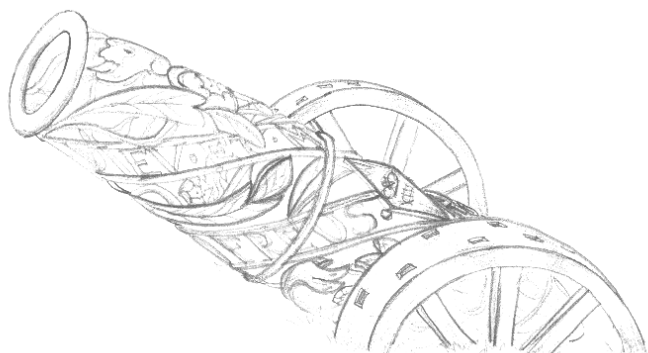


**'ROYALIST CANNON' INSTALLATION, QUEEN'S SCONCE,
NEWARK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

EXCAVATION REPORT

NGR: SK 7905 5304
ACCESSION no NEKMS:2009.49
SITE CODE: NQSX12
PCAS job no. 910



Prepared for
Parks and Amenities Department
Newark and Sherwood District Council

by

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Contents

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Site location and description	2
3.0	Topography and geology	2
4.0	Planning background	2
5.0	Archaeological and historical background	3
6.0	Methodology	4
7.0	Results	4
8.0	Conclusion	4
9.0	Effectiveness of methodology	4
10.0	Acknowledgements	4
11.0	Site Archive	5
12.0	Bibliography	5

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Appendix 2: OASIS summary

Figures

Fig. 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000

Fig. 2: Location plan of the development site at scale 1:500, showing the positions of the cannon and the earthworks of the Queens Sconce

Fig. 3: Plan and section of excavated area 1:20

Plates

Plate 1: Overview of site before excavation, looking south-east

Plate 2: Overview of excavation, looking south-east

Plate 3: 'Cannon' after installation is complete, looking south-east

Non-Technical Summary

- A programme of archaeological excavation was completed for the installation of a public work of art on the Queen's Sconce earthwork within Sconce and Devon Park in Newark, Nottinghamshire.
- The Queen's Sconce forms part of the Civil War fortifications of the town of Newark, and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- The excavation revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance.

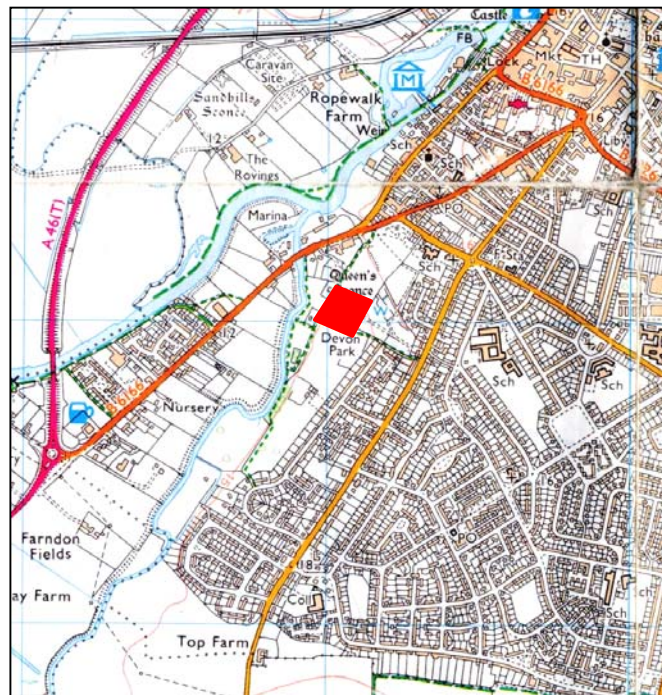


Figure 1: Location plan of the Queen's Sconce (marked in red) at scale 1:25,000. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was requested by the Parks and Amenities Department of Newark and Sherwood District Council to excavate a small area ahead of the installation of a public work of art on the Queen's Sconce earthwork in Sconce and Devon Park, Newark, Nottinghamshire. The sculpture, representing a Royalist cannon, occupies a footprint area of roughly 2.7m x 1.4m, and is situated on the north-east bastion of the earthwork. The installation took place on the 6th and 7th of August 2012.

The excavation revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance.

2.0 Site location and description (figs. 1 and 2)

The Queen's Sconce earthwork lies within Sconce and Devon Park on the south-western edge of the town of Newark-on-Trent, within the administrative district of Newark and Sherwood.

