

# The Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



March 2016

**Client: Enterprise Property Group**

OA East Report No: 1900

OASIS No: oxfordar3-245553

NGR: TL 4649 5214

**The Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

*By Steven Graham BA*

*With contributions by Rachel Fosberry ACIfA*

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*Report Date: March 2016*

**Report Number:** 1900  
**Site Name:** The Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford  
**HER Event No:** ECB 4656  
**Date of Works:** March 2016  
**Client Name:** Enterprise Property Group  
**Client Ref:** 19119  
**Planning Ref:** S/2820/15/FL  
**Grid Ref:** TL 4649 5214  
**Site Code:** GSH RAT 16  
**Finance Code:** GSH RAT 16  
**Receiving Body:** Cambridgeshire County Council Stores (Deep Stores)

**Accession No:**

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Date: 23/03/15

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Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: 23/03/15  
Signed: 

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## **Summary**

*On the 9th and 10th of March 2016, OA East carried out an archaeological evaluation on the site of the former Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford. During the course of the evaluation, comprising two trenches, four small gullies and two possible ditches were uncovered. No pottery or any other type of dating evidence was retrieved from any of these features. Some of the features may be periglacial in origin, while others are probably the remains of cultivation rows of uncertain, but possibly Iron Age to Roman, date.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) at the site of the former Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford (TL 4649 5214; Fig. 1). Two trenches were excavated in the car park area at the front of the disused public house in advance of a proposed residential development.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/2820/15/FL), 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 geological sheet for the area (British Geological Survey 1970, Sheet 205) indicates that the site is underlain by a drift of Second terrace River deposits (silt, sand and gravel) over a solid geology of West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site is located within a triangular piece of land in a built up area, bounded to the east by the railway line and to the west by Station Road.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Shelford has been identified as an early crossing point of the River Cam, where the river's action had cut a narrow gap between adjacent areas of dry gravel land, providing a shallow fording place without extensive marshy land on either side. It has been suggested that this fording point formed part of prehistoric long distance trade and communication route (Taylor 1971).
- 1.3.2 Extensive evidence for prehistoric activity is recorded from the area. Neolithic and Bronze Age flint tools and features are recorded from the lower slopes of White Hill, to the north of the site (HER 04462, 04880/04880A, 04881, 04882, 04886, CB15541) of the site.
- 1.3.3 The cropmarks north of the current site (HER04461) are thought to include evidence for Iron Age settlement and agricultural enclosures in addition to Roman period remains – although no definite Iron Age pottery was recovered in survey work in 1978. Confirmed Iron Age settlement remains are known at Granham's Farm (CB15540) and at Clay Lane (MCB16973). It is also possible that at least some of the rectilinear and enclosure cropmarks may represent Middle Bronze Age field systems.



- 1.3.4 Evidence for an extensive area of Roman settlement is recorded north of the current site (HER 04461), on the east side of Hobson's Brook. These remains, initially identified from aerial photography, are interpreted as a probable Roman villa site and associated settlement. Fieldwalking in 1978 confirmed a Roman date, with finds belonging to the 1st and 4th century being recovered. The cropmarks show a pattern of rectangular enclosures and double-ditched trackways on a largely northwest-southeast orientation, following the foot of White Hill. In the northern part of the settlement area, a large rectangular enclosure (c.175x150m) is shown; this has been interpreted as an enclosure surrounding the villa or other public building complex.
- 1.3.5 Additional cropmark enclosures of probable Roman date (04463), and confirmed Roman enclosures (CB15539) and settlement remains (CB15538) identified at Granham's Farm, provide further evidence for extensive occupation and utilisation of the Hobson's Brook valley floor.
- 1.3.6 Further north, Roman enclosures and settlement evidence have been recorded at Clay Farm (MCB16976, MCB16977).
- 1.3.7 The HER includes only one record relating to probable Saxon period activity within 1km of the current site: an enclosure at Granham's Farm (HER 01002a).
- 1.3.8 Late Saxon and medieval settlement in Great Shelford appears to have been focused in the south part of the modern village, on the rising gravel to the east of a ford across the River Cam. By the 11th century a second area of settlement had developed around the Granham's Manor House (01002, CB15542). Through the medieval and post-medieval periods settlement growth out from these two cores resulted in gradual coalescence (Taylor 1971).
- 1.3.9 Little work has taken place in the immediate vicinity of the site, although test pits dug in gardens for the Higher Education Field Academy project to the west of the site (ECB 3483 & 3891) in 2011 produced Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery (Blinkhorn 2011).
- 1.3.10 The Railway Inn was built in 1845 alongside the London Liverpool Street to Cambridge railway line and remained as a public house until 1961. During the early 1960s the pub was used as a general store, reverting to its original use from the late 1960s until 2009 (Gdaniec 2016).

