

**Buchan St Neighbourhood Centre  
Buchan Street  
Cambridge**

*Archaeological Evaluation*



*for:*  
RPS Consulting

on behalf of:  
The Hill Group

CA Project: SU0413  
CHER Event Number: ECB6903  
OASIS Id ref: cotswold2-508718

August 2022



# Buchan St Neighbourhood Centre Buchan Street Cambridge

## *Archaeological Evaluation*

CA Project: SU0413  
CA Report: SU0413\_1  
CHER Event Number: ECB6903  
OASIS Id ref: cotswold2-508718

Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
1	APS	APS	APS	Draft	–	APS

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Buchan St Neighbourhood Centre
<b>Location:</b>	Buchan Street, Cambridge
<b>NGR:</b>	545007 261470
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	19th – 27th July 2022
<b>Planning reference:</b>	19/1757/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Facility and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
<b>OASIS Id ref:</b>	cotswold2-508718
<b>CHER Event No:</b>	ECB6903
<b>Site Code:</b>	ECB6903

In July 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge. This evaluation was undertaken for RPS Consulting, acting on behalf of The Hill

Despite the location of the site in an area of some archaeological potential for remains of prehistoric and Roman date to be present, no archaeological features or finds were identified. Evidence for modern development-related impacts were identified in all trenches, either in the form of modern deposits associated with the landscaping of the site directly overlaying the natural substrate, for example in trenches 3 and 4, or modern services and other sub-surface intrusions, including service trenches and post and fence bases, such as those encountered in trenches 1 and 2.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In July 2022, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge (centred at NGR: 545007 261470). This evaluation was undertaken for RPS Consulting, acting on behalf of The Hill Group.

1.2. Cambridge City Council (CCC) has granted planning permission (planning ref: 19/1757/FUL) for *Demolition of existing community centre, shop and cafe and erection of new shop (use class A1), community cafe (use class A1/A3/D1), 28 affordable dwellings, car parking with modified vehicular access arrangements, open space, play equipment and new landscaping* on land at *Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre 6 Buchan Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 2XF*. Planning permission is subject to conditions, one of which, Condition 47, requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI. Condition 47 states:

*No demolition/development shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has implemented a programme of archaeological work which has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than under the provisions of the agreed WSI, which shall include:*

- a) the statement of significance and research objectives;*
- b) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;*
- c) The timetable for the field investigation as part of the development programme;*
- d) The programme and timetable for the analysis, publication & dissemination, and deposition of resulting material.*

*Reason: To ensure that an appropriate archaeological investigation of the site has been implemented before development commences.*

1.3. The first stage of work required was defined in consultation between Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET), in their capacity as archaeological advisors to CCC, and RPS Consulting as a comprising a trial trench evaluation.

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- 1.4. The requirements for the evaluation were subsequently set out in a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* (CHET 2021) and a responding Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2022), which was submitted to CHET for approval prior to the commencement of works. The WSI and subsequent works were also guided by the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2008) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### **The site**

- 1.5. The 0.33ha (approx.) site comprises The Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, which is located on the north edge of Cambridge, bounded to the northwest by Kings Hedges Road and all other sides by existing residential development and Buchan Street/ Callander Close. The site itself comprises areas of carparking/ hardstanding, and the existing neighbourhood centre buildings, situated at approximately 12.18 – 12.9m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as mudstone of the Gault Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravel (River Terrace 3) (BGS 2022).

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The archaeological background of the site and its immediate surrounding area has been presented previously as part of a Desk-based Assessment (PCA 2019) and Archaeological Impact Assessment (RPS 2020). Updated baseline information from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record was provided with the Brief (CHET 2021).
- 2.2. The DBA noted that there is a wide spread of archaeological sites within the study area with the principal concentrations of archaeological activity focused to the east and south-east of the site and to the north-west, at Arbury Camp. The assessment concluded that the site has a high potential for Roman activity, moderate potential for prehistoric activity, low to moderate potential for medieval and post-medieval activity and low potential for Saxon activity (PCA 2019).



