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**LAND NORTH OF HOUGHTONS LANE,
ISLEHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB7 5SR**

**(EAST FEN ROAD, SITE BETWEEN
HOUGHTONS LANE (SOUTH))**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Samuel Thomelius (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 6520 7450	Report No: 5705
District: East Cambs	Site Code: ECB 5560
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: P7816
	Date: 13 November 2018; Revised 15 August 2019

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Project details			
Project name	Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5SR		
<p><i>In November 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire CB7 5SR (NGR TL 6520 7450; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to the planning approval for the construction of two dwellings with attached garages and external works (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 18/00819/FUL), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).</i></p> <p><i>There is quite substantial evidence for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation in and around the village of Isleham, including a medieval priory complex and church within the historic nucleus. Formerly the closest recorded CHER find spots to the site was a small number of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds found during test pitting some 170m to the west (MCB19752 and MCB 19721); however a recent trial trench evaluation adjacent and to the west (CHER ECB5371; Barlow 2018), recorded evidence for medieval roadside activity, potentially peripheral village occupation.</i></p> <p><i>The current evaluation revealed features in each trench comprising mostly ditches, with isolated post holes and a possible quarry pit. The features contained medieval (mid 12th - 14th century) pottery and also two sherds of residual Middle Saxon pottery. Medieval ditches containing small quantities of pottery comprising locally-produced coarse ware jars and cooking pots, and a fragment of floor tile, is consistent with peripheral activity away from the village core. The features represent a clear continuation of the medieval roadside activity recorded in the trial trench evaluation to the west (Barlow 2018). The features are also similar to the evidence from previous investigations along The Causeway, also close by to the west.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	November 2018		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	P7816	Site code	ECB 5560
Type of project	Archaeological evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Arable field		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	Ditches and post holes		
Significant finds (+dates)	Pottery: Saxon & medieval (12 th – 14 th C) pottery, CBM		
	Cambs	East Cambs	Isleham
HER/ SMR for area	Cambridgeshire HER		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	1600m ²		
NGR	TL 6520 7450		
Height AOD (min/max)	approx 5.2m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Historic Environment Team, Cambridgeshire County Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd		
Funded by	Victoria Stanley Developments Ltd		
Full title	Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5SR. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Thomelius, S.		
Report no.	5705		
Date (of report)	November 2018; revised August 2019		

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In November 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire CB7 5SR (NGR TL 6520 7450; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to the planning approval for the construction of two dwellings with attached garages and external works (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 18/00819/FUL), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).

There is quite substantial evidence for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation in and around the village of Isleham, including a medieval priory complex and church within the historic nucleus. Formerly the closest recorded CHER find spots to the site was a small number of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds found during test pitting some 170m to the west (MCB19752 and MCB 19721); however a recent trial trench evaluation adjacent and to the west (CHER ECB5371; Barlow 2018), recorded evidence for medieval roadside activity, potentially peripheral village occupation.

The current evaluation revealed features in each trench comprising mostly ditches, with isolated post holes and a possible quarry pit. The features contained medieval (mid 12th - 14th century) pottery and also two sherds of residual Middle Saxon pottery. Medieval ditches containing small quantities of pottery comprising locally-produced coarse ware jars and cooking pots, and a fragment of floor tile, is consistent with peripheral activity away from the village core. The features represent a clear continuation of the medieval roadside activity recorded in the trial trench evaluation to the west (Barlow 2018). The features are also similar to the evidence from previous investigations along The Causeway, also close by to the west

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire CB7 5SR (NGR TL 6520 7450; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to the planning approval for the construction of two dwellings with attached garages and external works (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 18/00819/FUL), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET; Kerry Hopper; dated 11th October 2018), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 22nd October 2018), and approved by CCC HET. It followed the

procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), and also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

Objectives

1.3 As stated in the brief:

- The evaluation should aim to determine, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied.
- The evaluation results will be used to: a) determine the character, date, condition and significance of the archaeological resource, and b) define the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required.
- The mitigation of construction impacts to archaeological remains identified during this evaluation will be outlined in a further design brief for archaeological investigation.

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. The proposed development site lies on the northern side of Houghtons Lane on the eastern edge of the village, north of Appleyards Farm.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 Isleham is located on the tip of a low spur which slopes down into the Fen to the north, with the site located at 5.2m AOD. The River Lark is located 900m to the north of the site. The local soils comprise shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over argillaceous chalk associated with similar soils affected by groundwater. The drift geology is alluvium which overlies solid geology of Zig-Zag Chalk Formation.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Prehistoric finds are fairly well-represented in the Isleham area; a Palaeolithic handaxe has been recovered from Soham Fen (CHER MCB19231) and the CHER records several instances of Mesolithic flint artefacts (CHER 10883; 10954) and Mesolithic antler axes (CHER 07622) recovered in the area. A Mesolithic pit has been recorded at Hall Barn Road (CHER MCB20930). The Neolithic is represented by flintwork (CHER 07590, 10862, 10883A, 10954A, 10966, 11280) and a possible long barrow near Rymanmoor Long Turning, identified from aerial photos (CHER 10957). Bronze Age flintwork has also been recovered in the Isleham area (CHER 07537, 07623, 10883B, 10968) as has pottery (CHER 07590A) and this period is also represented by a bronze socketed axe (CHER 11711), early Bronze Age settlement evidence at Prickwillow Road (CHER 11896) and similarly dated features at Hall Farm (CHER MCB17270). Middle Bronze Age settlement has been recorded on a sand island in Isleham Fen (CHER 07536) Iron Age pottery was recovered during a test pit survey at Little London Lane (CHER MCB19744). Early Iron Age features have been recorded at Isleham Community Centre (CHER MCB22685). A late Prehistoric pit has been recorded at Hall Barn Road (CHER CB15282).

4.2 The Roman period is less well-represented with only finds of metalwork (CHER 07589), brooches (CHER 10863 and 11710), a saddle quern (CHER 10864) and pottery recovered during a test pit survey at Little London Lane (CHER MCB19744) recorded on the CHER. Roman ditch systems have been recorded at 32-34 Church Lane (CHER MCB20915) and Ellwoods Close (CHER MCB20917), with evidence at Ellwoods Close of a possible high status Roman building (CHER ECB4634).

