Prehistoric and Roman Occupation at Orton Longueville School, Oundle Road, Peterborough: An Archaeological Investigation

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SUMMARY

Between the 4th and 13th December 2000 staff of the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological excavation at Orton Longueville School, Oundle Road, Peterborough (TL 1630 9625). The work was carried out prior to the construction of a new sports hall.

Two areas totalling some 730sqm were mechanically excavated. Although much of the site had been disturbed by modern interventions and levelling, the southern part of the development area had escaped damage. There, the removal of the undisturbed topsoil and subsoil exposed archaeological features, consisting of pits, postholes and ditches.

The excavation produced evidence for land use from the late Neolithic period to Roman times and, possibly, for livestock management during the Late Neolithic/Bronze Age period, as suggested by the presence of ditched enclosures and double-ditch/post-built enclosures/droveway systems. The results seem to corroborate the existing evidence for land clearance and management from the late Neolithic period.

There was no evidence for industrial activities in association with the Roman site to the south of the development area.

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PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN OCCUPATION AT ORTON LONGUEVILLE SCHOOL, OUNDLE ROAD, PETERBOROUGH: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION (TL 1630 9625)

1. INTRODUCTION

Between the 4th and 13th December 2000 staff of the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) carried out an archaeological investigation at Orton Longueville School, Oundle Road, Orton Longueville, Peterborough (TL 1630 9625), in advance of development of land (Fig. 1).

2. SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning Background

The proposed development entails the construction of a new sports hall and facilities in the recreation ground of Orton Longueville School. Given the known archaeological background of the area under investigation (below), the possibility of there being archaeological remains determined the requirements for an archaeological investigation.

The work was carried out by the AFU on behalf of Peterborough Design Group, in accordance with a Project Specification (Roberts, NOV156/00) produced in response to a Design Brief issued by Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service (PCCAS) (Robinson, November 2000).

The archaeological work was supervised on site by Andrew Hatton (Site Supervisor). The project was managed by Judith Roberts (Project Officer).

2.2 Geology and Topography

The development site is located to the south of Orton Longueville School (Fig. 1). It comprises a rectangular area of some 730sqm that slopes from south (16m OD) to north (7mOD) towards Oundle Road and the River Nene. Area 1 comprised approximately 14m x 12.5m between a metal fence to the south and a footpath that flanks the southern side of the existing school buildings to the north of the development site. The remaining area (Area 2) lies to the south of the metal fence in the northern portion of the grassed recreation ground (Fig. 1).

The site is located on the third terrace gravels of the River Nene over Oxford Clay with an outcrop of Cornbrash Limestone just to the north (Horton 1989, BGS 158).

2.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The development site is situated in an area of known archaeological and historical interest.

