

Denny Lodge

Chittering, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

August 2025

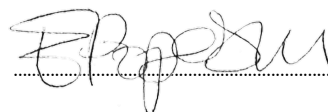
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Prepared by: Matthew Edwards (Fieldwork Supervisor)
Checked by: Kathryn Blackburn (Acting Project Manager)
Edited by: Joshua White (Post-Excavation Project Officer)
Approved for Issue by: Elizabeth Popescu (Head of Post-Excavation and Publications)
Signature:

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Oxford office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 980 700

Cambridge office

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridge
CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

Lancaster office

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880
250

E: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
W: oxfordarchaeology.com
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Denny Lodge, Chittering, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Matthew Edwards

With a contribution from Séverine Bézie BA MA

Illustrations by James Henderson BA MA

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SUMMARY

Between the 14th to the 16th of July 2025, Oxford Archaeology conducted an archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed development at Denny Lodge, Chittering in Cambridgeshire. The work was commissioned by Queens College, University of Cambridge and comprised the excavation of three evaluation trenches.

The investigation revealed four ditches and two pits, alongside several modern features. A sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from a ditch recorded across Trenches 1 and 3. Although the remaining features could not be accurately dated, their shared alignment with the aforementioned ditch suggests they may have also dated to the Roman period.

The character of the recorded archaeological remains indicates low levels of activity in the Roman period, probably of an agricultural nature, peripheral to areas of contemporary occupation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Queens College, University of Cambridge for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Lu Speariett who monitored the work on behalf of Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Kathryn Blackbourn. The fieldwork was directed by Matthew Edwards who was supported by James Henderson. Surveying and digitising were carried out by Matthew Edwards. Thanks are extended to the OA staff that cleaned and packaged the find under the supervision of Natasha Dodwell and prepared the archive under the supervision of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Queens College, University of Cambridge to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a proposed building to be used for research/development and production purposes at Denny Lodge, Chittering in Cambridgeshire (TL 49536 69453; Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (Planning Ref. 23/02886/FUL). A brief was set by Lu Speariett of the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OA detailing the work necessary to inform the planning process (Blackbourn 2025). This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements and details the results of the investigation. The fieldwork was carried out between the 14th to the 16th of July 2025.

1.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct (2022)*, *Standard for archaeological field evaluation (2023a)* and *Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation (2023b)*.

1.1.4 The works carried out and the contents of this report and the WSI (Blackbourn 2025) have met the requirements of Condition 6.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site lies to the east of the A10 between Chittering (to the north) and Waterbeach (to the south). The River Cam is located c. 3.7km to the east and the River Great Ouse is located c. 2km to the north-west.

1.2.2 The area of proposed development (0.59ha) consists of arable farmland and is bound to the north by Denny Lodge Business Park and to the east, south and west by arable farmland (Fig. 1).

1.2.3 The site sits at approximately 5m OD and the underlying geology comprises sandstone of the Woburn Sands Formation, with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2025).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 This section provides an archaeological and historical background of the site. The locations of select historic environment records (HER) are shown on Figure 2.

Prehistoric

1.3.2 A Bronze Age barrow has been recorded some 850m to the south of the site (HER 09655; not illustrated) and fragments of burnt flint have been recovered from this same area (HER 09656; not illustrated). An excavation c. 570m to the south-east of the site revealed a single feature which produced a small assemblage of Early Neolithic to Bronze Age struck flint (ECB 447; not illustrated).

- 1.3.3 Excavations at the waste management park to the south-west revealed ditches, pits and a well of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date, with some earlier struck flint also recovered (ECB 2396, ECB 2640 and ECB 3062).

