

Archaeological Evaluation at land at 21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge



Archaeological Evaluation Report



August 2015

Client: Elleric UK Ltd

OA East Report No: 1814

OASIS No: oxfordar3-220 129

NGR: TL 4528 5960

Land at Nos 21 to 23 Milton Road, Cambridge

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: August 2015

Report Number: 1814
Site Name: Land at Nos 21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge
HER Event No: ECB 4515
Date of Works: August 2015
Client Name: Elleric UK Ltd
Client Ref: 18476
Planning Ref: 15/0363/FUL
Grid Ref: TL 4528 5960
Site Code: CAM MLR 15
Finance Code: CAM MLR 15
Receiving Body: Cambridgeshire County Council Stores
Accession No: n/a
Prepared by: Steve Graham
Position: Archaeological Supervisor
Date: 10/08/2015
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Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 11/08/2015
Signed:



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Summary

Between the 4th and 5th of August 2015, Oxford Archeology East conducted an archaeological trenching evaluation at land formerly occupied by the houses numbered 21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge. Two trenches were excavated at the proposed development site revealing six large post-medieval quarry pits dating to the 19th century. The pits were sealed by layers of late 19th or early 20th century rubble, associated with the construction of houses on the plot in the 1920s, and their subsequent demolition in the 1990s.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 A trial trenched archaeological evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) on land at Nos 21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge; a vacant L-shaped plot of land 0.098ha in extent located to the north-east of the city centre and c.0.2km north of the River Cam (centred TL 4528 5960). The work was undertaken in advance of a proposed residential development.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 15/0363/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Brudenell 2015).
- 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 solid geology of the site is Gault Formation mudstones of the Cretaceous period. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Quaternary second River Terrace sands and gravels. The site lies at 9.1m OD and is relatively flat (British Geological Society (BGS) 1981).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential as recorded by information held by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). It is located in the hinterland of the Roman town of Cambridge, centred on Castle Hill to the west, with evidence for Roman activity recorded from finds c.130m to the south-east of the site (CHER 04547). Immediately west, burials of Saxon date were recorded in the late 19th/early 20th century from Swan's Gravel Pit (CHER 04551).
- 1.3.2 More recent investigations have focused on works in advance of redevelopment/infill development in the surrounding area, and have tended to yield features and finds of medieval and post-medieval date. These include a medieval gully, possibly indicative of agricultural activity, directly south of the site (CHER 15640) and unglazed medieval pottery recovered from an evaluation trench also directly to the south (CHER 19826).
- 1.3.3 A post-medieval ditch aligned north to south similar to that shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map (viewed at www.old-maps.co.uk) was also identified west of the development area (CHER 18265). Adjacent to the site, directly 70m north, were two pits probably associated with post-medieval quarrying (CHER 17864).
- 1.3.4 The Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1886 (viewed at www.old-maps.co.uk) reveals that the site was once within the far north-east corner of a larger rhombus-shaped parcel of land, bordered by the Sixth Public Drain to the north. On the 1901 map, the site is crossed by the access to Swan's Gravel Pit to the north-west. By 1925 the site

was occupied by Nos 21-23 Milton Road, which remained on the plot until demolition in the early 1990s.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Elleric UK Ltd for funding the work and DPA Architects who commissioned the work on their behalf. The site was managed by Dr Matthew Brudenell and surveyed by David Brown. The fieldwork was carried out by Steve Graham and Rebecca Jarosz-Blackburn. Gemma Stewart of CCC HET monitored the work. Thanks are also extended to the various specialists who contributed to the report, the illustrator and the editor.

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 two trial trenches were to be excavated across the proposed buildings footprints. The trenches comprised a 20m long by 1.8m wide trench and a 10m long by 1.8m wide trench. These were designed to provide a 5% sample of the total development area.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GS08 with Smartnet live data feed.
- 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 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were revealed by the evaluation.
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were dry and bright.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Both of the excavated trenches (Figs 2-3) contained archaeology. Trench 1 contained two sub-circular pits while Trench 2 revealed four large sub-circular pits. All of these features cut into the light brown sand silt subsoil. They were in turn sealed by levelling layers of 19th century brick and rubble. In Trench 1 these layers were overlain by a layer of concrete: the remains of the foundations of the early 20th century housing which formerly occupied the site. The uppermost layer within both trenches was a mixture of modern concrete and rubble. The trenches are described below in numerical order, supplemented by further trench/context information in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was located in the eastern end of the site (Fig. 3; Plate 1). It was 10m long and 1.80m wide. The trench was aligned north-west to south-east, and had an average depth of 0.90m. Only two features were identified, both at the north-west end of the trench. These were overlain by a thin band of light brown sand silt subsoil (5), sealed by later post-medieval levelling layers.

