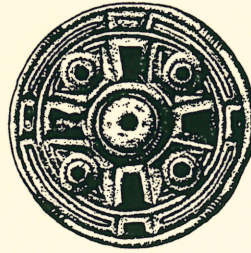


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Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Deposits at 2, West End, Ely: An Archaeological Evaluation

S Kenney

1999

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 164

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Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Remains at 2, West End, Ely:
An Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

In August 1999, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 2 West End, Ely (TL5362/8026), in advance of a proposed housing development. The work revealed extensive remains of medieval occupation, although no direct evidence of structures. In spite of considerable modern disturbance, preservation was good, especially over the northern half of the site, where an intact medieval layer was preserved in at least one trench. The southern half of the site was more heavily disturbed, but even here, intact medieval layers were present in at least one area. The alignment of features appeared not to relate to the present street frontage onto West End, but rather to a routeway or boundary to the north. The majority of features contained pottery dating to 1150 - 1350, although three features in the north-eastern part dated to 900 - 1150 and one in the northern part to 800 - 900. A small number of Roman and early to middle Saxon sherds were also recovered. In general, the occupation appeared to be domestic in character, although a relatively small quantity of smithing slag was also found in several features across the site. One unusual find was a late medieval drain made up of Ely ware pottery drainpipes.

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Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Remains at 2 West End, Ely: An Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

Between 9th and 13th August 1999, the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council (AFU) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 2 West End, Ely (TL5362/8026). The work was carried out at the request of Buckingham and Sparrow Ltd, in advance of a proposed housing development of eight dwellings, and was in response to a brief set by the County Archaeology Office (CAO).

The site lies close to the centre of Ely, 400m west of the cathedral. The area affected by the development proposals covers approximately 0.27ha. Until recent demolition took place, there were buildings standing on the front part of the site. The presence of archaeological remains was considered likely by the CAO on the basis of the site's location near the centre of the historic city, and information contained in the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

Six trenches with a total length of 91m were opened by a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket, and subsequently hand cleaned, photographed, and base planned. Five out of the six trenches were found to contain sequences of medieval layers and cut features.

Although the weather was variable during the evaluation, this did not adversely affect feature recognition, excavation or recording, and the confidence level to be attached to the results set out below is considered to be high.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

According to the British Geological Survey, the centre of the city lies on the Lower Greensand which caps the Ely island, the bulk of which is composed of Kimmeridge Clay. As has been observed on numerous occasions on the island, a layer of stone exists just below the top of the Greensand and many of the features excavated on the present site had this stone as their base.

2.2 Topography

The site is located on the highest ground on the island of Ely, a plateau at about 20.5m OD. The benchmark used during this evaluation has a value of 21.18m and is situated on the wall of no. 36 St. John's Road..

