



Extension at 24 Taylor's Lane, Swavesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

June 2019

Client: Mark Hasted

Issue No: Version 1
OAE Report No: 2196
NGR: TL 3597 6902

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Extension at 24 Taylor's Lane, Swavesey, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report

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Summary

Between 9th and 10th April 2018 Oxford Archaeology East carried out monitoring and recording during the excavation of the foundation trench for an extension and the rear of 24 Taylor's Lane, Swavesey, Cambridgeshire.

The site was located within the "Castle Hill" earthworks, a set of earthworks associated with a medieval castle and planned town, which are a scheduled monument (National Heritage List for England Entry No 1006913; Cambridgeshire HER ref DCB337).

An E-shaped foundation trench measuring 14.48m in total length and 0.6m wide was excavated revealing an undated north-east to south-west aligned ditch visible at three points within the trench. A large pit which contained a horse femur was revealed in the north-west corner of the trench.

Although neither of these features could be securely dated they are likely to represent a continuation of medieval (12th-14th century) activity recorded during more extensive excavation immediately to the west of the site (Gilmour 2019).

Acknowledgements

OA East would like to thank Mark Hasted for commissioning this project. Thanks also to Sarah Poppy who monitored the work on behalf of Historic England for her advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Aileen Connor. The fieldwork was directed by Nicholas Cox. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Katie Hutton. Thank you also to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natasha Dodwell, and Katherine Hamilton who prepared the archive.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Mark Hasted to undertake archaeological monitoring during the construction of an extension at the rear of number 24 Taylor's Lane, Swavesey, Cambridgeshire (Fig.1; TL 3597 6902).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. S/3738/17/FL). The development is situated within the designated 'Castle Hill' Earthworks, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List for England Entry No. 1006913; Cambridgeshire HER ref DCB337), comprising the earthworks associated with a Norman castle site and the defensive ditch of the medieval town.
- 1.1.3 Recent archaeological investigations conducted by OA East in 2014 at 24 Taylor's Lane uncovered archaeological features (pits and ditch alignments) dated to between the mid-12th to 14th centuries. These remains included a large ditch of mid-12th century date which may have formed part of the bailey ditch of Swavesey Castle. Furthermore, earthwork banks were surveyed and excavated which appear to be of 15th to 16th date and may relate to Swavesey Priory, located to the north of the site (Gilmour 2019).
- 1.1.4 Due to the high archaeological potential the site, a brief was set by Cambridgeshire County Council and Historic England outlining the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process. Historic England provided Scheduled Monument Consent for the works (SMC reference S00152975). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA detailing the methods by which OA proposed to meet the requirements of the brief (Connor 2017).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The parish of Swavesey lies in the southwestern hinterland of the Fens, Swavesey itself is built on a promontory and two 'islands' of Amphill clay capped with river terrace gravels. These 'uplands' extend into the fen where the Great Ouse valley joins the fen basin. The site is on the more northerly (and smaller) of the two islands and was a prime fen-edge location for occupation. The surrounding area has been subject to seasonal and periodic flooding with major water management features and in the historic period the settlement was well served by water transport.
- 1.2.2 The site is located on the northern edge of the village, with fields extending to the north, and house properties bounding the site to the east and west along Taylor's Lane.
- 1.2.3 The area of extension consists of garden lawn and a paved area to the back of an existing dwelling. The site stands at a height of c.4.5m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological and historical background of the site was produced for the WSI (Connor 2017) and is reproduced here. A map of Cambridgeshire HER data within the local area is shown in Figure 1.

