

Early Medieval Occupation  
and Related Features  
Isleham Recreation Ground  
Cambridgeshire



**Archaeological  
Evaluation Report**



November 2012

**Client: Archial**

OA East Report No: 1369

OASIS No: oxfordar3-128411

NGR: TL 6425 7403

# **Early Medieval Occupation and Related Features at Isleham Recreation Ground, Cambridgeshire**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

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*Report Date: November 2012*

**Report Number:** 1369  
**Site Name:** Isleham Community Centre, Mill Street, Isleham, Cambridgeshire  
**HER Event No:** ECB 2762  
**Date of Works:** 21-25 May 2012  
**Client Name:** Archial  
**Client Ref:** -  
**Planning Ref:** App. No.09/00475/FUM  
**Grid Ref:** TL 6425 7403  
**Site Code:** ISL MIL 12  
**Finance Code:** ISL MIL 12  
**Receiving Body:** CCC Stores, Landbeach

**Accession No:**

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Date:  
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## Summary

*From the 21st to the 25th of May 2012 Oxford Archaeology East conducted an archaeological evaluation at Isleham Community Centre and recreation ground, Mill Street, Isleham (TL 6425 7403) in advance of the development of a new community centre with associated services and parking.*

*Seven trenches were excavated totalling 147m in length. Two areas of occupation were uncovered dating to the early medieval period whilst a third may relate to medieval clunch processing. Occupation located to the south-west of the proposed development area consisted of a high density of features including postholes, pits and ditches. These features appear to have been bounded to the east and north by a ditched enclosure. Occupation identified to the east of the site consisted of a pit containing an articulated cow burial as well as eleven postholes indicative of houses or briars. These features were bounded to the west by a large ditch. A third area of activity to south of the development area, evidenced by a substantial chalk filled feature, may be evidence of clunch working in the medieval period.*

*The site may have been part of a small holding with a primarily pastoral economy in the early medieval period. Environmental evidence suggests fish and grain was brought in to the site whilst the cow burial indicates that livestock was kept on the site. This small holding may have been closely related to the priory and a lack of Ely ware ceramics suggests that this site went out of use around the time that the monks were moved to Linton. Clunch working may have continued on the site until the late medieval period with a sherd of Cistercian ware pottery from this area being the latest recovered from this evaluation.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the Community Centre, Isleham, Cambridgeshire (Figure 1; TL 6425 7403).
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application 09/00475/FUM), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Drummond-Murray 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 *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 is located on the Zig-Zag marly chalk formation that is part of a ridge that runs south west to north-east along the southern Fen edge (B.G.S. 1978). The River Lark lies 2.4km to the north-east whilst the River Snail lies 3.5km to the west from where they flow towards the Fen edge c.750m to the north of the proposed development area. The site lies on ground at a height of 11.60m in the south-west falling to 10.20m in the north-east. The ground to the south-west had been artificially altered prior to the construction of the all weather pitch, and had been subsequently further disturbed during its removal.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

#### Prehistoric

- 1.3.1 Evidence of prehistoric activity has primarily been identified close to the Fen edge to the north-west with several concentrations of artefacts, particularly lithics, being found during the Fenland survey (Hall 1996). Few prehistoric finds have been uncovered in the village itself, notable artefacts include two Mesolithic antler axes (HER07622), found 500m to the north of the site. Excavation along the course of the Isleham to Ely water pipeline, to the west and north of the village, added to the number of sites identified by the Fenland survey with particularly notable evidence of Neolithic to Bronze Age occupation being found (MCB17270, Edmonds *et al.* 2007). Burnt flints indicative of prehistoric activity have been recovered from several sites in and around the village, including Hall Barn Road 300m to the west to the site (CB15282, Kenney 2001; CB154281, Grant and Gardner 2002) and West Street 250m to the north (CB15283, Knight 1997) whilst a single sherd of prehistoric pottery was recovered from excavations on Beck Road to the east (MCB18442, Ennis 2009). Bronze Age activity in the wider area is attested to by 'the Isleham hoard', consisting of 6500 Late Bronze Age metal artefacts buried in a ceramic pot, located 1.5km to the south-west of the village

(CHER07592). Ring-ditches, visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs, located to the south-west of the site may also date to the Bronze Age (HER09020, Hall 1996: 86-88; HER11125).

- 1.3.2 Very little is known of the Iron Age period in the vicinity. Evidence for Iron Age (and earlier) occupation in the form of storage pits was recovered at Chalk Farm, 1.2km south-west of the development site (Gdaniec *et al.* 1997).

### **Roman and Saxon**

- 1.3.3 Occupation in the Roman period is evidenced by the location of a villa to the north of Temple Road (HER11661). This villa may have been associated with a driveway uncovered on Hall Barn Road to the south (HER11894; Gdaniec *et al.* 1997). Find spots and several individual features indicate that there was background activity in the Isleham area during the Roman period. A pit located 150m to the south of the proposed development area contained a single fragment of Roman tile (MCB16866; Kenney 2004) and a large quantity of re-used Roman building material was found later during excavations (Newton 2006, 7). Several other finds have been recovered from the west of the village including a brooch (MCB16203), a saddle quern (HER10864), several coins (HER07559; HER07559a) and a scatter of pottery (HER10866).
- 1.3.4 Evidence of the Saxon occupation of Isleham is limited to a few individual finds consisting of two brooches (HER11691, 11708) and a coin (HER07612), however two features identified on the Fordham Road site (MCB16866) to the south of the proposed development area have been tentatively interpreted as possible sunken floor buildings that may relate to Saxon occupation.

### **Medieval**

- 1.3.5 Located 350m to the north of the proposed development site, the alien Benedictine priory is evidence of the importance of the site following the Norman Conquest. The priory was probably founded soon after the land was granted to the Breton abbey of St-Jacut-de-la-Mer in the 1110s. In the 1220s the monks were moved to the sister cell in Linton and the priory became a manor. The only standing priory building is the Chapel of St Margaret of Antioch (HER07529) to the north of which lie the buried foundations of the conventual buildings. Earthwork remains to the north include fishponds and linear divisions (HER07528). Recent archaeological works have uncovered possible contemporary features to the north-west of the priory (Webster 2011), whilst excavation to the west uncovered a large boundary ditch extending beyond the scheduled limits of the site (Knight 1997). Property boundaries associated with the medieval settlement have also been uncovered on West Street (Macaulay 2000).
- 1.3.6 There are no certain medieval remains located away from the village. Remains of a moat survive to the south of the Roman villa (HER05704a), off Temple Road. The name of the road and the surrounding area (commonly referred to as 'The Temple') originate from the Manerium Templi that was held by the Master of the Templars in 1279 (Reaney 1943, 193). However, the moat does not appear to be associated with the Manerium. Pottery recovered in this area would suggest a 14th century date for the earthwork (HER11574, HER11074). Excavations to the west of the village at Hall Farm uncovered three rectangular pits on a north-west to south-east alignment which appeared to replicate the general alignment of medieval features in this area (HER11895, Gdaniec *et al.* 1997). A post-built structure and a sunken floor building, dated to the 11th-12th century, were located to the south of Fordham Road (MCB16866, Newton 2006). This site also contained evidence of high intensity clunch quarrying and processing tanks

indicating that it was a major source of building material in the early medieval period (Newton 2010).

- 1.3.7 From the later medieval period onwards drainage of land began on a major scale. The process was accompanied by both intensification of agricultural practices and industrial development. During the later part of the medieval period a water-filled channel, which gave its name to the present road of Waterside, linked a former quay (one of at least three situated along the north side of Isleham) with the River Lark to the north. A further canal ran westwards at the rear of properties on the north side of the village, which gave them their own access for waterborne trade (Oosthuizen 1996).
- 1.3.8 By 1460, five crofts east of the south end of Up (later Mill) Street had quarry pits at their street ends, and there was a limekiln croft south of Bletherweyk (later West) Street. Clunch continued to be extracted for both building material and for burning into lime until 1938 (Wareham & Wright 2002).
- 1.3.9 The church of St. Andrews, located 500m to the north of the proposed development site, was constructed in 1330AD on the site of a previous Norman church (HER 07591).

#### **1.3.10 Post-medieval**

- 1.3.11 A windmill (HER07611) dating to this period was located 300m to the south of the proposed development area. A series of 19th century lime kilns on the east side of High Street (HER07489) may have been associated with a quarry shown on the Enclosure Map (Draft) to the north (HER11214). Clunch quarrying for construction purposes and for these kilns appears to have been common in this area and have been uncovered to the south at Fordham Road (CB15282: Kenney 2004) and to the east on Beck Road (MCB18442; Ennis 2009).
- 1.3.12 The 1885 first edition 25" ordnance survey map shows no features in the proposed development area which is labelled as 'Street Farm'.

### **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Richard Underwood of Archial, and Isleham Parish Council who commissioned and funded the work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and monitored by Dan McConnell who also wrote the Brief for archaeological works. The works were directed by Gareth Rees, who also undertook the site survey. Zoë Ui Choileáin and Kate Clover provided excavation assistance. Specialist advice was supplied by Chris Faine, Rachel Fosberry and Paul Sperry; Stuart Ladd digitised the records and produced the illustrations.