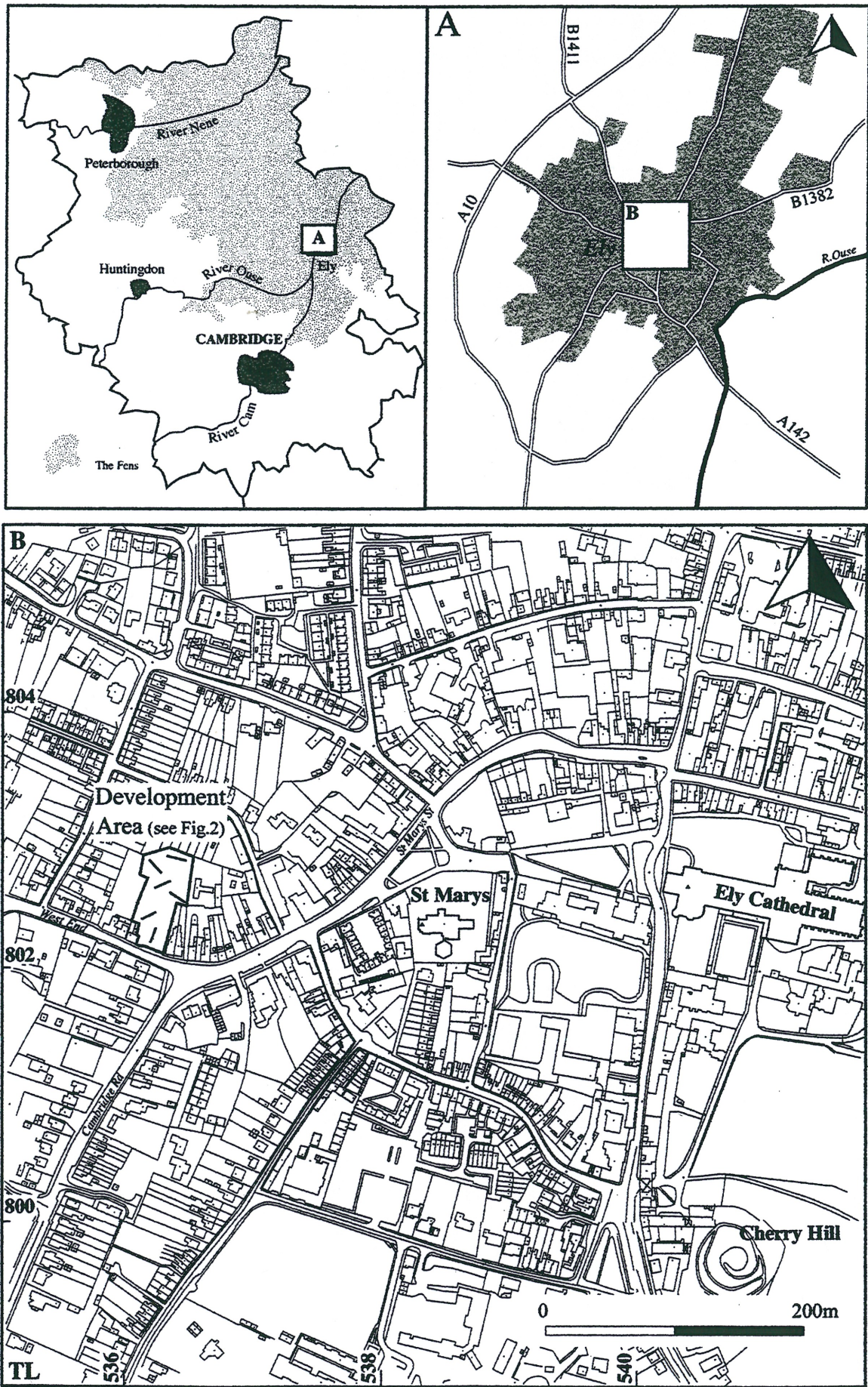


Figure 1 Site Location Map

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical Background

Lying 23km north-northeast of Cambridge on the river Great Ouse, Ely was mentioned in Domesday as a small agricultural settlement. Its development as an important medieval town began after the construction of the cathedral, built on the site of an earlier monastery, and the canalisation of the river, which provided important trade links. West End runs into Cambridge Road, which then becomes St Mary's Street to the east. Cambridge Road is recorded as *Stanweye* in 1319, and is the probable course of a Roman road.

3.2 Archaeological Background

The earliest evidence for occupation on the summit of the Ely island is in the form of Mesolithic flint artefacts from the Bray's Lane excavation (SMR 10175, a ,b ,c ,d). Later occupation from the Iron Age was found just southeast of the Cathedral. Late Saxon pottery was found at St Mary's Lodge in St Mary's Street in 1993 (Robinson unpub.). The Cathedral itself dates from the 1080's. Numerous excavations in Ely have produced medieval finds, and evidence has been found in several locations of medieval structures. Some standing buildings have medieval fabric within them, including the farm buildings, formerly the hospitals of St John the Baptist and St Mary Magdelene, at the northern end of St John's road (SMR 07342,a ,b ,c ,SMR 08435).. Ely is well-known as a pottery production centre in the medieval and post-medieval periods, and quantities of the local wares have been recovered from sites all over the city. Over the past few years, several production sites have been examined and the local wares are currently the subject of study. What is not known is the exact size and form of Middle and Late Saxon Ely.

Until 1999 it was generally assumed that pre-Conquest Ely lay mostly in the area between the Cathedral and the present site and the area a little to the north (Robinson 1993). A few small trenches had revealed middle and late Saxon finds; at St Marys Lodge (Robinson unpub.) and Chapel Street (Hinman 1996). During 1999 this viewpoint has been revised in the light of the discovery of several hectares of middle Saxon to early post-Conquest remains several hundred metres to the West, around West Fen Road (Mortimer pers. comm.). The present site may therefore lie within the pre-Conquest settlement, being located directly between the small amounts of Saxon remains previously recognised, and the newly recognised area of settlement.

In any case, the location of the site, near to the heart of the ancient city, close to one of the main through routes, and only 100m from two medieval hospitals, in

itself suggested an area with high archaeological potential

4 METHODOLOGY

Before beginning work on site, a desktop study was undertaken to ascertain the full extent of known archaeological data for the area. The desktop study revealed general rather than specific information, but was useful in characterising the archaeological background of the site and its potential as noted above.

Six trenches were opened using a mechanical excavator with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist (see fig. 1). The trenches were cleaned by hand, photographed, and base planned at a scale of 1:50. The trenches were located in OS coordinates with a Zeiss RecElta 15 total station theodolite.

Features were sample excavated by hand in all six trenches and plans and sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. The excavated features were photographed again.

5 RESULTS

Archaeological features were observed in every trench, with the highest density being in trenches 1-3. Most of the features were pits or linear features of one type or another. No direct evidence was found for buildings or other structures apart from the known, recently-demolished post-medieval ones. In the following results, features and deposits from which no finds were recovered have not been assigned context numbers.

