

Archaeological Evaluation at North Cambridge Academy Arbury Road, Cambridge



Archaeological Evaluation Report



December 2014

**Client: Wates Ltd for Cambridgeshire
County Council**

OA East Report No: 1722
OASIS No: Oxfordar3-199074
NGR: TL 4560 6070

Archaeological Evaluation at North Cambridge Academy, Arbury Road, Cambridge

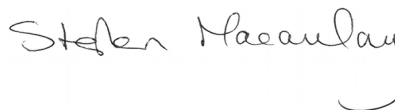
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Date: 5/1/15
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Summary

Between the 22nd and the 23rd of December 2014, OA East conducted an archaeological evaluation at the North Cambridge Academy, Arbury Road, Cambridge (TL 4560 6070). The archaeological work comprised of six evaluation trenches.

The only archaeology identified was one undated linear feature and an undated plough furrow possibly medieval in date. The majority of the trenches were either sterile or so heavily truncated by modern building foundations as to render the survival of any archaeological features unlikely.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the North Cambridge Academy, Arbury Road, Cambridge.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andrew Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application [14/0591/FUL]), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 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 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 British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology of the site is composed of Third Terrace River Gravel

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Residual prehistoric worked flint has been found in later features in the area.
- 1.3.2 Bronze Age finds have been recovered in a ditch 1 kilometre to the west (MCB19296) as well as an arrowhead NW of the site (MCB19623) and a pottery sherd SW (MCB19623).
- 1.3.3 Northwest of the site 1.5 kilometres away is the Kings Hedges Iron Age ring-work. SE from the site are Iron Age pits at Chesterton Road (MCB17140). Residual Late Iron Age pottery has been recovered in later features near to the site (MCB17141).
- 1.3.4 Due north of the site c500m at the Kings Hedges Primary School is a Roman Villa estate (CHER 05411) with associated field systems (CHER 05435). This settlement is one of many such Roman sites located to the north of the historic core of the City of Cambridge. Close by a Roman well and pottery have been found at Alexwood Road in 1974 (CHER 05428) and in the 1950s Roman remains were found at Humphreys Road 200m west of the site (CHER 05430). The Humphreys Road site, covering some 3 hectares included a building with clunch foundations and six late Roman burials. Also near the site, a Roman cremation has been found on Brimsley Road 400m to the south west (CHER 05429) and Roman remains have recorded at the New Milton Monument School 600m to the south west (MCB 15631).
- 1.3.5 The Roman road of Akeman Street (CHER 05352) passes to the west of the Academy between Roman Cambridge (Duroliponte) and Ely and is known locally as the Mere Way.
- 1.3.6 A community excavation was carried out at the site of the academy in 2000. A 53m long trench was excavated near the south eastern boundary of the playing fields at TL 4572 6062. A palisaded ditch with associated post holes was identified. This was interpreted

as being Roman in date although the feature was much truncated by medieval ploughing (CHER MCB 16487; Reynolds, 2000).

- 1.3.7 Saxon activity has been located at Kings Hedges to the north of the site (HER 05421b). At Chesterton 800m to the south east, pits, ditches and two bronze Saxon broaches were recovered (HER 05480).
- 1.3.8 Aerial photographs show a considerable amount of Medieval ridge and furrows on either side of Arbury Road which survived until the urban development of the area in the 1950s (CHER 05465, 05527A, 10106). Medieval or post medieval furrows have been identified at the Academy (MCB 19678). An excavation of the site by OA East in 2012 identified two heavily truncated ditches in the south west corner. These were interpreted as the bases of Medieval or post Medieval plough furrows from when the area was farmed as part of the Manor Estate which had subsequently been truncated by modern ploughing (Clover 2012).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Cambridgeshire County Council who funded the work and Wates Ltd who commissioned the work on their behalf. Stephen Macaulay managed the project on behalf of OA East and the field work was carried out by Steve Graham, Nick Cox and Malgorzata Kwiatkowska. David Brown surveyed in the trenches. The brief was written by Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeology office, who also monitored the work.

