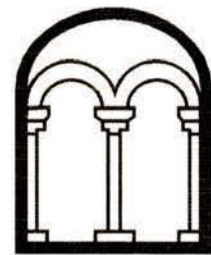

**LAND AT ASHDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN
ESSEX**

**ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL
AND
UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN**

Albion
archaeology



**LAND AT ASHDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN
ESSEX**

**ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL
AND
UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN**

Project: SWAR12

Document: 2013/30
Version 1.0

27th March 2013

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Christiane Meckseper	Robert Wardill	Drew Shotliff

Produced for:
Persimmon Homes & Charles Church Essex
10 Collingwood Road
Witham
Essex
CM8 2EA



Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project Background	4
1.2 Status and Purpose of this Document	4
1.3 Site Location and Description	4
1.4 Archaeological and Historical Background	4
2. THE STRUCTURAL SEQUENCE	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Undisturbed Geological Deposits and Overburden.	7
2.3 Phase 1: Medieval to Post-medieval Features (15th–18th century)	7
2.4 Phase 2: mid 18th-century to mid 19th-century Farm Complex	9
2.5 Phase 3: mid 19th-century to early 20th-century Farm Complex	10
2.6 Phase 4: mid to late 20th-century Farm Complex	11
2.7 Phase 5: 1970s Demolition	12
3. ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS	13
3.1 Pottery	13
3.2 Ceramic Building Material	14
3.3 Other Artefacts	16
3.4 Animal Bone	18
4. ANALYTICAL POTENTIAL OF THE DATA	19
4.1 Structural Analysis	19
4.2 Artefact and Ecofact Analysis	19
4.3 Research Objectives	19
4.4 Dissemination	21
4.5 Archiving	21
5. DISCUSSION	22
5.1 Medieval to Post-medieval (15th-18th Century)	22



5.2	19th Century to Early 20th Century	23
5.3	Mid to late 20th Century	24
6.	CONCLUSION	26
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	27
8.	APPENDIX	28
8.1	Copt Hall, Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden: Documentary and Cartographic Sources	28

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site location
 Figure 2: Mitigation area and evaluation trenches
 Figure 3: All features plan
 Figure 4: Phase 1 – medieval to post-medieval (15th–18th century)
 Figure 5: Phase 2 – mid 18th century to mid 19th century
 Figure 6: Phase 3 – mid 19th century to early 20th century
 Figure 7: Phase 3 – overlaid over first edition OS map 1897
 Figure 8: Phase 4 – mid to late 20th-century alterations and additions
 Figure 9: Location of sections (Figures 10-12)
 Figure 10: Sections of ditch Phase 1 and postholes Phase 3
 Figure 11: Sections of ditches in Land-use groups L7 and L27 (Phase 1)
 Figure 12: Sections of pits in Phase 1 and wall in Phase 3
 Figure 13: The excavated area, looking south during machining (top), looking north (bottom)
 Figure 14: Phase 2, Building L15 (southern barn), wall foundations
 Figure 15: Phase 2, possible chimney pad G39
 Figure 16: Phase 1 drainage ditch L6 (left) cut by Phase 3 farm yard rubble wall foundation L19 (right).
 Figure 17: Phase 3, Building L24.3 flint cobble wall foundation
 Figure 18: Phase 3, building L24.1 in plan, looking south
 Figure 19: Phase 3, line of postholes forming building L25, looking west
 Figure 20: Phase 3, NW corner of southern barn L15 and building L16, looking west
 Figure 21: Phase 4, southern barn L14 and modern brick reinforcement
 Figure 22: Depth of demolition layers in north-western part of site

The figures are bound at the back of the report.



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the brief and project design. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

Acknowledgements

This assessment has been prepared by Christiane Meckseper (Project Officer) with contributions by Marcin Koziminski (structural analysis), Jackie Wells (pottery), Holly Duncan (other artefacts), Maria Medlycott (historical research) and Pat Ryan (ceramic building material).

The excavation was supervised by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor) with investigation and recording carried out by staff seconded from the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service: Preston Boyles, Phil Camps, Tony Fisher, Steve Manthorpe and Simon Picard. The assistance of Rhodri Gardner is also gratefully acknowledged. Processing and analysis of the finds was undertaken by Jackie Wells. The project was managed by Christiane Meckseper and Robert Wardill (Project Manager). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology is grateful to Terry Brunning of Persimmon Homes for commissioning the work. The site was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Richard Havis, the Senior Historic Environment Officer at Place Services, Essex County Council.

Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	27/03/2013	n/a

Albion Archaeology
 St Mary's Church
 St Mary's Street
 Bedford, MK42 0AS
 ☎: 01234 294006
 Fax: 01234 294008
 e-mail: office@albion-arch.com

Structure of the Report

After an introduction to the project in Section 1, a summary of the results of the investigations is presented in Section 2. Section 3 outlines the proposals for analysis and publication. Section 4 presents an analytical discussion of the results and conclusions are given in Section 5. Section 6 is a bibliography. The Appendix in Section 7 represents an additional report on historical documentary and cartographic research on Copt Hall Farm by Maria Medlycott.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

In March 2009, a planning application (UTT/0400/09) was submitted to Uttlesford District Council for the development of 130 residential units on land at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden. As part of the preparations for that submission, Albion Archaeology prepared an archaeological desk-based assessment (Albion Archaeology 2005). This identified the potential remains of a medieval and post-medieval farm complex on the site. The site was subsequently subject to archaeological trial trenching which confirmed the existence of remains of the farm and associated field boundaries (Albion Archaeology 2010).

As the development had the potential to impact on the significance of this locally identified heritage asset, the Historic Environment Team Officer (HEMO) of Essex County Council advised that a full excavation of the farm complex should be undertaken prior to development of the site. This advice was in accordance with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5) which has since been replaced by the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* published in March 2012.

In response to a brief issued by the HEMO (Havis 2011) a WSI was prepared (Albion Archaeology 2012) and approved by the HEMO. The archaeological excavation took place in September 2012.

1.2 *Status and Purpose of this Document*

This report presents an assessment and analysis of the results of all stages of the archaeological investigations. The completion of dissemination and archiving of the results of the fieldwork will fulfil the requirements of the HEMO's brief and will allow the discharge of the archaeological planning condition.

1.3 *Site Location and Description*

The development area (DA) lies on the eastern edge of Saffron Walden (Figure 1) and at the time of the fieldwork was arable farmland. It is *c.* 5.35ha in size, and is centred on NGR TL 5520 3870.

To the north, the site is bounded by Ashdon Road, to the east by wire fencing and a petrol storage depot, to the south by The Slade stream and to the west by a mixed hedgerow.

The geology of the area consists of superficial "head" deposits, consisting of mixed clay, silt, sand and gravel. The underlying bedrock consists of Lewes nodular chalk formation, Seaford chalk formation and undifferentiated chalk.

1.4 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

1.4.1 *Prehistoric to medieval*

The archaeological potential of the DA and a wider study area (a radius of 1km around its centre point) is presented in detail in Albion's desk-based assessment (Albion Archaeology 2009).



In summary, very few archaeological remains from the prehistoric to the medieval periods were recorded within the study area. Isolated findspots of prehistoric pottery (HER 6726) and Roman pottery (HER 6727) have been catalogued by the Essex HER. A Roman silver coin (HER 264) has been found within the DA.

The DA lies at the periphery of the potential Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement of Saffron Walden and most likely consisted of arable lands.

1.4.2 Post-medieval

A discussion of the historical documents related to Copt Hall Farm and a map regression is presented in the appendix (Medlycott 2012). This section gives a brief summary and sets Copt Hall Farm within the context of the development of farming methods and farm building within the region.

The earliest historical references to Copt Hall Farm suggest that in the 15th and 16th century the land on the DA was not yet built upon. Title deeds to the farm, which were first drawn up in 1492, refer to strips of arable lands within a larger open field or croft in the location of the DA.

The existence of a tenement on the land is first documented in 1627 and by 1660 a farm complex bearing the name Copt Hall is established on the DA and the deeds refer to associated orchards, gardens, stables and barns.

Prior to the mid-18th century farming was characterised by increasingly market-based and specialised regional economies, the exploitation of medieval strip fields and the changeover from this early, open field farming to the larger, rectangular fields of the enclosure period. Not many complete farm buildings of this era survive, but where examples do exist they provide the first evidence for the development and strengthening of regional traditions and building types (English Heritage 2006).

Cartographic evidence first shows the farm on an estate map dating to 1758. This depicts two main structures, slightly set back from the main road to the north. The southern of the two buildings has a distinctive bay and it is possible that this is also shown on the 1843 tithe map with a second bay added to its west. However, it is more likely that the farm was remodelled in the early-mid 1840s to adapt the complex to the demands of the agrarian revolution and what was called the era of ‘High Farming’ in the Victorian period.

The period from around 1840 to the agricultural depression of the late 1870s saw widespread adoption of a more mixed farming regime and the implementation of a more intensive regime, based on the high input/high output, factory-based approach of the Industrial Revolution. These systems required the use of fertilisers and manure in order to increase production — hence the increased importance of a system of livestock management that not only allowed production of meat and dairy products to meet growing urban demand, but also manure for the production of grain and animal feed.



Assisted by new technology and an increasing literature on scientific methods, farmers began to expand into less productive areas and invest in new buildings, particularly closed yards with a combination of open shelters, loose boxes and dairies. Significant increases in land prices from the 1750s increased the incentive, especially for estates, to invest.

From the 1840s farmstead design changed significantly and this was the period when most farms were re-built or their existing buildings were adapted. The design of the new-style farmstead was influenced by the widespread extension of mechanisation (for preparing feed and threshing), the increasing availability of mass-produced fittings and materials as well as the adoption of industrial and scientific principles to the accommodation and feeding of ever increasing numbers of livestock.

Medlycott states that the East of England was at the centre of the developments associated with 'High Farming' (Medlycott 2011, 85) and the re-organisation and expansion of Copt Hall Farm from 1843 onwards fits into this picture. The main farm complex had been established by 1871 and continued in that form until the early 20th century when it slowly began to shrink.

1.4.3 Modern

Bordering the eastern limit of the DA is the now dismantled railway line of the Saffron Walden to Audley End Branch (HER 372). This was opened in 1865 and closed in 1964. Immediately east of the DA are the remains of a platform built in 1957 for the benefit of the Acrow Engineering Works. Part of the branch line forked to the east to an Air Ministry siding (HER 40475) that was built in 1939 to serve an underground fuel storage depot (HER 40476). The sidings and six large subterranean tanks capped by earthen banks still appear on aerial photographs.

Copt Hall Farm was demolished after 1972, which is the date of the last Ordnance Survey Map that shows the farm buildings.



2. THE STRUCTURAL SEQUENCE

2.1 Introduction

The contextual data was assessed in order to establish whether it would provide a coherent spatial and chronological framework. The site records from the open area excavation were combined with those from evaluation Trenches 7–10 which fell within the excavation area (Figure 2).

A total of 696 contexts from the open area excavation and 234 contexts from the evaluation trenches were assigned to Assessment Groups, *e.g.* possible structures, pit groups, boundary ditches, *etc.* The decision as to which Assessment Groups contexts were assigned to, was made on the basis of the following criteria:

- Do the contexts form a coherent spatial unit *e.g.* building, post hole alignment *etc.*?
- Do the contexts represent key positions within the stratigraphic sequence?
- Do the contexts contain suitable dating material?

Assessment Groups were then assigned to a number of distinct Land-use areas, corresponding to larger, coherent and contemporaneous spatial units. These Land-use areas were then assigned to a number of episodes (Phases) of human activity corresponding to broad, chronological divisions (Periods), *e.g.* medieval or post-medieval, based on their artefactual assemblage. Where more than one distinct episode of human activity was apparent within a chronological period, they were assigned to separate Phases.

The text which follows is structured by chronological period and discussed by Phase. Relevant elements within these Phases are referred to by their Assessment Land-use areas (L) and Groups (G). The all features plan is shown in Figure 3. Archaeological phases are illustrated in Figures 4 to 7 (colours on the phase plans are used to visually differentiate between land-use groups). Sections of selected features are shown on Figures 10 to 12.

2.2 Undisturbed Geological Deposits and Overburden.

Overburden consisted of dark grey-brown silty loam topsoil that was 0.20–0.28m thick across the site. The undisturbed geological deposits consisted of white chalk across the majority of the site, which changed to a light yellowish brown “head deposit” of silty clay along the western edge of the excavated area.

2.3 Phase 1: Medieval to Post-medieval Features (15th–18th century)

Figure 4

2.3.1 Elements of the medieval field system

Phase 1 consisted of a number of boundary ditches, pits and postholes, which may have been part of the earliest field system and farm complex on the site.

The earliest feature on the site that can be interpreted with any certainty to originate in the medieval period is boundary ditch G123 which lay on a north-



south alignment in the eastern part of the excavated area. It was generally up to 1.30m wide and 0.5m deep with a wide, bowl-shaped profile (Figure 11). The ditch correlated with a boundary ditch shown on the estate map of 1758. On this map the ditch forms the eastern boundary of a long, thin strip of arable land, in Essex called “shots” (Medlycott 2012), which was a land division common in the medieval period.

The ditch continued in use as a boundary until the demolition of the farm in the mid 1970s. Its continued maintenance is evidenced by the existence of a re-cut G124 along its length (Figure 11).

The ditch is part of land-use group L27 which also includes a number of quarry pits G131 immediately to the east of the boundary.

A further boundary L7 lay on an east-west alignment in the southern part of the excavated area. It consisted of a ditch G20 which was up to 1.10m wide and 0.23m deep with a V-shaped profile (Figure 11). It became shallower towards the east and terminated in a possible pit G98. It is possible to correlate this ditch with a boundary ditch on the 1758 estate map where it divides the northern large rectangular field that contains Copt Hall Farm from a number of remaining narrow strip fields to the south.

Two smaller gullies G21 and G24 (Figure 10) (combined L9), which lay perpendicular to ditch G20 and extended southwards beyond the limit of excavation, may be further field boundaries of those strip fields, not shown on the map.

2.3.2 Ditches and pits

Another feature that stratigraphically pre-dates any buildings on the site was north-south aligned ditch G41, which led to a large rectangular pit G58 in the south-western part of the site. Both are part of land-use group L6. Ditch G41 was generally 0.7m wide and up to 0.20m deep. Pit G58 was rectangular in plan and measured 11m x 6m in extent and was 0.45m deep (Figure 12). It had steep sides and a flattish base, with the exception of its northern edge which had a very shallow slope, possibly for access. The pit fill contained fragments of pottery and ceramic building material datable to the post-medieval period (1500–1900). It is possible that both features represent a drainage facility and/or water pit.

Two further pits contained fragments of post-medieval pottery and are part of Phase 1. Pit G99 lay close to the southern boundary ditch G20 (L7). It was oval in plan, 5.15m x 3.10m in extent and 1.28m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It had a lower, fairly thin black organic fill and was then deliberately backfilled with chalky deposits derived from the surrounding geology (Figure 12). The black fill produced a small quantity of animal bone and a pair of scissors (see Section 3.3). The uppermost fill contained a fragment of post-medieval pottery (1500–1900).

Steep-sided oval pit L23 (G80) in the northern part of the site was 6m x 2m in extent and 0.75m deep. It had been deliberately backfilled (Figure 12). It also produced fragments of post-medieval pottery (1500–1900) but its function is unclear.



Ditch L21 (G30) was located on the same alignment as L27, *c.* 50m to its west. The ditch was 16m long, 1.15m wide and 0.15m deep with concave sides and base. A contemporary small oval pit G34 lay adjacent to the ditch. The function of the ditch is unclear. Its alignment suggests it is contemporary with L6 and L27. As it is not shown on any map, it is likely that it represents a further, relatively minor drainage ditch.

