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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

### 8 ACRE EXTENSION AT FLOAT FISH FARM, FARCET, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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NGR: TL 2275 9475	Report No. 3283
District: Farcet	Site Code: -
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3396
Signed:	Date: April 2009

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>8 Acre extension to Float Fish Farm, King's Delph Gate, Farcet, Peterborough, Cambs. Archaeological desk-based assessment.</i>		
Project description (250 words)	<p><i>This DBA is an updated version of assessments carried out by Archaeological Solutions in 2005 and 2007, based on NGR TL 2275 9475, and incorporates a summary of trial trenching carried out in a previous phase in 2007). The new assessment site comprises an 8 acre field, centred on TL 2285 9460 bounding the southern edge of the original evaluation site.</i></p> <p><i>The assessment area is located in the fen between a fen 'island' to the west containing two Bronze Age ring ditches (MCB 8208) and a pot-boiler site, and a 'peninsular' to the east containing a round barrow (SAM 3393) which leads up to Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement sites c.2.5km to the north. Roman burials were located some 0.75 km to the west at Palmer's Farm.</i></p> <p><i>The 2007 evaluation carried out immediately to the north found no archaeological features and one sherd of unstratified Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. The stratigraphy revealed river flood plain alluvial silt overlying the natural gravel, which in turn was overlain by an old land surface thought to be of Late Neolithic/Bronze Age date. This in turn was covered by peat layers from wetter conditions capped by topsoil of alluvial silt and clay of late prehistoric/early historic date.</i></p> <p><i>Oakley Dike bounding the north-east side of the assessment area was cut at an unknown date between the Roman period and the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The fen was drained and enclosed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, providing the rural form and character seen today.</i></p>		
Project dates (fieldwork)	-		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	Y	Future work (Y/N/?)	TBC
P. number	3396	Site code	-
Type of project	<i>Archaeological desk based assessment</i>		
Site status	<i>Fish farm development</i>		
Current land use	<i>Agricultural</i>		
Planned development	<i>Fish farm</i>		
Main features (+dates)	-		
Significant finds (+dates)	N/A		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambs</i>	<i>Hunts</i>	<i>Farcet</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambs HER</i>		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site			
NGR	<i>TL 2275 9475</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>2-3m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>n/a</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Pete Thompson</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mick George Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Float Fish Farm, King's Delph Gate, Farcet, Peterborough, Cambs. An archaeological desk-based assessment.</i>		
Authors	<i>Alexandra Grassam, Leonora O'Brien, Pete Thompson, Sophie Unger</i>		
Report no.	<i>3283</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>April 2009</i>		

## **8 ACRE EXTENSION AT FLOAT FISH FARM, FARCET, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

### **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

#### **SUMMARY**

*In April 2009, Archaeological Solutions conducted an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Float Fish Farm, King's Delph Gate, Farcet, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR TL 2275 9475). The desk-based assessment updates previous desk-based assessments carried out by AS in 2005 and 2007 and includes details of fieldwork conducted on the site in October 2007. The assessment includes a new proposed development area.*

*The new assessment site is located within the former fen, and is situated immediately to the south of the area evaluated by trial trenching in 2007. The latter excavation found no archaeological features and only one unstratified Early Bronze Age Beaker sherd which may originally have been associated with a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age land surface overlying river plain alluvium. This surface was subsequently covered by peat layers as conditions became wetter, a process which continued until the later prehistoric or early historic period, when the topsoil comprising alluvial silt and clay was deposited.*

*The site is located between two areas of higher ground, a fen 'island' to the west containing two Bronze Age ring ditches (MCB 8208), and a 'peninsular' to the east containing a scheduled round barrow SAM 3393 which leads up to prehistoric settlement sites including Bradley Fen/King's Dyke, c.2.5km to the north. A concentration of mainly Roman features and finds, including a ditch, pottery and metalwork, and possible burials, are located approximately 500 metres north-east of the assessment site. The presence of Roman finds around Horsey, 1km to the north, and burials at Palmer's Barn some 0.75km to the west, also attest Roman settlement in the area, while the Fen Causeway passed c. 3.5km to the north of the site, leading past further burials and a probable Roman settlement at Whittlesey.*

*The date of the initial creation of Oakley Dike, which forms the north-eastern boundary of the assessment area is unknown, but predates the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century. Roman and early medieval dates are considered plausible, but in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the feature was thought to have been created by King Cnut. In the medieval period, the area was completely covered by fen, with the shallower areas of Farcet Fen providing summer grazing. The fen was drained and enclosed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which created the rural form and character seen today. Ordnance Survey Maps show that the area has remained virtually unchanged for over a century.*

*Given its fen location, the depositional sequence of this site is of interest.*

*Archaeological investigation could potentially determine the lines of the boundaries between the fen and the higher island/ peninsula of the Bronze Age, and there is also potential for surviving Bronze Age settlement or burial/ritual activity. Roman remains may be present at the site, and evidence to date Oakley Dyke could be recovered.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In April 2009, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Float Fish Farm, King's Delph Gate, Farcet, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR TL 2275 9475) (Figs. 1 - 2). The desk-based assessment updates previous assessments conducted by AS in 2005 and 2007, and includes a summary of the fieldwork undertaken in connection with the previous phase of site evaluation (Brogan *et al.* 2008). This updated desk-based assessment was commissioned by Mick George Ltd following the proposed extension of the quarry to include a new area centred on NGR TL 2285 9460.

1.2 The desk-based assessment was conducted as part of a proposal to extend an area previously approved for mineral extraction. It followed the procedures outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (revised 2001) and the relevant requirements of the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal aims were to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the development of the site. Specific objectives included the collation, verification and assessment of any relevant archaeological, documentary, cartographic and geotechnical information.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 & 2)**

2.1 The assessment site is located in a rural setting approximately 2km to the east of the village of Farcet. The town of Yaxley lies c. 4km to the south-west, Whittlesey lies c. 5km to the north-east and the city of Peterborough is c. 5km to the north-west. The assessment area is situated approximately 400m to the south-east of King's Delph Gate Farm on the eastern side of Ramsey Road (B1095 Milk and Water Drove). The modern, channelled, River Nene flows c. 1km to the north of the assessment site, but its former course (which still carries water) passes closer to the site (c. 600m to the north-west). The site lies at between 2 and 3m AOD.

2.2 The new assessment site centred on NGR TL 2285 9460 comprises a rectangular field of 8 acres located at the southern end of the land that was previously evaluated (Brogan *et al.* 2008), and is bounded by the track called King's Delph Highway to the south-west, and the Oakley Dike drain to the north-east.

### **3 METHOD OF WORK (Desk-Based Assessment)**

The following materials were studied for the desk-based assessment:

#### **3.1 Archaeological Databases**

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and spot-finds within Cambridgeshire comes from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record based at County Hall, Cambridge (CHER), incorporating the Huntingdonshire Historic Environment (HHER) and Fenland Historic Environment Record (FHER). In order to provide a representative sample, the CHER database was searched for all known entries within a 1km radius of the study area. The entries within an approximate 1km radius of the site are plotted below (Figure 3). This was backed up by consultation of the Peterborough Historic Environment Record (PHER). National Monument Record (NMR) information is also included. The significance of these entries, where relevant, and that of any other sites of importance in the locale, is discussed in Section 4.2.

#### **3.2 Historical & Cartographic Sources**

The principal source for early maps of the assessment area was the County Record Office in Cambridge (CRO). Relevant documents are listed in Appendix 2 and reproduced in Figures 4-6.

#### **3.3 Secondary Sources**

The principal sources of secondary reference material (such as published excavation reports and period-specific/ thematic studies) were the County Record Office (Cambridge), Cambridge Central Library Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge University Library and AS's own reference library. Unpublished archaeological 'grey' literature was consulted at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Historic Environment Record Offices.

#### **3.4 Geological/Geotechnical Information**

A description of the superficial and solid geology of the area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site (Section 4.1, below). Information was drawn from the Soil Survey of England and Wales and the work of the British Geological Survey. No detailed

geotechnical survey of the site was available for consultation at the time of writing. However, the archaeological evaluation of the previous development area provides some indication of the sequence of subsurface deposits, particularly that within Area 1, which is in a similar topographical position (see below).

## **4 THE EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 Topography, Geology and Soils**

4.1.1 Farcet Fen consists primarily of Glacial Till (boulder clay), although there are areas (including the site itself) where gravels are exposed along with intermediate mixed gravelly clay deposits. By the end of the Neolithic period, all of the lower-lying ground in the area supported peat fen, and during the early Bronze Age, a soft blue-coloured material ('fen clay') was laid down to the south of Clapgate Farm (Hall 1992, 19).

4.1.2 Soils within the assessment area belong to the Ireton Association, described as permeable humose coarse and fine loamy soils, associated with humose calcareous, coarse loamy over sandy soils, suitable for growing cereals, sugar beet and potatoes and with groundwater controlled by ditches and pumps. To the north and west, below the Farcet ridge, soils are mainly river alluvium over peat (Midelney Association), described as stoneless clayey soils mostly overlying peat and variably affected by groundwater. The land rises towards Farcet and Yaxley, where soils are mostly chalky till of the Hanslope Association, consisting of slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Immediately east of the assessment site, soils are Fen Peat (Adventurer's 1 Association): deep peat soils on flat land. Beyond these, to the south-east, is the Bedford Level, a vast expanse of Marine Alluvium and Fen Peat (Downholland 1 Association), characterised as deep humose stoneless clayey soils with a peaty or humose surface horizon (SSEW 1983).

4.1.3 The Fenland Survey indicates that much of the area around the assessment site probably lay beneath the wet peat fen during the Neolithic and Bronze Age (but see Sections 4.1.6 & 4.3.1). Immediately to the south of Ramsey Road (which forms the western boundary of the previous development area) was a raised fen 'island', while an additional peninsula of high ground, running south of Bradley Fen, lies to the north-east (Hall 1992; see Fig. 7). The Fenland Survey (Hall 1992, 19) notes that: "in plan the island has a complex indented shape with a large depression towards the west-centre that is probably a modified pingo or thermokarst feature. A narrow peninsula approaches from Whittlesey to the north. There is a gap separating it from the main island, but the curious way that the peninsula makes for one of the island's indents suggests that once the two did link." The Fenland Survey indicates that east of the peninsula, and south of Whittlesey, was the fen delta of the old River Nene, a meandering system of streams, with the dendritic tributaries of the old river still visible on aerial photographs (Fig. 7).

4.1.4 The site at Float Fish Farm has a varied micro-topography. Much of the previous development area, closest to King's Delph Gate Farm, is low-lying and would have lain within the peat fen, between the fen 'island' and the peninsula of high ground approaching from Whittlesey (Fig. 7). The assessment site is in this low-lying area and as such, would probably have been increasingly waterlogged and subject to peat growth from the Neolithic onwards, although earlier prehistoric land surfaces may survive under the peat.

4.1.5 These subtle topographical variations are now masked by several millennia of peat growth, and subsequent peat shrinkage following the draining of the Fens in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the wider area around the site appears as one large fen island, rising to over 3m OD in places (Fig. 8), a relatively high area in comparison with the Bedford Level to the south-east, where much land lies below sea level.

4.1.6 The natural resources available in the area, and their consequent exploitation by humans, have varied widely over time. This is due to the low-lying terrain, vulnerable to both marine flooding from The Wash and 'ponding-back' of freshwater runoff from higher ground to the west. This fluctuating fenland environment has influenced the location and character of settlement and agricultural activity in the area since the Mesolithic period. Episodes of flooding, silting and peat formation have masked and protected earlier deposits which have been revealed in increasing quantities over the past 30 years in the course of fen drainage, peat shrinkage, intensive arable land use and mineral extraction.

