



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of
Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk,
July - August 2013



Northamptonshire Archaeology

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No: 156621
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk 2013	
Short description	In July and August 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, for CgMs Consulting acting on behalf of their client, Persimmon Homes, on land north of Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk. The works identified no archaeological features, but modern field drains and a former field boundary were observed.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment and geophysical survey	
Current land use	Arable	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	None	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Norfolk	
Site address	Mendham Lane, Harleston	
Easting Northing	TM 2511 8315	
Area (sq m/ha)	5.1 ha	
Height aOD	35m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Norfolk County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements (NA)	
Project Manager	Ian Meadows (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting for Persimmon Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	30/7//2013	
End date	2/8/2013	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents
Physical	ENF132199	Site records (1 archive box)
Paper		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk, July - August 2013	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION ON LAND
NORTH OF MENDHAM LANE, HARLESTON
NORFOLK, JULY 2013**

Abstract

In July and August 2013, an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology, for CgMs Consulting acting on behalf of their client, Persimmon Homes, on land north of Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk. The works identified no archaeological features, but modern field drains and a former field boundary were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out in July and August 2013 by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on land north of Mendham Lane, Harleston, Norfolk (NGR: TM 2511 8315; Fig 1).

The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of Persimmon Homes, and was undertaken as part of archaeological work in advance of a proposed new development as a condition of the planning application (Ref: 2012/0530) in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

The investigation followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013) and adhered to the procedural document MoRPHE issued by English Heritage (EH 2006) and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

