

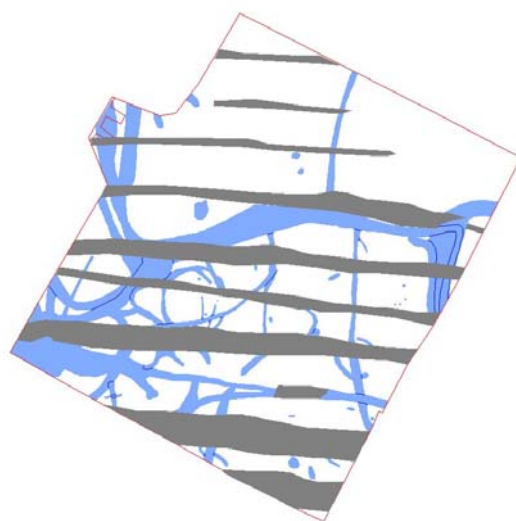


Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Recording Action
on land south-east of
Lancaster Business Park (Unit D)
Ely, Cambridgeshire
November 2008

ECB3073



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July 2009

Report 09/45

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis Number: 62764
Project title	Archaeological Recording Action on land south-east of Lancaster Way Business Park (Unit D), Ely, Cambridgeshire	
Short description	An archaeological excavation was carried out on 0.42ha of land for a proposed warehouse building to the south-east of Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire. The site was part of a former World War II RAF base that has since been restored to agriculture. The excavations revealed a sequence of enclosures and boundary ditches dating from the Middle to Late Iron Age, through to the first half of the 1st century AD. Finds indicating domestic and craft activity included pottery, animal bone, a loomweight, bone weaving comb and personal dress items. A small quantity of slag and hammerscale provides evidence of limited metalworking. The excavated area forms part of a more extensive Iron Age settlement lying to the south and east. The site was traversed and truncated by furrows of a former medieval field system.	
Project type	Recording action	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Evaluation ECB3017 (Simmonds and Mason 2008) Oasis 50920	
Current Land use	Agricultural/industrial units	
Future work	None	
Monument type/period	Iron Age enclosures, ditches and pits; medieval furrows and modern drains	
Significant finds	Penannular brooch, loomweight, Iron Age pottery, flint hammerstone, metal working debris	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Cambridgeshire	
Site address	Land south-east of Lancaster Business Park, Wellington Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire	
Study area	0.35 ha	
OS Easting & Northing	551940 209450	
Height OD	15m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds	
Project Manager	Mark Holmes	
Sponsor or funding body	MARS Construction	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	November 2008	
End date	March 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	ECB3073	2 archive boxes of pottery, bone, metal working debris 1 plastic archive box of metal finds
Paper	ECB3073	1 archive box including site records and permatrace sheets
Digital	ECB3073	1 CD Photographs and illustrations
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological Recording Action on land south-east of Lancaster Way Business Park (Unit D), Ely, Cambridgeshire	
Serial title & volume	09/45	
Author(s)	M Holmes and C Simmonds	
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**Archaeological Recording Action on land south-east of
Lancaster Way Business Park (Unit D), Ely, Cambridgeshire**

November 2008

ECB 3073

Abstract

In November 2008 Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation on 0.42ha of land to the south-east of Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire. The site lay in one corner of a former World War II RAF airfield that has since been restored to agriculture. The works were undertaken within the footprint of a proposed warehouse building. The excavations revealed a sequence of enclosures and boundary ditches dating from the Middle to Late Iron Age, through to the first half of the 1st century AD. Finds indicating domestic and craft activity included pottery, animal bone, a loomweight, bone weaving comb and personal dress items. A small quantity of slag and hammerscale provides evidence of limited metalworking. The excavated area forms part of a more extensive Iron Age settlement lying to the south and east. The site was traversed and truncated by furrows of a former medieval field system.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In November 2008, Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by MARS Construction, acting on behalf of ISON Distribution, to carry out an archaeological excavation, combined with a wider strip, map and record exercise, on land to the south-east of Lancaster Way Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 51940 09450; Fig 1).

The work was undertaken in order to provide mitigation for a revised planning application with regard to developing the land for industrial warehousing (Planning Application No: 06/01422/FUM/08/00048/FUM). The total development area, 4.3ha, was subdivided into four distinct plots, with Unit D to the south-east being the subject of this investigation. The footprint of the building measures 30m by 30m and comprises five bays at 6m wide. To the south a further three bays were allowed for, giving the potential for expansion.

The strip, map and record comprised a total area of 0.42ha. Much of this area was to be preserved beneath the new development, so sampling of features was minimal. To the north a smaller block, measuring 47m by 10m, was subject to detailed archaeological excavation, with all features sampled (Fig 2). Archaeological features within the vicinity of the foundation pads were also subject to sample excavation. The archaeological works were carried out to a specification (NA 2008) approved by Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning and Countryside Advice (CAPCA). The specification was based upon a revised brief prepared by CAPCA (2008).

The archaeological area had not been included as a material planning consideration by the Local Planning Authority when issuing outline consent for four plots in the extension area for Lancaster Way Business Park. The strategy devised for Unit D reflected the developer's acceptance of the planning obligation under a resubmitted planning application for the

redesign of the Unit D area, despite the lack of a negative PPG16 condition on the outline consent.

1.2 Location and topography

Lancaster Way Business Park is situated 2km south-west of Ely, Cambridgeshire and south of the A142 Ely Fens road (Fig 1). The extension is located immediately east of the current business park, in the northern apex of a triangular block of arable land that was formerly within the bounds of a World War II airfield, RAF Witchford.

The site is a continuation of the Isle of Ely, an area of higher ground rising above the southern Cambridgeshire Fens at c 15m OD. The underlying bedrock of the site and surrounding area comprises Kimmeridge Clay (Jurassic), capped by glacial till (Boulder Clay) (www.bgs/geoindex). The soils belong to the Hanslope (411d) Soil Association, comprising slowly permeable clayey soils (SSEW 1983).

1.3 Archaeological context

This area of the Isle of Ely has been subject to intense archaeological investigation, largely as a result of development. Evidence for Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity as well as medieval and later open fields has been encountered.

Along the route of Wellington Road, which follows the line of the western airfield runway, excavations for the construction of a water pipeline indicated the presence of Iron Age occupation. To the west, under the present extent of Lancaster Way Business Park, excavations revealed Iron Age and Roman activity. More recently, geophysical surveys, fieldwalking and trial trenching undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology immediately to the south of the proposed development area revealed further Iron Age and Roman enclosures and occupation (Fisher 2008; Morris 2008; Holmes 2008). The area of Unit D was subject to archaeological evaluation in August 2008 (Simmonds and Mason 2008).

1.4 Objectives

The trial trench evaluation of the proposed site of Unit D (Simmonds and Mason 2008), indicated that the area had a high potential for settlement remains dating from the late Bronze Age to the early Roman period. Principal activity was likely to have dated from the Middle Iron Age. As such, the following aims and objectives were specified:

- To mitigate the effect of the proposed development on the existing archaeology, through preservation by record
- Attempt a reconstruction of the site through its history and land use
- Assess the significance of the site at local, regional and national levels, with particular reference to the prehistoric to early Roman research agendas for the region (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000).

1.5 Methodology

The excavation strategy was one that sought to preserve *in situ* as much as possible of the archaeology, with excavation only focusing on the areas of greatest developmental impact.

Excavation of archaeological features was undertaken in 23 instances where it was considered that archaeological features would be subject to significant attrition from groundworks associated with the development (Figs 2 and 3). These areas comprised:

- An area measuring c 47m x 10m at the northern end of the warehouse building
- Large foundation pads on the eastern and western sides of the building and, if present, in the southern extension.
- Service runs of significant widths that were located as close to the building as possible on the north and west sides (greater than 500mm).

The rest of the stripped area was subject to a base planning exercise in order to maximise understanding of what was the northern part of a known more extensive late Iron Age settlement, prior to covering the site with hardstanding (Plate 1).

The topsoil and subsoil was removed by a tracked mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, across the whole of the development area in order to reveal the top of the archaeological horizon or, where absent, the natural substrate. The area was stripped under the direct supervision and control of a qualified archaeologist.

The areas were then hand-cleaned sufficiently so as to define archaeological features (Plate 2). The archaeological features that were revealed across the development area were surveyed using a Leica System 1200 GPS to an accuracy of +/- 0.1m in relation to Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36) and Ordnance Datum.

2 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

2.1 Introduction

The excavation recorded a sequence of ditches and enclosures dating from the Middle Iron Age to the 1st century AD (Fig 3). There was some truncation of the Iron Age remains by medieval furrows and modern field drains. In some areas the relationship between features was not well-defined, with a number of inter-cutting features, especially in the south-west corner of the site. Some features cannot be ascribed to any period due to the dearth of dateable material. In general, the fills of the archaeological features were characterised as brown or greyish-brown clays. Other features were filled by dark grey silty clays, often with charcoal flecks. Marked variations are noted in the text.

The natural substrate comprised compact yellowish-orange or orangey-brown sandy clay at an average height of 15m aOD. Archaeological features were cut into the natural substrate unless otherwise stated in the text.

There was a thin layer of subsoil in the north-west corner of the excavation, comprising compact brownish-yellow clay up to 0.15m thick. This was overlain by a layer of topsoil, up to 0.4m thick, comprising a dark brown clay loam.

2.2 Early activity

Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age activity in the area was indicated by a sparse scatter of flint artefacts, including flint blades and a hammerstone, which were recovered as residual finds in Iron Age contexts.

2.3 Middle Iron Age settlement

The combination of geophysical survey and excavation indicates that the settlement covered an area measuring at least 250m north-south and at least 150m east-west. The settlement would have occupied an area in excess of 3.2ha, but the limits of settlement have not been established to the west, east or north. The nature of the archaeology in both the geophysics survey and the excavation indicates that this was an extensive open settlement containing numerous sub-enclosures. To the south, a pair of roundhouses appear to have been unenclosed, while further south there are abutting small enclosures. In both the geophysics and the excavation the presence of intercutting ditch systems shows that use of the area occupied sufficient time to involve at least one major reorganisation of the boundary and enclosure systems.

Within the excavated area, it is difficult to characterise the function of the major ditch systems, as they all extended beyond the excavated area, but it is suggested that the major ditch systems were probably parts of ditched enclosures, while the minor ditches were either sub-divisions within larger enclosures or elements of land division or partial enclosure within open areas. The relationships between the excavated ditch systems broadly suggests that a more open landscape containing minor ditch system was later subsumed within more regular system of enclosures defined by more substantial ditches.

The open settlement phase comprised a number of irregular-shaped areas defined by minor ditches (Fig 3; DS1-DS5), with a possible roundhouse (RH1) and perhaps a second smaller structure (RH2). The corner of a possible enclosure (E1) lay to the east, and extended to the east beyond the excavation area. The pottery assemblage, characterised by local hand-made wares, indicated a Middle Iron Age date.

