

# Evidence of Roman Settlement at Over Industrial Estate



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



August 2009

**Client: Chancery Resources Limited**

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## **Evidence Of Roman Settlement At Over Industrial Estate**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

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## Summary

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out on Plot 5 Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3790 6930) between 27th and 31st July 2009. Three trenches were located within the proposed development area. Archaeological features and deposits dating to the Roman period were located across the development area but were concentrated in the northernmost trench where at least two phases of activity were recorded interrupted by an episode of flooding. The pottery assemblage from features in the northern half of the site are of particular interest and indicate settlement in the near vicinity. Deposits of charred seeds and other plant remains were found in abundance and are evidence that arable farming and associated primary crop processing were taking place on the site or very close by.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Location and scope of work

An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Plot 5, Norman Way industrial Estate, Over, Cambridgeshire (TL 3790 6930). This document details the results of the evaluation.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application E/09/00078/FUL), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Aileen Connor (Oxford Archaeology East).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). 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.

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

The subject site lies approximately 1km south-east of the fen edge. Much of the western half of Over comprises fen land lying at about 3m AOD, the eastern half of the parish is on higher ground comprising largely Amphill Clay overlain by Pleistocene Till. The highest point in the parish of Over lies near Hill Farm which is about 18m AOD. The subject site is located in the eastern half of the parish on the higher ground at approximately 11m AOD. The river Ouse is located approximately 3km to the north of the site and the Swavesey Drain, a meandering waterway that follows the parish boundary between Over and Swavesey, flows approximately 2km to the south of the site.

### 1.3. Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric remains are mainly clustered in the north of the parish and none are known from close to the subject site.

The subject site is located along the south-western edge of Roman fen (Hall 1996, 158 Fig.88). This area was densely settled during the Roman period and Hall (1996, 159) remarks that “there were villas and the whole landscape was infilled with small rural settlements”. In the immediate vicinity of the subject site finds of Roman date have been found including pottery and a fragment of tile (CHER 07724). These finds may be associated with a double rectangular enclosure which can be seen as a cropmark (CHER 11133) to the east of the subject site and indicate the site of a Roman settlement. It is thought that the northern part of Over industrial estate has been built on part of this settlement. There are a number of other Roman settlement sites known in the vicinity (e.g. MCB9332, 13733, 13073). Recent archaeological work along the route of the Cambridge Guided Bus way has revealed an Iron Age/Roman settlement to the south of the subject site (MCB18477).

Domesday records Over in 1086 as “Ouere” meaning “the bank of the river” (Reaney 1943, 169) presumably referring to the river Ouse (or Old West River). Over was prosperous during



medieval times and stood at the junction of several major routes, including the road between two important markets (Cambridge and St Ives). Ramsey Abbey built a church here and attempted to organise the village around it (Taylor 1998, 69). Medieval remains are known in the area (e.g. MCB9333 and possibly MCB15759).

#### **1.4. Acknowledgements**

The author would like thank Adair Associates who commissioned the works and Chancery Resources Limited who funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor and the illustrator was Lucy Offord, with Jonathan House, Chris Faine and James Fairbairn as the on site staff.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Aims

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

The Brief required that evaluation should include a programme of linear trial trenching to adequately sample the threatened area and that sufficient archaeological features should be excavated and recorded to meet the project objectives.

Machine excavation of three trenches was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using a tracked 360 excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket. The trenches measured 50m, 35m, and 15m in length, all the trenches were one bucket width.

A Leica 1200GPS was used to locate the site to the Ordnance Survey and to provide a Temporary Bench Mark.

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 digital photographs and Black and white photographs with an SLR were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Environmental sampling targeted features with good potential for ecofact remains, five samples were taken.

The site was covered in overgrown mixed vegetation, and upon excavation showed signs of modern disturbance, particularly wide spread spoil movement resulting in truncation and displacement of topsoil and subsoil, possibly relating to previous construction work on the site. Several land drains were noted in two of the trenches and evidence of possible ridge and furrow in the most southerly trench.

The weather was changeable, but did not inhibit the excavation and recording of archaeological deposits.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1. Introduction

Three trenches were excavated, the results are presented and described by trench below.

#### 3.2. Trench 1

Trench 1 was located at the north end of the development area, the trench measured 1.8m wide and 15m in length. Top soil had been partially truncated in some areas leaving it variable in thickness (0.07m to 0.29m). The archaeological features were separated into two distinct phases by a 0.23m thick, possible alluvial layer of mid greenish yellow silty clay (104).

##### Early Roman (Features sealed by layer 104)

Pit **103** was circular and steep sided and contained no finds, it was cut by a sub-circular shallow pit **101**, which contained 10 sherds of a mid 1st to mid 2nd century pottery jar and fragments of animal bone. Both pits were clearly sealed by layer 104.

At the south end of the trench was a series of inter-cutting features (Fig. 3, Section 12). These comprised a pit or ditch terminus (**124**) that contained one small sherd of Roman pottery. It was truncated by two U-shaped ditches (**122** and **126**), the former was aligned east to west and appears to have terminated in the trench, the latter (**126**) was aligned north to south. Both these features were cut by a shallow ditch (**120**), aligned east to west and filled with black silty clay. The latest feature was a small circular steep sided pit (**115**) that cut ditch **120**. No finds were found in these features which were all clearly sealed by layer 104.

**Layer 104/118** was 0.23m thick and comprised a mid-dark greenish yellow clay. The layer was initially identified as a subsoil lying directly below topsoil, however, it both sealed and was cut by features of Roman date. The layer was present along most of the length of the trench although it appears to have suffered recent truncation at the north end, Unfortunately no finds were recovered from the layer itself and its origin is not fully understood but may be the result of one or more episodes of flooding. The layer was present in all three trenches and was recorded as layer 143 in trench 2 and layer 139 in trench 3.

