



Northamptonshire Archaeology

A Programme of Archaeological Observation,
Investigation and Recording at
Peterborough Cathedral
June 2013



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
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Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. 156361	
Project title	A Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording at Peterborough Cathedral		
Short description	An archaeological investigation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on the north-west corner of the cathedral. No archaeological features were present.		
Project type	Archaeological watching brief and test pit		
Site Status	-		
Previous work	Yes		
Current land use	Cathedral precinct		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	-		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Cambridgeshire		
Site address	Peterborough Cathedral		
Post code			
OS co-ordinates	519343 298669		
Area (sq m/ha)	23.8 sqm		
Height aOD	-		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Peterborough Cathedral Archaeologist		
Project Design originator	NA		
Director/Supervisor	Christopher Jones (NA)		
Project Managers	Ian Meadows(NA)		
Sponsor or funding body	Peterborough Cathedral		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	03-06-2013		
End date	04-06-2013		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	NA store		
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
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**A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING AT
PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL**

Abstract

An archaeological investigation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks on an area of hard standing on the north-west side of the cathedral, where the depth of the hard standing was being increased. No archaeological features were present, and only post-medieval finds recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

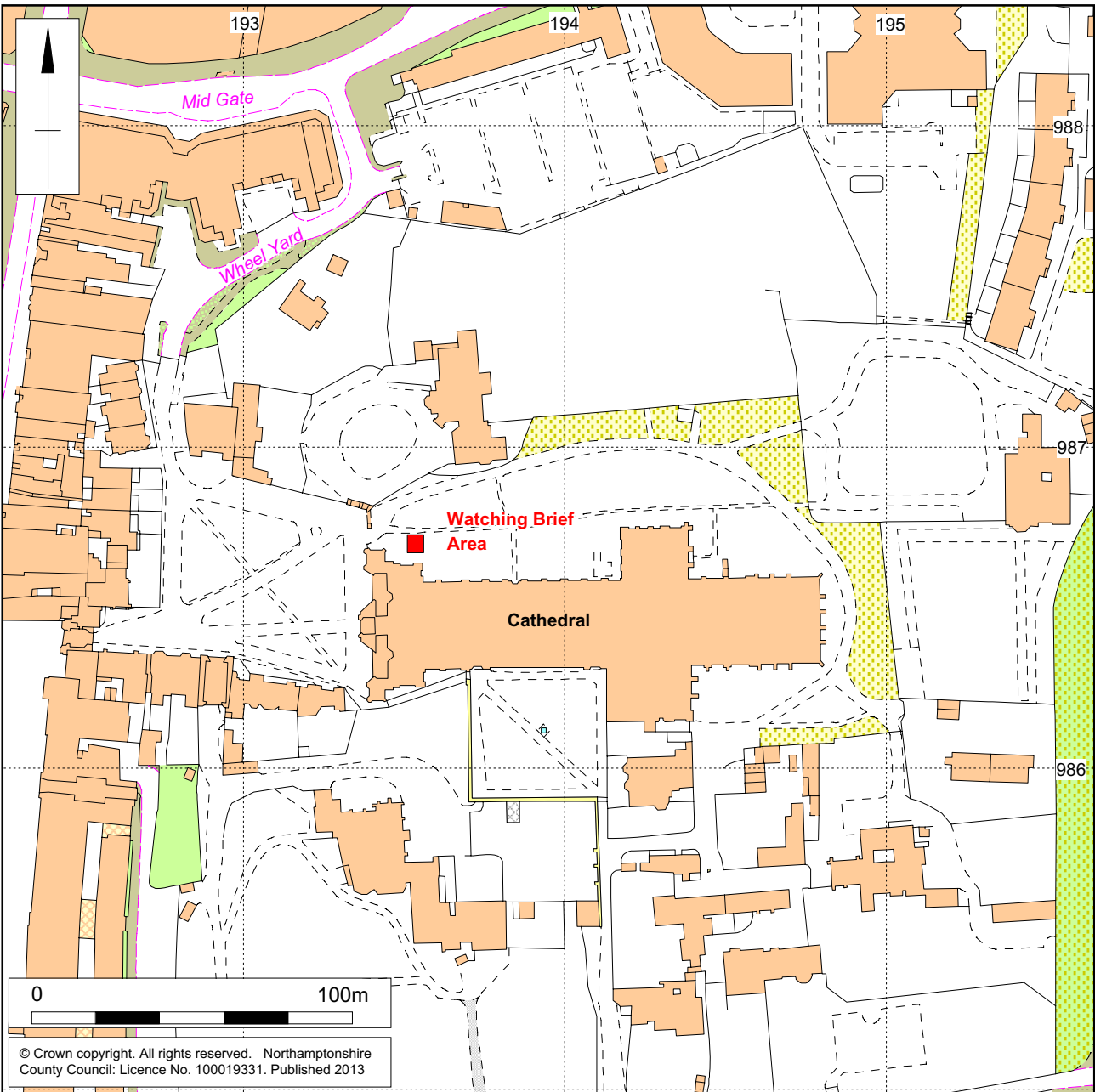
Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Peterborough Cathedral to carry out an archaeological investigation through continuous observation of groundworks on an area of hard standing on the north-west side of the cathedral (NGR TL 519343 298669; Fig 1). The depth and extent of the hard standing was being increased due to the weight of the equipment used by the fire brigade and to allow access closer to the cathedral

