

Hinchingsbrooke School New Sports Facility



Archaeological Evaluation Report



May 2014

**Client: Lyster Grillet and Harding
on behalf of Hinchingsbrooke School**
OA East Report No: 1624
OASIS No: oxfordar3-179518
NGR: TL 22600 71550

Hinchingbrooke School New Sports Facility

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: May 2014

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Client Name: Lyster Grillet and Harding on behalf of Hinchingsbrooke School
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Prepared by: Gareth Rees
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Date:
Signed:



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Summary

Between the 20th and 21st May 2014 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation in advance of the development of a new sports facility on grounds to the rear of Hinchingsbrooke School (TL 22600 71550). The trenches were excavated with a total length of 63m.

The area of land where the evaluation took place had been previously landscaped with a large amount of built-up material to the west of the plot and probable truncation of natural deposits to the east.

The footing of a post-medieval wall, which could be seen on the surface, was exposed in section in Trench 3, no other archaeological features were uncovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Hinchingsbrooke School, TL 22600 71550 (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 1301994FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Wiseman 2014).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on an interface of Grey Mudstone, Boulder Clay and Terrace Gravels (B.G.S 1978) on a south facing slope towards a spur of the River Great Ouse, known as Alconbury Brook, which is located 300 to the south-west of the the proposed development area. Within the proposed development area the highest point is c.20m O.D. sloping down to c.16.50m O.D. The proposed development area was located on a grassed area within the grounds of the school, adjacent to a path and school buildings.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) has entries for sites and find-spots dating from the prehistoric to the post-medieval period within 1km of the proposed development area.

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 Major river systems, such as the Great Ouse were the focus for much of the prehistoric activity in Cambridgeshire and East Anglia. Several sites within the study area have produced evidence of semi-permanent or permanent settlement. The earliest activity uncovered close to the site maybe a flint scatter consisting of burnt flint and flakes in Brampton to the north-west (CHER09963). Lithics dating from the Mesolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age were also recovered from Christie Drive (MCB19581; Howe 2007; Brittain 2011).
- 1.3.3 Lithics and pottery dating to the Neolithic period were recovered from an evaluation in advance of the development of new sports facilities for Huntingdon Regional College. (MCB17935; Wheeler 2008) whilst an evaluation at the new school site uncovered the remains of a horse skull covered with ceramics associated with Beaker pottery (CHER13032; Hinman and Cooper 2001). Features dating from the Bronze Age that may have been associated with settlements were uncovered adjacent to Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke (CHER15903), and at the new sports facilities for Huntingdon Regional College (MCB17935).

1.3.4 Several settlement sites dating to the Iron Age have been uncovered, the earliest of which may be represented by a ditch and posthole dating to the Early Iron Age at Christie Drive to the north-west (MCB19581). By the Late Iron Age field-systems and enclosures had also been constructed in this area (CHER15903). A Middle to Late Iron Age settlement, including cremations was uncovered at Bob's Wood (CHER13033) to the west, whilst pits postholes and ditches also dating to these periods were uncovered at a site on Hinchingsbrooke Park Road (CHER13031) where a large assemblage of late pre-Roman Iron Age domestic pottery was also found. An Iron Age roundhouse along with pits, ditches and postholes have been uncovered adjacent to Parkway, Hinchingsbrooke.

Roman

1.3.5 The late pre-Roman Iron Age site uncovered on Park Road is indicative of early, pre-conquest, Romanisation of this area. Other sites in the study area tend to date from the early to middle Roman period. A burial uncovered at Nun's Bridge was found with a coin in its mouth dating to 180 AD (CHER02586), whilst the Roman settlements at Bob's Wood (CHER13033; Hinman 2003) and Christie Drive (MCB19581) predominantly dating from the late 1st to 3rd centuries AD. Second century cremations and the possible location of a villa were also uncovered at Bob's Wood (CHER13033).

Saxon

1.3.6 The borough of Huntingdon, located to the west of the study area, is thought to have originated during the Saxon era, however sites dating to this period have rarely been located. Saxon pottery was recovered from excavations at Bar Dyke on Mill Common (CHER17359) as well as from test pitting ahead of the West of Town Centre Link Road (CHER19575; Webster 2011).