## 1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA East would like to thank the Enterprise Property Group for funding the work. The site was managed by James Drummond-Murray, supervised by Steven Graham and surveyed by David Brown. The fieldwork was carried out by Steven Graham and Denis Sami. The brief was written by Kasia Gdaniec who also monitored the work. Thanks are also extended to the various specialists who contributed to the report and the editor.

## 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 Brief required that an archaeological evaluation was carried out at the site comprising two trenches totalling 30m in length. Trench 1 was 20m long whilst Trench 2 was 10m long. This was in lieu of the demolition of the existing public house “The Railway Tavern” and the construction of 12 new residential dwellings.
- 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 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 Environmental samples were taken from the base of ditch **11** and the base of gully **14**, both located within Trench 2.
- 2.2.7 Site conditions were mostly good with slight rain on the first day and overcast light on the second.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Two trenches were excavated (Fig. 2) in the car park area, which was surfaced with Tarmac, at the front of the (former) Railway Tavern. The natural was a mixture of sand and chalk. The trenches are described below in numerical order, supplemented by further trench/context information in Appendix A and an Environmental Report in Appendix B.

#### 3.2 Trench 1 (Fig.2, Plate 1)

3.2.1 Trench 1 was located in the southern end of the development area. It measured 10m in length with an east to west orientation. The trench was in front of and parallel to the front of the Railway Tavern building. The depth of the trench ranged from 0.60m to 0.82m.

3.2.2 Only one possible feature was evident, a shallow, irregular linear cut (**2**) running across the western end of the trench on a roughly north to south orientation. It was 0.60m wide with an uneven base and had an average depth of 0.20m. Its fill comprised a dark red silt sand (**3**) which contained no finds. Whilst it was possible that this was a ditch, the uneven nature of the base of this feature suggests that it was probably periglacial in origin.

3.2.3 Overlying this possible feature was a horizontal layer of light red brown silt sand (**6**) which was on average 0.30m thick. This was overlain by a dark red brown horizontal layer of clay sand (**5**), on average 0.16m thick. Above this was a 0.12m-thick construction or bedding layer of light yellow sand (**4**) mixed with modern brick and tile forming the base of the Tarmac surface, which was 0.20m thick.

#### 3.3 Trench 2 (Fig.2, Plate 2)

3.3.1 This trench was 20m long with a north to south orientation, running parallel to the eastern edge of the development area. The depth of the trench ranged from 0.70m at the south to 1.10m at the north.

3.3.2 Located 8m along from the southern edge of the trench was a possible north-east to south-west aligned linear feature (**11**) which had a width of 0.84m and a depth of 0.40m (Fig. 2; Plate 4). Its single fill (**10**) was a mid reddish brown clay sand and contained no finds. Whilst it was possible that it was a ditch, the lack of finds and nature of the fill suggests that it may be periglacial in origin.

3.3.3 Located midway along the trench was another linear feature (**19**). This was 0.70m wide, 0.14m deep and had a north-east to south-west orientation. The fill (**18**) was a mid brown clay sand containing no finds; it was truncated by another linear feature (**17**). Whilst it was possible that **19** may represent a ditch, the nature of its fill, the lack of finds and unevenness of its base suggest that this may also be periglacial in origin.

