

Former Masons Cement Works Great Blakenham Suffolk



Archaeological Evaluation Report



April 2010

Client: CgMs Consulting

OA East Report No: 1179

OASIS No: oxfordar3-75464

NGR: TM 1215 5020

Former Masons Cement Works, Great Blakenham

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: April 2010

Report Number: 1179
Site Name: Masons Cement Works, Great Blakenham
HER Event No:
Date of Works: 7-9th April 2010
Client Name: CgMs Consulting
Client Ref:
Planning Ref: 2326/05
Grid Ref: TM 1215 5020
Site Code: XSFGBM10
Finance Code: XSFGBM10
Receiving Body: Suffolk County Council

Accession No:

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Date: April 2010

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Date: April 2010
Signed:



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Summary

From 7th to 9th April 2010, Oxford Archaeology East undertook an archaeological evaluation in Great Blakenham, at the former Masons Cement Works and the football pitches across the road (TM 1215 5020).

The brief required that 8x25m trenches be excavated, five of which were on areas of concrete hard standing. The concrete was found to be reinforced with two layers of metal wiring, thus making it extremely hard to break through. These areas were thus considered un-viable for trenching, so two of the trenches were moved to different areas and the remaining three were not excavated.

The only features uncovered during the works were post-medieval disturbance which was most likely related to the sites previous use in the mid 20th century as a Ministry of Defence Fuel Depot.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the former Masons Cement Works, Great Blakenham, Suffolk.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council (Planning Application 2326/05), supplemented by a WSI prepared by CgMs and a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by Suffolk County Council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Upper Chalk in the area of the fuel depot, and Brickearth in the area of the Cement Works (BGS sheet 207 1981). The excavated trenches, however, came down onto a gravely sand natural.
- 1.2.2 The study area is immediately south of Great Blakenham village and comprises of the site of the former Masons Cement Works and fuel depot to the east of Bramford Road and playing fields to the west of Bramford Road. The playing fields are situated at a height of c. 21.9m AOD. The western boundary of the Cement Works is at a height of c. 20.7m AOD and drops down into the Gipping Valley to c. 13.1m AOD at the eastern boundary.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological and historical background has been taken from the Desk Based Assessment by CgMs (Chadwick and Dicks 2004).

Prehistory

- 1.3.2 The study site lies within the Gipping Valley, which is an archaeological landscape well known for its wealth of prehistoric settlement.
- 1.3.3 Archaeological investigations at Blackacre Hill (c. 100m south-west of the development area) recorded features containing worked flints and Neolithic pottery (SMR 18640). A flint knife was recovered at Barham (SMR 4403) and a transverse arrowhead at Eastall's Pit (SMR 4401) which both lie less than 1km away from the study site.
- 1.3.4 There are no recorded Bronze Age settlement sites within 1km of the development area, however the main river valleys were densely scattered with burial mounds during this period, thus two ring ditches visible as crop marks from aerial photography (SMR 4465 and 4466) have been identified, one at Broomvale Farm (c. 300m south of the site) and one within the playing field area.

- 1.3.5 A large quantity of Iron Age finds were recovered from archaeological works on the Claydon Bypass (c. 800m south-east of the study area), including spindle whorls, bracelets, coins and pottery (SMR 4452). Rectilinear field systems have also been identified though aerial photographs on land off Chalk Hill Lane (c. 600m west of site).

Roman

- 1.3.6 The Roman road, *Via Devanna* ran 2km north of the development area. Two phases of Roman field system and trackways have been identified at land off Chalk Hill Lane, plus work at Blackacre Hill recovered features and inhumations of Roman date.

Medieval

- 1.3.7 Evidence for early Medieval/Saxon settlement in the immediate vicinity of Great Blakenham is almost completely unknown, although Saxon settlement has been identified along the Gipping Valley at Coddendam, Bramford and Ipswich.
- 1.3.8 Great Blakenham is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Dense artefact scatters have been recorded at 8 sites within 1km of the development area. However the site itself lies beyond the Medieval village limits.

