

Rectory Farm Great Gransden



Archaeological Evaluation Report



October 2012

Client: Complete Fabrications

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Rectory Farm, Great Gransden

Archaeological Evaluation

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Summary

On the 8th and 9th August 2012 Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Rectory Farm, Great Gransden (NGR 527147 255584), in advance of the installation of ground source heating pumps.

Trench 1 revealed evidence for the foundations of a wall which contained residual Roman pottery, along with a shallow pit tentatively interpreted as a sunken-featured building (SFB), possibly dating to the Anglo-Saxon period. The pit contained animal bone fragments and a worked bone pin beater of possible late Anglo-Saxon date. Environmental samples taken from the pit recovered large amounts of charred grains. The trench also contained two small modern ditches and a post-medieval furrow.

Trench 2 contained two ditches on separate alignments, both of which contained early medieval pottery. The larger of the two ditches also contained animal bone and a large amount of daub. Environmental samples from both ditches produced high numbers of charred grains. The eastern end of the trench was taken over by a quarry pit which contained post-medieval tile and early medieval pottery, implying that it had truncated away further archaeological features.

Also observed in the section of Trench 2 was a buried soil horizon sealed between the topsoil and subsoil. This indicated that landscaping had occurred at some point where soil from the northern end of site had been pushed down slope.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Rectory Farm, Great Gransden (NGR 527147 255584) (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a statement issued by Cambridgeshire County Council (McConnell 2012), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Connor 2012).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Great Gransden parish is 11 miles west of Cambridge and 10 miles south-east of Huntingdon. The parish ranges from c.33m OD near its border with Abbotsley parish to c.75m OD on the disused airfield.
- 1.2.2 The site is located within a short distance to the south of the parish church which itself sits on high ground overlooking a steep valley to the south which leads to Gransden Brook/Home Dole Brook. The site itself is located on this same steep south facing slope. The north-western end of the site is now relatively level at a height of 48.5m OD, this drops steeply southwards down to 46m OD within a distance of approximately 30m. There is evidence that the site has been subject to landscaping and the level area at the north-west end is likely to have been artificially created.
- 1.2.3 The subsoil is Ampthill clay with Lover Greensand. Streams in the parish include Waresley Dean, College Dean, Vicars Dean, Mandeian and Gransden Brook; Home Dole Brook marks the border with Little Gransden parish and Cambridgeshire.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following information is taken from the Specification (Connor 2012):
- 1.3.2 The development area lies immediately to the south of the medieval church of St Bartholomew (CHER 10345) within a rich archaeological landscape. The earliest evidence for settlement in Great Gransden parish dates to the Bronze Age in the form of pottery and a barbed and tanged arrowhead (CHER 02400). A single gold coin (CHER 02407) is the only evidence for Iron Age occupation, although there are a number of rectangular enclosures recorded on aerial photographs that could belong to this period. The evidence for Roman occupation is quite extensive, but largely relies on stray finds, including coins, pottery, nails, shears, keys, quern stones, building material and an inhumation burial at Bulls Bridge, Bullby Hill (CHER 02392).
- 1.3.3 Building materials and pottery of Anglo-Saxon date have been found near Gransden Brook (CHER 02417). There are a number of possible manor sites in Great Gransden including Rippington manor (CHER 02319). An evaluation within the grounds of the

manor however found no archaeological evidence. Of particular relevance is the possibility that Rectory Farm is located on or near the site of a moated manor. An L-shaped moat is shown on the 1794 map of College Farm, Little Gransden (CHER 01141), which is adjacent to Rectory Farm (and was previously also known as College Farm). The area around the church is most likely the focus of the early village settlement. An evaluation some 300m north-east of the subject site (AFU report A44) found no archaeological evidence, although a watching brief on West Street did find some features of unknown date (CHER 11983).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like to extend thanks to Robin Gomm of Complete Fabrications for commissioning the work. The project was managed by Aileen Conner. The site was visited and monitored by Dan McConnell.
- 1.4.2 The site was excavated by the author with the aid of Steve Morgan. Site survey was carried out by the author.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Two trenches were excavated (32.5m and 18m in length), one over the location of the vertical heating system and a second to evaluate a wider area required for the alternative horizontal heating system.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked mini excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by the author using a Leica 1200 GPS.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 Three environmental samples were taken to investigate the possible survival of micro- and macro- botanical remains.
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were extremely hot and sunny for the duration of the archaeological works.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Archaeology revealed at the site appeared to date for the most part to the late Anglo-Saxon and early medieval periods, although there has clearly been activity at the site in subsequent periods as well. Due to the small size of the evaluation, the archaeology will be discussed by trench. A comprehensive listing of trench depths, descriptions and related context data can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 Natural geology was encountered 0.29m below ground level in Trench 1 and 0.79m below ground level in Trench 2. Topsoil (11 and 14) consisted of a mid grey brown silty clay which contained a small amount of post-medieval finds. The subsoil (13 and 15) was a clean mid orange brown silty clay.

