

36 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



September 2012

Client: Steve Count

OA East Report No: 1400

OASIS No: Oxfordar3-133478

NGR: TL 4174 9656

36 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation

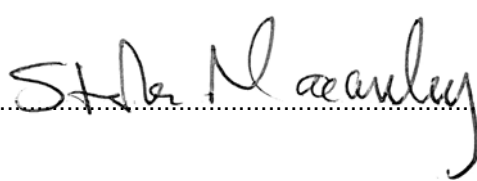
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Report Date: September 2012

Report Number: 1400
Site Name: 36 High Street, March
HER Event No: ECB 3826
Date of Works: August 2012
Client Name: Steve Count
Client Ref: Text
Planning Ref: F/YR11/0901/O
Grid Ref: TL 4174 9656
Site Code: MAR HIS 12
Finance Code: MAR HIS 12
Receiving Body: CCC Stores, Landbeach
Accession No: 4
Prepared by: Tom Phillips
Position: Project Officer
Date: September 2012
Checked by: Stephen Macaulay
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: September 2012
Signed: 

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	7
1.2 Geology and topography.....	7
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	7
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	7
2 Aims and Methodology.....	9
2.1 Aims.....	9
2.2 Methodology.....	9
3 Results.....	10
3.1 Introduction	10
3.2 Trench 1.....	10
3.3 Trench 2.....	10
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	11
4.1 Discussion.....	11
4.2 Recommendations.....	11
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	12
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	14
B.1 Pottery.....	14
B.2 Clay Pipe.....	15
B.3 Metallic Slag.....	15
B.4 Glass.....	15
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	16
C.1 Faunal Remains.....	16
Appendix D. Bibliography	17
Appendix E. OASIS Report Form	18

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Trench plan

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Trench 1, looking south. 1m scale
Plate 2 Trench 2; north facing profile at eastern end of trench. 1m scale

Summary

On 23rd August 2012 an archaeological evaluation was conducted at 36 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire. Two trenches, totalling 24.5m in length, were machine excavated. Trench 1 contained a series of probable post-medieval plough scars, which were truncated by a post-medieval pit containing a cattle skeleton and pottery dating to the late 17th – late 18th centuries. A ditch, also of post-medieval date, was uncovered at the north-western end. The upper fill contained pottery dating to the 16th – mid 17th centuries. Trench 2 contained no archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at 36 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application F/YR11/0901/O), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 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 The study area lies on a narrow north to south ridge of March gravels, with deposits of boulder clay to the east and west (British Geological Survey 1995), surrounded by Fen to the south-east and west. In reality, the geology within the trenches was a glacial till, which sealed the gravels.
- 1.2.2 The site was relatively flat; ground level measured 3.0m OD in Trench 1 and 2.88m OD in Trench 2.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The proposed development site lies within the historic core of the town of March, close to the medieval cut/course of the river and likely crossing. There survives later evidence (16th century) of development along March High Street and no. 36 (Listed Building ref 1287721) dates to the late 18th century.
- 1.3.2 Earlier activity in the vicinity is recorded with Roman pottery (CHER 05921) found in the gravel at the Army & Navy Store site (Phillips 1970), while Roman coins and pottery were found at Middle Level Yard (CHER 05927; *ibid.*).
- 1.3.3 Evaluation along Elwyn Road, 200m to the north-east, revealed two late medieval or post-medieval ditches and an isolated pit of uncertain date, possibly Iron Age. The ditches may have represented drains/boundaries defining the eastern limit of the post-medieval built-up area to the south of the bank of the Old Nene (CHER CB15694; Casa Hatton 2001). North of the river, at the White Horse Inn 300m to the north-west, evaluation revealed sparse archaeological features, comprising the remains of a small post-medieval ditch, a possible 18th or 19th century brick culvert and field drains (CHER CB14604; Gardner and Prosser 2001).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The archaeological evaluation was commissioned and funded by Steve Count. It was managed by Stephen Macaulay and was excavated by the author and Louise Bush. Survey was also done by Louise Bush. The evaluation was monitored by Andy Thomas

of Cambridgeshire County Council. Carole Fletcher and Anthony Haskins examined the pottery and animal bone respectively. Illustrations for the report were done by Gillian Greer.

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 The Brief required that a programme of linear trial trenching be undertaken to adequately sample the threatened available area. In total, 24.5m of linear trenching were machine excavated.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by Louise Bush using a Leica GPS 1200 system.
- 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 Site conditions were favourable. The ground consisted of well compacted soils and there was no evidence of any large modern truncation. The trenches were machined up to 1m below ground level but no water was encountered.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Results are described in order of trench, starting with the chronologically earliest deposit or feature in each.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Located in the west of the site, Trench 1 measured 12m in length and was orientated north-west to south-east. The earliest features were a series of 4 parallel gullies (**10**, **12**, **14** and **16**), possibly plough scars, all orientated north to south in the centre of the trench. The gullies were separated by no more than 0.75m. The smallest was gully **10**, measuring 0.1m wide and 0.02m deep, while the largest was gully **14**, measuring 0.26m wide and 0.1m deep. Each contained a single greyish brown sandy silt fill. No finds were recovered.

