

Archaeological Evaluation at WATA, Old Houghton Rd, Hartford



Archaeological Evaluation Report



December 2013

Client: Burmor Construction

OA East Report No: 1557

OASIS No: oxfordar3-166386

NGR: TL 2603 7278

Report Title

Archaeological Evaluation at WATA, Old Houghton Rd, Hartford.

By John Diffey BA

With contributions by Rachel Fosberry HNC (Cert Ed)

Editor: Paul Spoerry BTech PhD MfA

Illustrator: Séverine Bézie BA MA

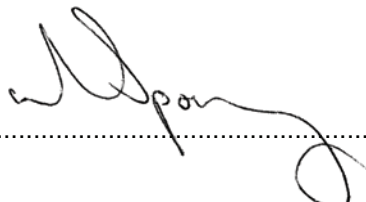
Report Date: December 2013

Report Number: 1557
Site Name: WATA, Old Houghton Rd, Hartford
HER Event No: ECB4089
Date of Works: November 2013
Client Name: Burmor Construction
Client Ref: n/a
Planning Ref: 1300986FUL
Grid Ref: TL 2603 7278
Site Code: HUNWAT13
Finance Code: HUNWAT 13
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach

Accession No:

Prepared by: John Diffey
Position: Assistant Supervisor
Date: 3/12/13

Checked by: Paul Spoerry
Position: regional Manager, OA East
Date: 5/12/13
Signed:



Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology East,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge,
CB23 8SQ

t: 01223 850500
f: 01223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>
© Oxford Archaeology East 2011
Oxford Archaeology Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	7
1.2 Geology and topography.....	7
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	7
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	7
2 Aims and Methodology.....	8
2.1 Aims.....	8
2.2 Methodology.....	8
3 Results.....	9
3.1 Introduction	9
3.2 Trench 1.....	9
3.3 Trench 2.....	9
3.4 Finds Summary.....	10
3.5 Environmental Summary.....	10
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	11
4.1 Discussion.....	11
4.2 Significance.....	11
4.3 Recommendations.....	11
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	12
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	13
B.1 Pottery.....	13
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	13
C.1 Environmental samples.....	13
Appendix D. Bibliography	15
Appendix E. OASIS Report Form	16

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Site plan

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Site overview looking south-east
Plate 1 Trench 1 looking west-north-west
Plate 1 Trench 2 looking south-south-east

Summary

Between the 25th and the 26th of November 2013 a small archaeological evaluation was carried out at the West Anglia Training Associations Site at Old Houghton Rd, Hartford. The evaluation found a post-medieval system of ridge and furrow a single ditch dating to the Saxon period and a posthole, pit and ditch/channel of unknown date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the site of West Anglia Training Association, off Old Houghton Rd, Hartford, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application No.1300986FUL), 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 *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). 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 site lies at around 8.6m AOD on Terrace Gravels of the Great Ouse system, over Oxford Clay (BGS, Geology of Britain Viewer; <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The river lies less than 300m to the south and the site slopes gradually from north to south.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site is located in an area of high archaeological potential on the edge of the historic village of Hartford. The village contains numerous listed buildings including the 12th century All Saints Parish Church (HER No. CB14749) approximately 400m north east of the site and the 15th century Manor House (HER02710) approximately 200m east of the site. Numerous prehistoric finds including flints from palaeolithic and neolithic periods have been recorded from gravel extraction pits within 1km of the site (HER 00268a, 00268b, 01687, 01689, 01843, 01844, 01845, 01960, 05774). A burial ground was also discovered at one of the gravel pits approximately 1km east-south east of the site, dating from the Iron Age to Saxon period (HER 00268). Roman finds have been recorded in the local vicinity with coins and a mill stone recovered from Hartford vicarage garden 1km to the south east of the site (HER 02700), and pottery found north of the river south of the site (HER 02747). A medieval coin hoard was found approximately 500m east-south-east of the site (HER 02682).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The Author would like to thank the staff of Burmor Construction and the staff of the West Anglia Training Association for their support during the site works.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this archaeological evaluation 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 the evaluation should include a programme of linear trial trenching and archaeological features be excavated to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of archaeological remains.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a 6 tonne rubber tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 Environmental samples were taken from features where their fills contained charcoal
- 2.2.6 Work was hindered on site by a high water table that filled the base of trenches and the features found therein.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results below are subdivided by trench.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 measured 50x1.5m and was aligned east-south-east to west-north-west running parallel to and 12m south-south-east of the WATA main car park. The trench was excavated down to the natural geological gravels (layer 001) at a depth of 0.65m following the removal of 0.4m of top soil (layer 017) and 0.25m of subsoil (layer 016). Three archaeological features were identified as cuts in the natural gravel.

