

Witham Archaeology

A Report to Davies White
on behalf of Nene Park Trust

April 2014



NEW PLAY AREA AT FERRY MEADOWS COUNTRY PARK, PETERBOROUGH

Archaeological Watching Brief

R Trimble

NEW PLAY AREA AT FERRY MEADOWS COUNTRY PARK, PETERBOROUGH

Site Code: FMCP14

Planning Application No.: 13/01448/FUL

NGR: TL 14844 97531

Archaeological Watching Brief

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NEW PLAY AREA AT FERRY MEADOWS COUNTRY PARK, PETERBOROUGH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundwork relating to the construction of a new play area at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough. The work was commissioned by Davies White Ltd, Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of Nene Park Trust, to meet the requirements of Peterborough City Council as set out in a brief by the City Archaeologist. Fieldwork was carried out during the period 5th to 20th February 2014.

The site lies within the boundaries of a Scheduled Monument PE182, defined by a complex of cropmarks indicating settlement from prehistory into the Roman period. Excavations carried out in the 1970s, in advance of mineral extraction, revealed evidence of Iron Age and Roman-British activity, including a probable marching camp, the foundations of a temple, settlement remains, a cemetery and iron-working remains. More recently, a watching brief was carried out immediately west of the play area, during construction of a new siding for the miniature railway. The monitoring produced a largely negative result.

The majority of excavations for the current project were contained within recently disturbed ground or comparatively late deposits and did not reveal any evidence of archaeologically significant remains.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundwork relating to the construction of a new play area at Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough. The work was commissioned by Davies White Ltd on behalf of Nene Park Trust, Peterborough, to meet the requirements of Peterborough City Council as set out in a brief issued by the City Archaeologist.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Fig. 1)

The site is located within Ferry Meadows Country Park, c. 5km west of Peterborough city centre, at NGR TL 14844 97531. It lies on an existing play area situated to the north of the café and visitor centre, east of the miniature railway and west of Overton Lake.

Situated within a meander of the River Nene, the area is generally level, at an elevation of around 6.80m OD. The site lies upon solid geology of Grantham Formation sandstone, siltstone and mudstone, overlain by superficial deposits of river terrace sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 1:50 000 Solid and Drift).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the boundaries of Scheduled Monument PE182. Cropmarks visible on aerial photographs indicate a complex settlement pattern, with remains dating from prehistory to the Roman period. A Romano-British farmstead (HER Ref. 01433f) dated as early 3rd to mid 4th century and an associated cemetery were investigated during archaeological excavations on land to the west of the site, ahead of mineral extraction in the early 1970s.

Further excavations northeast of the current site, revealed a probable early Roman marching camp, the stone foundations of a Romano-Celtic temple, and evidence of 3rd to 4th century settlement. The settlement remains included corn driers, and an aisled workshop with metal working furnaces, various drainage channels and a large, stone basin (HER Ref. 09820).

The complex of remains is bounded to the south by a series of linear features (visible as cropmarks) running east-west. The features (HER Ref. 01433) have been interpreted as ditches, possibly with a defensive function.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project, as set out in a Witham Archaeology specification of 10th January 2014, were to:

- *allow the preservation by record of any surviving archaeological deposits and artefacts exposed by the development groundwork within the constraints imposed by the contractor's working methods, programme and development design.*
- *obtain information on the date, character, extent and degree of preservation of any archaeological remains, and to determine the sequence of deposition.*
- *interpret any remains in terms of their local, regional and national importance.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum together with a client report.*
- *provide information for accession to the City's Historic Environment Record.*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The current project entailed removal of the bark surface from the existing play area and the removal of existing play equipment, as well as localised excavations for new fence-posts and replacement play equipment. The works included the excavation of a service trench extending to the north side of the nearby café.

Site visits were timed to coincide with the main phases of groundwork, and a representative selection of sections was recorded, with the intention of achieving a model of deposits across the site.

The record comprises written context descriptions on *pro forma* context sheets, section drawings at scale 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate, and photographs in 35mm black and white print and colour digital.