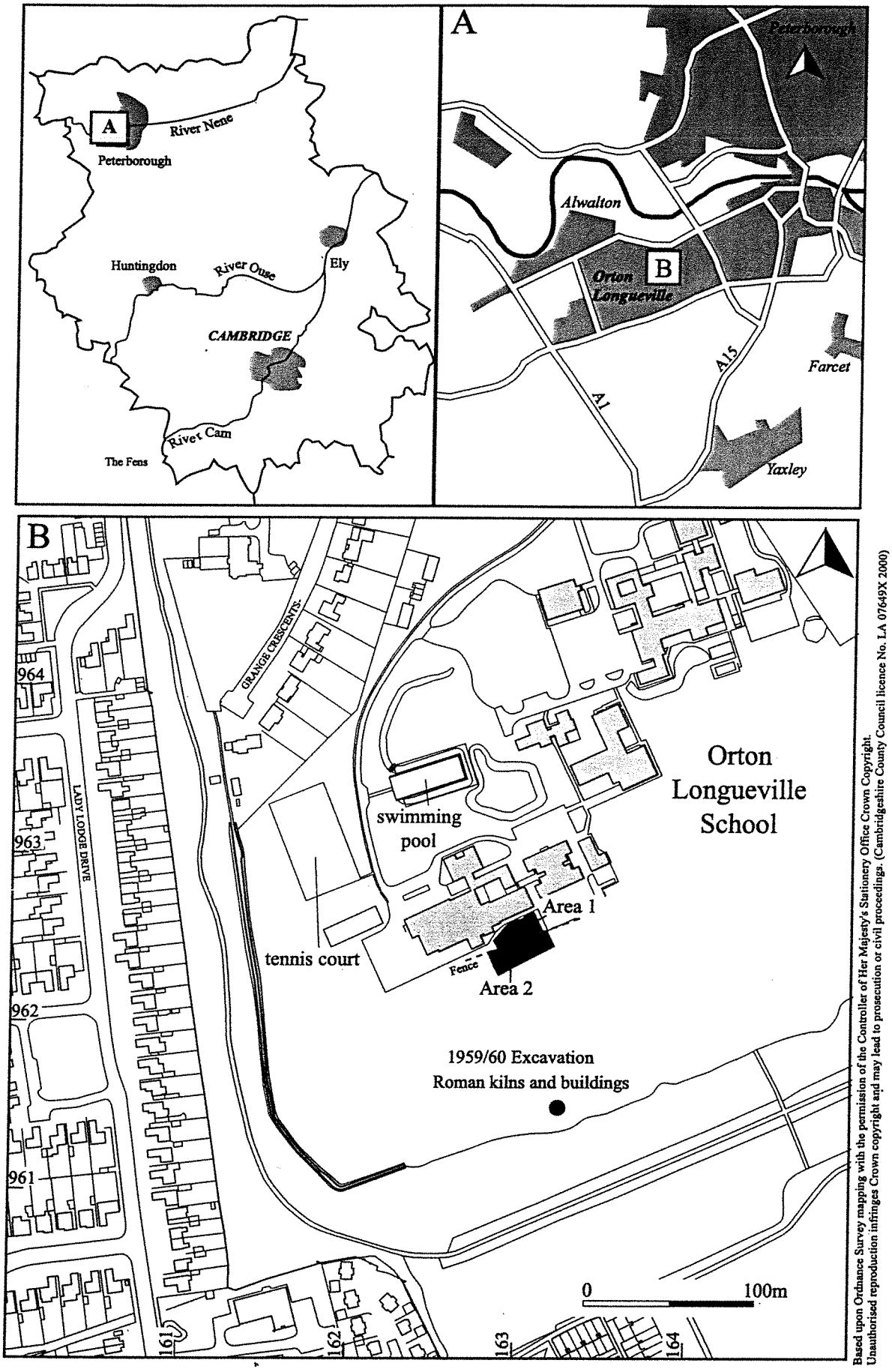

Figure 1 *Site Location Map showing existing buildings and grounds of Orton Longueville School*

For the present report a search within 1km radius was undertaken. Information was obtained from the Sites and Monument Record Office in Peterborough (PCCSMR). Records of finds and excavations, together with historical maps and OS overlay maps of aerial photographs were consulted and combined with relevant historical and archaeological information from written sources.

Prehistoric

The high density of pre-Roman finds to the west (Orton Waterville) and, in particular, to the north of the development site (Orton Meadows) may be biased, due to gravel extraction having taken place in the old bed of the River Nene and to the west of the development site during the 1930s and 1980s.

Early prehistoric activity from the palaeolithic period is documented by stray finds, namely lithic implements. Implements have been found to the north of the development site (PCCSMR 01808a) and to the west (PCCSMR 02072).

Evidence for Neolithic occupation in the form of storage pits with Peterborough Ware was uncovered during gravel extraction to the west of the development site, in the parish of Orton Waterville (PCCSMR01807b).

Early Bronze Age activity is mainly represented by barrows. At Orton Meadows barrows associated with burials (and beakers) were found rising above the flood plain of the River Nene sealed beneath accumulations of later alluvium (PCCSMR01392). A further barrow was found on a Neolithic burial/ritual site immediately to the east (PCCSMR 01998).

Finally, possible barrows/pit-cremations were found to the west of the site, at Orton Waterville (PCCSMR01807c).

The Iron Age is represented by scatters of finds at Orton Meadows. In particular, a collection of Iron Age objects (400 BC-AD43) was recovered from the old bed of the River Nene in the course of gravel extraction in the early 1980s. Currency bars, swords, a spearhead, a latchlifter and a ladle represent river deposits over a period of 400 years (PCCSMR04208). Further objects in similar contexts include the following isolated items and scatters of metal finds: a dagger (PCCSMR50379), currency bars, a spearhead, a latchlifter and a sword (PCCSMR50380), a ladle (PCCSMR50381), a sword (PCCSMR50328), a sword (PCCSMR50383), a spear and a sword (PCCSMR50384), a dagger and human remains (PCCSMR50385).

To the west of the development site, at Orton Waterville, evidence for occupation has emerged in the form of a storage pit with Iron Age pottery (PCCSMR01807d).

Notwithstanding limitations posed by the nature of chance discovery, it would appear that at least from the Neolithic period the river was the focus of ritual activity whereas settlements were located on higher and well drained ground, i.e. on the third gravel terrace further south. This pattern is consistent with the theory that by the close of the Neolithic period significant areas of valley side and upland had been cleared for cultivation (Pryor & French 1985, 299).

Roman

The earliest elements in the Roman landscape were Ermine Street which crosses the River Nene at Water Newton, the Vexillation fortress at Longthorpe and the auxiliary fort at Water Newton. Military activity has also been found at Lynch

Farm, Orton Longueville. The military presence in the region brought about the development of the *'vici'* of *Durobrivae* (Water Newton) and Chesterton in a landscape progressively dominated by villa-estates and farmsteads, together with pottery and metalworking industries.

With reference to the development site, Roman activity was identified in the southern portion of the school recreation ground during an excavation conducted in 1959/60. Evidence emerged for three furnaces with stoke pits. Their function was uncertain due to lack of industrial and domestic waste. The features were dated to the first half of the second century and had already fallen into disuse by the early-mid third century when they were partly obliterated by a rectangular building. The building was made of local limestone and had floor-tiles, roof-tiles, flue-tiles, Collyweston slates and painted wall-plaster, as indicated by the presence of debris. It may have consisted of a large unpaved open area at the front, and rooms with tessellated floors at the back, i.e. a possible 'strip-building' of industrial function with a shop/workshop at the front and living quarters at the back. At a later stage a three-room bath-house with hypocaust was erected. The bath-house seems to have gone out of use by the fourth century when it was modified and had changed function (Daking 1961, 50-67).