##### Later Roman Features (cutting layer 104)

Four features (three pits and a ditch) were clearly later than layer 104. Two of the pits (**128** and **130**) were observed only in section on the east side of the trench. They were filled by a similar very dark brownish grey silt. Pit **128** was cut by a large rectangular pit (**105**), filled by complex layers of redeposited greyish yellow clays interleaved with lenses of black silt which contained large quantities of burnt seeds, cereal grains (samples 1 and 2). A lower fill contained one sherd of Early Roman pottery and another (**110**) contained seeds of duckweed which must have derived from a waterlogged context. The uppermost black silt fill (**106**) contained 53 large unabraded sherds of pottery dating to the mid 2nd to 3rd century AD.

Ditch (**117**) was located some metres to the south on an east to west alignment. It was a shallow (0.18m deep), flat bottomed ditch (1m wide) filled with dark grey silty clay (**116**), two small sherds of Roman pottery suggest a Roman date for this feature.

#### 3.3. Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned north to south and was 1.8m wide and 50m in length. Modern truncation and dumping was evident along much of its length but was more marked towards the south. An

area in the centre of the trench was very disturbed by field drains. The trench was up to 0.82m in depth where it encountered layers of recently dumped materials (gravel, clay and topsoil).

### **Features sealed by layer 143**

Most of the archaeological features in trench 2 appeared to have been sealed beneath a layer of mid greenish yellow clay (143) similar to 104 in trench 1. A broad (3m wide) linear feature, possibly a ditch crossed the trench at the northern end on an approximately east to west orientation. The feature was filled with a pale grey slightly silty clay, it was not excavated. Two small pits were located to the south of the ditch, both contained patches of black silt and reddened burnt clay. Both pits were approximately 0.70m wide. Pit **141** was approximately 0.20m deep and contained a single layer (140) of mid yellowish brown silty sandy clay mottled throughout with lenses of burnt clay. The base of the pit was reddened suggesting either in situ burning or deposition of hot ashes.

A third possible pit or post hole was located at the north end of the trench. This was approximately 0.40m in diameter and filled with a very pale greyish brown clay, only slightly different in colour to the natural clay through which it was cut. Feature **149** is likely to be more than one feature; a sub-circular pit filled with a dark grey silt, possibly cutting a ditch terminus filled with a pale grey silty clay. Two sherds of pottery recovered from the surface of the pit (148) were Roman in date.

Pit **145** (Fig. 3, Section 9) was partially obscured beyond the edges of the trench. It was probably rectangular or square in shape and at least 1m by 1m in plan and 0.35m deep. It was filled with dark yellowish brown silty clay (144) mottled throughout with flecks of charcoal and burnt clay, no finds were recovered from it, but a sample (4) produced a good assemblage of charred cereal grains and weed seeds.

Only two features were present at the south end of the trench (a small pit and a ditch). These were both filled with a pale reddish brown clean silty clay that contained only a few unidentifiable fragments of animal bone. The ditch (**150**) was aligned north-east to south-west, was very shallow (0.24m) and was 0.80m wide.

Layer 143 sealed all except one of the archaeological features in trench 2. Layer 143 was almost certainly the same as layer 104 in trench 1 and was similar in thickness and comprised a mid-dark greenish yellow clay. The layer was present along most of the length of the trench and was sealed beneath several layers of modern dumped material in the southern half of the trench. No finds were recovered from it.

### **Features cutting layer 143**

Ditch **146** was orientated north-east to south-west, it was 0.95m wide and 0.43m deep with a broad U-shaped profile. It was filled with a dark grey silt flecked throughout with charcoal. A sample (4) from the fill (147) produced a good assemblage of charred weed seeds and cereal grains including free-threshing wheat. A small sherd of Roman pottery and a tiny fragment of animal bone was also recovered.

## **3.4. Trench 3**

Trench 3 was located at the southern end of the development area, it was 1.8m wide and 50m long on an east to west alignment. It was heavily disturbed by modern earth moving activity, although this seemed primarily to comprise dumping rather than major truncation (Fig. 3, Section 7) as well as several land drains on the same alignment as those seen in Trench 2. The trench was up to 1.05m in depth where it cut through modern dumps of topsoil, clay and gravel. Two possible archaeological features were located in this trench. Pit **135** was oval in shape (0.6m wide and 1.3m long) and quite shallow (0.20m). It was filled with a dark bluish grey

silty clay but contained no finds. It was probably sealed by layer 139 although this was not confirmed. Layer 139 was observed across most of the trench, it was similar to 104 and 143 in trenches 1 and 2 and may be a continuation of that layer. At the western end of the trench a shallow linear feature (**133**) 0.10m deep and 2.5m wide cut through layer 139. It had an irregular base and may be the remains of medieval ridge and furrow, it contained no finds.

### **3.5. Finds and Environmental Summary**

A total of 70 sherds, weighing 1.623kg, of Romano-British pottery were recovered from seven contexts. Most of the pottery was recovered from a single mid-late Roman pit (**105**). The majority of the pottery is relatively fresh with an average sherd weight of 23g. Evidence for use and wear has survived, indicating low levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as might occur from middening, ploughing and water damage). This is a relatively small assemblage providing evidence for continuous settlement from the Mid 1st century AD through to the late 3rd/early 4th century AD. The assemblage is typical of a utilitarian domestic assemblage recovered from low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105).

Tiny amounts of animal bones were found in four contexts. None of the bones were identifiable to species.

Five soil samples were collected and processed in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts. All samples contained plant remains preserved by carbonisation. Preservation is good although the plant remains appear to have been subjected to high temperature burning, and one sample contained evidence for waterlogging at some time in the past. The samples contained evidence for arable farming, crop processing and fuel.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1. Prehistoric?**

The three archaeological features at the south end of the site may be evidence of a pre-Roman phase of activity. All three features (a ditch and two small pits) were filled by heavily leached clay, and the small amount of animal bone found in the ditch was particularly decayed, possibly implying a greater age. There was, however, no other dating evidence and these features could equally be Early Roman.