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- 2.3. A number of sites are recorded in the CHER as cropmarks visible on aerial photography. A cropmark east of Arbury Iron Age camp, 200m north of the proposed development area, is thought to be the remnants of an undated trackway or possible enclosure (CHER no. 09530). A ditch of uncertain date is located near the Cambridge Road c.1km south-west of the site (CHER no. 1512), while cropmarks recorded south of Brownlow Road, c1km south-west of the site, comprised a ring ditch and linear feature (CHER no. 09533). A cropmark of U shape was identified by aerial photography east of Roseford Road, approximately 670m south-west of the site, and thought to be part of an undated enclosure (CHER no. 05527).
- 2.4. Of particular note in regard to the site, Arbury Camp, an Iron Age hillfort with enclosure, partial ditch and gateway, is located approximately 450m to the north-west of the site.
- 2.5. Iron Age settlement is also recorded within an area of extensive cropmarks to the northeast, which also includes the site of a probable Roman Villa, which in turn sits within an extensive Roman landscape that includes field systems, structures and burials, set around the road running north from the Roman town at Castle Hill, Cambridge. During excavations in the 1960's at Arbury Road, 381m to the east, evidence of prehistoric, possibly Iron Age, earthworks, ovens/hearths, well and building structure were uncovered (CHER no. 05413a). Evidence of Iron Age activity, comprising a posthole and ditch, was also located at King's Hedges School Roman villa site 534m to the east of the PDA (CHER no. 05421b).
- 2.6. The majority of features and finds recorded in the CHER within the study area utilised for the Desk-Based Assessment concern Roman remains. An evaluation and excavation on Apollo Way, located approximately 250m east of the site and undertaken in 2001, revealed Roman ditches and quarry pits associated with the Roman road of Akeman Street and features relating to probable Roman roadside occupation (CCHER MCB15936). Along with the gravel pit and probable stock enclosure, a number of inhumations were investigated, ranging in date between the 2nd and 4th century AD. The features likely relate to roadside occupation activity along the west side of Roman road Akeman Street (CHER no. 15936).
- 2.7. Excavations in 1991, approximately 660m north-east of the PDA, at Gypsy Ditches in Arbury investigating the line of the Akeman Street Roman road found evidence of



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metaling with possibly associated ditch and pit features (CHER no. 10087). Ditch digging on King's Hedges Road, 553m north-east, located several sherds of Roman Horningsea ware jar and a grey ware jar and lid, while evaluations and excavation along the route of the Guided Busway, approximately 650m to the north-east of the site, uncovered Roman remains including a quarry pit, three ditches and pits. Finds included pottery, oyster shells and animal bone, building material and coins of the 3rd and 4th centuries (CHER no. MCB19359). Further excavations along the busway route, 610m north-east of the site located three ditches and two pits of Roman date (CHER no. MCB19361).

2.8. Roman burials in wooden coffins with a few sherds of pottery were found during building work on the King's Hedges Estate in 1970, approximately 380m south-east of the site (CHER no. 05213), while inhumations and pottery of Roman date were located on the Arbury Road Allotments in 1937, 570m to the south (CHER no. 05288). Finds of coins and artefacts of Roman date at Arbury Camp indicates later utilisation of the Iron Age ringwork (CHER no. 08479a)

2.9. Little evidence for Saxon activity is recorded from the vicinity of the site, while the immediate area appears to have largely been in agricultural/ pastoral use in the medieval, post-medieval and early modern periods, with evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation, drainage and field boundary ditches recorded from aerial photographs and a number of sites in the vicinity, including during recent works at The Meadows Community Centre, St Catherine's Road (CA 2021).

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. The aims of the evaluation, as stated in the Brief (CHET 2021), were to:

#### Character and Significance

- determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development;
- define the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required.

#### Environment, Economy and Industry

- determine the presence/absence of palaeosols and old land surface soils/deposits;

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- establish the character of deposits and their contents within negative features;
  - establish the presence/ absence and character of any palaeo-channels;
  - understand the nature of site formation processes generally;
  - undertake an assessment of any buried soils and associated deposits to establish whether soil micromorphology or other analytical techniques may enhance understanding of depositional processes and transformations at the site;
  - undertake an assessment of the potential to inform on the general environmental and dietary evidence of the inhabitants of the site through an examination of suitable deposits.
  - consider the retrieval, characterisation and dating (including absolute dating) of artefact, burial or economic evidence to assist in the characterisation of the site and in the development of future mitigation strategies

3.2. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable CCC, as advised by CHET, to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise any development-related impacts upon those heritage assets and/ or to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. This process is in accordance with policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021).

