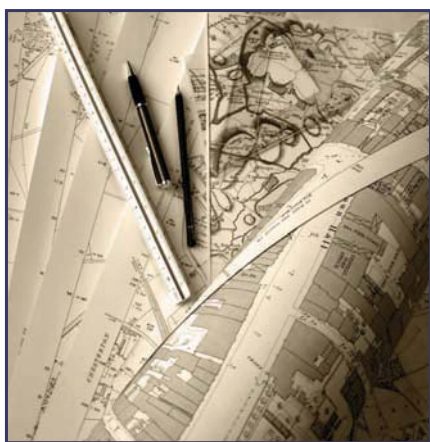


Land at Ermine Street Huntingdon



Desktop Assessment



August 2010

Client: John Martin & Associates

OA East Report No: 1205

OASIS No: oxfordar3-81579

NGR: TL 22360 73400

Land at Ermine Street, Huntingdon

Desk-Based Assessment

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Summary..... | 5 |
| 1 Introduction..... | 7 |
| 1.1 Planning Background..... | 7 |
| 1.2 Location, Geology and Topography | 7 |
| 1.3 Acknowledgements..... | 8 |
| 2 Archaeological and Historical Sources | 9 |
| 2.1 Historical Sources | 9 |
| 2.2 The Historic Environment Record (HER) Fig. 2..... | 9 |
| 2.3 Cartographic Evidence (Fig. 3)..... | 10 |
| 2.4 Aerial Photographs..... | 10 |
| 2.5 Earthworks..... | 11 |
| 2.6 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys (Fig. 4)..... | 11 |
| 3 Deposit Mapping | 14 |
| 3.1 Prehistoric..... | 14 |
| 3.2 Roman..... | 14 |
| 3.3 Saxon to post-medieval..... | 15 |
| 4 Degree of Survival | 16 |
| 4.1 Archaeological features and deposits..... | 16 |
| 4.2 Finds and environmental remains..... | 16 |
| 4.3 Additional notes | 17 |
| 5 Discussion | 18 |
| 6 Conclusions | 20 |
| Appendix A. Bibliography | 21 |
| Appendix B. OASIS Report Form | 22 |

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location (study area outlined red)
- Fig. 2 HER entries (purple) in the vicinity of the study area (outlined red). Not to scale
- Fig. 3 Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1:2500 scale, 1882-7) showing the study area (outlined red)
- Fig. 4 Plan of main archaeological results from previous investigations within the study area (after Cullen 2004, fig. 2) in relation to nearby sites. Not to scale

Summary

In August 2010 OA East were commissioned by John Martin and Associates to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment on land at Ermine Street, to the south of Great Stukeley. This work has taken place pre-planning and will form part of an Environmental Statement in support of a planning application for a c.50ha site on the north-western edge of Huntingdon.

The study site is located within the Great Ouse Valley, an area rich in prehistoric remains. Unusually, the study area has already been subject to an extensive programme of survey and evaluation including a desk-based assessment, aerial photographic interpretation, geophysical survey, fieldwalking and evaluation by trial-trenching over a period spanning 1998 to 2004.

This current study has aimed to review and update where appropriate the available historic, cartographic and HER evidence, and combine this with collation of the results of the previous surveys and investigations both within and around the study area. This has enabled a more comprehensive overview of the potential archaeological character of the site to be explored.

There is high potential for the presence of prehistoric (Late Bronze Age) and Roman features within the study area. Four main zones of activity have been identified by the previous work, mostly comprising features associated with agriculture and in particular stock management. These are largely concentrated within the south and western parts of the study area, although features (many of them undated) were generally scattered across the site.

Of significance is an area of possible settlement and/or ceremonial-related activity that appears to be contemporary with the Late Bronze Age field system. An undated ring ditch, possibly the remains of a ploughed-out barrow, was also identified in the south of the study area.

The plan and consistent north-west to south-east alignment of the Roman fields and enclosures indicates a high degree of homogeneity and planning, suggesting that they may have been laid in relation to a major line of reference such as Ermine Street. No evidence of this Roman road, which purportedly forms the eastern boundary of the site, was identified, or indeed any enclosures or ditches offset from it.

Later activity is represented by medieval furrows which are present across much of the study area.

Survival of features is generally good from both main periods of activity although modern ploughing has resulted in some truncation. No earthworks are present within the study area. Potential for the survival of palaeoenvironmental remains is likely to be moderate; at least one waterlogged deposit was identified. Relatively small quantities of finds mostly comprising pottery, flint, animal bone and a small number of post-medieval metal finds was recovered during the evaluation. The absence of significant assemblages within the study area may reflect its more agricultural basis and peripheral location in relation to the presumed focus of contemporary settlement identified by geophysical survey and aerial photography to the north-west of the study area, south of Brookfield Farm Cottages.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

- 1.1.1 John Martin and Associates have commissioned an archaeological desk-based assessment from Oxford Archaeology East. This work has taken place pre-planning and will form part of an Environmental Statement in support of a planning application for a c.50ha site on the north-western edge of Huntingdon.
- 1.1.2 This desk-based assessment has been compiled in accordance with IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Revised 2008).
- 1.1.3 The study site falls within a larger area that has previously been subject to archaeological assessment and evaluation in support of a former planning application for a proposed c.70ha residential development. This entailed an aerial photographic survey (Air Photo Services of Cambridge (APS), 1998); geophysical survey (GSB Prospection, 2000) and desk-based assessment (John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC) 2002), followed by fieldwalking (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2004) and trial-trenching evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology: Cullen 2004). At the time of the latter evaluation the proposed development was referred to as Northbridge.
- 1.1.4 This current desk-based assessment will collate and update the results of these previous stages of work in light of more recent investigations to the immediate east of the study area (Phillips 2009). As a result of the comprehensive nature of previous work within, and adjacent to the study area, it was not deemed necessary to undertake a site visit or revisit the record office, however a further consultation of the Cambridgeshire Heritage Environment Record (CHER) was carried out. No Brief or corresponding Specification was produced for the current phase of assessment.

