

Land at 103
Cottenham Road
Histon, Cambridgeshire



Archaeological
Evaluation Report



Jan 2009

Client:

OA East Report No: 1079

OASIS No: oxfordar3-52558

NGR: TL 4407 6457

Archaeological Evaluation on land
at
103 Cottenham Road, Histon.

By James Fairbairn

With contributions by William S Wadeson and Rachel Fosberry

Editor: Richard Mortimer MIFA

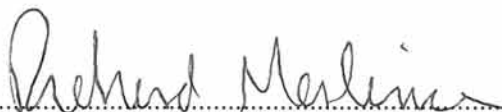
Illustrator: Crane Begg B.sc Hons

Report Date: January 09

Report Number: 1079
Site Name: 103 Cottenham Road, Histon.
HER Event No: ECB3077
Date of Works: November 08
Client Name: Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd
Client Ref:
Planning Ref: S/2350/07/F
Grid Ref: TL 4407 6457
Site Code: HIS COR 08
Finance Code: HIS COR 08
Receiving Body: Cambs County Stores, Landbeach
Accession No:

Prepared by: James Fairbairn
Position: Supervisor
Date: December 08

Checked by: Richard Mortimer
Position: Project Manager
Date: December 08
Signed:



Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology East,
15 Trafalgar Way,
Bar Hill,
Cambridge,
CB23 8SQ

t: 01223 850500
f: 01223 850599
e: oeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oeast>

© Oxford Archaeology East 2008
Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Table of Contents

Summary.....	5
1 Introduction.....	6
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	6
1.2 Geology and topography.....	6
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	6
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	6
2 Aims and Methodology.....	7
2.1 Aims.....	7
2.2 Methodology.....	7
3 Results.....	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Trench 1.....	8
3.3 Trench 2.....	8
3.4 Trench 3.....	8
3.5 Finds Summary.....	8
3.6 Environmental Summary.....	9
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	10
4.1 Discussion	10
4.2 Significance.....	10
4.3 Recommendations.....	10
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	11
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	12
B.1 Pottery.....	12
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	12
C.1 Environmental samples.....	12
Appendix D. OASIS Report Form	13

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Trench plans
Fig. 3 Sections

List of Plates

- Plate. 1 Trench 1
Plate. 2 Trench 3

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at 103 Cottenham Road, Histon, prior to the construction of two residential dwellings and following the demolition of an existing building.

OA East was commissioned to excavate 27m of trenching representing a 5% sample of the entire development site. Three archaeological features were found consisting of a small pit, a linear ditch and a possible furrow.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at 103 Cottenham Road, Histon, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Eliza Gore of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/2350/07/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).
- 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 and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology

- 1.2.1 The area lies on Third Terrace River Deposits overlying Gault Clay and the site is located at approximately 10m AOD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The site lies in an area of some archaeological potential with extensive cropmark sites of unknown, but probable Iron Age or Roman date, to the north and southeast of the site (Historic Environment Record Numbers 16216 & 11453). Monitoring and Recording along an electricity cable to the east of the site in 2006 revealed archaeological remains dating from the Roman and post-medieval periods (HER MCB16772, 16770, 16769, ECB2064). The medieval core of Histon lies some way to the south, but post-medieval settlement is known to have extended north along Cottenham Road. Post medieval structures have been recorded both as standing buildings (17th Century cottage - HER 002811) and as archaeological remains uncovered through excavation (HER MCB17320, ECB2170).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The Author would like to thank Neil Roe of Amber Developments (St Ives) who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer. James Fairbairn carried out the evaluation. Rachel Clarke surveyed the site and the illustrations were produced by Crane Begg. Richard Mortimer edited the report and Andy Thomas from CAPCA monitored the evaluation.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Three trenches totalling twenty-seven linear metres were excavated within the property boundaries.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out using a Leica GPS which is located on the ordnance survey grid. Levels were also recorded on the top and bottom of each trench and on section drawings with the GPS. Drawn plans were incorporated with the survey data to accurately plot the position of the trenches.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 A Total of 30L of bulk soil samples were collected.
- The total volume of each sample was processed by water flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flots were collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residues were washed through a 1mm mesh. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residues were passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for ecofacts (e.g. animal bone, fish bone, charcoal, shell, etc..) and artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification. Identifications were made by the author without comparison to the OA East reference collection and should be seen as provisional. Nomenclature for the plant classification follows Stace (1997).
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were dry and sunny