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 16.8m long and contained several archaeological features. 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.3m of subsoil. Near the eastern end was **4**, a slightly curving linear 0.4m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 1.8m long. It curved away to the east, and contained a single fill, **3**, a dark yellowish brown silty clay sand from which animal bone was recovered.

West of **4** were two possible postholes 1.3m apart, 0.2m and 0.15m in diameter respectively. They both had very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay fills.

West of these was pit **6**, almost perfectly semicircular within the trench. It contained fill **5**, a very dark greyish brown silty sandy clay with occasional small stones, from which was recovered pottery dated to 1350-1500, animal bone and worked flint. The cut of **6** had concave sides and a flat base, in the centre of

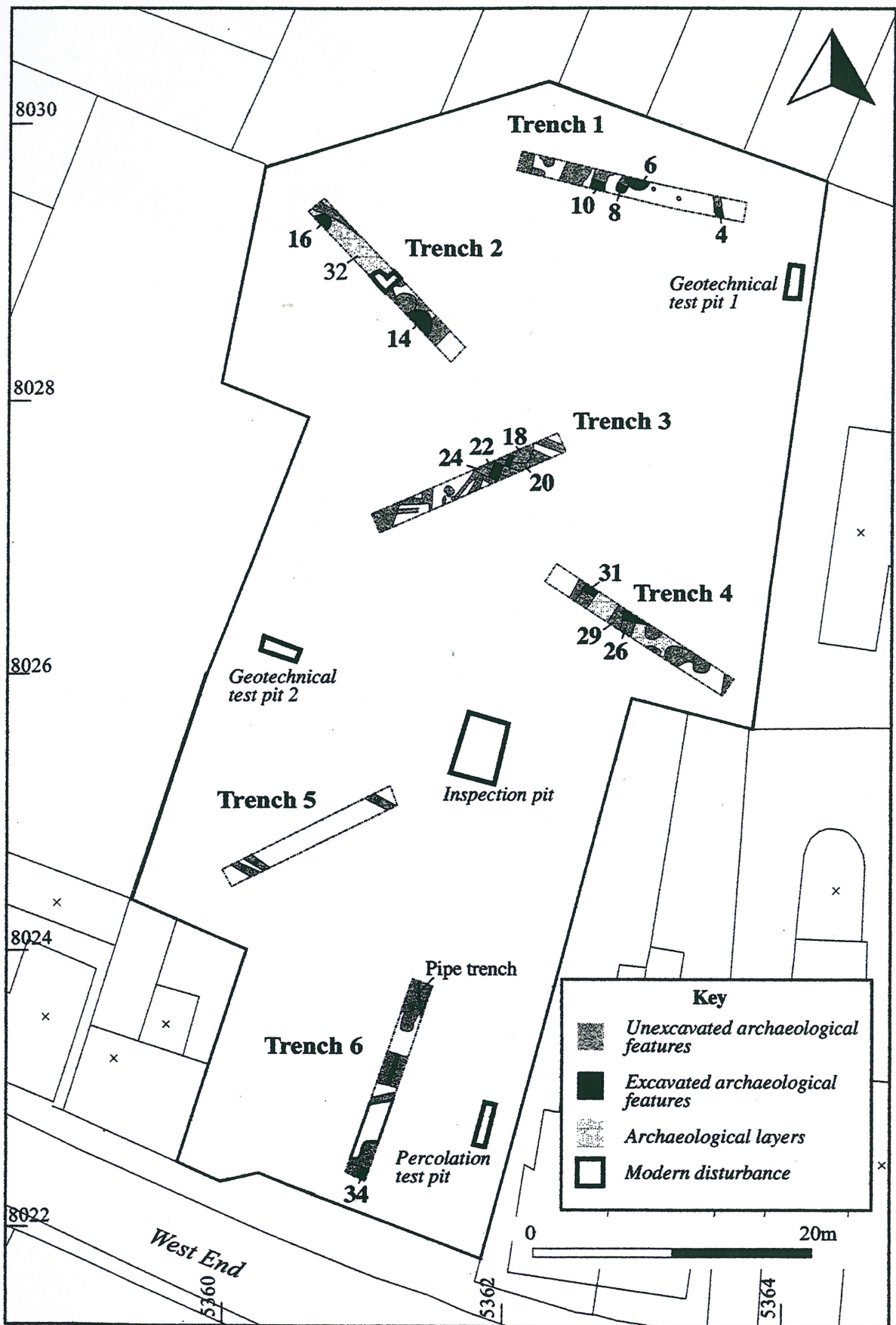


Figure 2 Plan showing development area and position of trenches.

which was a concave depression 0.1m deep. Overall, its dimensions were 1.7m by 0.9m and 0.4m deep, including the central depression. To the west, it cut the fill of linear 8.

Linear 8 ran NE-SW, butt ending to the SW within the trench. It was 0.7m wide, 0.3m deep and at least 1.4m long. It contained a single fill, 7, a dark greyish brown sandy silty clay with rare small stones, from which was recovered pottery dated to 1150-1200, smithing slag, worked flint, and burnt and unburnt animal bone. It had near vertical sides and a slightly concave base.

