

**M AND E MOBILE ENGINEERS,  
WHYTEFIELD ROAD,  
RAMSEY,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**NGR REF: TL 2866 8521**



***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION***  
**(OASIS ID: independ1-293499)**  
**(EVENT NR: ECB5116)**

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## Summary

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants for the construction of four, three bedroom town houses and conversion of existing office to one bedroom flat at M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridge. Two evaluation trenches were opened up across the development area, and a number of medieval deposits and features were investigated. A rich pottery material was also collected from the various features, indicating human activity in the area from the late medieval period onwards.*

*The evaluation had the potential to assist in establishing the development of medieval Ramsey, and in particular to answer questions concerning the impact of the Great Whyte medieval canal on this particular part of Ramsey. Samples taken from carr deposits and occupation deposits provided useful data regarding the natural environment at the time of reclamation and during the episode of domestic occupation.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out at M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire (NGR: TL 2866 8521) in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014), as well as discussions with Gemma Stewart, Archaeological Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 1.2 Independent Archaeology Consultants is an archaeological consultancy company based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The company subscribes to the *Code of Conduct, the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (CIfA 2014), *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (EAA Occasional Paper 14) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (EAA Occ. Paper No 24, 2011). All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (15/02142/FUL & 15/02264/LBC) for a new development at M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire. The development comprised the demolition of an existing garage and the erection of four, three bedroom town houses and conversion of existing office to one bedroom flat.
- 2.2 The plot enclosed an area of some 600m<sup>2</sup> at an average height of 3.8m AOD. The geology of the site comprised Oadby Member and Oxford Clay Formations

(British Geological Survey). The development was located on the edge of the historic core of medieval Ramsey.

- 2.3 The site was situated at the southern end of Great Whyte, close to the site of a medieval dock, and archaeological investigations in the vicinity have revealed deposits and finds associated with the reclamation and use of the area in the medieval period. The site was therefore located within an area of high archaeological potential, as defined by the CHER, and an archaeological evaluation was required prior to any construction on the site, as mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by Huntingdon District Council.

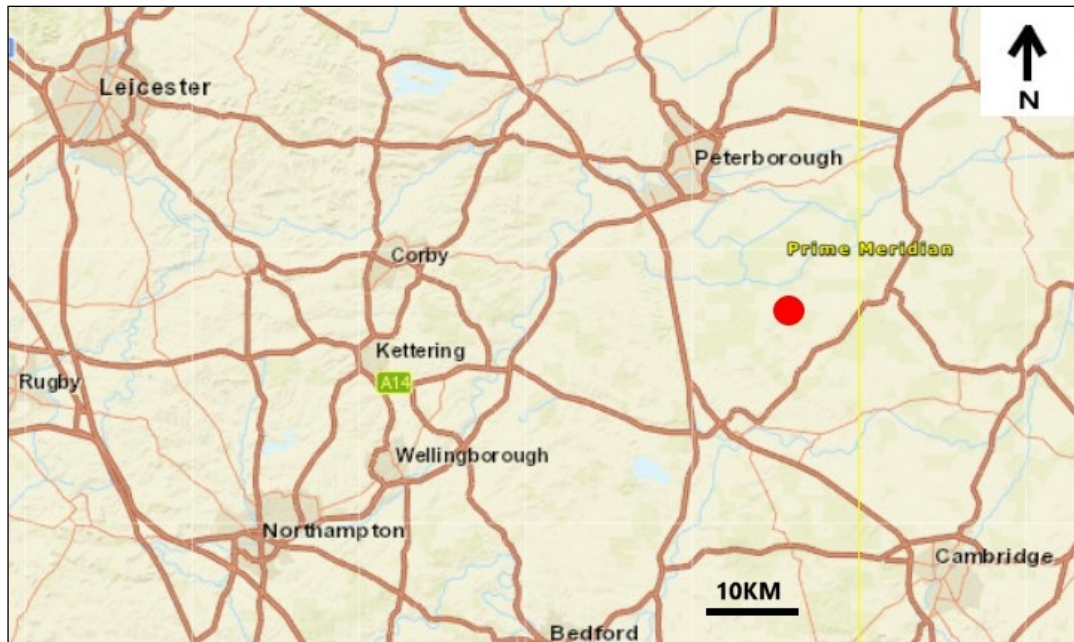


Figure 1. The location of Ramsey in England.

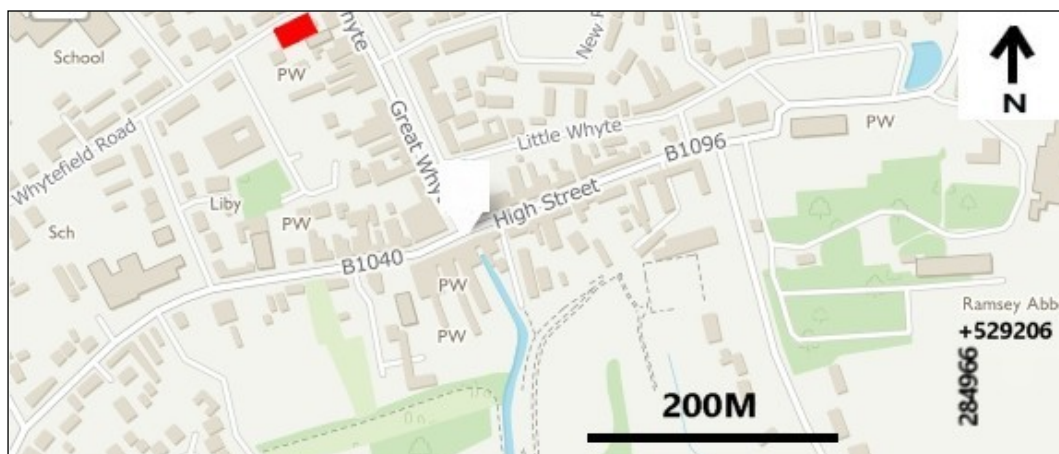


Figure 2. Site Location in Ramsey (Red). (Ordnance Survey maps produced with Licence nr: Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

