Bronze Age Fields in Suffolk: a Preliminary Survey

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APPENDIX S1: SITE GAZETTEER

SHOTLEY PENINSULA

Slough Road, Brantham

Excavation of a 1.9 ha open area prior to house building revealed an Early Iron Age settlement set beside and within a rectilinear ditched field system (Fig. S1). The exposed field system was regular, comprising a set of at least three apparently oblong north-east to south-west-aligned fields of similar width (*c*. 40 m) and, where more complete, more than 80 m long, divided by single ditches, and with the outside (west, south, and east sides) of this field block seemingly demarcated by double/multi-ditched boundaries. The somewhat sinuous southern boundary likely followed a minor contour change in the very gradual southward slope. The multiple and sometimes converging ditches marking it are most likely to be traces of successive recuts surviving side by side, with plough damage accounting for at least some of their perforated appearance, although larger gaps at the corners of each field (and perhaps that at the south end of the divide between the western and middle fields) were probably real entrances. The regular and quite wide spacing (7 m) between the parallel ditches at the west side of the field system is convincing as a trackway. Cropmarks (Suffolk Historic Environment Record [SHER] BNT 017) suggest that this excavated western boundary feature curves away to the north-east and south-east beyond the site. It could be a routeway extending north-east onto the spine of the peninsula and south-east down the small valley that the site sits at the head of. It is possible that both this and the stratigraphically latest ditch at the east side of the system were not parts of the original 'strip-field' layout, though they certainly respected its axial alignments. At the south side of the field block (70 m away) are springs ('Pattles Fen') where perched groundwater emerges from beneath the Crag sand and flows southwards to the river Stour.

The excavated field/trackway ditches contained barely any cultural material (just 23 sherds/120 g of Post-Deverel-Rimbury type [hereafter 'PDR'] pottery, found widely dispersed in the fills of various ditches) and almost no organic matter that could be radiocarbon dated, partly due to the acidic sand soil. Charred emmer from the fill of one of the southern set of ditches provides an Early Iron Age (770–420 cal. BC; 2468±28 BP; UBA[1]-53661) date range. Radiocarbon dated wheat grain from the stratigraphically latest ditch on the eastern boundary is early Roman but could well be intrusive. The emmer is most likely to derive from the adjacent settlement features and was probably also intrusive in the loose sand ditch fill.

The Early Iron Age settlement consisted of a dispersed but quite dense scatter of post-hole structures, including loosely defined circular round-house type buildings and 'four-posters', along with some hearths, pits containing domestic debris, possible fence lines, and other ancillary features. Identifying individual building footprints from amongst the profusion of post-holes is subjective but there is a reasonably clear sense of perhaps up to nine broadly circular buildings and 18 four-post structures. The evidence is insufficient to show whether this was a large settlement consisting of multiple homesteads that were occupied simultaneously or the palimpsest of a long-lived farmstead of perhaps just one or two dwellings that had shifted with each rebuild. The settlement features contained an assemblage of just under 1000 sherds (13 kg) of predominantly sand-and-calcined-flint-tempered pottery, the fabrics and forms of which best fit a *c*. 700–500 BC date; five radiocarbon dates from the settlement features are all within the same 8th–5th century BC range. The only certain evidence for earlier activity at the site was an isolated pit containing thick sherds from a coarse grog-and-flint-tempered Middle Bronze Age type bucket urn.

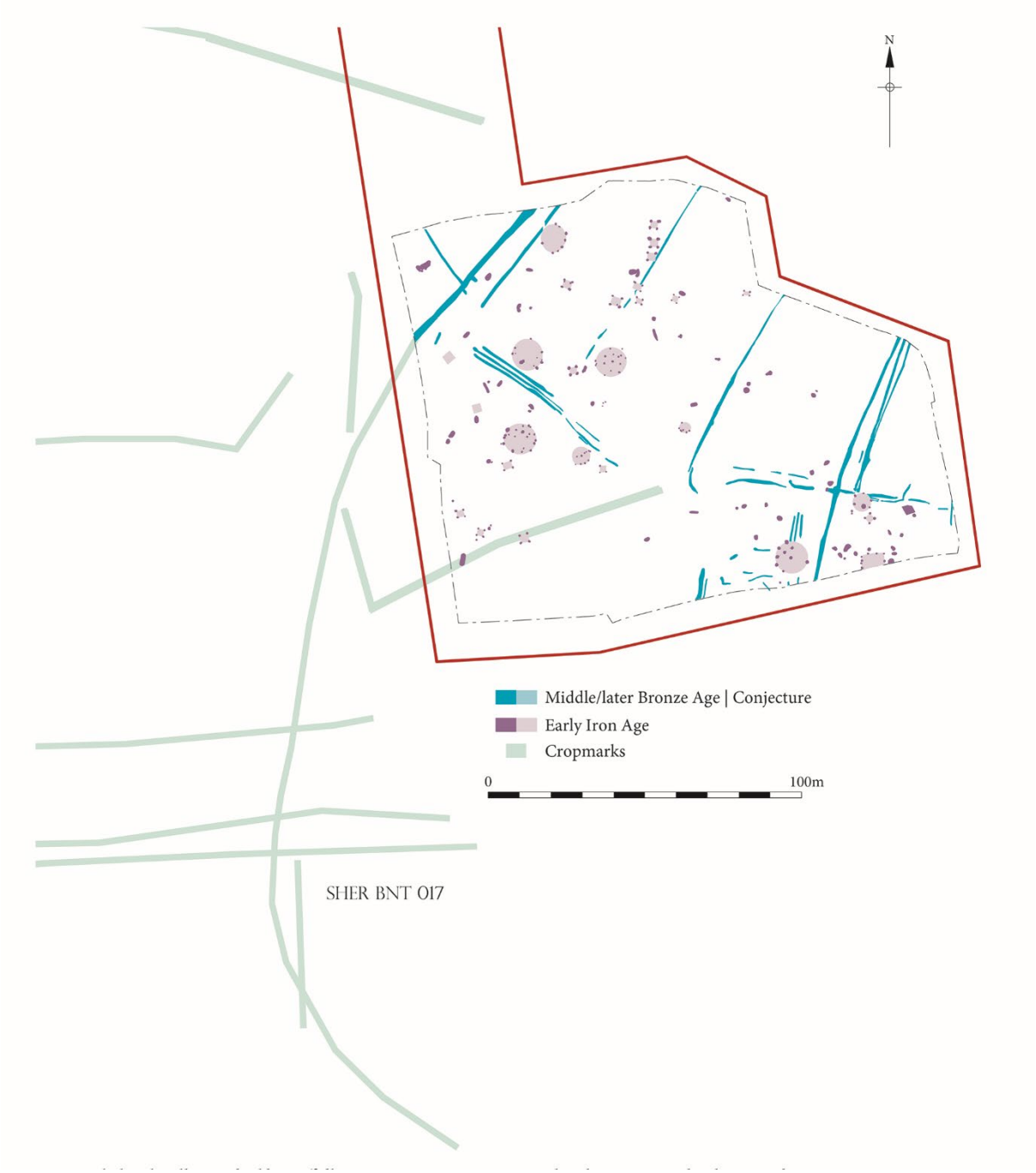

Fig. S1
Slough Road, Brantham (cropmark data kindly supplied by Suffolk Historic Environment Record (SHER) & Historic England National Mapping Programme (NMP))

It is striking that the settlement features were directly beside/interspersed with the field system ditches but that the latter contained so little associated occupation debris, suggesting that they were not open when the settlement was occupied. Similarly, if the field system was established after the settlement had been abandoned, the incidental incorporation of greater quantities of residual settlement material into the field ditches would be expected, especially as there are strong indications from the pottery assemblage that much of the material lay in surface deposits/middens before eventually ending up in the post-holes and pits from which it was recovered. Equally apparent is that there was almost no intercutting between Early Iron Age features and the ditches; in the very few instances where

intercutting did occur the settlement related features were stratigraphically later (though rarely individually well dated). It therefore appears that the ditches pre-dated the settlement and had silted up by the time it was occupied. Nevertheless, there are indications — from both the lack of intercutting and the layout of buildings with respect to the ditches — that at least some of the field boundaries remained visible, perhaps as hedges, banks, or both, though no positive evidence for either was preserved on this shallow, plough truncated site. Early Iron Age structures tended to cluster along the south side of the identified field block and in the west field, although in some cases the putative structures that have been identified from amongst the discrete post-holes only make sense if no trace of the earlier, intervening boundaries were left. It is less certain whether the field system remained in agricultural use: the quite dense scatter of settlement remains across the western field suggests that, at least, was not, but the central and eastern fields were emptier and could feasibly have been used for livestock by the Early Iron Age inhabitants.

Soil conditions preclude detailed understanding of Early Iron Age farming at the site, certainly with regard to animal usage. The constancy of grass and weed species, along with sedges and occasional dock/sorrel, across the 93 assessed bulk environmental samples indicates a local environment of predominantly rough pasture/meadow. Cereals were present across features of all types, though at low densities and generally poorly preserved; a sizeable assemblage of mostly unidentifiable grains, but including some naked wheat, was recovered from a post-hole of one of the many four-post structures, going some way towards reinforcing identification of those as raised granaries. Some other four-poster and round-house post-holes contained oats and other indeterminate grains. Overall, the evidence shows mixed farming, though probably with an emphasis on pastoral land use in the vicinity of the settlement itself, perhaps including the relict fields. This, of course, reveals nothing about how this sub-divided land may have been used before the Early Iron Age.

FELIXSTOWE/TRIMLEY PENINSULA:

Thurmans Lane, Trimley St Mary

Excavation ahead of house building revealed a pair of parallel ditches forming a quite substantial west-north-west to east-south-east track or droveway, 10–13 m wide, 150 m+ long, and flanked by perpendicular ditches forming at least two broadly rectilinear enclosures (Fig. S2). The ditches consistently contained small sherds and 'crumbs' of handmade flint-/predominantly flint-and-sand-tempered pottery (total 60 sherds; 276 g), found well distributed throughout the excavated portions, which collectively fit Barrett's (1980) 'Undecorated' phase of the PDR ceramic tradition (*c.* 1100–800 BC), although their abraded condition and the scarcity of diagnostic pieces make identification tentative. Of course, this is more likely to indicate when the ditches were filling in than when they were constructed. Occasional burnt/struck flints were also present, the latter including some thick, crudely produced flakes that are in keeping with later prehistoric knapping techniques. The scarcity of artefacts probably reflects distance from settlement; a slightly increasing frequency of potsherds to the north suggests occupation in that direction. This is also suggested by two convincing post-holes, located at the northern edge of excavation, which contained slightly larger, less abraded, groups of Late Bronze Age sherds and might belong to a structure of that period lying mostly outside the site. It is clear from the plan that the enclosure system continues to the east, where the trackway appears to head directly towards a cropmark ring-ditch (SHER TYY 011) 120 m away. Within the exposed area, there was no obvious means of access between the track and enclosures, suggesting that it could have been mainly for longer distance 'through traffic'. Evidence for earlier activity comprised two pit clusters containing structured deposits of Early Neolithic struck flint and Mildenhall Ware. There was no subsequent activity until a farmstead was established in the 11th century AD, the boundaries of which bore no relation to the underlying Bronze Age land divisions.

