Medieval Occupation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Medieval Occupation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in the courtyard to the rear of the Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire between 30/06/08 and 03/07/08. OA EAST (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC) undertook the work on behalf of The Whitfield Group.

The evaluation was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment 1990).

A number of substantial pits were recorded within the development area. These included potential quarry pits, some showing re-use as rubbish pits, and a possible well. The archaeological remains recorded during the evaluation were similar in character to those encountered during excavations undertaken by The Whittlesey Society in the early 1980s. These works, comprising a total of fifteen test pits, revealed medieval pitting in the centre of the development area with a possible later cobbled surface towards the east

The archaeological deposits recorded by the current evaluation and the excavations of the 1980s suggest that the plot formed part of a yard or garden during the Medieval period, in all likelihood this was associated with properties fronting the Market Square.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the courtyard to the rear of the Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.

1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application F/YR06/0633/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Richard Mortimer of 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 CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on an island of sand and gravel (March Gravels) overlying Oxford Clay at a height of between 6.00m and 7.00m AOD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Whittlesey sits on a large gravel-capped island of high ground in the fens immediately east of the 'mainland' at Peterborough and straddles the Romano-British (or Romanised) 'Fen Causeway' route across the fens from Peterborough to March and on to Norfolk. It has been extensively settled and exploited, particularly in the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods, and large areas of ritual and settlement archaeology of these periods have been excavated along the western fringes of the island prior to gravel and clay extraction. However, little is known of the archaeology of Whittlesey itself as the town centre has seen little systematic archaeological fieldwork (Mortimer, 2008).

1.3.2 Medieval activity is likely to have been centred on the area of the current town centre. The Whittlesey Society excavations of the early 1980s recovered large quantities of medieval pottery along with animal bone, glass, worked bone and stone, and a few metal finds, including a 15th century silver penny and copper-alloy brooch (HER 01963 and 11910). The medieval St Mary's Church and Manor House lie immediately to the south of the site and Anglo-Saxon remains were recorded in excavations within this area in 2004 (ECB 1616 and MCB 15935) (Mortimer, 2008).

1.3.3 The development area lies within the historic core of the town, close to the Market Cross (HER 02814 and SAM 32) and it was thought possible that Saxon as well as

Medieval deposits, features and finds of a domestic and/or industrial nature could have survived (Mortimer 2008).

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The author would like to thank Geoff Allen and The Whitfield Group who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. Chris Thatcher carried out the evaluation with the assistance of Spencer Cooper and Chris Faine. The illustrations were produced by Caoimhín Ó Coileáin and Richard Mortimer edited the report. Thanks also to Simon of Rose Plant Ltd who machined the trenches.

1.4.2 The brief for the archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, who visited and monitored the evaluation.

2 Aims and Methodology

2.1 Aims

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

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The Brief required an approximate 5% sample of the site be subjected to trial trenching (the development area is 730 sq m). The limited area of the site, and associated difficulty in manoeuvring the digger, made test pits the preferred option over trenches and two 4x4m and one 2x2m test pits (36 sq m) were opened.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 3 tonne 360º type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. It was necessary to amend the trenching strategy as a result of the ground conditions and sub-surface obstacles. Trench 1 was excavated as planned but Trenches 2 and 3 had to be altered as a result of a large modern drain running through the development area. The shape of Trench 2 was altered to 6m x 2m in order to avoid the services. The overall size of Trench 3 had to be reduced to 1.2m x 2.10m as a result of the proximity of the drain, a boundary wall and a soak-away filled with modern brick which was encountered during excavation (Fig.1).

2.2.3 It was necessary to use a toothed bucket to remove an unusually deep and hard packed hardcore layer immediately underlying the brick paving that sealed the site. As soon as this was removed excavation of the underlying soils was completed using a toothless bucket.

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 A total of three environmental samples were taken during the evaluation from features in Trenches 1 and 3.

2.2.7 Conditions on site were good with predominantly dry and bright weather conditions and dry ground conditions.

3 Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The trial trenching revealed a series of Medieval pits across the development area. The results are presented below by trench.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 A significant level of modern disturbance, in the form of a large concrete service run and iron pipe, were recorded in this trench. Both were aligned north to south. Whilst these had not truncated the archaeological deposits the concrete did obstruct and preclude machining down to the natural sands and gravels along its length (Fig.2).

3.2.2 Three archaeological features were recorded, two pits (**105** & **107**) and a small posthole (**109**), none of which lay fully within the area of the trench. Pit **105** lay in the northeast corner of the trench and extended beyond the excavation area to north and east, and beneath the concrete service run to the west. The pit was *c*. 0.80m deep with steep, rough hewn concave sides and base. Three deposits were recorded filling the feature (102, 103 & 104; see Fig.2, section 1). The primary deposit comprised a black/brown sandy silt lining the bottom of the pit representing a layer of primary silting prior to the deposition of fill 103, a lighter brown sandy silt that filled most of the remainder of the feature. The tertiary fill (102) lay in the depression formed by the settling of 103 and was comprised of a grey-black sandy silt, and contained several sherds of 13th - 14th century pottery. There was extensive rooting in evidence throughout the feature.

3.2.3 Pit **107** extended beyond the south eastern limit of the trench. It was however possible to excavate a part section through the feature, which revealed it to be almost vertical sided with a flat base and 0.70m deep (Fig. 2, section 2). A single fill was recorded (106) that comprised a dark sandy silt containing numerous sherds of pottery, dated to the 13th - 14th century, alongside two sherds of residual Stamford ware. Animal bone and a sherd of window glass were also recovered.

3.2.4 In the northwestern corner of the trench, a shallow possible posthole (**109**) was recorded that contained a single dark brown sand silt fill (108). No finds were recovered from this feature.

3.2.5 Two further possible features were investigated close to the centre of the trench but these were found to be the result of root disturbance.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 An area of fairly dense pitting was recorded on the western side of the trench. Upon excavating sections through this area two large pits were identified (**208** & **210**). Pit **208** was located towards the south of the trench and extended beyond its western limit (Fig.2). The section dug through it revealed it to have a steep sided, slightly concave profile filled by three deposits (Fig.2 section 4). The feature was approximately 0.60m north to south and 0.40m deep. The primary fill (207) comprised a dark brown sandy silt that was probably the result of natural silting, overlying this was 206, a mid brown sandy silt. The tertiary fill (205), a dark grey sandy silt with infrequent gravel inclusions, contained a number of Late Medieval pottery sherds - Bourne D ware and Shelley wares, alongside residual, abraded Thetford ware. A few fragments of animal bone were also recovered.

3.3.2 Pit **210** was located to the north and was found to have vertical sides. It was excavated to a depth of 1.20m, at which point excavation ceased on safety grounds. The depth of the trench and the limited access to the cut as a result of the pit extending beyond the trench limit, precluded full excavation. Two fills were recorded, 213 was the lowest fill excavated and comprised a mid brown sandy silt, overlying this, the tertiary fill (209) was found to contain Late medieval pottery and animal bone.

