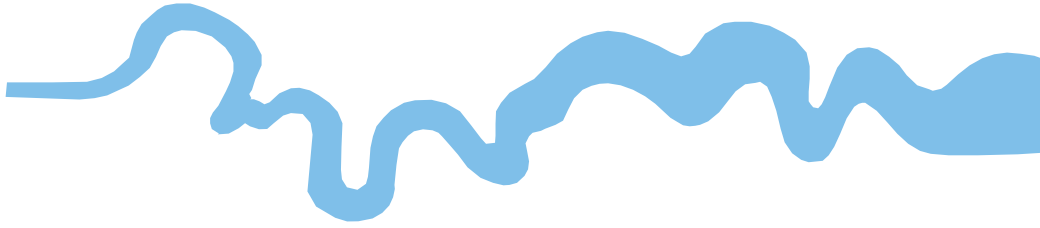


T V A S



EAST MIDLANDS

**Land North of 21 High Street,
Witcham, Cambridgeshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Eleanor Boot and Joshua Hargreaves

Site Code: HSW20/76

(TL 4665 8009)

Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Armour Heritage

By Eleanor Boot and Joshua Hargreaves

TVAS East Midlands

Site Code HSW 20/76

CHER Event; ECB6269

October 2020

Summary

Site name: Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire

Grid reference: TL 4665 8009

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th-25th August 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Joshua Hargreaves

Site code: HSW 20/76

Area of site: c. 0.23ha

Summary of results: Three evaluation trenches were excavated. Trenches 1 and 3 contained potential archaeological features, with these and the remaining trench 2 also containing modern demolition deposits below the topsoil. A linear ditch was found in Trench 1 containing one sherd of pottery dating from the 11th to 13th century. Trench 3 contained two postholes, a modern wall foundation and a large undated linear feature. One of the postholes contained undecayed wood which cannot be of any great antiquity, while the other is most plausibly associated with it. Apart from the ditch in trench 1 all the features plausibly relate to the working and disuse of a late 19th- and 20th-century farm. There is no specific evidence to relate them to a possible earlier 19th or 18th-century phase of the farm.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS East Midlands, Wellingborough and will be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Archive Storage Facility in due course, with accession code ECB6269.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 07.09.20 Steve Preston ✓ 14.12.20

Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire An Archaeological Evaluation

By Eleanor Boot and Joshua Hargreaves

Report 20/76

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire (TL 4094 8009) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Amour Heritage Limited, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, BA11 5DP.

Planning permission (18/1821/FUM) has been granted by East Cambridgeshire District Council to develop the site for housing. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Kasia Gdaniec, Senior Archaeologist for Cambridgeshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joshua Hargreaves and Eleanor Boot between 24th and 25th August 2020 and the site code is HSW 20/76. The archive is presently held at TVAS East Midlands, Wellingborough and will be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Archive Storage Facility in due course, with accession code ECB6269.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the historic centre of Witcham, west of Ely in the Cambridgeshire Fens (Fig. 1) (TL 46646 80098). It is within Witcham Conservation Area, north of High Street and west of Headley's Lane (Fig. 2) on the site of a former farm, and lies at a height of c.19m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is recorded as Kimmeridge Clay formation (BGS 2020) which matches the geology observed in the evaluation trenches. We are grateful to Ms Kasia Gdaniec for the information that the farm can be identified as 'Pond Farm', though it is not so named on any of the available Ordnance Survey mapping. There is a pond to the north.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Ms Jessica Cooper-Dunn of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team drawing on records from the Cambridgeshire HER. In summary, the site lies within an area of some archaeological significance, which has

been subject to several investigations. These have revealed evidence dating from the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. Close to the site to the west is the Church of St Martin which has 13th-century origins, east-north-east of the church is a listed building (1163097). Further east of the site, a number of earthworks have been recorded (CHER 09500) and interpreted as house platforms, a driveway and pond of Medieval origins which suggests Witcham contracted or relocated in Late Medieval to early Post-Medieval times. Archaeological investigations have also been carried out to the south-west along Silver Street showing occupation from the Medieval to Post-Medieval periods (ECB 1865). Recent fieldwork on the plot immediately to the south has found just two undated features (ECB6243; Collie 2020) and there is cropmark evidence of an enclosure complex of unknown date to the north-east of the village (CHER 09499). The dilapidated farm buildings on the site match the footprints of those shown on the Ordnance Survey maps from 1887 onwards: the farmhouse on High Street (likely 18th century); a barn converted to a house fronting Headley's Lane to the east; and two disused cowsheds to the west (Selby 2016, 7).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. All works were to be carried out in such a manner as would not compromise the integrity of the archaeological features or deposits that would be best suited for investigation under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Medieval or early Post-Medieval occupation is present;
- to determine if any archaeologically significant deposits relating to the late Saxon, Medieval and later settlement of Witcham are present;
- to determine the presence/absence of palaeosols or old land surface soils/deposits and assess the potential to inform on the general environmental and dietary evidence of the inhabitants;
- to study and record any palaeochannels encountered; and
- to provide information to assist in the development of a mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to excavate three trenches, each 15m long, all with a width of c. 1.8m. A contingency of 10m of trench was included should it have been required to clarify the nature of the initial findings. The trenches were to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under supervision of an experienced

