Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION: LAND OFF HOLGATE LANE & BARBERS HILL, WERRINGTON PETERBOROUGH

on behalf of Avebury International PLC

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May 2005

ASC: 672/WBH\2

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Site Data

ASC site code:	WBH	*Project no:*	672
County:	Peterborough		
Village/Town:	Werrington		
Civil Parish:	Werrington		
NGR (to 6 figs):	TF 168 051 (approx. centre)		
Extent of site:	*c.*1 hectare		
Present land use:	Uncultivated grassland		
Planning proposal:	Housing development		
Local Planning Authority:	Peterborough City Council		
Planning application ref/date:	05/00044/FUL		
Client:	Avebury International Plc Midsummer House Midsummer Boulevard Milton Keynes MK9 3BN		
Contact name:	Helen Smith		
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Internal Quality Check

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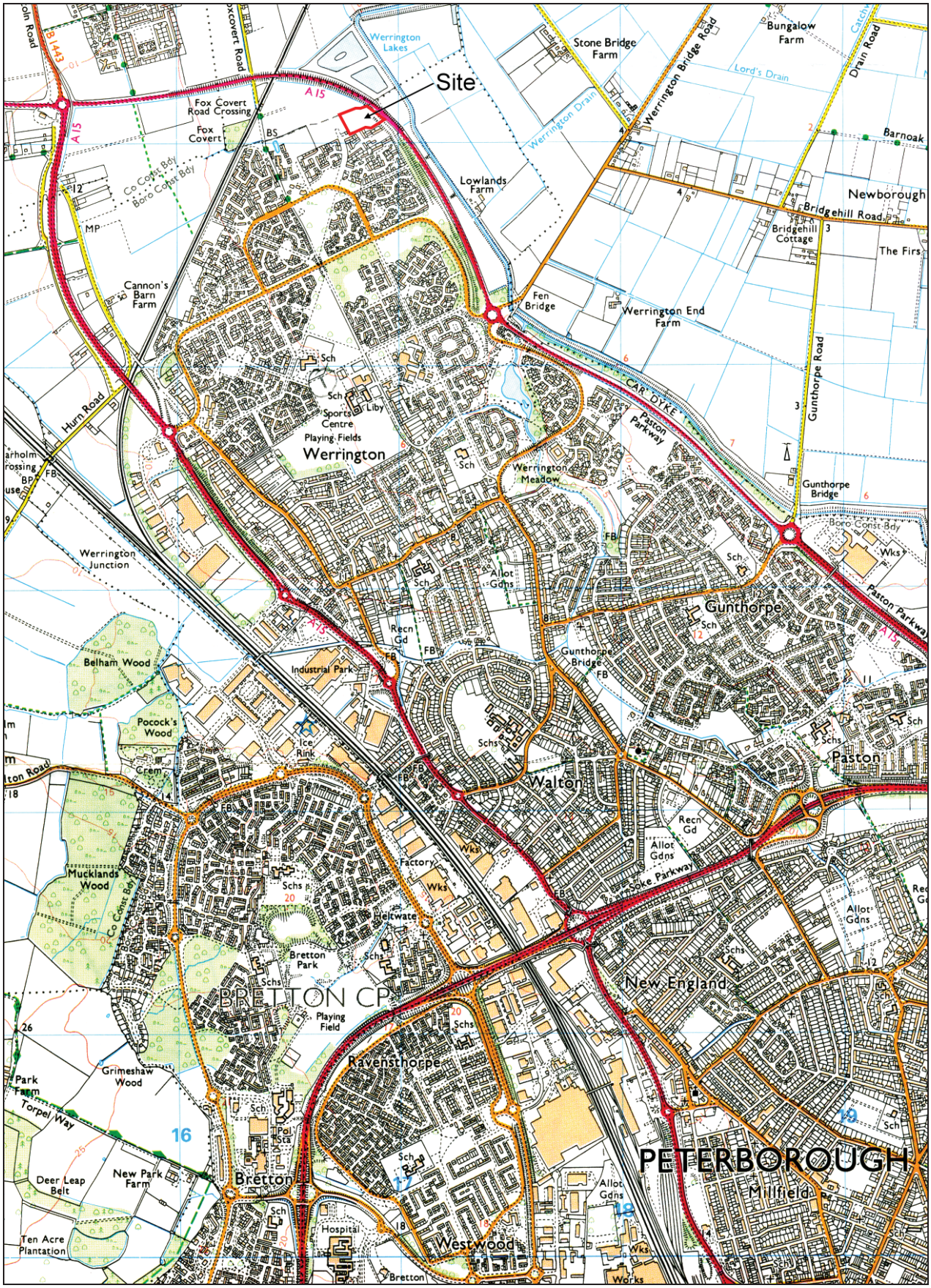

