



Land Adjacent to 41 Stretham Rd, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

July 2017

Client: PlanSurv

Issue No: 1

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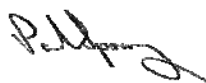
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Land Adjacent to 41 Stretham Rd, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Nicholas Cox BSc

*With contributions from Carole Fletcher HND BA (Hons)
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Dylewski*

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Summary

On the 5th of June 2017 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 41 Stretham Road, Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (TL 4905 7498).

A total of three 19m trial trenches were excavated during the evaluation. Trenches 1 and 2 contained no archaeological features.

Trench 3 contained two parallel boundary ditches, orientated east to west and spaced c. 3m apart. The only dating evidence was a single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery (c. AD 450 – 650) from the southern ditch. The pottery is likely to be a residual find while the ditch itself may be post-medieval in date, possibly part of the pre-enclosure landscape.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank PlanSurv for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Andy Thomas who monitored the work on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Tom Phillips. The fieldwork was directed by Nicholas Cox. Survey and digitising was carried out by Gareth Rees. Thanks is also extended to the OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natasha Dodwell, processed the environmental remains under the management of Rachel Fosberry, and prepared the archive under the management of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by PlanSurv to undertake a trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to 41 Stretham Road on the eastern edge of the village of Wilburton, Cambridgeshire (TL 4905 7498).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Consent (planning ref. 16/01495/OUT). A brief was set by Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (Thomas 2017) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OA (Moan 2017), which outlines how OA proposed to implement the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The development area is situated at approximately 22m OD and is relatively flat, with no undulating topography.
- 1.2.2 Currently, the land is arable farmland, forming part of a larger field that extends to the north, located directly east of the landscaped grounds of Wilburton Manor.
- 1.2.3 The development area is situated on a geology of Woburn Sands Formation, with no overlying superficial deposits recorded. (British Geological Survey 2014, British Geological Survey online map viewer: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>, accessed 05/05/17).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site below is based on that included in the WSI (Moan 2017). Selected Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) numbers are referenced in Figure 1.

Prehistory

- 1.3.2 Nearby early prehistoric activity is noted in the HER in the form of finds spots, such as a Neolithic scraper recovered from Mill Drove, Stretham (CHER 02093), and the recovery by Victorian antiquarians of a complete Bronze Age Beaker vessel and associated inhumation, somewhere within Wilburton in 1847 (CHER 05882), thought to be approximately 900m south-west of the development area. Similarly, a scatter of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age finds were recorded during excavation in 2004 at Mitchell's Farm, School Lane (ECB2375).
- 1.3.3 Two Bronze Age metalwork hoards were discovered in the parish during the 19th century, one in Grunty Fen at the northern edge of the parish, approximately 2.5km to the north (CHER 05785) and the other in Wilburton Rush Fen, c. 2.3km to the south-west (CHER 05717).

- 1.3.4 An Iron Age settlement that was reused in the later Roman period was found during evaluation in 2006 in Stretham, south of the development area (ECB2329).

Roman

- 1.3.5 A small amount of Roman activity has been identified on the HER in the area around the site, all over 500m away.
- 1.3.6 An evaluation in 2007, south of 4 Car Pond Lane, revealed boundary and enclosure ditches of pre-Roman Iron Age and early Romano-British date (ECB2551).
- 1.3.7 Roman finds including pottery (CHER 05755) and a copper alloy brooch (MCB16760) have been found to the east of Twenty Pence Road. Further finds of Roman pottery and possibly coins were made 890m to the north-east of the site near Mill Drove (MCB17012).

Medieval

- 1.3.8 The village is recorded as *Wilburhtune* in 970 AD and as *Wilbertone* in the Domesday book, its name meaning 'The Farm of Wilburh' (Reaney 1943).
- 1.3.9 The earliest elements of the Church of St Peter, located 1km to the west of the site, date to the 13th century, with extensive rebuilding in 15th century (Pugh 1967).
- 1.3.10 The former Manor House, Burystead (CHER 01081B), dating from the 1600s, is located 450m to the west and the original manor is probably considerably older (CHER 01081, 01081A).
- 1.3.11 Medieval occupation was also recorded during evaluation at Mitchell's Farm in 2000 (ECB445). This included postholes and ditches of the 12th to 14th centuries and a possible structure on the road frontage.
- 1.3.12 The Car Pond Lane evaluation also found medieval boundary ditch dating to the 13th or 14th century (ECB2551).

