

Iron Age–medieval remains at 8 Market Street, Soham



Excavation Report



September 2012

Client: C J Murfitt Ltd

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Iron Age – medieval remains at 8 Market Street, Soham

Archaeological Excavation

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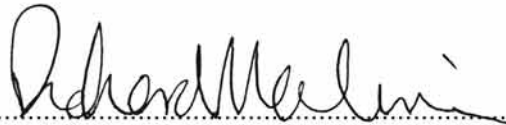
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Summary

Between 16th and 24th July 2012 Oxford Archaeology East carried out a small excavation at 8 Market Street, Soham, Cambridgeshire in advance of redevelopment of the site for residential purposes. Three trenches were excavated at the rear of the plot, each measuring 3m² on the surface. The trenches were machine excavated to a depth of approximately 0.9m, at which point the trench was stepped and a 1.5m² test pit was hand excavated in the centre of each.

*All three trenches contained a preserved Iron Age soil horizon measuring up to 0.5m thick. The soil horizon yielded an assemblage of predominantly Early Iron Age pottery (54 sherds, 574g), although there were a number of Late Bronze Age sherds, later Iron Age sherds and Early Roman sherds, along with a pair of tweezers of possible Roman date. Although there had been a certain level of disturbance within the soil over a long period of time, it is believed this is the remnants of a soil which, according to the datable pottery, began forming during the Late Bronze Age or earlier, and had midden material periodically worked in as soil development continued. Several features truncated the agricultural soil including ditch **111** and pit **132** in trench 2, ditch **120** in trench 3 and at least one posthole. There were several post-medieval features including a wall footing and possible yard surface in trench 1. The rear of the plot had clearly avoided any major modern truncation or disturbance; it had previously been sealed by concrete slabs and before that was back garden plots since at least the late 19th century. Part of an in-situ clunch built wall was visible on the surface and correlates with the eastern side of a small out-building on both the 1st and 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey maps. The site also features on Palmer's 1656 map of Soham. A building which fronts on to Market Street is visible although the majority of the plot including trenches 1-3 are located within the back garden.*

This report also integrates the result of a single evaluation trench excavated along the front of the plot in 2004. A gully, possibly Iron Age in date, was the earliest feature. Subsequently a property boundary was defined and re-established in the 12th to 13th centuries by intercutting ditches. Further ditches or large pits were dug at about the same time.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological excavation was conducted at 8 Market Street, Soham (Figs. 1 and 2) in advance of the construction of 4 townhouses with associated parking and services. The excavation of 3 trenches follows on from an evaluation in 2004 (Cooper 2004) which comprised one trench at the front of the plot. The results of the earlier evaluation will be integrated here.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application E/03/00845/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site is Lower Chalk according to the British Geological Survey (1981). In reality, all three trenches contained an orangey brown silt which overlay the chalk and probably represents 3rd Terrace River Deposits. The land sloped downhill slightly from west to east. The top of trench 3 in the west was at 8.92m OD, while the top of trench 1 in the east was at 8.62m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Cambridgeshire Historic Environment (CHER) record numbers are noted in Fig. 1.
- 1.3.2 There are a number of prehistoric findspots in Soham, including unlocated Mesolithic tranchet axes (CHER 07098), unlocated Neolithic finds (CHER 07087) and a Neolithic Axe (CHER 11019). Iron Age remains are relatively scarce within Soham. Excavation by Archaeological Solutions Ltd. at the old Parish Hall site, only 100m to the south, uncovered part of a ditched enclosure of Late Iron Age date, along with rubbish pits and a possible post-built structure (Thomas Woolhouse, pers. comm.). The site produced over 500 sherds of Late Iron Age/Early Roman pottery as well as a small number of residual Neolithic/Bronze Age sherds. Iron Age features uncovered during work at St Andrews House 250m to the south-west (CHER 15776 – Atkins 2004) included two east to west orientated ditches, a number of pits and some possible postholes. Further afield, 1km to the south, evaluation at Fordham Road allotments uncovered evidence for prehistoric settlement comprising at least two rectangular ditched enclosures associated with evidence for timber buildings and rubbish pits (CHER 14631 – Connor 2001).
- 1.3.3 Roman remains are more common in this area although Soham itself does not appear to have been a major Roman centre. Human skeletal remains along with Roman pottery were found off White Hart Lane 50m to the south of the development area (CHER 06971). The old Parish Hall site, which was occupied in the Late Iron Age/Early

Roman period (predominantly 1st century AD), was re-occupied in the Late Roman period, specifically the 4th century (Thomas Woolhouse, pers. Comm.). Roman quarrying was also discovered during evaluation at the same site (CHER MCB18184 – Thatcher 2008). Approximately 250m to the south-east a number of ditches were found south of Paddock Street, at least one of which was securely dated as Roman (CHER MCB18200 – Rees 2008). More convincing Roman settlement features were found at the Fordham Road allotments site including possible evidence for buildings, and finds of ceramic building material, mainly Roman tile (CHER 14631 – Connor 2001). Close by a considerable number of features of Romano-British date were found (mainly 2nd century), including enclosure ditches and pits (CHER 14630 – Murray and Hounsell 2001).

- 1.3.4 The modern town of Soham is Early Saxon in origin. The name is derived from the Old English *Soegan Hamm* or 'swampy' settlement referring to its position on a peninsula in Soham Mere (Reaney 1943). Twelfth century documentary sources refer to the foundation in the 7th century AD of a monastery by St Felix, first bishop of the East Angles, who was buried in Soham. The monastery was destroyed during the Danish invasions of East Anglia (late 9th century) along with many other religious foundations in the area, never to be re-established (Salzman 1948). The exact location of the monastery is unknown, although it is possible that the Parish church of St Andrew's (late 12th century) was founded on the site of its Saxon predecessor. The sub-circular pattern of roads around the centre of the village may suggest a religious precinct (Oosthuizen 2000).
- 1.3.5 Funerary remains from several cemeteries attest Early Saxon occupation at Soham. Burials were discovered in the church graveyard (TL 5998 7239) where grave goods and stray finds included brooches, several beads and spearheads (Fox 1923). At 11 White Hart Lane, Saxon inhumations were observed (CHER 11789 – Robinson 1995) although these may not have been *in-situ*. A number of burials were also recovered in the Victorian period and are recorded on the 1886 First Edition Ordnance Survey map. It is thought the monastery cemetery lies in this area. Further to the south, at the Soham/Fordham Waterworks, lay another cemetery where excavations conducted in the 1930s (Lethbridge 1933) located some 23 furnished inhumations (and 2 cremations assigned to the 6th-7th century).
- 1.3.6 As yet there has been no definite archaeological evidence for Middle Saxon activity in Soham, though a single sherd of Ipswich ware was recovered during excavations at St Andrew's House (Atkins 2004).
- 1.3.7 The manor of Soham was given to Ely Abbey shortly after the refoundation of the latter in the 10th century (Conybeare 1887). Evidence for occupation during the Saxo-Norman period has emerged through recent excavations. At Nos. 9-13 Pratt Street (275m to the north-west) an archaeological evaluation revealed shallow gullies, a posthole and a large pit containing 11th or 12th century Thetford Ware (CHER 11932 – Hatton and Last 1997). Evaluation trenches at the rear of No. 38 Station Road produced evidence of ditches dating from the 10th to 12th centuries (CHER 11985 – Heawood 1997). Close by, evaluations at Weatheralls Primary School revealed early medieval field systems containing 10th to 13th century pottery, predominantly St Neots and Thetford type ware (CHER 07099 – Bray 1991; Phillips and Diffey 2011).
- 1.3.8 The remains from Weatheralls Primary School (and from High Street/Clay Street) represent a major phase of development and prosperity that is attested by the construction of St Andrew's Church in the late 12th century. Soham is also thought to have held an unchartered market before the 12th century (Ridout 2000). Evaluations in

the town centre at St Andrew's House (CHER 15776 – Casa Hatton 2000; Atkins 2004) produced medieval (12th to 16th century) pits, ditches and posthole structures. A small evaluation at Ten Bell Lane produced one late medieval quarry pit and some undated ditches (CHER MCB16279 – Atkins 2004a).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank C.J. Murfitt Ltd. who funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer and the site was excavated by the author. Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council monitored the project. Gareth Rees carried out the site survey. A number of specialists contributed to this report, including Matt Brudenell, Nina Crummy, Chris Faine and Rachel Fosberry. The report is illustrated by Lucy Offord.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this excavation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that a series of test pits be hand excavated, below the depth of the modern overburden and 19th century soil dumps which can be mechanically machined, in the location of three soakaways that are to be positioned at the rear of the development. The soakaways are to be roughly 1.5m² and will have a total impact on archaeological remains in the area. Each test pit measured 3m² on the surface. The trenches were machine excavated to a depth of approximately 0.9m, at which point the trench was stepped and a 1.5m² test pit was hand excavated in the centre of each.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.4 Five environmental samples were collected to assess the possible survival of micro- and macro-botanical remains.
- 2.2.5 The water table was encountered at approximately 7.6m OD, roughly 1.2m below the modern ground level, making excavation of the lower deposits difficult.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Results are presented by trench, starting with the earliest deposit in each case. Figure 2 shows the trench layout in relation to the modern road layout and plot boundaries, while Figure 3 shows more detailed trench information.