3.2.2 Located at the end of the trench was pit **10**. The observable width of the pit from north-west to south-east was recorded as 0.72m. Its depth as indicated on the south-west facing side of the trench was 0.20m. The fill of the pit (9) was a mid grey brown sand silt containing 19th century yellow unfrogged and unperforated brick, and fragments of tile. This was overlain by a dark red brown sand silt levelling layer containing post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) (4).

3.2.3 Cutting into the subsoil (5) and initial levelling layer (4) was a smaller pit (**8**; Figs 3 and 4, section 1). Only 50% of the pit was available in the trench, the other half being under the south-west facing side of the trench. Circular in shape, the width of the pit was 1.30m and its depth was 1.10m. The pit contained two fills; an initial thin layer of dark grey brown sand silt (7) and an upper deposit of mid grey brown sand silt containing post-medieval CBM and brick fragments (6).

3.2.4 Both pits were overlain by a horizontal band of grey brown clay silt (3) containing post-medieval brick/tile fragments, on average 0.12m thick. This was in turn sealed by a layer of bright yellow concrete (2) that was on average 0.22m thick. The final layer was a 0.40m thick light grey brown sandy silt (1) containing 20th century rubble, cut into by (disconnected) electrical and telecommunication cables.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was located in the western side of the site (Fig. 3; Plate 2). It measured 20m in length and 1.80m in width. It was aligned north-east to south-west with an average depth of 1.10m. Four large pits were identified, three of which (**12**, **18** and **30**) were only partially exposed. The pits cut into the small band of subsoil (5), only visible at the south-west end of the trench.

- 3.3.2 Located at the western end of the trench was a steep-sided pit (**11**; Fig. 4, section 2; Plate 3). The pit was 2.25m wide and 1.24m deep. This pit cut into the band of natural chalk running across the natural gravels at the west end of the trench. The pit contained six fills, the earliest of which (17) was a grey brown sandy silt. Above this was a thin (0.04m thick) lens of light yellow redeposited sand (16), covered by a grey brown sandy silt (15) containing post-medieval brick/CBM. This was in turn sealed by another thin (0.05m thick) lens of redeposited sand (14), overlain by the upper fill comprising a red brown sandy silt (13) containing brick/CBM fragments.
- 3.3.3 A further half metre to the north-east was a large pit (**18**; Fig 5; Plate 4) with a width of 3m and an excavated depth of 1.44m. Orientated north-west to south-east, the pit had near vertical sides. Because of its depth, the pit was excavated to a level of 1m with a smaller stepped slot dug a further 0.44m to the base. The pit contained four fills, the earliest of which was a grey silt sand (19) containing a single piece of post medieval CBM. Above this was a grey brown sandy silt (20) containing lumps of chalk and post-medieval CBM and pottery fragments (not retained). Above this was a reddish grey sand silt (21) backfill. The upper fill (22) was a grey brown silt sand mixed with gravel.
- 3.3.4 Both of these features (pits **11** and **18**) were capped by a leveling layer of grey brown clay silt (24), on average 0.40m thick, containing 19th century brick/CBM fragments.
- 3.3.5 Further along the trench to the north-east (by 0.30m) was pit **30**. Unexcavated, this 5.25m wide pit had an upper fill (29) comprising grey brown silt sand with gravel, identical to the upper fill (22) of pit **18**. The fill yielded post-medieval brick and tile fragments and a non-diagnostic clay pipe stem.
- 3.3.6 Adjacent to this feature was another pit (**12**) cutting through the natural gravels into the chalk below. The exposed width of the pit was 6.25m, and a box slot (1m by 1m) was excavated at its edge. The pit was not fully-excavated, with excavation ceasing at a depth of 1.20m. Around the base of the slot was evidence of shoring comprising the remains of a circular iron support following the curvature of the cut. The earliest observable fill was a grey brown sand silt (28) containing strips of iron, 19th century pottery fragments, CBM, brick fragments and a complete bottle (see Section 3.3.8). Above this was a layer of bright yellow redeposited sand and mortar (27). The upper fill of the pit (26) was a grey brown silt sand containing brick, CBM, post-medieval pottery and a non-diagnostic clay pipe stem.
- 3.3.7 All of the features in the trench were sealed by a horizontal band of dark grey brown clay silt (23), on average 0.40m thick. This layer yielded 19th century brick fragments, pieces of CBM and 19th century pottery sherds of 'willow pattern' ware. The upper layer with the trench was a horizontal layer (25) of light yellow sand and concrete fragments mixed with 20th century rubble and brick, on average 0.40m thick.