2.4 Phase 2: mid 18th-century to mid 19th-century Farm Complex

Figure 5

2.4.1 The southern barn

The earliest structure on the site is represented by the remains of building L15 to the south. It was *c.* 28m long and 9m wide. The surviving wall foundations G52, G53, G91 and G88 were 0.34m and 0.42m wide and consisted of one to three courses of brick, bonded with a yellowish brown sandy lime mortar (Figure 20). The building had a porch to the south and an eastern outbuilding, which was of a post-built construction (G93-95). Based on cartographic evidence and correlations with other examples of this kind, the building has been interpreted as a barn (Medlycott 2012).

While it is likely that L15 represents the building that was already shown on the estate map of 1758, the distinctive porch on its south-eastern side (rather than south-western), that is evident as part of the foundations of L15, is not shown until the tithe map of 1843. This map also shows an eastern extension or outbuilding to the barn that was post-built and is evidenced by postholes G94 which are also part of L15.

A post-built fence line L10 extended southwards from the eastern corner of the porch and then turned a right angle along the southern edge of Phase 1 field boundary ditch G20. The post-holes were sub-square in plan, ranging from 0.2–0.65m in size and 0.03–0.49m in depth, suggesting some load bearing posts. The latter also had distinct post-pipes in their centre.

The fence line crossed Phase 1 boundary ditch L7, suggesting this had been filled in or silted up, even though the boundary line was still demarcated by the new fence.

2.4.2 Possible farmhouse

Brick pad G39 was located in the north-central part of the site and represents a rectangular structure on a north-south alignment. It measured 2.30m x 1.35m (Figure 15). The central pad was made up of bricks laid on their stretchers, surrounded by a slightly raised rim of bricks on their headers. The raised brick edge had remains of a whitish-brown lime mortar suggesting that the structure supported walls on at least three sides. The surface of the bricks was covered in a dark grey ash, suggesting the structure represents the remains of a chimney base.

It is very difficult to associate structure G39 with any known buildings on the site or to assign any date to it, other than that provided by the 18th-century manufacture of its constituent bricks. When overlaying the site plan with the 1758 map it is possible to locate the chimney base within the northern



structure shown on the map. However, it needs to be borne in mind that any correlation between an 18th-century map and a modern site plan carries a wide margin of inaccuracy.

Brick-lined well G29 was located near the northern limit of excavation. It measured 1.75m in diameter and was not excavated. The well truncated the Phase 1 ditch L21 but pre-dates the Phase 3 farmhouse and its associated pump. It is, therefore, possible that it was also part of the mid 18th-century farm complex.

2.4.3 Postholes

Posthole group L8 lay in the south-western part of the excavated area and consists of a number of sub-square postholes. One of the postholes truncated the large Phase 1 pit G58. However, their function and date remain unclear.

2.5 Phase 3: mid 19th-century to early 20th-century Farm Complex

Figures 6 and 7

This phase contains the majority of the building foundations and other structural features recorded during the excavations. Most of the building foundations can be correlated with the first and second edition OS maps dating to 1897 (Figure 7) and 1921.

Barn L15 now formed the southern side of a large rectangular enclosed farmyard L19. The wall foundation G37 of the farmyard consisted of flint rubble (Figure 16). A concave ditch G9 (L19), 0.70m wide and 0.28m deep, extended westwards from the north-western corner of the farmyard and represents the southern boundary of the garden and orchard of Copt Hall Farm.

Group L20 consists of 30 postholes and three small pits which lay within farmyard L19. The majority do not form any readily recognisable structures but could be related to a number of enclosures and associated activity that are marked on the OS map within the farmyard. Two postholes G87 in the eastern part of the farmyard represent part of a possible stock enclosure.

A new farmhouse L18 had been built to the north of the farmyard and a number of further structures, most likely stables and other farm buildings L24, L25 and L26, lay in a loose grouping on the north-eastern side of the farmyard. Building L24.1 was brick-built and represents an eastern range to the farmyard. It remained on the site until the demolition of the farm in the 1970s.

Buildings L24.2, L24.3 and L25 consisted largely of robbed out structural trenches and postholes suggesting they were of a post and sill beam construction (Figures 10 and 19). Wall foundation L24.3 consisted of a layer of flint cobbles (Figure 17). The postholes were generally sub-square in plan and many still had remains of timber posts *in situ*. The timber posts had been cut off at ground level. They possibly represented stables and outhouses. Building L25 is shown on the late 19th-century maps but did not survive until 1921.



Building L26, which was post and brick built, may represent a later alteration and/or replacement to the southern wing of this building complex. It is still shown on the third edition OS map of 1938.

A small yard or stock pen was added to the rear of barn L15 (Medlycott 2012) and this is most likely represented by posthole groups L12 and L11. A small two-celled building L16 with brick foundations had also been added to the north-eastern corner of barn L15. The eastern rectangular cell is shown on the first edition 1897 OS map and the western cell with the curvilinear wall was added prior to the second edition OS map of 1921.

The majority of buildings survived in the form of brick foundations which were *c.* 0.35m deep and contained one to three courses of red brick, bonded with a yellowish-brown sandy lime mortar. A small number of wall foundations (notably farmyard enclosure L19 and building L24.3) consisted of flint cobbles. External walls were usually 0.5–0.6m wide; while internal walls were 0.35m wide.

A cluster of postholes and small pits L4 was located in the western part of the site, external to both the farmyard and the garden. These could represent activity within two small enclosures indicated on the OS maps in this area, as well as the deposition of rubbish outside the main farm complex. One of the pits G12 contained a small animal burial (unexcavated).

2.6 Phase 4: mid to late 20th-century Farm Complex

Figure 8

The majority of the Phase 3 brick-built farm buildings stood on the site until the demolition of the Copt Hall Farm in the mid 1970s. The farm did contract in size and a number of buildings were demolished before the middle of the century. Most notably, post-built buildings L24.2, L24.3, L25 and L26 are no longer shown on the OS map of 1960.

The most prominent addition to the farm complex was a range of buildings L28 with brick foundations to the north-east of barn L15. These are first shown on the OS map of 1960. The foundations were 0.35–0.45m wide and constructed of modern frogged bricks with a yellowish-white cement mortar.

It is likely that the barn L15 that had stood on the site since the mid 18th century (Phase 1) was remodelled and reduced in size. Building L14 represents a rectangular building with a porch at its northern end, the footprint of which coincides very precisely with a building shown on the OS map of 1970. The foundations of L14 were built of red 18th-century brick but these could represent re-used bricks from the earlier dismantled barn. The northern porch of L14 was re-enforced with a single row of modern bricks G51 (Figure 21).

A number of pit groups L3, L13 and L17 are also assigned to Phase 4. They represent a mixture of rubbish deposition, including animal burials (unexcavated), and structural posts of an unspecified function. Group L5 represents two underground brick-lined and concrete-capped storage tanks.



2.7 Phase 5: 1970s Demolition

A series of thick demolition layers and deliberately dumped chalk material L29 overlay the foundations of the demolished buildings (Figure 22). The deposits were up to 0.65m thick and consisted of chalk mixed with demolition debris G3 in the form of loose bricks, concrete fragments, structural timbers, rubber tyres and other modern materials. On the northern part of the site a layer of nearly pure chalk G141 was deliberately dumped. The demolition layers formed a man-made “hump” over the northern part of the farm complex.



3. ARTEFACTS AND ECOFACTS

3.1 Pottery

3.1.1 Methodology

For each context, pottery was recorded by fabric type and quantified by minimum sherd count and weight. This information was entered onto a table in the project database (MS Access). Pottery was spot dated by individual fabric and / or form type, and was a determinant in assigning contexts to chronological period. Beyond this assessment, the assemblage has no potential for further analysis.

3.1.2 Quantification

The assemblage comprises 21 vessels, represented by 25 sherds, weighing 529g. The pottery survives in good condition, and sherds have an average weight of 21g. The majority derive from features assigned to L6, Phase 1.

3.1.3 Pottery type series, dating and provenance

Fabric types have been correlated with the regional fabric type series for post-Roman pottery in Essex (Cunningham 1985; Cotter 2000; Table 1).

Fabric Code	Description	Date Range	Sherd No.	Wt (g)
21	Sandy orange ware	c. 1200–1600	3	23
40	Post-medieval red earthenware	c. 1500–1900	17	432
40bl variant	Black glazed redware	c. 1600–1750	1	22
40 variant	Slip-decorated earthenware	1600+	1	16
45M	English stoneware	1670+	1	23
48P	Pearlware	1779+	1	1
48	Industrial wares	1900+	1	12

Table 1: Pottery Type Series

The small assemblage is dominated by coarse redwares (fabric 40), including locally made slip-decorated wares and black-glazed variants, broadly datable from the late 15th century to the post-medieval period. The dominance of this long-lived coarseware type means that the deposits from which they derive cannot be more precisely placed within an overall date range. However, the presence of glazed sherds; a common feature of later redwares (Cunningham 1985, 2); suggests they may fall towards the end of this range. Forms are utilitarian, and comprise mainly large, shallow bowls and two jars. A number of production sites are known throughout the county, including Harlow and Stock (Cotter 2000, 189-91, fig 129.)

Three sherds of sandy orange ware (fabric 21) deriving from a single vessel (23g) were recovered from Phase 3 ditch G9. With a broad date range of 13th to 16th century, peaking in the 15th century (Cunningham 1985, 1), the sherds occurred in the same context as post-medieval redwares. The former may be residual finds, although it is uncertain whether they represent the earliest form of the red earthenware type. The two wares are likely to have had a period of some chronological overlap.



Three undiagnostic sherds of English stoneware, Pearlware and modern mass-produced ware (total weight 36g) derived from Phase 3 pit G16 (L4), and post holes G106 (25).

Phase	Landscape	Group	Description	Sherd No.	Wt (g)	Fabric	Date
1	6	41	Ditch	1	7	40	c. 1500-1900
		58	Large pit	3	70	40	c. 1500-1900
		99	Large pit	5	86	40	c. 1500-1900
	7	20	Ditch	1	7	40	c. 1500-1900
	23	80	Pit	3	127	40	c. 1500-1900
3	4	10	Post hole packing	1	54	40	c. 1500-1900
		11	Pit	1	38	40	c. 1500-1900
		16	Pit	2	35	45M, 48	1670+, 1900+
	19	9	Ditch	3	23	21	c. 1200-1600
	20	48	Pit	2	4	40	c. 1500-1900
	24	110	Robbed out foundation trench	1	29	40	c. 1500-1900
	25	106	Post holes	2	49	40, 48P	c. 1500-1900 1779+

Table 2: Pottery quantification and date by phase, landscape and group

3.2 Ceramic Building Material

3.2.1 Methodology

For each context, brick and roof tile were recorded by fabric type and quantified by minimum fragment count and weight. This information was entered onto a table in the project database. Where possible, the material was assigned a date range. Beyond this assessment, the assemblage has no potential for further analysis.

3.2.2 Quantification

The assemblage comprises 41 pieces of roof tile (1.6kg) and 47 bricks, the latter weighing approximately 27kg, and including eight complete examples. Three modern brick fragments (764g), recovered from L10 post holes G96, (Phase 2) and L17 pit G101, (Phase 4) were not retained.

3.2.3 Provenance, phasing and date range

Ceramic building material was recovered from features assigned to all phases (Table 3).

Phase	Landscape	Group	Description	Frag. No.	Wt (g)
1	6	41	Ditch	2	143
		58	Large pit	11	4147
		61	Post holes	1	282
		99	Large pit	16	583
	7	20	Ditch	7	1528
		60	Post holes	1	14
	9	21	Ditch	1	138



Phase	Landscape	Group	Description	Frag. No.	Wt (g)
2	23	80	Pit	2	142
	27	123	Ditch	4	1763
	10	23	Post hole	1	1
		96	Post holes	4	789
	15	52	Wall foundation	1	2000
		88	Wall foundation	1	2000
		91	Wall foundation	1	2000
3	4	10	Post hole packing	3	97
		11	Pit	3	46
	16	89	Farm building	1	2000
	18	26	Wall foundation	1	1912
	19	9	Ditch	9	493
	20	48	Pit	2	100
	24	110	Robbed out foundation trench	2	46
	25	106	Post holes	2	37
	26	83	Farm building	1	2000
	4	3	7	Post holes	3
14		50	Building foundation	5	2000
		51	Wall reinforcement	1	2000
17		101	Pit	1	16

Table 3: Brick and tile quantification by phase, landscape and group

Brick

The bricks were examined by Pat Ryan, whose comments are as follows. Most of the bricks recovered are 18th century in date. Many have gritty lime-mortar attached to them. They are red in colour, fairly regular in general shape, with fairly sharp and regular arrises. Header and stretcher faces are smooth or slightly creased. Bases are relatively smooth. Dimensions are 215–225mm in length; 100–110mm in width; and 60–65mm in thickness.

Complete 18th-century bricks were collected from wall foundations G52, G88, G91 (Phase 2); G83, G102 (Phase 3) and G50 and G51 (Phase 4). There are part bricks, or fragments of this brick type in Phase 1 pit G58 and post holes G61; Phase 3 wall foundation G26; and Phase 4 foundations G50.

Parts or fragments of 17th-century bricks occur in Phase 1 ditch G20 and pit G58; and Phase 4 building foundation G50. The 17th-century brick is red in colour, rather irregular in general shape, and tends to have rounded irregular arrises. Some header and stretcher faces are creased and the bases tend to be less smooth than those of the 18th-century bricks. They vary in thickness from 40–60mm; most being about 50mm thick. The 17th-century brick fragments from foundation G50 have two types of mortar on them, indicating they have been reused. The later mortar is the gritty lime mortar similar to that on the 18th-century bricks.

Part of a ‘special’ brick from the coping of a boundary wall was found in Phase 1 ditch G123; unfortunately it lacks any datable features.

Roof tile

Roof tiles survive in fair condition, and have an average fragment weight of 39g. No complete examples survive. Thicknesses range between 13–17mm.



All occur in a uniform oxidised sandy fabric, similar to the bricks. Four pieces retain partial circular holes (*c.* 10mm diameter), for the insertion of wooden pegs for attachment to a roof. The largest single deposit derived from Phase 1 pit G99, which contained 15 fragments (535g). The tiles are considered to be of similar date to the bricks, spanning the 17th and 18th centuries.

3.3 Other Artefacts

3.3.1 Methodology

Each object was assigned an identification and functional category, and was quantified by number and/or weight. A date range was assigned, where applicable, with reference to standard typological works.

All ironwork will be x-rayed by Lincolnshire Archives (Lincolnshire County Council) prior to deposition of the archive. The x-ray plates will form part of the site archive.

3.3.2 Quantification and variety

A total of 15 items was recovered. The assemblage is quantified by material in Table 4; all the assemblage came from phased deposits.

Material	Quantity	Phase 1	Phase 3	Phase 4
Copper alloy	1	1	-	-
Iron	9	4	3	2
Glass	5	1	4	-
Totals	15	6	7	2

Table 4: Other Artefacts by material and phase

As can be seen from Table 5, a small range of functional categories were represented. Fasteners were the most numerous accounting for 46.7% of the assemblage, with household items, represented solely by glass vessels, accounting for 33.3%.

