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CCC AFU Report Number 883

**Enclosures at Nos 6 & 8 Earith
Road, Willingham,
Cambridgeshire**

An Archaeological Excavation

Dan Hounsell

August 2006

Cover Images

Machine stripping: Soham	On-site surveying
Roman corn dryer, Duxford	Guided walk along Devil's Dyke
Bronze Age shaft, Fordham Bypass	Medieval well, Soham
Human burial, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery	Timbers from a medieval well, Soham
Blue enamelled bead, Barrington	Bed burial reconstruction, Barrington Anglo-Saxon Cemetery
Aethusa cynapium 'Fool's parsley'	Medieval tanning pits, Huntington Town Centre
Digging in the snow, Huntingdon Town Centre	Beaker vessel
Face painting at Hinchingbrooke Iron Age Farm	Environmental analysis
Research and publication	Monument Management, Bartlow Hills

**Enclosures at Nos 6 & 8 Earith
Road, Willingham,
Cambridgeshire**

An Archaeological Excavation

Dan Hounsell BA, PhD

With contributions by

Rachel Fosberry HNC, Cert Ed

Chris Faine BA, MA, MSc

Steve Macaulay BA, AIFA

Site Code: WILEAR06

CHER Event Number: ECB2308

Date of works: 12th – 23rd June 2006

Grid Ref: TL 4043 7071

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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Enclosures at Nos 6 & 8 Earith Road, Willingham, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation			
Short description	<p>Evaluation in land surrounding two derelict buildings in advance of their demolition and re-development. This work served to reveal more of the extent of an enclosure system, defined by a series of moderately sized, linear ditch features, initially identified by the evaluation. In addition to the various phases of linear boundary features there were also a large number of discrete pit features. One of these pits had been used to dump (as opposed to placing or burying) the partial remains of a human chiefly a leg, mixed in with the partial remains of a pig (mainly the jaw). Unfortunately the function of the remainder of the pit features was much less clear, although none of them appeared to have had a structural use. The excavation demonstrated the presence of a reasonable concentration of archaeological deposits within the development area. Furthermore, this work appeared to indicate that the ancient use of the site was primarily Roman in date, and agricultural hinterland in function, the site being dominated by linear ditches appearing to define a series of enclosures. The dearth of finds from this site, as well as the natural infill nature of the features following their disuse, meant that it was unlikely that this site was particularly close to any settlement. Fairly strong archaeological evidence indicates that the focus for the Roman settlement of Willingham was at an area just to the north of the current village centre. The evidence presented by this study site would indicate that it was on the periphery of this activity.</p>			
Project dates	Start	12 / 06 / 2006	End	23 / 06 / 2006
Previous work	Eval march 2006. CAM ARC rep 865, CHER Event Number: ECB2169		Future work	NO
Associated project reference codes	WIL EAR 06, CHER ECB2308 Planning S/1710/05/F			
Type of project	Excavation,			
Site status	NONE			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Residential (rural)			
Planned development	Residential re-development			
Monument types / period (list all that apply and use <u>thesaurus of monument types</u>)	Roman field enclosure system			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply and use <u>MDA object thesaurus</u>)	none			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Willingham	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Nos 6 & 8 Earith Road, Willingham, Cambridgeshire, CB24 5LS			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	880m ²			

National grid reference	Easting (6 figure)	TL 4043	Northing (6 figure)	7071
Height OD	Max OD	4.56	Min OD	4.41
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	Cambridgeshire County Council, CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Kasia Gdaniec (CAPCA)			
Project design originator	Stephen Macaulay			
Director/supervisor	Daniel Hounsell			
Project manager	James Drummond Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Jason C. Frost Development Consultants			
ARCHIVES	Location and accession number	Content: HSR, animal bone, pottery, shell, context sheets, photo's access database, spreadsheets, survey data, word documets		
	WILEAR06, Cambs County Council			
Physical	Cam ARC	Cam ARC		
Paper	Cam ARC	Cam ARC		
Digital	Cam ARC	Cam ARC		
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Summary

An Archaeological excavation was conducted by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU) between the 12th and 23rd June 2006 on land to the rear of Nos. 6 – 8 Earith Road, Willingham (TL 4043 7071) prior to the re-development of the existing properties, the demolition of the surrounding out-buildings and the construction of a number of new dwellings with associated access and services. The work was commissioned by Jason C. Frost Development Consultants.

The excavation followed an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site by CCC AFU in March 2006. The entire development area (c. 880m²) was mechanically excavated (under close archaeological supervision) onto the underlying natural geology in order to reveal the archaeological deposits.

This work served to reveal more of the extent of an enclosure system, defined by a series of moderately sized, linear ditch features, initially identified by the evaluation.

In addition to the various phases of linear boundary features there were also a large number of discrete pit features. One of these pits had been used to dump (as opposed to placing or burying) the partial remains of a human – chiefly a leg, mixed in with the partial remains of a pig (mainly the jaw). Unfortunately the function of the remainder of the pit features was much less clear, although none of them appeared to have had a structural use.

The excavation demonstrated the presence of a reasonable concentration of archaeological deposits within the development area. Furthermore, this work appeared to indicate that the ancient use of the site was primarily Roman in date, and agricultural hinterland in function, the site being dominated by linear ditches appearing to define a series of enclosures. The dearth of finds from this site, as well as the natural infill nature of the features following their disuse, meant that it was unlikely that this site was particularly close to any settlement.

Fairly strong archaeological evidence indicates that the focus for the Roman settlement of Willingham was at an area just to the north of the current village centre. The evidence presented by this study site would indicate that it was on the periphery of this activity.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Geology and Topography	2
3	Archaeological and Historical Background	2
4	Methodology	5
5	Results	6
6	Discussion	11
7	Conclusions	12
	Acknowledgements	14
	Bibliography	14

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Location of excavation areas with the development area outlined	27
Figure 2:	Excavation area plans	28
Figure 3:	Section drawings	29
Figure 4:	Section drawings	30

List of Plates

Plate 1:	Area B	31
Plate 2:	Substantial ditch in area B	31
Plate 3:	Area B	32
Plate 4:	Area A	32
Plate 5:	Site overview	33

List of Appendices

Appendix 1:	Context Summary	15
Appendix 2:	Finds Summary	18
Appendix 3:	The Pottery, by Stephen Macaulay	19
Appendix 4:	Animal Bone Assessment, by Chris Faine	21
Appendix 5:	Human Skeletal Remains, by Chris Faine	23
Appendix 6:	Environmental Appraisal, by Rachel Fosberry	24

1 Introduction

This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/1710/05/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU).

