

# Land at Ivy Farm Baldock Road Royston



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



May 2014

**Client: CgMs Consulting  
on behalf of Kier Homes**

OA East Report No: 1620  
OASIS No: oxfordar3-178018  
NGR: TL 344 408

## **Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

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*Report Date: May 2014*

**Report Number:** 1620  
**Site Name:** Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston  
**HER Event No:** n/a  
**Date of Works:** April 2014  
**Client Name:** CgMs Consulting on behalf of Kier Homes  
**Client Ref:** n/a  
**Planning Ref:** 13/00700/01  
**Grid Ref:** TL 344 408  
**Site Code:** XHTIFA14  
**Finance Code:** XHTIFA14  
**Receiving Body:** Royston Museum  
**Accession No:** n/a  
**Prepared by:** Andrew Greef  
**Position:** Assistant Supervisor  
**Date:** May 2014  
**Checked by:** Richard Mortimer  
**Position:** Senior Project Manager  
**Date:** May 2014  
**Signed:** 

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## **Summary**

*Between the 28th and 30th of April 2014 Oxford Archaeology East undertook an evaluation on Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston, Hertfordshire (TL 34422 240775). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Keir Homes.*

*Eight trial trenches were excavated, within which the remnants of a north-south aligned field trackway and a posthole were recorded, both situated on the line of the original field boundary. The trackway is thought to have functioned as access to the field with the posthole possibly part of a fenceline. Additionally a shallow pit was recorded further to the south in the same trench as part of the trackway. Aside from these features the remaining trenches were devoid of significant archaeology, though large quarry pits and service trenches were recorded. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered other than those dating to the late 19th and 20th centuries.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation issued by Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting (HCC; Planning Application 13/00700/01), supplemented by a Specification also prepared by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2014).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by HCC, 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 to the west of Royston on a slight north facing slope below Therfield Heath. Ground levels fall from c.69m OD along the southern Baldock road boundary to c.60m OD along the northern railway boundary. A short terrace of houses front onto Baldock Road to the south and a number of farm buildings occupy the southern and central part of the site.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the site consists of chalk overlain by well drained calcareous silty soil of the Upton 1 Association (Flitcroft 2013).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following summary is taken from the updated Desk-Based Assessment prepared by CgMs Consulting (Flitcroft 2012). This study incorporates the results of archaeological investigations directly to the east of the site in 2009 and 2010 along with records from Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) from the immediate vicinity. No records are directly related to the development area itself.

#### ***Prehistoric***

- 1.3.2 The route of the Icknield Way, a prehistoric trade route, is broadly followed by the Baldock Road to the west of Royston and passes through the general area of the development site. Spot finds of prehistoric material have been made in the Royston area dating from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age. The precise location of these finds is unknown as only a general OS grid reference is recorded. Overlooking the Icknield Way to the south of the development area are a nationally important group of prehistoric burial and ritual monuments on Therfield Heath. Upstanding earthwork monuments include a Long Barrow (HER 40) of probable Neolithic date; and a barrow cemetery (HER 6355) of probable Bronze Age date.

### ***Roman***

- 1.3.3 Ermine Street, a major Roman road, passes north to south through Royston approximately 1km to the east of the development area. Roman coins and other Roman occupation evidence have been found around the crossing point with the Icknield Way, which also continued in use during the Roman period.
- 1.3.4 Further Roman activity along the line of the Baldock road consists of the 19th century excavation of the chalk mine 'near the cricket ground on Therfield Heath' (HER 6506) and an earlier 18th century account of a 'Roman camp', "a quarter of a mile from Royston on the road to Baldock" (HER 4196). The location and interpretation of this monument remains uncertain, with no evidence from the archaeological excavations to the east of the development area to suggest that it may have lain in the immediate vicinity.

### ***Early Medieval***

- 1.3.5 Antiquarian investigations of the monuments on Therfield Heath found evidence of Saxon period burials. Further Saxon burials have also been found within the built up area of Royston to the east. There is no mention of Royston in the Domesday Book and little recorded evidence of Saxon settlement in the area. Based on the existence of the burial sites in the area however it is thought that a Saxon hamlet may have existed, perhaps at the junction of the earlier Ermine Street and Icknield Way, in the area of Royston's medieval and later town core (Smith & Ransom, 2001, 3).

