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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**LAND BETWEEN AMBERSIDE & PRUDEN,  
GRUNTY FEN ROAD,  
WILBURTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

Author: Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 5160 7640	Report No: 5182
District: East Cambs	Site Code: ECB 4657
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 6473
Signed:	Date: 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2016

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*Historic building recording and appraisals*  
*Trial trench evaluations*  
*Geophysical surveys*  
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## **CONTENTS**

### **OASIS SUMMARY**

#### **SUMMARY**

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**
- 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**
- 4 METHODOLOGY**
- 5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**
- 6 CONFIDENCE RATING**
- 7 DEPOSIT MODEL**
- 8 DISCUSSION**
- 9 CONCLUSION**

#### **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS**

**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET****Project details**

Project name	Land between Amberside & Pruden, Grunty Fen Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
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*In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land between Amberside & Pruden, Grunty Fen Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5160 7640). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the proposed change of use of land to site 8 mobile home pitches and erect 8 family day rooms ((East Cambs Planning Approval Ref. 15/01346/FUL). The evaluation was undertaken based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) requiring a programme of archaeological work.*

*The evaluation revealed two undated ditches in Trenches 3 (F1002) and 4 (F1004). The cartographic sources record only drainage ditches which correlate with the borders of the site and none are shown crossing or within it, so the recorded ditches likely pre-date the drainage of the area.*

*There was no suggestion that the ground was significantly disturbed or truncated and therefore additional archaeological remains, if present, would have been revealed.*

Project dates (fieldwork)	August 2016		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	6473	Site code	ECB 4657
Type of project	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Vacant		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	Ditches		
Significant finds (+dates)	None		

**Project location**

County/ District/ Parish	Cambridgeshire	East Cambs	Wilburton
HER/ SMR for area	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CCC HER)		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	0.8ha		
NGR	TL 5160 7640		
Height AOD (max/ min)	c.3.50m AOD		

**Project creators**

Brief issued by	Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Funded by	Messrs Tidd & Grey
Full title	Land between Amberside & Pruden, Grunty Fen Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
Authors	Barlow, G.
Report no.	5182
Date (of report)	July 2016

**LAND BETWEEN AMBERSIDE & PRUDEN,  
GRUNTY FEN ROAD,  
WILBURTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY**

*In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land between Amberside & Pruden, Grunty Fen Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5160 7640). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the proposed change of use of land to site 8 mobile home pitches and erect 8 family day rooms ((East Cambs Planning Approval Ref. 15/01346/FUL). The evaluation was undertaken based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) requiring a programme of archaeological work.*

*The site lies within an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER), from where multi-period finds have been made in Grunty Fen, much through drainage work and ploughing. Neolithic and Bronze Age flints and flint/metal tools have been found in the fen (HER MCB 2673 & 17022. MCB7045 & 8370) as well as Roman finds (HER MCB2674 & 8406). Roman settlement is known from the east at Little Thetford and Bedwell Hey farm north of the site and the line of Roman Akeman Street runs c.300m to the east of the site (HER MCB20681), surviving as a field track on the 1885 OS edition map and further south along the line of the modern A10.*

*The evaluation revealed two undated ditches in Trenches 3 (F1002) and 4 (F1004). The ditches were comparable in their forms and fills, and were parallel. F1002 did not continue into Trench 4. The cartographic sources record only drainage ditches which correlate with the borders of the site and none are shown crossing or within it, so the recorded ditches likely pre-date the drainage of the area.*

*There was no suggestion that the ground was significantly disturbed or truncated and therefore additional archaeological remains, if present, would have been revealed.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In July 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land between Amberside & Pruden, Grunty Fen Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5160 7640;

Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the proposed change of use of land to site 8 mobile home pitches and erect 8 family day rooms (East Cambs Planning Approval Ref. 15/01346/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 (Kasia Gdaniec; dated 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016) and a specification compiled by AS (19<sup>th</sup> February 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 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 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

2.1 The site lies at c.3-4m AOD on solid Kimmeridge Clay deposits in Grunty Fen which is former fenland north of the higher ground of Wilburton Ridge.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER), from where multi-period finds have been made in Grunty Fen, much through drainage work and ploughing. Neolithic and Bronze Age flints and flint/metal tools have been found in the fen (HER MCB 2673 & 17022. MCB7045 & 8370) as well as Roman finds (HER MCB2674 & 8406). Roman settlement is known from the east at Little Thetford and Bedwell Hey Farm north of the site and the line of Roman Akeman Street runs c.300m to the east of the site (HER MCB20681), surviving as a field track on the 1885 OS edition map and further south along the line of the modern A10.

