

LAND R/O 40 HIGH STREET, RAMSEY,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**LAND R/O 40 HIGH STREET, RAMSEY,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER No. 3324

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NGR: TL 2865 8506	Report No: 3683
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Project details			
Project name	<i>Land R/O 40 High Street, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire</i>		
<p><i>In January 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 40 High Street, Ramsey Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 2865 8506). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses (East Cambridgeshire Planning Ref. 0900595/FUL).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within the historic core of the medieval town. A Roman Samian bowl was found c.100 metres to the east. Excavations at properties further to the east along High Street have found evidence of post-holes for timber buildings, yards, and ditches relating to water management or boundaries, along with 11th-14th century pottery.</i></p> <p><i>Two trial trenches were excavated. Trench 1 revealed evidence of a former watercourse (L1010 & L1028), a possible hearth (F1020), a possible causeway (F1012), two buried medieval soils (L1011 & L1029), and a large post-medieval pit (F1016). Trench 2 also revealed evidence of a former watercourse (L1018). The former fen level (L1025), two buried medieval soils (L1004 & L1005), a medieval clay dump/layer (L1023), a possible causeway (F1008), and a modern animal burial (F1006) were also recorded.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	18 th – 22 nd January 2010		
Previous work (Y/N/?)		Future work	TBC
P. number	P3683	Site code	AS 1266
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	-		
Current land use	<i>Vacant Lot</i>		
Planned development	<i>A pair of semi-detached houses and associated landscaping</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Former watercourse, ?hearth, causeway.</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Medieval pottery and animal bone</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>Huntingdonshire</i>	<i>Ramsey</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	--		
Area of site	200m2		
NGR	TL 2865 8506		
Height AOD (max/ min)	c.4.5m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>(CAPCA) Cambridgeshire County Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr K Buckley</i>		
Full title	<i>Land R/O 40 High Street, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire. An archaeological evaluation.</i>		
Authors	<i>Barlow, G. & Thompson, P.</i>		
Report no.	3683		
Date (of report)	<i>January 2010</i>		

LAND R/0 40 HIGH STREET, RAMSEY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In January 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 40 High Street, Ramsey Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 2865 8506). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses (East Cambridgeshire Planning Ref. 0900595/FUL).

The site lies within the historic core of the medieval town. A Roman Samian bowl was found c.100 metres to the east. Excavations at properties further to the east along High Street have found evidence of post-holes for timber buildings, yards, and ditches relating to water management or boundaries, along with 11th-14th century pottery.

Two trial trenches were excavated. Trench 1 revealed evidence of a former watercourse (L1010 & L1028), a possible hearth (F1020), a possible causeway (F1012), two buried medieval soils (L1011 & L1029), and a large post-medieval pit (F1016). Trench 2 also revealed evidence of a former watercourse (L1018). The former fen level (L1025), two buried medieval soils (L1004 & L1005), a medieval clay dump/layer (L1023), a possible causeway (F1008), and a modern animal burial (F1006) were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at 40 High Street, Ramsey Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 2865 8506: Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses (East Cambridgeshire Planning Ref. 0900595/FUL). It was required by the local planning authority based on the advice of Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice, Cambridgeshire County Council (CAPCA).

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by CAPCA (dated 12/10/2009), and a specification compiled by AS (dated 22/10/09). The archaeological evaluation adhered to the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* and the procedures contained in the *IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (revised 2001) and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable

to be threatened by the proposed development. It also aimed to identify area of previous ground disturbance on the site.

Planning policy context

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG16 (1990) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology. It states that there should always be a presumption in favour of preserving nationally important archaeological remains *in situ*. However, when there is no overriding case for preservation, developers are required to fund opportunities for the recording and, where necessary, the excavation of the site. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to the conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs.1 & 2)

2.1 The site is located within the historic core of the town on the north side of the High Street between Great Whyte Road and School Lane.

3 METHODOLOGY (Desk-based assessment)

Information was sought from a variety of available sources in order to meet the objectives of the desk-based assessment.

3.1 Archaeological databases

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and spot finds within Cambridgeshire comes from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). In order to provide a representative sample, the HER database was searched for all known entries within a c. 0.5 km radius of the site. Entries within an approximate 1 km radius of the site are listed (Appendix 1) and plotted below (Fig. 3).

3.2 Historical and cartographic sources

The principal source for these types of evidence was the Cambridge Record Office (CRO). Relevant documents are listed in Appendix 2 and reproduced in Figs. 5 - 7

3.3 Secondary sources

The principal sources of secondary material were the CHER as well as AS's own reference library. All sources, including websites, are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Geological/geotechnical information

A description of the superficial and solid geology of the local and surrounding area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site. This information was drawn from appropriate maps based on the work of the British Geological Survey.

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Topography, geology and soils

4.1.1 The town is located at approximately 5 m AOD on a low peninsular of Pleistocene Till overlying Oxford Clay. Bury Fen lies to the south and Stocking Fen to the north.

4.2 Archaeological and historical background (Fig. 4)

Prehistoric (c. 700,000 BC – AD 43)

4.2.1 The earliest evidence from the area is a Palaeolithic hand axe from Victoria Street (CHER 2877). The heavy clay soils on the Ramsey peninsular were not conducive to Neolithic settlement and the nearest areas of significant prehistoric activity lie on the Fen edge 2 km to the east, with another flint scatter 3 km to the west (Last 2001, 5). A polished greenstone hand axe was found to the north-west of Ramsey (CHER 1899).

4.2.2 There is more evidence for Bronze Age occupation in the area including a cluster of Bronze Age barrows overlooking the fen 2 km to the north-east, and lithic scatters have been found to the east. A palstave came from within the assessment area (CHER 2810). No Iron Age finds have been made probably because conditions were wetter during this period.

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

4.2.3 Comparatively little Roman material has been found in the area although a possible tessellated pavement and coins from an unlocated spot within the area suggest the presence of a building of some status (CHER 2888). Several stray finds and small pottery scatters have been found in the area including an imported Samian bowl found less than 100 m from the site on the corner of High Street and School Lane (CHER 1550).

Anglo-Saxon (AD 411 – 1065)

4.2.4 No early or middle Saxon finds were made during the Fenland Survey. Ramsey Abbey was founded for the Benedictines in 969 in the reign of King Edgar by Oswald Bishop of Worcester and a local magnate Ailwyn of Upwood. It is recorded paying 4,000 eels annually to Peterborough Abbey to quarry its renowned Barnack limestone.

Medieval (AD 1066 – 1539)

4.2.5 At the time of the Conquest Ramsey Abbey was the four wealthiest ecclesiastical landowner in England (Cozens 2000, 42). The town is not mentioned in Domesday Book, possibly because it belonged to the abbey which enjoyed royal favours, and it did not become important until the 12th century. In 1110 the Abbot established a fair at Slepe (St Ives) sometimes attracting international trade and royal purchasers.