Near the school swimming-pool to the north of the development site, the 1927 OS Map shows a scatter of Roman pottery and coins together with palaeolithic implements (above) found during gravel extraction. Further east, the 1970 OS Map shows the site of a Romano-British settlement that may be associated with the finds near the swimming-pool.

Less than 500m west of the site, on the east side of Orton Waterville, Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds, together with tile debris, animal remains, human bone and other unspecified Roman material were recovered during gravel extraction in the early 1930s (PCCSMR01807e).

Finally, a ditched enclosure and double-ditch track located some 300m south of the development site are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs. They are generically dated to the Iron Age/Roman period (PCCCSMR 09216).

Saxon

Excavations at Orton Hall Farm to the east of the development site seem to suggest that the Saxons were present in the area during the late Roman period (Mackreth 1996).

At least two *grubenhaüser* with sunken floors were found to the west of the development site on the edge of Orton Waterville during gravel extraction (PCCSMR 02016). Further to the south a possible early Saxon settlement was identified west of Orton Longueville Park (PCCCSMR 01807f). There, 'houses', sixth-seventh century pottery, combs and spindle whorls were found during gravel extraction.

Grubenhaüser were also found to the east of the development site (PCCSMR1806) together with an extensive system of late-Saxon land parcels at Grange Farm (PCCSMR 50652) (Meadows 1999).

Medieval

Orton is known as Ofertune (10th-11th century) and later Ovretune and Ortun. Longueville derives from Longevill (13th-14th century). Originally it was king's land but a portion was alienated by King Edgar to the Abbey of Peterborough. King Edgar also granted land to the bishop of Lincoln. The pre-conquest manor

belonged to Elsi. It was infeudated before 1135 and held by the Longueville family. In the Domesday Book no distinction of name is made between the holds of the Watervilles and Longuevilles. The holds became separated sometime in the 12th century (Page 1974, 190 ff.).

The parish churches of Holy Trinity at Orton Longueville and St Mary at Orton Waterville have medieval origin. Both churches were later rebuilt.

At the north end of Water Newton immediately north-east of College Farm the site of a moat with ancillary platforms partially survives in the form of earthwork remains (PCCSMR1023).

Ridge and furrow systems also survive. The open fields of the parish were enclosed in 1736, following the Act of Enclosure in 1728 (RCHME 1961). Large areas of cultivation remains are still visible on the ground around the development site (OS Map 1970 Overlay), Grange Farm (PCCSMR00852), Clayton School (PCCSMR50523 and PCCSMR11917) and Lady's Lodge Farm. Traces of ridge and furrow systems in other parts of the parish can also be seen on aerial photographs.

Post-Medieval and Modern

Numerous post-medieval buildings and barns survive in both parishes. Their distribution along (and off) Vicarage Road in Orton Longueville seems to suggest continuity of settlement from the Saxo-Norman period onwards, the church of Holy Trinity representing the focus of later settlement growth. Similarly, the church of St Mary at Orton Waterville attracted the later manor and buildings north of Church Drive.

With reference to the development site, the Estate Map of 1808 refers to the area as 'The Hall', by then an undeveloped open field surrounded by a belt of trees, probably used for grazing. It was associated with Orton Hall, a three-storey post-medieval great house (PCCSMR 01621). In the 1927 OS Map the site appearance had not changed, but for the presence of small enclosures in the north west corner (The Grange), and for the appearance of a quarry pit with associated access road. Furthermore, the map mentions 'rises' (water springs?) in the south west corner of the field. It is possible that the springs provided the source of water for the Roman bath-house to the east (above).

Modern activity on site was represented by phases of levelling and pitting associated with the development of the school complex.

3. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological investigation consisted of a preliminary evaluation of the site followed by open area excavation.

The evaluation aimed to establish the presence/absence, nature and degree of preservation of archaeological features and deposits in the area of the proposed building footprint. Constraints were posed by the presence of a metal fence that ran approximately west to east across the site. As a result, two separate areas (Area 1 and Area 2) were excavated to the north and south of the fence, some 0.5m away from it (Fig. 1). The modern topsoil and subsoil were removed to the top of the geological gravel and sand deposits by means of a mechanical excavator with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Archaeological and natural

deposits were encountered at a depth between 0.25m and 0.50m below the present ground surface. They were cleaned by hand and planned at 1:100. Finally, the exposed surfaces and the spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector to maximise artefact recovery.

The preliminary assessment of the development site was followed by excavation of the open areas. Significant archaeological features were sample-excavated and described (single-context based recording). Relevant sections and plans were drawn at 1:10/1:20 and 1:50/1:100 respectively. Colour slides and colour prints were produced as part of the site record. Finally, samples for macro-environmental analysis were taken from a representative selection of deposits *(Appendix 2)*.

The recording system and the post-excavation procedures followed the standard AFU practice in compliance with the IFA guidance policy.

4. RESULTS

Area 1

Area 1 (12.5m x 14m) was located between a tarred path flanking the existing school buildings to the north and the metal fence (Fig. 1). The removal of imported topsoil to a depth of 0.25m (northern part) and 0.40m (southern part) exposed natural and imported gravel that appeared to have been artificially levelled (Fig.1).