### **4.2. Roman 1st to 2nd Century**

The earliest phase of occupation is characterised by a series of pits and ditches sealed by a layer of clay thought to represent one or more possible flooding episodes. Although features belonging to this phase were scattered throughout the trenches, the majority (and all of those that contained meaningful finds) were located in trench 1 at the north end of the subject site. The relatively few finds (13 sherds of pottery) recovered from features belonging to this phase suggest a date in the 1st or 2nd century AD, although most of the pottery (10 sherds) was found in one pit. One soil sample was collected from a phase 1 pit in trench 2 and shows that crop processing and arable farming was taking place during this earliest phase of occupation. A complex of intercutting features (in trench 1) have been assigned to this earliest phase and demonstrate that parts of the site saw heavy use which perhaps belies the lack of cultural material.

The end of this phase was clearly marked by the deposition of a layer of clay across the whole of the site. It has not been possible to date this layer directly, although by inference it might be assumed to date to somewhere around the 2nd century. Assigning a closer date and interpreting the processes by which this layer was deposited would be a clear objective should

any further archaeological work need to be undertaken on this site. It is possible that the layer was deposited as the result of episodic flooding, and this might help to provide evidence towards improving current understanding of how this part of the fenland landscape changed throughout the Roman period. In the early part of the period the evidence points to a gradual drying out of the landscape due to marine regression and various deliberate attempts at drainage, thus making former wetlands available for settlement and agricultural production (Taylor 2007, 151). Work on pottery assemblages from Cold Harbour Farm excavated by W.G. Simpson (Phillips 1970, 189) in the 1950s led to the conclusion that there had been a period of severe flooding that temporarily took marginal agricultural land out of production, however recent work has questioned this and it is suggested that “the present picture is one of gradual encroachment of the fen upslope throughout the Roman period” (Evans and Hodder 2006, 450). Whatever the case it is clear that on this site there was a clear break in arable farming that led to or was caused by processes resulting in the deposition of an extensive clay layer.

#### **4.3. Roman 2nd to 3rd Century**

The features cutting through the putative flood deposit appear to be late 2nd to mid 3rd century in date based on the pottery typology, although some 4th century pieces are also present so a more accurate date may be rather later. It is important to note that as with the earliest phase, the majority of the pottery was collected from a single pit (53 out of a total of 57 sherds), this feature also produced the best environmental results. Clear evidence for primary crop processing indicates that the subject site is on or very near to a focus of activity relating to agricultural production. The pottery assemblage, whilst obviously not suffering from reworking is typical of a relatively low status (farming) settlement. Most of the pottery is utilitarian and would have been used for small scale storage of dry goods, cooking and serving food. The presence of mortaria in this phase is interesting as it is a specialised vessel used in the preparation of foods such as herbs and spices. The lack of animal bones is worth noting, although this may be due to preservation bias and the assemblage is in any case too small to draw any conclusions.

#### **4.4. Post-Roman**

Other than several land drains and recent geotechnical test pits only one archaeological feature (a probable furrow in trench 3) may be post Roman in date. Ridge and furrow is a characteristic of medieval and early post-medieval farming practices and is often recognised by distinctive cropmarks or earthworks.

#### **4.5. Significance**

The presence of a double rectangular enclosure (CHER 11133) adjacent to the subject site shows that the remains of a Roman settlement/farmstead lie in close proximity. The most significant remains are located at the northern end of the development area and are largely confined to the northern third of the site. This area of the subject site has produced small but significant assemblages of pottery and charred plant remains. The remains are characteristic of a relatively low status arable farm with good evidence for primary crop processing. The subject site appears to be located on the southern edge of this activity, possibly breaking into fields to the south. It is likely that further good assemblages of pottery and charred plant remains are present on the site, particularly in the northern area, the likelihood of recovering similar remains diminishes to the south. The presence of an extensive clay layer (possibly flood related) is significant for its potential to contribute to questions relating to the changing land-use of this

area of the fens. In conclusion part of the development area appears to be located on the southern extremity of a large Roman rural settlement or farmstead and has provided an opportunity to record another instance of a settlement being significantly affected by rising groundwater and overbank flooding. The site has some potential to contribute towards an understanding of Roman settlement and how it was affected by periodic flood episodes, common in fenland locations. East Anglian Research Agendas (Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott and Brown 2008) identifies a number of broad Research Themes towards which this site has the potential to contribute. These include, but are not limited to:

- Roman Rural Settlements and Landscapes
- Characterisation of the Roman agricultural norm
- Production of Food

#### **4.6. Recommendations**

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office of Cambridgeshire County Council.

