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LAND ADJACENT TO 6 SCHOOL LANE, LITTLE DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB6 2SY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Author: Gareth Barlow (Fig	Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork and report)					
NGR: TL 5250 8416	Report No: 5076					
District: East Cambs	Site Code: ECB 4687					
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 6626					
Signed:	Date: 31 March 2016 Revised: 20/04/2016					

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details					
Project name	I and adia	acent to 6 School	Lane	Litlle Downham	
		geshire CB6 2SY	Lanc,	Lille Downnam,	
				an archaeological evaluation on	
				shire CB6 2SY (NGR TL 5250	
				planning condition attached to	
				bungalows (East Cambs Ref.	
				Cambridgeshire County Council	
Historic Environment Team	(CCC HE	T) requiring a prog	gramm	ne of archaeological work.	
The site lies within the me	edieval and	l post-medieval s	ettlem	ent area of the village of Little	
				church of St Leonard (CHER	
				MCB1346) and archaeological	
				ce of medieval/post-medieval	
				lier prehistoric activity is known	
		•		has been recorded 40m west of	
the site at Downham Feoffe	es Primary	y School (CHER E	CB70	<i>IZ).</i>	
The evolution revealed	two foot	oo: o noot modi-		r modorn nit (E1000) and an	
				r modern pit (F1009) and an parallel to, an extant fence and	
				ce since at least the $18^{th}/19^{th}$	
century. No residual finds			XIS(CI10	te since at least the 18 /19	
century. No residuar ninas	were prese	п.			
Project dates (fieldwork)	March 20	016			
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Ν	Future work		TBC	
P. number	6369	Site code		ECB 4687	
Type of project	Archaeol	ogical Trial Trencl	h Eval	uation	
Site status	-				
Current land use	Vacant				
Planned development	Resident	ial			
Main features (+dates)	Pit, Ditch				
Significant finds (+dates)	Post med	lieval and modern	n potte	ry and CBM	
County/ District/ Parish		geshire East Can		Little Downham	
HER/ SMR for area			nviron	ment Record (CCC HER)	
Post code (if known)	CB6 2SY				
Area of site	1500M ²				
NGR	TL 5250				
Height AOD (max/ min)	c.19m AC	DD			
Project creators					
Brief issued by				Historic Environment Team	
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd				
Funded by	Salmons	Brothers Ltd			
Full title		acent to 6 School			
			An A	rchaeological Trial Trench	
	Evaluatio				
Authors	Barlow, G	Э.			
Report no.	5076				
Date (of report)	March 20)16 (Revised 20/0	4/2010	6)	
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LAND ADJACENT TO 6 SCHOOL LANE, LITTLE DOWNHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB6 2SY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In March 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 6 School Lane, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire CB6 2SY (NGR TL 5250 8416). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the proposed construction of four bungalows (East Cambs Ref. 15/00417/FUL). It was undertaken based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) requiring a programme of archaeological work.

The site lies within the medieval and post-medieval settlement area of the village of Little Downham, 100m to the north west of the medieval parish church of St Leonard (CHER MCB14888). A medieval moated site lies to the north (CHER MCB1346) and archaeological investigations to the south west have revealed evidence of medieval/post-medieval occupation (CHER MCB17493). In addition, evidence of earlier prehistoric activity is known from this part of the village. Mesolithic occupation evidence has been recorded 40m west of the site at Downham Feoffees Primary School (CHER ECB702).

The evaluation revealed two features: a post-medieval or modern pit (F1009) and an $18^{th}/19^{th}$ century ditch (F1007). The latter ran close to, and parallel to, an extant fence and hedge line suggesting the boundary has been in existence since at least the $18^{th}/19^{th}$ century. No residual finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 6 School Lane, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire CB6 2SY (NGR TL 5250 8416; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the proposed construction of four bungalows (East Cambs Ref. 15/00417/FUL). The evaluation was undertaken based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) requiring a programme of archaeological work.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by CCC HET (Gemma Stewart; dated 7th March 2016) and a specification compiled by AS (8th March 2016) and approved by CCC HET. It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It also adhered to relevant sections of Gurney's (2003) *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England.*

1.3 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

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 effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be the asset. 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 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The vacant site extends to some 1500m2 and lies on the north-eastern side of School Lane in the north-astern part of the village.

