some modern services and features were present, and the ground was wet, but these factors did not inhibit the recognition and recording of archaeological features.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Topsoil L1000 was uppermost and it comprised a dark greyish black, cohesive, sandy silt (0.14 – 0.39m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a mid yellowish brown, cohesive, sandy clayey silt (0.08 – 0.27m thick). Subsoil L1001 overlay the natural, L1002, a mid brownish orange, sandy clay (0.30 – 0.64m below the current ground surface).

## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The excavated features are tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Spot Date
1	1003	Ditch	Post-medieval / early modern
	1006	Re-cut of F1003	Early modern
	1008	Pit	Early modern
	1010	Ditch	One sherd of early Bronze Age pottery
	1012	Pit	Post-medieval / early modern
2	1028	Ditch	Post-medieval
4	1026	Pit	Post-medieval
5	1014	Post hole	Early Bronze Age
	1016	Pit	Early Bronze Age
	1018	Post hole	Early Bronze Age
	1024	Post hole	Undated
7	1020	Ditch	Post-medieval
11	1030	Ditch	Post-medieval

9.2 The majority of features were present on the western side of the site (Trs. 1- 4). These features, principally pits and ditches, were post-medieval or early modern. The ditches broadly aligned N/S (F1003 (Tr.1), F1028 (Tr.2), F1020 (Tr.7) and F1030 (Tr.11)) correlate with the boundary ditches recorded on the early maps (Figs.3 and 4).

9.3 The c.1842 tithe map shows two contiguous houses or buildings in Plot No.1898. The entire site is classed as grass covered closes and has houses and gardens to the south (Fig. 3). The 1889 first edition OS map shows some changes to land boundaries on the site, with more houses and buildings appearing to the south and east (Fig. 4). The 1902 OS map shows two more buildings have appeared bordering the east side of the site on Plot No.1416 (Fig. 5). It appears that the smaller building on the west side of the site has now gone. By the modern map the remaining building on the west side of the site has gone as have the two buildings bordering the east side. The area around the site is fully developed, and the site contains a piggery at the south end, and a church-like structure to the east.

9.4 Discrete Early Bronze Age features (a pit and post holes) were recorded along the length of Trench 5, and an Early Bronze Age pottery sherd was found in Ditch F1010 (Tr.1). It is noted (Environmental Report below) that archaeobotanical assemblages from early Bronze Age deposits are often quite sparse and the excellent preservation of a small number of cereal remains from the trial excavations (particularly L1015) is worthy of note.

9.5 Two residual medieval (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) pottery sherds were found in Ditch F1020 (Tr.7) and Ditch F1028 (Tr.2). The latter also contained a medieval (14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) brick fragment.



### *Research potential*

9.6 The features identified in Trench 5 indicate early Bronze Age activity at the site but provide limited information regarding the nature of this activity. The distances between the postholes (c. 2m in each case) suggest that they are unlikely to have combined to form a single structure but their apparent alignment suggests a spatial/functional relationship. Their presence, however, does suggest that the site has the potential to contain further information relating to the early Bronze Age utilisation of the fenland 'island' on which March is located. The identification of these features adds to the known corpus of information relating to Bronze Age activity in the Cambridgeshire fenlands.

9.7 The possibility that this evidence relates to occupation or settlement during the early Bronze Age in this area suggests that the site has the potential to contain evidence which may contribute to an understanding of the character and form that occupation and settlement took locally. The identification of a settlement site is likely to contribute to studies examining the inter-relationship of settlements in this period and the variation and changes in settlement type in the local area, the county as a whole and the wider eastern region; these are considered to be important research subject for Eastern England (Medlycott 2011, 20). Dependant on the nature of any further evidence that may be present, the site may also be considered to have the potential to contribute to palaeoenvironmental studies intended to recreate past landscapes and economies (Medlycott 2011, 20).

9.8 Although only recovered in small quantities, the early Bronze Age pottery present at the site has the potential to contribute to the understanding of the chronological development of pottery in the region (Brown and Murphy 2000, 10). The possibility that further such material exists at the site indicates that there is a potential for further archaeological work here to contribute to an understanding of the cultural value of ceramics and the associated patterns of use and discard (Brown and Murphy 2000, 10).

9.9 The previous identification of later Bronze Age activity elsewhere in March may indicate that there is a potential for comparisons to be drawn between the two sites, contributing to an understanding of the development of local Bronze Age society and settlement over the course of the period.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site, at Cambridgeshire County 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 Limited would like to thank Crestel Partnerships for funding the archaeological evaluation and for their assistance (in particular Shenaz Virji).

