



Iron Age and Medieval Activity at Neale Wade College March Cambridgeshire

Interim Archaeological Evaluation Report



March 2010

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Iron Age and Medieval Activity at Neale Wade Community College, March

Interim Archaeological Evaluation Report

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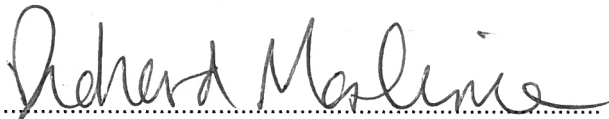
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Summary

Between 25th and 30th October 2009, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation at Neale Wade Community College, March. This revealed several Iron Age ditches, containing pottery of the 5th -3rd centuries BC, which may represent the remains of a wider, inhabited field system. In addition several Medieval ditches were recorded. Three of these were parallel and may have divided the area into plots. A single very large ditch containing a significant amount of Medieval pottery and domestic waste appears to represent a major boundary, and could potentially be related to a Manor or Religious House.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Neale Wade Community College.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council, supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).
- 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 and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). 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 study area is located in the Town End area of March (fig. 1), which was the Medieval centre of the town. The western boundary is the B1101 Wimblington Road which is orientated north to south and leads to March town centre to the north and the village of Wimblington to the south.
- 1.2.2 The study area lies on a narrow north south ridge of March gravels, with deposits of boulder clay to the east and west (British Geological Survey 1995) which forms the southern tip of the March island, surrounded by Fen to the south east and west. The site lies at c.4m OD, with the land gradually dropping to 1m OD c.900m to the south.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The Historic Environment Record (HER)

Relevant entries:

- HER 09009 – Rectilinear enclosure and possible building cropmark evidence (Palmer 2003)
- HER 11645 – Cropmark of large sub rectangular enclosure to the south of the PDA. Probably Middle or Late IA like one found at Wimblington Rd.
- HER MCB14807 – Excavation at 9 Church Street (Grassam 2004)
- HER MCB15352 – Iron Age and Roman remains, Wimblington rd (Atkins 2004)
- HER MCB16060 – Icenic coin hoard, Field Baulk Farm. Immediately north of study area (Potter 1996).
- HER 03781 – Roman pottery, bronze coins and other bronze objects.
- HER 03781a – Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooch, probably 6th Century (same find spot as above).
- HER 11643 – Ridge and furrow agricultural remains. Aligned east west. Thought to be medieval.

- HER 05915 – Roman coin hoard. “Large pot” full of Hadrianic coins (early 2nd Century) found in the 19th Century.
- HER ECB3013 – Evaluation at 12 Jobs Lane (Adams 2008).
- HER CB14565 – Evaluation at Cavalry Park, The Avenue (Kemp 1999).
- HER 05917 – Large dolerite perforated axe hammer. Found in St. Wendreda’s Churchyard in 1969.
- HER 02007 – Grandford Farm Romano-British settlement. Extensive settlement located on the north western edge of the March island.
- HER 06032 – Roman occupation and industrial site at Flagrass, located immediately north of Fen Causeway on the north east of the March island.
- HER 06016 – Norwood Rd settlement. Sub rectangular Roman enclosures with saltern pits containing briquetage.

Cartographic Evidence

- 1.3.1 The first edition Ordnance Survey sheet for Town End, March shows settlement around St. Wendreda’s Church. Since then the route of Wimblington Road has been straightened so the original frontage of Wimblington Road, for the most part, lies beyond the western boundary of the study area.

Aerial Photographs

- 1.3.2 To the south of the study area, on the west side of the B1101, there exists significant cropmark evidence indicating a rectilinear enclosure with associated field system (HER 10798, Palmer 2003). Palmer suggests these are Iron Age or Roman in date and also that there might be a building immediately to the west, although this is less certain. Atkins suggests that the probable track way visible in crop marks is an early precursor of the medieval Wimblington to March road (modern B1101).
- 1.3.3 The remains of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture are also visible to the west of this putative enclosure and field systems. This might mask further Iron Age and Roman archaeological features and deposits.
- 1.3.4 Excavations at 22-23 Wimblington Road discovered the remains of at least two large sub rectangular enclosures both with internal post holes and ring gullies (Atkins 2004 pp. 53-4, Fig. 2). One of these was 58m long and over 22m wide. Further south towards Wimblington on the east side of the B1101, a substantial sub rectangular cropmark (HER 11645) measures approximately 60m east west to 70m north south (See Fig.2). These are conceivably large Middle Iron Age enclosures, more of which could exist in the vicinity.

Archaeological Excavations and Surveys

- 1.3.5 Recent developer funded investigations and surveys in the south of March have revealed the presence of occupation and settlement.

Excavations at 9 Church Street (Grassam 2004).

- 1.3.6 Open area excavation took place immediately north of St Wendreda’s Church, located to the west of the proposed development area on the west side of the B1101. This revealed several ditches, pits, post holes and a pond or hollow. Most of these were thought to date from the Iron Age and Roman periods and contained mostly abraded

pottery, interpreted as residual. Of five ditches found, four were orientated north to south while one was east to west. A further five ditches were identified during the evaluation of the same site but located in trenches outside the area of later excavation. These were all orientated north south.

- 1.3.7 Several post holes were also discovered which might have formed fence lines. No dating evidence was recovered from them.
- 1.3.8 The conclusion reached was that, although not securely dated, the ceramic material recovered from the excavation indicates a continuous Roman presence in the vicinity. A Saxon presence was also indicated by a single Ipswich Ware sherd. This could also be residual, particularly when considering the likelihood of early medieval settlement associated with St Wendreda's Church.
- 1.3.9 The evidence recovered from this excavation was interpreted as being associated with farming and manuring.
- 1.3.10 Post medieval and modern archaeology was also found. A large pit in the east of the excavation was thought to have been used for gravel extraction.

Excavations at 22-23 Wimblington Road, March

- 1.3.11 Open area excavation found part of a rural settlement which dated from at least the 1st Century BC to the early 2nd Century AD. This was located to the south of the study area and c.150m to the south of St. Wendreda's Church. Large Middle / Late Iron Age enclosure ditches were the earliest features recorded on site. Within these were possible circular and/or post built structures, possibly part of a ditched farmstead. These were followed by field systems and possible fence lines in the early Roman period. The middle Roman period (mid second early third century) was characterised by further enclosures, boundary ditches and east west track way ditches (Atkins 2004).
- 1.3.12 All features continued beyond the limits of excavation to the north, south, east and west. Moreover, the excavations conducted by AS (Grassam 2004), some 350m to the north, found Iron Age and Roman ditches on the same alignment, undoubtedly part of the same settlement.

Evaluation at Cavalry Park, March.

- 1.3.13 Evaluation trenches revealed a series of large pits, approximately 14m in diameter. These were thought to be medieval or post medieval in date, although one was potentially Roman. Kemp suggests that the relatively large amounts of residual Roman pottery found indicates a settlement either on the site or close by (Kemp 1999).

Evaluation at 12 Jobs Lane, March.

- 1.3.14 Evaluation revealed an Early Bronze Age pit containing worked flint and Beaker pottery. Also, a Roman ditch, on a north south orientation is presumably is part of the same field system noted in the excavations at Church St to the north (HER MCB 14807) and Wimblington Road (HER MCB15352) to the south.

Field Balk Farm Icenian Coin Hoard

- 1.3.15 Immediately north of the study area a coin hoard was discovered containing 872 Icenian coins which are thought to have been buried at the time of the Boudiccan revolt. They appeared to be contained within a single vessel. Excavation of the immediate area showed the coins to have been deposited adjacent to or within a small curvilinear ditch.

This was up to 0.6m wide and 0.4m deep which probably represents occupation on the site in the Late Iron Age and early Roman period.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Cambridgeshire County Council who commissioned the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. All on-site surveying was carried out by Louise Bush and excavation was undertaken by Nick Gilmour, Steve Graham and James Fairbairn.
- 1.4.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas who visited the site and monitored the excavation.

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.
- 2.1.2 This will allow for the development of a methodology to appropriately mitigate against any loss of the archaeological record.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that 5% of the development area be excavated. A total of 84m of trench were excavated, constituting slightly less than a 5% sample of the available area. This shortfall was due to having to avoid underground services not marked on any supplied plan.
- 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 The site survey was carried out by Louise Bush using Leica 1200 GPS rover using smartnettm.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 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.
- 2.2.6 Bulk soil samples were taken from several features for environmental processing. Any deposit rich in charcoal was sampled, as was one deposit which may have remained waterlogged since deposition.
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were generally good, with only occasional rain showers.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The features and deposits identified are presented by trench below. Full details of trench dimensions are given in appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1 (fig. 3)

3.2.1 Two modern features were excavated towards the northern end of trench 1. An Iron Age ditch, a Post-Medieval pit and two undated features were also identified. Archaeological deposits lay between 0.68m and 0.74m below the present ground surface.