4.1.7 An evaluation comprising eight trial trenches was carried out in October 2007 during a previous phase of work at the site, centred on NGR TL 2275 9475 (CHER MCB17937; Brogan, McCann, O'Brien and Unger 2008). The investigations revealed the following subsurface deposit model:

Deposit	Highest Point Encountered	Lowest Point Deposited	Description
Topsoil	0.00m*	0.35m	Dark grey-brown gleyed silty alluvium with occasional small rounded stones and organic material.
Black Peat Layer	0.21m	0.50m	Humic, dessicated black peat with occasional rootlets, wood fragments and gravel inclusions.
Red Peat Layer	0.31m	0.85m	Mid reddish-brown humified and dessicated peat with high silt component and visible lamination. Not always present.
Dark Brown Peat Layer	0.45m	0.97m	Compact, moist, humified dark brown sedge peat with less silt than Red Peat, above, and occasional rounded wood inclusions.
Buried Soil Horizon	0.51m	1.05m	Organic brown-grey peaty silt containing horizontally-bedded leaves of Phragmites.
Creamy-White Silt Layer	0.64m	0.92m	Thin lenses of tufa-rich silt. Not always present.
Alluvial Clay	0.62m	1.05m+	Blue-grey alluvial clay.

*Table 1: Deposit model showing the sequence of layers from the archaeological evaluation*

\* 0.00m = modern ground level

A palaeo-environmental assessment of the site (Scaife in Brogan *et al.* 2008) helped to clarify the origins of these deposits. The natural Pleistocene gravel geology was found to be overlain by Flandrian alluvial silts containing fen/ reed swamp vegetation, deposited in a river floodplain environment (described as 'Alluvial Clay' in Table 1, above). Lenses of whitish tufa-rich silt indicate the presence of localised open freshwater pools (Creamy-White Silt Layer, above). Following a reduction in the groundwater table, an old ground surface, comprising a grey peaty palaeosol, emerged (Buried Soil Horizon, above). This was marked by tree hollows, but horizontally-bedded leaves of Phragmites suggest that the ground was still periodically wet. An Early Bronze Age Beaker sherd recovered during the evaluation probably came from this land surface, which is also present at Must Fen and Bradley Fen. A change in sea level, probably in the Early to Middle Bronze Age, resulted in the watertable in the Fenland Basin rising, and three layers of brown and black humic peat developed over the old land surface. The site's topsoil, comprising the Barroway Drove Beds, was of alluvial silt and clay laid down in the late prehistoric or early historic period. This sequence of deposits was comparable to the stratigraphy visible on an open quarry face to the west of the site, which showed the full sequence of deposits overlying the natural Pleistocene gravel terrace. The one notable difference was that in the quarry face,



the alluvial sediment overlying the Pleistocene gravel was a firmer blue-grey clay, probably formed locally under standing water.

4.1.8 As discussed above, the location of the proposed quarry extension occupies a similar topographical position to the previous evaluation area and the sequence of subsurface deposits is likely to be similar to that described above.

## **4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### *4.2.1 Early prehistoric*

During the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, human activity appears to have been concentrated on the higher land of the fen edge, although this apparent distribution may simply reflect the fact that much of the evidence of earlier prehistoric activity is sealed beneath layers of later peat growth and alluvium. The heavy soils of Farcet were probably not attractive to early settlers, although Palaeolithic and Mesolithic flints are recorded from the area. The exact location of these findspots is not known and these finds probably reflect ephemeral activity, such as flint knapping on a hunting expedition, rather than longer-term occupation sites.

About 1.6km to the south-east of Float Fish Farm, on the 'peninsula' leading to modern Whittlesey, is a probable settlement site, represented by a flint scatter. The majority of the flintwork is dated to the Neolithic, although a small Mesolithic blade and a Bronze Age scraper were also recovered (FHER 10871; Site 1, Hall 1992, 19, fig. 10; see below). Palaeoenvironmental research suggests that the assessment site may have been dry land at this time (French & Pryor 1993, fig. 70), although numerous canoes or logboats have been recovered from the fen in this area, indicating the extensive use of waterways and inlets (see Section 4.2.2, below). The Peterborough HER notes that sparse Neolithic flint implements have been found widely scattered in the area to the north-west of the site, near Horsey Bridge, which was on dry land at this time (PHER 1953), with further Neolithic and Bronze Age flint recovered during fieldwalking at Stanground (PHER 51229; 51230).

### *4.2.2 Later Neolithic and Bronze Age*

#### *4.2.2.1 Environment*

During the early Bronze Age, rising water levels resulted in marine flooding, reducing land available for settlement and agriculture. The Fenland Survey suggests that the assessment site lay just within the peat fen in the later Bronze Age, with the edge of a fen island immediately to the west, running along the south-western side of Ramsey Road (Hall 1992, fig. 10). To the east, the fen edge probably ran along the line of Oakley Dyke (Hall 1987, fig. 38; Hall 1992, fig. 10). However, it is important to note that the areas of projected fen, skirtland and

dryland in the immediate vicinity of King's Delph are hypothetical and, with the exception of the 2007 trial trenching (HER MCB 17937 (4.1.7)), have yet to be tested by fieldwork (Fig. 7 and see below, Section 4.3.5).

#### 4.2.2.2 Settlement sites

Two possible Bronze Age settlement sites are noted at Farcet and Whittlesey in the Fenland Survey (Fig. 7). The first is a principally Neolithic flint scatter with some Bronze Age material, located 'on the gravelly peninsula extending from Whittlesey' and '...with potential for waterlogged contemporary remains being preserved under the marine clay that lies a few metres from it'. This is c. 1.6km south-east of the assessment (Site 1; Hall 1992, 19, fig. 10). An area of burnt flint at Redshank Farm on the former fen 'island' was interpreted as a pot boiler or cooking site, c. 1.8km to the south-west of the present site (FHER 10873; Site U2; Hall 1992, 22, fig. 10). A poorly-provenanced stray find of an Iron Age vessel is recorded from near Park House Farm, also on the former 'island', c. 1km to the south (NMR\_NATINV-871296), and a food vessel is recorded from Whittlesey Road, to the north-west (PHER 7832).

The extensive Bronze Age ritual platform and post alignment at Flag Fen lies c. 4.5km to the north of the assessment site, with the field systems of Fengate to its west (Pryor 2001). This area was a shallow, open fen basin, which was sufficiently dry to permit the construction of the Flag Fen settlement, although the repeated rebuilding and artificial raising of this settlement may reflect rising water levels. The site was finally abandoned at the end of the Bronze Age.

During the South West Fen Dyke Survey, archaeological observation of Mustdyke (Dyke 10), between Flag Fen and the channelled river Nene, noted a buried soil cut by features, some containing charcoal or Bronze Age flints. Elements of the Flag Fen timber platform were noted, as was the Fen Causeway (French & Pryor 1993, 92-7, 100; EHNMR 082732). Study of Dyke 9, parallel to the Nene near Northey Island, suggested that the area was an occupied island of dry ground during the Neolithic and Bronze Age (*ibid*, 91-100; EHNMR 1082729). Finds from excavations at Northey suggest that salt production was undertaken in the vicinity in the Bronze Age (Gurney 1980; EHNMR 1083034).

To the south of Flag Fen, on a fen island embayment, excavations at Funtham's Lane, Bradley Fen, Whittlesey (1962) by Peterborough Museum Society Archaeology Field Section, found Iron Age settlement remains and Roman settlement and burials (EHNMR-642854). Further recent investigations at Bradley Fen have found Neolithic metal surfaces with flint scatters and animal remains, probably related to watering holes, as well as pits, wells, postholes and 'troughs', which yielded well-preserved wooden artefacts including log ladders and a piece of a log boat. Another Neolithic log boat was discovered near Whittlesey, to the east (NMR\_NATINV-367061), and a further possible logboat site is recorded to the north of the assessment site, near Horsey Toll Farm (in 1828) (PHER 2955). At

Bradley Fen, a series of Bronze Age burnt mounds were found, as well as single 'pristine' spears between the burnt mounds, a hoard of 20 damaged weapons (dating to c. 1200 BC), metalworking evidence and human remains. The field system at Bradley Fen was probably established before the late Bronze Age-early Iron Age roundhouse settlement (Lewis 2002, 147; Edwards & Gdaniec 1997; Knight 2000a).

Excavations at King's Dyke West, located immediately east of Bradley Fen, recorded a Neolithic henge monument, an Early Bronze Age monument complex and several Late Bronze Age roundhouses (Mortimer 1995; Mortimer 1996; Alexander 1997; Lucas 1997; Edwards nd; Knight 1999; Knight 2000b; Gibson & Knight 2002). A Bronze Age burial has also been recorded in this area (NMR\_NATINV-367068).

#### 4.2.2.3 Barrows

The area between Farcet and Whittlesey is relatively rich in barrows. Bowl barrows are the most frequent form of round barrow and date from the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age (c. 2400 to 1500 BC). They can occur in isolation or in groups; some 10,000 are known nationally although there are regional variations (Taylor 1981). Barrows are of national importance not only for potentially contributing to understanding of prehistoric burial practices and ideology, but also because buried soil beneath the mound will retain valuable information on land use, with organic deposits showing environmental conditions of the time (Watkins 2003). For example, at Etton, well-developed brown forest soils were found on the higher parts of the terrace, which had rarely been ploughed before barrow construction (French 1988, French & Pryor forthcoming).

A bowl barrow (HER 07727) lies less than 350m east of the assessment area. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 3393). The barrow has been reduced by ploughing, but still survives as a gravel rise 0.2m high and 23m in diameter. The surrounding 5m-wide ditch is now in-filled, but is discernible as a buried cropmark feature seen on aerial photographs. The barrow is located on the fen edge on a gravel peninsula in proximity to the prehistoric course of the river Nene (Hall 1987, fig. 38).

The plough-damaged remains of two further barrows are located to the south-east of the assessment site, on the higher ground of the fen 'island', near Park House Farm (Fenland Survey Sites 2 (FHER 10872) and U1 (FHER 10873); Hall 1992, 19-21, fig. 10). They have been 'reduced to low mounds 14m in diameter and about 30cm high ... neither is likely to have wet remains, since both now lie on a 'hill' top' (Hall 1992, 19-21).

To the west of the site are the cropmark remains of a cluster of four ring ditches, south of Milby Farm and c. 150m west of the assessment site (HER 06804). These

ring ditches may be the remains of ditches around barrow mounds, or may represent another category of buried feature (see Taylor 1981, 108).

A round barrow cemetery lies 1.2km south-east of the Farcet barrow, at Suet Hills (1.6km from the assessment site). This site includes eight round barrows in two groups. The westernmost group comprises a cluster of five barrows, with the remaining three lying a short distance to the east. Five barrow mounds survive as earthworks, measuring between 0.3m and 1m high, while the three easternmost mounds have been reduced by ploughing and are no longer visible above ground (EH NMR NATINV-367149).

Further afield, geophysical survey and trial trenching at Stanground North (Flag Fen) in 1999 revealed a Bronze Age timber trackway and post alignment, as well as a Bronze Age round barrow raised over the site of a contemporary round house (EHNMR-1306733).