Medieval

1.3.7 Medieval activity within Hinchingsbrooke would have been centred around the Benedictine Nunnery (CHER02707A), which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and is likely to have been founded before 1087. The stone-built Nun's Bridge (CHER02589) dates from the 15th or 16th century.

1.3.8 Outside of Hinchingsbrooke Park, early medieval pottery has been recovered from excavations at Bar Dyke on Mill Common (MCB17358) whilst records show that St. Peter's Church stood to the north-west in the 14th century (CHER02596).

1.3.9 Medieval structures and an inhumation were uncovered during test pitting ahead of the West of Town Centre Link Road (CHER19575).

1.3.10 Much of the evidence for medieval activity comes from field systems, ridge and furrow and lynchets. Lynchets are located to the south of Alconbury Brook (CHER02746), perpendicular to ridge and furrow (CHER07690). More ridge and furrow can be seen to the north-west (CHER08747; CHER08751) and to the south and south-east (CHER09260; CHER09262).

Post-medieval

1.3.11 Hinchingsbrooke House was built on the site of the former nunnery in 1536 after the dissolution (CHER02707). It was built by Richard Williams, with additions made between the 17th and 19th centuries, and included parts of the earlier nunnery buildings. The lands of the former nunnery became Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (CHER12127) shortly afterwards. The park, first documented in 1607, included over 100 acres and was laid out as formal gardens in the 16th and 17th centuries.

- 1.3.12 Features relating to the Civil War defences are preserved as earthworks on Mill Common and Hinchbrooke Road where a ditch and bank (CHER02543) and artillery battery (CHER02601) are located.
- 1.3.13 The growth of this area during the post-medieval period is attested to by the number of surviving buildings dating to this period. In total 16 listed buildings stand within the study area, three of which conform to Grade I standards.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank David Carmichael of Lyster Grillet and Harding Architects who commissioned and funded the work. Ian Oliver provided site access during term time. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and the specification for archaeological works was written by Rob Wiseman. The brief was written by Andy Thomas. Excavation and site survey was carried out by the author.

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 that an adequate sample of the threatened area was subject to a programme of linear trial trenching and/or test-pitting. A five percent sample was agreed prior to the start of works, which consisted of a total of 63m of linear trenching (Wiseman 2014).
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket 1.80m wide.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by the author using Leica 1200 dGPS.
- 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 of the trenches 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 The site was located on a grassed area to the rear of Hinchingbrooke School. The area under investigation was fenced off with heras fencing since the excavation took place whilst school children were present. The majority of the site had been subjected to hard landscaping in the past when it had been the location of tennis courts. Two strips of possibly undisturbed ground were present, one to the north-east and one to the south-east of the development area, however these could not be investigated due to the presence of an electric cable and trees protected by a conservation order.
- 2.2.7 Trenches were targeted at the edges of the landscaped area where it was thought truncation would be at a minimum. Over a meter of post-medieval and modern built-up ground was uncovered in these areas and so a trench was excavated in the central area to establish the extent of the built-up ground as well the any truncation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results are presented below by trench in numerical order (Figure 2). A comprehensive list of trench dimensions and descriptions can be found in Appendix A. Each of the trenches was overlain by 0.10m of turf.

3.2 Trench 1 (Plate 1)

3.2.1 Located in the centre of the proposed development area, this trench measured 18m in length, 1.80m wide and a maximum of 0.60m deep, and was orientated from north-north-west to south-south-east. The topsoil measured 0.20m where present and had been truncated to the north and replaced with a modern levelling deposit. The subsoil measured up to 0.30m deep and consisted of a mid grey-brown silty-clay. The trench was located over a modern drain and embankment associated with the split level tennis courts that had previously been located here.

3.2.2 The natural deposits here consisted of light grey-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions. No archaeological deposits were uncovered. No artefacts were recovered from metal-detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.