Features 004 and 006

3.2.2 Feature **004** may represent a pit or the terminal of a ditch, it was sub-circular in plan, with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by 005, a dark red brown silty sand which contained no finds. This was cut by pit **011**.

3.2.3 Feature **006** was sub-circular in plan, with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It was 0.50m long, 0.40m wide and 0.07m deep and may represent either a post hole of a small pit. It was filled by 007, a dark reddish brown sandy silt which contained no finds.

Ditch 008

3.2.4 This ditch ran across the trench on a northwest to southeast orientation. It was 0.80m wide and 0.22m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by 009; a light greyish brown silty sand which contained no finds. Overlaying this was 010, a dark greyish brown silty sand which contained four sherds of pottery, including a large and unabraded decorated rim sherd of 5th -3rd century BC date.

Pit or Ditch 011

3.2.5 This feature was probably a pit, however, as it continued out of the excavated area on two sides, it is possible that it represents the edge of a substantial ditch aligned northwest to southeast. It had moderately sloping sides and was up to 0.54m deep, although the true base of the feature may not have been reached within the evaluation trench. It was filled by 012, a dark reddish brown sandy silt which contained pottery of Medieval date. Overlaying this was fill 013, a mid reddish brown silty sand which contained pottery of 16th - Mid 17th century date.

Pit 057

3.2.6 This pit appeared sub-rectangular in plan, but continued out of the trench on two sides. It was over 0.40m long and 0.20m wide and only 0.08m deep. It contained a single fill, 056, a pale yellowish orange silty sand which contained pottery of 16th - Mid 17th century date.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 No archaeological features were identified in Trench 2, however, the trench was shorter than originally intended, due to the presence of a cable not marked on the service plans of the area. The base of the subsoil was located between 0.68m and 0.80m below the present ground level.

3.4 Trench 3 (fig. 4)

3.4.1 This trench contained a probable Iron Age ditch, a Medieval ditch and a burnt tree bowl. Archaeological deposits were located between 0.50m and 0.54m below the present ground surface.

Ditch 017

3.4.2 This ditch ran on an almost north to south alignment, it was 1.05m wide and 0.20m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled by 016, a pale grey silty sand which contained no finds.

Tree Bowl 021

3.4.3 feature **021** was sub-circular in plan, with irregular undercutting sides and an irregular base. Excavation revealed the basal deposit (020) to be charcoal rich, suggesting that a tree may have been burnt *in situ*, no finds were recovered.

Ditch 025

3.4.4 This ditch was also observed in trench 4, as ditch **039**. It ran on an almost east to west orientation, with near vertical sides and a flat base. The full width of the ditch could not be determined at this point, as it continued out of the trench, however it was over 1.10m wide and was 0.90m deep. It was filled by 024, a mid grey silty clay which contained no finds. Overlaying this was fill 023, a mid greyish orange silty sand, which also contained no finds. The final fill of the ditch (022) was a mid greyish brown silty sand which contained pottery of Mid 12th - Late 14th century date and fragments of animal bone.

3.5 Trench 4 (fig. 4)

3.5.1 This trench was perpendicular to Trench 3, and attached to its' western end. Archaeological deposits in the trench were located between 0.74 and 0.50m below the present ground surface.

Ditch 015

3.5.2 This ditch ran on a northeast to southwest orientation and had steeply sloping sides, with a flat base. It was 0.90m wide and up to 0.25m deep. It was filled by a single fill (014), a pale grey silty sand which contained a large unabraded pottery sherd of 5th -3rd century BC date along with an abraded sherd of very coarse flint tempered pottery which may be earlier in date. There was also a single struck flint flake. Ditch 015 was cut by ditch **039** at the north.

Ditch 039

3.5.3 This ditch was a continuation of Ditch **025**, identified in trench 3. It was not excavated at this point and was 1.96m wide.

Ditch 026

3.5.1 This ditch was extremely large, being 5.04m wide and 1.40m deep. It appeared to run on an approximate east to west alignment and had steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled by many different deposits, which are listed fully in appendix A. These deposits contained Medieval pottery, animal bone, muscle shell, cockle shell, lava quern and a copper alloy object. The dates of the pottery recovered from each fill are given in the table below. These suggest that the ditch was cut in the 12th - 14th century and filled in by the Late 15th century.

- 3.5.2 The tips lines of these fills suggest that more material was eroding from the south side of the ditch, tentatively suggesting that this would have been the location of any bank or mound.

Context	Weight (g)	Sherd count	Date
027	551	23	Mid 14th - Late 15th
061	58	8	13th - Late 15th
062	423	11	12th - Mid 14th
033	204	5	Mid 14th - Late 15th
032	271	11	13th - Late 15th
030	2	21	12th - Mid 14th
Total	1509	79	

Table 1: Pottery from ditch **026** presented in stratigraphic order

3.6 Trench 5 (fig. 5)

- 3.6.1 This trench contained two ditches, one Iron Age and one Medieval. Archaeological deposits were located between 0.82m and 0.90m below the present ground surface.

Ditch 046

- 3.6.2 This ditch ran on a northwest to southeast orientation, and was probably the same as ditch **052**, identified in trench 6 (see below). It was 1.10m wide and 0.46m deep, although the southern edge was not revealed in the evaluation trench. It had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by 045, a pale to mid grey silt sand which contained a single flint flake.

Ditch 048

- 3.6.3 This ditch ran on an east to west orientation and had steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It was 1.80m wide and 0.80m deep and contained two separate fills. Fill 049 was a dark reddish brown silty sand which contained a small amount of Medieval pottery, this was overlain by fill 050, a dark reddish grey silty sand, which contained animal bone.

3.7 Trench 6 (fig. 6)

- 3.7.1 This trench located a probable natural hollow, through which had been cut an Iron Age ditch and a Medieval ditch. Archaeological deposits were located 0.88m below the present ground level.

Probable Natural Hollow

- 3.7.2 The majority of the base of Trench 6 was covered by layers 053 and 054. An exploratory test pit was dug through these, which showed there to be a series of three silty sand layers totalling 0.46m in depth. these layers probably represent the infilling of a natural hollow. No finds were recovered from any of these layers, but they were cut by Iron Age ditch **052**, and so must pre-date this period.

Ditch 052

- 3.7.3 This ditch ran on a northwest to southeast orientation and was probably the same as Ditch **046** identified in Trench 5. It was 0.60m wide and 0.22m deep, although it had

been partially truncated by machining. It was filled by 051, a mid to pale grey silty sand which contained a single sherd of Iron Age pottery.

Ditch 060

- 3.7.4 This ditch ran on an east to west orientation and was only just visible on the southern edge of the trench. It had a maximum visible width of 0.60m and depth of 0.60m. It was filled by 059, a mid grey silty sand with clay which contained a single piece of Mid 12th - Mid 14th century pottery. Overlaying this was fill 058, a pale brownish grey silty sand which contained no finds.

3.8 Finds Summary

Pottery (Carole Fletcher)

- 3.8.1 The evaluation at March produced an assemblage of pottery of from a wide range of periods. A small number of unabraded Iron Age sherds were recovered from contexts 10 and 14, while contexts 3 and 51 contained pottery which may be Late Iron Age or Early Roman.
- 3.8.2 The majority of the assemblage is medieval and late medieval and includes large unabraded sherds from medieval and late medieval Ely ware jugs (mid 12th-late 15th century) and sherds from decorated high medieval Grimston ware jugs (mid 13th-mid 14th century). Also present are sherds of Bourne D and East Anglian redware, both are 15th-16th century fabrics.
- 3.8.3 The assemblage is domestic in nature suggesting that there was medieval and late medieval occupation close to the area of excavation. There are no fabrics present that date to later than the mid 17th century suggesting that the area after this date may have been abandoned.

3.9 Environmental Summary

Environmental Remains (Rachel Fosberry)

- 3.9.1 Eleven bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Five of the bulk samples were selected for processing on the basis of their likely potential. Features sampled include Iron Age and Medieval ditches.
- 3.9.2 The flots produced a low abundance of charred material in the form of cereal grains, wood charcoal and charred sedges. This suggests the samples represent general scatters of burnt debris rather than discrete purposeful deposits.
- 3.9.3 Wheat grains are difficult to identify on the basis of morphology alone. Two morphological forms were tentatively identified as spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) in Sample 3 from the IA ditch along with the more rounded free-threshing wheat from the medieval contexts.
- 3.9.4 Saw sedge was one of the major vegetation types of the Fen and was commonly used as fuel. It is interesting to note that its use in both the Iron Age and the Medieval period.
- 3.9.5 Eppiphium (egg cases) of the water-flea are indicative of standing water and duckweed and pondweed indicate standing or slow flowing water. This suggest that the Iron Age and Medieval ditches from which they came, were both wet soon after construction.

