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**EMSID, 22 OLD BANK, PRICKWILLOW,
ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB7 4UT**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER ECB 5947

Authors: Vincent Monahan & John Summers (Fieldwork & report) Keeley-Jade Diggons (Research & report)	
NGR: TL 5928 8208	Report No: 5878
District: East Cambs.	Site Code: ECB5947
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: P7474
	Date: 14 August 2019 (revised 15 th November 2019)

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Project details			
Project name	<i>Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4UT</i>		
<p><i>In August 2019 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5928 8208; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two dwellings following the demolition of an existing bungalow (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 17/00341/FUL). It was undertaken based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.</i></p> <p><i>Mechanical excavation across the 'Old Bank' in (Trench 2) revealed a raised chalk embankment (L1007) with alluvial clay (L1003) abutting it on the west. This forms the western edge of a substantial chalk embankment and is the former embankment associated with the old course of the River Great Ouse, prior to its 19th century diversion.</i></p> <p><i>Hand augering of deposits over the site and against the embankment identified alluvial clay (L1003) generated by overbank flooding of the former river, overlying deposits of fen peat (L1004).</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>9th August 2019</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	<i>Future work</i>	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P7474</i>	<i>Site code</i>	<i>ECB5947</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Chalk embankment – former embankment of the River Great Ouse</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>East Cambs</i>	<i>Prickwillow</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CB7 4UT</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.096ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5928 8208</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.0.6m AOD</i>		
<i>Project creators</i>			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Lukasz Wisniewski</i>		
Full title	<i>Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4UT. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Monahan, V., & Diggons, K-J.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5878</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>August 2019 (revised November 2019)</i>		

**EMSID, 22 OLD BANK, PRICKWILLOW,
ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB7 4UT**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In August 2019 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5928 8208; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two dwellings following the demolition of an existing bungalow (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 17/00341/FUL). It was undertaken based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

The site is located within an area of archaeological potential on a former spur of slightly higher land above the lower-lying former fenland and River Lark to the north east, which would have been a desirable location for early occupation of the dryland. Nearby archaeological remains are recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHR), with artefacts of prehistoric and Roman date having been found locally on the higher spur of land (CHER 07255 & 07260).

Mechanical excavation across the 'Old Bank' in (Trench 2) revealed a raised chalk embankment (L1007) with alluvial clay (L1003) abutting it on the west. This forms the western edge of a substantial chalk embankment and is the former embankment associated with the old course of the River Great Ouse, prior to its 19th century diversion.

Hand augering of deposits over the site and against the embankment identified alluvial clay (L1003) generated by overbank flooding of the former river, overlying deposits of fen peat (L1004).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2019 Archaeological Solutions (AS) was carried out an archaeological evaluation at Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5928 8208; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Lukasz Wisniewski to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two dwellings following the demolition of an existing bungalow (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 17/00341/FUL). It was undertaken 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 5th July 2019), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 12th July 2019) and approved by CCC HET. It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (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 2019) 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 lies on the western side of Old Bank in the core of Prickwillow. It comprises an existing bungalow and garden, and extends to 0.096ha.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies at c.0.6m AOD approximately 6km south of the Fens; much of the Prickwillow area lies below sea level and the closest area of relative high elevation is the settlement of Ely, some 4km to the west. Prickwillow was once located on the banks of the River Great Ouse, but is now on the banks of the River Lark since the re-organisation of the local river system in the first half of the 19th century. The solid geology in the area consists of Kimmeridge Clay Formation mudstone, formed in the Jurassic Period. Superficial (drift) deposits in the area are recorded as Tidal Flat Deposits clay and silt, formed in the Quaternary Period (BGS 2019). Overlying these deposits is a loamy and sandy soil with naturally high ground water and a peaty surface.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Evidence of prehistoric activity within the area surrounding the development site comes in the form of a Bronze Age flint beaker knife (CHER 07255), recovered c.150m north of the site, and a late Bronze Age socketed axe (CHER 07256), located some 720m north-east.

4.2 Romano-British activity in the area is represented by a single bronze skillet with neillo decoration and an inscription (CHER 07260), identified approximately 460m to the north-east of the development site.

