

# Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham Cambridgeshire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



May 2010

**Client: CgMs Consulting**

OA East Report No: 1178  
OASIS No: oxfordar3-75202  
NGR: TL 5538 5271

**Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham, Cambridgeshire**


*Archaeological Evaluation*

*By Tom Phillips BA AlFA*

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*Report Date: May 2010*

**Report Number:** 1178  
**Site Name:** Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham, Cambridgeshire  
**HER Event No:** ECB 3314  
**Date of Works:** March 2010  
**Client Name:** CgMs Consulting on behalf of The Trustees of the Vestey 1993 Settlement.  
**Client Ref:** -  
**Planning Ref:** S/0652/08/F  
**Grid Ref:** TL 5538 5271  
**Site Code:** BALDOB 10  
**Finance Code:** BALDOB 10  
**Receiving Body:** CCC Stores, Landbeach  
**Accession No:** -  
**Prepared by:** Tom Phillips  
**Position:** Project Officer  
**Date:** May 2010  
**Checked by:** James Drummond-Murray  
**Position:** Project Manager  
**Date:** May 2010  
**Signed:** 

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## **Summary**

*Between 29th - 30th March 2010 Oxford Archaeology East (formerly CAMARC, Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit) undertook an evaluation at Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham, Cambridgeshire. Five trenches totalling 96m were machine excavated across the development area. The only two features encountered were a possible geological feature in trench 1 and a modern posthole in trench 5. Trenches 2 and 3 contained layers of made ground. Trenches 4 and 5 showed evidence of possible truncation of topsoil although it is not believed this would have affected any buried archaeological remains.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham, Cambridgeshire (TL 5538 5271; Figure 1). The development site is located approximately 3.2km north-west of the village of Balsham and 1.6km east of the A11 Fulbourn/Balsham junction.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was conducted under a condition attached to planning permission (South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Permission S/0652/08/F, condition 19), in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council, supplemented by Specifications prepared by CgMs Consulting and Oxford Archaeology East.
- 1.1.3 The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of The Trustees of the Vestey 1993 Settlement.
- 1.1.4 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 and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). 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.
- 1.1.5 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 underlying geology of the site is recorded as New Pit Chalk Formation (British Geological Survey 2002) overlain by shallow well drained calcareous coarse loamy/sandy soils of the Newmarket 2 Association (SSEW 1983).
- 1.2.2 The site slopes downhill from south-east to north-west. Modern ground level at the south-eastern end of trench 5 was 67.29m OD and at the north-western end of trench 1 it was 59.8m OD.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The development site is located in an area identified as being of high archaeological importance. The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) was consulted to obtain details of all recorded archaeological remains within a 1km radius. The earliest remains within this radius include a possible Bronze Age barrow recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey, in the field to the north of the site (Figure 1; CHER 06267), and two possible Neolithic flint axes found 1km to the north and 1km to the north-east (CHER 06260 and 06262).
- 1.3.2 The nationally important Fleam Dyke (Scheduled Monument Cambridgeshire 6) is located 0.7km to the north-east of the site. Fleam Dyke is one of four Cambridgeshire Dykes which are orientated south-east to north-west. It runs for almost five kilometres, marking the boundary between the parishes of Fulbourn and Great Wilbraham and Balsham and West Wrating, and is thought to be Saxon in origin, constructed to act as

a territorial marker and defensive barrier, controlling access in and out of East Anglia. Several inhumations, dated as Saxon, were found in the Fleam Dyke to the north-east of the site in 1861 (CHER 06386). They were dated as Saxon due to the artefacts discovered with the burials, including two shield bosses and a spearhead.

- 1.3.3 Approximately 0.5km to the north-west is the possible location of the deserted medieval village of Middletone (CHER 08078), to the south of which is a linear cropmark (CHER 09078) orientated north-east to south-west. To the south-east of the development area are a series of cropmarks interpreted as possible enclosures (CHER 09056).
- 1.3.4 The site itself contains a single Grade II Listed Building, an early 19th century barn, directly adjacent to the road (Listed Building 51203).
- 1.3.5 As part of the background search, available aerial photographic evidence was also consulted, but no relevant features were identified either on or close to the development area.