Post Medieval and Modern

- 1.3.9 The 1840 Tithe Map shows the northern end of the development site to contain two areas of quarrying. These are also present on the 1st and 2nd edition OS. The 1926 OS map shows the chalk quarry to the north, and the southern end of the site is occupied by the Masons Cement Works.
- 1.3.10 The 1968 OS shows the Cement Works to have greatly expanded and the MoD fuel depot has been built on the northern half of the site, taking in the areas of quarrying. The MoD fuel depot was built in 1939 to provide fuel for local RAF airfields during the Second World War. Buildings still stand on the site today and include a gatehouse, air raid shelter, pump room, and large buried fuel tanks. These structures are the subject of another report (CgMs forthcoming).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Paul Chadwick of CgMs who commissioned the work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray. Fieldwork was carried out by the author, Chris Faine and Steve Graham. The survey and illustrations were also done by the author. Mechanical excavation was undertaken by Latternbury Services.
- 1.4.2 Thanks too to Adrian Hardesty of TA Plant for his on-site help, and to Dick Gates. The site was monitored and visited by Jude Plouviez of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Conservation Team.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that a 5% sample of the development area which has not been disturbed by the sites previous use be subject trial trenching. This equated to 8x25m trenches. Due to constraints of areas of the site being made up of reinforced concrete, only five trenches were opened.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked CAT excavator using a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by the author using a Leica GPS 1200 system.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 No environmental samples were taken because no archaeological features were uncovered.
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were fairly difficult do to the problem of parts of the site being made up of concrete hard standing and having to work around other machines which were uncovering the MoD fuel tanks and other related buildings. Two areas of the site were not easily accessible by the machine, so a low-loader was needed to move the tracked excavator back and forth between areas. The weather was extremely warm and sunny.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 During the evaluation works, no archaeological features dating prior to the post-medieval period were uncovered in the trenches. Several post-medieval/modern features were present. (Figs 1 and 2, Plates 1 and 2).

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Natural geology was encountered 0.54m below modern ground level. Topsoil (15) was a dark grey-brown silty sand 0.2m deep. Subsoil (16) consisted of a mid red-brown silty sand 0.3m deep. A single modern pipe trench **19** was revealed running in a north-east to south-west direction. It was 1m wide, 0.8m deep with near vertical sides, the pipe at the base was covered by two fills. The primary fill (18) consisted of a mid yellow-brown silty sand with frequent flint inclusions. A fragment of brick was recovered from the fill but discarded. The secondary fill (17) capped the top of the feature and was made up of a thin layer of coke 0.03m deep.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 The location of this trench was originally supposed to be running north to south on the concrete hard standing directly north of the site entrance. It was moved to an area of scrub land immediately south of its original position.

3.3.2 A layer of hardcore 0.3m deep was revealed under the surface moss. This came down onto a concrete surface, thus the trench was not excavated to its full length.

3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 It was planned that this trench was to be situated in an east to west position directly above the originally intended location of Trench 2 on the concrete hard standing. The area of scrub land directly to the east of this was investigated as a possible new location for Trench 3. The CAT scanner was run over the area and deemed unsafe due to high voltage electricity cables running south out of the electricity sub-station situated next to this area. As a result, Trench 3 was not excavated.

3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 This trench was also moved, it was originally located on the electricity sub-station access road, thus was repositioned c. 3m to the south of this on an area of scrub.

3.5.2 Natural geology was encountered 0.8m below the modern ground level. Subsoil (24) consisting of a mid brown-orange silty sand with moderate flint inclusions was 0.24m deep and capped by 0.56m of hardcore made up of several layers of compacted concrete lumps and sand.

3.5.3 One modern feature **13** was recorded in the trench, consisting of a large irregular shaped pit. The single fill (14) was a dark grey brown silty sand with flint inclusions. It was excavated to 0.3m, but the base was not found. Pieces of modern brick, concrete and a large plastic chemical container were recovered from the fill.

