

## Medieval Trackway on land at Ivy Farm Royston, Hertfordshire



### Excavation Report



October 2011

**Client: CgMs Consulting**

OA East Report No: 1305

OASIS No: oxfordar3-112012

NGR: TL 34525 40710

## **Medieval Trackway on land at Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire**

*Archaeological Excavation*

*By Taleyna Fletcher BA, MifA and James Fairbairn*


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*Report Date: October 2011*

**Report Number:** 1305  
**Site Name:** Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston, Hertfordshire  
**HER Event No:** n/a  
**Date of Works:** October 2010  
**Client Name:** CgMs Consulting  
**Client Ref:** Ivy Farm, Royston  
**Planning Ref:** 09/02241/1  
**Grid Ref:** TL 34525 40710  
**Site Code:** XHTIBF10  
**Finance Code:** XHTIBF10  
**Receiving Body:** Royston Museum  
**Accession No:** TBA

Prepared by: Taleyna Fletcher  
Position: Project Officer  
Date: October 2011

Checked by: Richard Mortimer  
Position: Project Manager  
Date: October 2011  
Signed: 

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## Summary

*Between the 21st and 28th of October 2010 Oxford Archaeology East were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake a strip, map and record investigation on land at Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire (TL 34525 40710).*

*The investigation revealed a late medieval trackway aligned east to west in the south-eastern corner of the development area, a small post medieval ditch with a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation and numerous post medieval and modern small pits/post holes were also recorded. These lay mostly to the south of the trackway and may be associated with the planting of trees or shrubs parallel to the road. The trackway is likely to be a continuation of that recorded during evaluation of the site by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2009 where medieval and post-medieval finds were also recovered.*

*OA East returned in July 2011 after the ground clearance works to conduct a Watching Brief. No further archaeological features were revealed.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological excavation was conducted on land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological excavation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Instone of Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit (Planning Application 09/02241/1), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2010).
- 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 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). 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 The site lies to the west of Royston on a gentle north facing slope at the foot of Therfield Heath. It is bounded to the north by a railway track, to the south by Baldock road, to the east by modern housing and to the west by open land. Ground levels fall from c. 69-60m OD.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the site consists of chalk overlain by calcareous silty soil of the Upton 1 Association (Flitcroft 2010).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The following summary of the archaeological background to the site is taken from the desk-based assessment prepared by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2009). This study established that Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) does not contain records relating to the proposed development area itself, though a number do pertain to its immediate vicinity.

#### ***Prehistoric***

- 1.3.1 Spot finds of prehistoric material have been made in the Royston area including a Mesolithic bone harpoon/spear point and five stone axes. Other prehistoric finds include flint artefacts, a bronze axe, Iron Age coins and pottery. The precise location of these finds is unknown. The Icknield Way, a prehistoric trade route, passes through the general area of the development site and to the south, on Therfield Heath, are a nationally important group of prehistoric burial and ritual monuments including a Long Barrow (HHER 40) of probable Neolithic date and a barrow cemetery (HHER 6355) of probable Bronze Age Date.

#### ***Roman***

- 1.3.2 Roman Ermine Street passes north to south through Royston a kilometre east of the proposed development site. Icknield Way also remained in use during the Roman period. The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record maps it to the south of the site



following the modern day Baldock Road. A subsidiary Roman road alignment is mapped to the east of the site (HHER 4631).

- 1.3.3 Coins and other evidence for Roman occupation have been found c. 600m to the east of the site at Briary Lane (HHER 1489) and Roman ditches were discovered at Green Drift which lies c. 700m away in the same direction (HHER 13761). Antiquarian accounts mention a 'Roman Camp' a mile out from Royston on the Road to Baldock (HHER 4196). The location and interpretation of this record remains obscure.

#### ***Early Medieval***

- 1.3.4 Early Saxon burials were found during antiquarian investigations of the prehistoric monuments on Therfield Heath to the south of the site. Saxon burials have also been found to the east within the modern town of Royston. Although there is no mention of Royston in the Domesday Book it is thought that a small Saxon hamlet may have been supplanted by the medieval core of the town.

