

# Land at the Rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



September 2009

**Client: Chartism Housing**

OA East Report No: 1126

OASIS No: Oxfordar3-64327

NGR: TL 5422 2453

**Land at the Rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

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*Report Date: September 2009*

**Report Number:** 1126  
**Site Name:** Land at the Rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire  
**HER Event No:** CHER 3211  
**Date of Works:** September 2009  
**Client Name:** Chartism Housing  
**Client Ref:**  
**Planning Ref:** S/2135/08/O  
**Grid Ref:** TL 5422 2453  
**Site Code:** FOW PIC 09  
**Finance Code:** FOW PIC 09  
**Receiving Body:** CCC Stores, Landbeach  
**Accession No:**

Prepared by: Nick Gilmour  
Position: Supervisor  
Date: September 2009

Checked by: James Drummond-Murray  
Position: Project Manager  
Date: September 2009  
Signed: .....



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## **Summary**

*Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere. This revealed no significant archaeological features, although several abraded Roman pottery sherds were recovered. There were large geological features identified on the site, but the upper fills of these contained no anthropogenic material.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at the rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere, between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological Evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application S/2135/08/O), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council's CAM ARC).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies near the boundary of the lower and middle chalk, on the horizon of the Melbourn Rock (BGS 205).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Fowlmere has been the location of a number of previous archaeological excavations and has two significant earthwork monuments within it. As well as this a number of scattered finds, cropmarks and listed buildings suggest long term activity in the area.

#### ***Prehistoric and Roman***

- 1.3.2 Prehistoric remains recovered from the vicinity are largely confined to chance finds of objects. A Palaeolithic scraper was found while digging a hole for a fencepost c.200m to the northeast of the site in Chapel lane (HER 11694). A scatter of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints was recovered from the surface of a field c.350m to the southeast of Pipers Close (MCB 16114). While a Langdale stone axe of Neolithic date was also discovered somewhere in the vicinity of Fowlmere (HER 04028). The only prehistoric feature located close to the site was an Iron Age ditch recorded during excavation adjacent to the round moat (Spoerry 1994).
- 1.3.3 Few Roman remains have been recorded in the area, however, a Radiate of Postumus (AD 259-268) was found c.500m to the northeast of the site (MCB 16115) while a single sherd of pottery was recovered on the surface of a field c.750m to the west (HER 04071A).

#### ***Saxon and Medieval Fowlmere***

- 1.3.4 Fowlmere appears to have been a relatively prosperous medieval centre, growing from 36 'households' in Domesday Book to about 100 by 1279 (Hitch 1993). This growth, although not meteoric, was sufficient to warrant a Market Charter by 1207 (Keeling 1982, 160). Population declined in the 14th century following the general pattern of economic hardship and disease at the time. Fowlmere's later recovery was, however,

good with more than 70 households being mentioned in several mid to late 15th-century sources (Keeling 1982, 155).

- 1.3.5 Fowlmere's Round Moat lies within the historic core of the village, to the south of the High Street on the west bank of Fowlmere Brook, some 300m to the northeast of the site. Although the Round Moat is believed to have experienced medieval occupation, its origins are likely to pre-date the Norman Conquest (Hinman 1999). Round moats usually prove to be earlier than the peak moat-building phase of the late 12th to early 14th centuries when 'moat' form was almost always rectilinear. Curvilinear property boundaries and enclosures are features of the more organic village development of the pre-Conquest period.
- 1.3.6 Adjacent to the Round Moat is the Parish Church of St Mary, a grade 1 listed building which includes elements of 12<sup>th</sup> century structure along with numerous later additions (DCB 6757). There are also pieces of Saxo-Norman stonework which have been re-used in the fabric of the structure (CB 14838).
- 1.3.7 Fowlmere's settlement layout suggests that the village was originally centred on the Round Moat and church, but that the location of the manor at the west end of the High Street from the early 14th century (Keeling 1982, 157) allied with the increasing importance of the commercial activities along this road, resulted in a shift of focus to the north-west, away from the Moat. The site, therefore, would appear to be outside the main area of Medieval and possible Saxon settlement.
- 1.3.8 The Crows Parlour Medieval moated site lies c.300m to the east and may be linked in some way to the round moat, no excavations have ever taken place on this site so specific dating is not possible.

#### ***Previous Archaeological Excavations***

- 1.3.9 An evaluation between the High Street and Round Moat revealed associated medieval remains (ECB 851, Spoerry 1994). This was followed up by an excavation which revealed a Saxon sunken featured building and subsequent later occupation into the Medieval period (ECB400, Hinman 1999). The presence of Early Saxon remains reinforcing the potential of the Round Moat to pre-date the Medieval period.
- 1.3.10 An evaluation and excavation at Long Lane/ Rectory Lane produced evidence for six phases of activity from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (ECB1847, Thompson et al 2004, ECB 1848, Crank et al 2004).

