An Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear of 18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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June 2014

Client: Matthew Miller

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

An Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear of 18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey

Archaeological Evaluation

By John Diffey

With contributions by Carole Fletcher BA

Editor: Richard Mortimer MIfA

Illustrator: David Brown BA

Report Date: June 2014

Report Number: 1628

Site Name:	18 Gibraltar Lane Swavesey
HER Event No:	ECB4212
Date of Works:	June 2014
Client Name:	Matthew Miller
Client Ref:	16964
Planning Ref:	S/1354/11
Grid Ref:	TL 3623 6831
Site Code:	SWAGIL14
Finance Code:	SWAGIL14
Receiving Body:	CCC Stores, Landbeach
Accession No:	
Prepared by:	John Diffey
Position:	Supervisor
Date:	23/06/14
Checked by:	Richard Mortimer
Position:	Senior Project Manager
Date:	25/06/14
Signed:	.....

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Summary

On the 4th of June 2014 an archaeological evaluation was carried out on land to the rear of 18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey ahead of the proposed development of 3 residential properties. The works identified a series of post-medieval field drains and tree planting holes related to the sites previous use as an orchard.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1. An archaeological evaluation was conducted at land to the rear of 18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey.

1.1.2. This evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/1354/11), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.

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 at c.6.5mOD with a gentle south-west to north-east slope. It is situated on the slight ridge of higher clay land running north-south through the parish, along which the Swavesey High Street runs terminating in a gravel island at its northern end. The British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of the site at Swavesey comprises Amphill Clay Formation. The soil types are deep heavy mudstones. The area was strip-farmed until the mid-twentieth century, when it was developed for housing. It is therefore, comparatively undisturbed land

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1. A Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) search was carried out on the 23rd May 2014

1.3.2. Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval

Excavations in the late 90's around Black Horse Lane and Amen Corner c.900m NNW of the site found a sparse scatter of worked flint (HER: 01772a). The Bronze Age may be represented in Swavesey's archaeological record by a possible barrow identified on Mill Way 1km NW of the site (HER:03522). Iron Age settlement activity including pottery and kiln bars were also found during excavations at Blackhorse Lane (HER: CB15288). Roman pottery is recorded as being found 800m north-east of site (HER: 08387) and Roman coins have been found in the garden of a house in Blackhorse Lane (HER: MCB16700). Late Saxon occupation was also identified during the Blackhorse Lane excavations in the late 90's (HER:11949).

1.3.3. Historic

The Historic settlement of Swavesey followed the prehistoric activity patterns with a densely built up centre on the gravel island 700m to the north of the site and a second gravel island further north where St Andrews church (HER: 03419) was sited c.AD1000, followed by Swavesey Priory (HER:03488) in 1086 and later Swavesey Manor (HER: 01289). The main medieval settlement centred on the high ground around the junction of Station Rd, Taylors Lane and High Street (Wright & Lewis 1989). The construction of a castle west of this centre in the late 11th or early 12th century (HER: 01722) was followed by fortification of the wider town in the late 12th century, also when the town officially became a port. The remains of these fortifications have been found in a number of locations and as far south as School Lane 250m north of the site (HER: 03490, CB15285, CB15287). Numerous medieval sites have been recorded south of Taylors Lane and north of School Lane suggesting this as the limit of the medieval settlement. The clay ridge on which the site sits and which extends across the southern third of the parish was used almost exclusively for arable farming and pasture during this period and it is only in the late medieval period that examples of suburban development such as Ryders Farm (HER: 10155 C13th to C16th) are situated south of the main settlement (Wright & Lewis 1989). Even in this late medieval period development was sparse outside of the settlement and it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries with the drainage and inclosure of the fenland to the north, west and east of Swavesey that that the setlement grew much beyond its medieval limits. The development of the land around the site in question including the residential developments at Carters Way and Priory Avenue only occurred in 1972 with the land previously being agricultural.

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1. The Author would like to thank Mr M. Miller for commissioning the works and for his assistance on site while they were carried out. Richard Mortimer managed the project.

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 the evaluation should include a programme of linear trial trenching and/or test-pitting to adequately sample the threatened available area.

2.2.2. Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3. The site survey was carried out by Gareth Rees using a Leica GPS.