3.3. Had significant archaeological remains been identified then this report would have sought to place those remains in their local and regional context with reference to *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011) and the online East of England Regional Research Framework (<https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>). However, the absence of any archaeological remains means that the results have no potential to contribute to any research themes or objectives.

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## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of five trenches, excavated in three phases between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as a result of the “live” nature of the site and parking areas where the trenches were located. As a result of changes to the intended phasing of the works the trenches were renumbered as-dug from the sequence shown on Figure 2 of the WSI and the trench numbers shown on Figure 2 of this report should be regarded as the final/ definitive number sequence. With the exception of trench 1, all of the trenches were subject to minor positional changes as a result of the presence of utilities and other constraints. The trenches were originally intended to comprise 2no. 10m x 1.8m wide trenches and 3no. 5m x 1.8m trenches; however, as excavated trench 1 measured 5m long by 1.2m wide, the width being constrained by the presence of previously unrecorded utilities detected by CAT and GENNY scanning; Trench 2 measured 10m long by 1.2m wide; trench 3 measured 10m long by 1.4m wide; trench 4 measured 7m long by 0.8m wide; and, trench 5 measured 5m long by 1.2m wide, being constrained by the presence of services to the northeast and southeast. The works were monitored by the CHET (Andy Thomas - Archaeology Planning Manage) via site monitoring meetings on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July (trenches 1-3 and 5) and remote sign-off of trench 4 via email and photos on the 27<sup>th</sup> July.
- 4.2. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Following the removal of block-paving and tarmac, where present, overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate.
- 4.3. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling. No archaeological deposits were identified and no artefactual material that predated the modern period.
- 4.4. CA will make arrangements with the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Facility for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and

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digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.

### Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 5.2. Trench 1 measured 5 x 1.8m and was located in the north part of the site, in an area of amenity grassland to the south of the junction of Kings Hedges Road and Buchan Street. The deposit sequence comprised a thin turf and topsoil layer, approximately 10 – 15cm thick, directly overlying the natural substrate, which comprised an orange-brown gravelly clay with chalk fragments. A semi-circular feature at the south end of the trench was tested and shown to be modern in date, possibly relating to amenity planting of the area, while the trench was bisected by a modern service and also contained two concrete post or sign bases. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

- 5.3. Trench 2, measuring 10m long by 1.8m wide, was located in the north-central part of the site, in a block-paved parking area. The trench location was adjusted slightly from that shown in the WSI to take advantage of the presence of a flowerbed, within which the trench was subsequently excavated. The deposit sequence comprised a thin silty topsoil, approximately 10cm thick, overlying a deposit of modern made ground that became thicker in depth towards the northeast end of the northeast-southwest orientated trench. This sealed the natural substrate, which again comprised an orange-brown gravelly clay with chalk fragments. A modern service trench was present running across the southwest end of the trench. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

### Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

- 5.4. Trench 3, measuring 10m long by 1.8m wide, was excavated in the west part of the site, in a block-paved area to the rear of the shop and café. The deposit sequence

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comprised block paving over a crushed stone and sand base that in turn sealed the natural substrate of orange-brown gravelly clay with chalk fragments. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

#### **Trench 4 (Fig. 6)**

- 5.5. Trench 4 was excavated in the southwest corner of the site, in an area covered by tarmac hardstanding and again evidenced extensive modern disturbance/ hard landscaping. Measuring 7m long, the tarmac surface was removed to reveal a thick layer of modern sand and crushed stone, becoming deeper toward the western end of the trench. This directly overlay the natural substrate, comprising a yellow gravelly clay with chalk, confirming that the area had previously been stripped of topsoil/ any subsoil prior to laying of the crushed stone. Once again, no archaeological finds or features were identified.