Post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.13 The development area lies in the south-east corner of the former grounds of the 19th century Wilburton Manor (MCB19198), which appears to have been open park lands with orchards to the east in 1901 (Ordnance Survey 1902).
- 1.3.14 Ditches, pits and ponds of 18th to 19th century date were excavated during the Car Pond Lane evaluation (ECB2551).
- 1.3.15 Several buildings within Wilburton are grade II listed, including 17th to 18th century houses, which are located within the historic core of the village, 400m west of the development area.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iii. To set results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context – and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions.
- iv. To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables, and orders of cost.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A total of three trenches were excavated, measuring 19m long x 1.6m wide.
- 2.2.2 Service plans were checked before work commenced on site. Before trenching, the footprint of each trench was scanned by a qualified and experienced operator using a CAT scanner with a valid calibration certificate.
- 2.2.3 Bucket samples of 90 litres of excavated soil were taken from the ends of each trench, in order to characterise artefactual remains in the topsoil horizon above the archaeological level. These were sieved on site for the purposes of finds retrieval. Three fragments of post-medieval tile and a natural flint were recovered.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector.
- 2.2.5 All machine excavation was undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 2.2.6 The trial trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator to the upper interface of archaeological features or deposits. A toothless ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches. Overburden was excavated in spits not greater than 0.1m thick.
- 2.2.7 Spoil was stored alongside trenches. Topsoil, subsoil, and archaeological deposits were kept separate during excavation, to allow for sequential backfilling of excavations.
- 2.2.8 All archaeological features and deposits were excavated by hand, in slots of at least 1.0m in width.
- 2.2.9 Site survey was carried out using a survey-grade differential GPS (Leica CS10/GS08 or Leica 1200) fitted with "smartnet" technology with an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.
- 2.2.10 The site grid is accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. Elevations are levelled to the Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2.11 A register has been kept of all trenches, features, and photographs.
- 2.2.12 All features, layers and deposits have been issued with unique context numbers. Each feature is individually documented on context sheets, and hand-drawn in section.

Written descriptions are recorded on pro-forma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements.

- 2.2.13 Sections of features have been drawn at 1:20. All sections are tied in to Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2.14 All site drawings include the following information: site name, site code, scale, section number, orientation, date and the name or initials of the archaeologist who prepared the drawing.
- 2.2.15 The photographic record comprises high resolution digital photographs.
- 2.2.16 Photographs include both general trench shots and photographs of specific features. Every feature has been photographed at least once. Photographs include a scale, north arrow, site code, and feature number (where relevant), unless they are to be used in publications. The photograph register records these details, and photograph numbers are listed on corresponding context sheets.
- 2.2.17 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence for all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology was overlain by topsoil with no subsoil recorded.

3.2.2 Ground conditions during the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were only present only in Trench 3.

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Trench 3 was aligned north to south and had an average depth of 0.46m (Fig. 2 and Plate 1).

3.4.2 At the northern end of the trench were a set of three narrow ditches. Two parallel ditches were orientated east to west and spaced c. 3m apart (**4** and **6**). Ditch **4** was 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep with steep sides and a concave base (Fig. 3, section 1 and Plate 2). It was filled by a mid brownish grey sandy silt (5).

3.4.3 Three metres south of ditch **4** was ditch **6**, which was at least 0.7m wide and 0.4m deep with near-vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 3, section 2 and Plate 3). It was filled by a mid greyish brown sandy silt (7), which produced one sherd (8g) of abraded Early Anglo-Saxon pottery (c. AD 450 – 650; Appendix B.1) and fragments of animal bone totalling 17g (Appendix C.1). An environmental sample from the fill produced seventeen charred barley grains (Appendix C.2).

3.4.4 Truncating ditch **6** was ditch **8**, orientated west-north-west to east-south-east. It measured 0.86m wide but only 0.18m deep and contained a mid grey brown sandy silt (9).

