

Witham Archaeology

A Report to DSM builders

November 2017



Land south of Penwald Court, Peakirk, Peterborough

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

N Jefferson

LAND SOUTH OF PENWALD COURT, PEAKIRK, PETERBOROUGH

SITE CODE: PKPC17

Planning Reference: 16/02075/FUL

NGR TF 16720 06010

OASIS ID: withamar1-302660

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

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LAND SOUTH OF PENWALD COURT, PEAKIRK, PETERBOROUGH, ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken on land south of Penwald Court, Peakirk, Peterborough. The project was required as a condition of planning permission (Application 16/02075/FUL) granted by Peterborough City Council for a residential development. The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area, approximately 40 metres south and west of the line of the ancient watercourse known as the Car Dyke and on the southern outskirts of Peakirk, a settlement with origins as an eight century hermitage founded by St Pega. Ring ditches and enclosures of possible prehistoric date are also known from cropmarks in areas to the east of the proposed development.

The Car Dyke is a linear watercourse which extends from the River Cam in Cambridgeshire northwards along the Fen Edge to the Witham Valley east of Lincoln. Interpretation of the function of the monument varies but it is generally thought to represent a canal, possibly used as part of system of land drainage during the Roman period.

Seven trenches were excavated, amounting to approximately 4% of the proposed development area. The distribution and size of trenches was significantly influenced by the presence of standing buildings, live services and a variety of obstructions.

Thick deposits containing modern material were recorded over the central and eastern parts of the site and indicate recent disposal of waste material. Any archaeological remains originally present in these areas are unlikely to have survived. Natural deposits were exposed along the full lengths of two trenches located on the northwest part of the site, but contained no archaeological remains.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken on land south of Penwald Court, Peakirk, Peterborough. The evaluation was required as a condition of planning permission (Application 16/02075/FUL) granted by Peterborough City Council for residential development at the site.

As the proposed development is located in an archeologically sensitive area, the planning archaeologist of Peterborough City Council recommended to the local authority that a programme of trial trenching should be undertaken to provide information on the potential for surviving archaeological remains in the area.

Fieldwork was carried out on the 20th and 21st November 2017, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Witham Archaeology and approved by the Peterborough City Council Planning 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 Chartered Institute of Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Figs. 1, 2 and 3)

The proposed area of development is located east of St. Pega's Road, bounded to the east by the Peterborough to Lincoln railway line and immediately south of Penwald Court on the south side of Peakirk, Peterborough. The site itself comprises an irregular plot measuring approximately 0.55 hectares.

Solid geology in the area comprises mudstone of the Oxford Clay formation which underly superficial deposits of second terrace sands and gravels <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.

3.0 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Peakirk is thought to have derived its name through a connection with St. Pega, a little known 8th century saint who founded a hermitage in the area during the 8th century. Pega is said to have been the sister of Guthlac, the much more celebrated saint who lived on the nearby island of Crowland. Pega is thought to have lived with her brother on Crowland until she was banished and forced to establish the hermitage at Peakirk (Ranson and Pryor, 2012). The present church is an 11th century foundation dedicated to Holy Trinity, The Virgin Mary and All Hallows.

Prehistoric activity in the area is suggested by cropmarks of possible Bronze Age round barrows and enclosures to the west of the village. A Bronze Age cinerary urn from an unknown location in Peakirk is held in Peterborough museum.

The line of the watercourse known as the Car Dyke passes through the village, extending north to south through the settlement, closely followed on its the western flank by St Pega's Road. However, the Car Dyke turns sharply eastward approximately 40m north of the proposed development, and following a short west to east aligned section which coincides with the northern boundary of the site, heads northwest to southeast. The Car Dyke is commonly thought to represent the remains of a canal used as part of an extensive drainage system during the Roman period. Other interpretations see the monument as a major imperial boundary of Roman date.

An extensive test pitting community project recovered scattered Romano British pottery which may indicate occupation of the period in the southern part of the village (Ranson and Pryor, 2012).