3.2.2 The gullies were sealed by layer (6), a mid brownish grey sandy silt measuring 0.1m thick, which sealed the natural and was interpreted as an interface between it and the overlying soil. It was sealed by layer (5), a lower subsoil horizon. Layer (5) was a dark greyish brown sandy silt of moderate compaction.

3.2.3 Truncating layer (5) in the centre of the trench was a sub-rectangular pit (**8**), measuring 1m wide and at least 0.5m deep. It contained a dark brown silty sand of loose compaction. Within the fill was a cattle skeleton, approximately two-thirds of which was visible in the trench, including the spine, pelvis and legs. Other finds comprised a clay tobacco pipe of mid 17th century date and four sherds (12g) of post-medieval pottery dating to the late 17th – late 18th centuries.

3.2.4 Ditch **19**, located in the north-western end of the trench, also truncated layer (5). It was orientated east to west, measuring at least 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep. It contained two fills, the upper of which yielded 10 sherds (112g) of post-medieval pottery dating to the 16th – mid 17th centuries.

3.2.5 The features were sealed by subsoil layer (3), a mid brown silty sand measuring 0.3m thick. This was sealed in turn by topsoil layer (1), a mid greyish brown silty sand measuring 0.22m thick.

3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Located in the east of the site, Trench 2 measured 12.5m in length and was orientated east to west. It contained no archaeological features. The natural geology was sealed by layer (6), which in trench 2 measured 0.12m thick. This was sealed by layer (5), measuring 0.26m thick. A single sherd (8g) of abraded Early Roman Greyware pottery was retrieved from layer (5) at the eastern end of the trench. Layer (5) was sealed by layer (4), a 0.15m thick mixed deposit of re-deposited natural and mid brown silty sand, probably representing made ground. Sealing it was subsoil layer (3), measuring 0.2m thick. It was sealed at the eastern end of the trench by a lens of gravel (2), measuring 0.1m thick. Topsoil layer (1) completed the sequence, measuring 0.2m thick in Trench 2.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 The evaluation revealed low-level archaeological remains, probably all of post-medieval date. Ditch **19** in Trench 1 contained 16th – mid 17th century pottery and was parallel to the plot boundary 5m to the north, suggesting it represents a former version of this boundary. The plough scars all extended perpendicular to ditch **19** and are also probably post-medieval in date. Pit **8** contained a cattle skeleton, along with late 17th – late 18th century pottery and a clay pipe bowl dating to the mid 17th century.

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	NW-SE
Plough scars 10, 12, 14 and 16 . Possible ditch 19 and shallow pit 8 , which contained a cattle skeleton.					Avg. depth (m)	0.8
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	12
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.22	Topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
5	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil	-	-
6	Layer	-	0.1	Natural interface	-	-
7	Fill	1	0.5	Pit	Cattle skeleton, clay pipe (C17), pot (post-med), glass	Post-med: late 17th-late 18th century
8	Cut	1	0.5	Pit	-	Post-med
9	Fill	0.1	0.02	Plough scar	-	Post-med
10	Cut	0.1	0.02	Plough scar	-	Post-med
11	Fill	0.2	0.06	Plough scar	-	Post-med
12	Cut	0.2	0.06	Plough scar	-	Post-med
13	Fill	0.26	0.09	Plough scar	-	Post-med
14	Cut	0.26	0.09	Plough scar	-	Post-med
15	Fill	0.16	0.05	Plough scar	-	Post-med
16	Cut	0.16	0.05	Plough scar	-	Post-med
17	Fill		0.13	Ditch	Animal bone, pot (post-med), slag	Post-med: 16th - mid 17th century
18	Fill		0.17	Ditch	-	Post-med
19	Cut	>1.15	0.3	Ditch	-	Post-med
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
No archaeological features present.					Avg. depth (m)	0.9
					Width (m)	1.6
					Length (m)	12.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.1	Made ground/levelling	-	-

context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
3	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-
4	Layer	-	0.15	Made ground	-	-
5	Layer	-	0.26	Subsoil	Abraded sherd of Roman Greyware	-
6	Layer	-	0.12	Natural interface	-	-

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

by Carole Fletcher

B.1 Pottery

Introduction

B.1.1 The excavation produced a small pottery assemblage of 15 sherds, weighing 0.132kg, recovered from three contexts. The condition of the overall assemblage is moderately abraded. The average sherd weight from individual contexts is small at c.9g.

