



LAND AT FELLOWS ROAD, FLETON PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

**LAND AT FELLOWS ROAD, FLETON,
PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

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Non-technical Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (the Client) on behalf of Abbey New Homes Ltd to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief at land off Fellows Road, Fletton, Peterborough, (the Site) centred on NGR 519223/297103.

The work was undertaken in response to a brief for archaeological works issued by Peterborough City Council and was aimed at identifying and recording evidence of prehistoric activity on Site, particularly evidence associated with the Palaeolithic site discovered at Fletton Road in 1908. More specifically it sought to characterise the Site's Palaeotopography and Pleistocene fauna and identify any evidence of buried Palaeo land surfaces. The project also sought to establish the existence of and record any evidence of surviving archaeological deposits and features associated with the Saxon and medieval development of the area.

This report details the results of the Watching Brief, which was undertaken between the 16th and 20th May 2005.

No remains of archaeological merit were observed during the Watching Brief. This report concludes that quarrying, along with extensive terracing and the development of the Site in the 20th century, coupled with more recent demolition and groundwork associated with remediation of the Site, has significantly truncated and/or removed any archaeological remains.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank; Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the Historical Environment Officer of Peterborough City Council for monitoring the work. Last but not least Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Tony Blake of Abbey New Homes Limited and the staff of Midlands Construction for all their assistance during the work on Site.

The project was undertaken by Gary Evans (Project Officer) and was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Reuben Thorpe (Project Manager) and Gary Evans.

Gary Evans prepared this report with contributions by Reuben Thorpe. The illustrations are by Mark Roughley.

LAND AT FELLOWS ROAD, FLETTON, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (London) was commissioned by CgMS Consulting (the Client) to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief during the excavation for construction of poured concrete foundations of House Plot B (**Figure 1 & 2**), on Land at Fellows Road, Fletton, Peterborough (the Site), centred on NGR 519223/297103. This report details the results of this fieldwork undertaken in May 2005.

1.1.2 The Watching Brief was undertaken in compliance with an Archaeological Condition attached to outline planning consent by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in accordance with the Department of Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (1990).

1.1.3 All archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001) and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, (Gurney. 2003). A Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs, 2004) was prepared prior to the commencement of works, which was approved by the Archaeology Advisor of Peterborough City Council and the (LPA).

1.2 Site Location Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Site is broadly rectangular in plan. To the south it is bounded by Fletton, High Street and to the west by the main East Coast London – Edinburgh railway line. To the north, the Site is bounded by the Lowes Gardens Housing Estate, whilst to the east, the Site is de-limited by the gardens at the rear of the terrace housing along Milton Road (**Figure. 1**).

1.2.2 The Site is presently open ground, the previous factory/depot having been demolished and removed in 2004.

1.2.3 The present topography on Site is largely the product of recent development and landforming. However, the area's natural topography comprises a gentle slope down from south to north, this slope is still evident in the surrounding streets.

1.2.3 Modern street level, adjacent to the Site (Fletton Road), is at 8.53m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The present ground levels on Site varied from 9.25m aOD, in the northeast corner, to 8.80 m aOD in the northwest corner.

1.2.5 In 2004 the foundations of the former depot/factory on the Site were removed and the Site remediated. These operations have undoubtedly resulted in the substantial movement and mixing of earth and soils across most of the Site.

- 1.2.6 The eastern half of the Site is located on river terrace gravels over Oxford clay (British Geological Survey, sheet 158). The southern half of the Site is shown as “Open cast mineral workings some wholly or partially backfilled” (CgMs 2004: 5).
- 1.2.7 Geotechnical investigations have confirmed that the southern half of the Site has been heavily truncated but indicated that river gravels are present elsewhere on the Site.

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the Site has been detailed in *Specification for an Archaeological Monitoring Exercise* (CgMs, 2004). It is summarised below.

Prehistoric (500,000-10,000 BC)

- 1.3.2 There is evidence for human activity in the vicinity of the Site dating to the prehistoric period; this comprised an assemblage of Palaeolithic flint tools found at “the East Side of the Fletton Road” (CgMs 2004: 6). in 1908. The findspot is marked on the 1928 Ordnance Survey map of the area as being northeast of the Site.

Roman (AD 43-410)

- 1.3.3 A number of Romano British finds, including, pottery, jewellery and a burial have been found in the area.

Anglo Saxon -Medieval (AD 410-1538)

- 1.3.4 Evidence of Anglo Saxon occupation of the area has come from Fletton High Street and Hunting Avenue.