## 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 proposed development area.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that 150m of evaluation trenches were opened, giving approximately a 2.5% sample of the site.
- 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 The site survey was carried out using a Leica 1200 GPS.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All 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 A total of seven samples was taken for environmental sampling. Samples were taken from features that had high potential for preservation of charred remains and macrofossils and from contexts thought to contain artefacts that may not have been recognised during hand collection. These samples were processed and analysed at OA East's facilities.
- 2.2.7 The conditions on site were generally good with meteorological and geological conditions conducive to high feature visibility. The land at the south-west of the site had been disturbed during the construction of an all weather pitch. The topsoil and subsoil had been removed and replaced with a clay levelling deposit up to 1m thick. Subsequent removal of the all weather pitch had left spoil mounds and uneven ground in this area. The eastern part of the site consisted of previously undisturbed ground between a cricket pavilion and the out field of the cricket ground.
- 2.2.8 The trenches were on various alignments and measured between 6m and 30m in length and were 1.50m wide. All of the trenches were fenced due to the continued use of the recreation ground during the archaeological works.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below by zones of activity; first the occupation area located to the south-west, then the trenches between the two occupation areas, followed by that to the east (Figure 2). Where necessary features are described stratigraphically, from the earliest to the latest. Significant stratigraphic relationships were present in Trenches 1 to 3 and so the results from these trenches have been separated accordingly broad phases of activity. All features uncovered were cut into natural geological chalk deposits.
- 3.1.2 Where present, topsoil measured a maximum 0.20m thick whilst subsoil consisted of a friable mid grey silty-clay with occasional chalk inclusions and varied in thickness across the site from 0.30m to 0.50m.
- 3.1.3 Trench 2, measuring 30m long and up to 1.20m deep, had been disturbed at the southern end where subsoil had been removed and replaced with 0.80m of clay levelling for the all weather pitch. The depth at which the natural deposits were located in this trench may indicate that the archaeological deposits had also been disturbed. This levelling layer was also seen in Trenches 1 and 3.
- 3.1.4 A comprehensive listing of trench depths, orientations, descriptions and related context data can be found in Appendix A.

#### 3.2 The south-western occupation area (Trenches 1, 2 and 3) (Figure 3a)

##### *Phase 1*

- 3.2.1 The earliest features uncovered in this area consisted of three ditches, three pits and a posthole. The westernmost ditch (**102**), located at the western end of Trench 1, measured 0.60m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.12m deep. This undated ditch, containing fragments of animal bone, was aligned north-west to south east and was filled by a mid brown grey silt.
- 3.2.2 A second ditch (**64**), located 31m to the east in Trench 3, measured 1m wide and 0.20m deep and had a broad concave base. It was filled with a dark grey brown silty clay which contained small animal bones, probably from rodents. An environmental sample produced evidence of charred plant remains and mineralised material which may have derived from cess (Appendix C). This ditch was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, roughly perpendicular to the western ditch (**102**), and was truncated by a later boundary ditch (**58**). A third undated ditch segment (**47**), located at the northern end of Trench 3, measured 1.80m long, 0.40m wide and 0.10m deep.
- 3.2.3 Located directly to the north of this ditch in Trench 3, two pits may also relate to this phase of activity. The southernmost pit (**62**), measuring 0.80m wide and 0.30m deep, contained a soft sandy yellow brown fill and no artefacts. The second pit (**60**), to the north, measured 0.95m long, 0.20m deep and in excess of 0.60m wide (Plate 1). It contained a mid grey-brown silty clay fill and no artefacts. Both of these pits had concave profiles.
- 3.2.4 An undated pit (**96**) located at the southern end of Trench 2 was assigned to this phase since it was truncated by a later feature. It was sub-rounded in shape with a concave base and measured 3.60m north to south, in excess of 1.20m wide, and 0.05m deep.

- 3.2.5 The single posthole (**55**) relating to this phase of activity was also located in Trench 3. This feature measured 0.20m diameter and 0.10m deep. It contained no finds and was sealed by a silty clay layer (**56**).

#### *Phase 1a*

- 3.2.6 The majority of features in this area of the site had no stratigraphic relationships with each other but the similarity of form and fills in these features may indicate that they were part of the main period of activity here.
- 3.2.7 Trench 1 contained three features assigned to this phase. A ditch (**104**), aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, measured 0.40m wide and 0.12m deep and was located at the west of the trench. It had a 'U' shaped profile and contained a mid brown-grey sandy-silt fill.
- 3.2.8 To the south-east of this ditch a large irregular shaped feature (**108**) with steep sides may have been a clunch extraction pit or waterhole. This feature, measuring 5m wide and 0.5m deep, contained a single mid reddish brown sandy silt fill and no artefacts. This was associated with a short length of ditch (**106**) located to the east which measured 0.40m long, 0.30m wide and 0.05m deep and terminated just to the north of the pit (**108**).
- 3.2.9 The majority of features assigned to this phase were located in Trench 2. Located at the north end of this trench, a ditch (**70**) was aligned east to west (Plate 2). Measuring 1m wide and 0.25m deep, it had a concave profile and contained a single fill from which animal bone and a single lithic were recovered. An environmental sample taken from this feature produced mussel shells, fish bone, a large quantity of land molluscs and charred plant remains. This ditch may have formed part of the northern boundary to the activity in this area.
- 3.2.10 Directly to the south of this ditch, and aligned with it, were two rectangular postholes. These features (**72** and **74**), measuring up to 0.45m long, 0.35m wide and 0.35m deep, contained mid brown-grey silty clay fills (figure 4 – section 72). The easternmost feature contained a single sherd of Saxo-Norman pottery and analysis of soil sampled from this feature produced evidence of charred plant remains and charcoal. (see Appendix B; Appendix C). Another posthole (**76**), located to the south of these postholes, measured 0.38m wide and 0.18m deep.
- 3.2.11 A shallow curvi-linear gully (**78**), located 7.5m from the north of the trench and measuring 1.40m long, 0.50 wide and 0.09m deep, was primarily filled with burnt chalk. This feature also contained a single sherd of early medieval pottery. Much of this burnt chalk did not look redeposited and may have been caused by burning in the feature above. A pit and a posthole were located to the south of this feature. The pit (**80**), measuring 1.40m wide and 0.10m deep, was partially covered by the western baulk and contained no finds. The posthole (**82**) was sub-rounded in shape and measured 0.40m in diameter and 0.16m deep. A triangular-shaped feature, 2m to the south, may have been the western half of a rectangular pit partially extending beyond the baulk. This pit measured 1m north to south, 0.80m east to west and 0.08m deep and contained a mid reddish brown silty clay with no artefacts.
- 3.2.12 The shallow remains of two ditches lay to the north and the south of a rectangular pit in the centre of the trench. The northern ditch (**86**), measuring 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep, curved slightly to the south as it crossed the trench, whilst the southern ditch (**90**) measuring 0.80m wide and 0.20m deep was aligned south-west to north-east where it

turned to the north and terminated. Both of these features contained mid grey brown friable silty clay fill and no artefacts. A pit (88), located between these ditches, measured 1m long from south west to north east, 0.70m wide and 0.20m deep. The pit had an irregular shape, it's eastern end being rectangular with steep sides, and it contained no finds.

- 3.2.13 A feature at the southern end of the trench appeared to be the truncated remains of a ditch terminal, the extent of which continued under the western baulk. This feature (92), measuring 2m long, 0.55m wide and 0.12m deep, was aligned north east to south west whilst the southern feature (94) measured 1.40m long, 0.80m wide and 0.05m deep. It had a broad concave profile and contained no finds.
- 3.2.14 Four postholes were located in the centre of Trench 3. A single posthole (110) lay to the east of the northern segment of the boundary. This feature, measuring 0.45m diameter and 0.08m deep, was round with a concave base and steep sides. Two nearby postholes (51 and 53) measured up to 0.38m diameter and 0.10m deep. A feature located to the north-west of these may have been a pit or large posthole. This feature (49), measuring 0.60m long, in excess of 0.30m wide and 0.08m deep, was rectangular in shape and had a flat base with steep sides. It contained a dark brown grey friable silty clay and no finds. These features may have been associated with the earlier posthole located to the south (55) and could form part of an earlier fenced boundary.

#### *Phase 2*

- 3.2.15 A ditch (100), measuring 0.36m wide and 0.12m deep, was aligned west south west to east-north-east at the western end of Trench 1. This feature truncated an earlier ditch (102) and contained no artefacts. It was truncated by a sub-rounded pit (98), measuring 1.30m diameter and 0.35m deep, that contained animal bone and pottery dating to the 11th - 12th century.
- 3.2.16 A feature at the southern end of Trench 2 appeared to be the truncated remains of a ditch terminal, the extent of which continued under the western baulk. This feature (94), measuring 1.40m long, 0.80m wide and 0.05m deep, was aligned east to west and had a broad concave profile. This ditch may have replaced a ditch located directly to the north (92).
- 3.2.17 A boundary consisting of four elements was located in Trench 3 and may have marked the eastern extent of occupation in this area. The northern segment of the boundary consisted of a ditch (43=45) measuring 9.80m in length, 0.60m wide and 0.18m deep which became shallower at its southern terminal indicating that it may have been a continuous feature truncated by modern disturbance (Figure 4, section 43). This feature, truncating an earlier ditch (47) to the north, contained animal bone and medieval pottery dating to the 11th-12th century as well as amphibian bones, mussel shells, charcoal and charred plant remains. An environmental sample also produced evidence of mineralised material which may have derived from cess. The second segment of the boundary was located 1.60m to the south of the northern segment. This ditch (58), measuring 3.55m from north-north-west to south-south-east, 0.55m wide and 0.20m deep, truncated two pits and a ditch of the previous phase (60, 62, 64) (Plate 3). It was filled with a dark grey brown friable silty clay containing a sherd of early medieval pottery and burnt bone along with charred plant remains and charcoal recovered from sampling. The southernmost elements of the boundary consisted of two sub-rounded pits (66 and 68) measuring up to 0.56m diameter and 0.12m deep that contained no

artefacts. It is possible that this boundary was the return of that uncovered to the north in Trench 2 (70).

