

Angle Common Soham



Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report



October 2014

Client:

OA East Report No: 1654

OASIS No: oxfordar3-207654

NGR: TL 5885 7294 to TL 5852 7312

Angle common, Soham

Monitoring and Recording

By Michael Green (Bsc Hon)

With contributions by Carole Fletcher, Rob Atkins

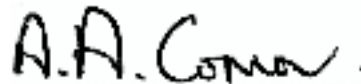
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Report Date: October 2014

Report Number: 1654
Site Name: Angle common, Soham
HER Event No: ECB4243.
Date of Works: 29/7/2014 to 11/8/2014
Client Name: ADAS UK Ltd
Client Ref:
Planning Ref:
Grid Ref: TL 5885 7294 to TL 5852 7312
Site Code: SOHANC14
Finance Code: SOHANC14
Receiving Body: CCC Stores
Accession No: SOHANC14
Prepared by: Michael Green
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Date: Date: 7th October 2014
Signed:



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Summary

Oxford Archaeology East carried out monitoring and recording on works relating to a new cable on Angle Common, Soham (TL 5885 7294 to TL 5852 7312). The works crossed three pasture fields and revealed post medieval layers and finds. A topsoil easement of 3.5-4m wide and 0.2m in depth was observed and a cable trench to a maximum of 1.2m in depth and 0.45m wide through natural was also monitored.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 The Planning Inspectorate gave consent for works through Angle Common, Soham, on condition of “a programme of archaeological works in accordance with the Planning Archaeologist for East Cambridgeshire's recording and monitoring brief”. The Client proposed a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording, during excavation of the cable easement, to provide information on the presence, absence, and possible significance of any archaeological remains.
- 1.1.2 Oxford Archaeology East Carried out the programme of archaeological works during a period of six days.
- 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 Cambridge county council (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 British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of the site at Angle Green lies on Gault Formation (Mudstone), overlain by deep, heavy chalky soils (Eversham group, 411c) (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk>). The site lies at 3m AOD. It slopes very gentle from the higher ground where Soham is built to the northeast, down into the Soham Mere. The area was strip-farmed until the mid-twentieth century, when it was developed for housing. It is therefore, comparatively undisturbed land (Wiseman, R).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

A Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared for the project by ADAS UK Ltd. The main findings of the Assessment are repeated below by period.

1.3.1 Mesolithic

Four Mesolithic tranche axeheads were recovered near the Common (CHER07098).

1.3.2 Neolithic

A Neolithic axehead and a pestle were found somewhere in the area, but the exact find-spot is not known (CHER07087).

1.3.3 Bronze Age

CHER07090 reports an undated 'cinerary urn' – actually an Early bronze Age Collared Urn – found at Clipsel Field, Soham in 1906. Other reports add that it contained a

partially-articulated cremation, and was accompanied by bronze pin and an unburnt skeleton. About 500 metres from the route of the cable, a Late Bronze Age four flanged gold torc was found south of Angle Farm (MCB8549).

1.3.4 Iron Age

An Early Iron Age burial of a man with spear and two dogs, was found on the Common (CHER07086), although the CHER also notes an opinion that the burial may also be Anglo-Saxon.

1.3.5 Post-medieval and Modern

A series of mills have occupied the Lion Mills site (MCB16612): first a watermill (dating from the 17th century), replaced by a steam mill around 1820. This burnt down in 1945, and was replaced by the current mill. On the same site are a number of undated (but probably medieval or post-medieval) ditches of unknown function (MCB17564), containing a small quantity of animal bone and a single Romano-British pottery sherd.

1.3.6 Soham Mere

During the Post-Medieval period a systematic drainage of the Fens was attempted. The Ely and Soham Fenland and surrounding landscape was designated the Bedford Level, which was further sub-divided into the North, Middle and South Levels in 1697 (Page *et al* 1936, 249-290).

The first Watt engine was applied to Fenland drainage efforts in 1820 at Bottisham Fen, which was followed in 1851 by the application of Appold's Centrifugal Pump. The disappearance of the last remaining extensive stretch of water in the Fenland in 1853 marked the final stages of the older economy of the Fens, and the success of the steam-driven mill (Page *et al* 1936, 249-290). It is likely that Soham mere was drained successfully between 1820 and 1853 with the introduction of these pumps creating the agricultural land that is present to this day (Moore, F).

