



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Windsor House

Heath Terrace

Towcester

Northamptonshire



Quality Check

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CONTENTS

Summary	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	8
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	9
4. Results.....	13
5. Conclusions.....	17
6. Acknowledgements.....	18
7. Archive.....	19
8. References.....	20

Appendices:

1. List of Photographs	22
2. Finds Concordance.....	23
3. Specialist Report.....	24
4. OASIS and Site Data.....	25

Figures:

1. General location	5
2. Site location.....	6
3. Development plan.....	7
4. HER data plan	12
5. Archaeology plan and stratigraphy section	16

Plates:

1. Ground reduction, looking NW	14
2. Stratigraphy of ground reduction, looking NW	14
3. Disarticulated human bone in situ, looking SSW.....	15
4. Stone foundation [2], looking SSE.....	15



Summary

In August 2018 KDK Archaeology undertook an Observation and Recording Project at Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester, Northamptonshire during minimal ground reduction to the rear garden of the property. The works revealed that the stratigraphy consisted of made-ground, and exposed the remains of a post-medieval stone foundation, a modern concrete foundation and gas pipe, and finds that included a fragment of disarticulated human bone and a fragment of Romano-British Grey Sandy Ware. Further human remains have been found previously on the site, suggesting that an undated cemetery exists in the vicinity of the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 In August 2018 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester, Northamptonshire. The project was commissioned by Systems Contracts UK, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Dodd & Barclay-Jones 2018), and approved by Northamptonshire County Archaeology Team (NCAT), Archaeological Advisor (AA) to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), South Northamptonshire Council. The relevant planning application reference is S/2017/2450/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as Condition 3 of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

The site is located within the town and civil parish of Towcester, in the administrative district of South Northamptonshire. It lies at National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 469106 248846 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development area is situated in a small housing development southwest of Watling Street known as Heath Terrace and is bounded to the north and west by dwellings, to the east by private gardens and a barn to the south (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The geology of the site comprises sedimentary bedrock from the Whitby Mudstone Formation, which is overlain by superficial deposits of Diamicton, from the Oadby Member (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site lies at a height of approximately 89.9m AOD.

Development

The development involved replacing the current workshop with single storey side extension and new front porch and ground reduction to the rear garden (Fig. 3).