AS would also like to thank Ms Sarah Bultz of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team for providing the HER information

AS gratefully acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Dan McConnell of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team

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## **WEB SITES**

Heritage Gateway  
Soilsworldwide.net

## APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

AS1544, Elliott Rd., March  
Concordance of finds by  
feature

Feature	Context	Segment	TT	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1003	1004	A	1	Basal Fill of Ditch	late 18th-19th	(9) 15g	1486		Glass (2) - 23g Mussel Shell - 1g
		B			late 18th-19th	(7) 95g (18)	6987	6	Fe. Frags (5) - 83g
	1005	A		Upper Fill of Ditch	late 18th-19th	275g	781	19	Clay Pipe Stem (1) - 1g Coal - 5g Fe. Frags (7) - 191g Glass (2) - 25g O. Shell - 62g
		B			late 18th-19th	(15) 539g	23	95	Clay Pipe Stem (3) - 15g Fe. Frag (1) - 3g Glass (1) - 46g
1006	1007	A	1	Fill of Re-cut Ditch	19th	(1) 44g	48		Fe. Frags (2) - 16g
		B					288		Shell - 3g
1008	1009		1	Fill of Pit					
1010	1011		1	Fill of Ditch	EBA	(1) 1g			
1012	1013		1	Fill of Pit	18th-19th	(2) 10g		1724	
1014	1015		5	Fill of Posthole	EBA	(5) 40g		37	
								1g	
1016	1017		5	Fill of Pit	EBA	(6) 57			
1018	1019		5	Fill of Posthole	EBA	(1) 13g		1	B. Flint - 17g
						(10)			
1020	1023		7	Third Fill of Ditch	17th-18th	202g	52	35	Clay Pipe Stem (9) - 34g SF1 - Ag. Coin (Half Groat/Sixpence) - 3g

1026	1027		4	Fill of Pit	17th-18th	(2) 40g		
1028	1029		2	Fill of Ditch	13th-15th	(1) 44g	2193	
1030	1031			Basal Fill of Ditch	17th-18th	(2) 42g		230 Snail Shells - 4g
	1032			Fill of Ditch	Late 17th-18th	(2) 27g		
	1033			Fill of Ditch				
	1035			Fill of Ditch	17th-18th	(3) 203		

## **APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORTS**

### **THE PREHISTORIC POTTERY**

*Andrew Peachey*

The evaluation recovered a total of 13 sherds (111g) of prehistoric pottery in a fragmentary and slightly abraded condition. A single small rim sherd and the fabric of the sherds indicate they were manufactured in the early Bronze Age. The pottery was quantified by sherd count and weight (g), with fabrics analysed at x20 magnification, and all data entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that forms part of the site archive.

The prehistoric pottery occurred in two hand made fabrics. The first, tempered with poorly-sorted medium quartz and grog, account for the sherds contained in Ditch F1010, Postholes F1014 and F1018. Posthole F1014 (L1015) contained a total of 5 sherds (40g) from a single vessel, while the other features were limited to isolated body sherds in this fabric. The vessel partially contained in Posthole F1014 (L1015) comprised a barrel-shape/bi-partite jar with a single row of finger-nail impression on the top of the rim. The second fabric, tempered with moderately-sorted medium quartz and calcined flint, was limited to 6 body sherds (57g) contained in Pit F1016 (L1017). Although the forms and fabrics in this small assemblage are limited in terms of diagnostic content, they are typical of early Bronze Age pottery recorded in the Fens and on the Fen-Edge.

### **THE MEDIEVAL, POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN POTTERY**

*Peter Thompson*

The evaluation recovered 71 medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery sherds weighing 1.521 kg. The assemblage can be generally classed as abraded and the majority of sherds are of post-medieval to early modern date.

The two exceptions are two medieval sherds. A large jug shoulder sherd from Ditch F1028 (L1029) in grey fabric containing fine white oolites, calcareous material and occasional voids, is probably a high to late medieval Lyveden ware imported from Northamptonshire. The sherd appears a little overfired, with bubbling in places to the abraded external green glazed surface, and the fabric is highly fired. The other sherd was a small abraded medieval grey sandy ware residual in Ditch F1020 (L1023).

Ditch F1020 and Pit F1026, contained only post-medieval red earthenware indicative of a 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century date. Drainage Ditch F1030 contained post-medieval red earthenware along with a sherd of London-type stone ware indicating a late 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries date.

The remaining features contained early modern pottery.

**KEY:**MSW: Medieval sandy ware 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>

LYV: Lyvfen ware

PMRE: Post-medieval red earthenware late 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>LONS: London-type stoneware late 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>ENGS: English stoneware 18<sup>th</sup>+TPW: Transfer Printed Ware late 18<sup>th</sup>+MOCH: Mocha-type ware late 18<sup>th</sup>+REFW: Refined white earthenware late 18<sup>th</sup>+

Feature	Context	Quantity	Date	Comment
Ditch 1003	1004A	7x11g REFW 1x3g MOCH 1x3g ENGS	late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	REFW: min 4 vessels
	1004 B	3x81g PMRE  1x13g MOCH  3x18g REFW	late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: min 2 vessels, x 1 bifid bowl rim MOCH: bowl 22cm diam rim REFW: min 1 vessel
	1005 A	6x115g PMRE 1x1g REFWE  3x120g MOCH 1x4g ENGS  7x26g TPW	late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: min 4 vessels, x 1 folded, squared bowl rim MOCH: min 2 vessels including ring base to a bowl 9cm diam TPW: min 4 vessels including 2 willow pattern plates
	1005 B	4x234g MOCH  1x3g REFW  3x212g PMRE    7x51g TPW	late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	MOCH: 2 vessels: open bowl rim 23cm diam, mug/cup rim 16cm diam PMRE: min 2 vessels: large shallow bowl 56cm diam rim, internal dark brown glaze TPW: min 3 vessels including willow pattern
Ditch F1006	1007 B	1x66g REFW	19 <sup>th</sup>	REFW: shallow bowl with purple and green underglaze painted leaves
Horse burial 1012	1013	2x10g PMRE	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: 2 vessels

