



Histon and Impington Junior School

Archaeological Evaluation Report

August 2017

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Histon and Impington Junior School

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

On 9th and 10th August 2017, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of Histon and Impington Junior School. The evaluation was required to provide information in relation to proposals for the construction of a new school building and an all-weather sports pitch. The evaluation revealed a single post-medieval ditch, along with two modern pits. Four small abraded sherds of medieval pottery were also recovered; these are probably a result of manure spreading during the medieval period, indicating an agricultural land-use at that time.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Cambridgeshire County Council for commissioning this project. Thanks also to Gemma Stewart who monitored the work and provided advice on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment team for their advice and guidance. Thanks to Keir Construction who arranged the work and provided liaison with the school.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Aileen Connor. The fieldwork was directed by Nick Gilmour. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Gareth Rees. Thanks also to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Natash Dodwell, processed the environmental remains under the management of Rachel Fosberry, and prepared the archive under the management of Katherine Hamilton.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to undertake a trial trench evaluation at Histon and Impington Junior School (TL 544060 263790).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the Planning Authority with regard to the proposed construction of a new school building. A brief was set by Andy Thomas detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process/discharge the planning condition, and a written scheme of investigation was produced by OA. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The proposed development area is located in the centre of the village of Histon, on the grounds of Histon Junior School. It is enclosed by Glebe Way to the north and the east, The Green to the south and High Street and Pages Close to the west.
- 1.2.2 The site is level, at an elevation of c. 9.9m OD. The solid geology comprises mudstone of the Gault Formation, overlain by River Terrace gravels (British Geological Survey 2014, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home>) (accessed 01/06/2017)
- 1.2.3 The site is currently occupied by green area belonging to Histon Junior School. It is surrounded by hedgerow and several high trees along the edges of the site.
- 1.2.4 The area of proposed development consists of a new school building and an all-weather sports pitch.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following section is largely taken from the specification (Kwiatkowska 2017) and provides a brief description of the known heritage assets within a 1km radius of the proposed site of works, using data provided by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER).

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 No prehistoric finds or activity have been revealed within the vicinity of the proposed evaluation works.

Iron Age and Roman

- 1.3.3 Iron Age features and Roman settlement, in the form of ditches and pits, were revealed in a series of investigations in 2009 and 2011 located 400m to the south east of the proposed development site (CHER 18457, CHER 19427). Majority of the features recorded at the site were dated to the Roman period. Significant finds included four Roman copper alloy brooches and amphorae fragments.

- 1.3.4 A series of fieldwalking surveys was carried out on undated cropmarks (CHER 11453), located 800m to the north east of the Histon Primary School. These surveys identified a dense scatter of Roman pottery associated with these cropmarks.

Medieval

- 1.3.5 Majority of heritage assets recorded near the site are Medieval and post-medieval in date. The centre of Medieval activity within Histon is located about 500m to the north west of the development site. Implington village centre is located 1km to the south east. Most of recorded activity is located between these two village cores.
- 1.3.6 On the development site a Saxon loomweight (CHER 05196) was found during the construction of the Primary School in the 1970's, suggesting Saxon activity in the area.
- 1.3.7 Remains of the village green and pond, likely to be of Medieval origin, are located approximately 200m to the south of the Primary School.
- 1.3.8 The Scheduled Ancient Monument of moated site 140m south west of Histon Manor (CHER 05562) is located within 500m west of the site. The moated site is believed to represent the manor of Histon Denny, later called Histon St Andrew, which was owned by the bishops of Lincoln from the 11th century until 1392. The manor is thought to have been succeeded by the present Histon Manor in the 17th century.
- 1.3.9 Two churches were located within the vicinity of the site. Remains of Saint Etheldreda's Church (CHER 05327) are located about 600m west of the development site. The outline of the church walls is visible as earthworks, and can be seen in the pasture field at Abbey Farm. Construction of Saint Andrew's Church (CHER 10844), located 400m west of the site, dates to the 12th century with additional constructions continuing into the 20th century.