### 3.3 Central area (Trenches 4 and 5) (Figure 3b)

- 3.3.1 Activity in these trenches lay to the east of the early medieval boundary ditch in Trench 3. Trench 4 contained three features including two pits located at the north-eastern end of the trench. The northernmost pit (38) measured 2m long, in excess of 0.40m wide and 0.58m and contained a sherd of pottery dating from the late medieval/early post-medieval period
- 3.3.2 To the south of this a pit (40), measuring 1m long, in excess of 0.40m wide and 0.17m deep, had a flat base and steep sides and contained chalk backfill but no artefacts.
- 3.3.3 At the eastern end of the trench two inter-cutting features were aligned north-east to south-west. The earliest feature (114) was probably a ditch, measuring 0.40m wide and in excess of 0.40m deep, which had a steep 'U' shaped profile and contained a chalk backfill possibly from a bank. This ditch was truncated by a broad flat-based, steep-sided feature (36). This feature measured 2.60m wide and 0.50m deep and was filled predominantly with chalk (Figure 4, section 36). This fill may also have derived from deliberately backfilled bank material or could have been residual material left in a clunch processing pit. A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from this fill. This feature was not seen in Trench 3 to the west or in Trench 5 to the north and so may have been part of an enclosure to the south-east of the western occupation area or a pit in an area of clunch working which may have also included the pit (40) located to the north.
- 3.3.4 Trench 5 contained a single feature at its north eastern end, a posthole (35) measuring 0.30m long, 0.20m wide and 0.05m deep.

### 3.4 The eastern occupation area (Trenches 6 and 7) (Figure 3c)

- 3.4.1 The second occupation area was uncovered in the eastern part of the site in Trenches 6 and 7.
- 3.4.2 Located 6m from the western end of Trench 6 a pit (32), measuring 0.80m long, 0.60m wide and 0.25m deep, contained a light grey yellow sandy clay fill. It was truncated by a large ditch which may have formed the western boundary of this area of activity. This ditch (8) measured 2.20m wide and 0.65m deep and had a concave base, steep on the east side and gradually sloping to the top on the west. It contained two fills, the first of which (33) sloped from west to east and had a large number of chalk inclusions indicative of the erosion of bank material from the west into the feature (Figure 4, section 8). The upper fill (7), consisting of mid grey-brown silty clay, contained pottery dating to the mid-11th to 12th century as well as mussel shells, charcoal and animal bone.
- 3.4.3 A pit was located 2m to the east of this ditch. This pit (10) had a similar orientation to that of the ditch and measured 1.30m long, 0.60m wide and 0.36m deep (Plate 4). It had steep sides and a flat base and contained the articulated remains of a young cow.
- 3.4.4 Nine postholes and a ditch were uncovered in the eastern section of Trench 6 (Plate 5). Three of the postholes were rectangular whilst the others were rounded. The rectangular features (28, 22 and 20), measuring from 0.40m to 0.60m long and 0.30m to 0.40m wide, were up to 0.20m deep and had flat based profiles. The remaining rounded postholes (14, 16, 18, 24, 26 and 30) measured between 0.3m and 0.55m

diameter and 0.05m and 0.15m deep. All of these features contained a mid brown grey friable silty clay fill of which one (17) contained a fragment of animal bone.

- 3.4.5 A ditch (12), surviving only as a shallow gully, was uncovered at the eastern end of the trench. This ditch, measuring 0.50m wide and 0.13m deep, terminated 0.60m from the north-eastern end of the trench.
- 3.4.6 Two postholes (4 and 6) were uncovered in Trench 7. These measured 0.40m in diameter and up to 0.15m deep and contained no artefacts.
- 3.4.7 The postholes in this area may be indicative of buildings or fences, perhaps the two different shapes of feature representing two separate phases of use.

### 3.5 Finds Summary

- 3.5.1 Artefacts were recovered from 13 contexts with pottery and animal bone being the most common find. A total of 16 sherds of pottery was recovered from eight separate features. A single sherd of Cistercian ware is dated to the late 15th-16th century whilst the others are all dated to the early medieval period, mid-11th-12th century.

### 3.6 Environmental Summary

- 3.6.1 Animal bone was recovered from six contexts all in different features. These generally consisted of discarded waste material but a complete articulated cow was recovered from context 9. Mussel shell and burnt flints were recovered from the boundary ditch on the eastern activity area. A single naturally stuck lithic artefact that may have been used as a scraper was recovered from the northern boundary ditch of the western occupation area.
- 3.6.2 The charred plant remains are dominated by cereal grains including bread wheat. The assemblage includes a small number of seeds of weeds commonly encountered growing alongside cereal crops on cultivated soils and were most likely harvested with the cereal crop. The mineralised material recovered from Samples 2 and 7 suggest that these deposits contain cess material which can lead to mineral replacement in organic material such as seeds and insects.
- 3.6.3 The results of this assessment suggest that domestic refuse was being discarded into some of the ditches. None of the ditches produced waterlogged seeds as evidence that they originally contained water but this may be due to poor preservation.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 South-western occupation area

- 4.1.1 Evaluation on the recreation ground in Isleham has uncovered the remains two areas of early medieval settlement. That to the west of the site, located under the footing of the proposed new-build, contained a high density of features. These consisted of pits and postholes, as well as stratified remains bounded by a segmented ditch. The amphibian bones from this ditch may be an indication that the ditch was left open in wet conditions, or that it was filled with water. Evidence of mineralised material that may have derived from cess, as well as processed and carbonised bread wheat is indicative of a settlement in close proximity. Rectangular postholes aligned with the northern boundary ditch may indicate that there were two phases of boundary, one fenced and one ditched. This is also the case to the east of this area in Trench 3. The presence of an earlier ditched feature, on a different alignment, suggests that the original extents of this activity area may have been greater than that bounded by the latest ditch. The presence of a possible large waterhole in Trench 1 may indicate that this area was used for holding animals at some time.

### 4.2 Eastern occupation area

- 4.2.1 Evidence of activity uncovered in this area, consisting primarily of postholes, may indicate that there were barns or domestic structures here. The different shapes of postholes tends to suggests that there were at least two phases of buildings or boundaries in this area also. The presence of the cow buried in this area is indicative of activity relating to agricultural or pastoral activities, perhaps a small holding. The large ditched boundary, with the bank probably located to the west, may indicate that animals, presumably cattle, were kept to the east and that at least some of the postholes relate to a briar or animal pen.

### 4.3 Central area

- 4.3.1 The sparsity of features in Trench 5 is indicative of an area between the zones of activity that may have been left to pasture in the early medieval period. The large feature that may have been a clunch processing tank (40) uncovered in Trench 4 is evidence for a third occupation area present to the south. Features of similar dimensions, dating to the 12th to 14th centuries, were uncovered during excavations on the Fordham Road site to the south of the current site (Newton 2010). These clunch processing tanks were used for soaking the quarried chalk in order to soften it for cutting. If the features uncovered in Trench 4 related to clunch in the medieval period processing then they may have been associated with providing building material for the post-priory expansion of the village.

### 4.4 Discussion

- 4.4.1 There is a clear comparison between the features identified during the excavation on Fordham Road to the south (Newton 2010) and those uncovered on the current site. The type, size and density of features are similar on both sites and so it is interesting that the pottery assemblage varies. Although the assemblage recovered from the current site is small, it is notable for the lack of Ely wares which made up almost eighty percent of the Fordham Road ceramic collection. The fact that no early medieval

material was identified during excavation further east in village (Ennis 2009) may indicate that the current site formed part of a post-conquest expansion of Isleham, possibly associated with the foundation of the priory. This is supported by the fact that the boundary to the north and east of the south-western occupation area is aligned with medieval road layout (Mill Street). The clunch-processing tanks may relate to a further expansion of the village in the medieval period when demand for building material increased. Unlike the Fordham Road site, activities on the current site were varied with evidence of settlement nearby and a pastoral or agricultural economy.

#### **4.5 Significance**

- 4.5.1 The potential for archaeological remains at Isleham recreation ground may be of local and regional significance, contributing to the knowledge of medieval village development on the southern Fen edge as well as adding depth to the narrative of the growth of Isleham, and its relationship with the priory in the early medieval period. The lack of later features truncating those from the medieval period is indicative of good preservation of the archaeology on the site.

#### **4.6 Recommendations**

- 4.6.1 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             | WNW-ESE   |
| Topsoil in this trench measured 0.30m deep over 0.20m of a clay and chalk levelling layer under which there was up to 0.40m of dark reddish brown subsoil. It contained 6 features including 4 ditches, a pit and a waterhole\quarry pit. |       |           |           |                         | Avg. depth (m)          | 0.80      |
|   |       |           |           |                         | Width (m)               | 1.50      |
|   |       |           |           |                         | Length (m)              | 15        |
| Contexts  |       |           |           |                         |                         |           |
| context no  | type  | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment                 | finds                   | date      |
| 97  | fill  | 1.30      | 0.35      | Fill of pit 98          | Animal bone and pottery | 1050-1200 |
| 98  | pit   | 1.30      | 0.35      |                         |                         |           |
| 99  | fill  | 0.36      | 0.12      | Fill of ditch 100       |                         |           |
| 100   | ditch | 0.36      | 0.12      |                         |                         |           |
| 101   | fill  | 0.30      | 0.12      | Fill of ditch 102       | Animal bone             |           |
| 102   | ditch | 0.30      | 0.12      |                         |                         |           |
| 103   | fill  | 0.40      | 0.12      | Fill of ditch 104       |                         |           |
| 104   | ditch | 0.40      | 0.12      |                         |                         |           |
| 105   | fill  | 0.30      | 0.02      | Fill of ditch 106       |                         |           |
| 106   | ditch | 0.30      | 0.02      |                         |                         |           |
| 107   | fill  | 5         | 0.50      | Fill of 108             |                         |           |
| 108   | pit   | 5         | 0.50      | Quarry pit or waterhole | -                       | -         |