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this work 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.
- 2.1.2 The Cambridgeshire County Council Brief (Gdaniec 2014) required that all the stages of construction that included ground works be monitored to fulfil an archaeological condition placed on the site, as part of the planning consent. All work was carried out by a tracked 360° excavator under constant archaeological supervision.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording will consist of:
1. archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping across the easement
 2. recording in plan archaeological features identified
 3. investigating features by hand, sufficient to characterize their nature and date of features,
 4. sampling features and preserved environmental remains.
 5. archaeological monitoring of subsoil stripping of a 0.45-meter wide strip over the cable trench, with inspection, planning, hand excavation and sampling of identified features (Wiseman, R).
- 2.2.2 Records comprise survey, drawn, written and photographic data. Each feature will be individually documented on context sheets, and hand drawn in section and plan. Written descriptions will be recorded on pro-forma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements. Where stratified deposits are encountered, a Harris Matrix will be compiled during the course of the excavation.
- 2.2.3 Site plans will normally drawn at 1:100, but on deeply-stratified sites a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 will be used. Detailed plans of individual features or groups will be at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20). The site grid will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. Long sections showing layers will be drawn at 1:50. Sections of features or short lengths of trenches will be drawn at 1:20. A register of sections will be kept. All sections will be tied in to Ordnance Datum. The photographic record will comprise high resolution digital photographs.
- 2.2.4 Site conditions were variable, from very wet to dry.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The area of works ran through three fields which will be presented as fields A, B and C (see Fig.2). All three fields are currently pasture fields with long grass and are enclosed by ditches.

3.2 Field A

3.2.1 Field A was located to the east of field B and Mill drove and south of the Soham Lode drain (See Fig.2). A total of 170m in length and 4m in width of topsoil strip was observed to a depth of 0.2m maximum. The cable trench also was 170m in length 0.45m in width and 1.2m in depth. The cable trench also crossed two extant ditches that ran either side of the driveway access to two properties. Four layers were seen all with post medieval finds present and the whole field was heavily disturbed by modern activities.

3.2.2 Layer (1) was the topsoil layer 0.2m in depth and was removed by machine. The layer was a mid brown friable silt with occasional small flints and CBM flecks.

3.2.3 Layer (2) was modern made ground 0.3m in depth and was a mid greyish brown firm silty clay with frequent CBM, concrete and flint inclusions.

3.2.4 Layer (3) was a buried topsoil layer 0.2m in depth and was a mid brown friable silt with occasional small flint and CBM inclusions.

3.2.5 Layer (4) was a subsoil layer/ interface layer 0.1m in depth and was a light yellow brown plastic clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions.

3.2.6 Layer (5) was the natural geology of grey plastic clay with yellow sand patches.

3.3 Field B

3.3.1 Field B was located west of Mill drove and field A and east of the railway. A total of 155.5m in length and 4m in width of topsoil strip was observed to a maximum depth of 0.2m. The cable trench was also 155.5 in length, 0.45m in width and 1.2m in depth. A water logged area was present in the north-west corner measuring 40m east to west and 25m north to south. There was less disturbance present than in field A and five layers could be seen.

3.3.2 Layer (6) was the dump deposit 0.1m in depth, 6m in length (East-West) and 3m in width and was located at the eastern most edge of the field, this was removed by machine. The layer was a light yellow grey silty clay with frequent small rounded flints and CBM flecks and lumps. This probably represents a dump of 17th-18th century material in a natural hollow to level the field.

3.3.3 Layer (7) was a topsoil layer 0.2m in depth and was a mid grey brown friable clayey silt with an occasional small flint inclusion.

3.3.4 Layer (8) was a natural interface layer 0.1m in depth and was a light yellow grey plastic clay with occasional small flint inclusions.

- 3.3.5 Layer (9) was a water logged layer 0.3m in depth and was a mid grey plastic silty clay with no visible inclusions. It was present for 20m of the strip (east-west) at the western edge of the field.
- 3.3.6 Layer (10) was a subsoil layer 0.4m in depth and was a mid brown grey soft clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions.

