Land at Johnstons Press,
Oundle Road, Peterborough:
Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation



May 2015





PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY R12092

LAND AT JOHNSTONS PRESS, OUNDLE ROAD, PETERBOROUGH

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Control

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Land at Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough:

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Local Planning Authority: Peterborough City Council

Planning Reference: 14/02012/FUL

Central National Grid Reference: TL 1802 9731

Site Code: CORP15

Report No. R12092

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough (NGR TL 1802 9731) between the 28th April and the 1st May 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to residential development (14/02012/FUL). The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.

The evaluation identified a concentration of archaeological features in the north-east of the site. This included five ditches, one of which produced Iron Age pottery, one pit (also dated to the Iron Age), one undated posthole and one grave cut containing human remains and likely to be Roman in date. The pit and posthole indicate the presence of settlement in the vicinity of the evaluation and the ditches are likely to represent phases of enclosure or field systems.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) on land at Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 1802 9731) from the 28th April to the 1st May 2015 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to residential development (Planning Reference 14/02012/FUL).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CgMs in response to a Brief for archaeological evaluation issued by Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough City Council.
- 1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A total of six trial trenches totalling 190m were excavated and recorded.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the evaluation and aims to inform the design of an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy. The project archive will be deposited with Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery's facilities.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 Geology

2.1.1 The solid geology of the site is mapped by the British Geological Survey as Kellways Clay Member mudstone. Superficial deposits are recorded as River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel.

2.2 Topography

- 2.2.1 The development site is situated to the south of Oundle Road, Woodston, approximately 1.75km to the south-west of Peterborough city centre and covers an area of approximately 2.3ha centred on NGR TL 1802 9731. The site is an irregular parcel of land accessed from Oundle Road to the north. The site is currently occupied by disused industrial buildings.
- 2.2.2 The site is situated at approximately 12m AOD dropping to c.10.5m AOD in the south-west.

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3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

3.1.1 The archaeological background to the site is presented in the desk-based assessment (Garwood 2014) and will not be reproduced here. For the purposes of contextualising the results of the evaluation, a summary of this background is included below.

3.2 Prehistoric

- 3.2.1 The evidence for early prehistoric activity, (predominantly Palaeolithic and Mesolithic) comes from antiquarian finds and observations within sand and gravel extraction works, exploiting the river terrace gravels east of the site during the early 20th century.
- 3.2.2 The location and provenance of later Bronze Age evidence is more reliable, with Late Bronze Age ditches postholes, gullies and pits found during an archaeological evaluation at the former British Sugar Works site (c.150m north-east). Another archaeological evaluation at the Sugar Works revealed remains of two possible circular buildings, artefacts and a substantial ditch, similar to remains of Iron Age date found in the general area.
- 3.2.3 The location of the proposed development area on the gravel terrace of the Nene Valley which has yielded substantial evidence for prehistoric activity and significant assemblages of prehistoric flint, coupled with the evidence for Bronze and Iron Age activity found in nearby evaluations suggests that the site has a moderate to high potential for uncovering prehistoric archaeological remains or artefacts.

3.3 Roman

3.3.1 Evidence for Roman occupation and burial activity within the vicinity of the site is relatively abundant. Antiquarian references to fourteen inhumation burials found in a field to the north of the site and north-west of the Cross Keys Inn are compounded by the discovery of three further inhumation burials, probably of Roman date, and the skeletal remains of a severely disturbed late Roman (4th century) inhumation found within the boundary of the site. This evidence strongly suggests the presence of a larger burial

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complex or cemetery within this area of the lower valley. The cemetery, located on the east side of the River Nene, may have served the settlements in Peterborough or Water Newton (Durobrivae). Based on the location and frequency of activity it is thought that the site has a moderate to high potential for encountering Roman burial and or settlement remains.

