

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

# KETTERING ROMAN SETTLEMENT

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Funded by English Heritage

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2002

## **CONTENTS**

<b>CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I    DESCRIPTION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.0    TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY .....	7
2.0    HISTORICAL & TOPOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT .....	7
3.0    THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	7
3.1 <i>Communications</i> .....	7
3.2 <i>Defences</i> .....	8
3.3 <i>Buildings</i> .....	8
3.4 <i>Commerce &amp; Industry</i> .....	8
3.5 <i>Religious, Ritual &amp; Funerary</i> .....	9
3.6 <i>Land Use</i> .....	9
<b>II    ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>11</b>
ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE AND SURVIVAL.....	11
1.0 <i>Documentary</i> .....	11
2.0 <i>Archaeological</i> .....	11
<b>III    RESEARCH AGENDA.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>IV    STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1.0    EXISTING DESIGNATIONS.....	17
2.0    MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES.....	17
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>19</b>

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Figure 1 | Location of Kettering                  |
| Figure 2 | Kettering Monuments                    |
| Figure 3 | Kettering Archaeological Interventions |
| Figure 4 | Kettering Survival                     |
| Figure 5 | Kettering Hinterland Survival          |
| Figure 6 | Kettering Strategy                     |

## **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

This is one of a series of reports compiled by Northamptonshire County Council as part of the English Heritage funded Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of Northamptonshire, which is intended to provide an effective information base and research framework to guide the management of the county's urban archaeological resource. The survey encompasses all urban settlements and others that may have had some urban attributes, from the Roman period to the 1930s. The only exception is Northampton, which is the subject of an Intensive Urban Survey in its own right.

Each report comprises three distinct sections: a detailed description of the town in each major period; an assessment of potential and definition of a research agenda; and a strategy for future management. A consistent approach has been taken in the presentation of the description in each report with detail being presented under each standard category even where this has no direct obvious relevance to the urban aspects. This section has however been presented in the form of a gazetteer with standard headings so enabling the reader to identify those sections of particular interest. This report considers the nucleated Roman settlement at Kettering has. The medieval and post-medieval market town, and the industrial period town are considered in a separate report prepared by Glenn Foard & Jenny Ballinger. Other contributions to the EUS on digital mapping, database input and related work have been made by various individuals including Christine Addison, Chris Jones, Paul Thompson, Rob Atkins, Phil Markham and especially Tracey Britnell and Abi Kennedy.

The first objective of the report is to determine layout, character and chronology of the Roman nucleated settlement at Kettering. An attempt has been made to identify the various components of the settlement which are likely to have left identifiable archaeological remains and, as far as practicable, to define the exact location and extent of these buried 'monuments'. They have also all been assessed for likely current survival and their potential to contribute to research objectives. The relationship of the town to its hinterland has also been considered and the potential for study of that interaction has been assessed. In this way the report aims to provide a well founded research framework, establishing the current state of knowledge of Roman Kettering and defining a research agenda which can guide future archaeological investigation within the town. Conservation objectives have also been defined. This report should be viewed as a starting point rather than a definitive study, which it certainly is not. If this report serves its purpose then it will need to be regularly reviewed and substantially revised in future years as archaeological investigations, and hopefully also further documentary research, is undertaken.

Given the limitations of time, which inevitably must guide the conduct of a countywide project, it has been necessary to limit the depth of investigation. No original archaeological earthwork or other such field survey has been conducted, but all available existing archaeological data has been consulted. Mapping from aerial photographic sources in the Northamptonshire SMR, CUCAP and the NMR has been completed. Each town has been visited to examine the topography of the town and an assessment attempted as to the general state of archaeological survival.

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## **SUMMARY**

Kettering is an example of a medium sized undefended small town within the county. Located on a road from Irchester to the Gartree Road, it is probably one of the less significant nucleated settlements nationally and is some 12-16ha in size.