| Trench 2   |             |                  |                  |                       |              |             |
|--|-------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>General description</b><br><br>The topsoil here measured up to 0.40m. This overlay up to 0.8m of clay made ground. Natural chalk sloped from north to south but this may be due to truncation. Archaeology in this trench was quite dense with six ditches, three pits, four postholes and a shallow burnt feature. |             |                  |                  | <b>Orientation</b>    |              | N-S         |
|  |             |                  |                  | <b>Avg. depth (m)</b> |              | 0.85        |
|  |             |                  |                  | <b>Width (m)</b>      |              | 1.50        |
|  |             |                  |                  | <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> |
| 69   | fill        | 1                | 0.25             | Fill of ditch 70      | flint        |             |
| 70   | ditch       | 1                | 0.25             |                       |              |             |
| 71   | fill        | 0.4              | 0.35             | Fill of posthole 72   | pottery      | 1050-1200   |
| 72   | posthole    | 0.4              | 0.35             |                       |              |             |
| 73   | fill        | 0.4              | 0.20             | Fill of posthole 74   |              |             |
| 74   | posthole    | 0.4              | 0.20             |                       |              |             |

|     |          |       |      |                     |         |           |
|-----|----------|-------|------|---------------------|---------|-----------|
| 75  | fill     | 0.38  | 0.18 | Fill of posthole 76 |         |           |
| 76  | posthole | 0.38  | 0.18 |                     |         |           |
| 77  | fill     | 0.5   | 0.09 | Fill of ditch 78    | pottery | 1050-1200 |
| 78  | ditch    | 0.5   | 0.09 |                     |         |           |
| 79  | fill     | 1.30  | 0.10 | Fill of pit 80      |         |           |
| 80  | pit      | 1.30  | 0.10 |                     |         |           |
| 81  | fill     | 0.40  | 0.16 | Fill of posthole 82 |         |           |
| 82  | posthole | 0.40  | 0.16 |                     |         |           |
| 83  | fill     | 0.80+ | 0.08 | Fill of pit 84      |         |           |
| 84  | pit      | 0.80+ | 0.08 |                     |         |           |
| 85  | fill     | 0.55  | 0.20 | Fill of ditch 86    |         |           |
| 86  | ditch    | 0.55  | 0.20 |                     |         |           |
| 87  | fill     | 0.70  | 0.20 | Fill of pit 88      |         |           |
| 88  | pit      | 0.70  | 0.20 |                     |         |           |
| 89  | fill     | 0.80  | 0.20 | Fill of ditch 90    |         |           |
| 90  | ditch    | 0.80  | 0.20 |                     |         |           |
| 91  | fill     | 0.55  | 0.12 | Fill of ditch 92    |         |           |
| 92  | ditch    | 0.55  | 0.12 |                     |         |           |
| 93  | fill     | 0.80  | 0.05 | Fill of ditch 94    |         |           |
| 94  | ditch    | 0.80  | 0.05 |                     |         |           |
| 95  | fill     | 1.10  | 0.05 | Fill of pit 96      |         |           |
| 96  | pit      | 1.10  | 0.05 |                     |         |           |
| 111 | fill     | 0.80  | 0.22 | Fill of ditch 88    |         |           |

| Trench 3   |       |           |           |                     |                |           |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------------|-----------|
| General description  |       |           |           |                     | Orientation    | NNW-SSE   |
| Up to 0.30m of topsoil was overlaying up to 0.37m of clay levelling material. There was a high density of archaeology in this trench. Four ditches, five pits and three postholes. |       |           |           |                     | Avg. depth (m) | 0.61      |
|  |       |           |           |                     | Width (m)      | 1.50      |
|  |       |           |           |                     | Length (m)     | 17        |
| Contexts   |       |           |           |                     |                |           |
| context no   | type  | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment             | finds          | date      |
| 42   | fill  | 0.60      | 0.18      | Fill of ditch 43    | pottery        | 1050-1200 |
| 43   | ditch | 0.60      | 0.18      |                     |                |           |
| 44   | fill  | 0.60      | 0.15      | Fill of ditch 45    |                |           |
| 45   | ditch | 0.60      | 0.15      |                     |                |           |
| 46   | fill  | 0.40      | 0.10      | Fill of pit 47      |                |           |
| 47   | pit   | 0.40      | 0.10      |                     |                |           |
| 48   | fill  | 0.30      | 0.08      | Fill of posthole 49 |                |           |

|     |          |       |      |                      |                         |           |
|-----|----------|-------|------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 49  | posthole | 0.30  | 0.08 |                      |                         |           |
| 50  | fill     | 0.32  | 0.12 | Fill of posthole 51  |                         |           |
| 51  | posthole | 0.32  | 0.12 |                      |                         |           |
| 52  | fill     | 0.38  | 0.10 | Fill of posthole 53  | pottery                 | 1050-1200 |
| 53  | posthole | 0.38  | 0.10 |                      |                         |           |
| 54  | fill     | 0.20  | 0.10 | Fill of posthole 55  |                         |           |
| 55  | posthole | 0.20  | 0.10 |                      |                         |           |
| 56  | layer    | 0.70+ | 0.07 | spread               |                         |           |
| 57  | fill     | 0.55  | 0.20 | Fill of ditch 58     | Pottery and Animal bone | 1050-1200 |
| 58  | ditch    | 0.55  | 0.20 |                      |                         |           |
| 59  | fill     | 0.60+ | 0.20 | Fill of pit 60       |                         |           |
| 60  | pit      | 0.60+ | 0.20 |                      |                         |           |
| 61  | fill     | 0.80  | 0.30 | Fill of pit 62       |                         |           |
| 62  | pit      | 0.80  | 0.30 |                      |                         |           |
| 63  | fill     | 1     | 0.20 | Fill of ditch 64     |                         |           |
| 64  | ditch    | 1     | 0.20 |                      |                         |           |
| 65  | fill     | 0.56  | 0.12 | Fill of pit 66       | pottery                 | 1050-1200 |
| 66  | pit      | 0.56  | 0.12 |                      |                         |           |
| 67  | fill     | 0.54  | 0.12 | Fill of pit 68       |                         |           |
| 68  | pit      | 0.54  | 0.12 |                      |                         |           |
| 109 | fill     | 0.45  | 0.08 | Fill of posthole 110 |                         |           |
| 110 | posthole | 0.45  | 0.08 |                      |                         |           |

#### Trench 4

##### General description

In this trench 0.20m of topsoil overlay 0.35m of subsoil. A moderate density of archaeology was uncovered including two pits and a feature that may have been a pit or ditch.

##### Orientation

WNW-ESE

##### Avg. depth (m)

0.53

##### Width (m)

1.50

##### Length (m)

13.50

##### Contexts

| context no | type  | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment          | finds       | date      |
|------------|-------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 36         | ditch | 2.60      | 0.50      |                  |             |           |
| 37         | fill  | 2.60      | 0.50      | Fill of ditch 36 | Animal bone |           |
| 38         | pit   | 0.40+     | 0.58      |                  |             |           |
| 39         | fill  | 0.40+     | 0.58      | Fill of pit 38   | pottery     | 1480-1550 |
| 40         | pit   | 0.40      | 0.17      |                  |             |           |
| 41         | fill  | 0.40      | 0.17      | Fill of pit 40   |             |           |

|     |       |      |      |                   |  |  |
|-----|-------|------|------|-------------------|--|--|
| 112 | fill  | 2    | 0.20 | Fill of pit 38    |  |  |
| 113 | fill  | 0.40 | 0.40 | Fill of ditch 114 |  |  |
| 114 | ditch | 0.40 | 0.40 |                   |  |  |

| Trench 5   |          |           |           |                     |                |       |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------------|-------|
| General description  |          |           |           |                     | Orientation    | NE-SW |
| The topsoil here measured 0.20m deep and this overlay 0.40m of undisturbed subsoil. Only a single feature, a posthole, lay at the eastern end of the trench. Whilst a modern truncation was located to the west. |          |           |           |                     | Avg. depth (m) | 0.52  |
|  |          |           |           |                     | Width (m)      | 1.50  |
|  |          |           |           |                     | Length (m)     | 30    |
| Contexts   |          |           |           |                     |                |       |
| context no   | type     | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment             | finds          | date  |
| 34   | fill     | 0.20      | 0.05      | Fill of posthole 35 |                |       |
| 35   | posthole | 0.20      | 0.05      |                     |                |       |

| Trench 6  |          |           |           |                     |                             |           |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| General description   |          |           |           |                     | Orientation                 | ENE-WSW   |
| The topsoil in this trench measured 0.15m deep and overlay 0.55m of undisturbed subsoil. The archaeology in this trench was moderately dense and included a large boundary ditch, two other ditches, a pit and ten postholes. |          |           |           |                     | Avg. depth (m)              | 0.66      |
|   |          |           |           |                     | Width (m)                   | 1.50      |
|   |          |           |           |                     | Length (m)                  | 30        |
| Contexts  |          |           |           |                     |                             |           |
| context no  | type     | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment             | finds                       | date      |
| 7   | fill     | 1.40      | 0.50      | Fill of ditch 8     | Pottery, bone, mussel shell | 1050-1200 |
| 8   | ditch    | 2.20      | 0.65      |                     |                             |           |
| 9   | fill     | 0.60      | 0.36      | Fill of pit 10      | Animal bone                 |           |
| 10  | pit      | 0.60      | 0.36      |                     |                             |           |
| 11  | fill     | 0.50      | 0.13      | Fill of ditch 12    |                             |           |
| 12  | ditch    | 0.50      | 0.13      |                     |                             |           |
| 13  | fill     | 0.30      | 0.10      | Fill of posthole 14 |                             |           |
| 14  | posthole | 0.30      | 0.10      |                     |                             |           |
| 15  | fill     | 0.55      | 0.10      | Fill of posthole 16 |                             |           |
| 16  | posthole | 0.55      | 0.10      |                     |                             |           |
| 17  | fill     | 0.45      | 0.15      | Fill of posthole 18 | Animal bone                 |           |
| 18  | posthole | 0.45      | 0.15      |                     |                             |           |
| 19  | fill     | 0.40      | 0.20      | Fill of posthole 20 |                             |           |

