

**EXETER ARMS,  
3 CHURCH LANE,  
HELPSTON,  
PETERBOROUGH**

**NGR REF: TF 12191 05578**



***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION***

**APRIL 2019**

**PREPARED BY CHRISTER CARLSSON**

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### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants between 1 and 3 April 2019. The proposed development entailed the conversion of a former public-house to a modern dwelling, the conversion and extension of a barn to dwellings and the erection of three detached dwellings with associated garaging, manoeuvring and amenity space. The two evaluation trenches contained Roman remains in the form of a ditch and a building. The pottery could date the two features to around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The site was located at Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TF 12191 05578) (Figure 1-2). The proposed development entailed the conversion of the former public-house to a modern dwelling, the conversion and extension of a barn to dwellings and the erection of three detached dwellings with associated garaging, manoeuvring and amenity space.
- 1.2 The project was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* issued by the Chartered 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 (18/02197/FUL) for a new development at the former pub Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough. The proposed development entailed the conversion of the former public-house to a modern dwelling, the conversion and extension of a barn into dwellings and the erection of three detached dwellings with associated garaging, manoeuvring and amenity space.
- 2.2 The site comprised an irregularly shaped area of approximately 0.282 hectares at an average height of 13m AOD. The proposed development site was located close to the village centre and on the north side of Church Lane. It was sitting within the boundaries of Helpston Conservation Area and included the Exeter Arms, a late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed public house. The geology

## Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston: Archaeological Evaluation

of the site comprised alluvium of clay, silt, sand and gravel over Blisworth Limestone Formations (British Geological Survey).

- 2.3 The site was situated within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by the Peterborough City Council HER. Therefore, an archaeological evaluation was required prior to any construction within the site. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by Peterborough City Council.

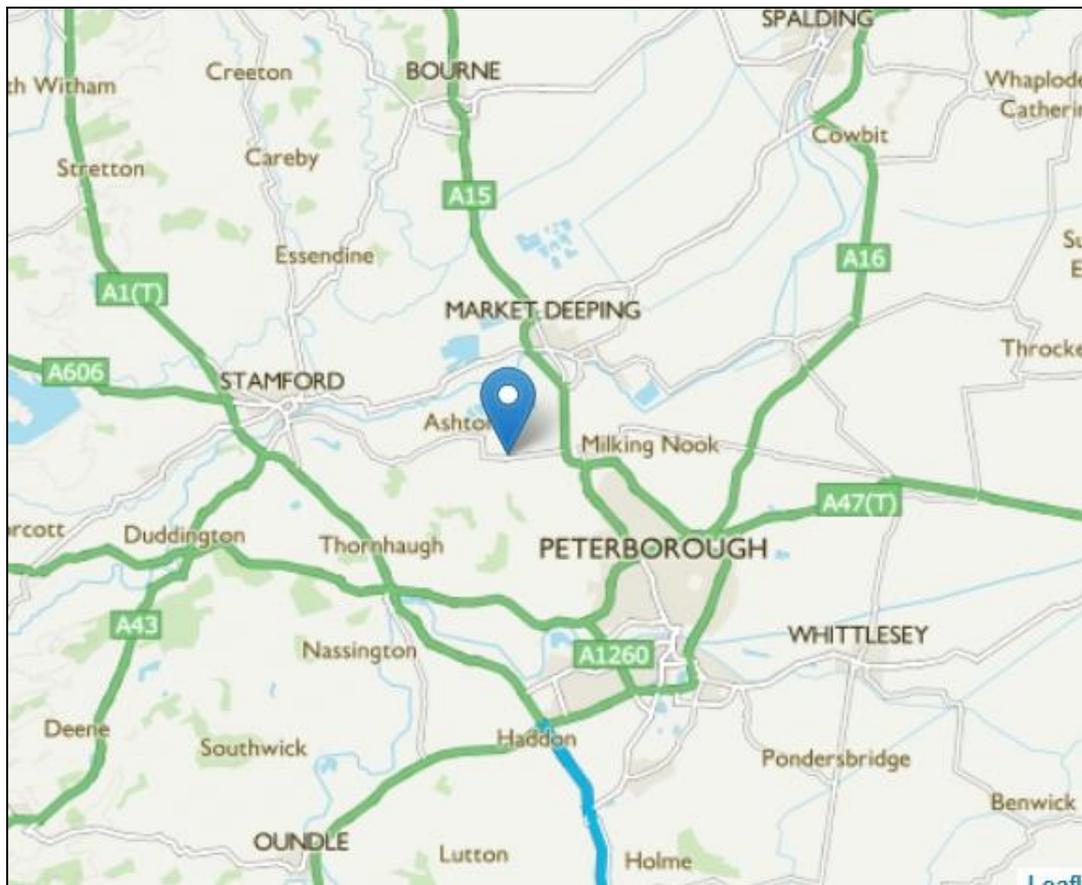


Figure 1. Site Location in England.

# Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston: Archaeological Evaluation

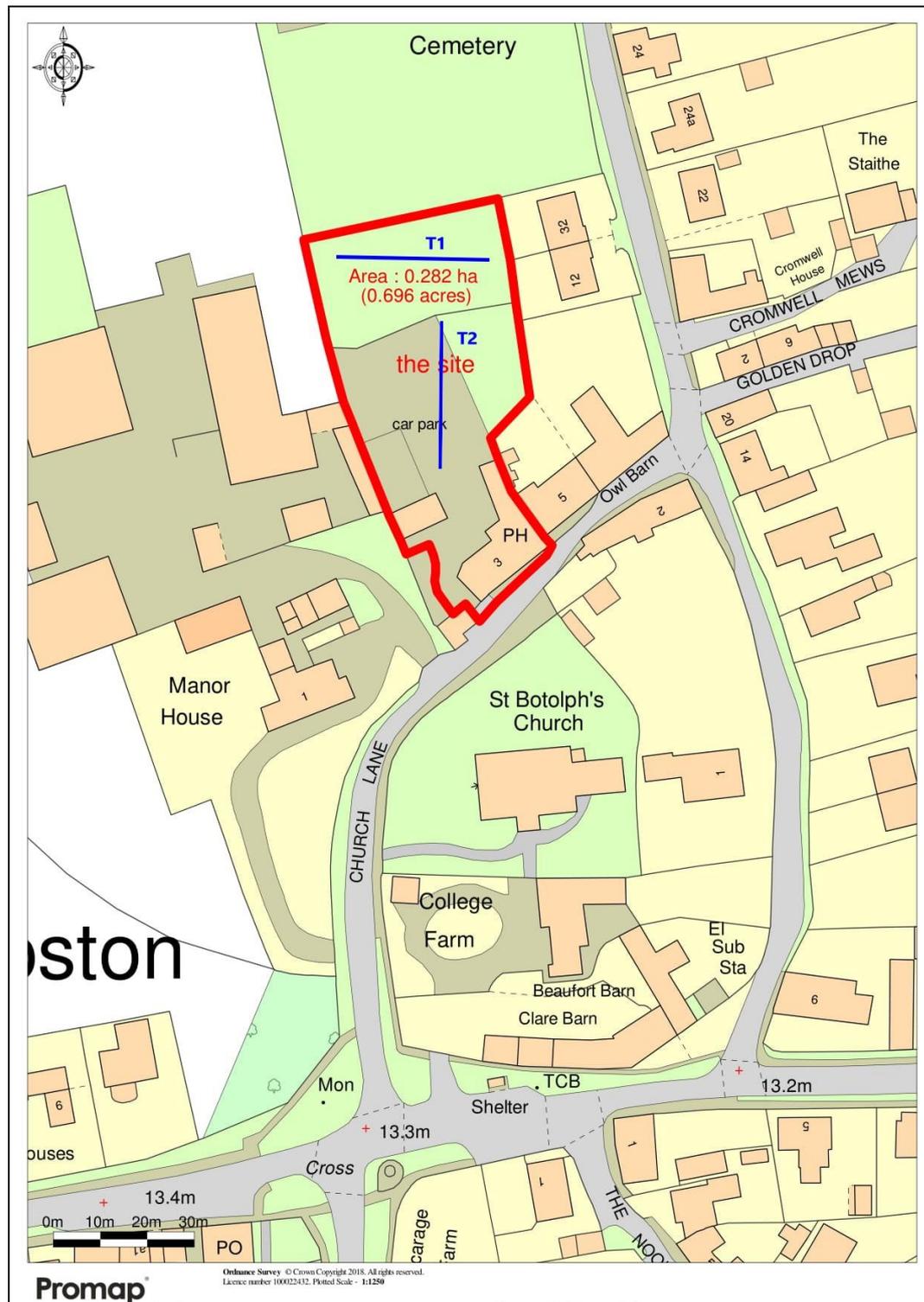


Figure 2. Site Location and Trench Locations in Helpston.