1.2 Location, Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The subject site, centred on TL 22360 73400, is located on the north-western fringe of Huntingdon and c.0.75km to the south of Great Stukeley (Fig. 1). Roughly triangular in shape, the site is bounded to the north-east by Ermine Street, which at this point appears to follow the course of the Roman road of the same name. The A141 forms the boundary to the south and intersects with the A14 trunk road at Spittals roundabout at the south-west corner of the site; the A14 continues north-westwards and bounds the study area along its western edge. A farm track linking Ermine Street with the A14 provides the northern boundary to the study area.
- 1.2.2 The British Geological Survey records the area as being located on glacial Boulder clay (BGS 1975); the desk-based assessment (JSAC 2002, 7) noted the presence of chalky till on the lower areas of the site, giving rise to clay on the higher ground. Evaluation undertaken in 2004 (Cullen 2004, 6) recorded orange clay silt across much of the site, with flint and gravel mixed with silt clay towards the south. Recent investigations to the immediate north-east of the study area also revealed the natural to be Boulder clay, although an outcrop of chalk bedrock was encountered below the clay in the northern parts of the site (Phillips 2009, 7).
- 1.2.3 Topographically the study area is located on a gentle slope that falls from c.25m OD to c.12m OD in a south-westerly direction (Cullen 2004, 6). The site is under arable cultivation; very few boundaries remain indicating that this area has been subject to hedgerow removal (JSAC 2002, 7), especially when compared with the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (Fig. 3).

1.3 Acknowledgements

- 1.3.1 Oxford Archaeology East would like to thank John Martin and Associates for commissioning this desk-based assessment. Research and collation of material was undertaken by the author who would like to thank Hazel White and Sally Thompson for their assistance at Cambridgeshire County Council HER. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray, who also edited this report; Andy Corrigan produced the illustrations and was responsible for collating and printing the report.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

2.1 Historical Sources

- 2.1.1 Original historical research is outside the scope of this study and much of the historical background and development of the site has been drawn from secondary sources such as unpublished reports, published histories and web-based resources.
- 2.1.2 The study area lies within the parish of the Stukeleys; it is located c.0.75km to the south of Great Stukeley village and, due to modern encroachment, is now situated close to the edge of modern Huntingdon.
- 2.1.3 The Stukeleys are mentioned in the Domesday Book under the name '*Stivecle*' (Mawer and Stenton 1969, 224). At the time of the Conquest in 1066 it was held by *Hungifu* and in 1086 by Countess Judith, who held three hides (Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, <http://www.pase.ac.uk>, accessed 23 August 2010; Page *et al* 1974, 230-231). The place-name derives from Old English *Syfic*, *leah* meaning 'stump-clearing' (Mawer and Stenton 1969, 224), suggesting an area of felled or coppiced woodland (JSAC 2002, 8).
- 2.1.4 Three manors are recorded in the medieval period: Stukeley Manor, later known as Nokes Manor, Camoys Manor and a holding later known as the manor of Prestleys (Page *et al* 1974, 231-232).
- 2.1.5 The village, which is somewhat scattered, lies on both sides of Ermine Street Roman road, which crosses the parish from Godmanchester and Huntingdon to the south towards Peterborough to the north. The parish, comprising an area of c.2,875 acres is mainly arable land with a small amount of woodland surviving. The Great Northern Railway passes through the eastern part of the parish (Page *et al* 1974, 231).

2.2 The Historic Environment Record (HER) Fig. 2

- 2.2.1 The study site lies within the area of the Ouse Valley which is known to be particularly rich in prehistoric remains.
- 2.2.2 A Late Neolithic ceremonial complex has been found in Brampton, 3km to the southwest (Scheduled Monument (SM) 121). Monuments within this complex included henges, a cursus and a long mortuary enclosure.
- 2.2.3 A Bronze Age triple ring ditch (CHER 02117) was uncovered c.2km to the south of the subject site during excavations immediately west of Thrapston Road, Brampton in 1966, before the construction of the Miller Way housing estate. More recently a small pit containing fragments of Bronze Age Beaker pottery with charcoal and burnt bone was revealed during an archaeological investigation to the south of Thrapston Road (CHER 11176). Evidence of Bronze Age occupation was found within the subject area during evaluation in 2004 (MCB16363; Cullen 2004); this is discussed more fully in Section 2.6 below.
- 2.2.4 Recent work has demonstrated that parts of the Ouse Valley, including the more labour intensive claylands, began to be heavily exploited during the Iron Age. Bob's Wood, Hinchbrook, located to the south of the subject site, originated as a farmstead in the Middle Iron Age, which by the Roman period had grown into a settlement of several hectares (CHER 13033; Hinman *in prep*). An Iron Age enclosure containing traces of houses was recorded in 1966 adjacent to the Bronze Age barrow complex (CHER 02117) to the south-west of the study area; part of a Late Iron Age/early Roman field system (MCB15840) was also identified at Alconbury Airfield c.2km to the north of the

subject site. Settlement evidence dating to the Early/Middle Iron Age was also found here. Roman field systems and enclosures were recorded on the northern edge of Brampton (MCB10172) in addition to evidence of possible corn drying kilns.

- 2.2.5 Within and adjacent to the current study area, a number of rectangular enclosures and ditches associated with field systems were identified by geophysical and aerial photographic survey (MCB16939 and 16363) and were interpreted as being of possible late prehistoric to Roman date. These are discussed further in Section 2.6 below.
- 2.2.6 It is interesting to note that no direct evidence for the route of the Roman road leading from the Roman town of Godmanchester was found during the previous evaluation of the study area or during the installation of a water mains pipeline adjacent to it. The latter ran along a 400m stretch of Ermine Street and a 400m section of the adjoining minor road, Green End (MCB15034).
- 2.2.7 Two barrows or burial mounds of probable Roman date (SMs 33351 and 33352) are located east and west of Ermine Street in Great Stukeley, less than 1km to the north of the study area. Both survive as substantial earthworks forming conical mounds encircled by ditches. One of these (SM33352) is recorded as being slightly truncated by Ermine Street.
- 2.2.8 Nearby remains of medieval date include the site of St Margaret's leper hospital (MCB06918), a probable 12th century foundation, which is known to lie to the immediate south of the study area within the parish of St John's, Huntingdon. Part of the graveyard associated with the hospital, comprising at least 20 skeletons, was uncovered during the construction of the A14/A1126 interchange in 1987 (CHER 3958), opposite the south-eastern tip of the study area. Numerous instances of medieval and later ridge and furrow are recorded in the vicinity of the study area, including on the south-west side of Ermine Street, close to the site of the leper Hospital where it was associated with a homestead moat (not illustrated).