The Medieval Town

1.3.2 Swavesey is a large southern fen edge village 13km north of Cambridge and connected to the Great Ouse by its own medieval lode. Ravensdale identified Swavesey as a planned town, probably originating in the 13th century and probably by the de la Zouche family. The settlement sits on a sequence of three pieces of dry land: two 'islands' jutting out into the Fenland where the Great Ouse valley enters this new environment, and an upland promontory to the south. This latter carries a routeway leading to the main road, originally of Roman date, between Cambridge and Huntingdon/Godmanchester. The most northerly island was the site of a late Saxon monastic cell and the main manor, whilst the southernmost may include the remainder of the settlement. In the mid-12th century a rectangular Anarchy period castle (Swavesey Castle; Fig. 2, DCB337) was constructed on the second island, interfering with previously established routeways, but acting as a spur for further development. The 13th-century planned town works consist of a semiregular street plan incorporating previously existing elements on the second island and surrounded by a re-working of what may have been partially pre-existing defensive circuit. The defensive ditch, being Fenland, is for much of its length a canal, and there are two or three hithes in different parts of the settlement incorporated within the system of lodes and ditches. At least one of the known hithes seems to be part of the planned development, although the others are probably earlier in origin.

The Anarchy Castle

1.3.3 The castle earthworks (Fig. 2, DCB337) comprise the remains of two adjacent rectangular enclosures. Only the north and west sides of the northernmost enclosure (c.90m by c.180m) are the remains of banks c.2.1m high from the bottom of the c.0.9m outer ditch. The bank which surrounded this enclosure has completely disappeared on the eastern side, and on the north and west sides vary in height, averaging from c.1.2m to c.1.8m from the level of the enclosure and from c.2.1m to c.2.75m above the water level in a marshy moat (c.3.65m wide) which extends around the outside. There appears to have been a second rectangular enclosure to the south, the western bank of which is parallel to and to the west of the northern enclosure. At the return of this bank towards the main enclosure lies a 3m high mound of obscure purpose. The area formerly enclosed by the banks is partially occupied by buildings on the eastern side, and to the west the ground is cut up by a number of shallow gravel diggings. All the works are made of gravel and this has contributed to their irregular and decayed state.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

1.3.4 The area around the castle has been subjected to archaeological investigation previously, most notably in 1990 (Evans 1990; ECB1540), and again in 1996 & 1997 (Cooper & Spoerry 1996 & 1997; ECB943 & ECB944), all of which reported extensive Anglo-Saxon and medieval activity in the area. Recent fieldwork undertaken by the Archaeological Field Unit (unpublished) has also located extensive prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon remains. An excavation through the Medieval ditch surrounding Swavesey provided an open section of ditch deposits suitable for environmental analysis. The site was found to contain a diverse range of sub-fossils (Haigh 1984: 45-

53; ECB466). Subsequently two trenches confirmed the line of the ditch and associated bank and produced finds which suggested a 13th century date for its construction. The environmental evidence showed that the ditch had been kept fairly clean and normally held standing water. It may also have acted as a flood defence before being partly filled in during the fifteenth century. Further excavation in the "outer bailey" showed no signs of occupation (Evans 1990).

- 1.3.5 In 1996/97 investigations within the town defence and castle earthworks revealed a considerable density and complexity of features from the Late Iron Age, Late Saxon, Saxo-Norman and Medieval periods in the Northern part of the site. Other trenches in the south and west part of the site revealed a substantial ditch possibly a continuation of the defensive line of the castle bailey, which lies adjacent and to the north (Roberts 1998; ECB248).
- 1.3.6 In 2001 trial excavation carried out at 24 Taylor's Lane found major features of 11th to 13th century date. The high density of finds suggested occupation, though features possibly relating to a defensive enclosure were also found. At the westernmost side of Amen Corner field a well preserved agricultural landscape was found, including ponds, ridge and furrow and ditches (Whittaker 2001; ECB247).
- 1.3.7 Most recently an archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring has been carried out within the footprint of the adjacent property (Gilmour 2019; ECB4234). The evaluation comprised a topographic survey of the surviving earthworks coupled with three evaluation trenches. The subsequent excavation revealed a ditch of 12th century date, which may have been part of the bailey ditch of Swavesey Castle. During the 15th to 16th century a ditched and banked enclosure was constructed on the site, adjacent to the disused probable castle bailey ditch. The banks of this enclosure survived as earthworks and it appears that it was related to Swavesey Priory located to the north of this site.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The primary objective was to preserve the archaeological evidence contained within the site by record and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the site.