### 3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The proposed development site was located within the boundaries of Helpston Conservation Area, and included the Exeter Arms, a late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed public house (List Entry Number: 1365652) which sits within its listed curtilage. Additional listed buildings were located in the vicinity of the site, and contributed to the historic character of the area. To the north was a 19<sup>th</sup> century cemetery.
- 3.2 The area, for this reason, had a high archaeological potential as indicated by the distribution of known finds from the site and the immediately surrounding area in Peterborough Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 3.3 In April 2016 the Torpel History and Archaeology Group (HAG) opened up a series of test pits at locations within the historic core of Helpston village, including John Clare Primary School (front garden), the Golden Drop just off Maxey Road, the former Rose and Crown beer-house, and behind the Exeter Arms public house. A collection of sherds was recovered, most of which consisted of fragments of cooking pots (bowls/dishes), as well as storage jars with a dominance of grey ware from Castor- while there was just one sherd of Samian ware. These finds were dated to the Roman period, from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, although some may have been earlier. This is a typical collection from a Roman farmstead, comparable to findings from similar sites in the Nene Valley. One of the pits excavated within the grounds of the Exeter Arms also included mid-Saxon pottery dating from AD 600-750. A portion of a possible Roman wall was also recorded at this location.
- 3.4 To the north, an archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at 29 Maxey Road in 2013 revealed evidence for Romano-British activity within the south-eastern part of the site. A linear feature was interpreted as a shallow ditch or, possibly, part of a track and ditch, and the re-cut as either a boundary or enclosure ditch. Although there was no direct evidence relating to structures or occupation in the immediate area, small quantities of pottery, including a sherd of mortarium dated to between the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century, a fragment of Roman tile, possible stone roof tile, and animal bone attest to domestic occupation in the general vicinity of the site. Evidence for ridge and furrow was also uncovered indicating that during the medieval and post medieval periods the site lay within the open fields of the parish.
- 3.5 The proposed development was also located adjacent to the site of the listed medieval church of St Botolph, which consists of early work of the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century, with some alterations and reconstructed parts dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Fragments of an Anglo-Saxon grave-cover used as wall stones during the rebuilding of the church tower may indicate an earlier origin.
- 3.6 To the south of the church graveyard, an archaeological evaluation carried out in 2015 on land to the rear of The Nook exposed a number of archaeological settlement features likely to date from the Saxo-Norman period to the 14<sup>th</sup>

century. Some features had shallow and truncated profiles with some pottery showing evidence of slight abrasion, undoubtedly the result of later medieval/post-medieval ploughing activity.

- 3.7 To the west of the proposed development site was also the listed complex of the 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century Manor House.

## 4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- Gain information about the heritage assets within the proposed development areas;
- Provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent, integrity and degree of preservation of the identified heritage assets;
- Inform a strategy for the recording, preservation and/or management of the identified assets;
- mitigate potential threats;
- Inform proposals for further archaeological investigations (namely, targeted area excavations) within the ongoing programme of research;
- 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.
- If applicable, provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals.
- If applicable, provide an impact assessment.

- 4.2 The evaluation 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), *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda* (1997); *Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2005 - 2010* (English Heritage 2005).

4.3 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 Trial Trenching

It was suggested that two 35m long and 2m wide machine cut trenches would be excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The total length of trenching would therefore be 70m, totalling 140m<sup>2</sup>, or ca. 5% of the 0.282ha large development area.

The location of the trenches targeted areas of proposed ground disturbance and provided representative sample coverage. The location of the trenches were slightly flexible and 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 trenches were excavated to the upper interface of secure archaeological deposits or, where these were not present, to the upper interface of natural deposits. Thereafter, cleaning and hand-excavation were required to sample any features exposed. The field evaluation 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. The metal detector was not set to discriminate against iron.

### 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. Hand excavation and feature sampling was sufficient to establish the date and character, and to allow appropriate levels of recording.

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. Discreet exposed features were subject to a minimum of 50% excavation. At least 15% (or a percentage sufficient to achieve information on the character, function and dating) of linear features were hand excavated. All slots through linear features were at least 1m wide. Particular attention

was given to terminals and intersections, to ascertain stratigraphic and physical relationships.