West of 8 was ditch 10, 1.0m wide, 0.4m deep and at least 1.5m long. It contained a single fill, 9, a brown silty clay sand with rare small stones, from which was recovered pottery dated to 800-900 and several large animal bones. The profile of 10 was a wide V with slightly concave sides.

West of 10 was probable ditch 12, 1.9m wide, and at least 1.5m long. It contained a single visible fill, 11, a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks, from which was recovered pottery dated to 1150-1350 and animal bone. It was very slightly curving away to the west at either end.

West of this were two probable tree throws or other root disturbances, and at the very western end of the trench, a final linear, at least 0.6m wide and 1.5m long, containing a single visible fill, a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay with occasional small stones.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 15.2m long and contained numerous archaeological features. 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.2-0.4m of subsoil.

At the northwestern end, a pit, 16, and a linear cut into a layer, 32.

The pit, 16, was oval, quite regular, 1.2m wide, probably 1.4m long, and only 0.12m deep. It contained a single fill, 15, a very dark grey sandy clay silt with occasional chalk flecks, from which was recovered a surprising amount of pottery, mostly from a single vessel, dated 1150-1350. A small fragment of smithing slag and a quantity of animal bone were also recovered. Adjacent to this pit to the north was a narrow linear.

The linear was straight, 0.4-0.5m wide and at least 3.4m long, running WNW-ESE. Its fill was very similar to the layer it was cut into, 32, but was distinguished by the lack of chalk flecks, and the inclusion of burnt sandstone fragments.

Both of the above features were cut into layer 32, a very dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with occasional chalk flecks and larger lumps and rare charcoal flecks. Pottery recovered from this context has been dated to 1200-1350. The