4.2.6 In 1143, during the Anarchy, the rebel earl Geoffrey de Mandeville occupied the Isle of Ely from which he launched guerrilla raids into the surrounding country. Ramsey Abbey was occupied and garrisoned as an outer fortification and the monks expelled, Cambridge and St Ives were sacked and the raids were so savage that it is thought they are referred to when the Peterborough Chronicler recorded '*Men said openly that Christ and his saints were asleep*'. Geoffrey was killed whilst besieging King Stephen's castle at Burwell and although his son Ernulf attempted to carry on the bad work he was soon forced to abandon Ramsey (Salzman 1948, 387). Excavations at the abbey found remains of late Saxon buildings and a short-lived defensive ditch thought to relate to this period. Abbot Walter at this time was also unpopular for selling gold ornaments and alienating abbey holdings, but the abbey recovered and contributed £1,000 to Edward I for his successful campaign to conquer Wales. Although placed temporarily in debt by the effects of the Black Death Ramsey Abbey continued to prosper to the end of the medieval period.

4.2.7 By 1200 the town was important enough to warrant the abbot granting a weekly market. This was confirmed in 1267 by Henry III who also granted an annual three day fair to be held at the feast of the Translation of St Benedict. Ramsey's isolated setting however, prevented it becoming any more than a market town. In 1327 young Edward III visited Ramsey where the townsmen

claimed the abbot was withholding their common rights and was also taking a quantity of the recently executed Hugh Despencers treasure for himself. The line of the streets has not changed much since the town was first laid out and High Street was the approach way to the abbey. The western part of High Street known as Bridge Street developed at the end of the 13th century when plots of land were set out for buildings (Page, Proby and Ladds 1932, 189). By the early 15th century the market area to the west of the abbey had been built over.

4.2.8 An evaluation carried out at 50-52 High Street and Mews found four ditches and a posthole containing early to high medieval pottery and animal bones, whilst remains of post-medieval and modern buildings were also located (Wotherspoon & Ross 2004, 11). Similar evidence came from excavations at 46-48 High Street, and it is clear that medieval settlement extended further back than previously thought. Other medieval remains have been located from excavations within the town. At Great Whyte c.100 north of the site, ditches were dug to protect the edges of the medieval town. One excavated ditch formed a boundary to a burbage plot, and evidence for medieval and post-medieval land reclamation was found at Ramsey Garden Centre. Further excavations around the abbey have found a medieval midden and water channel, monastery wall, and part of the 13th century gatehouse (which was rebuilt in the 15th), along with pits and ditches.

Post-medieval (AD 1540 – 1900)

4.2.9 In 1540 the abbey was dissolved and bought by Richard Cromwell for £4,633, and the stone was taken for other buildings. In 1636 a fire in Little Whyte caused 15 tenements to burn down and others damaged. In 1731 a fire in High Street between School House and High Bridge saw the houses on the north side destroyed or badly affected (Page, Proby and Ladds 1932, 189).

4.3 The site

OS maps of the Development Site

4.3.1 The earlier maps do not show any detail of High Street. The 1887 first edition 25 inch OS map (Fig. 5) shows the site as an empty area, probably a back yard, at the north end of a tenement plot, with buildings to the south fronting High Street. There are buildings in the next plot to the east bordering the site, whilst the plot to the west appears to be an orchard or back garden, and a park borders the site to the north. The 1901 25 inch OS map (Fig. 6) shows a new set of buildings have been built in the southern part of the plot which abut the south-west corner of the site. The 1924 OS map (Fig. 7) shows no further changes to the immediate surroundings of the site.

5 METHODOLOGY (Trial trenching)

5.1 Two trial trenches were excavated (Fig.3). Trench 1 was 9m long and Trench 2 was 7m. The trenches formed a 'T' shape.

5.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a 180° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Six evenly spaced test pits were excavated by hand, three in each trench. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 (Figs. 8-9)

<i>South end, east facing</i> <i>0.00m = 4.32m AOD</i>		
0.00 - 0.02m	L1000	Yard surface. Gravel in matrix of dark grey brown organic silt.
0.02 - 0.20m	L1001	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown organic clay silt with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional small sub angular flints.
0.20 - 0.40m	L1002	Subsoil. Firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small sub angular flints.
0.40 – 0.86m	L1021	Clay layer. Very firm, mid brownish yellow, mottled with red, clay. Upper fill of F1020.
0.86 – 1.08m	L1011	Buried soil. Firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional medium/large and small angular flints, charcoal flecks, chalk flecks.

<i>North end, east facing</i> <i>0.00m = 4.24m</i>		
0.00 – 0.02m	L1000	Gravel. As above.
0.02 – 0.14m	L1001	Topsoil. As above.
0.14 – 0.34m	L1002	Subsoil. As above
0.34 – 0.58m+	L1017	Clay layer. Very firm, mid brownish yellow clay with frequent charcoal, chalk flecks, and pea grit.

Description: Three test pits were excavated. Evidence of a former watercourse (L1010 & L1028), a possible hearth (F1020), a possible causeway (F1012), two buried medieval soils (L1011 & L1029), and a large post-medieval pit (F1016), were recorded.

F1016 was a large pit (1.70m+ x 1.03m+ x 0.36m+) located in Test Pit 3, at the northern end of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides. Due to the high water table this feature was not bottomed. Its fill, L1015, was a firm, dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent small and medium sub angular flints, and frequent tree root fragments. It contained mid 16th – 17th century pottery, CBM (233g) and a clay pipe stem fragment (91g).

F1012 was a clay feature (3.00m x 1.60m+ x 0.32m) located in the centre of the trench, in Test Pits 2 and 3. It had relatively steep southern side and a flat base. Its northern side was cut by Pit F1016. It contained three fills. On the southern side (in Test Pit 2) the lowest fill, L1013, was a compact, pale greenish grey silty clay with frequent small angular flints. It contained no finds. It was overlain by L1014, a firm, pale orange yellow clay with frequent small angular flints that contained no finds. On the northern side (in Test Pit 3) the fill, L1017, was a compact, mid brownish yellow clay with frequent chalk flecks. It contained no finds. The exposure of the feature was limited; it may represent a causeway across wet ground.

L1010 and L1028 in Test Pit 2 may represent a possible watercourse. L1010 was a compact, pale brownish grey silty clay with frequent small subangular flints and chalk flecks. It contained no finds. L1028 was a soft waterlogged, darkish grey brown sandy silt with occasional small sub angular flints, chalk flecks, occasional medium/large sub rounded flat limestone, and moderate black flecks that may represent small fragments of preserved wood. L1010 may be a lining for a water management channel as L1028 had the appearance of having been laid down in flowing water. L1028 may be the same deposit as L1018 in Test Pit 4 (Tr. 2).

Layer L1011 was present in the southern half of Trench 1. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with occasional lenses of mid brownish orange silty clay and occasional small and medium sub rounded flints. It contained a fragment of a bone handle (SF1; 8g), mid 13th – 15th century medieval pot (377g), animal bone (489g), and shell (18g). This layer is the same as L1005 in Trench 2.