4.3 Although the Saxon period is represented only by a few spot finds, including a disc brooch (CHER 11691), pottery at St Andrew's Close (CHER MCB19749), and ditches at Ellwoods Close (CHER MCB20918), evidence for medieval occupation in Isleham is abundant. The scheduled earthwork remains of the priory fish ponds, hollow ways and building platforms lie to the west of the current proposed

development site (NHLE 1013278). The Priory was a medieval Alien Benedictine institution (CHER DCB221), located some 100m to the west of the medieval Church of St Andrew (CHER 07591). The Chapel of St Margaret of Antioch (CHER 07529) survives as a standing structure, with the buried remains of the foundations of the conventual buildings and the earthworks remains of the associated agricultural and other elements of the complex to the north of the Grade I building, listed under CHER MCB14478). Possible medieval field systems (CHER 11895), property boundaries (CHER CB15283, MCB20930), clunch-processing sites (CHER MCB16866 and MCB20069), settlement activity (CHER 07528, MCB18442, MCB19827), pits and ditches (CHER MCB23922) and a variety of finds (CHER 11074, 11574, 11712, MCB19712, MCB19713, MCB19719, MCB19721, MCB19744, MCB19749, MCB19750, MCB19752) are amongst the other evidence for medieval activity within Isleham. A recent excavation by Archaeological Solutions on the north side of Houghton Lane to the immediate west of the current site recorded shallow medieval pits, gullies and ditches containing relatively low quantities of domestic detritus including pottery, butchered bone and shell, as well as low concentrations of carbonised cereal remains that may relate to peripheral roadside and agricultural activity on the margins of the village, or may indicate a low level of occupation (CHER ECB 5371). Even more recent investigations at Appleyard Farm on the opposite side of Houghtons Lane revealed a number of structural remains associated with a 19th century phase of development at the east end of the settlement of Isleham, in the area known as East End (CHER ECB 5445).

4.4 Post-medieval activity is represented by a windmill (CHER 07611), a quarry (CHER11214) shown on early maps. Other sites of this date include the gardens of Isleham Hall (CHER MCB19362), wall foundations at 12 West Street (CHER MCB19442), post-medieval pottery from the church social centre grounds (CHER MCB19714), pottery from Waterside (CHER MCB19716), 20 East Road (CHER MCB19718), 6 Bowers Lane (CHER MCB19720), 94 The Causeway (CHER MCB19722), West Street (CHER MCB19745), Mill Street (CHER MCB19746), Church Street (CHER MCB19747, MCB19748), East Road (CHER MCB19751)

4.5 Isleham's chalk and lime industry is represented by 19th century kilns at High Street (CHER 07489), and several quarries (e.g. CHER MCB22016, MCB22017, MCB22018, MCB22019). Modern sites recorded on the Cambridgeshire HER include High Street Chapel (CHER MCB17085), Isleham Baptist Church (CHER MCB17214), allotments (CHER MCB22014, MCB22015), former blacksmith's shops (CHER MCB22020, MCB22021, MCB22022), a former Malthouse (CHER MCB22023), a former windmill (CHER MCB22027), Peyton's Almshouses (CHER MCB22029), the site of St Bernard's wagon works (CHER MCB22030), the site of the former Methodist chapel (CHER MCB22031)

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 CCC HET required a programme of archaeological trial trenching and required that 5% of the total area subject to development to be sampled. Two trenches each 23m x 2.00m were excavated (Fig. 2), and focussed on the footprint of the proposed dwellings.

5.2 The archaeological investigation 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. The excavated spoil was checked for finds.

5.3 A one-metre square of topsoil and subsoil were bucket sampled and sorted by hand at each end of the trenches to characterise their artefact content. Soil from this sampling procedure was kept separate from the main spoil heaps. Site records were completed to reflect this exercise and an on-site record was made of the finds recovered. A metal detector was used to enhance finds recovery. The metal detector survey was conducted when the trenches were opened, and the detector was not set to discriminate against iron. The spoil tips were also surveyed. The finds observed during the sampling of the topsoil and subsoil, and the metal detecting survey were all of 19th and 20th century date.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample Section 1A 0.00 = 7.32m AOD		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel.
0.25 – 0.62m	L1001	Subsoil. Friable, pale grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel.
0.62m +	L1002	Natural. Compact, pale grey chalk with occasional sub-rounded flint and gravel

Sample Section 1B 0.00 = 6.86m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As Above.
0.28m +	L1002	Natural. As Above.

Description: Trench 1 contained Ditches F1020, F1022 and F1024; Post Holes F1026 and F1028; Pit F1032; and ?Quarry F1034. The trench also contained animal burrows and tree roots, and plough scars. Ditches F1022 and F1024, and Post Hole F1028 contained medieval (mid 12th – 14th century) pottery, and Animal Burrow F1030 contained a medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery sherd (1; 4g).

Ditch F1020 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 0.80 x 0.28m), orientated E/W. It had irregular moderately sloping sides and a narrow irregular base. Its fill, L1021, was a firm, mid grey brown silty sand with moderate small sub-angular gravel and sub-rounded chalk. It contained no finds.

Ditch F1022 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 1.23+ x 0.51m), orientated E/W. It had moderate to gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1023, was a firm, mid

grey brown silty sand with moderate small sub-rounded chalk stones and occasional small sub-angular stones. It contained medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery (15; 36g) and fired clay (271g). Ditch F1022 was cut by Ditch F1024.

Ditch F1024 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 1.15 X 0.45m), orientated E/W. It had moderately sloping sides and a shallow concave base. Its fill, L1025, was a firm, mid brownish grey silty sand with frequent small sub-rounded chalk. It contained medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery (2; 3g). Ditch F1024 cut Ditch F1022.

Post Hole F1026 was sub-circular in plan (0.30 x 0.25 x 0.24m). It had vertical sides and an irregular concave base. Its fill, L1027, was a firm, mid reddish brown sand with occasional small sub-angular gravel. It contained no finds.

Post Hole F1028 was sub-circular in plan (0.15 x 0.16 x 0.23m). It had steep near vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1029, was a firm, mid reddish brown sand with occasional small sub-angular gravel. It contained medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery (1; 7g).

Pit F1032 was not defined in plan (0.52 x 0.30 x 0.24m). It had irregular sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1033, was a firm mid reddish brown sand with occasional small sub-rounded gravel. It contained no finds.