3.4 Field C

- 3.4.1 Field C was located west of the railway and field B. A total of 330m in length and 4m in width of topsoil strip was observed to a maximum depth of 0.2m. The cable trench was also 330m in length, 0.45m in width and 1.2m in depth. There was less disturbance present than in field A and three layers could be seen.
- 3.4.2 Layer (11) was a topsoil layer 0.2m in depth and was a mid grey brown friable clayey silt with an occasional small flint inclusion.
- 3.4.3 Layer (12) was a subsoil layer 0.2m in depth and was a mid brown grey soft clayey silt with occasional small flint inclusions.
- 3.4.4 Layer (13) was a marl layer 0.3m in depth and was a light grey soft clayey silt with moderate mollusc inclusions. This layer may represent flooding or the presence of Soham mere.

3.5 Finds Summary

- 3.5.1 A very small assemblage of finds was recovered including 3 sherds of pottery, two post-medieval bricks and one piece of architectural limestone.

3.6 Environmental Summary

A total of two 16 litre samples were taken, both samples contain modern roots and plant material. Sample 1, layer (9) did not contain any other preserved plant remains and was not waterlogged. Sample 2, layer (13) contains a single charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grain and occasional fragments of charcoal. The samples were poor in terms of identifiable material. The presence of a single charred grain is indicative of the preservation of food from this site but does not aid interpretation.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The conclusions are presented for each Field A-C. The topsoil monitoring showed a variety of layers but due to the shallow depth of the topsoil strip (0.2m) in relation to the depths of deposits (0.4m in most parts) it was difficult to identify any archaeological remains from top soil stripping. The cable trench monitoring also showed a sequence of layers but due to the width of the cut (0.45m) it was difficult to identify archaeological remains.

4.2 Field A

4.2.1 Field A was excavated through modern made ground (2) as well as topsoil layers (1) and (3) and subsoil (4) straight to the natural geology. Subsoil (4) produced finds of pot and tile of mixed dates showing the area has had some disturbance at this level most likely from ploughing. No archaeological features were seen in the cable trench cutting the natural geology.

4.3 Field B

4.3.1 Field B had less disturbance and modern made ground than field A. The field had 0.2m of topsoil (7) onto 0.4m of subsoil (10) with an interface layer (8) onto the natural clay. Field B also had two other layers, (6) at the east end of the field and (9) at the west end.

4.3.2 Layer (6) was a dump deposit 0.1m in depth just below the topsoil (7) and comprised of brick, tile and stone and is most likely a dump of hardcore material to level the field. Although the CBM within layer (6) is 17th-18th century it is most likely that the in filling of the hollow was more recent as the same date CBM was present within layer (2) in field A with tarmac and concrete. The dump was found in relative proximity to the Lion Mills site which had been occupied by a series of mills (MCB16612): first a watermill (dating from the 17th century), replaced by a steam mill around 1820. It is possible that the brick and architectural stone derived from one of these buildings.

4.3.3 Layer (9) was present for 20m of the cable strip at the western most edge of field B. The layer was 0.3m in depth and was seen below the topsoil (7) and most likely represents a waterlogged subsoil layer. The area was visibly water logged at the surface with vegetation associated with a waterlogged environment. The layer only differed from the subsoil (10) seen for the rest of field B due to small molluscs present within the deposit, this may represent the presence of water for prolonged periods and may indicate a small pond/ watering hole present in the corner of the field outside the development area.

4.4 Field C

4.4.1 Field C was the largest of the three fields and three layers were present. Topsoil (11) was 0.2m in depth, subsoil (12) which was 0.2m in depth and marl layer (13) which was 0.3m in depth and was present for 66m from the western edge of the field. There was

also a modern track running north to south made of brick, concrete and crushed tarmac, this was seen just below the topsoil and the land owner informed the ground workers on site that this was present and created in the last 40 years.

- 4.4.2 Layer (13) was a marl layer present below the subsoil and may represent standing water in the area. The deposit contained numerous small molluscs and a small amount of organic material and may represent the mere edge deposits. Soham mere is shown in the area and is known to have been drained in the 16th-19^h century and these deposits most likely relate to the mere edge (see fig.3).

