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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**LAND SOUTH OF 70 THE BUTTS, SOHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**  
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

CHER: ECB 5249

Authors: Thomas Muir (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 5971 7224	Report No: 5482
District: East Cambs	Site Code: ECB 5249
Approved: Claire Halpin MClfA	Project No: P7383
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**PI House, 23 Clifton Road, Shefford,  
Bedfordshire SG17 5AF  
01462 850483**

**Unit 6, Brunel Business Court, Eastern Way,  
Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AJ  
01284 765210**

**e-mail [info@ascontracts.co.uk](mailto:info@ascontracts.co.uk)  
[www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk](http://www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk)**



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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Land South of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire</i>		
<p><i>In November 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land south of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5971 7224; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed construction of a detached residential dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated works (East Cambs Council Ref. 17/01023/FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.</i></p> <p><i>The trial trench evaluation recorded low quantities of prehistoric artefacts of likely Mesolithic date, comprising flint blades, animal bone including deer, and burnt flint potentially used as pot boilers. These artefacts were recovered from ditches and pits, predominantly in Trench 2 towards the front of the site, but it is unclear if these features are of prehistoric origin, and it is unlikely they are Mesolithic in date. However, this low quantity of finds provides further evidence for Mesolithic activity on the margins of the fen island.</i></p> <p><i>The results do not correlate closely with other archaeological remains in the vicinity, though it is clear enclosures were established from the Bronze Age onwards on surrounding land at Soham. Investigations to the north of The Butts recorded sparse Bronze Age activity and flint work (CHER MCB17961), while along Fordham Road investigations have revealed extensive evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement/occupation and further significant Saxon inhumation burials (CHER ECB4586, ECB455, ECB3613 &amp; ECB4556). An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies to the north east (CHER 07027) and its southern extent is unknown, but no evidence that could be related to this or other enclosure systems in the local area was recorded during the evaluation.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>November 2017</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	<i>Future work</i>	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P7383</i>	<i>Site code</i>	<i>ECB 5249</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Vacant</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Pits, post holes, ditches</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Sparse Mesolithic flint, burnt flint and animal bone</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>East Cambs</i>	<i>Soham</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.136ha.</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5971 7224</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.4.80 AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Ms Carol Sennitt</i>		
Full title	<i>Land South of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Muir, T.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5482</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2018</i>		

## LAND SOUTH OF 70 THE BUTTS, SOHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In November 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land south of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5971 7224; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed construction of a detached residential dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated works (East Cambs Council Ref. 17/01023/FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.*

*The site is located within an area of archaeological potential with nearby archaeological remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies to the north east (CHER 07027) and its southern extent is unknown. Elsewhere along Fordham Road, investigations have revealed extensive evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement/occupation and further significant Saxon inhumation burials (CHER ECB4586, ECB455, ECB3613 & ECB4556). Prehistoric occupation has also been recorded to the north of The Butts (CHER MCB17961).*

*The trial trench evaluation recorded low quantities of prehistoric artefacts of likely Mesolithic date, comprising flint blades, animal bone including deer, and burnt flint potentially used as pot boilers. These artefacts were recovered from ditches and pits, predominantly in Trench 2 towards the front of the site, but it is unclear if these features are of prehistoric origin, and it is unlikely they are Mesolithic in date. However, this low quantity of finds provides further evidence for Mesolithic activity on the margins of the fen island.*

*The results do not correlate closely with other archaeological remains in the vicinity, though it is clear enclosures were established from the Bronze Age onwards on surrounding land at Soham. Investigations to the north of The Butts recorded sparse Bronze Age activity and flint work (CHER MCB17961), while along Fordham Road investigations have revealed extensive evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement/occupation and further significant Saxon inhumation burials (CHER ECB4586, ECB455, ECB3613 & ECB4556). An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies to the north east (CHER 07027) and its southern extent is unknown, but no evidence that could be related to this or other enclosure systems in the local area was recorded during the evaluation.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land south of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5971 7224; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed construction of a detached residential dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated works (East Cambs Council Ref. 17/01023/FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HET, Gemma Stewart; dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017) and approved by CCC HET. It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition significance and quality of any 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 site is located on the southern edge of Soham, on the western side of The Butts. It comprises existing open land and extends to some 0.136ha.

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

3.1 The site lies at c.4.80m AOD, on higher ground above the former low-lying fenland. The local solid geology is chalk, with some river terrace deposits locally.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 Mesolithic and Neolithic settlement and activity appears to be focused to the north of Soham in the Broad Hill area, and is represented by extensive flint scatters. Flint artefacts of this date in the vicinity of Fordham Road are limited to sparsely distributed or isolated finds including a hammer stone, axe and blades to the north (HER 02097 and 07498) and scrapers and a whetstone to the south-east (HER04456). The bulk of Bronze Age activity that has been recorded in the Soham area comprises funerary activity that appears to have been situated away from the peninsula on which the historic town was situated and on the mainland overlooking the fen. This evidence comprises funerary mounds at Wicken and Fordham, while a burial has been recorded at Clipsall Field to the south-east (HER 07518). A spearhead (HER 07605a) and Beaker pottery (HER 07493) have also been recorded in the Clipsall Field and Down Field areas to the east and west and a thumbnail scraper has also been identified as an unstratified find (HER 07107A). However archaeological investigations closer to the current area have indicated the presence of Bronze Age settlement on the peninsula. Late Bronze Age to early Iron Age enclosures and settlement activity have been recorded at the former Fordham Road allotments site (HER CB14631). Struck flint of Bronze Age date has been recovered at The Butts (HER MCB17961)

4.2 The Iron Age landscape around Soham is dominated by the hilltop settlement at Henney. However, part of an early Iron Age settlement, represented by pits, ditches and a few possible postholes, has been investigated during two phases of evaluation and small-scale excavation work at Clay Street/St Andrew's House (HER CB15776). Late Bronze Age to later Iron Age and Roman pottery, a preserved Iron Age soil horizon, and a handful of features has been recorded at 8 Market Street and Cyril Fox records the discovery in Soham of an early Iron Age male warrior burial accompanied by a spear and two dogs (HER 07086), although its precise location is not known and an Anglo-Saxon date may be more likely.