?Quarry F1034 was not defined in plan (2.20+ x 0.90+ x 0.17m). It had irregular sides and an irregular base. Its fill, L1035, was friable, pale brownish grey sandy silt with moderate chalk and sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel. It contained no finds.

Trench 2 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample Section 2A 0.00 = 6.77m AOD		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1000	Topsoil. As Above.
0.40m +	L1002	Natural. As Above.

Sample Section 2B 0.00 = 6.58m AOD		
0.00 – 0.37m	L1000	Topsoil. As Above.
0.37m +	L1002	Natural. As Above.

Description: Trench 2 contained Ditches F1003, F1005, F1013 and F1015; Ditch Terminal F1011; Ditch Re-cut F1018, Post Hole F1009 and Tree Hollow F1007. The trench also contained animal burrows and tree roots. Ditches F1015 and F1018 contained medieval (mid 12th – 14th century) pottery, and Ditch F1015 contained two residual Middle Saxon sherds.

Large Ditch F1015 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 2.20 x 0.88m), orientated N/S. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its basal fill, L1016, was a friable, pale grey sandy silt with moderate small chalk and occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel. It contained two residual Middle Saxon sherds and medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery (12; 117g). Its upper fill, L1017, was a friable, light grey

brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and small sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel. It contained no finds. F1015 was re-cut by Ditch F1018, and cut by Ditch F1013.

Ditch Re-Cut F1018 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 1.70 x 0.42m), orientated N/S. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1019, was a friable, mid grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and small sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel. It contained medieval (12th – 14th century) pottery (1; 13g) and CBM (271g).

Ditch F1013 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 1.30 x 0.60m), orientated N/S. It had steep stepped sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1014, was friable, pale grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel. It contained no finds. F1013 cuts Ditch F1015.

Ditch F1005 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 0.86 x 0.38m), orientated N/S. It had irregular moderately sloping sides and a narrow base. Its fill, L1006, was a firm, yellow brown clay silt with moderate stones and pebbles. It contained no finds.

Ditch Terminal F1011 was linear in plan (1.10+ x 0.66 x 0.11m), orientated N/S. It had gently sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1012, was a firm, yellow brown clay silt with moderate stones and pebbles. It contained no finds.

Ditch F1003 was linear in plan (2.20+ x 0.65+ x 0.42m), orientated N/S. It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1004, was a firm, mid reddish brown sandy silt with moderate medium sub-rounded chalk and occasional small sub-angular gravel. It contained no finds.

Post Hole F1009 was sub-circular in plan (0.43 x 0.46 x 0.23m). It had irregular steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1010, was a firm, mid reddish grey brown sandy silt with occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel and flint. It contained no finds.

Tree Hollow F1007 was irregular in plan (2.70 x 1.00 x 0.29m). It had irregular sides and an irregular base. Its fill, L1008, was a firm, mid yellowish brown to pale yellowish brown silty sand with frequent small sub-rounded chalk and occasional patches of pale brown yellow silty sand. It contained no finds.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 Plough scars were evident in Trenches 1 and 2. Smaller features such as post holes may have been truncated which will have inhibited the recognition of structures.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000, a friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk and sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel (0.25 – 0.40m thick). Below L1000, Subsoil L1001, was a friable, pale grey brown sandy silt with

occasional chalk and sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel. It was present in the mid and northern sectors of Trench 1; not the southern sector of Trench 1 and not Trench 2. At the base of the sequence was the natural, L1002, a compact, pale grey chalk with occasional sub rounded flint and gravel (0.28 – 0.62m below the present day ground surface).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The recorded features are tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Spot Date
1	F1020	Ditch	
	F1022	Ditch	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)
	F1024	Ditch	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)
	F1026	Post Hole	
	F1028	Post Hole	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)
	F1030	Animal Burrow	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)
	F1032	Pit	
	F1034	?Quarry	
2	F1003	Ditch	
	F1005	Ditch	
	F1007	Tree Hollow	
	F1009	Post Hole	
	F1011	Ditch	
	F1013	Ditch	
	F1015	Large Ditch	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)
	F1018	Ditch Re-cut	Medieval (mid 12 th – 14 th C)

9.2 The evaluation revealed features in each trench, and of a high number in each trench (Trench 1: 7 and Trench 2: 7). The features were linears (ditches, a ditch terminal and a ditch re-cut), post holes and a possible quarry. Natural features (burrows, roots and tree hollows) were also present. The ditches recorded in Trench 1 (F1020, F1022 and F1024) were all oriented east / west, and the ditches recorded in Trench 2 (F1003, F1005, F1011, F1013 and F1015) were mostly orientated north / south. If contemporary the ditches may be indicative of a series of enclosures on the north side of Houghtons Lane with boundaries parallel and perpendicular to the road. The enclosures may be related to the exploitation of the roadside area or part of a wider field system associated with a local farm or organised landscape to the east of the historic village core.

9.3 The earliest dating evidence is two residual Middle Saxon sherds from Ditch F1015 (Trench 2). The date of the features is consistently medieval (mid 12th – 14th century), as indicated by relatively highly-fragmented sherds of locally-produced coarse ware jars and cooking pots. The pottery assemblage includes fragments of a vessel from Ditch F1015 with patches of soot on the exterior. Ditch F1022 contained 15 sherds derived from the same vessel, a jar with a rilled shoulder. Associated finds were very limited but include from Ditch F1018 a fragment of CBM

with traces of glaze on the upper surface, likely a fragment of medieval floor tile contemporary with the mid 12th-14th century pottery. The carbonised remains likely to represent background scatters of carbonised material, such as in the form of windblown debris. There was no evidence of dumps of domestic or agricultural processing remains in any of the deposits. The low density of remains is comparable to the adjacent site (Summers 2018), suggesting a similarly low intensity of medieval activity on the site.

