

Archaeological Remains at Crows Parlour, Chapel Lane Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



September 2016

Client: Robert & Annette Mill

OA East Report No: 1972

OASIS No: oxfordar3-260956

NGR: TL 4244 4565

**Archaeological Remains at Crows Parlour, Chapel Lane, Fowlmere,
Cambridgeshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: August 2016

Report Number: 1972
Site Name: Crows Parlour (aka Chapel Lane), Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire
HER Event No: ECB 4789
Date of Works: August 2016
Client Name: Robert & Annette Mill
Planning Ref: S/0453/16/FL
Grid Ref: TL 4244 4565
Site Code: FOWCRP16
Finance Code: FOWCRP16
Receiving Body: CCC Stores
Accession No: FOWCRP16
Prepared by: Helen Stocks-Morgan
Position: Project Officer
Date: 23/09/16

Checked by: Name
Position: Job title
Date: Date
Signed:

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	7
1.2 Geology and topography.....	7
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	7
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	8
2 Aims and Methodology.....	9
2.1 Aims.....	9
2.2 Methodology.....	9
3 Results.....	10
3.1 Introduction.....	10
3.2 Trench 1.....	10
3.3 Finds Summary.....	10
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	11
4.1 Discussion.....	11
4.2 Recommendations.....	11
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	12
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	12
B.1 Pottery.....	12
Appendix C. Bibliography.....	13
Appendix D. OASIS Report Form.....	14

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Site location map

Fig. 2 Trench Plan

List of Plates

Plate 1 pits **9** and **11**, looking from south-west

Plate 2 Ditch **4**, looking from south-west

Summary

On the 10th of August 2016 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation at Crows Parlour, 80 – 86 Chapel Lane, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire (TL 4244 4565). The work took place to inform a planning application for the construction of a new bungalow.

The trial trenching revealed a series of intercutting pits which are undated. It is thought that these pits may have been the result of a managed muck heap. A further undated north to south ditch was recorded within the trench which is interpreted to have been a small boundary ditch.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Crows Parlour, 80 – 86 Chapel Lane, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire (Grid ref: TL 4244 4565, See Fig. 1 for site location).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/0453/16/FL), supplemented by a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA East (Macaulay, 2016).
- 1.1.3 The evaluation was located adjacent to a scheduled ancient monument known as Crows Parlour, which is a medieval moated site. A watching brief was conducted in 2015 on works to reconstruct the moat and is detailed in a separate report (Stocks-Morgan, 2015).
- 1.1.4 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.
- 1.1.5 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on a bedrock of Zag chalk formation, with no overlying substrate recorded (British Geological Survey 1995).
- 1.2.2 The area comprises grassland to the north of the moat, with the moated enclosure itself partially wooded. It is relatively flat at 25m OD and is located on the eastern side of the river Shep, located on the eastern side of the site.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological and historical background is based on that within the Design Brief (Poppy 2015).
- 1.3.2 Prehistoric occupation has been recorded in the vicinity of the site with a Palaeolithic flint scraper recovered along Chapel Lane (MCB 11694). Further flint scatters have been found to the south-west (MCB 16114). Archaeological evidence for later prehistoric occupation in the form of ditches have been recorded along the high street (MCB 11138A) which date to the Iron Age.
- 1.3.3 Evidence for Roman occupation is limited to the occasional find spot, such as the coin found at 0.5km to the south-west (MCB 16115).
- 1.3.4 The medieval settlement of Fowlmere was originally centred on the church of St Marys and the manor complex immediately to the south, known as the Round Mound (MCB 1621).