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## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench has seen a degree of truncation very little top soil, features observed below turf, there was also a sub soil, which also sealed features.					Avg. depth (m)	0.49
					Width (m)	2.10
					Length (m)	37.70
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Fill	0.5	0.22	Fill of Pit 101	Pot, bone	MC1-MC2
101	Cut	0.5	0.22	Cut of sub circular Pit	-	-
102	Fill	0.7	0.5	Fill of Pit 103		-
103	Cut	0.7	0.5	Cut of circular Pit		-
104	Layer	-	0.23	?Flood deposit		-
105	Cut	≥1.8	≥1.4	Cut of rectangular Pit	-	-
106	Fill	≥2.62	0.9	Fill of Pit 105	Pot, bone	MC2-C3
107	Fill	≥1.82	0.09	Fill of Pit 105		-
108	Fill	≥0.65	0.02	Fill of Pit 105 Tipping lens		-
109	Fill	≥0.89	0.08	Fill of Pit 105		-
110	Fill	≥1.30	0.02	Fill of Pit 105 Tipping lens		-
111	Fill	≥2.40	0.22	Fill of Pit 105		-
112	Fill	≥0.96	0.08	Fill of Pit 105		-
113	Fill	0.6	0.3	Fill of Pit 115		-
114	Fill	0.4	0.2	Fill of Pit 115		-
115	Cut	0.6	0.5	Cut of circular Pit	-	-
116	Fill	1	0.18	Fill of Ditch 117	Pot	MC1-C4
117	Cut	1	0.18	Cut of shallow Ditch	-	-
118	Layer	1.6	0.2	Same As 104?		-
119	Fill	1.6	0.2	Fill of Ditch 120		-
120	Cut	1.6	0.4	Cut of shallow Ditch		-
121	Fill	1.25	0.6	Fill of Ditch terminus 122		-
122	Cut	1.25	0.6	Cut of Ditch terminus	-	-
123	Fill	0.8	0.6	Fill of Pit 124	Pot	MC1-C4
124	Cut	0.8	0.6	Cut of truncated Pit	-	-
125	Fill	0.5	0.2	Fill of Ditch 126		-
126	Cut	0.5	0.2	Cut of Ditch		-
127	Fill	≥0.91	≥0.12	Fill of Pit 105		-
128	Cut	1.22	0.5	Cut of truncated Pit	-	-

129	Fill	1.22	0.5	Fill of Pit 128	Pot	MC1-MC2
130	Cut	0.51	0.14	Cut of Pit / Post Hole	-	-
131	Fill	0.51	0.14	Fill of Pit / Post Hole 130	-	-
<b>Trench 2</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	N-S
Trench had a top soil and sub soil, but in the southern half of the trench there was a lot of modern truncation. In the area of the truncation, there was a lot of made ground.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.82
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1.8
					<b>Length (m)</b>	50
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
140	Fill	0.8	0.2	Fill of Pit 141		-
141	Cut	0.8	0.2	Cut of oval Pit		-
142	Layer	-	0.6	Top soil		-
143	Layer	-	0.2	?Flood deposit		-
144	Fill	1.3	0.4	Fill of Pit 145		-
145	Cut	1.3	0.4	Cut of circular Pit		-
146	Cut	0.95	0.43	Cut of Ditch	-	-
147	Fill	0.95	0.43	Fill of Ditch 146	Pot, bone	MC1-C4
148	Fill	≥1.05	-	Not Excavated	Pot	MC1-C4
149	Cut	≥1.05	-	Not Excavated	-	-
150	Cut	0.81	0.24	Cut of Ditch	-	-
151	Fill	0.81	0.24	Fill of Ditch 150	Bone	-
<b>Trench 3</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	E-W
Trench has high degree of truncation and made ground, top soil within the trench was varied.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	1.05
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1.8
					<b>Length (m)</b>	40
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
132	Fill	1.3	0.1	Fill of Furrow 133	None	-
133	Cut	1.3	0.1	Cut of Furrow	-	-
134	Fill	0.6	0.2	Fill of Pit 135	None	-
135	Cut	0.6	0.2	Cut of circular Pit	-	-
136	Layer	-	0.18	Made ground	-	Modern
137	Layer	-	0.23	Made ground	-	Modern
138	Layer	-	0.26	Made ground	-	Modern
139	Layer	-	0.19	?Flood deposit	-	-

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## APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

### 1 Pottery

*By Stephen Wadeson*

#### 1.1. Introduction

A total of 70 sherds, weighing 1.623kg, of Romano-British pottery were recovered during the evaluation at Plot 5, Over Industrial Estate, Cambridgeshire (OVE INE 09). The majority of the pottery is relatively fresh with an average sherd weight of 23g. Evidence for use and wear has survived, indicating low levels of post-depositional disturbance (such as middening, ploughing and water damage).

#### 1.2. Methodology

The assemblage was examined in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Study Group for Roman Pottery (Webster 1976; Darling 2004; Willis 2004). The total assemblage was studied and a preliminary catalogue was prepared. The sherds were examined using a magnifying lens (x10 magnification) and were divided into fabric groups defined on the basis of inclusion types present. The fabric codes are descriptive and abbreviated by the main letters of the title (Sandy grey ware = SGW) vessel form was also recorded.

The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

#### 1.3. Quantification

All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed to the nearest whole gram. Decoration and abrasion were also noted and a spot date has been provided for each individual sherd and context.

#### 1.4. The assemblage

The majority of the pottery recovered is of an utilitarian nature with locally produced domestic coarse wares (reduced and oxidised) and shell tempered wares forming the majority of the assemblage. Used for small scale storage of dry goods, vessels were often used for both cooking and serving food.

Sandy grey wares, c.38% (by weight) form the majority of the Romano-British pottery assemblage. Present in a range of forms including jars and dishes they are typical of locally produced coarse wares. Pottery of this type is commonly found in most domestic assemblages in this region throughout the Roman period.

The partial remains of a single Shell tempered storage jar accounts for a further c.33% (by weight) of the assemblage. Unsourced sherds such as these and can be difficult to date unless rims are present within the assemblage. However it is certain that the forms produced and their place of production changed throughout the Roman period. It is probable that much of early Roman shell tempered wares were produced in the Lower Nene Valley between the 1st and 3rd centuries (Perrin 1996).

Only five sherds of fine wares were identified within the assemblage and include both domestic and continental produced wares. These include four sherds of Nene Valley colour coated wares (Tomber and Dore 1998, 118), produced in the Lower Nene Valley and centred on the Roman town of Durobrivae (Water Newton).

In addition a single sherd from a Drag. 31R samian bowl was recovered. Produced at Lezoux (AD 120-200) in Central Gaul (Tomber and Dore 1998, 32) the bowl can be dated to the mid Antonine period (AD160+).

