



# Land South of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

**March 2023**

**Client: Broadleaf**

Issue No.: 1

OA East Report No.: 2644

NGR: TL 6194 9790

NHER Event No.: ENF153203

NCCES Ref. No.: CNF46723

NMS Accession No.: NWHCM:2023.36

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Planning Ref: 16/00718/OM



Client Name: Broadleaf  
Document Title: Land South of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk  
Document Type: Evaluation Report  
Report No.: 2644  
Grid Reference: TL 6194 9790  
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Planning Reference: 16/00718/OM  
Site Code: ENF153203  
Invoice Code: XNFFAH23  
OASIS ID No.: oxfordar3-513170  
Receiving Body: Norfolk County Council Community and Environment Services  
Accession No.: NWHCM:2023.36

OA Document File Location: <https://files.oxfordarchaeology.com/nextcloud>  
OA Graphics File Location: <https://files.oxfordarchaeology.com/nextcloud>

Issue No: 1  
Date: March 2023  
Prepared by: Robin Webb (Project Officer)  
Checked by: Patrick Moan (Senior Project Manager)  
Edited by: Graeme Clarke (Post-Excavation Project Officer)  
Approved for Issue by: Paul Sperry (Regional Manager)  
Signature:



pp Patrick Moan

**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

**OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridge  
CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane Mills  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w. [oxfordarchaeology.com](http://oxfordarchaeology.com)

Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627



Chief Executive Officer:  
Ken Welsh, BSc., MCIFA  
Private Limited Company, No: 1618597  
Registered Charity, No: 285627  
Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd  
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES

## Land South of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Robin Webb BA MA ACIfA*

*With contributions from Lawrence Billington MA PhD, Martha Craven BA, Carole Fletcher HND BA (hons) ACIfA, Ted Levermore MA (cantab.) MA, Carlotta Marchetto MA ACIfA and Zoë Uì Choileàin MA MSc BABA0*

*Illustrations by David W Brown BA*

### Contents

Summary.....	7
Acknowledgements.....	8
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology .....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background .....	1
<b>2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Aims.....	7
2.2 Research frameworks .....	7
2.3 Methodology .....	7
<b>3 RESULTS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	9
3.2 General soil and ground conditions.....	9
3.3 Distribution of archaeological deposits .....	9
3.4 Finds summary.....	11
<b>4 DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	12
4.2 Evaluation objectives and results.....	12
4.3 Interpretation .....	13
4.4 Significance.....	14
<b>APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
B.1 Flint.....	18

---

B.2	Late Bronze Age Pottery .....	18
B.3	Post-medieval Pottery .....	18
B.4	Spindlewhorl.....	19
APPENDIX C	ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS.....	20
C.1	Faunal Remains.....	20
C.2	Environmental Remains.....	20
APPENDIX D	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	23
APPENDIX E	OASIS REPORT FORM .....	25

## List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map with development area (red) and trenches (black)  
Fig. 2 Map showing NHER Events and Monuments  
Fig. 3 Evaluation results  
Fig. 4 Selected sections  
Fig. 5 The site in relation to the Hilgay tithe apportionment map of 1839

## List of Plates

- Cover Photo View across site towards the fen, looking west  
Plate 1 Trench 1, showing the course of ditch **103**, looking east  
Plate 2 Trench 4, ditch **403**, looking west  
Plate 3 Trench 2, ditch **211** cutting ditch **209**, looking west  
Plate 4 Trench 6, looking south-east  
Plate 5 Trench 6, ditch **605** cutting ditch **603**, looking west  
Plate 6 Trench 3, posthole **303**, looking south  
Plate 7 Trench 3, natural feature **309**, looking south-west  
Plate 8 Trench 5, ditch **503** and surrounding rooting disturbance, looking south-west

## Summary

Between 6th and 8th February 2023 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land to the south of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk. In total, six trenches were excavated, all of which contained archaeological features.

An east-west aligned Late Bronze Age boundary ditch was identified to the north (Trenches 1 and 4), whilst to the south, a post-medieval boundary ditch crossed Trenches 1, 3 and 6 on a west-south-west to east-north-east alignment. A possibly earlier boundary, on a south-west to north-east alignment, was identified in Trench 5. In addition, an isolated, undated posthole was revealed in Trench 3 and two probable medieval agricultural furrows were identified in Trench 2.

A small assemblage of artefacts and ecofacts was recovered from Trenches 1-3 in the western part of the site. A Bronze Age spindlewhorl and a sherd of Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the later prehistoric ditch in Trench 1. The recut post-medieval ditch alignment in Trenches 2 and 3 yielded a sherd of 16th-18th century pottery and five fragments of animal bone along with a residual flint and Late Bronze Age pottery sherd. Environmental evidence included poorly preserved remains of a grass seed and rare charcoal from the Late Bronze Age ditch and a small quantity of cereal grains from the post-medieval boundary ditch. The Late Bronze Age finds and ditch adds to the corpus of findspots of the period discovered at Hilgay and suggests a focus of Late Bronze Age settlement lies in the near vicinity.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology East would like to thank Max Wiseman of Broadleaf for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Steve Hickling who monitored the work on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology East by Patrick Moan. The fieldwork was directed by Robin Webb, who was supported by Gareth Hayes. Survey and digitising were carried out by Tom Houghton and Daria Adamson. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natasha Dodwell, processed the environmental remains under the direction of Rachel Fosberry, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Kat Hamilton.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) was commissioned by Broadleaf to undertake archaeological trenching on land to the south of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk (centred on National Grid Reference TL 6194 9790; Fig. 1). The work met Condition 16 of planning permission for residential development of up to 17 dwellings at the site (Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk planning ref. 16/00718/OM).
- 1.1.2 A brief was set by Steve Hickling of Norfolk County Council Community and Environment Services (NCCCES) detailing the local authority's requirements for the work necessary to inform the planning process (Hickling 2023). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was subsequently produced by OA East outlining the programme of work to be carried out (Moan 2023). This document details how OA East implemented the specified requirements detailed in the WSI and presents the results of the fieldwork undertaken.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 Hilgay is located in the south-west of Norfolk and is on one of the largest 'fen islands' in the county. This 'island' of relatively higher ground is separated from the main upland area to the north by a c.0.5km wide belt of peat alongside the River Wissey (Silvester 1988, 1). The site itself is situated in a field on the western edge of this 'island', overlooking former fenland to the west.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development is in the north-eastern corner of a larger arable field at approximately 14m OD. It is bounded to the east and north by residential development, and west and south by open farmland. The topography falls gently to the south and west of the site into the former fenland, reaching approximately 0m OD 500m to the west of the site.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Kimmeridge Clay Formation mudstone with no overlying superficial deposits recorded. Directly to the east, the geology is Roxham and Ructon Member sand, with superficial deposits of peat recorded approximately 125m to the west of the site (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/>, accessed 21st February 2023). The surface geology was revealed as sand with frequent root disturbance, overlain by a silty sand subsoil and a sandy silt topsoil. The northern part of the site was surfaced with grass and the southern part of the site was ploughed ground.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following section provides a summary of the archaeological background for the area surrounding the site. It is drawn from a 1km search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) along with information from other archaeological works in the surrounding area. Selected NHER entries are presented in Fig. 2, with those shown in the figure presented in **bold**.



### *Prehistoric (c. 10000 BC-AD 43)*

- 1.3.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential due to position overlooking the fen. Neolithic and Bronze Age burial monuments were frequently placed on ridges overlooking water (rivers and fen) with burials known to have been placed into the fen around 2500 BC near the Hilgay-Southery 'island' (Coles and Hall 1998, 29). During the Iron Age, areas near water were utilised to exploit their resources. This is particularly relevant to the site, where prehistoric burnt flints and flint-tempered pottery spot-dated to the Iron Age (or possibly earlier) was recovered during fieldwalking as part of the Fenland Survey (**NHER 24367**).
- 1.3.3 Despite the archaeological potential of the site, surrounding prehistoric activity is limited to findspots. The earliest of these findspots was of a Mesolithic flint core (**NHER 23369**) recovered amongst later prehistoric and medieval pottery during fieldwalking c.960m north-east of the site.
- 1.3.4 Neolithic activity within the search area is represented by a polished axehead that was recovered during agricultural/drainage work (**NHER 58999**) c.600m north-west of the site. A Neolithic to Bronze Age macehead, shale spindle whorl, double ended hammer, part of a polished axehead, two flint axeheads and a flint blade (**NHER 15799**) were recovered c.900m north-west of the site. A Beaker period scraper (**NHER 23369**) was recovered c.960m to the north-east of the site, worked flints (**NHER 24286**) c.310m to the east and a Beaker period scraper was recovered amongst other flints (**NHER 24317**) c.1.2km to the east.
- 1.3.5 Numerous prehistoric findspots are recorded west of Lynn Road, close to the fen edge. These include Bronze Age finds of isolated palstave axes from the Great West Fen, approximately 500m to the west of the site (**NHER 14420**), whilst other Bronze Age activity has been identified with a further palstave axe (**NHER 11405**) recovered c.410m north of the site, two socketed axes (**NHER 13891**) recovered c.1.1km south-west of the site, and a heavily corroded copper alloy flat axehead (**NHER 15766**) c.910m to the west.
- 1.3.6 Evidence for Iron Age activity on Hilgay is more limited, with activity in the wider area (in addition to the material on the site) represented by the recovery of pottery (**NHER 24105**) c.100m to the east of the site as part of the Fenland Survey.
- 1.3.7 In addition, further assemblages of less precisely dated prehistoric material were recovered by the Fenland Survey. These include pottery (**NHER 15871**) recovered to the north-east of the site, and flint recovered to the east (**NHER 24103, 24283, 24316**), south-east (**NHER 23373, 23374, 23375, 24259, 24290, 24291**), south (**NHER 24104**), south-west (**NHER 24116**) and west (**NHER 24110**) of the site. Amongst these, concentrations of burnt and worked prehistoric flints were recovered c.1km north-east (**NHER 23442, 23654, 23655**) and c.830m south of the site (**NHER 24292**). In addition to these, the fieldwalking of the Fenland Survey also recovered a prehistoric sandstone saddle quern (**NHER 24499**) c.930m to the west of the site.