Faunal Remains (Chris Faine)

3.9.6 Eleven contexts yielded 34 fragments of animal bone of which 20 were identifiable to species (see table 1). With the exception of context 17 (an Iron Age ditch fill containing a single portion of butchered sheep vertebra), all faunal remains were recovered from contexts dating from the Medieval period, with the majority of these coming from a large boundary ditch (**26**). Of the identifiable assemblage cattle are the most prevalent taxon, consisting largely of butchered lower limb elements such metapodia. An intact radius from context **61** gave a withers height for the animal of around 1.04m. Sheep/goat remains are limited to contexts 27 and 41 and consist of butchered cranial elements. Horse remains were recovered from contexts 32 and 50. A mandible recovered from context 32 belonged to an animal around 5-6 years of age. An intact metatarsal from context 50 came from animal around 1.35m at the shoulder. A single dog humerus was recovered from context 13. Two fragments of bird were recovered; a butchered goose humerus from context 50 and an intact fowl tibiotarsus from context 49. The tibiotarsus was from a male bird but showed scarring consistent with the removal of the spur. This is an extremely small sample from which few conclusions can be drawn, most likely representing butchery/settlement waste.

	NISP	NISP%
Cattle (<i>Bos</i>)	5	25
Sheep/Goat (<i>Ovis/Capra</i>)	3	15
Horse (<i>Equus caballus</i>)	2	10
Dog (<i>Canis familiaris</i>)	1	5
Domestic Goose (<i>Anser sp.</i>)	1	5
Domestic Fowl (<i>Gallus sp.</i>)	1	5
Large Mammal	7	35
Total:	20	100

Table 2: Species distribution for the Bone assemblage

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The Archaeological features recorded can be split into three distinct periods, largely on the basis of the pottery recovered from them. Each of these periods is discussed below.

4.1 Iron Age

Field system

- 4.1.1 Three ditches containing pottery of the 5th -3rd century BC are probably the remains of an Iron Age field system. Ditch **008** appears to run parallel to Ditch **046** (also dug as **052**), while Ditch **015** appears to be perpendicular to these (fig. 2). While it can be difficult to be certain of the orientation of ditches in narrow evaluation trenches, the similar dates of the pottery within these features also strongly suggests they are related. The large, unabraded sherds of pottery recovered from Ditches **008** and **015** suggest that settlement may be located very close by, within this field system, as such relatively soft Iron Age pottery is easily broken and worn.

Ditch 017

- 4.1.2 This ditch did not contain any finds and so cannot be accurately dated. However, the pale fill it contained, together with its' morphology, would suggest that it is of an early date. It is on a different alignment to the Iron Age ditches discussed above and so could be earlier in date, potentially Bronze Age. Alternatively, it may belong to a different phase of activity within the Iron Age system. The presence of a couple of struck flints and a small scrap of potentially later Bronze Age pottery also suggest there may have been an earlier presence on the site.

4.2 Medieval

- 4.2.1 Given the location of the site, close to St. Wendreda's Church, the presence of Medieval activity is not unexpected. However, that this activity has remained unaffected by later ploughing and has largely survived the various modern building programmes within the school is less expected.

Boundary Ditches (025, 048 and 060)

- 4.2.2 A series of three quite similar Medieval ditches were identified running parallel to each other (fig. 2) and perpendicular to the original line of Wimblington Road (fig. 7). These all contained pottery of a similar 12th to 14th century date. If an additional ditch existed between ditch **025** and **048** (where no evaluation trench was excavated) then these four ditches would be evenly spaced at c. 25m apart. These ditches are likely to have formed burgess plots running back from the road (and parallel to the road to the south). The area where the trenches were excavated is some distance from the original road frontage (c. 80m), where settlement is most likely to have occurred and hence large amounts of domestic waste was not recovered from these ditches.

Ditch 026

- 4.2.3 Ditch **026** was very large, being just over five meters wide and 1.40m deep (2m deep from present ground level). It contained significant quantities of domestic debris, in the form of pottery, animal bone, muscle shell and charcoal/ash. Unfortunately, it was not clear on which side of this ditch any original bank may have been located, however, tip lines on the southern edge of the ditch suggest that it may be more likely that a bank

lay to the south. This would imply that any 'enclosed' activity associated with this ditch was also occurring to the south.

- 4.2.4 Such a large Medieval ditch is open to several interpretations, especially when only a very short length has been exposed in a single trench. It is possible that it represents a major boundary ditch, encompassing a manor or a religious house of some type. As such, significant occupational remains could be expected to be associated with it. Alternatively it could have been of a defensive feature encompassing, or cutting off a wider area of land. Finally, it is also possible that the ditch is part of the remains of a windmill, the construction of which involved the digging of a large circular ditch in order to provide material for the construction of a mound on which the windmill was located - there is ample room to the north of the trench to fit in the full circle of a windmill ditch.

4.3 Significance

- 4.3.1 The presence of a middle Iron Age field system, potentially with direct settlement within it, could greatly increase our knowledge of the use of March island at this time. Previous Iron Age finds in the immediate area (including a large coin hoard) have all dated to the later Iron Age period, whereas the pottery recovered from the current site is earlier in date, being of the 5th -3rd century BC.
- 4.3.2 While Medieval activity is not surprising, given the location of the site so close to St. Wendreda's Church and the likely centre of Medieval March, the presence of the large ditch **026** is of particular interest. This ditch would have been a significant feature in Medieval March and may be associated with further important remains.

4.4 Recommendations

- 4.4.1 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	NW-SE	
Trench contained modern disturbances, together with several archaeological features.				Max. depth (m)	0.74	
				Width (m)	1.5	
				Length (m)	16.5	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.14	Turf	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.34	Topsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	0.65	Subsoil	-	-
004	Cut	0.60	0.16	Pit/ditch	-	?
005	Fill	0.60	0.16	Fill of 004	-	?
006	Cut	0.40	0.07	Pit/Post hole	-	?
007	Fill	0.50	0.07	Fill of 006	-	?
008	Cut	0.80	0.22	Ditch	-	5th -3rd century BC
009	Fill	0.60	0.22	Fill of 008	-	-
010	Fill	0.60	0.20	Fill of 008	Pot	5th -3rd century BC
011	Cut	>2.00	>0.54	Pit?	-	16th - Mid 17th century
012	Fill	2.00	0.32	Fill of 011	Pot	Medieval
013	Fill	1.60	0.22	Fill of 011	Pot	16th - Mid 17th century
056	Fill	>0.40	0.08	Fill of 057	Pot	16 th - Mid 17 th Century
057	Cut	0.40	0.08	Pit	-	16 th - Mid 17 th Century

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology, shortened due to services				Max. depth (m)	0.8	
				Width (m)	1.5	
				Length (m)	12.5	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.12	Turfline	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.28	topsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 3						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench contained archaeological features, a modern pit and a tree bowl				Max. depth (m)	0.54	
				Width (m)	1.5	
				Length (m)	19	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.10	Turfline	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	0.32	Subsoil	-	-
016	Fill	1.05	0.20	Fill of 017	-	-
017	Cut	1.05	0.20	Ditch	-	Iron Age?
018	Fill	0.80	0.20	Fill of 021	-	-
019	Fill	0.32	0.08	Fill of 021	-	-
020	Fill	0.42	0.16	Fill of 021	-	-
021	Cut	0.80	0.48	Tree Bowl	-	-
022	Fill	>1.10	0.60	Fill of 025	Pot, bone	Mid 12 th - late 14 th Century
023	Fill	>1.10	0.20	Fill of 025	-	-
024	Fill	>1.10	0.10	Fill of 025	-	-
025	Cut	>1.10	0.90	Ditch	-	Mid 12 th - late 14 th Century

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench contained several archaeological features, including a very large ditch.				Max. depth (m)	0.74	
				Width (m)	1.5	
				Length (m)	18.5	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	0.00	0.10	Turfline	-	-
002	Layer	0.00	0.22	Topsoil	-	-
003	Layer	0.00	0.50	Subsoil	-	-
014	Fill	0.90	0.25	Fill of 015	Pot, flint	5th -3rd century BC
015	Cut	0.90	0.25	Ditch	-	5th -3rd century BC
026	Cut	5.05	1.40	Ditch	-	
027	Fill	5.05	0.28	Fill of 026	pot	Mid 14 th - late 15 th Century
028	Fill	0.42	0.08	Fill of 026		-