Post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.10 Majority of post-medieval and modern heritage assets are located within 300m to the west and south west of the development site. These comprise of the former Baptist church (CHER 22586) and Matthews Memorial Chapel (CHER 16983). There are also a number of 16th and 17th century houses located around the village green and around Saint Andrew's church. These lie 200m to 600m away from the school site

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 This evaluation will seek to establish the character, date, state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The scheme of works detailed below aims to:

- establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site, characterise where they are found (location, depth and extent), and establish the quality of preservation of any archaeology and environmental remains
- provide sufficient coverage to establish the character, condition, date and purpose of any archaeological deposits
- provide sufficient coverage to evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking deposits
- set results in the local, regional, and national archaeological context – and, in particular, its wider cultural landscape and past environmental conditions
- provide – in the event that archaeological remains are found – sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables, and orders of cost.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A total of three trenches measuring a total of 80 metres (30m, 30m, 20m) was excavated. This is equivalent to 5% of the area of the new extension building and sports pitch. The shape of one trench (trench 3) was altered from the original proposal, to avoid other works in progress on the site. Trench 3 was L-shaped.

2.2.2 Service plans were checked before work commenced on site. Before trenching, the footprint of each trench was scanned by a qualified and experienced operator using a CAT and Genny with a valid calibration certificate. In spite of this, cable ducting was located in one of the trenches (trench 1).

2.2.3 All machine excavation took place under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.

2.2.1 Records comprise survey, drawn, written, and photographic data.

2.2.2 Surveying was done using a survey-grade differential GPS (Leica GS08) fitted with "smartnet" technology with an accuracy of 5mm horizontal and 10mm vertical.

2.2.3 All features, layers and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. Each feature was individually documented on context sheets, and hand-drawn in section and plan.

2.2.4 Site plans were drawn at 1:50. Sections were drawn at 1:20. All section levels were tied in to Ordnance Datum.

2.2.5 All site drawings include the following information: site name, site code, scale, plan or section number, relevant context or feature numbers, orientation, date and the name or initials of the archaeologist who prepared the drawing.

Photographs

2.2.6 The photographic record comprises high resolution digital photographs.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence between all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology of gravels was overlain by a mid greyish brown subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil. In the northern part of trench 1, the subsoil was not present, possibly as a result of levelling the area for use as a football pitch.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, however there was heavy rain on the first day. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

Bucket Sampling

3.2.1 Bucket samples of 90 litres of excavated soil were taken from each trench, in order to characterise artefactual remains in the topsoil and other soil horizons above the archaeological level. Each sample was hand-sorted in very wet conditions. No finds were recovered from trenches 1 and 2. A single sherd (3g) of oolitic sandy ware of uncertain date was recovered from the subsoil at the northern end of trench 3.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were present in Trenches 1 and 2.

3.4 Trench 1

3.4.1 Two inter-cutting pits were located at the northern end of trench 2. Pit **14** was sub-circular in plan and continued out of the trench to the west. It had a maximum width (within the trench) of 3.40m and was 0.18m deep. Deposit 13 fill this pit and it was a dark brownish grey, silty sand.

3.4.2 Pit **16** cut pit **14**. Pit **16** was also sub-circular in plan and continued out of the trench to the west. Pit **16** had a maximum visible width of 1.40m and was 0.20m deep. The pit was entirely filled by deposit 15, a dark brownish grey, sandy silt. A single fragment of 18th to 19th century brick (870g) was recovered from this fill.

3.5 Trench 2

3.5.1 A single ditch (**12**) crossed trench 2 on a north-east to south-west orientation and appeared to turn a corner onto a north-west to south-east orientation. Ditch **12** was 1.84m wide and 0.68m deep. It had steeply sloping sides, with a concave base and cut through the sub-soil (Fig. 3, S1).

