
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**LAND ADJACENT AND TO THE REAR OF 52 TO 56 WEST STREET,
ISLEHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

CHER ECB 4861

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NGR: TL 6383 7419		Report No: 5272
District: East Cambridgeshire		Site Code: ECB 4861
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA		Project No: P6968
		15 December 2016 (Revised: 15/03/2017)

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land Adjacent and to the Rear of 52 to 56 West Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire</i>		
<i>In December 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench on land adjacent and to the rear of 52 to 56 West Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 6383 7419). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for planning conditions on two separate planning approvals (East Cambs. Council Approval Refs. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL) for one new dwelling and one 1 and 1/2 Storey dwelling, garaging and new access drive (Planning apps. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL).</i>			
<i>The earliest finds from the evaluation are residual Roman sherds from Pits F1003 (Trench 1), F1010 and F1012 (Trench 2). The subsoil contained an iron knife blade of probable early Roman date (SF2). A residual medieval (mid 12th – 15th C) sherd and a residual late medieval (15th – 16th C) sherd were also recovered from Subsoil L1001. This context also contained a residual medieval (late 14th – 15th C) brick fragment and a lead weight of probable medieval to post-medieval date (SF1).</i>			
<i>Three late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) pits were located in Trench 1 (F1003) and Trench 2 (F1010 and F1012). Trench 2 also contained a clunch and flint wall, M1006. The construction cut for the latter (F1005) truncated Subsoil L1001 and its fill (L1007) contained 18th – 19th century CBM. M1006 is not recorded on historic cartographic maps dating from the late 19th century (Figs. 3 – 6) suggesting that the wall was demolished by this time. Pit F1010 yielded an iron nail of ?post-medieval date.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	December 2016		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	6968	Site code	ECB 4861
Type of project	Archaeological trial trench evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Enclosed lawns/fields		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	18 th – 19 th century pits and a wall		
Significant finds (+dates)	Sparse residual Roman, medieval and late medieval pottery sherds; probable early Roman iron blade; medieval brick fragment; medieval to post-medieval lead weight; ?post-medieval Iron nail		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Cambridgeshire	East Cambridgeshire	Isleham
HER/ SMR for area	Cambridgeshire HER		
Post code (if known)	CB7 5RA		
Area of site	6,550m ²		
NGR	TL 6383 7419		
Height AOD (min/max)	7.3m AOD		
<i>Project creators</i>			
Brief issued by	Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Mark Blagg-Newsome		
Funded by	Mr Dale Clarke		
Full title	Land Adjacent and to the Rear of 52 to 56 West Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation		
Authors	Blagg-Newsome, M. and Thompson, P.		
Report no.	5272		
Date (of report)	15 December 2016 (Revised 15/03/2017)		

LAND ADJACENT AND TO THE REAR OF 52 TO 56 WEST STREET, ISLEHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In December 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench on land adjacent and to the rear of 52 to 56 West Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 6383 7419). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for planning conditions on two separate planning approvals (East Cambs Council Approval Refs. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL) for one new dwelling and one 1 and 1/2 Storey dwelling, garaging and new access drive (Planning apps. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL).

The Scheduled Monument of Isleham Benedictine Priory including the upstanding Chapel of St Margare is located 350m to the east. The grounds of 16th century Isleham Hall abut the northern side of the proposed development site. Possible Bronze Age ring ditches are located 450m to the south-west. A possible Roman villa and medieval moated site is located 750m to the west. Prehistoric to Roman finds have been recovered mainly to the west and north. Medieval and post-medieval activity has been recorded within Isleham, the closest 180m east of the site.

The earliest finds from the evaluation are residual Roman sherds from Pits F1003 (Trench 1), F1010 and F1012 (Trench 2). The subsoil contained an iron knife blade of probable early Roman date (SF2). A residual medieval (mid 12th – 15th C) sherd and a residual late medieval (15th – 16th C) sherd were also recovered from Subsoil L1001. This context also contained a residual medieval (late 14th – 15th C) brick fragment and a lead weight of probable medieval to post-medieval date (SF1).

Three late post-medieval/modern (18th – 19th) century pits were located in Trench 1 (F1003) and Trench 2 (F1010 and F1012). Trench 2 also contained a clunch and flint wall, M1006. The construction cut for the latter (F1005) truncated Subsoil L1001 and its fill (L1007) contained 18th – 19th century CBM. M1006 is not recorded on historic cartographic maps dating from the late 19th century (Figs. 3 – 6) suggesting that the wall was demolished by this time. Pit F1010 yielded an iron nail of ?post-medieval date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2016 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench on land adjacent and to the rear of 52 to 56 West Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 6383 7419; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for planning conditions on two separate planning approvals (East Cambs. Council Approval Refs. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL) for one new dwelling and one 1 and 1/2 Storey dwelling, garaging and new access drive (Planning apps. 14/00309/FUL and 15/01367/FUL). Both planning agreements are on adjacent plots and are being dealt with under the same archaeological brief. The

evaluation was undertaken based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET), advisors to East Cambridgeshire District Council.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the CCC HET (Gemma Stewart, dated 11th November 2016), and a specification compiled by AS (dated 23rd November 2016) and approved by CCC HET. It adhered to the *ClfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) and the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

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 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The village of Isleham is situated 12km south-east of Ely, with the site located on the west side of the village immediately to the north of West Street. The site consists of an open grassed paddock area.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 Isleham is located on the tip of a low spur at 7.3m AOD which slopes away northwards into the Fens. The south to north flowing River Lark is located 1.7km to the north-east. The local soils comprise shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over argillaceous chalk associated with similar soils affected by groundwater (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983 a and b). The drift geology is alluvium, overlying a solid geology of Zig-Zag Chalk (British Geological Survey 1991).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 There is extensive evidence of multi-period activity recorded in the vicinity of Isleham. Prehistoric finds are fairly well-represented in the area. A Palaeolithic handaxe was recovered 220m to the south-east of the proposed development site (CHER MCB19231), and Mesolithic flint artefacts including Tranchet axe heads and scrapers were found 430m to the north (CHER 10883), with other Mesolithic flints recovered beyond that in Isleham Fen (CHER 10954). Two Mesolithic antler axes were recovered in Isleham some 770m or so east of the site (CHER 07622). The Neolithic is represented by scatters of flintwork one including a polished flint axe head, antler pick and arrowheads from an area centred on 400-440m to the north-west of the site (CHER 10862, 10883A), with other scatters from Isleham Fen further to the north and north-west (CHER 10954A, 10966). A possible long barrow identified from aerial photos is situated near Rymanmoor Long Turning, approximately 900m north-west of the site (CHER 10957).

4.2 An area of Bronze Age activity was identified at Hall Farm centred on 260m west of the site (CHER MCB17270). The evidence included a post-hole packed with chalk, a gully, and a relict pond containing burnt flint and pottery. Evidence for Early Bronze Age settlement has been identified at Prickwillow Road centred on 860m north of the site, which includes clusters of pits and post-holes and quantities of animal bone, and one human humerus (CHER 11896). Bronze Age Beaker pottery and other rusticated pottery sherds were also found in the vicinity (CHER 07537). A bronze socketed axe head was found 400m to the west of the proposed development site (CHER 11711). Bronze Age finds were also recovered from the same location as Mesolithic and Neolithic finds on Isleham Fen to the north-west (CHER 10883). Three ring ditches indicating former Bronze Age burial mounds are present on the edge of the village centred on 450m south-west of the site (CHER MCB17114), along with enclosures of probable late prehistoric date, identified from aerial photographs (CHER ECB2284). Iron Age and Roman grey ware pottery was recovered during a test pit survey at Little London Lane, 180m east of the site (CHER MCB19744).

4.3 A 2nd century AD brooch was found near Hall farm approximately 170-80m north-west of the site (CHER 10863), as was a saddle quern stone (CHER 10864). Another brooch dated to the 1st century AD was found some 380m west of the site (CHER 11710). The site of a Roman building referred to as 'The Temple' (see 4.6), indicated by the presence of tessellated paving, roof tile, box tile and a small amount of pottery, is located approximately 750m west of the site (CHER 05704). Several Roman metalwork objects were also found to the north-west of the site in the

direction of the putative Neolithic long barrow (CHER 07589). The Saxon period is represented by only a few spot finds, including a disc brooch found in the fields to the west of the site (CHER 11691), and Saxon (and medieval) pottery from St Andrew's Close north of the parish church (CHER MCB19749). However, evidence for medieval occupation in Isleham is abundant.