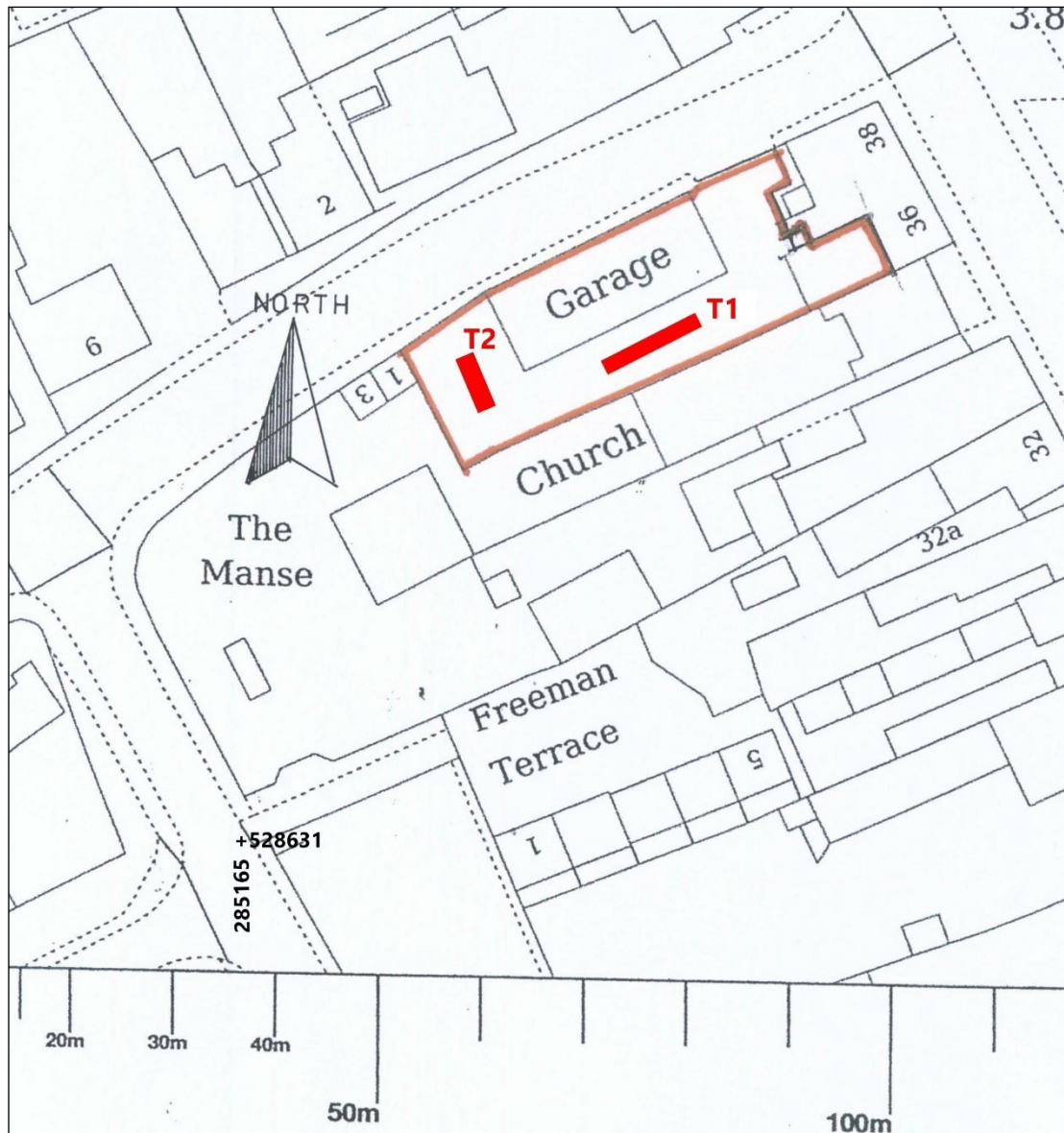


Figure 3. Site Outline and Trench Locations.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The Great Whyte was known as *la wihte* in the 13th century, and an artificial water course was open until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was finally culverted and a road built over the tunnel system. The characteristics of the medieval occupation along the flanks of *la wihte* is not known in detail, but a number of small-scale investigations along Great Whyte (ECB963 (adjacent to the site) and ECB749) have demonstrated the presence of lateral channels, thick dump layers and some evidence of industrial deposits on the western side. This area was also an area of extreme fire damage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when much of the older building structures were lost.