Post-medieval (1538-1799)

- 1.3.5 For most of this period the Site appears to have been essentially rural. Lying to the west of Fletton village, the area appears to have been given over to agriculture. (The Ordnance Survey map of 1889 shows a “Manor farm” to the east of the Site). However, evidence of late medieval and post-medieval activity has come from archaeological works at No 79 and Nos. 117-153 Fletton High Street.

Modern (1800-present)

- 1.3.6 The area underwent a period of rapid change with the building of the London to Edinburgh railway and the setting up of the Fletton brick works and associated housing in the 19th century. The Site itself seems to have initially been developed in the mid 20th century. It is shown as agricultural land on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1889 and 1901. In the 1920s the northern half of the Site was developed by the Carlton food canning works. At the same time the southern half of the Site was given over to allotment gardens. These allotments had disappeared by 1971, when the Carlton Works occupied the

entire Site. The Carlton Works were demolished in the 1980's and a warehouse/depot built on Site.

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS

- 2.1.2 The principle objective of the Watching Brief was to establish, as far as reasonably possible, the nature and date of any archaeological deposits and features exposed during groundworks on Site.
- 2.1.3 Specifically the work sought to identify, characterise and record, evidence of prehistoric activity on Site, particularly evidence associated with the Palaeolithic site discovered at Fletton Road in 1908. In addition, archaeological observation also sought to characterise the Palaeotopography of the Site as well as its Pleistocene fauna. The Watching Brief also aimed to identify and record evidence of Palaeo land surfaces still surviving on Site.
- 2.1.4 The work also sought to establish and record the evidence of surviving archaeological deposits and features associated with Saxon and medieval development of the area.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Health and Safety

- 3.1.1 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.
- 3.1.2 All works were carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety regulations (1992) as well as all other current and relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice.
- 3.1.3 A risk assessment was prepared by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 The Watching Brief was undertaken on the site of House Plot B (**Figure 2**) during the excavation, by the site contractor, of foundation and service runs. It comprised a continual archaeological attendance and monitoring of all ground interventions. No works monitoring foundation construction were undertaken at House Plots A, C and D due to the piled nature of their construction.
- 3.2.2 Regular breaks in machine excavation by the site contractor were time tabled into the work programme. These breaks allowed the examination, by Wessex Archaeology, of the revealed archaeological sequence.
- 3.2.3 Excavation of foundation and service trenches was undertaken utilising a 21 ton tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket.

- 3.2.4 Trench widths varied between 0.60m - 0.90m and 1.50m. Trench depths also varied depending on the requirements of the intended build.
- 3.2.5 Recording of the archaeological sequence consisted of scaled photographic records complimented by measured sketch drawings and written observations recorded on Wessex Archaeology standard Trench Record Sheets. A full or representative selection of artefacts was collected, depending on their intrinsic nature, age, quality, preservation, rarity, monetary and or artistic/technological value.
- 3.2.6 All spot heights, provided in the text, refer to heights above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and refer to the top (upper interface) of each deposit.
- 3.2.7 All works were undertaken in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001) and *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, (Gurney. 2003).

4 RESULTS

- 4.1 The following provides a brief summary of the findings and an outline narration of the depositional sequence encountered.
- 4.2 Geological deposits were observed and recorded in the sections of all of the foundation trenches observed in House Plot B. These deposits comprised dark bluish grey and dark brown, compact, laminated clays [6] [12], which occurred at heights of between 8.10m aOD and 8.35m aOD. These clays contained occasional fragments of fossilised sea shell and ammonite fossils. In places the natural geology lay directly below a modern make up / levelling layer [1].
- 4.3 A substantial east–west aligned palaeo-channel [9] was observed running across the northern edge of House Plot B. It was at least 4.40m wide and 34m long and cut into the underlying clay [6]. The southern edge of this palaeo-channel had a 45° slope (**Figure. 3**), and its base was flat. This 2.20m deep, palaeo-channel, the southern end of which only was observed on the northern edge of excavation, was filled with deposits of sand and gravel of varying thickness [3] [4] [5]. None of the gravels were more than 50mm in size and all were angular or sub-angular in shape. A 100mm thick deposit of light grey, clayey sand [8] was observed at the southeaster corner of the feature. No artefacts or ecofacts were observed in any of the fills in this natural feature.
- 4.4 Both the palaeo-channel [9] and in some areas the natural clay [6], were overlain by 0.80m - 1.30m thick deposits of sand and fine angular gravels [2] or a deposit of clayey sands [7]. Over much of the building plot, the boundary between [2] [7] and the overlying deposits [1] was seen to be very diffuse with a high degree of mixing between deposits. In places building rubble and other modern deposits were observed at the top of the underlying clays of the natural geology (**Figure 2 & Section 1 in Figure 3**).