Enclosure 1 (E1)

A length of ditch [1093] may have formed the north-west corner of an enclosure, extending to the east beyond the excavated area (Fig 3). The ditch was substantial, measuring 1.20m wide by at least 1.15m deep (Plate 3), and quantities of animal bone and pottery were recovered from the secondary and upper fills (1091 and 1090). The upper fill (1090) also contained some slag which may have derived from a smithing hearth, suggesting that metalworking was taking place nearby, perhaps further to the east.

Possible roundhouses (RH1 and RH2)

Roundhouse 1 (RH1) lay to the west, and was surrounded by a number of minor ditches (Figs 3 & 4). It was largely unexcavated as this area was not due to be disturbed by building works. The roundhouse had an internal diameter of c 10m north-south, with an entrance facing east-north-east. The ditches at the terminals were 0.5m wide, while an excavated section to the south-west (218) was 0.77m wide by 0.36m deep.

In its original form it appeared to have an oval plan, measuring 8.0m diameter west-east, with a 3.5m wide entrance. The entrance was later recut, with the new terminals laying to the east, making a more circular plan, measuring 10.0m west-east. A single posthole [1044], 0.47m diameter by 0.19m deep, may have been the southern side of the

roundhouse doorway, with its partner lost beneath a furrow. The roundhouse may have been 8.0m in diameter. Two pits or postholes lay within the ring ditch.

The roundhouse had fallen out of use before the excavation of the curving boundary ditch DS1.

Another possible roundhouse lay to the south-east (Fig 3, RH2). Arcs of gully, which were not excavated, define a circle only 5.2-6.0m in diameter. To the south-east, and originally interpreted as a pit, there was a possible entrance terminal, pit [1067] (Fig 3 and Fig 5, Section 2). It was 0.80m wide and up to 0.34m deep, with gradual sloping sides and a flattish base. The bulk of the fill (1085) was dark grey clay which contained the fragmentary remains of 18 hand-built vessels, including part of a scored slack-shouldered jar (Fig 6, 4). The fills also contained charred plant remains of cereals and weeds, as well as hammerstone. The concentration of occupation debris is characteristic of the assemblages often derived from the entrance terminals of roundhouse ring ditches although in this instance a central roundhouse could only have been some 5.0m in diameter, which is exceptionally small.

Ditch systems

There are several minor ditch systems that predated the late phase of ditch cutting (DS6, DS7 and DS8).

Ditch System 1 (DS1) was a curving ditch that post-dated the roundhouse (RH1) and a linear ditch [1104] (Fig 5, Section 1), and predated at least the later use of the boundary to its north (DS6). The ditch [1101/1046] ran for 30m long and was 0.98m wide by 0.46m deep, with a U-shaped profile, and the upper fill (1098) was dark grey.

Ditch System 2 (DS2) comprises a number of ditches or gullies to the west of roundhouse RH1, which were largely unexcavated. They predated ditch systems DS6 and DS7.

Ditch System 3 (DS3) was a linear ditch in excess of 34m long. It cut across the possible small roundhouse (RH2) (Fig 5, Section 2). The ditch was up to 1.6m wide towards its southern end, and it was 0.30m deep to the north and 0.5m deep to the south, with gradual sloping sides and a rounded base. To the south, on slightly lower ground, there were two phases of silting, indicative of water draining along the ditch. At the northern end of this ditch system there was a curving gully [1030/1054], 3.0m long by 0.35m wide and 0.11m deep (Fig 5, Section 4).

Ditch System 4 (DS4) lay to the south of the roundhouse (RH1) and comprised several disparate lengths of ditch. They averaged c 1.5m wide.

Ditch System 5 (DS5) lay in the northern part of the site. It ran for more than 20m and was 1.12m wide by 0.36m deep. It had shallow sides, but a narrow V-shaped base, and was filled with silt (1011) overlain by greyish-brown clay (1013). Its relationship with DS6 was lost beneath a furrow.

Pits

Seven pits were excavated and three of these have been ascribed a Middle Iron Age date.

A pit [305], excavated during the evaluation, was cut by a gully.

To the north, and west of Ditch System 5, there was a shallow pit [1017] with an uneven U-shaped base (Fig 5, Section 3; Plate 4). It was 1.08m wide, 1.38m long and 0.14m deep, and had a fill of dark grey silty clay with very frequent charcoal inclusions. It was notable for

containing a very high proportion of the total pottery assemblage, comprising 207 sherds from nine vessels of hand-built Iron Age pottery. A small quantity of possible metalworking debris was also recovered, along with charred plant remains from cereals and weeds that are typical of the Iron Age.

A large sub ovoid pit [1056], 3.5m long and 2.8m wide, had been explored as part of the evaluation, pit [110], and was excavated further in order to obtain more dating evidence (Fig 6, Sections 6 and 7; Plate 5). The quadrant excavated in the evaluation was taken to the full depth of 1.15m, but it could not be bottomed on its south-eastern quadrant during the recording action due to the ingress of water.

The lower fills (109-106) suggested a process of rapid silting by material largely similar to the natural substrate. A disturbance of these fills at the southern end of the pit [1064], 1.27m long by 0.28m deep, with a dark fill (1063) may have been a shallow partial recut or a perhaps a tree throw [1064].

The final fill (1061/103) was of blackish-brown silty clay, containing quantities of Middle Iron Age pottery and part of a bone comb (Plate 7), which may have filled either a shallow cut or a subsidence hollow [1062] in the top of the earlier fills. Some of the pottery recovered from this deposit in the evaluation was thought to date to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date (Simmonds and Mason 2008), but no further similar material was recovered from this pit or anywhere else.

2.4 Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement

In the later use of the settlement there appears to have been a more regular system of ditched enclosures. The pottery assemblage indicates that settlement spanned the late Iron Age with abandonment in the middle in the 1st century, the Late Iron Age to Early Roman transition, with the assemblage including some wheel-thrown pottery.

Enclosure 2 (E2) and Ditch System 6 (DS6)

Ditch System DS6, may have formed the south-western corner of an Enclosure E2. This enclosure abutted the north-west corner of Enclosure E1, and may have been an enlargement of Enclosure E1, which would explain the configuration of the later ditches at the north-western corner of Enclosure E1 (DS). The DS6 ditch system was between 1.9m and 3.0m wide, and was up to 0.7m deep (Fig 5, Sections 4 and 5). To the east there was a sequence of two cuts, and to the west there were three, while the width of the central section is presumably also a product of multiple recuts. It was had a simple sequence of silting with grey-brown clay.

Ditch System 7 (DS7)

Ditch System 7 may have formed part of a subsidiary enclosure abutting the western wide of Enclosure E2.

Ditch System 8 (DS8)

Ditch System 8 was aligned east to west and was over 55m long. The ditch was 1.6m wide and up to 0.55m deep. It had been excavated during the evaluation, and comprised two shallow gullies, with the southern gully curving southwards to the west.

Pits

Pits [1069] and [1067] lay to the south of ditch system DS8. The fills of both contained wheel-thrown pottery. Pit [1067] was circular, 0.66m in diameter and up to 0.14m deep, with had near vertical sides and a slightly rounded base. The fill of dark grey clay contained

much charcoal, but no cereal or other charred grains, although mollusc remains indicate that the habitat at the time of deposition was dry and open.

Pit [1069] was oval, 0.8m long by 0.4m wide and 0.11m deep. It had gradual sloping sides with a rounded base and was filled with brownish-grey clay. Small amounts of barley and weed remains were recovered.

2.5 Medieval and later activity

A series of shallow east to west aligned furrows, likely to be medieval in date, were spaced at c 8m intervals (centre-to-centre). The furrows varied in width from 1.4m to 6.0m and were up to 0.2m deep. They were broader to the south where the ground begins to slope down. In general, they were filled by light brown clays. A number of iron and copper alloy items, 17th-century clay pipe bowls, coal, brick and tile fragments were retrieved from the furrows. A number of furrows had ceramic pipe drains running along them.

A concrete duct pipe, aligned south-west to north-east (not illustrated) may relate to the use of the area as an airfield during World War II.

2.6 Undated activity

There were 12 features which could not be dated, although most are likely to be further features contemporary with the Iron Age settlement. Of these, only pit [1105] was investigated (Fig 3). This was a very shallow pit, 0.74m wide by 0.12m deep, filled by light yellowish-grey clay with occasional charcoal flecks (1015).

3 THE ARTEFACTS

3.1 Worked flint by Yvonne B Wolframm-Murray

In total nine pieces of worked flint were recovered during evaluation and excavation, dating from the Mesolithic period to the Early Bronze Age. The flint comprised four blades, three flakes, a hammerstone, an end scraper and a piece of natural flint. The end scraper and natural flint were recorded during the evaluation (Chapman, in Simmonds and Mason 2008, 6). All of the worked flint were residual finds and were in a good condition, with very little post-depositional edge damage. In the main, the raw material was greyish-brown vitreous flint and any exceptions are noted in the text.

Table 1: Concordance of flint artefacts

SF	Artefact type	Date	Context	Feature	Feature number
2	End scraper	Neolithic-Bronze Age	104 (Eval)	Pit 110	
-	Natural?	-	208 (Eval)	Ditch 210	DS2
55	Blade		1033	Ditch 1034	DS6
62	Blade	Mesolithic?	1066	Pit 1067	
65	Flake		1085	Pit 1087	
66	Natural		1085	Pit 1087	
67	Hammerstone		1085	Pit 1087	
69	Flake		1016	Pit 1017	
70	Blade		1085	Pit 1087	

The distal end of a blade (SF55) was an opaque light grey flint. Another blade (SF 62) was the proximal portion of a blade, which was soft hammer struck. It had a light brown cortex on its dorsal surface and was heavily patinated white, including the broken edge. This blade dates possibly to the Mesolithic. A flake (SF 65) was a mid greyish brown vitreous flint with some light grey cortex on the dorsal surface. Another blade (SF70) was of vitreous light to mid greyish-brown coloured flint.

Technological characteristics of the remaining artefacts indicate a date range from the Neolithic to Early Bronze Age.

The hammerstone, (SF 67), was a nodule of vitreous light grey flint and medium to heavily patinated white. Its outer surface was heavily pitted from the battering damage of being used.

3.2 The Iron Age and Roman pottery by Ed McSloy (Cotswold Archaeology)

A total of 603 sherds (8377g) of Iron Age pottery was hand-recovered from 53 deposits. This total includes 104 sherds (1723g) recovered from the evaluation. The assemblage is for the most part heavily fragmented, but includes some vessels represented by multiple, joining sherds and reconstructable below shoulder-level. The mean sherd weight is moderately high for a later prehistoric group at 13.8g. In other respects the condition of the pottery is good, with little surface loss and calcareous inclusions preserved.