3.5.2 Four deposits filled ditch **12**. The basal fill (11) was a mid greyish brown, silty sand. This was overlain by deposit 10, which was also a mid greyish brown, silty sand, that was less compact than the basal fill. Deposit 9 was above this and it was a dark

brownish grey, sandy silt. The final fill (8) was a dark brownish grey, silty sand, with frequent gravel inclusions. Residual pottery sherds from Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware and Medieval Sandy Greyware vessels and 386g of animal bone were recovered from fill 10, while a single fragment of 19th century floor brick (285g) was found in fill 9.

3.6 Trench 3

- 3.6.1 No features were identified within this trench, although a single sherd (3g) of medieval Oolitic Sandy ware was recovered from the subsoil.

3.7 Finds and environmental summary

- 3.7.1 Summaries of the artefacts and ecofacts are given below. Full reports on the finds are given in Appendix B.

Pottery

- 3.7.2 A total of seven sherds (33g) of pottery was recovered during the evaluation. Four sherds (25g) were medieval, while the remaining three sherds (8g) were 19th century.

Ceramic building material

- 3.7.3 Two fragments (1155g) of ceramic building material were found during the evaluation. One of these (870g) was a fragment of late 18th to 19th century brick, while the other (285g) was a piece of a 19th century floor brick.

Faunal remains (Zoe Ui Choileain MA MSc BBAO)

- 3.7.4 Context ten contained two fragments of cattle radius and eight fragments of cattle femur weighing 386 grams. The condition of the bone was good with little of the surface masked by erosion. The radius was complete and measured 225mm in length. A single chop mark was observed on a proximal femur fragment. These were the only faunal remains recovered and further analysis would provide no useful information as regards the interpretation of the site.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Evaluation objectives and results

4.1.1 Heavy rain on the first day of work washed silt into the trenches, which may have obscured some features. However, features were visible during machining of the trenches and their locations marked, so it is unlikely that significant archaeology was missed.

4.2 Interpretation

4.2.1 The presence of sherds of medieval pottery is likely the result of manuring from the nearby settlement of Histon.

4.2.2 Ditch **12** recorded in trench 2, is believed to be post-medieval, with the sherds of 13th to 14th century pottery being residual. Although this ditch is not shown on the 1st edition OS map, it was aligned with the other boundaries shown on this map (Fig.4).

4.2.3 Pits **14** and **16** recorded in trench 1 were both modern and may have been dug to dispose of rubbish.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 This evaluation did not reveal substantial archaeological deposits.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Two pits were identified within this trench. The remainder of the trench consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sand and gravels.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.38
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	0.34	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.06	Subsoil	-	-
13	Fill			Pit		
14	Cut			Pit		
15	Fill			Pit		
16	Cut			Pit		

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
A single ditch was identified within this trench, it cut the subsoil and was sealed below the topsoil. The remainder of the trench consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sand and gravels.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	1.80
					Avg. depth (m)	0.48
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3	Layer	-	0.30	Topsoil	-	-
4	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil	-	-
8	Fill	1.00	0.08	Ditch	-	-
9	Fill	1.42	0.10	Ditch	CBM	
10	Fill	1.84	0.32	Ditch	Pottery, bone	
11	Fill	1.06	0.18	Ditch	-	-
12	Cut	1.84	0.68	Ditch	-	

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sand and gravels.					Length (m)	20
					Width (m)	1.80
					Avg. depth (m)	0.44
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3	Layer	-	0.32	Topsoil	-	-
4	Layer	-	0.16	Subsoil	-	-
7	Finds Unit	-	-	Finds from bucket sample of subsoil	Pottery	

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORT

By Carole Fletcher

Assemblage

- B.1.1 A small assemblage of pottery and ceramic building material was recovered from features and subsoil across three trenches.
- B.1.2 Trench 1, pit **14**, produced two sherds from a Bone China saucer and a small fragment of transfer-printed Refined White Earthenware, alongside two residual sherds of Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware. Also present were several fragments of bitumen-tar coated stones, likely to have been from a road surface. Overall, the pit dates to the 19th century. Pit **16**, which is cut by pit **14**, produced late 18th-early 19th century red brick and is therefore no earlier than the late 18th century.
- B.1.3 Ditch **12** in Trench 2 produced a fragment of 19th century floor brick from upper fill context 9 and from lower fill, context 10, residual sherds from Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware and Medieval Sandy Greyware vessels.
- B.1.4 A single abraded sherd of medieval Oolitic Sandy ware was recovered from the subsoil in Trench 3.