- 1.3.5 To the south of the settlement core lies a further moated site known as Crows Parlour, which was constructed between the 12th to 14th centuries and is an indication of the owners wealth and status.
- 1.3.6 The moated site is depicted as an old enclosure on a tithe map dated 1847 (not illustrated), at which time it contained pasture and was surrounded by water on all but the southern side. The site is apparently unexcavated, although the northern and western arms of the moat were partially re-cut prior to 1903.
- 1.3.7 This moated site lies immediately next to the Site and has an archaeological watching brief the moat was conducted in 2015 (CHER 4395) as part of these building works. This work oversaw the removal of modern infill within the moat. The extents of the original moat were mapped along the northern and eastern arms but subsequent boundary changes meant that the south-west corner lies outside the scope of works. The original moat infill was left in situ and therefore was not visible to record.
- 1.3.8 Fowlmere is recorded as *Fuelmere* in Domesday, meaning 'wild birds mere'.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Robert Mills who commissioned and funded the archaeological work.
- 1.4.2 In addition to the author, the survey was undertaken by Charlotte Walton. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay. The brief for archaeological works was written by Gemma Stewart of Cambridgeshire County Council, who visited the site and monitored the archaeological works.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to establish the character, date, state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The scheme of works detailed below aims to:

- to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains
- to provide sufficient coverage to establish the form, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits
- to provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits
- to set results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions
- to provide, in the event that archaeological remains are found, 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 In accordance with the Brief (Stewart 2016) and WSI (Macaulay 2016) a programme of trial trenching was undertaken within the footprints of a proposed new residential building prior to its construction.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica 1200 GPS fitted with *Smartnet*.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned where appropriate 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 The fieldwork was undertaken in dry and sunny conditions.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The topsoil (1) across the site consisted of a dark grey brown clayey silt which contained occasional sub-rounded stones. Subsoil (2) was made up of a mid greyish brown clayey silt. Natural geology was encountered c.0.4m below modern ground level.
- 3.1.2 Unless otherwise stated, no datable finds were recovered from features. A list of relevant trench depths and related context data can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 At the north-western end of the trench a large area of dark brownish grey clayey silt (5) was encountered measuring 5.8m in length. The trench was extended by two arms to the north-east, perpendicular to the original line of the trench in order to ascertain the extent and form of this deposit. On the surface the deposit appeared sub-circular and measured at least 5.8m long and 4m wide. Three slots were placed within this spread and revealed a series of at least three intercutting pits described below.
- 3.2.2 The slot at the north-eastern end of the deposit revealed a shallow sub-circular pit (9) which measured 1.3m in diameter. This pit had shallow sides a flattish base which was 0.15m deep. The fill comprised a dark brownish grey clayey silt (8).
- 3.2.3 Immediately to the south-west of pit 9 was another very shallow sub-circular pit (11) which was 1.4m in diameter. The pit had very gradually sloping sides and a flat base, it was 0.05m deep. It was filled by a dark greyish brown clayey silt (10).
- 3.2.4 The most south-westerly pit (7) of this series measured at least 1.25m in diameter. This pit had near vertical sides and a flat base and was 0.7m deep. It was initially filled with a 0.5m thick dark brownish black clay silt (6), which had a high content of desiccated organic material and contained a sherd of late medieval pottery. This was overlain by dark brownish grey clayey silt (5) which was 0.2m thick.
- 3.2.5 Towards the centre of the original trench lay a north to south aligned ditch (4) which was 0.8m wide. The eastern side of this ditch was steep and the western side of the ditch was gradual. The base of the ditch was concave and it measured 0.24m in depth. The fill comprised a dark greyish black clayey silt (3).