archaeologist. Lower soil horizons overlying the archaeologically sensitive levels were to be sampled at each end of each trench. A total of 90 litres was to be removed per soil horizon per trench and hand-sorted with the spatial distribution of any artefacts recovered being recorded. Any features uncovered were to be cleaned, excavated and recorded using the appropriate hand tools.

Results

All three trenches were dug as intended (Fig 2). The three trenches ranged in length from 14.7m to 21.2m and in depth from 0.34m to 0.63m. From Trenches 1-3 the topsoil and demolition deposits from both ends of the trench were sampled and hand-sorted for finds as there was no subsoil present.

Any identified features were excavated to their full extent and spoil heaps were monitored for finds recovery. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features, with dating evidence, are summarized in Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned SE - NW and was 21.2m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil (50) sealing 0.24m of a mid-grey silty clay demolition deposit (54) with mixed flint and brick rubble inclusions. This in turn overlay a light blueish grey clay natural geology. From Trench 1 both topsoil and the demolition deposit (54) from both ends of the trench were sampled and hand-sorted for finds. One sherd of 19th- or 20th-century pottery was recovered from the demolition deposit. Ditch 4 (Pl. 4) was recorded 12.2m from the south end of the trench aligned E-W. It had a flat irregular base with steep sides, it was 0.9m wide and 0.29m deep. Its fill (60) was a light-mid grey clay with occasional chalk inclusions. One sherd of pottery dating between the 11th and 13th centuries, a stone object which is most probably a spindle whorl, and five fragments of animal bone were found in ditch 4.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned SW - NE and was 14.7m long and 0.34m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil sealing 0.2m of a mid-grey silty clay demolition deposit (55) with mixed flint and rubble inclusions. This in turn overlay a light blueish grey clay natural geology. From Trench 2 both topsoil and the demolition deposit (55) from both ends of the trench were sampled and hand-sorted for finds. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the demolition deposit dating from the 19th or 20th century. No features of archaeological interest were present in the trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 2, 3 and 4; Pls 3, 5-8)

Trench 3 was aligned SW-NE and was 16m long and 0.63m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil sealing 0.24m of light yellowish-brown silty clay demolition deposit (52) with brick inclusions, which sealed 0.14m of a mid-grey silty clay demolition deposit (53) with mixed flint, stone and brick rubble inclusions. This in turn overlay a light blueish grey clay natural geology. From Trench 3 the topsoil and both demolition deposits (52 and 53) from both ends of the trench were sampled and hand-sorted for finds. A collection of 17 sherds of pottery was recovered, 6 pieces of ceramic building material were taken as a representative sample and four pieces of glass were recovered from demolition deposit (53); the pottery dated between the 18th and 20th centuries.

Ditch 3 (Pls 5 and 6) was recorded 2.7m from the W end of the trench aligned N-S. It had gradual sloping sides and a concave base, it was 5.05m wide and 1.45m deep it had three fills (59, 62, 61). Its top fill (59) was a mid-greyish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal inclusions, this overlay fill 62, a mid-greyish brown silty gravel with occasional charcoal inclusions. This in turn sealed fill 61, a very dark greyish blue clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. One fragment of animal bone was recovered from the upper fill (59). Ditch 3 was cut by postholes 1 and 2 (Pl 6).