<b>Barrow/probable barrow site</b>	<b>Height (m AOD)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Distance from centre of assessment site NGR TL 2275 9475</b>
Fenland Survey site U1 (FHER 10873) (Hall 1992, fig. 10)	2.1	Fenland survey Site U1 (Hall 1992). BA ploughed-out barrow (14m diameter, 0.3m high) at 2.1m AOD	1.2km south west
Fenland Survey site 2 (FHER 10872) (Hall 1992, fig. 10)	2.1	Fenland survey Site 2 (Hall 1992). BA ploughed-out barrow (14m diameter, 0.3m high) at 2.1m AOD	1.5km south west
SAM3393 (HER 7727)	2	Bowl barrow surviving as a gravel rise; 23m diameter, 0.2m high	0.8km east north east
?Barrow (FHER 8156)	2	AP of ring ditch of round barrow? same as SAM3393	0.8km east north east
Suet Hills barrow field (NMR-NI 367149)	2	Barrow field	c. 2.0km east
Ring ditches at Milby Farm (HHER 6804)	2	Crop mark of four ring ditches	0.45km west

*Table 2: Barrow sites in the vicinity of the development area*

#### 4.2.2.4 Metalwork recovered from the area of the Bronze Age fen

A large fragment of a late Bronze Age spearhead was discovered near Wakes Farm, c. 700m south of the assessment site (HHER 2922), and a socketed axe

and a flint knife were found south of Straight Drove, between Farcet Bridge and Slacker Ground Farm (Fenland survey Gazetteer; Hall 1992 microfiche). Both find spots lie in areas that were probably fen in the Bronze Age, but quite close to the hypothetical fen edge (Hall 1992, fig. 10).

Numerous Bronze Age implements have been found in the River Nene and along its banks near Horsey, including a socketed axe and two palstaves, which are now in Peterborough Museum (Bodger Collection) (PHER 2950). A late Bronze Age leaf-shaped sword was found at Stanground, near Horsey Toll (PHER 2937). To the north, at Bradley Fen, recent excavations found a hoard of weapons; earlier excavations in the same area found a Bronze Age rapier and sword (NMR\_NATINV-367139); the fen edge location of these finds at Bradley Fen is topographically comparable to those of the spearhead fragment and socketed axe and flint knife found closer to the current assessment site.

The weapons hoard from Flag Fen is one of a small number of such deposits found in this area of the fens, but a deposit of a type which occurs frequently further south on the fen edges of southern Cambridgeshire, as well as elsewhere in middle to late Bronze Age Britain, notably in the Thames Valley (Downes 1993, 25-26). The occurrence of hoards in these areas has been variously interpreted as a religious phenomenon (Pryor 1991, 118), perhaps indicating focal points for a new 'water-based' religion arising at this time (Burgess 1974, 179), and as evidence of prosperity, due to the availability of natural resources and good water communications, with the area becoming a new centre of power (Rowlands 1980, 34-5). Another interpretation with an economic aspect is that the deposition of metal items in the fen took it out of circulation and so kept its value high, thus maintaining its status as a prestige material affordable only by the wealthy and/ or powerful; the destruction of such valuable items on the flat land of the fens would have been a very public act and may have brought prestige to the depositor (Pryor 1991, 120). However, there has also been debate as to whether hoards represent single depositional events or multiple depositions over time (Barrett and Gourlay 1984, 349). If the latter interpretation is accepted then single bronze tools, like those noted above as having been recovered from the area of the Bronze Age fen in the area of the assessment site (see Fig. 7), can be interpreted as variants of the same pattern rather than a separate phenomenon (Bradley 1982, 110; Downes 1993, 26).

It has been noted above that the bowl barrows of this region date to the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. This is in keeping with the widespread trend away from individual burials toward undifferentiated cremation cemeteries; an example of such a cemetery having been identified at Fengate (Downes 1993, 26). The coincidence of this change in burial practice with the beginnings of deposition of tools and weapons into the fen, has led to the hypothesis that the latter form of deposition replaced the grave goods of the earlier Bronze Age (Bradley 1982, 113; 1984, 112), being a symbolic way of 'burying' important individuals in the waters of the fen (Pryor 1991, 120). It would, however, be inaccurate to imply that his

interpretation could be applied to all bronze artefacts recovered from the fen, and chance loss is likely to have occurred in these areas as well as on dry land (e.g. Pryor 1991, 120) (though with less frequency owing to the patterning of activity).

### 4.2.3 Iron Age and Roman

#### 4.2.3.1 Environment

The Late Bronze Age and Iron Age were wet periods, during which peat would have formed in the lower-lying areas around the site (Hall 1992, 22). The scarcity of Iron Age sites in the area is a reflection of the wet conditions of the period, but sites of this date are not absent from the region (see Section 4.2.3.2). This indicates that there were some areas where the land was dry enough for occupation or more sporadic activity; these include two sites (FHER 1719 and FHER 7726) within c. 600m to the east and north-east of the assessment site. Even when covered by peat, the area would have had value in its wetland resources.

By the time of the Roman Conquest, the fens were beginning to become drier, presumably due to climatic change, as there is no evidence for deliberate drainage (Potter, 1981, 81; although this may be due to post-medieval wastage of the relevant peat deposits). The fen island at Stonea Camp, near March, was a focal point for Iceni resistance to Roman rule, its fen surroundings making it a good defensive position (Salway 1993, 77; Pottery and Jackson 1998; Malim 2005). It is possible that other fen islands also became points of resistance to the spread of Roman rule.

During the Roman period, there appears to have been major investment in communications and drainage works in the Fenland, although no private villa estates or towns have been found. The rich grazing and tidal streams may have been exploited as parts of a single large imperial estate (Jackson & Potter 1996; Salway 1981, 127). During the 3rd century AD, widespread freshwater flooding in the southern Fenland, when alluvium was washed inland and deposited, may have caused populations to move to higher ground (Mackreth 1996, 235). During the late and post-Roman periods, poor maintenance of drainage works may have led to further flooding. Silty organic clays derived from eroded topsoils were deposited in the later Roman and early medieval periods. Although the growth of the peat and silt had been temporarily arrested during the Roman period, the fens would continue to expand until the advent of large-scale drainage schemes from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The distribution of Roman remains suggests that the peninsula to the north-east of the site was still dry land at this time. Possible settlements were located at Horsey Toll, near Bradley Fen, and Stanground south and west of Whittlesey. Burials have been found near Whittlesey, possibly close to the route of the Fen Causeway.

Further burials are known from Horsey Toll and the 'peninsula' to the north of the site, near Bunting's Farm.

#### 4.2.3.2 Settlement sites

On the 'peninsula' to the east of the assessment site is a possible Iron Age pot boiler site noted in the Fenland Survey, consisting of a dark area with a surface scatter of burnt stone, bone, pottery sherds and other artefacts (FHER 7726).

Surface finds of Roman building stone, flue tile and 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>-century pottery have been found near Horsey Toll Farm during various fieldwalking trips undertaken by the Peterborough Museum Field Section. An excavation has also been carried out (PHER 1364; Phillips 1970, 188), and Roman coins are also recorded from this area (NMR\_NATINV-367135), as well as stray finds of pottery (PHER 1369). Pottery sherds spanning the Roman period have also been found c. 600m north-west of the assessment site (HER 2957a), and near Black House Farm, east of Horsey Toll (PHER 2939).

Excavations west of Whittlesey (1958-9) found a 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>-century settlement with a sequence of associated field systems; a burial was also found (NMR\_NATINV-367069). Excavations at Itter Farm, Whittlesey, near King's Dyke (1958-59), found a Roman ditch (EHNMR-642855; Phillips 1970, 188). Excavations nearby at Funtham Lane (1962) found a Roman pit and ditch (EHNMR-1090134; Phillips 1970, 188). Recent investigations at Bradley Fen, Whittlesey found a possible alternative route for the line of the Fen Causeway, c. 2.5km north of the assessment site (Knight 2000a).

#### 4.2.3.3 Burials

No new Iron Age or Roman remains were discovered in Farcet during the Fenland Survey. However, approximately 500m to the west of the site, Roman burials and 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>-century pottery had previously been found close to Palmer's Barn (HER 02957a). In the same location, a burial was found in 1906 under a stone slab (HHER 02811), while a skull was also ploughed out near an area of cropmarks, indicating a potential occupation area with an associated cemetery (HHER 2957).

Excavations at Horsey Toll in 1955 found a Roman ditch and burial (EH NMR 642852; see also PHER 4018). Roman skeletons may also have been ploughed up in this area (PHER 1364; Phillips 1970, 188), however, the exact findspots and origins are rather confused (Hall 1992, 17). During construction work at Park Farm, Stanground, west of Horsey Toll, builders found an inhumation (PHER 3129), building stone, flue tiles, and 1st to 3rd century pottery (PHER 4015). Four 3rd century kilns have been excavated at Park Farm, Stanground (PHER 3128).

Excavations in the 1950s on the 'peninsula' near Bunting's Farm, found five Romano-British burials dating to the mid 2nd century (FHER 999), as well as 2nd

to 4th century ditches, baked clay debris possibly reflecting an industrial site (FHER 994), worked bone (FHER 999a), jet and bronze items (FHER 999b), coins and Roman pottery (FHER 995). Fieldwalking during the Fenland Survey noted a small dark area with tile and potsherds in the near-vicinity (FHER 7734).

Excavations near Bradley Fen, to the north, in 1961, found eight 2nd century burials, pottery and a wicker-lined pit containing 3rd to 4th century Roman pottery (NMR\_NATINV-367138). Excavations nearby in 1962 found pits and ditches with 2nd to 4th century pottery and a Roman sword (NMR\_NATINV-367139). A Romano-British cremation was found west of Whittlesey (NMR\_NATINV-367137).

#### 4.2.4 Anglo-Saxon, Norman and medieval

##### 4.2.4.1 Farcet and archaeology in the site's vicinity

Place-names suggest that multiple estates existed in the area between c. AD 650 and 950. These would have comprised numerous small settlements and farms, some of them specialised, administered from an estate centre. The name Farcet is first recorded in the 10<sup>th</sup> century as *Faresheued*, meaning 'Bull's headland or hill' and indicates the presence of a substantial farm specialising in rearing stock (Kirby & Oosthuizen 2000; Mills 1991, 127). Farcet is not mentioned in the 1086 Domesday survey but was one of the earliest endowments of Thorney Abbey, given in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. There were shared rights between Ramsey and Thorney Abbeys in Ramsey Marsh and in 1224 Yaxley and Farcet were passed, free of claim, to Thorney Abbey (Page 1936, 167). During medieval times, much of the Nene water passed between Farcet and the Fen and much of the northern part of the fen would have been covered by floodwater in wet seasons (Darby 1940). The fen island would have provided good grazing during summer, as the peat covering was only slight (Hall 1992, 22).

Ridge and furrow earthworks have been noted on higher ground at Stanground, to the north-west (PHER 51234; 50653). Here, a geophysical survey was carried out, noting traces of ridge and furrow along with possible pits and linear features. Two areas produced anomalies that may indicate ancient settlement and boundary features (PHER51234).

##### 4.2.4.2 Oakley Dike and Kings Dike

The north-east boundary of the assessment area is formed by a drain marked on the 1999 OS map as Oakley Dike. This water channel was first documented in 1285, when it was referred to as *Suthende de Kinggesdelfe*; *Northende de Kinggesdelfe* was recorded at the same time, referring to (modern) King's Dike, which passes c. 1.1km north of the assessment site. The name 'King's Delph', which originally referred to these dikes, survives in several local place-names (including that of the farm to the north of the assessment site and the trackway which passes through it). An earlier (c. 1250) source refers to the northern dike as



*Swerdesdelf*. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the name *Sword Dyke* had been transferred to the northern dike, which was also known as *Whittlesey Dyke*, and by the late part of that century, both were being called *Canutus/ Knutus* or *Kings Dyke*. The name *Oakley Dyke* was first recorded in 1821 (Reaney 1943, 208).

The origin of these dikes remains unknown, though clearly they predate the mid to late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Roman (*cf.* Reaney 1943, 260) and post-Roman (*cf.* Hall 1987, 66) dates are both plausible; the Victoria County History states only that they are of 'considerable antiquity'. The Roman finds listed in the Historic Environment Record show no patterning indicative of a spatial relationship with Oakley Dike (see Fig. 3). The late 17<sup>th</sup>-century name for the dykes results from their reputedly having been made by King Cnut (Reaney 1943, 260). The Victoria County History notes the recovery of a late Anglo Saxon (10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century) spearhead and sword (both now lost) from the junction of King's Dike and the River Nene (Salzman 1967, I, 325, 326) but it is not clear whether these came from the bed or the banks of the watercourse.