Roman

- 1.3.4 Roman remains have been recorded in abundance within the vicinity of the site. Roman Akeman Street ran to the west of the site, parallel to the A10. This Roman road is thought to have extended from Cambridge to Denver (HER 05352). The Roman settlement of Chittering was located just 650m to the north (SM 1012359) and covers an area of approximately 2.6ha, comprising a group of raised, rectangular areas set out on a regular grid pattern, as well as trackways and depressions which possibly represent structures.
- 1.3.5 Roman pottery has been recovered roughly 330m to the south-east of the site (HER 05475) and a Roman enclosure was identified approximately 1km to the south-west, where finds including coins, pottery, a dagger, an axe and metal working debris have also been recovered (HER 05523). Further excavations conducted in this area have revealed a substantial Roman settlement dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD (ECB 2396, ECB 2640 and ECB 3062), where the recorded features produced a vast quantity of finds. Cropmarks just 550m to the east of the site suggest the presence of a further Roman settlement, with finds from this area including pottery and quern stone fragments (HER 06672; not illustrated). To the south of the proposed development area and possibly continuing across the site, further cropmarks of probable Roman enclosures have been recorded (MCB 31031; not illustrated), alongside cropmarks of probable Roman lazy beds (HER 11180; not illustrated).

Medieval to post-medieval

- 1.3.6 Denny Abbey (SM 1127360; not illustrated) – a Benedictine abbey dated to 1150 AD with a number of later additions – lies 1km to the south of the site. A series of earthworks dating to the medieval period surround the abbey (HER 05394a; not illustrated), which comprise boundary ditches, enclosures, ponds, gardens, a water channel and a causeway. Excavations to the south-east of the site revealed a medieval causeway/droeway thought to date to the 14th century AD, as well as associated medieval ditches and structures (ECB 447; not illustrated). The remains of a post-medieval windmill have been recorded 900m to the east of the site (HER 06359; not illustrated).

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project's aims were to:

- i. establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent) and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeological and/or palaeoenvironmental remains;
- ii. provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits;
- iii. provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the probable impacts of past land uses and the possible presence of masking deposits; and
- iv. provide – in the event that archaeological remains are found – sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of costs.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A total of three trenches measuring c. 20m in length were excavated. This approximated a 2% sample of the proposed development area. Trenches were located to ensure adequate coverage across the site. During the evaluation, the locations and dimensions of some of the trenches were modified because of constraints. In order to fully expose a ditch revealed in Trench 1, the trench was extended by 1.3m.

2.2.2 Service plans were checked before work commenced on site. Before trenching, the footprint of each trench was scanned by a qualified and experienced operator using a CAT and Genny with a valid calibration certificate.

2.2.3 The trenches were excavated by an eight tonne, 360° tracked mechanical excavator using a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket to the depth of geological horizons or to the upper interface of archaeological features or deposits, whichever was encountered first.

2.2.4 Topsoil, subsoil and archaeological deposits were kept separate to allow for sequential backfilling. The trenches were not backfilled until approval was given by CHET.

2.2.5 All machine excavation took place under constant supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. The top of the first archaeological deposits revealed were exposed by machine and then investigated by hand. Any archaeological deposits present were excavated stratigraphically to the level of the geological horizon where safe to do so. The spoil from both features and trenches was scanned visually and with a metal detector to aid the recovery of artefacts. Metal detecting was carried out in the location of the trenches prior to mechanical stripping by an experienced operator and this continued throughout the course of the excavation of the trenches. The base and sides of trenches were also scanned with a metal detector.