Layer L1019, in Test Pit 3, was below L1017. It was a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium angular flints. It contained 13th – 15th century medieval pot (84g), animal bone (25g), and shell (79g). This layer appeared to be the same as L1029 in Test Pit 2, and L1004 in Trench 2.

F1020, located in Test Pit 5, at the south end of Trench 1 and extending beyond the western baulk, was a square or rectangular pit with steep sides and a flattish base. It contained two fills. The basal fill, L1030, was a firm, mid red orange burnt clay with occasional fine gravel and charcoal flecks. It contained no finds. The upper fill, L1021, was a compact, mid brownish yellow, mottled with red, clay with frequent gravel and occasional charcoal flecks, chalk flecks, and small burnt clay fragments. It contained no finds. The burnt clay base of this feature suggests *in*

situ burning with additional evidence of burning above. It may represent the remains of a hearth.

Trench 2 (Figs. 8-9)

<i>East end, north facing</i> <i>0.00m = 4.37m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.02m	L1000	Gravel. As above, Tr.1.
0.02 – 0.16m	L1001	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.16 – 0.36m	L1002	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.36 – 0.70m+	L1005	Buried soil. Firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with lenses of mid brownish orange silty clay, with occasional small and medium sub rounded flint.

<i>West end, north facing</i> <i>0.00m = 4.53m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.02m	L1000	Gravel. As above, Tr.1.
0.02 – 0.16m	L1001	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.16 – 0.34m	L1002	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.34–0.50m+	L1005	Buried soil. As above, Tr.2.

Description: Three test pits were excavated in Trench 2. Evidence of a former watercourse (L1018), the former fen level (L1025), two buried medieval soils (L1004 & L1005), a medieval clay dump/layer (L1023), a possible causeway (F1008), and a modern animal burial (F1006) were recorded.

F1006, located in Test Pit 1 at the western end of the trench, was rectangular with steep sides and a flat base. It cut clay layer L1008. Its fill, L1007, was a firm, dark grey brown clay silt. It contained an articulated animal skeleton (a dog), CBM (61g), and a clay pipe stem fragment (10g).

F1008 was located in Test Pit 1, at the western end of the trench. It was rectangular with vertical sides and a flat base. Its fill, L1009, was a firm, pale orange yellow silty clay that contained no finds. Although only a small area was exposed by the trench its similarity in form and fill suggests it may have had a similar function to F1012 in Trench 1 (?causeway).

Layer L1005 extended the full length of the trench, and was the same as layer L1011 in Trench 1. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with occasional lenses of mid brownish orange silty clay and occasional small and medium sub rounded flints. It contained 14th – 15th century medieval pot (201g), animal bone (148g), CBM (241g), shell (37g) and a clay pipe stem fragment (11g).

Layer L1004 was encountered below L1005 in Test Pits 1 and 4. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small sub angular flints and

medium/large sub rounded flints, and sparse medium/large sub rounded flat limestone. It contained 13th – 14th century medieval pottery (308g), animal bone (191g), and shell (99g).

Layer L1003 was encountered below L1004 in Test Pit 1 only. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with frequent black flecks of organic material, preserved root fibres, occasional small sub angular flint and small rounded chalk. It contained no finds, however, occasional aquatic snail shells were observed suggesting this layer was laid down in a wet environment and may represent the top of the old fen level. It was not bottomed due to continuous rapid flooding of the test pit.

Layer L1018 was encountered below L1004 in Test Pit 4 in the centre of the trench. It comprised a soft waterlogged, darkish grey brown sandy silt with occasional small sub angular flints, chalk flecks, occasional medium/large sub rounded flat limestone, and moderate black flecks that may be small fragments of preserved wood. It contained 13th – 14th century medieval pottery (118g), animal bone (76g), and shell (17g). L1018 had the appearance of having been laid down in flowing water, occasional aquatic snail shells were observed, and may be the same deposit as L1028 in Test Pit 2 (Tr.1). It was not bottomed due to continuous rapid flooding of the test pit.

F1026, located in Test Pit 6, at the extreme eastern end of the trench, was linear with vertical sides and a flat base sloping downwards from west to east. Its fill (L1027) was a firm, dark grey brown, organic, clay silt with occasional small and medium sub angular flints. It contained no finds other than a large, modern, ceramic service pipe.

Layer L1022, in Test Pit 6, is likely a continuation of L1005. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional lenses of pale yellow orange silty clay, and occasional small angular flint and small rounded chalk. It contained mid 13th – 15th century medieval pottery (208g), CBM (181g), animal bone (31g), and shell (27g).

Layer L1023, in Test Pit 6, was a firm, mid yellow brown, with patches of pale yellow orange, silty clay with occasional small angular flint, and sparse small and medium rounded flint, large flint nodules, and rounded flat limestone. It contained 13th – 14th century medieval pottery (20g), and a clay pipe stem fragment (11g). This layer may have had the same function as clay feature F1012 (?causeway) in Trench 1, but would appear to be of an earlier date being located beneath layer L1022 (= L1005, = L1011) rather than cut through it.

Layer L1024 was encountered below L1023 in Test Pit 6. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown silty clay with no obvious inclusions. It contained occasional black flecks of organic matter but no finds. This may be an alluvial deposit the result of periodic flooding.

Layer L1025 was encountered below L1024 in Test Pit 6. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown silty clay with very frequent black flecks of organic matter. It contained no finds. This layer may represent the top of the old fen level and may be the same as L1003 in Test Pit 1. It was not bottomed due to continuous rapid flooding of the test pit.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds present at the machined level of the trench, as this was dry. However, due to the very high water table a very short distance below this level the test pits suffered continuous and rapid flooding which may have hampered the recognition of features in the basal layers.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The current surface of the site (L1000) comprised a thin layer of gravel, in a matrix of dark grey brown organic sandy silt, a uniform 0.02m thick. It overlay the topsoil (L1001), a firm, dark grey brown organic clay silt with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional small sub angular flints (0.08m - 0.18m thick).

8.2 Beneath L1001 was Subsoil L1002, a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small sub angular flints (0.12m - 0.24m thick). It contained modern pottery and CBM.

8.3 Beneath L1002 was a late medieval buried soil (L1005 (= L1011, = L1022), comprising a firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with lenses of mid brownish orange silty clay, with occasional small and medium sub rounded flint. Medieval (14th – 15th century) pottery sherds were recovered from this layer.

8.4 Additional layers below L1005 (=L1011 & L1022) were revealed by the test pits, with different sequences present in each pit. Immediately below L1005 (=L1011, = L1022) in Trench 1 and the western half of Trench 2 was layer L1004 (=L1019, = L1029) (0.45m thick). It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small sub angular flints and medium/large sub rounded flints, and very occasional medium/large sub rounded flat limestone. This too produced sherds of medieval pottery (13th – 14th century).