Fig. S2
Thurmans Lane, Trimley St Mary. Later Saxon, medieval and post-medieval features not shown (cropmark data kindly supplied by SHER & NMP)

Felixstowe Academy

Middle Bronze Age enclosure (c. 1600–1300 BC): excavations targeted the main areas impacted by construction of a new school. On a marginally higher gravel spur in the north-west of the site, two perpendicular ditches (Boundaries 1 and 2) appeared to form the corner of a rectilinear enclosure extending beyond the excavation (Fig. S3). Both ditches, although plough damaged, were fairly substantial (*c.* 1.8 m across and 0.5 m deep); they contained homogeneous silt fills without discernible evidence of recutting/maintenance. A complete Middle Bronze Age bucket urn, similar to examples found in the cremation cemeteries at Brantham Hall (Gilmour 1975) and Sproughton (SHER SPT 035, Percival 2009; Sommers 2011) in Suffolk, and Ardleigh (Brown 1999), White Colne (Brown 1995), Brightlingsea (Brown 2008, 36–43), and St Osyth (Germany 2007) in Essex, was found upside-down on the base of the northern ditch (Figs S4–S5). It appeared deliberately placed. The bottom of the vessel had collapsed into the interior and was recovered at the same level as the rim, indicating the pot was either empty or contained only organic matter when it was placed there. The size of the ditches, and the associated finds, suggest this may have been a settlement enclosure, the placed vessel possibly being a ritual deposit marking the disuse of the boundary or the enclosure (see Brück 1999, 152; 2001, 150–1). Radiocarbon dates for Ardleigh-style urns from Brightlingsea, including plainer vessels comparable to this one, fall within the range 1600–1300 BC (Clarke & Lavender 2008, 57). A similar deposit of a bucket

urn buried on its side was found in one of the boundaries of the Middle–Late Bronze Age (*c*. 1500–1000 BC) settlement at North Shoebury, Essex (Wymer & Brown 1995, 26–7 figs 15–16, 79 fig. 62.12, 80, 153). Inversion of the Felixstowe vessel mirrors the positioning of urns in many cremation burials of the period, including at Brightlingsea (Clarke & Lavender 2008, 14). Wiseman *et al*. (2021) discuss the 'meaning' of inversion and its potential conceptual association with death, the underworld and, perhaps by extension here, 'endings'.

Fig. S3
Felixstowe Academy. Roman and later features not shown

Middle/Later Bronze Age field system: in addition to the Middle Bronze Age enclosure, the excavations revealed a series of smaller field ditches (Boundaries 3–8) laid out on broadly similar north-east–south-

west by north-west–south-east alignments. All the ditches were narrow, shallow, slightly meandering in their orientations, and artefactually sterile. The piecemeal exposure permitted by the development groundworks obscures relationships between them (and with the Middle Bronze Age enclosure). Nevertheless, their consistent size, shared morphology, and common alignments suggest that they belonged to broadly the same system of land division. Despite excavation of regularly spaced slots amounting to at least 25 % of each ditch, just 14 sherds of pottery, variously of earlier Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, and Early Iron Age types, were found in Boundaries 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, alongside occasional burnt flint, struck flint that is mainly characteristic of later 2nd–early 1st millennium BC flintworking (Young & Humphrey 1999), and a sandstone sharpening stone.

The few Early Iron Age potsherds suggest that some of the ditches remained at least partially open then, and in the field formed by Boundaries 5 and 6 was a truncated, possible cremation burial containing sherds from a fine angular bowl similar to examples from Darmsden (Cunliffe 1968, fig. 2 no. 1). Its presence shows that this landscape was still occupied in the *c.* 6th–4th centuries BC; although there was no direct evidence, the Bronze Age fields could theoretically still have been in use, as hedges or banks might have remained even though the ditches were mostly infilled. The bone fragments are too small to radiocarbon date or distinguish as either human or animal. In the absence of identification all that can be said is that 'token' cremation deposits, consisting of small quantities of human bone, have been widely identified within later Bronze Age–earlier Iron Age settlements and field systems elsewhere in eastern England, for example, at Game Farm, Brandon (Gibson 2004, 28–30), South Hornchurch in Essex (Guttman & Last 2000, 354–5), and Gadebridge (Last 2000) and Thorley (Last & McDonald 1999) in Hertfordshire (see also Brück 2019, 48, 51–3). Perhaps burial of the dead within fields was a way of ensuring their continuing productivity (Johnston 2000, 69; Yates 2007, 138; Bradley 2019, 186).

Fig. S4
Felixstowe Academy: Middle Bronze Age bucket urn *in situ*, view north (photo: Mark Hinman)

Fig. S5
Felixstowe Academy: Detail of Middle Bronze Age bucket urn, photo showing vessel inverted, as found (photo: Aileen Tierney; illustration: Cate Davies)

Several of the ditches continued beyond the excavated areas, demonstrating that the fieldwork provided only an irregular window on a wider Bronze Age subdivided landscape (Figs 3–4). Importantly, trial trench evaluation and recent excavation on the opposite side of Walton High Street have identified Early Neolithic and Beaker period pits, six round barrows, an extensive series of reportedly Middle Bronze Age field boundaries (on the same set of predominantly north-west by south-east and north-east by south-west orientations seen at the Academy site), *c.* 50 cremation burials, and a swathe of deposits relating to Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age occupation (SHER FEX 059, House 2012, 25–6, fig. 2; SHER FEX 299 & 451, Richard Mortimer, Cotswold Archaeology Suffolk, pers. comm.;[2] Mortimer & Everett 2022). Given its distance away (*c.* 400–700 m), the field system at Felixstowe Academy could have been outlying agricultural land used by this long-lived community, though a relationship with another settlement in the vicinity — perhaps that represented by the enclosure in the north-west of the Academy site — is equally possible.

Indeed, further recent development-led evaluation and targeted excavation on 4.8 ha of land directly west of the Academy site ('Walton Green') has recorded two phases of Middle Bronze Age ditched field system (SHER FEX 312). Although it would not be appropriate to pre-empt analysis and publication of that site, a preliminary overview can be drawn from the detailed assessment report by Archaeology South-East (Carvey 2018). Middle Bronze Age Field System 1 (FS1) was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west by east-south-east to west-north-west; it was apparently superseded by a field system on more north-east to south-west by north-west to south-east alignments (FS2). The main droveway and enclosure ditches were quite substantial — comparable in scale to the Middle Bronze Age enclosure boundaries at FEX 281 rather than the field system ditches there. Walton Green Ditch G63 (part of FS2) appears to directly continue Felixstowe Academy Enclosure Boundary 2.

Sherds of grog-tempered Deverel-Rimbury tradition pottery were fairly well-distributed throughout the field system ditches at FEX 312 (total site assemblage: 323 sherds; 2.3 kg). One of the main trackway/enclosure boundaries of FS1 (G2) contained a substantial group of sherds from a

Deverel-Rimbury barrel urn with fingertip decoration. One of the boundaries of FS2 (G1) contained parts of two further Middle Bronze Age vessels, including a bucket urn, but the majority of the pottery associated with FS2 is in moderately coarse-flint-tempered fabrics, suggesting some degree of continuity into the later Bronze Age. A few finer, sandier, flint-tempered sherds are more characteristic of the early 1st millennium BC and may be intrusive. There was an area of Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age activity in the south of the Walton Green site, including a possible post-hole enclosure and pits containing evidence associated with textile and pottery production. A scatter of Middle Bronze Age pits and a post-hole towards the north end of the site were loosely focused around a small (internally 3.15–3.7 m across) ring-gully (G15), interpreted as the drip gully of a structure. These features, and proximity to the complete bucket urn found in the north-west of the Academy site, all suggest a focus of Middle Bronze Age occupation or other activity in/near this northern area, possibly focused in the unexcavated gap between the two sites.

The presence of trackways (the main axial trackway of FS2 was 6–9 m wide) and quite wide breaks/entrances in the field boundaries at FEX 312 both suggest herding of livestock, perhaps utilising marshland along the bank of the river Orwell, to the south, as summer grazing. Some of the exposed entrances had associated post-holes/gullies that may indicate gates or other blocking mechanisms, though they were not the sort of corner entrances typically associated with livestock management (see Pryor 2001, 417). There was almost no surviving animal bone from Middle Bronze Age features but a picture of mixed farming during both phases of the field system's use emerges from the plant macrofossil evidence, which includes hulled and unhulled wheat and barley grains (and chaff), possibly cultivated legumes, and arable weed seeds.

Evidence of later activity at Felixstowe Academy was limited to a Roman ditch on the same alignment as the road that led down the peninsula to the Roman port at Felixstowe (Scarfe 1972, 67; Moore *et al*. 1988, 28 ill. 9, 31–2; Fairclough 2011, 253–5, figs 68 & 71); possible medieval, and post-medieval, field ditches were also recorded.

IPSWICH ENVIRONS:

Ipswich Academy

Excavation on the site of another new school recorded part of a Bronze Age field system, which might have been re-organised at least once (Fig. S6). The system was initially demarcated by a set of broadly parallel/perpendicular north-east to south-west (Ditches 2, 15, and curvilinear Ditch 13) and north-west to south-east ditches (Ditches 9, 10, 11, 18, & 20), with 'kinked' Ditches 25 and 26 (the latter replacing the former) initially orientated west–east before turning south-eastwards. One section of Ditch 18 contained 13 sherds (214 g) of flint-tempered later Bronze Age pottery. Struck flints, including three later prehistoric flakes, were found in Ditch 2. Ditch 20 truncated a charcoal-rich pit [267] that contained abraded earlier Bronze Age pottery (21 sherds; 85 g) and 12 Middle Bronze Age to earlier Iron Age struck flints, including waste flakes (one of which refits to an extensively but rather randomly reduced core), probably mostly debris from a single knapping event and in a primary discard position. Ditch 25 contained two Late Bronze Age potsherds, while Ditch 13, which cut Ditch 25, contained four later prehistoric flint flakes. Owing to the uniformly shallow character of the ditches and general lack of differentiation within their fills, none of these ditch finds can be considered well stratified.

