

Nene Park Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

An Archaeological Evaluation



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CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
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Nene Park Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
An Archaeological Evaluation Assessment

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Non-Technical Summary

Cambridge Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological evaluation at Nene Valley Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire on the 17th August 2012. Two test-pits were excavated and revealed a deep sequence of alluvial silts and clay overlying the natural Terrace gravel. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) on the 17th August 2012 on land at Nene Valley Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire prior to the construction of a new school building. Commissioned by Kier Group, the evaluation aimed to establish the presence, date, state of preservation and significance of any potential heritage assets of archaeological interest. The evaluation was carried out and this report was written in response to a brief by Peterborough Archaeological Service at Peterborough City Council. The evaluation was approved and monitored by an Archaeological Officer from that team.

Location, Topography and Geology

The Proposed Development Area (PDA) occupies *c.* 460m² of land located next to the western boundary of Nene Park Academy and centres on TL 1616/9626, (see Figure 1). It is bounded by a housing estate to the west and school buildings and facilities to the north, south and east and is situated within an area of rough grassland which slopes downwards from a height of 15.03m OD to 14.50m OD.

The underlying geology of the PDA comprises of Jurassic Oxford Clay overlain by Third Terrace river gravels.

Archaeological Background

The PDA lies within an extensive archaeological landscape dating from the prehistoric period through to the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods and a full account of the archaeological background for the Academy grounds is detailed in a CAU Desk Based Assessment (Standring 2008). A brief summary of this is detailed below.

Several prehistoric artefacts and features were identified and recorded in the early 20th century during extensive gravel quarrying within the area of the Academy grounds which included pits containing Neolithic pottery and Bronze Age burials. Also within the grounds, a number of paleolithic flint hand-axes were recovered in 1923, although, the location of their discovery was not well documented (Standring 2008). A more recent excavation carried out just to the east of the PDA, and in advance of the construction of a new sports hall, recorded pits, postholes and ditches which produced Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age worked flint and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (Cassa Hatton 2001).

Two archaeological excavations have recorded extensive Romano-British settlement remains within the eastern half of the Academy grounds. This included a stone built structure with tessellated floor alongside pottery kilns, pits and enclosure ditches dating from the 2nd–3rd centuries AD (Dakin 1961). The excavation at the sports hall also identified ditches, pits and building material dating to this period (Casa Hatton 2001).

Anglo-Saxon remains were identified within the vicinity of the PDA in the early 20th Century and included pottery, spindle-whorls and bone combs associated with potential 'House Sites', although the exact location for these artefacts and features is

unclear. In addition, Late Saxon field-systems have been identified to the southwest of the PDA and the nearby Church of the Holy Trinity is mentioned in the Domesday Book (Standring 2008).

A recent CAU excavation at the Academy (Tabor 2010) located just to the south of the PDA (see Figure 2) identified limited archaeological remains including medieval/post-medieval plough furrows and areas of post-medieval quarrying which contained some residual worked flint and Romano-British pottery.

Methodology

Originally the PDA was to be evaluated by a single 10m trench within the footprint of the planned building, however, due to the depth of deposits encountered and the high water table; this was modified to evaluation by two machine excavated test pits measuring 1.8m by 3m.

Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist by a tracked 3-ton 360° machine using a 1.8m wide toothless grading bucket and under a Kier Group 'Permit to Dig' system. A datasheet detailing the characteristics of each test pit was generated and a digital photographic archive was compiled. All removed deposits were also scanned by eye and metal detector for artefacts.

All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of FAME (Allen & Holt 2010) and in accordance with a site specific risk assessment and the CAU Health and Safety policy. The CAU assigned site code is OLP 12.

Archive

The documentary and digital photographic records have been assembled into a catalogued archive in line with Appendix 6 of MAP2 (English Heritage 1992) and are being stored at the CAU offices.

Results

The Test Pits are located on a noticeable slope which drops away from the Academy towards the west. The same sequence of deposits was encountered in both pits which included a relatively shallow topsoil averaging 0.25m deep overlying a substantial subsoil layer consisting of clayey, orange/brown sandy silt. Underlying this was a further substantial deposit of blue/grey alluvial clay silt with Third Terrace gravels occurring at a depth between 1.80 and 1.90m, (see Figure 3). A rapid inflow of groundwater was encountered from a depth of approximately 1m.