029	Fill	0.50	0.06	Fill of 026		-
030	Fill	0.60	0.08	Fill of 026	Pot	Medieval
031	Fill	0.80	0.02	Fill of 026		-
032	Fill	1.10	0.24	Fill of 026	Pot	13 th - late 15 th Century
033	Fill	0.66	0.08	Fill of 026	Pot	Mid 14 th - late 15 th Century
034	Fill	1.38	0.32	Fill of 026		-
035	Fill	1.82	0.18	Fill of 026		-
036	Fill	1.12	0.10	Fill of 026		-
037	Fill	1.32	0.20	Fill of 026		-
038	Fill	0.30	0.02	Fill of 026	Mortar?	-
039	Cut	1.96	-	Ditch (same as 025)	-	-
040	Fill	1.96	-	Fill of 039	-	-
061	Fill	2.44	0.10	Fill of 026	Pot	13 th - Late 15 th Century
062	Fill	1.42	0.18	Fill of 026	Pot	12 th - Mid 14 th Century
063	Fill	1.62	0.12	Fill of 026		-
064	Fill	0.72	0.38	Fill of 026		-

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench contained two ditches				Max. depth (m)		0.9
				Width (m)		1.5
				Length (m)		8.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.10	Turfline	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	0.42	Subsoil	-	-
045	Fill	>1.10	0.46	Fill of 046	flint	-
046	Cut	>1.10	0.46	Ditch	-	Iron Age
048	Cut	1.80	0.80	Ditch	-	Medieval
049	Fill	1.80	0.30	Fill of 048	bone	-
050	Fill	1.80	0.50	Fill of 048	pot	Medieval

Trench 6						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench contained two ditches and a probable large natural hollow				Max. depth (m)	0.98	
				Width (m)	1.5	
				Length (m)	8.8	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	-	-
003	layer	-	0.74	Subsoil	-	-
051	Fill	0.60	0.22	Fill of 052	pot	Iron Age
052	Cut	0.60	0.22	ditch	-	Iron Age
053	Layer	-	0.12	Natural layer	bone	-
054	Layer	-	0.22	Natural layer	-	-
055	Layer	0.00	0.10	Natural layer	-	-
058	Fill	0.30	0.20	Fill of 060	-	-
059	Fill	0.60	0.52	Fill of 060	pot	Mid 12 th - Mid 14 th Century
060	Cut	0.60	0.60	Ditch	-	Mid 12 th - Mid 14 th Century

APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction and Methods

- B.1.1 Eleven bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.
- B.1.2 Five of the bulk samples were selected for processing on the basis of their likely potential. Features sampled include Iron Age and Medieval ditches.
- B.1.3 Ten litres of each of the selected samples were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve. 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 at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 3.

Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Flot Contents	Residue Contents
3	5	004	Charcoal, snails and charred grain	Animal bone and pottery
4	14	015	Charcoal, charred saw-sedge leaf, snails, waterlogged seeds and insect fragments	Small bones and pottery
7	50	048	Snails, small rodent bones	Small bones
9	33	026	Charred grains and weed seeds, saw-sedge leaf, burnt snail, charcoal	Mussel shells, animal bone, pottery
11	63	026	Charred grain, saw-sedge leaf and charcoal, waterlogged seeds	Animal bone, small bones, mussel shells

Table 3. Environmental Remains Results

Preservation

- B.1.4 All of the samples except Sample 7 contain plant remains preserved by carbonisation.
- B.1.5 Samples 4 and 11 also contain plant remains that are preserved by waterlogging (survival due to anoxic conditions)

B.1.6 Plant Remains

Cereals

- B.1.7 Charred cereal grains are present in three of the samples; Sample 3, fill 5 of Iron Age ditch **004** contains two abraded wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains that are possibly the hulled variety. Sample 11, fill 63 of medieval ditch **026** contains four free-threshing wheat grains and Sample 9, fill 33 of medieval ditch **026** contains wheat and rye (*Secale cereale*). No chaff elements occur.

Weed seeds

- B.1.8 Charred seeds are rare and consist of single specimens of cleaver (*Gallium aparine*), sedge (*Carex* sp.) and dock (*Rumex* sp.). Charred Saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) in the form of leaf fragments and a single nutlet occur in most of the samples.
- B.1.9 Samples 4 and 11 contain numerous quantities of seeds preserved by waterlogging including pond weed (*Potamogeton* sp.) and duck weed (*Lemna* sp.). The epiphium (egg cases) of the water flea (*Daphnia* sp.) along with insect fragments were also noted in both of these samples.

Ecofacts and Artefacts

- B.1.10 Three of the samples contain occasional sherds of pottery.
- B.1.11 Animal bones and/or small rodent bones occur in all of the samples.
- B.1.12 Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) shells are present in Samples 9 and 11.

Contamination

- B.1.13 Modern roots were present in large quantities in all of the samples.

Discussion

- B.1.14 The flots produced a low abundance of charred material in the form of cereal grains, wood charcoal and charred sedges. This suggests the samples represent general scatters of burnt debris rather than discrete purposeful deposits.
- B.1.15 Wheat grains are difficult to identify on the basis of morphology alone. Two morphological forms were tentatively identified as spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) in Sample 3 from the IA ditch along with the more rounded free-threshing wheat from the medieval contexts.
- B.1.16 Saw sedge was one of the major vegetation types of the Fen and was commonly used as fuel. It is interesting to note that its use in both the Iron Age and the Medieval period.
- B.1.17 Eppiphium (egg cases) of the water-flea are indicative of standing water and duckweed and pondweed indicate standing or slow flowing water. This suggest that the Iron Age and Medieval ditches from which they came, were both wet soon after construction.

Further Work and Methods Statement

- B.1.18 The samples examined from this evaluation produced a low abundance of charred material making conclusions tentative. The assemblage appears to represent the disposal of domestic waste along with the natural accumulation of plant remains from local vegetation. No further work is required at this stage.
- B.1.19 If further excavation is planned, sampling should be undertaken as investigation on the nature of cereal waste and possible weed assemblages is likely to provide an insight into to utilisation of local plant resources, agricultural activity and economic evidence from this period.
- B.1.20 The pottery from Sample 3 from fill 005 of ditch **004** and should be examined by a ceramic specialist for it's potential for dating this context.

APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Atkins, R. 2003 An Early Salt Making Site and Settlement at Longhill Road, March, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation. Cambridge County Council Archaeological Field Unit Report
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- Kemp, S. 1999 Roman and Medieval Gravel Pits Along The Avenue, Cavalry Park, March. Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Report no A147
- Palmer, R. 2003 Land Adjacent to 22-23 Wimblington Road, March, TL415948, Cambridgeshire: Aerial photographic assessment.
- Potter, TW. 1996 *In* Jackson, RPJ. & Potter, TW 1996 Excavation at Stonea, Cambridgeshire 1980-85 pp.45-48
- Stace, C., 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second edition. Cambridge University Press

APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-66565		
Project Name	Iron Age and Medieval Activity at Neale Wade Community College, March		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	25-10-2009	Finish	30-10-2009
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	MARNWA09	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER No.	ECB 3283	Related HER/OASIS No.	n/a

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Development Type	Public Building

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 checked="" 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 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
DITCH	Iron Age -800 to 43	POTTERY	Iron Age -800 to 43
DITCH	Medieval 1066 to 1540	POTTERY	Medieval 1066 to 1540
	Select period...	ANIMAL BONE	Medieval 1066 to 1540

Project Location

County	CAMBRIDGESHIRE	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Fenland	Neale Wade Community College, Wimblington Road, March, Cambridgeshire. PE15 9PX	
Parish	March		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	0.5 ha	National Grid Reference	TL 4176 9530

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	CAPCA
Project Design Originator	Nick Gilmour
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Nick Gilmour

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC stores landbeach	OA East	CCC Stores Landbeach
MARNWA09	MARNWA09	MARNWA09

Archive Contents/Media





	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
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Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey


Notes:

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation	—————
Deposit - Conjectured	-----
Natural Features	—————
Sondages/Machine Strip	- - - - -
Intrusion/Truncation
Illustrated Section	<u> S.14 </u>
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Layer	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	118

Sections

Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	—————
Cut-Conjectured	-----
Deposit Horizon	—————
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	-----
Intrusion/Truncation
Top Surface/Top of Natural	—————
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	- - - - -
Cut Number	118
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^
Inclusions	

