

CCNP11



COTTESMORE CLOSE, PETERBOROUGH

Archaeological Evaluation

for Carter Homes

11/00168/FUL

February 2012

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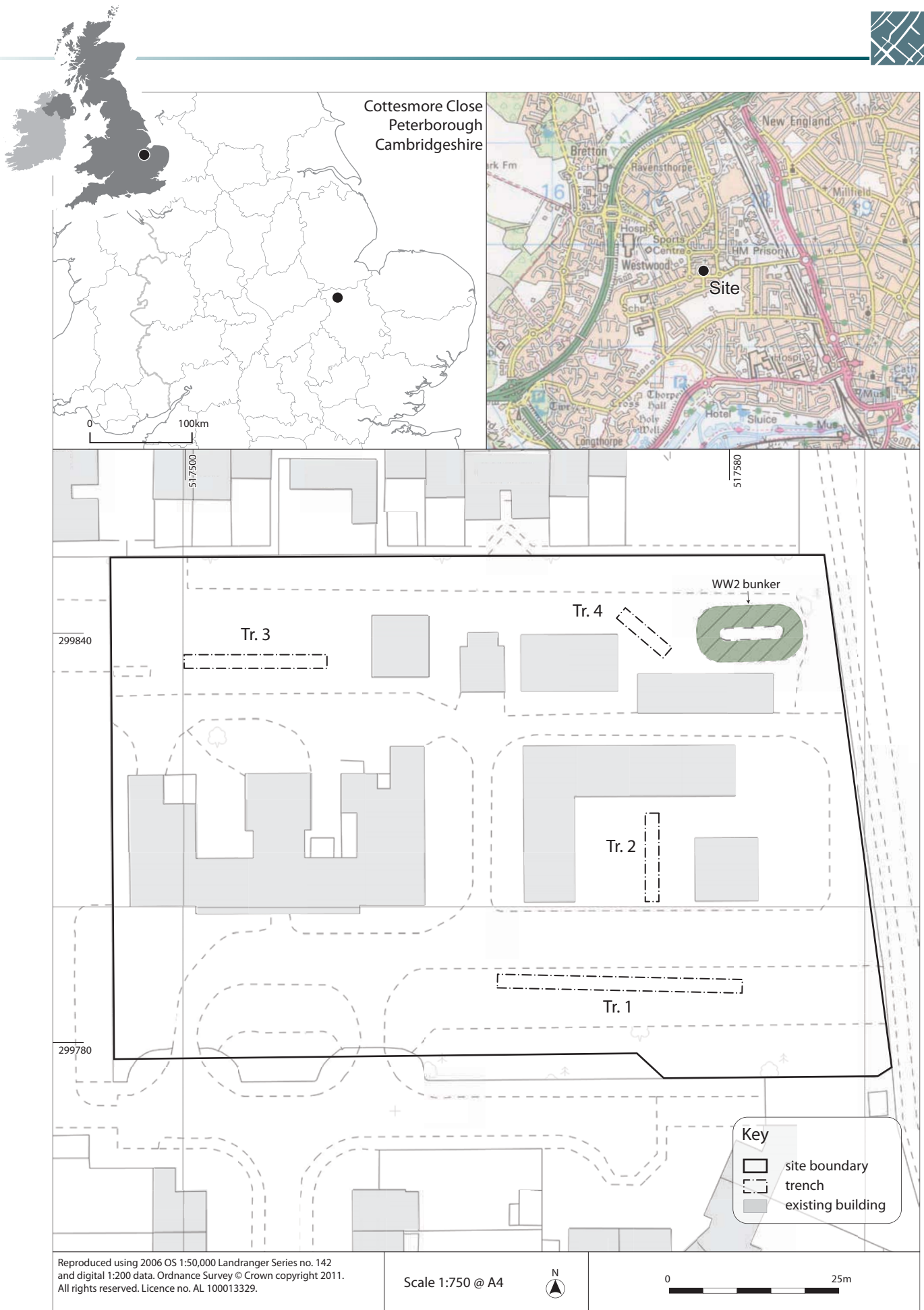
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COTTESMORE CLOSE, PETERBOROUGH

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology Ltd conducted an evaluation at Cottesmore Close, Netherton, Peterborough, in order to provide further information on its archaeological potential. The work was commissioned by Carter Homes. A total of four trenches were excavated over the development area. These revealed no significant sub-surface archaeological remains.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning background

Carter Homes have proposed development works at Peterborough Professional Development Centre for the change of use of the existing Officers Mess building and associated land on the western portions of the site, and construction of dwellings on the eastern portion of the site comprising apartments in two blocks (development area – DA).

