RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire, Geotechnical Test Pit Watching Brief 2003

Project No. 1113
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RAF NEWTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
GEOTECHNICAL TEST PITTING

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2003

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Summary

A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of five geotechnical test pits on land at RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire (NGR SK 692 408, Fig. 1). This work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of the Home Office and undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology in October 2003. Proposals to develop the site as an Accommodation Centre required enabling works in advance of the main development. These comprise the construction of a new access road of the A46 (Fosse Way), for which geotechnical test pitting was being undertaken. Prior to this a desk-based assessment had identified a potential for prehistoric and Romano-British remains within the site boundaries, due mainly to the proximity of the Fosse Way to the east of the site and a series of cropmarks to the north of the site.

Birmingham Archaeology had previously undertaken an archaeological evaluation on the site in 2002. A total of 19 trenches was excavated. Archaeological remains, comprising clusters of discrete features and linear features, were identified within seven of the trenches. A pit located in the northern part of the site produced four degraded fragments of Iron Age pottery. Although dating evidence was scant, the morphology of the features and the focus of the site towards the Roman Fosse Way suggested a Roman or pre-Roman date.

This watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits.

RAF NEWTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
GEOTECHNICAL TEST PIT WATCHING BRIEF
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 This report describes the results of a watching brief carried out during the excavation of five geotechnical test pits at the site of RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire (NGR SK 692 408, Fig. 1). The work was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology and commissioned by CgMs Limited on behalf of the Home Office.

1.1.2 The archaeological watching brief was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999), and complied with a Specification for Archaeological Evaluation prepared by CgMs Consulting (Mould 2002a). The watching brief was also conducted within the general parameters defined by PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning', the Nottinghamshire Structure Plan Review, the Rushcliffe Borough Council Replacement Local Plan Deposit Draft (February 2000) and the East Midlands Research Framework.

2 SITE LOCATION (Fig. 1)

2.1.1 The site (centred on NGR SK 692 408, Fig. 1) is situated within a former RAF base which is bounded by the Newton Road to the north, the A46 Fosse Way to the east, a railway track to the south and a minor road to the west. Within the RAF base, the site comprises an area of accommodation fronting the Fosse Way (Fig. 2).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 A desk-based assessment of the site was previously undertaken by CgMs Consulting (Mould 2002b). This identified a potential for prehistoric and Romano-British remains within the site boundaries, due mainly to the proximity of the Fosse Way to the east of the site and a series of cropmarks to the north of the site. In addition, an archaeological evaluation in 2002 identified a number of archaeological remains, comprising clusters of discrete features and linear features, identified within seven of the nineteen trenches. The details of which have been discussed in the evaluation report (Mann & Ramsey 2002) and will not be repeated here.

4 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The aims of the watching brief were as follows:

- To observe the depth of modern overburden.
- To identify any finds or settlement features revealed in section, either within archaeological features/deposits or as scatters within the overburden.
- To identify the changes in the underlying geology that might reflect the presence of past settlement.

4.1.1 Five test pits were excavated by machine with a 0.50m toothed bucket. Each of the test pits measured 2.50m in length. The test pits were excavated to depths of between 0.8 and 0.9m.

4.1.2 Measured sketches at a scale of 1:20 were made of the profiles and supplemented by brief soil descriptions which now form part of the paper archive. No aretefacts were recovered.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Test Pit 1

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of context	Identification	Comment
1000	-	0.20m	Grass covered, dark brown sandy clay	Topsoil
1001	0.20m	0.60m	Dark brown slightly sandy clay	B Horizon

5.2 Test Pit 2

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
2000	-	0.20m	Grass covered, dark brown sandy clay	Topsoil
2001	0.20m	0.60m	Dark brown slightly sandy clay	B Horizon

5.3 Test Pit 3

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
3000	-	0.20m	Grass covered, dark brown sandy clay	Topsoil
3001	0.20m	0.40m	Dark brown slightly sandy clay	B Horizon
3002	0.60m	0.30m	Subsoil. Red brown sandy clay	Natural subsoil

5.4 Test Pit 4

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
4000	-	0.20m	Grass covered, dark brown sandy clay	Topsoil
4001	0.20m	0.40m	Dark brown slightly sandy clay	B Horizon

5.5 Test Pit 5

Context	Depth below surface	Depth of Context	Identification	Comment
5000	-	0.20m	Grass covered, dark brown sandy clay	Topsoil
5001	0.20m	0.30m	Dark brown slightly sandy clay	B Horizon
5002	0.50m	0.10m	Blue grey mudstone	Natural subsoil
5003	0.60.	0.20m	Red brown clay	Natural subsoil

