



**Archaeological watching brief  
at Saxon House, Bakewell Road  
Orton Southgate  
Peterborough  
March 2016**

Planning reference: 15/01155/FUL

Report No. 16/59

Author: Ben Kidd

Illustrator: Oliver Dindol



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Project Manager: Anthony Maull  
Site Code: PSH16  
NGR: TL 13971 94739

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis No. molanort-247442</b>	
Project title	Archaeological watching brief at Saxon House, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough, March 2016		
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land to the rear of Saxon House, Orton Southgate, Peterborough in March 2016. The archaeological monitoring of works, associated with the construction of a car park, was carried out by MOLA on behalf of CgMs Consulting. No archaeological remains were encountered, with the area comprising made ground which appeared to have been previously stripped within the recent modern period.		
Project type	Watching Brief		
Site Status	-		
Previous work	-		
Current land use	Gravel surface temporary car park		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	-		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Peterborough, Cambridgeshire		
Site address	Saxon House, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough		
Post code	-		
OS co-ordinates	TL 13971 94739		
Area (sq m/ha)	1.017ha		
Height aOD	22m aOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	MOLA 2016		
Director/Supervisor	Ben Kidd, MOLA Northampton		
Project Manager	Anthony Maull, MOLA Northampton		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	08/03/2016		
End date	16/03/2016		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	PSH16	-	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological watching brief at Saxon House, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough, March 2016		
Serial title & volume	Report 16/59		
Author(s)	Ben Kidd		
Page numbers	11 pages including illustrations		
Date	April 2016		

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Location and geology</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Historical and archaeological background</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>

## Figures

Front cover:	General view of the site, looking north-west
Fig 1:	Site and watching brief location
Fig 2:	Historic Environment Record (HER) data
Fig 3:	Stripped area section at northern edge of site
Fig 4:	General shot showing stripped area, looking south-west
Fig 5:	Section in existing gravel layer
Fig 6:	General view showing stripped area, looking south

## Tables

Table 1:	Historic Environment Record data
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# **Archaeological watching brief at Saxon House, Orton Southgate, Peterborough March 2016**

## **Abstract**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land to the rear of Saxon House, Orton Southgate, Peterborough in March 2016. The archaeological monitoring of works associated with the construction of a car park was carried out by MOLA on behalf of CgMs Consulting. No archaeological remains were encountered, with the area comprising made ground which appeared to have been previously stripped.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

MOLA Northampton was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of their client, to provide archaeological monitoring of works in advance of alterations to Pegasus House to the south and the construction of a new car park on a parcel of land to the rear of Saxon House, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough (Planning reference 15/01155/FUL; NGR: TL 13971 94739; Fig 1). These works and this report constituted the archaeological monitoring of the car park at Saxon House.