2.1.2 This monitoring and recording investigation provides an adjunct to the excavation works that have already taken place on the site and should be seen as contributing to the overall research aims of the project which are as follows:

- i. The Development of the Castle Site at Swavesey - Specifically this site affords an opportunity to gather additional information to support recent excavation works on an adjacent site and may provide additional data in support of the Research Aims below:
- ii. Environmental reconstruction - Using the spectrum of environmental techniques appropriate for this aspect of investigation, an attempt will be made to model the landscape and its transformation brought about by the settlement's inhabitants and due to natural events

2.1.3 The Specific Projects Research Aims are:

- i. The origins and nature of Swavesey Castle are currently very poorly understood; indeed, its castle status is itself open to question and this work offers a very rare opportunity to shed light on this monument. Castles also remains a Regional Research Priority (p.62 in Brown & Glazebrook 2000).
- ii. The investigation may provide information which could date the construction of the Castle. This might confirm that Swavesey Castle was (a) an 11th century Norman Motte and Bailey, (b) a 12th century Anarchy Castle or indeed (c) a 13th century fortification built as a response to the Barons War.
- iii. The investigation directly contributes to the development of towns within the region (p.70 Brown & Glazebrook 2000).

2.2 Methodology

Investigation methods – Foundation trenches, Service Trenches landscaping and other ancillary works

2.2.1 All below ground development works were subject to archaeological monitoring and recording. Specifically, an experienced archaeologist attended the site during below ground construction works in order to investigate and record any archaeological deposits affected.

2.2.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered during the construction phase the attending archaeologist carried out relevant investigations, including hand excavation where safe to do so.

Recording of archaeological deposits and features

2.2.3 Records comprise digital, survey, drawn, written and photographic data.

- 2.2.4 Each feature was individually documented on unique context sheets, and hand drawn in section and plan. Written descriptions were recorded on pro-forma sheets comprising factual data and interpretative elements. A register of contexts has been kept.
- 2.2.5 Site plans were drawn at 1:20. A register of plans has been kept.
- 2.2.6 The site plan is accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on the 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
- 2.2.7 Sections of features or short lengths of trenches have been drawn at 1:20. A register of sections has been kept. All sections are tied in to Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2.8 The photographic record comprises high resolution digital photographs. A register of photographs has been kept.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- 2.2.9 All works have been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC reference S00152975).

Finds Collection and retention

- 2.2.10 All finds (except obviously modern) were collected, retained and allocated to a unique context on site.

Metal detecting and the Treasure Act

- 2.2.11 Metal detector searches took place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the monitoring and recording work are presented below. Details of all deposits recorded are tabulated in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence was fairly uniform across the trench. The natural geology (258) of mid orange clayey sand was overlain by two layers of made-ground (252 and 253), which in turn was overlain by concrete and paving on the inside of the foundation trench and topsoil (259) on the outside (Plate 1).

3.2.2 Ground conditions were very wet with the water table being at the same level as the natural deposits. Archaeological features, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology but the water-level made ascertaining the bases of the features more difficult.

3.3 Foundation Trenches

3.3.1 The foundation trench was 0.65m wide and ran for 4m north-west from the wall of the existing building, turned a right angle to the north-east and continued for 6.48m before turning south again for 4m back to the existing building. An additional 4m strip aligned north-west to south-east ran within the area bounded by the rest of the trench (Fig. 3).