Posthole 1 was located 2.4m from the west end of the trench, 0.56m in diameter and 0.35m deep with steep sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill (57) was a mid-reddish-brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal inclusions and a surviving piece of timber. Posthole 2 was located 1.4m further east, and was 0.4m in diameter and 0.4m deep with steep sides and a concave base. Its fill (58) was a mid-reddish-brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal inclusions. No finds came from the fills of these features

A wall foundation (56) (Pl 8) was uncovered at the west end of the trench, on a N-S alignment. It was investigated and found to be modern, associated with standing (disused) farm structures.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Twenty-two sherds (186g) of pottery were collected from four contexts during the evaluation (Appendix 3). Quantification was carried out using sherd count and weight – estimated vessel equivalent (eve) was not recorded as no rims were present in this assemblage. The minimum number of vessels (MNV) within each context was also recorded, but cross-fitting was not attempted unless particularly distinctive vessels were observed in more than one context. Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form

terminology follows MPRG classifications (1998). The results were input onto an MS Access database, which forms the archive catalogue. Medieval wares were identified based on Spoerry (2016); post-medieval to modern fabrics are based on the author's fabric series. Table 1 provides a summary quantification by fabric.

Table 1: Pottery quantification by fabric

<i>Description</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Date range (AD)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>eve</i>	<i>MNV</i>
Early Med Essex/Suffolk micaceous ware	EMEMS	11th-13th century	1	7		1
English stoneware	ESW	18th-20th century	3	37	0.15	3
Porcelain (European)	PORC	18th-20th century	5	19		3
Yellow ware	YELW	Late 18th-19th century	1	16		1
Refined factory-made whitewares	REFW	19th-20th century	12	107		6
<i>Totals</i>			22	186	0.15	14

One sherd is of medieval date. This was a body fragment in a micaceous sandy fabric which is likely to be of Essex or west Suffolk origin. It was found in fill (60) of ditch 4.

All other sherds were of modern date. Potentially the earliest was a base fragment of porcelain with hand-painted polychrome overglaze decoration, much of which was lost. Three sherds of another porcelain vessel, probably a plate, were decorated with overglaze red transfer print and green painting, and there was a plain white porcelain plate base. The English stonewares comprised fragments of at least two preserve jars and one other vessel. A yellow ware sherd was a rim fragment from an oval or sub-rectangular kitchenware dish. The refined whitewares included body and base fragments from one or two jars with moulded fluting, a fragment of plate with moulded scrollwork on the rim, and two fragments with transfer-printed decoration. The modern wares were all recovered from a demolition deposit and presumably represent waste from nearby houses or the farm.

Animal Bone

From ditch 3 (59) one large fragment of an long bone from a large mammal weighing 44g was recovered. From ditch 4 (60), five large fragments of bone from a large mammal weighing 323g were recovered.

Stone

A grey stone fragment was excavated from Medieval ditch 4 (60). It was 39mm in diameter and 25mm in thickness with a hole through the middle measuring 12mm in diameter. It weighs 48g and was presumably used as a spindle-whorl (Pl. 9).

Glass

Three shards of glass were found in demolition deposit 53, weighing 40g. One shard is part of neck and rim of a bottle, a second shard of the same glass was found and they are possibly from the same bottle and a very light clear greenish blue. The other shard is from a separate object and of a brighter greenish blue pigment. Also found

in demolition deposit 53 was a glass ball, it weighed 20g, and was a very light slightly frosted greenish blue. These glass balls are common of the later 19th century, used in codd-necked glass bottles as a way of keeping drinks carbonated.

Ceramic Building Material

From demolition deposit 53, a representative sample of ceramic building material was recovered this included one almost complete handmade brick measuring approximately 170x110x50mm and two other fragments of handmade brick were recovered, weighing 2834g. Two fragments of glazed modern wall tile, weighing 30g were also found in demolition deposit 53.

Environmental sampling by Jo Pine

A single flot was examined from ditch 4 (60) which was possibly of medieval date. This contained no charcoal and two modern weed seeds. A broken freshwater mussel shell was also found in the flot.

Conclusion

All three trenches were successfully excavated. In trench 1 there was a ditch containing one sherd of pottery dating from the 11th to 13th century, animal bones and a mussel shell. This pottery is insufficient to provide a secure date for the feature but it may be of Medieval date, as it is not shown on historic maps, and there is no information to link it to the late Post-medieval farm depicted on Ordnance Survey maps (Selby 2016, fig 3.6; Fig. 5). In trench 3 there were two post holes and a large undated linear feature. One of the post holes contained undecayed wood which cannot be any great antiquity, and while the other is undated it is most likely related to the first. Trench 3 also contained a modern wall foundation which was associated with existing barn buildings. All trenches showed evidence of a modern demolition deposit related to the destruction of several farm buildings from the 20th century. The projected line northwards of ditch 3 in trench 3 implies it underlies one of the extant farm buildings, which is the same as one depicted on the historic Ordnance Survey map (Selby 2016, fig 3.6; Fig. 5) and was presumably backfilled and consolidated prior to the building's construction and likewise had also gone out of use before the farm was constructed. Thus there is no obvious link between this undated feature and the Post-medieval farm. The evaluation has therefore confirmed the archaeological potential of the site to be limited with no evidence of any significant archaeological deposits.