2.3 Cartographic Evidence (Fig. 3)

- 2.3.1 Research for the previous archaeological desk-based assessment (JSAC 2002) recorded that no large scale maps depicting the study area exist that pre-date the 1816 enclosure award map. The enclosure map (not illustrated) shows the study area divided into fields from common land, these were called: Great Meadow, Little Field, Down Field, Harris Meadow and Little Meadow. This indicates that much of the area was pasture land until the early 19th century when, like many of the Napoleonic War enclosures, it was probably converted to arable use (*ibid*, 9).
- 2.3.2 The pattern of fields and indeed roads and lanes appears to change little from the first edition Ordnance Survey (Fig. 3) until the mid to late 20th century. Currently most of the study area comprises a single large field (Fig. 1), although a ditched boundary bisects the site north-east to south-west and appears to correspond with one on the Ordnance Survey historic map.

2.4 Aerial Photographs

- 2.4.1 Aerial photographic assessment, undertaken by APS in May 1998, examined an area of c.70 ha (centred on TL223735) and encompassed the current study area. This survey included photographs held by the Cambridgeshire University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP) and the National Library of Air Photographs (NLAP) in Swindon and those held within a Specialist Collection, the earliest of which dated to 1942.

- 2.4.2 Ridge and furrow was mapped largely as soil marks across the study area, and adjacent fields, with small areas surviving as earthworks within remnants of pasture land until the 1960s. Features described as 'pre-medieval' were recorded from a set of oblique photographs taken in 1994 in an area of thinner soil or poorer crop-growth towards the centre of the study area. These features were interpreted as probable ditches, most of which were on a common north-west to south-east alignment, mirroring that of the adjacent Ermine Street, although one group was on a slightly different alignment. A possible late prehistoric or Roman date was indicated (JSAC 2002, 10). Two ponds of fairly recent date were also mapped (APS 1998, fig 1).

2.5 Earthworks

- 2.5.1 As mentioned above, earthworks in the form of remnant ridge and furrow survived in small areas of the study area until the 1960s; these have since fallen victim to intensive agricultural practices. No other earthworks are known to exist on the site, although a number of burial mounds survive to the north of the study area in Great Stukeley (see Section 2.2.6 above).

2.6 Archaeological Excavations and Surveys (Fig. 4)

Investigations within the Study Area

- 2.6.1 In addition to the aerial photographic assessment, Geophysical survey was also commissioned as part of the programme of archaeological assessment undertaken by JSAC (2002). This produced a series of anomalies that on the whole corresponded well with the cropmark features identified by the aerial photographic survey and included further definition of the ridge and furrow and several groups of rectilinear enclosures. Some of the latter are located to the north of (and outside) the study area (Fig, 4). As well as providing a more coherent and extensive plan of the cropmark features, additional anomalies include probable pits and the identification of a ring ditch adjacent to a square enclosure in the south of the survey area (GSB 2000).
- 2.6.2 Further survey, in the form of fieldwalking, was also undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2004 as part of the assessment but produced few results (Cullen 2004, 7).
- 2.6.3 Evaluation comprising the excavation of 135 trenches (providing a 3% sample of the study area) was carried out by Cotswold Archaeology from August to October 2004 (Cullen 2004). The trenches were in part designed to target features identified by the previous surveys as well as investigate apparently blank areas.
- 2.6.4 Four main zones of activity were identified where higher concentrations of features were revealed that broadly represent occupation during the Late Bronze Age and Roman periods. These largely fall within the southern and western parts of the study area, although a scatter of features (mostly furrows) was identified across the c.50ha site. None were found on the clays in the north of the site, reiterating the evidence from the aerial photographic and geophysical surveys.
- 2.6.5 The Bronze Age features identified in the west of the study area are largely interpreted as field systems and small trackways representing stock management rather than arable cultivation. The presence of a large waterhole (possibly spring-fed) in Zone 4, which cumulatively measured over 10.5m across and contained pottery, flint and well-preserved animal bone, may support this interpretation. In contrast, the concentration of pits and possible post-holes located in the central/eastern part of the site (Zone 2) are more suggestive of occupation and possibly ceremonial activities. The latter is indicated by the presence of structured deposits of flint artefacts and pottery within a pit in Trench

80. A number of undated features including a series of curvi-linear gullies in the south-western part of the site and the possible ring ditch (originally identified by the geophysical survey) in Zone 4 may also date to this period.

- 2.6.6 Roman features were identified that generally corresponded well with the results of the geophysical survey and confirmed the presence of a ditched rectangular enclosure in the southern part of the site (Zone 4, Fig. 4). Additional detail was revealed indicating several phases of activity, including a possible structure (on a slightly different alignment) with evidence of *in-situ* burning, probable internal divisions within the enclosure and a long-lived waterhole containing waterlogged material. Datable finds were recovered from the ditch fills which on the whole had survived relatively well. Evidence of further ?Early Roman field systems, in the form of linear ditches not identified by previous surveys, were located to the east of the enclosure and may be contemporary.
- 2.6.7 The main settlement focus was thought to lie to the north-west of the study area on the other side of the track where the geophysical survey had identified a concentration of anomalies, including several enclosures, on a similar north-west to south-east alignment (Fig. 4). Of note, no evidence of the Roman road was identified by the evaluation and no ditches or field systems were revealed that might have been laid out perpendicular to its route.
- 2.6.8 Medieval and post-medieval features were largely represented by plough furrows. No evidence relating to, or contemporary with, the nearby medieval leper cemetery was found, although this area was quite disturbed and truncated. Equally, no evidence of the field boundaries shown on the historic mapping was apparently found, perhaps suggesting that these were enclosed by hedgerows rather than ditches. Modern field drains were encountered in a number of trenches.

Notable investigations within the vicinity (Fig. 4)

- 2.6.9 There have been a number of excavations in the vicinity, including Roman sites such as the extensive farmstead and settlement already mentioned at Bob's Wood, Hinchbrook. Discoveries here include the remains of houses and associated structures, enclosures and water management features, a smithy, cremations, inhumations and significant assemblages of metalwork, pottery and animal bone (Hinman in Prep).
- 2.6.10 Of particular relevance to the current study is the evaluation of the adjacent site (Ermine Business Park on the opposite side of Ermine Street) to the north by Oxford Archaeology East in 2008-2009 (Fig. 4). This entailed geophysical survey and fieldwalking followed by evaluation by trenching (Phillips 2009). The sample strip geophysical survey produced extensive evidence of the pre-enclosure field system of ridge and furrow but no indication of earlier features. Other anomalies recorded relate to former field boundaries and modern ferrous remains. The fieldwalking survey recovered a background scatter of Roman, medieval and post- medieval pottery with no particular concentrations of artefacts.
- 2.6.11 The subsequent evaluation, however, comprised 70 trenches and revealed two discrete sites located across the two fields. Site 1, in field A, was interpreted as a Middle Iron Age industrial area consisting of one or more large pits with a diameter of approximately 20m, cut through the chalk bedrock. Later post-holes, pits and associated features were also identified including a pebble surface. Also in field A were several ditches representing field boundaries or land divisions, part of a co-axial field system. One of these may have extended, although not continuously, for 200m as it

was encountered in three trenches. Part of its course was close to the industrial area. Another ditch on the northern edge of Site 1 contained a domestic dog burial.