#### **Trench 5 (Fig. 7)**

- 5.6. Trench 5 was excavated in the central part of the site, to the southwest of trench 2. Measuring 5m long by 1.8m wide, this trench evidenced a high level of modern disturbance with the deposit sequence comprising block paving overlaying a concrete base, most likely for a metal fence, dividing the northeast-southwest orientated trench down the middle. Crushed stone and sand was present to either side of the fence base, with machine excavation along the northwest side of the base showing that the crushed stone was approximately 0.5m thick and overlay a mid brown silt clay presumed to be the natural substrate. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

- 6.1. Despite the location of the site in an area of some archaeological potential for remains of prehistoric and Roman date to be present, no archaeological features or finds were identified. Evidence for modern development-related impacts were identified in all trenches, either in the form of modern deposits associated with the landscaping of the site directly overlaying the natural substrate (e.g trenches 3 and 4), indicating that the site had previously been stripped of topsoil and any subsoil that may have been present prior to being developed, or modern services and other sub-surface intrusions such as those encountered in trenches 1, 2 and 4.

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## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Adrian Scruby and Anna Wolf. This report was written by Adrian Scruby. The report illustrations were prepared by Susanna Ferron. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Molly Agnew-Henshaw. The project was managed for CA by Adrian Scruby.

## 8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html> Accessed 5 May 2020

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2021 *National Planning Policy Framework*

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RPS Consulting, 2020. *Archaeological Impact Assessment: Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Cambridge, CB4 2UP*



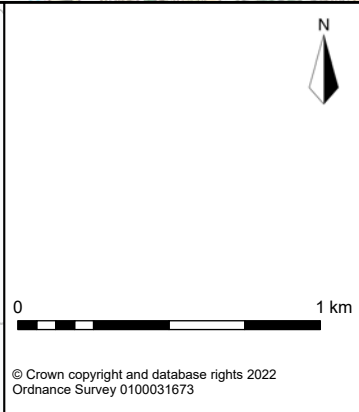
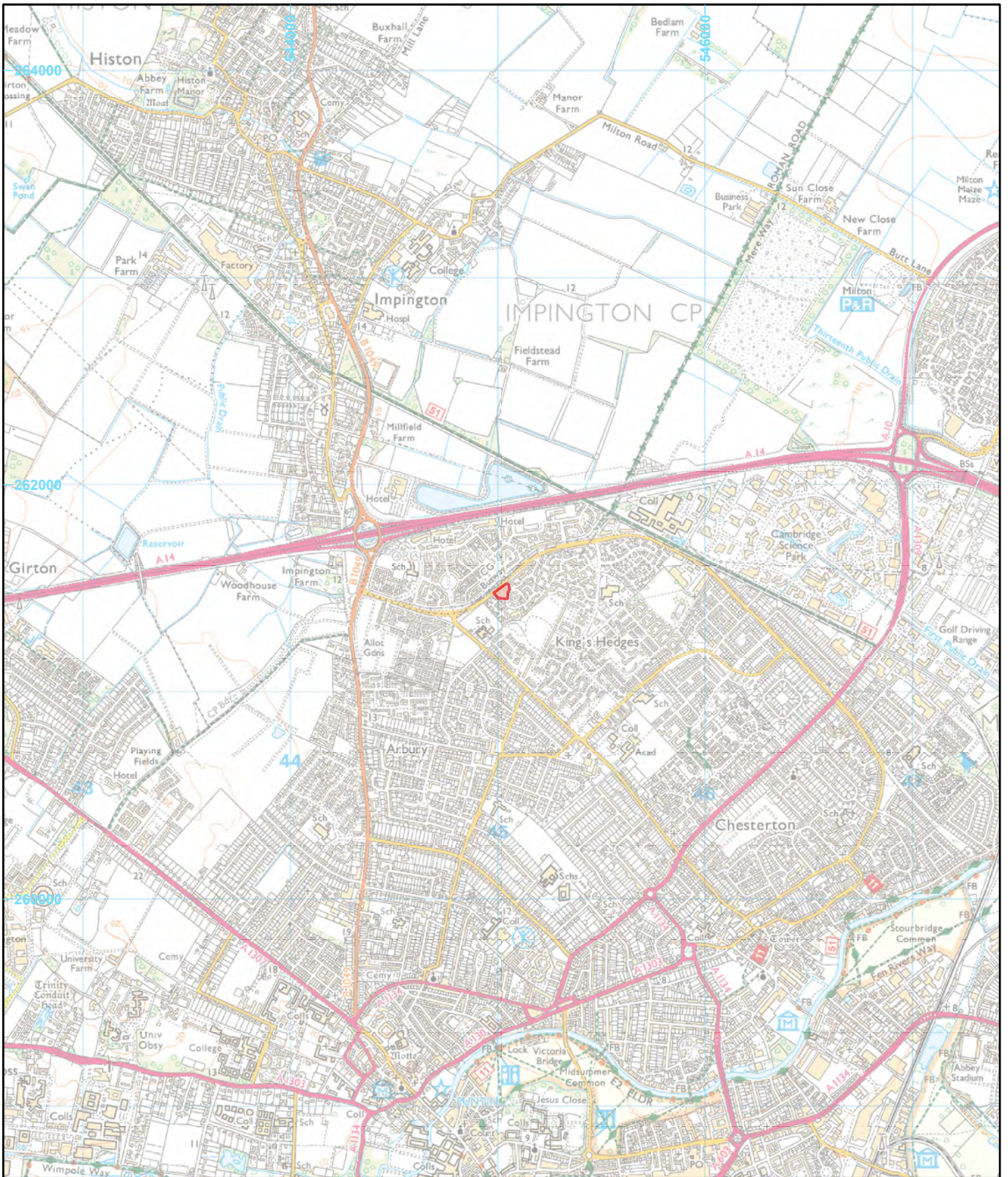
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		topsoil	mid grey brown silty clay			0.25	
	101	Natural		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown silt clay with gravel and chalk flecks/lumps			-	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	mid grey brown silty clay			0.14	
2	201	Layer		Made ground	Firm mid red brown silty clay with brick fragments			0.18	
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Crushed concrete			0.11	
2	203	Natural		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown silt clay with gravel and chalk flecks/lumps			-	
3	300	Layer		Block paving	Modern block paving			0.08	
3	301	Layer		Made ground	Sand and crushed stone			0.2	
3	302	Natural		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown silt clay with gravel and chalk flecks/lumps			-	
4	400	Layer		Tarmac	Tarmac surface			0.09	
4	401	Layer		Made ground	Sand and crushed stone			0.42	
4	402	Layer		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown silt clay with gravel and chalk flecks/lumps			-	
5	500	Layer		Block paving	Modern block paving			0.08	
5	501	Layer		Made ground	Sand and crushed stone			0.3	
5	502	Natural		Natural substrate	Mid orange brown silt clay with gravel and chalk flecks/lumps			-	
5	503	Modern		Modern disturbance	Dark orange brown silt sand – some concrete and block paving fragments. Possible former service trench	2m	0.8m	0.46m	