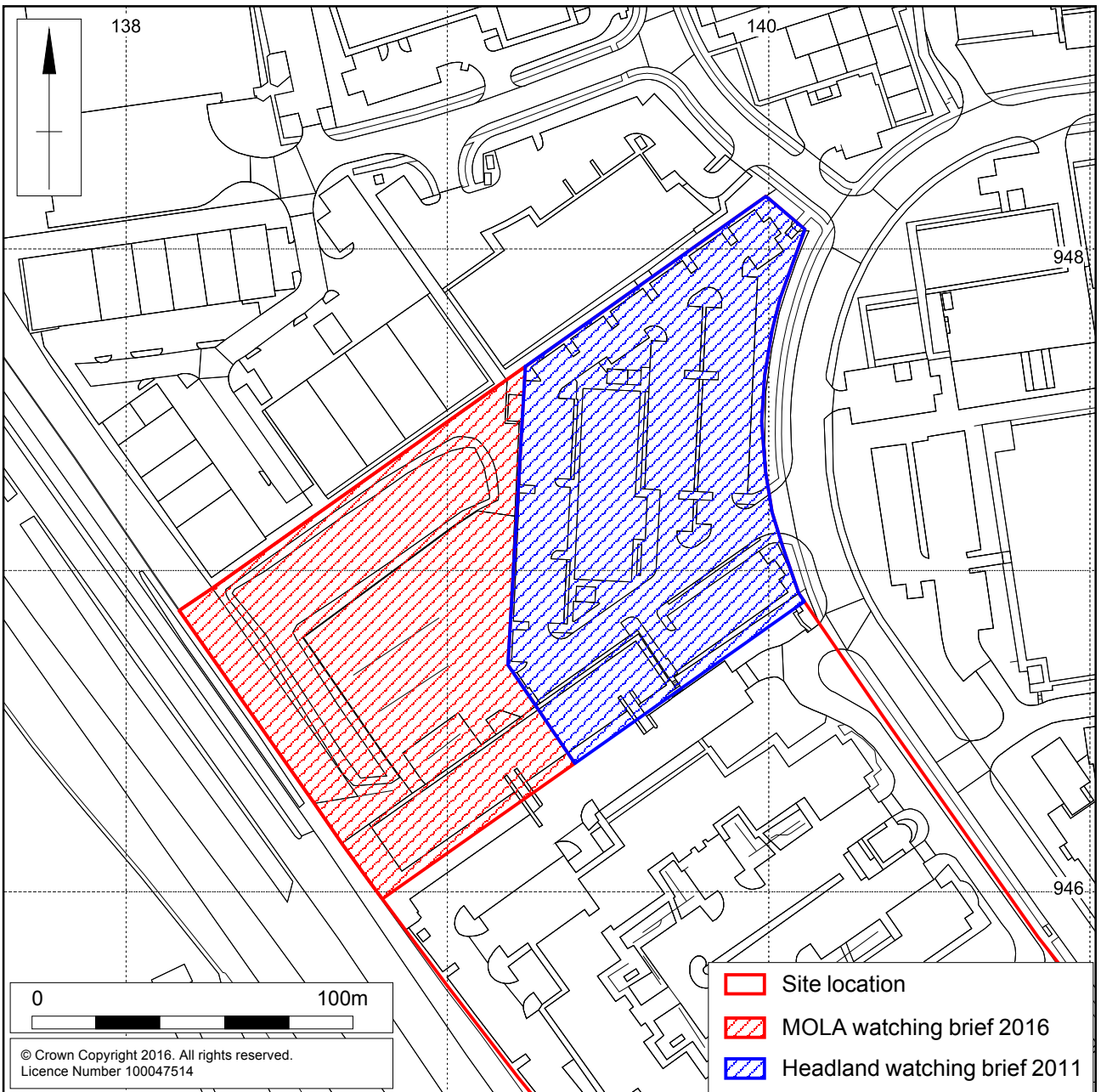
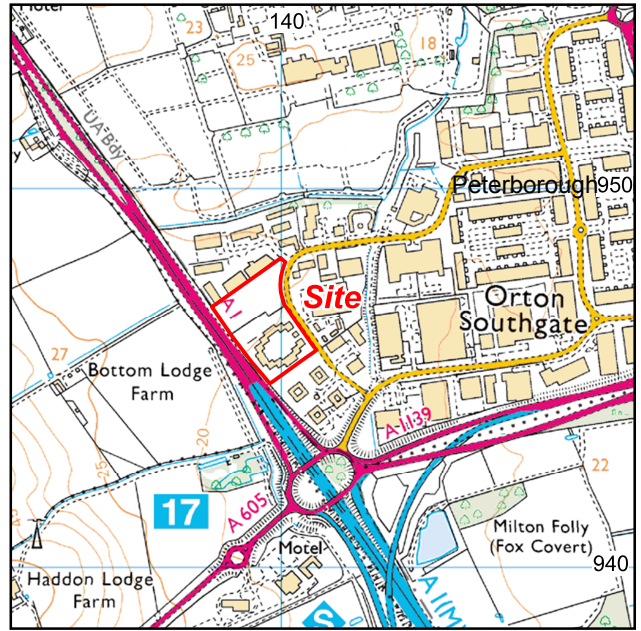
The archaeological observation of the mechanical excavation of overburden down to the proposed formation level, took place across the area of the proposed car park and were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (ClfA 2014a) and *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014b). The works followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by MOLA Northampton (MOLA 2016)

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and geology**

The development area is located within the site of Saxon House and Pegasus House, Bakewell Road within the new development of Orton Southgate (Fig 1). The area of Orton is composed of the ancient villages of Orton Waterville and Orton Longueville, which formed the focus for post Second World War expansion, along with the newer developments of Orton Brimbles, Orton Goldhay, Orton Malborne, Orton Northgate, Orton Wistow and the location of this development Orton Southgate. Orton Southgate is mainly characterised by business developments including offices and warehouses, with a small area of housing to the north-east, to the north lies the East of England Showground and Peterborough Arena.