- 2.6.12 The second focus, Site 2, in field B, consisted of an area of Middle Iron Age settlement. Features included several boundary ditches, some of a considerable size, two possible water holes, a pit and a curvilinear gully which could have been part of a roundhouse. The settlement was restricted to a relatively small area, approximately 1ha. Beyond this no Iron Age activity was encountered.
- 2.6.13 As with the current study area, the evaluation revealed extensive evidence of medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow across much of the site, as well as features interpreted as agricultural strips, possibly to aid drainage.
- 2.6.14 Finds from this evaluation comprise a total of 236 sherds of mostly Middle Iron Age pottery; no metal finds appear to have been recovered.
- 2.6.15 An extremely small assemblage of animal bone (49 “countable” bones from 15 contexts) was recovered that most likely represents general settlement/butchery waste. The presence of a wide age range of cattle and sheep in particular suggests a mixed economy. One ditch contained part of a human femur.
- 2.6.16 Twenty-four 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. There was a lack of plant remains suggesting that either the conditions at the site do not favour preservation or that there was little evident occupation. Two samples contained organisms that indicate standing or slow flowing water, whilst the cereal grains recovered were extremely abraded.

3 DEPOSIT MAPPING

3.1 Prehistoric

- 3.1.1 Prehistoric remains, in particular features of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date have been identified both within the study area and its wider landscape.
- 3.1.2 Geophysical and aerial photographic surveys undertaken as part of the previous assessment of the study area identified probable enclosures and field systems of late prehistoric or Roman date. The evaluation (Cullen 2004) identified two separate foci concentrated within Zones 1, 2 and 3 (Fig. 4) that appear to represent different types of activity within the study area. This indicates that much of the south-western part of the site was predominantly used for the keeping and management of stock (Zones 1, 3 and possibly 4) whilst more settlement- or ceremonial-type activities were perhaps taking place in the more central part of the site (Zone 2).
- 3.1.3 This model is largely based on the presence of linear ditches representing enclosures and small trackways in Zones 1 and 3 and a large ?spring-fed watering-hole in Zone 4; evidence that contrasts with the concentration of pits and possible post-holes in Zone 2. The latter includes a pit that produced the largest quantity of Late Bronze Age pottery and flint from the site, possibly representing structured or placed deposits (often found on Neolithic or early Bronze Age sites). Conversely, relatively few finds were recovered from the features associated with stock management.
- 3.1.4 The report also reiterated the point that many of the undated ditches (both curving and linear) and other features identified across the study area could be contemporary with this activity. Of particular note is the ring-ditch initially identified by the geophysical survey and later investigated during the evaluation in the north of Zone 4. If this is a ploughed-out barrow it is important evidence of (possibly) earlier prehistoric land-use that might complement results from nearby sites such as at Thrapston Road, Brampton c.2km to the south-west (and closer to the river Ouse). Few prehistoric features were identified in the northern or eastern parts of the study area and in some trenches it was clear that the Bronze Age remains tended to respect the geological boundary between Boulder clay and the lighter gravels and silty clays (Cullen 2004, 11).

3.2 Roman

- 3.2.1 The second main phase of activity identified by previous work within the study area dates to the Roman period and indicates that much of the land continued to be used for agricultural purposes, perhaps also with a focus on stock management (remains of sheep/goat, cattle and pigs were found). Again this was largely focused on the southern and western parts of the study area.
- 3.2.2 Roman activity is represented by a number of clearly-defined rectangular enclosures and field ditches on a similar north-west to south-east alignment, and a second large watering hole. Much of this was found in Zone 4 in the south-west of the study area, although similar remains (ditches) were found to the east and north. These features on the whole corresponded well with the geophysical anomalies.
- 3.2.3 The orientation of the ditches and enclosures appears to differ from the Bronze Age alignment and may indicate a break in occupation on the site (given the paucity of Iron Age finds) followed by the establishment of a new coaxial system possibly extending from Ermine Street in the Roman period. Some of the ditches displayed evidence of several phases of activity, which probably span the Early Roman to Mid-Roman period

(c.80 AD to 200AD); only one abraded sherd of definitely Late Roman pottery was recovered.

- 3.2.4 The focus of contemporary settlement was thought to lie to the north-west of the study area on the other side of the track; this may also be where the main Bronze Age occupation was also located. The geophysical survey identified a concentration of anomalies in this area (A), including several enclosures with internal pit-like features, on a similar north-west to south-east alignment. Remains of a possible building that appears to have been burnt *in-situ*, however, was also identified within the square enclosure in Zone 4. This may conceivably have had an industrial rather than domestic function and been deliberately sited away from the main occupation area.
- 3.2.5 On the whole it seems that there was very little Roman activity in the eastern and northern parts of the study area, which is curious given the proximity of the route of the supposed Roman road.

3.3 Saxon to post-medieval

- 3.3.1 No evidence of Saxon activity appears to have been identified on the site. Post-Roman features appear to be solely represented by medieval and later ridge and furrow that was extensive across the study area. It is suggested that many of the field boundaries shown on historic maps were delineated by hedgerows as few post-medieval ditches were identified. Some of the ridge and furrow survived as earthworks in pasture areas of the site until the 1960s but have since been destroyed to make way for more intensive arable farming.