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.
- 2.1.2 The North Cambridge Academy was being redeveloped with the phased demolition of existing school buildings and their replacement with a new two storey school and associated parking and landscaping. The first phase of demolition was programmed for November to December 2014, with four separate structures being demolished.
- 2.1.3 An attempt was made to determine the depth of any foundations of the demolished buildings and to indicate if any archaeology might survive beneath them.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Six trial trenches were excavated, all were 2.0m in width. Although the OA East Written Scheme of Investigation specified that these should all be 30m in length, conditions on the ground necessitated changes to the length of the trenches.
- 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 by David Brown using a Leica GS08.
- 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 The paucity of any archaeology meant that no environmental sampling was required.
- 2.2.7 Despite the time year, conditions on the site were dry and firm. The weather was dry and overcast.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The results are described in Trench order. Full details by trench and context are described in appendix A. Trenches 1, 2 and 6 were excavated through turf, whilst trenches 3, 4 and 5 were excavated through the rubble of the demolished buildings.

3.2 Trench One (Fig 3 and Plate 1)

- 3.2.1 This was located in the south west corner of the demolition area in a grassy verge directly adjacent to one of the demolished buildings and was 18.5m in length, aligned SE to NW. Naturally gravelly sand was identified 0.56m below ground level. This was sealed by 0.16m to 0.20m of mid brown silty sand subsoil (101) and this was in turn sealed over by 0.40m of dark brown silty topsoil (100) which contained occasional small stones.
- 3.2.2 The natural was cut by five features all orientated NW to SE. of these four were during excavation clearly identified as firmly post medieval, being service ditches for the school. However one linear feature (**103**) was not obviously Modern, being shallow 0.10m deep and wide 1.42m. Its fill (104) was mid greyish brown comprised of silty sand. Only two small fragments of undiagnostic fired clay or daub were recovered from the fill.

3.3 Trench Two (Fig 3 and Plate 3)

- 3.3.1 This trench was directly adjacent to trench One on its north eastern corner and was aligned from the SW to the NE for 25.5m. Natural sands and gravels were located 0.72m below ground level. These were sealed over by 0.31m of silt sand sub soil (201) and 0.37m of silt topsoil (200). This trench was heavily truncated throughout by post medieval intrusions such as concrete drains and foundation cuts for the demolished school building. There was no evidence of any earlier archaeology in the trench.

3.4 Trench Three (Fig 3)

- 3.4.1 This trench was located in the centre of the demolished buildings. Its length was 22.5m and was aligned from the NNW to the SSE. Its natural was a combination of sandy gravel and compact brown sand located 0.65m below ground level. This was sealed over 0.24m of silt sand subsoil (301) and 0.35m of sandy silt topsoil (300). The natural was cut into by four narrow linear features all of which were modern service trenches. Two sub circular hollows were investigated but were revealed to be tree bowls. There was no other trace of archaeology in the trench.

3.5 Trench Four (Fig 3 and Plate 5)

- 3.5.1 This trench was located in the north western area of the demolished buildings. Its length was 28m and was aligned from the NE to the SW. The natural of sandy gravels and compact sand was located 0.66m below ground level. This was sealed over by a silt sand sub soil (402) 0.3m thick, this in turn was sealed over by 0.36m of sandy silt topsoil (401) which 0.10m of demolition rubble above this (400).
- 3.5.2 At either end of the trench were modern foundation cuts whilst four linear features running across the trench were all clearly modern service trenches. One linear was potentially medieval or earlier (403) with a width of 0.64m and a depth of 0.21m. No datable material was retrieved from its fill.

3.6 Trench Five (Fig 4 and Plate 4)

- 3.6.1 This trench was located in the north east corner of the excavation area directly in the centre of the demolished buildings. It was 25m long and was aligned from the NW to the SE. Its natural of gravelly sands was located 0.56m below ground level. This was sealed over by a loose clayey sand subsoil (502) 0.20m thick, which in turn was sealed over by a grey brown silt sand topsoil (501) 0.15m thick with a demolition layer (500) of 0.22m atop of this.
- 3.6.2 Over 70% of the natural sandy gravel was heavily truncated by the modern concrete foundations of the school buildings. These foundations were deep with virtually no chance for any earlier archaeology to survive underneath them. There was no evidence of archaeology in those parts of the trench that were untouched by the foundations.

