

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:**  
**WHETSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH, DOG AND GUN LANE, WHETSTONE, BLABY,  
LEICESTERSHIRE**

NGR: SP 5566 9640  
BDC Planning Ref.: 13/0869/1/PX  
PCAS job No.: 1307  
Site code: WBCE 14  
Archive acc. no.: X.A122.2014

Report prepared for

KPW Architects

By

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December 2014



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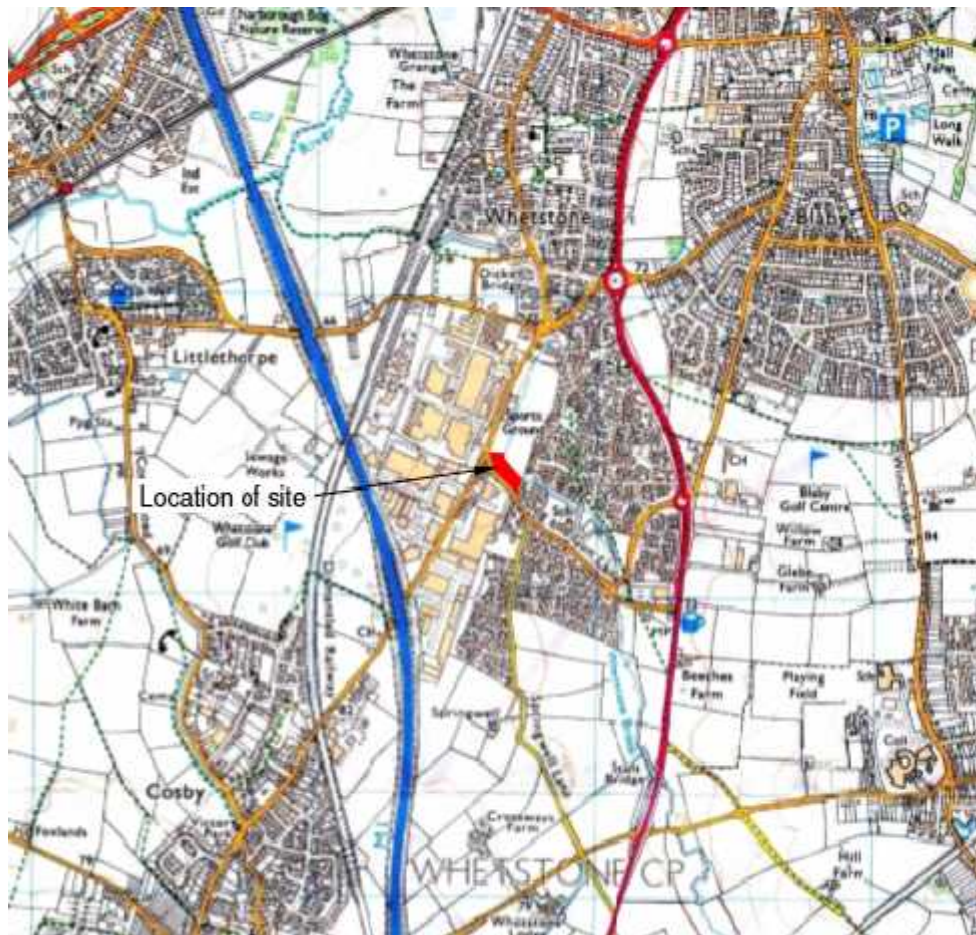
**Plate 9:** Shallow pit [107] (looking N).

## Summary

In November 2014, a trial trench evaluation took place in advance of a proposed new Baptist church on land off Dog and Gun Lane in the town of Whetstone in Leicestershire. This was commissioned by KPW Architects and was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the District Planning Authority. The results will be used to ascertain the archaeological potential of the site and, if necessary, to inform a scheme of mitigation to be carried out in advance of and/or during construction groundworks, in order fulfil the planning conditions.

This consisted of four trenches, three of which measured 35m x 2m with a fourth trench at 15m x 2m. They were positioned to give the broadest sample of the area affected by the proposed development.

Three trenches (2, 3 and 4) contained no archaeology, with Trench 1 containing just a single pit of unknown date or function.



**Fig. 1:** Location plan of the site (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) were commissioned by KPW Architects to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation trenching in advance of a proposed new Baptist church on land off Dog and Gun Lane in the town of Whetstone in Leicestershire. The results of this evaluation will inform any further archaeological mitigation, if required.