8.5 In Test Pit 4 L1004 (=L1019, =L1029) overlay L1018 (=L1028), a soft waterlogged, darkish grey brown sandy silt with occasional small sub angular flints, chalk flecks, occasional medium/large sub rounded flat limestone, and moderate black flecks that may be small fragments of preserved wood. This layer produced sherds of 13th – 14th century medieval pottery in Test Pit 4. The gritty

nature of this deposit, together with the presence of aquatic snails suggests this layer was laid down in water that had some flow.

8.6 In Test Pit 1, located at the western end of Trench 2, L1004 overlay L1003 (0.12m+ thick). It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clay silt, with frequent black flecks of organic material, preserved root fibres, occasional small sub angular flint and small rounded chalk.

8.7 In Test Pit 6, located at the eastern end of Trench 2, layer L1022 (=L1005, = L1011) overlay layer L1023 (0.46m thick). The latter comprised a firm, mid yellow brown, with patches of pale yellow orange, silty clay with occasional small angular flint, and very occasional small and medium rounded flint, large flint nodules, and rounded flat limestone. L1023 overlay L1024 (0.16m thick), a firm, mid grey brown silty clay. It contained occasional black flecks of organic matter. And at the base of the sequence was layer L1025 (= L1003) (0.07m+ thick), a firm, mid grey brown silty clay with very frequent black flecks of organic matter.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Summary of the archaeology

9.1.1 Six features and six layers were identified.

Trench	Context	Layer	Description	Date
1, 2		L1004 =L1019 =L1029	Buried soil	13 th – 15 th C
1, 2		L1005 = L1011 = L1022	Buried soil	13 th – 15 th C
2	F1006		Dog burial	Modern
2	F1008		?Causeway	Undated
1	F1012		?Causeway	Undated
1	F1016		Pit	Mid 16 th – 17 th C
1, 2	-	L1018 = L1028	Former watercourse	13 th – 14 th C
1	F1020		?Hearth	Undated
2		L1023	Clay dump	13 th – 14 th C
2		L1024		-
2		L1025 = 1003	Fen level	-
2	F1026		Sewer pipe	Modern

9.1.2 Pit F1006 (Trench 2) contained an articulated animal burial and clay pipe. It cut F1008 and medieval layer L1005. At the extreme northern end of the site (Trench 1) was a large post-medieval pit (F1016) that cut clay feature F1012. F1016 contained a large quantity of tree root fragments as well as modern pottery and CBM. Linear feature F1026 on the eastern side of the site (Trench 2) contained a modern ceramic sewer pipe.

9.1.3 The three undated features all contained a similar, but not, identical clay fills. The largest, F1012 Tr. 1, appeared large enough to have formed a causeway, with the clay forming a firm and waterproof base on what would have been very wet ground. Only a small area of a similar feature, F1008, was exposed in Trench 2. This may have served a similar function.

9.1.4 F1020 in Trench 1 whilst of a similar depth and also with a pale clay fill was different. It was smaller, and there was clear evidence of burning. The lower clay fill (L1030) had reddened whilst the upper clay fill (L1021) contained charcoal fragments as well as fragments of fire reddened clay. This feature may represent the remains of a hearth.

9.1.5 Evidence of a former watercourse (L1018 = L1028) running approximately north – south was seen in both trenches. This layer contained aquatic snail shells and was of a grittier nature to all the others suggesting it formed in water with some flow.

Research Potential

9.1.6 The desk-based assessment notes that there is little evidence for prehistoric activity within the area. The imported Samian ware bowl from the corner of School Lane (CHER 1550) and the now unlocated tessellated floor surface and coins (CHER 2888) hint at high status Roman occupation in the area (CHER 1550), but Roman finds are otherwise sparse. There is virtually no archaeological evidence for the Saxon period until the abbey was founded in the 10th century. The medieval town street plan has probably not changed much since it was laid out by the 12th century. The evaluation at 50-52 High Street recorded medieval ditches and evidence of post-built structures, and the earliest pottery comprised five sherds of St Neots and Stamford ware (c.11th-12th centuries). Other excavations in the town and abbey precinct have found evidence for buildings, pits and ditches connected with property boundaries or water management. It has been suggested that there is an overall dearth of ancient buildings along Ramsey High Street probably due to the fire of 1731 (Last 2001, 9). The site is on the north side of the street, understood to have been the worst-affected during this fire.

9.1.7 Ayers (2000, 31) identifies evidence for commercial and industrial activity, craft and trade specialisation, evidence for industrial zoning and the relationship between industrial and commercial sites as important research subjects for the medieval and post-medieval periods in the east of England's urban areas. The identification of medieval and post-medieval features and deposits at this site close to the centre of historic Ramsey indicates that it has the potential to inform on these issues.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the County Archaeological Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank CC Associated (UK) Ltd for commissioning this evaluation, and Mr Buckley for his co-operation and funding of the project.

Thanks are due to staff at Cambridge HER and Cambridge Record Office.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice, Cambridgeshire County Council.

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WEB SITES

Heritagegateway.org.uk

APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA

The following sites are those that lie within a c. 1 km radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER). The locations of the sites are shown in Fig. 3. Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Section 4.2

CHER No.	NGR	Details
<i>Prehistoric 700,000 BC – AD 43</i>		
1899	2830 8580	Neolithic green stone axe
2810	2800 8500	Bronze Age palstave
2877	2898 8503	Palaeolithic hand axe
<i>Roman AD 43-410</i>		
1550	2858 8502	Samian bowl
2874	2920 8511	Roman pottery
2822	2890 8450	Coins
2888	2800 8500	Possible tessellated floor and coins
7807	2852 8497	Pottery scatter
8016	2930 8490	Cropmarks with associated Roman pottery
<i>Saxon 410-1066</i>		
2781a	2918 8503	Benedictine nunnery
<i>Medieval 1066-1539</i>		
1777	2920 8480	Booth's Hill Castle, moat and ditch
2781	2918 8503	Ramsey Abbey, Benedictine
2782	2920 8510	Ramsey Abbey Gatehouse
2832	291 851	St Thomas' Church
2882	2890 8450	Coins
7829	2800 8500	c.13 th century iron key
10886	293 853	Probable rubbish tip or midden including building materials. Earthworks of gravel terrace and pond
CB15308	2866 8517	Medieval ditch
CB15414	2891 8520	Medieval pit
<i>Post-medieval to modern 1539+</i>		
2781b	2918 8503	Abbey house, now a school
2880	2887 8561	19 th century disused windmill
3696	2840 8480	Great Eastern Joint Railway. Branch closed in 1956
<i>Undated</i>		
8418	2877 8522	Cobbled surface

APPENDIX 2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Figs	Date	Map	Scale	Source
Fig. 1	modern	Site location	1:25,000	OS Explorer
Fig. 2	modern	Detailed site location	1:500	Client
Fig. 3	modern	Trench Plan location		
Fig. 4	modern	HER information	1:25,000	Archaeological Solutions
Fig. 5	1887	First edition OS X.15-16	25 inch	HRO
Fig. 6	1901	Second edition OS X.15-16	25 inch	HRO
Fig. 7	1927	OS X.15-16	25 inch	HRO