- 2.2.6 All features were investigated and recorded to provide an accurate evaluation of archaeological potential, while at the same time, minimising disturbance to archaeological features and deposits.
- 2.2.7 Interventions into linear features were at least 1m wide. Discrete features were half-sectioned (50% excavated). No environmental sampling was undertaken as no suitable deposits were identified.
- 2.2.8 Surveying was carried out with a survey-grade differential GPS (Leica GS16) fitted with 'smartnet' technology, providing an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.
- 2.3 Archiving**
- 2.3.1 The artefact and documentary archive will be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council's (CCC) Archaeological Archives Facility under the accession code ECB 7620, following the completion of a *Transfer of Title* form (see Croft *et al.* 2020). The digital component of the archive will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented in this section which includes stratigraphic descriptions of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. Full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. A report on the Roman pottery from the site is presented in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence across all three trenches was relatively uniform. The natural geology comprised a mix of mid yellowish brown silt and mid reddish brown sand. This was overlain by a mid reddish brown sandy silt subsoil which measured 0.1-0.2m thick (101=201=301). Above this was a mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil which was 0.25-0.5m thick (100=200=300). The overall thickness of the soil overburden varied between 0.4-0.65m.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good and the site remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Three trenches were excavated and archaeological features were recorded in all three trenches (Fig. 3). Modern features – comprising field drains, a service trench and a ditch – were identified in Trenches 1 and 2.

3.4 Trench 1 (Plate 1)

3.4.1 Trench 1 was located in the west of the site and was 21.3m long. The trench was aligned north-east to south-west and contained five ditches (including one of modern date). Three modern field drains were also identified, but were not excavated or formally recorded. The features are described below from the north-east to the south-west.

3.4.2 Modern ditch **110** was located at the north-east end of the trench. It was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 0.8m wide. It was only excavated to a depth of 0.08m. The ditch had been recently backfilled with modern debris including glass, concrete, plastic and animal bones.

3.4.3 Ditch **108** was aligned north-west to south-east. It was 0.4m wide and 0.08m deep with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a mid reddish brown sandy silt which produced no finds (109). It was truncated on its south-western edge by a modern field drain.

3.4.4 Ditch **102** (Fig. 4, Section 1) was also aligned north-west to south-east and measured 0.32m wide by 0.12m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill consisted of a mid yellowish orange sandy silt which produced no finds (103).

3.4.5 Ditch **104** (Plate 4) was located towards the south-west end of the trench. It was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 0.9m wide by 0.28m deep. The ditch had steeply sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill comprised a mid orangey grey sandy silt which produced no finds (105).

- 3.4.6 Ditch **106** (Plate 3), located at the south-west end of the trench, was aligned north-west to south-east. It measured 1.3m wide and 0.16m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by a mid reddish brown sandy silt (107) which produced an abraded sherd of Roman pottery (2g). The ditch was truncated on its south-western edge by a modern field drain and it was probably the same feature as ditch **302** in Trench 3.
- 3.5 Trench 2 (Plate 4)**
- 3.5.1 Trench 2 was located in the centre of the site, measured 20m long and was aligned north-west to south-east. It contained one pit and a modern service trench, both located at the north-west end of the trench. A field drain was also observed but it was not excavated. The features are described below from north-west to the south-east.
- 3.5.2 Modern service trench **204** was aligned north-east to south-west. It measured 0.32m wide and 0.2m deep. The trench had vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled by a mid greyish brown clayey silt (205) which produced modern ceramic building material (CBM; not retained).
- 3.5.3 Pit **202** (Fig. 4, Section 4) measured 1m in diameter and 0.28m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a flat base. The fill of the pit comprised a mid greyish brown silty sand which produced no finds (203).
- 3.6 Trench 3 (Plate 5)**
- 3.6.1 Trench 3 was located in the south-east of the site, was aligned north-east to south-west, and contained one pit and one ditch. The features are described below from north-east to south-west.
- 3.6.2 Pit **304** (Fig. 4, Section 3) was located in the north-east part of the trench. It measured 0.92m in diameter and 0.33m deep. The pit had steeply sloping sides, a concave base and contained a mid reddish brown silty sand that produced no finds (305).
- 3.6.3 Ditch **302** (Plate 6) was located at the south-west end of the trench and was aligned north-west to south-east. It measured 1.2m wide, 0.34m deep, had gently sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a mid greyish brown silty sand which produced no finds (303). This feature was probably a continuation of ditch **106** recorded in Trench 1.
- 3.7 Artefact summary**
- 3.7.1 A single sherd of Roman pottery (2g) was recovered during the evaluation. It is a heavily abraded body sherd from a Horningsea Reduced ware jar or bowl. It was retrieved from the fill (107) of ditch **106** in Trench 1. It broadly dates from the mid 1st to mid 4th centuries AD.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of the field investigation

4.1.1 The trial trenches achieved good coverage of the site and were located to maximise the potential for exposing archaeological features. The ground and site conditions were generally good throughout the course of the fieldwork. Machining was carried out cleanly with visibility of all features and deposits good. The results of the evaluation are considered to be a true reflection of the archaeological potential of the site.