Structural remains (stake holes, post holes and gullies, as well as masonry foundations or low masonry walls and associated features like hearths) were hand cleaned and documented in plan/phase, as appropriate to the requirements of the evaluation. The evaluation provided a representative sample of the site's archaeology at no significant cost to the value or integrity of archaeological remains therein. Judgement regarding the removal of structural remains, or other special remains or deposits, was led by this consideration, and was always made in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor for Peterborough City Council.

### **5.4 Palaeoenvironmental Sampling**

The site was located in an area of high archaeological potential and had, as such, good conditions for the preservation of faunal/plant remains and/or waterlogged timber in deeper deposits. However, no features uncovered within the site were considered suitable for environmental sampling.

### **5.5 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 to 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 also 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 (a maximum of two photographs per A4 sheet).

## **6 RESULTS**

### **Trench 1**

- 6.1 Trench 1 was east-west orientated, 35m long and 2m wide. The lowest deposit encountered consisted of the Natural of yellow-white Cornbrash and gravel (Figure 3).
- 6.2 Cut into the Natural deposits was the foundations of a north-south orientated Roman house [103], with its partly preserved western wall (104) and its floor

layer (105) (Figure 4). The much ruined western wall of the structure was visible in the eastern part of Trench 1, while the rest of the building stretched into the area east of the trench. The wall material consisted of rough lime stones in yellow-white mortar. Demolition material from the building was also visible in the subsoil (102). The subsoil also contained a single piece of Iron Age pottery, which is indicating human activity in the area before the arrival of the Romans.

- 6.3 In the floor layer (105) were a number of Roman pottery sherds visible. These consisted of one sherd of South Gaulish Samina Ware, one sherd of Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware and one sherd of Nene Valley Grey Ware. Together they date the Roman building to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A. D.
- 6.4 The floorlayer (105) consisted of dark grey, soft silty clay with frequent yellow-white mortar inclusions. It is possible that the building had a long gone floor consisting of lime stone slabs. The building may have been robbed of most of its original stone material at the end of the Roman period.
- 6.5 The subsoil (102) in Trench 1 was up to 0.18m thick and consisted of brown-red, soft sandy silt with occasional inclusions of bricks and mortar. Covering all features and deposits in Trench 1 was the up to 0.32m thick topsoil (101) of light brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional pieces of bricks and mortar.

### **Trench 2**

- 6.6 Trench 2 was north-south orientated, 35m long and 2m wide. The lowest deposit encountered consisted of the Natural of yellow-white Cornbrash and gravel (Figure 5).
- 6.7 Cut into the Natural deposits was the east-west orientated Roman ditch [204]. The ditch had sloping sides and a rounded base and was 0.53m deep and 2m wide. Its single fill (203) consisted of light brown, plastic silty clay with frequent stones and occasional Roman pottery.
- 6.8 In total five sherds of Nene Valley Grey Ware were collected from the ditch fill, but all sherds turned out to be from the same vessel. The pottery can date the ditch to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A. D.
- 6.9 The subsoil (202) in Trench 2 was up to 0.20m thick and consisted of brown-red, soft sandy silt with occasional inclusions of bricks and mortar. Covering all features and deposits in Trench 2 was the up to 0.32m thick topsoil (201) of light brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional pieces of bricks and mortar.
- 6.10 Covering the topsoil was finally a modern 0.15m thick layer of solid, black tarmac and a modern 0.25m thick bearing layer of yellow, compacted gravel in the pub's former carpark.



*Figure 3. Trench 1 from east.*



*Figure 4. The Roman house from east.*



Figure 5. Trench 2 from south.

## 7 FINDS (The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn)

7.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 10 sherds with a total weight of 341g. It was all Roman, other than a residual sherd of Iron Age material. It was recorded using the conventions of the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). The following fabric types were noted:

**LGFSA: South Gaulish Samian Ware**, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century. 1 sherd, 3g.

**LRSH: South Midlands Shell-tempered Ware**, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 12g.

**NVCC: Nene Valley Colour-Coated Ware**, mid 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 48g.

**NVG: Nene Valley Grey Ware**, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century. 6 sherds, 275g.

7.2 In addition, a single small (weight= 4g) and abraded sherd of Iron Age pottery in a soft, organic-tempered fabric was also noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the region.