Figure 1: General location *(scale 1:25,000)*

Summary

During May 2005 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on a site at *Barbers Hill/ Holgate Lane, Werrington, Peterborough. The work was undertaken in advance of proposed residential redevelopment of the site.*

A total of eight trenches were excavated. Two undated features were revealed, no artefacts were recovered from the excavated spoil from these features or the trenches in general.

In conclusion it seems likely that the area has remained largely undisturbed and undeveloped until now with the exception of the sparse features revealed.

1 Introduction

1.1 In May 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Barbers Hill/Holgate Lane, Werrington, Peterborough (NGR TF 168 051: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Avebury International Plc, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse & Fell, 2005), and a brief (Robinson, 2005) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Peterborough City Council,* by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service.* The relevant planning application reference is 05/00044/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of 33 two and three-storey houses with associated gardens, an access road and car parking facilities.

1.3 *Location and access*

The site is in Werrington in the unitary authority of Peterborough (Fig. 1). It is situated on the north side of the village, *c*.5km north of Peterborough city centre. The site comprises an irregular shaped area of land *c*.1 hectares in extent.

Access to the site is from Holgate Lane. Further access from the south is available off Barbers Hill. No buildings are currently standing on the site. A number of service runs cross the site.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the site are of the *Badsey 2 Association* (Soil Survey 1983, 511i) namely well drained calcareous fine loamy soils overlying alluvium and Second Terrace River Gravel. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay. The site is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of *c.*8m OD.