Ditch 1020	1023	8x215g PMRE 1x2g MSW	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: abraded, min of 7 vessels, x2 flanged dish rims (one c.35cm diam)
Pit 1026	1027	2x38g PMRE	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: abraded, same vessel
Ditch 1028	1029	1x41g LYV	13 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>	LYV: jug shoulder external green glaze, well fired
Ditch 1030	1531	2x41g PMRE	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: abraded, min 1 vessel
	1532	1x21g PMRE 1x3g LONS	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	
	1035	3x189g PMRE	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	PMRE: 3 vessels; x1 jar or jug with hollow base 8cm diam, internal green glaze partial external glaze, end of strap handle with dark green glaze, x1 bowl neck with brown glaze and white slip

## The Ceramic Building Materials

*Andrew Peachey*

A total of 72 fragments (10573g) of CBM, including a single medieval brick, with the remainder forming a homogenous group of post medieval CBM manufactured between the 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Table 1). The CBM is generally in a fragmented but only slightly abraded condition. The CBM was quantified by fragment count and weight, with fabrics analysed at x20 magnification, and all diagnostic dimensions/characteristics recorded. The data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that forms part of the site archive.

CBM Type	Fragment Count	Weight (g)
Medieval Brick	1	2151
Post-Medieval Wall Brick	9	4704
Post-Medieval Floor Brick	30	2309
Post-Medieval Peg Tile	30	1229
Post-Medieval Pantile	2	180
<i>Total</i>	72	10573

Table 1: Quantification of CBM

The single medieval brick was contained in Ditch F1028 (L1029) and comprised a complete example, weighing 2151g including some adhering mortar. 260x100x65mm with a rough base, irregular arrises and faces with squodge marks, and sparse straw impressions on the exterior. It was



manufactured in a dark red-brown fabric tempered with poorly-sorted common, medium-coarse sand, sparse black iron rich grains/slag and flint (both 0.5-3mm). These characteristics are typical of bricks produced in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, spanning the late medieval and early Tudor periods.

The remaining CBM has a homogenous post-medieval character and includes, wall and floor brick, peg tile and pantiles, which all occur in association with one another, notably in Ditch F1003. The bulk of the post-medieval CBM: 63 fragments (8046g) was contained in Ditch F1003 (L1004/L1005 Segs. A/B), with very sparse fragments also contained in Ditches F1006 and F1020. The regular red wall bricks with dimensions of 220x115x65mm, which include a complete example in Ditch F1003 (L1004 Seg. B), are typical of this period, while pantiles only became a common component of roof structures from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. The peg tiles, entirely in a cream calcareous fabric with narrow nail holes are also more typical of the later post-medieval period, while the relatively crudely manufactured floor bricks were a common element of many buildings, particularly in cellars, rural outbuildings and relatively low status structures. The combination of the post-medieval CBM form types, particularly the wall brick and pantile suggest the CBM originated from a nearby structure, probably of relatively rural/utilitarian function of 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century construction, although demolition may have been later.

## **The Environmental Samples**

*Dr John Summers*

### **Introduction**

Three bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were taken and processed during the archaeological evaluation at March. All three samples were from early Bronze Age deposits. The small size of the sampled features meant that each sample was only 10 litres in volume.

### **Methods**

Samples were processed at the Archaeological Solutions Ltd facilities in Bury St. Edmunds using a Siraf style flotation tank. The light fractions were washed onto a mesh of 250µm (microns), while the heavy fractions were sieved to 500µm. The dried light fractions were scanned under a low power stereomicroscope (x10-x30 magnification). Botanical and molluscan remains were identified and recorded using a semi-quantitative scale (X = present; XX = common; XXX = abundant). Reference literature (Cappers *et al.* 2006; Jacomet 2006; Kerney and Cameron 1979; Kerney 1999) and a reference collection of modern seeds was consulted where necessary. Potential contaminants, such as modern roots, seeds and invertebrate fauna were also recorded in order to gain an insight into possible disturbance of the deposits.

## Results

The assessment data from the bulk sample light fractions are presented in Table 2.

Only a small number of carbonised remains were present in the samples, with a single wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grain in L1019 and a very well preserved hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain in L1015. The excellent preservation of the grain in posthole F1014 indicates little weathering or mechanical damage prior to deposition. This may imply the use or processing of cereals within the immediate vicinity.

Other Bronze Age sites in the region have provided evidence of both these cereals, such as at West Row Fen (Martin and Murphy 1988) and Kilverstone (Ballantyne 2006, 94). At present, the assemblage from March is too small for detailed comment, other than to hypothesise that both wheat and barley were used in the vicinity of the excavated features.

The presence of water snails (Hydrobiidae indet.) and uncharred sedge (*Carex* sp.) seeds indicates that some deposits on the site may have been wet from prehistory. This raises the possibility that some waterlogging may have occurred and that a wider range of biological remains could be preserved in other areas of the site.