The larger part of the assemblage comprises handmade vessels of Middle to Late Iron Age date (see dating and associations, below). A small proportion of the assemblage, which is derived from selected deposits, consists of wheel-thrown material and is dateable to the Late Iron Age or Late Iron Age to Early Roman transition.

The assemblage was fully recorded (Table 2) and sorted by fabric and quantified according to sherd count, estimated number of vessels (sherd families) and Estimated Vessel

Equivalents (rim EVEs). Other recorded characteristics include vessel form, where this was identifiable, rim diameter, type and location of decoration and evidence for use. The pottery was sorted into fabrics on the basis of the principal inclusion, size/sorting of inclusions and characteristics of firing. Handmade and wheel-thrown fabrics were ascribed separate fabric codes, though it is accepted that the difference here is technological and there is cross-over in terms of inclusions and potential source.

*Table 2: Iron Age pottery fabrics, summary quantification
(sherd count; estimated vessel count; weight (g) and Rim EVEs)*

Group	Fabric		Count	Vess	Weight (g)	EVEs
<i>Handmade</i>						
Quartz	Q2	'Standard' quartz	195	134	2915	.89
	Q4	Quartz with sparse fossil shell	18	8	325	.21
	Q6	Quartz with sparse organic	8	7	165	.16
	Q7	Quartz with sparse larger quartz/flint	41	23	912	.13
	Q8	Quartz with sparse limestone	31	22	339	.05
	Q9	Quartz with sparse bone inclusions	3	2	96	-
Shell	SH1	Common fossil shell	3	3	74	.10
	SH2	Sparse fossil shell	7	5	52	.04
Organic	ORG	Organic/vegetable	213	15	2137	.30
Grog	GQ	Grog with sparse quartz	2	2	19	-
Flint	FL	Flint	1	1	9	-
LI	LI	Limestone	11	3	97	-
Sub-total			533	225	7140	1.88
<i>Handmade</i>						
Grog	WG	Grog-tempered	3	3	37	-
Quartz	WQ1	'Standard' quartz	45	25	1061	.85
	WQ5	Fine quartz, 'sandwich'-firing	22	3	139	.28
Sub-total			70	31	1237	1.13
Total	Total		603	256	8377	3.01

Fabrics

The pottery fabrics as defined for this assemblage are described in summary below. The dominance of sandy fabrics among the handmade group is marked (66.7% of total vessel number) and somewhat less compared to similar material from neighbouring sites at Wardy Hill, Coveney (Hill and Horne 2003), West Fen Road, Ely (Percival 2005) and the Hurst Lane Reservoir (Percival 2007) where equivalent figures are in the range 71–76%. The discrepancy may be a reflection of the smaller size of this assemblage and the skewing effect resulting from one substantially complete but well-fragmented vessel in a non-sandy fabric (Fig 7, 3). The equivalent figure based on number of vessels is higher at 87.6%.

The range of fabric groups broadly compares with published assemblages from the Ely area, the similarities across the sites almost certainly reflecting geographical restrictions of the Isle of Ely. The results of thin-section analysis undertaken with the sizeable groups from Wardy Hill (Williams 2003) and Hurst Lane (Williams 2007) indicated that the dominant inclusions could have derived from (Jurassic) clays and (Lower Greensand) sands found in the locality of Ely. There were some indications from previous petrographic studies that shell-tempered fabrics might originate further afield. Certainly the densely shell fabrics, which represent only 1.8% of the total assemblage at Lancaster Way, resemble fabrics common across the fen-edge-sites in the region of the Lower Nene Valley. There is some evidence in support of a separate source from the forms in shelly fabrics (below) which comprise barrel-shaped jars which are dissimilar from vessels among the 'local' ware types.

A noteworthy aspect of the assemblage is the incidence, albeit rare, of a fabric containing bone inclusions (Q9). Three sherds of this type were identified among Middle to Late Iron

Age material from deposits (1016) pit [1017] and (1061) pit [1062], with further material noted by the author from the probably contiguous site at Lancaster Way (Holmes 2008). The occurrence of this material, though sporadic, is sufficient to assume the use as an intentional inclusion as an added 'filler', rather than the accidental incorporation of kitchen or other domestic waste. The sherds in bone-bearing fabrics are otherwise unremarkable, comprising undecorated bodysherds. The bone fragments are too small (in the range 4–6mm) to identify either the species or elements represented, although it appears from the extent of heat-alteration, that the bone fragments may not have been burnt prior to their addition to the potting clay.

The wheel-thrown component of the assemblage makes up 11.6% of the total sherd count (14.8% of total weight). The majority comprises sandy (quartz-bearing) fabrics, the most common type among which (WQ1), corresponds visibly with the principal handmade type Q2. The small amount of wheel-thrown grog-tempered pottery might conceivably derive from non-local sources, these corresponding with Belgic types common from the regions to the west and south of the Cambridgeshire Fenland (Thompson 1982).

Handmade fabrics

Quartz (Q2, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9)

The handmade quartz-bearing fabrics are united by abundant to common quartz sand which is rounded or sub-rounded and clear or slightly milky. The quartz inclusions are typically well-sorted and in range 0.4–0.6mm. Rare greenish, rounded ?glaucanite pellets. Hard with sandy feel and irregular fracture. The fabrics commonly exhibit patchy red-brown exterior surfaces and dark grey core and interior. The sparse presence of, limestone, fossil shell, coarse quartz inclusions, organic inclusions and bone distinguish fabric variations (Table 2).

Shell (SH1/SH2)

Grey-brown exterior surface with reddish-brown core and interior surface. Smooth feel with laminated/irregular fracture. Type SH1 with abundant and well-sorted fossil shell in range 2–3mm. Type 2 with sparse, coarser (up to 5mm) fossil shell.

Organic (ORG)

Patchy grey/brown surfaces with dark grey core. Soft with slightly sandy feel and laminated fracture. Common, black-edged voids from burnt-out organic inclusions. Sparse quartz sand and red iron oxide.

Grog with quartz (GQ1)

Patchy grey-brown surfaces with dark grey core. Soft with soapy feel and irregular fracture. Common dark grey or brown, sub-rounded grog or clay pellet (2–3mm).

Flint (FL)

Red-brown throughout. Sandy feel with irregular fracture. Common (burnt) angular flint (2–4mm) and common quartz sand.

Limestone (LI)

Brown exterior surface with grey core and interior surface. Slightly sandy feel with irregular fracture. Common coarse sub-rounded limestone (2–4mm); sparse rounded quartz sand and grog/clay pellet.

Wheel-thrown fabrics

Grog (WG)

Dark grey-brown surfaces with light brown margins and grey core. Common sub-rounded, dark grey grog, 0.5–1mm; common to sparse rounded clear quartz sand (0.3–0.5mm).

Sandy feel with finely-irregular fracture.

Quartz (WQ1)

Dark grey throughout. Hard with sandy feel with finely-irregular fracture. Common rounded clear quartz sand (0.3–0.5mm).

Fine quartz (WQ5)

Dark grey surfaces and core with light grey margins. Sparse rounded clear quartz sand (0.3–0.5mm). Smooth feel with finely fracture.

Forms

A dual-level of form recording was utilised describing vessel profile and secondary form elements such as rim or base morphology. The rarity of vessels preserved below neck/shoulder-level presents problems for form classification, and recording was informed by knowledge of other Middle Iron Age assemblages from the eastern region. Most vessel forms probably represent jars, suitable for a range of storage-related or cooking functions.

Most common among the handmade component are shouldered vessels (Table 3). The distinction drawn for the purposes of recording between round or 'slack' shoulders is not a clear one and this may in reality be arbitrary. Vessels of the shouldered class feature upright or slightly everted rims (Fig 7, 3–4). The rim uppers are unadorned and rounded/squared or feature fingertip/fingernail decoration. Two possible bowls were identified (Fig 7, 2), these smaller vessels sharing characteristics with jars of round-shouldered profile and upright rim.

Table 3: Iron Age pottery forms summary

(shown as number of vessels according to fabric group)

Form		Quartz	Organic	Shell	WT Quartz
<i>Handmade</i>					
JB	Jar or bowl, uncertain profile	4	3	1	4
JBAROV	Jar - barrel-shaped or ovoid, neckless	1		2	
JRS	Jar - round-shoulder, upright or everted rim	9	1		
JSS	Jar - Slack-shouldered, upright or everted rim	4			
JR	Jar - Rounded/globular	4	1		
JLTS	?Jar - large, thickened shoulder	1			
BJRS	?Bowl - round-shoulder, upright or everted rim	2			
<i>Wheel-thrown</i>					
JN	Jar, necked, shouldered				5
BCAR	Bowl, carinated				4

Generic form groups JBAROV and JR represent neck-less vessels where form profiles might be rounded or possibly ovoid. Rim uppers for class JBAROV are simple and unadorned. More variation is shown by class JR which includes bead-like and short-everted rims (Fig 8, 5–6).

Form JLTS describes a single, unusual form (Fig 8, 8), a large and thick-walled vessel with well-defined and thickened shoulder and upright, plain rim.

The smaller wheel-thrown group comprises a mix of high-shouldered, necked jars and smaller, carinated bowls/cups. Two vessels, in fabrics WG and WQ1 feature raised cordons, located in each instance at the base of the neck.

Evidence for pottery was present as carbonised residues. A total of 21 sherds from an estimated nine vessels featured burnt food residues. Only three sherds from two vessels exhibited exterior sooting, perhaps suggesting that cooking over direct heat was not commonly employed.

Decoration

Incidences of decoration including burnishing were rare, and noted on 28 vessels or 11% of the assemblage and restricted to handmade vessels. Surface scoring is most common, recorded on an estimated 14 vessels (5.5% of the total) and combined with finger-tip rim decoration in one instance (Fig 7, 3). Scoring occurs almost universally with quartz-tempered fabrics suggesting that this material was locally made. Typically the scoring is lightly executed and unidirectional in vertical or oblique strokes (Fig 7, 4). One vessel from ditch fill 1094 exhibits decoration probably executed using a comb and in an overlapping arc motif. Four vessels, all slack-shouldered jars, exhibit decoration to the upper part of the rim in the form of finger-tip impressions (3) or slashing, possibly executed using a fingernail. In addition there is one instance of possible fingernail decoration to the shoulder zone (Fig 7, 1). Burnishing was recorded with eight vessels, mostly represented as bodysherds.

Dating and associations

Limited dating evidence for Early Iron Age activity was present from large pit [1056] (pit [110] in evaluation), although the sherds identified would appear to be residual alongside Middle/Late Iron Age material. The early elements consist of a sherd in a flint-tempered fabric, a type considered associated with the earlier Iron Age in the area (Hill and Horne 2003), and a sherd from a jar with fingernail decoration to its shoulder (Fig 7, 1). The latter compares to decorated styles deriving from a Late Bronze Age tradition and continuing as late as the 5th century BC (Knight 2002).