9.4 The distribution of the archaeological features is commensurate with medieval activity set back from the route of the modern road. Ditch F1020, approximately 10m north of the road, appeared to form a continuation of a gully recorded during a trial-trench evaluation adjacent to the west (Barlow 2018; Gully F1036). On this site there was also a parallel boundary to the south represented by two intercutting ditches, with Ditches F1024 potentially a re-cut of Ditch F1022. These parallel ditches have various interpretations: they may have formed the earlier route of a lane; they may represent drainage parallel to the road; or boundary divisions of backyard plots. The features recorded during the adjacent trial trench suggested that plots may have bordered the edge of an earlier, less regular route of Houghtons Lane. The possible quarry pit at the southern end of Trench 1 (F1034) may represent mineral extraction on the periphery of the village. The north/south aligned ditch in Trench 2 (F1015), possibly replaced by Ditches F1013 and/or F1018, may represent a boundary perpendicular to the road. The division of land and activity represent a continuation of medieval roadside activity, to the north of Houghtons Lane, directly comparable to that previously recorded adjacent and to the west.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The remains of the Scheduled Isleham priory are located to the west which include the extant St Margaret of Antioch church and earthworks associated with former priory buildings, fishponds and agricultural complexes (CHER 07528, Scheduled Monument Number 27101). There is evidence for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation in and around the village, but these sites are over 500m from the application site. Formerly the closest recorded CHER find spots to the application site are a small number of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds found during test pitting some 170m to the west (MCB19752 and MCB 19721). However the recent trial trench evaluation adjacent to the west (CHER ECB5371; Barlow 2018) recorded evidence for medieval roadside activity.

10.2 The current evaluation revealed features in each trench comprising mostly ditches, with isolated post holes and a possible quarry pit. The features contained medieval (mid 12th - 14th century) pottery and also two sherds of residual Middle Saxon pottery. Medieval ditches containing small quantities of pottery comprising locally-produced coarse ware jars and cooking pots, and a fragment of floor tile, is consistent with peripheral activity away from the village core. The features represent a clear continuation of the medieval roadside activity recorded in the trial trench evaluation to the west (Barlow 2018). The features are also similar to the evidence from previous investigations along The Causeway, also close by to the west.

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. The transfer of the title and the ownership of the archive to the county facility will be arranged following the completion of the archaeological field work and approval of the report. The *Deposition of Archaeological Archives in Cambridgeshire 2017 Guidelines* will be consulted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Kerry Hopper, Archaeological Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council.

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Appendix 1 - Concordance of Finds

ECB5560 - P7816, East Fen Road Site Between Houghtons Lane

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date (Pot Only)	Pot Qty	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	Other Material	Other (g)
1015	1016		2	Fill of Ditch	12th-14th C Residual Middle Saxon	12	117			
1018	1019		2	Fill of Ditch	Mid 12th-14th C	1	13	271		
1022	1023		1	Fill of Ditch	Mid 12th-14th C	15	36		F.Clay	4
1024	1025		1	Fill of Ditch	Mid 12th-14th C	2	3			
1028	1029		1	Fill of Post Hole	Mid 12th-14th C	1	7			
1030	1031		1	Fill of Animal Burrow	Mid 12th-14th C	1	4			

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The archaeological evaluation recovered 32 sherds weighing 180g from five archaeological features and an animal burrow. The sherds are medieval bar two residual Saxon sherds.

Methodology

The sherds were examined under x35 binocular microscope and recorded according to the Medieval Pottery Research Group Guidelines (Slowikowski et al 2001; Table 1). Fabric codes are those used for the Cambridgeshire County Council pottery type series, or mnemonics where necessary.

The Pottery

Ditch F1015 (L1016) contained 10 cooking pot fragments in South-east Fenland Calcareous ware (SEFEN). Several sherds, including a small jar rim that matches SEFEN forms (Spoerry 2008, 45), contained small amounts of sooting indicating they derived from cooking pots. The amount of sooting however was too small for analysis. Also present was a large, thick grey body and sagging base fragment from a Saxon pot in a fine sandy fabric. The sherd is visually similar to Ipswich ware, but handmade and so is probably Middle Saxon in date. Ditch F1022 (L1023) contained 15 sherds of medieval coareware that probably all came from the same jar. The remaining sherds are also SEFEN.

Key:

MSHM: Middle Saxon – handmade fine sandy fabric 7th-9th

MCW: Medieval coarse ware – common fine and medium sub-rounded quartz, rare coarse angular to rounded, quartz and occasional small black inclusions calcareous reddish core, dark grey outer surface, mid-dark grey inner surface 12th-14th

SEFEN: South-east Fenland Calcareous ware mid 12th-15th

Feature	Context	Quantity	Date	Comment
Ditch 1015	1016	10x72g SEFEN 2x45g MSHM	12 th -14 th Residual Middle Saxon	SEFEN: small jar rim with patch of sooting; sherds with sparse charcoal residue
Ditch 1018	1019	1x13g SEFEN	mid 12 th - 14 th	
Ditch 1022	1023	15x36g MCW	mid 12 th - 14 th	MCW: simple jar rim and rounded shoulder with rilling
Ditch 1024	1025	2x3g SEFEN	mid 12 th - 14 th	
Post Hole 1028	1029	1x7g SEFEN	mid 12 th - 14 th	
Animal Burrow 1030	1031	1x4g SEFEN	mid 12 th - 14 th	

Table 1: Quantification of pottery by context

Recommendation for further work (if an excavation is undertaken)

The presence of charcoal residues in conjunction with rim sherds may highlight the potential for the use of organic residue analysis (HE 2017, 1 & 19) to be applied as a scientific method to further inform on medieval diet.

Note appropriate samples should ideally not have been washed and should be handled minimally, therefore a specific sampling/packaging/processing strategy should be implemented with pottery reviewed by a specialist immediately after sampling and before washing to identify sherds to be taken forward for organic residue analysis.

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The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

Ditch F1018 (L1019) contained a single fragment of 25mm thick flat tile; manufactured in a fabric with thin mid red-brown surfaces over a dark grey core; with inclusions of common poorly-sorted quartz (0.1-0.75mm), sparse flint, black iron ore and chalk (all <1.5mm, occasionally <3mm). The upper surface has faint traces of a white residue, that may represent the remnant of a slip or glaze; and it is highly likely that this fragment is derived from a medieval floor tile, consistent with the mid 12th to 14th century pottery from the same deposit.

Ditch F1022 (L1023) contained three small fragments (4g) of fired clay, containing common chalk inclusions (<4mm). It may represent degraded daub or hearth lining but its function remains unclear.