3.5 Finds summary

3.5.1 A single sherd (8g) of abraded Early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered during the evaluation along with 17g of animal bone, all from ditch **6** in Trench 3.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The soil profile and natural geology were very similar across all three trenches, all of which were also very similar in depth.
- 4.1.2 The archaeological features were relatively easy to discern against the natural geology.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation has established that the majority of the area contains no archaeological features. The only features, a series of boundary ditches, were located in the north-eastern corner of the investigation area, although could extend across the northern part of the site.
- 4.2.2 The features found have been dated, one by pottery finds and the other by its near identical dimensions and parallel alignment to the first ditch.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 A series of three boundary ditches were identified in the north-east corner of the site, in Trench 3. Two of the ditches (**4** and **6**) were parallel, orientated east to west and also parallel with Stretham Road to the south. The two ditches were nearly identical in depth and similar in width with some variation in profile. Ditch **8** was on a slightly different alignment and truncated the top of ditch **6**.
- 4.3.2 The ditches most likely represent a boundary which has shifted over time. The single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery found in ditch **6** is likely to be a residual find, which is much earlier than the ditch itself. There was no further dating evidence to determine a date for any of the ditches but they may be part of the post-medieval field-system (c. AD 1500-1750), which disappeared when smaller fields were enclosed in the late 18th or early 19th century. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (c. 1880) depicts the site within the grounds of the 19th century manor house (MCB19198); there are no boundaries which correspond to those found in the evaluation.

4.4 Significance

- 4.4.1 The site is of limited archaeological significance. The ditches encountered in Trench 3 represent former boundaries, most likely of post-medieval date. The single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery recovered from ditch **6** attests to Anglo-Saxon activity in the local landscape but not necessarily at the site itself.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench was devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of gravelly sand.					Length (m)	19
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.39
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	0.39	Topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench was devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of gravelly sand.					Length (m)	19
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.38
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	0.38	Topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench contained three small ditches at its northern end. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of gravelly sand.					Length (m)	19
					Width (m)	1.60
					Avg. depth (m)	0.46
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	0.46	Topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
4	Cut	0.80	0.40	Ditch	-	-
5	Fill	-	0.40	Ditch Fill	-	-
6	Cut	0.70	0.40	Ditch	-	Medieval
7	Fill	-	0.40	Ditch Fill	Pottery, A. Bone	Medieval
8	Cut	0.86	0.18	Ditch	-	-
9	Fill	-	0.18	Ditch Fill	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Richard Mortimer

Description

- B.1.1 A single sherd of handmade Early Anglo-Saxon pottery (c. AD 450 – 650) weighing 8g was recovered from ditch **6** in Trench 3. The fragment is a body sherd in a quartz-tempered fabric and is moderately abraded.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Animal Bone

By Hayley Foster

Introduction

C.1.1 The animal bone from the evaluation represented faunal remains from ditch **6** (fill 7) in trench 3. The material was recovered by hand and from an environmental sample, weighing 17g in total. There were five fragments of bone recovered, detailed in Table 1. The fragments represented include sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*) and medium mammal. The method used to quantify this assemblage was based on that used for Knowth by McCormick and Murray (2007) which is modified from Albarella and Davis (1996). Identification of the faunal remains was carried out at Oxford Archaeology East. References to Hillson (1992), Schmid (1972), von den Driesch (1974) were used where necessary.

Results of Analysis

Context	Species	Element
7	Sheep/goat	Atlas
7	Medium mammal	Unidentifiable long bone
7	Medium mammal	Rib
7	Sheep/goat	Cranium
7	Sheep/goat	Loose maxillary tooth

Table 1: Total number of identifiable fragments (NISP) by species.

C.1.2 All remains recovered are from sheep/goat and medium mammal (likely sheep/goat or pig). Remains are a mixture of cranial and axial elements. No fragments can be used for ageing or sexing specimens. The material is fragmentary but the bone is in good condition. There is no evidence of butchery, burning or pathology noted. The assemblage is very small, therefore the potential for further investigation is somewhat limited unless further faunal remains are recovered from richer contexts to shed light on human-animal activity in the area.

C.2 Environmental Samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

C.2.1 A single bulk sample was taken from fill 7 of ditch **6** in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Methodology

C.2.2 The total volume (up to 17L) of the sample was processed by tank flotation using modified Siraff-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating

evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the sample was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve.