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Trench 1 was orientated NW-SE and was located at the front of the plot close to the Cottenham Road. Trench 2 was orientated NE-SW and ran southwest from the northern boundary of the plot. Trench 3 was orientated N-S and was located at the westernmost end of the development area. Trenches are discussed in numerical order.

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 Two archaeological features were recorded in trench one, a small pit **105** truncated a SSW-NNE aligned ditch **107**.
- 3.2.2 Ditch **107** was broad and relatively shallow, with a depth of 0.50m and an approximate width of 2.20m. Visible edges in section suggested gently sloping sides and a slightly concave base. It contained a single fill (106) consisting of a mid to light brown sandy silty clay which had very similar characteristics to that of the sub soil layer 102 so exact edge dimensions were difficult to ascertain. A single sherd of domestic Roman grey ware (not closely datable) was recovered from fill 106 (see appendix B). The ditch was cut through the subsoil layer 102.
- 3.2.3 Pit **105** had a width of 0.62m and a depth of 0.23m. It had steep sides and a slightly concave base and contained a single fill (104) consisting of a dark silty clay very similar to that of the top soil layer (102). No finds were recovered from this fill. The feature was cut from within the topsoil layer 101 (see Fig 3, Section 1).
- 3.2.4 This area of the evaluation is capped by a modern car parking area made up of a hardcore base and a gravel surface to a maximum depth of 0.28m.

3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 No archaeological features were recorded in Trench 2. A topsoil layer 101 existed to a depth of 0.40m and a subsoil layer 102 to a depth of 0.30m. (see Fig. 3, Section 2).

3.4 Trench 3

- 3.4.1 A possible furrow **109** was recorded at the southern end of Trench 3. It had a width of 2.60m, a depth of 0.15m with an uneven base. The fill of this feature (108) consisted of a light brown silty sand. No finds were recovered from the excavated section. The interface between this fill and the subsoil layer above 102 was not readily apparent. Topsoil and subsoil depths were as those in Trench 2.

3.5 Finds Summary

- 3.5.1 Although all fills were scanned by eye and with a metal detector for artefactual evidence no finds other than obvious modern objects were found within the trenches with the exception of a single abraded sherd of domestic Roman Grey ware. . This pottery was recovered from ditch **107** in Trench 1.

3.6 Environmental Summary

- 3.6.1 Flots from environmental samples from the two features in Trench 1 produced no charred plant remains. The material from the residues is indicative of relatively modern garden soils.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 The excavation area produced little in the way of archaeological finds or features. However, the ditch **107** recorded in Trench 1 may possibly have had some relationship to the forerunner of the present day Cottenham Road, which runs roughly on the same orientation. The abraded state of the single piece of Roman pottery recovered from ditch **107** suggests it was residual and so does not date the ditch. Due to disturbance of the topsoil layer and truncation by the modern day hardcore and gravel layer overlying this area there was no evidence for a bank remaining on either side of ditch **107**.
- 4.1.2 Ditch **107** truncated the subsoil layer 102 suggesting that it represents a cultivation layer or plough soil, probably of medieval origin, although the paucity of finds makes this difficult to prove. The possible furrow **109** recorded in Trench 3, which runs perpendicular to the road, adds weight to the suggestion that the evaluation area was part of a medieval agricultural landscape.