3.3 Trench 2 (Plate 2)

3.3.1 Orientated from north-east to south-west, this trench measured 15m in length, 1.80m wide and up to 1.20m deep, and was located to the north of the proposed development area. The topsoil, measuring 0.10m deep, overlay a modern levelling deposit measuring up to 0.80m. This deposit appeared to consist primarily of redeposited subsoil. A layer of undisturbed subsoil, measuring up to 0.25m deep was uncovered below the levelling layer, overlying reddish grey and light grey brown natural clays.

3.3.2 No archaeological deposits were uncovered. No artefacts were recovered from metal-detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.

3.4 Trench 3 (Plate 3)

3.4.1 This trench, orientated from north-west to south-east, was located along the south-western boundary of the development area. Measuring 30m in length, 1.80m wide and up to 1.50m deep at the north-western end, this trench contained 0.20m of topsoil and up to 0.80m of redeposited subsoil or levelling material. At the north-western end of the trench a layer of undisturbed subsoil was uncovered measuring 0.40m deep. These levelling deposits may have been brought in to compensate for the natural slope of the land to the north and west.

3.4.2 The natural deposits varied from an orange-brown gravelly silt at the north-west to a light grey-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions at the south-east. No archaeological deposits were uncovered at the base of the trench. No artefacts were recovered from metal-detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.

3.4.3 A stone wall could be seen in part on the surface prior to excavation running from north-west to south-east through the south-western part of the proposed development area. The footing of this wall was exposed in section at the north-west of this trench in order to characterise and date it. This wall footing survived to a depth of 0.38m and consisted of two courses of sandstone blocks measuring up to 200mm by 130mm (Plate 4). A sandy mortar remained between some of the blocks. The foundation trench for this wall lay within the levelling deposits so it was assumed that it dated to the post-medieval or modern era.

3.5 Finds Summary

3.5.1 No artefacts were present on the site.

3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 No stratified and datable environmental remains were present on the site.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation in advance of the new sports facility at Hinchbrooke School has uncovered no archaeological deposits. The site appears to have experienced more than one period of landscaping in the past which would have had a detrimental effect on the preservation of any archaeological remains. The wall uncovered in Trench 3 does not appear on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map in 1885 (Figure 3) but is shown on the 1901 Ordnance Survey map forming part of a rectangular walled enclosure.

4.1.2 The lack of evidence for activity in any period is likely to be a result of extensive landscaping in this area. The absence of residual finds may be indicative of this area being unoccupied from at least the Roman period through to its incorporation into Hinchbrooke Park.

4.2 Significance

4.2.1 The findings here will have minimal significance in addition to local histories including that of the Hinchbrooke Hall.

4.3 Recommendations

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

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SS
No archaeological deposits were encountered. Natural deposits consisted of light grey-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions. No artefacts were recovered metal detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.					Avg. depth (m)	0.47
					Width (m)	1.8
					Length (m)	18
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	0.2	Levelling	-	-
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
No archaeological deposits were encountered. Natural deposits consisted of reddish grey and light grey brown natural clays. No artefacts were recovered from metal detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.					Avg. depth (m)	1
					Width (m)	1.8
					Length (m)	15
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	0.8	Levelling	-	-
Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
A post-medieval or modern wall was uncovered in the upper layers of this trench. No other archaeological deposits were encountered. The natural deposits consisted of an orange-brown gravelly silt at the north-west and a light grey-brown clay with chalk and flint inclusions at the south-east. No artefacts were recovered from metal detecting and sampling of the topsoil and subsoil.					Avg. depth (m)	1.2
					Width (m)	1.8
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	0.8	Levelling	-	-
4	Wall	0.3	0.38	Seen on surface	-	Post 1885

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-179518		
Project Name	Hinchingsbrooke school new sports facility		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	20-05-2014	Finish	21-05-2014
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	STUHIS14	Planning App. No.	1301994FUL
HER No.	ECB4188	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
Development Type	Other

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

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

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Wall	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Hinchingsbrooke	Hinchingsbrooke School Brampton Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3BN
Parish	Stukeley	
HER	Cambridge	
Study Area	50m x 40m	National Grid Reference TL 22600 71550

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Rob Wiseman
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Gareth Rees