2.2 Little Downham lies 3km to the north-west of Ely in the Fens, Cambridgeshire. The settlement is centred on the two parallel streets: Main Street and Common Street. The site is on the northern periphery of the village, on School Lane which connects to Main Street.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The wider landscape is typically fenland. Little Downham occupies slightly higher ground which rises to c.15m AOD. The landscape is characterised by dense drainage systems. The Old Bedford River and River Delph both run on a south-west

to north-west course c.5.3km to the north-west, while the River Great Ouse flows past the western boundary of Ely c.4.5km to the south-east.

3.2 The solid geology of the area form part of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation; a mudstone formed in the Jurassic Period. Little Downham overlies a pocket of limerich, loamy and clayey soils.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistory

4.1 Mesolithic flint has been recorded *c*.40m south-west of the site at Downham Feoffees Primary School (CHER ECB702; 11905). Neolithic finds have also been recovered from the surrounding area including several axes and a lithic implement (CHER 07151, 07152, 11762). The Bronze Age evidence comprises two groups of urns and three cremation burials *c*.790m to the south-west (CHER 07340). A fragment of a Bronze Age rapier (CHER11762a) has also been recovered from the Little Downham area, in fields to the north-east of the site.

Romano-British

4.2. The Roman period is represented by a series of ditches which contained Romano-British pottery and were possibly part of a field system. The archaeology was recorded some distance to the south-west of the current site with a small paddock-type enclosure in the north-west part of the field (CHER MCB17583). Various spot finds including a buckle and pottery sherds, have also been recorded on the periphery of the modern settlement (CHER 07143; MCB16056), and also during an evaluation at the school *c*.70m to the south of the site (CHER ECB702).

Medieval

4.3 Human remains (CHER 07142; 07150) and spot finds (CHER 117626; CB14772) indicate a Saxon precursor for the more extensive medieval activity. The inhumation cemetery located *c*.400m to the south of the site included several skeletons with finds like bronze pins, however it is noted they could be Roman-British in date.

4.4 By Domesday the settlement is called 'Duneham' and had a 'quite large' population (www.opendomesday.org). An elongated pond, recorded as a medieval moat on historic maps, lies to the north-west of the site (CHER 01064). Approximately 100m to the east is the medieval parish church of St Leonard (CHER MCB14888). It incorporates 12th century fabric with later additions and alterations. The medieval Bishop's Palace is now incorporated into farm buildings (CHER 07154) and its associated parkland (CHER 12059) lies *c*.620m to the west of the site. Archaeological investigations to the south-west have revealed evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation (CHER MCB17493).

Post-medieval

4.5 A windmill or wind pump is depicted on the 1844 Inclosure Map (CHER 07139), a post-medieval windmill may have stood on Little Street (CHER 07149), and there is evidence for medieval/post-medieval quarrying *c*.290m to the south (CHER MCB17493). A large number of houses, cottages and the public house date from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Directly to the south-east, the village hall fronts Main Street; this was once the village school and dates from the late 18th century (CHER DCB1288).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The evaluation provided for a *c*. 5% sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched. Three trenches, one of $25m \times 1.6m$ and two of $12.5m \times 1.6m$, were excavated.

5.2 The topsoil and subsoil was removed under close archaeological supervision and control using a 180° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand.

5.3 Exposed sections were cleaned and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Open trenches and excavated spoil were manually/ visually searched and scanned by metal detector to enhance the recovery of archaeological finds.

5.4 In accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation (section 4.7) artefact characterisation was undertaken as part of the evaluation. It was intended that a 'one-meter square of any remaining topsoil and subsoil below existing surfaces...be excavated by hand at each end of the trenches to characterise their artefact content (as required Section 2.8 of the brief), if present'. Machine excavation removed all topsoil and subsoil from these areas. However, spoil from the trench ends was kept separate to the main spoil heaps and separately searched (manually/ visually and by metal detector) to enhance finds recovery.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Sample section 0.00m = 19.11m		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark orange brown sandy silt with occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints
0.36 – 0.62m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid yellow brown silty sand with occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints.
0.62m+	L1002	Natural deposits. Firm, pale brown yellow silty sand with very occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 - 3)

Sample section Northwest end, 1 0.00m = 19.03m	Northeas	t facing			
0.00 – 0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.			
0.38 - 0.66m	L1001	01 Subsoil. As above.			
0.66m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above.			