## **2.0 Site location and description**

Whetstone lies within the administrative district of Blaby in the county of Leicestershire, on the southern outskirts of Leicester city, approximately 6km from the city centre.

The proposed development site lies to the south of the historic core of Whetstone, with housing development to the east and a large industrial zone to the south and west; it forms part of an L-shaped plot bordered by Dog and Gun Lane to the south, the Whetstone to Cosby road to the west and a sports field to the north and east, from which it is divided by the course of the Whetstone Brook. It measures approximately 6885 square metres in total, and is currently used for car parking.

Central National Grid Reference: SP 5566 9640.

## **3.0 Topography and geology**

The site lies in the shallow valley created by the Whetstone Brook, a tributary of the River Soar; the site is on the south-west side of the brook at the valley base, and slopes gradually down to the north-east, falling from approximately 68.5m above Ordnance Datum sea level adjoining Dog and Gun Lane to approximately 67m OD near the north-east side. At the north-eastern edge, the ground rises again to a shallow bank dividing the brook from the rest of the site.

The drift geology on the site is alluvium, laid down along the course of the Whetstone Brook; an adjoining deposit of glaciofluvial sand and gravel may extend on to the south-western edge of the site. The underlying solid geology is Triassic Mercia Mudstone (bgs.ac.uk).

## **4.0 Planning background**

On 27 March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced PPS5. The NPPF places the responsibility for dealing with heritage assets affected by development proposals with the developer. Local planning authorities now need to be assured by those applying for planning permission that any such remains are not under threat of being destroyed unrecorded. As a result developers are required to produce a definitive method of mitigating the effect of development on the historic environment within the planning process.

Section 12, paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that, *'128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation'*.

Planning permission for the construction of a new church, with associated ancillary and community facilities, was granted by Blaby District Council in February 2014 (application ref. 13/0869/1/PX). This permission was granted subject to conditions: condition 24 requires a programme of archaeological work to be detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation before any

demolition or construction takes place. The WSI was submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority; the site investigation was to be completed in accordance with the programme set out in the approved WSI, and provision be made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and deposition of the archive.

The results of this evaluation will be used to ascertain the archaeological potential of the site and, if necessary, to inform a scheme of mitigation to be carried out in advance of and/or during construction groundworks, in order to fulfil the planning conditions detailed above.

## **5.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The Leicestershire and Rutland HER records no prehistoric sites or findspots in the vicinity of the site, but the wider area does have potential for prehistoric remains (Senior Planning Archaeologist, comment on planning application). The north-western edge of a 1km radius search area touches on a prehistoric multiple ditch system, consisting of a river loop enclosure containing a number of enclosures and a possible ring ditch, identified from crop-marks at the confluence of the River Soar and the Whetstone Brook (HER ref. MLE366); the only other evidence of prehistoric activity within the search area is the find of the base of a beehive quern, probably late Iron Age, approximately 600m to the west of the site (MLE6568).

A possible Roman road has been identified running south from Ratae Corieltavorum (Leicester), the major Roman town of the region, to the small town of Tripontium, south of Lutterworth. A road surface was found at approximately SP 546 857, at the north end of Lutterworth, in 1979, but this lies well outside the study area, within which the route of the Roman road is followed by the modern course of the Lutterworth Road (A426), passing approximately 600m to the east of the site (HER ref. MLE1902).

Early medieval Whetstone was a small manorial estate with arable land, meadow land and a mill, occupied by a knight, 24 free men, 16 unfree labourers and 2 slaves (Williams and Martin, 1992, p.649). The historic settlement core lies approximately 350m to the north of the site.

The HER records a medieval trackway from Whetstone, running south from Bottom End Bridge (on the road to Littlethorpe). It is marked by a bank and respected by adjoining earthwork ridge-and-furrow, and is followed by an existing footpath (HER ref. MLE365). The footpath passes the site approximately 200m to the east, but the trackway is believed likely to cross the Whetstone Brook and continue into the site; it is possible that other, contemporary remains may be associated with it (Senior Planning Archaeologist, comment on planning application).

The industrial estate to the west of the site dates from the mid-20th century and was built on the land of the former Park Farm. The greater part of the 19th-century farmstead was demolished during the construction of the industrial estate, although a range of brick barns survived until 2012 (HER ref. MLE20666).

