Summary

- *An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) at the Grange Allotments, Mayors Walk, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. This work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd. on behalf of Peterborough City Council, to inform planning applications in due course.*

- *Few features were exposed, and those that were included an undated pit, post-hole, furrow, low numbers of linear ditches/gulleys, and one modern drain.*

- *On the basis of the area evaluated, it is suggested that the site is of limited archaeological potential, and that the archaeology identified is of local importance only. For the most part, little or no archaeology was exposed within trial trenches; restricted to Trenches 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 (in addition, a modern foundation was exposed in Trench 3).*

- *Although undated, there is some evidence of horizontal stratigraphy/inter-truncation in the south-west corner of the site (in the vicinity of Trenches 10 and 11)*

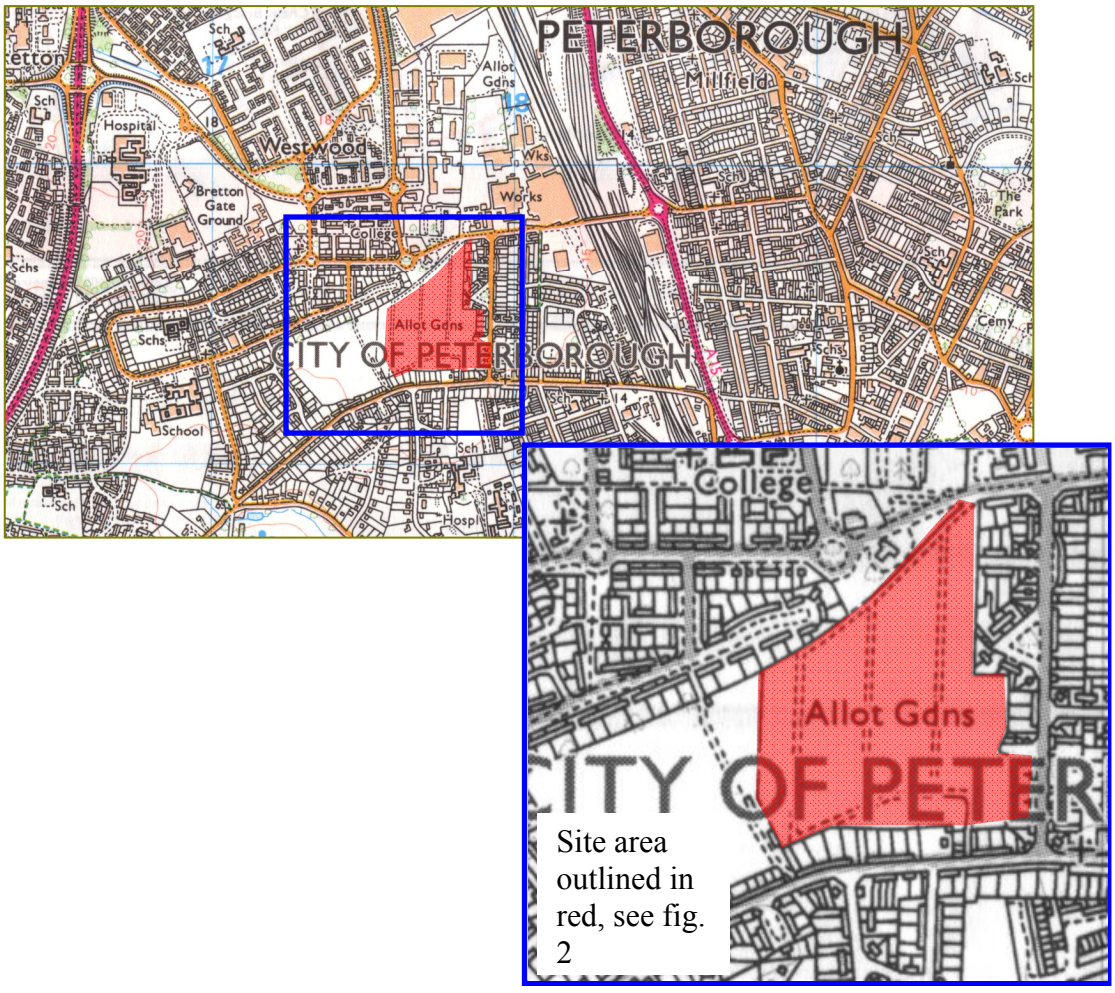

Fig. 1: General site location. Scale 1:25 000 and 1:10 000.
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1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Grange Allotment Site, Mayors Walk, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

This was undertaken at the request of Peterborough City Council, as part of the Capital Receipts Programme to assist the determination of subsequent planning applications. This approach is consistent with the *recommendations of Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), and *Standards and guidance for archaeological evaluations* (IFA, 1994 *as revised*).

