



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation on land off
Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough,
November 2013



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. 166215	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation on land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough		
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site Status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Former arable		
Future work	No		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Cambridgeshire		
Site address	Land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough		
Post code	PE1 5YS		
OS co-ordinates	TL 2218 9924		
Area (sq m/ha)	c 11 hectares		
Height aOD	0m – 5m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Rebecca Casa-Hatton, Peterborough City Council Archaeological Services		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Director/Supervisor	Mo Muldowney (NA)		
Project Managers	Ian Meadows (NA)		
Sponsor or funding body	KNM Project Services		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	25/11/2013		
End date	26/11/2013		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery	None	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)			
Title	Archaeological Evaluation on land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough, November 2013		
Serial title & volume	13/245		
Author(s)	Mo Muldowney		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND OFF
STOREY'S BAR ROAD, PETERBOROUGH
NOVEMBER 2013**

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

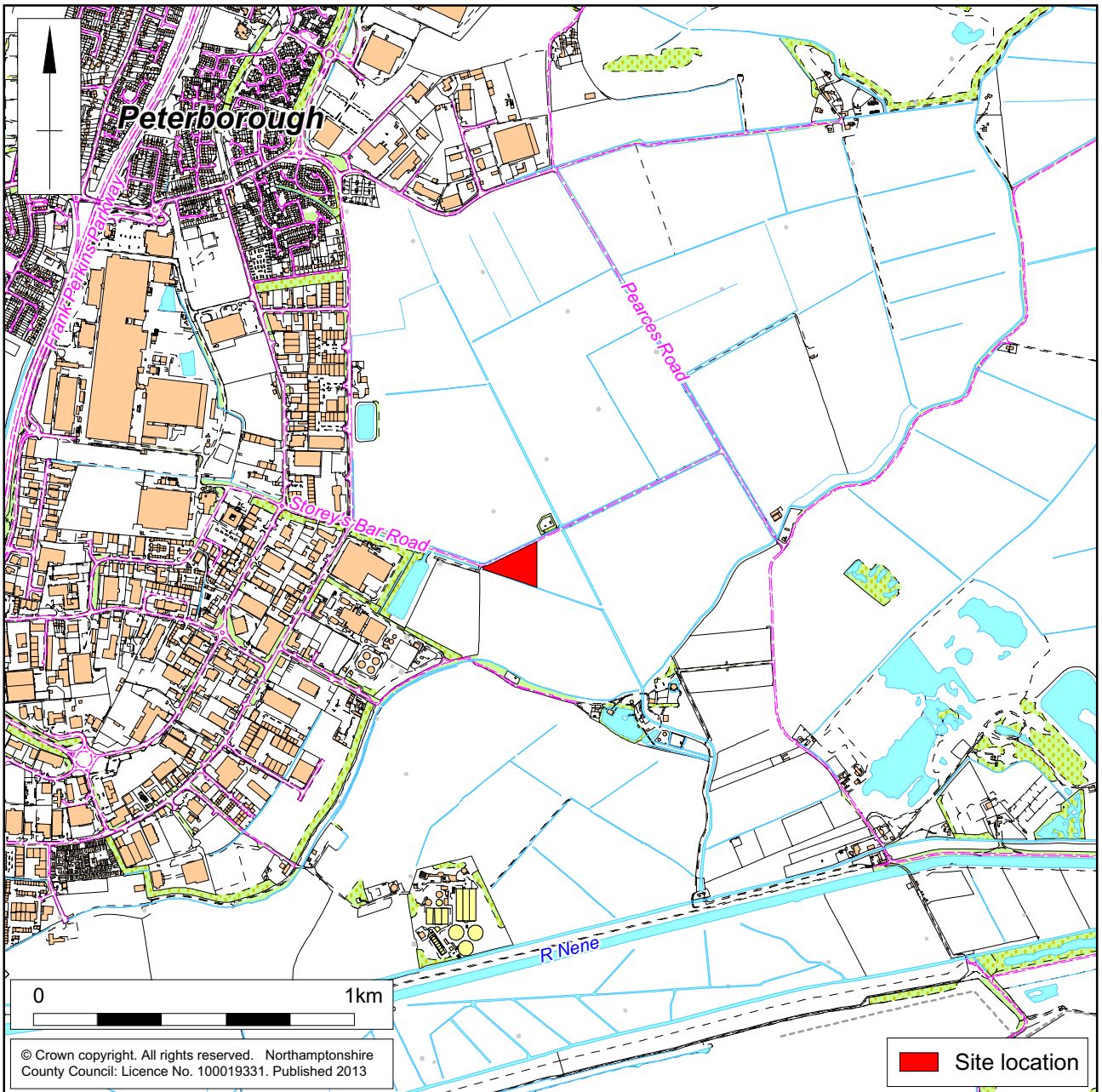
Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by KNM Project Services Ltd to carry out archaeological trial trenching on land off Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough (NGR TL 2218 9924; Fig 1).