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
OASIS id ref:	cotswold2-508718.	
Project name	Buchan St Neighbourhood Centre Buchan Street, Cambridge: Archaeological Evaluation	
Short description	<p>In July 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge. This evaluation was undertaken for RPS Consulting, acting on behalf of The Hill</p> <p>Despite the location of the site in an area of some archaeological potential for remains of prehistoric and Roman date to be present, no archaeological features or finds were identified. Evidence for modern development-related impacts were identified in all trenches, either in the form of modern deposits associated with the landscaping of the site directly overlaying the natural substrate, for example in trenches 3 and 4, or modern services and other sub-surface intrusions including service trenches and post and fence bases such as were encountered in trenches 1 and 2.</p>	
Project dates	19th – 27th July 2022	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA), 2019, The Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge.. Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment. PCA Report No: R13919 RPS Consulting, 2020. Archaeological Impact Assessment: Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Cambridge, CB4 2UP	
Future work	No	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Buchan Street, Cambridge, Cambs, CB4 2XF	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.33ha	
Site co-ordinates	545007 261470	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Adrian Scruby	
Project Supervisor	Anna Wolf	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	None	N/A
Paper	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Facility	Trench record sheets, report
Digital	Archaeology Data Service	Survey, digital photos, report
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2022 Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge: <i>Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report SU0413_2		