Sconce and Devon Park is the largest area of public green space in Newark, covering approximately 15 hectares. The park is long and narrow, aligned roughly north-east to south-west and paralleling the course of the River Devon along much of its north-western border: the Queen's Sconce stands near its centre, with the Sconce Hills area extending to the north-east and Devon Park to the south-west.

3.0 Geology and topography

The drift geology over most of the Sconce and Devon Park area consists of Balderton Sand and Gravel, with a narrow band of alluvium, laid down by the River Devon, on its north-western edge. The Balderton Sand and Gravel, part of the terraces laid down by the River Trent, forms an island on which most of the town of Newark stands. The underlying solid geology is Middle to Upper Triassic Edwalton Formation Mudstone (BGS, 1996). Previous archaeological monitoring of groundworks on the Queen's Sconce encountered layers of sand and gravel, commensurate with the earthwork consisting of upcast from ditches cut into the natural drift geology (Savage and Sleaf, 2011).

The Queen's Sconce is situated on level, low-lying ground within the Trent valley, to the south-east of the confluence of the River Trent with its tributary, the River Devon, which forms much of the north-western border of the Sconce and Devon Park.

4.0 Planning background

Scheduled Monument Consent was required for the installation of a piece of public art on a bastion of the Queen's Sconce Civil War earthwork. The work proceeded following an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation and an associated archaeological impact assessment prepared by Pre-construct Archaeological Services Ltd. (PCAS, 2012).

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Newark was a Royalist stronghold during much of the Civil War, and was intermittently besieged by Parliamentary forces over a period of some four years, eventually falling to General Poyntz in May 1646. The town was defended by a range of earthwork fortifications outside the town walls, which remain some of the most impressive and best preserved field fortifications in Britain. They included a pair of earthwork forts, the King's and Queen's Sconces (a word derived from the Dutch *schans*, 'fort', and used in English to mean a small protective fortification or earthwork). These were earthworks constructed outside the town, serving as a platform for ordnance that could provide covering fire in all directions over the flat meadows. The location of the Queen's Sconce on a prominent knoll, with commanding views of the crossing point over the River Devon at Markhall Bridge and of the Fosse Way, suggests that it was primarily designed to cover the southern approach to the town whilst denying control of a tactically important piece of high ground to the attackers.

The Queen's Sconce fortification is nearly 300 feet across. It is square with arrowhead bastions at each corner, surrounded by a wide, deep ditch. The sconce is constructed of local gravel, but the steep angle of repose suggests that it was reinforced in some way. The mass of the sconce was designed to absorb the impact of cannon fire and its shape to deflect cannon balls. It is likely to have had an earthen parapet to protect troops and gun emplacements, and timber storm poles projecting horizontally from the bastions to deter access by foot soldiers. Cannon would have been located in the bastions to provide flanking lines of fire. A timber drawbridge was the most likely means of access for troops, stores and ammunition. The Sconce was manned in rotation by sections of troops stationed outside the garrison (FSDP, n.d.). It is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (no. 30213).

The field containing the Queen's Sconce appears to have remained unaltered during the later post-medieval period and the Industrial Revolution, but by the end of the 19th century the town was beginning to expand, with plots to the north and east of the Sconce being laid out as allotments. Between 1897 and 1901, a tramway was laid to the north of the Queen's Sconce, dividing the plot on which the earthwork lay. It was built to serve the Cafferata and Co. gypsum works at Hawton south of Newark, bringing the gypsum to a quay on the Trent (FSDP, n.d.).

Three archaeological watching briefs were carried out by the John Samuels Archaeological Consultancy between 2002 and 2005 in the Devon Park sports ground area, but none encountered any features that could be dated to the Civil War. However, a large number of individual finds from this period have been retrieved from the area by metal-detecting (JSAC, 2005).