The work follows earlier trial trenching (Meadows 2007) on adjacent parcels of land and aims to fulfil the objectives for archaeological evaluation of the remaining triangle of ground prior to the development. The purpose of the work is to inform the adoption of appropriate mitigation for this part of the site.

All works were undertaken in accordance with *the National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and followed the Brief issued by Ben Robinson (previous Archaeological Officer Peterborough City Council Archaeological Services (PCCAS)), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The development area lies to the east of Peterborough, just off the fen edge, on land comprising c11 hectares of arable and pasture land (Fig 1). The underlying geology as mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain comprises Oxford Clay mudstone with overlying glacial deposits of first terrace river gravels towards the west. Holocene sediments composed of alluvial clays/silts, detrital wood peats and peaty alluvium overlie both of these deposits (bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain).



Scale 1:20,000

Site Location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This specification proposes the methods of fieldwork to be employed during the archaeological investigation. The objectives of the evaluation are to examine the archaeological resource within the proposed development area by:

- *Determining and recording the presence, date, character, integrity, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits, and*
- *To seek to understand the archaeology of the development area in terms of the likely impact of the proposed development in order to inform, any future mitigation which might be required by the Planning Archaeologist.*

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development site is located within an area of high archaeological interest. The fen edge has been the subject of archaeological excavation intermittently since the early 20th-century and since the 1970s large-scale projects have exposed substantial tracts of this interface between the dry ground and wet ground. This intense fieldwork has resulted in a good understanding of the context of the present development area and some of the archaeological potential.

A number of archaeological features are known through cropmark evidence to lie close but outside the development area. These include a trackway and enclosure to the north-west (Sites and Monuments Record No:2326), two concentric ditches to the south-west (SMR No:3031a/10151), and a ring ditch to the east (SMR No: 8188).

Some 600m to the south-east is located the internationally known Bronze Age site of Flag Fen (SMR No: 8782), the boundary of the protected site abuts the edge of the previously evaluated land (Meadows *op cit*) in which only extensive horizontally bedded fen deposits were present. The site is of national importance and comprises a post alignment and platform along with conditions that have produced scatters of prehistoric timbers and evidence for extensive activities (Pryor 2001).

In the last few years other archaeological works have been carried out which demonstrate the extensive nature of occupation on and near the fen edge. Work about 600m to the north-west of the present study area produced evidence for Neolithic and early Bronze Age pits along with elements of a middle Bronze Age paddock and driveway system (Beardsmore 2005). At 800m south-west of the current site excavation produced further evidence for the droves and field systems of middle Bronze Age date and evidence for a later Bronze Age house (Beardsmore 2006).

The evaluation of the majority of the area likely to be affected by the proposed development was carried out in 2007 (Meadows *op cit*) and the results indicated that the intense prehistoric activity related to the Flag Fen Bronze Age site did not extend into the threatened area. A sequence of prehistoric soil sealed beneath peats and alluvial clays formed a series of horizontally bedded deposits extending across the area. The present study area is located at a point where, with the possible exception of a small localised island, the extensive horizontally bedded deposits are likely to continue uninterrupted across it.