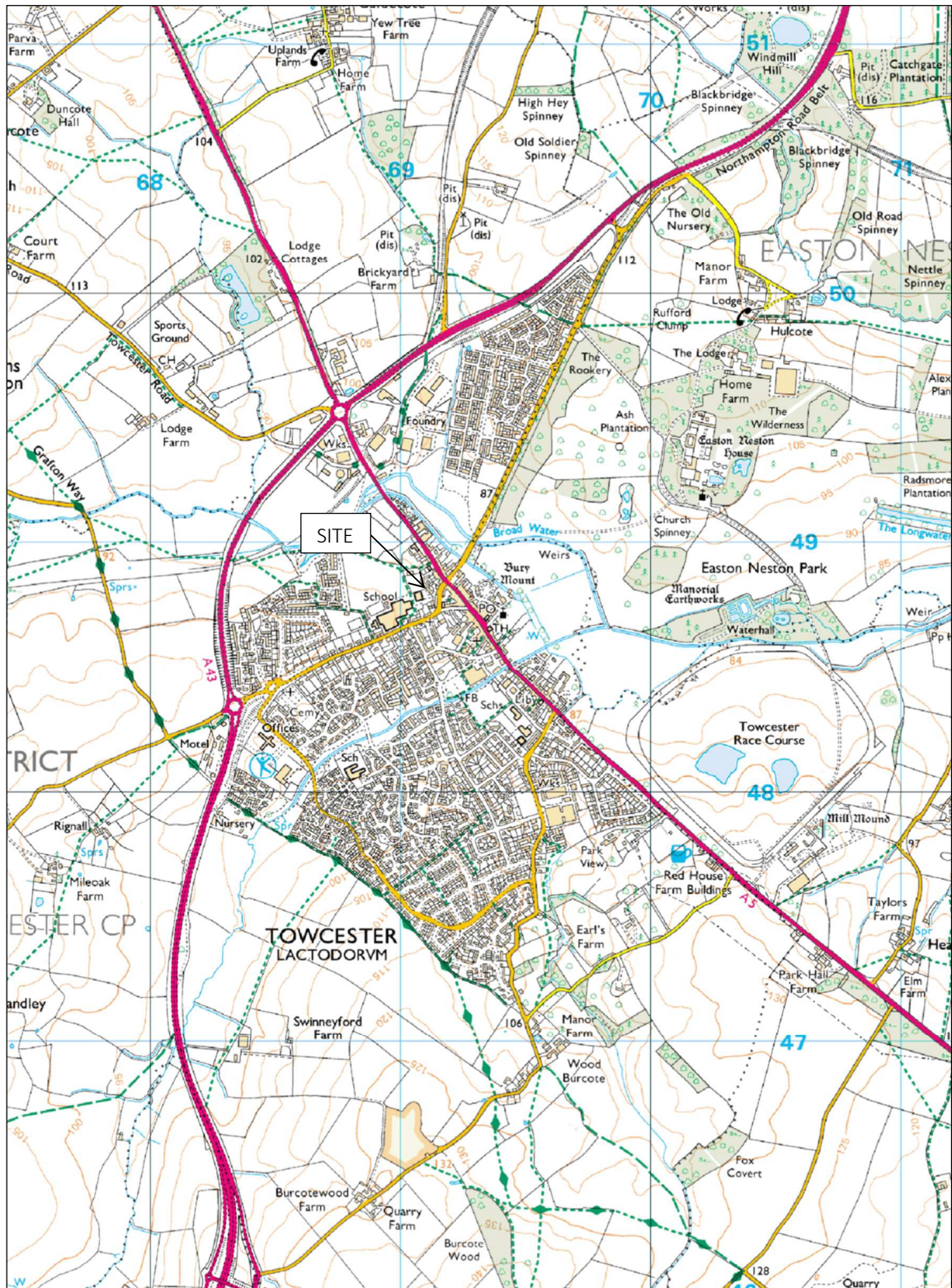


Figure 1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)



Figure 2: Site layout (scale 1:1,250)