#### ***Medieval and post-medieval***

- 1.3.5 The first documentary reference to Royston dates to 1184 when an Augustinian priory was founded close to the junction of Ermine Street and Icknield Way. The medieval town grew up around this and became an important local market. Throughout the medieval and post-medieval period the proposed development lay outside the core of the historic town.
- 1.3.6 In October 2009 Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation on the site comprising thirteen trenches (Mason 2009). This phase of investigation recorded a trackway of possible medieval/early post-medieval date aligned east to west in the south-eastern corner of the proposed development area and small number of post-medieval/modern pits were present in the north-west corner.

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work. The excavation was directed by James Fairbairn and Andy Instone from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit wrote the brief for the works and visited the site. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer, assisted by Taleyna Fletcher.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this investigation 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 The Brief required that a “Strip, Map and Record” investigation be conducted. However, following the machine strip and discovery of the trackway and other features it was determined in consultation with Andy Instone from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit that a full excavation should be conducted.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 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.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 No environmental samples were taken.
- 2.2.6 Site conditions were good with bright sunshine.

### 3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 The results are presented below by period, the location of investigated features can be seen on Figure 2. Cut numbers are represented in **bold** text, all other deposits are in normal text. Layers of topsoil (100) and subsoil (101) with a maximum combined depth of 0.88m were removed from both areas (Section 1, Plate 1).

#### ***Late Medieval***

- 3.1.2 The principal feature within this area was a trackway **143/157** which had been previously recorded in the evaluation phase (Mason 2009) and continued to run east to west across the excavation area. The trackway had an average width of 2.40m and a maximum depth of 0.16m from the natural subsoil level (Section 1 and 2, Plates 2 and 3). The basal fill of the ditch was a mid grey chalky loam with regular chalk inclusions. This was capped by a dark grey-brown silty topsoil. The base of the trackway was marked by a series of wheel ruts. The carts that used the track appear to have had a relatively narrow gauge (1.20-1.30m).
- 3.1.3 A single, relatively large and unabraded sherd of a medieval (Essex Greyware) jug was recovered from the uppermost fill. The sherd dates to the 13th - 15th century. The trackway may originally have been situated at the bottom of a slope, within a slight hollow way.

#### ***Modern***

- 3.1.4 A narrow ditch (**133**), orientated north-north-west to south-south-east, was recorded continuing beyond the northern and southern limits of the investigation area. It was relatively shallow with a depth of 0.30m and a width of 0.60m (Section 3, Plate 4). Late 19th/early 20th century pottery was found within its single fill.
- 3.1.5 A scatter of square postholes of a clearly modern date were excavated. These were typically 0.15m to 0.20m deep and c. 0.30m wide (Section 4, Plate 5). All had a single fill of mid brown chalky loam. Posthole **106** contained a length of cast iron down pipe. No datable finds were recovered from any of the remaining postholes.

#### ***Undated***

- 3.1.6 A total of nine undated small pits and/or postholes were recorded across the area which may date to the later post-medieval period (related to the standing farm buildings). These ranged in diameter from 0.20 to 0.60m and had an average depth of 0.20m (Plate 6). No finds were recovered from any of these features.

#### ***2011 Watching Brief***

- 3.1.7 OA East returned in July 2011 after the ground clearance works to conduct an Archaeological Watching Brief. No further archaeological features were revealed (Plate 7).

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### *Trackway*

- 4.1.1 The trackway found at Ivy Farm would appear to date from at least the medieval period. There is no map evidence for a trackway here either before or after the construction of Ivy Farm. It ran parallel with the Baldock Road immediately to the south and from its recorded alignment, may have continued eastwards into Royston. To the west, the projected line of the trackway suggests that it would have joined the Baldock road (A505) at the location of the current modern roundabout. The trackway was narrow and vehicles using it would have had a relatively small gauge.
- 4.1.2 The only pottery recovered from the site comprised a single sherd of later medieval ware, from the upper part of the trackway ditch fill. The remaining features probably relate to the 19th and 20th century development of Ivy Farm itself.
- 4.1.3 The trackway is most likely to be contemporary with a similar feature recorded in Trench 2 during the 2009 evaluation (Mason 2009). During those works an east to west orientated feature was recorded in Trench 2. It was 30cm deep with a flattish base and possible wheel rutting. This feature contained pottery sherds dating to the mid-late medieval period, two post-medieval iron nails were recovered from within the ruts. On the basis of the alignment observed in the trial trench this putative trackway may have crossed the southern part of the site from east to west, extending beneath the farm buildings to the west and the gardens to the east.
- 4.1.4 The remaining features were modern in date, perhaps associated with temporary farm buildings or the digging of garden plants.

## APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context no	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Findings	Date
100	Layer	-	0.4	Dark grey silty loam topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.48	Mid grey chalky loam	-	-
102	Fill	4	0.3	Mid to light grey chalky loam with frequent chalk inclusions	-	-
105	Fill		0.12	Mid to light grey Chalky loam fill of posthole	Cast iron pipe	Modern
106	Cut	0.25	0.12	Cut of post hole		
108	Fill	0.2	0.1	Mid grey chalky loam fill of posthole		
109	Cut	0.2	0.1	Cut of post hole		
116	Fill	0.2	0.2	Light grey silty chalky loam fill of posthole		
117	Cut	0.2	0.2	Cut of posthole		
118	Fill	0.18	0.1	Light grey silty chalky loam fill of posthole		
119	Cut	0.18	0.1	Cut of posthole		
120	Fill	0.28	0.15	Mid grey silty chalky loam fill of posthole		
121	Cut	0.28	0.15	Cut of posthole		
124	Fill	0.5	0.35	Mid grey brown chalky loam fill of pit		
125	Cut	0.5	0.35	Cut of pit		
128	Fill	0.4	0.2	Light grey brown silty chalky loam fill of pit		
129	Cut	0.4	0.2	Cut of pit		
130	Fill	0.32	0.18	Light grey silty chalky loam fill of small pit		
131	Cut	0.32	0.18	Cut of pit		
132	Fill	0.6	0.3	Light grey brown silty chalky loam fill of ditch	Pottery	Post medieval
133	Cut	0.6	0.3	Cut of ditch		
134	Fill	0.72	0.38	Light grey silty chalky loam fill of pit		
135	Cut	0.72	0.38	Cut of pit		
136	Fill	0.72	0.2	Light grey brown chalk loam fill of pit		
137	Cut	0.72	0.2	Cut of pit		
138	Fill	0.8	0.2	Mid brown grey chalky loam fill of shallow pit		

139	Cut	0.8	0.2	Cut of pit		
140	Fill	0.3	0.1	Mid brown grey chalky loam fill of shallow pit		
141	Cut	0.3	0.1	Cut of pit		
142	Fill	2.4	0.2	Mid brown grey chalky loam fill of trackway		
143	Cut	2.4	0.2	Cut of trackway		
144	Fill	0.6	0.3	Light grey brown chalky loam fill of ditch	Pottery	Post medieval
145	Cut	0.6	0.3	Cut of ditch		
146	Fill	0.3	0.1	Mid brown grey chalky loam fill of shallow pit		
147	Cut	0.3	0.1	Cut of pit		
153	Fill	0.8	0.18	Light grey chalky loam fill of trackway		
155	Fill	2.2	0.1	Mid grey brown chalky loam fill of trackway	Pottery	Medieval -post medieval
157	Cut	2.8	0.2	Cut of trackway		

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Flitcroft, M. 2009 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Land At Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire
- Flitcroft, M. 2009 Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording and Area Investigation: Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston, Hertfordshire
- Instone, A. 2010 Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and recording via “Strip, Map and Record” and monitoring of Associated Groundworks
- Mason, P. 2009 Archaeological Evaluation at Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire

APPENDIX C. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SHEET

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name and address:</b> Ivy Farm Baldock Road Royston Hertfordshire SG8 9NU		
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire		<b>District:</b> North Hertfordshire
<b>Village/Town:</b> Royston		<b>Parish:</b> Royston
<b>Planning application reference:</b> 09/02241/1		
<b>HER Enquiry reference:</b> unknown		
<b>Client name, address, and tel. no.:</b> CgMs Consulting Units 20-22 Newark Beacon, Beacon Hill Office Park, Cafferata Way Newark, Notts. NG24 2TN 01636 653 060		
<b>Nature of application:</b> Residential Housing Development		
<b>Present land use:</b> Disused Farm		
<b>Size of application area:</b> 5850sq m		<b>Size of area investigated:</b>
<b>NGR (to 8 figures):</b> TL 34525 40710		
<b>Site code (if applicable):</b> XHTIFB10		
<b>Site director/Organization:</b> Taleyna Fletcher/James Fairbairn / Oxford Archaeology East		
<b>Type of work:</b> Strip, Map and Record/ Excavation		
<b>Date of work:</b>	<b>Start:</b> 21.10.10	<b>Finish:</b> 28.10.10
<b>Location of finds &amp; site archive/Curating museum:</b> Royston Museum		
<b>Related HER Nos:</b> unknown		<b>Periods represented:</b> Late Medieval. Post-,medieval, modern
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports</b> Late Medieval trackway Post-medieval and modern pits and horticultural features		
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> Between the 21st and 28th of October 2010 Oxford Archaeology East were commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake a strip, map and record investigation on land at Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire (TL 34525 40710). The		



investigation revealed a late medieval trackway aligned east to west in the south-eastern corner of the development area, a small post medieval ditch with a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation and numerous post medieval and modern small pits/post holes were also recorded. These lay mostly to the south of the trackway and may be associated with the planting of trees or shrubs parallel to the road. The trackway is likely to be a continuation of that recorded during evaluation of the site by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2009 where medieval and post-medieval finds were also recovered.

OA East returned in July 2011 after the ground clearance works to conduct an Archaeological Watching Brief. No further archaeological features were revealed.

**Author of summary:** Taleyna Fletcher | **Date of summary:** October 2011

## APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-112012		
Project Name	Archaeological Excavation at Ivy Farm, Royston, Hertfordshire		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	21-10-2010	Finish	28-10-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XHTIFB10	Planning App. No.	09/02241/1
HER No.	n/a	Related HER/OASIS No.	n/a

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

### Please select all techniques used:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

### 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
Trackway	Medieval 1066 to 1540	pottery	Medieval 1066 to 1540
Ditch	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	pottery	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Pit	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	iron object	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901

### Project Location

County	Hertfordshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	North Hertfordshire	Ivy Farm Baldock Road, Royston Hertfordshire, SG8 9NU
Parish	Royston	
HER	Hertfordshire	
Study Area	1974 sq m	National Grid Reference TL 34525 40710

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Unit
Project Design Originator	Andy Instone
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	James Fairbairn