No archaeological features were uncovered, undoubtedly due to the high degree of modern disturbance caused during the construction of the school buildings.

Area 2

Area 2 (15.5m x 36m) was located to the south of the metal fence, in the northern portion of the school recreation ground (Figs. 1 and 2).

As with Area 1, the northern part of Area 2 had been disturbed by modern interventions and levelling. The removal of the imported topsoil to an average depth of 0.35m revealed the presence of mixed dark deposits and depressions that contained modern building material.

The southern part of the area had escaped damage. There, the removal of the undisturbed topsoil (0.22m thick) and subsoil (0.25m thick) exposed archaeological features, consisting of pits, postholes and ditches. Based on the available dating evidence, stratigraphic relationships and shared similarities (e.g. fill composition, alignment, grouping etc.), four phases of activity were identified and assigned to the late Neolithic/Bronze Age, Bronze Age, Bronze Age/Early to Mid Iron Age and later Roman period.

With reference to the Late Neolithic/Bronze Age phase, dating was mainly achieved by means of identification of lithic débitage from the fills of some of the features (ditches), and on the absence of later, i.e. Roman, material. The features (pits) generically assigned to the Bronze Age phase produced no pottery. They were grouped together by typology, their chronology being based on relative stratigraphic sequences.

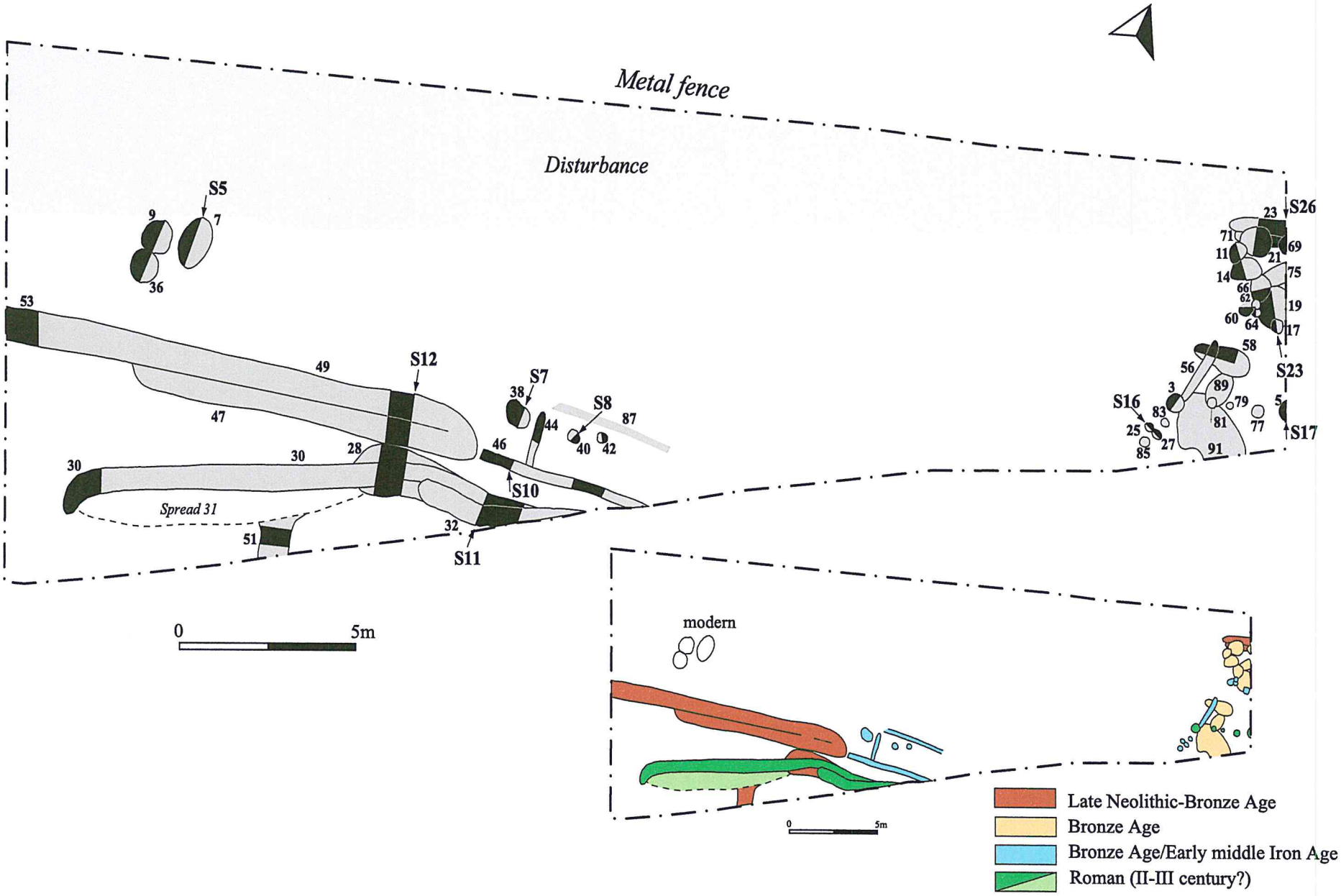

Figure 2 *Excavation plan of Area 2 showing excavated sections of features in black. (Sections indicated thus* **S11→**)

The pits appeared to cut through the late Neolithic/Bronze Age ditches and were cut by later Bronze Age/Early to Mid Iron Age features (postholes and beam-slots/gullies). With reference to these latter, dating was based on the evidence provided by one sherd of pottery from one of the features, and absence of both earlier and later finds. They were grouped together by typology and shared similarities. Finally, with reference to the later Roman phase, most features (ditches and postholes) produced debris from the demolition of one or more buildings that must have been located in close proximity to the development area.