3.3 Finds Summary

- 3.3.1 One sherd of pottery, weighing 3g was recovered from pit fill 6.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 At the north-western end of the trench lay a series of intercutting pits (**7, 9, 11**) which are thought to be contemporaneous and dug for the same undefined purpose. The only datable find was a small heavily abraded sherd of late medieval pottery found from the lower fill of pit **7**, which is not conclusive enough to confidently date these features as it could easily have been incorporated into the pit fill accidentally and at a much later date.
- 4.1.2 The most diagnostic feature of these pits was the composition of the pit fills which seem to have included a large amount of desiccated 'peat like' organic material. This may originally have been manure or compost. The pits could, therefore, have been dug as planting holes, backfilled with organic material to aid the growth of plants, however, one would expect a more regular lay out rather than them being intercutting if this is the case. Another possibility is that they represent the base of compost or manure heaps and that the pit-like effect was caused by regularly digging out the compost or manure for use elsewhere.
- 4.1.3 It is possible that the deeper pit may have originally been dug to quarry the chalk, which is commonly used to make soil less acidic (soil liming) and then subsequently backfilled with general waste material or that this pit was dug specifically to deposit waste material.
- 4.1.4 A north to south ditch (**4**) was encountered in the middle of the trench. Given that the ditch was relatively small, being 0.5m wide and 0.24m deep it is most likely that this acted either a drainage ditch or as a small boundary ditch, or fulfilled both functions. It is currently undated however it is unlikely to have been associated with the medieval moat as its north to south alignment does not bear any relationship with it or to the surrounding roads / field systems, which are thought to have originated in the medieval period. However, its alignment does coincide with the extents of layer 5, and it is possible that the ditch was associated with the intercutting pits, perhaps forming a boundary to a managed 'muck' heap.
- 4.1.5 There is little evidence to associate these pits with the moated enclosure immediately to the south, with the suggestion that these pits are of a later date and may relate to garden activity occurring by the road side, to the north-west.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench contained one ditch and a series of three intercutting pits. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk.				Avg. depth (m)	0.45	
				Width (m)	2.00	
				Length (m)	10.30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-
3	Fill	0.8	0.24	Fill of Ditch 4	-	-
4	Cut	0.8	0.24	Ditch	-	-
5	Fill	1.25	0.2	Fill of Pit 7	-	-
6	Fill	1.25	0.5	Fill of Pit 7	pottery	Late medieval
7	Cut	1.25	0.7	Pit	-	-
8	Fill	1.2	0.15	Fill of Pit 9	-	-
9	Cut	1.2	0.15	Pit	-	-
10	Fill	1.4	0.05	Fill of Pit 11	-	-
11	Cut	1.4	0.05	Pit	-	-

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

B.1.1 One sherd of heavily abraded late medieval coarseware was recovered from the lower fill of pit 7 (context 6).

APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Macaulay, S. 2016 Specification for Archaeological Evaluation. Oxford Arch. East
Tender Ref No 19812 (unpublished) Tender Ref. No. 19812
(unpublished)
- Stewart, G 2016 Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation. Cambridgeshire
County Council (unpublished)
- Stocks-Morgan, H 2015 A Medieval Moat at Crows Parlour, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire.
Oxford Arch East Report No 1959

Cartographic Sources

British Geological Survey, 1995 Sheet 190, England and Wales 1:50,000

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25 inch Map. Cambridgeshire. Sheet LIV.2 1903

APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-260956		
Project Name	Crows Parlour, Chapel Lane, Fowlmere		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	10-08-2016	Finish	10-08-2016
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	FOWCRP16	Planning App. No.	S/0453/16/FL
HER No.	ECB 4789	Related HER/OASIS No.	oxfordar3-206604

Type of Project/Techniques Used

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

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input 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
Pit	Uncertain	pottery	Roman 43 to 410
ditch	Uncertain		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	south cambridgeshire	80 - 85 Chapel Lane Fowlmere Cambridgeshire
Parish	fowlmere	
HER	Cambridgeshire	
Study Area	130 SQ M	National Grid Reference TL 4244 4565

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Gemma Stewart (CCC)
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay (OA East)
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay (OA East)
Supervisor	Helen Stocks-Morgan (OA East)