Functional category	Ditch	Pit	Structural	Category totals
<i>Fasteners</i>				7
Nail	1	1	4	
Washer	1	-	-	
<i>Household</i>				5
Bottle	-	1	-	
Wine bottle	-	1	-	
Vessel	1	2	-	
<i>Multipurpose bladed implements</i>				1
Scissors	-	1	-	
<i>Dress & adornment</i>				1
Buckle	-	1	-	
<i>Multifunctional</i>				1
Wire	-	1	-	
Totals	3	8	4	15

Table 5: Other artefacts by functional category and feature type



3.3.3 Date Range

Where datable, the assemblage spans the post-medieval to modern periods. The majority of the assemblage is not closely dated. A body sherd from a cylindrical wine bottle dates no earlier than the mid 18th century, the basic form continuing in use into the 19th century. A pale green/colourless mould pressed body sherd dates no earlier than the late 19th century, as does a narrow cylindrical bottle in blue-green glass.

3.3.4 Provenance

Other artefacts were restricted to deposits in Phases 1, 3 and 4.

Phase 1 (Medieval to post-medieval)

The fills of boundary ditch G123 (L27) yielded a large circular iron washer. Although probably of post-medieval date — as a type it is not closely dated — examples of similar size have been found in medieval deposits at Staines, Surrey and late medieval to post-medieval deposits at Winchester (Goodall 1980, fig. 126 J288-290). The form continues with little change into the modern period.

Boundary ditch G20 (L7), which appears on the 1758 estate map produced an olive green glass body sherd. The sherd has a slight curvature but no original edges; the form it originated from is indeterminate. Olive green glass is used extensively in wine bottles, but was also occasionally used in jars and jugs. This piece most likely derives from a wine bottle, indicating a date not before the mid 17th century. Ditch G21.1 (L9), which ran perpendicular to G20, yielded a flat headed nail.

Ditch G41 (L6) contained a section of drawn copper alloy wire. During the 12th century drawn wire was introduced in England (Pritchard 1991, 297), and was used extensively in the production of wire pins, hooked and looped fasteners in the 14th and later centuries. The *c.* 113mm length of wire from ditch G41 probably had a more prosaic agricultural use. Ditch G41 led to pit G58, the two features suggesting a drainage or waterpit. The fill of pit G58 contained an iron D-shaped buckle with looped over pin. D-shaped buckles are fairly easily manufactured and have a lengthy history. The dimensions of the buckle from G58 would be appropriate for a strap of *c.* 27mm width; this could have been used as a belt buckle, but could have equally served on a harness strap.

A pair of scissors, with centrally set oval finger loops, was recovered from the fill of pit G99 (L6). Scissors, although introduced into Britain in the 6th or 7th century, did not attain any popularity until the 14th century (de Neergaard 1987, 60), most examples deriving principally from the 16th and later centuries. The size of the pair from G99 suggests a domestic use.

Phase 3 (mid-19th to early 20th century)

Finds from Phase 3 deposits were restricted to L4, a cluster of postholes and small pits located in the western part of the site, external to both the farmyard and the garden and L25, part of a lines of postholes and two robbed out wall foundation trenches. Two nails, one retaining a flat rectangular head, were recovered from one of a group of seven east-west aligned post-holes in G106 (L25).



Finds from L4 were limited to the fills of pit G16.1. One flat headed nail, and four sherds of vessel glass were recovered. Vessels included a late 18th–19th-century cylindrical wine bottle body sherd, a dark olive green body sherd likely to derive from a wine bottle, a pale green body sherd with mould pressed or embossed decoration comprising a stem and two veined leaves and a narrow cylindrical bottle of blue-green glass. The narrow cylindrical bottle, with two mould seams and number in relief on the base is most likely machine-made, indicating a date post-1887 (Hedges 2002, 23).

Phase 4 (mid- to late-20th century)

Only one of the two postholes forming G7 in L3 yielded other artefacts; they were confined to a nail shank and a flat, rectangular headed nail.

3.3.5 Assessment of potential

The ‘other artefact’ assemblage has no potential to assist in determining the earliest evidence for use of Copt Hall Farm due to the absence of any items that can be firmly dated to the medieval period. Much of the material is domestic in nature, the one possible exception being the D-shaped buckle which could have been used on harness. There were no indications of additional industries or crafts, and beyond a few nails recovered from postholes, there were no finds directly associated with buildings and hence the assemblage cannot assist in determining building functions.

Beyond this assessment, the assemblage has no potential for further analysis.

3.4 Animal Bone

3.4.1 Quantification, methodology and variety

For each context, animal bone was quantified by minimum fragment count and weight. This information was entered onto a table in the project database.

The faunal assemblage comprises 27 fragments, weighing 278g, the majority deriving from Phase 1 pit G99, L6 (Table 6). Pieces survive in fair condition, with some surface erosion, and have an average weight of 10g. Diagnostic bone elements are rib, vertebra, scapula, mandible and tooth fragments. With the exception of a bird bone, the material is too fragmentary to be identified to species. The small assemblage has no potential for further analysis.

Phase	Landscape	Group	Description	Sherd No.	Wt (g)
1	6	58	Large pit	1	13
		99	Large pit	22	239
3	4	16	Pit	3	9
4	3	5	Gully	1	17

Table 6: Animal bone quantification by phase, landscape and group



4. ANALYTICAL POTENTIAL OF THE DATA

4.1 *Structural Analysis*

The majority of contextual data on the site consisted of structures like brick wall foundations, brick-lined wells and below-ground concrete storage tanks. Negative features like ditches, pits and post-holes also form a large part of the contextual data.

The state of preservation of negative features was good, due to their relatively recent date. However, due to the total demolition of the farmstead only the lowest level of the foundations of previously upstanding structures survived, usually in the form of one or two courses of bricks. Where the foundations of the 19th-century buildings were particularly shallow, no trace of them survived.

This low level of structural survival means that the contextual data only has a very limited potential to contribute to the original research aims, other than indicating a simple presence/absence of structures. Due to the scarcity of artefacts in secure contexts it is also very difficult to date features which do not correlate with cartographic evidence.

However, the open area excavation has revealed the known farmstead almost in its entirety and the contextual data can be used to supplement the documentary and cartographic evidence for Copt Hall Farm. Drawing these strands together provides a narrative of the farm complex and its place within the agricultural history of the east of England.

4.2 *Artefact and Ecofact Analysis*

The artefact and ecofact assemblages are small and unremarkable. They have no potential to contribute to the project research objectives and, beyond this assessment, have no potential for further analysis.

4.3 *Research Objectives*

4.3.1 *Original research objectives*

The research objectives of the archaeological excavation were based on topics identified in the regional research framework (Medlycott 2011). They were set out in the WSI (Albion 2012) and focused on determining the origins, nature, extent and development of settlement at the Copt Hall Farm site. They are reproduced here:

1. Chronology – what is the earliest evidence for use/settlement of the site and how does the site develop over time?
2. Settlement continuity – is the site continuously occupied from its origin?
3. Settlement character – what range of structures were present at the site during its lifetime and how were they used?
4. Settlement form and pattern – how was the occupation and use of the site reflected in its size and layout?



5. Economy – what resources were exploited by the inhabitants of the site? Was the economy of the site based only on agriculture or was there additional industry/manufacture?
6. Material culture – what was the wealth status of the settlement? Did this change over time?
7. Environment – how did the environment change? Is this reflected in the settlement evidence?

The investigation was also particularly concerned with potential evidence for the origin and development of Copt Hall Farm in the medieval period. With regard to medieval farms, the regional research framework highlights the following research questions:

- What form do early farms take?
- What range of building types is present?
- How far can functions be attributed to buildings?

Following assessment of the results of the fieldwork and the analytical potential of the recovered data, it is apparent that there is very little archaeological evidence to answer any of the research questions relating to the early, medieval history of Copt Hall Farm. In general, any discussion of Copt Hall Farm still relies just as much on existing historical and cartographic evidence as on any newly revealed archaeological evidence, if not more so.

The following table summarises the potential of the available evidence to answer the original research objectives.

		Type of evidence			
		Historical	Cartographic	Contextual	Artefacts
Research objectives	1. Chronology	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	2. Settlement continuity	Moderate	Moderate	Low	x
	3. Settlement character	x	Moderate	Low	Negligible
	4. Settlement form and pattern	x	Moderate	Low	x
	5. Economy	x	x	x	Negligible
	6. Material culture	x	x	x	Negligible
	7. Environment	x	x	x	x
	8. Origin and medieval history	Low	x	x	x

Table 7: Potential of data-sets to address the original research objectives (“x” equals no potential)

4.3.2 Revised research objectives

In the light of the available evidence the original research aims have been amalgamated and new research objectives added. These mainly refer to the research theme of “Landscape” in the post-medieval period, as set out in the regional research framework, which calls for a better understanding of the Agricultural Revolution in East Anglia and its impact on the landscape (Medlycott 2011, 79).



As part of the overarching research theme of “Landscape and environment” the research agenda calls for further study of the development of the post-medieval landscape including thematic survey of farm types and agricultural industries, particularly in the context of “High Farming” (Medlycott 2011, 85).

The revised research objectives are set out below:

1. Collate the existing historical, cartographic and landscape evidence for the form and function of Copt Hall Farm and lands associated with it in the medieval period;
2. Establish the chronology, continuity and settlement character of Copt Hall Farm from the medieval to the modern period;
3. Put Copt Hall Farm in context with the mid 19th-century agricultural revolution and the period of “High Farming” in East Anglia.

4.4 Dissemination

Section 4 of this document addresses the analysis and research objectives set out above. This report will be submitted to and will be accessible through the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition, the report will be available through the OASIS online database.

A summary note on the project will be submitted to *Essex Archaeology and History*, the journal of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History. The summary note will be cross-referenced to the HER and OASIS documents.

4.5 Archiving

Following approval of this document by the HEMO the archive of materials (subject to the landowner’s permission) and accompanying records will be deposited with Saffron Walden Museum (accession no. 2012.04).



5. DISCUSSION

5.1 *Medieval to Post-medieval (15th-18th Century)*

5.1.1 15th–17th century

The earliest historical references to Copt Hall Farm suggest that in the 15th and 16th century the land on the DA was not yet built upon. Title deeds to the farm, which were first drawn up in 1492, refer to strips of arable lands, called “shots”, within a larger open field or croft in the location of the DA. One of these field boundaries, which originated in the medieval period, is represented on the site by ditch L27. The boundary survived until the modern period.

According to documents, a tenement near the road had been established on the site by 1627 and by 1660 this had developed into a messuage with orchards, gardens, stables, barns and associated pasture and arable land. It is possible that field boundary L7 in the southern part of the site could date from this period, when the developing farmstead was demarcated from the surrounding arable strip fields.

Possible drainage ditch and large water pit L6 were on a similar alignment to field boundary L27 and may date to this period. A further pit within L6 and pit L23 contained fragments of post-medieval pottery and may also have been part of the early farmstead; however, their function is unclear.

In general, it is impossible to associate any ditch, pit or posthole on the site within Phase 1 (or later) securely with this early phase of Copt Hall Farm. None of the features form any recognisable early structures. There were very few pottery sherds and much of it is of such a wide date range that it is impossible to distinguish earlier or later features.

It is likely that the early farmstead was completely replaced by the later, more substantial farm buildings.

5.1.2 18th century

The first visual evidence of Copt Hall Farm and its buildings is in the form of the estate map of 1758. This shows two main buildings of equal size which lie opposite each other in the north-eastern part of the farm plot. The southern building, with a large porch to its south, is most likely a barn (Medlycott 2012) while the northern building is of an elongated L-shape and may represent the farmhouse. A possible enclosure or yard is indicated by the side of the road.

It is likely that the southern barn is the building that is evident on the site until the middle of the 20th century and which is represented by brick foundations L15. There is no trace of the northern building. One exception might be the possible chimney pad L22, which does fall within the footprint of the northern building when the estate map and all features plan are overlaid. However, one needs to allow for a high degree of inaccuracy of the older map and the association is by no means certain.



5.2 19th Century to Early 20th Century

5.2.1 Early 19th century

From *c.* 1750 onwards, social and economic changes, along with scientific and technological advances, heralded the beginning of the Agricultural Revolution. However, it wasn't until the 1840s after sustained high grain prices from the period of the Napoleonic Wars (1794-1815), and the widespread use of more intensive systems of agricultural production, that the era that became to be known as "High Farming" truly began (English Heritage 2006).

Copt Hall Farm seems to have stayed largely the same until *c.* 1843 when it is shown on the tithe map of Saffron Walden. The southern barn is shown in the southern part of the site with an added western porch on its south side and an outbuilding to the east. The farmhouse seems to be further to the north than shown on the 1758 map, leaving a larger yard between the two buildings and an additional small building in its east. It is now also on a different alignment with an extension to the north-east.

It is unclear whether this is the same farmhouse as shown on the 1758 map, allowing for inaccuracies in early mapping. None of the surviving features on site correlate with its footprint. It is possible that this phase represents the first re-organisation of the farm as part of innovations in agricultural methodologies.

The period from around 1840 to the agricultural depression of the late 1870s saw widespread adoption of a more mixed farming regime and the implementation of a more intensive regime based on the high input/high output, factory-based approach of the Industrial Revolution. Farmstead design changed significantly and this was the period when most farms either re-built or adapted their existing buildings.

The design of the new-style farmstead was influenced by the widespread extension of mechanisation (for preparing feed and threshing), the increasing availability of mass-produced fittings and materials as well as the adoption of industrial and scientific principles to the accommodation and feeding of ever increasing numbers of livestock.

By 1843 the farm had also come into the holdings of the Audley End Estate. Within the context of the agricultural revolution large estates also played a pivotal role in the re-organisation and emergence of larger farms. Estate policies and the development of the land agent profession led to investment in infrastructure, particularly buildings and drainage, and improved husbandry by tenants was encouraged through leases (English Heritage 2006, 25).

5.2.2 Mid 19th century and the era of "High Farming"

These developments had their effect on Copt Hall Farm and the first OS map of 1871 shows that the farm had been completely re-organised and adapted to modern farming methods.

The majority of the surviving wall foundations and structural postholes on the excavated area correlate with this phase of the farm. This is made particularly



clear when the all-features plan is overlaid on the first edition OS map of 1897 (Figure 7) which also shows internal divisions of the buildings.

The southern barn is still a prominent feature of Copt Hall Farm and now lies at the southern edge of a large rectangular farmyard. It has been extended by several small enclosures to its rear and a further porch facing into the farmyard. Several enclosures and open-sided sheds line the farmyard itself. An elongated farm building with brick foundations, most likely a stable for cattle, lies at the north-eastern edge of the farmyard. This is part of its own complex of farm buildings which could be further animal pens, cart sheds and storage buildings for fodder and produce.

The old farmhouse of the maps of 1758 and 1843 has been replaced by a new rectangular building situated closer to the road to the north and separated from the farmyard. It lies at the eastern end of a garden and orchard and has several outhouses and a pump to its rear.

Copt Hall Farm is a good example of a farmstead built on a “loose courtyard plan”. The plan of a farmstead provides a direct reflection of the degree to which farm-based functions are located in specialist or combination structures and ranges (English Heritage 2006, 38) and can give an indication as to the function of the farm.

Loose courtyard plans have become most directly associated with large arable farmsteads. Usually they consist of a large barn which may shelter a south-facing yard which is also bordered by a stable and granary and later shelter sheds. Scatters of other farm buildings may be sited close by (English Heritage 2006, 40-41). This type of layout is very much in evidence at Copt Hall Farm.

Poor weather in the late 1870s, and a series of catastrophic harvests led to a collapse in income from arable crops and farming entered a period of depression. As a result, grain production was confined to the drier soils of the eastern and southern counties, with a focus on meat and dairy produce in order to meet urban demand elsewhere.

Also, in the eastern region, farmers were able to adapt to the needs of the London population and, therefore, did not suffer from the depression in grain prices at the end of the 19th century as much as those in other southern English regions. In terms of farm layout by the 1890s farm plans retained the same basic relationship between storage, processing and livestock areas as had been common 40 years earlier (English Heritage 2006). The OS map of 1938 shows that the size and layout of Copt Hall Farm stayed the same until the beginning of the 20th century.