3.7 Trench Six

- 3.7.1 This trench was located in the south west corner of the school playing fields. It was aligned the NE to the SW for a length of 30m. The natural of sandy gravels was located 0.66m below ground level. This was sealed over by 0.30m of silt sand subsoil (602) and 0.37m of silt topsoil (601) with 0.05m of turf atop (600) of this. The trench was totally sterile of archaeology with absolutely no trace of activity within it at all.

3.8 Finds Summary

- 3.8.1 Only two small pieces of fired clay were recovered from the entire site. These came from the linear feature found in trench One (**103**). With a combined weight of 6g, these were unable to provide any type of firm dating evidence. No other dated material was recovered from the site.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Only two features were identified in the entire excavation. The ditch (**403**) found in trench 4 was small, shallow and contained no datable material. There was no trace of a continuation of the feature in trench 3 directly to the south east. The other feature was the wide shallow ditch located in Trench 1 (**103**). Only two pieces of undiagnostic fired clay were recovered from this ditch. Trench 1 was located very close to a previous trial trench from the OA East evaluation of the site in 2012. Two similar ditches in size and shape were excavated producing a fragment of reddish sandy pottery dated to either Roman or medieval. These two ditches were interpreted as being heavily truncated medieval or post medieval furrows (Clover 2012), the ditch in trench 1 is most likely also a furrow from the same period.
- 4.1.2 All of the trenches excavated within the perimeter of the demolished school buildings, were heavily truncated by either the school building foundations or the associated service trenches. Aside from the small ditch in trench 4, there was no other evidence of archaeology in the exposed natural sands and gravels. The depth of the buildings foundations were ascertained in 2012 to be 0.85m below ground level, the deepest trench in this evaluation was 0.73m below ground. This would suggest that any archaeology that may have been present within the perimeter of the demolished school buildings had been truncated or destroyed during their construction.
- 4.1.3 The large palisaded ditch and post holes that were recorded in the evaluation trench in 2000 in the south east boundary of the playing field was not in evidence in the single trench excavated in the south eastern corner of the field.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 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	NW-SE
Naturally gravelly sand sealed by subsoil (101) and topsoil (102). Natural truncated by four post medieval service ditches and one probable furrow (103).					Avg. depth (m)	0.56
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	18.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.32	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer		0.25	Subsoil		
103	Cut	1.42	0.10	Furrow/Ditch cut	-	-
104	Fill	-	-	Fill of 103	-	-
Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Naturally gravelly sand sealed over by subsoil (201) and topsoil (200). Heavily truncated by foundation cut of school building and associated services, no other archaeology present.					Avg. depth (m)	0.73
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	25.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.47	Topsoil		
201	Layer		0.32	Subsoil		
Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SSE
Naturally gravelly sand sealed over by Subsoil (301) and topsoil (300). Archaeologically sterile except post medieval service trenches and tree bowls.					Avg. depth (m)	0.65
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	22.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer		0.35	Topsoil		
301	Layer		0.30	Subsoil		

Trench 4							
General description					Orientation		NE-SW
					Avg. depth (m)		0.66
					Width (m)		2.00
					Length (m)		28.0
Naturally gravelly sand sealed over by subsoil (402), topsoil (401) And turf layer (400). Ether end of the trench is truncated by school building foundation cuts and heavily truncated by service ditches throughout. One potential linear feature (403) runs across the trench containing no datable material.							
Contexts							
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date	
400	Layer		0.10	Turf Layer			
401	Layer		0.36	Topsoil			
402	Layer		0.30	Subsoil			
403	Cut		0.21	Ditch Cut			
404	fill		-	Fill of 403			

Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Naturally gravelly sand sealed over by a subsoil (502), a topsoil (501) and a demolition layer (500). The entire trench heavily truncated by modern cement foundations of school buildings, no evidence of any archaeology.					Avg. depth (m)	0.56
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	25.0
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
500	Layer		0.22	demolition rubble		
501	Layer		0.12	Topsoil		
502	Layer		0.20	Subsoil		

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Naturally gravelly sand sealed over by a subsoil (602), a topsoil (601) and a turf layer (600). Archaeologically sterile.					Avg. depth (m)	0.66
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	30.0
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
600	Layer		0.10	Turf layer		
601	Layer		0.37	Topsoil		
602	Layer		0.30	Subsoil.		

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clover, K., 2012., *Manor Community College, Arbury Road, Cambridge, An Archaeological Evaluation*, OA East Report No.1360

Reynolds, T. 2000., *Archaeological Evaluation at the Manor Community College, Arbury, Cambridge* (CMMCC 00)

Thomas, A. 2014 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at North Cambridge Academy, Arbury Road, Cambridge*. Cambridgeshire County Council.

Wiseman, R., 2014, *Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Evaluation at North Cambridge Academy, Arbury Road, Cambridge*. OA East.

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

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Project Name	<input type="text"/>
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	<input type="text"/> Finish <input type="text"/>
Previous Work (by OA East)	<input type="text"/> Future Work <input type="text"/>

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	<input type="text"/>	Planning App. No.	<input type="text"/>
HER No.	<input type="text"/>	Related HER/OASIS No.	<input type="text"/>

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	<input type="text"/>
Development Type	<input type="text"/>

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input 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".

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Project Location

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District	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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HER	<input type="text"/>	
Study Area	<input type="text"/>	National Grid Reference <input type="text"/>

Project Originators

Organisation	<input type="text"/>
Project Brief Originator	<input type="text"/>
Project Design Originator	<input type="text"/>
Project Manager	<input type="text"/>
Supervisor	<input type="text"/>

Project Archives

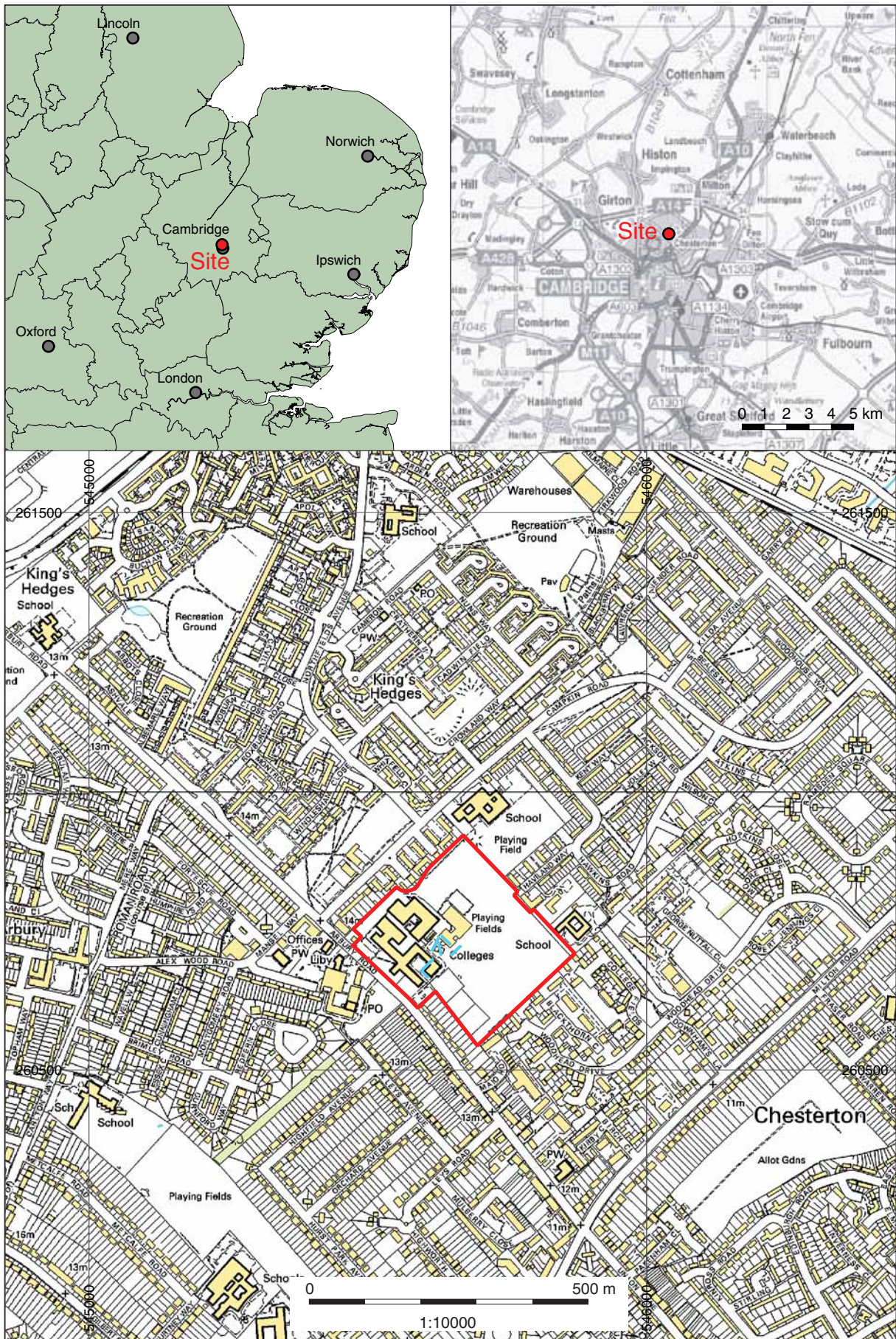
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Archive Contents/Media