4.3 During the Roman period Soham formed part of a complex and intensively settled landscape on the edge of the supposed Imperial estate of the fens. A significant component of this local landscape was a villa at East Fen Drove (HER 07688 and 07578) to the north-east as well as a settlement at Fordey Farm to the north-west of Soham. A substantial building has also been recorded to the south of the town (HER 02087). Archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Fordham Road (e.g. HER CB14630, CB14632) have recorded significant evidence for Roman activity and settlement, while the Clipsall Field and Down Field areas to the east and north have produced high quantities of Roman finds. Some evidence for Roman occupation has also been found in the vicinity of the modern town centre but the character and status of this activity is not yet well understood although. Pottery, including castor ware and a cordoned jar of 1<sup>st</sup> - to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century date, has been found in association with a human skull at Weatheralls Close. A Roman burial ground in the vicinity of White Hart Lane, just north of the High Street, may be indicated by seven skeletons found in building trenches (HER 06971) and an additional inhumation uncovered nearby during other construction work (HER MCB17746). However, in both cases only one or two sherds of Roman pottery were present with which to date the graves and this could have been residual in later burials. A late Iron Age to early Roman (c. 50 BC – AD 70/80) ditched enclosure with associated rubbish pits, possible structural features and evidence of high-status occupation including imported Gallo-Belgic pottery has been recorded at the former Church Hall site on the High Street (HER MCB18184). Evidence for late Roman settlement (4<sup>th</sup> to possibly early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries) was also present. An archaeological investigation further north west along Fordham Road (HER CB14630) recorded a continuation of enclosure ditches with associated pits, containing low to moderate quantities of finds including 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery and a spindle whorl. Roman features have also been recorded at Paddock Street (HER MCB18200). In addition, several finds of unstratified artefacts have been recovered from the surrounding area, including pottery, coins and other items (HER 07104, 07107, 07119, 07120, 07121, 07603a, 11518, MCB16684, MCB18080).

4.4 Excavations by AS in 2012-13 further NW on Fordham Road revealed dense archaeological activity; two phases of prehistoric (late Bronze Age to Iron Age) settlement followed by three phases of Romano-British activity (HER MCB19583). The prehistoric activity comprised a series of enclosures which appear to have been appended to a settlement. No domestic buildings were present but the character of the artefactual assemblages suggested settlement in the immediate vicinity. The enclosures appear to have been multi-functional, possibly having some agricultural purpose but also possibly used for other activities. The Roman site comprised a series of enclosures, very similar in layout to the prehistoric site despite a possibly very long hiatus in activity, that were used for agricultural processing. Within the enclosures were a well, corn-drying ovens, a kiln, and ovens constructed from re-used storage jars. A pair of Romano-British graves was also identified. As in the prehistoric phases, there were no domestic structures and it is suggested that the site formed part of a larger farming estate. Certain aspects of the artefactual assemblage are considered to suggest that the site formed part of a villa estate which would correlate with the presence of villas and other high status sites in the Soham



area. Significant Prehistoric and Roman activity has recently been recorded at Fordham Road and Cherrytree Lane (HER MCB20523)

4.5 The first evidence for Anglo-Saxon period settlement and associated activity within Soham includes four pagan cemeteries. One of these cemeteries is located to the north east of the site on Newmarket Road (HER 07027). Saxon and medieval settlement features have been recorded at the former Church Hall site on the High Street (HER MCB18185). A Saxon spearhead has been recovered from a location in Down Field (HER 07585). Other finds of Saxon date include a pin and girdlehanger (HER 07121a), a strap fitting (HER 07603), and a brooch (HER 07604).

4.6 A key component of the medieval agricultural landscape would have been windmills, one of which was situated on the other side of Fordham Road on Mill Croft (HER 07497) others are also known from later cartographic sources (HER 07105). During this period, or possibly the Saxon period, it is presumed the river Snail was canalized and the Soham Lode created but there is no dating evidence to confirm this. Saxon and medieval settlement features have been recorded at the former Church Hall site on the High Street (HER MCB18185). The Cambridgeshire HER records a medieval moated site near Soham Mills (HER 01068). Medieval activity has been recorded at Brook Dam Lane (HER MCB16314). A retting pit and other medieval features have been recorded at Paddock Street (HER MCB18201). Medieval features have been recorded at land north of 10 and 23 The Oaks (HER MCB19936). Evidence of medieval settlement and quarrying has been recorded at Brook Street (HER MCB21804). Netherall Manor (HER MCB19369) originated in the medieval period.

4.7 "The Moat" is recorded on the Cambridgeshire HER as a post-medieval garden (HER 12188). Post-medieval features have been recorded at Brook Dam Lane (HER CB15264, MCB16314). Post-medieval quarrying activity has been identified at Soham High Street (HER MCB17349). Post-medieval features have been recorded at land north of 10 and 23 The Oaks (HER MCB19936). Post-medieval pits have been recorded at The Butts (HER MCB17961). Finds of post-medieval metalwork and similar items have been recorded from a number of locations in Soham (HER 07119b, 071212b, 07603b, 11518B).

4.8 The early modern period is represented on the Cambridgeshire HER in the vicinity of the site in the form of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century cemetery (HER 12186), the 19<sup>th</sup> century (with an earlier precursor) Baptist Church north of Clay Lane (HER MCB17131), a 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglican burial chapel (HER MCB17213) and a non-conformist cemetery chapel (HER MCB17233) which are both listed buildings, the dismantled route of the Ely and Newmarket railway (HER MCB19610), a clunch pit (HER MCB21390), schools (HER MCB21386 & MCB21387) and 19<sup>th</sup> century almshouses (HER MCB21388) and by the locations of several former buildings known from documentary evidence (HER MCB21758-MCB21765, MCB21771, MCB21773, MCB22993-MCB22995) including several blacksmiths workshops (HER MCB21768-

MCB21770). 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century features have been recorded at Alfreda Court, Red Lion Square (HER MCB20642).

4.9 The walled garden associated with Netherall Manor is recorded as being of 20<sup>th</sup> century date (HER MCB19370).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The evaluation provided for a sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched (overall site area c.0.136ha). The brief required a c.5% sample of the site to be investigated by trenching, with a contingency for further judgemental trench use. One trench 25m x 1.80m, and one trench 15m x 1.80m, were excavated (Fig.3)

5.2 The archaeological evaluation comprised the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Encountered features and deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate.

5.3 Open trenches and excavated spoil were manually / visually searched and scanned by metal detector to enhance the recovery of archaeological finds.