Convention Key



Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

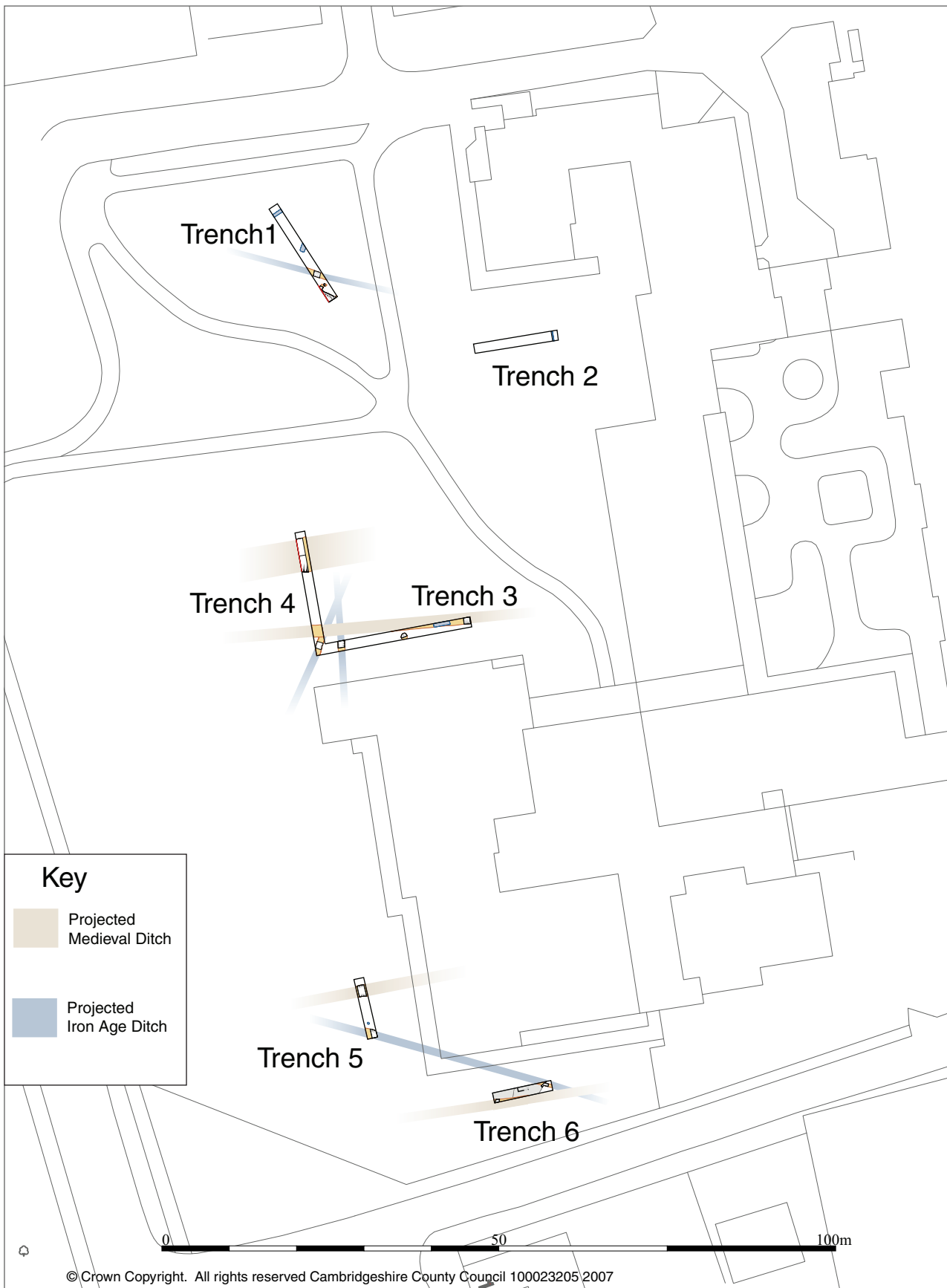


Figure 2: Trench Plan

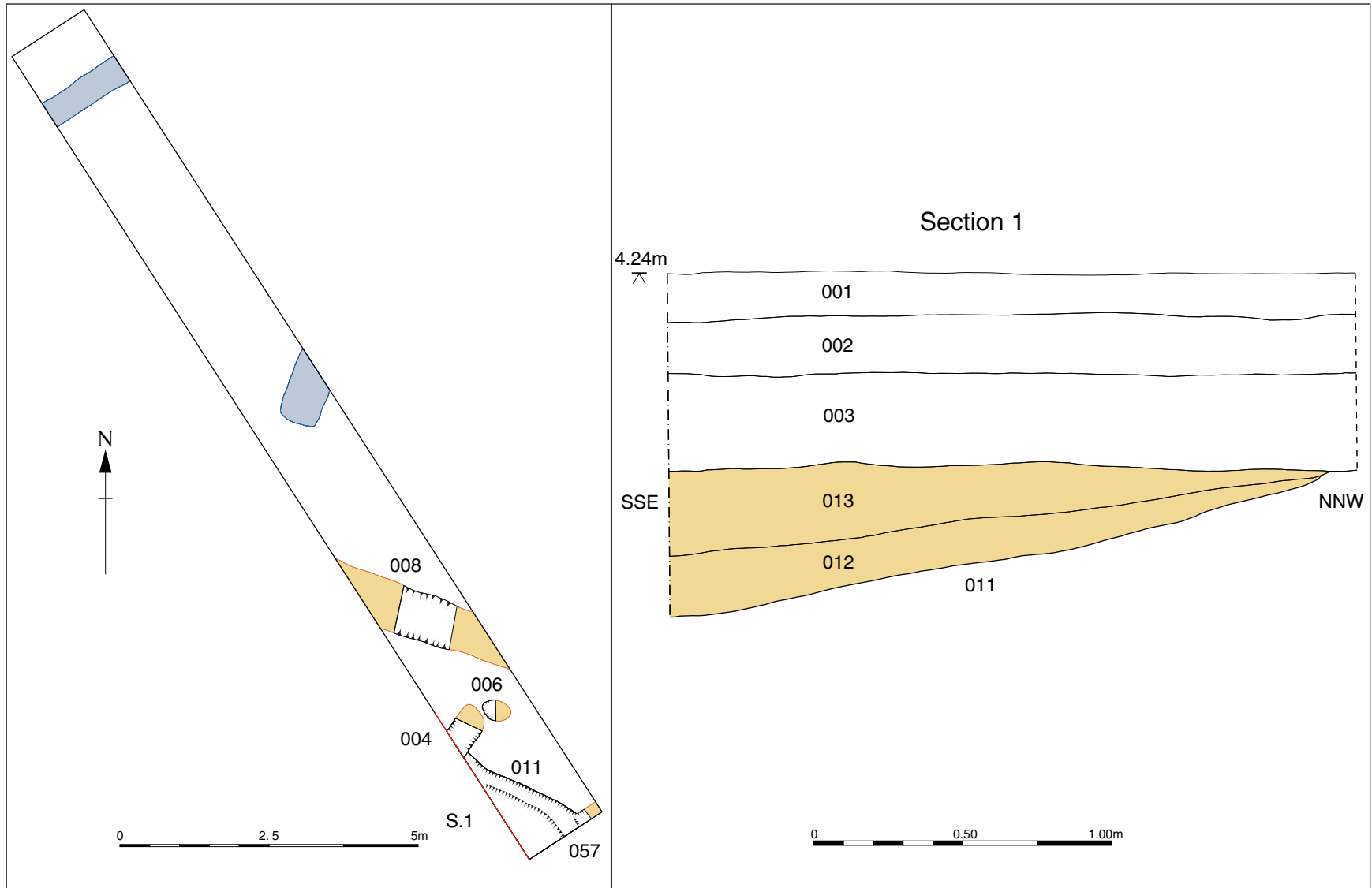


Figure 3: Trench 1 Plan and Section.