In 2009-10, a programme of improvements to the Sconce and Devon Park took place under archaeological monitoring by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. The works included the construction of a new access bridge leading onto the top of the Queen's Sconce; improvements to the kerb rail surrounding it; the provision of CCTV monitoring; repairs to erosion scars on the sides of the earthwork, and the positioning of a visitor orientation plate at its summit on the northern edge. A network of new paths was also constructed, some approaching or passing very close to the earthwork. The bridge construction involved the excavation of two pile cap trenches on either side of the ditch (fig. 2). The oldest securely dated deposit was encountered in the eastern trench, and may have represented the original surface of the Queen's Sconce earthwork, with two overlying layers possibly representing upcast from later work deepening and recutting its ditch. The surface layers were then cut by what appeared to be a sequence of two linear features, one so shallow that it was uncertain that it was in fact man-made rather than natural, while the other was clearly marked and had stood open long enough for a turf line to form. No dating evidence was retrieved from these features that might have assigned them to the active life of the fort. A single linear feature was recorded in the western trench, which produced no dating evidence apart from a fragment of clay pipe stem. No archaeological horizons were seen during the construction of the eastern bridge approach. The new path which adjoined the east side of the Sconce, giving access

to the bridge approach, encountered the concrete slab base of a structure 15m to the north-east of the north-eastern point of the earthwork: this was identified as a World War II Home Guard hut, used for storage and shelter. To the north of this structure, a deposit of clinker with coal, iron waste and fragments of 19th century brick overlay the topsoil: this was probably associated with the late 19th century tramway. No archaeological horizons were seen during the monitoring of the kerb rail improvements around the Sconce: finds retrieved from three of the new post-holes comprised a Second World War bullet casing, a metal button, a sherd of post-medieval pottery and a fragment of clay tobacco pipe. No archaeological horizons or artefacts were recorded during the excavation of a CCTV camera stand pit adjoining the south-east corner of the Sconce earthwork; a lead musket ball was among a heterogeneous assembly of topsoil finds retrieved during the excavation of the associated cable-trench (Savage and Sleaf, 2011).

6.0 Methodology

The area of impact was scanned with a metal detector. The area to be excavated was marked out using tapes within the space designated by the Park Ranger, Peter Dixon. The trench was a maximum of 0.15m wide and was hand dug to a depth of 0.15m (Fig. 3). Excavation of further areas was necessary during the installation as shown on Fig 3.1, to the same depth.

All spoil was scanned with a metal detector.

7.0 Results

The excavation revealed brown sandy loam topsoil (001) up to 0.15m deep across site. This deposit was disturbed by rooting and contained some fragments of modern tile and glass, as well as a non-diagnostic piece of slag. A tent peg was recovered using the metal detector.

Beneath this was a deposit of natural sand and gravel (002). This orangey brown sand with frequent semi-rounded river pebbles was up-cast from the Civil War ditch of the 1640s; used to form the bastion ramparts. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed during this project was effective in demonstrating the absence of archaeological features within the confines of the development impact, while ensuring that any features that might have been present would not have been destroyed unrecorded and causing the minimum of disruption to the construction process.

9.0 Conclusion

The excavation did not encounter any features or artefacts related to the active use of the bastion. This investigation has therefore revealed no new information about the Queen's Sconce in Newark.

10.0 Acknowledgements

PCAS Ltd. would like to thank Philip Beard, Parks and Amenities Manager for Newark & Sherwood District Council for this commission. Thanks are also due to Peter Dixon (Park Ranger) and Michael Condron (Sculptor) for their assistance and co-operation during this project.

11.0 Site Archive

The site archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd, Saxilby, Lincolnshire, and will be deposited at the Newark Resource Centre within six months of the completion of the report. It may be consulted there by quoting the archive accession number, NEKMS:2009.49

12.0 References

British Geological Survey (BGS), 1996, *Nottingham: England and Wales Sheet 126, Solid and Drift Edition, 1:50,000 Series*. BGS, Keyworth, Nottingham.

Friends of Sconce and Devon Park (FSDP), n.d., *History of the Park*. Consulted 13/04/11 at http://www.sconceanddevonpark.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=27

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Ordnance Survey, 2010, *Newark-on-Trent, Retford, Southwell & Saxilby: Explorer series no. 271, 1:25,000*.

Savage, R. D. and Sleaf, J., 2011, *Queen's Sconce and Devon Park, Newark, Nottinghamshire: Archaeological Scheme of Monitoring Works*. Unpublished client report for Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd.



Figure 2: Plan of the Queen's Scence at scale 1:500. The new approach and footbridge can be seen at bottom right.