#### 4.2.5 *Post-medieval*

In the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, a civil war pentagonal fort with bastions and a large gun emplacement or sconce, was built at Horsey Grange Farm, 1.3km to the north of the site, on the east bank of the old course of the River Nene (PHER 1996). This guarded the toll road from Peterborough and Stangate to Whittlesey, where it crosses the River Nene. However, the area was strongly controlled by Parliament and the fort is unlikely to have been involved in any significant campaign or military action. It was during the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Farcet Fen was drained and entirely inclosed. At this time, traces of a fen island were found in the gravel. The drainage of Whittlesey Mere was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1762 (Page 1936, 166).

#### 4.2.6 *Modern*

Horsey Toll Airfield, north-west of the site, was a Second World War airbase used for repairing Hawker Hurricane aeroplanes (PHER 50570, 50571, 50572, 50573, 50574 & 50575).

### 4.3 RECENT FIELDWORK IN THE VICINITY OF THE SITE

4.3.1 In 2007, Archaeological Solutions carried out an archaeological evaluation of a previous area of the quarry at Float Fish Farm, centred on NGR TL 2275 9475 (CHER MCB 17937). Eight trial trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were found but one unstratified sherd of Beaker pottery was recovered from a buried early Bronze Age soil horizon sealed by layers of peat.

4.3.2 Archaeological investigations carried out since 2005 at Must Farm (c. 2.25km north-east of the site) have discovered significant prehistoric archaeology (Evans & Knight 2005, 66). The preliminary investigations discovered a timber alignment which was radiocarbon dated, at least partially, to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (Evans & Knight 2005, 14). As the site is very close to Flag Fen; connections have been suggested between the two sites.

4.3.3 A second phase of work at Must Farm discovered one of the most important findings of the fieldwork programme: an intact Neolithic oval barrow, which had a large circuit ditch and a mound consisting of upcast material. A moderate quantity of Peterborough ware was found in association (Evans & Brudenell 2005, 66). A round barrow was also found, but with a smaller ditch and capped with gravels (Evans & Brudenell 2005, 66). The round barrow fell directly upon the projected axis of the oval barrow, indicating that the oval barrow was constructed earlier; it was suggested that c. 500-1000 years elapsed between their periods of construction (Evans & Brudenell 2005, 68). There are thought to have been two prehistoric settlement sites within the Must Farm area. The first (site 1) was located beside the south-west terrace-edge and revealed evidence of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age settlement, although it is thought to have been seasonal or temporary in nature. The second settlement site (site 4), again dated to the later Neolithic/early Bronze Age, was dispersed, suggesting settlement, but again possibly on a seasonal basis (Evans & Brudenell 2005, 68). Within this site was the southern part of a rodden (former river channel), aligned south-east to north-west (Evans & Brudenell 2005, fig. 15/1/18).

4.3.4 Excavations at Bradley Fen, Must Farm and Jings Dike West have revealed a rich landscape of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity along the fen edge to the north and west of Whittlesey Island. Archaeological remains identified to date include a Neolithic henge, late Neolithic settlement and Bronze Age barrows and burnt mounds. At Bradley Fen, pollen from a palaeosol showed that prior to Neolithic woodland clearance and a change to a grassland environment, lime woodland was dominant in the area, with oak and alder also present in wetter zones. In the Early Bronze Age, peat formation began, with floodplain-type trees such as alder carr appearing over the old land surface, and major waterways including the Nene showing signs of silting up. A rise in the water table saw the development of grass/sedge fen, and a wooden trackway covered with an earthen embankment was created to traverse the fen. Its sinuous route and the presence of tree hollows indicate that much of the area was still wooded. This is of interest in identifying where the resources came from to create massive timber structures such as Flag Fen and the post boundaries leading down to the fen at Stanground (see below). The environmental evidence correlates with the levels at Northey, Flag Fen and Fengate. An Early Bronze Age ring ditch at Bradley Fen was post-dated by burnt mounds at the fen edge, which provided a radiocarbon date of c. 1740-1520 BC. In the Middle Bronze Age (c. 1600-1200 BC), field systems were created close to the fen edge, and as the peat formation advanced in the later Bronze Age (c. 1390-790 BC), metalwork was deposited at the edges of the dry

land. These deposits and the burnt mounds were located at around 1m AOD. By the early Iron Age (c. 700 BC), the peat growth intensified and subsumed the lower part of the field systems, and a new settlement was built higher up at 1.2-2.5m AOD, over the existing Bronze Age field boundaries. Peat formation continued until the Late Iron Age (Gibson & Knight 2006).

4.3.5 Fieldwork at Stanground South (c. 1.5km north-west of the site) was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology between September and December 2005 (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 42). Results from the archaeological evaluation produced 19 middle Bronze Age cremation burials, three of which were excavated but poorly-preserved (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 42). Field boundaries dating to earlier than the Iron Age were discovered, as was a probable Iron Age ditch system (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 42). Geophysics and subsequent trial trenching were able to confirm the presence of three late Iron Age roundhouses, thought to be one primary house with two smaller outbuildings (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 42). Occupation was thought to continue into the early Roman period with abandonment occurring in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 43). Fieldwalking produced a wealth of Roman pottery and tile and trial trenching revealed a pottery kiln on the settlement (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 43). Other pottery kilns manufacturing similar wares have been found at other excavations close by (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 43). Ridge and furrow was encountered, which could date to either the medieval or post-medieval period, confirming the results of the Aerial Photographic Assessment (Taylor & Aaronson 2005, 43). A buried terrain model compiled in advance of development at Magna Park in Stanground, located 2.5km north, indicates an area of high ground approximately 400 metres north north of the assessment area. The model survey ends immediately north of Bunting's Farm, but suggests it could continue towards the assessment area (pers.comm. Kasia Gdaniec), and this is supported by the presence of the bowl barrow (SAM 3393) 350 metres east of the assessment area.

4.3.6 Recent excavations at Farcet Road and Horsey Hill (c. 1.5km north-west and c. 1km north of the site, respectively) have produced multi-period evidence (Kenney 2007). The Farcet Road excavations showed Iron Age and Roman settlement (areas 1, 2 and 3). Horsey Hill produced evidence of prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation (areas 4, 5 and 6) (Kenney 2007).

## **4.4 THE ASSESSMENT SITE**

4.4.1 The 1891 and 1902 (Fig. 4) Ordnance Survey Maps indicate that the site was much the same in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century as it is today. Earlier maps were not informative as to land use at the site. The field boundaries shown on the two early Ordnance Survey maps are the same as today and the only buildings in the immediate vicinity are those of King's Delph Gate Farm. The bowl barrow (HER 7727; SAM 3393) can be seen east of the assessment area. The succeeding Ordnance Survey Maps of 1938 and 1950 (Figs. 5 & 6) show no real change to the

local area, which retains its rural character, and landscape of drained fenland, and none at all to the assessment site.

4.4.2 The coaxial ditches which form field boundaries on either side of Ramsey Road are clearly shown on the maps, their presence indicating the continuing need for drainage on this low-lying land. Smaller field drains may be present within the assessment site. The field drains respect the positions of both Oakley Dike and the King's Delph Highway.

4.4.3 It was not until after 1950 that further buildings were constructed at King's Delph Gate Farm (Fig. 2). However, building activity has not encroached onto the assessment site, and there is no evidence to show it has been affected by modern activity other than ploughing.

4.4.4 King's Delph Highway appears on all of the maps consulted. On the Ordnance Survey maps published between 1891 and 1950, it is shown as a continuation of the section of Ramsey Road between King's Delph Gate Farm and the junction with King's Delph Drove; it is thus only in the last 55 years that it has declined to the status of a trackway rather than a road. On all of these maps it peters out at approximately the same point as it does today, but its line is (as today) continued by field boundaries which intersect with Ramsey Road at White Hall Farm. It is possible that at one point King's Delph Highway continued to this point, providing a shortcut which avoided the loop of this part of Ramsey Road. Trackways are shown on the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Ordnance Survey maps running north-eastwards from Ramsey Road to the line of King's Delph Highway beyond its termination, supporting the theory that it formerly extended further to the south-east. Its alignment, straight and perpendicular to the field boundaries rather than curving parallel to Ramsey Road and Oakley Dike, may indicate that it dates to the time of the instigation of the modern system of drainage and boundaries. Short trackways running along the sides of boundary/ drainage ditches, connecting farms and larger roads, are seen across this area of the Fens; some are labelled as droveways. Some of these tracks are shown on the 1998 OS map to be public Rights of Way, but others, like King's Delph Highway, are not. It is likely that the track takes its name from the farm at which it terminates, rather than having any more direct link to the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Suthende de Kinggesdelfe* or *Northende de Kinggesdelfe* (see Section 4.2.4.2).

## 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 *The potential of the site for prehistoric remains*

5.1.1 There is evidence of Neolithic settlement on the edge of the embayment at Bradley Fen, 2km to the north of Float Fish Farm, and a flint scatter on the 'peninsula' to the south-east of the site contains predominantly Neolithic material (Fig. 7). Recent excavations at Must Farm have revealed oval and round barrows

of Neolithic to early Bronze Age date, with two possible seasonal settlements in the vicinity. A pot boiler/ cooking site, located on the south side of the fen 'island' to the south-west of Float Fish Farm, may also date to the Neolithic or Bronze Age (Fenland Survey site U2; Fig. 7) and highlights the potential of the islands of higher ground within the fen for prehistoric settlement.

5.1.2 Throughout most of the later prehistoric (and Roman) period, the area of the proposed quarry extension probably lay within the peat fen, between a low 'island' to the south-west and a 'peninsula' leading towards Bradley Fen and Whittlesey to the north-east. However, there is nevertheless some potential for earlier prehistoric ground surfaces, predating the rising water table in this part of the Fenland Basin, to survive beneath the peat. A buried grey peaty soil horizon, sealed beneath three dark peat layers and the topsoil, was identified during the trial trench evaluation of the previous quarry area. A palaeo-environmental assessment (Scaife in Brogan *et al.* 2008) suggested that it had formed during a period of slightly lower water levels in the Fen and was dry enough to have supported woodland growth, although it still would have been periodically wet. An unstratified early Bronze Age Beaker sherd from the evaluation probably came from this layer.

5.1.3 The locations of the edges of the Bronze Age fen island and peninsula are projected and have yet to be confirmed by fieldwork (Fig. 7; Hall 1992, fig. 10; Hall 1987, fig. 38). Any intrusive investigation carried out on the proposed development areas will probably reveal a sequence of peat and alluvial deposits, with potential to contribute to our understanding of the changing past topography and environment of Farcet Fen. Fieldwork may also provide evidence to confirm/ refute the projected position of the later prehistoric fen edge.

5.1.5 It should be noted that at present, there is little direct evidence for Bronze Age settlement on the 'island' and 'peninsula' adjacent to the assessment site, although barrows are well-represented on both and (possibly votive) metalwork deposits have been recovered from adjacent areas of the fen itself. The known settlements of this period were located on embayments on the fen edge to the north, while the liminal zone of the 'island' and 'peninsula', which protruded into the fen, may have been reserved for burial (in the early Bronze Age), and for votive deposition of metalwork in the surrounding waters (in the middle and later Bronze Age). Evidence of Iron Age settlement has been discovered during recent fieldwork in the area, although this is c. 1.5km from the site. However, the absence of known later prehistoric settlement remains in the immediate vicinity of the site could simply be a result of the limited archaeological fieldwork carried out to date.