Project Archives

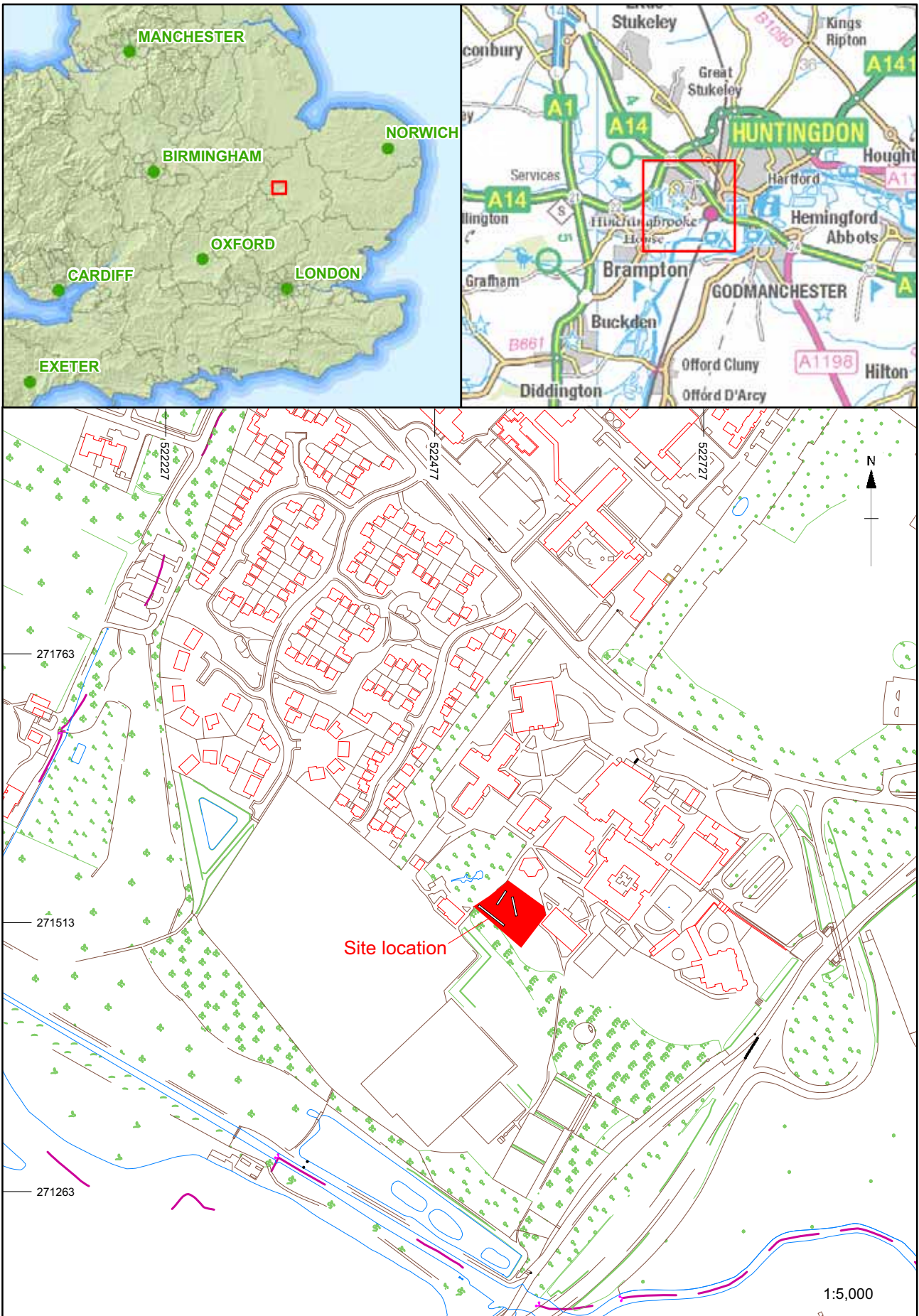
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
OA East	OA East	OA East
STUHIS14	STUHIS14	STUHIS14

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
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<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



C:\Documents and Settings\markus.dylewski\Desktop\personal useful stuff\Figure_01.mxd*markus.dylewski*02/04/2014