5.3 Mid to late 20th Century

After 1938 many of the timber-framed buildings of Copt Hall Farm, which were part of the north-eastern farm complex had been demolished, leaving only the brick-built buildings. A new range of buildings was added to the east of the farm in the middle of the 20th century. These are shown on the 1960 OS map and are represented on site by wall foundations L25 constructed of modern frogged bricks.



By 1970 the farmstead was reduced in size and only the brick-built farmhouse, long north-south aligned stables with an outbuilding to its rear, and parts of the southern barn remained on the site. The later evolution of the southern barn is unclear. Wall foundation L14 on site fits very precisely with the 1970 OS map, suggesting that the building was probably reduced in size and rebuilt on a smaller footprint. This must have re-used the earlier bricks as the foundation was entirely built of 18th-century bricks; only the northern porch was reinforced by a row of modern 20th-century bricks.

The farm is shown on the 1:10,000 OS map of 1972 but not on any later maps, suggesting it was demolished in the mid 1970s.



6. CONCLUSION

Copt Hall Farm is a farm that is known from historical evidence to have originated in the 15th century and deeds to the farm suggest that the first buildings stood at the location off Ashdon Road as early as 1627.

The earliest surviving building found during the excavations was a large barn that was built in the mid-18th century. However, the excavations at Copt Hall Farm revealed the ground plan of a farm complex that largely dates to the 19th and 20th centuries.

Copt Hall Farm was completely re-organised in the mid 19th century to adapt the farm to the modern and more efficient working methods that came with the agricultural revolution and its incorporation into the Audley End Estate. With the exception of the 18th-century barn, no buildings of the earlier post-medieval farm complex survived. The re-organised farm complex was consistent with that of a model farm built on a loose courtyard plan.

The farm complex remained unchanged until the early 20th century when the farm was again adapted to changing agricultural needs with the removal of some of the stable blocks and other buildings. A map of 1972 shows the farm largely reduced in size. Some time after 1972 Copt Hall Farm was demolished.

The demolition of the farm was very thorough and while there were extensive demolition layers on site, the majority of the materials had been taken off site during demolition. Only the lower foundations of buildings were left *in situ* and there was a distinct lack of artefactual material within securely datable contexts.

The pottery and other artefacts retrieved all fell into a very broad date range (1500–1900) or were potentially residual, making it impossible to filter out any features that might have dated from the earlier farm complex. The lack of structural and artefactual remains also made it very difficult to assign any form or function to the farm buildings based purely on archaeological evidence.

The excavation was successful in matching the revealed building foundations and a large number of structural postholes with maps dating to the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The majority of bricks that were sampled during the investigations were 18th century in date, suggesting that the building material from the early farm complex was re-used when the farm was remodelled in the mid 19th century. They also provide the only potential physical evidence of the earlier farm.

The importance of Copt Hall Farm lies in its combination of historical, cartographic and archaeological evidence that gives a picture of a farm complex that was in use, originally as arable lands and later as a working farm, from the 14th until the 20th century. It also gives a useful insight into site formation processes and how the modernisation and re-modelling of a farm complex on the same site, including the re-use of building materials, can completely remove any earlier evidence.



7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion Archaeology 2005. *Ashdon Road and Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden, Essex. Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. Report no. 2005/30 v 1.1.
- Albion Archaeology 2010. *Land at Ashdon Road, Saffron Waldon, Essex: Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Report no. 2010/92.
- Albion Archaeology 2012. *Land off Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden. Written Statement of Investigation for Archeological Excavation of a Historic Farmstead*. Report no. 2012/01.
- Cotter, J.P., 2000, *Roman Pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*. Colchester Archaeological Report 7.
- Cunningham, C.M., 1985, 'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex', in CM. Cunningham, and PJ. Drury, *Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford*, CBA Research Report 54, 1-16.
- English Heritage 2006. *Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement. East of England Region*. [Online.] Available at: <http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/historic-farmsteads-preliminary-character-statement-east-of-england/>. [Accessed: 21st February 2013.]
- Glazebrook, J. 1997. *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties – 1 Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 3.
- Goodall, I.H. 1980 *Ironwork in Medieval Britain: An archaeological study* unpublished PhD thesis University College Cardiff
- Havis, R. 2011. *Archaeological Excavation of a Historic Farmstead at Land off Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden*. Essex Country Council Historic Environment Management Team. March 2011. (Brief).
- Hedges, A.A.C. 2002 *Bottles and Bottle Collecting* Shire Album 6
- Medlycott, M. (ed) 2011. *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.
- de Neergaard, M. 1987 'The use of knives, shears, scissor and scabbards' in J. Cowgill, M. de Neergaard and N. Griffiths *Knives and Scabbards Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*:1, 51-61. HMSO
- Pritchard, F. 1991 'Pins' in G. Egan and F. Pritchard *Dress Accessories c.1150-c.1450 Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*:3, 297-304. HMSO



8. APPENDIX

8.1 *Copt Hall, Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden: Documentary and Cartographic Sources*

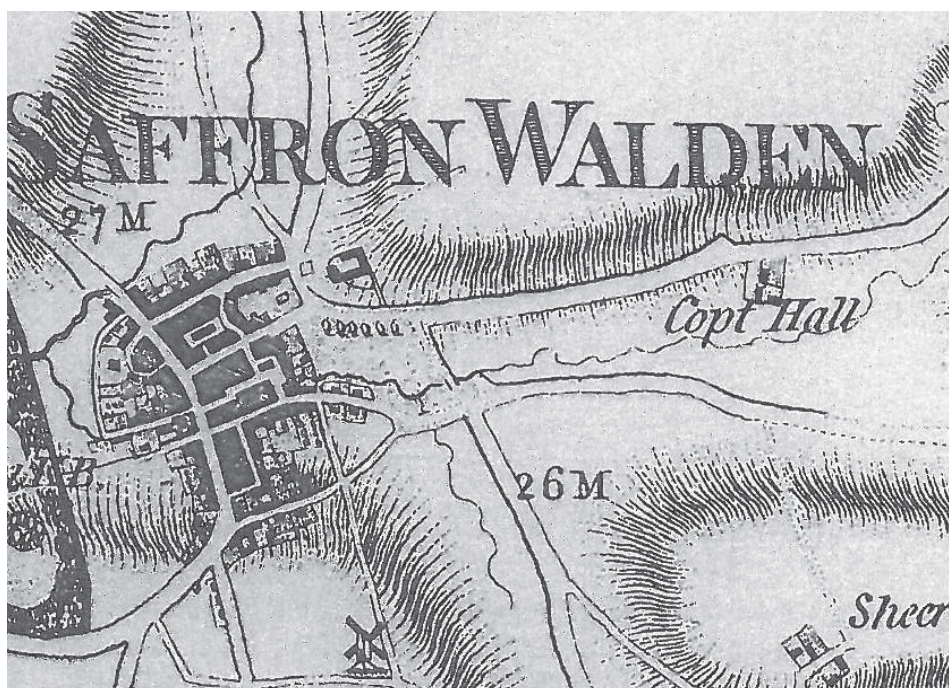
Maria Medlycott

COPT HALL, ASDHDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN: DOCUMENTARY AND CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Sept 2012

Maria Medlycott (Place Services, ECC)

Copt Hall is located to the east of Saffron Walden, approximately 1km outside the historic town (Medlycott 1999) on what were formerly open fields.



1777 Chapman and André map showing the relative positions of Copt Hall and Saffron Walden.

It is now located on the eastern edge of the modern expansion of Saffron Walden. Ashdon Road was formerly known as Whitstreet, and it appears under that name in most of the following documents.

DOCUMENTARY AND CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

The earliest references to Copt Hall date to the late 15th century (see below). The original documents do not survive, but a series of transcripts of title deeds for Copt Hall were compiled in the 18th century which have been preserved in the Essex Record Office as an 'Abstract of title to a farm and lands called Copt Hall in Walden both freehold and copyhold with the land purchased of Barker' (ERO, D/DBy T1/225). The original deeds, of 1492 and

1548 refer to strips of arable land (or 'shots') lying within a larger open field or croft. This form of land-division was the norm around Saffron Walden (Cromarty 1967) and in the north-westernmost parts of Essex .

27 Sept 1492 – By deed poll with livery and seizin inclosed John Cryswell and Agness his wife daughter of Thomas Tomor deceased did give grant and confirm unto Wm. Bonham, Ann Claydon, Rob Claydon, Thos. Francis and Wm. Adam.

Two pieces of arable land with the apparts lying dispersedly in a croft enclosed with hedges and ditches in Walden in a field there called Whitestreet. One piece between the land of the Abbot and Convent of the Monastery of Walden on both parts, the head abutting on the way from Walden to Ashdon. The other pieces lie there between lands of John Hall on the one part the land of the said Abbott on the other part containing together three acres more or less. Given by T. Tomor's will to Agnes his daughter to hold to them and their heirs'. (ERO, D/Dby T1/225)

30 Nov 1548 – Two pieces of arable land with the apparts lying separately in one croft inclosed with hedges and ditches in a field called Whitestreet Field. (ERO, D/Dby T1/225)

At some date between 1548 and 1627 a house with accompanying garden had been built on the plot.

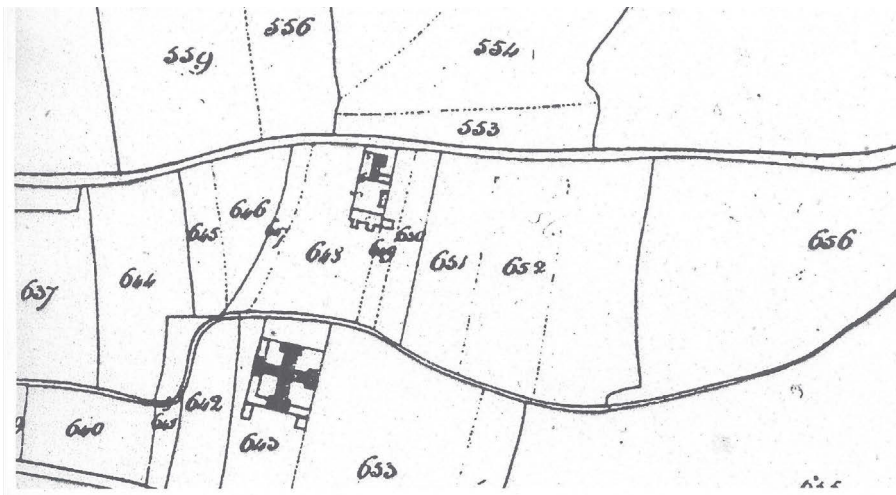
21 Dec 1627 – 'One piece of pasture with a tenement thereon built with a garden to the same tenement adjoining road. By estimation 2 acres more or less lying in a certain field called Whitestreet's Field' (ERO, D/Dby T1/225).

By 1660 the deeds refer to Copt Hall by name and reference accompanying orchards, gardens, stables and barns. The name Copt (or Copped) Hall denotes a building with a spiky appearance, in other Essex examples this name has been applied to buildings with turrets of particularly prominent or distinctive chimneys (Reaney 1935)

19 April 1660 – Philip Wright devises to his two sons Edward and Philip Wright. All that his messuage or tenement called Copt Hall and all the orchards, gardens, stables, barns and all pasture, meadow and arable lands thereto belonging.' (ERO, D/Dby T1/225)

The earliest map of the site dates to 1758, it shows two principal structures (see below).

1758 – Referenced in the deeds of Pounce Hall, Copt Hall and St Aylett and shown on the accompanying estate map. 'Known by the name of Copt Hall with the house, outhouses, edifices, buildings, barns, stables, yards, gardens, orchards and barnsides thereto belonging



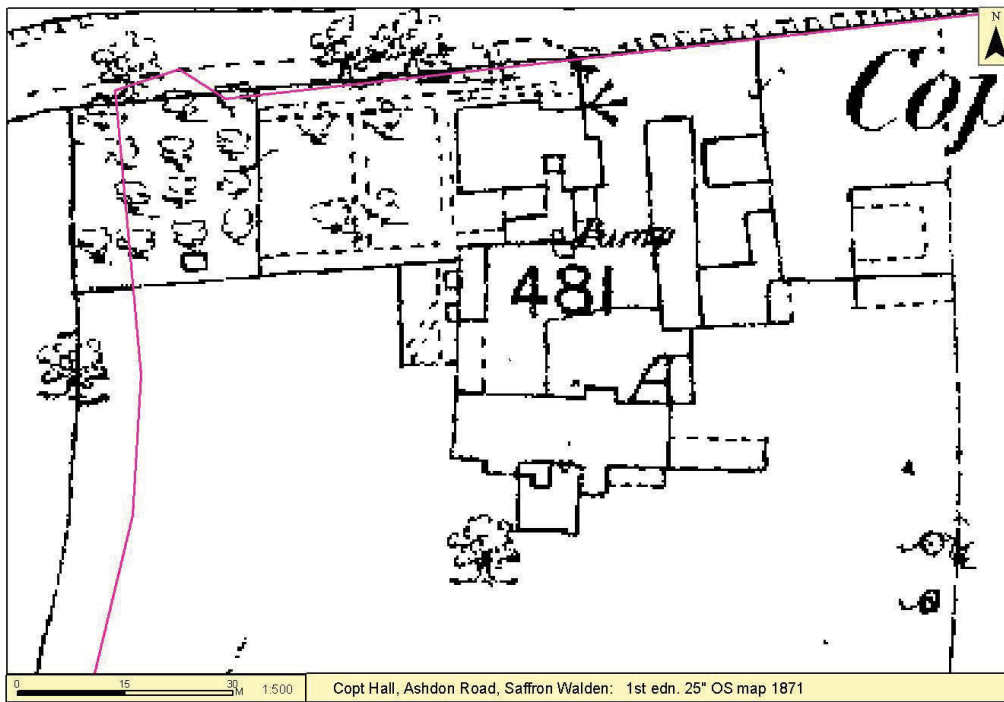
Tithe map 1843

Parcel no.	Fieldname	Use	Owner	Occupant
644	In Copt Hall Rd.	Arable	Thomas Smith	William Brewer
645	Copt Hall Field	Arable	Lord Braybrooke	Seamer Spicer
646	Copt Hall Field	Arable	Lord Braybrooke	Seamer Spicer
647	Copt Hall Close	Grass	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
648	Copt Hall Close and Homestead	Grass	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
649	Copt Hall Close	Grass	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
650	Copt Hall Close	Grass	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
651	Andrews Close	Arable	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
652	Andrews Close	Arable	Lord Braybrooke	Nathaniel Catlin
653	-	Arable	Lord Braybrooke	Isaac John Norris

1848 – Mentioned in Whites Directory of 1848, when the farmer was a Robert Marking of Copt Hall

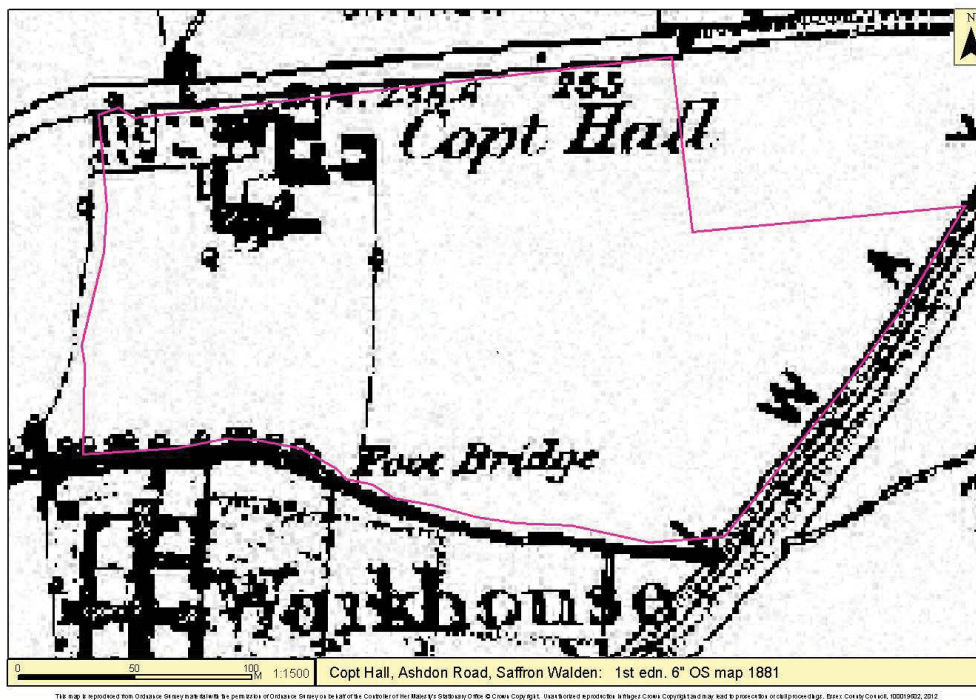
Between 1843 and 1871 the site is re-modelled with the original house being replaced and the addition of new farmyard buildings, the barn however appears to have remained a fixture of the site (see below).