- 3.2 Further fires in the 17<sup>th</sup> century along Little Whyte might have removed all traces of earlier structures in this area, but again, a number of smaller archaeological investigations in the Newtown Green area (east of the proposed development area, ECB312) provided evidence of 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century occupation in the area fronting the Abbey precincts.
- 3.3 Trading activities at Ramsey are well documented, and included from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards weavers, fullers and other activities connected with the cloth trade and fishing industries. Investigations along the High Street have revealed evidence for the efforts made to expand the town westwards from the Old Bridge crossing from at least the 11<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, until greater land stability was realised around the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.4 To the southeast of the development area is the Scheduled Ancient Monument Ramsey Abbey (SM 141), a 10<sup>th</sup> century foundation standing on the highest part of the 'island' or spur at 5m. The Abbey was dissolved in 1539. The relationship between the Abbey and the secular settlement is of major importance in the reconstruction of the development of the town, and while the proposed development site was located in the medieval core of the settlement its relationship with the canal could provide additional evidence of trade and industry during the period in which Ramsey Abbey flourished.
- 3.5 The Fenland Survey noted that by the medieval period fen deposits were encroaching into the area of the town from the north and east (Hall 1992). Jonas Moore's 1860s map of Ramsey is the first map showing the whole town.
- 3.6 A number of small-scale evaluations have been carried out within the town. An evaluation at 30 Great Whyte revealed a ditch containing Grimston ware dating from ca. 1350-1500. The ditch represented a plot boundary that developed alongside the Great Whyte canal in the medieval period (Cooper 2003, CHER 15038).
- 3.7 An evaluation at Newton Green uncovered medieval deposits cut by a late medieval pit, covered by over 1m of modern overburden (Pearson and McDonald 2000). The layers directly overlying the peat deposits contained 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>- century pottery.
- 3.8 A Recording Brief at Marriots Yard found no archaeological remains (Membery and Hatton 1996, CHER11975), but a building at 88 Great Whyte, demolished in 1980, is recorded as having been a 15<sup>th</sup> century structure with deeply stratified earlier medieval deposits.
- 3.9 An archaeological evaluation undertaken at Ramsey Garden Centre, close to the Great Whyte, revealed medieval and post-medieval deposits containing small quantities of shell, metalwork, animal bones and late medieval tiles. The layers probably represent attempts at land reclamation in the early and later post-

medieval period. The only archaeological feature present was an early post-medieval ditch (Last 2002).

- 3.10 There have been further archaeological evaluations at 46-48 High Street (Atkins 2004). These investigations have shown there are also survival evidence for Saxo-Norman and early medieval Ramsey.

#### 4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to gain information about the heritage assets within the proposed development area;

ii) to provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent, integrity and degree of preservation of the identified heritage assets;

iii) to inform a strategy for the recording, preservation and/or management of the identified assets;

iv) to mitigate potential threats;

v) to inform proposals for further archaeological investigations (namely targeted area excavations) within the ongoing programme of research;

vi) to define the sequence and character of activity at the site, as reflected by the excavated remains;

vii) to interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context.

- 4.2 The evaluation also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: Medlycott, M. 2011 (ed.) *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24; *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Glazebrook 1997; Brown & Glazebrook 2000), *English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda* (1997); *Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2005 - 2010* (English Heritage 2005).

- 4.3 Specifically the following investigative aims were accommodated in the programme of archaeological work:

\*characterisation of the site in the broader landscape;

\*characterisation of the activities identified on the site;

\*characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Trial Trenching**

The evaluation aimed at determining the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. It was suggested that one 10m x 2m large, and one 5m x 2m large, machine cut trench were opened up under constant archaeological supervision using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The total length of trenching was therefore 15m, totalling 30m<sup>2</sup>, or ca. 5% of the 600m<sup>2</sup> large plot.

The location of the trenches targeted areas of proposed ground disturbance and provided representative sample coverage. The location of the trenches were, however, slightly flexible and took into consideration potential above- and below-ground constraints and/or hazards, such as trees, utility trenches, overhead cables and areas of modern disturbance. The investigation area was searched for live cables and other potential threats prior to the evaluation.

The trenches were excavated to the upper interface of the archaeological deposits. Thereafter, hand-excavation was required to sample any features uncovered. The field evaluation was not carried out at the expenses of the heritage assets of the site and was minimally intrusive to archaeological remains.

### **5.2 Metal Detecting**

Metal detector sweeps of exposed deposits, features and spoil heaps were carried out in advance of, and during, the excavation process, but no metal items of archaeological interest were being found.

### **5.3 Hand Excavation**

All man-made features were investigated. Apparently natural features (such as tree throws) were sampled sufficiently to establish their origin and to characterise any related human activity. Hand excavation and sampling was sufficient to establish the date and character of all exposed deposits, and to allow appropriate levels of recording.

Deposits and layers (including buried horizons of top- and subsoils) were sampled sufficiently to enable a confident interpretation of their character, date and relationships with other features. A characterisation of the artefact contents of the younger deposits was attempted to provide an understanding of the presence/absence and condition of possible underlying archaeological remains. The upper deposits were bucket sampled in 90 litre samples, but all finds in the first meter of deposits in both trenches turned out to be of Post-medieval date. Machine excavation therefore stopped on top of the first identified medieval deposits (104) and (205), which were hand cleaned and photographed.