Late Neolithic-Bronze Age ditches

Group 1

Earlier Phase

Ditch **47** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *termini* on a W to E alignment, 0.70m wide and 0.06m deep. Filled by 48, a brown soft sandy silt with a low percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained no finds and was cut by ditch **49** and, possibly, ditch **28**.

Later phase

Ditch **49=53** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *terminus* on a E to W alignment, 0.70m wide and 0.14m deep. Filled by 50=54, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained animal bone and two flint flakes of Neolithic/Bronze Age date *(Appendix 1)*.

Ditch **28** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *terminus* on a E to W alignment, 1.70m wide and 0.60m deep. Filled by 29, a dark brown soft sandy silt with a high percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained animal bone and two flint flakes of Neolithic/Bronze Age date *(Appendix 1)*, and was cut by ditch **30** during the Roman period.

Uncertain Phase

Ditch **51** (Fig. 2): Linear feature on a N to S alignment, 1m wide and 0.14m deep. Filled by 52, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained no finds and was sealed by 31 spreading from ditch **30**.

Group 2

Earlier phase

Ditch **71** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *terminus* on W to E alignment, 0.25m wide and 0.25m deep. Filled by 70=72, a light brown soft sandy silt. It contained no finds and was cut by ditch **23**, and, later, sometime in the course of the Bronze Age period by pits **21** and **69**.

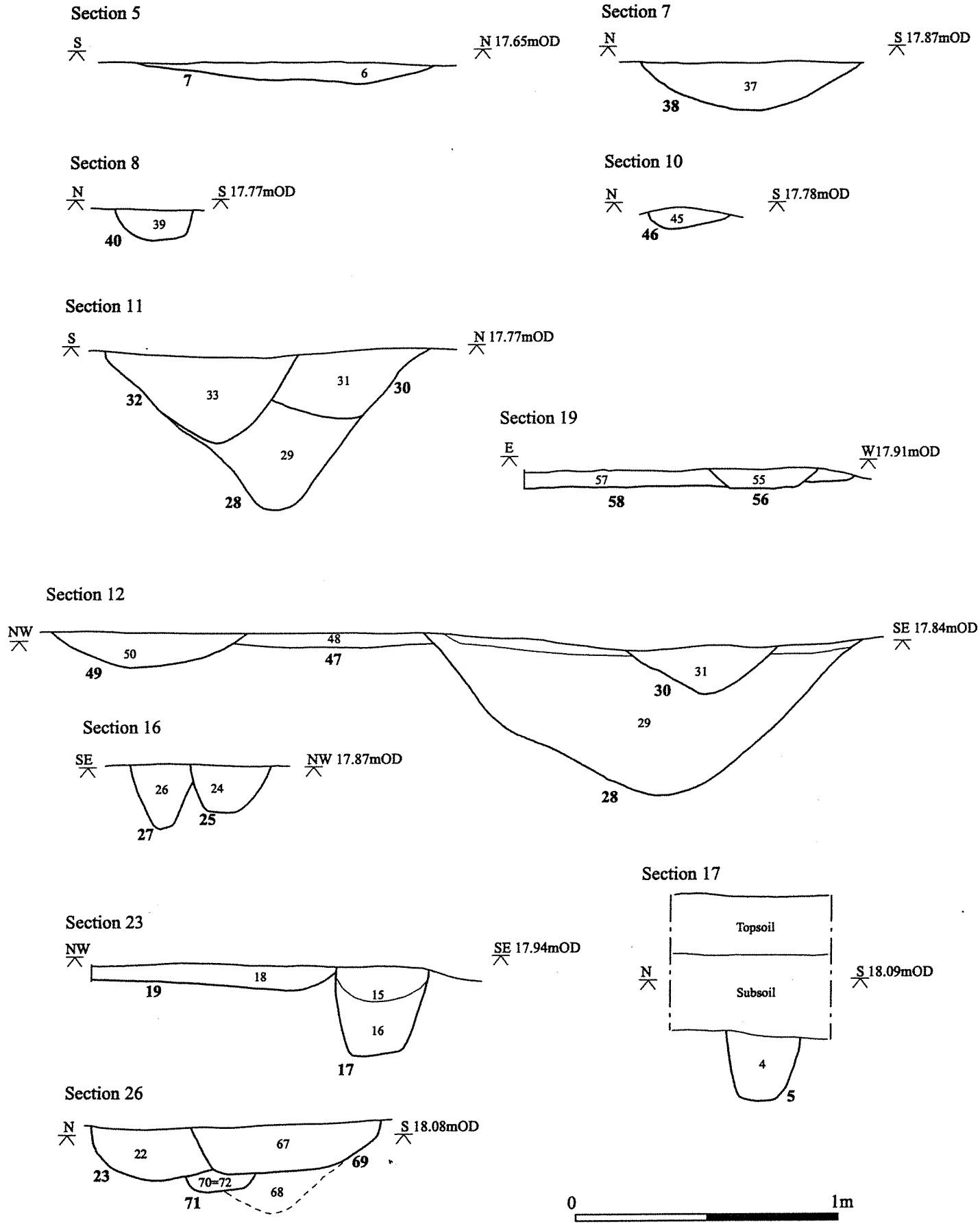

***Figure 3** Sections*

Later Phase

Ditch **23** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *terminus* on a W to E alignment, 0.40m wide (truncated width) and 0.20m deep. Filled by 22, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained a flint flake and was cut by pits **21** and **69**, and partially obliterated by modern disturbance.

