

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
RUSHDEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
RUSHDEN
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

NGR: SP 9515 6756

on behalf of Lend Lease Projects Ltd



David Kaye BA AIFA

May 2009

ASC: 1184/RCC/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	RCC	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1184
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-59784	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	-
<i>County:</i>	Northamptonshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Rushden		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Rushden		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9515 6756		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.1650 sq m (512 sq m area of new build)		
<i>Present use:</i>	School sports field		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of new vocational learning centre		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	08/00062/CCD		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Wellingborough Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	11.05.09-12.05.09		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Peter Haddon Architects The Old Rectory Rectory Lane Milton Malsor Northampton NN7 3AQ		
<i>Client:</i>	Lend Lease Projects Ltd C/o Property Asset Management PO Box 128 County Hall Northampton NN1 1AS		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Ruth Stephenson		

Internal Quality Check

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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	8
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	9
4. Results.	10
5. Conclusions	14
6. Acknowledgements	15
7. Archive	15
8. References	16

Appendices:

1. Trench Summary Tables.....	17
2. List of Photographs.....	19
3. ASC OASIS Form	20

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	6
3. Trench location	7
4. Trench sections and plan	12

Plates:

Cover: Excavating Trench 1, facing northeast

1. Stratigraphy of Trench 1	13
2. Stratigraphy of palaeo-channel, facing northeast.....	13
3. Stratigraphy of palaeo-channel, facing southeast	13