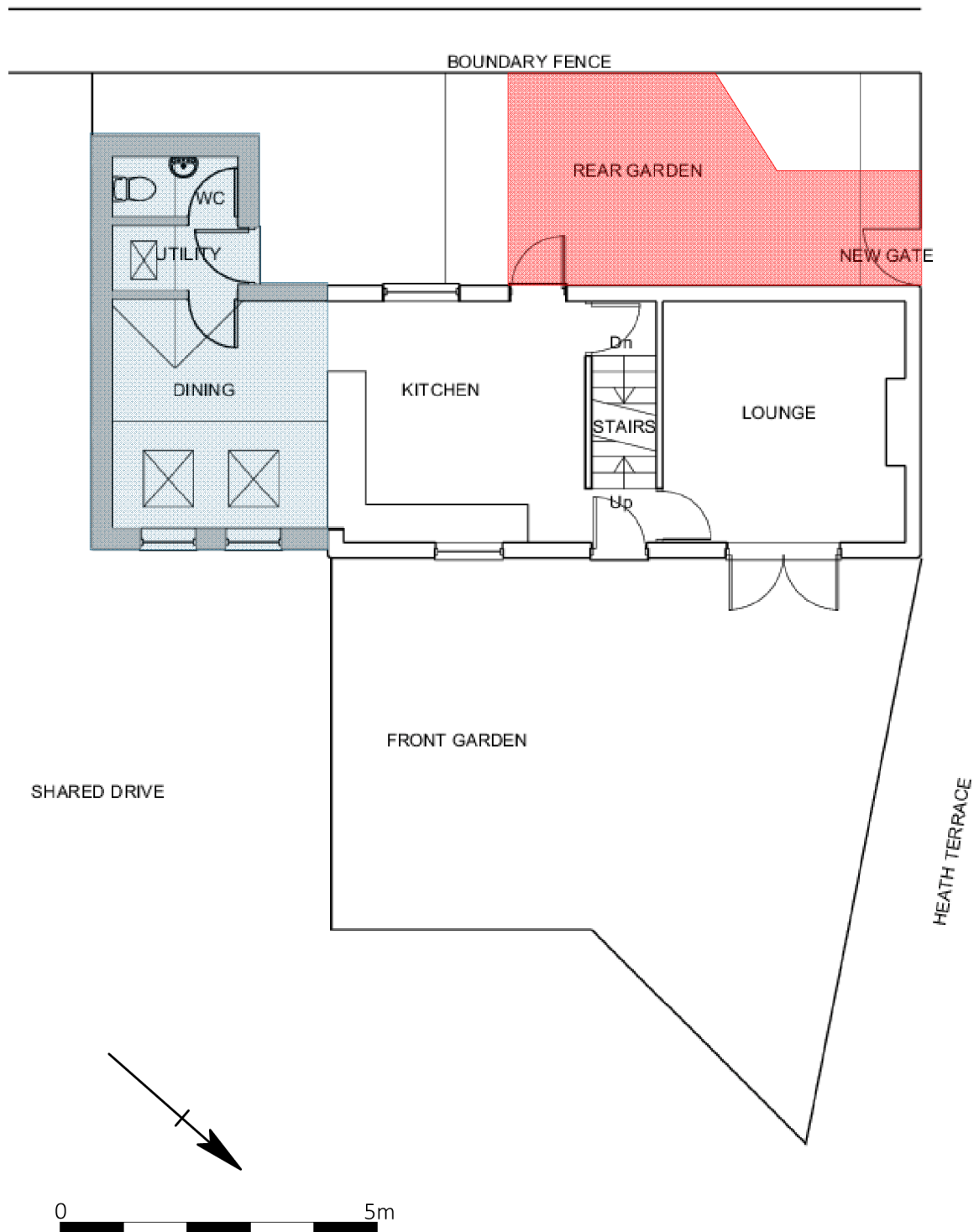


Figure 3: Development plan; the area that required monitoring is highlighted in red (scale 1:100)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Dodd & Barclay-Jones 2018) were:

- To establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation within the development area
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape
- To recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

2.2 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the brief, the methods used were as follows:

As the extension was built off existing foundations, this scheme of work only applied to the ancillary works in the garden. The methods used were as follows:

- All the ancillary works in the garden were excavated under constant and continuous archaeological supervision (Fig. 3).

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The design brief
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (CIfA 2014)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (HE 2015, EH 2008)



3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The site lies within the area of historic settlement of both medieval Towcester (MNN 3660) and the Roman town of Lactodorum (MNN 3659). The name of Towcester has developed from earlier forms – in the early 10th century it was called *Tofeceaster* – ‘Tofe’ being an Old English river name meaning ‘slow’ - and by 1086 it was called *Tovecestre*, meaning ‘Roman fort on the River Tove’ (Mills 1991: 333). The development area is located within the Conservation Area in the town.

This section has been compiled with information from Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (the search radius being 250m around the site), reliable Internet sources, and KDK’s own library.

3.2 ***Prehistoric*** (before 600BC)

There is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the study area, but finds from the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Mesolithic and Bronze Ages suggest that human occupation began quite early in the area around Towcester, although it was not until the Iron Age that evidence of significant settlement appears.

3.3 ***Iron Age*** (600BC-AD43)

Evidence of Iron Age activity in the area around the development site includes a Middle Iron Age farmstead (MNN 28419), which lies to the south-east of the site, and a roundhouse (MNN 115837) to the south of the site. There have also been isolated finds in the area, including unstratified Iron Age bronze coins (MNN 19049) and a mount from a scabbard chape (MNN 115842).