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. Site conditions were good with fair whether and a low water table,.

3 Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1. The results below are subdivided by trench number

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1. Trench 1 was situated in the far north-east of the site c.5m away from and running parallel to the site's north-eastern boundary. The trench measured 30×1.6m. The natural geology **(003)** was reached at a depth of 0.4m and comprised a light reddish grey clay containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones. Considerable disturbance by tree roots was found a the north-northeast end of the trench at this level.

3.2.2. The only archaeological features found cutting the natural clay were a series of narrow linears running north-east to south-west across the trench a single example was dug and recorded as context **004**. Cut **004** measured 0.2m wide and 0.04m deep and contained a single fill **(005)** which comprised a mid reddish grey clay containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and occasional charcoal flecks. This fill also produced a number of finds including a single pottery sherd from a Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire Stoneware vessel most likely a bottle dating to the late 17th to late 18th century and a fragment of glass from the neck of a Codd-type bottle dated post 1870. The linear features all ran parallel to each other and align with the slope of the land and with similar features in Trench 2 they are thought to represent post medieval land drains.

3.2.3. The natural clay and features cutting it were all overlain by a 0.15m thick layer of sub soil **(002)** which comprised a soft mid reddish grey clay containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones and charcoal flecks. The subsoil itself contained a number of archaeological finds including a post medieval redware sherd dated from the mid 16th – 18th centuries, an earlier medieval grimston-type ware jug sherd, a fragment of clay field drain pipe and a fragment of hand made brick both of a post-medieval date.

3.2.4. The sub soil layer was in turn overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of topsoil **(001)** comprising a soft dark brownish grey sandy clay containing occasional small sub-rounded flint stones

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1. Trench 2 was situated across the centre of the site running south-east from the far north-west corner of the site. The trench measured 45×1.6m. The natural geology **(003)** was reached at a depth of 0.41m and was as described in trench 1.

3.3.2. A series of linear features similar in form to **004** described above were found cutting into the natural geology. Their form and alignment suggest that they were a continuation of the land drain system identified in Trench 1. A slightly wider linear feature **010** which followed a different but similar south-west to north-east alignment was excavated and found to be 0.32m wide 0.23m deep and contained a single fill **(011)** comprising a light reddish grey sandy clay. This fill contained a post-medieval redware rim sherd dating to the mid 16th – 18th centuries and two earlier medieval fragments of south-west Cambridgeshire sandy ware. This feature most likely represents a land drain although its different size and alignment may suggest a second phase of drainage.

3.3.3. In the north-western half of the trench, two sub-rectangular features **006** and **008** were partially exposed and excavated. Both features measured 0.9m across and extended

out of the tench on its north-east side. Both were approximately 0.2m deep and contained similar soft grey sandy clay fills (**(007)** and **(009)** respectively) both fills and the natural below showed evidence of rooting and the topsoil above feature **006** contained dark rotten wood material. While fill **(007)** contained no finds, fill **(009)** contained two sherds of post-medieval redware dating from the mid 16th-18th centuries and two fragments of undiagnostic fired clay possibly part of a ceramic field drain. The similarity of the two features, the presence of rooting in the fills and cuts and the presence of decayed wood in the topsoil above **006** combined with the knowledge that the site was previously used as an orchard (pers. comm. from land owner) suggest that these features represent planting holes for the fruit trees that once occupied the site.

3.3.4. Approximately 10m from the south-east end of the trench a modern feature was partially exposed. The feature was seen to cut through the top and subsoil and was left unexcavated on request of the land owner as it contained the remains of a pet dog (pers. comm. land owner).

3.3.5. The natural clay and the features described above were overlain by a 0.16m thick layer of subsoil **(002)** as described above. In trench 2 this layer contained two sherds of post medieval redware a medieval sherd of south-west Cambridgeshire sandy ware and a fragment of clay field drain.

3.3.6. The subsoil layer was inturn overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of topsoil **(001)** as described above.

3.4 Finds Summary

3.4.1. The small finds assemblage on site covers a date range from the mid 12th century to the 19th century with the majority of finds dating to the mid 16th – 18th centuries. The assemblage is made up of pottery, glass, CBM, field drain fragments and fragments of coal and clinker and are all thought to be domestic in origin and are likely to have been deposited on site through manuring of the fields during the medieval and post medieval period.