3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 All of the pits and upper layers of both trenches contained fragments of post-medieval brick, tile and CBM, along with occasional fragments of clay pipe, glass bottles/sherds and sherds of 19th century pottery; none of which were retained. The brick fragments found were yellow, unfrosted and unperforated, of a type widely used in Cambridge from the 17th century onwards, but prolific during the 18th and 19th centuries (Rob Atkins pers. comm.). The clay pipe stems were undiagnostic and undatable.
- 3.4.2 The only find of note was a complete bottle in the deepest excavated fill (28) of pit **12**. Labelled "Woods and Son, Mineral Water, Cambridge", this distinctive bottle is of the Codd's ball stopper soda water style. This type of bottle was first patented in 1870 in England with patents for the most commonly seen types granted in 1872 and 1873. The bottle has no apparent evidence of air venting and was blown in a post-bottom mold. These features would date the bottle from the 1870s to mid-1880s. However European manufacturers were "behind" the US in adopting new bottle production techniques so it is possible that this Codd bottle could date as late as 1900-1915, as Codd bottles with these diagnostic traits are known from that era (<http://www.sha.org/bottle/soda.htm>).

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Although there remains potential for Roman, Saxon and later deposits of archaeological interest in the vicinity of the site, the only evidence of pre-modern activity at Nos 21-23 Milton Road was found in the form of six large 19th century sand and gravel quarry pits. The findings from the two trenches suggest that the plot is likely to be covered in a series of amorphous quarry pits penetrating seams of sand and gravel in the underlying geology.
- 4.1.2 In general, the results echo those from an earlier evaluation, c.70m to the north of the site at Milton Road Primary School, where quarry pits were also located (CHER 17864; Hogg 2008). Combined, they suggest that this area witnessed extensive quarrying, with both sites potentially associated with the gravel pit annotated above Victoria Road on the Ordnance Survey 1886 six-inch map of the area (www.old-maps.co.uk). The date would also accord well with the soda bottle recovered from pit **12**, which suggests that the quarries were being abandoned and backfilled around the turn of the century. Certainly, by the time of the 1906 map, the quarry known as Swans Gravel pit is depicted further to the north-west, with the current site being crossed by an access road into the pit.
- 4.1.3 Deposits sealing the quarry pits at Nos 21-23 Milton Road probably represent levelling and consolidation layers put down prior to the construction of the terraced housing on the plot in the 1920s. Those layers of concrete and rubble above this are the remains of the foundations following the demolition of the housing in the 1990s.

4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 Whilst the site adds to the existing knowledge of late Victorian quarrying in the immediate vicinity, there is no indication of earlier deposits surviving at the site.

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		NW-SE
Trench contains two post medieval pits. These cut into the subsoil and are sealed over by a 19th century levelling layer, a concrete layer and a 20th century layer.				Avg. depth (m)		0.90
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		10.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds (not retained)	date
1	Layer	-	0.40	backfill	-	modern
2	Layer	-	0.70	surface	CBM	modern
3	Layer	-	0.80	backfill	CBM	post medieval
4	Layer	-	1.10	levelling	CBM	post medieval
5	Layer	-	1.20	sub-soil	-	-
6	fill	-	1.10	fill of 8	-	post medieval
7	fill	-	1.10	fill of 8	CBM	post medieval
8	cut	-	1.30	pit	-	post medieval
9	fill	-	1.10	fill of 10	CBM	post medieval
10	cut	-	1.10	pit	-	post medieval
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NE-SW
Trench contains four post medieval pits. These are sealed over by 19th century sealing layers and a 20th century layer consisting of bricks and mortar.				Avg. depth (m)		1.10
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		20.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds (not retained)	date
5	layer		0.92		-	-
11	cut		1.6	pit	-	post medieval
12	cut		1.8	pit	-	post medieval
13	fill		0.4	fill of 11	-	post medieval
14	fill		0.44	fill of 11	CBM	post medieval
15	fill		0.64	fill of 11	CBM	post medieval
16	fill		0.68	fill of 11	-	post medieval
17	fill		0.72	fill of 11	-	post medieval
18	cut		1.4	pit	-	post medieval
19	fill		0.24	fill of 18	CBM	post medieval
20	fill		0.76	fill of 18	CBM; pot	post medieval
21	fill		0.28	fill of 18	-	post medieval