The area is shown as part of open farmland on the 1st edition OS County Map of 1887 and also the 2nd edition map of 1900. Until 1938 the site appears to have remained open but by the 1950's the site was occupied by a number of buildings. On the 1:2500 6 inch map of 1974 part of the site was occupied by a timber yard and a number of other buildings of commercial\industrial nature.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

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

- *provide information on the presence/absence, nature, date and quality of survival of archaeological deposits and remains which might be contained within the site, at the depth of proposed construction disturbance, and to assess the importance of such remains in terms of their local, regional and national context.*
- *assess the possible scale of development impact on any remains and provide information which might influence development design so that impact on any remains can be avoided or minimised.*
- *provide information that will allow the local planning authority to reconcile development proposals with their policy for preserving archaeological remains and make an informed and reasoned decision on a planning application.*
- *provide site specific archaeological information which (if necessary) would allow for the design and integration of timing and funding of any further archaeological work (or other mitigating strategy) which might be required in advance of or during any subsequent development programme.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum and from which the potential for further study and academic research could be assessed.*

- *provide information for accession to the Peterborough Historic Environment Record (HER).*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The project specification provided for the excavation of 7 trenches, measuring between 5m x 1.6m and 30m x 1.6m (Fig 3), distributed across the proposed area of development. The distribution and size of trenches was significantly influenced by the presence of standing buildings, live services and a variety of obstructions. A large, square brick built building with a white roof (Plate 1) of modern appearance occupies much of the south end of the site. To the south of the building are a number of areas of concrete hardstanding. To the northeast of the large building on the opposite side of the access road is a large wooden shed, and two smaller wooden structures lie further to the north. On the north side of the large square building there is an area of open space, but this is occupied by a number of medium sized trees adjacent to the western boundary of the site.

All topsoil and overburden removal was undertaken by mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. The bases and sides of the trench were hand cleaned where appropriate to characterise and where possible date the stratigraphic sequence.

A record of the site was compiled through plans drawn at scale 1:20 and sections at 1:10, colour digital and monochrome (35mm) photographs and individual written context records on *pro forma* recording sheets. The trench was located using a survey grade GPS system.

6.0 RESULTS

The earliest deposit recorded on the site was mid brownish orange, clayey sand and gravel natural, identified at the southern end of Trench 5 (502), (Fig 4, Section 5) and in Trenches 2 (202), (Fig 2, Section 2) 4 (402), (Fig 4, Section 4) and 7 (702) (Fig 4, Section 7). Over the remainder of the southern and central areas of the site the natural was only recorded in small patches due to truncation by recent activity. Figure 5 depicts the estimated areas of truncation. Sample excavation during the machining of the trenches demonstrated that the depth of modern deposits exceeded the safe level of excavation of 1.2m in places. Trench depths were limited to between 0.8m and 1.0m in these areas as the infilled material was loose and unstable.

In Trench 5 at the southern end of the site the natural was recorded at a depth of 0.47m below current ground level, at 5.74m above Ordnance Datum (OD). In Trench 2 on the northwestern side of the site natural layers were recorded at a depth of 0.55m below current ground level, at 5.55m OD. Natural deposits in Trench 7 were recorded at 5.8m OD, 0.48m below the current ground surface.

Overlying the natural was 0.3m to 0.4m of mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil (101) recorded in Trenches 5, 2, 7 and 4. Elsewhere on the site this layer was not present due to modern truncation. Cutting or covering the topsoil in all but Trench 7 was 0.2m to +0.8m of dark blackish grey, clayey sand (100), containing modern rubble and waste, including modern plastic, glass, metal, and CBM. This deposit probably represents tipping and waste disposal at the site, probably before construction of the modern buildings current occupying the site.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Although the site is located in an archaeologically sensitive area no archaeologically significant features were recorded during the evaluation. Large areas of disturbance and overburden in the central part of the site almost certainly results from construction and demolition of the 20th century buildings shown for the first time on mid 20th century Ordnance Survey maps. It is unclear when these were demolished but from map evidence it seems that the structures were present until late in the 20th century.