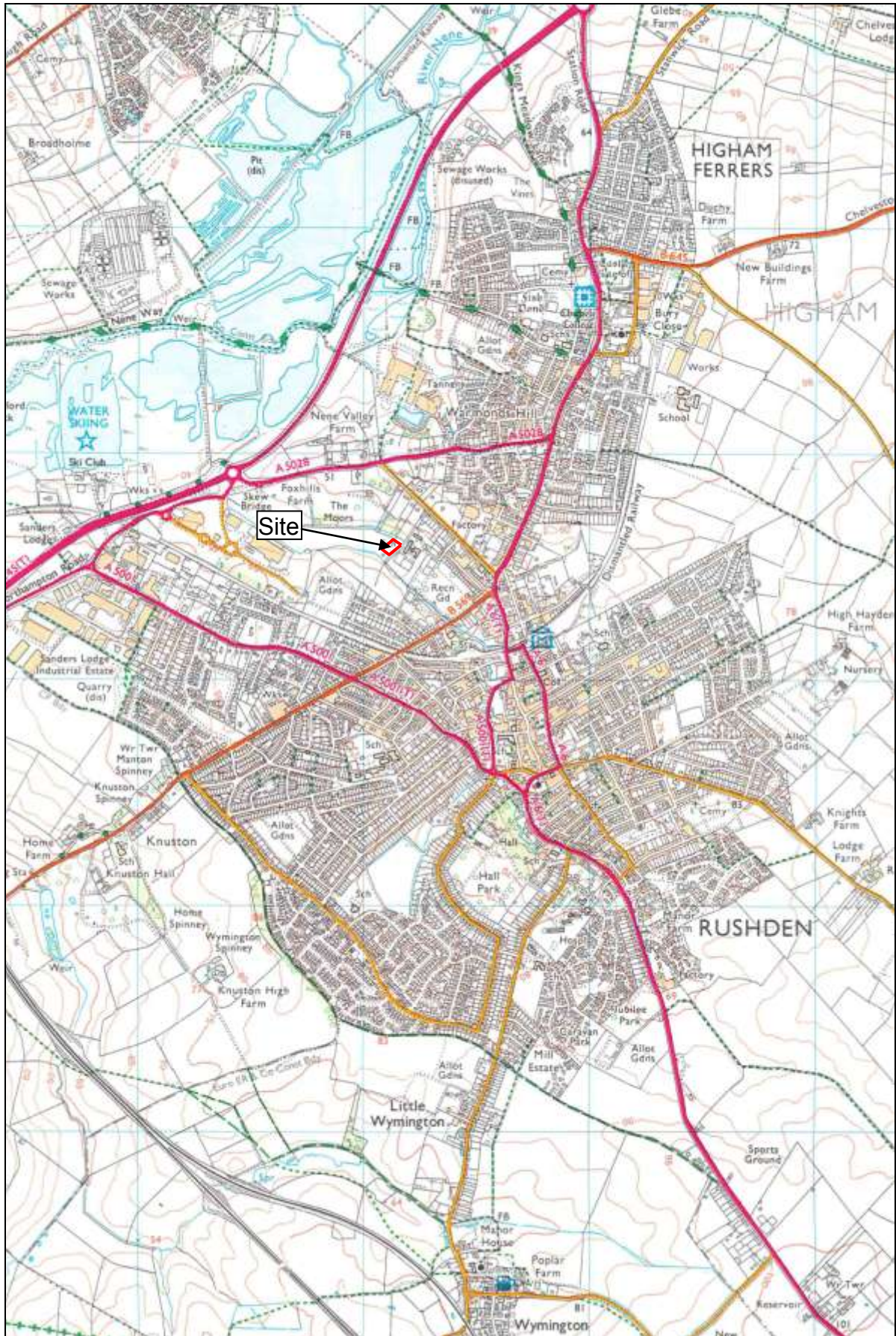


Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In May 2009 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a programme of archaeological trial trenching at Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire.

Two trenches, totalling 40 linear meters were opened within the footprint of the proposed new Vocational Learning Centre, and its associated car park.

No archaeological cut features or deposits were noted in either trench, though two fragments of cattle bone were recovered from the spoil of an alluvial deposit within a palaeo-channel in Trench 2. There were no indications of butchery marks on either.

1. Introduction

1.1 In May 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire. The project was commissioned by Peter Haddon Architects, and was carried out according to a brief (Mather 2009) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), Wellingborough Borough Council, by their archaeological advisor (AA), Northamptonshire County Council, and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2009). The relevant planning application reference is 08/00062/CCD.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The project was managed by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The development site is in Rushden, in the administrative district of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (Figure 1). It is situated to the northwest of the town centre, within the playing fields of the community college, south of Batsmans Drive, and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 9515 6756 (Figure 2).

The application area comprises an area of c.1650 sq m, at the east end of the sports field. It is approximately rectangular in shape and is currently laid out to grass, as part of the sports field. Pedestrian access is from the east, via a gate, from the college grounds. Machine access has yet to be arranged.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The natural soil comprises the *Moreton Association*, namely well drained calcareous clayey and fine loamy soil (Soil Survey 1983, 511b). The underlying geology comprises Holocene alluvium and gravel of the river Nene (BGS, Sheet 186).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The development proposal comprises the construction of a new vocational skills centre covering an area of 512 sq m, with associated car parking and services (Figure 3).