5.4 A one-metre square of the topsoil and subsoil was bucket sampled and sorted by hand at each end of the trenches to characterise their artefact content. No finds were present in the topsoil and subsoil.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 Figs. 3 - 4

Sample section 1A 0.00 = 4.05m AOD		
0.00-0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown clayey silt with occasional small sub rounded stones
0.30-0.52m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones
0.52m +	L1003	Natural. Firm, light orangey brown sandy clay.

Sample section 1B 0.00 = 4.33m AOD		
0.00-0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.28 -0.64m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.64m+	L1003	Natural. As above.

*Description: Trench 1 contained undated Pit F1004.*

Pit F1004 was sub circular in plan (1.05+ x 1.20 x 0.25m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1005, was a friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt with moderate small sub angular burnt flint. It contained animal bone (7g) and burnt flint (2149g).

## Trench 2 Figs. 3 - 4

Sample section 2A 0.00 = 3.98m AOD		
0.00-0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.28-0.61m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.61m+	L1003	Natural. As above.

Sample section 2B 0.00 = 4.17m AOD		
0.00-0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.34-0.87m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.87m+	L1003	Natural. As above

*Description: Trench 2 contained Gully F1010; Ditches F1006, F1008, F1018, F1024, and F1030; Post Holes F1012 and F1022; and Pits F1014, F1016, F1020, F1026, F1028, F1032 and F1034.*

Gully F1010 was linear in plan (2.10+ x 0.42 x 0.10m), orientated N/S. It had gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1011, was a friable, light brownish grey sandy clay. It contained no finds.

Post Hole F1012 was sub circular in plan (0.37 x 0.32 x 0.12m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1013, was a friable, light brownish grey clayey silt. It contained no finds.

Post Hole F1022 was circular in plan (0.42 x 0.22m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1023, was a friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt. It contained no finds.

The ditches were recorded and are tabulated below:

Cut	Fill	Profile	Fill	Relationships	Spot Date
F1006	L1007	Linear (NE/SW). Steep - moderately sloping sides, concave base (2.50+ x 0.68 x 0.23m)	Friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular flints	-	Animal bone (88g); burnt flint (152g).
F1008	L1009	Linear (NE/SW). Shallow moderately sloping sides, concave base (2.40+ x 0.90 x 0.17m)	Friable, light brownish grey sandy clay	-	Animal bone (5g); burnt flint (155g).
F1018	L1019	Linear (NE/SW). Shallow sides, flattish base	Friable, light brownish grey sandy clay	-	Animal bone (2g)

		(2.00+ x 0.78 x 0.11m)			
F1024	L1025	Linear (N/S). Steep - moderately sloping sides, concave base (1.90+ x 0.95 x 0.3m)	Firm, mid greyish brown clayey silt	Cut by F1026	Struck flint (2; 22g)
F1030	L1031	Linear (N/S). Moderately sloping sides, flattish base (1.80+ x 1.46 x 0.29m)	Friable, light brownish grey clayey silt occasional medium sized sub-angular stones	Cut by F1032	-

The pits were recorded and are tabulated below:

Cut	Fill	Profile	Fill	Relationships	Spot Date
F1014	L1015	Sub circular. Shallow sloping sides, flattish base (0.90 x 0.55 x 0.09m)	Friable, mid brownish grey clayey silt	-	-
F1016	L1017	Sub circular. Shallow sides, flattish base (0.75+ x 0.65 x 0.09m)	Friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt with moderate small sub angular flint	-	Animal bone (64g); burnt flint (616g).
F1020	L1021	Sub circular. Shallow sides, concave base (0.92+ x 0.67 x 0.09m)	Friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt.	-	-
F1026	L1027	Sub circular. Moderately sloping sides, concave base (1.77+ x 0.42 x 0.48m)	Friable, dark brownish grey clayey silt	Cut F1024 and F1028	Struck flint (1; 2g)
F1028	L1029	Sub circular. Moderate sloping sides, flattish base (1.00+ x 0.25+ 0.41m)	Firm, dark brownish grey clayey silt.	Cut by F1026	-
F1032	L1033	Sub circular. Moderately sloping sides, flattish base (1.39+ x 1.10 x 0.4m)	Friable, mid brownish grey clayey silt with moderate sub angular stones.	Cut F1030	Animal bone (236g)
F1034	L1035	Sub circular. Gently sloping sides, flattish base (0.45+ x 0.64 x 0.07m)	Friable, mid brownish grey clayey silt with sparse sub angular stones	-	Animal bone (15g)

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors restricted the identification of archaeological features or finds.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Uppermost Topsoil L1000 was a friable, dark grey brown silty sand with occasional small sub rounded flint and gravel (0.28 – 0.35m thick).

8.2 L1000 overlay Subsoil, L1001, a firm, mid brownish grey, clayey silty sand with sparse sub rounded stones. In Trench 2 for a short section Subsoil L1002 was present below Subsoil L1001, and it was a firm dark blueish grey silty clay.

8.3 At the base of the sequence the natural, L1003, a firm light orange brown sandy clay. It was present 0.52 – 0.95m below the present day ground surface.

## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The recorded features are tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Finds data
1	F1004	Pit	Animal bone; Burnt flint
2	F1006	Ditch	Animal bone; Burnt flint
	F1008	Ditch	Animal bone; Burnt flint
	F1010	Gully	-
	F1012	Post Hole	-
	F1014	Pit	-
	F1016	Pit	Animal bone; Burnt flint
	F1018	Ditch	Animal bone
	F1020	Pit	-
	F1022	Post Hole	-
	F1024	Ditch	Struck flint
	F1026	Pit	Struck flint
	F1028	Pit	-
	F1030	Ditch	-
	F1032	Pit	Animal bone
	F1034	Pit	Animal bone

9.2 Features were present in each trench but by far the larger number were present in Trench 2 which contained 15 features, and was located towards the front of the site. The features were of a broad range and comprised pits, ditches and post holes.

9.3 The only dateable finds evidence was from Ditch F1024 and Pit F1026 which contained sparse struck flint. The latter comprises blades with truncated bulbs of percussion, potentially of Mesolithic date (Struck and Burnt Flint report below).