The Environmental Samples

Dr John Summers

Introduction

During the archaeological evaluation at land off Houghtons Lane, Isleham, eight bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were

taken and processed. Four of the sampled deposits were spot dated to the medieval period, while the remaining four were undated. 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.

All samples >10 litres were 50% sub-sampled for the purpose of the assessment. Any with the potential to produce an assemblage >30 identifiable specimens will be fully processed and the resulting flots retained with the site archive.

Results

The assessment data from the bulk sample light fractions are presented in Table 2. Carbonised plant macrofossils were recorded in five of the bulk sample light fractions, mostly in the form of cereal grains. Identifiable grains were all of wheat (*Triticum* sp.), including free-threshing type wheat (*T. aestivum/ turgidum* type). A single pea/ bean (large Fabaceae) was identified in undated pit fill L1027 (F1026). These were typical elements of the medieval arable economy (e.g. Moffett 2006). Charcoal remains were also scarce.

The calcareous soils on the site had facilitated the preservation of a large assemblage of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic molluscs. The majority of the identified taxa were characteristic of short grassland (*Pupilla muscorum*, *Helicella itala* and *Vallonia* sp.), while others were from damp, ground litter habitats (*Trichia hispida* group, *Cochlicopa*, sp., *Oxychilus* sp. and *Discus rotundatus*). This is likely to reflect predominantly short grassland habitats with areas of taller vegetation, such as on ditch margins. Sample 4 of ditch fill L1019 (F1018) also included freshwater aquatic taxa (*Bathyomphalus contortus*, *Bithynia tentaculata*, *Planorbarius corneus* and *Planorbis carinatus*). These taxa are characteristic of slow moving freshwater habitats and are likely to reflect standing water in the base of the feature on a permanent basis, which might suggest a drainage function.

Conclusions

The carbonised remains from the bulk sample light fractions were sparse and likely to represent background scatters of carbonised material, such as in the form of windblown debris. There was no evidence of dumps of domestic or agricultural processing remains in any of the deposits. The low density of remains is comparable to the adjacent site (Summers 2018), suggesting a similarly low intensity of medieval activity on the site.

The molluscan remains indicate predominantly grassland habitats with areas of taller vegetation and ground litter. Aquatic molluscs in ditch fill L1019 may indicate a drainage function.

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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		Hazelnut shell	Charcoal		Molluscs	Molluscs Notes	Roots	Contaminants				
										Cereal grains	Cereal chaff	Notes	Seeds	Notes		Charcoal>2mm	Notes				Modern seeds	Insects	Earthworm capsules		
ECB556 0	1	100 4	100 3	Fill of Ditch	2	-	40	20	50%	X	-	FTW (2), NFI (2)	-	-	-	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX	X X	-	-	X	
ECB556 0	2	100 6	100 5	Fill of Ditch	2	-	40	20	50%	X	-	NFI (1)	-	-	X	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX	X X	X	-	-	
ECB556 0	3	102 1	102 0	Fill of Ditch	1	-	40	20	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Helicella</i> <i>itala</i> , <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX	X X	-	-	-	

ECB556 0	4	101 9	101 8	Fill of Ditch	2	Mid 12th- 14th C	40	20	50%	X	-	FTW (2), Trit (1), NFI (3)	-	-	-	X	-	XX X	<i>Bathymophalus contortus</i> , <i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> , <i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Discus rotundatus</i> , <i>Oxychilus</i> sp., <i>Planorbarius comeus</i> , <i>Planorbis carinatus</i> , <i>Pupilla muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX X	X X	X	-	-
ECB556 0	5	102 3	102 2	Fill of Ditch	1	Mid 12th- 14th C	40	20	50%	X	-	FTW (1), NFI (2)	-	-	-	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Pupilla muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX X	X X	X	-	-
ECB556 0	6	102 7	102 6	Fill of Pit	1	-	10	10	100 %	-	-	-	X	Large Fabaceae (1)	-	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Helicella itala</i> , <i>Pupilla muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX X	X X	-	-	-

ECB556 0	7	103 1	103 0	Fill of Natural Feature	1	Mid 12th- 14th C	10	10	100 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	XX X	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispidia</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp., <i>Vertigo</i> sp.	XX	X X	-	-	X
ECB556 0	8	102 9	102 8	Fill of Posthol e	1	Mid 12th- 14th C	10	10	100 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	XX	<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp., <i>Helicella</i> <i>itala</i> , <i>Pupilla</i> <i>muscorum</i> , <i>Trichia</i> <i>hispidia</i> group, <i>Vallonia</i> sp.	XX	X X	-	-	-	

Table 2: Results from the assessment of bulk sample light fractions from Houghtons Lane, Isleham. Abbreviations: FTW = free-threshing type wheat (*Triticum aestivum/ turgidum*); Trit = wheat (*Triticum* sp.); NFI = not formally identified (indeterminate cereal grain).

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OASIS ID: archaeol7-334070

Project details

Project name	LAND NORTH OF HOUGHTONS LANE, ISLEHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB7 5SR (TT)
Short description of the project	In November 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire CB7 5SR (NGR TL 6520 7450; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to the planning approval for the construction of two dwellings with attached garages and external works (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 18/00819/FUL), based on advice from Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET). There is quite substantial evidence for prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation in and around the village of Isleham, including a medieval priory complex and church within the historic nucleus. Formerly the closest recorded CHER find spots to the site was a small number of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds found during test pitting some 170m to the west (MCB19752 and MCB 19721); however a recent trial trench evaluation adjacent and to the west (CHER ECB5371), recorded evidence for medieval roadside activity, potentially peripheral village occupation. The current evaluation revealed features in each trench comprising mostly ditches, with isolated post holes and a possible quarry pit. The features contained medieval (mid 12th - 14th century) pottery and also two sherds of residual Middle Saxon pottery. Medieval ditches containing small quantities of pottery comprising locally-produced coarse ware jars and cooking pots, and a fragment of floor tile, is consistent with peripheral activity away from the village core. The features represent a clear continuation of the medieval roadside activity recorded in the trial trench evaluation to the west (Barlow 2018). The features are also similar to the evidence from previous investigations along The Causeway, also close by to the west.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2018 End: 15-11-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P7816 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 5560 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	DITCHES AND POSTHOLES Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition
 Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England
 Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE ISLEHAM Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5SR
 Postcode CB7 5SR
 Study area 1600 Square metres
 Site coordinates TL 6520 7450 52.343229051646 0.425399938437 52 20 35 N 000 25 31 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 5.2m Max: 5.2m