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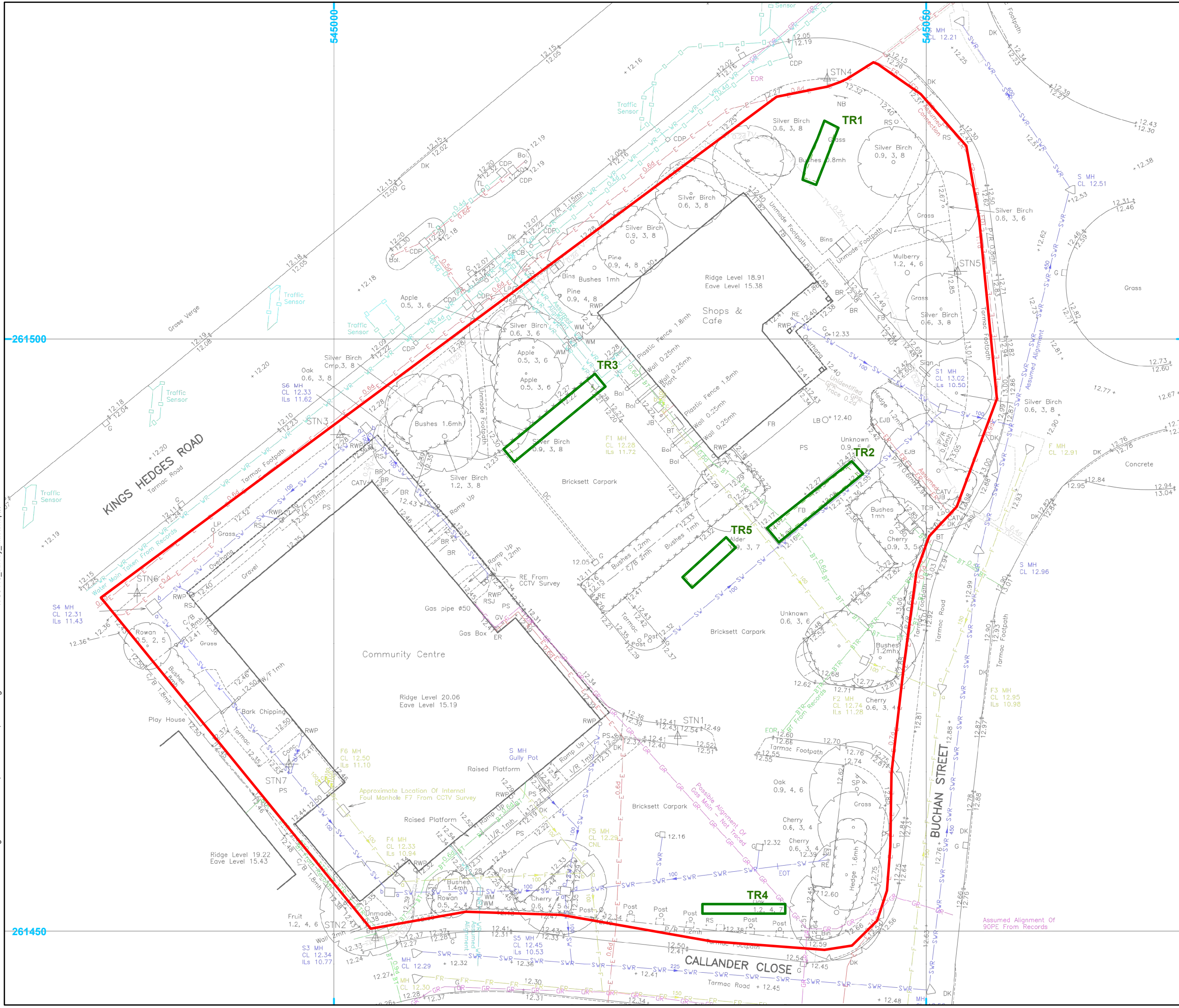
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre,  
 Buchan Street, Cambridge

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

**DRAWN BY** SF **PROJECT NO.** SU0413 **FIGURE NO.**  
**CHECKED BY** MP **DATE** 19/04/2022 **1**  
**APPROVED BY** AS **SCALE @ A4** 1:25,000

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- Legend**
- Site Boundary
  - Evaluation trench



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 SU0413 - Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre, Buchan Street, Cambridge

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan - as excavated

<b>DRAWN BY</b>	SF	<b>PROJECT NO</b>	SU0413	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>	
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	MP	<b>DATE</b>	15/08/2022		2
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	AS	<b>SCALE@A3</b>	1:300		



Fig. 3: Trench 1, looking northeast





Fig. 4: Trench 2, looking northeast



Fig. 5: Trench 3, looking west





Fig. 6: Trench 4, looking west



Fig. 7: Trench 5, looking northeast



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