## **6.0 Aims and methodology**

The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council has recommended an archaeological evaluation on the site, to identify and locate any archaeological remains of significance, and propose suitable treatment to avoid or minimise damage by the development. The evaluation consisted of four trenches, three 35m x 2m with a fourth at 15m x 2m. The trenches were positioned to give the broadest sample of the area affected by proposed development while working within the constraints of the site (e.g. avoiding the canopy of trees, allowing room for a machine to manoeuvre).

The broad aim of the evaluation was:

- To determine the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival, importance, extent, form and function of archaeological features;
- To recover stratified artefactual evidence;
- To establish the sequence of archaeological remains on the site;
- To interpret archaeology in the context of the known archaeological landscape.

All trenches were accurately fixed into the National Grid using a Leica GS50, Topcom GRS1 global positioning system (GPS). The precise locations of the 17 trenches had been agreed in advance, but their locations were subject to minimal adjustment to avoid services, overhead obstructions etc. These alterations did not affect the features that were being targeted. Trench positions are shown overlain on greyscale geophysical survey imagery on Figure 2.

The excavation of all trial trenches took place initially using a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Machine excavation progressed in spits no greater than 200mm and ceased either at the first significant archaeological horizon, or the natural substrate.

All archaeological features were examined sufficiently to determine their date, character, state of preservation and extent, as well as to recover artefactual / ecofactual remains for further study. Features were recorded by measured plan and section drawings at appropriate scales (1:20 and 1:10 respectively). A written record for each stratigraphic horizon and archaeological feature was made on standard PCAS recording forms. A photographic archive and a narrative account in the form of a site diary supplements these records.

The results of the evaluation presented here will be used to provide site-specific archaeological information that will allow the Local Planning Authority to make an informed judgement on any appropriate archaeological mitigation for the proposed development.

## **7.0 Results**

A full descriptive context summary list appears as Appendix 2, whilst selected photographs can be seen in Appendix 1. A Trench location plan is included as Figure 2; see Figure 3 for trench plans and sections.

### *7.1 Trenches containing archaeological features*

#### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was positioned at the very northern edge of the site and was orientated approximately N-S. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy that consisted of multiple layers of modern made ground and areas of alluvial silting. The made ground is most likely associated with the laying of tarmac for the former car park. Beneath these layers of made ground, a single pit was partially exposed in the north western corner of the trench.

The pit, [107], which was partially located outside of the excavation area, seemed to be irregular / oval in plan, with shallow edges and a slightly concave base. It was 0.95m long, 0.49m wide and 0.07m deep. It contained a single silty fill, which contained no finds. The date and function of this feature is unknown, and given the scarcity of finds and features across the site, it may be that the pit was of natural origin.

### *7.2 Trenches containing no archaeological remains*

Of the four trenches excavated three were identified as being archaeologically negative: Trenches 2, 3 and 4. The depths of these trenches varied between 0.5m and 0.63m, with most

containing a stratigraphy of topsoil overlying multiple layers of modern rubble and made ground on top of the natural substrate.

## **8.0 Discussion and conclusion**

The evaluation revealed that Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were devoid of archaeological remains: only natural substrate, topsoil and deposits of modern made ground were exposed in these areas.

Trench 1 also consisted of multiple layers of modern made ground overlying the natural substrate. A single 'pit' was partially exposed in the north western corner of the trench. This was sealed by modern made ground and was cut into the natural substrate; however it contained no finds, and its function is unclear.

## **9.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

The methodology employed during this project achieved its primary objective, ensuring that the proposed development area was fully explored in order to confirm the presence/absence and to characterise the archaeology that was exposed.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. is grateful to KPW Architects for this commission.

## **11.0 References**

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

KPW Architects, 2013, Proposed Church Building for Whetstone Baptist Church: Design and Access Statement in Support of Planning Application.

Ordnance Survey, 2010, Leicester & Hinckley: Explorer Series Sheet 233, scale 1:25 000. The Ordnance Survey, Southampton.





Figure 2: Trench location plan @ scale 1:500.