The few earlier elements aside, the handmade assemblage belongs to a Middle to Late Iron Age tradition which shares characteristics of form and decoration with material known across the East Midlands region (Knight 2002; Elsdon 1992). Dating after c 300 BC was favoured for material in this tradition from the Wardy Hill (Hill and Horne 2003) and Hurst Lane, Ely, (Percival 2005), assemblages which were similarly dominated by slack-shouldered forms and marked by rare occurrence of scoring or other forms of decoration.

The larger handmade Iron Age groups derived from pits, notably features [1017] 207 sherds from 9 vessels; [1087] 41 sherds from 18 vessels, and [1062] 18 sherds from 14 vessels; with typically smaller groups from linear features including gully 218, RH1 (21 sherds from 7 vessels) and 210 DS2 (12 sherds from 11 vessels). The conservative and apparently long-lived nature of the regional potting tradition for the Middle to Late Iron Age and scarcity of evidence from other sources means that it is rarely possible to discern chronological differences within or across assemblages. A group of differing character which is suggested as being later in the sequence is material from DS2, ditch [210] (fill 208). This group contained no shouldered vessels and consists of undecorated barrel-shaped and rounded vessels (Fig 7, 5–7).

There is good evidence locally for the continued use of handmade vessels and the introduction (probably not before the mid 1st century BC) of vessels in the wheel-thrown tradition (Hill and Horne 2003). The deposits producing wheel-thrown pottery at Lancaster Way nevertheless help define a discrete and, in part, stratigraphically late group of features (DS6, DS7, DS8 and pits 1067 and 1069). The wheel-thrown element accounts for just under half of the pottery from these features (48% by sherd count). Given that a proportion of the handmade pottery from these deposits is likely to be residual, these groups probably relate to a period when use of wheel-thrown vessels was already well established. This, together with the absence of Romanised (grey or oxidized) fabrics or typically Roman forms, may suggest that this material dates to the first half of the 1st century AD.

Illustration catalogue (Figs 7 and 8)

- 1 Round-shouldered jar with fingernail impression to shoulder. Fabric Q7. Pit 110 (fill 103)
- 2 Round-shouldered ?bowl with upright, squared rim. Fabric Q2. Pit 1017 (fill 1016)
- 3 Large slack-shouldered jar with upright, finger-tipped rim. Light, multi-directional scoring. Fabric ORG. Pit 1017 (fill 1016)
- 4 Slack-shouldered jar with upright, simple rim. Light, multi-directional scoring. Fabric Q2. Pit 1087 (fill 1085)
- 5 Rounded jar with short, everted rim. Fabric Q2. DS2, Ditch 210 (fill 208)
- 6 Rounded jar with bead-like rim. Fabric Q2. DS2, Ditch 210 (fill 208)
- 7 Barrel-shaped/ovoid jar with simple rim. Fabric SH1. DS2, Ditch 210 (fill 208)
- 8 Large, thickened shouldered jar with upright simple rim. Fabric Q2. DS7, Ditch 207 (fill 205).

3.3 Fired clay by Pat Chapman

There are 13 fragments of fired clay, weighing 148g. Nine of these are hard, fine silty clay with a red to brown surface and black reduced core, perhaps the scattered fragments from a structure such as an oven or kiln. The three from fill (1061) pit [1062] are coarse sandy fragments. The fragment from (1059) pit [1056] has a core of fine silty clay, partially covered by some kind of mineralization. None of these pieces have any particular features, they are just the very sparse remnants of settlement activity.

Table 4: Quantification of fired clay

Context/feature	No.	Wt (g)
1019/1020 Ditch	1	40
1049/1051 Ditch	3	5
1059/1056 Pit	1	28
1061/1062 Pit	3	25
1091/ 1093 Ditch	1	11
1094/1095 Ditch	2	31
1098/1101 Ditch	2	8
Totals	13	148

3.4 Loomweight by Pat Chapman

A fragment of an Iron Age triangular loomweight (SF68) came from fill (1061), the upper fill of pit [1056]/[110]. Just one corner survives with part of the perforation. The weight is 50mm wide and the perforation is c 15mm in diameter, but splaying out slightly at each end, suggesting that the implement used to make the perforations was slightly narrower at the end and was pushed through from both sides. The weight was made from fine silty clay with frequent flint inclusions and coloured light brown, orange and black indicating a bonfire firing.

3.5 Metalworking debris by Andy Chapman

From the fill (1075) of ditch [1076] (Ditch System DS9), there is a small lump, 28mm diameter and weighing 9g, of fired clay. This is light grey in colour and is vesicular with glassy, vesicular debris adhering to one surface. It is similar in appearance to the fabric of bronze-working crucibles, but the thickness of the piece, 11mm, might suggest that it has come from the fired-clay lining of a hearth or furnace. There is also a very small quantity of similar material from the fill (1016) of pit [1017]. From the fill (1090) of ditch [1093] there are several small pieces of slag, weighing 87g. It is vesicular and light grey to brown in colour, with the largest piece retaining impressions of the charcoal fuel on one surface. This

material has most probably come from a smithing hearth, and may be fragments from a typical bun-shaped smithing-hearth bottom.

During processing of the environmental samples small amounts of flake hammerscale from smithing were recovered from pits [1017]; [1067], [1069], [1087] and a posthole [1044] (See section 5.2). With the exception of the Late Iron Age pits [1067] and [1069] the flake hammerscale was recovered from Middle Iron Age contexts.

3.6 Other Iron Age and Roman finds by Tora Hylton

Of particular interest is part of a decorated bone weaving comb [SF1] from Pit [1056]/[110] (Plate 7). Stylistically the handle represents a tapered long-handled comb, with a surviving length of 85mm, manufactured from the long bone shaft of a large ungulate (Karen Deighton pers com). The handle is up to 25mm wide and the surface is decorated with double lines of oblique linear cross-hatching, forming lozenges, with two transverse grooves above the teeth. There are two surviving notches at the bases of broken teeth. Soil conditions have caused the surface of the handle to become pitted, making it difficult to determine the extent of wear. Weaving combs of this type are common finds on sites of Iron Age date, they are generally thought to have been used as beaters in the weaving process, for a discussion on style and usage see Sellwood 1984 (371-78).

Stylistically, two objects can be specifically dated to the Roman period. A copper alloy penannular wire brooch, recovered from the fill of ditch [1099], has a circular cross-section (2mm) that tapers slightly (1mm) towards the overlapping terminals, which coil back at right angles to the ring. It is a Fowler Type C (1960) and displays similarities to an example from Bancroft Villa (Mackreth 1994, fig 137, 53). Brooches of this type are common throughout East Anglia and Southern Central Britain and it has been suggested that they date to the early 1st century AD (Bayley and Butcher 2004, 138).

Two ferrous metal rod fragments (possibly nail shanks) come from ditch systems DS7 and DS8.

A cast fragment from a brooch was residual in furrow deposits. The fragment resembles a perforated lug; originally it would have formed part of the spring mechanism sited behind the head of a brooch.

3.7 The post-medieval finds by Tora Hylton and Tim Upson-Smith

All the post-medieval finds were recovered from furrow deposits. They include a copper alloy mount and buckle for use with horse furniture; three copper alloy buttons; a suspension ring; and three undiagnostic fragments of sheet metal. In addition, a lead discoid spindle whorl/weight was recovered from the subsoil.

Four fragments of clay tobacco pipe, comprising two bowls and two stem fragments were recovered from medieval furrows. These were classified using the Oswald type series. The stems were dated using the width of the bore as outlined in Oswald 1975, 92-5.

The two bowls recovered dated to between 1640 and 1680. A virtually complete bowl with a flat foot and rouletting around the rim of the bowl; the bowl is quite abraded, SF 57, type G5, dated 1640-1660. The second bowl as above but with only partial rouletting around the rim; the bowl on this example was slightly malformed during manufacture. Context (1009), type G6, dated 1660-1680. The two stem fragments are broadly comparable in date to the bowls. No mouth pieces were present.

4 THE ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

4.1 The animal bone by Karen Deighton

Introduction

A total of 3.1kg of animal bone was recovered from a range of contexts during the course of excavation. This material was analysed to ascertain the taxa present, preservation of material and information on the animal economy of the site as well as any details on site function.

Method

Analysis used standard zooarchaeological methods. Recording follows Halstead (1985) after Watson (1979). Fusion is after Silver (1969). Recording of sheep teeth follows Payne (1972) that of cattle follows Halstead (1985). Identification of butchery and canid gnawing follows Binford (1981).

Results

Fragmentation (see Table 5) was heavy with only 7% of long bones complete. Fresh breaks only accounted for 7% of fragmentation. Shaft cylinder was the most common break recorded which could be related to the prevalence of canid gnawing (see below). Only one instance of butchery was noted, appearing to be consistent with filleting, although heavy fragmentation could be as a result of butchery. The level of canid gnawing was fairly high at 44%, which suggests firstly the presence of dogs on site and secondly that bone was possibly left exposed on the ground for a time before burial. Heavy fragmentation could therefore be a result of trampling. This could also account for the lack of smaller bones recovered. Evidence of burning was seen on only 4% of bone; in one instance the position of the blackened area suggests cooking of meat on the bone. The low frequency of burning also suggests this was not the preferred method of disposal.

Table 5: Fragmentation

Fragmentation	Number	Percentage
Whole	3	7
Some shaft missing	9	20.9
End+shaft	1	2.3
Cylinder	15	34.9
Splinter	10	23.3
End only	2	4.7
Fresh break	3	7

Table 6: Taxa by number and percentage

Name	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Horse	Sheep/goat/roe
Taxa	<i>Bos</i>	<i>Ovicaprid</i>	<i>Sus</i>	<i>Equus</i>	<i>Ovicaprid/capreolus</i>
Number	35	26	1	4	2
Relative percentage	52.2	37.3	1.5	6	3

Table 7: Taxa by element

Species Element	Cattle Bos	Sheep/goat Ovicaprid	Horse Equus	pig Sus	Sheep/goat/roe Ovicaprid/Capreolus
Horn Core	3				
Mandible	1	3			
Teeth	4	1			
Scapula	1		1		
P.humerus	3	1			
D.humerus	5	2			
R. radius	4	2			
D. radius	2	1			
Ulna		1		1	
P.metacarpal	2	1			
D.metacarpal	2	1			
Phalanx 1	2	1	1		
Pelvis		1			
D.femur	1				
P.tibia	1	2			
D.tibia	1	2			
Calcaneum	1	1			
Astragulus	1				
P.metatarsal		3	1		1
D.metatarsal		3	1		1
Axis	1				
Total	35	26	4	1	2
Percentage	52.2	37.3	6	1.5	3

Table 8: Material from sieved samples

Context	sample	Ovicaprid	Amphibian	Small ungulate
1016	50	1	-	-
1043	55	4	-	1
1066	57	3	-	2
1068	58	1	-	-
1085	59	-	1	-

Table 9: Tooth eruption and wear by species and context

Context	Taxa	Element	Side	Eruption and wear stage	Approx. age
1037	Bos	Molar tooth	Left	I	Senile
1043	Ovicaprid	Mandible	Left	C+	6-12mths+
1057	Ovicaprid	Mandible	Left	D+	1-2years
1063	Ovicaprid	Mandible	Right	C+	6-12mths+
1070	Ovicaprid	Molar tooth	Left	I	8-10years
1084	Bos	Mandible	Left	D+	18-30mths+
1086	Bos	Premolar	N/A	A	0-1mths
1098	Bos	Molar tooth	N/A	D+	18-30mths+

No kill-off patterns could be established due to the fact that most teeth could not be placed in a single age category and the lack of material (see Table 9 above). Unfortunately due to the nature of fragmentation (i.e. most epiphyses were missing), fusion was largely recorded as indeterminate.

