



**Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and
analysis of land at Foxcovert Road,
Werrington, Peterborough
November 2017**

Report No 17/140

Author: Tim Sharman

Illustrator: Joanne Clawley



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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No: molanort1-303813	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis of land at Foxcovert Road, Werrington, Peterborough. November 2017		
Short description	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis work was carried out on land at Foxcovert Road, Werrington, Peterborough during groundworks for the excavation of two wildlife (newt) ponds. A possible curvilinear gully of unknown date and a series of 19th or 20th century plough furrow marks were uncovered.		
Project type	Archaeological observation, investigation recording and analysis		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Grassland		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	Undated and modern		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Cambridgeshire		
Site address	Foxcovert Road, Werrington		
Easting Northing	TF 16461 05127		
Area (sq m/ha)	c350 sq m		
Height aOD	10.5m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project brief originator	Rebecca Casa-Hatton (Peterborough City Council)		
Project Design originator	Jim Brown (MOLA)		
Director/Supervisor	Tim Sharman (MOLA)		
Project Manager	Jim Brown (MOLA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Network Rail		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	07/11/2017		
End date	08/11/2017		
ARCHIVES	Location (Site code)	Contents	
Physical	Peterborough Museum (FXV17)	N/A	
Paper		Watching brief forms, permatrace plans	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Unpublished client report			
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Archaeological observation, investigation and recording of land at Foxcovert Road, Werrington, Peterborough November 2017

Abstract

Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis work was carried out on land at Foxcovert Road, Werrington, Peterborough during groundworks for the excavation of two wildlife (newt) ponds. A possible curvilinear gully of unknown date and a series of 19th or 20th-century plough furrow marks were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was commissioned by Network Rail to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis during the excavation of two new wildlife (newt) ponds on land close to Foxcovert Road, Werrington, Peterborough (Fig 1; NGR TF 16461 05127). The work was undertaken in consultation with the Archaeologist from the Historic Environment Team at Peterborough City Council. The newt ponds were excavated in order to provide a new habitat for colonies of Great Crested Newts which are to be translocated from the environs of the Werrington Grade Separation Scheme, located approximately 2km to the south-west of the site. The Werrington Grade Separation Scheme is a project to remodel the junction of the East Coast Main Line and the Peterborough to Spalding and Stamford railway lines.

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken to mitigate the effects of the groundworks on the archaeological resource. Works were undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Network Rail 2017).

MOLA is a Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Registered Organisation. This report has been prepared in accordance with the current best archaeological practice. All works were conducted in accordance with the procedural documents Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (HE 2015), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance: Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014b) and *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014a). The methodology follows the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Network Rail 2017).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

Werrington is a village located just to the north of Peterborough. The site lies approximately 7.5km to the north of the city centre. The site is located on land just to the east of the northern extremity of Foxcovert Road, Werrington at the point where it crosses the Peterborough to Spalding railway line.

The areas of observation comprised the excavation of two small elliptical ponds each measuring 18m long by 10m wide and aligned east to west, set within a rectangular parcel of rough grassland bounded to the south by a wide hedgerow, to the west by Foxcovert Road and to the north and east by an arable field (Fig 1).

The site is essentially level, lying at approximately 10.5m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying sedimentary bedrock comprises Kellaway and Oxford Clay formations of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The overlying superficial deposits consist of river terrace sands and gravel (BGS 2017).