9.4 Animal bone and burnt flint, or just animal bone, was found in numerous features. Much of the animal bone appears particularly hard and has a partially mineralised appearance to it indicating it is likely of significant age (Animal Bone report below). Only two bone fragments were identified to specific taxa. One of these is a fragment of deer metapodial from Pit F1034 L1035, and this find is consistent with a Mesolithic date for the assemblage. The other identified bone is a cattle metatarsal from Ditch F1006 L1007. Given the small size of this bone it would have belonged to a domestic animal of probably no earlier than Iron Age date. The rest of the assemblage

however is consistent with a Mesolithic date as indicated by the lithic assemblage (Peachey, this report).

9.4 The presence of pea/bean and free-threshing type wheat within the carbonised plant remains may indicate a post-Roman date for the deposits. However, this is tentative based on the low concentration of material (Environmental report below).

9.5 Fragments of coal were identified in Ditch F1018 L1019 (Trench 2) and may indicate a post-medieval date for this deposit.

9.6 The dating evidence from this site is variable: with Mesolithic artefacts; some Iron Age or later animal bone; post-Roman carbonised plant remains; and fragments of coal from Ditch F1018.

9.4 Ditch F1024 (Trench 2) does not appear to be a natural drainage channel and therefore was likely cut at a later date to improve drainage. Pit F1026 which contained struck flint cut Ditch F1024, and therefore the presence of a few Mesolithic flint blades likely represents the re-deposited detritus of episodic hunter-gatherer activity on the peninsular that forms the Soham fen 'island'. Pit F1004 (Trench 1) contained animal bone and the bulk of the burnt flint (2149g). It was probably associated with the features present in Trench 2, and may represent a primary deposit of deliberately-heated and subsequently shattered 'pot-boilers' used to heat water in the prehistoric period (Struck and Burnt Flint report below).

9.5 In the Mesolithic period the water table of the fenland area rose but ridges along the flanks of the Fen-edge remained conducive to activity as evidenced by numerous flint scatters from the region, as well as bone and antler tools found in Soham Fen (Reynolds 2000, 6). The quantity of the flint and bone recovered from The Butts is low and likely residual. The interpretation of the features as a settlement is unlikely but the artefacts add to the distribution of Mesolithic finds from around the fen island, notably to the north in the Broad Hill area.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

10.1 The trial trench evaluation recorded low quantities of prehistoric artefacts of likely Mesolithic date, comprising flint blades, animal bone including deer, and burnt flint potentially used as pot boilers. These artefacts were recovered from ditches and pits, predominantly in Trench 2 towards the front of the site, but it is unclear if these features are of prehistoric origin, and it is unlikely they are Mesolithic in date. However, this low quantity of finds provides further evidence for Mesolithic activity on the margins of the fen island.

10.2 The results do not correlate closely with other archaeological remains in the vicinity, though it is clear enclosures were established from the Bronze Age onwards on surrounding land at Soham. Investigations to the north of



The Butts recorded sparse Bronze Age activity and flint work (CHER MCB17961), while along Fordham Road investigations have revealed extensive evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement/occupation and further significant Saxon inhumation burials (CHER ECB4586, ECB455, ECB3613 & ECB4556). An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies to the north east (CHER 07027) and its southern extent is unknown, but no evidence that could be related to this or other enclosure systems in the local area was recorded during the evaluation.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Cambridge County Archaeological Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Ms Carol Sennitt for funding the works and for their assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Gemma Stewart, Senior Archaeological Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council.

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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



**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)
1004	1005		1	Fill of Pit					7	B.Flint		2149
1006	1007		2	Fill of Ditch					88	B.Flint		155
1008	1009		2	Fill of Ditch					5	B.Flint		158
1016	1017		2	Fill of Pit					64	B.Flint		638
1018	1019		2	Fill of Ditch					2			
1024	1025		2	Fill of Ditch								
1026	1027		2	Fill of Ditch						S.Flint	2	22
1032	1033		2	Fill of Pit						S.Flint	1	2
1034	1035		2	Fill of Pit					236			
									15			

## APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORTS

### **The Struck and Burnt Flint**

*Andrew Peachey*

The evaluation recovered three pieces (24g) of struck flint in an un-patinated condition, with technological traits that indicate they may have origins in the Mesolithic period. A total of 133 fragments (3100g) of burnt flint were also recovered. The burnt flint exhibits no evidence of being worked (before or after burning).

#### Methodology & Terminology

The flint was quantified by fragment count and weight (g), with all data entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will be deposited as part of the archive. Flake type (see 'Dorsal cortex,' below) or implement type, patination, colour and condition were also recorded as part of this data set, along with free-text comments. Terms used to describe implement and core types follow the system adopted by Healy (1988, 48-9). The term 'cortex' refers to the natural weathered exterior surface of a piece of flint, and the term 'patination' to the colouration of a flaked surface exposed by human or natural agency. Dorsal cortex is categorised after Andrefsky (2005, 104 & 115) with 'primary flake' referring to those with cortex covering 100% of the dorsal face; 'secondary flake' with 50-99%; 'tertiary' with 1-49% and 'un-corticated' to those with no dorsal cortex.

#### Discussion

The struck flint was manufactured using a slightly mottled dark-brown grey flint, likely sourced locally. All three pieces comprised blades (35-45mm in length) with deliberately truncated bulbs of percussion, leaving an implement with a very flat profile, characteristic of careful systematic soft-hammer percussion. Single blades with neat parallel dorsal scars in Ditches F1024 (6g) and F1026 (2g) have not been further modified; while a slightly thicker crested blade (16g) in the former has been blunted by steep abrupt retouch on one lateral edge with the opposing edge serrated by fine pressure flaking, thus may be regarded as a serrated blade or denticulate. Although based on a limited quantity of struck flint, the technological traits of these pieces, in particular blades with truncated bulbs of percussion, suggest they were produced in the Mesolithic period, with the production of denticulates more common in the late Mesolithic, potentially contemporary with the microlithic industry at Shippea Hill (Clark 1955). The fenland basin was largely submerged due to a rise in sea levels in the Mesolithic (Reynolds 2000, 6) though the peninsular of which the Soham 'island' is situated may have been conducive to hunter-gatherer activity, there although the context of these blades suggests they are residual, the blades may not have been re-deposited a significant distance.

The burnt flint included a group of 85 fragments (2149g) contained in Pit F1004, with sparse further fragments contained in ditches F1006, F1008 and

Pit F1016. The Pit F1004 group has a mean fragment weight of 25.2g, slightly higher than that of the other features (c.19.7g), supporting the suggestion it may represent a primary deposit of deliberately heated and subsequently shattered 'pot-boilers' used to heat water in the prehistoric period, and also sometimes to heat water or pots in the Roman period. There is no further dating evidence for the use or deposition of the burnt flint, and no evidence of the flint being worked or worn before or after it was burnt.