## 5.4 Palaeoenvironmental Sampling

The site was situated within a medieval town core and had, as such, good potential for the preservation of faunal/plant remains and/or waterlogged timber. For this reason viable baulk samples to characterise soil profiles, as well as plant remains/charred plant remains, molluscs, small faunal remains and pollen sequences, were collected from a representative selection of suitable deposits in accordance with the evaluation aims.

Special care was taken to understand the stratigraphy of the site: Where the investigated deposits created in dry or wet conditions, and what can this, in that case, tell us about the development and history of the site? Buried soils and deposits were carefully studied in order to understand the processes behind their creations.

The assessment of the potential to inform on the general environmental and dietary evidence of the inhabitants of the site through examination of suitable deposits was also arranged with a suitably qualified specialist. Special attention was paid to: i); the retrieval of charred plant macro & microfossils, faunal remains and land molluscs from former dry-land palaeosols and cut features, ii); the retrieval of plant macro & microfossils, insect, faunal remains, molluscs, pollen and other biological remains from waterlogged deposits located; iii); provision for the absolute dating of critical contacts: eg the basal contacts of carr deposits over former dryland surfaces; distinct landuse or landmark change in urban contexts.

The project manager ensured that the results of the palaeoenvironmental investigation, industrial residue assessments/analyses & scientific analyses were included in the full evaluation report and sent to the Historic England Science Advisor.

All samples were extracted and recorded in accordance with the following publications: *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice and Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011), *Association for Environmental Archaeology, 1995, Environmental archaeology and archaeological evaluations. Recommendations concerning the environmental archaeology component of archaeological evaluations in England (1995)*, *A working classification of sample types for environmental archaeology (1992 for 1991)*, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis (1994)*, and in consultation with the appointed specialist and Historic England. The appointed Plant Remains and Environmental Samples Expert Val Fryer was available to assist throughout the project.

The following guidance documents were consulted in order to provide an adequate strategy for the excavation, field treatment and conservation of any delicate organic materials: English Heritage, 2012, *Waterlogged Organic Artefacts: Guidelines on Their Recovery, Analysis and Conservation*; English Heritage, 2008, *Investigative Conservation: Guidance on How the Detailed Examination of Artefacts from Archaeological Sites Can Shed Light on Their Manufacture and Use*; English Heritage, 2010, *Waterlogged Wood: Guidelines on the Recovery, Sampling, Conservation and Curation of Waterlogged Wood*.

## 5.5 Recording

A numbered single context-based recording system, written on suitable forms and indexed appropriately, was used for all elements of the archaeological recording programme.

Measured plans were produced showing all exposed deposits (including natural and modern features etc.) and excavated areas. Individual measured plans and sections were produced for all excavated deposits. These were accurately tied into trench plans/trench location plans, that in turn were accurately related to the Ordnance Survey grid and to suitably mapped local features (boundaries, buildings, roads etc.).

All sections and plans were related accurately to Ordnance Datum. A photographic record comprising monochrome and digital photos formed part of the excavation record, and a selection of digital photographs was also used in this report.

## **6 RESULTS**

### **Trench 1**

- 6.1 Trench 1 was 10m long, 2m wide and up to 1m deep (Figure 4). Underlying all other deposits in the trench was a thick carr deposits consisting of organic, softly packed branches and tree bark (107). No archaeological finds or features could be seen in, or cut into, these carr deposits.
- 6.2 Overlying the carr deposits was (104), an up to 0.18m thick layer of dark brown, plastic silty clay with occasional bricks and medieval pottery. This is also the level Trench 1 was machine cut down to.
- 6.3 Cut through (104) was the ditch [106]. This ditch was 0.50m deep, had V-shaped sides and a flat bottom. The ditch had a single fill (105) consisting of mixed greyish and yellow, plastic silty clay with occasional medieval and early post-medieval pottery (Figure 5).
- 6.4 Overlaying (104) was an up to 0.65m thick deposit of dark brown plastic silty clay with moderate inclusion of glass, china and bricks (103). This layer was in turn overlain by an up to 0.18m thick fill of softly packed crushed mortar and bricks (102). The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 was a 0.12m thick layer of grey, solid concrete (101).
- 6.5 In an attempt to investigate the thickness of the carr deposits two sondages were opened up in each end of Trench 1. Both sondages were dug through the medieval deposit (104), and about 0.50m into the underlying carr deposits. No finds or features of archaeological interest could be seen anywhere in the carr deposits before the water began to fill up the two sondages. Excavation of both sondages therefore stopped on a level of about 1.8m below the present ground surface (Figures 6 and 7).

- 6.6 In the southeast corner of Trench 1 a part of the section collapsed due to a number of worked medieval stones from the period ca 1350-1450 that were discovered just outside the trench. The pit the worked stones were recovered from [108] was 0.9m wide, 0.8m deep and was cutting through the deposits (102) and (103) behind Section 1. It is therefore likely these medieval stones had been dumped in the pit during the post medieval period. The pit [108] is not shown in Section 1, as the pit was located outside Trench 1.