The early date, small size and poor quality of the excavations at Kettering limit the extent to which the town can be characterised. The excavated evidence, augmented by a small number of stray finds, suggest its overall extent to have been between 12 and 16ha (and probably around 15ha). The early date of most of the quarrying and housing development that covers the site means that there is no survey evidence to better elucidate the town's overall morphology.

In the absence of firm evidence to the contrary, it seems that the settlement developed at a strategic point on the regional road network during the course of the later first and second centuries AD around a possible junction between the route noted above and a side road towards Laxton and Great Casterton. The settlement was predominantly a ribbon development along the main south southeast to north northwest route that was possibly associated with a road station (a *mansio* or *mutatio*, now destroyed) towards its northern edge. Such that it is possible to judge, the town's primary significance may lie in its role as one of several nucleated foci (along with Thistleton, Great Casterton, Laxton and Ashton) for the production and redistribution of ironwork within one of the province's major industrial landscapes. It probably also owed its development to its location on the road network within this landscape.

Given the limited amount of modern excavation and absence of survey, it is difficult to say much with certainty about the town's historical development. It appears that occupation was largely focused along the main road frontage over a distance of perhaps 800m. There is little evidence to indicate secondary occupation away from this strip; though it is possible additional buildings were located along an as yet unidentified road running towards a probable cemetery 400m to the west. Any additional development along a possible road towards Laxton to the north east is likely to have already been destroyed by quarrying.

The town continues as a focus of activity well into the late fourth century AD but does not seem to have survived into the Early-Middle Saxon period when the focus for settlement shifted some 2km south west.

# **I DESCRIPTION**

## **1.0 TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY**

The Roman settlement at Kettering lies close to the source of Gutter Beck, a tributary of the River Isle and on its northern side. The extent of the settlement is still not well understood but appears to have broadly followed the course of a through road up the side of the small valley in which the stream lay onto a spur of higher ground at about 100m above OD.

## **2.0 HISTORICAL & TOPOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Prehistoric**

Pre conquest origins for the settlement remain to be demonstrated. Several Iron Age coins have been recorded from unprovenanced locations (3957/0/0 Bull 1912, 223-4) and a Corieltauvian stater was recovered from a pit in the 1971 excavations (3957/0/27) but in a residual Roman context. Earlier reports of Iron Age pottery from the southern extreme of the site by Gutter Beck (3957/0/38) are considered by Dix (1988, 107) to be unreliable.

### **Roman**

Bull (1904) illustrates metalwork of possible military association recovered from the ironstone quarries to the north of the town but as yet there is little evidence to suggest any military origins for the settlement. Dix suggests that occupation began shortly after the conquest (1988, 107) but survey of the pottery and coin evidence records nothing definitively predating the 60s AD. By the later first and early second century AD, however, much of the probable settlement area was in use, a pattern of relatively rapid expansion seen at other towns within the region.

### **Saxon**

The latest recorded coins from the settlement are of late fourth century issues predominantly from the area of the quarries but not exclusively so. No structural evidence from the site can confidently be considered to date to the late fourth-early fifth century, though a number of the recorded pottery forms may extend into this period. It is thus still largely impossible to consider the character of any late Roman activity at Kettering though the absence of Saxon material from the site suggests that any direct continuity is unlikely. The medieval settlement of Kettering lies approximately 1.8km south south west of the Roman focus and further suggests marked discontinuity in the development of urbanism around Kettering.

## **3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 COMMUNICATIONS**

The early housing development and quarrying over most of the settlement area mean that little can be said with confidence about the network of roads and track ways across the town. Enough evidence is available though to indicate that Roman Kettering lay on a significant local road thought to run from Irchester to join the Gartree road to Leicester. Dix suggested that the line of the former Church Headland may mark the course of the Roman road to the south of the settlement (1988, 105) but within the town we are

dependent on the sometimes ambiguous evidence provided by a series of small trial excavations and observations. Together these interventions (3957/0/30, 3957/0/36, 3960/1/1-3) at least provide a reasonable guide to the course of the main road through the core of the settlement. Further north, outside the settlement, the side ditches of an unmetalled track way recorded by excavations at SP 874 813 (SMR 3925) may constitute the continuation of the road. Nothing is known of other side roads within the settlement, as the significance of occasional sightings of metalled surfaces from small interventions cannot easily be interpreted.

