

Witham Archaeology

A Report to Hereward Homes Limited

January 2018



LAND AT STRATH ISLA, FIRST DRIFT, WOTHORPE, PETERBOROUGH

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

R Trimble

LAND AT STRATH ISLA, FIRST DRIFT, WOTHORPE, PETERBOROUGH

Site Code: WTFD18
LCCM Accession No.: TBC
Planning Application No.: 17/01203/FUL
NGR: TF 02857 06085
OASIS ID: withamar1-307066

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (see Figs. 1 and 2).....	1
3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES	2
5.0 METHODOLOGY	3
6.0 RESULTS (Figs. 3 and 4)	3
7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION	3
8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
9.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS	4
9.1 Project Information.....	4
9.2 Archive Details	4
 <i>Colour plates</i>	
<i>Plate 1: General view of trial trenching, looking north.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Plate 2: General view of trench, looking southeast; 1m scale</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Plate 3: General view of trench, looking northwest; 1m scale</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Plate 4: Section 1 including cut [103], looking west; 1m scale.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Plate 5: Cut [005]/Section 2, looking northwest; 1m scale</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Plate 6: General view of trench post excavation, looking northwest; 1m scale.....</i>	<i>7</i>

Illustrations

Fig. 1 Site Location Maps

Fig. 2 Trench Location Plan - Scale 1:500

Fig. 3 Trench Plan - Scale 1:20

Fig. 4 Sections 1 & 2 – Scale 1:20

APPENDIX A – CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

APPENDIX B – OASIS SUMMARY DETAILS FORM

LAND AT STRATH ISLA, FIRST DRIFT WOTHORPE, PETERBOROUGH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken on the site of a proposed small scale housing development at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough. The project was commissioned by Hereward Homes Limited to meet the requirements of a condition of planning permission.

The site lies close to the line of the Roman road between London and York and approximately 900m to the north of earthwork remains of medieval settlement at Wothorpe. From historic map evidence, the area around First Drift appears to be farmland until around the mid 19th century and the site itself remained undeveloped until the 1960s.

A single trench excavated on the northeast side of the plot revealed Jurassic clay (the Whitby Mudstone or Upper Lias as previously known), with pockets of sandy gravel interpreted probable till deposits. A probable late post medieval land drain was revealed at the northwestern end of the trench.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken on the site of two proposed new houses at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough. Full planning permission had earlier been granted by Peterborough City Council for demolition of the existing house (probably erected in the 1960s) and the construction of two new two-storey houses – one with four bedrooms, the other with five. The project was commissioned by Hereward Homes Limited in response to a condition of planning permission issued by Peterborough City Council. Fieldwork was carried out on 22nd January 2018, in accordance with a specification compiled by Witham Archaeology and approved by the Peterborough 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 Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists.

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

The village of Wothorpe and civil parish of the same name is situated in the administrative district of the City of Peterborough approximately 1 km south of the centre of Stamford, Lincolnshire. Strath Isla, is located in the northwestern part of Wothorpe, in the angle between the principal axis of First Drift and an offshoot to the northeast, at NGR TF 02857 06085.

The single trench was excavated in an area of lawn, northeast of the house and close to the northeastern boundary of the property.

Topographically, the site is located to the south of the River Welland, on the northwest facing slope of the of river valley. The local geology is Jurassic mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation (previously the Upper Lias clay). There are no superficial deposits in the area (British Geological Survey, Geology Viewer at <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>?).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The probable line of Ermine Street, the Roman Road between London York, passes approximately 90m to the northeast of the proposed development (see Fig. 1).

Wothorpe is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (<http://opendomesday.org/place/TF0205/wothorpe/>), which suggests that settlement in the area was established from at least the late Saxon period. The place-name is thought to have derived from the Old English 'wrid', indicating a shoot or bush and the Old Norse 'thorpe', which indicates a secondary settlement (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Huntingdonshire/Wothorpe>).