4.2 Results and interpretation

4.2.1 The evaluation demonstrated the presence of a limited number of archaeological features, possibly associated with the Roman activity recorded in the surrounding area. Known Roman settlement remains are located at Chittering, c. 650m to the north, with cropmark evidence of Roman occupation also recorded c. 550m to the east. Although most of the features recorded during the evaluation could not be dated, it is possible that some were of Roman date based on their shared alignment with ditch **106=302**, the only securely dated feature recorded in this investigation. This feature was recorded in Trenches 1 and 3, and produced a single sherd of Roman pottery.

4.2.2 The character of the archaeological remains recorded indicates low levels of activity in the Roman period, probably of an agricultural nature, peripheral to areas of contemporary occupation.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of probable Roman features across the site which probably related to agricultural activities.

4.3.2 While the remains encountered are not considered to be of high archaeological significance in isolation, their identification adds to the picture of Roman land-use along this stretch of Akeman Street and beyond the limits of the settlements previously recorded in the environs.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying the natural geology of pale yellowish brown silt and mid reddish brown sand.					Length (m)	21.3
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.25-0.3	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.15-0.2	Subsoil	-	-
102	Cut	0.32	0.12	Ditch	-	-
103	Fill	-	0.12	Fill of ditch 102	-	-
104	Cut	0.9	0.28	Ditch	-	-
105	Fill	-	0.28	Fill of ditch 104	-	-
106	Cut	1.3	0.16	Ditch	-	-
107	Fill	-	0.16	Fill of ditch 106	Pottery	1st-4th centuries AD
108	Cut	0.4+	0.08	Ditch	-	-
109	Fill	-	0.08	Fill of ditch 108	-	-
110	Cut	0.8	0.08+	Modern ditch	-	-
111	Fill	-	0.08+	Fill of modern ditch 110	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying the natural geology of pale yellowish brown silt and mid reddish brown sand.					Length (m)	20
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.6
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.45-0.5	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.1-0.15	Subsoil	-	-
202	Cut	1	0.28	Pit	-	-
203	Fill	-	0.28	Fill of pit 202	-	-
204	Cut	0.32	0.2	Modern service trench		
205	Fill	-	0.2	Fill of modern service trench 204	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying the natural geology of pale yellowish brown silt and mid reddish brown sand.					Length (m)	20
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer	-	0.35-0.45	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil	-	-
302	Cut	0.92	0.33	Ditch	-	-
303	Fill	-	0.33	Fill of ditch 302	-	-
304	Cut	1.2	0.34	Pit	-	-
305	Fill	-	0.34	Fill of pit 304	-	-

APPENDIX B ARTEFACT REPORT

B.1 Pottery

By Severine Bézie

- B.1.1 A single sherd of Roman pottery (2g) was recovered during the evaluation. It is a heavily abraded body sherd from a Horningsea Reduced ware jar or bowl (HOR RE/R02; Tomber and Dore 1998, 116; Evans *et al.* 2017, 51-2). It was retrieved from the fill (107) of ditch **106** in Trench 1. It broadly dates from the mid 1st to mid 4th centuries AD. Horningsea Reduced ware was produced at the Horningsea kilns, approximately 8km north-east of Cambridge.