3.2 Prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site has been indicated through the identification of a scatter of early Mesolithic to late Bronze Age lithic artefacts (CHER MCB16255) and a Neolithic polished flint axe (CHER 02103). Scatters of Roman pottery (CHER MCB16256 and MCB 16259) identified to the north-north-east of the site and a Roman quern (CHER 02103A) identified to the north-east indicate a Romano-British presence in the surrounding area. It is considered that the lost Saxon settlement of *Cratendune* is located in the wider vicinity of the site and this may be supported by the recovery of a Saxon pendant (CHER 03159) and Saxon brooches (CHER MCB16257) in the surrounding area.

3.3 The site was situated within an agricultural landscape in the medieval period, potentially much affected by variations in the Fenland water levels, though less so as drainage schemes were implemented throughout the post-medieval period. A remnant of this landscape was a windmill (CHER 06924) located in the vicinity. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 depicts the regular networks of drainage ditches that criss-cross the local landscape, including those that form the northern and eastern boundaries of the site (though none actually bisect the site), ultimately feeding into the Grunty Fen Catchwater (Drain), which passes c.300m to the north and south. The 1887 map also depicts the line of the Ely, Sutton and St.Ives branch of

the Great Eastern Railway (CHER MCB19487), which passed immediately to the south of the site, with Streatham Station and the Railway Tavern located on the opposite side of Grunty Fen Road; however the railway was closed in 1964 and dismantled shortly thereafter. Subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey depict the site as an undeveloped field, with sparse properties added to plots around the village in the 1920s, and the property of Pruden built in the plot adjacent to the north of the site in the 1960s. The drainage ditches and plots in the landscape surrounding the site appear to remain unaltered throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and almost all remain extant in the present day.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation provided for a c.3% sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched, with a contingency for an extra 30m of trenching if required. Four trenches, each 40m x 1.8m, were excavated, along with a fifth trench of 20m x 1.8m (Figs.2 - 3).

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

4.3 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 and visually searched, and scanned by metal detector to enhance the recovery of archaeological finds.

4.4 At either end of each trench the topsoil was test pitted for finds.

## 5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

5.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### **Trench 1** (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample section 1A</i> <i>0.00m = 2.65m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.45m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark orange brown silty clay
0.45m+	L1001	Natural. Firm, mid yellow brown silty clay

<i>Sample section 1B</i> <i>0.00m = 2.71m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.47m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.47m+	L1001	Natural. As above.



*Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 2** (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample section 2A</i> <i>0.00m = 2.66m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.41m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.41m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 2B</i> <i>0.00m = 2.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.34m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 3** (Figs. 2 - 4)

<i>Sample section 3A</i> <i>0.00m = 2.67m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.35m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 3B</i> <i>0.00m = 2.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.32m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 3 contained undated Ditch F1002.*

Ditch F1002 was linear in plan (1.80+ x 0.87 x 0.20m), orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1003, was a firm, dark greyish brown silty clay. It contained no finds.

**Trench 4** (Figs. 2 - 4)

<i>Sample section 4A</i> <i>0.00m = 3.70m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.36m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 4B</i> <i>0.00m = 3.75m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.32m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 4 contained undated Ditch F1004.*

Ditch F1004 was linear in plan (1.80+ x 0.64 x 0.19m), orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1005, was a firm, dark greyish brown silty clay. It contained no finds.

## **Trench 5** (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample section 5A</i> <i>0.00m = 3.18m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.38m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 5B</i> <i>0.00m = 3.24m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.34m+	L1001	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 5 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## **6 CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **7 DEPOSIT MODEL**

7.1 Topsoil L1000 was a dark orange brown silty clay. It directly overlay the natural, L1001, a firm, mid yellow brown silty clay which was 0.32 – 0.47m below the present day ground surface.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

8.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER), from where multi-period finds have been made in Grunty Fen, much through drainage work and ploughing. Neolithic and Bronze Age flints and flint/metal tools have been found in the fen (HER MCB 2673 & 17022. MCB7045 & 8370) as well as Roman finds (HER MCB2674 & 8406). Roman settlement is known from the east at Little Thetford and Bedwell Hey farm north of the site and the line of Roman Akeman Street runs c.300m to the east of the site (HER MCB20681), surviving as a field track on the 1885 OS edition map and further south along the line of the modern A10.