Bronze Age Pits

Group 3

Pit **19** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 1m in diameter and 0.10m deep. Filled by 18, a light grey soft sandy silt. It contained no finds and was cut by pit **66**. At a later date, sometime during the Bronze Age period, it was cut by postholes **17**, **60**, **62** and **64**.

Pit **75** (Fig. 2): Oval feature 1m long (truncated length) and 0.50m wide. Filled by 74, a light grey soft sandy silt. It was cut by pit **66**.

Pit **66** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 1m in diameter and 0.10m deep. Filled by 65, a grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. It was cut by pit **14**. At a later date, sometime during the Bronze Age period, it was cut by posthole **62**.

Pit **14** (Fig. 2): Oval feature 0.65m in diameter and 0.25m deep. Filled by 12 (upper fill), a dark grey brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions and by 13 (lower fill), a grey brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. The two fills contained no finds. Fill 12 was cut by pit **11**.

Pit **21** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.80m in diameter and 0.18m deep. Filled by 20, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions It contained no finds and was cut by pit **11**.

Pit **11** (Fig. 2): Sub-circular feature 0.55m in diameter and 0.25m deep. Filled by 10 (upper fill), a grey brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions and by 34 (lower fill), a yellowish brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. The two fills contained no finds.

Pit **69** (Figs 2 and 3): Feature extending beyond the eastern edge of the excavated area, 0.70m in diameter and 0.18m deep. Filled by 67, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained no finds.

Pit **58** (Fig. 2): Sub-oval feature 2m long, 0.75m wide and 0.05m deep. Filled by 57, a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. At a later date, sometime during the Bronze Age period, it was cut by gully/slot **56**.

Pit **91** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 1m in diameter and 0.10m deep. Filled by 90, a light grey soft sandy silt. It was cut by pit **89** and, at a later stage, by gully **56**. Sometime during the Roman period it was cut by postholes **3** and **81**.

Pit **89** (Fig. 2): Oval feature 1.10 m long and 0.70m wide. Filled by 88, a light grey soft sandy silt. It was cut by pit **58** and, sometime during the Roman period, by posthole **81**.

Bronze Age/Early to Middle Iron Age Postholes and Gullies/Slots

Group 4: Enclosure 1

West -East Aligned Features

Posthole **17** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.35m wide and 0.35m deep. Filled by 15 (upper fill), a grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds, and by 16 (lower fill), a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds.

Posthole **64** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.47m wide and 0.10m deep. Filled by 63, a grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. Cut by posthole **60**.

Posthole **60** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.32m wide and 0.05m deep. Filled by 59, a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. Cut by posthole **62**.

Posthole **62** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.15m wide and 0.05m deep. Filled by 61, a grey brown soft silt with no finds.

North-South Aligned Features

Posthole **83** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.20m wide. Filled by 82, a dark grey brown soft silt.

Posthole **85** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.35m wide. Filled by 84, a dark grey brown soft silt.

Posthole **25** (Figs. 2 and 3): Circular feature 0.30m wide and 0.19m deep. Filled by 24, a dark grey brown soft silt that contained a sherd of Late Bronze Age/Early to Mid Iron Age pottery *(Appendix 1)*.

Posthole **27** (Figs 2 and 3): Circular feature 0.23m wide and 0.25m deep. Filled by 26, a grey brown soft silt. It contained no finds and was cut by posthole **25**.

Gully/slot **56** (Fig. 2): Linear feature 2m long (visible length) on a N to S alignment, 0.40m wide and 0.07m deep. Partially truncated (by ploughing?). Filled by 55, a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. Sometime during the Roman period it was cut by posthole **3**.

Group 5: Enclosure 2

West -East Aligned Features

Post-built Fence

Posthole **38** (Figs. 2 and 3): Circular feature 0.85m wide and 0.19m deep. Filled by 37, a light brown soft silt that contained animal bone.

Posthole **40** (Figs. 2 and 3): Circular feature 0.30m wide and 0.10m deep. Filled by 39, a light brown soft silt with no finds.

Posthole **42** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.45m wide and 0.10m deep. Filled by 41, a light brown soft silt with no finds.

Ditched Fence

Gully/slot **87** (Fig. 2): Linear feature on a W to E alignment, 4.5m long (visible length), 0.30m wide. Partially truncated (by ploughing?). Filled by 86, a light grey brown soft sandy silt.

Gully/slot **46** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature on a W to E alignment, 5m long (visible length), 0.30m wide and 0.08m deep. Partially truncated (by ploughing?). Filled by 45, a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds.