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 Trench 1 was located in the south-east of the development area. Three postholes (**113**, **115**, **117**) were located in the base of the trench, cut in to the natural geology. The relationship of the postholes with soil horizon (107) was not completely clear although there was a suggestion that posthole **117** was sealed by (107), visible in section 102 (Fig. 4). All three postholes were sub-circular, measuring no more than 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep. Each contained a dark brown clayey silt fill; the only finds recovered were burnt flint (189g) and ceramic building material (23g) from posthole **113**.
- 3.2.2 As stated above, it appeared that at least one posthole (**117**) was sealed by soil horizon (107), a dark greyish brown clayey silt which extended across the whole trench and measured 0.34m thick. It contained a small assemblage of pottery (10 sherds, 113g); predominantly Early Iron Age in date although individual sherds of possible Late Bronze Age Plainware Post-Deverel Rimbury (PDR) wares and Middle – Late Iron fabrics were found. It also contained 151g of animal bone, which was not identifiable to species.
- 3.2.3 In the south and east facing trench sections, soil horizon (107) was sealed by a possible external yard surface (134), a yellowish brown gravel and sand layer measuring 0.1m thick. It contained one sherd (27g) of post-medieval glazed pottery.
- 3.2.4 In the north facing section a brick-built wall (105) was visible (Plate 1). It was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east and extended only 0.3m in to the trench. There was an associated cut feature (**106**) directly to the west which had been backfilled with loosely compacted dark brown clayey silt (104). The wall correlates with the corner of a small backyard building visible on the 1st and 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1886 and 1926 respectively (Figs. 6 and 7).
- 3.2.5 Layer (102) appeared to have been built up against wall (105), and was also visible in the west facing section (section 101 in Fig. 4) and part of the south facing section. It consisted of a mid brown clayey silt with inclusions of chalk lumps and contained 5 sherds (152g) of post-medieval glazed pottery.
- 3.2.6 Subsoil layer (101) sealed layer (102). It measured 0.3m thick and consisted of a dark brown clayey silt with rare inclusions of fragmented post-medieval brick. The sequence was completed by topsoil (100), a dark blackish brown clayey silt measuring 0.14m thick. It contained occasional fragments of broken brick and tile and fragments of coke.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was located in the south of the development area. The natural geology was sealed by (130), a layer of disturbed natural (section 100 in Fig. 4). It consisted of a brownish orange sandy silt measuring 0.1m thick. Overlying it was soil horizon (108), equivalent to layer (107) in trench 1. Soil horizon (108) was a mid greyish brown clayey silt measuring 0.5m thick. It contained a moderate density of pottery (37 sherds, 419g), predominantly Early Iron Age in date along with 3 sherds of Late Bronze Age PDR

pottery, 2 later Iron Age sherds and one Early Roman rim sherd, the majority from the 1.5m² hand excavated test pit. It also contained a small quantity of animal bone (133g) comprising fragmentary large mammal ribs along with a single sheep/goat radius. Three fragments of burnt flint were recovered (133g) along with several pieces of struck flint (46g)

- 3.3.2 Truncating the soil horizon was a pit and a posthole. Pit **132** was located in the south-west corner of the trench. It was sub-circular in plan, measuring at least 1m wide and at least 0.45m thick with steep sides (section 106 in Fig. 4). The base was unexcavated due to the water table. It contained two fills, the lower of which (131) was a blackish brown clayey silt with occasional flecks of charcoal. The upper fill (129) consisted of a dump of poorly fired clay and marl, which was a mixture of yellow and orange in colour. It contained a single sherd of Early Iron Age pottery (13g). A single grain of charred barley was recovered from environmental sample 104. Posthole **126** was located directly to the north and was circular in plan, measuring 0.18m in diameter and 0.3m deep. It contained a single fill and no finds were recovered.
- 3.3.3 A pit similar to pit **132** was located on the northern side of the trench. Pit **138** was unexcavated but could be seen in section measuring approximately 0.15m deep. It again contained a large lump of fired clay.
- 3.3.4 Deposit (109) was a discrete dump of degraded fired clay sitting on top of soil horizon (108) in the north-east corner of the 1.5m² test pit. It measured approximately 0.2m in diameter and 0.25m deep.
- 3.3.5 Posthole **124** was located in the centre of the trench. It was not clear whether it truncated soil horizon (108) or was sealed by it although the most likely interpretation is that it was associated with the pits and posthole. It was circular in plan, measuring 0.2m in diameter and 0.09m deep. Its single fill contained no finds.
- 3.3.6 Ditch **111** was later than pit **132** as it clearly truncated fill (129), the poorly fired clay fill (see Plate 2). Ditch **111** was orientated north-west to south-east. It measured at least 1.5m wide as it extended beyond the south-west corner of the trench. It was excavated to a total depth of 1m before the water table prevented further excavation. This depth includes part in the upper trench section, which was machine excavated. The ditch contained a single fill (110), a dark brown clayey silt, which yielded 10 sherds (39g) of Early Iron Age pottery, 7 sherds (61g) of Middle – Late Iron Age pottery and 3 sherds (21g) of Roman pottery. Animal bone totalled 96g and consisted of an intact cattle 1st phalanx along with a large number of anuran amphibian remains from environmental samples. Environmental sample 101 produced cereals in the form of wheat grains along with fragments of charcoal. Several of the grains are elongated and have the general morphology of the hulled wheat species spelt/emmer. It also contained a single spikelet fork of spelt wheat and several glume bases of both spelt and emmer wheat, evidence of crop processing.
- 3.3.7 Pit **122** truncated ditch **111** in the south-west corner of the trench and was also visible in section 100 (Fig. 4). It measured at least 0.45m wide and at least 0.6m deep although it was not fully excavated due to the water table. It contained a single dark brown clayey silt fill (121), which yielded 3 sherds (38g) of Early Iron Age pottery, 2 sherds (27g) of Roman pottery and 40g of animal bone; a sheep mandible from an animal around 2-4 years of age at death.
- 3.3.8 Subsoil layer (135) sealed pit **122**. It consisted of a mid greyish brown clayey silt, measuring 0.4m thick. The only finds recovered were 3 sherds of pottery (22g), one of

which was Roman and two of which were post-medieval in date. Topsoil (100) completed the sequence, which in trench 2 measured up to 0.2m thick.