4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 This evaluation has provided results that show the area of land recently occupied by 103 Cottenham Road was probably part of a wider medieval agricultural landscape, which itself lay within an area of limited earlier Romano-British activity.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 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 Trench 1 consisted of a modern gravel driveway overlaying a dark silty clay garden soil which in turn overlay a mid to light brown silty clay subsoil. Two archaeological features were recorded.					Orientation		NW-SE
					Avg. depth (m)		0.90
					Width (m)		1.80
					Length (m)		10.00
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
101	Layer	-	0.35	Dark silty clay topsoil			
102	Layer	-	0.30	Silty clay subsoil			
103	Layer	-	-	Sandy gravel natural			
104	Fill	0.62	0.23	Dark silty fill of 105			
105	Cut	0.62	0.23	Cut of pit			
106	Fill	2.20	0.50	Mid to light brown ditch fill	Pottery	1-4 th Century	
107	Cut	4.50	0.50	Cut of linear ditch			
Trench 2							
General description Trench 2 consisted of a dark silty clay garden soil overlying a mid to light brown silty clay subsoil. No archaeological features were recorded.					Orientation		NE-SW
					Avg. depth (m)		0.40
					Width (m)		1.80
					Length (m)		6.0
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
101	Layer		0.40	Dark silty clay topsoil			
102	Layer		0.30	Silty clay subsoil			
103	Layer			Sandy gravel natural			
Trench 3							
General description Trench 3 consisted of a dark silty clay garden soil overlying a mid to light brown silty clay subsoil. A possible furrow was recorded.					Orientation		NNW-SSE
					Avg. depth (m)		0.45
					Width (m)		1.80
					Length (m)		12.00
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
101	Layer		0.43	Dark silty clay topsoil			
102	Layer		0.30	Silty clay subsoil			
103	Layer			Sandy gravel natural			
108	Fill	2.60	0.15	Brown silty clay fill of 109			

109	Cut	2.60	0.15	Possible furrow		
-----	-----	------	------	-----------------	--	--

APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By William S Wadeson

- B.1.1 The evaluation at Cottenham Road, Histon produced a single Romano-British sherd (10g) of Sandy Grey ware. Undiagnostic in form, the fragment, which is substantially abraded, can only be roughly dated to the Roman period locally produced (but unsourced), the sherd is typical of utilitarian domestic coarse wares of this region.

APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Rachel Fosberry

C.1.1 Methodology and Results

The total volume of each sample were processed by water flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flots were collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residues were washed through a 1mm mesh. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residues were passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for ecofacts (e.g. animal bone, fish bone, charcoal, shell, etc.) and artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification. Identifications were made by the author without comparison to the OA East reference collection and should be seen as provisional. Nomenclature for the plant classification follows Stace (1997).

- C.1.2 A total of 30L were taken for bulk sampling, 20L from fill (106) and 20L from fill (105). When processed both samples produced results indicative of garden topsoils and subsoils, including cinder, charcoal and small fragments of coal.

APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-52558		
Project Name	Evaluation at 103 Cottenham road Histon. CB24 9ET		
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	24-11-2008	Finish 26-11-2008
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	HISCOR08	Planning App. No.	S/2350/07/F
HER No.	ECB3077	Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Rural Residential

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input 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 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	Roman 43 to 410	pot Sherd	Roman 43 to 410
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible) 103 Cottenham road, Histon. CB24 9ET	
District	South Cambs		
Parish	Histon		
HER	Cambridge		
Study Area	27 linear mtrs	National Grid Reference	TL 4407 6457

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	CAPCA
Project Design Originator	Richard Mortimer
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	James Fairbairn

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Cambs County Store	OA East	Cambs County Store
Accession ID ... HIS	Accession ID ...HISCOR08	Accession ID ...HISCOR08

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input 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 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


Notes:

Drawing Conventions

Plans

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

Sections

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

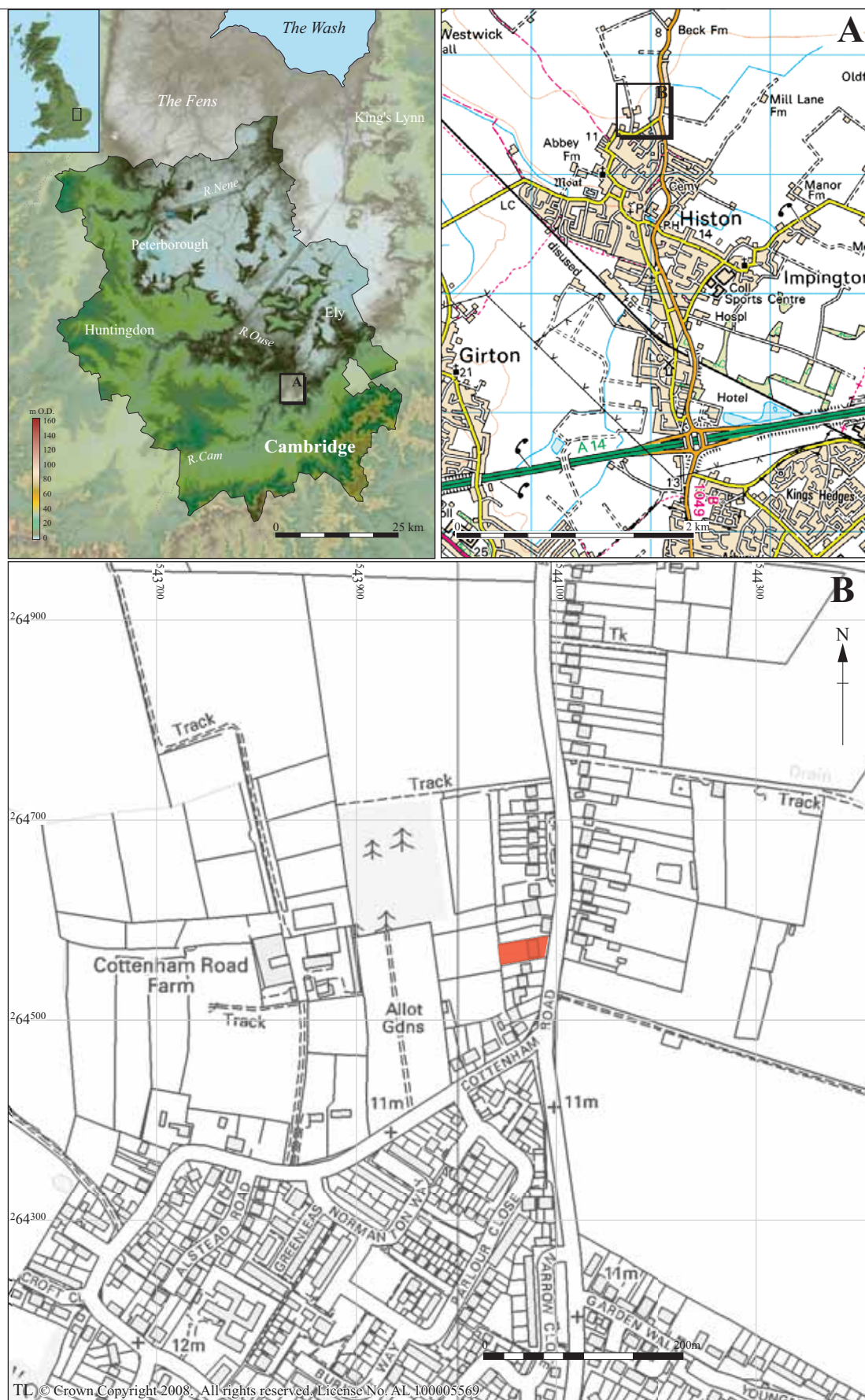


Figure 1 Location of development area outlined (red)