3.4 ***Roman*** (AD43-c.450)

This Iron Age activity may have formed the basis for the Roman town of *Lactodurum*, a major Roman settlement considered one of the largest and most significant small towns in the region (Taylor *et.al.* 2002:7), as it may have been a significant local or regional centre during the Roman period. The settlement was located on a spur of land surrounded on three sides by the marshy floodplain of the River Tove. It grew up around the junction of two major Roman roads- Watling Street (MNN 3501) (the modern A5) and the road to Alchester (MNN 8515) (www.british-history.ac.uk). By the later part of the 1st century AD the core of the town had been established, and included several large religious buildings (including a possible temple – MNN 32148) and several other substantial structures. The area around Watling Street was enclosed in the later part of the 2nd century AD by a large earthen rampart and ditch, for defensive purposes. Traces of these are still known today (including MNN 19099, MNN 19131, MNN 34386, MNN 34864 and MNN 31441). The Roman defence earthwork is a Scheduled Monument (SM 112), to the west and north-west of the development site.

Roman cemeteries were located outside the town walls, and one is known to have existed to the south of the site (MNN 134670). Undated burials, thought to be possibly Roman (MNN 8522) have also been discovered to the south-west of the site. Cremation remains (MNN 141473) have also been found close to the site (although outside of the search radius) at Sponne School.



Roman finds, including a centurion's badge (MNN 36921), are common along Watling Street, to the east and north-east of the development area, and also along Brackley Road to the south. Unstratified finds of items such as stone capitals (i.e. MNN 19050), coins (i.e. MNN 19059) and pottery (i.e. MNN 19089) are also common in the area.

Archaeological investigations at Nelson's Yard (ENN 100500, ENN 18241), in the immediate vicinity of the development site, revealed a Romano-British embankment (MNN 34869) which was covered with modern soil deposits, as well as sections of Roman defences (MNN 34868).

3.5 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

There is no significant evidence for occupation in Towcester during the early Saxon period, as the only finds from this period have been some pottery sherds, and some unstratified remains. Evidence for middle and later Saxon activity increases markedly, and by the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Towcester was a 7½ hide royal estate and the head of a Hundred (Williams & Martin 1992: 590). It was one of two royal estate centres in the region (Taylor *et.al.* 2002: 8), and it is thought that the two centres may have come from the splitting of one estate from Late Saxon (and possibly earlier) times (*ibid.*). The location of the royal manor in Towcester is still under debate, but it is possible that the medieval motte and bailey (a scheduled monument known as Bury Mount - SM 13623; MNN 14883), which lies to the east of the development area, may have been constructed on the site (www.british-history.ac.uk).

A possible Late Saxon building was discovered to the south of the development site (MNN 19144), and there are also traces of Late Saxon defences (MNN 19152, MNN 19153, MNN 26579), from when Edward the Elder ordered the defences to be strengthened against the Danes in the 10th century. Otherwise there is little evidence of note from this period within the search area.

3.6 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

Owing to its location on Watling Street, the town maintained a level of commercial importance through the medieval period, and in the 14th century it had both a market and a fair (www.british-history.ac.uk). The market was first recorded in 1220, but existed prior to that, although it is likely it didn't come into existence until after 1086 (Taylor *et.al.* 2002: 8).

There are traces of medieval defences within the study area, including a ditch (MNN 8530) above two Roman ditches (although the dating isn't certain), drainage ditches (MNN 19154) and defences (MNN 19157, MNN 19166). The medieval manor site (MNN 34860) lies to the east of the development site, where the main (and possibly only) bailey is thought to lie between Bury Mount and the church; this contained the manorial centre throughout the medieval period. There was also a moat (MNN 115881), although this was backfilled.

3.7 **Post-Medieval** (1500-1900)

Despite the recession in the 14th century, Towcester managed to remain successful as a commercial centre, and by post-medieval times it was a small but flourishing town (Taylor *et.al.* 2002: 9). A number of industries are known from this period, including shoe- and boot-making, brewing and the wool industry. Shoe-making was of great economic importance to the town, especially in the 19th century, although there are few surviving remains. The wool industry was also important, and two wool warehouses have been identified in the town. Brewing was the other major industry, and Towcester was the home of the Phipps Brewery,



which was established in 1801 – although it is thought that there may have been many small-scale brewers operating from the outbuildings of public houses and inns (Taylor *et.al.* 2002: 61-62).