## 5.2 *The potential of the site for Roman and later remains*

5.2.1 There is little evidence for local Iron Age activity, when much of the area would have been covered by peat. In the Roman period, a probable cemetery was located at Palmer's Barn, on one of the highest parts of Farcet Fen, c. 500m south-west of the assessment site (HHER 02811 & 02957). Connections between this

burial ground and the Roman settlements at Whittlesey and Stanground have been postulated, but these settlements are both over 2km away and it is possible that the burials in fact relate to an as yet unidentified settlement on the fen 'island' south-west of the assessment site. This possibility finds some support in cropmarks located close to Palmer's Barn and in a Roman pottery scatter found 250m west of Float Fish Farm (HHER 2957a). Further Roman burials have been found near Bunting's Farm north-east of the assessment site.

5.2.2 The date at which Oakley Dike was cut remains unknown; dates ranging from the Roman period to the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century being plausible. It is possible that fieldwork carried out on the assessment site would reveal evidence to date the initial creation of the dike and there is also a potential for earlier cuts to be revealed.

5.2.3 There is little evidence of medieval activity in the area around the site, as at this time, the majority was covered by peat fen. However, the island to the south-west may have had only had a thin covering of peat, and would potentially have made good summer grazing for cattle, as suggested by the place name. The fen drainage and enclosure of in the 17<sup>th</sup> century has created the present agricultural landscape, with very little change to the modern day.

### 5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 The available evidence indicates a fairly low potential for the presence of archaeological remains in the assessment area, ahead of the proposed quarry extension. The area is low-lying and would have lain well within the fen, probably being subject to peat growth from the early to middle Bronze Age onwards. Trial trench evaluation of the previous quarry area, which has similar topography, found an earlier prehistoric (?early Bronze Age) ground surface sealed below the peat. However, this would have still been fairly wet and would probably not have supported settlement/ agriculture on any scale. Only a single unstratified Beaker sherd was found, indicating very low-level activity.

5.3.2 The proposed development area may contain evidence with a bearing on the date of Oakley Dike, running along the north-east side.

5.3.3 Should archaeological remains be present, they may contribute to the following research issues:

- Locating the precise line of the Bronze Age fen edge and the extent of the projected fen 'island' and 'peninsula'.
- Recovering archaeological evidence for settlement or burial/ votive activity, and environmental evidence with a bearing on issues such as the changing Fenland environment, the extent and nature of woodland cover at various

times during prehistory (important for understanding the origins of the timber used in monuments such as the Flag Fen timber causeway and platform), and how the Bronze Age landscape was utilised and perceived by its occupants.

- Recovering evidence for Iron Age/ Roman occupation or activity, helping to define and characterise the probable settlement area known from find-spots to the north.
- Recovering evidence to help date the Oakley Dike.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Ltd would like to thank John Gough of Mick George Ltd for commissioning the works and for funding the project.

AS would also like to thank the following for their kind assistance:

Sarah Poppy and Sally Thompson, Cambridgeshire Sites & Monuments Record Office  
Kashir Gdaniec, County Archaeologist for Cambridgeshire  
Staff at the Cambridgeshire County Record Office, Shire Hall  
Ben Robinson and Rebecca Casa-Hatton, County Archaeologists, Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service

## Appendix 1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Historic Environment Record Information

### Key -

PHER=Peterborough Historic Environment Record

FHER=Fenland Historic Environment Record

HHER=Huntingdonshire (Cambridgeshire) Historic Environment Record

CHER=Cambridge Historic Environment Record

HER No.	NGR TL	Type	Description
<b>Geological</b>			
FHER 3196 – MCB3959	233 954	Bone	Ichthyosaur bone, possibly 1.6 million years old.
<b>Prehistoric -</b>			
PHER 51229	210- 957-	Flint scatter and later artefacts	A fieldwalking survey was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology 2002/2003. 'Light' scatters of artefacts were recovered over the entire area, including flint, pottery and tile, spanning the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. Four greater concentrations of artefacts were also identified, including a scatter of worked flint, a scatter of Roman pottery, a scatter of Roman pottery and tile, and a concentration of post-medieval pottery. These are described individually under PHER 51230, 51231, 51232 & 51233
<b>Neolithic 4300-2100 BC</b>			
PHER 2955	222- 962-	Log boat	In 1828 a complete dug-out canoe was discovered at Horsey near Peterborough "in the bog which forms the bank of the old river with the junction of the Nen". It was 30 ft long and 2 ft 8in wide (at the widest point). Near it was found a second canoe formed of two logs pinned together. Neither Trollope nor Artis mention a lifting and one is left with the impression that they were possibly left in situ. See PHER 2951 for objects found with the canoes.
FHER 10165	2440 9439	Flint	Flint blade tool with slight patination, retouched, noted in Fenland Survey
PHER 2953	21-- 96--	Flint scatter	Neolithic implements, widely scattered, but scarce. One chipped chisel. Majority found at Horsey Bridge. Peterborough Museum have on display many



			implements from this area. The museum collection also has over 7000 flint implements simply labelled as from 'The North Hunts Gravels'.
FHER 51230	2090 9560	Flint scatter	A fieldwalking survey was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology during the winter of 2002/2003. A widely dispersed concentration of worked flint was recovered from the central part of the survey area, centred roughly on the grid references given above (named 'Field 5') by the survey. It contained Neolithic and Bronze Age material, but not of sufficient quantities or concentrations to make any firm conclusions about specific site activities. It is possible that the recorded distribution is associated with buried features defined by geophysical survey. See also PHER 51229, 51231, 51232 & 51233.
FHER 10871	2349 9328	Flint scatter	Wide range of flints recovered in Fenland Survey (Hall 1992). As well as Neolithic, a small Mesolithic blade, 2 large patinated flints and a Bronze Age scraper (unpatinated) occurred in the assemblage
<b>Bronze Age 2,300 – 700 BC</b>			
FHER 07727 – MCB 9336 NMR NI- 1381585	2345 9474	Barrow	SAM 33393. Bowl barrow surviving as a gravel rise; 23m diameter, 0.2m high
FHER 8156	234- 958-	?Barrow	Ring ditch noted on aerial photographs. ? same as barrow SAM 33393
Fenland survey U1 FHER 10873	2303 9341	Barrow	Fenland survey Site U1 (Hall 1992). BA ploughed-out barrow (14m diameter, 0.3m high) at 2.1m AOD
Fenland survey 2 FHER 10872	2339 9326	Barrow	Fenland survey Site 2 (Hall 1992). BA ploughed-out barrow (14m diameter, 0.3m high) at 2.1m AOD
NMR-NI 367149	2450 9415	Barrow fields	Barrow field at Suet Farm
HHER 6804 – MCB 8208	221 948	Ring ditches	Ring ditches shown by crop marks
Fenland survey U2	2135 9332	Burnt mound	Fenland survey Site U2 (Hall 1992). Prehistoric burnt mound site with burnt pebbles and charcoal
Fenland survey 1	2339 9326	Flint scatter	Fenland survey Site 1 (Hall 1992). Neolithic and BA flint scatter at 0.9m AOD
PHER 7832	21- 96-	Ceramic vessel	Food vessel. Found in gravel pit, in 1896. 4,1in high. Diam of rim 4,5in, diam of base

			3in.
HHER 02922 – MCB 3683	2286 9397	Spear	Two thirds of a Bronze Age spear head found near Wakes Farm, reported in 1954
PHER 2937	222-964-	Sword	O1, Late BA leaf shaped sword found at Horsey Toll Farm during ploughing. On loan to Peterborough Museum. (R1)O2, The sword is on display in Peterborough Museum.
Fenland survey Gazetteer	209 943	Socketed axe	BA socketed axe and a flint discoidal knife, both without exact findspots. Accessioned with Peterborough Museum in 1976 (L1251)
PHER 2950	222- 960-	Flint handaxe, palstave	Many BA implements found in the course of the Nene and its banks near Horsey. A socketed axe and two palstaves are in Peterborough Museum (Bodger Collection). No history of the collection is known other than that the major portion came from the Horsey / Whittlesey areas.
CHER MCB 17937	2275 9475	Ceramic	Unstratified Early Bronze Age beaker sherd recovered from a sequence of peat deposits overlying a buried land surface and palaeosol. The sherd may have come from this buried soil
PHER 51373	2100 9545	Cremation cemetery	Excavation in 2005 found a Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery of 19, and a ditch (see PHER 51374, 51375, 51696
<b>Iron Age 700 BC – AD 43</b>			
FHER 1719	233- 954-	Ceramics	Sherds of grey ware found at Horsey Toll, possibly in same area as Roman pottery finds (FHER 7734). (The description sounds Roman)
FHER 7726	2365 9467	Pot boiler site	Fenland Survey Site 1. Dark area with burnt stone, bone, sherds. 24 artefacts
PHER 51374	2100 9545	Settlement	2005 excavation found Early Iron Age ditch and Middle Iron Age E-W aligned ditches with pottery, possibly an unenclosed cemetery see PHER 51373, 51375, 51696
<b>Roman AD 43 – 410</b>			
FHER 7734 – MCB 9344	2333 9528	Ceramics	Small dark area with tile and sherds found in Fenland Survey near Bunting's Farm
CHER 7735	2326 9565	Ceramics	Small dark area with 19 artefacts comprising tile, sherd and bone
Fenland survey Gazetteer	195 943	Ceramics	Roman pottery recovered from brick clay pits (Page 1926, 255)
HHER 2811,	2194 9438	Burial	Discovered in 1906 near Palmer's Barn;

Fenland survey U3			skull and Romano-British pot covered by a stone slab 1.8m by 0.7m. Skull ploughed out in 1944, Fenland Survey Site U3 (Hall 1992)
HHER 2957 – MCB 3673	220 943	Occupation	Crop marks indicate a Roman settlement near Palmer's Barn; a skull was uncovered during ploughing but no other finds.
HHER 2957a MCB 3674	221- 949-	Ceramics	Scatter of C1 – C4 potsherds found by fieldwalking in "Hill Field" (the field centred TL/221-/949) north of Palmer's Barn in November 1950. For settlement site and cropmarks centred at TL/220-/943- see HHER 02957.
HHER 6810	216- 937-	Occupation	Cropmarks indicate a Roman site, probably associated with HHER 02957 (Ro cropmark settlement site); no surface remains.
PHER 1364	233- 954-	Occupation ?Inhumations	Stray finds and excavation at Horsey Toll Farm in the 1950s recovered 1st to 3rd century pottery, red tile, burnt pebbles, and a ditch; inhumations may have been found too.
PHER 2939	233- 963-	Ditch, pottery	Stray finds of pottery. Finds scatter at Black House Farm
FHER 994	233- 954-	Industrial site, inhumation, kiln waste, pottery	Baked clay debris, probable industrial site. Finds are described in Museum Records as coming from Horsey Toll - an adjacent site in Stanground. The finds are dated 1955 - 1957. Some items are dated between late C2 and up to C4. Certain finds are mentioned as originating in specific graves. See also FHER 995, 999 and 1364 for adjacent Roman sites.
FHER 995	233- 955-	coin, ditch, human remains, inhumation, pottery	From TL/233-/953- to TL/233-/957-, Ditches with coins and C1 - C4 pottery; TL/233-/955- inhumation and pottery. A collection of Samian sherds in the Norris museum is attributed to this site. See also FHER 994 and 999 for adjacent Roman sites.
FHER 999	233- 954	Inhumation, pottery	Site to the E of Horsey Hill. The pottery found came from a ditch traced for 600 yards. The late 2nd to 4th century pottery is a series of sherds from ten different vessels, all bearing the same owner's mark, an N or reversed N, incised after firing. 5 Romano British burials with mid 2nd century pottery have also been found,