3.2.2 The first feature was a medium sized circular pit **002** situated 20m from the east-south-east end of the trench and extending out of the trench to the north. The pit was 1.5m in diameter and 0.26m deep had gently sloping sides and concave base. This pit contained a single fill (003) of mid yellowish grey soft silty clay containing occasional small rounded flint stones and frequent small lumps of charcoal. No material culture was found within this feature to allow dating although a 20ltr environmental sample identified wood charcoal and a single charred cereal grain within the processed residue.

3.2.3 0.5m west-south-west of pit **002** a single shallow posthole **004** was found cutting the natural gravels. Posthole **004** was circular in shape and measured 0.35m in diameter and 0.08m deep with gently sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (005) which comprised a mid greyish brown firm sandy silt and contained occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and charcoal flecks. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

3.2.4 The final feature identified in Trench 1 was a linear cut **006** possibly a ditch or natural channel aligned north-south across the trench 4.25m east-north-east of Pit **002**. Cut **006** measured 2.2m across, 0.42m deep and extended out of the trench to the north and south. The cut had gently sloping sides and an irregular concave base and contained a single fill (007) which comprised a light yellowish grey soft clayey silt containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and charcoal flecks. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 measured 30x1.5m and was aligned north-north-west to south-south-east along the north-east edge of the proposed development. The trench had to be moved to the east of the proposed building footprint in order to avoid a number of trees on the proposed site. The trench was excavated down to the natural geological gravels (layer 001) at a depth of between 0.7 and 0.6m following the removal of 0.4m of topsoil (layer 017) and 0.2m of subsoil (layer 016). At the north-north-west end of the trench the topsoil was overlain by a layer of modern building rubble (018) which extended 11.5m south-south-east along the trench. This layer formed a hard-standing for a construction compound when the previous WATA buildings were constructed. Three archaeological features were identified as cuts in the natural geology

3.3.2 The first two features **008** and **013** were wide shallow linear cuts thought to be furrows which could be seen in section to be cutting through the subsoil layer 016. These features measured 3.2m across and were 0.36 and 0.26m deep respectively. Both

features were aligned east-south-east to west-north-west, approximately 11.5m apart and they extended out of the trench in both directions. Both of these features contained two fills described below. The lower fills, (009) and (014) respectively, comprised a mid brownish grey soft sandy silt containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and charcoal flecks and are thought to represent a preserved subsoil. The upper fills of these features, (010) and (015) respectively, comprised a dark reddish grey sandy silt containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and charcoal flecks and are thought to represent a preserved topsoil. Fill (009) contained ceramic building materials (CBM), white china pottery, a single fragment of clay pipe and a fragment of coal, while fill (014) contained two small fragments of fired clay thought to be modern CBM. These finds date these features to the post-medieval period, and their active backfilling to the 19th century or later.

- 3.3.3 The final feature identified was a small, shallow linear feature **011** cut into the natural gravels 2.65m south-south-east of furrow **008**. Feature **011** was 0.65m wide and 0.1m deep and aligned north-east to south-west, extending out of the trench in both directions. The cut contained a single fill (012) which comprised a light grey brown sandy clay containing frequent small sub-rounded flint stones and occasional small lumps of charcoal. A 20ltr environmental sample was taken from this context which identified wood charcoal within the fill however the residue of the sample also contained an amorphous bone fragment and a single small sherd of pottery. This pottery sherd although small (1g) has been identified as probably of Thetford type ware (AD 850-1150) (P. Spoerry pers. comm.)

3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 Finds from furrows **008** and **013** included pottery, clay pipe and CBM dating to the later post-medieval period. The single small pottery sherd from environmental sample 2 from feature **011** is identified as Thetford type ware and dated to AD 850-1150.