The core of the historic settlement lies approximately 900m south of the site, on the opposite side of the modern A1. Documentary sources indicate a church in the parish until at least 1540 and a small Benedictine nunnery but their precise locations are not known. The village was probably deserted by around 1700, possible as a result of clearance associated with the building of Wothorpe House and the creation of a small park. The earthwork remains of tofts (some possibly containing buildings) and crofts have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the village, while further remains appear to have been removed during construction of the Stamford bypass (NMR No. 348032, viewed at www.pastscape.org.uk).

Wothorpe House was built in the early 17th century by Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter. The building was partly demolished in around 1791, but ruins of the building have survived to the present day and are now a Scheduled Monument (NMR No. 347957).

Ridge and furrow field systems of probable medieval date have been identified on land to the north of First Drift (NMR No. 1036732). Roads corresponding to First Drift are shown on the First Series Ordnance Survey map, set within farmland and with no sign of development. The First Edition County map of 1886-7 shows The Lawns on land to the north of the future site of Strath Isla, and Claire Lodge to the south. The Elms is located to the east and Terracotta Villa and Terracotta Malting to the southeast.

The site of Strath Isla was still shown as undeveloped land on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1960 and it appears that the building and neighbouring Orchard House were both constructed in the 1960s.

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project, as set out in a Witham Archaeology specification of 3rd January 2018, 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

A single trench was excavated, measuring 2m wide by 10m long. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork the provisional trench location (see Fig. 2) was agreed with the Peterborough City Archaeologist. It was situated in gardens northeast of the existing house and outside the footprint of more northeasterly of the two proposed new houses.

Topsoil and other recent deposits were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a c. 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Features revealed in plan and representative samples of the trench sides were subsequently cleaned by hand, prior to the part-excavation of features and deposits of potential archaeological origin to ascertain character, extent and date.

Excavated features were recorded in plan by survey grade GPS and hand drawn sections were produced at scale of 1: 10. The drawn record was supplemented by digital and black and white photographs showing overall site circumstances and archaeologically significant features and deposits, together with written context records on *pro forma* recording sheets. The trench outline and levels across the site were recorded by GPS.

6.0 RESULTS (Figs. 3 and 4)

The earliest deposit encountered in the trench was mid yellowish brown and bluish clay (109) interpreted as natural. Encountered at around 0.7m below existing ground level, the clay was interspersed with extensive pockets of mid reddish brown slightly clayey silt containing frequent angular stone of up to 40mm across in size (102). The same material extended throughout a cut or depression, [103], which was partially revealed on the southwest side of the trench. With a straight edge on its northeast side, the feature, which appeared to terminate to the southeast and northwest, was probably natural in origin. However, there is a slight possibility that it formed part of a furrow within a ridge and furrow field system. A sub-circular hollow, [105], around 0.50m in diameter, up to 20mm deep and positioned centrally in the trench probably had a similar natural origin. It was filled by material, (104), identical to (102).

In the southeastern half of the trench, (102), extended over the clay (109), attaining a maximum thickness of around 0.25m at the southeastern end of the trench. The deposit thinned to the northwest.

The natural was sealed by mid yellowish brown silty sand 0.30m to 0.35m thick (101). The deposit, which extended throughout the trench, may be interpreted as a plough-soil resulting from medieval and later cultivation.

The probable ploughsoil (101) was cut at the northwestern end of the trench by a stone-filled land drain aligned southeast-northwest. The linear cut, [107], was around 0.25m wide and was filled by (106) irregular lumps of limestone, typically 0.15m x 0.1m x 50mm in size (70%) mixed with mid greyish brown sandy silt (30%). The feature extended beyond the limit of excavation to the southeast but terminated to the northwest where it appeared to have been truncated by a relatively late disturbance containing redeposited clay and silty sand (108).

Mid greyish brown silty sand topsoil (100), generally 0.3m thick, extended throughout the upper levels of the trench.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Trial trenching at Strath Isla revealed clays of the Whitby Mudstone Formation (previously known as the Upper Lias), interspersed with and overlain by sandy silt and gravel with the characteristics of till deposit.