At some point this system ostensibly appears to have been replaced by a set of rectilinear ditches on slightly more north-north-west to south-south-east (Ditches 1, 6, & 17) and east-north-east to west-south-west (Ditch 16) alignments, most clearly indicated by the superimposition of Ditch 1 over the fills of earlier Ditches 2 and 13. The only finds were small quantities of struck flint, in forms that were used throughout the later Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age. However, a prehistoric date is reinforced by the complete absence of later cultural material in the ditches and by the stratigraphic relationships between Ditch 1 and a group of overlying boundaries, on different alignments, that demarcated a 1st century AD field system. It is possible that the stratigraphic relationship between the two apparent phases of Bronze Age ditches just reflects the order in which they were last cleaned out.

Under that scenario, all the ditches could be broadly contemporary components of a 'grid' like system of small square/rectangular enclosures with dimensions, where visible (for example, between Ditches 1, 6, 2, 13, & 16), of just over 0.3 ha (0.75 acres), with smaller enclosures to the south-west. The Bronze Age ditches at Game Farm probably formed an identical, grid like but sinuous, field system (Gibson 2004, 11 fig. 10, 53). Apart, perhaps, from the flaring arrangement of adjacent Ditches 6 and 17, there were no obvious candidates for tracks/droveways in the exposed part of the Ipswich Academy field system.

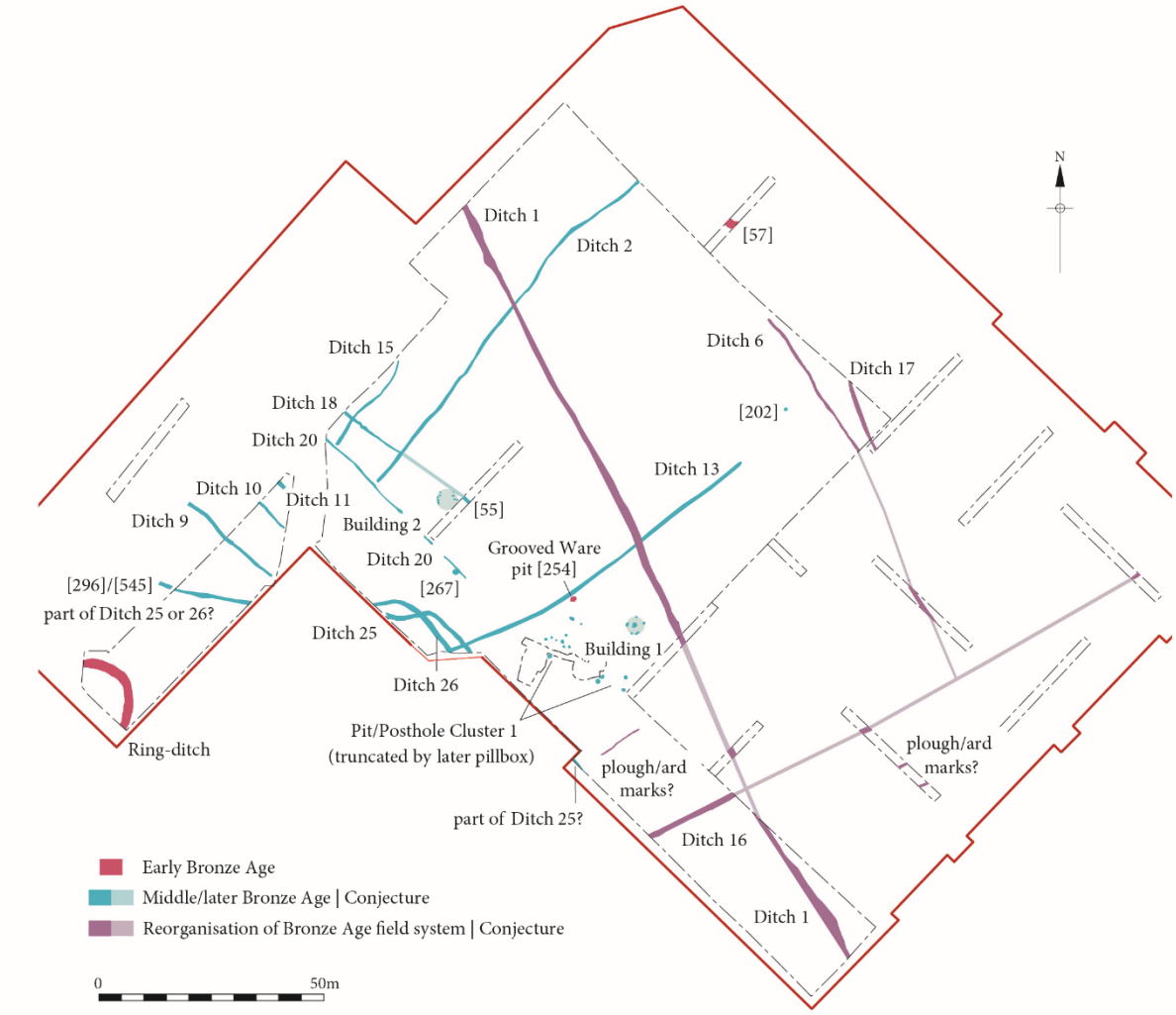

Fig. S6
Ipswich Academy. Roman, Anglo-Saxon, & later features not shown

There were traces of perhaps three post-built structures within/beside the fields. The most complete, Building 1, located in the area between Ditches 1, 13, and 16, consisted of a ring (4 m diameter) of seven post-holes surrounding a central post-hole, the latter abutting an area of heat-discoloured sand (168), probably a hearth (Fig. S7). The post-holes measured 0.25–0.37 m wide and 0.23–0.28 m deep; all had single fills, some containing small daub fragments from the structure's walls and others pieces of burnt clay hearth lining. Two adjacent post-holes in the south-east of the circuit ([183] and [185]) contained incomplete baked clay objects made in a grog-tempered fabric with smoothed surfaces and, in one case, a pierced hole. These may be cylindrical loomweights, similar to

later Bronze Age examples from Winnall Down, Hampshire (Fasham 1985, fig. 70, 2), Potterne, Wiltshire (Lawson 2000, fig. 66, 28), and Runnymede Bridge, Surrey (Needham & Spence 1996, 184, fig. 99, C35). The central post-hole contained four later prehistoric flint flakes. The close positioning of Post-holes [173] and [174] might indicate that one held a replacement or reinforcement post for the other, suggesting the building was in use long enough to require repair. Oak charcoal from the dark, ash-rich fill of Post-hole [187] returned an Early Bronze Age radiocarbon date (2030–1780 cal. BC; SUERC[3]-105784 (GU62073); 3578±27 BP; 1960–1880 cal. BC at 68.3 %) but it is not clear if this material was contemporary with the building or old when used.