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<b>Context</b>	<b>Fill</b>		<b>No/</b>	<b>Wgt</b>	<b>Comment</b>
F1004	L1005	Pit	85	2149	25.2
F1006	L1007	Ditch	8	155	19.4
F1008	L1009	Ditch	8	158	19.8
F1016	L1017	Pit	32	638	19.9
			133	3100	23.3

Table 1. Quantification of burnt flint

## The Animal Bone

*Dr Julia E M Cussans*

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from trial trench excavations at The Butts, Soham. Animal bone derived from a mix of pit and ditch fills (Table 2) and preservation varied from very poor through to ok on a five point scale ranging from very poor through to excellent. High levels of bone abrasion were noted and bones appeared highly fragmented with a mix of fresh and old breaks. Much of the bone appeared particularly hard and had a partially mineralised appearance to it indicating it was likely of significant age. A single bone was noted as having been subject to rodent gnawing (Pit F1032 L1033).

The majority of the bone fragments were not identifiable to specific taxa but could only be identified as belonging to large (cattle, horse or red deer sized) mammal and the majority of these were identified as long bone shaft fragments. One large mammal tibia fragment was thought to possibly belong to red deer due to its relative slenderness; however this could not be determined with any certainty. Only two bone fragments were identified to specific taxa. One of these was a fragment of deer metapodial from Pit F1034 L1035 and the other was a cattle metatarsal from Ditch F1006 L1007. This latter bone was the most complete bone in the assemblage and given its small size would have belonged to a domestic animal of probably no earlier than Iron Age date. The rest of the assemblage however would not be inconsistent with a Mesolithic date as indicated by the lithics assemblage (Peachey, this volume). No butchery marks or pathological modifications were noted on any of the bone fragments.

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Preservation	Cattle	Deer	Large mammal	Total
F1004	L1005	1	Fill of Pit	poor			1	1
F1006	L1007	2	Fill of Ditch	ok	1			1
F1008	L1009	2	Fill of Ditch	very poor			1	1
F1018	L1019	2	Fill of Ditch	poor			1	1
F1020	L1021	2	Fill of Pit	very poor			25	25
F1032	L1033	2	Fill of Pit	poor			13	13
F1034	L1035	2	Fill of Pit	ok		1		1
				<b>Total</b>	1	1	41	43

Table 2. Quantification of animal bone from The Butts, Soham

## The Environmental Samples

Dr John Summers

### Introduction

During the trial trench evaluation at The Butts, Soham, eight bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were taken and processed. None of the sampled deposits have been reliably spot-dated due to the absence of dateable pottery but a small number of Mesolithic flints have been identified in Ditches F1024 and F1026 (Trench 2). 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 reference literature (Cappers *et al.* 2006; Jacomet 2006; Kerney and Cameron 1979; Kerney 1999) and a reference collection of modern seeds. 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 3. Four of the samples contained low densities of carbonised plant macrofossils and charcoal. Three grains of free-threshing type wheat (*Triticum aestivum/ turgidum* type) were identified in ditch fill L1019 (F1018). Also present was pea/ bean (large Fabaceae), another likely cultivated taxon, in ditch fill L1007 (F1006). Vetch/ wild pea (*Vicia/ Lathyrus* sp.) and medium legume (Fabaceae) seeds were present in L1005 and L1009, which could represent arable weeds. A fragment of plum-type stone (*Prunus* sp.) in L1007 may also represent part of the food economy. Depending on the species and period represented, fruit could have been gathered from wild habitats or cultivated in orchards. Although fragmentary, the stone did not appear to be representative of native *Prunus* species (i.e. *Prunus spinosa*, *P. padus* or *P. avium*).

Charcoal was also present in low concentrations, predominantly in the form of diffuse-porous wood types. This is likely to represent scattered fuel debris. Fragments of coal were identified in Ditch F1018 L1019 and may indicate a post-medieval date for this deposit.

## *Conclusions*

The bulk samples from The Butts, Soham, produced only a low density of carbonised plant material. Where present, it is likely that the remains represent scattered and wind-blown carbonised debris which became incorporated into the archaeological deposits. Insufficient material is present to make any detailed comments regarding the site's palaeoeconomy, and the excavated features may have been peripheral to contemporary domestic and arable processing activities. The presence of pea/bean and free-threshing type wheat may indicate a post-Roman date for the deposits. However, this is tentative based on the low concentration of material

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Site code	Sample number	Context	Feature	Description	Trench	Spot date	Volume taken (litres)	Volume processed (litres)	% processed	Cereals			Non-cereal taxa		Charcoal		Molluscs		Contaminants								
										Cereal grains	Cereal chaff	Notes	Seeds	Notes	Charcoal>2mm	Notes	Molluscs	Notes	Roots	Molluscs	Modern seeds	Insects	Earthworm capsules	Other remains			
ECB5249	1	1005	1004	Fill of Pit	1	-	40	20	50%	-	-	-	X	<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	XX	Diffuse porous	X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	
ECB5249	2	1007	1006	Fill of Ditch	2	-	40	20	50%	-	-	X	Large Fabaceae (1), <i>Prunus</i> sp. (1)	Diffuse porous incl. RW	X	X	<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ECB5249	3	1009	1008	Fill of Ditch	2	-	20	10	50%	-	-	X	Medium Fabaceae (1)	-	X	-	XX	<i>Anisus leucostoma</i> , <i>Lymnaea truncatula</i> , <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	
ECB5249	4	1019	1018	Fill of Pit	2	-	20	10	50%	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	<i>Helicella itala</i>	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	Coal (X)	
ECB5249	5	1021	1020	Fill of Pit	2	-	20	10	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Lymnaea truncatula</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	
ECB5249	6	1025	1024	Fill of Ditch	2	-	20	10	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XX	-	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	
ECB5249	9	1031	1030	Fill of Ditch	2	-	20	10	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
ECB5249	10	1035	1034	Fill of Pit	2	-	10	10	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	<i>Lymnaea truncatula</i>	XX	-	X	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: Results from the assessment of bulk sample light fractions from The Butts, Soham. Abbreviations: FTW = free-threshing type wheat (*Triticum aestivum/ turgidum*).