Conclusion

- B.1.5 The medieval pottery suggests low levels of medieval rubbish deposition or manuring which is to be expected within or close to a medieval settlement. The 18th-19th century pottery is also likely to be present due to low levels of rubbish deposition and reworking of deposits. The fragments of 18th-19th and 19th century CBM may also have become incorporated into the features by rubbish deposition, or as hardcore that has subsequently been redeposited.
- B.1.6 If no further work is undertaken, the following table acts as a full record and the finds may be deselected prior to archival deposition.

Finds Catalogue

Trench	Context	Cut	Form, Fabric and Description	MNV	No. of Sherds	Weight (kg)	Ceramic Date
1	13	14	Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware, abraded body sherds	2	2	0.011	Early 13th-end 14th century
			Bone China saucer, rim sherds	1	2	0.007	19th century
			Transfer-printed Refined White Earthenware, body sherd	1	1	0.001	19th century
	15	16	Fragment of sandy dull red brick, 111mm wide with shallow rounded frog		1	0.870	Late 18th-19th century
2	9	12	Sub-rectangular fragment of floor brick, slightly wedge-shaped with polishing (wear) to upper surface. Hard fired yellow-pink surfaces, poorly mixed clay, dark grey/black interior. 49mm thick		1	0.285	19th century
	10		Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware, abraded body sherd	1	1	0.001	Mid 11th-early 13th century
			Medieval Sandy Greyware, abraded slightly convex obtuse base sherd	1	1	0.013	13th-end 14th century

Trench	Context	Cut	Form, Fabric and Description	MNV	No. of Sherds	Weight (kg)	Ceramic Date
3	7		Oolitic Sandy ware, abraded body sherd	1	1	0.003	unknown

Table 1: Pottery and CBM (MNV=minimum number of vessels)

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental Remains

By Rachel Fosberry

Introduction

C.1.1 A single bulk samples were taken from fill (10) of ditch 12 within Trench 2 of the evaluated area at Histon Junior School, Cambridgeshire in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains and their potential to provide useful data as part of further archaeological investigations.

Methodology

C.1.2 The total volume (16L) of the sample was processed by tank flotation using modified Siraff-type equipment for the recovery of preserved plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The floating component (flot) of the sample was collected in a 0.3mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through 10mm, 5mm, 2mm and a 0.5mm sieve. The dried flot was scanned using a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 60.

Results

C.1.3 The sample contains half a legume, probably a pea (*Pisum/Lathyrus* sp.), and an extremely abraded cereal grain. Occasional fragments of charcoal are vitrified and appear to have been subjected to high-temperature or repeated burning. Modern rootlets are present and may have caused movement of material between/into the context. No finds were recovered from the sample residue.

C.1.4 The paucity of preserved remains precludes any further interpretation of the feature and there is no potential for further work.

APPENDIX D BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kwiatkowska, M, 2017, Histon Junior School; written Scheme of investigation, Oxford Archaeology East unpublished document.

APPENDIX E OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-292977		
Project Name	Histon and Impington Junior School		
Start of Fieldwork	09/08/2017	End of Fieldwork	10/08/2017
Previous Work	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	HISJUN17	Planning App. No.	
HER Number	ECB5186	Related Numbers	

Prompt	Direction from local planning authority
Development Type	School
Place in Planning Process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input 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	Period	Object	Period
Ditch	Post Medieval (1540 to 1901)	pottery	Medieval (1066 to 1540)
pit	Modern (1901 to present)	pottery	Modern (1901 to present)
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.