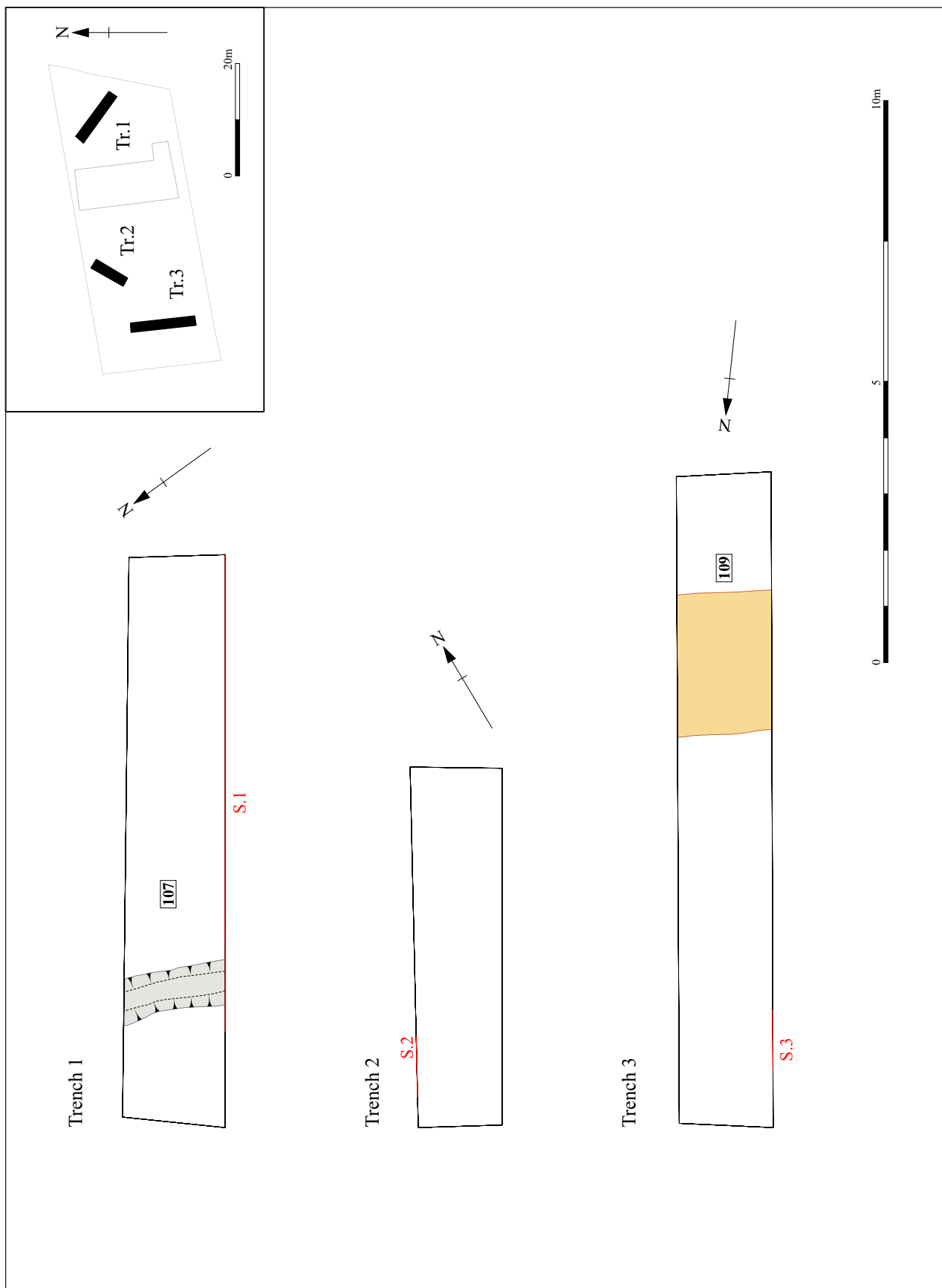


Figure 2: Trench plans at 1:100

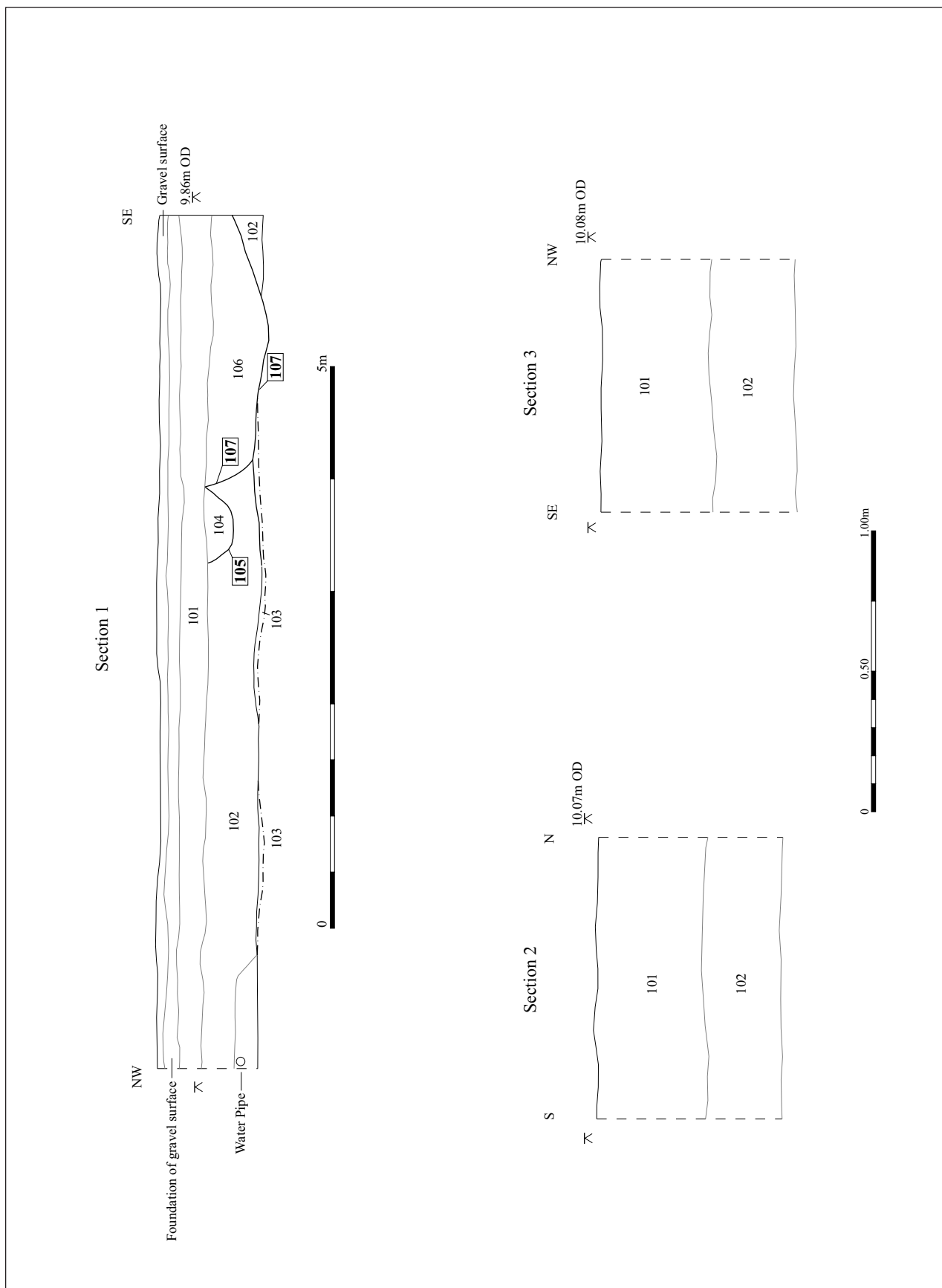


Figure 3: Section drawings (Scale 1:50 and 1:20)



Plate 1



Plate 2



Head Office/Registered Office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850 500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850 599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Manguio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@oamed.fr](mailto: oamed@oamed.fr)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

*Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*