

Land near the Temple Bridge Cavenham Suffolk



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



May 2010

Client: Environment Agency

OA East Report No: 1175

OASIS No: Oxfordar3-77750

NGR: TL 7577 7290

Land near the Temple Bridge, Cavenham, Suffolk

Watching Brief

By Rob Atkins BSocSc DipArch

Site Code: XSFICK 09

SHER No.: CAM 049 for flints and pottery

Date of Works: 1st February and 18th-19th February

Report No: 1175

Excavator: Rob Atkins

Client: Environment Agency

Report Date: May 2010

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Summary

From 1st February to 19h February 20010, OA East carried out an intermittent archaeological watching brief on land adjacent to the west of Temple Bridge on the southern bank of the River Lark at TL 7577 7290. The archaeological monitoring was carried out during construction of a cofferdam and associated drainage ditch. No archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered during work on these features, although on higher ground, adjacent to the south, artefacts were found in the backfill of rabbit burrows and mole hills within a c.90m by 40m area. These consisted of four worked flint pieces comprising a side scraper and three broadly Neolithicdebitage flakes, and 11 sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery. These burrows/mole hills were more than 1m above the floodplain on either a natural scarp or an earthwork. During 2009, in the same location during earlier works in the watching brief, twelve flint pieces and three sherds of Late Iron Age and two Early Roman pottery sherds were found (Atkins 2009).

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The superficial geology shows there were glacial sand and gravel on both banks of the River Lark with till and peat to the south and east (BGS map on line).
- 1.1.2 The work were located through the southern bank of the River Lark and low lying land adjacent to it over a 71m distance (Figs. 1 and 2). The top of the bank is at c.11mOD with land adjacent to it below 10mOD (Fig. 1).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The 2009 watching brief report recorded the Suffolk HER sites in the vicinity of the original archaeological work and this work took place over a 2km distance (Atkins 2009, fig. 2). Many of these SHER records relate to prehistoric flint and prehistoric and Roman pottery being recovered.
- 2.1.2 The present watching brief work is within one area of the 2009 watching brief, at the location of geotechnical trial pits TP 5 and WS 6. This area is just to the west of a routeway which was recorded on all the maps as the Icknield Way Trail or Icknield Way Path (Figs. 1 and 2). This name was probably a medieval or post-medieval labelling as the Icknield Way was not at this location (pers. comm. Dr. Colin Pendleton and Edward Martin). The routeway was likely to date from the medieval period and it ran from The Green, Tuddenham, over the River Lark at "Temple Bridge" and to Icklingham. Temple Bridge may be the location of a Knight's Templers preceptory although there is some dispute and it may have been located elsewhere, possibly at Cavendish (Atkins 2009, fig. 2 (SHER IKL 117 and Cam Misc MSF211)).
- 2.1.3 The bridge no longer survives across the river although the base of its c.16th to 17th century brick piers foundations can still be seen on either bank (SHER IKL 117). There is map evidence for a bridge here in 1755 (Bowen's Map of the County of Suffolk). It is unlikely that there was a bridge here in the Roman period as the Roman routeway from Icklingham across the River Lark is thought to be further to the east directly to the south of Icklingham (pers. comm. Dr. Colin Pendleton). In recent times a weir has been built to the west of this former bridge and directly to the north of TP 5. Recent earthworks associated with the weir's construction were recorded in the earthwork survey on site (Fig. 2).
- 2.1.4 One field adjacent to the east of the Icknield Way Trail was called "Bomb field" due to bombs being dropped here in WWII. This field is adjacent to the development area and as a consequence, all work within the development area was monitored by a specialist in bomb disposal.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The proposed development area is adjacent to the Cavenham Heath Nature Reserve which is primarily established for birds. The aim of the proposed work is to raise the water level within certain parts of the area which will increase the opportunities of birds to feed etc. on the site.
- 3.1.2 The 2009 watching brief investigation took place in September 2009, along a c.2km stretch of the River Lark within Cavenham, Icklingham and Tuddenham parishes, Suffolk (TL 736738 to TL 758729). The archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of exploratory holes by a geotechnics team from A F Howland's

Associates. No archaeological features or artefacts were uncovered within the geological test holes, although on higher ground adjacent to the south of TP 5, near to the south bank of the River Lark at TL 7577 7290, artefacts were found in the backfill of rabbit burrows within a c.90m by 40m area. These burrows were more than 1m above the floodplain on either a natural scarp or an earthwork and a survey of this area at 1:1000 was recorded (Fig. 2). The artefacts recovered comprised twelve flint pieces dating from the Late Neolithic and Bronze Age including a core and a scraper, a Late Iron Age and two Early Roman pottery sherds. The Suffolk HER assigned the record number CAM 049 for these artefacts.