APPENDIX 3 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

AS 1266: Rear of 40 High Street, Ramsey Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1004		Layer	13th - 14th C	(21) 308g		191	Shell (10) 99g
1005		Layer	14th C	(9) 201g	241	148	Charcoal (1) 17g Clay Pipe (3) 11g Shell (6) 37g
1006	1007	Fill of Animal Burial			61	711	Clay Pipe (2) 10g
1011		Layer	Mid 13th - 14th C	(27) 377g		489	SF 1 Worked Bone 8g Shell (3) 18g
1016	1015	Layer	Mid 16th - 17th	(2) 24g			Clay Pipe (13) 91g
1018		Layer	13th - 14th C	(7) 118g		76	Shell (3) 17g
1019		Layer	13th C	(5) 84g		25	Shell (7) 79g
1022		Layer	Mid 13th - 14th / 15th C	(12) 208g		31	Shell (7) 27g
1023		Layer	13th - 14th C	(1) 20g			Clay Pipe (1) 11g

APPENDIX 4 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

by Peter Thompson

The trial trenching recovered 86 medieval sherds weighing 1.259 kg nearly all datable between the 13th and 15th centuries. No Saxo-Norman wares are present and there is nothing to indicate than any of the sherds date much before c.1200. The pottery is quantified by feature (below).

Thirty-nine sherds (45%) are Ely-type wares comprising quartz tempered fabrics with sparse to moderate chalk and occasional rare red iron oxide. The vessels can be generally characterised as hand made with wheel-finished rims. The forms and decoration are listed (below) and typologised according to Spoerry (2008). Two sherds have patchy glaze but isolated drips of glaze on 'unglazed' sherds suggest the pots were fired in a kiln alongside (or beneath) glazed wares.

The remaining coarse wares comprise 14 sherds in shell or shelly sandy ware probably made fairly locally and 8 reduced sherds in quartz sand fabrics. Two unglazed Lyveden/Stanion-type wares were imported from Northamptonshire.

The fine ware glazed jugs were mainly imported from Northamptonshire comprising 5 Lyveden/Stanion wares and 4 Potterspury wares. One or two sherds each from Grimston, Norfolk, Brill, Buckinghamshire, and possibly a London-type ware are also present.

The latest sherd came from feature F1016 (L1015) comprising a sherd similar to Cistercian ware but oxidised fabric akin to red earthenware rather than semi-vitrified. This may be a Babylon ware produced at Ely dated c.16th-early 17th and it was associated with a flanged bowl rim in late medieval reduced ware.

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KEY:

MSHW	Medieval Shelly ware 12 th -14 th
MSHS	Medieval Sandy Shelly ware 12 th -14 th
MELS	Medieval Ely ware late 12 th -15 th
MCW1	Medieval coarse ware - grey sandy ware
MCW2	Medieval coarse ware - buff sandy with vc red ironstone
MCW3	Medieval coarse ware – orange surfaces w/m?, grey core clear and grey quartz, some red iron oxide
MOW	Medieval Oxidised ware - Oxidised throughout, medium sub-rounded quartz, sparse rounded chalk and sparse rounded red ironstone
MGL	Medieval glazed ware (miscellaneous) late 12 th -15 th
LON	London-type ware
GRIM	Grimston ware late 12 th -14 th
LYV/STAN	Lyveden/Stanion ware late 12 th -14 th
BRILL	Brill-type ware early 13 th -15 th
POT	Potterspury-type ware mid 13 th -15 th
EPMRE	Early post-medieval red earthenware 16 th -17 th

Feature	Layer	Quantity	Date	Comment
1004		10x173g MELS 1x12g MEL (gl) 2x9g MCW1 1x5g MCW2 5x59g MShS 1x25g LYV/STAN 1x8g MGL	13 th -14 th	MELS: Type B flat topped jar rim c.24 cm diam, 1x hand made wavy line deo, 1x Type bowl E with internal bead and roulette deco, 1x square roulette deco MELS (gl) MGL; patchy clear and green glaze
1005		4x105g MELS 1x17g MGL 1x31g MShW 1x6g LYV/STAN 1x9g POT	14 th	MELS: x1 Type B jar rim similar to Kings Lynn, x1 flat w/m deep bowl rim with internal and external wavy line deco MGL: base with patchy clear glaze MSh: thick simple rim to large vessel LYV/STAN: abundant ooliths but patchy, pimply green glaze as with Ely wares POT: w/m sherd with trace of glaze
1011		12x197g MELS (ox) 1x3g MEL (gl) 3x46g MShW 1x26g MSSh 2x14g MCW1 1x3g MCW3	Mid 13 th -14 th	MELS: hand made MEL (gl) neck rilling MSh: flat base MSSh: everetEd jar rim MCW3: GRIM: Iron stained strip fabric oxidised inner surface LYV/STAN: rilled jug neck, 1xyellow slipped, all glazed

		1x3g GRIM 4x40g LYV/STAN 3x22g POT		POT: Glazed
1016	1015	1x8g MCW1 1x17g EPMRE	Mid 16 th - 17 th	MCW1: flanged rim EPMRE: Babylon ware?
1018		3x58g MELS 1x4g MShW 1x9g MCW1 2x35g GRIM	13 th -14 th	MCW1: possibly Grimston, a little coarser GRIM: glazed, x1 brown iron rich trip
1019		1x42g MELS 1x19g MShW 1x5g MCW1 1x11g MGL 1x6g MOW	13 th	MCW1: simple everted cooking pot rim MGL: Possibly London-type war, green glaze with neck rilling
1022	Layer	6x121g MELS 1x7g MCW1 3x38g MShW 1x10g LYV/STAN 3x38g BRILL	Mid 13 th - 14 th /15 th	MELS: 1x highly deco strap handle with central thumbed strip LYV/STAN: unglazed BRILL: glazed with applied strip
1023	Layer	1x18g MELS	13 th -14 th	MELS: Bowl E

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

Trial trench excavations recovered a total of five fragments (483g) of highly fragmented, slightly abraded CBM from two layers and an animal burial. The CBM was recorded by fragment count and weight (g), with fabrics analysed at x 20 magnification. All data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that forms part of the site archive.

A total of two fragments (144g), recovered from Layer L1022 and Animal Burial F1006 (L1007), occur in an orange fabric with inclusions of common well-sorted quartz (0.1-0.25mm), sparse red/black iron rich grains (0.1-0.5mm) and occasional chalk (0.5-4mm). Both fragments occur as 18mm thick flat tile, which suggests they are derived from Roman tegula roof tile.

The remaining three fragments (339g) are post-medieval in date and occur in a very hard fabric with orange-red surfaces and a red core, manufactured in calcareous clay with sparse quartz inclusions (0.1-0.5mm). A fragment in Layer L1022 is from a 14mm thick flat tile, probably a peg tile, while two fragments in Layer L1005 are from bricks of unidentifiable type.