Any archaeological features originally present in these areas are likely to have been disturbed by foundations and services associated with the former buildings and by demolition processes. There is a relatively low potential for archaeological remains in the area, although the results of the test pitting

undertaken by the local community the presence of remains of archaeological date cannot be entirely discounted. However, undisturbed natural deposits were identified in the southern part of the site in Trenches 2, 4 and 5 and in Trench 7 but no evidence of significant archaeological remains was revealed. The medieval and Saxon village appears to have been focussed in areas to the north of the Car Dyke and the site probably formed agricultural or marginal land during this period, indicating low potential for complex settlement remains.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank DSM Builders for their support in ensuring that the project was brought to a successful conclusion.

9.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cope-Faulkner, P. and Simmons, B. B., 2004, *The Car Dyke: Past Work, Current State and Future Possibilities*. Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series **No. 8**.

Ranson and Pryor, 2012. *Archaeological Test Pit Excavations in Peakirk, Cambridgeshire, 2012*. Access Cambridge Archaeology. University of Cambridge.

BGS 2017, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed November 2017

10.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 Project Information

SITE CODE: PKPC17

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: 16/02075/FUL

FIELD OFFICER: N. Jefferson

NGR: TF 16720 06010

CIVIL PARISH: Peakirk

DATES OF INTERVENTION: 20th and 21st November 2017

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Trial Trench Evaluation

UNDERTAKEN FOR: DSM Builders

10.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, 2 High Street, Ruskington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire

FINAL LOCATION: Peterborough Central Library, Broadway, Peterborough PE1 1RX

SITE CODE: PKPC17

ACCESSION DATE: TBC

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	1
Plans at Scale 1:50	1 sheet
Section Drawings at Scale 1:20	1 Sheet
Black and White photographs	16
Digital Photographs	16
Set of Site Notes	2