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Digital Media	Paper Media
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trenches (blue) in development area (red)

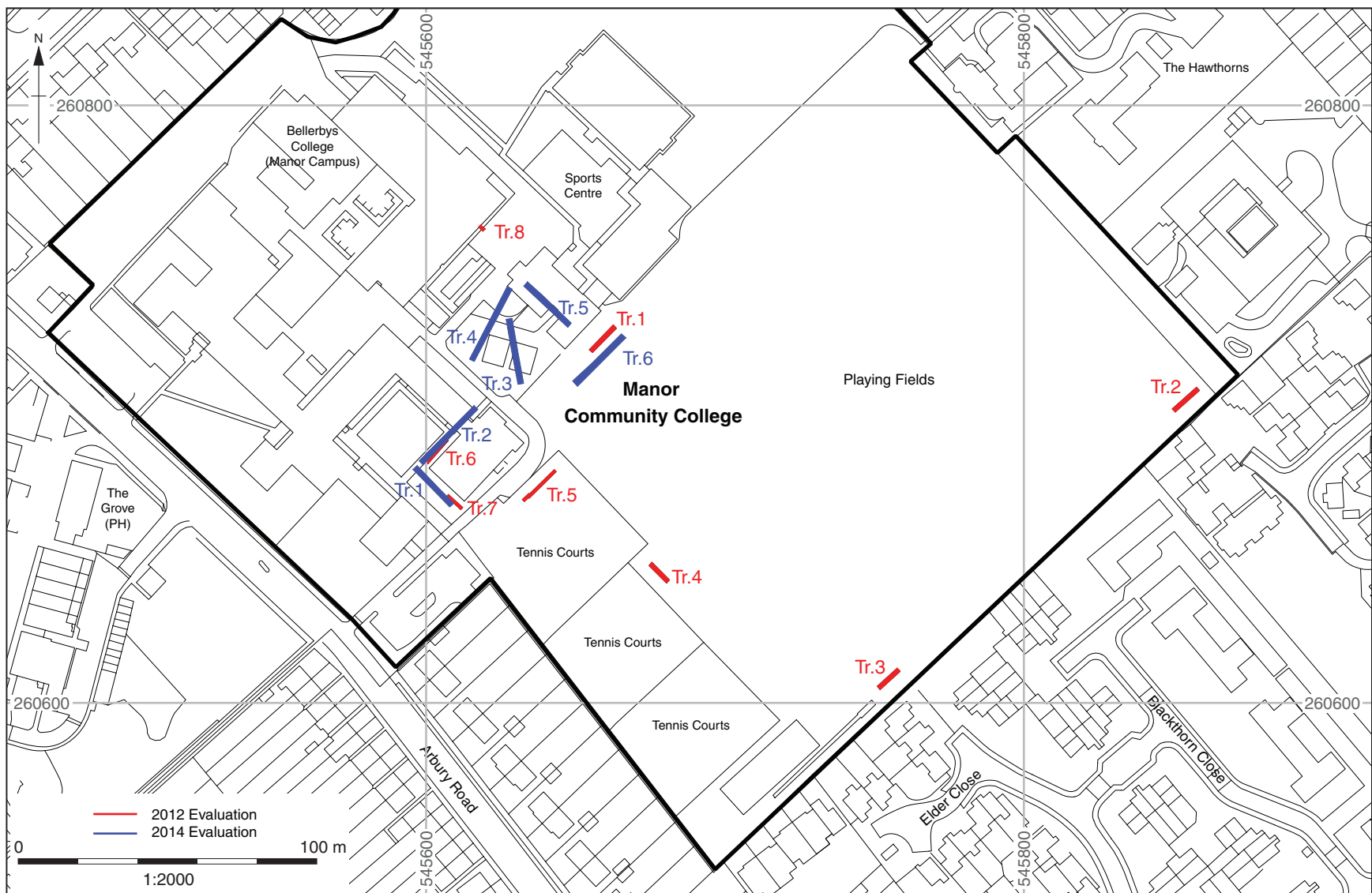