1871 – Depicted on the OS 1st edition 25" map



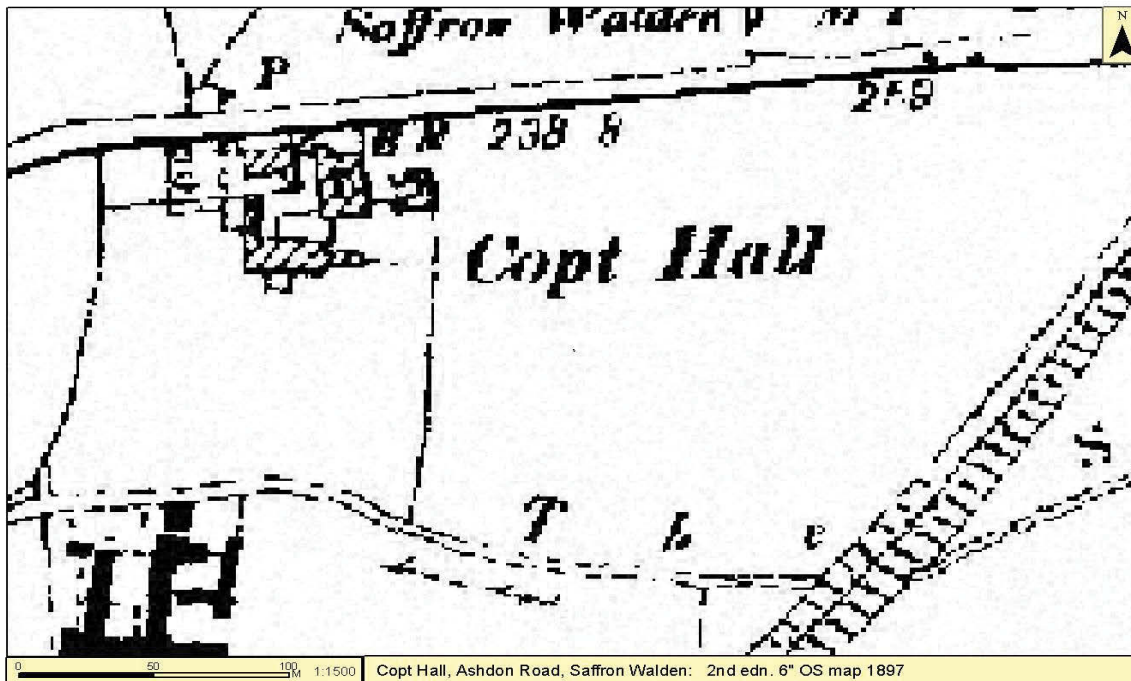
Copt Hall farmhouse on the OS 1st ed 25" map, 1871

1881 – Depicted on the OS 1st edition 6" maps

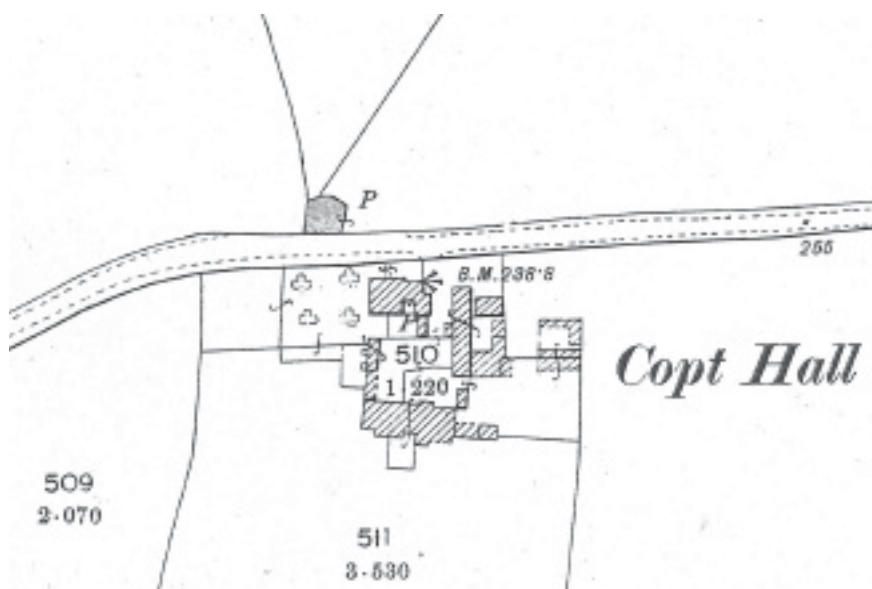


Copt Hall farm on the OS 1st edition 6" map, 1881

1897 – Depicted on the OS 2nd ed. 25" map



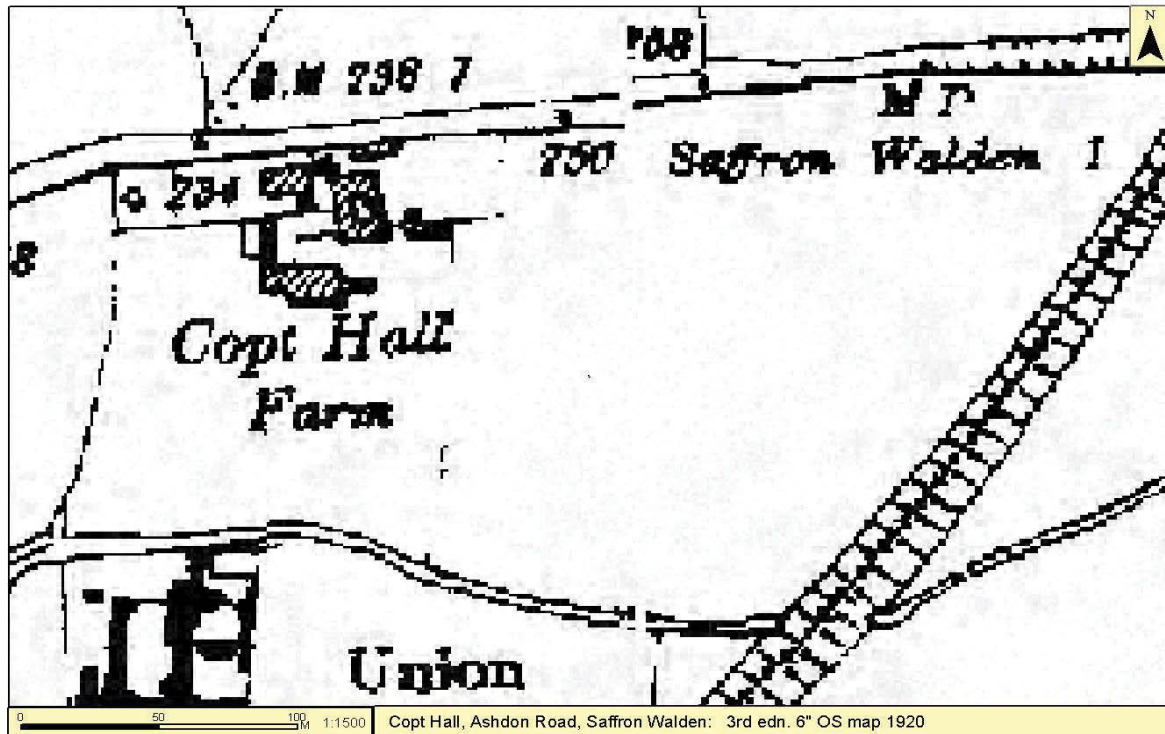
Copt Hall farm on the OS 2nd ed 6" map, 1897



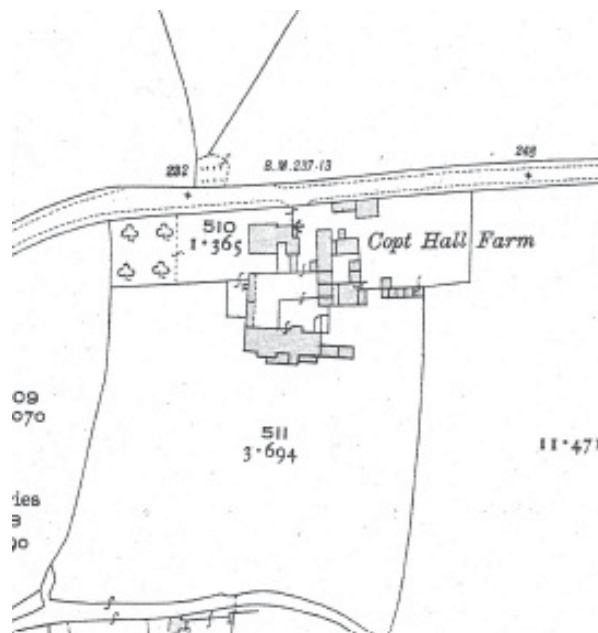
Copt Hall farmhouse on the OS 2nd ed 25" map, 1897

1903 – Correspondence about cleaning of ditches and the sale of wheat, barley and beans (ERO D/F 35/8/127)

1920-1 – depicted on the OS 3rd ed. Maps

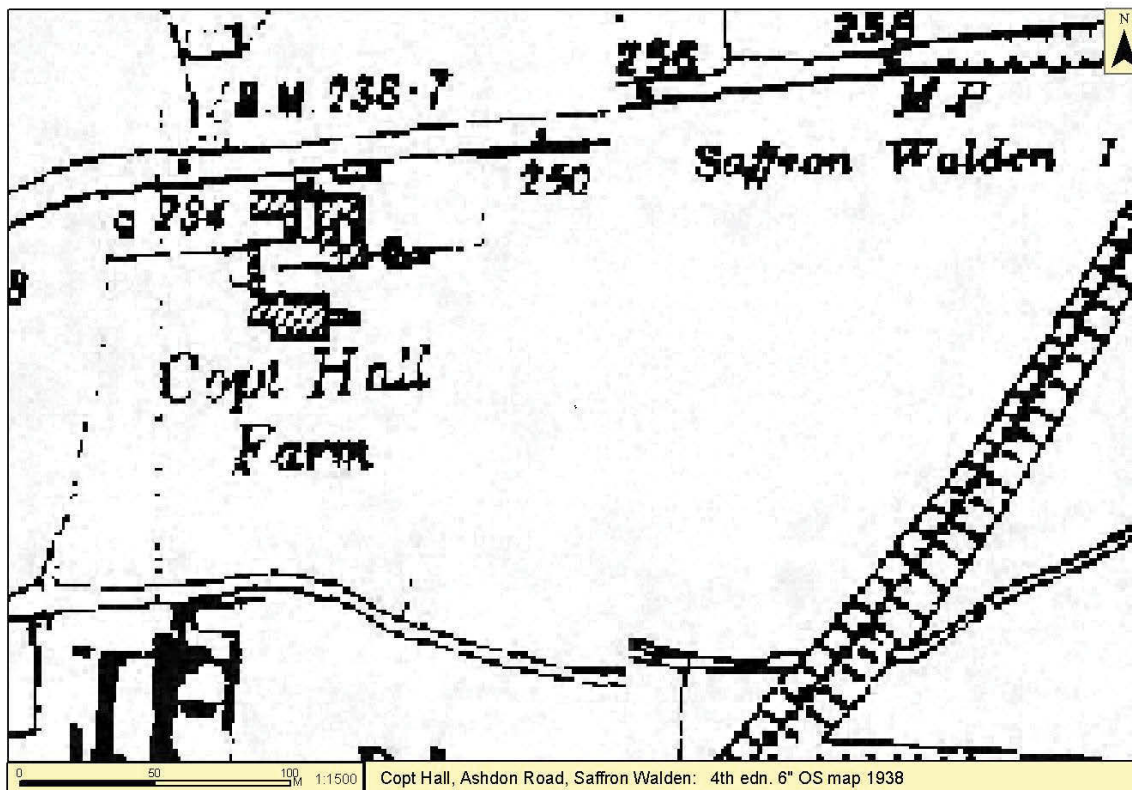


Copt Hall farm on the OS 3rd edition 6" map, 1920



Copt Hall farmhouse on the OS 3rd edition 25" map, 1921

1938 – Depicted on the OS 4th edition 6” map, the ERO doesn’t have a copy of the 25” OS map of the same date for the area



Copt Hall Farm OS 4th edition 6” map, 1938

It has not been possible to establish when the farm was demolished, but it must have occurred post- 1938 and prior to 1980.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FARMHOUSE AND YARD

Early - mid 17th century – the first house and farmyard is constructed, this includes gardens, stables and barns.

Late 17th - mid 18th century - The earliest map of the site dates to 1758, it shows two principal structures. The southernmost building is interpreted as a barn, based on plan-form comparisons with later maps. The presumed farmhouse is an L-shaped building, with the long range lying parallel to the road. There is a possible third, square building lying between it and the road but the map is creased at this point and it is not clear.

Late 18th-early 19th century – The 1843 map shows that prior to that date an extension or outshot has been added to the east end of the barn and the farmhouse has been extended to the north. A new farm-building is depicted between the barn and the farmhouse.

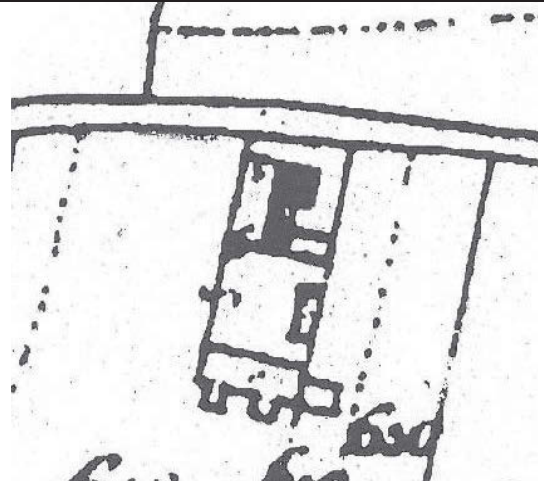
Mid – late 19th century - The 1871 and 1897 OS maps show considerable additions to the overall layout of the farmyard. The 17/18th century farmhouse has been replaced by a square building sited rather closer to the road. At the rear of this is a line of small outbuildings (possibly the privy or coalhouse?). The pump is located behind these outbuildings. To the west of the house is a formal garden area, with an orchard beyond. The 17/18th century barn is still in existence and forms the southern boundary of the farmyard. A small yard or stock-pen has been added to its rear. There is a new shed, on the western side of the farmyard, by 1897 this had been expanded so that it linked to the barn, it is open-fronted and may have been a cattle-byre or cart-shed. A new block of farm-buildings had also been constructed on the east side of the yard, given their proximity to the road and the farm-house they may include the stables. Beyond this is a small U-shaped group farm-buildings, depicted as open-fronted structures facing onto a small yard, and usage as stock-sheds is postulated.