### ***Medieval and post-medieval***

- 1.3.6 Throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods the development area lay well outside Royston's settlement core. Maps pre-dating the middle of the 19th century show the development site as undeveloped agricultural land. The 1850s Ordnance Survey 1inch 'Old Series' map shows a group of buildings at Ivy Farm lying directly east of the development site. The farm group comprised a series of buildings set around a square yard with open fields to north, west and east. The farm is identified as Monument ref 15989 in the Hertfordshire HER.
- 1.3.7 A late medieval stirrup was found on Therfield Heath 'near the Icknield Way' in the 19th century (HER 17680) and archaeological investigations in 2009 and 2011 identified a late medieval trackway a short distance north of Baldock Road running east to west (Mason 2009 and Fletcher 2011). This trackway is identified as Monument ref 16210 in the Hertfordshire HER.

### ***Undated***

- 1.3.8 Two broad linear ditches are recorded from aerial photography in the fields to the west of the development site.

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work and Kier Homes for funding it. Further thanks go to Andy Instone for providing consultation on the archaeological works. Site work was undertaken by the author with survey provided by Louise Bush and James Fairbairn. The project was managed by Richard Mortimer.



## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

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

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The WSI required that eight 30m trial trenches be excavated down to the layer of natural chalk or to the upper level of any archaeological features or deposits. The trenches would be positioned to provide overall spatial coverage of the areas with surviving potential for archaeology.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked mechanical excavator using a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket .
- 2.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds would have been retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern. In the event no pre-modern artefacts were recovered.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 No environmental samples were taken.
- 2.2.6 Site conditions were mainly overcast with one morning of light rain.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The trenches are discussed below numerically (Fig 2). Full details of trenches and lists of contexts can be found in Appendix A. No finds were recovered from features and no environmental samples were taken.

#### 3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 Trench 1 was devoid of any pre-modern archaeological features. A large modern pit was located at the north-western end towards the rail line containing fragments of brick and modern metal debris. Proximity to the rail line could suggest chalk quarrying associated with its construction or alternatively it could have a similar purpose to the pits (avoided) to the west, being for the disposal of modern rubbish and animal remains. Further to the south-east a concrete slab came partway across the trench, adjacent was a smaller modern pit full of compact rubble (Plate 1).

#### 3.3 Trench 2

- 3.3.1 Trench 2 was devoid of any pre-modern archaeological features. A narrow feature halfway along the trench had vertical edges and clear marks from the teeth of a small digger bucket. A drain at the north-eastern end contained a green plastic pipe (Plate 2).

#### 3.4 Trench 3

- 3.4.1 Trench 3 was devoid of any pre-modern archaeological features. Modern disturbance consisted of two machine-dug slots, with similar characteristics to the one in Trench 2, and a modern pit containing asbestos at the north-eastern end. The presence of asbestos was not surprising given the proximity of the barn on the east of site which is known to have asbestos shuttering (Plate 3).

#### 3.5 Trench 4

- 3.5.1 Trench 4 contained a single posthole (1). It was circular in plan, with a diameter of 0.25m, and was 0.10m deep with vertical sides and a flat base. This posthole was located on the same alignment as the recently removed field boundary and may represent a fence post. No finds were recovered from the fill (2) which was a light grey chalky sandy silt. A modern drain further to the north ran west to east across the trench (Plate 4).

#### 3.6 Trench 5

- 3.6.1 Trench 5 was devoid of pre-modern archaeological features but contained modern disturbance. The end of one modern service trench running south was seen with another service to the north, heading off towards the farm buildings (Plate 5).

#### 3.7 Trench 6

- 3.7.1 Trench 6 contained a disturbed and rutted area measuring 2.4m wide and up to 0.15m deep. This was thought to be part of a trackway (3). The wheel ruts ran north to south in line with the recently removed field boundary. No finds were recovered from the fill (4) which was a light grey chalky sandy silt. Further to the east a service trench crossed the trench which was lined with plastic (Plate 6).

### **3.8 Trench 7**

- 3.8.1 Trench 7 contained the possible continuation of the trackway seen to the north in Trench 6. This partial trackway (5), which measured 0.35m in width and 0.2m in depth, contained no finds in its fill (6) which was a light grey chalky sandy silt. A shallow undated pit or depression (7), measuring 0.5m in width and 0.1m in depth, was located further to the south. It was circular in plan with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled with a light brown grey chalky sandy silt fill (8) (Plate 7).

### **3.9 Trench 8**

- 3.9.1 Trench 8 was devoid of pre-modern archaeological features and was heavily disturbed by modern activity. Where seen, the natural was 0.1m below the modern land surface and a large area of hardcore and concrete extended halfway across the trench from the north in line with the modern trackway running downhill (Plate 8).