3.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

- 3.2.1 Toward the south-eastern end of the trench was a shallow pit (1). It extended beyond the edges of the trench to the north, so its full dimensions were not observed, its dimensions within the trench were 3m across and 0.3m deep. The pit contained a single mid to dark grey sandy silt (2) with two distinct charcoal lenses (Fig. 3; S.4, Plate 1). Animal bone and a bone pin beater (SF1), used in textile manufacture were recovered from the fill. An environmental sample taken from the fill produced abundant levels of charred cereal grains. The feature was sub-rectangular in plan, aligned east to west, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It is possible that this pit represents the remains of a sunken-featured building (see discussion in Section 4 below).
- 3.2.2 Located at the north-western end of the trench was a small modern ditch aligned north-east to south-west. It contained a large piece of broken field drain. A second small modern ditch was seen at the opposite end of the trench. This ditch was aligned north-northeast to south-southwest and contained modern tile. Positioned near the middle of the trench was a post-medieval furrow, this was orientated north-east to south-west and was devoid of finds.
- 3.2.3 Also present within Trench 1 was the remnant of the foundations of a wall (17). It was 1.1m wide and made up of red brick fragments and tabular stone blocks with a crushed white mortar. Two sherds of residual Roman pottery were found within the foundation cut along with early medieval pottery.

3.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

- 3.3.1 Two ditches were identified on the western side of the trench. Ditch 5 was 0.99m wide and 0.27m deep with a bowl shaped profile (Fig. 3; S.1, Plate 2). It was orientated north to south. The ditch contained two fills; a primary silt (4) made up of a mid grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks devoid of finds and a later fill (3), consisting of a mid grey brown clayey silt that contained early medieval pottery. An environmental sample taken from fill 3 produced a large amount of mixed cereals.
- 3.3.2 Ditch 8 ran on a north-east to south-west alignment (Fig. 3; S.2). It was 0.86m wide and 0.57m deep with a flat bottomed U-shape profile. The earliest fill (7) was made up of a mid yellow grey sandy silt. Above this, fill 6 was a dark grey clayey silt and contained early medieval pottery, daub and animal bone. The daub appears to have come from a structure, probably an oven, rather than a building. An environmental

sample taken from fill 6 produced high quantities of charred cereal grains and a moderate amount of charcoal.

- 3.3.3 Directly beneath the topsoil (11) of Trench 2 was a buried soil (12). It was made up of a 0.28m thick dark grey clayey silt with occasional chalk fleck inclusions (Fig. 3; S.3). This soil horizon was sat on top of subsoil 13 and extended east across the trench for c.11m.
- 3.3.4 The eastern portion of the trench was taken over by quarry pit **10**. Its full dimensions were not seen as it extended beyond the limits of the trench, but it was at least 7m long. It was filled by a large number of different slumping fills (9) which contained post-medieval tile and sherds of medieval pottery. Quarry pit **10** had cut through buried soil 12 and removed it over part of the trench.

3.4 Finds Summary

- 3.4.1 This evaluation produced quite a small assemblage of pottery sherds, weighing 0.194kg, from four contexts. The material recovered was Roman (mid 1st to 4th Century) and early-medieval (12th to 14th Century) in date. The condition of the overall assemblage was moderately abraded.
- 3.4.2 There was a small to medium amount of animal bone retrieved from the site, weighing 1.087kg, from three contexts. This consisted of butchered cattle and goat portions. The goat remains are of particular note because of their rarity throughout all periods in Britain.
- 3.4.3 Ten fragments of fired clay, weighing 0.856kg, were recovered from a single context. The overall condition of the assemblage is moderately abraded and is likely to have come from a structure such as an oven.
- 3.4.4 The evaluation also produced three pieces of CBM, weighing 0.3kg, from one context. One tile has been tentatively dated to the medieval period, the remainder are of a post-medieval date.
- 3.4.5 A Late Saxon/early-medieval pin beater (SF1) used in textile working, was also recovered during the archaeological works. As was a very small fragment of oyster shell.