3.5 Environmental Summary

- 3.5.1 Sample 1 from feature **002** contained wood charcoal and a single charred cereal grain. Sample 2 from feature **011** contained wood charcoal.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 The two shallow linear features **008** and **013** in Trench 2 are clearly identifiable as furrows that cut the subsoil (016) and contained material dating the features to the later post-medieval period. All of the other features on site were sealed by this subsoil layer so must be of earlier date although the majority contained no dating evidence. The exception to this was the small shallow linear feature **011**, thought to be a ditch, which contained a single small sherd of pottery dating it to the Late Saxon period. It is possible that the other undated features with their similar stratigraphic positions and similarly light fills, as opposed to the dark fills of the more modern archaeology, may date to a similar period although there is a lack of dating evidence to confirm this theory.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 The presence of post-medieval furrows shows an arable farming use for the site in the recent past. The undated features including the post hole, pit and ditch/channel provided little evidence of function or the possible activity occurring on site although the charred grain may hint at arable farming activity. The small shallow ditch containing the Late Saxon pottery sherd may suggest a similar date for the undated features found on site and while small pits and ditches may appear of little significance, archaeology of Saxon date will always have some value owing to its relative sparsity in the archaeological record.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		ESE-WNW
3 Features identified as cutting the natural geology and sealed by the sub oil layer. A pit 002 , a single post hole 004 and a ditch or channel 006 .				Avg. depth (m)		0.65
				Width (m)		1.5
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
2	Cut	1.5	0.26	Pit	-	-
3	Fill	1.5	0.26	Pit Fill	-	-
4	Cut	0.35	0.08	Post Hole	-	-
5	Fill	0.35	0.08	Post Hole Fill	-	-
6	Cut	2.2	0.44	Ditch/Channel	-	-
7	Fill	2.2	0.44	Ditch/Channel Fill	-	-
16	Layer	-	0.15	Sub Soil	-	-
17	Layer	-	0.4	Top Soil	-	-
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NNW-SSE
3 Features identified. 2 post-medieval furrows 008 and 013 cutting subsoil and single ditch 011 cutting natural and sealed by subsoil.				Avg. depth (m)		0.65
				Width (m)		1.5
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
8	Cut	3.2	0.36	Furrow	-	-
9	Fill	2.3	0.14	Furrow Fill	CBM, Pottery, Clay Pipe, Coal	Post-Medieval
10	Fill	3.2	0.22	Furrow Fill	-	-
11	Cut	0.65	0.1	Ditch	-	-
12	Fill	0.65	0.1	Ditch Fill	Pottery	AD 850-1150
13	Cut	3.2	0.26	Furrow	-	-
14	Fill	2.26	0.12	Furrow Fill	Fired Clay	Post-Medieval
15	Fill	3.2	0.14	Furrow Fill	-	-
16	Layer	-	0.15	Sub Soil	-	-
17	Layer	-	0.4	Top Soil	-	-
18	Layer	-	0.3	Rubble Hard-standing	CBM	Modern

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Paul Spoerry

- B.1.1 Refined whiteware pottery, dating to the end of the 18th century or later, was recorded from 009, the fill of a furrow, which was found alongside modern CBM, clay pipe and coal. These early modern finds were not collected.
- B.1.2 A single sherd (<1g) of Thetford Type Ware was recovered from Sample 2, Context (12), dating to the period AD 850-1150.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

- C.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during the evaluation of the WATA Site, Hartford, Huntingdon from pit **2** and ditch **13** encountered under a subsoil cut by post-medieval ridge and furrow. Both samples were processed in order to retrieve any dating evidence and to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Methodology

- C.1.2 Twenty litres of each bulk sample was processed by water flotation (using a modified Siraff three-tank system) for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residues were allowed to air dry. A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The dried flots were subsequently sorted using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60.

Results

- C.1.3 Both samples contain wood charcoal fragments, more commonly in Sample 2, fill 12 of ditch **13**. Sample 1, fill 3 of pit **2** also contains a single fragment charred grain that is poorly preserved and has been identified as a cereal grain mainly by the characteristic internal 'honeycomb' morphology. The residue of Sample 2 contains an amorphous bone fragment and a small piece of pottery that may assist in dating the deposit.

5

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Sample Size (L)	Flot contents	Residue contents
------------	-------------	---------	--------------	-----------------	---------------	------------------

1	3	2	pit	20	Charred grain, charcoal	charcoal
2	12	13	ditch	20	No finds	Pottery, bone.

Table x: Environmental samples from HARWAT13

Discussion

- C.1.4 The small amount of charred plant remains recovered indicate that wood burning took place in the immediate area and the resulting charcoal may or may not have been deliberately dumped in ditch **13**. Charred material is likely to have been blown across the site and would accumulate in negative features such as ditches. The paucity of preserved plant remains preclude any further interpretation of the site.

APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-166386		
Project Name	Evaluation at WATA, Old Houghton Rd, Hartford		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	25-11-2013	Finish	26-11-2013
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	HARWAT13	Planning App. No.	1300986FUL
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Select Prompt (this should be in your brief/spec)...
Development Type	For DBA/Evaluation - select the type of development planned for the site...

Please select all 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 type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

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
Furrows	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Pottery	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Ditch	Early Medieval 410 to 1066	Pottery	Early Medieval 410 to 1066
Pit	Uncertain		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Huntingdonshire	WATA, Old Houghton Road, Hartford, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE291YB
Parish	Hartford	
HER		
Study Area		National Grid Reference

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Dan McConnell
Project Design Originator	Paul Spoerry
Project Manager	Paul Spoerry
Supervisor	John Diffey

Project Archives

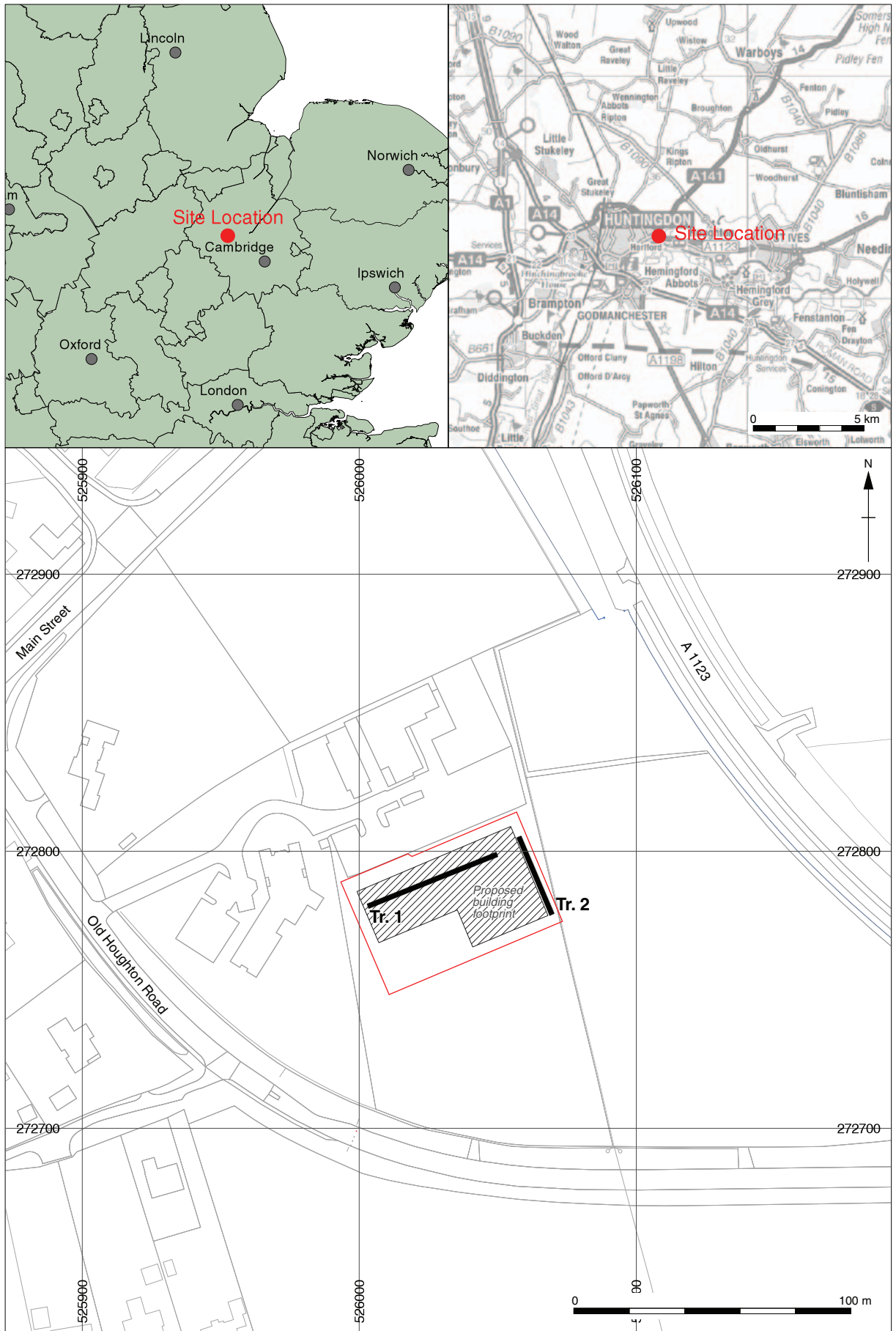
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Location ...	Location ...	Location ...
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



Ornance Survey. © Crown Copyright 2013. All rights reserved. Licence number 0100031673.