3.4 Trench 3

- 3.4.1 Trench 3 was located in the south-west of the development area. The natural geology was sealed by (130), which in trench 3 measured 0.08m thick. Overlying it was soil horizon (118), equivalent to layer (107) in trench 1 and (108) in trench 2. Soil horizon (118) was a dark greyish brown clayey silt measuring 0.5m thick. Similar to (108), it contained a pottery assemblage which was predominantly Early Iron Age (17 sherds, 168g) along with 2 sherds (8g) of possible Late Bronze Age pottery, 3 sherds (24g) of Middle – Late Iron Age pottery and 6 sherds (26g) of Roman pottery. The Roman pottery included 5 sherds from an Early Roman poppy beaker. A pair of plain tweezers, which may have been medical rather than cosmetic, were also recovered (see Appendix B.2). The tweezers were cast rather than wrought, which suggests a Roman date rather than Anglo-Saxon or medieval, as Anglo-Saxon cast tweezers are invariably decorated while medieval tweezers are usually wrought. Three fragments of burnt flint were also recovered (96g), along with a small flint scraper (17g), possibly Bronze Age in date. Environmental remains consisted of a single oat grain and fragments of charcoal.
- 3.4.2 Ditch **120** truncated the soil horizon, which could be seen in section 105 (Fig. 4). It was orientated north-east to south-west, making it perpendicular to ditch **111** in trench 2 (Plate 3). Ditch **120** measured 0.62m wide and 0.2m deep with steep sides and a U-shaped profile. Its single dark brown clayey silt fill contained Early Iron Age pottery (7 sherds, 72g), one sherd (7g) of possible Middle – Late Iron Age pottery and a semi-complete but extremely fragmented adult cattle cranium (430g). A small number of hulled wheat grains and fragments of charcoal were recovered from environmental sample 102.
- 3.4.3 There was no clear relationship between layer (127) and ditch **120**. Layer (127) definitely sealed soil horizon (118) and also contained a fragment of post-medieval clay pipe and so is most likely later than ditch **120**. Layer (127) measured 0.38m thick and was very similar to (118), being a dark brown clayey silt which was slightly more compact than the underlying soil.
- 3.4.4 There were two modern features in trench 3, both associated with the garage which had previously occupied the site. Pit **137** was located in the south-west corner of the trench and was visible in both the base of the trench and section 104 (Fig. 4). It measured at least 2m wide and 0.94m deep and was backfilled by loosely compacted deposits of re-deposited natural (136). In the north-east corner of the trench was the corner of the foundation cut for a brick-lined diesel tank which was still open and extended to the north-east of the trench.

3.5 2004 Trench

- 3.5.1 The 2004 evaluation trench was located in the north of the development area, close to the street frontage. It measured 9m long and 1.10m deep and was orientated west-south-west to east-north-east.

- 3.5.2 Medieval and earlier features consisting of intercutting ditches and pits were sealed by post-medieval and modern deposits consisting of make-up layers and a modern tarmac surface (section 1 in Fig. 4).
- 3.5.3 Beamslot **18** is likely to have been the earliest feature based on its stratigraphic relationships and its north-west to south-east orientation, which was at variance to other linear features. This orientation has more in common with ditch **111** in trench 2 and ditch **120** in trench 3. The beamslot was more than 0.6m long, 0.3m wide and 0.07m deep. It contained a single sherd of Early Iron Age pottery (12g). Beamslot **18** was cut by ditch **12**.
- 3.5.4 Posthole **7** was located adjacent to beamslot **18**. It was circular in plan, measuring 0.24m in diameter and 0.09m deep with a flat base. No finds were recovered from its dark greyish brown silty clay fill (6).
- 3.5.5 A series of intercutting ditches (**12**, **14**, and **16**) were located in the centre of the trench, on a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation.
- 3.5.6 Ditch **12** measured 0.55m wide and 0.4m deep and was filled by (11), a dark grey silty clay. Pottery from this fill included 7 sherds (142g) of Early Iron Age pottery, 1 sherd of possible later Iron Age pottery (7g) and 3 sherds (19g) of medieval pottery, two of which were Thetford ware dating to the 11th to 12th century. The fill also contained a butchered cattle femur and fragments of wheat grains and fat hen from sample 2.
- 3.5.7 Ditch **16** was at least 0.55m wide and more than 0.4m deep, it was filled by (15), a dark grey silty clay. Finds from this fill comprised a pottery sherd of potential Saxon date (6g) and two sherds (11g) of medieval pottery dating to the 12th to 13th century.
- 3.5.8 Ditch **14** truncated ditches **12** and **16**. It measured 1.3m wide and 0.4m deep. It was filled by (13), a dark greyish brown silty clay which contained two sherds (17g) of 12th to 13th century pottery along with a sherd of possible later Iron Age date (16g). A single portion of sheep radius was also recovered.
- 3.5.9 In the western corner of the trench and on the same alignment as ditches **12**, **14** and **16**, were two large features, **5** and **10**.
- 3.5.10 Pit/ditch **5** was orientated east to west and was at least 1m wide and more than 0.58m deep. Its vertical sides suggested it may have been a pit, although the possibility that it was a ditch cannot be ruled out. It was filled by (4), a dark grey silty clay which contained 12 sherds (63g) of medieval pottery dating from the 13th to 14th centuries and a single sherd (5g) of possible later Iron Age date. There were also a number of loose pig teeth along with a portion of sheep metatarsal. It was truncated by pit/ditch **10**.
- 3.5.11 Pit/ditch **10** was orientated north to south and was more than 1.5m wide and at least 1.1m deep. Its vertical sides suggested it was more likely to have been a pit, although the possibility that it was a large ditch should not be ruled out. It was filled by (9), a dark grey silty clay that contained several small sherds of pottery. Most of the pottery (8 sherds, 41g) dated to the Early Iron Age, although some (3 sherds, 11g) were medieval dating to the 12th to 13th centuries, while a single sherd (6g) may have been Saxon. Wheat and oat seeds were recovered from sample 3.
- 3.5.12 Layer (8) sealed all of the features; it varied in thickness from 0.2m to 0.4m and consisted of a dark grey silty clay. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

- 3.5.13 Layer (3) sealed layer (8). It varied in thickness from 0.4m to 0.45m and consisted of dark grey silty clay. Victorian bricks and associated rubble were contained in this layer. Layer 3 was sealed by layer 2.
- 3.5.14 Subsoil layer (2) sealed layer (3). It varied in thickness from 0.2m to 0.55m and was a light grey silty clay which contained a large amount of modern building material.
- 3.5.15 Layer (1) sealed layer (2). It measured between 0.2m and 0.25m thick and consisted of tarmac and gravel.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Iron Age and Roman activity

- 4.1.1 Perhaps the most surprising finding of this small excavation was the survival of a lower soil horizon (107=108=118) which contained predominantly Early Iron Age pottery, which across the 3 trenches totalled 54 sherds, weighing 574g. The soil horizon also contained pottery both earlier and later in date including 6 sherds (91g) of Late Bronze Age Post-Deverel Rimbury pottery, 8 sherds (61g) of Middle and Late Iron Age fabrics and 7 sherds (32g) of Early Roman pottery. A pair of tweezers were also recovered from the soil horizon, most probably of Roman date. The most likely interpretation is that this preserved soil horizon periodically saw midden material worked in throughout the Iron Age, possibly since the Bronze Age, and into the Roman period. If the soil was being cultivated or ploughed during this time there may have been a certain level of disturbance and some mixing of finds. The density of Early Iron Age sherds in relatively small test pits suggests settlement near by, which at the beginning of the Iron Age would probably have consisted of a small unenclosed farmstead. It is possible that layer 8 in the 2004 trench equates to the soil horizon. It was recorded as sealing all of the features (see section 1 in Fig. 4) but given the wet conditions during the evaluation, the difficulty in spotting relationships in trenches 1-3, and without prior knowledge of a preserved Iron Age soil being present on the site, it is quite possible that at least some of the features truncated layer (8). The lack of finds is probably due to the fact that layer (8) was removed by machine.
- 4.1.2 There were a number of features truncating the soil horizon in trenches 2 and 3. The most significant of these were the two ditches; ditch **111** in trench 2, which was orientated north-west to south-east, and ditch **120** in trench 3 which was perpendicular to it. Gully or beamslot **18** in the 2004 trench was on the same alignment as ditch **120** and may have been contemporary. The three ditches contained a similar mixture of residual pottery; mainly Early Iron Age but with rare instances of Late Bronze Age pottery and several sherds of later Iron Age and Roman pottery. The orientation of this system of ditches contrasts with the modern layout, which itself can probably be traced back until at least the late medieval period. The earliest map of Soham is Palmer's map of 1656 (Fig. 5), which shows a similar road layout to the present one. The alignments could tie in to an earlier medieval layout of roads and boundaries for which little or no trace survives. However, it is more likely, given date of the pottery, that the ditches were elements of an Iron Age field-system or part of a farmstead which occupied the site. The field-system most likely dates to either the later Iron Age or the Early Roman period as ditched enclosures are not a feature of Early Iron Age settlements within the region and this correlates with ditches **111** and **120** truncating at least the lower part of the soil horizon. A similar picture emerged at the old Parish Hall Site 100m to the south, where the alignments of the Late Iron Age ditched enclosure and possible post-built structure varied with the medieval street plan (Thomas Woolhouse, pers. comm.).
- 4.1.3 An Iron Age date is supported by the presence of spelt and emmer wheat in ditches **111** and **120**. Emmer wheat was gradually replaced by spelt wheat during the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period but neither species were cultivated during the medieval period. Ditch **111** also contained a single spikelet fork of spelt wheat and several glume bases of both spelt and emmer wheat, evidence for crop processing near by. Significantly, there was no spelt or emmer wheat in the samples taken from the soil horizon or the fired clay fill of pit **132**. Both are earlier than the ditches and the difference in environmental remains again highlights this.