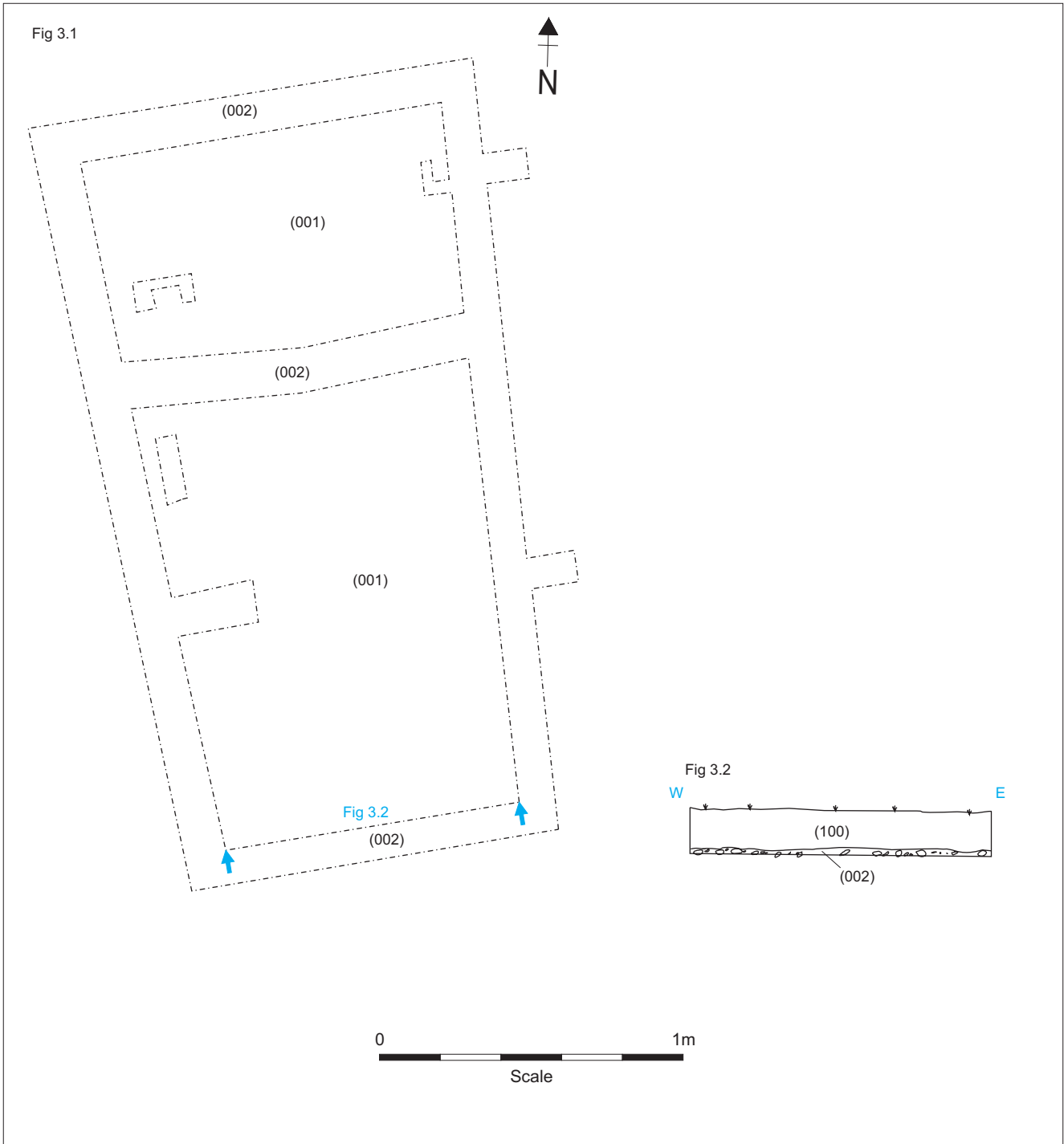


Fig 3 plan and representative section of excavation
Scale 1:20

Appendix 1. Colour Plates



Plate 1: Overview of site before excavation looking south-east



Pl. 2: Overview of excavation, looking south-east



Plate 3: 'Cannon' after installation is complete, looking south-east

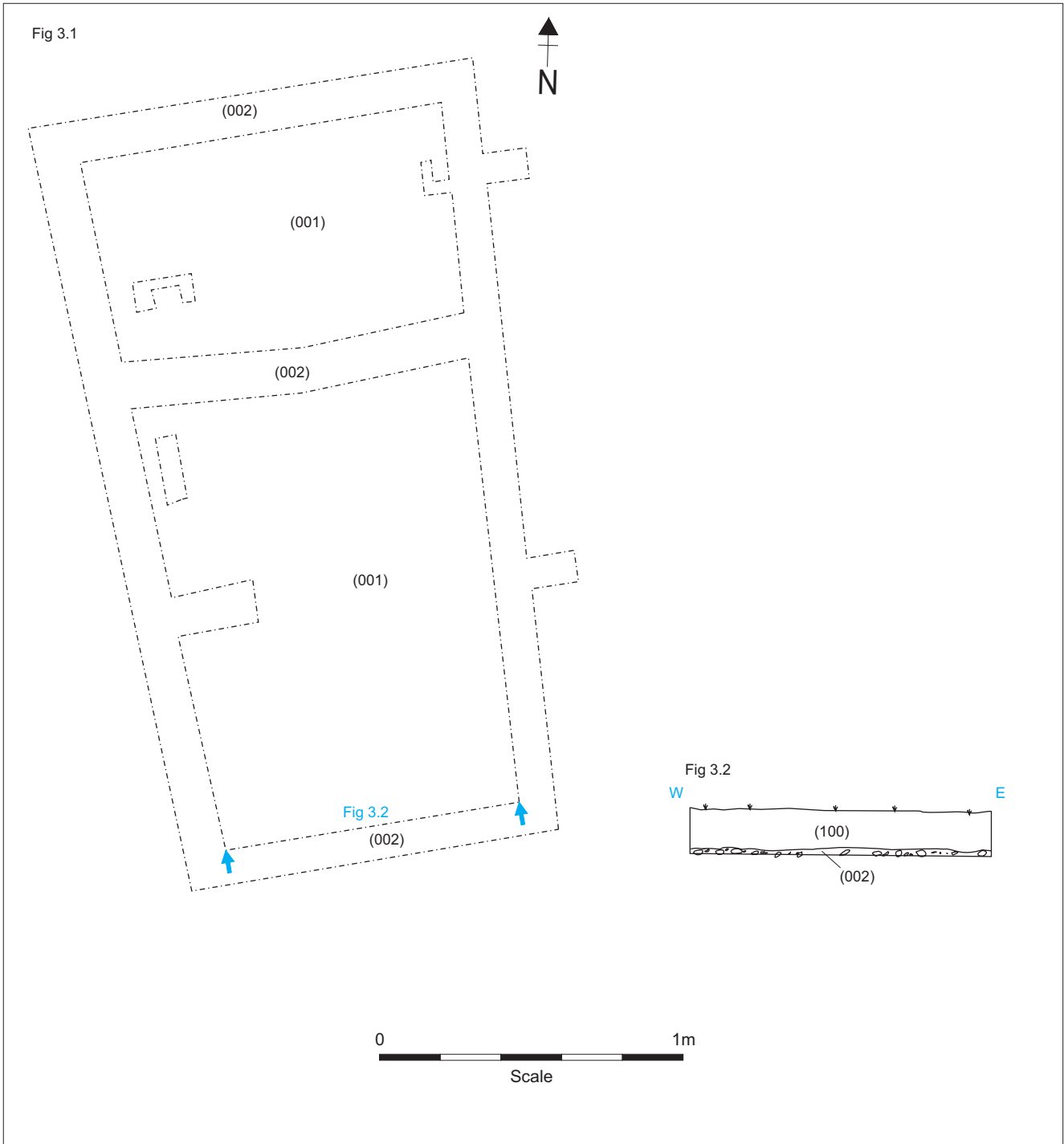


Fig 3 plan and representative section of excavation
Scale 1:20

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OASIS ID: preconst3-143593

Project details

Project name	Newark Sconce 'Cannon'
Short description of the project	Excavation of footings for the installation of public art on the Queens Sconce in Newark. located on the bastion of the Scheduled Ancient Monument
Project dates	Start: 06-08-2012 End: 07-08-2012
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	NQSX12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	30213 - SM No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Woodland 6 - Parkland
Current Land use	Woodland 6 - Parkland
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Full excavation""
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NEWARK AND SHERWOOD NEWARK Queens Sconce, Sconce and Devon Park
Postcode	NG24 4UG
Study area	4.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 7905 5304 53 0 53 04 06 N 000 49 12 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
Project brief originator	Newark and Sherwood District Council
Project design originator	Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
Project director/manager	Will Munford

Project supervisor Karen Francis
Type of sponsor/funding body District Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Newark Resource Centre
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient Newark Resource Centre
Paper Media available "Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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