The site is bounded to the west by a strip of undeveloped land and the A1(M) trunk road, to the north by several large warehouses and offices, to the east by Saxon House and associated car parks and to the south by Pegasus House and associated car parks.



Scale 1:2000

Site location Fig 1

The topography of the site is flat lying at 22m above Ordnance Datum (aOD); the underlying geology has been mapped as sedimentary mudstone of the Jurassic Oxford Clay Formation (BGS 2015).

## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

A search was undertaken of the Peterborough Historic Environment Record (PHER) for a 1km radius around the site and was supplemented by data from Historic England's Pastscape resource (HE 2016: PS), these indicate that few records exist for the immediate vicinity around the development site. The locations are shown in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Three undated ring ditches are located under 1km to the north-east of the site and comprised two concentric ring ditches which have diameters of 25ft and 50ft and one with 20ft (PHER 9174 and PHER 9186); these ring ditches were not observed on later photographic surveys and would now lie within the East of England Showground.

Most of the known archaeology within 1km of the site lies to the south; Archaeological Solutions undertook an evaluation in 2005, 800m to the south-east of the site beyond the Fletton Parkway where evidence for Iron Age settlement and a medieval field system were uncovered (Schofield and Williams 2005).

Approximately 700m to the south-west of the site during works on the A605 a substantial Roman farmstead was identified; during the 1st century AD the site comprised a number of possible barns, two circular and one sub-square post built, with all being set within large ditched enclosures. The 4th century AD saw the construction of a large horseshoe-shaped enclosure along with smaller parallel fields with fence-post lines and corner entrances. The remnants of several stone buildings were also identified along with a well or clay pit, with the site being levelled in the late 4th-early 5th centuries AD (PHER 9748).

Further Roman activity is known beyond the 1km radius, particularly within the Nene valley with the Roman fortified garrison of *Durobrivae* being located at Water Newton where the Roman road of Ermine Street crossed the River Nene, 2.8km to the north of the development site; the route of Ermine street is preserved as the modern A1(M) which edges the site just to the west. Located approximately 3km to the south of the site near Orton Waterville, the possible site of a Roman villa, discovered in 1861 is located.

Evidence for early medieval activity within 1km of the site is quite sparse, with the only evidence being Anglo-Saxon pottery recovered to the south of the site in the area of the A605 (PHER 9748a).

Prior to the enclosure of the surrounding parishes in 1809 there were three large open fields named Ham, Bush and Church; fields with ridge and furrow have been observed from aerial photographs around Orton Southgate with some extant remains. Just to the north of the site off Culley court, prior to the construction of new industrial units, archaeological trial trenching undertaken in November 2000 identified remnants of well-defined ridge and furrow (PHER 51131). To the south-east of the site at Alwalton hill, extant ridge and furrow systems were identified during aerial photography in May 2005 (PHER 51344), with remnant furrows on a north-south alignment also being observed to the south of the site on the A605 PHER 9748). Ridge and furrow was also identified c750m to the east of the site where a sunken hollow-way was also identified (PHER 914)

In the late post-medieval period historic mapping from the Ordnance Survey shows the site lying as part of a large field between Ermine Street (now the A1) to the west