4.4 The Scheduled Monument site of Isleham Priory was a medieval Alien Benedictine institution (CHER DCB221; SAM 27101), located some 100m to the west of the medieval Church of St Andrew (CHER 07591), and commences 350m east of the proposed development site. The Grade I listed Chapel of St Margaret of Antioch (CHER 07529) survives as the only standing structure, with the buried remains of the foundations of the conventual buildings, and the earthwork remains of the associated agricultural and other elements of the complex, to the north (CHER 07528). Included in the scheduling are the earthwork remains of Isleham Priory fish ponds, hollow ways and building platforms which lie immediately adjacent.

4.5 Possible medieval field systems (CHER 11895), property boundaries (CHER CB15283), clunch-processing sites (CHER MCB16866 and MCB20069), and a variety of finds (CHER 11074, 11574, 11712, MCB19713, MCB19719, MCB19721, MCB19744, MCB19749, MCB19750, MCB19752), are amongst the other evidence for medieval activity within Isleham. The closest of these sites to the proposed development site is the test pit 180m to the east that produced Iron Age and Roman pottery, which also contained medieval and post-medieval sherds including early post-medieval Metropolitan slipware from Harlow (CHER MCB19744).

4.6 The earthworks of a possible medieval moated site 'The Temple' is located 750m west of the site, which takes its name from a 14th century land holding in the area of the Knights Templar (CHER 05704a). It overlies the possible Roman 'villa', and medieval glazed and coarseware sherds were found on the site. The 16th century Isleham Hall lies close by the proposed development site to the north, with its associated park and gardens and lime kilns which abut the proposed development site (CHER MCB19362). A group of lime kilns last used c.1910 were located on the High Street in the middle of Isleham (CHER 07489).

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 The evaluation provided for a c. 5% sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched. The trenching focused on the footprint of the proposed new dwellings and two T-shaped trenches were excavated (Figs. 2 and 7). The southern arm of Trench 2 was extended by 0.50m to expose a wall.

6.2 Topsoil and subsoil were removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Exposed sections were cleaned and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

6.3 Open trenches and excavated spoil were manually/ visually searched and scanned by metal detector to enhance the recovery of archaeological finds; AS was

assisted in this task by metal detectorist Mr Shane Smalley. Metal fragments including a lead weight and iron blade were recovered from Subsoil L1001.

6.4 A one-metre square of layers below the existing surface were bucket sampled and sorted by hand at each end of the trenches to characterise their artefact content. A medieval and a late medieval sherd were recovered from Subsoil L1001. The latter also contained a medieval (late 14th – 15th C) brick fragment and a lead weight of medieval to post-medieval date (SF1). Of intrinsic interest from L1001 was a probable early Roman iron Knife (SF2) of Manning Type 23 with a close parallel from Hod Hill, Dorset (see *The Small Finds*, Appendix 2). Although this form of knife has Iron Age origins, a Roman date is suggested by residual pottery from the site.

7 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

7.1 Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Figs. 2, 7 and 8)

<i>Sample section 1A</i> 0.00m = 6.01m AOD		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark brownish black silty clay with very occasional small angular chalk. CBM was recovered from this layer.
0.30 – 0.60m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid to light brownish grey silty clay, with very occasional small sub-angular chalk and very occasional small angular flint.
0.60m+	L1002	Natural. Light creamy white chalk

<i>Sample section 1B</i> 0.00m = 6.13m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.32 – 0.72m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.72m+	L1002	Natural. As above.

<i>Sample section 1C</i> 0.00m = 6.12m AOD		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.29 – 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.54m+	L1002	Natural. As above.

Description: Trench 1 contained late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) Pit F1003 and a water service trench. The pit contained two residual sherds of Roman (mid 2nd – 4th century) pottery.

Pit F1003 was irregular in plan (2.50 x 3.04 x 0.29m). It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish undulating base. Its fill, L1004, was a loose, light to mid brownish grey sandy silt, with occasional small sub-angular flints. It contained Roman (mid 2nd – 4th century) pottery (2; 27g), CBM (108g) and animal bone (70g). The CBM includes small fragments of red peg tile characteristic of the industrially-produced

roofing materials of the 18th to 19th centuries (see *The Ceramic Building Materials*, Appendix 2). The Roman pottery is therefore residual.

Trench 2 (Figs. 2, 7 and 9)

<i>Sample section 2A</i> 0.00m = 6.12m AOD		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.30 – 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.54m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 2B</i> 0.00m = 6.15m AOD		
0.00 – 0.33m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.33 – 0.67m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.67m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

<i>Sample section 2C</i> 0.00m = 6.01m AOD		
0.00 – 0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.34 – 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.50m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

Description: Trench 2 contained late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) Pits F1010 and F1012. Each pit contained a sherd of residual Roman pottery, while F1010 also yielded an iron nail of possible post-medieval date. A a clunch and flint wall (M1006) was also present in Trench 2.

Pit F1010 was sub-circular in plan (1.34 x 2.20 x 0.89m). It had steep sides which became vertical towards the base, which was flat. It contained three fills. The basal fill (L1014¹) comprised dark grey, friable sandy silt and contained late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) CBM (180g) and animal bone (14g). The secondary fill (L1008²) was mid reddish brown, loose sandy silt with frequent CBM. It was thought on site, that L1008 represented the remains of a collapsed roof of a clay structure, but the CBM is much fragmented and equates to rubble (see *The Ceramic Building Materials*, Appendix 2); it does not represent a primary context. L1008 contained late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) CBM (4788g) and animal bone (47g). The upper fill, L1009, was a loose, mid greyish brown sandy silt, with some occasional small angular flints. Finds from L1009 include residual Roman pottery (1; 12g), CBM (7007g), animal bone (178g) and oyster shell (2; 24g). An iron nail of possible post-medieval date was also present within this context.

Pit F1012 was sub-circular in plan (1.00+ x 1.10+ x 0.52m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1013, was a firm, light grey-yellowish brown silty clay with occasional medium-sized sub-rounded chalk. It contained Roman pottery (1; 4g) and CBM (15g). The latter includes small fragments of red peg tile characteristic of the industrially-produced roofing materials of the 18th to 19th

¹ Following excavation, F1014 was recorded in the SW section of Trench 2 only (Fig. 9)

² L1008 was half sectioned and recorded, then 100% excavated (within the trench area (Fig. 9))

centuries, indicating that the Roman sherd is residual. In the north-eastern section of the trial trench, the fill of Pit F1012 (L1013) was sealed by a small deposit of redeposited natural (L1015; Fig. 9). Pit F1010 cut the fill of Pit F1012.

M1006 was a clunch and flint wall (3.00+ x 0.15 to 0.26 x 0.28m), bonded by a mottled mid yellow mortar. The construction cut for the wall, F1005, truncated Subsoil L1001. The western edge of the cut was steep and it had a flattish base. This feature continued beyond the trial trench to the east; its eastern edge was not revealed within the confines of the trench (Fig. 9). Two fills were recorded within F1005 (L1011 and L1007). Fill L1007 was a friable, mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional small sub-rounded chalk, and contained 18th – 19th CBM (2757g). L1011 comprised light greyish brown, friable silty clay with frequent chalk.

8 CONFIDENCE RATING

8.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

9 DEPOSIT MODEL

9.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000, a firm, dark brownish black silty clay with very occasional small angular chalk (0.29 - 0.34m thick). Below L1000 was Subsoil L1001, a firm, mid to light brownish grey silty clay with very occasional small sub-angular chalk and angular flint (c.0.24 - 0.40m thick). Below L1001 was the natural geology (L1002), comprising light creamy white chalk bedrock (0.50 – 0.72m below the present day ground surface).

10 DISCUSSION

10.1 The recorded features are tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Date
	L1001	Subsoil	Residual ?early Roman iron knife blade Residual medieval (mid 12 th – 15 th C) sherd and residual late medieval (15 th – 16 th C) sherd Residual medieval (late 14 th – 15 th C) brick fragment Residual ?medieval to post-medieval lead weight
1	F1003	Pit	18 th – 19 th C Residual Roman (mid 2 nd – 4 th C) sherd
2	M1006	Clunch and Flint Wall	18 th – 19 th C
	F1010	Pit	18 th – 19 th C Residual Roman sherd
	F1012	Pit	18 th – 19 th C Residual Roman sherd

10.2 The earliest finds from the evaluation are residual Roman sherds from Pits F1003 (Trench 1), F1010 and F1012 (Trench 2). An iron Knife blade of probable early Roman date (SF2) was recovered from Subsoil L1001. A residual medieval (mid 12th – 15th C) sherd and a residual late medieval (15th – 16th C) sherd were also recovered from Subsoil L1001. This context also contained a residual medieval (late

14th – 15th C) brick fragment and a lead weight of probable medieval to post-medieval date (SF1).