### *Roman (c. AD 43-410)*

- 1.3.8 Following on from the sparse evidence for prehistoric features, the occupation of the fenland ‘islands’ became more evident during the Roman period. This Romano-British fenland landscape was largely rural and agricultural and survived as earthworks; preserved by the rising water levels of the Anglo-Saxon period and surviving the medieval and later ploughing after the fenland reclamation projects of the 17th and 18th centuries, only to be mostly lost through mechanised ploughing (Coles and Hall 1998, 53). Hilgay is known to have a number of important Roman sites, such as a small Roman farmstead that still survived as earthworks as recently as 1988 (NHER 4455) and included a ‘fen circle’ or stack stand for drying hay (Coles and Hall 1998, 59; Hall 1996, 177-179), which was located 2km east of the site, adjacent to the River Wissey.
- 1.3.9 The route of Akeman Street, the Roman road that ran from Cambridge to Ely and onwards to Brancaster on the Norfolk coast, traversed this area. The exact route of the continuation of Akeman Street to the north of Ely is unclear, although metalling for a possible road was uncovered during ploughing in the 1940s at Low’s farm, west of Southery and Hilgay and c.2.5km west of the site (NHER 25273).
- 1.3.10 However, as with the evidence for prehistoric activity, a Romano-British presence in the vicinity of the site is predominantly evidenced through findspots. Finds have mostly been recovered as part of the Fenland Survey, including a single sherd of Roman pottery recovered from the field in which the site is situated during fieldwalking (NHER 24367).
- 1.3.11 Further afield, findspots include the recovery of part of a possible finger ring (NHER 11405) c.400m to the north of the site, a scabbard chape (NHER 17414) c.230m east of the site, a disc brooch with a blue glass inlay and traces of red enamel decoration (NHER 17903) c.440m east of the site, a Roman bow brooch (NHER 24290) c.170m south-east of the site, and coins c.660m north-west of the site (NHER 24115) and c.180m south-east of the site (NHER 24290). In addition, fieldwalking for the Fenland Survey recovered Roman pottery from the area c.550m to the north-east (NHER 23368), c.100m to the east (NHER 24105), c.300m to the south-east (NHER 24290, 24291) of the site, and a spread of Roman pottery and tile (NHER 24317) c.1.1km to the east of the site.

### *Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 410-1066)*

- 1.3.12 The village of Hilgay is thought to have Anglo-Saxon origins and the name Hilgay derives from the Old English name *Hýthla* or *Hydla* conjoined with *-inga-* and *-ēg* meaning ‘island of Hýthla’s or Hydla’s people’, with the first documentary reference to Hilgay as *Hillingeiæ* occurring in a grant by King Edgar to Ramsey Abbey in AD 974, with a further one, *Hidlingheia*, in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Mills 2011). Despite this suggested Anglo-Saxon origin for Hilgay village, there is very little archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity, although it is possible that it is located under the modern core of the village. Its possible location has also been suggested through the recovery of Late Saxon pottery amongst later medieval material during the Fenland Survey (NHER 13903) to the north of the modern village, c.550m north of the site.

- 1.3.13 Amongst the limited evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the parish is burial evidence, with an Anglo-Saxon pot, iron spearhead, wooden shaft and iron pin that may have accompanied an Early Saxon burial recovered from the cemetery of the church (**NHER 4453**), c.275m north-east of the site, whilst two Early Saxon brooches (**NHER 17797**) were recovered c.600m east of the site in an area that has been suggested to also be that of an Early Saxon cemetery.
- 1.3.14 An Anglo-Saxon presence is also recorded through the findspots of a Middle to Late Saxon strap end (**NHER 24290**) recovered c.170m south-east of the site, and Late Saxon pottery recovered during the fieldwalking for the Fenland Survey (**NHER 17414**) c.230m north-east of the site.

### *Medieval (c. AD 1066-1500)*

- 1.3.15 The medieval landscape around Hilgay was heavily influenced by the fens, with flooding a high probability in the lower-lying areas. As a result, flood defences were built, including the King's Dyke (**NHER 29183**), constructed as a large bank to the west of the village; which also marks the boundary between Hilgay and Methwold parishes. As part of this wetland landscape, the rivers (Great Ouse and Wissey) were important routeways, and a canal (**NHER 24368**) that may have been built to offer a short-cut between them (but that may also be a roddon) has been identified c.830m north-west of the site. A second canal (**NHER 24676**), now infilled, was built between Fordham and the River Wissey, which is visible on aerial photographs c.1km north-north-west of the site.
- 1.3.16 The village is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1087 as being in the Hundred of Clackclose with a population of 55.5 households and seven landowners. The landowners included the Abbeys of Bury St Edmunds, Ely and Ramsey (Powell-Smith 2023). The main manor was owned by Ramsey Abbey, with Modney Priory (**NHER 4459**) founded prior to 1291 as a Benedictine cell under their care. Land in Hilgay owned by Ramsey Abbey was centred upon a moated manorial site that survives as a complex of earthworks (**NHER 4454**) 600m north-east of the site. The church in Hilgay (**NHER 4453**) is located c.275m north-east of the site and was built during the 14th and 15th centuries, although much of this building was restored during the Victorian period.
- 1.3.17 Medieval settlement evidence in Hilgay is scarcer, although the village was probably centred on the church, and subsequently shrank in size (Fell 2005, 7). However, the bounds of medieval tofts (**NHER 24314**) probably relate to fields of the period. Pottery scatters found during the Fenland Survey suggest that there may have been a continuation of Late Saxon occupation c.550m north of the site (**NHER 13903**).
- 1.3.18 Medieval agriculture has been identified in aerial photographs across the 'island', visible as ridge and furrow earthworks in fields that have more recently been left under pasture that probably formed part of open common land in Hilgay during this period. This land includes the largest (19ha) remaining surviving area of ridge and furrow in Norfolk (**NHER 24136**) in the adjacent field to the west of the site. Although most of these earthworks are on an east to west orientation, a block of ridge and furrow in the extreme south (and to the south of the site) is aligned north to south.

Additional areas of ridge and furrow earthworks include an area c.540m south of the site (**NHER 14497**), as well as a 6ha area (**NHER 24137**) in the grounds of Wood Hall, c.700m south-east of the site.

- 1.3.19 Further medieval activity includes the site of a medieval windmill (**NHER 13456**), known still as 'Mill Mound', c.570m east-north-east of the site. The use of this site continued into the post-medieval period, with the mound surviving as an earthwork, and was marked as such on Ogilvy's 1675 map.
- 1.3.20 Within the site itself, a sherd of medieval pottery recovered during fieldwalking for the Fenland Survey (**NHER 24367**).
- 1.3.21 In the surrounding area, findspots of medieval material include: a steelyard weight (**NHER 14787**) found on the bank of the river c.720m north of the site; a short cross penny of Henry III (**NHER 15756**) recovered c.370m north of the site; coins, a jeton and 'peasant' finger ring (**NHER 23368**) c.500m north-east of the site; a belt fitting (**NHER 17902**) c.410m east-north-east of the site; a strap end and coin (**NHER 24105**) c.100m east of the site; and a coin (**NHER 24290**) c.170m south-east of the site. Findspots of pottery have also been recovered to the north-east (**NHER 15871, 17414, 23368, 23369, 23442**), north-west (**NHER 24109, 24115**), east (**NHER 24103, 24105, 24283, 24316, 24317**), south (**NHER 24104, 24259**) and south-east of the site (**NHER 23374, 24290, 24291**).