### *Contaminants*

The samples contained modern rootlets and a small number of burrowing molluscs (*Cecilioides acicula*) and modern seeds. It is unlikely that there has been extensive biological disturbance of the deposits.

## Conclusions and statement of potential

Archaeobotanical assemblages from early Bronze Age deposits are often quite sparse (e.g. Campbell and Straker 2003, 14-18) and the excellent preservation of a small number of cereal remains from the trial excavations (particularly L1015) is worthy of note. Should further excavation be undertaken at the site, there is the possibility that an assemblage of early Bronze Age plant macrofossil remains could be recovered that would provide details of early agriculture in this fenland landscape. A detailed programme of sampling with large sample sizes would be required to realise the true potential of the available material. In addition, if further work is undertaken, the potential for waterlogged deposits should also be considered.

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Site code	Sample number	Context	Feature	Feature type	Spot date	Volume (litres)	Flot (ml)	% processed	Cereals				Non-cereal taxa		Charcoal		Molluscs		Contaminants			
									Cereal grains	Cereal chaff	Notes	Grain preservation	Seeds	Notes	Charcoal>2mm	Notes	Molluscs	Notes	Roots	Molluscs	Modern seeds	
AS1544	1	1015	1014	Posthole	EBA	10	15	100%	X	-	HB (1)	3	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	XX	X	X
AS1544	2	1017	1016	Pit	EBA	10	15	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XX	X	XX
AS1544	3	1019	1018	Posthole	EBA	10	15	100%	X	-	Trit (1)	5	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	XX	XX	X

Table 2: Results from the assessment of bulk sample light fractions from March. Abbreviations: HB = hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.); Trit = wheat (*Triticum* sp.).

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
Trench 1, ditch 1003 with re-cut 1006, looking north