The investigation was carried out to fulfil the objectives of a request for archaeological investigation as required by the Peterborough Cathedral Archaeologist.

The works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

2 GEOLOGY

The underlying drift geology is river terrace deposits (sands and gravels) overlying Limestone Cornbrash based upon Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds. (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex.htm>).



Scale 1:2000

Site Location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the work was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the groundwork's;
- recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Archaeological background

A watching brief was carried out when the hard standing was originally installed to the current ground surface, and nothing of archaeological significance was seen (J Limentani, pers com).

In 2009, a mole was used to lay a data cable from the Deanery to the west front north tower and this involved the digging of three holes in the cemetery (plus one adjacent to the Deanery) with an attendant watching brief (Hall 2011). Holes 2 and 3 were dug to a depth of 0.85m. Hole 3 was actually in the area of the proposed new area of hard standing. The conditions were difficult but there was clearly a layer of topsoil at the top (min. 0.15m) and grave soil at the bottom. It was not clear where the division between the two layers was, but perhaps at c.0.65m from the top. In the hole adjacent to the tower, at a depth of 0.55m, the tops of archaeological deposits were seen in an area of rubble and a burnt layer.

4.2 Historical background (from Hall 2011)

A detailed discussion of the cemetery can be found in Hall 2010. Little is known of the pre-Conquest history of the area north of the church, although it probably lay within the precincts of the 10th-century abbey (Burgh; Mackreth 1999). The abbey was extended westwards by Martin de Bec (1132-55). There are some slight remains of a pre-Conquest cemetery: a charnel pit containing bones dated by C-14 to the 7th to 10th centuries in the garden of Table Hall, south of the eastern arm of the present cathedral (Meadows 2004); and 10th-11th-century grave covers discovered in the 19th century below the Norman north transept (Allen 1887-8; Irvine 1894). In fact, Irvine's work points to an extensive graveyard around the late Anglo-Saxon abbey church. Certainly from the early 12th century, and probably the late 11th century, most lay people were buried away from the abbey in a separate parish church (Hall 2010).

The parish church, however, was inconveniently situated on the east side of the precincts and in 1402 the townsfolk petitioned to move the church into the market square and the new church was complete by 1407. Since it was impossible to create a graveyard in the Market Square, the townsfolk also petitioned for the use of the yard on the north side of the abbey church to be used as the parish cemetery, which

was agreed. This included the area from the cemetery gate, adjacent to the Deanery gateway, to beyond the east end of the abbey church.