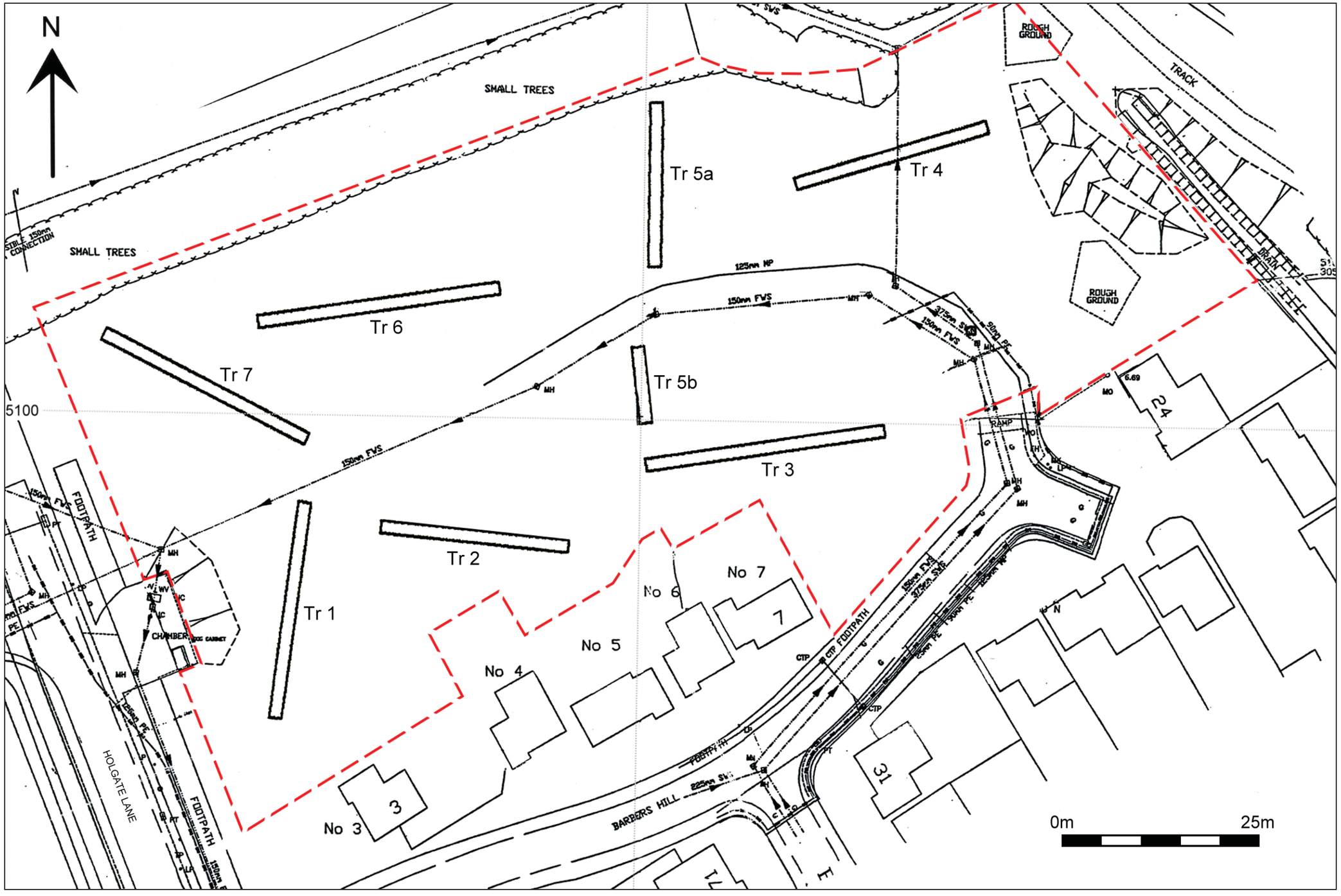

Figure 2: Site plan and trench locations *(scale 1:500)*

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the brief (Section 3.5), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To provide detailed information regarding the extent, distribution and character of archaeological remains and palaeo-environmental deposits across the site.
- To place the archaeology of the subject site within its local, regional and national, archaeological context. Appropriate use of the extensive published works relating to the area is required, and the use of national regional resource assessments and agendas will be made.
- To define any potential constraints for further archaeological fieldwork (for example, areas of disturbance, service locations etc.).
- Specific issues to be addressed include establishment of the date of the crop-marked field system that traverses the site and assessment of the presence and extent of any non crop-marked remains on the site. The latter will contribute to the assessment of cropmark representation in the vicinity

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual.*

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 4), which required:

- An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- A programme of Archaeological Trial Trenching. *c.*210 linear metres of trenches were excavated. The trenches were located in order to provide as wide a sample as possible and also test the presence of known cropmarks (Fig. 2).

2.4 *Constraints*

Due to an oversight on the part of the project supervisor the trenches were cut to only 1.6m width rather than the 2.0m required by the brief.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 *Introduction*

The local and regional settings of archaeological sites are factors that are taken into consideration when assessing the planning implications of development proposals. The following sections provide a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs.

3.2 In order to set the site in its local and regional context, this section will consider both the site and also the surrounding area. The study area has been defined as an area of 1km radius, centred on the site.

3.3 Werrington is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance. A number of significant sites are known in the area, but relatively little detailed archaeological work has been undertaken. Therefore the development provided the opportunity to examine a significant area on the northern edge of modern development. The site offered the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest was anticipated to lie in the prehistoric and Roman periods.

3.4 *Aerial Photography (Fig. 3)*

A useful technique adopted by archaeologists studying the Fens is the study of aerial photography. Archaeological remains are often visible from the air as 'cropmarks' and this area has recently been the subject of one such study, indicating that the area is rich in cropmarks of this type (Palmer 2000).