4 DEGREE OF SURVIVAL

4.1 Archaeological features and deposits

- 4.1.1 Ploughsoil and subsoil depths varied across the study area, but were described as relatively 'thin' or 'minimal' in some areas, especially in Zone 4 (Cullen 2004, 12 and 22). In this area (and in Zone 1) there was a maximum combined thickness of 0.6m, although in the area of the ring ditch the ploughsoil was recorded as being a maximum of 0.4m thick and in the area of the square enclosure was just 0.2m thick. The ring ditch was probably very truncated at 0.2m deep; further damage by modern agricultural techniques was indicated by the presence of ploughscores noted across this zone. (Cullen 2004, 14). Greater survival of features was recorded in areas of thicker plough and sub-soil, particularly in Zone 2 where the combined thickness was 0.9m where it sealed some of the Bronze Age pits, post-holes and other features. Some of these were, however, very shallow at 0.1m. In Zone 3, close to the farm track, the depth of deposits sealing features was again quite substantial at 0.8m.
- 4.1.2 It is worthy of note that many of the features in Zone 3 were only visible after several weeks of weathering. In addition, the northern ends of these trenches were sealed beneath possible water-lain gravel deposits not encountered elsewhere on the site (*ibid*, 12).
- 4.1.3 Heavy truncation of deposits was noted in the south-east corner of the study area, close to the roundabout; services associated with the road were also encountered here (Cullen 2004, 9). The remains of medieval and later ridge and furrow was identified across the study area, which presumably also truncated some of the earlier features.
- 4.1.4 Evaluation has demonstrated that the study area contains a range of features (some of them quite substantial and occasionally intercutting or recutting) including ditches, furrows, gullies, pits, watering holes, post-holes and other possible structural remains. Although these are likely to be concentrated with the zones described above, it is possible that discrete features such as the Bronze Age pits could be present elsewhere within the study area, in the apparently blank areas.
- 4.1.5 The dimensions of features are not always noted in the evaluation report, although it seems that they generally ranged from c.0.1m to c.1m in depth. Ditches forming enclosures seem to survive particularly well. Fills included almost sterile silt clays to deliberate infills, in addition to occasional waterlogged and structured deposits.

4.2 Finds and environmental remains

Finds

- 4.2.1 Relatively moderate quantities of finds were recovered by the evaluation, perhaps reflecting the largely agricultural origin of many of the features.
- 4.2.2 Only a brief overview of the finds is presented in the report and no overall totals are given; however a finds concordance table is included and allows some further overviews to be made.
- 4.2.3 Pottery forms one of the major components of the assemblage and comprises c.500 prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval sherds weighing c.3.5kg. The approximate total number of Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery sherds was 190, deriving from eight contexts, whilst c.250 Late Iron Age to Roman sherds (mostly Early to Mid-Roman) were recovered. The remaining sherds are mostly post-medieval wares.

- 4.2.4 Non-ceramic Roman finds comprise a number of iron nails and slag. A 'large quantity' of worked flint was also recovered, mostly deriving from one Late Bronze Age pit, although smaller quantities of flint of Broad Late Neolithic to Bronze Age date were also recovered from other contexts. Few medieval and post-medieval finds (in addition to pottery) were recovered, comprising tile and clay tobacco-pipe fragments mostly recovered from topsoil and subsoil layers. Metal finds include a silver groat of Mary I (1553-4) and an illegible copper-alloy coin (?farthing).

Environmental remains

- 4.2.5 Animal bone weighing c.3.2kg was recovered from a variety of features spanning the Bronze Age and Roman periods and includes sheep/goat, pig, horse and cattle. No assessment of this material is included within the evaluation report, making comments on condition *etc* unfeasible, although an assemblage of animal bone recovered from a Bronze Age watering hole was described as being in good condition (Cullen 2004, 14).
- 4.2.6 Bulk samples were apparently taken from a number of features, although no assessment of these appears to have been included in the evaluation report. Information gleaned from the main body of the report indicates that there is some potential for the survival of palaeoenvironmental remains. This includes an artefact-rich fill of a 'structured' Late Bronze Age pit in Zone 2, and a waterlogged basal deposit in a large probable watering hole of Roman date. The latter contained preserved pieces of vegetation, in addition to charcoal and shell. Other deposits that may or may not have been sampled include the fill of an undated pit with a dark organic appearance and a burnt deposit within a possible structural feature in Zone 4.
- 4.2.7 Samples from the adjacent Middle Iron Age site at Ermine Street Business Park (Phillips 2009) produced fairly poor environmental remains.

4.3 Additional notes

- 4.3.1 It should be noted that overhead power cables traverse the south-western corner of the site and a footpath crosses the eastern half from Ermine Street.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 It is an unusual situation to produce a desk-based assessment after a programme of extensive survey and evaluation has already been undertaken, as has occurred on this site. This study has aimed to review and update the available historic, cartographic and HER evidence, and combine this with collation of the results of the previous surveys and investigations both within and around the study area. This has enabled a more comprehensive overview of the potential archaeological character of the site to be explored.
- 5.1.2 Four main zones of activity have already been identified by the previous work, mostly comprising features associated with agriculture and stock management in the Late Bronze Age and Early to Mid-Roman periods. These are largely concentrated within the south and western parts of the study area, although features were scattered across the site.
- 5.1.3 Clearly one of the major areas for future research should focus on further defining the date, extent and nature of later prehistoric use of the site. This should include investigation of the field system and associated trackways and comparison with the alignments of contemporary field systems in the vicinity. It is not certain whether the pits and other features in Zone 2 represent occupation and/or ceremonial activity that is contemporary with the field system; either would be significant. It appears that there was a break in occupation within the study area, possibly between the Early Iron Age and the Early Roman period, which needs further investigation.
- 5.1.4 The plan and alignment (which differs from that of the predominant Late Bronze Age field system) of the Roman fields and enclosures indicates a high degree of homogeneity and planning, suggesting that they may have been laid out with reference to a major line of reference such as Ermine Street. No evidence of this Roman road was identified, or indeed of enclosures or ditches offset from it, although this might in part be due to the angle of the trench array across the study area which was aligned north-south rather than with the general north-west to south-east trend of roads and boundaries in this area. Although it is likely that the major focus of Roman settlement lay to the north-west of the track (outside the current study area), the square enclosure located within Zone 4 may also have been a habitation focus, especially given the presence of a possible structural feature with evidence of *in-situ* burning in this area.
- 5.1.5 A slightly different picture of land-use and occupation appears to be emerging for the study area compared to that revealed at the adjacent site (Ermine Business Park; Phillips 2009) and nearby Bob's Wood to the south. The adjacent site produced evidence of two foci comprising an area of probable Middle Iron Age industrial activity and a separate apparently short-lived Middle Iron Age enclosed settlement possibly extending over a hectare. A fragmentary co-axial field system was also identified that was on a similar alignment to the Roman field system identified within the study area, although a possible prehistoric date was suggested for the former. No Bronze Age finds were recovered at this adjacent site and the only Roman sherds appear to be residual within medieval and later furrows.
- 5.1.6 Equally, at Bob's Wood, located a couple of kilometres to the south of the current site, a large Iron Age farmstead probably belonging to an extended family, was uncovered that grew into an extensive Roman settlement that must have been fairly dominant within the landscape. This combined evidence is significant in understanding a number of

research themes including settlement location, spacing, hierarchy, longevity/continuity and specialisation as well as management of the surrounding agricultural landscape and relationship to nearby urban and Roman military centres.