Early 20th century - The 1921 map shows two new adjoining structures facing on to the road. The postulated stock-pens on the eastern edge of the farmyard have been replaced by a row of small buildings – possibly pig or poultry houses.

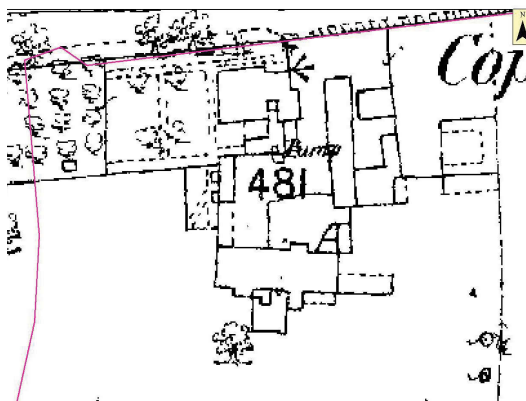
Late 20th century – Copt Hall no longer exists.



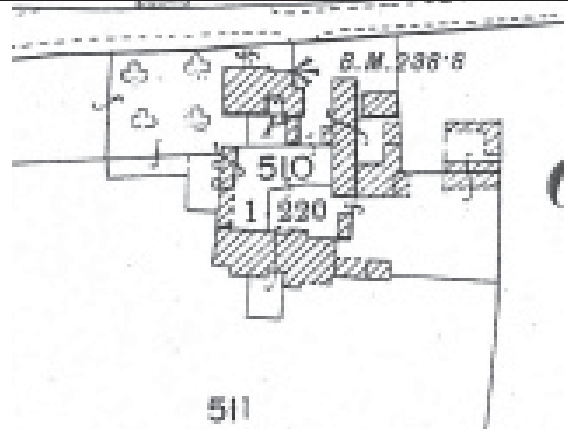
1758



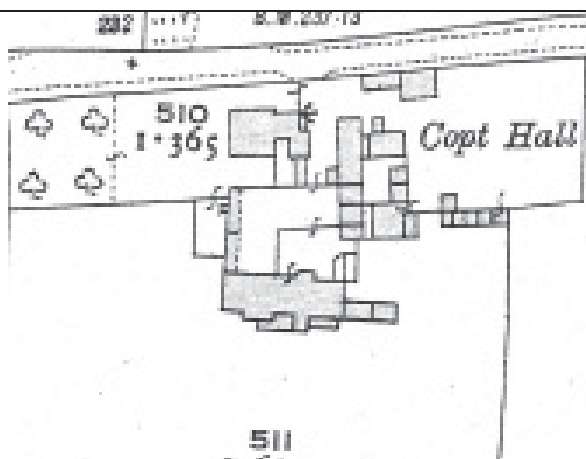
1843



1871



1897



1921



1938

Bibliography

- Cromarty, D. 1967 'Chepying Walden 1381-1420, a study from the Court Rolls' *Essex J.* **2**, p.104
- Medlycott, M. 1999 *Saffron Walden Historic Town assessment*, ECC internal rep.
- Reaney, P.H. 1935 *Place-names of Essex*, Cambridge, p. 541

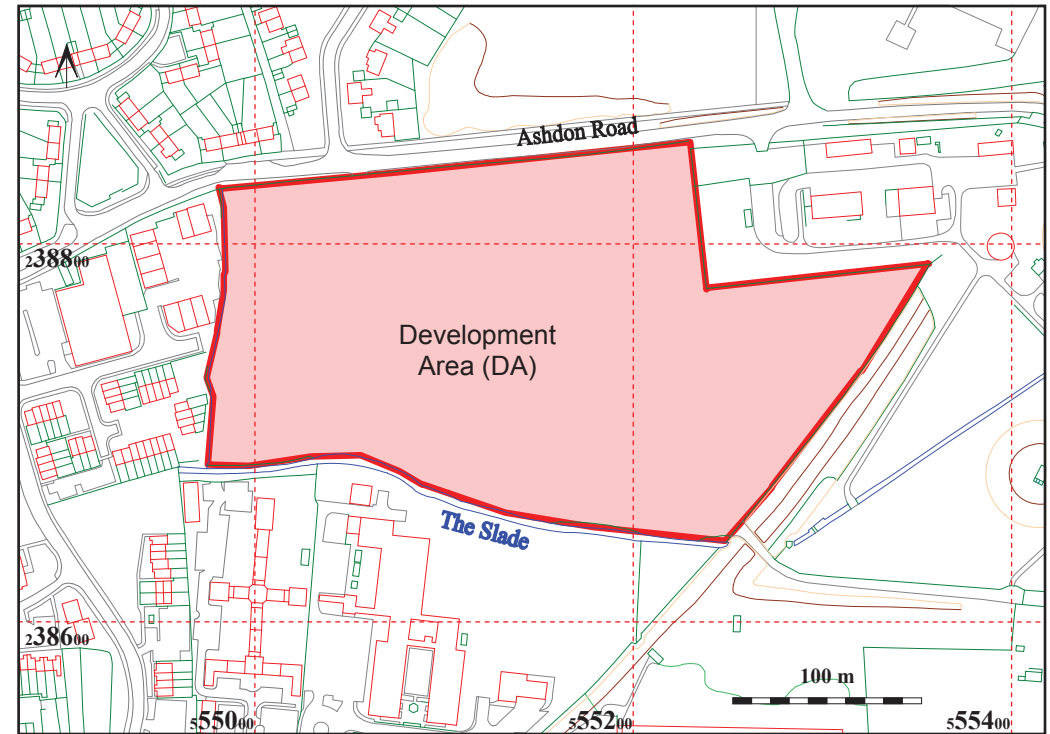
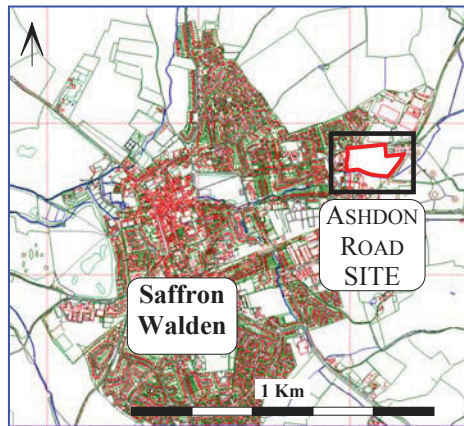


Figure 1: Site location

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford. OS Licence No. 100017358 (LA). © Crown Copyright.

*Land at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden, Essex:
Assessment of Potential and Updated Project Design*

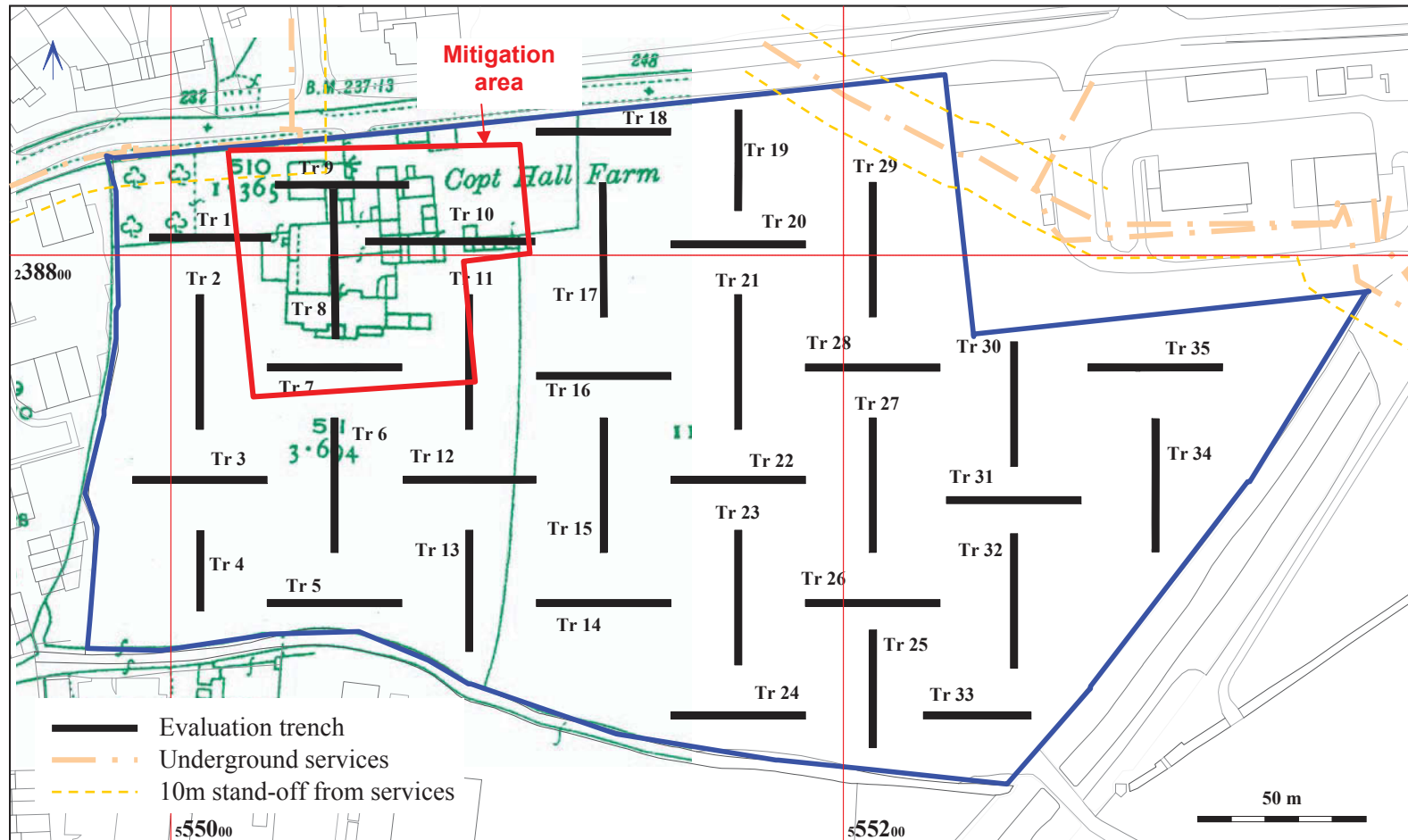


Figure 2: Mitigation area and evaluation trenches

Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Albion Archaeology, Central Bedfordshire Council. OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.

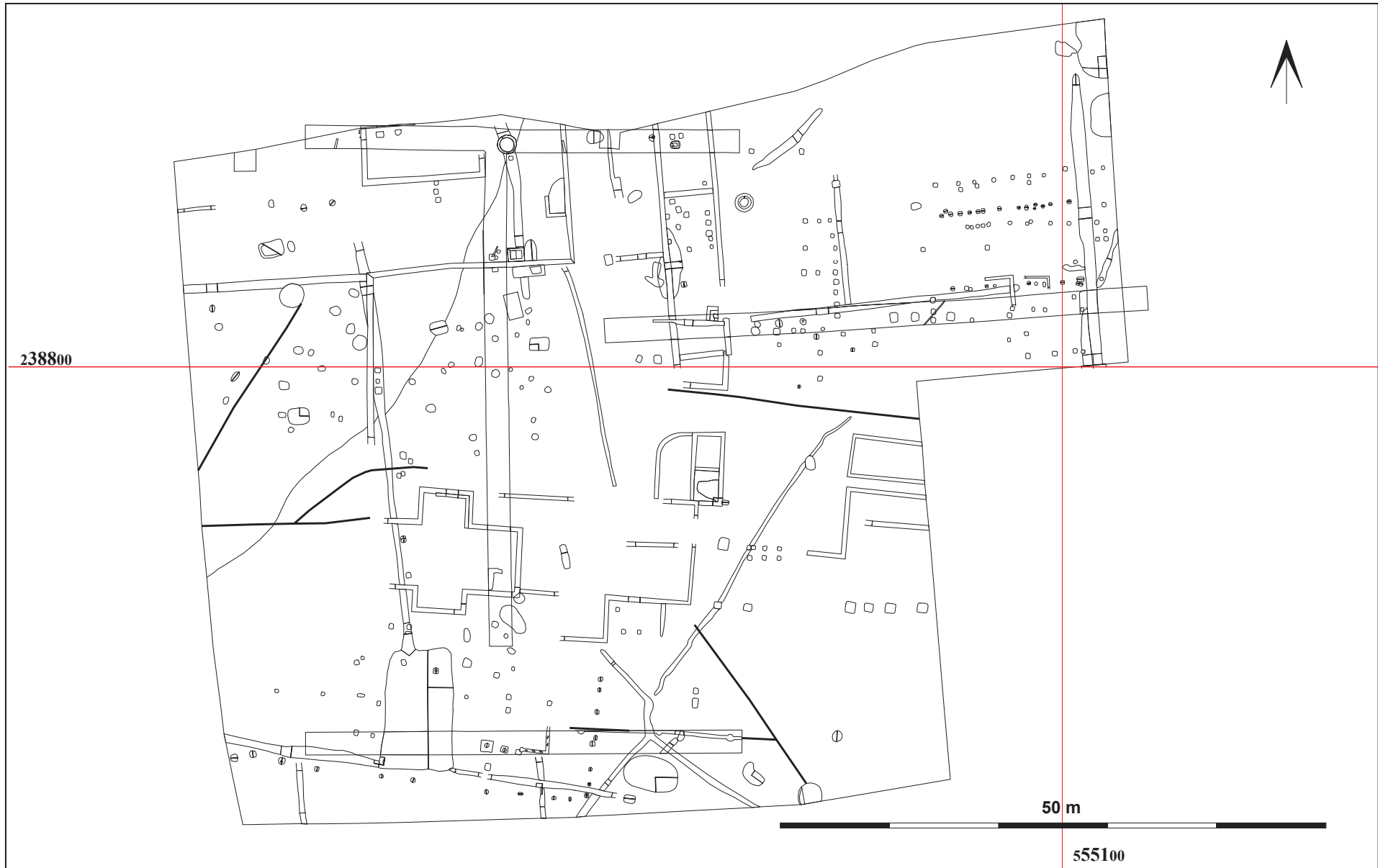


Figure 3: All features plan



Figure 4: Phase 1 – medieval to post-medieval (15th – 18th century)