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank CgMs Consulting on behalf of The Trustees of the Vestey 1993 Settlement who funded the archaeological work. James Drummond-Murray managed the project and edited the report. Andy Thomas and Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council monitored the project. The author and Nick Gilmour carried out the fieldwork. Rachel Clarke conducted the GPS survey. Andrew Corrigan, Nick Gilmour and Severine Bezie were responsible for the illustrations.



## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- To determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development.
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered.
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed and the scope of any further investigation works defined.
- To produce a site archive for deposition and to provide information for accession to the Cambridgeshire HER.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Prior to the evaluation, background research was carried out. This included consulting the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record for all entries within a 1km radius of the site. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 was studied (Figure 4) and available aerial photographic data was reviewed through the CHER.

2.2.2 The Brief required that a programme of linear trial trenching be carried out, to adequately sample the threatened area. In total 96m of trenches were machine excavated within an area of 0.77ha (Figure 2).

2.2.3 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.4 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GPS 1200 system to locate the position of the excavated trenches and record their heights.

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. All trenches were well drained and there were no problems encountered during machining.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Results are presented in trench order and then stratigraphic order, beginning with the earliest layer or feature. A full list of trench and context details can be found in Appendix A.

#### 3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was located in the north-west of the site, in the corner of an arable field, approximately 10m south of the road and on the line of the new access road. It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 25m in length (Plate 2). Feature 6 (Figure 3, section 1; Plate 1) was sub-circular in plan, measuring approximately 2.5m wide and 0.5m deep with an irregular profile. It contained three sterile fills, which were devoid of any artefactual or ecofactual remains. There was also a non-continuous and diffuse linear 'mark', orientated north-north-west to south-south-east, extending across the trench (see Plate 2). Upon investigation there was no depth to this feature and it was interpreted as a plough scar. Feature 6 was sealed by subsoil layer 2, a light brown sandy loam measuring 0.12m deep. It was sealed by topsoil layer 1, a dark greyish brown silty loam measuring 0.38m deep.

#### 3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 Trench 2 was located to the south-east of trench 1 in an area of trees, approximately 10m south of the road and on the line of the new access road. It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 10m in length. The chalk natural was sealed by subsoil 2 measuring 0.1m deep. It was sealed in turn by topsoil 1, measuring 0.2m deep. In trench 2 there was an additional 0.4m of made ground comprising layers 14, 13 and 7 (Figure 3, section 2; Plate 3), which sealed topsoil layer 1.

#### 3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 Trench 3 was located in the east of the site, directly to the west of the Listed barn, within the area of the new car park. It was originally intended to be orientated north-east to south-west and measure 10m in length. However, it was located within a mound of made ground, thought to have been created when the main access from the road was landscaped. There were also two drain covers on the crest of the mound. Therefore the trench was positioned over the shallowest part of the mound and was reduced in length. It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 6m in length.

3.4.2 Subsoil layer 2 and topsoil layer 1 were not present suggesting they were cleared during the landscaping (Plate 4). Instead, the natural chalk was sealed by layer 10, a dark greyish brown silty loam measuring 0.66m deep, probably topsoil which had been dumped. It was sealed by layer 9, a light yellowish grey sand measuring 0.28m deep, which contained fragments of modern brick. It was only present in the south-east of the trench, on the highest part of the mound, and represents a separate episode of dumped material. Completing the sequence was layer 8, a dark greyish brown silty loam measuring 0.28m deep, very similar to layer 10.

### 3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 Trench 4 was located in the south of the site, south of the modern farm buildings and an area of hard standing, on the the footprint of the new office building. It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 30m in length (Plate 5). A series of diffuse linear 'marks' were visible in the trench, orientated north-north-west to south-south-east. These were interpreted as plough scars. The chalk natural was sealed by subsoil 2 measuring 0.15m deep. It was sealed in turn by topsoil 1, measuring 0.22m deep.

### 3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 Trench 5 was located in the south-east of the site, within a courtyard formed by the older, timber framed barns, where new paths will be located. It was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 25m in length. In trench 5 there was evidence that truncation of the topsoil and subsoil may have occurred. In the south-east of the trench in particular, the chalk was much purer and more compact, suggesting the interface between the chalk and subsoil had been removed. In section, the interface with the chalk was very sharp (Figure 3, section 4; Plate 6), in contrast to, for example, trench 2 (Plate 3), where the subsoil was preserved. As a result the sequence was different in trench 5. The chalk natural was sealed by layer 17, a mid greyish brown sandy loam measuring 0.06m deep. It contained several small fragments of brick, observed during machining. Layer 17 was sealed by layer 16, a mid brown sandy loam measuring 0.14m deep, very similar to layer 17 except it contained moderate inclusions of chalk fragments. It was sealed in turn by layer 15, a dark greyish brown sandy loam measuring 0.14m deep. Layers 15-17 represent disturbed topsoil and re-deposited natural, presumably related to either the construction of the barns or landscaping of the courtyard.