3.3.4 A narrow gully (**17**) measuring 0.43m wide and 0.20m deep cut across linear feature **19** on a north-east to south-west orientation. Its single fill, a mid brown clay sand (**16**), contained no finds.

3.3.5 Located a short distance to the north of, and parallel to, **17** was another linear feature (**20**) that was 0.80m wide and 0.10m deep. It was filled with a dark red brown clay sand fill (**21**) which contained no finds.

- 3.3.6 Directly next to and running parallel with this feature was a narrow linear gully (**14**) (Fig.2; Plate 3) that measured 0.40m wide and 0.10m deep. It contained a single fill (15) of dark red brown clay sand which contained no finds but was bulk sampled (see below).
- 3.3.7 Located 1m from the northern end of the trench was a further linear feature (**12**) on a slightly different alignment. This was 0.84m wide and 0.18m deep and contained a single fill (13) of dark reddish clay sand which contained no finds.
- 3.3.8 Overlying the ditches and gullies was a horizontal band of mid grey brown clay sand (9). This layer was relatively 'clean' with no finds and its thickness ranged from 0.06m at the southern end of the trench to 0.50m at the northern end. Above this was a layer of dark red brown sand clay (8) – also containing no finds – with a thickness ranging from 0.08m at the southern end of the trench to 0.24m at the north. The subsequent layer was a 0.12m to 0.24m thick band of dark grey brown silt clay (7) with fragments of modern brick and tile throughout. This was sealed by the construction/bedding layer (4) with an average thickness of 0.18m, forming the base for the Tarmac surface, which was on average of 0.12m thick.

### **3.4 Finds Summary**

- 3.4.1 No finds were retrieved from any of the linear features. Brick and tile fragments were noted in the upper 'modern' layers of the trenches, but not retained.

### **3.5 Environmental Summary**

- 3.5.1 Two bulk samples were taken (40L in total). Sample 1 was taken from fill 10 of ditch **11** and Sample 2 from fill 15 of possible cultivation ditch **14**. Aside from small fragments of charcoal and clinker, the only other material recovered from the samples were two abraded, indeterminate charred grains. Neither sample contained any finds.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Seven possible features were identified within the two evaluation trenches, however three of these could not be conclusively demonstrated to be archaeological in origin. The north to south feature (**2**) running across Trench 1 was very shallow with an extremely uneven base, while two linear features located at the mid point of Trench 2 (**11** and **19**) were also irregular in character, and positioned perpendicular to all the other features in the trench. The red 'clean' fills found within these gullies are often associated with natural features and whilst they could be the result of human activity, in the absence of further evidence it is equally likely that these features were periglacial in origin.
- 4.1.2 The four shallow linear gullies located in the northern half of Trench 2 (**12**, **14**, **17** and **20**) were far more convincing as archaeological features with broadly uniform depths, profiles, orientations and fills. Due to the lack of finds, however, these features remain undated although all were sealed beneath horizontal bands of (undated) material (see below), suggesting that they are of some antiquity. North of the site at Granham's Farm (TL 462 530) evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British field systems was revealed (Hinman 1999) and it is possible that the features found at the current site could represent cultivation rows of broadly contemporary date. The shallowness and close proximity of all four linear features, and the fact that they have similar fills and were on the same orientation, suggests that they are a result of agricultural activity.
- 4.1.3 Overlying the features in Trench 2 were two sterile layers of sand and clay (8 and 9) that, unlike the subsequent layers directly above them, contained no finds or modern material. There was a clear difference in thickness of these layers, with the lower layer (9) increasing from 0.06m thick at the southern end of the trench to 0.50m at the northern end, making the northern end of the development area noticeably higher. Whilst it is probable that these layers related to the construction of the railway cutting immediately adjacent to the site, or the Railway Tavern itself, an earlier origin cannot be discounted.
- 4.1.4 All of the other upper layers contained modern brick and tile fragments and were directly related to the Railway Tavern and/or its car park.