Specialist wares are limited to just four partially burnt sherds of mortaria from the Lower Nene Valley, Cambridgeshire (Tomber and Dore 1998, 119).

## 1.5. Discussion

The majority of the assemblage is of an utilitarian nature with locally produced domestic coarse wares (reduced and oxidised) and shell tempered wares forming the bulk of the assemblage. Specialist wares are poorly represented within this assemblage, however the presence of mortaria may indicate that the local population were adopting Romanised methods of food preparation, involving the grinding of herbs and spices and the production of sauces, or were simply becoming more affluent (Lyons 2008).

The limited number of continental imports within the assemblage, a single sherd of Central Gaulish samian, is typical of low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105) while the presence of Nene Valley wares, on this and other sites in the region is due to the proximity of the site to the production centres of the Nene Valley. This often results in the dominance of Nene Valley colour coats over other fine wares, with the result that the presence of Nene Valley colour coats acts as a chronological indicator for the site rather than one of status.

## 1.6. Conclusion

This is a relatively small assemblage providing evidence for continuous settlement from the Mid 1st century AD through to the late 3rd/early 4th century AD. Consistent with other Roman sites in the surrounding area the assemblage is typical of a utilitarian domestic assemblage recovered from low order settlements within this region (Evans 2003, 105). Although not the focus of a settlement itself the small number of sherds recovered from site and their condition would suggest they are likely to derive from a Romano-British settlement or farmstead nearby, possibly associated with the cropmark site to the north-east of the site (CHER 111333).

## 1.7. Sampling Bias

The excavation of evaluation trenches was carried out by hand and selection made through standard sampling strategies on a feature by feature basis. There are not expected to be any inherent biases. Where bulk samples have been processed for environmental and artefactual remains, there has also been some recovery of pottery. These are a small quantity of abraded sherds which have been quantified, and added to the catalogue.

## 1.8. Statement of Potential

This preliminary assessment has shown the assemblage has potential to answer a range of local and regional research aims. A more detailed analysis of this assemblage combined with the results of future excavations would undoubtedly allow us to increase our knowledge of pottery manufacture, use, trade and exchange in this area during the Romano-British period.

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Alice Lyons, OA East for her time, support and specialist knowledge of Roman pottery and Carole Fletcher, OA East for her time and patience.

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## The Pottery Catalogue

Ctxt (Cut)	Fabric	Des.	Form	Qty	Wt (Kg)	Spot date	Context date	Comments	
100 (101)	SGW	U	JAR	10	0.167	MC1-MC2	MC1-MC2	Oxidised margins and inner surface	
106 (105)	NVOW	UR B	MORT	4	0.395	C3-C4	MC2-C3	Burnt	
106 (105)	CGSAM	U	DRAG. 31R BOWL	1	0.015	MC2		AD160+ M-L Antonine	
106 (105)	STW	U	S/JAR	19	0.541	C1-C3			
106 (105)	NVCC	UB		4	0.037	MC2-C3		?Beaker	
106 (105)	SGW	UR B	SHALLOW DISH	1	0.066	C2-C4		Black slip	
106 (105)	SGW	RU	CARINATED BOWL?	1	0.132	MC1-MC2		Remnant	
106 (105)	SGW	UB		3	0.031	MC1-C4			
106 (105)	SGW	UR B	DISH	3	0.096	MC2-C4		?Mica dusted	
106 (105)	SGW	UR		4	0.011	MC1-C4			
106 (105)	SGW	U		9	0.049	MC1-C4		?One vessel	
106 (105)	SGW	U		3	0.005	MC1-C4		Misc sherds	
106 (105)	SGW	U		1	0.002	MC1-C4			Sample 2
116 (117)	SGW	RB	JAR	2	0.015	MC1-C4		MC1-C4	
123 (124)	SGW (mica)	U		1	0.011	MC1-C4	MC1-C4		
129 (128)	SGW	U		1	0.020	MC1-MC2	MC1-MC2	Oxidised margin	
147 (146)	SGW	U		1	0.003	MC1-C4	MC1-C4	Sample 5	
148 (149)	SGW	U		1	0.006	MC1-C4	MC1-C4		
148 (149)	OW (gritty)	U	?DISH	1	0.021	MC1-C4		Internal groove Linear combing	
<b>Total</b>				<b>70</b>	<b>1.623</b>				

**Key:** C=Century, E=Early, M=Mid, L=Late.

R=Rim, U=Undecorated body sherd, D=Decorated body sherd, B=Base.

## APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By Rachel Fosberry

### 1.1. Introduction and Methods

Five bulk samples were taken from features within the evaluated areas of the Norman Way Industrial Estate Site, Over, Cambridgeshire in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

The samples were soaked in a solution of sodium carbonate for five days prior to processing in order to break down the clay component of the sample.

Up to twenty litres of each sample were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 1

### 1.2. Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Sample Size (L)	Comments	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Chaff	Weed Seeds	Modern Seeds	Snails from flot	Charcoal <2mm	Charcoal > 2mm	Flot comments	Residue Volume (ml)	Small animal bones	Large animal bones	Pottery	Fired Clay
1	106	105	pit	20	pit containing nine fills. This fill had lots finds	250	###	###	###	0	0	++	+	Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases and spikelet forks, Avena sp. Grains, , Avena sterilis floret, Anthemis cotula, Large and small ,Poaceae, Bromus, Chenopodium, Rumex, Polygonaceae,	1200	0	0	0	0
2	110	105	pit	10	1cm lens of dark organic material near base of pit(not lowest fill)	120	###	###	###	0	0	++	+	Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases and spikelet forks, Avena sp. Grains, , Avena sterilis floret , Large and small ,Poaceae, Bromus, Chenopodium, Rumex, Polygonum, Lemna, un-id seeds	600	0	#	#	0
3	140	141	pit	20	pit containing burning and charcoal	35	#	##	##	#	#	+	+	Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases , Chenopodium, Scirpus,, un-id seeds, rootlets	600	0	0	0	0
4	144	145	pit	20	pit contained some burning	50	##	#	##	#	#	+	+	Triticum sp. Grains (mixed) , T. spelta glume bases , Urtica,	600	0	0	0	0
5	147	146	ditc h	20	base of ditch, dark fill - no finds	60	##	###	#	#	#	+	+	Triticum sp. Grains, T. spelta glume bases , Bromus	600	#	0	#	#