### Project Archives

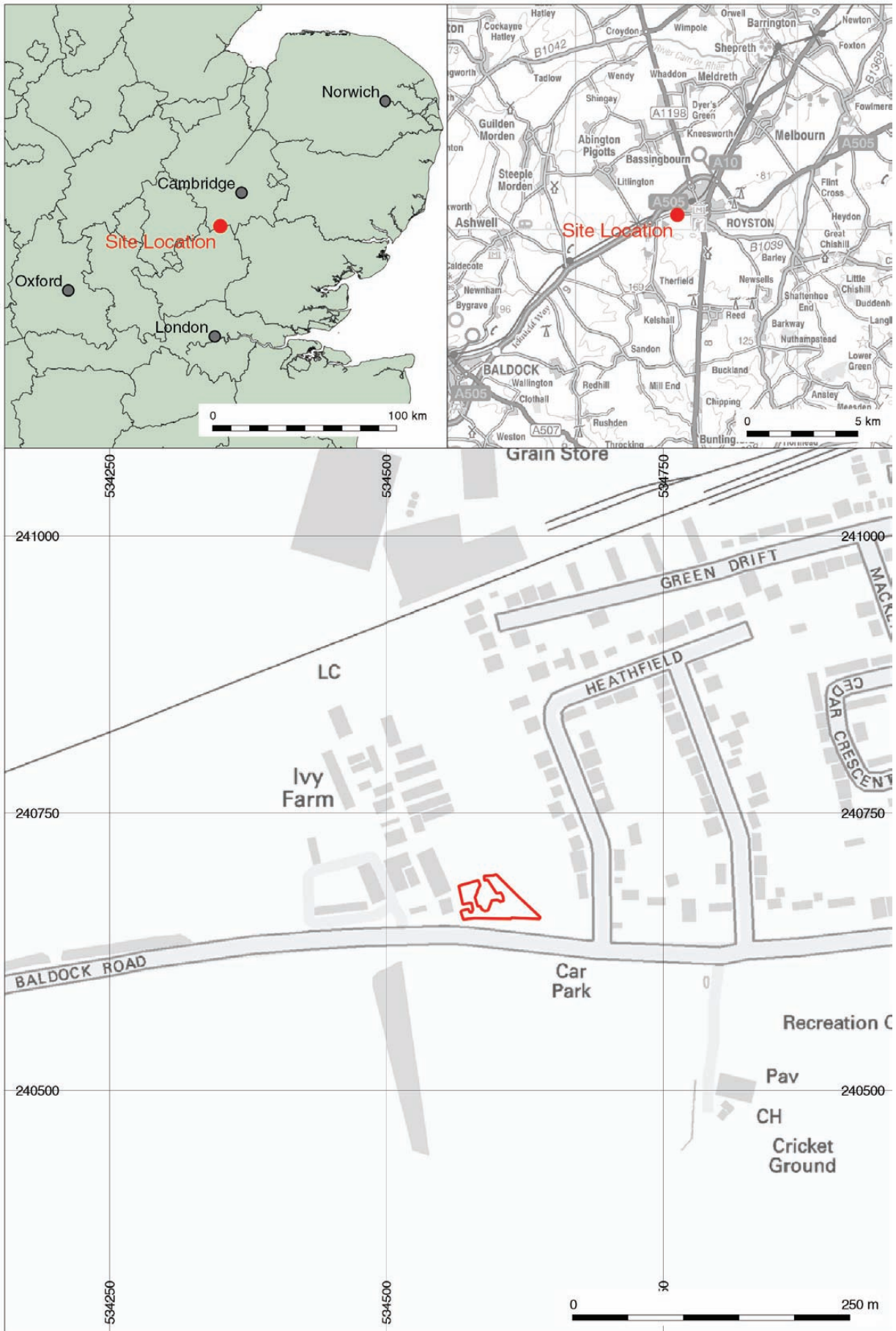
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
xxx	OA East Offices	xxx
TBA	XHTIFB10	TBA

### Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input 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 Bones	<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"/>
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Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

**Notes:**



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Figure 1: Site location map showing the excavation area outlined red

