

Works to the south of David S Smith packaging site Fordham Road Fordham



Archaeological Evaluation Report



September 2015

Client: SDC Builders LTD

OA East Report No: 1836

OASIS No: oxfordar3-224439

NGR: TL 6328 6808

Works to the south of David S Smith packaging site, Fordham Road, Fordham

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: September 2015

Report Number: 1836
Site Name: David S Smith Corrugated Limited, Fordham Road, Fordham
HER Event No: ECB4537
Date of Works: September 2015
Client Name: SDC Builders LTD
Client Ref:
Planning Ref: 15/00478/FUM
Grid Ref: TL 6328 6808
Site Code: ECB4537
Finance Code: FORFOR15
Receiving Body: CCC Stores

Accession No:

Prepared by: Anthony Haskins
Position: Fieldwork Project Officer
Date: 21st September 2015

Checked by: Aileen Connor
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 23rd September 2015

Signed:

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Summary

In September 2015, Oxford Archaeology East excavated five trenches to the south of the David S Smith site on Fordham Road, Fordham (TL 6328 6808). Two of the trenches were excavated onto undisturbed natural chalk. The remaining three trenches demonstrated evidence for extensive machine truncation of the natural chalk. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in any of the five trenches.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the southern end of the David S Smith site, Fordham Road, Fordham (TL 6328 6808).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 15/00478/FUM), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Connor 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 store in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the edge of two geological formations. Their boundary runs north-east to south-west. The bedrock, to the north, forms part of the West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation. To the south, the bedrock is part of the Zig Zag Chalk formation. There are no recorded overlying superficial deposits. Extensive deposits of alluvium and sand are located along the valley of the river Snail to the east of the development and near Fordham itself (British Geological Survey).
- 1.2.2 Fordham lies on a spit of typical argillic brown earth of the Moulton association. This runs north to south. On either side of this spit lie grey redzinas of the Wantage 2 association, with a small outcrop of earthy-amorphous peat of the Adventurers' 2 association to the east (SSEW 1983).
- 1.2.3 The River Snail lies 500m to the east of the site. New River is 200m to the west. The prehistoric fen edge is several kilometres to the west and north.
- 1.2.4 The proposed development site is situated at the base of a south facing slope that rises to 16m aOD to the north (towards Fordham Road). This forms the southern end of a low ridge on which Fordham and Soham are located, with low lying fen to both east and west. Low hills at c.30m aOD are located to the south, towards Exning, and east, at Snailwell, continuing south the land undulates but gradually rises in elevation, that reaches its peak southeast of Newmarket, at approximately 100m aOD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The proposed site lies within an area of high archaeological interest. During excavations preceding the construction of the Fordham Bypass, many Bronze and Iron Age finds and features were recorded (ECB747, ECB2043). In 1996, Cambridge Council Council excavated the area, now under the southern factory buildings, and found evidence of intense Bronze Age and Iron Age activity (MCB16109). To the north and west of the development, there are records of earthworks. There is also evidence for Roman and Iron Age settlement to the south and east.

Mesolithic

- 1.3.2 Three possible Mesolithic flint blades were found 900m to the north of the development site (HER 07433A). Seven other Mesolithic findspots are also present throughout the Fordham landscape.

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

- 1.3.3 Excavation prior to the construction of the Fordham Bypass (CB 14997), 600m north of the site, revealed an extensive area of buried land surface (Mortimer 2005). This contained a large Neolithic finds assemblage, and a probable Neolithic burial, along with pits dated between the early Neolithic and Early Iron Age.
- 1.3.4 The 1996 excavation, immediately and north of the proposed site (MCB16109), recovered Neolithic pottery and struck flints (Connor 1996). The evaluation of the factory site (MCB19626) recovered Beaker pottery, indicating domestic activity. Two ring-ditches were investigated, one with a burial at its centre. Other ditches contained Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age finds. A large assemblage of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age and Bronze Age pottery was also recovered from the site.
- 1.3.5 Further excavation work 800m north of the site and south of the Fordham bypass also revealed early prehistoric activity associated with the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (MCB19626; Gilmour 2015).