- 4.1.4 Evidence for contemporary or at least broadly contemporary settlement was represented by the postholes and pits in trenches 1 and 2. In trench 2 there were two postholes (**124** and **126**), one of which (**126**) definitely truncated the soil horizon. There were also three instances of poorly fired clay or marl in trench 2. Deposit (109) was a discrete dump sitting on top of soil horizon (108), where as the other two were in cut features; one lump appeared to sit in a shallow cut (**138**), while a large dump (129) was present in pit **132**. It is difficult to interpret this spread of poorly fired clay, but given the presence of postholes it could be the degraded remains of daub from structures which stood on the site.
- 4.1.5 The overall sequence for the Iron Age activity on the site is slightly confused as not all relationships between features and the soil horizon were visible. However, the following sequence has been proposed. An existing soil which already contained sherds of Early Iron Age pottery was truncated by post-built structures and associated pits. These were superceded by a system of ditched boundaries, evidenced by ditch **111**, which clearly truncated the fired clay fill of pit **132**.

4.2 Medieval and post-medieval activity

- 4.2.1 A number of features in the 2004 trench were medieval in date. These included the series of intercutting ditches (**12**, **14**, **16**) orientated north-north-west to south-south-east, pit/ditch **10** which was parallel and pit/ditch **5**, which was perpendicular. All of these features were either parallel or perpendicular to the medieval road layout and as well as residual Iron Age pottery contained medieval pottery, mainly 12th to 13th century in date.
- 4.2.2 Post-medieval activity in trench 1 included a possible external surface, possibly a yard surface, and a brick-built wall (105), which correlates with the corner of a small backyard building visible on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig. 6). On the surface, between trenches 1 and 2, part of a clunch wall (133) was identified (Plate 4). It extended for 2m, orientated north-north-west to south-south-east (Fig. 3). A further study of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the wall matches the eastern side of a small building to the rear of cottages which front on to Crown Lane (modern day Market Street). In fact the wall may be on the boundary between two properties and this is certainly the case by the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1926 (Fig. 7). It is not possible to say when the wall was built although it does not appear to be present on Palmer's 1656 map of Soham (Fig. 5). The 1656 map shows that approximately two-thirds of the site was located within a single plot, which had a building fronting on to Market Street. The 2004 trench is within the area of the building and Market Street appears to be a lane or minor road. Trenches 1 and 2 are located within the back garden of the plot while trench 3 is outside the plot to the west.

4.3 Significance

- 4.3.1 Convincing Early Iron Age land-use has not previously been found in the historic core of Soham. The nearest known Iron Age activity was found at the old Parish Hall site to the south, although this dates to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman transition. Several features at St Andrew's House, 250m to the south-west, were dated as Iron Age (Atkins 2004). Out of a group of two ditches, four pits and two postholes only two features contained Iron Age pottery; one of the ditches (2 sherds) and one of the pits (13 sherds). In contrast, the ceramic assemblage from the current excavation is impressive in terms of the quantity retrieved from such a small sample. Perhaps more significant is the context

from which it was recovered. The lower soil horizon represents a sealed and mostly undisturbed soil, which may have seen midden material worked in since at least the Late Bronze Age. On the majority of sites such a soil would have been truncated by later activity.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description						
Iron Age soil horizon (107) and three postholes. Sealed by a series of later layers.					Avg. depth (m)	1.2
					Dimensions (m)	3 x 3
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/feature
100	Layer		0.14	Topsoil	-	Post-medieval
101	Layer		0.3	Subsoil	-	Post-medieval
102	Layer		0.12	Levelling	clay pipe	Post-medieval
107	Layer		0.34	Soil horizon	pot, a. bone, flint	Early Iron Age
112	Fill	0.23	0.15	Posthole	a. bone, burnt flint, CBM	
113	Cut	0.23	0.15	Posthole		Early Iron Age?
114	Fill	0.2	0.06	Posthole		
115	Cut	0.2	0.06	Posthole		Early Iron Age?
116	Fill	0.36	0.07	Posthole		
117	Cut	0.36	0.07	Posthole		Early Iron Age?
134	Layer		0.1	Surface (external)		Post-medieval

Trench 2						
General description						
Iron Age soil horizon (108) truncated by pit 132 and posthole 126 . Posthole 124 and pit 138 probably associated. Pit 132 then cut by ditch 111 , orientated NW-SE.					Avg. depth (m)	1.2
					Dimensions (m)	3 x 3
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/feature
100	Layer		0.2	Topsoil	-	Post-medieval
108	Layer		0.5	Soil horizon	pot, a. bone, flint, burnt flint	Early Iron Age
109	Finds unit			Large lump of fired clay		
110	Fill		1	Ditch	pot, a. bone, flint	
111	Cut		1	Ditch		Iron Age
121	Fill		0.6	Pit/tree bole	pot, a. bone	
122	Cut	0.45	0.6	Pit/tree bole		

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/feature
123	Fill		0.09	Posthole		
124	Cut	0.2	0.09	Posthole		Iron Age
125	Fill		0.3	Posthole		
126	Cut	0.18	0.3	Posthole		
129	Fill		0.4	Pit?	pot, flint, CBM	
130	Layer		0.1	Natural		
131	Fill		0.1	Pit?		
132	Cut	1	0.45	Pit?		Early Iron Age?
135	Layer		0.4	Subsoil		
138	Cut			Pit		

Trench 3						
General description						
Iron Age soil horizon (118) truncated by ditch 120 . Sealed by subsoil (127). Truncated by modern pit 137 .				Avg. depth (m)	1.2	
				Dimensions (m)	3 x 3	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/feature
118	Layer		0.64	Soil horizon	pot, a. bone, flint	Early Iron Age
119	Fill		0.2	Ditch	pot, a. bone	
120	Cut	0.62	0.2	Ditch		Iron Age
130	Layer		0.08	Natural		
127	Layer		0.38	Subsoil	clay pipe, a. bone	Post-medieval
136	Fill		0.94	Modern pit		
137	Cut		0.94	Modern pit		Modern

2004 Trench						
General description				Orientation	ENE-WSW	
Beamslot/gully 18 was the earliest feature. Truncated by a series of NNW-SSE orientated ditches. Ditch 5 was parallel with the road.				Avg. depth (m)	1.1	
				Length (m)	9	
				Width (m)	1.6	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/feature
1	Layer		0.25	Made ground		Modern

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	Date of context/ feature
2	Layer		0.55	Topsoil?		Post-medieval
3	Layer		0.45	Subsoil?		Post-medieval
4	Fill	1	0.58	Pit/ditch	pot, a. bone	
5	Cut	1	0.58	Pit/ditch		Medieval
6	Fill	0.24	0.09	Posthole		
7	Cut	0.24	0.09	Posthole		
8	Layer		0.4	Garden soil?		
9	Fill	1.5	1.1	Pit/ditch	pot	
10	Cut	1.5	1.1	Pit/ditch		Medieval
11	Fill	0.55	0.55	Ditch	pot, a. bone	
12	Cut	0.55	0.55	Ditch		Medieval
13	Fill	1.3	1.3	Ditch	pot, a. bone	
14	Cut	1.3	1.3	Ditch		Medieval
15	Fill	0.55	0.55	Ditch	pot	
16	Cut	0.55	0.55	Ditch		Medieval
17	Fill	0.3	0.3	Beamslot/gully	pot	
18	Cut	0.3	0.3	Beamslot/gully		Early Iron Age

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Matt Brudenell

Introduction and methodology

- B.1.1 A total of 123 sherds (1255g) of later prehistoric pottery were recovered from the excavation, with a mean sherds weight of 10.2g. The pottery dates from the Late Bronze Age through to the Late Iron Age, with the bulk of the material belonging to the Early Iron Age, c. 600-350 BC. Given the small size of this assemblage, the pottery from each set of contexts is described in turn, followed by a brief discussion at the end of the report.
- B.1.2 All the pottery has been fully recorded following the recommendations laid out by the Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group (2009). After a full inspection of the assemblage, fabric groups were devised on the basis of dominant inclusion types, their density and modal size (Table 1). Sherds from all contexts were counted, weighed (to the nearest whole gram) and assigned to a fabric group. Sherd type was recorded, along with any evidence for surface treatment, decoration, and the presence of soot and/or residue. Rim and base forms were described using a codified system recorded in the catalogue, and were assigned vessel numbers. Where possible, rim and base diameters were measured, and surviving percentages noted. In cases where a sherd or groups of refitting sherds retained portions of the rim and shoulder, the vessel was also categorised by form. All pottery was subject to sherd size analysis. Sherds less than 4cm in diameter were classified as 'small'; sherds measuring 4-8cm were classified as 'medium', and sherds over 8cm in diameter will be classified as 'large'. The quantified data is presented on an Excel data sheet held in the site archive.