3.4 Saxon

3.4.1 The archaeological evidence for Saxon settlement and burial activity in the general area of the site is considerable. A possible inhumation cemetery is recorded at a distance to the west of the site and the site of a 'Saxon village' comprising 'ancient huts', artefacts and human remains lies to the south-east of the Cross Keys Inn (east of the site). An Anglo-Saxon barrow, where reportedly 'excellent urns, pottery and ashes' were discovered to the rear of the 'Cross Keys' on 'Woodstone Hill'. Whilst this activity is mainly located to the north and east of the site, it is not unreasonable to suggest that archaeological activity of Saxon date may extend into the development area. Therefore the site presents a moderate potential for Saxon remains.

3.5 Medieval

3.5.1 The potential for medieval archaeological activity within the study area is thought to be low to moderate. Very little physical evidence of medieval activity has been unearthed during the various evaluation works in the area. Remains of medieval sate that have been uncovered in the vicinity relate to agricultural activity (ridge and furrow and field boundaries). These agricultural remains are highlighted by aerial photography of ridge and furrow seen to the south and west of the site and confirms that this area was primarily farmland, with the nearest focal point for medieval settlement located around the parish church of St Augustine.

3.6 Post-medieval

3.6.1 The documentary and cartographic evidence shows that the Woodston area has remained as open farm land and water meadows since the early 19th century. The cartographic evidence charts the gradual encroachment of housing to the south of Peterborough, and the extensive industrialisation of the area, encouraged by the arrival of the railway lines from the mid 19th

century onwards, established to exploit the abundant deposits of aggregate and Oxford clays for brick works. The mapping confirmed that the site was not subjected to extraction and was devoid of structural activity until the construction of the print works in the later 1960s.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation and Sampling

- 4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation proposed the excavation of six trial trenches, distributed across the site but avoiding standing buildings (Figure 2). Due to constraints including live services and presence of thick, reinforced concrete on site, Trench 3 could not be excavated.
- 4.1.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using an 8-ton wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m-wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed natural geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools. Overburden deposits were set aside beside each trench and examined visually and with a metal-detector for finds retrieval.
- 4.1.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoilheaps were scanned by metal-detector as they were encountered/ created.
- 4.1.4 Field excavation techniques and recording methods are detailed in the PCA Fieldwork Induction Manual (Operations Manual I) by Joanna Taylor and Gary Brown (2009).
- 4.1.5 All features were investigated and recorded in order to properly understand the date and nature of the archaeological remains on the site and to recover sufficient finds assemblages to assess the chronological development and socio-economic character of the site over time.
- 4.1.6 Discrete features such as pits and postholes were at least 50% excavated and, where considered appropriate, 100% excavated.
- 4.1.7 Significant features such as burials, were recorded in plan but left in-situ

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pending any future open area excavation.

4.2 Recording Methodology

- 4.2.1 The limits of excavations, heights above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the locations of archaeological features and interventions were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit with RTK differential correction, giving three-dimensional accuracy of 20mm or better.
- 4.2.2 Manual plans and section drawings of archaeological features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50).
- 4.2.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.2.4 High-resolution digital photographs were taken at all stages of the evaluation process. Digital Photographs were taken of all archaeological features and deposits and black and white film photographs were taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor.
- 4.2.5 Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from the site (IfA 2001; Walker 1990; Watkinson 1981).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated. Archaeological features and deposits were sealed by the subsoil, unless otherwise stated. The evaluation identified eight archaeological features, all located in Trench 2.

5.2 Trench 1

5.2.1 Trench 1 contained no archaeological features.

TRENCH 1	Figure 2			Plate	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 18m Level of		el of Natural (m OD):		
Deposit		Context No. Average Depth (m)		h (m)	
				SW End	NE End
Concrete and made ground		(100)		0.65m	0.5m
Subsoil		(101)		0.4m	0.7m
Natural		(102)		1.05m+	1.2m+

Summary

Trench 1 was located close to the north-western boundary of the site.

The trench contained no archaeological features.