## **1.4 Acknowledgements**

- 1.4.1 The author would like to thank Chartism Housing who commissioned the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray. All on-site surveying was carried out by Lucy Offord. The Excavation was carried out by Steve Graham and the author.
- 1.4.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Dan McConnell, Andy Thomas visited the site and monitored the excavation.



## 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 6 trenches, totalling 120m long and constituting 3.5% of the total development area were excavated.

2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked 12 ton excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by Lucy Offord using a Leica total station (TCR 705).

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 Conditions on site were generally good, with warm overcast days.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Descriptions of any features identified within trenches are given in this section, full descriptions with dimensions are given in appendix A.

#### 3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 This trench contained a large periglacial feature, which was primarily filled with pale orange sands which were not excavated. However, a slot was hand excavated through the upper fills of this feature. The only find recovered from this slot was a fragment of the pelvis of a large mammal. Thus, no date could be established for the final infilling of this natural feature.

#### 3.3 Trench 2

3.3.1 This trench ran at right angles to trench 1 and the only feature identified in it was the same large periglacial feature already recorded in trench 1.

#### 3.4 Trench 3

3.4.1 This trench contained another large periglacial feature, which was primarily filled with pale orange sands which were not excavated. However, a slot was hand excavated through the upper fills of this feature (4 and 5). No date could be established for the final infilling of this natural feature as no finds were recovered from it.

#### 3.5 Trench 4

3.5.1 No features were recorded in this trench. However, a darker layer (6) was identified at the north-eastern end of the trench (fig 2), which possible represented a buried soil. This layer consisted on a mid-dark brownish grey silty clayey sand. In spite of hand excavating 5 separate square meter test pits through this layer only one worked flint was recovered. The date of this potential buried soil could not, therefore, be determined.

#### 3.6 Trench 5

3.6.1 No features were recorded in this trench.

#### 3.7 Trench 6

3.7.1 The majority of this trench was disturbed by Early 20<sup>th</sup> century activity, consisting of a series of pits and dumps into natural hollows. The area at the southwest of the site, in which trench 6 was located, had continued to be used as a dump through to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 3.8 Finds Summary

3.8.1 Very few finds were recovered from the site, those which were are discussed below.

3.8.2 A single piece of flint debitage, likely to be of Neolithic date, was recovered from layer 6 in trench 4.

- 3.8.3 Six sherds of Roman coarseware pottery were recovered from the subsoil during machining. These were extremely abraded and it is likely they derive from the manuring of fields (Steve Wadeson *pers. comm.*).
- 3.8.4 A fragment of a large mammal pelvis was recovered from context 12 (Chris Faine *pers. comm.*), the fill of a geological feature in trench 1.
- 3.8.5 Trench 6 contained a large amount of modern material, two complete glass bottles were kept as a sample of this. These were produced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Geological Features

4.1.1 The large periglacial features identified across the site, while not created by humans, have the potential to contain important assemblages of archaeological material. Such natural features often gradually infill, leaving ponds or sheltered hollows in which may be utilised by people. They may also preserve buried ancient land surfaces. For example, a similar feature excavated on the route of the Fordham bypass, contained significant quantities of Early Neolithic flint and pottery in its uppermost fill (Mortimer and Connor forthcoming). However, despite hand excavating sections through the upper fills of the periglacial features on this site, no significant finds were encountered.

### 4.2 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dump

4.2.1 Trench 6, to the southwest of the site revealed extensive evidence for 20<sup>th</sup> century dumping. Some of this appears to have filled a natural hollow, with further rubbish having been deposited in pits. The area appears to have continued in use as a dump into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 4.3 Significance

4.3.1 This evaluation has shown that little archaeological activity took place on this site. However, several geological features and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century dump were recorded. Six sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the sub-soil, but the small quantity and abraded nature of this pottery argues against settlement in the immediate vicinity.

### 4.4 Recommendations

4.4.1 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>	NE-SW	
Trench contained a large periglacial feature.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.5	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.5	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	25	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.28	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	Pottery	Post-Medieval
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
8	Natural			Natural 'cut'	-	-
9	Fill			Fill of 8	-	-
10	Fill			Fill of 8	-	-
11	Fill			Fill of 8	-	-
12	Fill			Fill of 8	Bone	-

Trench 2						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE	
Trench perpendicular, and attached to trench 1. Contained same large periglacial feature as Trench 1.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.76	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.5	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	10	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.36	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		NW-SE
Trench contained a large periglacial feature.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>		0.42
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.5
				<b>Length (m)</b>		25.1
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil	Pottery	Roman
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
4	Fill	0.8	0.22	Fill of natural feature	-	-
5	Fill	7.5	0.42	Fill of natural feature	-	-