C.2.3 The dried flot was scanned using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60 and an abbreviated list of the recorded remains are presented in Table 2. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.* 2006) and the authors' own reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (1997) for other plants. Plant remains have been identified to species where possible. The identification of cereals has been based on the characteristic morphology of the grains and chaff as described by Jacomet (2006).

Quantification

C.2.4 For the purpose of this assessment, items such as seeds and cereal grains have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories:

= 1-5, ## = 6-25 specimens

C.2.5 Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal has been scored for abundance
+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

C.2.6 Preservation of plant remains is by carbonisation. Seventeen barley grains were recovered in addition to a sparse quantity of charcoal and occasional animal bone elements.

Sample No.	Context No.	Feature No.	Feature Type	% context sampled	Trench No.	Volume processed (l)	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Charcoal
1	7	6	Ditch	<10	3	17	30	##	+

Table 2: Environmental samples

Discussion

C.2.7 The feature sampled is thought to be a boundary ditch, possibly of post-medieval date. The recovery of charred barley grains from such a feature is difficult to interpret. It indicates that there is the potential for preservation of charred plant remains from this site and the possibility of a discrete dump of culinary waste in the ditch.

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APPENDIX E OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-287154		
Project Name	Land Adjacent to 41 Stretham Road, Wilburton		
Start of Fieldwork	5-06-2017	End of Fieldwork	5-06-2017
Previous Work	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	WBTRST17	Planning App. No.	16/01495/OUT
HER Number	ECB 5123	Related Numbers	N/A

Prompt	Requirement from local planning authority
Development Type	Rural Residential
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <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 checked="" 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	Period
Ditch	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)
	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.

Object	Period
Pottery	Early Medieval (410 to 1066)
	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) 41 Stretham Road Wilburton Ely Cams CB6 3RX
District	East Cams	
Parish	Wilburton	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	2022 sq. m	
National Grid Ref	TL 4905 7498	

Project Originators

Organisation	OA East
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Patrick Moan
Project Manager	Tom Phillips
Project Supervisor	Nicholas Cox

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	CCC Stores	ECB 5123
Digital Archive	OA East	ECB 5123
Paper Archive	CCC Stores	ECB 5123