5.3 Trench 2

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 contained eight archaeological features: five ditches (one of which produced Iron Age pottery), one pit (also dating to the Iron Age), one undated posthole and one undated grave cut containing human remains.
- 5.3.2 Ditch [104] (Plate, Figure 3, Section 1) measured 0.48m wide and was 0.16m in depth. It was aligned north-east to south-west, with sides sloping steeply to a concave base, and extended beyond the limit of excavation in both directions. It contained a fill (103) of mid greyish brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.
- 5.3.3 Ditch [108] (Plate, Figure 3, Section 2) measured 2m wide and was 0.2m in depth. It was aligned east to west, with sides sloping gradually to a flat base, and extended beyond the limit of excavation in both directions. It contained a

- fill (107) of mid greyish brown sandy silt. A single fragment of animal bone was recovered. [108] was heavily truncated through the middle by a modern brick-filled drain.
- 5.3.4 Posthole [106] (Plate, Figure 3, Section 3) measured 0.34m in diameter and was 0.14m in depth. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a fill (105) of mid brownish grey sandy silt. No finds were recovered.
- 5.3.5 Ditch [110] (Plate, Figure 3, Section 4) measured 0.72m wide and was 0.06m in depth. It was aligned east to west, with sides sloping gradually to a flat base, and extended beyond the limit of excavation in both directions. It contained a fill (109) of mid greyish brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered.
- 5.3.6 Pit [112] (Plate, Figure 3, Section 5) measured at least 1.6m long, 0.9m wide and was 0.08m in depth. It had sides sloping very gradually to a flat base, and was cut by Ditches [110] and [114]. It contained a fill (111) of mid greyish brown sandy silt from which Iron Age pottery was recovered.
- 5.3.7 Ditch [114] (Plate 5, Figure 3, Section 6) measured 2.36m wide and was 0.5m in depth. It was aligned northwest-southeast, with sides sloping steeply to a flat base, and extended beyond the limit of excavation in both directions. It contained a fill (113) of mid brownish grey sandy silt. No finds were recovered.
- 5.3.8 Grave cut [116] (Plate 6, Figure 3) measured 0.4m wide and was 1m+ in length. It was aligned north to south and extended beyond the limit of excavation to the south. It contained a fill (115) of mid brownish grey sandy silt, in which an extended human burial was visible. These remains were left in situ and covered, and no finds were retrieved from (115).
- 5.3.9 Ditch [118] (Plate, Figure) measured 1.2m wide and at least 4m long. It was aligned east to west and extended beyond the north-west limit of excavation and appeared to have been cut by [114] to the east. It contained a fill (117) of mid greyish brown sandy silt. It was not excavated but Iron Age pottery

was recovered from it. It was also cut by Grave [116].

TRENCH 2	Figures 2 & 3			Plate 3 & 4	
Trench Alignment: NE-SW	Length: 50m Level of		ch Alignment: NE-SW Length: 50m Level of Natural (m OD):11.1m-11.):11.1m-11.42m
Deposit		Contex	t No.	No. Average Depth (m)	
				NW End	SW End
Tarmac and made ground		(100)		0.45m	0.4m
Subsoil		(101)		0.25m	0.4m
Natural		(102)		0.7m+	0.8m+

Summary

Trench 2 was located in the north-east of the site.

There were eight archaeological features in the trench: five ditches (one of which produced Iron Age pottery), one pit (also dating to the Iron Age), one undated posthole and one undated grave cut containing human remains.

5.4 Trench 3

5.4.1 This trench was not excavated due to site-specific considerations (see above).

5.5 Trench 4

5.5.1 The trench contained no archaeological features.

TRENCH 4	Figure 2			Plate	
Trench Alignment: E-W	Length: 30m Level of		evel of Natural (m OD):		
Deposit		Context No.		Average Depth (m)	
				E End	W End
Concrete and made-ground		(100)		0.6m	0.6m
Subsoil		(101)		0.6m	0.4m
Natural		(108)	•	0.1.2m+	1m+

Summary

Trench 4 was located in the south-west corner of the site.