3.5 Environmental Summary

3.5.1. Environmental sampling was deemed unnecessary at this site

4 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Medieval and Post medieval activity

4.1.1. The medieval period is very poorly represented on site with no features dating to this period and only a few small abraded pottery sherds found of this date. These sherds were most likely deposited on site through the use of domestic waste as manure for the arable fields. It is likely that the land was being farmed during this period although there is no definitive evidence of this.

4.1.2. All of the features found on site date to the post medieval or modern period and all are of an agricultural nature. The land drains found are evidence of efforts to increase productivity of the land and are typical of agricultural practice after land inclosures in the post medieval period. The features described above a tree planting holes are probably even more recent in date and should probably be classed as modern as a number of fruit trees from the orchard still stand on the site.

4.1.3. The continued agricultural use of the land right up until very recently shows the value of this good agricultural land within an area previously dominated by fenland

4.2 Significance

4.2.1. The results hold some significance as a negative result proving that the medieval or post medieval settlement had not spread out as far as the site in question during this period.

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-SSE
Series of small post medieval land drains found cutting natural clay, overlain by subsoil and topsoil.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.4
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
001	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
004	Cut	0.2	0.04	Cut of Land Drain		
005	Fill	0.2	0.04	Fill of Land Drain		

Trench 2						
General description					**Orientation**	NNW-SSE
Series of small post medieval land drains and orchard tree planting holes found cutting natural clay, overlain by subsoil and topsoil.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.41
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	45
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**date**
001	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil		
002	Layer	-	0.16	Subsoil		
003	Layer	-	-	Natural		
006	Cut	0.9	0.14	Cut of Tree Planting Hole		
007	Fill	0.9	0.14	Fill of Tree Planting Hole		
008	Cut	0.9	0.2	Cut of Tree Planting Hole		
009	Fill	0.9	0.2	Fill of Tree Planting Hole		
010	Cut	0.32	0.22	Cut of Land Drain		
011	Fill	0.32	0.22	Fill of Land Drain		

Appendix B. Finds Reports

B.1 Glass

by Carole Fletcher

B.1.1 The excavation produced an assemblage of bottle glass, weighing 0.042kg, from two contexts. The glass recovered is domestic in nature.

Context	Weight (kg)	Description	Date
2	0.016	Two large body shards from a press-moulded bottle with a concave recessed panel or panels. The glass is thin clear with an aqua tint and the surviving lettering on the shards is FAVO and ITE most likely FAVO(UR)ITE the U and R not being present.	*c.*20th century
5	0.026	Single shard from the neck of a Codd-type bottle	Post 1870
Total	**0.042**		

Table: Glass

B.2 Pottery

by Carole Fletcher

Introduction

B.2.1 Archaeological works produced a pottery assemblage of 11 sherds, weighing 0.261kg. The assemblage spans the mid 12th to 19th century, although the largest group by weight within this broad date range are the mid 16th-18th century sherds (6 sherds, 0.235kg). The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded and the mean sherd weight is moderate at approximately 0.023kg.

Methodology

B.2.2 The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) 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.2.3 Recording 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 using Cambridgeshire's type series (Spoerry forthcoming). All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed on a context-by-context basis. The assemblage is recorded in the summary catalogue. The pottery and archive are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

B.2.4 The subsoil (context 2) in Trenches 1 and 2 produced three sherds from Post-medieval Redware vessels alongside a small number of earlier sherds including an abraded sherd from a medieval Grimston-type ware jug and a sherd tentatively identified as South-west Cambridgeshire Sandy Ware, an oxidised sandy ware characterised by Dr Paul Spoerry (Spoerry forthcoming) and dated to the mid 11th-mid 13th century.

B.2.5 Context 5 produced a sherd from a Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire Stoneware vessel most likely a bottle and context 9 produced two sherds from the basal angle of a Post-medieval Redware bowl.

B.2.6 Three sherds of pottery were recovered from context 11, a rim sherd from a Post-medieval Redware jar and two abraded sherds of mid 11th-mid 13th century,?South-west Cambridgeshire Sandy Ware.

B.2.7 The assemblage is domestic in nature, indicating low levels of pottery deposition from the mid 11th century onwards. The medieval pottery represents rubbish deposition, most likely through manuring.

