

**KING'S GARAGE SITE, THE SLADE  
WITCHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

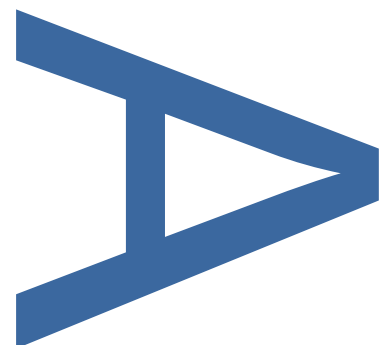
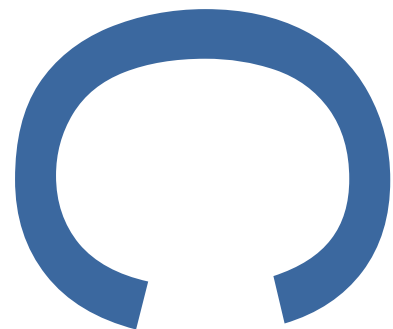
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLANNING REFERENCE: 17/00689/FUL**

**PCA REPORT NO: R13383  
OASIS REF: preconst1-325680  
SITE CODE: ECB5471**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

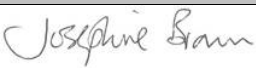

## King's Garage Site, The Slade Witcham, Cambridgeshire

### An Archaeological Evaluation

#### Quality Assurance

Project no: K5665

Report no: R13383

Stage	Name	Signature	Date
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Version	Date	Status	Checked by	Approved by
Draft A	5-9-18	Client review	S Carlyle	S Carlyle
Draft A	7-9-18	LPA review	S Carlyle	S Carlyle
Final A	24-9-18	LPA approval	P Crawley	P Crawley

## Land at King's Garage Site, The Slade, Witcham: An Archaeological Evaluation

**Local Planning Authority:** East Cambridgeshire District Council

**Planning Reference:** 17/00689/FUL

**Central National Grid Reference:** NGR TL (5)4631 (2)7984

**ECB Number:** ECB5471

**Site Code:** ECB5471

**Report No.** R13383

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**September 2018**

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Plate 3: Trench 3, looking west

Plate 4: Trench 4, looking south

Plate 5: Trench 2, possible truncated furrow [105], looking north

Plate 6: Trench 3, tree throw [107], looking north

## **ABSTRACT**

*In August 2018, Pre-Construct Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of the King's Garage site, The Slade, Witcham, Cambridgeshire. The work, which was commissioned by Buckingham & Sparrow Ltd, was carried out to meet the requirements of a condition that had been attached to planning consent for the residential development of the site by East Cambridgeshire District Council.*

*The archaeological evaluation was successful in demonstrating that despite the site's proximity to the historic medieval core of the village of Witcham, settlement did not appear to extend this far to the south. It therefore seems likely that in the medieval period the land formed part of the village's open field system, as is suggested by the presence of a shallow furrow in one of the trenches. Apart from the furrow, no other archaeological features were encountered by the evaluation.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Buckingham & Sparrow Ltd have been granted planning consent by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) for the residential development of a plot of land on the site of King's Garage, The Slade, Witcham, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL (5)4631 (2)7984; Fig. 1).

1.2 Due to the high archaeological potential of the site and in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework*, paragraph 128 and 129 (DCLG 2012), Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (CCCHET) advised ECDC that a programme of archaeological investigation should be carried out as a condition of consent (planning ref. 17/00689/FUL). Condition 10 reads as follows:

*'No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. (Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains are suitably recorded in accordance with policy ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and LP27 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.)'*

1.3 To meet the requirements of the condition and those of a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* issued by CCCHET, Buckingham & Sparrow Ltd commissioned Pre-construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation. The work was carried out in early August 2018 and consisted of the excavation four trenches with a combined length of 75 linear metres, representing approximately 4% of the accessible development area.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (PCA 2018), was to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site by trial trenching. This was achieved through the identification, sample excavation and recording of archaeological remains encountered by the evaluation and determining their location, extent, date, character and state of preservation. The results of the evaluation will assist CCCHET in determining the nature and extent of any mitigation works that may be required.

- 1.5 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by PCA (PCA 2018), which was approved by CCCHET prior to the commencement of fieldwork. In addition, it abided by the standards and guidelines set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (CIfA 2014b).
- 1.6 The project was managed in accordance with the Historic England procedural document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (HE 2015).
- 1.7 All artefactual material will be held in storage by PCA Cambridge until ownership of all such archaeological finds are transferred and the archive is deposited with the Cambridge County County's archaeological archive storage facility.