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The trackway found in Trenches 6 and 7 was undated but ran north-south along the line of the recently removed field boundary. This probably represents a track running into the field from the Baldock Road to the south. The single posthole to the north in Trench 4 may have been part of a fence-post alignment along the line of the field boundary. The only other potential archaeological feature on the site was a shallow pit or depression of unknown date in Trench 7.
- 4.1.2 Several modern features appeared in the trenches. The large pit by the rail line could have been used as a chalk quarry during its construction. The remaining disturbance consisted of services related to the nearby houses and farm buildings.

## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology but contained modern disturbances. A large pit was located at the north-western end towards the rail line. Further to the south-east a concrete slab came partway across the trench along with a smaller modern pit full of rubble. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.3
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	SW-NE
Trench devoid of archaeology but contained modern disturbances. A machine dug slot halfway along the trench and a modern drain at the north-eastern end. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.42
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	22
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	SW-NE
Trench devoid of archaeology but contained modern disturbances. Two machine dug slots and a modern pit with asbestos at the north-eastern end. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.25
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	21
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench contained one posthole and a modern drain running off towards septic tank. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	31.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Cut	0.25	0.1	Posthole	n/a	Undated
2	Fill	0.25	0.1	Posthole fill	-	Undated
Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology but contained modern disturbances. The end of one Modern service running off to south and another service heading off towards farm buildings. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.35
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	SW-NE
Trench contained rutting from a trackway running North to South along line of old field boundary and a modern service. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	22
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
3	Cut	2.4		Trackway	n/a	Undated
4	Fill	2.4		Trackway fill	n/a	Undated

Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench contained partial continuation of trackway from Trench 6, a shallow pit and a modern service. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	27.75
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
5	Cut	0.35	0.2	Trackway	n/a	Undated
6	Fill	0.35	0.2	Trackway fill	n/a	Undated
7	Cut	0.5	0.1	Pit	n/a	Undated
8	Fill	0.5	0.1	Pit fill	n/a	Undated
Trench 8						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology but contained modern disturbances. A bore hole at the southern end of the trench and a large area of hardcore in line with the modern track running downhill to the north. Consists of a small amount of soil overlying a natural of chalk					Avg. depth (m)	0.1
					Width (m)	2
					Length (m)	30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fletcher, T. 2011. Medieval Trackway on land at Ivy Farm Royston, Hertfordshire. Oxford Archaeology East report 1305
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- Mason, P. 2009. Archaeological Evaluation at Ivy Farm, Royston Northamptonshire Archaeology client report ref 09/144
- Smith. N & Ransom, C. 2001. Royston. Extensive Urban Survey Project. Assessment Report Hertfordshire County Council



## APPENDIX C. HERTFORDSHIRE HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:  Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston SG8 9NU		
County: Hertfordshire		District: North Hertfordshire
Village/Town: Royston		Parish: Royston
Planning application reference:13/00700/01		
HER Enquiry reference:n/a		
Funding source: Kier Homes Ltd		
Nature of application:Housing development		
Present land use: Disused farm buildings		
Size of application area:1.9 hectares		Size of area investigated:1.9 hectares
NGR:TL 344 408		
Site code:XHTIFA14		
Site director/Organization:Oxford Archaeology East		
Type of work: Archaeological evaluation		
Date of work:April 2014	Start:28/04/14	Finish:29/04/14
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Royston Museum		
Related HER Nos:		Periods represented:post-med, modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports n/a		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>Eight trial trenches were excavated, within which the remnants of a north-south aligned trackway and posthole were found situated on the line of the original field boundary. The trackway is thought to have functioned as access to the field and the posthole part of a fenceline. Additionally a shallow pit was recorded further to the south in the same trench as part of the trackway. Aside from these features the remaining trenches were devoid of any archaeology.</p>		
Author of summary:Andrew Greef		Date of summary:May 2014

## APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	<input type="text" value="oxfordar3-178018"/>		
Project Name	<input type="text" value="Land at Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston"/>		
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	<input type="text" value="28-04-2014"/>	Finish <input type="text" value="29-04-2014"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text" value="No"/>	Future Work	<input type="text" value="No"/>

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text" value="XHTIFA14"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text" value="13/00700/01"/>
HER No.	<input type="text" value="n/a"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text" value="n/a"/>

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	<input type="text" value="Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5"/>
Development Type	<input type="text" value="Housing Estate"/>

### 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 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
<input type="text" value="Posthole"/>	<input type="text" value="Uncertain"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
<input type="text" value="Trackway"/>	<input type="text" value="Uncertain"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>
<input type="text" value="Pit"/>	<input type="text" value="Uncertain"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Select period..."/>