#### *Post-medieval and modern (c. AD 1500 onwards)*

- 1.3.22 In Hilgay, Ramsey Abbey continued to exert a major influence on the parish, with Wood Hall (**NHER 4468**), located c.1km south-east of the site, built in 1579. The surrounding parkland was established around the time of improvements to the estate at the beginning of the 19th century (**NHER 56269**).
- 1.3.23 Land use during the post-medieval period became more intensive than that of the preceding periods. Prior to the 18th century, it was dominated by enclosure of land that was linked to the drainage of the fenland to allow for increased arable land and improved grazing (Dyson-Bruce and Thorogood 2009, 56). For example, a drain (**NHER 13530**) designed by Vermuyden in the 1630s, was located c.1km south-west of the site, with the main section having since been filled in. Where enclosure took place in the vicinity of the site, it was to the west and north. In contrast, during the 18th and 19th centuries, enclosure was primarily to the east of the site and took the form of piecemeal enclosure by agreement, the typical type across Norfolk (*ibid.*, 40). The site itself, however, lies in an area that relates to 20th century enclosure, a form that relates to sub-divisions of existing fields or newly designed landscapes (*ibid.*, 49). By the time of the Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition map of 1886, the site resided within a larger field, which by 1904 was used for allotments. Between 1937-72, the field surrounding the site had been sub-divided, the water tower built by its north-eastern corner, and the present southern boundary of the field established.
- 1.3.24 Additional post-medieval activity includes the possible continuation of the use of medieval windmill **NHER 13456**, although by Ogilvy's map of 1675 this was only marked as an earthwork mound. A further windmill (**NHER 14496**) c.125m north-east of the site is marked on Faden's 1797 map of Norfolk. This mill was replaced by a

smock mill in 1873 which was last in use in 1912 and was subsequently demolished. Industrial activity includes the site of a brick kiln (**NHER 14497**), marked on Faden's Map of Norfolk, c.600m to the south of the site. The old workhouse (**NHER 57053**), c.580m north of the site, was converted into a National School in 1838, with the school closing in 1904/5 and the building subsequently being used as a village hall.

- 1.3.25 Three structures of World War II date survive c.800m north of the site near the junction with the A10: a spigot mortar emplacement (**NHER 16125**), a Home Guard shelter or store (**NHER 32679**) and a pillbox (**NHER 32680**).

### *Previous archaeological works*

- 1.3.26 Limited archaeological works have been undertaken in the vicinity of the site. However, as part of the Fenland Survey (Silvester 1988), the field in which the site lies was fieldwalked with Iron Age pottery and worked flint found (**NHER 24367**). An aerial photographic survey undertaken by the OS in 1980 suggests that undated enclosures (**NHER 16526**) lie c.500m to the north of the site; whilst further undated ploughed-out earthworks/enclosures (**NHER 29761**) of possible recent origin lie c.890m to the north-west of the site.
- 1.3.27 A watching brief at Hubbard's Drove undertaken by Norfolk Archaeological Unit during the excavation of building footings in 2000 (**ENF88991**), c.525m north-east of the site, recovered a possible Roman gaming piece (**NHER 35195**), although no archaeological features were identified (Crowson 2000). An archaeological investigation of seven trenches by Archaeological Services and Consultancy at Fox House in 2005 (**ENF97749/NHER 41120**; Fell 2005), c.500m north-east of the site also revealed no archaeological remains.
- 1.3.28 In contrast, an archaeological evaluation of three trenches undertaken in 2016 by Archaeological Solutions on land south-east of East End (**ENF140502**), c.730m north-east of the site, revealed several pits and ditches of probable Late Saxon to medieval date along with domestic waste (**NHER 65582**). Archaeological excavation of this site was undertaken in 2020 by Allen Archaeology (**ENF149389**).
- 1.3.29 Archaeological monitoring work is currently being undertaken along the route of Anglian Water's Bexhil to Bury St Edmund pipeline (**ENF150772**), which passes Hilgay 1.2km to the east of the site, although no information on the works is currently available.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 Following the project aims and objectives defined in the WSI, the evaluation sought to establish the character, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The project aims and objectives were:

- i. establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains;
- ii. provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits;
- iii. provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits;
- iv. set the results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context – and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions; and
- v. provide – in the event that archaeological remains are found – sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables, and orders of cost.

### 2.2 Research frameworks

2.2.1 This informative trenching took place within, and will contribute to the goals of Regional Research Frameworks relevant to this area:

- Glazebrook J. (1997). *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 1. Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 3.
- Brown, N. and Glazebrook, J. (2000). *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern counties: 2. Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 8.
- Medlycott, M. (2011). *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 24.
- The online East of England Regional Research Framework (<https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>)

### 2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 All stages of the project adhered to *Standards for development-led archaeological projects in Norfolk* produced by NCCCES (Robertson *et al.* 2018), along with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a) and *Code of conduct* (CIfA 2014b).

2.3.2 A total of six trenches measuring 30m long and 1.8m wide were excavated, equivalent to 5% of the 0.6ha development area (Fig. 3).



- 2.3.3 Prior to excavation on the site, service plans were checked, with a water and sewer main identified by the northern edge of the site and a second sewer main crossing the middle of the site. The trench layout was designed to avoid these. Before mechanical excavation, the footprint of each trench was scanned by a qualified and experienced operator using a CAT and Genny with a valid calibration certificate. No unknown underground services were encountered during the fieldwork. Prior to excavation, the locations of the trenches were also scanned with a metal detector by an experienced operative. Metal detecting continued throughout all stages of the project, and all identified archaeological features and deposits were scanned. However, no metal artefacts were recovered from this site.
- 2.3.4 Trenches were excavated by a 14-tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket to the depth of the geological horizon, or to the upper interface of the archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. Topsoil and subsoil were removed in 0.1m spits under the constant supervision of an experienced and qualified archaeologist, with subsoil and topsoil deposits kept separate and stored alongside the trenches to allow for sequential backfilling of the excavations following approval by the NCCCES.
- 2.3.5 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe to clarify the archaeological deposits, following which the archaeological features were excavated by hand. All segments excavated into ditches were at least 1m wide, and following recording of its half-section, the single posthole was 100% excavated. Where natural features were identified as irregular based curvilinear natural scarring crossing Trenches 2 and 3, these were also excavated.
- 2.3.6 Surveying was carried out using a survey-grade differential GPS connected to Leica Smartnet, providing an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical. The site was accurately tied into the OS National Grid.
- 2.3.7 All features, layers and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, with a register of all trenches, features and photographs kept. Each feature was individually documented on context sheets and hand-drawn in section and plan at appropriate scales – 1:50 for plans and either 1:10 or 1:20 for sections. Written descriptions were recorded on pro-forma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements. The photographic record comprises high resolution (at least 10 megapixel) digital photographs taken with a camera with an APS-C sensor. Photographs were taken of all features and deposits as well as general site shots. Digital photographs consist of JPEGs and RAW versions of each shot.
- 2.3.8 The site archive is currently held by OA East. Upon completion of the project, all finds, along with digital and paper records created, will be archived with Norfolk Museum Service under the accession code NWHCM:2023.36, in accordance with current guidance (ClfA 2014c; Norfolk Museum Service 2018).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. Where features were identified across multiple trenches and maintained similar morphologies these have only been described in the first trench in which they were encountered, with any differences highlighted as they were encountered. The full details of all trenches, with dimensions and depths of all deposits, can be found in Appendix A. Finds reports are included in Appendix B and environmental reports in Appendix C.

### 3.2 General soil and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence in the trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology was revealed as a mid-brownish yellow silty sand that was overlain by a 0.13-0.4m thick mid-reddish brown silty sand subsoil, which in turn was overlain by a 0.3-0.38m thick dark brownish grey sandy silt topsoil. Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout. Although there was early morning frost and fog, this did not affect the visibility of features, and sunny conditions periodically hampered photography. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology, except for the single ditch in Trench 5.

### 3.3 Distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were identified in all six trenches with a slight concentration in Trenches 2 and 3 (Fig. 3). Two of the ditch alignments extended between multiple trenches. Artefacts were limited to the ditches revealed by Trenches 1-3.

#### *Trenches 1 and 4 (Fig. 3)*

##### *Linear ditch alignment*

3.3.2 A linear ditch was uncovered by Trench 1 which was sealed by the overlying subsoil (Fig. 4, Section 15). As this ditch extended on an east to west alignment across most of the length of the trench, two segments (**103=105**) were excavated (Plate 1). It measured up to 0.65m wide and 0.17m deep with gently sloping sides and a flat, slightly uneven base (Fig. 4, Section 17). It was filled by soft dark reddish brown silty sand (104=106) that produced a sherd (3g) of Late Bronze Age pottery and a slightly abraded, complete Bronze Age spindlewhorl. An environmental sample taken from the ditch fill yielded only a grass seed fragment.

3.3.3 Ditch **103=105** continued east to Trench 4, where it was excavated as ditch **403**. It was also sealed by the overlying subsoil and measured 0.94m wide by 0.22m deep (Fig. 4, Section 11; Plate 2). Its fill (404) consisted of soft mid greyish brown silty sand, which perhaps differed from fill 104=106 in Trench 1 due to the paler underlying natural geology observed in this trench. No artefacts were recovered.



### **Trenches 2, 3 and 6 (Fig. 3)**

#### ***Linear ditch alignment***

3.3.4 South of Trench 1, the south-eastern end of Trench 2 revealed a linear ditch (**209**) and its recut (**211**) on an east-north-east to west-south-west alignment. The earlier ditch (**209**) was steep sided with a concave base that measured up to 0.56m deep (Fig. 4, Section 22; Plate 3). It was filled by soft mid greyish brown silty sand with occasional small sub-angular sandstone fragments (210) and produced no artefacts. Ditch **209** was cut on its northern side by shallower ditch **211** which had a moderately steep sided and concave-based profile up to 1.1m wide by 0.4m deep. It was filled by a slightly darker fill (212) that yielded a sherd (0.5g) of 16th-18th century pottery and five fragments of animal bone speciated to horse, sheep/goat bone and cattle. This fill also contained a residual and heavily burnt distal end of a non-cortical flint flake and a further piece of unworked burnt flint (18g). The ditches continued east to Trench 3, where they were excavated as ditches **305** and **307** of similar morphology. The fill of ditch **307** produced a residual sherd (6g) of Late Bronze Age pottery and contained frequent elder seeds and occasional wheat grains along with possible fragments of clinker and vitrified charcoal. This boundary ditch alignment continued east to Trench 6 (Plate 4), where it was excavated as ditches **603** and **605**. Both ditches were c.0.3m deep, possibly due to the underlying sandstone having been reached at this shallower depth (Fig. 4, Section 8; Plate 5).

