

Early Medieval Pits at No. 22 Old Lynn Road Wisbech



Archaeological Evaluation Report



January 2014

Client: Fitt Construction Ltd.

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NGR: TL 4732 1073

Early Medieval Pits at No. 22 Old Lynn Road, Wisbech

Archaeological Evaluation

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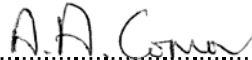
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Summary

Four archaeological trenches were excavated on the site of a former garage at No. 22 Old Lynn Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire formerly in the parish of Walsoken within the county of Norfolk.

Two trenches towards the rear of the plot revealed features and pits dating from the 11th to mid-12th century showing evidence of domestic waste and hammerscale indicating industrial activity. The environmental evidence suggests these are more typical of those found in Medieval towns and most likely relate to backyard activity from plots fronting either north onto Old Lynn Road (as the modern plots do) or east onto Kirkgate Street, the road leading up from Walsoken village to Old Lynn Road.

Two trenches at the front of the plot showed truncation and contamination to a depth in excess of 1.5m below the surface.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at No. 22 Old Lynn Road, Wisbech, NGR TL 4732 1073 (Fig 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Daniel McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application F/YR12/0682/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Connors 2013).
- 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 underlying geology is Terrington Beds; younger saltmarsh and tidal creek deposits (silty clay and sandy silt) which overlie Amphill Clay (BGS: Wisbech, Solid and Drift Edition, 1: 50 000 Series, 1995).
- 1.2.2 The silts overlying this area are thought to be Post-Roman in date (Silvester 1988, 82 & fig. 61), the site being protected from Post-Medieval flooding by the Roman Bank (of Late Saxon to Early Medieval construction). It is not clear whether the site lies upon a roddon of the Ouse system which may lie under Wisbech (Mortimer 2008, 3) although roddons are recorded further east meandering away from the direction of the site (Silvester 1988, fig. 61).
- 1.2.3 Resting south of Old Lynn Road the site sits at approximately 4.2m OD, dropping to 3.40m OD away from the road.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site is located within the eastern bounds of Wisbech, on the south side of Old Lynn Road which was once within the parish of Walsoken within the county boundary of Norfolk. Since the expansion of Wisbech Town within the last hundred years, the area now lies within the suburbs of Wisbech.
- 1.3.2 The name Walsoken is thought to originate from the Old English meaning 'the district under particular jurisdiction (soke) by the wall' (Rye 1991, 28) which refers to the village's proximity to the Roman bank. The Roman Bank was in all probability constructed in the late Saxon period as a defence against flooding. The CHER shows the bank to be located at approximately 0.5km to the west-north-west of the development area while a surviving portion following Waterlees Road lies 0.35km to the west (Fletcher in prep.).

Roman

- 1.3.3 Archaeological evidence has found that much of the land of Walsoken of pre-Roman occupation was completely submerged beneath Iron Age silts. As such, very little early prehistoric archaeology has been recorded. It is thought that some dry land existed within the parish in the Bronze Age as several artefacts from that time period were uncovered in the 19th century. There has been a lot more archaeological evidence found to attest to Roman occupation in the parish, including a dispersed hoard of 300 to 400 Roman coins which were found via metal detecting in the 1980s (NHER 18937).

Medieval

- 1.3.4 Walsoken was established by the time of the Norman Conquest. The village's population, land ownership and productive resources were detailed in its entry in the Domesday Book of 1086. Walsoken is recorded by the name Walsocam. The parish was held by the Benedictine Order based at Ramsey Abbey before and after 1066. The survey also records the presence of a fishery.
- 1.3.5 The estuary of the River Nene through Wisbech to the Wash has always been prone to flooding, and in response to apparent rising water levels in the 8th - 10th centuries large banks were constructed on either side of the estuary in an attempt to limit the problem. The banks were most likely heavily altered and re-landscaped over the ensuing centuries and it is known that flooding on several occasions devastated Wisbech. The banks finally fell out of use in the later medieval period (16th century onwards) when increased levels of drainage works reduced the threat of flooding to the town and its environs.
- 1.3.6 The layout of medieval fields in the Parish is more regular in the east and less so in the west, suggesting an earlier Medieval date for the establishment of Old Lynn Road and adjacent fields. These fields would have been associated with a series of banks and dykes (Silvester 1988, 85-6, figs. 62-4).

Post-medieval

- 1.3.7 The development area fell within 'Lerowe Field' on the tithe map of 1842 (NRO DE/TA 33; see Fig. 2), in the Field 731a (arable). Walsoken Mill is shown but not labelled in the field adjacent to the east (Field 731, pasture). This is not shown on Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk (while two nearby in Wisbech are) but it is active from 1826 (Apling 1984 via Neville 2009), placing its construction in the early 19th century.
- 1.3.8 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows 'Walsoken Mills (corn)'. The 1927 Ordnance Survey map shows fields or orchards adjacent to 'Fruit Preserving Works'.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The work was commissioned by Fitt Construction Ltd. and machine excavation was undertaken by John Fitt under the supervision of Michael Webster and Stuart Ladd who conducted the excavation. Finds were processed by Michael Webster and the GPS survey was performed by Stuart Ladd. Carole Fletcher analysed the pottery assemblage, Chris Faine the animal bone and Rachel Fosberry processed the environmental samples. The project was managed by Aileen Connors and Stephen MacCauley.