The town was fortified again in 1643 when Prince Rupert garrisoned it to use as a base of operations against the Parliamentarians of Northampton (www.british-history.ac.uk) and these defences are still visible in the town (*i.e.* MNN 13738, MNN 115974, MNN 141044) along with a gun emplacement that was placed on Bury Mount (MNN 14883) during the Civil War and a moat around the town (MNN 115975), which was repurposed from a Roman ditch.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, Towcester was an important staging post on the London-Holyhead road (Taylor *et.al.* 2002: 9). A number of coaching inns (*i.e.* MNN 101301, MNN 16751, MNN 101322) were established along Watling Street to deal with the passing trade (*ibid.*); however, this died down when the railways began to replace road travel, and Towcester started to lose a large part of its trade (www.british-history.ac.uk).

Following the demise of the coaching trade, Towcester experienced economic decline despite its market. Various attempts to attract visitors to the town included the opening of a public ornamental garden on Bury Mount (MNN 19161) and the opening of the Towcester Racecourse in 1928, which grew out of an event founded by Elizabeth, Empress of Austria in 1876 (<http://www.towcester-racecourse.co.uk/history.php>).

3.8 **Modern** (1900-present)

Industry in the town has gradually declined, and there are now few (if any) surviving remains from the shoe-making industry. The final wool warehouse was still in use in the 1930s, although the industry had declined severely, but has since been demolished. The Phipps Brewery opened a second brewery in Northampton in 1817, and all production was moved there in 1901 after a fire destroyed the brewery in Towcester. The racecourse was established in its present form in 1928, and has become a major focus for social and sporting events within the area.

There are a number of notable modern buildings in the vicinity of the site, including Sponne School to the west (MNN 101342) and the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (MNN 101349) on Brackley road to the south of the site, but no notable archaeology.

3.9 **Site Specific**

An archaeological watching brief at Windsor House in 2003 (ENN 103684) was undertaken during the construction of a new building, but no archaeological remains or features were noted. However, in 1993, a small amount of undated human bone was found in the footings of a new garage (ENN 12976). The following year, during the erection of a picket fence, some fragments of a human skull and mandible were uncovered, but not retained; a single piece of Roman period Nene Valley Colour Coat ware was also recovered (ENN 108891). There is also a report of some human bones being dug up during construction work at the rear of the house in 1998 (ENN 18205), although this does not appear to have been substantiated. These remains are thought to suggest the possibility of an undated cemetery in the vicinity.



Figure 4: HER data plan, site marked with red star (scale 1:6000)



4 Results

Introduction

A single site visit was made to monitor the ground reduction of the rear garden to Windsor House. A JCB 8014 CTS 1.5-ton machine was used, fitted with a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket.

See context table below for full descriptions of all contexts, and Appendix 3 for the specialist report for pottery and cbm (ceramic building material).

Description

An area that measured 16.68 sq. m was reduced up to 300mm. The overburden was made-ground (1) consisting of mid-dark brown, soft/loose silty clay with moderate fragments of sub-angular stones <50mm and CBM <100mm (ceramic building material). This made-ground contained mixed concentrations of building debris in places.

A number of finds were recovered from this deposit. To the southwest of the area a fragment of disarticulated human bone deriving from the mid shaft of an adult right femur was found 0.14m BGL (below ground level). This bone was returned to the lab, where it was examined by KDK Archaeology's human osteology specialist. Limited information can be obtained from a disarticulated single fragment of bone but the bone did appear fairly robust, which may suggest that it derived from a male. No pathology was present and measurements were taken, following guidelines set out by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994: 83):

Femur: anterior-posterior (sagittal) midshaft diameter = 36.28mm

Femur: medial-lateral (transverse) midshaft diameter = 30.32mm

Femur: midshaft circumference = 105mm

A single sherd of Romano-British Grey Sandy Ware, along with a fragment of animal bone and a 1959 half penny coin were also recovered (Fig. 5; Plates 1-3).