3.4.1 A ditch is shown on aerial photographs traversing the centre of the site. It was orientated north to south and a gap, perhaps an entrance, was present in the north part of the site. The ditch extends north, towards Peakirk. Trenches 3 and 4 were located in order to test for the presence of this ditch. A second parallel ditch traversed the area beyond the east site boundary, and the two ditches may have flanked a droveway or formed part of a field system.

4.4.2 The east end of an east/west aligned cropmark is present in the southwest part of the site. It extended beyond the west limit of the site, and Trench 1 was positioned in order to sample this ditch.

4.4.3 A less extensive ditch, perhaps part of an enclosure, is present in the field northwest of the site (SMR 2168). A second enclosure attached to a further possible boundary ditch is present further to the west (SMR 4958).

3.5 Prehistoric *(before 600BC-AD43)*

3.5.1 Two parallel sinuous ditches have been recorded from aerial photographs *c.*400m north of the site, and have been tentatively interpreted as part of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure (SMR 51144). Monuments of this type are generally localised in extent, but if the ditches continue to the south, they may extend into the evaluation area.

3.5.2 A circular cropmark has been identified *c*. 500m northeast of the site (SMR 50065). It was 29m in diameter and is interpreted as a possible round barrow (prehistoric burial mound).

3.6 Roman *(AD43-c.450)*

3.6.1 During the Roman period settlement in the Peterborough area was dominated by the town of *Durobrivae* (Water Newton). This was situated *c.* 8km southwest of the site and acted as the focus of settlement during this period (Fincham 2004). The town was served by a major road, now known as *Ermine Street*, which linked *Londinium* (London) with *Lindum* (Lincoln) and *Eburacum* (York). A second major road, now known as *King Street,* intersected with *Ermine* Street near *Durobrivae* and provided access to a small town at Bourne.

3.6.2 A number of minor routes and tracks intersected with *Ermine Street* in the Werrington area, including a postulated route *c.*800m west of the site (SMR 2286), which may have intersected with *King Street* near Baston, Lincolnshire.

3.6.3 An important monument, now known as the *Car Dyke* (SMR 50068) traversed the area close to the east boundary of the site (Palmer 2000; Simmons 1979). The precise function of the Car Dyke is not fully understood but may have been a canal, or drain.

3.6.4 Little controlled archaeological excavation has taken place in the area, but a significant excavation has taken place south of the site in advance of landscaping operations for a new school playing field (Mackreth 1988). The excavation revealed the presence of a square enclosure of Roman date containing circular buildings and a larger 'penannular ring-ditch'. The site was reorganised during the early 4th century and replaced by a series of linear ditches, possibly part of a wider field system.

3.6.5 A number of other sites of this period are known in the area surrounding the site, often identified by surface spreads of pottery sherds. Examples are present *c.*300m southeast of the site, close to the modern A15 road (SMR 2213), further southeast near Fen Bridge (SMR 2215) and west of the railway line *c.*800m west of the site (SMR 2167). Lowlands Farm, *c.* 400m southeast of the site (SMR 523) may also have been the site of a Roman settlement as a spread of pottery, fire bars, limestone rubble and part of a quern have been recorded. Other possible settlement sites include an area adjacent to Far Pasture *c.* 600m south of the site where a ditched enclosure and track have been identified (SMR 2212). The SMR also includes two entries (2194 and 50622) west of Hodgson Avenue *c.*500m southwest of the site.

3.7 Saxon *(c.450-1066)*

3.7.1 Little is known of the Saxon period in the study area. The medieval village of Werrington is included in the *Domesday Survey* (1086) and may have originated in this period, but no archaeological evidence of this period has been recorded within or adjacent to the site.

3.8 Medieval *(1066-1500)*

3.8.1 The Domesday Survey records that the land at Werrington was held by Peterborough Abbey. During this period the site is likely to have comprised open land, part of the open field system of the parish.

3.9 Post-Medieval and Modern *(1500-present)*

3.9.1 The layout of the site in the mid 19th century is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4). This was published 1886-9 and shows that the site formed part of a more extensive, subrectangular plot of land, which was probably formed at the time of the parliamentary enclosure. The northern boundary of the site follows the boundary of the parishes of Werrington and Peakirk, and may have an earlier origin.