Table 1. Results

### 1.3. Quantification

Archaeological materials such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded according to the following categories

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

Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored as follows

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

### 1.4. Preservation

All samples contain plant remains preserved by carbonisation. Preservation is good although the plant remains appear to have been subjected to high temperature burning.

Sample 2, context 110, pit **105** contains calcined seeds of duckweed (*Lemna* sp.) suggesting that this feature once contained water.

### 1.5. Plant Remains

#### *Cereals and chaff*

The charred plant remains assemblage is dominated by chaff, predominantly in the form of Spelt glume bases with rachis segments and occasional spikelet forks. Charred cereal grains are present in all of the samples; Spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) predominates although grains of free-threshing wheat are present in Sample 4. Grains of wild oat (*Avena sativa/fatua*) are abundant in Samples 1 and 2 and have been identified by the distinctive articulation scar on the well-preserved florets.

#### *Weed seeds*

Samples contain moderate quantities of seeds preserved by charring including brome (*Bromus* sp.), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), large and small grass seeds (Poaceae), goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp), dock (*Rumex* sp.), knotweeds (*Polygonum* sp.) and nettle (*Urtica* sp.) along with some un-identified seeds.

### 1.6. Ecofacts and Artefacts

Two of the samples contain occasional sherds of pottery.

A few fragments of animal bone and small bones were recovered from the residues of Samples 3 and 5.

### 1.7. Contamination

Modern seeds and/or roots were present in Samples 3, 4 and 5. It should be noted that Samples 1 and 2 did not contain any contaminants at all.

### 1.8. Discussion

The presence of grains, chaff and weed seeds (probably associated with the cereal crops) is an important indication that crop processing was taking place nearby. This crop-processing waste may subsequently have been burnt as fuel before being dumped into nearby pits and ditches.

Cereal grains are present in all of the samples and represent both discrete possibly deliberately burnt deposits and general scattering of grain preserved by accidental burning.



Wheat grains are difficult to identify on the basis of morphology alone. The presence of substantial quantities of the distinctive spelt glume bases indicates that the droplet shaped grains are *Triticum spelta* and the more rounded grains are free-threshing wheats.

The seed assemblage is consistent with arable farming and the presence of stinking mayweed (*A. cotula*) indicates that heavy clay soils were being cultivated.

Although oats are a cultivated crop during the Roman period, the form present in this assemblage are of the smaller, non-cultivated variety that would have been a crop contaminant. These seeds could have been discarded along with the other weed seeds and chaff through the sieving stage of crop processing in which the grains are separated out from the rest of the material.

### **1.9. Statement of Research Potential**

This assemblage clearly shows that the site at Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over is likely to provide a well preserved charred plant remains assemblage with excellent potential to provide evidence that would contribute towards current research aims relating to the utilisation of local plant resources, agricultural activity and economy in the Roman period.

### **Bibliography**

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## APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-63162		
Project Name	Plot 5 Over Industrial Estate		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	27-07-2009	Finish	31-07-2009
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Yes

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	OVEINE 09	Planning App. No.	No.S/1453/08
HER No.	ECB 3228	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Development Type	Rural Commercial

### Please select all techniques used:

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

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

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

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Settlement	Roman 43 to 410	Pottery	Roman 43 to 410
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	South Cambs	Plot 5, Over Industrial Estate Over, Cambs, CB4 5QE
Parish	Over	
HER	Cambridgeshire County council	
Study Area	3500m2	National Grid Reference TL 3790 6930

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas Cambridge County Council
Project Design Originator	Aileen Connor
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Jonathan House

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Landbeach	Bar Hill Office	Landbeach
OVE INE 09	OVE INE 09	OVE INE 09

### Archive Contents/Media




	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 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 type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
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<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:**

## Drawing Conventions

### Plans

Limit of Excavation	—————
Deposit - Conjectured	-----
Natural Features	—————
Sondages/Machine Strip	- - - - -
Intrusion/Truncation	.....
Illustrated Section	<u>                  S.14                  </u>
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit/Field Drain	
Cut Number	<b>118</b>

### Sections

Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	—————
Cut-Conjectured	-----
Deposit Horizon	—————
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	-----
Intrusion/Truncation	.....
Top Surface/Top of Natural	—————
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	- - - - -
Cut Number	<b>118</b>
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^
Clay inclusions	