4.3 Evidence of post-medieval activity apparent in the area is more substantial. A number of 19th century structures are present in the surrounding area, including two blacksmiths (CHER MCB 24476 & 24477), two drainage windmills (CHER 07242 & 07252), a cornmill (CHER MCB 24475), a windmill (CHER MCB 24474), an engine house (NHLE 1262255), a pumping station (CHER MCB 16605), four ecclesiastical structures (CHER CB 14901, 15902 & 14903; MCB 23919), three public houses (CHER MCB 23917, 23918 & 23920), a toll bridge (CHER MCB 23916) and a school (CHER MCB 25578). The Great Eastern Railway Cambridge line also runs through the area (CHER MCB 21582).

4.4 A pillbox (Type Fw3/28) World War II gun emplacement also lies within proximity of the site (CHER MCB 16410).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 CCC HET required a sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched. Two trenches each 15m x 1.8m were excavated (Figs. 2 - 3).

5.2 Mechanical excavation across the 'Old Bank' in (Trench 2) revealed a raised chalk embankment (L1007) with alluvial clay (L1003) abutting it on the west. Hand dug auger holes were put down to test the depth of the alluvial clay (L1003) and peat (L1004) in Trenches 1 and 2. Since these were natural deposits and the alluvium was difficult for the mechanical excavator to penetrate in some areas, the use of an auger was considered the most effective means of characterising the depth of the relevant deposits without causing significant and unnecessary ground disturbance.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

The finds observed during the sampling of the topsoil and subsoil were of 19th – 20th century date. These consisted of 19th-20th century porcelain and modern building materials. The modern finds were not retained due to their modern date.

Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

Trench 1 Figs. 2 – 3

Sample Section 1A 0.00 = - 0.02m AOD		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Paving slabs.
0.06 – 0.26m	L1001	Topsoil. Friable, dark red brown silty clay.
0.26 – 0.43m	L1002	Subsoil. Friable, mid brown grey peaty clay.
0.43m +	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits. Firm, dark blue grey clay.

Sample Section 1B 0.00 = - 0.67m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1001	Topsoil, as above.
0.27 – 0.51m	L1002	Subsoil, as above.
0.51m – 1.70m	L1004	`Peat`. Organic silty clay.

Auger 1 0.00 = 0.10m AOD		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits, as above.
0.20 – 1.90m	L1004	`Peat`. Organic silty clay. Dry, friable and degraded dark reddish brown organic silty clay (0.2 – 0.8m). Lower, wet but not waterlogged, black organic silty clay with visible plant macrofossils (0.8 – 1.90m).
1.90m+	L1006	Natural grey clay deposit. Firm, mid blue grey clay. Probable Kimmeridge clay formation.

Auger 2 0.00 = -0.58m AOD		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits, as above.
0.20 – 1.65m	L1004	`Peat`. Upper, 0.20 – 0.60m, degraded peat (as above). Lower, 0.60 – 1.65m, fibrous organic peat (as above).
1.65m+	L1006	Natural grey clay deposit, as above.

Auger 3 0.00 = -0.63m AOD		
0.00 – 2.00m	L1004	`Peat`. Upper, 0.00 – 0.60m, degraded peat (as above). Lower, 0.60 – 2.00m, fibrous organic peat (as above).
2.00m+	L1006	Natural grey clay deposit, as above.

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Features representing a modern service in the south of the trench and disturbance from a modern path in the north were identified.

Trench 2 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample Section 2A 0.00 = 0.17m AOD		
0.00 – 0.45m	L1005	Made ground. Firm, pale yellow grey mixed sand and building debris with frequent medium to large rubble.
0.45 – 0.54m	L1002	Subsoil, as above.
0.54m +	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits, as above.

Sample Section 2B 0.00 = 0.56m AOD		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1005	Made ground, as above.
0.21m +	L1007	Chalk. Firm, pale grey to white chalk.

Auger 4 0.00 = -0.34m AOD		
0.00 – 0.50m	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits, as above.
0.50 – 2.90m	L1004	'Peat'. Upper, 0.50 – 2.00m, degraded peat (as above). Lower, 2.00 – 2.90m, fibrous organic peat (as above).
2.90m+	L1006	Natural grey clay deposit, as above.

Auger 5 0.00 = -0.08m AOD		
0.00 – 0.70m	L1003	Alluvial clay deposits, as above.
0.70m+	L1004	'Peat'. As above. Augered to the top of the 'peat' deposit.