			as well as ? Parts of a kiln. See also FHER 999a, 999b, 994 and 995.
FHER 0999a	233- 954	Awl, needle, pin, scoop, whistle	Site description is given in FHER 00994 Bone finds in St Ives Museum are as follows:- Part of ? whistle Bone scoop or scraper? Borer or awl, carved from a bone and worked to a point at one end Bone pin with swelling two thirds of the way up shaft, round head Bone pin or needle fragments. See also FHER 00999, 00999b, 00994 and 00995.
FHER 0999b	233- 954-	Bead, bracelet, toilet implement, tweezers	Site description is given in RN 00994. Bronze finds in St Ives Museum are as follows:- jet bracelet fragments penannular bronze bracelet piece of plaited bronze, presumably from bracelet pair blunt-ended bronze tweezers; 2 pieces round sectioned bronze from ligulae; half large green glass bead. See also FHER 00994, 00995, 00999 and 0099a.
PHER 1369	222- 967-	Beaker, dish, jug, vessel	Stray finds of pottery found in 1957-1959 at Horsey Toll Farm.
PHER 3128	2153 9669	Kiln, kiln waste, pottery	Two 3rd century Roman pottery kilns excavated at Stanground Park Farm by B R Hartley and G B Dannell in 1965. Two further kilns found 50 ft to the NE in 1967, with an associated gully containing a kiln load of wasters, mostly samian ware with black colour coat on a grey paste. A watching brief was carried out in 1993 and the remains of a rectilinear beam-slot structure were identified, ditches with large amounts of pottery, many pieces of kiln debris and ash (possibly resulting from the kiln fires. Beyond the ditch line on the SE side of the site only isolated features were visible. See PHER 03127 - further Ro finds from this area, 03129 - Ro pottery, skeleton, 03130 - earlier Ro finds from the area, 10090 – Ro inhumations from nearby.
PHER 3129	214- 965-	Inhumation, pottery	Park Farm housing estate: 3rd century Roman pottery found with human skeleton in 1964. or 1966, See also PHER 03127 - Ro finds, RN 03128 - " , RN 03130 - " , RN 03131 - " .
PHER 50514	2250 9565	Enclosure	2005-6 excavation found prehistoric flint scatters, Neolithic pit, Iron Age pits and

			post-holes and Roman rectangular double ditched enclosure with pottery and bone. Recut in the Saxon period with pottery, loomweight and metalwork found
PHER 50561	2178 9632	Pottery	Sparse Roman pottery noted in 1994 excavation at Park Farm, Stanground
PHER 51232	21709 95585	Building, settlement	A fieldwalking survey was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology during the winter of 2002/2003. A concentration of Roman pottery and tile, centred at the given grid reference, was recorded within the field named 'Field 8' for the purpose of this survey. The recovered pottery included Nene Valley Wares colour coated vessels (post 250 AD) and greywares. The pottery is not heavily abraded, suggesting recent plough disturbance of buried deposits. The presence of tile fragments suggests buried building remains survive here. See record numbers 51229, 51230, 51231, 51233, for other fieldwalking survey finds.
PHER 4015	224- 962-	Architectural fragment, pottery, settlement, tile	Horsey Toll Road. Building stone, flue tiles, etc, pottery C1 - C3. TL/2242/9608 lot of red tile and limestone rubble: building stone sherds etc, noted in 1983
PHER 4016	221- 961-	Coin	Roman coins, Horsey Bridge
PHER 4018	2243 9573	Burial	A "burial site" is marked on the "Map of Roman Sites" in the VCH to the south of Horsey Hill Fort, but no mention of it is made in the text. See also RN 04017 - Ro pottery.
PHER 51226	210 953	Settlement	2005-6 excavation found an Iron Age roundhouse, hearth, pit and field system and a Roman trackway
PHER 51232	21709 95585	Ceramics	Roman pottery including Nene Vallley Colour Coat found during field walking
PHER 51375	2100 9545	Enclosure	2005 excavation Late Iron Age and Roman enclosure, and pit with kiln bars, pot dating the end to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> centuries. See PHER 51373, 51374, 51696
<b>Medieval AD 410 -1500</b>			
PHER 50514	2250 9565	Settlement	Recut Roman enclosure containing Saxon pottery, loomweight and metalwork
PHER 51696	2100 9545	Ridge and Furrow	2005 excavation see PHER 51373, 51374, 51375

PHER 51234	20973 95647	Agriculture	A geophysical survey, comprising magnetic gradiometer scanning followed by detailed gradiometer survey, was carried out over a prospective development area of 95 hectares during 2002 (R1). Detailed survey areas amounting to 10 hectares were allocated across the area according to archaeological potential indicated by the scan results. Traces of ridge and furrow were identified across most of the prospective development area, along with possible pits and linear features. Two areas produced anomalies that may indicate ancient settlement and boundary features. See PHER 51235 & 51236.
PHER 51215	2250 9630	Agricultural	An aerial photographic assessment was undertaken and a couple of archaeological features emerged, including medieval fields of ridge and furrow and a linear ditch.
PHER 5056	2178 9632	Ridge and furrow	Ridge and furrow earthworks noted in aerial photographic survey of land at Stanground
<b>Post-medieval AD 1500-1900</b>			
PHER1996	2331 9598	Fort	Civil War Fort
<b>Modern AD 1900+</b>			
PHER 50570	2245 9645	Airfield	Site of former aircraft maintenance base used during the second world war for repairing Hawker Hurricane fighter planes. Runway was grass and has now been turned into arable fields. The accompanying buildings have been converted for use as warehousing and offices. Part of the landing light array was possibly sited at TL/2277/9693 but the local farmer has removed it to the side ditch at TL/2271/9705. See also PHER 0571, 50572, 50573, 50574 & 50575.
PHER 50571	2229 9639	Building	Former bowser garage used during second world war at maintenance airfield. To east of building is two fuel stand pipes and location of possible subterranean fuel tank. See also PHER 50570, 50572, 50573, 50574 & 50575.
PHER 50572	2231 9639	Building	Possible volatile materials store used during second world war at the maintenance airfield. See also PHER 50570, 50571, 50573, 50574 & 50575.

PHER 50573	2233 9635	Building	Hangar. Belonging to former maintenance airfield. See also PHER 50570, 50571, 50572, 50574 & 50575.
PHER 50574	2234 9630	Building	Hangar. Belonging to former maintenance airfield. Possibly of Type A1 standard. See also PHER 50570, 50571, 50572, 50573 & 50575.
PHER 50575	2230 9630	Building	Possible former engine repair and test shed belonging to former aircraft maintenance base. See also PHER 50570, 50571, 50572, 50573 & 50574.
<b>Undated</b>			
PHER 51236	21182 95504	Ditch, boundary ditch	Magnetic gradiometer survey at Stanground centred on the given grid reference produced anomalies suggestive of former field divisions. See record numbers 51234, 51235 for entire survey.
FHER 6776	243- 946-	Enclosure	Aerial photography at Suets Hill Farm. Enclosures - some uncertain, stray geological background. Square and rectilinear enclosures among geological cracks and splodges.
PHER 50653	2105 9545	? Enclosure	A desk top study in advance of possible housing allocation considered land between Stanground and the old course of the River Nene. Fragmentary cropmarks suggestive of ditched enclosures were located in two areas (see RN 8155 and at TL/2169/9546). Soilmark remains of ploughed down ridge and furrow and headlands were identified across the site. Earthwork ridge and furrow is preserved in pasture in one area (see RN 51156). One third of the site was field-walked as part of the Fenland Survey, but no significant archaeological finds were recorded here.
PHER 8155	213-959-	Enclosure	Cropmarks of enclosures.

## Appendix 2 List of Cartographic Sources

<b>Figure No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Figure 1	1998	Site Location Map. Ordnance Survey	1:25000
Figure 2	-	Detailed Site Location (courtesy of client)	1:1250
Figure 3	-	SMR Information	1:25000
Figure 4	1902	6 inch Ordnance Survey	1:10560
Figure 5	1938	6 inch Ordnance Survey	1:10560
Figure 6	1950	Revision of 1924 with editions in 1950	1:10560
Figure 7		Reconstruction of Bronze Age landscape near King's Delph Gate Farm (after Hall 1992, fig. 10; Hall 1987, fig. 38; French & Pryor 1993, fig. 103)	1:25000
Figure 8		Contour map of King's Delph area	1:25000