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
 Type of sponsor/funding body Victoria Stanley Developments Ltd
 Name of sponsor/funding body Victoria Stanley Developments Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cambridgeshire Council Archaeological Store
 Physical Contents "Ceramics"
 Digital Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store
 Digital Contents "Ceramics"
 Digital Media available "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store
 Paper Contents "Ceramics"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX (P7816)



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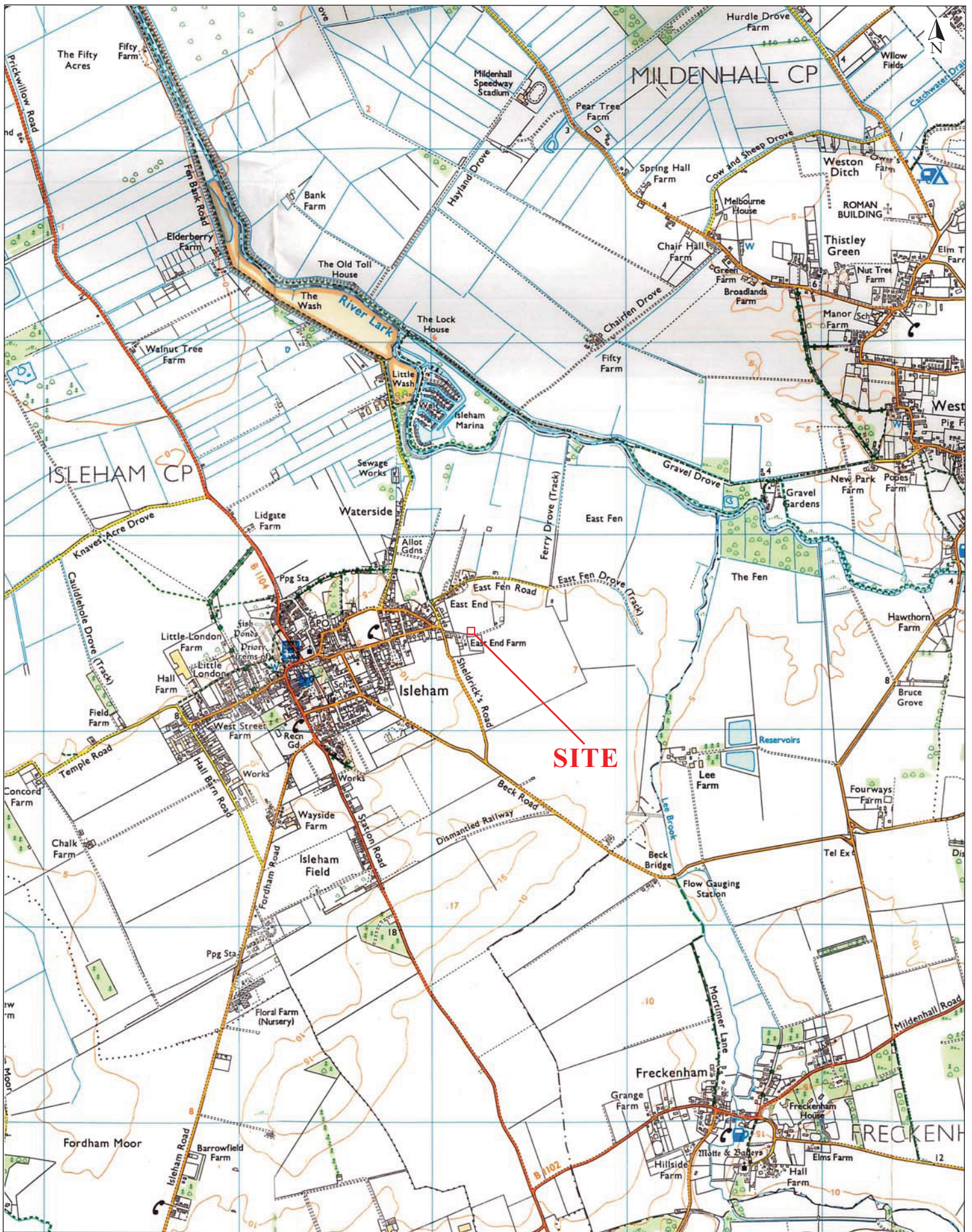
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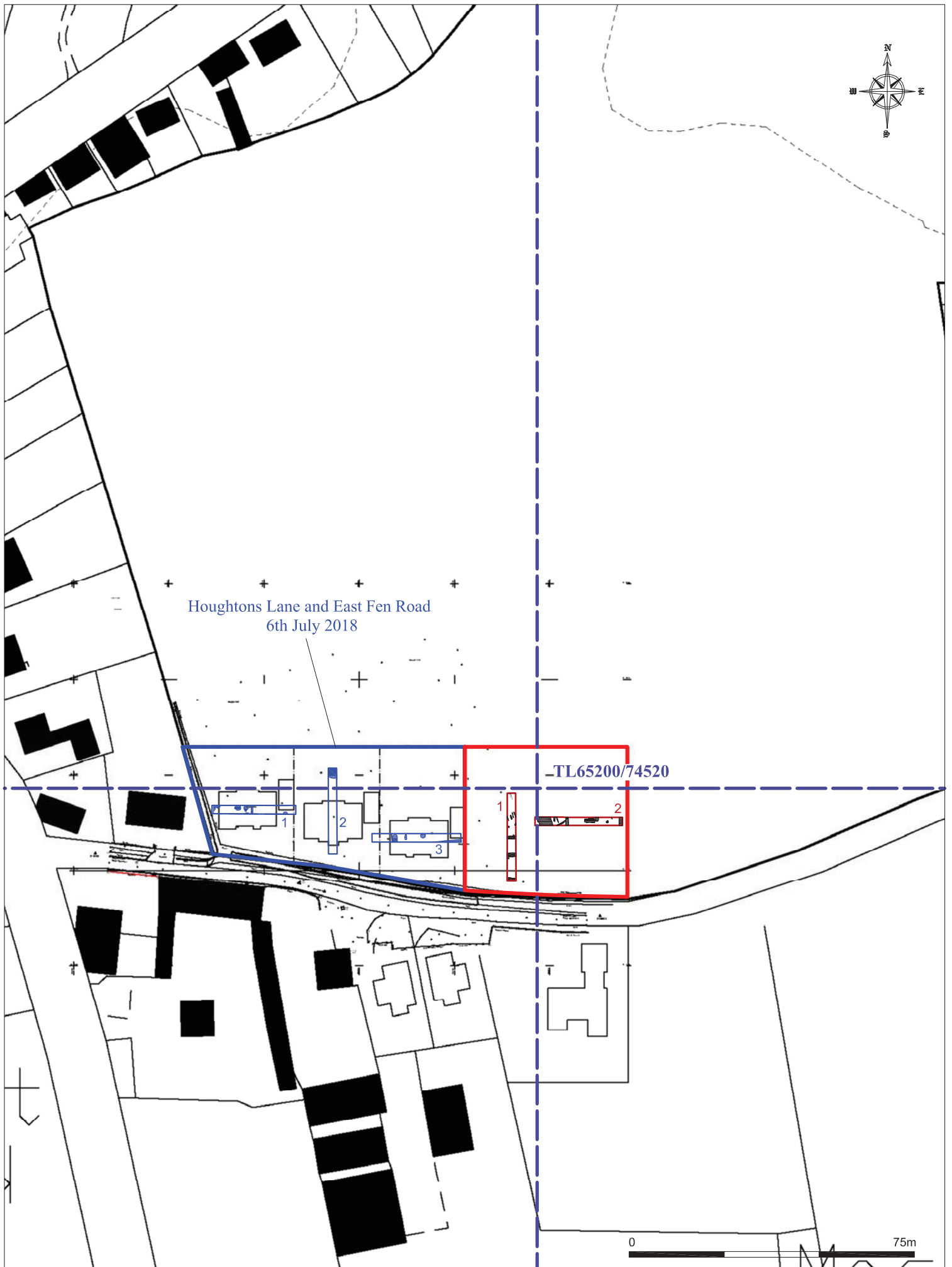