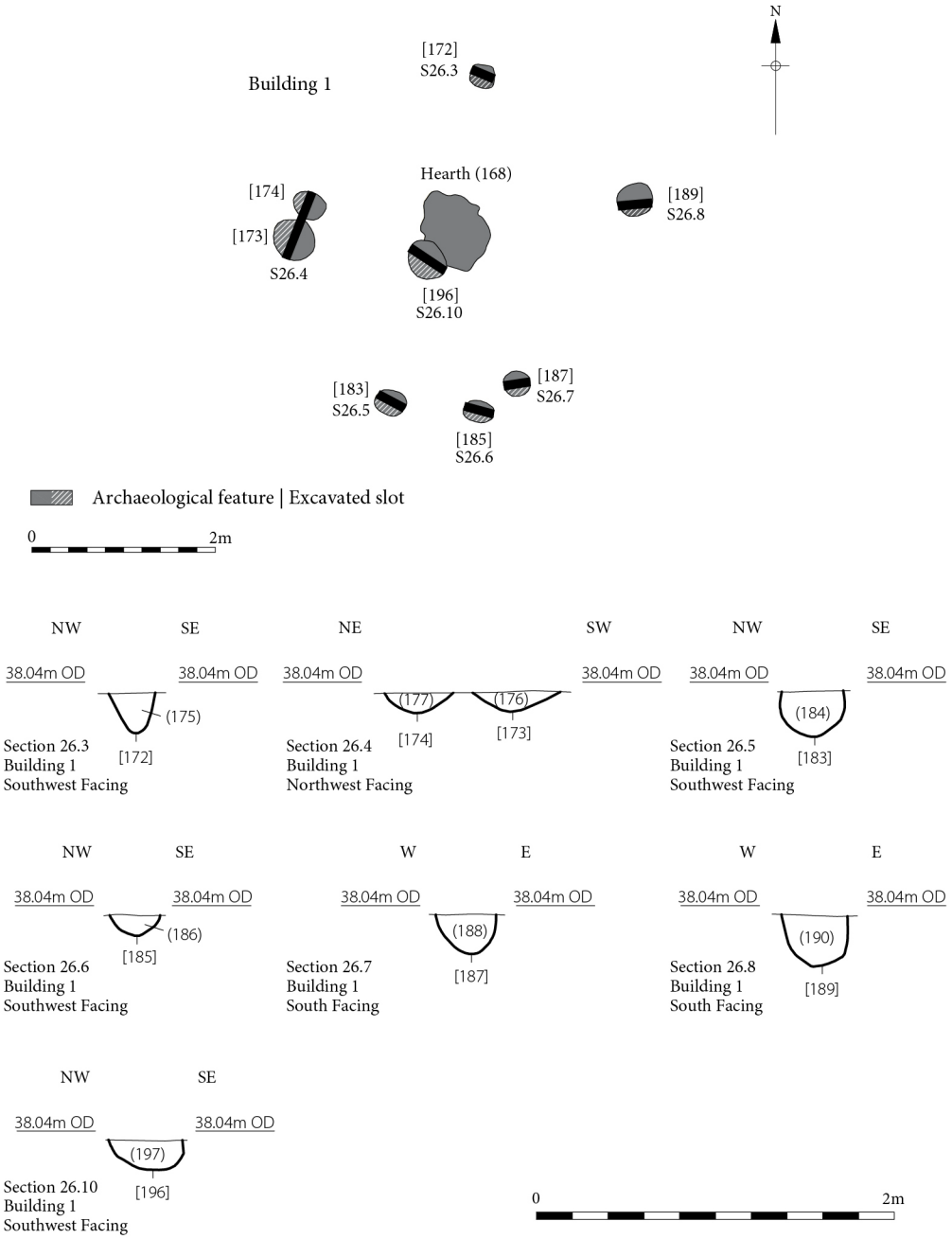

Fig. S7
Ipswich Academy Building 1

A second possible building was represented by a cluster of seven post-holes, each typically not more than 0.25 m wide and 0.15 m deep, all located within 3.5 m of one another beside Ditch 18. They lacked a clear configuration in plan, and none contained finds; however, the presence of a concentration of Late Bronze Age pottery in an adjacent ditch slot [55] adds weight to their identification as a building. A third cluster of small pits and post-holes (Pit/Post-hole Cluster 1) may represent the remains of one or more additional structure(s), though any configurations had been obscured by the foundations of a Second World War 'pillbox'. Several of these features contained artefacts, including *in situ* Bronze Age flintworking waste, pieces of daub, later Bronze Age type clay loomweight fragments, two grog-tempered, cord-impressed potsherds possibly from Collared Urns, and two other grog-tempered sherds from earlier Bronze Age urn forms. The low density distribution of buildings within the fields, each comparable in form to the somewhat irregular rings/clusters of post-holes and pits making up the Middle–Late Bronze Age structures at Ormesby St Michael (Gilmour *et al.* 2014, 146–7, 153–4) and Game Farm mirrors the disposition of round-houses at that site (Gibson 2004, 7–32). Rather clearer rings of post-holes defined several of the Middle Bronze Age round-houses at Fordham Road, Newmarket (SHER NKT 047; Rees 2017), the two Late Bronze Age (*c.* 1000–800 BC) round-houses at Bloodmoor Hill, Carlton Colville (SHER CAC 042, Heard 2013), and the better preserved of the Late Bronze Age dwellings at Flixton (Boulter 2022, 47).

After the later Bronze Age, there was a break in archaeologically visible activity until the mid-1st century AD, when a new field system was laid out. This was short-lived, not being maintained much beyond AD 100; it was cut by parallel ditches defining a north-east to south-west trackway, one of which contained Ipswich Ware.

Among the low-level pre-field system activity was a pit [254] containing an apparently structured deposit of selected struck flint and Grooved Ware pottery [254] (Thomas 1999; 2012, 7; Pollard 2001, 325–9; Garrow 2006; 2007, 14–16, 20; Lamdin-Whymark 2008; Fig. S8), and a presumably Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ring-ditch in the western corner of the site (Fig. S9). This monument, possibly originally enclosing a mound, was still a visible (and visited) landscape feature when the fields were in use, as indicated by later Bronze Age–Iron Age flint-knapping debris in its upper fills. Its position at the edge of the excavation meant its precise relationship with the Bronze Age field boundaries was unclear, and that associated burials, if present, were not revealed.

Fig. S8
Artefact assemblage from Pit [254]: flint hammer or rubbing stone; 2 finely made & retouched double-ended, long end scrapers; blade retouched into piercer, Grooved Ware pottery from 4–5 incomplete vessels, including a highly decorated, partially complete, large barrel shaped urn
(photo: Aileen Tierney)

Fig. S9
Ipswich Academy ring-ditch, view west (photo: Mark Hinman)

Ravenswood Area 'T'

A 0.73 ha area within the former Ipswich Airfield was excavated ahead of house building. With the exception of two small ring-ditches, the earliest feature was a 5 m wide, north-east–south-west, ditch defined trackway (Trackway 1) flanked by perpendicular field/enclosure ditches (Ditches 1, 7, and 8) (Fig. S10). In the corner of one of these fields was a small pit [151] containing the cremated remains of an infant interred in a small (120 mm rim diameter), plain, grog-tempered pottery vessel with a slightly barrel shaped profile, similar to Middle Bronze Age examples from Ardleigh and Brightlingsea. The vessel had been truncated, which may account for the incompleteness of the skeleton, but it is possible that it was originally a token deposit, with the remainder of the bone either not collected from the pyre, deposited elsewhere, or curated (Evans 1996, 22; Brück 2019, 48). Samples of bone were submitted for radiocarbon dating but neither contained sufficient collagen (SUERC GU37774).

At some time later the field system was modified by the laying out of two enclosures or sub-divisions (Enclosures 1 & 3) either side of the track; the former, at least, could equally have been part of the original layout. The trackway also appears to have been blocked by the digging of small Enclosure 2 over its path. This was only partly within the site, making its function impossible to discern, but the enclosure's apparently small size makes an agricultural use unlikely. The need to divert the track could perhaps explain curving Ditch 12, which might demarcate one side of a slightly re-aligned route bypassing Enclosure 2, though no sign of a second, parallel, ditch was found unless the original western trackway boundary (marked by Ditch 2) was still visible. Later still, the narrow, south-east facing entrance to Enclosure 2 was blocked by Ditch 15. There was also modification to the enclosures in the southern part of the exposed system, as suggested by short Ditch 16 and by traces of an earlier ditch, possibly forming part of a field entrance, seen underneath the middle part of Ditch 10. While Ditch 10 appeared to cut across what had been the main axis of the boundary system up to that point (the track/droveway), it is possible that in its initial form it did not extend across the track and instead formed a replacement of Ditch 9 as the northern limit of Enclosure 3. The space between it and short Ditch 16 could then have formed a narrow corner entrance to the enclosure, replacing the earlier entrance between the terminals of Ditches 9 and 11.

The dating evidence for all the elements of this system of land division is very limited, comprising just 16 small sherds of handmade pottery, found widely distributed throughout the

Fig. S10
Ravenswood Area 'T'. Anglo-Saxon and later features not shown

ditches, which are likely to be Bronze/earlier Iron Age, together with a low number of struck flints, including several 'squat' flakes of later prehistoric type (Martingell 1990; 2003). There was almost no cultural material in the overburden, suggesting low-intensity land use during those eras when one might expect to see more abundant material remains (that is, the Roman, medieval, and post-medieval periods), and rendering it unlikely that the pottery was incorporated into the ditches as residual material. The latest ditch in the stratigraphic sequence (Ditch 10) contained charcoal dated to 230–390

cal. AD (SUERC-61008, GU37775; 1746±30 BP), suggesting silting during the Roman period, though small pieces of charcoal (and other cultural material) can easily be intrusive on these loose sand soils. This land south-east of the *emporia* at Ipswich was certainly used for charcoal burning by the Early to Middle Anglo-Saxon era, as indicated by widespread scatters of small, charcoal-filled pits identified in excavations across the area, and radiocarbon dated to this period (eg, SHER IPS 719, Clover 2013, 21–5; IPS 725, Woolhouse 2014, 21–7; and also found on Ravenswood Area 'T' itself). It may be no coincidence that 'Brazier's Wood' lies just west of here.

The only pre-field system features were two stratigraphically early, narrow, shallow curvilinear ditches. Both had been severely truncated by the Bronze Age trackway ditches cutting directly through them; they might originally have formed complete rings 3.5–4.5 m across, potentially with small internal mounds. Although their surviving parts were fully excavated, there were no finds to indicate the ring-ditches' age or function, particularly whether they originally had associated burials. Similar small ring-ditches are found in Middle Bronze Age cremation cemeteries in Suffolk, Essex, and further afield (eg, Brown 1999, 36; Cooper 2018, 6). Based on their positions directly beneath the main Bronze Age boundaries it is possible that they served as markers when the first ditched land divisions were laid out.

Other parts of Ipswich Airfield were subject to evaluation and targeted excavation prior to its redevelopment (SHER IPS 024, IPS 386, IPS 390, IPS 391, IPS 404, IPS 405, IPS 406 and IPS 420, Bales *et al.* 2006). These investigations found evidence for successive ditched fields and other land boundaries. Although rarely containing artefacts, stratigraphically early ditches/gullies at two of the sites (SHER IPS 406 and 390), at least, were tentatively assigned to the earlier Bronze Age. Other sites had occasional dispersed Late Neolithic and Bronze Age pits and other features, with SHER IPS 386 having a greater concentration, including two possible structures (Bales *et al*. 2006, 8–28). The funnelling arrangement of the possible Bronze Age ditches at IPS 406, *c*. 100 m south-east of Area 'T', was suggested as having an association with herding livestock (*ibid*., 66–71).

DEBEN VALLEY

Main Road, Martlesham

Excavation ahead of house building revealed parts of a prehistoric field system delineated by a set of regular south-west to north-east and north-west to south-east ditches (Fig. S11). The system had two distinct components: in the north of the main excavation area (Area 1), ditches formed a series of small (306 m², 340 m², and *c.* 305 m² in the cases of the substantially complete Enclosures 1, 2, & 6) adjoining roughly square enclosures, sometimes surrounded with double ditches, while to the south of a broad central trackway were much larger ditched fields. The central axis of the southern field system closely followed level ground just above the 30 m contour, with the perpendicular ditches aligned up/down the very gentle slope (Fig. S12). Magnetometer survey revealed that there were two more-or-less parallel trackways funnelling into the enclosures from the south-west (SHER MRM 101, Roseveare & Lewis 2010, figs 2–3); the clearer, central track heads directly towards a barrow group (SHER MRM 016; Fig. S13; Fig. 6). Trenching 350 m north-west of the site revealed undated ditches of similar appearance to those at MRM 157 (SHER MRM 154, Schofield 2012). A 'crumb' of poorly fired, handmade, flint-tempered pottery was found in one of the ditches but disintegrated when lifted (Matthew Adams, Britannia Archaeology, pers. comm.). Nevertheless, its presence hints at Bronze Age land divisions continuing in that direction.