### 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						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE	
Trench contained a single linear feature. Consists of redeposited soil, layers of sand and rubble and Tarmac overlying a natural of clay sand.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.82	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.50	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	10	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.10	Tarmac	-	Modern
002	Cut	0.60	0.20	Ditch?	-	-
003	Fill	-	0.20	Fill of [002]	-	-
004	Layer	-	0.12	Construction Layer	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	0.17	Redeposited layer	-	-
006	Layer		0.32	Bank Material		-

<b>Trench 2</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>	N-S	
Trench contained four narrow shallow gullies on a NE to SW orientation and two potential ditches on a NW to SE orientation. The trench consists of bank material, layers of sand and rubble and Tarmac overlying a natural of clay sand.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.94	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.50	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	20	
<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>
001	Layer	-	0.10	Tarmac	-	Modern
004	Layer	-	0.10	Construction Layer	-	Modern
007	Layer	-	0.34	Build up layer	-	Modern
008	Layer	-	0.28	Bank material	-	-
009	Layer	-	0.30	Bank material	-	-
010	Fill	-	0.40	Fill of <b>11</b>	-	-
011	Cut	0.84	0.40	Ditch?	-	-
012	Cut	0.84	0.18	Ditch	-	-
013	Fill	-	0.18	Fill of <b>12</b>	-	-
014	Cut	0.40	0.18	Ditch	-	-
015	Fill	-	0.18	Fill of <b>14</b>	-	-
016	Fill	-	0.20	Fill of <b>17</b>	-	-
017	Cut	0.43	0.20	Ditch	-	-
018	Fill	-	0.14	Fill of <b>19</b>	-	-
019	Cut	0.70	0.14	Ditch	-	-
020	Cut	0.80	0.10	Ditch	-	-
021	Fill	-	0.10	Fill of <b>20</b>	-	-

## APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### B.1 Environmental samples

*By Rachel Fosberry*

#### **Introduction**

- B.1.1 Samples were taken from two features within the evaluated area in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations. Sample 1 was taken from fill 10 of ditch **11** and Sample 2 from fill 15 of possible cultivation ditch **14**.

#### **Methodology**

- B.1.2 The total volume (up to 16 litres) of the samples was processed by water flotation (using a modified Siraff three-tank system) for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieves. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. A magnet was dragged through each residue fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The dried flot was subsequently sorted using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60.

#### **Results**

- B.1.3 Sample 1 contains small fragments of charcoal and clinker that may be intrusions from the nearby railway line. Two abraded, indeterminate charred grains were recovered from Sample 2. Neither sample contains any finds.



## APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blinkhorn, P. 2011. *Great Shelford 2011: Pottery report for HEFA Programme Testpit exercise*. (Unpublished document)

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Hinman, M., 1999 *Granhams Farm Golf Course, Neolithic to Medieval; the archaeological landscape surrounding Granhams Farm, From Nine Wells to Hinton Way, Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, An Evaluation*. AFU Report No. 167, Cambridgeshire County Council.

Taylor, C (ed) 1971 *Domesday to Dormitory: The Landscape of Great Shelford*. Cambridge: privately printed

## APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-245553		
Project Name	Evaluation at land on the Railway Tavern, Station Road, Great Shelford.		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	09-03-2015	Finish	10-03-2015
Previous Work (by OA East)	Unknown	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	GSHRAT16	Planning App. No.	S/2820/15/FL
HER No.	ECB4656	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Environmental Assessment regulations Schedule 1 projects (Obligatory)
Development Type	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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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	Uncertain	none	None
Gully	Uncertain		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	South Cambridgeshire	The Railway Tavern, Station road, great Shelford, CB22 5LR
Parish	Great Shelford	
HER	Cambridgeshire	
Study Area	30m	National Grid Reference
		TL 4649 5214

## Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Kasia Gdaniec
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Steve Graham