|    |          |      |      |                     |  |  |
|----|----------|------|------|---------------------|--|--|
| 20 | posthole | 0.40 | 0.20 |                     |  |  |
| 21 | fill     | 0.30 | 0.13 | Fill of posthole 22 |  |  |
| 22 | posthole | 0.30 | 0.13 |                     |  |  |
| 23 | fill     | 0.25 | 0.05 | Fill of posthole 24 |  |  |
| 24 | posthole | 0.25 | 0.05 |                     |  |  |
| 25 | fill     | 0.40 | 0.05 | Fill of posthole 26 |  |  |
| 26 | posthole | 0.40 | 0.05 |                     |  |  |
| 27 | fill     | 0.30 | 0.08 | Fill of posthole 28 |  |  |
| 28 | posthole | 0.30 | 0.08 |                     |  |  |
| 29 | fill     | 0.32 | 0.08 | Fill of posthole 30 |  |  |
| 30 | posthole | 0.32 | 0.08 |                     |  |  |
| 31 | fill     | 0.60 | 0.25 | Fill of pit 32      |  |  |
| 32 | pit      | 0.60 | 0.25 |                     |  |  |
| 33 | fill     | 2.20 | 0.66 | Fill of ditch 8     |  |  |

| Trench 7  |          |           |           |                    |                |         |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|---------|
| General description   |          |           |           |                    | Orientation    | NNW-SSE |
| Features in this trench were overlain by 0.20m of topsoil and 0.55m of undisturbed subsoil. There was a low density of features in this trench comprised of two postholes.. |          |           |           |                    | Avg. depth (m) | 0.72    |
|   |          |           |           |                    | Width (m)      | 1.50    |
|   |          |           |           |                    | Length (m)     | 6.50    |
| Contexts  |          |           |           |                    |                |         |
| context no  | type     | Width (m) | Depth (m) | comment            | finds          | date    |
| 3   | fill     | 0.30      | 0.10      | Fill of posthole 4 |                |         |
| 4   | posthole | 0.30      | 0.10      |                    |                |         |
| 5   | fill     | 0.40      | 0.13      | Fill of posthole 6 |                |         |
| 6   | posthole | 0.40      | 0.13      |                    |                |         |

## APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 Pottery

*By Paul Spoerry and Gareth Rees*

- B.1.1 The evaluation at Isleham Community Centre produced a small assemblage of pottery consisting of 18 sherds, weighing 0.05kg, from eight contexts. The material recovered consists primarily of early medieval mid 11th to 12th century developed St. Neots ware (DNEOT) which was common in Cambridgeshire in this period. Two sherds of South Cambridgeshire Smooth Sandy Ware also date to this period. The late medieval assemblage consists of a single sherd of Cistercian ware. It is significant that no Ely wares were present in the assemblage since they are common in Cambridgeshire, and have been found in large quantities in Isleham, from the late 12th-16th centuries. This may indicate that the DNEOT sherds tend to date from the beginning of their range.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the text are:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Developed St Neots                     | DNEOT |
| South Cambridgeshire Smooth Sandy ware | SCSSW |
| Cistercian ware                        | CIST  |

- B.1.2 Pottery was recovered from pits, postholes and ditches on the site with only a low level of material being produced. The largest assemblages by count came from a pit (**98**) in Trench 1 (four sherds) and a ditch (**8**) in Trench 6 (six sherds). All other features from which pottery was recovered only contained a single sherd. The assemblage consisted primarily of undiagnostic DNEOT body sherds. A SCSSW rim from ditch **8** would have formed part of an in-turned bowl.

- B.1.3 Quantification:

| Ware  | Count | Weight (g) | Date (approx) |
|-------|-------|------------|---------------|
| CIST  | 1     | 1.8        | 1480-1550     |
| DNEOT | 15    | 37.3       | 1050-1200     |
| SCSSW | 2     | 10         | 1050-1200     |

- B.1.4 The pottery and archive are curated by OA East until formal deposition.

#### **Statement of Research Potential**

An assemblage of this size would often provide only basic dating information for a site, however this assemblage was recovered from an area close to another previous excavation (Newton 2006). Comparison with the assemblage recovered from this excavation to the south of the current site offers insight into the development of medieval Isleham.

Should further work be undertaken this assemblage should be reassessed alongside any new material recovered and with reference to the earlier excavated material.

## APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### C.1 Animal Bone

*By Chris Faine*

- C.1.1 A total of 2.5kg of animal bone was recovered from the evaluation, with the majority (2.2kg) being recovered from context **9**. This consisted of an articulated cattle skeleton around 1 to 1 ½ years old at death. The skeleton was fragmented but around 75% complete, with only the phalanges and some ribs missing. The remainder of the faunal material was recovered from contexts **7, 17, 37, 97 & 101**. This consisted of portions of butchered cattle long bone fragments, along with a juvenile goose humerus and distal tibia from context **37**.

### C.2 Environmental Samples

*By Rachel Fosberry*

#### **Introduction**

- C.2.1 Seven bulk samples were taken during the evaluation phase at Isleham Community Centre. Features sampled include ditches, a pit and a posthole dating to the medieval period. The purpose of this assessment is 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. The initial results showed that preservation of plant remains was good with both carbonised and mineralised plant remains present.

#### **Methodology**

- C.2.2 One bucket (up to ten litres) of each of the selected samples were processed by tank flotation 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. 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 1. Identification of plant remains is with reference to the Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands and the authors' own reference collection. Nomenclature is according to Stace (1997).

#### **Quantification**

- C.2.3 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

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

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

m = mineralised, f = fragment cty = cotyledon

## Results

### Preservation

C.2.4 Plant remains are preserved by carbonisation (charring) along with two seeds that have been preserved by mineralisation (mineral replacement). The carbonized material comprises cereal grains and weed seeds in addition to charcoal and is generally in poor to moderate condition.

| Sample No.  |                                      | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5         | 6   | 7     |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|
| Context No.   |                                      | 7     | 63    | 57    | 69    | 71        | 97  | 42    |
| Cut No.   |                                      | 8     | 64    | 58    | 70    | 72        | 98  | 43    |
| Feature Type  |                                      | Ditch | Ditch | Ditch | Ditch | Post hole | Pit | Ditch |
| Volume processed (L)  |                                      | 7     | 7     | 8     | 8     | 8         | 9   | 8     |
| <b>Cereals</b>  |                                      |       |       |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Avena</i> sp. grain  | Oat                                  | #     | ##    | #     |       |           | #   | #     |
| <i>Hordeum</i> sp. grain  | Barley                               |       | #     |       |       |           | #   | #     |
| <i>Triticum</i> sp. grain                                       | Wheat                                | #     | ####  | #     | #     | #         | #   | ##    |
| <i>T.aestivum/compactum</i> grain                               | Bread wheat                          |       | ##    |       |       |           |     | #     |
| Cereal Indeterminate  |                                      | #     | ##    | ##    |       |           |     |       |
| <b>Other food plants</b>  |                                      |       |       |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Pisum sativum</i> L.   |                                      |       | #     |       | #cty  |           | #f  |       |
| <b>Dry land herbs</b>   |                                      |       |       |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Agrostemma githago</i> L. seed                               | Corncockle                           |       | #     | #     |       |           | #   |       |
| <i>Anthemis cotula</i> L. achene                                | Stinking Chamomile                   | #     |       |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Atriplex prostrata</i> Boucher ex DC./ <i>patula</i> L. seed | Spear-leaved/Common Orache           |       |       |       |       |           | #   |       |
| <i>Brassica nigra</i> type seed                                 | Black Mustard [coarse-textured seed] |       | #     |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Bromus</i> spp. caryopsis                                    | Bromes                               |       | #     | #     |       |           | #   |       |
| <i>Chenopodium</i> sp. seed                                     | Goosefoots                           |       | #     |       |       |           | #   | #     |
| <i>Fumaria officianalis</i> L. achene                           | Common Fumitory                      |       |       |       |       |           |     | #m    |
| <i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> L. seed                                 | Henbane                              |       |       | #     |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Lithospermum arvense</i> L. nutlet                           | Field Gromwell                       |       | #     |       |       |           |     |       |
| <i>Lolium cf. temulentum</i> L. caryopsis                       | Darnel                               |       |       |       |       |           |     | #     |
| small Poaceae indet. [<   | small-seeded Grass Family            |       |       |       |       | #         |     |       |

|                                 |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2mm] caryopsis                  |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <b>Wetland/aquatic plants</b>   |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <i>Juncus</i> sp. seed          | Rushes |     |     |     |     |     | #   |     |
| <b>Other plant macrofossils</b> |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Charcoal <2mm                   |        | +   | ++  | ++  | ++  | ++  | +   | ++  |
| Charcoal >2mm                   |        | +   | ++  | ++  | ++  | ++  | +   | +   |
| Charcoal >10mm                  |        |     | +   | ++  |     |     |     |     |
| Indet.seeds                     |        |     |     | #m  |     |     |     |     |
| <b>Other remains</b>            |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| molluscs                        |        | ++  | ++  | ++  | ++  | ++  | ++  | +++ |
| Small bone                      |        |     |     |     | #   |     |     |     |
| Fish scale                      |        |     | #   | #   |     | #   |     |     |
| <b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>  |        | 5   | 30  | 25  | 30  | 30  | 15  | 10  |
| <b>% flot sorted</b>            |        | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

4.6.1 Table 1: environmental flot contents

### Cereals

- C.2.5 The main cereal types are represented with wheat (*Triticum* sp.), in particular bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum/compactum*), predominating over barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and oats (*Avena* sp.). Chaff elements were not present. The sample that contained the greatest number of cereals is Sample 2, fill 63 of ditch **64** which contained a significant (>100) number of charred wheat grains.