3.6.2 There was also a post-medieval or modern posthole in trench 5. Posthole feature **12** was circular in plan, measuring 0.3m in diameter and 0.4m deep with vertical sides. It contained a very loose fill (11). A small fragment of brick was retrieved from the fill and there were roots visible on the surface.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 Only two features were encountered during the evaluation. Feature **6** in trench 1 is most likely a natural hollow given the irregular profile and the very sterile fill. The second feature was a post medieval or modern posthole, feature **12**, in trench 5. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1885 (Figure 4) shows a series of internal divisions within the area of the courtyard and posthole feature **12** could relate to one of these.
- 4.1.2 The only other results pertain to layers. In trenches 1, 2 and 4 intact subsoil and topsoil were encountered. In trenches 3 and 5 there was evidence of truncation although it is unlikely this would have affected the preservation of buried archaeological remains.
- 4.1.3 No artefacts were collected from either the topsoil or made ground layers, providing further evidence that the site has minimal archaeological interest.

### 4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The results of the evaluation are deemed to be of low significance in the areas where trenches were excavated.

## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Possible natural feature 6. Sealed by subsoil and topsoil.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		1.6
				Length (m)		25
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Topsoil	-	0.38	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
2	Subsoil	-	0.12	Light brown sandy loam	-	-
3	Fill	1.2	0.4	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
4	Fill	0.2	0.2	Mid greyish brown silty loam	-	-
5	Fill	0.24	0.32	Mid grey silty loam	-	-
6	Cut	2.5	0.5	Cut of possible natural feature	-	Undated
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Trench devoid of features. Subsoil and topsoil sealed by made ground.				Avg. depth (m)		0.7
				Width (m)		1.6
				Length (m)		10
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Topsoil	-	0.2	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
2	Subsoil	-	0.1	Light brown sandy loam	-	-
7	Layer	-	0.14	Dark reddish brown silty loam	Fragments of brick	Modern
13	Layer	-	0.18	Light greyish brown silty loam		Modern
14	Layer	-	0.08	Dark brown silty loam	Fragments of brick and slate	Modern
Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Trench devoid of features. Geology possibly truncated. Build up of dumped material				Avg. depth (m)		1.22
				Width (m)		1.6
				Length (m)		6
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
8	Layer	-	0.28	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	Modern
9	Layer	-	0.28	Light yellowish grey sand	Fragments of brick	Modern

10	Layer	-	0.66	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
<b>Trench 4</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
Trench devoid of features. Chalk natural sealed by subsoil and topsoil.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.37
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1.6
					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
1	Topsoil	-	0.22	Dark greyish brown silty loam	-	-
2	Subsoil	-	0.15	Light brown sandy loam	-	-
<b>Trench 5</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
Post medieval/modern posthole 12. Geology possibly truncated. Build up of disturbed material.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.34
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1.6
					<b>Length (m)</b>	25
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
11	Fill	0.3	0.4	Mid greyish brown sandy loam	Small brick fragment	Post medieval/modern
12	Cut	0.3	0.4	Posthole		Post medieval/modern
15	Layer	-	0.14	Dark greyish brown sandy loam	-	-
16	Layer	-	0.14	Mid brown sandy loam	-	-
17	Layer	-	0.06	Mid greyish brown sandy loam	-	-

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Geological Survey, 2002, *Saffron Walden. England and Wales Sheet 205 Solid and Drift Geology 1:50 000*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, *Soils of England and Wales Sheet 4, Eastern England 1: 250 000*.

## APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-75202		
Project Name	Evaluation at Dotterell Hall Barns, Balsham		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	29-03-2010	Finish	30-03-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	BALDOB 10	Planning App. No.	S/0652/08/F
HER No.	ECB3314	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Development Type	Rural Commercial

### 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
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<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
Posthole	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	None	Select period...
Natural feature	Uncertain		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	South Cambs	Dotterell Hall Balsham CB21 4HE	
Parish	Balsham		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	0.77ha	National Grid Reference	TL 5538 5271



### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Local Authority Archaeologist
Project Design Originator	Myk Flitcroft, CgMs Consulting
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Tom Phillips

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC County Stores	OA East	CCC County Stores
BALDOB 10	BALDOB 10	BALDOB 10

### 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"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey



**Notes:**

## Drawing Conventions

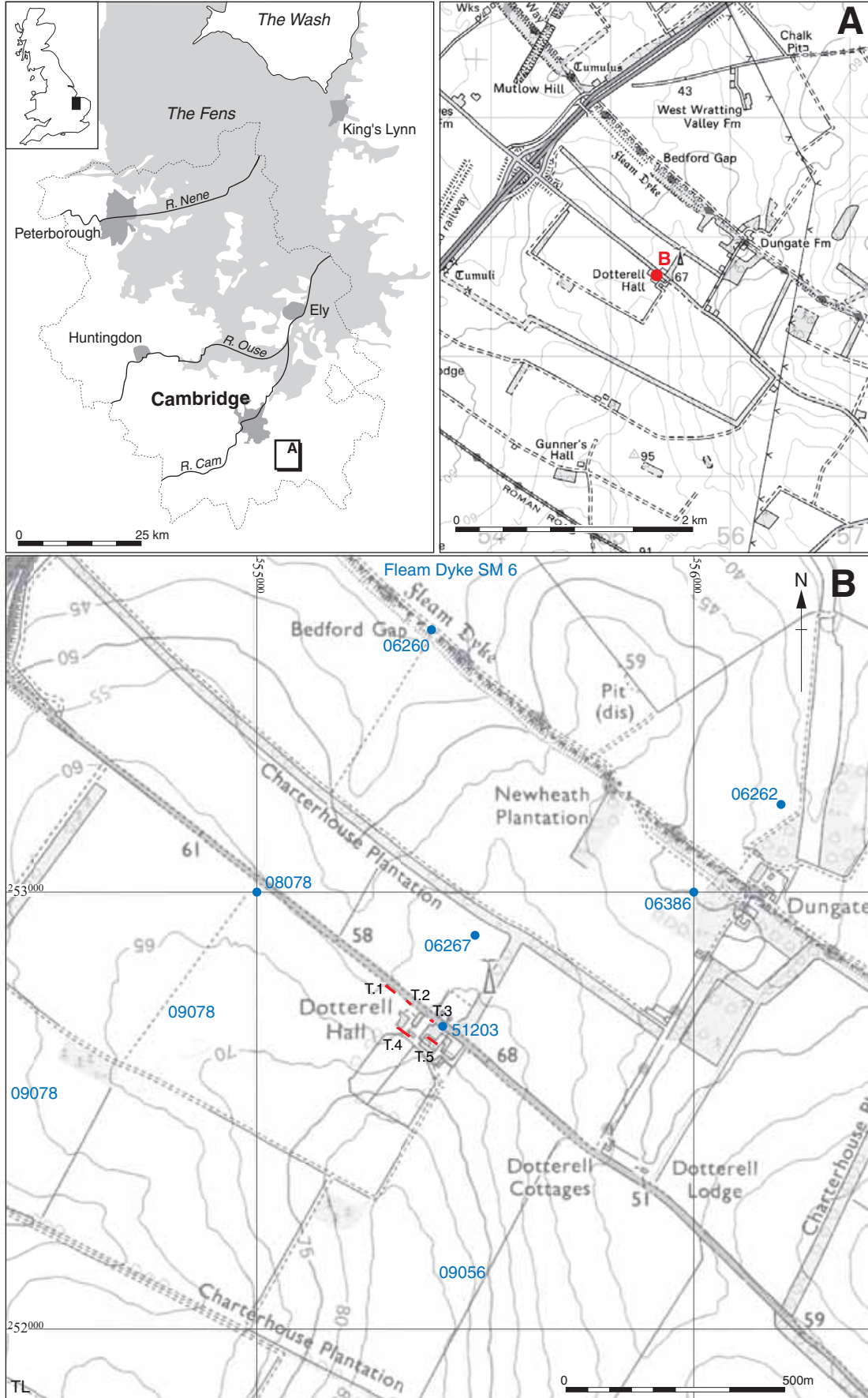
### Plans

Limit of Excavation	_____
Deposit - Conjectured	-----
Natural Features	_____
Sondages/Machine Strip	-----
Intrusion/Truncation	-----
Illustrated Section	<u>S.14</u>
Archaeological Deposit	
Excavated Slot	
Modern Deposit	
Cut Number	<b>118</b>