10.3 Three late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th) century pits were located in Trench 1 (F1003) and Trench 2 (F1010 and F1012). Trench 2 also contained a clunch and flint wall, M1006. The construction cut for the latter (F1005) truncated Subsoil L1001 and its fill (L1007) contained 18th – 19th century CBM. M1006 is not recorded on historic cartographic maps dating from the late 19th century (Figs. 3 – 6) suggesting that the wall was demolished by this time.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The evaluation recovered residual Roman sherds from three pits located in both Trenches 1 and 2. A residual iron knife blade of Manning Type 23 (SF2) – probably dating to the early Roman period – was recovered from Subsoil L1001. Sparse medieval and late medieval sherds were also recovered from Subsoil L1001. The latter also contained a medieval (late 14th – 15th C) brick fragment and a lead weight of probable medieval to post-medieval date (SF1).

11.2 Three late post-medieval/ modern (18th – 19th century) pits were located in Trenches 1 and Trench 2. Trench 2 also contained a clunch and flint wall of 18th – 19th century date. The wall is not recorded on the historic cartographic maps dating from the late 19th century suggesting that the wall was demolished by this time.

11.3 The site was not significantly disturbed suggesting that additional archaeological features, had they been 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 Ltd (AS) would like to thank the client, Mr Dale Clarke for funding the project and for his assistance. AS also acknowledges the assistance of metal detectorist Mr Shane Smalley.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Gemma Stewart (Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team).

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Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983b

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

APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date (Pottery Only)	Pottery (Qty)	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	Animal Bone (g)	Other Material	Other (Qty)	Other (g)
	1001		Subsoil	18th C+	6	82	1717	368	SF1 Pb Weight SF2 Fe Blade	1 1	27 32
			1 Residual medieval sherd, Late medieval sherds and medieval brick fragment						Cu.Frags Pb.Frags Fe.Frags	5	14 38 749
1003	1004	1	Fill of Pit	Mid 2nd-4thC AD	2	27	108	70			
1005	1007	2	Construction cut for wall M1006				2757				
1010	1008	2	Fill of Pit				4788	47			
	1009	2		Residual: Roman	1	12	7007	178	Fe Nail	1	7
	1014	2					180	14	Oyster Shell	2	24
1012	1013	2	Fill of Pit	Residual: Roman	1	4	15				

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

Andy Peachey and Peter Thompson

The archaeological evaluation recovered 10 sherds (119g) (Table 1); with three pits yielding four sherds of Roman pottery. Subsoil L1001 contained a single medieval rim sherd, and five sherds of late medieval to post-medieval date.

Methodology

The pottery was examined and recorded in keeping with *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (Barclay et al 2016), which develop previous period specific guidelines such as those of the Medieval Pottery Research Group (i.e. Slowikowski et al 2001 and MPRG 1998). The fabrics are listed and catalogued below.

Fabric Descriptions

Roman:

GRS: Sandy grey ware

BSW: Black surfaced reduced ware

LNV WH: Lower Nene Valley white ware (Tomber and Dore 1998, 119)

Medieval to post-medieval:

MEL: Medieval Ely type ware; mid 12th-15th

LMT: Late Medieval Transitional Ware; 15th-16th

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenware; 16th-18th

Feature	Context	Quantity	Date	Comment
Subsoil	L1001	1x26g MEL 2x23g LMT 2x25g GRE 1x8g SWSG	16 th -18 th	MEL: developed jar rim 25cm diam
Pit F1003	L1004	1x16g LNV WH 1x8g BSW	Mid 2 nd -4 th C AD	-
Pit F1010	L1009	1x10g GRS	Roman	GRS: everted bead rim of a jar (diameter: 18cm)
Pit F1012	L1013	1x3g GRS	Roman	-

Table 1: Quantification of sherds by context

The Roman Pottery

The limited stratified sherds were entirely of Roman date and predominantly comprise ubiquitous locally-produced coarse wares (GRS and BSW), including the rim of a jar or cooking pot in Pit F1010 L1008. However the basal junction of a jar or bowl in Lower Nene Valley white ware (LNV WH) in Pit F1003 provides tentative evidence that occupation may not have commenced prior to the mid 2nd century AD, when production of this fabric expanded in the kilns around *Durobrivae* (Water Newton) in the fenland to the north-west.

References

Barclay, A., Knight, D., Booth, P., Evans, J., Brown, D., and Wood, I., 2016
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A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms, MPRG Occasional Paper No. 1

Slowikowski, A., Nenk, B. and Pearce, J., 2001
Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics, MPRG Occasional Paper No. 2

Tomber, R. and Dore, J., 1998
The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (London, Museum of London)

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey MClfA

The evaluation recovered a total of 241 fragments (16902g) of CBM (Table 2), including a single fragment of uncommon medieval brick, with a significant component of the assemblage comprised of peg tile that could feasibly have been manufactured in the late 15th to 16th centuries. The bulk of the assemblage is associated with the backfill of Pit F1010 that is defined by highly fragmented 18th to 19th century brick and tile that can be characterized as rubble; suggesting the peg tile may have been re-used or recycled in a later structure.

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.

CBM Type	Date	Fragment Count	Weight (g)
Brick	Medieval	1	885
Peg Tile	Late medieval	91	4908
Brick	Post-medieval (18-19 th C)	133	9827
Peg tile		16	1282
<i>Total</i>		<i>241</i>	<i>16902</i>

Table 2: Quantification of CBM

The Medieval Brick

A single fragment of brick (885g), approximately 60-70% of a complete brick was recovered from Subsoil L1001; manufactured in a slightly inconsistent red-orange fabric with inclusions of sparse quartz, limestone/chalk (both <0.5mm), shell and red iron rich grains (both 0.5-4mm). The brick has partial dimensions of ?x100x45mm, with a rough base, creased faces and irregular arrises; technological traits that are characteristic of the re-introduction of bricks manufactured in England in the late 14th to early 15th centuries, including production at Ely (Lucas 1993, 157-8), with this type of brick continuing as a small variant into the Tudor period. Nonetheless, the occurrence of this brick is isolated and un-stratified, and it remains unclear if it was associated with a structure in the vicinity.

The Peg Tile

The bulk of the peg tile was manufactured using local Kimmeridge clays that produced tiles with pale orange to yellow-brown surfaces over a mid grey core; in a calcareous fabric (with sparse red iron rich pellets 1.5-10mm). These peg tiles were

typically 10-12mm thick, relatively thin for their type, with circular, slightly recessed peg holes. Other technological traits include un-sanded bases, knife-trimmed edges and a high incidence of creased/warped tiles; which collectively identify these tiles as relatively early within their currency as building materials, although the lack of further extant dimensions prevents a more specific chronology being defined. Early peg tiles came into general use in East Anglia in the mid 13th century and had become almost universal by the beginning of the 14th century; however until 1477 when legislation standardised dimensions and quality they exhibited considerable variation (Drury 1981, 131). The technological traits, including the firing and fabric of these peg tiles suggest they could feasibly pre-date 1477, with peg tiles adopted as a roofing material from the late 13th to 14th centuries at Forehill Ely (Alexander 2003, 147). The peg tiles could potentially be contemporary with the brick recorded in Subsoil L1001; however, the majority were recovered as part of the backfills of Pit F1010 and Construction Cut F1005 (for Wall M1006). Their broken but not highly fragmented condition suggests that they may have been re-laid as foundation, floor or wall materials.

Recovered in association with the earlier peg tiles, and as isolated fragments in Pits F1003 and F1012, were small fragments of red peg tile in a sandy fabric, with a smooth, highly-fired appearance that is characteristic of the industrially-produced roofing materials of the 18th to 19th centuries.

The Post-Medieval Brick

The backfill of Pit F1010 L1008 contained all the fragments of post-medieval brick recorded, which are entirely comprised of gault bricks produced in the local area, notably between Ely and Burwell. The brick fragments are in very poor condition, possibly in part due to deliberate crushing, but have partial dimensions of ?x110x60mm with a smooth base, suggesting they were manufactured in the 18th to 19th centuries, probably before c.1875.

References

Alexander, M., 2003

'A medieval and post-medieval street frontage – investigations at Forehill, Ely,' *Proceeding of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* XCII, 135-82

Drury, P., 1981

'The production of brick and tile in medieval England', in Crossley, D. (ed.), *Medieval Industry*, Council of British Archaeology Research Report 40, 126-42

Lucas, R., 1993

'Ely Bricks and Roof Tiles and Distribution in Norfolk and elsewhere in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', *Proceeding of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* LXXXII, 157-62

The Small Finds

Rebecca Sillwood

Introduction

Two small finds were recovered from the trial trench evaluation (Table 3): one of lead (SF1) and one of iron (SF2). Both pieces were recovered from Subsoil L1001. An iron nail was also found in pit F1010 (L1009).