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014
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Figure 1: Site location

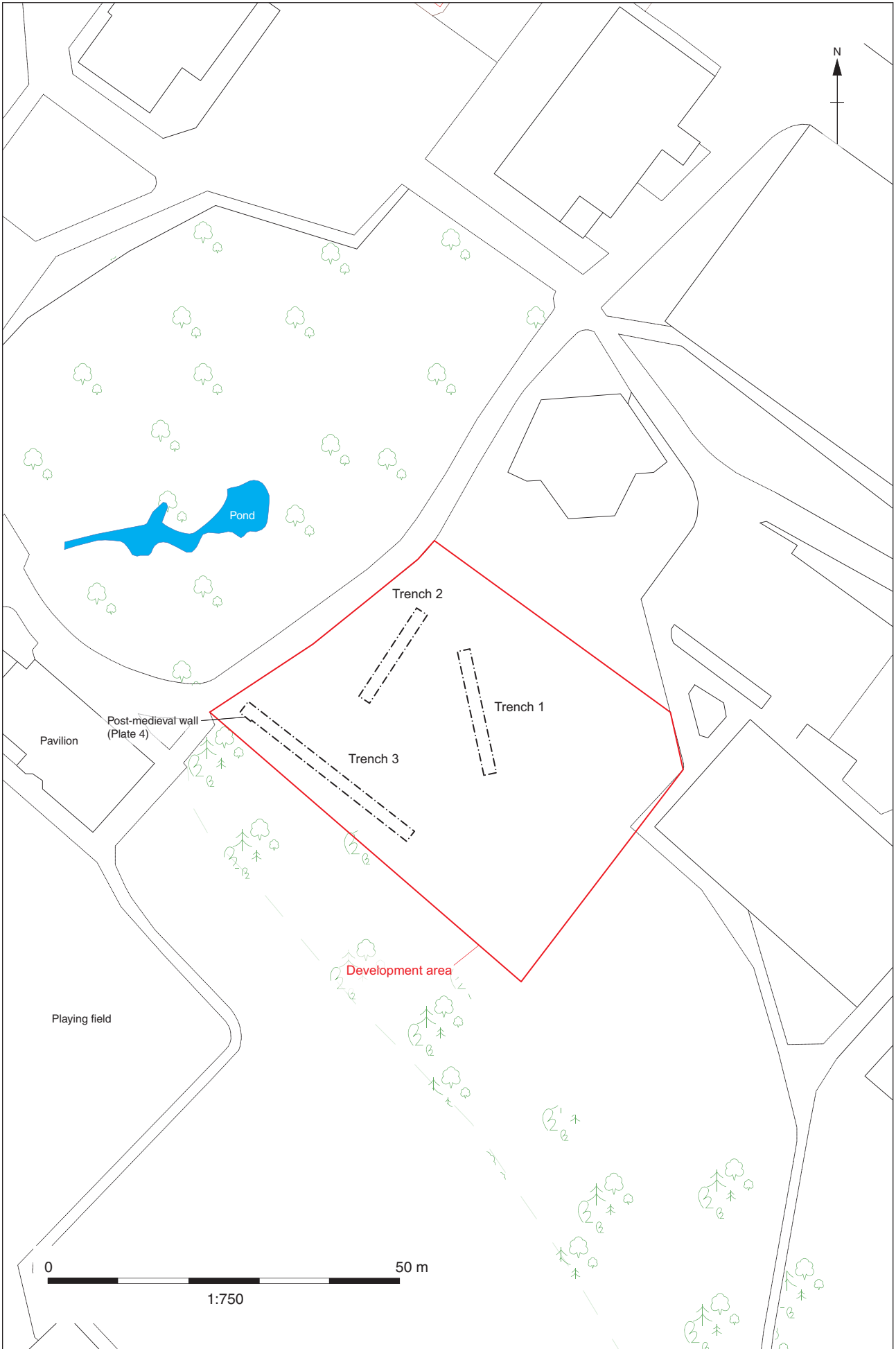


Figure 2: Trench Plan

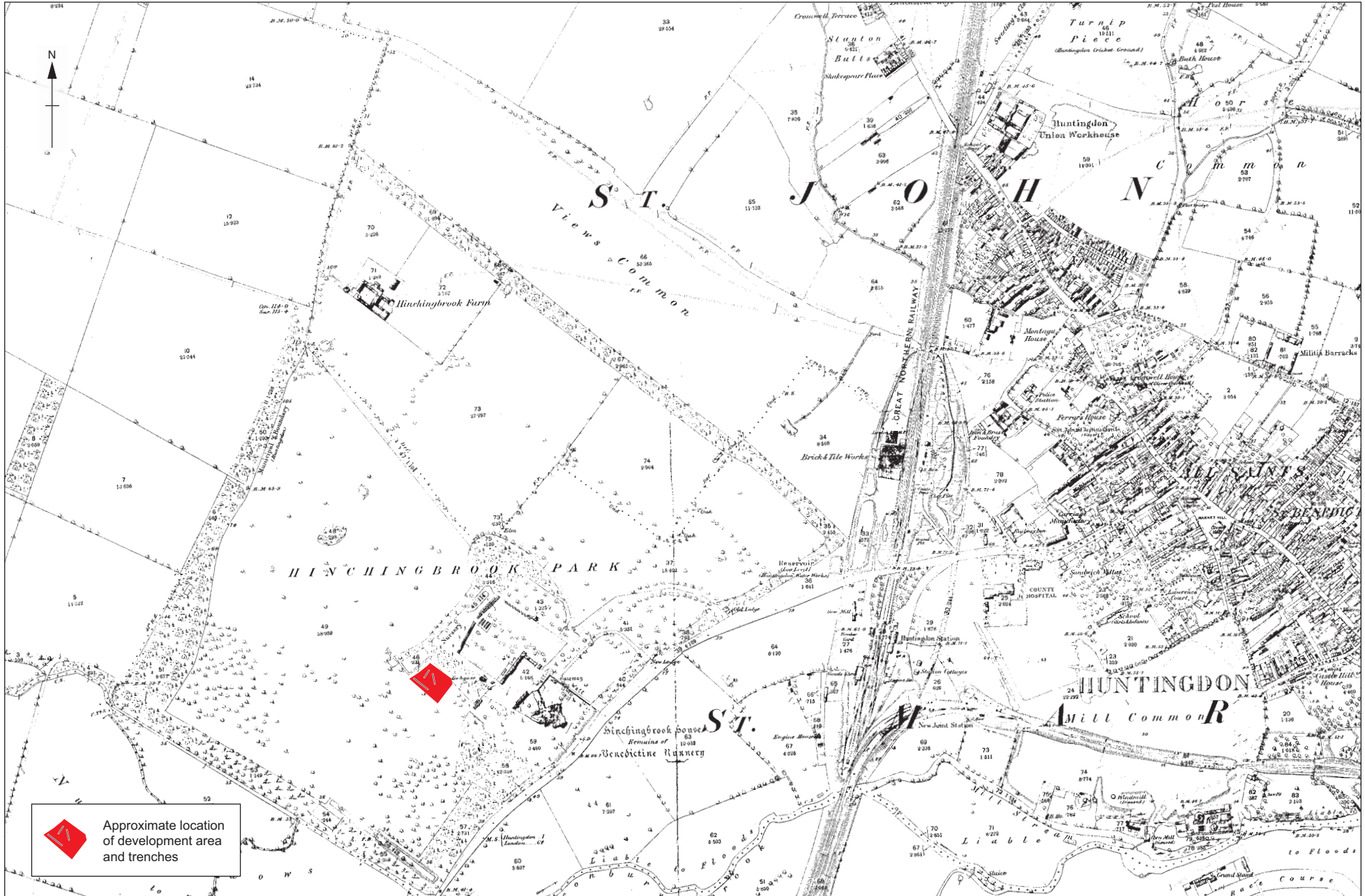


Figure 3: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map 1885



Plate 1: Trench 1 facing south



Plate 2: Trench 2 facing north-east



Plate 3: Trench 3 facing north-west



Plate 4: Post-medieval wall footing in Trench 3. Facing south-west



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