

**FERRY MEADOWS COUNTRY PARK,
HAM LANE,
PETERBOROUGH,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

NGR REF: TL 14619 97693



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

JULY 2015

PREPARED BY CHRISTER CARLSSON

CONTENTS

	Summary
1	Introduction
2	Project Background
3	The Archaeological Background
4	Aims
5	Methodology
6	Results
7	Finds
8	Discussion
9	Archive
10	References

Appendices:

Context Descriptions

Finds List

Plans

Sections

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants 28 July 2015 for the construction of a new dog agility course with associated landscaping work at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Ham Lane, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. A Romano-British rubbish pit with pottery from the 3rd -4th century A.D. was encountered during the fieldworks.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site was located at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Ham Lane, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL 14619 97693) (Figure 1-3). The development comprised the construction of a new dog agility course with associated landscaping works.
- 1.2 The project was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2015), as well as discussions with the Peterborough City Council's Historic Environment Team. The project was based on a WSI, which complies with the principles of NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2012).
- 1.3 Independent Archaeology Consultants is an archaeological consultancy company based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The company subscribes to the Code of Conduct issued by the CIfA. All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (15/00726/FUL and 15/00734/ADV) for a new development at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Ham Lane, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The development comprised the construction of a new dog agility course with associated landscaping works.
- 2.2 The development site was located about 3.5km southwest of central Peterborough in the parish of Orton Waterville. The site was on the west side of Ham Lane and to the south of the River Nene. Waterville. It enclosed an area of some 3000m² at an average height of 9m AOD. The solid geology comprised sandstone formations overlain by the First Terrace Gravels of the River Nene.
- 2.3 The site was situated within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by Peterborough HER. Therefore, an archaeological watching brief was required prior to any construction on the site. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by Peterborough City Council, and was in line with standards described in NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework).

Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough: Archaeological Watching Brief

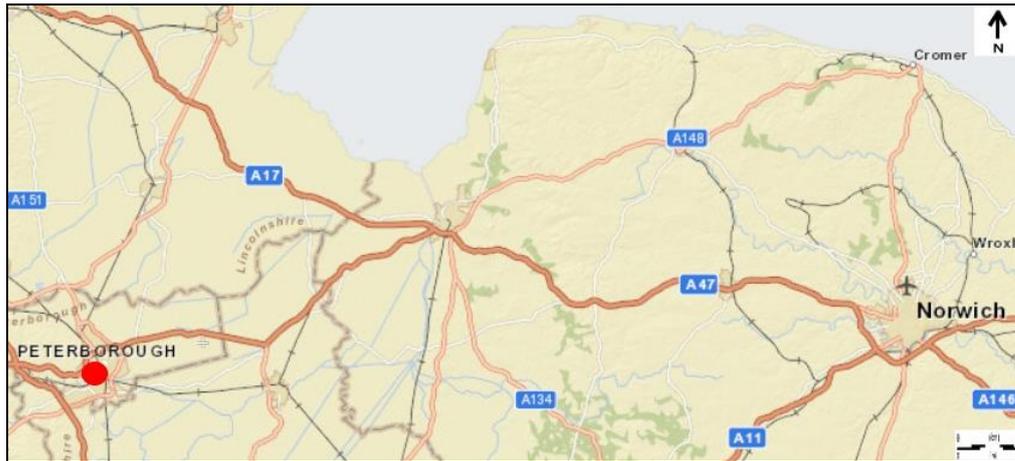


Figure 1. Site Location in England.



Figure 2. Site Outline.