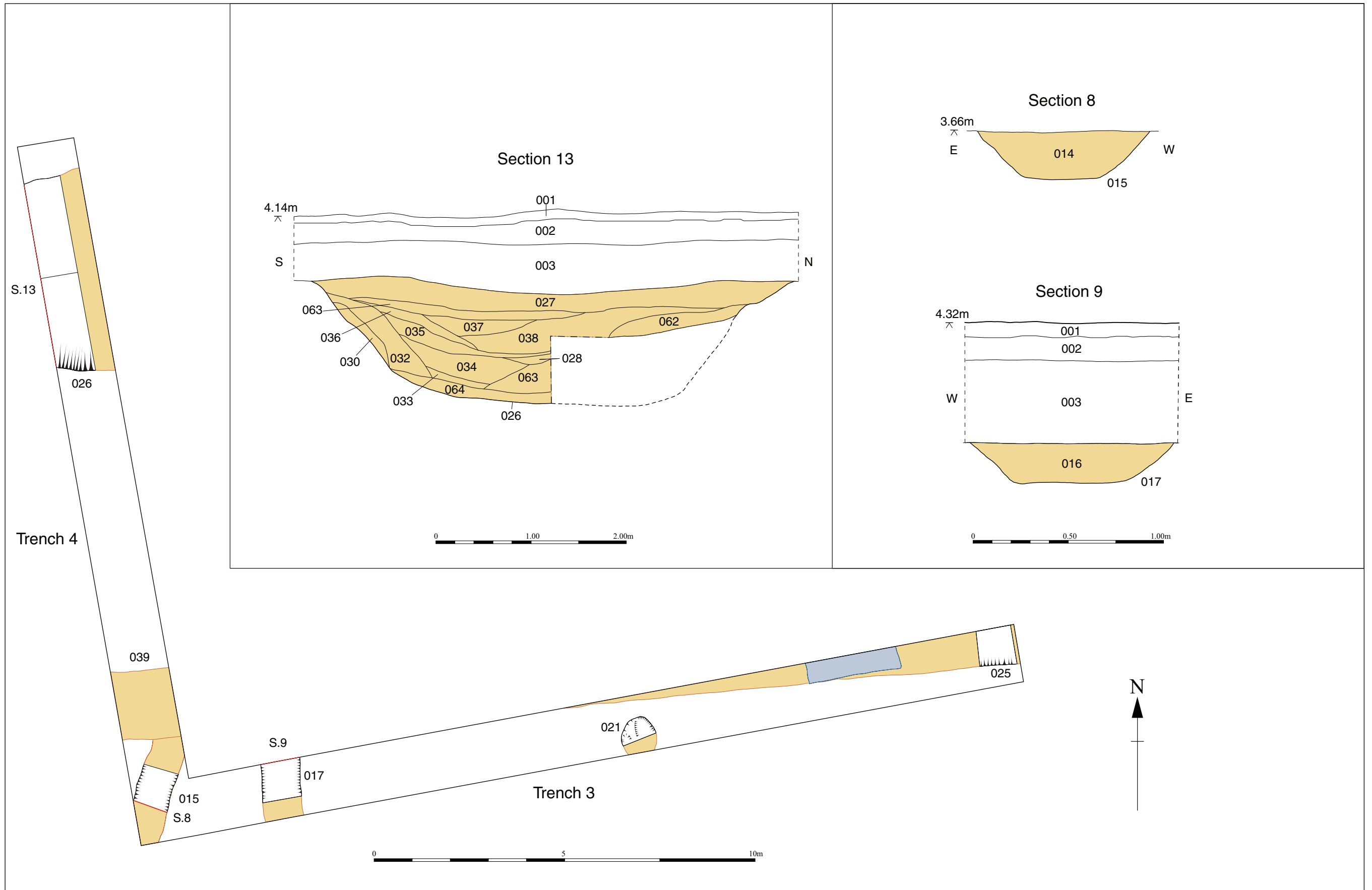


Figure 4: Trenches 3 and 4 Plans and Sections

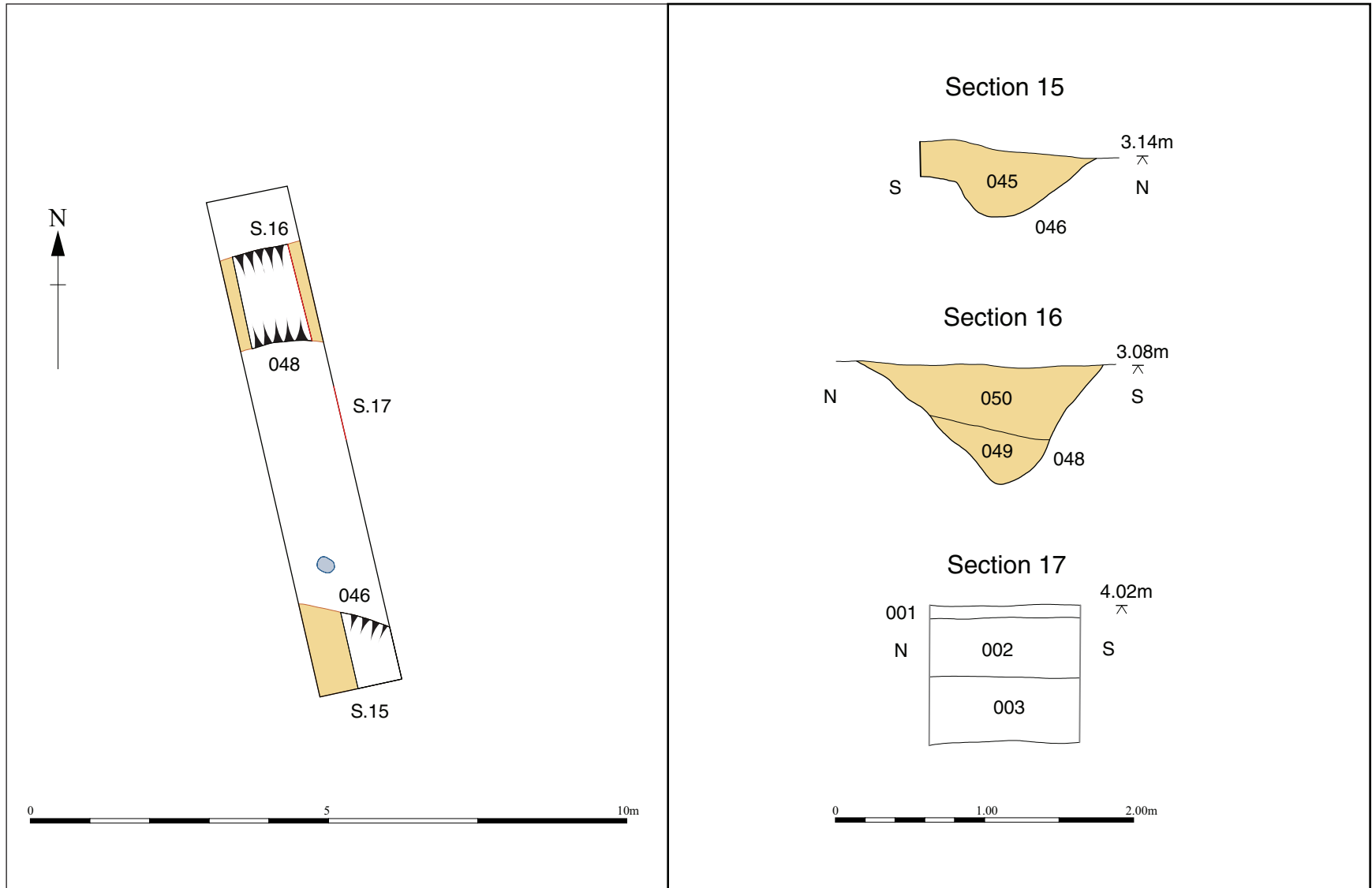


Figure 5: Trench 5 Plan and Sections



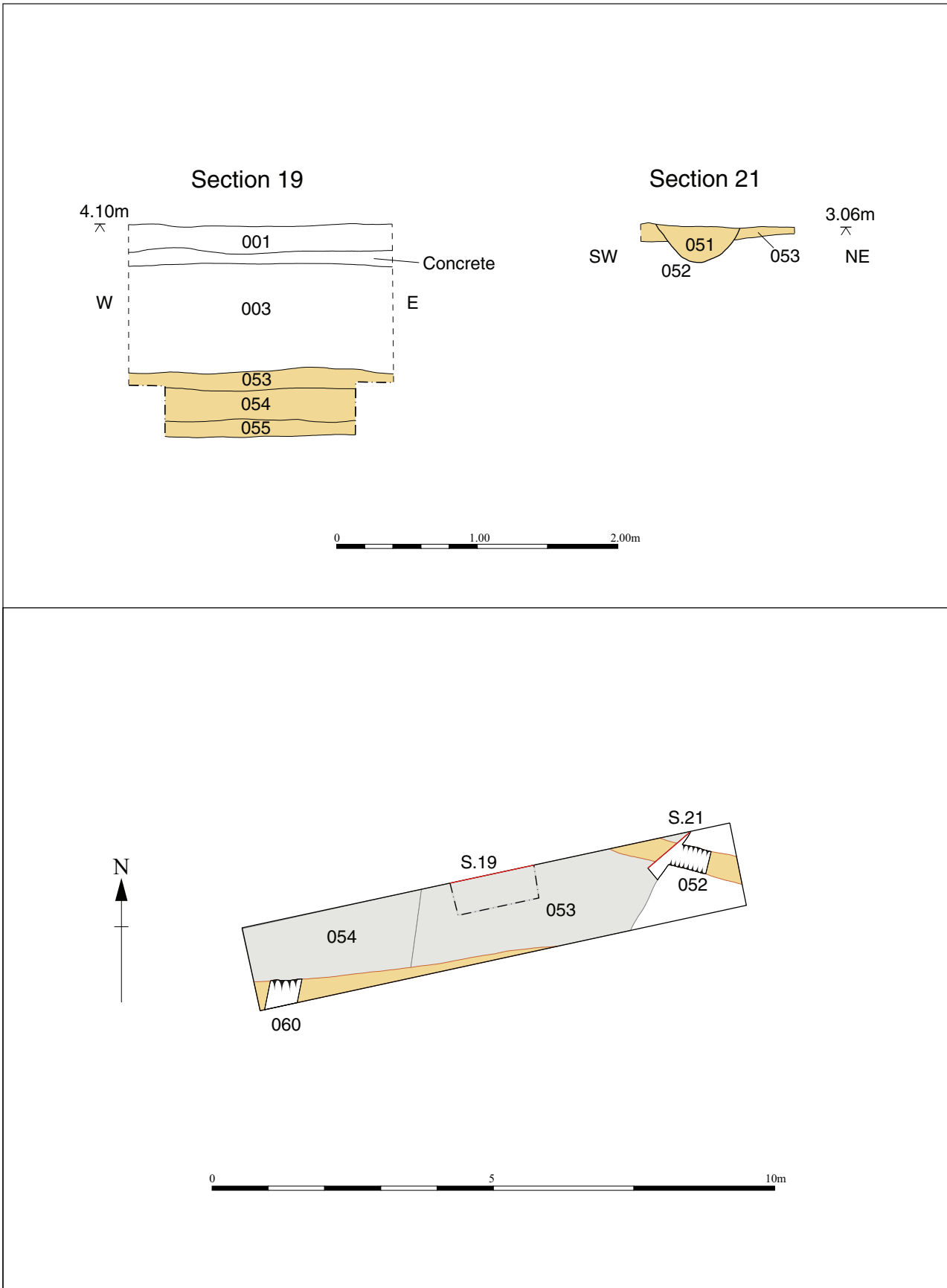


Figure 6: Trench 6 Plan and sections

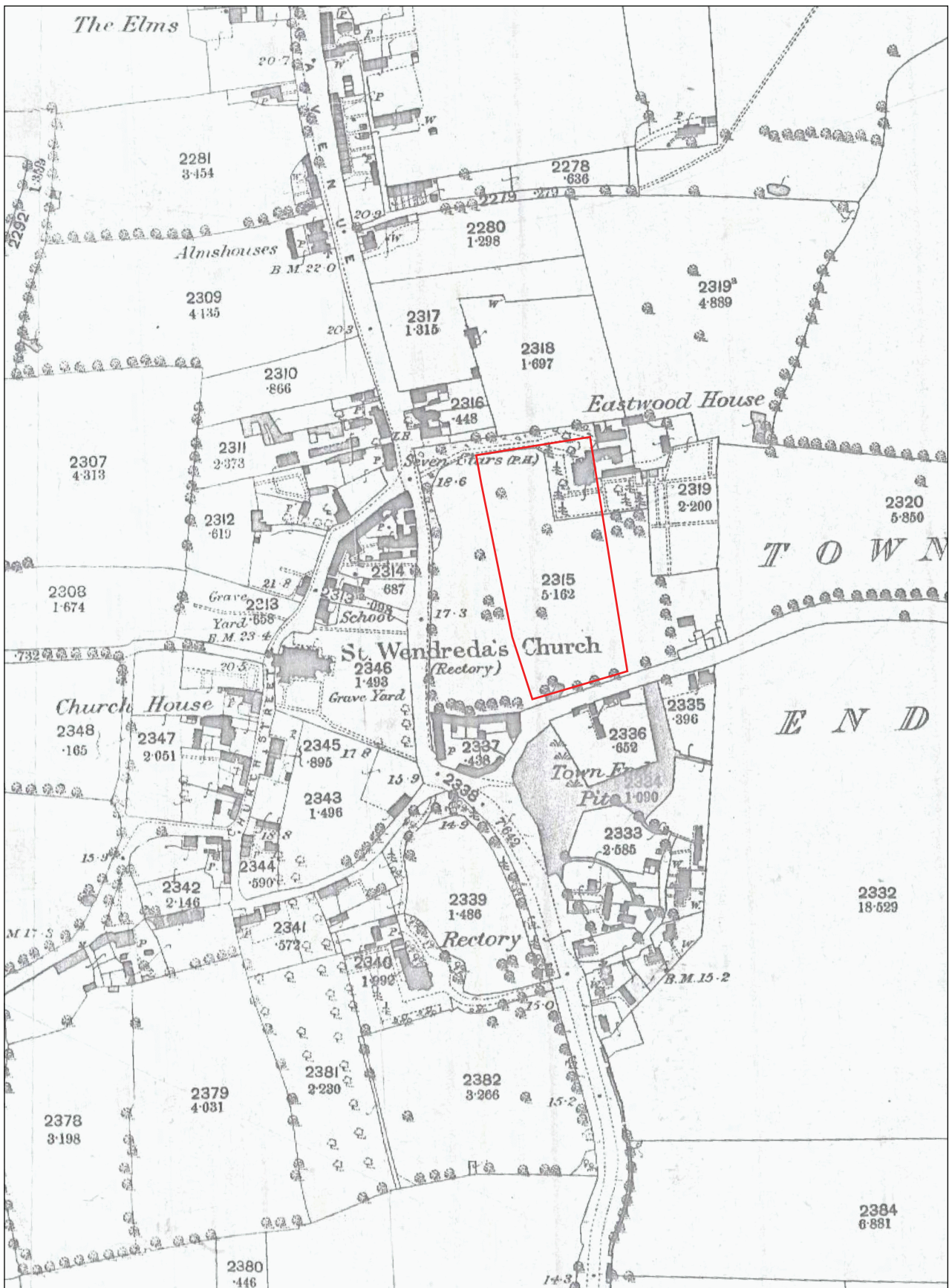


Figure 7: 1st Edition OS map (1885), with approximate development area outlined (red).

APPENDIX E. WATCHING BRIEF ON TEST PITS AT NEALE WADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Site Code: MARNWA10

Date of Works: February 2010

Report No: 1142

Excavator: James Fairbairn

Client: Galliford Try

Report Date: March 2010

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map and test pit locations
Fig. 2 Sections of Test pits 5 and 14

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Test pit 5
Plate 2 Test pit 14

Summary

Between the 17th and the 19th February 2010, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Neale Wade Community College, March (TL 4176 9530). The monitoring was carried out during test and investigative pitting in advance of the erection of new school buildings. This follows an evaluation carried out by OA East in 2009 which revealed several Iron Age ditches, containing pottery of the 5th -3rd centuries BC, which may represent the remains of a wider, inhabited field system. In addition several Medieval ditches were also recorded. Three of these were parallel and may have divided the area into plots. A single very large ditch containing a significant amount of Medieval pottery and domestic waste was also found which appears to represent a major boundary, and could potentially be related to a Manor or Religious House. The watching brief revealed possible medieval occupation in the form of two possible quarry pits with one containing animal bone and pottery dating to the 14th and 15th centuries.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1.1 The objective of this watching brief 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.