Figure 2: Location of trenches

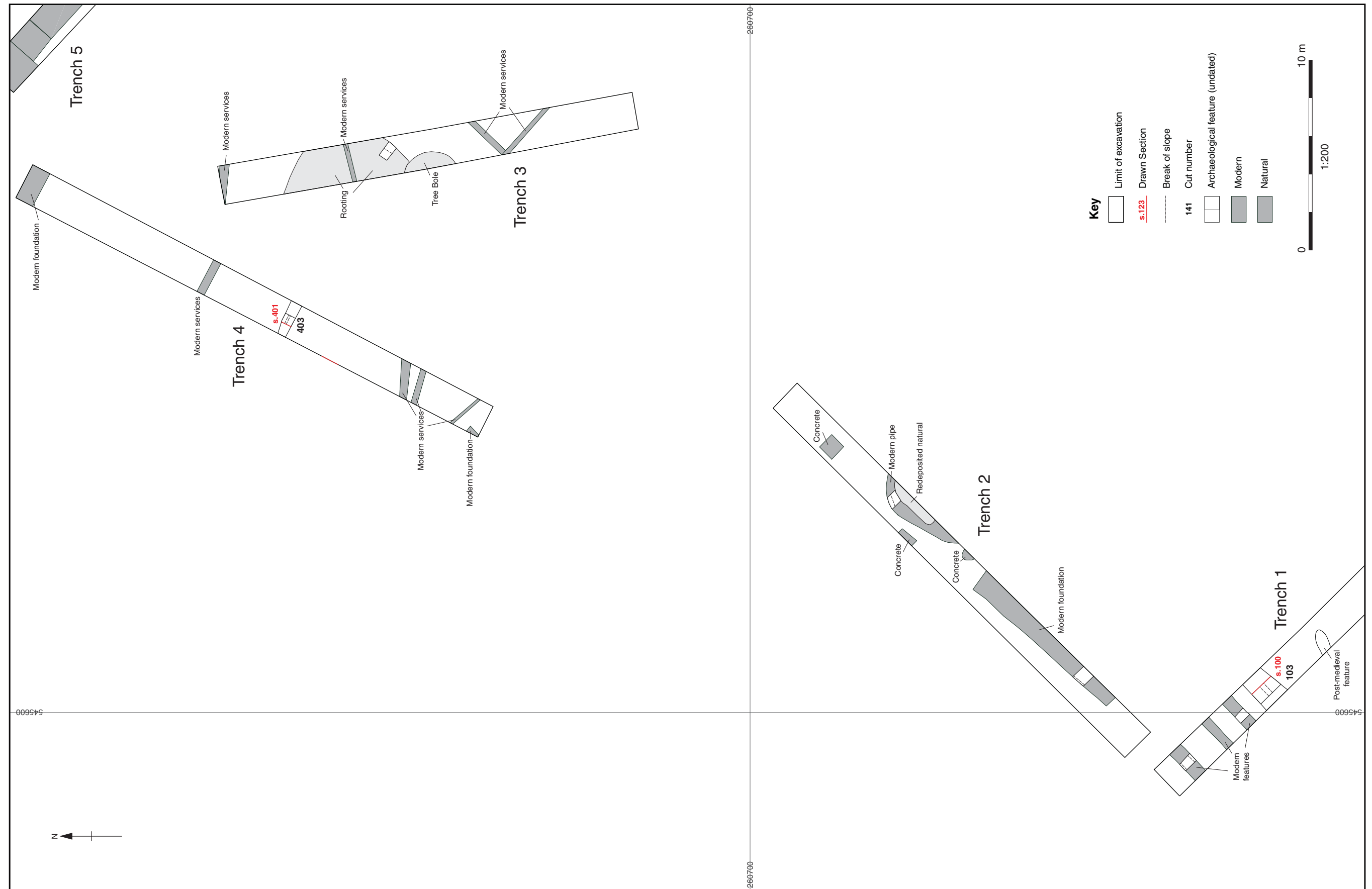


Figure 3: Plan of trenches 1-4

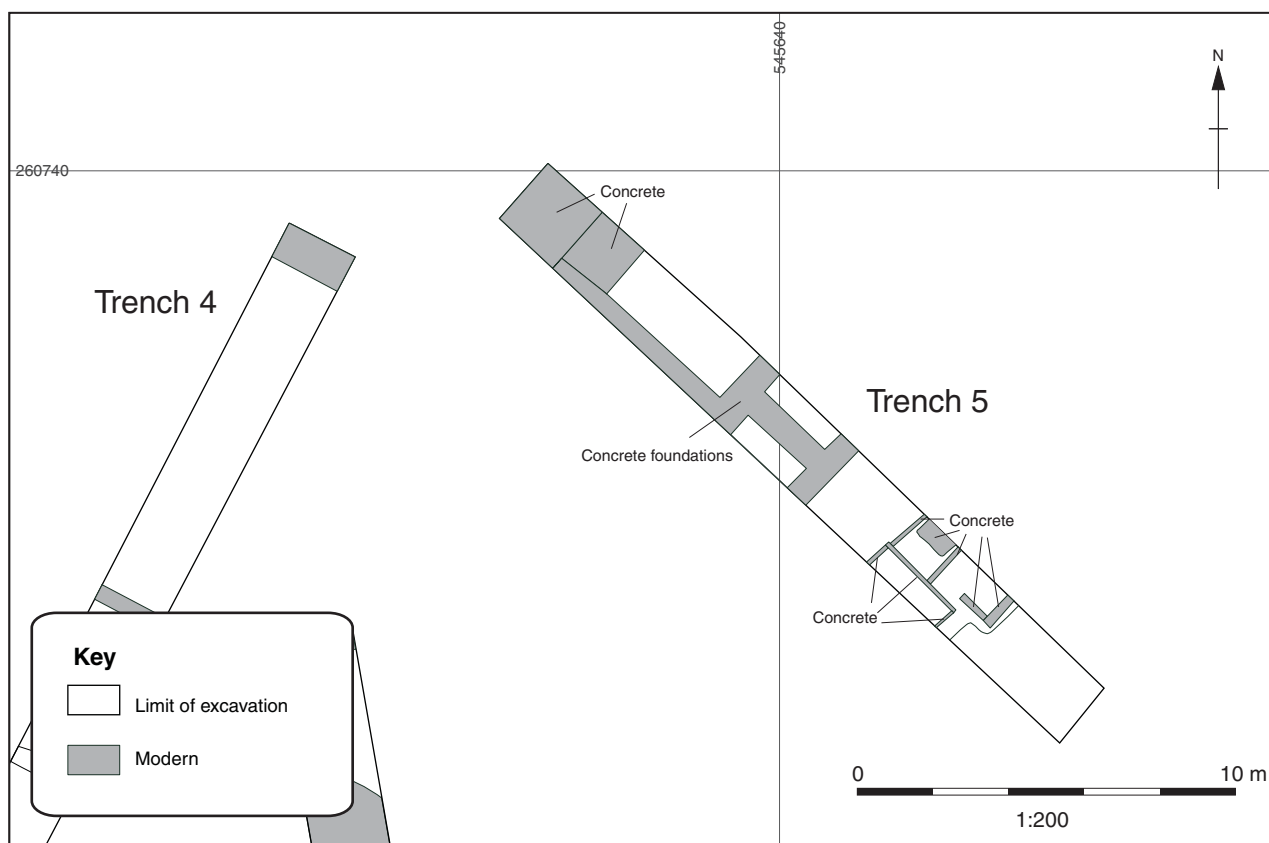


Figure 4: Plan of trench 5