8.2 Test pitting of the topsoil recovered small modern abraded pottery sherds and CBM.

8.3 The evaluation revealed two undated ditches in Trenches 3 (F1002) and 4 (F1004). The ditches were comparable in their forms and fills, and were parallel. F1002 did not continue into Trench 4. The cartographic sources record only drainage ditches which correlate with the borders of the site and none are shown crossing or within it, so the recorded ditches likely pre-date the drainage of the area.

## **9 CONCLUSION**

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains of prehistoric and Romano-British activity in particular, and also for later periods. Two undated ditches were recorded. There was no suggestion that the ground was significantly disturbed or truncated and therefore additional archaeological remains, if present, would have been revealed.

## **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 would like to thank Messrs Tidd & Grey for funding the evaluation and Mr Grahame Seaton of Grahame Seaton Design Limited for his assistance.

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

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## APPENDIX 1      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date (Pot Only)	Pot Qty	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other Material	Other Qty	Other (g)
	1000			Topsoil	19th-20th C	1	2	107				
			1B		19th-20th C	2	8					
			2A		19th-20th C	2	28					
			3A					18				
			4A		19th-20th C	3	12					
			4B		19th-20th C	3	5	3				
			5B		19th-20th C	1	1					



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
Trench 1 looking north



2  
Trench 2 looking west



3  
Trench 3 looking north



4  
Ditch 1002 in Trench 3 looking east





5  
Trench 4 looking north



6  
Ditch 1004 in Trench 4 looking east

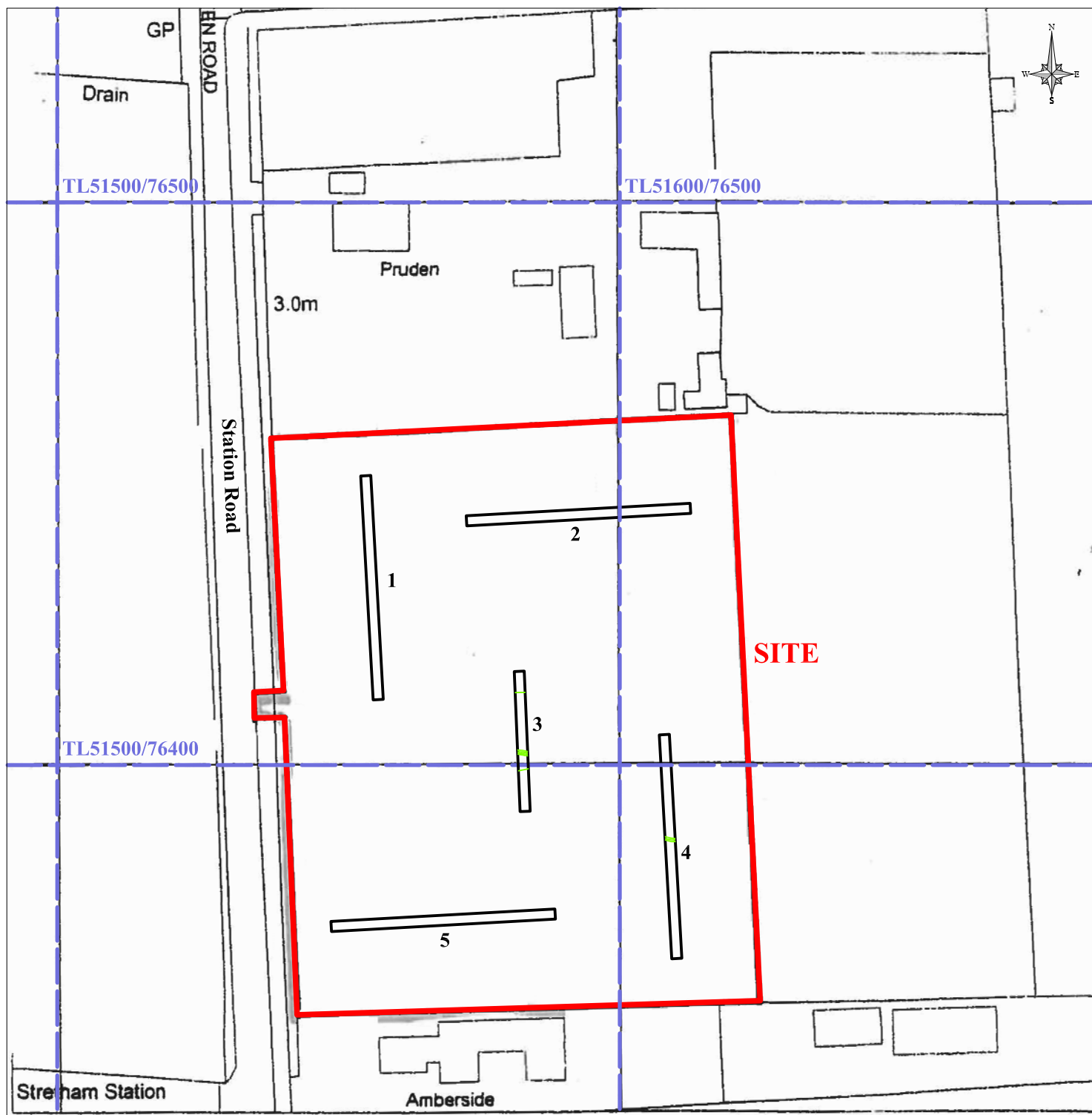