3.5 Environmental Summary

- 3.5.1 Three bulk samples were taken in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains, bones and artefacts and their potential to provide useful data as part of the archaeological investigations.
- 3.5.2 The environmental samples produced significant quantities of mixed cereal grains in an assemblage that can be interpreted as the waste from the final stages of crop processing namely parching/drying.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological works at Rectory Farm have revealed a small insight into the history of Great Gransden.
- 4.1.2 No evidence for human activity prior to the Roman period has been found at the site.
- 4.1.3 Roman pottery has been found but it was in later features, there is no evidence for archaeological features dating to this period being present. The presence of Roman pottery here, is unsurprising as it is this period that has produced the most archaeological evidence in Great Gransden. The pottery sherds of this date are of a reasonable size and fairly unabraded suggesting they have not travelled far.
- 4.1.4 A shallow pit found in Trench 1, has the characteristics of a simple SFB (sunken-featured building) type structure often associated with Anglo-Saxon occupation. However, it has none of the very typical characteristics such as associated post holes, so it is difficult to be absolutely certain of its function. The pin beater found within the feature could date to the Anglo-Saxon period, although pin beaters were in use in the Roman and medieval periods. Pin beaters were used in the weaving process, helping to beat the threads into place. An attempt should be made to date it more closely as, if found to be of Anglo-Saxon date it will be a significant addition to evidence for Great Gransdens historic development.
- 4.1.5 To the south in Trench 2, two ditches of probable early medieval date are a sign that the site was the focus of activity during this period. Daub from one of the ditches is likely to have come from a small structure, almost certainly an oven, indicating settlement activity on or very close to the site. Environmental samples from the ditches in Trench 2 and the possible SFB in Trench 1 have all produced large quantities of charred cereal grains suggesting final stages of crop processing took place in the near vicinity, it is therefore possible that the oven was used for drying cereal grains (see Appendix C3). The position of the ditches within Trench 2 itself is of interest, in that the ditches are on two separate alignments, yet are located only c.0.5m apart, thus they would intersect just south of the trench, implying more than one phase of activity.
- 4.1.6 The variation in the thickness of overburden in the trenches is worth noting. With a difference of 0.5m, some form of landscaping has clearly occurred on the site. The site is on a south facing slope, dropping quite sharply from c.48.5m to c.46m in the short distance between the two trenches. It is likely that the buried soil observed in Trench 2 was covered during landscaping and that the relatively level area at the north end of the site (and nearest to the house) has been artificially created.
- 4.1.7 The wall which was recorded in Trench 1 was situated on a north-east to south-west alignment. A possible walled enclosure on the same alignment encompasses an orchard on the 1901 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map for the site. This structure is not present on the 1887 Ordnance Survey and is gone by 1974, so there is potential for the wall found to be the remnants of this quite short lived structure.
- 4.1.8 Overall, the evaluation at Rectory Farm has shown good evidence for multi-period occupation on the site and adds to the overall picture of the archaeology and history within Great Gransden as a whole.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1							
General description					Orientation		
Trench contained two post-medieval ditches, a furrow, a wall foundation and a large pit/SFB. Natural consisted of a mid orange sand with clay seams.					WNW-ESE		
					Avg. depth (m)		0.29
					Width (m)		2
					Length (m)		32.5
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
1	cut	3	0.3	pit/?SFB	-	-	
2	fill	-	0.3	-	bone	-	
14	layer	-	0.14	topsoil	bone	-	
15	layer	-	0.15	subsoil	-	-	
16	cut	1.1	0.1	foundation trench	-	-	
17	structural	-	-	wall	pottery	Roman	
Trench 2							
General description					Orientation		
Trench contained two Saxon ditches and a large post-medieval quarry. Natural consisted of a light yellow sand.					E-W		
					Avg. depth (m)		0.75
					Width (m)		1.5
					Length (m)		18
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
3	fill	-	0.22	-	pottery	Early medieval	
4	fill	-	0.1	-	-	-	
5	cut	0.99	0.26	ditch	-	-	
6	fill	-	0.38	-	pottery, daub, bone	Early medieval	
7	fill	-	0.2	-	-	-	
8	cut	0.86	0.57	ditch	-	-	
9	fill	-	-	-	pottery, tile	Early med/post-med	
10	cut	>7m	-	quarry pit	-	-	
11	layer	-	0.2	topsoil	-	-	
12	layer	-	0.28	buried soil	-	-	
13	layer	-	0.16	subsoil	-	-	

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By Carole Fletcher and Stephen Wadeson

Introduction and methodology

- B.1.1 The evaluation produced a small pottery assemblage of 21 sherds, weighing 0.194kg, from four contexts (see Table 1 below). The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded and the average sherd weight is small at approximately 9g.
- B.1.2 The Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG) documents *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms* (MPRG, 1998) and *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics* (MPRG, 2001) act as a standard.
- B.1.3 Dating was carried out using OA East's in-house system, based on that previously used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described medieval and post-medieval types. All sherds have been counted, classified and weighed. All the pottery has been recorded and dated on a context-by-context basis. The archives are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Context Date Range
3	Developed St Neots		5	0.015	Mid 12th-mid 14th century
	Roman Sandy Grey Ware (Mid 1st-4th century)		1	0.008	
6	Developed St Neots	Bowl	1	0.032	Mid 12th-mid 13th century
	Developed St Neots	Jar	1	0.019	
	Developed St Neots		6	0.031	
	Roman Fine Micaceous Sandy Ware (Mid 1st-4th century)		1	0.014	
9	Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy Ware		1	0.007	16th century +
	Unknown		1	0.018	
	Post-Medieval Redware	Plant pot	1	0.004	
	St Neots	Jar	1	0.005	
17	Roman Sandy Grey Ware	Lid	1	0.025	Roman, mid 1st-4th century
	Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy Ware	Bs	1	0.016	