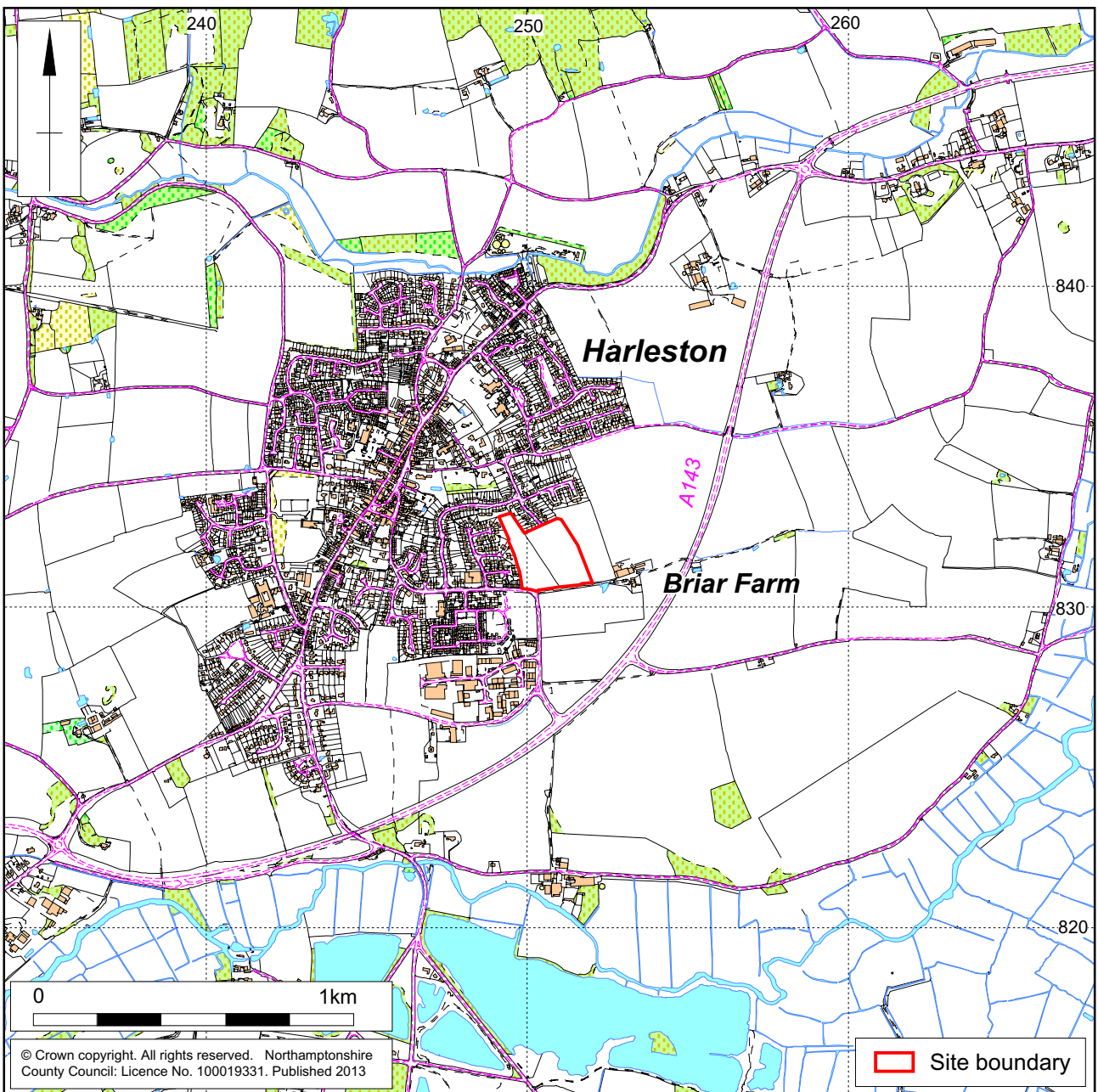
Location

The site is c 5.1ha in extent and comprises two arable fields which lie on the northern slope of the River Waveney at a height of c30m-35m aOD. It lies on the eastern edge of the town of Harleston and is bounded by a farm track to the south, arable fields to the east and housing to the north and west.

Geology

The site is recorded as being underlain by Lowestoft Till comprising of pebbly silty clay (BGS 2013).

The soils across the site are recorded as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid loamy and clayey soils. (Landis 2013).



Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:2500

Trench location and magnetometer survey results Fig 2

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was previously considered by an archaeological desk-based assessment (Gailey 2011). The following summarises that information.

Prehistoric

Although no evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified within the development area isolated worked flints were recorded during the construction of the Harleston bypass 400m to the south indicating that prehistoric tool production was taking place nearby.

Roman

No evidence of Roman activity has been recorded within 1km of the development area but, 2.5km to the south-west, a Roman settlement is recorded on the north bank of the River Waveney indicating that within the wider landscape occupation took place close to the river.

Anglo-Saxon/medieval

No evidence of Saxon occupation has been recorded within the development area. In the Domesday survey of 1086 Harleston was recorded as a small hamlet. However, from the medieval period Harleston developed as a prosperous settlement. Numerous medieval pottery sherds were found during the archaeological monitoring in advance of the construction of the bypass approximately 400m to the south. These likely represent casual loss or manuring scatters during the medieval period. As the site lies outside of the core of the medieval settlement of Harleston it most likely comprised cultivated fields.

Post-medieval and modern

During the post-medieval period the town of Harleston continued to expand. Numerous Listed Buildings lining both sides of The Thoroughfare, Broad Street and Old Market Place reflect this. The site continued to lie within agricultural land away from the core of settlement activity during the post-medieval period.

Previous archaeological intervention

An archaeological geophysical survey was carried out in the development area by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2011 (Walford 2011). It identified one possible pit and areas of disturbance associated with recent ponds and buildings and the line of a former field boundary. Two ferrous objects were also recorded.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

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

The aim of the archaeological evaluation is:

- To inform the planning application for the site;
- To determine and understand the nature, function, and character of the archaeological site in its cultural and environmental setting;
- To determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- To ascertain the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;

- To recover artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region.

3.2 Methodology

Eighteen trial trenches were excavated in accordance with a trench plan prepared by CgMs Consulting designed to test anomalies revealed by the previous geophysical survey and provide a general coverage of the proposed development area (Fig 2). All of the trenches measured 20m long by 1.80m wide. A total area of 648 square metres was excavated. Trenches were positioned using a Leica system 1200 GPS.

A JCB 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden to archaeological levels or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned sufficiently to enable the identification and definition of archaeological features. Deposits were described on *pro-forma* sheets to include measured and descriptive details of the context, its relationships and interpretation (NA 2011). Photography was with 35mm black and white film supplemented with digital images. Sections were drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate and related to Ordnance Survey datum.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 General stratigraphy

The underlying geology of silty clay was encountered between 0.30-0.40m below the modern ground surface. This occurred as mid-orange brown compacted silty clay with up to 50% mixed sized gravels and pebbles. The subsoil was dark orange brown sandy loam containing occasional small gravel and pebbles. It had an average depth of 0.10m. A subsoil was not present in trenches 5 and 6. The topsoil was dark grey-brown sandy loam containing frequent small rounded and angular gravels and pebbles and was 0.25m deep. In trenches 2, 4 and 5 fragments of modern building debris (brick and tile) was visible in the topsoil and subsoil relating to areas identified as magnetic debris from the geophysical survey which relate to former buildings near these locations.

4.2 The trial trenches

The trench locations are shown in Figure 2 and an inventory of contexts is provided in the Appendix.