*Figure 4. Trench 1. Overview from southwest. The trench was machine excavated down to the top of the medieval deposits (104). In the far corner a part of Section 1 has collapsed. This is where the worked stones were found just outside Trench 1.*



*Figure 5. the ditch [106] had been cut through the medieval deposit (104) and its fill (105) contained pottery from the medieval and early post-medieval periods.*



*Figure 6. Sondage 1 in the eastern part of Trench 1 was excavated well into the underlying carr deposits. No deeper horizons of human activity were identified before the water started to rise in the sondage.*



*Figure 7. Sondage 2 in the western end of Trench 1 was also excavated well into the carr deposits, but no deeper horizons of human activity were identified.*

## Trench 2

- 6.7 Trench 2 was 5m long, 2m wide and up to 1m deep (Figure 8). Underlying all other deposits in the trench was the same kind of material as in Trench 1; a thick carr deposit consisting of organic, softly packed branches and tree bark (209). No archaeological finds or features could be seen in, or cut into, the carr deposits.
- 6.8 Overlying the carr deposits was a 0.20m thick layer of dark brown, soft silty clay (208). This layer was in turn covered by an up to 0.35m thick, and very similar, layer of dark brown, soft silty clay with occasional medieval pottery (205).
- 6.9 Covering (205) was (204), an up to 0.12m thick deposit consisting of softly packed mortar and crushed bricks. This layer was in turn overlain by the up to 0.30m thick deposit (203) of dark brown, plastic silty clay with occasional bricks and mortar. Covering (203) was an up to 0.18m thick fill of softly packed crushed mortar and bricks (202).
- 6.10 Cut through the deposits (208), (205), (204), (203) and (202) was the circular well [207]. The outer walls (206) of this well were made of LBC bricks, an indication that the bricks come from the London Brick Company. This suggests the bricks cannot be older than the year 1900, when this company first opened up its production (Figure 9).
- 6.11 The fact that the well was cutting through most of the post-medieval deposits in Trench 2, and the fact that it was only covered by the modern concrete in the carpark, suggests that the outer walls of the well are only about 100 years old. It is possible, however, that the well was constructed from a lower level in the ground, and was later extended. Because of the rising water in Trench 2, and the considerable depths that would have been necessary to reach in order to investigate the bottom of the well, a complete investigation of this feature was not possible within the frames of the archaeological evaluation.
- 6.12 The uppermost deposit in Trench 2, and the only layer to cover the well, was the up to 0.15m thick grey, solid concrete (201).
- 6.13 In an attempt to investigate the thickness of the carr deposits two sondages were opened up in each end of Trench 2. Both these sondages were dug through the deposit (208), and about 0.50m into the under laying carr deposits (209).
- 6.14 However, no finds or features of archaeological interest could be seen anywhere in the carr deposits before the water began to fill up the two sondages. Excavation of both sondages, therefore, stopped on a level of ca 1.80m below the present ground level.



*Figure 8. Overview of Trench 2 from northwest. The trench was machine excavated down to the top of the medieval deposits.*



*Figure 9. The well [207] was found in Trench 2. The outer walls were made of LBC bricks and are likely to be about 100 years old.*

## 7 FINDS AND SAMPLES

### Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

7.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 314g. It was all medieval or early post-medieval. The assemblage was recorded using the system of codes and chronologies suggested by Spoerry (2016), as follows:

**BOND:** Bourne ‘D’ Ware, 1430-1650 2 sherds, 124g.  
**GRIM:** Grimston Ware, 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 14g.  
**OSW:** Late Medieval Oxidized Sandy Wares, 1450-1550. 3 sherds, 57g.  
**PMR:** Glazed Red Earthenware, mid 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century. 7 sherds, 119g.

7.2 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

7.3 All the sherds are from glazed jugs, other than the fragments of PMR, which are from internally glazed bowls. This is typical of the industries represented. The sherds are all fairly large and in good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	GRIM		OSW		BOND		PMR		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
(104)	1	14	3	57	2	124			M15thC
(105)							5	91	M16thC
(205)							2	28	M16thC
Total	1	14	3	57	2	124	7	119	

### Worked Stones (By Christer Carlsson)

7.4 The six fragments of worked Barnack stones that were recovered from post-medieval deposits just outside the southern section in Trench 1 all appear to be from a large, high status gothic building (Figures 10-12). The high quality of the masonry suggests they may come from Ramsey Abbey, as few other such buildings are known from medieval Ramsey. At least two of the stones have mason marks of a type which has no known parallels in the Ramsey area (Figure 13).

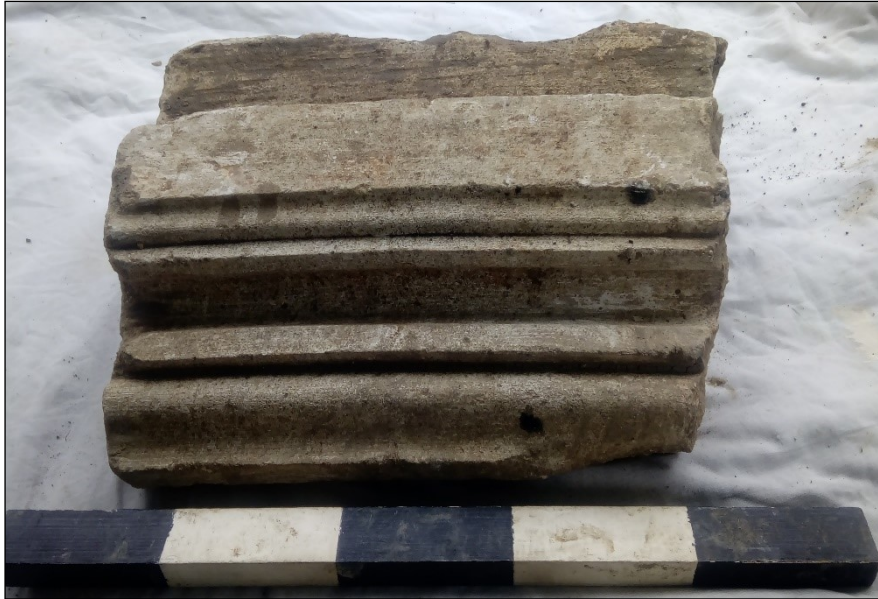
7.5 The mouldings of all six stones are the same, and it appears to be of mid-14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century origin. The moulding may have parallels in Stamford St Martin, Leadenham and Kettering.