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 2 (Figs. 2 - 3)

Sample section 2A:						
0.00m = 19.08m AOD						
0.00–0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.				
0.38 – 0.72m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.				
0.72m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1.				

Sample section 2B:						
0.00m = 19.14m AOD						
0.00–0.35m L1000 Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.						
0.35 – 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.				
0.44m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1.				

Description: Trench 2 contained a post medieval or modern pit (F1009).

Pit F1009 was sub-circular in plan ($1.05 \times 0.30 + \times 0.33m$). It had vertical sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1010) was a firm, mid brown grey silty sand with very occasional medium sub-rounded flints. It contained CBM (62g) and a clay pipe stem fragment (1;6g).

Trench 3 (Figs. 2 - 3)

Sample section 3A: 0.00m = 18.97m A		
0.00–0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.35 – 0.72m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.72m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1.

Sample section 3B:						
0.00m = 19.07m AOD						
0.00 – 0.12m	L1003	Topsoil. Firm dark grey brown silty sand with occasional- moderate small rounded flint.				
0.12 – 0.29m	L1004	Made ground. Friable, mid grey brown silty sand with moderate concrete fragments and occasional-moderate small sub-rounded flints.				
0.29 – 0.61m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.				
0.61 – 1.10m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.				
1.10m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above, Trench 1.				

Description: Trench 3 contained Ditch F1007 which yielded 18th-19th pottery. Modern services were present at the eastern end of the trench; although one service was

truncated and recorded in section (see Sample Section 3B (Figure 3)), the concentration of services in the far end of the trench prevented machine excavation below the level of Made Ground L1004 (Fig. 3). In this south-eastern area of the site, Topsoil L1000 was seen to dip downwards, being stratigraphically sealed by Made Ground L1004.

Ditch F1007 was linear (1.80+ x 1.60 x 0.52m), orientated north east / south west. It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1008) was a firm, mid yellowish grey brown silty sand with sparse sub-rounded flints. It contained 18^{th} - 19^{th} century pottery (2; 224g) and CBM (1371g).

Artefact Characterisation

The artefact characterisation exercise recovered 19th to mid 20th century pottery sherds – in keeping with the bulk of the recovered assemblage from the site – and fragments of peg tile in a fabric of medieval or post-medieval date (see Appendix 2). Other finds (from L1000) comprise modern glass and slate.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 The topsoil and subsoil had been partially disturbed in the area of Trenches 2 -3 nonetheless it is not felt that this factor inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Uppermost Topsoil L1000 was a firm, dark orange brown sandy silt with occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints (0.32 - 0.38m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a firm, mid yellow brown silty sand with occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints (0.09m - 0.49m thick). At the base of the sequence was the natural, L1002, a firm, pale brown yellow silty sand with sparse medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints.

8.2 In the south-eastern corner of the site (Trench 3), Topsoil L1000 was seen to dip downwards. It was stratigraphically sealed in this area by Made Ground L1004, comprising friable, mid grey brown silty sand with moderate concrete fragments and occasional-moderate small sub-rounded flints (up to 0.17m thick). L1004 was sealed by an additional layer of topsoil (L1003), comprising firm, dark grey brown silty sand with occasional, small to moderate rounded flint (0.12m thick). The stratigraphic sequence in this area suggests that the ground level has been recently raised.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The recorded features are tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Spot date
2	F1009	Pit	Post medieval or modern
3	F1007	Ditch	18 th -19 th C

9.2 The site lies within the medieval and post-medieval core of Little Downham, 100m to the northwest of the medieval parish church of St Leonard (CHER MCB14888). A medieval moated site lies to the north (CHER MCB1346), and archaeological investigations to the south west have revealed evidence of medieval and post-medieval remains (CHER MCB17493). In addition, evidence of earlier prehistoric activity is known from this part of the village. Mesolithic occupation evidence has been recorded 40m west of the site at Downham Feoffees Primary School (CHER ECB702).

9.3 The evaluation revealed two features: a post-medieval or modern pit (F1009) and an 18^{th -} 19th century ditch (F1007). The latter ran close to, and parallel to, an extant fence and hedge line suggesting the boundary has been in existence since at least the 18th/19th century. No residual finds were present.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The site had the potential to reveal medieval and post-medieval remains associated with the settlement of Little Downham. In the event the evaluation revealed two features of late post-medieval and modern date; Pit F1009 (Trench 2) and Ditch F1007 (Trench 3).