Trench 4						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeological features. Contained possible buried soil in NE end.				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>		0.8m
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.5
				<b>Length (m)</b>		25.25
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.5	Subsoil	Pottery	Roman
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
6	Layer	-	0.3	Possible buried soil	1 Flint	unknown

Trench 5						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>		0.6
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.5
				<b>Length (m)</b>		8.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.24	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.36	Subsoil	Pottery	Roman
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

<b>Trench 6</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE	
Trench contained large amounts of Early-Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century disturbance and dumps				<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.45	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.5	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	25	
<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>
1	Layer	-	0.24	Topsoil	-	-
2	Layer	-	0.36	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
14	Cut	-	>0.25	Natural 'cut'	-	-
15	Fill	-	0.25	Fill of 14	Glass bottles	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Crank, N., O'Brein, L. and Rennell, R. 2004; *Residential Development at Long Lane/Rectory Lane, Fowlmere, Cambridge*. Archaeological Solutions report 1646.

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## APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	Oxfordar3-64327			
Project Name	Land at rear of Pipers Close, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	08-09-2009	Finish	10-09-2009
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	FOW PIC 09	Planning App. No.	S/2135/08/O
HER No.	3211	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input checked="" 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
n/a	Select period...	pottery	Roman 43 to 410
	Select period...	flint	Late Prehistoric -4k to 43
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	South Cambridgeshire	Land at rear of Pipers Close, London Road, Fowlmere, Royston SG8 7RX	
Parish	Fowlmere		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	5000sqm	National Grid Reference	TL 5422 2453

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	CAPCA
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Nick Gilmour

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Stores Landbeach	OA East	CCC Stores Landbeach
FOW PIC 09	FOW PIC 09	FOW PIC 09

### Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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	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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