The ground reduction also exposed the remains of a stone foundation [2] found 0.25m BGL and described as follows:

Stone Foundation [2] was found at the southeast end of the area, orientated northwest to southeast, and consisting of a single irregular course of roughly worked oolitic limestone, possibly from the Weldon quarry (pers comm. Karin Kaye 2018). Fragments of brick and tile were also found amongst the stone. The stones measured up to 0.28m in length, 0.25m in width and 0.1m in depth, with no bonding material. Two fragments of tile were collected from the foundation for dating purposes. These are thought to be of late medieval to early post-medieval date (Fig. 5; Plate 4).

A modern concrete wall foundation was also exposed along the width of the area, orientated west southwest to east northeast. Adjacent to this wall a gas pipe was also exposed (Fig. 5; Plate 1).

Context Table

<i>Ctxt no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Deposit	D: >0.3m	Made-ground: mid-dark brown, soft/loose silty clay with moderate fragments of sub-angular stones <50mm and CBM <100mm.



<i>Ctxt no.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dimensions (max)</i>	<i>Description</i>
2	Structure	W: 1.4m L: >0.9m D: 0.1m	Stone foundations: constructed of a single irregular course of roughly finished limestone pieces with tile and brick found amongst the stones. Stone was up to 0.28m in length, 0.25m in width and 0.1m in depth, with no bonding material used.



Plate 1: Ground reduction, looking NW
(1m scale)



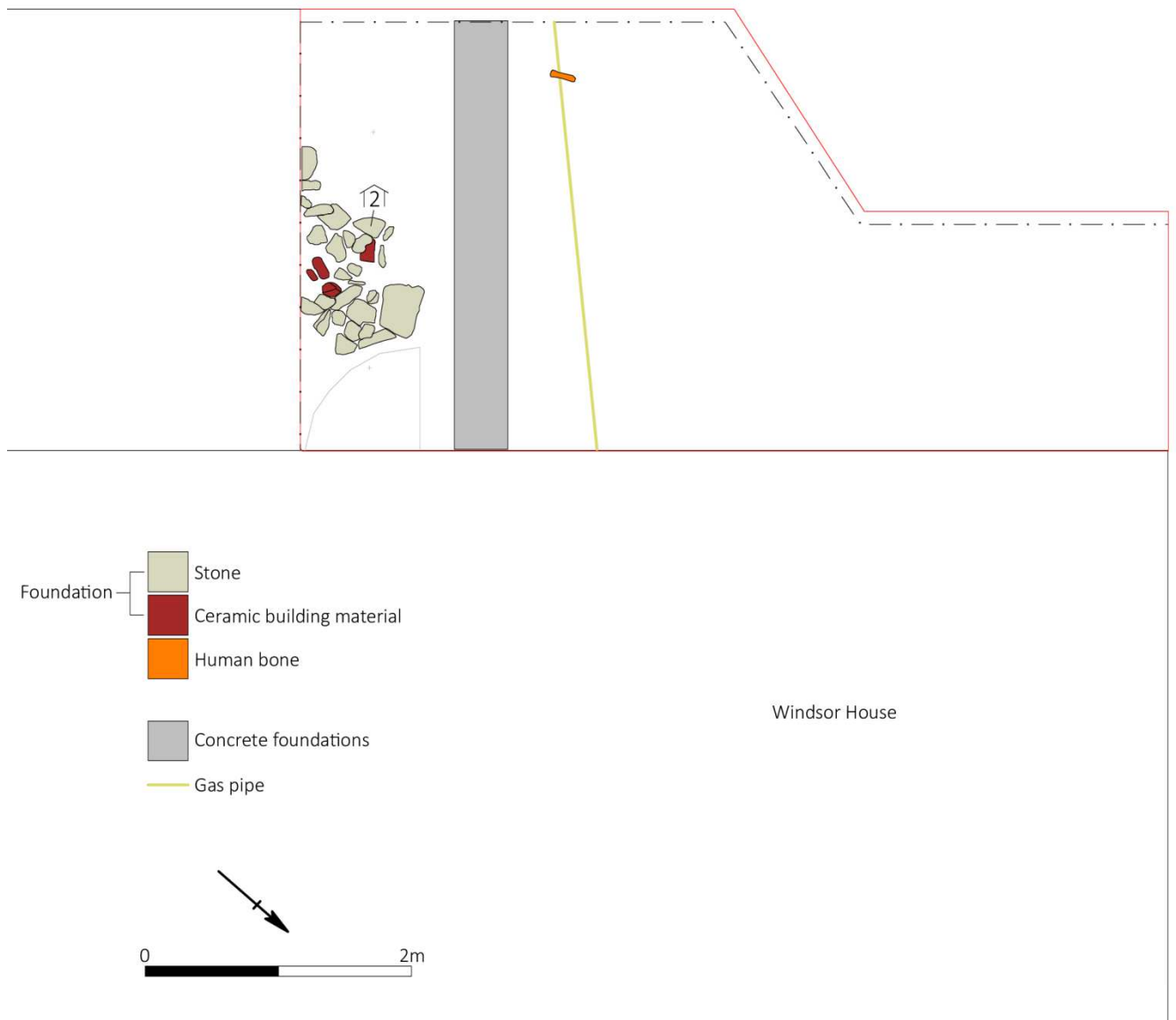
Plate 2: Stratigraphy of ground reduction, looking NW (0.5m scale)