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**OASIS ID: archaeol7-312545**

### Project details

Project name	Land South of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	In November 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land south of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5971 7224; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed construction of a detached residential dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated works (East Cambs Council Ref. 17/01023/FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team. The trial trench evaluation recorded low quantities of prehistoric artefacts of likely Mesolithic date, comprising flint blades, animal bone including deer, and burnt flint potentially used as pot boilers. These artefacts were recovered from ditches and pits, predominantly in Trench 2 towards the front of the site, but it is unclear if these features are of prehistoric origin, and it is unlikely they are Mesolithic in date. However, this low quantity of finds provides further evidence for Mesolithic activity on the margins of the fen island. The results do not correlate closely with other archaeological remains in the vicinity, though it is clear enclosures were established from the Bronze Age onwards on surrounding land at Soham. Investigations to the north of The Butts recorded sparse Bronze Age activity and flint work (CHER MCB17961), while along Fordham Road investigations have revealed extensive evidence of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement/occupation and further significant Saxon inhumation burials (CHER ECB4586, ECB455, ECB3613 and ECB4556). An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies to the north east (CHER 07027) and its southern extent is unknown, but no evidence that could be related to this or other enclosure systems in the local area was recorded during the evaluation.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2017 End: 30-11-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P7383 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5249 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	DITCHES Mesolithic
Monument type	PITS Mesolithic
Significant Finds	STRUCK FLINT Mesolithic

Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Mesolithic
Significant Finds	BURNT FLINT Mesolithic
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches","Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOHAM Land South of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire
Study area	0.14 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5971 7224 52.324557629318 0.343798293335 52 19 28 N 000 20 37 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 4.8m Max: 4.8m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Project brief originator	CCC HET
Project design originator	Jon Murray
Project director/manager	Jon Murray
Project supervisor	Archaeological Solutions Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Store
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Store
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge County Archaeological Store
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Survey "

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
------------------	---

Title Land South of 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire  
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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
Trench 1 with Pit 1004 in foreground