- 7.6 Very little is known about the building history of Ramsey Abbey, so it is difficult to say exactly what part of the structure the stones may come from. Based on the slightly curved shapes of the stones, however, it is likely that they all come from the same large window or arched doorway. Some of the stones appear to fit together, as they have once been fitted into the masonry next to each other.
- 7.7 We know from written evidence that the Abbey did receive large donations in the period ca 1350-1500, and that such donations could have formed the economical foundations for an expansion of the Abbey, and in particular the Abbey church, in these years.
- 7.8 There are unfortunately no preserved images or maps of Ramsey Abbey, so it is difficult to compare the recovered stones with any particular section of the walls. As the former Abbey site is today a Scheduled Monument no modern archaeological investigations have been carried out in the area, and no archaeological material exists to be used for a comparison.
- 7.9 Of large interest is the architectural fragment which was found during an archaeological investigation some 200m north of the site described in this report. That fragment was also interpreted as having been robbed from the Abbey, to end up in a completely different context along the Great Whyte. This would suggest that stones were robbed from the Abbey in the post-medieval period and transported on the river into the city centre to be re-used in younger structures (Cooper 2005) (ECB2157).

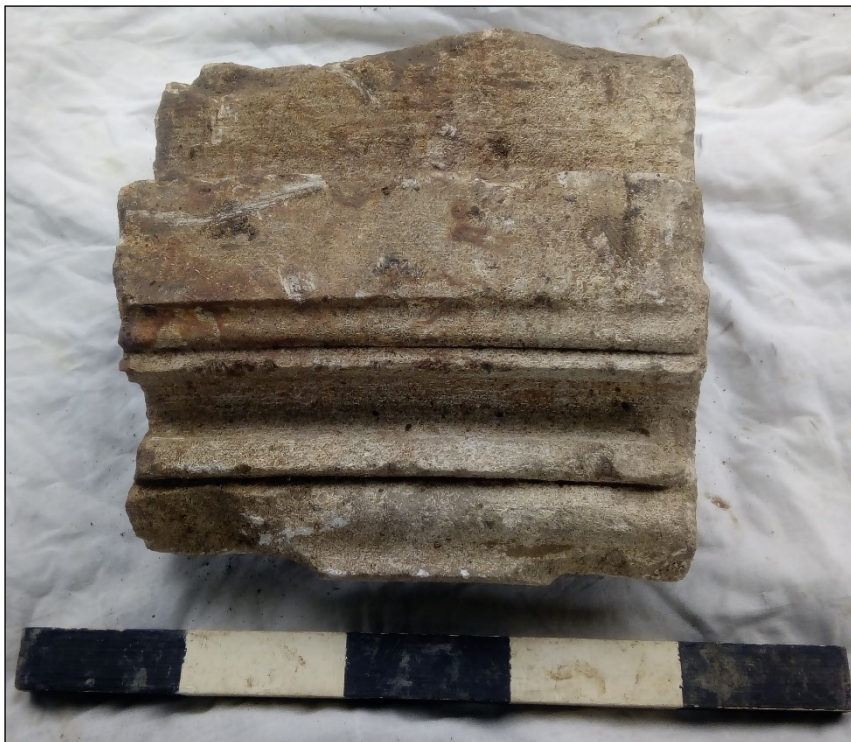


*Figure 10. Most of the worked gothic stones from Trench 1 are of a very high quality. Their sizes and slight curving indicates that they may come from a door or window in a large medieval religious building. It is likely, therefore, that they have been robbed from Ramsey Abbey, which was located some 400m southeast of the site.*





*Figure 11. Another of the high quality, worked gothic stones from Trench 1.*



*Figure 12. A third example of one of the fine worked, gothic stones from Trench 1.*



*Figure 13. Well preserved medieval mason marks could be seen on two of the worked stones. They are of a type commonly used in the Middle Ages, and are difficult to dedicate to one, specific master.*

#### **Environmental Samples (By Val Fryer)**

- 7.10 Evaluation/test pit excavation at Ramsey, undertaken by Independent Archaeology Consultants, recorded a small number of deposits including two highly organic layers initially described by the excavators as carr deposits. Samples for the evaluation of the content and preservation of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken, with six being submitted for assessment.
- 7.11 The samples (or sub-samples thereof) were processed using manual water flotation/washover, with the flots being collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. Although waterlogged remains were present, the flots were dried to facilitate rapid sorting and final storage. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 1. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (2010). Both charred and waterlogged plant remains were noted, with the latter being denoted within the table by a lower case 'w' suffix. Occasional modern roots and seeds were also recorded.
- 7.12 The assemblages from contexts (104), (105) and (204) are all strikingly similar in composition, containing moderate densities of abraded charcoal/charred wood, black porous and tarry residues, fish bones/scales and small pieces of coal. Individual charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains are also present within the

two samples from context (204), along with a single saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) nutlet. Small fragments of what appears to be mortar/plaster or daub, of a cream to pink colour with numerous small grits and occasional plant impressions, are noted within the assemblages from contexts (104) and (105). Occasional shells of terrestrial and marsh/freshwater molluscs are also present. It would appear most likely that all four assemblages are principally derived from midden/hearth waste, much of which may have been exposed to the elements for some period prior to final deposition.