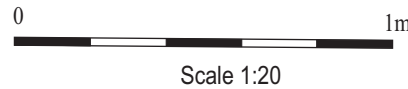
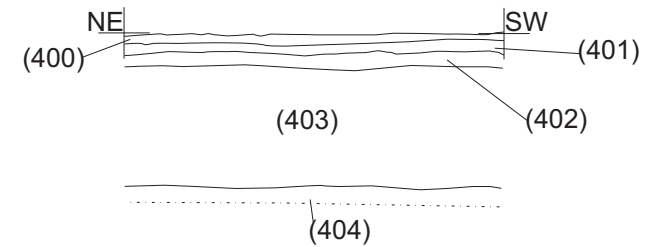
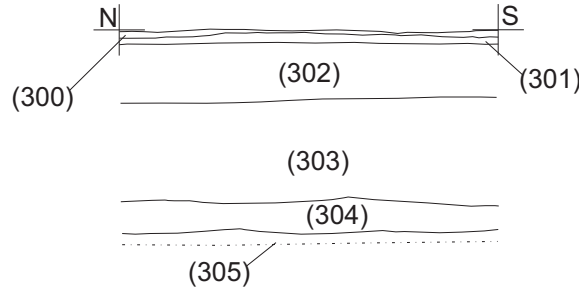
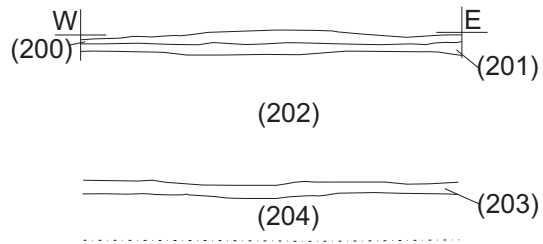
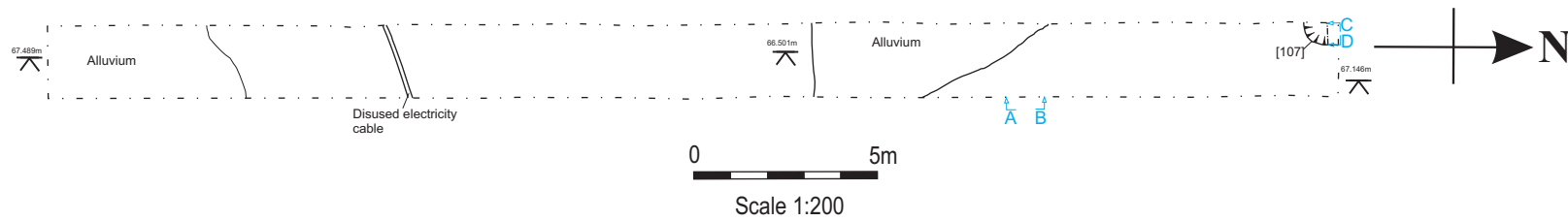
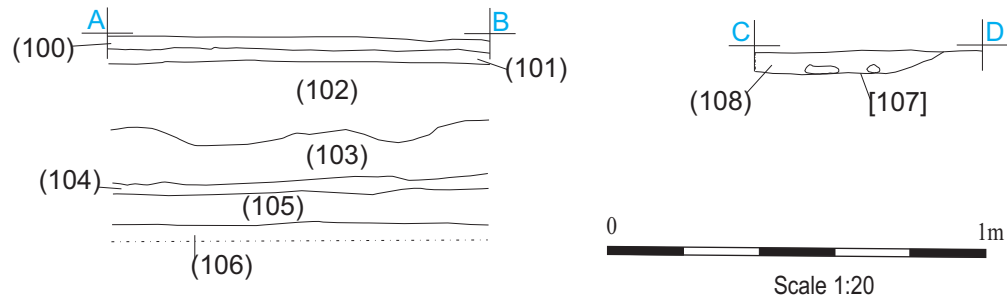


Figure 3: Trench 1 plan (1:200) and sections (1:20); and representative sections (1:20) of negative trenches.



Appendix 1 – Colour Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 pre-ex (looking S).



Plate 2: Trench 2 pre-ex (looking W).



Plate 3: Trench 3 pre-ex (looking S).



Plate 4: Trench 4 pre-ex (looking SE).





Plate 5: Trench 1 representative section (looking E).



Plate 6: Trench 2 representative section (looking N).



Plate 7: Trench 3 representative section (looking E).



Plate 8: Trench 4 representative section (looking NE).



Plate 9: Shallow pit [107] (looking N).