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A programme of evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2013) in response to brief provided by the previous Peterborough City Council Planning Archaeologist. This required the excavation of five test pits and three 50m long trenches, across the area as required by PCCAS. The trenches and test pits were distributed across the area and were sited to investigate the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains within the development area (Fig 2).

The trench layout was arranged with consideration for the intermediate pressure gas main which runs along the site's west boundary and the presence of overhead power cables along the south-west boundary. The trenches were set out using differential GPS (Leica System 1200).

Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated as per the trench plan, however, once these were opened it became clear that any further large-scale excavation either side of the gas lines could cause the ground to become unstable and detrimentally effect the integrity of the pipes. Therefore it was decided in consultation with National Grid engineer Angus McDonald, to not excavate Test Pits 1, 2 and 3 as they were sited closer to the pipes than the trenches had been. Permission to excavate Trench 1 was also denied for the same reason and because a third gas pipe is located under and running with Storey's Bar Road itself. As the road is set at a higher level than the development area it was assessed that by excavating Trench 1 there was a high potential for destabilising the road and therefore the gas pipe. As a compromise, NA was permitted to excavate a single test pit (re-named TP2) towards the south-west end of the location of Trench 1, on the proviso that it was immediately backfilled (Fig 2).

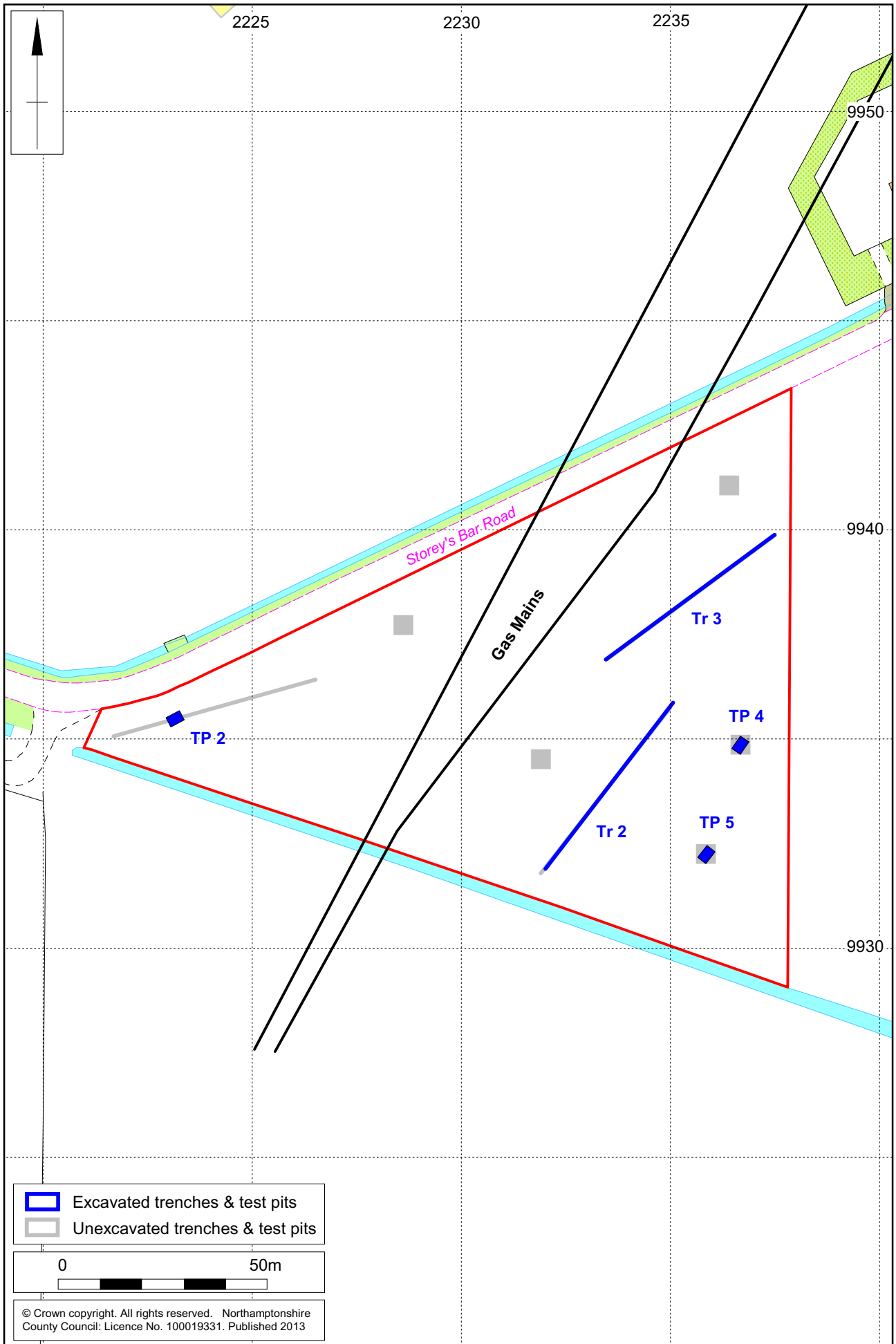
All trenches and test pits were excavated using a 25ton tracked excavator, fitted with a 2.5m wide toothless ditching bucket, operated under constant archaeological supervision. Each individual stratigraphic unit was stacked separately adjacent to the trench to facilitate backfilling. Where required the trenches were stepped or battered to allow safe working at depths of over 1.5m. The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with NA guidelines and all records were created using NA pro-forma (NA 2011). Photographs were taken of all relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film, high resolution digital images were also taken. Work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural geological horizon. Individual test pits were excavated with the same bucket and were 2.5m wide by 3.6m long. Test pits were not stepped or battered as access was not required. Trenches and spoil-heaps were scanned with a metal-detector.