Table 1: Pottery dating

Results

- B.1.4 The pottery recovered includes two sherds tentatively identified as Roman, including a large unabraded fragment from an externally sooted, sandy greyware lid (Mid 1st-4th century). The earliest post-Roman sherd is a leached and abraded base sherd from a Late Saxon-early medieval St Neots Ware jar, found as a residual element in context 9, which also produced a possible Roman sherd, a sherd of Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy Ware and an unabraded post-medieval Redware sherd.
- B.1.5 Several early medieval sherds were recovered, however the majority of the pottery is Developed St Neots Ware (mid 12th-mid 14th century), including a rim sherd from an inturned bowl and the rim from a jar, the form of which is commonly referred to as a top hat pot, dated to the mid 12th-mid 13th century.
- B.1.6 The presence of relatively unabraded domestic Roman pottery suggests Roman occupation close to the area of excavation. The mid 12th-mid 13th century pottery, also domestic in origin, likewise indicates occupation on or close to the site, however this pottery most likely represents rubbish disposal.

Statement of Potential and Further work

- B.1.7 An assemblage of this size provides basic dating information and an indication of the origins of pottery brought to the site. Further work will be required on this assemblage should excavation be undertaken.

B.2 Ceramic Building Material

By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

- B.2.1 The evaluation produced a small assemblage of three fragments of roof tile, weighing 0.300kg, from context 9 (Table 2). The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded to unabraded and the average sherd weight is moderate at 100g.
- B.2.2 A single fragment of roof tile has tentatively been identified as medieval, the remainder is post-medieval.

Context	CBM Type	Fabric	Dimensions	Date and Comments	Fragment Count	Weight (kg)
9	Roof Tile	Hard fired yellow fabric with common moderate to large voids visible in the section and surfaces of the tile from calcareous material that was burnt out during firing or subsequently leached out. Occasional coarse calcareous material survives.	Maximum thickness 12mm	Post-medieval. Sooted on the upper surface and across the break	1	0.160
9	Roof Tile	Hard fired, dull red-pink fabric with mid grey brown core in the thicker parts of the tile,	Maximum thickness 14mm	?Medieval. Paler wiped external surface with	1	0.086

		with common moderate to large voids visible in the section and surfaces of the tile from calcareous material that was burnt out during firing or subsequently leached out. Common moderate calcareous inclusions and occasional swirls of clay with no calcareous inclusions.		traces of mortar on the reverse and surviving edge		
9	Roof Tile	Hard fired, dull red fabric with mid grey core in the thicker parts of the tile. Common moderate quartz with common moderate to large voids visible in the section and surfaces of the tile from calcareous material that was burnt out during firing or subsequently leached out.	Maximum thickness 15mm	Post-medieval	1	0.054

Table 2: Ceramic Building Material

Statement of Research Potential and Further work

- 2.2.3 The assemblage indicates the presence of structures with tiled roofs in the vicinity of the site. The presence of medieval tile suggests a building of relatively high status and further work will be required on this assemblage should excavation be undertaken.

B.3 Fired Clay

By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

- B.3.1 A small-moderate assemblage of fragments of fired clay weighing 0.856kg was recovered from context 6 (see Table 3). The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded. The majority of the fired clay has two or more dark surfaces and the dull red sandy clay appears to have been squeezed and impressed against another surface or structure. Several fragments have straw or grass impressions on their surfaces, while two have possible wattle impressions and there are finger impressions and smoothing marks on other fragments.
- B.3.2 Several fragments are quite hard and highly fired. The fired clay appears to be structural, possibly from an oven rather than the wall of a building.

Statement of Potential and Further Work

- B.3.3 Further work will be required on this assemblage should excavation be undertaken and the assemblage should be examined by a suitable specialist.

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Fabric	Comments
6	Undiagnostic irregular fragments with dark surfaces	8	0.773	Dull red fabric with and mid to dark red-grey surfaces. Moderately hard fired, common medium and coarse sub-rounded quartz. Rare very coarse flint, up to 2cm	Some surfaces show finger impressions and possible wattle impressions and traces of grass or straw.
6	Undiagnostic irregular fragments with dark surfaces	2	0.082	Dull red fabric with and mid to dark red-grey irregular surfaces. Hard fired, common medium and coarse sub-rounded quartz and traces of straw or grass temper	Straw or grass impressions on the surfaces of the fragments.

Table 3: Fired Clay

B.4 Worked Bone

By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

- B.4.1 A single object associated with the manufacture or working of textiles was recovered during the evaluation. A bone pin beater of a type described by MacGregor *et al* as a flat single-ended form a 'picker-cum-beater' (MacGregor *et al*, 1999 p1967-1968, Fig.923). The object is polished all over, although marks can still be seen on the sides and chisel end of the pin beater where it has been more roughly finished.

SF1: Pin beater, 121mm long, 12mm at widest point. Highly polished especially around the tip and lower part of shaft. Oval in cross-section towards the tip, while at the centre it is flat-backed with sub-oval cross-section and tapered, being almost square cut at the butt end (?10th-12th century).