3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 Located in the lowest part of the site, the natural geology was 1.2m below modern ground level. The dimensions of the trench had to be altered once machining was

started because an old manhole buried below c. 0.1m of topsoil was clipped by the mechanical excavator. The trench was thus moved a couple of metres away and turned into an 'L' shape trench.

- 3.6.2 Possible tree throw **23** was revealed at the north-western end of the trench, measuring 0.75m wide and 0.08m deep with a mid brown silty sand fill.
- 3.6.3 Post-medieval pit **21** had an irregular but generally vertical side to it with a single mid grey-brown silty sand fill (20). The base of this feature was not found, a sondage 0.5m deep was dug before excavation was halted. Pit **21** had been truncated by a modern pit, the fill of which was a loose orange sand containing large pieces.

3.7 Trench 6

- 3.7.1 Located to the south-east of Trench 5 on the other side of an access road, Trench 6 ran north-west to south-east and contained two features. The topsoil (01) was made up of a mid grey-brown silty sand 0.32m deep and the subsoil (02) was 0.3m deep and consisted of a mid brown silty sand. A single horse metacarpal was recovered from the subsoil. Post hole **03** had an open-U profile, was 0.3m in diameter and 0.18m deep with a single fill (04) which consisted of a mid grey-brown silty sand.
- 3.7.2 The north-western end of the trench had revealed a spread of light yellow-brown sand, a sondage was excavated into this revealing the spread to be part of a very large pit with several fills being tipped in from the north-east. The pit (**11**) was excavated to 0.7m but the base was not revealed. Seven fills were identified in the sondage, the earliest (10) was a dark grey-brown silty sand 0.3m deep. One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from this fill. Above it, fill (09) was a mid yellow sand 0.08m thick. Fill (08) was a dark grey brown silty sand 0.18m deep, a fragment from a Victorian glass bottle was recovered from the fill. Fill (07), a mid yellow sand was 0.22m deep. Above fill (07) was fill (06), a mid brown-grey silty clay 0.08m deep, this fill contained two sherds of medieval pottery. Fill (05) was made up of a mid grey-yellow sand 0.1m deep. The latest fill, (12) consisted of a light yellow-brown sand 0.22m deep and contained three sherds of medieval pottery.

3.8 Trenches 7 and 8

- 3.8.1 The last two trenches were located at the northern most limit of the site and were to run east to west parallel to one another. They were to be situated on an area of concrete hard standing which had been capped with tarmac, therefore it was decided that these trenches would not be excavated as any surviving archaeology beneath would be negligible.

3.9 Finds Summary

- 3.9.1 Very few finds were recovered from the excavations. One complete horse metacarpal was retrieved from the subsoil (02) of Trench 6, and six sherds of mid 12th century pottery were found in three of the fills from pit **11**. A piece of Victorian glass was also recovered from pit **11**.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 This evaluation has identified activity dating predominately to the post-medieval period. Any possible earlier archaeological activity has been lost to quarrying and the instillation of the MoD fuel depot in the 1930's. The recovery of four sherds of medieval pottery however shows that there were, at one point, medieval features present in the vicinity of the north-eastern part of the site. The piece of modern glass found in an earlier fill to that of the pottery confirms that this area of the site has been subject to large scale soil movement in the past, which ties in with its extremely close proximity to one of the huge buried petrol storage containers.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the Suffolk County Archaeology Office. However following discussions on site with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Conservation Team it was indicated that no further work would be required.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench contained a modern pipe trench. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sands				Avg. depth (m)		0.54
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		25
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
15	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
16	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
17	Fill	-	0.03		-	-
18	Fill	-	0.77		Brick	Modern
19	Cut	1	0.8	Modern pipe trench	-	-