7.3 All the sherds from context (203) are from the same vessel, a jar. The rest of the assemblage consists of plain bodysherds, other than the sherds of NVCC which is from the rim of a bowl.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

Context	IA		LRSH		NVCC		NVG		LGFSa		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
(102)	1	4	1	12							U/S
(105)					1	48	1	38	1	3	3rdC
(203)							5	237			3rdC
Total	1	4	1	12	1	48	6	275	1	3	

### Bibliography

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

## 8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation at Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough indicated that Roman remains are present within the proposed development area. The western wall of a Roman building was found in Trench 1 in the northern parts of the site, while a Roman ditch was uncovered in Trench 2 further to the south.
- 8.2 The Roman house could, through pottery sherds in the floor layer, be dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A. D. and the Roman ditch contained pottery from the same period. The variety of the Roman pottery indicates that a fairly rich Roman household was once present in the area behind the former public house Exeter Arms in Helpston.
- 8.3 The Roman house is likely to be the same structure that was partly uncovered in April 2016 by the Torpel History and Archaeology Group (HAG), when they opened up a series of test pits at various locations within the historic core of Helpston village. The pits excavated within the grounds of the Exeter Arms included Roman and mid-Saxon pottery, as well as a portion of a possible Roman wall.
- 8.4 Based on the location of the wall found in 2016 it is likely that the evaluation which was carried out in April 2019 uncovered parts of the very same Roman structure. If this is indeed the case this building is likely to have been at least 10m long in a north-south direction.
- 8.5 The ditch in Trench 2 might have filled the function of a former boundary ditch, which was separating the Roman plot from the village street in the south. It is however unclear exactly where the Roman roads through Helpston were located.

- 8.6 The archaeological evaluation in April 2019 indicated, therefore, that the proposed development area contains Roman remains of high archaeological significance, and that parts of these structures may be threatened by the on-going development.

## **9 ARCHIVE**

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The photographic and drawn records

The archive is currently maintained by Independent Archaeology Consultants.

The project report

The primary site records

Finds

The archive will be transferred to: Peterborough Museum

## **10 REFERENCES**

British Geological Survey. (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.

CIfA 2015. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*.

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)*.

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

## APPENDICES

### ***OASIS ID: independ1-349511***

#### **Project details**

Project name	Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation of the garden behind the former public house. A Roman ditch and remains of a Roman building were found behind the existing building.
Project dates	Start: 01-04-2019 End: 03-04-2019
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	EAHP19 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	18/02197/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	SN NT Roman
Monument type	SN NT Roman
Significant Finds	SN CL Roman
Significant Finds	SN CL Roman
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

#### **Project location**

## Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston: Archaeological Evaluation

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Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH HELPSTON Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough
Postcode	PE6 7DT
Study area	0.28 Hectares
Site coordinates	TF 12191 05578 52.635977387919 -0.341949978292 52 38 09 N 000 20 31 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 12m Max: 14m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Independent Archaeology Consultants
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Independent Archaeology Consultants
Project director/manager	Christer Carlsson
Project supervisor	Christer Carlsson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector"
Paper Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

### Project bibliography 1

## Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston: Archaeological Evaluation

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Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, Peterborough
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Carlsson, C
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Independent Archaeology Consultants
Place of issue or publication	Peterborough
Entered by	Christer Karlsson (contact@independentarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	22 April 2019

**CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Younger than</b>	<b>Older than</b>
		<b>Trench 1 (35m x 2m)</b>		
(101)	0.32	Topsoil of light brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional pieces of bricks and mortar	(102)	-
(102)	0.18	Subsoil of brown-red, soft sandy silt with occasional bricks, mortar and Iron Age pottery	(104)	(101)
[103]	0.42	Cut for the foundation wall of the Roman house	Natural	(104)
(104)	0.42	The western wall in the Roman house	[103]	(102)
(105)	0.07	The floor layer in the Roman house. Dark grey, soft silty clay with frequent yellow-white mortar inclusions and occasional Roman pottery	(104)	(102)
Natural	-	Yellow-white Cornbrash and gravel	-	[103]
		<b>Trench 2 (35m x 2m)</b>		
(201)	0.32	Topsoil of light brown, soft silty clay with frequent roots and occasional pieces of bricks and mortar	(202)	-
(202)	0.20	Subsoil of brown-red, soft sandy silt with occasional bricks and mortar	(203)	(201)
(203)	0.53	Fill of Roman ditch [204]. Light brown, plastic silty clay with frequent stones and occasional Roman pottery	[204]	(202)
[204]	0.53	Cut of Roman ditch [204]. Sloping sides and rounded base.	Natural	(203)
Natural	-	Yellow-white Cornbrash and gravel	-	[204]