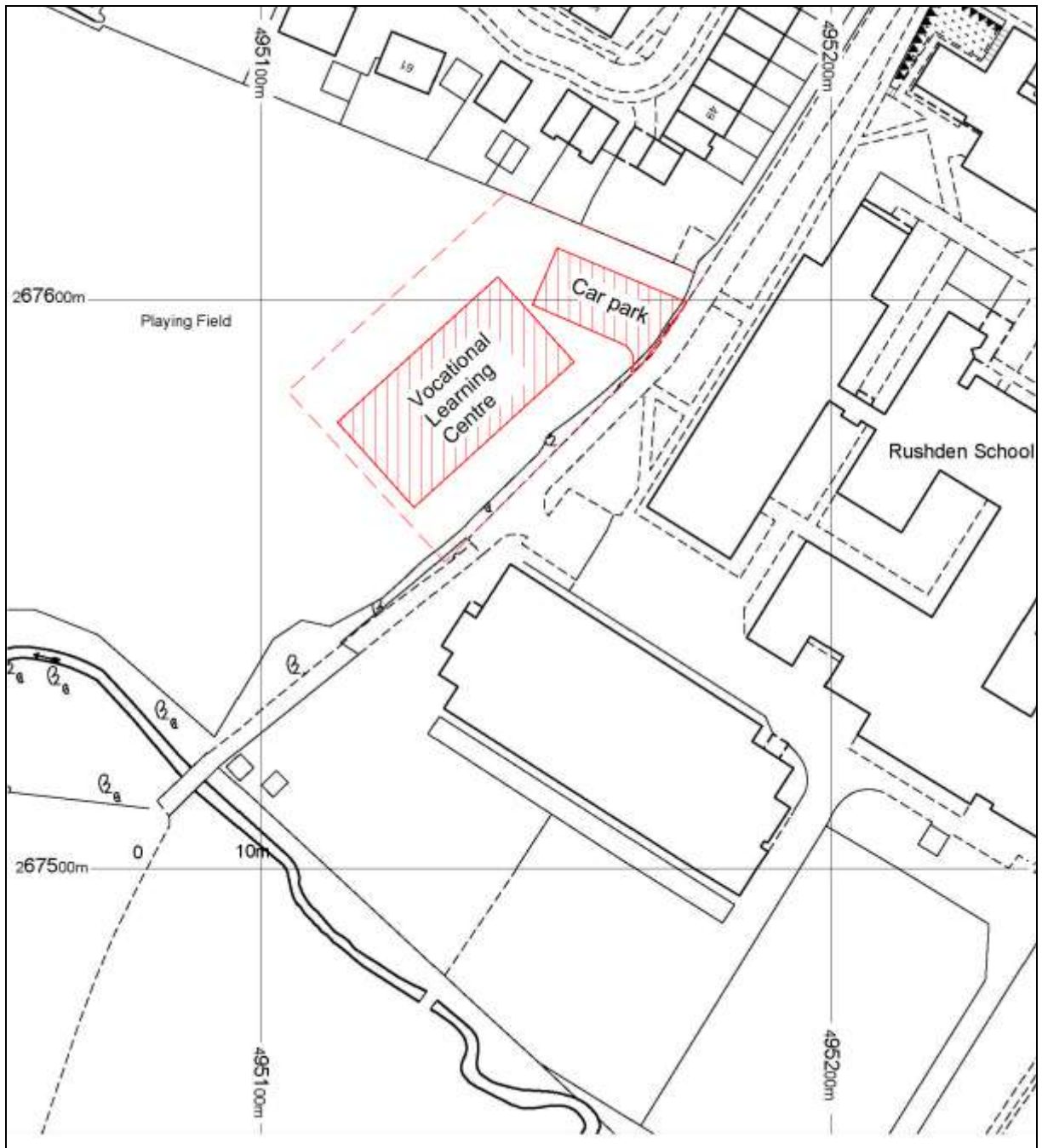


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1000)