6 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 The depth of each varied, dependant upon the requirements of the geotechnical assessment. In Test Pits 3 and 4 respectively a field drain and a soak-away were observed and recorded. No evidence of any archaeological remains were recovered from any of the test pits. While it has already been demonstrated that archaeological deposits are present on the site (Mann & Ramsey 2002), the contribution to the archaeological record by the watching brief has been scant. This is due in part to the small size and shallow nature of the geotechnical test pits.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1.1 This project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of The Home Office, and many thanks are due to Cathy Mould of CgMs Consulting for her help and assistance. Thanks are also due to Ursilla Spence, who monitored the site on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. Mark Hewson, carried out the watching brief and wrote this report. The project was managed by Richard Cuttler who also edited this report. Illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

8 REFERENCES

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999 *Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*

Mann, P & Ramsey, E (2002), *An archaeological evaluation at RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire BUFAU Report 938.*

Mould, C. 2002a *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation: RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire CgMs*

Mould, C. 2002b *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: RAF Newton, Nottinghamshire CgMs*

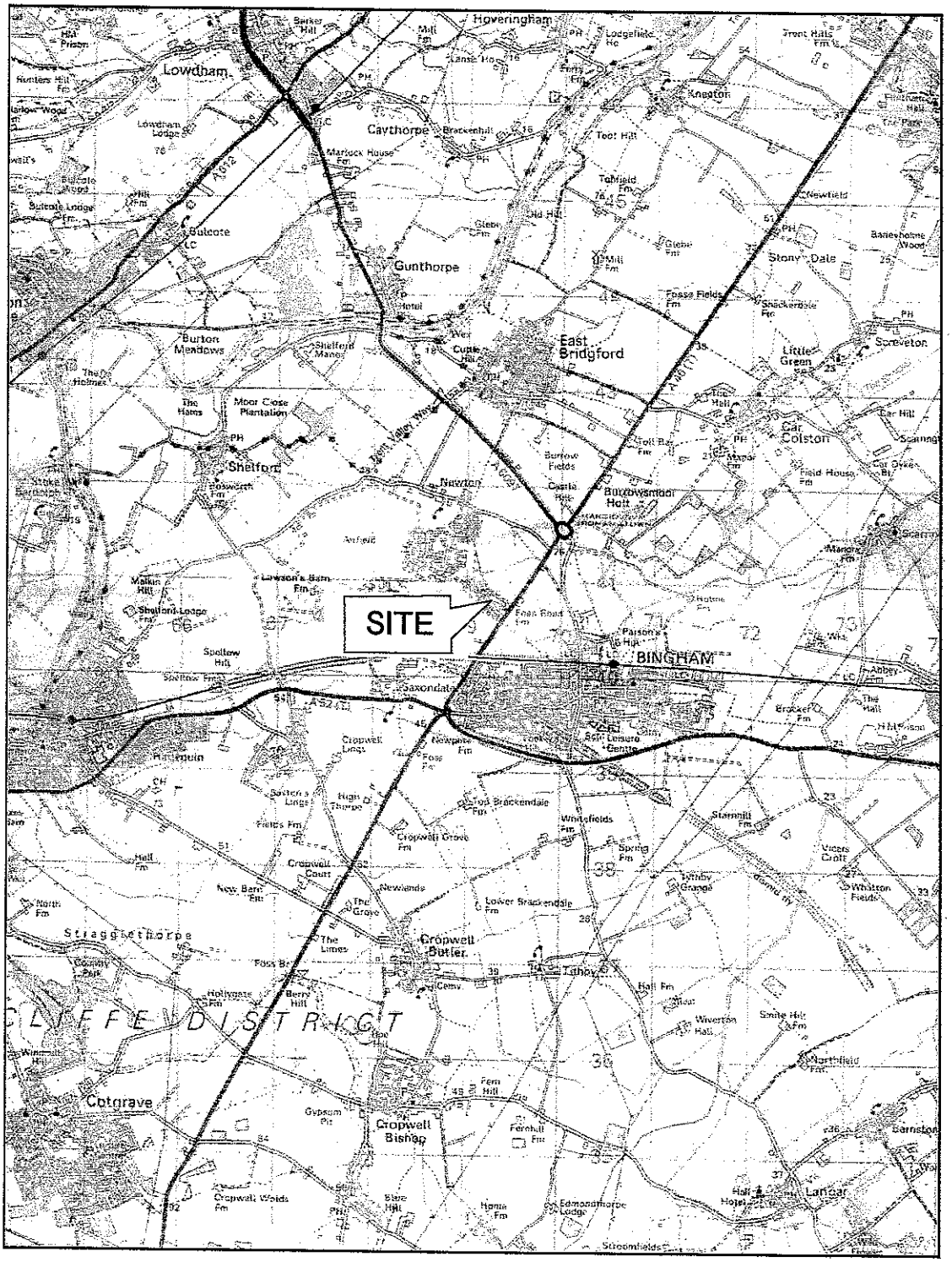
SITE
Lowdham
Hoveringham
Caythorpe
Gunthorpe
Bulcote
Burton Meadows
Shelford
East Bridgford
Kneaton
Stoney Dale
Car Colston
Screveton
Little Green
Newton
Bingham
Saxondale
Cropwell Butler
Cropwell Bishop
Cotgrave
Langar
Stragglethorpe
CLIFFE DISTRICT