3.9.2 Later editions of the Ordnance Survey map show that little change took place at the site, until encroachment of residential development during the 1980, as part of the expansion of Peterborough new town.

3.9.3 At the time of the evaluation, five houses had been constructed along the south boundary. A number of service runs had been excavated across the site, which probably caused localised ground disturbance.

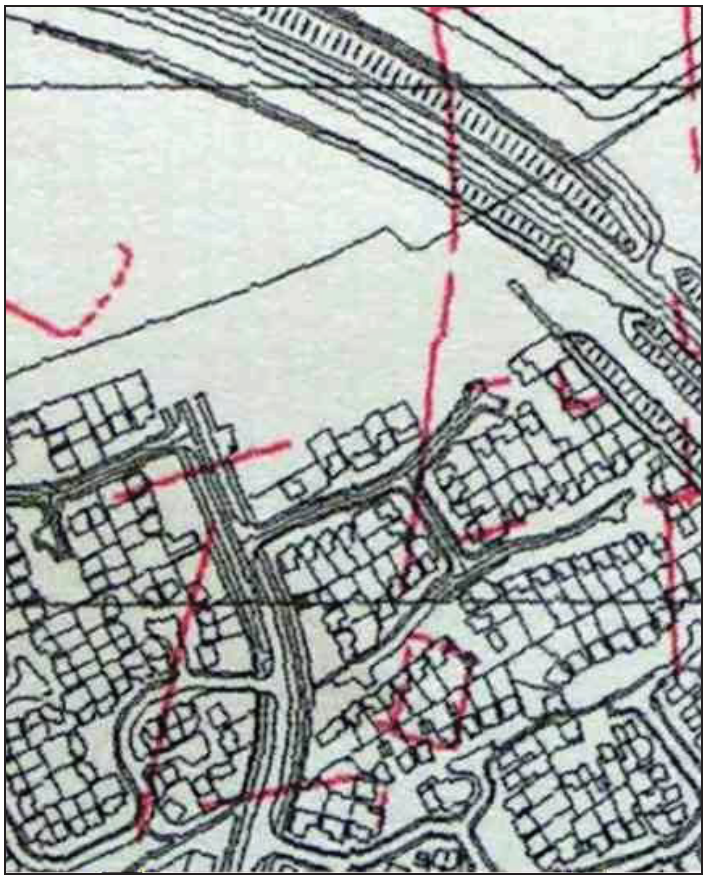

Figure 3: Aerial Photograph Plot *(Not scaled)*

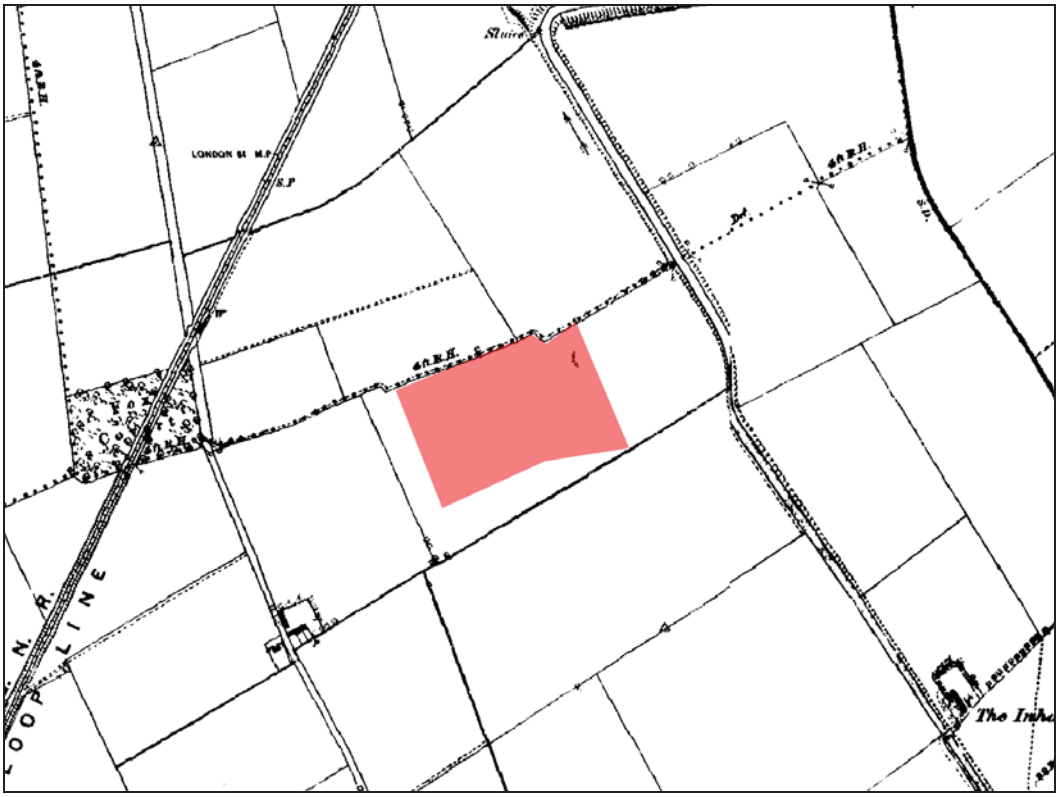

Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 25in *(Not scaled)*

4 Results

4.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the trial trenches. A full description of the trenches with photographs is provided in Appendix 1.

4.2 *Results*

With the exception of trenches 4 and 7 no archaeological features were revealed within the trenches and no pre-twentieth century artefacts were recovered from the excavated spoil. The trenches and spoil heaps were scanned using a metal detector but no artefacts were recovered.

4.3 The trenches revealed a generally consistent pattern of soil formation. The overburden in the trenches consisted of topsoil except in trenches 2, 3, 4 and 5b where a layer of dumped topsoil and rubble was underlain by the original topsoil layer. The depth of overburden across the site was generally between 0.20 – 0.45m.

4.4 A linear feature traversed the western end of trench 4 [403]. 1.0m wide and 0.25m deep it was filled by a topsoil derived deposit (404) from which no finds were recovered. A modern service trench was also observed traversing the middle of trench 4. A 3.3m wide and 0.2m deep feature [703] was excavated at the northwest end of trench 7. Filled by a clearly topsoil derived deposit (704) this feature was extremely broad and shallow and yielded no artefacts. It is suggested that it may represent a former hedge line.