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.

At the eastern end of Trench 2 (sample section 2B) below Made Ground L1005 was a significant embankment of compacted chalk (L1007) which appeared on inspection to be natural in origin. In the field this was interpreted as a natural chalk escarpment and recording subsequently treated this feature as a natural deposit. However, geologically this cannot be the case as the natural geology of the site is Kimmeridge Clay formation and a surface expression of chalk in this area would not be possible. The chalk bank is in fact a man-made feature representing a historic embankment on the south/ west of the River Great Ouse prior to its relocation in the first half of the 19th century (see below). A profile of the embankment is presented in Fig. 4.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 In the southern area of the site, uppermost were paving slabs, L1000. Below the latter, Topsoil L1001, a friable, dark red brown silty clay, was present. L1001 overlay Subsoil L1002, a friable, mid brown grey peaty clay.

8.2 In the northern area of the site (Trench 2), Made Ground L1005 was a firm pale yellow grey mixed sand and building debris. It overlay Subsoil L1002 at the western end of the trench. At the eastern end of the trench, L1005 overlay L1007, a chalk embankment (see below).

8.3 At the base of the sequence were alluvial clay deposits (L1003) overlying peat (L1004) and natural Kimmeridge Clay (L1006) deposits. The alluvial clay (L1003) likely represents fluvial deposits generated by overbank flooding of the River Great Ouse, which would have built up against the chalk embankment (L1007). The peat deposits are fen peat which developed prior to post-medieval drainage activities.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential on a roddon of the River Lark (Hall 1996, 30-40). This forms a spur of slightly higher land above the lower-lying former fenland and River Lark to the north east, which would have been a desirable location for early activity. Nearby archaeological remains are recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHR), with artefacts of prehistoric and Roman date having been found locally on the higher spur of land (CHER 07255, 07256 & 07260). It has been postulated that prehistoric finds from the area result from river traffic or hunting due to the absence of a pre-Flandrian land surface in the vicinity (Hall 1996, 35).

9.2 Mechanical excavation across the 'Old Bank' in (Trench 2) revealed a raised chalk embankment (L1007) with alluvial clay (L1003) abutting it on the west. This forms the western edge of a substantial chalk embankment and is the former embankment associated with the old course of the River Great Ouse. Prickwillow was established on the banks of the River Great Ouse, prior to its diversion in the first half of the 19th century. The present site is located on the area once occupied by the river. The bank is clearly visible on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) and has subsequently been used as the foundation of the modern road.

9.3 The bank is butted by alluvial clay (L1003) on the west generated by the overbank flooding of the River Great Ouse while it was an active river, the main channel of which is likely to be further to the west. It is likely that the chalk embankment sits directly on underlying fenland peat (L1004), although this relationship could not be confirmed.

9.4 Hand dug auger holes were put down to test the depth of the alluvium (L1003) and peat (L1004) in Trenches 1 and 2.

9.5 Hand auger sample No. 5 revealed c.0.70m of alluvial clay overlaying peat (L1004). Another hand auger hole (No. 4) in Trench 2 revealed c.0.5m of alluvium

(L1003) overlying peat (L1004), which extended to a thickness of 2.40m. This deposit overlay grey clay (L1006) thought to be the Kimmeridge Clay Formation.

9.6 In Trench 1 three auger holes (Nos. 1 - 3) recorded peat (L1004) with a thickness of between 1.45 - 2.0m. This was overlain by a slightly thinner layer (c.0.37m) of alluvial clay (L1003). Again, the peat overlay grey clay (L1006) thought to be the Kimmeridge Clay Formation.

9.7 The greater thickness of alluvium close to the bank could be the result of build-up against the bank itself. However, closer to the modern dwelling the deposits could have been truncated due to ground reduction associated with the building's construction.

9.8 The lower part of the peat deposit was well preserved, with waterlogged plant macrofossils observable. It is mostly not under permanent waterlogging, with the water table only encountered in the northern end of Trench 1 at 1.80m in the auger hole (No.3). This is the result of modern drainage.