APPENDIX A. CONTEXTS INVENTORY

Ctxt	Cut	Feature Type	Date/Function	Width	Depth (m)	Artefacts
1	-	Layer	Topsoil (Field A)	-	0.2	Modern Pot and CBM
2	-	Layer	Made Ground (Field A)	-	0.3	Modern Pot and CBM
3	-	Layer	Buried Topsoil (Field A)	-	0.2	Modern Pot and CBM
4	-	Layer	Subsoil (Field A)	-	0.2	Pot, Bone and CBM
5	-	Layer	Natural (Field A)	-	-	-
6	-	Layer	Dump Deposit (Field B)	-	0.3	CBM, Stone
7	-	Layer	Topsoil (Field B)	-	0.2	Modern Pot and CBM
8	-	Layer	Natural Interface (Field B)	-	0.1	-
9	-	Layer	Waterlogged deposit (Field B)	-	0.3	-
10	-	Layer	Subsoil (Field B)	-	0.4	-
11	-	Layer	Topsoil (Field C)	-	0.2	Modern Pot and CBM
12	-	Layer	Subsoil (Field C)	-	0.2	-
13	-	Layer	Marl (Field C)	-	0.3	-

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

by Carole Fletcher

Introduction

B.1.1 Archaeological works produced a pottery assemblage of 3 sherds, weighing 0.996 kg from the subsoil stripped in Field A. The assemblage spans the mid 12th to end of the 18th century. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded and the mean sherd weight is moderate at approximately 0.087kg.

Methodology

B.1.2 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.1.3 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.1.4 The assemblage is domestic in nature, indicating low levels of pottery deposition from the mid 12th century onwards. A single rim sherd from a large South-east Fenland Medieval Calcareous Buff Ware (SEFEN) bowl was recovered (mid 12th-mid 15th century). SEFEN has been found at Burwell, Cambridge, Longstanton, Soham, Wicken and Wisbech (Spoerry forthcoming) and was first recognised at Cloverfield Drive, Soham where it is dominant in the earliest contexts on the site. A sherd from a Post-medieval Redware bowl was also recovered alongside a sherd from a 19th century Yellow ware vessel. All were recovered from the subsoil in Field A with none being particularly abraded.

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Pottery Date Range
4	4.4.3 South-east Fenland Medieval Calcareous Buff Ware	Bowl rim sherd	1	0.122	Mid 12th-mid 15th century
	Post-medieval Redware	Bowl body sherd	1	0.122	Mid 16th-end of 18th century
	Yellow ware	Bowl body sherd	1	0.019	19th century
Total			3	0.263	

Table: Pottery

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- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--|
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| Spoerry, P. | Forthcoming | The Production and Distribution of Medieval Pottery in Cambridgeshire |

B.2 Brick

By Rob Atkins

Two post-medieval bricks (3.097kg) were recovered from the layer 6 in Field B. They are both reasonably well made and date from the 17th and up to the early 18th century. One is complete (1.862kg) and is in an orange sandy fabric. It measured 212mm (8½") in length, 101mm (4") wide and 50mm thick (2"). The other (1.235kg) is a well puddled (yellow and orange clay mixed) example and survived as a part brick. It is 102mm (4") wide and 43mm (1½") thick.

B.3 Worked stone

By James Fairbairn

A single piece of architectural stone was recovered from layer 6 in Field B. It is likely to be a fragment of window mullion, hand cut from oolitic limestone. It is rebated and a recess may have held a lead rod. It is not closely datable but is unlikely to be earlier than the 13th century, and was found with 17th/18th century bricks (Atkins above). It may have originally come from an ecclesiastical or moderately high status domestic context, but was found in a tertiary deposit of rubble hardcore.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

- C.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken from features during the monitoring and recording brief at Angle Common, Soham in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. The features sampled were layers (contexts 9 and 13) thought to be post-medieval in date and possibly waterlogged.

Methodology

- C.1.2 The total volume (sixteen litres) of each bulk sample was processed by water flotation (using a modified Siraff three-tank system) for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. 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. Both flot and residues were allowed to air dry. A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction 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. Nomenclature is according to Zohary and Hopf (2000). Carbonized seeds and grains, by the process of burning and burial, become blackened and often distort and fragment leading to difficulty in identification. The identification of cereals has been based on the characteristic morphology of the grains and chaff as described by Jacomet (2006).