Bronze Age and Early Iron Age

- 1.3.6 Cropmarks and associated worked and burnt flints dating from the Bronze Age were found immediately north and approximately 900m north east of the site (CHER 07433 and CHER 07745 respectively). Other recorded but undated cropmarks, probably ring ditches and enclosures (HER 09025, 09026) are clustered to the north of the site. There is a ring ditch 250m south-east of the site and a rectangular enclosure 100m to the west (HER 11105 and 10314).
- 1.3.7 Excavation at the southern end of the Fordham Bypass (ECB 747), 800 metres north of the proposed site, found evidence of timber buildings, fence lines, and a field system, all of which date to between the Early Bronze Age and Late Iron Age. A large Late Bronze Age shaft was found dug into a solution hollow. Iron Age Quarry pits were also reported (Mortimer 2005).
- 1.3.8 The excavation area immediately north of the site (ECB 1736/MCB16109) revealed several phases of large sub-rectangular and D-shaped enclosures, as well as other smaller enclosures and ditches. Domestic features, finds, and these earthworks are evidence for occupation on the site from the Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age (Connor 1996).
- 1.3.9 Between the 1996 excavation site and the proposed development lies a sequence of parallel ditches, forming the southern boundary of the settlement. These ditches date to the latter phase of Bronze Age occupation (MCB16109).
- 1.3.10 Evidence for a number of Bronze Age barrows, burials, and cremations were recovered during excavation works to the north of Turners Yard (Gilmour 2015). A late Bronze Age cremation cemetery of 21 cremations was also recovered during these excavations.

Iron Age and Roman

- 1.3.11 Towards Snailwell, 1km south-east of the site, Iron Age material has been recorded (CHER 7742). 600m north-east of the development at Snailwell Fen, finds and features dating from the Iron Age and Roman period have been recorded (CHER 07435, CHER07745A, CHER07746). Fieldwalking in this area also reported the presence of several scatters of Roman and Iron Age pottery (MCB 20063).
- 1.3.12 Approximately 500m north-east of the proposed site is a designated Roman Villa (HER 07483). Excavation has dated the villa to the 1st and 2nd century. The presence of hypocaust and painted plaster suggests it may have been a significant building, but its extent is uncertain. One kilometre to the south-east of the development is an area of significant Roman archaeology including, a Roman cremation burial (HER07743, HER07434).
- 1.3.13 The Fordham Bypass excavations (CB14997) revealed what is thought to be a Roman road, running north-south, with a roadside ditch. A Roman inhumation was also excavated in this area. Another roadway, running NNE-SSW, dates to the late Roman period, with evidence of use into the early Saxon period (MCB16946). The line of the second road has also been identified in Exning village (Haskins 2014). Romano-British ditches were also identified during the excavation to the north of the Turners Yard (Gilmour 2015), although no finds or, settlement evidence were recovered.

Saxon and Early Medieval

- 1.3.14 The modern Fordham Road runs along a headland that may have been the route of the medieval road to Ely (MCB16946). Within Snailwell, Anglo-Saxon pottery has been recorded (HER07742A). Anglo-Saxon material was also recovered from the Fordham Bypass excavations (CB14997; Mortimer 2005).

Later medieval and Post-medieval

- 1.3.15 To the east of Newmarket Road, 2km north of the development, is the site of Fordham Abbey. The abbey is made up of several medieval structures and has ornamental gardens associated with it (HER12340).
- 1.3.16 To the west of the site in Fordham, around 1km away, is Saint Nicholas' Church. Originally built in 1445, it was added to and restored throughout the later medieval and post-medieval periods (CB14885).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Moomith Ullah of SDC Builders Ltd. for commissioning the work, and DS Smith Plc. for their assistance on site. Thanks also go to Lloyd Bisgrove for managing the site on behalf of SDC Builders Ltd. The author would also like to thank Aileen Connor (OA East), who managed the project and Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Services who monitored the works.
- 1.4.2 Finally, thanks go to the site staff, Anthony Haskins and Ashley Pooley as well as Charlotte Walton for her illustration, and the site surveyor, David Brown.

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 prepared by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team required a programme of linear trial trenching on a sample of the site. A total of five trenches measuring 30m x 2.1m were excavated.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by David Brown using a Leica CS10/GS08 DGPS.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All 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 environmental samples were collected. Samples for artefact retrieval were only taken from the topsoil in Trench 5 as the other trenches were contaminated with modern material. Metal detecting was also only carried out on Trench 5 for the same reason.
- 2.2.7 It was generally overcast during the works. The site remained dry throughout the works.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 During the machine stripping it became clear that trenches 2, 3, and 4 were cutting through an area that had been heavily disturbed during the construction of the David S Smith site. Therefore these trenches are presented together below. Trenches 1 and 5 were outside the disturbed area and are presented together. Context information is presented in Appendix A. No finds were recovered from any of the excavated Trenches. The artefact retrieval samples and metal detecting did not produce any finds.