Dix (1988, 106) believed that the main road was probably joined by a side road from the north east, identified at nearby Weekly (Jackson & Dix 1988, 78-80) that would have linked Kettering to the road to Great Casterton. If true, the settlement at Kettering then lay at the junction of two significant local routes, a pattern of development seen elsewhere in the county at Titchmarsh and Kings Sutton.

### **3.2 DEFENCES**

There is no evidence that the town was ever enclosed within a defensive circuit.

### **3.3 BUILDINGS**

Clear stone foundations were recorded in several places during the ironstone quarrying to the north (Bull 1911) but their character and critically, precise location, are unfortunately unknown. The extent of occupation within the quarries has been estimated at 15 acres (c.6.5ha) probably, as seen elsewhere, largely focused in a ribbon development c.160-200m wide along the main road. It is also likely that the major stone buildings lay close to the road and one example indicated by walls located at SP 872 805 (3957/0/14) of broadly 2nd-4th century date certainly lay close to the through road on its western side. Finds here and from largely unstratified contexts elsewhere across the settlement indicate that some were clearly of some sophistication with examples of both stone and ceramic roofing tiles, painted wall plaster and mortar flooring. Furthermore, a nineteenth century discovery within the area of subsequent ironstone quarries may suggest a hypocaust (3957/1/1 - recorded as a furnace/kiln) associated with a substantial building in the area of the former Blackmiles and Howslade furlongs (Bull 1904, 382). Although its location and form are uncertain, it is possible that it represented a villa/mansio/mutatio located close to the main road towards the northern edge of the town.

Wooden buildings have rarely been recorded at Kettering though this is unsurprising given the circumstances in which most of the earlier discoveries were made. At Kipling Road, the 1971 excavations located a simple six post structure set well back from the main road and associated with a probable threshing floor (3957/0/27). Isolated post holes recorded in some of the smaller excavations and observations elsewhere within the town (e.g. 3957/0/9 and 3957/0/10) suggest that timber buildings were probably widespread.

### **3.4 COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

Evidence for craft production is perhaps surprisingly, reasonably good at Kettering. Reports of a clay lined oven or furnace and possible kiln furniture from the earlier quarries and excavations by Kettering Grammar School in the 1960s (3957/0/2; 3957/0/14) possibly suggest small-scale pottery manufacture.



In the absence of significant sized modern excavations there is no quantitative guide from artefactual evidence to provide insights into other aspects of the town's possible trading role but the sheer numbers of coin finds and their general chronological bias fits the pattern seen on other small towns and noted by Reece (1991).

### **Ironworking**

The occurrence of quarry pits dug into the Northampton sands at a number of locations across the town (3957/0/27, 3957/0/29) and the recording of tap slag and furnace debris from the Kipling road excavations (3957/0/27) confirm the suspicion that iron extraction and smelting may have been a key craft activity across the southern half of the settlement at least.

Further evidence that the town may have acted as a focus for craft production may come from additional discoveries of a possible Roman iron furnace under the modern town centre (3802/0/1) and the discovery of a mould for casting a mythological relief found close to the suggested line of the main road some 500m south of the main settlement (3957/0/10).

## **3.5 RELIGIOUS, RITUAL & FUNERARY**

### **3.5.1 Temples and Shrines**

Neither the antiquarian records from the quarried areas nor recording during subsequent housing development has noted any significant evidence for a ritual focus within the settlement at Kettering. Given the early and incomplete nature of many of the records, however, such a possibility cannot be excluded.