Insert more lines as appropriate.

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Address (including Postcode)
District	South Cambridgeshire	
Parish	Histon	
HER office	Cambridgeshire	
Size of Study Area	0.15ha	
National Grid Ref	TL 544060 263790	

Project Originators

Organisation	OA East
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Malgorzata Kwiatkowska

Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Project Supervisor	Nick Gilmour

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	Cambridgeshire county stores	ECB 5186
Digital Archive	OA East bar Hill	HISJUN17
Paper Archive	Cambridgeshire County Stores	ECB 5186

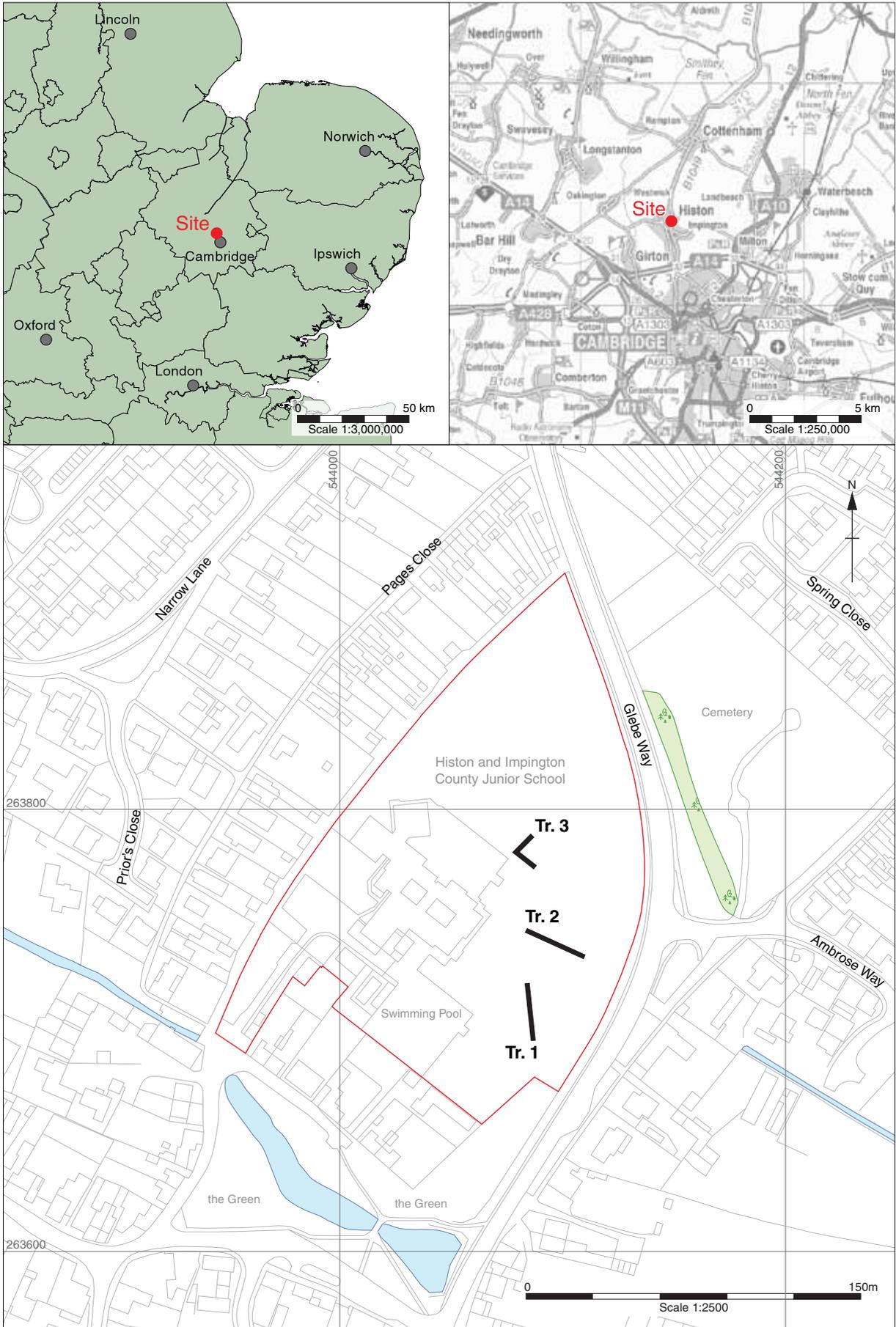
Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media