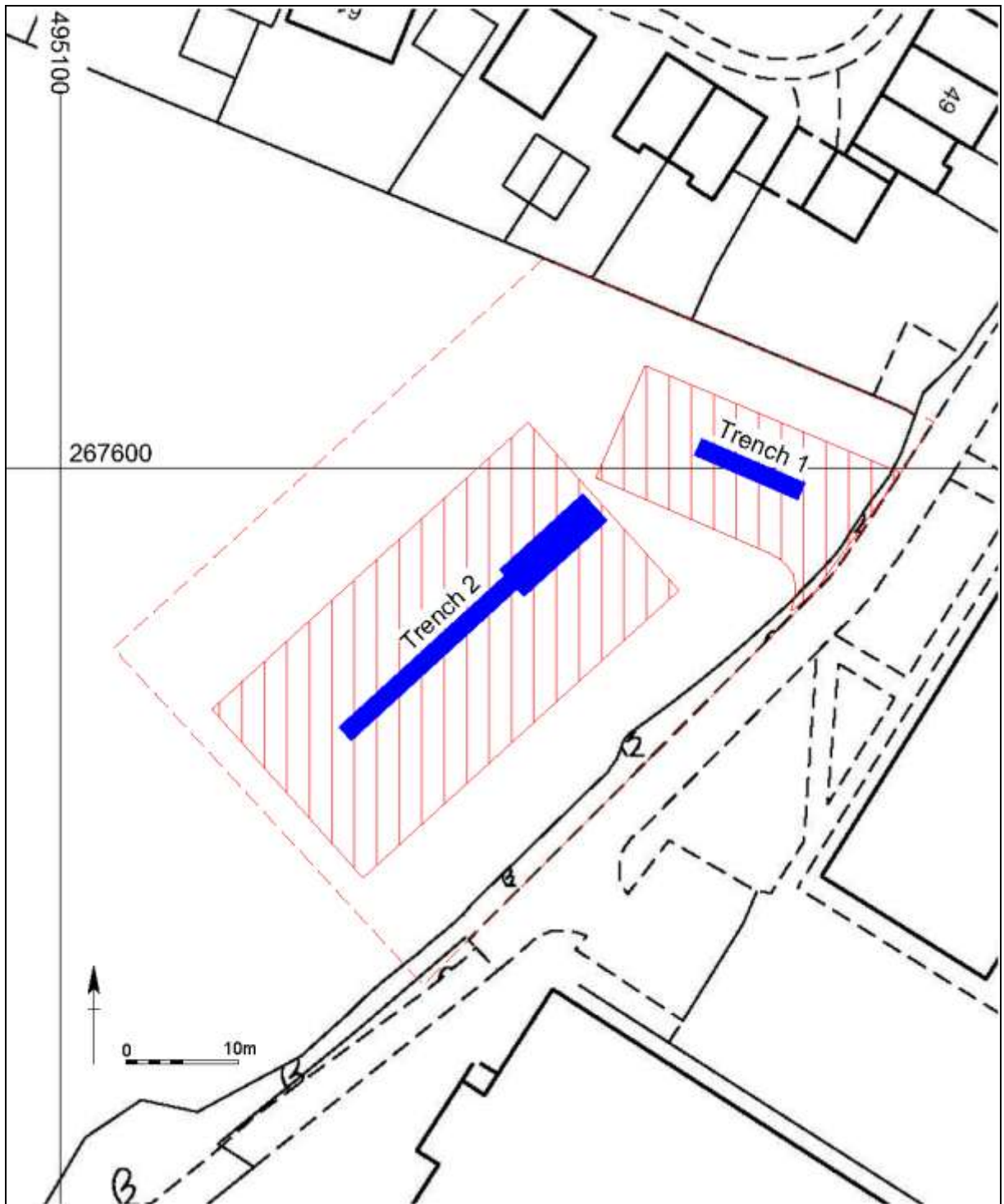


Figure 3: Trench location (scale 1:500)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

In line with the requirements of the *brief* (Section 4.3), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site
- to recover artefacts to assist in the development of the type series within the region
- to recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

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*

2.3.1 The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3.7), which required:

- two trial trenches to be excavated, totalling *c.*40 linear metres. One trench targeting the footprint of the proposed building, and the second targeting the parking and entrance area.
- a contingency for the excavation of an additional 10 sq m, if required by the AA.

2.4 *Constraints*

Due to the presence of deep alluvial deposits, a portion of Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.4m, and the trench width was stepped accordingly. However, the subsequent size of the trench and volume of spoil, would have made it impractical to excavate to the base of the alluvium along its whole length.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 This section has been compiled with information from the initial desk-based assessment (Fell 2008) and provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest (Ballinger 2000; Salzman 1970, 44-50; Taylor 2006, 145), but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the Roman period.
- 3.2 The valley of the river Nene was of importance during the prehistoric periods but little is currently known of the area during these periods. Antiquarian sources refer to past finds of Bronze Age axes in the area (eg Coles 1838, 218) and a number of Iron Age sites, comprising farmsteads and agricultural enclosures were excavated in advance of the construction of the A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers Bypass (Mudd 2004, Sites 3 and 4).
- 3.3 The area currently occupied by the community college was in use during the Roman period. A variety of Roman period remains have been found within and close to the college grounds (Fell 2008, Figure 4), notably an inhumation burial, with coins and pottery sherds which were recorded from the north side of the college grounds (HER 3194). Further Roman pottery and animal bone has been found north of the college, at 93 Hayway (HER 9099) and a Roman coin has been recorded to the south, from Woodland Road (HER 3195). These finds do not allow the extent and nature of Roman settlement in the area to be defined, and it is possible that further remains exist, within the development site.
- 3.4 Rushden may have originated during the Saxon period and the core of the Saxon and medieval settlement is c.1km south of the development site, centred on the church of St Mary. During the Saxon period the area was probably dominated by a settlement at Higham Ferrers, where a complex of buildings, ditches within a horseshoe shaped enclosure has been interpreted as a trading centre or 'tribute centre' (Hardy and Charles 2007).
- 3.5 During the medieval period, the development site probably comprised part of the open field system of Rushden. The area is shown as open land on the 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps and was incorporated into the college in 1953.

4 Results

4.1 General

Two trenches, totalling 40 linear meters, were opened within the footprint of the proposed development, using a wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket. The excavated area constituted a 4% sample of the effected area.