North-South Aligned Features

Gully/slot **44**(Fig. 2): Linear feature on a N to S alignment, 2m long (visible length), 0.18m wide and 0.05m deep. Partially truncated (by ploughing?). Filled by 43, a light grey brown soft sandy silt with no finds. Cut by slot **46**.

Later Roman Ditches and Postholes

Group 6: Ditched Boundaries

Ditch **30** (Figs. 2 and 3): Linear feature with *terminus* on a NNE to SSW alignment, 0.50m wide and 0.28m deep. Filled by 31, a brown soft sandy silt with a moderate percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained fragments of Roman tile *(Appendix 1)* and was cut by ditch **32.**

Ditch **32** (Figs. 2 and 3) Linear feature with *terminus* on a NNE to SSW alignment, 0.70m wide and 0.36m deep. Filled by 33, a brown soft sandy silt with a low percentage of flint and stone inclusions. It contained a sherd of second century Nene Valley grey ware (residual) and Roman box flue tile *(Appendix 1).*

Group 7: Post-built Boundary (Fence)

Posthole **3** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.45m wide and 0.29m deep. Filled by 2, a grey soft silt that contained animal bone and Roman tile *(Appendix 1).*

Posthole **5** (Figs. 2 and 3): Circular feature 0.28m wide and 0.26m deep. Filled by 4, a grey soft silt that contained animal bone.

Posthole **77** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.40m wide. Filled by 76, a grey soft silt.

Posthole **79** (Fig. 2): Circular feature 0.30m wide and 0.26m deep. Filled by 78, a grey soft silt.

Posthole **81** (Fig. 2):Circular feature 0.35m wide. Filled by 80, a grey soft silt.

Modern features

Posthole **7** (Figs. 2 and 3): 1m wide and 0.10m deep. Filled by 6, a dark brown soft silt. It contained building debris.

Posthole **36** (Fig. 2): 0.23m wide and 0.25m deep. Filled by 35, a dark grey brown soft silt. It contained modern building debris and was cut by posthole **9.**

Posthole **9** (Fig. 2): 0.65m wide and 0.60m deep. Filled by 8, a dark grey brown soft silt. It contained building debris.

5. DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were uncovered in Area 1, undoubtedly due to the high degree of modern disturbance. Similarly, most of Area 2 had been obliterated and only few features had survived in the southern and eastern parts. As a result, any attempt at interpretation is fraught with difficulty and has to remain confined to the realm of the hypothetical.

The results from the archaeological investigation show that the development area was in use from the late Neolithic period to Roman times. Traces of ridge and furrow to the south and east indicate that most of the surrounding area was still farmed during the Middle Ages.

The earliest features on site were represented by major ditches on a west to east alignment. based on lithic evidence *(Appendix 1)*, they were assigned to the Neolithic/Bronze Age period. Ditch **47** appeared to have been re-cut and extended at least once. The presence of two *termini* (entranceways?) may suggest that it was originally an interrupted ditch of uncertain function later extended westwards as **49** and associated with the presence of a second ditch **28** running eastwards. Although there was no direct stratigraphic relationship between these ditches on a west to east alignment and ditch **51** on a north to south orientation, similarities in size and fill composition suggest that they may have been part of the same system. A further ditch with *terminus*, **71**, was uncovered in the north east corner of Area 2. It had been re-cut by **23**. Both **71** and **23** were on the same west to east alignment as **47-49-28**. It is possible that the ditches of this phase were part of enclosure/droveway systems. In particular, the projected line of ditches **71-23** ran parallel to ditches **47-49-28**, being set some 6.5m apart from these latter.

Based on stratigraphic relationships, the cluster of pits in the eastern portion of Area 2 was dated between the Late Neolithic/ Bronze Age period and the Bronze Age/ Early to Mid Iron Age period. The pits were very shallow with no artefacts. Their function could not be established with certainty. They may have represented small quarry pits for the extraction of sand.

In comparison with the late Neolithic/ Bronze Age ditches, the later Bronze Age/Early to Mid Iron Age land system appears to have been characterised by smaller enclosures defined by shallow gullies and /or postholes on the same alignment as, and parallel to, the earlier ditches. There was evidence for at least two enclosures. A two-phase enclosure was located immediately to the east of the Bronze Age ditch system, being defined by gullies **44**, **46**, **87**, and by postholes **38**, **40**, **42**. The other enclosure was exposed near the east edge of the excavated area, being defined by a gully, **56**, and by postholes **60-64**, **17**, **25-27**. The ditched and/or post-built boundaries appear to have comprised small areas some 2m to 3.5m wide. The function of the enclosures is uncertain. However, they may have represented small pens for livestock. Alternatively, they could have been part of droveway systems (as in the case of gully **44** in relation to ditches **47-49**?) that was later modified.

In Roman times the boundary ditches were re-defined. Two phases were identified, with ditch **30** having been re-cut at least once and extended eastwards as **32**. Postholes on the same alignment as the ditches (**3**, **5**, **77**, **79** and **81**) may have represented boundary markers. In comparison with the earlier enclosures both ditched and post-built boundaries were on a slightly different alignment, oriented north-north-east to south-south-west. Based on the alignment, it is possible that the ditches and the postholes may have been associated with the

undated enclosure and track located to the south of the development (PCCCSMR 09216, above). The function of the enclosure is uncertain. The double-ditch track that flanks the enclosure may have headed north towards the River Nene. The road would have represented a communication route running some 100m east of the industrial complex, and 200m east of the development site. It is possible that the trackway, together with the natural contour of the area, conditioned the orientation of the Roman ditches uncovered during the investigation.