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 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked mini-digger excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Concrete surfaces over all trenches were broken out by machine prior to the commencement of excavation.
- 2.2.2 The site survey was carried out using Leica GPS 1200 system with SmartNet technology.
- 2.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.5 Bulk environmental samples were taken from two features for flotation and processing.
- 2.2.6 Conditions on site were clear but cold with high winds and occasional rain on the second day. Much of the surface area around trenches was taken up by broken concrete and scrap metal.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Results are presented in order of trench number (see Fig. 3 for trench layout) with earliest features discussed first.
- 3.1.2 Trenches 1 and 2 were located within the forecourt of the disused garage on higher ground. As such a degree of modern truncation was expected. Trenches 3 and 4 lay at the back of the plot on lower ground. The trenches were located within the footprints of the proposed new buildings.

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 Trench 1 lay on a northwest-southeast alignment, approximately 3m south of the road. It was excavated to a depth of 1.5m to the top of a clayey silt (2.75m OD) which was dark blueish-grey where contaminated and light brown elsewhere. No finds were present in this deposit. Due to the depth and contamination, mechanical excavation stopped at this level and a small hand-excavated shovel sondage was used to explore a further 0.3m but no change was observed.
- 3.2.2 Post-medieval contaminated silts lay above this. A sharp vertical terrace cut through these silts was observed in section starting approximately 3.5m from the southeast end of the trench to a depth of at least 1.5m. This was filled to the southeast with redeposited light yellowish brown silt and modern material, possibly to build up the forecourt ground level closer to that of Old Lynn Road before the concrete slab was set down.

3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 Lying on a north-south axis 3m from Old Lynn Road, Trench 2 was excavated to an average depth of 0.5m (3.33m OD) before a gas line and a buried fuel tank obstructed progress. It was possible to excavate two machine sondages between these areas to a depth of 1.2m (2.88-2.99m OD).
- 3.3.2 A similar profile to Trench 1 was observed; 0.35m of contaminated silts was sealed by modern material comprising a 0.15m-thick brick floor overlain by 0.6m of hardcore capped by the 0.2m thick concrete slab.

3.4 Trench 3

- 3.4.1 At the rear of the development area, trench 3 was located on lower ground partly covered by a concrete slab and tarmac.
- 3.4.2 Machine excavation stopped on the top of a light yellowish brown silt deposit (2.15m OD) which produced no artefacts and has been interpreted as natural (see Trench 4). Across the northern side of the trench, this was stained darker, apparently contaminated by leaked material buried higher up. Two archaeological features cut into this layer.
- 3.4.3 At the southeast end of the trench, a shallow feature (3) with gently sloping sides was excavated by hand. This was filled by a mid brown silt (4) which produced 12th-mid 13th century pot sherds. In the baulk section this fill spilled over a greater area than indicated by the sides of the feature when viewed in plan (Fig. 4). The full extents were not established within the trench and nor is it certain whether the base of the cut was found, however its form suggests a pond or similar feature. A sample (number 1) was

taken from the fill for environmental processing and produced a range of grains dominated by wheat, as well as bone, egg shell, fish bone, hammerscale and daub.

- 3.4.4 At the north-west end of the trench a small (0.25m x 0.3m) posthole (5) was half-sectioned. It was filled by a contaminated blueish-grey clay (6) which produced no finds.
- 3.4.5 These features lay under a subsoil (2) of light brown silt 0.4m thick, itself covered by a silty topsoil (1) which was buried under modern build-up and buried scrap, hardcore and tarmac. Soils 1 and 2 produced modern and residual medieval pottery sherds.

3.5 Trench 4

- 3.5.1 Trench 4 lay between Trench 3 and a demolished modern structure to the west (Fig. 4). It was machined to the top of the same light yellowish brown silt as trench 3 with some subsoil (10) left overlying the southern half of the trench. This was removed by hand to a depth of 1.4m (2.56m OD) to expose more of the yellow silt cut by two pits. Excavation of one of these showed that the yellow silts are approximately 0.7m thick and overly natural light blue silty clay at a depth of 2m (1.46m OD). Lacking an intermediate cultural layer, these yellow silts are interpreted as natural.
- 3.5.2 Circular in plan, pit 8 was only 0.22m deep with gently sloping sides and a broad flat base. It contained a mottled dark greyish blue/brown silty fill (17) below another mixed yellowish-grey/brown silt (16), possibly redeposited. A Stamford-type ware pottery handle suggests a broad late 9th-mid 12th century date.
- 3.5.3 Adjacent to the south-west was another pit (7) of potentially slightly later date. This lay mostly beyond the trench edge with a portion of subsoil left over it as a step but the segment excavated showed it had a radius and depth of 0.7m with steep sides gently sloping to a concave base 2.06m below the modern surface (1.40m a.O.D). Its series of fills (from top: 11-15) contained Stamford, Shelly and Developed St Neots ware pottery sherds, together suggesting a 12th-mid 13th century date for the feature.
- 3.5.4 The earliest fill (15) was a thin (10-20mm) compressed layer of dark grey waterlogged material, possibly a decayed organic lining, which was sealed by a layer of redeposited natural yellowish brown silt (14).
- 3.5.5 There followed a thicker (0.15m) layer of formerly waterlogged dark blueish grey silt (13) from which a bulk sample was taken (sample number 2). Environmental processing revealed cereals and burnt plant remains as well as bone, egg shell, fish bone and hammerscale.
- 3.5.6 This in turn was covered by another redeposited natural silt fill layer (12) 0.05m thick. The top fill (11) was 0.5m thick and consisted of a greyish brown silt.
- 3.5.7 Taken together, the proximity, similarity of plan and fills of these pits suggest they are likely to be closer in date than the single find from pit 8 would suggest.
- 3.5.8 As with Trench 3 the pits were sealed by subsoil (10), 0.3m thick. The subsoil was cut by a modern clay field drain running parallel to the modern plot boundaries at the southern end of the trench, presumably from the site's use as a fruit preserving works. Topsoil (9), 0.5m thick, was covered by two layers of concrete floors on hardcore foundations (in total 0.5m thick).