3.3.2 A single very shallow ditch (**250/256**), ran on a north-east to south-west alignment across the investigation area, being revealed in all three 4m NW-SE stretches of the trench. This was up to 0.9m wide and 0.16m deep, and was filled by a mid orange-grey sandy clay (251/257) which did not produce any finds (Fig. 4, Section 100).

3.3.3 In the north-west corner of foundation trench a sub-circular pit (**254**; Plate 2) was revealed, measuring 1.5m wide by more than 1.6m long, with a maximum depth of 0.39m (Fig. 4, Section 101; Plate 2). This was filled by a mid brown grey sandy clay (255), which contained a single horse femur (280g). The surface condition of the bone is good and the specimen is nearly complete. The distal epiphysis is present and fused indicating an age over three - three and a half years (Zoë Ui Choileáin per. Comm.).

3.4 Finds summary

3.4.1 A single horse femur weighing 280g was recovered from a fill 255 of pit **254**.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Conditions within the foundation trench were extremely wet at the upper level of the archaeological horizon. Archaeological features were easily visible against the natural geology when machined but rapidly filled with water during excavation.

4.2 Interpretation

4.2.1 A small number of features were revealed during the excavation of the foundation trench. Neither of the features produced any dating evidence which makes characterising them difficult.

4.2.2 Similar ditches and pits were excavated during excavations on the adjoining property immediately to the west (Fig. 3; ECB4234; Gilmour 2019), which were dated to between the latter 12th century.

4.2.3 The single ditch **250/256** did not directly align with the either of the two closest SW to NE ditch lines (**34** and **48**) from the earlier excavation. Its dimensions were also closer to those of ditch **94** (although wider), which was aligned at right-angles (north-west to south-east) but could possibly turn to match **250/256** (Fig. 3).

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 Due to the small number of features found and their lack of dating, little significance can be attached to these findings other than demonstrating a probable continuation of the medieval activity identified to the west.

APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
250	Cut	0.90	0.16	Ditch	-	Uncertain
251	Fill	-	0.16	Fill of Ditch 250	-	Uncertain
252	Layer	-	0.20	Made-ground	-	-
253	Layer	-	0.60	Made-ground	-	-
254	Cut	1.50	0.39	Pit	-	Uncertain
255	Fill	-	0.39	Fill of Pit 254	Animal Bone	Uncertain
256	Cut	0.80	0.12	Ditch	-	Uncertain
257	Fill	-	0.12	Fill of Ditch 256	-	Uncertain
258	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
259	Layer	-	0.10	Topsoil	-	-

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX C OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-321509		
Project Name	24 Taylor's Lane, Swavesey		
Start of Fieldwork	9-04-2018	End of Fieldwork	10-04-2018
Previous Work	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	SWATAY17	Planning App. No.	S/3738/17/FL
HER Number	ECB4968	Related Numbers	N/A

Prompt	Directive from local planning authority
Development Type	Residential Extension
Place in Planning Process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Uncertain	Animal Bone	Uncertain
Pit	Uncertain		Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.

Insert more lines as appropriate.

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode) 24 Taylor's Lane Swavesey Cambridge Cambs CB24 4QN
District	South Cambs	
Parish	Swavesey	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	25.92 sq.m	
National Grid Ref	TL 3597 6902	

Project Originators

Organisation	OA East
Project Brief Originator	N/A
Project Design Originator	Aileen Connor

Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Project Supervisor	Nicholas Cox

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	CCC Stores	ECB4968
Digital Archive	OA East	SWATAY17
Paper Archive	CCC Stores	ECB4968

Physical Contents

Present?