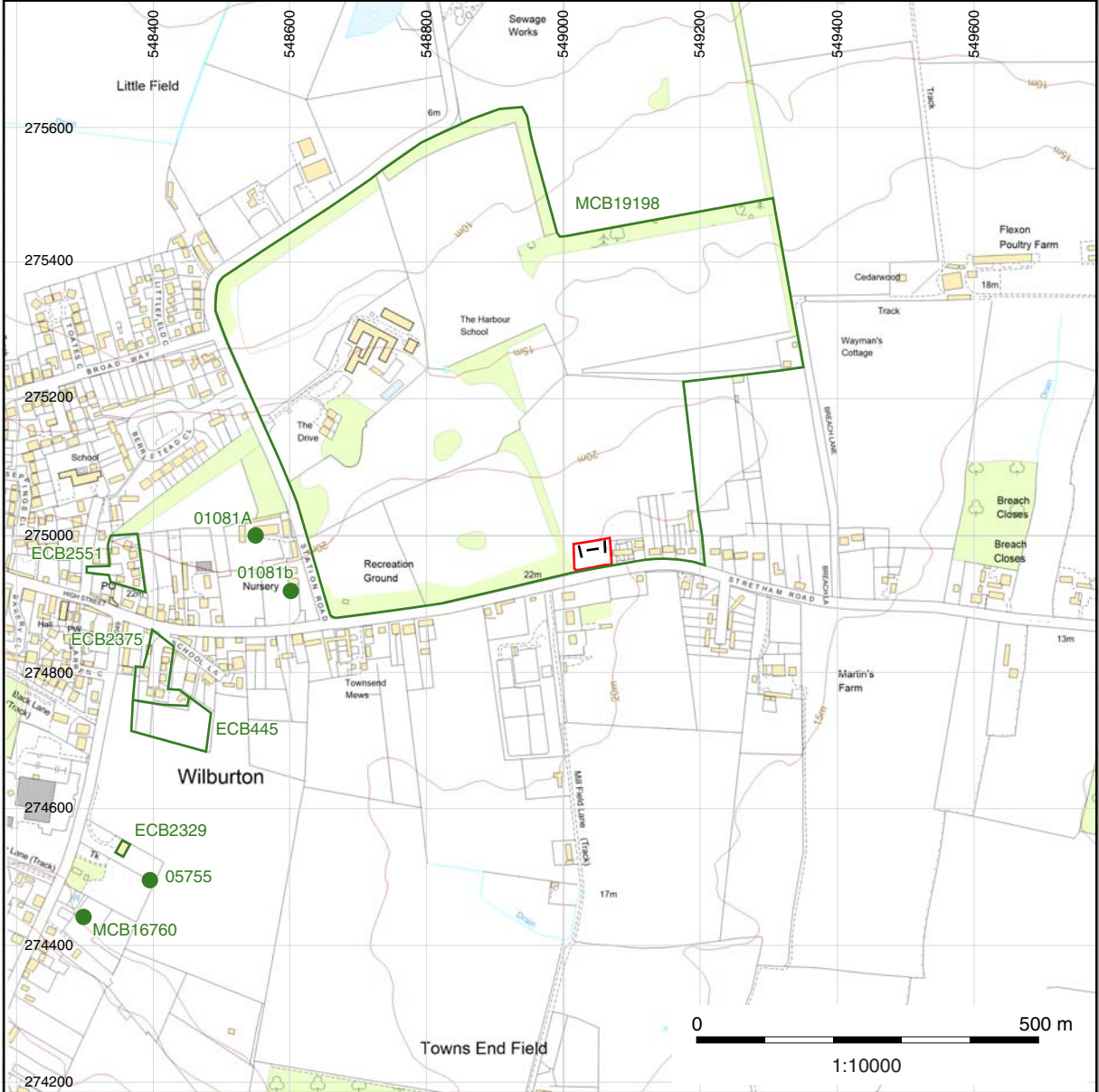
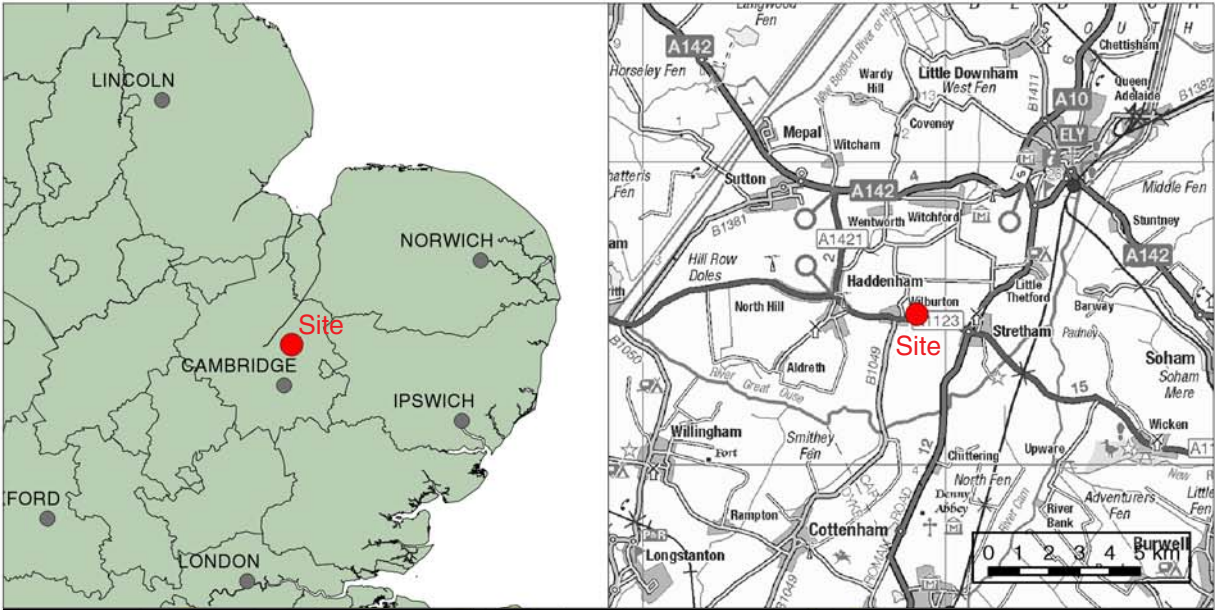
Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<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