The evaluation produced no convincing evidence of archaeological remains although a straight sided feature partially revealed at the edge of the trench could have formed part of a furrow resulting from medieval and later arable cultivation. However, the feature more likely to have had a geological (glacial?) origin.

The presence of the probable plough-soil (101) is consistent with historic map evidence showing the area of First Drift as farmland associated with historic settlement at Wothorpe, located further to the south.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank staff of Hereward Homes Limited for their interest and support in ensuring the successful completion of archaeological fieldwork. Thanks are also due to the Peterborough City Archaeologist, Rebecca Casa-Hatton, for advice provided in advance of and during execution of the project.

9.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

9.1 Project Information

SITE CODE: WTFD18

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: 17/01203/FUL

FIELD OFFICER: R. Trimble

NGR: TF 02857 06085

CIVIL PARISH: Wothorpe

SMR No.: N/A

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 22nd January 2018

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Trial Trench Evaluation

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Hereward Homes Limited

9.2 Archive Details

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, 2 High Street, Ruskington NG34 9DT

FINAL LOCATION: Peterborough Museums Service

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: TBC

ACCESSION DATE: TBC

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	10
Section Drawings at Scale 1:10	2
Black and White photographs	20 frames
Digital Photographs	24 files
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 of trial trenching, looking north



Plate 2: General view of trench, looking southeast; 1m scale



Plate 3: General view, looking northwest (NW end part excavated; leaving drain intact): 1m scale



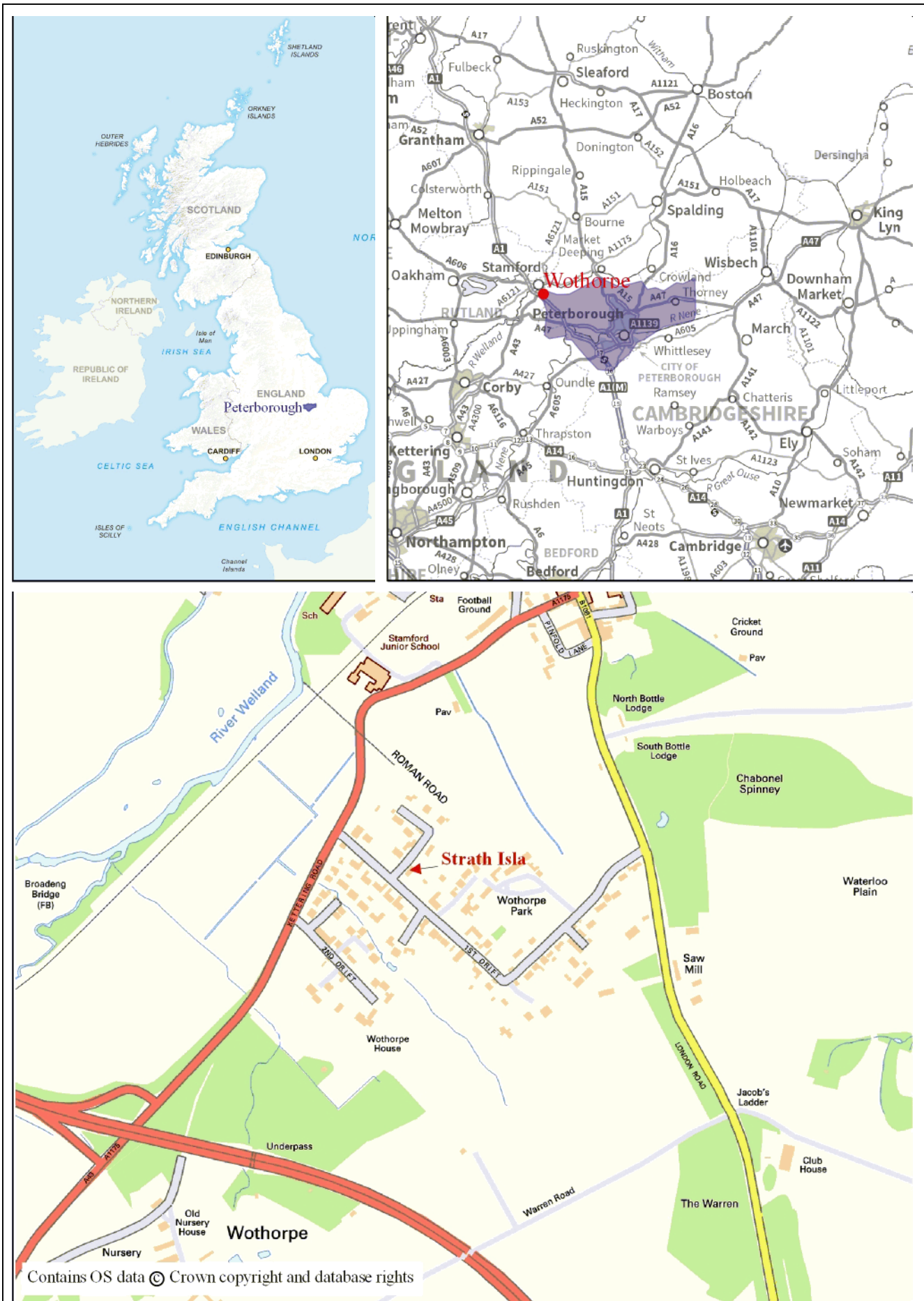
Plate 4: Section 1 including 'cut' [103], looking west; 1m scale