## **2 SITE BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Site location, topography and geology**

- 2.1.1 The site, which covers an area of c. 0.37ha, is located on the south side of Witcham, a village that lies approximately 7km to the west of Ely town centre. Formerly the site of King's Garage, it fronts on to The Slade, the main road leading south from the centre of the village, and consists of the garage building, a graveled forecourt and side strip, a concrete-surfaced access road to the rear of the building and an area of grass and trees.
- 2.1.2 The site is situated on relatively flat ground at c. 12m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), although in its wider topographical setting it lies on the southeast facing slope of a low hill that rises above the surrounding fens and forms the historic core of the village of Witcham.
- 2.1.3 The geology within the site consists of Jurassic mudstone of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation; no superficial deposits are mapped within the area (BGS 2018).

### **2.2 Archaeological and historical background**

- 2.2.1 There are no known designated or undesignated heritage assets within the site, although reference to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) shows that it lies within an area where archaeological remains, most likely to be of medieval date, could be present. Known archaeological sites within 300m of the site are summarised below (CHER nos. in parentheses).

#### **Prehistoric (pre-AD 43)**

- 2.2.2 There is a record of a Bronze Age socketed spearhead having been found c. 150m to the northwest of the site (05838; VCH 1938). To the east of The Slade, c. 175m to the southeast of the site, cropmarks of two enclosures may indicate the site of an Iron Age settlement (MCB23632), although a Roman date for these remains is equally likely.

#### **Roman (AD 43 to AD 410)**

- 2.2.3 There are no known Roman remains in the vicinity, although a Roman coin was found during the building of a house extension c. 60m to the east of the site (MCB16736) and a sestertius of Septimius Severus has been found in the garden of 32a High



Street (MCB16738). The cropmarks mentioned above (MCB23632), if not Iron age in date, may be the remains of a small Roman farmstead.

### **Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 to 1066)**

2.2.4 No Anglo-Saxon remains have been found within the vicinity of the site, although the village is likely to have been established during this period; the village probably derives its name from the Old English for 'place of the wych elms' (Reaney 1943). Sherds of Middle to Late Saxon St Neots-type ware, a sherd of possible Ipswich ware and other medieval pottery was found during the erection of a fence to the north of Silver Street, c. 70m north of the site (MCB17577).

### **Medieval (1066 to 1485)**

2.2.5 The historic core of the village is situated on the low hill to the north and northeast of the site, that in past times would have stood out prominently above the surrounding marshland and affording protection from flooding. The manor of Witcham formed part of the demesne of the church of Ely, to which it had been granted long before the Domesday Survey of 1087 (BHO 2018). In 1066 it had been valued at £7, but by 1086 it was worth £5, this reduction in value possibly being due to the local turmoil caused by Hereward's armed resistance to Norman rule in the early 1070s. The manor remained with the convent after the formation of the see in 1109.

2.2.6 The oldest building in Witcham is the Church of St. Martin, which dates from the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (CB14993). The earliest part of the fabric is the chancel, and the tower is of approximately the same date. The aisles were added in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the porch was added, the chancel arch rebuilt, and new windows inserted in the lateral walls of the chancel. In the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the west side of the tower was partly rebuilt in brick. The church escaped Victorian restoration and has been carefully repaired in recent years.

2.2.7 The site of the former manor house is located on the southeast corner of the junction between The Slade and High Street (MCB16739), approximately 50m to the north of the site. It was demolished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although the possible remains of the farm yard and barn survive; masonry that may have formed the foundations of the manor house have been uncovered in the garden of 2 High Street.

2.2.8 In 2015, an evaluation at the west end of Silver Street, c. 120m to the northwest of

the site, revealed medieval remains consisting of a series of parallel ditches with associated pits and a gully (MCB16308; AS 2005). Pottery from these features largely consisted of locally produced Ely ware. Evidence for early post-medieval activity was also identified.

2.2.9 A second stage of evaluation of the same site revealed a medieval ditch and two pits in the southwest part of the site and three undated postholes and a further ditch were considered to be of a similar date. The presence of domestic wares and waste material from these features indicated medieval occupation in the vicinity. No early post-medieval features were encountered, suggesting a decline in activity on the site in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, tentatively linked to the known contraction of Witcham in the later medieval period. Other remains included three areas of cobbled surface and boundary ditches, all dating to the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

2.2.10 Subsequent excavation of the above site found evidence of property boundaries dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century through to recent times, with evidence of a reorganisation of property divisions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (AS 2006). Finds and features were consistent with back yard activity at the site from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with a possible slight fall-off in activity in the early post-medieval period. The animal bone recovered from the site included the remains of three dogs dated to the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, including the partial skeleton of a very large dog, similar in size and form to a Great Dane or wolfhound.