Discussion

The assemblage was dominated by cattle followed by sheep/goat (Table 6). The relatively low numbers of horse can be explained by the fact horse had uses other than food (ie transport).

Unfortunately few statements concerning body part representation could be made due to the small size of the assemblage. Other than that a similar range of body parts was observed for both the major taxa and no particular concentrations were apparent (Table 7). No statements on the age or sex structure of herds can be made due to a lack of relevant data. No temporal analysis was attempted as the material was all from Middle-Late Iron Age to early 1st century AD contexts.

Comparisons with contemporary sites in the region are tentative due to the small size of the assemblage. It differs from a contemporary site at Lancaster Way (Deighton 2008) which was dominated by ovicaprids and had a greater range of taxa. The assemblage from Prickwillow, Ely (Deighton 2003) was also dominated by cattle then sheep, as was that from Papworth Everard (Deighton 2008). Taxa at Papworth differed in that horse was absent and dog was present. Prickwillow had a much larger range of taxa; however, the site and assemblage were also much larger.

Analysis has shown a small assemblage, with a limited range of taxa, which provides little information on the economy and function of the site. However, it is within the parameters expected for a Middle/Late Iron Age assemblage.

4.2 Charred plant remains by Karen Deighton

Introduction

Thirteen soil samples were collected, and these were assessed to determine the presence, nature and preservation of ecofacts. Samples 7, 8, 10 and 11, all from pit [1056/110] were sterile (Simmonds and Mason 2008), and are not tabulated below. A further 11 samples were collected by hand during the course of excavation. Five were chosen, by the excavator and by arrangement with the curator, for analysis to establish the presence, nature and level of preservation of ecofacts. The contribution to a further understanding of the site and its function and economy has also been considered.

Method

The samples were processed using a siraf tank fitted with a 250-micron mesh and flot sieve. The flots were dried and examined using a microscope (10 x magnification). Identifications were made with the aid of the author's reference collection and Cappers *et al* (2006). Molluscs were identified with the aid of Kerney and Cameron (1994). Animal bone from sieved samples is dealt with elsewhere (see section 5.1). Hammerscale was also identified in some of the sieved samples by scanning the flots with a magnet (see Section 5.3).

Results

The condition of snails was reasonable. Charred plant material was fragmentary and abraded, which adversely affected identification.

Table 10: Ecofacts by context and sample

Cut/fill	1017/1016	1044/1043	1067/1066	1069/1068	1087/1085
Sample	50	55	57	58	59
Feature type	Pit	Posthole	Pit	Pit	Pit
Volume (litres)	40	10	40	20	20
Spelt (chaff) (<i>Triticum spelta</i>)					5
Glume wheat (chaff) (<i>Triticum sp</i>)	1				
Hulled barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>)	7	2		2	1
Indet barley (<i>Hordeum sp</i>)	10				2
Cereal indet	9	1		7	2
Fat hen (<i>Chenopodium album</i>)	22				2
Cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>)	1				
Sheep sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>)	1				
Dock (<i>Rumex sp</i>)					1
Indet wild taxa	13			1	
Fruit stone	3				2
Nutshell (<i>Cf Corylus sp</i>)	1				
Charcoal*	10	5	6	4	9
MOLLUSCS					
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i>			15		
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i>	1		6	2	2
<i>Vallonia cf costarta</i>			45		
<i>Vallonia sp</i>	21	2	45	8	12
<i>Vitrea sp</i>			12		
<i>Lymnaea sp</i>			1		
Indet mollusc	17	1	63		7

Key for charcoal +=present, 2=2-10, 3=10-20, 4=20-50, 5=50-100, 6=100-200, 7=200-300, 8=300-500, 9=500-1000, 10=1000+

Discussion

The cereal taxa present are typical for the Iron Age period. The wild plant taxa present are common ruderal and crop weeds. Fat hen is ubiquitous at sites of human activity. The low numbers of charred grains and seeds suggest background, i.e. material washed or blown in, activities taking place elsewhere. The snail taxa present suggest dry open habitats although *V costarta* will live in rock rubble and stone walls.

Comparisons with samples from earlier evaluation work at Lancaster Way (Holmes 2008) show a similar range of snails; although water taxa are more common from features on the evaluation to the south and *V costarta* is absent. These two observations could suggest drier conditions on the slightly higher ground at the current site. A similar range of cereal and crop weeds are seen at both sites, suggesting no change in plant exploitation across the site. Analysis shows a low to moderate number of ecofacts which are broadly comparable with earlier work.

5 DISCUSSION

The suggestion from the trial trenching that the site may have had a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age component (Simmonds and Mason 2008, 14) has not been proved. Further excavation of the pit in question showed that it was of Middle Iron Age date, but with two anomalous sherds that may be residual material of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date.

The formation of the excavated part of the settlement dates from the Middle Iron Age, and use of this area continued into the first half of the 1st century AD. This appears to represent a continuation both in character and date of the Iron Age features found in a previous evaluation immediately to the south (Holmes 2008). The series of conjoined and overlapping enclosure and boundary ditches along with possible roundhouses are indicative of a settlement which was probably broadly contemporary with the more extensive landscape as partially defined through geophysical survey and trial trenching.

However, in the excavated area there was no Roman material while there was to the south, suggesting that later 1st and 2nd century AD settlement was concentrated slightly away from the excavated area.

The palimpsest of ditches and the re-cutting of their circuits would suggest an extended period of use which is confirmed by the identification of two phases within the pottery assemblage. However, the limited amount of excavation undertaken combined with the attrition from later medieval agriculture makes it impossible to provide any detailed assessment of this sequence.

The finds and environmental assemblages were generally similar to the archaeological features located to the south (Holmes 2008, 26). The charred grain and weed seeds retrieved from soil samples indicate only a background level of activity, with stray material washing into open pits and ditches. A similar small quantity of such material occurred at the nearby site at Stirling Way (Atkins 2008, 24). Pits, although present, were not numerous and few contained significant amounts of domestic detritus such as animal bone, although whether this is due to the functional use of the space or simply a matter of survival is unclear. However, the fills of the features centred on the roundhouse did appear to contain significant quantities of dark charcoal-stained soil suggesting occupation, and a relatively large pottery assemblage was retrieved.

Also of significance was the recovery of a little slag and hammerscale from some of the sampled features, which is indicative of iron smithing in the vicinity. No meaningful distribution of the smithing can be made. Associative datable material provided by pottery indicates a Middle to Late Iron Age date for the industrial activity. Both of these activities would have required charcoal in quantity indicating that charcoal burning may have occurred locally or would have been brought in from further afield.

In its wider context the site continues the sequence of occupation on this part of the Isle of Ely and its character appears to accord with that generally outlined for the region in this period (Bryant 1997). Previous excavations have suggested a sequence of occupation sites possibly starting in the Early Iron Age and continuing through to the later Roman period in the general area. The sites appear to form small rural agricultural settlements with their attendant fields and enclosures, exploiting the slightly higher land of the Isle. Although these sites can probably be classed as farms, the size and depth of some of the ditches associated with them has led to speculation as to whether some at least may belong to a class of sites with defensive elements (Atkins 2009, 24). However, the character of the Lancaster Way enclosures does not immediately suggest that they fall into such a group.

As with the other sites in the vicinity, the Lancaster Way Unit D site was crossed by a series of furrows of the medieval field system from which post-medieval artefacts were recovered. No Saxon or medieval material was present on the site. Although the bases of the furrows had truncated the earlier archaeological horizons enough of these earlier features survived to recover a coherent plan.

Although the limited excavation programme meant that detailed interpretation of the remains could not be undertaken, fuller interpretation of the site may be possible should further archaeological work ever take place in the surrounding area. Meanwhile, the surviving archaeological remains, unaffected by the construction of the warehouse, have been preserved *in situ* and therefore will remain as a resource for the future.