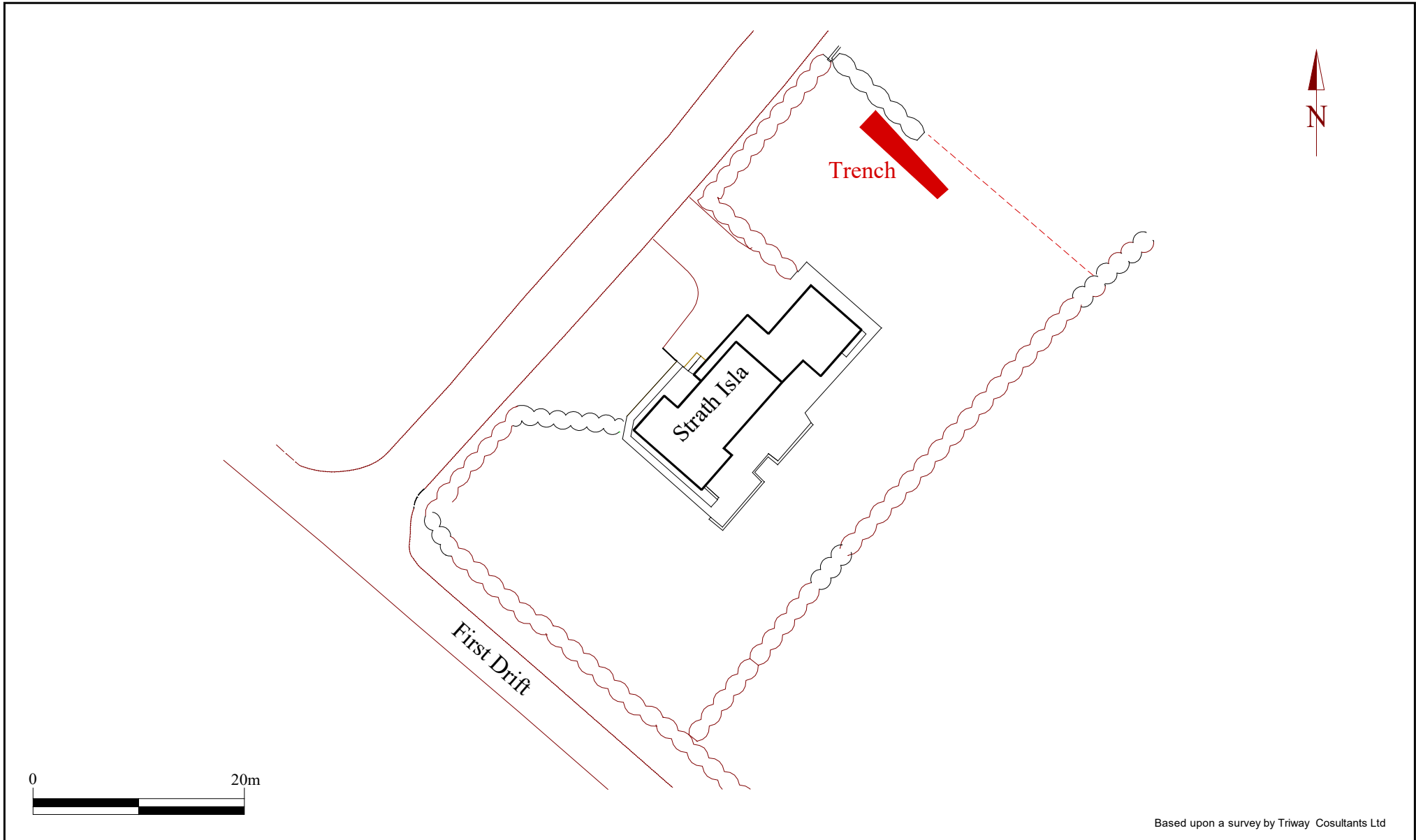


Plate 5: 'Cut' [005]/Section 2, looking northwest; 1m scale

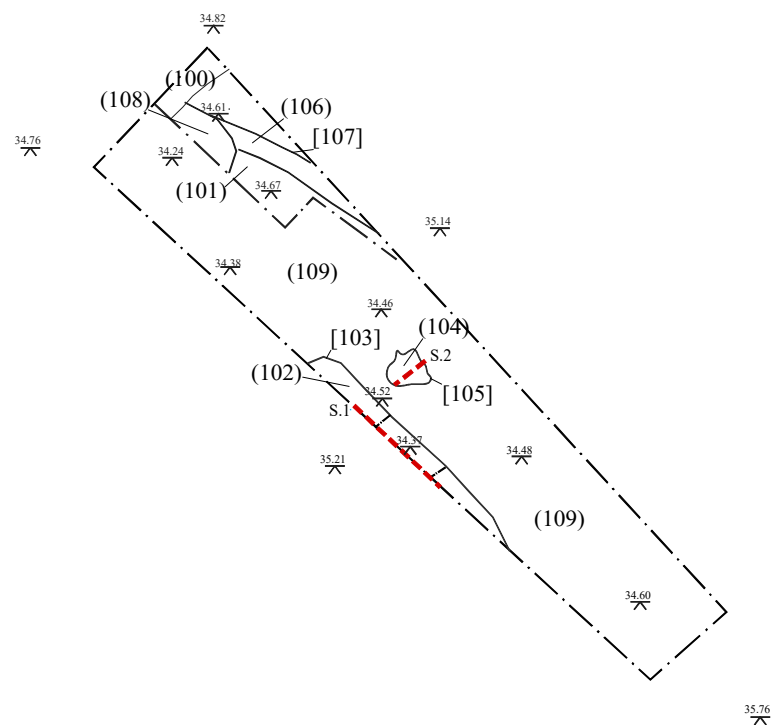