9.9 Modern features were present in Trench 1, representing a modern service in the south of the trench and bedding of a modern path in the north.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The site had the potential for archaeological remains due to its potentially desirable location for early occupation on a spur of slightly higher land within the former fenland. Nearby artefactual findspots (CHER 07255, 07256 & 07260) attest to potential prehistoric and Roman activity.

10.2 The only archaeological feature was a chalk embankment abutted by alluvial clay. This represents the 'Old Bank' recorded in the modern road name and was a former embankment of the River Great Ouse prior to its relocation during the first half of the 19th century. The date of origin of the bank is unknown but probably corresponds with drainage and land management activities earlier in the post-medieval period.

10.3 Hand augering of deposits over the site and against the embankment identified alluvial clay (L1003) generated by overbank flooding of the former river, overlying deposits of fen peat (L1004).

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 archive will be deposited following the gaining of the transfer of title.

The physical paper archive will consist of administration documents including transfer of title and an inventory, project brief, project WSI, Trial Trench Evaluation

Report, primary site records, registers, and photo contact sheets, which will amount to approximately 50 pages. This archive will be prepared with guidance from the document *Deposition of Archaeological archives in Cambridgeshire, September 2019, Version 4*, and will be deposited in a standard sized archive quality documentation box with CCC.

The digital archive will consist of administration documents, project brief, project WSI, Trial Trench Evaluation Report, report appendices, graphics figures and CAD files, and collated primary site records, which will amount to approximately 49 digital files.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Lukasz Wisniewski for funding the evaluation and for all his assistance.

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

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OASIS ID: archaeol7-364016

Project details

Project name	Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4UT (TT)
Short description of the project	In August 2019 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 5928 8208; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two dwellings following the demolition of an existing bungalow (East Cambs Council Approval Ref. 17/00341/FUL). It was undertaken based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team. No archaeological features or finds were found during the evaluation. Mechanical excavation across the 'old bank' in (Trench 2) revealed a raised chalk ridge (L1007) with alluvial clay (L1003) abutting it on the west. Hand dug auger holes were put down to test the depth of the peat (L1004) and clay deposits (L1003 and L1006) in Trenches 1 and 2, and the nature of the 'old bank' in Trench 2. The deposit sequence comprised a chalk ridge abutted by alluvial clay and fenland peat deposits. The lower part of the peat deposit was well preserved, with waterlogged plant macrofossils observable. It is mostly not under permanent waterlogging, with the water table only encountered in the northern end of Trench 1 at 1.80m in the auger hole (No.3).
Project dates	Start: 09-08-2019 End: 10-08-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P7474 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5947 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Monument type	ALLUVIAL CLAY AND PEAT DEPOSITS Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
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 ELY Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow,

Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4UT
 Postcode CB7 4UT
 Study area 0.1 Hectares
 Site coordinates TL 5928 8208 52.413081998369 0.342166975078 52 24 47 N 000 20 31 E Point
 Height OD / Depth Min: 0.6m Max: 0.6m

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
 Name of sponsor/funding body Mr Lukasz Wisniewski

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store
 Paper Contents "none"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Emsid, 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4UT. An Archaeological Evaluation
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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX (P7474)