### Weed seeds

- C.2.6 The majority of the weed seeds are carbonised and include seeds of plants found growing amongst crops (segetals) including corn-cockel (*Agrostemma githago*), corn gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), vetch/tare (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), brassicas (*Brassica* sp.), bromes (*Bromus* sp.), rye grass (*Lolium* sp.), stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*), and grass seeds (Poaceae). Carbonised seeds generally occur as single or less than ten specimens per sample. A single mineralised seed of fumitory (*Fumaria officinalis*) was noted in Sample 7, fill 42 of ditch **43** and an unidentified mineralised seed (or possibly an insect egg case) was recovered from Sample 3, fill 57 of ditch **58**.

### Other ecofacts/artefacts

- C.2.7 Animal bones, both small and large mammal and amphibian bones are present in many of the sample residues in addition to mussel shell fragments, molluscs and a single pottery sherd from Sample 7.

### Discussion

- C.2.8 The charred plant remains are dominated by cereal grains with wheat grains occurring most commonly. The cereal grains may have been accidentally burnt while being dried prior to storage or during cooking over open fires prior to being deliberately deposited in some of the ditches. Bread wheat has been identified and would most probably have been ground into flour. Barley was often used for animal fodder but may have been

used for human consumption in the form of bread, stews and soup and it was also used for the brewing of beer. No germinated grains were recovered to suggest brewing activities. Oats may have been grown as a crop or may have occurred as contaminants of a another crop; without the diagnostic floret bases it is not possible to determine whether the oats are a cultivated or wild species. The lack of cereal chaff elements in this assemblage suggest that the grain had been imported onto the site in a fully processed state.

- C.2.9 The assemblage includes a small number of seeds of weeds commonly encountered growing alongside cereal crops on cultivated soils and were most likely harvested with the cereal crop. Most of the seeds are of a similar size to the cereal grains and would not have been removed by sieving. The species included allow some insight into cultivation conditions; corn gromwell is associated with an autumn sown crops and the presence of stinking mayweed suggests that at least one of the crops were grown on heavy clay soils. Weeds mixed in with the cereal crops would have been a major concern for medieval farmers and they would have either had to pull out or hoe by hand. Inevitably the harvested crop would be contaminated with weed seeds which would either be picked out by hand or tolerated although this would have affected the quality of the flour.
- C.2.10 The mineralised material recovered from Samples 2 and 7 suggest that these deposits contain cess material which can lead to mineral replacement in organic material such as seeds and insects.
- C.2.11 The results of this assessment suggest that domestic refuse was being discarded into some of the ditches. None of the ditches produced waterlogged seeds as evidence that they originally contained water but this may be due to poor preservation.

#### ***Further Work and Methods Statement***

- C.2.12 The assessment of environmental samples from the evaluation has shown that there is excellent potential for the recovery of charred plant remains and that mineralised material is also present. If further excavations are planned for this area, it is recommended that a schedule for environmental sampling should be appended to the updated project design. By extensive sampling the nature of cereal waste and weed assemblages is likely to provide an insight into utilisation of local plant resources, agricultural activity and economic evidence from this period.

## 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               | oxfordar3-128411         |             |                   |
| Project Name               | Isleham community centre |             |                   |
| Project Dates (fieldwork)  | Start                    | 21-05-2012  | Finish 25-05-2012 |
| Previous Work (by OA East) | No                       | Future Work | Unknown           |

### Project Reference Codes

|           |          |                       |              |
|-----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Site Code | ISLMIL12 | Planning App. No.     | 09/00475/FUM |
| HER No.   | ECB 2762 | Related HER/OASIS No. |              |

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Prompt           | Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5 |
| Development Type | Public Building                                 |

### 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 type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey            | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey           | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey                     |
| <input checked="" 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     | Medieval 1066 to 1540 | CERAMIC         | Medieval 1066 to 1540      |
| PITS      | Medieval 1066 to 1540 | ARTICULATED COW | None                       |
| POSTHOLES | Medieval 1066 to 1540 | CERAMIC         | Post Medieval 1540 to 1901 |

### Project Location

|            |                     |   |              |
|------------|---------------------|---|--------------|
| County     | CAMBRIDGESHIRE      | Site Address (including postcode if possible)       |              |
| District   | EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE | 45 Mill Street Isleham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5RY |              |
| Parish     | ISLEHAM             |   |              |
| HER        | CAMBRIDGESHIRE      |   |              |
| Study Area | 0.8HA               | National Grid Reference                             | TL 6425 7403 |

### Project Originators

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Organisation              | OA EAST               |
| Project Brief Originator  | DAN MCCONNELL         |
| Project Design Originator | JAMES DRUMMOND-MURRAY |
| Project Manager           | JAMES DRUMMOND-MURRAY |
| Supervisor                | GARETH REES           |

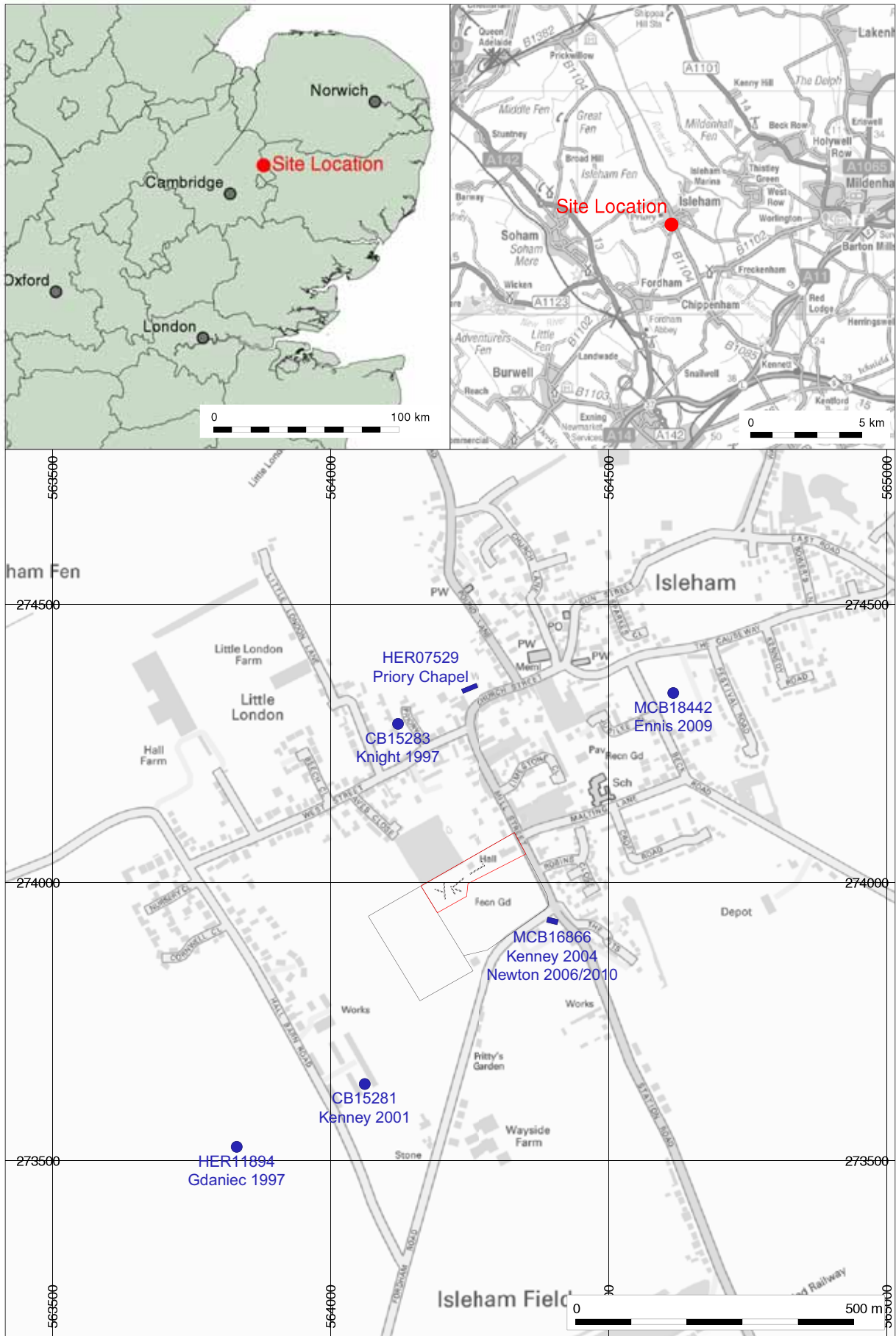
### Project Archives

| Physical Archive | Digital Archive | Paper Archive |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| OA EAST          | OA EAST         | OA EAST       |
| ISLMIL12         | ISLMIL12        | ISLMIL12      |

### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
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| Leather             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Metal               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
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| 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 checked="" 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos         |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans          |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report         |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections       |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey                    |



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Figure 1: Site location, proposed development area (red) and trenches (dashed), showing selected related sites (blue).