22	fill		0.23	fill of 18	-	post medieval
23	layer		0.68	backfill/levelling layer	CBM; pot	post medieval
24	layer		0.9	backfill/levelling layer	CBM	post medieval
25	layer		0.4	backfill/levelling layer	-	modern
26	fill		0.3	fill of 12	CBM; pot, glass clay pipe	post medieval
27	fill		0.6	fill of 12	-	post medieval
28	fill		1.20	fill of 12	CBM; pot, glass	post medieval
29	fill		0.80	fill of 30	CBM	post medieval
30	cut		0.80	pit	-	post medieval

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hogg, I., 2008., *Milton Road Primary School, Cambridge; An Archaeological Evaluation Report*. AOC Archaeology Group report 30041.

Thomas, A., 2015 *21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge. Brief for Archaeological Evaluation*, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) (report dated 10th July 2015)

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	<input type="text" value="oxfordar3-220 129"/>		
Project Name	<input type="text" value="Evaluation at 21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge"/>		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	<input type="text" value="04-08-2015"/>	Finish	<input type="text" value="05-08-2015"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text"/>	Future Work	<input type="text"/>

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text" value="CAMMLR15"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text" value="15/0363/FUL"/>
HER No.	<input type="text" value="ECB4515"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text"/>

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	<input type="text" value="Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4"/>
Development Type	<input type="text" value="Urban Residential"/>

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input 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
<input type="text" value="quarry pits"/>	<input type="text" value="Post Medieval 1540 to 1901"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
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Project Location

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District	<input type="text" value="Cambridge"/>	<input type="text" value="21-23 Milton Road, Cambridge"/>
Parish	<input type="text" value="Chesterton"/>	
HER	<input type="text" value="CHER"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text" value="TL 4528 5960"/>

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	A Thomas
Project Design Originator	M Brudenell
Project Manager	M Brudenell
Supervisor	S Graham

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
ccc stores	O A East	CC Stores
CAM MLR 15	CAM MLR 15	CAMMLR 15

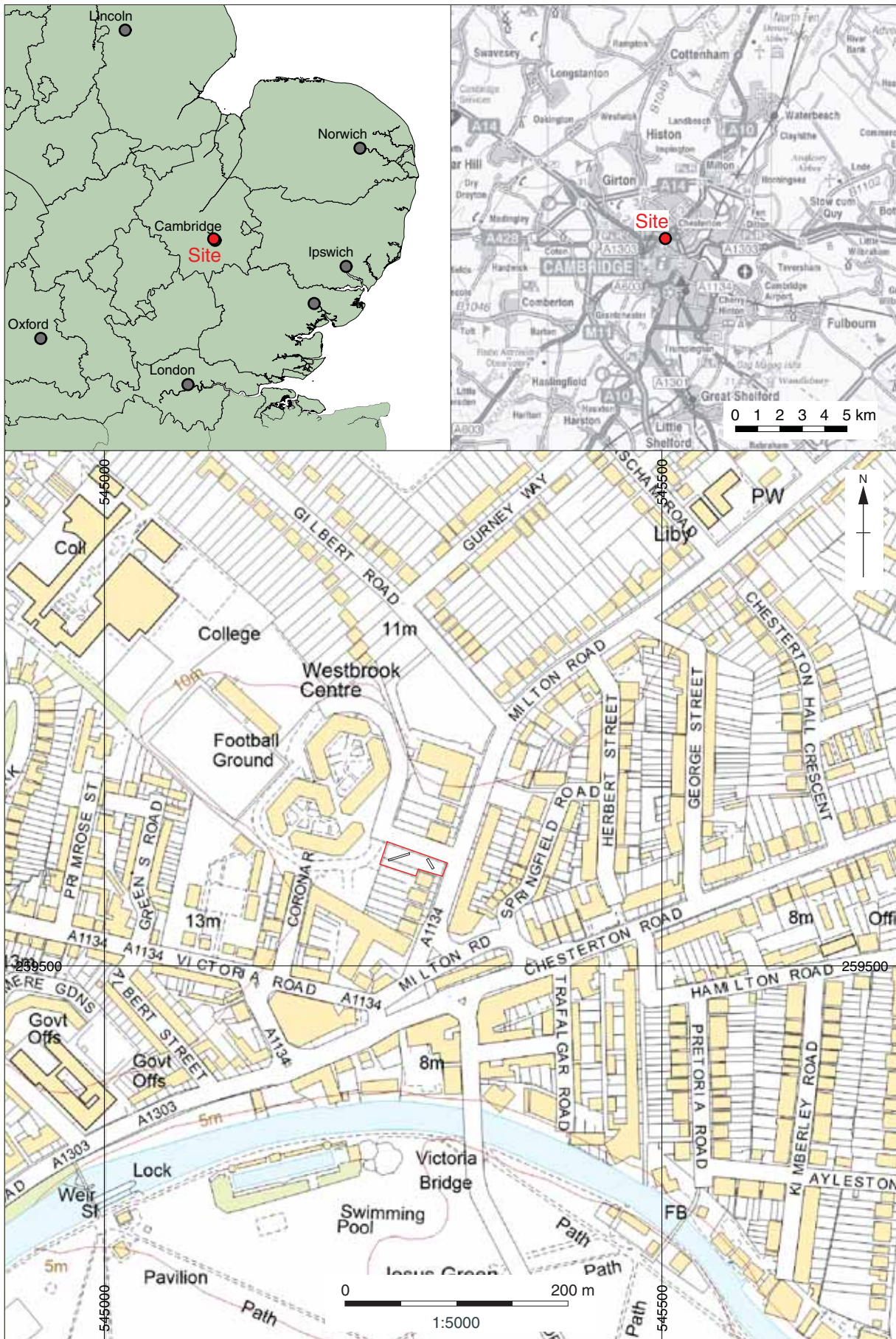
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
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<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input 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:

Post-medieval to modern glass, pottery and clay pipe not retained



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

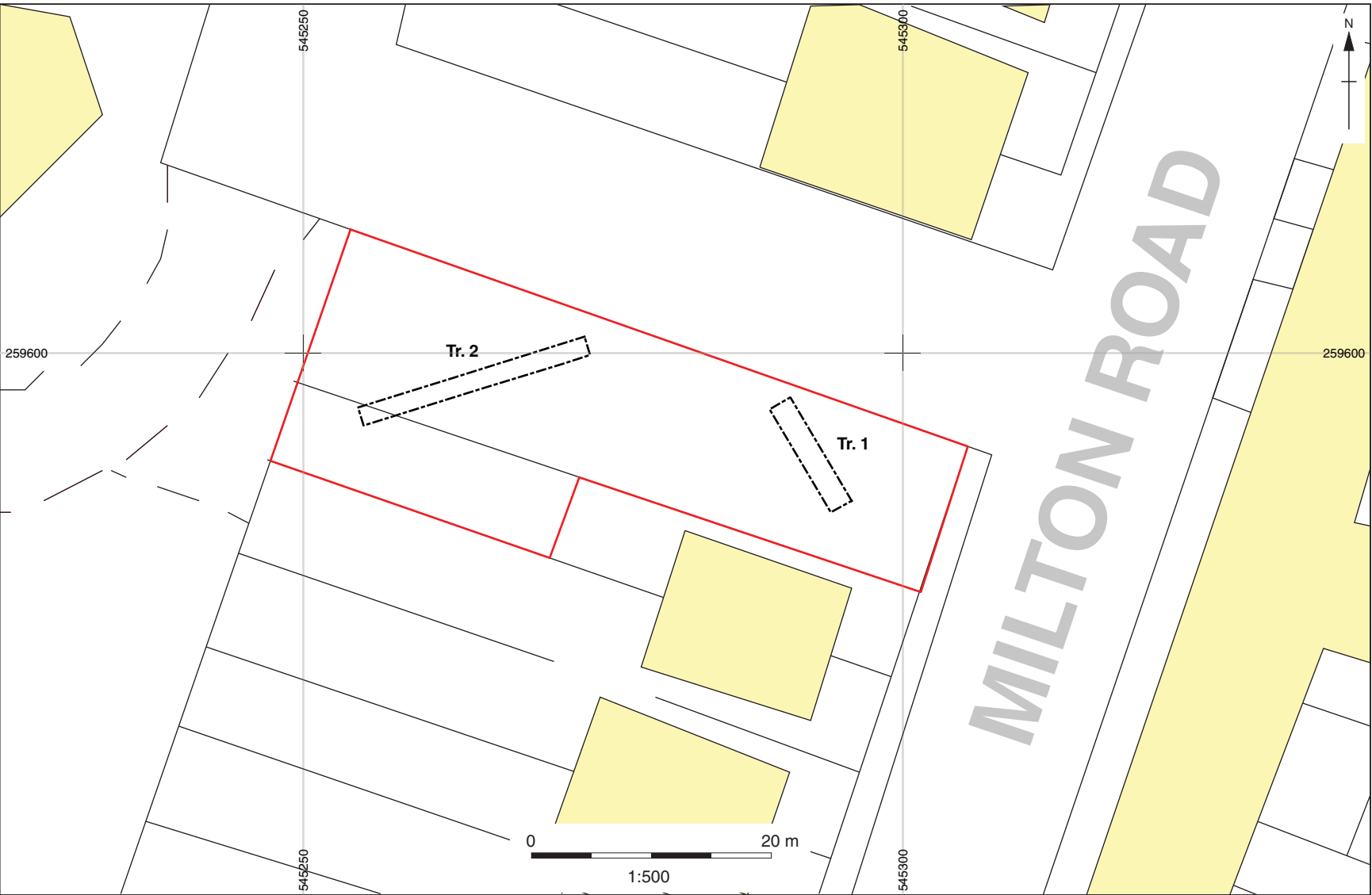