1
General site overview



2
Trench 1 looking south



3
Sample section 1A



4
Sample section 1B



5
Trench 2 looking west

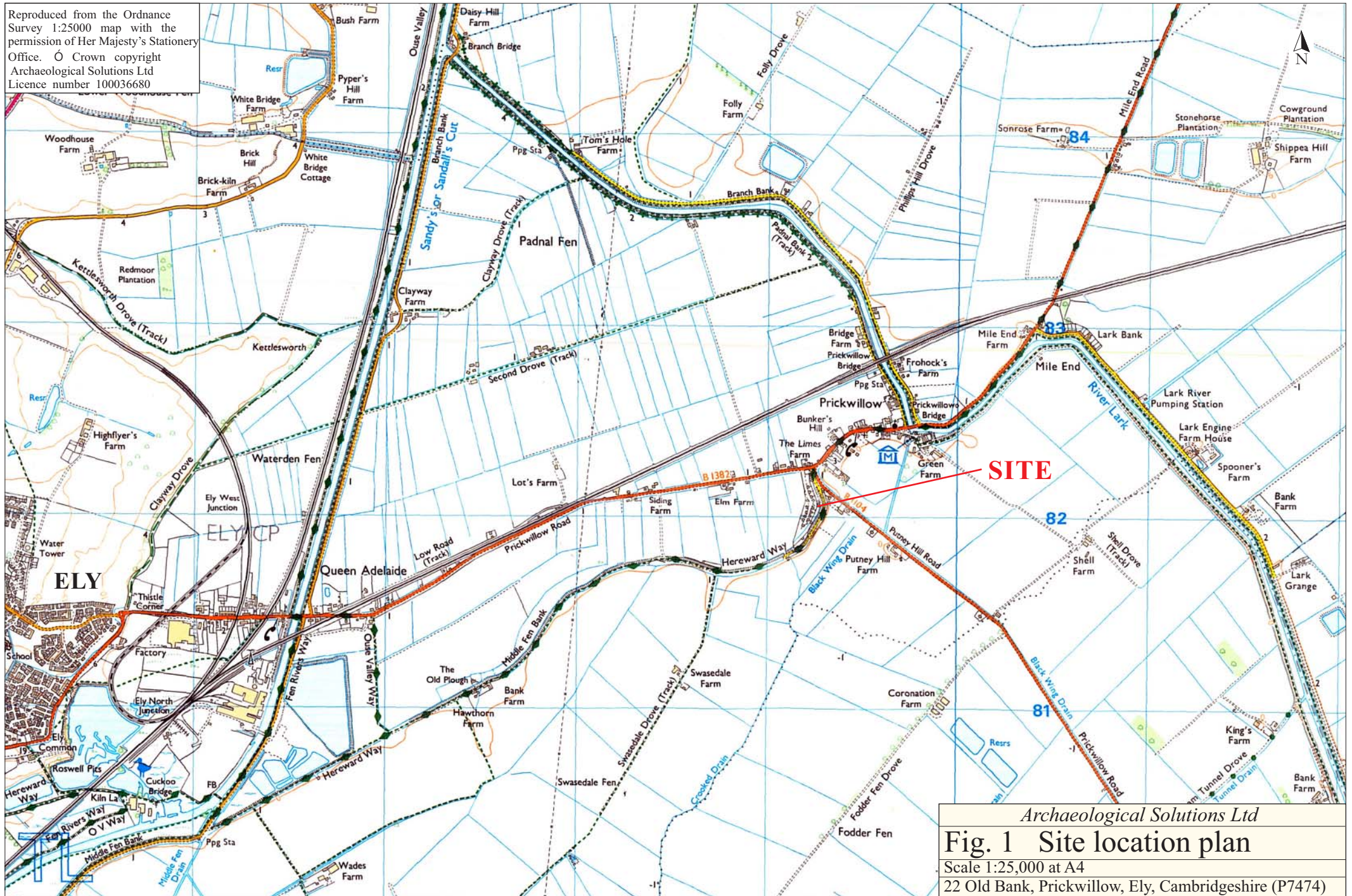