AS 1266: Rear of 40 High Street, Ramsey, Cambs
Concordance of Samples

Sample	Size (l)	Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Flot (ml)	Pot (g)	A. Bone (g)	Shell (g)	Other
1	40	1004		2	Silt Layer	13th - 14th C	20	(7) 23g	21	6	S. Flint (5) 16g
2	40	1018		2	Silt Layer	13th - 14th C	20	(5) 15g	11	9	S. Flint (6) 7g Fe Fragment (1) 4g

The flots have been sent to Alex Livarda for analysis

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP1. General site shot, looking south west.



DP2. Trench 1 pre exc, looking south.



DP3. Trench 2 pre exc, looking west.



DP4. Trench 1. Sample section and Test Pit 5, looking west.



DP5. Trench 1 post exc, looking south.



DP6. Trench 2. Sample section, looking south.



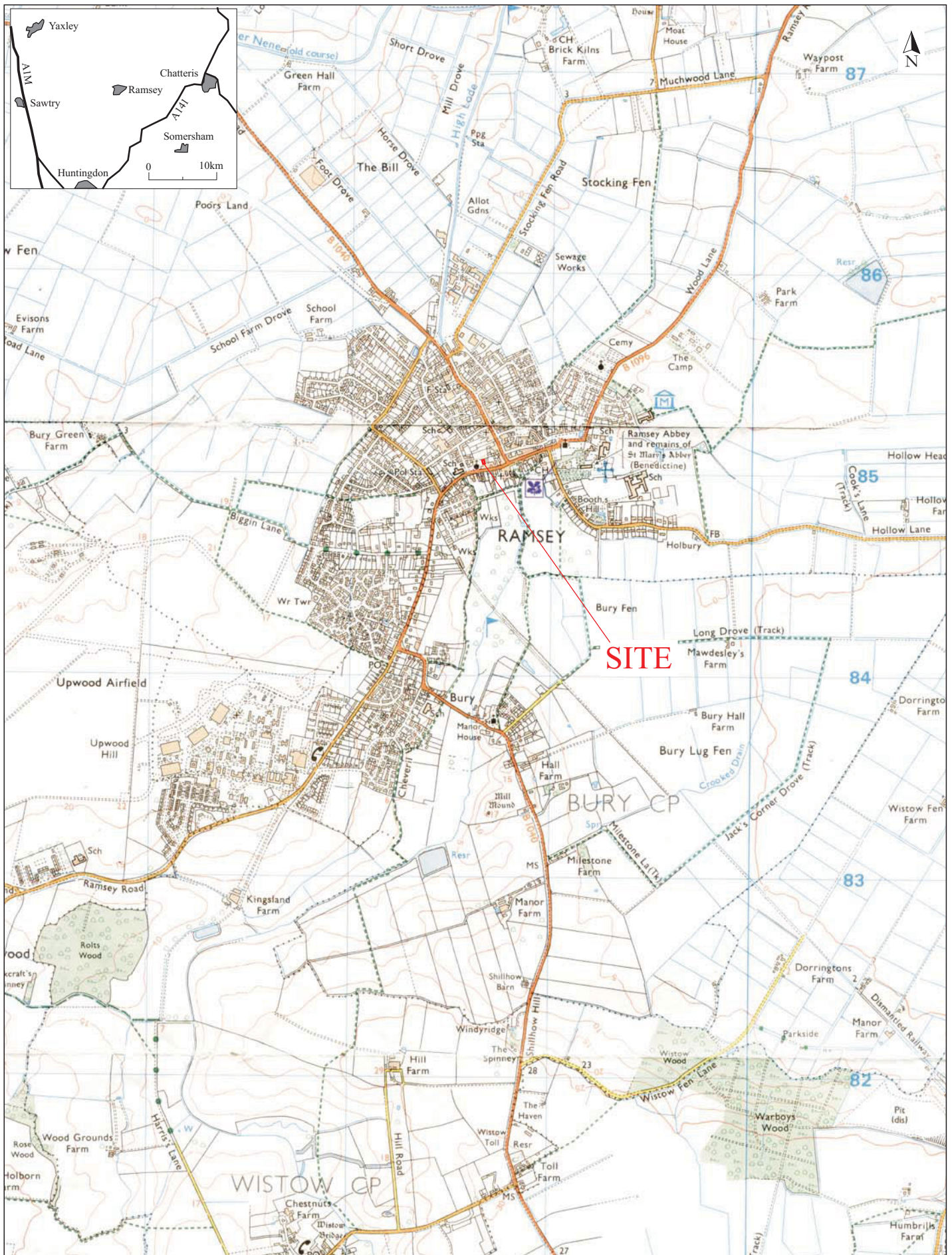
DP7. Trench 2. Test Pit 1, looking north.



DP8. Trench 2. Test Pit 6, looking south.



DP9. Trench 2 post exc, looking west.