- 7.13 The assemblage from sample (108) is not a true peat deposits, but instead appears to be derived from an alder carr type habitat. Alder (*Alnus* sp.) fruits and a possible cone are certainly present along with nutlets of sedge (*Carex* sp.) and spike-rush (*Eleocharis* sp.), but the assemblage is principally composed of root/stem fragments and numerous small pieces of leaf. In contrast, the sample from context (209) comprises a very densely compacted organic mud (again, not a true peat). Root/stem fragments and small pieces of wood are present, but all are very well rotted and identifiable remains are entirely absent.
- 7.14 Although the current assemblages are very limited in composition, they are of note as they appear to illustrate various stages of habitat change including a choked boggy environment, alder carr and human settlement and usage. Although this progression is very well recorded from numerous other sites within the Fenland region, it is suggested that if further interventions are planned, additional plant macrofossil samples should be taken in order to further document the environmental conditions within the Ramsey area.

### Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens    xx = 11 – 50 specimens    xxxx = 100+ specimens  
 cf = compare    w = waterlogged    b = burnt    ss = sub-sample

Context No.	104	105	204	204	108	209
Feature No.		106				
Feature type		Ditch				
Test pit No.	1		3	4	1	3
Trench No.	1	1	2	2	1	2
<b>Plant macrofossils</b>						
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)			xcf	x		
Cereal indet. (grain)			x			
<i>Aethusa cynapium</i> L.	xw					
<i>Carex</i> sp.					xxw	
<i>Cladium mariscus</i> (L.)Pohl			x			
<i>Eleocharis</i> sp.					xw	
<i>Alnus</i> sp. (fruits)					xw	
(cone frag.)					xcf	
Charcoal <2mm	xx	x	xx	xx		

Charcoal >2mm	x	x	xx	x		
Charcoal >5mm	x	x	xx	x		
Charcoal >10mm		x	x			
Charred root/stem		x	x	x		
Waterlogged root/stem					xxxx	xxxx
Minerally preserved organics (wood)	x					
Indet. leaf frags.					xxxx	
Indet. moss	xw					
Indet. twigs					x	
Wood frags.>5mm						xw
<b>Other remains</b>						
Black porous/tarry material	x	xx	x	x		
Bone	x xb	x xb				
Burnt/fired clay	x	x	x	x		
Burnt stone		x				
Cladoceran ephippia					x	
Compacted organic mud						xxxx
Fish bone/scales	xx	xx	x	x		
Mineralised soil concretions	x	x	x			
Mortar/plaster/daub	xcf	xcf				
Marine mollusc shell		x				
Small coal frags	x	xx	xx	xx		
Small mammal/amphibian bone	x					
Waterlogged arthropod remains	x			x	x	x
<b>Molluscs</b>						
<b>Terrestrial species</b>						
<i>Trichia hispida</i> group			x	x		
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.		x	x			
<i>V. pulchella</i>		x	x			
<b>Marsh/freshwater species</b>						
<i>Bithynia</i> sp.		x	x	x		
(operculum)	x					
<b>Sample volume (litres)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10ss</b>	<b>10ss</b>
<b>Volume of flot (litres)</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>&lt;0.1</b>	<b>0,3</b>	<b>0,3</b>
<b>% flot sorted</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>

## 8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation at M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire consisted of two trenches that were opened up in the yard next to the existing garage.
- 8.2 The aim of the project was to establish the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the site. The results of the evaluation have, therefore, made an interesting contribution to the understanding of the development of medieval and post-medieval Ramsey.
- 8.3 The evaluation has indicated that well preserved deposits from the late medieval period exist within the development area. The pottery collected from these deposits suggests they were created of domestic waste which was dumped in former wetland, just on the borders of the medieval town core some time in the late-medieval period.
- 8.4 The evaluation has therefore revealed evidence for late-medieval and post-medieval land reclamation on the fen edge. Both trenches were resting on top of carr deposits, which were rich in organic remains. These deposits imply the presence of standing water in the area, which indicates the site was once located within the former fen.
- 8.5 The investigated late-medieval deposits had been created directly on top of thick carr deposits, without any indications of previously human activity in the area. It seems, therefore, as it was only in the later part of the Middle Ages that human occupation occurred in this part of Ramsey.
- 8.6 The results of the investigation presented in this report indicate that a similar development took place along Whitfield Road that in areas some 50m to the south, where an archaeological excavation was carried out in 2003. That investigation came to very similar results, as a medieval ditch, heading in the direction of the Great Whyte, contained late medieval pottery and animal bones. The ditch was cut through medieval deposits which were resting on thick carr deposits from the former Fen (Cooper 2003).
- 8.7 Another archaeological evaluation was carried out along the Great Whyte canal, some 200m north of the site in 2005. This evaluation also demonstrated the presence of medieval and post-medieval activity related to land reclamation of the fen edge (Cooper 2005).
- 8.8 All three investigations, therefore, demonstrate late-medieval and early post-medieval reclamation layers overlying thick carr deposits. The ceramic evidence from the three sites suggests that no reclamation activity occurred in this part of Ramsey before the late 14<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest, but more probably in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- 8.9 This lack of pre-15<sup>th</sup> century depositions seems to fit well with the documentary evidence which suggests the Great Whyte canal is of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin (Hall

1992). Only once the canal was created did further activity gravitate here, to gradually expand along the banks.