3.6 Finds Summary

- 3.6.1 The excavation produced a small pottery assemblage of 26 sherds, weighing 0.189kg, recovered from seven contexts. All of the pottery is medieval in date and there is a tile fragment of possible Roman date.
- 3.6.2 The fired clay (0.043kg) was recovered from one context. This material is not closely datable although it was found with Early Medieval pottery sherds.
- 3.6.3 Six fragments of animal bone were recovered from the assemblage with 5 identifiable to species. The total weight of bone recovered was 135g.

3.7 Environmental Summary

- 3.7.1 Two bulk environmental samples were taken, one from the feature in Trench 3 (3) and one from the pit in Trench 4 (7). These contained charred cereals, weed seeds, plant remains as well as burnt bone, burnt egg shell and hammerscale. Ostracods in both samples suggest either the features were once waterfilled or the ostracods came from a water source that was used for cooking or to douse a fire from which the ash was deposited in the features. These sample results indicate domestic waste and industrial activity in close proximity and are more typical of assemblages found within Medieval towns.
- 3.7.2 A total of 0.002kg of shell fragments of edible marine molluscs (cockle and mussel) were collected from context 4 and indicate the disposal of food waste.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Old Lynn Road

4.1.1 The modern surface Old Lynn Road sits approximately 0.7-1m above the concrete surface at the back of the plot (which covered surviving top soil) and significantly higher than the ground in the plots along both sides of the road. So the road may lie on a medieval bank raised above the level of surrounding fields and as such may have had a pair of dykes either side (Silvester 1988, 86), but it was not possible to establish this in the evaluation.

4.2 Site

4.2.1 The truncation and contamination at the front (north) of the site hinder interpretation of the broader archaeological context for the features found at the rear (south).

4.2.2 Protected from later medieval and post-medieval flooding by the Roman Bank to the east, the site has not been subjected to the repeated silting seen in the centre of Wisbech (e.g. Mortimer 2008; Hinman 2012) and the rear trenches show a simple sequence of subsoil and topsoil sealing medieval features cut into (undated) natural silts prior to modern development.

4.3 Medieval Features

4.3.1 Two pits (7, 8) were found in the most easterly trench. They seem to have been used to dispose of domestic rubbish, dating from 12th to mid 13th century. A possible pond (3) to the west has a similar date, although with fewer finds compared to the pits

4.3.2 The environmental assemblage is interesting as it is more typical of those found in Medieval towns in the east of England (Appendix C.). The grains place the features in a domestic context, pit 7 having several deliberate layers of redeposited natural deposits sealing domestic waste. The presence of hammer scale shows industrial activity close by and hulled barley was likely used for fodder, suggesting animals were also kept nearby.

4.3.3 Ceramic finds from the pond and pits support the domestic setting and provide dates between 11th and mid 13th century. This is a similar date to the industrial features found at Waterlees Road (Fletcher, in prep.) 350m to the west adjacent to the Roman Bank.

4.3.4 It is likely that these features sit within the back yards of plots fronting either northwards onto Old Lynn Road (as the modern plots do) or eastwards onto Kirkgate Street. The former is a medieval road from Wisbech to Walpole and King's Lynn, the latter being the main street connecting Old Lynn Road to the village of Walsoken 300m to the south.

4.3.5 The pattern of post-medieval settlement is shown on the tithe map (Fig. 2) by a cluster of buildings 40m west of the site on the north side of Old Lynn Road and a small number of dispersed structures along Kirkgate Street. Only a small number of buildings are shown close to the site, one of which is Walsoken Mill which stood no more than 20m to the east from the early 19th century.

4.3.6 The site's distance from any established post-medieval clusters of house plots and its separation in time from the later corn mill prevent any more detailed interpretation of the archaeological remains found in this evaluation. It is only clear that the two nearby

roads probably have origins dating back to the Early Medieval period and therefore the contemporary features excavated are associated with that road system.

4.4 Significance

- 4.4.1 The Fenland Project did not cover the location of this site in detail, the old village centre of Walsoken (now more built up) falls outside the bounds of the modern parish for the Norfolk survey (Silvester 1988, fig. 59) and was only peripheral to the study of Wisbech in the Cambridgeshire Survey (Hall 1996, fig. 90). This site offers an insight into the medieval development of the road and field system surrounding Walsoken and Wisbech, perhaps showing earlier road-side development than might have been expected out in the fields between Wisbech and Walsoken.