SF No.	Context	Material	No.	Wt. (g)	Length (mm)	Diameter (mm)	Height (mm)
1	1001	Lead	1	27	-	25	11.5
2	1001	Iron	1	32	8.6	-	-
-	1009	Iron	1	7	-	14	37

Table 3: The metal finds

Lead Object

A conical lead weight with a roughly circular base, sloping sides and a central hole (SF1), was found in Subsoil L1001. Lead weights are notoriously difficult to date – they can vary greatly in size, shape, quality and style throughout multiple periods, and local variation also means that there is much uncertainty over dating. However, this type of weight is almost certainly of medieval to post-medieval date, which is a very broad band of possibility, and given that this piece is also unstratified makes it problematic to refine. The weight of the object itself is not a reliable guide for dating either, given that time and deposition conditions can change such objects markedly.

Iron Objects

SF2 is a complete knife of unusual and very distinctive type. The piece is probably Roman in date, and is a small curved blade with a whittle tang. The back of the blade curves up from the tang to the point, which is slightly higher than the tang. The blade edge is convex, with the shoulder sloping at a 45° angle down from the tang.

Manning (1985, 118) describes this type of knife as a Type 23, with the Isleham example being very similar to one recovered from Hod Hill in Dorset (Manning 1985, plate 56, Q66). This type of knife has Iron Age origins, but is thought to have continued as a design into the Roman period, tapering off around the late 1st or 2nd century.

The second iron object is a nail from pit F1010 (L1009), in which residual Roman pottery and later CBM was also found. Nails are a ubiquitous find from many periods, so it is difficult to put an exact date on this example as it has no outstanding or unusual features that would enable such a pronouncement. It is likely to be post-medieval in date, given its context, but could feasibly be earlier, given the presence of some earlier material at the site.

Conclusions

The metal finds from the site are limited in quantity and are mainly unstratified. The small iron knife is likely to be of Roman date, and is not a common find, especially given that it is complete and in reasonably good condition. Residual Roman pottery was recovered from the site, though the overall assemblage seems to suggest a later date for occupation in the area. The knife implies an early Roman presence.

Lead weights are a common find on many sites, and are a staple of many metal detected assemblages, as are iron nails. The weight from Isleham is probably medieval to post-medieval in date.

Reference

Manning, W.H., 1985

Catalogue of the Romano-British Iron Tools, Fittings and Weapons in the British Museum (London, British Museum Publications)

The Animal Bone

Mark S. Blagg-Newsome

A very small assemblage (total 677g) of animal bone was recovered during the trial trench evaluation (Table 4). The majority (368g) is derived from Subsoil L1001 and not reported on. Bone preservation was rated as generally ok on a five point scale from very poor through to excellent. The bone is derived from pit fills (F1003 and F1010). Bone abrasion was observed in generally low quantities, but some contexts (L1009) had a higher level of abrasion, whilst fragmentation was generally low with only a few fresh breaks. Of the recorded assemblage, just under half (47%) of the total assemblage was identifiable to a specific taxa, with cattle and pigeon (*Columba sp.*) the dominant species represented. If taken on basic NISP counts, pigeon would be the dominant species due to the presence of a potential associated bone group (ABG) in the assemblage. For the purposes of this report, the ABG has been counted as 1 in the NISP count to address this imbalance. Sheep/goat and pig then follow equally in abundance after cattle and pigeon. 5 fragments were identifiable to only size categories (13% of the assemblage); 1 large mammal (cattle or horse size) and 4 medium mammal (sheep/goat or pig size).

With the exception of one mandibular M3 and mandibular ramus, cattle was represented by limb elements of mostly juvenile age. The pig and sheep/goat remains were also represented by limb elements. All of the above species probably represent those animals killed for food. The pigeon remains were all recovered from within a fill (F1010 L1009). Two oyster shells were also recovered from this fill.

No canid or rodent gnawing was observable on any of the bones. Butchery was noted on one element, the cattle mandibular ramus from F1010 L1008. A diagonal chop mark separating the ramus from the coronoid process can be seen, a butchery technique usually associated with the removal of the tongue, probably for the purposes of meat acquisition. No pathology was noted on any of the bones. Light burning indicated by a slight blackening of the bone was observable on one unidentified fragment and one large mammal rib. No further comment is possible.

Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Cattle	Sheep/Goat	Pig	Pigeon	Large Mammal	Medium Mammal	Unidentifiable	Total (Not inc. Unid)
1003	1004	Pit Fill	Mid 2 nd – 4 th C AD	3		1			1	4	5
1010	1008	Pit Fill	18 th – 19 th C	1					1	1	2
	1009	Pit Fill	18 th – 19 th C	2	3	2	6	1	1	8	15
	1014	Pit Fill	18 th – 19 th C						1	2	1
			Totals	6	3	3	6	1	4	15	23

Table 4: Quantification of bone from 52-56 West Street, Isleham, Cambs. (for the pigeon count, all the bones from the ABG were counted as 1 for the purposes of quantification. The actual number of bones in the ABG is 14)

The Environmental Samples

Dr John Summers

Introduction

During trial evaluation on land adjacent to 52-56 West Street, Isleham, four bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were taken and processed. Three samples were from deposits associated with Pit F1010. This report presents the results from the assessment of the bulk sample light fractions, and discusses the significance and potential of any remains recovered.

Methods

Samples were processed at the Archaeological Solutions Ltd facilities in Bury St. Edmunds using standard flotation methods. The light fractions were washed onto a mesh of 500µm (microns), while the heavy fractions were sieved to 1mm. 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 5.

Carbonised plant macrofossils in the form of charred cereal grains were recovered from two deposits (F1003 L1004 and F1010 L1014). A single wheat grain (*Triticum* sp.) was present in L1004, while numerous barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grains were recorded in L1014. No other carbonised remains, such as chaff or non-cereal weed taxa, were present, which may indicate the presence of clean grain. This could have been generated during food preparation and consumption activities, or the carbonisation of stored, clean grain. At present, the number of samples does not allow a detailed examination of the significance of different crops in the arable economy or the distribution of activities on the site.

Charcoal was recorded as common in L1009 and L1014, with an assessment of vessel patterns identifying non-oak ring- and diffuse-porous wood types. This material is likely to represent spent fuel debris.

Mollusc shells, primarily of taxa characteristic of ground litter, were identified in all four samples. This suggests sheltered conditions on the site, such as taller waste ground vegetation.

Conclusions

The samples from 52-56 West Street have shown that both wheat and barley were in use at the site. The material is likely to represent waste from routine processing and

food preparation activities, being deposited with hearth waste (charcoal). Insufficient evidence was recovered from the present investigation to understand the economic significance of the crops recovered or any information regarding crop husbandry regimes.

References

Cappers, R.T.J., Bekker R.M. and Jans J.E.A., 2006

Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands. Groningen Archaeological Studies Volume 4 (Eelde, Barkhuis Publishing)

Jacomet, S., 2006

Identification of Cereal Remains from Archaeological Sites (2nd edition, Laboratory of Palynology and Palaeoecology, Basel University)

Kerney, M.P., 1999

Atlas of the Land and Freshwater Molluscs of Britain and Ireland (Colchester, Harley Books)

Kerney, M.P. and Cameron, R.A.D., 1979

A Field Guide to Land Snails of Britain and North-West Europe (London, Collins)

	Other remains	,	,
Contaminants	Earthworm capsules	,	,
	Insects	,	,
	Modern seeds	X	X
	Molluscs	XX	XX
	Roots	XX	X
Molluscs	Notes	<i>Carychium</i> sp., <i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Discus rotundatus</i> , <i>Oxychilus</i> sp., <i>Pupilla muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Discus rotundatus</i> , <i>Helicella itala</i> , <i>Pupilla muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.
	Molluscs	XX	XXX
Charcoal	Notes	,	,
	Charcoal>2mm	X	,
	Hazelnut shell	,	,
Non-cereal taxa	Notes	,	,
	Seeds	,	,
Cereals	Notes	Trit (1), NFI (1)	,
	Cereal chaff	,	,
	Cereal grains	X	,
	% processed	50%	50%
	Volume processed (litres)	10	10
	Volume taken (litres)	20	20
	Spot date	Mid 2 nd – 4 th C AD	18 th – 19 th C
	Description	Fill of Pit	Fill of STR
	Feature	1003	1008
	Context	1004	1009
	Sample number	1	2