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- Spoerry, P, 2016, *The Production and Distribution of Medieval Pottery in Cambridgeshire*, East Anglian Archaeology, **159**

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	21.2	1.6	0.54	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.45m demolition deposit (54); 0.45+ light blueish grey clay natural geology. Ditch 4. [Pl. 1, 4]
2	14.7	1.6	0.34	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.34m demolition deposit (55); 0.34m+ light blueish grey clay natural geology. [Pl. 2]
3	16	1.6	0.63	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.49m demolition deposit (52);,0.49-0.63m demolition deposit (53); 0.63m+ light blueish grey clay natural geology. Postholes 1 and 2, ditch 3. [Pls 3, 5 to 8]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	57	Posthole	Undated	
3	2	58	Posthole	Undated	
3	3	59, 62, 61	Ditch	Undated	
1	4	60	Ditch	Medieval?	Pottery

Appendix 3: Pottery catalogue

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Spot date (century AD)</i>
1	4	60	EMEMS	U	1	7	1			12-13
1		54	REFW	B	1	44		jug?		19-20
2		55	ESW	B	1	19	1			19-20
2		55	PORC	B	1	6	1	plate		19?
3		53	PORC	B	1	10	1			18+
3		53	PORC	RD	3	3	1	plate?	everted?	18-19
3		53	YELW	R	1	16	1	dish	flat-topped everted	L.18-E.20
3		53	ESW	R	1	15	1	preserve jar	upright plain	19-20
3		53	ESW	D	1	3	1	preserve jar		19-20
3		53	REFW	D	1	5	1			19-20
3		53	REFW	D	1	7	1			19-20
3		53	REFW	B	1	6	1			19-20
3		53	REFW	FP	1	13	1	plate	everted	19-20
3		53	REFW	U	4	17	1			19-20
3		53	REFW	D	3	15	1			19-20

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OASIS ID: thamesva1-405834

Project details

Project name	Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	Three evaluation trenches were excavated. Trenches 1 and 3 contained potential archaeological features, with these and the remaining trench 2 also containing modern demolition deposits below the topsoil. A linear ditch was found in Trench 1 containing one sherd of pottery dating from the 11th to 13th century. Trench 3 contained 2 postholes of a modern fence line as well as a modern wall foundation and a large undated linear feature.
Project dates	Start: 24-08-2020 End: 25-08-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	18/1821/FUM - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	HSW20/76 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB6269 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	POSTHOLES Uncertain
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Significant Finds	CERAMICS Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE WITCHAM Land north of 21 High Street, Witcham
Study area	0.23 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 4665 8009 52.398744649504 0.15572309111 52 23 55 N 000 09 20 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 18m Max: 19m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	TVAS East Midlands
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Tim Dawson

Project director/manager	Tim Dawson
Project supervisor	Joshua Hargreaves
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultant
Name of sponsor/funding body	Armour Heritage Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire archaeological archive store
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire archaeological archive service
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire archaeological archive service
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked stone/lithics","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Correspondence","Drawing","Matrices","Microfilm","Miscellaneous Material","Plan","Report","Section","Survey"