Fabric	Group	No./(wt.) sherds	% of fabric (by wt.)	No./wt. sherds burnished	% of fabric burnished (by wt.)	MNV	MNV burnished
F1	Flint	6/36	2.9	-/-	-	-	-
FQ1	Flint and sand	15/273	21.8	2/68	24.9	2	-
FQ2	Flint and sand	17/164	13.1	6/45	27.4	1	-
FQ3	Flint and sand	4/16	1.3	3/11	68.8	1	1
FQ4	Flint and sand	1/15	1.2	-/-	-	-	-
FQ5	Flint and sand	21/196	15.6	3/24	12.2	3	1
FQ6	Flint and sand	12/77	6.1	7/30	39.0	1	1
G1	Grog	1/4	0.3	-/-	-	-	-
Q1	Sand	25/241	19.2	10/111	46.1	2	-
S1	Shell	8/87	6.9	-/-	-	2	-
S2	Shell	4/34	2.7	1/11	32.4	1	-
S3	Shell	2/59	4.7	1/10	16.9	2	1
SQ1	Shell and sand	1/8	0.6	-/-	-	-	-
SQ2	Shell and sand	1/4	0.3	1/4	100	-	-
SQ3	Shell and sand	2/12	1.0	1/8	66.7	2	1
VEQ1	Veg. and sand	3/29	2.3	-/-	-	-	-
TOTAL	123	123/1255	100	35/322	25.7	17	5

Table 1: Fabric frequency and the relationship to burnishing and vessel counts. MNV = minimum number of vessels, calculated as the total number of different rims and bases.

Flint fabrics

- B.1.3 F1: Moderate to common medium and coarse burnt flint (mainly 2-4mm). The clay matrix may contain rare to sparse sand

Flint and sand fabrics

- B.1.4 FQ1: Moderate to common coarse burnt flint (mainly 2-4mm) in a dense sandy clay matrix
- FQ2: Moderate to common medium burnt flint (mainly 1-2mm) in a dense sandy clay matrix
- FQ3: Moderate to common finely crushed burnt flint (mainly 0.25-1mm) in a dense sand clay matrix. The fabric may contain rare pieces of burnt flint up to 2mm in size
- FQ4: Rare or sparse coarse burnt flint (mainly 2-4mm) in a dense sandy clay matrix
- FQ5: Rare or sparse medium burnt flint (mainly 1-2mm) in a dense sandy clay matrix. Sherds may occasionally contain rare rounded quartz grains (up to 1.5mm), or rare voids
- FQ6: Rare or sparse finely crushed burnt flint (mainly 0.25-1mm) in a dense sandy clay matrix. The fabric may contain rare pieces of burnt flint up to 2mm in size. Occasional sherds contain sparse calcareous flecks

Vegetable matter and sand fabrics

- B.1.5 VEQ1: Moderate to common linear voids from burnt out vegetable matter and moderate to common quartz sands. Voids are visible throughout the clay matrix

Shell fabrics

- B.1.6 S1: Moderate to common medium to very coarse shell (mainly 1-4mm)
- S2: Moderate to common medium shell (1-2mm)
- S3: Moderate to common fine shell and/or shell flecks (mainly <1mm)

Shell and sand fabrics

- B.1.7 SQ1: Sparse medium to coarse shell (1-3mm) and moderate to common quartz sand
- SQ2: Sparse to common medium shell (1-2mm) and moderate to common quartz sand
- SQ3: Sparse to moderate shell flecks (mainly <1mm) and moderate to common quartz sand

Quartz sand fabrics

- B.1.8 Q1: Moderate to common quartz sand

Grog fabrics

- B.1.9 G1: Sparse to common medium grog (mainly 1-2mm). The clay matrix contains rare to moderate quartz sand. Occasional sherds contain mica flecks

Pottery from soil horizon (107), (108) and (118)

- B.1.10 A total of 67 sherds (723g) of prehistoric pottery were recovered from the soil horizon traced across trenches 1-3. The earliest material comprised six sherds (91g) of Late Bronze Age Plainware Post-Deverel Rimbury (PDR) pottery in flint and flint-and-sand tempered fabrics (Barrett 1980). Diagnostic sherds included a fragment of a hooked-rim jar, and the partial profile of shouldered jar with an everted tapered lip. Both vessels carried perforated holes on the neck, which did not penetrate right the way through the sherd walls. This form of decorative treatment is not especially common in the Late Bronze Age, but can be paralleled at Striplands Farm, Cambridgeshire (Brudenell 2011, 21) and other assemblages in East Anglia dated c. 1100-800 BC (Brudenell 2012, 157).
- B.1.11 The bulk of the remaining pottery was Early Iron Age in origin (c. 600-350 BC), found in a range of flint-and-sand, shell and sand tempered fabrics. Diagnostic sherds were scarce, though a tool impressed shoulder sherd was recovered, alongside a carinated fineware sherd with grooved horizontal line immediately above the shoulder – this possibly being from a Darmsden-Linton-type bowl. Also of note was a red oxidised body sherd, which possibly carries the remnants of a haematite slip.
- B.1.12 The latest prehistoric material comprised seven sherds (58g) of later Iron Age pottery, including both handmade (six sherds, 50g) and wheel-made/wheel-finished wares (one sherd, 8g). All the sherds were sand tempered, with two of definite Late Iron Age date, including a combed fragment, and a burnished wheel-made sherd. These components of the assemblage date between c. 50 BC-AD 50, though the handmade wares could potentially date back as early as c. 350 BC.

Pottery from agricultural soil (128)

- B.1.13 Four sherds (36g) were recovered from the agricultural soil, sealing soil horizons (107), (108) and (118). The sherds were in a range of fabrics, reflecting different dates. The two identifiable Early Iron Age sherds (14g) were in flint-and-sand and shell-and-sand tempered fabrics, whilst a single Middle/late Iron Age sherd (14g) was recovered in a dense sandy fabric. This was partial profile of a globular jar with a slightly everted rounded rim. The final sherd (8g) was a wheel-made shell tempered rim of Late Iron Age origin, dated c. 50 BC- 50 AD.

Pottery from the evaluation – pit/ditch 5, pit/ditch 10, ditch 12, ditch 14 and beam slot 18

- B.1.14 A total of 19 sherds (223g) were recovered from these features, all of which are likely to be residual. The earliest pottery derived from ditch **12** and pit/ditch **10**, which included 16 sherds (190g) in mainly flint-and-sand tempered fabrics characteristic of the Early Iron Age, c. 600-350 BC, but with one possible later Iron Age ware. A single similarly dated sherd (12g) was recovered from beam slot **18**, whilst pit/ditch **5** and ditch **14** yielded single sherds (21g) of probable Iron Age origin.

Pottery from ditch 111

- B.1.15 19 sherds (114g) were recovered from fill (110). In both character and composition the assemblage was very similar to that from the soil horizons (107), (108) and (118). It included sherds in a range of fabrics, almost certainly of different date. The earliest wares were two sherds (14g) with coarse flint temper, most likely of Late Bronze Age origin. Ten sherds (39g) had flint-and-sand or shell tempered fabrics, probably of Early Iron Age date, whilst the final seven sherds (61g) were mainly in dense sandy fabrics more typical of the Middle/late Iron Age, c. 350-50 BC/AD 50.