There were no archaeological features in the trench.

5.6 Trench 5

5.6.1 Trench 5 contained no archaeological features.

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TRENCH 5	Figure 2			Plate 1	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 9m Level o		el of Natural (m OD):		
Deposit			Context No. Average Depth (m)		h (m)
				NW End	SE End
Concrete and made ground		(100)		0.7m	0.6m
Subsoil		(101)		0.7m	0.7m
Natural		(102)		1.4m+	1.3.m+

Summary

Trench 5 was located in the south edge of the site.

There were no archaeological features in the trench.

5.7 Trench 6

5.7.1 Trench 6 contained no archaeological features.

TRENCH 6	Figure 2			Plate 2	
Trench Alignment: NW-SE	Length: 16m Level o		6m Level of Natural (m OD):)):
Deposit		Context No. Average Depth (m)		h (m)	
				NW End	SE End
Concrete and made ground		(100)		0.7m	0.56m
Subsoil		(101)		0.2m	0.32m
Natural		(102)	•	0.9m+	0.88m+

Summary

Trench 6 was located in the south-east corner of the site.

There were no archaeological features in the trench.

6 THE FINDS

6.1 Pottery by Berni Seddon

6.1.1 A total of sixteen sherds of pottery were recovered from the evaluation. This included 6 sherds (87g) of grog-tempered ware and 1 sherd (26g) of shell-tempered pottery from the fill of a pit (111). 9 sherds of a coarse, shell-tempered pottery was found in context (117), the fill of ditch [118]. This material is consistent with local Iron Age pottery fabrics.

6.2 Animal Bone by Kevin Rielly

6.2.1 Methodology

The bone was recorded to species/taxonomic category where possible and to size class in the case of unidentifiable bones such as ribs, fragments of longbone shaft and the majority of vertebra fragments. Recording follows the established techniques whereby details of the element, species, bone portion, state of fusion, wear of the dentition, anatomical measurements and taphonomic including natural and anthropogenic modifications to the bone were registered.

6.2.2 Description of faunal assemblage

There were just two bones hand collected from this site, namely part of a cattle mandible (adjacent to the toothrow) from the fill (117) of cut [118] (in 3 pieces, fresh breaks); and part of a cattle-size rib from the fill [107) of ditch [108]. The latter piece had been butchered with chop marks on the medial (interior) surface (most probably made by a metal instrument) either end of a 4cm section of rib shaft. Both of these bones were well preserved although the mandible had undergone a minor level of root etching.

6.2.3 Conclusion and recommendations for further work

The good condition of these few fragments suggests that further excavation will undoubtedly provide more faunal material. However the quantity so far recovered is rather small and a rather major excavation may be required to provide enough bones to facilitate any discussion of faunal usage at this

occupation site. It follows from the location of these finds that further work should be concentrated in the north-eastern part of the site. In addition, the good condition of the bones also suggests the likely survival of smaller bones and thus it is recommended that a sieving programme be incorporated in any later work at this site.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation consisted of a total of 6 trenches placed to test the archaeological potential of the development area.
- 7.2 Although the site had been heavily developed there was subsoil present in most of the trial trenches and any archaeology that may have been present in them would have suffered little from modern intrusion. The lack of archaeological features identified in Trenches 1,4,5 and 6 is therefore likely to be due to an absence of activity and not modern destruction. The features found in Trench 2 were mostly sealed by the subsoil deposit.
- 7.3 The evaluation identified a concentration of archaeological remains in the north eastern corner of the development area, contained entirely within Trench 2. These remains consisted of five ditches, one pit, one posthole and one grave.
- 7.4 Ditches [108], [110] and [118] are aligned east to west and their close proximity to each other suggests that they represent separate phases of the same boundary.
- 7.5 Evidence of Late Bronze Age ditches along with postholes, gullies, and pits were found during an archaeological evaluation at the former British Sugar Works site (c.150m north-east of the development area). Another archaeological evaluation on the same site revealed evidence of Iron Age activity (Garwood 2014). The Iron Age enclosures and field system ditches found at the nearby Sugar Works together with the features identified in this evaluation suggest the presence of settlement in the immediate area, the core of which is perhaps located beyond the limit of the development area.
- 7.6 Although no datable finds were recovered from the unexcavated Grave [116] it is likely to be of Roman date. Three inhumation burials (HER 1405), probably Roman in date, were found in 1931 close to the location of Grave [116]. In addition the skeletal remains of a severely disturbed 4th century inhumation (HER 10086) were found within the southern boundary of the site in the early 1920s (Garwood 2014), suggesting the PDA may at least