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Sample section 2A



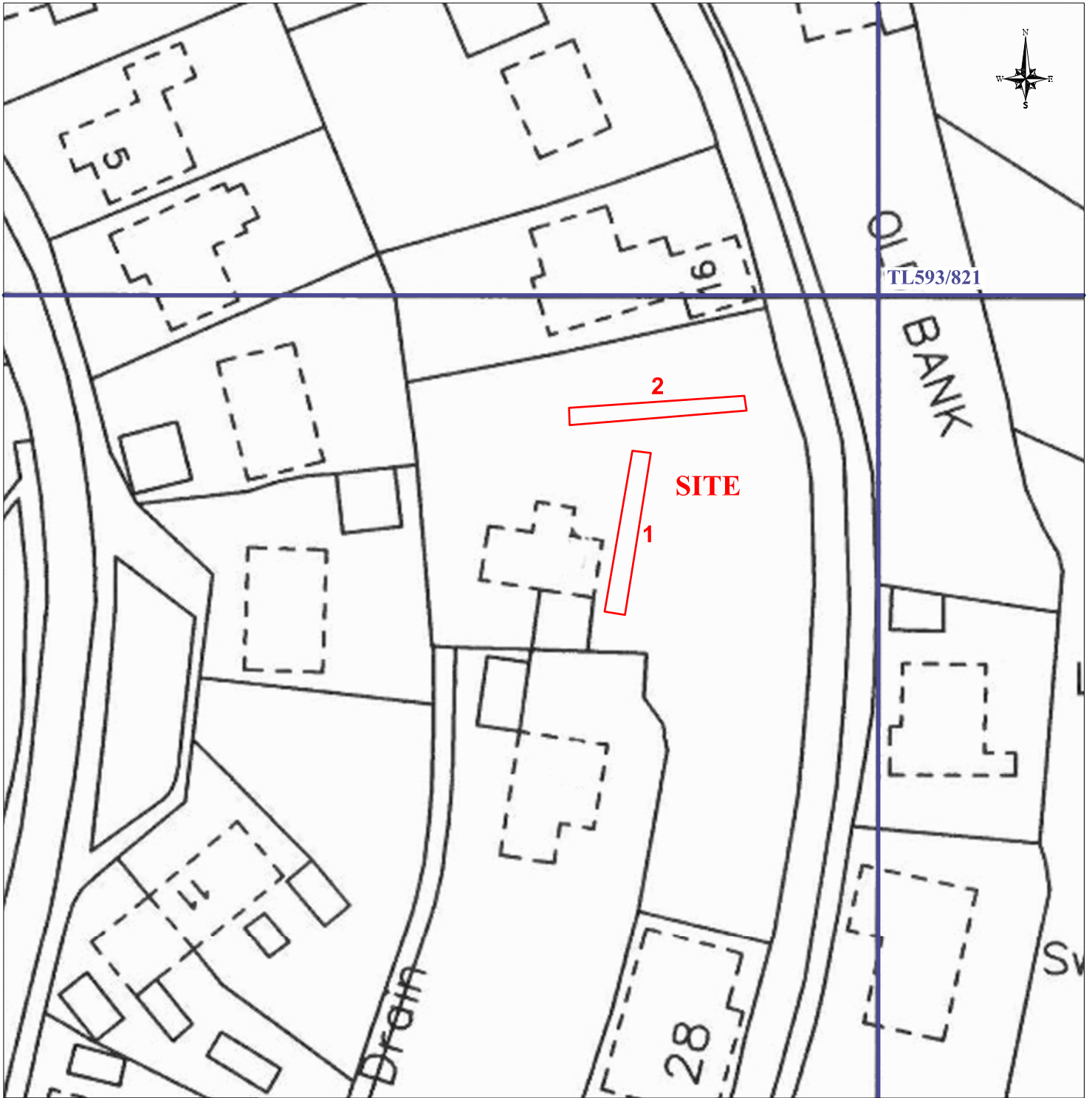
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Sample section 2B