Statement of Potential and Further Work

- B.4.2 The pin beater is indicative of textile working and often found on Late Saxon/early medieval domestic sites alongside other items associated with textile manufacture or textile working. If further excavation is undertaken the pin beater should be sent to a worked bone specialist and should be illustrated.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal remains

By Chris Faine

Assemblage

- C.1.1 Twenty three fragments of animal bone were recovered from the evaluation with eleven fragments identifiable to species.
- C.1.2 The largest number of identifiable fragments were recovered out of context 2 (from a possible SFB; 1). These consisted of butchered portions of cattle radius, 1st phalanx and tibia. Two instances of goat remains were also recovered. These were an adult metacarpal from an animal around 71cm at the shoulder, and an intact mandible from animal around 6-8 years old. Goat remains are rare in all periods in Britain with the ratio of sheep to goats at West Stow being 100:1 (Crabtree, 1990). Context 6 from ditch 8 contained a portion of butchered cattle radius and 2nd phalanx. A complete but unfused cattle femur was also recovered from the topsoil (14) of trench 1.

C.2 Shell

By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

- C.2.1 A total of less than 1g of shell of marine *Mollusca* were collected (Table 4). The shell was collected by hand from context 9 and is poorly preserved, although it does not appear to have been deliberately broken or crushed. Oysters were a common food source throughout the medieval period, however very little can be inferred from such a small quantity of shell.

Context	Type	Weight (kg)
9	Oyster: <i>Ostrea edulis</i>	<0.001

Table 4: Shell

Further Work

- C.2.1 No further work is required on this assemblage.

C.3 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction and methodology

- C.3.1 Three bulk samples were taken during the evaluation to determine whether plant remains are present, their mode of preservation and whether they are of interpretable value with regard to domestic, agricultural and industrial activities, diet, economy and rubbish disposal.
- C.3.2 Samples were taken from early-medieval ditch fills (which also contained residual Roman pottery) and a potentially Saxon pit.

C.3.3 The total volume (up to eighteen litres) of each of the samples was processed by tank flotation using a modified Siraff-system for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 0.5mm sieve.

C.3.4 Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope and the presence of any plant remains or other artefacts are noted on Table 5 below. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands (Cappers *et al.*, 2006) and the authors' own reference collection.

Quantification

C.3.5 For the purpose of this initial assessment, items such as seeds, cereal grains and small animal bones have been scanned and recorded qualitatively according to the following categories

= 1-10, ## = 11-50, ### = 51+ specimens #### = 100+ specimens

C.3.6 Items that cannot be easily quantified such as charcoal, magnetic residues and fragmented bone have been scored for abundance.

+ = rare, ++ = moderate, +++ = abundant

Results

Sample No.	Context No.	Cut No.	Feature Type	Flot Volume (ml)	Cereals	Chaff	Legumes	Weed Seeds	Charcoal <2mm	Charcoal > 2mm
1	3	5	ditch	220	####	#	#	#	+	++
2	6	8	ditch	80	####	0	#	#	++	++
3	2	1	pit	300	####	0	#	#	+	++

Table 5: Environmental samples

C.3.7 Plant remains are preserved by carbonization. The carbonized material is comprised of large quantities of cereal grains with occasional weed seeds, legumes and charcoal fragments.

Cereals

C.3.8 All four of the main cereal types are present. Wheat (*Triticum* sp.) is the most abundant; the grains being of a compact, rounded morphology suggesting bread wheat (*T. aestivum sensu-lato*). Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) is also common along with oats (*Avena* sp.) and rye (*Secale cereale*) which occur less frequently. The only chaff element recovered is a single barley rachis from Sample 1, fill 3 of ditch 5.

Weed seeds

C.3.9 Charred weed seeds include seeds of segetal plants that can be found growing on cultivated soils such as corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), darnell (*Lolium cf. temulentum*), brome (*Bromus* sp.), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) in addition to seeds of plants that are found growing in a wider range of habitats such as grasses (Poaceae), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), docks (*Rumex* sp.) and clover (*Trifolium* sp.). Wetland species are represented by rushes (*Juncus* sp./*tenuis*).

- C.3.10 Animal bone fragments were recovered from the residues of all three samples and a small fragment of pottery was found in Sample 2, fill 6 of ditch 8.

Discussion

- C.3.11 The plant assemblage is comprised primarily of mixed cereal grains with wheat as the predominant species. Wheat grains are difficult to identify on the basis of morphology alone and their compact, rounded morphology suggest that they are of the bread wheat variety and would most likely have been accidentally burnt whilst drying the grains prior to milling.

Barley grains are enclosed in an outer sheath that would have to be removed by parching to make it palatable for human consumption in the form of bread, stews and soup but it is suitable in its hulled form for use as animal fodder. Barley was also used for the brewing of beer although no germinated grains were recovered from these samples to suggest brewing activities. Oats were used for both human and animal consumption. It is not possible to distinguish between wild and cultivated oats without the diagnostic chaff elements and the oats in this assemblage could be either form. Rye is an important Saxon crop and had several uses. It is possible that the cereals could have been grown as a maslin in which two types of cereal are grown together.