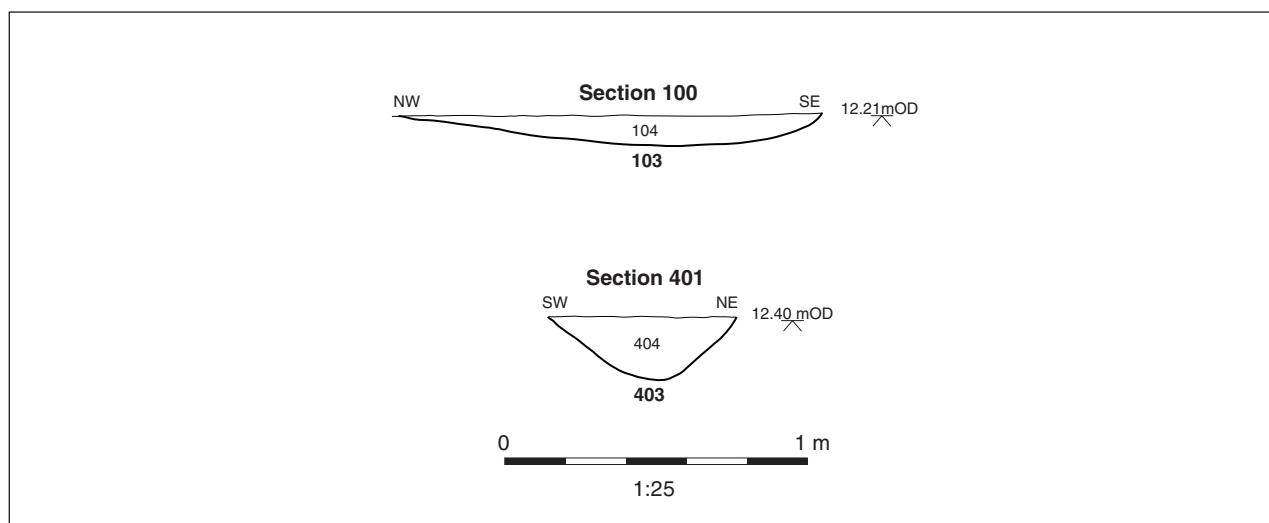


Figure 5: Sections 100 (Tr1) and 401 (Tr4)



Plate 1: Trench 1 from the North west



Plate 2: Ditch **(103)** from the south west



Plate 4: Trench 5 from the north



Plate 3: Trench 2 from the south west



Plate 5: Trench 4 from the North east



Plate 6: Ditch **(403)** from the south east



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