Digital files associated with Finds

Paperwork associated with Finds

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

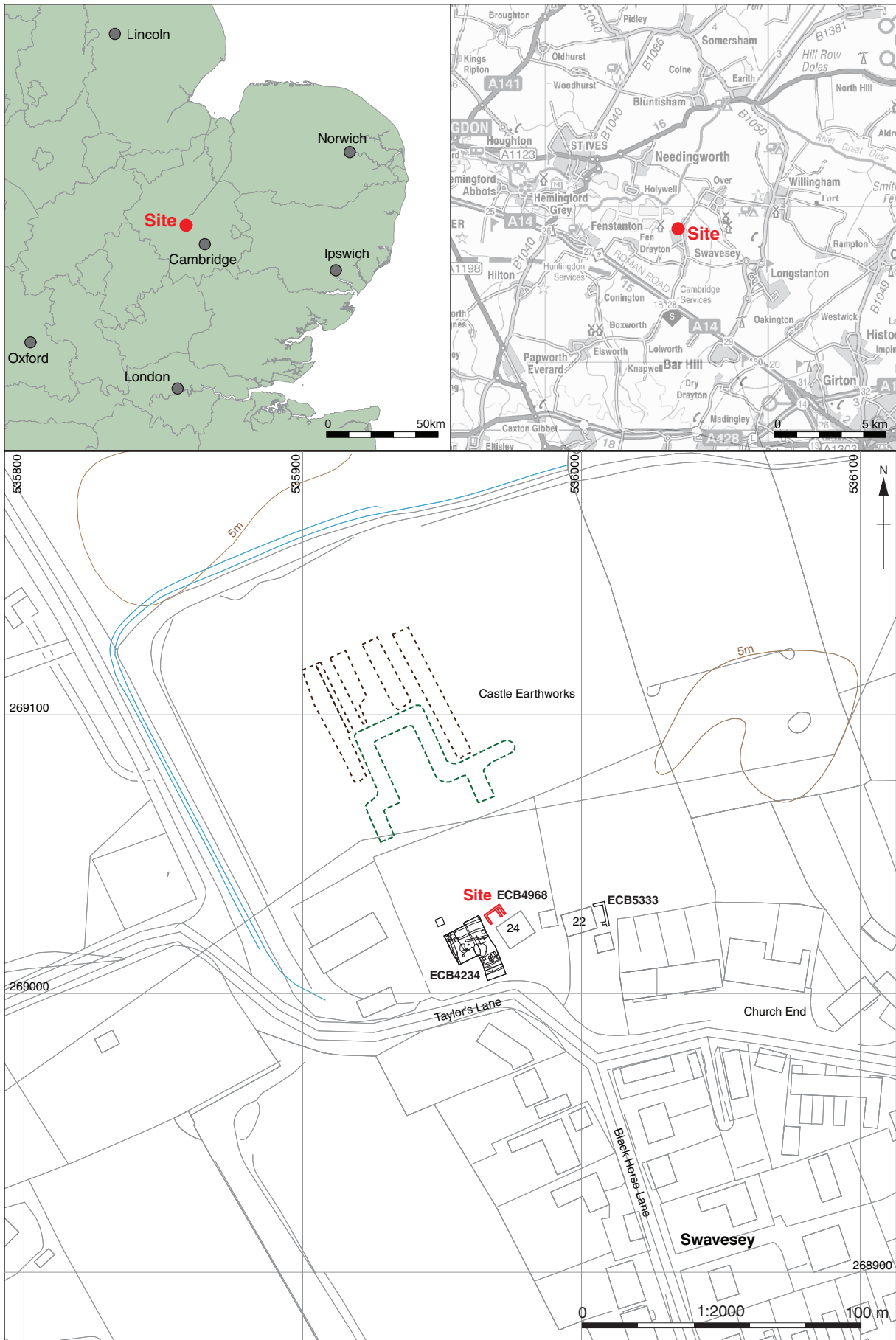
Digital Media

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

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further Comments



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Figure 1: Site location map. Scale 1:2000



Figure 3: Plan of trench, shown in conjunction with nearby OAE excavation of 12th century features (Gilmour 2015)