3.3.3 A shallow pit or posthole 0.35m diameter and 0.18m deep (**204**) was located in the southern part of the trench; the single fill (203) contained no finds.

3.3.4 The edges of the Whittlesey Society test pits, dug in the 1980s, were recorded running along the eastern edge of Trench 2 (**212**). A section was excavated through the backfill (211) of these intrusions, which revealed them to have been excavated 0.12m below the base of Trench 2 (Fig. 2).

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Pit **313** was recorded in the base of Trench 3, underlying 309. This feature was up to 0.59m deep (from where?) , square in plan and with a steep sided profile. The base of the cut was broadly flat. It continued beyond the northern limit of the trench and appeared to have a southern limit that had been truncated by a 1980s test pit (see below).

3.4.2 The fills of the pit comprised a primary deposit of dark black-brown sandy silt (312) mixed with darker bands with concentrations of charcoal throughout. The Late Medieval/Early Post Medieval pottery assemblage recovered from this fill was heavily sooted. Comparatively large quantities of animal bone, including a number of sheep, cattle and horse jaws were also recovered and a 20L environmental sample was taken (see Appendix X). This fill was up to 0.36m thick and by far the most extensive deposit within **313**. Overlying this was a layer of grey brown sandy silt (311) that contained a lower frequency of animal bone. The uppermost deposit recorded in **313** was a lens of laminated, light grey silt (310) extending out of the western profile. This did not extend to the edge of the cut and it is suggested that this may have represented a layer of silting that accumulated in the depression formed by the settlement of the lower layers, this deposit was also sampled .

3.4.3 The western section of the trench (Fig.3 section 8) revealed a third feature cut from high up in the sequence (**307**). A single mid grey sandy silt (306) was recorded filling this pit and several sherds of Late Medieval Bourne D pottery were recovered from the lower part of the fill (Fig.3). These soils need a section of their own in the sequence.

3.4.4 The pit truncated two soil layers (308 & 309) interpreted as possible Medieval garden soils. These layers were 0.34m & 0.33m thick respectively and sealed pit **313**.

3.4.5 The northernmost test pit, dug in the 1980s by The Whittlesey Society, was recorded in the southern part of Trench 3. This was recorded as **305** (Fig.3 section 7). The fills of this feature (301, 302 & 303) appeared to comprise redeposited material derived from pit **313**, mixed with topsoil.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 The evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire produced a small pottery assemblage from three trenches. It included examples of late Saxon and early medieval Stamford and Thetford wares, which in this assemblage appeared to be residual; their presence alongside Early Medieval wares suggested that they were post conquest in date. The mid 12th,13th and 14th centuries were also represented with the

presence of Lyveden-Stanion and Shelly ware and the 16th century by the presence of Bourne D wares. The condition of the overall assemblage was unabraded with a large average sherd size. The assemblage revealed medieval and early post medieval occupation of this area of Whittlesey, hinting also at early medieval activity on or close to the site (Fletcher, App. C).

3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 Three environmental samples were taken from features across the site. The plant remains in this assemblage included a mixture of cereal grains, associated weed seeds and sedges. The weed seed assemblage suggested utilisation of a wetland environment typical of the Fen-edge. Saw sedge was traditionally used in this area for thatching and could have been burnt accidentally. Sedges and spike rushes were also used as fuel for flash-firing of bread ovens (R.Ballantyne pers. comm.).

3.6.2 Cereal grains, in particular those of bread wheat were abundant in Sample 3. The presence of stinking mayweed (*A.cotula*) suggests that the crop were grown of heavy clay soils prior to importation to the site.

3.6.3 The presence of fish bones and shell fish in this assemblage suggesting that these were dietary constituents. Mineralised maggots were recovered from samples 1 and 3, which suggests that these deposits may have contained cess.

3.6.4 The preliminary appraisal of a selection of samples from this site showed that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

3.6.5 An informative assemblage of plant remains was recovered from Sample 3. The mixture of such a variety of cereals and weed seeds suggests that this feature was utilised for the disposal of domestic and culinary waste on a number of occasions.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Medieval Pitting

4.1.1 The evaluation revealed a number of substantial pits across the development area, possibly excavated to fulfil a variety of functions. The rough hewn aspect of pit **105** and comparatively low frequency of finds when compared with **107**, may suggest that it was dug as a quarry pit for the extraction of gravel and backfilled soon after with displaced topsoil.

4.1.2 Pits **107** and **208** had more regular profiles and their fills yielded a greater quantity of finds material, chiefly pot sherds and faunal remains. This could suggest that they were used for slightly more immediate, primary rubbish disposal. The pottery assemblage from this trench was dated to the 13th to 14th century. Unlike the features within Trenches 2 & 3 no Later Medieval or Post Medieval pottery was recovered from this part of the site.

4.1.3 Pit **210** had vertical sides and was considerably deeper than the other features on the site. It's shaft-like profile suggests that it may have served as a well. Whilst the excavated fills showed no evidence of being waterlain it may be that these represented the upper backfill of the feature, once tit fell out of use, and sat above the level of the water table. The upper fill of this feature (209) was found to contain pottery dated to the late 15th - 16th Century. It seems likely however that the putative well was constructed at an earlier date.

4.1.4 Pit **313** was markedly different from the other archaeological features recorded during the evaluation in both its shape and size and the nature of its fills. The very regular and well-defined edge on its eastern side, and wide flat base extending beyond the limits of the trench to the north and west, suggest that it may have been a structural pit of some kind. Fill 312 contained a high frequency of charcoal and soot and a far higher concentration of animal bone, compared with the other features recorded on site. Furthermore, 310 appeared to represent an accumulation of silt, possibly the result of standing water. This suggests that the feature lay open after the deposition/accumulation of 312. This slow accumulation of sediment was not apparent in any of the other features.

4.1.5 The features recorded in Trenches 2 & 3 were broadly dated to the late 15th - 16th Century. There was very little abrasion in evidence on the sherds which suggests that they were deposited almost immediately and subsequently subject to very little post depositional mixing. This may suggest that the focus of activity was shifting towards the present day Market Place by Late Medieval Period. Furthermore, the presence of two sherds of Stamford ware in the Trench 1 is indicative of Saxo-Norman activity within the vicinity.

4.2 Impact of Previous Works

4.2.1 The archaeological remains recorded during the evaluation were not dissimilar to those encountered during the excavations by The Whittlesey Society in the 1980s (Fig.4). These were located in the centre of the development area and comprised a total of fifteen test pits, fourteen of which were 10 x 5 foot and one 10 x 10 foot pit. Fairly dense medieval pitting was revealed throughout along with a possible cobbled surface towards the east. In Figure 4 the Society's test pits have been located as defined by their, fairly rough, site plan. This does not precisely fit with the known locations of some of the test pits as recorded within the current evaluation trenches but, as the precise

number, dimensions and locations of these pits cannot now be ascertained, their locations have been left as stated on the original plan.