2.2.11 In the vicinity of the site, sherds of medieval pottery were found during the construction of a house extension c. 60m to the east of the site (MCB16736).

2.2.12 Well-preserved earthworks in a pasture field at the east end of High Street are the remains of medieval house platforms, a drove way and village pond (09500). The earthworks of ridge and furrow ploughing survive in fields c. 65m to the east (MCB16737), 220m to the southeast (09271) and 170m to the northwest (MCB23631) of the site.

#### **Post-medieval and modern (1485 to present)**

2.2.13 The gardens of Witcham Hall date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and are screened from the road by a high brick wall with an 18<sup>th</sup>-century wrought-iron gate flanked by brick piers surmounted with stone urns (MCB19199). The pathway has topiary yews clipped to

represent salt and pepper pots. Herbaceous borders are located to the north and west of the Hall, and a Victorian earth closet has been retained in one corner of the garden. An octagonal thatched summerhouse survives dwarfed by a large Scots pine tree.

- 2.2.14 The site of a post-medieval dovecote is recorded 25m to the northeast of the site, in a garden to the east of The Slade (10001).
- 2.2.15 Other entries in the HER relating to the post-medieval and modern periods are for the sites of buildings identified in Silver Street or High Street on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century maps or still extant buildings. In Silver Street, immediately to the north of the site, these include: the site of a blacksmith's workshop (MCB23626); Park Hall Farm (MCB23625); the White Horse public house (MCB23627); and a Methodist church (CB14994). To the east, along High Street, are: the former school building (MCB23629); fire engine station (MCB23606); and the site of Witcham House (MCB23630).

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 General**

3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised three 2m x 20m and one 2m x 15m trial trenches, totalling 75m. These were positioned in accessible parts of the site to provide a representative sample of the development area.

#### **3.2 Excavation methodology**

3.2.1 Prior to machine excavation, the location of each trench was scanned with a CAT (Cable Avoidance Tool) to check for services.

3.2.2 The trenches were excavated using a 12 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator (Plate 2). Topsoil and subsoil was removed in spits down to the level of the undisturbed geological deposits where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded.

3.2.3 Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel and hoe as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.

#### **3.3 Recording and finds recovery**

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 All hand-excavation, investigation and recording was carried out in accordance with PCA's *Operations Manual I: Fieldwork Induction Manual* (Taylor and Brown 2009). Linear features were investigated by means of one metre slots within the trenches. Where stratigraphic relationships between features could not be discerned in plan, relationship slots were also excavated and these were recorded as part of the GPS survey and noted on the relevant context sheets. Discrete features were half-sectioned, photographed and recorded by a cross-section scaled drawing at an appropriate scale (either 1:10 or 1:20).

3.3.3 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector periodically. Only objects of modern date were found and were not retained for accession.

3.3.4 Appropriate photographs were taken of the trenches and the archaeological remains encountered by the evaluation, supported by general photographs of the site, its setting and working shots. The primary photographic record was compiled in 35mm black and white format. This was supplemented by digital format photographs (minimum 10 megapixels).

### **3.4 Environmental sampling**

3.4.1 Environmental sampling was carried out in accordance with *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (EH 2011). No deposits were encountered that were suitable for environmental sampling.

## 4 QUANTIFICATION OF ARCHIVE

### Paper Archive

Context register sheets	1
Context sheets	7
Section register sheets	1
Sections at 1:10 & 1:20	4
Trench record sheets	4
Photo register sheets	1

### Digital Archive

Digital photos	30
GPS survey files	1
Digital plans	1
Access database	1

### Physical Archive

[None]

## 5 EVALUATION RESULTS

### Introduction

5.1 The trenches are described below in numerical order, with technical data tabulated (Fig. 2; Appendices 2 and 3). Across the site, the geological substrate (103) was a mixture of blue clay and sandy gravels. It was overlain by c. 0.30m thick brownish grey silty-clay subsoil (102) which in turn was overlain by a c. 0.30m thick topsoil (101).

### Trench 1

5.2 Trench 1 did not contain any archaeological finds or features. The geological substrate was recorded at c. 0.60m below ground level (bgl).