#### ***Agricultural furrows***

3.3.5 Across the middle of Trench 2 were two linear agricultural furrows (**205** and **207**) that lay on a broadly north to south alignment. These features were between 1-1.18m wide and up to 0.16m deep with gently sloping sides and concave bases (Fig. 4, Section 19). They were both filled by a soft light greyish brown silty sand (206 and 208 respectively) that contained no artefacts.

#### ***Posthole***

3.3.6 In the central part of Trench 3 lay a circular posthole (**303**) which measured 0.23m in diameter and 0.1m deep (Fig. 4, Section 13; Plate 6). It was filled by soft mid brownish grey silty sand (304) that contained rare charcoal fragments and displayed some evidence of rooting disturbance. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from this feature.

#### ***Natural linear feature***

3.3.7 The north-western part of Trench 2 revealed a shallow linear feature (**203**), up to 0.5m wide by 0.04m deep, with an irregular profile. It was filled by soft light brownish grey sand which produced no artefacts (204). This natural scar continued north-east to Trench 3, where it was excavated as 0.74m wide feature **309** (Plate 7).

### **Trench 5 (Fig. 3)**

#### ***Linear ditch alignment***

3.3.8 Located towards the southern edge of the site and to the south of Trench 4, Trench 5 contained a linear ditch (**503**) that was difficult to distinguish from the natural geology

due to heavy root disturbance. The ditch crossed the trench on a differing, south-west to north-east alignment than the other linear ditches excavated in Trenches 1-4, and 6. It measured 1.68m wide by 0.2m deep with gently sloping sides and a flat base (Fig. 4, Section 10; Plate 8). It was filled by soft dark reddish brown silty sand (506) that contained no finds.

### 3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 A small assemblage of artefacts and ecofacts was recovered during the works, all of which were collected from Trenches 1-3.
- 3.4.2 Prehistoric artefacts included a worked flint, a couple of sherds of pottery and a complete spindlewhorl. A single worked flint and a fragment of unworked burnt flint (18g) were both recovered from the fill of ditch **211** (context 212) in Trench 2. Although the worked flint is an undiagnostic heavily burnt distal end of a non-cortical flake, it is probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. A total of two sherds (9g) of handmade Late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from ditch **103** in Trench 1 and ditch **307** in Trench 3. Although neither of the sherds can be closely dated, the character of the fabric is typical of pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age in Norfolk. A single complete, slightly abraded fired clay Bronze Age spindlewhorl was recovered from the ditch (**103**) in Trench 1, with the fabric being similar to the pottery recovered from Trench 3. Objects of this type were personal items and prone to accidental loss.
- 3.4.3 The remaining artefacts comprised post-medieval material. A single sherd (0.5g) of 16th-18th century glazed red earthenware was recovered from the later of the two boundary ditches (ditch **211**) at the southern end of Trench 2. This was abraded and indicates low levels of pottery distribution. Five fragments of animal bone were recovered from the later of the boundary ditches in Trench 2 (ditch **211**). Only three of these were identifiable to species (single horse and cattle teeth and a sheep/goat bone) whilst the other two fragments were from large mammals. The assemblage, representing domestic animals, is poorly preserved with erosion from the acidic soil and root activity.
- 3.4.4 A total of three bulk samples were taken from features. Although rare specks of charcoal were noted during the excavation, the recovery of scarce carbonised plant remains – with those that were preserved in a poor state – suggests that there is limited potential for the preservation of plant remains at the site, with rootlets also likely to have disturbed deposits. A single grass seed was recovered from the ditch in Trench 1, whilst no plant remains were recovered from the posthole (**303**). In contrast, a small quantity of cereal grains, clinker and vitrified charcoal representing a background scatter of domestic refuse was recovered from ditch **307** in Trench 3.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The trenching revealed archaeological features in all six of the investigated trenches, including linear ditches and a posthole. The ditches were observed to cross multiple trenches. In general, most of the archaeological features were relatively shallow, suggesting they had undergone moderate horizontal truncation by the plough. Most of the features contained a single fill of mid-dark greyish or reddish brown silty sand. Archaeological features were clearly visible within the trenches against the natural geology – with the exception of the undated ditch (**503**) in Trench 5 – and the weather and ground conditions remained good during the course of the fieldwork. The results of the fieldwork are considered reliable.

### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The project aims, as set out in the WSI and Section 2.1 above, were to establish the character, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The ways in which the project aims and objectives have been met are outlined below.

***Establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains***

4.2.2 The evaluation identified a total of seven archaeological features which were concentrated in the western half of the site; the majority relating to two ditched boundaries that crossed the site from east to west. A further possible ditch alignment, a discrete posthole and vestiges of agricultural furrows were also found. These features were relatively shallow, surviving up to a maximum depth of 0.56m below the natural geological horizon. The depths of the overlying subsoil and topsoil were recorded, which were notably thinner in the north-western part of site. Only a few artefacts were recovered which were restricted to pottery sherds, a fired clay item and flintwork. The only notable ecofacts were some animal bone fragments and carbonised cereal grains from the post-medieval ditch. The slightly acidic sandy soil has not been conducive to the preservation of remains.

***Establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits***

4.2.3 The remains at the site probably relate to agricultural activity. Each of the east to west ditches probably represent chronologically separate field boundaries. The earliest phase of activity relates to the Late Bronze Age ditch alignment identified in Trenches 1 and 4. The presence of the spindlewhorl in the ditch was probably the result of casual loss and is suggestive of nearby domestic activity. The later phase of post-medieval land division represented by the ditch traversing Trenches 2, 3 and 6 follows the same broad alignment as boundaries to the north and south depicted on the tithe apportionment map of 1839 (see Fig. 5). Its fill also produced a small sherd of post-medieval pottery.

4.2.4 To the south, undated ditch **503** was difficult to discern amongst root disturbance and may represent a short lived internal division of the post-medieval field.

- 4.2.5 Further agricultural activity is evidenced by the presence of two furrows in Trench 2. Although their fills were difficult to distinguish from the subsoil, they were clearly visible against the natural geology. The shallow depth of these features suggest they represent the deepest surviving vestiges of a set of furrows that extended from north to south across this site during the medieval and/or post-medieval periods. The adjoining field to the west contains the largest surviving area of known ridge and furrow in Norfolk, and the examples on this site probably relate to this system.

***Evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits***

- 4.2.6 The long-term use of the site as agricultural land has probably led to the disturbance of the upper horizons of archaeological deposits by the plough, especially given the generally shallow nature of the identified features. However, a protective, 0.13-0.4m thickness of subsoil was recorded across the site overlying the archaeological features. The vestiges of agricultural furrows identified in Trench 2 suggests their widespread truncation probably constitutes part of the subsoil make-up on this site.
- 4.2.7 It is highly likely that the construction of the water and sewer mains along the northern edge and central part of the site will have truncated any archaeological remains along their route (Fig. 3).

***Set the results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context – and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions***

- 4.2.8 The site has revealed a probable Late Bronze Age ditch with the recovery of a spindlewhorl indicative of nearby settlement activity. The site lies on the western edge of the elevated 'island' of Hilgay, where many later prehistoric findspots have previously been found, mostly by the Fenland Survey.

### **4.3 Interpretation**

***Late Bronze Age (c. 1150 - 800 BC)***

- 4.3.1 The Late Bronze Age ditch identified in Trenches 1 and 4 lies in a relatively rich area of later prehistoric findspots (see Section 1.3.2-7). Iron Age or earlier pottery was recovered during fieldwalking of the current site and a field c.100m to the east during the Fenland Survey (Silvester 1988). However, the absence of any further prehistoric features on this site precludes any speculation as to the location of any associated settlement focus, although the recovery of the complete spindlewhorl might suggest such a focus lay nearby.

***Medieval/post-medieval (c. AD 1066-1750)***

- 4.3.2 The two agricultural furrows identified in Trench 2 probably represent the survival of a truncated system of furrows which extended across the site on a north-to south orientation. Immediately west and south of the site are ridge and furrow earthworks believed to be of medieval origin (see Section 1.3.18; Cushion and Davison 2003, 201), with the portion at the southern end identified on a similar north to south alignment.

- 4.3.3 Towards the southern boundary of the site, a post-medieval boundary ditch and its subsequent recut extended across the site, which was excavated in Trenches 2, 3 and 6. Its depth appeared to be dependent on the depth of underlying sandstone encountered within the natural geology.
- 4.3.4 Although not extant by the time of the tithe apportionment survey of 1839 (Fig. 5), this ditch alignment lay on the same orientation as boundary marked on the map to the north and south of the site, suggesting it was also of relatively recent origin, which is supported by the sherd of 16th-18th century pottery from its fill. By 1886, the OS map of Hilgay shows the boundary to the south of the site had also gone out of use.