Methodology

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.

Assemblage

B.1.4 Layer 5 produced a single abraded sherd of Roman proto-Sandy Greyware, which was recovered from the eastern end of trench 2. No other datable material was recovered from this context. Context (7), the fill of pit 8, produced a single unprovenanced Sandy Ware sherd that is not closely datable, two sherds from post-medieval redware vessels and a single sherd of late 17th-late 18th century Nottinghamshire type stoneware.

B.1.5 Ten sherds of pottery were recovered from pit 19, fill (17). These include six sherds from a Bourne D Ware bowl with knife-trimmed flat base and a splayed base sherd from a Cistercian Type Ware drinking vessel, dating the context to between the 16th-mid 17th century.

B.1.6 Being domestic in origin, these sherds represents occupation or rubbish disposal on the site. The single Roman sherd and the abraded Sandy Ware sherd are residual elements in an otherwise 16th to late 18th century assemblage.

Statement of Research Potential and Further Work

B.1.7 An assemblage of this size provides only basic dating information for a site. Unless further excavation takes place no further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Pottery Date Range
5	Proto sandy Greyware		1	0.008	Second half of the 1st century AD
7	English Stoneware Nottingham-type		1	0.002	Late 17th-late 18th century
	Post-medieval Redware	Bowl	1	0.005	
	Post-medieval Redware	Jar	1	0.004	

Context	Fabric	Basic Form	Sherd Count	Weight (kg)	Pottery Date Range
	Unprovenanced Sandy Ware not closely datable		1	0.001	
17	Bourne D Ware	Bowl	6	0.050	16th century-mid 17th century
	Cistercian type Ware	Drinking Vessel	1	0.016	
	Late medieval and transitional		1	0.036	
	Late medieval and transitional	Jug	1	0.008	
	Post-medieval Redware	Bowl	1	0.002	

Table 3: Pottery Dating Summary Catalogue

B.2 Clay Pipe

B.2.1 A near complete clay pipe bowl was recovered from pit **8**, fill (7). This most closely resembles an Oswald type 5 (Oswald 1975, p37, fig 3), which dates to the 17th century. Pottery recovered alongside this clay pipe fragment dates from the late 17th to late 18th century, and considered with the clay pipe fragment suggests the context may be late 17th century.

B.2.2 No further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Number of Fragments	Weight (kg)	Decoration	Oswald Type	Date
7	1	0.008	Rouletted below the rim	Type 5	c.1640-1660

Table 3: Clay pipe

B.3 Metallic Slag

Assemblage

B.3.1 A piece of ferrous slag was recovered from pit **19**, fill (17), within which small lumps of tap slag are distinguishable, while small amounts of calcitic material suggest this slag is the result of blast furnace smelting from the 16th century or later.

B.3.2 No further work is required on this assemblage.

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Range
17		1	0.319	post-medieval

Table 1: Slag

B.4 Glass

B.4.1 A small shard of window glass that is not closely datable was recovered from pit **8**, fill (7).

Context	Form	Count	Weight (kg)	Date
7	Window glass	1	0.001	17th century-modern

Table 2: Glass

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Faunal Remains

By Anthony Haskins

Introduction

- C.1.1 An assemblage of 58 fragments of animal bone (4.318kg) were submitted for assessment from the evaluation at 36 High Street, March. The material was recovered from two contexts (7 and 17), which represent the fills of a post-medieval pit and ditch, respectively.

Methodology

- C.1.2 The entire assemblage was initially scanned by context. All “countable” bones were recorded. The faunal remains and archive are curated by Oxford Archaeology East until formal deposition.

Results

- C.1.3 The most prevalent taxon recovered from the assemblage is cattle represented by numerous elements from an articulated skeleton in context (7), the fill of post-medieval pit **8**. The majority of the elements are fused except the along the spine, suggesting the animal was an older juvenile.
- C.1.4 The remaining material recovered from fill (17), ditch **19**, was a mix of taxons including cattle, pig, sheep and cat. Cattle again was the most well represented with a phalange and mandible fragment. The remaining fragments were unidentifiable long bone shaft fragments from a large mammal

Preservation

- C.1.5 The bone was relatively well preserved, which is to be expected from recently deposited material.

Conclusion

- C.1.6 The material from the pit fill (7) suggests an articulated cattle skeleton was buried within the pit. The material from (17) is likely to represent a mix of domestic refuse and butchery waste.

Further work and Methods Statement

- C.1.7 The material recovered was a small assemblage from post-medieval features and requires no further work.