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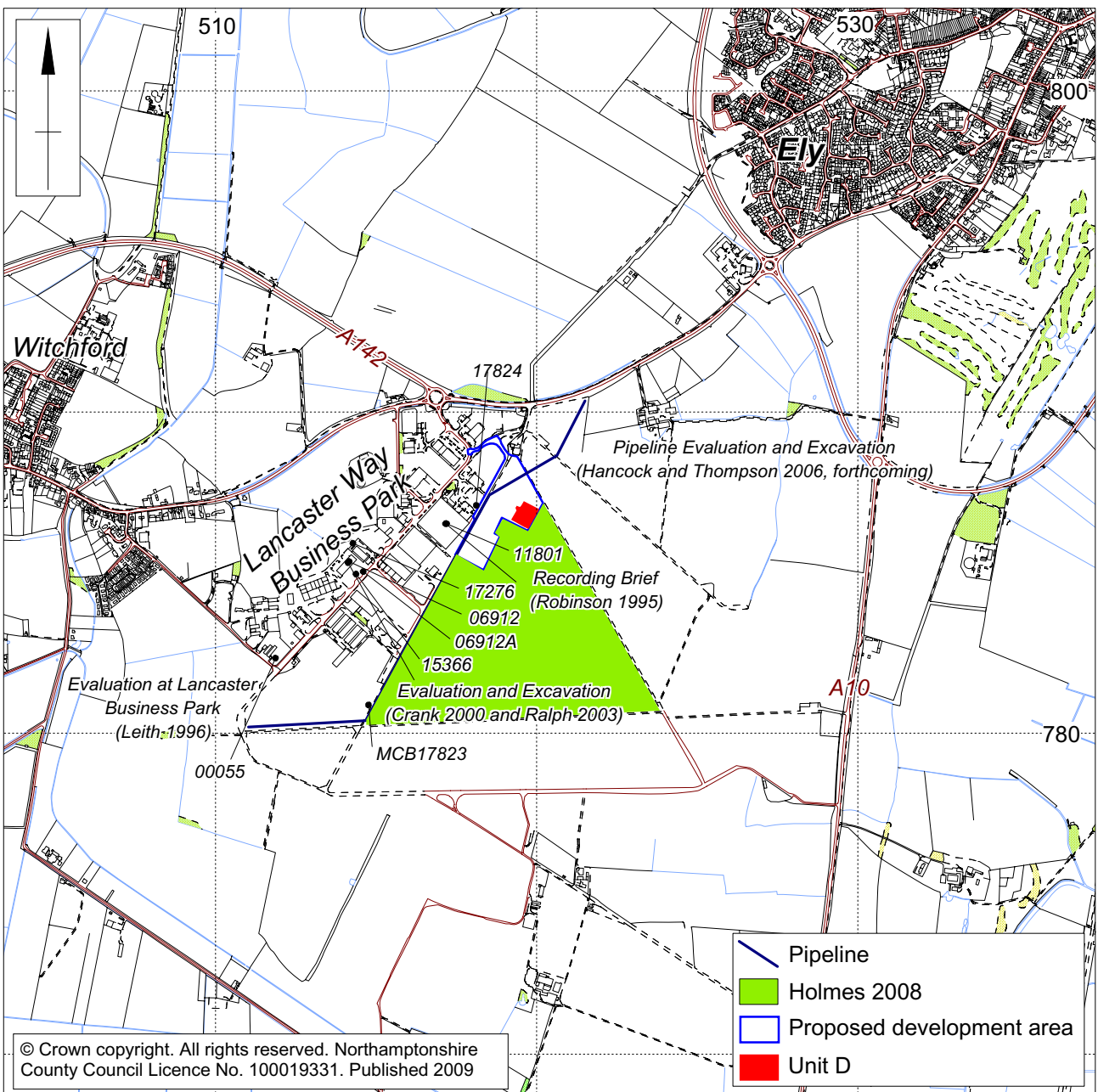
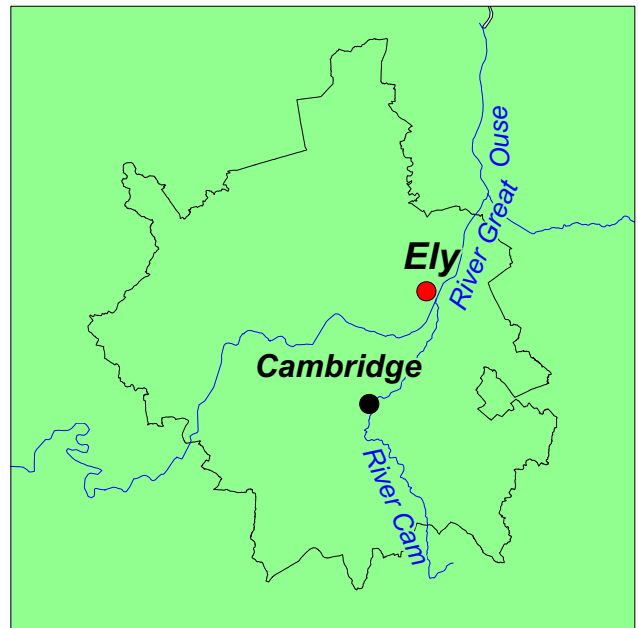
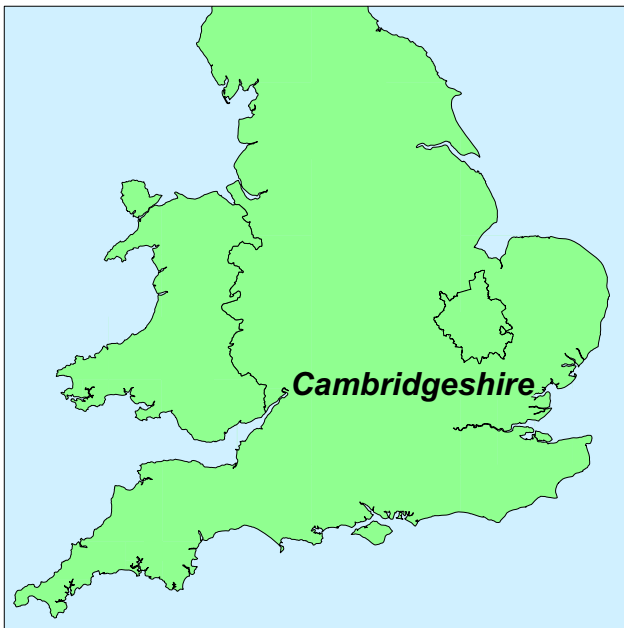
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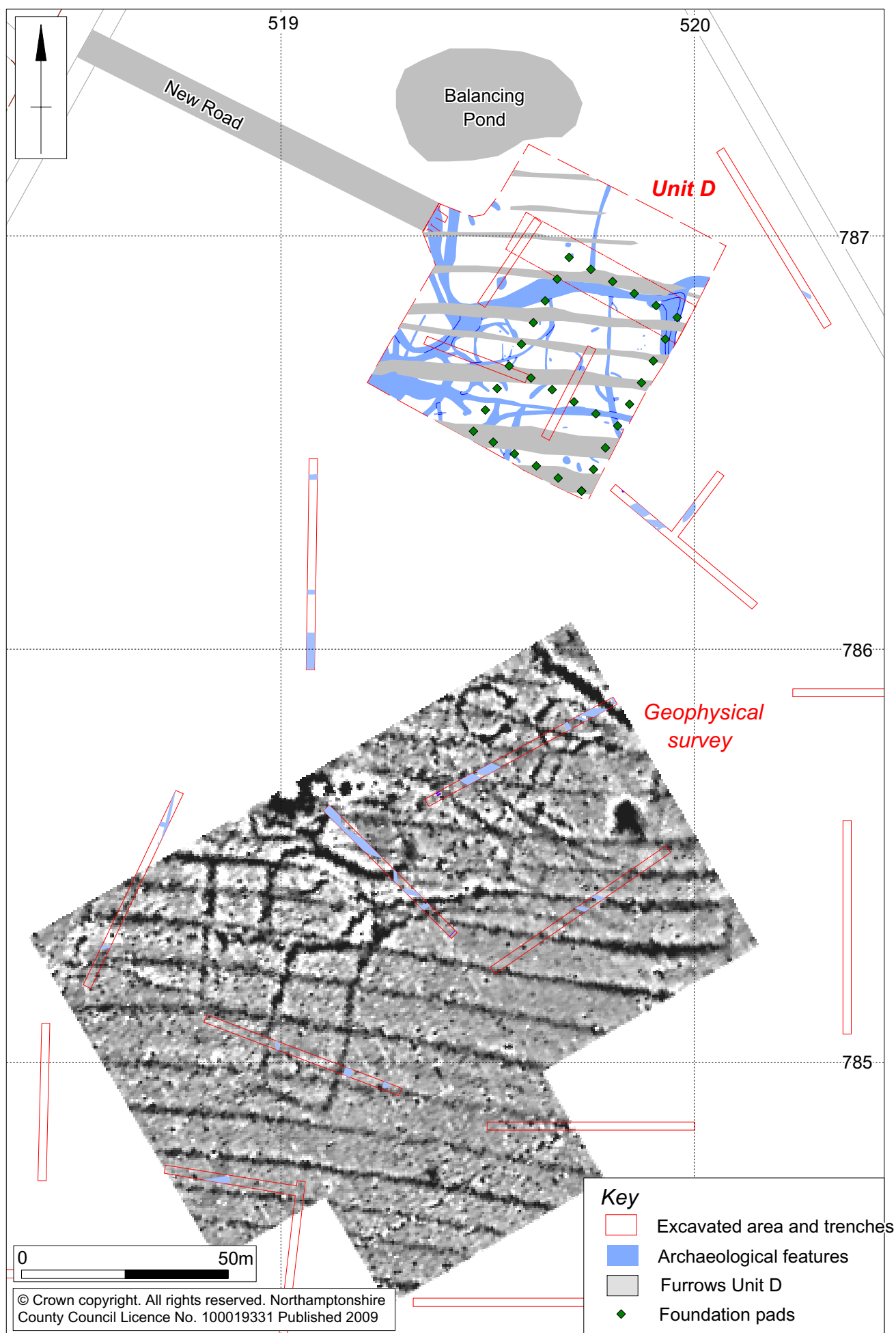
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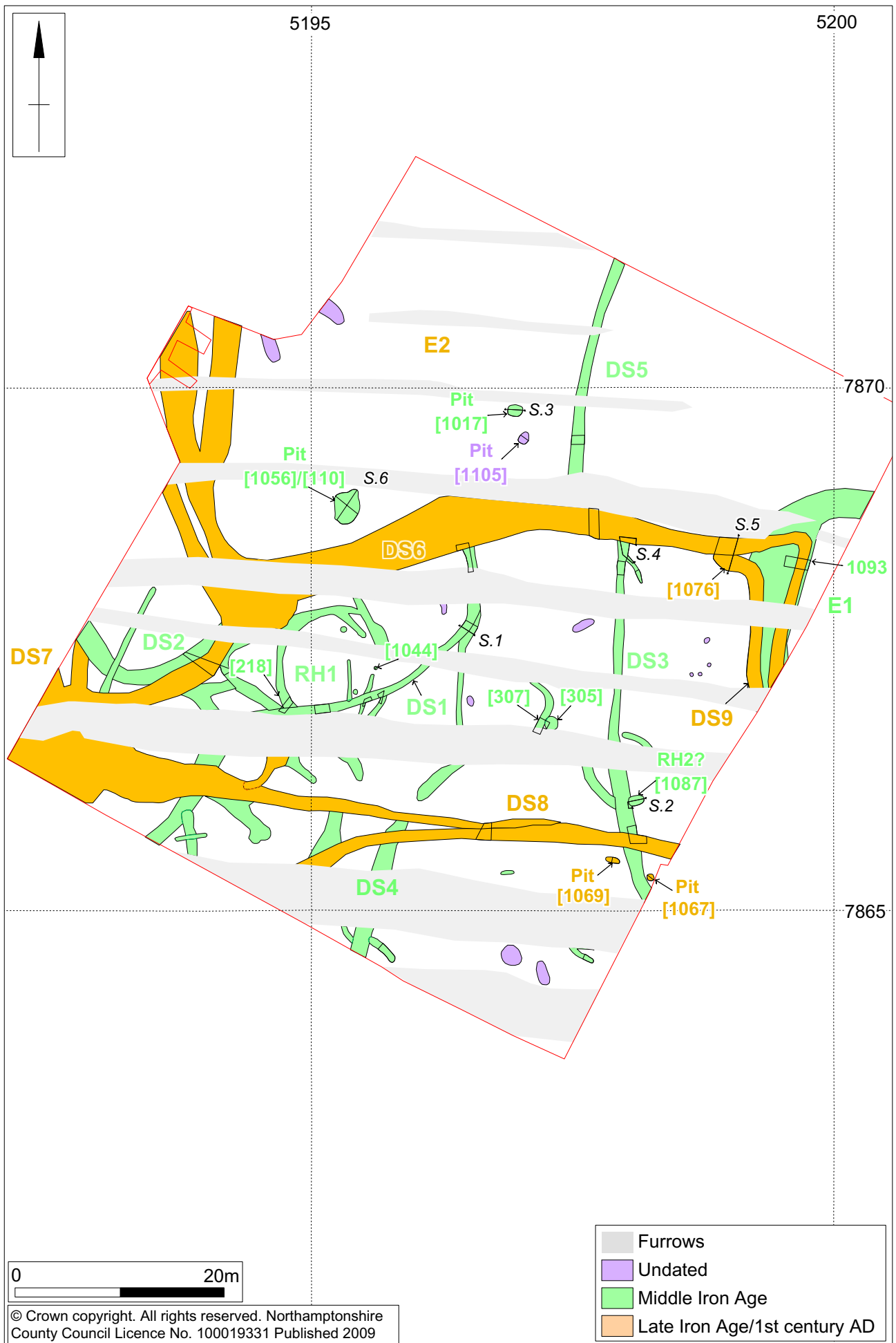
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Site location and areas of other archaeological work Fig 1