#### *Undated features*

- 4.3.5 A possible boundary ditch was identified across Trench 5 whose alignment may have continued between Trenches 4 and 6 to the north-east. This ditch was not dated by artefacts but may represent a shorter-lived field sub-division of medieval or later origin. The only other undated archaeological feature was the isolated posthole in Trench 3. This feature may have formed part of a fence line extending across the site, or it may have been an isolated feature. Although undated, it contained a similar fill as the post-medieval ditch to suggest it may have been broadly contemporary in date.

#### **4.4 Significance**

- 4.4.1 The possible Late Bronze Age ditch identified on this site, and its associated spindlewhorl and pottery, enhances previous surface findspots of prehistoric pottery and flintwork recovered nearby by the Fenland Survey which further suggests a settlement focus lies somewhere in the vicinity. The agricultural furrows, boundary ditches and posthole of medieval and later origin are not significant.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1							
General description						Orientation	E-W
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a single linear ditch excavated in two segments.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.8
						Avg. depth (m)	0.53
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer				Natural		
101	Layer			0.25	Subsoil		
102	Layer			0.3	Topsoil		
103	Cut		0.65	0.12	Ditch		LBA
104	Fill	103	0.65	0.12	Secondary Fill	LBA pottery, BA spindlewhorl	LBA
105	Cut		0.64	0.17	Ditch		LBA
106	Fill	105	0.64	0.17	Secondary Fill		LBA

Trench 2							
General description						Orientation	NW-SE
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a natural feature, two furrows and a recut ditch.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.8
						Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer				Natural		
201	Layer			0.13	Subsoil		
202	Layer			0.32	Topsoil		
203	Cut		0.5	0.04	Natural Feature		
204	Fill	203	0.5	0.04	Secondary Fill		
205	Cut		1.18	0.08	Plough Furrow		Med
206	Fill	205	1.18	0.08	Secondary Fill		Med
207	Cut		1	0.16	Plough Furrow		Med
208	Fill	207	1	0.16	Secondary Fill		Med
209	Cut			0.53	Ditch		Post-med
210	Fill	209		0.53	Secondary Fill		Post-med
211	Cut		1.02	0.4	Ditch		Post-med
212	Fill	211	1.02	0.4	Secondary Fill	PM pottery, worked and burnt flint, animal bone	Post-med

Trench 3							
General description						Orientation	N-S
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a natural feature, a single posthole and a recut ditch.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.8
						Avg. depth (m)	0.69
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer				Natural		
301	Layer			0.36	Subsoil		
302	Layer			0.33	Topsoil		
303	Cut		0.22	0.1	Posthole		
304	Fill	303	0.22	0.1	Secondary Fill		
305	Cut		1.44	0.56	Ditch		Post-med
306	Fill	305	1.44	0.56	Secondary Fill		Post-med
307	Cut		1.1	0.4	Ditch		Post-med
308	Fill	307	1.1	0.4	Secondary Fill	LBA pottery	Post-med
309	Cut		0.74	0.04	Natural Feature		
310	Fill	309	0.74	0.04	Secondary Fill		

Trench 4							
General description						Orientation	NNW-SSE
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a single linear ditch.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.8
						Avg. depth (m)	0.76
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
400	Layer				Natural		
401	Layer			0.4	Subsoil		
402	Layer			0.36	Topsoil		
403	Cut		0.94	0.22	Ditch		LBA
404	Fill	403	0.94	0.22	Secondary Fill		LBA

Trench 5							
General description						Orientation	ENE-WSW
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a single linear ditch.						Length (m)	30
						Width (m)	1.8
						Avg. depth (m)	0.7
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
500	Layer				Natural		
501	Layer			0.36	Subsoil		
502	Layer			0.35	Topsoil		
503	Cut		1.68	0.2	Ditch		
504	Fill	503	1.68	0.2	Secondary Fill		

Trench 6							
<b>General description</b>						<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
Trench consists of a natural geology of sand overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Contains a recut ditch.						<b>Length (m)</b>	30
						<b>Width (m)</b>	1.8
						<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.71
Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
600	Layer				Natural		
601	Layer			0.33	Subsoil		
602	Layer			0.38	Topsoil		
603	Cut		1	0.26	Ditch		Post-med
604	Fill	603	1	0.26	Secondary Fill		Post-med
605	Cut		1	0.3	Ditch		Post-med
606	Fill	605	1	0.3	Secondary Fill		Post-med



## APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 Flint

*By Lawrence Billington*

- B.1.1 The trial trenching recovered a single worked flint and a fragment of unworked burnt flint (18g), both from the fill of ditch **211** (context 212) in Trench 2. The worked flint is a heavily burnt distal end of a non-cortical flake – undiagnostic but probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

### B.2 Late Bronze Age Pottery

*By Carlotta Marchetto*

- B.2.1 Two plain sherds (9g) of handmade Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the evaluation with a mean sherd weight of 4.5g. The pottery derived from ditch **103** (one sherd, 3g) in Trench 1 and ditch **307** (one sherd, 6g) in Trench 3. The sherd from ditch **307** is in a poorly sorted flint tempered fabric with inclusions ranging from 1-4mm in size. The other sherd is in a moderate fine with rare coarse flint fabric with smooth surfaces. The sherds cannot be closely dated, but the character of the fabric is typical of pottery dating from the Late Bronze Age in Norfolk, c.1100-800 BC.

### B.3 Post-medieval Pottery

*By Carole Fletcher*

#### *Introduction and Methodology*

- B.3.1 Archaeological works produced a small assemblage of 16th-18th century pottery from Trench 2. A single sherd, weighing less than one gram, was recovered.
- B.3.2 The Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG), Study Group for Roman Pottery (SGRP), and The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG), 2016 *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* and the MPRG *A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms* (MPRG 1998) act as standards. A simplified method of recording has been undertaken, with fabric codes assigned from Sue Anderson's unpublished post-Roman fabric series, based on Jennings (1981).
- B.3.3 The pottery and archive are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition or dispersal.

#### *Assemblage and Discussion*

- B.3.4 Trench 2: ditch **211** produced a single abraded body sherd (0.5g) from a 16th-18th century Glazed Red earthenware (GRE) vessel. The assemblage is fragmentary and indicates extremely low levels of pottery distribution.
- B.3.5 Should further work be undertaken, post-medieval pottery may be recovered, although only at low levels. This statement acts as a full record and, if no further work is undertaken, the pottery may be deselected prior to archival deposition.

## B.4 Spindlewhorl

*By Ted Levermore*

- B.4.1 A single complete fired clay spindlewhorl (30g) was recovered from the single fill (104) of the ditch (**103**) in Trench 1. It is a good example of a Bronze Age ellipsoid spindlewhorl. It is slightly abraded but retains a well-formed rounded body (D40mm, H20mm) and a small central perforation (D5mm). It is made in a reduced, compact, slightly micaceous clay with dense tempering of fine and coarse angular flint (>1mm-5mm). This fabric is similar, if not identical to the pottery found in context 308, ditch **307** in Trench 3. This parity shows the connection between the potters and the weavers living on this site; who are likely to be the same people. Objects of this type are commonly recovered from grave or domestic contexts, but tend to also be found further afield in discard contexts; they were personal items and therefore prone to accidental loss.

## APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

### C.1 Faunal Remains

*By Zoë Ui Choileàin*

#### *Introduction and Methodology*

- C.1.1 A small collection of animal bone was collected from a single ditch (**211** in Trench 2) excavated during the trial trenching (Table 1). A total of five fragments were recordable of which three were identifiable to taxon. Three taxa were identified: cattle, horse, and sheep/goat.
- C.1.2 All bone was identified using Schmid (1972). Surface preservation was evaluated using the 0-5 scale devised by Brickley and McKinley (2004 14-15).

#### *Results of Analysis*

- C.1.3 All specimens are highly fragmented, and the preservation of bone is poor, best represented by 2-3 on the McKinley scale. This means that most of the surface is masked by erosion, primarily soil acidity and root activity.
- C.1.4 The MNI or minimum number of individuals present for all species is one.
- C.1.5 The assemblage is very small and poorly preserved. All bone represents domestic mammals. There is little further information to be gleaned from this assemblage.

Trench	Cut	Context	Feature	Taxon	Element	Count
2	<b>211</b>	212	Ditch	Horse	Loose mandibular cheek tooth	1
2	<b>211</b>	212	Ditch	Cattle	Loose mandibular cheek tooth	1
2	<b>211</b>	212	Ditch	Large mammal	Tibia	1
2	<b>211</b>	212	Ditch	Large mammal	Mandible	1
2	<b>211</b>	212	Ditch	Sheep/goat	Ph1	1
<b>Totals</b>						<b>5</b>

Table 1: A catalogue of recordable bone by feature

#### *Retention, Dispersal and Display*

- C.1.6 This assemblage should be retained for the archaeological record.

### C.2 Environmental Remains

*By Martha Craven*

#### *Introduction*

- C.2.1 Three bulk samples were taken from features revealed within the trenches to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Samples were taken from a range of features encountered across Trenches 1-3 and are thought to possibly be Roman or post-medieval in date.