## Project Archives

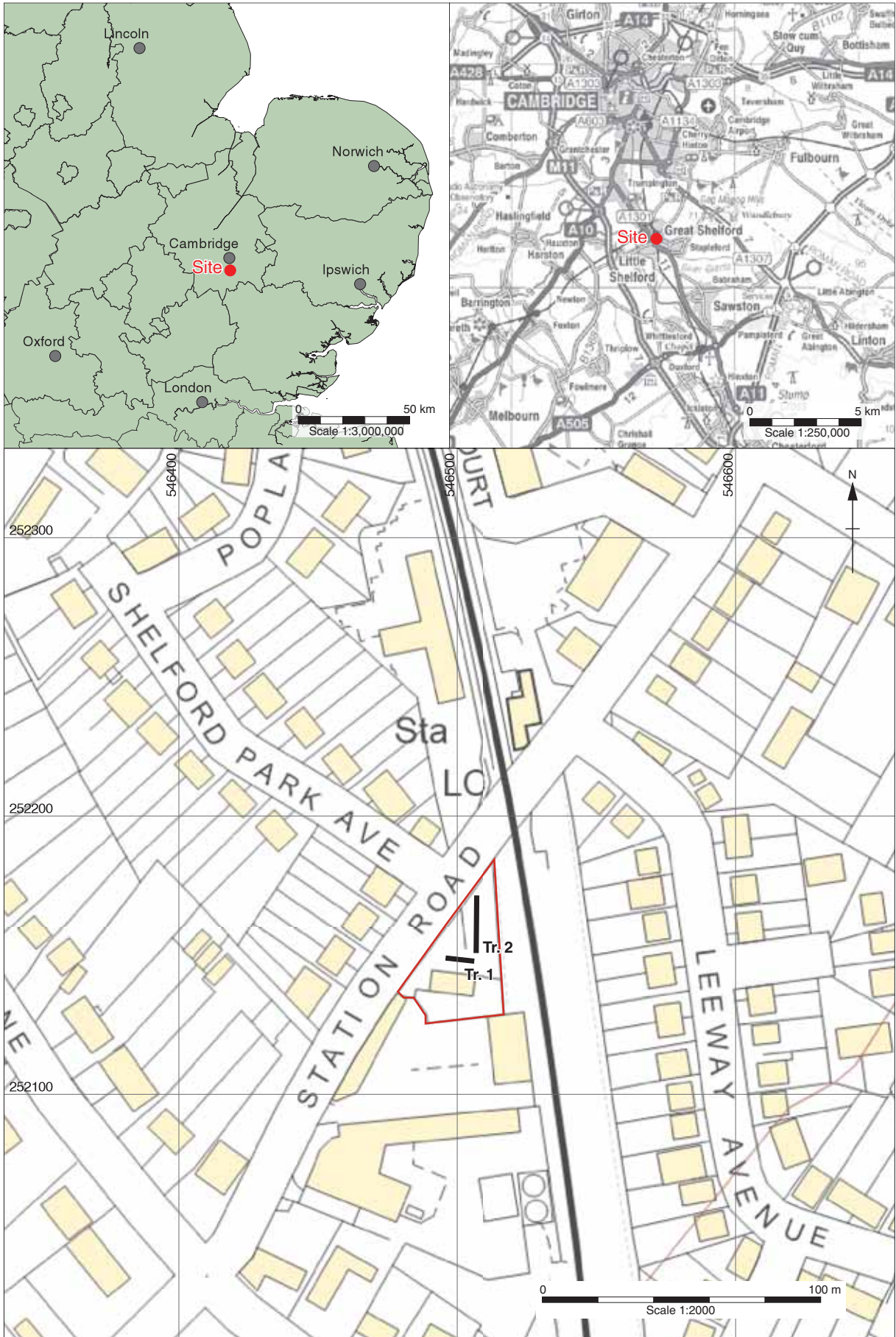
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC stores	OA East	O A East
ECB4656	GSHRAT16	ECB4656

## Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input checked="" 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 archaeological trenches (black) in development area (red)