- C.3.12 Weed seeds are useful for providing information about agricultural practices. Stinking mayweed is a plant that favours heavy clay soils and suggests that at least one of the cereal crops were grown on such soil. In addition, mayweeds and other low-growing plants such as clovers suggest reaping close to the ground rather than just below the ears. Cleavers are autumn germinating weeds and were possibly contaminants of winter wheat. It is possible that the smaller seeds in this assemblage had a separate origin to the grains and were burnt in with the fuel. Charcoal is relatively sparse although larger lumps were noted in the sample residues.
- C.3.13 The relative paucity of weed seeds and chaff suggests that the grain had been fully processed in that the the outer chaff has been removed and the cereals had been sieved to remove smaller weed seeds and chaff elements. Several of the weed seeds recovered, such as corn gromwell, darnel and brome are of a similar size to the grains and would have been retained in the sieve and later picked out by hand.
- C.3.14 The poor representation of crop processing waste in the form of chaff suggests that the earlier stages of processing had taken place elsewhere, either in an unexcavated area of the site or the crops may have been brought in already cleaned and ready to be dried/parched on site. The presence of burnt clay in ditch 8 has been interpreted as the remains of an oven that has been cleared out and the material dumped in the ditch. It is likely that the oven was used for drying/parching the cereals. During this process grains are likely to become burned and would have been discarded.
- C.3.15 Despite the ditch deposits containing residual Roman pottery, the plants remains are typical of the later Saxon period (Grieg, 1991) particularly as they contain rye which did not become an important crop until the Saxon and medieval period (Van der Veen, 1992) and is rarely recovered from earlier deposits in this region. The mixture of cereals and legumes suggest that the assemblage is derived from several deposition events.

Statement of Potential and Further Work

- C.3.16 The environmental samples have produced significant quantities of cereal grains in an assemblage that can be interpreted as the waste from the final stages of crop processing namely parching/drying. It is not considered that full analysis would add significantly to this interpretation and additional work is not recommended at this stage.

APPENDIX D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX E. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-132075		
Project Name	Rectory Farm, Great Gransden		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	08-08-2012	Finish	09-08-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	GRGRFM12	Planning App. No.	
HER No.	ECB3835	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Pipelines/Cables

Please select all techniques used:

<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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Early Medieval 410 to 1066	Pottery	Roman 43 to 410
Ditch	Modern 1901 to Present	Pottery	Early Medieval 410 to 1066
SFB	Early Medieval 410 to 1066	Animal bone	None

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Huntingdonshire	Rectory Farm Church Street, Great Gransden, Sandy SG19 3AF
Parish	Great Gransden	
HER	Cambs County Store	
Study Area	0.25 ha	National Grid Reference
		527147 255584

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	N/A
Project Design Originator	N/A
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	Louise Bush

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Cambs County Store	OA East	Cambs County Store
GRGRFM12	GRGRFM12	GRGRFM12







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Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

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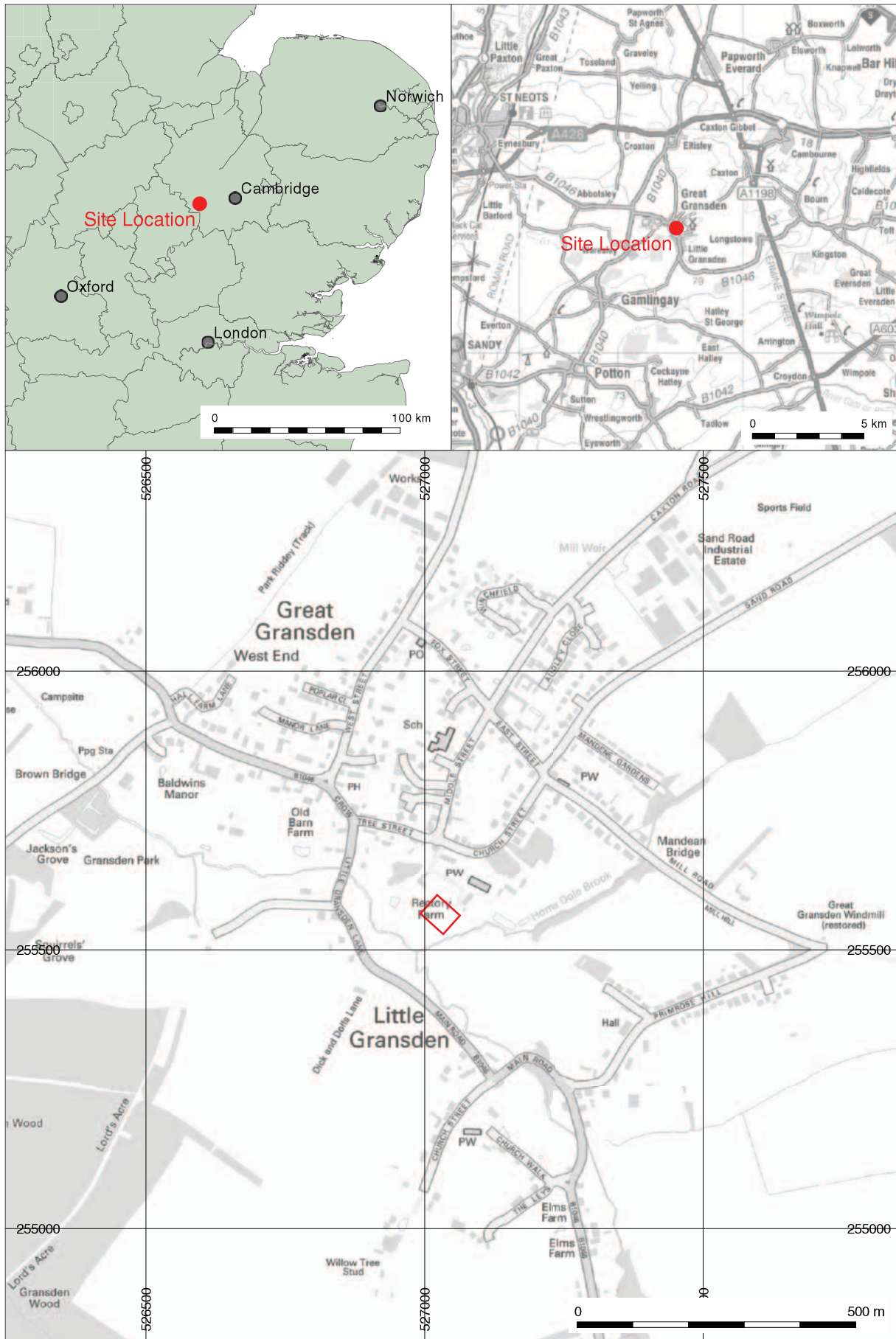
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Sondages/Machine Strip	- - - - -
Illustrated Section	————— S.14
Archaeological Feature	
Excavated Slot	
Furrow	
Modern	
Brick	
Wall	
Cut Number	118
Deposit Number	118