- 5.1.7 Current evidence seems to suggest that the study area was first systematically colonised and farmed in the later Bronze Age, was abandoned by the Early/Middle Iron Age (did the settlement shift eastwards to the adjacent site?) and re-established in the Early Roman period. It appears to have once again been abandoned or completely turned over to agriculture after the Late Roman period.
- 5.1.8 The colonisation of the more labour-intensive Clay land in this part of Cambridgeshire during the later prehistoric period has been previously demonstrated at sites such as Bob's Wood to the south of the site (Hinman, In Prep), but was not in evidence within the current study area. This, however, might reflect the fact that site appears not to have been inhabited during the Late Iron Age, the reasons for which are not currently known. Equally, no direct evidence of Late Iron Age occupation was found at the adjacent site at Ermine Street Business Park, perhaps also suggesting that the settlement was abandoned, relocated or possibly subsumed in this period.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The desk-based assessment has further defined the high potential for Late Bronze Age and Roman features within the study area, particularly within the four zones of concentrated activity identified by the evaluation (Cullen 2004). As was noted in the evaluation report, these areas should not be taken as exclusion zones at the expense of the remaining archaeology within the study area.
- 6.1.2 There is also clear potential for the survival of medieval furrows across the site, many of which have been mapped by the geophysical and aerial photographic surveys.
- 6.1.3 Future work will be determined by the type of mitigation strategy proposed for the four main zones of high archaeological potential that have been identified within the study area. This may take the form of preservation *in-situ* by incorporating the areas of archaeological significance within any proposed development plan, or alternatively preservation by record (*i.e* full archaeological excavation) may be necessary.

APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX B. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| OASIS Number | oxfordar3-81579 | | |
| Project Name | Land at Ermine Street, Huntingdon | | |
| Project Dates (fieldwork) | Start | 19-08-2010 | Finish 25-08-2010 |
| Previous Work (by OA East) | No | Future Work | Unknown |

Project Reference Codes

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------------------|-----|
| Site Code | STUNES10 | Planning App. No. | N/A |
| HER No. | | Related HER/OASIS No. | |

Type of Project/Techniques Used

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Prompt | Environmental Assessment regulations Schedule 1 projects (Obligatory) |
| Development Type | Rural Residential |

Please select all techniques used:

DBA

| | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Site Visit) |

Monument Types & Period

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

| Monument | Period |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Field system | Bronze Age (-2,500 to -700) |
| Co axial Field system | Roman (43 to 410) |
| Ridge and furrow | Medieval (1066 to 1540) |
| pottery | Bronze Age (-2,500 to -700) |

Project Location

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| County | Cambridgeshire | Site Address (including postcode if possible) |
| District | Huntingdonshire | Land at Ermine street Great Stukeley, Huntingdon |
| Parish | The Stukeleys | |
| HER | Cambridgeshire | |
| Study Area | 54ha | National Grid Reference TL22360 73400 |

Project Originators

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Organisation | OA EAST |
| Project Brief Originator | N/A |
| Project Design Originator | N/A |
| Project Manager | James Drummond-Murray |
| Supervisor | Rachel Clarke |

Project Archives

| Physical Archive | Digital Archive | Paper Archive |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| .CCC Stores | OAEAST | CCC Stores |
| STUNER10.. | STUNER10.. | STUNER10. |

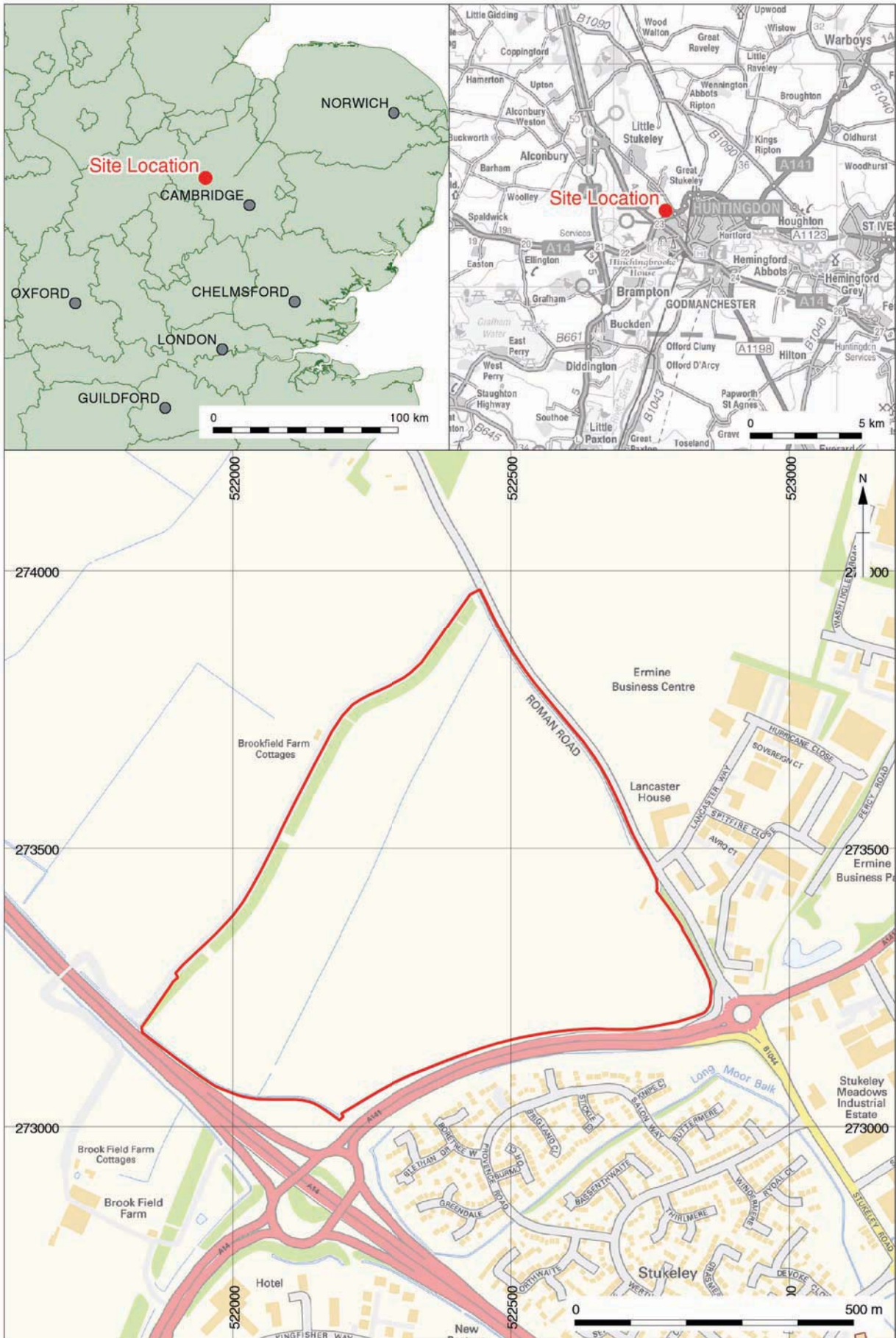
Archive Contents/Media

| | Physical Contents | Digital Contents | Paper Contents |
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| 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"/> |
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| Stratigraphic | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| 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 |
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| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sections |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey |

Notes:

This DBA was designed to collate information from previous work on the site (DBA, APs, Geophysical survey and evaluation) during 1998-2004



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Figure 1: Site location (study area outlined red)

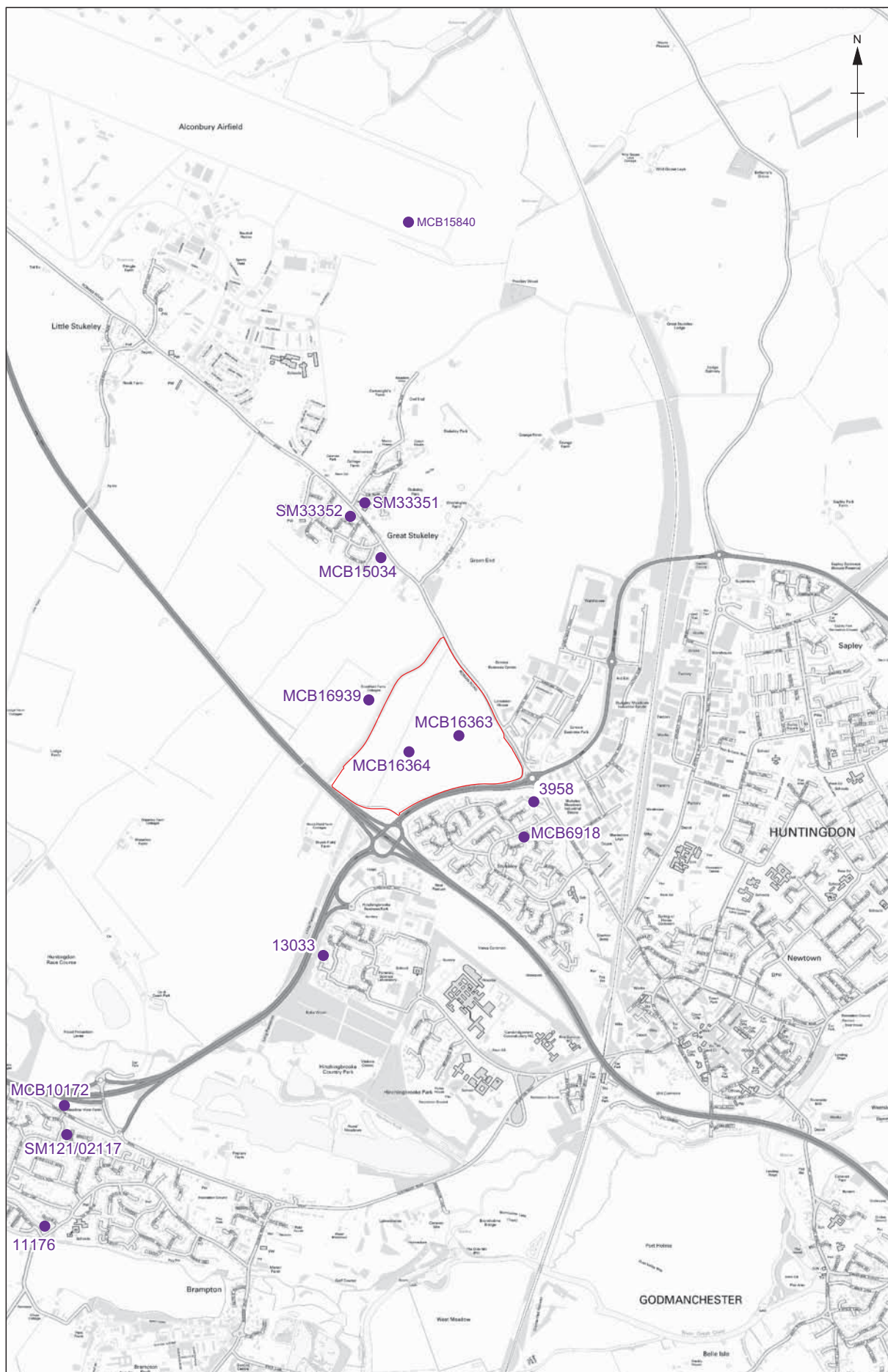


Figure 2. HER entries (purple) in the vicinity of the study area (outlined red). Not to scale