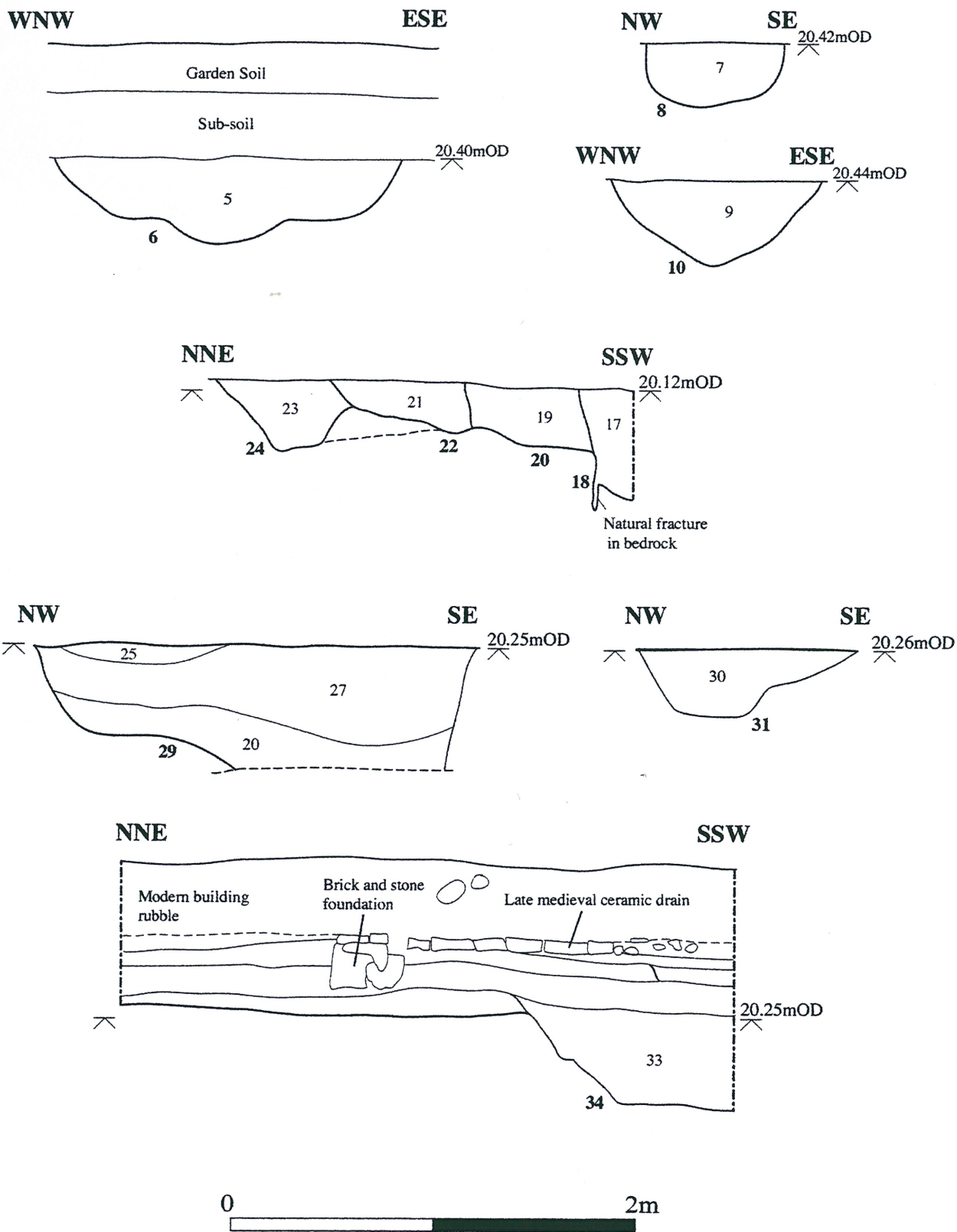


Figure 3 Sections of excavated features

full extent of this layer is not known, but it extended for 6.0m along the trench across its full width from the northwest end to the modern disturbances in the middle, and was at least 0.3m thick.

The trench was bisected by two modern intrusions, a pipe trench and a rubbish pit. Layer 32 did not appear to extend beyond these to the southeast. However, the modern linear cut two probable pits with its southeast edge, both of which were filled with very similar dark olive brown sandy silty clays. The southernmost of these pits cut the fill of the northernmost of a pair of pits.

Although this pair of pits had visually indistinguishable fills, an attempt was made to determine the relationship between them by excavation, to see whether they could be separated by texture or compaction. This pair of pits also appeared to cut a linear running SW-NE across the trench, while the southernmost of the pair additionally cut a further linear to the south which had the same orientation.

The southernmost of these pits, 14, was probably subrectangular, 2.2m long, 0.35m deep and at least 1.4m wide. It contained 13, a very dark greyish brown sandy clay silt with occasional chalk flecks, from which a varied and somewhat confusing assemblage of pottery was recovered. This included Roman and Saxon sherds, but is dated by the Ely ware to 1150-1350. The fill also contained animal bone and smithing slag. The cut was basically a shallow concave shape to the south, with the sides getting steeper on the northern side. Although excavation did not eventually validate hypotheses about the stratigraphic relationships in this area, raising more questions than were answered, it did reveal a startling context, hitherto hidden beneath 14.

Below, and cut by, 14, was the apparent corner of a rectilinear feature. The fill was unusual, in that although its matrix was an unremarkable dark olive brown silty sandy clay, it contained such a high density of burnt sandstone fragments and fired clay flecks and lumps (at least 50%) that it appeared red at a distance.

The northern pit of the pair had an identical fill to 13, but was more oval in shape, 1.5m wide and at least 1.7m long.

The linear apparently cut by this pair of pits was 1.2m wide and at least 0.8m long. Its fill was an olive brown sandy clay silt.

The linear to the south of 14 was 1.5m wide and at least 1.5m long. It contained two visible fills. What appeared to be the upper fill was a very dark grey silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks, moderate burnt clay flecks and occasional chalk flecks. Below this was an olive brown sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks.

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 14.8m long and contained numerous archaeological features. At the southwestern end of the trench 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.1m of hardcore, which in turn overlay 0.15m of subsoil. The hardcore lensed out about halfway along the trench and the depth of subsoil increased to 0.5m by the far end of the trench.

At the northeastern end, a subrectangular probable quarry pit, **18**, at least 1.8m by 1.4m, with a rounded corner, cut another subrectangular pit, **20**, and a linear. The fill of **18** was 17, a dark olive brown sandy clay silt with occasional chalk and charcoal flecks from which was recovered pottery dated to 1150-1350. Where excavated, the cut of the feature had a near vertical flat side, and appeared to cut through the layer of stone near the top of the underlying Greensand bedrock (see *Geology* above). The base was not found during this evaluation, but the fill was excavated to a depth of 0.7m under rather cramped conditions.

The linear, running E-W, which was not excavated, was 0.9m wide and at least 2.0m long. It was filled by a light olive brown sandy clay silt containing occasional chalk flecks.

20, The other pit cut by **18** was rectangular, 0.28m deep, 1.6m wide, at least 3.4m long, with straight sides and a sharp corner in plan. It contained a single fill, 19, an olive brown sandy clay silt with moderate chalk flecks and occasional charcoal, burnt sandstone fragments and fired clay flecks. This fill contained pottery dated to 1200-1350, animal bone and smithing slag. The side of the cut, where excavated, was very flat and near vertical, and broke abruptly onto the slightly uneven stone layer within the Greensand bedrock base. To the south, **20** cut the upper fill of ditch **22**.

Ditch **22** was straight in plan, 0.24m deep, at least 2.9m long, and had a surviving width of 0.7m. It contained a single fill, 21, a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay with rare chalk flecks, from which was recovered pottery dated to 900-1150 and animal bone. The profile was basically a wide U. To the south, **22** cut the upper fill of ditch **24**.