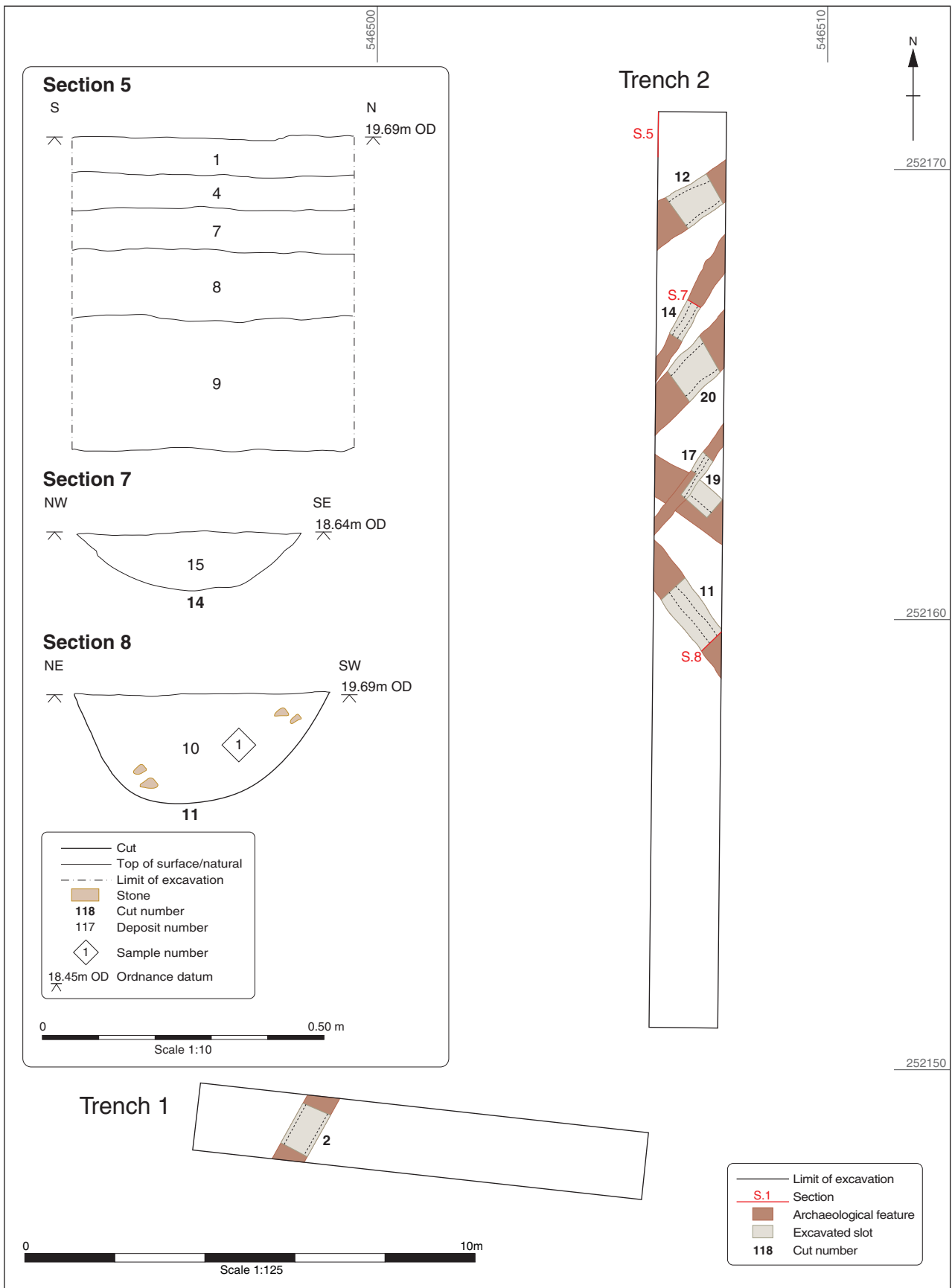


Figure 2: Trench plans and selected sections



Plate 1: Trench 1 from the west



Plate 2: Trench 2 from the north



Plate 3: Section through gully 14 from the west



Plate 4: Section through ditch 11 from the north west



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