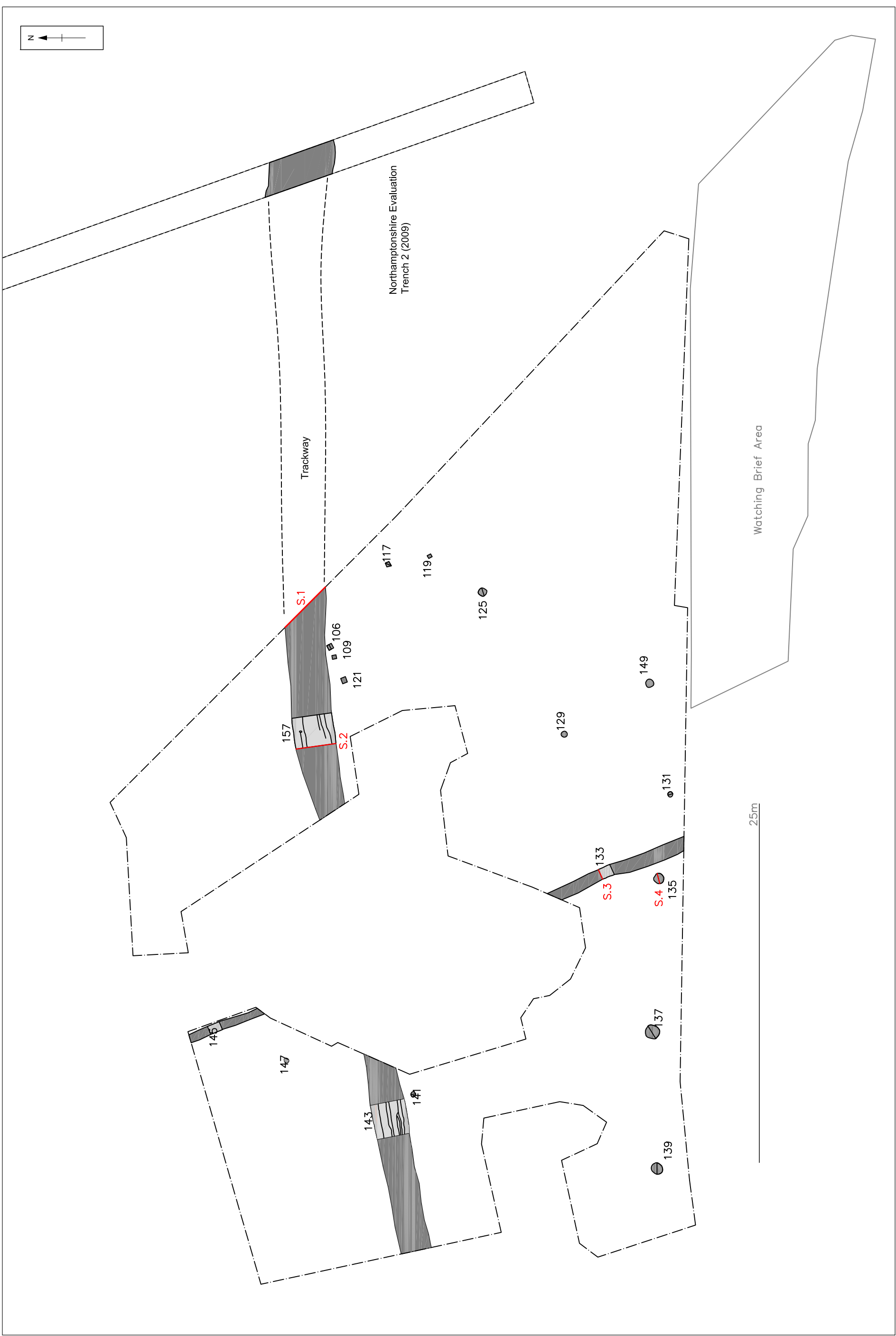


Figure 2 Excavation area

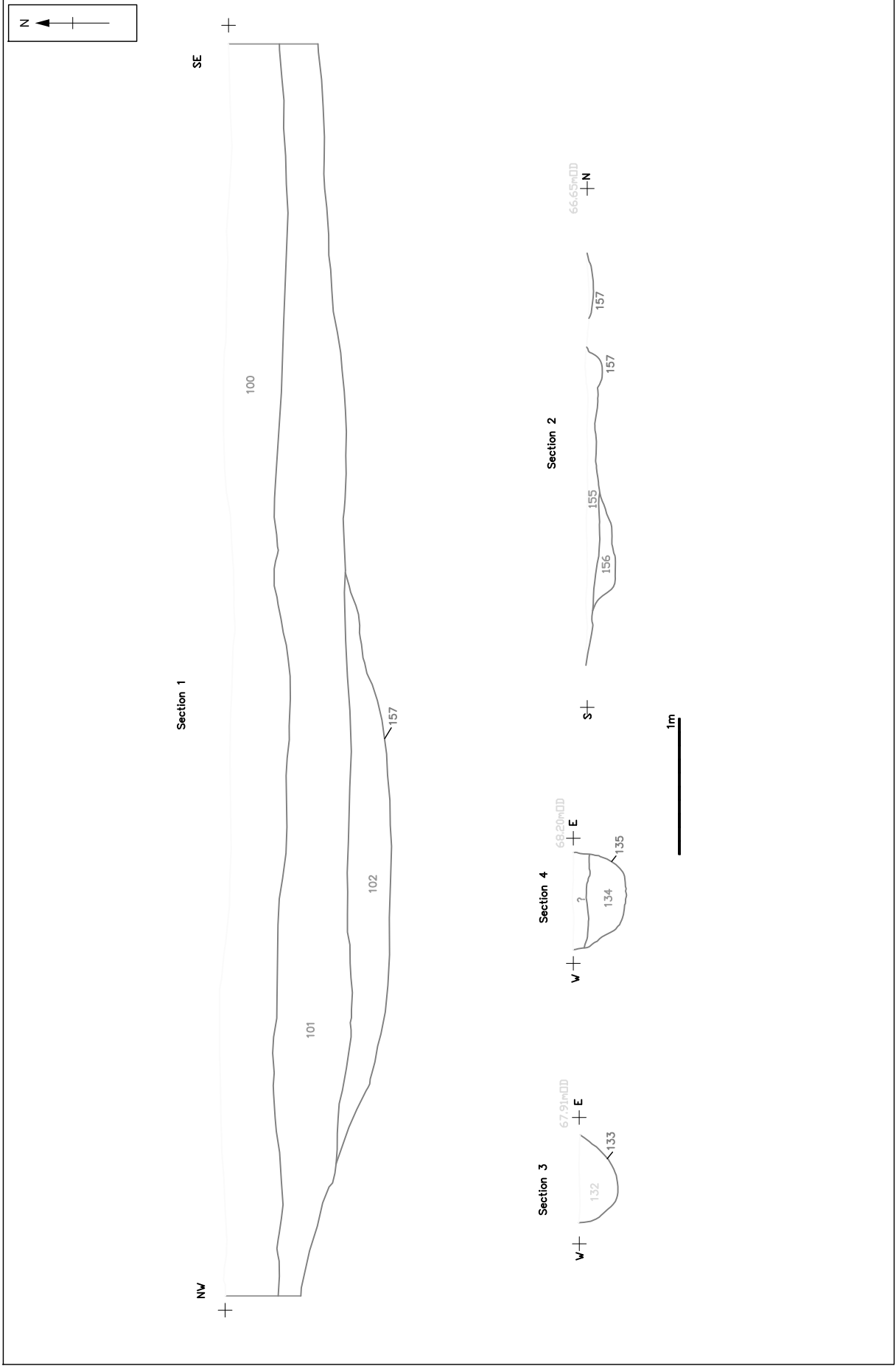


Fig 3 Sections 1-4



Plate 1: Profile of topsoil and subsoil



Plate 2: Section through trackway 104/157



Plate 3: Photograph showing trackway leading to rear of Ivy Farm farmhouse, looking W