Project Archives

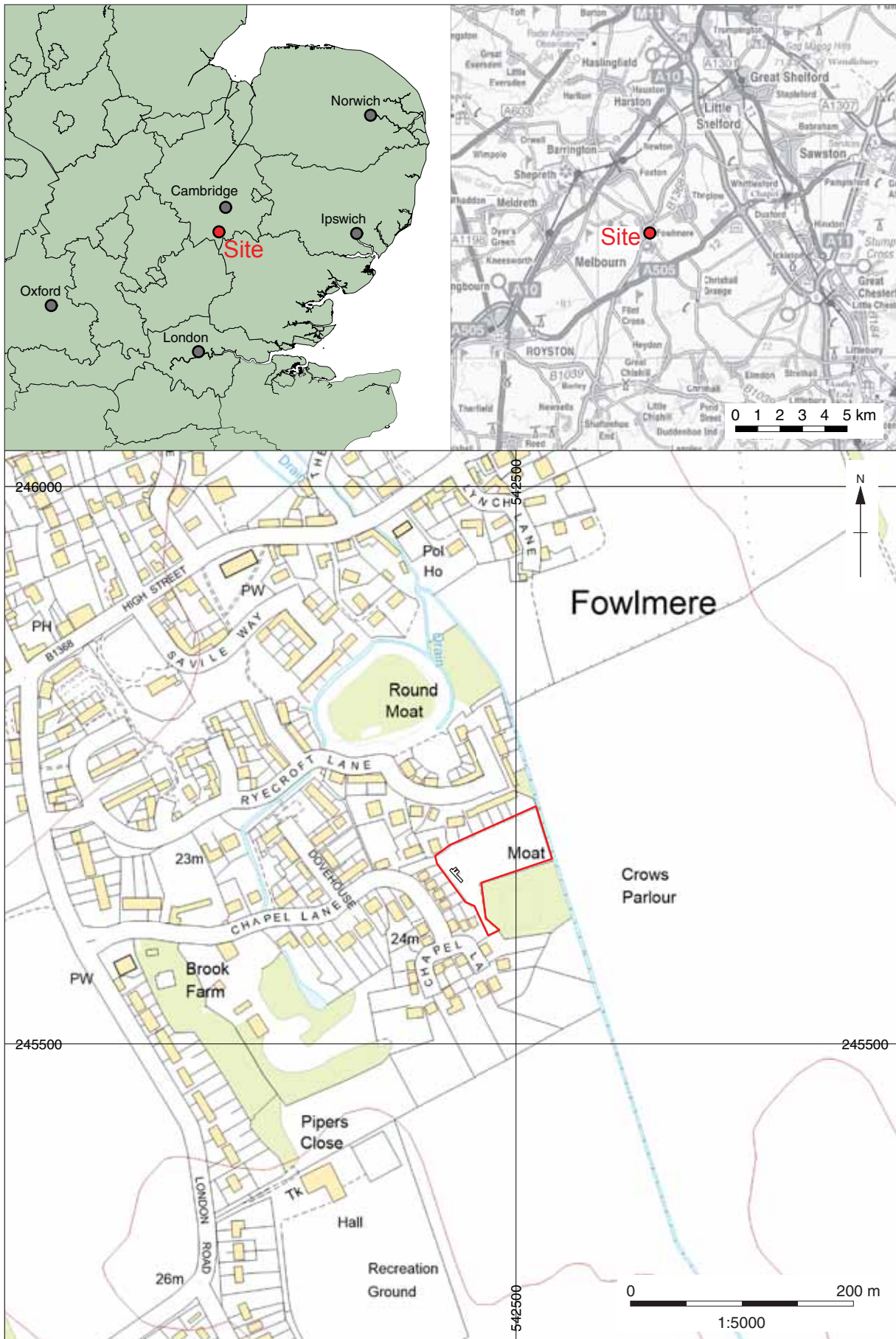
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Cambridgeshire Stores	Oa East (Bar Hill)	Cambridgeshire Stores
FOWCRP16	FOWCRP16	FOWCRP16

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input 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 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"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