4.2.2 A large proportion of the total area of the development has been subject to investigation when the earlier works and the three trenches dug by OA East are taken in conjunction. As a result only the extremities of the site, particularly the southeastern corner of the development area, remain uninvestigated (Fig.4).

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 The archaeological deposits recorded by the evaluation and excavations of the 1980s suggest that the plot was used as a yard or garden throughout the Medieval period and into the Post Medieval period, in all likelihood this was associated with properties fronting the Market Square.

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. Health and Safety Statement

A.1.1 OA East will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with relevant Health and Safety Policies, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act, 1974* and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations, 1992,* and in accordance with the manual *Health and Safety in Fieldwork Archaeology* (SCAUM 1997).

A.1.2 Risk assessments prepared for the OA East office will be adhered to.

A.1.3 OA East has Public Liability Insurance. Separate professional insurance is covered by a Public Liability Policy.

A.1.4 Full details of the relevant Health and Safety Policies and the unit's insurance cover can be provided on request.

Appendix B. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

Trench 1						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Two pits [105] & [107] and a shallow posthole [109] recorded. Medieval pottery recovered. Modern services and truncation throughout trench. Natural deposits comprised of sandy gravel.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.90
					Width (m)	4.00
					Length (m)	4.00
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
100	Layer	-	0.70	Modern Makeup		
101	Layer	-	0.40	Garden Soil		
102	Fill	1.00	0.30	Tertiary fill of pit [103]	Pot	13th - 14th Century
103	Fill	2.40	0.60	Secondary fill of pit [103]		
104	Fill	2.20	0.10	Primary, basal fill of pit [103]		
105	Cut	2.40	0.80	Cut of quarrying pit		
106	Fill	0.80	0.60	Single fill of pit [107]	Pot, animal bone, Glass, SF1	13th - 14th Century
107	Cut	0.80	0.60	Cut of pit		
108	Fill	0.40	0.20	Single fill of small posthole [109]		
109	Cut	0.40	0.20	Cut of shallow posthole		
Trench 2						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Three pits [204], [208] & [210] were recorded, from which Medieval pottery was recovered. The edge of the test pits dug in the 1980s was also recorded along the eastern edge of the trench [212]. Modern truncation for the paving present throughout trench. Natural deposits comprised of sandy gravel.					**Avg. depth (m)**	1.24
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	6.00
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
200	Layer	-	0.60	Modern Makeup		
201	Layer	-	0.30	Garden Soil		
202	Layer	-	0.60	Garden Soil		
203	Fill	0.35	0.18	Single fill of pit [203]		
204	Cut	0.35	0.18	Cut of pit		
205	Fill	0.70	0.30	Tertiary fill of pit [208]	Pottery	Late 15th - 16th Century

206	Fill	0.60	0.20	Secondary fill of pit [208]		
207	Fill	0.60	0.40	Primary fill of pit [208]		
208	Cut	060	0.60	Cut of pit		
209	Fill	-	0.35	Tertiary fill of pit [210]	Pottery	16th Century
210	Cut	-	1.30 N.F.E	Cut of pit		
211	Fill	-	0.08	Single fill of pit [212]		
212	Cut	-	0.08	Cut of 1980s trial pit		
213	Fill	-	0.30	Fill of pit [210]		

Trench 3						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
A large, possibly structural pit [313] with very sharp, straight edges was recorded. This was truncated by the edge of one of the 1980s trial pits. The modern modern disturbance recorded in Trenches 1 & 2 extended into this trench. Large quantities of animal bone were recorded in pit 313.					**Avg. depth (m)**	1.30
					Width (m)	1.20
					Length (m)	2.10
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
300	Layer	-	0.55	Modern Makeup		
301	Fill	-	0.20	Redeposited fill of modern pit		
302	Fill	-	0.30	Redeposited fill of modern pit		
303	Fill	-	0.80	Redeposited fill of modern pit		
304	Layer	-	0.20	Modern Makeup		
305	Cut	-	-	Cut of 1980s trial pit		
306	Fill	0.75	1.12	Fill of pit [307]	Pottery	16th Century
307	Cut	0.75	1.12	Cut of pit		
308	Fill	-	0.34	Garden Soil	Pottery	16th Century
309	Fill	-	0.33	Garden Soil		
310	Fill	-	0.02	Layer of silting in top of ditch [313]		
311	Fill	-	0.17	Tertiary fill large pit [313]	Pottery and animal bone	16th Century
312	Fill	-	0.40	Primary fill of large pit [313]	Pottery, animal bone, CBM, glass, Worked stone, SF 3	16th Century

313	Cut	1.35 N.F.E	0.58	Cut of large pit, possibly structural		
314	Fill	-	0.27	Slump, derived from (304)		
315	Cut	-	0.20	Cut in which levelling deposit (304) sat		

Appendix C. Finds Reports

C.1 Pottery

By Carole Fletcher BA AIFA

Introduction

C.1.1 The evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire produced a small pottery assemblage of 42 sherds, weighing 1.710kg, from three trenches. The assemblage includes a small number of sherds of STAM and THET, both types present in the late Saxon and early medieval periods, however in this assemblage they appear to be residual, their presence alongside EMW suggests that they are post conquest in date. The mid 12th,13th and 14th centuries are also represented with the presence of SHW, LYST and the 16th century by the presence of BOND. The condition of the overall assemblage is unabraded and the average sherd from individual contexts is large at approximately 41g.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the following text are:

BONBT	Bourne B
BOND	Bourne D
EMW	Early Medieval ware
GRIM	Grimston
HUNFSW	Huntingdonshire Fen Sandy ware
LYST	Lyveden-Stanion
SHW	Shelly ware
STAM	Stamford ware
THET	Thetford

Methodology

C.1.2 The basic guidance in the Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2) has been adhered to (English Heritage 1991). In addition the Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations (Blake and Davey, 1983), A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms (MPRG, 1998) and Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG, 2001) act as a standard.

C.1.3 Dating was carried out using OA East's in-house system based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been spot dated on a context-by-context basis.

C.1.4 The pottery and archive are curated by OA East until formal deposition.

Assemblage

Trench 1

C.1.5 Two features in this trench contained pottery, the fill of pit **105** produced six sherds of high medieval date. These included glazed jug sherds from BONBT and LYST vessels and sherds from three separate SHW jars. Several of the sherds were abraded others moderately so and one was unabraded which suggesting some reworking of the material before deposition.

C.1.6 The second feature a shallow post hole **109** contained a single fill and the medieval pottery recovered included six SHW sherds from at least three different jars, the rim sherd from a BONBT jug and the rim from a HUNFSW bowl. In addition three residual early medieval sherds were identified, a rim from a small EMW jar and two glazed STAM sherds. These sherds are only moderately abraded, having undergone little reworking and indicate an earlier phase of activity on or close to the site.