- 4.5 A 3m deep vertically sided cut [12] was observed in the exposed sections at the north east corner of the plot (**Figure 2** & Section 1 in **Figure 3**). This was filled with a loose, dark grey and black ashy silt [11], which contained quantities of coal, clinker and ash, as well as 19th and early 20th century pottery and glass bottles. This feature, which cut into the fills of palaeo-channel [9], almost certainly represents the northern and southern, edges of a former quarry, perhaps part of “open cast mineral workings”(CgMs, 2004, 5).
- 4.6 A make up/levelling up deposit [1], comprised a mixed sandy gravel with patches of mid brown clay containing demolition debris of numerous red brick fragments (most of which were marked “Phorpes” and “LBC”), as well as substantial chunks of concrete, was observed across the Site. In places this modern deposit layer directly above the clays of the natural geology [6] [12].

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Dark grey and brown alluvial clays [6] [12] were observed to extend across the entire area within the footprint of Building plot B. This natural layer was seen to slope up from 8.00m aOD at the northern edge of the plot, to 8.35m aOD at the southern edge.
- 5.2 None of the observed deposits represented either occupation or relict ground surfaces and all appear to be either of geological origin or represent modern dumping/levelling up and/or remediation of the site.
- 5.3 No structural remains were observed in any of the foundation trenches in House Plot B.
- 5.4 No evidence of the former topsoil was seen in House Plot B. However, a small area of topsoil was seen surviving right up against the garden walls at the rear of the properties at the eastern edge of the Site. Where encountered this was up to 1m thick and comprised a light grey sandy silt which was seen to overlay the gravelly sand encountered elsewhere on the Site.
- 5.5 The absence from the Watching Brief of archaeological deposits or deposits of palaeo-environmental interest suggest that archaeological remains have been significantly truncated by quarrying and previous groundworks associated with the demolition and remediation of the Site in the late 20th century.

6 THE ARCHIVE

- 6.1 The project archive is held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the Wessex project code 58770. Following conclusion of the project it will be deposited at the appropriate museum or storage facility.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY TABLE

(+) Indicates deposits features not fully excavated

Context No	Interpretative/processual keyword	Type	Description	Height aOD
1	Modern levelling / make up. Quarry use/disuse	Deposit	Light yellowish brown gravel and coarse sand. Gravel = sub rounded well-rounded small –medium flint pebbles up to 40mm. Frequent small to medium fragments of red brick, concrete, wood and assorted modern demolition rubble throughout. Diffuse wavy boundary between [1] [7] and [2]	9.25m-9.00m
2	Sub soil	Deposit	Light yellowish brown gravel coarse sand. Gravel = sub rounded – well rounded small – medium flint pebbles throughout.	8.85m-8.20m
3	Natural waterlain fill of palaeo channel/channel use	Deposit	Very light yellowish grey clayey gravel mixed with coarse sand Gravel sub rounded to well rounded small to medium flint pebbles 10mm – 0.10m	8.80m
4	Natural waterlain fill of palaeo channel/channel use	Deposit	Mid to light yellowish orange, sand occasional clay with frequent sub rounded to well rounded small to medium flint pebbles	8.25m
5	Natural waterlain fill of palaeo channel/channel use	Deposit	Light yellowish orange, sand with occasional sub rounded to well rounded small to medium flint pebbles	7.25m
6	Natural Geology	Deposit	Dark bluish grey, homogenous compact laminated clay. Occasional Ammonite fossils small to medium flint pebbles	8.35m-8.10m(+)
7	Sub Soil	Deposit	Light yellowish brown clayey gravel coarse sand. Gravel = sub rounded – well rounded small – medium flint pebbles throughout. Boundary between [7] and overlying modern levelling deposits [1] upper interface wavy and often diffuse	8.85m-8.35m
8	Natural waterlain fill/channel use	Fill	Very light grey clayey sand frequent sub rounded well rounded flint pebbles 20mm	7.90m
9	Natural palaeo-channel/channel use	Cut	East –west cut. Flat base, 45° side (only southern edge seen) filled with [3] [4] [5] and [8]	Top=8.25m Base 6.40m
10	Fill / Disuse	Deposit	Loose, dark grey ashy silt frequent clinker, coal, red brick fragments. 19 th –20 th century glass bottles and pottery	Top=9.25m Base= 6.25m
11	Quarry pit / construction and use	Cut	Large cut. Base not reached. Vertical sides. Filled with [10]	Top=9.25m Base= 6.25m
12	Natural Geology	Deposit	Dark brown grey homogenous compact, laminated clay with occasional Ammonite fossils small to medium flint pebbles	8.35m-8.10m(+)