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum (mAOD) were established for all trenches using GPS.

No artefacts were recovered.

All records will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991).



Scale 1:1250

The excavated trenches and test pits Fig 2

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

The natural horizon in all excavated trenches and test pits was light greyish-blue clay with occasional patches of light yellow clay and mid yellow-orange gravels (Fig 2).

The overlying deposits presented a similar but not fully equivalent sequence of clay and peat layers (Figs 3-4). These are described by trench (Table 1 & 2; Figs 3 & 4) and then by test pit (Table 3 to 5; Figs 5 to 7) in tabular form below.

No archaeological features were present in the excavated trenches. No finds were recovered during the metal-detection survey.

Table 1: Deposits in Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Average thickness	Upper surface height	Comments
201	Topsoil	Friable mid brownish-grey silty clay, rare small stones	0.39m		Occasional fragments of post-medieval glass and porcelain – not kept
202	Peat	Firm very dark brownish-black with mid red patches	0.19m		-
203	Clay	Firm mid reddish-brown silty, peaty clay	0.15m		-
204	Clay	Firm sticky mid greyish-brown silty clay	0.15m		-
205	Peat	Friable very dark brownish-black	0.22m		-
206	Silt	Friable mixed dark brown and dark grey clay silt	0.16m		Wood fragments at base of deposit - unworked
207	Silt	Friable mid brown sandy silt	0.22m		Occasional charcoal flecks
208	Natural	Firm light greyish-blue clay with occasional patches of light yellow clay and mid yellow-orange gravels	-	-0.01m AOD	Occasional embedded wood (stick) fragments - unworked