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Pit 1004 in Trench 1



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Sample section 1A



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Sample section 1B





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6  
Ditch 1006 in Trench 2



7  
Ditch 1008 in Trench 2



8  
Post Hole 1012 and Pit 1014 in Trench 2





9  
Gully 1010 in Trench 2



10  
Pit 1016 and Ditch 1018 in Trench 2



11  
Pit 1020 in Trench 2



12  
Post Hole 1022 in Trench 2

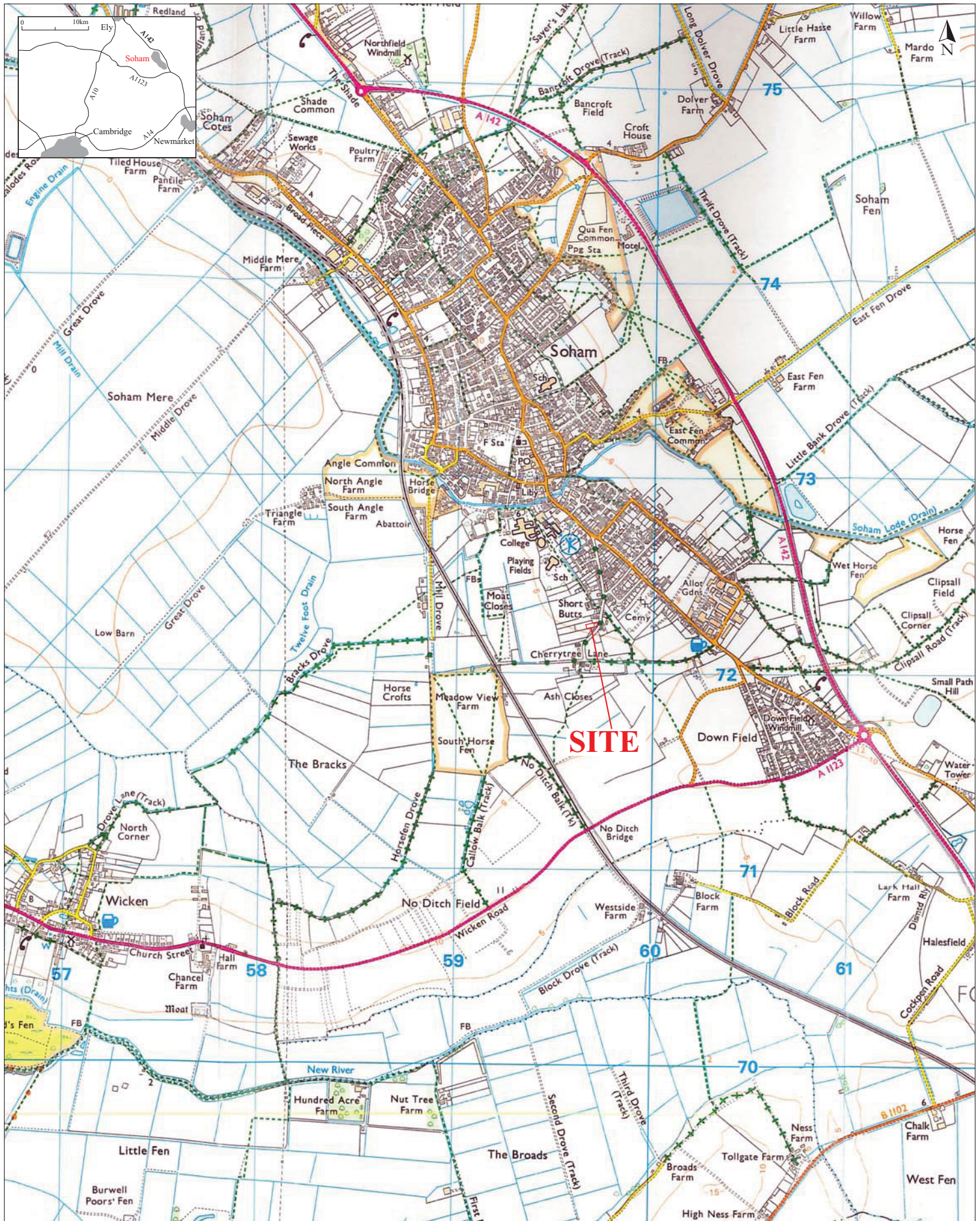


13  
Ditch 1030 and Pit 1032 in Trench 2



14  
Sample section 2A

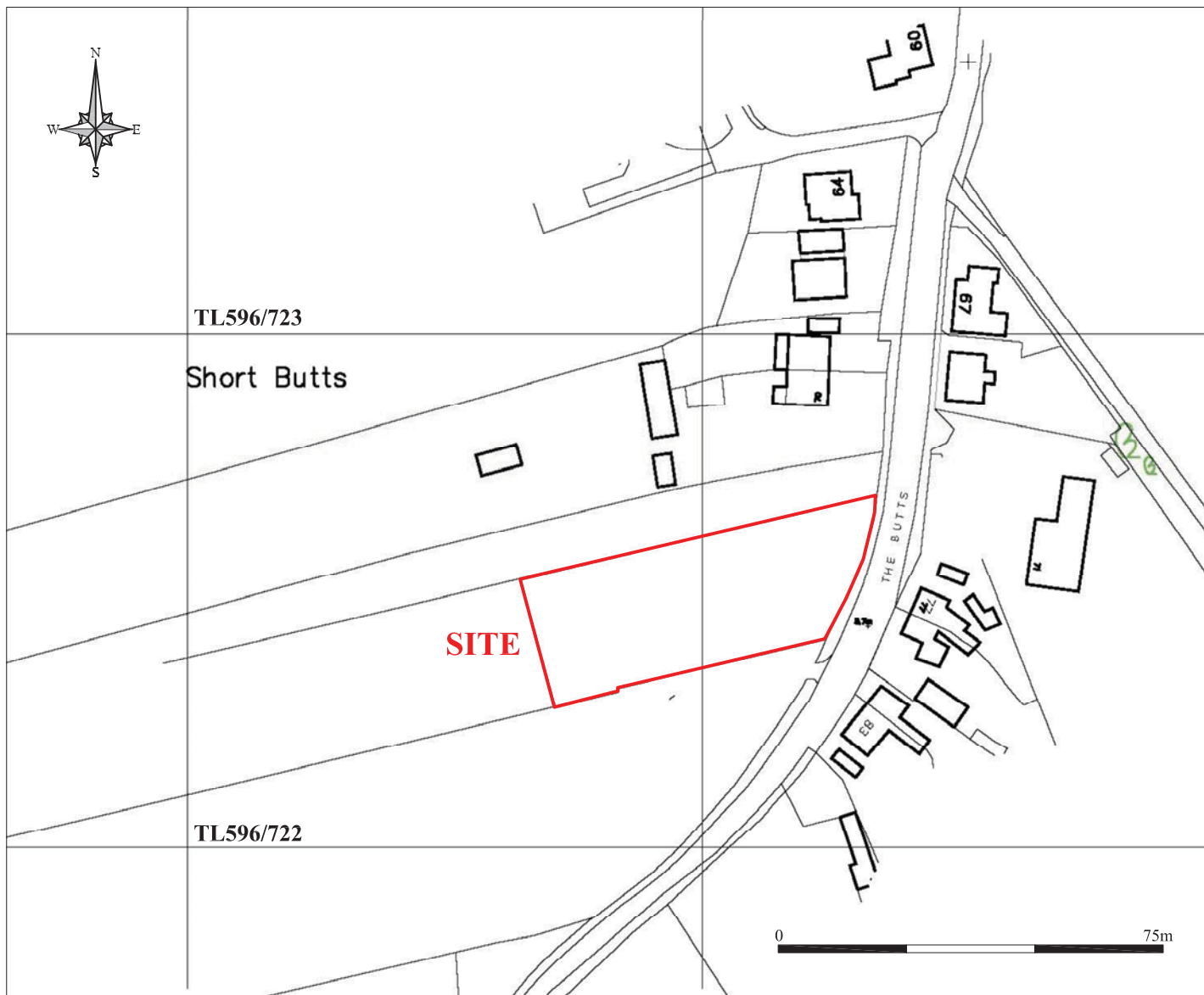




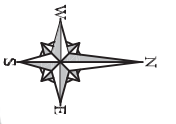
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (P7383)



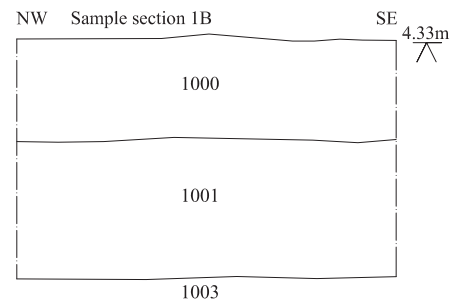
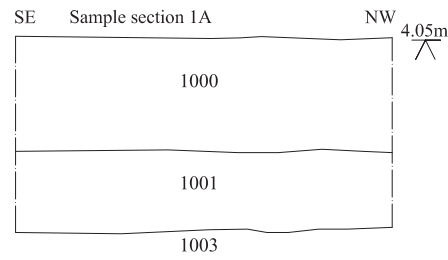
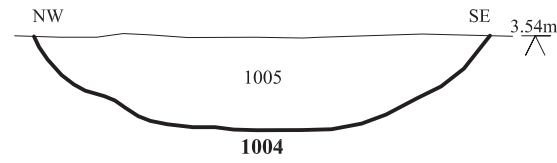


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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:1250 at A4  
 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (P7383)