### **3.5.2 Cemetery**

A group of burials (3957/2/1-5) located approximately 350-400m west of the main road probably indicate the presence of a cemetery covering at least 1.8ha and possibly up to 3ha. Lying immediately below the crest of the ridge, the area contains both cremations and inhumations (the latter seemingly north to south orientated) with one skeleton cited as having been buried with a fourth century coin in its mouth (3957/2/2). It is just possible that further north to south orientated inhumations recorded as having been found at the north end of Bath road (3957/0/21) are also part of this cemetery. This, however, would mean that the cemetery extended some 300m further east than is currently thought. The Bath road burials location c.70-80m back from the main road frontage may suggest they are better interpreted as boundary or back-plot burials.

A separate area of burials was located within the area of the former quarry to the north (3957/3/1). Three or four inhumations, one in a lead coffin, (again orientated north to south and northeast to southwest respectively), they may have been part of a second cemetery towards the northern fringes of the settlement although Dix (1988, 107) suggests they may be further examples of boundary burials similar to those found at Ashton.

## **3.6 LAND USE**

At present the Kipling Road excavations provide our only significant evidence for agricultural activity within the settlement. A metalled area 9.1 long by 3.6m wide has been interpreted as a probable threshing floor, though without the benefit of botanical evidence, and an associated 6 post (and possibly more) structure may have been an

associated barn or shed. Though unconfirmed, if this is evidence for an area of agricultural processing and storage, its location set back some 50-60m from the main road may parallel the perceived pattern at Ashton and Irchester of peripheral areas being devoted to agricultural and burial practice. Other than this, no definitive examples of corn driers or other agricultural features have been recorded though Bull mentions numerous hearths and ovens in the early reports.

The location of much of the settlement on a spur of Northampton sand above Gutter Beck would tend to suggest that Kettering may not have great potential for non-carbonised botanical remains but earlier observations have noted numerous wells (3957/0/3, 3957/0/13, 3957/0/21, 3957/0/27) at least one of which contained waterlogged shoes and wood (3957/0/15). Unfortunately none of this information is recorded in sufficient detail to help better understand agricultural or environmental issues.

The absence of significant modern excavation close to the beck prevents any assessment of the immediate environment of the settlement, as does the early date or rescue context in which other excavations took place in the 1960s and 1970s.

## **II ASSESSMENT**

### **ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE AND SURVIVAL**

**Kettering is a regionally significant example of a class of medium sized undefended small town of a kind seen in Northamptonshire at Duston and Kings Sutton. In the absence of significant evidence to the contrary it seems the settlement was probably primarily a ribbon development along a regionally significant linking road between the Nene and Welland valleys and the Gartree road to Leicester beyond. It may also have lain at the junction of a side road running north east towards Laxton and Great Casterton though this remains to be demonstrated.**

**The town's primary interest lies in its possible position as a one centre for iron production within a nationally important wider iron producing landscape. If the evidence from the quarry pits and slag so far discovered proves significant, Kettering constitutes one of a group of important nucleated settlements associated either with the extraction and smelting of iron (Kettering and Laxton) or its smithing (Ashton, Thistleton and Great Casterton).**

**Unfortunately, Kettering is the least well preserved of all these centres as approximately 6ha of the northern part of the town is thought to have been destroyed by quarrying and the rest lies under nineteenth and early twentieth century housing. Little of this destruction was adequately recorded and possibilities for the investigation of extensive contiguous areas of the settlement are now severely limited. Trial excavation and evaluation since the 1960s has however, demonstrated that significant pockets of archaeology survive across much of the area currently under housing and can provide valuable insights into the southern half of the settlement's basic form and function.**

#### **1.0 DOCUMENTARY**

No contemporaneous epigraphic or literary sources about Roman Kettering are known.