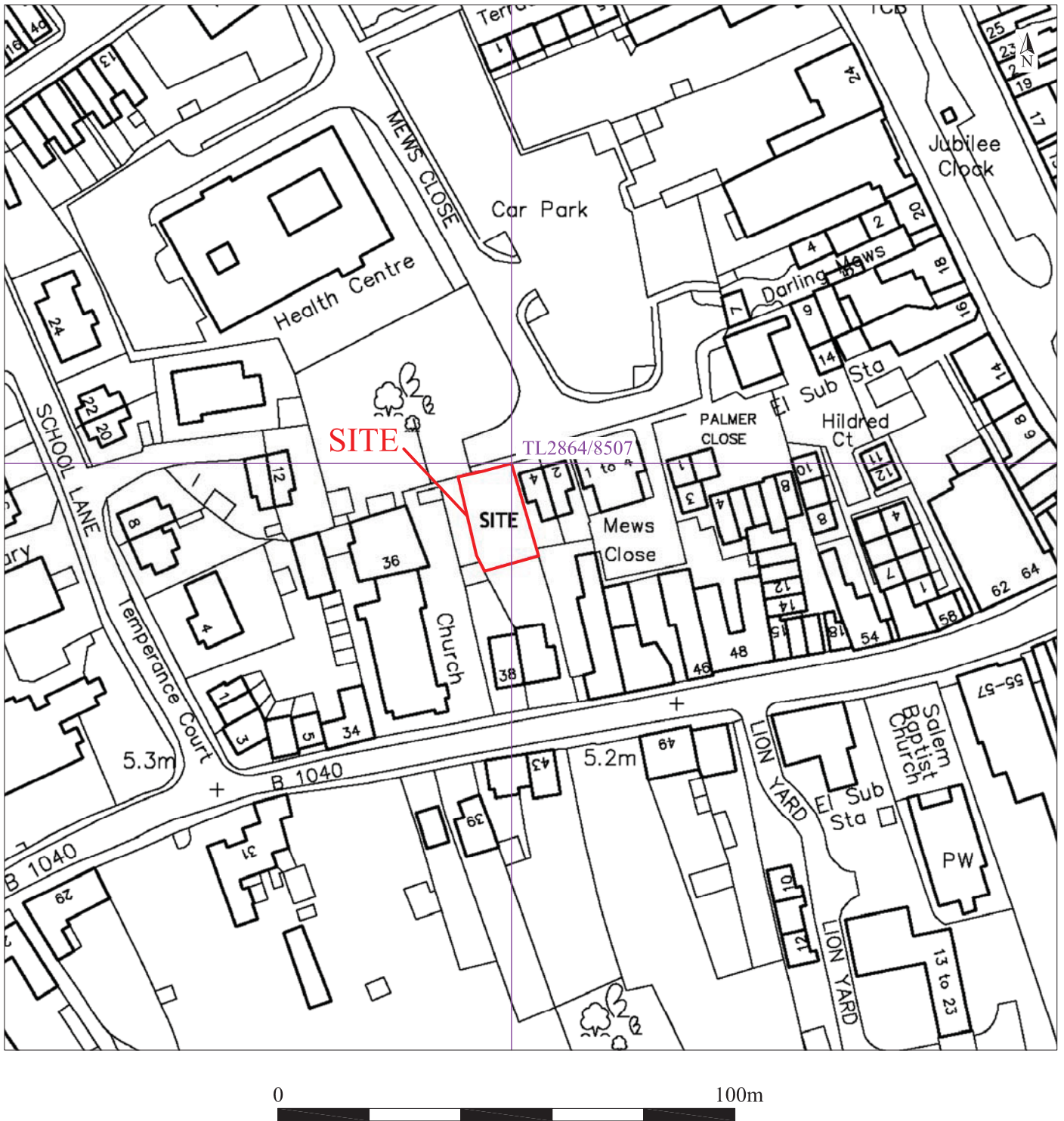


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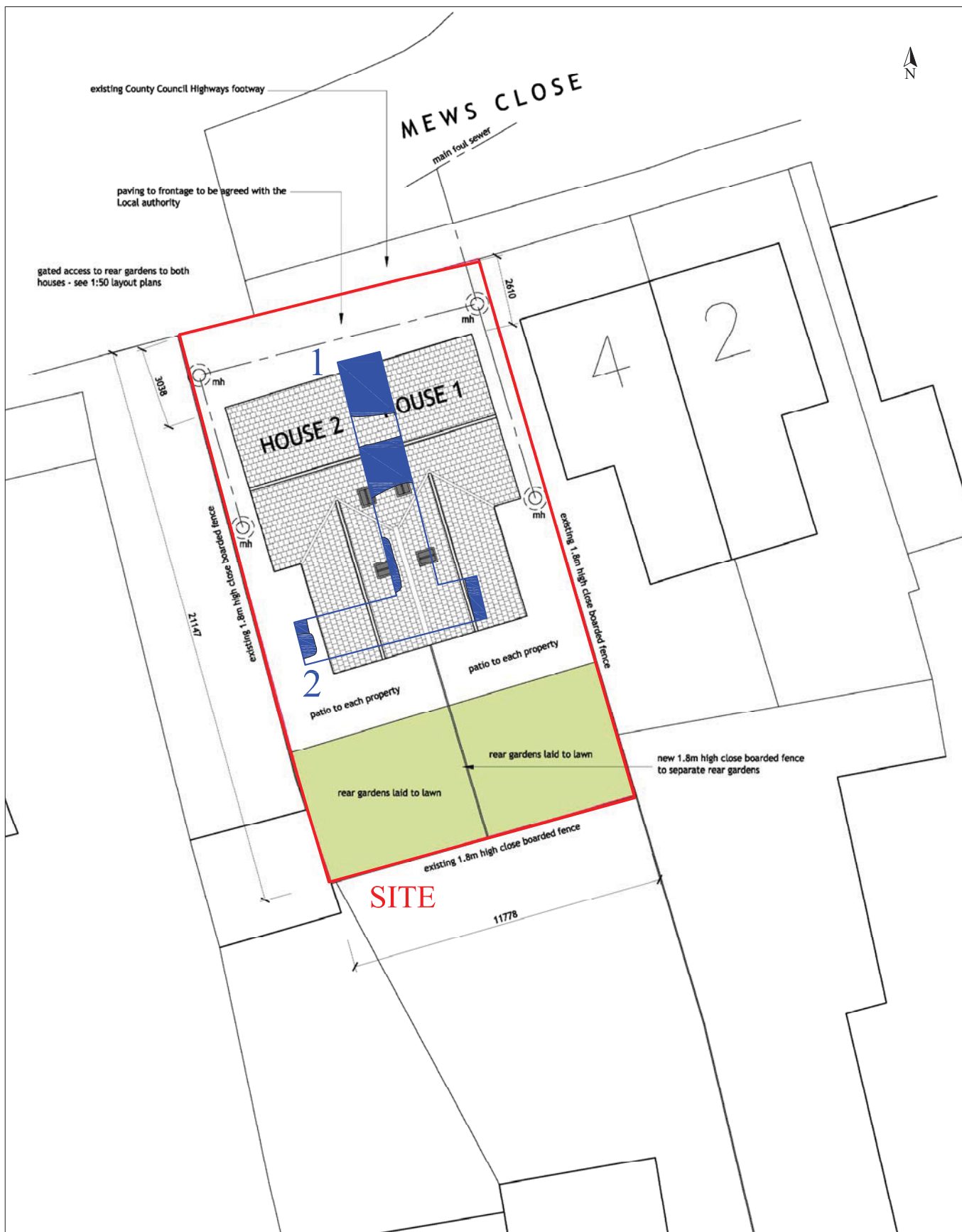
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Fig. 1 Site location plan

Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location
 Scale 1:1250 at A4