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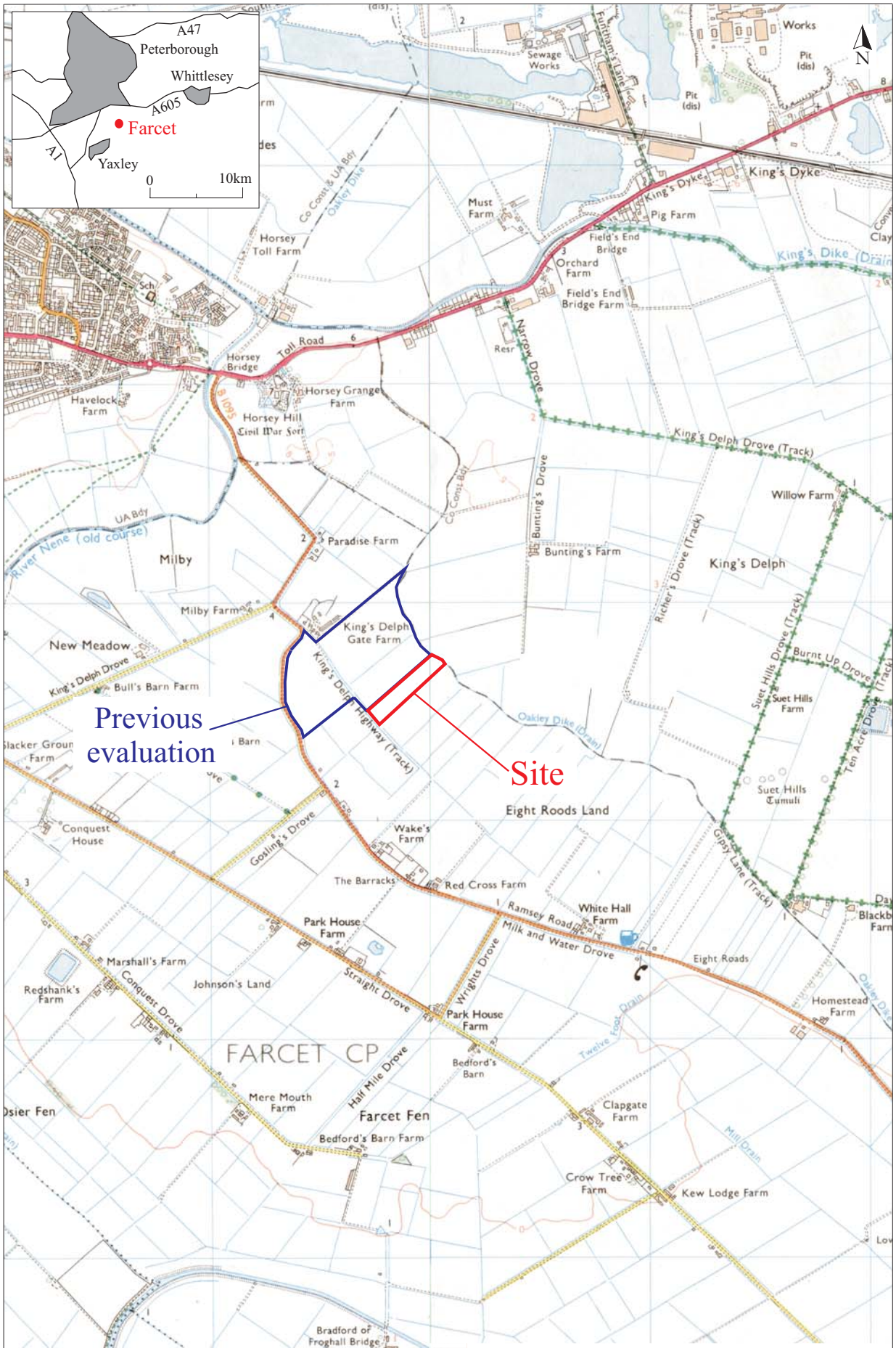
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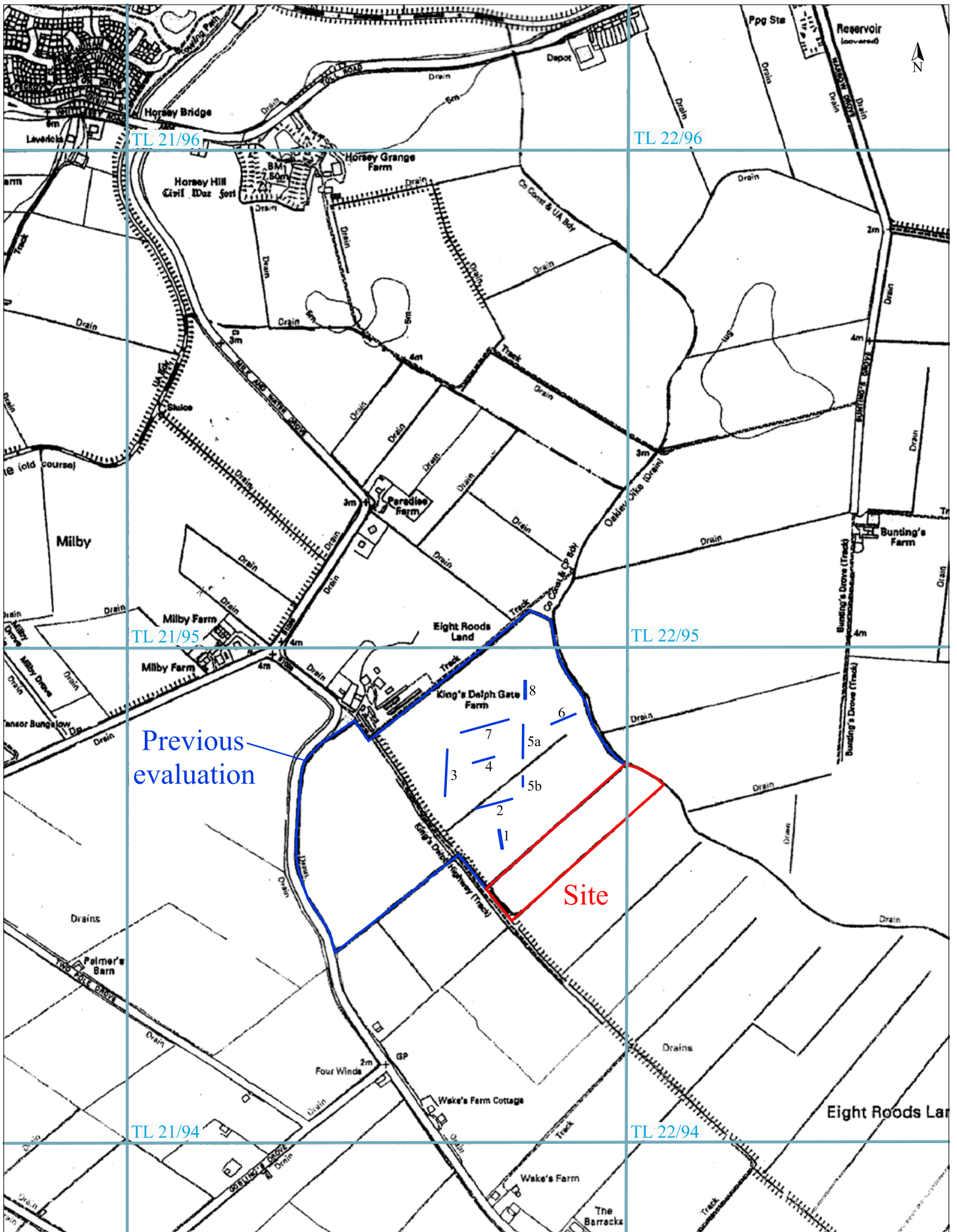
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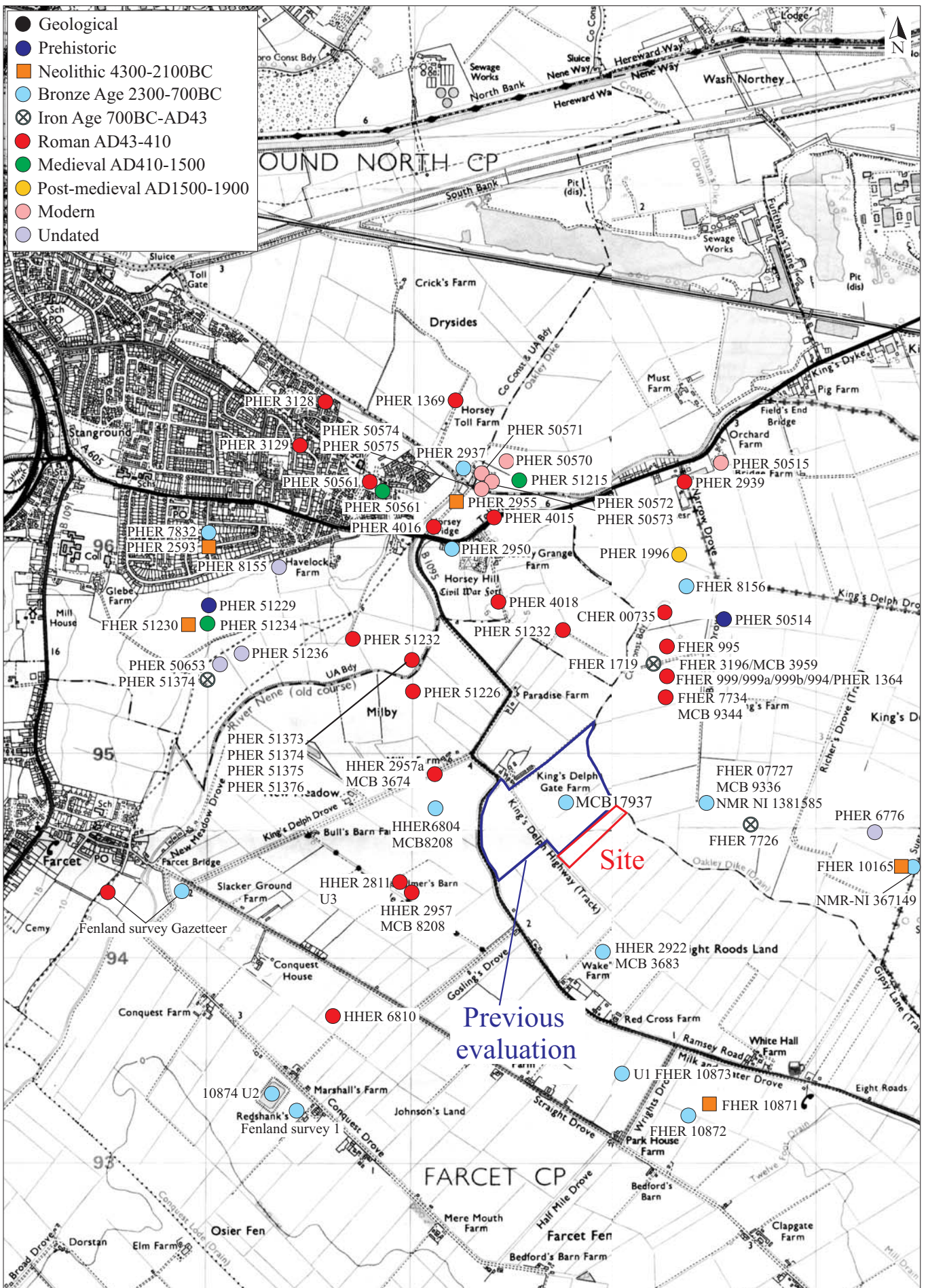
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4





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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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**Fig. 3 HER Data**  
Scale 1:25,000 at A4