Figure 2: Location of Trenches

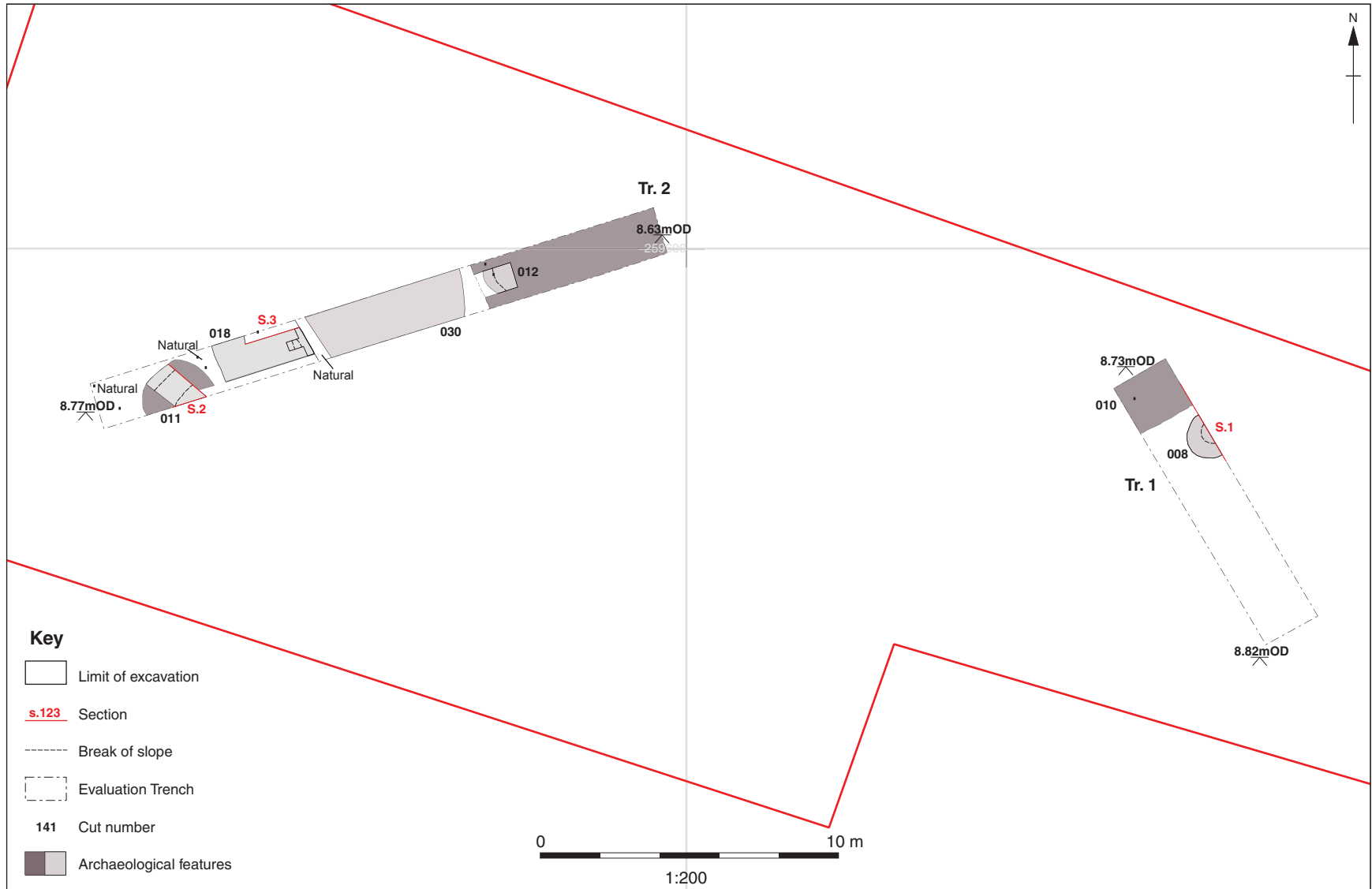


Figure 3: Plan of Trench 1 and Trench 2

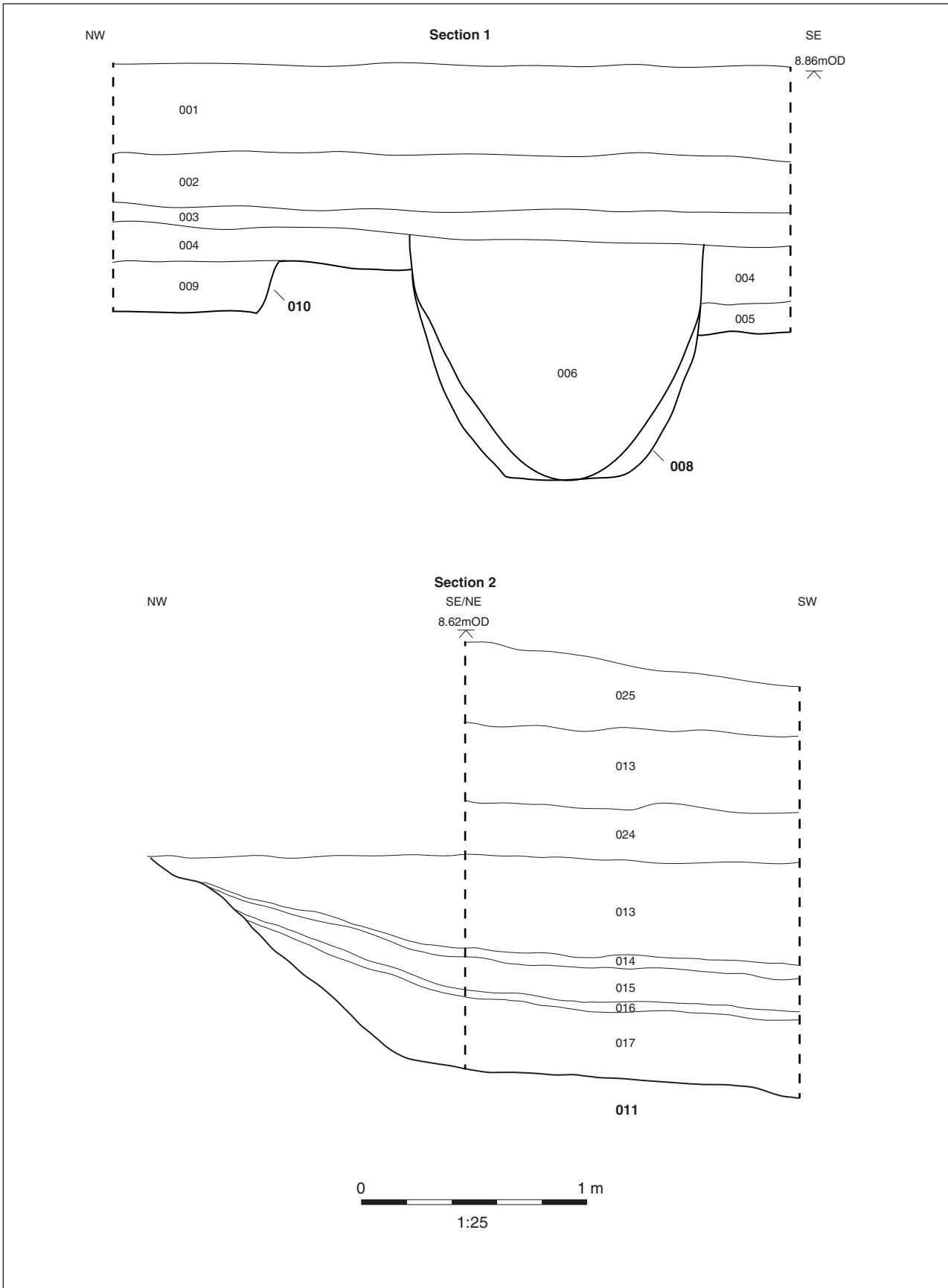