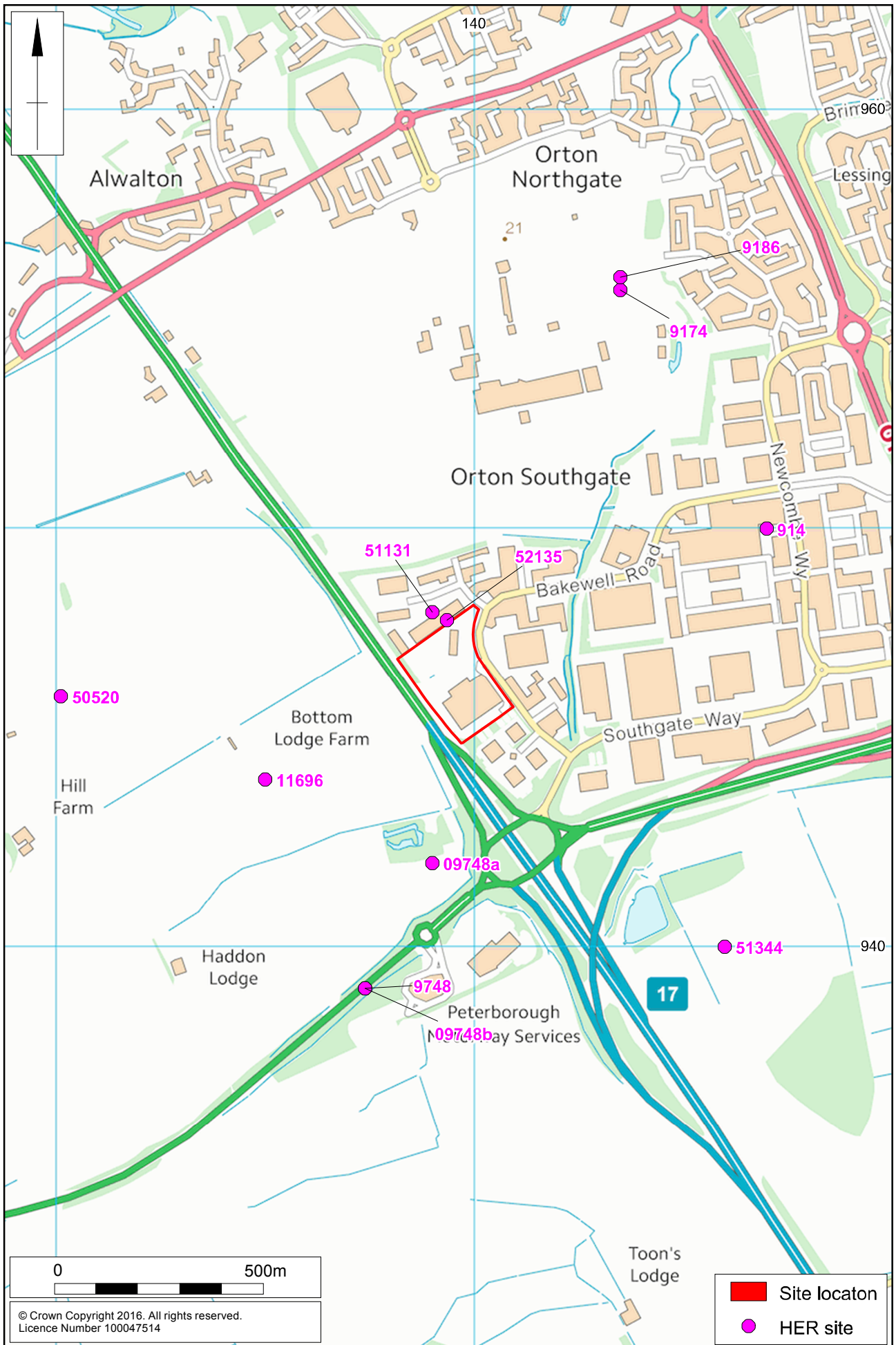


and a small brook to the east. To the north of the site, in the area where the East of England Showground now lies, was Glebe Farm and c400m to the south was the Haddon Brick Works; between 1902 and 1926 the works went out of use with the area becoming flooded and turning to marsh. The East of England Showground, just to the north of the site, was constructed between 1958 and 1966 and by 1984 the main body of Orton Southgate had been constructed; with Saxon House, Pegasus House and other buildings just to the south and east built between 1986 and 1999. In 2003-2006 Culley Court and the large warehouse to the north-east were built, with three smaller warehouses and associated yard which bound the site immediately to the north being constructed in 2006-2008.