2  
Trench 1, ditch 1003 with re-cut 1006, looking south



3  
Trench 5, F1014 looking north



4  
Trench 5, F1018 looking west

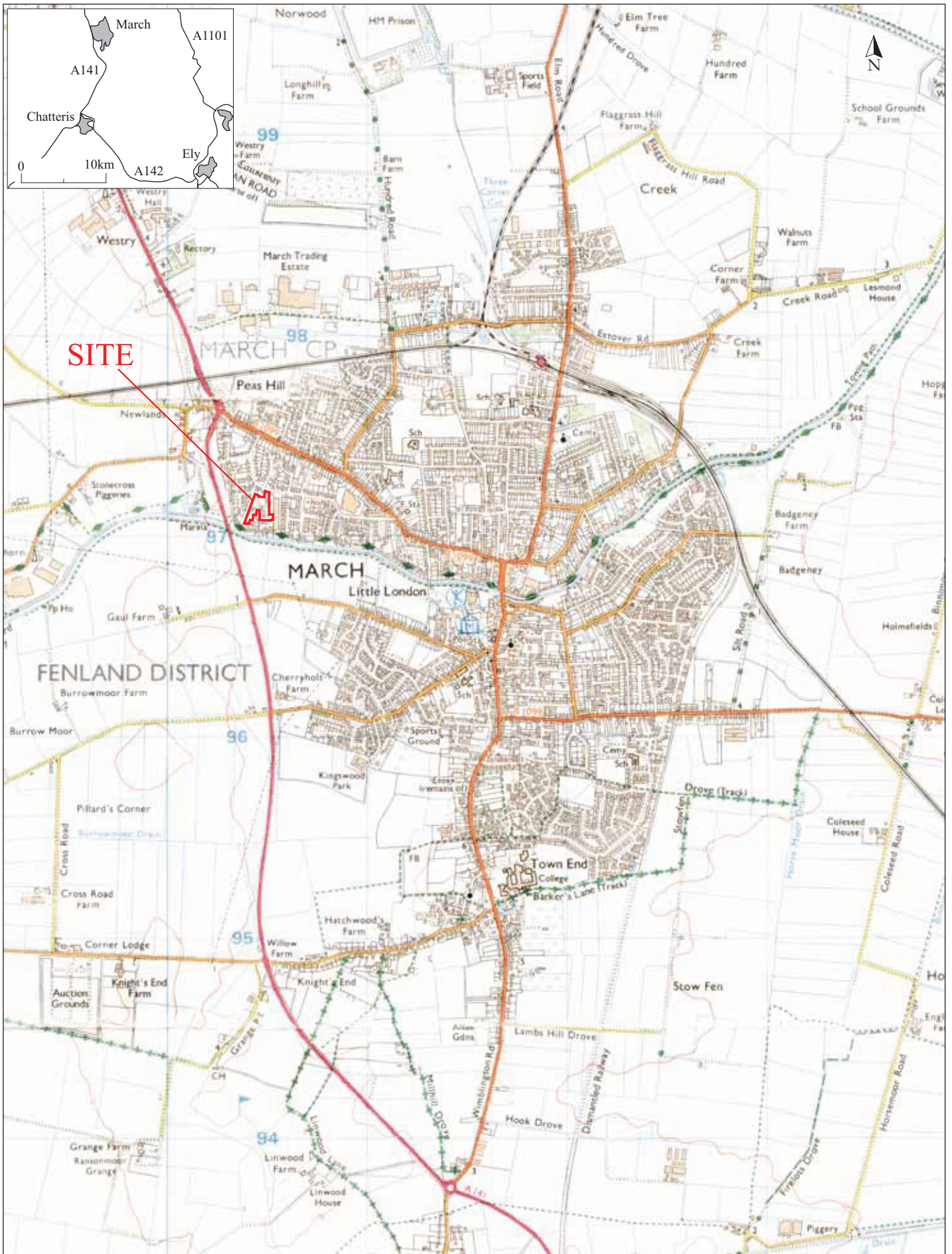


5  
Trench 2, F1028 looking south



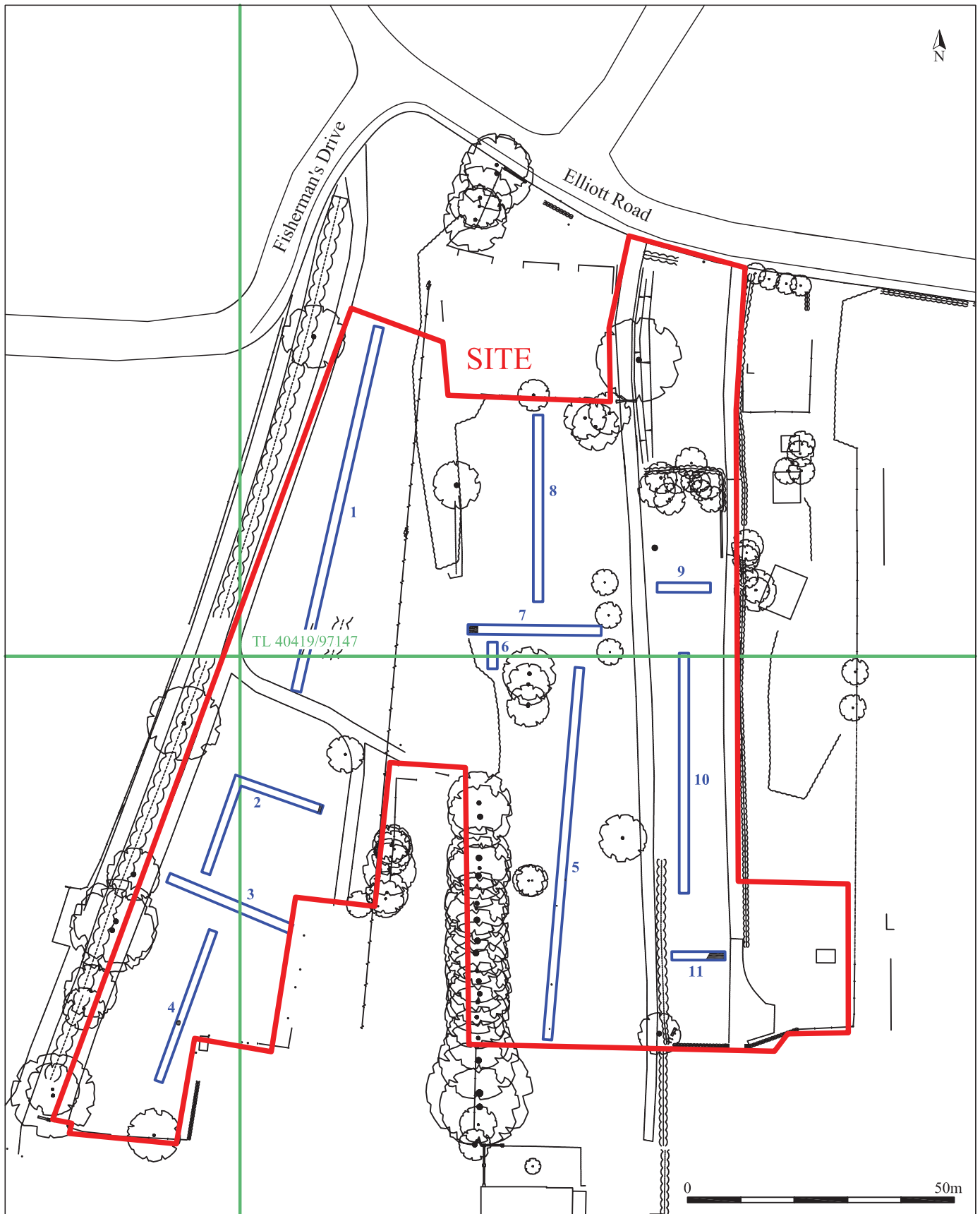