Plate 4: Modern ditch 133

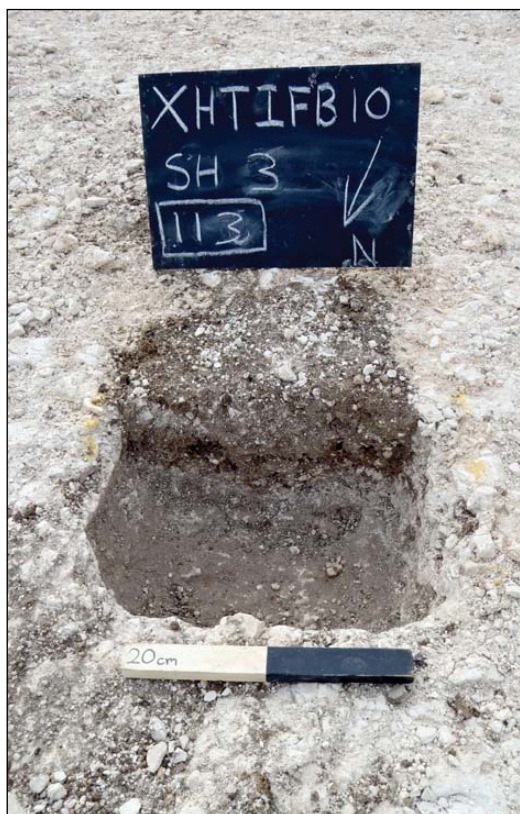


Plate 5: Modern square posthole 113



Plate 6: Small pit/posthole 125





Plate 7: Watching Brief area



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