Table 2: Deposits in Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Average thickness	Upper surface height	Comments
301	Topsoil	Friable mid brownish-grey silty clay, rare small stones	0.32m		Occasional fragments of post-medieval glass and porcelain – not kept
302	Peat	Firm very dark brownish-black with mid red patches	0.25m		-
303	Clay	Firm mid reddish-brown silty, peaty clay	0.24m		-
304	Clay	Firm sticky mid greyish-brown silty clay	0.18m		-
305	Peat	Friable very dark brownish-black	0.29m		Wood fragments of varying sizes within deposit - unworked
306	Natural	Firm light greyish-blue clay with occasional patches of light yellow clay and mid yellow-orange gravels	0.50m	0.05m AOD	Occasional embedded small wood fragments - unworked
307	Natural	Loose light orange and grey sands becoming gravels at depth	-	-0.45m AOD	

Table 3: Deposits in Test Pit 2

Context	Type	Description	Depth & height of natural	Comments
201	Topsoil	Friable mid brownish-grey silty clay, rare small stones		Patches of post-medieval waste material including brick and tile fragments
202	Peat	Friable dark reddish-brown		Patches of post-medieval waste material including brick and tile fragments
203	Peat	Friable mid-brown with moderate silt content		Patches of post-medieval waste material including brick and tile fragments
204	Peat	Friable mid reddish-brown peat		-
205	Peat	Friable dark brownish-grey with moderate silt content		Wood fragments of varying sizes within deposit - unworked
206	Natural	Firm yellowish-grey clay	1.24m 0.10m AOD	Occasional embedded small wood fragments - unworked

Table 4: Deposits in Test Pit 4

Context	Type	Description	Depth & height of natural	Comments
401	Topsoil	Friable mid brownish-grey silty clay, rare small stones		Occasional fragments of post-medieval glass and porcelain – not kept
402	Peat	Firm very dark brownish-black with mid red patches		-
403	Clay	Firm mid reddish-brown silty, peaty clay		-
404	Clay	Firm sticky mid greyish-brown silty clay		-
405	Peat	Friable very dark brownish-black		-
406	Silt	Friable mixed dark brown and dark grey clay silt		Wood fragments at base of deposit - unworked
407	Silt	Friable mid brown sandy silt		Occasional charcoal flecks
408	Natural	Firm light greyish-blue clay with occasional patches of light yellow clay and mid yellow-orange gravels	1.50m 0.04m AOD	Occasional embedded wood (stick) fragments - unworked

Table 5: Deposits in Test Pit 5

Context	Type	Description	Depth & height of natural	Comments
501	Topsoil	Friable mid brownish-grey silty clay, rare small stones		Occasional fragments of post-medieval glass and porcelain – not kept
502	Peat	Firm very dark brownish-black with mid red patches		-
503	Clay	Firm mid reddish-brown silty, peaty clay		-
504	Clay	Firm sticky mid greyish-brown silty clay		-
505	Peat	Friable very dark brownish-black		-
506	Silt	Friable mixed dark brown and dark grey clay silt		Wood fragments at base of deposit - unworked
507	Silt	Friable mid brown sandy silt		Occasional charcoal flecks
508	Natural	Firm light greyish-blue clay with occasional patches of light yellow clay and mid yellow-orange gravels	1.40m 0.01m AOD	Occasional embedded wood (stick) fragments - unworked



Trench 2, looking north-east Fig 3



Trench 3, looking south-west Fig 4



Test Pit 2, looking north-west Fig 5



Test Pit 4, looking north-east Fig 6



Test Pit 5, looking south-west Fig 7

7 CONCLUSION

The trench and test pit evaluation did not identify any archaeological features despite the development area's proximity to Flag Fen, an internationally renowned Bronze Age site, and to several other prehistoric sites known from cropmarks and previous archaeological investigations (see section 4).

By comparing this fieldwork with the previous archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken by NA in 2007, it can be seen that in this area there were fewer deposits and only one peat layer (here described as a series of up to four lenses of peat or clay and peat). This loss of material can be attributed to either erosion via agricultural practice or the mechanical removal of deposits for unknown reasons. The topsoil across the site appears to have been imported (Steve Critchley *pers comm.*).

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