- 3.1.3 A possible palaeochannel was found in one of the geotechnical exploratory pits (HD 1) at TL 736 738 with peat encountered to a depth of more than 3.3m and the Suffolk HER assigned the number TDD 021 for this possible palaeochannel (Atkins 2009 fig. 2).
- 3.1.4 All the proposed ground works were found to be on the flood plain which was considered too low for human occupation (Atkins 2009). Due to prehistoric and Roman artefacts being recovered adjacent to the site at TL 7577 7290, it was decided that a further watching brief would be carried out on all further ground work near to this location.
- 3.1.5 The two linked ground works within this area consisted of a cofferdam across the River Lark and associated drainage ditch (Figs.1 and 2). The cofferdam was a water control structure with the side weir located through the southern bank of the river. The area of the southern side weir was initially sheet-piled (six metre deep) before archaeological monitoring. The internal material within the sheet piling was mostly machined out using a 360° mechanical excavator. This excavator also dug the drainage channel from the cofferdam using a toothless ditching bucket. The works were recorded on a plan with digital and black and white photographs taken.
- 3.1.6 Site conditions took place in very cold conditions during dry as well as snowy weather.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Cofferdam

- 4.1.1 The first metre of soil within the sheet piling at the cofferdam was removed using a 360° excavator and consisted of a mixed brown gravel loam with chalk lenses and a few small natural flint pieces. A lot of natural root disturbance occurred within this soil. At this depth, the piling was internally shored using some acro props and a further 0.6m largely hand dug roughly to the water level of the river. Concrete was then infilled within the piled area.

4.2 Drainage ditch

- 4.2.1 The drainage ditch was excavated by 360° excavator running from behind the cofferdam for 71m in a north-westerly direction (Fig. 2). The ditch followed low lying land, with the raised "earthwork" adjacent to the west of it. The ditch was dug up to 0.5m deep and was largely within a layer of denuded peat. No features or artefacts were recovered from this route.

4.3 Rabbit burrows and mole hills within the possible earthwork area

- 4.3.1 Four flints were found in this stage of works comprising one flake retouched into a side scraper and the remaining three flakes were debitage material probably of Neolithic date. There were also 3 scraps of probable flint tempered Iron Age pottery (2g). There were also parts of at least three Roman vessels found which comprised: Three sherds from possibly the same medium mouth jar in a sandy reduced fabric (21g). These sherds are datable to the 2nd or 3rd centuries AD and the vessel(s) were probably manufactured in the West Norfolk/Suffolk area. There were three sherds from a lid seated wide mouth jar with finger nail incised decoration on the shoulder in a sandy grey ware fabric (45g). This vessel would date to the 2nd to 3rd or 4th centuries AD. Two sherds of a central boulder clay production jar in a sandy grey ware blue (8g). These are difficult to date and a 1st to 4th century date can only be applied. A sherd of 17th or 18th century post-medieval Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE) was also recovered (31g).

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The work on the Cofferdam encountered only build up deposits. A new drainage ditch was dug from this cofferdam but was within low lying land of the flood plain and no features or artefacts were encountered.
- 5.1.2 Of archaeological interest is the higher ground adjacent to this work where a possible earthwork may survive (Atkins 2009). The 2009 work in this area suggested that this site may have been used and/or occupied in the prehistoric and Roman period. If the unstratified artefacts from both the 2009 works and the present watching brief are added, together this may imply some 3,000-4,000 years of use. In all 16 worked flint of Neolithic and Bronze Age were found including cores, tools and debitage pieces. There has been four sherds of Late Iron Age pottery and 13 sherds of Roman pottery which ranges from the Early Roman period to at least the 2nd centuries AD or later. There was also a single post-medieval pottery sherd. It should be stressed the artefacts are unstratified and it is uncertain how significant the recovery of these artefacts are. The HER in 2009, has given a number CAM 049 for flints and pottery (Atkins 2009).