The removed deposits were scanned by eye and a metal detector for artefacts but none, including any dating to the post-medieval period, were recovered.

Test Pit 1		
General Description	Orientation	SE-NW
Test Pit 1 contained no archaeological features and no artefacts. A thick deposit of subsoil overlay sterile alluvial clay silt which in turn overlay Third Terrace gravels.	Length (m)	2.50
	Width (m)	1.80
	Surface OD Height (m)	15.03
	Topsoil Depth (m)	0.25
	Subsoil Depth (m)	0.75
	Alluvium Depth (m)	0.85
	Total Depth (m)	1.80

Test Pit 2		
General Description	Orientation	SE-NW
Test Pit 1 contained no archaeological features and no artefacts. A thick deposit of subsoil overlay sterile alluvial clay silt which in turn overlay Third Terrace gravels.	Length (m)	2.50
	Width (m)	1.80
	Surface OD Height (m)	14.50
	Topsoil Depth (m)	0.25
	Subsoil Depth (m)	0.75
	Alluvium Depth (m)	0.90
	Total Depth (m)	1.90

Discussion

The lack of features and artefacts within Test Pits 1 and 2 suggests the dense pattern of prehistoric, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval archaeology identified elsewhere within and around the Academy grounds did not extend into this area. Also, the undisturbed and sterile nature of the deposits suggests the PDA was not subject to the extensive quarrying seen in the surrounding area (Standing 2008, Tabor 2010), possibly due to the depth of the overburden.

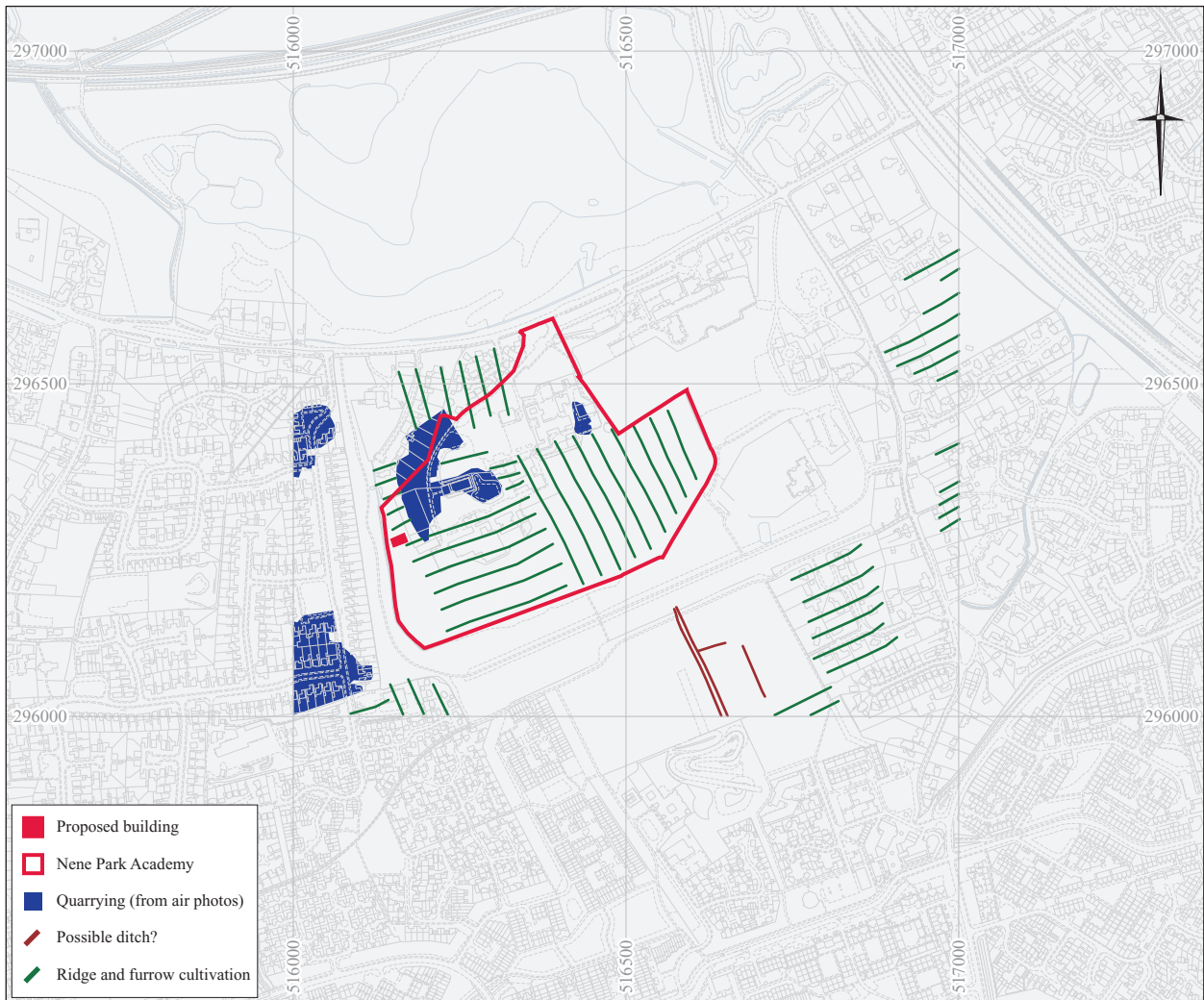
The depth and presence of alluvial silt deposits in both Test Pits suggests the PDA is potentially on, or near to, a former tributary of the nearby River Nene.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Kier Group. Monitoring was undertaken by Rebecca Casa-Hatton of Peterborough Archaeological Services. Emma Beadsmoore was the CAU Project Manager. Many thanks to Jane Matthews for assisting the author on site.