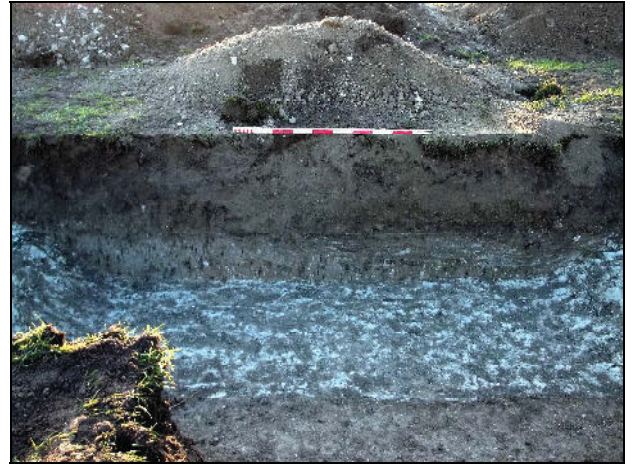
3	1009	1008	Fill of STR	18 th – 19 th C	20	10	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	Carychium sp., Cochlicopa sp., <i>Discus</i> <i>rotundatus</i> , Oxychilus sp., <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispidata</i> group, <i>Vitrea</i> sp.	XX	Ring porous, Diffuse porous	XX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	1014	1008	Fill of STR	18 th – 19 th C	10	10	100%	XX	-	Horde (XX)	-	-	-	-	XX	XX	XX	XX	X	Cochlicopa sp., Oxychilus sp., <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispidata</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp., <i>Vitrea</i> sp.	XX	Diffuse porous	XX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5: Results from the assessment of bulk sample light fractions from 52-56 West Street, Isleham. Abbreviations: Hord = barley (*Hordeum* sp.); Trit = wheat (*Triticum* sp.); NFI = not formally identified (indeterminate cereal grain)

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
View of Trench 1, looking south-west



2
Pit 1003 in Trench 1, looking south-east



3
View of Trench 2, looking north-west



4
Wall M1006 in Trench 2, looking south



5
Pit F1010 in Trench 2, looking south-east



6
Pit F1010 in Trench 2, looking south-west



7
Pit F1012 in foreground with Pit 1010 beyond,
looking north-west



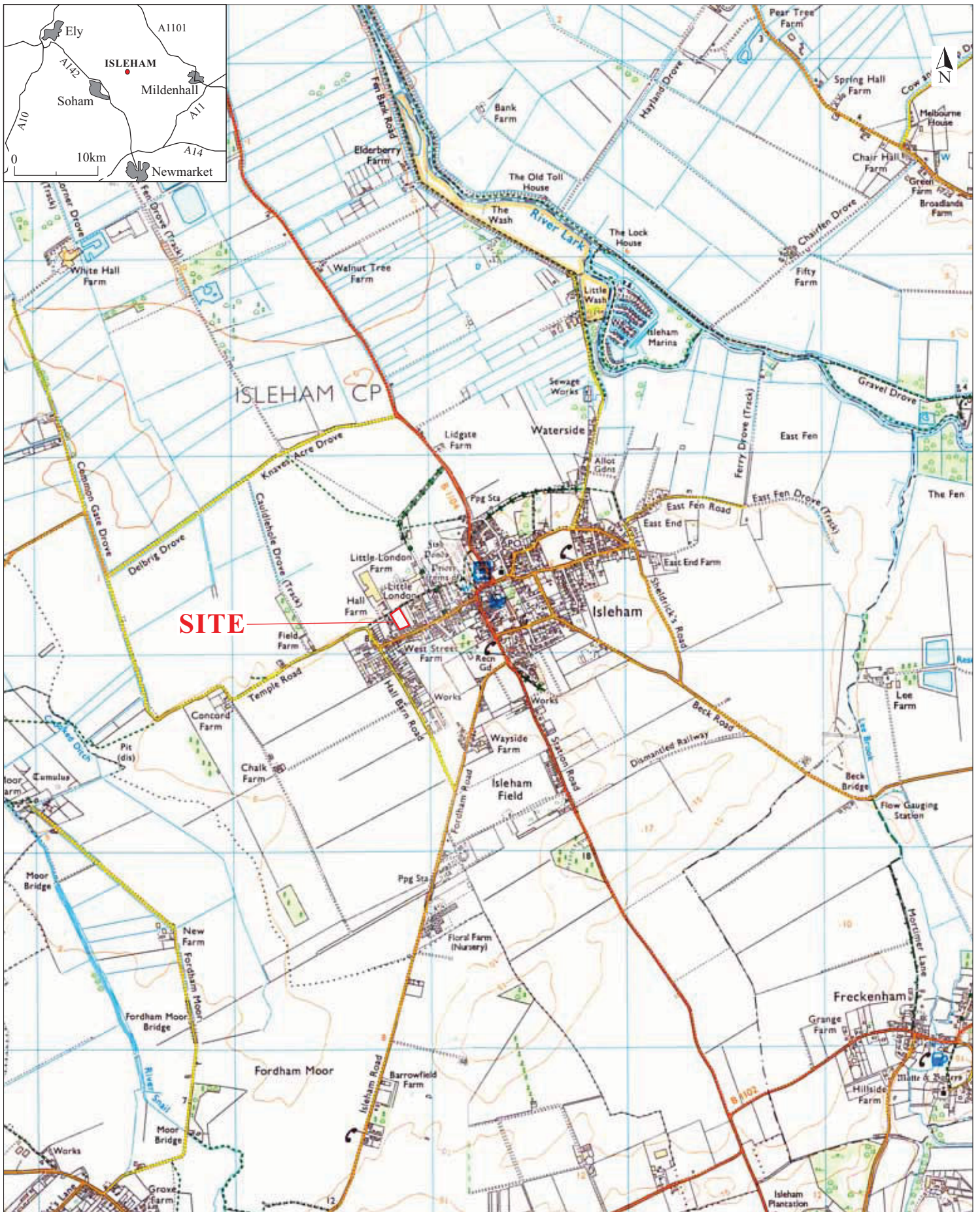
8
Pit F1010 half-sectioned, looking south-west