APPENDIX C BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX D SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-536000
Project Name	Denny Lodge, Chittering, Cambridgeshire

Start of Fieldwork	14/07/2025	End of Fieldwork	16/07/25
Previous Work	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	CHITDEN25	Planning App. No.	23/02886/FUL
HER Number	ECB7620	Related Numbers	

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Rural Commercial
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Techniques used

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Roman (43 to 410)	Pottery	Roman (43 to 410)
Ditch	Uncertain		

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address Denny Lodge Business Park Ely Road Chittering Cambridgeshire CB25 9PH
District	South Cambridgeshire	
Parish	Waterbeach	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	0.59ha	
National Grid Ref	TL 49536 69453	

Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology
Project Brief Originator	Lu Speariett
Project Design Originator	Kathryn Blackbourn
Project Manager	Kathryn Blackbourn
Project Supervisor	Matthew Edwards

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archives Facility	ECB7620
	Digital Archive	ADS
Paper Archive	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archives Facility	ECB7620

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

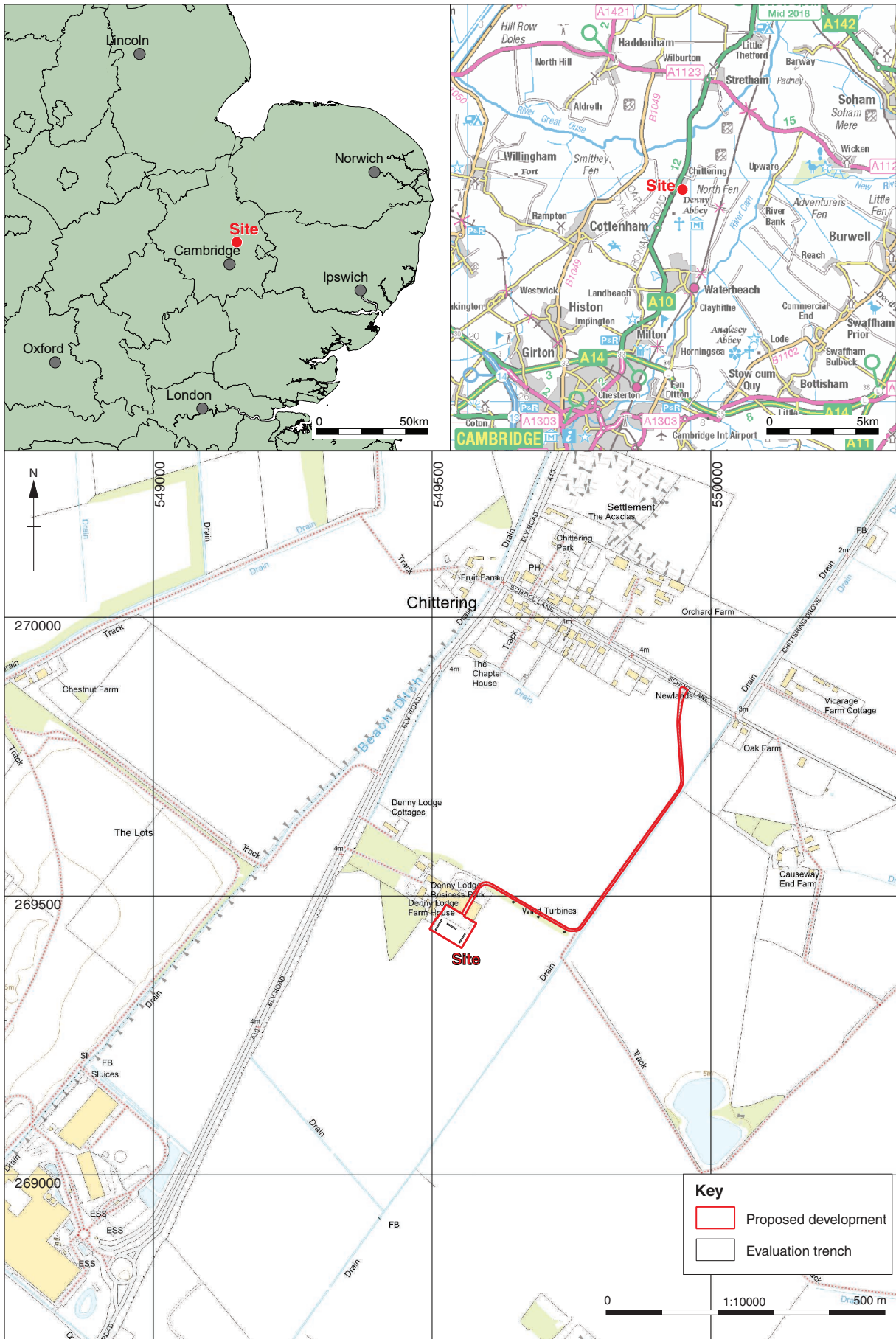
Digital Media

Database	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Figure 1: Site location map showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area (red)



Figure 2: Selected HER data

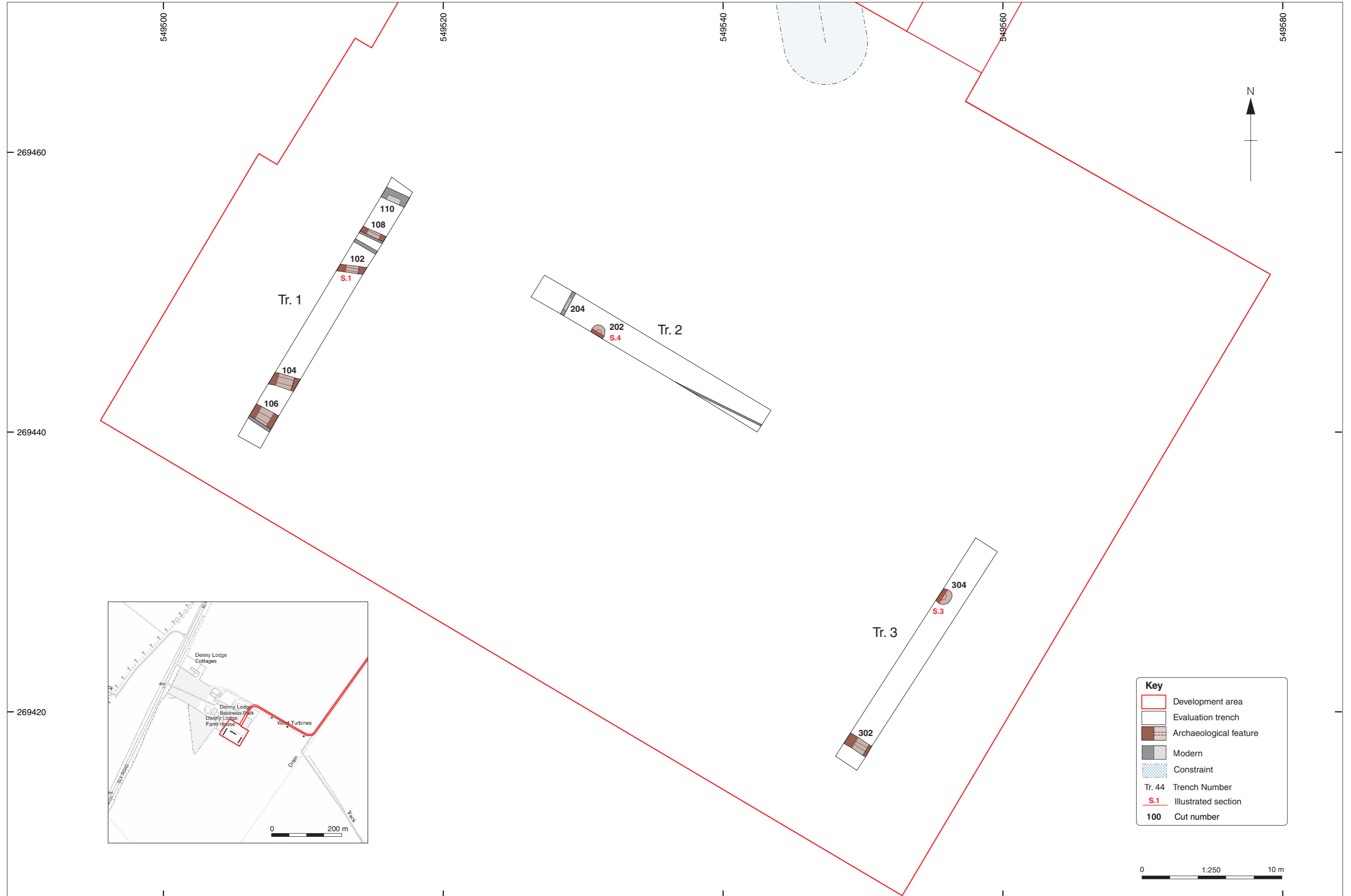
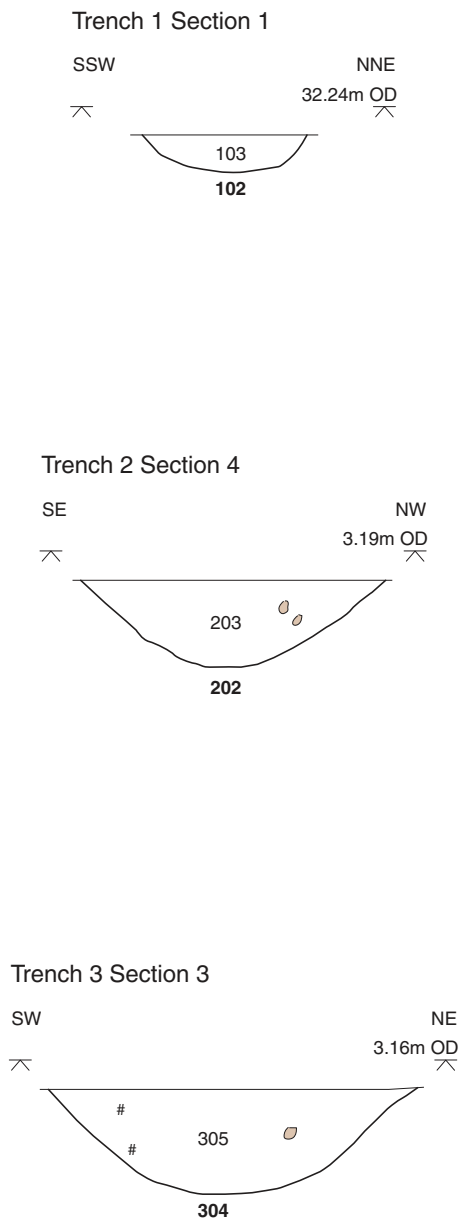


Figure 3: Site plan of trenches 1-3



Key

- Top surface
- Cut
- Deposit
- 117** Cut number
- 116** Deposit number
- Stone
- # # Charcoal
- 32.26m OD Level



Figure 4: Selected sections



Plate 1: Trench 1, from the south-west



Plate 2: Trench 2, from the north-west



Plate 3: Trench 3, from the south-west



Plate 4: Ditch **104**, Trench 1, from the east



Plate 5: Ditch **106**, Trench 1, from the south-east



Plate 6: Ditch **302**, Trench 3, from the south-east

Cambridge office

15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridgeshire, CB23 8SQ
T: +44(0)1223 850500
E: info@oxfordarchaeology.com

Lancaster office

Mill 3,
Moor Lane,
Lancaster, LA1 1QD
T: +44(0)1524 541000
E: info@oxfordarchaeology.com

Oxford office

Janus House,
Osney Mead,
Oxford OX2 0ES
T: +44(0)1865 980700
E: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
W: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Chief Executive Officer
Ken Welsh, BSc, MCIfA, FSA
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