Trench 2			
General description		Orientation	E-W
No archaeological features uncovered. Excavation of trench halted when came down onto concrete surface		Avg. depth (m)	0.3
		Width (m)	1.8
		Length (m)	6

Trench 3			
General description		Orientation	-
Not excavated		Avg. depth (m)	-
		Width (m)	-
		Length (m)	-

Trench 4						
General description		Orientation	E-W			
Trench contained modern disturbance. Consisted of subsoil overlain by layers of modern hardcore and sand		Avg. depth (m)	0.7			
		Width (m)	1.8			
		Length (m)	21			
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
13	Cut	?	?	Part of a possible large pit	-	-
14	Fill	-	?		Plastic, concrete	Modern

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
No archaeological features found. Consists of topsoil and subsoil coming down onto gravel sand natural				Avg. depth (m)		1
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		17.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
20	Fill	-	?		Brick	Post-medieval
21	Cut		?	Post-medieval pit	-	-
22	Fill	-	0.08		-	-
23	Cut	0.75	0.08	Possible tree throw	-	-

Trench 6						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Consists of topsoil and a deep subsoil coming down onto sand natural				Avg. depth (m)		1.1
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		26
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
3	Cut	0.3	0.18	Possible post hole	-	-
4	Fill	-	0.18		-	-
5	Fill	-	0.3		-	-
6	Fill	-	0.08		Pottery	Mid 12th century
7	Fill	-	0.18		-	-
8	Fill	-	0.22		Glass	Victorian
9	Fill	-	0.08		-	-
10	Fill	-	0.1		Pottery	Mid 12th century
11	Cut		?	Part of large pit	-	-
12	Fill	-	0.22		Pottery	Mid 12th century

Trench 7			
General description		Orientation	-
Not excavated		Avg. depth (m)	-
		Width (m)	-
		Length (m)	-

Trench 8		
General description	Orientation	-
	Avg. depth (m)	-
	Width (m)	-
	Length (m)	-
Not excavated		

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chadwick, P. & Dicks, S., 2004 *Land at Great Blakenham - Archaeological desk based assessment*. CgMs Consulting (unpublished)
- Chadwick, P & O'Reilly, J 2010 *Former Masons Cement Works – Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation*. CgMs Consulting (unpublished)
- Drummond-Murray, J., 2010 *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Great Blakenham, Suffolk*. OA East (unpublished)
- Martin, E., 2010 *Brief and Specification for Archaeological Evaluation and Structural Recording: former Masons Cement Works, Great Blakenham*. Suffolk County Council. Archaeol. Service (unpublished)

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-75464		
Project Name	Former Masons Cement Works, Great Blakenham		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	07-04-2010	Finish	09-04-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XSFGBM10	Planning App. No.	2326/05
HER No.	N/A	Related HER/OASIS No.	N/A

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Urban Residential

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input 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 checked="" 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 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
Pipe trench	Modern 1901 to Present	None	None
Quarry pit	Uncertain	Pottery	Medieval 1066 to 1540
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Suffolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Mid Suffolk	Former Mason Cement Works Bramford Road, Great Blakenham Suffolk IP6 0JP	
Parish	Great Blakenham		
HER	Suffolk HER		
Study Area	15.4 hectares	National Grid Reference	TM 1215 5020

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Edward Martin (Suffolk County Council)
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Louise Bush

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds	OA East	Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds
XSFGBM10	XSFGBM10	XSFGBM10





Archive Contents/Media

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Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

Plans

Limit of Excavation	_____
Illustrated Section	_____ S.14
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Tree Throw	
Cut Number	118

Sections

Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	_____
Deposit Horizon	_____
Top Surface/Top of Natural	_____
Cut Number	118
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^