6  
Trench 2, F1030 looking south





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

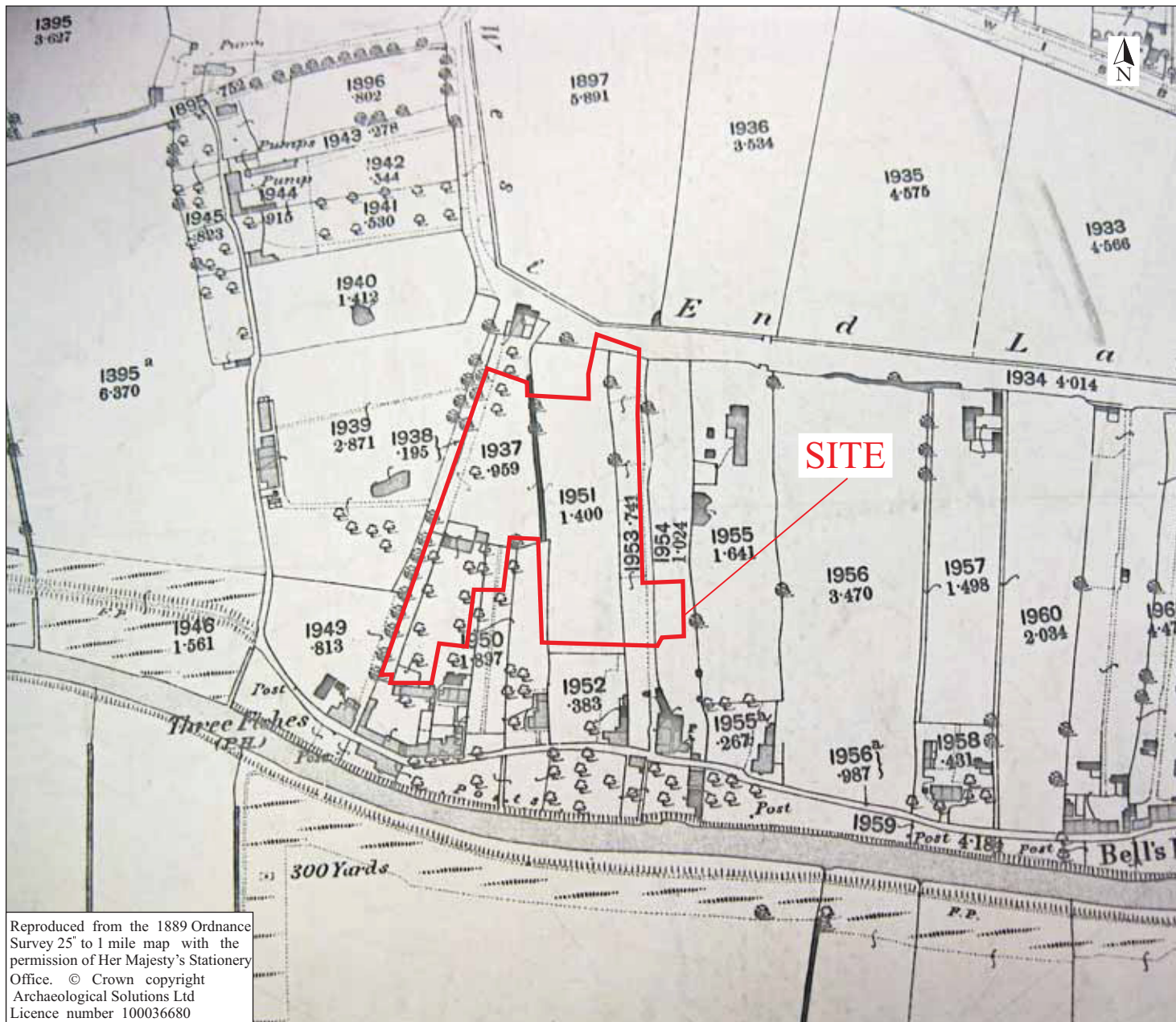


Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
**Fig. 2 Trench location plan**  
 Scale 1:1000 at A4