Trench 2

C.1.7 Two pits within this trench produced pottery, the first **208** can be dated to the late 15th -16th century. Four sherds from an early post medieval BOND were found alongside residual medieval SHW and a small fragment of late Saxon or early medieval THET.

C.1.8 Pit **210** also produced a mix of medieval and post medieval sherds, two sherds from a highly decorated GRIM jug, two sherds from a decorated LYST jug and an unglazed LYST base also probably from a jug, alongside these a single BOND base sherd. The sherds are moderately abraded or unabraded and it is unclear if the medieval material is residual or the post medieval material intrusive. Non of the pottery came from the primary fill and the feature was not fully excavated, The presence of unabraded BOND suggests that this context is 16th century in date. However this does not preclude the possibility that the feature is earlier.

Trench 3

C.1.9 Four contexts in this trench contained pottery and all can be dated to the 16th century. Feature **307**, context 306, contained a single large unabraded sherd from a BOND bowl, approximately 60% of the vessel is present and gives a complete profile of a medium sized bowl, which is internal partially glazed. The bowl may have been used as a cream pan and must have been deposited almost immediately after being broken and may have been recovered from its primary place of deposition.

C.1.10 Context 308 described as a layer, contained two BOND sherds a small body sherd from a jug and a large unabraded rim sherd from a large bunghole jug or cistern.

C.1.11 Context 309 produced six sherds of pottery, a single sherd from a medieval GRIM jug, a moderately abraded PMR bowl sherd and four sherds of BOND, including a body sherd from a jar or jug with and internal deposit that may indicate it was used to store water or urine.

C.1.12 Only three sherds of pottery were recovered from pit **313,** all from context 312, two unabraded BOND sherds and a moderately abraded LYST jug sherd, the second medieval sherd recovered from trench 3.

Fabrics, Forms and Provenance

C.1.13 There are few early medieval fabrics present, two sherds of STAM from Lincolnshire, a sherd of EMW and a small fragment of THET from Norfolk. Medieval fabrics include

from Lincolnshire unglazed and glazed jug sherds of BONBT, from Norfolk GRIM jugs sherds and LYST jug sherds from Northamptonshire. Also present are unglazedcoarse ware SHW jars which may have been produced in Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire or near Peterborough, the same parent clay outcrops in all three areas. The presence of other Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire wares illustrates trade with both regions for fine wares, and coarse wares may have arrived with these vessels, as containers for other goods. They may also be a more local product of the recently identified SHW production in the Peterborough area (A. Vince and P. Spoerry pers comm) A single sherd of PMR which may be from Cambridgeshire or Essex and 14 sherds of BOND (Lincolnshire) represent the post medieval elements of the assemblage.

C.1.14 Jugs are the most common form by sherd number in the assemblage in all periods, however bowls are dominant the form by weight due entirely to the presence the large BOND sherd in context 306. Jars are under represented due in part to the post medieval date of much of the assemblage, where present these are mainly SHW, the only other jar of note is the EMW rim in context 106.

Statement of Research Potential

C.1.15 An assemblage of this size would often provide only basic dating information for a site, however this assemblage was recovered from an area adjacent to an excavation undertaken by the Whittlesey Society in the 1980s, unfortunately unpublished, the pottery is held by the local museum (C. Thatcher pers. comm). Should further work be undertaken this assemblage should be reassessed alongside any new material recovered and with reference to the earlier excavated material.

C.1.16 The assemblage offers a brief glimpse into the medieval and early post medieval occupation of this area of Whittlesey, hinting also at early medieval activity on or close to the site.

Bibliography

Blake, H and Davey, P. 1983 Guidelines for the Processing and Publications of Medieval Pottery from Excavations. Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings_Occasional_Paper 5

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Dating Table

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Sherd Weight in kg	Date Range for the Context
102	BONBT	Jug	1	0.007	13th-mid 14th century
	LYST	Jug	1	0.017	

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Sherd Weight in kg	Date Range for the Context
	LYST		1	0.010	
	SHW	Jar	3	0.035	
106	BONBT	Jug	1	0.015	13th-mid 14th century
	BONBT		1	0.019	
	EMW	Jar	1	0.016	
	HUNFSW	Bowl	1	0.039	
	SHW	Jar	6	0.239	
	STAM	Jug	2	0.011	
205	BOND	Jug	4	0.043	Late 15th-16th century
	SHW	Jar	1	0.005	
	THET		1	0.002	
209	BOND		1	0.060	16th century
	GRIM	Jug	2	0.020	
	LYST	Jug	2	0.054	
	LYST		1	0.070	
306	BOND	Bowl	1	0.583	16th Century
308	BOND	Jug	2	0.276	16th Century
309	BOND	Bowl	1	0.068	16th Century
	BOND	Jug	1	0.011	
	BOND		2	0.009	
	GRIM	Jug	1	0.001	
	PMR	Bowl	1	0.017	
312	BOND	Jug	2	0.066	16th Century
	LYST	Jug	1	0.017	

Table C.1. Pottery dating table

C.2 Faunal Remains

By Chris Faine

Introduction

C.2.1 A total of 20 “countable” bones were recovered from the Old Post Office, Whittlesey evaluation, with a further 18 fragments not identifiable to species, (47.3% of the total sample). All bones were collected by hand apart from those recovered from environmental samples; hence a bias towards smaller fragments is to be expected. Residuality appears not be an issue and there is no evidence of later contamination of any context. Faunal remains were recovered from a variety of contexts dating from the medieval period.

Methodology

C.2.2 All data was initially recorded using a specially written MS Access database. Bones were recorded using a version of the criteria described in Davis (1992) and Albarella & Davis (1997). Initially all elements were assessed in terms of siding (where appropriate), completeness, tooth wear stages (also where applicable) and epiphyseal fusion. Completeness was assessed in terms of percentage and zones present (after Dobney & Reilly, 1988). The ageing of the population was largely achieved by examining the wear stages of cheek teeth of cattle, sheep/goat and pig (after Grant, 1982). The states of epiphyseal fusion for all relevant bones were recorded to give a broad age range for the major domesticates (after Getty, 1975). All measurements were carried out according to the conventions of von den Driesch (1976). Measurements were either carried out using a 150mm sliding calliper or an osteometric board in the case of larger bones.