### Trench 2

5.3 Trench 2 contained a 0.08m deep, 0.56m wide linear feature [105]. It may have been the base of an agricultural furrow or a siltier section of the natural ground. It contained no finds. The geological substrate (103) was recorded at c. 0.70m bgl.

### Trench 3

5.4 Trench 3 contained an irregular 0.90m wide by 0.07m deep feature that represents the disturbance of the geological substrate by tree root activity [107]. No finds were recovered from this feature. The geological substrate was recorded at a depth of 0.60m bgl.

### Trench 4

5.5 Trench 4 did not contain any archaeological finds or features. The topsoil was overlain in this trench by made-ground for a tarmac surface. The grey colour and odour of the trench deposits suggests they were contaminated with hydrocarbons. The geological substrate was recorded at a depth of 0.70m bgl.

## **6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation was successful in demonstrating that despite the site's proximity to the historic medieval core of the village of Witcham, settlement did not appear to extend this far to the south. It therefore seems likely that in the medieval period the land formed part of the village's open field system, as is suggested by the presence of a shallow furrow in Trench 2.
- 6.2 Other than a feature formed by tree roots in Trench 3 and the above-mentioned furrow, no other archaeological features were encountered in the trial trenches.



## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1 PCA would like to thank Buckingham & Sparrow Ltd for commissioning and funding the work and Kerry Hopper and Kasia Gdaniec of CCCHET for providing advice on the trenching strategy and for monitoring the work on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council. The fieldwork was directed by A G Pullen, assisted by Gareth Morgan and Cleve Roberts. The report was prepared by A G Pullen and the figures were produced by Rosie Scales. The project was managed by Simon Carlyle.