Database	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological features (black) in development area (red), with selected HER numbers (green)

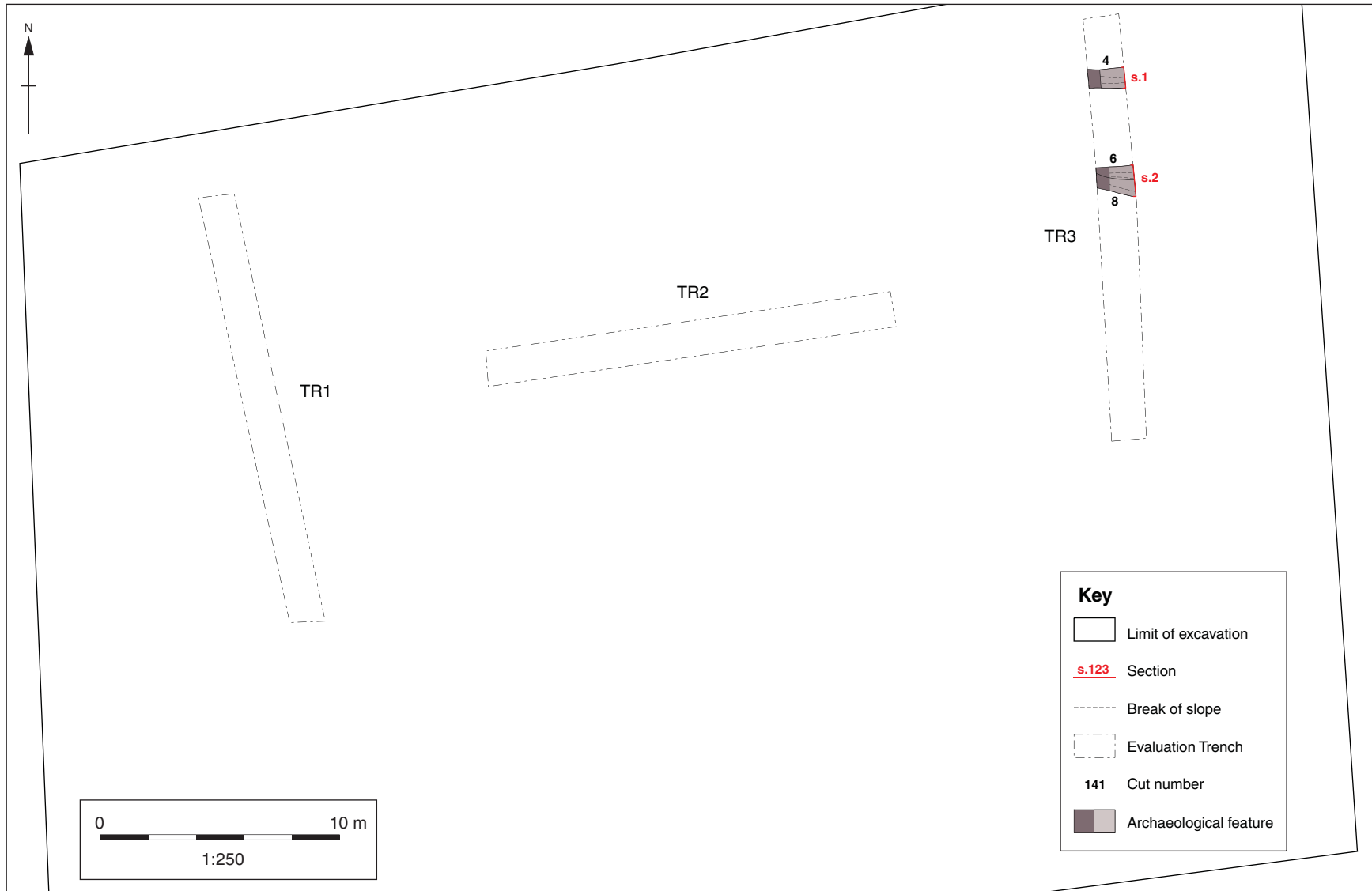


Figure 2: Trench layout