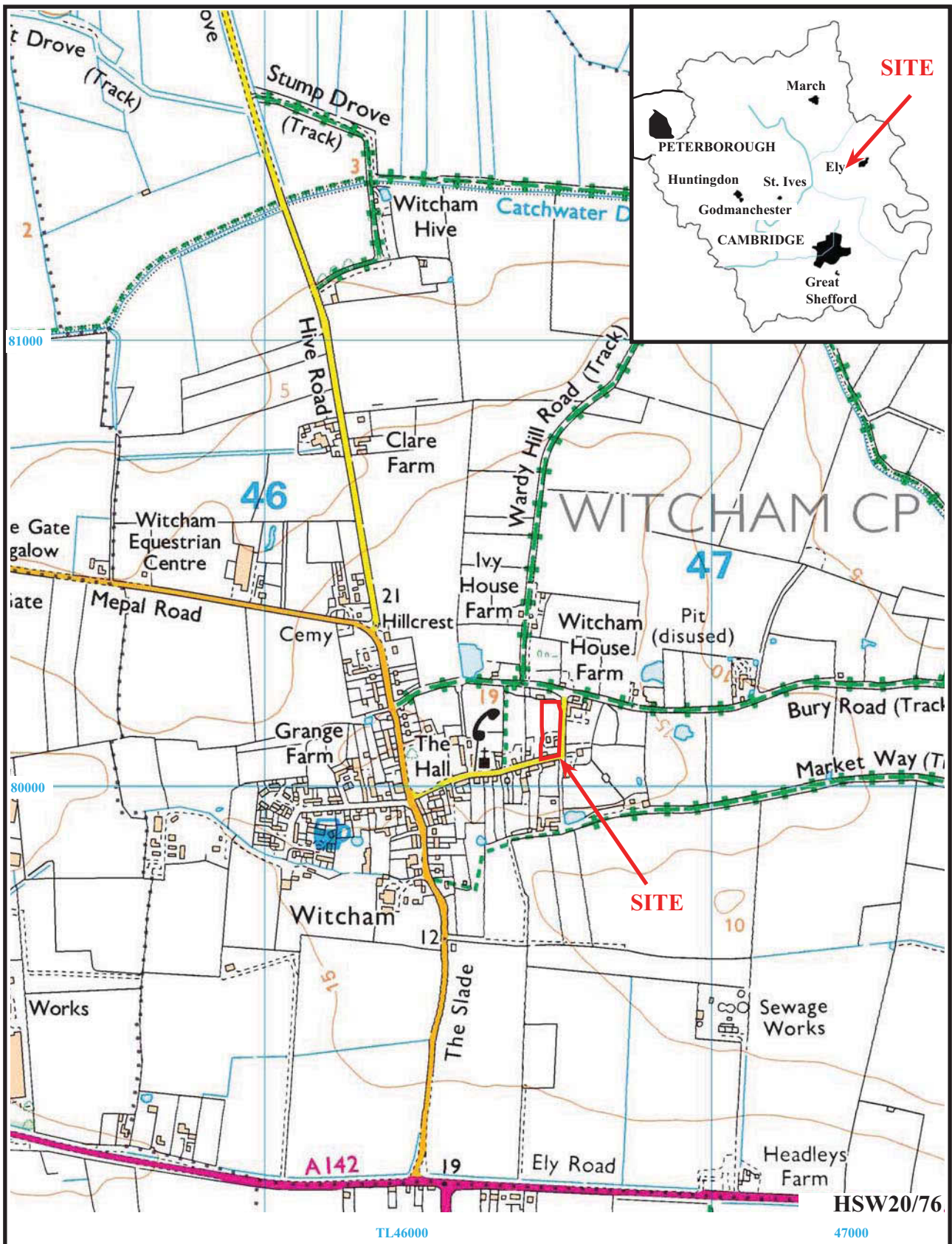
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Boot, E
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Hargreaves, J
Other bibliographic details	20/76
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Issuer or publisher	TVAS East Midlands
Place of issue or publication	Wellingborough
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URL	www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp
Entered by	Steve Preston (tvast@tvast.co.uk)
Entered on	16 October 2020