### Convention Key

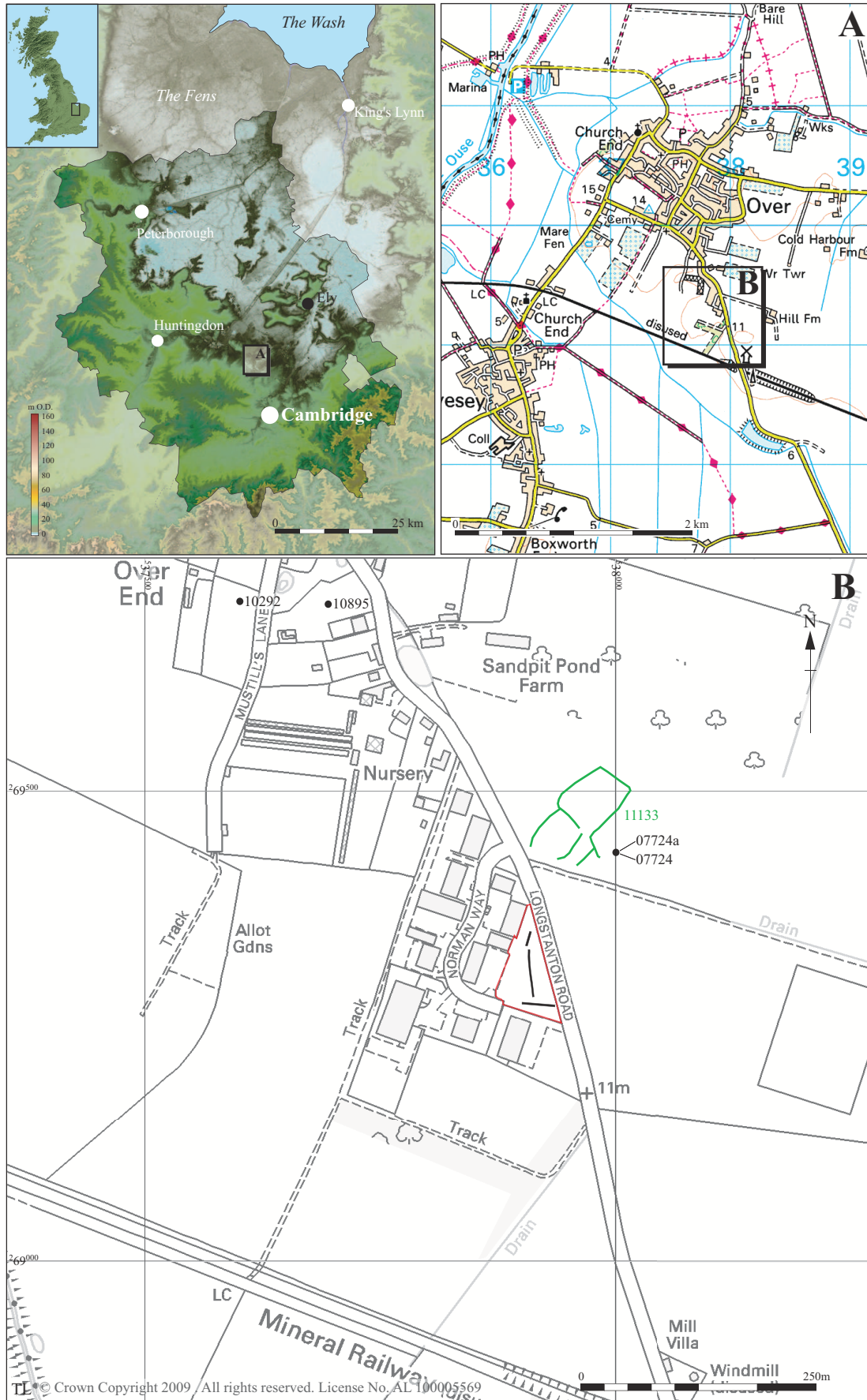


Figure 1: Location of trenches with the development area outlined (red), cropmarks (green) and HER data