Figure 3. Location of obstacle 1-8 and Sign A and B within the development site.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The proposed development site was located within the boundaries of Scheduled Monument PE 182 (List Entry No. 1006822, The Lynch Farm complex, which includes Prehistoric and Roman sites.
- 3.2 Known from aerial photographs, the site originally comprised an intricate pattern of settlements located within a large projecting meander of the River Nene. These settlements appeared to date from the Prehistoric to the Roman period. The main area included a number of ring ditches and enclosures bounded to the south by a series of substantial ditches running north-east to south-west across the narrow part of the meander. These ditches possibly represented some kind of defensive work associated with an early Roman fort located to the north-east (below).
- 3.3 Excavations conducted in the early 1970s in advance of mineral extraction within the area of dense cropmark distribution produced evidence for a farmstead which was in occupation throughout the 3rd century into the first half of the 4th century. An adjoining cemetery, containing one cremation and at least fifty inhumations, presumably served the farmstead.
- 3.4 Further to the north excavations revealed an oval pit which produced quantities of highly decorated pottery and flints of the Beaker period (ca. 2000 BC).
- 3.5 Emergency excavations to the east of the Romano-British farmstead revealed further 3rd-4th century agricultural features, including a timber framed aisled workshop. Corn-driers, numerous drainage channels, and a stone revetted basin. Metal working furnaces of various types were found within the workshop, which itself overlay two early Flavian pits. Evidence of early military occupation was apparent in the form of a marching camp defined by a series of V-shaped ditches. Excavations on the main 'defensive' quadruple linear ditches proved them to exhibit great variation in profile. No dating material was present in the basal fill. However, the presence of pottery in the upper fill indicated that they were filled in deliberately sometime after the mid- 2nd century. During excavation the footings of a Romano-Celtic temple, 4m square and constructed of a single layer of pitched limestone, were uncovered. Painted wall plaster, fragments of *opus signinum* and pieces of tile were also found.
- 3.6 Finally, Iron Age remains, including a ditch and two cremation burials, were excavated further to the south.

4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- Provide a record of archaeological remains whose preservation *in situ* is threatened by the proposed work. If applicable, remains that can be preserved *in situ* will be recorded and prepared for re-burial. Therefore, steps will be taken to ensure construction and future maintenance do not threaten preserved remains
- Provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent and degree of preservation of all excavated archaeological remains
- Define the sequence and character of activity at the site, as reflected by the excavated remains
- Interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional, and national, archaeological context

The excavation also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: Medlycott, M. 2011 (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24; *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Glazebrook 1997; Brown & Glazebrook 2000), *Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2010 - 2015* (Historic England 2015).

Specifically, the following investigative aims were accommodated in the programme of archaeological work:

- Characterisation of the site in the broader landscape
- Characterisation of the activities identified on the site
- Characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Monitoring of Groundworks

The archaeological investigation consisted of the continuous observation of removal of overburden in the development area, followed by the investigation and recording of all archaeological features that were uncovered.

All groundworks were made under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed ditching bucket. When archaeological features were encountered they were investigated and recorded according to the parameters described below.

The program of fieldwork took into consideration potential above- and below-ground constraints and/or hazards, such as trees, utility trenches, overhead cables and areas of modern disturbance.

The development area was excavated to the upper interface of secure archaeological deposits or, where these were not present, to the upper interface of natural deposits. Thereafter, hand-excavation was required to sample any features exposed.

The monitoring was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets and was minimally intrusive to archaeological remains.

5.2 Metal Detecting

Thorough metal detector sweeps of exposed features and spoil heaps were carried out in advance of, and during, the excavation process.

5.3 Hand Excavation

All man-made features were investigated. Apparently natural features (such as tree throws) were sampled sufficiently to establish their origin and to characterise any related human activity. Deposits and layers (including buried horizons of top- and subsoils) were sampled sufficiently to enable a confident interpretation of their character, date and relationships with other features. The monitoring provided a representative sample of the site's archaeology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of archaeological remains therein.

The developer was informed that provision must be made for delays caused by the need for archaeological recording, or if contingency allowance must be made for more detailed recording of exceptional finds.

5.4 Recording

A numbered single context-based recording system, written on suitable forms and indexed appropriately, was used for all elements of the archaeological recording programme.

Measured plans were produced that show all exposed features (including natural features, modern features, etc.) and excavated areas. Individual measured plans and sections in the scales 1:20 and 1:50 were produced for all excavated features and deposits. These were accurately tied in to trench plans/trench location plans, that in turn were accurately related to the Ordnance Survey grid and to suitably mapped local features (boundaries, buildings, roads, etc.). All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum.

A photographic record comprising monochrome and digital photos formed part of the excavation record. A selection of digital photographs was also used in this report.