The Assemblage

C.2.3 Faunal remains were recovered from 6 contexts, the largest numbers of which were recovered from context **312**. Six ageable mandibles were recovered from this context; three from pig, two from sheep/goat and one from cattle. All are from individual animals. The two-sheep/goat mandibles were aged via tooth wear analysis to 4-6 years of age at death, with all three pig mandibles coming from animals around 2-3 years old. The single cattle mandible came from an animal around 1-2 years of age. No sexing information was available. With respect to the sheep mandibles little pathology was observed given the relatively advanced age of the sample. However, the M3 on one specimen had not erupted and was instead set deep inside the jaw with the roots visible through the ascending ramus. This is likely to be congenital as no alveolar resorbtion was observed. In addition to portions of horse maxilla were recovered from an animal around 2-3 years of age. Few post-cranial elements were recovered from **312** including a fragmentary cattle 1st phalange, metatarsal and horse scapula along with an intact domestic fowl ulna with extensive cut marks on the distal epiphysis.

C.2.4 The remaining contexts contain only small amounts of bone. Context **102** contained a single butchered sheep/goat metatarsal. Butchered postcranial cattle remains were recovered from contexts **106** & **309**. Context **309** also contained the distal humerus and partial mandible and pelvis of an extremely large adult male pig. A single butchered goose proximal ulna was recovered from context **308**.

Discussion

C.2.5 As one would expect the assemblage is dominated by domestic mammals, with the range of species and body parts present being indicative of waste from variety of possible processes (i.e. butchery for meat, skins etc), therefore the exact nature of the assemblage remains unclear. The small assemblage of mandibles from context **312** suggests the sheep/goats were kept for wool and breeding rather than meat (a practice characteristic of the period). Pigs were kept only until physical maturity before slaughter for meat, as they are limited in the secondary products they can provide.

References

Albarella, U. and Davis, S.J.M. 1994 The Saxon and medieval animal bones excavated 1985-1989 from West Cotton, Northamptonshire. Ancient monuments Laboratory Report 17/94.

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Dobney, K & Reilly, K. 1988. A method for recording archaeological animal bones: the use of diagnostic zones. *Circaea* 5(2): 79-96

Driesch, A von den. 1976. *A guide to the measurement of animal bones from archaeological sites*, Harvard: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology Bulletin 1.

Grant, A. 1982. The use of tooth wear as a guide to the age of domestic ungulates. In B. Wilson, C. Grigson & S. Payne (eds.) *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites*. Oxford: BAR British Series 199

APPENDIX D. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

D.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry with identifications by Rachel Ballantyne

Introduction

D.1.1 Three samples were taken from a pit (Sample 1) and successive deposits within a ditch (Samples 2 and 3) within the evaluated area and submitted for an initial appraisal.

Methodology

D.1.2 The volume of bulk soil samples collected was between 10 – 20L.

D.1.3 Ten litres of each sample were processed by water flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flots were collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residues were washed through a 1mm mesh. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residues were passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for ecofacts (e.g. animal bone, fish bone, charcoal, shell, etc..) and artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification. Identifications were made by Rachel Ballantyne without comparison to

the OA East reference collection and should be seen as provisional. Nomenclature for the plant classification follows Stace (1997).

Quantification

D.1.4 The results obtained are summarised on Table D.1.

Results

Preservation

D.1.5 The plant remains were predominantly preserved by carbonisation. Sample 3 also contained a few seeds preserved by mineralisation. Mineralised maggots occur in samples 1 and 3. Preservation of plant remains is moderate to good.

Plant Remains

Cereals

D.1.6 Charred cereal grains are present in small quantities in Samples 1 and 2 and are abundant in Sample 3. Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum sensu-lato*) predominates and barley (*Hordeum vulgare)* is common. Occasional grains of oats (*Avena* sp.) are also present. Chaff elements of all of these cereals also occur in Sample 3.

Weed seeds

D.1.7 Charred weed seeds are rare in samples 1 and 2 and abundant in sample 3. Seeds from wet-land plants include sedges (*Carex* sp.), spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*.) and a nutlet of saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*). Grassland and possible crop contaminants include darnel (*Lolium tenulentum)*, bedstraws (*Gallium* sp.), medick/clover (*Medicago/ Trifolium*), knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) and plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).

Legumes

D.1.8 Legumes are rare and include vetches (*Vicia* sp) and small peas (*Lathyrus/Pisum* sp.) found in sample 3 and a single specimen in sample 1

Ecofacts and Artefacts

Bone

D.1.9 Small fragments of animal bone including rodent bones are present in Samples 1 and 3 and elements of fish bone occur in a Sample 3.

Pottery

D.1.10 A single small sherd of pottery was recovered from the residue of Sample 1.

Metal objects

D.1.11 Four rusty iron lumps were retrieved from sample 3

Marine shell

D.1.12 Mussel (*Mytillus* sp.) and cockle *(Cerastoderma edule)* shells occur in Sample 3.

Small Finds

D.1.13 A fragment of a green glass bead was retrieved from Sample 3

Contamination

D.1.14 Modern roots were present in most of the samples. Uncharred seeds of *Sambucus* sp. (elderberry) and *Rumex* sp. (dock) may be modern contaminants in sample 3.

Discussion

D.1.15 The plant remains in this assemblage are a mixture of cereal grains, associated weed seeds and sedges. The weed seed assemblage suggests utilisation of a wetland environment typical of the Fen-edge. Saw sedge was traditionally used in this area for thatching and could have been burnt accidentally. Sedges and spike rushes were also used as fuel for flash-firing of bread ovens (R.Ballantyne pers. comm.)

D.1.16 Cereal grains, in particular those of bread wheat are abundant in Sample 3. Associated chaff and seeds indicate that some fine sieving was carried out on site. The presence of stinking mayweed (*A.cotula*) suggests that the crop were grown of heavy clay soils prior to importation to the site.

D.1.17 The presence of fish bones and shell fish in this assemblage suggesting that these were dietary constituents.

D.1.18 The presence of mineralised maggots in samples 1 and 3 and mineralised seed in sample 3 suggest that these deposits may have contained cess.

Conclusions and recommendations

D.1.19 The preliminary appraisal of a selection of samples from this site have shown that there is potential for the recovery of plant remains.

D.1.20 An informative assemblage of plant remains was recovered from Sample 3. The mixture of such a variety of cereals and weed seeds suggests that this feature was utilised for the disposal of domestic and culinary waste on a number of occasions.