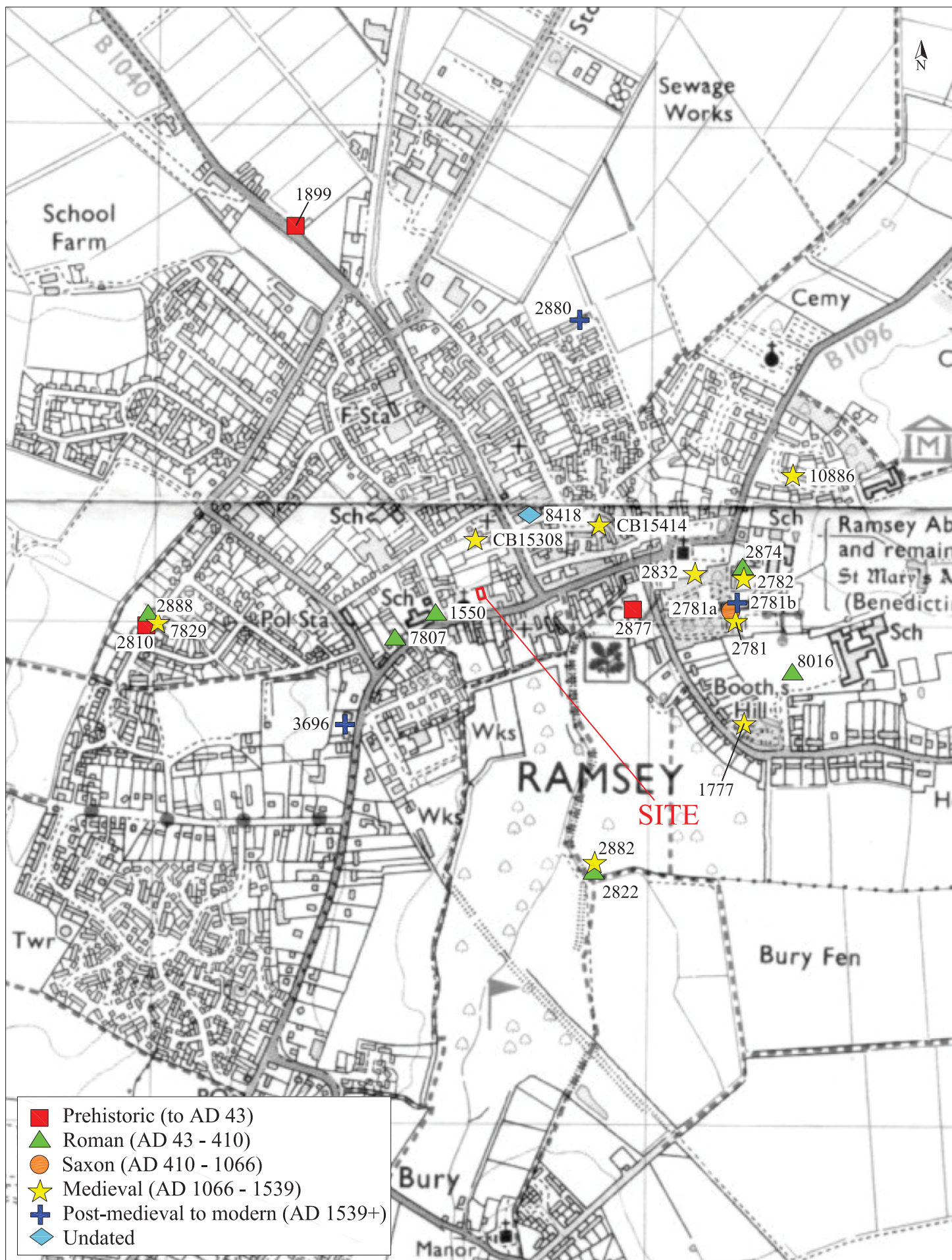


0 10m

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Fig. 3 Trench location plan

Scale 1:200 at A4



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Fig. 4 HER Data

Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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Fig. 5 1st edition OS map, 1887

Not to scale



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Fig. 6 2nd edition OS map, 1901
 Not to scale

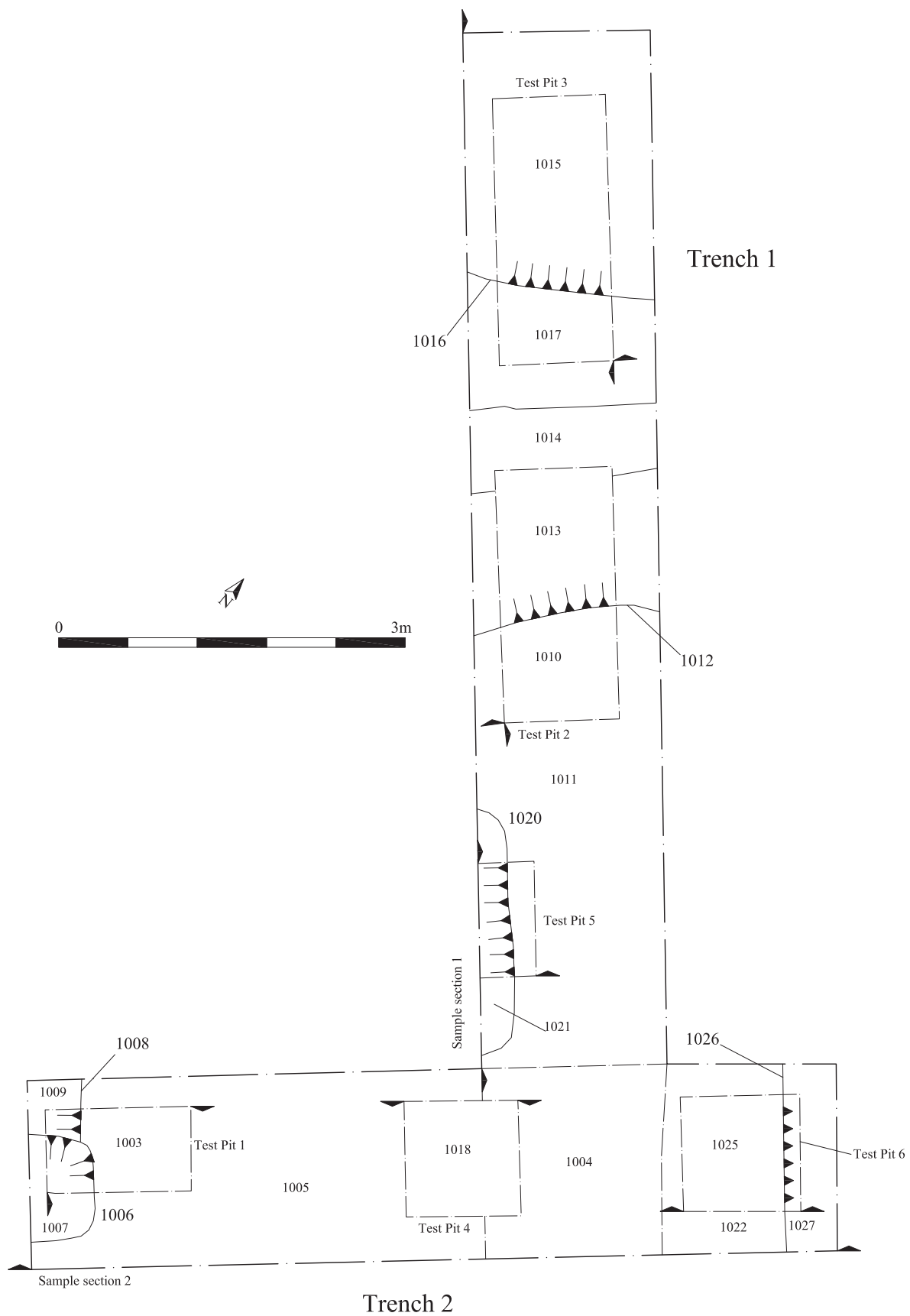


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Fig. 7 3rd edition OS map, 1924

Not to scale



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Fig. 8 Trench plan
 Scale 1:50 at A4