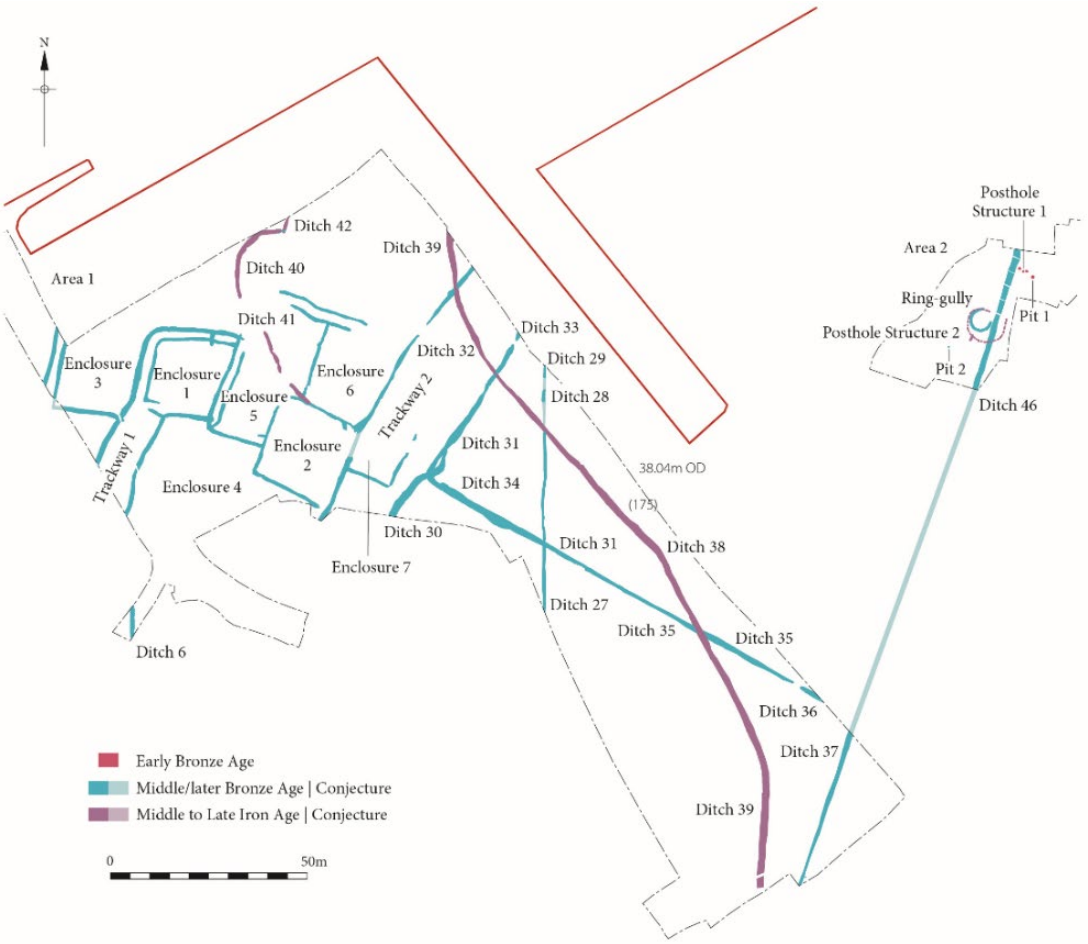

Fig. S11
Main Road, Martlesham. Anglo-Saxon & post-medieval features not shown

Despite excavating regularly spaced slots amounting to at least 25% of each ditch and, in some cases, full excavation, artefacts were extremely sparse. Some of the ditches contained abraded sherds (mean weight only 3.2 g) of handmade, predominantly flint-tempered pottery, characteristics which, together with the generally coarse nature of the flint inclusions and lack of decoration, are most consistent with a later prehistoric (Middle Bronze Age–earlier Iron Age) date. The entire assemblage from the Area 1 ditches consists of just 14 sherds (45 g), with a few more from the topsoil; however, potsherds were consistently present in ditches across the site, without any later material. The excavation also produced a few struck flints that are characteristic of later prehistoric (later 2nd–1st -millennium BC) flintworking (Herne 1991; Young & Humphrey 1999; Ballin 2002; Humphrey 2003; McLaren 2009); a low density scatter of Middle Bronze Age flints was also noted during fieldwalking (Brooks 2010, 6, 7 fig. 3; Pendleton 2010). Shared morphology and the overall coherence of the system allow ditches without finds to be broadly dated by association.

This rectilinear field system was cut by a set of curving boundary ditches that followed entirely different alignments and show a complete re-organisation of the earlier agricultural landscape. The principal Iron Age ditch contained a moderate sized group of sherds from a handmade, slack-profiled Middle Iron Age-type vessel (*c*. 3rd–1st century BC), similar to those from West Stow and Barnham (West 1990, 63 fig. 46; Martin 1993, 1–22). However, these sinuous boundaries might have originated at an earlier date as they are similar in form to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age 'linear/ranch boundaries' that superseded Middle Bronze Age co-axial field systems on the Wessex chalk downlands (McOmish *et al.* 2002, 56–67). Thus, a date in the Middle Bronze Age is most likely for construction of

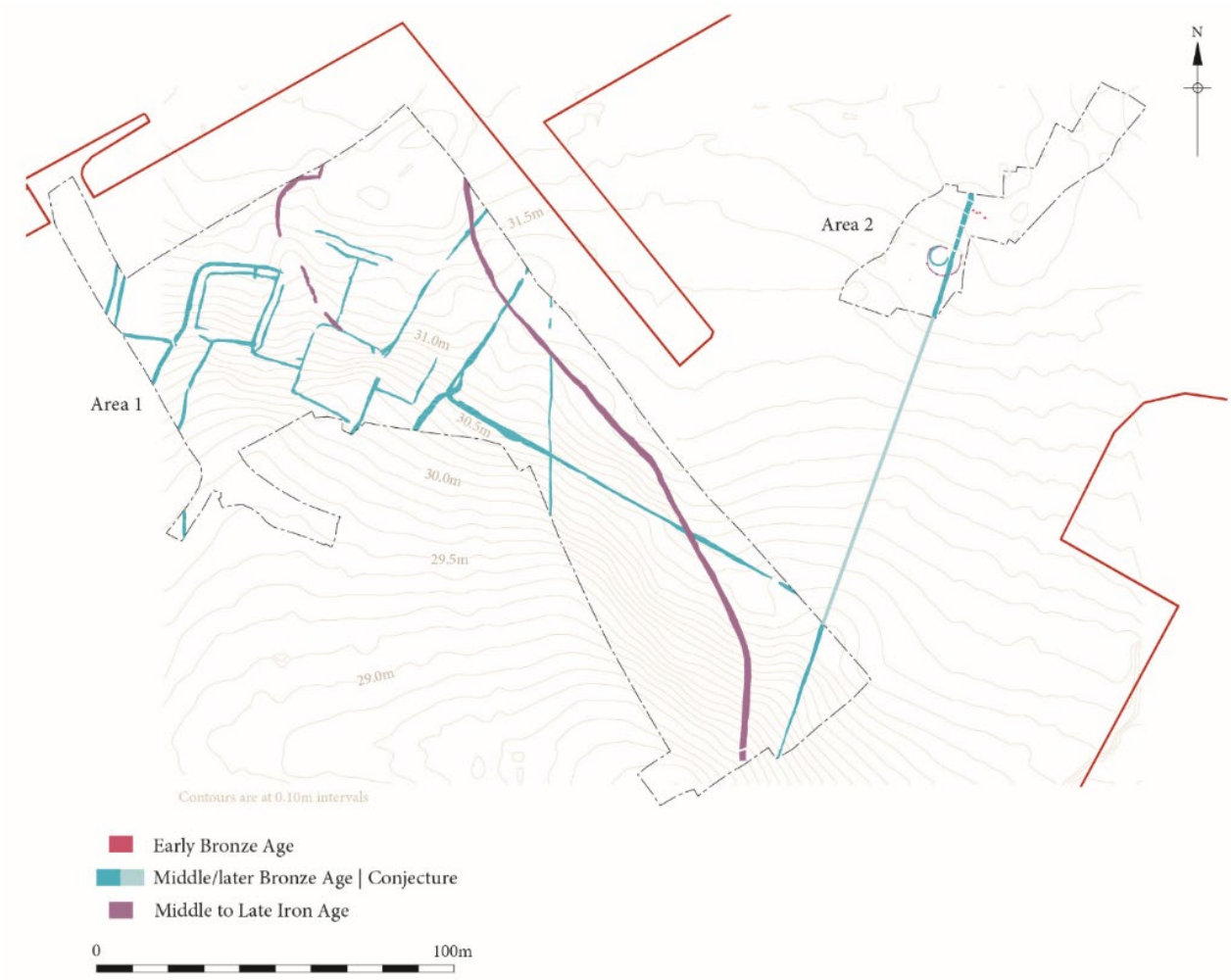

Fig. S12
Martlesham field system with topography

the rectilinear field system, with some elements, at least in its southern part, possibly remaining partially open up to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition, as indicated by two sherds that have lightly incised decoration most redolent of that found in the 9th–8th century assemblage from nearby Little Bealings (Martin 1993, 56, fig. 37). Of course, finds from the ditches reflect when they were silting up rather than their date of construction. The presence of a narrow, sinuous ditch line (Ditches 27, 28, & 29), with a very leached fill, on a slightly different alignment (north–south) from the main Bronze Age boundary system and cut by one of its principal axes (Ditch 31), suggests some time depth to this sub-divided landscape.

Further corroborating evidence for a *c*. later Bronze Age date came from excavation of small Area 2, which was irregular in shape due to its location in a wooded area with trees that were to be retained within the new housing estate (Fig. S14). Here, a shallow penannular gully (0.4–0.57 m wide × 0.08–0.22 m deep) with a diameter of 5.4 m (4.4 m internally) is thought to be the remains of some kind of structure or monument with an east facing entrance (Fig. S15), positioned beside (but not intercutting with) a ditch that appears to directly continue a field ditch seen in Area 1. The ring-gully fill contained an ostensibly domestic type assemblage comprising 31 sherds (164 g) of pottery, knapping waste characteristic of Bronze–Iron Age flintworking (including several 'squat' flakes), burnt flints, a few charred barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grains plausibly deriving from culinary preparation, and a sharpening/polishing stone. The pottery is in a range of handmade fabrics containing flint, quartzsand, and sometimes no visible temper. This finds assemblage is comparable in terms of range/quantity of