Bibliography

Stace, C. 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second edition. Cambridge University Press

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut Number	Feature Type	Sample Size (L)	Comments	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Chaff	Legumes	Weed Seeds	Charcoal <2mm	Charcoal >2mm	Small Bones	Snails	Flot comments	Small animal bones	Large animal bones	Fishbone	Marine molluscs	Pottery	Metal	Residue comments
1	106	107	pit	20	dark pit fill	15	*Secale cereale* *Triticum aestivum sensu-lato* *Hordeum vulgare* *Avena sativa*		Pisum/ Lathyrus sp.	*Chenopodium* sp.	###	##			plant remains all charred. Mineralised fly pupae	#	#			#		
2	310	313	ditch	2	silty/laminated deposit/lens overlying basal fill of possible structural pit	5	cereal indet.			*Chenopodium* sp.	##	##										No finds
3	312	313	ditch	20	Dark basal fill of feature containing charcoal	70	*Triticum aestivum sensu-lato* *Hordeum vulgare* *Avena sativa* *Secale cereale*	*Triticum aestivum sensu-lato* rachis nodes *Triticum* sp. Basal rachis nodes cereal indet. Culm nodes *Poaceae* sp. Culm node *Hordeum* sp. Rachis nodes	14 Vicia/ lathyrus sp.	1 *Carex* sp. *Eleocharis pallustris* (charred and 1 mineralised) 1 *Odonites vernis* 3 *Medicago lupulina* 2 *Medicago/Trifolium* 8 *Lollium temulentum* 3 *Poacea* sp. (medium) 7 *Gallium* sp. (small) 1 *Atriplex* sp. (mineralsied) 1 indet. *Ranunculus* 9 *acris/bulbosus/repens* 3 *Centaurea nigra* 2 *Centaurea* sp. Kernel 1 *Anthemis cotula* 1 *Plantago lanceolata* 1 *Asteraceae* sp. 3 *Lithospermum arvense* 1 *Raphanus raphanistrum* 1 *Cladium mariscus* 1 *Bromus* sp. (mineralised)	###	##	#	*Lymnaea turncatula* *Vertigo* sp.		##	##	#	#		Fe lumps x 4	fragment of green glass bead 3mm, cockle and mussel shells

Key: # = 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens

Table D.1: Ecofact quantifications

APPENDIX E. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mortimer, R 2008 Specification for an archaeological evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

Thomas, A 2008 Archaeological Brief for an evaluation at The Old Post Office, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

APPENDIX F. OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS NUMBER: oxfordar3-47101			
PROJECT DETAILS			
Project dates *(fieldwork)*	Start: *30-06-2008*	End: *03-07-2008*	
Previous work *(by us)*	yes	Future work	unknown
PROJECT LOCATION			
County: Cambridgeshire	District: Peterborough	Parish: Whittlesey	
HER: *Peterborough*			
HER Event Number: ECB 2979			
Site area (sq.m or ha): 0.1ha			
PROJECT ORIGINATORS			
Organisation:	OA East		
Project brief originator	CAPCA		
Project design originator	Richard Mortimer		
Director/supervisor	Chris Thatcher		
Project manager	Richard Mortimer		
Name AND type of sponsor or funding body	Whitfield Group		

PROJECT ARCHIVE

Notes on completing this section:
This section of the form must be completely carefully and accurately to detail what is in your archive.

Location: Cambridge County Store	**Accession ID:** WHS OPO 08
Physical Archive	

Contents *(Please 'Y' all that apply)*:

Animal Bones	Y	Ceramics	Y	Environmental	Y	Glass	Y	Human Bone	
Industrial		Leather		Metal	Y	Textiles		Wood	
Worked Bone		Worked Stone/Lithics		Other					

Digital Archive

Contents: *Relating to digital illustrations/specialist reports/other digital information relating to these categories (Please 'Y' all that apply).*

Animal Bones	Y	Ceramics	Y	Environmental	Y	Glass	Y	Human Bone	
Industrial		Leather		Metal	Y	Stratigraphic		Survey	
Textiles		Textiles		Worked Bone				Worked Stone/Lithics	
None		Other							

Digital Media: *The media in which any of the above information is present. Raster Images are digital photographs, Vector Images are those produced by CAD/illustrator (Please 'Y' all that apply).*

Databases	Y	GIS		Geophysics		Raster Images	
Vector Images		Moving Image		Spreadsheets	Y	Survey	
Text	Y	Virtual Reality					

Paper Archive

Contents: *This may include physical illustrations/specialist reports/any other information relating to these categories (Please 'Y' all that apply).*

Animal Bones	Y	Ceramics	Y	Environmental	Y	Glass	Y	Human Bone	
Industrial		Leather		Metal	Y	Textiles		Wood	
Textiles		Textiles		Worked Bone				Worked Stone/Lithics	
None		Other							

Paper Media: The media in which any of the above information is present *(Please 'Y' all that apply)*:

Aerial Photo		Context Sheet	Y	Correspondence	Y	Diary		Drawing	
Manuscript		Map	Y	Matrices		Microfilm		Misc.	
Notebook/Research		Photograph		Plan	Y	Report	Y	Section	Y
Survey		Other							

Archive Notes: The archive is currently held at OA East, 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB23 8SQ, and will be deposited with the ..... County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: .....