Pottery from ditch 120, pit/tree-throw 122, and ?pit 132

- B.1.16 Collectively, 12 sherds (130g) in shell, sand and flint-and-sand tempered fabrics were recovered from these features (8 sherds, 79g, from ditch **120**; 3 sherds, 38g from pit/tree-throw **122**; one sherd, 13g from ?pit **132**). The pottery is similar to that from ditch **111**, and is likely to be of Early Iron Age origin, c. 600-350 BC. This is supported by the finding of a finger-tipped shoulder sherd from pit/tree-throw **122**.

Other sherds

- B.1.17 Two sherds (29g) were recovered from context (99999): one (23g) in a flint-and-sand tempered fabric characteristic of the Early Iron Age: the other (6g) an organic tempered fabric more typical of the Middle/late Iron Age.

Discussion

- B.1.18 The prehistoric pottery from 8 Market Street, Soham, constitutes a mixed assemblage with sherds dating from the Late Bronze Age through to the Late Iron Age. Most of the material derived from buried soil horizons (107), (108) and (118), where sherds with Early Iron Age characteristics dominated. Overall, these contexts can be described as artefact-rich soils, which may have seen midden material periodically worked into them at various points in prehistory. Some of this pottery was evidently caught in later features that cut these horizons, and in most instances, the broader condition and composition of the sherds in these contexts was similar to that from the buried soils.

B.2 Metalwork

By Nina Crummy

Description

- B.2.1 A single item of metalwork was retained during the excavation; a pair of tweezers from soil horizon (118) in Trench 3. The tweezers were cast and have a well-formed spring-loop. The blades are long, plain and slightly flared. Although dating of plain wrought tweezers is difficult unless they are securely stratified, a Roman milieu is preferred for cast examples as both wrought and cast tweezers occur widely in Roman contexts, Anglo-Saxon cast tweezers are invariably decorated while wrought ones are plain, and medieval tweezers are usually wrought (Eckardt & Crummy 2008, 48, 112, 148; Egan & Pritchard 1991, 383).
- B.2.2 Given the length of the blades and the tightness of the loop on this example, it was probably fitted with a sliding collar that could be moved up and down the blades to reinforce or secure the grips during use (Eckardt & Crummy 2008, 158, fig. 101). Such collars have often been considered to distinguish between cosmetic tweezers used for epilation and medical forceps used for the extraction of splinters or other minor surgical procedures, and while a collar on short-bladed tweezers forming part of a toilet set from Castleford, Yorkshire, shows that this is not an invariable rule, a medical rather than cosmetic use is likely for the Soham tweezers (*ibid.*, 158, 169, fig. 110, 1311-16; Jackson 1986, 138-9; 2002, 87). Tweezers, a spoon-probe and a small pot for a salve were the only tools buried with a healer, probably an eye doctor, from London (Eckardt & Crummy 2008, 82-3).

Catalogue

(118), Trench 3. Cast copper-alloy tweezers, complete apart from slight damage to one of the grips. The spring-loop is small and tight, the plain blades are slightly flared. Length 67 mm.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal Remains

By Chris Faine

- C.1.1 Twenty five fragments of animal bone were recovered from both phases of the evaluation with 17 fragments identifiable to species. The total weight of the assemblage is 952g. Three contexts from the 2004 evaluation contained bone. Fill (4) in pit/ditch **5** contained a number of loose pig teeth along with a portion of sheep metatarsal. Fill (11) in ditch **12** contained a single butchered proximal cattle femur. A single portion of sheep radius was recovered from fill (13) in ditch **14**.
- C.1.2 The largest number of identifiable fragments from the 2012 phases was recovered from fill (110) in ditch **111**. These consisted of an intact cattle 1st phalanx along with a large number (NISP: 13) of anuran amphibian remains from environmental samples. Other contexts contained few identifiable elements. Soil horizon (108) contained fragmentary large mammal ribs along with a single sheep/goat radius. Fill (119) in ditch **120** contained a semi-complete but extremely fragmented adult cattle cranium. A fragmentary sheep/goat metacarpal was recovered from layer (128). Only one ageable mandible was recovered from fill (121) in pit/tree bole **122**; a sheep mandible from an animal around 2-4 years of age at death. Soil horizon (107) and (118) contained no identifiable fragments.

C.2 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

C.2.1 Five bulk samples were taken during the excavation from features within trenches 2 and 3, thought to date from the Iron Age. Sample 100 comprised a sample of fired clay from context (109) and is excluded from this report. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether plant remains are present, their mode of preservation and whether they are of interpretable value with regard to domestic, agricultural and industrial activities, diet, economy and rubbish disposal.

Methodology

C.2.2 The total volume (up to eighteen litres) of each of the samples (except for Sample 100) were processed by tank flotation. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm mesh. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted in Table 1. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands.

Quantification

C.2.3 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories

= 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens ##### = 100+ specimens

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored for abundance

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Volume processed (L)	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Chaff	Weed Seeds	Charcoal <2mm	Charcoal > 2mm
100	109			0	0	0	0	0	0	0
101	110	111	ditch	16	50	##	##	##	++	++
102	119	120	ditch	7	30	#	0	0	+	++
103				8	60	#	#	0	+	++
104	129	132	pit	6	20	#	0	0	+	++

Table 1: Environmental samples

C.2.4 Plant remains are preserved by carbonization. The carbonized material is comprised of cereal grains and weed seeds in addition to charcoal fragments.

Charred cereal grains are present in all of the samples. Sample 101, fill 110 of ditch **111** in Trench 2 contains the most significant quantity of cereals in the form of wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains. Several of the grains are elongated and have the general morphology of the hulled wheat species spelt/emmer (*T. spelta/dicoccum*). Hulled wheat species are enclosed in a tough outer sheath, which during crop processing breaks into various diagnostic elements including glume bases and spikelet forks. Sample 101 also contains a single spikelet fork of spelt wheat and several glume bases of both spelt and emmer wheat. Hulled wheat is also present in Sample 102, fill 119 of ditch **120**. Single grains of oat (*Avena* sp.) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) were noted in Samples 103 and 104 respectively. Sample 101 is the only sample to contain weed seeds; charred brome (*Bromus* sp.) seeds were identified.

- C.2.5 Samples 101, 102 and 103 all contain mineralized segments of millipede exoskeleton in addition to small quantities of hammerscale. Pottery fragments were recovered from the residues of Samples 101 and 102.

Discussion

- C.2.6 The samples recovered all produced charred plant remains, albeit in low densities. Charred cereal grains are likely to have become incorporated in the deposits due to the disposal of grain that has been accidentally burnt during cooking or during crop processing. The hulled wheats of emmer and spelt recovered from Samples 101 and 102 are both wheat species that were commonly cultivated and consumed during the Iron Age and Roman period (Grieg,1991). Hulled wheat required parching and/or pounding to release the grain from the hulled spikelet. This process produces chaff that is commonly used as fuel and subsequently can become incorporated in archaeological deposits. The charred weed seeds of brome indicate that this grass was growing amongst the wheat crop and was harvested at the same time. Brome seeds are often found in charred grain assemblages as they grow to the same height as the cereal crop and are a similar size to the cereal grain. They could have been tolerated as a crop contaminant as they are unlikely to greatly affect the quality of flour.
- C.2.7 Emmer wheat was gradually replaced by spelt wheat during the Late Iron Age/ Early Roman period and neither species were cultivated during the medieval period.
- C.2.8 The presence of hammerscale in both flake and spheroidal form is indicative of blacksmithing activities occurring in the near vicinity at some point in time. Hammerscale is very small (up to 3mm) and can pass into lower deposits through bioturbation. Further detailed sampling would be required to accurately date this activity.

Conclusion

- C.2.9 The charred plant assemblage provides evidence that domestic, culinary and blacksmithing activities were taking place at this site. The presence of grains, chaff and crop weeds are an important indication that some crop processing took place on site. The low densities of plant remains recovered are not considered to merit full analysis.