- 5.1.2 The Brief required that fifteen pits of varying depths and in different locations spread across the site were monitored for archaeological features or artefacts.
- 5.1.3 The area of investigation was located at The Neale Wade Community College, March, Cambridgeshire. (TL 4176 9530).
- 5.1.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 5.1.5 Site conditions were cold and wet with occasional snow, sunny periods were encountered on the final day. These conditions had no adverse affect on the archaeological monitoring.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A total of fifteen pits were dug and monitored over three days. These pits varied in depth from 0.30m to 3.00m. Six test pits were excavated by machine and nine were hand dug. Of these only two pits showed any sign of archaeological features, Test Pit **5** & Test Pit **14**, these are discussed below. All other pits were found to be devoid of any archaeological features.

6.2 Test Pit 5

- 6.2.1 Test Pit **5** was excavated by a JCB machine using a toothed bucket. It measured 2.50m in length, was 0.75m wide and was dug to maximum depth of 3.00m and was located in the playground to the east of one of the school buildings (see fig 1). The base of the test bit revealed a band of Ampthill clay overlain by a course sandy gravel. Cut into this was a remnant of a pit **069** which had a truncated width of 2.25m and a maximum visible depth of 0.65m (see fig 2 and plate 1) the eastern side of the pit had a gently sloping side. The single fill of this pit, 064 consisted of a mid reddish brown sandy silty clay which was moderately compact. No finds were found within the fill. The pit was capped by a modern concrete surface layer.