References

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Figure 1. Location map and gazetteer

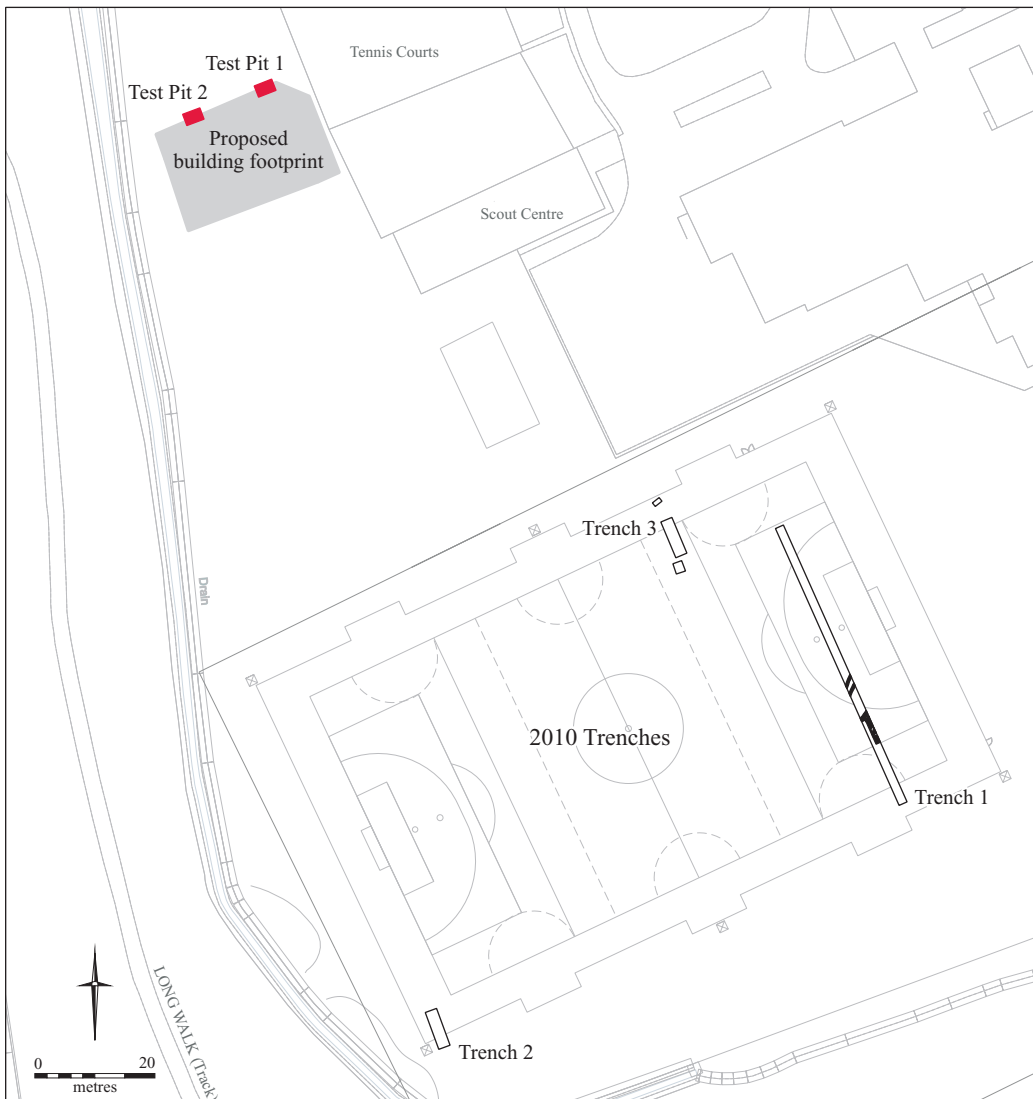
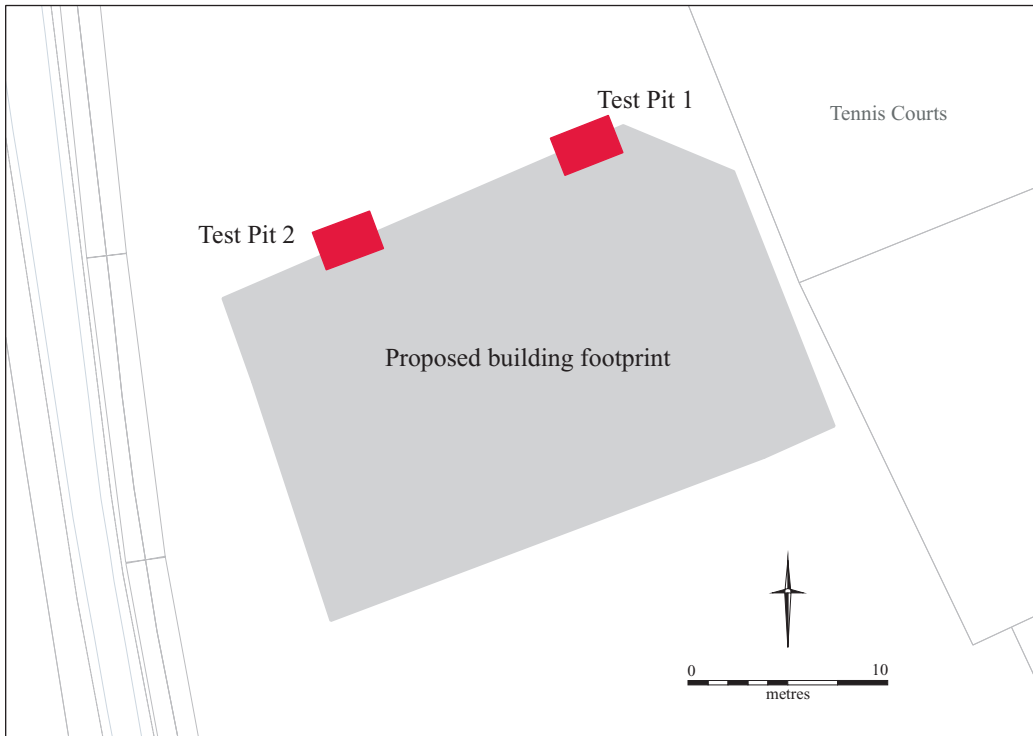


Figure 2. Site plan



Test Pit 1



Test Pit 2

Figure 3. Photographs of Test Pits 1 and 2

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-132607

Project details

Project name	Nene Park Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire An Archaeological Evaluation Assessment
Short description of the project	Cambridge Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological evaluation at Nene Valley Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire on the 17th August 2012. Two test-pits were excavated and revealed a deep sequence of alluvial silts and clay overlying the natural Terrace gravel. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.
Project dates	Start: 17-08-2012 End: 17-08-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Test Pits"
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE PETERBOROUGH ORTON LONGUEVILLE Nene Park Academy, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Postcode	PE2 7EA
Study area	460.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 1616 9626 52 0 52 33 05 N 000 17 11 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 14.50m Max: 15.03m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Emma Beadsmoore
Project director/manager	Emma Beadsmoore
Project supervisor	Matthew Collins
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Kier Group

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	N/A
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	OLP 12
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	OLP 12
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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