### Project Location

County	<input type="text" value="Hertfordshire"/>	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	<input type="text" value="North Hertfordshire"/>	<input type="text" value="Ivy Farm, Baldock Road, Royston"/>
Parish	<input type="text" value="Royston"/>	
HER	<input type="text" value="Hertfordshire"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text" value="1.9 hectares"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text" value="TL 344 408"/>

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Myk Flitcroft
Project Design Originator	
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Andrew Greef

## Project Archives

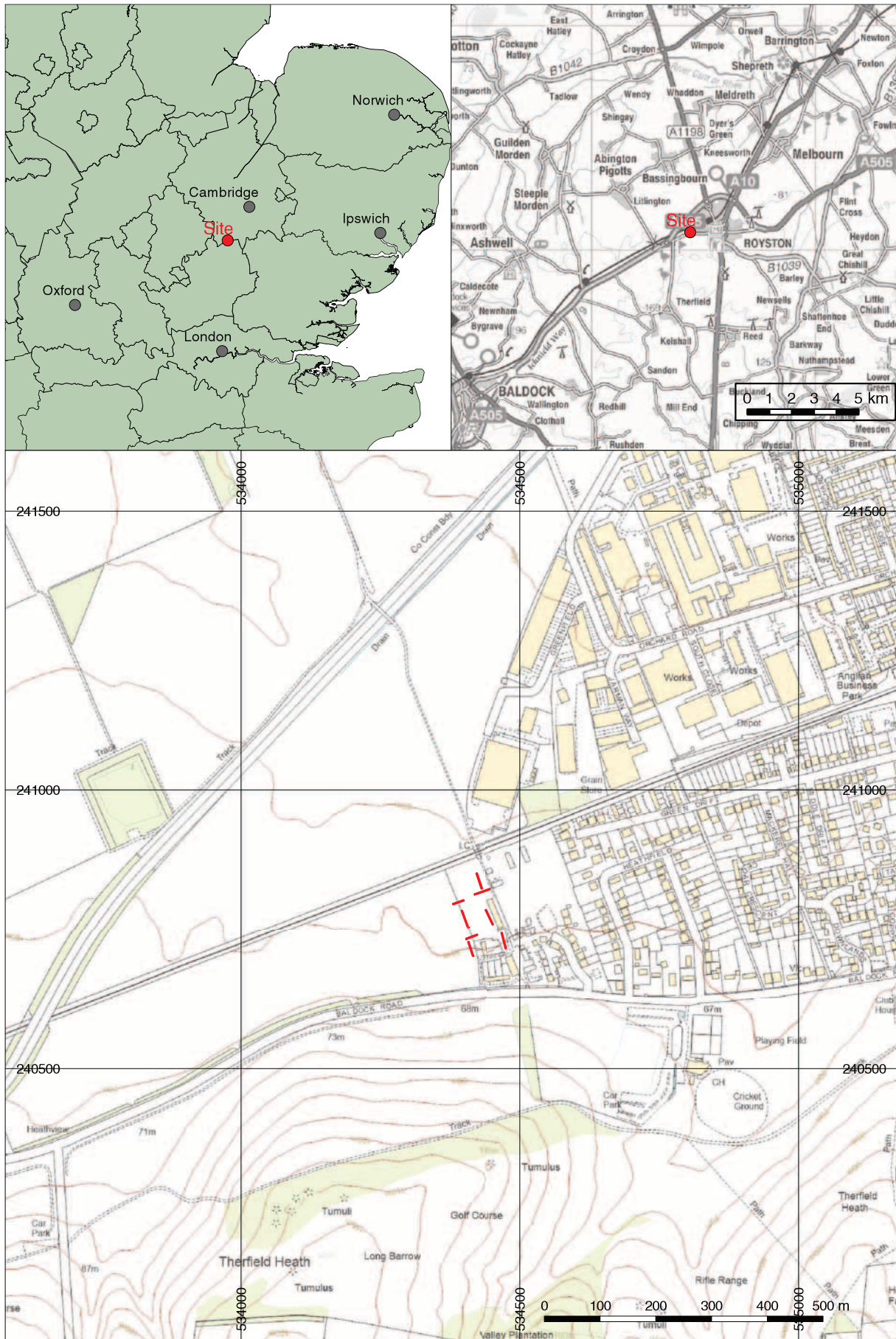
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Hertfordshire HER	OA East	Hertfordshire HER
XHTIFA14	XHTIFA14	XHTIFA14

## Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
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Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

## Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing location of evaluation trenches (red). Scale 1:10000

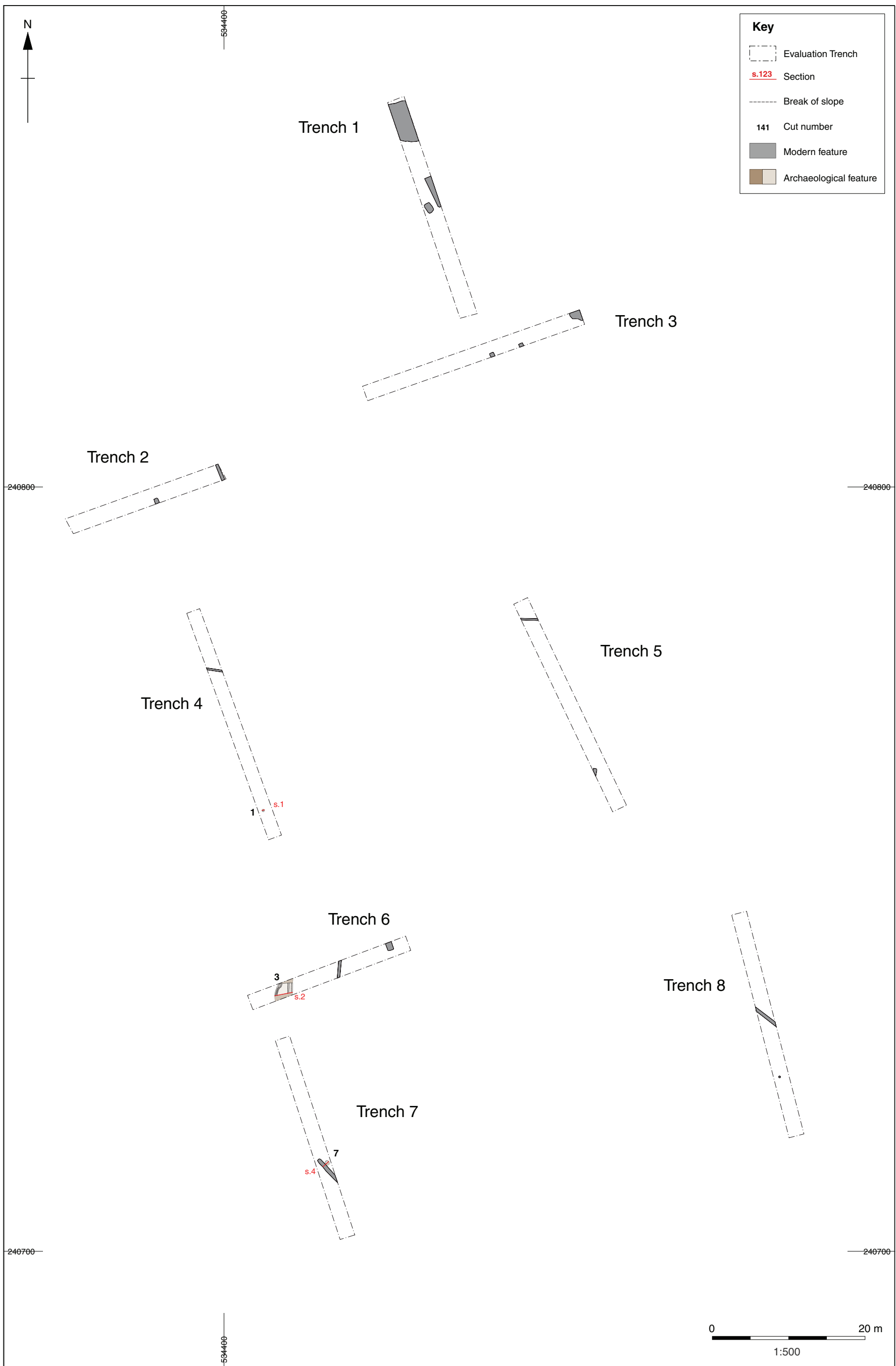


Figure 2: Evaluation trenches 1-8. Scale 1:500





Plate 1: Trench 1 (looking south-east)





Plate 2: Trench 2 (looking north-east)





Plate 3: Trench 3 (looking north-east)





Plate 4: Trench 4 (looking north-west)





Plate 5: Trench 5 (looking north-west) t





Plate 6: Trench 6 (looking north-east)





Plate 7: Trench 7 (looking south-east)





Plate 8: Trench 8 (looking north)



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