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SITE

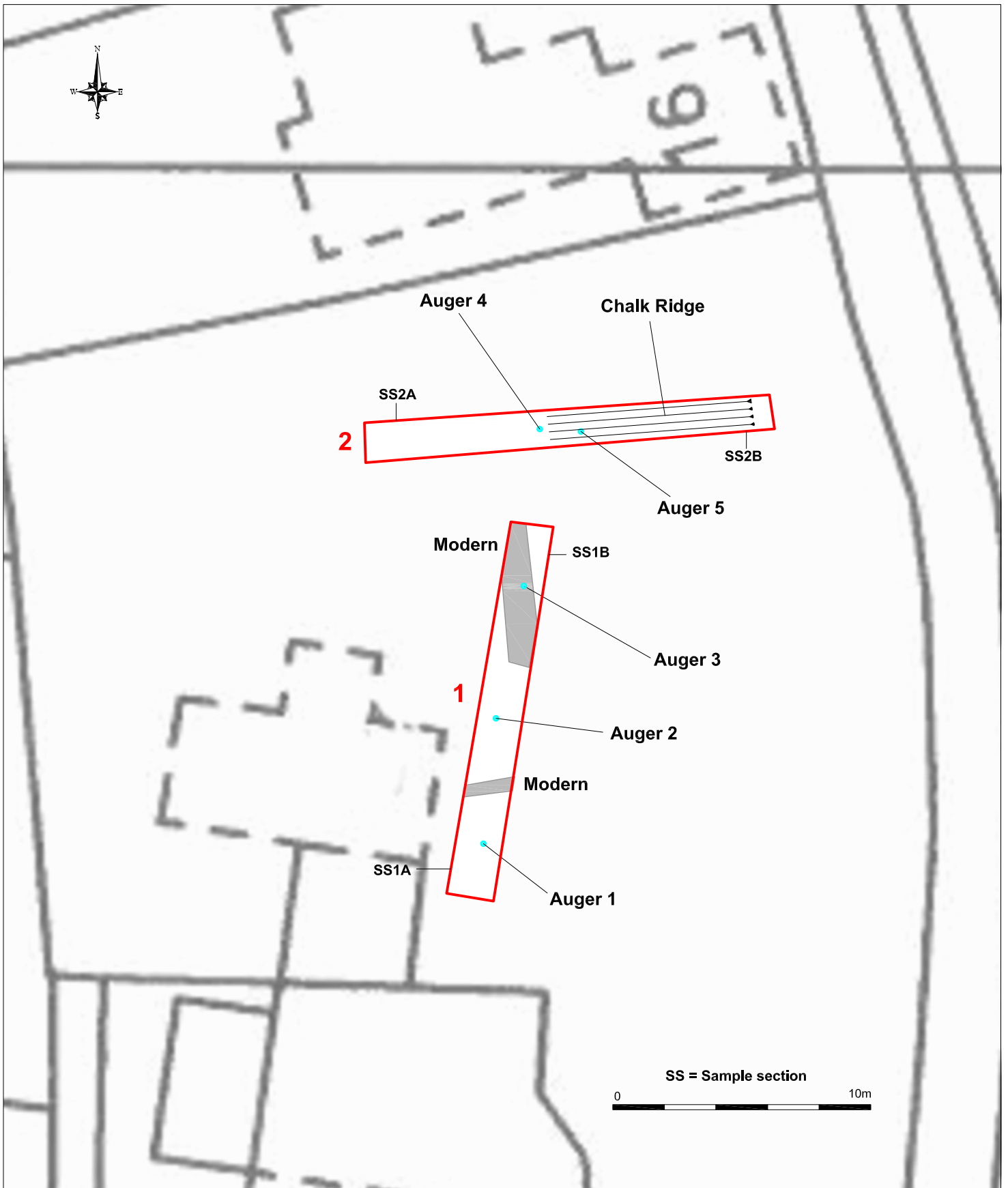
Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (P7474)



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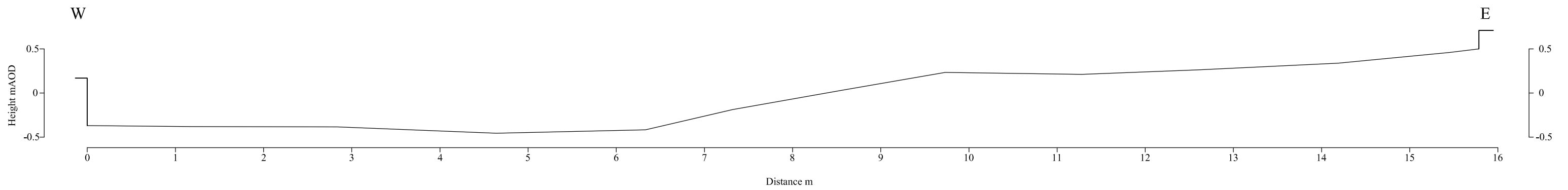
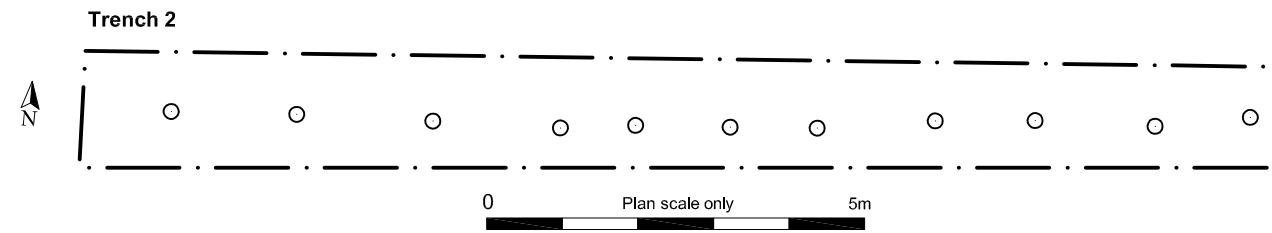
0 30m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:500 at A4
22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (P7474)