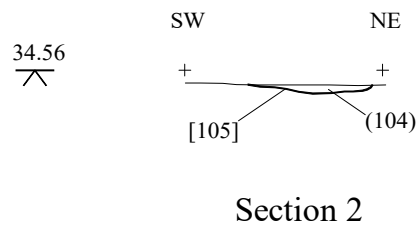
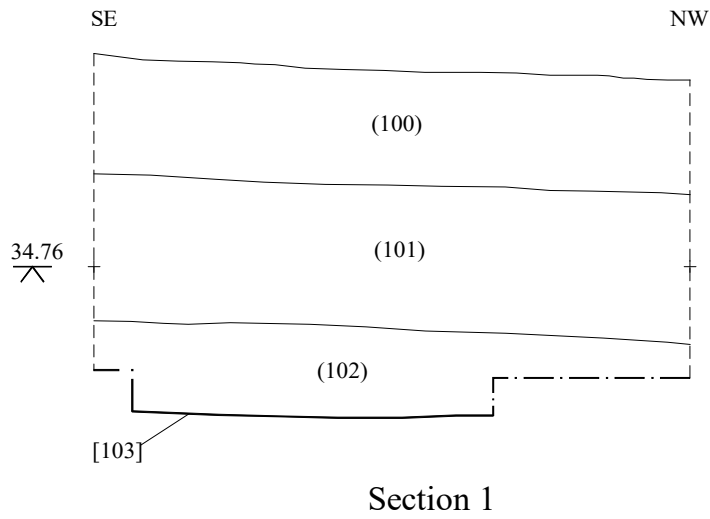
Plate 6: General view of trench (post excavation), looking northwest; 1m scale