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	Oxfordar3-133478		
Project Name	36 March High Street		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	23-08-2012	Finish	23-08-2012
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	MARHIS 12	Planning App. No.	F/YR11/0901/O
HER No.	ECB 3826	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5
Development Type	Urban Residential

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 type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
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<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

Monument 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	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Pottery	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Pit	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Animal bone	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901
Plough scar	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Clay pipe	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	36 March High Street, March, Cambs, PE15 9JR
District	Fenland		
Parish	March		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	50m x 20m	National Grid Reference	TL 4174 9656

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	Tom Phillips

Project Archives

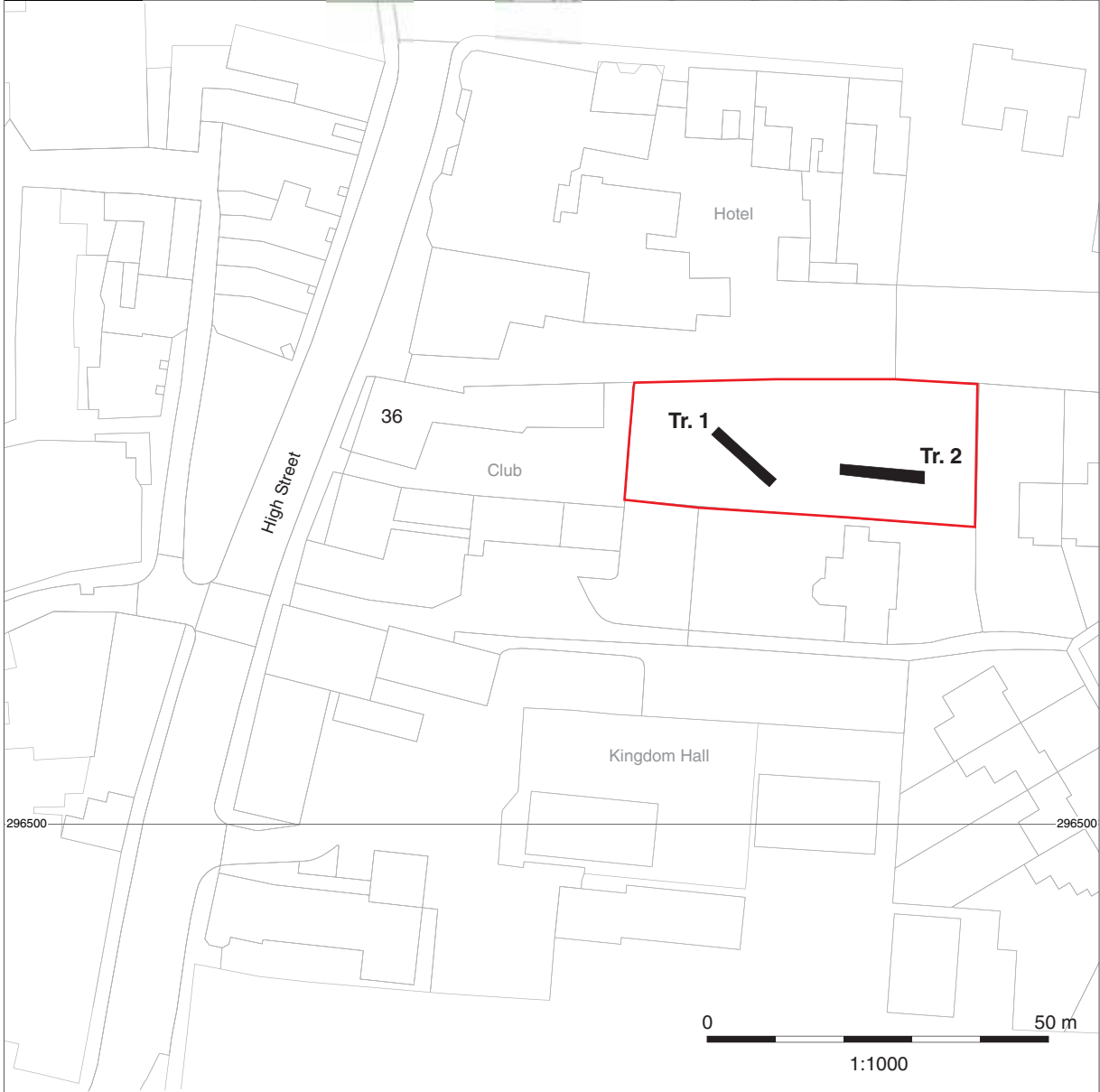
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CCC County Stores	OA East	CCC County Stores
MARHIS 12	MARHIS 12	MARHIS 12

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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



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Figure 2: Trench Plan



Plate 1 : Trench 1, looking south. 1m scale



Plate 2: North facing profile at eastern end of trench. 1m scale



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