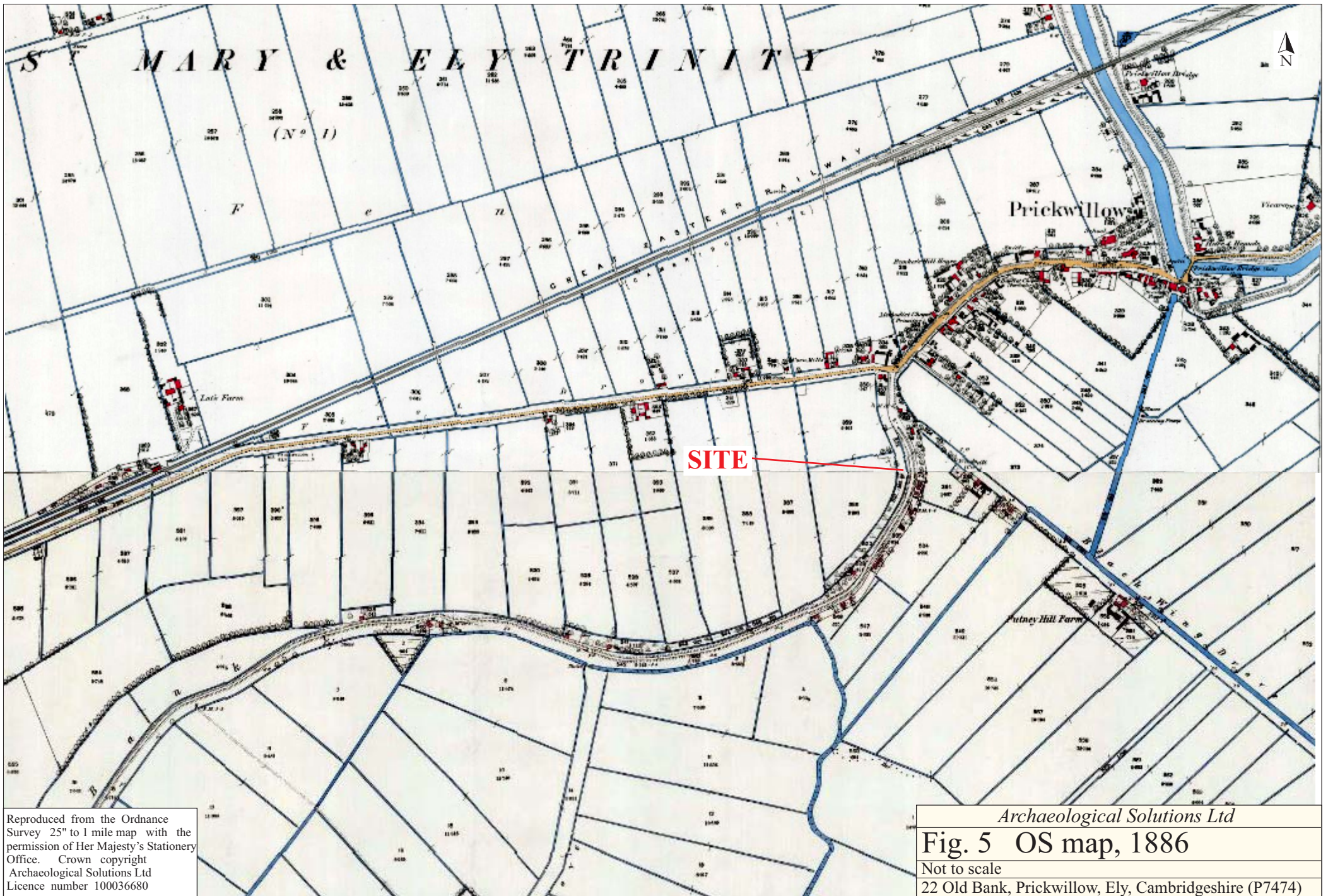


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Fig. 3 Trench location plan
Scale 1:200 at A4
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Fig. 4 GPS spot height survey and bank profile
Plan scale 1:100 at A3
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Fig. 5 OS map, 1886
Not to scale
22 Old Bank, Prickwillow, Ely, Cambridgeshire (P7474)