Sections

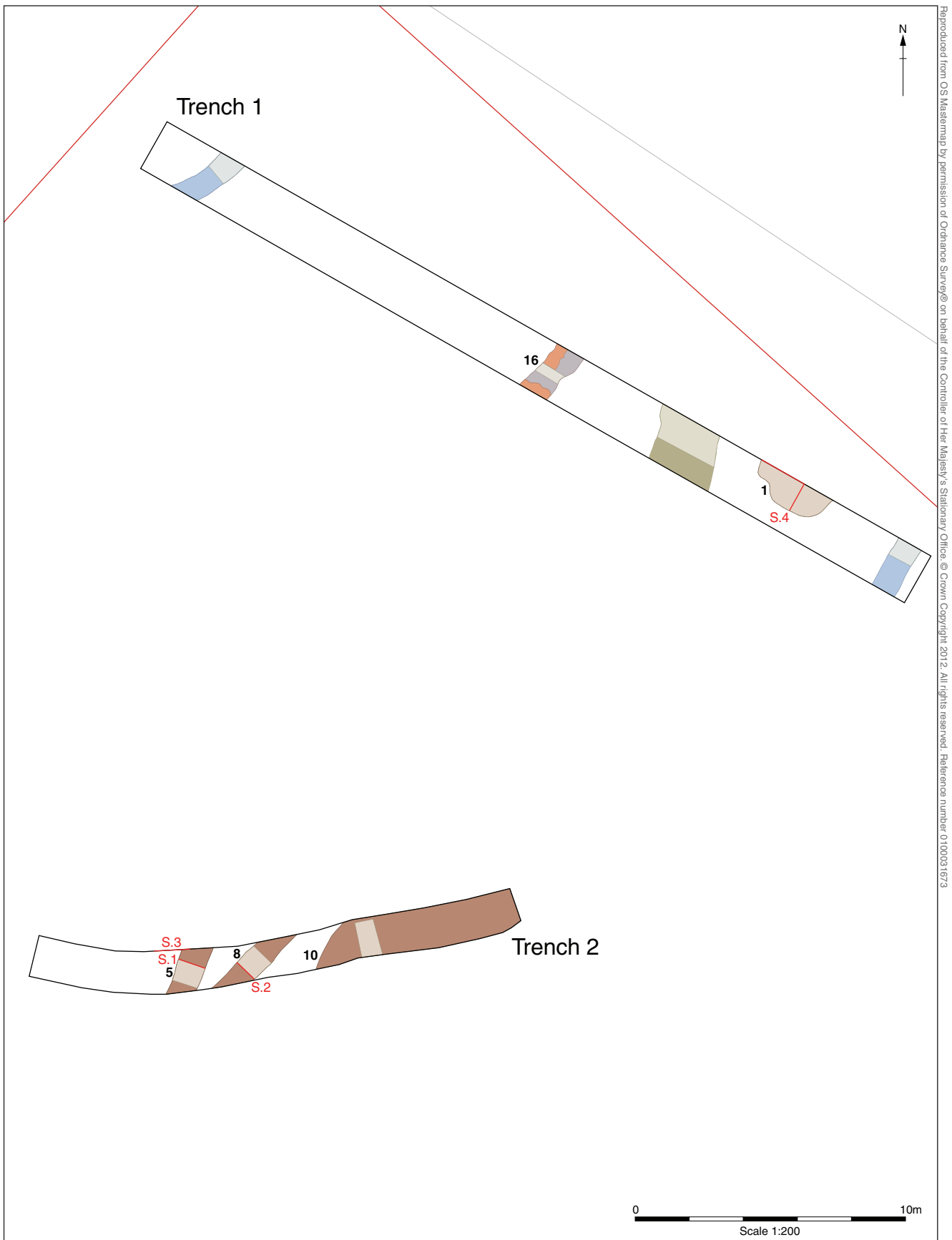
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Cut	—————
Deposit Horizon	—————
Top Surface/Top of Natural	—————
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	- - - - -
Cut Number	117
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD ^
Stone	
Charcoal	
Daub	