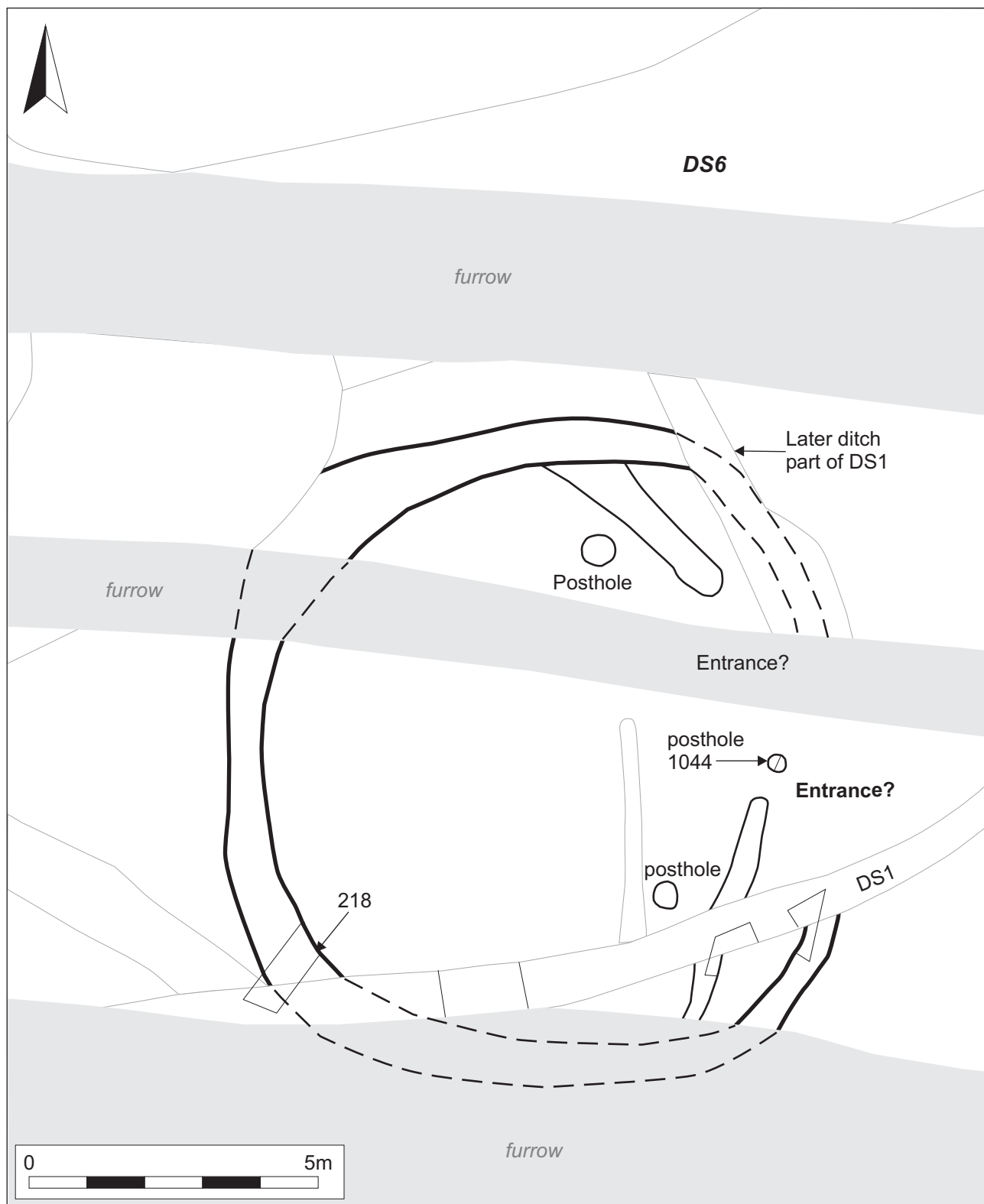
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Unit D and the immediate landscape Fig 2