9
South-eastern edge of Pit F1012 in north-eastern section of Trench 2 (Sample Section 2D), looking north-east

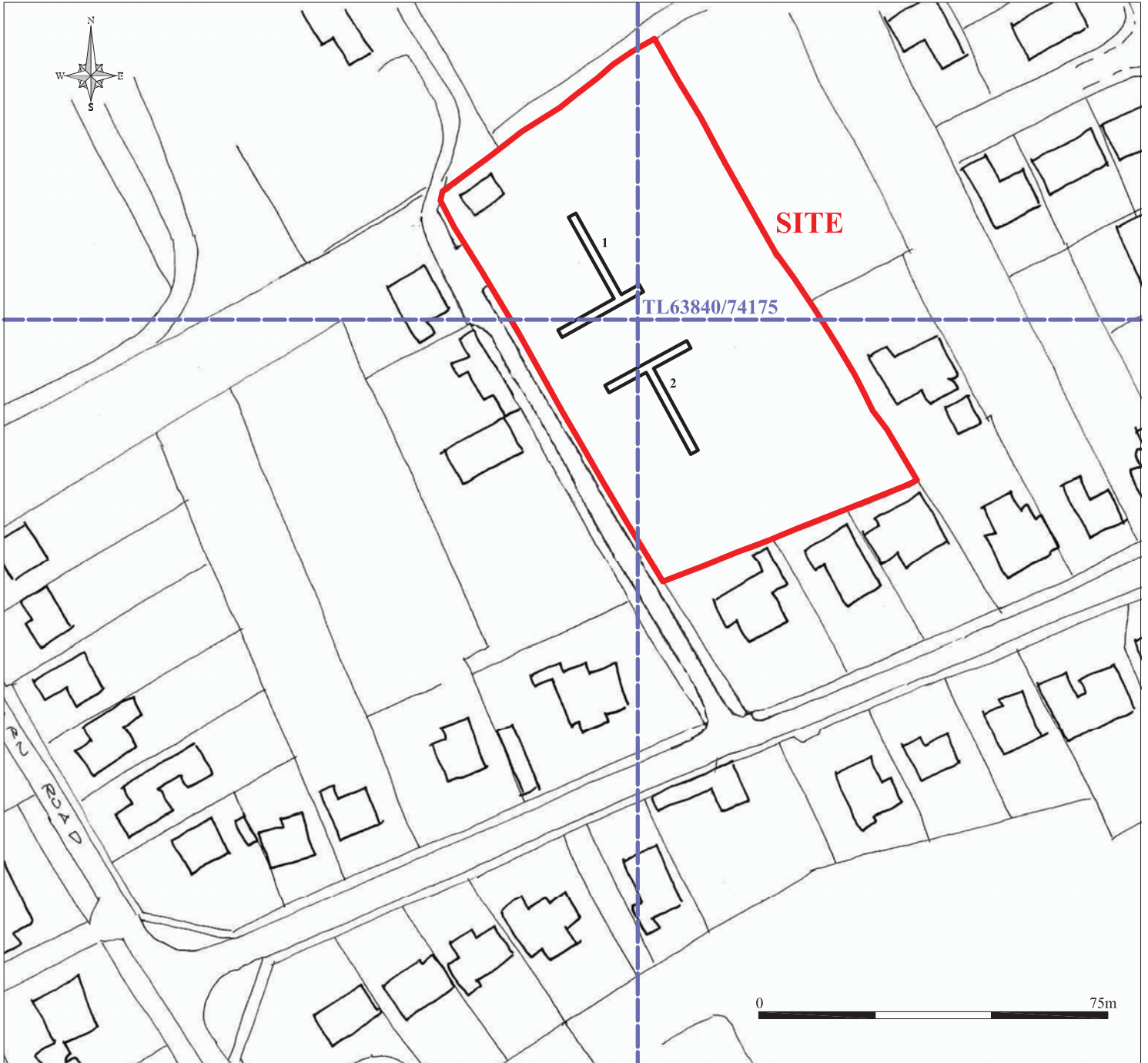


10
Iron knife found in subsoil in Trench 2

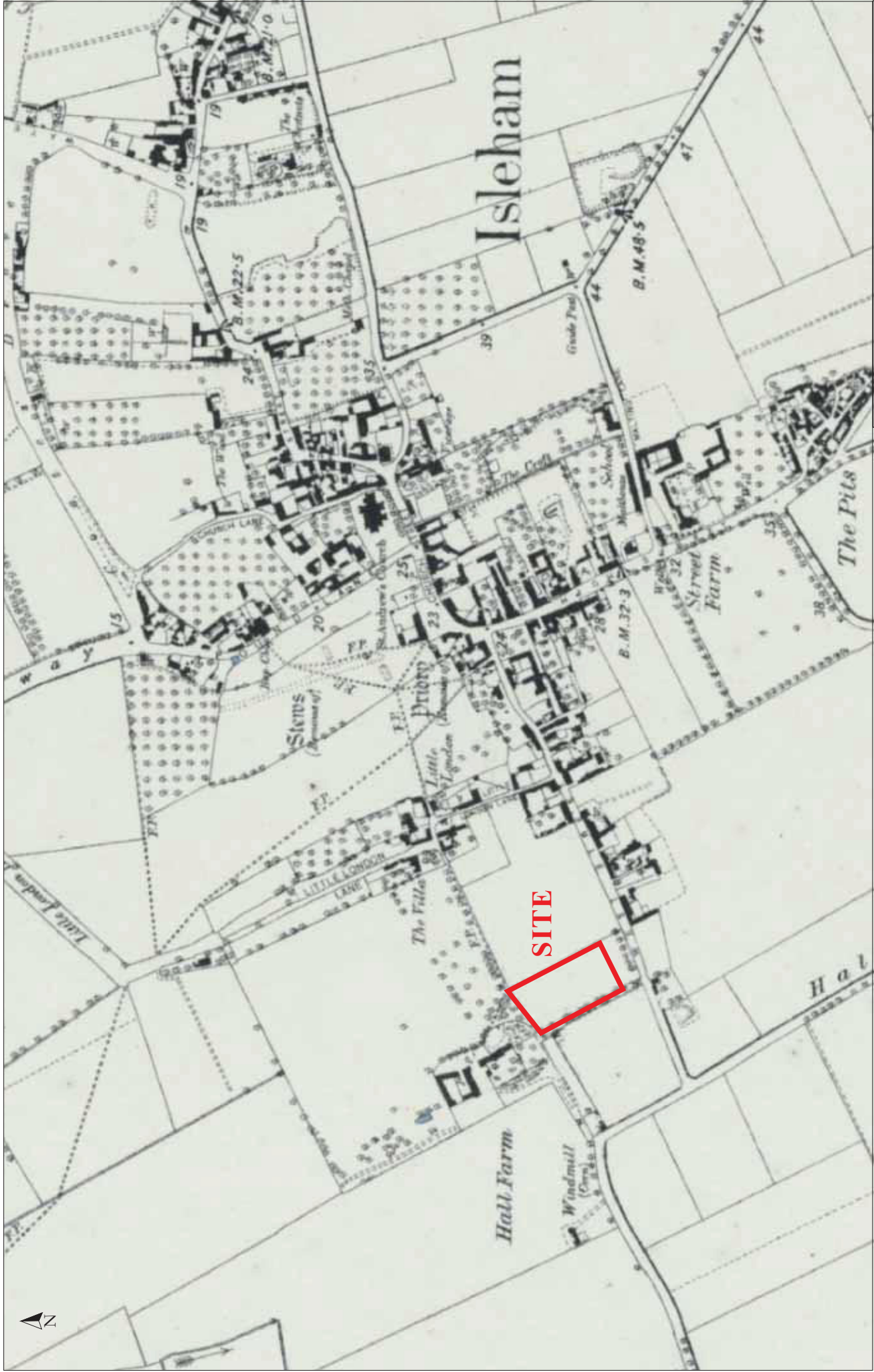


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 52-56 West St, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (P6968)



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:1250 at A4
52-56 West Street, Isleham, Cambs (P6538)



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Fig. 3 OS map, 1886 (6 inch)
Not to scale
52-56 West St, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (P6968)

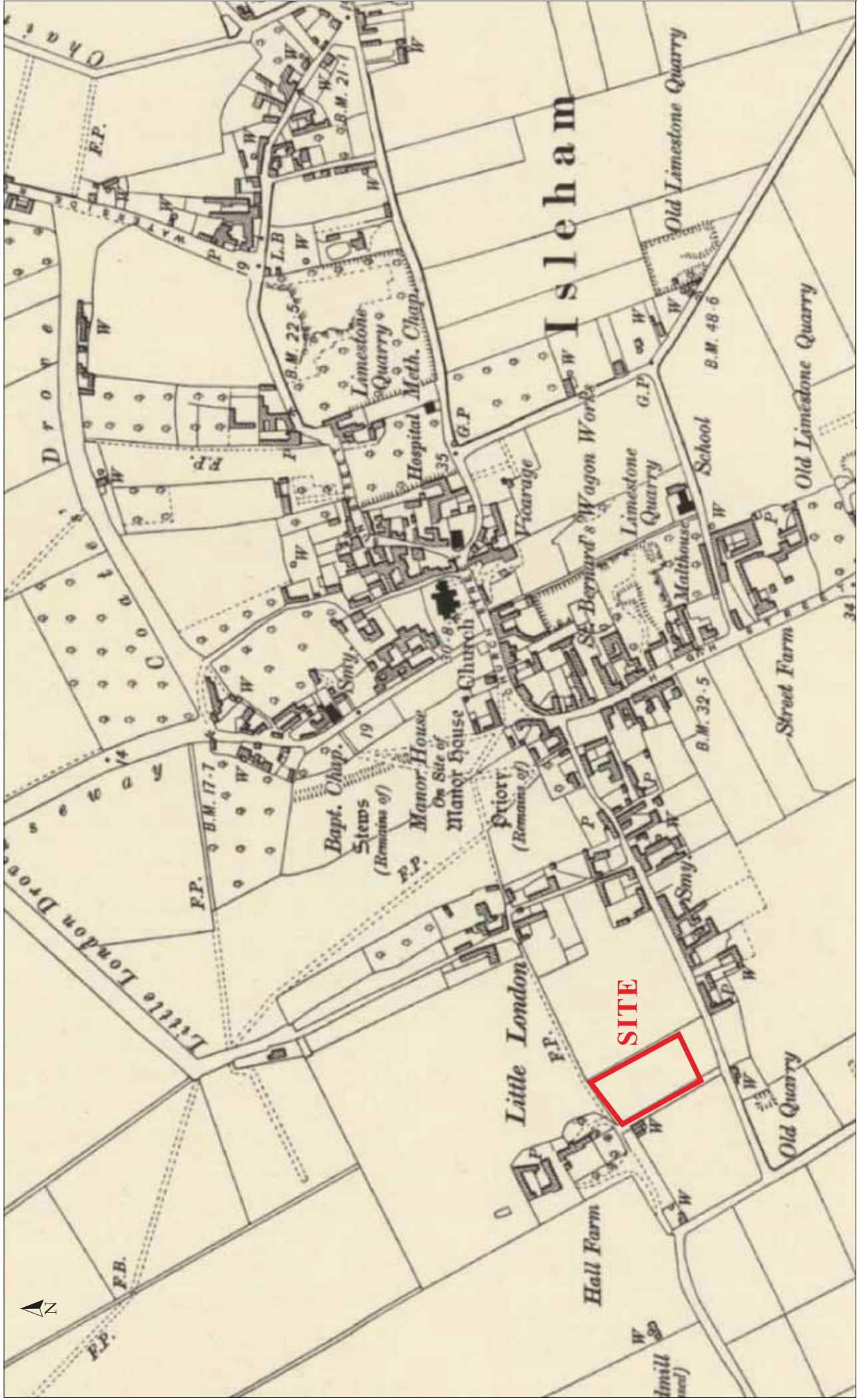


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Fig. 4 OS map, 1902 (25 inch)