## **Methodology**

- C.2.2 The total volume (up to 18L) of each of the samples was processed by tank flotation using modified Siraf-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the samples was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve.
- C.2.3 The dried flots were scanned using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x60 and an abbreviated list of the recorded remains are presented in Table 2. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.* 2006) and OAE's reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cereals and Stace (2010) for other plants. Plant remains have been identified to species where possible. The identification of cereals has been based on the characteristic morphology of the grains and chaff as described by Jacomet (2006).

## **Quantification**

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

# = 1-5, ## = 6-25, ### = 26-100, #### = 100+ specimens

- C.2.5 Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal and snail shells have been scored for abundance:

+ = occasional, ++ = moderate, +++ = frequent, ++++ = abundant

Key to table:

f=fragment

## **Results**

- C.2.6 The site's archaeobotanical assemblage consists of carbonised (charred) plant material. Untransformed material is also present at the site which may or may not be contemporary to the feature from which it was sampled. Untransformed seeds usually have a tough outer coating which is resistant to decay.
- C.2.7 The remains are preserved in a poor state. It should be noted that many of the flots contain rootlets which may have caused movement of material between contexts.
- C.2.8 The pottery and archive are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition or dispersal.

### **Trench 1**

- C.2.9 Sample 1, fill 106 of ditch **105**, contains a single grass (Poaceae) seed fragment and negligible charcoal.

### **Trench 3**

- C.2.10 Sample 2, fill 304 of posthole **303**, is devoid of plant remains. Occasional wheat (*Triticum sp.*) grains and those too poorly preserved to identify were noted in Sample 3, fill 308 of ditch **307**, alongside a small quantity of charcoal. Frequent untransformed elder (*Sambucus nigra*) seeds were also noted in Sample 3. A small quantity of possible

clinker fragments and vitrified charcoal were present in this feature which could be a waste by-product from the burning of coal.

Trench	Sample	Context	Cut	Feature Type	Volume Processed (L)	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Weed Seeds	Tree/shrub Macrofossils	Charcoal Volume (ml)	Pottery	Amphibian bones	Burnt flint
1	1	106	105	Ditch	18	5	0	#f	0	<1	#	0	#
3	2	304	303	Posthole	3	<1	0	0	0	5	#	0	0
3	3	308	307	Ditch	18	5	#	0	###U	3	0	#	0

Table 2: Environmental samples

### Discussion

- C.2.11 The recovery of scarce carbonised plant remains from features at this site suggests that there is limited potential for the preservation of archaeobotanical material. The small quantity of cereal grains found within ditch **307** is likely a background scatter of domestic refuse that has unintentionally been incorporated into the feature. The frequent elder seeds also found within the ditch suggest that an elder shrub may have been growing close to the feature.
- C.2.12 It is recommended for any further excavation that environmental sampling is carried out in accordance with Historic England guidelines (2011).

## APPENDIX D      BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brickley, M. and McKinley, J. (eds.). 2004. *Guidelines to The Standard for Recording Human Remains*. IFA Paper 7. Reading, IFA/BABAO
- British Geological Survey 2023. *Geology Viewer*. Available: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/> accessed 9 February 2023
- Cappers, R.T.J, Bekker R.M, and Jans, J.E.A. 2006. *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands*. Groningen Archaeological Studies 4, Barkhuis Publishing, Eelde, The Netherlands. [www.seedatlas.nl](http://www.seedatlas.nl)
- ClfA, 2014a, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)
- ClfA, 2014b, *Code of conduct* (Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)
- ClfA, 2014c, *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists)
- Coles, J. and Hall, D. 1998. *Changing Landscapes: The Ancient Fenland*. Wetland Archaeology Research Project Occasional Paper 13. Cambridge, Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cranfield University 2023. *Soilscapes Map*. Available: <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> accessed 9 February 2023
- Crowson, A. 2000. *Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at Hubbard's Drove, Hilgay*. Norfolk Archaeological Unit Report 512
- Cushion, B. and Davison, A. 2003. *Earthworks of Norfolk*. East Anglian Archaeology Report 104
- Dyson-Bruce, L. and Thorogood, P. 2009. *Norfolk's Historic Landscape Character. A Report on the Norfolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project*. Gressenhall, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology
- Fell, D. 2005. *Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Fox House, Hilgay, Norfolk*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd Report 643
- Hall, D. 1996. *The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, The Isle of Ely and Wisbech*. East Anglian Archaeology Report 79
- Hall, D. N. 1998. Medieval fields in their many forms. *British Archaeology* 33, 6-7.
- Hickling, S. 2023. *Brief for Informative Trenching as Part of a Programme of Archaeological Mitigatory Works at Land South of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk*. NCCCES (unpublished)
- Historic England 2011. *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (2nd edition)*. Swindon, Historic England Centre for Archaeology Guidelines
- Jacomet, S. 2006 *Identification of cereal remains from archaeological sites*. (2nd edition, 2006) IPNA, Universität Basel / IPAS, Basel University
- Jennings, S. 1981. *Eighteen Centuries of Pottery from Norwich*. East Anglian Archaeology Report 13

- Mills, A.D. 2011. *A Dictionary of British Place Names*. Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Moan, P. 2023. *Land south of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigatory Work*. OA East (unpublished)
- MPRG, 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*. Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper I
- Norfolk Museum Service, 2018, *Requirements for Deposition of Fieldwork and Excavation Archives With Norfolk Museums Service*. Norwich, Norfolk Museum Service
- PCRG SGRP MPRG. 2016. *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology*
- Powell-Smith, A. 2023. *Open Domesday*. Available <https://opendomesday.org/place/TL6298/hilgay/> accessed 10 February 2023
- Robertson, D., Albone, J., Watkins, P., Percival, J.W., Hickling, H., Hamilton, H., Heywood, S., Shoemark, J., Tremlett, S. and Jarvis, C., 2018, *Standards for development-led archaeological projects in Norfolk* (Gressenhall: Norfolk County Council Environment Service)
- Schmid, E. 1972. *Atlas of Animal Bones*. New York and Amsterdam, Elsevier Publishing Company.
- Silvester, R.J. 1988. *The Fenland Project Number 3: Marshland and the Nar Valley, Norfolk*. East Anglian Archaeology Report 45
- Stace, C., 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second edition. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Zohary, D. and Hopf, M. 2000. *Domestication of Plants in the Old World – The origin and spread of cultivated plants in West Asia, Europe and the Nile Valley*. 3rd edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press

## APPENDIX E OASIS REPORT FORM

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-513170		
Project Name	Land south of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk		
Start of Fieldwork	6 February 2023	End of Fieldwork	8 February 2023
Previous Work	No	Future Work	N/A

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	ENF153203	Planning App. No.	16/00718/OM
HER Number	ENF153203	Related Numbers	N/A

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Residential
Place in Planning Process	Pre-application

### Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling          | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new            | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning         | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey          | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors        | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey       | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling              | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey    | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography  |   |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Uncertain	Animal bone	Post-medieval (c.AD 1500-1750)
Ditch	Later prehistoric (c. 4000BC-AD 43)	Pottery	Late Bronze Age (c.1150-800BC)
Ditch	Post-medieval (c.AD 1500-1750)	Pottery	Post-medieval (c.AD 1500-1750)
Posthole	Uncertain	Worked flint	Later prehistoric (c. 4000BC-AD 43)
		Spindle whorl	Bronze Age (c.2500-800BC)

### Project Location

County	Norfolk	Address (including Postcode) Land south of Foresters Avenue, Hilgay, Norfolk, PE38 0JU
District	West Norfolk	
Parish	Hilgay	
HER office	Norfolk	
Size of Study Area	0.6ha	
National Grid Ref	TL 6194 9790	



### Project Originators

Organisation	Oxford Archaeology East
Project Brief Originator	Steve Hickling
Project Design Originator	Patrick Moan
Project Manager	Patrick Moan
Project Supervisor	Robin Webb

### Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	Norwich Castle Museum	NWHCM:2023.36
Digital Archive	Norwich Castle Museum	NWHCM:2023.36
Paper Archive	Norwich Castle Museum	NWHCM:2023.36