Database	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

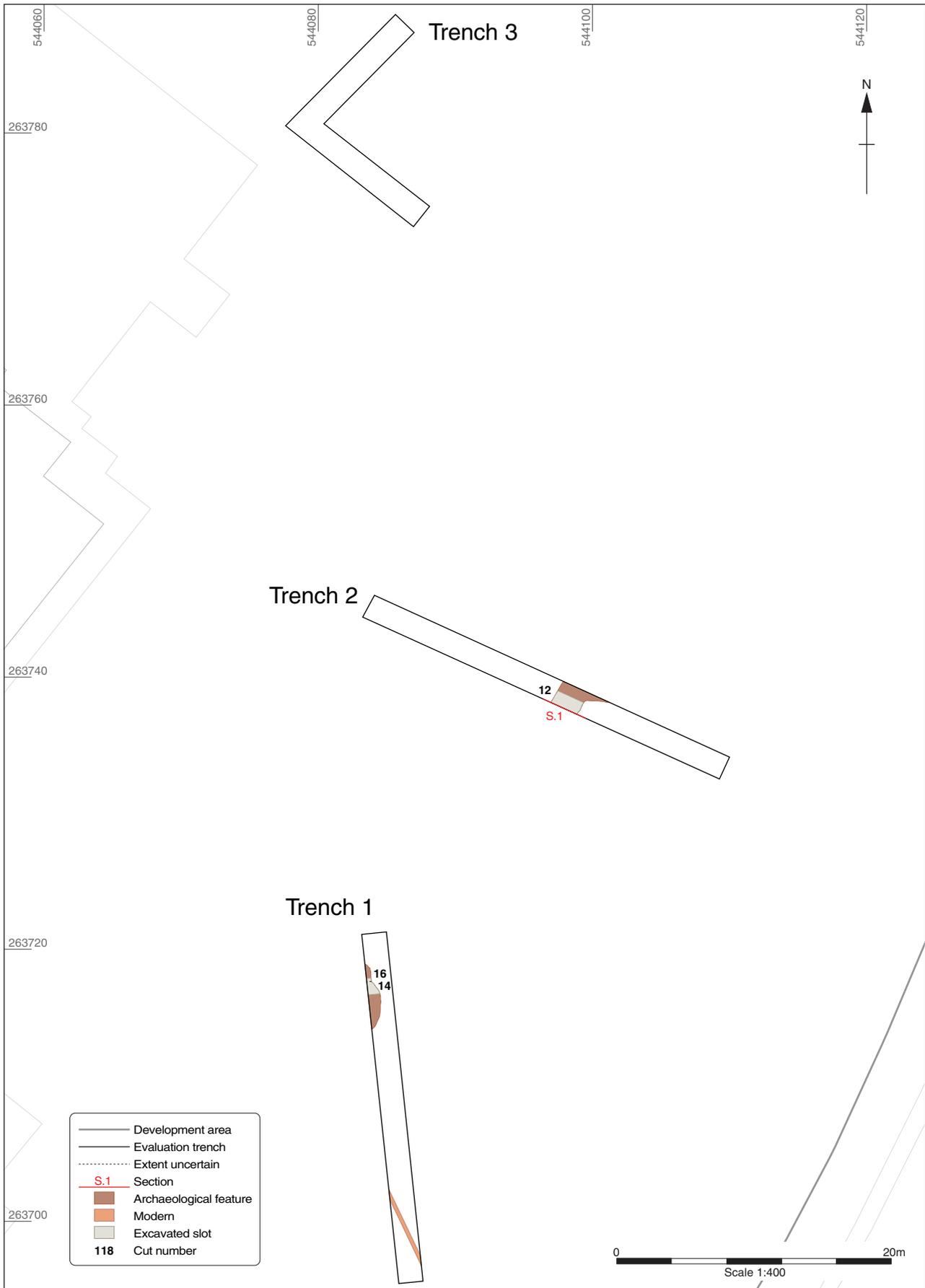
Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Trench plan