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-131613		
Project Name	Excavation at 8 Market Street, Soham		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	16-07-2012	Finish	24-07-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	SOHMKS 12	Planning App. No.	E/03/00845/FUL
HER No.	ECB 3532	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Iron Age -800 to 43	Pottery	Bronze Age -2.5k to -700
Posthole	Iron Age -800 to 43	Pottery	Iron Age -800 to 43
Soil horizon	Iron Age -800 to 43	Tweezers	Roman 43 to 410

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible) 8 Market Street, Soham , CB7 5JG	
District	East Cambs		
Parish	Soham		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	9 sq. m	National Grid Reference	TL 5942 7326

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Kasia Gdaniec, Cambridgeshire County Council
Project Design Originator	Richard Mortimer
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Tom Phillips

Project Archives

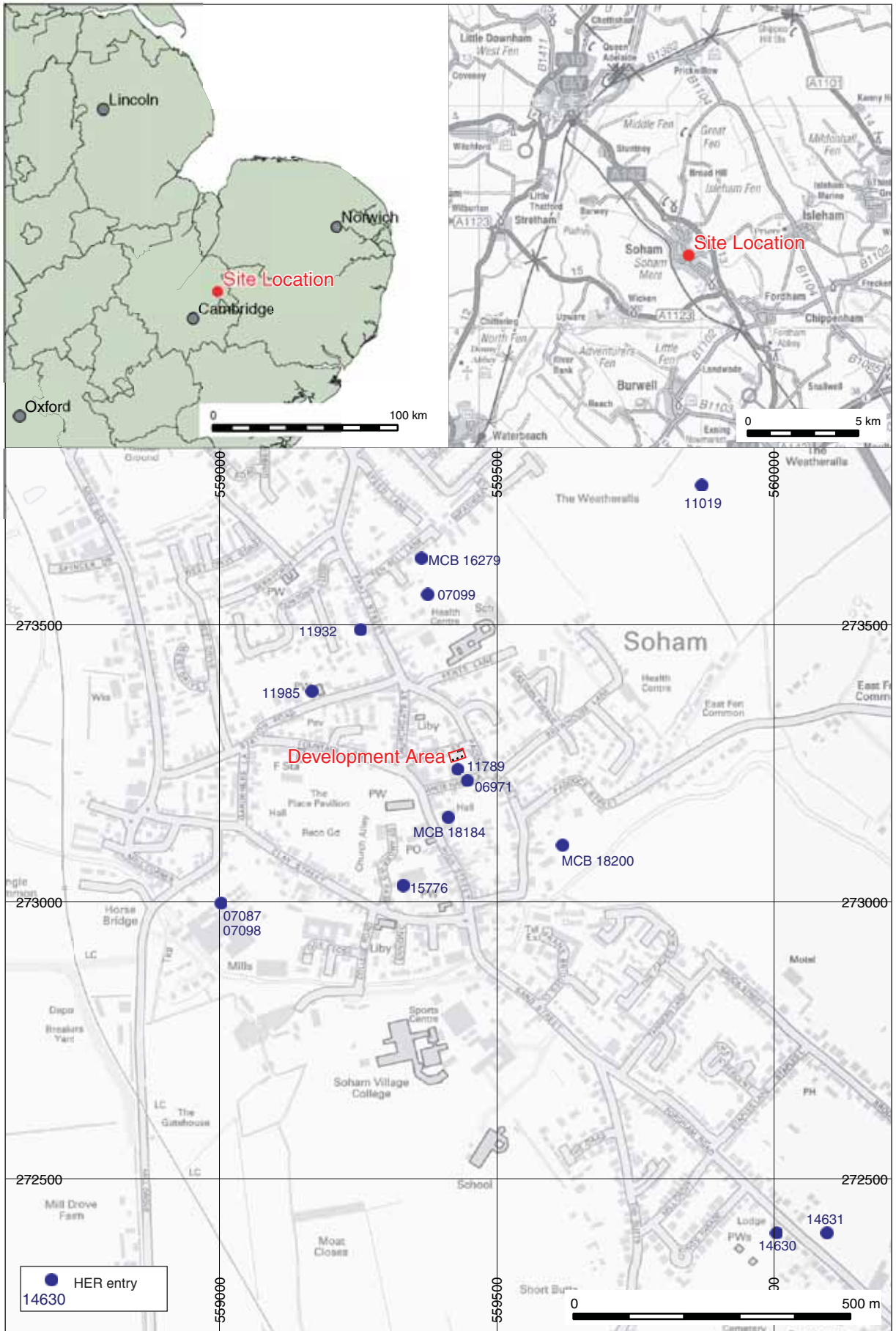
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC County Stores	OA East	CCC County Stores
SOHMKS 12	SOHMKS 12	SOHMKS 12

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" 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	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Detail of trenches in relation to modern roads and boundaries