#### **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

The modern residential urban context of the surviving parts of the site inhibits what is, and will be possible to say about the morphology and possible zonation of Roman Kettering. To date, the main sources of evidence have come from small-scale excavation or observation during construction work or trenching for services. This is augmented by stray finds recovered from individual properties across the estate. No aerial photographic, earthwork or surface survey evidence is available (due to the early date of the major modern developments) and there is little or no opportunity for such work in the future other than in a few areas towards the southern and eastern periphery of the settlement. It is likely that small-scale excavation and evaluation will remain the most valuable source of additional archaeological information in the future.

## **Survival**

The extensive ironstone quarrying to the north of the town has clearly destroyed as much as 6ha of archaeological remains. Whilst it is possible that islands of archaeological deposits survive within the quarried area (as seems to have been the case at Kipling Road) it is currently not possible to define where these may be. The remaining area covered by the Roman settlement largely lies under residential development from the earlier part of the twentieth century. Here housing and service trenches will have destroyed much significant information though pockets of archaeological deposits will almost certainly survive in back gardens and under metalled surfaces. The main archaeological threat today stems from continual minor redevelopment of existing housing, infill of remaining open spaces and the construction or repair of services. Given the ephemeral and surface nature of many later Roman deposits it is likely that any significant landscaping will also have had a major impact.

None of the settlement is currently scheduled but two relatively small contiguous areas close to the suggested southern and south eastern edges of the settlement may survive in reasonable condition and for Kettering represent potentially significant deposits away from the main road frontage. There is currently little evidence to suggest that the settlement extends south of Gutter Beck and none that it extends beyond the quarry to the north. To the east quarrying has destroyed most of the settlement. To the west the extent of settlement is still uncertain beyond a strip c. 100m from the main road and it is possible that the cemetery lay some 200m outside the town.

### **2.1 Settlement Morphology and Communications**

With the exception of the main road virtually nothing is known about the layout of roads and track ways at Kettering or their likely survival. Trial excavations at a number of places within the modern residential area during the 1960s and 1970s indicate that metalled surfaces do survive in a number of places but the small area usually available to view makes interpretation difficult.

Given the seemingly relatively narrow extent of intensive occupation away from the main road, secondary roads may never have extended beyond properties on the main frontage. The location of the probable cemetery, however, would suggest that at least one local track way extended some 400-500m west of the main road and may have continued into the surrounding agricultural landscape beyond. Aerial photographic evidence some 500m to the east of the town beyond the quarries does not indicate any further roads although the excavations at Weekly to the north east suggest a side road into the town ran in this direction.

### **2.2 Buildings**

Little is known about the density, form or pattern of buildings at Kettering but the number of rubble spreads recorded at different locations (3957/0/9, 3957/0/14, 3957/0/38) suggests that stone structures were probably common close to the main road frontage. The former quarry clearly contained a least one significant building and the number of wells found across here and elsewhere indicates that Kettering was probably a fairly densely occupied settlement. Kettering, unlike many of the Roman towns covered in the project lies under relatively modern urban development over former agricultural land. In this situation the potential for the study of architecture within the settlement is likely to be limited by the size of surviving pockets of archaeological deposits. Although limited in extent, and unlike many of the rurally located settlements in the county, these deposits may not have suffered as severely from superficial damage by cultivation.

Consequently the potential survival of some later Roman features may be better than on many of the Roman towns in the county. Some support for this comes from the 1966 excavations (3957/0/14) where walling, surface rubble spreads and mortar flooring all survived.

The destruction caused by the quarry and housing, however, make it unlikely we will ever get a clear idea of the overall nature and layout of the towns architectural traditions. This should not stop attempts to assess evidence for individual buildings when the opportunity arises in future, especially if it proves possible to attempt to discern whether strip buildings associated with particular craft or trading practices occupied the main frontages. Furthermore, development opportunities in the area between the main road frontage and the western cemetery need to be used to evaluate whether domestic/craft/agricultural buildings occupied the intervening space and if so, their general orientation in relation to any potential side roads.