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partially cover an area of Roman burials or a small cemetery site.

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8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Archaeological activity was concentrated in the north-east corner of the site.

 No archaeological remains were identified in the remainder of the site.
- 8.2 The trial trench evaluation has identified evidence for Iron Age activity, possibly relating to nearby settlement, as suggested by the presence of contemporary remains revealed in adjacent evaluations. The grave may relate to a larger complex of Roman burials.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank CgMs Consulting Ltd for commissioning the work and Rose Plant Hire for operating the excavator. PCA are also grateful to Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service for her advice and for monitoring the work. The author would like to thank Mark Hinman for managing the project and PCA's CAD department for preparing the figures.

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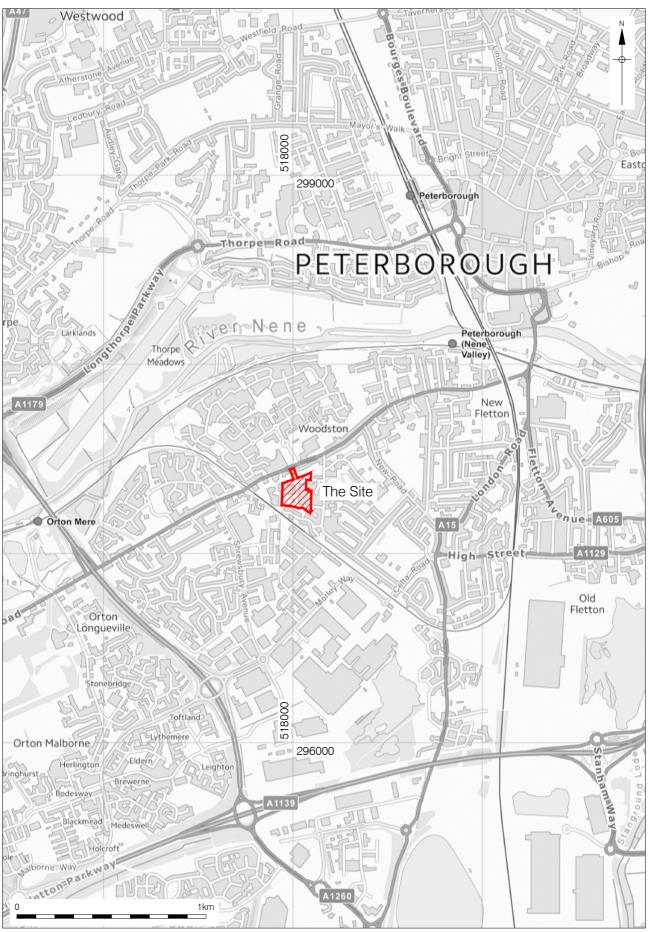
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10.2 Websites