The work was designed to assist in further defining the character and extent of the 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 proposed development works comprised the re-development of the existing properties, the demolition of the surrounding outbuildings and the construction of a number of new dwellings with associated access and services. The results of this work will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

Following an initial trial trench evaluation, undertaken by CCC AFU in March 2006 (Thatcher 2006), CAPCA decided that a full excavation of the site was required in order to further inform on the nature and extent of the archaeological remains and to record them prior to development.

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

2 Geology and Topography

The site overlies first terrace sand and gravel deposits and Ampthill Clays (British Geological Survey Sheets 187 and 188, Huntingdon and Cambridge, 1981). The site lay at between 4.56mOD and 4.41mOD and the topography of the development area was fairly level with a recorded variation in height across the site of less than 0.20m.

The topsoil was between 0.22m – 0.55m thick and consisted of a dark brownish black silt. This overlay a 0.10m – 0.25m thick layer of mid yellow grey, silty clay, subsoil. Both of these soils, as well as the underlying natural geology were heavily disturbed by modern activity, consisting of the foundations of outbuildings (sheds and greenhouses) as well as large rubble filled dumping pits, and smaller cess pits.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric

A number of prehistoric finds are recorded for the area in and around Willingham. These include two polished Neolithic flint axes to the north of the village in Middle Fen (CHER 05599 and 05733), Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age features found during an excavation in 1997 (MCB 14092 Connor & Robinson 1997) and an Iron Age ditch recorded in an evaluation west of the High Street (MCB15004 Casa Hatton & Kemp 2002).

To the east of the village and lying adjacent to the Aldreth causeway is the site of Belsars Hill. The causeway, although currently undated, is assumed to be of Iron Age provenance (CHER 01770) and linked the Isle of Ely with the mainland.

Furthermore, Iron Age and Roman crop marks have been noted at Milking Hills Corner to the northeast of the village (CHER 05776b & c) and excavations there by the Fenland Survey revealed Late Iron Age features which possibly constituted part of a settlement (CHER 07976). Late Iron Age and Roman pottery (CHER 08600 and 08600a) were also recovered from an area of dark occupation soils at the site. To the south of the village an area of dark soil also yielded Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds (CHER 08615 and 08615a) and undated earthworks have been recorded near to Manor Farm (CHER 09898 & 09899).

3.2 Roman

There are numerous Roman finds recorded from the northern part of the village in close proximity to the development area. These include a

Roman ditch located during an evaluation on Church Street (MCB14621 Dickens 1999) as well as Roman pottery (CHER 05602, 05603 and 05604) and a Roman coin of Gratian (CHER 05730) found immediately to the southeast of the development area.

During an evaluation on the High Street (CHER11937A) Roman features including a grave were found. Further excavations on the High Street in 1997 (MCB 14092 Connor & Robinson 1997) revealed a single inhumation found in the backfill of an east to west orientated ditch. Burials in ditch terminals are characteristic of the Late Iron Age and Roman period. This particular burial was attributed to the Late Roman or post-Roman period on the basis of an associated pottery sherd and the stratigraphic sequence of associated features.

Roman pottery was also recovered from ditches and a heavily truncated pit. The overall quantity of Roman finds was very small with much of it thought to have been residual material in Anglo-Saxon features, some of which may have been deliberately collected. The assemblage recovered by the excavation suggested that any Roman presence on the site was confined to enclosed fields at some distance from any domestic structures existing in the vicinity (MCB 14092 Connor & Robinson 1997).

A scatter of Roman pottery has been recorded (CHER 01892) approximately 500m to the northwest of the development Area Along West Fen Road whilst to the north of the village metal detectorists found three pewter plates with chi-ro symbols along with pottery and other remains (MCB 14716).

On the southern edge of the village, a pit whose contents included Roman coins and pewter plates is recorded (CHER 11162). Coins and pottery dated to the Roman period (mid 2nd to mid 4th century) have also been recorded to the southeast of the village (CHER 05563, 05564 and 05565). Between the village and Belsars Hill, more Roman pottery, querns and building material have been found (CHER 05729 and 08606).

3.3 Anglo-Saxon

Excavations at the High Street revealed eight complete post-built 'halls' along with a series of other settlement-related features (CHER 11973b). No positive evidence was found for buildings constructed on beam-slots, which suggests that the main phase of occupation was during the Early Saxon, or Early-Middle Saxon period. The pottery assemblage from the site contained examples of Early, Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon/early post-conquest wares, however, the majority of the pottery was undecorated, handmade and dated to the Early/Middle Saxon. Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware was recovered in small quantities but the general paucity of this style supports the idea that the settlement was predominantly Early-Middle Saxon. Late Saxon

(Thetford Ware and St Neots Ware) pottery was also recovered from ditches and pits towards the north end of the site. It is thought that these features related to the establishment of properties fronting Church Street and the period during when Willingham began to attain its present form (MCB 14092 Connor & Robinson 1997).

Visible in the walls of the church, which is first documented in the 9th century (CHER 05794a), are fragments of an Anglo-Saxon stone cross. Further to the south, between the village and Belsars Hill, an assemblage of Late Saxon pottery has been recorded (CHER 08606a). A ceramic money pot was also discovered containing thousands of Late Saxon coins (CHER 11781a).

3.4 Medieval

Excavations at the High Street in 1997 uncovered a small number of pits and a ditch, thought to belong to the later medieval period. This confirmed the documentary and cartographic evidence that the area, although 'central' to the modern village, lay between medieval and post-medieval properties fronting the High Street, Church Street and Long Lane (MCB 14092 Connor & Robinson 1997).

Archaeological evaluations on Green Street, the High Street (CHER11973c) and Church Street (MCB 14621) all uncovered medieval features. A silver coin was amongst the finds recorded from Green Street (MCB16302 Hickling 2005). A small amount of medieval pottery was also found at Fen End (CHER 05602a) and medieval and later boundary and drainage ditches were found on an evaluation north of Over Road (MCB 15003 Keir & Murray 2002)

Furthermore, the parish church of St Mary and All Saints dates to the 13th and 14th centuries, but contains fragments of Norman masonry (CHER 05794).