2.0 Site location and description

The site is approximately 2km north-west of Peterborough City Centre, situated between Mayors Walk and Westfield Road, and centred on NGR TL 511770 29945. The proposed development area comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land that is currently used as allotment gardens. It measures 45.4ha in area, 23.6ha of which was available for archaeological field evaluation.

The south and eastern boundaries of the site area delineated by modern residential boundaries, and the west is occupied by the Westwood Grange Playing Fields; the northern boundary consists of a mix of residential and commercial development fronting Westfield Road. (fig. 1 and 2).

The geology of the area comprises of Jurassic Cornbrash Limestone and superficial deposits of interglacial river terrace and Anglian glacial till (British Geological Survey, 1984).

3.0 Archaeological and historical background

Archaeology of prehistoric and Romano-British date is well documented throughout the immediate area of the site. Approximately 700m to its north-east, recent work has identified field systems and occupation of Bronze Age date (Knight, 2000), while closer by, to the south-east of the site, Neolithic and Bronze-Age features have also been reported (Hatton, 2001).

In the 19th century, approximately 650m to the east of the site, Romano-British settlement remains, including burials, were discovered during railway construction. More recent discoveries indicate further settlement evidence of this period, along with artefacts of a votive nature (ADS, 2007). At Mayors Walk, investigations suggest that a substantial Roman building existed close by (Hatton, 2001).

Quarrying is known to have taken place to the east and south-east of the site during the 19th and 20th centuries (ADS, 2007)

4.0 Methodology

The evaluation methodology required the initial machine excvavation of twelve trial trenches. Eleven of these were 2m x 30m in area, while one trench, Trench 4, was 2m x 15m.

The trenches were positioned in accordance with a project specification prepared by Scott Wilson Ltd using a Leica GS50 global positioning system. The original plan was adjusted slightly during the course of machining, resulting in the enlargement of Trench 9, the re-positioning of Trench 11, and no investigation of Trench 12 (fig. 2). Each of these changes was discussed with and agreed by the Archaeological Consultant and the Peterborough City Council Archaeologist.

Following machine excavation, all archaeological deposits identified were subjected to limited controlled excavation and sampling to determine their nature, dimensions and function, and to attempt to recover datable artefactual remains and make an assessment of archaeo-environmental potential. All trench spoil heaps were scanned for artefacts and metal detected by the author.

These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions on context record sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings, in both plan and section complement these accounts. The groundwork was carried out using a 360º wheeled excavator using a 2.25m toothless ditching bucket.

The fieldwork was undertaken over a period of seven days between the 15th – 23rd of August 2007 by Laura Hill, Lisa Baker, Neil Jackson and the author.

5.0 Results

The general stratigraphy

The natural geology encountered across the site, context (003), comprised of fragmented Cornbrash within a mid-brown silty clay matrix and occurred between 0.70m-1.50m below existing ground level. Also evident throughout all trenches was a light/mid-brown silty clay sub-soil containing occasional Cornbrash fragments, context (002), and this occurred approximately 0.70m below existing ground level. Sealing this (and present across the entire site) was topsoil (001), mid-brown silty clay incorporating occasional rounded and sub-rounded stones (see fig. 7 and Appendix 3).

Previous archaeological work close to the site has indicated evidence of buried soils. Therefore, each representative trench section was scrutinised for this possibility; the results of which proved negative in all areas.

In Trenches 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8, no archaeological deposits or horizons were exposed.

Trench 1

Archaeologically sterile.

Trench 2

Archaeologically sterile.

Trench 3

Approximately mid-way along the length of the trench, concrete foundations of modern date were exposed. These were recorded but were not excavated (fig. 3).

Trench 4

Archaeologically sterile.

Trench 5

A single ditch or gulley [502] on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment was exposed towards the centre of the trench. This was 1.27m wide, and 0.20m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It truncated the natural geology and was sealed by context (002). Its fill (501), comprised mid greyish-brown sandy clay, incorporating poorly sorted angular stones (figs. 3 and 7).

Trench 6

Archaeologically sterile.

Trench 7

Approximately 4m east of the trench west end, a steep-sided ditch [700] was exposed. It was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east and measured 1.50m wide and 1.10m deep, with a stepped profile towards its base. Here it contained three 0.30m diameter ceramic drain pipes (703), beneath a bulk fill of mid brownish silty clay with frequent small angular and rounded stones and lenses of natural (701) (figs. 4 and 7).

Trench 8

Archaeologically sterile.

Trench 9

Three features were exposed within this trench; a pit, [902] a possible furrow [907] and a gulley [905].

The pit was 1.00m x 0.70m in plan, with moderately steep sides and a concave base. It contained a basal fill (901) of mid brown sticky clay with frequent charcoal flecks and burnt angular stone fragments. This was sealed by mid-brown silty clay, also incorporating angular stone fragments, some of which were burnt, (900).