Results

- C.1.3 Both samples contain modern roots and plant material. Sample 1, layer 9 did not contain any other preserved plant remains and was not waterlogged. Sample 2, layer 13 contains a single charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grain and occasional fragments of charcoal.

Discussion

- C.1.4 The samples were poor in terms of identifiable material. The presence of a single charred grain is indicative of the preservation of food from this site but does not aid interpretation.

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	<input type="text"/>		
Project Name	<input type="text"/>		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	<input type="text"/>	Finish	<input type="text"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text"/>	Future Work	<input type="text"/>

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text"/>
HER No.	<input type="text"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text"/>

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

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".

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Project Location

County	<input type="text"/>	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parish	<input type="text"/>	
HER	<input type="text"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text"/>

Project Originators

Organisation	<input type="text"/>
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Project Design Originator	<input type="text"/>
Project Manager	<input type="text"/>
Supervisor	<input type="text"/>

Project Archives

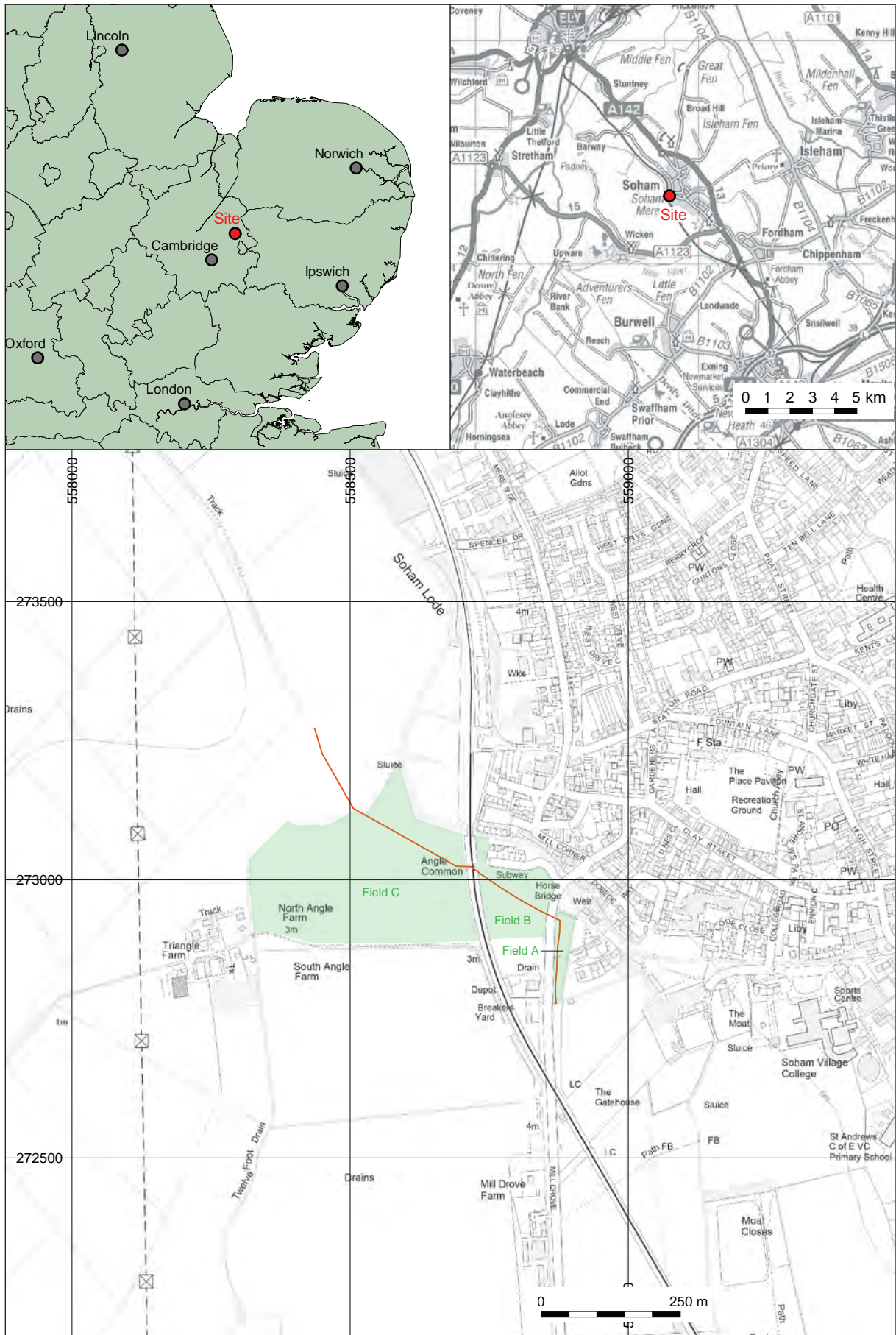
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Archive Contents/Media