4.5 Recommendations

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

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Surface concrete broken out to 10x2m. Excavated to a depth 1.3-1.5m below surface (2.75m OD), only modern truncation and compaction was observed over contaminated silts and clay. No context numbers issued.				Avg. depth (m)		1.4
				Width (m)		1.5 (base)
				Length (m)		7 (base)
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Surface concrete broken out to 10x2m. Excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m (2.88m OD) where possible between services and a fuel tank. Contaminated blue-grey clay was recorded below modern deposits. No context numbers issued.				Avg. depth (m)		1.2
				Width (m)		1.5 (base)
				Length (m)		1.5 & 1.8 (base)
Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Surface concrete broken out to 10x2m. Below modern hardcore and post-medieval soils, one medieval feature found cutting natural clayey silts in SE end of trench.				Avg. depth (m)		1.4
				Width (m)		1.5 (base)
				Length (m)		7.5 (base)
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	layer		0.5	Buried topsoil		Post-Medieval/Modern
2	layer		0.8	Buried subsoil. Light-brown silt.		Post-Medieval
3	cut	>2	0.4	Cut of possible pond/pool		12th-mid 13th
4	fill			Fill of feature 3. Mid-brown silt.		12th-mid 13th
5	cut	0.25	0.3	Posthole, sub-circular		Undated
6	fill			Grey-blue clayey silt		Undated

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Surface concrete broken out to 10x2m. Topsoil & subsoil survive below concrete and hardcore. Subsoil largely removed by hand to reveal two pits of 2m or more in diameter. One shallow, the other deeper both contained Early Medieval pottery sherds.				Avg. depth (m)		
				Width (m)		
				Length (m)		
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
7	cut	>2	0.85	Pit, steep sided, gradual break of slope to concave base with layers of redeposited natural silts waterlogged silts (11-15).		12th-mid 13th century
8	cut	2.5	0.24	Shallow pit, gently sloping sides to a flattish wide base. Fills 16 & 17.		Late 9th-mid 12th century
9	layer		0.5	Buried topsoil (=1)		Post-Medieval/Modern
10	layer		1	Buried subsoil (=2). Light brown silt.		Post-Medieval
11	fill			Fill of pit (7). Mid greyish brown silt.		12th-mid 13th century
12	fill			Fill of pit (7) Redeposited natural silt; light brownish yellow.		12th-mid 13th century
13	fill			Fill of pit (7). Dark bluish grey clayey silt. Waterlogged. Sample number 1.		12th-mid 13th century
14	fill			Fill of pit (7). Redeposited natural silt; light brownish yellow.		12th-mid 13th century
15	fill			Fill of pit (7). Dark grey silt.		12th-mid 13th century
16	fill			Fill of pit (8). Mid greyish/yellowish brown.		Late 9th-mid 12th century
17	fill			Fill of pit (8). Dark bluish grey/brown silt. Possibly waterlogged.		Late 9th-mid 12th century

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

by Carole Fletcher

Introduction

- B.1.1 The excavation produced a small pottery assemblage of 26 sherds, weighing 0.189kg, recovered from seven contexts. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded. The average sherd weight from individual contexts is low at approximately 7g.

Methodology

- B.1.2 The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents *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.
- B.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 medieval and post-medieval types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been recorded and dated on a context-by-context basis. The archives are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

Assemblage

- B.1.4 A subsoil, contexts 2 and 10, produced three sherds of pottery including a body sherd from a Stamford ware jug and a rim sherd from a Developed St Neots ware jar.
- B.1.5 Feature 3, identified by the excavator as a pond, produced 12 sherds of pottery including material recovered from sample 1. The fabrics present include Stamford ware and Early Medieval ware alongside sherds of Shelly ware. The pottery recovered has a wide date range from the late 9th to end of the 15th century and although the feature is of uncertain date, a date of 12th century to mid 13th century is possible.
- B.1.6 Contexts from pit 7 produced sherds from a minimum of two developed St Neots-type ware jars including an unabraded rim sherd, and from two Stamford ware vessels. Also present was a small sherd of Shelly ware and overall it seems likely that the date of the context is 12th century to mid 13th century
- B.1.7 Redeposited natural, context 14, produced a base sherd from a Shelly ware vessel and pit 8 produced a handle from a Stamford ware spouted pitcher. Kilmurry says that some spouted pitcher production occurred in the 12th century but that Stamford ware jugs had become the predominant form by the end of the 12th century (Kilmurry, 1980, p140). Indicating a pre-mid 12th century date for the vessel.
- B.1.8 The assemblage is domestic in origin, these sherds representing low levels of rubbish disposal on the site. The overall assemblage is early medieval with few later sherds, those being Shelly wares, and there are no high medieval glazed wares present suggesting that the use of the site changed in the early-mid 13th century. The unabraded nature of some of the sherds indicates they may have been found close to their place of primary deposition.