The site stratigraphy consisted of 0.3-0.4m of topsoil overlying 0.55-0.85m of orange and grey mottled clay natural. Beneath this was up to 5 layers of alluvial deposition, overlying clay and gravel. The topsoil was a mixed with modern building materials and the stratigraphy contained no subsoil, suggesting the site has been truncated, probably during the construction of the playing fields.

No archaeological cut features or deposits were noted in either trench.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figs. 3 & 4: Plate 1)

Trench 1 was located in the northeast corner of the site, orientated approximately northwest-southeast, within the footprint of the proposed car park. It was 10m in length and its stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil mixed with modern building debris, overlying 0.55m of firm, orange and grey mottled clay natural.

Geotechnical data indicated that there were underlying alluvial deposits, so once the clay natural had been inspected for archaeological features, it was machined through. The alluvium consisted of 0.25m of soft, dark brown to black silt, overlying 0.15m of fairly firm dark brown silt. It is possible that this represents two separate deposits, or a single deposit that has subsequently settled. The underlying natural geology consisted of grey clay and gravel.

No archaeological cut features, deposits or artefacts were observed in Trench 1, at any level.

4.3 Trench 2 (Figs. 3 & 4: Plates 2 & 3)

Trench 2 was located within the footprint of the proposed Vocational Learning Centre, orientated northeast-southwest, and parallel to the site's eastern boundary. It was 30m in length, with stratigraphy consisting of 0.3m of topsoil and modern debris, overlying 0.85m of orange and grey mottled clay. Beneath this were four separate alluvial deposits overlying gravel.

As with Trench 1, the natural clay was machined through, once it had been ascertained that there were no archaeological features present. The geotechnical data indicated that the alluvium may be at least 2.8m below the existing ground surface, so after consultation with the Northamptonshire County Archaeologist, the machining level was raised to the interface between the topsoil and the natural clay.

No archaeological cut features or deposits were observed in Trench 2, though two pieces of cattle bone were recovered from the spoil of one of the alluvial deposits. There were no indications of butchery on either.