Context	Trench	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Context Date Range
2	1	Post-medieval Redware	Bowl rim sherd	1	0.027	Mid 16th-18th century
		Grimston-type ware	Jug body sherd	1	0.006	
2	2	Post-medieval Redware		1	0.057	Mid 16th-18th century
		Post-medieval Redware		1	0.044	
		?South-west Cambridgeshire Sandy Ware		1	0.006	
5		Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire Stoneware		1	0.008	Late 17th-late 18th century
9		Post-medieval Redware		2	0.049	Mid 16th-18th century
11		Post-medieval Redware		1	0.058	Mid 16th-18th century
11		?South-west Cambridgeshire Sandy Ware		2	0.006	
Total				**11**	**0.261**	

Table: Pottery

B.3 Ceramic Building Material

by Carole Fletcher

B.3.1 A small assemblage of ceramic building materiel including field drain was recovered during the archaeological works. All of the fragments were moderately abraded to abraded and cannot be closely dated.

Context	Trench	Form-description	Count	Weight	Date
2	1	Yellow clay field drain fragment,	1	0.020	Post-medieval
		Hand made brick, dull red fabric	1	0.070	Post-medieval
2	2	Clay field drain fragment – poorly mixed pink-yellow swirled clay	1	0.057	Post-medieval
9		Undiagnostic fragment of yellow clay possibly from a field drain	1	0.002	Not closely datable
		Undiagnostic fragment of dull red clay with grog or clay pellet inclusions possibly from a brick	1	0.004	Not closely datable
11		Undiagnostic fragment of yellow clay	1	0.006	Not closely

		possibly from a field drain			datable
Total			**6**	**0.159**	

Table: Ceramic building material

B.4 Miscellaneous

by Carole Fletcher

B.4.1 A small number of miscellaneous fragments of coal and clinker most likely from domestic hearths were also recovered and are recorded below.

Context	Trench	Form-description	Count	Weight	Date
2	1	Coal	1	0.010	Not closely datable
5		Coal	1	0.002	Not closely datable
		Clinker	2	0.002	Not closely datable

Table: Miscellaneous

Bibliography

Medieval Pottery Research Group	1998	*A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms.* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper I
Medieval Pottery Research Group	2001	*Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2
Spoerry, P.	Forthcoming	*The Production and Distribution of Medieval Pottery in Cambridgeshire*

Appendix C. Bibliography

Wright, A.P.M. & Lewis, C.P. (Eds.) 'Swavesey: Introduction', *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 9: Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds* (1989), pp. 374-381. URL: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=15503 Date accessed: 09 June 2014.

Appendix D. OASIS Report Form

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-182131		
Project Name	Evaluation at land to rear of 18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey.		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	04-06-2014	Finish	04-06-2014
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	SWAGIL14	Planning App. No.	S/1354/11
HER No.	ECB4212	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Housing Estate

Please select all techniques used:

☐ Aerial Photography - interpretation	☐ Grab-Sampling	☐ Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
☐ Aerial Photography - new	☐ Gravity-Core	☒ Sample Trenches
☐ Annotated Sketch	☐ Laser Scanning	☐ Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
☐ Augering	☒ Measured Survey	☐ Targeted Trenches
☐ Dendrochronological Survey	☒ Metal Detectors	☐ Test Pits
☒ Documentary Search	☐ Phosphate Survey	☐ Topographic Survey
☐ Environmental Sampling	☐ Photogrammetric Survey	☐ Vibro-core
☐ Fieldwalking	☒ Photographic Survey	☒ Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
☐ Geophysical Survey	☐ 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
Land Drain	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Pottery	Medieval 1066 to 1540
Orchard	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Pottery	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	18 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey, Cambs, CB244RR
District	South Cambridgeshire		
Parish	Swavesey		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	2400sq.m	National Grid Reference	TL 3623 6831

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Dan McConnell
Project Design Originator	Rob Wiseman
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	John Diffey