Figure 4: Sections of pits 8 and 11

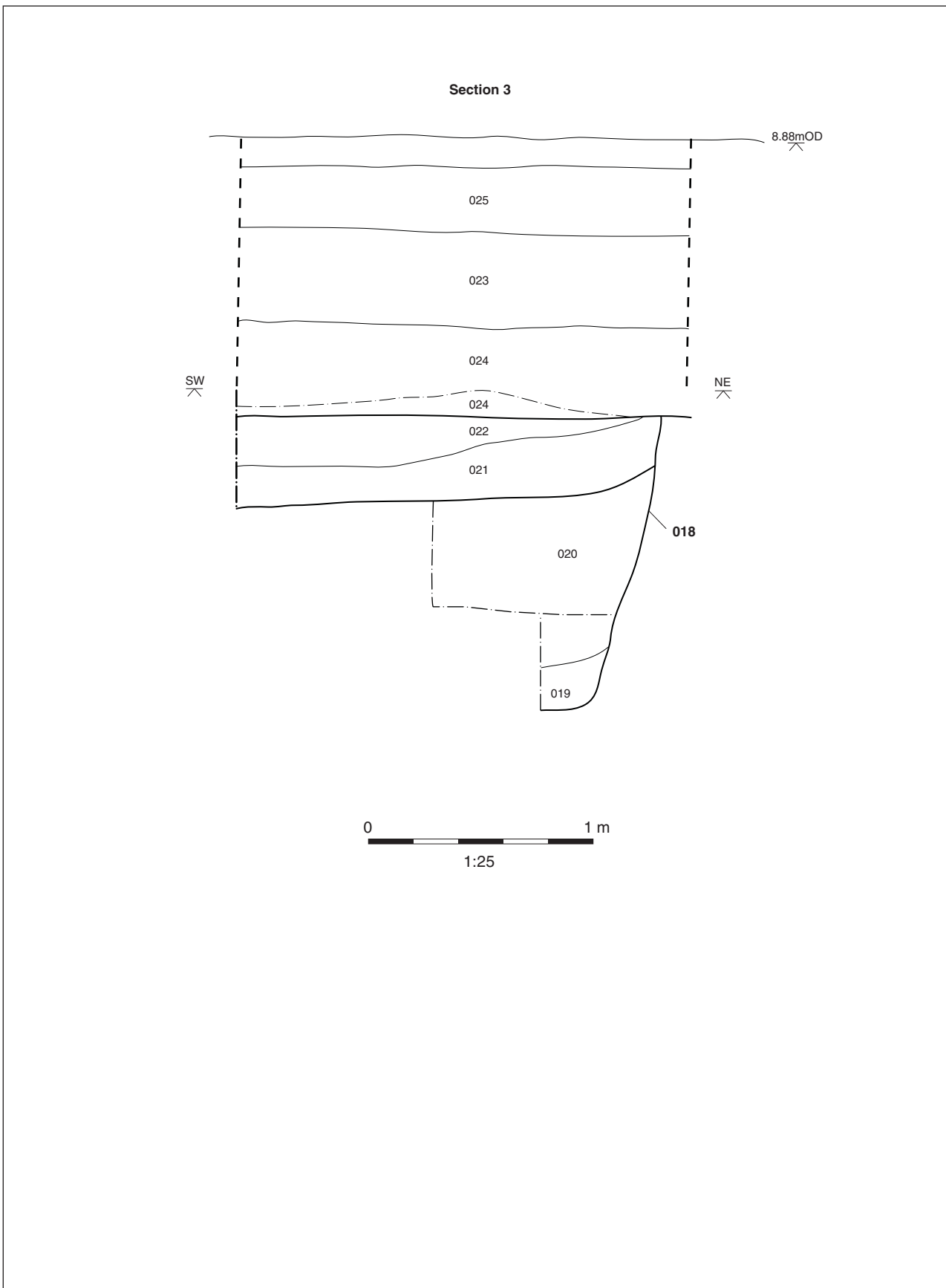


Figure 5: Section of pit 18



Plate 2: Trench 2 from the south-east



Plate 1: Trench 1 from the north-west



Plate 4: Pit 18 from the south



Plate 3: Pit 11 from the south-east



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