### **2.3 Commerce & Industry**

Despite the poor level of recorded evidence at Kettering, a number of structures such as hearths, ovens and possible furnaces have been noted. Although as largely surface built structures these are likely to have been damaged where residential development has required landscaping, the presence in a number of the earlier excavations suggests that significant untruncated archaeological deposits survive. Furthermore, even where development has removed surface stratigraphy the common occurrence of quarry pits and wells still provides some possibility of determining former craft activity. Earlier excavations have recovered much significant information (about iron production in particular) dumped into the rapidly backfilled quarry pits and waterlogged wells, and the depth to which the pits and wells were dug (often in excess of 2.5m below present ground surface) means that they are likely to survive in most instances.

At present the settlement appears to have been a focus for iron smelting and possibly pottery manufacture. The scale of these activities is currently poorly understood as none of the extant studies have attempted to quantify the excavated material. The available artefactual evidence, though extensive, has virtually all been haphazardly reported and as such is still a very limited resource for the study of craft and exchange. Any future excavation should provide quantified groups that can be used for comparison with the other towns and known rural settlements within the immediate region. Although individual groups may be small, evaluations from different parts of the settlement may draw out contrasts in the zonation of activities that are at present barely discernible.

### **2.4 Religious, Ritual & Funerary**

The existing records for Kettering provide little information for the study of Roman burial practice in the town. They do, however, provide reasonable evidence as to the likely location of at least two potential burial areas immediately behind the main road frontage and some 400m further to the west. Although housing will have damaged a number of the burials and prevents a reasonable understanding of the overall layout and development of burial in these parts of the settlement, significant numbers of burials probably survive in the intervening spaces. Wherever possible these need to be recorded in future in order to better understand chronological and spatial trends in burial location (are the two areas cemeteries, how large an area etc) and custom.

At present there is no significant evidence of shrines or temples within the town. Their presence cannot be ruled out but as yet it is difficult to suggest anywhere that such a focus may be located unless evaluation of the Gutter Beck area brings anything to light.

## **2.5 Landscape & Environment**

The absence of paleoenvironmental work from any of the evaluated sites in Kettering limits the potential to understand much of the settlement itself and its immediate hinterland to the north, west and south. There is, however, still potential for some work on the main road frontage in the southern half of the settlement and around Gutter Beck where stratified deposits survive. Earlier reports from the excavation of wells within the settlement suggests that here at least water logged material survives providing good if isolated deposits for analysis. Much of the immediate hinterland of the town has been built over or quarried away and so the scope for an assessment of the town's wider agricultural and environmental context is severely limited.

## **3.0 Hinterland**

For the purposes of assessment of the hinterlands of the Roman towns an arbitrary boundary of 10km radius was established and its potential graded according to professional judgment. A wider understanding of the role of urban foci in the region and their relationship with surrounding agricultural landscapes is better reviewed as a whole and the findings of such an approach to Northamptonshire are summarized in the Roman period section of the general report of the Extensive Urban Survey.

The present urban location of the Roman settlement at Kettering means that its immediate hinterland has been seriously affected by development and mineral extraction. Most of the settlement itself and all of the landscape immediately to the west, south and east lie under housing or industrial development erected largely without archaeological intervention. In the process significant areas of a probable Roman cemetery, the main road frontage through the settlement and most of the evidence for agricultural or craft activity in its immediate environs has been lost or damaged.

Further from the settlement itself, the 10km hinterland of Roman Kettering incorporates most of the Ise Valley and its watershed. Whilst this could comprise a useful unit for study, the landscapes of the area have suffered considerable damage. Iron ore extraction and the growth of the industrial towns of Kettering and Corby has destroyed or damaged much of the northern half of the town's hinterland, particularly along the upper reaches of the valley itself. Some archaeological work has taken place in advance of these developments but largely in the form of rescue excavation without attendant wider survey to place individual sites in context. To the south of Kettering a significant tract of agricultural land does survive to the west of the Ise that could provide important information about the road system and rural settlement on the route to Irchester. Unfortunately further mineral extraction along the length of the eastern side of the valley and its tributaries would limit the extent of any such work.