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at the Cambridgeshire County Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) would like to thank Salmons Bros Ltd for funding the project and for their assistance (in particular Mr Adam Salmons).

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

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SSEW 1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales: Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales Harpenden, Rothamsted Experimental Station/Lawes Agricultural Trust

Web resources

www.opendomesday.org Accessed 31/03/2016

APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pot	Pottery	CBM	A.Bone	Other Material	Other	Other
					(Pot Only)	(Qty)	(g)	(g)	(g)		(Qty)	(g)
	1000		1	Topsoil	19 th -mid 20 th	5	21	214		Glass	1	2
			2		19th-mid 20th	7	77			Glass	1	5
										Slate	2	22
			3		19 th -mid 20 th	3	7			Glass	1	9
										Slate	1	2
	1001		1	Subsoil				82				
			2					277				
1007	1008		3	Fill of Ditch	18th-19th	2	224	1371				
1009	1010		2	Fill of Pit				62		Clay Pipe	1	6

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The archaeological evaluation predominantly recovered early modern to modern sherds (19th-mid 20th centuries date) comprising factory made refined white earthenware, Transfer Printed Ware and porcelain, from the Topsoil. The exception was Ditch F1007 L1008 which contained a sherd of white salt glazed stoneware and a large sherd of glazed post-medieval red earthenware of 18th to early 19th centuries date.

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey MCIfA

The evaluation recovered a total of 18 fragments (2006g) of moderately abraded and fragmented post-medieval CBM. The fragments were recorded by fragment count and weight per context, with all data entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will form part of the site archive.

The CBM, including brick and peg tile were manufactured in a pale yellow-brown fabric, frequently streaked with red; with inclusions of common shell or voids (generally <5mm), and sparse red iron rich grains and quartz (<1.5mm). This fabric is a common local product in the Ely and Fenland region in the medieval and post-medieval periods. L1008 was the only deposit to contain both brick and peg tile, with L1000, L1001 and L1010 containing only peg tile. The brick has partial dimensions of ?x105x60mm with a smooth sanded base, slightly irregular faces and arrises. It is typical of types that were produced from the late 16th to 18th centuries; however such bricks, despite the relative crudity were retained and re-used in structures into the early 20th century. Similarly the peg tile, which is 12-14mm thick with a smooth base would have been produced after the standardization of such tiles in the mid/late 15th century, but based on such limited evidence could have been manufactured and formed a part of a roof throughout the post-medieval to early modern periods.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