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank the Environment Agency who commissioned and funded the archaeological work especially to Phil Catherall who organised the scheme. The project was managed by James Drummond- Murray who edited this report. Rob Atkins monitored the work. Alice Lyons and Richard Mortimer commented on the artefacts.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins R., 2009 *Watching brief on site investigations for the Cavenham-Icklingham water level management plan* Oxford East report no. 1129 (unpublished)

APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-77750		
Project Name	Land near the Temple Bridge, Cavenham, Suffolk		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	30-01-2010	Finish	19-02-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XSFICK 09	Planning App. No.	N/A
HER No.	CAM 049	Related HER/OASIS No.	Oxfordar3-66179

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
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Please select all techniques used:

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

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

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

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Earthwork?	Iron Age -800 to 43	Flints and pottery	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43
Earthwork?	Roman 43 to 410	pottery	Roman 43 to 410
	None		Select period...

Project Location

County	Suffolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	Forest Heath	Land on the southern bank of the River Lark to the west of the Temple bridge	
Parish	Cavenham		
HER	Suffolk HER		
Study Area	less than 100m	National Grid Reference	TL 7577 7290

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	-
Project Design Originator	-
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Rob Atkins

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Location ...Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds	Location ...OA East	Location ...Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds
CAM 049	CAM 049	CAM 049

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
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<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