Plate 3: Disarticulated human bone in situ, looking SSW (0.2m scale)



Plate 4: Stone foundation [2], looking SSE (1m scale)



General Stratigraphy

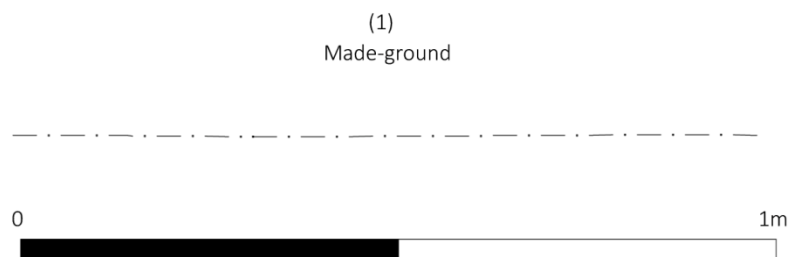


Figure 5: Archaeology plan and stratigraphy section (plan 1:50 & section 1:10 scale)



5 Conclusions

The works revealed an undated disarticulated human bone fragment, a fragment of residual Romano-British pottery, a post-medieval stone foundation and a modern concrete foundation.

The disarticulated human bone can be linked to previous findings on the site, including a small amount of human remains found in the footings of the new garage (ENN 12976), and some fragments of human skull and mandible found during the erection of a picket fence in 1994 (ENN 108891). There are also reports of human bone being found during construction work at the rear of the house in 1998 (ENN 18205). Such evidence suggests that an undated cemetery exists in the vicinity of the site.

The finding of a residual sherd of Romano-British Grey Sandy Ware on the site is also not wholly unexpected, given the fact that the site is situated within the Roman town of Lactodorum. It is also in close proximity to the Roman road, Watling Street, and Roman defences located at Nelsons Yard, to the SW of the site.

It is difficult to fully ascertain the origin of the stone foundation, due to the small size of the remains. It may represent the foundations to a wall. The tile recovered from the foundation was deemed to be of late medieval to early post-medieval date. The concrete foundation may also be associated with a boundary wall. Unfortunately, when referring to early mapping of the site, neither of the foundations observed are shown.

The works have shown, that despite the limited groundworks carried out, archaeological remains still prevail on the site, and of particular importance is the likelihood of there being a cemetery within the site's vicinity.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to System Contracts UK for commissioning this report on behalf of Mr & Mrs Airle. Thanks, are also due to Northamptonshire Historic Record Office for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents; and to Liz Mordue of Northamptonshire County Archaeology Team for monitoring the project.

The site ground workers are also duly acknowledged for their full co-operation throughout the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was carried out by Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA. The report was written by Carina Summerfield-Hill, and edited by Dr Ellen Shlasko.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs
7. Specialist reports
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Northamptonshire Archaeology Resource Centre (NARC) – Event No: ENN109169.