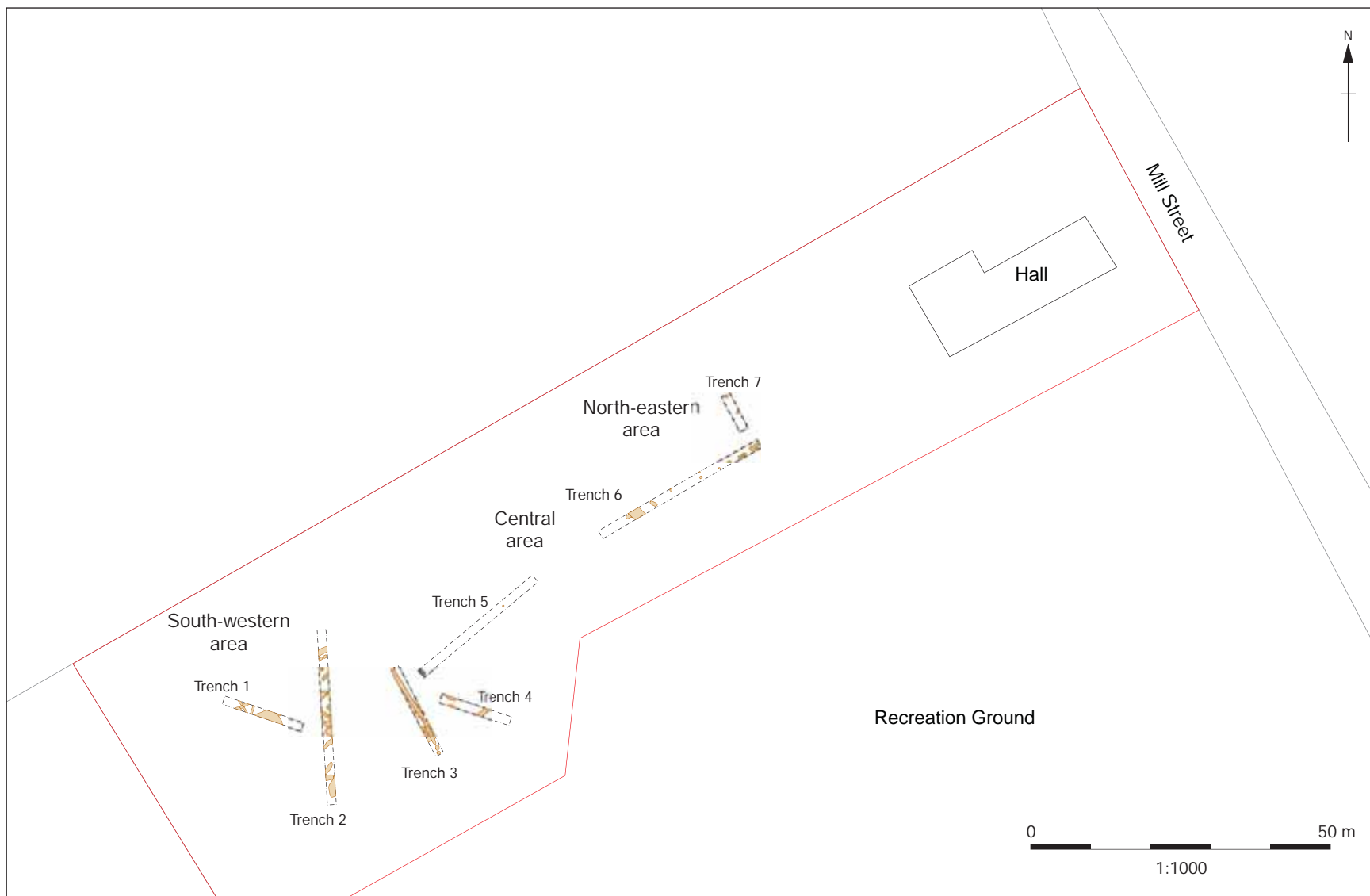


Figure 2: Proposed development area (red) with trenches highlighted

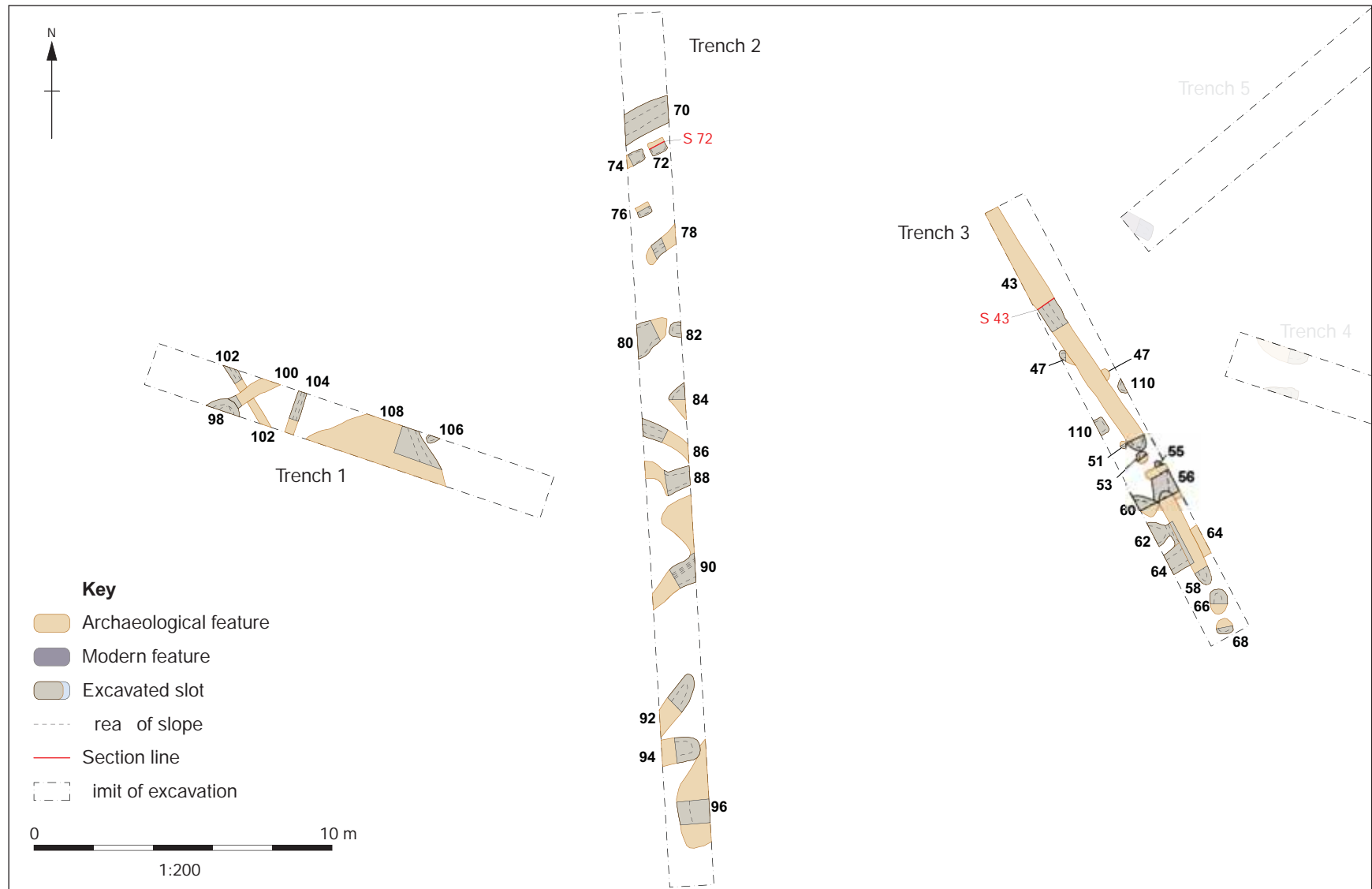


Figure 3a: Plan of trenches 1-3

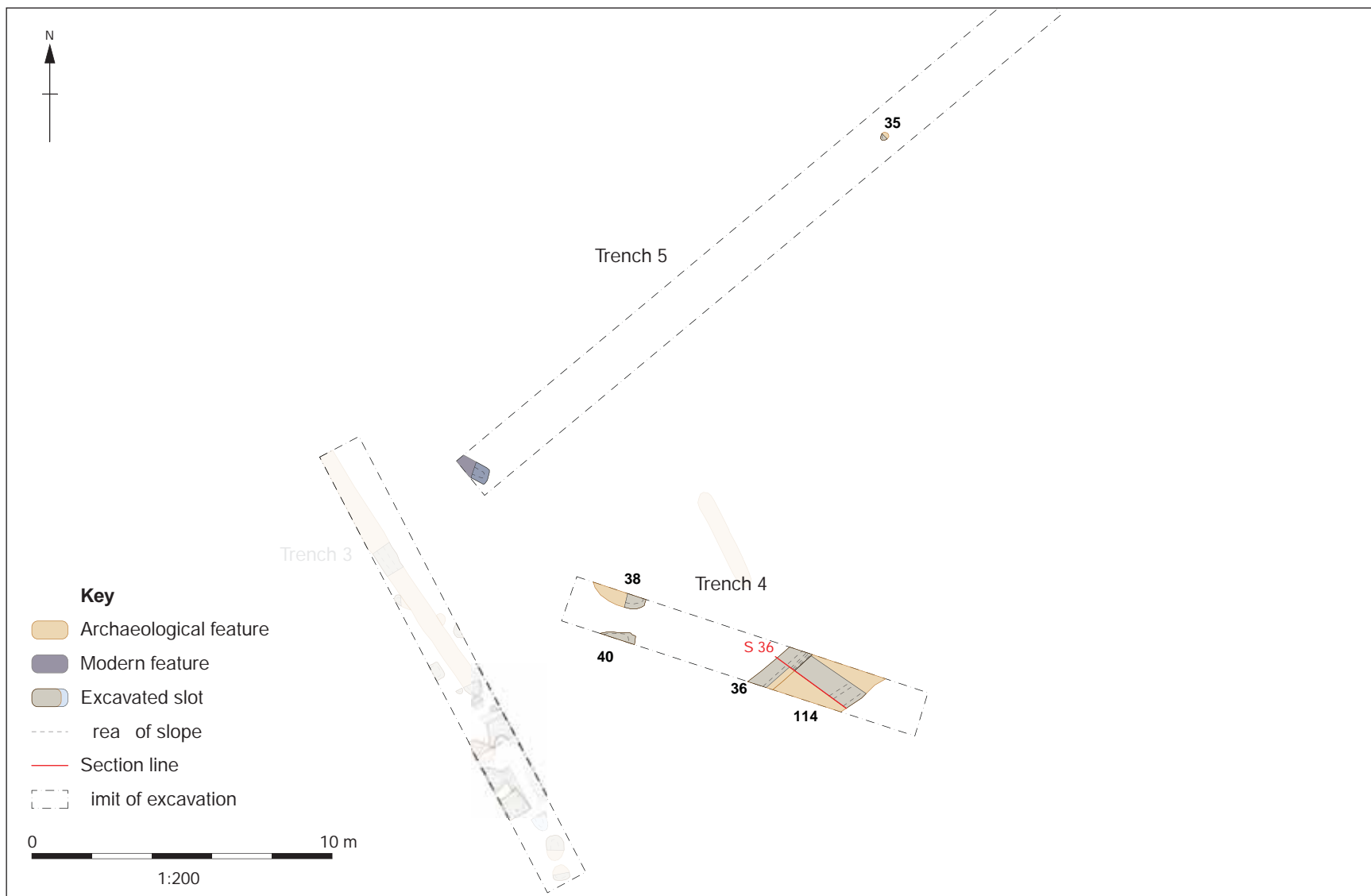


Figure 3b: Plan of trenches 4-5

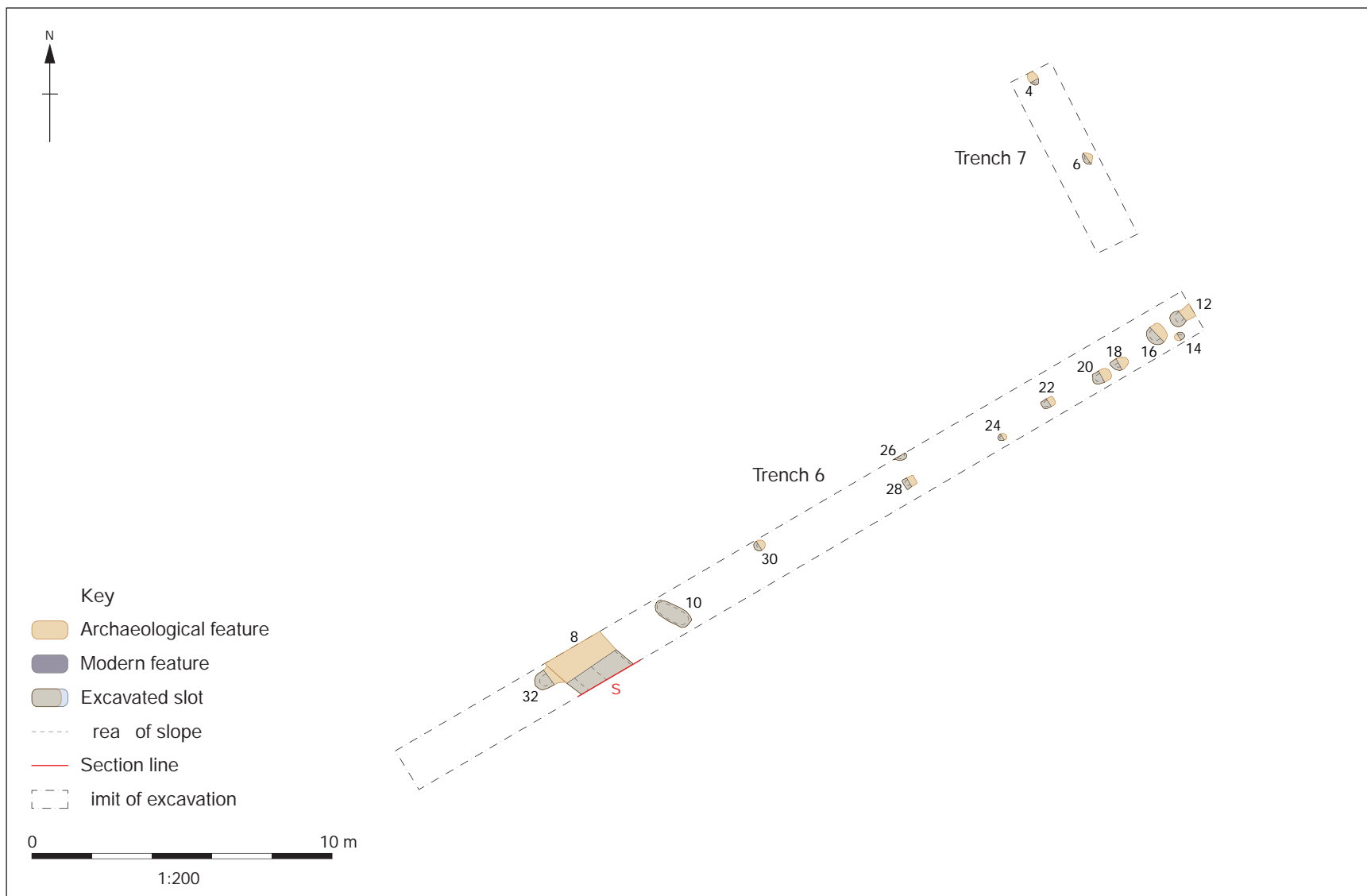


Figure 3c: Plan of trenches 6-7

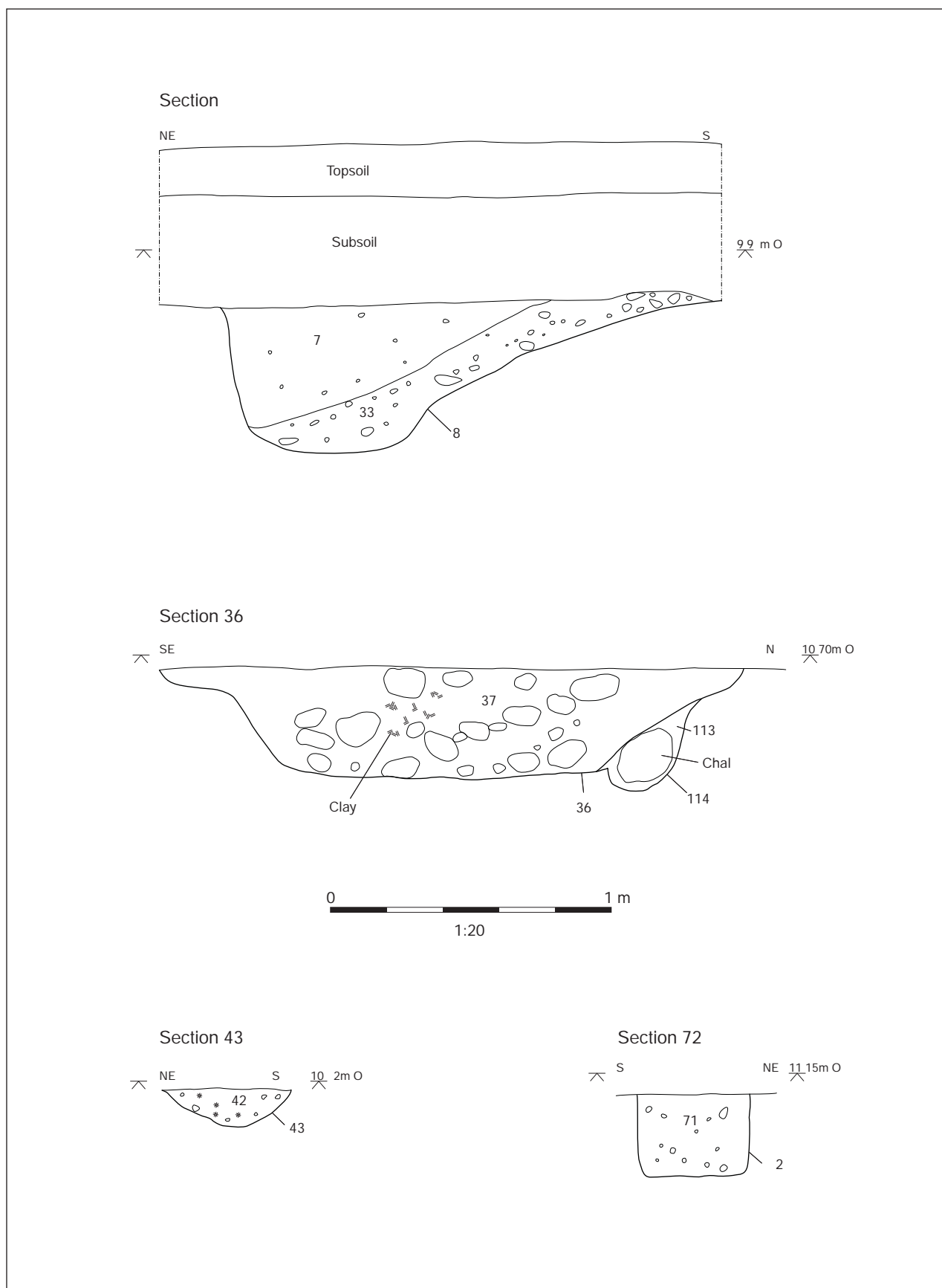


Figure 4: Selected section drawings



Plate 1 Trench 3: Pits 60 and 62 and ditch 64 (left) facing west-south-west



Plate 2 Trench 2: ditch 0 and postholes 2 and 4 viewed from the north



Plate 3 Trench 3: boundary ditch 8 with pits 66 and 68 in foreground facing north-north-west



Plate 4 Trench 6: Pit **10** facing south-west



Plate 5 Trench 6: ditch 12 (foreground) and postholes **14- 4** facing south-west



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