3.5 Other Archaeological Investigations

An evaluation behind Nos. 76 High Street revealed no archaeological features, but did yield pottery dated from the 16th century onwards and horseshoes dated as late 15th to 16th century (Bailey 2003).

A watching brief conducted at the parish church revealed no archaeological features (Hatton 1998).

Residual Iron Age, Roman and medieval pottery sherds, along with several post-medieval features, were recorded during an evaluation at land off Rampton Road in 2001 (CHER MCB15868), which lies to the south of the site development area. Another evaluation next door in 1999 produced two undated ditches.

An evaluation at the corner of Short Lane and Green Street in 1999 revealed no archaeological features (Prosser & Seddon 2000).

The evaluation undertaken on the study site itself in March 2006 uncovered a number of moderately sized enclosure ditches. The pottery recovered from these features was mainly Roman in origin and of a low status kitchen / storage type. Cattle bone was also recovered, which indicated butchery or possible tannery waste.

4 Methodology

The objective of this excavation 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.

The Brief required that the full extent of the proposed development area, c. 880m², be excavated as indicated in Fig. 1. The archaeology revealed should then be excavated to a level of 50% for discrete features and a minimum of 25% for linear features, these levels to be altered as appropriate for the various features encountered.

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

The small nature of the site meant that it was necessary to excavate the area in two halves. The southern half of the site (Area A) was mechanically excavated, archaeologically investigated and then backfilled. The second half (Area B) of the site was then mechanically excavated and the spoil from this stored on backfilled Area A.

Exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those that were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's *pro-forma* sheets. Pre - and post - excavation plans, and sections, were recorded at appropriate scales. Digital, and where appropriate colour and monochrome slide photographs, were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Six 10L environmental samples were taken from relevant features to provide an indication of the level of survival of charred grain and other ecofacts. The evaluation took place in mainly dry and overcast conditions though there were sunny periods and showers during the course of the excavation.

During the course of the work the weather was usually dry and bright and no factors served to obscure the archaeology.

5 Results

The site revealed a number of linear ditches running across the length and width of the site, appearing to create a boundary system, which appeared to have been modified and altered over time. The exact phasing of these features was, largely, unclear as there were limited stratigraphic relationships on the ground and the features yielded few finds, and those that were discovered were all of approximately 2nd – 4th century AD in date. In addition a number of small to moderate sized pits were also noted, although the function of many of these was largely unclear.

5.1 Linear Ditches, Phase 1

Five ditches have been placed in a tentative initial phase, based on relationships with other features and alignment.

Ditch **1079** (also identified in slots **1085** and **1081**) was seen in Area B. This feature ran on a NW-SE alignment across the area for 17.50m. At its northern end the ditch disappeared under the northern limit of excavation (LOE). At its southern end the feature was truncated by a large modern Pit. This linear was typically 1m wide, 0.40m deep and demonstrated a regular, steep and concave profile. **1079**, was truncated by another ditch **1090**. The fill of this feature (identified as 1077, 1084 and 1080) was a light brown grey, compact, silty sand containing occasional gravel inclusions.

Ditch **1071**, in Area B, ran on a parallel alignment to ditch **1079** at a point c. 3.50m to the east. This feature emerged from the southern LOE (where it was partially truncated by ditch **1050**) and ran for 9.7m before ending in a rounded terminus. This ditch was typically 0.6m wide by 0.32m deep. Excavation of a slot in the feature, illustrated a steep, deeply concave, U shaped profile. The fill of this feature 1070, was very similar to 1077, but a little more friable and contained a few unidentifiable bone fragments.

Ditch **1056** has also been placed into this phase due to its alignment across Area B, which was the same as that of features **1079** and **1071**. Excavation of a single slot across the feature demonstrated that while it was quite wide (1.66m) it was also quite shallow at 0.24m with a wide, flat profile. Fill 1055 was a moderately compact, dark grey, sandy clay that contained inclusions of charcoal and gravel.

Ditch **1015**, located in Area A, was aligned WNW – ESE, running from the rough centre of the eastern LOE to the NW corner of the site, for a total length of around 21m. Four slots were excavated across the

feature (identified as **1015**, **1020**, **1028** and **1031**) and demonstrated a typical width of c.1.15m and depth of c.0.40m. In profile the feature was flat based with steep, slightly concave sides. These slots also revealed that the ditch contained two (quite similar) fills. The upper fill **1018** (also **1027** and **1029**) was usually round 0.20m deep and was a moderately compact, dark greyish black, sandy clay, with occasional inclusions of charcoal and gravel. It yielded a few small fragments of bone as well as a piece of pottery identified as Colchester ware. The lower fill **1019** (also **1014**, **1044** and **1030**) was similar in composition to **1018** but much lighter.

Ditch **1015** almost directly overlay and therefore truncated an earlier ditch (**1017**). This feature was only seen in two slots (also recognised as **1022**), at points where the line of the later ditch **1015** deviated slightly from the line of ditch **1017**. Where seen ditch **1017** was >0.95m wide and 0.35m deep with a single moderately compact mid grey sandy clay (identified as fills **1016** and **1021**) and contained fragments of shelly ware pottery.

The spatial relationship between ditches **1015** and **1017** appeared to indicate that later ditch **1015** was a "maintenance cut", effectively a clear out of the early ditch **1017** which had become at least partially filled, the later ditch only slightly deviating from the line of the earlier ditch.

Ditch **1015** was truncated by later, perpendicular, ditch **1034**.

5.2 Linear Ditches, Phase 2

Three ditches can be placed in a later phase, based on physical stratigraphic relationships with other features on the site.

A substantial linear ditch feature was seen to span areas A and B, running along a NNE – SSW alignment. In Area A the feature was 5m long and in Area B, 12m. In both areas the ditch disappears under both the northern and southern LOE Three slots were excavated along the length of the feature, (**1008**, **1050** and **1074**), demonstrating a width of c.2.20m and a depth of c.0.70m and illustrated a steep, flat based V - shaped profile. This ditch contained three fills. The basal fill **1007**, only seen in one of the slots, was a 0.15m thick, mid brown orange sandy gravel. Above this fill **1006** (also **1049** and **1073**) was a 0.25m thick, mid brownish grey sandy silt containing a moderate level of gravel inclusions and finds of animal bone (horse) and a piece of probably intrusive medieval pottery (12th – 15th century). The upper fill **1005** (also **1048** and **1072**) was 0.20m thick and consisted of a mid greenish grey, sandy silt, containing c.20% gravel inclusions. Finds from **1005** consisted of the almost complete skeletal remains of a horse.