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: Aerial view of the site



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking northeast



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking northeast



Plate 4: Trench 5, looking north



Plate 5: Section 1, Trench 1, looking southwest



Plate 6: Section 2, Trench 2, looking southwest



Plate 7: Section 6, Trench 6, looking southeast



Plate 8: Section 7, Trench 7, looking southeast

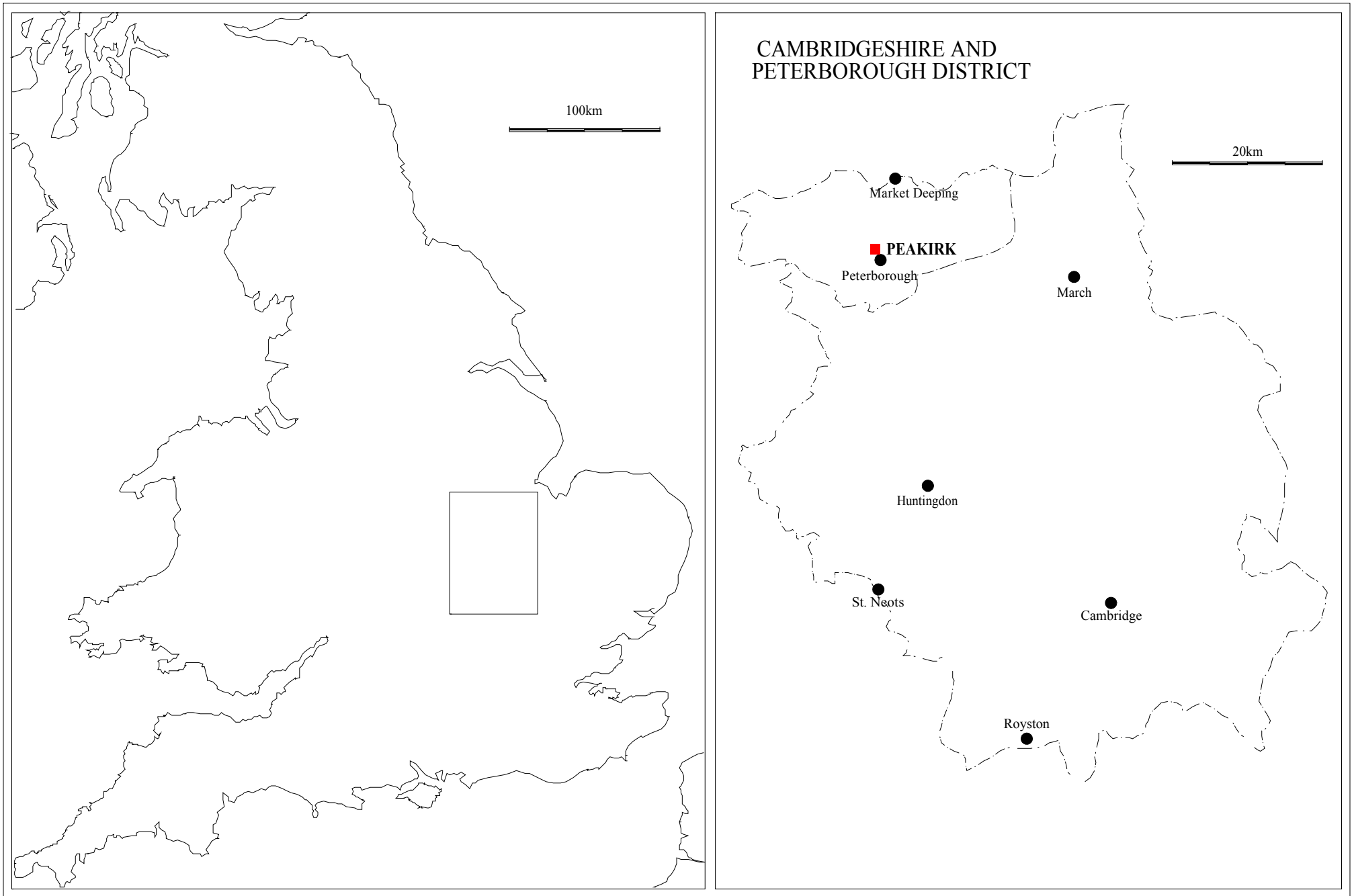
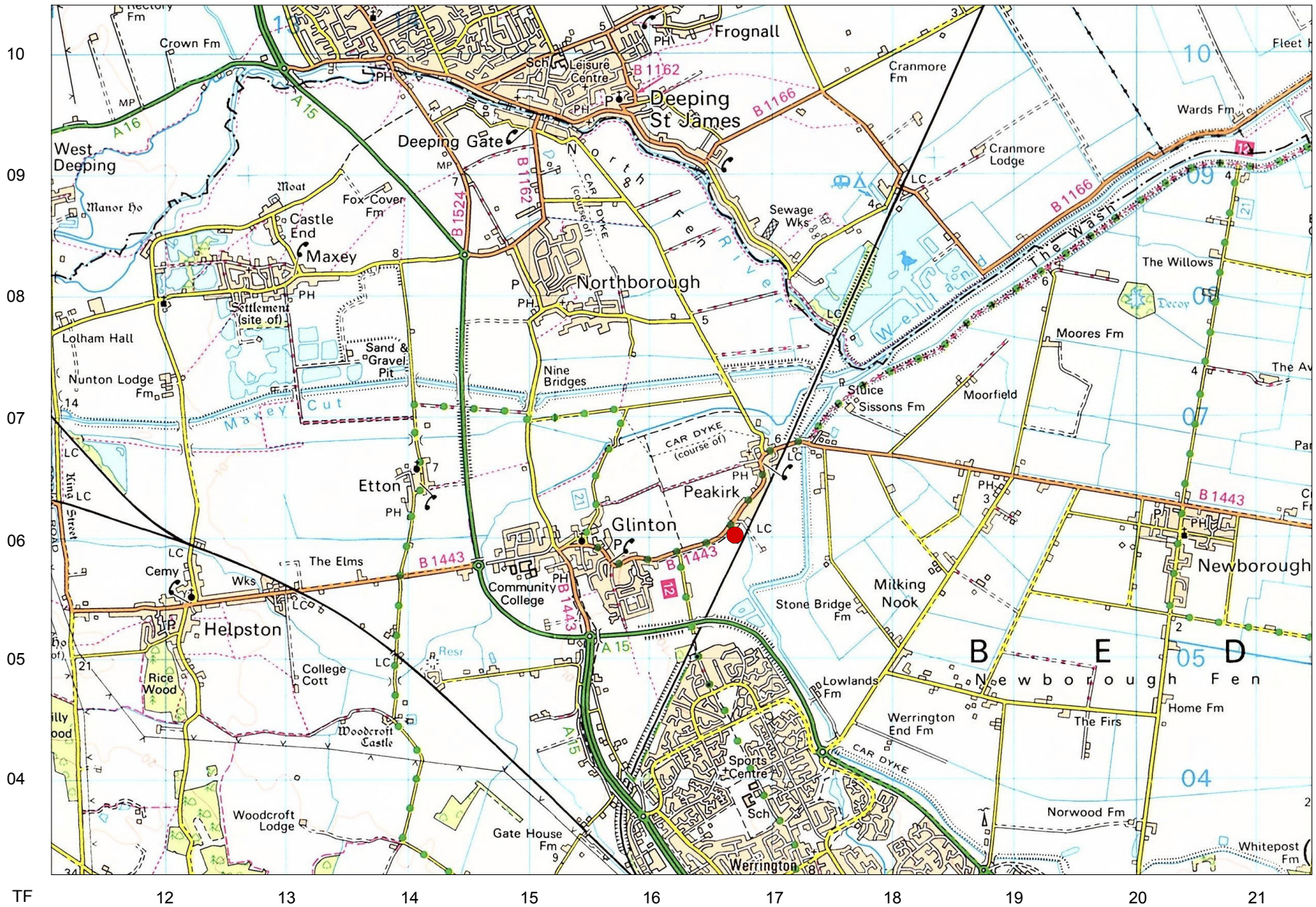