Appendix 2 – Context Summary

Context No.	Type	Description	Finds
<b>Trench 1</b>			
100	Layer	Topsoil. Dark brown grey silt. 0.02m thick.	
101	Layer	Tarmac of former car park. 0.04m thick.	
102	Layer	Made ground. Black hardcore with stones and virtually no soil. Interface with brick layer (103) variable in depth. Layer present in northern third of trench. 0.2m thick.	
103	Layer	Brick demolition layer. Present throughout the trench. Depth greater to the south. 0.3m thick.	
104	Layer	Thin layer of yellowish brown clay. Possibly used as a foundation layer, although not present everywhere. 0.04m thick (where present).	
105	Layer	Mid brownish grey alluvium silt layer. 0.1m thick.	
106	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid orange brown alluvium with occasional gravel inclusions. Depth not known.	
107	Cut	Cut of shallow pit located at northern end of trench. Irregular oval in shape, with shallow edges and a concave base. Possibly natural depression or a tree throw. 0.95m long, 0.49m wide and 0.07m deep.	
108	Fill	Fill of [107]. Mid to dark brownish grey alluvial silt. Loosely compacted with some rare rounded stones.	
<b>Trench 2</b>			
200	Layer	Topsoil. Same as (100). 0.02m thick.	
201	Layer	Tarmac of former car park. 0.04m thick.	
202	Layer	Brick demolition layer present throughout trench. Irregular interface with (203). 0.35m thick.	
203	Layer	Mid brownish alluvial layer. Possible water logging or buried topsoil. 0.1m thick.	
204	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid orange mottled yellow-brown alluvium with occasional inclusions. Depth not known.	
205	Layer	Black hardcore. Same as (102) but only present between (201) and (203) in the eastern most 5m of the trench. 0.1m thick.	
206	Layer	Alluvial/silt layer (mid yellow brown) only present in the western end of trench. Between (202) and (203) where present. 0.14m thick.	
<b>Trench 3</b>			
300	Layer	Topsoil. Same as (100). 0.02m thick.	
301	Layer	Tarmac of former car park. 0.04m thick.	
302	Layer	Mid pinkish layer of crushed brick and gravel present throughout trench. 0.16m thick.	
303	Layer	Brick demolition layer present throughout trench in varying amounts. Mixed with some darker silty material. 0.3m thick.	
304	Layer	Mid orange grey alluvial silt. Possibly buried soil. 0.08m thick.	
305	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid yellow-brown orange mottled alluvium with occasional gravel inclusions. Depth not known.	

<b>Trench 4</b>			
400	Layer	Topsoil. Same as (100). 0.03m thick.	
401	Layer	Tarmac of former car park. Only present in northern half of trench. 0.04m thick.	
402	Layer	Light brownish grey silty clay. Frequent gravel inclusions. Only present in middle third of trench. 0.03m thick.	
403	Layer	Black layer of hardcore with virtually no soil content. Deeper towards the SE and often falls into the brick layer (404) below. 0.3m thick.	
404	Layer	Natural substrate. Firmly compacted alluvium with a significant clay content. No inclusions. Depth not known.	

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**OASIS ID: preconst3-196435**

#### Project details

Project name	WHETSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH, DOG AND GUN LANE, WHETSTONE, BLABY, LEICESTERSHIRE
Short description of the project	In November 2014, a trial trench evaluation took place in advance of a proposed new Baptist church on land off Dog and Gun Lane in the town of Whetstone in Leicestershire. This was commissioned by KPW Architects and was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the District Planning Authority. The results will be used to ascertain the archaeological potential of the site and, if necessary, to inform a scheme of mitigation to be carried out in advance of and/or during construction groundworks, in order fulfil the planning conditions. This consisted of four trenches, three of which measured 35m x 2m with a fourth trench at 15m x 2m. These were positioned to give the broadest sample of the area affected by the proposed development. Three trenches (2, 3 and 4) contained no archaeology, with Trench 1 containing a single pit of unknown use or function.
Project dates	Start: 01-11-2014 End: 30-11-2014
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WBCE 14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

**Project location**

Country England

Site location LEICESTERSHIRE BLABY WHETSTONE WHETSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH, DOG AND GUN LANE, WHETSTONE, BLABY, LEICESTERSHIRE

Study area 0 Square metres

Site coordinates SP 5566 9640 52.5622220874 -1.1788146022 52 33 44 N 001 10 43 W Point

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

Project director/manager Will Munford

Project supervisor R. Mandeville

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Leicester Museums Archaeology Collections

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Leicester Museums Archaeology Collections

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Entered by Leigh Brocklehurst (leigh@pre-construct.co.uk)

Entered on 26 November 2014

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