With reference to the industrial complex to the south of the development site (Daking 1961), the presence of debris similar to that recovered from the ditch-fills (namely roof tiles and flue tiles) seems to suggest that the furnaces and some of the buildings had gone out of use by the time the ditches were dug. The presence of small gullies and surfaces near the furnaces were interpreted as evidence that the industrial site may have continued into the later period. However, it cannot be discounted that sometime in the course of the late Roman period the industrial site went out of use and that land further north was cultivated. There was no evidence that industrial activity ever took place on the development site. This could indicate that a major boundary ditch on a west to east alignment separated the industrial area from the non-industrial, possibly agricultural, area to the north. Whether ditch **30-32** may have represented such boundary could not be established with certainty.

To conclude, the excavation has produced evidence for land use and, in particular, for livestock management on the higher ground, as suggested by the presence of possible ditched enclosures and possible droveways. Droveway systems have been identified at Fengate and associated with the management of livestock (Pryor 1980). In particular, the evidence from the site at Orton Longueville would be consistent with the results from the excavation at the Newark Road Subsite. There, ditched enclosures with entrance-ways some 2m to 5m wide were found in association with double-ditch and post-built fence droveways. Both enclosures and ditches appeared to have undergone changes, with the ditches being re-cut and entrances blocked.

A picture has started to emerge of continuity in terms of occupation and exploitation of land from the late Neolithic period. The presence of settlements less than 500m to the west of the site is indication that the higher land underwent no significant environmental changes, and continued to offer suitable economic conditions for sustainable settlements. Furthermore, the settlement sites were well positioned to exploit the valley and the lower river terraces for winter grazing and river resources. With the Romans exploitation of the natural resources (i.e. water and wood) for industrial use intensified.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of the project were to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the site prior to development.

Notwithstanding the absence of evidence associated with the industrial Roman site to the south of the development area (Daking 1961), the project was successful in achieving its objectives. The presence of archaeological features on the site is consistent with the known archaeological background of the area, with particular reference to the presence of settlement evidence dating from the late Neolithic period to the west of the development area (PCCSMR01807).

Furthermore, the excavation has drawn light upon aspects of land management on the higher land to the south of the Nene Valley confirming that the land on the third gravel terrace had been cleared and was managed from the late Neolithic period (Pryor & French 1985).

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The project was managed by Judith Roberts (Project Officer) who also edited the present report.

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MAPS

1808 Estate Map of Orton Longueville cum Botolph Bridge (Haddon, Chesterton, Orton Waterville and Woodstone), Huntingdonshire.

1927 OS Map: 25 inch and 6 inch to the mile.

1958 OS Map 1:10,000

1958 OS Map 1:10,000 overlay

1970 OS Map 1:2500

1970 OS Map 1:2500 overlay

Appendix 1: The Finds. Brief Observations

The Pottery (by Paul Spoerry)

Context 24: posthole fill. Rim, shell-tempered hand-made rim of an open vessel. Prehistoric. Late Bronze Age-Early to Mid Iron Age (Steve Kemp, per. comm.).

Context 33: ditch fill. Body sherd, Lower Nene Valley Grey Ware, 2nd century, residual.

The Flint (by Steve Kemp)

Context 22: ditch fill. Flake, débitage, late prehistoric.

Context 29: ditch fill. Two flint flakes, débitage, Neolithic-Bronze Age.

Context 54: ditch fill. Two flint flakes, débitage, Neolithic-Bronze Age.

Unstratified: waste flake, slightly retouched on the distal end to obtain a cutting edge.

The flint collection includes artefacts with no diagnostic features and are likely to date to the Neolithic period.

The Tiles (by Carole Fletcher)

Context 2: posthole fill. Tile, Roman.

Context 31: ditch fill. Tile, Roman.

Context 33: ditch fill. Box flue tile, Roman.

Unstratified: tiles, Roman.

The Coin (by Steve Critchley)

Unstratified: House of Constantine, 4th century.

Appendix 2: Environmental Samples, Summary (By Rachel Fosberry)

A total of five samples from selected contexts was collected for flotation (Table 1). The macro-environmental analysis of the processed samples revealed the presence of weed species that occur with cultivated grain species. In addition, two samples produced small charcoal flecks. There was no evidence of burn or charred floral remains. Nothing was retrieved from the heavy residue.

In synthesis, the macro-environmental results were not significant, due to the low percentage of recovered floral and fauna evidence from the processed samples.

Sample No.	Context No.	Fauna		Flora		Description
		Bones	Shells	Seeds	Charcoal	
1	37			3 x seeds 1 x grain		Undetermined Undetermined
2	39	1 x bone		1 x fruit pip 1 x bean		Undetermined Bean
3	2			3 x grain	Frequent	Pea/bean
4	29			1 x seed 1 x grain	Moderate	Stellaria Sp. Undetermined
5	33			4 x seeds		Polygonum Sp. & Brassica Sp.

Table 1