Headland Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief in August 2011 on the construction of Saxon House immediately to the east of the development site. No significant archaeological remains were observed, it was concluded that the area had been previously stripped of topsoil within the modern period. The presence of field drains suggested that the level at which they had been placed had previously been exposed possibly during the development of the industrial units to the north and south of the site (PHER 52135).

*Table 1: Historic Environment Record (HER) data*

<b>HHER</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
11696	Archaeological monitoring of pipeline work along the course of the Peterborough South trunk main. No archaeology was found	Uncertain	excavation
50520	Brick, pot, tile, findspot	Post Medieval	watching brief, find
914	Ridge and furrow field system	Uncertain	aerial photography, archive research, documentary evidence
9174	Ring ditch	Uncertain	aerial photography, cropmark
9186	Ring ditch	Uncertain	aerial photography, cropmark
9748	Animal remains, ditch, enclosure, farmstead, field system, pit, pot, well	Roman	excavation, burial, find
9748a	Pot, findspot	Early Medieval	fieldwalking survey, find
9748b	Ridge and furrow	Medieval	earthwork, excavation
51131	Ridge and furrow	Medieval, Post Medieval	excavation
51344	Ridge and furrow	Medieval	aerial photography
52135	Field drain	Uncertain	watching brief, physical evidence



Scale 1: 12,500

Historic Environment Record (HER) data Fig 2

### 3 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the works were to:

- *Mitigate the impact of the development through preservation by record.*
- *Establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;*
- *Establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;*
- *Recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.*
- *Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.*

Specific regional research objectives as relevant to the fieldwork were drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Medlycott 2011).

The ground works comprised the removal of existing overburden to formation level or the level of archaeological deposits, whichever came first. The excavation of overburden was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, under continuous archaeological observation.

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification was recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit. All recording followed the guidelines detailed in the MOLA Northampton *Archaeological fieldwork manual* (2014). A photographic record comprising digital images was maintained.

#### **4 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

No natural substrate was observed down to the formation level, with this level being between 0.10m to 0.60m below the existing surface levels; with only redeposited mixed clays with inclusions of modern plastics and metal, modern gravels and made ground being identified across the site (Fig 1).

The majority of the groundworks within the development area revealed no topsoil to be present, with the majority of the area being a pre-existing gravel surface temporary car park; with the gravel layer being between 0.20m to 0.60m in thickness (Figs 3-6).

The extreme northern and southern edges of the development area were outside the gravelled area, and could potentially reveal undisturbed ground; however, no topsoil was discerned and only made ground and re-deposited clays were observed down to the formation level. At the northern edge of the area possible topsoil, c0.30m thick, of mid brown-grey clay was observed, however, this overlay modern made ground (Fig 3) and should be considered as entirely re-deposited in nature. A layer, c0.30m thick, of mixed mid brown and grey clay was observed at the southern edge of the site, this overlay redeposited clays.

#### **5 DISCUSSION**

During the archaeological watching brief on the construction of the new car park, no significant archaeological remains were identified.

The results of the watching brief suggest that the development area had previously been stripped of topsoil, almost certainly within the recent modern period, presumably coinciding with the numerous previous construction projects to the immediate north, east and south. Mixed clays and made ground re-deposited onto the area (Figs 3-6), supporting the negative results of the watching brief immediately to the east for the construction of Saxon House (Headland Archaeology 2011: Fig 1). The area has then presumably been re-stripped again to allow for the construction of the temporary gravel car park which covered most of the development area.

Evidence for Prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity is known within the vicinity (MOLA 2016), with the development area lying directly adjacent to the A1(M) (the former Roman road, Ermine Street. However, due to the later truncation of overburden across the site, it remains unclear whether archaeological remains once existed on the site or whether there is a genuine lack of archaeology within the development area.



Stripped area section at northern edge of site Fig 3



General view showing stripped area, looking south-west Fig 4



Section in existing gravel layer

Fig 5



General shot showing stripped area, looking south

Fig 6

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MOLA  
6th April 2016, revised 13th April