Figure 1 General location plan



TF

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

● Site Location

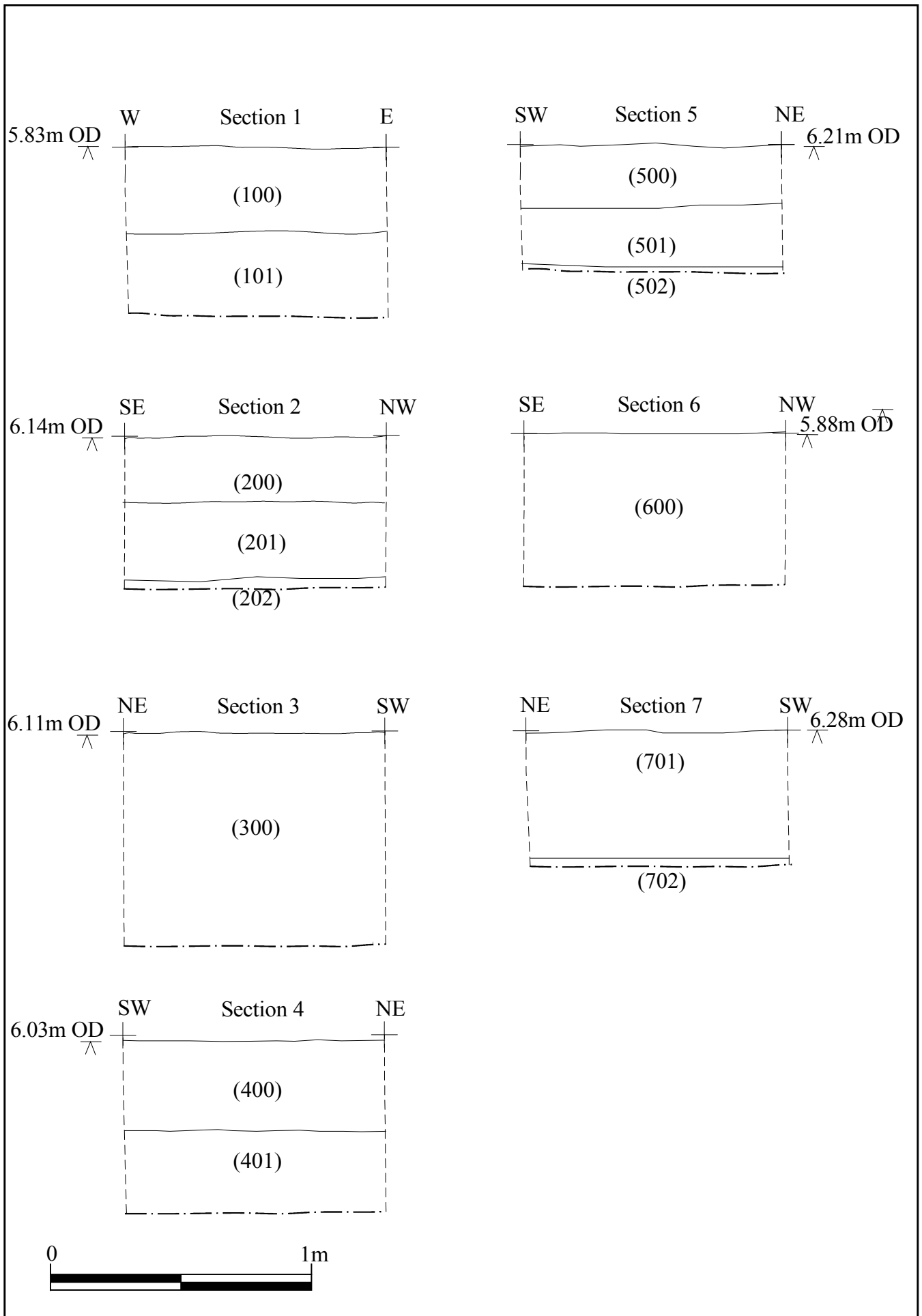
Crown copyright and database rights 2014 OS 100049610