The local planning authority (LPA) is advised, on archaeological matters, by the Peterborough City Council Heritage Access Officer (AO). The AO advised that a condition should be placed on consent requiring that a programme of archaeological work, comprising field evaluation, should be undertaken prior to development (Planning Ref.: 11/00168/FUL).

The client commissioned Headland Archaeology to undertake the evaluation and produce a report (this document) on the results. Fieldwork took place on 26th January 2012.

1.2 Site location and geology

The DA is located at Cottesmore Close in the Netherton area which is situated on the north-west side of Peterborough (site centred on TL 1756 9982). It was formerly part of RAF Westwood which was closed in 1964 and at the time of fieldwork, it housed derelict former RAF buildings most recently used by Peterborough City Council.

The geology of the area is Cornbrash Limestone overlain by sands and gravels. The DA is flat and is bounded by hedgerows to the north, Cottesmore Close to the south and Gresley Way to the east. The site lies at a height of c.18m AOD.

1.3 Archaeological background

The DA is located 2.1km north-east from the centre of Peterborough, the origins of which are thought to be in the seventh century AD when it was recorded as settlement named Medeshamstede. There is known prehistoric activity within Peterborough and to the north-east of the site, archaeological investigations (HER 51187, 51188, 51757) revealed elements of Bronze Age settlement and enclosure. The findings comprised pits containing Collared Urn fragments, two linear boundaries or field ditches, part of a substantial enclosure, and a stone- and pottery-lined post-hole. Various other artefacts have been found within the area and are evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity with many flint implements and Roman coins found to the south west of the DA (HER 01664).

The known cultural heritage interest within the DA lies in its 20th century use by the RAF. It is situated within the former site of RAF Westwood which was opened in 1932 as a Flying Training School used during the Second World War. The DA itself includes a Batman's Hut which is a wooden single storey building formerly used as accommodation for RAF Westwood officers' batmen (HER 50448) and a former Junior Officers quarters and mess (HER 50456). Both buildings have most recently been used by Peterborough City Council although are now derelict. Two overgrown and covered air raid shelters



are also contained within the site (HER 50450, 50451) one of which is located directly beside the Batman's Hut to the north of the DA (PCC 2011).

Other buildings in the vicinity of the DA connected to RAF Westwood include former storehouses (HER 50452, 50453), a sergeants mess (HER 50454) and a station office (HER 50455) which is now used by Ordnance Survey.

The above findings were noted prior to trial trenching being undertaken and have been considered in the production of this report.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal (as well as the affect on setting of a Heritage Asset),
- to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any remains on the site, in their cultural and environmental setting,
- to analyse any evidence retrieved which is considered relevant to the objectives contained within the frameworks of local, regional and national research. In this case they are provided by Medlycott (2011), Glazebrook (1997), Brown & Glazebrook (2000) and English Heritage (1991 & 1997).

Specifically, the aims of the investigation were:

- to establish the depth and character of archaeologically 'sterile' overburden,
- to identify, characterise and date any potential archaeological remain within the site.

2.2 Methodology

Four trenches were excavated and represented a 5% sample of area. The trenches were placed on various alignments, with Trench 1 and 3 orientated E-W, Trench 2, N-S and Trench 4, NW-SE. This orientation was used to sample the land available for

evaluation that fell within zones of proposed development impact. Full trench descriptions, including orientation, length and soil profile, can be found in Appendix 1.

A 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological deposits were encountered.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features was investigated by hand and all features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

2.3 Recording

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists. All trenches were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded. A full photographic record including colour slide, black and white print and digital photographs was taken. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs.