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation

Evaluation Trench

Deposit - Conjectured

Natural Feature

Sondages/Machine Strip

Test Pit

Intrusion/Truncation

Illustrated Section S.14

Archaeological Feature

Archaeological Deposit

Excavated Slot

Modern

Cobble Surface

Stone

Pipe

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

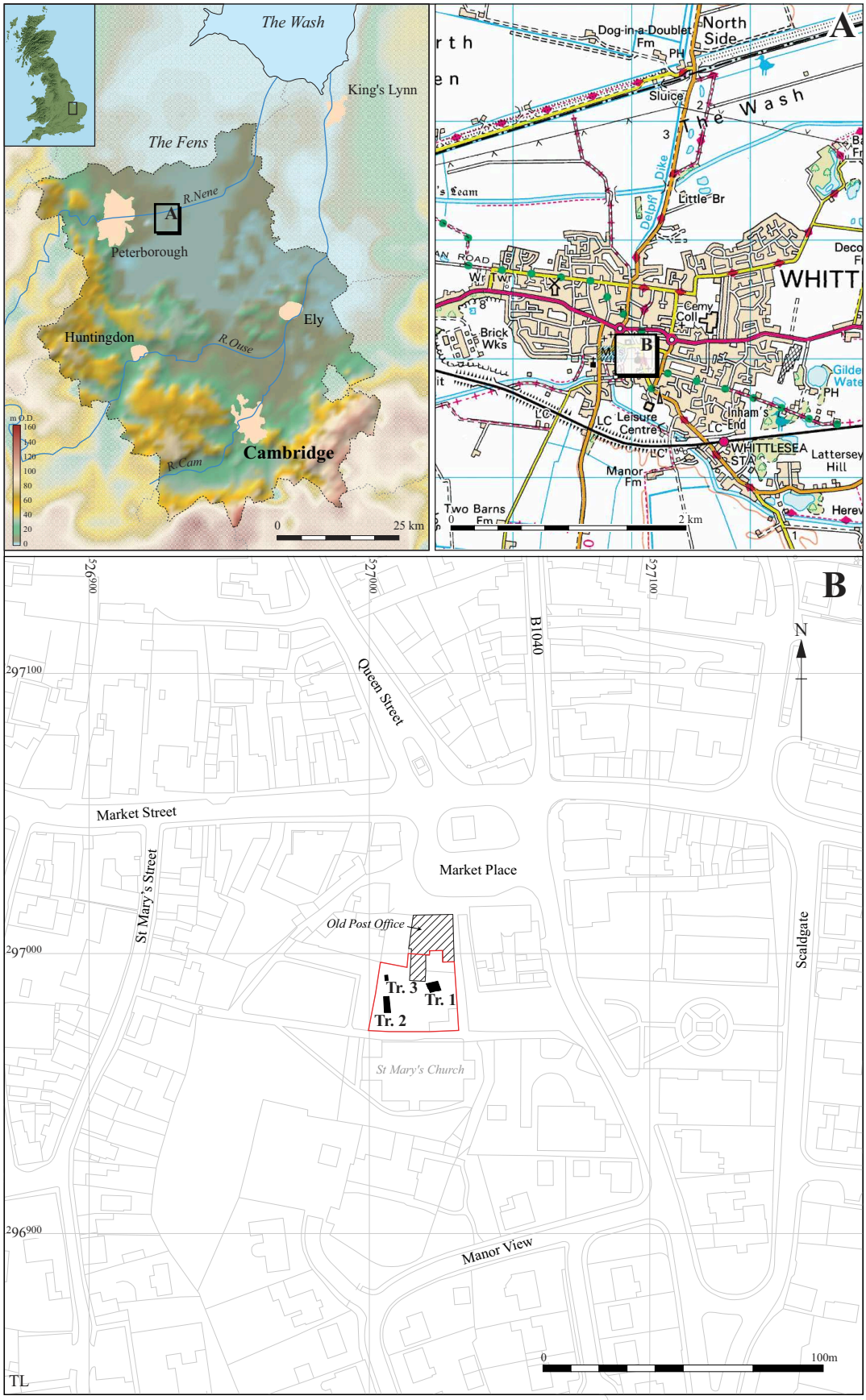

Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