APPENDIX 2: OASIS DETAILS

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: wessexar1-8554

Project details

Project name	Land at Fellows Road, Fletton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire: watching brief
Short description of the project	A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches. The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record evidence of prehistoric activity associated with the Palaeolithic site discovered at Fletton Road in 1908. Quarrying, extensive terracing, the development of the site in the 20th century and more recent groundworks had, however, significantly truncated and/or removed archaeological remains, and no such evidence was found.
Project dates	Start: 16-05-2005 End: 20-05-2005
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH PETERBOROUGH Land at Fellows Road, Fletton, Cambridgeshire
Study area	14350.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TL 19223 97103 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	R. Thorpe
Project supervisor	G. Evans

Project archives

Paper Archive recipient	Peterborough Museum
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Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

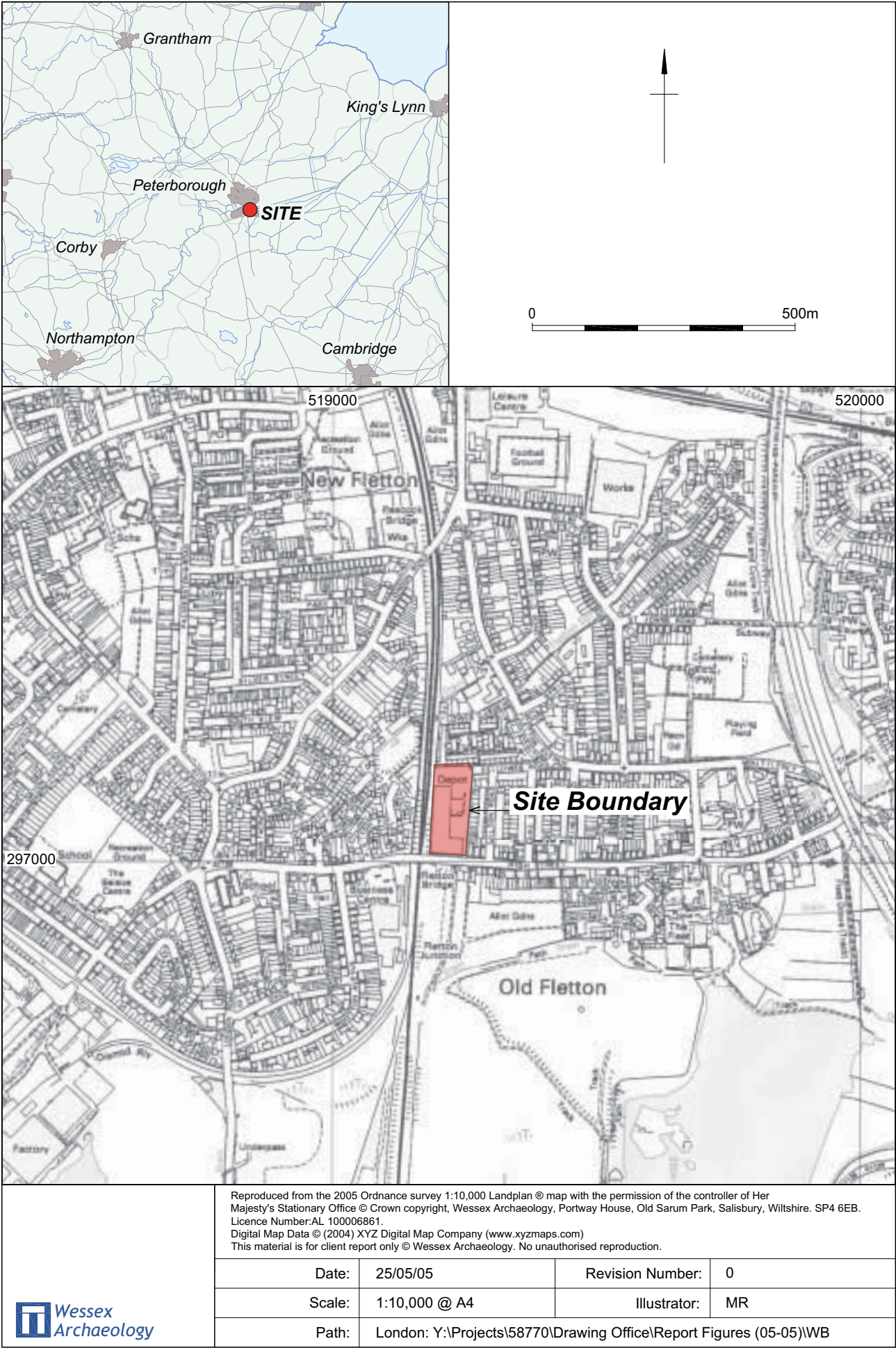
Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Plan','Report','Section','Unspecified Archive'