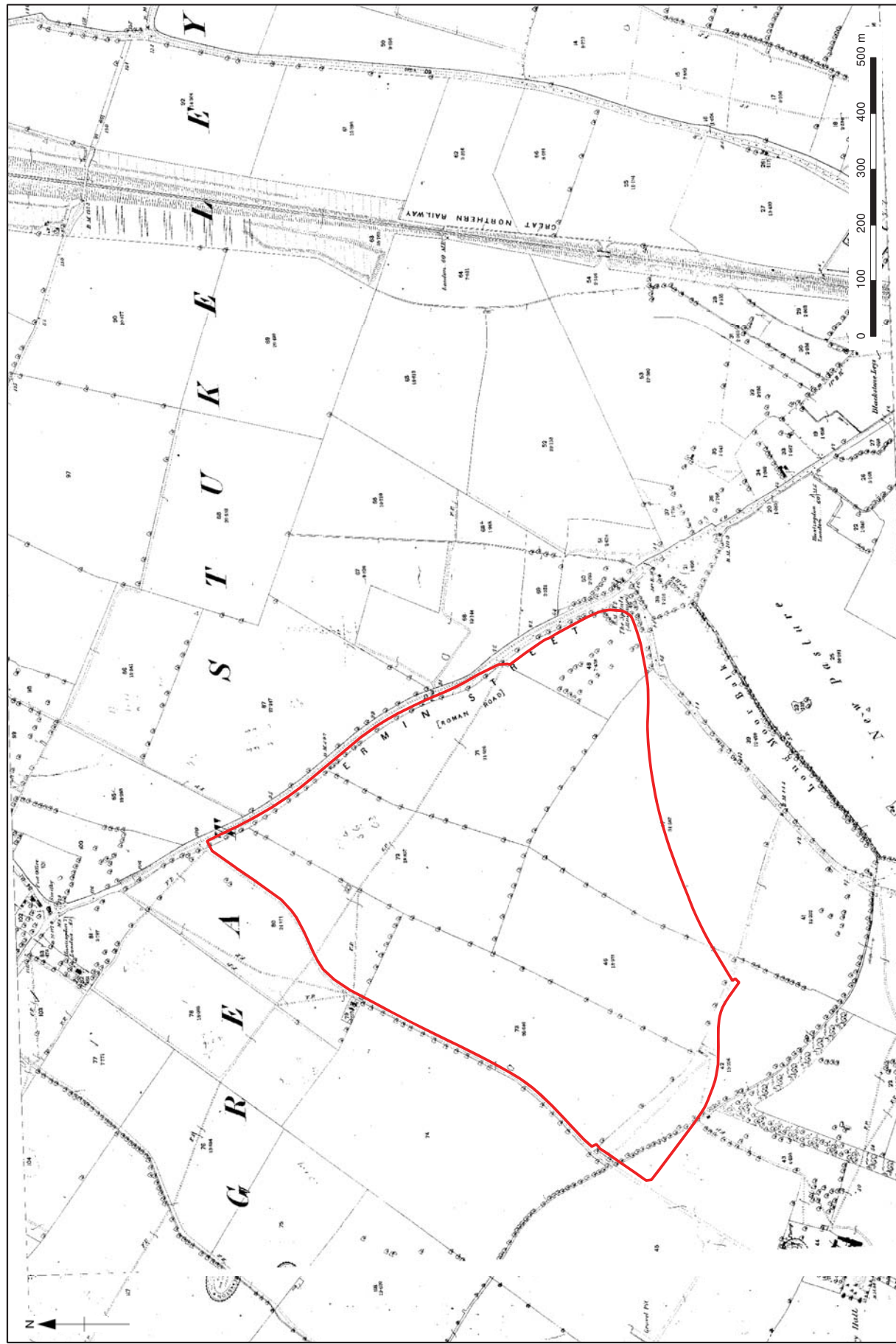
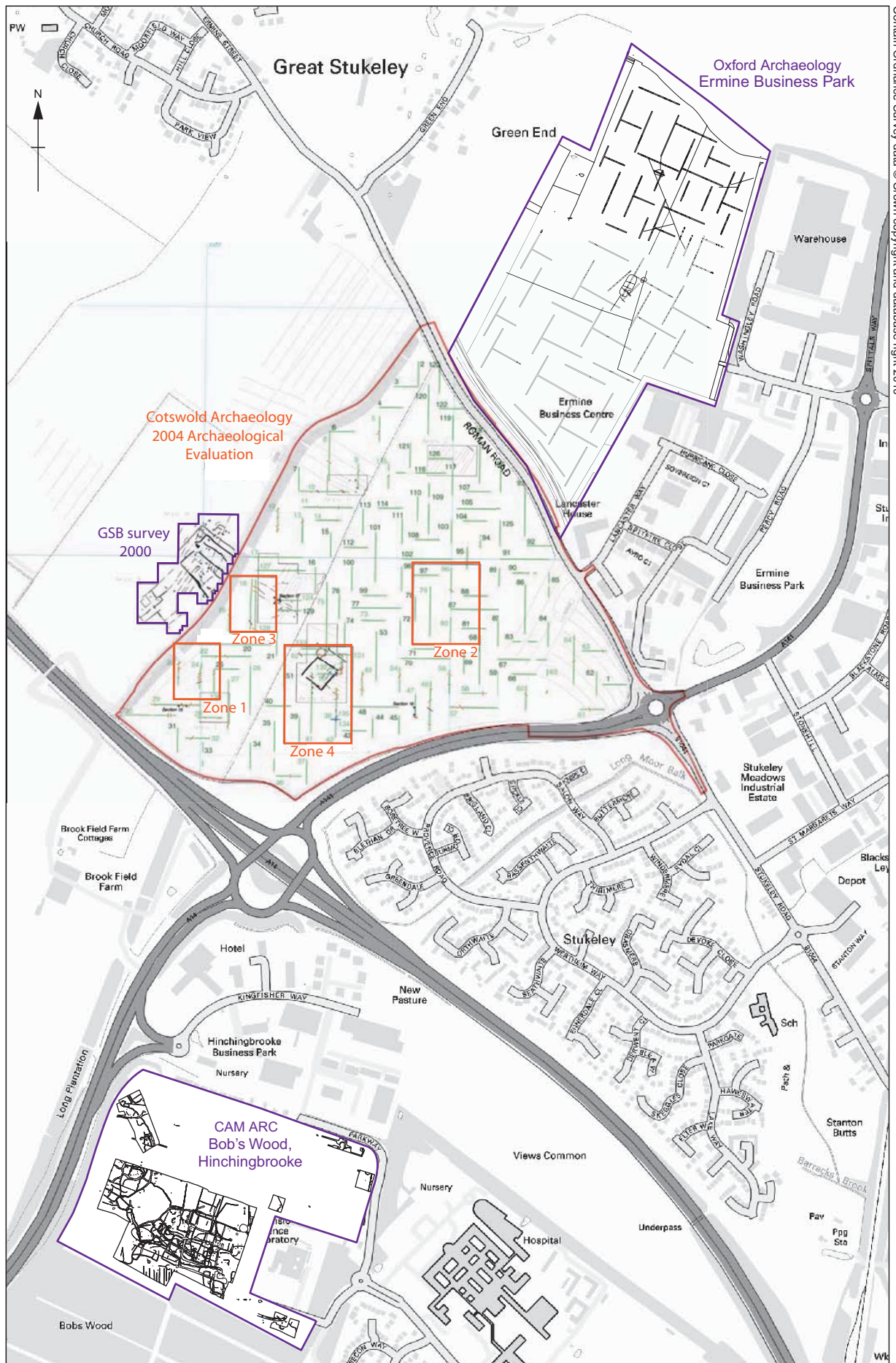


Figure 3: Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1:2500 Scale, 1882-7) showing the study area (outlined red)



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Figure 4: Plan of main archaeological results from previous investigations within the study area (after Cullen 2004, fig. 2) in relation to nearby sites. Not to scale



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