Based upon a survey by Triway Cosultants Ltd





APPENDIX A - CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

<i>Context</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Topsoil	Soft/friable, mid greyish brown silty sand containing frequent roots from 2mm to 20mm in diameter and occasional small angular stone to 10mm; generally 0.30m thick
101	Relict ploughsoil?	Soft/friable, mid yellowish brown, silty sand containing occasional roots from 2 – 5mm diameter, occasional angular stone to 30mm becoming more frequent at lower levels; average 0.3 – 0.35m thick
102	Probable Natural	Moderately compact, mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy silt containing frequent, mostly angular stone to 40mm; occurring in large patches within the clay and over the clay in the southern part of the trench – up to around 0.25m thick in section the southeastern end; appears to fill [103]
103	Natural feature (glacial origin?) or possibly a furrow	Partially revealed on the southwest side of the trench, has a straight north-eastern side and terminates to the northwest and southeast. The remainder lies beyond the limit of excavation to the southwest. The excavated portion had a gradually concave base and was up to 0.12m deep as taken from the trench base.
104	Fill of [105] = (102)?	Moderately compact, mid reddish brown slightly clayey sandy silt containing occasional small angular stone; 20mm thick (max.), extending throughout [105]
105	Natural hollow?	Sub-circular (generally irregular) in plan with gradual sides and a concave/irregular base; up to 20mm deep and around 0.5m in diameter
106	Fill of [107]	Irregular limestone typically 150mm x 100mm x 50mm (70%) mixed with loose/friable mid greyish brown sandy silt (30%); not excavated
107	Cut of land drain	Linear and aligned c. SE-NW it was c. 2.6m long extending beyond LOE to the southeast and possibly cut by late disturbance to the northwest; around 0.25m wide (not excavated)
108	Redeposited natural in probable late disturbance cutting [107]	Mix of compact bluish grey clay and mid reddish brown sand; at least 1m across southeast-northwest
109	Natural clay (Upper Lias?)	Compact/malleable, mid yellowish brown and bluish grey clay, occurring across base of trench at northwest end and overcut by around 0.10m at the southeast end.

APPENDIX B
OASIS SUMMARY DETAILS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: withamar1-307066

Project details

Project name Archaeological trial trenching on land at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough

Short description of the project A single trial trench was excavated at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough, on the site of a proposed residential redevelopment involving demolition of the existing house and the construction of two new houses. The line of Roman Ermine Street passes to the north of the site and the site lies around 900m north of medieval and post medieval settlement at Wothorpe. The trench revealed natural clay (the Upper Lias) mixed with areas of sandy silt and gravel at around 0.70m below existing ground level. One area of sandy silt had a relatively straight edge on one side suggestive of a medieval furrow but the composition of the deposits was more consistent with a natural origin. The natural was sealed by probable ploughsoil (part of the medieval/post medieval strip system?) which was in turn cut by a stone filled (presumably later post medieval) land drain. The topsoil was 0.3m thick.

Project dates Start: 22-01-2018 End: 22-01-2018

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes WTFD18 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

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 WOTHORPE Land at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough

Postcode PE9 3JE

Study area 1800 Square metres

Site coordinates TF 02857 06085 52.642386490789 -0.479682237929 52 38 32 N 000 28 46 W Point

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 Russell Trimble

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Hereward Homes Limited

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", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery
Paper Archive ID	TBC
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Strath Isla, First Drift, Wothorpe, Peterborough. Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
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