6.0 RESULTS (Figs. 2 and 3)

The primary deposit within the limits of the play area (see Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5; *Plates 3, 4, 5, 6*) was moderately compact mid reddish brown sand and gravel (007) occurring at depths of between 0.55m and 0.65m below existing ground level. The deposit may be interpreted as undisturbed river terrace sand and gravel.

Natural sand and gravel (007) was sealed by a layer of compact, mid to dark greyish brown sandy clay (006), averaging 0.20m thick (see Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5; *Plates 3, 4, 5 and 6*). The deposit, encountered at depths of between 0.40m and 0.45m below existing ground level, may be interpreted as topsoil remaining from the period immediately prior to gravel extraction in the 1970s.

Probable topsoil (006) was overlain by loose, mid brown sand and gravel up to 0.15m thick (005). The deposit (see Sections 2, 3 and 5; *Plates 3, 4 and 6*), which lay at depths of between 0.30m to 0.40m below existing ground level, probably represented the further extent of apparently redeposited sand and gravel identified during previous work on the new railway siding (Trimble 2011). The deposits were probably formed during operations relating to sand and gravel extraction.

West of the existing playground, beyond the area reduced for the existing bark surfacing, (005) was sealed by soft yellowish brown clay (008), forming ground level (see Section 5, *Plate 6*).

East of the playground, in Section 1 (*Plate 2*), compact, light brown sandy clay (004) was revealed at around 0.3m below existing ground level. The deposit, which may have been 'natural', was sealed by sand and gravel 30mm thick (003), possibly corresponding to (005) elsewhere on the site. Mid greyish brown sandy silt 80mm thick, (002) and topsoil, 0.15m thick occupied the upper levels of Section 1.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The majority of excavations for the new play area were contained within deposits derived from recent activity associated with sand and gravel extraction and construction of the existing play area. While apparently natural sand and gravel was revealed in excavations for installation of the play equipment, the excavations were localised and did not reveal any evidence of significant archaeological finds or deposits.

Further to observations made during installation of the adjacent railway siding (Trimble 2011), the current project confirmed the presence of redeposited sand and gravel (005) extending throughout the area. The material almost certainly derived from processes associated with recent sand and gravel extraction.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Ms Andrée Davies of Davies White Ltd and Site Manager Shaun Bruno, for assistance in ensuring that the project was brought to a successful conclusion. Thanks are also due to Rebecca Casa-Hatton, Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service, for providing relevant advice and information.

9.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, N and Glazebrook, J (eds) 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the for the Eastern Counties: 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers **8**

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Medlycott, M 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers **24**

Trimble, R 2011 *New Covered Siding, Ferry Meadows Country Park Railway, Peterborough*. *Archaeological Watching Brief*. Witham Archaeology Report **22**

10.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 Project Details

SITE CODE: FMCP14

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: -

FIELD OFFICER: R Trimble

NGR: NGR: TL 14844 97531

CIVIL PARISH: Orton Waterville

HER No.: -

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 5th to 20th February 2014

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Watching Brief

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Davies White Ltd, Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of Nene Park Trust

10.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, Unit 6, Sleaford Station Business Centre, Station Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7RG

FINAL LOCATION: Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

ACCESSION DATE: June 2014

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	8
Section Drawings at Scale 1:20	5
Black and Photographs	1 film
Colour Digital Photographs	33
Set of Site Notes	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.