Given present archaeological knowledge of the area and the extent of its destruction the Roman landscapes around Kettering do not have high archaeological potential for study. With the exception of the block of land to the south of Kettering west of the Ise and a smaller area thought to incorporate the course of a road from Kettering to Laxton to the north east, there are a few contiguous and accessible parts of the landscape left. Although the hinterland contains a number of examples of significant excavations of both Late Iron Age and Roman sites (predominantly villas) there has been little systematic survey ahead

of destruction through mineral extraction. Recent survey work in the Rockingham Forest and around Brigstock (Foster 1988), at the eastern and north eastern extreme of Kettering's hinterland, does provide some opportunity for an assessment of the development of the rural landscape of the clays and ironstones of the area. This work has identified an important multi-period iron working landscape of national importance that could provide useful insights into the development of all the small towns in the area. The distance of these surveys from Kettering, however, limits their value in assessing the economic relationships between the town and its hinterland, especially in the absence of an opportunity to study the town itself.

### **III RESEARCH AGENDA**

Given the evidence above and the current potential of the site the sections below outline a series of key research questions relating to Kettering itself. Certain wider research issues, better dealt with in relation to all the towns in the region are considered in the project overview document.

#### **Origins**

What is the nature and date of the settlement that first develops? Is there any significant Late Iron Age focus in or neighbouring the Roman town? When was the main road and crossing of Gutter Beck first constructed? When were the earliest properties occupied alongside the main road?

#### **Communications**

When is the through road constructed and where does it go beyond the settlement? Is the road from the north east noted at Weekley a side road into the town? If so where is the junction under the housing estate? Is this also a junction with a side road to the western cemetery and beyond or is there a separate road further north along the main road? What is the nature of the crossing over the Gutter Beck?

#### **Urban Topography and Zonation**

Was the main road the primary focus for domestic architecture? Is there evidence for domestic or other activity away from the main road towards the east or the western cemetery? Can the analysis of material evidence from future isolated excavations across the settlement area determine significant zonation in activity? In particular, where was iron smelting, pottery production or other related activities located? Is there any evidence for a significant religious focus within the settlement, especially in the area close to the Beck or around the possible road junctions?

Can the systematic recording of small finds from across the settlement help to determine possible trade or religious zonation?

#### **Landscape and Environment**

Can future excavation or evaluation determine whether surviving archaeological deposits (in addition to the wells) within the core of the settlement have a high potential for environmental analysis? Has the canalisation and covering over of the Gutter Beck destroyed or preserved paleoenvironmentally rich deposits at the southern edge of the settlement? If so what do they tell us about the environment of the area at the time of the construction of the road and subsequently? The destruction of much of the surrounding

landscape prevents much further comparative work in the town's immediate hinterland but some opportunity may exist to the east and may provide insights into the immediate agricultural environment.

### **Craft and Agricultural Practice**

To what extent was iron extraction and smelting a key part of the economy of the town? Was smithing also a significant activity? Was pottery manufacture also significant? Can waterlogged deposits from excavated deep features provide evidence for the production of secondary agricultural products such as leather, wooden artefacts or textiles? Is there evidence primarily for the processing and consumption of agricultural produce or agricultural production from the town itself? Was craft or agricultural production or processing organised significantly differently from excavated rural sites in the immediate region, especially in relation to iron production?

### **Religious, Ritual & Funerary**

What was the extent of the probable cemetery to the west of the main road? What insights can we gain into its size and chronological development? Do the recorded burial traditions follow rites seen elsewhere in the region and especially at Ashton? Are the burials recorded to the immediate west of the main road (3597/0/21) part of the western cemetery, a freestanding cemetery or just a small group of back plot burials? If the latter, are there other such burials located to the rear of the main road frontage?