6 RESULTS

- 6.1 In total 8 obstacles and two information signs were put up within the development area for the new dog agility course. The depths of the various foundation trenches varied slightly, but the entire area contained very similar topsoils, subsoils and natural deposits.
- 6.2 The lowest deposit encountered was the natural ground consisting of yellow-orange, plastic silty clay with occasional roots and stones. Partly cut into the natural at obstacle 8, in the northern part of the development area, was the Romano-British pit [104] with its single fill (103). The pit was 0.23m deep, had rounded sides and a rounded bottom, and had obviously been excavated from a higher level. The cut was hard to see in section, but it could be followed through the subsoil. It has for this reason been marked out on the photo below (Figure 4). The fill of the pit (103) consisted of mixed yellow-dark brown, soft silty sand and contained a mix of Romano-British pottery from the 3rd – 4th century.
- 6.3 The subsoil (102) was up to 0.25m thick and consisted of yellow brown, soft silty sand with occasional pebbles and flint. The uppermost deposit in the area was the, up to 0.30m thick, topsoil (101) of brown-yellow, soft silty sand with occasional pebbles, flint and roots. The topsoil was also sealing the Romano-British pit.



Figure 4. The Romano-British rubbish pit [104] with its fill (103). The pit contained a mix of 3rd- 4th century pottery. North facing photo.

7 FINDS

Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

- 7.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 32 sherds with a total weight of 264g. It was all Romano-British, and all occurred in a single context, (103). Where possible, it was recorded using the conventions of the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). The following fabric types were noted:
- 7.2 **Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware (NVCC)**, mid 2nd – 4th century. 1 sherd, 1g
Nene Valley Grey Ware (NVG), 3rd -4th century. 11 sherds, 138g
Sandy Grey Ware (GRY), 1st – 4th century. 7 sherds, 40g
South Midlands Shell-tempered Ware (LRSH), 3rd – 4th century. 13 sherds, 85g
- 7.3 The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. All the pottery is in fairly good condition, and appears reliably stratified. All the shelly inclusions have been leached out, but this is probably due to the burial conditions. A single rolled jar rim was noted, in LRSH, and a number of the sherds of NVG were from a beaker. The entire assemblage appears to be of 3rd – 4th century date.

8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The archaeological watching brief at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Ham Lane, Peterborough revealed a Romano-British rubbish pit with a large number of pottery sherds from the 3rd - 4th century A. D. The pottery was in a good condition, indicating that it has not been disturbed by modern farming activities.
- 8.2 The date of the pottery to the later part of the Roman period is interesting, as excavations conducted in the early 1970s produced evidence for a 3rd- 4th century farmstead in the immediate vicinity of the site. The results of the 2015 investigation, therefore, fit well into the known history of the area.
- 8.3 The fact that no other features were found during the investigation can be due to the fact that obstacle 8, where the rubbish pit was found, is closer to the known Romano-British settlement than the obstacles further to the south. It can also be an indication that the northern part of the dog agility course is close to the edges of the settlement.
- 8.4 A large Romano-British farmstead is likely to contain fields, barns and other features associated with farming activities. Rubbish pits are therefore a kind of archaeological features that can be expected in association with a Romano-British household. Further archaeological investigations in the area can hopefully tell us more about the long and fascinating history of Orton Waterville and its surroundings.

9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief	The project report
Written Scheme of Investigation	The primary site records
The photographic and drawn records	Finds

The archive is currently maintained by Independent Archaeology Consultants.
The archive will be transferred to:

Peterborough Museum, Priestgate, Peterborough, PE1 1LF, Cambridgeshire

10 REFERENCES

British Geology. (Online resource).

Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. 2000. *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 8.

English Heritage, 1997. *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda*.

Glazebrook, J. 1997. *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource Assessment*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 3.

IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.

Medlycott, M. 2011 (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.

NPPF 2012. (National Planning Policy Framework). Department for Communities and Local Government. London 2012.

Peterborough Historic Environment Record (HER).

Tomber, R, and Dore, J, 1998. *The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection: A Handbook* Museum of London/English Heritage/British Museum.

Wass, G. 2003. *Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery Standards for Archaeological Archive Preparation*.