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Digital Media

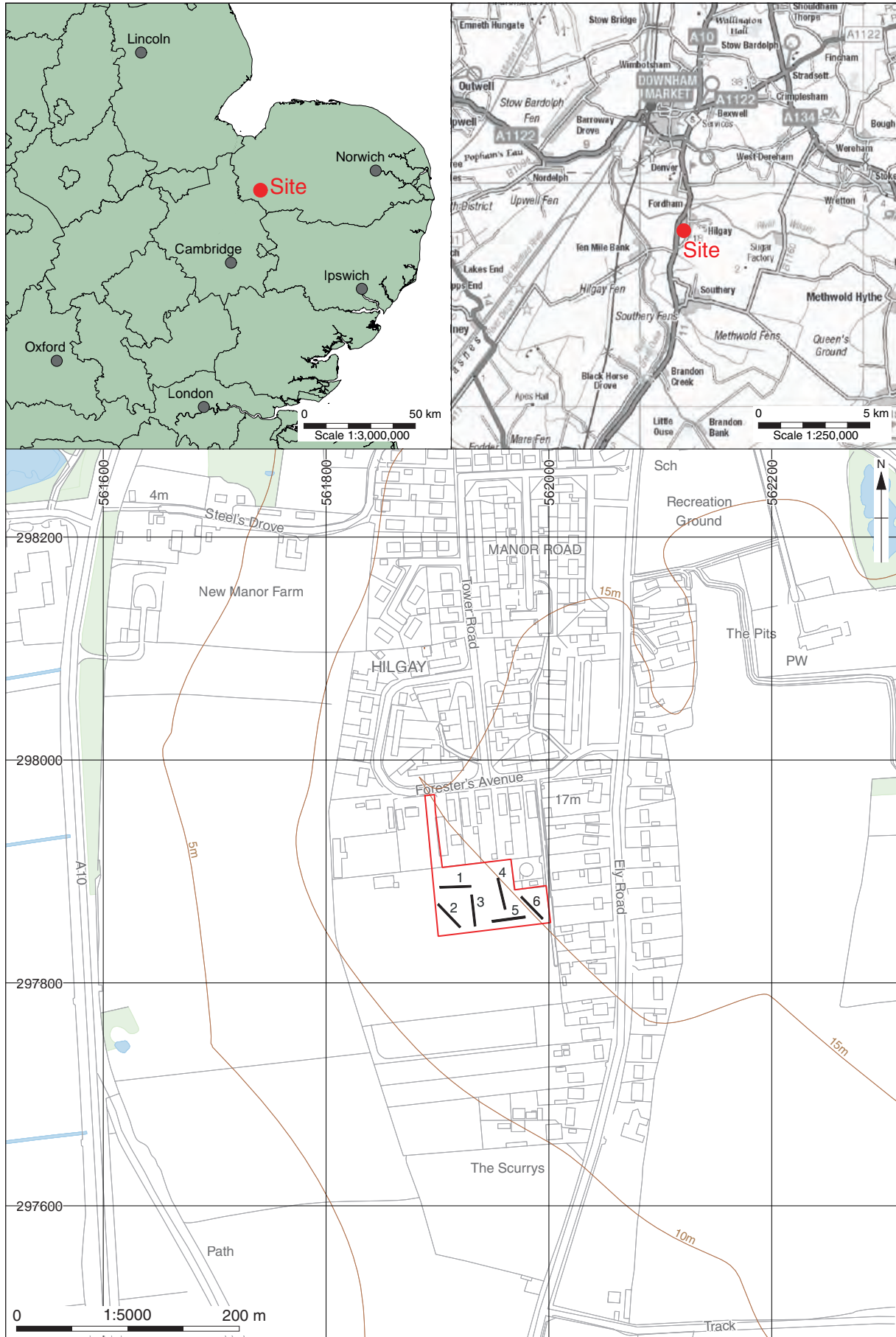
Database	X
GIS	X
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	X
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	X
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	X
Text	X
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Paper Media

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

Report	X
Sections	X
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Further Comments



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. License No. AC0000549896

Figure 1: Site location map with development area (red) and trenches (black)