At the southern end of its recorded extent in Area B, ditch **1050** truncated fill 1070 of ditch **1071**. At its northern extent **1050** interfaced with ditch **1090**. This ditch ran at 90° to **1050**, the interface between the two creating an apparent enclosure corner. Investigation of this corner did not reveal any obvious stratigraphic relationship and it was possible that despite the difference in the nature of the two features, **1050**, and **1090** were actually contemporary features - **1090** possibly being an internal division in a larger enclosure defined by **1050**.

Ditch **1090** was 16m long and aligned WSW – ENE. At its western end the ditch disappeared under the western LOE, while at its eastern end it interfaced with the western edge of ditch **1050** but did not reappear from the eastern edge of this ditch.

Three slots were excavated along the length of ditch **1090** (also recorded as **1076** and **1083**) that demonstrated a width of c.1.02m and depth of 0.24m and a gradual, concave, U - shaped profile. The single fill 1089 (also 1075 and 1082) was a moderately loose, mid grey yellow, sandy silt, with occasional gravel inclusions and small fragments of animal bone.

Ditch **1034** was located in Area A, was aligned NNE – SSW, emerging from the southern baulk of the site – just to the east of the SW corner of the site - and running for 8.10m before ending in a rounded terminus. Excavation of two slots along the length of ditch showed a width of 1.02m, depth of 0.42m and a steep, irregular, stepped, flat based profile. This feature contained three fills. The basal fill 1033 (also 1025) was a 0.10m thick layer of dark blackish grey, sandy clay, containing occasional gravel inclusions. Above this, intermittent fill 1024 was a yellowish brown, sandy clay, 0.06m thick. Both of these layers appeared to be of a re-deposited natural type. The Upper fill 1032 (also 1023) was a greyish brown, sandy clay.

Ditch **1034** was seen to truncate the fills of ditch **1015**, to which it was aligned at a perpendicular angle.

5.3 Linear Ditches, unclear phase

A further four ditches were located, in Area A, which could not, by stratigraphic relationship or relationships in alignment and nature, be firmly placed in any clear phase.

At the southern end of Area B two relatively small ditches **1066** and **1069** ran parallel to each other, along an E-W alignment, across the site. Ditch **1066** lay 5m to the north of **1069**, both of the features disappeared under the LOE at their western ends, and were truncated by a large modern pit at their eastern ends. Both were c.16m long and the single slot excavated in each demonstrated a wide, shallow U - shaped profile. **1066** was 0.95m wide, **1069** was 1m. **1066** contained a

single fill – 1065, this was a compact, light grey, silty sand, with occasional gravel inclusions. **1069** contained two fills, the lower fill 1067, was a light orange grey, silty clay, with some gravel inclusions – much like a re-deposited natural material. The upper fill 1068 was similar to 1065 and contained fragments of dog bone. The alignment and nature of feature **1069** indicated that it was a continuation of linear feature **1004**, identified in Area A where it ran for 6.3m between the northern and southern baulks of the area. The fill of this feature (1003) was a light brown grey, compact, silty sand containing occasional gravel inclusions and a fragment of dog mandible.

It is possible that these two ditches may be of the same phase as ditches **1015** and **1017**. These linear features (**1066**, **1069**, **1015** and **1017**) all showed the same alignment with a regular spacing of c. 4.50m between them. However there were no stratigraphic relationships or datable artefacts to confirm this.

In the NW corner of the site a wide, relatively shallow ditch was also noted. This ditch (**1122**) emerged from the western baulk and ran for 2.8m along a WSW – ENE alignment before ending in a wide rounded terminus. The feature was 1.7m wide, 0.25m deep and demonstrated a wide, flat based, U - shaped profile. Fill 1121 was similar to 1065.

Emerging from an area of modern disturbance against the southern LOE (between the eastern ends of **1066** and **1069**) was the terminal end of a further ditch - **1106**. This ran for 2.9m along a NW – SE alignment before ending in a rounded terminus. A slot excavated in this feature illustrated a width of 0.9m, a depth of 0.16m and a wide, steep sided, flat based, U - shaped profile. The single fill (1105) was similar to 1065.

5.4 Pits

In addition to the ditches discussed above a number of pits were also noted across the site. These were typically an irregular sub - oval shape in plan, were shallow and contained a single fill that was usually a compact, mid grey, clayey to sandy, silt containing fragments of animal bone (primarily sheep and cattle) and pottery of a broad Roman date. Many of these features had been heavily truncated by modern disturbance and the function of the features was largely unclear. None of the pits were indicative of any structural activity, nor did they have any other obvious function. These features are tabulated below.

Cut	Fill	Shape	Dimensions L X W X D (M)	Fill Type	Function / Date
1009	1010	Oval	3.35 x 2.10 x 0.09	Loose, brown grey, sandy silt	Unclear probable natural hollow, rooting scar
1037	1036	Elongated oval	3 x 0.64 x 0.18	Compact, mid grey, sandy clay	Unclear - may be rooting hollow
1039	1038	Sub - circular	1.2 x 1.6 x 0.3	Compact, mid orange grey, silty clay	Unclear probable natural hollow, rooting scar
1041	1040	Irregular oval	0.5 x 0.25 x 0.14	Friable, dark orange grey, silty clay	Probable water cut Gully
1043	1042	Sub - circular	1.2 x 0.9 x 0.14	Loose, mid brownish grey, sandy silt	Root activity
1047	1045	Sub - oval	0.35 x 0.15 x 0.12	Mod compact, mid blackish brown, silty sand	Pet burial
1052	1046			Cat Skeleton	
1051	1051	Sub - oval	1 x 0.6 x 0.05	Mod. compact, light grey, sandy gravel	Rooting Hollow
1054	1053	Oval	2 x 0.7 x 0.11	Mod. Compact, light grey, silty sand	Unclear
1058	1057	Sub - oval	2.5 x 1.12 x 0.22	Mod. Compact, mid grey, sandy clay	Poss. tree bowl or natural hollow.
1060	1059	Sub - circular	1 x 1 x 0.12	Mod. Compact, mid grey, sandy clay	Poss. Pit remnant or tree hollow.
1062	1061	Sub - circular	0.71 x 0.71 x 0.09	Mod. Compact, mid grey, sandy clay	Poss. Pit remnant or tree hollow.
1064	1063	Sub - circular	1.5 x 2.42 x 0.31	Mod. Compact, dark grey, sandy clay.	Poss. Pit remnant
1086	1086		0.20 thick	Mod. Compact, yellowish brown, sandy clay	
1088	1087	Sub - circular	0.7 x 0.76 x 0.29	Friable, mid grey, silty clay	Unclear
1092	1091	Irregular ovoid	3.9 x 2.17 x 0.29	Firm, mid yellow grey, slightly clayey silt.	Poss remnant of large storage Pit
1094	1093	Circular	0.56 x 0.50 x 0.42	Firm, very dark grey brown, clayey silt	Modern rubbish Pit
1096	1095	Circular	0.45 x 0.51 x 0.46	Firm, very dark grey brown, clayey silt	Modern rubbish Pit
1098	1097	Irregular	2.9 x 1.37 x 0.09	Firm, mid grey, slightly clayey silt.	Unclear / poss. Remnant Pit / natural hollow.
1100	1099	Sub - circular	1.77 x 1.77 x 0.14	Mod. Compact, mid grey, sandy clay	Poss. Pit remnant or tree hollow.
1108	1107	Elongated oval	3.10 x 0.5 x 0.10	Loose, mid. Orange grey, sandy silt	Unclear
1110	1109	Elongated oval	3.10 x 0.5 x 0.16	Loose, mid. Orange grey, sandy silt	Unclear
1112	1111	Sub - oval	4 x 1.4 x 0.17	Compact, mid brownish grey, sandy silt.	Unclear
1114	1113	Sub - circular	1.6 x 1.6 x 0.26	Loose, mid. Orange grey, sandy silt	Unclear
1124	1123	Sub - oval	0.70 x 0.75 x 0.05	Mod. Compact, grey, silty sand	Unclear