### Sections

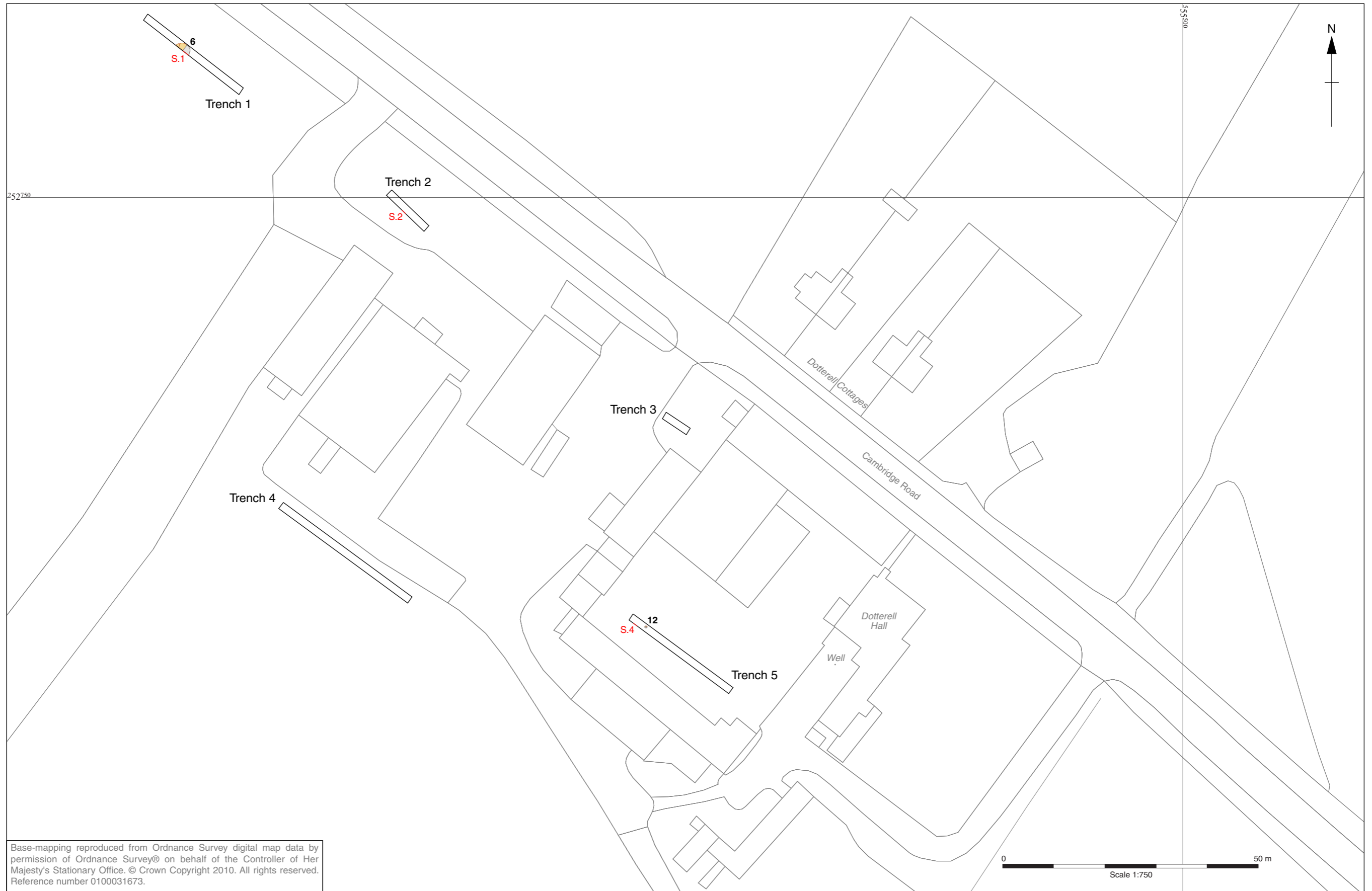
Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	_____
Cut-Conjectured	-----
Deposit Horizon	_____
Deposit Horizon - Conjectured	-----
Intrusion/Truncation	-----
Top Surface/Top of Natural	_____
Break in Section/ Limit of Section Drawing	-----
Cut Number	<b>118</b>
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m OD 
Inclusions	