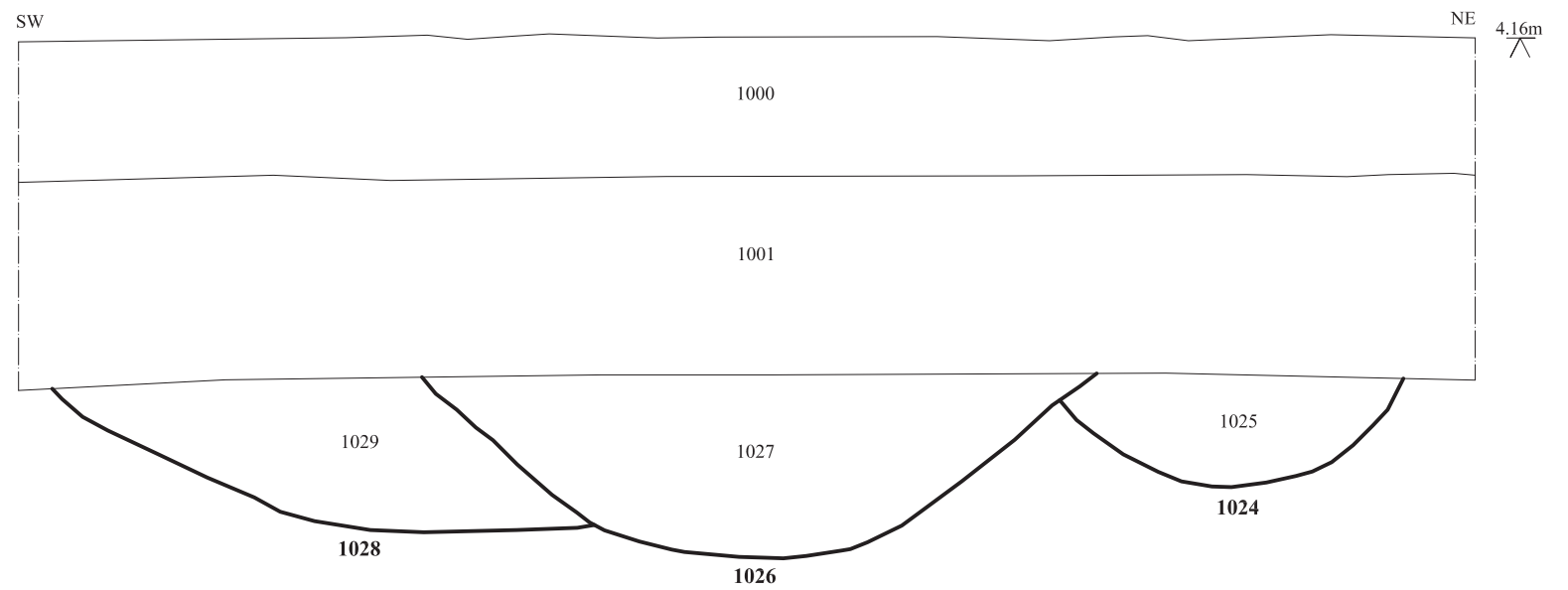
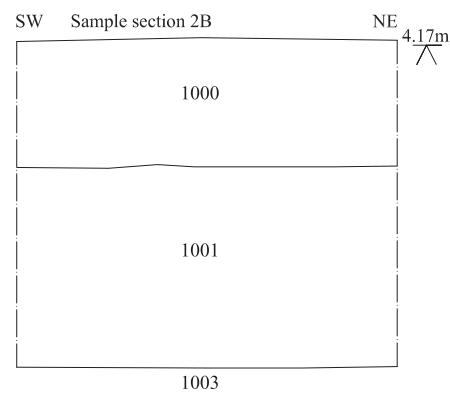
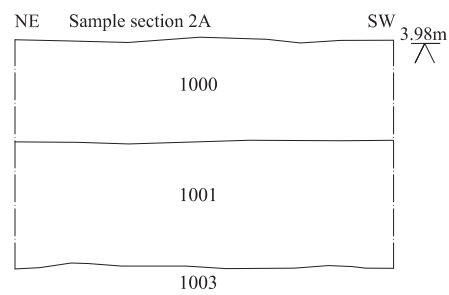
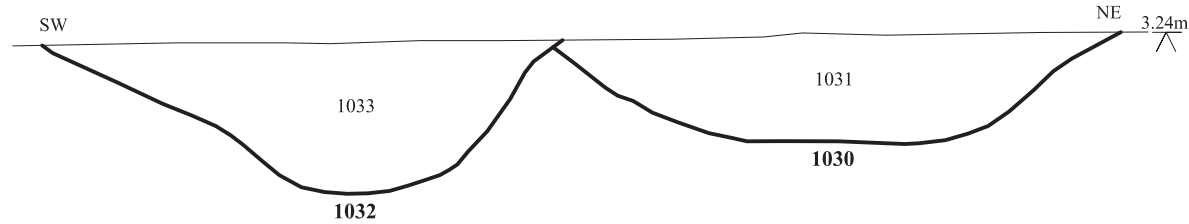
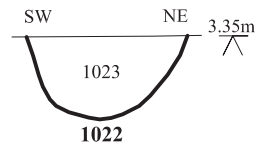
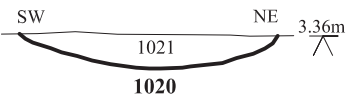
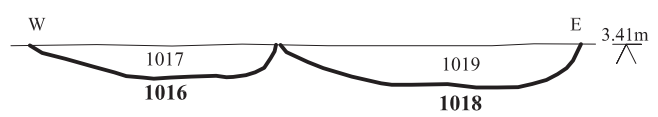
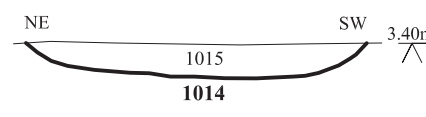
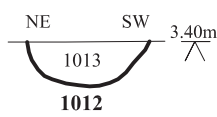
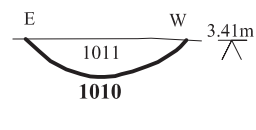
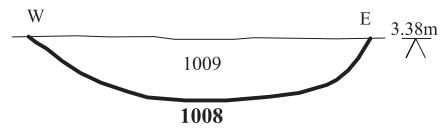
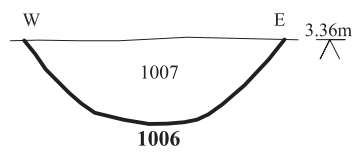
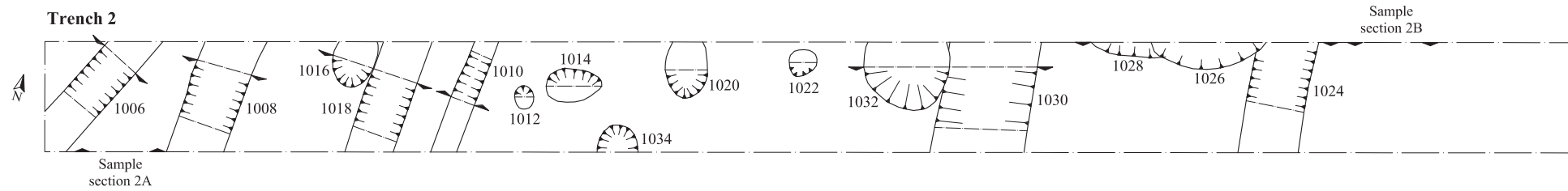


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**Fig. 3 Proposed development**  
Scale 1:250 at A4  
70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (P7383)

**Trench 1**



**Trench 2**



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**Fig. 4 Trench plans & sections**  
 Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3  
 70 The Butts, Soham, Cambridgeshire (P7383)