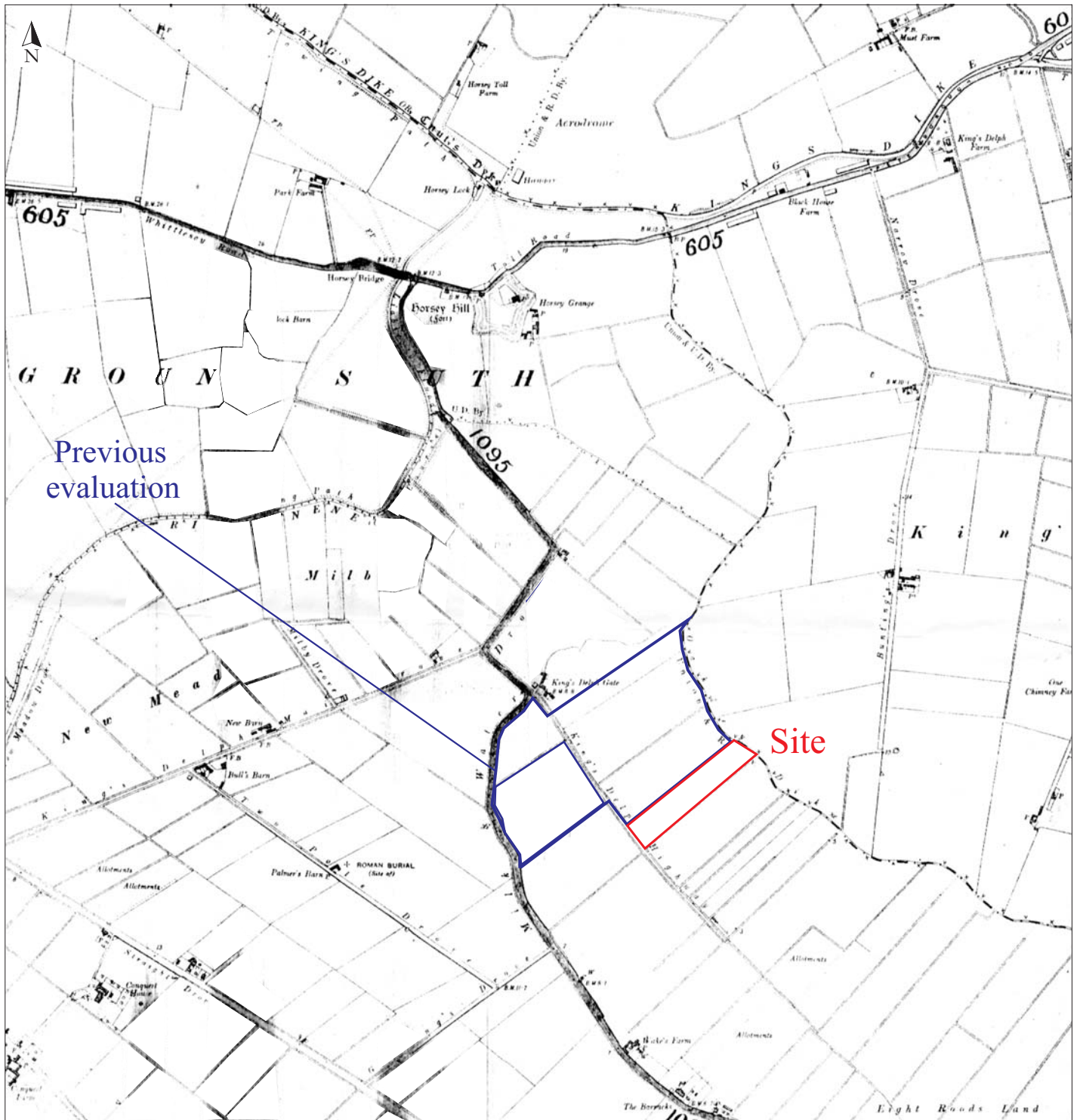




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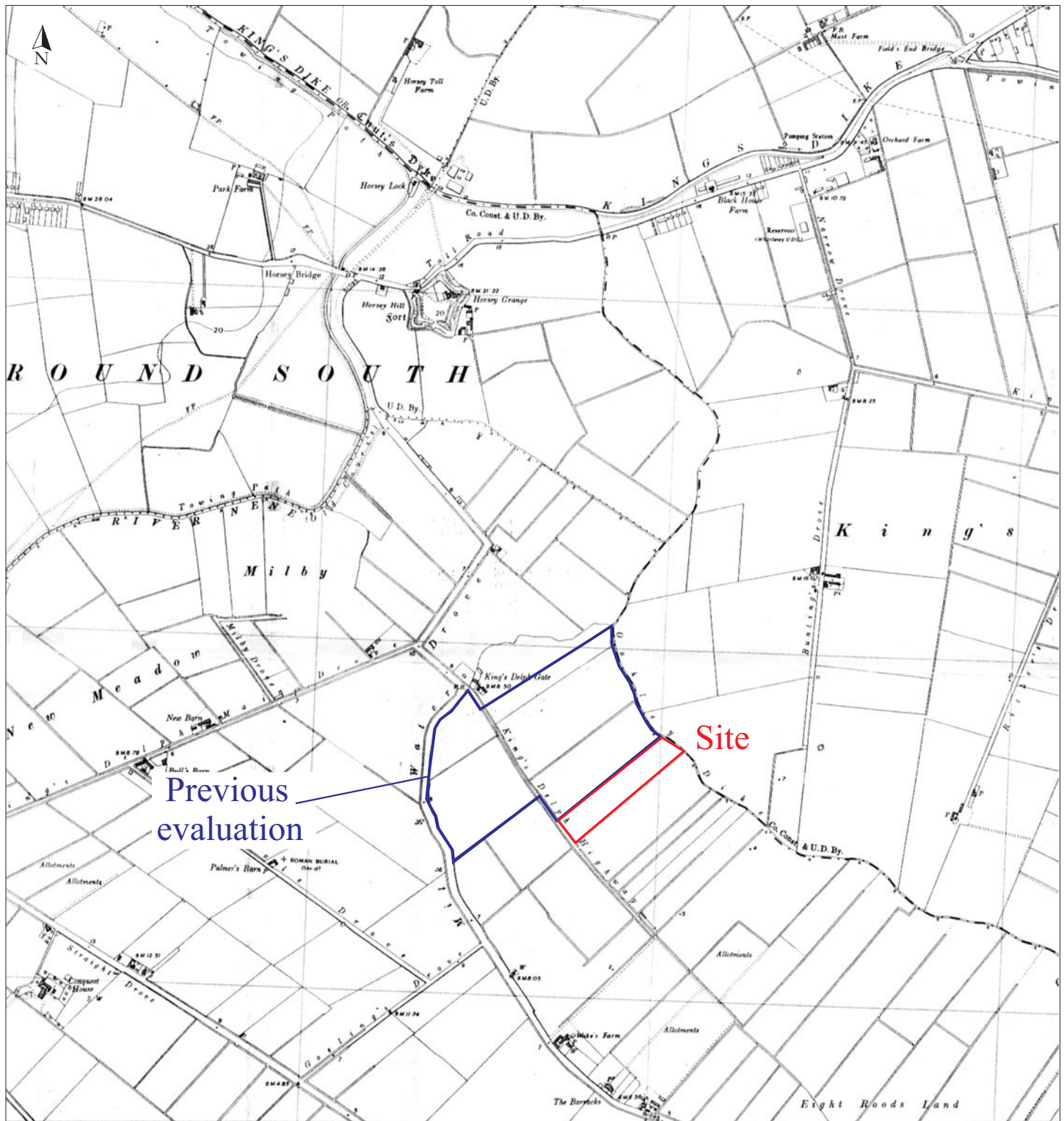
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**Fig. 4 OS map, 1902**  
 Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4





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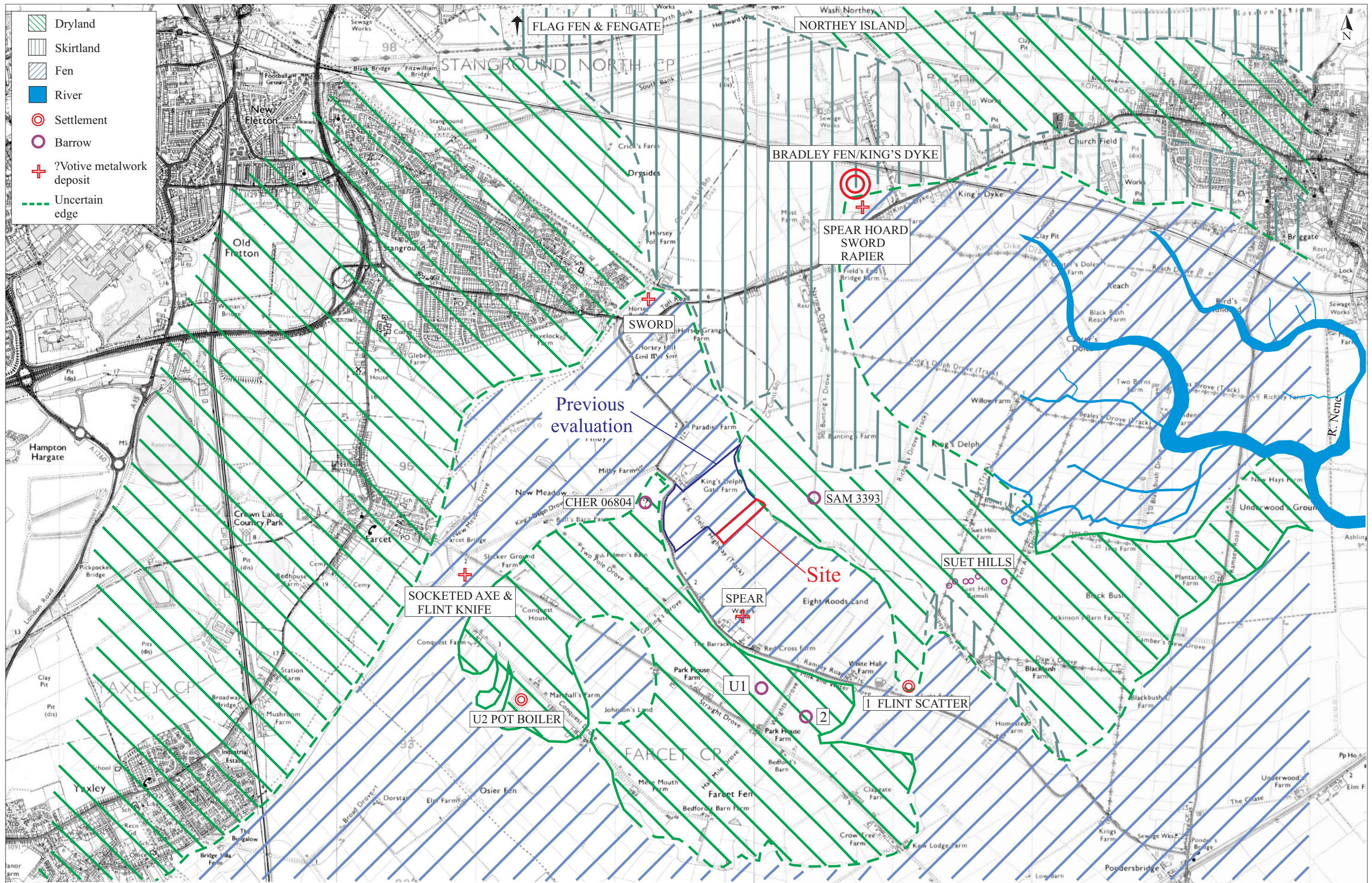
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**Fig. 5 OS map, 1938**  
 Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4



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**Fig. 6 OS map, 1950**  
 Scale 6" to 1 mile at A4





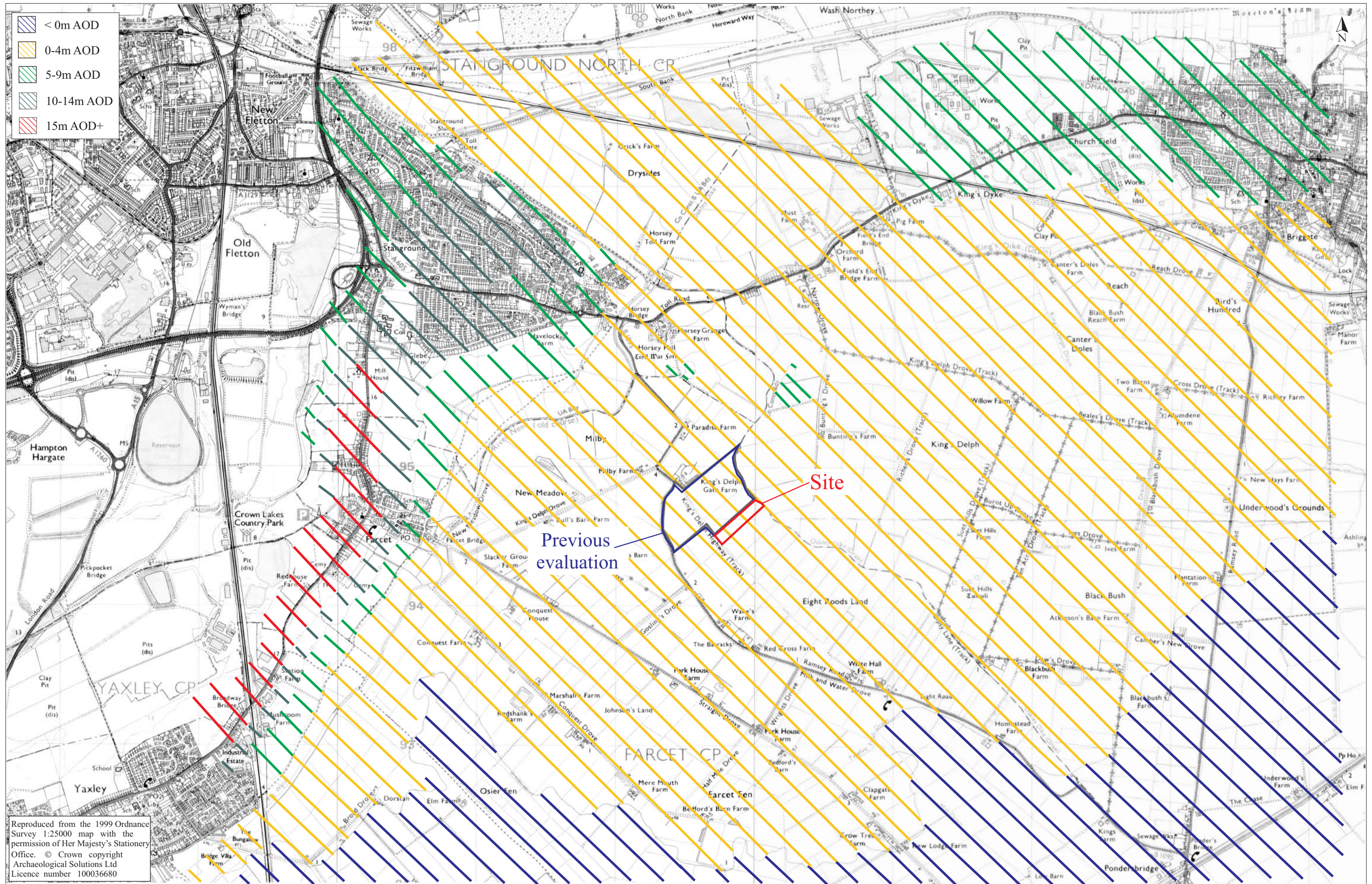
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Fig. 7 Reconstruction of Bronze Age landscape near King's Delph Gate Farm (after Hall 1992, fig. 10; Hall 1987, fig. 38, French & Pryor 1993, fig. 103)

Scale 1:25,000 at A3





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 Fig. 8 Contour map of King's Delph area (present day)  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A3