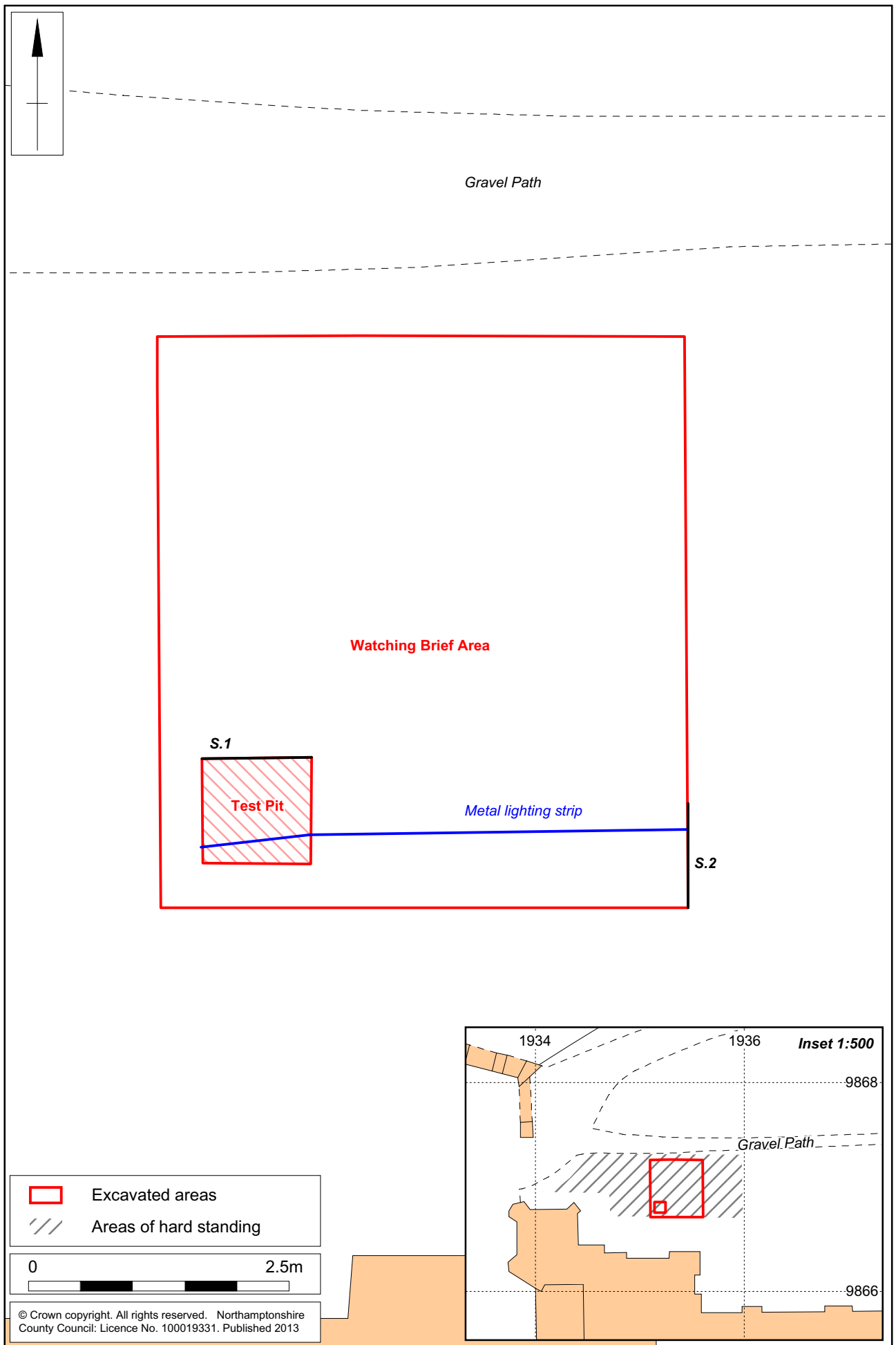
There was a period of landscaping in the late 19th century, but this mostly concerned the works associated with rebuilding the central tower and the reduction in ground level next to the cathedral church towards the east, but probably also around the west end (PCC HER 80082). In 1924, more gravestones were removed preparatory to the new buttress for the choir, but again this may have also extended to the west (PCCHER 80082).

The church itself dates from 1118, when the foundation stone was laid at the east end, with the nave, up to bay 9 at least, finished by the time of Abbot Benedict's death in 1193 (Peers 1906, 438-440; Thurlby 2006; Sparke 1723, 99). The west transept and west front, for which no documentary date survives, were probably begun in the early years of the 13th century, may have been held up by the interdict, and was finished in the late 1220s, as shown by tree-ring dating of the north portico roof (Tyers 1999).



View of watching brief area

Fig 2



Scale 1:50 (A4)

Watching brief area and excavated test pit locations Fig 3

5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of stratification was recorded on Northamptonshire Archaeology watching brief sheets. All recording followed the guidelines detailed in the Northamptonshire Archaeology *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2011).

A photographic record was maintained, consisting of digital images.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive site archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (1991).

Work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008).