Convention Key



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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Trench plans

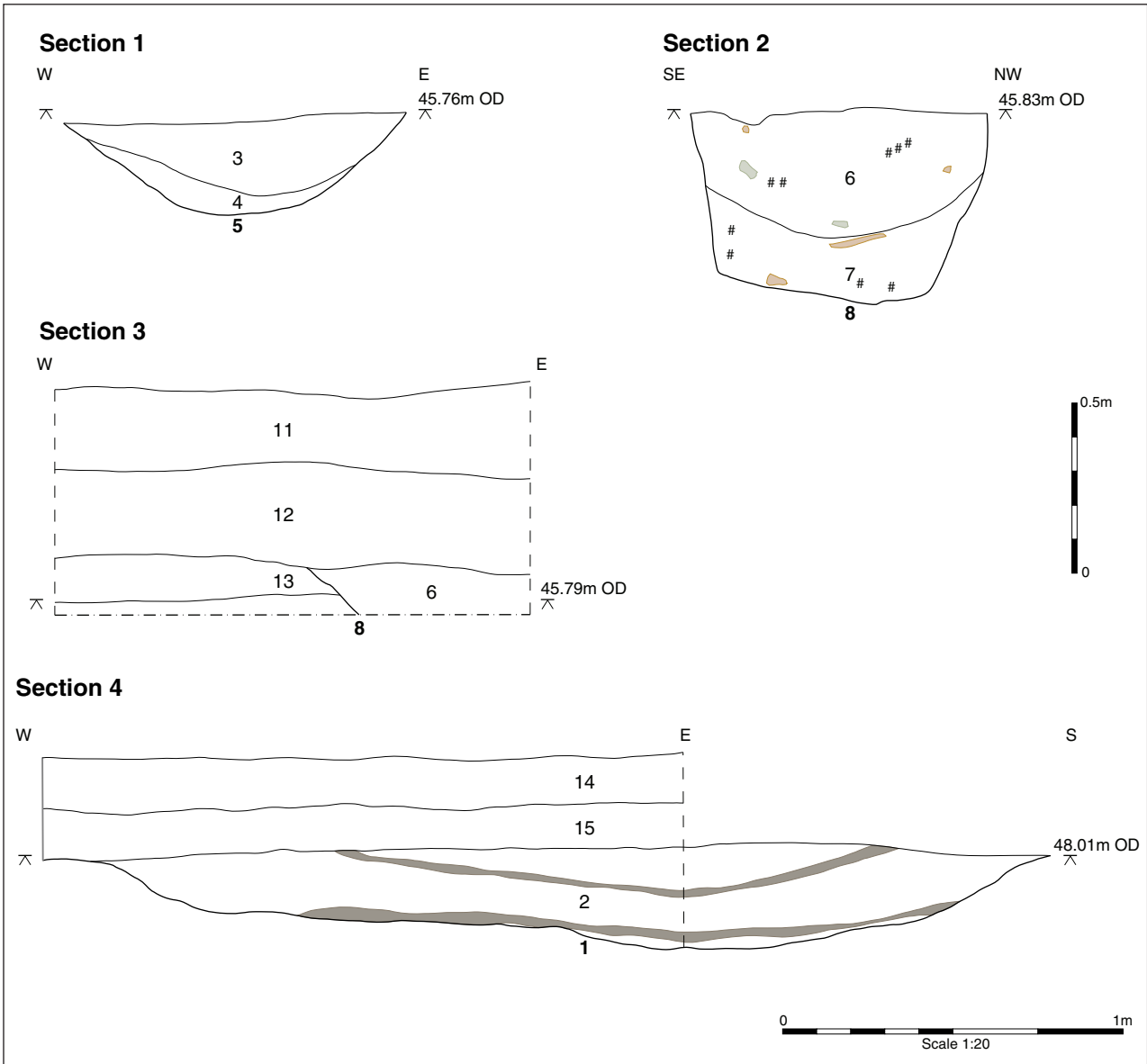


Figure 3: Section drawings



Plate 1: Pit 1 (looking north-east)



Plate 2: Ditch 5 (looking north)



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