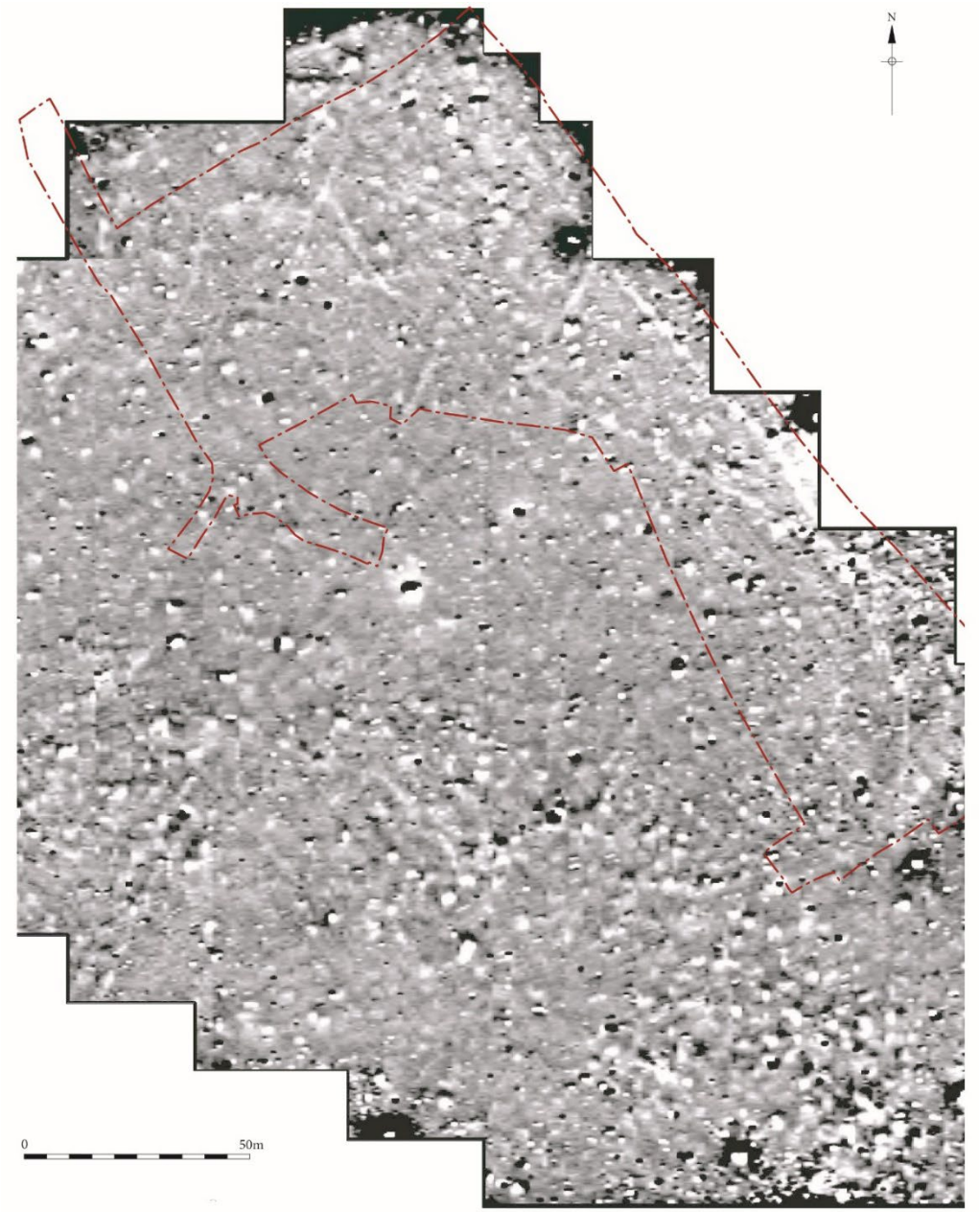

Fig. S13
Martlesham field system with geophysics. Magnetometer survey by Archaeophysica Ltd (Roseveare & Lewis 2010, fig. 2)

artefacts with those recovered from two post-built Late Bronze Age round-houses at Bloodmoor Hill, Carlton Colville (SHER CAC 042, Heard 2013, 74–6).

Additional pottery and 'fresh' flintworking waste were found in the adjacent field ditch: 19 struck flints including several cores and flakes, and 49 sherds (243 g) of predominantly flint-tempered pottery, from at least three vessels, the fabric/lack of decoration on which best fit a later Bronze Age–Early Iron Age date. Artefacts were found concentrated in a fully excavated *c*. 10 m stretch of ditch adjacent to the 'structure' and were overwhelmingly present in the upper ditch fill (Spits 1 and, particularly, 2), the lower levels of the ditch fill being mostly sterile. This evidence demonstrates that the field boundary had already been in place and infilling for a time before the *c*. later Bronze Age occupation material was deposited. A barley grain from the ring-gully returned a date of 1890–1830

Fig. S14
Detail of Martlesham Area 2

(25.0 %) or 1840–1680 (70.5 %) cal. BC (SUERC-105790, GU62076; 3454±27 BP), clearly rather earlier than the associated artefacts and of uncertain significance given the presence of earlier Bronze Age surface deposits in the near vicinity (see below) and the likelihood of residuality. A second, post-medieval, radiocarbon date from charcoal found in the ring-gully can certainly be discounted but adds further doubt to the contextual security of any of the plant macrofossils found in its loose sand fill.

Despite the 'domestic' character of the finds, the identification of this ring-gully as a round-house would be problematic: based on the development of round-house architecture elsewhere in Suffolk and Norfolk, buildings incorporating ring-gullies (whether eaves-drip gullies to keep rainwater away from the wall timbers or foundation trenches for structural posts) tend not to pre-date the Middle Iron Age (Martin 1999, 68–9). However 'Structure 1' is interpreted, the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date of the associated artefacts at least provides a *terminus ante quem* for the establishment of the field system. The structure was located on relatively high ground (31.6 m aOD) just off the brow of the slight ridge, to the north of the site, that forms the southern edge of the river Fynn Valley.

Seven metres to the south-west was a small pit (Pit 2) containing the truncated lower portion of a large, flat-bottomed, flint-and-sand-tempered Bronze Age urn. The small dimensions of the pit imply that it was dug specifically to contain the pot. The feature was fully excavated and the fill sieved but no cremated bone was present. Nevertheless, there is a strong possibility that this was either a disturbed cremation burial or some other kind of placed/ritual deposit, as it contained approximately half a cast copper-alloy miniature wheel (Fig. S16), broadly datable on typological grounds to the Late

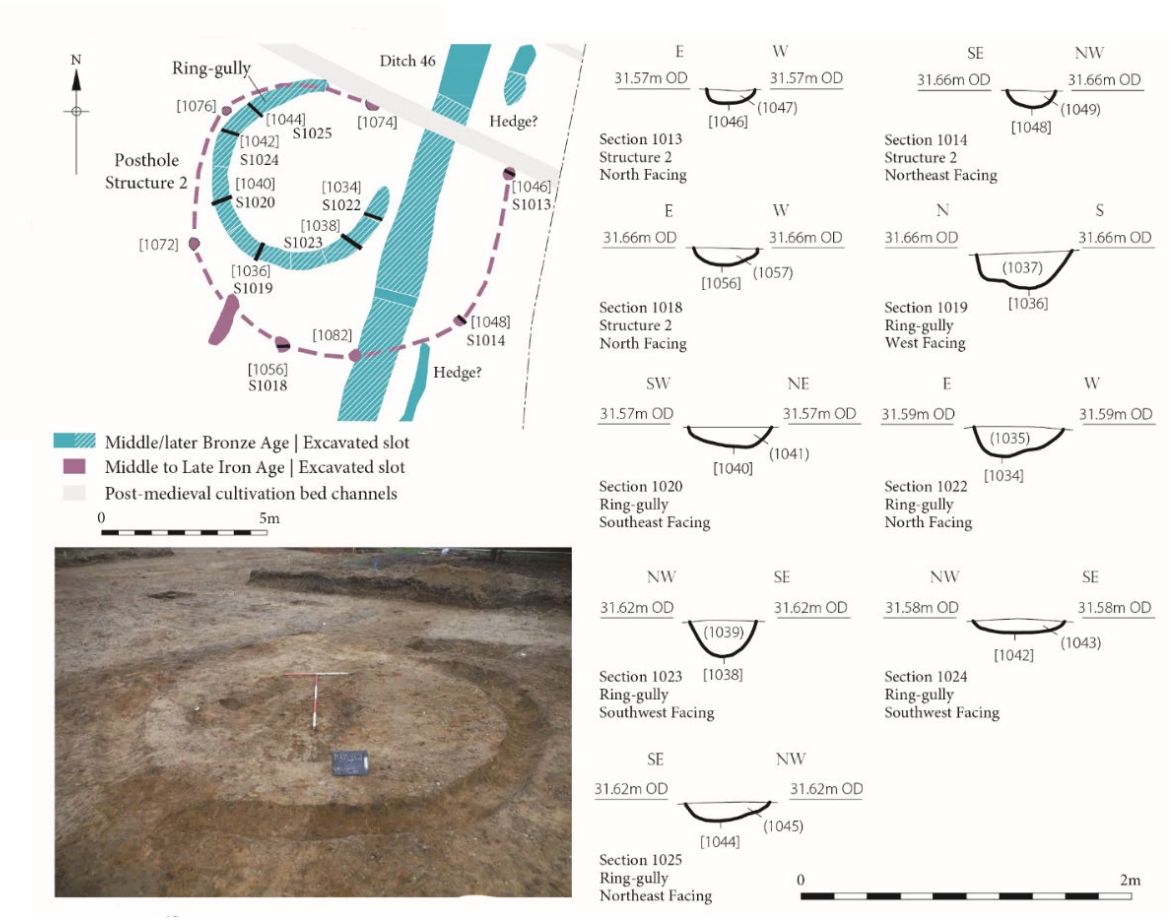

Fig. S15
Martlesham ring-gully and post-hole Structure 2 (photo of Structure 1, view east-north-east: Tom Woolhouse)

Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (*c*. 1000–500 BC) and similar to examples from Flag Fen (Pryor 1991, 111, fig. 87; 2001, 272–3 no. 154, fig. 10.8) and the Salisbury and Hounslow hoards (Stead 1998, 122, pl. 18). Other comparable artefacts from Shropshire, Kent, and Oxfordshire are recorded in the Portable Antiquities Scheme database (Reavill 2006; Jackson 2014; Adams 2018). Although incomplete, the fabric and apparent form of the pot would fit the Collared Urn or Deverel-Rimbury ceramic traditions of the Middle and later Bronze Age (Barrett 1980; Gibson 2002, fig. 51, 106).

The proximity of this possible truncated cremation deposit to the ring-gully could point to it being an associated funerary/mortuary monument. Although the similar small ring-ditches seen in 'Ardleigh type' cremation cemeteries and elsewhere are normally complete rings (Bradley 2019, 246 fig. 5.15; see Woolhouse 2020, 558, for discussion), a ring-ditch surrounding a probable grave at Flixton, attributed to the earlier Bronze Age, was penannular with a narrow north-east facing gap between its terminals (Boulter 2022, 33–5, 7, fig. 3.19) and an undated but presumed Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age small ring-ditch at Aldeburgh Road, Leiston, had two opposing entrances (King 2023, 379–80, fig. 113; see below). The pottery and lithic assemblage from the ring and adjacent ditch could, in that scenario, represent something more than casual discard: the use of earlier features to deposit flintwork and other 'domestic' debris is a recurring theme in later prehistory and at some other sites it has been argued that the practice could have had symbolic connotations. For example, in an era of agricultural intensification, when large areas of the landscape were rapidly becoming divided up and demarcated, such depositional practices might have reflected tenurial or dynastic concerns, for example, appealing to ancestral authority by marking earlier foci of perceived cultural significance with evidence of the community's presence (Bishop 2019; forthcoming).