Not to scale

52-56 West St, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (P6968)

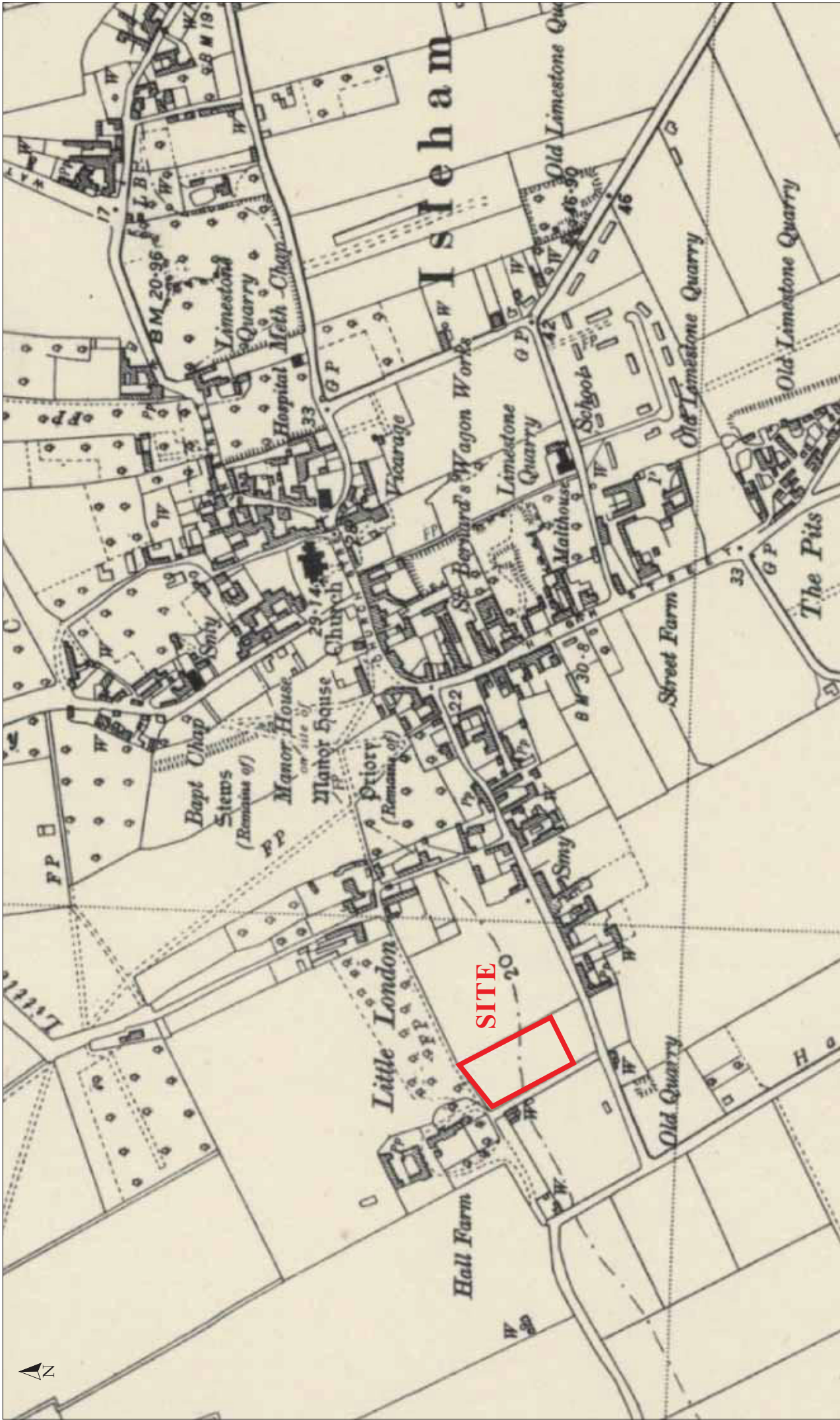


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Fig. 5 OS map, 1903 (6 inch)

Not to scale

52-56 West St, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (P6968)



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Fig. 6 OS map, 1953 (6 inch)

Not to scale

52-56 West St, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (P6968)

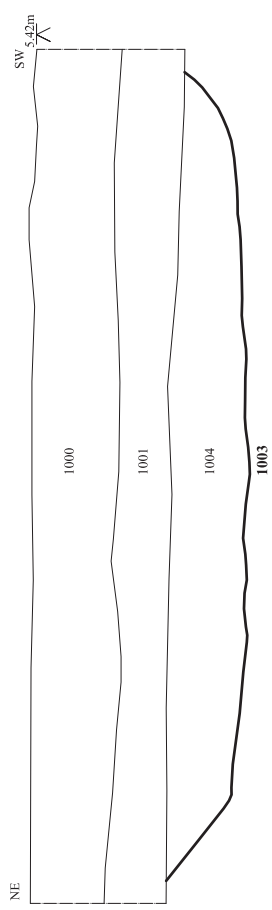
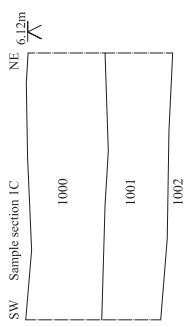
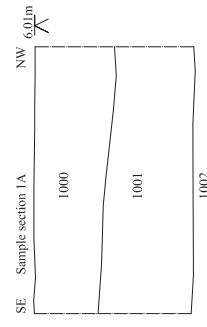
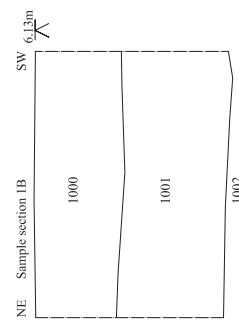
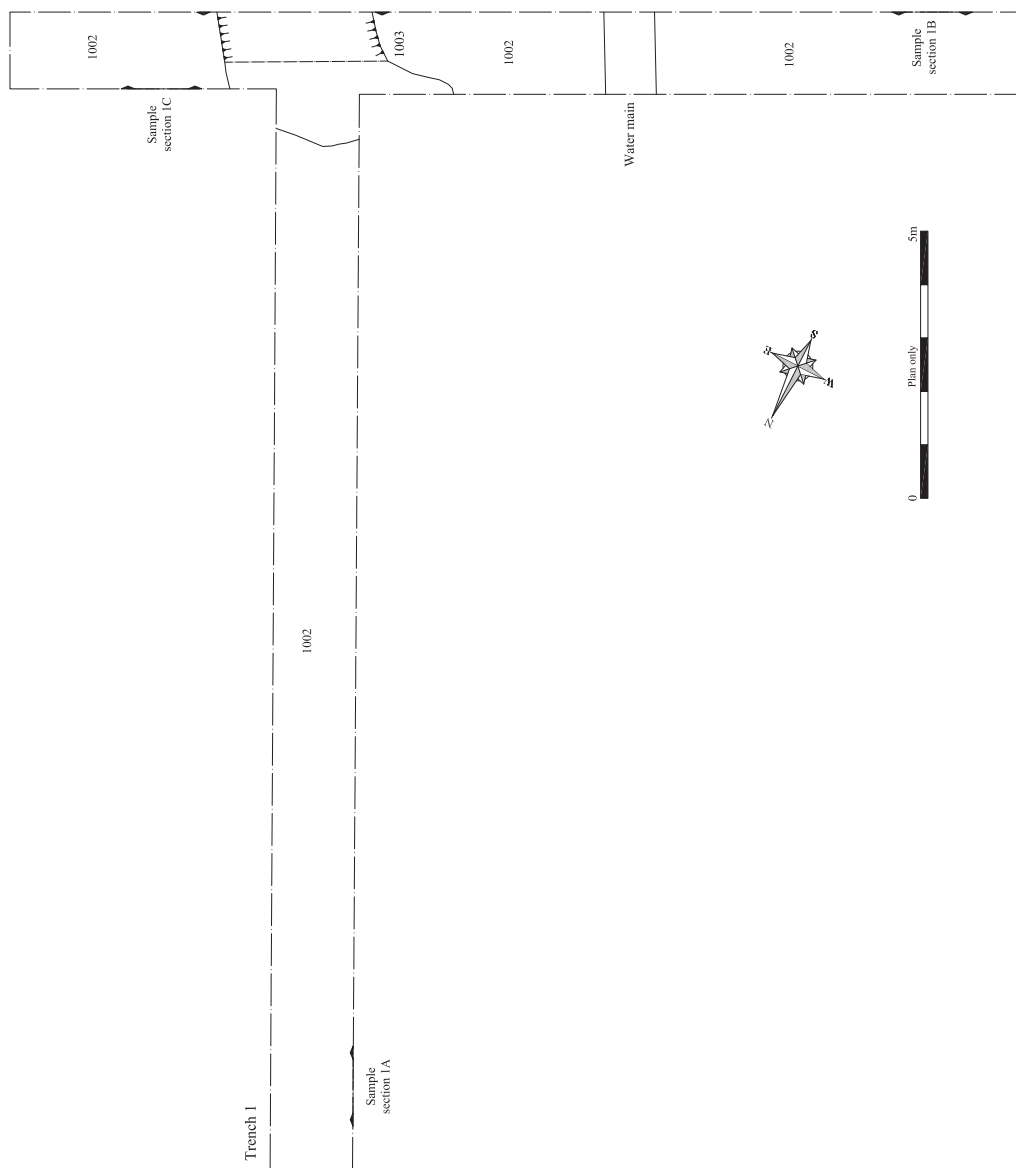