General view of excavated trenches



2 Trench 1 looking north-west



3 Sample section 1A looking north-east



Sample section 1B looking north-east





6 Pit F1009 in Trench 2 looking north-west

5 Trench 2 looking south-west



7 Sample section 2A looking south-east



8 Sample section 2B looking south-east



9 Trench 3 looking north-west



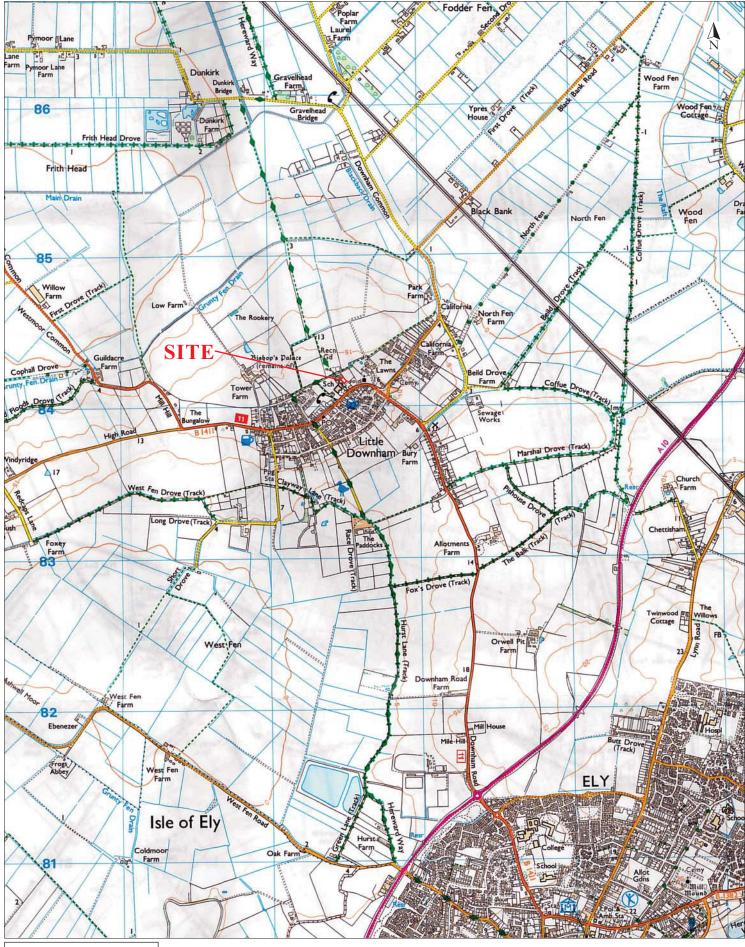
10 Trench 3 looking south-east



11 Ditch F1007 in Trench 3 looking south-west



12 Sample section 3B looking north-east

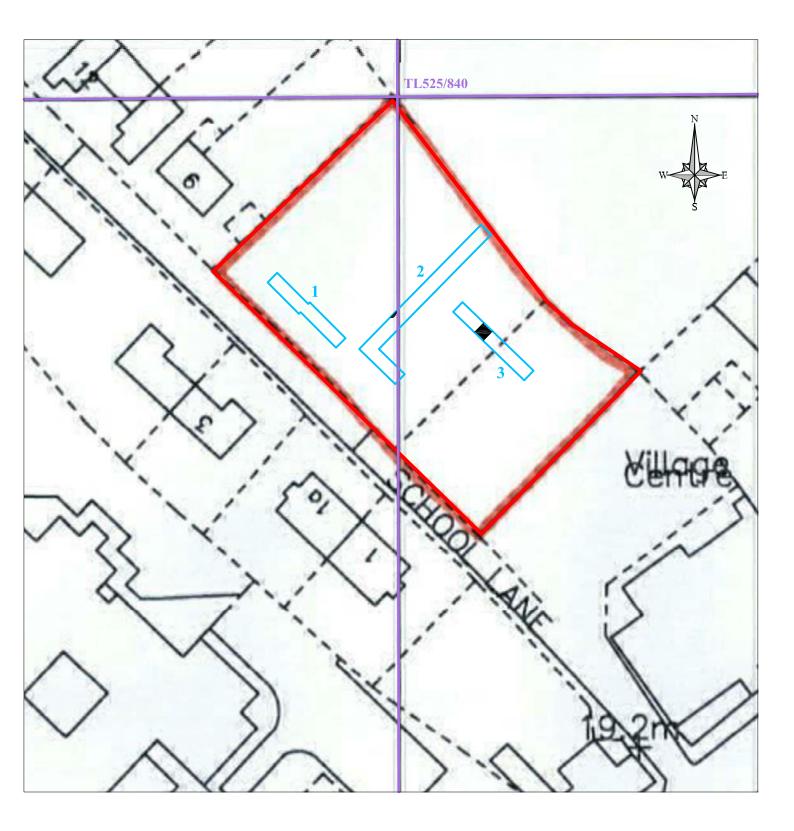


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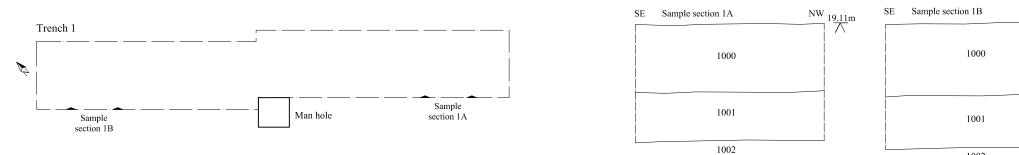
 Fig. 1
 Site location plan