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Ditches F1013 and F1015 and Ditch Re-cut F1018
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham (P7816)

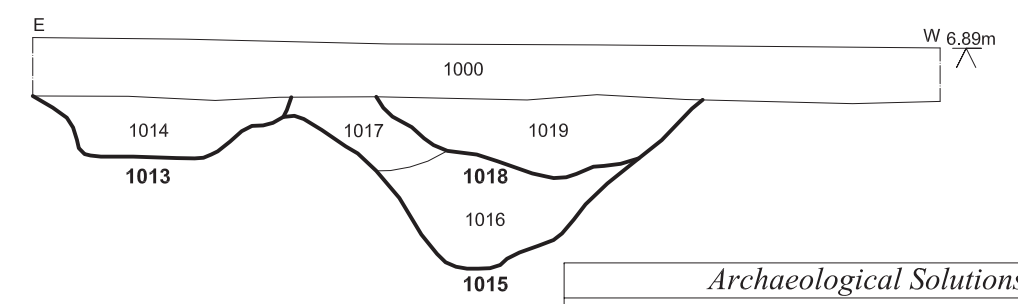
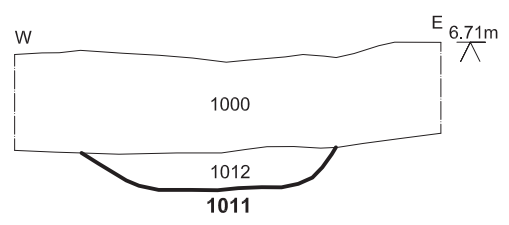
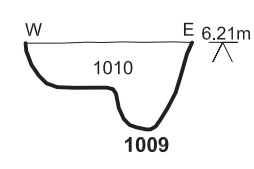
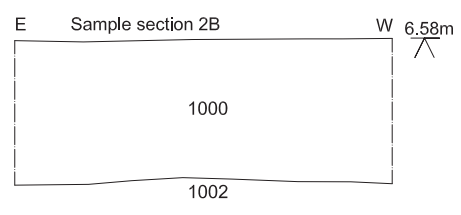
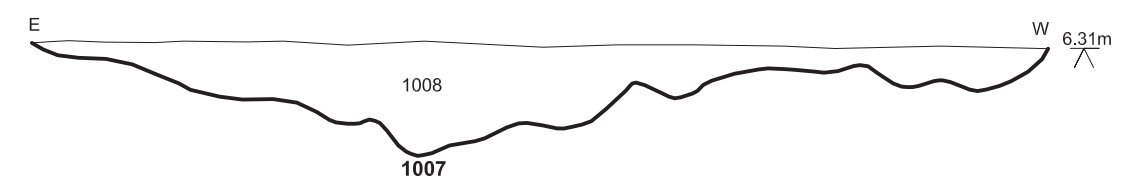
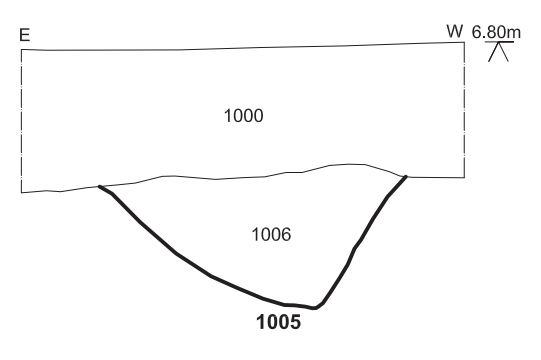
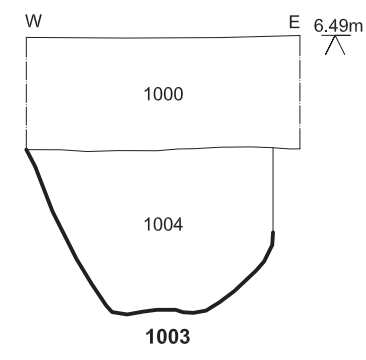
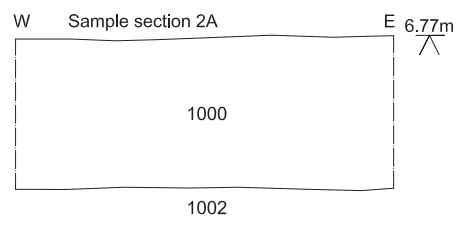
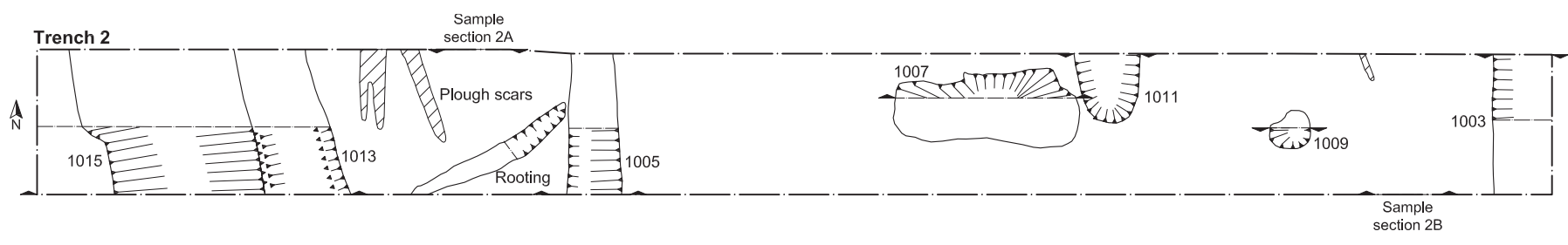
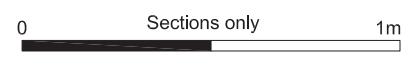