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Fig. 7 Trenches on proposed development plan

Scale 1:750 at A4

52-56 West Street, Isleham, Cambs (P6538)

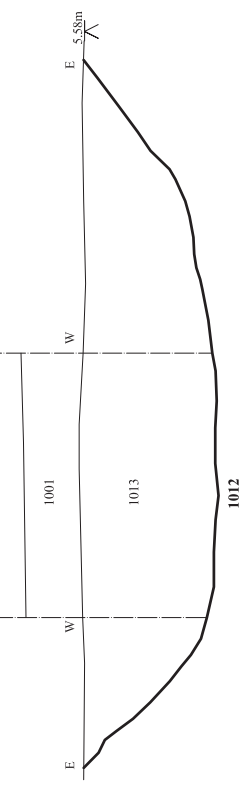
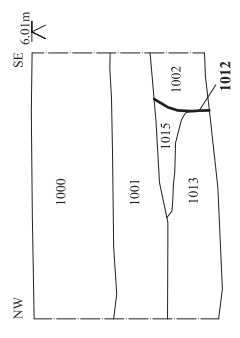
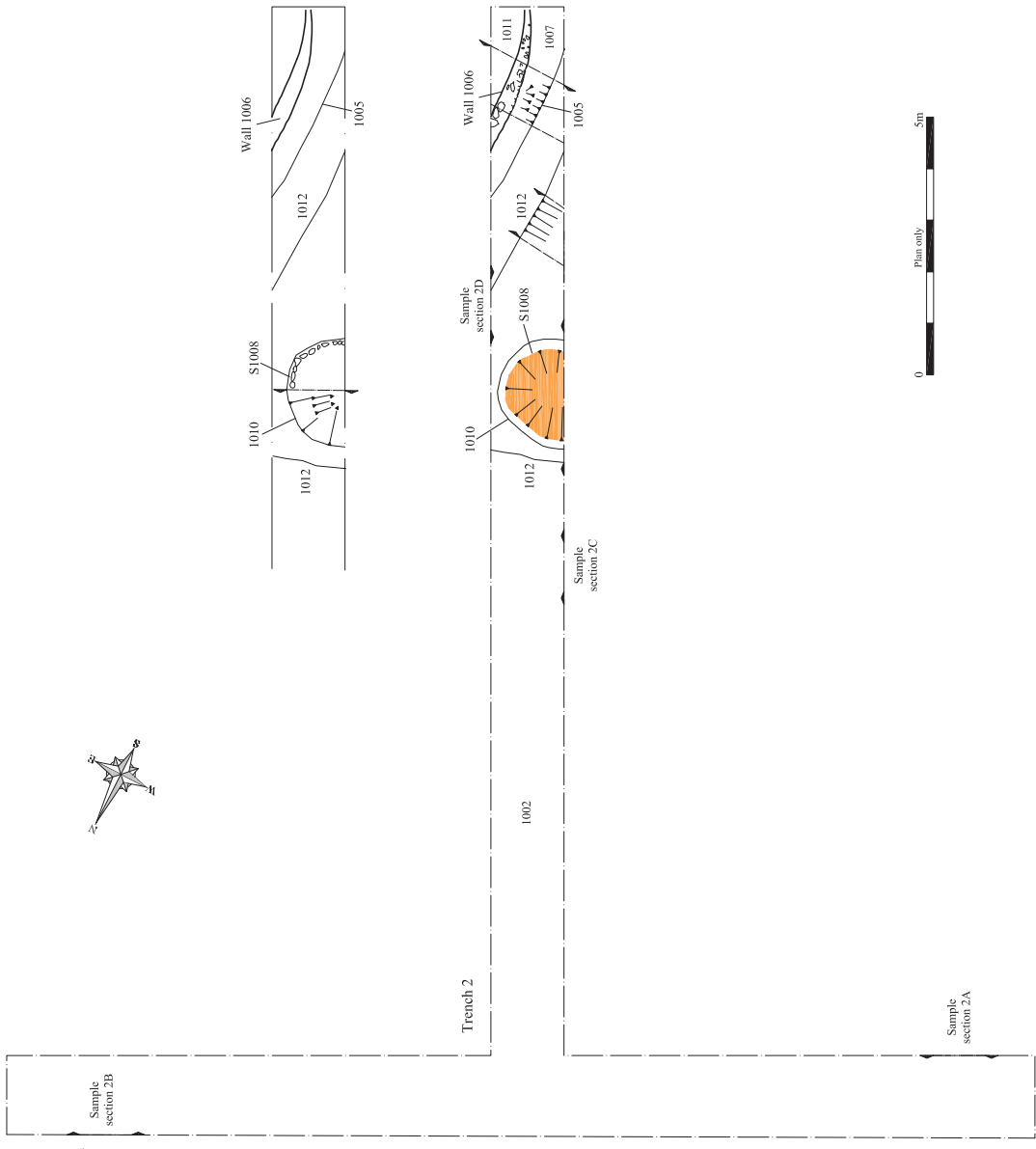


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Fig. 8 Trench 1 - plan and sections

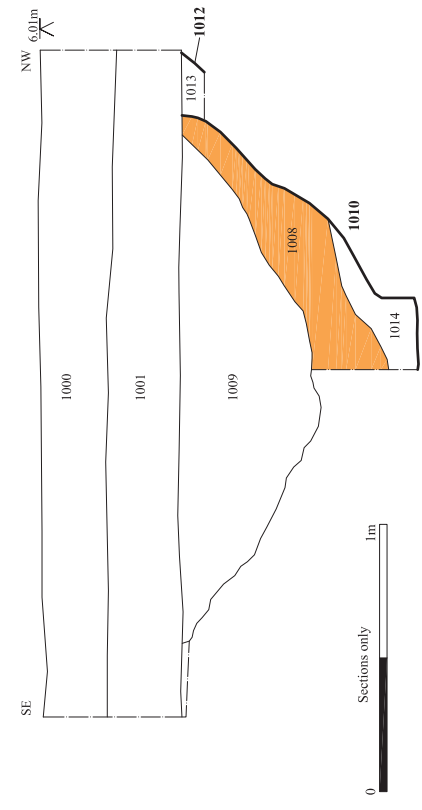
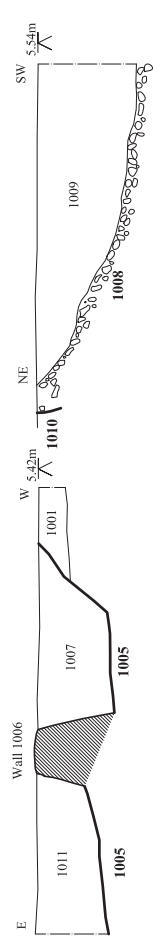
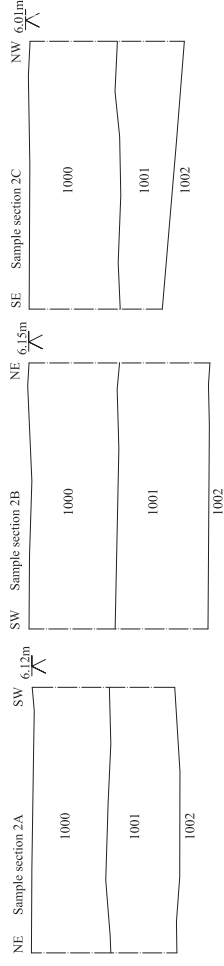
Scale Plan 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3

52-56 West Street, Isleham, Cambs (P6968)



Flint wall
Ceramic building material

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Fig. 9 Trench 2 - plan and sections
Scale Plan 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3
52-56 West Street, Isleham, Cambs (P6968)



Sections only
0 1m