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
	Location ...	Location ...
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	☐	☐	☐
Ceramics	☒	☐	☐
Environmental	☐	☐	☐
Glass	☐	☐	☐
Human Bones	☐	☐	☐
Industrial	☐	☐	☐
Leather	☐	☐	☐
Metal	☐	☐	☐
Stratigraphic		☐	☐
Survey		☒	☐
Textiles	☐	☐	☐
Wood	☐	☐	☐
Worked Bone	☐	☐	☐
Worked Stone/Lithic	☐	☐	☐
None	☐	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐	☐

Digital Media	Paper Media
☐ Database	☐ Aerial Photos
☒ GIS	☒ Context Sheet
☐ Geophysics	☒ Correspondence
☒ Images	☐ Diary
☒ Illustrations	☒ Drawing
☐ Moving Image	☐ Manuscript
☐ Spreadsheets	☐ Map
☒ Survey	☐ Matrices
☐ Text	☐ Microfilm
☐ Virtual Reality	☐ Misc.
	☐ Research/Notes
	☐ Photos
	☒ Plans
	☒ Report
	☒ Sections
	☒ Survey

Notes:

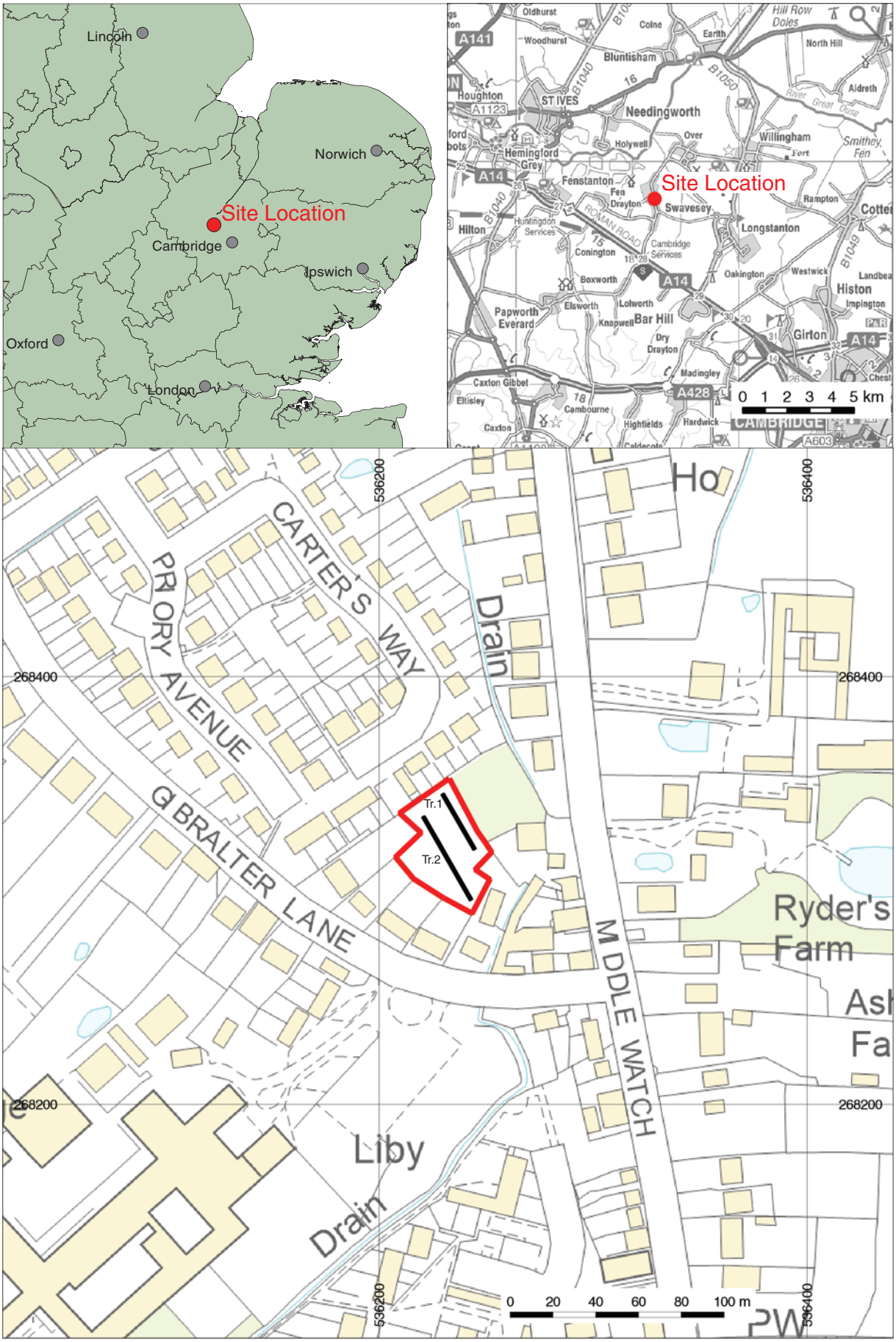

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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (black) in development area (red)