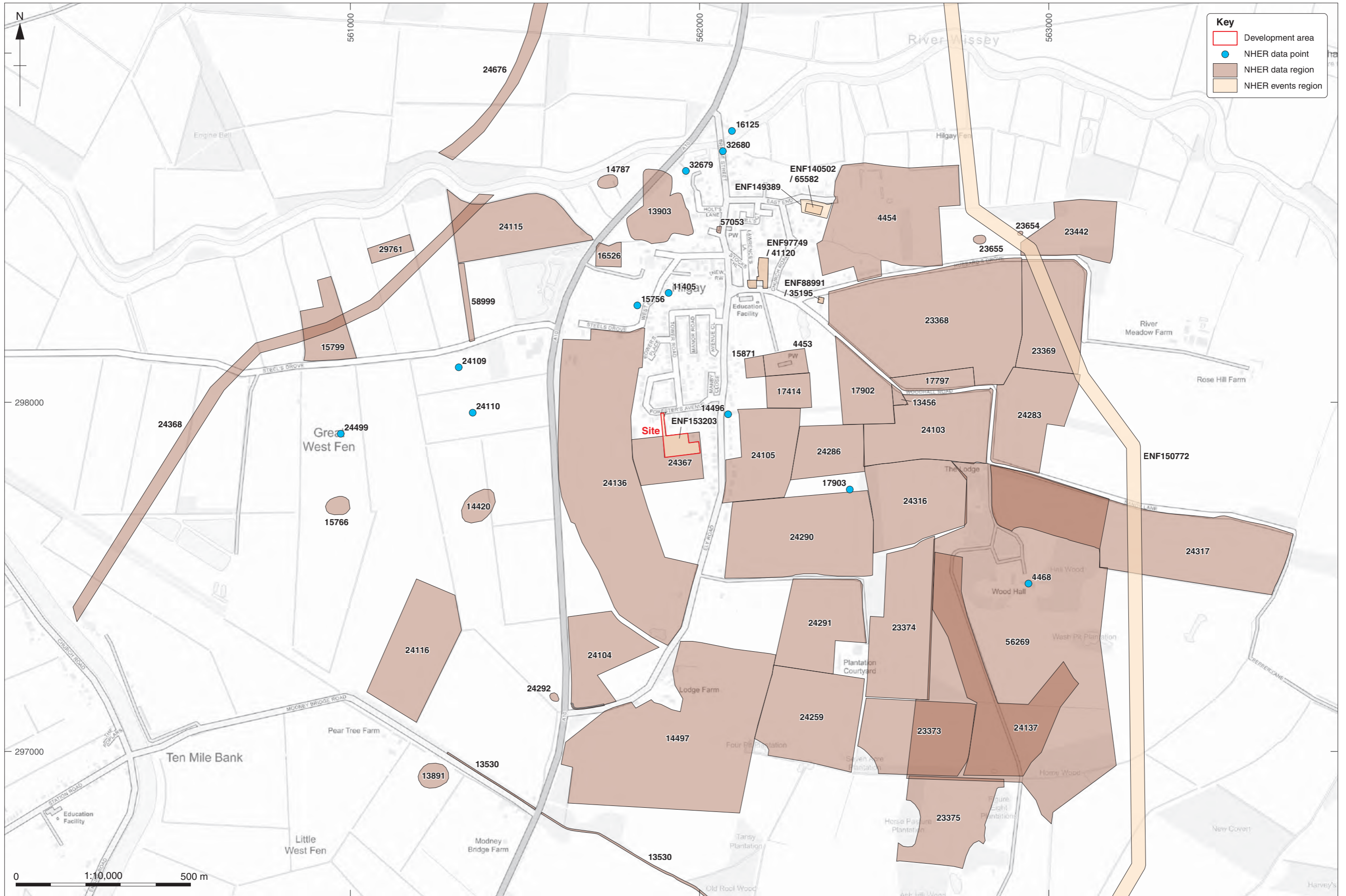


Figure 2: Map showing NHER Events and Monuments

Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2023

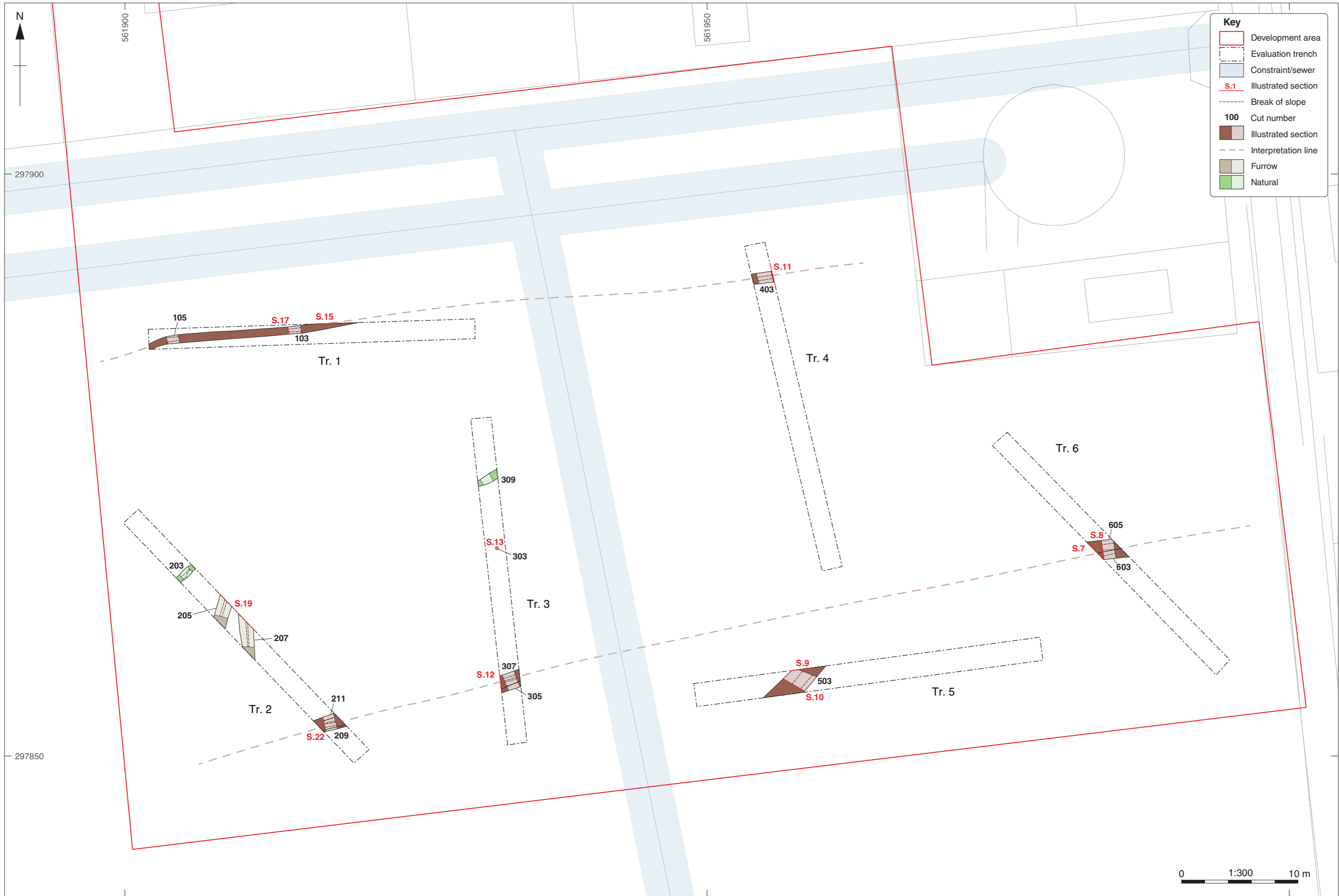


Figure 3: Evaluation results

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. License No. AC0000549896

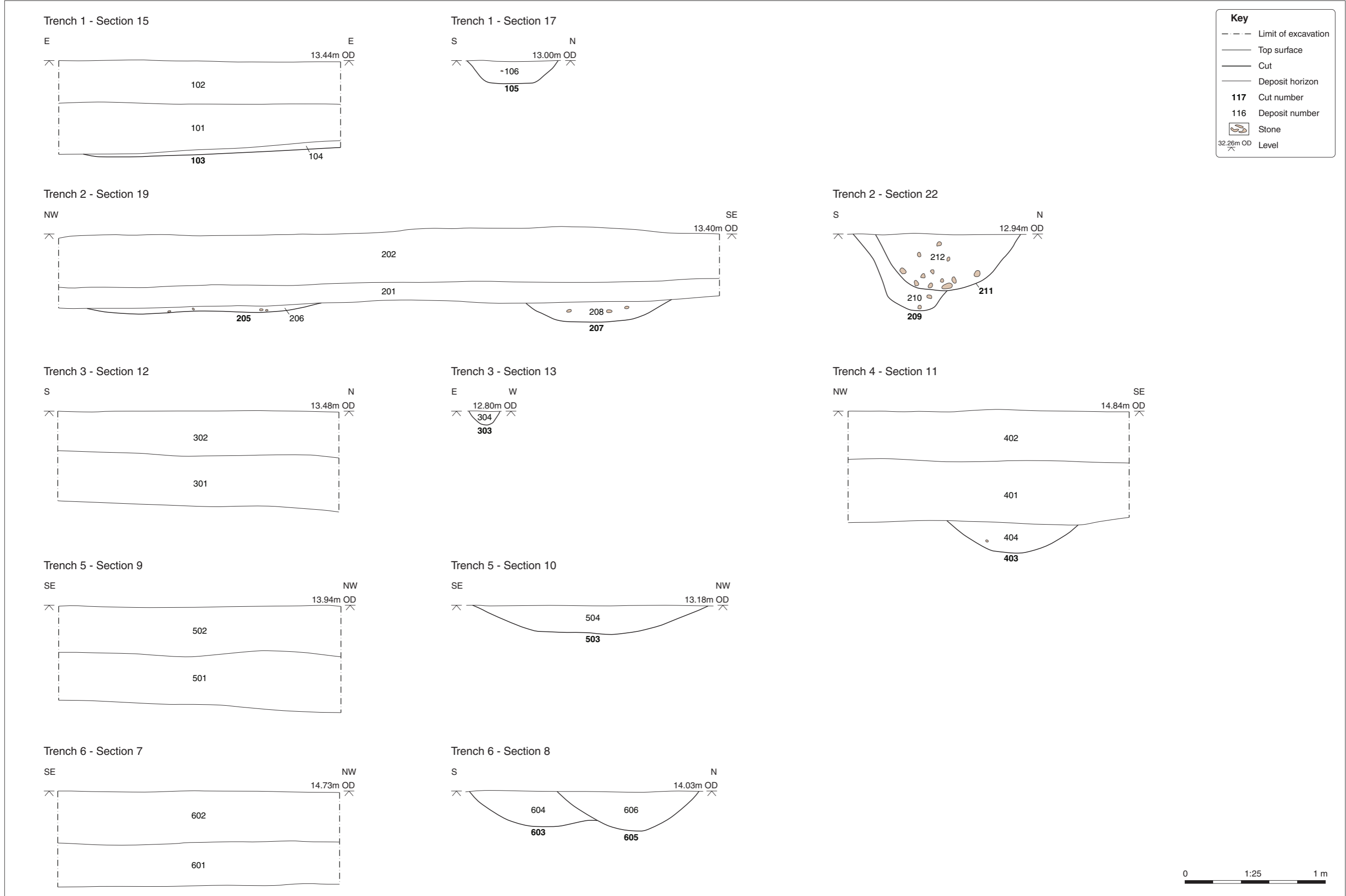


Figure 4: Selected sections





Figure 5: The site in relation to the Hilgay tithe apportionment map of 1839 (copyright Norfolk Records Office, reference code: DE/TA 13)





Plate 1: Trench 1, showing the course of ditch 103, looking east

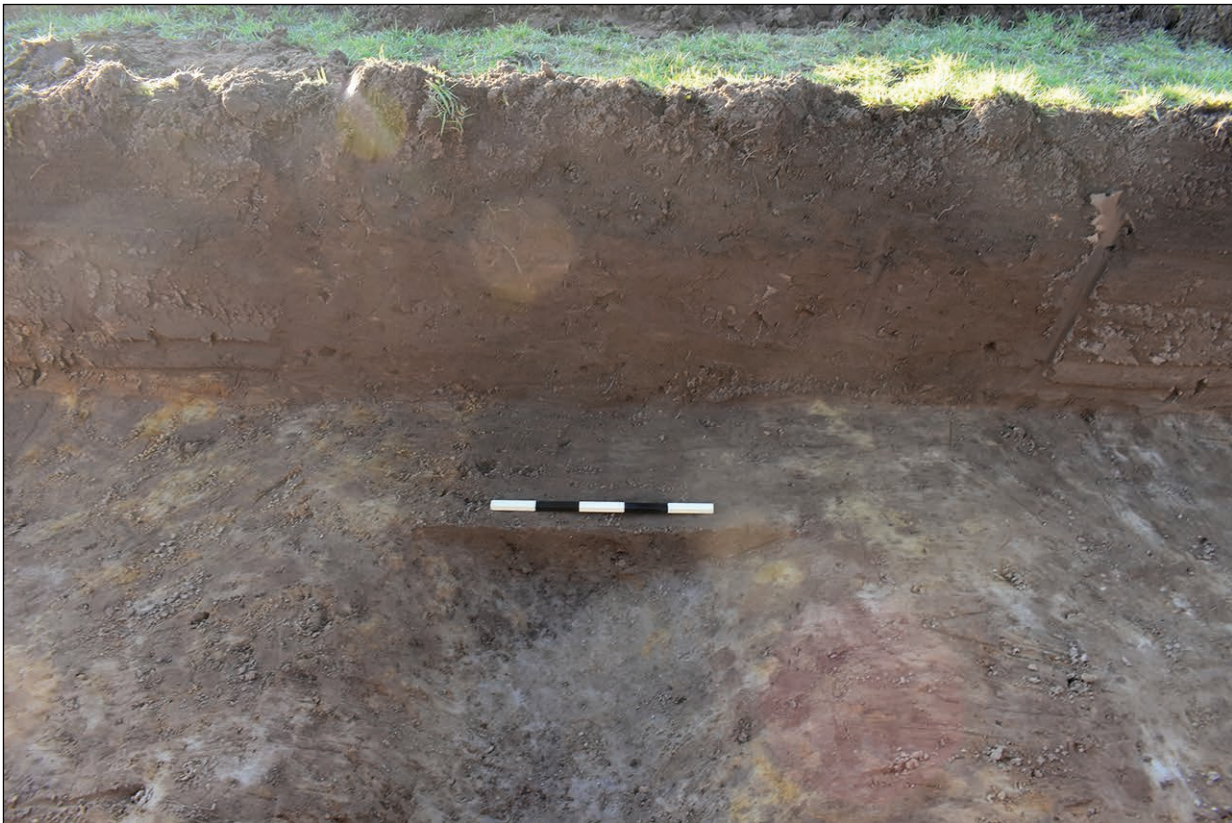


Plate 2: Trench 4, ditch 403, looking west





Plate 3: Trench 2, ditch 211 cutting ditch 209, looking west



Plate 4: Trench 6, looking south-east





Plate 5: Trench 6, ditch 605 cutting ditch 603, looking west



Plate 6: Trench 3, posthole 303, looking south





Plate 7: Trench 3, natural feature 309, looking south-west



Plate 8: Trench 5, ditch 503 and the surrounding rooting disturbance, looking south-west





**Head Office/Registered Office/  
OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496  
e: [info@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto:info@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000  
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606  
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



*Chief Executive Officer*  
Ken Welsh, BSc, MCIFA  
Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a  
Private Limited Company, N<sup>o</sup>: 1618597  
and a Registered Charity, N<sup>o</sup>: 285627