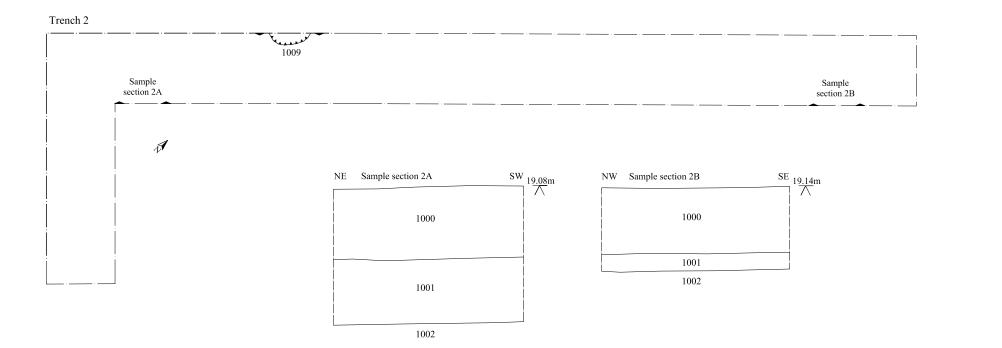
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 6 School Lane, Little Downham, Cambs (P6626)

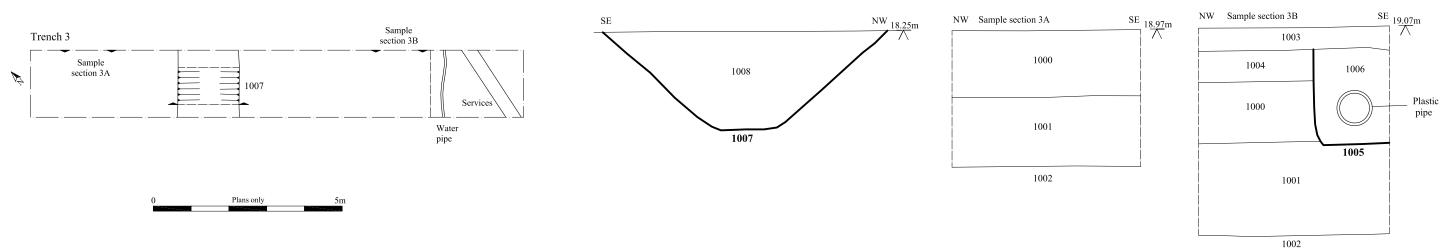


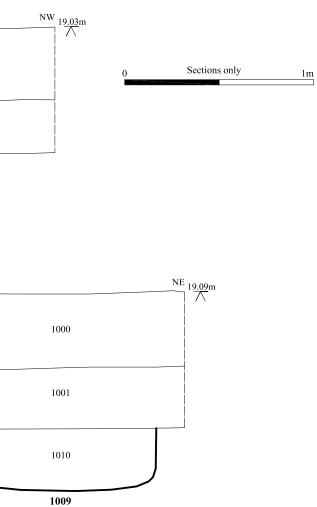
Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:500 at A4
6 School Lane, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire (P6626)

25m





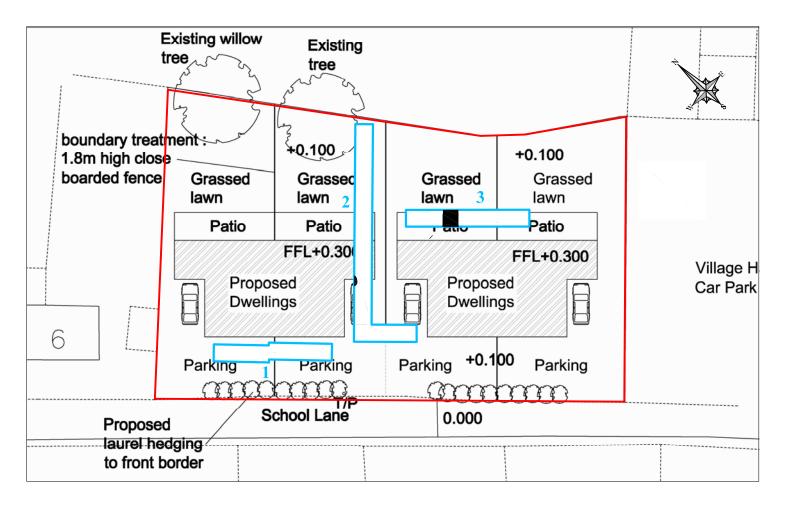




1002

SW

Archaeological Solutions Ltd Fig. 3 Trench plans & sections Scale - Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3 6 School Lane, Little Downham, Cambridgeshire (P6626)



0 25m