**Notes:**

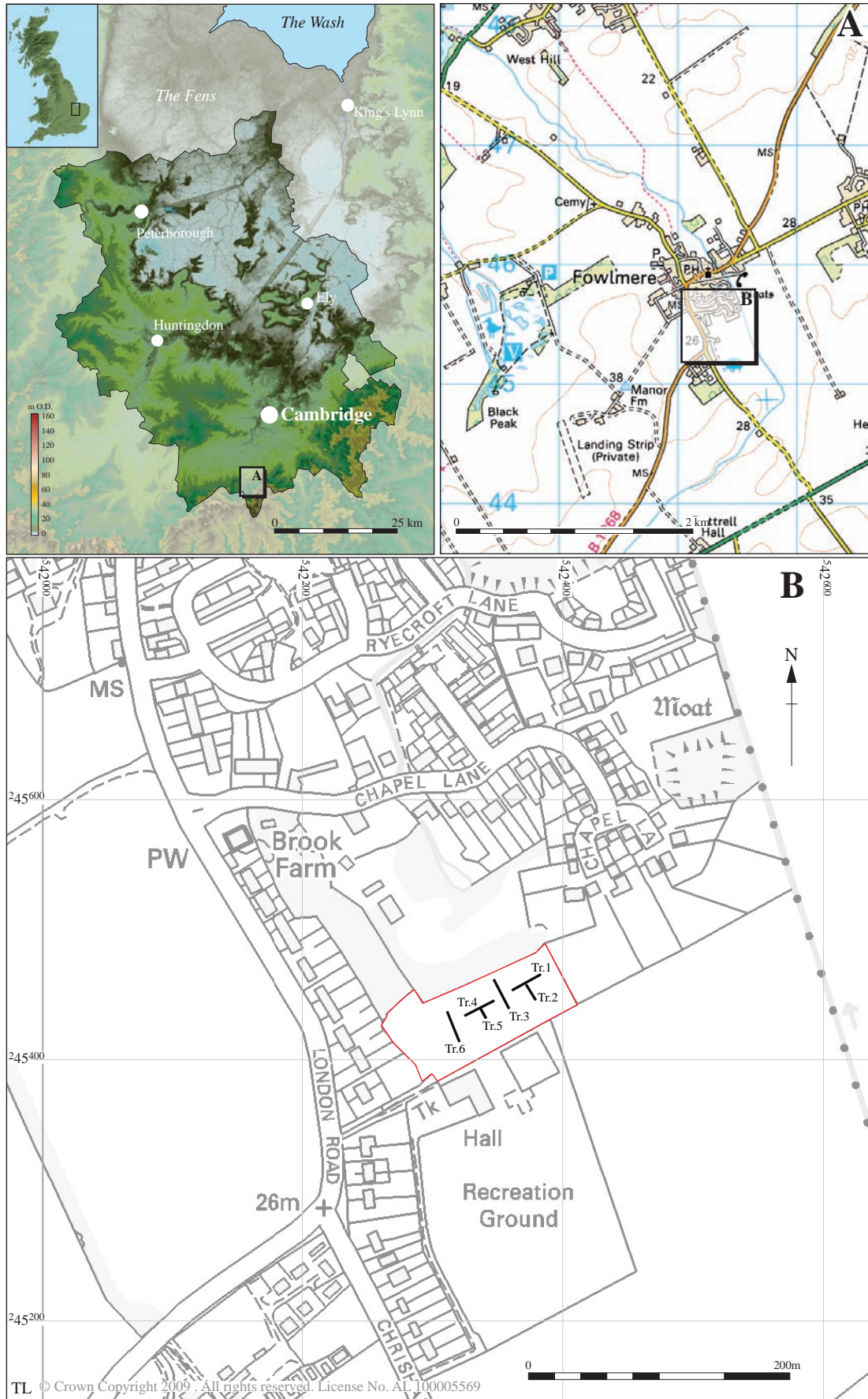


Figure 1: Location of trenches (black) with the development area outlined (red)

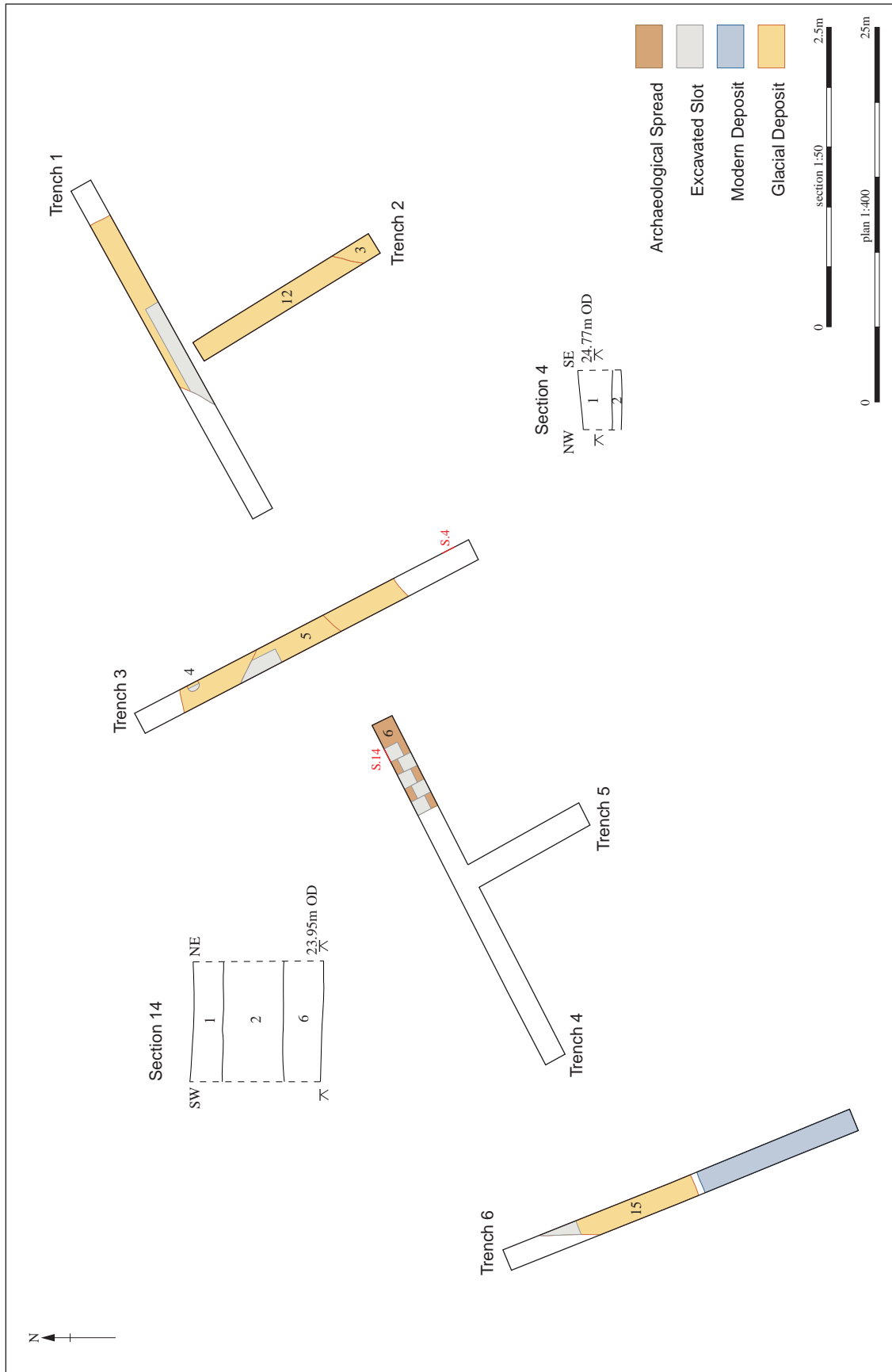


Figure 2: Trench plans with associated sections



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