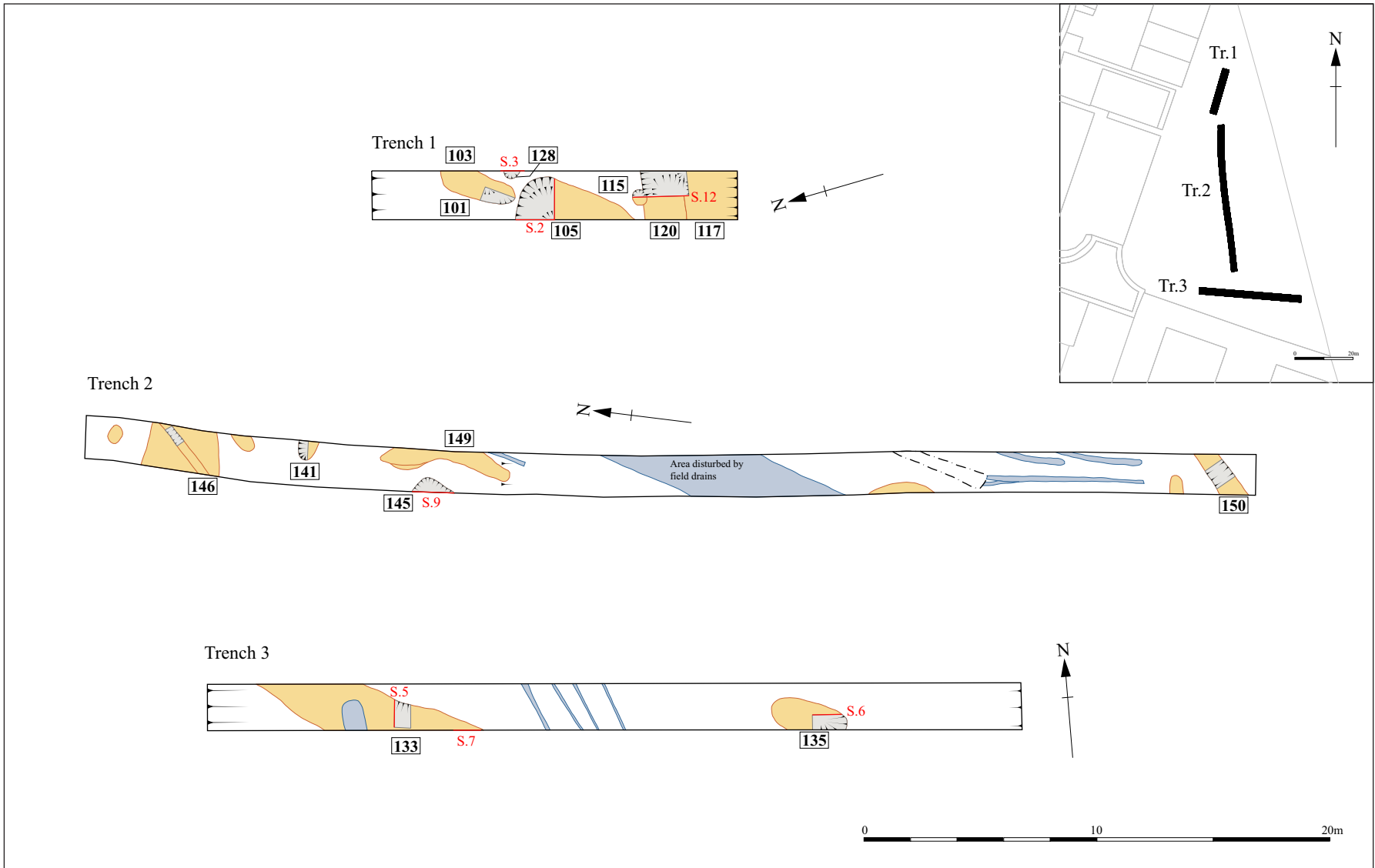


Figure 2: Trench plans (1:250)

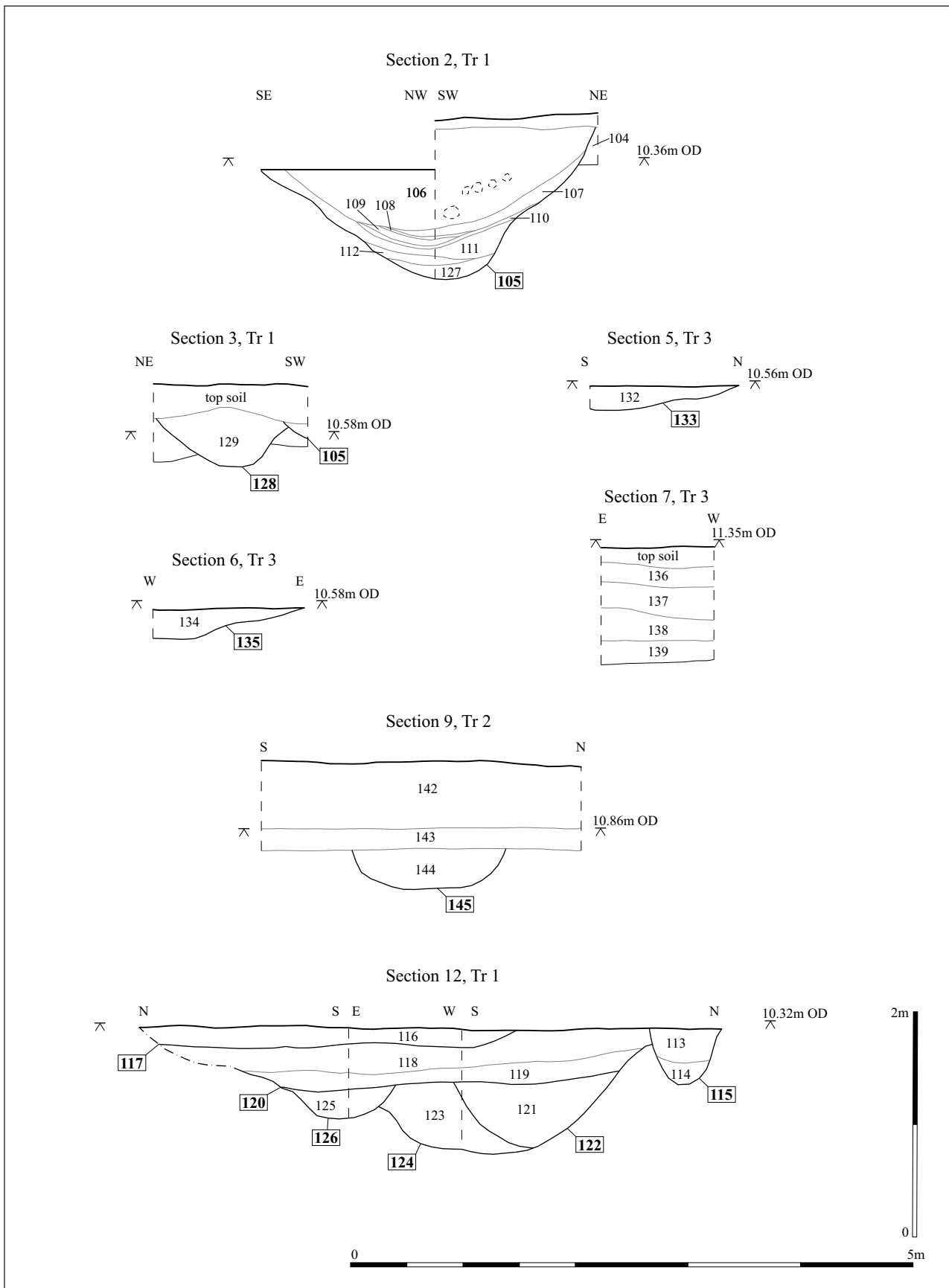


Figure 3: Section drawings (1:50)



*Plate 1: Trench 1 looking North*



*Plate 2: Ditches 122, 124 and 120 saeled below layer 118 and ditch 117 cutting layer 118*





*Plate 3: Pit 105 filled with interleaving layers of black ashy silts*



*Plate 4: Pits 101 and 103*



*Plate 5: Trench 2 looking South*



*Plate 6: Trench 3 looking East*



*Plate 7: Ditch 150 containing heavily leached fill*



*Plate 8: Pit 141 containing burnt clay deposits*



Plate 9: Trench 3 section edge showing modern made-ground



Plate 10: Pit 133



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