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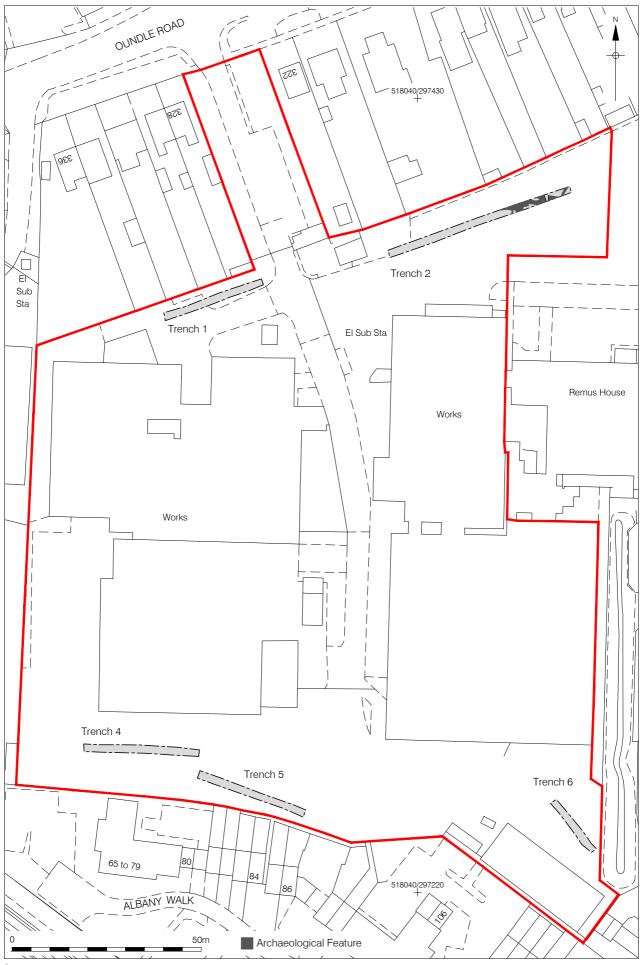
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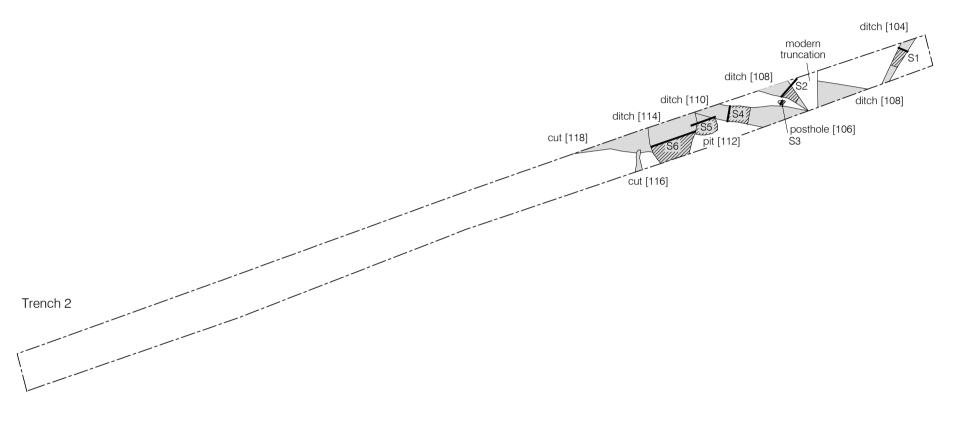


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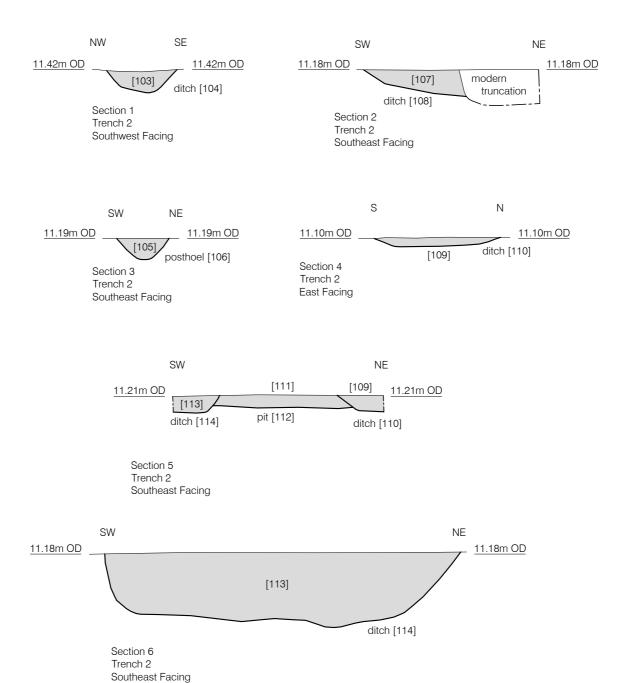
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APPENDIX 1: PLATES