APPENDICES

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

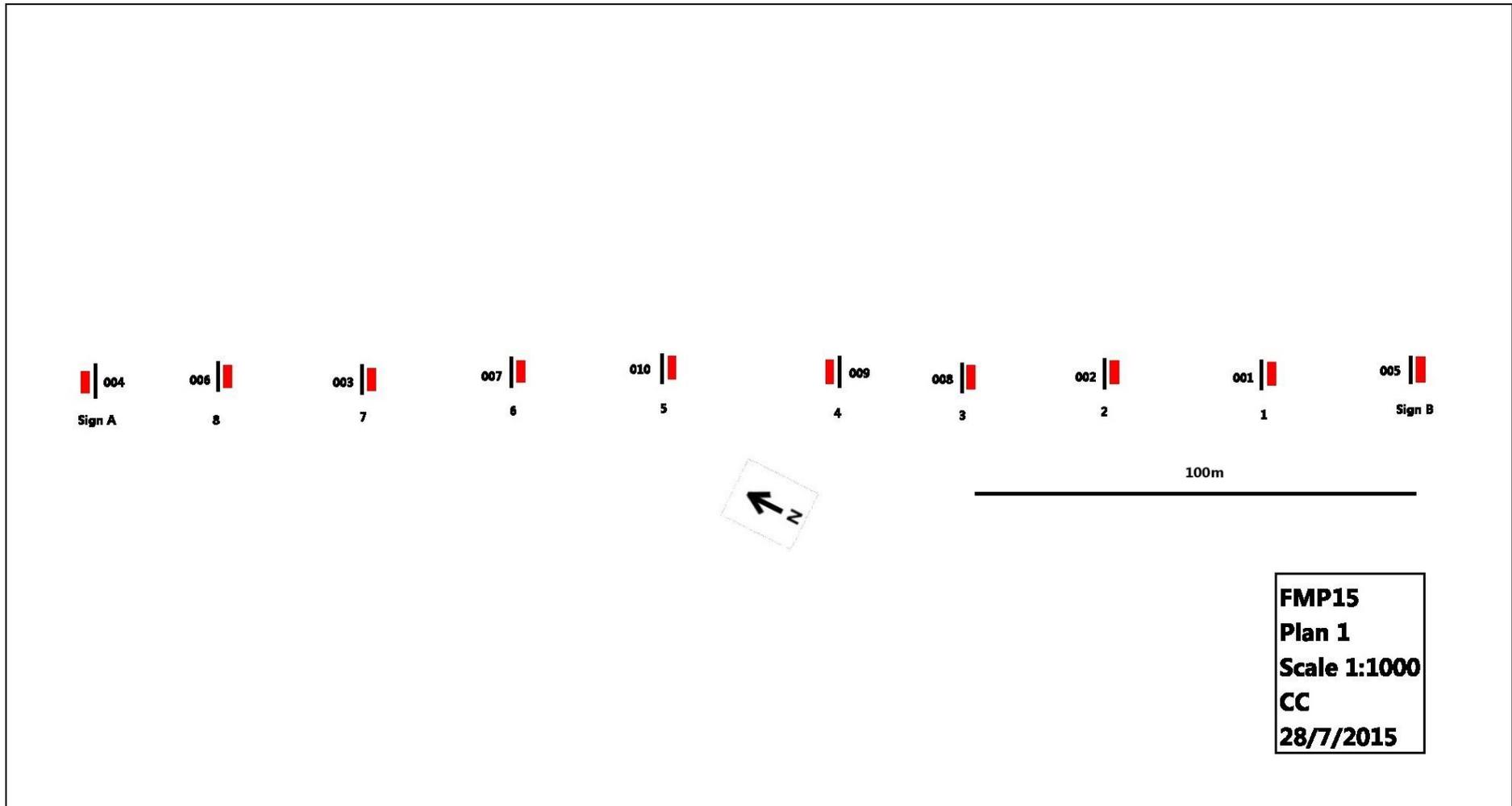
Context Nr	Depth (m)	Description	Younger than	Older than
(101)	0.30	Topsoil of brown-yellow, soft silty sand with occasional pebbles, flint and roots	(102)	-
(102)	0.25	Subsoil of yellow-brown, soft silty sand with occasional pebbles and flint	(103)	(101)
(103)	0.23	Fill of pit [104]. Mixed yellow-dark brown, soft silty sand	[104]	(102)
[104]	0.23	Cut of pit [104]. Rounded sides and a rounded bottom	Natural	(103)
Natural	-	Yellow-orange, plastic silty clay with occasional roots and stones	-	[104]

Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough: Archaeological Watching Brief

FINDS LIST

Find nr	Context	Material	Object	Description	Period
1	(103)	Fired Clay	1 sherd of pottery	Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware	Romano-British
2	(103)	Fired Clay	11 sherds of pottery	Nene Valley Grey Ware	Romano-British
3	(103)	Fired Clay	7 sherds of pottery	Sandy Grey Ware	Romano-British
4	(103)	Fired Clay	13 sherds of pottery	South Midlands Shell-tempered Ware	Romano-British

Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough: Archaeological Watching Brief



Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough: Archaeological Watching Brief