In field 1 trenches 1 and 6 were positioned to target isolated ferrous anomalies. In field 2 trench 12 targeted a possible pit and trench 9 targeted a former field boundary (Fig 4), all identified by the geophysical survey (Walford 2011). The field boundary was not excavated as it is shown on the 1975 OS map but has been removed by the 1991 edition (Gailey 2011).

The other trenches sampled 'blank areas'. Trench 13 was repositioned 5m east to avoid being aligned with the centre of the modern field boundary. No archaeological features were identified within the eighteen trenches. Modern plough scars and field drains were present in all the trenches (Figs 3 and 5).



Trench 8, field drains, looking west Fig 3 Trench 9, field boundary, looking west Fig 4



Trench 16, plough scars, looking north Fig 5

5 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation identified no archaeological deposits and no pre-modern finds were recovered. The two ferrous anomalies identified by the geophysical survey were both located in areas where land drains transect the respective trenches. It is likely that ferrous debris within the backfill of the field drains has caused these anomalies. The former field boundary, identified by the geophysical survey was observed in trench 9 (Fig 4) and 18 and was not excavated due to its known modern date.

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Walford, J, 2011 *Archaeological Geophysical Survey of land at Briar Farm, Harleston, Norfolk*, Northamptonshire Archaeology report, **11/252**

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BGS 2013 <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html> British Geological Survey website

Landis 2013 <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Cranfield University National Soil Resources Institute

APPENDIX: CONTEXT INDEX

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	20m x 1.80m ENE-WNW	TM 24945 83254	34.00m aOD	33.60m aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown sandy loam	0.25m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.15m thick	-
103	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with pebbles and gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	20m x 1.80m NNW-SSE	TM 24963 83198	35.36m aOD	35.01aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.05m thick	-
203	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with pebbles and gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
3	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25001 83172	35.38m aOD	35.98aOD
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type Feature & type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/ Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.10m thick	-
303	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
4	20m x 1.80m NNW-SSE	TM 25022 83142	34.96 aOD	34.56aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
401	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.10m thick	-
403	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
5	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25036 83109	35.19m aOD	34.89aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
501	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
502	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
6	20m x 1.80m NNW-SSE	TM 25062 83074	35.14m aOD	34.84aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
601	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
602	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
7	20m x 1.80m NW-SE	TM 25021 83220	35.88m aOD	35.45aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
701	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.35m thick	-
702	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.08m thick	-
703	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
8	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25073 83244	35.33m aOD	34.93aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
801	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
802	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.10m thick	-
803	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
9	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25108 83235	36.37m aOD	36.02aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
901	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.30m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.05m thick	-
903	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-
904	Fill of modern field boundary	Dark grey-brown sandy loam	4m wide	Modern brick and tile
905	Field boundary	Modern field boundary	4m wide	-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
10	20m x 1.80m NNW-SSE	TM 25079 83210	36.44m aOD	36.14aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1001	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.22m thick	-
1002	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.08m thick	-
1003	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
11	20m x 1.80m WNW-ESE	TM 25047 83167	36.73m aOD	36.43aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1101	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.22m thick	-
1102	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.08m thick	-
1103	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
12	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25096 83178	37.16m aOD	36.86aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1201	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.25m thick	-
1202	Subsoil	Dark range-brown sandy loam	0.05m thick	-
1203	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
13	20m x 1.80m WNW-ESE	TM 25123 83206	38.05m aOD	37.75aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1301	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.22m thick	-
1302	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.08m thick	-
1303	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
14	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25132 83152	37.51m aOD	37.21aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1401	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.25m thick	-
1402	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.05m thick	-
1403	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
15	20m x 1.80m WNW-ESE	TM 25104 83135	37.75m aOD	37.42aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1501	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.18m thick	-
1502	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.10m thick	-
1503	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

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Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
16	20m x 1.80m NW-SE	TM 25079 83108	37.88m aOD	37.53aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1601	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.23m thick	-
1602	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.12m thick	-
1603	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
17	20m x 1.80m ENE-WSW	TM 25122 83100	37.25m aOD	36.98aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1701	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.23m thick	-
1702	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.04m thick	-
1703	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
18	20 x 1.80m WNW-ESE	TM 25161 83102	36.89m aOD	36.51aOD
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1801	Topsoil	Mid brown-grey sandy loam	0.34m thick	-
1802	Subsoil	Dark orange-brown sandy loam	0.14m thick	-
1803	Natural	Mid orange-brown compacted silty clay with gravels		-
1804	Fill of modern field boundary	Dark grey brown sandy loam	-	Modern brick, tile and metal objects
1805	Field boundary	Modern field boundary	-	



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