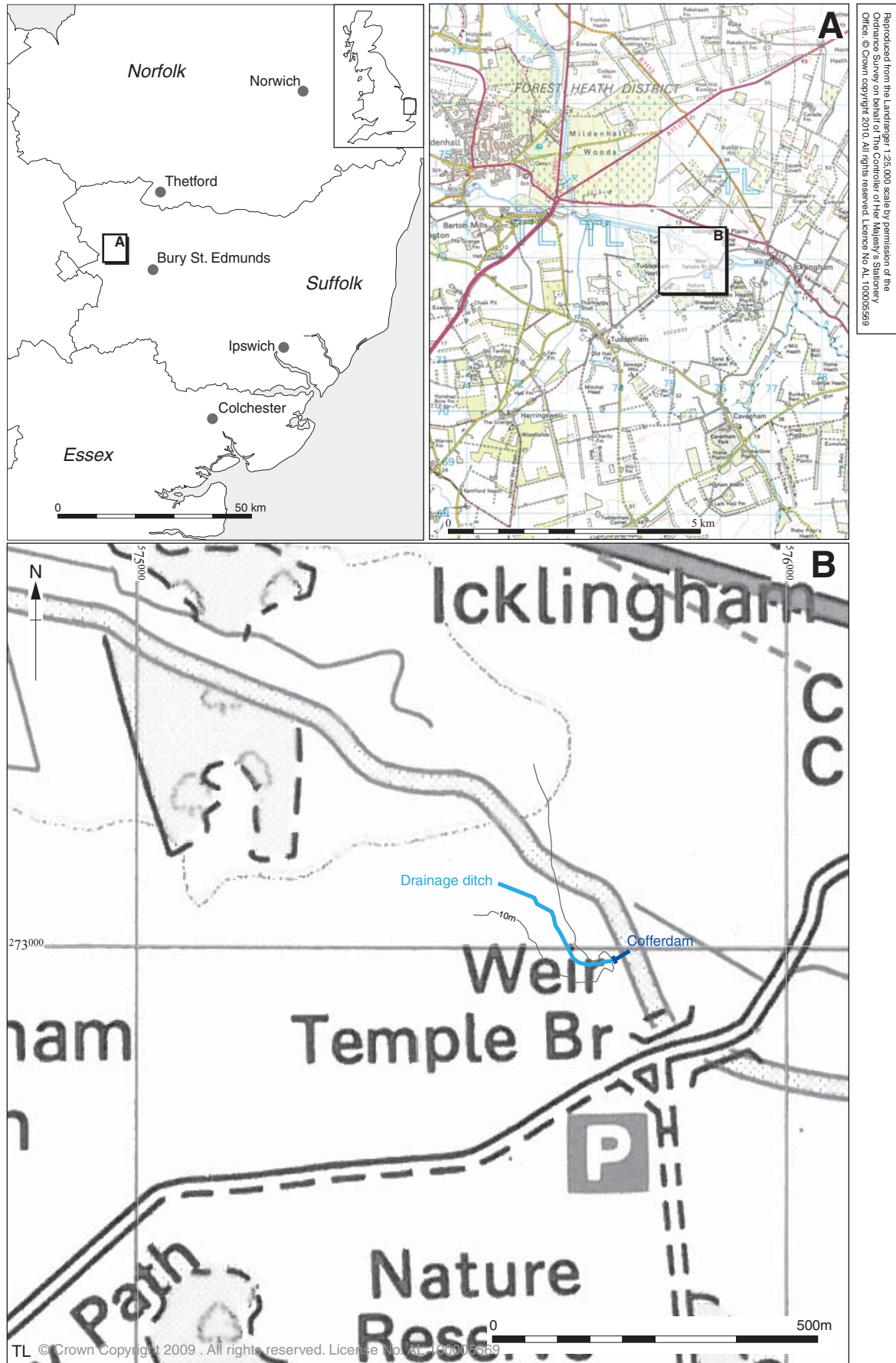


Figure 1: Location of drainage ditch and new cofferdam

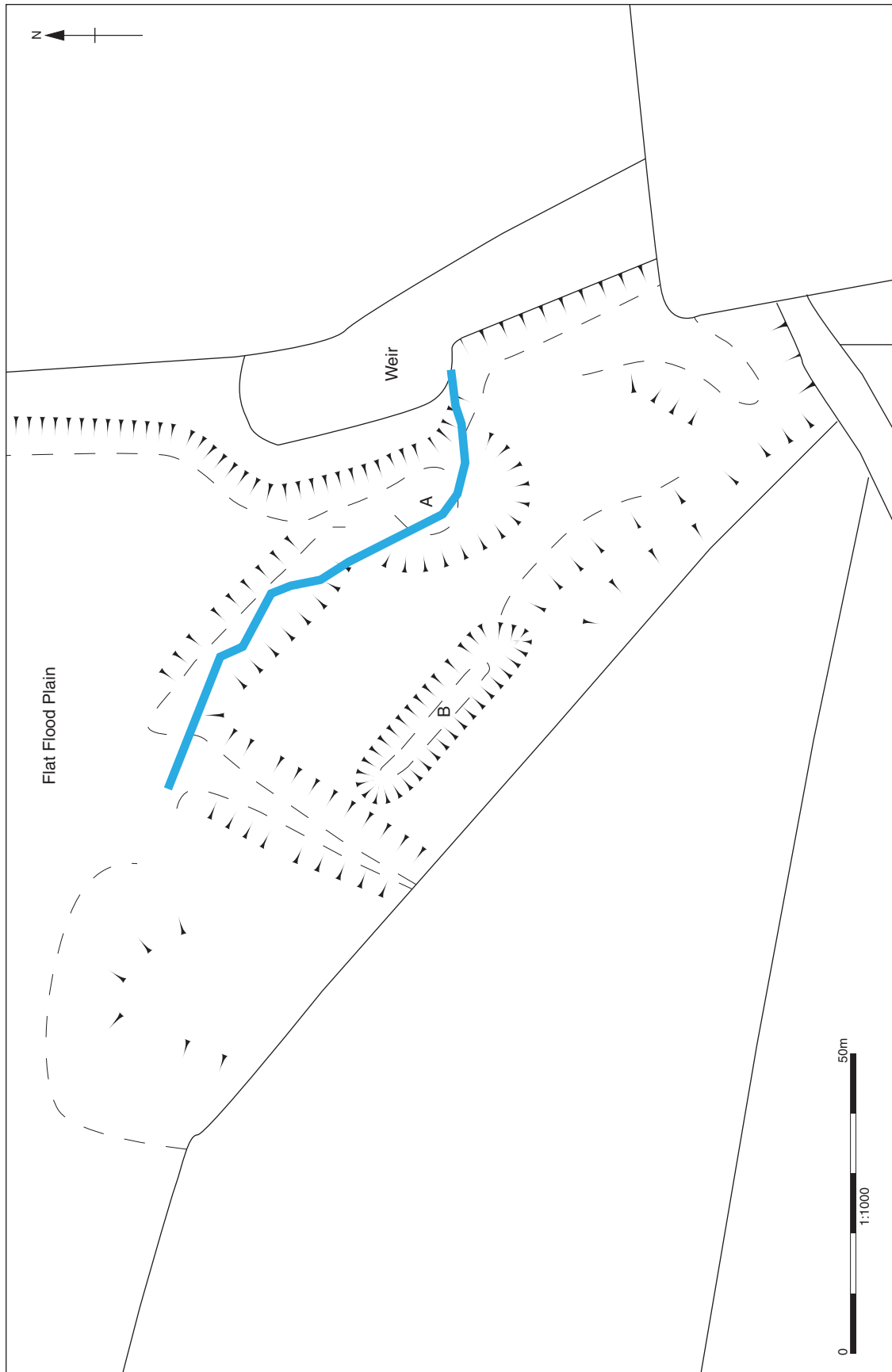


Figure 2: The new drainage ditch (blue) overlaid earthwork survey of southern part of field containing TP 5



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