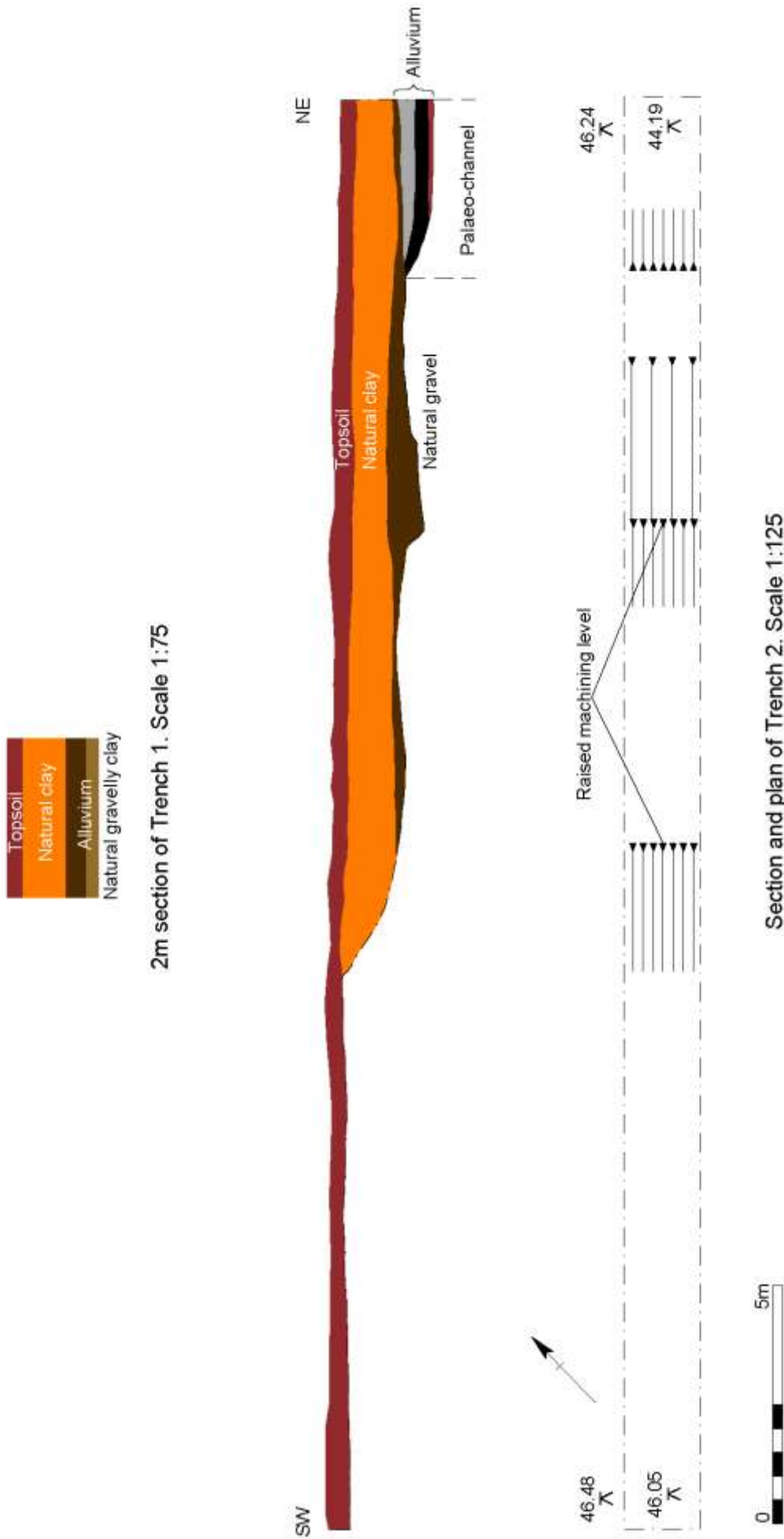


Figure 4: Trench sections and plan (scale as shown)



Plate 1: Stratigraphy of Trench 1



Plate 2: Stratigraphy of palaeo-channel, facing northeast



Plate 3: Stratigraphy of palaeo-channel, facing southeast

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The absence of subsoil in the stratigraphy suggests that the site has been truncated, probably during the construction of the school and its playing field. The ground rises sharply along the northern boundary by 0.7m. This may be in part to accommodate a culverted spring, but may also give an indication of the amount of ground reduction that has taken place, implying that only deep cut archaeological features would have survived in the natural clay.

The three lower alluvial deposits in Trench 2 appear to be associated with a palaeo-channel. They are sealed by the upper layer of alluvium that probably continues into Trench 1 to the northeast, and overlies the natural gravel to the southwest, where it also deepens, suggesting the presence of a possibly later channel.

The fragments of cattle bone recovered from the spoil of the palaeo-channel showed no sign of butchery, and their presence in the fill cannot necessarily be attributed to local human activity, as currents within the channel may have been sufficient to carry material downstream for a considerable distance.

Significant archaeological features were not observed in the trenches. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Peter Haddon Architects. The writer is grateful to Ruth Stephenson for her assistance. The project was monitored by Lesley-Ann Mather of Northamptonshire County Council on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Lattenbury Services for the machine and fencing provision.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by David Kaye BA AIFA and Martin Cuthbert BA. The report was prepared by David Kaye 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. Site record drawings
7. List of photographs
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be stored temporarily with ASC, as museums in much of Northamptonshire are not currently accepting archives from archaeological excavations.

8. References


Standards & Specifications


- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).
- Fell, D. 2009 *Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation: Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire* (ASC Report 1184/RCC/1)
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Mather L-A 2009 *Brief for the Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land at Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire*. Northamptonshire County Council

Secondary Sources

- Ballinger J, 2000 *Rushden. Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey*. Northamptonshire County Council
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Coles J, 1838 *The History and Antiquities of Higham Ferrers*
- Cooper N J (ed) 2006, *The Archaeology of the East Midlands. An Archaeological Assessment and Research Agenda*. Leicester Archaeology Monograph **13**
- Fell D, 2008 *Desk-Based Assessment: Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd report no **1123/RCC/1**
- Hardy A & Charles B, 2007, *Death & Taxes: The Archaeology of a Middle Saxon Estate Centre at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire*. Oxford Archaeology Monograph 7
- Mudd A 2004 'Iron Age and Roman Enclosures near Hugham Ferrers: The Archaeology of the A6 Rushden and Higham Ferrers Bypass' *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, **32**, 57-93
- Salzman L F, (ed) 1970 *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*. **4** Dawsons of Pall Mall
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).
- Taylor J 2006, 'The Roman Period in Cooper 2006, 137-159