COLOUR PLATES



Plate 1: General view showing work in progress, looking southeast



Plate 2: Section 1, looking southwest



Plate 3: Section 2, looking west, 1m scale



Plate 4: Section 3, looking north, 0.5m scale



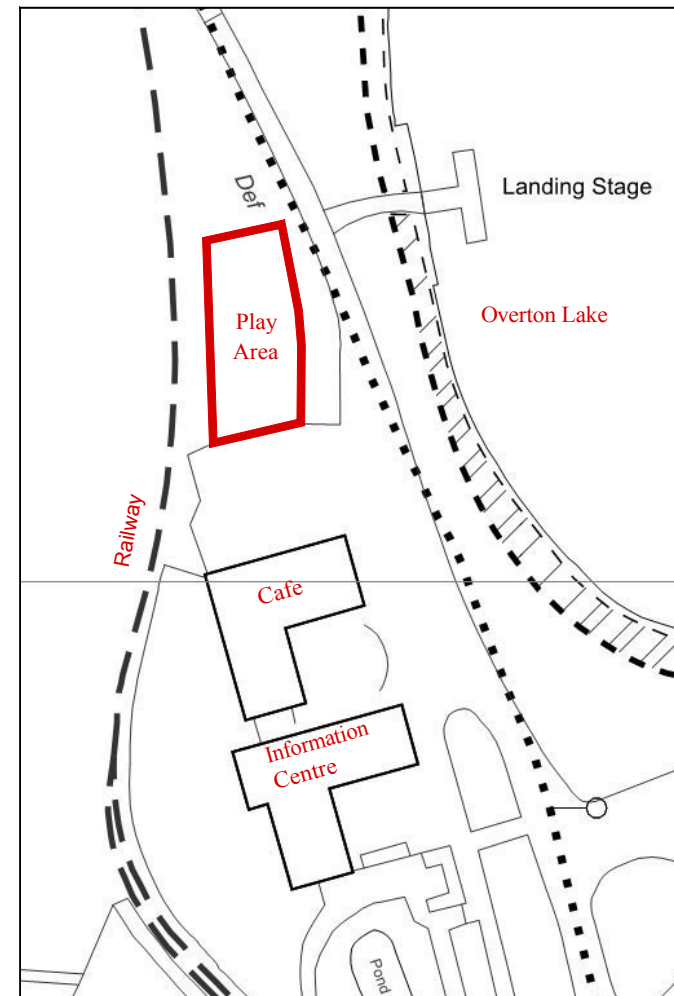
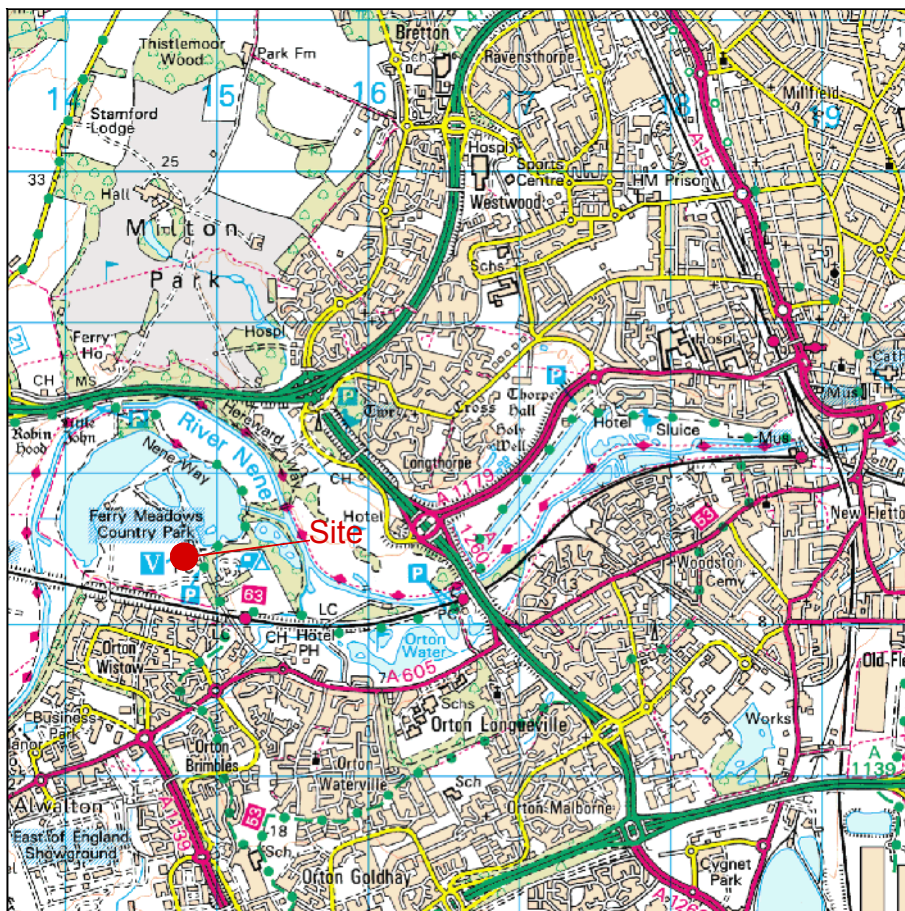
Plate 5: Section 4, looking east-northeast, 0.5m scale