Ditch **24** was straight in plan, 0.34m deep, at least 2.9m long, and had a surviving width of 0.65m. It contained a single fill, 23, a dark olive brown sandy silty clay with rare chalk flecks, from which was recovered a fragment of Niedermendig lava quern and animal bone. The profile was a narrow flat-based V. To the south, **24** cut an apparently bifurcated linear running N-S, which may have been two features, but the fills were unfortunately indistinguishable.

The part of the bifurcation to the east appeared to butt end to the south, and was 0.4m wide. The western arm was narrower, only 0.2m wide. They appeared to join 0.4m south of the edge of **24**, which truncated them. The single fill they shared was a mottled very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay with slightly yellower patches. It contained occasional burnt sandstone

fragments and chalk flecks. The wider segment cut another E-W linear running into it from the west, which did not emerge on the other side. This feature had a very dark greyish brown sandy silty clay fill.

South of these linears were three rather irregular suboval features which were probably root holes, or they may have been postholes damaged by root action. They all had very dark grey sandy silty clay fills.

At the southwestern end of the trench was a group of features on a slightly different set of alignments from everything else in the trench. In plan, they consisted of a possible linear or pit at least 1.4m wide and 1.5m long, with a straight N-S edge which appeared to turn sharply to the east, becoming a linear 0.4m wide, which then turned sharply again, continuing as a 0.5m wide linear to the north, and also a 0.15m wide linear to the south. This whole complex appeared to be filled with the same deposit, a dark olive brown sandy clay with occasional charcoal and chalk flecks and moderate small stones. Another narrow linear filled with fractionally paler material could faintly be made out running parallel and to the south of the E-W element, apparently cut by the pit or linear at the southwestern end of the trench, but fading out to the east. None of these features were excavated.

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 15.5m long and contained several archaeological features and modern intrusions. 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.4m of subsoil at the northwestern end, increasing to 0.6m at the south-eastern end.

At the northwest end of the trench, a modern pit full of bottle and window glass was removed by machine for health and safety reasons. This inevitably resulted in greater truncation of some features; further hand excavation, however, was made possible.

The modern pit just missed the edge of ditch 31, 1.05m wide, 0.32m deep, and at least 1.6m long, which ran NNE-SSW across the trench. The ditch contained a single fill, 30, a dark olive brown sandy clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks and rare small stones. It had a steep flat side to the west, a flat base, and a slightly stepped concave eastern side (fig 3). Animal bone was recovered from this fill, along with pottery which has been spotdated to 900-1150. Ditch 31 was cut into the upper fill of another linear feature which remains unexcavated. It was 3.4m wide, on the same alignment as 31, which lay wholly within the width of the earlier feature, and may represent a recut. The fill of this earlier feature was an olive brown sandy clay silt from which no finds were recovered.

Southeast of these features, another linear 26 cut into the upper fill of a further large possible linear, 29. The fill of 26 was 25, a very dark greyish brown sandy clay silt, from which was recovered pottery dated to 900-1150 and animal bone. The cut was a shallow concave shape with no distinction between sides and base. It was 0.8m wide, 0.1m deep, and at least 1.6m long. This shallow linear

cut 27, the upper fill of 29, an olive brown sandy clay silt with occasional charcoal and chalk flecks up to 0.46m deep, from which no finds were recovered. Below this was fill 28, a dark olive brown silty sandy clay with occasional chalk flecks up to 0.28m deep, from which pottery dated 900-1150 was recovered, along with animal bone, burnt stone and oyster shell. Cut 29 had a curving stepped west side, blending smoothly into the perfectly flat bedrock base. The east side was not established by excavation and was not readily discernible in plan.

Several possible features to the east may be no more than patches in the surface of a larger feature, which may turn out to be the continuation of 29, in which case it would obviously be some type of large pit, but these interpretations are tentative at best. What is more certain is that the easternmost features in the trench were post-medieval at the very earliest, containing as they did seventeenth or eighteenth century brick and tile. These were a probable linear at the very end of the trench and a possible butt end of a linear some 1.5m to the west. Between the dark patches and the post-medieval features, and cut by the butt-ending linear mentioned above was a curvilinear feature 1.2m wide, the fill of which was similar to those of the later features, but did not apparently contain any brick or tile.

5.5 Trench 5

Trench 5 was 13.5m long and contained only three archaeological features. Beneath 0.2m of hardcore lay 0.2m of topsoil, and below that, a further 0.4m of hardcore, rubble, ash and general rubbish. There seemed to be distinct layering to this, and the layers were extremely flat, suggesting make-up rather than an enormous pit.

Sealed below these deposits were three features, two parallel narrow linears close together at the southwestern end of the trench, and a single narrow linear at the northeastern end. All three had fills with an appearance and consistency unlike any other features on the site. The southwestern pair were each 0.5m wide and separated by 0.1m. Both were filled with identical very dark greyish brown sandy clay which was extremely compacted. The fill of the third feature was similar, but slightly greyer. This feature was 0.6m wide, and they were all aligned WNW-ESE, approximately the same as West End at this point. All three were shallow, less than 0.05m deep at maximum, with straight sides and a generally smooth concave base. The only finds recovered from any of these were fragments of post-medieval brick and tile from the surface revealed by machining.