Fig. S16
Copper-alloy votive wheel (photo: Strephon Duckering; illustration: Mark Hoyle)

It is interesting to consider briefly the evidence for both pre- and post-field system use of this landscape. Approximately 10 m north of Structure 1 was an east–west line of three post-holes that may have formed part of another small structure (Post-hole Structure 1); there was a scatter of Bronze Age pottery and struck flint on the surrounding ground surface, including sherds from a Biconical Urn type vessel. Next to the post-holes was a small pit (Pit 1) containing a deposit of Food Vessel and Beaker pottery (53 sherds; 958 g) together with burnt flint, struck flints, cereal grains including barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and possibly six-row barley (*H. vulgare* L.), and a hazel nutshell fragment, all in a homogeneous dark silty sand. A barley grain provides a date of 2290–2030 cal. BC (SUERC-105791, GU62077; 3749±27 BP). Pits containing Grooved Ware or Beaker pottery, either isolated or in small groups, are a common feature of Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age East Anglia. In common with other such sites, the variable condition of the pottery here suggests that some of it had previously been in middens or other surface deposits. The pit thus reflects the 'tidying' of accumulated surface material, an act which might have had cultural significance to the people involved extending beyond modern Western notions of casual rubbish disposal, especially given that there is frequently — as here and at Ipswich Academy — evidence for deliberate selection of what went into pits. Indeed, by deliberately placing selected material residues of their activity in earth-fast pits, communities may have been beginning to assert or fix connections between themselves and particular land or places in the landscape (Thomas 1999, 86–8; 2012, 5; Pollard 2001, 323, 327).

This location in the north-east of the site thus appears to have been a long term focal point for occupation and related activities, having evidence for habitation in the Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age (albeit perhaps temporary in nature), later Bronze Age–Early Iron Age, and, possibly, the Middle to Late Iron Age, the latter evidenced by a ring (7.2–8.7 m in diameter) of seven evenly spaced large post-holes surrounding the footprint of earlier Structure 1 and apparently representing a later construction on approximately the same footprint. One post-hole contained three 'fresh' later Iron Age globular bowl/jar sherds; another was cut into the top of, by then infilled, field Ditch 46. As noted above, the closest section of contemporary Ditch 39, in Area 1, also contained handmade Middle Iron Age tradition pottery, possibly indicating that other dwellings occupied the intervening, unexcavated (due to retained trees and a Second World War pillbox) gap between Areas 1 and 2. That the site of 'Structure 1' was referenced by this considerably later build implies that it remained visible — perhaps adding further weight to interpretation of the ring-ditch as some kind of monument (with a low mound?).

The Street, Easton

The site occupies a south facing hillside in the middle/upper reaches of the Deben valley. At the foot of the slope is a tributary stream of the Deben; the site has views southwards over the main river valley, 250 m to the west. Excavation ahead of house building revealed multi-period remains, which have previously been described elsewhere (Woolhouse 2020).

In summary, excavation revealed part of a ditched rectilinear field/enclosure that appears to pre-date the Iron Age, although based on limited finds and stratigraphic evidence (Fig. S17). One of the apparent field ditches was cut by a pit [641] containing part of a quartz-sand-and-flint-tempered Early Iron Age jar, alongside hearth waste, burnt flint, and later Bronze Age–Iron Age struck flints.

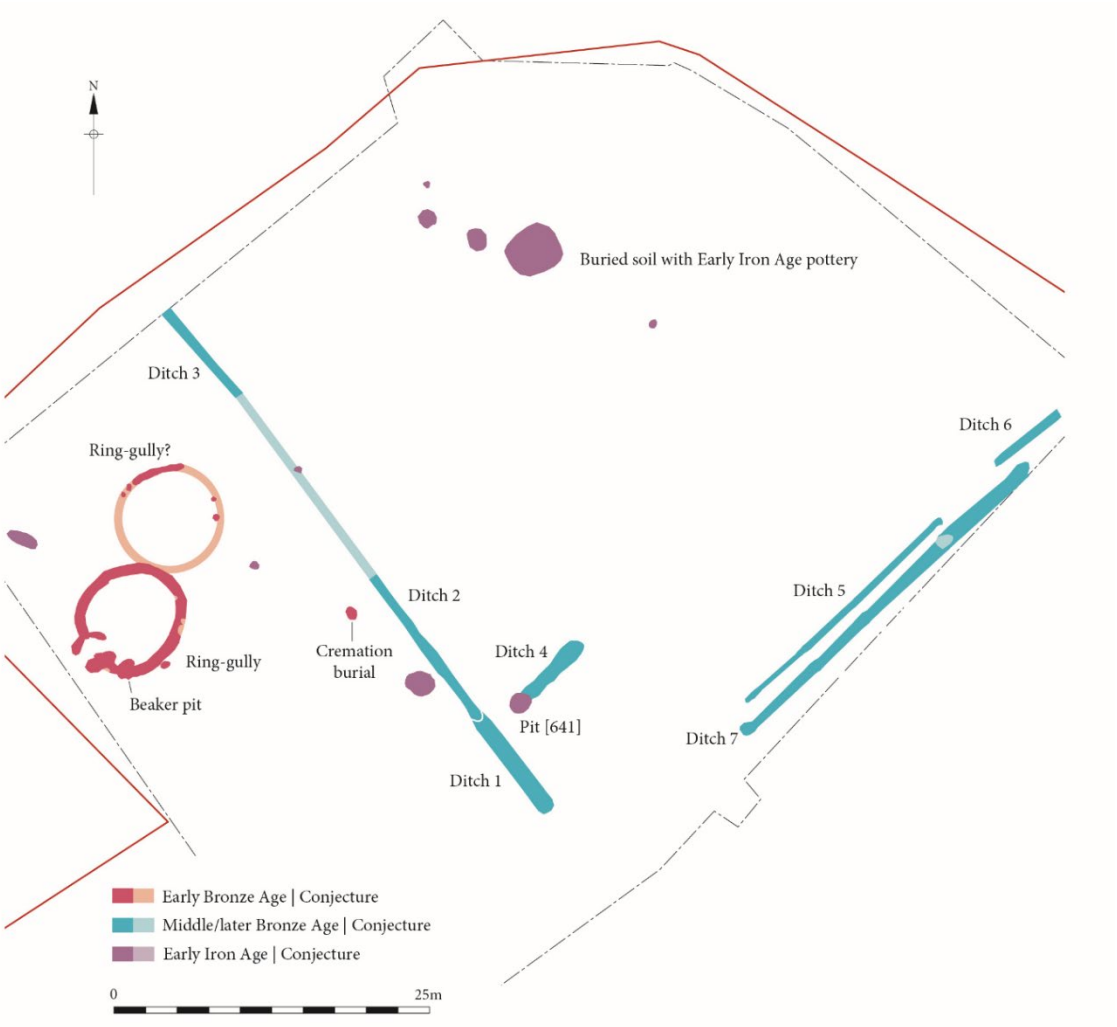

Fig. S17
The Street, Easton

This pit was part of an area of Early Iron Age (*c*. 8th–6th century BC) settlement, the exposed part of which consisted of scattered pits, a large 'dump' of pottery (157 sherds; 2.8 kg, including several diagnostic forms) found in a buried soil layer, and one or possibly two poorly dated ring-ditches that might have been associated structures, though — contrary to the published account — at least the better preserved of them is more likely to have been an earlier funerary monument. The field/enclosure ditches themselves contained just a few Bronze–Iron Age struck flints and three sherds of prehistoric pottery, one of them flint-tempered. Given their proximity to the settlement features, the almost complete absence of cultural material in the ditches suggests they had filled in by the Early Iron Age. Nevertheless, there was some circumstantial evidence for associated hedges — notably the close spacing of parallel Ditches 5/6 and 7, which is too small to be a trackway — which could theoretically have continued to demarcate the field(s) after the ditches had filled in.

This early field/enclosure was overlain by the boundary ditches of a Roman farmstead, laid out *c*. AD 70, which had markedly darker fills. The Roman boundaries followed the same alignments as the Bronze Age ditches; this could be due to the enduring influence of prehistoric land divisions, perhaps marked by hedges or banks, or might simply reflect the way that the lie of the stream valley influenced land allotment in both periods. Earlier Bronze Age activity at the site comprised part of a burial area, including a pit containing a Beaker vessel, probably accompanying a 'lost' crouched inhumation (and cut by one of the ring-ditches), and a cremation burial containing faience beads.

Aldeburgh Road, Leiston

Excavation ahead of residential development revealed a 5.5 m wide north-north-east to south-south-west-aligned ditched trackway flanked on its west side by two perpendicular ditched boundaries that delineated three rectangular fields averaging 95 m+ long by 27 m wide (King 2018; 2023; Fig. S18). Gaps in the field and trackway ditches were mainly interpreted as entrances. Four small groups of post-holes formed potential buildings and/or fence lines but the alignments of all these structures were offset from the field system and are therefore unlikely to have been precisely contemporary. Features assigned to this period contained small amounts of broadly Late Neolithic–Middle Bronze Age pottery and undiagnostic flintwork, most of which appeared residual; nevertheless, a Middle–Late Bronze Age date was suggested. This early system of land division was cut by an extensive Roman rectilinear field system on a different axis (King 2018, 24–7, figs 9–10). Land east of the trackway lacked evidence for sub-divisions; it may be significant that a small (7.5 m diameter), interrupted ring-ditch of presumed Late Neolithic–Early Bronze Age date was located in this apparently open area.