Convention Key

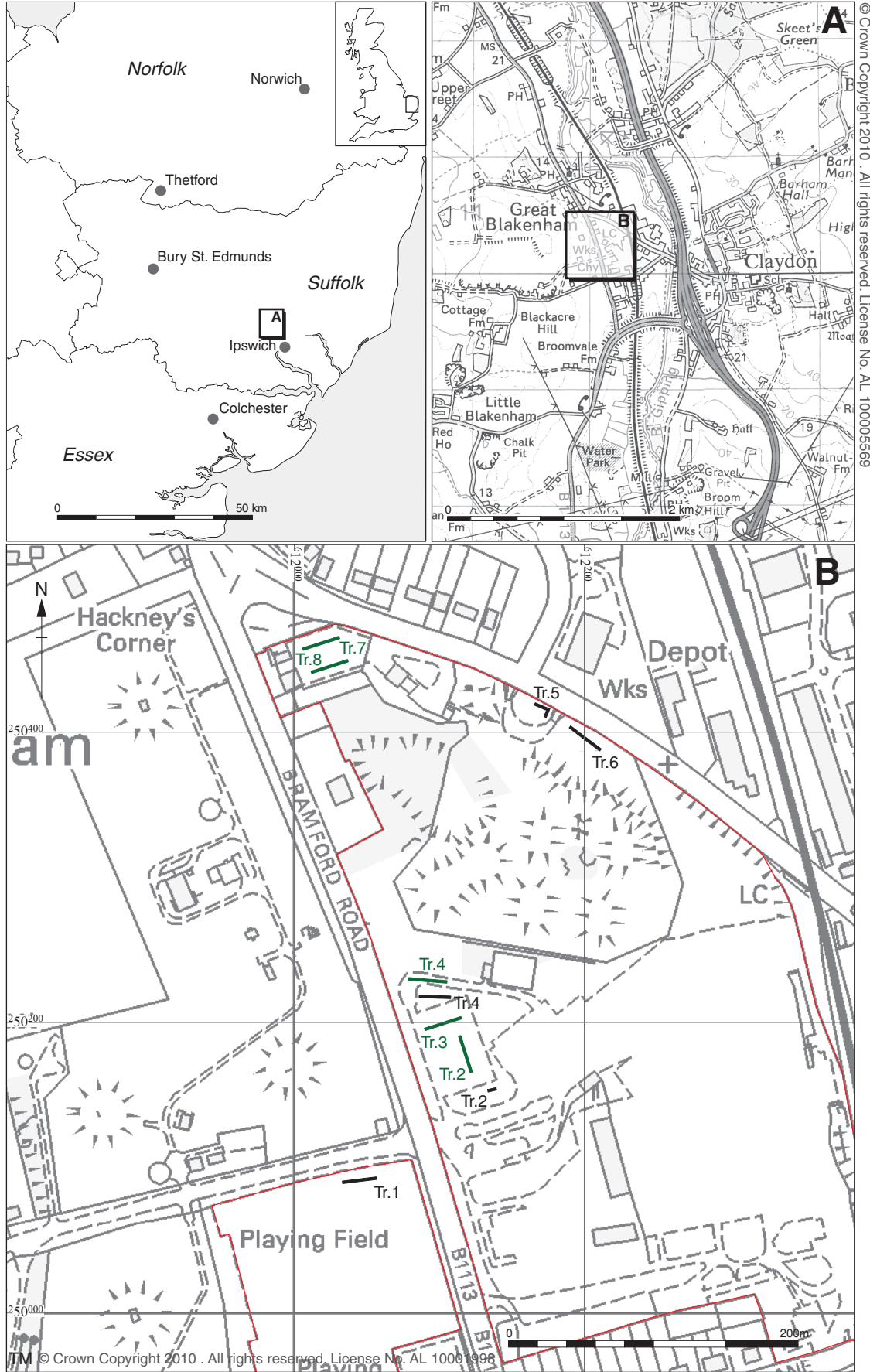


Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with original positions (green) and development area outlined (red)