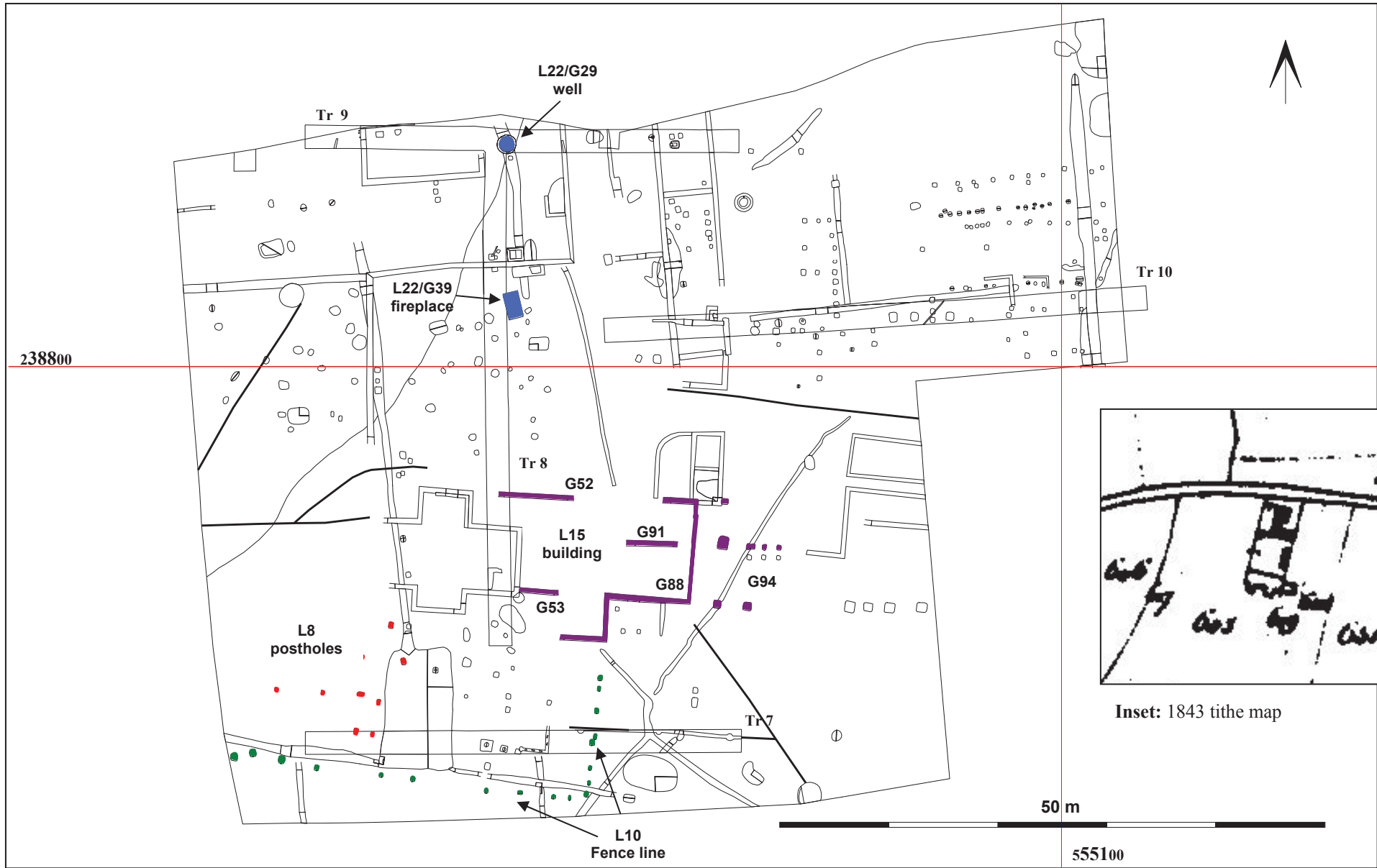


Figure 5: Phase 2 – mid 18th century to mid 19th century

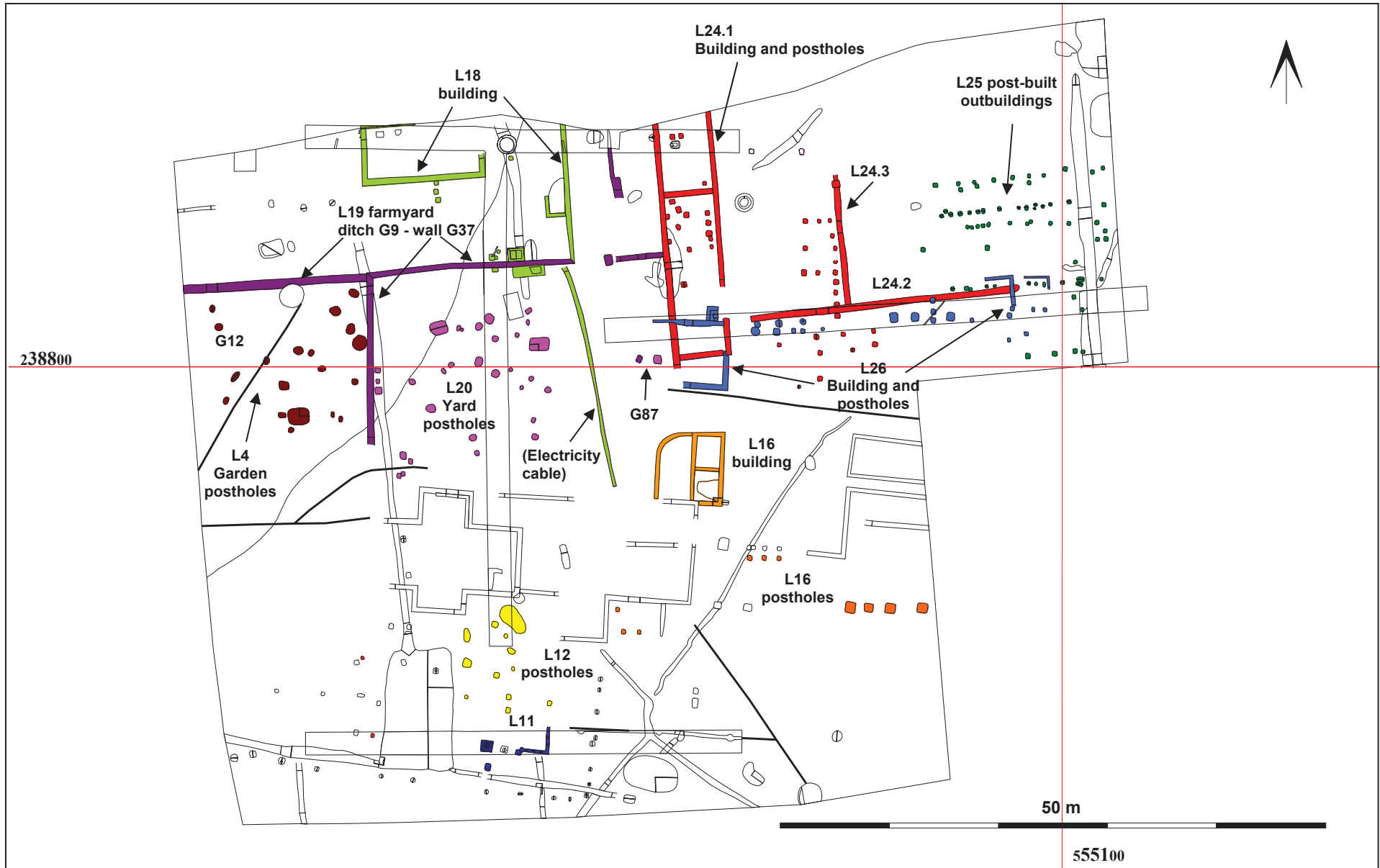


Figure 6: Phase 3 – mid 19th century to early 20th century



Figure 7: Phase 3 – overlaid over first edition OS map 1897

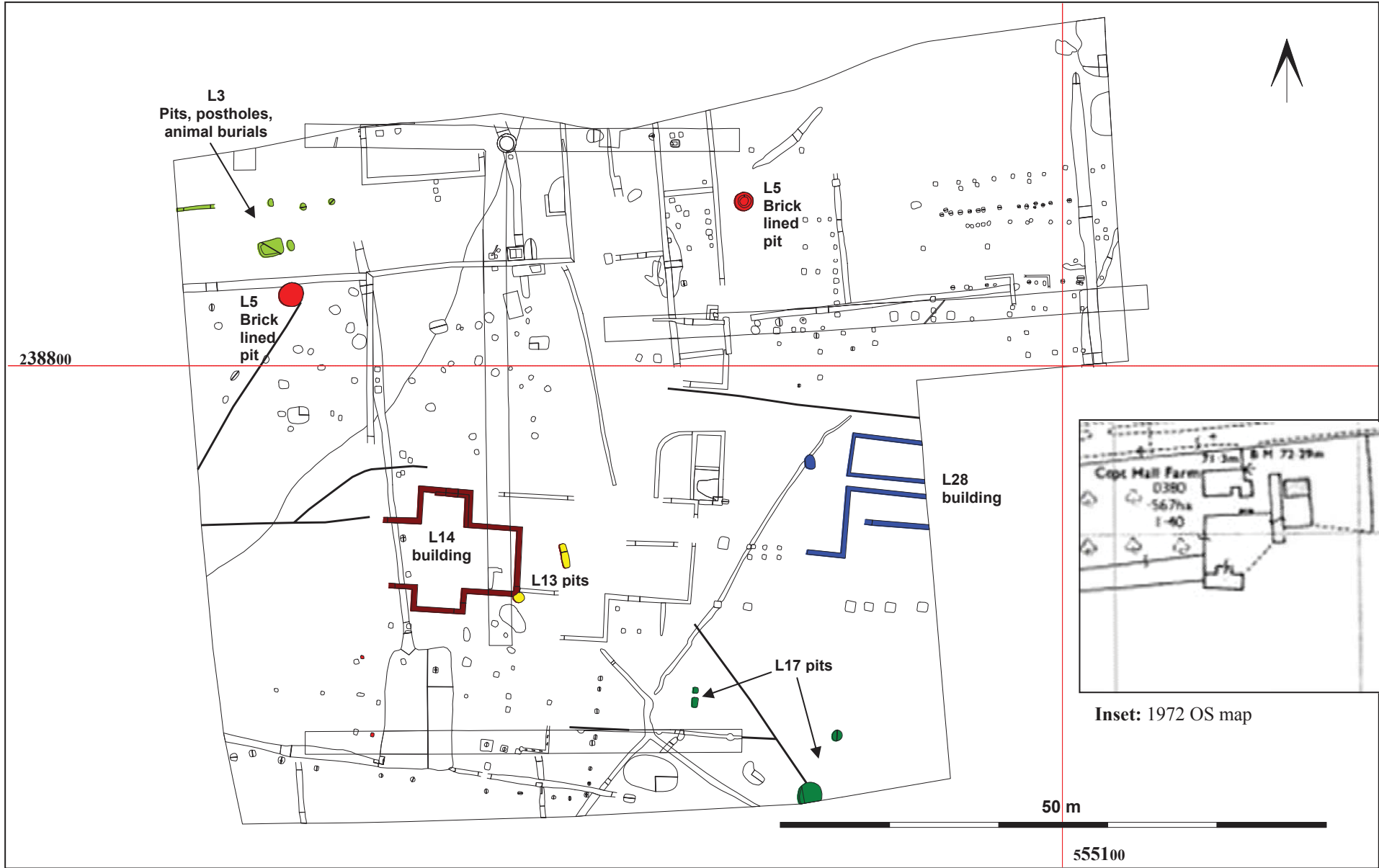


Figure 8: Phase 4 – mid to late 20th century alterations and additions

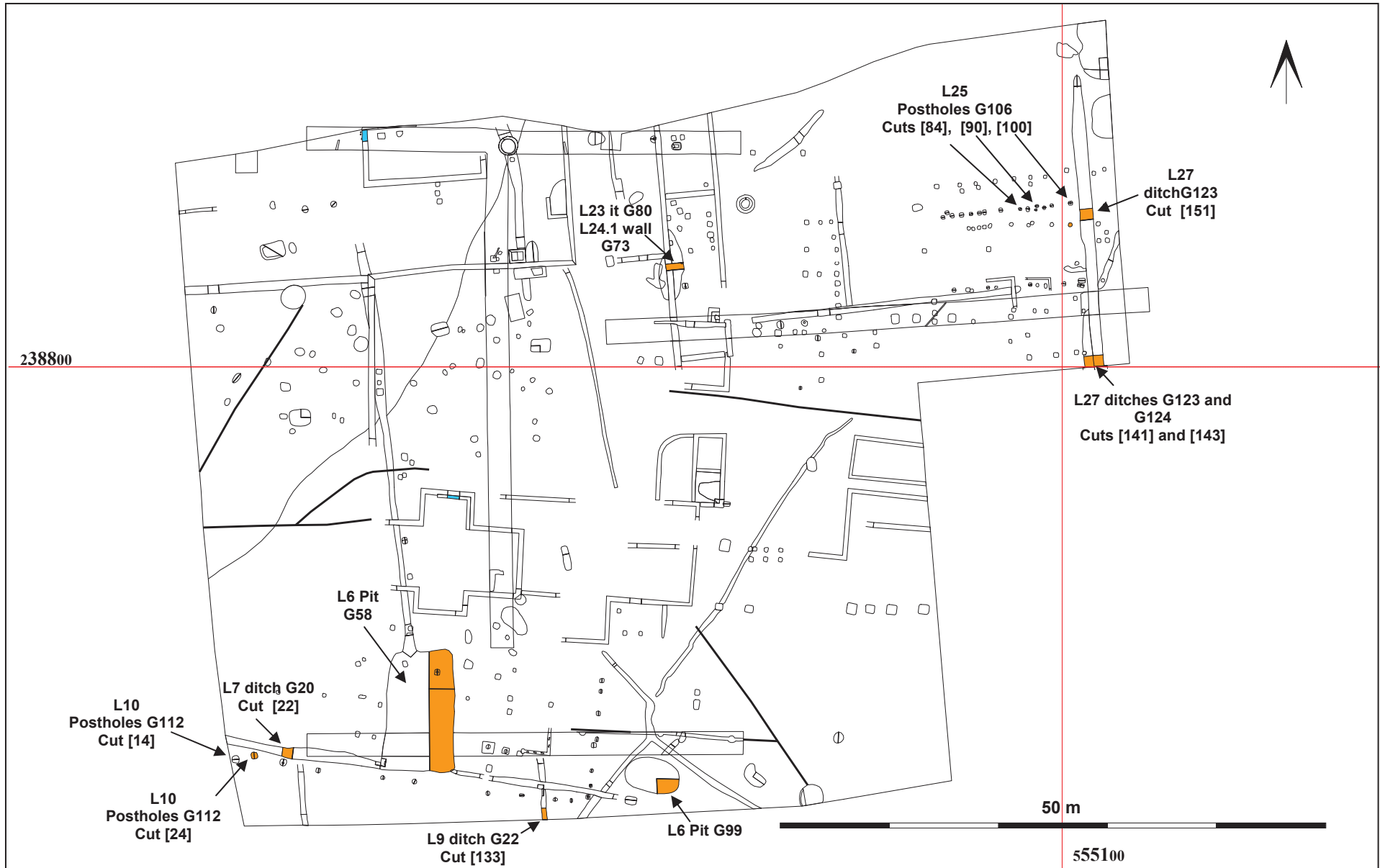


Figure 9: Location of sections (Figures 10-12)