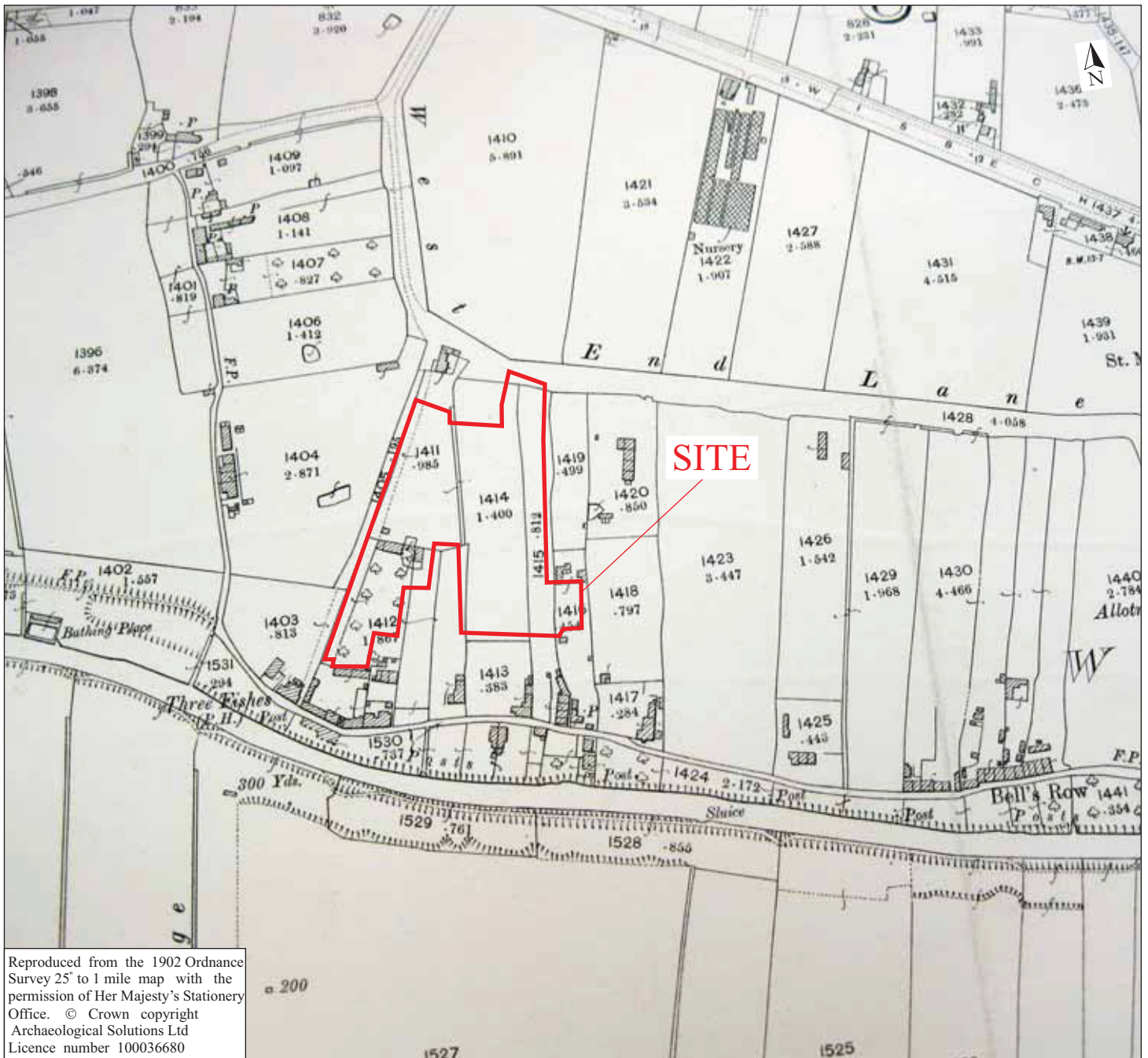


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**Fig. 3 Tithe map of March, 1840**  
Not to scale



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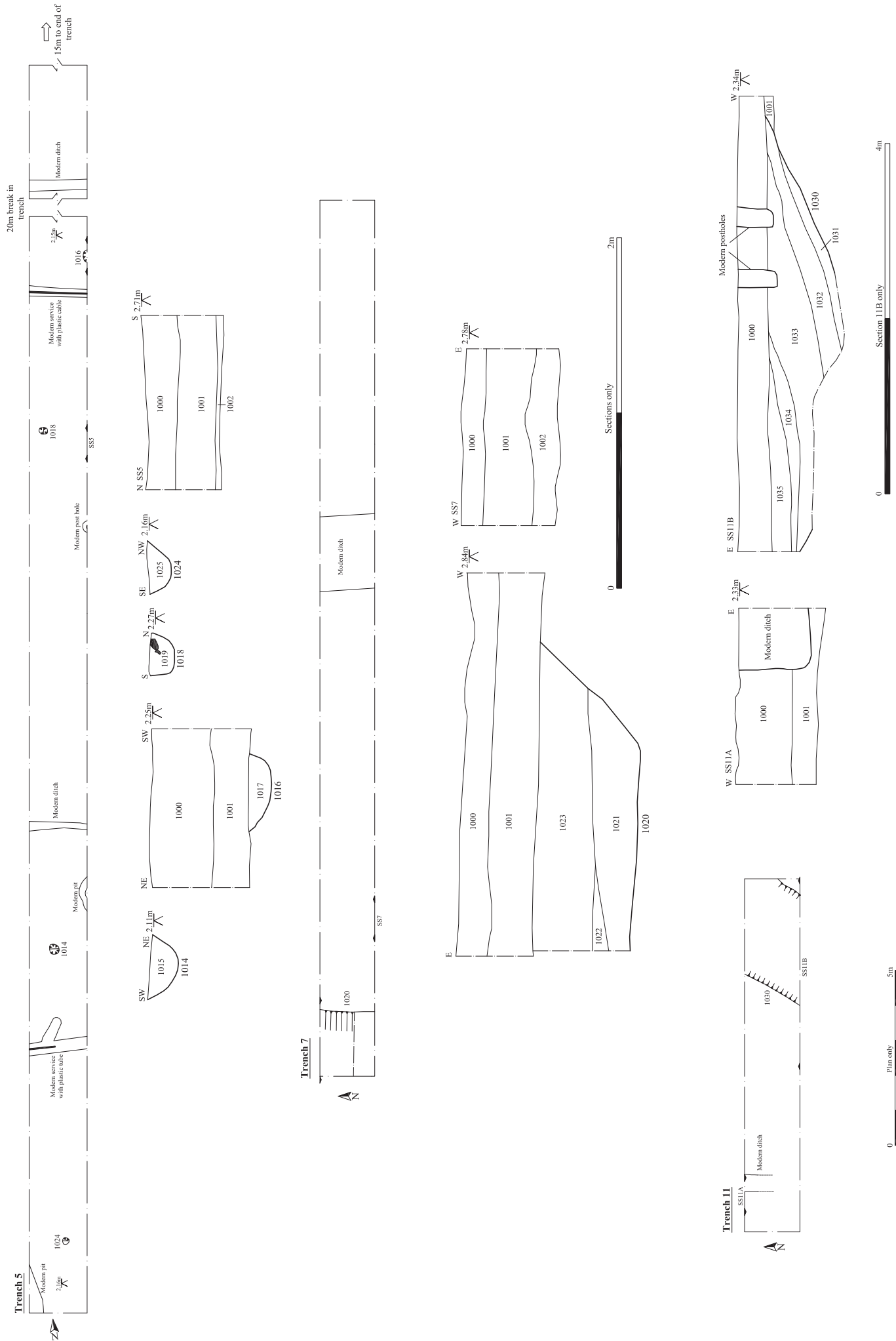
Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
 Fig. 4 OS map, 1889  
 Not to scale