Summary Pottery Catalogue

Context	Cut	Full name	Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Context Date Range
2		Early Medieval-type ware	Jar-body sherd	1	0.004	Mid 11th-end of the 12th century
4	3	Early Medieval-type ware	Jar-body sherd	3	0.021	12th-mid 13th century
		Stamford ware	Jug-body sherd	4	0.010	
		Sandy ware	Body sherd	2	0.005	
		Shelly ware	Body sherd	4	0.009	
10		Developed St Neots?	Jar-rim	1	0.017	Mid 11th-end of the 12th century
		Stamford ware	Jug-body sherd	1	0.005	
12	7	Shelly ware		1	0.005	12th-mid 13th century
		Stamford ware	Jar-body sherd and base sherd	2	0.016	
13	7	Developed St Neots	Base sherd	1	0.016	Mid 11th-end of the 12th century
		Developed St Neots	Jar-Rim	2	0.035	
		Stamford ware	Jug-body sherd	2	0.002	
14	7	Shelly ware	Base sherd	1	0.012	12th-mid 13th century
16	8	Stamford-type ware	Jug/Spouted pitcher-handle	1	0.032	Late 9th-mid 12th century
Totals				26	0.189	

Table 1: Pottery Dating Summary Catalogue

B.2 Ceramic Building Material and Fired Clay

by Carole Fletcher

B.2.1 The excavation generated a small assemblage of ceramic building material (0.039kg) and fired clay (0.043kg) recovered from two contexts. A fragment of tile recovered from context 10 has a fine sanded base and part of a curved cut-out. The tile has tentatively been identified as Roman but may be later. The fired clay is fine and silty with some mica, only one fragment retains traces of a flat surface. The material recovered is not closely datable.

Context	Form	No. Fragments	Weight (kg)	Date
10	Tile	1	0.039	?Roman
16	Fired Clay	6	0.043	Not closely datable

Table 2: Ceramic Building Material and Fired Clay

B.3 Animal Bone

by Chris Faine 9/12/13

B.3.1 Six fragments of animal bone were recovered from the assemblage with 5 identifiable to species. The total weight of bone recovered was 135g. Identifiable material was recovered from 3 contexts. Context 4 contained a partial cattle inominate, sheep radius

and juvenile pig scapula. An adult sheep mandible and cattle rib fragment were recovered from contexts **10** & **12** respectively.

B.3.2 Animal and fish bone were recovered from the environmental samples.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

by Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

C.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during a site evaluation at Old Lynn Road, Wisbech from features dating to the late Saxon/early Medieval period. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether plant remains are present, their mode of preservation and whether they are of interpretable value with regard to domestic, agricultural and industrial activities, diet, economy and rubbish disposal.

Methodology

C.1.2 The total volume (twenty litres) of each sample was processed by tank flotation using modified Siraff-type equipment. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve. A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction for the recovery of magnetic residues prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The dried flots were subsequently sorted using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60 and a summary of the recorded remains are presented in Table 3. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands* and the authors' own reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Stace (1997).

Quantification

C.1.3 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories

= 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens ##### = 100+ specimens

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal have been scored for abundance

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Charred cereals	Charred legumes	Charred weed Seeds	Small bones	Charcoal <2mm	Residue contents
1	4	3	pond	###	#	##	#	++	Pottery, bone, egg shell, fish bone, hammerscale, daub
2	13	7	pit	#####	#	#	0	+++	Pottery, bone, egg shell, fish bone, hammerscale,

4.5.1 Table 3: Environmental samples from WISOLR13

- C.1.4 Plant remains are preserved by carbonization and consist of cereal grains and weed seeds in addition to charcoal. Cereal grains are abundant within both samples; slightly more so in Sample 2, fill 13 of pit 7. Free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum sensu lato*) and hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) predominate along with smaller quantities of rye (*Secale cereale*) and oats (*Avena* sp.). Sample 1 (fill 4 of pond 3) is wheat dominant with occasional grains of barley and oat. The grains are moderately preserved and a few of the barley and oat grains show evidence that they have germinated. Sample 2 (13) is dominated by barley grains, a few retaining elements of their outer chaff indicating that the barley is of the hulled variety. Other chaff elements are absent suggesting the assemblages represent fully processed grain. Legumes occur as peas (*Pisum/Lathyrus* sp) and possibly bean (*Vicia faba*). Quantities are low as is commonly found in archaeobotanical assemblages as legumes are usually under-represented.
- C.1.5 Charred weed seeds are fairly common within the assemblage with good species diversity although individual numbers are generally low. The most frequent charred seeds are those of weeds that are commonly found growing amongst cereal crops on cultivated land and include rye grass/darnel (*Lolium* sp.), cornflower (*Centaurea* sp.), bromes (*Bromus* sp.), goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) and stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*). The presence of stinking mayweed (Sample 2 (13)) suggests that at least one of the cereal crops was grown on clay soils as this plant species is habitat-specific. Plants that can be found growing on disturbed soils and also in pasture include curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), clover (*Trifolium* sp.), buttercup (*Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus*) and grasses (Poaceae).
- C.1.6 Wetland plants are also represented; charred seeds of sedges (*Carex* sp.) are present in both samples and spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) seeds occur commonly in Sample 2 (13). Several of these seeds are silicified. Sample 2 (13) also contains additional silicates indicating ash deposits.
- C.1.7 Ostracods (small aquatic bivalve crustaceans) are common in Sample 2 (13) and indicate that either the feature was once water-filled or that they have originated from a water-source that may have been used for cooking or dousing a fire and been deposited in the feature along with the hearth waste.
- C.1.8 The residues of both samples contain egg shell and fish bones some of which have been burnt. Sample 2 (13) also contains a vertebra of an eel. Hammerscale in the form of flakes, spheroids and small fragments of ferrous material are also present in both residues.