4.5 A variable yellow/orange silty sand and gravel layer was revealed beneath the topsoil and is interpreted as the natural strata.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The evaluation revealed two undated archaeological features in trenches 4 and 7. No artefacts were recovered from the overburden excavated from the trenches or from the excavated features. Close examination of the trenches and their profiles suggests that the natural strata has been subject to little truncation, although the ground in some areas had clearly been raised by dumping of material most probably during construction of the neighbouring estate.

5.2 No archaeological features were revealed that corresponded with the linear cropmarks known from the site. However, the service trench noted in trench 4 may coincide with one of these cropmarks.

5.3 In the light of the above it seems reasonable to conclude with a high level of confidence that the lack of activity indicated by the evaluation is a representative result. However, while it is unlikely that significant archaeological remains are present on the site, the potential presence of occasional isolated remains away from the evaluation trenches should not be entirely excluded.

6. Acknowledgements

The writers are grateful to Lorraine Hollis and Helen Smith of Avebury International Plc for commissioning the evaluation. The input and advice of Ben Robinson, Development Control Archaeologist with *Peterborough City Council Archaeological Service* is acknowledged.

The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA, assisted by Nicholas Crank BSc AIFA, the report was prepared by Nicholas A Crank and David Fell MA MIFA and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs/slides
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England.* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition.* English Heritage (London).

EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation.* English Heritage (London).

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IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance* documents *(Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

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Ground Engineering, 2004 *Report on Ground Investigation. Barbers Hill, Werrington, Peterborough*. Ground Engineering Ltd Report no. **C9450**.