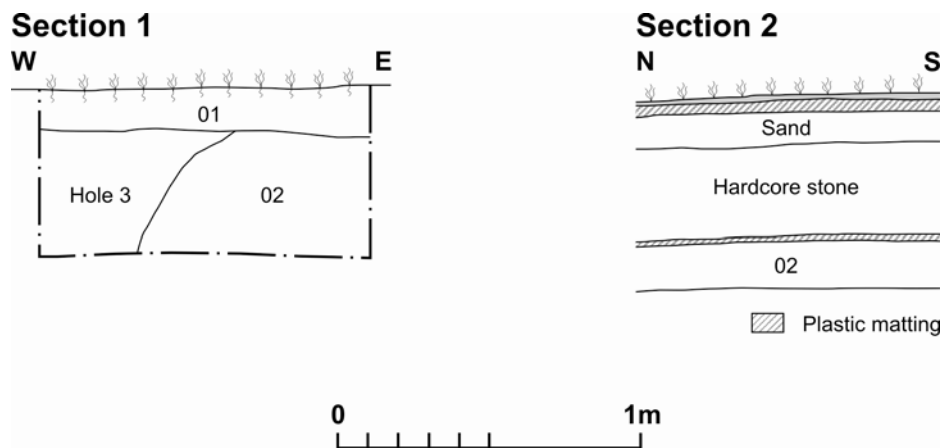
6 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The area to be excavated was made-up of hard standing and grass on the north-west side of the cathedral (Fig 2). The existing hard standing and soils were removed by hand down to a depth of 0.53 (Fig 3-6).

Northamptonshire Archaeology excavated a hand dug test pit 1.0m by 1.0m and 0.53m deep which did not reach the natural substrate (Fig 4, section 1). A light brown clay soil subsoil (02), 0.40m thick was present, which was overlaid with a dark brown loamy topsoil (01), 0.15m thick, mixed with grass and roots. Backed fill soils from the earlier hole (3) for a data cable in 2009, was encountered. No burials or archaeological features were encountered in the test pit or in the watching brief area.

The conditions were good and observation of the excavated groundwork was possible throughout the excavation (Fig 4, section 2).

No archaeological features or finds were present in the excavated area or in the test pit except for discrete fragments of bone and post-medieval pottery, clay tobacco pipe, roof tiles and glass.



Sections of test pit and watching brief area Fig 4



Test pit, looking north

Fig 5



Area of hard standing, looking east

Fig 6

7 THE FINDS

7.1 Post-medieval pottery by Tora Hylton

Three sherds of pottery dating from the 18th to the 19th/20th century were recovered from subsoil deposits. The earliest sherd is an undiagnostic base sherd in salt-glazed stoneware (c 1720-1780). Later wares comprise undiagnostic body sherds in stoneware and utilitarian whiteware dating from about the c18th to 19th/20th centuries.

Salt glazed stoneware – base sherd: (2.4g), c 1720-1780
 Stoneware -body sherd: (1.2g), c18th-19th centuries
 Utilitarian whiteware – bodysherd: (2.6g), c 19th /20th centuries

7.2 Ceramic roof tile by Pat Chapman

Two sherds of green glazed roof tile, 13mm thick and weighing 170g, come from the subsoil (02). The flat roof tile is orange with a light grey core and the ridge tile is purple-brown with a darker grey core and frequent tiny shell. These tiles are the local Lyveden/Stanion type in production from the 14th to the early 16th century.

7.3 Bottles and clay tobacco-pipes by Tim Upson-Smith

Three bottles necks and a clay tobacco-pipe bowl were recovered from the subsoil (02) in a test pit excavated at Peterborough Cathedral.

The three bottle necks are all in green glass which is flaking quite heavily. The string rings on the three necks are high, suggesting a date range within the latter half of the 18th century (Cox 1977).

The clay tobacco pipe bowl, whilst being incomplete, is broadly comparable to an Oswald G10 (1975), having a thinner bowl narrowing towards the mouth and a large flat foot. This type of pipe dates to c1700-1740.

The finds together suggest a mid to late 18th century date for the layer.

8 DISCUSSION

The archaeological observation, investigation and recording on the excavated area and the hand dug test pit did not reveal any burials or archaeological features. Only a scattering of post-medieval material was recovered from the subsoil. The lack of archaeology would be due to the previous hard standing works and the 19th century landscaping.

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