Discussion

- C.1.9 The environmental samples from Old Lynn Road, Wisbech have produced charred plant assemblages that are rich in cereal grains and associated weed seeds. All four of the main cereal groups are represented with wheat most common in Sample 1 (4) and barley in Sample 2 (13). Wheat would have been a staple crop and used for making flour for bread. Rye was similarly grown for bread and the flours were commonly mixed.
- C.1.10 Barley was used for animal fodder but may have been used for human consumption in the form of bread, stews and soup and it was also used for the brewing of beer. Barley grains are enclosed in an outer sheath that would have to be removed by parching to make it palatable for human consumption in the form of bread, stews and soup but it is suitable in its hulled form for use as animal fodder and for brewing. There is evidence that the barley in Sample 2 (13) is hulled which may suggest use for the latter. Some of

the grains show evidence of having sprouted prior to charring which may be an indication of malting or it could just represent grain that has spoilt and been discarded. It is not possible to determine whether the oats present within these assemblages is of the wild or cultivated form as diagnostic chaff elements are absent. Oats were commonly cultivated as a mixed (maslin) crop with barley known as 'dredge'.

C.1.11 The weed species are consistent with what one would generally expect to find growing amongst cereal crops. They would have set seed at the same time as the cereals and been harvested together. The wetland seed component of sedges and spike-rush are both plant species that could have grown on wetter margins of fields and also been unintentionally harvested with the crop or they could have been deliberately harvested for use as fuel. The quantity of legumes recovered suggests that they were a significant dietary constituent as these items are less likely to be burnt accidentally than grain as they do not need to be exposed to heat as cereals do.

Conclusion

C.1.12 The two features sampled both contain significant assemblages of burnt domestic waste that appear to have been deliberately deposited in negative features that would have provided a convenient depository for rubbish disposal. A range of crops are represented including the full range of cereals; wheat, barley, rye and oats along with pulses including peas and beans. A nearby site at Waterlees Rd, Wisbech (Fletcher in prep) also produced grain-rich assemblages without chaff which suggests that cereals were probably imported onto these sites having been processed elsewhere. Any interpretation based on only two samples can only be tentative but the lack of chaff and the diversity of cereal species at Old Lynn Road, Wisbech may suggest a medieval site of greater scale than just an isolated farmstead.

C.1.13 There is evidence in the form of hammerscale that metalworking activities were being carried out in the very near vicinity.

C.2 Mollusca

By Carole Fletcher

C.2.1 A total of 0.002kg of shell fragments of marine molluscs were collected from context 4. The shell does not appear to have been deliberately broken or crushed.

Context	Type	Weight (kg)
4	Common cockle: <i>Cerastoderma edule</i>	0.001
4	Mussel: <i>Mytilus edulis</i>	0.001

Table 4: Shell

APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-167760			
Project Name	Evaluation at 22 Old Lynn Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	04-12-2013	Finish	05-12-2013
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	WISOLR13	Planning App. No.	F/YR12/0682/F
HER No.	ECB 4069	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Housing Estate

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

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

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Pits	Medieval 1066 to 1540	Pot	Medieval 1066 to 1540
	Select period...	Animal Bone	Medieval 1066 to 1540
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Fenland	22 Old Lynn Road, Wisbech	
Parish	Wisbech Town		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	0.12ha	National Grid Reference	TL 4732 1073

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Daniel McConnell
Project Design Originator	Aileen Connor
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Stuart Ladd