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

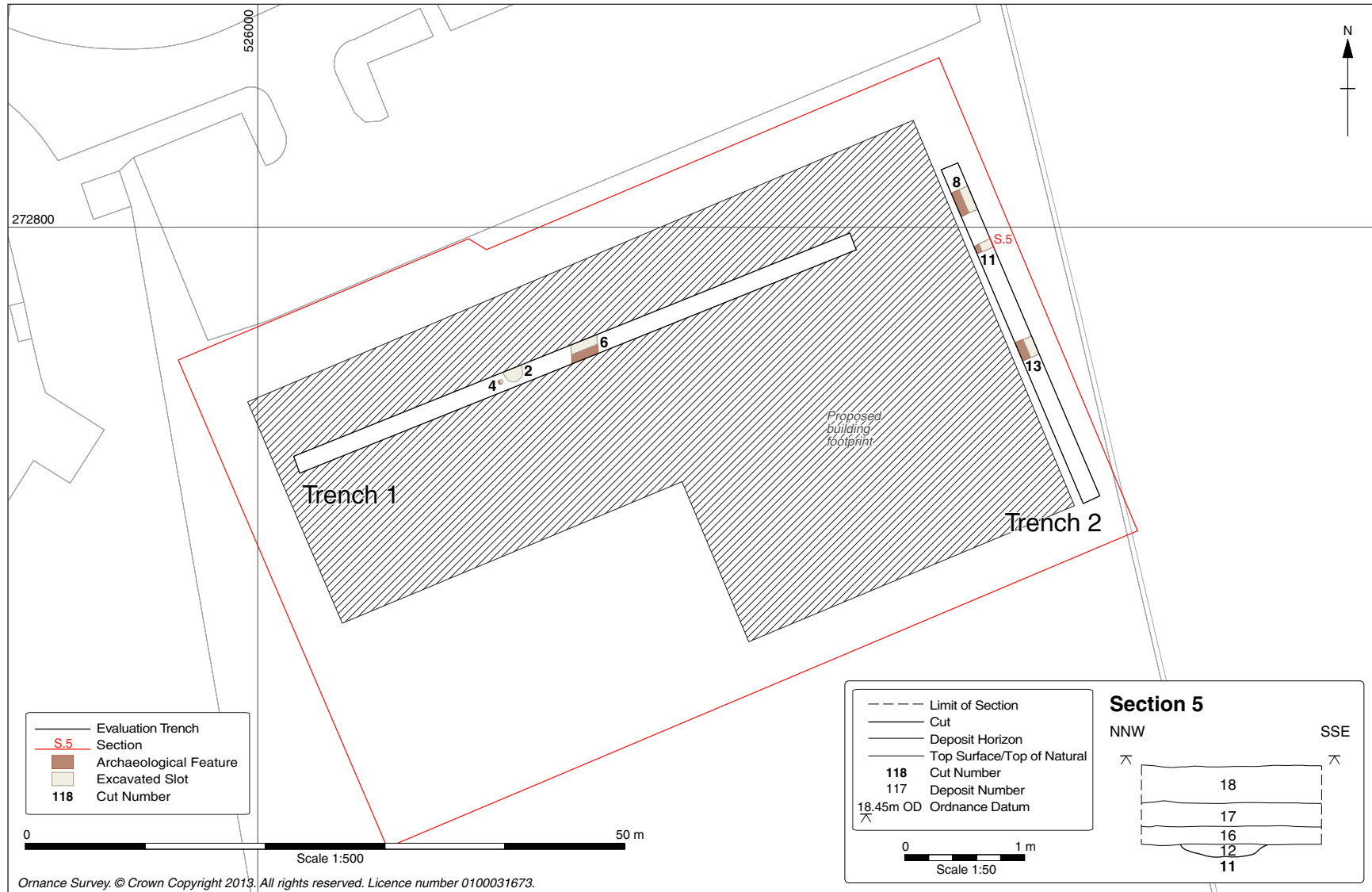


Figure 2: Trench plans and selected section



Plate 1: Site overview looking south-east



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking west-north-west



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking south-south-east



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MIFA
*Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*