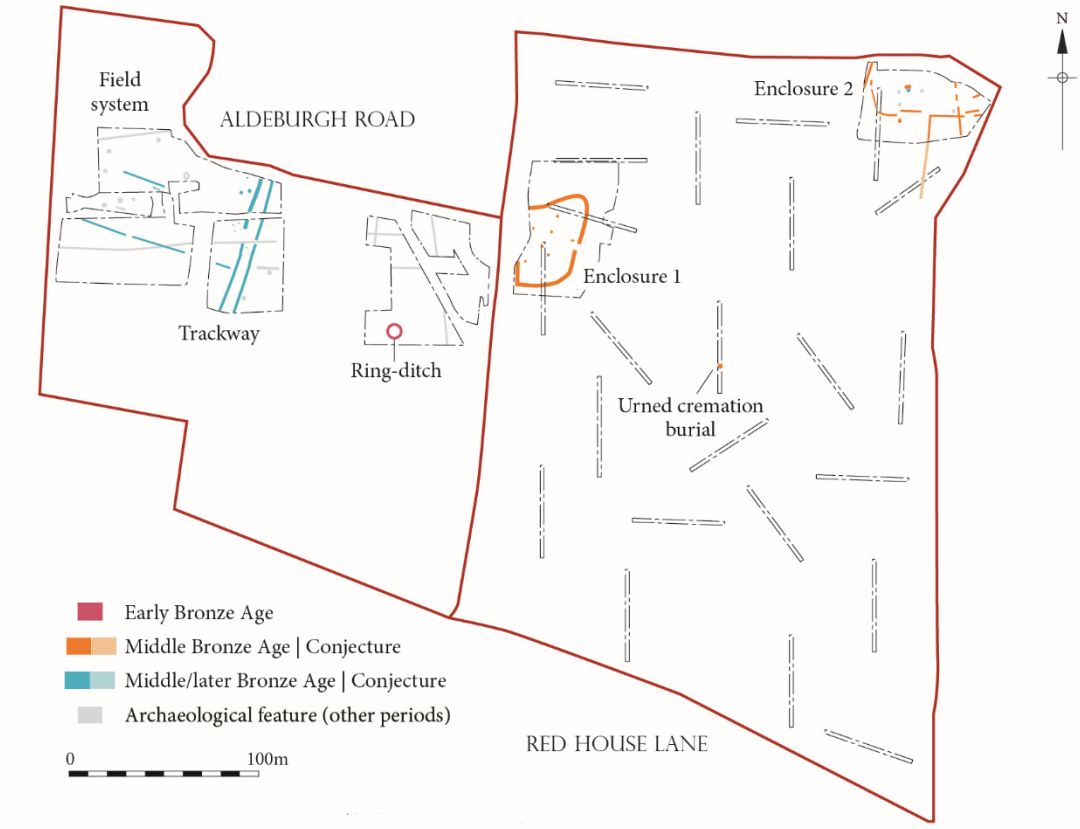

Fig. S18
Aldeburgh Road, Leiston (after King 2023, 377 fig. 111 & Clarke 2023, 399 fig. 117)

Subsequent excavation on adjoining land directly to the east, at Red House Lane, identified parts of two Middle Bronze Age settlement enclosures. Enclosure 1 was a substantial sub-rectangular ditched enclosure associated with ephemeral post-hole structures and pits containing burnt flint and charcoal. Enclosure 2 was the corner of an apparently larger enclosure surrounded by interrupted ditches (Clarke 2023). Both enclosure ditches were associated with Deverel-Rimbury type pottery, including, from the terminus of one ditch forming the south side of Enclosure 2, 71 sherds (1641 g) from the base of a single vessel, alongside burnt and later prehistoric struck flint, and fired clay fragments. Hawthorn type charcoal from the same fill returned a radiocarbon date of *c*. 1390–1200 cal. BC (3023±25;

SUERC-80775). Hazel charcoal from one of the burnt flint pits in Enclosure 1 returned a date of 1410–1230 cal. BC (3023±25 BP; SUERC-80775). Enclosure 2 cut two earlier ditches that might be part of an underlying field system on a main north–south axis, different to the orientation of the early trackway and fields at neighbouring Aldeburgh Road. The two sites combined amount to 13.5 ha of geophysical survey, trial trenching, and targeted excavation, with the evaluation identifying additional evidence for the surrounding Bronze Age landscape, including a Middle Bronze Age urned cremation burial (Lees & Hogan 2016).

WAVENEY VALLEY

Flixton Park Quarry

An extensive rectilinear ditch system, traced across a kilometre of the gravel terrace, was orientated parallel/perpendicular to the north-east to south-west-aligned river Waveney as well as with a north-east facing shallow valley on the river terrace (Boulter 2022, 63–6). Although locally truncated, it is clear that the ditches formed part of the same, extensive network. While complete plots rarely survived, the impression is of a patchwork of variably sized and rectangular or 'square-ish' fields with sides not exceeding 175 m in length and often smaller (Fig. S19). The staged publication of the quarry poses some problems for appreciating the full extent and overall morphology of the field system, with some of its ditches apparently continuing into adjacent quarry areas (notably SHER FLN 091) not covered by the volumes published to date (*ibid*., 66 and compare Boulter 2022, 4, fig. 1.3 & 64, fig. 3.45 with Boulter 2017, 40, fig. 11, and 44). While there are some persistent alignments that would perhaps justify classification of the field system as 'co-axial', other elements suggest more piecemeal development and addition of fields to the system over time.

A stratigraphically late addition or recutting (Ditch 12) was more substantial than the majority of the ditches and contained a discrete deposit of Roman pottery in its upper levels; other relationships might also indicate a degree of longevity and gradual evolution of the field system, for example, the presence of secondary(?), parallel stretches of ditch running alongside Ditches 15 and 16 for parts of their lengths. Stratigraphically, the field system ditches post-dated Early Bronze Age features and pre-dated the Late Iron Age/early Roman but, apart from the aforementioned localised deposit of Roman pottery, and a Roman coin and Late Iron Age toggle from ditches in that same general area, finds were limited to burnt and residual worked flint and Beaker pottery found where the ditches cut earlier features, and two earlier Iron Age potsherds.

Earlier activity in this part of the Flixton landscape (Boulter 2022, 29–63, 146–50) included some 16 Early Bronze Age ring-ditches and other circular monuments, the majority of them ploughed-out barrows, and scattered/small clusters of pits containing Beaker pottery and other finds. Middle Bronze Age activity, potentially contemporary with the field system, comprised two pits containing Deverel-Rimbury pottery, and ten cremation burials, the latter mostly in two small groups, nine of them un-urned and one associated with a small, inverted Collared Urn; three of them returned Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon dates. Towards the north-east end of the identified field system was a swathe of Late Bronze Age (*c*. 1150–800 BC) features apparently representing a *c*. 4 ha area of unenclosed occupation located on a gentle south-east-facing slope. The settlement remains consisted of four- and six-post square and rectangular structures and circular post-built buildings, the former assumed to be raised grain/food stores and the latter dwellings. In more recently excavated areas of the quarry, to be covered in a future publication (SHER FLN 088 & 090), a number of complete ground plans of the circular structures were recorded, consisting of arcs of post-holes 7–7.8 m in projected diameter with arrangements of post-holes to the south-east that presumably represented entrances. The structural remains and associated pits contained an assemblage of predominantly Plain Ware pottery, as well as worked flint, burnt flint/stone, and fired clay fragments, the latter mostly from loomweights. Entirely separate, within the southern part of the field system and particularly towards its south-west end, was a similar swathe of Early Iron Age (*c.* 800–550 BC) unenclosed settlement located on the shallow north-west facing slope beside the boundary between

Fig. S19
Flixton Park Quarry (after Boulter 2022, 64 fig. 3.45, 30 fig. 3.14, 4 fig. 1.3, 2017, 40 fig. 11)

the heavier clay soils and lighter sand. The main features were, again, four- and six-post (grain storage?) structures and pits; no clear circular buildings were identified but the associated finds assemblage reflects domestic activities.

As noted at several of the other sites discussed here, it seems highly improbable that the field ditches were open at the same time as the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age occupations as almost no cultural material of those periods was found in the ditch fills. Nevertheless, the sub-divided landscape — if indeed Bronze Age in origin — could have remained visible during the Late Bronze Age

and, potentially, in use, as settlement of that period was almost entirely outside/at the very edge of the identified field system (compare Boulter 2022, 48, fig. 3.30 & 64, fig. 3.45). In contrast, the Early Iron Age settlement features were scattered throughout much of the southern field block, rendering it unlikely that those enclosures were still farmed (*ibid*., 60, fig. 3.42).

LITTLE OUSE VALLEY

Game Farm, Brandon

Excavation revealed a Middle–Late Bronze Age landscape that had been protected beneath colluvium and windblown sand layers. The subdivided landscape comprised sets of narrow and shallow ditches aligned broadly north-west to south-east and south-west to north-east, though all the ditches were sinuous and meandering, incorporating curves and roughly right-angled bends, sometimes to avoid earlier structures (Gibson 2004). The ditches also had a 'braided' appearance from repeated recutting, necessitated by the friable soil into which they were cut and rapid infilling of ditches with windblown sand. Some ditch lines had been recut more than others, indicating they were longer-lived and/or more important for practical or perceived reasons. Together, the ditches give a strong impression of 'organic' development (Fig. S20).

A sequence of four phases was identified on the basis of ditch stratigraphy but it is likely that some early iterations of ditches had been entirely obscured or removed by later cleaning out/recutting. The suggested four-phase sequence results in a picture wherein the main axial alignment of the boundary system changed, somewhat unconvincingly, from north-west by south-east in the two earlier phases to south-west by north-east in Phase 2c, then back to something close to the original orientation in the final phase (Gibson 2004, 10–11, 54, fig. 31). As the author notes, this impression may be misleading, with the observable stratigraphic relationships preserving only a partial record and perhaps just indicating the order in which a set of what were, in fact, broadly contemporary ditches were last scoured out. If so, the overall system might actually have been a 'grid like' pattern of small square/rectangular fields (*ibid*., 53).

Within the ditched fields/enclosures was dispersed Middle to Late Bronze Age settlement represented by at least four broadly circular 6–8 m diameter post-built structures variously associated with pits, hearths, and internal spreads/surfaces of dark sand containing occupation debris. While the PDR pottery assemblage found associated with the structures and ditches (273 sherds; 2.3 kg from just the ditches) is consistent with a *c*. 9th–8th century Late [/*latest*] Bronze Age date (Last 2004, 40–1), two samples of charcoal associated with Structures 1 and 2 are Middle Bronze Age: 1760–1500 cal. BC (3350±60 BP; Beta-178455) and 1620–1320 cal. BC (3200±70 BP; Beta-178456), respectively, as is one from an un-urned cremation burial in one of the fields: 1450–1260 cal. BC (3100±50 BP; Beta-178453). 'Old wood' effect or other factors could perhaps account for this discrepancy (O'Brien 2004). Post-holes or internal layers of several structures were cut by field/enclosure ditches; other ditches deviated/kinked to avoid buildings, suggesting either broad contemporaneity or that not much time had elapsed between a building's occupation and the ditch being dug. Deposits of small/'token' amounts of human bone, either burnt or un-burnt, were found in pits located amidst the fields, in association with the structures, and, in one case, in a ditch terminus.

Fig. S20
Game Farm, Brandon (after Gibson 2004, 11 fig. 10)

Notes

[1] CHRONO Centre for Climate, the Environment, and Chronology, Queen's University, Belfast.

[2] Post-excavation assessment is underway at the time of writing.

[3] Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre Radiocarbon Laboratory.

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