Table 1: Description of pits

Pit **1013** was a regular oval in shape, 1.2m long, 0.47m wide, 0.15m deep and demonstrated a regular, steeply concave and bowled profile. The 0.02m thick lower fill (1011) was a loose mid brown yellow, silty sand that was indicative of a naturally re-deposited material. The 0.13m thick upper fill 1012 was a darker, heavier, slightly sandy, clayey silt. This fill contained a quantity of bone - which was a mix of human and pig remains. The human bone consisted of a broken section of radius and femur as well as part of an ankle bone and a section of finger bone. The pig bone comprised the remains of a jaw, teeth, and the broken remains of some flat bone. These remains were not articulated or arranged in any identifiable way within the pit and appeared to have simply been dumped in together during one back fill event. Despite the dark nature of the surrounding soil there was no evidence for *in situ* burning nor was there any burnt bone - the darkness of the surrounding soil was more likely due to the decay of remaining organic material.

Quite what this pit represented was unclear. The presence of fill 1011 indicated that the pit was cut and then left open for some short time - allowing some material to slump back into it. It was then filled in by the apparent dumping (as opposed to placement or burial) of organic material into the pit - which included a mixture of human and pig remains.

While it is certainly possible that this feature had been previously disturbed / truncated in some way (much of the site had been), when identified during this archaeological work the feature was partially sealed by a spread of subsoil (layer 1001) that filled a depression in the natural geology, in which the feature was located. The feature was fully excavated and a portion of the fill sampled for ecofactual remains.

6 Discussion

This work served to reveal more of the extent of an enclosure system initially identified by the evaluation, as well as confirming the presence of at least two phases of such activity on the site. The earlier phase defined by ditches **1079**, **1071**, and **1050** - seemingly formed a divided, NW-SE aligned, enclosure. Ditch **1015**, a maintenance re-cut of an earlier ditch **1017**, also appeared to represent an earlier phase of boundary / enclosure use on the site, although how exactly this feature related to the other earlier phase of features was unclear since ditch **1017** did not respect the alignment of the **1079** complex nor was it particularly similar in nature.

The second phase of boundary / enclosure activity comprised ditches **1050** and **1090**. It appeared that the larger of these two ditches (**1050**) represented the main outer boundary part of the enclosure with the much smaller but apparently contemporary ditch **1090** forming an internal division to this complex. The two smaller ditches (**1066** and

1069) did not have a stratigraphic link to this complex but their alignment (similar to that of **1090**) suggested that they represented a further internal division that was re-worked, and hence slightly, moved over time.

Ditch **1034** has also been placed in this second phase, as it truncated **1015** although how **1034** related to the **1050** complex is again unclear as there was no direct stratigraphic link and the features are not comparable in alignment or nature.

In addition to the various phases of linear boundary features there were also a large number of discrete Pit features. The phasing of these, both between each other and in relation to the linear boundary features was largely unclear (although Pit **1064** was truncated by **1050**).

While one of these pits (**1013**) had been used for the disposal of partial human remains (as well the partial remains of a pig) the function of the remainder of the pits was much less clear, although none of them appeared to have had a structural use.

This excavation, as with the evaluation, yielded few datable finds, and little to indicate the original function of the various features. Those datable finds that were present indicated a generic Early Roman date for the infilling of the features. However, all of these features appeared to have been filled in via natural processes as opposed to deliberate backfilling, and this may have taken some time. This lack of tightly datable material combined with the general paucity of artefacts meant that the finds were of little use in tightening the phasing of the site.

7 Conclusions

The excavation largely confirmed the conclusions of the evaluation, demonstrating the presence of a reasonable concentration of archaeological features within the development area. Furthermore, this work appeared to indicate that the ancient use of the site was primarily Roman in date, and agricultural hinterland in function, the site being dominated by linear ditches appearing to define a series of enclosures. The dearth of finds from this site, as well as the natural infill nature of the features following their disuse, meant that it was unlikely that this site was particularly close to any settlement. The lack of closely datable artefacts also meant that precise dating and phasing of the various features of the site was very difficult.

There is fairly strong, direct archaeological evidence, for relatively intense Roman settlement of Willingham, focused on the area just to the north of the current village centre, indicated by the presence of remains such as pottery, coins and plates (see 3.2 above). The evidence presented by this study site would indicate that it was on the

periphery of this activity – an area far enough away from the main centre that little cultural material was dumped on the site. This is not entirely surprising as the early Ordnance Survey and tithe maps (dated 1830) label the area that the study site is located in as “fen”, with a lode running just to the west of it. This would have meant that the ground here would have been very wet and, while just about suitable for agriculture, would not have been suitable for occupation.