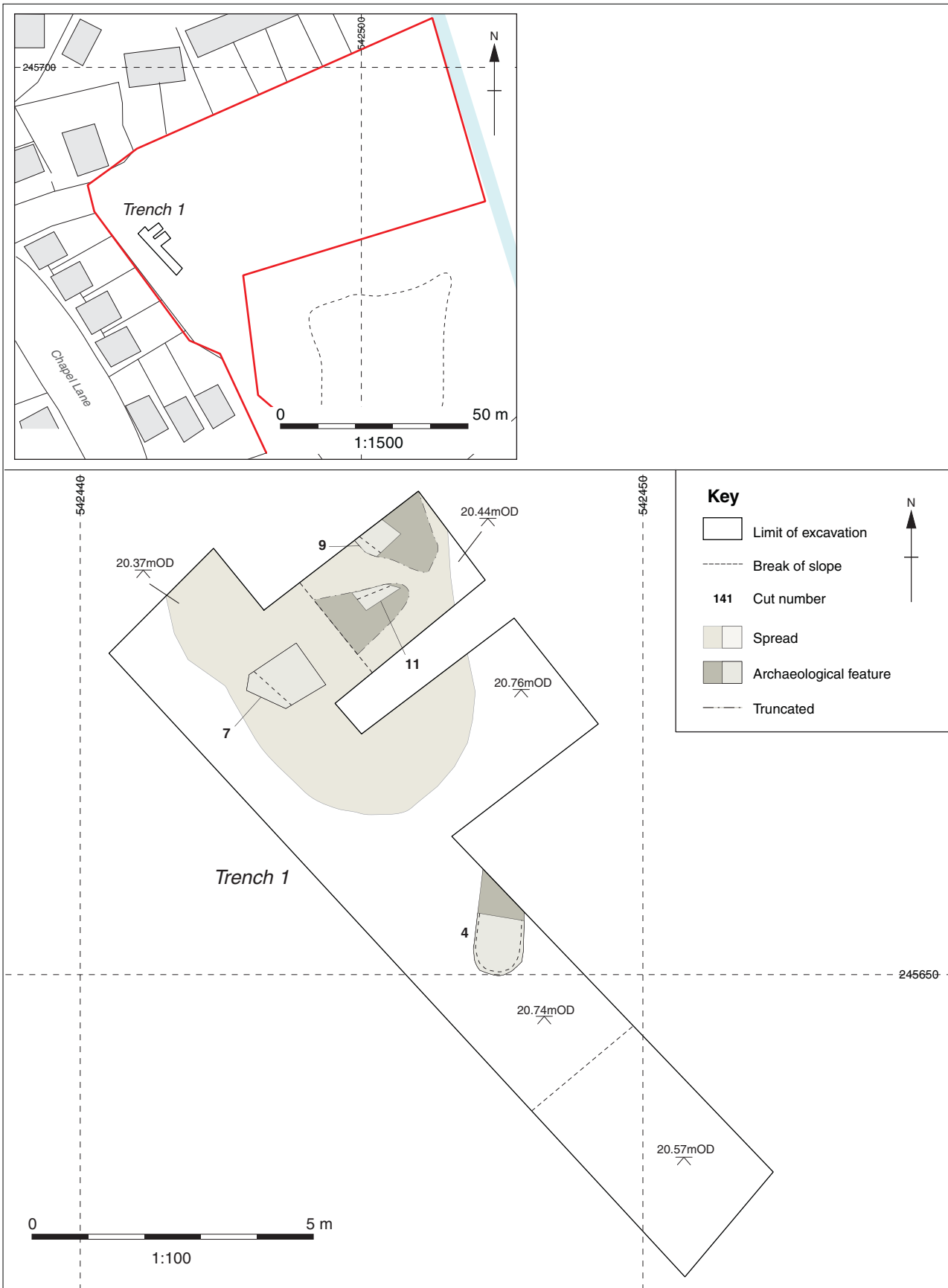
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<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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



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Figure 2: Plan of evaluation trench



Plate 1: Pits 9 and 11, looking from south-west



Plate 2: Ditch 4, looking from south-west



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