Plate 1: Trench 5, view south-east.



Plate 2: Trench 6, view north-east.



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Plate 3: Trench 2, view north-east.



Plate 4: Trench 2, view south-west.



Plate 5: Ditch [114], view southeast.



Plate 6: Unexcavated Grave [116], view east.



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11 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

					Trench
Context	Cut	Туре	Category	Interpretation	Number
				Tarmac and concrete	
100	-	Layer		made ground	-
101	-	Layer	Subsoil		-
102	-	Layer	Natural		2
103	104	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [104]	2
104	104	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch	2
105	106	Fill	Posthole	Fill of [106]	2
106	106	Cut	Posthole	Posthole	2
107	108	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [108]	2
108	108	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch	2
109	110	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [110]	2
110	110	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch	2
111	112	Fill	Pit	Fill of [112]	2
112	112	Cut	Pit	Pit	2
113	114	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [114]	2
114	114	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch	2
115	116	Fill	Pit	Fill of [116]	2
116	116	Cut	Pit	Grave	2
117	118	Fill	Ditch	Fill of [118]	2
118	118	Cut	Ditch	Boundary Ditch	1

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APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM 12

OASIS ID: preconst1-210813

Project details

Project name Land at Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough: An

Archaeological Evaluation

of the project

Short description This report describes the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on land at Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough (NGR TL 1802 9731) between the 28th April and the 1st May 2015. The archaeological work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd in response to a planning condition attached to residential development. The aim of the work was to characterise the archaeological potential of the proposed development area. The evaluation identified a concentration of archaeological features in the north-east of the site. These consisted of five ditches, one of which produced Iron Age pottery, one pit also dating to the Iron Age, one undated posthole and one grave cut containing human remains likely to be Roman. These pits and ditches form part of a field system perhaps linked with similar features previously identified to the north of the development area.

Project dates Start: 28-04-2015 End: 01-05-2015

Previous/future No / Yes

work

Any

associated CORP15 - Sitecode

project reference

codes

Type of project Field evaluation

Monument type **DITCH Early Iron Age**

Monument type **DITCH Uncertain**

Monument type PIT Early Iron Age

Monument type **POSTHOLE Uncertain**

Monument type **GRAVE Uncertain**

PCA Report Number: R12092 Page 30 of 33 Significant Finds POTTERY Early Iron Age

Methods & "Targeted Trenches"

techniques

Development type Housing estate

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)

planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH PETERBOROUGH Land at

Johnstons Press, Oundle Road, Peterborough

Postcode PE2 9QR

Study area 2.30 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 1802 9731 52.5604371746 -0.258795803229 52 33 37 N 000 15 31

W Point

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Organisation

Project brief Peterborough City Council Planning Services

originator

Project design Mark Hinman

originator

Project Mark Hinman

director/manager

Project supervisor Stephen Porter

Project archives

Physical Archive Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

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recipient

Physical Archive CORP15

ID

Physical Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Digital Archive Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

recipient

Digital Archive ID CORP15

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Database","Images raster / digital

available photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery

recipient

Paper Archive ID CORP15

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context

available sheet","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey

","Unpublished Text"

Project

bibliography 1

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