3.2 Trenches 1 and 5 (Fig. 2 and Plates 1 & 2)

3.2.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1) was excavated through a 0.25m thick layer of modern topsoil (1) and a 0.15m thick layer of compressed soil (8), presumed to be the original topsoil. Modern material including plastic was recovered from both these layers. Two irregular features (4 and 6) were identified within the trench. The larger (6) was 4.6m by 0.7m in plan and had a depth of 0.08m. It contained a single fill (5) of light greyish-brown clayey silt. The smaller feature (4) was 1.45m by 0.65m and had a depth of 0.15m. It contained a single fill (3) of light greyish-brown clayey silt.

3.2.2 Trench 5 (Plate 2) was located outside the area of the disturbed ground on a north-east to south-west alignment. The trench was excavated through a 0.3m thick topsoil (1). No archaeological features were identified within the trench.

3.3 Trenches 2, 3, and 4 (Fig. 2 and Plate 3)

3.3.1 Trenches 2, 3, and 4 were excavated through an area of land built up during the construction of the David S Smith site in 1997. All three trenches were all excavated to at least 1m depth. A thin topsoil layer (1) c. 0.1m thick overlay a loose chalk-rich backfill (7) that produced modern material, including concrete stanchions, kerbs, and plastic.

3.3.2 Trench 2 (Plate 3) was the only trench excavated to the full depth of the modern deposits. This revealed a section 2.55m deep through several layers of redeposited natural and loose modern building rubble. The latter included plastic, concrete stanchions and kerbs. The natural chalk identified at the base of the trench was smooth and flat and was likely to have been machine truncated to this depth. It lay c.2m below the depth of the undisturbed natural in Trench 5.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Trenches 1 and 5

- 4.1.1 No archaeological deposits or features were identified within Trenches 1 and 5. Trench 1 was inside the area affected by the construction of the David S Smith site and may have been partially truncated. The two features located within this trench are likely to be modern tree throws from the copse removed before trenching began.
- 4.1.2 Trench 5 was outside the area altered during the construction of the DS Smith site and therefore contained undisturbed natural.

4.2 Trenches 2, 3, and 4

- 4.2.1 Any archaeological deposits within the area of these trenches are likely to have been removed by modern truncation.

4.3 Conclusion

- 4.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the evaluation and it is likely that the built-up bunded area has been heavily truncated during the construction works in 1997.

4.4 Recommendations

- 4.4.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	N-S
The Trench contained two probable tree throws. With overburden that consists of soil and a compressed soil overlying a natural chalk.					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	width (m)	depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
3	Fill	0.65	0.15	Fill of 4	-	-
4	Cut	0.65	0.15	Cut of tree throw	-	-
5	Fill	0.7	0.08	Fill of 6	-	-
6	Cut	0.7	0.08	Cut of tree throw	-	-
8	Layer	-	0.15	Compressed soil	-	-
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SSE
Trench excavated through topsoil and modern disturbed rubble and redeposited natural. Stepped out to 6m width					Avg. depth (m)	1.0
					Width (m)	2.1 – 6.0
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	width (m)	depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
7	Layer	-	2.45	Modern redeposited material	-	Modern (1997)
Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SSE
Trench excavated through topsoil and modern disturbed rubble and redeposited natural.					Avg. depth (m)	1.0
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	width (m)	depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
7	Layer	-	0.9	Modern redeposited material	-	Modern (1997)
Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	ENE-WSW

Trench excavated through topsoil and modern disturbed rubble and redeposited natural.					Avg. depth (m)	1.0
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	width (m)	depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
7	Layer	-	0.9	Modern redeposited material	-	Modern (1997)
Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Excavated through topsoil onto chalk natural.					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
					Width (m)	2.1
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	width (m)	depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	layer	-	0.35	Topsoil	-	-

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-224439			
Project Name	Works to the south of David S Smith packaging site, Fordham Road, Fordham			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	14-09-2015	Finish	15-09-2015
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ECB4537	Planning App. No.	15/00478/FUM
HER No.	ECB4537	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
Development Type	Rural Commercial

Please select all techniques used:

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

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

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

Monument	Period	Object	Period
none	Select period...	none	Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	East Cambridgeshire	Fordham Plant, Packaging Division, Fordham Road, Newmarket, CB8 7TX
Parish	Fordham	
HER	Cambridgeshire	
Study Area	6000 sq. m	National Grid Reference TL 6328 6808