- 8.10 The lack of earlier material from the investigation implies that the initial phase of dumping in this part of Ramsey was in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with later domestic activity represented by the ditch in Trench 1. The digging of the ditch was followed by more dumping, presumably to raise the ground surface above the wet fenland.
- 8.11 The results of the evaluation, therefore, tend to support the idea that the lower deposits within the area are medieval while the overlying made ground is medieval in date. It is tempting to link this to the major changes experienced in Ramsey following the dissolution of the Abbey.
- 8.12 Another indication that this part of Ramsey became more developed in the period following the dissolution of Ramsey Abbey are the worked gothic stones, that were pulled out from a post-medieval pit just behind the southern section in Trench 1. These stones are most likely from the Abbey, and their location in the city centre indicates they might have been robbed from the Abbey, transported on the river and later dumped in the area when there was no use for them in the post-medieval town.
- 8.13 Interestingly enough similar stones, that are also thought to be from the Abbey, were found during the previously described evaluation that took place some 200m north of the site. A large architectural fragment of Barnack stone undoubtedly originated from a high status building, probably Ramsey Abbey itself (Cooper 2005) (ECB2157).
- 8.14 The presence of these worked medieval stones in Ramsey City Centre is an indication that older building material was brought into the town in the post medieval period. If the Abbey was robbed of its stones this would explain why so little of this once very impressive complex has been preserved to the present day. It is difficult to say exactly what part of the Abbey the stones come from, but the dating of the stones to ca 1350-1450 suggests the stones are from a section of the Abbey which was constructed about 600 years ago. Studies of these stones are therefore important for a better understanding of medieval Ramsey.

## 9 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

### Paper Record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

The photographic and drawn records

The project report

The primary site records

Finds

The archive will be transferred to:

The Archaeological Collections for Cambridgeshire County Council.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDICES

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context Nr	Depth (m)	Description	Younger than	Older than
<b>Trench 1 (10m x 2m)</b>				
(101)	0.12	Grey, solid concrete.	(102) [108]	-
(102)	0.18	Fill of crushed mortar and bricks. Softly packed.	(103)	(101) [108]
(103)	0.65	Dark brown, plastic silty clay. Moderate inclusion of glass, china and bricks.	(105)	(102) [108]
(104)	0.18	Dark brown, plastic silty clay. Occasional bricks and medieval pottery.	(107)	(103) [106]
(105)	0.50	Fill of [106]. Mixed greyish and yellow, plastic silty clay. Occasional medieval pottery.	[106]	(103)
[106]	0.50	Cut of ditch [106]. Flat bottom and V-shaped sides.	(104)	(105)
(107)	?	Carr deposits. Organic, softly packed with frequent of branches and tree bark.	-	(107)
[108]	0.8	Cut for pit with medieval worked stones.	(102) (103)	(101)
<b>Trench 2 (5m x 2m)</b>				
(201)	0.15	Grey, solid concrete.	(202)	-
(202)	0.18	Fill of crushed mortar and bricks. Softly packed.	(203)	(201) [207]
(203)	0.30	Dark brown, plastic silty clay. Occasional bricks and mortar.	(204)	(202) [207]
(204)	0.12	Fill of softly packed mortar and bricks.	(205)	(203) [207]
(205)	0.35	Dark brown, soft silty clay. Occasional medieval pottery.	(208)	(204) [207]
(206)	?	An early 20 <sup>th</sup> century well made of LBC-bricks.	[207]	(201) [207]
[207]	?	Cut of the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century well.	(202) (203) (204) (205) (208) (209)	(206)
(208)	0.20	Dark brown, soft silty clay.	(209)	(205) [207]
(209)	?	Carr deposits. Organic, softly packed with frequent of branches and tree bark.	-	(208) [207]

***OASIS ID: independ1-293499***

**Project details**

Project name	M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation for a new development within the site.
Project dates	Start: 15-08-2017 End: 18-08-2017
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	15/02142/FUL and 15/02264/LBC - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	WRR17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	CL BT Medieval
Monument type	SN CL Medieval
Significant Finds	SN CL Medieval
Significant Finds	SN CL Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

**Project location**

## M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridge: Archaeological Evaluation

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Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUNTINGDONSHIRE RAMSEY M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire
Postcode	PE26 1AQ
Study area	600 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 2866 8521 52.449289762083 -0.106587810401 52 26 57 N 000 06 23 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2m Max: 4m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Independent Archaeology Consultants
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Independent Archaeology Consultants
Project director/manager	Christer Carlsson
Project supervisor	Christer Carlsson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire HER
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire HER
Digital Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire HER
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "Environmental"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	M and E Mobile Engineers, Whytefield Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Carlsson, C
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