Is there a key focus for religious practice in the form of a temple or shrine within the town? Do any of the wells or larger pits appear to have been ritual foci in their own right? What is the nature of the rites associated with them?

### **The Later Roman Town**

Can we identify surviving late fourth-early fifth century activity from any untruncated deposits within the area of the modern housing estate? If so what is the nature of this activity and can it be related to non-agricultural settlement? Clearly an active focus for settlement and burial well into the fourth century, when do individual properties appear to have been abandoned? Is there any evidence for post-Roman activity? If so how can this be related to the origins and development of the medieval town of Kettering to the south south west?

## **IV STRATEGY**

The assessment of the management and conservation priorities within the Extensive Urban Survey have been based around an assessment of levels of importance previously applied elsewhere in the county for management purposes. The grading falls into five categories:

**Scheduled:** nationally important remains that have statutory protection.

**Unscheduled national importance:** in some cases statutory protection is suggested while in others recording action may prove to be the appropriate response to threats.



**County importance:** Where significant archaeology is known or where it is likely but confirmation is required. Normally recording rather than preservation would be the appropriate mitigation strategy.

**Local importance:** where archaeology may survive but where, on present evidence investigation does not appear appropriate.

**Destroyed:** where the archaeology has been wholly destroyed.

**White Land:** Archaeology not assessed for this report.

## **1.0 EXISTING DESIGNATIONS**

### **1.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

None of the area of Kettering Roman Town is scheduled

### **1.2 Listed Buildings**

No buildings associated with the Roman settlement survive as extant features. Additionally, no later buildings within the settlement area are designated as Listed Structures

### **1.3 Conservation Area**

The area of Kettering Roman Town, and the surrounding area, are not designated as a Conservation Area

### **1.4 Registered Parks**

No Registered Parks are located in the area of Kettering Roman Town

## **2.0 MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES**

Due to the extent of modern destruction, the surviving area of the settlement is primarily of county or regional importance. None of the current area is scheduled and the only potential areas of interest at the southern and south eastern fringes of the settlement require evaluation in order to determine their potential significance. The southern area lies close to Gutter Beck and its probable road crossing and may include a small area of settlement immediately to the south. Its location may also preserve waterlogged deposits of high archaeological and paleoenvironmental value. The area to the south east may provide the only relatively extensive and contiguous deposits from the rear of the main frontages and incorporate significant agricultural, craft production or burial evidence.

Intervention should be considered anywhere within the area delimited as of county significance under the housing development unless there is good evidence for extensive truncation through landscaping.

### **2.1 Evaluation and Recording Priorities**

At Kettering the immediate concerns for the future are:

- The need to ensure the systematic recording of future chance finds of metalwork in order to characterise chronological, functional and religious evidence from the site.
- The need to evaluate through surface prospection the two areas of potential archaeological survival towards the southern and southeastern fringes of the settlement in order to characterise the nature and extent of Roman settlement in these directions.
- The need to better understand the potential and state of preservation of archaeological deposits within the present housing estate and close to Gutter Beck.
- The need to consider archaeological excavation in advance of any significant open area of development within the housing estate not previously built upon.
- The need to evaluate the potential for waterlogging of deeper archaeological deposits within wells, pits and alongside Gutter Beck.

## **2.2 Conservation Priorities**

Most of the core area of the town is under continuing threat from predominantly small-scale architectural development and service trenching and as such requires monitoring and intervention through excavation or watching brief where appropriate. Particular consideration should be given to evaluation of any area of development that provides the potential for open area excavation close to the suspected areas of occupation discussed above.

The settlement has no visual value and given the degree to which significant archaeological structures are likely to have been damaged by building and the residential context for much future development are not thought to be of significant amenity value.

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