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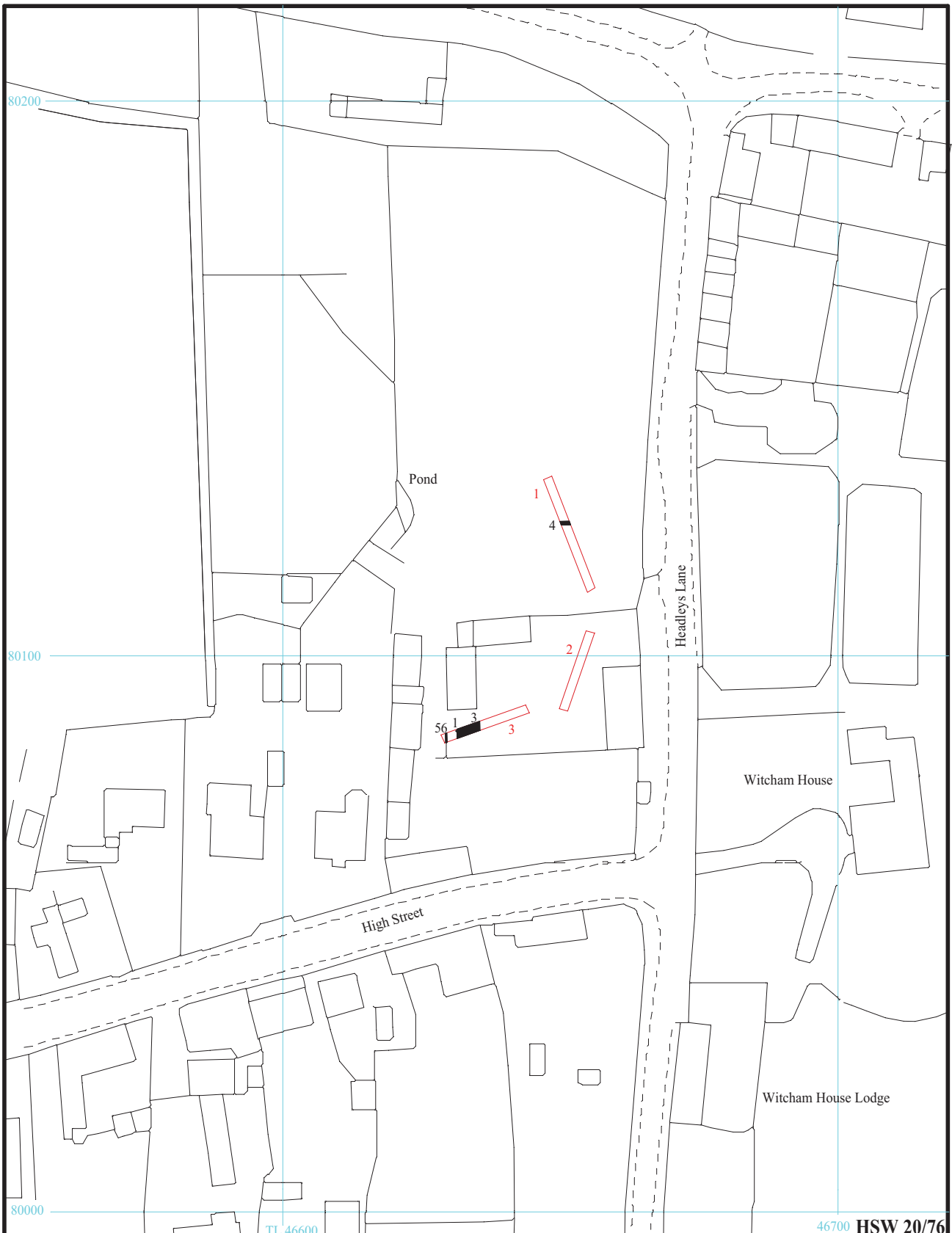


**Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Witcham and Cambridgeshire.

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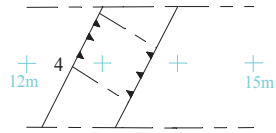


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Archaeological Evaluation**

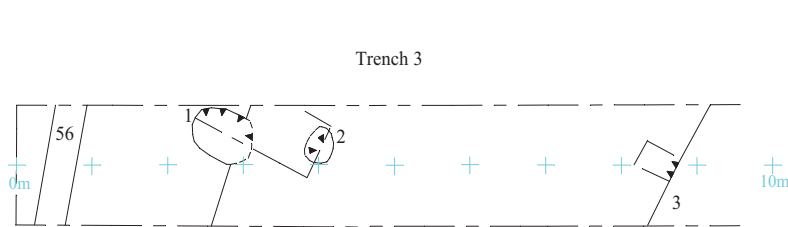
Figure 2. Locations of trenches within site.