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

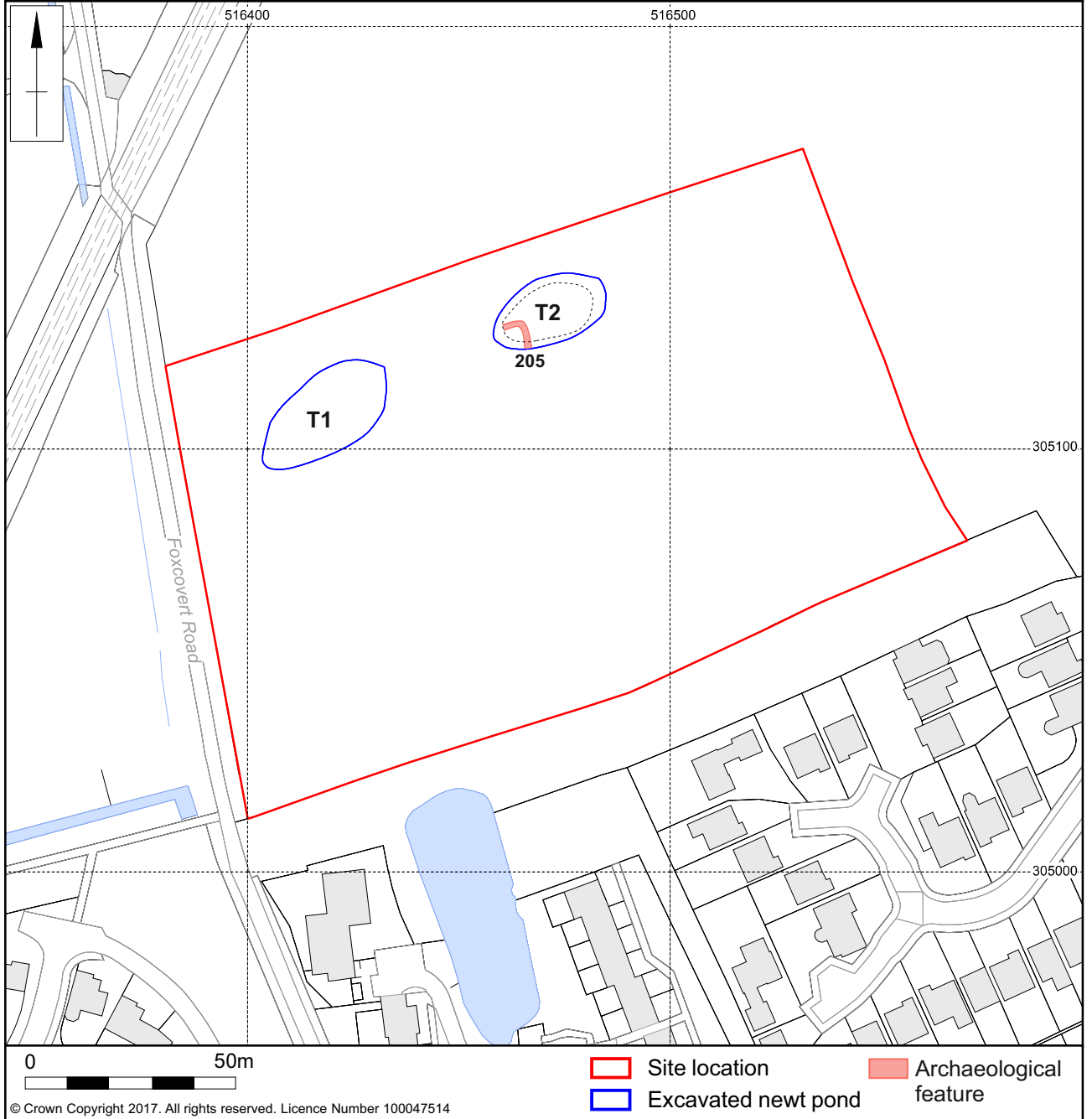
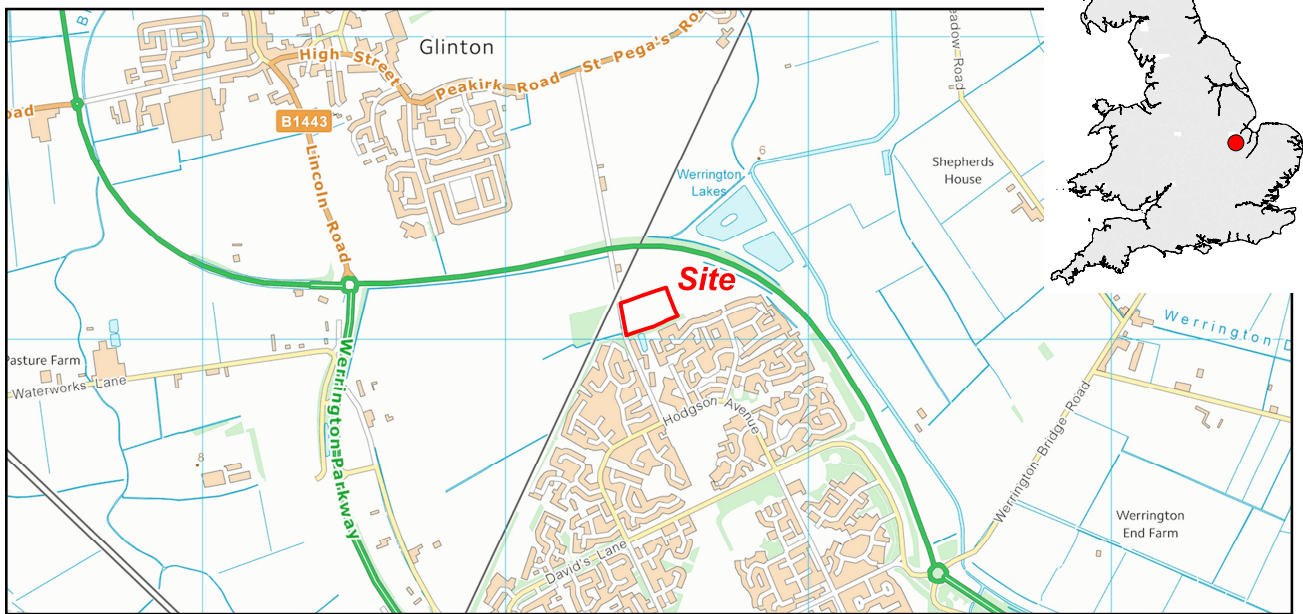
Little evidence has been found from the Neolithic and Bronze Age close to the site, though fieldwalking in 2006 on arable land c500m to the west, produced nine worked flints, most likely from those periods (Morris 2006).