Project Archives

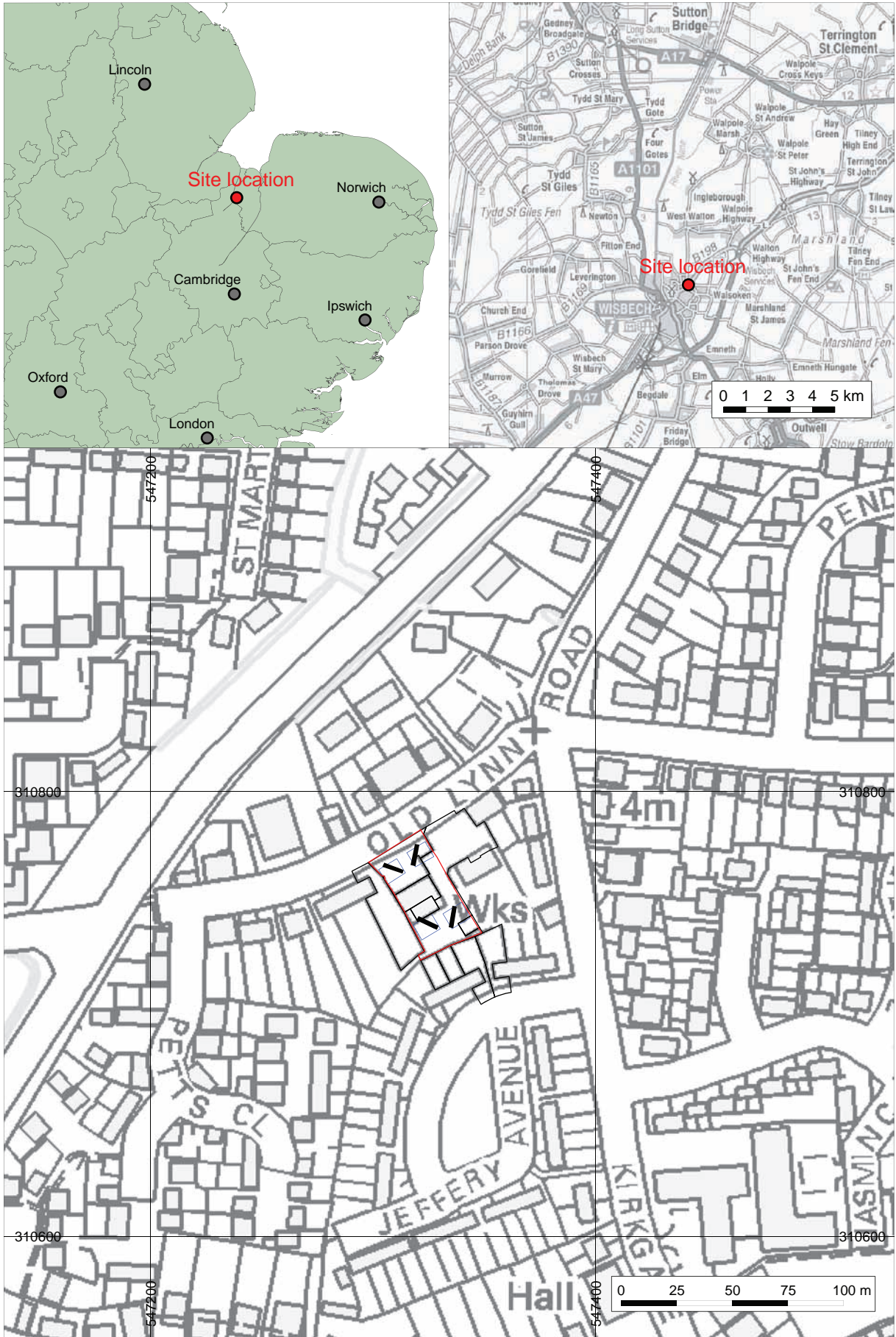
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Stores Landbeach	OAEast	CCC Stores Landbeach
WISOLR13	WISOLR13	WISOLR13

Archive Contents/Media

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

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area (red). © Crown Copyright 2013. All rights reserved. License No. AL 10001998



Figure 2: Extract from Walsoken Tithe map 1842 (NRO DE/TA 33), showing development area