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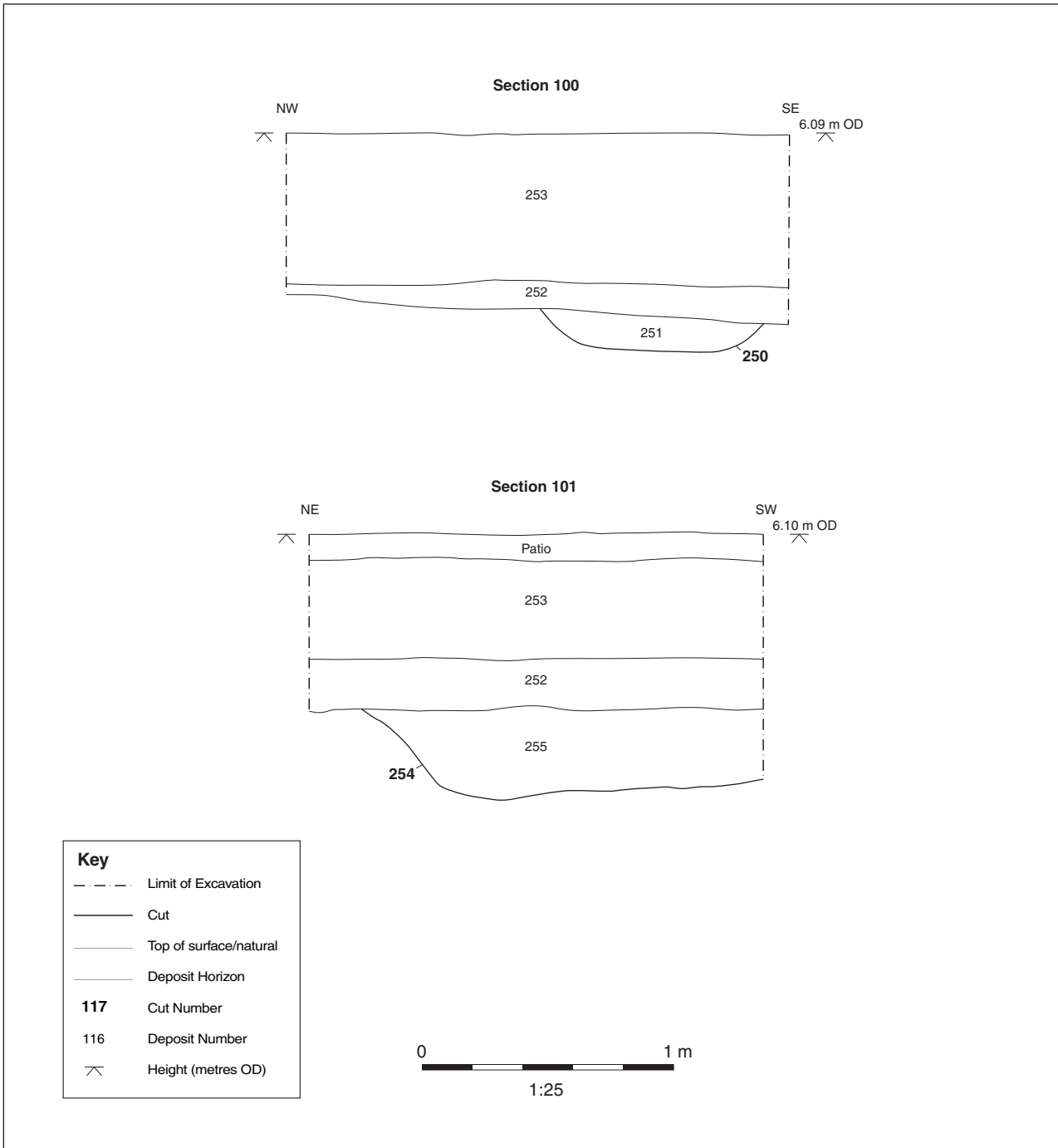


Figure 4: Selected sections



Plate 1: General trench section, looking north-west



Plate 2: Pit 254, looking south-east



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