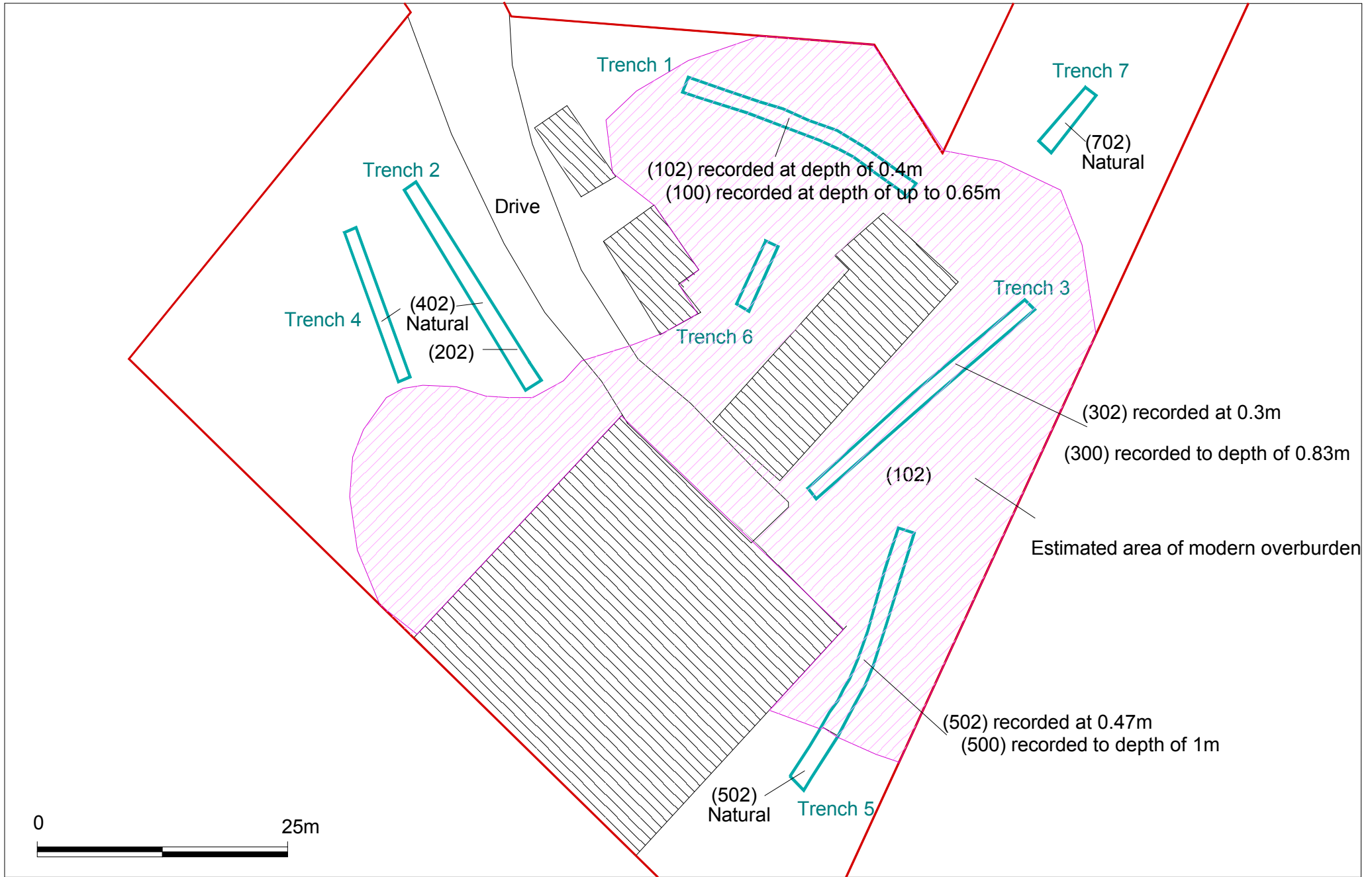


Site location map Scale 1:50,000

Fig. 2







APPENDIX A - CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

<i>Context</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Description</i>
(100)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep
(101)	Former topsoil	Mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil. Common small/medium angular and rounded stones. 0.3m to 0.4m deep.
(102)	Natural	Mid brownish orange, clayey sand and gravel natural >0.10m deep
(200)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep
(201)	Former topsoil	Mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil. Common small/medium angular and rounded stones. 0.3m to 0.4m deep.
(202)	Natural	Mid brownish orange, clayey sand and gravel natural >0.08m deep
(300)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep
(400)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep
(401)	Former topsoil	Mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil. Common small/medium angular and rounded stones. 0.3m to 0.4m deep.
(500)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep (over 1.2m in areas)
(501)	Former topsoil	Mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil. Common small/medium angular and rounded stones. 0.25m to 0.4m deep.
(502)	Natural	Mid brownish orange, clayey sand and gravel natural >0.09m deep
(600)	Recent waste disposal or tipping	Dark blackish grey, clayey sand, with modern rubble throughout, 0.2m to >0.8m deep
(701)	Former topsoil	Mid greyish-brown, clayey sand topsoil. Common small/medium angular and rounded stones. 0.3m to 0.48m deep.
(702)	Natural	Mid brownish orange, clayey sand and gravel natural >0.08m deep

APPENDIX A – OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: withamar1-302660

Project details

Project name	Land south of Penwald Court, Peakirk, Peterborough
Short description of the project	An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken on land south of Penwald Court, Peakirk, Peterborough. The project was required as a condition of planning permission (Application 16/02075/FUL) granted by Peterborough City Council for a residential development. The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area, approximately 40 metres south and west of the line of the ancient watercourse known as the Car Dyke and on the southern outskirts of Peakirk, a settlement with origins as an eight century hermitage founded by St Pega. Ring ditches and enclosures of possible prehistoric date are also known from cropmarks in areas to the east of the proposed development. The Car Dyke is a linear watercourse which extends from the River Cam in Cambridgeshire northwards along the Fen Edge to the Witham Valley east of Lincoln. Interpretation of the function of the monument varies but it is generally thought to represent a canal, possibly used as part of system of land drainage during the Roman period. Seven trenches were excavated, amounting to approximately 4% of the proposed development area. The distribution and size of trenches was significantly influenced by the presence of standing buildings, live services and a variety of obstructions. Thick deposits containing modern material were recorded over the central and eastern parts of the site and indicate recent disposal of waste material. Any archaeological remains originally present in these areas are unlikely to have survived. Natural deposits were exposed along the full lengths of two trenches located on the northwest part of the site, but contained no archaeological remains.
Project dates	Start: 20-11-2017 End: 21-11-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	16/02075/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	PKPC17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH PEAKIRK Land south of Penwald Courty
Postcode	PE6 7NN
Study area	0.65 Hectares
Site coordinates	TF 516720 306012 52.85115854437 0.252676306945 52 51 04 N 000 15 09 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.57m Max: 5.76m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Witham Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Dale Trimble
Project director/manager	Dale Trimble
Project supervisor	Neil Jefferson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
Digital Archive ID	TBC
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
Paper Archive ID	TBC
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Map", "Matrices", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Other bibliographic details	228
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Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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