Convention Key



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Figure 1: Location of trenches (red) with HER entries (blue)



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Figure 2: Trench layout

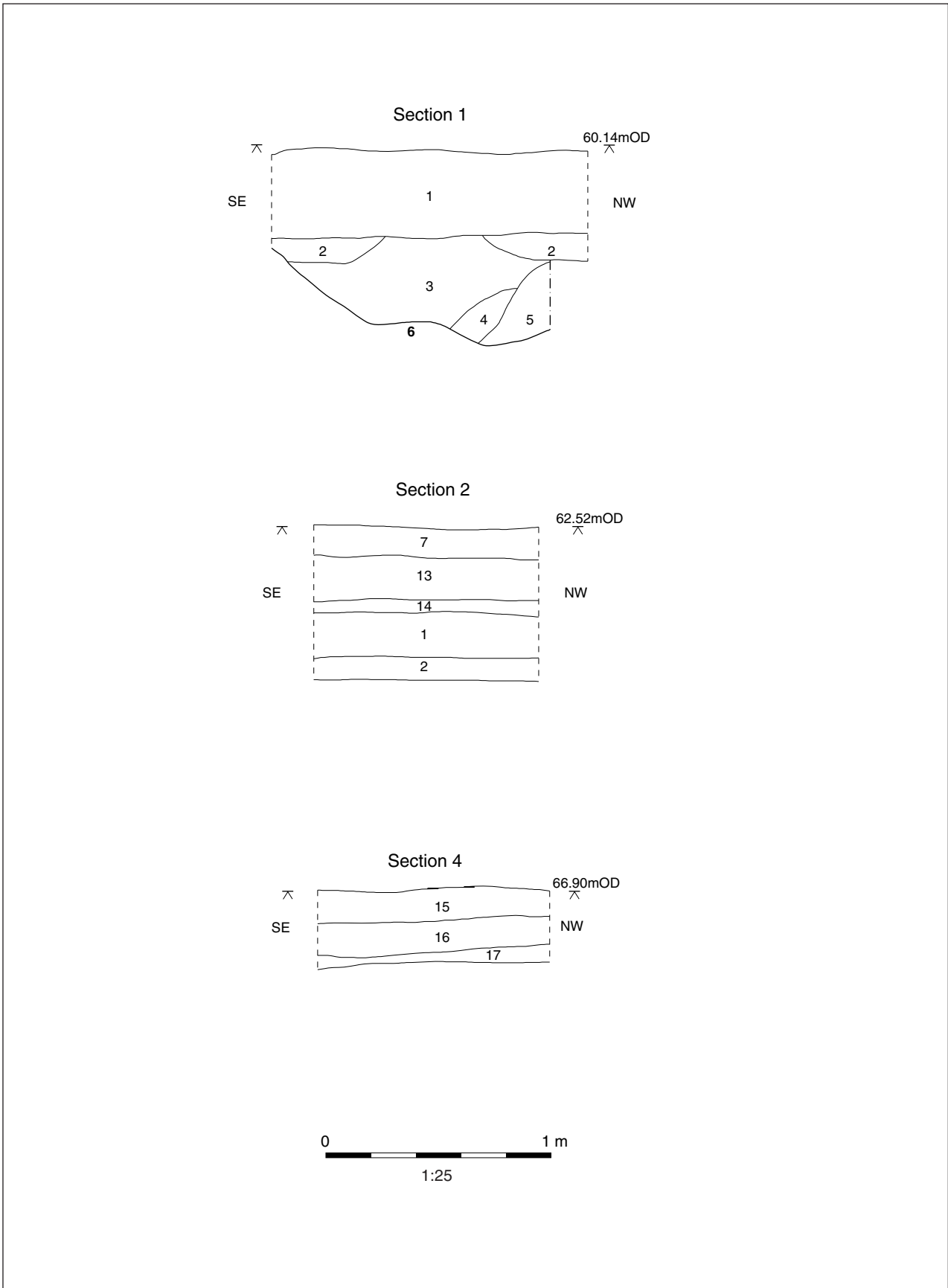


Figure 3: Selected sections

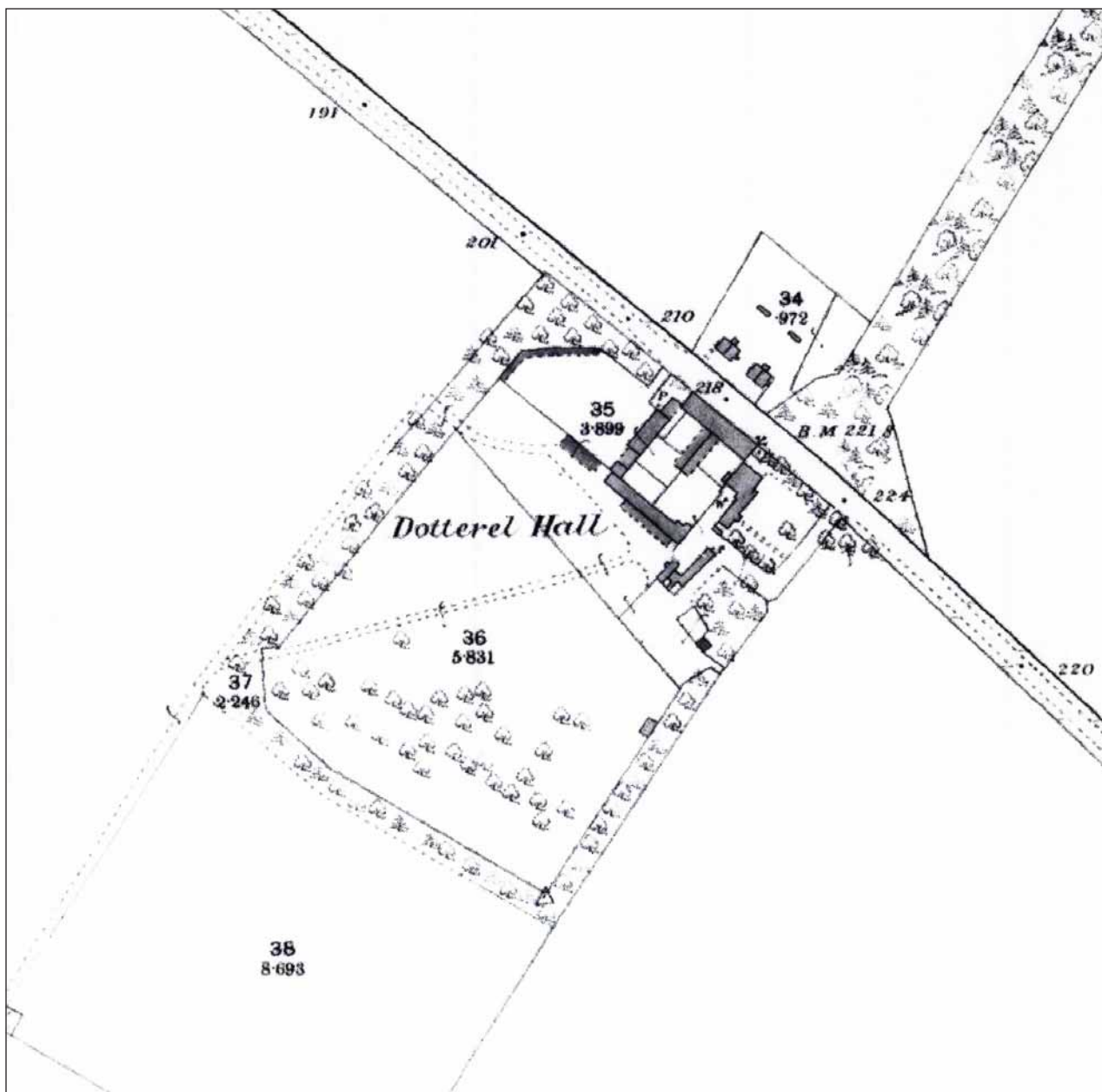


Figure 4: First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1885



Plate 1: Section 1, north-east facing profile of feature 6 in trench 1 (2m scale)



Plate 2: Trench 1, looking north-west (2m scale)



Plate 3: Section 2, north-east facing trench profile in trench 2 (0.5m scale)



Plate 4: South-west facing trench profile in trench 3 (2m and 0.5m scale)





Plate 5: Trench 4, looking north-west (2m scale)



Plate 6: Section 4, north-east facing profile of trench 5 (0.5m scale)



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