The nature of the ground at this time was probably also the reason for the lack of evidence for use of the site during the Anglo - Saxon period. There is strong evidence that the area that is now Willingham High Street (c. 1km south of the study site) was once the centre of a Early / Early-Middle Saxon settlement with evidence for 8 post-built halls along with a series of other settlement related features (see 3.3 above). There was no direct archaeological evidence to indicate that the study site was exploited at this time. However it is likely that at least the agricultural exploitation of this land continued into this period.

Acknowledgements

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The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, who visited the site and monitored the works.

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Feature Type	Function	Cut
1000	layer	topsoil		1000
1001	layer	subsoil		1001
1002	layer	natural		1002
1003	fill	ditch	Disuse	1004
1004	cut	ditch	Use	1004
1005	fill	ditch	Disuse	1008
1006	fill	ditch	Disuse	1008
1007	fill	ditch	Disuse	1008
1008	cut	ditch	boundary	1008
1009	cut	pit/ spread		1009
1010	fill	pit/ spread		1009
1011	fill	pit	rubbish	1013
1012	fill	pit	rubbish	1013
1013	cut	pit	Rubbish/ burial	1013
1014	fill	sitch	Disuse	1015
1015	cut	ditch	boundary	1015
1016	fill	ditch	Disuse	1017
1017	cut	ditch	boundary	1017
1018	fill	ditch	Disuse	1020
1019	fill	ditch	Disuse	1020
1020	cut	ditch	boundary	1020
1021	fill	ditch	Disuse	1022
1022	cut	ditch	boundary	1022
1023	fill	ditch	Disuse	1026
1024	fill	ditch	Disuse	1026
1025	fill	ditch	Disuse	1026
1026	cut	ditch	boundary	1026
1027	fill	ditch	Disuse	1028
1028	cut	ditch	boundary	1028
1029	fill	ditch	Disuse	1031
1030	fill	ditch	Disuse	1031
1031	cut	ditch	boundary	1031
1032	fill	dich	Disuse	1034
1033	fill	ditch	Disuse	1034
1034	cut	ditch	boundary	1034
1035	layer			1035
1036	fill	ditch	Disuse	1037
1037	cut	ditch	boundary	1037
1038	fill	pit	Disuse	1039
1039	cut	pit	Use	1039
1040	fill	gully	Disuse	1041

Context	Category	Feature Type	Function	Cut
1041	cut	gully	Use	1041
1042	fill	pit/ tree bowl	Disuse	1043
1043	cut	pit/ tree bowl		1043
1044	fill	ditch	Disuse	1028
1045	fill	pit	Burial	1047
1046	fill	pit	Burial	1047
1047	cut	pit	Burial	1047
1048	fill	ditch	Disuse	1050
1049	fill	ditch	Disuse	1050
1050	cut	ditch	boundary	1050
1051	fill	pit	Disuse	1052
1052	cut	pit	Use	1052
1053	fill	ditch	Disuse	1054
1054	cut	ditch/ pit	Use	1054
1055	fill	ditch	Disuse	1056
1056	cut	ditch	boundary	1056
1057	fill	pit	Disuse	1058
1058	cut	pit		1058
1059	fill	pit	Disuse	1060
1060	cut	pit		1060
1061	fill	pit	Disuse	1062
1062	cut	pit		1062
1063	fill	pit	Disuse	1064
1064	cut	pit		1064
1065	fill	ditch	Disuse	1066
1066	cut	ditch	boundary	1066
1067	fill	ditch	Disuse	1069
1068	fill	ditch	Disuse	1069
1069	cut	ditch	Use	1069
1070	fill	ditch	Disuse	1071
1071	cut	ditch	Use	1071
1072	fill	ditch	Disuse	1074
1073	fill	ditch	Disuse	1074
1074	cut	ditch	Use	1074
1075	fill	ditch	Disuse	1076
1076	cut	ditch	Use	1076
1077	fill	ditch	Disuse	1079
1079	cut	ditch	boundary/ enclosure	1079
1080	fill	ditch	Disuse	1081
1081	cut	ditch	boundary/ enclosure	1081
1082	fill	Ditch	Disuse	1083
1083	cut	Ditch	Boundary	1083
1084	fill	Ditch	Disuse	1085
1085	cut	Ditch	Boundary/ Enclosure	1085
1086	fill	Pit	Disuse	1064

Context	Category	Feature Type	Function	Cut
1087	fill	Pit	Disuse	1088
1088	cut	Pit	Use	1088
1089	fill	Ditch	Boundary/ Enclosure	1090
1090	cut	Ditch	Boundary/ Enclosure	1090
1091	fill	Ditch	Unclear/ Storage	1092
1092	cut	Pit	Unclear/ storage	1092
1093	fill	Pit	Modern rubbish dump	1094
1094	cut	Pit	Modern rubbish dump.	1094
1095	fill	pit	Modern rubbish pit	1096
1096	cut	Pit	Modern rubbish pit	1096
1097	fill	Pit	Unclear	1098
1098	cut	Pit	Unlcear	1098
1099	fill	Pit	Disuse	1100
1100	cut	Pit		1100
1101	fill	Pit	Disuse	1102
1102	cut	Pit		1102
1103	fill	Ditch	Disuse	1104
1104	cut	Ditch	Use	1104
1105	fill	Ditch	Disuse	1106
1106	cut	Ditch	Use	1106
1107	fill	Pit	Disuse	1108
1108	cut	Pit		1108
1109	fill	Pit	Disuse	1110
1110	cut	Pit	Use	1110
1111	fill	Pit, deposit	Disuse/ natural	1112
1112	cut	Pit/ deposit		1112
1113	fill	Pit	Disuse	1114
1114	cut	Pit	Use	1114
1115	fill	Pit	Rubbish?	1116
1116	cut	pit	Use	1116
1117	fill	Ditch	Disuse	1118
1118	cut	Ditch	Use	1118
1121	fill	Ditch	Boundary/ Enclosure	1122
1122	cut	Ditch	Boundary/ enclosure	1122
1123	fill	Pit	Disuse	1124
1124	cut	Pit		1124

Table 2: Context Summary

Appendix 2: Finds Summary

Context	Bone (Kg)	Ceramic (Kg)	Shell (Kg)
1003	0.009		0.001
1005	0.571		
1006	0.334	0.004	
1010	0.091		
1012	0.197		
1016		0.009	
1027	0.003	0.04	
1029	0.032		
1036	0.031	0.011	
1040		0.009	
1046	0.063		
1057	0.282	0.001	
1059	0.254		
1068	0.05		
1070	0.012		
1073	0.081	0.007	
1075	0.051		
Total	2.061	0.081	0.001

Table3 :Finds Summary

Appendix 3: Pottery

by Stephen Macaulay

A total of 94g of Roman pottery (12 sherds) were recovered. Interestingly this amount was a smaller assemblage than that recovered during the evaluation stage (165g).