1:500

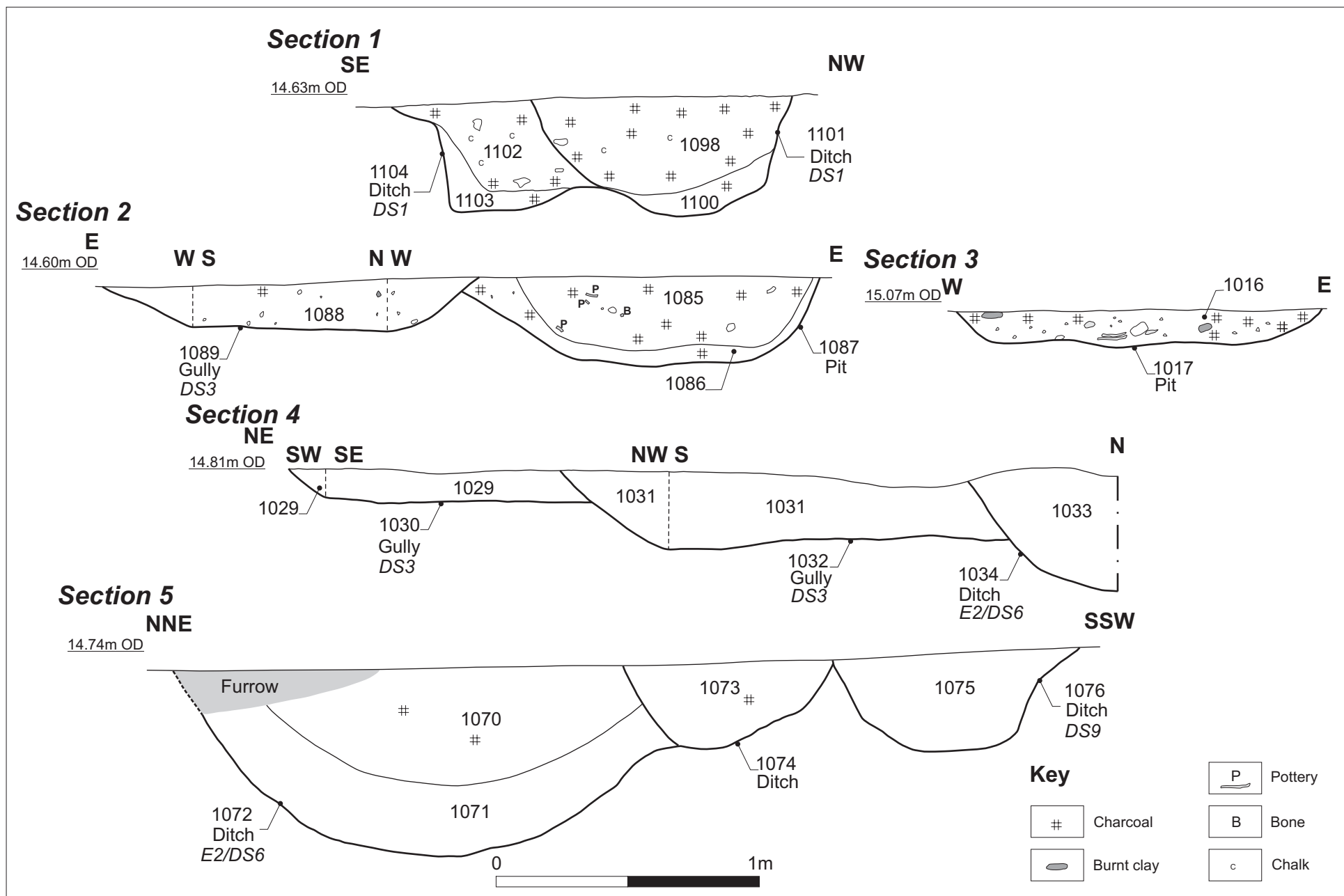
The development of the site Fig 3



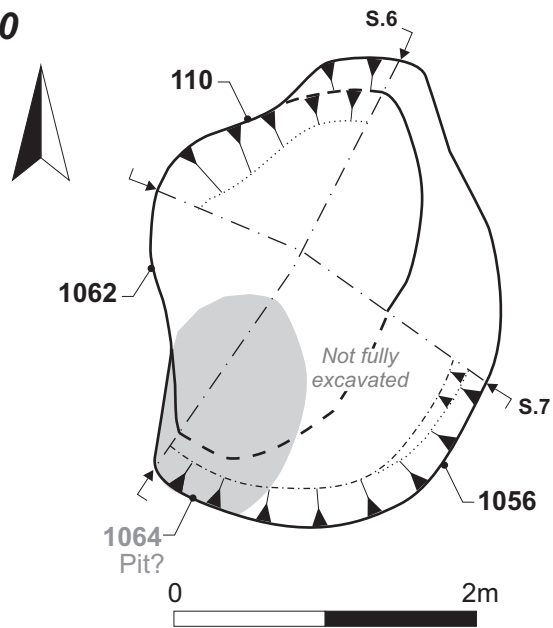
Roundhouse (RH1) Fig 4

Scale 1:20

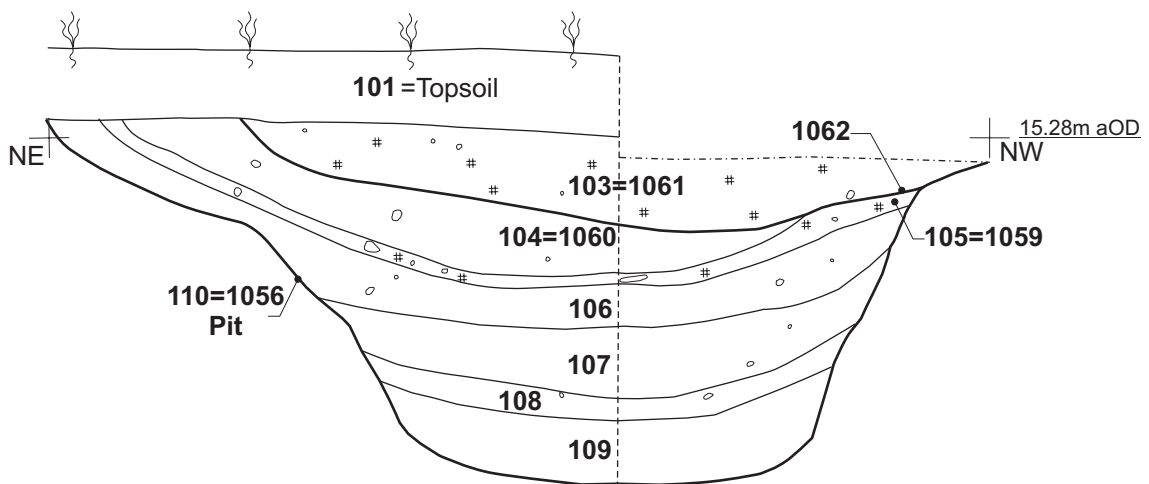
Sections 1-5 Fig 5



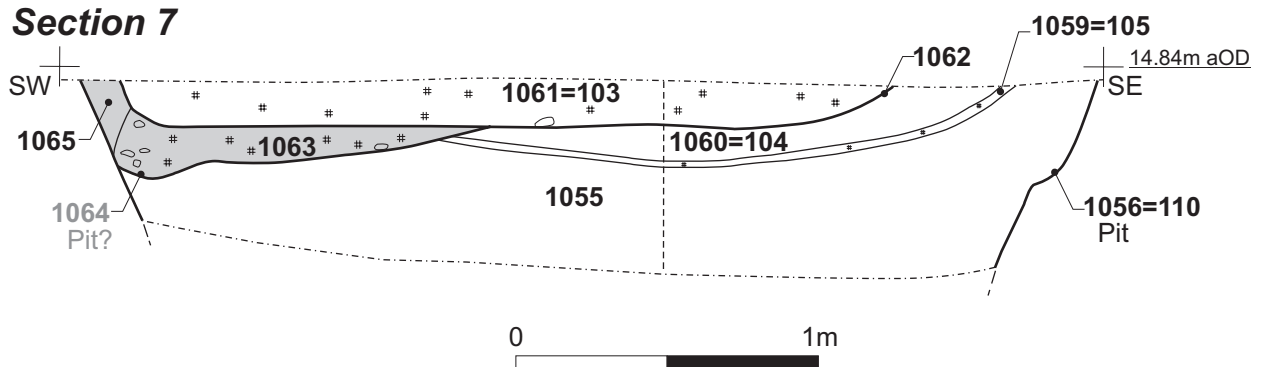
Pit 1056/110



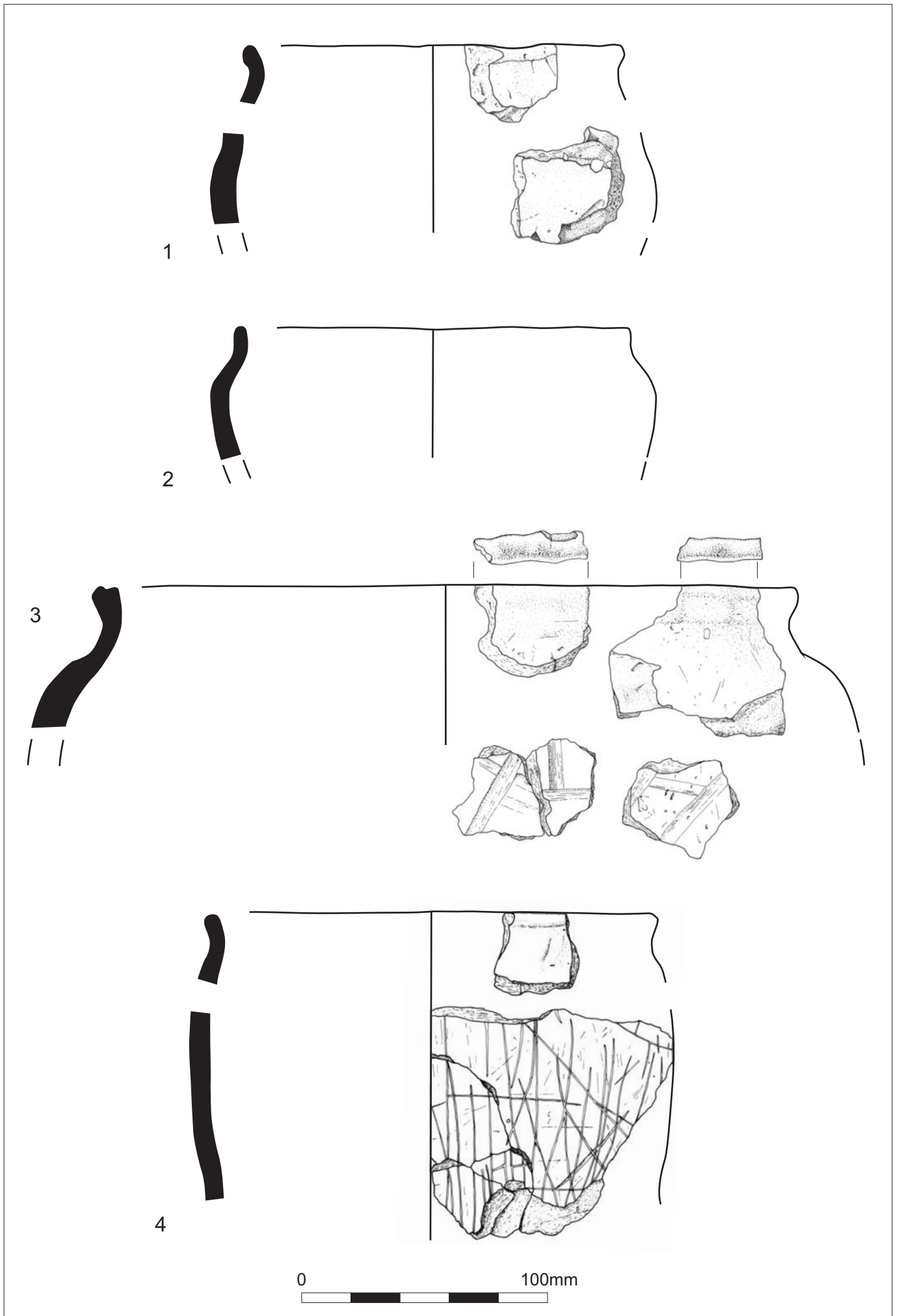
Section 6



Section 7

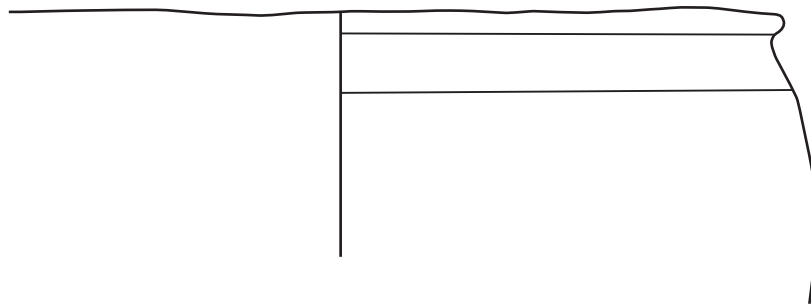


Plan and sections of pit 1056/110 Fig 6

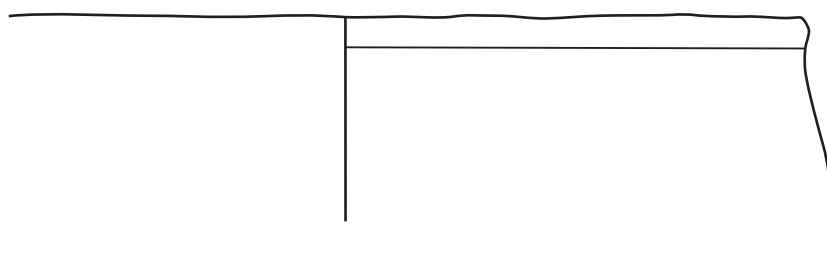


The Iron Age pottery, 1-4 Fig 7

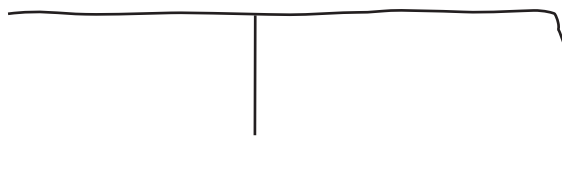
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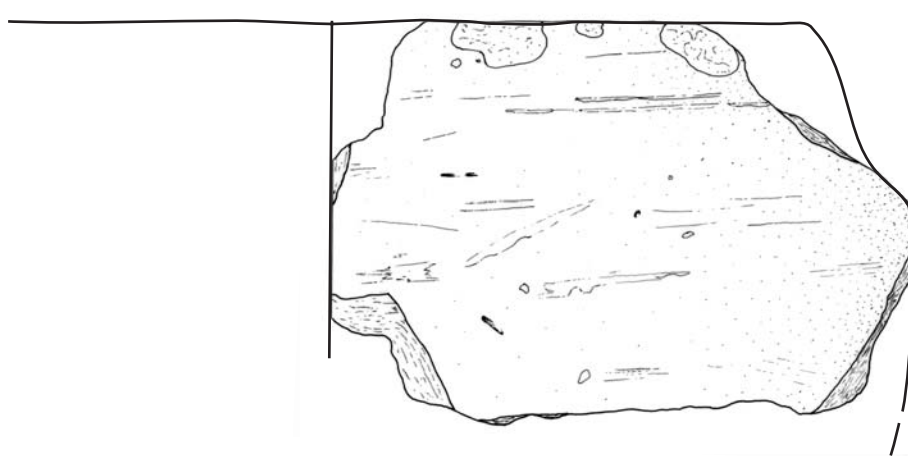
6



7



8



0

100mm





Plate 1: View of the excavation area, with terram and hardstanding being laid, facing north-east



Plate 2: The northern part of the site, looking north-east



Plate 3: The north-western corner of Enclosure1 (E1), looking north-east



Plate 4: Middle Iron Age pit [1017] (0.14m deep) with pottery showing in section, looking north



Plate 5: Partially excavated south-eastern quadrant of pit [1056]/[110] (0.65m deep), looking north-east. The opposite quadrant had been fully excavated during the evaluation



Plate 6: The southern boundary of enclosure E2, DS6 (0.70m deep) and DS9 (0.40m deep), looking east south-east



Plate 7: Bone weaving comb from Iron Age pit [1056] (Scale 20mm)