7  
Trench 5 looking west





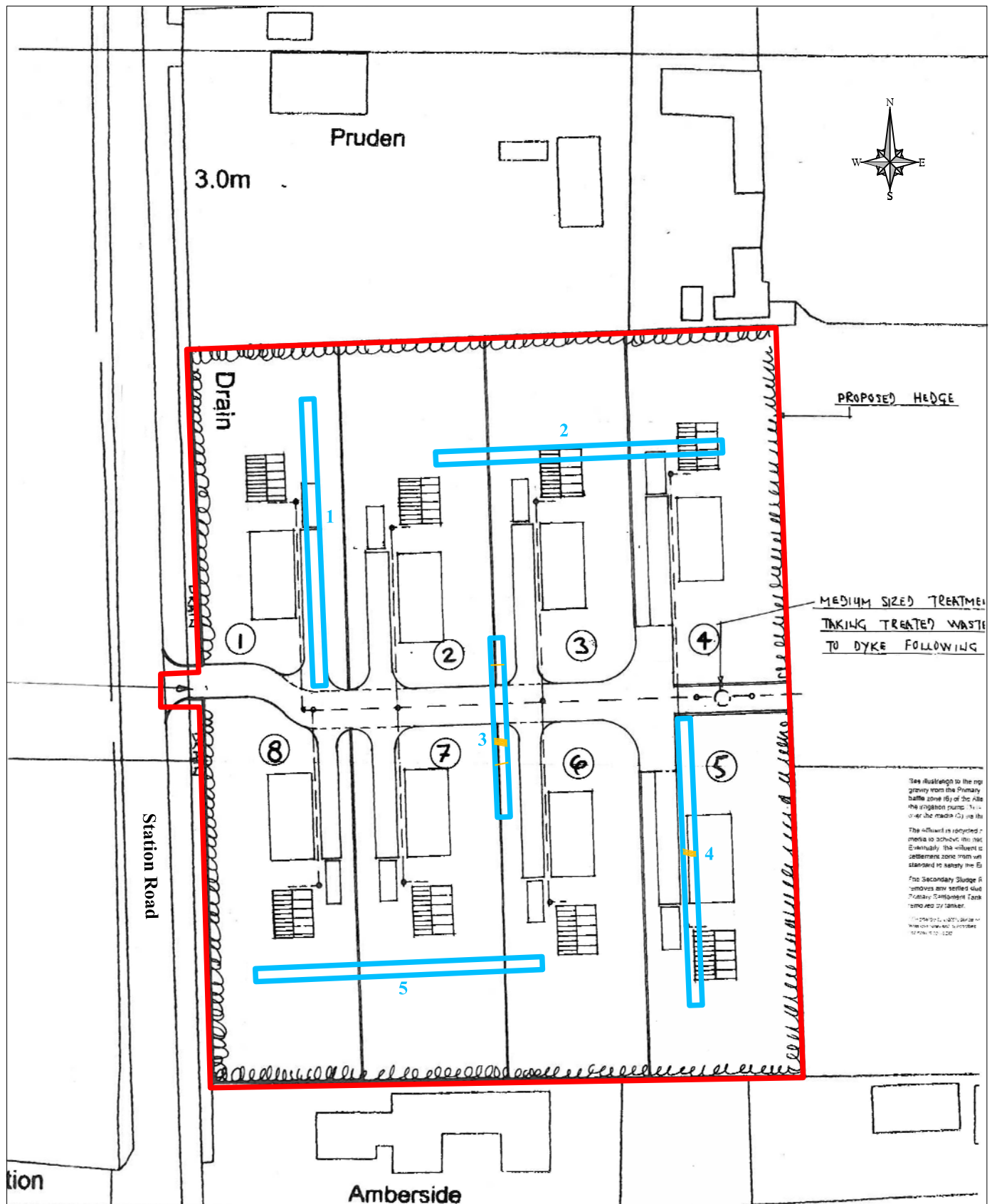




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0 50m

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<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:1000 at A4
Grunty Fen Rd, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (P6473)

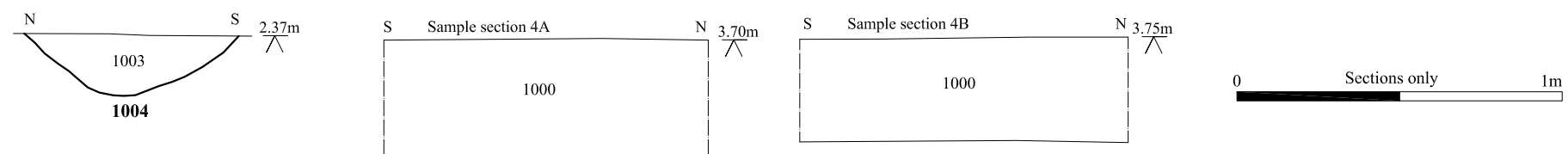
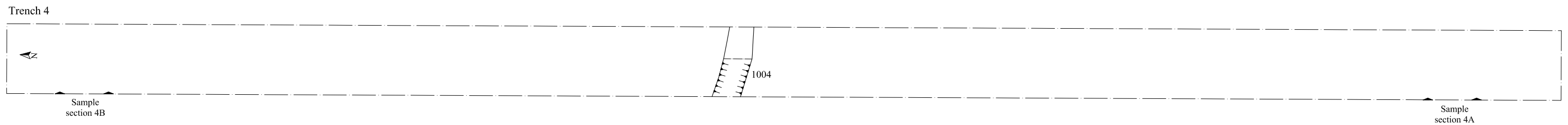
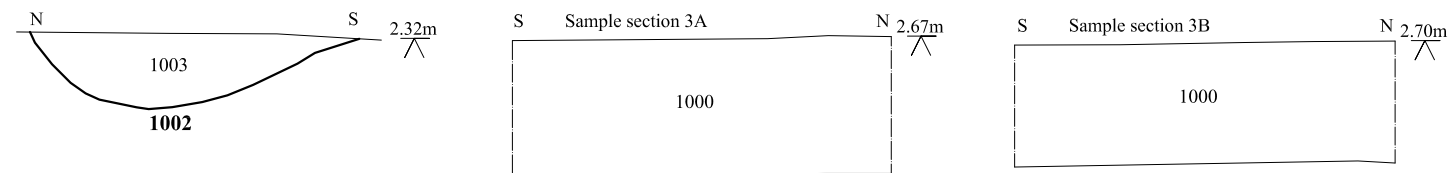
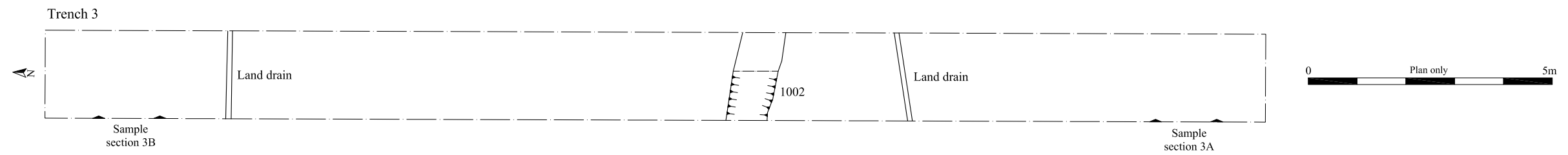


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### Fig. 3 Proposed development

Scale 1:500 at A4

Grunty Fen Rd, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (P6473)



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**Fig. 4 Trench plans and sections**

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

Grunty Fen Rd, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (P6473)