Trench 1



Trench 3

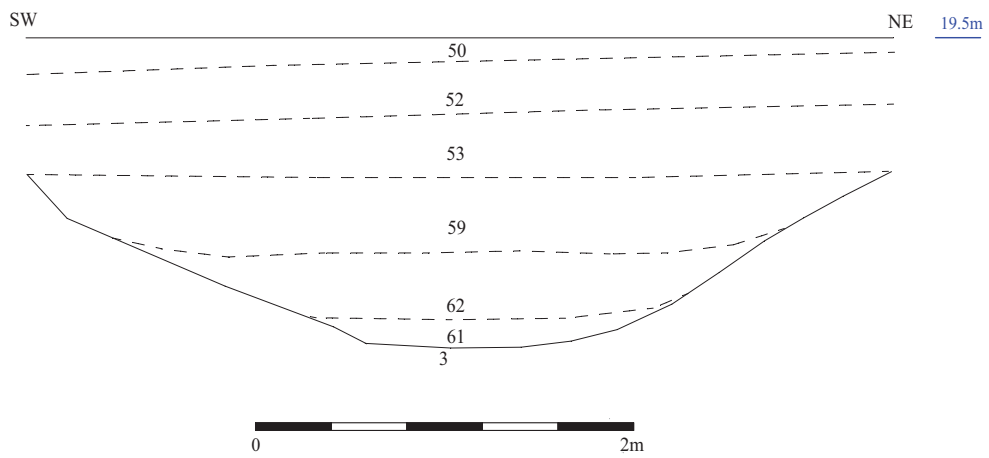
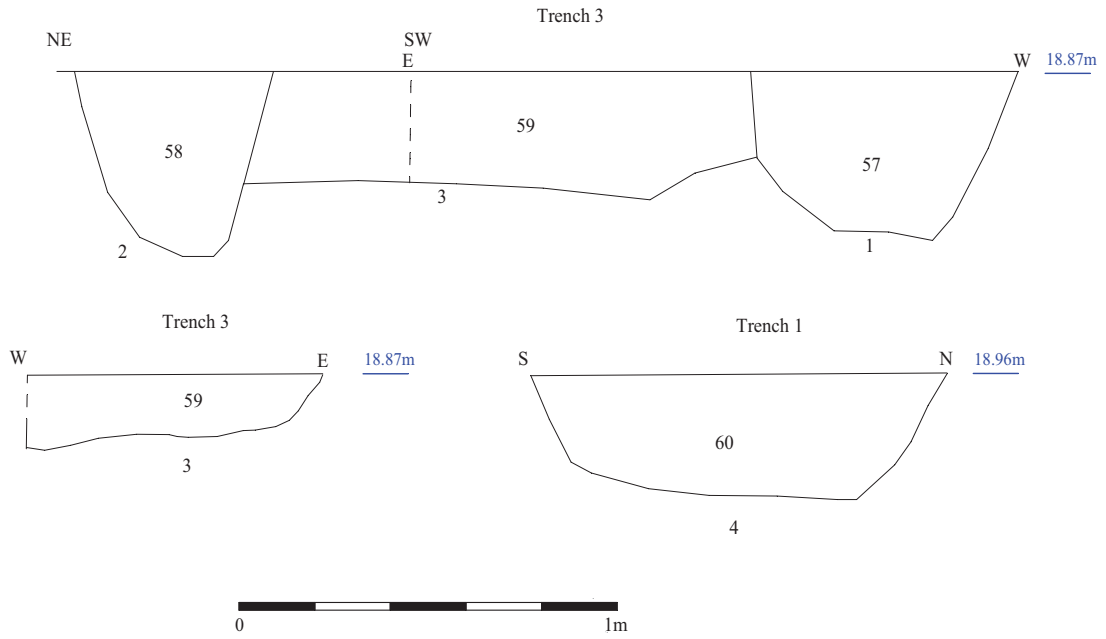


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**Land North of 21 High Street,
Witcham, Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Trench Plans.