5.6 Trench 6

Trench 6 was 15m long and contained several archaeological features. It was also extensively disturbed by modern and post-medieval intrusions, although it appears that cellaring had not occurred. Only after heavy rain caused several

lengths of the baulk to collapse was the Late medieval drain mentioned below revealed within the section. The extremely unstable and dangerous nature of the sections within this trench precluded all but the briefest and most localised excavation at the end closest to the street frontage.

At the southern street frontage end of the trench, it became apparent that archaeological layers and a late medieval ceramic drain survived in the eastern section (see fig 3), while across the width of the trench, the opposite section had been obliterated by modern disturbances. Up to 0.5m of modern hardcore and rubble overlay a brick and stone foundation 0.4m wide running roughly E-W. The foundation trench had cut through a compact olive brown silty clay layer 0.08m thick which contained an Ely Ware ceramic medieval drain.

The drain was constructed from round sections approximately 0.5m long, 0.15m at the widest end, tapering to 0.1m at the narrow end. A slight collar was evident at the wide end where the narrow end of the next section was intended to fit. At least two of these joins were evident in the section, despite the pipe being in generally poor condition.

Below the layer which contained the pipe were two further layers, a dark olive brown silty clay 0.1m thick, and below that, a very dark greyish brown silty clay 0.15m thick. Both were very compact and neither contained any finds. The lowest layer sealed the fill of ditch 34, a flat-based V in profile. It was 0.5m deep and at least 1.0m wide, and ran across the trench, parallel to West End. The fill, 33, was an olive brown sandy clay silt with occasional small stones. It contained pottery which has been spotdated to 1150-1350 and a relatively small quantity (840g) of smithing slag.

Ditch 34 cut into the upper of two further layers, a dark yellowish brown sandy silty clay 0.15m deep. This in turn overlay a dark brown sandy silty clay at least 0.5m deep, the lower limit of which was not found. Neither contained any finds.

Just over 3m from the southern end of the trench, a modern intrusion began which extended the remaining length of the trench down to at least 0.9m below the ground surface, and which had done extensive damage to the archaeology beneath. Other, separate, modern intrusions included a pipe trench at the northern end and a square posthole about 4m from the north end. What little archaeology remained beneath was probably all truncated to some degree.

A narrow sliver of curving edge, probably a pit, survived just to the north of the deepest part of the modern intrusion. The fill was a very dark greyish brown silty clay from which no finds were recovered. North of this was a broad linear feature 2.4m wide, running E-W across the trench, which upon investigation turned out to be only 0.15m deep, a shallow wide U in profile. To the north of this, a squarish butt end was just clipped by a square modern posthole to the south and cut by a probable pit to the north. The probable pit was filled by a dark olive grey silty clay with ashy patches and moderate charcoal flecks. It was at least 1.2m wide and 2.4m long, and was itself truncated to the east by the pipetrench mentioned above. The linear which butt ended ran N-S, and was up

to 1m wide and at least 1.7m long, widening slightly to the north. Its fill was a dark olive brown sandy clay silt. No finds were recovered from any of these features.

6 DISCUSSION

Although no actual structural remains were found in the evaluation, the overall impression is of a large number of relatively densely-packed archaeological features, indicating fairly intense occupation of the site during the early to late medieval period. There was little evidence for the character of the occupation being anything other than domestic, although there was slight evidence of industrial processes such as smithing in the form of a small quantity of metalworking slag. The state of preservation of archaeological remains seemed good, especially in the northern half of the site. Here, 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.15 - 0.60m of subsoil, which in turn overlay the archaeology. Over most of the northern half, the latter consisted of features with a depth of around 0.4m cut into natural; in trench 2, however, there was an extensive layer at least 0.3m thick, cut by a probable medieval feature.

The intercutting of several of the features suggests more than one phase of occupation, although analysis of the pottery suggests that all of these phases would fit within the post-Conquest period. Most of the pottery groups recovered date to the period 1150 -1350, although three features (22, 26 and 31) contained pottery dating to 900 - 1150. These were all located in the north-eastern part of the site, in trenches 3 and 4, which may be significant. A single feature (10 in trench 1) contained a pottery group dating to 800 - 900. The presence of a few Roman and some early to middle Saxon sherds in later features hints at still earlier occupation of the site

In general, where it could be determined, the orientation of the linear features observed at the back of the site (trenches 1-4) seemed not to be aligned with reference to (i.e. neither parallel nor at right angles to) the street frontage on to West End. It is perhaps more likely therefore that they related to routeways or property boundaries to the north, rather than West End itself. In fact, it is very difficult, in spite of their abundance, to relate the linear features observed in the different trenches to each other. Each trench showed a relatively complex arrangement of intercutting pits and ditches, but what the layout of the site as a whole looked like in any given phase is very hard to assess. It is also interesting that no archaeological remains at all were noted in the geotechnical test pits. The lack of continuity between the different trenches and the geotechnical test pits is surprising, given their relative proximity on what is actually a small development area.