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Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
 Fig. 5 OS map, 1902  
 Not to scale



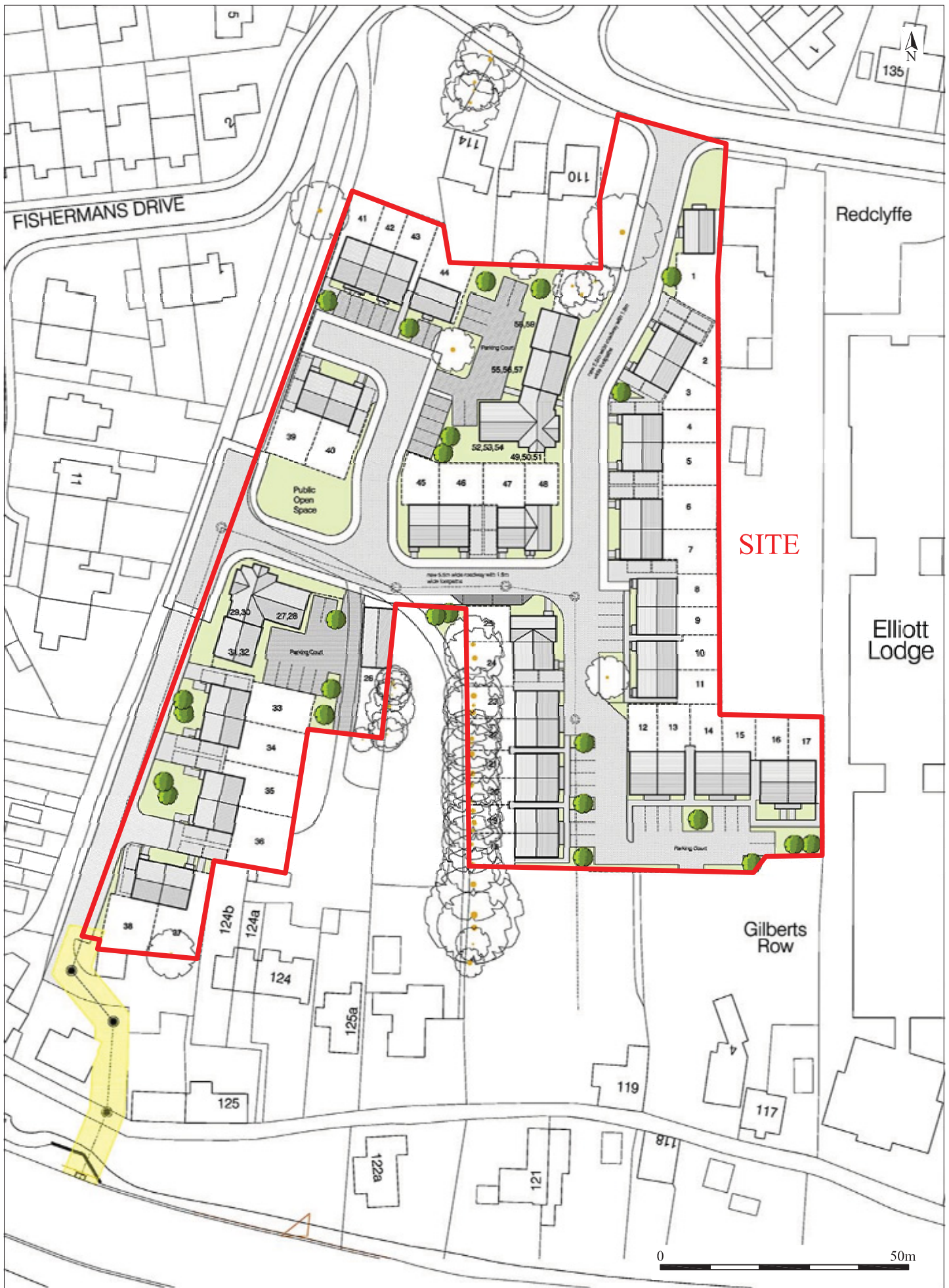


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**Fig. 7 Trench plans & sections**  
 Scale plans at 1:100 & sections at 1:20 except SS11B at 1:40 at A3



Pottery





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**Fig. 8 Proposed development plan**  
 Scale 1:1000 at A4