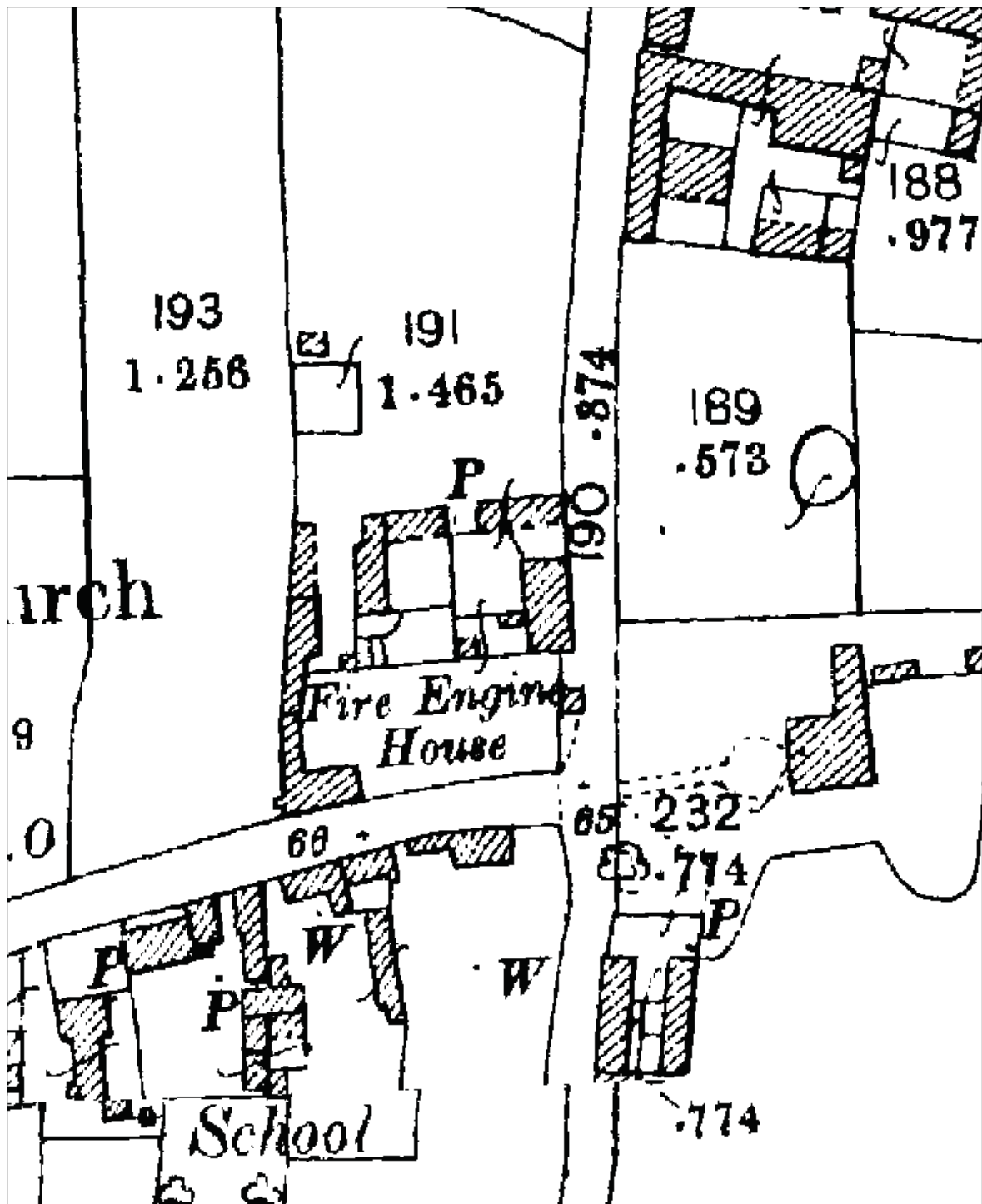


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Land North of 21 High Street,
Witcham, Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Sections.





0 50m

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Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham, Cambridgeshire
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 5. Ordnance Survey map 2nd edition 1902

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north-east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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**Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham,
Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.**





Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north-east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 1, Ditch 4, looking north-west,
Scales: 0.5m and 0.2m.

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**Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham,
Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 3 and 4.**





Plate 5. Trench 3, Ditch 3, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 3, PostHoles 1 and 2, Ditch 3, looking south-west,
Scales: 1m and 0.2m.

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**Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham,
Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 and 6.**





Plate 7. Trench 3, Demolition deposits, looking north-west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 8. Trench 3, Wall foundation 56, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.2m.

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Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham,
Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 7 and 8.

T V A S
EAST MIDLANDS

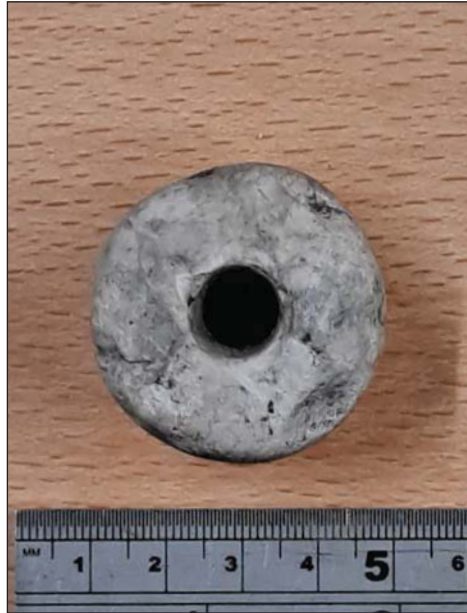


Plate 9. Stone object from Ditch 4, Trench 1.

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**Land North of 21 High Street, Witcham,
Cambridgeshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plate 9.**

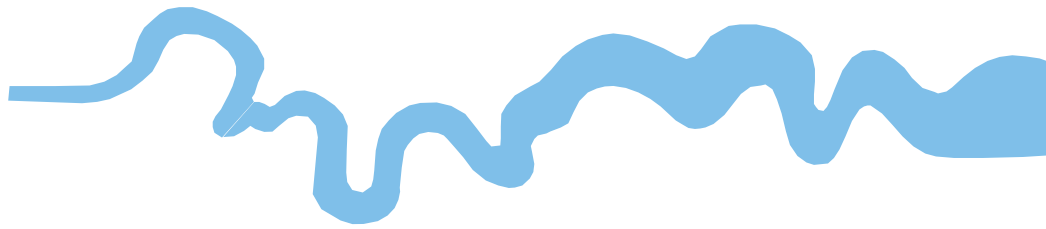
T V A S

EAST MIDLANDS

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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