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Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing cable route (orange). Scale 1:10000

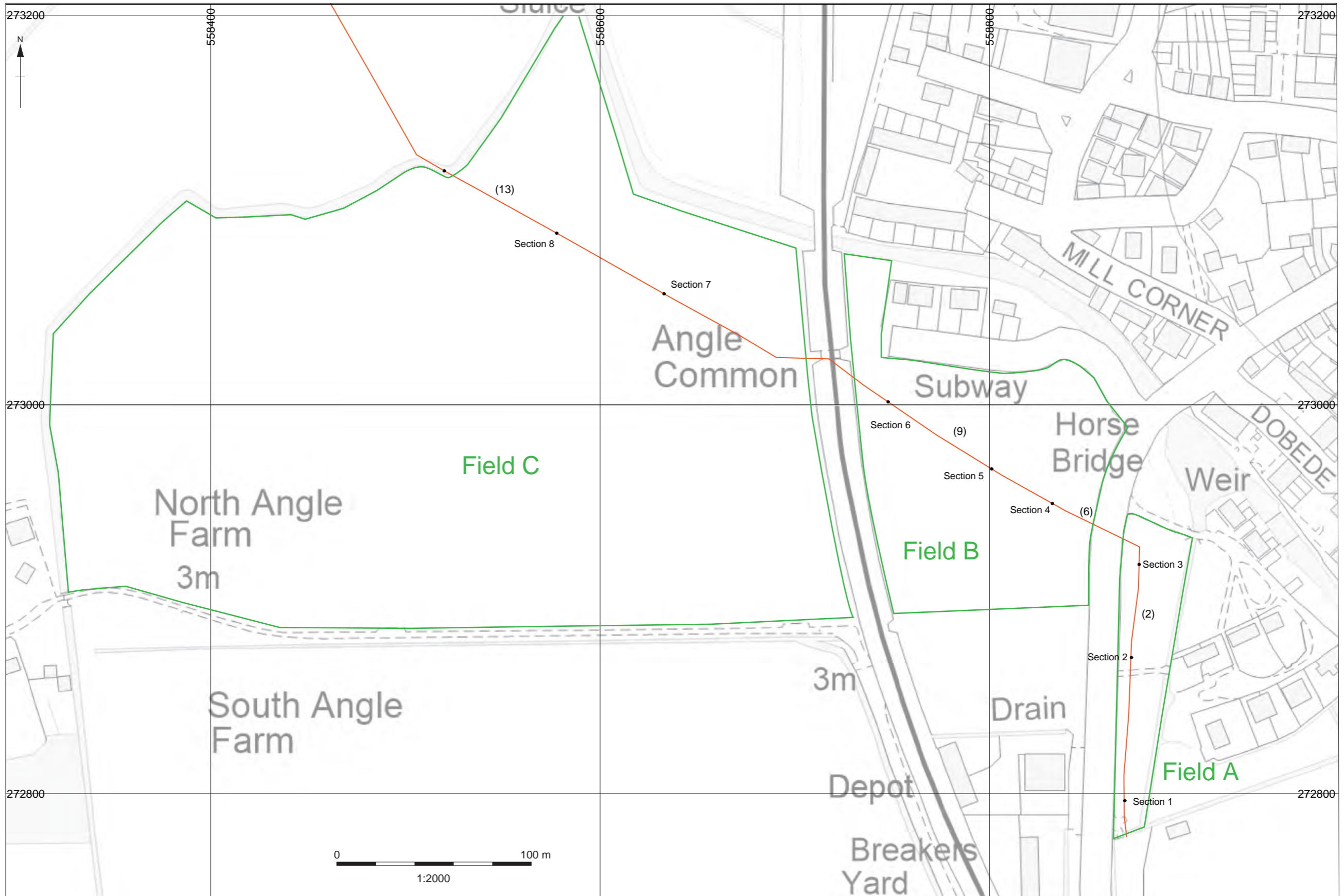


Figure 2: Cable route showing section locations. Scale 1:2000



Figure 3: Cable route (red) showing Soham mere

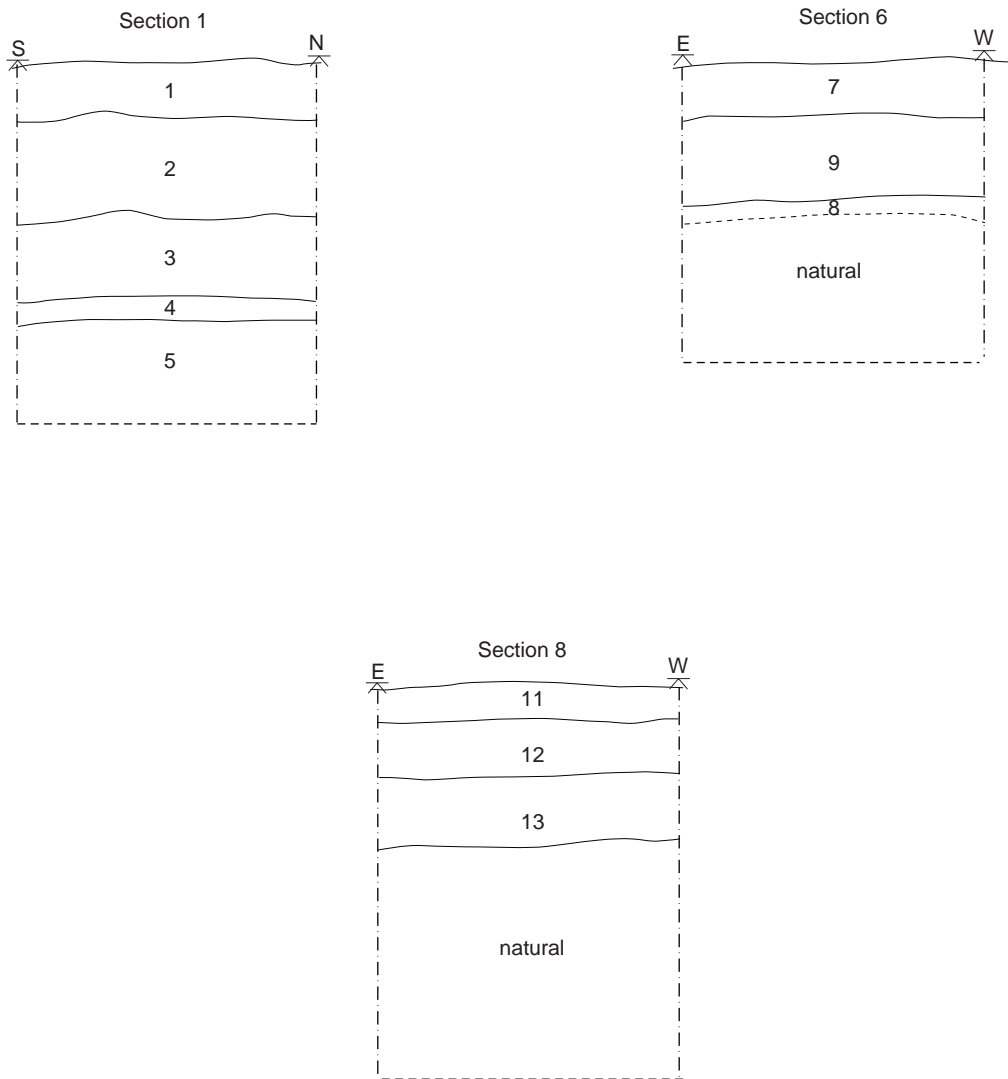


Figure 4: Selected sections from works



Plate 1: Field A topsoil strip, looking North



Plate 2: Field A cable trench, looking North



Plate 3: Field B topsoil strip showing layer (6), looking west



Plate 4: Field B cable trench, looking west



Plate 5: Field C topsoil and cable trench, looking East



Plate 6: Field C section showing marl (13), looking South



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