Fig. 1

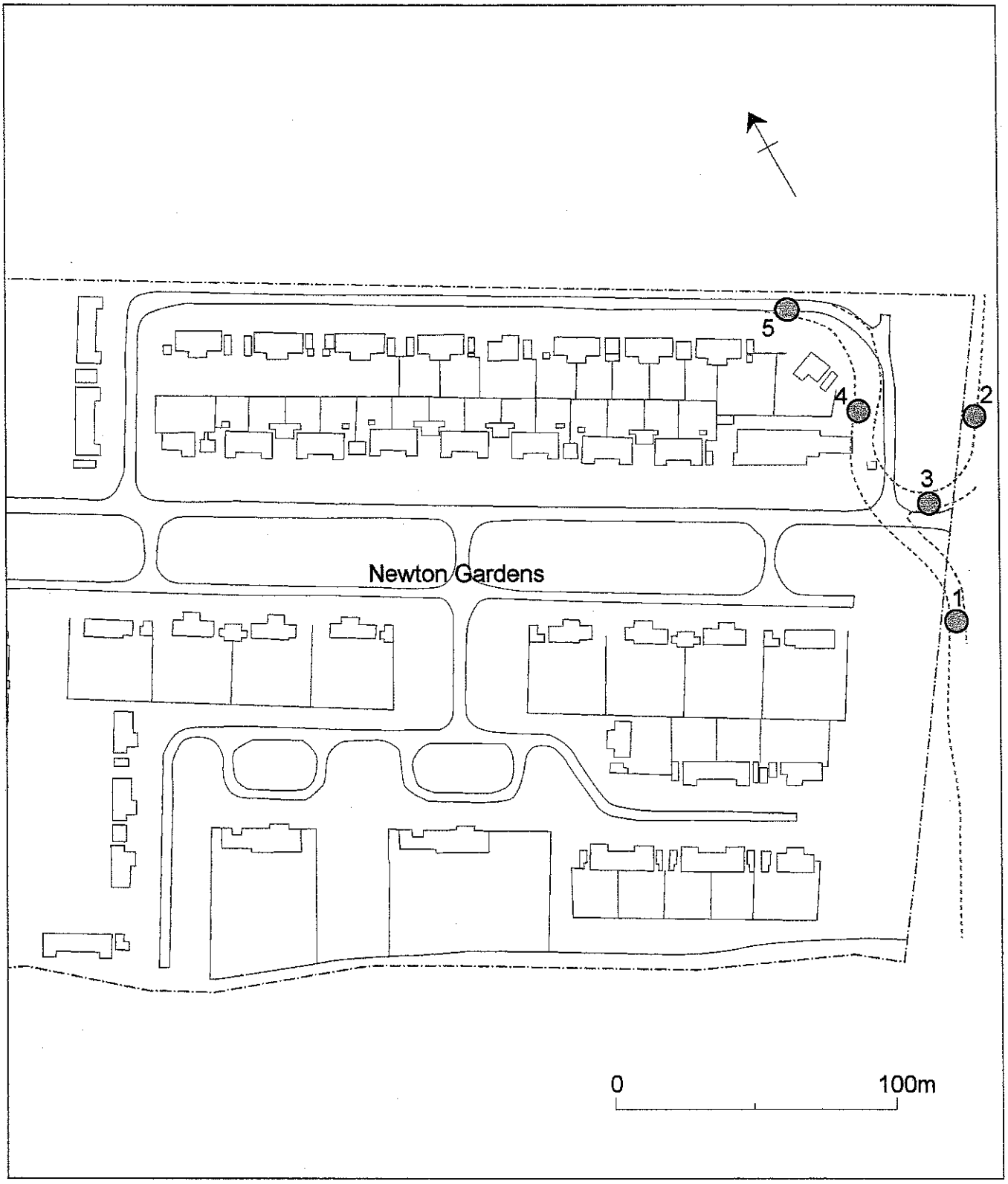

Fig.2