Although there were areas of modern disturbance in the northern half of the site and most features noted had probably been truncated to a greater or lesser degree, the presence of fairly thick layers of topsoil and subsoil with only

limited expanses of hardcore or rubble suggested that in this half of the site the most recent former land use had been as a garden or back yard.

The southern half of the site appeared by contrast to have been much more heavily disturbed by recent building and demolition work. The overburden consisted of 0.5 - 0.8m of mainly hardcore and rubble, and in trench 5, the features beneath this were only very shallow cuts into natural, suggesting that fairly extensive truncation had taken place. Trench 6 was perhaps the most heavily disturbed by modern activity, which is not surprising as it was located beneath the site of a recently-demolished building. Nevertheless, an area at the southern end of this trench appeared to contain intact layers, with a depth of at least 0.3m. These layers were cut by a feature containing pottery dating to 1150 -1350, suggesting that they themselves were medieval or earlier in date. The Ely ware ceramic drain uncovered in this trench appears to be unparalleled. It is difficult, however, to say whether or not it suggests high status occupation of the site (Spoerry pers. comm.).

Although the evaluation has revealed evidence for fairly intense medieval occupation of the site, it has left a number of questions unanswered. The absence of any evidence for structures is tantalising, and the question must arise as to whether such evidence might exist in the areas of the site not yet examined. The date and precise character of the occupation are likewise enigmatic. Although the character of the occupation appeared domestic, there was a relatively small but widespread presence of smithing slag which may suggest more than this. The majority of features were medieval but there was one probable late Saxon feature and hints of an early or middle Saxon presence. This is particularly significant in the light of the current state of fluidity of the accepted models for the development of Ely in the pre-Conquest period.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly, the site at 2, West End contains extensive and potentially important remains which could add to the current debate about the development of Ely in the pre-and post Conquest periods. Some areas of the site appear to contain stratified deposits, which adds to their importance. Any building work on the site which penetrates below the topsoil, subsoil and rubble layers is likely to have an impact on these remains. In addition, further impacts are likely from service trenches and access roads. In the absence of detailed information about the foundations of the proposed buildings, it is difficult to say exactly what their impact might be, and it is possible that they could be designed or re-designed so as to limit their impact. Assuming a conventional foundation design, however, the present proposals for constructing houses, garages and access roads over the site appear to constitute a major impact on the important archaeological remains beneath. If this impact cannot be mitigated by redesigning the development, then further work should be undertaken on the site to preserve the archaeology by recording it in advance of construction works.

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Appendix A

Pottery spotdating and assessment

Dr Paul Spoerry, PhD.

57 sherds from 12 contexts, plus unstratified material and a large group of drainpipe fragments were studied from this evaluation.

A handful of Roman and early to middle Saxon sherds are present, along with late Saxon material, although most sherds are of post-Conquest date. Of these the majority are recognisably Ely ware, although fragments of glazed jugs from the Sible Hedingham and Lyveden-Stanion industries are also present. The only group that may be pre-Conquest is 9. In addition the Ely ware drainpipe is a previously unknown artefact type and requires record.

The assemblage is otherwise unremarkable. The exact date of the pre-Conquest activity is difficult to identify with such a small sample; the hand-made pottery may on balance date with the Ipswich ware and thus be post-700, but this is not certain.

<i>Cont</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Pot</i>	<i>Pot Date</i>	<i>Context Date</i>
5	1	MEL glazed	1350-1500	1350-1500
	1	LYST late	1350-1500	
7	1	Hand-made, black	450-850	1150-1200
		MEL glazed	1150+	
	3	NEOT cookpots	900-1150	
	1	THET/LMU cookpot	1050-1200	
9	1	IPSW	700-850	800-900
	3	Micaceous, smooth ?THET	850-1000	
11	2	MEL GLAZED	1150-1350	1150-1350
13	1	ROMAN base		

	1	IPSW? cookpot	700-850	1150-1350
	2	THET Cookpot	850-1200	
	12	MEL assorted	1150-1350	
	1	CSW	UNK	
15	17	MEL mostly one bowl	1150-1350	1150-1350
	1	HEDI jug	1150-1350	
17	1	MEL	1150-1350	1150-1350
	1	LMU	1150+	
	1	THET	900-1150	
19	1	MEL	1150-1350	1200-1350
21	4	THET incl jar of classic type	900-1150	900-1150
	1	NEOT	900-1150	
	1	ROMAN greyware		
	1	CSW black hand made	450-850 (like Hinxton fabric)	
25	1	THET	900-1150	900-1150
31	2	THET? micaceous	900-1150	900-1150
32	2	MEL jug	1200-1350	1200-1350
	2	MEL/CHEL base	1150-1350	
35	MEL	drainpipe	?1350+	



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