Plate 6: Section 5, looking west, 0.5m scale

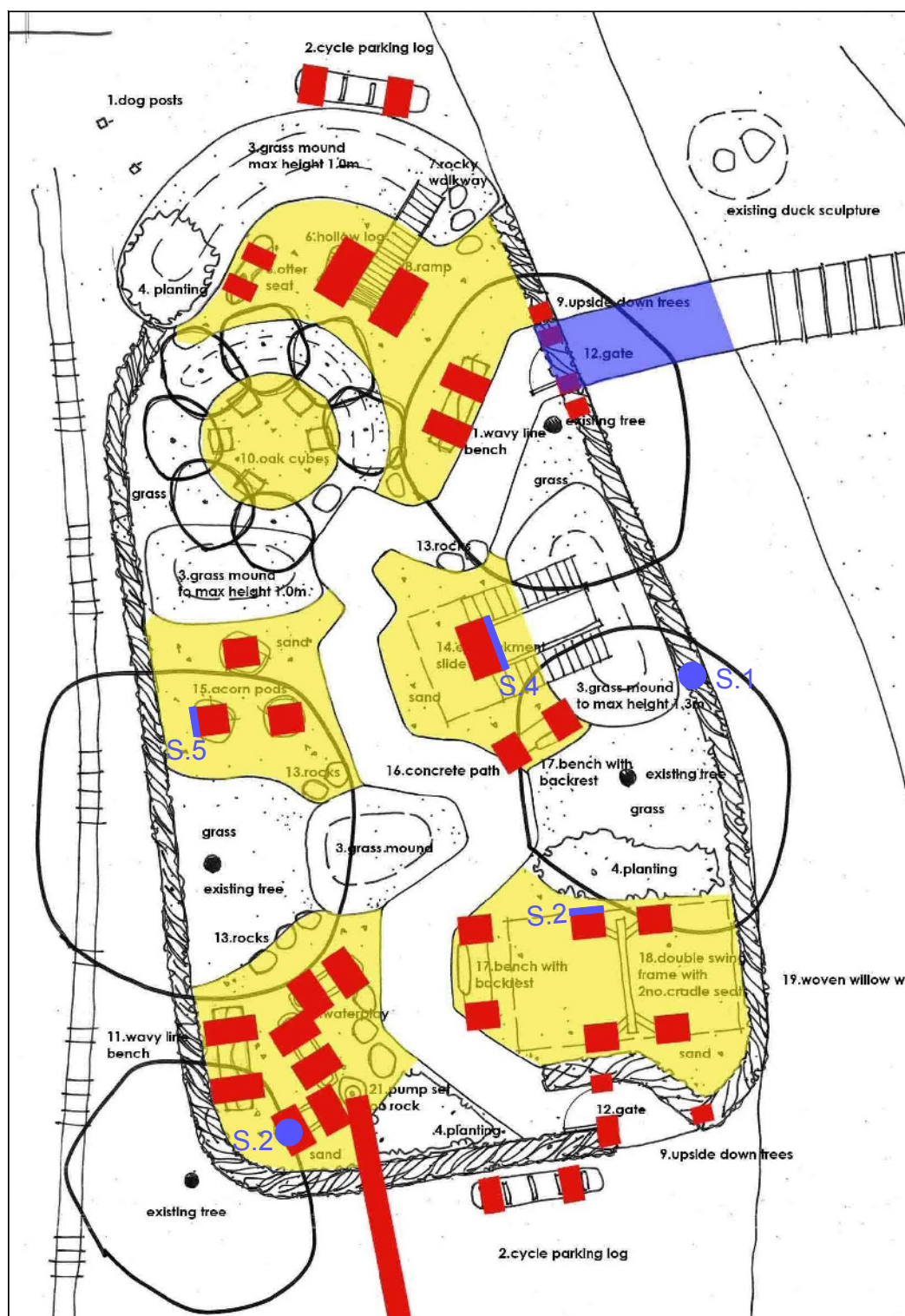


Plate 7: View of work in progress during installation of services to the café



Based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer and 1:1250 Masterplan maps with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, ©Crown Copyright

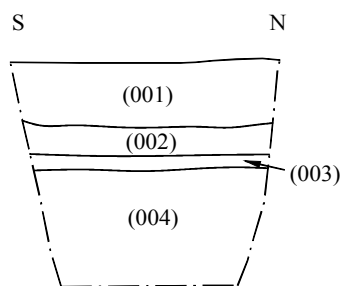
Licence No.: 100049610



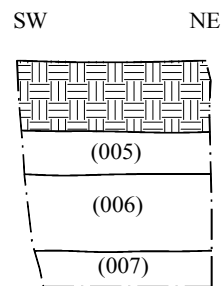
Sections 1 & 2 - approximate locations only



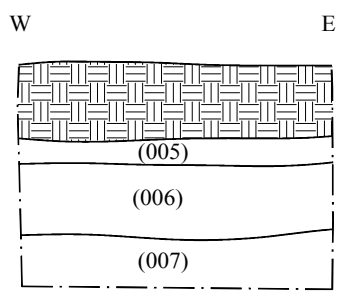
Extract from drawing supplied by Davies White - Drawing no. DW011 -02



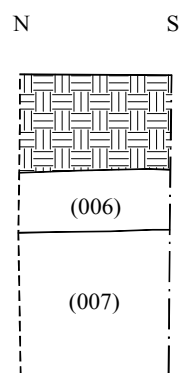
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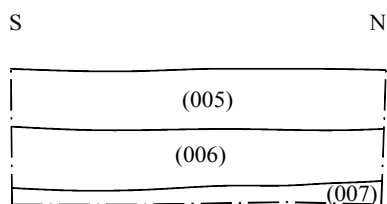
Section 2



Section 3

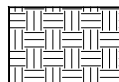


Section 4



Section 5

Key



Clay deposited as part of current works



APPENDIX
OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM:

England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: withamar1-176570

Project details

Project name	Watching Brief during installation of new play area at Ferry Meadows County Park, Peterborough
Short description of the project	A watching brief was maintained during the installation of new equipment in the children's play area, Ferry Meadows Country Park, Peterborough. The site lies within the boundaries of Scheduled Monument PE182. Previous investigations in the area had revealed the remains of Iron Age and Roman-British settlement. The majority of the groundworks for the current project were contained in relatively recent deposits and did not therefore have an impact upon archaeologically significant deposits.
Project dates	Start: 05-02-2014 End: 20-02-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FMCP14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH ORTON WATERVILLE Ferry Meadows Country Park
Postcode	PE2 5UU
Study area	500.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 14844 97531 52.5631040915 -0.305553697091 52 33 47 N 000 18 19 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Witham Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Russell Trimble
Project director/manager	Russell Trimble
Project supervisor	Russell Trimble
Type of sponsor/funding body	Other Charitable Trust
Name of sponsor/funding body	Nene Park Trust

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	New Play Area at Ferry Meadows Country Park. Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Trimble, R
Other bibliographic details	Report No. 54
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Witham Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Sleaford
Description	A4, comb-bound

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Entered on 6 April 2014

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