3. RESULTS

In general, the soil profile of the DA comprised 0.3m of mid brown grey friable sand clay topsoil lying over



Illus 2

WW2 bunker alongside the Batman's Hut



Illus 3

Trench 3 – typical trenching result

a subsoil of orange friable sand clay. The subsoil had an average depth of 0.25m and lay above a natural geology of mixed orange and yellow sand/clay with frequent angular stone inclusions (Illus 3 and 4). Within Trench 2, a deposit of demolition debris was observed beneath the topsoil which included modern tile, brick and stone. This was isolated to 2m within the trench and was not seen in any other area of the DA.

No archaeological remains were revealed in any of the four trenches.

3.1 Description of the significance of the Heritage Assets

The local and regional research contexts that are provided by Medlycott (2011), Glazebrook (1997), Brown & Glazebrook (2000) and the national context provided by English Heritage (1991 & 1997) outline various gaps in knowledge in the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire area. Due to no archaeological remains being identified by trial trenching, the site does not contribute to these research aims.

4. DISCUSSION

As the DA is situated on the former site of RAF Westwood which was a Flying Training School, it can be presumed that prior to the creation of the air field and associated buildings the DA was likely a landscape of open field systems. The results of this evaluation support this assertion as no evidence of previous occupation of the site was uncovered. The small amount of demolition debris seen in Trench 2 was presumed to be associated with the temporary buildings which now occupy the site and was not part of an activity which had taken place prior to RAF Westwood being created.

The presence of the subsoil within areas not presently built on within the DA indicates that they have not been disturbed by the construction of the Officers Mess and Batman's Hut, the bunker or by modern ploughing. Therefore condition for the preservation of archaeological remains within the DA is considered to be good and the paucity of remains indicates a genuine reflection of the archaeological potential of the DA.

4.1 Assessment of the impact of development on the significance of Heritage Assets

The change of use of the eastern part of the DA to dwellings will involve destructive groundworks. However, as no archaeological features were uncovered, the impact of these groundworks on Heritage Assets is considered to be nil.

3



Illus 4

Soil profile within Trench 4



5. REFERENCES

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- Peterborough City Council (PCC) 2011 *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation at Peterborough Professional Development Centre, Cottesmore Close, Netherton, Peterborough*.
- Medlycott, M (ed.) 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24.

4 5.2 Internet sources

- Open Geoscience – British Geological Survey Website
<www.bgs.ac.uk> accessed 27 Jan 2012.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Site registers

Trench register

Trench no.	Direction	Description	Length (m)	Max depth (m)
1	E-W	Topsoil of mid brown grey friable sand clay laying over a subsoil of orange friable sand clay. This lay over natural geology of orange yellow clay with frequent angular stone inclusion.	36	0.4
2	N-S	As Trench 1 – topsoil of mid brown grey friable sand clay laying over a subsoil of orange friable sand clay. This lay over natural geology of orange yellow clay with frequent angular stone inclusion.	13	0.65
3	E-W	As previous trenches – topsoil of mid brown grey friable sand clay laying over a subsoil of orange friable sand clay. This lay over natural geology of orange yellow clay with frequent angular stone inclusion.	21	0.6
4	NW-SE	As previous trenches – topsoil of mid brown grey friable sand clay laying over a subsoil of orange friable sand clay. This lay over natural geology of orange yellow clay with frequent angular stone inclusion.	9	0.6

Photographic register

Photo no.	Direction	Description
001	NW	Listed building
002	E	Trench 1 area
003	NW	Trench 2 area
004	SE	Trench 3 area
005	E	Bunker
006	NW	Bunker
007	NW	Trench 4 area
008	E	Linear in Trench 1
009	SE	Linear in Trench 1
010	SE	Trench 4 post-ex
011	NE	Sample section Trench 4
012	N	Trench 2 post-ex
013	E	Demolition layer in Trench 2
014	E	Trench 1 post-ex
015	E	Trench 3 post-ex
016	E	Trench 3 post-ex



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