To the north-east of the site, during the 1960s a hearth and associated postholes and ditches, together with Iron Age and early Roman pottery were found during excavation of a high pressure gas pipeline. In 2006 an aerial photographic assessment at the same location revealed possible Iron Age and Romano-British ditched enclosures (Palmer 2006). Fieldwalking on nine arable fields to the west and south-west of the site (Morris 2006) produced 63 sherds of Romano-British pottery scattered over a wide area which was probably indicative of manure-scattering activity associated with a Romano-British site possibly located within a 1km radius of the present development area.

In the Domesday Survey of 1086, Werrington was known as 'Widerintone' and located in Northamptonshire. Werrington was recorded as having 30 villagers, four smallholders, four slaves and 19 freemen.

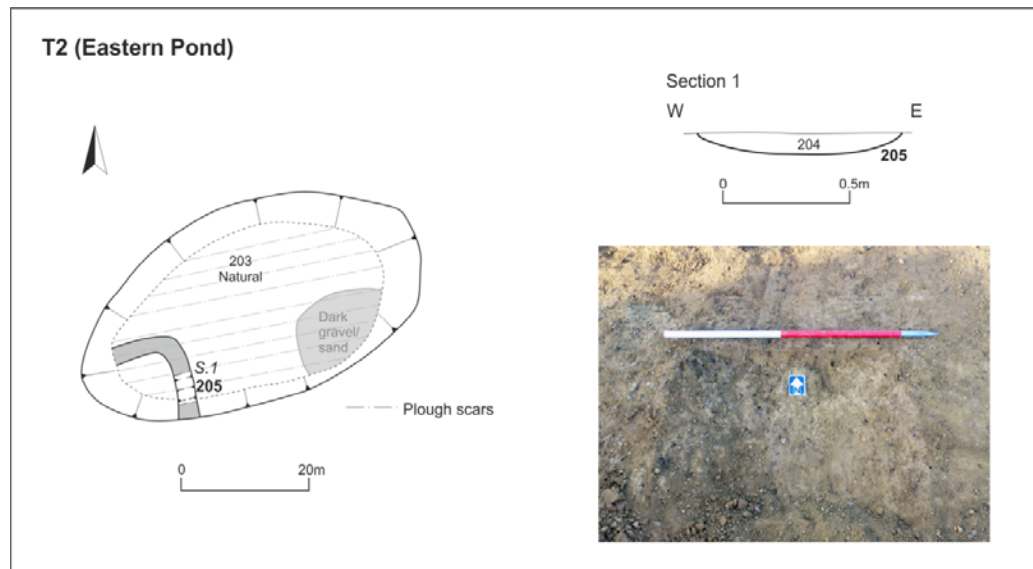
During the medieval period the parish of Werrington consisted of large open fields on land above a low-lying flood plain and fen edge. The village was constructed above the flood plain on land over 1km to the south. The oldest building in the village is the 12th century church of St John the Baptist.

Fieldwalking on arable land to the west and south-west of the site produced 106 sherds of medieval pottery associated with manure-scattering activity (Morris 2006). Immediately to the west of the site, alongside Foxcovert Road, was the Sobrite Spring of the Glinton Artesian Water Company. In 1899 Peterborough Corporation sank bores in order to supply the city with drinking water. Later on, the water was bottled and traded under the name of 'Sobrite'. A grotto was built above the spring. In 1955, after the company which bottled the water had ceased trading, the grotto was demolished and later in 1989, the spring was sealed by concrete. In 2014, the spring was uncovered and restored.