Figure 3: Trench layout showing all features

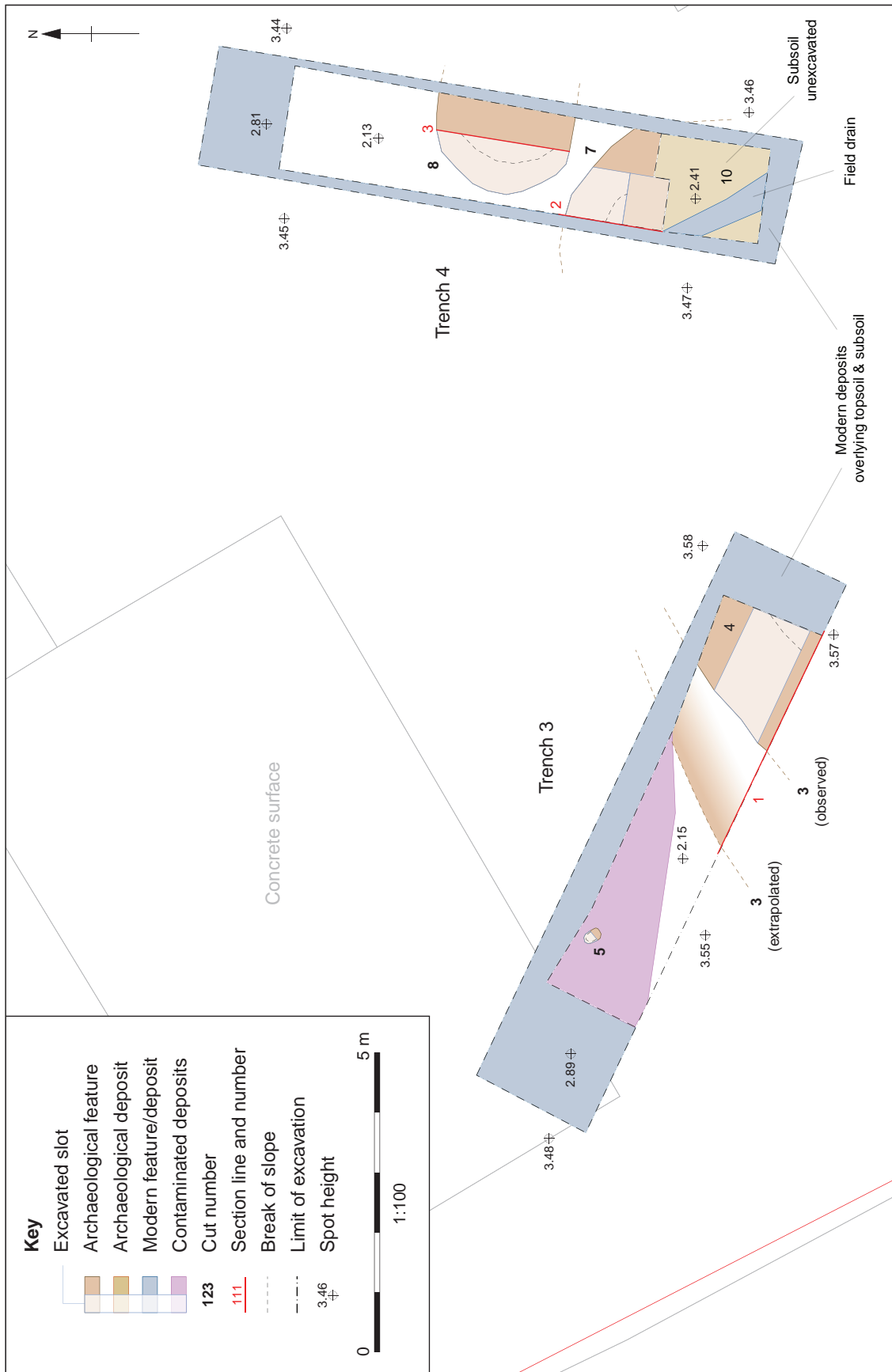


Figure 4: Plan of Trenches 3 and 4

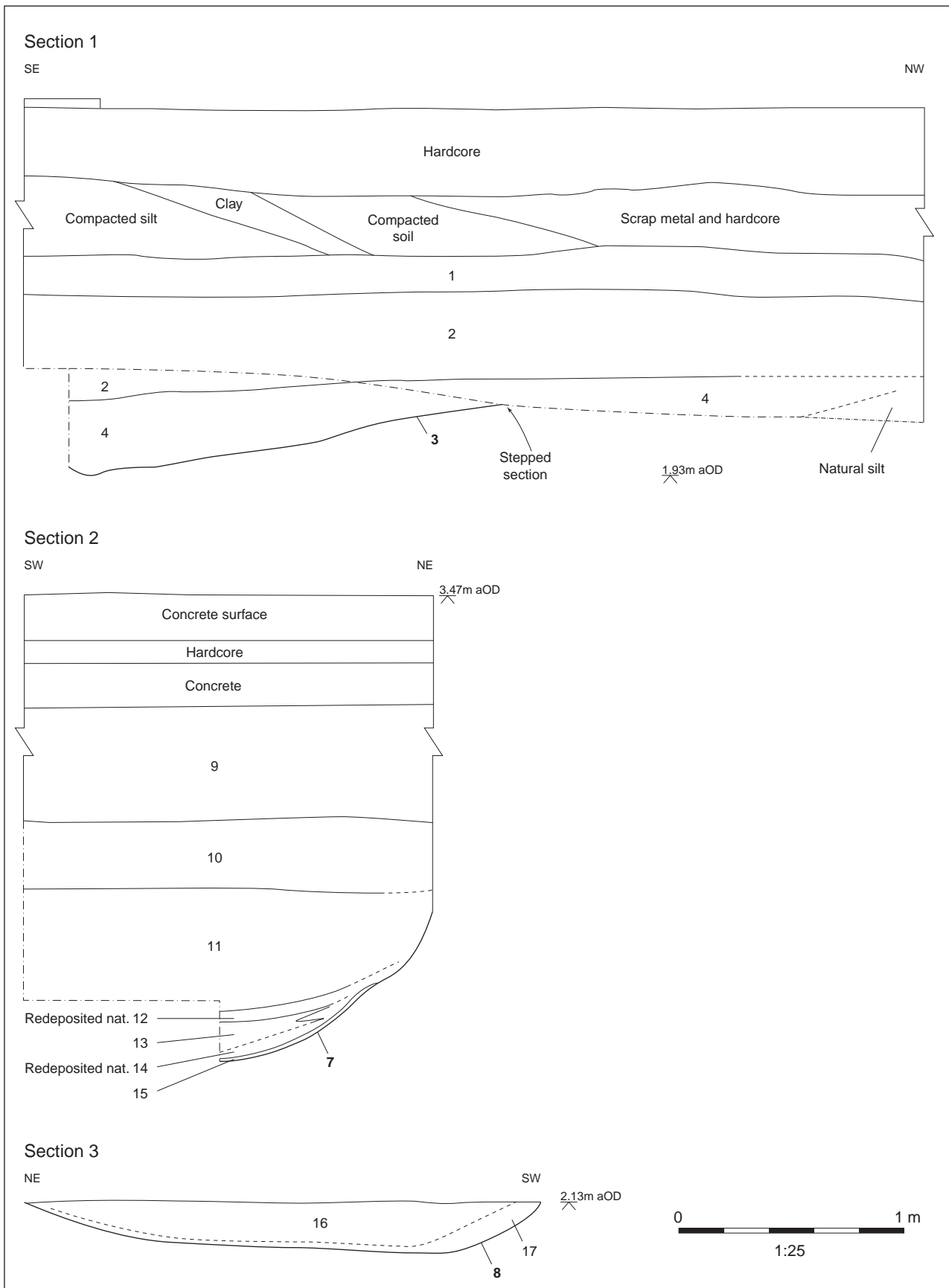


Figure 5: Section drawings



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north-east



Plate 3: Trench 3 looking north-west



Plate 4: Trench 4, looking north-east



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