The pottery was in a fairly poor condition with the assemblage being comprised entirely of abraded coarse ware pottery (again the same as the evaluation stage).

The assemblage was mostly comprised of coarse wares derived from local (Cambridgeshire) sources, although two sherds of Colchester creamware pottery were also recovered. Grey and sandy wares dominated, although a single sherd of shelly ware was recovered. A single sherd of grey ware with a colour coat (probably not of a Nene Valley type) was also found, the source of this sherd was unidentifiable. Earith was the location of a sizable Roman settlement which utilised the transport network of the Car Dyke canal and local waterways (Old West River). Sherds of Horningsea pottery were recovered, which was to be expected. Recent investigations at The Camp Ground, Colne Fen, Earith have revealed a significant Roman settlement and earlier Iron Age occupation (CAU unpublished).

The assemblage was comprised of mostly jars and bowls typical of a kitchen and storage assemblage of low status.

The date range of the assemblage was 2nd –4th century AD. The Colchester wares suggest possibly an earlier (2nd-3th century), all other material is generic Roman in date.

Type	No. Sherds	Weight (g)
Grey ware (CC?)	1	4
Grey Ware	2	16
ShellyWare	1	9
Oxidised Sandy Ware	3	25
Colchester	1	40
Total	9	165

Table 4: Pottery Sherds by type

Context	Weight (g)	Pottery type	Vessel	Decoration	Rim or Body
1006	4	Grey ware with colour coat		none	body
1016	9	Shelly Ware		none	body
1027	40	Colchester ware	jar	none	body
1036	11	Oxidised Sandy Ware	jar	none	body
1040	9	Grey Ware (Horningsea?)		none	body
1048	13	Oxidised Sandy Ware		none	body
1057	1	Oxidised Sandy Ware		yes	body
1073	7	Grey Ware (Horningsea?)	jar		
Total	94				

Table 5: Pottery Sheds by context

Appendix 4: Animal Bone Assessment

By Chris Faine

The small assemblage of animal bone consisted of 130 fragments, with 90 elements identifiable to species (70% of the sample). All unidentifiable elements were classed as medium/large mammals. Preservation of the sample is fair, albeit extremely fragmented in some cases. Faunal remains were recovered from contexts dating from the Romano-British period. The largest number of identifiable fragments was recovered from context 1005, the upper fill of ditch **1008**. This consisted almost entirely of horse remains, with a single sheep/goat metacarpal showing evidence of butchery at its distal epiphysis. The horse remains consisted largely of lower limb bones such as metapodia, tarsals and phalanges. Many of these elements show signs of butchery, with substantial chop marks indicating the use of a heavy knife or cleaver. A single horse astragalus showed evidence of being split through the distal articulation, a pattern also seen in on a calcaneus from the same context. A 3rd metacarpal was also split, this time longitudinally through the shaft. Two horse vertebrae recovered from the same context also showed signs of butchery, with a lumbar vertebra being split through the vertebral body. All elements appear to be from adult individuals.

Context 1006, the middle fill of ditch **1008** also contained horse remains, with a single 3rd metacarpal being recovered. Metrical analysis indicates an individual with a withers height of around 1.47m: just over 14 hands high (considered the modern threshold between horses and ponys). In addition a single sheep/goat mandible was recovered from an animal around 1 to 2 years old, showing evidence of butchery around the ascending ramus (possibly indicating disarticulation of the jaw). Context 1010, fill of pit **1009** yielded several unfused portions of a single sheep/goat pelvis, along with a butchered femur (also unfused, indicating an individual around 2 years old). Context 1046, the lower fill of grave **1047**, contained a partially complete adult cat skeleton, with examples of all elements being present with the exception of the femur. In particular there were significant numbers of metapodia and vertebrae. No butchery or pathology was seen.

The remaining contexts yielded few identifiable remains with 1036 (fill of ditch **1037**) and 1029 (upper fill of **1031**) containing a butchered cattle vertebrae and mandible respectively. Context 1012 (lower fill of pit **1013**) contained a small portion of pig mandible along with a 3rd and 4th premolar. Context 1003 (fill of ditch **1004**) contained a fragmented portion of dog mandible. Further dog remains were recovered from context 1068 (lower fill of ditch **1069**), with a humerus from this context showing evidence of butchery at its distal articulation. Context 1059 –

fill of pit **1060** contained a single (albeit shattered) cattle radius. A portion of butchered distal cattle femur was recovered from 1057 (fill of pit **1058**). Contexts 1070, 1073 and 1075 (of ditches **1071**, **1074** and **1076**) contained no identifiable fragments.

Unfortunately, due to the size of the assemblage few conclusions can be drawn. In terms of the domestic mammals horse and cattle dominate, with the preponderance of elements from the lower limbs suggesting secondary butchery waste, with the meat bearing elements being processed/deposited elsewhere. The cat and dog remains are most likely those of commensal species with the exact reason for deposition remaining unclear.

Appendix 5: Human Skeletal Remains

By Chris Faine

In addition to the faunal remains a small amount of human skeletal material was recovered from context 1012 (main / basal fill of grave **1013**). This consisted of an intact left calcaneus, along with portions of left radius, femur and both 5th metatarsi. All elements appear to be from adult individuals.

Appendix 6: Environmental Appraisal

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Six bulk samples were taken from features within the excavated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Ten litres of each sample were processed by bucket flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification and the presence of any plant remains or other finds is noted in Table 4.

2 Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Sample Size (L)	Feature Type	Small animal bones	Large animal bones	Cereals	Chaff	Legumes	Charcoal <2mm
1	10122		pit	0	+	+	0	0	+
2	100510		ditch	0	+	0	+	0	+
3	100610		ditch	0	+	0	0	+	+
4	101610		ditch	0	0	+	0	0	+
5	101410		ditch	0	+	0	0	0	+
6	101810		ditch	++	0	+	0	0	+

Table 6: Environmental Samples from WIL EAR 06

Key to Tables

+ = 1 – 10 specimens ++ = 10 – 100 specimens +++ = 100+ specimens by Rachel Fosberry

2.1 Plant macrofossils

Preservation is by charring and is poor. Charcoal fragments are present in all of the samples in small quantities.