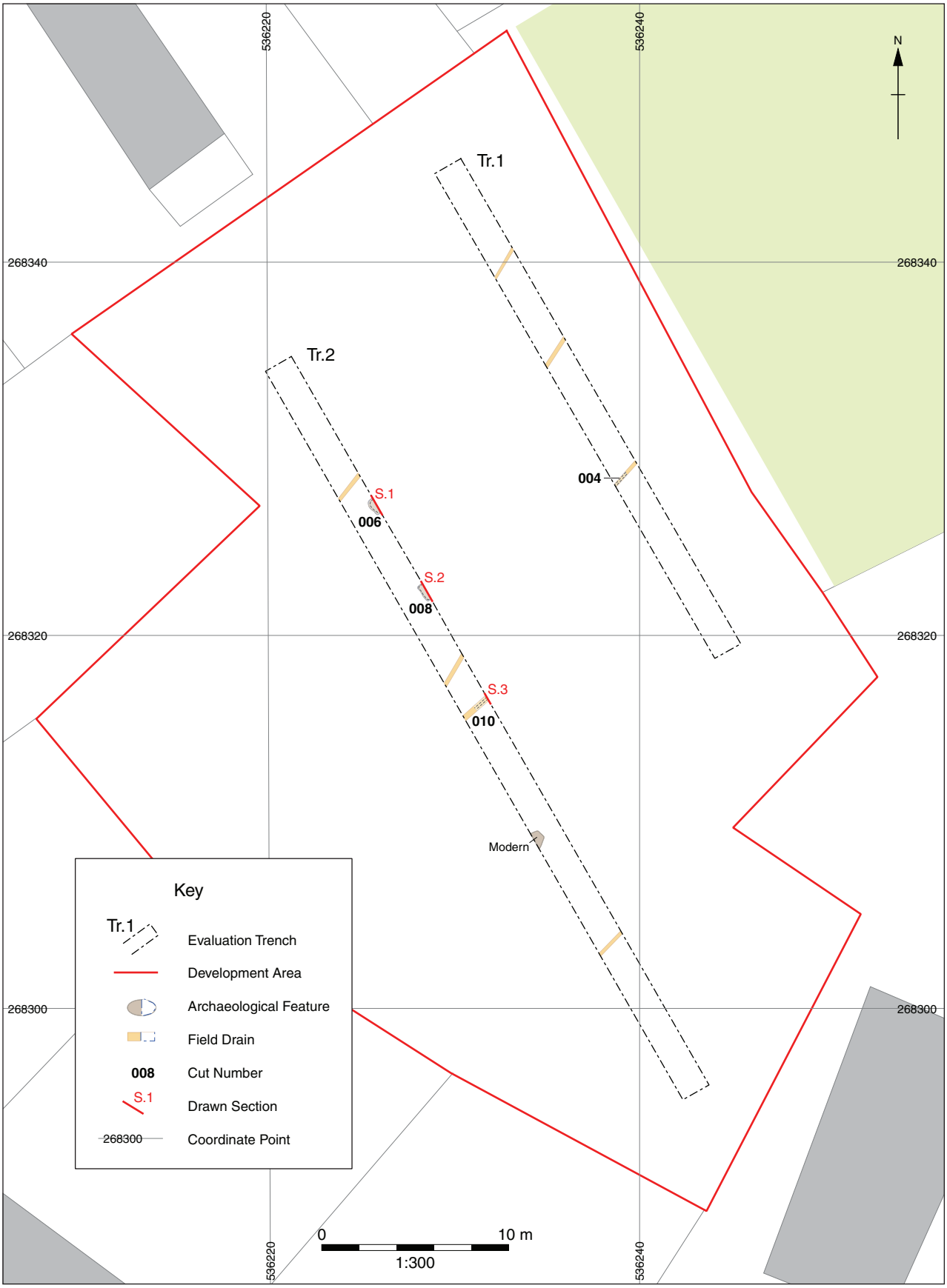

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Figure 2: Trench Plan