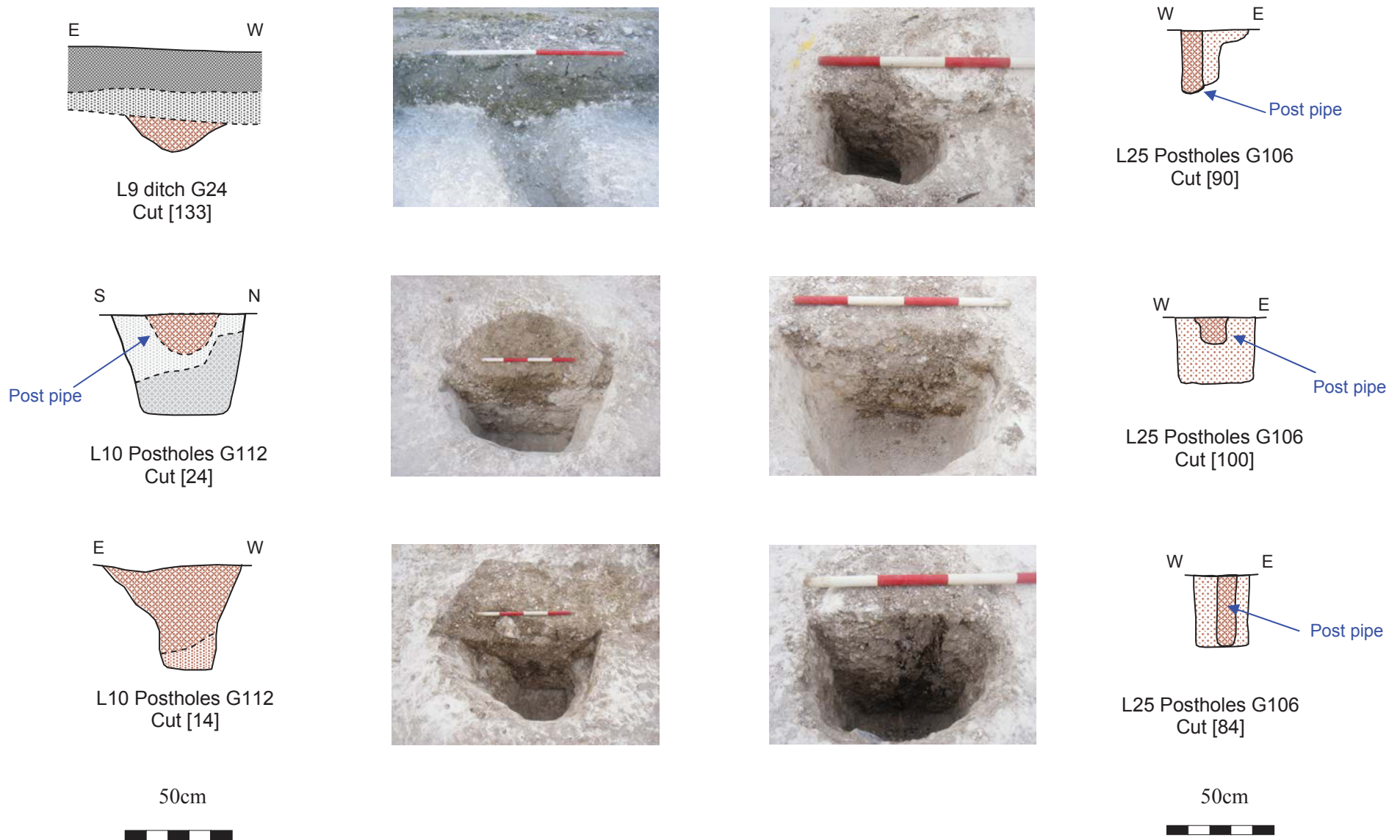


Figure 10: Sections of ditch Phase 1 and postholes Phase 3

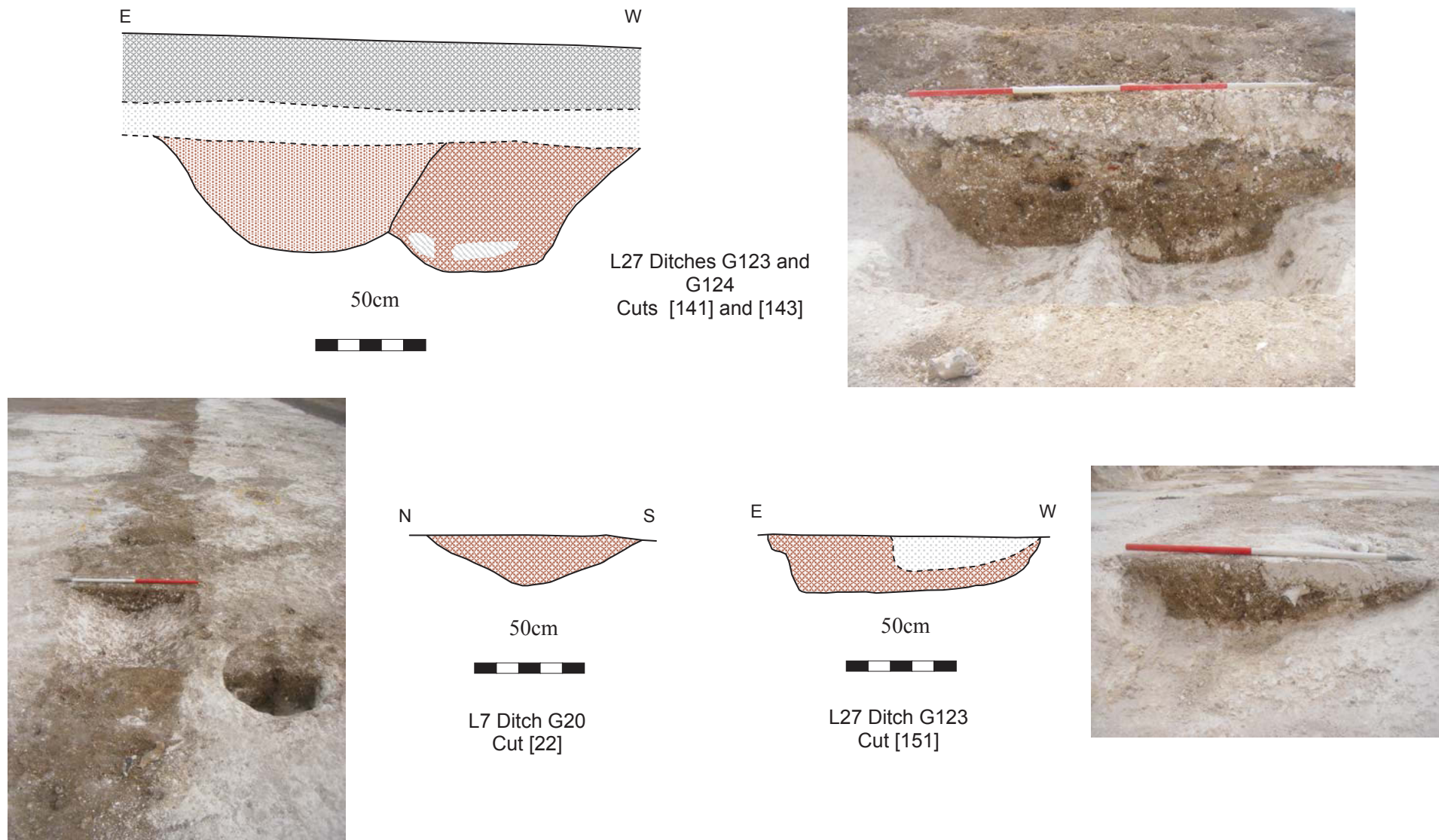
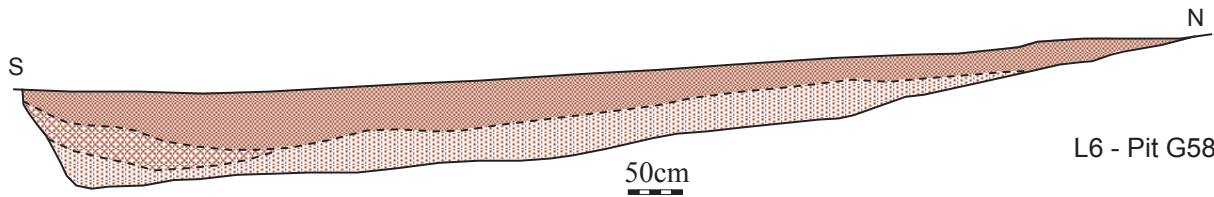
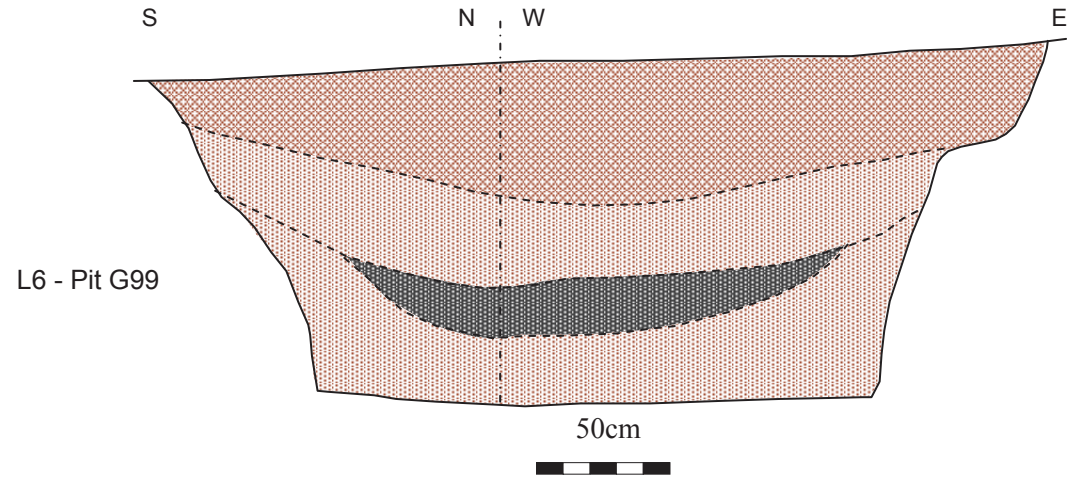


Figure 11: Sections of ditches in Land-use groups L7 and L27 (Phase 1)



L6 - Pit G58



L23 - Pit G80
L24.1 wall G73

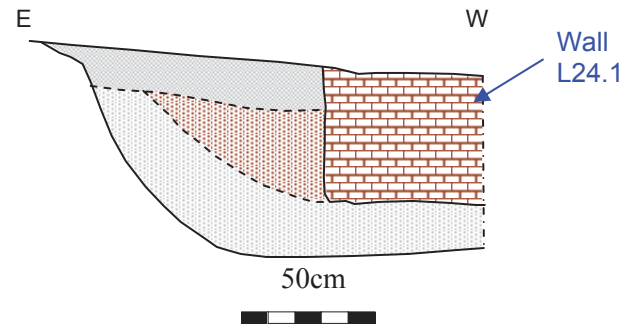


Figure 12: Sections of pits in Phase 1 and wall in Phase 3



Figure 13: The excavated area, looking south during machining (top), looking north (bottom)

Panoramas created using Autostitch (<http://www.cs.bath.ac.uk/brown/autostitch/autostitch.html#licensing>)



Figure 14: Phase 2, Building L15 (southern barn), wall foundation



Figure 15: Phase 2, possible chimney pad G39

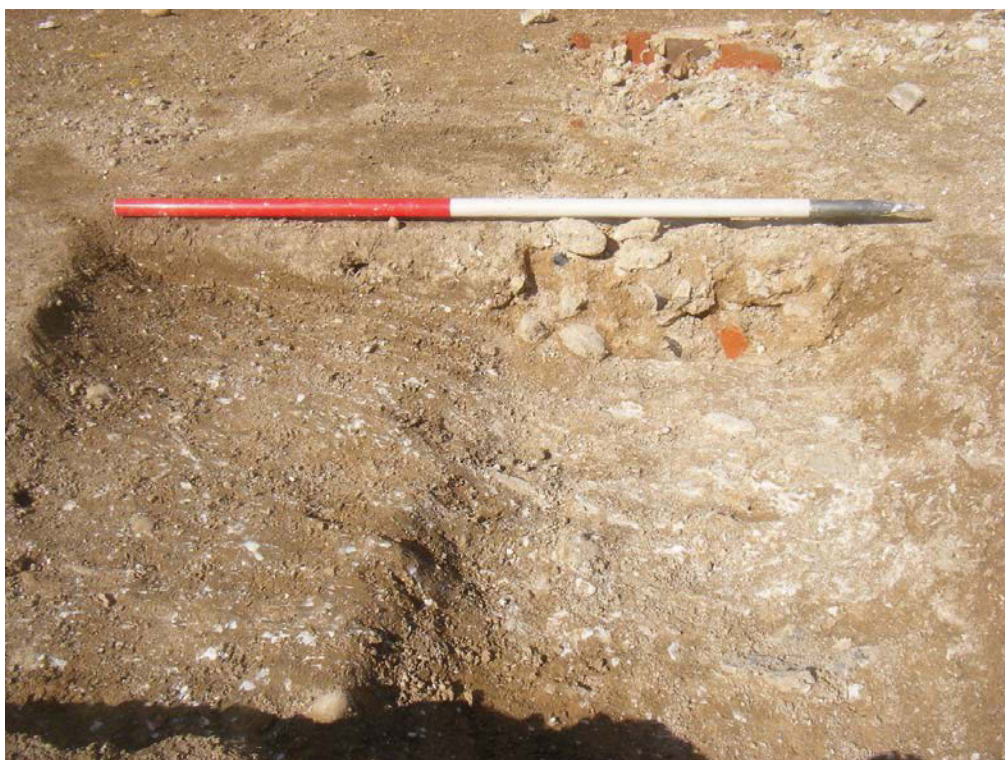


Figure 16: Phase 1 drainage ditch L6 (left) cut by Phase 3 farm yard rubble wall foundation L19 (right). 1m scale.



Figure 17: Phase 3, Building L24.3 flint cobble wall foundation. 0.5m scale

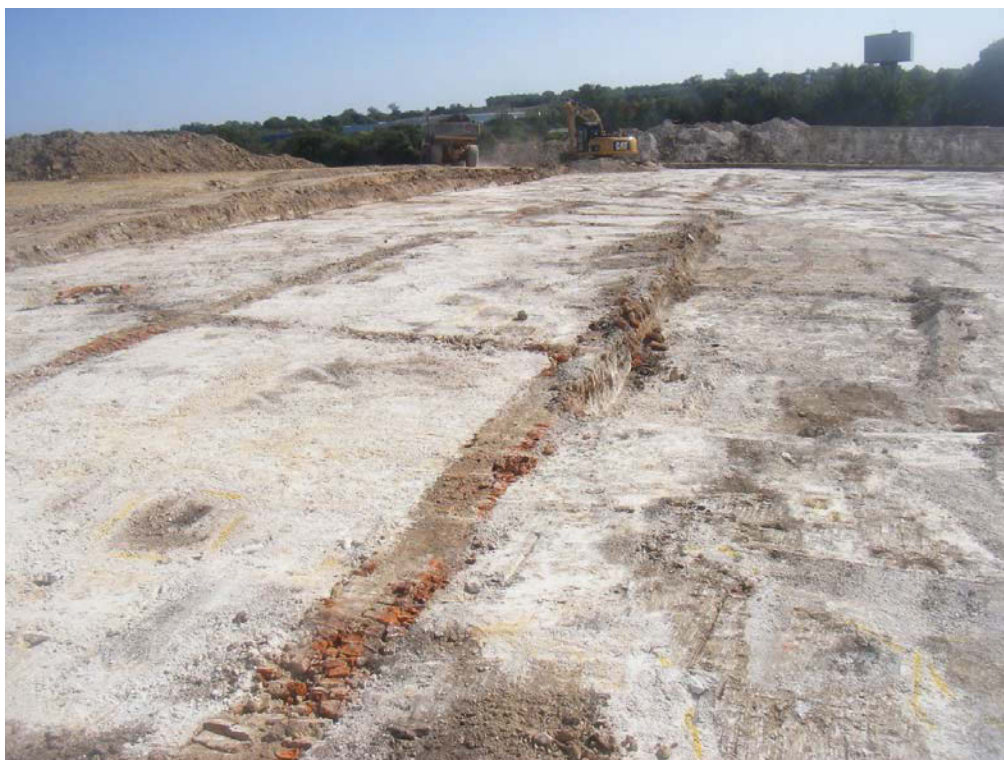


Figure 18: Phase 3, building L24.1 in plan, looking south



Figure 19: Phase 3, line of postholes forming building L25, looking west



Figure 20: Phase 3, NW corner of southern barn L15 and building L16, looking west



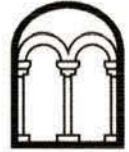
Figure 21: Phase 4, southern barn L14 and modern brick reinforcement



Figure 22: Depth of demolition layers in north-western part of site
(start of machining)

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