Scale 1:1500

Site location and excavated ponds Fig 1



Trench 2 (eastern pond) plan and section across [205] Fig 2

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main objective of the investigation was to determine and understand the nature, function, and character of an archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting. Specific objectives 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 research objectives were to be taken from the regional research frameworks (Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott 2011), as appropriate.

3.2 Methodology

A 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket was used to excavate the two ponds (Trenches 1 and 2), under archaeological supervision. Each trench was elliptical in shape, measuring c18m long by c10m wide by 1.2m deep (Fig 2).

Archaeological mitigation comprised the continuous observation during removal of topsoil, subsoil and overburden within the areas of the two ponds, followed by the investigation and recording of any archaeological features that were revealed.

The observations took place on 7th and 8th November 2017 in good weather conditions. The groundwork areas were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification

and definition of archaeological features, where present. Recording followed standard MOLA Northampton procedures as described in the *Fieldwork Manual* (MOLA 2014). Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation. The photographic record comprises digital images.

No finds were retrieved from the site.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The archaeological investigation and recording was undertaken within the areas of the two new ponds. Within the easternmost pond (Trench 2) the soil marks of possibly 19th or early 20th-century ploughing cutting into the subsoil (202) and a possible curvilinear gully of unknown date were revealed.

4.1 General stratigraphy

In both pond sites, the natural substrate comprised light yellow-brown sand (103, 203) with frequent flint gravel inclusions. This was overlain by a c0.2m deep subsoil, which consisted of friable yellow-brown sandy clay loam (102, 202) with frequent small stone inclusions throughout. The overlying topsoil (101, 201) comprised friable, dark grey-brown, sandy loam with occasional small pebbles.

4.2 Trench 1(western pond): Stratigraphy

Trench 1 (Fig 3) was machined down to approximately 1.2m in depth. No archaeological features were noted, although a sherd of post-medieval pottery (not retained) was noted in the topsoil.

4.3 Trench 2 (eastern pond): The possible curvilinear feature

Close to the western end of Trench 2, a small curvilinear feature (205) of unknown date was noted. The feature measured c3m long by 0.8m wide by c0.1m deep, with gently sloping sides and continued beyond the limit of excavation (Figs 1, 2, 4 and 5). The fill (204) was characterised as slightly compacted, yellow-brown sandy loam with occasional small stone inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature.



Trench 1 (western pond) looking east Fig 3



Trench 2 (eastern pond) showing excavated base, looking east Fig 4



Trench 2 (eastern pond) section across [205], looking north Fig 5



Trench 2 (eastern pond) showing plough marks, looking east Fig 6

4.4 Trench 2: The plough furrow marks

In Trench 2 (eastern pond) a series of parallel plough scars, aligned east to west, were noted cutting into the subsoil (Fig 6). The scars were c0.25m wide and spaced equidistantly.

5 DISCUSSION

The curvilinear feature within Trench 2 (eastern pond) contained no dateable material and its potential remains unclear as no further evidence was identified. It is possible that the feature relates to other Iron Age and Roman activity identified to the north-east of the site, although the lack of evidence precludes a confident interpretation.

The plough furrow marks within Trench 2 are indicative of agricultural activity across the site. The exact nature of the type or date of that activity is unclear, it could relate to modern ploughing or slightly earlier steam powered ploughing, however, small fragments of coal often associated with steam plough furrows were not evident.

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MOLA Northampton
14 December 2017

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Area	Length, width & alignment			
Site	Trench 1 (western pond) 18m long x 10m wide east to west			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with occasional rounded stone pebbles	c0.3m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with frequent small stone inclusions	c0.2m thick	-
103	Natural	Light yellow-brown sand with frequent flint gravel inclusions	At least 0.3m thick	-

Area	Length, width & alignment			
Site	Trench 2 (eastern pond) 18m long x 10m wide east to west			
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with occasional rounded stone pebbles	c0.3m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Yellow-brown sandy clay loam with frequent small stone inclusions	c0.2m thick	-
203	Natural	Light yellow-brown sand with frequent flint gravel inclusions	At least 0.3m thick	-
204	Fill of gully	Yellow-brown sandy loam with occasional small stones	0.08m thick	-
205	Cut of gully	Shallow gully with gently sloping sides	At least 3m long x 0.8m wide x 0.08m deep	-



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