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Gemma Stewart
Project Design Originator	Aileen Connor and Ted Levermore
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Anthony Haskins

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
N/A	OA East	CCC
N/A	ECB4537	ECB4537

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input 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 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 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:

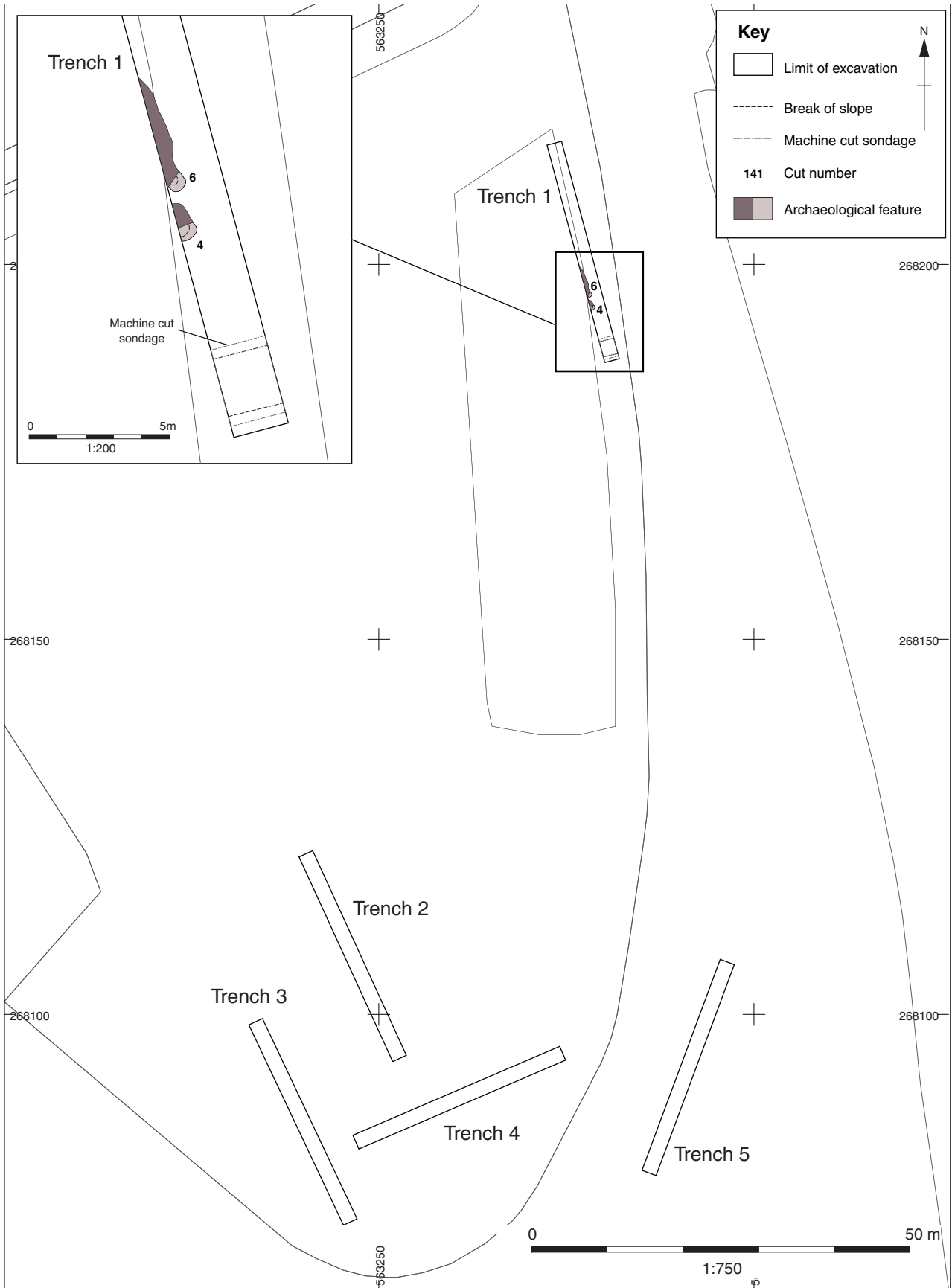


Figure 2: Plan of evaluation trenches



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 5, looking north-east



Plate 3: East-facing section of Trench 2, showing modern overburden



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