Project bibliography

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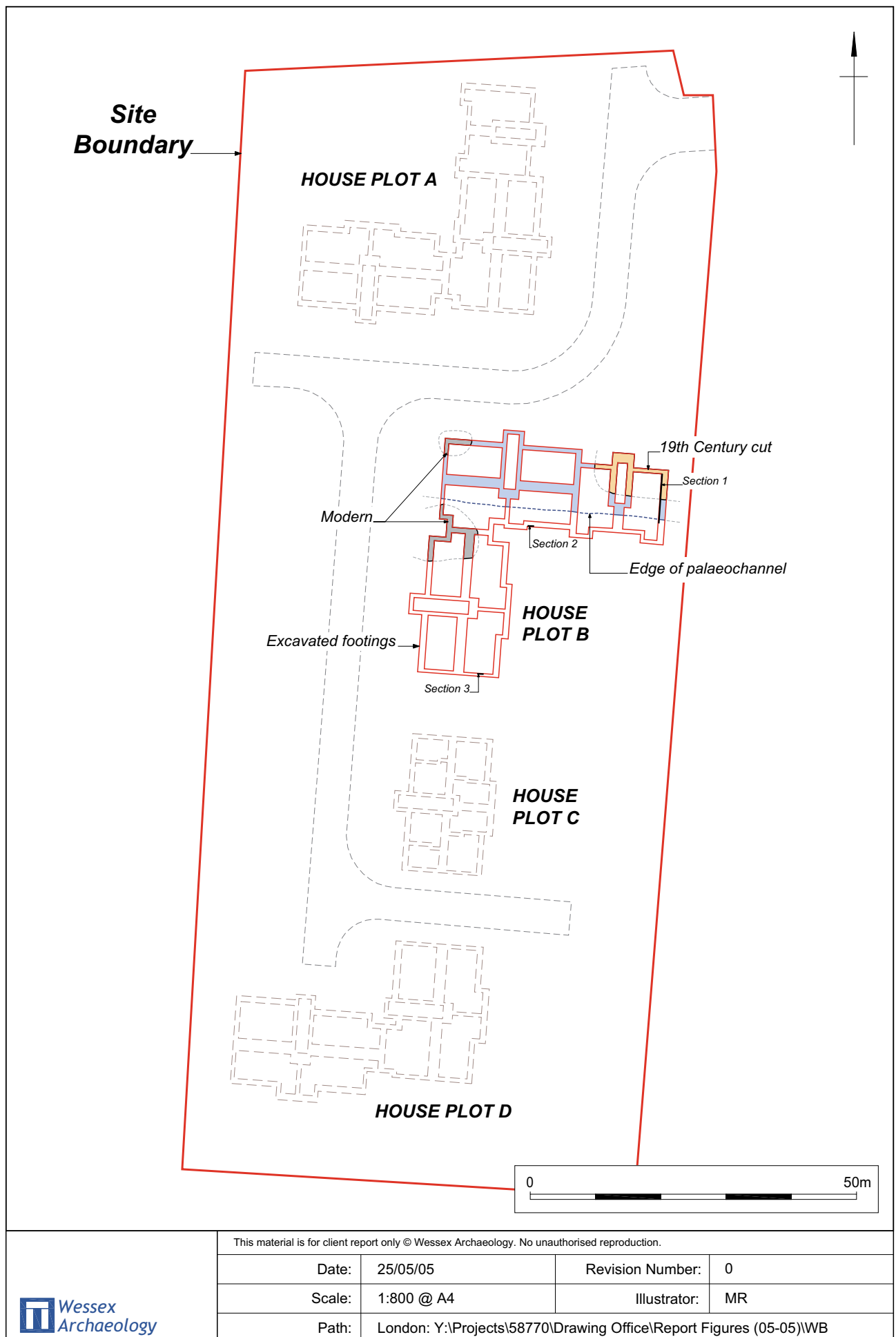
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Site Location

Figure 1



Plan of Proposed Development showing the Excavated Footings and Observed Features

Figure 2



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