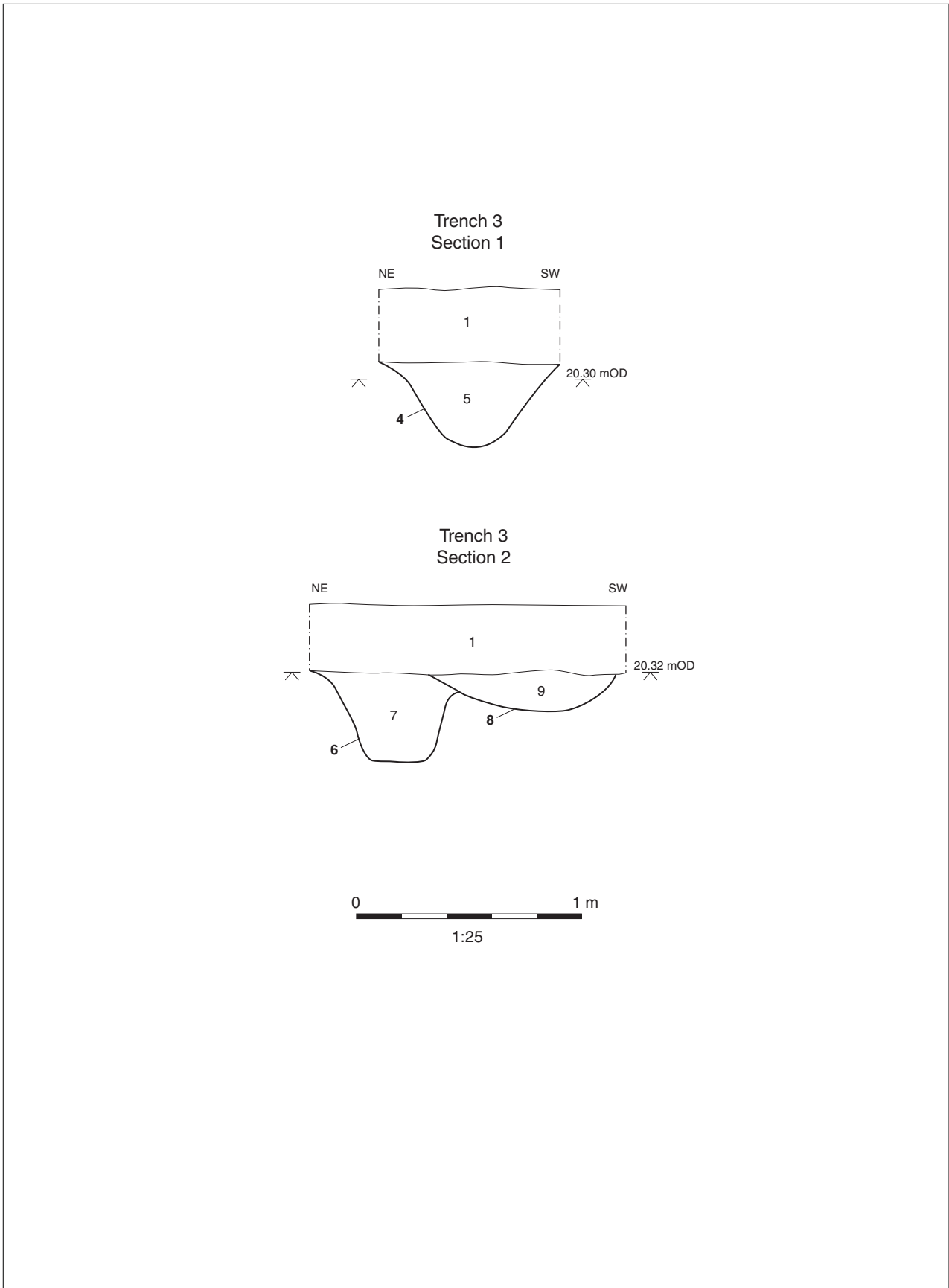


Figure 3: Sections



Plate 1: Trench 3, looking south



Plate 2: Ditch 4, Trench 3, looking east



Plate 3: Ditches **6** and **8**, Trench 3, looking east



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