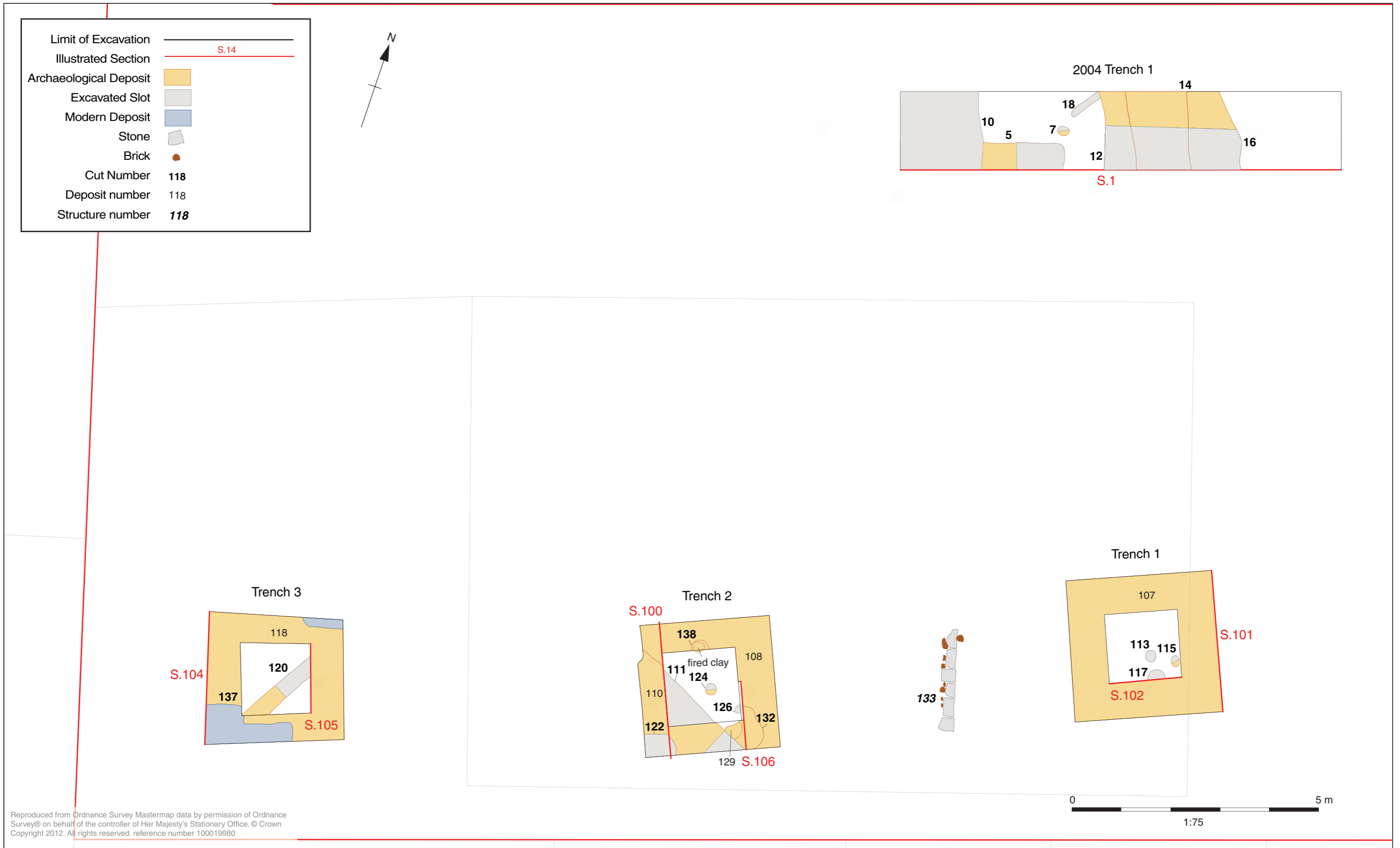


Figure 3: Trench plan

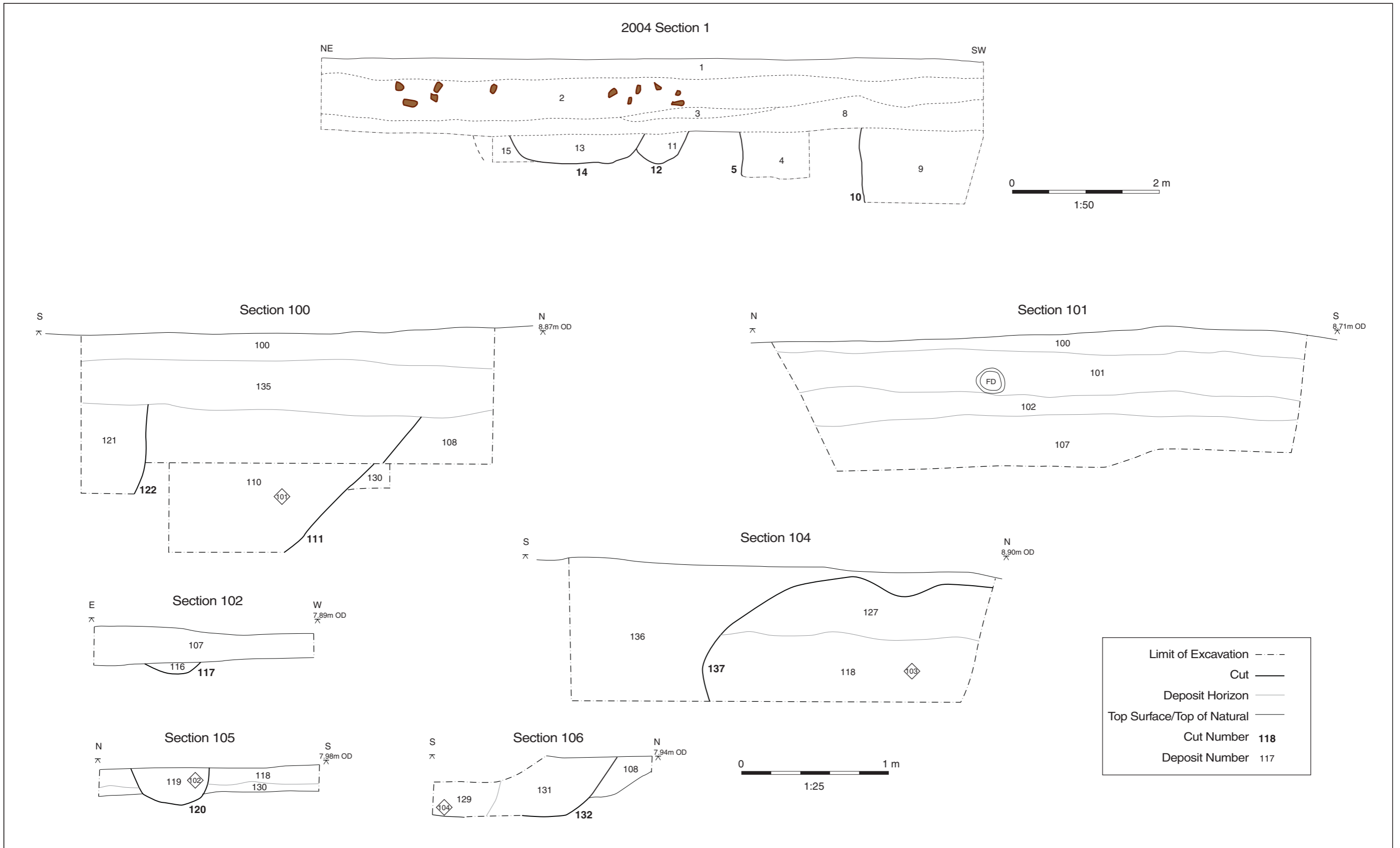


Figure 4: Sections



Figure 5: Extract from Palmer's 1656 map of Soham with development area (red) and trenches (black)



Figure 6: Ordnance Survey map of Soham, 1st Edition 1886, with development area (red) and trenches (black)

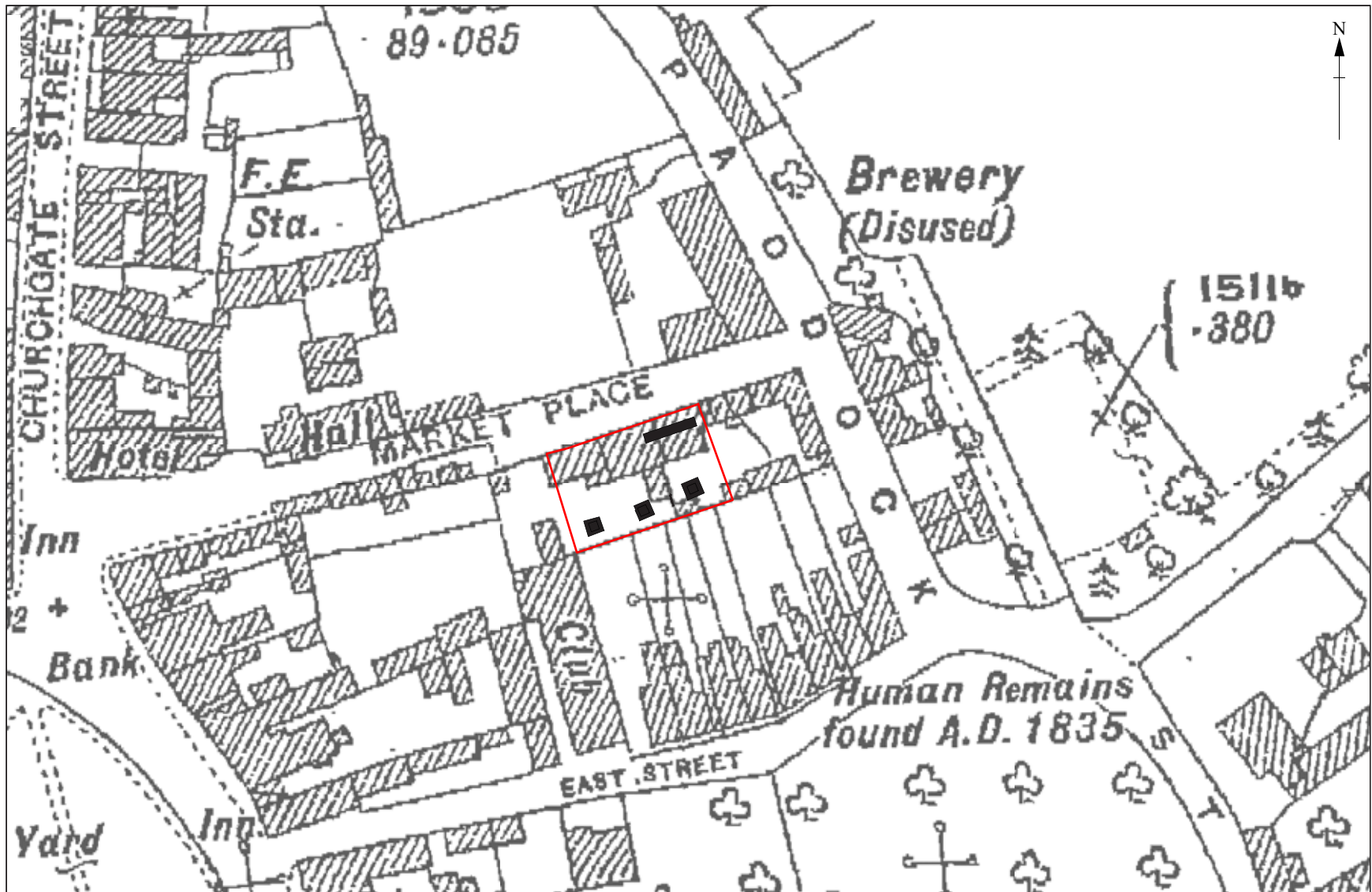


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey map of Soham, 3rd Edition 1926, with development area (red) and trenches (black)



Plate 1: North facing section in Trench 1. 1m scale



Plate 2: Trench 2 excavated from the east. Ditch 111 extends diagonally across base of trench. 1m scale



Plate 3: Trench 3 excavated, from the east. 1m scale



Plate 4: Clunch wall (133), from the north. 1m scale



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