Currently NARC is not receiving archaeological material, until they are ready to accept archives KDK will provide temporary storage of archive material, which will be archived in accordance with the guidelines set out by NARC (2014) along with further guidelines set out by Museums and Galleries Commission (1992) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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British History Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol4/pp149-160>

Towcester Racecourse: <http://www.towcester-racecourse.co.uk/history.php>

Specialist Report – Pottery and Ceramic Building Material

Timby J., 2008 Roman Pottery in J. Brown and I. Soden, Bury Mount: A Norman Motte and Bailey Castle in Towcester *Northamptonshire Archaeology* **35**, 152-3



Appendix 1: Photograph List

Digital	View	Subject
1	SSE	Stone foundations [2]
2	SE	Frag of Human femur in situ
3	SW	Frag of Human femur in situ
4	N	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
5	WNW	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
6	NW	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
7	NW	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
8	SE	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
9	SSE	General shot of ground reduction to rear garden
10	WSW	Ground reduction to rear garden, stratigraphy
11	NW	Ground reduction to rear garden, stratigraphy



Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Context		Pottery		Animal Bone		CBM		Human Bone		Other	
No	Type	No.	Gms	No.	Gms	No.	Gms	No.	Gms	No.	Gms
1	Deposit	1	6	1	7			1	155	1959 Half Penny Coin x 1	6
2	Structure					2	80				
TOTAL		1	6	1	7	2	80	1	155		6

Not retained



Appendix 3: Specialist Report

Pottery and CBM from Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester, Northamptonshire (Site 388/TWH)

Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery weighing 5g occurred in context 1. It is a fragment of Romano-British Grey Sandy Ware, a very common find at sites of the period in the town (eg. Timby 2008, Table 2).

Two fragments of flat roof tile weighing 78g occurred in context 2. They are both probably from the same tile, and are in a hard-red sandy fabric with rare calcareous inclusions up to 4mm. They are both 12mm thick, unglazed, and most likely of late medieval to early post-medieval date.

Bibliography

Timby J, 2008 Roman Pottery in J. Brown and I. Soden, Bury Mount: A Norman Motte and Bailey Castle in Towcester *Northamptonshire Archaeology* **35**, 152-3



Appendix 4: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester	Project Site Code	388/TWH
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-32313	Event	ENN109169
OS reference	SP 469106 248846	Study area size	16.68 sq. m
Project Type	Observation & Recording	Height (mAOD)	c.89.9m AOD
Short Description	In August 2018 KDK Archaeology undertook an Observation and Recording Project at Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester, Northamptonshire during minimal ground reduction to the rear garden of the property. The works revealed that the stratigraphy consisted of made-ground, and exposed the remains of a post-medieval stone foundation, a modern concrete foundation and gas pipe, and finds that included a fragment of disarticulated human bone and a fragment of Romano-British Grey Sandy Ware. Further human remains have been found previously on the site and likely suggest that an undated cemetery exists in the vicinity of the site.		
Previous work	Yes	Site status	N/A
Planning proposal	Side extension to existing house and ground reduction to rear garden	Current land use	Private dwelling
Local Planning Authority	South Northamptonshire Council	Planning application ref.	S/2017/2450/FUL
Monument type	Stone foundation, concrete foundation	Monument period	Post-medieval, modern
Significant finds	Fragment of human bone, pottery sherd, cbm	Future work	No
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	Liz Mordue (NCAT)	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Laura Dodd ACIfA	Director/Supervisor	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA
Sponsor/funding body	Mr & Mrs Airle		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	17.08.18	End date	17.08.18
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (ENN109169)	Human bone, pottery sherd, cbm	
Paper		WSI, report, development plans, site records, digital photos printout	
Digital		Digital versions of the above onto a CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation & Recording: Windsor House, Heath Terrace, Towcester		
Serial title & volume	KDK 388/TWH/2.1		
Author(s)	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc ACIfA		
Page no's	25	Date	23.08.18