Modern contaminants in the form of rootlets and a few common seeds such as *Chenopodium* sp. are present in most of the samples.

2.2 Cereals

Cereal grains are present in small quantities in three of the samples and a single glume base was recovered from Sample 2. All cereal grains are fragmented and abraded.

2.3 Animal bone

Most of the samples contained small quantities of animal bone.




























3 Conclusions and Recommendations

In general the samples were poor in terms of identifiable material. The charred plant remains consist of cereal grains that were all poorly preserved, either because of taphonomic factors or because they had been charred at a high temperature. The poor preservation did not allow detailed identifications and most of the grains have been identified simply as cereals. The glume base recovered from sample 2 can be identified as *Triticum spelta* showing that spelt wheat was processed in the vicinity.

The other dietary remains of fragments of animal bone along with the charred grain are probably derived from the deposition of small quantities of burnt domestic refuse.

In conclusion, the samples showed only a low abundance of charred material that is not considered worthy of further analysis. If further excavation is required for this site, a specific sampling strategy should be considered.

Drawing Conventions

Sections	Plans
Limit of Excavation 	Limit of Excavation 
Cut 	Deposit - Conjectured 
Cut-Conjectured 	Natural Features 
Deposit Horizon 	Sondages/Machine Strip 
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured 	Intrusion/Truncation 
Intrusion/Truncation 	Illustrated Section 
Top Surface/Top of Natural 	Archaeological Features 
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing 	Archaeological Deposit 
Cut Number 	Excavated Slot 
Deposit Number 117	Modern Deposit 
Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45m}{\wedge}$ OD	Clay Deposit 
Inclusions 	Rubble Deposit 
	Root Disturbance 
	Field Drain 
	Concrete 
	Mortar 
	Brick 
	Cut Number 118



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Figure 1: Location of excavation areas (grey) with the development area outlined (red)



Plate 3 - Area B



Plate 4 - Area A



Figure 2: Excavation area plans

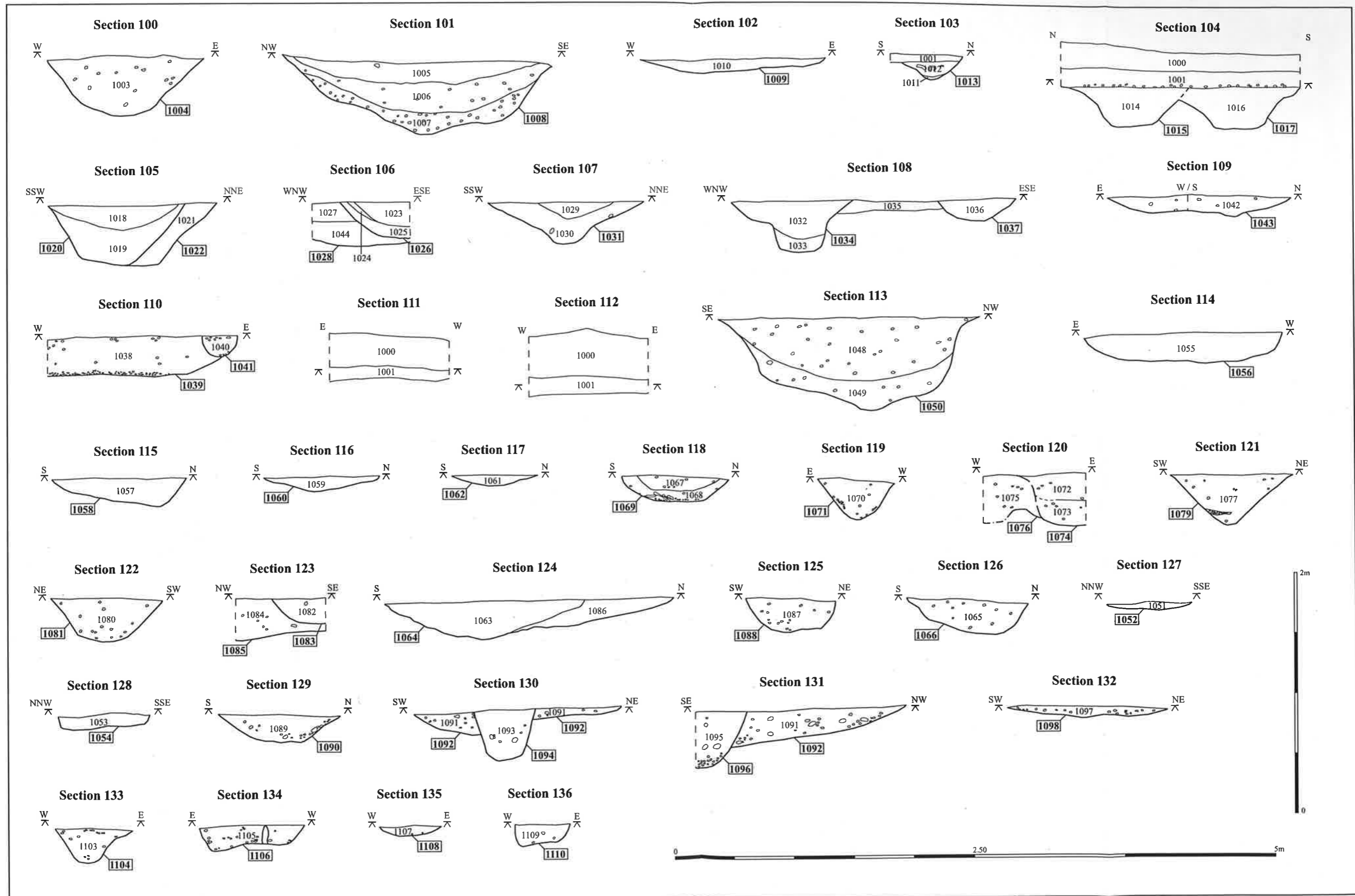


Figure 3: Section drawings



Plate 1 – Area B



Plate 2 – Substantial ditch in area B



Plate 3 – Area B



Plate 4 – Area A



Plate 5 – Site overview



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cambridgeshire archaeology
archaeological field unit

Fulbourn Community Centre Site
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Fulbourn
Cambridge
CB1 5HD

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Fax: 01223 880946
email: arch.field.unit@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
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