6.3 Test Pit 14

- 6.3.1 Test pit **14** was excavated using the same means as test pit **5** and measured 2.20m by 1.60m and had a maximum depth of 2.40m, its northern facing section revealed a large pit **067**. This had a maximum visible width of 1.90m and a depth of 1.38m (see fig 3 and plate 2). **067** contained medieval domestic pottery. The assemblage consisted of two sherds one being a Bourne D type ware dating to the mid 15th century and the other a small piece of Grimston ware dating from the 14th to 15th centuries (Carole Fletcher pers comm). Two pieces of animal bone thought to be sheep were also found, again this pit was cut into a course sandy gravel. The pit had two fills 065 and 066. The earliest fill

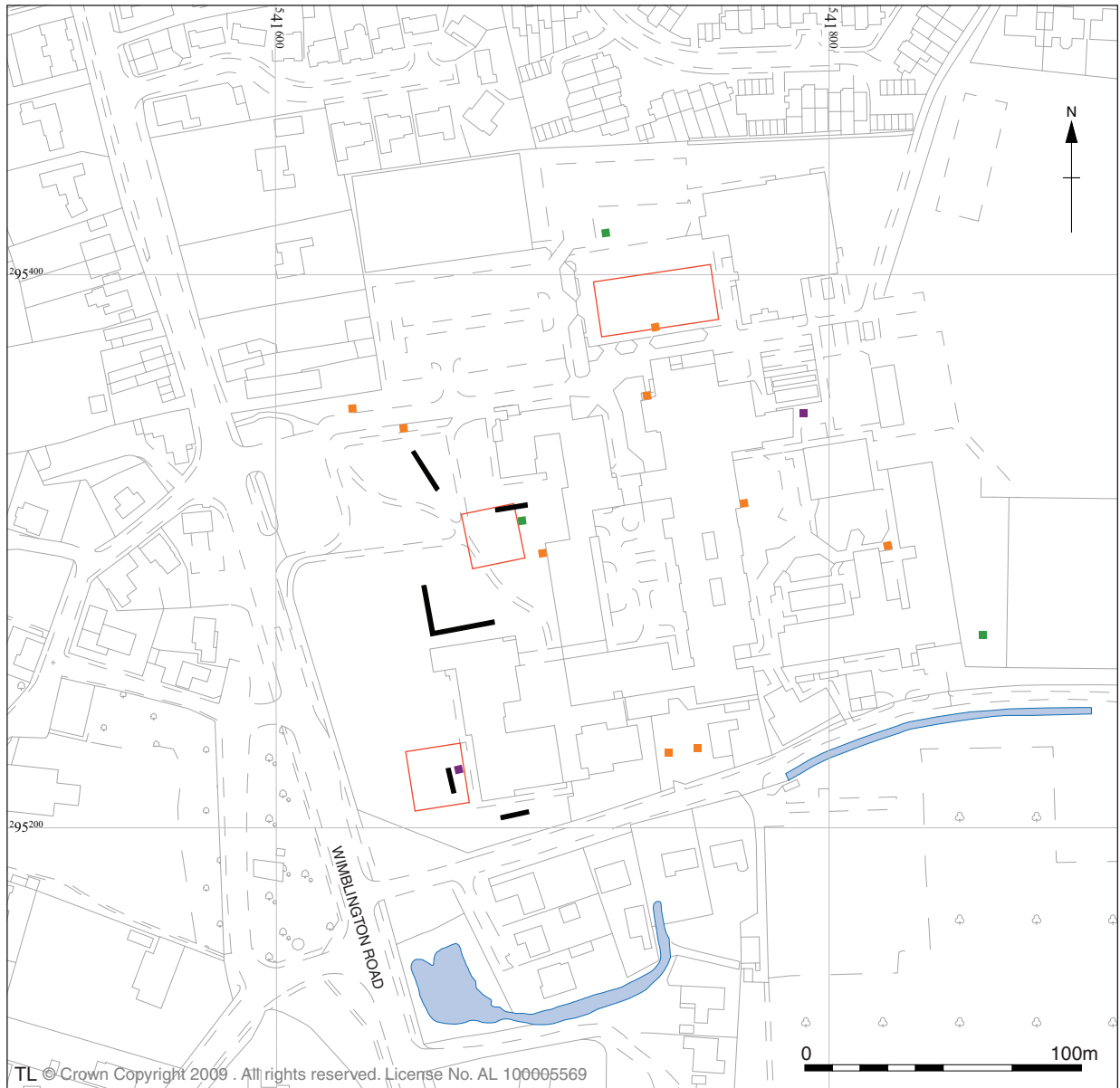
(066) consisted of a dark grey silty sandy clay which had a moderately loose compaction. No finds were evident within this fill. Fill 065 consisted of a dark brown grey silty sandy clay of moderately loose compaction, it is within this fill that the pottery and bone were found. Capping these fill was a layer of heavily disturbed ground 064. This disturbance is most probably due to ground-works relating to the construction of the nearby classrooms.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 Gravel quarrying seems the most likely explanation for the two pits found during the archaeological monitoring. It was not uncommon in medieval times to use sand and gravel in the construction of dwellings, with the materiel specifically used to construct the platform on which the house stood. Given the findings of this watching brief and the previous evaluation in 2009, added to the fact that the site lies so close to St Wendreda's church and the probable centre of medieval March, some form of occupation of the site is to be expected.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1.1 The author would like to thank Galliford Try who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer and James Fairbairn carried out the monitoring work. The illustrations were produced by Louise Bush.



- Machine dug test pits containing archaeology
- Machine dug test pits (no archaeology)
- Hand dug test pits (no archaeology)
- Temporary accomodation blocks
- Evaluation trenches

Figure 1: Test pit plan

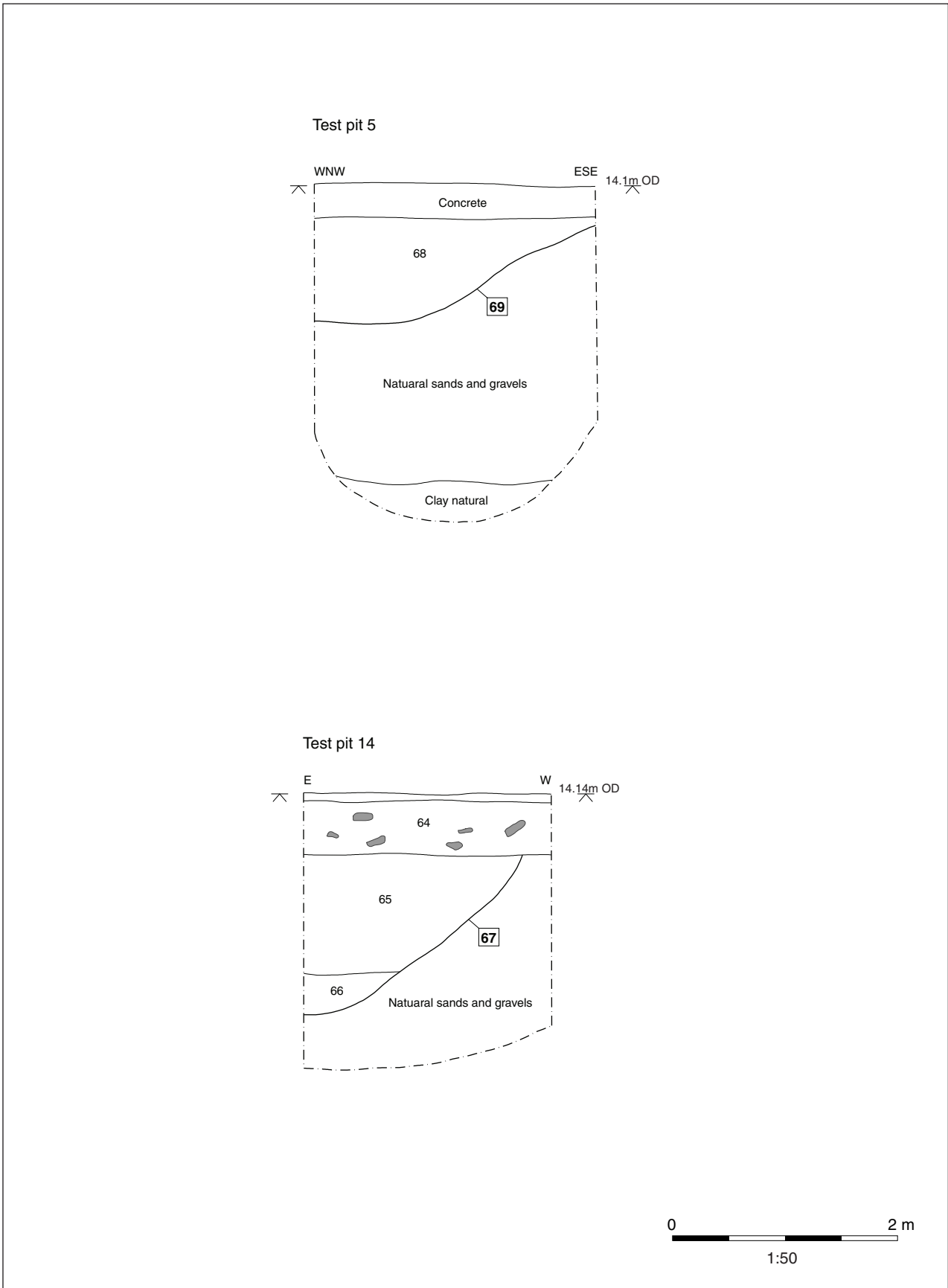


Figure 2: Sections



Plate 1: Test pit 5



Plate 2: Test pit 14



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