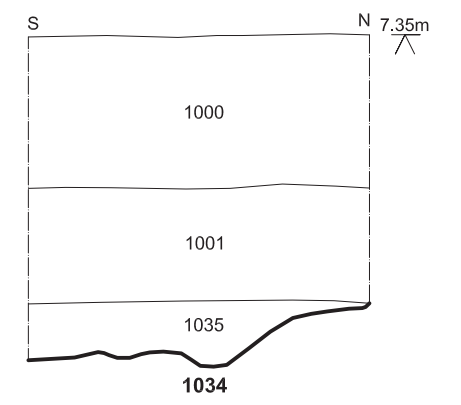
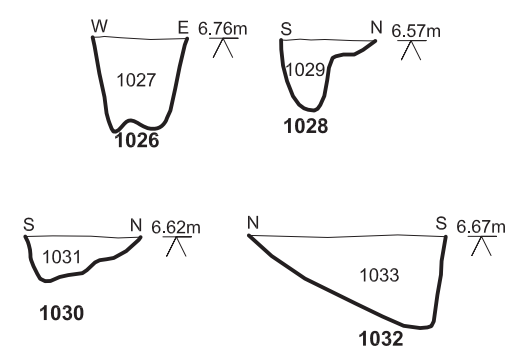
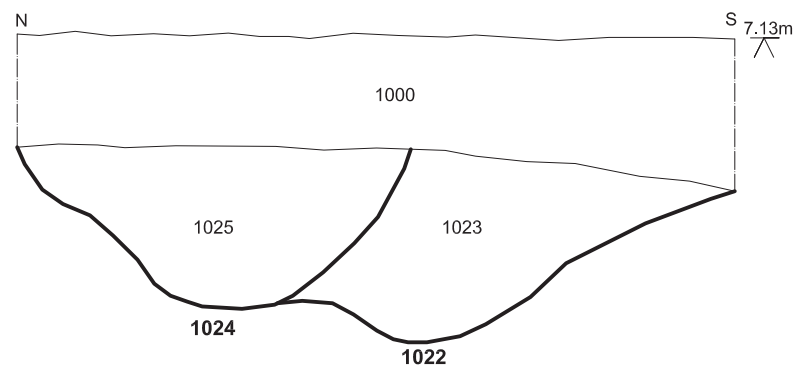
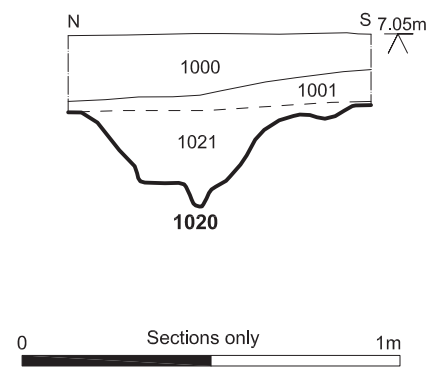
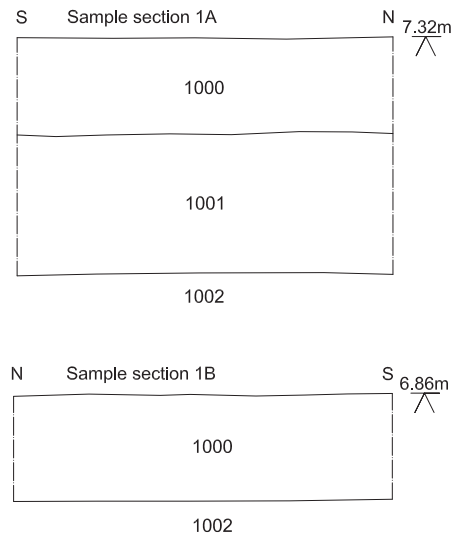
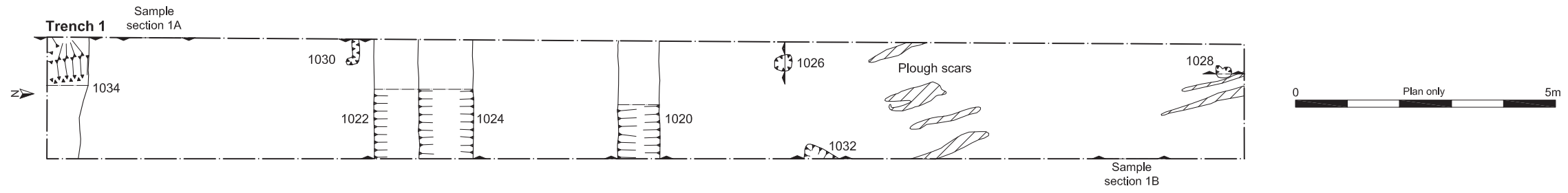


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:1250 at A4

Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham (P7816)



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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections
 Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3
 Site North of Houghtons Lane, Isleham (P7816)