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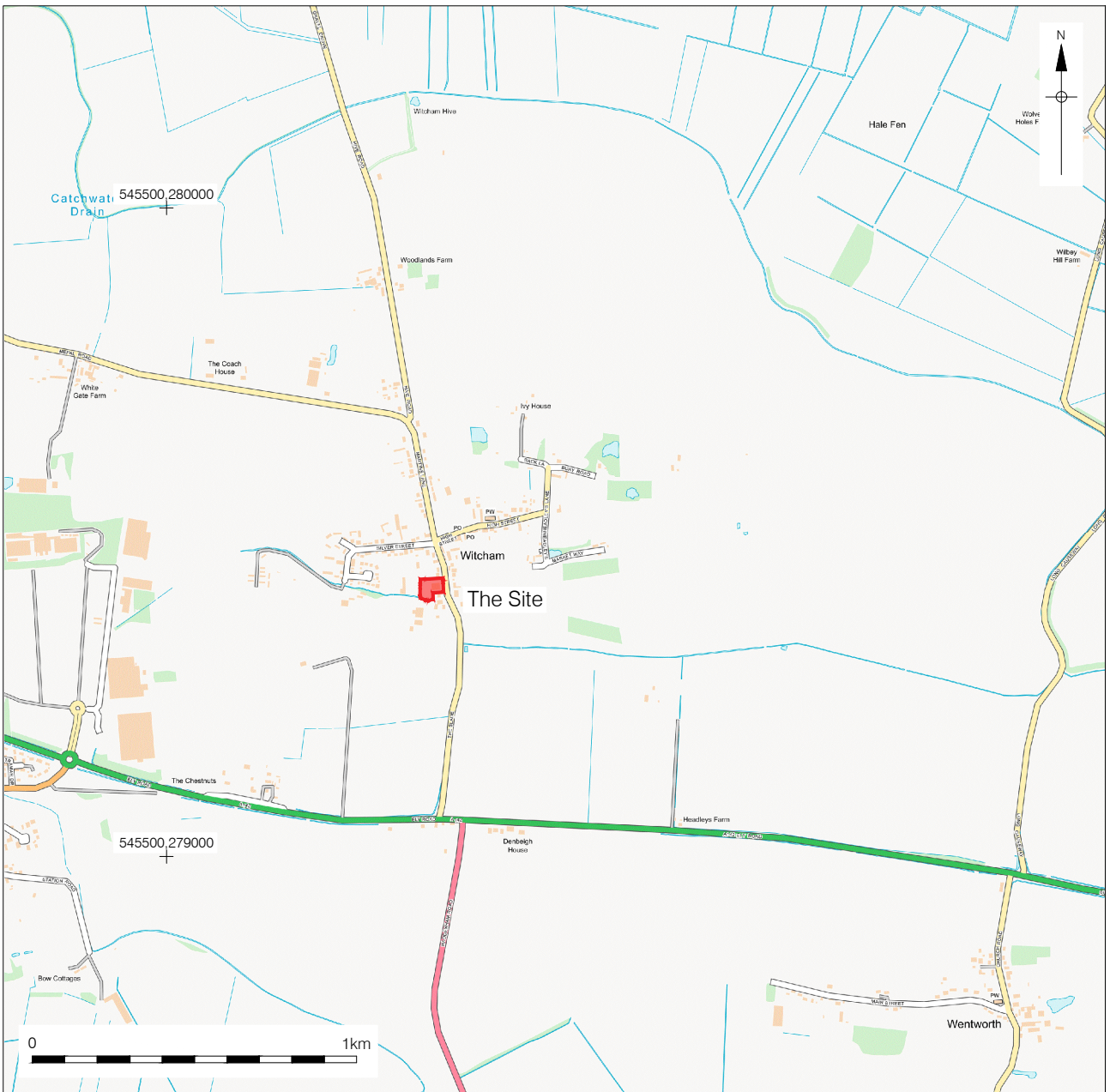
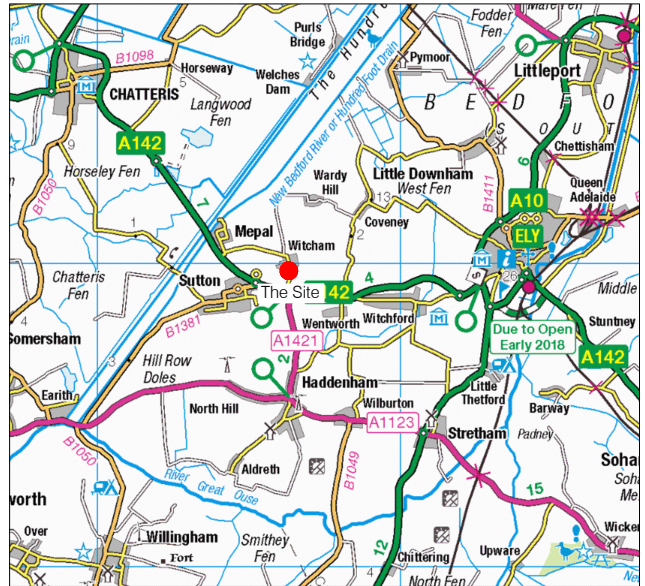
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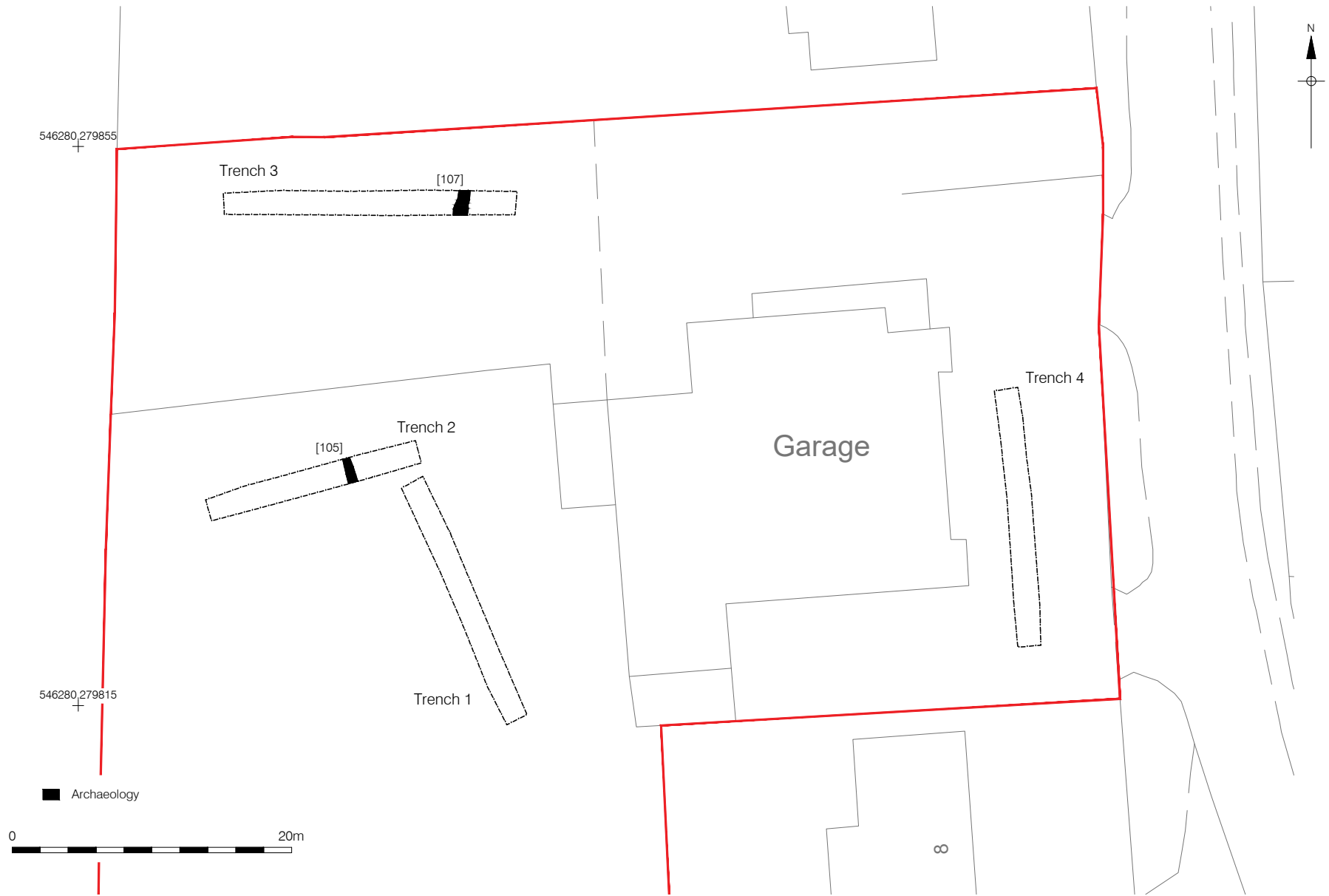


Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:400 at A4



## PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking west





Plate 3: Trench 3, looking west



Plate 4: Trench 4, looking south





Plate 5: Trench 2, possible truncated furrow [105], looking north



Plate 6: Trench 3, tree throw [107], looking north



## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Trench	Type	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
101		1-4	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.3	mid-brown, silty clay sand.
102		1-4	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.3	yellowish brown silty clay-sand
103		1-4	Layer	Natural	-	-	-	mixed blue clay with sand and gravel patches
104	105	2	Fill	Furrow	2	0.56	0.08	mid-brownish grey silty-clay
105	105	2	Cut	Furrow	2	0.56	0.08	shallow, concave sides
106	107	3	Fill	Tree throw	2	0.98	0.07	greyish brown clay-silt
107	107	3	Cut	Tree throw	2	0.98	0.07	shallow, irregular sides

**APPENDIX 2: TRENCH TABLE**

Trench	Alignment	Length (m)	Max depth (m)	Level of geology (mOD)	End A			End B		
					Topsoil thickness (m)	Subsoil thickness (m)	Geology depth (m)	Topsoil thickness (m)	Subsoil thickness (m)	Geology depth (m)
1	NW-SE	20	0.7	11.27	0.29	0.38	0.67	0.28	0.38	0.66
2	NE-SW	15	0.8	11.33	0.3	0.42	0.72	0.37	0.3	0.67
3	E-W	20	0.7	11.48	0.3	0.43	0.73	0.33	0.22	0.52
4	N-S	20	0.8	11.1	0.4	0.27	0.67	0.32	0.32	0.74

### **APPENDIX 3: 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: preconst1-325680**

### Project details

Project name	Kings Garage, Witcham Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	A programme of 75m of trial trenching was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology. No significant finds or features were identified during the evaluation. The results of this work indicate that the proposed development will have no impact on buried heritage assets.
Project dates	Start: 06-07-2018 End: 07-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5471 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	TREE THROW Uncertain
Monument type	FURROW Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE WITCHAM King's Garage Site, Witcham
Postcode	CB6
Study area	0.37 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 54631 27984 51.928397851562 0.249206897662 51 55 42 N 000 14 57 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 11.1m Max: 11.3m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA Central
Project brief originator	CCC Historic Environment Team
Project design originator	PCA Central
Project director/manager	Simon Carlyle
Project supervisor	Alexander Pullen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Buckingham & Sparrow Ltd

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archive Facility
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Archive Facility
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at King's Garage Site, The Slade, Witcham, Cambridgeshire: an archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	A G Pullen
Date	2018
Place of issue or publication	Pampisford
Description	A4 Grey Literature Report
Entered by	Alexander Pullen (agpullen@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	13 August 2018

# OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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