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	10	Width	1.6	Depth	1.2
	Levels					
	Trench base northwest		44.87m OD			
	Trench top northwest		46.07m OD			
	Trench base southeast		44.90m OD			
	Trench top southeast		46.26m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	5166,7497		SP	5156,7510	
	Orientation			NW-SE		
Reason for Trench			Evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: m)	Length (max: m)	Thickness (max: m)	
101	Layer	Dark brown, silty clay and building debris. Topsoil.	>1.60	>10	0.20	
102	Layer	Orange and grey mottled clay. Natural.	>1.60	>10	0.53	
103	Layer	Black-dark brown soft silt. Alluvium.	>1.60	>10	0.25	
104	Layer	Dark brown firm silt. Alluvium.	>1.60	>10	0.15	
105	Layer	Grey clay and gravel. Natural	>1.60	>10	-	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	30	Width	1.6 - 3.2	Depth	1.6 - 2.2
	Levels					
	Trench base northeast			44.19m OD		
	Trench top northeast			46.24m OD		
	Trench base southwest			46.05m OD		
	Trench top southwest			46.48m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SP	5147,7496		SP	5125,7476	
	Orientation			NE-SW		
Reason for Trench			Evaluation			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: m)	Length (max: m)	Thickness (max: m)	
201	Layer	Dark brown, silty clay and building debris. Topsoil.	>3.20	>30	0.30	
202	Layer	Orange and grey mottled clay. Natural.	>3.20	>30	0.85	
203	Layer	Black-dark brown soft silt. Alluvium.	>3.20	>15.50	>2.50	
204	Layer	Grey-mid brown, fine, sandy, silt. Alluvium.	>3.20	>3.40	2.50	
205	Layer	Black, peaty, silt. Alluvium.	>1.60	>3.70	2.50	
206	Layer	Dark brown-black, peaty, silt. Alluvium.	>1.60	>2.50	1.50	
207	Layer	Olive green-brown gravel. Natural.	>1.60	>10.00	-	

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire			SITE NO/CODE: 1184/RCC
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	√	√	Trench 1, facing northwest
2	√	√	Trench 1, facing northwest
3		√	Trench 1, facing northwest
4	√	√	Trench 1, section
5	√	√	Trench 1, section
6	√	√	Trench 1, section
7		√	General shot, facing southeast
8		√	General shot, facing southeast
9		√	General shot, facing northeast
10		√	General shot, facing northeast
11		√	General shot, facing northeast
12	√	√	Trench 2 section, facing northeast
13	√	√	Trench 2 section, facing northeast
14		√	Trench 2 section, facing northeast
15		√	Trench 2 section, facing southeast
16		√	Trench 2 section, facing southeast
17		√	Trench 2 section, facing southeast
18	√	√	Trench 2, facing southwest
19	√	√	Trench 2, facing southwest
20	√	√	Trench 2, facing northeast
21	√	√	Trench 2, facing northeast

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire		
Short Description:	<p>In May 2009 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a programme of archaeological trial trenching at Rushden Community College, Rushden, Northamptonshire. Two trenches, totalling 40 linear meters were opened within the footprint of the proposed new vocational learning centre and its associated car park.</p> <p>No archaeological cut features or deposits were noted in either trench, though two fragments of cattle bone were recovered from the spoil of an alluvial deposit within a palaeo-channel in Trench 2. There were no indications of butchery marks on either.</p>		
Project Type:	Trial Trenching		
Site status:	None	Previous work:	DBA (Fell 2008)
Current land use:	Playing field	Future work:	None
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds:	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Northampton	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 9515 6756
Site address:	The Rushden Community College, Hayway, Rushden, Northants, NN10 6AG		
Study area:	c.1650 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c.46.50
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Northamptonshire County Council	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	Karin Semmelmann
Sponsor / funding body:	Peter Haddon Architects		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	11.05.09	End date:	12.05.09
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Temporarily retained by ASC	None	
Paper:	"	Site plans, site records, site drawings	
Digital:	"	CD containing images, list of photographs, B/W prints & negatives, project design, report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation:, Rushden Community College, Rushden Northamptonshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1184/RCC/2		
Author(s):	David Kaye BA AIFA		
Page nos	20	Date:	21.05.09