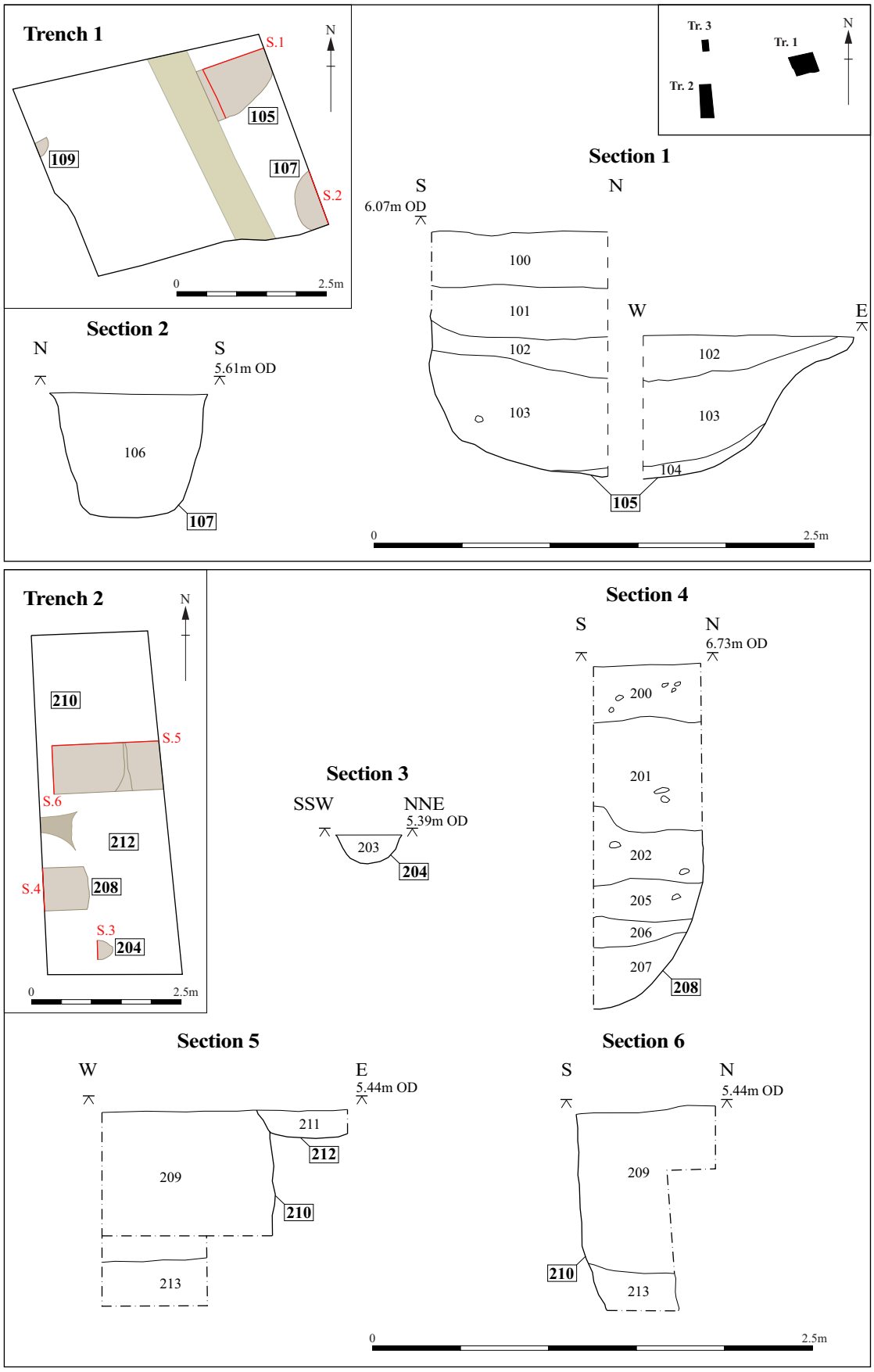

Figure 2: Plans and sections of trenches 1 and 2

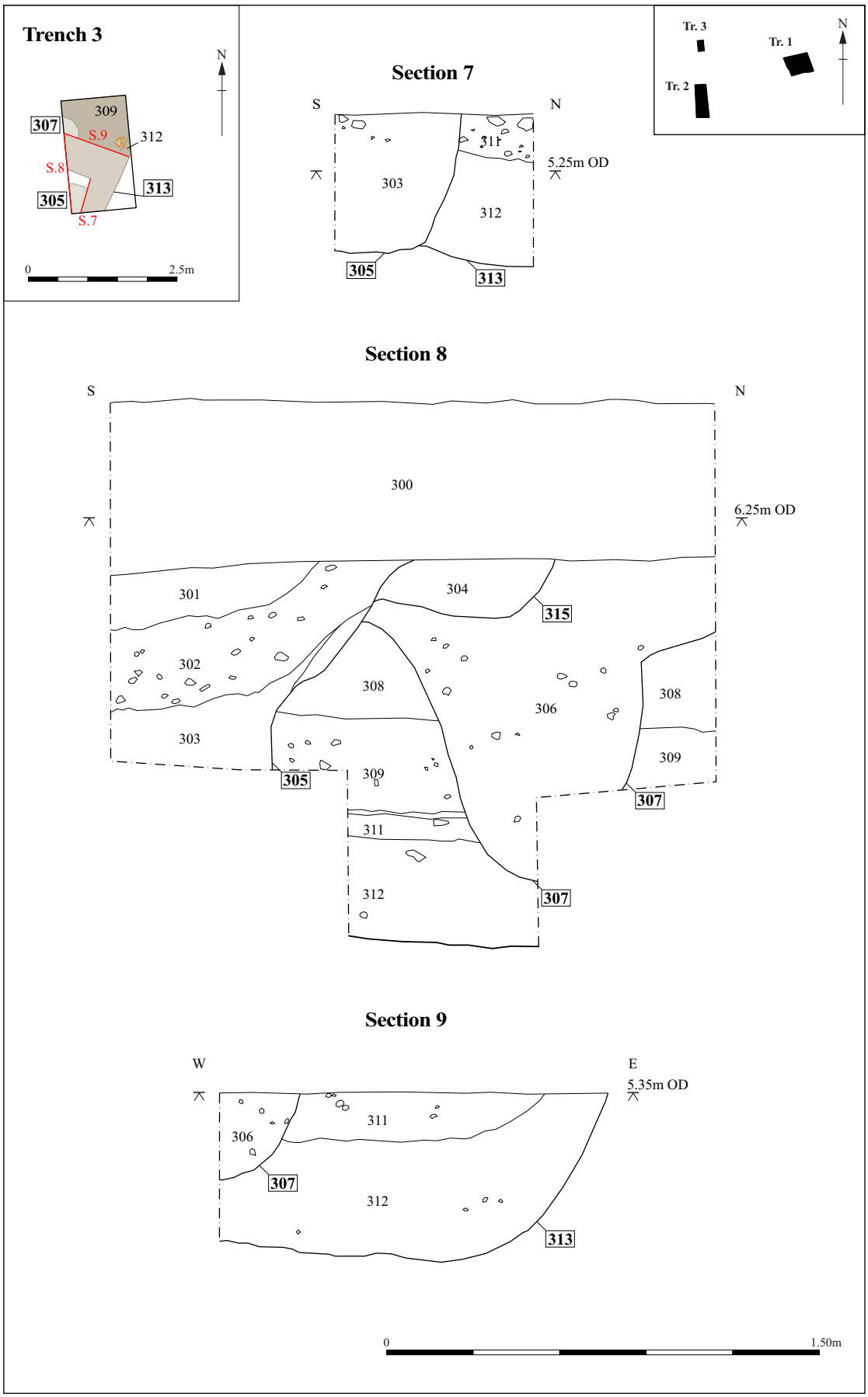

Figure 3: Plan and sections of trench 3

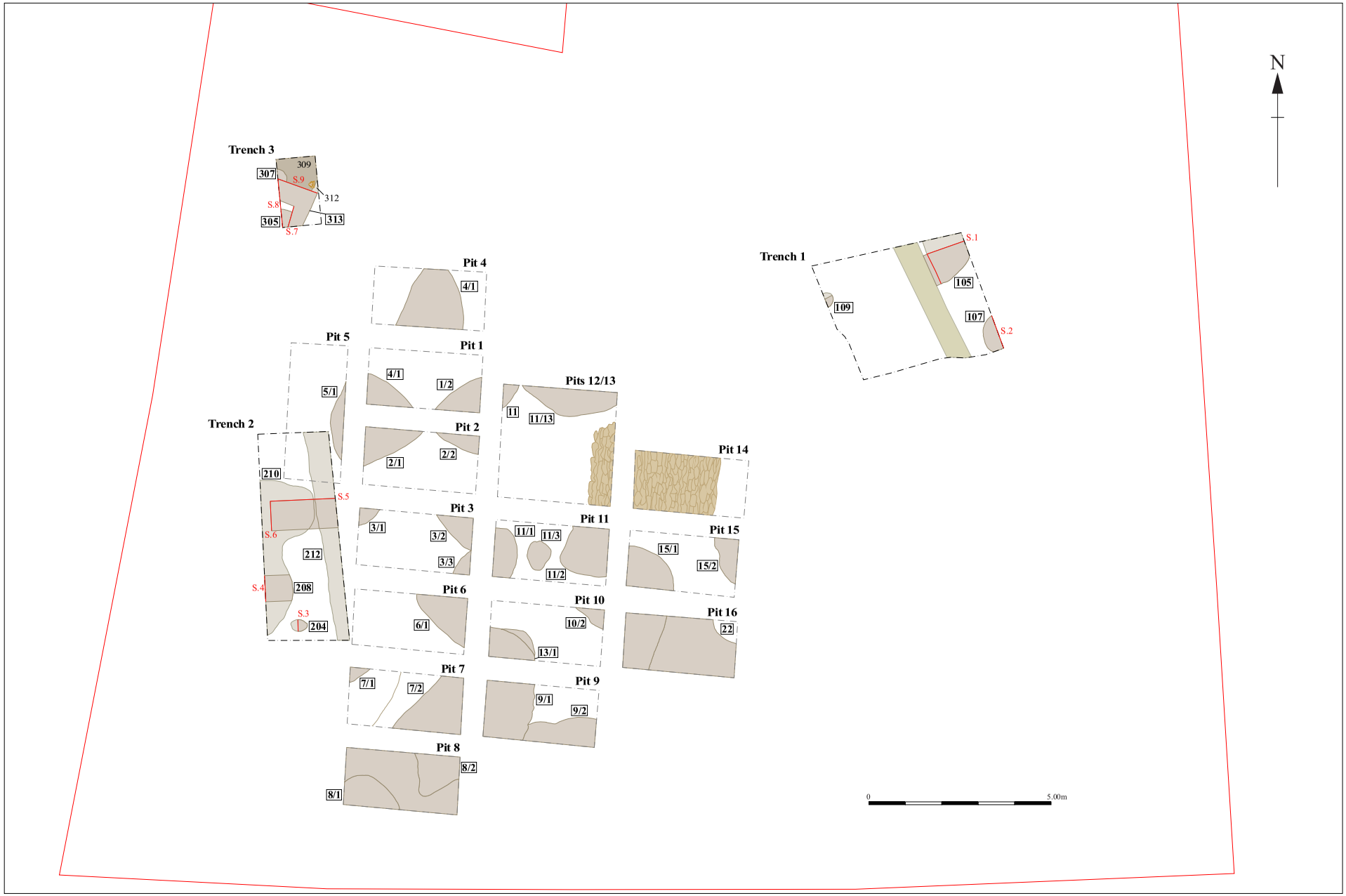

Figure 4: Trench plan of 1980s excavation by the Whittlesey society overlaying the modern trench locations

Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south

Plate 2: Trench 3, pit 313 looking west

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