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Simmons B.B. 1979 'The Lincolnshire Car Dyke: Navigation or Drainage?' *Britannia* **10**, 183-196

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1

Max Dimensions					
Length	26.5	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.55

Levels	
Trench base north	5.99m OD
Trench top north	6.30m OD
Trench base south	5.92m OD
Trench top south	6.38m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
N	16757.84 5064.54	**S**	16753.21 05068.54
Orientation		N-S	
Reason for Trench		Identify cropmark	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
100	Layer	Yellowish brown topsoil		250	0-250
101	Natd	Yellowish orange sand (natural) Cut by modern ploughing		--	250+

Trench 2

Max Dimensions					
Length	25.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.8

Levels	
Trench base west	5.97m OD
Trench top west	6.46m OD
Trench base east	6.05m OD
Trench top east	6.66m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
W	16767.32 5091.23	**E**	16791.22 05088.03
Orientation		W-E	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenches	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
200	Layer	Modern dump (500mm at W end)		200	0-200
201	Layer	Topsoil		200	200-400
202	Natd	Orange sand cut by modern ploughing		--	400+

Trench 3

Max Dimensions					
Length	30.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.8

Levels	
Trench base west	5.88m OD
Trench top west	6.65m OD
Trench base east	5.87m OD
Trench top east	6.29m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
W	16801.30 05098.12	**E**	16831.75 05101.76
Orientation		W-E	
Reason for Trench		Identify possible crop mark	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
300	Layer	Modern dump		300	0-300
301	Layer	Topsoil		150	300-450
302	Natd	Orange sand cut by modern ploughing		--	450+

Trench 4

Max Dimensions					
Length	25.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.5

Levels	
Trench base NE	5.89m OD
Trench top NE	6.22m OD
Trench base SW	5.78m OD
Trench top SW	6.23m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
SW	16821.36 05133.46	**NE**	16845.89 05139.90
Orientation		SW-NE	
Reason for Trench		Identify possible crop mark	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
400	Layer	Modern dump		300	0-300
401	Layer	Topsoil		150	300-450
402	Natd	Orange/brown silty sand		--	450+
403	Cut	Possible ditch (undated)	1000	--	450
404	Fill	Topsoil derived fill of [703]	1000	250	--

Trench 5a

Max Dimensions					
Length	20.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.45

Levels	
Trench base north	5.83m OD
Trench top north	6.13m OD
Trench base south	5.87m OD
Trench top south	6.23m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
N	16804.05 05144.15	**S**	16803.16 05123.34
Orientation		N-S	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenches	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
501	Layer	Topsoil		400	0-400
502	Natd	Yellowish brown silty sand		--	400+

Trench 5b

Max Dimensions					
Length	10.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.45

Levels	
Trench base north	5.90m OD
Trench top north	6.19m OD
Trench base south	5.95m OD
Trench top south	6.43m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
N	16800.77 05113.25	**S**	16801.56 05103.52
Orientation		N-S	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenches	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
500	Layer	Modern dump		200	0-200
501	Layer	Topsoil		200	200-400
502	Natd	Yellowish brown silty sand		--	400+

Trench 6

Max Dimensions					
Length	30.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.45

Levels	
Trench base east	5.90m OD
Trench top east	6.27m OD
Trench base west	6.02m OD
Trench top west	6.28m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
E	16783.37 05121.15	**W**	16752.4805117.67
Orientation		E-W	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenches	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
601	Layer	Topsoil		300	0-300
602	Natd	Orange sand and patches bluish clay		--	300+

Trench 7

Max Dimensions					
Length	30.0	**Width**	1.6	**Depth**	0.3

Levels	
Trench base NW	6.21m OD
Trench top NW	6.55m OD
Trench base SE	6.03m OD
Trench top SE	6.36m OD

NGR Co-ordinates			
NW	16732.98 5116.74	**SE**	16758.32 05102.64
Orientation		NW-SE	
Reason for Trench		General pattern of trenches	

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
701	Layer	Topsoil		200	0-200
702	Natd	Orange sand/gravel & yellowish brown sandy silt		--	200+
703	Cut	Probable hedge line	3300	--	200
704	Fill	Topsoil derived fill of [703]	3300	200	