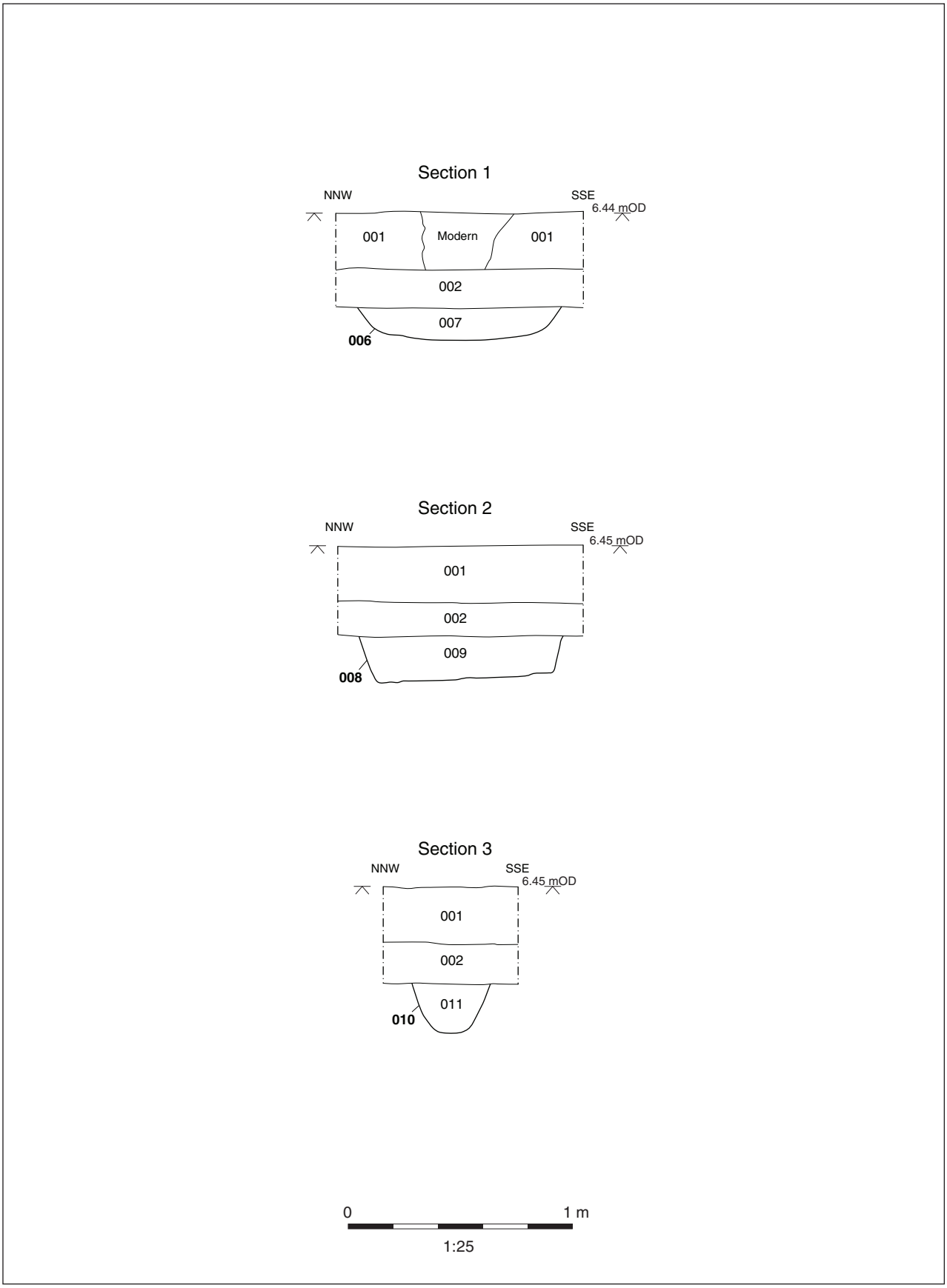

Figure 3: Drawn Sections

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