The most extensive feature, a possible furrow, was orientated north-west to south-east. It was 1.30m across and a mere 0.18m in depth, and it truncated the sub-soil (002).

Its fill comprised of mid brown silty clay (906) that incorporated occasional small poorly sorted angular stones.

Emerging from the southern baulk of the trench was a straight gulley [905] that was orientated north to south and terminated just 1.70m north of the section face. It measured 0.30m in width, and 0.05m in depth with moderately steep sides and a flat base. Its fill (904) was mid-brown silty clay with occasional small angular poorly sorted stones (figs. 5 and 7).

Trench 10

Two features were present in this trench; an east-west orientated re-cut ditch [1002] and a post-hole [1005].

The ditch was maximum 2.00m wide and 1.10m deep. Both of the identified cuts were steep, with the earliest displaying evidence of upper erosion. The earliest cut was filled with mid-blackish/brown sandy clay and incorporated occasional small angular poorly sorted stones, (1001). The later cut was filled with mid-brownish yellow sandy clay, with occasional small and poorly-sorted angular stones.

Just 0.20m from the south end of the trench was a post-hole, [1005] which was approximately 0.40m in diameter and 0.20m deep. This had sides and a concave base, and was filled with mid brown re-deposited natural soil with no inclusions present, (1006) (figs. 6 and 8).

Trench 11

Within this trench were three linear ditches/gulleys, [1102] and [1104] and [1106].

Two of these features traversed the trench on a north-south orientation: [1102] was 0.80m wide and 0.40m deep, with shallow sides and an irregular base. To its immediate west, ditch [1104] was 0.50m wide and 0.45m deep. Both ditches truncated the subsoil (002) and appeared to merge as they entered the southern baulk of the trench (a stratigraphic relationship could not be established). Their fills (1101)/(1103) comprised mid-brown slightly sticky silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and poorly sorted small rounded stones.

Just over 1.0m east of the above features was [1106] a gulley which ran across the trench on a north-west to south-east orientation. It was 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep with shallow sides and a U shaped profile. Its fill (1105) was mid-brown silty clay with no inclusions (figs. 6 and 8).

6.0 Interpretation and conclusion

Contexts recorded across the site consisted of natural deposits, low numbers of linear ditches and gulleys, a pit, post-hole and a modern field drain trench.

No artefactual material was retrieved from a secure context throughout the site, although a late 18th-early 19th century clay pipe bowl was found within the spoil of Trench 5, and a Neolithic flint core was retrieved from the spoil of Trench 10. This makes the dating of any features difficult.

It is possible that those features observed to truncate the subsoil are more recent than those that were sealed by this layer, but this can provide only a vague (and floating) chronology.

The features that truncated the subsoil comprised a possible plough furrow [907] and two ditches [1102] and [1104]. These features may be associated with post-medieval or even more recent agricultural practice, although this cannot be verified.

Features where their relationship with the subsoil was uncertain included two gullies [905] and [1106]. These could possibly be associated with either settlement or agricultural use, albeit of an unknown period.

The remaining features (underlying the subsoil) comprised a shallow ditch, [502]; a pit, [902]; a substantial ditch, [1102], and a post-hole, [1105]. These features could possibly reflect some form of low-level settlement activity, although this is far from clear. The large ditch could be another field boundary, but it could also be part of a possible settlement enclosure ditch.

7.0 Statement of potential.

The general state preservation of the archaeological remains exposed was relatively good, in an area that has been subjected to much ground disturbance throughout the years of allotment gardening.
The site is in the vicinity of archaeological remains relating to several cultural periods, with particular reference to the Iron Age and Roman periods. However, evidence from the current investigation would suggest that any archaeological remains present are likely to be sparse, difficult to predict, and difficult to date.

Although undated, there is some evidence of horizontal stratigraphy/inter-truncation in the south-west corner of the site (in the vicinity of Trenches 10 and 11)

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology has proven only partially effective. While assisting the identification of some classes of archaeological deposits and features, the interpretation, extent and dating of these features remains problematic. It is unfortunate that there is no wider-scale back up information available such as aerial photographs or geophysical survey results (although it is acknowledged also that neither technique would have been particularly applicable with reference to the current site).

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Scott Wilson Ltd. for commissioning this work and their guidance and suggestions throughout the project.

Thanks are also due to Ben Robinson of the City of Peterborough Archaeology Service for his input and recommendations.

10.0 References

Archaeological Data Service (ADS) www.ads.ahds.ac.uk

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11.00 Site Archive

An archive of written, drawn, photographic and object records is in preparation and will be deposited at an appropriate receiving museum within six months following the completion of this report.