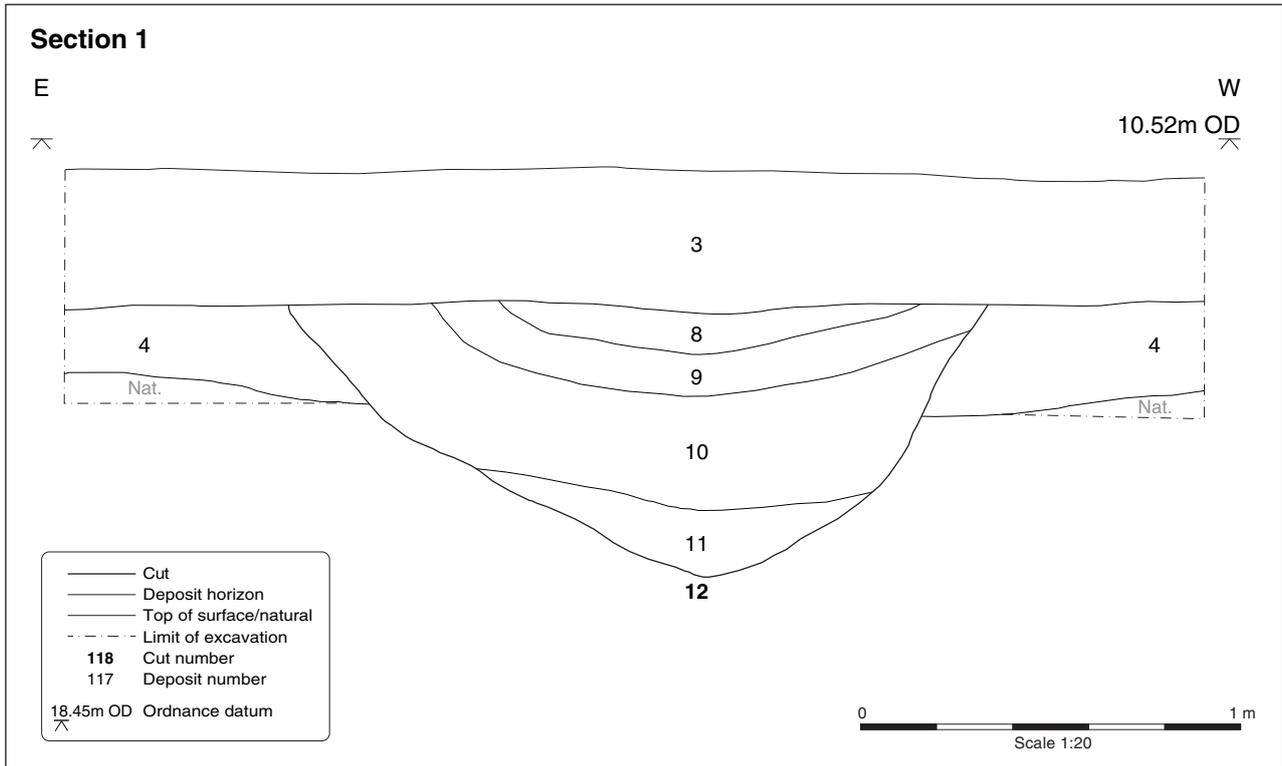


Figure 3: Selected section

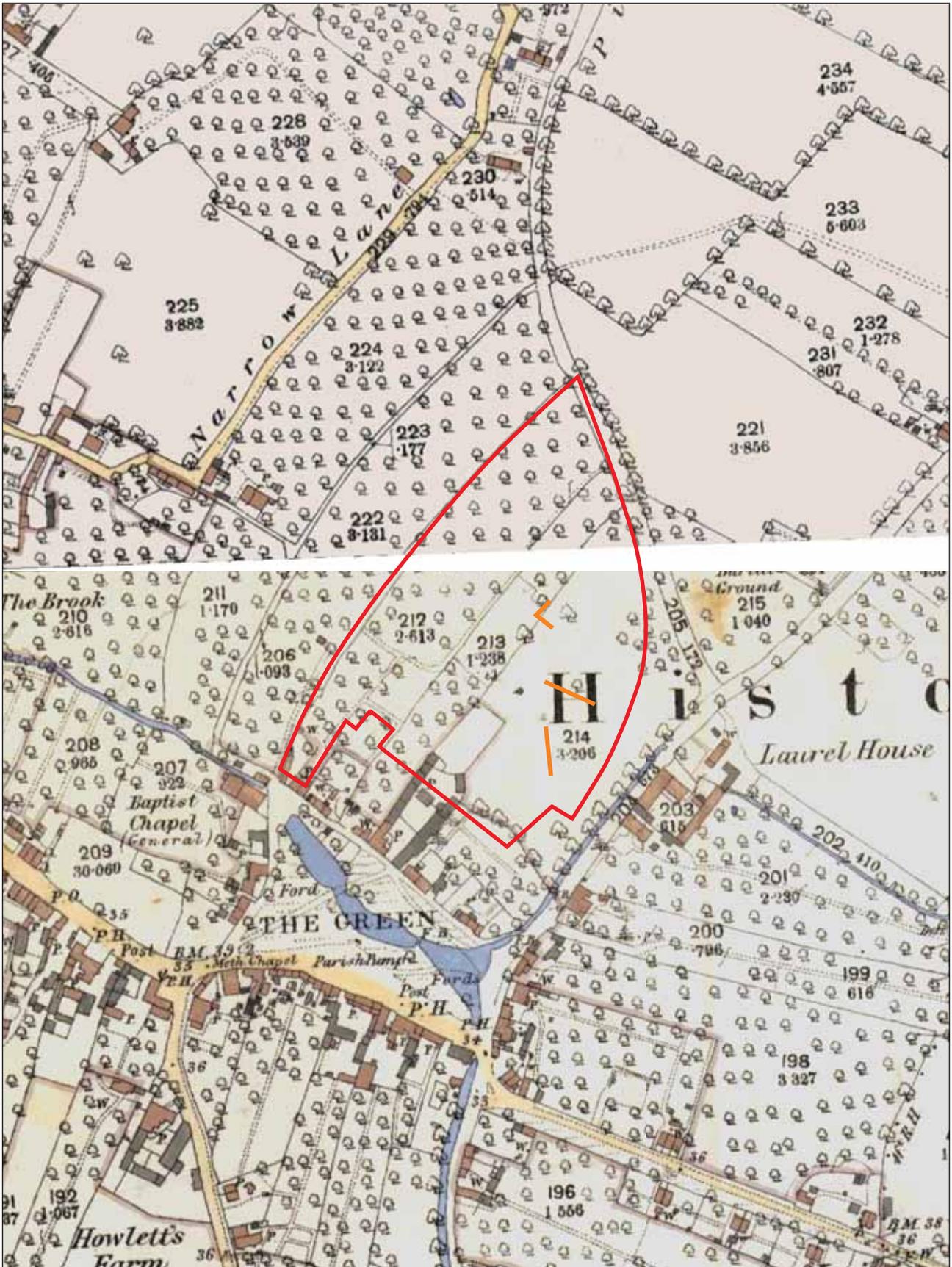


Figure 4: 1st edition OS map, 1885, with development area outlined (red) and trenches (orange)



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