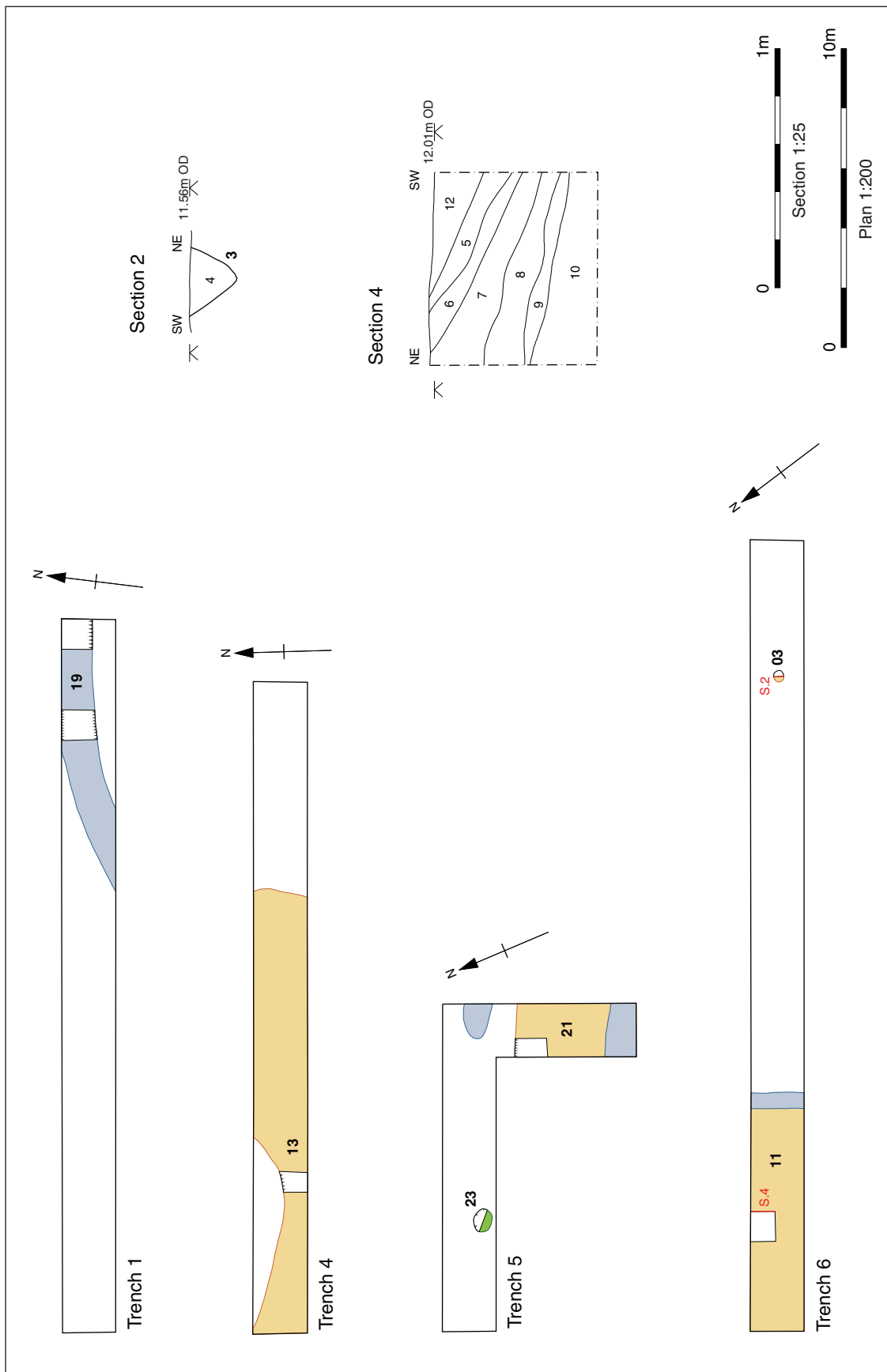


Figure 2: Trench plans with selected sections



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking west



Plate 2: Concrete remains of MoD fuel depot



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